

Research & Evaluation Brief

Department of Accountability, Research & Planning

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Did you Know?

Since 1990, there has been a 823% increase in our English as a Second Language (ESL) student population

The number of students taking advanced placement exams increased from 443 in 1998 to 4,891 in 2008

ISSUE EDITOR:
JUDI VANDERHAAR

Introduction

- Bob Rodosky

We in the Research & Planning department have embarked on a mission to broadly communicate the multitude of research & evaluation activities that are occurring in JCPS, and in the wider educational research world. While our primary aim is the dissemination of research & evaluation related information, these briefs are specifically designed to:

- * Present evaluation results regarding the effectiveness of the various programs that are occurring in JCPS;
- * Provide vital information on current and upcoming JCPS testing and research related activities that directly impact administrators and schools;
- * Share information emerging from current educational research occurring in the wider research community that is relevant to JCPS programs,

initiatives, and mission; an * Offer practical evaluation tools in a step by step series "tools for evaluation" so that teachers, administrators, and program directors can learn how to evaluate the effectiveness of their program and efforts.

Our Research & Evaluation Briefs will be published three times per year (January, May, and September).

Principals and Data-Driven Decision-Making: JCPS Research

-Marco Munoz

We believe that the vast majority of principals in JCPS use data to make decisions. Most principals also have Instructional Leadership Teams (ILT) that use data-driven processes to make their decisions. Our current challenge is to take these practices to the next level: engaging with groups of teachers in professional learning communities. In this sense, the role of our Research Department is to support principals, leadership teams, and teachers in their data-driven decision-making (DDDM) efforts. As part of these efforts, a study associated with school leadership and data-driven decision-making has led us to a better understanding of our JCPS principals. In order to gain a deeper understanding of the DDDM perspective of beginning principals in JCPS, we supported a Vanderbilt University research study led by Drs. Joan Dabrowski, Jon Eckert, and Kim Finch. Findings were organized around areas associated with DDDM: (a) New

Superintendent with an Innovative Vision; (b) data analysis with teachers and, (c) linking data with Instruction and the "Data-Usage" Gap.

The Superintendent Leadership in JCPS is impacting how beginning principals consider DDDM; principals understand the need to think about a wider vision of data that takes into consideration the physical, social, or emotional issues which young people face. With respect to **Data Analysis with Teachers**, JCPS is a data-rich district with multiple sources and types of achievement data. For most beginning principals, DDDM is linked inextricably to accountability, particularly NCLB. Team meetings used for data analysis often take place during the school day. In some instances, principals attend and lead each meeting; in other schools instructional coaches or lead teachers facilitate these meetings. **Linking Data with Instruction and the "Data-Usage" Gap** requires attention. The struggle to shift DDDM from

an "identification activity" toward an informing experience which impacts instruction is present. Necessary re-teaching may not always happen because the pressure to move ahead prevails. Content expertise from instructional coaches or lead teachers is essential in interpreting this achievement data; they appear able to translate data into classroom instructional practice.

JCPS is effectively preparing principals in DDDM. JCPS needs to continue offering a wide-range of principal preparation programs. However, principals need to be prepared for leading data-analysis meetings with teachers. Data needs to be transformed into meaningful knowledge for teachers and that makes possible the adjustment of instruction.

A key element is that JCPS' principals need to be exposed to wider sources of data beyond achievement to be able to better respond to complex student issues (physical, social and emotional). We need to move into the whole-child approach to education.

The new **WHOLE-CHILD** Comprehensive School Survey

- Marco Muñoz, Tamara Lewis, Beverly Nelson, Kyle Underwood, Jessica Lyons, Susan Egan, and Kathy Smith



At the request of the Superintendent, Dr. Sheldon Berman, the Comprehensive School Survey (CSS) was substantially redesigned to meet the new leadership vision of JCPS. The new conceptualization frames CSS within the most fundamental educational context: the personalized engagement and nurturing of the whole-child. As a District, this means that we need to put the

children and their learning needs within the center of every educational program and resource decision. In our commitment to educating the whole child in JCPS, the CSS captures data that goes beyond the common focus on academics. Educating the whole-child cannot happen if emphasis is placed solely on academic achievement. For the school year 2008-09, we will collect *student* surveys using our CAS-CADE system and *staff* surveys using JCPS On-Line during February 2-20, 2009. Parents will have

the option of using both on-line and paper-and-pencil surveys, with the concept that we will have the full implementation of the on-line option in the future.

