



Executive Summary

Kilby Laboratory School

Lauderdale County Board of Education

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Introduction

Every school has its own story to tell. The context in which teaching and learning takes place influences the processes and procedures by which the school makes decisions around curriculum, instruction, and assessment. The context also impacts the way a school stays faithful to its vision. Many factors contribute to the overall narrative such as an identification of stakeholders, a description of stakeholder engagement, the trends and issues affecting the school, and the kinds of programs and services that a school implements to support student learning.

The purpose of the Executive Summary (ES) is to provide a school with an opportunity to describe in narrative form the strengths and challenges it encounters. By doing so, the public and members of the school community will have a more complete picture of how the school perceives itself and the process of self-reflection for continuous improvement. This summary is structured for the school to reflect on how it provides teaching and learning on a day to day basis.

Description of the School

Describe the school's size, community/communities, location, and changes it has experienced in the last three years. Include demographic information about the students, staff, and community at large. What unique features and challenges are associated with the community/communities the school serves?

Kilby Laboratory School is unique in the state of Alabama as it is the only elementary school affiliated with the higher education system. It is located close to the downtown area in Florence, Alabama on the campus of the University of North Alabama. The population of Florence is approximately 45,000 and is considered part of the four cities of the Shoals area with an inclusive population of nearly 150,000. Our school offers one class for each grade Pre-K through 6th, with a current enrollment of 147 students. Admission to Kilby Laboratory School is through an application process. There is no bus transportation, so parents must deliver and pick up children on a daily basis. Approximately sixty percent of the student population has parents employed by University of North Alabama (UNA). There is no attendance zone; therefore students come from throughout Lauderdale and Colbert Counties. The student population represents a cultural diversity of Chinese, Korean, Japanese, Hispanic, and African American while the majority is Caucasian.

Kilby Laboratory School is governed by the policies of the University of North Alabama and yet receives state allocation of money through the Lauderdale County Board of Education. The Director of Kilby Laboratory School is a Cost Center Head and Department Chair at the University and attends meetings of Lauderdale County principals. The faculty is required to have a Masters Degree and Class A certificate. Historically there has been little turn-over in these positions. The entire faculty is highly qualified with three of the seven classrooms having National Board Certified teachers. Faculty hold titles of Instructors or Assistant Professors as part of the university system. Kilby Laboratory School faculty have been presenters at regional, state, and national conferences. The faculty is also utilized by the university to teach UNA classes or courses when needed.

Please see the chart of our school demographics on the file at our school or on our website.

School's Purpose

Provide the school's purpose statement and ancillary content such as mission, vision, values, and/or beliefs. Describe how the school embodies its purpose through its program offerings and expectations for students.

The faculty and staff at Kilby Laboratory School share a strong desire to provide our students with a safe, stimulating, and cooperative learning environment which promotes cognitive development with an emphasis on thinking, reasoning, and problem solving. Based on the mission and goals of Lauderdale County School District and UNA, it is the goal of Kilby Laboratory School to train and develop our students for the technological savvy world in which we live so that they may become successful, productive members of our community and life-long thinkers.

The faculty and staff at Kilby believe that there is strength in diversity and we respect and embrace the individuality of each adult and student at our school. We aim to encourage and support each unique individual in order to foster their intellectual, emotional, social, and physical developmental needs.

Also, as part of the University of North Alabama, we also maintain the highest level of application of research-based educational practices. Not only do our own students benefit from these best teaching practices, but it allows the UNA faculty and students to observe, participate, and apply these practices in a real-life setting.

Each year, as a faculty, we review our state mandated testing (ARMT+, DIBELS) results. We look for our areas of strengths and weaknesses. We collaborate with each other, the Advisory Committee and at times with our university partners to develop our goals for the school year, based on these areas of weaknesses. We discuss what strategies, professional development, and materials would best help us attain these goals.

We continually strive to assist our students in developing the strategies and skills they need to tackle, answer, and discuss questions at the higher-order of Bloom's Taxonomy. We have taught and employed the Q-A-R (Question-Answer Relationship) strategies across all grade levels, K-6. We have also developed and adopted a plan of GRR (Gradual Release of Responsibility) that we use with our Scott Foresman reading series Benchmark Testing. This allows teachers to model through a think-aloud method the way good readers think and strategies they use in answering these higher-order questions. It also gives the students many opportunities to be actively engaged in the learning and discussions.

After we release the students to take the Benchmark tests on their own, teachers conduct an item analysis on the test results to see which and what types of questions the students are missing. We analyze the item analysis results at our Data Meetings with the teachers, Reading Coach, and Director. We discuss which methods and/or strategies need to be used in order to provide corrective feedback to students who may still be struggling, as well as what adjustments need to be made in our daily instruction.

You will find a chart of the test scores for students at Kilby Laboratory from the 2002/2003 school year to the 2011/2012 school year on file at our school, on our website, and the Alabama Department of Education website.

Notable Achievements and Areas of Improvement

Describe the school's notable achievements and areas of improvement in the last three years. Additionally, describe areas for improvement that the school is striving to achieve in the next three years.

At Kilby Laboratory School we use state-mandated tests as prescribed by the State Department of Education: ARMT and SAT (in past years) and now ARMT+ in grades three through six. In grades Kindergarten through three, we use DIBELS for benchmarking and progress monitoring. We also use the benchmark tests and progress monitoring tools that are provided with our adopted reading and math series. In addition, three times each year, we use the AR STAR test to predict reading levels, and a Diagnostic Spelling Assessment that reveals students' spelling and phonics skill-levels. We also use teacher-made assessments, student journals, observations, and anecdotal records.

