

# THE ACADEMY @ SHAWNEE

## Multiple Dimensions of Change



“ I am very excited about my staff. Ultimately, that’s where the difference is made. If you put good people in the classrooms, the rest is easier.”

KEITH LOOK  
Shawnee High School Principal

It is difficult to explain comprehensive school turnaround work to those not familiar with what can sometimes be the very bleak and dire circumstances of a school in need of turn-

around. It is essential to note that school improvement and school turnaround work are not synonymous. School improvement is aimed at course corrections to improve student performance. School turnaround work means absolutely stopping what is happening in the building and completely changing course. It is drastic, immediate, and not without victims of some sort. It is a life-saving measure.

Practice linked to research is not always easy to find. Such has been the case with the turnaround work at The Academy @ Shawnee. Schools are complex, interrelated systems and we knew that there were multiple layers, or di-

mensions of change, that had to be initiated and nurtured. Through the Signature Partnership Initiative at the University of Louisville, a faculty member joined the Shawnee team from the College of Education and Human Development. Seeking best practices and a research framework for the turnaround work, the team came upon the elementary school case study work of Daniel Duke. Realizing there was merit in the multiple dimensions of change Duke described in his work *Keys to Sustaining Successful School Turnarounds*, the design team at Shawnee continued down the road of substantive, widespread change well before the school had been identi-

fied as one of the lowest performing schools in the state of Kentucky.

The work within the multiple dimensions of change continues through year two of our turnaround process with the added partnership of the Kentucky Department of Education.

The work at Shawnee to date is based on research and flavored with the real-world experience of life in a turnaround school.

The following pages document our journey to date. Having adopted the Duke framework of eight dimensions of change found in his case study of elementary schools, the team at The Academy @ Shawnee added a ninth dimension of change, student engagement, we felt essential in secondary school turnaround work.

We have provided a brief synopsis of our efforts through year one and year two of our turnaround efforts for each of the nine dimensions of change. Should you require additional information on any of this work, our contact information is located on page four.

### Shawnee -Dimensions of Change

Leadership

Parent/Community Involvement

Facilities

Programs

PERSONNEL

Student Engagement

ORGANIZATION

School Policies

Classroom Practice



# LEADERSHIP CHANGES

## MISSION AND FOCUS

Lack of direction was replaced with a laser-like focus on singular targets of literacy and numeracy

### YEAR ONE: WE BELIEVE

- CSIP-Comprehensive School Improvement Plan rewritten from 38 pages down to six pages
- Schools within a School
- Professional Development was designed to support interdisciplinary instructional teams to reinforce literacy and numeracy across the content areas—teachers of students and not teachers of “subjects”

### YEAR TWO: THE TRANSPARENCY OF TEACHING

- 30-60-90 Day Plan focused on literacy and numeracy as two critical areas

“THE BEST VISION IS INSIGHT.”

Malcolm Forbes

## PROFESSIONAL CULTURE

Belief that all children learn  
 High value placed on teamwork and collaboration  
 Commitment to data-driven decisions  
 Focus on shared responsibility for student achievement

### YEAR ONE

- Schools within a School  
Two Academy Structure-Prep Academy & Upper Academy
- Professional Development was designed to support interdisciplinary instructional teams to reinforce literacy and numeracy across the content areas to promote teachers of students and not teachers of “subjects”
- Assigned teachers based on talents
- Embedded developmentally appropriate practices within the two academies

### YEAR TWO

- 30-60-90 Day Plan focused on literacy and numeracy as two critical areas
- Professional Development to support proficiency for all students in literacy and numeracy
- Student-focused learning
- Student-centered decision-making based on relevant data

## DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP

Lead teachers and team leaders played key roles in planning, implementing, and coordinating turnaround efforts.

### YEAR ONE

- Selected team leaders to assist in organizing and solidifying the sense of team in the building
- Established a Principals’ Instructional Leadership Team with team leaders and department heads
- Student Support Services were reinvented and included as part of the leadership team

### YEAR TWO

- Continued Year One initiatives and added the following:
- Additional Prep for Team Leaders for support of team issues related to student needs
- Enhanced support for special education leadership within the building
- Built a new Turnaround Team to assist with monitoring programs, goals, progress

## SCHOOL POLICY CHANGES

We made changes to the daily schedule and semester/trimester schedule. We also made changes to the manner by which students are assigned to classes.

### SCHOOL SCHEDULE AND CLASS ASSIGNMENT CHANGES

#### YEAR ONE

- Prep Academy Structure  
Shared students, shared planning, semester schedule, six period day
- Upper Academy Structure  
Shared students, trimester schedule, five period day
- Steam-line dress code
- Revised attendance policies
- Teachers were assigned to one academy with the exception of the elective teachers
- Eliminated student aides in the building
- No split lunches
- Only ½ the school is in common areas at any given time due to different bell schedules

#### YEAR TWO

- Continuation of year one revisions
- Double-block of English for 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grades
- Year-long mathematics instruction in 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grades meaning all three trimesters
- Academic Workshops providing literacy and numeracy interventions both during and after school

“The only person who likes change is a baby with a wet diaper.”

Mark Twain

## PROGRAM CHANGES

The Shawnee experience includes program changes to better support struggling students; student recognition; athletics; supplemental programming; Family Resource Youth Service Center (FRYSC) assistance.

