

DOINGWHATWORKS



Video

FULL DETAILS AND TRANSCRIPT

Planning Together to Support Student Growth

Hardy Elementary School, Tennessee • August 2008

Topic: Turning Around Chronically Low-Performing Schools

Practice: Focus on Instruction

Highlights

- Grade-level teacher teams meet weekly to review assessment data, discuss individual students, and share teaching strategies.
- The meetings shape the school's curriculum and help create a team environment.

About the Site

Hardy Elementary School

Chattanooga, TN

Demographics

97% Black

3% White

100% Free or Reduced-Price Lunch

Several practices helped Hardy Elementary School go from being the worst to the top among the elementary schools in the state of Tennessee:

- A new principal bringing in a new vision and approach
- New teachers
- Targeted professional development to establish a schoolwide set of instructional strategies
- A clearly articulated lesson plan structure
- A balanced literacy program
- Regular use of student assessment data that included monitoring and adjusting instruction based on a careful analysis of data
- New school building
- Clear behavior expectations from all students and school staff

Full Transcript

Maston to colleagues: And what we are going to do is we are going to focus on the reading language arts part, and we are going to look at the data.

Maston: The teachers here at Hardy meet weekly. It's important that we meet as a grade-level team because during that time we discuss our kids and the testing assessments, which help us to get together, focus on certain skills that the kids may need. And also, we are able to look at these different students, see who needs intervention, and see who needs to be placed with the different support teams that we have for the advanced students. Also during that time, we come together in order to brainstorm on writing prompts, and each grade level does this. It's important that the writing prompts are geared towards that specific grade.

Also during that time, if we have concerns of materials that we need during our team time—that's a period where we look at the students and we divide them by ability, and we work with those kids on whatever skills they need. So there are times when one group of kids may not need a certain help in the area where other kids do. So during those grade-level meetings, we are able to brainstorm, come up with different ideas, and also we share these weekly with our administrative team.

Maston to colleagues: What I have noticed is there are two areas across the board with the students that we have now who are either borderline proficient, and we have to come up with strategies of getting them to advanced because our goal this year is to move as many kids as we can to advanced. So our first team time, what do you want to focus on because what I have noticed is the grammar and the writing process were the two areas that needed the most help?

Teacher: We probably just need to work on one of them for the first team time. Maybe focus on grammar, and maybe we can break it down to see exactly where in the grammar process they had their problems; I am sure there is something that gives maybe more detail.

Maston to colleagues: Yes, there is. You ought to take a look at it, but these were the two areas that I was looking at right here. And if you would notice, I could just randomly pick—see how it is?

Teacher: That writing process seems to be every year in third and fourth grade. Grammar, I am a little bit surprised.

Maston: These grade level meetings are very important because they guide our instruction, and we are able to look at where the kids are, and use the information as a team in order to put together strategies and materials to move our kids forward.