We will continue to protect the confidentiality of the staff and parent surveys, but we will start obtaining identifiable student data to ensure the placement of programs that address their individual needs. Our academic and our whole-child data will help us get a better understanding of our children needs to better serve them.

Turning Around Schools: A Review of What Works

-Dena Dossett and Timothy Sauer

Ever wonder what it takes to turn a school around? Researchers nationwide have been trying to answer that question for more than a decade as the accountability demands placed on schools and districts have increased. And while no “magic bullet” or single approach has been found, there are a number of tried and true strategies that have proven to be successful. The purpose of this article is to identify the research-based practices that have been most effective in improving schools within Jefferson County Public Schools

JCPS school leaders in 5 elementary, 3 middle and 2 high schools that had demonstrated marked improvement over the last three years on the state accountability testing system were invited to report on the factors that they believed were the most important in their success. Leaders attributed success to an intentional focus on data and a positive culture in their

school.

More specifically, the factors that school leaders listed as the most important included: (a) alignment of assessment results with curriculum and instruction, (b) staff accountability and enthusiasm for student achievement, (c) leadership’s flexibility and inventiveness, (d) leaders staying in touch with the classroom and building, (e) students feeling safe and secure, (f) students’ relationships with staff, and (g) teacher’s knowledge base in content and instruction. Yet, leaders reported that they had to overcome several obstacles in their turnaround efforts, such as a lack of parent involvement, negative school climate and school organizational issues.

Supplemental research on the impact of coaching and HSE programs on school turnaround

efforts found that these programs appear to show improvement in schools’ accountability scores from the prior school year. However, the degree of improvement varies across level and school year and does not appear to show consistent differences when compared to schools that did not receive assistance.

In conclusion, there are a number of strategies that have proven successful for JCPS schools in their improvement efforts, particularly around building a positive culture among staff where they are accountable and enthusiastic leaders in the regular collection and analysis of school and student performance data that informs instruction and interventions.

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School Nurse Pilot Program

- Beverly Winsch

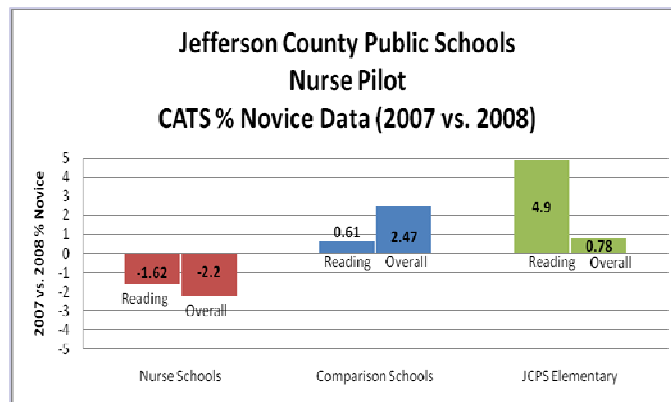
A pilot study conducted during the 2007-2008 school year examined the impact of three nurses assigned to seven high poverty elementary schools on student health and academics. Highlights of services provided during the pilot year included the following:

- * 174 student physicals
- * 1,428 student sick room visits
- * 1,313 (92%) of those students returned to class
- * 284 home visits
- * 798 phone consultations
- * 25 reports to child protective services
- * 2,995 teacher/parent class attendees
- * 105 trips for medical treatment to other JCPS schools
- * 1,082 parents/support service personnel contacted

Attendance data indicated that the schools with nurses outperformed their 2006-2007 attendance rates. Assessment data showed that the pilot schools reduced Novices by 1.6% in reading and 2.2% on the overall academic index.

Pilot schools compared favorably to two control groups (i.e., the next set of elementary schools to receive nurses and district average for elementary schools) as shown.

