

St. Lucas Has Come On Board!

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Bay View is building a reputation as a hot place to live and work. Known for its eclectic mix of residents and innovative restaurants, most of the buzz centers around this South Side community’s dramatic transformation into one of Milwaukee’s hippest neighborhoods. But Bay View is also home to a different kind of transformation.

Tucked away on a side street off of Kinnickinnic Avenue is a cheery brick and stone building. On the outside it may not look like a hub for education reform, but appearances can be deceiving. Here, the educators of St. Lucas Lutheran School are quietly transforming a 141-year-old institution into one of Milwaukee’s best success stories.

St. Lucas serves children in three-year-old kindergarten through eighth grade. In recent years, enrollment grew by 73 percent to more than 200 children. Sixty-one percent of students are eligible for the federal government’s free and reduced meal program, and about 25 percent receive targeted intervention services outside of the classroom to help with a variety of learning challenges, such as

dyslexia, autism, and speech or visual impairments.

Like many high-quality schools, St. Lucas students take a test called the Measures of Academic Progress (MAP), which compares their academic results with students across

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America. St. Lucas students are making steady improvements on the assessment. By the fall of 2013, 56 percent of students outperformed their national peers in math, and 60 percent did so in reading. On the Wisconsin state test, St. Lucas students outperformed the district average in all subjects.

“After a thorough vetting process, the Center for Urban Teaching (CfUT) is proud to add St. Lucas to our list of ‘Partner Schools,’” said Krysta DeBoer, executive director for CfUT.

St. Lucas and CfUT are working together to assist teachers in achieving their professional development goals and the team’s school-wide objectives.

“Even Aaron Rodgers needed a coach,” Principal Mike Koestler said. “We want to do everything possible to ensure students succeed, and that starts with supporting our teachers.”

Although the relationship between St. Lucas and CfUT is only a few months old, Mr. Koestler said the school is already seeing results and teachers agree.

“My coach’s enthusiasm and energy is infectious and inspiring,” said Ryan Randall, a math teacher at the school. “He provides practical strategies and tools that have helped me increase the rigor in my classroom. Working with CfUT has taken my classroom to a place I did not know was possible.”

Stay tuned. We will continue to keep you updated on St. Lucas!

