

Success Story Snapshot: Northside Elementary School (K-5)

District: Sun Prairie Area School District			Implementation: Reading
Community: Rural/Suburban	CESA: 2	Students: 550	Tier: Universal
Assessments Used to Measure Implementation <ul style="list-style-type: none">• School-wide Implementation Review (SIR)• Tiered-Fidelity Inventory (TFI)			Key System Features Highlighted <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Family and Community Engagement• Equity• Strategic Use of Data
Resources: Invitation Reader Schedule/Survey Reader Reminder			

When?

In 2014, Northside Elementary School began their implementation journey toward culturally-responsive family engagement.

Why?

Northside staff noted that 89% of Northside's black students were performing at basic proficiency or below in English Language Arts and 84% basic or below in Mathematics, a rate that's 10-20 percentage points more than all other non-white students.

Who? What? How?

In response to this data, Northside's leadership team set a goal to develop the capacity of all staff in culturally-responsive practices, engage and embrace families of underserved students through cultural celebration, and implement year one of [Read Your Heart Out](#) (RYHO) – a family-school-community experience that centers collective knowledge and celebration of African-American history, culture, values, identity, and experiences.

Since 2014, staff have participated in a range of professional learning events and activities, book clubs, and movie discussions to gain exposure to privilege and culturally-responsive practices. Some profession learning highlights include:

- 2014 – all staff attended the *Social Justice Institute*
- 2015 – collaborated with the *Madison Reading Project*
- 2016-17 – the Northside Equity team participated in the *Equity and Social Justice Conference*
- 2017-18 – attended the *Center's Building Culturally Responsive Systems* training and trained with *Pacific Education Group*

Using what they learned, the school-wide equity team met monthly to develop inclusive literacy practices and created building-wide programs for African American families and students of color. The *PBIS Family Connections* subcommittee wrote postcards, hosted an information table at school family nights, and planned outings in neighborhood parks.

In the fall of 2016, staff participated in RYHO training as a way to embrace the partnership with families that Northside was developing and to tie all of their previous efforts together. That year, Title I funds were used to add value to the staff library with more authentic and culturally-diverse books. The following spring, staff experienced a RYHO event at a neighboring school to gain knowledge to hold their own event. In the fall and winter of 2017, staff met regularly to plan and implement RYHO in February 2018. Their hard work and efforts made the event very successful.

Further embracing a range of cultures and backgrounds to increase attendance at events for underserved families, Sun Prairie area social activists met with English as Second Language (ESL) families to discuss barriers to school engagement. Northside staff personally invited families to face-to-face opportunities including parent-teacher conferences, music concerts, and culturally-immerse family experiences (potluck dinners, dancers, live music, culture, and museum visits).

So what?

Northside brought culturally responsive family engagement to fruition through all of the aforementioned efforts. Today, there is a resource room for staff to continue their [Seven Experiences](#) journeys, the learners and staff can see themselves in the halls and on the wall throughout the building décor, everyone is asking questions and listening to one another, and there is a continued personal and professional growth experiment with mentorship programs in place. Culturally-relevant experiences continue to grow through *RYHO*, Culture Night, and more.

Anything else?

RYHO continues to grow exponentially through Title I books, ideas from *RYHO* schools, and lots of engagement and excitement throughout the community. *RYHO's* success is measured through parent, staff, student, and community surveys on belonging, organization, and cultural relevance.