

William C. Bryant Elementary School

Superintendent Barbara Byrd-Bennett

Principal Kathy Sauchak

Case Study Report Highlights: William C. Bryant Elementary School

PROVIDING LEADERSHIP THAT RESULTS IN CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

- **Strong and Experienced Leadership** - The principal has been at the school 10 years and has successfully put into place a number of practices that encourage strong parent involvement. For example, she calls 10-12 parents on the telephone daily and requires parents to pick up report cards. She is well liked by teachers and parents who appreciate her collaborative approach and ongoing efforts to make the school effective.
- **Family Atmosphere** - The school is smaller than most in Cleveland and has many activities for children. The principal knows and is able to address by name all parents and students.
- **Collaborative Teachers** - The teachers plan together at the beginning of the year and then at monthly follow-up sessions. Two second-grade teachers share a position and the third-grade teachers team-teach. The principal visits classes daily and has monthly meetings with teachers by grade level to review student data and determine interventions for students needing improvement.

CREATING A CULTURE WHERE EACH INDIVIDUAL FEELS VALUED

- **Committed Teachers** - Teachers are committed to helping students progress. They volunteer to tutor students before and after school and make an effort to take into consideration non-academic issues.
- **Efforts to Involve All Students** - The school has a preschool program that serves disabled children, ages 3-5. These students can transition into first grade through the school's integrated kindergarten. Tutoring is offered to all students whose assessment scores are below grade level.
- **High Expectations** - Teachers regularly communicate the expectation that students can achieve and be successful.
- **Strong Discipline** - The schoolwide behavior management plan has specific consequences in which students lose privileges based on the number of incidents within a week. Children with serious behavioral problems carry a passport in which their status is documented throughout the day.

DESIGNING INSTRUCTION TO ENSURE EVERY STUDENT'S SUCCESS

- **Research-based Program Influence** - William C. Bryant's Academic Achievement Plan has been influenced by the school's involvement in the *Institute for Learning's Principles for Learning* (Lauren Resnic's research at the University of Pittsburgh) <http://www.instituteforlearning.org/about.html> which includes high expectations for students and a strong partnership with families.
- **Reading Program** - The district is implementing the new *Cleveland Literacy System* which includes the development of high quality center-based activity modules in conjunction with Harcourt's Trophies series.
- **Assessment** - The kindergarten teachers review students' basic skills quarterly. All other teachers test frequently and each grade level group meets with the principal monthly to discuss students' results and needed interventions.
- **Use of Tutors** - The principal was able to use extended-day funds to continue in-school tutoring of at-risk students this year. In addition, nine teachers volunteered their time to tutor before and after school.
- **Intervention** - The school's Intervention-Based Assessment (IBA) team, which includes special education teachers, regular teachers, psychologist and parents, meets weekly and reviews non-progressing students. The team first recommends appropriate interventions before referral for special education testing.
- **Incentives** - The school receives "lunchroom" treats based on the number of consecutive days of attendance during specified periods. Teachers use various rewards to encourage good performance and behavior.

PROVIDING RIGOROUS INSTRUCTION ALIGNED TO STANDARDS

- **Attention to Standards** - District pacing charts as well as extensive professional development have helped the teachers understand and apply the standards. Staff took part in *Institute for Learning* workshops in 2003-2004.

ENGAGING PARENTS AND COMMUNITY TO SUPPORT STUDENT SUCCESS

- **Parent Involvement** - William C. Bryant has remarkably strong parent involvement. Years ago, staff adopted the model provided by Joyce Epstein at the Center on School, Family, and Community Partnerships <http://drdc.uchicago.edu/offhm/index.html?http://www.csos.jhu.edu/p2000/center.htm>, which specifies that parents are expected to send their children to school as well prepared as possible. In addition, every year each student, parent, and the teacher signs the school's *Our Commitment for Success* which outlines expectations for academics, attendance and homework. The school has a wide range of activities, including charitable events, designed to foster the "home-school connection" and produce "well-rounded" children.

INTRODUCTION

The Cleveland Municipal School District (CMSD) had 124 schools in the 2004-2005 school year and has the largest enrollment (62,542) of any district in the state. As of the end of the 2004-2005 school year, the district is facing a \$36 million operating deficit. In the past two years, the district has laid off nearly 1,400 teachers and permanently closed 11 schools. Since the district failed to pass levies in fall 2004 and August 2005 it is likely that continued cuts are inevitable.¹ (The last levy to pass in Cleveland was in 1996.) In addition to these financial worries, over 50 elementary schools have been scheduled for expansion from elementary to K-8.

| Cleveland Municipal School District Profile | | |
|--|---|---|
| | 2003-2004 | 2004-2005 |
| District Rating | Academic Watch (4 out of 22 indicators met) | Academic Emergency (2 out of 23 indicators met) |
| District Enrollment | 66,532 | 62,542 |
| Schools | Elementary Schools: 87 Middle Schools: 19 High Schools: 21 | Elementary Schools: 85 Middle Schools: 19 High Schools: 20 |

| William C. Bryant Elementary School Profile | | |
|--|--|--|
| | 2003-2004 | 2004-2005 |
| School Rating | Effective (5 out of 7 indicators met) | Effective (7 out of 9 indicators met) |
| Enrollment | 366 | 358 |
| Grade Levels | K-5 | K-5 |
| Average Expenditure per Pupil | \$7,877 | NA |
| Low-Income percentage | 69.5%* | 100% |
| Percent racial/ethnic minority | 17.0% | 20.8% |
| Students with Disabilities | 14.1% | 15.7% |
| Student Attendance Rate | 99.1% | 98.8% |

*The percentage as reported in the CCIP system

William C. Bryant Elementary is located south of downtown Cleveland, in the “Old Brooklyn” neighborhood. There are nearly 50,000 people living in the school’s zip code. The majority, (78 percent) is white, 7 percent is African-American, and 20 percent is Hispanic. Nearly a quarter of families (23 percent) with children below age 18 live in poverty. Almost 70 percent of students attending William C. Bryant are classified as economically disadvantaged.

Five teachers were laid off from William C. Bryant at the beginning of the school year and three more were scheduled for layoffs beginning in June 2005. The layoffs especially impacted the younger staff. Remaining teachers described some of those that got laid off as being particularly effective teachers who worked well with others in the building. The loss is disruptive for all staff, students and parents. The school has had to make some changes as a result of the layoffs and funding cuts. Tutoring of disadvantaged students and support of technology (most of William C. Bryant’s classroom computers were inoperable) are areas notably affected.

