

During the 2013-2014 school year, Jesse S. Bobo Elementary School students, parents, and staff have partnered on several remarkable achievements.

With support from both Spartanburg County School District Six and grants from local businesses, our school now has 8-10 laptops in every classroom. This has allowed our students to regularly interact with top quality adaptive software, our teachers to employ blended learning in classrooms and tailor instruction to individual student needs. Moreover, these laptops have provided a crucial platform for implementing LEGO Education. In February, our school announced a first-of-its-kind partnership with LEGO Education. This partnership will offer our students and teachers the opportunity to be involved with cutting edge materials and training. During the kick-off for this initiative, over 300 people spent their evening at our school, building with one another and going classroom to classroom as students and teachers demonstrated LEGO Education materials. JSBES and LEGO Education share the goal of developing and inspiring the builders (and leaders!) of tomorrow.

This school year, we have focused on writing. Every teacher has participated in a yearlong intensive professional development through University of South Carolina Upstate's Spartanburg Writing Project with Dawn Mitchell. This has resulted in a clear improvement in the quality of writing instruction and student performance in writing. All students have written in a variety of forms and disciplines. To support this effort, our staff implemented our "Bear Mail" system, an in-school mail service. Students and staff have written hundreds of letters to one another via this system. Our focus on writing has also provided an additional partnership opportunity with our neighbor, Spartanburg Methodist College. The college has established an SMC Essay Contest, and will recognize JSBES students during their awards day.

Our students have also been top-tier readers. This year, our students have made several challenges based on their reading performance. For instance, 3rd grade passed nearly 300 Accelerated Reader (AR) tests. This resulted in the principal wearing a purple wig for an entire school day. Not to be outdone, 2nd grade passed nearly 400 AR tests, resulting in the school's media specialist dressing like a Christmas tree. On a single Friday, the entire school committed itself to the task and passed nearly 600 AR tests (to celebrate this accomplishment, the principal has to sing to a schoolwide audience).

This year, Jesse S. Bobo Elementary School dedicated itself to becoming a leader in Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS). During the summer, a team of teachers and administrators attended a three day training on this system, designed an implementation plan, and trained the entire staff before students returned. The school's careful implementation of PBIS has led to a significant increase in positive behavior. Now noted as area experts in PBIS, Jesse S. Bobo Elementary's staff recently conducted a districtwide training so that others could emulate the model. This program has been a successful counterpart to our well-established OLWEUS Anti-Bullying Program.

JSBES seeks to build on these initiatives and others as we realize our vision of being a STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics) oriented school. We believe that these efforts and our newly established partnerships with five of our local colleges indicate significant progress in our efforts to have JSBES students well on the path to being college and career ready.

Frances Vaughan, Chair
Jesse S. Bobo Elementary School Improvement Council

Thomas Webster, Principal
Jesse S. Bobo Elementary School