

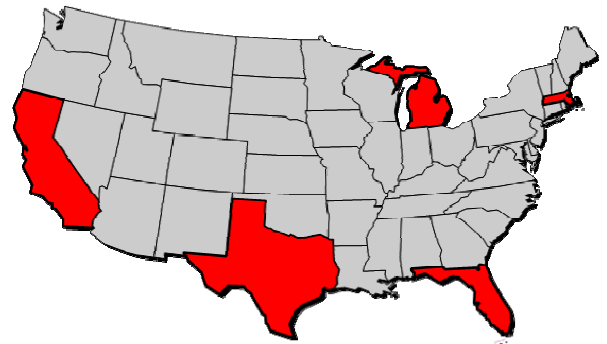


## CASE STUDY

# Core Practices in Math & Science: An Investigation of Consistently Higher Performing Schools in Five States

## King Middle School

Santa Rosa County  
School District  
(Florida)



## Introduction

Since 1999, the National Center for Educational Achievement (NCEA) and its affiliated research teams have studied over 500 public schools across the country in an effort to identify and disseminate effective practices embraced by higher performing schools that distinguish their campuses from their average-performing peers. Building on the foundation established by this previous research, NCEA sought in the current study to focus specifically on educational practices in the areas of mathematics and science in five states: California, Florida, Massachusetts, Michigan, and Texas.

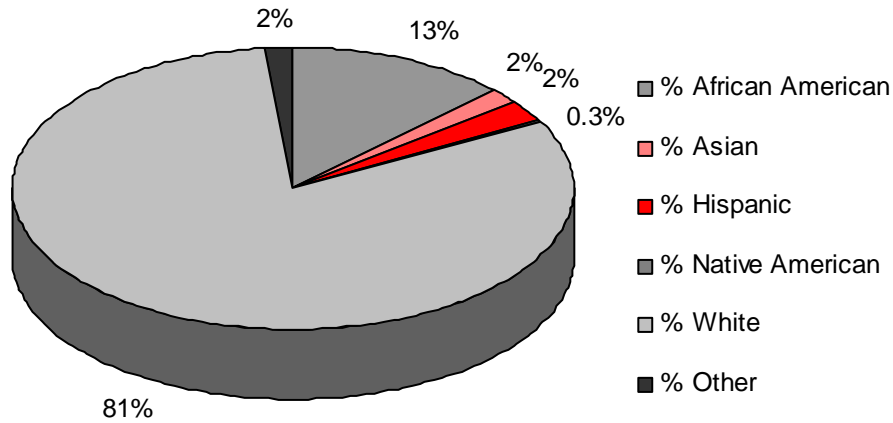
Criteria used in school selection in the current study included three years of state assessment data in mathematics and science (2004, 2005, and 2006), campus demographic make-up, percentage of economically disadvantaged students, school size, and geographic location. In addition, all of the schools selected for participation met the state and federal requirements for Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in 2006. Schools categorized as higher performing based on the selection criteria were those “beating the odds” with consistently better student achievement over three years, when compared to peer campuses with a similar student population. Therefore, a list of the state’s highest performing schools may contain schools different from those selected for this study.<sup>1</sup>

In order to illuminate the roles of different members in a school community, for each selected school, NCEA researchers interviewed district-level administrators, school administrators, and classroom teachers. To supplement the interview data, researchers collected pertinent documents, observed secondary level algebra classes, and invited participants to take part in the NCEA *Self-Assessment* online.

<sup>1</sup> For more detailed information about the school identification process and the list of higher performing schools included in the study, please see the full cross-case report at <http://www.nc4ea.org>.

**Figure 1: Student Demographics**

## King Middle School



### District and School Profile

Located in the Florida Panhandle, the Santa Rosa County School District serves approximately 26,000 students and operates a total of 38 schools, including 17 elementary schools, seven middle schools, and six traditional high schools. Approximately one-third (32%) of the student population qualifies for free and reduced-price meals.

One of the middle schools in the district, King Middle School first opened its doors in 1972. With the school's large attendance boundary, educators at King serve many students who ride the bus for more than an hour daily. High student achievement has consistently earned the school the status of an "A" school in the state of Florida. Located in the city of Milton in Santa Rosa County, King Middle School enrolls 604 students, 61% of whom receive free and reduced-price meals. The majority of the students at King Middle School are White (81%), followed by African-American students (13%) and Hispanic students (2%). Because of the school's proximity to a military base, educators on campus serve many students of military personnel.