¹Okoben, Janet. “Byrd-Bennett a victim of plummeting image” in Cleveland Plain Dealer (August 06, 2005).



| W.C. Bryant Elementary School Teacher Profile | | |
|---|-----------------|-----------------|
| | 2003-04 | 2004-05 |
| Teachers | 23 | 17 |
| Average Teacher Salary | \$51,673 | \$56,359 |
| Percent of Courses Taught by Certified Licensed Teachers | 98.7% | 98.7% |
| Teacher Attendance Rate | 91.7% | 88.7% |
| Average Years of Experience | 12 | 14 |

Prior to the 2004-2005 school year, for example, the school had two staff members with the title of “developer,” who served as building coaches in English/Language Arts and math. The developers went into classrooms and helped support the regular teachers. They also participated in additional training from which they shared information and demonstrated best practices at the school’s monthly meetings. The principal asked both developers to move into teaching positions that were lost as a result of the layoffs. However, with the reassignment of the developers, the school has lost an important source of supplementary classroom support. In addition, the school was considered for closing, as it is one of the smaller and older schools in the district. William C. Bryant was eventually included among the schools that will begin serving students through grade 8. In the 2005-2006 school year, it will add grades 6-8 to its current PreK-5 student body.

The superintendent resigned within days of the latest levy defeat and says she will not seek a new contract when hers expires the end of September 2005. She has agreed to stay in the position until a replacement is found. In addition to financial problems, the district is directed by a mayor-appointed board making it imperative that the new superintendent be able to work well with the mayor’s office.² Cleveland schools, including William C. Bryant, are facing substantial stress and uncertainty, especially as additional budget cuts are expected.

SCHOOLS OF PROMISE AND THE CASE STUDY RESEARCH PROCESS

William C. Bryant was first recognized as a *School of Promise* in reading in 2003-2004 and it maintained this status in 2004-2005. Fourth-grade students improved dramatically on the fourth-grade reading proficiency test between 2002-2003 and 2003-2004. They increased from a 67.7 percent to 84.8 percent proficiency level, realizing a 17 percentage point gain in reading in one year. Third-grade students also did well on the new 2003-2004 reading achievement test (89.4 percent passed). In 2004-2005, all groups tested (grades third, fourth and fifth) exceeded a 75 percent pass rate in reading, and William C. Bryant once again was a *School of Promise* based on students’ reading performance.

The school met the state minimum of 75 percent passing in math on the fourth-grade proficiency in both 2003-2004 and 2004-2005. Only 73 percent of white students passed in 2003-2004, however, and the school fell short in several categories in 2004-2005, so W.C. Bryant did not meet *Schools of Promise* requirements for subgroups in math. All groups of students did well on the third-grade math achievement test (85.4 percent passed overall), but since the school did

²Okoben, Janet. “Campbell, board’s Hopkins reach agreement to find new schools CEO” in Cleveland Plain Dealer (August 09, 2005).

not meet the *Schools of Promise* criteria for fourth grade, the school could not be recognized for its math achievement.

W.C. Bryant Elementary School: Case Study Research Coverage*

| | TOTAL | Interviewed | | Observed | | Returned Survey | |
|-------------------------------------|-------|-------------|------|----------|------|-----------------|------|
| | N | N | N | N | % | N | % |
| Teachers | | | | | | | |
| Pre-K – Grade 5 | 15 | 14 | 93.3 | 13 | 86.7 | 14 | 93.3 |
| Other Interviews and Surveys | | | | | | | |
| Principal | | 1 | | | | | |
| Parents | | 4 | | | | | |
| Students (Two Focus Groups) | | 11 | | | | | |
| Other Interviews | | | | | | | |
| Special Education | | 2 | | | | | |
| Occupational Therapist | | 1 | | | | | |
| Other Observations | | | | | | | |
| Music Assembly | | 1 | | | | | |
| TOTAL INTERVIEWS | | 33 | | | | | |
| TOTAL TEACHERS OBSERVED | | 13 | | | | | |
| TOTAL TEACHER SURVEYS | | 14 | | | | | |

*A scheduling conflict prevented observation of one interviewed teacher. Another teacher chose not to participate in the case study process.

W.C. Bryant Elementary is one of four elementary schools randomly selected by Institutional Research Consultants (IRC) from the 68 elementary schools identified among the 2003-2004 *Schools of Promise*. The focus in this case study is the school’s reading program, but the research team also observed math classes and asked teachers about their math instruction. During the two-day case study visit, the researchers observed 13 and succeeded in interviewing 14 of the 15 PreK-5 teachers. The team also interviewed the principal, two special education teachers and the occupational therapist. In addition, researchers conducted two single-sex focus groups with students, six males and five females. Finally, the team completed interviews with four parents. A total of 33 people were interviewed, 13 teachers were observed and 14 teachers completed the case study survey. The table above outlines all research activities.

This report is organized using the “Five Lessons Learned” identified in earlier *Schools of Promise* case study research.³ These lessons emphasize the importance of instituting strong leadership, establishing a school culture that values individual students, designing instruction to ensure student success, providing rigorous instruction aligned with the standards, and engaging parents and the community to support student success. W. C. Bryant Elementary has evidence of many of these components. This report describes the school’s ongoing efforts to prepare students to do well in reading and math while facing increasing challenges resulting from the district’s budget crisis.

³The *Five Lessons Learned* emerged from the case study research conducted by the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) in 2001-2002 (see http://www.ode.state.oh.us/achievement_gaps/Schools_of_Promise/5lessons.asp). There is also evidence of the use of practices that corresponds to the Framework of Practice that ties the *Five Lessons* to research on effective schools (see http://www.ode.state.oh.us/achievement_gaps/schools_of_promise/FOP.asp).

PROVIDING LEADERSHIP THAT RESULTS IN CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Kathy Sauchak has been principal of William C. Bryant Elementary for the past 10 years. She has done much to establish a good building environment conducive to learning. Teachers spoke glowingly of her efforts to involve parents, acknowledge students and be fair to the instructional staff. Comments from the principal and teachers emphasized their view that the school is effective because of the commitment and collaboration among the principal, teachers and parents. It is clear that Sauchak has been pivotal in setting the tone of the school, especially with the expectation that all parents be involved. She makes about 10-12 telephone calls to parents each day and expects them to be on-site twice a year to pick up report cards. She visits classrooms daily, meets with teachers monthly to review data on students and specifically asks teachers how they intend to improve students' performance. Comments from teachers include:

The dedication of our principal ... she works hard and she makes sure everything is ship shape around here. ... The kids know she knows them, she knows their family and she's been in contact with them. That knowledge for them makes such a difference. They internalize that ... it's probably a pretty big thing. She's here early in the morning and late in the afternoon. She's always in the cafeteria with the kids. She plays little games if they can't go outside. She'll call them up to the microphone [during lunch] to say a joke. She told me other principals told her not to deal with the cafeteria, but she said that's where you get to know the kids.

The principal is incredible to work for. She knows every teacher, every parent and every student. She keeps everybody together. She has high expectations for the teachers and the students. I think the principal makes or breaks the school – what they put value on. Value here is on discipline and excellence. She doesn't expect less than what they can do. She always wants them challenged.

She runs a tight ship with heart.

The teachers emphasized the work the principal does for the building, especially in terms of strengthening the "home-school connection" and making the building feel like a community. Through her high energy and upbeat attitude, staff is encouraged to be similarly involved and supportive of the school. When teachers and parents talked about other schools, they noted how much more they enjoyed working at William C. Bryant compared to other schools in the district. They described the overall school environment as responsive, caring and "kid-friendly."

