



CONROE
INDEPENDENT
SCHOOL DISTRICT

Clark Intermediate School

Lindsay Ardoin
Principal

Nomination- Schools Transforming Learning

Katherine Johnson Clark Intermediate School

Conroe Independent School District

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Nominated by Lindsay Ardoin, Allison Alford, and Trish Brown
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Overview and Background

Katherine Johnson Clark Intermediate School, known by students as the “Happiest Place on Earth,” is a highly innovative campus, committed to developing children into productive citizens of our society. The Clark vision is to “create a safe, loving, and innovative environment by working and collaborating interdependently to promote courageous actions, giving back to the community, dreaming of the future, and building positive, healthy, life-long relationships.”

When Clark Intermediate school opened in 2018, it did not take long to realize that there was much work to be done in the classroom, in our community, and within our professional learning communities. In the five years since Clark opened in Conroe ISD, our once smaller 5th and 6th grade teams grew into a staff of over 100. Clark houses 1,100 students from diverse backgrounds, including socio-economic backgrounds, and cultural differences.

Focus Areas: Article V: Organizational Transformation

Clark Intermediate has committed the last few years to building a campus that models real life learning experiences for students. It is evident that our current world is requiring schools to transform traditional lessons and activities involving paper and pencil, and challenging us to develop opportunities for students to collaborate, communicate, create, connect, and dive into the depth and rigor of the work. After studying the Visioning Document, our staff identified three areas on which to focus, each falling under Article V: Organizational Transformation. Our three areas of change are to implement learning experiences for students that will prepare them for the current needs of our world, to empower students to develop leadership skills and healthy relationships, and to utilize teachers’ strengths as designers of the learning experiences.

When we opened our campus, these were our biggest challenges to overcome. We found that lessons were planned in a way that modeled rote-style activities and lacked innovation and critical thinking skills. Students appeared to show poor engagement and had difficulty retaining information. Additionally, our students struggled with problem-solving with peers and were not able to properly show emotion and unity among their classmates. A House System was developed to support students by helping them develop leadership skills, embrace inclusivity, and show accountability through positive reinforcement. By empowering teachers to think “out of the box,” they were able to move past the traditional style of teaching practices and shift into being the designer of true learning experiences that inspire.

Work

Part of the Clark Intermediate vision statement centers around being committed to creating “...an innovative learning environment by working interdependently...” One of our focuses is creating learning experiences for students through room transformations. By bringing in professional developments and allowing our teachers to attend offsite growth opportunities that encourage, teach the implementation of, and give ideas regarding room transformations, they now collaborate with each other to create these highly engaging learning experiences for students. We are fully dedicated to the mindset that this is truly making the old become new within our classrooms. As an entire campus, we implemented a school-wide transformation for a day. The students “walked the red carpet” dressed in Rock N Roll themed clothes, ready for a

day of new learning through engaging and focused activities in all of their subjects. We have connected technology knowledge and development into some of our transformations using break out rooms from the Population Police, Book Creator highlighting different African countries, game shows reviewing math concepts for assessment, and even creating plot maps digitally right in the middle of our construction zone classrooms. We know that by creating these innovative learning environments for the students, they remember the experiences as well as the material that is being taught through them. We know that experiences create memories.

We believe that students need to be in charge of their emotional reactions and ability to problem-solve with their peers. We developed a House System our first year of opening, and it has transformed into identifying who we are as a campus. Each child is "sorted" into a house and the students work together each week to spotlight desired behaviors, acts of kindness, and appropriate reactions. The students lead the weekly spotlight and take ownership of awarding their peers. Students learn how to develop healthy peer-to-peer relationships and practice daily skills, such as proper eye contact, hand shakes, holding the door for others, and picking up trash. Each "house" is given points each day and is tracked on a video screen for all of the campus to monitor. Our community stakeholders, nearby businesses, and parents, have also embraced the healthy competition and positive promotion of social behaviors. They, too, show their pride in the four different houses. The House System has transformed the way we promote positive behaviors and rewards and has become the heartbeat of Clark.

Our PLCs have evolved into a campus-wide commitment to excellence where profound learning experiences and connection to the curriculum grows through trust and collaboration among teachers. Teachers are now known as "designers" of learning experiences, which has transformed their creativity in ways that support student engagement. The teachers meet weekly to study data from a variety of common and formative assessments to then design the path for their class. Using this data, they design intervention groups and "Learning Lab" activities focused around the individual needs of their learners. The teacher works to simply facilitate the experiences so that students can be embedded into the inquiry-based learning and actually "own the knowledge" that is being presented.

Results

By focusing on room transformations as a form of high student engagement, developing a House System to empower students, and train teachers as designers of learning experiences, the campus has seen tremendous growth academically and culturally. 2021 to 2022 STAAR interim assessments have increased in all subjects, discipline referrals have decreased, and the overall climate of the staff has continued to be rated in the upper 90th percentile in the Organizational Health Inventory (OHI) survey. When our families, parents, new students, substitutes, and visitors walk into Clark Intermediate, there is little doubt that this campus is an organization filled with love and light.



**Principals'
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**SCHOOLS
TRANSFORMING
●●●● LEARNING**

Superintendent Endorsement

I endorse and support the nomination of Clark Intermediate
as a School Transforming Learning.

Superintendent's Signature: RMS dford
Date: 2-22-23