As a strong proponent of higher standards, NCEA recognizes school efforts to move more students to the state's higher standard of achievement by accounting for those students in the analysis of consistent higher performance. Tables 1 and 2 summarize performance at both the state's proficient and advanced standards attained by the students at King Middle School for the years of 2004, 2005, and 2006. The state averages included in the tables represent student performance

among schools with a student population similar to King, particularly based on the percentage of economically disadvantaged students.

**Table 1: Performance Trends based on Proficiency Standard**

	2004			2005			2006		
Grade	6	7	8	6	7	8	6	7	8
Mathematics	40%	50%	72%	38%	53%	62%	57%	64%	60%
Science	Not Tested	Not Tested	46%	Not Tested	Not Tested	43%	Not Tested	Not Tested	45%
State Average for Similar Schools (Math)	37%	42%	48%	39%	45%	52%	44%	47%	53%
State Average for Similar Schools (Science)	Not Tested	Not Tested	21%	Not Tested	Not Tested	26%	Not Tested	Not Tested	24%

**Table 2: Performance Trends based on Advanced Standard**

	2004			2005			2006		
Grade	6	7	8	6	7	8	6	7	8
Mathematics	16%	19%	32%	15%	22%	26%	23%	24%	34%
Science	Not Tested	Not Tested	7%	Not Tested	Not Tested	12%	Not Tested	Not Tested	7%
State Average for Similar Schools (Math)	14%	17%	19%	15%	18%	20%	18%	18%	20%
State Average for Similar Schools (Science)	Not Tested	Not Tested	2%	Not Tested	Not Tested	4%	Not Tested	Not Tested	3%

## Theme 1

### Student Learning: Expectations & Goals

**A district-wide focus on the Florida Sunshine State Standards serves as the overarching curriculum guide for aligned educational expectations. Based on the state standards, teachers at King Middle School develop specific and prioritized curriculum documents to ensure aligned instruction.**

- Educators in the Santa Rosa County School District emphasize the importance of the state standards as a means to attain consistency. Administrators at the district office and at King Middle School expect teachers to anchor instruction and lesson planning to the state standards to ensure instructional consistency across the district. One district administrator shared,

“Because of the emphasis on tying the lesson plans directly to the state standards, teachers are following the standards closely.”

- School-level educators create standards-based curriculum documents to provide specific guidance for instruction. At King Middle School, leaders on campus require teachers to create curriculum documents. Math and science teachers work collaboratively within their departments to prioritize the state standards and develop documents such as sequencing, scopes, power standards, yearly outlines, and annual plans. The curriculum documents contain more specific information for each grade level and subject area than the state standards. For example, one school administrator explained that the course outline in 6th-grade math specifies “the set of standards we want teachers to cover in 6th-grade math, so the 7th-grade teachers know what students have been exposed to.”

**Leaders at King Middle School emphasize and communicate to teachers the importance of consistent curricular implementation across classes and grade levels. Teachers achieve consistency by implementing the established curriculum, using curricular recourses, and communicating with colleagues.**

- At King Middle School, administrators expect and enforce consistency in curricular implementation across classrooms by requiring teachers to deliver the same content and assessments in each classroom at the same grade level. For one school leader, the importance of consistency and alignment lies in fairness and equal access for all students as “every child in the school should receive the same instruction regardless of which teacher’s class he is in.” The established curriculum also eliminates instructional discrepancies from newly hired teachers as they can easily figure out what to teach based on the curriculum.
- Standards-based curriculum documents and teacher communication facilitate instructional consistency and alignment. By following curriculum documents that contain identified priority standards in each grade level and subject area, school leaders and teachers ensure that instruction is consistent across classes and grade levels. Regarding teacher communication, one district leader stated that district administrators “try to give emphasis to teachers planning lessons with one another, and make sure that teachers are talking to each other about what they are covering in their departments.” At King Middle School, grade-level teams meet almost daily to plan lessons to ensure consistency in course delivery.
- Math and science teachers at King Middle School possess both vertical and grade-level knowledge pertaining to the state standards in their subject areas. The teachers consider themselves responsible for preparing students for the next grade level by fully implementing the standards-based curriculum in their

grade. For instance, 6th-, 7th-, and 8th-grade science teachers all share a sense of responsibility for preparing students for the FCAT (Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test), even though 8th-grade students are the only ones tested. One 7th-grade teacher stated, "If the children aren't taught well in the sixth and seventh grades, or if we have a weak teacher, then it affects the eighth grade."