Family-like School Environment

Staff accentuated how much they like the "family atmosphere" at William C. Bryant, explaining that the smaller size and older building contributed to the "close-knit" feeling. One teacher highlighted the school's focus on children:

There's a really nice climate in this building. When you come in, it looks like a happy place to be. It's an interesting old school, it just has character and there are just things everywhere that say, "Children work and live here." There are a lot of things for them to have fun with. Programs are brought in for special times, there are activities for the kids and we have playground equipment.

Staff members described a school culture in which the principal, teachers, students and parents are all supportive of one another. The principal further explained that the history of parent involvement at the school stems from when it was a Parent/Teacher Co-op magnet. School staff use the model from the Center on School, Family, and Community Partnerships

<http://drdc.uchicago.edu/offhm/index.html?http://www.csos.jhu.edu/p2000/center.htm>. Central to this approach is that good parent involvement means parents send their children to school as well prepared as possible, including being clean, rested and well fed. The most important factor is that parents be able to communicate with the school. Staff regularly talk to parents or send them written notes. Parents stressed the importance of such communication:

They never had the attitude that we don't have time. There's always some form of communication going on. The teachers really know their students and they really know the parents. They are always outside after school. They're approachable. They pretty much have an open door policy. (Parents of a fourth-grader)

The principal described a critical component of the school that encourages parent participation:

Our Commitment for Success is signed every year by the student, by the parent and by the teacher. It deals with academics, attendance and homework. Our parents have really taken to it. There are some parents who come in and volunteer religiously. But I tell you if I call a parent, they call me back. If I call with a concern, they come in. When you need them, they come in. They do the kind of things parents are supposed to do.

Parent involvement at William C. Bryant surpassed that of all other case-study schools. In addition, the school has monthly workshops in which teachers provide specific instruction on how parents can help their children with homework. The school also has numerous "fun" activities such as community fund-raisers, art shows and crafts activities that involve both parents and children. These are discussed in greater detail in the *Engaging Parents and Community to Support Student Success* section toward the end of this report.

Collaborative Working Relationships

The principal explained she no longer has much input into the hiring process (given the district's financial situation), as any additional teachers coming in would be transfers based on seniority. William C. Bryant's teachers averaged 14 years of experience and more than half (54 percent) had been with the school at least six years. There was only one new teacher in the 2004-2005 school year, and she was transferred from another school in the district. The principal and teachers indicated they have a collaborative relationship based on respect and common sense. The teachers regularly share and learn from each other. At the beginning of the school year, all teachers meet and plan together.

The school follows the initial meeting with monthly staff meetings at which time is often designated for grade-level group discussions. This facilitates discussion of information impacting their specific grades at appropriate times during the session. Every other school meeting includes time for professional development. In prior years, the developers led professional development activities, but beginning in 2004-2005, since the school no longer has developers, all teachers were asked to voluntarily present and share information that could be helpful to their colleagues. Teachers in each grade level also meet with the principal as a group every month. The focus of these sessions is on reviewing assessment data and determining specific strategies that teachers can use to address weaknesses of individual students.

The principal's management style is collaborative. She views the teachers as being able to learn from each other in conjunction with professional development. Thus, she strives to listen to the staff and give them as much freedom as possible to do what they think will work best with the children in their classrooms. Teachers stressed their willingness to share and have made efforts

to integrate subjects such as reading and science. For example, one pointed out, “There’s a lot of exchange of ideas. There’s no problem of someone going to someone else and asking how they did it or watching them do it.” Another confirmed teachers’ comfort about expressing their honest opinions with the principal:

There is no hierarchy. I’m not afraid to go down there and say, ‘I totally disagree.’ You discuss what’s going on. She sets the tone and she came into this building when it was strong. She kind of adapted her ways to this building because it worked and we’d been doing it for so long. Then eventually, she integrated her own ideas. The building wouldn’t survive if you didn’t have a strong leader and she’s a strong leader. She’s innovative. If you want to try something new, she’s totally supportive. I think that she gives all teachers freedom in curriculum decisions.

Third-grade teachers team and plan together a couple of times each week. Two of the second-grade teachers share a single position, one works in the morning and the other in the afternoon.

CREATING A CULTURE WHERE EACH INDIVIDUAL FEELS VALUED

Staff emphasized that what makes the school work is the way the principal, teachers and parents work together in the interests of children. The principal explained she strives to place children with teachers who will be a good match with each child’s needs. Staff tries to make it a good learning environment as well as a fun and safe place. They incorporate fun activities into the school day but are clear that school is serious business in which students are expected to complete their assignments and follow the rules. The parents also play a key role by being involved and responsible. The principal stressed, “The teachers know the kids and they care for the kids. It’s a culture where everybody meshes together very well.”

Staff Committed to Students

Teachers’ commitment to students is evidenced through their volunteering to tutor students beyond the regular school day and helping parents understand ways they can help their children achieve. Comments from teachers included:

Teachers care. It’s not a 9-5 job. We tutor in the morning or after school.

The staff goes above and beyond. I’ve never seen anything like that in the two other schools where I’ve been. They give everything they can and more, as does the principal. They don’t just address one area. It’s not just academics. It’s compassionate – what do they need, what is their home life like, what can we do to make it better for this child? That whole attitude is what makes this such a wonderful school. The teachers are probably the one factor for success. The extra hours they put in, the planning they do.

The staff is willing to go beyond academics, including taking into consideration students’ home life and other possible variables in their efforts to help students progress.

Specific Efforts to Address Needs of All Students

William C. Bryant houses a preschool that serves disabled 3-5 year olds who are bused from their home or day care to the school. The school also has an integrated kindergarten in which children who went through the preschool program are transitioned into kindergarten. Children in grades 1-5 who are identified as needing additional assistance based on their assessment scores are provided with tutoring.

High Expectations

William C. Bryant was heavily involved in the *Institute for Learning* (Lauren Resnic's research at the University of Pittsburgh) <http://www.instituteforlearning.org/about.html> in 2003-2004,⁴ which was a districtwide initiative. This program includes high standards for students:

- Organizing for Effort - I will keep trying until I understand.
- Clear Expectations - I know and understand what is expected of me.
- Fair and Credible Evaluations - I know what I need to study. I will be expected to share what I learned in my classroom.
- Recognition and Accomplishment - When I work hard my teacher praises me and celebrates my efforts.
- Academic Rigor in a Thinking Curriculum - I challenge myself to be a risk taker and problem solver. I am encouraged to be reflective about my learning strategies.
- Accountable Talk - I should be able to explain what I know to others.
- Socializing Intelligence - It is my job to get information, ask questions, explore solutions and solve problems.
- Self-Management of Learning - I am responsible to think about my own thinking.
- Learning as Apprenticeship - I get support and encouragement from my teacher to see and analyze my thinking.

In addition to these principles, at the forefront of William C. Bryant's philosophy is that student learning is a joint effort between home and school. Staff members are continuing to utilize and apply these principles in their work with students and families.

