

Capitol View Elementary – Des Moines Public Schools

Collaboration Leads to Leaps in Literacy

When just 23 percent of the kindergartners at Capitol View Elementary in Des Moines were hitting their literacy benchmarks, educators at the diverse 600-student school knew they needed help. Enter Heartland AEA.

Through a year-long effort focused around literacy, professional development and instructional coaching for teachers, Heartland AEA and Capitol View staff collaborated to move 89 percent of the kindergartners to proficiency by the end of the 2014-15 school year.

Heartland AEA was able to provide knowledge and resources around a number of practices that helped improve literacy for not only the kindergartners but the entire student body. Some of those included providing:

- Planning and facilitation of a three-day literacy “boot camp” for all K-5 building teachers
- Deep knowledge of Chapter 62 Early Literacy Implementation legislation requirements
- Assistance in accessing the FAST assessment and the school’s subsequent data in the TIER system
- Assistance during literacy data days in which teachers reviewed student assessment data to make decisions about instruction
- Support for intervention efforts with evidence-based materials
- Support to district instructional coaches in coaching best practices including how to be an effective teacher leader

“Because of our teachers’ work with Heartland AEA, interventions became targeted, teachers felt more direction in their work, they understood student needs better and they felt they had an additional person to support their work,” Liz Griesel, elementary literacy curriculum coordinator at Des Moines Public Schools, says. “Heartland AEA was able to bring agency resources to Capitol View and invited DMPS district supports to attend PLC (professional learning community) discussions so that we would also have those supports to share with other buildings in our district.”

The success that unfolded at Capitol View last year has paved the way for more good things to come at the school and the district as a whole. Work continues this year to improve literacy for all kids at Capitol View and beyond.