

**Ardmore Elementary School
BELLEVUE SCHOOL DISTRICT
Bellevue, WA
READING**

Introduction

Under the leadership of Principal, Kathleen Poole, the school began their work with Regie Routman in 2002 with the goal of providing high quality reading instruction for every student. Ardmore serves a diverse population; 56% of the students are English Language Learners, and 39% of the students participate in the free and reduced lunch program. Through the use of both *Reading to Understand* and *Reading/Writing Connections*, the commitment to focusing on high expectations and instructional leadership has not only produced gains in student achievement but it has also ensured that gains are sustained. (Since 2005, Principal Angela Dunavant has continued the work, now with a writing and reading focus)

Student Performance Data

The following chart captures reading scores for 4th grade students meeting and exceeding the standard over the past 7 years. The school's commitment to high expectations and professional development and support promises continued gains.

	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Reading % Meeting Standard	57%	60%	63%	82%	79%	80%	84%

Lessons Learned

- Principal support is the most important key to successful implementation and sustainability.
- One important shift in the culture of the school has been a whole-staff focus on instructional practices as determined by analyzing student data and, then, acting upon that data to improve achievement.
- Redistribute support services where the greatest needs are, in this case, first grade reading.
- Collaborate with others through regular professional conversations about student learning.
- Connect grade-level and cross grade-level teachers in planning, sharing, and implementing.
- Increase students' engagement in reading through reading texts students write, access to excellent, targeted guided reading instruction, and providing additional, daily time for independent reading.
- Establishing classroom libraries with students and teaching them how to access and select books they can read are crucial to reading success.
- Capitalize on the reading-writing connection to increase achievement in both reading and writing.
- Employ daily, one-on-one informal reading conferences to assess students' understanding, celebrate strengths, teach, and set goals.
- Provide students with greater access to nonfiction reading, a key to increasing motivation and achievement.
- Involve the staff in whole-school coaching using peer-to-peer classroom visits.

Testimonials

Principal, Angela Dunavant: *Among the many lessons I learned, one especially influences my work on a daily basis. Inadvertently, teachers (and administrators) often hold students back when they fail to set high expectations for all students. Each year during the residency we saw struggling children produce high quality work.*

1st grade teacher, Mary Yuhas: *I learned how to involve my students in building, organizing and caring for their classroom library by thoroughly modeling the use of the library and guiding kids as they practiced selecting books that were just right for them. This led to increased enjoyment and time spent reading appropriate texts, which in turn led to higher reading achievement for all my students.*

Literacy Director, Sandy Garcia: *I learned that through ongoing schoolwide professional conversations, we created a culture of success for all learners. One classroom, one school, can become an agent of change in an entire school system. Ardmore Elementary became a model school where other schools in our district could visit, observe, learn, and discover what was possible for **all** learners.*