

Felicity Franklin Elementary School

Felicity Franklin School District (Clement County)



School Profile 2003-2004	
<i>2003-2004 School of Promise in Mathematics</i>	
School Rating	Effective
Enrollment	432
Grade Levels	K-4
Percent Economically Disadvantaged	43.3%
Percent Racial/Ethnic Minority	NC<10

District Profile 2003-2004	
District Rating	Effective
District Enrollment	1,136

Lesson 1: Providing Rigorous Instruction Aligned to Standards

Vertical Alignment: Two conditions that facilitated alignment are the employment of a curriculum director, whose focus is continuous improvement, and the campus itself: all three Felicity Franklin schools (elementary, middle, and high) are located on the same campus.

Attention to Standards: The Ohio content standards are understood and constitute the curriculum by nearly all teachers. Educators see the Ohio standards as having displaced the previous curriculum, which had been created in collaboration with the other districts in Clermont County. In general, the faculty views this change as productive. Teachers understand that by matching up their lessons to the standards, they are ensuring that students are learning what will be tested on the state assessments.

Instructional Alignment: The Ohio content standards have influenced the school's instructional design and delivery. Teachers use a combination of textbooks and supplementary materials that are aligned to the standards. Because the standards require students to not merely know, but also understand, apply, and analyze, teachers often ask students to explain and analyze.

Lesson 2: Providing Leadership That Results in Continuous Improvement

Top-Down Leadership: The school's improvement goals are grounded in the district's Continuous Improvement Plan; therefore, district monitoring takes place quarterly. District leaders require teachers routinely to make use of specific set of research-based instructional strategies. And, the principal coordinates and structures activities in order to maintain control and order in the building.

Bottom-Up Leadership: The principal's approach to leadership is authoritative, yet responsive. Teachers are assured that she will help them handle situations, and at the same time she will seek out their input on how to handle the situation.

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

Professional Collaboration: teachers meet in grade level teams to discuss assessment results and talk about ways to improve. Teachers also collaborate in deciding which professional development activities would be most helpful. In 2003-2004, for example, the teachers decided that writing was an important focus, and many of them attended professional development sessions preparing them to become more effective as teachers of writing.

Inclusion: Students with disabilities are included in the regular classrooms. This inclusion prompts teachers to find ways to represent the same, or very similar, content to all students, but with whatever adaptations are needed. Children with disabilities appear to be blended quite successfully into their

classrooms. It was difficult for the researchers who observed the classes to identify which children had been given a special education label and which had not.

Lesson 4: Engaging Parents and Community to Support Student Success

Evolution of Community Support: The school is central to the community; it is one of the largest employers in the township. Until recently, school leaders did not welcome the participation of parents and community members. However, the school's low performance and low accountability ranking (i.e., Academic Emergency) alerted the community to the need for improvement. As part of the school's continuous improvement planning, the school surveyed community members, teachers, and students to determine what needed to be changed in order to improve student performance. In recent years, the community elected three new board members, each reportedly a parent with children in the school system.

Community Support Two-way Street: School personnel take an active role in community improvement. For example, staff members participate in the Felicity Initiative for Neighborhood Excellence (FINE), which works to raise community resources and reverse the perception by outsiders that Felicity is simply a rural, poor town with deficiencies. FINE works to instill community pride.

Lesson 5: Creating a Culture Where Each Individual Feels Valued

Respect through Discipline: Educators and community members see a connection between respect and compliance with rules. Teachers at each grade level work together to develop a code of conduct and assertive discipline to be used in all classrooms and across grade levels. Although rules and sanctions dominate behavior policies and disciplinary practices at the school, the spirit with which they are deployed is positive. Rules are treated as expectations for good behavior, punishments as fair consequences for occasional misbehavior. Teachers use a progressive system that first alerts students to the fact that they have broken a rule and then imposes increasingly more severe sanctions as incidents of misbehavior accumulate.

Care for Individual Students: Holding every student to high standards of behavior and academic performance, the staff makes efforts to address individual needs while at the same time treating all students fairly. Teachers work hard to keep from singling out children in ways that might embarrass them. As one teacher commented, "...you treat them equally and you wait at your door every morning and you give them a compliment every morning and just make them feel good about themselves, every single one of them."