

# Enos Elementary School

## Springfield Public School District 186

### School context

Springfield Public School District 186 is the ninth largest school district in the State of Illinois. Springfield is located 200 miles south of Chicago and 90 miles north of St. Louis. The district is home to over 14,000 students in 36 schools; Enos Elementary is home to 253 students. Compared to the state, the district serves a large percentage of low-income students and African-American students. The percentage of Hispanic students is low compared to the state at both the district and school level; as a result there are few English Language Learners. In the fall of the year 2000, the district changed its school boundaries, reconfiguring elementary and middle schools. Enos transformed from being a grade 5 and 6 center to being a Kindergarten through fifth grade school. At the time of the reconfiguration, 30 percent of the faculty and all the students were new to Enos Elementary School. The school's mobility rate soared from 20.2 percent to 86.3 percent in the school's first year of existence. The low-income rate that year increased from 75.2 percent to 91.5 percent. The poverty rate (77.5%) and student mobility rate (33.6 %) remain high at Enos Elementary and staff turnover continues to challenge the school. At the beginning of the 2002-03 school year, 50 percent of the faculty were new to the school.

### Curriculum and Academic Goals

**The district central office translated the state standards into district standards and benchmarks which are more teacher friendly.** The state standards are broken down into grade level standards and defined into benchmarks and a body of knowledge for teachers. The body of knowledge illustrates the progressive development of what students need to learn across a series of grades. Teachers are very aware of the state standards. The standards are posted in every classroom and teachers were quick to identify specific state standards that were linked to their goals. Teacher-developed documents indicate which elements of the language arts curriculum focus on narrative or expository text structure to be aligned with the state standards.

**Curriculum development is a cyclical process for the district that is institutionalized within the system.** The department of instruction at the district level includes a standards coordinator to keep curriculum and standards uniform current; district curriculum coordinators work with teachers year round. For new textbook adoption, the district central office puts a representational group of teachers and parents together. A couple of schools in the district will pilot the series that seems to most closely meet the district's needs. District and school administrators emphasize that the curriculum does not consist of textbooks. They see the curriculum as consisting of the standards, benchmarks and the body of knowledge with the text materials attached to it.

### Student Demographics\*:

	<i>Enos EI</i>	<i>Springfield PSD</i>	<i>Illinois</i>
% Low Income	77.5	46.4	37.9
% Limited English-Proficient	0.0	0.3	6.3
% Mobility	33.6	27.4	16.4
Student Ethnic/Racial Distribution			
% White	60.9	60.6	58.6
% African-American	36.8	36.2	20.7
% Hispanic	1.6	1.4	17.0
% Asian/Pacific Islander	0.4	1.7	3.6
% Native American	0.4	0.2	0.2

## Staff Selection, Leadership and Capacity Building

### **Springfield district 186 tries to develop internal candidates for the principalship. District administrators actively recruit minority teachers.**

The district wants to deepen the pool from which they can draw and is looking at ways to tap into potential leaders within the district and get people to think about themselves in terms of being a principal. The principal at Enos Elementary will retire within two years. She pushes strong teachers to go for leadership and asks them to spearhead a focus. She does not chair any of the committees anymore, but encourages the teachers to lead instead. Principal selection is handled at the school level first. A site leadership team of teachers, parents and community representatives interview the candidates first. A district member sits in on these interviews. Two candidates are forwarded to the district. The superintendent for curriculum explains that they try to take the candidates to a deeper level in this interview because "we are at a time where instructional leadership is crucial." To recruit minority teachers, district and school administrators go on recruiting trips to universities that are known to have high minority populations. The district also works with the NAACP and minority ministers in town. Candidates are interviewed and ranked by a group of principals and then the top candidates are interviewed by a team consisting of the principal and teacher representatives at the individual school. The principal of Enos Elementary says that she is not necessarily looking for the very best teacher she can find, but for a teacher that can fill up a weakness the school has in a particular area.

