What Works in Jefferson County Public Schools

April 2012

Data Management, Planning and Program Evaluation
Dr. Robert J. Rodosky, Executive Director
The “What Works” Project

An analysis of student assessment data from the past five years shows that there is a core of JCPS schools that have demonstrated greater improvement in academic achievement than similar schools (see Appendix A for school data). These schools have faced many tough challenges, yet through persistent implementation of systemic, school-wide practices, they have raised student achievement.

During winter 2012, JCPS invited teams of elected officials, parents, community representatives, and business leaders to visit eighteen identified elementary, middle and high schools to take a close look to better understand the specific practices that are working to raise student achievement. “What works” participants were given the opportunity to hear from school leaders, observe teaching and learning in multiple classrooms, meet with teachers and students, and ask questions. Through this process, they were able to gain a deeper understanding of the hard work and focused attention being undertaken in schools across the district to improve educational outcomes for children in our community.

Participants were provided four guiding questions to reflect upon during their visit, and were asked to submit responses based on their experiences. The questions were:

- Do teachers know what they should be teaching? What did you see or hear?
- Do the teachers and staff know where students are on their learning? What evidence did you see or hear?
- How do teachers and staff use data to help students? What did you see or hear?
- How does the staff work together to help students succeed academically? What did you see or hear?

Results

The results are telling. Participants independently identified a set of common themes and specific areas of intense professional focus which appear to have near universal acceptance across these higher-performing schools. Evidence from the school visits reflects a movement by educators in these schools beyond superficial recitation of the latest education “buzz words” to intentional, long-term, and sustained work to change in school culture and instructional practice.

As might be expected, there were differences in strategies and emphasis between schools, reflecting the distinct school “personality” or culture created by the collective influence of the particular teachers, students and school leaders in each school, but more striking is the similarities of approach across schools.
In the areas of curriculum and instruction, the use of data to inform and guide practice, teaching as a profession, and school culture and climate, common threads can be seen across schools.

**Curriculum and Instruction**
- Instruction aligned with state-adopted content standards.
- Specific learning targets publicly shared and understood by teachers and students.
- High levels of student and teacher engagement, using a combination of teaching strategies.
- Interventions and student groupings targeted to specific learning needs of each student.
- Flexible, iterative, fluid student groupings based on ongoing assessments.
- Increased time focused on instruction.

**Use of Data**
- Intentional, regular use of formative and summative assessments to determine student proficiency and identify students in need of intervention.
- Use of “data rooms” to share assessment information about all students.
- Common teacher planning using data to identify areas of weakness, allowing for collaboration and sharing of strategies.
- Daily use of data to guide instructional choices.

**Teachers as Professionals**
- Strong school leadership supporting teachers.
- Establishment of professional learning communities, creating collaboration teams to ensure high quality instruction, effective intervention, and improvement over time.
- Emphasis on practice-focused professional development over “sit and get” PD.
- Constructive and actionable feedback from principal and colleagues to improve instruction.
- Culture of high expectations for teachers’ professional practice.

**School Culture and Climate**
- High expectations for all students.
- High levels of communication and collaboration toward common goals.
- A commitment by teachers, individually and collectively, to take responsibility for the success all students, particularly struggling students.
- Creation of a safe, caring environment for students.
- A welcoming place for parents and the community.
High Schools

Do teachers know what they should be teaching? What did you see or hear?

Fairdale High School
- All rooms had learning targets.
- Teachers were actively engaged with students and their learning.
- Teacher panel indicated laser-like focus on standards and what that meant for students in the classroom – all students.
- Consistent conversation with teachers that included references to standards, curriculum maps, and aligned assessments.

Jeffersontown High School
- Kentucky Core Academic Standards (KCAS) are used to guide instruction.
- Collaboration to discuss together what worked and what didn’t.
- Strong leadership allows the administration, teachers, and students to work as a team.
- Relevant learning by connecting core content to career academies.
- Hands-on experiences to build real-world connections for all learners, particularly struggling learners.
- Awareness of standards by students and teachers; work is aligned to the standards.

Western High School
- Instructional binders with curriculum and pacing guides.
- Project Proficiency standards aligned to new end-of-course (EOC) standards.
- “ASK”.
- Grade-level curriculum is provided by assessment coordinator.

Do the teachers and staff know where students are on their learning? What evidence did you see or hear?