Our teachers also conduct an item analysis after each Scott Foresman Reading Benchmark test. These item analyzes assist us in identifying the types of questions the students are missing, and the ones in which they have the most success, as well. We analyze the item analysis results at our Data Meetings, and discuss which methods and/or strategies need to be used in order to provide corrective feedback to students who may still be struggling, as well as instructional adjustments that need to be made in our daily small group and whole group instruction.

Bi-weekly grade level meetings are held to compare data and discuss instructional strategies used in our classrooms. We are a data-driven school and have regularly scheduled data meetings with the Director, classroom teachers, and reading coach to review all current data and discuss the progress of our students. If needed, we may also invite the counselor and/or special education teacher to these data meetings. We carefully track the students and monitor them to see if they are making adequate progress. We adjust instruction and set goals for those students who need more challenging work and for those in need of remediation, as well. We also include the students in the goal-setting and the charting and graphing of their own progress. There is chart of assessment used and purpose of use in the portfolio section.

Kilby Laboratory School believes that every student can be successful. Our staff strives to help students reach their highest levels of performance by meeting individual needs including academic, social and emotional. In order to obtain our goals, we work in a collaborative fashion and value the partnerships with students, parents, community, and staff which has generated a strong academic focus. We are dedicated to fostering life-long learners and productive citizens.

Additionally, students are offered a variety of extracurricular afterschool activities such as band, chorus, guitar lessons, and scouts. Parents are given the opportunity to have their child attend the Kilby Afterschool program which provides a structured atmosphere for homework, snack, and physical activity.

Programs in our laboratory school are enhanced by our connection to and collaboration with the various departments of the university. The education of students is enriched by scheduled activities with the education department that include: field-based classes, internships, honors program tutors, and involvement by student volunteer organizations.

A Parent Advisory Board comprised of parents, university faculty, Kilby faculty, and community representatives assists in the decision making about our programs and services. An active PTO is vital to the success of our school. For example, in prior years, the PTO paid the salaries for music and art instruction.

The Kilby Fund established through the UNA Foundation helps to secure the future of our school. We rely on the support of our alumni and friends to help Kilby continue to provide the high quality programs and the unique learning opportunities that enhance our children's education. The campaign for the Kilby Fund was initiated during UNA's 2011 Homecoming weekend.

After reviewing our student data, the goals established by the Advisory Committee and the survey responses the future challenges for Kilby Laboratory School include:

1. Training teachers to engage 21st century students in a challenging curriculum based on College and Career Ready Standards,
2. Preparing students for the 21st century using a challenging curriculum based on College and Career Ready Standards,
3. Increasing our involvement with all the colleges of the university and expanding our role as a Laboratory School.

4. Implementing action research to inform instruction and improve student achievement/well-being.

Additional Information

Provide any additional information you would like to share with the public and community that were not prompted in the previous sections.

Proration of money from the State of Alabama has caused severe reduction in financial supplements from both the state and the university. In the past, the university has significantly subsidized our budget. Being in a unique position, Kilby Laboratory School does not receive any portion of the city or county tax appropriation. In order to reduce costs this past year, the media specialist served half-time as the sixth grade math, history, and science teacher while maintaining half-time duties as the media specialist. Cafeteria staff also functioned with a reduction from three employees to two part-time employees.

This past year the University of North Alabama reviewed the value of supporting a laboratory school on its campus. University employees and Parent Teacher Organization members worked diligently to redefine and publicize the school's importance to the university. Activities such as a Homecoming Reunion raised \$10,500 and served to make the community and university more aware of the value this school represents. The PTO was instrumental in creating the Kilby Fund in the University Foundation to seek donations to Kilby Laboratory School. Alumni have been encouraged to register through the UNA Foundation. A committee was also created to gather research on the process, procedures, and funding at Eastern Kentucky's Model Laboratory School to gain information about the operation of another laboratory school.

Kilby Laboratory School was established by the university in 1862 as an integral component of the Education Department. Our school has a long history of accomplishments in which we take great pride. First and foremost would be the high levels of students' performance. Nationally normed test scores have consistently placed our students at or above the 85th percentile in academic achievement. Our students are frequently placed in advanced classes as they progress into the middle school years.

Another area of pride is our strong support of parent involvement. Nearly 100 % attend our annual parent/teacher conferences. We communicate frequently through email and handouts sent home with students. Our families are also part of the LION ALERT system at UNA to receive phone, text, and email alerts concerning inclement weather and safety issues on UNA's campus. Kilby parents have volunteered time and talents to organize family oriented activities such as the second annual 5K Run to raise money for construction of an outdoor track at our school.

Another unique component of the Kilby Laboratory School is the Kilby Child Development Center. It is also located on the campus of the University of North Alabama and is accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), the nation's largest organization of early childhood educators. Kilby Child Development Center offers two classes for young children, ages 3-4: An exemplary Pre-K program sponsored by the Alabama Office of School Readiness and a multi-age, part-time class. Kilby CDC is in a unique position to provide mentoring and observation opportunities for UNA child development majors and P-3 interns and provides faculty and students with opportunities for study and research related to preschool children.

Each year Kilby CDC offers at least 15 hours of planned family enrichment workshops. Topics include preschool curriculum, early literacy, active parenting, kindergarten readiness, child health and nutrition, and community support services. Parents are encouraged to attend family enrichment workshops and to volunteer in the classroom. During the 2011-2012 academic years, all Pre-K families participated in at least 6 hours of family enrichment with over 350 volunteer hours. Kilby CDC also has an active PTO which supports the school environment with fund raising and social activities.