- At King Middle School, teachers' use of standards-embedded resources and tools with fidelity also strengthens instructional consistency in different classrooms. For instance, to align instruction, teachers make consistent use of textbook resources such as lesson-by-lesson correlation to the FCAT, key grade level expectations, and assessment tools. Teachers also work to fill gaps existing in instructional materials. Science teachers at King, for example, mentioned how they incorporate the FCAT released tests to develop the conceptual understanding of the standards required of the students.

**Educational goals at the district, school, and classroom levels address both academic achievement and successful citizenship. Administrators and teachers aim to apply ambitious college and career readiness goals to every student.**

- Many administrators and teachers define their goals and priorities in terms of both enhancing student achievement academically and equipping students with life-long learning skills to help them become productive and responsible citizens. At King Middle School, adults hold fast to this dual definition of their job. Regardless of the students' ethnicity or socio-economic status, the principal expressed that "we look at our children as 'you are OUR children.' It doesn't matter if you are red, or green, or polka dot, you are our children and we expect you to perform." As a poverty school in a neighborhood with many societal problems, educators at King commented on the need to weave qualities such as responsibility, work ethics, and service attitudes into instruction in and outside of classrooms. For example, the principal and her staff push garbage bins around during lunch hours to demonstrate those qualities to the students. In addition, to expose students to the real world, one school administrator shared how, even before the state mandate on middle school career courses, the principal had created courses such as business computers, home economics, and bookkeeping for all 8th-grade students to be "in the career wheel."
- In developing their annual professional goals, staff members at the district, school, and classroom levels articulate their objectives in terms of academic performance. At the school level, school improvement plans are not only academically focused but also address specific student needs. Likewise, based on the school improvement plan and advice from school leaders, teachers develop annual goals that are academically specific and measurable.

For instance, reviewing student data from the 2006-07 school year, school leaders at King identified Research and Reference as the areas in reading most in need of improvement. To support the development of these two skills, the principal assisted reading and social studies teachers with setting goals to work with individual students and to promote growth via strategies such as daily warm-up activities.

- At King Middle School, one academic goal is to prepare students for advanced level coursework in high school in order for them to become successful graduates. In the math and science departments, teachers align their academic expectations with those present at the high school level. In math, 8th-grade students taking Algebra I not only attain credits to fulfill the graduation requirement at the completion of the course but also receive the same instructional content as students taking the course in district high schools. In science, a school administrator shared that, based on the experience of her own children attending King, the rigor in the courses at the school also prepares students for advanced and honors classes in high school.

## Theme 2

### Staff Selection, Leadership, & Capacity Building

**Internal development of administrators and leaders is a common practice at the district, school, and classroom levels. The development model results in strong instructional leadership and career longevity at all levels.**

- Development and selection of leaders in the Santa Rosa school district emphasize instructional leadership and management. Without excluding qualified candidates from outside of the district, Santa Rosa leaders have in place a “grow your own” model for developing instructional leaders, assistant principals, and principals. According to one administrator, “The largest majority of our principals comes from our current assistant principals and tends to be those who have actually taught here in the school system for several years.” The classroom experience that internally developed leaders and administrators possess serves as a measure of strength and understanding of instructional leadership. In addition, new and potential leaders receive ongoing training and support as part of the internal development. For instance, one district administrator spoke about the monthly meetings he holds with current assistant principals to prepare them for principalship via in-depth discussions regarding topics such as teacher interview and application processes. Additional training topics include data analysis, district-wide initiatives, leadership, and management of the learning environment.

- Continuous leadership development at King Middle School ensures contiguity and high-quality education. At King, leadership development is constant and continuous, with strong instructional leadership evident in the math and science departments as well as school-wide. Examples of leadership include math teachers' involvement in the state standard revision process. School-wide, the literacy coach on campus leads and models effective lessons and strategies. In addition, as a result of the continuously developed leadership on campus, succession upon staff retirement is smooth. While the principal and both math and science department chairs were retiring at the time of data collection after more than 30 years of service at King, the principal stated with confidence that "when we leave, we want that same quality of teaching to continue...The school won't hurt [because of the retirement of] department heads. We just have great teachers here" who could easily take over the responsibilities.

