PLC Learning Community Evidence of Effectiveness

School Information

School Name: Canyon Elementary school (K-6)

District Name: Lincoln Country School District #1

School Address: 1310 Antelope Drive, Kemmerer, WY 83101

Principal: Brad Meyer

Principal Email: bmeyer@rangers1.net

Web Address: rangers1.net

Demographics

Number of Students: 340

Percent Eligible for Free and reduced lunch: 17%

Percent of Limited English Proficient: .5%

Percent of Special Education: 23.2%

Racial/Ethnic Percentages:

* White- 90%
* Black- NA
* Hispanic- 9%
* Pacific Islander- .3%
* American Indian/Alaskan Native- .5%

Achievement Data

**Table 1**

|  |
| --- |
| *Third Grade Reading Proficiency Rates and Respective t-test Values* |
| School Year | 2010-11 | 2011-12 | 2012-13 | 2013-14 | 2014-15 | 2015-16 |
| TES RPR | 65.31 | 65.30 | 80.85 | 83.93 | 91.67 | 68.63 |
| State RPR | 65.50 | 69.56 | 65.66 | 61.96 | 60.65 | 58.05 |
| t Scorea | 0.027 | 0.619 | 2.877 | 3.346 | 4.250 | 1.585 |

Note. RPR = reading proficiency rate

aCritical value of t = 1.645 for a one-tailed test at the 95% confidence level and 1.28 for a one-tailed test at 90% confidence level, for large df (greater than 6500).

3rd grade reading scores taken from the doctoral dissertation of Dr. Brad Martin, a quasi-study of the school wide implementation of MTSS examining progress in reading proficiency rates for the State Wide Test, PAWS.

**Table 2**

|  |
| --- |
| *Fourth Grade Reading Proficiency Rates and Respective t-test Values* |
| School Year | 2010-11 | 2011-12 | 2012-13 | 2013-14 | 2014-15 | 2015-16 |
| TES RPR | 78.38 | 78.85 | 91.11 | 78.05 | 69.09 | 80.43 |
| State RPR | 83.60 | 83.16 | 78.42 | 63.91 | 60.45 | 65.44 |
| t Scorea | 0.831 | 0.850 | 2.066 | 1.970 | 1.306 | 2.109 |

Note. RPR = reading proficiency rate

aCritical value of t = 1.645 for a one-tailed test at the 95% confidence level and 1.28 for a one-tailed test at 90% confidence level, for large df (greater than 6500).

4th grade reading scores taken from the doctoral dissertation of Dr. Brad Martin, a quasi-study of the school wide implementation of MTSS examining progress in reading proficiency rates for the State Wide Test, PAWS.







Canyon Elementary Significant Data

Canyon elementary began implementation of the PLC process during the year 2012. Canyon elementary had enjoyed seven and a half years of PLC effectiveness. In this application, there are two sets of data charts, one indicating the last three years of PLC implementation and one set of data for the first four years, results from a study conducted by Brad Martin. While test scores not always accurately show growth, progress, and all of the other amazing work our teachers put into the PLC process, we do use our states standardize testing as one method of accountability. The State of Wyoming previously used PAWS and now is currently employing WY-TOPP for testing purposes.

Dr. Brad Martin conducted his study on the efficacy of PLC implementation in regards to increasing the proficiency rates of reader in the third and fourth grade. Dr. Martin’s baseline data included two years of scores prior to PLC implementation (2010-2012) and four years following implementation (2013-2016). The local reading scores were compared to the state reading proficiency rates for each year for each of the two grades. What Dr. Martin found was that the two years prior to implementation there were no significant differences between scores of Canyon Elementary and the State scores. During implementation, that six of the eight post-PLC comparisons show that Canyon Elementary reading proficiency rates were significantly higher than the state rates at the 95% confidence level and the remaining two were significant at the 90% confidence level (Martin, 2017). His findings clearly indicate the efficacy with which the staff worked diligently to implement PLC with substantial results.

Following Dr. Martin’s study, Canyon Elementary continued to improve upon our school wide implementation of PLC ‘s. You can see how we have been able to advance with our progress and improvement of our scores, which for the most part, remain above the state average. During the year 2016-2017, PAWS continued as the state wide assessment. Our scores remained above the state average a minimum of 6 percentage points to a maximum of 21 percentage points. Wyoming changed their state assessment to WY-TOPP beginning in 2017. Where PAWS was a paper based test, WY-TOPP presents as a computerized test. This change in format was difficult for both students and teachers, as we, as a whole school, had to learn a new format. Teachers took extra time to teach students how to navigate the site, the new tools available, and the new question designs. There were decreases in scores across the state of Wyoming during this change, however, through working collaboratively with our grade level PLC’s and through intensive small group instruction, CES was still able to remain close to or above the state average. CES maintained an average of 6 percentage points above the state average across math, reading, and science.

