

Ballard Memorial High School

Ballard County, Region 1

Ballard Memorial High School is a rural school in far Western Kentucky with 424 students in grades 9-12. Forty-eight percent of our students qualify for free/reduced lunches. As we like to say, we are a little school with big heart.

Our philosophy is simple: Every student. Every decision. Every day.

It's not just something that we came up with because it's vogue to have a mission statement. It's more than just a motto – it's our core belief system. We believe in our students; they are our priority. Everything we do is driven by what is best for our students. We look at students individually to determine the best decisions to make for them on a daily basis. It is our job as educators at Ballard Memorial to give students the tools they need to be successful, contributing citizens after they leave us.

Our other primary focus is on our teachers. Teachers should be given the opportunity to educate these students without barriers or distractions, and it is my job as an administrator to take away as many of those obstacles as possible. I give teachers what they need, so they can give students what they need in the classroom.

I believe my predecessor, now our assistant superintendent, summed it up very well:

"We have the silver bullet for improving education at this school. It's called effective teachers. It is my role as a leader to lay the framework so they can be successful and take away any roadblocks to their success. We went from a 'Needs Improvement' school just a few years ago to 'High Performing' for the last two years. We still have the same demographics in our student population; no more funding has come through than before. What changed is how our teachers have been empowered to be their most effective."

Earlington Elementary School

Hopkins County, Region 1

Earlington Elementary is a school with a rich heritage in Western Kentucky that services southern Madisonville, Earlington, and surrounding communities. Approximately 360 Pre-Kindergarten through fifth grade students attend EES. Earlington Elementary serves a diverse group of students, with approximately 80% of students receiving free or reduced lunch and 20% representing a minority population. 22% of EES students receive special education services.

Though Earlington's little school building on the hill looks the same as it has for years on the outside, EES has truly transformed in the last six years. Through the analysis of TELL Kentucky Survey data and achievement data, Earlington has implemented many changes and incentives that make it a great place to work and learn. Each year, the staff embed a professional development theme centered on culture and climate. Through themes such as Whale Done, Bucket Fillers, and The Fish Philosophy, EES teachers have grown the culture by putting the needs of the child first, emphasizing positive interactions, and looking for ways to make a child's day. EES is in the fifth year of implementation of Positive Behavior Supports and Interventions (PBIS) and has decreased office referrals by over one hundred per year since beginning implementation. Earlington is proudly incorporating character education and bullying awareness into our daily interaction with students. Earlington is also technology rich with Chrome Books, iPads, Smartboards and more to keep instruction exciting and relevant.

The TELL analysis has been a cornerstone of the improvement process. Tremendous growth has occurred instructionally as the school culture has improved. Earlington teachers provide high levels of intervention and support through our KSI program, and teachers are implementing rigorous and challenging instruction. Teamwork and sharing of knowledge in PLC's have become the norm for our teachers. The excitement of change and growth at Earlington Elementary has been contagious among the students, staff, and community.

North Marshall Middle School

Ballard County, Region 1

North Marshall Middle School is located in rural western Kentucky. Our 620 member student body is made up of grades 6-8. We are the largest of the three county middle schools. We have approximately 47% free and reduced lunch population and 11% disability population.

North Marshall's vision is to be an ever-improving school where all students are fully engaged. Because we strive to improve every day, the data the TELL survey provides is instrumental in administrative decisions. As a faculty, we look at our weaker areas and staff members give input and suggestions on how we can strengthen those areas. We are not a school led by one or two individuals, but instead we are a group who use our individual strengths to work towards a common goal- to create every day heroes. Our HERO acronym stands for healthy choices, excellence in academics, responsible actions and others first. We believe in developing the whole child, not just academically, but also as future empathetic, contributing members of society.

Our Points Pyramid is a reward system that was developed and is revised yearly by our entire staff. Students start the year with 100 points. Discipline offenses result in the loss of a pre-determined number of points. At different point levels there are pre-determined consequences. This system allows us to be clear with our expectations. Each 9 weeks, points reset to 100 for all students. This allows for a fresh start each 9 weeks. Students who keep their points are rewarded every 9 weeks and students who keep their points all year long are rewarded with a trip to Holiday World. We attribute our success with managing student behavior in large part to our Points Pyramid. We believe in recognizing positive behavior and dealing with negative behavior with consistency.

