Case Study for Katherine Nielson School

Grades K-5

Galesburg District 205

Galesburg, IL

February 2003
Katherine Nielson School – Key Takeaways

### Catalysts for Change

- **1996** – District decided to realign schools’ curriculum and supporting activities to new IL learning standards.
  - District teacher committees produced and published expectations for each grade
  - New report card structure aligned with IL learning standards and required teachers to gather student performance information 3x a year
  - District teacher committees developed Assessment Guideline book for teachers to use
  - New structure of student grades: K-2 – “progress” grades; 3-5 letter grades
- **1997** – Board of Education identified R,W,M needs
  - Mandated summer school for all students not meeting IL standards
- **Workshops convened to create new curriculum**
  - All grade teachers plus consultants worked summer days to create new curriculum, assessment and goal-supporting activities
  - Teachers from prior year’s workshops on hand

### Key Factors for School Success

- **Teachers’ opinions:**
  - Consistency of teaching cohort, which has built a strong, cooperative team
  - Supportive administrators who empower teachers
  - “Data analysis not most important”
  - Teachers provided with 45 planning periods each day
- **Asst. Supt. Dr. Sappington’s opinions:**
  - Curriculum realignment to IL learning standards
  - Professional development opportunities
  - Teachers seeing data coming back to them, more engaged in using results
  - “Quality is made in the board room” – strong board direction/mission
  - Teachers given autonomy to work as they see fit within the system
  - “Attachment to a measurement process that promotes change”

### Challenges Overcome

- **Teacher buy-in:** applied district pressure/initiative for teachers to change, but ensured they were fully involved in change process
  - Teachers also provided significant amount of relevant professional development and peer training
Katherine Nielson School – Profile

<table>
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<tr>
<th>School Profile</th>
<th>ISAT performance</th>
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| › Grade levels: K - 5  
  › Five year average: 318 students, 30% student mobility, 62% low income, 95% student attendance, 70% white, 24% black, 5% Hispanic  
  › Teachers  
    - Teacher mobility rates very low  
  › Nielson was an Accelerated School for past two years  
  › Principal's background  
    - Current principal is in first year at Nielson  
    - Former principal information unavailable  | › Third Grade  
  | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 |
  | R    | 0.84 | 0.67 | 0.62 | 0.73 | 0.79 |
  | M    | 1.00 | 0.75 | 0.83 | 0.92 | 0.80 |
  | W    | 0.98 | 0.82 | 0.80 | 0.85 | 0.78 |

|  | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 |
| S    | 0.93 | 0.96 | 0.60 | 0.75 | 0.69 |
| SS   | 0.93 | 0.88 | 0.48 | 0.66 | 0.61 |

|  | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 |
| R    | 0.58 | 0.56 | 0.51 | 0.68 |
| M    | 0.49 | 0.59 | 0.48 | 0.74 |
| W    | 0.83 | 0.84 | 0.77 | 0.77 |

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<tr>
<th>Technology Profile</th>
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Katherine Nielson School – Data Collection and Analysis, Standard

Data Capture and Analysis

- ISAT data collected and used by School Improvement Teams as they construct each School Improvement Plan
- STAR tests given at the beginning of the year for all students in 1st through 3rd grades
- Language Arts: pre- and post-testing administered throughout year by all teachers using 4-Block program for 1st through 3rd grades
- Mathematics: pre-testing for all students in the 3rd grade
- All pre- and post-testing administered by teachers with commercially provided as well as teacher-authored exams.
- Each grade’s “core tests” aligned with state standards and help determine optimal student groupings as well as the students that will need Title 1 support
- Title 1 teacher assists classroom teachers with collection and organization of assessment results.
- Nielson school records any student’s behavior problems and data is tracked and provided for evaluation by grade teacher and principal
- Iowa Test of Basic Skills and COGAT exams used to be administered at Nielson, but were replaced several years ago with the district’s standards aligned assessments (“integrated theme tests” given three times an academic year for grades 3 through 5)
- None of these assessments required any special skill or training in data gathering or analysis techniques
- No special technology needed to administer assessments, gather and distribute results