**The district has a strong mentoring program for both principals and teachers.** Training programs are in place where teachers getting their administrative certification can work with a principal for a year. New principals have retired principals from the district as their mentors for two years. The district organizes a 'new principals coffee' for new principals, their mentors and central office personnel once a month. For new teachers, Springfield School District 186 offers a two-year voluntary mentoring program in conjunction with National Louis University and the Springfield Education Association. The Teacher Mentor (Induction) program used is the Educational Testing Service Pathwise Model based on extensive research on teacher induction. Mentors and District Trainers receive extensive training from ETS/Pathwise certified trainers. Mentors attend four Mentor meetings and six Mentor Training Sessions. Protégés (new teachers) attend

seven monthly meetings. They actively interact with their mentors, are self-reflective and set goals. The district also provides a new teacher orientation day prior to the start of the school year.

**Principals participate in professional development at the district and school level. Peer groups and walk-throughs provide opportunities for support and collaboration.** The district asks that the principals participate in the professional development that teachers receive. Principals need to know the materials that their teachers are being exposed to at their training. They need in depth knowledge on how to support the teachers in the implementations. All principals are part of a professional development process each Wednesday afternoon; topics this year included special education, technology and the implementation of a variety of programs across the district. Principals also go to targeted conferences out of the district so they are not isolated or parochial. Peer groups are the contact point for practical discussions. Principals share ideas on how to handle problems, improve student achievement and motivation. They also conduct book studies to help change practices; this year's focus was on "closing the achievement gap." A principal's meeting at the district office takes place one a month. For one week during the school year, there are "principal walk-throughs" where principals open up their schools for other principals and get feedback.

**The district is moving towards providing on-going professional development that is tied to the school improvement plan.** Professional development time is released to the school (half a day each month) and tailored to the teachers' needs at each campus. The training is all-inclusive: the entire faculty from a building comes together to work within a common focus. The department of instruction identifies strategies that connect across all of the curricular areas. Enos' professional development focus was on Reading First this year. Every other Tuesday, the reading coach gets together with grade level teachers to talk about rubrics, students and progress. Teachers discuss what they do differently. Teachers received training in the Reading First modules prepared by the Illinois State Board of Education. A one and a half hour workshop about balanced literacy is organized every other month and there are monthly faculty meetings. For half a day every other week teachers participate in grade level walk-throughs. They provide good opportunities for teachers to see best practice; teachers are given time to observe in other classrooms with instructional

coaches accompanying them. The walk-throughs are followed up with a school wide meeting during which teachers compare notes and discuss what each grade level has seen and how they could incorporate some of those things into their own classrooms. The school pays teachers for attending book studies before and after school and during lunch. Every teacher has attended Ruby Payne poverty workshop. Some teachers have also received PBIS (positive behavior intervention and supports) training. All teachers in District 186 received Standards Training specific to their grade and content areas through the District's Department of Instruction.

**The district provides extensive instructional support for teachers focusing on student work.**

District instructional coaches go into schools to work with teachers, as well as staff from the district department of instruction and school improvement coaches. At Enos Elementary there are curriculum leaders for mathematics, science and language arts and there is a technology facilitator as well. A lot of the work that the district does revolves around looking at student work: looking at the assignment, using the rubrics to identify how work may be improved upon, what does rigor look like in student's work. The district provides "anchor" papers, so teachers can see an exemplary piece of student work and know what a grade "4" looks like in the extended response assessment. Coaches go into the buildings and model lessons for the teacher followed by a debriefing session. Then the teacher tries the lesson followed by more debriefing. Teachers have the opportunity to share tapes of their lessons. The district website contains video clips of quality lessons in the reading/writing workshop for teachers to view, lesson plans, additional resources that can be used, etc. Most of the assessment pieces that teachers need and use are on the website as well.

**Teachers have ample opportunities to collaborate.**

Enos teachers collaborate through the site leadership team, reading first grant, faculty meetings, monthly in-service, Positive Behavior Intervention and Support team, balanced literacy team and the literacy design team. The principal estimates that teachers spend about 6-8 hours in formal collaboration and adds that there is also lots of informal collaboration within the school. Collaboration is not mandated, but according to the principal it is very clear to the teachers that this is the environment and expectation within the school. She says "we are a community of learners." On days when two specials are present (e.g. music and physical education teacher), the principals tries to schedule the two teachers at grade level to have free time together. The reading coach indicates that she meets with her teachers on a regular basis and has on-going conversations with them about the various activities that are going on in the building. She also feels strong support from the district in the area of professional development.