Fairdale High School
- Students receive immediate intervention either at their request or the teachers’ request.
- Individualized conversations/interactions with students.
- Student panel reflected teacher ownership of each student and their learning.
- School-wide systemic plan to address interventions (e.g. 6th period, peer tutoring, Saturday school).

Jeffersontown High School
- Useful feedback from principal.
- Lesson plans shared through collaboration as a way to gauge the learning process.
- Common rubrics for assigned work shared.
- Open communication between teachers on student performance.
• Positive student-teacher relationships allow open dialogue regarding factors that affect learning (e.g. personal issues, family problems, low academic skills).
• Weekly collaboration to assess progress by individual students.
• Project Proficiency principles explained and supported by teachers.

Western High School
• Data is collected from a variety of formative and summative assessments, including Project Proficiency.
• Project Proficiency lets students know the standards on which they have attained proficiency, and teachers post charts in classrooms to let students know which standards they have mastered.
• Processes are in place to ensure that no student is left behind.
• Students have good relationships with teachers and discuss their learning.
• Analysis of performance data in professional learning communities.
• Counselors assigned to students from 10th through 12th grade, and know where students came from, where they are, and where they need/want to go.
• Learning targets are clearly posted in the classroom for all lessons.

How do teachers and staff use data to help students? What did you see or hear?

Fairdale High School
• Students and teachers own student learning.
• Regular formative assessments, combined with district assessments, provide up-to-the-minute data on each student.
• Fluid system that allows targeted help for simple intervention and long-term help for more needy students.

Jeffersontown High School
• Weekly professional learning communities evaluate student mastery of standards to determine remediation.
• Analyze data from diagnostic and proficiency exams to design lessons.
• Data allows teachers to adjust and improve practice.

How does the staff work together to help students succeed academically? What did you see or hear?

Fairdale High School
• Principal has created a culture where they are all committed to the school and the students.
• Students believe that all teachers are there to help them succeed.
• Teachers are not isolated; they work with a team of teachers to ensure high-quality instruction and effective intervention.
• Teachers recognize the challenges of their community, but don’t use them as excuses.
Jeffersontown High School
- Use cross-curricular planning to help students meet standards.
- Teachers openly stated that their instruction has improved through their collective work.
- Collaboration between career academy teachers and content teachers.
- Remediation with several teachers to address all learners (i.e. a different teacher may have different method to reach the student).
- Taking a “whatever it takes” approach.

Western High School
- Data is utilized to determine which students are at or above proficiency.
- Teachers keep daily records on student progress.
- Students are grouped according to current skill levels.
- Data is used to determine specific interventions (e.g. in-class, pull-out).
- Data is used to determine which teaching strategies work.
- Data is used for planning, to identify next steps.

Middle Schools

Do teachers know what they should be teaching? What did you see or hear?

Newburg Middle School
- High level of engagement between students and teachers.
- Most students on task.
- Focused instruction.
- Students very aware what is expected of them.
- Many evidences of student learning objectives and progress.
- Learning targets were clearly stated in each classroom.

Olmsted North Middle School
- Common Core Standards and learning targets posted in every classroom.
- Curriculum pairing guide is being following throughout the school.
- Instructional Activities were relevant and rigorous.
- Classroom environments were positive and encouraging.
- Students were engaged during instruction.

Olmsted South Middle School
- Very hands approach to teaching.
- Students were engaged and interacting.
- Instruction relevant to learning goals.
- Standards for all classes were clear.
Ramsey Middle School
- Posted learning targets, which seemed to be focused on during class.
- Intentional questioning to build student knowledge and thinking skills.
- Teachers appeared well-prepared, enjoy what they are teaching, and engaged with the students and dynamics of the room.
- Environment was positive, patient, and open. Students were on task and seemed to enjoy class.
- In several classes, students were observed recording their learning targets and reflecting on how well they met the target.
- Lots of group work.

Do teachers and staff know where students are on their learning? What evidence did you see or hear?

Newburg Middle School
- Good philosophical conversation in social studies class.

Olmsted North Middle School
- The school follows the district’s diagnostic/proficiency benchmark testing schedule.
- The Measures of Academic Progress Test is given three times a year.
- Each teacher keeps an evidence binder that has student results for all common tests and current student work samples.

Olmsted South Middle School
- Students engaged throughout the year, with regrouping of students for intervention as needed.

