

Great Ideas for Great Public Schools

WEST VIRGINIA

Multi-pronged strategy gets results

Teachers and staff at Eagle School Intermediate in Martinsburg, West Virginia, are using new strategies to identify and address student learning needs, with the result that **student achievement is on the rise and achievement gaps are narrowing**. The school, which serves a diverse and at-risk population of 720 fourth- and fifth-grade students, has earned recognition at both the national and state levels for its success. In 2008, Eagle Intermediate was one of six schools recognized nationally with a Panasonic National School Change Award for consistent and outstanding growth in student achievement, and in 2009, the school was named a West Virginia School of Excellence for 21st Century Learning.

Teacher-led initiatives

- When the new school opened in the fall of 2001, Title I teacher Judy Miller says the staff worked hard to create a student-centered learning environment, and the principal backed teachers' strategies for change.
- One of the most significant initiatives was learning to use data both to design instruction and adjust instructional practice.
- Some of the other teacher-led initiatives included tying professional development to the school's needs, aligning curriculum and instruction, finding new ways to involve parents, and integrating technology into the curriculum.

Greater rigor

- Two years ago, West Virginia simultaneously upgraded its educational standards and developed a more challenging state test (WESTEST2) that also includes an online writing assessment. With those changes, meaningful comparisons can't be made with current numbers and previous years' results.
- Based on WESTEST2 2010 data, Eagle Intermediate outperformed both county and state in percentages of reading and math proficiency. The school has made adequate yearly progress (AYP) four of the last five years.

Continuous use of data

- Students are assessed periodically during the school year using computer-adaptive assessments such as STAR Reading, STAR Math, and STAR Early Literacy from Renaissance Learning. Teachers use the information to create a blueprint to inform instruction. They also use the data to select appropriate instructional materials and to form flexible student groups that address individual needs. These assessments are used as universal screening instruments as well as progress-monitoring tools, and they are an integral part of the school's RTI (Response to Intervention) framework.
- Students are reassessed often. Each time, teachers use the immediate feedback to adjust instruction and identify instructional interventions to address specific student needs.

Collaboration among all staff members

- The administration focused on building professional relationships based on respect and valuing the contributions of individual staff members.
- Staff initiated change, participated in shared decision making, and collaborated across grade levels in school-wide focus teams and committees.

For more information: Judy Miller, Title I reading specialist, Eagle School Intermediate, 304-263-0422, mjcmiller@aol.com

Panasonic National School Change Award: <http://bit.ly/ifKCnO>

West Virginia School of Excellence for 21st Century Learning: <http://bit.ly/h1AvW5>



Great Public Schools for Every Student