Teachers make students well aware of their expectations for them. One teacher begins the school year referring to children in her classroom as "her college-bound students." Children who score high on their report card are recognized with the following designations: First Honors (Grade A), Second Honors (Grade A-), and Merit Goal (Grade B). Students who reach these categories have their names posted in the hallways. Teachers gave some examples of how they instill high expectations and encourage students to push themselves:

I instantly felt that when I came to work here everybody wanted to get each child to where they could be in every area – to bring them to where they should be, to where their potential is.

The first thing is that if they give me work that I don't think is good enough, I give it back. I tell them I know they can do better I pull things out of fifth-grade books, and tell them this is a fifth-grade activity. It seems like they try harder. Sometimes they can accomplish things that are at a higher level because I told them that it was and that they could do it if they tried. That's how I do it, I trick them into it. You try to make it a challenge. I'll give them reinforcements like stamps. If they don't get it right, they go back and keep trying until they get it right. They don't give up – that's not allowed.

Teachers also explained they want students to learn to "think more deeply" and learn to expand their responses such that their work is more "polished" and "detailed." They want them to appreciate the importance of study skills and taking responsibility. They see these traits as applicable for college preparation or whatever a child may pursue in the future.

⁴ The Institute for Learning was founded in 1995 as a partnership of school districts committed to standards-based education and systemwide reform. Staff participates in professional development that prepares them to apply nine principles of learning in their instruction <http://www.chlive.org/rpreisano/Principles%20of%20Learning.htm>.

Strong Discipline

The school has a behavior management program. The specific consequences vary for each teacher but all classes have consequences for misbehavior. One first-grade teacher described how it works in her class:

Our behavior plan is very simple and it works. Coming from other schools, I'm amazed. Misbehaving students get their name put on the board for a week. They are not allowed to pick from the treasure box on Friday. If check marks get added, they are taken out of Friday Fun which is where we have little sporadic things, like we'll play hot potato for a few minutes or maybe they get to have something fun. If they have a check mark, they have to sit out. If you follow through with it, it works real well.

Students also get their names put on the board for not submitting homework. Teachers view that as the students' responsibility. Children are not allowed to go out at lunch if their name is on the board. All teachers, special education teachers and lunch ladies help enforce the rules during lunchtime so everyone is consistent.

A few students with substantial behavioral issues have a passport they carry with them throughout the day that allows multiple teachers to track their behavior. Teachers document their status at specific points during the day. For example, for one special education student in the morning, if she receives a frowning face stamp on her passport in the morning, she has to eat lunch in the principal's office. If she has one in the afternoon, she has to eat breakfast in the office. Families are very supportive and numerous interventions are provided to these children. The school has an on-site counselor and some children receive additional counseling from the Children's Home.

Teachers described the children overall as well behaved with supportive families. One teacher noted, "They have a respect for the classroom, the community and this school. I have minimal behavior problems that interfere with instruction." Teachers said they rarely send students to the office, but they do have a buzzer to call the office if needed. They write notes or call parents to discuss any behavioral problems. Parents come in to discuss the issue, and often a team of teachers will be involved in the conferences.

DESIGNING INSTRUCTION TO ENSURE EVERY STUDENT'S SUCCESS

All district schools have an Academic Achievement Plan. William C. Bryant's has three goals focusing on academics, parent involvement and special education. The main academic goal is that staff wants at least 75 percent of students to pass the Ohio Achievement Tests and Ohio Proficiency Test. Teachers also emphasized the importance of literacy, math skills, discipline, cooperation, respect and independence in describing their goals for their students. During 2003-2004, staff participated in extensive professional development and made efforts to introduce the *Principles of Learning* into their classrooms. They view this program as having had a huge influence on the school's overall approach to instruction. One kindergarten teacher elaborated on how this program impacts her classroom interaction:

We're learning how to use higher-level thinking in our classrooms. We are supposed to do *accountable* talk. When I read a story in my classroom, I have them discuss and share. We say do you agree or disagree, and then they add on things. They really like doing that.

It is of note that the school had a completely different structure when it first met the *Schools of*

Promise requirements in 2003-2004. The school had smaller class sizes, as it had more teaching staff prior to district budget cuts and additional classroom support was provided by the two developers. Even though the school is facing many changes and obstacles, teachers seem to be doing their best to do what they know works with their students. This section describes some of the changes taking place in the district, classroom activities by grade and the school's efforts to address special needs. It is reassuring that William C. Bryant was able to maintain its distinction as a *School of Promise* in 2004-2005 despite all of the district challenges.

Districtwide Changes to Reading Program

The district has made numerous efforts to strengthen its reading program in the past few years, including introducing a 90-minute literacy block. All district elementary schools, including William C. Bryant, were undergoing a major revision of their reading programs during the 2004-2005 school year. As part of the districtwide implementation of the *Cleveland Literacy System*, all elementary schools are making the transition to Harcourt's Trophies Series www.harcourtschool.com/menus/preview/trophies/preview.html, a new basal reader that includes additional intervention activities. The school had been using Harcourt's Signatures series, but Trophies is being phased in districtwide. This is the last year for Signatures for the upper elementary grades. The Trophies Series is Harcourt's most recent reading series for grades K-6. Most classes received new books over a year ago, but each grade is on a different implementation schedule. The district provided three days of grade-level specific professional development on the new series in summer 2004 and will have ongoing in-service sessions as additional grades begin using the new series.

The district is also developing supplementary modules to complement the Trophies series. Entitled the *Cleveland Literacy System*, the new program is center-based and is designed for the 90-minute reading block. In 2004-2005, the district introduced the program to the third grade and provided after-school training to teachers on how to use the new modules. The district plans to expand the modules to other grades; grades 2 and 4 are scheduled for 2005-2006.

The new modules include a variety of materials such as ideas for centers in social studies, science and work on words. There is additional emphasis on spelling and writing. Students are given opportunities to be more active participants in their learning through pair reading, acting out their reading and grading their own papers using a rubric. The principal explained that the *Cleveland Literacy System* is the district's effort "to combine the best of the best." She and a leadership team have been trained on how to use the modules, which include benchmarks and units aligned with the standards. Although William C. Bryant teachers are using the new materials, they are using additional resources they know are successful. The principal is supportive of staff continuing to have flexibility and freedom to use familiar material in their work with students.

There seemed to be a bit of confusion about the extent to which the modules are supposed to be used in conjunction with the Trophies Series, as one third-grade teacher appeared to have the impression the modules were to replace the textbook and used them in that way. In addition, the modules are still being developed and there have been delays in dissemination to schools. One third-grade teacher said she had not received a module since just after Christmas break. When William C. Bryant did not receive the modules needed, staff made the decision to return to resources they had used in the prior year. The other major problem is that teachers have to plan and establish all the centers. One teacher noted, "Once they're made, they're made, but it's hard the first year to make the centers."

The major benefit of the districtwide reading program is that all students will be exposed to the same materials which will make it easier for students and teachers who transfer within the

system. Teachers also noted the modules received to date have been high quality with more activities than they could possibly do in the time period specified. Finally, the district is developing accompanying tests that are aligned with the standards in a format consistent with the Ohio Achievement Tests.

