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Project-based education allows Danville students to learn without being cooped up

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As a 2013 District of Innovation, Danville Independent Schools has fully implemented project-based learning into their curriculum for the 2013-14 school year.

Under the plan, all students begin working towards state ACT benchmarks beginning in the 6th grade through classes designed to provide real-world learning opportunities in courses which emphasize group interaction, research, design and community action.

The early returns show the program is making a difference with Danville students.

In 2011, 34% of Danville students met all ACT benchmarks. That number rose to 70% in 2013. In addition, Danville went from 110th to 24th in state rankings.

Danville Independent Schools staff members believe the curriculum is preparing kids ready for the 21st century workplace.

Most students in the Danville district have embraced the project-based concept. They talk about how it's fun to go to school every day. While working towards ACT benchmarks officially begins in the 6th grade, school officials agree that it starts even earlier than that. In the Danville district, project-based learning starts at the elementary school level and some 4th grade students. One of the projects that the students are doing is building a chicken coop, and they say it isn't for the birds.