

BOVENSCHEN

School Improvement Annual Report 2008-09

The mission of Keith Bovenschen School is to provide a nurturing educational environment that enables students to achieve their highest level of independence and self-esteem in order to face the challenges in their daily lives.

Our program provides educational services for students, ages 3 to 26, who have moderate to severe cognitive impairments. As of May 2009 our enrollment was 296. Our daily student attendance rate averaged 84% last year.

Status of School Improvement

Our school improvement team includes teachers, ancillary staff, paraprofessionals and administrators. Parent input is elicited through surveys and discussions at PTO meetings.

Goal: To use a curriculum-based approach to improve students' functional reading skills as measured by performance on the English language arts assessment.

Several professional learning communities at Bovenschen explored topics related to literacy, and helped to relate Individualized Education Plan (IEP) goals and instruction with content expectations in English language arts. Others met in groups to look at the continuity of our program across grade levels. Our Data Driven Instruction committee began analyzing MI-Access data, and some staff were trained in the use of Data Director, a program to help coordinate analysis of student performance on multiple assessments.

Another committee created an English language arts (ELA) assessment linked with Michigan's Extended Grade Level Content Expectations (EGLCE) for use countywide. In addition our school adopted the belief statement – Every Child, Every Chance, Every Day.

Curriculum

Our curriculum is based on each student's needs—both academic and functional. We use EGLCE in the areas of English language arts, mathematics and science, and the "Participation" and "Supported Independence" levels of the Addressing Unique Educational Needs (AUEN) curriculum. Its focus is on communication, daily living, vocational and pre-academic skills. Academic and functional skills are continually practiced both in the community and during schoolwide themes and events.

Classroom learning is also integrated into practical work experiences. Elementary-aged students, for example, may learn about community workers; at age 14, students begin formally planning for transition by training for custodial, laundry, office work, restaurant work, human services and supply distribution jobs inside and out of school. Structured feedback about performance helps maximize the benefits of on-the-job training. By linking work-based experiences to classroom learning and curriculum, our students are prepared to transition into specialized workshops or Lutz School for Work Experience when they leave Bovenschen.

Student Achievement

Math and English language arts assessments are aligned to statewide content expectations and take into account our students' unique learning needs. A transition assessment measures vocational, employment and daily living skills. In our early childhood classrooms we use the Brigance Inventory of Early Development II to measure development of students, ages 3 to 8. Many of our students are assessed using MI-Access (see tables that follow for results). Quarterly reports keep parents apprised of their child's progress.

MI-Access—Participation

Number assessed and percentage meeting or exceeding expectations

Grade	ELA				MATH				SCIENCE			
	2008		2007		2008		2007		2008		2007	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
3rd	6	*	4	*	6	*	4	*	6	*		
4th	6	*	10	90%	6	*	10	80%	6	*		
5th	9	*	5	*	9	*	5	*	9	*	5	*
6th	8	*	13	77%	8	*	13	62%	8	*		
7th	14	54%	13	54%	14	79%	13	54%	14	0%		
8th	11	82%	8	*	11	91%	8	*	11	100%	8	*
11th	13	77%	13	85%	13	60%	13	62%	13	38%	13	38%

MI-Access—Supported Independence

Number assessed during the 2008-09 school year*

	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 11
ELA	6	7	1	8	7	3	5
Math	6	7	1	7	4	3	0
Science			1			2	3

*The state does not provide data when fewer than 10 students in a group are assessed.

Use of Technology

Our program uses technology to support student achievement in the classroom and at home. *News-2-You*, *Intellitools* and Edmark software enrich our literacy program by encouraging student participation. Some students use alternative communication systems to meet their language needs. These systems can be as simple as a single button a student activates for a pre-recorded message, such as "good morning." They can also be as complex as a computer-like device which speaks sentences and allows students to converse.

Staff create Individualized Education Plans (IEP) electronically and some have used *Survey Monkey* to gain feedback in a timely and organized manner. Our website promotes the school, highlights our accomplishments, and enables parents to find out about special events, contact staff, and see their children at work. Selected staff began training on Data Director, a software program for managing information and aiding in data analysis.

Staff Development

Staff development opportunities are aligned to our goal of improving reading skills. Workshops for professional staff included the Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS), adaptive books, and a writers' workshop. Paraprofessionals attended sessions on literacy and reading. Topics of other conferences, training and workshops included curriculum, transition, literacy, school culture, homeless education and professional learning communities.

All of our teachers meet the "highly qualified" standards of the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act and IDEA.

Use of Community Resources

Our community-based instruction (CBI) program plays a key role in our curriculum. It gives all of our classrooms the chance to apply skills learned in the classroom out in the community. We make regular trips to the grocery store and a bowling center. Last year we also visited a veterinarian's office, a fire station, the library, and numerous restaurants. Some students also attended Lifetown, a simulated city in which they practiced skills in a real-life environment.

Peer Pal programs give our students opportunities to develop friendships with students in nearby schools. Our high-school aged students attend class weekly at Fitzgerald High School where they play percussion instruments in the wind ensemble band. This year they participated in the spring concert at the high school. Preschoolers attend weekly sessions at Carlson Elementary School where teachers plan multisensory lessons and encourage interactions between students.

The community also helps our school by volunteering time and resources. Among our supporters are the Alhambra's Sancho Caravan, the Knights of Columbus, Presbyterian Women First, Regina High School, Sterling Heights High School, Angel Food Ministries, the Warren Elks, the Warren Rotary, and numerous individuals.

Parent/Family Participation

Individualized Education Plan (IEP) team meetings help keep parents involved in their child's education. This year, 65% of parents participated. In addition, 68% came to conferences.

Sibling programs give the brothers and sisters of our students the chance to discuss many topics in a non-threatening, confidential setting. Parents benefited from programs on nutrition and IEPs.

Our very active parent/teacher organization (PTO) held annual events (holiday dinner, parent-child dance, "Mom's Night Out," etc.), and hosted a fundraiser at a comedy club, raising over \$3,000 to benefit our students. Family Fun Night was also expanded this year.

Points of Pride

- All classrooms participated in area Special Olympics; 15 went on to the state games and brought home medals in swimming, ball throw, walking and weightlifting.
- To promote fitness we had a "Hoops for the Heart" week, and took part in ACES (All Children Exercising Simultaneously). Since October 2007, students have walked nearly 1,313 miles in the Lancer Walk/Roll challenge.
- One of our theme-based literacy units ended with a special visit and on-site train ride, sponsored by the PTO. At a reading assembly featuring an adaptive book, students got to see themselves riding the train.
- We're on our way to becoming a "Michigan Green School," recycling paper, plastic bags and bottles, pop cans, aluminum, glass, printer cartridges and batteries. Seven classrooms are involved in 4-H and we grow and sell plants from our greenhouse.
- 52 students and 28 staff members attended the annual trip to Camp Fowler. Students rode horses, gardened, took boat rides, participated in challenge education and more.



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