Following the first year of WY-TOPP testing, we steadily increased our scores. In year 2018-2019, CES not only remained above the state average in both reading and math, but increased our scores by an average of 13. 1percentage points across reading, math, and science.

One area where Canyon’s work through the PLC process really shined was in the growth number of our 6th grade students from year 2017 to 2019. Through grade level PLC meetings, our sixth grade teachers identified skill deficits in reading and math. Each week, the met for 45 minutes or more to discuss how to dived their groups into the most effective levels and skills in order to address these deficits. In reading, their students grew an average of 48 points.

**Efforts in Building Professional Learning Communities**

First and foremost, Canyon Elementary has actively encouraged PLC process in our school for the past seven year, and have seen increases in growth across all grade levels. As a school, we strive to reach all students and aid them in achieving their potential. Administration creates schedules that allow all grade levels to meet a minimum of hour each day. This allows teachers to review curriculum, build common assessments, discuss each student individually, and assess small group design. Teacher’s follow a PLC set agenda which lists agreed upon norms and also lists SMART goals that were built at the beginning of the year. Again, both SMART Goals and grade level, leadership, and specials PLC Norms are created new each year. Emphasis for the meetings are placed on the four big questions: What do we expect our students to learn? How will we know they are learning? How will we respond when they don't learn? How will we respond if they already know it? During this time, teachers are also able to divide students by skill and discuss which teacher or para is best fit to teach this skill for optimum effectiveness and growth.

Not only do our teachers meet daily, but Canyon grade level also meet monthly with all staff working with our students, including teachers, IF, para’s, SPED teachers, and school counselor to discuss grade level outcomes, test results, progress of small groups, and to address behavior concerns. In these meetings, the teachers have built an agenda to follow with norms agreed on by the meeting team.

Our specials teachers meet not only as their own team, but also meet with other grades often to discuss ways to create cross-curricular teaching, bringing math and reading into their art, music, and PE lessons.

We meet as a PLC leadership team approximately twice a month to discuss concerns of the school, progress being made, and identify avenues to increase our abilities as a school. The grade level agendas are reviewed during this meeting as yet another way to monitor progress of our students and creates a way to check and maintain fidelity to the PLC process. During the year, the leadership PLC ensures that the school schedule is conducive for each team to meet daily for a minimum of one hour.

Our school believe that bringing in parents is an increasingly important component to the success of our students. We access two avenues of parent cooperation, the first being our Build Leadership Team, where parents meet with teachers and administration to confer over building policy, ways to increase student academic motivation, and how to increase partnership between the school and the community. Secondly, parents are asked to be active participants in their students learning and behavior plans through collaborative meetings. As a school and community, we have both behavior and academic teams consisting on the homeroom teacher, school counselor, principal, SPED teacher, and administration that meeting on the parent’s student to address concerns and create intervention plans which are individualized to meet the student’s specific needs. These meetings occur frequently and can be initiated by any team member, with parents taking an imperative role as a team member.

**Effective Strategies**

As previously stated, we as a school maintain adherence to the four PLC questions when building our programs. Firstly, we expect all of our students to thrive and grow no matter where they are skill wise or academic level. We level our small groups by skills as well as level, keeping groups in a relatively low number to maximize our time with each student. Second, we have created common formative assessments in each grade level, allowing teachers to examine what is working and potential problem areas that can be improved upon. Thirdly, when students are not learning, teacher’s identify which students are struggling in which skills, then create individualized intervention plans to meet that student’s needs. Finally, through differentiation and increased awareness, students are pushed in a rigorous curriculum that, as a district, we have built to create an environment where our highest learners can continue to grow.

To celebrate our students when they grow, Canyon created the Ranger Buck store and monthly celebration assemblies to reward students who are working diligently towards reaching their potential. Also, prior to each testing period teachers and students engage in fun activities that bring our school closer together. Last year, our librarian encouraged our students reading by offering up ticket to those who completed books. These tickets purchased the opportunity to throw pies at the teacher of their choice. While it was a sticky mess for those adults pied, it was an activity the students loved and brought joy into their reading.

Over the past seven years, Canyon has enjoyed the fruits of what the PLC process has to offer. Building our program around our school’s PLC process created an environment of trust, collaboration, and increasing comradery in all our staff. These benefits have directly attributed to the growth, learning, and achievement of all of our students. We have seen the results and appreciate this opportunity to become part of the PLC Model School Community.

References

Martin, B. G. (2017). *MTSS Implementation and School-Wide Reading Proficiency Analysis: A multiple Time Series Quasi-Experimental Study.* North-Central University, Prescott Valley.