
Case Study: Heatherbrae Elementary School

Phoenix, AZ y 730 students y 85% Hispanic y 8% African-American y 92% Low-income y 10% Special Ed

2014 Ryan Award Winner: Eva Stevens

When Eva Stevens took over as principal of Heatherbrae Elementary in 2000, dirt-bare grounds surrounded worn school buildings. Students played unsupervised on playground equipment in the morning and were all over the campus. But as teacher Deborah Howard describes it, there was a more ominous problem: “The inside needed a lot of work...The people...they were very relaxed,” she says. The student achievement rate was stuck in the thirties. In some classes, just 16 percent of kids were meeting expectations on state assessments. Teachers were used to doing things the way they wanted— “without any data, without any results, without any consequences, without any accountability,” Stevens recalls.

Today, Heatherbrae Elementary continues on its decade-long climb toward becoming a 90-90-90 school. In 2014, students hit an 85 percent proficiency rate in reading, with 91 percent of 3rd graders meeting or exceeding standards on the state’s test reading portion. The school’s impressive performance has earned it an ‘A’ rating from the state of Arizona.

Piece by piece, 2014 Ryan Award winner Eva Stevens has built a strong, mission-driven culture, putting in place the necessary systems and structures. It took a number of years to get the school where it is today, and Stevens carefully guards the delicate school culture, spending four to five hours a day in the classroom. As a leader,

Stevens’ quiet but firm presence is felt throughout the building—her mark seen in the lesson plans, the way students move quietly through the breezeways, and the consistent routines that bring stability to the classroom.

The daughter of a teacher, Stevens says school always has been a happy place for her, and she knew from a young age she also would become a teacher. After earning a degree from Southern Illinois University, she started her teaching career in East St. Louis and later moved with her family to Phoenix. While she loved being in the classroom, she did the math and realized she could impact more children’s lives by moving into administration. Soon after, she became an assistant principal, and later, principal of Heatherbrae.



Principal Eva Stevens, a 2014 Ryan Award Winner, meets with students outside Heatherbrae Elementary School before class (Phoenix, AZ).

Located in Northwest Phoenix, Heatherbrae is a fixed institution in a

neighborhood of squat sand-colored apartment buildings. More than 90 percent of Heatherbrae students are minority and come from low-income households. But with a principal who refuses to allow the nation’s persistent achievement gap to affect the experience of her students, this district-run school shows the promise of what is possible with a strong leader in place.

From her first visit to Heatherbrae, LeeAnn Aguilar Lawlor, an assistant superintendent for the Cartwright School District, says she saw what

set the school apart: high expectations and Eva Stevens. She recalls going into a 1st-grade class where most of the students had started the year speaking only Spanish. It was the second semester, and the children were speaking in complete sentences with very high academic language, she says. “I said, this is amazing that you would see children who started the year not speaking English and not having the background that students who

are native English speakers have, but being able to read and write by the spring of the same year using high-level academic vocabulary. It was, to me, just amazing,” Lawlor says. Stevens remains modest about her accomplishments. “It really is her leadership and her ability to create systems in the school that everybody knows and understands from year to year,” Lawlor says.



Transformational Leadership

Driver 1: Create and Sustain a Movement

- Leader has a clear vision and specific goals for what success looks like and has identified clear strategies and a concrete plan to achieve success
- Leader creates buy-in among all stakeholders and motivates them to complete the mission
 - y The staff believe in and are motivated by the vision and goals and are bought into the strategies and plan to achieve them
 - y The students believe in and are motivated by the leader's vision and goals set for them and are bought into the aspirational and constructive environment expectations to support their achievement of the goals
 - y The parents believe in the vision and goals and understand what follow through is expected of them in order to support their child's achievement of the goals
- Leader builds trust and loyalty among entire staff, operates with candor and transparency, and leverages his/her strengths and emotional intelligence to effectively execute the skills and capabilities of highly successful leaderscelebrations

Starting with Someone Else's Team

As is often the case in a traditional public school, Stevens inherited the existing staff when she started in her new role as principal at Heatherbrae. She made hires as vacancies arose, but a number of holdovers clung to the old ways of doing things and did not buy into her vision. "A lot of people thought that what they were doing was OK. It didn't register with them that they should be different," she recalls. In Stevens' vision, the school would be one where every single student in every single classroom would be making progress. The environment would be one of constant learning for everyone involved—not only for the students, but for the teachers and parents as well. The relaxed atmosphere would be replaced with one ruled by high expectations. Howard, who was one of the teachers who welcomed Stevens' changes back in 2000 and remains a 4th-grade teacher today, remembers the difficulty in getting some members

of the staff on board with that vision. "If I started a school and I had to endure some of the things she did, I don't know if I could have done it, to be honest with you," she says. "I used to think, how can she deal with this on a daily basis? There was quite a bit of resistance when she first arrived here."

At the end of the first year, a number of teachers left because they disagreed with the direction. Others stayed, though they were not entirely bought in to the plan. "Some people may say they're on board and pretend they're on board, but when they go in their classrooms and close their doors, you don't know if they're on board. That was a challenge," Stevens says. But at the same time, the school started to make progress because of the new expectations in place. And though some didn't believe wholeheartedly in the changes, they started behaving as if they did, to avoid trouble. "You can't change their heart necessarily, but you can change behaviors. So we



were aiming at changing behaviors right away,” she says. That first year, the school registered a small increase in academic achievement. “Even though our scores were going up, I think it took three or four years before we moved our campus to the way our campus is today, simply because there were barriers that were just phenomenal in terms of attitudes, and of individual belief systems that were in conflict,” Stevens says.

Case in point: She recalls one professional development session where a teacher adamantly insisted, in front of the staff: “I’m not going to do it.” Stevens says she planted her feet, smiled and asked him to think about it, keep it to himself and that they would talk about it later. “I tried to address things calmly and respectfully but yet address them.” She committed to not let little things slide, sending the message that common behaviors and respect was an important part of the school environment. But there were moments in staff meetings when certain staff members would intentionally disregard an agreed-upon norm. “I would take a post-it and I might write norm no. 1 and walk through very discreetly and put it in front of him or her because everyone at their table knew they had challenged the norm, so everyone at the table knew they were getting called on it,” she says.

Individually, she would follow up through conversations about professional responsibilities and acceptable behavior. She’d encourage teachers to bring up anything they felt strongly about in that private conversation. “So little by little, I broke down that resistance,” she says. Some teachers held onto the idea that their prep time should be their own, and they challenged the idea that they should have to attend team meetings or

collaborate with other teachers. “It was a systems change that had to occur,” Stevens adds.

She worked to get the grade-level teams and supportive staff members to a point where they would hold the resisters accountable in meetings, even when Stevens wasn’t there. “I didn’t want to be the only person doing this, but it takes time for other people to be comfortable and really take on sometimes bullying personalities among the staff,” she says. She brought in a consultant to help create structures that would allow staff members to confront the problems around them, particularly the bullying personalities.

