



# Sumner County Schools News

*Committed and Focused on Growing Learners*

*2014-15, Quarter 3, Issue 3*

## **Facilitating Learning through Quality Instruction**

Recent research from Tennessee's Department of Education (TDOE Policy Brief, Oct. 2013) found that there "... are spectacular successes occurring every day in classrooms all over the state." These are the types of classrooms that our Sumner County students participate in daily while achieving learning success due to effective teachers who are providing quality instruction. The TDOE discovered that these successes arose from practices such as aligning the curriculum to rigorous TN Education Standards, using student data to inform instruction, and providing time for problem solving and questioning strategies. Teacher collaboration regarding instructional strategies that work and their development of lessons that are differentiated to meet their students' individual needs assist in mastery accomplishment by Sumner County Schools (SCS) students. This occurs because our hard-working, caring teachers and staff strive continually to prepare our students for their pathways in life.

As SCS moves forward with the commitment to have our students college and career ready, we are utilizing many instructional strategies and methods that may be new to our parents and communities but are grounded in evidence-based practices.

RTI<sup>2</sup>, guided reading, Comprehension Toolkit, PBL (Project-based Learning), dual enrollment classes, data walls and notebooks, Plato and Credit Recovery, Daily 5 and Café, STEM, standards/skills practice through technology such as Study Island, Socratic seminar, progress monitoring and universal screening through aimsweb 2.0, and Scope of Work are just a few of the initiatives, strategies, and new words that you may hear as you talk with our students and teachers. Exciting offerings such as the Sumner County Middle College High School at VSCC, the University Experience at Union, the Sumner County Middle Technical College High School at Portland, and E. B. Wilson Virtual School have been started to support our dedication to all learners as well.

On the following pages, our readers will find examples of the high-quality instruction that our teachers provide to our students as well as definitions and explanations of some of our instructional methods. Keeping our families and communities aware and informed is an essential part of the mission of Sumner County Schools. We believe the provision of this information helps with that mission and hope you do too!

## RTI<sup>2</sup> -- The Need, the Process, the Reward

### **What is RTI<sup>2</sup>?**

Response to Instruction and Intervention, or RTI<sup>2</sup>, is a teaching system that uses data to identify students' specific needs and match those needs with appropriate instructional strategies. In Tennessee, the RTI<sup>2</sup> Framework is a component for academic excellence in the TN Standards. The implementation plan has three legs with student achievement at the center:

1. Assessment alignment and transparency
2. Instructional materials and curriculum
3. Quality training and meaningful support

### **What does the RTI<sup>2</sup> Framework look like?**

The RTI<sup>2</sup> Framework has three tiers. Each tier provides differing levels of support. The tiers are:

1. In Tier I, all students receive research-based, high quality, general education instruction that incorporates ongoing universal screening and ongoing assessment to inform instruction. Enrichment will also occur during Tier I.
2. In Tier II, intervention is implemented when assessment indicates that a student is not making adequate gains from Tier I instruction alone. In addition to Tier I instruction, students are provided small group interventions designed to meet their specific needs. These students are progress monitored weekly or every other week using a tool that

is sensitive to measuring changes in the student's individual skills.

3. In Tier III, more intensive interventions are provided to students who have not made significant progress in Tier II (e.g., possibly more than 1.5 grade levels behind). These students are progress monitored using a tool that is sensitive to measuring changes in the student's individual skills.

### **What are the key components of the RTI<sup>2</sup> Framework?**

One key component of RTI<sup>2</sup> is that all children receive high quality curriculum and instruction in the general education classroom (Tier I). Our teachers see this as a focus, and evidence of it is provided in this newsletter.

Another component of RTI<sup>2</sup> is that the school conducts universal screenings. Universal screenings review the performance and progress of all students through brief assessments. Sumner County Schools chose aimsweb 2.0 to use as a universal screener. The screening process helps schools identify students who may need more support or other types of instruction. As a result of universal screenings, students may be identified as needing targeted intervention (Tier II) in addition to the high quality instruction they are receiving in Tier I. Research-based interventions are used to support students in the area(s) in which they are struggling.

## RTI<sup>2</sup> -- The Need, the Process, the Reward

Research-based interventions are teaching strategies or methods that have been proven effective in helping children learn.

A third key component of RTI<sup>2</sup> is progress monitoring. Progress monitoring is a scientifically-based practice that is used to assess students' academic performance. To implement progress monitoring, the student's current levels of performance are determined and goals are identified for learning that will take place over time. Progress toward meeting the student's goals is measured by comparing expected and actual rates of learning.

Progress monitoring is also a way for teachers to take a "snapshot" of how children are doing on a specific skill. That snapshot shows how well the intervention is working. Progress monitoring includes formal and informal assessments which help determine whether an intervention is successful or needs to be changed. This information is shared with parents on a regular basis.

When progress monitoring indicates that the intervention is no longer needed, a child continues to receive support from the general education curriculum (Tier I). If the data shows that a child is not responding to the intervention, another approach or intervention may be tried. If a higher level of support is needed, students may be given more intense intervention that further focuses on the supporting skills they need to be successful learners (Tier III).

Students who do not respond to Tier III interventions **may** be referred for extra accommodations or testing for a possible learning disability.

More information on the Response to Instruction and Intervention initiative in Sumner County Schools may be found at <http://sumnerschools.org/index.php/parent-tools> under *RTI<sup>2</sup> FAQs for Families*. The Tennessee Department of Education website also has RTI<sup>2</sup> information at <http://www.tn.gov/education/instruction/rti2.shtml> and [http://www.tennessee.gov/education/instruction/docs/rti2\\_6-12\\_guidelines.pdf](http://www.tennessee.gov/education/instruction/docs/rti2_6-12_guidelines.pdf).

**In closing, as with all learning, RTI<sup>2</sup> and a child's academic success are best achieved through the school and home working as partners. We offer the following suggestions for supporting your child in school:**

- **Make reading a daily habit at home.**
- **Communicate with your child's teacher.**
- **Monitor and assist with homework assignments.**
- **Review progress monitoring data when it is sent home.**
- **Share and celebrate your child's successes.**
- **Learn more about the curricula and interventions being used in your child's school.**
- **Attend parent/teacher conferences and other school meetings regarding your child and learning.**

# Facilitating Learning through Quality Instruction in Elementary Schools

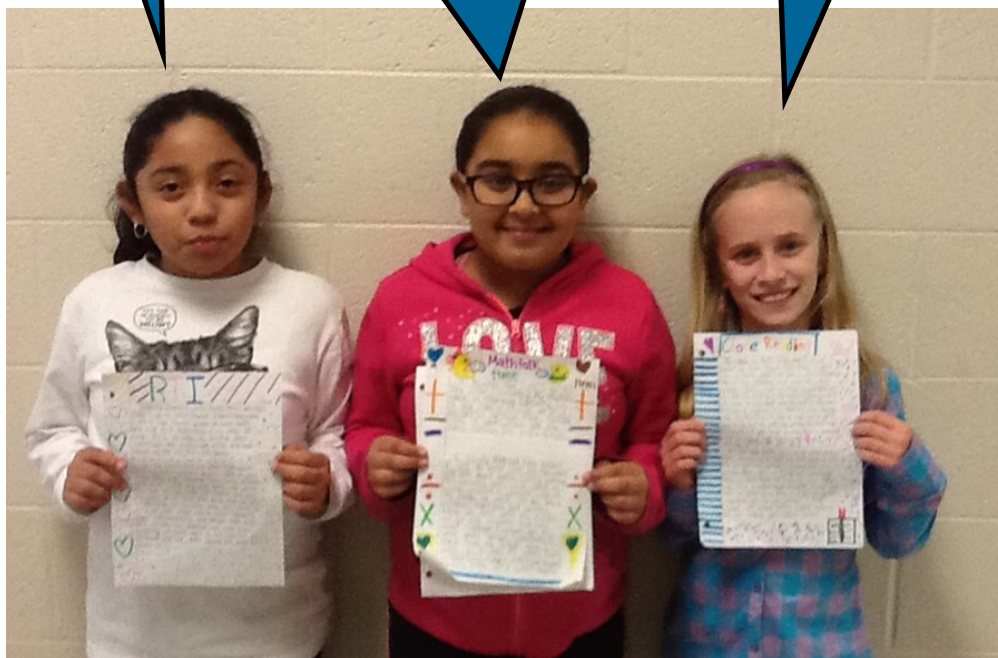
## Vena Stuart Elementary School's Fourth Graders Talk Learning Strategies

Every student gets to do a data dig with his or her own work.

This helps us see what we missed and need to work on. It could also be a skill we don't understand. Mrs. Casetty uses RTI<sup>2</sup> time to help us with these skills.

In my opinion, I think kids understand other kids, so Math Talk time really helps! It is exciting and fun to do, too. It exercises your brain in a fun way and will bring up your math scores. I know my class will rock at TCAP!

Close Reading is where we read a passage a few times. The first time it's kind of confusing, but it gets easier to understand when we read it more times. Mrs. Cassetty explained to us that it's like digging a hole. The first time it's kind of hard but it gets easier to dig. Just like with close reading — the first time it's hard, but it gets easier to understand or comprehend when we read it more times.





## Facilitating Learning through Quality Instruction in Elementary Schools



Ms. McGuire's 3<sup>rd</sup> grade classroom is engaged in a Socratic seminar using accountable talk to discuss the text.

## Vena Stuart Elementary School — Home of the VSE Stars



Mrs. Scharkley's RTI class is using metacognition, an awareness and understanding of our thinking, to discuss a read-aloud.



### What is Close Reading?

Close Reading is a teacher-directed activity that will include discussion and revisiting portions of the text. It may also involve the construction of a graphic organizer (e.g., web, KWL, T-chart). The teacher uses a carefully selected complex narrative or expository text which he/she will read and discuss with students in small or large groups. Reading and thinking together allows the teacher to demonstrate those same strategies in a safe, non-threatening situation. First, she/he can demonstrate how to problem-solve with text using context (meaning) and syn-

tax (word order or grammar) and to monitor their reading for accuracy and understanding. Secondly, close reading allows the teacher to demonstrate specific comprehension strategies (e.g., main idea, cause and effect) through the use of a "think aloud" and questioning techniques. Close reading is also an excellent strategy for helping students improve as writers. When students are exposed to the reading and analysis of texts that illustrate various text structures, they can develop a better understanding for organizing their own writing. In addition, close reading is an excellent instructional practice for teaching test-taking skills.

Facilitating Learning through Quality Instruction in Elementary Schools

Lakeside Park  
Elementary  
School

Origami  
Butterflies

These projects were created by 2<sup>nd</sup> graders as part of their study of origami. Origami is a very old art form from Japan in which the artist creates things by folding paper. The 2<sup>nd</sup> graders folded their butterflies and then glued them to a painted branch.



Winter  
Wonderland

These paintings were created by 3<sup>rd</sup> graders at Lakeside Park Elementary School as part of their study of perspective. They learned that the farther away something is, the smaller it appears. That is why one of the trees in each picture is so small.



Old Glory

These still life drawings were created by 4<sup>th</sup> graders at Lakeside Park Elementary School as part of their study of complimentary colors. First, the 4<sup>th</sup> graders carefully drew the flag the way it looked from their seat, using direct observation. They used color pencils to apply the complimentary (opposite) color wherever they thought the flag looked darker. For example, anywhere the red was darker, they colored green and then colored red over it.



Home  
of the  
LPE Dolphins



## Facilitating Learning through Quality Instruction in Elementary Schools

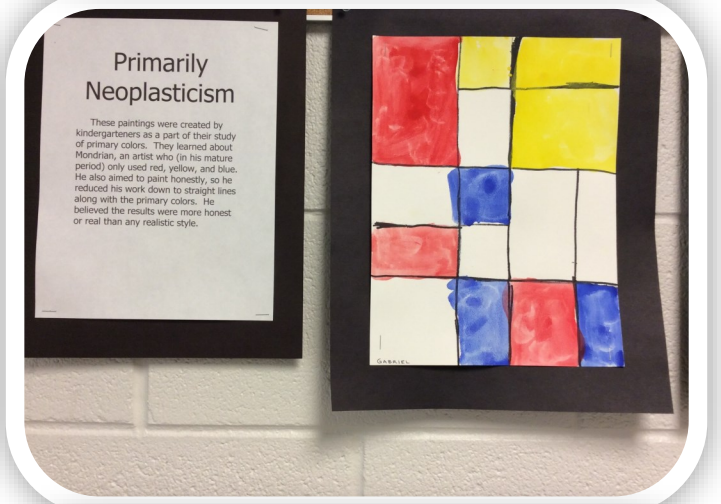
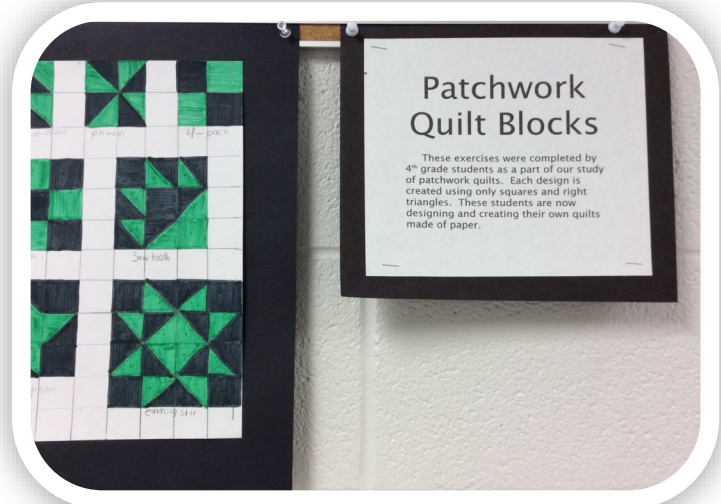
At **Lakeside Park Elementary School**, quality instruction means having high expectations for all students. The fine arts program offers the opportunity to teach many concepts embedded in real-life application and engage all students at different levels.

