

Instructional Improvement Through Leadership and Cultural Change

SCHOOL PROFILE

Metro Status: Rural

Grades: PreK–5

Total Enrollment: 355

**Eligible for Free or
Reduced-Price Lunch:**
87%

“Labadieville Primary School partnered with ICLE to create a coherent vision for instruction, institute structures to better support instruction, and enhance positive relationships in the school.”

GOALS

- Identify the school’s unique needs and create a sustainable plan to improve the student achievement, engagement, and motivation.
- Create a shared vision about what constitutes rigorous instruction at a school with a historically top-down decision-making structure.
- Strengthen relationships among students, parents, faculty, and staff.

CHALLENGES

Labadieville Primary School set out to improve student achievement during the 2007–2008 school year after nearly 40% of third graders scored below average on the English Language Arts state tests.

The school culture required a shift from a principal-driven model to a shared and unified leadership structure.

Determined to improve instruction and performance, Labadieville Primary School turned to ICLE for support and guidance.

SOLUTION

■ Creating a Coherent Vision for Instruction

With the guidance of an ICLE Executive Coach, the principal recognized the need to build leadership capacity among the teachers, and began developing a cadre of teachers to provide stronger instructional leadership. Once-a-month faculty meetings were instituted to focus on reading and writing strategies and the sharing of best practices and student work. Labadieville Primary School leadership also extended the new instructional vision to students and the community through school activities that demonstrated the importance of education.

■ Building Structures to Support Instruction

The Labadieville Primary School leadership team determined that teachers needed increased collaborative planning time to discuss curriculum, instructional practices, and student achievement. For the 2009–2010 year, the principal reorganized teachers' schedules to include two common grade-level planning periods each week. During these planning periods, teachers worked on reading strategies in their core workshops, and the content areas with a reading coach. Meetings also emphasized the interpretation of academic assessment data to help identify students' needs. The planning periods provided teams of teachers with the time to develop and discuss innovative instruction that would be relevant for the students in their classes.

■ Building Positive Relationships

As a result of the ICLE needs assessment, Labadieville Primary School strengthened relationships among teachers and students across grade levels through the development of activities that highlighted the importance of a "school family." Each grade "adopted" another grade-level class, and participated in collaborative activities. Teachers and staff developed and implemented a mentoring program for at-risk students. Labadieville Primary School also provided professional development for educators and implemented a school-wide positive behavior management system for teachers, staff, parents, and students. To reach out to parents, the Labadieville Primary School leadership team developed new activities and strategies to increase parental participation.

The leadership team clarified weekly student expectations for parents by refining the format and content of their weekly newsletter to focus on instruction, activities, and tips to support students.

"Labadieville Primary School leadership needed to focus on creating a more positive environment for learning, based on rigorous and relevant instruction, in order to begin improving achievement."

"Labadieville Primary School recognized that it needed to raise test scores by focusing on improving leadership around instruction and school culture."

SUCCESS

Since Labadieville Primary School partnered with ICLE student achievement has significantly improved. In 2009, only 62% of students scored above average on the third-grade iLEAP, just under the state passing rate of 66%. By spring 2010, 75% of third graders scored at the basic level or above, compared to 67% for the state. This was a 14 percentage point increase for Labadieville Primary School students from 2009, compared to a 1 percentage point increase for the state. Out-of-school suspensions, which were at 7.6% (higher than the state rate of 7%) declined to a rate of 4.3% following the partnership with ICLE.