The first breakthrough she had was when some staff members would come to tell her about others breaking the norms, which she could then address with the person. “Without giving colleagues names, I could say ‘A concern has come to my attention. What do you think could be the root of this? Why would teachers on your team believe this? What behaviors did they see that caused them to think this?’ When I began to address them, they began to dissipate,” she says. As time went on, the staff took care of more of those issues directly themselves. After a few years, as resisters retired and new people were brought in, the teachers who had bought into the vision were modeling the behavior Stevens hoped they all would exhibit, helping to onboard the new staff members.

Howard says after about three years, the people who remained on staff were mostly those who understood what Stevens was trying to accomplish. She says Stevens’ decision to involve the staff in setting the vision helped gather teacher



Ryan Award winner Eva Stevens meets with staff during a grade-level meeting.





By providing activities like movie nights and parent cafes, as well as a library and classes for parents, Heatherbrae Elementary has become a bright spot in the community. Under Ms. Stevens leadership, the school shows what's possible with strong, engaged leadership.

buy-in. “We joined forces. It wasn’t just Ms. Stevens who had a vision; it was the whole school. Because if it wasn’t, we wouldn’t be as strong—as committed—as we are,” Howard says.

Under the new school vision, the staff agreed that every child should be reading by 1st grade. “Kindergarten was half day and it was primarily a little bit more than day care. Consequently in 1st grade, kids were not reading,” Stevens recalls. The staff also agreed they should be working toward making the school a place where they would want to send their children or grandchildren. “We agreed on it, and wrote it on paper, and then it had to become alive and live among us. That was the work continually going on,” Stevens says.

One of the critical steps in helping to change the school was the drafting of the strategic plan. Stevens pulled together a group of staff members

who created an initial plan that was brought back before the whole staff for several rounds of input. Stevens says the committee helped to bring in voices from throughout the school. The resulting committee still exists today.

Stevens says all schools can create a strong school culture of high expectations. She acknowledged that it was more time-consuming to build her team at a district school. “I don’t think it’s a district or a charter initiative,” she says. “In any school, I can look at my data, I can look at my instruction, I can assess and reflect on the quality of instruction—where it is and where it needs to be—and what it takes to move it to where it needs to be. I don’t think there’s a limit to that in any school.”

The lesson Stevens learned? “Have a great sense of vision and a great sense of purpose, and really



understand that everything not in alignment with that vision and purpose has to be dealt with.”

Today, Stevens is described as a friendly leader with a no-nonsense style. “She doesn’t snap her fingers or anything like that, but you know this is what is expected of you,” Howard says.

Assistant principal Julie Case says Stevens is very attentive to the culture and the commitments the teachers have made toward the mission and vision. She always has a plan. To enroll others in her vision, she builds leaders from within the staff, who help hold others accountable. When announcing a decision or change, she uses a layered approach, first notifying the leaders and getting them on board, then going out to the larger group, Case says.

“If one person is negative or does something negative, there is usually somebody else sitting at that table who will call them out on it. It doesn’t spread,” Case says. She’s learned from Stevens how to tend to the culture. “You have to really listen to what people say, because their comment may not be negative, but their comment may undermine the mission. So when you hear a comment, you need to address it right away and redirect it into a positive way so that it doesn’t spread,” Case says.

Every year before school starts, Stevens has the staff revisit the vision and the collective commitments during orientation. First with small groups, then as a team and as a whole group, building the commitment at every level.

Teacher Katherine Pouretezadi-Treasure says Stevens looks at faculty members as individuals, recognizing each teacher’s strengths before they do and understanding the demands of their lives outside of school. “She helps you reach her expectations,” adds teacher Rebecca DeSantis.

“She doesn’t just say this is what you need to do, now do it. She’ll give you the support you need.”

Parents

The campaign to get parents to buy in to the mission and vision was also lengthy. Stevens’ first year, the goal of a new parent involvement committee was just to open the doors of the school. The staff started providing activities like movie nights and parent cafes, before expanding into a parent library and other classes.

Anna Lopez has had five children attend Heatherbrae. An older daughter struggled during her time there, and “if not for the psychologist and the principal, I don’t know what I would have done,” Lopez says, tearing up. “I can’t even tell you how amazing Ms. Stevens is...When I bring up an issue, she never says ‘I don’t have time for it.’ She’s always right on it.”

Parents are welcomed in for lunch, and as the neighborhood has gone through rough cycles, Lopez says the school has provided a safe, bright spot for the children. “You always feel like the school is a place you want to be,” Lopez says. Parents are kept up to date through the Class Dojo, which provides daily reports on whether the student was on time to class and with homework.

This year, Lopez’s 3rd-grade daughter was scoring in the “Falls Far Below” category in reading and writing, which was especially of concern because Arizona retains students who can’t pass the 3rd-grade reading test. “I sat down with the teacher because I didn’t want her to be held back. Emotionally it would be hard for her,” Lopez says. “Now she has all A’s and B’s. The teacher pulled her into class during lunchtime, on her own time. Now my daughter is getting her first award tomorrow at the assembly for her progress.”



Transformational Leadership

Driver 2: Create and Sustain Clarity

- Leader creates clear strategies and develops a concrete plan to achieve the vision and goals with measurable objectives and benchmarks, strategies, tactics, timeline, and personal responsibility
- Clear systems and protocols for measuring objectives exist and are used to benchmark progress, determine effectiveness of strategies, and hold team accountable to execution of the plan
- Leader course corrects as necessary to ensure that the most effective plan and strategies are implemented, and communicates rationale of course correction decisions to all stakeholders
- Ultimately, the leader communicates the plan and strategies and progress toward goals to all stakeholders, and holds the team accountable to execution of the plan and attainment of goals

Systems and Structures

From reinforcing the broader values that should guide the team to spelling out expectations in daily interactions, Stevens is very clear in her communication. Meeting agendas include reminders of the agreed-upon norms for behavior in meetings. (Examples: Produce clear expectations/action steps, Focus on the main objective.) The objective of the meeting is clearly stated, along with positive reminders to “Know Thy Impact!” and a motto of “Every Child! Every Chance! Every Classroom! Every Day!” Questions posed at staff meetings include: What do we want our students to know and be able to do? How will we know if they know it? How will we respond if they don’t know?

At breakfast time, throughout the school, the children finish their meals and worksheets at their desks as quiet music plays in the background. The continuity from classroom to classroom is the result of Steven’s careful vigilance and the

common elements that have been applied to each class. Morning routines help students know what they should be doing when.

When the lowest classrooms reached a point where 70 percent of students were meeting and exceeding state standards, Stevens says she realized that all of her classrooms finally were making growth, because that meant classrooms of second language learners were also progressing and exceeding. “When we got those classrooms over the hump, we knew we were beginning to make progress as a school,” Stevens says.