Ramsey Middle School
- Yes. Moving students beyond recall.
- Teachers attentive to whole class learning as well as individual needs.
- Teachers were engaged with students and responsive to student questions.

How do teachers and staff use data to help students? What did you see or hear?

Newburg Middle School
- Data is reviewed weekly to measure student progress.

Olmsted North Middle School
- Student progress is monitored by teacher teams on a regular basis.
- The best teachers are assigned to work with students who have the greatest learning needs.
- There is weekly imbedded professional development around data, lesson planning and results.
Olmsted South Middle School

- Use of MAP test.
- Use of Individualized Learning Plans.

Ramsey Middle School

- Flexible groupings – groups with different tasks and instructions.
- Data “war room” used to track student progress.
- Differentiation of instruction during class.

How does the staff work together to help students succeed academically? What did you see or hear?

Newburg Middle School

- Excellent, consistent use of technology in the classroom.
- Teamwork among teachers is outstanding.
- Principal is recognized and warmly welcomed throughout the school.
- Safe learning environment.
- Strong school leadership.

Olmsted North Middle School

- School administration and leadership team have built a culture of high expectations.
- School administration and leadership team have built a culture of working together.
- Classroom walk through (with feedback) are conducted every week on every teacher.
- Common planning time is scheduled on a daily basis.
- Teachers stay after school to either sponsor enrichment activities (clubs, teams, band, etc.) or to provide tutoring help to students.

Olmsted South Middle School

- Reliance on master teachers.
- Collaborative approach to teaching.
- Band, orchestra, and the arts.
- Culture of respect. No misbehavior.
- Focus on leadership.
- Strong effort at increasing parent engagement.

Ramsey Middle School

- The “social contracts” created by students within the teams help set the stage for a great learning environment.
- Noticed ECE support coming in. Service was seamless. Uses a “push in” rather than “pull out” model is positive.
Elementary Schools

Do teachers know what they should be teaching? What did you see or hear?

Chancey Elementary
- Teachers engaged with students, with lots of student participation.
- Teachers teaching new standards.
- Students engage in learning.
- “I can” statements throughout classrooms and hallways.
- Teachers are valued and empowered.

Coral Ridge Elementary
- Teach to common core standards and make decisions based on those standards.
- Teaching targets in every classroom.
- High level of student engagement.

Fairdale Elementary
- Focus on standards.
- No “stand and deliver” instruction. The instruction actively engaged students.
- Interventions in classroom include enrichment (Use of FLOODING Model from Coral Ridge Elementary)
- Positive visual reinforcement.
- High expectations for students.

Minors Lane Elementary School
- “I can” statements – teachers refer back to them.
- Lots of teacher resources in the rooms.
- Lots of repeating – engaging the kids –high energy level.

Portland Elementary School
- Use of curriculum maps and units evident.
- Learning targets posted in every classroom.
- Each student had their own plan for the week, where they set goals based on learning targets from the standards.
- Teachers plan lessons together, so instruction is standardized in every class at each grade level.
- Posted anchor charts in every classroom reflect strategies to meet the standards developed by students/teacher during mini-lessons.
- Systemic – everyone takes ownership for student learning.
Rutherford Elementary School
• Best practices evident throughout.
• Evidence of curriculum maps in use.
• Learning targets in the classroom.
• Kids understood and owned what they were learning.
• Lots of data on the walls.

Do teachers and staff know where students are on their learning? What evidence did you see or hear?

Chancey Elementary
• Teachers have data to measure how each student is improving or not improving.
• Teachers meet in professional learning communities to analyze data.
• A primary focus on being aware of standards and expectations.
• Track student progress and work to bring them up to speed.
• Principal does not micromanage.

Chenoweth Elementary School
• Teacher-student collaboration.
• Special interventions provided every day for 30 minutes with a certified teacher.

Coral Ridge Elementary
• 5th Grade student mentoring for kindergarten students.
• All teachers and students know their learning targets.

Fairdale Elementary
• Settings were integrated. No student knows where they are in a group.

Minors Lane Elementary School
• Kids refer to anchor charts.
• Data displayed in conference room as well for ILT and SBDM.
• Communication and planning based on needs.

