Using Short Cycle Assessments Data for Continuous Improvement

Dr. Michael D. Kuchar, Superintendent of Schools
Dr. Frank V. Auriemma, Director of EE4NJ

BERGENFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
CHILDREN COME FIRST

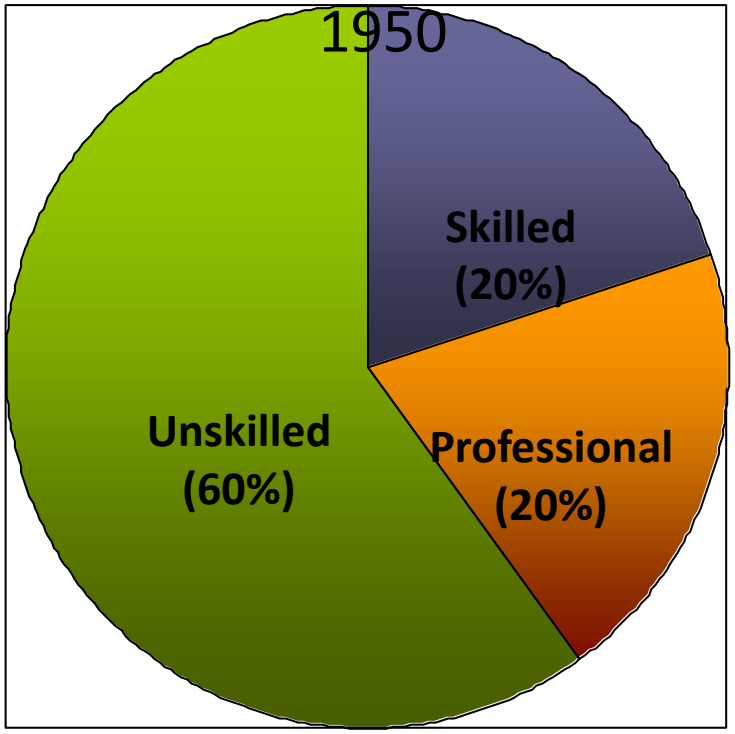
The Problem

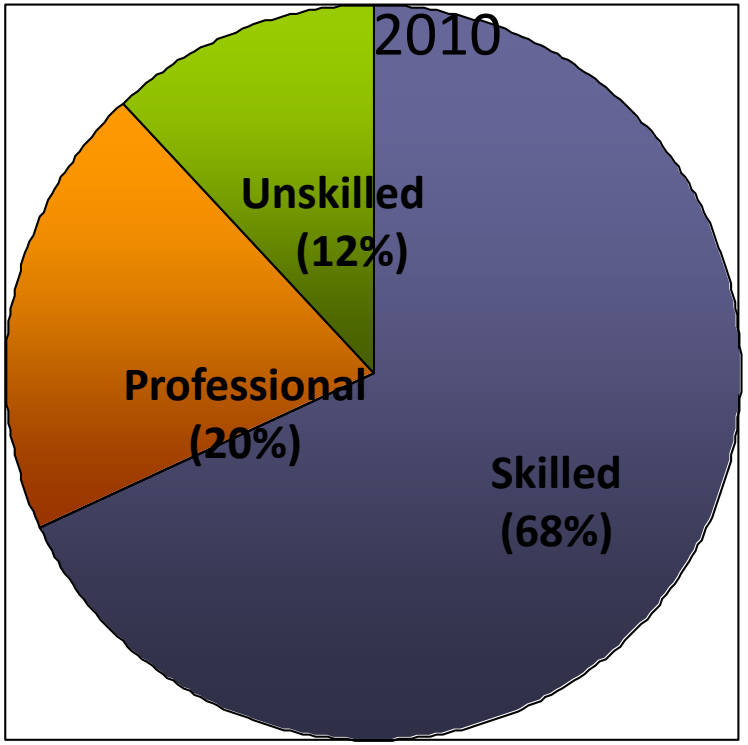
- The national high school graduation rate is reported to be between 72-75 percent, dependent upon the data source. Currently, one in four students drops out before he/she finishes high school. That's one every 26 seconds or more than one million students a year.

- *America's Promise Alliance*

857 empty desks = number of dropouts from American schools every hour of every day

Changes in the Workforce





United States Department of Labor, 2010

Developing Crisis in U.S.

- **U.S. Students Need 21st Century Skills to Compete in a Global Economy**
- A country's economy becomes more productive as the proportion of educated workers increases, since educated workers are able to more efficiently carry out tasks that require literacy and critical thinking.

US Educational Reform Movement

1)PARCC- Partnerships for College and Career Readiness

2)National Common Core Standards

3)Effective Teacher Reform

The Chicago Teacher Strike

- The Chicago teachers strike drags into a second week, after a representative group of the Chicago Teachers Union decided over the weekend not to end the walkout even though union leaders and school officials had reached a tentative contract deal. The strike in the third-largest school system in the country is affecting more than 350,000 children.

Q. What's the sticking point?

A. Among the major issues, the teachers are negotiating over the length of the school day, **objecting to their evaluations being tied to performance** and fretting about potential job losses.

CNN (September 17, 2012)

Management's Motive in Chicago

In 2010 high school graduation rate for Chicago Public Schools was 55.8 percent.

During the same time period, only .03% of all Chicago Public School teachers received an unsatisfactory rating on annual evaluations.

Rethinking Teacher Evaluations: Findings from the Excellence in Teaching Project Chicago Public Schools (2010). Consortium on Chicago School Research by the Urban Education Institute, University of Chicago.