**Hiring practices and low turnover rates at King Middle School establish shared educational philosophies that focus on student learning.**

- At King Middle School, low staff turnover and career longevity result in consistency in educational dedication on the school ground. The adults at King share a commitment to nurturing students and taking care of their physical, emotional, and financial needs in order for learning and achievement to occur. The principal's motto, which the teachers on campus can readily recite, is, "The students don't care how much you know until they know how much you care." One veteran science teacher commented, "When you come to King Middle School, you don't come because you want a job; you make a commitment to come. If you don't make that commitment, you leave soon after."
- When hiring teachers, school leaders make sure the candidates, like current faculty members, have compassion for children, a willingness to work hard and collaborate, and a desire to continue growing professionally. Whenever possible in the selection process, the principal talks to community members who are acquaintances of the candidates. Over the years, the principal has also weeded out teachers, especially when they lacked the characteristics listed above that are essential in the provision of quality education.
- Recruitment of positive and qualified teachers is a school-wide effort. Current faculty members actively assist school leaders in identifying qualified and competent candidates, for instance, through their contact with substitute teachers or student teachers. The principal has also recruited and hired former King Middle School students who serve as strong role models for the current students.

**With minimal interruption to their daily schedules, teachers in the Santa Rosa County School District have access to support through instructionally focused professional development and collegial collaboration.**

- Administrators in Santa Rosa place much emphasis on teacher training. Ample opportunities are available at the district and school levels for teachers to receive training on topics such as instructional strategies and content in their subject areas. Normally embedded in the teachers' daily activities, staff development opportunities are available during planning periods or via the district's provision of substitute teachers. Considering opportunities offered at the school site to be more convenient, teachers at King Middle School have access to onsite professional development, for instance, through learning communities where school leaders guide teachers through current and research-based publications on instructional strategies.
- Strongly encouraging collaboration among teachers, administrators often build collaborative time into the school schedule. Collaborating especially well at King Middle School, math and science teachers communicate within their departments both vertically and horizontally to address departmentally established agenda items such as the curriculum, state standards, alignment, student performance, and intervention needs. In addition to scheduled meetings, math and science teachers meet informally on a daily basis and comfortably ask for advice without feeling judged. One science teacher expressed, "The strength of King has been that we work as a department. It's not anyone doing their own thing. We are on the same page [in our instruction]." Teachers also share with one another instructional practices and strategies that have worked in their classrooms or that they have learned at workshops.
- The benefit of support from regular faculty collaboration is especially valuable for teachers new to a school. At King Middle School, veteran teachers are readily available to assist newly hired colleagues. One math teacher shared that "when I first started, every day that first year someone was there for me... excellent support, from what's happening at the school to how to help with the math itself." In addition, onsite mentoring provides good support to new teachers through frequent collaboration with and guidance from experienced colleagues assigned by the principal in the same subject and level.
- Teachers at King Middle School provide cross-curricular support to one another to strengthen instruction and better prepare students. For example, as 8th-grade science teachers frantically try to get students to understand the content, math teachers help with the review of science by focusing on math concepts applicable to the science state test. In addition, because math and science state tests both require content knowledge and reading skills, reading teachers and the library staff focus their efforts to help students read better. One science teacher stated that "the reading department has been



emphasizing nonfiction reading and the library has been purchasing books that go along with the science lessons. So there is more for the students to read and if they become interested in a topic, they can go further.”

