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### **Principal's Report 2006-2007**

Our focus during the 2006-07 school year was to become better educators - to advance our craft so that we can continue to realize significant improvement in student achievement at Westminster. To that end, we took a number of important steps last year, and I am pleased to report that many of these steps already have begun to pay dividends.

As a staff, we designed a more relevant professional development program - one that addresses our needs and enables us to more effectively meet those of our students. In that process, we spent many hours studying, collaborating, and sharing so that we would become better teachers of reading, writing, math, and the major content areas.

We examined our instructional program to maintain close alignment with New York State requirements. We learned how to become more proficient in our use of data as a tool to drive our planning, implementation, and evaluation of our academic program. This information will enable us to more readily identify student needs – addressing deficiencies and leveraging strengths. It already has helped us improve our approach to identifying necessary academic skills and the keys to mastering those skills, while developing our students' critical and creative thinking.

Our focus on continuous improvement also led us to assess how effective we've been in creating a student-centered culture that reflects respect for all, teamwork and parental involvement with high expectations on academics and student achievement. Through designated committees, we identified areas that needed to be addressed for us to advance our culture, and have taken steps to affect positive change.

The outcome of this planning, reorganization, and collaboration has been very positive. Our team building, team planning, team teaching, and peer coaching reached new levels! We learned from one another, we learned from our consultants, and we learned through the implementation of new ideas and strategies. We are becoming smarter in the use of data. Our organizational skills have improved. Our efforts are more focused and goal-oriented. We've become more creative and effective in designing our curriculum - planning around exciting themes with related units of study and accompanying activities. Students are excited about the new learning opportunities.

These efforts are reflected in our bottom line results – student achievement. We have developed an intensive one-to-one tutoring program and flexible small group instruction for the students who need this type of learning environment. At the same time, we've provided increased opportunities to challenge our top students, resulting in more advanced courses of study in math, biology, and Spanish. Many of our students graduated and entered high school with high school credits earned at Westminster Community Charter School.

We look back with pride on what we were able to accomplish last year and look forward with great anticipation to what we will accomplish in the years to come!