### PROGRAM CHANGES

#### YEAR ONE

- Credit Recovery
- All 9<sup>th</sup> graders participated in a rotation of district-level programs of studies  
Flight Simulator  
Travel and Tourism  
ROTC Leadership
- Built teacher capacity to deliver programs including appropriate instructional materials

#### YEAR TWO

- Credit Recovery Redesigned
- Revision of District-level Program of Studies and application of those programs with regard to the learning needs of our students
- In-house GED



## ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGES

### ANXIETY, RISK, AND PACE

#### YEAR ONE

- We introduced the concept of the bigger picture: School within the context of Life
- All staff to be evaluated annually
- Teacher Learning Binders for the Prep Academy
- Prep Academy Meetings focused on two things:
  - Student Needs
  - Building Capacity to meet those needs

#### YEAR TWO

- Walk-throughs
- Data Wall
- PD is streamlined to capitalize on quality over quantity
  - New skills introduced first semester and reinforced throughout the year

## PERSONNEL CHANGES

### INTERVENTION STAFFING, RECRUITED TALENT, RESOURCES

#### YEAR ONE

- Retired Principal Mentor to assist in development of Assistant Principals
- We organized the district resource personnel assigned to our building
  - We told them what their purpose was and how to spend their time in our building
- Built a roster of “players to be named later” throughout the school year
- Replaced more than 50% of the instructional staff through the SIG process (roughly 30 new staff to the building)

#### YEAR TWO

- Matched teaching talents with student needs
- Hired on talent and determined “fit” later
- Intervention Staffing
  - Realigned staffing to include master teacher mentors
- Created a New Position
  - Instructional Coordinator

## CLASSROOM PRACTICE CHANGES

### DELIVERY OF INSTRUCTION, INSTRUCTIONAL GROUPING, STUDENT ACCOMMODATIONS, SKILL RE-BUILDING

#### YEAR ONE

- Fidelity of select, district-supported classroom instructional practices
- 9/10 Academy Staff underwent multiple weekly walk-throughs
- Teacher Learning Binders for recording information and logging a continuous conversation
- Began to look at data to inform instruction

#### YEAR TWO

- Transparency of Teaching
  - Walkthroughs for every classroom
- Special Education Accommodations
  - Literacy Alignment between regular education and special education
- Personal, Instructional Coaching
- Co-teaching as a matter of building wide practice
- Team specific, subject-specific professional development

## PARENT/COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

### IMPROVED HOME-SCHOOL COMMUNICATION, PARENT INVOLVEMENT, COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

#### YEAR ONE

- Contact with all incoming 9<sup>th</sup> grade parents—back to school night
- Re-engagement With
  - UofL Signature Partnership Initiative
  - Shawnee Alumni Association
  - Shawnee Neighborhood Association
- Principal became a fixture at community gatherings
  - Promise Neighborhood Initiative Planning Team
  - City Council Activity
  - Developed relationships with School Board members beyond our own representative
- We have a total of 39 community partnerships at play in the building

#### YEAR TWO

- Attendance Committee
  - Daily phone calls for students not in school
  - Truancy Court Presence
- Student Incentive Program to include parents
- Increased parent contact through phone conferences
- Community members attending JCPS briefings
- Efforts to reintroduce the school through the media
- I3 Grant with Signature Partnership to provide graduation coaches for our most at-risk students

## SCHOOL FACILITIES CHANGES

*The physical space in which students learn and teachers teach cannot be ignored in the process of turning around low-performing schools.*

#### YEAR ONE

- Teachers and staff have painted classrooms, hallways, murals
- Entire rooms were overhauled
- A HUGE pile of broken and dilapidated furniture was pulled to the gym lobby for hauling away
- Upgraded technology
  - Flight Simulator Lab
- Revitalization of the School
  - Out with the old...in with the kids

#### YEAR TWO

- New classroom furniture continues to be purchased
- Technology Upgrades
  - Rebuilt 400 computers
  - Added document cameras
  - Clicker systems
- Inspirational banners with quotes and college banners now hang in the Academy hallways
- Athletic facilities upgrades
  - New scoreboards
  - New football field surface
- New signage and way finding





## **STUDENT ENGAGEMENT**

**CRITICAL TO SUCCESSFUL SECONDARY TURNAROUND WORK IS ENGAGEMENT OF THE STUDENT BODY IN THE WORK**

### **YEAR ONE**

- Infuse School Spirit  
“We Believe” became the mantra  
Class Meetings  
Revamped Graduation
- Student Principal Advisory Group
- Funding student opportunities beyond the campus  
Senior Retreat  
Field Trips
- Student Recognition  
Honor roll  
Student of the Month
- Email Daily Announcements to staff

### **YEAR TWO**

- Getting More Personal
- Student-focused learning and Student-centered decision-making based on relevant data
- ECE students know their coach/teacher for accommodations
- Academic coaches for after-school tutoring
- “I Got In” Campaign for Seniors
- Monthly Senior Breakfasts
- Attendance Buddies & Behavior Buddies
- Revamping Student Awards

# The Academy @Shawnee

An Aerospace & Energy Technology School

## **Contact Us**

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