

Carol L. Lane, Superintendent

Jerry Hicks, Chairman | Robin McInvale, Vice-Chair | Joseph Alexander | Leon Coverson | Robert Hawk



May 24, 2010

Implementing the Learning Focused Schools Project K-12 in Meriwether County is an on-going process, a work in progress, but as we entered our fourth year in 2004-05 we began realizing the tremendous benefits of *teaching with a focus on increasing student learning*. Our students live in rural, low socio-economic communities, our schools have high populations of minority and special education students, and our students come to us with great challenges in language and vocabulary development. Since we began designing our curriculum and teaching within the standards-based framework of learning focused instructional strategies, we have seen our students make tremendous gains in learning as evidenced by their performance on state-mandated assessments. We share a common language for learning, and we are becoming more and more professional, reflective practitioners of both the art and the science of teaching. Our goal has changed, from aiming to teach what is required, to ensuring that **all** students learn to the greatest possible degree and at the highest possible level. Learning, not teaching, is the issue, and LFS has helped us effectively change our focus. Now, in our ninth year of implementation, Meriwether County Schools can point to the following benefits of its system wide focus on learning focused instructional strategies.

- ☞ An increase in student achievement, especially in reading, language arts, and mathematics
- ☞ An increase in student engagement and a corresponding decrease in discipline referrals in our schools
- ☞ An increase in higher level thinking questions and tasks in our classrooms, providing increasing rigor and higher expectations for our students
- ☞ An increase in the use of scientific research-based instructional strategies in all classrooms
- ☞ An increase in the consistent and pervasive use of balanced assessment to inform scaffolding and differentiation

The on-going coaching and training, which supported and followed-up the initial instructional strategies training, has included more narrowly focused workshops targeting specific areas of the learning process, repeated instructional strategies training when needed, daily support by instructional lead teachers and instructionally-focused assistant principals, and county-level support by a learning-focused trainer/coordinator. Much of this follow-up work has taken the form of collaborative planning for instruction by teaching teams and coaching of individual teachers and teaching teams by the instructional lead teachers and the county-level support persons. At various times during the last nine years, Learning Focused associates have provided our system with expert, professional, and effective guidance and support.

*Martha Ann Todd*

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*Meriwether County School District is committed to do whatever it takes for all students to aim high, achieve GRADUATE, and succeed.*