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Internship Course

Dr. Reed

Demographics Study- Berry Elementary

1: Historical Background of Community and the School

Campus History

“James Berry was born near Mays Lick, Mason County, Kentucky July 15, 1809. He was the last of ten children. He immigrated to Texas to join the Texas Army, on March 12, 1836. On December 8, 1836, General Sam Houston, Commissioned him a first lieutenant of company I, first regiment of infantry where he served until 1838.

He was one of the first settlers of Harris County. He served as Justice of the Peace (1840-1853), Treasurer of Harris County (1854-1857), Civilian Director for the County during the Civil War (1861-1865) and as one of the County School Commissioners.

His first wife Martha Staples died in 1843 after bearing him two children, Joseph and Miles Frank, both of whom were to serve in the Confederate Army. He purchased a farm on Greens Bayou in 1846 from Clark and Elizabeth Beach. On December 2, 1876 on his return trip from Houston to the James Berry Farm his wagon hit a tree stump. He was thrown from the wagon and died of his injuries. He was buried by Holland lodge No. 1 in the family cemetery nearby, with a small marker inscribed ‘Death is certain, the hour unseen.’ In 1909 his children James and Frank Lee gave property on Berry Road as the site for the New Berry School built as a memorial to their father.

The New Berry School opened in 1910 which was the first building. The campus moved into the second building, its present location 2310 Berry Road, in 1950. In 2011-2012, Berry Elementary opened a new LEED Certified building, making it the third building named after James Berry. (Online source <http://www.houstonisd.org/Page/75459>).

2: Campus Governance

Organizational Chart

The campus organization chart was designed this school year to help the staff understand the new staffing and the roles the new administration would play on campus. The administration team consists of the Principal, Instructional Specialist, Teacher Specialist for PK-2nd grade, Teacher Specialist for 3rd-5th grade, and the Magnet coordinator. The Instructional Specialist, Teacher Specialists and Magnet Coordinator all have specific job duties and personnel they oversee. The principal is a firm believer that the administration team has the same vision and goals in mind. The team meets weekly to give updates in their areas.

Site Based Committee Selection

The school principal determines the size of the committee. Membership must include parents, community representatives, and no more than one business representative. Professional staff members must include at least two-thirds classroom teachers and one-third other campus-level professional staff. The number of classroom teachers should be at least twice the number of school-based professionals (2:1). This ratio does not apply to non-instructional staff members, parents, or business and community members. No more than one non-instructional staff member should be elected to the SDMC. Other SDMC members must include at least two parents of students currently enrolled within the district selected by the campus's parent organization; two community members; and one business representative. The principal has the authority to appoint

additional parents, community representatives, and business representatives to the SDMC. The school-based professional staff representatives are elected according to rules established by the HISD Board of Education. The principal serves as chairperson of the committee and as a member; a co-chairperson is elected from the school professional staff. At the beginning of a school year, an election is held by secret ballot to determine the school-based members of the SDMC. Each member serves a two-year staggered term.

3: Enrollment/Growth/ Achievement

District Demographics

Houston Independent School District is the largest school district in Texas located in Harris County. HISD school district bond rating is also the highest in Texas with the lowest property tax rate in Harris County. There are approximately 282 schools in the district. There are about 211,552 students enrolled in the district with 78.8% graduating from high school. Houston ISD has increased the number of students scoring 3 or higher on AP exams by 53% from 2009. In addition, high school graduates have been offered about \$186 million this school year in scholarships. HISD has also won the prestigious Broad Prize for Urban Education twice, the only school district in the US to accomplish this goal.

School Enrollment

The school is in a low socio economic area with 96% economically disadvantaged students. Currently there are 82% of the students that are considered at risk and 63% are considered LEP Students. It is considered to be an Environmental Science Magnet campus with the current enrollment of 749 students 70 of which are considered magnet students. The school is broken up 50/50 gender wise. Racially and ethnically, the breakdown is as follows: African American 4%; Asian/Pac. Islander 1%; Hispanic 94%; White 2%.

Student Performance on State Exams

Berry Elementary exhibits some strong and weak areas in the state exams. The school strength could be said to be meeting or exceeding reading standards. A weakness is in meeting or exceeding the math standards. When reviewing the data from district level assessments, there was a weakness in science at the beginning of the school year. After making changes to the science instruction, the science scores have increased dramatically. The administration is working on a plan for the following school year to increase not only math scores, but maintain the other content area scores as well.

4: Political and Geographical Characteristics of the School Attendance Area

Families

96% of the families at James Berry elementary are economically disadvantaged. In previous year as administrators talked with parents and families, parent involvement was not very high. This year alone the school has increased parent involvement from just parent meetings to include parent trainings, family nights and programs and events along with the monthly coffee with the principal meeting held for parent to come and hear updates and express concerns. We currently do not have an active PTO or PTA due to some money mismanagement concerns the previous year.

5: Professional Staff

The campus professional staff has changed from last year because of administration changes. This school year the whole administration staff is new to Berry Elementary, with the addition of two teacher specialist positions. The staff is 78% female and 23% male. The ethnic

demographics are as follows: 8% African American; 3% American Indian; 13% Asian/ Pacific Islander; 60% Hispanic; 15% White; and 3% with two or more ethnicities. The average years of experience is 50% with 5 or less years, 30% with 6 to 10 years, and 20% with 11 or more years of experience.

6 & 7: Other Elements & End of Demographic Study

Potential areas for improvement

One could say that an area in need of improvement is the content and grade level placements for some teachers. A highly effective teacher in every classroom is a non-negotiable. The district has a non negotiable guideline that the campus must follow which is that every grade 1st-5th must be departmentalized. Administrators did not feel that departmentalization was developmentally appropriate for PK-Kindergarten students. They are self contained.

Another area for improvement is the school discipline practices. The staff was not consistently following through with discipline referrals. Administration implemented Conscious Discipline techniques for minor incidents. A discipline referral sheet was developed for more sever incidents. Teachers need to consistently follow through with filling out the forms so that administrators know how to handle the situation. Next year, teachers should have a training over Conscious Discipline and the behavior management language it uses to effectively be used school wide.

An academic area for improvement would be the literacy and math scores on state exams. Previous school year scores were low in both content areas in addition to a low science score. This year's focus was to improve the science scores because the campus is an Environmental

Science Magnet school. Next year's goals should be to improve the math and literacy scores so that every student is on target to their grade level.

In addition to the mentioned above areas for improvement, the Special Education Department on campus needs a makeover. After a school audit on the Special Education Department on campus, it was noted that students IEP's were not effective, nor being implemented accordingly. A new system and guidelines needs to be put in place for the following school year so that all students' needs are being met.