### Theme 3

## Instructional Tools: Programs & Strategies

**Instructionally related decisions are largely site-based, with much teacher input in the process to increase buy-in.**

- The district office operates on site-based decision-making processes in order to address student needs, particularly in the realm of instructional arrangements. For instance, leaders at King Middle School created a 90-minute block for math education upon realizing that 6th-grade students’ performance was not ideal. In order to both support struggling learners and accelerate advanced students, leaders and staff at King also coordinated additional Academic Improvement Classes (AIP) in math, reading, and writing to provide both intervention and acceleration by placing students in these classes based on proficiency levels on the state tests. Furthermore, to ensure instructional consistency and equal opportunities in higher level math courses, a leader at King Middle School explained how a school-wide consensus led to the arrangement of one single teacher teaching all the Algebra I classes, and another teaching pre-Algebra; “we understand in those classes, you need to be consistent because Algebra I has been identified as the keystone class that really determines where a child’s education career would go.” Single-teacher assignments for the higher level courses are feasible because King Middle School has a relatively small student population.
- Regarding district-wide instructional and curricular issues, district administrators actively and constantly seek teacher input to increase teacher buy-in. For example, district leaders ask department chairs to collect teacher input on student interventions and course offering changes before meetings. The district’s textbook adoption process also illustrates the importance of teacher input. Teachers have confidence in the adopted textbooks for core subject areas because of their involvement in the selection process. One district leader shared that the adoption process “eliminates the attitude that the district is enforcing things on the schools because the teachers and administrators have realized the value of the materials.”

**To enhance learning, instruction at King Middle School involves the provision of applicability as incentives and of accommodation for student learning preferences.**

- Embracing the importance of having high expectations and believing all students can learn the rigorous curriculum, educators at King Middle School

recognize the need to create a gateway to continuous learning. At King, math and science teachers deliberately foster student motivation by connecting the content to real life situations. Helping students see how what they are learning is important and relevant to their lives and daily problem-solving, according to the teachers, is especially important for the economically disadvantaged population at King because education is not necessarily a goal set by the students. For instance, to involve her students in the lesson, an 8th-grade science teacher shared how she made connections between velocity and hunting - an activity in which many people in Santa Rosa engage. In life science, a teacher explained to the students how their understanding of the body helps them talk to a doctor about their health.

- In order to reach every student, math and science teachers include an array of explanations and approaches in their instruction. For instance, a math teacher mentioned how she tried to teach fractions with a different method of finding common denominators that another teacher had shared with her. "I presented it. Some of the children took it; some of them were still lost. So I presented something else that they could use."

**Implementation of adopted materials with fidelity and flexible student placement in instructional programs maximize educational benefits.**

- Implementation of instructional programs with fidelity is the focus both in the district and at King Middle School. With such a focus, administrators make arrangements to enable faithful and reliable implementation. For example, after realizing the need for a 90-minute math block to enable students to attain the full benefits of instruction, school leaders at King worked to include the time requirements on the master schedule.
- Student placement in various instructional programs at King Middle School is flexible. This placement practice enables educators to meet student needs promptly and effectively. One school administrator explained the flexible process of placing students in advanced classes as first involving the creation of a list of students who are ready to succeed upon placement in or reassignment to higher level courses. In addition, students in need of tutoring can also have their schedules flexibly arranged to allow them to receive the extra support without falling behind in their primary classrooms.
- In their classrooms, teachers at King Middle School augment student learning, also through effective implementation and flexibility. Stressing the importance of faithful instruction and implementation, one science teacher shared her practice of completely eliminating "free days" in the classroom; "on a regular basis, you just need to get in there and hit it hard every day." The teachers also make use of flexible grouping practices in their classrooms by arranging students based on ability to increase learning and understanding.

## Theme 4

### Monitoring: Compilation, Analysis, & Use of Data

**Progress monitoring is prevalent at the district, school, and classroom levels, with educators closely observing student performance during instruction and via assessment tools. Involvement from students and parents in progress monitoring is also common.**

- Student data is readily available and closely monitored throughout the district. One district administrator explained that she creates disaggregated and longitudinal data to help school administrators identify strengths and weaknesses on their campus. At King Middle School, because administrators are often eager to view and analyze student performance, they hand calculate raw data (e.g., from the state department of education) before it becomes available on the district's data system.
- With the importance placed on using and understanding student performance data, administrators in Santa Rosa ensure educators' ability to engage in data analysis. For instance, the district office provides training for school data teams, on which site administrators serve. At King Middle School, administrators work with teachers on data analysis. Recognizing the need to not only focus on struggling students but also challenge advanced learners, the principal conducted a training session "where we took the data and had the teachers actually tally. Once you understand the pattern is there, you are going to buy in and understand, 'we need to work on this.'" The training in data use enables educators to be aware of students who may be struggling. In addition, data analysis is a regular component in department planning periods, during which teachers identify strengths and weaknesses as well as methods of modification.
- Student monitoring via assessments is constant and consistent across each grade level at King Middle School. In math and science education, teachers collaboratively create common assessment instruments for student benchmarking and performance monitoring at each grade level. While benchmark tools are also available from the district office to formatively assess student mastery of the state standards, the principal explained, "as long as the teachers are successful in monitoring student performance, I am not going to complain." Teachers also create their own tests, consciously engage in verbal assessment, and consult results from individualized computer practices as additional layers of monitoring in their individual classrooms to effectively address student needs.
- At King Middle School, students and parents participate in performance monitoring. In addition to communicating with teachers, parents can easily

