

Christopher Ripp Early Learning Program

A collaborative effort of the Office of the Superintendent, Catholic Charities, and the host Catholic school.



The Christopher Ripp Early Learning program provides a “wrap around” component to already existing pre-K3 and pre-K4 programs, which will provide three and four-year old children crucial academic enrichment and remediation assistance in a safe and faith-filled environment. The preschool teachers and wrap around teacher will work as an educational team, sharing ideas and materials to provide a seamless educational experience.

The program will assist parents as the primary educators of their children, by providing them with tools to help nurture social, physical, emotional and academic growth in a learning community that is faith-filled and family centered.

Rationale:

This after school program, piloted at St Peter’s in Danbury will be expanded to other regions in the coming year. It will provide children the opportunity to further explore topics of interest or demonstrated need. It also ensures that students are in a safe environment, receive a healthy snack, and participate in activities that promote physical and emotional health. Studies show that involvement in programs such as this wrap around program improves attendance, increases academic success, improves interpersonal skills, and lowers aggression. While participation has demonstrated benefits for all children, the benefit is greatest for high-risk children that come from low-income families.

Research indicates that the most effective early childhood education programs, especially those in low-income communities, include parent education. Not only are literacy skills and language acquisition enhanced greatly when parents are taught how to support learning at home, but an even greater impact is seen on non-cognitive skills such as motivation, persistence and confidence.

A second pilot is projected to launch at another urban school in the fall of 2019 based on the documented success of the Danbury pilot.