Common to all subject areas across the curriculum are various “overarching” skills and processes, such as synthesis, analysis, reasoning, and communication. Educators can enhance student learning by creating opportunities for students to make connections between the arts and other disciplines across the curriculum. Recent studies conducted in the area of brain research and the development of higher order thinking skills have also confirmed the benefits of integrating fine arts education across the curriculum.

Instructional practices in visual arts education support and are enhanced by learning not only in other arts disciplines, but in core content areas such as mathematics, science, social studies, and English/language arts.

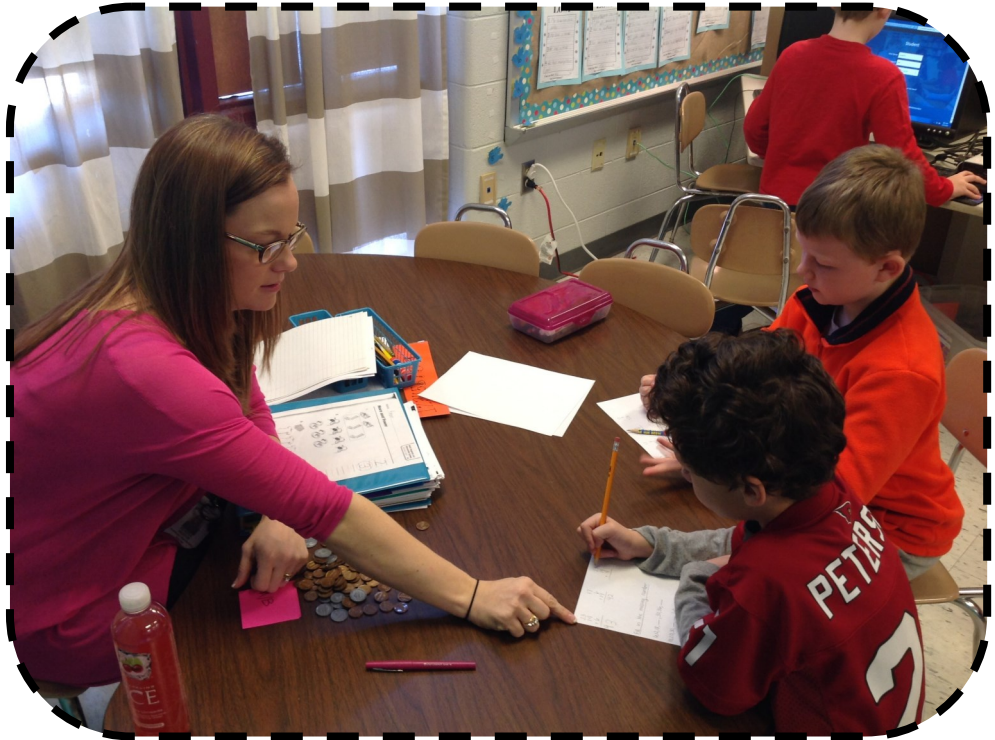
Visual arts education may provide an interdisciplinary context for exploring key ideas that include:

- Interpretations of literary texts (language arts)
- Application of mathematical concepts such as line, shape, and space (mathematics)
- Understanding of ways in which social and cultural values are defined and expressed throughout history (social studies)



# Facilitating Learning through Quality Instruction in Elementary Schools

**Jack  
Anderson  
Elementary  
School —  
Home  
of the  
JAE  
Jaguars**



**Jack Anderson Elementary School** is supporting student learning through the Response to Instruction and Intervention (RTI<sup>2</sup>) initiative. Each day, grade levels provide an Enrichment and Intervention (E/I) block of time for students. Students are engaged in activities to support and further their individual learn-

ing. Learning is supported through the use of manipulatives, technology, or small group instruction. Activities focus on supporting the understanding of content-related skills, reviewing concepts, or furthering learning through research activities.

## What is the Enrichment portion of RTI<sup>2</sup>?

## Enrichment is:

extra.

focused on what the kids need.

used to develop automaticity.

time on an area of interest.

goes beyond the basics.

expanding the standards.

a focused time.

quality instruction.





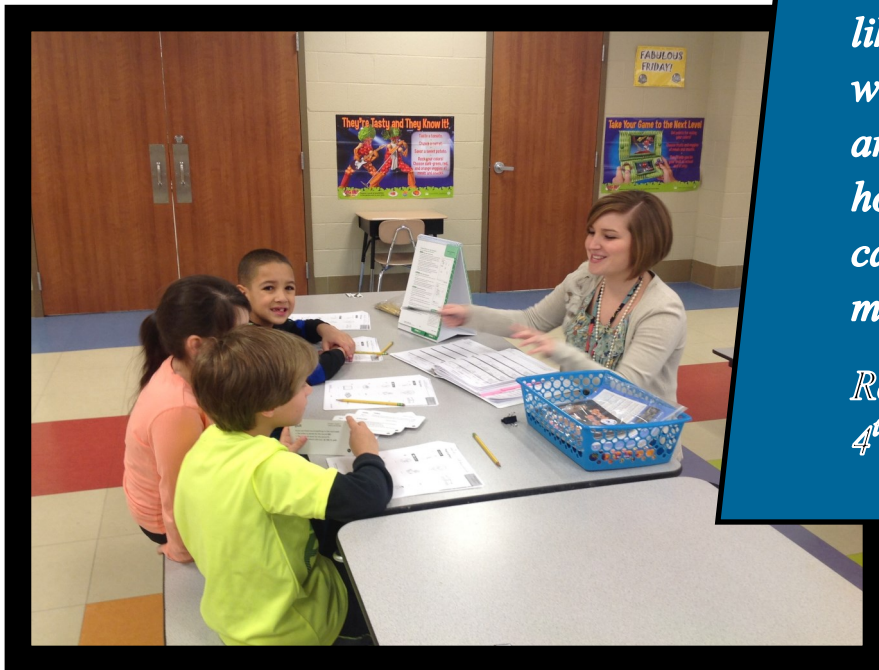
# Facilitating Learning through Quality Instruction in Elementary Schools

## We Have The Power

**Station Camp Elementary School** faced the challenge of the new RTI<sup>2</sup> initiative the same way it faces every challenge that comes its way — with excitement, dedication, and the desire to help children reach their full potentials. SCE named this designated RTI<sup>2</sup> time, Power Hour. The name itself reflects the powerful instruction that teachers set out to provide students. At any given time throughout the day, you will find groups of all sizes scattered around SCE. You may see a group at a table in the lunch room, in the computer lab, a corner of the library . . . and in all of the groups, you will find a dedicated staff member and children eager to learn.

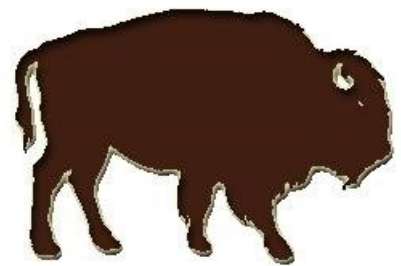
*"I like Power Hour because I can comprehend skills fluently. I also like Power Hour because it helps me understand skills I don't understand in class. I like Power Hour because it is good review for my brain. I like the rhymes that we make up for math and reading. I like how we switch because we can learn math and reading."*

Reece Elkins  
4<sup>th</sup> Grade



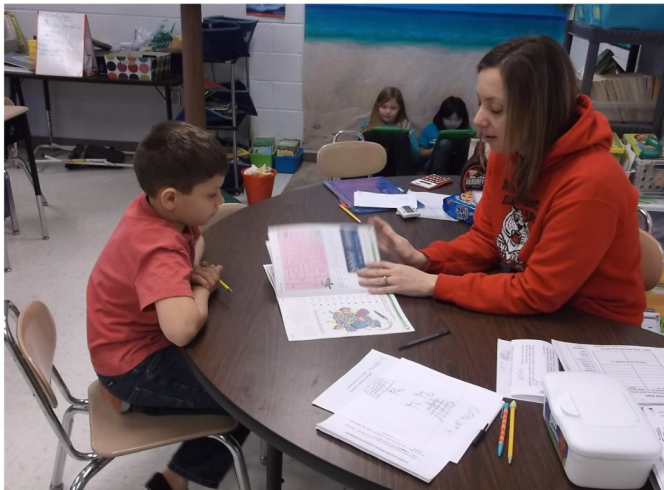
# Facilitating Learning through Quality Instruction in Elementary Schools

**Station  
Camp  
Elementary  
School —  
Home of the  
SCE Bison**





## Facilitating Learning through Quality Instruction in Elementary Schools



**North Sumner Elementary School** is skyrocketing with their reading interventions for students. At any time during the day, children can be seen involved in a close read, participating in guided reading, or facilitating peer teaching with accountable talk.

Along with classroom teachers, all of our special area teachers are deeply involved in RTI<sup>2</sup>. Some do small group intervention while our PE Coach, Rick Whited, works with all the students using the program, *Math and Movement*. This program incorporates skip counting and other mathematical processes with gross motor skills. Great test scores, as well as happy students, abound at NSE!



**Home  
of the  
NSE  
Tigers**

# Facilitating Learning through Quality Instruction in Elementary Schools



**North  
Sumner  
Elementary  
School**

## Why is rigor a primary focus in math?

Students need to gain a strong mathematical foundation by pursuing the following practices in major topics with equal intensity:

**Conceptual understanding:** The TN Standards call for conceptual understanding of key concepts such as place value and ratios. Students must be able to access concepts from a number of perspectives so that they are able to see math as more than a set of mnemonics or discrete procedures.

**Procedural skill and fluency:** The expectation for our students is speed and accuracy in math calculation. Teachers structure class time and/or homework time for students to practice core functions such as single-digit multiplication so that students have access to more complex concepts and procedures.

**Application:** Also, the TN Standards call for students to use math flexibly for applications in problem-solving contexts. Students are given the opportunity to apply mathematical knowledge of skills that set a clear expectation for solving real-world problems. Teachers in content areas outside of math, particularly science, ensure that students are using math to make meaning of and access content.



## Facilitating Learning through Quality Instruction in Elementary Schools

### Benny Bills Elementary Guided Reading Instruction

The second grade teachers at **Benny Bills Elementary School** implement guided reading during their daily ELA blocks. During guided reading, teachers use leveled readers to help their students become strategic in their reading. Some of these strategies include developmental word study (DSA), explicit vocabulary practice, comprehension questions, and text evidence analysis. Each month, the teachers perform a running record on each student to analyze his/her reading behavior and check for ac-

curacy and comprehension. The data from running records drive each small group's daily instruction. BBE's second grade team has begun utilizing the Lexile level report from aimsweb 2.0. Based on the universal screener, this report gives a Lexile level for each student and correlates the Lexile level to the leveled reader used during guided reading.



### Benny Bills Elementary School



Home of the BBE Bulldogs

## Facilitating Learning through Quality Instruction in Elementary Schools

### RTI<sup>2</sup> Reflections from Indian Lake Elementary

Students and teachers at **Indian Lake Elementary School** participate in a variety of strategies that facilitate learning through quality instruction. Daily, all students receive intervention and enrichment as part of the RTI<sup>2</sup> initiative. Students have guided reading, math, and writing lessons. They work with peers to simplify learning and use an assortment of best approaches to understand the curriculum. Some of these methods include close reading, accountable talk, and comprehension toolkit lessons. The large majority of this important work can be seen in small groups and inspire ILE fifth grader Ethan to note, "When people work together, creativity is sparked in everyone."

Indian Lake fifth grade students weighed in on

their experiences during small group instruction. Emily believes that working in small groups does help because in small groups you can work at your own pace. According to Jude, "Small groups are fun," and Carson adds to this sentiment by saying that, "In groups, everyone would get to share their ideas." The idea that small groups bring clarity, explanation, and focus is shared by Kaylee and Logan. It is easy to see that whether the small group focus is intervention-based or meant to facilitate reading, math, or writing, our students are having positive experiences with learning!

