

## THE ROAD TO EXEMPLARY



With hard work, and a little help, West Elementary School has overcome adversity to be recognized for its academic excellence.

# IT COULDN'T HAVE HAPPENED TO A BETTER, HARDER-WORKING GROUP. I BELIEVE COMPLETELY THAT SFA IS WHERE THE CREDIT LIES.

TIFFANY MORGAN , Principal

## THE CHALLENGE

West Elementary School (now Carroll Smith Elementary) in Osceola, Arkansas, faced some teaching challenges, with a disadvantaged 98.7% minority population, all of whom qualify for free or reduced-price lunches.

But that did not stop the school from adopting Success for All and striving hard to meet their annual measurable

objectives. “We always felt we were on the right track,” says West principal Tiffany Morgan, “so we just kept pushing. We set goals every year.”

## THE SOLUTION

Knowing that using SFA as it was designed is key to success, Morgan worked diligently with the staff at West to ensure that everyone was working within its structure. That’s when things fell into place. “Since we started working on fidelity, that’s when we started seeing the growth,” she says. She also recognizes that the teachers’ intense focus helped the school excel.

SFA’s research-proven methods emphasize cooperative learning and critical-thinking skills, something Morgan and West teachers appreciate. “SFA grounded itself in the strategies and the skills. I’m not teaching about ‘Brown Bear,’ I’m actually teaching a strategy. I’m teaching children how to clarify or find the main idea,” she explains.

They also appreciated SFA’s support network. Its job-embedded professional development provided teachers with the tools to teach effectively and, in turn, gave them a renewed sense of confidence.

Morgan found SFA’s onsite assistance invaluable and credits SFA coach Teresa Blanton for her unwavering assistance. “I don’t think that we would have gotten there without the support,” she says.

## THE RESULTS

The school’s steady progress and hard work paid off. In 2011, the Arkansas Department of Education named West as an exemplary school. This was a great honor, given that criteria were strict and 1,200 schools were eligible.



# SFA GROUNDED ITSELF IN THE STRATEGIES AND SKILLS. I'M NOT TEACHING ABOUT 'BROWN BEAR'; I AM ACTUALLY TEACHING A STRATEGY. I'M TEACHING CHILDREN HOW TO CLARIFY OR FIND THE MAIN IDEA.

TIFFANY MORGAN , Principal

"It couldn't have happened to a better, harder-working group," says Morgan. She also adds that the school could not have done it alone. "I believe completely that SFA is where the credit lies."

To determine exemplary schools, the Arkansas Department of Education calculated a three-year average percentage of students who scored proficient and advanced in math and literacy on the Arkansas Benchmark and End of Course Exams. In the High Performance High Targeted Achievement Gap Group (TAGG) category – which indicates a school's high economically disadvantaged population – West was one of only three schools to receive the distinction.

Morgan is quick to cite the students' hard work and dedication. "I really don't believe that there was a group of students who deserved it more."

She adds: "I would say the SFA brought us direction, because it works. It works."

## Doing Due Data Diligence

One of Success for All's fundamental tenets is that gathering, analyzing and using data is fundamental to instruction. When teachers shared that data with West Elementary School students, they became invested in their learning and could assess their own academic progress to determine which areas needed improvement. "We'd say, 'This is where you are, and this is where we'd really like to see you get,'" says school principal Tiffany Morgan.

Having that data also allows teachers to know precisely where their students need help and tailor instruction in specific areas. "The data was always there to support [instruction]," she says, "and so we got better in seeing what we needed to do. SFA guided us."



**FOUNDED IN 1987**, the nonprofit Success for All Foundation is dedicated to ensuring that every child, from pre-kindergarten to grade 8, becomes proficient in reading and learning – opening up new doors for a lifetime of achievement. Not only has SFA been proven time and again to help with student reading ability and math performance, it also addresses non-academic concerns, improving behavior, attendance and parental involvement. Please contact us for more information.

**LEARN MORE! SUCCESSFORALL.ORG**

  
**Success for All**  
FOUNDATION®