**Instructional Programs, Practices and Arrangements**

**The series for core subject areas are dictated by the central office to ensure alignment with state and national standards.** The district used to have a massive adoption system involving a high number of teachers and piloting programs for a year. Now the process is more streamlined. The district just adopted a new elementary reading series. The superintendent of curriculum: "We looked at the needs directed around Reading First, which requires the adoption of new materials. We looked at the five elements: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension. We looked at data. We developed a criteria sheet of our needs; we needed to enhance higher level thinking. The department of instruction

**Teacher Demographics\*:**

	<i>Enos EI</i>	<i>Springfield PSD</i>	<i>Illinois</i>
Average Teaching Experience	--	14.3	13.9
% of Teachers with Bachelors Degrees	--	55.7	53.9
% of Teachers with Master's Degrees	--	44.3	46.0
% of Teachers with Emergency or Provisional Credentials	0.0	0.3	2.5
% of Classes Not Taught by Highly Qualified Teachers	0.0	0.1	2.1

chose three programs to share with a larger group; we had representatives from each elementary school. We also had some materials from each of the three programs available at each school for the teachers to look at. We had the representatives from our schools listen to the presentations from the companies. Then we compiled data and consulted with the reading coaches. The curriculum council and principals shared the choice with the teachers. It was quick process, but the decision is a good one.” Teachers say they are free to supplement the district series with extra materials based on individual student needs. Especially the content level materials provided by participating in the Reading First grant provided a lot of money for the schools to buy additional materials that support instruction in the classroom. Word Wizard is a teacher-developed program that is tied to vocabulary. Teachers introduce vocabulary words on Monday, do a different activity with those words on each day of the week and assess their students on Friday. Students get stickers for telling the teacher how they used their word and go to other classes to share their new words.

**The district has schools for gifted students. Enos Elementary includes several self-contained special education classrooms. Flexible grouping is used in regular classrooms.** The large picture at the district level shows grouping of students. The district includes an elementary magnet school and a middle school for gifted students. Enos Elementary has one cross categorical class and two self-contained behavioral disorder and mentally impaired classrooms. Students in the self contained classrooms are grouped by category. Individualized and small group instruction is the primary strategy for teaching in regular classrooms.

The Kindergarten teacher explains: “Guided reading time allows me to sit one on one. The reading teacher comes in to help with that. Working one on one is very important because the students do not get this at home. It makes the students feel special, too, that one-on-one time. The writing workshop is a good time to assess students individually. Center groups are ability based – students that need a lot of attention are the ones that need more focused lessons. We look at gaps and try to spend more one on one time. I also put students with higher achieving students so there is some peer pressure and see they can do it too. We try to meet the needs of all the students by doing different types of grouping; all student needs are met no matter if they’re at 1<sup>st</sup> grade level or 5<sup>th</sup> grade level because we do small group instruction that is really tailored to whatever they’re working on.”

**The district established a guide for principals to help teachers allocate instructional time. Minimum times are based on the use of district adopted programs which should receive priority.** Teachers in District 186 use the Three Block Literacy Framework which includes an one hour Reading Workshop block, an one hour Writing Workshop block (45-60 minutes at primary grades) and a 30 minute Word Knowledge block. Teachers teach daily mathematics lessons of 60 minutes and 15 minutes of daily routines outside the formal mathematics time. The mathematics lessons need to include 10 minutes of Number Sense Focus (Math Chat) and 50 minutes of investigation. The principal at Enos Elementary makes the school schedule: “I know that primary age kids are ready to learn in the morning and not so much in the afternoon, so they get language arts instruction in the morning and receive specials in the afternoon.”

