

2014 TERREL H. BELL RECIPIENT

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St. Patrick Catholic School, in rural Kingman, Kansas, was built by farmers and workers during the Great Depression. A Catholic school in the widest sense of the word, St. Patrick's does not charge tuition (the Diocese of Wichita is the only stewardship diocese in the nation). More than half of St. Patrick's 165 students are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch, and yet in 2008, the community rallied again and built a major new addition during another recession.

Robert Lyall arrived at St. Patrick's with a reputation as a skilled administrator for schools transitioning through building projects and was proud of his nickname: "Bob the Builder." He shepherded the school through demolition, trailers, and construction, winning the Governor's award for outstanding achievement—the first of six consecutive awards—

even as the school was rebuilt. As the school's physical structure changed, Lyall worked to shift instruction and the faculty philosophy. In dialogue with staff, he led teachers in creating Professional Learning Communities and adopting data analysis and differentiated instruction; a certified special education teacher was added to the staff. With the success of St. Patrick's data use and differentiated teaching, Lyall now trains other diocese schools in data driven instruction, with striking results.

Mr. Lyall brought in professionals to talk about their careers and hosted career days, with an emphasis on degrees in science, business, and agriculture that augment small town life rather than replace it. St. Patrick's fosters life skills to prepare students for college, careers, and life in more culturally diverse communities. A cultural diversity plan prepares students to welcome the ever growing number of ethnic minorities into their school and to encounter a diverse world. Through an exchange program with an inner city, mostly African American Catholic School, students visit a working farm, often for the first time, while Kingman students learn to dispel many stereotypes about urban life. St. Patrick students also donate countless hours of time in community service and have monthly supply drives to benefit a variety of church and civic organizations.

With community support, St. Patrick's added Art and Spanish to the curriculum, and worked with the public school to bring Title I and individualized, adaptive computer programs into the school as well. Projectors and smart boards were added to every classroom, and teachers began contributing to a sleek new website, improving communication with parents and the community. In-services helped teachers learn how to use the new resources, including clickers, Chromebooks, and tablets, to differentiate instruction. Mr. Lyall also spearheaded the selection of new textbooks to support learning to Common Core standards. To foster holistic growth, he introduced a comprehensive and consistent behavior program emphasizing respect and personal accountability. Physical education and a high-quality lunch program contribute to student health.

Robert Lyall's leadership philosophy has three overlapping components. The first is creating teams cognizant of individual differences and collective strengths, developing meaningful, complementary, and interconnected roles that celebrate people's abilities and build on their strengths. The second is offering support through a warm and inclusive environment where everyone knows they are important and valued and where students feel safe, respected, and push to be and do their best. The third element, connection, supports a network of interest and support where people express their views openly and tackle conflict head-on by naming it and dealing with it.