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ISD Name: Kent

Promising Practice Name: Ignite Engagement

Describe the suggested promising practice that is being submitted.

Ignite Engagement is a long-term professional development initiative that is currently entering its fourth year. In partnership with Ellin Keene and Dr. Gholdy Muhammad, Ignite Engagement has focused on the following questions:

- How do we support students in learning how to engage?
- How do we create the conditions to ensure true engagement happens more often in our classrooms?
- In what ways might we help students to re-engage when they realize that they're not engaged?

Learning is constructed through a cohort model of partnerships between teachers and coaches. Cohort members engage in monthly learning community sessions along with spending time in one another's classrooms while participating in learning labs throughout the year.

To learn more about Ellin Keene's research and how it is embedded into the Ignite Engagement program, read [this article by Keene and Kent ISD's Early Literacy Coach, Diane Titche](#).

Recently, we have also worked closely with Dr. Gholdy Muhammad and to embed her work in an effort to weave the thread of equity through all that we do!

Provide any background that may help others understand why this practice was needed.

The Early Literacy Coaches at Kent ISD ground their services and support in the Essential Instructional Practices in Early Literacy (Grades K to 3). After observing classrooms and receiving feedback from teachers, Essential Practice 1, "Deliberate, research-informed efforts to foster literacy motivation and engagement within and across lessons," rose to the top as a key area of focus. In a recent article by Andy Hargreaves, titled "The Future of Learning Lies in Engagement", he encourages educators to focus on engagement as the right path to rectify learning losses and prioritize well-being.

In response to the identified need for students to be more authentically engaged while learning, Ignite Engagement was created. Ignite Engagement takes a very different approach than other current programs or strategies, beginning with the way engagement is defined, in comparison to *compliance*, *participation*, and *motivation*. After the transformative process of redefining engagement, members then begin to process ways that students can take ownership in their own engagement process, which is another unique approach found in Ignite Engagement. Other existing program or strategy outcomes resulted in an increase in student *participation*, which is different from an increase in student *engagement*. Research shows that student *engagement* directly impacts student achievement, as students are better able to retain and reapply their learning when they are *engaged*.

Describe how the suggested promising practice is implemented.

The Ignite Engagement program is implemented by Kent ISD and is open to all districts in the county. There are currently staff members from ten schools in and around the county in the program.

Kent ISD is currently facilitating three active components of Ignite Engagement:

1. **Apprentice Cohort** - The Apprentice Cohort consists of all first-year members. This year there are twelve members in the Apprentice Cohort from seven schools.
2. **Advanced Cohort** - After the cohort members' first year, they enter the Advanced Cohort. Currently, the program is in its fourth year and has collaboratively designed the learning in the Advanced Cohort to allow for flexibility and differentiation to support the range of expertise within the program's goals, including action research opportunities and taking steps to become a future coordinator through our Ignite Engagement Leadership Certification. This year there are eighteen members in the Advanced Cohort from eight schools/districts.
3. **Lab Schools** - The goal of each lab school is to develop research-based best practices in literacy instruction among all staff and share that learning by providing learning labs open to all educators. These practices include student ownership of living a more engaged life using the four pillars of engagement and cutting-edge literacy practices that increase motivation. Appleview Elementary in Sparta is entering its second year of professional development toward becoming a lab school, and Breton Downs Elementary in East Grand Rapids is entering its first year. By the end of year three in their lab school learning, these schools will be open for visitors to come to celebrate how the goals of a lab school are coming to life.