Implementation of Data Analysis

- Results of the above assessments indicate to teachers which areas are problems for individual students and student groups. Teachers, as a group and on their own, determine the best method to improve student performance, whether that be simply re-teaching the subject matter or finding new ways to delivery instruction
District gathers student performance data three times a year from grades 3 through 5. Classroom and Integrated Theme Tests (from Houghton Mifflin) are used
- District assistant superintendent and his assistant gather and enter all data results by school, grade and class
- Asst. Supt. uses SPSS software to record, sort, analyze, and publish results. He prepares results for quarterly report to school board and for consumption by the schools
- Principal gets back printout detailing results by each classroom
- Teachers get back details of their own classroom, but only summaries for grades and school

Teachers also use the district’s assessment record book, which was developed by district/school committees for teachers to monitor different performance measurements

K-2 – indirect student assessments. No district data. “Specific assessments in language arts and math”

District’s “integrated theme tests” are “never aligned with our needs” according to teacher sample. The older district assessment are used by the teachers as they see fit

Long standing “cadres” committees to get level understanding of ISAT results and implications

Because teachers are assessing and reporting on their own students, Dr. Sappington integrates ISAT data results to analysis and reports to add measure of objectivity. If serious incongruities between ISAT and district assessments, Dr. Sappington and principal will confer

District assessments are used by district administrators to identify trends towards or away from IL state standards
Teachers able to use the periodic district assessments to refocus efforts at re-teaching, though district assessments provide them with trending data unavailable to them with their classroom assessments and ISAT data
Katherine Nielson School – Leadership/Culture

**Leadership Roles**

- District Profile
  - Initiative for re-alignment of curriculum with new IL learning standards, and the attendant requirements to gather and assess student performance data regularly, came from the board of education and district administrators
- Teachers across district demonstrated leadership and proved commitment to accountability through participation in summer workshops, and authorship of new curriculum and assessment requirements

**Communication**

- Data results are shared between all grades; collaboration between grades is strong. Cadres meet once a month
- Grade level and faculty meetings occur monthly
- Parent guides published and distributed, including academic expectations by grade, subject area
- Teachers make home visits to children/parents

**External Support**

- Grants and district funds used to finance curriculum and assessment realignments. Currently, only grants are available
- Title 2 funds now are sought and used for district’s professional development of classroom assessment techniques
- Nielson has numerous community organizations (corporate and philanthropic) that contribute time, money and resources: e.g., Hy-Vee, Wal-Mart, Kiwanis, Rotary
- PTO provides breakfast for children during ISAT tests

**Professional Development**

- Standards aligned professional training provided by Two Rivers Professional Development Center – funded by the state
- Consultants on hand for curriculum and assessment creation. Consultants also roamed schools after summer workshops were over.
- Teachers’ professional growth plans designed to increase use of and comfort with data assessment techniques
  - Teachers developed pre/post testing processes. 4-block summer conference initiated this new approach
  - Nielson P.D. sessions also provided training around “how to use data” and various assessment techniques. Funding acquired by Dr. Sappington
Katherine Nielson School – Miscellaneous

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<tr>
<th>Hard Copy Appendices</th>
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<tr>
<td>‣ District Report Card for students</td>
<td>‣ Key sources: grant and district funds</td>
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<td>‣ Academic expectations pamphlets: 5th grade language arts and mathematics</td>
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<td>‣ Parental guide to District’s Elementary school report card</td>
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<th>Miscellaneous</th>
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<tr>
<td>‣ Sheryl McKinnon – 2nd grade teacher</td>
<td>‣ Language Arts consultants used:</td>
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<tr>
<td>‣ Barbara – 3rd grade teacher</td>
<td>- Dr. Marrietta Casseel from Western IL Univ.</td>
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<tr>
<td>‣ Debbie – 1st grade teacher</td>
<td>- Dr. Binelli from Western IL Univ.</td>
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<td>‣ All three at school for over six years</td>
<td>‣ Mathematics consultant used:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Dr. Melford Olsen and Dr. Judy Olsen</td>
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<td></td>
<td>‣ Cunningham and Hale: Balanced teacher Literacy, 4-block instructional model</td>
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