access student grades online via the Parent Internet Viewer program. In the classroom, students engage in monitoring their own performance and progress, although the specific mechanism may differ from class to class. Many teachers use percentage charts for students to fill out and schedule individual conferences to review performance with the students. One science teacher shared, "I talk one-on-one with students whose grades are falling or who are not doing their work. If necessary, I also notify the parents." Many teachers provide regular grade reports. One math teacher shared that she prints grades for all students at least every two weeks. All teachers in the science department send progress reports home every mid-term.

**School leaders are in charge of ensuring effective instruction and faithful implementation of instructional programs on their campus.**

- With the expectation that school administrators monitor program implementation, district leaders provide the data and information necessary for effective monitoring. For example, one district administrator shared that when the implementation of the district-adopted intervention program, Success Maker, was not as thorough as expected, the district office staffed and trained principals to conduct program monitoring. In addition, the district administration provided principals with student data and guidance to allow them to modify program implementation as needed for better student results.
- Leaders at King Middle School work closely with teachers in instructional decision processes in order to achieve instructional implementation with fidelity. The leaders rely on data analysis of student performance and their knowledge of the standards-based **curriculum** to inform their judgment. For instance, one leader shared that, after teachers collaboratively create yearly course outlines to specify instructional sequencing, the administrative team verifies the decisions and documents made by the teachers. "We have identified our areas of need based on data, and we may shuffle the order around a little bit" to ensure the courses effectively address the areas of weakness. In addition, school leaders are constantly in the classrooms observing, and their presence, expected by both teachers and students, does not interrupt the instruction. Based on their observations, the administrators provide helpful feedback for teachers to help them modify their instruction. The administrators also take advantage of brief encounters with teachers to provide feedback. One administrator mentioned having "walking conversations" with teachers when he saw them in the hallway.

## Theme 5

### Recognition, Intervention, & Adjustment

**With frequent support from the community, recognition for prominent performance and creation of expanded opportunities for the students are prevalent at King Middle School.**

- At King Middle School, recognition for student and teacher accomplishments abounds. In addition to praising students for good academic performance and behaviors, educators at King actively pursue opportunities for student recognition outside of the campus, including, for instance, the school board's recognition of the school's robotics team. One science teacher said, "Once students see that they can be successful, they will continue to be successful." For high-performing teachers, compliments from the school administration are constant, and recognition is often in the form of administrative requests for model lessons or classroom observations for the other teachers on campus.
- Serving many students living in poverty, the adults at King Middle School constantly engage in ways to expand the students' experiences and opportunities. Frequent community involvement supports such opportunities via fundraisers. In one case, community support provided funding for lodging, allowing students to attend national competitions. The community has also funded college scholarships that the retiring principal wants to create for students who are considering college but may not be able to afford it. In return, King Middle School gives back to the community by engaging students in activities such as honoring veterans on Veterans' Day and supporting the community food drive.
- Educators at King Middle School aim to provide students with instruction and resources that are otherwise unavailable at home. A good example is the Robotics Competition, for which school educators purchase a kit every year and which teachers actively promote to increase student involvement. Teachers voluntarily stay after school to mentor students in their creation of robots. In addition, science teachers strive to ensure and maintain well-equipped labs because the equipment affords students an experience unavailable to them at home.

**Staff interventions in the Santa Rosa County School District emphasize meeting teachers' specific needs.**

- As a way to amend areas of concern in instruction, district-provided professional development activities exemplify focus and specificity. For instance, district leaders often organize training to address site-specific needs. In order to identify staff development needs on the campus, leaders consult disaggregated student data and the school improvement plan. At King Middle

School, campus leaders also administer “surveys to find out what the teachers would like to learn.”