Park City Elementary School

Barren County, Region 2

Park City Elementary (PCE), a part of the Barren County school district, is located in Park City, Kentucky, a small rural town in the Mammoth Cave area of south central Kentucky. PCE serves 439 students in grades preschool through six; approximately 75% of these students meet free and/or reduced lunch requirements. In addition, PCE has a highly transient student population with 200 students, on average, moving throughout the school year.

PCE is committed to the success of all students. We strive to strengthen partnerships among students, parents, teachers, and the community. Our school's mission is to provide a safe, caring, and positive learning environment where all students are encouraged and expected to be life-long learners and contributors. The shared leadership philosophy of the staff is at the core of our success. By valuing the worth of individuals as important decision makers, we tap into the collective genius of the entire school community. Staff, students, volunteers and the community work together to meet students at their individual levels of learning in order to promote significant increases in social, emotional and academic performance. Students are recognized school-wide through the Leaders of the Month program, Positive Office Referrals, Rising Stars, Math Masters, attendance incentives, and academic achievement awards.

In an effort to foster continual improvement at PCE, the 2011 and 2013 TELL Surveys were utilized to support advancement in the areas of technology, professional development, and parent involvement. In response to the TELL data, PCE added 4 Chromebook labs to the intermediate grades. In addition, PCE hosted multiple parent/family involvement nights and professional development sessions specific to staff needs. The TELL Survey has given our staff an opportunity to have their collective voice heard, thus allowing for continued school improvement practices and greater student achievement.

Gamaliel Elementary School

Monroe County, Region 3

Gamaliel Elementary is located less than one mile from the Tennessee border in Monroe County, Kentucky and serves approximately 290 students Preschool through 5th grade. Our student body consists of mostly white, low socio-economic students, with approximately 80% of our student population participating in the Federal Free/Reduced Lunch program. GES is also considered a transit school, with the maximum number of record request reaching 75 in one school year. Many times, we only serve students for a few months.

A positive aspect of our school being located in a small, rural town is it is the heart of our community. It is often the location for meetings, entertainment, and reunions. GES has a strong support system. During school events, the entire community attends! Many staff members are former students of the school, and are all very proud of our "Tiger" roots. It is known across the county that "we bleed purple and gold."

GES prides itself on having a family atmosphere. Students are treated as our own children, and staff members love each other like family. Our staff enjoys spending time together, both in and outside of school. We work together; we celebrate together; we cry together; and we pull each other through difficult situation.

Data is a vital component in keeping the culture of GES positive and one of the best working environments in the state. We analyze data from parent surveys, teacher surveys and the Kentucky TELL survey to make necessary changes to improve our school each year. Input from all stakeholders is greatly valued, as we all are working towards a common goal – helping students reach their highest possible potential! We believe that we are the best part of the day for many of our students, and we want that part of their day to be GREAT!

Thomas Nelson High School

Nelson County, Region 3

Thomas Nelson, the statesman, is a testament to the values that guide our school. During his fifty-one years he was a farmer, an educated scholar, a civic leader, and a general that fought for the eventual independence of the United States. Thomas Nelson's life was in service to the ideals of personal liberty and opportunity that we intend to sustain within our local Nelson County community. Further, General Nelson's selfless nature and commitment to supporting others act as a model of citizenship to which we may all aspire. We look at Thomas Nelson's life as the impetus behind our leader values and vision. To this end, Thomas Nelson High School will serve many thousands of students in our lifetime and each one of them deserves the right to a rigorous education characterized by meaningful career and college preparation. In doing so, we will intentionally create happy, informed, and productive citizens to sustain our local community.

Located in Bardstown, Thomas Nelson High School opened in the fall of 2012. Currently serving 730 students TNHS has worked to provide a culture of CARE for both teachers (referred to as LEADERS, Artists, and/or Purple Cows) and students. TNHS is currently the only school in the state that lays claim to Genny, our remarkable Purple Cow. Genny always reminds us to not be afraid to defy the status quo and and think anew about the way we work together and create a school community. This notion will continue to guide our work at Thomas Nelson as we create together.