To make sure the staff stayed on track with their progress, Stevens established benchmarks teachers should strive for throughout the year. So if they set an overall goal of hitting 80 percent of students meeting or exceeding by the end of the year, they’d agree upon a goal of hitting 60 percent by the 1st quarter, 70 percent by the 2nd quarter, and 80 percent by the end of the year. Now the staff is at the point where the goal is 90 percent





Students go over their work while quietly finishing breakfast in the morning.

or more of students meeting the expectations, and benchmarking progress has evolved into a more daily event. Teachers are benchmarking progress every week through the common weekly assessment. Stevens is monitoring the progress of the whole school in the hours she spends in the classroom each day, to see how close each teacher is to getting her class to mastery on the week's performance objectives. "I'm constantly thinking about where kids are in relation to where they need to be right now," she says. "On Friday, I'm benchmarking every classroom. When we get to leadership meetings, I already know that data. The team leaders know that data, it's just the team doesn't know everybody's data. So when we get there, it's not for my benefit. I've already given feedback on that data. I've already talked to the teachers about that data and already intervened as I need to in relation to that data," she says. "I can't wait until I get to the midterm assessment to benchmark my progress. I already know and I've already intervened."

Benchmark goals are posted at the bottom of grade-level team meeting agendas. The vision and mission are reinforced in conversation and through the questions that are asked. Lesson plan structures put into place—such as pulling small groups at the end of each class to help those kids who did not grasp the lesson – is an extension of the vision that all children will learn every day.

Course Correcting: First Best Instruction

With a strong foundation laid, Stevens could turn her attention to accelerating academic achievement. She soon realized the focus of the school day was all wrong. More students were staying after school for tutoring than were grasping the material the first time it was presented during the school day. "Our pyramid of intervention was upside down," Stevens says. "We realized that until we changed those 6½ hours that the child spends with the teacher each day, that 1½ hour we have after school really isn't going to matter. We can do 1½ hours after school and give them really great instruction, but if tomorrow they come back and they have 6½ hours of ineffective instruction, what difference does it make?"

Stevens focused on making Tier 1 instruction truly the staff's "first and best" instruction. Tier 2 and 3 instruction would be available for those students who needed additional support, but the leadership intended to hit most students with high quality instruction the first time around. As Stevens and her team concentrated on tightening the schedule and maximizing instructional minutes, they created consistent structures, lesson plans, routines and expectations across the school.

The leadership meeting

It's still dark outside when Stevens stands before a small group of teacher leaders and administrators to call the regular leadership meeting to a start promptly at 7 a.m. It's one of several structures Stevens has built into the schedule of the week to keep her well-informed, to rally staff around the vision, and to hold the team accountable to their set goals. As such, student data from the past two weeks is projected on a board at the front of the room. Grade-level team leaders are expected to attend, but the meeting is open to any teachers, to help develop more leaders. "Leadership Meeting: Know Thy Impact" is written in cursive on a



large white pad of paper at the front of the room. Teachers wrap their hands around giant cups of coffee as Stevens begins cold-calling teachers on the purpose of the meeting and their mission.

By analyzing this data, what is their purpose? Stevens asks.

“Ensuring academic success for all our students,” answers one teacher.

“How are we going to do that?” Stevens continues.

“We will work as a high-functioning collaborative team,” says another.

First up: the kindergarten data. For each grade, those gathered in the room first find cause to celebrate. The majority of kindergartners are in meets and exceeds. “That’s a celebration!” Stevens says. Six percent are in the “Falls Far Below” category. “That’s a yes and a no celebration. Yes for the 94 percent above, and no for the 6 percent who we’re concerned about,” Stevens says.

And so it goes for each grade. They digest the numbers, point out celebrations, then next steps, with the team brainstorming ideas for how to move more children out of the lower categories.

Arizona is switching to a new state assessment this year, and the expectation is that most schools scores will go down because of the increased rigor of the tests. Early data shows that Heatherbrae is

above where they need to be, and suggests they’re transitioning well to the test with new, higher expectations, school officials say.

Stevens peppers the staff with more questions, letting some questions just hang there and the teachers reflect. “How do you know you’re teaching to mastery?”

“Check for understanding,” the teachers respond.

“How do you know your team is checking for understanding?”

At the end of the meeting, Stevens asks the members of the group to share an inspiring quote, one to motivate them in their leadership role for the week ahead.

Teacher Rebecca DeSantis reflects on a quote Stevens shared in an email: “Leaders don’t think I, they think we.” She explains that her math lesson the day before caused much frustration because her students were not grasping the objective. “The first thing I did was go to (fellow teacher Adriana) Torres and say ‘What do I do?’ And we thought of things we would do today,” DeSantis says.

Stevens nods, and as the meeting draws to a close, points to the “Know Thy Impact” sign. “High expectations—what does it look like, sound like?” she says to her team. “Keep that in mind as we go; what does that look like as I go about my daily life?”



CORNERSTONE I

Transformational Leadership

Driver 3: Create and Sustain a High-Performing Team

- Performance expectations and non-negotiables are clearly defined, and staff strives to meet them while following established routines, procedures, and non-negotiables set forth by the leader
- Leader consistently communicates clear Fit/ Performance expectations, prior to and during hiring and throughout on-boarding and employment
- Leader fosters staff relationships that reflect a culture of candor, trust & respect; authentically recognizes accomplishments; and facilitates effective resolution of conflict among colleagues
- The leader's consistent, mission-aligned decision-making anchors the staff and enrolls them in the leader's vision and strategies to achieve that vision
- Regular accountability processes are used by the leader to hold staff accountable to performance evaluation rubric and results, and performance level is communicated directly and promptly by the leader

A Team Mentality

Heatherbrae's four 4th-grade teachers drop their team binders on a worktable in Adriana Torres' classroom, ready for one of their weekly grade-level meetings, the conversation flowing immediately and freely. They meet one morning a week during the school day, while the students are at art, music or gym, and again on Wednesday afternoons. They may dive into data, research questions to prepare for the new state assessment, or brainstorm how to convey a particular concept. After a few minutes, they jump into the agenda, which lists the expected behavior for the meeting and their



Teachers at Heatherbrae collaborate together frequently to explore new approaches for helping their students achieve more.

goals of reviewing common assessment data, discussing math strategies for teaching mixed numbers, and next week's performance objectives.

Two of the teachers who also attended the morning's leadership meeting report back on the results and overall themes.

"Yay! 4th grade got props," says teacher Rose Marchiondo in reaction to their report, clapping.

Teacher Rebecca DeSantis is frustrated her math lessons on subtracting mixed numbers are not working. "I did not

foresee that being such an issue because I laid the foundation all last week, and only set aside Monday to do this, but it didn't go well. Tuesday,



I went back to more concrete and felt better. But we did the 'You Now' and they didn't get it."

They bounce ideas back and forth—maybe she could use more pictures, give more time? "I'm so baffled. We just did a problem. They can do every step. I'm trying to see where the disconnect is," DeSantis says.

The students are accustomed to using a place value mat, maybe they can try that? The teachers huddle over a sheet of paper and sketch it out. DeSantis keeps nodding as she surveys the paper, her excitement building. As the meeting closes, she stands up. "I'm going to go try that strategy now. Fingers crossed!"

