

Blended Learning Classroom Snapshot:

Paula Barr, Second Grade Teacher
Quail Run Elementary School
Lawrence Public Schools, Lawrence, Kansas



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Blended Learning

noun: \ˈblendəd ˈlɜrn-ɪŋ\

An education model that combines online learning with face-to-face learning in the classroom.

Authentic Engagement

Walk into second-grade teacher Paula Barr's classroom, and you won't see desks lined up in rows. You won't see Barr at the front of the classroom. In fact, you probably won't be able to identify the front of the classroom.

That's because Barr, along with more than 150 other teachers in Kansas' Lawrence Public Schools have adopted blended learning. During class time, students work in pairs, small teams, and individually—collaborating, discussing, reading, watching or creating videos, and teaching each

other—using Blackboard. Barr floats among her students to provide assistance and enrichment where needed.

Since adopting the blended learning model, Barr says her students are 100% more engaged, and learning is 100% individualized based on each student's ability. She is able to give attention to students who need it most, while accelerated students can move ahead at their own pace.

“Every single student is engaged all the time, all day long.” PAULA BARR

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“When I started with blended [learning], it was a total change in my teaching. My passion for coming in and doing my job in such a different way is really inspiring.” PAULA BARR

Blended learning increases students’...

- Self reliance
- Problem-solving ability
- Excitement about learning and coming to school
- Collaboration and discussion skills

A Look Inside Paula Barr’s Classroom

- **ONLINE** — Barr records instructional videos for students to watch in class and at home. If they don’t understand a concept, they can pause, rewind, repeat.
- **IN CLASS** — Students work together watching or creating videos, collaborating with teachers or other students in pairs or small groups, asking questions, reading, using Blackboard, and helping each other solve problems.
- **AT HOME** — Students share lessons with their parents via Blackboard
- **CLASS MOTTO** — The person who’s talking is the person who’s learning! The person who’s doing is the person who’s learning!

Best Practices for Successful Blended Learning

1. **ADOPT IT SLOWLY.** Spend time learning the technology and utilizing the tools and resources available through Blackboard in the beginning, and save time in the long run.
2. **BE A LEARNING ARCHITECT.** Design content in ways that help students build their own learning pathways.
3. **SHARE THE SPOTLIGHT.** Give students the freedom to choose partners, how they work, and what their assignment will look like (journal, video, song, website, discussion). Then let them teach each other, providing assistance where needed.

“After 32 years teaching, I am more energized about teaching and more proud of what I do because of blended learning than I ever have been before. I know my students better; I know they are 100% engaged from the minute they walk in the door until the minute they leave.” PAULA BARR

“Blackboard is a place for me to house all information that I want my students to access. When they walk into the classroom they are already getting started—they grab a computer, they check their email, they check Blackboard to see what’s new for the day.” PAULA BARR

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Learn how Lawrence is disrupting the factory model by embracing blended learning district-wide. [Watch Now.](#)

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