

Cumberland Trace-

Putting First Things First - Choosing Planning Over Recess

When it comes to planning a party for sixth grade students, it is not always an easy task, and unlike the lower grades we cannot count on parental leadership to plan the festivities. However, we most always have students who are quite up for the challenge. As a matter of fact, I have some students who spent quite a few days during indoor recess time, researching, planning, and even typing the parent note for our class Valentine party. Who knew they were such capable leaders? (6th Grade Teacher)

Jody Richards-

Each day I walk up the stairs to my classroom and I pass about 100 smiling faces on the wall. We've titled the display "4th Grade is Stepping Up to the Future." It is filled with my student's faces holding a chalkboard stating what they want to be when they grow up and which college they plan to attend in order to achieve their goal. I have a student with a poor home life that comes to school each day, walks by her picture on the way to my classroom, and smiles. She wants to be a nurse—she'll do it. She made a choice the day we wrote our goals on the chalkboard to be successful. That is what the Leader in Me is inspiring my students to do. They are becoming aware that they can make things happen in their lives by living out the 7 habits.

I watch my kids set goals every Monday for the week. At first it amazed them that when they set a goal it was happening. I heard, "Hey Mrs. B! I reached my goal and it's only Tuesday!" Now I hear, "I know I'll be able to do it, that's my goal for the week." Goal setting and beginning with the end in mind is a powerful thing. My kids know that they can make things happen because they are the leaders of their lives.

The Leader in Me program is working. It is changing the trajectory of my students' lives and they know that success and leadership will happen for them if they follow the 7 Habits and work hard. WOW! Thank you for funding a program that is truly helping to prepare my students for their futures. It's working! (4th grade teacher)

I believe that LIM focus has helped students learn the importance of presenting themselves and their ideas in a professional respectful matter. (Teacher)

McNeil-

The Leader in Me program inspires me to change and improve in many areas of my life, as well as the lives' of those around me. As a teacher I look to positive reinforcement as my main behavior system in the classroom. The Leader in Me program allows the students to gain a sense of responsibility and teamwork that makes them accountable for their actions. In order for this program to work to it's full potential, we must integrate this way of thinking into everything we do in the classroom, therefore. I not only teach the seven habits to my students, I model how to implement the habits into daily tasks and interactions. We use a common vocabulary in the classroom that fosters positive relationships and independence. Students also use this vocabulary in their writing and when setting goals in all academic

areas. More importantly, they understand what it means to think win-win- or put first things first", etc. and apply it to areas of their lives when I am not around. As a wife and mother, I model the Leader in Me values at home and in my personal life. By implementing the seven habits into my daily life, I am able to maintain a balanced lifestyle and manage the many roles that I play. My toddler also benefits from the positive vocabulary and ideals of being responsible for her actions. It has made discipline much more effective at this stage in her life and she loves singing our "Be Proactive" song! (1st grade Teacher)

Natcher-

The Leader In Me has impacted both my home and school life in various ways. Learning and practicing the 7 Habits as a new teacher was very beneficial to my classroom success. As I made it a priority to put these habits into motion in my own life, it was evident that I was able to be more efficient and have a more positive impact on my students. After the 7 Habits became a practice in my personal life. I felt more confident in implementing the habits with my students. The first thing that comes to mind is, "Wow!" What a difference having a common language grade-wide and school-wide can make. My students have truly learned to become leaders because they are fully aware now of the common characteristics that all leaders put into practice. I also can't begin to explain the confidence this program has given to my students. I previously had children in my class that would not stand up and speak in front of others for anything! Now these same students will tell their leadership stories in front of large groups of guests. In conclusion, it is hard to imagine how different many aspects of my life would be without The Leader in Me. (3rd grade Teacher)

Parker, Bennett Curry-

Recently the Bowling Green Independent School System has adopted the "Leader in Me Program" from Steven Covey. This program teaches students to be responsible, self-aware and to become leaders not only at school but in the community at large. This program has been a wonderful endeavor for me as well as my students, and the entire school at Parker Bennett-Curry Elementary (PBC). My students have grown as students and grow personally to be able to be better prepared for school and be self-reflective when it comes to all aspects of life. For example in my classroom the day starts off by having students take role, students, take the lunch count, and students send the lunch count through email to the cafeteria. The teacher (me) is simply a facilitator. Many of my students take on leadership roles and perform various task throughout the day. These task are anywhere from being a positive role model for others, keeping up with assignments for the entire class, to mentoring younger students. Each year students empower their selves to help in the creation and communication with parents and community members by updating my teacher website to show assignments and even using social media (twitter) to inform the community of what is going on in our class setting. I have personally witnessed a growth with students who previously had behavior problems and when given leadership responsibilities, self-reflection skills, and lots of love these students have become role models for other. My classroom was visited by the First Lady of Kentucky in the past and a group of students led the tour and shared information with her about the school, each other, and the classrooms. The "Leader in Me" program helps students to understand that their time and use of time is better served by positive behaviors, actions, and thoughts. I am also the Student Technology Leadership Program (STLP) coordinator and

the "Leader in Me" program has help me to take groups of students and present at various conferences for teachers. My 4th grade students were the first Elementary students to present at the KYSTE conference in Louisville KY. The students have been invited to GRECC and other conferences as well.

