

Underperformance to State Recognition in Two Years in Longview, TX

Ned E. Williams Elementary School



**Cynthia Wise,
Principal**



**557 students
Grades K to 5**



Study Island



**79% African American
20% Hispanic
90% economically
disadvantaged
22% ELLs**

The Challenge:

We know that schools are held to a high standard when comparing results, and in the case of Ned E. Williams, the school might have been slightly outperforming the general expectations, but it knew there was still work to be done to make its student population truly successful.

To reach the next level, the school needed a program that could focus on “hot spots” in background knowledge gaps that students struggle with as they move through curriculum. The key to filling those gaps was an ability to differentiate instruction, while still teaching to the state standards and preparing students for the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) test. Ned E. Williams knew the challenge with young students is keeping them focused on their learning, so its program needed to be engaging enough to keep the attention of its third, fourth, and fifth graders.

An elementary school in East Texas with 90 percent of its students economically disadvantaged has always found it challenging to reach its struggling students and prepare them for the rigorous STAAR assessments. Over the course of two years, Study Island has helped the school raise its achievement from underperforming to receiving distinction awards from the state.

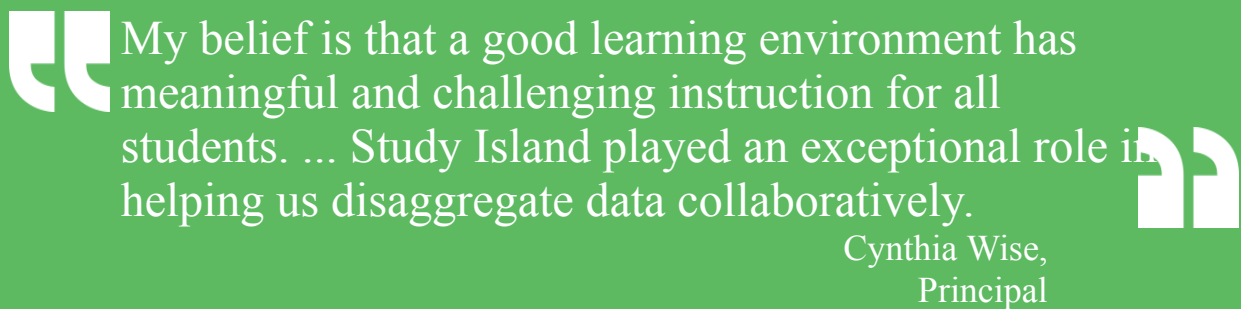
How They Did It:

“Prior to coming to this district as principal, I was an assistant principal in another district,” reported Ned E. Williams’ principal Cynthia Wise. “We started using Study Island back in 2007. It helped the children there, and I was determined that whenever I got my own school, I would use Study Island. It works, and it gets results!”

At Ned E. Williams, Study Island is used in a small-group blended learning environment that allows teachers to focus on the students' individual skills. This is also a great method for differentiation, as the teacher is able to circulate the room and spend more one-on-one time with students who might need extra attention.

Ned E. Williams has started getting creative when it comes to formative and cumulative assessments by establishing its own Quiz Bowl, powered by STAAR-aligned questions taken directly from the Study Island program. "The students enjoy the competitive nature of these assessments," said Wise.

Study Island has also helped inform the instruction of Wise's teaching staff. Wise stated, "My belief is that a good learning environment has meaningful and challenging instruction for all students. I believe that effective planning is important and is at the forefront when managing the classrooms and the school....Study Island played an exceptional role in helping us disaggregate data collaboratively."



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Success:

In the past two years, since the establishment of the more rigorous STAAR testing, Ned E. Williams has experienced a rapid upswing in its schoolwide achievement data. Reading scores have jumped 11 percent, from 79 percent to 90 percent. Math scores have been even more impressive, coming in at a 19-percent increase to 95 percent. Science improvement has been more modest, increasing from 69 percent to 75 percent.

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Cynthia Wise,
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The Future:

The goal at Ned E. Williams has always been that all students who come through the door can succeed, even though the demographic deck might have been stacked against them. Wise explained, “At Ned E. Williams Elementary School, we have challenging programs that enable our students to become independent learners who are capable of high levels of achievement, and [we have] effective teachers. The faculty, staff, community, and principal work together to achieve a positive school climate and emanate the characteristics described above so that the benefits will be afforded to all. I highly recommend that you use Study Island; the results will be evident and significant.”

For more information:

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