

We want to give you a brief introduction to our school so you have the most effective picture of our school as we describe the work we've been doing with the Safe and Supportive Schools Grant.

Greene County High School is a combination of the former Jefferson-Scranton and East Greene Schools. The high school is located in our county seat, Jefferson, a town of about 4,500 people. Paton-Churdan, a small school district north of Jefferson, also sends high school students to Jefferson for numerous classes each day. There are just over 400 kids including the PC kids in our high school.

For many years Jefferson-Scranton and East Greene have shared classes, but starting with last year the two districts began a whole grade sharing agreement. Our kindergarten through fourth grade students go to their respective elementaries while the remaining grades are distributed through available buildings. The fifth and sixth grades attend Greene County Intermediate in the former East Greene High School building that has been renovated in Grand Junction. The seventh and eighth grades go to our Middle School in Jefferson and the high school students attend the former Jefferson-Scranton High School building, also located in Jefferson.

Last February voters in the two school districts overwhelmingly approved a consolidation of Jefferson-Scranton and East Greene school districts. The reorganization of the two schools will be official on July 1, 2014. Paton-Churdan voted this year to continue to share some classes with us, but is not part of our consolidation.

Greene County High School is well known for its wide variety of opportunities for us, inside and outside of the classroom. We have strong vocational programs including a student run restaurant and bistro, a construction class that builds a house every year, and a student operated green house that provides the restaurant with lettuce and herbs, just to name a few. There seems to be an endless amount of clubs and organizations. Some of the others include Art Club, Speech Club, FCCLA (Future Career and Community Leaders of America), FCA (Fellowship of Christian Athletes), Powerlifting Club, GSA (Gay Straight Alliance), FFA (Future Farmers of America), Drama Club, National Honor Society, and Interact.

An additional resource Greene County High School has to offer is an off-site alternative program. Students who attend the alternative program are enrolled for half day sessions. Students work at their own pace on courses needed to complete a high school diploma. Kids who go to the alternative program also have the option to continue to attend the regular high school during the alternate half of the day. The alternative high school is a great way for kids who don't succeed in the regular class room for one reason or another to still complete their high school diploma.

Here is a short tour of our high school so you can get the feeling of where we are talking about in our school.

As you've heard about our consolidation, there have been many changes happening in our district since we started the grant. Our IS3 team is very proud of the work we have been doing, and our data is showing the positive progress too! In 2012 our index score was 21 and we just found out this year it is 24.

The areas our youth team has focused on the most are the physical environment and student-student relationships. Even though some other areas scored low too, we felt the most strong about being able to change these areas using our student voice. You can see that in 2012 student-student relationships had an index score of 1/3 and this year we achieved 2/3. The same goes for our physical environment.

During our brainstorming session for creating this presentation, we discussed how proud we are of the way student voice has really been shown in our school. Each year our principal has a new slogan word and we all get buttons on the first day of school. Last year our slogan was "Unity" because it was our first year of whole grade sharing as Greene County High School. This year's word is "tenacity." Although he didn't tell us the word until the first day of school, we were able to nominate colors and then everyone voted. It still makes our principal, Mr. Phillips, shake his head, but our buttons this year are hot pink and gray!

Since the grant has started we have had many opportunities for school-wide activities. Usually these activities take place during lunch. One example is our pledge against bullying. Emily took pictures of all of us during lunch one day and created a poster. The next day at lunch we all had the chance to unite against bullying and sign the pledge that said, "The end of bullying begins with me." Students wore orange on this day to represent unity. At lunch there was another chance to share student voice by texting an answer to "What does, 'The end of bullying begins with me,' mean." There were a lot of really good answers. Some included, "You can be the start of something new by stepping up to kids who bully people and making kids realize how they're hurting others by their actions," and "Bystanders are the key to stop bullying. If you see something anywhere you should get the victim out of the situation safely and go get help." Nearly 60 responses were sent in. Some of the answers were shared with other students on announcements the next day.

These activities take place throughout the year, but many were for Bullying prevention month in October. We kicked off the month last year by wearing blue in support of the cause. Student voice was heard in these activities through polls. Students received either the question, "What can the school do to prevent bullying," or "What is more of an issue cyber bullying or bullying at school; why?" During each lunch shift, two more questions were posted for students to answer via text message. The snack shack even colored the ice cream blue in support of bullying prevention. Foot steps with written examples of bullying were placed throughout the school. Students walked on them all day to represent "Stomp out Bullying."