Kindergarten

The school has three kindergarten classes. Two are regular classes and one is an integrated class that includes kindergarten students and students who attended the Preschool Child with Disabilities class. The kindergarten classes began using the Trophies Series in February 2005. Teachers indicated they liked the new series, especially how it includes more on decoding words, word building and phonemic activities at a much earlier point than the Signatures series. Teachers also have decodable books they read with the children and “popcorn” (high frequency) words. Kindergarten teachers have their students look for these words in the morning message and in the book. Although the kindergarten teachers do not do a lot of collaborative work, they do try to coordinate. They acknowledged they view reading and language arts as their most important priority. Some teachers participated in professional development a few years ago in Four-Blocks www.four-blocks.com (Building Blocks in kindergarten) and continue to use this approach in their reading instruction.

Teachers talked about how expectations for the kindergarten children had increased in recent years. They described how students were being required to do more, especially with respect to reading and writing. They elaborated on some of their activities, including the fact that kindergarten students are expected to do quite a bit of work at home:

In the beginning of the year, one student could read, and nobody else could. It was a little scary because many of my children have siblings in older grades. And years ago, we did not expect as much. The mothers were surprised at what we were expecting. We did writing in upper and lower case in the first weeks of the year. They're doing very well. They know where to write [teacher gives them lined writing paper and the students are generally able to write in the correct spaces]. Most of the students are reading phonetic material. They're writing nicely and can read popcorn books (sight words). I have 50 short-vowel cards that I make for each of them. They take those home to practice.

We have to spend a lot of time on sounds and blending and any kind of activities, even writing, to help build that. I do so much more writing than I did in years past. It used to be if they could write their letters and write their names that was enough. I feel like we push sometimes too hard for some kids, but it is amazing how much they can do. It also helps if you had the right kind of start at home before you got here. I can tell you the difference between this school and the other schools. They didn't have that start in the other school. I have quite a few that are reading. We really send a lot of stuff home. Kindergarten does homework. We send home a decodable book every week--these are books that stay home. They are supposed to keep these things at home and practice reading them. They go along with our reading series, Trophies.

In one kindergarten classroom, students rotate through four literacy centers every morning, including ABCs, listening/language, writing and manipulatives (puzzles and other related activities). The teacher also does word-building exercises for the first 10 minutes at the manipulatives center. They rotate to a different center each day. The children are given “free choice” on Friday to choose their preferred center, which, according to the teacher, helps them learn to make decisions. In the afternoon, the students participate in math, science and art

centers. Teachers do a lot of heterogeneous grouping, especially in kindergarten, as they feel that the better achieving students can help the slower children.

For two mornings a week and one afternoon, one kindergarten class has two parent volunteers (each comes on a different day) who help the children with various activities. The volunteers help ensure students are doing things correctly or do group activities with the children such as play vowel or alphabet games. Having an extra adult in the room also enables the teacher to focus on children who need additional one-on-one assistance.

First Grade

The first-grade teachers are still using the Signatures series but will transition to Trophies in the 2005-2006 school year. The first grade received the Trophies books, which includes leveled readers, about two years ago, but they have been using the new text as a supplemental resource. The new books were distributed before first grade was scheduled to begin implementation of the new reading program, as the district has been trying to increase the number of books available in classrooms. Nonetheless, one of the first-grade teachers noted that about 85 percent of the books in her room continue to be from her personal collection, including most of the leveled readers.

This teacher highlighted some of her typical class activities and reiterated how the principal gives teachers a great deal of leeway in how they manage their instruction:

I do a lot of whole class things. I teach phonics and grammar through poetry. [The principal] has given me a lot of freedom. I basically use the basal as the supplementary. I take the vocabulary I need, introduce that, we do read-alouds, we do choral reading, we discuss story procedures with the book, but they have so much more reading material in this room. They have their reading baskets, they have their reading bags, and I use leveled readers when I pull my groups out. My groups are not homogeneous; they have high, middle and low. But if we're working on the carpet during rotations, they're all reading different books but on the same topic.

During the observation, the teacher demonstrated a strong emphasis on phonics, fluency and comprehension.

One of the second-grade teachers noted how well prepared the students are as a result of their first-grade experience:

The teacher I worked with in first grade is an absolutely phenomenal reading teacher. She teaches those skills early and the children catch on to the way she teaches. They are very successful at first grade which gives them a great basis for learning in the other grades.

First-graders are also given specific classroom jobs to encourage them to take responsibility and care about their classroom.

Second-grade Reading

The second grade also is continuing to use the Signatures series this year. One teacher emphasized that she thinks its literature coverage is "terrific." Based on other teachers' comments, it is likely that when the second grade makes the move to the new series they will continue to use parts of the existing text they find useful. The second-graders are expected to read a book nightly. Parents and teachers take homework seriously; children are sanctioned if

they fail to do assigned tasks. Teachers are also doing a lot more to encourage students to write. One interviewee elaborated, "Writing is more challenging because even a strong reader is sometimes reluctant as a writer. We do a lot with writing a paragraph at first and do that over and over and over again to get them familiar with the process before we move on to bigger writing pieces." One of the second-grade classes is taught by two teachers who share a job position. The other second-grade class is taught by a long-term substitute teacher, as the regular teacher is on maternity leave.

Third-grade Reading

The two third-grade teachers team-teach and coordinate their activities so that all third-grade students have the same educational experiences. The third-grade classes are also relatively small with only about 20 students in each.

The third-grade teachers expressed some frustration about district communication regarding implementation of its new reading program, the *Cleveland Literacy System*. Regardless, teachers are doing their best to introduce the modules, and one described how she is using the program:

It all revolved around working in groups with the children at centers. There would be a warm-up, vocabulary, a little bit of writing. They were all scripted in big packets. We had a big binder and they would send us the lessons. They left it up to us as to how to do it, but they gave us suggestions on how to do it. I had a student teacher, so it worked out very well because she was able to work with the groups in the centers while I had my small reading group up front. We switched roles near the end.

The third-grade teachers produce a newsletter every week that includes homework assignments, the story the class is reading and spelling words. This is helpful to students and parents.

Fourth and Fifth Grades

The fourth grade began using Trophies this year and the teachers are pleased with the additional activities and materials. They especially liked the way skill tests are incorporated into the book. The fifth grade continued to use Signatures this year. Both the fourth- and fifth-grade teachers were comfortable using additional materials. For example, one fifth-grade teacher spent most of the spring using a supplemental series called T-Rex. She said that her class enjoys learning about dinosaurs and they make dioramas at the end of the first book.

Small Groups

Students often work in pairs or small cooperative groups. Much of the day's activity, especially in kindergarten and grade 1, is organized around centers where small groups participate at one center at a time. One first-grade teacher noted that the only time her students actually worked on their own is when they are assessed and occasionally in writing.

