

Heyburn Accountability Report Background Information.

Dear Members of the Board and Dr. Cox:

At the time of our submission we could not get some of our pictures to download so in the essence of timeliness, we are submitting our presentation without those pictures. Our presentation at the board meeting will include the photos. We also wanted to give you a brief synopsis of our data as background for our school focus and the changes we have instituted this year for improvement.

Our ISAT scores for English Language Arts fell just below the state scores in 3rd and 4th grade while our 5th grade scores exceeded state scores. We attributed this to some innovative things our 5th grade tried last year with their struggling readers. Last year they took their most struggling readers and rather than focusing on just filling in missing skills, they started instead by having them do a novel study using a book that, as it turned out, was a higher reading level than the book being used by their highest achieving students. The idea was to fill in holes through meaningful reading experiences. This, in combination with working very closely with our para professionals to scaffold information and meet individual student needs, proved to be highly successful.

Our math scores painted a similar story. We had excellent growth in 3rd and 5th grade, despite falling short of state scores across the grade levels. We are thrilled to have new curriculum to help us shore up what we have been missing in this area.

We also noticed a similar trend in our lower grades on the IRI. Fall to spring growth was strong despite seeing a dip in achievement in kinder and first grade. We attribute much of that to inexperience: 5 of our 7 teachers had 2 or less years of experience and 3 of those 5 had no student teaching experience. Those teachers have grown a ton over the past year and we are confident that our achievement in these 2 grade levels will continue to rise.

You will also notice as you preview our presentation that our numbers have grown significantly since last fall at this time. Last year our student population in the fall was about 492, by the spring we had grown to nearly 520. This fall we are currently at 547 students. With that growth have come new challenges. In addition to large class sizes, particularly in 4th and 5th grade, an overwhelming number of our new students are coming to us with significant learning deficits and/or behavior problems. Issues we hope to address through our changes.

At the end of last year, the Heyburn staff previewed our performance data in June and discussed their successes and their challenges for the year. From that conversation, we formulated a pre-plan, if you will, of what kind of changes we could make for this year. Here is what we said at the end of last year...

1st Grade:

- Establish grade level relationships earlier in the year → class exchange opportunities
- Looking for new interventions and being diligent to stick to them
- Knowing what we need for documentation for RTI

2nd Grade:

- Starting math interventions early
- Love them first & believe in them, teach them second
- Won't vs. Can't → determining which can be a challenge

3rd Grade:

- Work on motivating the unmotivated students
- Student perseverance
- Consistent and in-depth planning
- Learn to implement math curriculum

4th Grade:

- Teach & review expectations
- Character ed
- Better utilize late bus time
- Less spoon feeding
- Not underestimate kids including backgrounds

5th Grade:

- Success because of scaffolding, intensity, high expectations
- Failures – some scaffolding, but not as much as was needed
- Cross class team building and confidence building activities weekly and monthly

What we have put in place for improvement this year is a direct result of those conversations.

Respectfully,

Michele

Michele Widmier
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