By 10:21 a.m. DeSantis is trying out the new lesson to teach fractions. She asks the students to write out the problem on their white boards, with a column for whole numbers and a column for fractions. She circles the room, craning her neck to check white board to see who's getting it. Many are seeming to catch on. With some remarking "This makes so much more sense."

"I think tomorrow's going to be not the best data," DeSantis says later. "But I don't always get upset if my data's not the best if I know I see progress from Monday to Friday. And I know I got them there because I just thought of the strategy. We just started to get the hang of it so I know we're going to get it."

Howard also implements the new method for her afternoon class. "I did try the fractions thing because I was so excited." She and DeSantis later talk about how well it worked, and how excited the kids got. "More light bulbs turned on," she says.

This collaborative environment is key to keeping Heatherbrae running smoothly, Stevens says. Teachers say that Stevens even-handed approach toward the staff helps nurture a professional environment where teachers feel safe sharing. "She's very fair. Whether she has a personal relationship with you or not, she's going to treat everyone the same," says teacher Pam Metcalf.

"She doesn't have a clique." But she's always going to deliver the truth. "If you're not doing what you're supposed to, she's going to let you know that," Metcalf added. "You don't see anyone cutting corners or being lazy, because they will stand out... That's what you don't want to do on this campus is stand out for that."

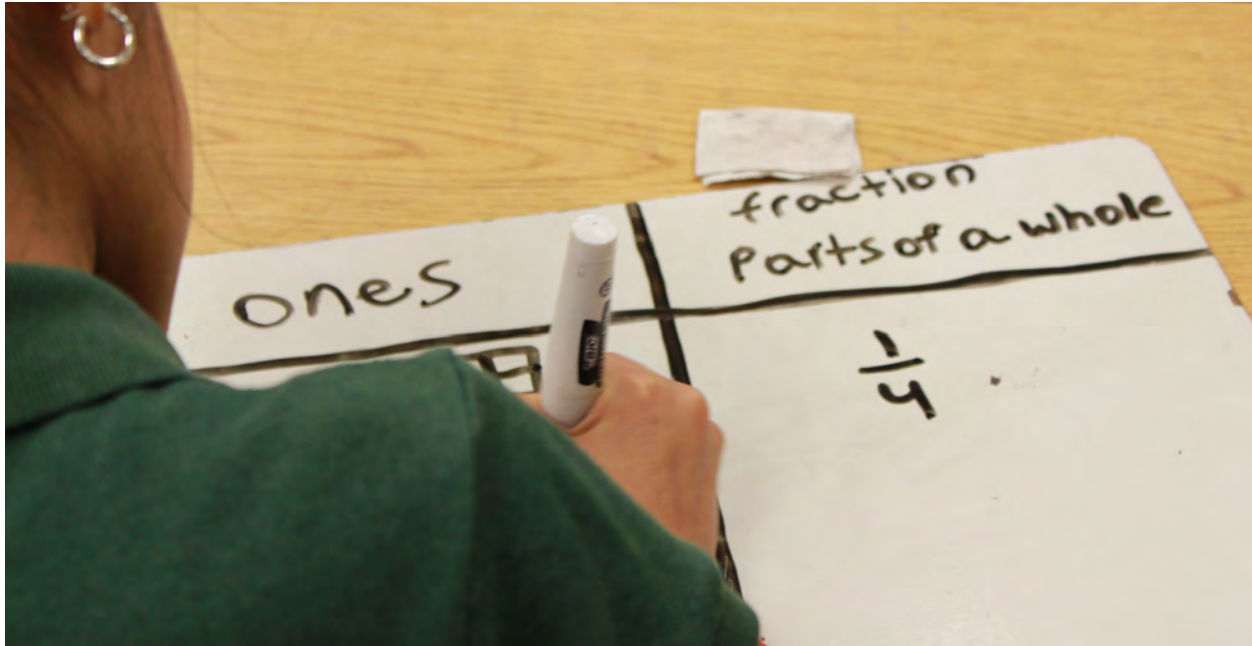
Metcalf says Stevens has a solid idea of the people who will fit well on the staff, and is careful on making hires. "Sometimes you can be deceived," she says. But people who don't fit with the team, or who do want to do less, usually don't last.

Instructional coach Bobbie Blair, who spends her days encouraging teachers to try new things, or pushing them to work on their craft in other ways, says she's impressed with the open-mindedness she finds toward her suggestions. "Sometimes I approach teachers with things I expect they'll give me resistance for, but they just always seem to want to give just a little more," she says. The campus struggles with teacher turnover, as many young teachers come to Arizona to get experience, then move back closer to home. But Heatherbrae's high-frequency coaching helps the staff to get the teachers up to speed quickly.

Stevens' near constant presence in classrooms also makes the difference. "You don't mind going the extra (mile) when you know someone else is going it with you," Blair says. When a teacher does react negatively to a suggestion, Blair says Stevens encourages her to stick with what the research says. "If they say I'm doing everything I should, show the data then. Sometimes bringing in past data where the kids were successful and now they're not helps. I don't think I've met someone who blatantly wouldn't do it," she says.

DeSantis says that her team kept her afloat in her first year of teaching. The first week before the students arrive, all the teachers return for professional development and to discuss goals and the vision. New teachers receive an additional week of training through a new teacher induction sponsored by the district.





Ms. Stevens is laser-focused on making Heatherbrae Elementary a 90-90-90 school. In 2014, her students hit an 85 percent proficiency rate in reading, with 91 percent of 3rd graders meeting or exceeding standards on the state's test reading portion. The school's impressive performance has earned it an 'A' rating from the state of Arizona.

Now in her fourth year of teaching, DeSantis says that Stevens is encouraging her development as a teacher-leader. "I didn't think I'd be one of the leaders. I'll just come to work and teach my kids, but (Stevens) pulled me aside one day and

she told me you have a lot of great qualities and I can see a leader in you. And I never saw that in myself, and ever since then she's been giving me more and more responsibilities," DeSantis says.

Transformational Leadership

Driver 4: Create and Sustain an Aspirational and Constructive Learning Environment

- Vision and goals are translated into sets of expected student behaviors and non-negotiables
- Staff communicate and clarify the culture goals and behavior expectations by providing rationale, practicing, and modeling with students
- Management policies, procedures, and response to disruptions are in place and utilized by all staff members to hold students accountable to high expectations
- Student motivation and investment are fostered through the use of college-bound symbols and stories to invest and motivate students in their own learning
- Inclusive and supportive learning community is created through symbols, ceremonies, and celebrations

Consistent Classrooms

The urgency that the staff feel toward the mission can be seen in ways small and large throughout the school. Signs remind teachers of the goal that 90 percent of kids will pass the state assessment. In Catherine Allmaras' kindergarten class, a girl arrives late to school, as the class is working on sentences. She fumbles with her backpack and papers in the back of the room. "Isabelle, let's do that later. I want you to do this with us," Allmaras says. Even this small 5-minute lesson should not be skipped by this student.

