

Conrad Elementary School

Newark, Ohio (Licking County)



2004-2005 School of Promise in Reading	
School Rating	Effective
Enrollment	214
Grade Levels	K-5
Percent Economically Disadvantaged	71%
Percent Racial/Ethnic Minority	14.2%

District Profile 2004-2005	
District Rating	Continuous Improvement
District Enrollment	6,411

Lesson 1: Providing Rigorous Instruction Aligned to Standards

Emphasis on Understanding: Alignment to state content standards is the hallmark of education at Conrad School. To make sure all teachers understood the standards and measures of achievement, two full days of staff development prior to the start of the school year focused on the state standards. The teachers talked about the importance of knowing how achievement will be measured so that students can be prepared to reach the necessary benchmarks.

Literacy Focus: All grades implement the Literacy Collaborative program, consisting of an extended two-and-a half to three hour instruction period focusing on a range of literary skills. It consists of guided reading where the teachers work with needs-based reading groups. While teachers are doing guided reading, other children are doing independent work, including shared reading and interactive writing.

Continuous Alignment: Everyday Mathematics and Literacy Collaborative have been implemented district wide. This allows for seamless horizontal alignment of the curriculum and creates a common platform for collaboration between the schools. Teachers at Conrad meet with teachers at another of Newark's elementary schools, Ben Franklin Elementary, several times a year to talk about alignment and share the insights they have gained teaching from the two programs.

Lesson 2: Providing Leadership That Results in Continuous Improvement.

Supporting Leadership: A collaborative was established by the district superintendent to give principals the opportunity to compare results at one another's school—as well as to note similarities. Members meet weekly to perform walk-throughs at each schools and provide feedback to that building's principal. An added benefit of the collaborative is that it builds camaraderie, respect, and a sense of being part of the same team among administrators.

Improving the Learning Environment: The principal uses various assessment scores to match students with teachers whose teaching styles fit the students' learning styles and needs. In part, matches are based on how well the student and teacher interact and thus create better working relationships that contribute to achievement. She also works with teachers to reduce distractions

in the classroom, increase small group instruction, and make sure students' testing environments are small and supportive.

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

Intervention and Assistance: The Intervention Assistance team includes educators, parents and sometimes the student who needs assistance. As a group, the team considers what has been tried with the student and then brainstorms to determine if other strategies might be adopted. After six weeks, the team reconvenes to determine if the parents, teachers, and student are keeping up with what they said they will do and if the intervention strategies used in the classroom are effective—it's important to make sure the whole team works together. Adjustments are made as necessary. Assessment is ongoing to target low performers as quickly as possible.

Lesson 4: Engaging Parents and Community to Support Student Success

Parent-Teacher Interaction: To encourage parent participation, the entryway into the school has been set up as a Parent Resource Center. A computer is set up in that area for parents to use. There is also a television set where family members can view videos on reading and learn how to support school efforts at home. Formal, scheduled Parent/Teacher Conferences take place twice a year, but letters, notes and phone calls go between school and home regularly. More informally, at the end of the school day, teachers will go outside to "intercept" parents if they need to talk.

Lesson 5: Creating a Culture Where Each Individual Feels Valued

Individualism through Structure: They feel they have an important role to play in providing structure in the classroom that can lead to fulfillment of these high expectations. Teachers work very hard to cultivate strong relationships. Compassion and kindness are not the only characteristics that go into creating a positive culture. Praise is continuous. The teachers are open to the culture and backgrounds of their students, and cultivate a climate of mutual respect between teachers and students.