Portland Elementary School
• Every teacher knows where their students are based on daily classroom work and assessment data that is monitored throughout the school year.
• Grade group teachers meet weekly to focus on regroup students based on student work from the previous week.
• Students who are not meeting their weekly goals are grouped during reading instruction based on the learning goals under which they need additional help.
• During whole group and small group instruction, teachers adapt instruction based on student responses.
• We observed instruction where teachers were monitoring and adjusting instruction to make sure every student was meeting the targets for that lesson.
- Use of student daily work – writing tasks to monitor student progress toward weekly goals.
- Play to the strengths of the child.

Rutherford Elementary School
- Hard for students to fall through the cracks.
- Students engaged and respected.
- Strong culture of learning; everyone focused on instruction.

How do teachers and staff use data to help students? What did you see or hear?

Chancey Elementary
- Teachers communicate with each other on the same grade level, sharing strategies to meet goals.
- Student data is tracked and next steps are taken for students to improve.
- Use of student data boards/”war rooms” to track student progress.

Chenoweth Elementary School
- Team leaders work together and provide weekly to ensure the progress of each student is known.
- Testing data is reviewed, and staff “name and claim” - take responsibility for a particular student. All novice students have a teacher who takes responsibility to ensure they receive the appropriate intervention.

Coral Ridge Elementary
- Teacher review data to determine students’ individual needs.
- Grouping of students to work through areas in need of additional assistance.
- Use of student response systems to gather information quickly.

Minors Lane Elementary School
- Data room – good use to make instructional decisions.
- Small groups to meet kids’ needs.
- Differentiation in classrooms.
- No pull outs- kids staying in room.
- Strong team approach.
- Culture - positive collaboration and planning.
- Embedded PD has ECE and ESL with regular classroom teachers.
- Descriptive feedback.

Portland Elementary School
- School has a data wall tracking all students over the course of the school year. You can see students progressing over time.
- Based on the data, students are regrouped and provided additional instruction in their area of need.
• We saw both push-in and pull-out models for small group intervention instruction. During small group reading instruction most classrooms had two or three adults working with small groups of students. We also observed teachers working outside the classroom with students.
• Posted chart paper in the principal’s office with the statement – “What we know from the RPAs” – analysis and instructional implications included.
• All staff know the students who are performing below grade level and have a role in their support.
• Attendance data is constantly monitored and strategies implemented to make sure students are at school.

Rutherford Elementary
• Data room for regular teacher meetings, with student data displayed on the wall.
• Data room is staffed by two instructional coaches who target interventions for students.
• Daily reference to data as part of daily school practice.
• Demonstration room that kids rotate through every six weeks.

How does the staff work together to help students succeed academically? What did you see or hear?

Chancey Elementary
• Focus on students, not teachers.
• Strong support of teachers from school leadership.
• Teachers as professionals. Professional Learning Communities.
• Outstanding teacher collaboration and work in teams.
• Sense of community. Emphasis on positive school culture working across certified and classified staff, students, parents and community partners.

Chenoweth Elementary School
• Strong PTA support and parental involvement.
• Strong volunteer base through Every1Reads.
• Emphasis on relationships – teacher-student-principal-support staff.
• Students encouraged to find and build on strengths.

Coral Ridge Elementary
• Strong school culture.
• Low teacher turnover.
• Share students across content areas.
• Community collaboration where the common goal is to get students on target.
Fairdale Elementary
- Emphasis on maximizing the support and resources going directly to kids.
- Professional learning communities.
- Collaboration between teachers across content areas.
- Discipline not an issue.

Minors Lane Elementary School
- Strong team approach.
- Great classroom management.
- Strong engagement with kids.
- Staff developer and in-house teacher – helpful.
- Every person seen as part of the puzzle.
- Teachers going to other schools to visit and learn – improves planning.
- Teachers are required to call family during first week to welcome the child and family.