The 28 children know the procedures, as Allmaras directs them to the carpet for story time. As they put their books and pencil baskets in cubbies, some rush to the carpet, while waiting for the other kids taking their time. Allmaras says "Let's count to 10 to see if they'll be here by then." That statement adds a little push to their movements.

When it's time for stations, they look to the color-coding groupings marked on a movable chart on

the wall. As the other children cut out words and paste, or write words with markers, or listen to books being read to them, four students sit with the teacher and are drilled on capital letters.

The procedures help the kids feel safe and secure, because they know what to expect, says teacher Katherine Treasure. "I could leave without even a teacher being in there and they would still know what to do. It's like a well-oiled machine," she says. "If they get off track, the beauty of it is their peers say 'hey!'" Stevens is a visible presence, reminding students what's acceptable: "We don't run on the sidewalk at Heatherbrae," she says to two girls hurrying past her.

At one time, the classrooms were not so consistent, and students would be all over the place. "So we talked about what are some things that should be happening when kids come into the classroom in the morning," Stevens says. The staff worked on morning routines that would give each student a step-by-step guide of what they should be doing.



One of the things Stevens never lets slip are things that could detract from the classroom environment. “If I’m walking down the hall and I hear a louder-than-usual voice I’ll step in and say, ‘Is there something wrong?’ That’s really important. I believe we have great climate and culture, but it is so delicate,” Stevens says. “It’s so difficult to build and so easy to lose.” Correcting it may entail just calmly asking a question that brings the teacher back into focus.

A worker brings around plastic baskets of pears to all the classrooms for the midmorning snack, another important element to priming students to learn. One recent morning, a teacher hugs a crying girl at her desk as the rest of the class eats breakfast. Teacher Deborah Howard says problems from family dysfunction at home overflows into the school. “We have problems, but the children here are really exceptional. They have a sense of responsibility, they look out for each other and the school, they see it as a community,” she says. “It’s exceptional when I think of the environment in which we live, it could be so different.”

When students cause disruptions in class, teachers use the “Make Your Day” system. The first time the teacher has to correct a student, he or she is separated from the group to think about what happened. Teachers return and they discuss a more appropriate choice. Eventually students who continue to misbehave may get sent out of the room to another classroom if they are too disruptive. If they’re sent out of the room, a phone call home is made. But DeSantis says teachers try not to leave the children in the other classroom too long because they are missing instruction.

Celebrations are worked into the fabric of the day through daily announcements, which spotlight achievements on things such as the weekly assessments. Students sing the Heatherbrae song which is set to “It’s a Small World” and touches on each student being part of the important Heatherbrae community. The school hosts regular red carpet celebration assemblies to recognize students for academic achievement and for making progress.

The staff is also using “The Leader in Me,” which is a schoolwide program that draws from “7 Habits of Highly Effective People” to help create a common language about successful habits, setting goals and meeting them, being responsible and showing initiative.

Prompt communication also helps preserve the positive environment. “Her communication is always as soon as possible, as honestly as she can, and to give you some opportunity to make some choices,” Blair says. “I’ll say, ‘I have to do this and this,’ and she’ll say, ‘As long as you talk to the teachers.’ She doesn’t want them to be surprised.”



Aguilar Lawlor, an assistant superintendent for the Cartwright School District, says she saw what set the school apart: high expectations and Eva Stevens.

CORNERSTONE II

Academic Accelerators: Systems and Structures

Driver 1: Implement Extended Day/Year Effectively

- High-quality instructional time is greater than 190 days and approximately 8 hours a day
- Appropriate teacher and student schedules allow for a variety of opportunities for professional development, high-frequency coaching, data analysis, and differentiated and small group instruction
- School-wide and classroom systems and procedures maximize instructional time, reduce transition time, and increase student academic engagement

Tighten the Schedule

The school day at Heatherbrae, a district-run neighborhood school, is 6.5 hours, with about 180 days per year. Teachers arrive at 7:45 a.m. and leave around 3:30 p.m. “We look at our performance objectives and we understand that there are far more of those than there are hours to teach them,” Stevens says.

The leadership team has a schedule that aims to maximize every minute. Roughly six years ago, when the staff overhauled the school day to strengthen their “first best instruction,” that is when Heatherbrae’s performance accelerated. But the changes meant tightening lesson plans to make sure teachers were maximizing instructional minutes and time on task. Teacher prep was key. “When teachers have all that straight, then we can look at the kids falling through the cracks. But we

can’t be sending them to after-school intervention if the teacher didn’t have their lesson plans,” says instructional coach Bobbie Blair.

“As we tightened the teachers, the kids tightened up and the instruction came along, so the kids falling through the cracks (because maybe that instruction wasn’t reaching them)—we eliminated that piece,” Blair recalls.

Each day, students wait in the cafeteria until the 7:45 a.m. bell, when they go to classrooms and have breakfast before school officially starts at 8 a.m. Students have lunch and a 15-minute recess on the playground, and specials are included four days a week—art, music, and PE twice a week. Each class is bursting with students—36 and 37 students in most classes, though they are able to keep kindergarten down to 27 and 28 students. There are no classroom aides.



CORNERSTONE II

Academic Accelerators: Systems and Structures

Driver 2: Implement Robust and Frequent Assessment Capability

- Valid and reliable interim and growth assessments that match Common Core/College Readiness Standards are determined for all grades and content—growth assessments are administered 3 times a year, and interim assessments are administered every 8-10 weeks
- Leadership fosters a data-driven culture through clear communication of the purpose and rationale of the data processes and through the act of regular assessment, analysis, and re-teaching
- Timely, leader- and teacher-owned processes are in place to assess, analyze, and act on interim assessment and growth data at the school-wide and individual student level
- A highly active leadership team reflects on the implementation of the data processes and manages accountability systems for assessment selection, administration, analysis and action

On the Same Page

Teachers at each grade level develop a common weekly assessment that is administered to everyone in the grade. The shift to common assessments helped create an even playing field from classroom to classroom at the grade.

“When everyone was using their own assessment, you’re not sure if they’re basing the test off the highest kid, or what they think their kids could do. We needed a uniform standard so we could have common data,” says instructional coach Bobbie Blair.

