

Kyle Elementary School

Troy City School District (Miami)



School Profile 2003-2004	
<i>2003-2004 School of Promise in Reading</i>	
School Rating	Excellent
Enrollment	260
Grade Levels	K-6
Percent Economically Disadvantaged	47.6%
Percent Racial/Ethnic Minority	15.2%

District Profile 2003-2004	
District Rating	Effective
District Enrollment	4,348

Lesson 1: Providing Rigorous Instruction Aligned to Standards

Attention to Standards: Teachers are well aware of the standards and do weekly monitoring to ensure their compliance. Most have participated in district workshops on curriculum alignment. They say that district pacing charts that display standards by grade level have been helpful.

Professional Development: There is ongoing professional development, led by several teachers and the district academic coach. They regularly share their knowledge with colleagues at meetings before or after school. Teachers also learn new strategies at the school's annual retreats for in-service training and team building.

Grants: OhioReads has been the school's major grant, and paid for a part-time program coordinator who recruits and schedules volunteers, the purchase of leveled reading books, and professional development.

Lesson 2: Providing Leadership That Results in Continuous Improvement

Strong and Experienced Leadership: The principal has been at the school four years, and has worked with teachers and sought their input before making a number of significant changes at the school so that each became a building decision rather than a principal's decision. Changes include: setting more specific school goals, introducing common planning time, moving special education and Title I teachers into regular classes, using data to systematically inform instruction, bringing in more intervention teachers and academic coaches, and introducing all-day kindergarten.

Experienced, Collaborative and Flexible Teachers: Teachers at Kyle average 14 years of classroom experience, two are nationally board certified, 67 percent have master's degrees, and 47 percent had been at the school for 20 years or more. Teachers work closely together, especially with the placement of special education and Title I teachers in regular classrooms. The fourth and sixth grade teachers team-teach. The teachers are adaptable and open to new strategies.

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

Overall Educational Approach: Teachers often do activities that go beyond the standards for the grade level being taught. Almost all classes use group work, which is aided by having several adults in each class. Teachers enjoy challenging the children and are pleased that most students are able to handle the material. Classrooms are well-equipped with books and other resources. Children are permitted to take home some of the classroom books over night.

Reading Program: In the 2004-2005 school year, Kyle began using the Houghton Mifflin reading series adopted by the district. The reading block is 90 minutes. All classrooms regularly have students working in small groups, facilitated by having more than one adult available to supervise activities.

Many teachers have advanced training in reading instruction. All language arts teachers meet once a quarter and the classroom teachers also meet by grade level to discuss the reading program and share strategies that they have found most useful.

Math Program: The math block has been increased to 90 minutes. The main goals for math are to improve recall and word-problem skills. As with reading, students regularly work in small groups, and have the benefit of more than one adult in the class to assist them.

Teacher Differentiation: In grades K-3, there are two teachers for each grade and each has a distinctive teaching style. One is highly active and the other is more traditional. Both teachers have other adults in the classroom. This setup helps students be placed with a teacher who is a good match with the child's personality and needs.

Use of Data to Target Instruction: Kyle uses STAR Reading (a computer program) and the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) to test students' reading skills. Teachers use the Yearly Progress Pro each week to monitor math progress of the fifth- and sixth-graders. Students also track their own performance.

Intervention: The school's Learning Assistance Team reviews the cases of students having academic or behavioral issues. Three Title I teachers assist students working below grade level within their regular classroom and all special education students are in regular classes. Additional one-on-one pullout assistance is provided as needed.

Lesson 4: Engaging Parents and Community to Support Student Success

Parent Communication and Involvement: Teachers have ongoing communication with parents and have parents sign weekly progress reports. Parent involvement is mixed but the school has an active Parent Teacher Organization and many activities throughout the year.

Business and Community Involvement: Kyle benefits from a strong partnership with the community, especially through Troy City Schools' exceptionally solid business support, which funds a program that provides ongoing support to 15 needy Kyle students. The business community also pays for a teacher to tutor at night. Another important community connection is with local universities such as Wright State University and Antioch College that provide student teachers to the school.

Lesson 5: Creating a Culture Where Each Individual Feels Valued

Committed Teachers and Staff: Teachers are aware of the challenge of working with students who have problems. They care about the students, enjoy the challenge of producing results and make an effort to personally connect with the individual child. The principal, teachers, specialists, aides and others talk and e-mail each other daily, discussing academic and behavioral concerns.

Efforts to Address the Needs of All Students: There are between two and five adults in the classrooms throughout the day. Two special education teachers, three Title teachers, five intervention aides, English as Second Language (ESL) and gifted and talented specialists and an academic coach all serve as additional adults in the classrooms. The presence of these staff, together with volunteers and student teachers, assures that students will have more direct adult supervision and more opportunities for small group activities.

High Expectations: Children at every grade level including kindergarten have homework. Teachers prepare individual handbooks for each grade level so students and parents know the expectations. Teachers regularly do timed tests and set performance goals.

Male Role Models: Four of six teachers in grades four through six are male, as is the music teacher. Teachers believe that having a male role model and seeing men and women working well together is good for students, many of whom come from single parent households.

Challenges

The school is unsure how it will maintain its volunteer reading program following reductions in its OhioReads funding beginning in 2005-2006.