Case Study for Washington School
Grades K-3
Mattoon District Number 2
Mattoon, IL
February 2003
### Washington School – Key Takeaways

#### Catalysts for Change

- From 1989 established new school emphases:
  - Shared decision making, shared responsibilities
  - Flat organizational structure; teachers peers with school administration
  - All social/personal problems given equal importance as academic problems
- 1989 – Washington an Accelerated School
  - 80% of teachers had to approve Accelerated school program
  - Took 4-5 years for AR to become successful, to see results
  - Increased use of surveys of: discipline, attendance, academic achievement
  - Formal “Inquiry” process used to identify yearly goals (Ongoing before state implemented SIPS)
  - SIP planning sessions use SWOT analysis to prioritize problems and feasible solutions
- Principal Kruse builds trust by often going along with school-consensus decisions though he may disagree

#### Key Factors for School Success

- Principal’s opinions
  - Teacher stability – low re-training efforts needed
  - Small size of school created effective team
  - Teachers bought into reform philosophy, “which happened to be Accelerated Schools”
  - “Many issues can’t be quantified”
  - “Downplay score/ranking pressure – don’t want to push test scores at expense of learning”
  - “Shared ownership” of responsibilities/decisions
- Teachers’ opinions
  - “Best data is communication with other teachers”
  - “the way teachers work together”
  - Use of cadres – looking at information together
  - Long standing practices using test results to improve, not to punish
  - Accelerated Schools processes tracked data, to-do plans, and results

#### Challenges Overcome

- Not complete buy-in from all teachers; some unwilling to change
  - School wide units employed to encourage cooperation
  - Heavy use of cadres also facilitated implementing change
Washington School – Profile

School Profile

- Kindergarten through 3rd grade
- Five year average: 196 students, 32% student mobility, 54% low income, 94% attendance, 92% white students, 6% black students, 2% Hispanic students, 22 students per class
- Teachers
  - Specialty teachers: school wide Title 1 teacher, LD teacher
  - Teacher mobility rates: very low. Between 1993-2000, only 2 teachers changed
  - School's recruiting process: New teachers brought in having bought in to Washington’s school methodologies. New teachers also heavily involved in cadres. Teaching committee heavily actively involved with hiring decisions
- Principal's background: Durl Kruse
  - Principal at Washington since 1993
  - Nine years as principal at another Mattoon district before Washington

Historical ISAT performance

- Third Grade
  - 1998: R 0.94, M 1.00, W 1.00
  - 1999: R 0.65, M 0.83, W 0.68
  - 2000: R 0.77, M 0.82, W 0.64
  - 2001: R 0.64, M 0.75, W 0.54
  - 2002: R 0.65

- Fourth Grade
  - 1998: S 1.00, SS 1.00
  - 1999: S 0.95, SS 0.90
  - 2000: S 0.78

Technology Profile

- 4 PCs per classroom, and a lab with 20+ PCs. Internet access.
- Staff uses PCs a great deal, for clerical, communication and lesson plan purposes
## Data Capture and Analysis

- Principal Kruse not concerned about year to year ISAT scores and tries to shield faculty from pressures of ISAT requirements. “It doesn’t take more than 1 or 2 students to move percentages” significantly
- ISAT and District data: evaluated in context of SIP at beginning and end of school year
  - SWOT analysis applied to results, the analysis of which has generated: cadres, school wide units, school wide tests
- District assessments given at least once a month. Considered “overkill” by teachers. Assessments adjusted so often not perceived to be useful. Assessments created by teachers who were not given any training to write questions. No coordination between what teachers were teaching and state objectives
- End of each quarter: Star Early Literacy (on PCs) measured three times a year
- Title 1 testing:
  - Each new student to school given Title 1 reading evaluation
  - Observation tests of Title 1 students given at end of program and then at end of year
- Reading recovery testing and after school testing administered on various bases
- EIU students perform in SOAR program
- In frequencies varying by teacher:
  - “Success Maker” program for reading and math
  - Accelerated Reader

## Implementation of Data Analysis

- “ISAT assessments only affect policy “of learning” and will never affect “how” students learn from day to day
- District assessments: according to principal teachers don’t use results of district assessment
- Teachers use other various tests to determine what amount of effort and attention individual students need
### Washington School – Data Collection and Analysis, Exceptional

#### Data Capture and Analysis

- School generated and administered surveys
  - General school evaluation survey (district provided; not given at Washington last 2 years because of its repetitious nature)
  - Surveys created by Washington teachers for: parents, teachers, and students.
  - Administered at various frequencies: some multiple times a year, some once every two-three years

#### Implementation of Data Analysis

- Results of surveys are evaluated at year-end school improvement meetings to determine on what issues next year’s goals and teaching cadres should focus
Washington School – Leadership/Culture

**Leadership Roles**

- **Principal Profile**
  - Kruse sought out external support for school reform
  - Kruse solicits and respects collective will of teachers
- **District Profile**
  - Though the district administers a district-wide assessment, they do not interfere with Washington’s efforts at self-assessment
  - Not many ways that district facilitates sharing, communication across district schools, except for curriculum and assessment creation
  - Though teachers not bought in to curriculum creation rationale

**Communication**

- Teacher cadres set up for: Title 1, Accelerated school, building administration, staff development
- Cadres “build school ownership” of issues and solutions
- School & District wide grade level meetings. District dir. of curriculum controls meeting agenda.
- Orientation, workshops, conferences, and parent surveys all used to integrate parents into education process

**External Support**

- Union plays neither a significant positive nor negative role
- Mini-grants are given to teachers for generating new ideas for learning. Grants approved by school steering committee
- District also has grant process for teachers

**Professional Development**

- Because of its small size, Washington able to give all teachers professional development training three to four times per year.
- All types of professional development topics selected
- Topics chosen by teachers together
- In-service training performed so teachers gain knowledge on single topic at the same time
- No specific examples of DDDM training
- Accelerated Schools: professional development institute
- District mentoring program; paid teachers for extra time to meet with newly hired teachers
Washington School – Miscellaneous

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<td>▸ Mrs. Chris Bough – 3rd grade; all subjects; 14 years at Washington</td>
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