*A special thanks to: Mrs. Cox, Ethan, Emily, Jude, Carson, Kaylee, Dylan, Logan, Parker, and Lesley for sharing their thoughts and time!*

**Indian Lake Elementary School —  
Home of the ILE Warriors**



**Accountable Talk: A Collaborative Article by the Students of Ms. Bergman's  
5<sup>th</sup> Grade Class at J. W. Wiseman Elementary**

“In school, we use accountable talk to have a discussion. Some ways are to collaborate by saying, ‘I agree with that because. . .’, then explain. When we disagree, we say it respectfully.” - Kayla Butler

“In our class, we are very scholarly when using accountable talk. We use accountable talk to speculate multiple answers. In addition, it is very easy to use and can be used in everyday life.” - Conner Stewart

**If you would like to learn more about accountable talk, please visit this website: [http://ifl.pitt.edu/index.php/educator\\_resources/accountable\\_talk](http://ifl.pitt.edu/index.php/educator_resources/accountable_talk)**



# Facilitating Learning through Quality Instruction in Elementary Schools



**Ms.  
Bergman's  
Fifth Grade  
Class**



# J. W. Wiseman Elementary School —

# Home of the JWWE Panthers

## What is Accountable Talk?

Accountable talk allows the teacher/facilitator to engage the students in meaningful conversation, observe their interaction and thinking process, ask and pose questions, and create an environment that feels safe for exploration. Accountable talk teaches students to be accountable—to the learning community, to accurate and appropriate knowledge, and to rigorous

thinking. Accountable talk seriously responds to and further develops what others in the group have said. It puts forth and demands knowledge that is accurate and relevant to the issue under discussion. Accountable talk uses evidence appropriate to the discipline (e.g., proof in math, data from investigations in science, textual details in literature, or documentary sources in social studies) and follows established norms of good reasoning.



## Facilitating Learning through Quality Instruction in Elementary Schools

At **Guild Elementary School**, quality instruction begins with understanding the diversity of student needs, then providing them with educational experiences that match their learning preferences. Just as students have varying learning styles, Guild's educators also have different teaching styles. Yet, all share a common objective: to provide educational experiences full of

wonder and excitement that inspire our students to persevere, to think and reflect, and to create a school climate and culture that leads to the success of all learners. Recently, Guild's students and educators filled their day with fun, engaging learning experiences as they celebrated Dr. Seuss and Read Across America Day.



The day began with a parade of books! Students studied their favorite book character closely and dressed to represent that character.



Some students chose an interesting vocabulary word and decorated a Vocabulary Hat to show the meaning of the word.

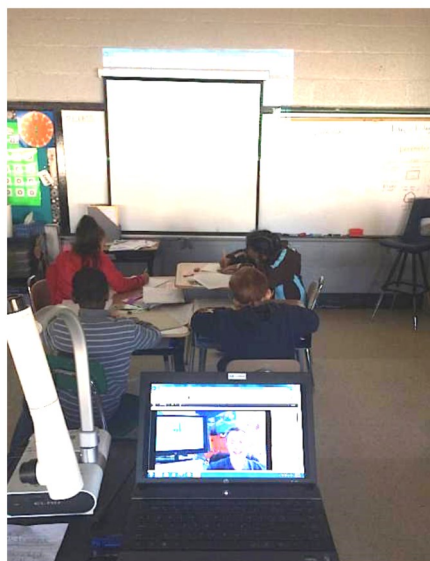
## Guild Elementary School—Home of the GES Gators

What does it mean for students to “persevere” in math? Students are expected to persevere while solving math tasks. That means if students reach a point at which they are stuck, they can reexamine the task in a different way and continue to solve the task.

# Facilitating Learning through Quality Instruction in Elementary Schools



The learning continued with a visit from Snowbird! Snowbird had some help reading two penguin books--one fiction and one non-fiction. The students learned so much about penguins and their amazing adaptations!



Guild students also received an online Skype lesson from Harptoons! Students learned how to create images from basic letters and words. This will not only help spark ideas in their writings but was a great lesson on following directions and transferring instruction to print.



## Facilitating Learning through Quality Instruction in Elementary Schools



**Howard  
Elementary  
School**

**Howard Elementary School's** focus is to concentrate on quality instruction that aligns to our school's ELA SMART goal. We have done this in various ways. First, we know that quality instruction in Tier I has the most impact on our students, so we aim to expose our students to many read-alouds that are above grade level. Following a modeled read, we focus our second and third reading on grade-level standards such as vocabulary and text structure. At first, it was a challenge to incorporate science and social studies. However, once we aligned our instruction with the district's Scope of Work and planned for these content areas with effective resources, we found we have more time for quality instruction.

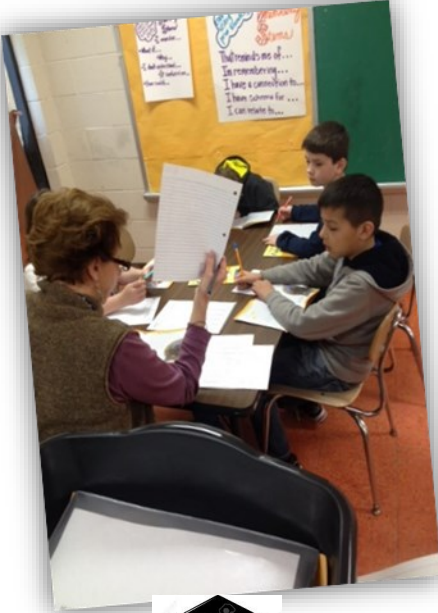


**Home  
of the  
HES Owls**



In addition, we have challenged our students to do more independent reading. As a result, HES accumulated over 200 hours on myON Reader. Woo-Hoo!!!

## Facilitating Learning through Quality Instruction in Elementary Schools



Next, we have worked tirelessly at each grade level to improve our RTI<sup>2</sup> time.



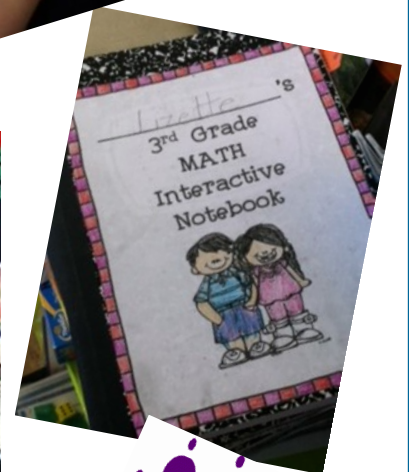
One important piece was collaboration among teachers, paraprofessionals, and assistants. Collaboration allowed us to focus skill intervention to an individual's content area strength, which provided students with the best we can give them. Furthermore, our grade level data meet-

ings focused on student data has been the driving force to students' successes. Finally, everyone loves to be celebrated, so at HES we celebrate our students' successes, teachers' successes, and our schools' successes as often as possible.



## Facilitating Learning through Quality Instruction in Elementary Schools

Quality instruction is found in each classroom at **Watt Hardison Elementary School**. On any given day, you can find fourth grade teacher, Lindsey Bradley, facilitating accountable talk while integrating social studies into the reading curriculum. Another fourth grade teacher, Sonja Glaser, is sure to incorporate science, writing, and fun into math standards. Move to third grade, and you might observe a teacher, Marzetta Mullican, implementing the Comprehension Toolkit and interactive notebooks. Walk into our Title I room and see our reading specialist, Julie Abraham, using guided reading instruction to focus on student reading. Also, if you are looking for a class that enjoys close reads on a variety of topics, then visit Tonya Adams' third grade class. Want to see teachers providing feedback to students in student conferences? It happens in the classroom of our teacher of the year, Marie Shartzer. There are so many wonderful instructional methods being used at WHE! Our Panther Pride is obvious by how our teachers collaborate continuously and work to ensure high quality instruction and student learning!



**Watt Hardison  
Elementary  
School—  
Home of the  
WHE Panthers**

## Facilitating Learning through Quality Instruction in Elementary Schools

At **Clyde Riggs Elementary School**, the teachers work tirelessly to provide the highest quality instruction that they possibly can to all students. The teachers work collaboratively through frequent grade level meetings, PLs, and PLCs to ensure they are utilizing the best resources. The following strategies are a few of the effective resources used:

**Guided Reading**—In Ms. Bates' first grade classroom, students have learned the expectations for ELA time. The students are divided into leveled reading groups based on their needs for growth and success as maturing readers. Each differentiated group is given a text to read. When the text is new, the students may preview the book through pictures and familiar vocabulary to make predictions of what the story will hold. Then, Ms. Bates or a Related Arts co-teacher will explore the text with the students. Before the actual reading commences, there may be some time to discover new vocabulary and talk about the strategies good readers use. Often, students are asked to find the answers to some questions by using the text as evidence. During reading, the teacher and group peers will guide students as they read. They will facilitate reading by providing wait time and giving prompts or clues as needed to individual students, such as "Let's look at the word again. What sound does the first letter make?" After reading, the teacher provides praise for strategies used by students during the reading. Students will read the text many times on their own and aloud to each other throughout the week. Students from one leveled group may then be asked to

read to a student from a different leveled group. Students are also encouraged to read at home to friends and family. All of these activities help expose students to numerous texts while requiring them to use many different thinking strategies to increase their own comprehension as well as that of their peers.

**Accountable Talk**—Fifth grade math can be a very difficult subject and leave many students confused and facing academic challenges. However, in Mrs. Muth's classroom, the students are practiced at accountable talk to help ensure everyone is able to comprehend the lesson. One of Mrs. Muth's students, Hayden J., reports that accountable talk, "Helps everyone get it." Through the use of accountable talk, some students are able to validate their own learning and deepen their understanding while others may ask questions for clarification. The students have been able to remember and apply the concept of accountable talk through a sing-song chant with Mrs. Muth snapping her fingers and leading them: "Build on, agree, explain, disagree, restate, and go beyond--woot woot!" The chant not only helps them apply accountable talk to their math learning, but it serves as an energizer without creating a disruption to the lesson.

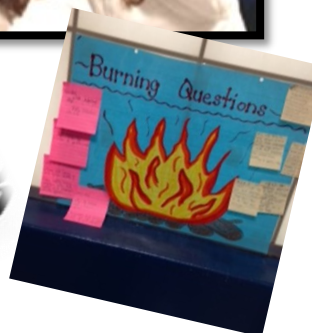
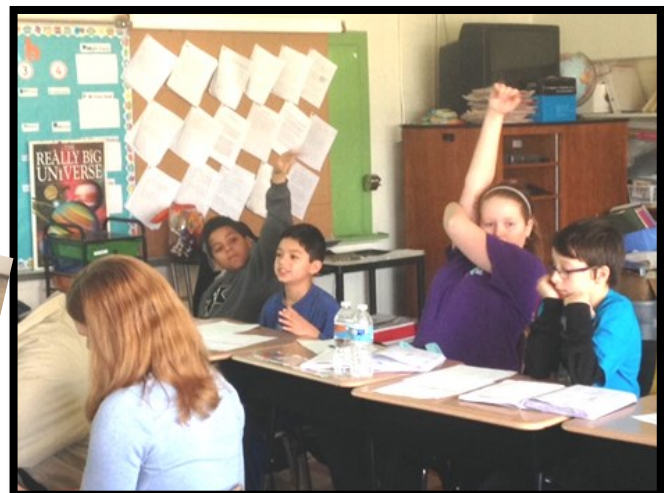
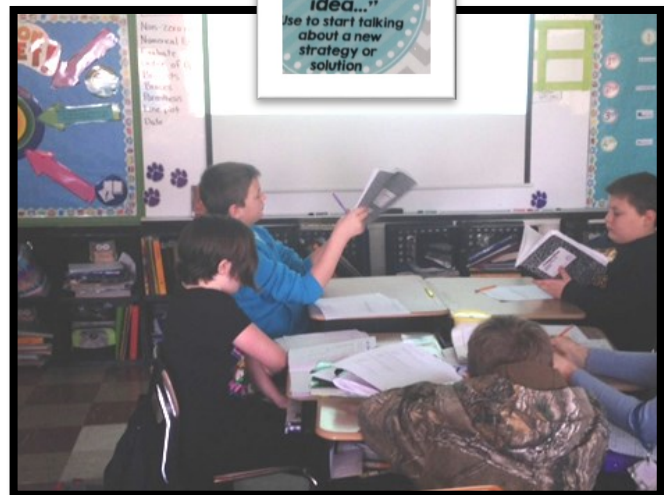
**Comprehension Toolkit**—For Mrs. Williams' fourth graders, sticky notes are great tools when reading! Mrs. Williams loves to see her students learn through the use of tracking when exploring a text. When students are invited to share their questions, confusions, connections, disagreements, or delights in

## Facilitating Learning through Quality Instruction in Elementary Schools

what they read, then they are being taught to be involved, reflective readers. Tracking their thoughts during reading requires students to be metacognitive which is to think about their thinking and not merely follow others' lines of thought. The strategy shows the students to be active, not passive readers. Tracking their thoughts helps them develop an awareness about what they do when they read successfully and also provides a repertoire of tools to draw on when they encounter stumbling blocks in reading.

### Clyde Riggs Elementary School

### Home of the CRE Panthers





## What is Guided Reading?

Guided reading is a vital instructional method in K — 5 classrooms. While there is a varied focus in each grade level, it is beneficial as “building blocks” to all readers.

Guided reading is the heart of a first grade literacy program and one of the most accelerative practices for those students. Guided reading is always teacher-directed and occurs most often in small groups of 3-5 students. Groups are formed based on common needs (strategy usage) and/or instructional reading level but are flexible; that is, they change as children's abilities change. Occasionally, guided reading can occur one-on-one, but it is never a large group activity.

The selection of the text is a key factor. The teacher must be sure that the text used for guided reading is at an instructional level (i.e., children can read it with an accuracy rate of 90-94%). It also should be one that provides the teacher with the opportunity to teach for reading strategies or a needed concept. The teacher should know the instructional reading level of each child and be able to back it up with current data (running records).

In a K--1 guided reading lesson, the teacher introduces the story by telling the children the title, author, the overall gist of the story, and calls their attention to any new or unusual language. She/he may guide them on a "picture walk" through the text. This should be brief.

