Dawson-Bryant High School

Dawson-Bryant Local School District (Lawrence)



School Profile 2003-2004	
2003-2004 School of Promise in Reading	
School Rating	Effective
Enrollment	412
Grade Levels	9-12
Percent Economically	46.8%*
Disadvantaged	
Percent Racial/Ethnic Minority	NC <10

*The percentage as reported in the CCIP system.

District Profile 2003-2004	
District Rating	Excellent
District Enrollment	1,304

Lesson 1: Providing Rigorous Instruction Aligned to Standards

Attention to Standards: Teachers have become increasingly knowledgeable about the state standards, largely through their participation in various professional development opportunities. Those of most value include: Scantron training, Writing Across the Curriculum, sessions on the Ohio Graduation Test (OGT), and Short Cycle Assessment.

Grants: The school had more than \$120,000 in external funding this past school year, and the principal regularly applies for potential opportunities. One of the school's major grants is High Schools That Work (HSTW) www.sreb.org/programs/hstw/hstwindex.asp, a federally funded program managed by the Ohio Department of Education (ODE). The principal believes that state meetings and networking associated with HSTW have been highly beneficial.

Lesson 2: Providing Leadership That Results in Continuous Improvement

Strong and Creative Leadership: The principal is highly innovative in using substitutes and part-time staff. She hires newly certified teachers to serve as long-term substitutes and has them tutor students when substitutes are not needed. Long-term substitutes have opportunities to observe master teachers and build a relationship with students. She hires retired teachers to instruct part-time. She has also introduced "extended" courses to give struggling students more time to absorb essential materials.

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

Tutoring Program: Struggling students can work one-on-one or in a small group with a tutor. Students needing substantial assistance may be pulled out of the regular class for a short time and some will remain with a tutor throughout most of the course. Tutored students range from those who have special needs and require ongoing help to those who only need short-term assistance in a specific subject area. The district hires newly credentialed and retired teachers to tutor students to help them pass the OGT. Regular teachers and long-term substitutes also tutor students as needed.

Opportunities for College-bound Students: Juniors and seniors who want to be teachers can take the Tech Prep Teacher Academy (TA) course that offers practical hands-on opportunities and prepares them for a college major in education. The class runs all morning and includes field team teaching experiences. Those who successfully complete TA receive three college credits. The school will pay costs of advanced placement tests. While still in high school, qualifying students take college-level courses part-time at a branch campus of Ohio University.

Use of Data to Target Instruction: The school is using various test programs to provide them with detailed information about student performance, coverage of the standards and preparation for the

OGT. These include Battelle for Kids Project (SOAR), Scantron, state proficiency test data and regular classroom assessments. Teachers test often, providing an ongoing check on students' progress. The detailed analyses pinpoint exactly what the teachers need to cover to improve student achievement.

- Math Changes: The math department has been reorganized and math teachers have worked hard to implement improvements and build a strong math department over the past five years. High school teachers recommended moving Algebra I to the ninth grade, as they found too many students were not ready for it in middle school, resulting in them struggling with high school math. Now all freshmen take it together, and students can take up to eight courses in mathematics during their high school years. Students expressed an interest in taking more advanced math classes, so the school introduced AP Calculus in the 2004-2005 academic year. The school also added a statistics class and more coverage of statistics to the Algebra I class after analysis of the school's proficiency data revealed that students were weak in this area. Teachers emphasized that they do a lot to build students' confidence and self-esteem in math.
- **Technology Program:** The high school has rebuilt its business department, infusing it with technology and bringing in Tech Prep classes, and now offering opportunities in distance learning, video conferencing and digital art. The World Experience and Exploration Program (WECEP) offers courses for at-risk students. They learn how to repair hardware, troubleshoot networks, help maintain the schools' computer labs and earn certification. The school also benefits from a good relationship with the nearby Career Center, including access to courses.
- **Career Passport:** During English classes, all juniors and seniors work on Career Passports that involve compiling materials that outline their future plans. The passports include a resume, cover letters and college essays; the school is working on making the passport more interactive, relevant and process-oriented.

Lesson 4: Engaging Parents and Community to Support Student Success

Parent and Community Events: The principal and teachers described parents as involved and especially visible at special events. Teachers noted that a great number of parents still do not attend the parent-teacher conferences. However, there is a high level of parent involvement in sports, band and special events. The principal also is pleased with the community's strong support of levies.

Lesson 5: Creating a Culture Where Each Individual Feels Valued

- Caring Teachers and Staff: Teachers care for the students, especially making sure that needy ones have appropriate clothing and can participate in all school activities such as prom. Teachers have organized clubs for students, most of which include a community service component. Several teachers noted that empathy and understanding of students are major factors in the school's success. Teachers also volunteer their time to come early and stay after school to help students.
- **High Expectations:** Teachers consistently encourage students to do their best, to join clubs, do community work, and take high level math classes. If students do not do well on a test, teachers expect them to retake the test. Teachers also give extra credit for students that correct their exams. The school pays for low income students to take college placement tests. When students have unexcused absences, the school calls to find out why.
- **Small Classes:** Most of the school's classes have fewer than 20 students, facilitating individual attention by teachers. The average class size was 15 students.
- **Block Schedule:** Students have four 86-minute classes a day. Students have less pressure and homework since they prepare for four classes instead of seven daily. The block gives teachers time to introduce a topic, discuss it and have students start an assignment in class, giving them an opportunity to see if students are on track and guide them in the right direction if they are not.

Challenges

The principal noted that the elementary school will no longer be participating in "Success for All," which may have a negative impact on future high school students' foundation in reading. The school is also heavily dependent on grant funding.