Students' reading levels frequently determine their group assignment. For example, one of the second-grade teachers separates the students into three groups of approximately equal size in which there is one above-level, one at-level, and one below-level. In other situations, teachers pair a higher achieving student with a lower one, but the groups are switched often. As students get older, teachers are much more likely to pair students such that ability differences would not likely be obvious. One teacher noted that using students to help is likely to become more pervasive as staffing and program cuts reduce adults available for tutoring or small-group work.

Some of the teachers have experience working with differentiated instruction and multiple intelligences, so they include variation in the activities in their efforts to meet students' varied needs. They adjust the group composition depending on what the class is working on. Some teachers will pull students into small groups for specific activities while the overall class is working on another task.

Assessment

Cleveland was one of 20 pilot districts statewide for the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment-Literacy test in fall 2004. Teachers evaluated students' skills prior to their entry into kindergarten and then monitored their progress. In 2005-2006, this assessment will be mandatory for all children in the state of Ohio. In kindergarten, teachers test quarterly using a checklist of basic skills (including demonstrating knowledge of all the letters, sounds and numbers). An insert that corresponds to the checklist is included in students' report cards.

Teachers of grades 1-3 test frequently, using the end-of-section tests in their books. Special teachers, such as the ESL teacher and the five special education teachers, test almost daily. Teachers have taught the upper elementary students how to use a rubric so they can grade themselves and each other's work. This helps the students better understand the grading process and what they need to do to improve.

Special Education

The school has five special education teachers. One covers the preschool program, one is in the integrated kindergarten, and three teachers have students in grades K-1, 2-3 and 4-5.

The school houses a half-day program for preschool children (ages 3–5) with a disability. The preschool is staffed by a teacher and an aide. An occupational therapist comes in once a week. Serving 3 to 5 year-olds with special needs is mandated by the federal government. Students who are referred for the program receive a full-scale assessment through the district. If they need only one service, such as speech, they could come as a neighborhood child and see the speech therapist in the building. They have to be at least age 3, but they do not have to be toilet trained or have any type of language skills. Children with cognitive, communication, social-emotional, adaptive behavior and speech and language deficits are eligible for the program. Many families with a child in the preschool program find out about it through *Child Find*, which is a community program that identifies children with special needs who are not in schools and provides information about available services to their families.

When students reach age 5, some move directly into kindergarten, but some continue an extra year with the "preschool" classification. At age 5, they are entitled to a full-year program. They can move into a full-time daycare or to an integrated kindergarten. There is one integrated kindergarten at William C. Bryant and eight children from the preschool are in that classroom. In the integrated kindergarten class, there is a regular teacher, a special education teacher, and an aide. This level of staffing allows for student needs to be met.

Students who are not progressing as expected are reviewed by an Intervention-Based Assessment (IBA) team, which includes special education teachers, regular teachers, psychologist and parents. The team may also consult with the occupational therapist, speech-language therapist or counselor if students exhibit needs in those areas. The team meets once a week in the morning before school and develops interventions to address the individual child's needs, which may be academic or behavioral. For example, if the student is having difficulty writing, the team would involve the occupational therapist who may have tips on pencil grips. If it is a behavioral issue, then the group will develop ways to address the child's specific issues. The objective is to eliminate the general response of "This child needs special ed." Classroom

intervention is tried before special education testing is done.

Special education students are in regular classes part of the day, but if they are in grades 1-5 and their Individual Education Plan (IEP) specifies instruction in a smaller class setting, they are pulled out for reading and math with one of the special education or Title I teachers. Although this provides an opportunity for increased individualized instruction, the extent to which these teachers worked effectively in small groups or one-on-one with the students during the pullout sessions varied widely. Teachers who sat with students and focused on specific tasks seemed to have greater student engagement than classes in which special education students were expected to work on their own at their desks. The coordination between the special education and regular education teachers is not as strong as it could be. For example, even though many of the activities are the same in both classes, the teachers work and plan independently.

ESL

Approximately three children in the school are pulled out for a 30-minute session once a week with a bilingual tutor. The tutor also provides assistance to students who need additional help in taking tests. The teachers feel their bilingual students are making progress, largely because they are surrounded by English speaking children who are constantly reinforcing their language skills.

Intervention

The school provides intervention to students who fall below the scaled scores. William C. Bryant previously had a *HOSTS* program in which at-risk students were pulled out one period a day for four days to work on reading and comprehension skills. The funding was supposed to end in March, but the principal was able to creatively use extended day funds. Beginning in January through early May, during the school day, the former *HOSTS* tutor worked with children who were falling slightly behind as measured by their performance in the school's regular assessments, or who were close to passing the proficiency in the prior year. A teacher stressed the benefit of this program: "Kids who made the most progress for reading went to the *HOSTS* program because they got that extra time, one-on-one, with somebody." Unfortunately, this type of extra tutoring is being cut districtwide and that likely will hurt students.

Teachers noted they use lots of interventions in the classroom to help students who are struggling, but tutoring has made a huge difference for at-risk students. The principal asked teachers to volunteer to tutor and nine teachers provided additional before- or after-school tutoring from December through March. The focus was on third and fourth grades, however, students in other grades were also included if there was a need. A high percentage of parents (nearly 90 percent) agreed to allow their children to participate in before- or after-school tutoring.

Incentives

The school introduced incentives in the past few years to encourage improved attendance. Students are rewarded with lunchroom treats such as chips, cookies and ice cream if classes have 100 percent attendance on specified days. Teachers give additional incentives to encourage good behavior. For example, one first-grade teacher has a "treasure box." If kids go all week without having their name on the board, they get to select a treat from the box on Friday. If there is no additional check mark beside their name, they get to participate in "Friday Fun," a short period of games.

Retention

The IBA review process must occur before a decision can be made to retain a child. Thus, the school attempts to identify the issue and possible intervention. The team uses a variety of factors in determining whether to retain a child or to suggest additional review for a possible

disability. The school begins the process of bringing in the parents to discuss the child's problems as early on as possible, which is usually by the end of January. Teachers pointed out that it is often a maturity issue and about half of their at-risk students are able to turn things around by the middle of the school year. The in-school and after-school tutoring also helps many students.

PROVIDING RIGOROUS INSTRUCTION ALIGNED TO STANDARDS

The district has provided extensive professional development on the standards and developed pacing charts for each grade and subject clearly showing the alignment of the district and state standards. The matrices include a timeframe for expected coverage of the benchmarks and some of the charts recommend chapters from specific textbooks used by the district. Teachers emphasized the pacing charts have been tremendously helpful in lesson planning. Several have done additional curriculum mapping to ensure they are meeting the benchmarks for each subject. One second-grade teacher described her use of the pacing charts and how she also introduces the standards to students, "To keep ourselves aware, we put them in our lesson plans to make sure we know what standards we're focused on. The children are aware of the objective-of-the-day. I don't know whether they would call it a standard or objective, but we say 'we're working to create fractions today or compare fractions.'"

Teachers said they systematically check to see they have covered the standards as they complete activities with students. They noted the district pushed the standards when they first came out and now attention to the standards is a given throughout the school. Teachers also explained how they are now using assessment to inform their instructional activities. They are better able to more specifically address students' weaknesses such as reading comprehension by analyzing the test data and identifying the students who are experiencing a specific difficulty.

