

Harold R. Walker Elementary School

Canton Local School District (Stark County)



2004-2005 School of Promise in Reading & Mathematics	
School Rating	Excellent
Enrollment	500
Grade Levels	K-5
Percent Economically Disadvantaged	55.2%
Percent Racial/Ethnic Minority	20.5%

District Profile 2004-2005	
District Rating	Effective
District Enrollment	2,497

Lesson 1: Providing Rigorous Instruction Aligned to Standards

Individualized Statements: To increase students' knowledge and understanding of state standards and to track their progress, the district and school created "I CAN" statements based on state standards. The "I CAN" statements were created to ensure students, the most important assessment users, understood what they were trying to learn.

Assessment Driven Decisions: In addition to the district-wide annual and nine-week assessment, all students are assessed weekly on "I CAN" quizzes. Weekly, grade-level teams review ongoing assessment data, create common assessments, and discuss how to equalize the pacing of instruction across classes. Teachers also use the assessment data to guide instruction by analyzing student responses on items, and to determine when and where students may need differentiated instruction and interventions.

Extended Learning Time: Daily, Walker provides 75 – 90 minutes of learning time for English Language Arts and Mathematics. In addition to whole-group instruction, the additional time allows for small group, partner or individual assignments.

Daily Parental Updates: Every student receives a daily assignment sheet with homework, additional practice activities, school news, and a report on whether the student met the school's behavior policies. Parents must sign off on the student assignment sheets.

Lesson 2: Providing Leadership That Results in Continuous Improvement

Continuous Improvement Committee (CIP team): The school has established a Continuous Improvement Committee (CIP) that is open to all staff, with mandatory grade level representation. The committee is a problem solving. It develops action plans for changes in instruction, climate, or management, while identifying "what's best for students" and "what data supports this decision." In addition to the CIP team, there are monthly vertical grade level team meetings that focus on identifying and closing vertical curriculum gaps.

Teacher Support: Teachers are strong instructional leaders who have shared planning time to collaborate on classroom strategies and goals, especially in language arts. Two literacy coaches work one-on-one with classroom teachers to model strategies that reach diverse learners and align with the language arts content standards. Coaches actually teach lessons and demonstrate how students can learn. They provide materials for small group instruction and help teachers set up centers in classrooms that include games and activities tied to strands and assessments.

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

Common Intervention Time: Walker Elementary has developed a common intervention time in reading for all grade levels. This period provides students with time for enrichment, practice and remediation. Students participate, based on their assessment levels, in activities that allow at-level learning and individualized computer-assisted learning.

Action Plan for At-risk Students: The school identifies and constantly monitors students deemed 'at risk' throughout the year, and modifies the list based on what students demonstrate. The school works with parents to create an 'action plan' designed to maximize learning opportunities and follow the student's progress. The student, the parents, the teacher and the principal are involved in drafting the plan. The home and school agree to check learning progress at specific times during the year.

Homework Completion: When students do not complete their homework, or their behavior interferes with completion of class work, they participate in additional time set aside for learning material or behavioral coaching.

Lesson 4: Engaging Parents and Community to Support Student Success

Pursuing Parents: The school's parent coordinator is responsible for supervising all parent and volunteer activities, including the recruitment, scheduling, and training of parent volunteers. The school uses volunteers to support reading initiatives, to assist teachers in meeting learner needs, and to staff special programming such as seasonal parties and end-of-the-year activities. During the time of this case study, the school had 50 parent volunteers.

Communication: Walker Elementary sends the grade-level "I CAN" statements to parents at the beginning of each grading period. As a result, parents know what their children will be expected to learn during that time span. Daily, parents of all children receive assignment sheets for their children which require parent signatures. The district's report cards display student progress by each academic standards; as a result, parents are becoming more concerned with the number of standards met rather than the final grade by subject.

Lesson 5: Creating a Culture Where Each Individual Feels Valued

Professional Learning Community: Walker emphasizes a culture of staff learning and working together. The goal is to have all teachers collaborating and developing positive, trusted relationships with teammates and other staff members. Another goal is for teachers to maximize school time, school resources, and support staff. The school's philosophy is that if students like school and their teachers, students will work hard to meet expectations.

Discipline Plan: The school's discipline plan has three components. If students do their homework (component one), have an adult signature on the daily assignment sheet (component two), and keep behavior choices in check (component three), students have daily privileges. Students track behavior in their student data folder and the office tracks discipline data quarterly. Administrators work with a student, the family, and the teacher team to help students meet and exceed behavior plan goals.

Recognition for Students: A major focus of the school is the recognition of high student performance. The school has a weekly activity for students who completed their homework for the week, demonstrated good behavior choices, and turned in parent signatures on all assignments. Nine-week assemblies award students for perfect attendance, good behavior, 100 percent completion of homework, academic performance on report card grades, and for 80 percent or above proficiency on computerized assessments. The school also recognizes students who have most improved in a subject or in their behavior.