I feel that the "Leader in Me" is a tremendous program for not only our students but for our educators, administrators, as well as parents and community members. (Teacher)

Rich Pond-

One of my students is the epitome of the 7 Habits at Rich Pond Elementary. In the past he was complacent with his lack of progress and achievements in school. However, now with the Leader In Me initiative, he has embraced his abilities as both a leader and an academic student. His grades have been low consistently until this year and he was content with them. This year he became determined to have a leadership role with one of our staff members, and knew that his grades and classroom attitude had to improve in order to secure this new position. But this drive went beyond that. Once he realized he was capable of solid academic achievements, he wanted to make them become a part of his legacy. He persisted with his assignments, made good choices about how, where, and when he was working, and transformed his work ethic and attitude. He began to take control of his actions, chose to use the 7 Habits, and began to see results. He is not achieving significant gains with his grades, has a leadership role in the school, and is no longer satisfied with anything he does not believe is his own solid effort and achievement. These changes could not have been achieved without the Leader In Me movement in our school. (5th/6th Grade Teacher)

In mid-October, after the first grading period of the school year, we had 9 students who were at risk of failing if they continued on their current path of not completing work, being disorganized and showing very little effort on their school work. In order to assist these students to pursue academic excellence as well as to take pride in their accomplishments, we created the BIG Rock Club. These students were issued a point sheet that would assist them in tracking 4 goals throughout the school day. At the beginning of each day, the students check in with a mentor to receive their point sheet and show the mentor all work that was completed at home the night before. The mentor issues any needed supplies for the day and encourages the students to do their best in each class. Progress is monitored daily in each class as the teacher provides feedback to the student using a point system. Students are given verbal feedback and can adjust or sustain their level of effort throughout the day in order to make their goal of 80% of total points possible by the end of the day. At the end of the day students check in with their mentor and scores from the point sheet are entered into a database. Students who maintain the goal of 80% for each day earn a trinket and are given praise for their efforts. At the end of the week, those students who maintain an average of 80% for the week earn a Sharpen the Saw activity to reward them for a job well done. Those who have missing work or who have not maintained the goal of 80% for the week are required to complete their missing work and/or write a reflection of the week with goals to assist them in making their goal the following week.

This program currently has 9 students who have participated for 60 days. Their average earned points for the week is 93.41%, which is a +13% over the goal of 80%. This program has proven to be a huge

success in assisting our students with becoming leaders of their own learning. Because of the success the students have had in the program, their academic scores have improved and their self-esteem has improved greatly. They volunteer more in the classroom and across school activities. We are definitely seeing the benefits and know that our students will be more prepared for what lies ahead in their futures. (Teacher)

Richardsville-

At Richardsville Elementary, the 2nd grade students are immersed into the principles of Leader In Me from the first day of school. School wide, classrooms use the first two weeks in August to concentrate on teaching students the 7 Habits, practicing them and using them in various scenarios. Students learn to use the 7 Habits in any and all subjects, to essentially make it a part of their lives. Our school's guidelines to success are closely linked to the 7 Habits. With my 2nd graders, we are teaching students to be leaders:

In the classroom: All students are expected to have a leadership jobs within the classroom. Students themselves choose the jobs; they are not assigned. Jobs change monthly so students will have the opportunity to experience a variety of responsibilities. Students keep a Leadership Notebook to chart their progress with behavior choices and academics.

In the school: Students are taught to embrace the 7 Habits, coupled with our Guidelines to Success, and use them throughout the school building and property, showing the students, faculty, staff and visitors what it means to be a leader. Second graders are thoroughly looking forward to applying for and being selected for school-wide leadership positions.

At home: Students are encouraged to teach their families what the 7 Habits are, to use the habits, and look for ways to display them "even when no one else is looking."

Throughout their lives: Second graders in my class start the day by greeting each other with a firm handshake and a "good morning" by name, preparing them to be leaders in the real world. If we somehow forget to do this, the students remind me! Students share ways to use the 7 Habits wherever they may be, and in future endeavors.

The Leader In Me and the 7 Habits have been a refreshing change since the first day we learned of it. The principles it teaches are what every child - and adult - needs to become successful, productive, respected people in society. (Teacher)

Rockfield-

"The 7 habits are stepping stones that provide away for students to be successful in and out of the classroom. It has been very rewarding to experience kids internalizing the habits and using them to solve problems and create opportunities. We expect these students to take the leadership skills learned in elementary school and carry them to middle school, high school, and beyond. I have seen it touch lives here and can only imagine how it will lead our kids into the future. EVERY student has the opportunity to

become a leader and a success story and I am blessed to be a part of something so meaningful!"
(Teacher)

I would like to take a moment to inform you of the positive changes that I have observed in Rockfield Elementary students since the implementation of the Leader In Me program. This program is providing our students with essential life skills that they can master and apply even into their adult lives.