The principal reviews students' progress on assessment tests and has monthly grade-level meetings to discuss the results with teachers. One third-grade teacher indicated they are focusing on preparation of the Ohio Achievement Test and that the principal, "will have all of the scores and will mark down the students and ask the following questions about intervention strategies: 'what will you do, how will you do it, and what will you tell parents?'" For all students that have shown weaknesses, the principal expects the teacher to detail an action plan for addressing those problems and include the parent in that discussion.

Professional Development

The school has monthly professional development meetings. Last year, the two developers in the building provided much of the staff development. In addition, as previously noted, the school was highly active in the *Institute for Learning*. This year, the school-based professional development has continued and has largely centered on the *Cleveland Literacy System*, the district's reading program. The professional development will help to ensure all classrooms are appropriately covering the standards and using the modules as intended.

Teachers said they have benefited from the district's ongoing grade-level professional development sessions. They especially commented on the usefulness of the workshops such as ones on the Building Blocks and Four-Blocks literacy framework, as well as using literature in kindergarten. Interviewees noted they think the district has expanded its in-service offerings since opening its Bratenahl Professional Development Center. They anticipate additional training will be provided to help schools transition to grades K-8.

Grants

The principal explained the school has had an ongoing relationship with the Cleveland

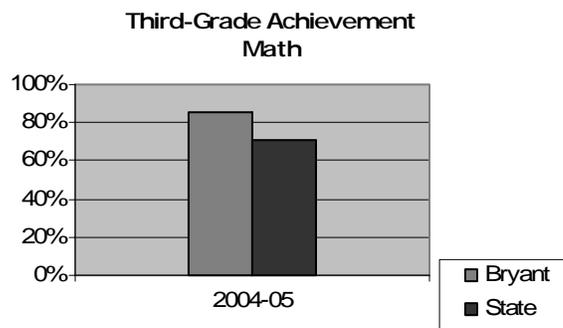
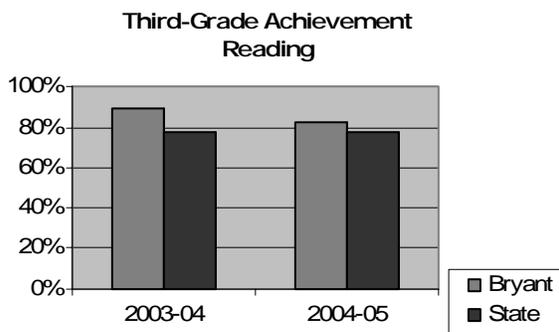
Orchestra for the past eight years and that MBNA funds their *Learning through Music* grant which is about \$4,000 per year. The purpose of the grant is to integrate music into the curriculum. Musicians come in to perform. In the beginning, the teachers helped write the curriculum that deals with various subject matter and music. Included in the grant are books, materials, CDs and musical instruments. Some teachers also have had success applying for small grants. One kindergarten teacher, for example, was awarded \$3,000 from MBNA for the purchase of the *Letter People* www.abramsandcompany.com/letterpeople_index.cfm for one classroom.

Student Performance

Teachers' increased attention to test results and standards have likely contributed to students' progress. More than 75 percent of all groups of students passed the state reading tests in grades 3 and 4 in 2003-2004, and in grades 3, 4 and 5 in 2004-2005, resulting in William C. Bryant's recognition as a *School of Promise* for two consecutive years. Students also did well on the state math tests, but fourth-grade subgroup scores (only 73 percent of white students passed in 2003-2004) prevented the school from meeting the *Schools of Promise* criteria in math.

W.C. Bryant Elementary School vs. Ohio⁵ Third-Grade Achievement Test Results

| | Reading | | Math | |
|-----------|-------------|-------|-------------|-------|
| | W.C. Bryant | State | W.C. Bryant | State |
| 2003-2004 | 89.4% | 78.2% | NA | NA |
| 2004-2005 | 82.9% | 77.3% | 85.4% | 70.4% |

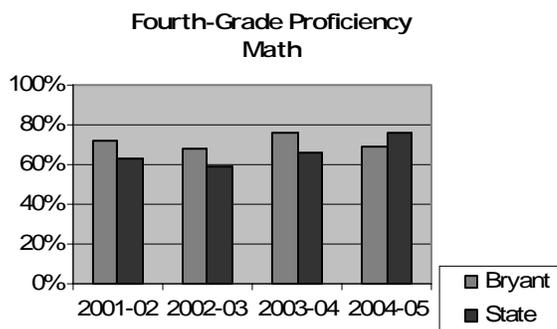
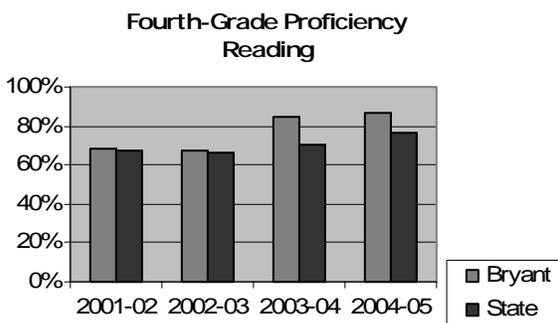


⁵ Data Source: School and State Report Cards.

Third-grade math students did well across the board in math; however, *Schools of Promise* guidelines require schools to meet the criteria for all state tests that its students take, so the school needed to satisfy the requirements for both third and fourth grades in order to achieve recognition in math. Nonetheless, achieving *Schools of Promise* recognition in math is within reach. With additional focused intervention, the school may be able to achieve this status in 2005-2006.

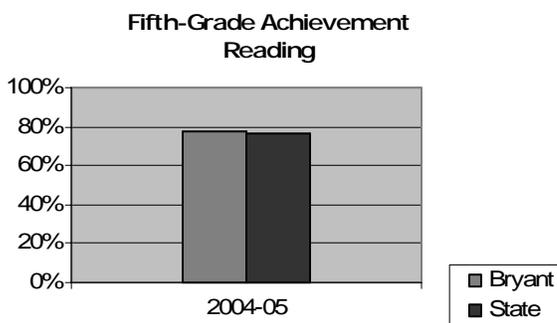
W.C. Bryant Elementary School vs. Ohio⁶ Fourth-Grade Proficiency/Achievement Test Results

| | Reading | | Math | |
|-----------|-------------|-------|-------------|-------|
| | W.C. Bryant | State | W.C. Bryant | State |
| 2001-2002 | 68.5% | 67.7% | 72.5% | 62.9% |
| 2002-2003 | 67.7% | 66.3% | 68.3% | 58.6% |
| 2003-2004 | 84.8% | 70.8% | 75.8% | 65.8% |
| 2004-2005 | 87.5% | 76.6% | 69.1% | 65.5% |



W.C. Bryant Elementary School vs. Ohio⁶ Fifth-Grade Achievement Test Results

| | Reading | |
|-----------|-------------|-------|
| | W.C. Bryant | State |
| 2004-2005 | 77.8% | 76.9% |



ENGAGING PARENTS AND COMMUNITY TO SUPPORT STUDENT SUCCESS

William C. Bryant has an exceptionally high level of parent involvement that goes beyond demographics or other family characteristics. Many of the parents went to this school as youngsters. The children are viewed as being better prepared than average, and though a lot of

⁶ Data Source: School and State Report Cards.

the families are not well off financially, most children are from intact two-parent households.

