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[Conn. school's culture "transformed" by Project CHILD®](#)

Chamberlain Elementary School in New Britain, Conn., is among 10 schools in the Northeast to have adopted the Project CHILD model, in which students have the same reading, writing and math teachers for three straight years and are exposed to more hands-on instruction and small-group work. Educators at the Connecticut school say the model has boosted test scores, attendance and structure. "We've transformed the culture with Project CHILD," said Jane Perez, Chamberlain's principal.

Chamberlain principal touts unique program to state

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By ROBERT STORACE, STAFF WRITER - NEW BRITAIN —

Saying "We've transformed the culture with Project CHILD®," Principal Jane Perez gave a PowerPoint presentation and tour of Chamberlain Elementary School to the state's commissioner of education and other education professionals Tuesday morning.

Chamberlain is one of 10 schools in the Northeast — and the only one in Connecticut — to implement the Project CHILD model, which entails having one math teacher, one reading teacher and one writing teacher instruct students for three consecutive years in an effort to bring stability to their learning process. The model also encourages more hands-on instruction in small-group work stations and more independent learning instruction.

Among those joining Perez and Commissioner of Education Stefan Pryor on the tour were Frank Gargiulo, superintendent of the Hudson County, N.J., schools of technology; James Simonic, president of the Innovative Education Program, the New Jersey-based company that in May 2013 bought the rights to the Project CHILD model and oversees Project CHILD models throughout the country; Carl Czaplicki Jr., a history teacher in the Hudson County school district; Superintendent of Schools Kelt L. Cooper and school board Chairwoman Sharon Beloin-Saavedra.

Czaplicki, who knew Pryor when the commissioner was working in New Jersey, saw the success of Project CHILD in two elementary schools in Hudson County and had heard of the success at

Chamberlain. Czaplicki spoke to Pryor and convinced him to visit Chamberlain to get a better understanding of the model.

Pryor, who had never visited Chamberlain before, said after the one-hour tour of several classrooms that he was impressed with what he saw.

Pryor, who interacted with numerous students who were learning in their work stations, said, “What I’ve seen is highly encouraging. I’d like to see it in other schools (in the state). I am very impressed with the progress here in New Britain. The progress here is palpable.”

The educators said schools that have implemented the model have achieved better test scores, higher attendance levels and more structure.

At Chamberlain, students who were at or above proficient in the Connecticut Mastery Test scores in mathematics in 2008 — the year Project CHILD was implemented — totaled 47 percent. That increased to 72 percent in 2013. Students were 48 percent proficient or above in writing in 2008, 65 percent proficient in 2013. Reading proficiency also increased over the period.

Said Beloin-Saavedra after the tour, “Project CHILD has really worked at Chamberlain. Teachers get to hone in on their strengths and they really become specialized in one content area.”

Beloin-Saavedra added, “For me, it was also very important to see that Chromebooks were being utilized in every classroom across content area. That’s very important.”

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