

Centennial High School

Columbus Public (Franklin)



School Profile 2004-2005	
2004-2005 School of Promise in Reading	
School Rating	Effective
Enrollment	760
Grade Levels	9-12
Percent Economically Disadvantaged	47%
Percent Racial/Ethnic Minority	49.5%

District Profile 2004-2005	
District Rating	Academic Watch
District Enrollment	59,754

Lesson 1: Providing Rigorous Instruction Aligned to Standards

Alignment to Standards: Centennial's curriculum is the same curriculum that Columbus Public Schools (CPS) uses district-wide. It's also a key component of Centennial's success, serving as a comprehensive guide to what concepts should be covered and when. The guides provide teachers with all the content which include activities, experiences, and materials that match or exceed the content, context, and cognitive levels of the state tests.

Contributing to the Curriculum: All of Centennial's current mathematics teachers, several English teachers, and a number of science teachers have all contributed to their discipline's curriculum across the district. As a result, teachers at Centennial have a particularly good understanding of the standards and how to use the district curriculum effectively.

Vertical and Horizontal Alignment: To ensure the curriculum is implemented effectively and students are prepared for the next level, Centennial's staff is aligned vertically and horizontally within departments. Teachers at Centennial take curriculum alignment to the next level by creating consistent expectations for performance. According to teachers it's not only important to align the material they teach; students have to understand teachers have high expectations at every grade level. Centennial's staff is so committed to alignment that they work with teachers at feeder schools in the CPS district on their curriculum guides.

Focus on High Expectations: High academic achievement and a focus on college success is a fundamental part of the culture and tradition at Centennial. Teachers' goals for students are set much higher than just passing the OGT. Centennial focuses on preparing students for college and offers Advanced Placement courses in most subjects. The emphasis on college preparation is reinforced as students approach critical points in their high school experience and decision making process. Teachers frequently remind students that performance in ninth and tenth grades has implications for their GPA in the long term and their likelihood of acceptance when it comes time to apply to college.

Lesson 2: Providing Leadership That Results in Continuous Improvement

Continuous Evaluation and Improvement: Centennial's school improvement plan is created and driven by a committee of teachers under the leadership of the principal. The committee consists of one parent representative, three teachers, and the principal. The group meets monthly and they update the plan quarterly. According to the principal, school improvement is driven by data, and feedback to individual teachers is continuous.

Teacher Leaders: Principal Hershey says her philosophy is to "empower" staff by encouraging them take ownership of school issues. As a result, departments have a high degree of autonomy and the responsibility for making sure information is disseminated to teachers. Counselors give department

chairs information about students that need extra help, and the staff works to solve problems involving the students.

National Scope: Centennial teachers are active in the national Urban Systemic Project through the National Science Foundation, which works to increase student achievement in mathematics, science, and technology by implementing standards-based, inquiry-centered instruction.. Each school participating in the USP has a "study group" of teachers and one lead teacher. The study groups use student performance data to determine building needs and design a plan to address those needs. Teachers participating in the USP set goals and are monitored throughout the year by a lead teacher

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

Individual Learning Styles: At Centennial, there is an emphasis on tailoring instruction to the learning style of individual students. Such monitoring requires careful monitoring of student performance data on grade level indicators, and identifying students who have not mastered the prerequisite skills. Teachers say to be effective they must know their content area so well that they are able to be flexible in their approach to motivate all students. When necessary, teachers modify their instructions to accommodate student needs. They try to be flexible in working with students while teaching the required curriculum. As a result, the teachers at Centennial teach to the individual needs of the student, not the whole class.

Concept Development: At Centennial, activities to promote higher-order thinking are deeply ingrained in the culture. Teachers understand the importance of the scaffolding process in concept development. Teachers use scaffolding to build confidence and knowledge at the same time. Teachers believe such techniques are important because the skills students develop through more active learning processes are not always reflected in the OGT or standardized testing.

Early Intervention: Typically, teachers initiate parent contact immediately when students are struggling, falling behind, or experiencing problems. Teachers also volunteer their time on an "intervention team" (IT). If individual teachers' efforts to contact a student's family regarding problems at school are unsuccessful, the IT team follows up with parents of struggling or truant students, adding another layer of intervention.

Lesson 4: Engaging Parents and Community to Support Student Success

Parent Liaisons: Centennial employs two parents as liaisons. Funding is provided through a grant from the district and covers 10 hours of work a week. Alternating days, the parent liaisons answer phones for the school's staff and serve as a resource for parents. The liaisons also act as "ambassadors," speaking at Centennial's open houses, talking about Centennial to other parents, and explaining why their children chose to attend the school.

Lesson 5: Creating a Culture Where Each Individual Feels Valued

Community Feel: The school's relatively small size creates a sense of community that extends beyond the walls of the schools. Teachers understand that students may be dealing with outside pressures that affect classroom performance so they try to help students who are having family problems by establishing support groups. The small school size provides students with more individual attention and more opportunities to be involved in school activities.

Community Diversity: Centennial is one of the most diverse schools in Columbus with students from at least 35 different countries and a place where cultural diversity is valued. Centennial's staff recognizes diverse cultures as components of the mainstream at the school. Teachers demonstrate respect for cultural differences, and the ESL department at Centennial illustrates this principle. Respect for diversity also extends to the mental health and special education departments.

Discipline: An essential element of the culture is the emphasis on the importance of discipline and structure. Teachers demonstrate strong behavioral and classroom management and usually address every instance of student misbehavior. Centennial has a reputation among students, parents, and school staff as a safe and secure environment. Students do not worry about violence or being distracted by classmates' bad behavior.