

## Project CHILD Brings Students a New Way to Learn



The days of one teacher as one-stop shopping are gone at Chamberlain Elementary School in New Britain.

Welcome to Project CHILD, which stands for “Changing How Instruction for Learning is Delivered.”

It’s best described by student Jayden Lopez, who explained that “one teacher will know mostly everything about, let's say math, and one teacher will know about reading and writing.”

The initiative is designed to help children benefit from the strengths of multiple teachers and ensure their educations are well rounded.

“In 2008, we started using Project CHILD; we started using the model,” said Chamberlain Elementary School Principal Jane Perez. “And we have seen continuous, significant improvement ever since.”

Project CHILD organizes the school day in a non-traditional way. Teachers specialize in a subject area and stay with the same group of students to teach that subject for a few years.

“Having them for three years, I know exactly what they need to work on, I know exactly what they need to focus on, so I don't have to waste any time,” said reading teacher Craig Muzzy. “I know them, I know what they need to do, and they develop that relationship with me as well.”

And so far, Chamberlain officials say it has been a success. Test scores have jumped, with 72 percent of students at or above proficiency on the Connecticut Mastery Tests in math, as opposed to 47 percent before Project CHILD was adopted. Proficient writing scores have increased from 48 to 65 percent of students, and reading proficiency has spiked from 35 to 50 percent, all in the last five years.

“I think that I learn a subject better when a teacher wants to teach that certain subject,” said student Jessica Taing.

It also helps teachers to better train.

“Working in clusters of teachers – reading, writing, and math – those teachers have developed a system where they develop routines together, and they learn a lot from one another,” explained Perez.

That means more time for small group instruction and hands-on learning that seems to be getting results.

“This is a program that really helps students become very engaged in their learning,” said Perez. “They become self-directed learners.”

**New Britain Herald**  
**February 19, 2014**