

Columbine Elementary School

Q&A with St. Vrain Valley School District Staff

The percent of students scoring at or above proficient on the Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP) **increased 14 percentage points in math** and **11 percentage points in reading/English language arts** at Columbine Elementary School in the St. Vrain Valley School District in Longmont, Colorado. This growth is attributed to the hands-on approach to leadership by Columbine's Principal, Eddie Cloke. Understanding the benefits of Galileo K-12 Online, and with District support, Mr. Cloke began spending instructional time with students and tracked their progress using the tools within Galileo. After gathering and reviewing the results of these efforts, Mr. Cloke states that the data revealed "huge, huge gains," in the students' learning. He shared the hands-on approach and results with his staff and they jumped on board. The school continues to see improvement in student scores.

What are the key things that were implemented that you feel are responsible for your successes?

Eddie Cloke – Principal:

"There were a number of things we implemented at our school. Last year in particular we put a huge emphasis on student writing because of research we had done showing that writing had impacted all areas of student achievement, especially in poverty ridden schools ... Along with that, we implemented a plan where we had ... collaboration between teachers and built-in time for them to sit together and talk ... **Part of that collaboration was looking at student data, analyzing the data, and making plans and moving forward.**"

What data was used during teacher collaboration?

Eddie Cloke – Principal:

"We started looking at our student writing samples, which we do three times a year, and from that point ... looked at some of the results we were getting from the Galileo benchmark assessment in writing. From there we were able to ... develop our own quizzes, tests, and activities using the Galileo system. That allowed us to have quicker access to information, data, and ongoing opportunities to monitor our students."

How have Columbine teachers responded to Galileo?

Eddie Cloke – Principal:

"Galileo has been really good for us ... Our success last year is due to a number of things and one of those things is Galileo. When we started out, our teachers were a little apprehensive because we've had things come our way and burn out, but Galileo was not that for us ... **I really believed that [Galileo] could have a positive impact on what we were doing** ... [One] aspect was being able to grade whatever assessments we gave *quickly*. Rather than spending an hour grading we were able to spend five minutes grading and an hour analyzing. That was very beneficial for my

staff. They began to see the impact and go on to the system and see the bank of questions and how it aligns to CSAP [Colorado Student Assessment Program]. They began to [reach a] comfort level to create their own [assessments]."

How did you identify students needing additional instructional assistance and what are the implemented interventions?

Eddie Cloke – Principal:

"One of the things we were able to do, for example, was to show teachers the impact [Galileo] could have. And so I started working with a small group of students in the area of math who needed some additional support. We created some online quizzes for them using Galileo. We would do a pretest, look at how they scored, and then I would center my instruction around that, and do a posttest. **We saw huge, huge gains in the students' growth** from just that practice. With the ease of using the system we were able to identify what the kids needed basically through the use of pretests, etc."

What advice would you give to other schools/districts who want to implement an approach like yours?

Eddie Cloke – Principal:

"From the school level ... I supported [my staff] as much as I could and did a lot of hands on work for them in terms of getting on the system and creating tests for them to use, just to show them over time the value that was there in terms of the time savings and data they were going to get regarding their students ... **It was really rewarding to start receiving emails from my teachers who are telling me they created their own tests** ... and so now [the teachers have] been empowered to utilize the system and are seeing results and [are relying] on that data."

Tori Teague – Executive Director Assessment and Curriculum:

"Advice I'd give to other districts would be to be open and flexible ... we have purchased clicker systems, we've purchased scanners, we're working with the computers so they have what [students] need. We piloted for two years, we expanded this year pretty dramatically, and next year we're District-wide. We used the pilot to see what supports were needed and we responded to the schools."

Any additional thoughts?

Lauren Eker – Assessment Coordinator:

"I think Mr. Cloke's leadership is truly why Galileo was so successful at Columbine ... Mr. Cloke was at the forefront of our District in really training his staff and becoming very involved."

Tori Teague – Executive Director Assessment and Curriculum:

"I think that can't be stressed enough because where we're successful in our schools is where the principal has really been a person who has been up front leading, showing, and helping ... **Mr. Cloke showed how he can make a difference with kids just on their lunch hour and so teachers really jumped on board.**"

Regina Renaldi – Executive Director Title I:

“The empowerment of these teachers is a strong key. Teachers are taking responsibility for students growing. I work with a literacy team and they are empowered to make certain that students grow and they are very enthusiastically looking at all of the data points to make certain the students are growing. I think that’s a key to great leadership and great turnaround. The data is their friend and the data is part of their everyday work. It’s no longer something they just have to do. They are embracing the data conversation.

There is pretty significant collaboration between Title I, classroom teacher, District leadership, school leadership. Everybody is talking about Columbine. I’d like to see this happening at all my Title I schools because I think they need to be talking about kids and data all the time and that’s what’s happening at this school. It’s a pretty exciting place to be.

The other thing that I think is exciting is that we are DRA2 [Diagnostic Reading Assessment] testing all of our Title I students – in St. Vrain we have six Title I schools – and Mr. Cloke’s students showed the greatest growth from August to December in the District. They showed 3.2 levels of growth per student on average on DRA2, which I think aligns with improved performance on Galileo and ultimately CSAP. I think it’s a nice predictor of huge success. Students who aren’t proficient are moving towards proficiency and I think it really is a culmination of all the work that’s been done and it’s continuing to show growth. **This wasn’t a one year wonder. I think we’re going to continue to see growth at this school because now they’re focused in terms of data.** They are analyzing data on a regular basis and DRA2 is just another indicator that these students are growing.”

Tori Teague – Executive Director Assessment and Curriculum:

“We have the proof that the kids grew last year, they are growing this year, and there’s many reasons, but one of the biggest is the fact that Mr. Cloke is using so many different types of formative assessments and having collaboration time to look at that data and really pinpointing that instruction to help kids. **Galileo is certainly a big part of that.**”

Regina Renaldi – Executive Director Title I:

“What’s great is that all of these formative assessments are giving us similar data which shows that kids are growing. It would be concerning if you only had one data point where kids were growing but I think it confirms that there is growth at this school and that’s what we want to see.”

Tori Teague – Executive Director Assessment and Curriculum:

“I can’t emphasize enough how far this school has come. Just a few years ago it was a struggling school with low performance. And they have turned the corner in the time they’ve implemented Galileo, and knowing that’s certainly not the only thing, but it’s been huge. **The data increases are incredible. I’ve been in data for a long time and it’s like nothing I’ve ever seen.**”