Some students are just natural-born leaders, but what I love about the Leader In Me program is that it makes leaders out of students that would never have come forward or had the self-confidence in situations to be leaders. This program helps those students realize that EVERY STUDENT is good at something and they can lead others in the areas in which THEY are accomplished. We have students that are developing and writing their weekly classroom newsletter to keep parents informed. We have students that are cleaning tables and sweeping floors to keep our cafeteria clean. We have students that are School Safety Patrol Members to keep our hallways safe. We have students that are Car Rider Helpers to assist in getting students in cars safely. We have students in a Peer-Mentoring Program that work with other students to build self-confidence. Every grade level does a Service Project to raise funds for Humane Society, Relay for Life, Jump Rope for Heart and Salvation Army, just to name a few.

We have more students now than I have ever seen before approaching teachers wanting to do things to help out weather victims or medical crisis victims or needy victims by creating things and selling them or collecting monies. Our students view our school as OUR school. That have as much of a share in the success of the building as the adults. We don't have to ask for volunteers any more. They have a sense of pride and leadership now that makes them wants to be Rockfield Elementary, not just attend it.

I have personally witnessed a stronger sense of self-confidence and pride in our students. They can now identify and share their leadership abilities, look for the win-win solutions in problem-solving, synergize with any and all of their peers and think and act proactively. I now spend less instructional time on discipline and more time observing smiling, happy students that are loving this opportunity to learn today how to be the leaders of tomorrow. (School Media Librarian)

Moss-

I have been an active part of the Moss Faculty during our entire Leader in Me journey, as well as playing an active member of our Teacher Lighthouse Team. Since the implementation of The Leader in Me initiative in the spring of 2012, I have witnessed a transformation among the faculty, staff and students in our building. This has been an amazing cultural change that has inspired students to change the trajectory of their lives. The Leader in Me has encouraged ALL students to take more ownership of their actions and goals, thus better preparing them for post-secondary endeavors.

As an Exceptional Needs Specialist, I often work closely with students who have suffered repeated academic failures. The populations of students I work with seldom have a chance to shine or to build upon and display their unique individual strengths. Through this cultural change and paradigm shift at our school, I have seen students with Autism shaking community members' hands, looking them in the eye and taking them on tours of our building. I have seen students with major behavior disorders learn

discipline and respect through their willing and eager participation in our Dragon Leadership Corps. I have witnessed students with speech impairments present a speech in front of a gymnasium full of peers. Without the Leader in Me, many of these leadership opportunities for all our diverse students may never have occurred. The confidence our students have obtained is priceless.

Students involved in our leadership culture, realize their own unique strengths and weaknesses and our preparing for their future now. Students from our school can work collaboratively with others, think outside the box and communicate effectively. (Teacher)

As a teacher in Warren County for the past twenty-six years, I can't ever remember a time in my professional career that I was truly excited about trying something "new" for my students. Yes, we educators are always trying 'this program' or 'that strategy' to increase the chance of success for our kids. Luckily for Warren County Schools, we had the opportunity to be a part of. The Leader In Me. This initiative has made the most profound difference in the lives of my students.

I was able to travel to other school systems around the United States to see TLIM in action. This educator was skeptical with the idea for encouraging the younger populations to lead and take charge. This isn't just a 'feel good program.' It's a way of teaching everyone, adults included, the skills needed to be a confident leader for the 21st century. The 7 Habits are only a fraction of what this leadership concept is all about. The habits, along with the understanding that you are what you choose, are what are needed in our society today. TLIM has helped Warren County students develop the skills needed to be the leaders of tomorrow.

Thank you for the Chamber of Commerce partnership with Warren County Public Schools. By supporting The Leader In Me, both financially and academically, we all can say we have worked to raise and prepare our young students. (Teacher)

For almost the past two years, I have been working with the Leader in Me program at Moss Middle School. When I first read the book years earlier, I knew that this was something that our students would respond to and it would be something that would make a difference in our school. As a member of the teacher Lighthouse team, we have learned much from our journey. From attending the Leader in Me symposiums to visiting other Leader in Me schools, we have gathered many ideas about how to implement the program. Although we revise and refine our methods, one thing has remained constant: the enormous positive impact on our students.

When Moss initiated the Leader in Me program and began offering leadership positions to students, they embraced the opportunities and soared. Students have chances to lead not only in the classroom, but in the school as a whole and in the community. They have relished these jobs and performed them amazingly well. (Teacher)

Warren East Middle School-

WEMS has learned a lot from implementing Leader in Me and we continue to learn a lot through this program. All teachers in this building have fostered positive relationships with our students. The

students know we care about them and are here to support them in whatever way we can. Leader in Me also carries over into our PBIS goals, making students more aware and accountable for their academic and behavioral goals and actions. It is true that if we live it and believe in it, we will continue to see growth and success as a school. (WEMS Teacher)