

Jackson Elementary School

Jackson City School District (Jackson)



School Profile 2003-2004	
<i>2003-2004 School of Promise in Reading</i>	
School Rating	Effective
Enrollment	129
Grade Levels	K-5
Percent Economically Disadvantaged	55.6%
Percent Racial/Ethnic Minority	5.2%

District Profile 2003-2004	
District Rating	Continuous Improvement
District Enrollment	2,638

Lesson 1: Providing Rigorous Instruction Aligned to Standards

Attention to Standards: Teachers are knowledgeable about state standards and used the benchmarks and standards as a guide in determining what they should teach the children and the level of students' expected performance. There was ample evidence that teachers were embracing the state standards in reading; they were creative in covering the standards and also making reading fun.

Professional Development and Grants: Teachers' opportunities to participate in high quality professional development increased dramatically with the district's receipt of an OhioReads Grant for four of the six elementary buildings in 2001-2002. Teachers and principals participated in 12 weeks of Rigby training, which is a balanced literacy program. The last two years, teachers had early release days once a month for two-hour professional development meetings; sessions focused on curriculum development, teachers' needs and review of materials. Teachers also participated in professional development activities during Common Planning Time.

Lesson 2: Providing Leadership That Results in Continuous Improvement

Strong and Experienced Leadership: While 2004-2005 was the principal's first year in that position at the school, she was previously a second grade teacher there and served as district curriculum director for 12 years. She also had been a Title I Reading Coordinator so she was highly experienced and knowledgeable with teaching young disadvantaged children how to read. She was able to build on the solid foundation established by her predecessor in student learning and in discipline.

Superintendent Supportive of Reading and Math: The superintendent made numerous changes intended to promote reading and math district wide. Mandates included requiring elementary schools to spend more time on these subjects by: eliminating physical education and art; reducing music instruction to 30 minutes per week; and eliminating the study of science except through nonfiction reading. The district also invested substantially in the purchase of reading resources and in professional development.

Experienced and Collaborative Teachers: The staff was highly experienced with teaching time averaging 18 years. Three had been at the school for 15 years or more. The teachers worked well together. That collaboration was enhanced with the introduction of Common Planning Time in 2004-2005. All teachers had the first 45 minutes of the day for planning; this enabled them to communicate and plan with each other, the special education teacher, and the Title I reading and intervention teachers.

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

Reading Program: Jackson Elementary clearly made reading a priority and scheduled two and one-half hours of reading time daily for kindergarten through fifth grade. All teachers were using the McGraw-Hill series, with some variations, particularly by Title I and special education teachers. Supplemental resources also were utilized.

Accelerated Reading Program (ARP): The other major reading program was ARP. Books in this program are color-coded so each student can read at his or her own level. Students take computerized tests upon completion of each book. When they score a four out of five, they get credit for the book and receive prizes based on the number of books read.

Small Reading Groups, Intervention, and Inclusion: The school reorganized classes to reduce reading groups to 10 or fewer students. Struggling kindergarten students were sent to an intervention teacher for 30 minutes daily. Students reading at the lowest levels in grades 1 through 5 were either assigned to the Title I teacher for the entire two and one-half hour reading period, or to the special education teacher. The special education teacher had students with Individual Education Plans (IEPs) for an hour, and then returned them to their regular classroom. Use of group activities enabled regular teachers to give IEP students one-on-one attention. Assignment to intervention teachers reduced each instructional group to six to 10 students. Students in grades 3, 4, and 5 with high reading ability could be sent to another grade-level room.

Writing Program: Every Jackson class composed a book each year that was professionally published, free for the school, and each student could purchase a copy. The books were then kept in classrooms for students to read.

Assessment: The school added systematic pre- and post-testing. Teachers used the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) test with first-graders and a Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) with second- through fifth-graders. There was also additional testing associated with the McGraw-Hill series and ARP books.

Incentives: Children, especially those in kindergarten through grade 2, were given small awards (candy, tattoos, and toys) to encourage completion of academic tasks, reward them for reading leveled books, and to discourage misbehavior.

Lesson 4: Engaging Parents and Community to Support Student Success

Parent Involvement: Jackson is a small, close-knit community and parents and teachers commended each other for their efforts to help the students. Teachers talked to parents and regularly sent home newsletters. The principal says there were five to 10 parents that she could call on for help at any time.

Lesson 5: Creating a Culture Where Each Individual Feels Valued

Caring Teachers: Teachers demonstrated their caring in a variety of ways inside and outside the classroom, from giving up their lunch and recess to continually work with children, to ensuring they had proper clothing for cold weather.

High Expectations: Teachers communicated high expectations to all children by exposing them to experiences beyond their own small community. Field trips, a pen pal program and other activities were designed to give the children a larger world view. Elements of holding students to a high standard included nightly homework by all teachers Monday through Thursday and frequent testing.

Strong Discipline: Teachers generally tried to deal with any discipline problems before sending a student to the office but appreciated the principal's disciplinary support. The school used a character program, the Virtues Program, to help children feel good about themselves as well as be more respectful and compassionate.

Challenges

Jackson Elementary School closed at the end of the 2004-2005 school year and its students were reassigned to other district schools.