

## **New London**

### What the district does well

- The district is very well led and managed by the superintendent. He is very well supported by his assistant and a dedicated team of professionals at the district office.
- The district has developed a very clear strategic plan for future development. The leadership is innovative, imaginative and not afraid to take well-calculated risks to bring about the improvements urgently needed to increase students' achievements.
- The district is very well supported by a strong system of governance. The board of education works well with the district and keeps a close oversight on financial and educational developments.
- There are very robust systems to ensure that fiscal operations are clear, transparent and secure. The district uses its finances with utmost care to ensure that the state, city and schools get the best value from the budget.
- The district works very well with official and voluntary external agencies to promote the well-being and all-round development of young people in the city.
- Operational systems are good. The Child Nutrition Program, in particular, provides a good, wide-ranging service at no cost to the city taxpayers.

### What the district needs to improve

- Students' achievement has to rise faster and the district needs to continue its focus on accelerating progress in English language arts, mathematics and science through:
  - further precisely-targeted professional development for key leaders in schools;
  - continued development of the curriculum and related assessments;
  - further improvements to ensure strategic use of data by teachers; and
  - increased sharing of effective practice and particularly on using data to improve learning for students.
- The district needs to guard against initiative overload on teachers and other staff by:
  - reviewing and prioritizing the strategic timing of current initiatives;
  - ensuring sufficient time for new practices and for new requirements to become well-established in school routines;
  - ensuring teachers all receive sufficient professional development in strategies aimed at improving instruction;
  - setting out and publicizing clear timelines for future planned projects to ensure that everyone understands when key events are likely to have impact at school level and what that impact will mean for individual schools; and
  - expanding the pool of highly qualified teachers and substitutes teachers.

- Put in place at the planning stage for each new project or initiative, clear mechanisms and procedures for the regular and ongoing evaluation of the effect on students' achievements and progress. This action needs to be retrospective for those projects started recently.
- Improve further, the monitoring of school leadership and the quality of work in the classroom by:
  - focusing more on the quality of students' learning during visits by district staff to schools;
  - conducting regular paired walkthroughs with all principals;
  - providing more comprehensive feedback to teachers about their strengths and areas for development; and
  - seeking out further opportunities for professional development for all key school leaders to bring about improvements in students' learning.
- Further increase stakeholders' understanding and involvement in educational matters by:
  - more regular, systematic and formal consultations through survey and focus groups at city and school level;
  - prompt dissemination of the findings of surveys, together with proposed actions;
  - setting out clearly for the whole community, the planned educational developments and changes planned for the next few years; and
  - ensuring everyone in the community is aware of the range, status, leadership and governance arrangements, purposes and characteristics of the different types of public schools serving the district.