Teachers are required to turn in the data from their weekly common assessments every Monday morning, although some do by Friday night. They also submit lesson plans for the week ahead at that time. Stevens and assistant principal Julie Case start reviewing the data and plans over the weekend. “If the data shows there might be a need for support, we want to make sure we’re in that

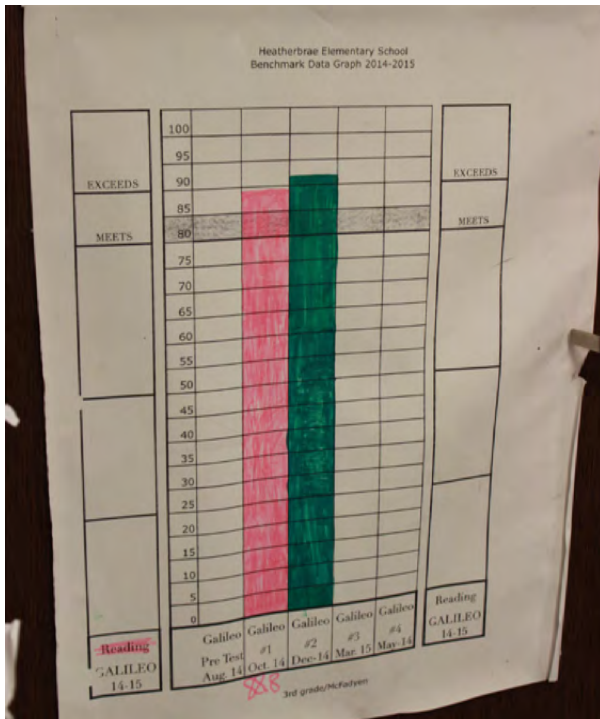
classroom, looking at what their lesson plan is going to be,” Case says.

The week is structured so that teachers have time to digest, analyze and discuss whole-class and student results with their team. Students also take a midterm assessment and a district-mandated quarterly benchmark assessment.

Along with those tests, the staff uses AIMSweb for reading and math. All of the tests provide immediate data that the staff can use to make decisions. In Arizona, the state is transitioning from the AIMS test to the AZ Merit state assessment, which measures student performance against the state’s College and Career Readiness standards. Arizona also has a law that says students who are not proficient in reading by the end of 3rd grade cannot be promoted to 4th grade.

Stevens is proactive about any data she can access. Recently, the school learned of changes that would be made to a required state test given to English





Signs throughout the school keep everyone apprised of their progress toward goals.

Language Learners. “We found out about them on Tuesday. By the end of the day Wednesday, Ms. Stevens already had a plan and was implementing a plan, and that plan has been used kind of like a model for the district,” says Case. “She doesn’t wait for someone to tell her. She identifies what she needs to do, makes a plan and moves forward before our district tells us. Not all administrators do that, they wait for the district. But we don’t have time to wait.”

Within classrooms, teachers use ‘You Dos’ on white boards or on paper to check for daily understanding, keeping lists of the students who will get a review during small groups. Some teachers use the Class Dojo app on their phone, tapping on the student names who might need to revisit a concept.

CORNERSTONE II

Academic Accelerators: Systems and Structures

Driver 3: Implement Small Group Instruction

- Leader identifies the differentiation and small group instruction implementation expectations for staff
- Strong tracking of student assessment data (growth assessments, interim assessments, checks for understanding, exit slips, and unit assessments) exists and is used to inform instruction and develop individualized learning strategies and plans
- Protocols and procedures are in place to ensure that Response to Intervention (RtI) occurs and is regularly assessed
- Protocols and procedures are in place to ensure that Special Education services exist, meet the needs of students, and are regularly assessed
- Accountability processes are in place to ensure that differentiated and small group instruction occurs and effectively responds to students needs, accelerating achievement for all students

Walk to Intervention

Small-group instruction is a core component of Heatherbrae’s model. At the end of every class period, teachers divide the class into small groups, working with the lowest-tier students or those who did not fully grasp the day’s lesson. Throughout the school, this arrangement can be seen as teachers sit at tables in the back of the room with five or so students, revisiting the day’s lesson to drill areas where they are struggling.

“When teachers finish their core instruction and the kids move into the You Do section where they do work independently, the teacher pulls a small group of kids,” Stevens says. “That’s a vision ensuring not just these 90 percent of the kids who are on task and ready to go to the independent stage are working, but these 6 kids who did not understand it or who are at different levels are

pulled together and we’re working together to bring those kids up to where they need to be. That is our vision in a nutshell.”

Further, Stevens has created “Walk to Intervention,” in which 1st and 2nd graders are grouped according to their phonics needs. From 2-2:30 p.m. every day, the students go to a classroom where the teacher has planned a lesson geared toward their level. Some students might not be technically going for “intervention,” but more for enrichment.

Ann Catlin’s “Walk to Intervention” class is abuzz with 1st and 2nd graders, the lowest-level students in the bunch, who are working at tables with trays of letters. One boy proudly shows all the words he can spell; while another tries to help a classmate: “Seth, do you want to learn words?” Some students just line up the letters in random order. They’ve just



finished a lesson on short vowels, and the word trays are a reward because they enjoy playing with the letters, Catlin says.

The groups are fluid. The students just had AIMSweb testing, so some jumped up a level, others moved down. The classes reflect those changes. “Everyone in that group all has the same need. The classroom teacher is monitoring their progress, and if they need to move in two weeks, they move in two weeks,” says assistant principal Julie Case.

Student most in need of support also will work with one of two resource teachers who pull them out to a classroom for small group instruction.

Pam Metcalf, resource teacher for 4th and 5th grade, is assigned students who are two years or more behind grade level. She tries to keep the groups to no more than five students. Grouping decisions are data-based, using the district quarterly benchmark scores, informal assessments and other test results.

The district also provides a “Move on with Reading” interventionist who focuses on K-3 because of the state law requiring that all children pass a reading assessment at the end of grade 3 in order to be promoted. In addition, Heatherbrae has a reading interventionist on staff who works with small groups of students throughout the day.

CORNERSTONE II

Academic Accelerators: Systems and Structures

Driver 4: Implement Standards-Based Curriculum

- The leader identifies Common Core/College-Readiness Standards and defines curriculum implementation expectations for staff
- Curriculum maps exist that outline which standards will be taught, and when, for each content area and/or grade level
 - y Units and lessons are aligned to the maps ensuring that standards are taught in a methodical way
 - y Clear lesson plans include components of effective lessons (e.g., instructional outcomes, lesson structure, instructional strategies and assessments)
- Staff are held accountable for implementing the standards-based curriculum through regular reviews of lesson plans and implementation by the leadership team

Arizona has developed a new set of college and career readiness standards that are Common Core aligned and will first be used in the 2015 statewide assessment. The district provides pacing guides to all teachers that outline which standards should be taught when, and which curricular materials are available to support the standards. All schools are using the district-adopted curriculum, but teachers can select from different options to teach a standard.

For example, if students must summarize a nonfiction text using details from the selection, teachers don't necessarily have to use the "Treasures" reading textbook, says assistant

principal Julie Case. Some could use a social studies text or other nonfiction text that best works for their lesson.

Instructional coach Bobbie Blair says the set core curriculum helps teachers concentrate on instruction. "That's better than when we're pulling randomly off the internet," with teachers trying to build their own curriculum from scratch, Blair adds.

The staff uses their own lesson plan templates that prompts teachers to outline the standards they're targeting. The templates also lead to more uniform lessons across classes.



