

Olathe District Schools

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Awards and Recognitions from Olathe District Schools

Fairview Elementary Named National Title I Distinguished School

OLATHE – Meeting the needs of students might sound a little cliché, but the practices and programs centered on this concept are making marked improvements in the lives of students at Fairview Elementary School. And the efforts of students, staff and parents in the Fairview Elementary community are not going unnoticed.

The National Title I Association, a national association of state Title I directors, recently named Fairview Elementary as a Title I Distinguished School. The association will recognize almost 100 winning school officials, including third-year Fairview Principal Brent Yeager, at the group's national convention Jan. 21-24 in Washington, D.C.

Yeager, who has been involved in education for nine years and the last three with Olathe District Schools, said he was ecstatic when he learned about the award from Superintendent Pat All.

"It is a great honor to be chosen, especially when we consider all of the amazing Title I schools in Olathe making a difference every day," Yeager said.

Approximately 370 students attend Fairview Elementary. Seventy percent of those students are on free or reduced lunches, 40 percent are Hispanic, 45 percent are ELL (English Language Learners) and 10 percent are African-American.

In selecting distinguished schools, the National Title I Association looks at state assessment data for the previous two years to determine schools that have significantly closed the achievement gap between student groups. Fairview Elementary's growth in the Kansas Reading Assessment test scores increased 12.4 percent for all students from 2007-2009. In that same timeframe for the same test, the free/reduced lunch subgroup student scores improved 20.2 percent while the ELL subgroup student scores were up 23.2 percent followed by the Hispanic subgroup student scores increasing 19.1 percent.

On the Kansas Math Assessment tests from 2007-2009, the Fairview Elementary growth for all students was 12.2 percent (17.5 percent growth for the free/reduced lunch subgroup; 29 percent growth for the ELL subgroup and 27.1 percent growth for the Hispanic subgroup).

For the Kansas Writing Assessment test from 2007-2009, the Fairview Elementary growth for all students was 41.5 percent. The state administers this test every other year. Additionally, the Fairview Elementary growth for all students on the Kansas Science Assessment tests from 2008-2009 was 10.1 percent.

“This award verifies that the Fairview Elementary community is working well as a team to help our students succeed,” Yeager said. “Our steps that we set in place to implement the district curriculum, engage our students in learning and provide resources for all of our students have been successful.”

Yeager explained that in addition to strategies consistent with any Title building (i.e., ELL instruction, Title 1 reading and math teachers, and extended learning for targeted students in the spring), Fairview Elementary offers unique programs that help lead to the school’s success.

For example, all students participate in small group learning at their instructional level that concentrates on targeted math or reading indicators. The school offers “Daily Prime Time Instructional Focus” time from 8:20-8:55 a.m. each day.

“Our teams design pre- and post-tests to assess our students and drive their instruction to meet individual needs,” Yeager said. “Each grade level also creates SMART goals for each Prime Time unit. Every single instructional adult in our building has a small group during this time.”

Fairview Elementary also conducts systematic formative assessments in grades three through six.

“Our intermediate grades take a practice Kansas Assessment test each week in reading or math,” Yeager pointed out. “This provides our instructional staff with ongoing data to know exactly how their students are performing with tested curriculum. The data helps teachers plan lessons to re-teach concepts the students have not yet mastered.”

Yeager noted that the “Fairview Families” program is another key component in the school’s success.

“All of our staff members have a ‘family’ of students that includes one student from each grade level,” he said. “Staff members meet with their families one time per month for 30 minutes. This time is spent visiting, playing games or making crafts. This time is about building relationships and providing our students with an additional important adult in their life. Our families stay the same from year to year.”

Finally, Yeager said that the school’s staff provides the extra effort to further make students’ success an attainable goal.

“Our staff is willing to do whatever it takes to make sure all of our students’ basic needs are being met,” he said. “We provide academic support nights for parents, clothing drives for families, and food collections for the Fairview Elementary community. By helping with these needs, our parents and students feel the commitment from the Fairview staff.”

Yeager pointed out that the standard at Fairview has always been to be a school of excellence.

“The staff and students have worked very hard to succeed in academics,” he said. “In the past three years, we have set goals and benchmarks, and have designed a strategic School Improvement Plan to meet the increasing challenges of No Child Left Behind and Olathe District Schools’ expectations.”