The 2012 survey showed student-student relationships to have a mean score of 2.97. Greene County continues to aim to improve the mean score to 3.10. As you can see, with

the effort we are making, we have made progress towards that goal. Our student-student relationships had a mean score of 3.05 this year. In analyzing the data, our team found that poor student relationships can result in bullying. After going through a root cause analysis process, we decided in our school bullying is a root effect, not a root cause. We even went further to identify home life as a root cause of problems in student to student engagement and therefore some of our plans focus on elements that could potentially lead to bullying behaviors.

Our grant coordinator, with the help of many generous people in our community, was able to turn a storage closet in our school into a community resource closet for students in need. The general focus of the closet is necessities such as socks, underwear, shampoo, toothpaste, and other necessity items that have been donated. We think having this available is great because then students can worry less about personal issues and focus on their school work while they are in our school.

Our school implemented a mandatory advisory program k-12 this school year. This played perfectly into our implementation plan because it made it easy to do things that would improve student-student relationship and adult-student relationships. At the high school this means that we meet with the same class and teacher every week on Wednesday for 20 minutes to do an activity. We were able to have our hand in planning some of these activities about respect. The activities can be fun and help promote the way we want students to treat each other in our school. You can see a picture of some kids doing one of our activities.

Our school was one of the first pilot schools to implement PBIS a really long time. We only use the universal level of PBIS now, but we really like it because we still have gold slips and can be drawn for prizes that are given out every week. Our teachers give us gold slips when we have done the right things and then we turn it into the office for the weekly drawing. We helped create PBIS expectation sheets. It helps us and our classmates know what is expected in the different parts of our building. We are also working on making the same format posters for the places we spend time in the community for a reminder.

Our school's PBIS slogan is be in the right place, at the right time, doing the right thing with the right people. Using this format – the same as the posters we hung up all over school and town, we had an attendance challenge between Thanksgiving and Christmas break. We were supposed to be “filling our stockings with good attendance.” Each grade had goals of how many days they could meet or exceed average daily attendance. For each goal the class made, a set number of names were drawn for PBIS prizes. The prizes all had the PBIS logo on them as a reminder of doing the right thing, at the right time, with the right people.

We are really proud of all of those smaller projects, but the project we have been most excited about this year is our library project. Last year we used our physical environment money to replace a set of double doors going into our cafeteria. It was a needed update from the old green doors, but it just wasn't something we were very excited about. This

year we decided that our library needed something different for a couple of reasons. We had many discussions about how to make more students feel comfortable at school. When we starting talking about how our school was going to 1:1 with chromebooks we realized our library would no longer need to function as a computer lab and would have a lot more empty space. The idea started with a description of our library having a comfortable feel, like a Barnes and Noble. The idea progressed and a plan was in place. We started with having some of our friends in an advanced interior design class recreate the space using the computer program “chief architect.” You can see here the plans were all laid out. They figured every detail - space, colors, price and so on. Once the project was approved Emily Gannon helped one student through the purchasing process. We even waited for a Labor Day sale so we could get more items. We are very happy with the way to project turned out and the data is showing the improvements in our school - both the physical environment and student-student relationships improved this year from  $\frac{1}{3}$  to  $\frac{2}{3}$ . The library is used more than ever and it is helping us feel more comfortable during our school day.

Here’s a little bit more about what others have to say about the library project.

No great project would be complete without some obstacles. Our biggest obstacles this year was getting our group to meet and follow through with projects. It’s very hard to find a time that works for all or even most of us. We are all really busy, dislike missing out on classwork, are swamped before and after school, and a lot of us ride the bus which eliminates using before and after school times. We also had a communication barrier as everyone has a different preference; some people listen to announcements, some check emails regularly, some use check text messages throughout the day. The end solution of this dilemma ended up being a smaller leadership team. As the year went on, people who were unable to make the commitment were weeded out of the group, leaving those of us who had or could make time to participate regularly.

Next year our hope is to expand our group by recruiting underclassmen. We discovered that some of our classmates don’t even know what IS3 stands for. We think it will help as we promote the group to get others excited to be involved. We expect that seeing the library project complete will be a motivation for students to want to join and make more cool improvements to our school. One of our projects for next year is creating a google document with information about all school groups, clubs, and activities. The purpose will be to encourage incoming freshmen in particular to get involved in something that fits their interest. As we present this to 8th graders at the end of the year, we will be able to share information and encourage them to want to be an active member of the youth team. Even as the grant ends we want to keep our group going. A lot of the projects we’ve worked on haven’t cost anything or have been part of another group in our school. It’s important for the student voice to continue to be heard and we think this team has been a great way to do that.