

SIMPSON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Franklin, KY

Simpson Elementary School

Grades 1st - 3rd

644 Students

39 Certified Staff

Rural Setting

Socioeconomic:

64.6% Free lunch

6.1% Reduced lunch

Ethnicity:

9% African American

.5% Asian

6.1% Hispanic

78.7% White

\$6,426 per student spending



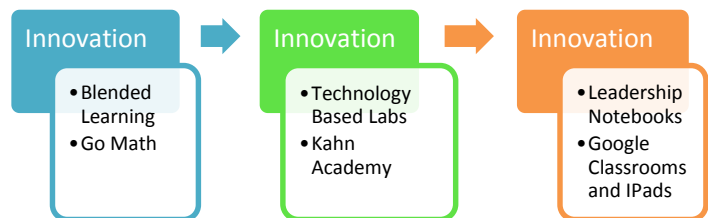
Innovation and Unrealized Potential

Innovation Snapshot

Innovation Pathways

Simpson Elementary seeks to move students toward setting personal growth goals and taking responsibility for their own learning.

Key Elements



kid-FRIENDLY Supports

- Data Retreat
- Community of Practice
- Leader In Me
- FRSYC Funds
- Cultural Proficiency Institute



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Personalized Learning Snapshot 2014-2015

The major goal of personalized learning is to move students toward setting personal growth goals and taking responsibility for their own learning. While we are very much in the planning stages, we want to use blended learning to further our work.

Currently, we have several programs in place that will aid in blended learning implementation. For math, we have an online tutor that differentiates lessons and assessment based on student's "math age" and ability level. Its strengths are mental math strategies, word problems, scope and sequence, and its ability to intervene when a student is struggling with a topic. We have just recently adopted the Go Math series which has online tutorials, instructional videos that help introduce and reinforce math topics, and instructional games that correlate to the math common core standards. Our recent addition of new iPad mini lab and a Google chrome lab has helped to reduce our technology ratio to 1 device per 4 students. Ideally, this would be 1:1 to maximize the capabilities of blended learning. For Language arts, we have Moby Max that differentiates instruction and assessment based on individual student performance, and accelerated reader with AR 360 capabilities. These allow students to choose from a database of real nonfiction newspaper articles based on a topic of their choice. Once chosen, students engage in a "chat" style communication between the teacher and other students about what they are reading. We are also beginning to explore other online resources available in CITTs, as well as Khan Academy, Learn Zillion, ReadWorks, and StoryWorks. For the at risk and low strategic students, we have invested in blended learning based programs like IREAD, System 44, and Read180. These are research based resources that are designed to pair teacher-led instruction, collaboration with peers, and computer technology to meet these students' individual needs.

With so much work toward personalized learning through blended learning, we needed a way that communicates this progress to our stakeholders. Leadership notebooks have proven an effective avenue for setting both academic and non-academic goals that parents, students, and teachers alike can track easily. We have not settled in this quest, but rather continue each year to reflect and improve the contents of these notebooks. However, the idea of communicating individual progress toward learning goals remains the consistent focus.

Beyond that, we have made some major structural adjustments to our core classes. Our teachers were working overtime in self-contained classrooms trying to differentiate a range of levels from pre-primer to 8th grade. After extensive visits, talks, and debate, we found that flexible grouping just may be the key to unlock our stalemate in student progress. At winter break, we restructured our core math and language arts to homogenous groups. While teachers are still differentiating within these groups, meeting individual needs is much more attainable with like ability pairings based on pre and post testing of units and teacher/parent anecdotal notes. Finally, we have begun to use Edviation and STAR record book to help set personalized goals for these groups.

Personalized learning is something that we have pockets of excellence in, but certainly not school-wide. One exemplar is our personalized learning team classrooms. In digital natives, Mrs. Denning is implementing blended learning through Google classroom and iPads. Students are using

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online tutorials, videos, and instructional games to aid in both forward learning and review. Mrs. Graves, our real-world application teacher, and Mrs. Denning both move these students along a personalized learning continuum via “must dos” and “can dos”. At any given time, one would observe students engaged in all sorts of 21st century skill building. In Mrs. Ogles room, student empowerment is happening where the students are inspired to learn through their own wonders and inquiries while she merely gives them the blended learning tools to explore. This work has certainly paid off, because in the short span of time between implementation and benchmark testing, these classrooms reduced the number of novice students, apprentice students, and increased the number of proficient and distinguished students according to STAR. Every student experienced an increase in scale score.

So, as one can see, we have steadily made progress toward laying the foundation for blended learning. Now, we must sequence a plan to use these tools of blended learning to meet students’ learning needs like never before.

1. Grow our personalized learning team. Perhaps each of our team members can mentor one teacher who is ready to “go blended.”
2. Collect data from local and surrounding personalized learning teams that support this initiative.
3. Provide PD in which teachers set personalized goals based on where they are in development toward blended learning.
4. Continue to reiterate how to use our programs like STAR record book and Edviation to move toward blended learning.
5. Reduce our technology ratio to 1:1.
6. Provide support systems for those willing to take risks and explore blended learning/personalized learning.

In the coming 2015-16 year, Simpson Elementary will be turning the corner on an almost all new administrative staff. We will have a new principal, assistant principal, and a new library media specialist. While these positions are faceless at present, we are hopeful that this new team will be naturally motivated by the innovation and unrealized potential in blended learning that leads to personalized learning.