The school has almost 100 percent attendance at parent conferences and a highly active School Parent Organization (SPO). William C. Bryant has an open door policy – parents visit and volunteer daily. Parents volunteer in the classroom and lunchroom, help with field trips and manage the school's book fair. They send in treats such as pretzels, candy and stickers as well as office supplies for teachers to use. Staff members are pleased with parent involvement and see it as a major thing that makes the school unique. According to Ms. Sauchak, "Our parents are here when we need them." Staff attribute the school's high level of parent involvement to its contractual requirement, *Our Commitment for Success* (reviewed and signed every year by the student, the parent and the teacher) and overall philosophy in which parents are expected to play a major role in their children's education.

William C. Bryant also has numerous activities that strengthen the connection between home and school. Some are just for fun, others contribute to the community and some involve academics. Teacher comments underscored the school's strong connection with families:

We've got really good parents and they do make sure their children turn in their homework. Everybody's involved. We do a number of things that don't have anything to do with academics but they strengthen the connection between home and school. The more connected the home and school are, the easier it is to tell a parent 'I'm not getting exactly what I need from your child' and they're more willing to back us up.

The principal has a lot to do with it. She expects parents to be here for report card pick-up. She expects them to support the fundraisers. She expects us, as staff, to make sure they get here. We need to be calling and having those conferences. She keeps on top of you until she's sure it's done. The office will call homes, whatever needs to be done, to get 100 percent [participation]. The parents that come here have to know these things are important because she makes them know it.

Our parents are great. They support everything we do We never have a problem with field trips or anything. You always have plenty of parents interested in coming.

The principal's connection is further strengthened by the fact that she lives locally, so she knows the community well and is personally invested in it. Below is a list of some of the activities in which parent participation is expected:

- Report Card Pick-up (twice a year) - The school does not send report cards home. If parents do not come to the school, the principal or teacher will go to them, but the principal noted that all parents generally pick them up.
- Monthly Parent Education Classes - Staff expect parents to support and help their children. The school has parent workshops that show parents how to help their children with homework and to encourage their academic success.
- *Bear Care Celebration* - A canned goods food drive in January works with the *Harvest for Hunger Program* for the city. Students bring in canned goods over a two-week period. At the end, the school has a celebration. The idea is to teach the children the value of helping others. The celebration is after school. The school has a dance and people are asked to donate canned goods. Parents donate hot dogs, buns, chips, juice – everything is free. Anything left

- over goes to the homeless shelter. As part of the 2004-2005 event, students also collected \$1,600 worth of pennies for Tsunami victims, and parents counted the money.
- Art Show and Community Open House - The Art Show in May was an Open House for the community. The school is pursuing registry as a Historical Landmark.

Other activities include bowling, chess tournament, Lego First Robotics League, Chucky Cheese Night and partnerships with local businesses (Lowe's and Pat Catan's Craft Store) where parents do craft projects with their children. Interviewed parents noted their appreciation for the wide variety of opportunities that help children become more "well-rounded." One parent of two students was pleased with the school's charitable events and noted, "This school is so community oriented. They care about what happens outside their own realm." Another parent summed up the overall good feeling that parents have about the school, "I know the principal and the teachers care about the children. They do their best to make sure the children are learning and they are safe. They also have some fun. I've been so happy with this school."

SUMMARY OF "LESSONS LEARNED" SPECIFIC TO W. C. BRYANT ELEMENTARY

William C. Bryant Elementary is part of the largest urban school district in Ohio. There are several aspects that make the school unique and contribute to students' high performance levels. About 30 percent of the students walk to school, and in many ways it operates as a neighborhood school. The principal is very highly regarded and she not only expects parent involvement, but has prepared a document that clearly outlines the school's expectations. Parents, teachers and the student sign *Our Commitment for Success* at the beginning of each school year. The principal and teachers also have regular ongoing contact by calling at least a dozen parents daily. Teachers use assessment results to help guide instruction and intervention. The intervention program includes tutoring outside of the school day for children who need additional help. The school is undergoing a great deal of transition largely because the district is in the process of making numerous budget cuts. The school will be expanded to grades K-8 in the coming year and has lost several positions as the result of district layoffs. The district also is in the process of implementing a new districtwide reading program. It is unclear to what extent these changes will impact the school's student performance or parent involvement, which has been exceptionally strong.

The table on the following page summarizes the school's characteristics that are most closely associated with the "Five Lessons Learned" identified in the initial *Schools of Promise* case studies. William C. Bryant successfully has put into place practices that make a difference for children. The school's level of parent involvement is notable and its practices can serve as a model for others. It has realized *Schools of Promise* recognition in reading for two consecutive years and is close to meeting the criteria in math.

**W.C. Bryant Elementary:
Summary of School Characteristics by Five Lessons Learned**

| Five Lessons Learned | | | | | School Characteristics |
|--|--|--|--|--|---|
| Providing leadership that results in continuous improvement | Creating a culture where each individual feels valued | Designing instruction to ensure every student's success | Providing rigorous instruction aligned to standards | Engaging parents and community to support student success | |
| | | | | | Staff Characteristics |
| X | | | | | Strong and collaborative principal |
| X | | | | | Strong previous principal |
| X | | | | | Senior/experienced staff |
| X | | | | | High staff commitment |
| X | X | | | | Caring teachers and staff |
| X | X | X | | | High expectations |
| | | | | | Practices Impacting Staff |
| X | | | | | Common Planning Time |
| X | | | | | Creative use of staff |
| | | | | | Practices Impacting Students |
| | X | X | X | | Tutoring at-risk students, in-school or after-school |
| X | | X | X | | Analysis of test data to inform intervention |
| | | X | X | | Frequent testing |
| | X | X | X | | Small reading groups |
| | X | X | X | | Extensive use of small groups |
| | X | | | | Incentives |
| | | | | | Instructional Characteristics |
| | X | X | X | | Teachers use wide variety of instructional strategies |
| | X | X | X | | Use of centers |
| X | | | | | Schoolwide behavior management program |
| | | X | | | Focus on early childhood education |
| | | | | | Staff Development Characteristics |
| | | X | X | | Attention to state standards |
| X | | X | X | | Extensive professional development |
| X | | X | X | | Research-based professional development program |
| | | | | | Parent and Community Characteristics |
| | | | | X | Extensive communication with parents |
| | | | | X | High level of parent involvement |
| | | | | X | High percentage of parents attended the school |
| | | | | X | Staff are graduates or part of community |
| | | | | X | Strong business/community partnerships |
| | | | | | Institutional Characteristics |
| | | | | X | Open Enrollment |