Ignite Engagement is grounded in eight professional learning practices which are woven into the structure of the program in conjunction with the local schools involved. They are as follows:

1. **Intensive Learning** - the Ignite Engagement program is grounded in the research of Ellin Oliver Keene. Members of our cohorts learn directly from Keene, both in a traditional professional learning sense, as well as experiencing classroom learning labs where the cohort members watch Keene in action, teach alongside her, and/or teach while she observes and gets her feedback. The Ignite Engagement program has also woven in Dr. Ghody Muhammad's work and the members have also had the opportunity to learn directly from Muhammad as well.
2. **Implementation Support** - The Ignite Engagement program is not a one-and-done PD. Cohort members have access to monthly networking with cohort peers, multiple learning labs with researcher Keene over the course of the year, as well as monthly onsite coaching visits with the ISD coach as the program coordinator.
3. **Student Agency** - This program empowers students by teaching them to understand their own levels of engagement. Students are taught the four pillars of engagement and they spend time reflecting on their own engaged experiences. For example, what does it look like, feel like, and sound like when we're engaged? And they also learn about the engaged life of others through read-aloud about highly engaged people (such as Jane Goodall, Greta Thurnberg, and Raye Montague).
4. **Teacher Empowerment** - This program empowers teachers by creating permissions of flexibility so teachers can adapt and expand their current curriculum to meet the needs of each of their students. This flexibility cultivates creativity and courage in teaching.
5. **Intentional Integration** - In 2021 the program began to interweave Dr. Ghody Muhammad's culturally and historically responsive literacy framework with Keene's pillars of

engagement. What is unique about this integration is the intentionality of our ISD coach and both researchers planning together prior to any professional learning with the cohorts. In other words, teachers were not presented with Gholdy's framework and were expected to make connections on their own. The researchers collaborated to a degree that when they are working with the cohorts they are making explicit connections to each other's work which in turn helped cohort members feel the cohesiveness of Muhammad's framework and Keene's pillars.

6. **Action-Oriented Resources** - Among the resources shared with teachers and coaches in the cohorts is a set of Teacher Growth Guides. This consists of three guides (found [HERE](#)), each of which contains multiple goals with specific action steps to help teachers meet each goal. The goals in the Growth Guides were developed from the conditions for engagement from Ellin Oliver Keene. The action steps also incorporate Dr. Gholdy Muhammad's work to apply the five pursuits from her Historically Responsive Literacy Framework. The conditions for engagement and the five pursuits enhance and support the research behind the K-3 Literacy Essential #1. They create opportunities for students to experience a sense of belonging, where they feel supported, seen, and academically challenged, so ultimately they take ownership of their own engagement. The Growth Guides serve as a continuous personal reflection tool throughout the year. The goals and action steps in the Growth Guides prompt changes in practice, while at the same time acknowledging the strengths and skills that teachers already have. Tracking their progression in the Growth Guides allows cohort members to celebrate every accomplishment in the program, whether it be as small as an action step or as large as completing an entire goal. The Growth Guides also serve as a source of program data that is collected three times a year. Every fall, winter, and spring teachers formally reflect and celebrate with their coach on what action steps and goals have been completed. The action steps and goals that have become a regular part of their practice are then counted and shared with the program coordinator.
7. **Data Focused** - The program evaluates multiple data sources to continually measure the effectiveness of the program. We routinely analyze student and cohort member perception surveys, teacher growth guide data, student achievement data, and classroom observational data. In the post-pandemic phase of the project, we hope to return to our control classroom model of data comparison to provide a deeper context to the data that we currently collect.
8. **Continuously Evolving** - We continue to use the data above to evolve the program. In addition to cohort professional learning, we have also launched two lab schools and have launched a leadership cohort for advanced members who are looking to lead this work with others.

If available, provide resources that may help others in implementing the suggested promising practice.