Chenoweth Elementary School

Jefferson County, Region 4

Chenoweth Elementary, a Jefferson County public school serving students in kindergarten through fifth grade, is located in the St. Matthews neighborhood, which is positioned between the heart of downtown and the East Louisville suburbs. Our enrollment is approximately 515, with 55 percent of students qualifying for free or reduced-price lunch and 20 percent receiving Exceptional Child Education (ECE) services. Our student population is 24 percent African-American, 64 percent white, 4 percent Hispanic/Latino, 2 percent Asian, and 6 percent other. In addition to neighborhood students attending Chenoweth, 20 percent of our population resides in downtown neighborhoods, and another 15 percent live outside our immediate area. As part of an urban school district, our diverse student body truly represents a melting pot of our society.

The entire staff at Chenoweth believes in a commitment to students, families, and the community. Our teachers have an average of fourteen years experience in the profession, and eighty-eight percent of them have earned a Master's Degree in Education or higher. Two teachers have completed National Board Certification. An experienced staff is not always an indicator of student success; however, Chenoweth teachers use their expertise and their continued commitment to professional growth to improve their craft. This dedication to improved teaching has led to sustained student achievement.

In our efforts to reach and teach each child, we focus on building relationships. We want to know our students both academically and socially. Through these relationships, we strive every day to meet students at their current level and challenge them to reach the next. Our school is a positive, happy place where students, parents, staff, and visitors feel welcome. Chenoweth Elementary is certainly a great place to teach and learn.

Carter G. Woodson School

Fayette County, Region 5

Carter G. Woodson Academy is an all- male traditional college preparatory A5 program located in Fayette County, Lexington, Kentucky. It provides an advanced and rigorous curriculum that meets the new common core standards through the lens of African American history, culture and culturally responsive teaching and learning. Our program serves “at promise” males in Fayette County in grades 6-12. This year we will have our first graduating senior class and we are extremely excited about this accomplishment! Our vision is to educate, motivate and activate the potential for excellence that lies within every young male. This vision is one that began prior to CGWA coming into existence. This program is an extension of the Black Male Working (BMW) Academy that started in 2005, under the direction of Rosz Akins, as a partnership between Fayette County Public Schools and First Baptist Bracktown. This Saturday academy meets every Saturday morning from 10am- 1pm and focuses on literacy, math, leadership, ACT preparation, culture and social skills to name a few of the topics covered throughout the year. CGWA scholar enrollment is approximately 190 males with 60% receiving free/reduced lunch assistance. This year we qualified for the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) program that allows each one of our scholars to receive a free breakfast and lunch. We are approximately 86% African American, 6% Hispanic, and 6% other and less than 1% White. Last year our average attendance rate was 95% or higher each month which speaks highly of our scholars who want to be at school, our families who ensure they get to school and our teachers who make learning active and engaging, therefore, scholars do not want to miss.

Our TELL data results revealed that teachers wanted more time to share, collaborate, reflect and plan with each other to maximize learning opportunities for scholars to increase academic achievement. The data results supported my professional goal of increasing and supporting scholar and staff growth by providing leadership opportunities within the school for teachers to grow each other which in turn would help scholars grow academically. There are three strategies we have implemented this year to address our TELL results: common

planning for the middle school core teachers, a high school professional learning community and incorporating a professional/staff development component to staff meetings.

We were able to create a very creative master schedule that allows the core middle school teachers to have a common plan time of approximately eighty minutes of uninterrupted time daily to collaboratively plan, prepare, share, grade, make parent contacts, analyze data and discuss scholar growth, needs and goals. Our high school professional learning community meets twice a month to analyze scholar data, plan cross content units and projects, discuss scholar and family needs and/or additional supports needed to be academically successful at school and home, collaborate and connect with the elective and special education teachers pulling in the administrative team and counselors if needed and planning celebrations for academic excellence and achievement. Each staff meeting this year contains a professional and/or staff development component that allows teacher leaders to showcase a strategy, unit, project, technology that they have used and been effective in engaging males in instruction and their classroom. This “pay it forward” time of sharing gives teachers an opportunity to share and learn with colleagues for the benefit of growing each other in a safe environment.