- At King Middle School, struggling teachers receive guidance and support to attain improvement. The school administrators not only provide struggling teachers with timely and individualized feedback but also specify routes to improvement. The principal explained that, after classroom walkthroughs, “if I feel that a teacher needs to work on an area, I will sit down with that teacher to talk about it. This is why I need you to do this. I want you to go and observe in these teachers’ classrooms to see, for example, classroom management, and then decide what would work best for you, write down what you have learned in these classes, and let’s talk about it.”

**At King Middle School, early student intervention is the focus and is not punitive. Scheduling and staffing arrangements, as well as administrative support, are measures to ensure effective implementation of intervention programs.**

- Based on reviews of student data, leaders and teachers at King Middle School determine the necessity of early intervention for struggling students. For instance, one leader shared that the creation of a 90-minute block for math intervention in the sixth grade was because “we have found that our biggest achievement gap exists with fifth graders who come to us from elementary schools.” The goal of the longer block is to have students spend as much time on math in the classroom as possible.
- School leaders at King work to meet prerequisites for effective intervention plans, such as scheduling. For example, based on their past experience, school leaders are aware of parents’ assumption that intervention programs are a form of punishment for their children and do not cooperate if the additional support is available after school hours. As a result, educators at King embedded the AIP classes, which encompass both intervention and acceleration, in the daily school schedule by taking five minutes off of each class during the day and reassigning the time to AIP classes.
- School leaders often rearrange teacher assignments based on student intervention needs. For example, one math teacher shared, “this year is the first year that I don’t have the same planning period with everybody else, and it is due to the students’ needs in getting more intervention math classes.” To staff the AIP classes, school administrators divide teachers according to their abilities and assign them to teach classes and subjects that may be different from their primary subject area or grade level.
- With much involvement from teachers, administrators at King provide pertinent training and develop materials to ensure effective student interventions. For instance, teacher-developed curricula for different subject

areas and various student levels provide an effective structure and consistency for the AIP classes. In the summer before the implementation of AIP classes, school leaders organized an in-service workshop for teachers to achieve curricular familiarity in subject areas or grade levels that were different from their primary assignments, in order to enable them to provide effective and accurate instruction in their assigned AIP classes.

## **Summary of Findings**

### **Student Learning: Expectations & Goals**

Educational and curricular expectations exemplify a high level of alignment and consistency throughout the Santa Rosa County School District, as a result of the emphasis administrators place on adherence to the state standards, the teacher-created standards-based curriculum documents that are rich in resources, and the knowledge classroom teachers possess in terms of state expectations in their own grade levels and across grades. Educational goals embraced by educators focus on student academic achievement and successful citizenship. At King Middle School, educators strive to prepare students to succeed in high school, particularly in math and science.

### **Staff Selection, Leadership, & Capacity Building**

Engaged in developing educators internally and frequently, leaders in the Santa Rosa County School District ensure strong instructional leadership, career longevity among staff, and contiguity in their focus on student learning and high-quality education. When hiring staff from outside of the district, administrators adopt rigorous and focused criteria deemed essential to the provision of quality education. At King Middle School, departmental and cross-curricular collaboration among teachers further enhance education for all students.

### **Instructional Tools: Programs & Strategies**

With the district's emphasis on staff involvement and buy-in, educators at King Middle School practice site-based decision-making in instructional arrangements. Through flexibility in course creation, staff assignment, and student placement, educators enhance student learning. In addition, via faithfully implementing programs and providing applicability and accommodation for the students, classroom teachers augment daily instruction.

### **Monitoring, Compilation, Analysis, & Use of Data**

Constantly analyzing available data, educators in the Santa Rosa County School District closely monitor student progress and performance. At King Middle School,

educators create additional assessment instruments and engage both students and their parents in progress monitoring. With regards to instructional effectiveness, school-level leaders receive support from the district office, work closely with teachers in instructional implementation, and constantly spend time in the classrooms.

## **Recognition, Intervention, & Adjustment**

Students and teachers at King Middle School receive not only recognition for outstanding performance but also needed support and opportunities. Intervention measures for the teaching staff include focused staff development activities and specific feedback and guidance. Additional assistance for students at King Middle School includes early intervention, flexible scheduling and staffing arrangements, and abundant resources necessary for effective implementation.





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