

## PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER



Buoyed by its quick boost in student reading scores, Kane Area Elementary School has set new goals for itself using the proven tools of SFA

## THE CHALLENGE

Kane Area Elementary School, in McKean County, in northwestern Pennsylvania, first turned to Success for All in 2011. The school needed help with the dropping reading scores of its approximately 500 K-5 students. While Kane always had a strong teaching staff, they tended to work in isolation. They needed to start pulling together to achieve greater consistency, using the right tools to ensure accountability and focus.

SFA's proven approach was exactly what was called for, getting the teaching staff out of their silos to work together towards well-defined goals, with the teaching materials, coaching and support needed to achieve them, including data-driven instruction methods. SFA would provide a basic framework for literacy instruction and engage students through cooperative learning.

This approach – which also involved teachers working in component area teams – soon paid off. Using SFA's collaborative learning methods, the 52% of students reading at or above grade level rose to 65% in the first year and showed strong growth the year following.

But the school under principal Linda Lorenzo did not want to sit on its laurels, so has recently set new goals for itself, including getting parents, family and other stakeholders more involved in the kids' learning.

“Our goal and vision is to create an environment of energized, engaged and empowered teachers, staff and students that are supported by families, child care providers and the community,” says Lorenzo.

## THE SOLUTION

As the school refined its implementation of the program, it drew upon SFA's goal-focused process for setting targets, planning actions and evaluating results. Kane's leadership provides schoolwide direction, manages the committees and decides priorities. The lines of communication are kept open through regular meetings during planning periods, in which the teachers in each component team review data and plan ahead. They focus on tier one instruction, monitor progress towards set goals and then celebrate the inevitable successes.

Different school committees work on other factors that contribute to student success, including the kinds of help students can receive at home. Parent and family involvement is achieved through activities including Second Cup of Coffee, the Book Bus and Read with the Team Night.

These activities are part of Kane's SFA-driven Read and Respond program, in which students are encouraged to “read what they want” at home, for 20 minutes, including books, magazines and newspapers. Then they are expected to discuss what they have read with a parent or an older sibling.

“Parents seem very positive,” says Lorenzo of the response to the program, in an article in the Kane Republican newspaper. “They're thrilled to see their children reading independently at home.”

With the Read with the Team Night, local high school athletes did Read and Respond homework with the Kane students in the high school gymnasium. After reading to the older students, the elementary pupils joined them in a fun evening of shooting hoops, practicing cheerleading moves and eating popcorn. The rewards for reading were immediate and inspiring for all involved.

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LINDA LORENZO

## THE RESULTS

All the hard work of Kane's teachers and administrators, the students' families and support networks, and of course the students themselves, paid off in January 2018. The Pennsylvania Department of Education, Division of Federal Programs recognized Kane as a "Title I Distinguished School for High Progress."

In the same month, SFA facilitator Janine Smith and reading specialist Mary Tunall received an invitation to Title I Improving School Performance Conference in Pittsburgh, where the pair presented "Schoolwide Interventions: Putting It All Together," highlighting the programs and processes put in place to meet the needs of all students, to ensure success.

They emphasized the fact that student academic outcomes are improved when everyone inside and outside school works together to achieve clearly defined goals, using the research-proven methods of SFA.



**FOUNDED IN 1987**, the nonprofit Success for All Foundation is dedicated to ensuring that every child, from pre-kindergarten to grade 8, becomes proficient in reading and learning – opening up new doors for a lifetime of achievement. Not only has SFA been proven time and again to help with student reading ability and math performance, it also addresses non-academic concerns, improving behavior, attendance and parental involvement. Please contact us for more information.

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