#### Instructional Information\*:

	<i>Enos EI</i>	<i>Springfield PSD</i>	<i>Illinois</i>
Pupil/Teacher Ratio	—	17.6	18.4
Average class size			
- Grade K	17.5	21.8	20.6
- Grade 1	10.3	17.3	21.3
- Grade 3	11.5	21.5	22.5
<b>Time devoted to teaching core subjects (minutes/day in grade 3):</b>			
- Mathematics	60	60	56
- Science	50	44	30
- English/ Language Arts	90	115	146
- Social Science	50	43	31

**The accountability system has changed the instructional practices within the district and school.** The assistant-superintendent feels that it made it possible for the district to leverage their work. "The accountability system sets a bar and people feel a great deal of pressure to meet those standards. It has given schools the opportunity to look at their practice and "clean their plate". We were able to remove some things that we did because we had always done them, not because they were good instructional practice. It helps us to get people's attention; no one can be complacent." The principal agrees: "The instruction is much more prescriptive and teachers are much more serious. Schedules have to be posted outside the classrooms, teachers are well prepared and cannot just teach what they feel like teaching today, and students should be on task and not disrupting class." The teacher says: "Standards guide my instruction, I know that I am accountable."

**Teaching language arts is a priority at Enos Elementary. The strong instructional focus on literacy is apparent in hallway displays and classrooms.** "Word wizard words" are displayed on the walls in the student bathrooms and student responses to literature are posted in the hallways. The school tries to immerse students in literacy. Students who are waiting for the rest room sit in the hallway and have a book to read. Books and comfortable places to sit and read are available throughout the building, even in the lunchroom.

**Student Achievement\*:** Percentage of students scores meeting or exceeding the Illinois Learning Standards for the grades and subjects tested on the ISAT.

<b>Enos EI</b>	2001-02	2002-03
<b>Grade 3</b>		
Reading	33.3	33.4
Mathematics	53.0	52.6
Writing	20.0	25.0
<b>Grade 4</b>		
Science	42.9	41.0
Social Science	31.0	25.6
<b>Grade 5</b>		
Reading	41.9	36.7
Mathematics	32.3	38.0
Writing	48.4	46.0

## Monitoring: Compilation, Analysis and Use of Data

**The district provides a quarterly assessment in reading and math for each grade. Some assessments are required; others are recommended.** Each school is required to administer at least one extended response assessment each quarter; it is recommended that schools administer both *the Language Arts and Mathematics Extended Response* quarterly. The *Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test* is administered in Kindergarten. The test results are used to help identify those students who may qualify for gifted and talented services. The *Multiple Assessment Series* for reading, writing and mathematics is administered in grade 2. The scores are reported back to the schools in a customized standards based format so that teachers can predict how students will achieve on the *Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT)* in third grade. The *Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS)* in reading, mathematics, writing, science and social science is administered in grade 4. This assessment allows teachers to compare how their students and school are doing compared to other students at the same grade level across the nation. The main purpose of the ITBS is to provide the school with information that can improve instruction. Results from this test are also used to identify students who are eligible for talented and gifted programs in District 186. The district customized the results of various publishers' tests to see how they match with their standards to accommodate consistent assessment across the district.

**The focus of District 186 on Language Arts is reflected by the large number of assessments the district administers in the areas of reading and writing.** The *Developmental Reading Assessment* is required in grades K-2; it is recommended for use with students considered below grade level in grades 3-5 in order to pinpoint their instructional level. The *Illinois Snapshot of Early Literacy (ISEL)* was developed in Illinois for K-2 grade students to help determine students' early literacy development. All schools receiving funds from the Illinois State Board of Education Reading First Grant are required to administer the ISEL at the beginning and end of the school year. First through fifth grade teachers administer district *Writing Assessments* at the end of each quarter. The assessments are intended to be similar to the writing portion of the ISAT.

*Integrated Theme Tests* are optional in grades 1-5. Theme tests give students practice in responding to the critical areas of word knowledge, comprehension and writing and are similar to what second, third and fifth grade students are expected to be able to do on the MAS and on the ISAT. Kindergarten teachers give additional assessments in the areas of Letter and Sound Identification at the beginning of the year and at the end of each quarter. The *Word Knowledge Assessment* is required in Kindergarten and optional in grades 1-5. All teachers are encouraged to hold *Individual Reading Conference Assessments* (IRCA) with students each quarter.