In a second—fifth grade guided reading lesson, the teacher sometimes allows the children to do a "picture walk" through the text as she provides an introduction that gives the overall gist of the story and allows children to hear new or unusual language. Also, for these more capable readers, the teacher may sometimes allow students to read silently until she taps them so that she may listen in. However, it is still the teacher who selects the text, provides an appropriate introduction, and calls the group back together to check their

comprehension and to discuss what has been read. Then, each child reads the whole story from a copy of the text. The reading is usually soft, but all members of the group are operating independently as readers at the same time. This is not round robin reading in which each child takes a turn reading aloud. As the group reads softly, each student at his/her own pace, the teacher "listens in" and intervenes as needed to teach for reading strategies that children must learn in order to read more independently.

After the reading, the teacher asks questions and/or has children retell the story in order to check/support students' comprehension and provide opportunities for oral language development. Also, the teacher often makes additional teaching points that directly relate to the reading just completed. Guided reading and the administering of running records are effective ways for the teacher to inform instruction, to monitor the progress of students, and to make appropriate text selections for the group's next reading lesson.



## Facilitating Learning through Quality Instruction in Elementary Schools

### Oakmont Astronauts

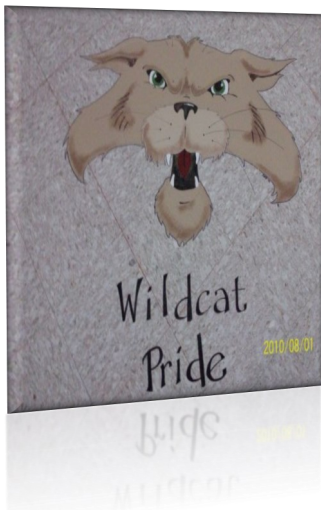
By Melissa Farmer, First Grade Teacher

The student astronauts in the first grade classes at **Oakmont Elementary School** ended their Tennessee Space Week activities with a space shuttle throw. The students made their own paper airplane shuttles in the classrooms. After designing their space shuttles, the students competed to see whose shuttle could fly farthest. Two students competed in each heat. The students had to measure the distance

and determine which plane was the winner. This was a fun way for students to implement math skills learned in the classroom. Students used measuring, addition, subtraction, and comparing numbers for this activity as well as problem solving. First, second, and third place winners were chosen from each first grade class. Afterward, the students wrote about the activity.

### **Oakmont Elementary School**

### **Home of the OES Wildcats**



# Facilitating Learning through Quality Instruction in Elementary Schools

## Just The Facts, Ma'am

By Erin Oakes, Librarian

## Beech Elementary School

In many of today's classrooms, literacy remains the most important aspect of a child's development. Tennessee's Education Standards, which place a concentrated focus on literacy, require students to have more encounters with nonfiction texts. To assist teachers in helping teach nonfiction, the Sumner County School District has implemented the use of *The Comprehension Toolkit*.

According to Stephanie Harvey and Ann Goudvis, the authors of the program, “*The Comprehension Toolkit* is a course of study designed for students to understand, respond to, and learn from nonfiction text. With the teaching and learning focus on comprehension strategies, the *Toolkit* provides a foundation for developing independent readers and learners

across the curriculum and throughout the school year.”

Debbie McCrary, a thirty-year-teaching veteran, believes the colorful graphics and fun pull-out posters from the kit help students engage in the nonfiction topics. McCrary said, “The program allows the kids to reflect on what they have learned. The kids enjoy digging deeper into nonfiction and asking questions.”

Laine Howell, who has taught first grade at Beech Elementary for 28 years, thinks the program connects with the kids because of the interesting topics. Howell said, “The kids are fascinated with anything about science. We’ve done lessons on people and animals that the students enjoyed also. Presented in the right way, they love nonfiction.”

## Beech Elementary School — Home of the BES Buccaneers





## Facilitating Learning through Quality Instruction in Elementary Schools

**Portland Gateview Elementary School** is proud to announce the opening of our new bookroom. We are now able to provide authentic leveled literature book sets to meet the reading levels of our students from Pre-K to 8th grade. Each fiction and non-fiction set contains six books that can be borrowed by teachers for grade or classroom use. The impact of this purchase has been threefold. First, it has created excitement in our teachers and staff as they have

begun to use the bookroom and find amazing literature from all genres. Second, it has strengthened our teachers' abilities to plan across curricular subject areas and be more effective in meeting reading, math, science, and social studies standards. Third, it has allowed us to provide additional balanced reading material as we meet our intervention needs. We see it as an investment that will assist us as we cultivate each student who walks through our doors.

**Portland Gateview  
Elementary  
School —  
Home of  
the PGE Panthers**



## Facilitating Learning through Quality Instruction in Elementary Schools

### WIN Time at Nannie Berry Elementary

“I don't care how much power, brilliance or energy you have, if you don't harness it and focus it on a specific target, and hold it there, you're never going to accomplish as much as your ability warrants.” ~Zig Ziglar

At **Nannie Berry Elementary School**, early intervention is one of our specific targets, and it is held close to our K-2 teachers' hearts for each one of our 300+ primary students. Our early intervention program, **WIN** (What I Need) Time, is focused on ensuring our students have a strong foundation on which to build academic success and solid skills for moving into grades 3-5. The teachers meet together regularly to review and analyze current data collection and diagnostic measures to make best-informed decisions concerning interventions and placement of students.

Sharing information with parents is also part of our commitment to build supportive rela-

tionships and strengthen the students' learning foundations. Our lead educator, Gayle Goad, reports, “The students look forward to **WIN** time because of the individual attention and tailored instruction they receive.” She also commented, “The gap is closing in reading skills, and teachers are seeing interventions making a difference!”

**WIN** time's impacts are many, but one of the biggest observed at NBE is that our primary students are discovering how to learn within the changing expectations of a more rigorous curriculum. Regularly-scheduled, vertical PLC (Professional Learning Communities of teachers) meetings have provided information and understanding for the next grade level's expectations and gaps which can be filled through the tiers of the intervention process.

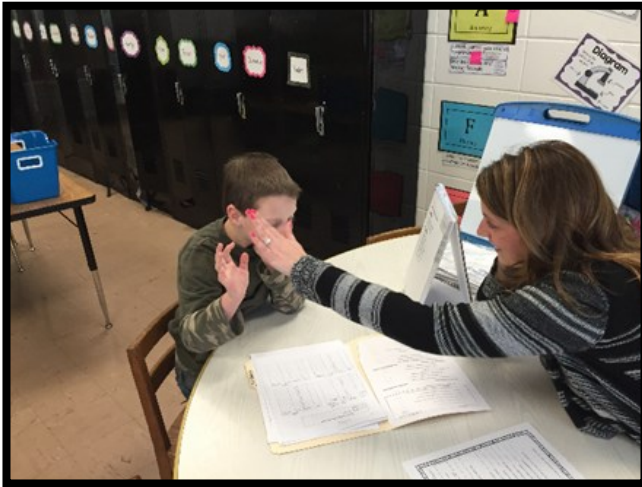
With **WIN** time at Nannie Berry Elementary, everyone **WINS**!

**Nannie Berry Elementary School**  
**Home of the NBE Bulldogs**



## Facilitating Learning through Quality Instruction in Elementary Schools

### WIN Time at NBE



Mrs. Madison's student receiving a high five for bringing his MAZE score up.



This is a group sitting knee to knee doing a close read about presidents. Students work on ELA skills three days a week and math skills two days a week.

### What is formative assessment?

Formative assessment is a process used by teachers and students during instruction that provides explicit feedback to adjust on-going teaching and learning to improve students' achievement of intended instructional outcomes. It is a method of continually evaluating students' academic needs and development within the classroom and precedes local benchmark assessments and summative assessments.

Teachers who engage in formative assessments give continual, explicit feedback to students and assist them in answering the following questions:

Where am I now?

Where am I going?

How can I close the gap between the two?

In order to show students how to close the gap between where they are academically and where they want to be, teachers must help students evaluate their progress in the learning process and give them explicit, descriptive feedback specific to the learning task. — Heather Coffey, LearnNC



## Facilitating Learning through Quality Instruction in Elementary Schools



Four years ago, **Westmoreland Elementary School** implemented a school-wide RTI<sup>2</sup> program in reading that has resulted in significant academic gains for our stu-

dents and meets the requirements of the current TN Standards initiative. The implementation of our RTI<sup>2</sup> program also has resulted in WES K-2 students achieving tremendous growth in reading skills. Data from DIBELS and aimsweb 2.0 assessments rank those students as some of the top achievers for reading growth in Sumner County Schools. In addition, RTI<sup>2</sup> strategies and the use of common assessment data have led to our third and fourth grade students realizing significant growth in reading on TCAP. While putting RTI<sup>2</sup> into action was a bit overwhelming at first, once the interventions were in place, the returns for students were and continue to be

significant.

Our goal at WES has always been to meet the academic needs of each individual student. To achieve that, we continue to utilize interventions that have been successful. Each teacher receives pre-made intervention materials that cover basic reading skills for K-3 students and higher level skills for 4-5 students. These intervention materials are skill-specific, research-based, and reproducible. As these resources are used, grade groups meet weekly to review individual student progress, share interventions, and discuss possible changes for each reading group.

An additional approach to meeting our students' needs is the recently completed WES data room that is specifically designed to house all of our students' assessment data. The room has data boards on each wall that display student scores and reading groups. This was designed to bring a visual component to our data collection and to ensure that each student is at the forefront of everyone's mind.



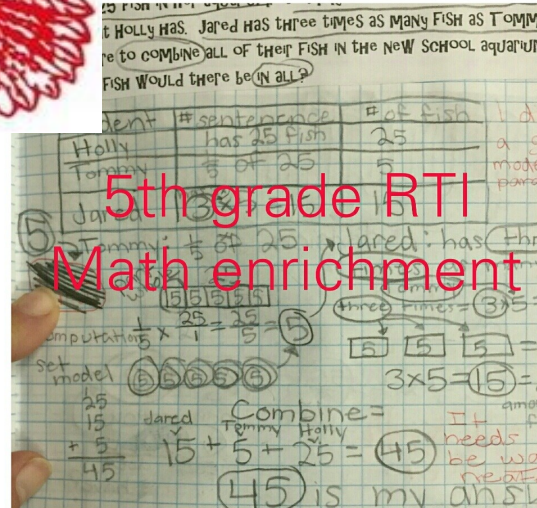
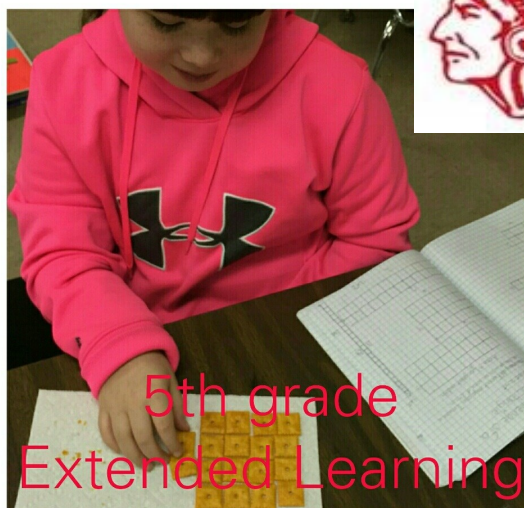
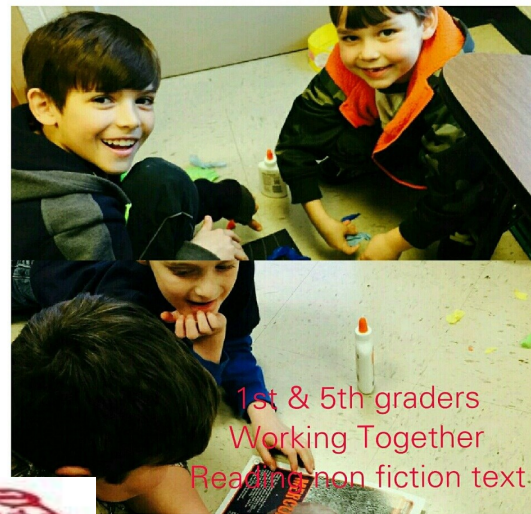
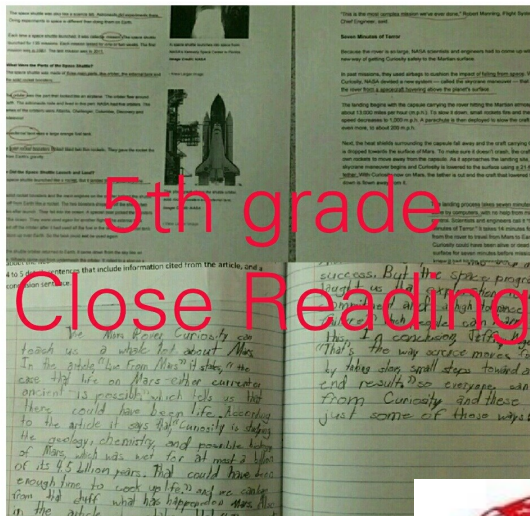
**Westmoreland  
Elementary  
School —  
Home  
of the  
WES Eagles**

## Facilitating Learning through Quality Instruction in Elementary Schools

The faculty and staff of **Union Elementary School** are committed to promoting high quality instruction to students with an emphasis

in the provisions of the foundation of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics).

