

 VIDEO
3:27 min

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Engaging Every Staff Member

MacArthur Elementary School, Minnesota
January 2014

Topic **TURNING AROUND CHRONICALLY LOW-PERFORMING SCHOOLS**

Highlights

- » The principal of Laura MacArthur Elementary School worked with his leadership team to conduct a comprehensive needs assessment to find out what was working and what was not working.
- » The principal and the leadership team determined that they needed to focus on differentiated instruction in math, guided reading, and small groups.
- » Their vision is to be a Reward School by 2015, and say they did it together.
- » Principal Glockle makes sure to engage every staff member, so that transformation comes from them. Staff are empowered to take ownership of the challenges facing the school.

About the Site **MacArthur Elementary School Duluth, Minnesota**

Demographics

(Source: NCES Common Core of Data, 2011-12)


- » Grades PreK–5
- » 466 students
- » 77% White


- » 9% Multiracial
- » 6% American Indian/Alaska Native
- » 5% Black
- » 2% Hispanic
- » 1% Asian/Pacific Islander
- » 79% Free or Reduced-Price Lunch
- » Schoolwide Title I

- » The Minnesota Department of Education identified Laura MacArthur Elementary School as a Priority school in 2012, demonstrating performance in the lowest 5 percent in the state.
- » The school applied for and received a School Improvement Grant (SIG) in September 2012.
- » The principal and the Leadership Team worked together to identify areas of weakness and form a plan for instructional changes in the following areas:
 - Differentiated instruction in math
 - Small-group instruction in reading
- » The school received support from the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) as well as a regional center called the Northern Center of Excellence.


Full Transcript





 **00:04** My name is Nathan Glockle. I'm principal at Laura MacArthur Elementary School in Duluth, Minnesota.


 **00:10** To give you a little bit of background on the turnaround efforts at Laura MacArthur, our school was labeled a Priority school as a persistently low-performing elementary school in the state of Minnesota. We needed to really ramp up our efforts in helping our most at-risk children. We had a comprehensive need assessment, and we looked at what were the things that were working, what were the things that weren't working, and we got our Leadership Team together and we started to talk about the things that weren't working. And we had already discussed what had worked in a survey

when I first got here. It was differentiated instruction in math, it was guided reading, and it was small groups. And so we took that and for the last two and a half years, that's what we've been focusing on.

 **00:58** Before our Priority label in 2012, we had met two different Saturdays with the Leadership Team to begin the conversation about what our vision might look like. And we developed a vision, and that vision is to be a Reward School in 2015 and say we did it together. And with that in mind, we really tried to implement things that were simple to understand, and it's something that everybody had a piece in. We talked and brought everybody's core beliefs to the table, and we believed that we could be, and so really, from the very onset, it was giving problems and challenges over to the staff.

 **01:49** I could always tell people what to do, but in order for transformation to happen it had to come from them. One of the reasons I believe we have such high staff engagement is, staff are empowered to take ownership of their situation of people's problems. It's about people not telling people what to do but asking them, "What do you think the solution is?" And so I sat through meetings after meetings and just brought people together, and I think that's the essence of leadership—is to bring people together to talk about problems and solutions.

 **02:18** Our school improvement plan was written by our staff, our School Improvement Grant was written by our staff, and the Leadership Team saw what can be done when they're working together, and they brought that sense of collaboration and teamwork to their grade-level teams. Everybody was engaged and they felt that their voice was going to be heard. And so, when we look at the amount of turnover, it's been very minimal because they're committed and they want to see this thing through.

 **02:51** We've seen some tremendous gains in a short period of time in closing an achievement gap. We went from the bottom 5% to

the top 1% in the state in closing an achievement gap. And there's a lot of different things that had to happen in the building, but we really capitalized on the low hanging fruit that was in the building, and engaged every single staff member in the building to get their oar in the water.

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