



New Jersey Department of Education, Office of Charter Schools

NORTH STAR ACADEMY

Collection of Best Practices

Name of Charter School: North Star Academy

About the Charter School (Mission / Key Design Elements):

North Star Academy Charter School of Newark is one of New Jersey's very first charter public schools, and after more than fifteen years has also become one of its most celebrated. Its mission is to:

- Serve Newark children by building an uncommon school where students partake of a rigorous, 10-month, extended day academic program that gives them the means to beat the odds in school and life.
- Shape an intimate, supportive, engaging school community where classes are small and personalized; parents are partners; teachers teach with passion and commitment; and all the adults model—and all the students develop and live—the values of caring, courage, justice, respect, and responsibility.
- Generate for students a transformative experience at an age when they are forging their very identities and lifetime aspirations and to cultivate in them the belief that they are the masters of their own destinies: each one worthy of greatness and goodness, each one capable of—and responsible for—serving the community and the world around them.

Best Practice Topic(s) / Performance Area within Organizational Framework:

Instruction, Instructional Leadership, Use of Data

Summary:

North Star Academy has spent the past 18 years codifying best practices around instructional leadership. This has contributed to consistent levels of academic performance. These systems have been published and disseminated via three books: *Driven By Data* (copyright 2010), *Great Habits Great Readers* (copyright 2013), and *Leverage Leadership* (copyright 2012). These books and companion DVDs have a large number of resources including videos and 1-pagers to help implement these best practices with school school.

- *Driven by Data* offers valuable tips and general guidelines about data-based instructional methods and the difficulties surrounding the implementation of data-driven instruction.
- *Great Habits, Great Readers* includes strategies, systems, and lessons from the top K-4 classrooms that bring the habits of reading to life, creating countless quality opportunities for students to take one of the most complex skills we as people can know and to perform it fluently and easily.
- *Leverage Leadership* offers concrete guidelines for a new paradigm in school leadership. The author meticulously shows the steps that great principals take to promote effective teaching and transform lackluster or even good schools into great school.

Partner(s): N/A

Dates: Ongoing

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Resources:

<http://www.uncommonschools.org/our-approach/thought-leadership/great-habits-great-readers>

<http://www.uncommonschools.org/our-approach/thought-leadership/driven-by-data-book-paul-bambrick-santoyo>

<http://www.uncommonschools.org/our-approach/thought-leadership/leverage-leadership-book-paul-bambrick-santoyo-doug-lemov>