### Union Elementary Stem and Demonstration School — Home of the UES Raiders





## Facilitating Learning through Quality Instruction in Elementary Schools

At **George Whitten Elementary School**, students were asked to share their thoughts on RTI<sup>2</sup> or intervention time. Below are some of their comments about the process and the intervention activities in which they participate:

"Lots of times, I feel like I'm being pushed past my reading level, but I'm glad because I will be at a new reading level." – Christopher Denson, 4<sup>th</sup> grader

"I like Intervention because we get time to read. I like to read. I get to read things I understand. When I don't understand something, I can ask a question." – Dakota Davidson, 3<sup>rd</sup> grade

"I can read faster now!" – Colton Binkley, 4<sup>th</sup> grader

"It feels like I'm getting a stronger brain because we learn math, and we read. We practice multiplication, and we play board games like *Main Idea*. It makes me feel happy when we are in Intervention. It's my happy place." -- Stedwin Mack, 4<sup>th</sup> grader

"There's a lot of work to do in my classroom. I like Intervention because we get to slow down and read." – Avery Chapman, 3<sup>rd</sup> grader



### George Whitten Elementary School



### Home of the GWE Warriors



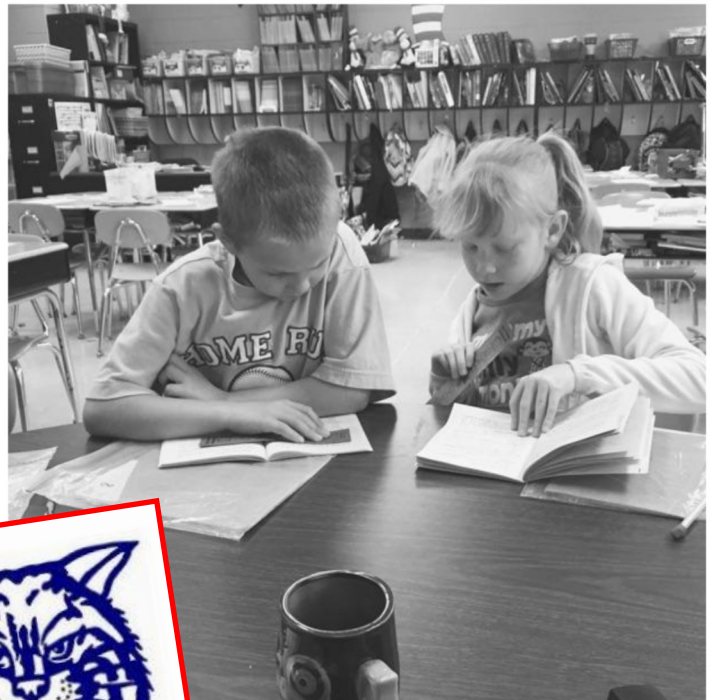
## Facilitating Learning through Quality Instruction in Elementary Schools

Students at **Bethpage Elementary School** are all around the room working on literacy. Here you see students reading a chapter book. Students in other learning centers around

the room are on iPads and computers focusing their time on myON Reader or Study Island. Other students are at learning centers working on writing and word work.

**Bethpage  
Elementary  
School —**

**Home  
of the  
BPE  
Bobcats**



### What is Word Work?

Word Work is the study of letters, words, and how they work. Woven throughout all literacy practices are opportunities for teachers to help children become aware of the sounds of language. The benefits from these are:

- sensitizing children to hearing sounds and recognizing the similarities/differences in sounds (phonological awareness).
- teaching children to link sounds with letters and letter clusters (phonics).
- familiarizing children with letter forms.

- assisting students in using the visual aspects of print while providing them with opportunities to notice and use letters and words that are embedded in familiar text.

- providing an awareness of grammar and mechanics while supporting the students' attainment of more sophisticated language.

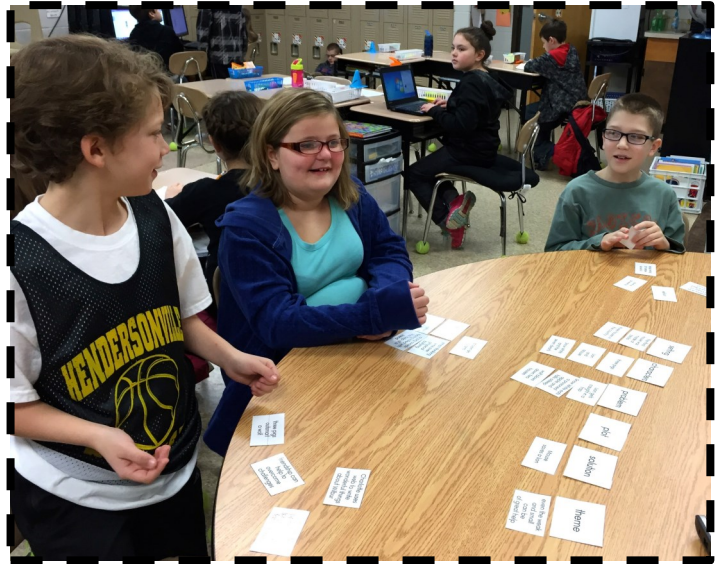
- helping children build a bank of known words and spelling patterns (onsets/rimes).

These opportunities help the students use the knowledge gained from Word Work to read more effectively and spell more conventionally.

Facilitating Learning through Quality Instruction in Elementary Schools

**H. B. Williams Elementary School** uses many best practices to facilitate learning with all students. Some of those are pictured below:

**H. B.  
Williams  
Elementary**

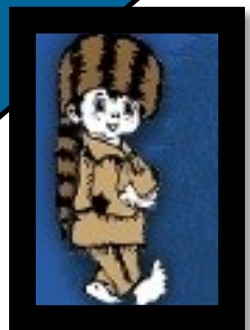


Third graders complete a Story Element Sort in Tier II reading group.



Fourth graders at HBWE provide peer tutoring during academic center rotations. They interact during recess and assist with preparation for Special Olympics.

**Home  
of the HBW  
Trailblazers**



## Facilitating Learning through Quality Instruction in Elementary Schools

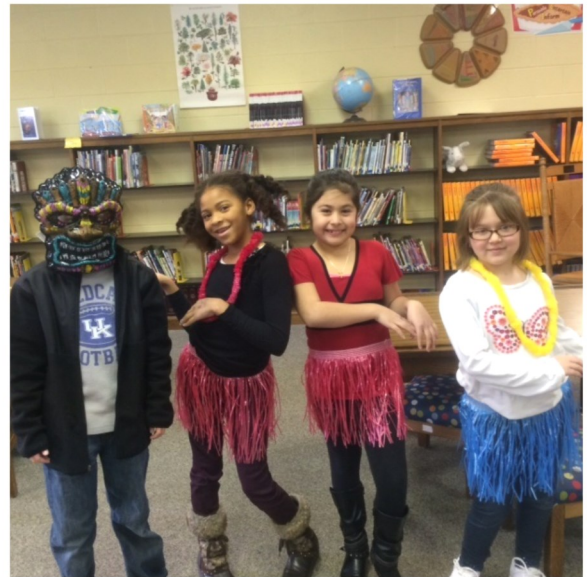
**Millersville Elementary School** was very busy the past nine weeks in spite of all the snow and ice. During our second benchmark, Millersville reduced the number of students that were identified with specific skill deficits by 20%. The hard work by teachers and students is making a successful academic difference.

The third graders in Tier 1 reading read the novel *Island* by Gordon Korman which was the first book in the Shipwreck series. The teachers planned engaging and meaningful lessons that offered many ways to reach a wide range of learners. During this book study, students interpreted and cited the fictional text. They identified character traits and how characterization was used to further the plot by drawing inferences from the text. The students utilized back-

ground knowledge and context clues to formulate logical predictions.

One of the students' favorite activities was rating a list of supplies salvaged from a sinking ship in the order of their importance to survival. Students worked in groups while debating how other students had rated the importance of the same items in order to come up with a group list. Finally, they compared their lists to a list made by the expert survivalists from the U.S. Coast Guard. The activity successfully caused the students to think about what it might be like to be shipwrecked. The students celebrated the completion of the novel by having a luau with hula dancing, Tiki masks, leis, and exciting typical luau food.

### Millersville Elementary School



Home of the  
**MES Mustangs**

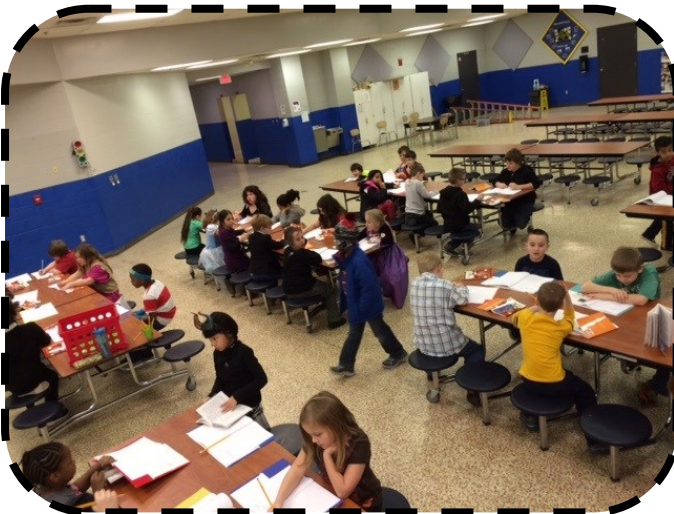




# Facilitating Learning through Quality Instruction in Elementary Schools

In addition, in second grade at Millersville Elementary, Tier I reading has started a book club with almost fifty members. They are reading *Frindle* by Andrew Clements. One student, Weston Rethi, from Mrs. Ferrell's class was quoted as saying, "Even though our book club has only second graders, we are successfully tackling *Frindle*, Lexile level 830, intended for ages 9-12." Rethi also wrote, "We have acted out what has happened in the book and used motions for some of the words. The teacher keeps our attention by

keeping our book club interactive.” The students have made predictions, connections, and inferences while reading the book. The group even held up pens and screamed “Frindle” while getting their pictures taken. This was a reference to the pen as a frindle which mimicked the main character in the book. Many students are looking forward to a Frindle party after finishing the book. MES teachers will continue to facilitate student learning during RTI<sup>2</sup> with peer interactions and celebrations.

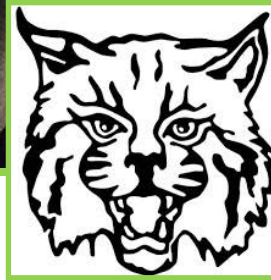


# Walton Ferry Elementary School — Home of the WFE Wildcats

Will: “My teacher taught me a trick with nine. You make ten and go down one, and that’s your answer. It’s really easy.” (strategies for fluency)



# Facilitating Learning through Quality Instruction in Elementary Schools



## Third Grade

Pate: “We did math bees in second grade and I still know my math facts, so I don’t have to use my fingers.” (fluency success)

Teylar: “My teacher makes up games to help us learn things. I like that, and it helps me remember.” (games for engagement and increasing retention of information)

Bethanie: “My teacher calls us up to her table one at a time to make sure we understand, and if we don’t, she helps us.” (conferring)

## Fourth Grade

Dylan: “In third grade, my teacher taught me a trick to remember my nines in multiplication.

I used it in third grade, and now I just know them.” (strategies that promote success and build fluency)

Bailey: “In science, our teacher showed us what heat can do with Mentos and Coke. It went way up high like an explosion. That was so cool.” (addressing various modalities of learning increases retention)

## Fifth grade

Grace: “We worked in small groups on an Everglades project. We each became experts on our part and then taught the rest of the group. I learned a lot from that.” (individual and group accountability and empowerment)



## Facilitating Learning through Quality Instruction in Elementary Schools

Hailey: "My teacher makes up songs and chants to help us remember stuff like the area of a triangle." (Whole brain teaching)

Madison: "My teacher uses songs and chants too, but she dances crazily when she does it. It's hilarious!" (More whole brain teaching with a side of silly)

Ethan: "It helps me when we do math bees and spelling bees." (Increase metacognition while developing an awareness of strategies that help)

### A little from our former Wildcats

Cameron: "I used the adjective and adverb songs to help me on a test. My friend was in my class too. She needed help, so I reminded her about the songs."

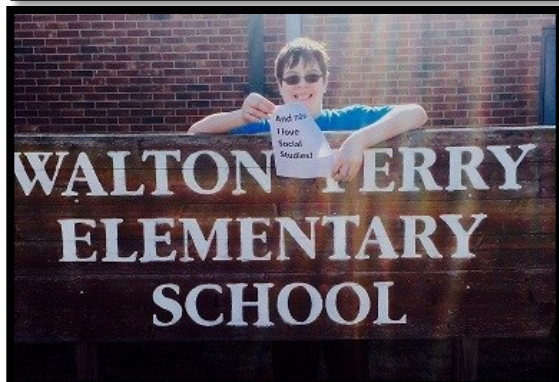
Andrew: "I still remember a lot of the songs and chants. They really stayed in my head. When I need them, they'll pop up."

Owen: "I still know my math facts because I dominated the math bees, and I learned at WFE that I do better when I reread something so I always do that now."

Josie: "Our new teacher was teaching similes and metaphors, and some of us started singing. We explained why we sang that song and showed her that we already knew them."

