Noble Elementary School

Tiffin City School District (Seneca)



School Profile 2004-2005	
2004-2005 School of Promise in	
Reading and Mathematics	
School Rating	Excellent
Enrollment	261
Grade Levels	K-5
Percent Economically	52.6%
Disadvantaged	
Percent Racial/Ethnic Minority	11.5%

District Profile 2004-2005	
District Rating	Effective
District Enrollment	2,858

Lesson 1: Providing Rigorous Instruction Aligned to Standards

Curriculum Aligned to Standards Throughout District: The centerpiece of instruction at Noble is the alignment of its curriculum to the state content standards. Noble is active in a district-wide alignment of curriculum and textbooks with the academic content standards. Standards posted on classroom walls allow teachers to explain them to students and link them to daily lessons.

Coordination: Noble's 19 teachers cooperate and learn from their peers about effective, standards-based instruction through district meetings and the coordinated efforts of Tiffin's Director of Elementary Instruction and Personnel. Same-grade teachers work together on an ongoing basis to align their curriculum, textbooks, and instruction to the standards and to exchange ideas and best practices.

Extended Time for Mathematics: Classroom teachers set aside 30 minutes of regular class time for Accelerated Math work sessions. This is in addition to 45-60 minutes a day of regular instruction. This software program allows 124 students to work at their own pace while teachers manage and monitor their learning individually. Teachers review student progress on these guided lessons and can customize learning for every student – from the gifted to those with disabilities. A special education teacher helps students with the greatest needs in mathematics.

Title I Reading Specialists: Reading instruction is extended within the regular class time through the use of Title I reading specialists—one certified teacher and one aide. Along with general class activities, all students are placed in one of three groups based on their abilities. During extended reading time, a Title I reading specialist and aide group students for intense work in smaller groups in their own literacy intervention classrooms to customize learning to students' abilities.

Lesson 2: Providing Leadership That Results in Continuous Improvement

Collaboration: Cooperation and collaboration are consistent themes at Noble. Teachers tend to come in early and stay late—providing many opportunities for discussion among teachers. Strong principal leadership allows teachers to be involved in decision-making and share feedback, problems, planning and strategies. Collaboration throughout the school is a daily event.

Professional Development: Professional development on differentiated instruction aligned to the state standards allowed more than two-thirds of teachers to meet the needs of diverse learners. More than half of the teachers participated in separate trainings that stressed collaboration in instruction as well as in-depth content knowledge. Other professional development opportunities involved data-drive decision making, family and community engagement, and classroom management and safety. All professional development activities tie into Noble's Consolidated Continuous Improvement Plan

(CCIP), giving each teacher \$300 annually. In addition, many teachers take advantage of "free" professional development opportunities offered by the Ohio Department of Education or pay their own expenses.

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

- **All-Day Kindergarten:** Title I funds all-day kindergarten, an essential program for a school where 53 percent of the student body is considered economically disadvantaged.
- **Using Data to Make Decisions:** Noble teachers constantly use assessment data such as observations and class exams to identify students who need intervention. Additionally, a special education teacher works with classroom teachers in mathematics. The Title I reading specialist and aide use informal inventories and observations to assess the reading progress of individual students during the extending reading session in their individual classrooms.
- Intervention: The school day is organized to facilitate intervention by scheduling 30 minutes when students receive specialized intervention in reading and mathematics while others use the Accelerated Math program to work individually. This allows time for the Title I reading specialist and aide to work with students from every classroom. Working with students in smaller groups allows teachers to intervene, monitor and then move students throughout the various groups based on their developmental progress. A special education teacher provides mathematics resources to teachers and works with students in the classroom. After-school study tables and five-week summer programs help students who are struggling.

Lesson 4: Engaging Parents and Community to Support Student Success

- **Communication:** The school encourages school-to-home communications by providing each child in the third grade and above with a homework notebook so that notes can go back and forth between parents and teachers every day. Teachers are always available to parents through telephones located in each classroom. Conferences occur twice a year. Teachers reach out to the parents early in the year through fliers and newsletters, and if a problem arises anytime during the year, teachers contact parents immediately. In some classrooms, a teacher newsletter supplements the school newsletter.
- **Partnership with Heidelberg College:** Noble has an ongoing partnership with local Heidelberg College, which provides student teachers and many tutors to the school. In fact, classroom observers noted student aides were fully integrated into the classroom at Noble and were effective in small-group instruction.

Lesson 5: Creating a Culture Where Each Individual Feels Valued

- **Expectations and Rewards:** Despite challenging economic disparities in the community, educators and staff at Noble have high expectations for their students. Noble encourages student rewards for improved academic achievement. Teachers also reward respectful behavior with age-appropriate activities, such as stickers for second-graders or pizzas for older students. Parents also offer similar rewards for good behavior achievement at Noble.
- **Making Learning Fun:** From a student perspective, teachers make learning fun and work to help every student succeed. A student focus group said hands-on activities, pairing of students, and help with detailed explanations and regular practice made learning fun. One student mentioned humor and the occasional joke help with the learning environment. Observers also noted that structure, discipline and good classroom management allowed this supportive learning environment.
- **Teacher Sensitivity:** In addition to dedication and flexibility, teachers say it is important to be sensitive to the needs of students who live in poverty. Understanding and accepting cultural differences is essential. Despite challenging economic disparities in the community, teachers maintain high behavioral and academic expectations and are viewed by the community as experts.