WHITESVILLE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Whitesville, KY

Whitesville Elementary School

Grades Preschool-5

347 Students

21.0 Certified Staff

Rural Setting

Socioeconomic:

36% free lunch

9.5% reduced lunch

Ethnicity:

.6% African American

.6% Asian

2.0% Hispanic

95.1% White

$8,704 per student spending

Preparing Every Student to be College or Career Ready

Innovation Snapshot

Student Empowerment

Whitesville Elementary will create a culture shift by encouraging students to be leaders and take charge of their own learning, behavior, attitude, and attendance by empowering our students.

Key Elements

Innovation	Innovation	Innovatio
•Leader in Me •College Visits •Career Days	•Thinking Strategies •Personalized Learning •Innovative Technology	•House Groups •Mentorships •Celebrations

kid-FRIENDLy Supports

- Data Retreat
- Leader In Me
- FRSYC Funds
- Personalized Learning Symposium

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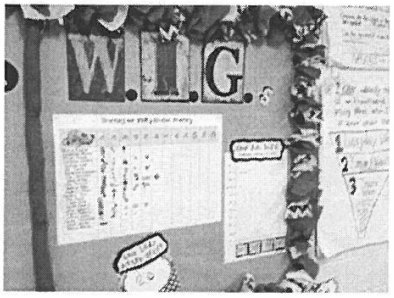
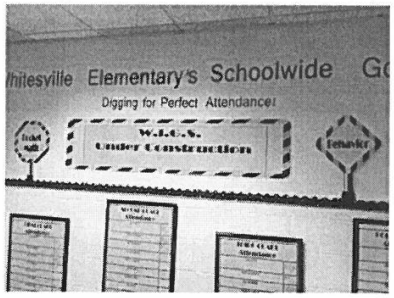
Whitesville Elementary School

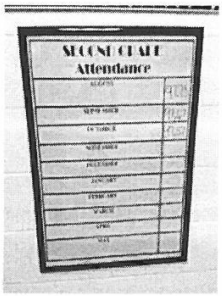
2015 Innovation Snapshot—*Student Empowerment*

Cindy Appleby, Principal

S *p* ranks very high when it comes to academic success of a school. After being introduced to Stephen Covey's, *Leader in Me* book at a conference I realized that we needed a leadership program that would encourage students to take ownership of their own learning through learning the 7 Habits. Reading about the significant difference it had made at A.B. Combs Elementary School in Raleigh, North Carolina in the book, my leadership team knew it was our missing link at Whitesville. Our students were achieving academically but we struggled at times with behavior, attitude, and attendance. We sent every staff member to visit a Leader in Me School and unanimously our staff wanted to explore becoming a Leader in Me School. Our three year journey with Leader in Me has been a true cultural transformation for our school. We've gone from administrators and teachers being the ***"leaders"*** in the building, to every person being a leader, including all staff and students. Students ***believe*** they are leaders; they understand the 7 Habits and want to be in control of their learning and behavior. Our school chose two Widely Important Goals (WIGS) to focus on as a school; behavior and attendance. We chose behavior and attendance being aware they are two large factors to learning. Classrooms also identify WIGs for their classrooms; such things as math facts, AR points, and etc. Students and staff also set personal goals, thinking with the end in mind, how to improve their personal life. This year we are on track to be named a Lighthouse School through the Covey Foundation. Reaching this milestone will be a wonderful recognition but our purpose for Leader in Me was to offer our students something that would be a part of their life forever.







We all know that behavior and attendance impact everything when it comes to learning. Over the course of the past three years, Whitesville's behavior referrals have dropped to less than 25 referrals per year. Currently, those 25 referrals belong to the same 4 to 5 students that have complex issues. The numbers of students who have to attend lunch and learn to complete homework have decreased from an average of 50 – 60 students per week to 15 – 20 students per week. This data is evidence that students are taking ownership of their learning and seeing intrinsically the purpose for learning. Also, if students are not here, they cannot learn. Attendance is the key in getting the necessary instruction a student needs to master the learning. Our goal was to reach 98% attendance school-wide and we are on target to reach that goal, assuming the flu season ends soon.

The 7 Habits give students the tools they need to have a framework for integrating these 7 principles of effective living into one's character. As Dr. Covey stated, "*Working on character may be a long-term process, but by working on character, including an effective view of the world, is getting at the root from which behavior flows and so is fundamental.*" By teaching these 7 principles we hope to give our students something that will have an enduring, permanent value on their lives. Our students were quick to learn the habits and what they mean but living the habits is a much harder task for both students and staff. We embed the 7 Habits in everything we do at Whitesville Elementary. We teach independence, interdependence, and how to renew yourself. Habit 7, a favorite for us all - Sharpen the Saw, renews the person through body, heart, mind, and spirit. We take each of the four components and concentrate on one per month

in our Sharpen the Saw time. Students have choices on how to renew that area and the opportunity to learn new methods to Sharpen their Saws. Students have internalized the 7 Habits and have started to take ownership for their learning, they share their leadership notebooks at conferences, and they strive to be the best they can be.

In our first year we wanted to create a leadership environment; full of quotes, habits, and evidence of student leadership work. The staff worked endless hours during the summer learning the 7 Habits, preparing their classrooms and hallways. Every student was delivered a golden ticket to come to school on the first day to see their school as it had turned into a Magical Leadership School. On the first day of school our students were greeted with a celebration which included dancing, music, excitement, and Leader in Me was everywhere. Our students were excited as we entered into our world of leadership. Great beginnings bring great years.

We decided to bump it up a notch in Year 2 of our LIM journey! We decided we wanted to broaden our leadership focus in the 2013-2014 school year. After visiting the Ron Clark academy in June of 2013 and being introduced to their house concept we decided to take our Leadership to the next level. We divided our students into 10 houses and each house would consist of Kindergarten through fifth grade. This allowed relationships to be built among our students, have an accountability partner outside of your classroom, and allow students to mentor each other. Once placed in a house, a child will remain in that house throughout their journey at Whitesville. Houses sit together in the gym in the mornings, and they can earn leadership tokens for best behavior, AR reading, and mentoring students. Houses meet during Sharpen the Saw time once a month on leadership projects. Each house represents a famous leader and the house studies that leader and his/her accomplishments. The house concept has added to our LIM tremendously. Students want to be the best leader they can be for not only their self, their class, but their house. We have a friendly house competition on who earns the most leadership tokens per house and at the end of the year we have a talent show competition for the houses. It was amazing last year and the house that earned the most leadership tokens goes to Holiday World.

Leader in Me gives our students something to hang their hat on, and be proud of at home and at school. Parents tell us how their child teaches the 7 Habits at home just like we do here. We host parent information nights for new parents to learn about Leader in Me. We train new staff coming on board so they can help us to sustain from year to year. The staff has ongoing PD to continue the excitement and enthusiasm about Leader in Me. We look forward to having the opportunity to participate in Thinking Strategies training during summer 2015 to continue to develop the work of our students and teachers. So, when you ask what has Leader in Me done for our school, everything! We are a Leader in Me School and as we enter our third year we are optimistic on reaching Lighthouse Status. Our students and staff have worked hard to meet the criteria in our leadership program to be deemed a Lighthouse School. We are proud to be close to that title but we are more proud for what it has done for our students and staff. By encouraging students to be leaders and take charge of their own learning, behavior, attitude, and attendance we have had a large culture shift. We are all LEADERS!