Portland Elementary School
- There is a school-wide coordination and expectation that all staff members are responsible for every student.
- A posted chart in the principal’s office show the vision and mission for this school year that was developed by the staff at the beginning of the school year based on this year’s student data.
- Teachers use planning time to observe other teachers with their principal – public teaching in front of adults often, and productive conversations afterwards.
- We asked the question, “How does the staff work together to help students succeed academically?” and the following are statements they made regarding what they are working on this school year:
  - We have open, honest communication about our roles and responsibilities. We have difficult conversations.
  - Commitment to implement effort-based ability in classroom practice.
  - Frequent engagement between teachers, such as Professional Learning Communities where we learn from each other.
  - Demanding and expecting high standards for teacher expertise for all teachers.
  - Non-defensive and self-examination of teaching practice in relation to student results- constant use of data to re-focus teaching.
- Anchor charts in every classroom developed with the students.
- Teachers use Care for Kids and Fred Jones to meet academic, social, and emotional needs of students.
- Because the school has so many students identified as ADHD and students struggling how to transition from one activity to another appropriately, teachers are participating in a year-long professional development and study with the school’s occupational therapist. Teachers are learning how to teach students strategies to monitor their behavior and apply those strategies.
- Eleven teachers have been trained in safe crisis management.
• External resources to support all students and teaching the standards through various modalities are constantly sought (e.g. Opera, Blue Apple Players, Street Academy).
• School climate – students feel safe and have a sense of belonging. Teachers want to be there.
• Strong coordination of staff - for small group instruction inside and outside of classroom.

Rutherford Elementary
• Strong, high energy principal leadership and support for teachers.
• Teachers feel like they are part of a family.
• Team professional development opportunities.
• Parent and community involvement tailored to specific cultural and social needs of families.
• Kids sign pledges/contracts about what they will achieve.
• Routine celebrations of success and meeting goals.
• Good use of budget to buy additional certified staff.
School Visit Team Members

**Atkinson**
Diane Porter
Rosemary Miller
Julie Schmidt
Karen Napier
Julia Robinson
Tim Holman

**Portland**
Diane Porter
Lue Peabody
Paul Lenzi
Barbara Sexton
Carol Smith
Alan Young

**Chancey**
Mike Mulheirn
Scott Koloms
Councilman Glen Stuckel
Marie Young
Mary Thurman
Tamy Holmes

**Rutherford**
Stephanie Bateman
Debra Hoffer
Beanie Geoghegan
Nancy Banet
Doris Carter
Kevin Fields

**Chenoweth**
Cordelia Hardin
Councilman Jerry Miller
Lindy Stoll
Karen Stone

**Young**
Diane Porter
DeVone Holt
Dan Ash
David Seewer
Aneeka Ferrell
Jeanine Ross

**Coral Ridge**
Cary Petersen
John Eberhardt
Kelly Higdon
Beverly Calloway

**Ramsey**
Sandy Ledford
Michael Hudson
Lynn Howard
Dana Jackson
Kelly Ramsey
Jo Bell

**Fairdale E.**
Donna Hargens
Councilwoman Vicki Welch
Mary Ellen Wiederwohl
Teri Gale
Royce Whitman

**Newburg**
Bill Eckels
Laura Frankrone
Debbie Lindsey
Jenny LaWall
Kathy Zandona
Erik Eades

**Minors Lane**
Amy Dennes
Caroline Howe
Lindsey Miller
Lori Cook
Diane McKim
School Visit Team Members

**Olmsted North**
Bob Rodosky  
Brooke Pardue  
Representative Wade Hurt  
Vitalis Lanshima  
Skip Hahnert  
Kim Dye  
Beverly Chester-Burton

**Western H.**
Linda Duncan  
Jack Jacobs  
David Oetken  
Councilman Rick Blackwell  
Cherie Dimar  
Marcie Gunnell  
Tammy Berlin

**Olmsted South**
Farryll Brown  
Ann Curtis  
Heather Burns  
Steve Tarver  
Kathleen Helm  
Dale Warren

**Fairdale H.**
Kim Goff  
Rowan Claypool  
John Asher  
Tom Moffett  
Eddie Squires  
Andrew Bailey

**Jeffersontown H.**
Joe Burks  
James Reddish  
Councilman Stuart Benson  
Jennie Jean Davidson  
Heather Wampler  
Brian Wampler  
Terrilyn Fleming

**Waggener**
Lynne Wheat  
Michael F. Hall  
Representative Ron Crimm  
Cherie Dimar  
Tammy Berlin
Appendix A: School Data

### Atkinson Elementary

#### School Website

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Portland Elementary

School Website

Rutherford Elementary

School Website

Young Elementary

School Website
### Newburg Middle

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### Olmsted North * Newly configured school in 2008-2009

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### Olmsted South * Newly configured school in 2008-2009

**School Website**

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Ramsey Middle *New school in 2008-2009

School Website

Reading

Math

Fairdale High

School Website

Reading

Math

Jeffersontown High

School Website

Reading

Math