We believe in the three e’s for scholar academic growth, success and excellence: exposure, experience and engagement. Our teachers try to expose our scholars to as much content as possible in the classroom setting while providing them with experiences to apply knowledge gained or learned in the real world. Scholar engagement is what connects the exposure and the experience together so the scholar is able to independently make connections and generalizations to other contents and real world applications. I believe this program is effective because of the teachers in each classroom that make it happen for scholars every day. Our teachers know their content, understand the standards, provide consistency by coming to school every day prepared to teach, re-teach, model, engage, assess and re-assess if necessary. They demonstrate genuine care for each scholar by treating them as if they were their son, grandson or nephew. Finally, our teachers are committed to the academic success of our scholars and this program which is evident by the amount of time they spend before and after school, and on the weekends to offer their services in tutoring, intervention and enhancing scholar learning without receiving a stipend or an

increase in pay. We are a program that is about academic excellence, teaching, learning, leading and empowering scholars and staff to aim high and land among the stars.

Arnett Elementary School

Erlanger-Elsmere, Region 6

Arnett Elementary is distinctively located directly across from the Ohio River and is nestled between homes and businesses in Erlanger and Elsmere. Arnett serves about 345 preschool-fifth grade students who bring a range of needs, experiences, languages, and backgrounds to the classroom. Our children are diverse learners and many of them have had their lives completely overcome and disrupted by forces beyond their control. Arnett is their safe haven where they are loved unconditionally, held accountable for their decisions, and can learn in a risk-free environment. At its core, the school is comprised of a fiercely dedicated group of adults committed to helping the children overcome whatever obstacle lies in their way to being successful. The administrators trust the professionals who serve our children.

Teachers are empowered to find a teaching style that matches their personality to use as a vehicle to deliver instruction. Teachers here are also trusted to add their own flavor to instruction to increase engagement and attract the smallest learners. Teachers are trusted to use every minute (“winning 8 a.m.-3 p.m.”) toward the instruction, collaboration, and planning needed to meet the needs of every student. This trust is then seen and shared by our students with each other and with Arnett’s staff. It is the hope of all that as we embrace our students and attend to their individual needs, we can also help break down barriers and obstacles that hinder the full potential of each child. In doing so, we hope to inspire them to have a passion for lifelong learning. The diversity doesn’t end with our students; our staff is composed of a driven, passionate, and creative group of people who serve as a team, and more importantly, as a family. These characteristics are what shape the culture and feel of Arnett Elementary School.

Allen Central High School

Floyd County, Region 7

At Allen Central High School our culture drives our school. Located in the rolling hills of southeastern KY, ACHS is home to 385 students, 77% of whom are considered free/reduced lunch and 22% of our student population bearing some degree of special needs.

By utilizing the TELL Survey, it has been reaffirmed that there are many positive attributes to celebrate within our school community. Our culture drives our focus, and it establishes the direction we must take in order to keep improving. One example is the fact that 100% of our faculty completed this survey, which indicates a complete buy-in. In addition, 100% of our faculty believes in the leadership qualities that teachers possess. We are fully committed to maintaining and demonstrating high standards for all stake-holders. Decision-making within our school is a shared process, as is evidenced by our TELL KY survey results.

One area that is definitely a strength for us is the capacity within this school. For example, if the administration were to be absent, school would continue without incident, because teachers are the educational leaders and are valued as such. In fact, teacher talents are often identified and shared, because our school family believes that every teacher possesses a talent and can help their peers grow and develop through sharing these talents, and by demonstrating a receptive attitude toward self-growth.

We are humbled and honored to be standing in the 2015 TELL Kentucky Winner's Circle, as it is a testament to our commitment to maintaining a positive school culture. As a result, our school culture drives our philosophy of great teaching and learning, so we can celebrate successes such as this with our children. Our cultural awareness allows us to remove barriers that are inherently present in low socio-economic schools. On behalf of the entire school community of Allen Central High School, thank you for recognizing our commitment to excellence.

