

Bucyrus High School

Bucyrus City School District (Crawford)



School Profile 2003-2004	
<i>2003-2004 School of Promise in Reading</i>	
School Rating	Effective
Enrollment	524
Grade Levels	9-12
Percent Economically Disadvantaged	42.4%
Percent Racial/Ethnic Minority	2.2%

District Profile 2003-2004	
District Rating	Effective
District Enrollment	1,639

Lesson 1: Providing Rigorous Instruction Aligned to Standards

Increased Focus on Standards and Testing: To ensure that lessons and assessments are aligned with state standards, the principal requires teachers to submit daily lesson plans and tests. He reviews them to ensure they are appropriately covering the standards and meeting the corresponding benchmarks. Teachers are in line with the Ohio Graduation Test (OGT) and use the proficiency test data to identify students' weaknesses. They are testing more frequently; there is preparation for a test, administration of a test, or review of a test in almost every class daily. The district provides test data analyses that teachers can use to redirect the focus of their instruction, as necessary.

Use of Incentives: The school has an elaborate system of student rewards tied to passing the proficiency test and this will be extended to the OGT.

Lesson 2: Providing Leadership That Results in Continuous Improvement

Likeable, Strong, and Creative Leadership: After just a few years as head of the school, the principal has made a good impression on students, teachers, and parents. He is creative in the way he hires new teachers, and as part of expanding school-wide inclusion, he has begun recruiting teachers that have a background in special education as well as strong content expertise in either math or reading.

Collaborative Planning Process and Working Relationship with Staff: The administrative team involves teachers in the planning process. Teachers describe the principal's management style as fair and productive and say he is completely supportive and open to their input. An important characteristic of staff is their stability: the average amount of teaching experience for all teachers at the school is 15 years. Of those responding to the survey, 79 percent have taught at least 11 years and 64 percent have been at BHS at least six years.

Daily Positive Message: The principal starts each day by saying the "Pledge of the Allegiance" and "It is a great day to be alive!" as part of morning announcements. The principal and staff want to establish an environment where students feel comfortable and valued; setting a positive tone for the day is part of this plan.

Lesson 3: Designing Instruction to Ensure Every Student's Success

Two Major Program Areas: The Essential and College Prep groupings allow teachers to more readily meet individual student needs. Relatively easy movement between programs is a critical and desirable feature, resulting in students not feeling stuck in a program if they are ready for a greater challenge or are overwhelmed. The major difference between the two programs appears to be the

pace rather than the content, another feature facilitating movement between the programs. The block schedule also assists movement because the timeframe for courses is a half year rather than a full year.

Special Education Inclusion: Most special education students are placed in mainstreamed classes with a special education teacher or aide assisting the classroom teacher. In the English inclusion class, the two teachers work well together and often team teach. The Multiple Handicapped (MH) teacher is similarly teaming with a science teacher and succeeded in getting funding for collaborative work that involves including the MH students in regular science labs for the first time. The school also is maintaining a three-ring binder in the office that includes each student's Individual Education Plan (IEP). Only teachers and administrators have access to this document; they can make ongoing notations regarding how much assistance the students need.

Opportunities for College-bound Students: The school offers college courses to more advanced students through Marion Technical College. Students are encouraged to take a summer ACT Prep class offered free of charge through the Crawford College Connection. The school also offers Advanced Placement (AP) classes in math and science and students are encouraged to take AP exams. Teachers provide tutoring for ACT and AP exams.

Lesson 4: Engaging Parents and Community to Support Student Success

Community Meetings: The principal has begun outreach meetings at local restaurants to encourage greater parental and community input and involvement, especially as parent involvement has been one of the school's weakest aspects.

Parent Call Log: Teachers regularly make phone calls to parents about discipline and academic concerns and keep a record of all calls. The principal is making an effort to call parents with good news as well as with concerns.

"Progress Book" Software: The school is using Progress Book software and student grades are now available online, which has facilitated parent involvement.

Lesson 5: Creating a Culture Where Each Individual Feels Valued

Block Scheduling: Several years ago, Bucyrus High School moved to block scheduling, with class periods of 83 minutes. At a week-long staff retreat to prepare for implementation, teachers committed to making "meeting the needs of individual students" an institutional priority. They say block scheduling has resulted in the ability to cover subject matter more thoroughly, created a more relaxed pace, and provided opportunities to really get to know the students. It also has facilitated movement between Essential and College Prep (CP) programs.

Intervention Classes: The school offers half-hour intervention classes for students during lunchtime. From September through March, students who have not yet passed the OGT are required to participate in these classes and all students who need assistance are encouraged to participate. Teachers also are available before and after school to work one-on-one with students. After-school intervention classes are provided for athletes, those with a high number of absences, and others who need to improve their performance.

Challenges

Many parents in the district work on the night shift and there are also students living with grandparents and other relatives. Consequently, many students were viewed as not having a great deal of support at home. Additionally, many parents did not have good experiences with school when they were children so they may have negative feelings associated with any school contact.

While inclusion has been successful in some subject areas, particularly Reading/Language Arts, results have been more mixed in other areas, mainly when the staff was not completely comfortable working as a team, coupled with a loss of two special education teachers. The principal plans to use the Reading/Language Arts team as a model and hire additional staff with special education backgrounds.