Derek: "My teacher asked us to raise our hands if we hated social studies, and I raised my hand. She told us she was going to change our minds. Now it's one of my favorite subjects."

Walton Ferry Elementary is proud of our Wildcats and excited to see what the future holds!



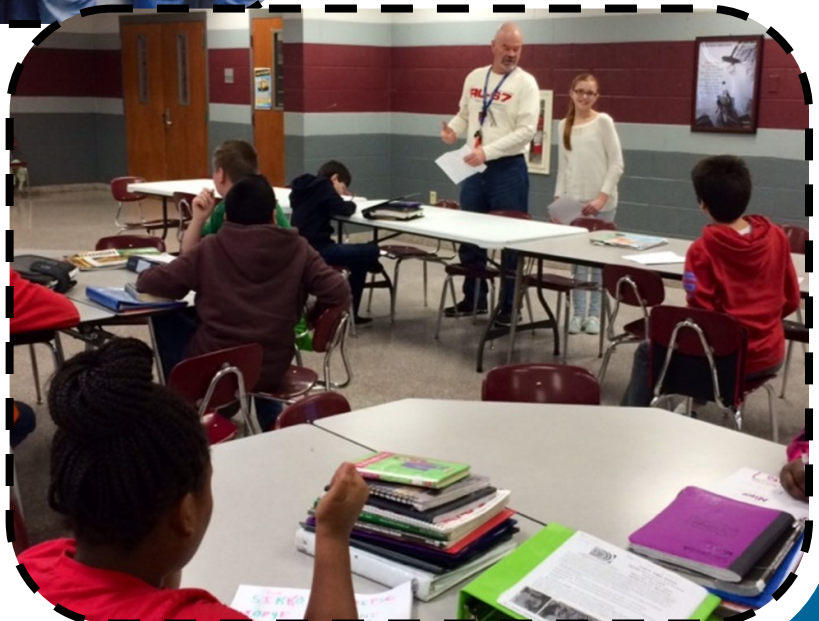
## Facilitating Learning through Quality Instruction in Middle Schools

The Rams at **Rucker-Stewart Middle School** are celebrating data points and students that are working hard and proving to have significant gains and growth with the RTI<sup>2</sup> initiative. Student-led enrichment groups on world studies and current events, a Science STEM Expo, and

an eighth grade project-based learning Career Exploration Fair are a few of the exciting collaborations happening with students and educators within the building. R-SMS will continue to celebrate the focus of the learning of individual students each stage of the journey!



**Rucker-Stewart  
Middle School —  
Home  
of the  
RSMS Rams**





## Facilitating Learning through Quality Instruction in Middle Schools

Students at **T.W. Hunter Middle School** are building strong, trusting relationships in specialized intervention and extension classes. These classes assist students in building confidence with skills and to feel safe in their learning environment. Students are mentored by teachers and staff, encouraged by peers, and learn to recognize within themselves the potential to reach the highest levels of academia.

"RTI<sup>2</sup> has increased my reading speed and expanded my vocabulary in all of my classes." - Rae, 8th grader

"RTI<sup>2</sup> has helped me to read and understand

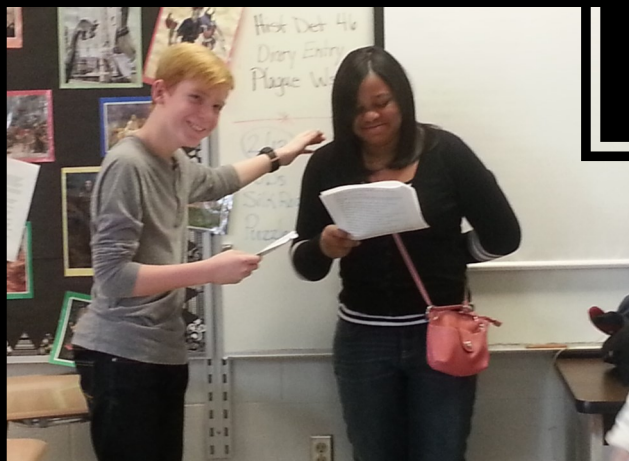
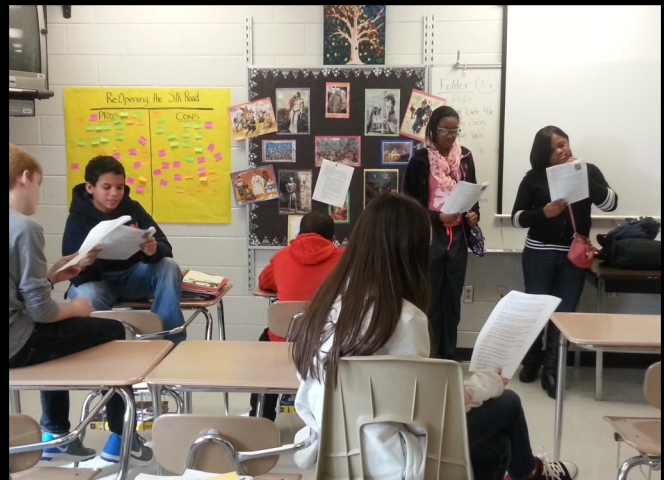
words better and learn how to pronounce them." Josh, 7th grader

"RTI<sup>2</sup> has helped me to accomplish more in my classes." -Edgar, 8th grader

"RTI<sup>2</sup> has made me more confident in reading and helped me be more confident in all my classes." -Bradlea, 7th grader

As we take every step in comprehension, fluency, math, accountable talk, and problem solving with confidence and collaboration, we celebrate. We will meet our 70/70 goal with confidence.

**T. W. Hunter  
Middle School —  
Home of the  
TWHMS Buccaneers**





## Facilitating Learning through Quality Instruction in Middle Schools

The sixth grade students at **Portland West Middle School** are doing a PBL (Project-Based Learning) activity dealing with saving electricity and water at school with the hopes these practices will spill over to home life. To introduce the project, a representative from CEMC (Cumberland Electric Membership Corporation) came in and explained to the students how electricity gets from the power stations to various locations (homes and schools) within the community. The representative also presented ways to conserve energy. Mark Holmes (pictured) from I-Con Systems shared information about the water process and water conservation. After the presentations were conducted, the students participated in various assignments/projects in all academic areas. In Language Arts, students completed research on ways to conserve both water and electricity in their everyday lives. Science teachers presented an energy mini-

lesson which showed students how electricity is made and had students create posters or public service announcements about saving resources. In math classes, students used PWMS electric and water bills to create graphs of resources used and to measure how successful the school's conservation efforts were. Social studies classes explored how energy resources have been used throughout time.

The goal is for students to become aware of the need to conserve energy sources (water and electricity) and become aware of strategies for conserving these resources at school and at home. The need for a clean environment where humans can continue to have the necessities of life was a key topic. These projects provided the opportunities for students to reflect on and begin to understand the relationship of energy conservation and their own personal quality of life.

### Portland West Middle School — Home of the PWMS Panthers



## Facilitating Learning through Quality Instruction in Middle Schools

At **Portland East Middle School**, an eighth grade student, Josh White, agreed to share his experience in one of his classes. He is one of many dedicated students at PEMS who could share similar stories because our teachers are focused on providing high-quality instruction to all of our students. Let's read what Josh has to share:

"In Ms. Gilliland's class, we work on different forms of writing in our composition books. She requires us to work on various topics throughout the year as we work on our writing. After we write, each paragraph is analyzed, checked, and proofread for mistakes. The advanced class normally takes these composition books to proofread and edit while also giving advice on how to improve the writing. Each time the

class checks the writing, they fill out a rubric that tells the writer the number and type of errors they have made. It also has a space for the total number of errors. Errors on this rubric are things like punctuation, capitalization, word choice, and spelling. After they finish proofing the writing, the work is given back in about a day to see what needs to be corrected quickly. As we continued writing pieces, we started to see how much improvement we were making. Ms. Gilliland really helps us also when we are confused on any of the writing topics or suggestions that our classmates give us. I really like this process because it lets me see how I have improved quickly, and I always look forward to seeing my scores each time we write."

-Josh White



**Portland East Middle School —  
Home of the PEMS Panthers**

## Facilitating Learning through Quality Instruction in Middle Schools

**Ellis Middle School's** faculty and staff provide instruction that addresses the needs of the "whole person." Recently, artwork from some of our phenomenal artists was on display at the district's Central Office. Many of our student artists also have pieces for show and for sale on Artsonia, a web-based host for student artists. We will have our annual art show the week of May 4, and the community is invited.

Continuing to support students through quality instruction, we have installed a weather station on our building with diagnostic information captured via a computer. Students are able to access

this data regularly in their science classes.

Finally, quality instruction is further supported with a relatively new after-school club, the Writing Club. Consistently, more than 30 students in all grades attend and will publish their own magazine, *Cougar Collaborations*, in late spring. Each of these endeavors is part of our vision of a collaborative culture, quality instruction, and shared resources.



**Ellis Middle School —  
Home of the EMS Cougars**



## Facilitating Learning through Quality Instruction in Middle Schools

### RTI<sup>2</sup> is Alive and Going Well at SMS!

At **Joe Shafer Middle School**, our faculty and staff were ready to embrace the challenge of implementing Response to Instruction and Intervention (RTI<sup>2</sup>) with our students. One of our top priorities was to address students' learning difficulties early on by using a universal screener to determine which target learning area should be the focus for each student. By providing students with high-quality instruction and interventions as soon as deficiencies are identified, we can prevent our students from falling behind in core academic areas.

In addition, SMS knows it's all about the data . . . not the bass! Therefore, by using progress monitoring tools such as Common Formative Assessments and Paced Interims to gather useful student data, we can provide necessary interventions consistently. Utilizing the data from these assessments, our data team identifies the students' needs and coordinates their endeavors to give intensive instruction and support which increases classroom success individually and collectively. Universal screening and consistent progress monitoring are essential to the successful and efficient implementation of RTI<sup>2</sup>, but it is the instruction that drives student achievement.



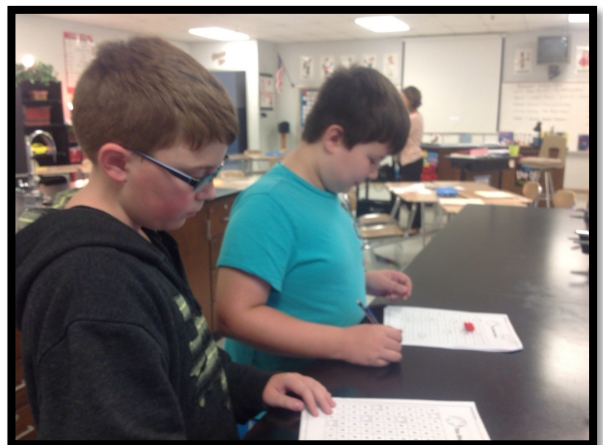
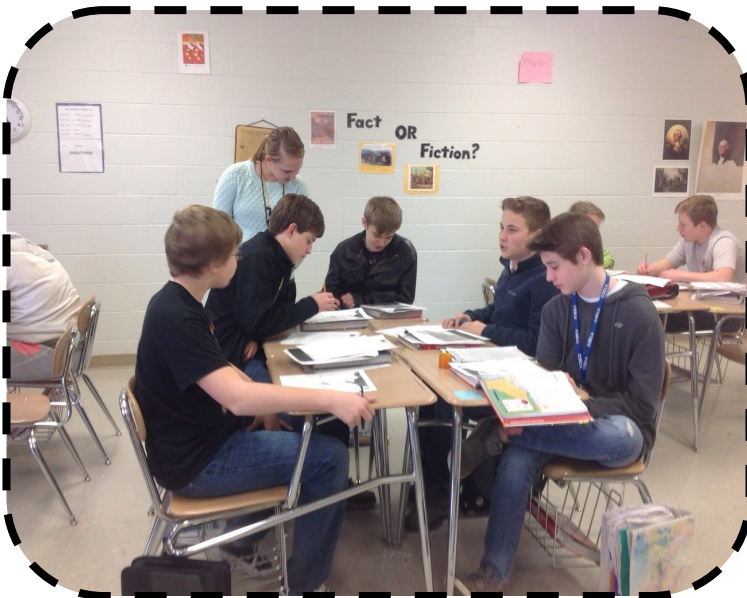
**Shafer Middle  
School —  
Home of the  
Green Wave**



# Facilitating Learning through Quality Instruction in Middle Schools

Students at **Westmoreland Middle School** work in collaborative groups to become more personally engaged in their learning. Students are grouped in mixed ability levels for varied outlooks on the academic content. Collaborative groups allow students to learn from one another and to examine others' problem-solving skills. Many of the students have stated that

being more involved in group work has been a great benefit to them. They embrace the challenge and support from other members of their groups. Testing data at WMS has also shown that group work is building deeper reasoning and critical thinking skills which lead to successful students.