**Student performance is reported to parents based on state standards.** The district has developed a standards based report card to give a clear message to parents about what their children know, what they are able to do and what they need to learn in relation to the state standards. Achievement and effort are rated separately. All schools will start using this report card next year. Student data are stored in the district's Information System which includes students' electronic cumulative folders and assessment data. Every student is online, and parents get training to access their child's information. The district is attempting to turn this system into a more dynamic system, where all the quarterly district assessments are online as well.

**Springfield Public School District #186 has a District Peer Review Process in place to review the school improvement plans.** The district peer review team consists of deputy superintendent of schools, the director of federal programs, the director of school improvement, the coordinator of language arts, the coordinator of mathematics and the coordinator of standards and benchmarks. The district peer review team meets within the first 45 days of the school year to review the school improvement plans using the 48 indicators within the 10 components of the Illinois State Board of Education's rubric, "School Improvement Plan: Components and Criteria for Development, Review and Revision" as a guide. School Improvement Plan Rubric score sheets are returned to the building principal submitting the School Improvement Plan within three days of the review date to aide in the self-reflection process at each school.

**Principals are evaluated once a year. Each principal within the district works with a district cabinet member to develop two or three individual goals that are aligned to the school improvement plan.** Principals are required to provide evidence of the accomplishment of the goals. A district cabinet member also visits the school for a walk-through and formal evaluation. District cabinet members help with the evaluation procedure, identify strengths and weaknesses, and try to get an sense of how they can support this principal. The evaluation ends with a goals conference and then a written evaluation conference.

**Non-tenured teachers are evaluated two times per year; tenured teachers are evaluated every other year.** A pre conference takes place before the evaluation. If a teacher gets a negative evaluation, he/she has 90 days to improve his/her performance or they will be dismissed. Student achievement data is not used in the evaluation. The principal: "We do not monitor by using hard data. Some people think that we ought to use student achievement, but because of the variables that we deal with I think that would be unfair."

### **Recognition, Intervention and Adjustments**

**Enos Elementary closely monitors each student's performance on the state standards.** For each grade level there are pocket charts containing index cards with assessment scores of each student in the school. A brightly colored line of tape is used to denote the cut off for students who are above or below standards. Each student's card is placed above or below the line for instant recognition. Color codes indicate scores or interventions, such as pull outs. The students whose cards appear below the line are closely monitored and Quarterly Intervention Plans are developed to help these students improve. These plans are shared with parents and include them in the process, e.g. by asking them to read with their children every night. The intervention plans are re-assessed throughout the year to see if students still need the intervention or if the plan can be dropped. Low-achieving students receive one-to-one attention each day. Reading Recovery teachers pull out students who need more attention in the morning and work with small groups in the afternoon. The speech teacher and Learning Disabilities teacher pull students out as well.

**Intervention programs for students with non-academic problems are in place.** The Positive Behavior Interventions and Strategies Program (PBIS) is designed for students with behavioral problems. Students are identified by individualized functional assessments and grouped according to common issues. An internal coach (teacher volunteer) manages the program. Verbal aggression is the main reason for referrals. The Student Assistance Program (SAP) includes a half time SAP coordinator who works with children who are suffering from the effects of family substance abuse, violence, loss of loved ones, and other issues that might impede student development and achievement. SAP coordinator works with individual students as well as student groups. SAP groups meet one hour a week for a semester. Group topics include life skills, anger management, dealing with loss, etc. The groups provide pre and post question data. The SAP also offers staff training to enhance effective education for students at risk. If both the PBIS and SAP do not help increase the student's performance, a student review team consisting of the school social worker, a psychologist and the special education teacher will conduct a full scale case study and evaluation. The PBIS team and parents are invited to participate in this. Enos Elementary also trains certain students in the area of conflict resolution. These students wear bright orange caps and function as 'peacekeepers' during lunch and recess.

## Factors Influencing District and School Practices

### Resource Allocation

**The Reading First grant and Title I funds are important resources for Enos Elementary.** The principal: "Funding is a big issue. Money makes a difference. Without the Reading First grant we would still be far behind. Title I money is also very important for our school. Title I pays for Reading Recovery, the Parent Educator, Home school Liaison, and an extra classroom teacher that allows us to have smaller class sizes. This makes a monumental difference to this building."

