Romulus Central Schools
New York

Superintendent: Mike Midey
Primary contact: Mike Midey
561 students, K-12, rural

District Description
The Romulus Central Schools district is located in rural upstate New York amid lakes, vacation spots, vineyards, and farms. Syracuse and Rochester, the nearest cities, are more than an hour’s drive from the town of Romulus. The district covers 150 square miles, which means that busing is necessary for most students. All students are served at one school site, but the building has two divisions—a preschool/elementary school and a middle/high school. The new superintendent, Mike Midey, was most recently the high school principal, and before that a teacher in the district. The superintendent continues to teach a high school physics class.

Key Findings
- The Romulus schools have had high levels of achievement in the past, consistently exceeding state targets. The new superintendent anticipates that this will continue, even though more grade levels will be tested in 2005-06.

- Romulus officials expressed concern about the unfunded costs of No Child Left Behind, such as the cost of scoring the additional tests for four grade levels that were not tested in previous years.

- The Romulus staff is quite stable, and finding highly qualified teachers has not been an issue for the district.

Overall Impact of NCLB
Superintendent Midey identified some positive effects from NCLB. Under the state and federal accountability systems, all students are judged in the same way, and he believes that having the same expectations for all students brings about positive results. To improve overall achievement, administrators, staff, students, and families have had to work together. This cooperation has paid off, as demonstrated by the district’s high student test scores and strong graduation rate. In addition, community support for the educational program matches the staff’s high expectations for student success.

On the other hand, the superintendent is concerned about the unfunded aspects of the NCLB requirements, which can have a large impact in a small district.
**NCLB and Student Achievement**

The achievement of Romulus students has not changed significantly at the three grade levels tested since NCLB took effect in 2002. The achievement levels are high and the schools have consistently made adequate yearly progress. Students in grades 4 and 8 have higher levels of proficiency in English/language arts, math, and science than the percentages required for adequate yearly progress. The percentage of 4th grade students scoring at or above the proficient level in English/language arts and in math has stayed in the 70-80% range, and the district scores are consistently above the state averages and well above AYP targets in both subjects.

The cut score for the proficient level in grade 4 math, for example, was a raw test score of 120 in 2004, but Romulus 4th graders had a considerably higher average score of 191. In grade 8 math, the percentage of students scoring at the proficient level has increased in each of the past three years—from 48% to 59% in English/language arts. In math the percentage has consistently exceeded 90% for the three years. The high school students take the Regents Examination, and for the past three years, the passing rate in English has ranged from a low of 75% for the 2002 seniors to 93% for the 2004 seniors. In math the percentages have been in the 80s, with 88% for the 2004 cohort.

**Adequate Yearly Progress and School Improvement**

Both the elementary and secondary schools have consistently made adequate yearly progress, and they did so again in 2004-05. Romulus schools have three subgroups large enough to count for AYP: white (94%), low-income students (32%), and students with disabilities (13%). All have made AYP in the past.

**Testing Issues**

State tests in New York have been administered in grades 4 and 8 in math, English/language arts, and science. High school students take the Regents exams, which have been part of New York state accountability for many years. In 2005-06, all grades 3 through 8 plus the high school grades will be tested. A committee of teachers has worked with the state department on test specifications and preparation. Sample tests that illustrate the types of knowledge and skills measured on the new tests were submitted to districts in the fall of 2005. Testing at all the required grade levels was scheduled for January 2006 for English/language arts and March 2006 for math.

Cut scores on the new tests had to be determined, according to Superintendent Midey, and proficiency levels had to be established for the additional grade levels. The targets for the four achievement levels (Basic, Basic Proficiency, Proficient, and Advanced Proficiency) have been adjusted by the state for the new tests so that higher percentages of students must score in the top two groups for a district or school to make AYP. The change is not likely to affect proficiency levels in the Romulus schools because their percentages of proficiency have consistently been much higher than the targets.

**Impact of NCLB on Curriculum and Instruction**

The district has made no major changes in curriculum and instruction in any grade as a result of NCLB because student performance has been strong. This may change when larger numbers of students are tested in 2005-06. In the past, AYP was based on the performance of only 150 students, or 25% of the students in the Romulus schools—those in the tested grades. From now on, two-thirds of the students will be in tested grades and will take the state tests. According to the superintendent, this may result in some changes to curriculum and instruction.
Teacher Qualifications, Support, and Professional Development

HIGHLY QUALIFIED TEACHERS
In 2005-06 the district’s enrollment fell by 24 students from the previous year, but the teaching staff has remained stable. Some changes in staff assignments at the district level, such as the consolidation of two positions, made it unnecessary to reduce the teaching staff. All teachers at both schools meet the highly qualified expectations, as they have for the past two years.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
The Romulus teaching staff is stable, and there is very little turnover from year to year. “We have good teachers, and what takes place consistently is good teaching,” said Midey. Teachers in Romulus are empowered to make whatever changes are necessary and are deeply involved in district decision making. “Teachers and other staff work hard,” Midey added. Although many of them live far from school, with commutes of up to an hour and a half, “they come to work early, they stay here until late, and I see them here on Saturday and Sunday,” he said. “They are dedicated people and committed to our kids.”

Teachers also participate in school activities and take part in professional development. The regional Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) provides professional development to teachers in Romulus and 24 other districts. This training focuses on using technology, differentiating instruction to meet diverse student needs, and teaching math and reading effectively. In addition, district teachers have received professional development on how to analyze and use assessment data to identify and address areas of academic need.

Paraprofessional Qualifications and Support
All seven paraprofessionals in the Romulus Central Schools, including the five Title I instructional paraprofessionals, are considered highly qualified, as they have been since the NCLB requirements took effect.

Funding and Costs
Federal Title I funds have declined in Romulus in the past three years, even though the percentage of students eligible for free and reduced-price lunch has increased. Title I funds are primarily used to add teachers at the elementary level.

Superintendent Midey expressed concern about the costs of NCLB. The district does not receive enough federal funds to cover all the costs of implementing the law, especially teacher training. The district will also face the extra costs of grading the additional tests that will be administered in 2005-06. Local funds are already stretched, because the district has undertaken a two-year building project to make school renovations that the staff feels are long overdue.

Data File—Romulus Central Schools
Location: North-central New York
Type: Rural

Number of Schools
Total: 2
Elementary: 1
Middle/high schools: 1
Number of Title I schools: 1

Student Enrollment and Demographics
Total enrollment: 561

- White: 94%
- African American: 2.5%
- Other: 0.5%

- Low-income students: 32%
- Students with disabilities: 13%

Teachers
Total number of teachers: 50
Percentage meeting NCLB “highly qualified” requirements: 100%

Paraprofessionals
Total number of Title I instructional paraprofessionals: 5
Percentage meeting NCLB “highly qualified” requirements: 100%

Total Number That Did Not Make AYP Based on 2004-05 Testing
Title I and non-Title I schools that did not make AYP, including those in improvement, restructuring, or corrective action: 0

Number of Title I Schools in Improvement, Restructuring, or Corrective Action

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<th>Based on 2004-05 Testing</th>
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Number of Schools Offering Choice and/or SES

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