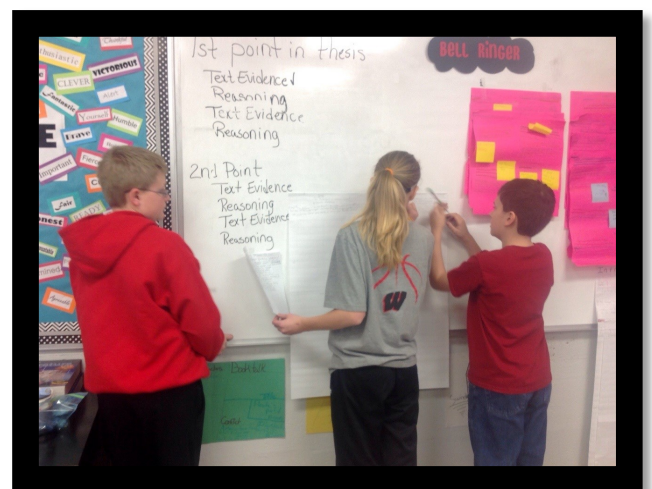
## Facilitating Learning through Quality Instruction in Middle Schools



**Westmoreland  
Middle  
School —  
Home  
of the  
WMS Eagles**

### What is Writers' Workshop?

Writers' workshop is much more than mere journal time. The purpose of writers' workshop is to involve students in the writing process (prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing) and help them develop pieces of writing with teacher and peer support and feedback. It teaches students to behave as writers and to see themselves as authors. For writers' workshop to operate effectively, it must have a simple, predictable structure that students learn. It most often begins with a short mini-lesson of some kind that may address a point of procedure (e.g., where to keep your writing folder), a point of craft (e.g., how to choose a topic), or a skill or strategy (e.g., how to punctuate appropriately). Then, students are given time to write as the teacher circulates and conferences to provide support or calls together small groups or individuals to confer about some aspect of their writing. Lastly, the students meet briefly to share their writing and to get feedback from the group. Feedback should include attention to the attributes of good writing (e.g., Is it coherent, well-organized, fluent, well-elaborated?)





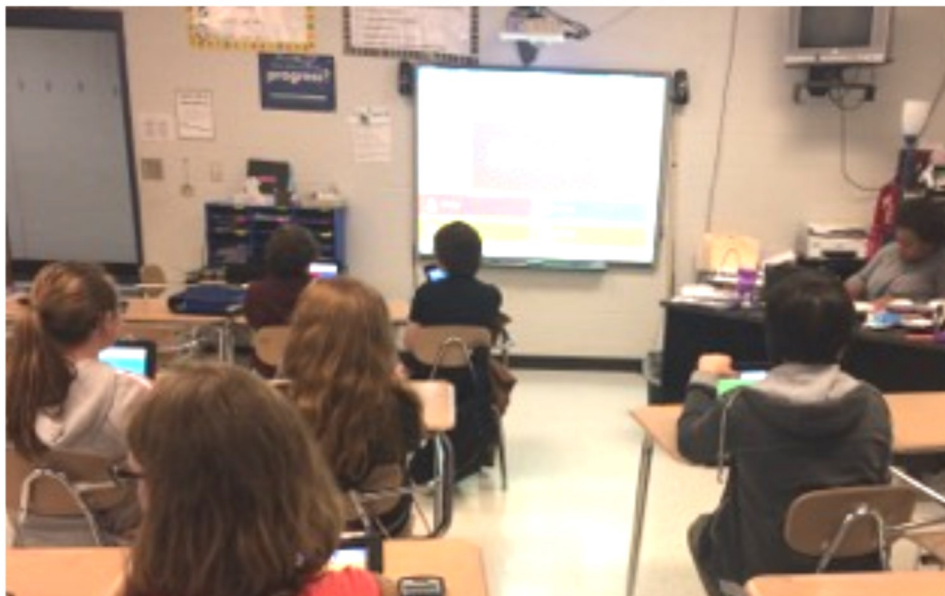
## Facilitating Learning through Quality Instruction in Middle Schools

### Using iPads and Kahoot in Ms. Heard's Sixth Grade RTI<sup>2</sup> Class at White House Middle School

**White House Middle School** applies technology as a support for the learning of RTI<sup>2</sup> students. In Ms. Heard's class, the students review the study of the area and circumference of a circle using a web-based program, Kahoot. This program can be used with any mobile device. The students love Kahoot for many reasons. Some like the competition; others like the background music or the option to

answer questions without being singled out. At the end of the program's quiz, students have the opportunity to rate the assessment and recommend it to others. Ms. Heard states that she loves the program because the students enjoy it, and it provides a detailed item analysis at the end of the assessment. She is able to quickly group students for a more in-depth review if needed.

## White House Middle School — Home of the Blue Devils



## Facilitating Learning through Quality Instruction in Middle Schools

**White House Middle** faculty and staff also believe that students achieve best through exploratory learning. On Friday, February 13<sup>th</sup>, our sixth graders wrapped up the atmosphere and weather unit in their Science classes. They mastered concepts about atmospheric pressure, forecasting, severe weather, and air masses. In addition, they were very excited to welcome Dan Thomas, meteorologist from News Channel 4, to WHMS. He

spoke to the students on how these new concepts are used in meteorology. The concepts were demonstrated through fun experiments such as a tornado in a box and cloud formations in a jar. Mr. Thomas also shared about his profession as a meteorologist. This culmination of the learning was enjoyed by the sixth grade students as they exhibited their new weather knowledge!



## Facilitating Learning through Quality Instruction in Middle Schools

**Knox Doss Middle School's** school year has been rather exciting with RTI<sup>2</sup> classes and PBLs (project-based learning activities) which have led to the facilitation of learning through quality instruction. As far as RTI<sup>2</sup> classes are concerned, teachers have really been thinking outside the box...literally! Besides utilizing the Comprehension Toolkits and vocabulary/fluency lessons provided by our Lead Educator, teachers have been looking at ways to help students enhance their math and ELA skills. Some teachers have determined that certain days were best spent as tutoring sessions. This determination was made by looking at personal data or collaborating with team teachers to see where students were struggling. Additionally, other teachers have been using games to guide instruction such as Scattergories, Parts of Speech Bingo, Synonym/Antonym Bingo, and a variety of other games to aid the students with math skills and reading fluency/comprehension. Still, others within the ELA classes have been bringing in articles that link and relate to the main lesson to keep students interested and to build comprehension skills. In fact, some of the discussions that have transpired due to the articles have been very intriguing.

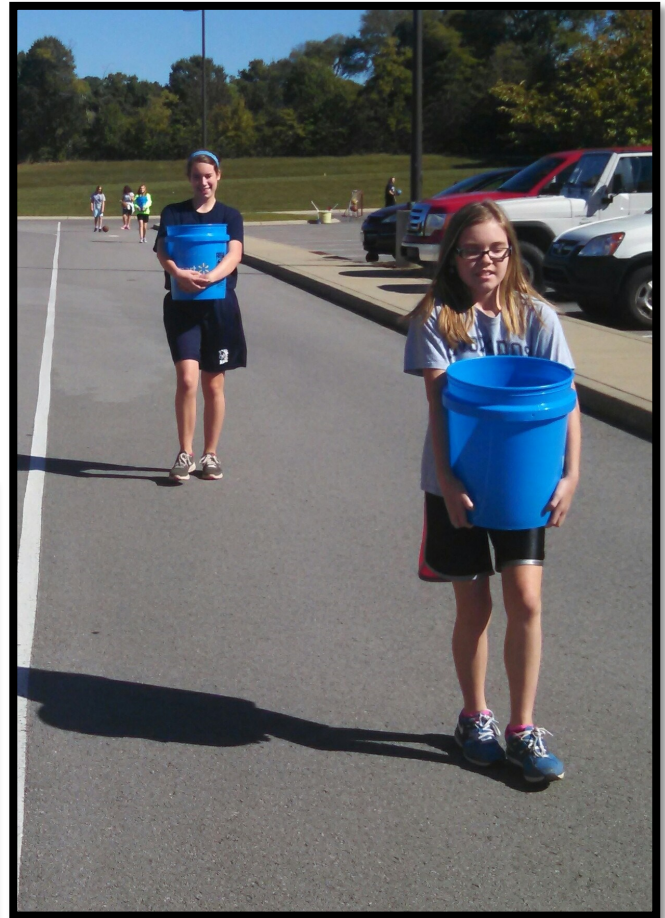
Another engaging student experience is the PBLs that KDDC did to culminate the end of the first semester. Each grade chose a topic. The eighth grade chose garden-to-table to coincide with one of the science teacher's gardens that is on-site. The seventh grade chose to go with a theme from the novel, *Long Walk to Wa-*

*ter*, that they had for summer reading. Sixth grade chose the topic of inventions and had the Invention Convention as their culminating event. Each grade, including the related arts classes, did an amazing job collaborating on and incorporating every subject to ensure that the topic was covered. For example, seventh grade students had the opportunity to write a public service announcement about water conservation or water safety, but also got to attempt to walk with a bucket of water (just like in the novel) for the length of time and endurance in miles that the character in the novel did. It was a tremendous learning experience for all involved.





Facilitating Learning through Quality Instruction in Middle Schools



**Knox Doss Middle  
School at  
Drakes Creek —  
Home of the  
KDDC Mustangs**

## Facilitating Learning through Quality Instruction in Middle Schools

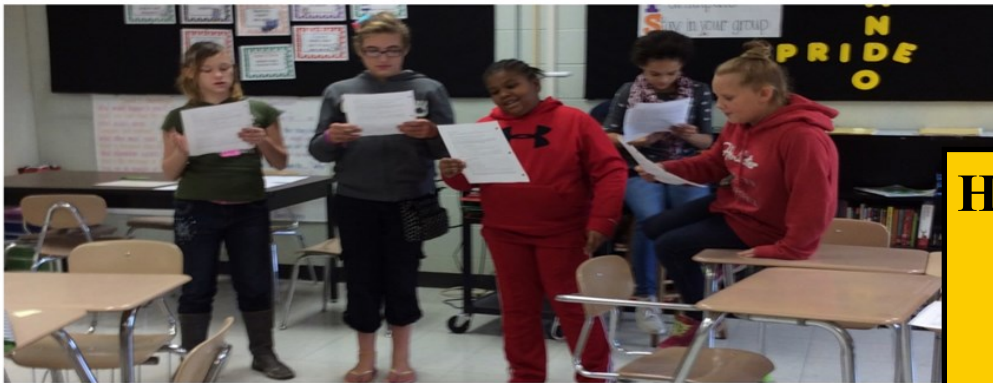
**Hawkins Middle School** has implemented the RTI<sup>2</sup> (Response to Instruction and Intervention) framework into our instruction this year. The purpose of RTI<sup>2</sup> is to provide quality instruction and intervention according to student needs. Students are monitored closely in the regular classroom, and struggling students attend a daily class especially designed to teach skills they may be lacking. Small classes provide an opportunity for teachers to work individually with students and help those students master skills necessary for success in their core classes. The purpose of RTI<sup>2</sup> is to close achievement gaps by preventing smaller learning problems from becoming overwhelming gaps.

Lead Educator, Janelle Brooks, works tirelessly

to provide engaging and meaningful activities for students in both reading and math RTI<sup>2</sup> classes. Each day brings a new learning experience for the students. Walk by any intervention classroom during the day, and you might see students playing a fun game to reinforce phonics or math fluency skills. On another day, you may also hear the enthusiastic voices of students as they practice reading aloud with a readers' theater activity. In a different room, you might witness students working cooperatively as they practice the strategies they are learning in math and reading. Students are monitored weekly, and many have made enough progress to be released from the program. Overall, Hawkins is making great strides in providing ongoing intervention and support for all students.



**Hawkins Middle  
School —  
Home of the  
HMS  
Commandos**





# Facilitating Learning through Quality Instruction in High Schools



On Wednesday, February 4th, **Station Camp High School's** DECA held a Baller's Breakfast for all members. This breakfast was hosted to honor the outstanding performance by SCHS DECA members at the Regional Career Development Conference. The breakfast also was to acknowledge widespread excellence displayed by chapter members. In total, 72 Station Camp

students have advanced to the State Competition which was held in March. All of these students were recognized at the Baller's Breakfast and applauded by their peers. The Baller's Breakfast is an integral part of Station Camp DECA's event schedule as it highlights the importance of competing for all DECA members.



# Station Camp High School — Home of the SCHS Bison



## Facilitating Learning through Quality Instruction in High Schools

Art teacher and archaeology enthusiast, Blake Long, shared highlights from his collection of Native American artifacts with history and English classes at **Station Camp High School** last month.

Long has built a collection of thousands of pottery shards, arrowheads, axes, and other tools over years of surface collecting on private property in the area. He proudly stated that 90% of his collection had been found within 10 miles of his Hendersonville home. He estimated to students that over 40 million Native Americans called the Cumberland Valley home over the past 10,000 years.

English 11 Honors teacher, James Dittes, arranged for Mr. Long to show his artifacts as part of a Native American unit Mr. Dittes teaches at the beginning of each year. The focus is on research and analytical skills. After Mr. Long's presentation, students researched artifacts from

the Fenimore Art Museum while crafting and supporting hypotheses about the cultures and religious practices of the tribes that had made them.

"I wanted my students to be challenged by Native American artifacts," Dittes said. "I wanted them to dig deep and unravel what these pieces of the past can tell us about the history of our country. Blake's been surface collecting for a long time, and his collection tied 21st-century students with the pre-history of our very own community."

U.S. History teacher, Seth Massey, also brought his students to the presentation. Coach Massey was recapping various Native American tribes from the 1865 and class vis- they had cussing.