CORNERSTONE III

Developing “Black Belt” Teaching

Driver 1: Ensure teacher proficiency with Curricular Tools and Resources

- Teachers can execute the fundamentals of the curricular tools and resources through practice
- Leadership supports teacher mastery of the curricular tools and resources through whole school and individual professional development and monitors teacher mastery through evaluation and observation
- Having mastered the fundamentals of the curricular tools and resources, teachers expertly utilize a variety of curricular strategies to enhance and supplement the curriculum

To help teachers sort out the pieces of their curriculum, Stevens brought in a consultant to model how to use the core curriculum in reading. “You get a curriculum and it has a million pieces. But they all have a purpose, so you don’t necessarily have to use all of those pieces. You have to know when to use them,” says assistant principal Julie Case.

Additionally, instructional support specialist Bobbie Blair will do modeling for teachers to help them understand how to best incorporate the tools that have been selected by the district. She also works with them to plan lessons using “Treasures” for reading and “EnVision” for math.

Stevens, Case and Blair spend the bulk of their day in classrooms, so they can pitch in to suggest a tweak to a lesson plan. Most of the 1st-grade

teachers were new to the school this year, so a veteran 3rd-grade teacher offered to go into their classrooms during her prep and model successful lessons, or help them brainstorm how to convey a topic using the curriculum.

Teacher Rebecca DeSantis remembers that in her first year, her grade-level team was essential in helping her figure out how to teach the EnVision math curriculum. The reading consultant provided insight as well. Teachers also attend district-sponsored PD conferences.

As a math teacher, DeSantis has gone offsite to complete Singapore math trainings as well as sessions on Kagan strategies and thinking maps. She’s returned each time and shared what she learned with the rest of the staff during weekly professional development time.



CORNERSTONE III

Developing “Black Belt” Teaching

Driver 2: Ensure teacher proficiency in Using Assessment Data to Individualize Instruction

- Teachers use data trends from student growth and interim assessment data, checks for understanding, exit slips, and unit assessments to develop individualized learning strategies and execute the fundamentals of differentiated and small group instruction
- Teachers communicate to students and parents an individual student’s current performance level (e.g., ACT, NWEA MAP, Lexile, Fountas and Pinnell level, or grade equivalency), current growth area, yearlong growth goals, and how to use the information
- Teachers utilize supplemental high-dosage tutoring to strategically support struggling and high-performing students from all subgroups
- Teachers expertly utilize a variety of technology and other programs (e.g., Accelerated Math) to strategically support struggling and high-performing students from all subgroups

Move Them Up

Each student is assigned to a quadrant: Meets, exceeds, approaching or falls far below. Teachers use that data to determine how to move individual children up and out of lower quadrants. “They have a plan of how they’re going to move these kids based on what they see from one quadrant to the next quadrant and they monitor that,” Stevens says. “If we have kids who are falls far below, I am monitoring it, the teacher is monitoring it, and the tier 3 teacher is also monitoring those kids.”

At weekly leadership meetings, the quadrant data is forefront, and the message is sent that team leaders should focus the staff on parsing the numbers and improving them. After her quick checks for understanding and ‘You Dos’ through the lesson, teacher Rebecca DeSantis will determine which students are getting it and which are not, and often pair those kids who are almost getting it with a good partner. “That’s something that’s helped me out a lot, that the kids actually love learning from each other,” she says. “For the

kids who are approaching and falling below, I’ll pull them up to the carpet while kids are doing independent work at their seats. A lot of times for those kids they just need the extra practice to break it down a little more.”

Teachers have two meetings with their grade-level team built into their schedule each week. And data is usually an agenda item at those meetings. From day one of joining the staff, “data is part of their environment,” says assistant principal Julie Case.

At a recent grade level team meeting in the school library, 1st-grade teachers collaborate on their common math assessment, while 2nd-grade teachers reviewed their data and tried to determine how to address some struggles students were having with subtraction lessons. As they reflected on the data, they planned a reteach and rearranged the timing of a test to make more time for the lesson.

Teachers of the same grade level also have a common prep, as all students go to specials at the same time every day.



In the barebones computer lab, teachers can bring students to use individualized online programs such as SuccessMaker that allow every student to work at his or her own pace. Teacher Annalee Poureetezadi brings her 1st grade class of English Language Learners to the computer lab for extra reading and math at the end of the day. She's been bringing them 4 days a week for 30 minutes for the past couple weeks for extra support to improve upon their speaking and listening skills. "I want them to hear someone else speaking besides me, because they'll need that to test out," she explains.

The staff uses AIMSweb testing and phonics screeners to flag problems with students. Students may be assigned to small groups during the end of class, pulled out for small groups with the resource specialists, or assigned to the appropriate level for "Walk to Intervention" periods.

When teachers need additional help with a struggling student, they also can go to the problem solving team. "If they are not making progress with

all of this, the team meets to review all the data and talk about how to change it," says Case. The matter can also be forwarded to a child study team if need be.

To help teachers target instruction, Stevens says the staff focused on better using their checks for understanding. "We worked on the fact that if I ask 15 questions in a lesson, I can't check everyone's understanding on all of those 15 questions. But if I chunk my lesson—I step my lesson up—I can check everyone's understanding on the essential questions," she says. "So when I plan, I plan my questions and I know my lesson. These are the questions that are going to get me to my objective. If they can't answer these questions, then I'm going to have to take you to my group when we do the You Do." But if 80-90 percent of the students answer those questions correctly: "I'm not going to stop my lesson. I'm going to know who those kids are, and I'm going to work with them here, and check them again here," she says.



CORNERSTONE III

Developing “Black Belt” Teaching

Driver 3: Implement Strategic Whole School Professional Development

- Data trends from student growth and interim assessment data, high-frequency observations, evaluations, and staff surveys are used to inform the priorities of school-wide professional development
- A year-long professional development plan with a calendar exists, which outlines the school-wide professional development goals, measurable objectives, quarterly benchmarks, and strategies to meet goals
- The Live the Learning model (i.e., airtight activities, high-quality content, framing, group-sharing, and reflection) is utilized to plan professional development
- Quality of the execution of professional development is measured through exit slips, surveys, and classroom observations, and the leadership team course corrects as necessary
- Leaders hold staff accountable to professional development objectives through a review of deliverables and focused observations

Early Dismissal for Regular PD

Every Thursday, students are dismissed early so the Heatherbrae staff can gather for schoolwide professional development from 1:45 p.m. to 3:25 p.m. “Mrs. Stevens doesn’t just have a professional development because you’re supposed to have them on Thursdays. There’s a purpose behind everything she does,” says assistant principal Julie Case. The professional development is often targeting something Stevens noticed on her regular walkthroughs.

One recent Thursday, the PD is targeted to something Stevens has noticed on recent classroom visits—that engagement is down. She points out that some teachers are calling on the same students who have their hands up, but that’s excluding those who don’t raise their hands. She has drafted teacher Rebecca DeSantis to help lead a math PD that will review and offer new ideas on techniques that might improve student

engagement. As the meeting starts, Stevens holds up her hand to quiet the teachers, right at 1:45 p.m.

They start with celebrations. A 3rd grade teacher shares the story of her success with one struggling boy who has made dramatic improvements in reading. The group applauds.