- Keene, Ellin Oliver. *Engaging Children: Igniting a Drive for Deeper Learning*. Heinemann, 2018.
- Keene, Ellin Oliver. *The Literacy Studio: Redesigning the Workshop for Readers and Writers*. Heinemann, 2022.
- Muhammad, Gholdy. *Cultivating Genius: An Equity Framework for Culturally and Historically Responsive Literacy*. Scholastic Teaching Resources (Teaching Strategies), 2020.
- GELN a MAISA Collaborative. "[Essential Instructional Practices in Early Literacy K-3.](#)"
- GELN a MAISA Collaborative. "[Essential Instructional Practices in Early Literacy 4-5.](#)"
- Disciplinary Literacy Task Force. "[Essential School-Wide Practices in Disciplinary Literacy: Grades 6 to 12.](#)"

- Early Literacy Taskforce. [“Essential Coaching Practices for Elementary Literacy.”](#)
- [“The Future of Learning Lies in Engagement.”](#) ASCD, 4 Jan. 2022.

Describe the assessment tool used and provide data (include graphs, tables, charts, etc.) that indicates improved learner outcomes for the suggested promising practice. (See FERPA guidelines below)

The Ignite Engagement program focuses on a variety of data sources. [See the slide deck](#) to learn more about the data celebrations from our program and the notes below that highlight the different data sources and notes of celebration.

Tool: Enrollment

Participation Data - See slide 2

Note: Over 90 educators and 2,406 students impacted since 2019

Implementation Support Data - See slide 4

Note: *76% of Apprentice Cohort participants returned to complete at least one more year of the Ignite Engagement program in the Advanced Cohort*

Tool: Classroom Visit Schedule

Implementation Support Data - See slide 3

Note: Average 144 classroom visits each year

Tool: Perception Surveys

Student Feedback Data - See slide 5

Note: 85% of K-2 cohort classroom students and 82% of 3-7 cohort classroom students could identify one or more factors that lead them to being engaged.

Tool: Teacher Growth Guides

Growth Guide Data - see slide 6

Note: Over the course of a year, teachers increased the goals completed by 42% and the action steps completed by 34%.

Tool: Benchmark Assessments

4th Grade MAP - See slides 7 and 8

Slide 7: This is the MAP data for an entire 4th grade in a single building, where one of the teachers was in the Ignite Engagement Cohort.

Slide 8: This is the MAP data for an entire 4th grade in a single building that had just begun work as a lab school. The Cohort Classrooms were two of the teachers who were in at least their second year of the cohort.

Slide 9: This Spring i-Ready data for an entire 3rd grade in a single building (where one of the teachers was in her first year in the Ignite Engagement Cohort) shows the cohort classroom students

outperformed students in all the other classrooms.

Note: Pattern Noticed: Students in classrooms taught by cohort teachers consistently performed better than students in non-cohort classrooms

Note: Pattern Noticed: Decline from fall to spring was less in the cohort classrooms than in non-cohort classrooms.

Note: We are in the process of enhancing our processes and platforms for data collection. We are analyzing the current and available literacy achievement data across all schools to provide a more comprehensive analysis of achievement data in years to come.

In two or three sentences, provide a testimonial on the promising practice in action.

Cohort Member Testimonials:

“I think having Ellin walk with us through her book and research adds a significant element that most book studies and trainings are absent of. We are able to translate theory into action and get right into the heart of the work” - cohort member

“I want to continue in the cohort so that I can continue to learn and grow and become a better teacher. I love the learning that is happening in our cohort. It is wonderful to work with such passionate people who want to do better for their students” - cohort member

“The cohort has been an opportunity to learn other viewpoints from dedicated educators OUTSIDE your district. It means new voices and a fresh perspective from educators who want to learn and deepen their leadership and instructional practices. This isn't always the case with mandated district PD or PLC” -cohort member

“The students who are in classrooms with teachers in the cohort are thriving... you can feel the difference walking into each of these rooms. The positive student relationships, the level of ownership of students and the passion that radiates is more than apparent. It is truly a blessing to be able to watch the teachers I work with reignite their own passion for teaching through this work. After all, an inspired teacher will always be a better teacher” - district coach

[Read More Testimonials](#)

Watch Videos and Hear From Participants

[Kelly](#)

[Sherry](#)

[Bridget](#)

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