### Why are middle/high school students of Sumner County Schools using project-based learning?

The core idea of project-based learning is that real-world problems capture students' interest and provoke serious thinking as the students acquire and apply new knowledge in a problem-solving context. The teacher plays the role of facilitator, working with students to frame worthwhile questions, structuring meaningful tasks, coaching both knowledge development and social skills, and carefully assessing what students have learned from the experience. Advocates assert that project-based learning helps prepare students for the thinking and collaboration skills required in the workplace. (Jane L. David, Educational Leadership)

## Facilitating Learning through Quality Instruction in High Schools

### GHS Seniors Experience Health Science Professions

For seniors in **Gallatin High School's** Health Science Academy, a unique, hands-on opportunity is helping them transition learning from the classroom to the adult workplace. A clinical internship experience arranged through Health Science teacher, Wendy Vincent, is impacting student learning and achievement in a positive, rigorous way. But, don't take our word for it; read what the students have to say:

"The clinical internship has already made a huge impact on my life. It has further prepared me for my future career and made me think of a different career. I'm very blessed to have this opportunity, and I will not take it for granted."  
-- Courtney G.

"Clinical internship has been an amazing opportunity, and I am proud to be a part of it. I have taken every Health Science class, besides one, and I can say I have never been as excited for a course as I am with clinical internship. This opportunity puts me in the setting I plan to make a career. In my opinion, it provides the best possible way of connecting with the health care industry as a juvenile. We are exposed to different roles in the hospital with various rotations, and I am a strong advocate of rotations rather than getting put in one spot. I have already learned and experienced a lot from what

little time I have been active in the hospital. My mentors have been great and care about my experience." -- Austin H.

"Being in clinical internship has helped me grasp what being in a real life hospital setting is like. I enjoy having the opportunity to follow and observe such talented physicians. Dr. Kindred has already shown me many tools I will use in my future career. His way of interacting with patients, entering the room, and showing compassion for his patients are ways I hope to follow. Speaking for myself and my classmates, I share that we are very thankful for this opportunity." -- Morgan C.

"Clinical Internship has been one of the most beneficial classes that I've taken throughout my high school career. It has been such an honor to be able to learn and experience my future before I start college in the near future. I feel it has and will readily prepare me for what to expect. Ultimately, the opportunity for this internship has given me confidence and made me so excited to succeed in a career in the medical field. The things I've learned truly can't be replaced or matched in any other way! Thank you, Mrs. Vincent!" -- Dima Q.

**Gallatin High School —  
Home of the GHS Green Waves**

Facilitating Learning through Quality Instruction in High Schools



Gallatin High School Health Science Students



# Facilitating Learning through Quality Instruction in High Schools

**Portland  
High  
School -  
Home  
Of the  
PHS  
Panthers**



Mrs. Sherrie Woods is the Lead Educator assigned to **Portland High School** and White House High School. She splits her time equitably between both schools. This is Sherrie's second year as the Lead Educator for Portland, and her hard work is paying off. The EOC scores from the Fall 2014 semester showed growth; that is testament to the guidance she has offered the PHS Language Arts Department.

Mrs. Woods has been in classrooms, modeled lessons, and trained not only PHS English teachers, but the whole faculty on literacy and close reading strategies. This year, in particular, she has assisted newer teachers with classroom management and helped the entire department focus on meaningful standards-based as-

sessments. She has given individual attention to each teacher in the department, compiling and reviewing data on their students, and discussing techniques for continuous gains in student achievement.

Her energy and passion for quality education is infectious, and she serves as a wealth of knowledge in her mentorship. She approaches her job duties with a fierceness unmatched, and she has been a welcomed leader for Portland High School.



## Facilitating Learning through Quality Instruction in High Schools

**Westmoreland High School** is in the process of developing an ACT Wall of Fame on which students will be recognized for their levels of achievement on this important test. While no individual scores will be posted, every student making a composite score of 20 or better will receive some sort of recognition. Higher levels of recognition will be given to students scoring in the 24-29 and 30-36 point ranges. Being implemented as a part of a new “University Blvd.,” it is hoped that students will be further motivated to score well on their ACT. This spring, Mr. Lasater is teaching a special “Saturday Series” of ACT Prep classes. Participation was free to students who jointly agreed with their parents and school administration on a performance contract.

WHS has also created a Facebook page to enhance communication with all its stakeholders. Within the first week, the page had over 350 “Likes” and 8,900 views; in total, the page was visited by over 1,900 different individuals. The school certainly shared a great deal of information about the WHS girls’ basketball team’s regional success and journey to the State Tournament during that week! Additionally, the school has documented hundreds of views of posts regarding scholarship opportunities and specific class announcements. “The new Facebook page provides opportunities for parents and interested members of the Westmoreland community to know more about what goes on inside the school on a daily basis,” said Principal Rick Duffer.



**Westmoreland High School — Home of the WHS Eagles**



## Facilitating Learning through Quality Instruction in High Schools

### Perspective makes the Difference—Peer-Facilitated Learning at HHS

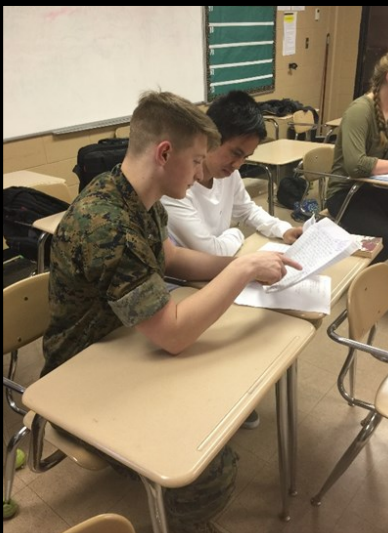
Teachers at **Hendersonville High School**, like others across Sumner County, strive for greatness every day. Whether in the classroom, in the athletic arena, or in the lives of their students, teachers push for excellence and try to make a long-lasting impact in many different areas. However, it is a peer's guidance that can have the most influence short-term at times.

Understanding the importance of the methodology of peer facilitation for learning and desiring the most for all students, HHS has undertaken a new adventure in the last three years. Peer-facilitated learning is not new, but it has breathed new life into the HHS Writing Lab. Twice a week, students come together to work

on writing skills essential for success.

When asked about his experience with the writing lab, Kevin Brewer (a senior at HHS) responded, "I found the writing lab welcoming and incredibly helpful. From only two sessions with the tutors, I was able to increase my score on my next essay 16 points."

At HHS, it has become common knowledge that the writing lab is making a difference for students and teachers. Writing is improving and relationships are being strengthened. Karen Sims (English teacher at HHS) stated, "It's been a plus for everybody!"



**Hendersonville High School —  
Home of the HHS Commandos**





# Facilitating Learning through Quality Instruction in High Schools

**Beech  
High  
School —  
Home  
of the BHS  
Buccaneers**



Recently, **Beech High School** math students and teachers found that math was even more fun to digest! In geometry, the math symbol Pi represents the number 3.141592653. This year, March 14, 2015 (3-14-15) at 9:26:53 was considered to be the Pi day of the century because of the sequence of the numbers in Pi. At Beech High School, they celebrated it in the math de-

partment by students bringing pies of different varieties. The math teachers also wore t-shirts for the "Ultimate Pi Day." The entire school was wished "Happy Pi Day!" and an explanation of Pi was given on the morning announcements. Happy Pi Day from Beech High School!!

## Facilitating Learning through Quality Instruction in Middle College

### Collaboration at SCS Middle College High School -VSCC Brings Rewards to All

This academic year, I have had the opportunity to participate in the **Sumner County Middle College High School** as Assistant Professor of Economics. Every student in the program is required to take economics to meet the state high school requirements for graduation. I observed the challenges of these students as they navigated the first semester, encountering academic freedom and expectations, being the new students among a mixture of traditional and older students. They were guinea pigs for new classroom software that I had chosen to launch using a customized e-book imbedded with YouTube and Kahn Academy clips along with my personal notes. Interactive assignments that intuitively learn a student's strengths and weaknesses in problem solving are also a new part of the course. In addition, they would use our online D2L class platform for discussion posts, tests, and other assignments which are much different than they might encounter at their local school. While all of these were new and unfamiliar expectations for these students, the instructions to the faculty were to treat the Middle College students as any other students without exception. The goal was for them to acclimate with other students and their surroundings on their own over time.

The first few weeks were typically awkward as students learned to master the new software and hardware requirements and settle in to my teaching style. My greatest strength as a classroom teacher is my ability to demand class participation using the Socratic method to extract

critical thought on a variety of current topics and problems. To achieve the atmosphere necessary for a lively debate on the economic merits of a wide range of topics - including medical marijuana, doctor-assisted suicide, minimum wage, monetary and fiscal policy - I extract as much information as possible about the students' goals, ambitions, and experiences. I begin constantly probing and asking questions from the very first day of class. At first, many of the Middle College students were reluctant to offer their thoughts and opinions in an open manner that would expose them to challenges from other students and the professor. One student who rose quickly to the challenge was Lily Gailmard. A senior from Station Camp, she employed a dry wit and a quick mind to respond to my questions and prompts. She soon became a class leader, and as her confidence grew, her academic reasoning improved. She was not afraid to take on the professor. Other students began to step out and share their opinions which created the dynamic energy I need to push their perspectives down roads they might not otherwise consider – challenging long-held beliefs. Near the end of the semester, many of my strongest students were from the Middle College. Lily was the match that sparked the group to take chances and trust their own thoughts and opinions. I believe that her initiative was the key to the successful launch of the Middle College in my class.

-David Fuqua, Assistant Professor of Economics

(Read Lily's perspective on page 63.)

## Facilitating Learning through Quality Instruction in Elementary Schools

### Collaboration and Persistence Make a Difference in Learning Environments

While my role as a class leader was necessary for the class, I would have never become one without a professor as engaged in his students' success as is Professor Fuqua. He was determined to not only teach the required material, but to also get students to form their own opinions and have a dialogue in class. He came to class every day ready to teach economics and discuss any current topic that came up. It was a very different environment than what I had been part of at my previous high school, and after the first class, I knew I would have to be the one to adapt. I had to learn to keep up with

all the online assignments and discussions, but I mostly had to actually read the textbook before class. Professor Fuqua pushed each and every student to come to class prepared because he wasn't scared to call on a hand that wasn't raised. Had it not been for his persistence in calling on me in class, whether I wanted him to or not, I would have never done well in his class. I would credit the class's success to Professor Fuqua's never-ending desire to push each student to reach his or her full potential as a student and as a critical thinker.

-Lily Gailmard, SCS Middle College High School at VSCC



Professor Fuqua and student, Lily Gailmard





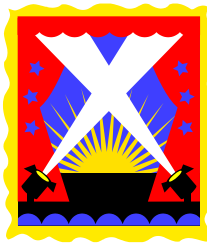
## Facilitating Learning through Quality Instruction in K-12 Schools

At **R.T. Fisher Alternative School**, teachers work to individualize the learning for each student's targeted need. Instructional methods include hands-on and group activities. Pictured is Dr. McKenna's high school English students' presentation on examples of an idiom. Some examples that the students picked and illustrated are "Don't cry over spilled milk," "When pigs fly!" and "He's bullheaded." While the class learned that idioms are phrases

or expressions where the words together have a meaning that is different from the dictionary definitions of the individual words, they also discovered that there are many talented artists at RTF!



**R. T. Fisher Alternative School —  
Home of the RTF Falcons**



Spotlighting “Positives” in Sumner County Schools

## Sumner County Schools Sponsors College GPS

On February 28th, Sumner County Schools held a **College GPS (Guide for Parents and Students)** event at Station Camp High School. This event was to assist parents and students in preparing for college. Two of our local post-secondary schools — Volunteer State Community College and Union University — were there to discuss the decision-making process for college choice and financial assistance. Dr. Charles Lea represented Union University, and Sherry Cliburn and Sue Pedigo were VSCC's representatives. Len Silverman of Huntington Learning Center in Hendersonville was present to offer an overview of the ACT test and its importance as part of a student's overall college

package.

In addition, Kristina Ellis, the author of *Confessions of a Scholarship Winner*, was available to speak with students on believing that their dreams can be achieved. She offered some tools which might be used to accomplish it. Ms. Ellis shared her life story, personal hardships, and how she highlighted her qualities of uniqueness (even though her academic scores were average) to apply for and be awarded over \$500,000 in scholarships while being able to attend her dream school, Vanderbilt University, for free! Her mission now is to help students find similar or even greater success.





# Facilitating Learning through Quality Instruction in Elementary Schools

Kristina Ellis, author of *Confessions of a Scholarship Winner*, talks with students and parents.





Facilitating Learning through Quality Instruction in Elementary Schools



Dr. Lea of Union University addresses college choices with families.



Glee Moore and Pamela Harrison, SCS High School Coordinators, present opportunities for learning to parents and students of Sumner County Schools.



Facilitating Learning through Quality Instruction in Elementary Schools



Volunteer State Community College representatives chat with prospective students and their parents about the community college experience.



Brad Schreiner, co-principal of Sumner County Middle College High School, explains the middle college concept to interested parents and students.



# Facilitating Learning through Quality Instruction in Elementary Schools

Parents and students learn tips about ACT test prep from Mr. Silverman of the Huntington Learning Center. The winner of the drawing for an academic ACT evaluation was Amanda Chichester.



Tennessee.gov and the Tennessee Department of Education sponsors the website, <https://www.collegefortn.org/> where students of all ages and community members may learn more about career planning, high school planning, college planning, and financial aid planning.