“Thank you,” Stevens says to the teacher.

“Thank you little boy,” the teacher responds.

They share stories of lessons that went well, colleagues who helped. Case points out that more than 100 students will be recognized the next day for being at 80, 90 percent or higher. A 3rd grade teacher will have everyone in her class recognized for meeting their goals or making substantial progress at the assembly tomorrow.

DeSantis takes over and leads a spiral review on ‘number bonds’ to help students find friendlier number combinations. Instructional support



specialist Bobbie Blair writes out the PD objective on the board: “I can use strategies to engage all my students in learning by reflecting on my current practice and identifying new strategies to use in my classroom.”

She has them repeat the word “engage,” again and again, then directs them to share a recent example where engagement occurred in their classrooms. She shows a video of a speaker who talks about the “no hands up classroom” and how asking students to raise their hands increases the achievement gap because it creates two classes of students: those breaking their arms to answer and those under the radar. Afterward, the staff lists the strategies they learned, shares additional ideas, and then DeSantis continues with her math lesson, modeling the new engagement strategies.

At 2:30 they wrap up, fill out feedback sheets on the PD, then head to their classrooms to use the additional time to plan.

Blair says that data and classroom observations guide the PD topics the staff will explore each week. “Most of our PD is instructional. There’s not a lot for informational, you can do that via email. They’re not like meetings, they are professional development,” Blair says. The leadership designs a PD calendar

at the beginning of the year, but it’s tweaked based on needs. “Our PD is relevant, our PD is fresh research that is effective. The type of PD teachers can take directly to the classroom and use it the very next day,” says teacher Katherine Treasure.

The district provides PD on topics such as how to prepare for the AZMerit, how to create math tests for EnVision Math, or how to teach math to lower learners. They also bring in consultants or sends teachers to trainings in areas such as thinking maps or Kagan strategies. DeSantis attended a Singapore math training and brought what she learned back to the school’s

PD sessions. Five teachers attended a conference to become certified as Thinking Map trainers, then slowly introduced the concept to the whole staff through Thursday PD sessions. Teachers are often asked to come back to a future session with examples of how they used a new strategy in their own classroom.



Instructional coach Bobbie Blair leads a weekly whole-staff professional development meeting.

Some PD sessions will entail a mini-lesson, with

extra time built in for them to plan. Or sometimes it will be more in-depth covering every minute of the session. But all if it, teachers are expected to “job embed,” says Stevens.

CORNERSTONE III

Developing “Black Belt” Teaching

Driver 4: Implement Strategic High-Frequency Coaching

- Data trends from student growth and interim assessment data, high-frequency observations, and teacher evaluations are used to determine staff performance levels and inform individual support plans
- Expectations are established for high-frequency observation of all teaching staff (e.g., 20 min weekly an average of 34 times per year)
- Leader prepares clear, effective, evidence-based feedback, and consistent feedback to teachers is provided through multiple normed meetings between teachers and leadership team members: 1:1 check-in, planning, observation feedback (15-30 min), and data analysis
- Teachers and leaders track progress on action steps and implementation of professional development objectives
- Leaders holds staff accountable for the progress and results of high-frequency coaching and school-wide professional development objectives

Immediate Feedback

Instructional coach Bobbie Blair’s day is spent moving from classroom to classroom, whisper-coaching, modeling or observing. Feedback is not provided at a post-observation meeting, or even after the class period, but right in the moment. “If they’re doing a lesson and it’s not meeting what the kids need, I’m not going to wait the 45 minutes,” Blair says. “If there’s an immediate need and the lesson’s not going well, I will say here are my concerns can I step in?” Instead of giving teachers three to five years to build their instructional skills, while classrooms of students flail, the leadership sets immediate high expectations for teachers and supports them through intensive coaching. “When we bring in new teachers, we say this is what we expect, but I’ll help you get there,” Blair says.

Some teachers, especially those new to the staff, receive a heavy amount of coaching; others not as much. It’s all based on need, depending on what

Stevens and the leadership team are seeing in the classroom. But the coaching model is based on the idea that without feedback, there’s no change. Stevens often reminds Blair that “everybody deserves to hear feedback,” she says. “You say it in a respectful way and give that person a way to improve it.”

During one recent class, Blair works with the new 5th grade teacher who just started midyear, the month prior. They are breaking down a text with the class, looking for signal words and descriptive facts. Blair is on the sidelines watching. After the students start reading a section to their partners as directed, Blair steps in to whisper to the new teacher some suggestions to make sure every student is accountable.

To help teachers understand what good teaching should look like in the classroom, the leadership team uses maps that were developed with a consultant at the district level; these maps spell out what teaching looks like at different levels.



The weekly whole school PD sessions reinforce what should be happening in the classroom, drawing from research-based strategies.

Injecting a sense of urgency into the classroom is also important, and Blair develops PD that reinforces that idea. “We want the teacher to know right then in that hour, that minute, ‘I need to change my instruction,’” Blair says. “We don’t want the instructional period to go by and we didn’t make adjustments for impact.”

As for formal evaluations, teachers with three years or less experience get two formal observations, which requires an administrator to observe a whole lesson, then conduct a post-conference. More experienced teachers have just one formal observation. At the end of the school year, each teacher has a summative evaluation, which covers a variety of areas, such as student engagement and how the teacher is serving special needs students. The evaluation blends the observations with school achievement and growth data, as well as parent surveys.

During a recent visit, Stevens settles into a chair in the back of Rosemarie Slater’s classroom for a formal evaluation of a lesson on author’s purpose. Slater leads the 27 students through a reading selection about Brazil, directing them to read aloud together, then to talk with their partners



Instructional coach Bobbie Blair “whisper coaches” to a teacher who is brand new to Heatherbrae.

about the meaning of the paragraph. But at one table in the back of the room, one group of three students is not following directions, with one boy staring off, and one girl jumping ahead and finishing the whole worksheet.

She starts them on the ‘You Do,’ in which they must describe the author’s purpose for writing the text, and answer additional multiple choice

questions. Slater circles the room, her smartphone in hand, clicking on the Class Dojo app to indicate which students seemed to get it, and which did not.

Afterward, Stevens cites some engagement issues, but says she had good structures in place so the students were analyzing the paragraphs the same way and knew what to expect. “The kids are in a good place but she needs to push them up. She has structures in place for student discourse but she needs to make sure everyone is talking,” Stevens says.



Eva Stevens observes a teacher as part of a formal observation.

As for the frequent, less formal observations, “teachers realize we’re always in there,” says assistant principal Julie Case. “If in August and September we’re working on something, and they improve that area, it’s going to be positive on your evaluation. But if we are working on the same things in September, October, November, well, that’s going to reflect (poorly) because you haven’t improved your practice.”

Results

2014 Medium Growth Percentile
for Bottom 25% of students:

77.25



2014 Performance on Arizona State Assessment

	Reading	Math
Grade 3	91%	77%
Grade 4	80%	71%
Grade 5	85%	73%