The pilot program has been expanded for the 2008-2009 school year to include 13 elementary sites currently served by school nurses. Evaluation of these expanded pro-



CARE for Kids: Research & Evaluation

- Florence Chang

In order to help students develop socially, emotionally, ethically, and intellectually, schools must deliberately provide significant and engaging learning opportunities, opportunities that allow students to experience membership in a safe and caring community of learners. To

"Intelligence is not enough. Intelligence plus character, that is the goal of true education."

-Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

achieve this, beginning in 2008-2009, CARE for Kids was rolled out to 28 elementary schools and 25 middle schools. Previous evaluation work on the CARE for Kids approach has been conducted

by the Department of Accountability, Research, and Planning.

From 2002-2007, 16 elementary schools (8 treatment and 8 control) participated in Project CARE, a project funded by the U.S. Department of Education, that utilized many of the same principles and practices (e.g., Morning/Classroom meetings, Developmental Discipline, Caring Classroom Community) from the CARE for Kids model. Major Project CARE results included:

- ◆ Students at Project CARE schools reported more active involvement in the classroom and a more supportive classroom atmosphere than students at control schools.

◆ Teachers at Project CARE schools reported more faculty collegiality and more trust in students than teachers at control schools.

◆ The Project CARE schools that used more Project CARE activities in their school showed higher reading gains.

Similar to Project CARE, the Department of Accountability, Research, and Planning will continue to evaluate the CARE for Kids model. **Stay tuned for results!**

"No matter what color, handicap, accent, or where you come from, you'll never be made fun of here." - participating CARE student

Research & Planning Website Update

The Accountability, Research & Planning Department produces research & program evaluations of numerous federal, state and local grants as well as district initiatives. We are currently in the process of revising our website to include reports of our evaluation work. The website will include links to executive summaries and to full, technical evaluation reports for each program that we have evaluated. Please check our website periodically for these updates: <http://www.jefferson.k12.ky.us/Departments/Planning/ProgramEvaluation/ProgramEvaluation.html>

How Will You Know if your Program is Really Working ?

- Dena Dossett

We, in the JCPS Research Department, are often called on to answer the question of whether district programs are really making a difference with our students. It is a complicated question that often times doesn't yield a simple response and typically generates more questions. There are a number of ways in which to evaluate a program's impact depending on the goals of the program. The judgment of a program's success takes time and how it will be accomplished needs to be considered at the initial stages of program planning and development.

The Research Department partners with many district offices and staff to help assess the impact of various programs. This article serves as the beginning in a series aimed at helping practitioners by providing them with the knowledge, tools and

resources to evaluate their own programs. Throughout this series, we will guide you step by step through the evaluation process. Step 1 involves developing evaluation questions; Step 2 is selecting an evaluation approach; Step 3 is gathering and processing data; and Step 4 is interpreting and using data to guide decisions. By the end of the series, you should be able to confidently answer the question of whether your program is really making a difference.

It is a complicated question that often times doesn't yield a simple response and inevitably generates more questions.

some general knowledge about evaluation and research, but just need some direction in order to get you started on conducting one on your own. Before starting with step 1, it is important to review the benefits and challenges posed by evaluation work.

Some of the benefits of evaluation work are that it will help clarify and improve program operations. Evaluation can also help justify the existence or expansion of the program. However, some of the challenges to be aware of include limited resources to conduct an adequate evaluation and a fear of negative results. Keeping in mind both the positive and negative implications will help you avoid any roadblocks as you navigate through your own evaluation experience.

Let's begin by posing a few questions that will help establish your frame of reference about evaluation in general. How do you define evaluation? What do you think are the goal(s) of evaluation should be? What activities might you engage in when conducting an evaluation? Your answers to these questions probably reveal that you already have

In the next article, we will cover Step 1 – How to develop evaluation questions. In the meantime, please feel free to contact the JCPS Research Department if you have any questions about program evaluation.

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Our Mission Statement

In support of the District's Vision and Goals,, the Research and Planning Department will enhance the utilization of data-driven decision making, quality indicators, programmatic evaluation and district wide accountability measures that will lead to continuous student, school and district improvement.