### Resource Allocation\*:

	<i>Springfield PSD</i>	<i>Illinois</i>
Instructional Expenditure per Pupil	\$4,625	\$4,842
Operating Expenditure per Pupil	\$8,516	\$8,181
% Expenditure per Function		
Instruction	45.4	45.5
General Administration	1.8	2.5
Supporting Services	36.7	31.0
Other Expenditures	16.2	21.0

\*Financial Indicators 2001-02

### Local Influences, Relationships and Communication

**Enos Elementary has strong community support.**

Several programs are in place to support Enos students and their families, including:

- The Universal Breakfast Program.
- A partnership with SIU School of Medicine which provides mentors for over 40 students each year and supports the school in numerous other ways throughout the year (school supplies, take home books and holiday treats).
- After school tutoring by Memorial Medical Center volunteers
- Big Brother/Big Sister which provides mentors to students

Other community groups support Enos students and families by providing services such as school physicals and required immunizations, free eyeglasses programs, dental sealants clinics and free shoes.

**The district actively communicates district standards to parents. Enos Elementary has a home-school coordinator and a parent educator to facilitate parent involvement and communication.**

The district developed brochures for each grade level describing the district learning standards and benchmarks by subject. "The benchmarks represent a general outline of the content and skills taught. They provide parents and teachers with a common set of expectations for what students should know and be able to do. When parents and teachers work together as partners in the education process the children will have the best opportunity to learn and succeed in school."

Enos has a home-school coordinator and a half-time parent educator who provide resources for effective communication between home and school. They also provide services for Enos students and their families. Other home school links include weekly take-home folders to facilitate communication and parent representation on the Site Leadership Team and the Literacy Design Team.

Enos Elementary has a burger buddy day every month where parents have lunch with their children; at the beginning of the year the school organizes an open house picnic with dinner for the parents, students and extended family, about 700 people come that night. The school principal: "We also have a workshop for parents to help prepare their children for the ISAT and to encourage them to take the test seriously. We have to train ourselves to look at different ways to get parent participation. The old model does not apply today; we have few parents who come in to help. The take home book bags could be part of a new model. We give students a take home folder every week, all the parents sign off on those. We also do parent surveys for topics of interest. Self esteem was the top, so a therapist came and donated time for the parent workshop. We held it at night and served dinner. We had 22 people." Kindergarten teachers send letters to parents showing which letters or words they need to practice with their children. The district website has a summer reading list and mathematics activities that parents can do with their children at home.

### **Core Beliefs About Teaching and Learning**

**The district is concerned about the performance requirements of No Child Left Behind.** The superintendent of curriculum: "Mostly we agree with the concepts of NCLB. We are not afraid of the accountability. We are not afraid to talk about how we are doing. We think that the sanctions are out of order. We don't think that choice is the appropriate first sanction. And we think the federal timeline is too fast, the way the sanctions keep coming one right after another. The hurdles for making AYP are going to move so fast, we don't know if we can move our population that fast. We currently have 10 schools of the 36 schools in the district on the early warning list or watch list, and we have another 6 in the wings that could be joining them. But you have to ask "why are schools there?" We know a number of our school are there because of lack of progress in single cells, rather than lack of progress overall."

**District and school administrators believe all children can learn, but feel challenged by the student population.** The superintendent: "We believe that all children can learn. I have no hesitation in making that statement. We will close the achievement gap for children in this district. It is not just lip service. We believe that we can do this." The principal: "I believe that all children can learn, but not at the same rate, at the same time, on the same day. Not every child in 3rd grade can achieve at the same pace when you have four special education classes in the building, when 16% of the student population in your school has an Individualized Education Plan, when there is a poverty level of 70% for your students and all the problems that come with it. But all children will learn, because that is the attitude of everybody: of the child, the teachers, and the principal. The number one definition of success at Enos Elementary is the ISAT scores. But the principal explains that faculty celebrates success every quarter. "We celebrate not only the scores, but any break through we make, for example a student is finally reading, a parent responded positively to a phone call, SIU just donated all these computers..."