

FAR MORE THAN A READING PROGRAM



When Kane Elementary School turned to SFA to improve its reading scores, it got much more – a “life-changing event.”

THE CHALLENGE

Administrators of Pennsylvania's Kane Elementary decided something needed to be done after the school's scores dropped on the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment.

After visiting another Success for All school and doing independent research on the program, Kane was sold.

"The more we read about it, the more excited we got," says Principal Linda Lorenzo. "It just seemed like a really good fit and something that we needed [to get] our scores moving in the right direction."

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THE SOLUTION

When Kane adopted SFA in fall 2011, Lorenzo was amazed to find that they were getting far more than a reading program. "That's not what SFA is at all," she says. After an inaugural year of "phenomenal results," Kane is poised to build on its initial success and is excited to share its progress. Says Lorenzo, "I told my colleagues that SFA is a life-changing event."

SFA offers a method of whole-school reform, with many built-in support systems for different areas of focus. Whether there are issues with parents, attendance, culture or various other learning barriers, SFA has resources in place to help students overcome them.

"Because of the 25 years of research in the program, there is nothing that has been forgotten or not thought of," says Lorenzo. "That really helps me and the team as a whole to not feel like we are on our own, but that we've got some resources to lean on and make this a success."

With Success for All's Leading for Success Schoolwide Solutions teams, Kane now has a well-defined system with clear plans on how to address issues that hinder student achievement, such as attendance. "We've always had kids that didn't do their homework, but we never really had a system before to assist them," Lorenzo says.

The school has also renewed its focus on tactics to ensure that parents are involved in their children's learning. For example, it hosted a parent-visitation night, where teachers shared information about the program and took an informal poll of parents' comments to get them more involved.

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Markers of Progress

As one of its great benefits for schools, Success for All provides tangible markers of student progress in reading that can be shared with teachers, parents, and the students themselves. "I think the key is the data that you can show folks to prove the effectiveness of the program," says Kane Elementary principal Linda Lorenzo. "That's huge and has really been very eye-opening for us as far as why our scores were the way they were for all these years."

Having that data readily available enables staff to immediately identify areas that need improvement. "I feel very empowered with the knowledge that I have," Lorenzo said. "I have data that's substantiated; it's not just a hunch. That's just an amazing tool."



THE RESULTS

In the school's first year with SFA, Kane saw a significant boost in reading scores. At the beginning of the 2011 school year, 52% of students were reading on or above grade level. By the end of the year, the number had increased to 65%.

"We had tremendous growth for our first year," says Lorenzo, who noted that the 2012-13 year is also going well. "Already during the first quarter of this second year, we've made a 10% [gain]."

Lorenzo is pleased not only with the increase in reading scores, but also with the way SFA has spurred her development as an administrator. "I think I have done more growth in the last year than I had in the 10 previous years in my career. It's just amazing."

After Kane's first year of schoolwide double-digit gains in reading, Lorenzo is confident that the school will continue to see academic-achievement gains. She's observed that students are speaking to one another differently, writing better and holding one another accountable. "The changes academically have been phenomenal," she said. "They encourage each other to bring homework back. Those are just things a principal dreams of."

In fact, Kane students "get what cooperative learning is all about," Lorenzo explains, and they drive one another to excel using this key Success for All concept. Students encourage one another to read at home or in the school library and are excited to celebrate success collectively. "I really feel like the kids love it," she said. "What we've done [since implementing SFA] is absolutely amazing."

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.

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