The Widget Effect

- Fewer than one percent of the 40,000 teachers covered by the study had ever received a lower than "satisfactory" rating on an evaluation.

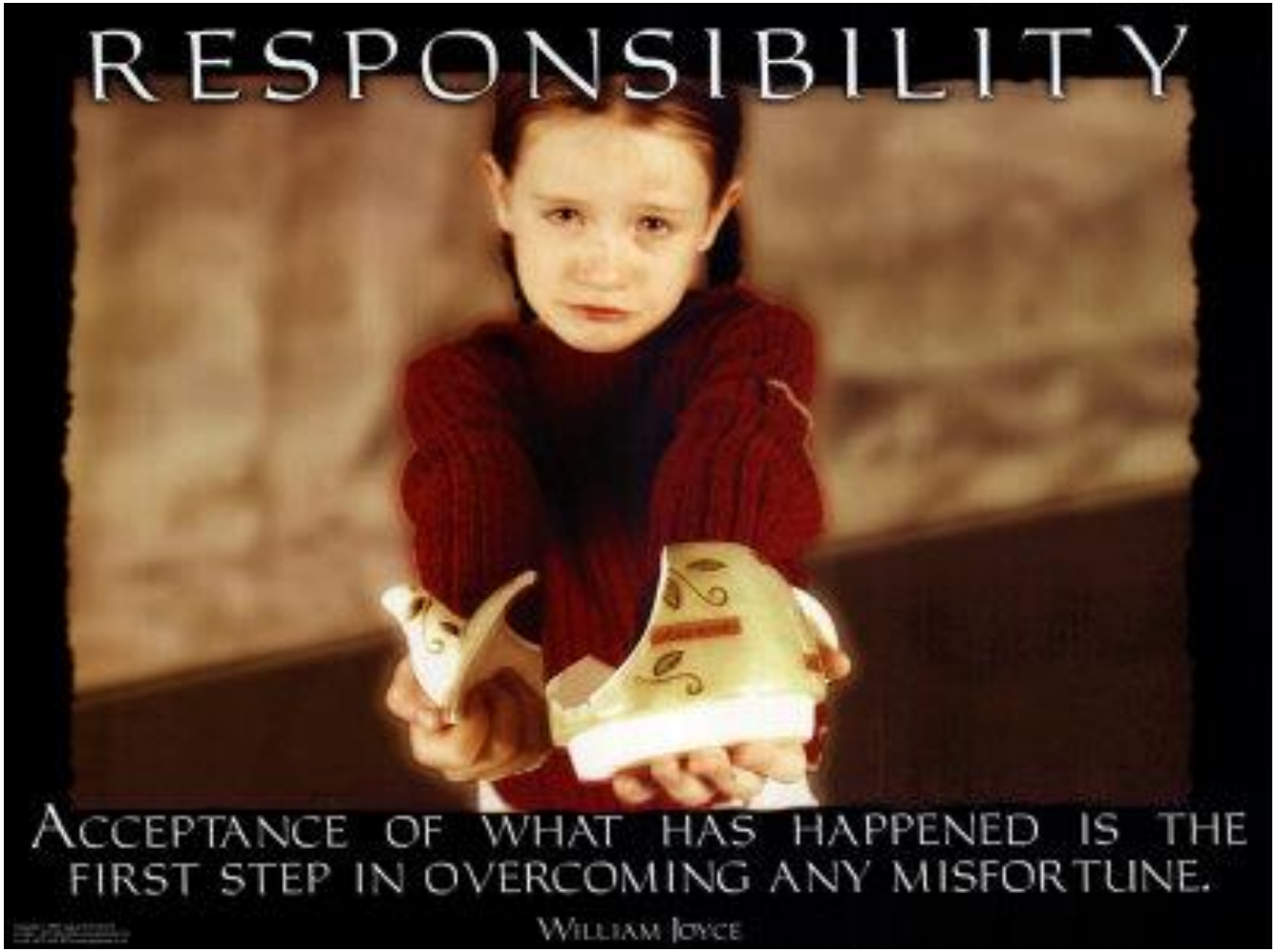
- Effective teachers are the key to student success. Yet our school systems treat all teachers as interchangeable parts, not professionals. Excellence goes unrecognized and poor performance goes unaddressed. This indifference to performance disrespects teachers and gambles with students' lives.

- *The Teacher Project (2009)*

Randi Weingarten, American Federation of Teachers President

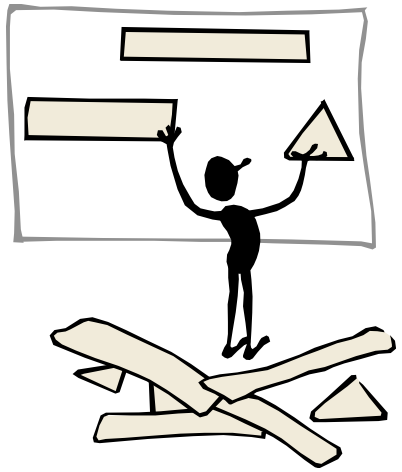
"…With rare exceptions, teacher evaluation procedures are broken, cursory, perfunctory, superficial and inconsistent.

We all have to take responsibility to create positive change!



Step One- Using Data to paint a picture of your reality

"Everyone thinks of changing the world, but no one thinks of changing himself."



Leo Tolstoy

Short Cycle Assessments: relevance & usefulness

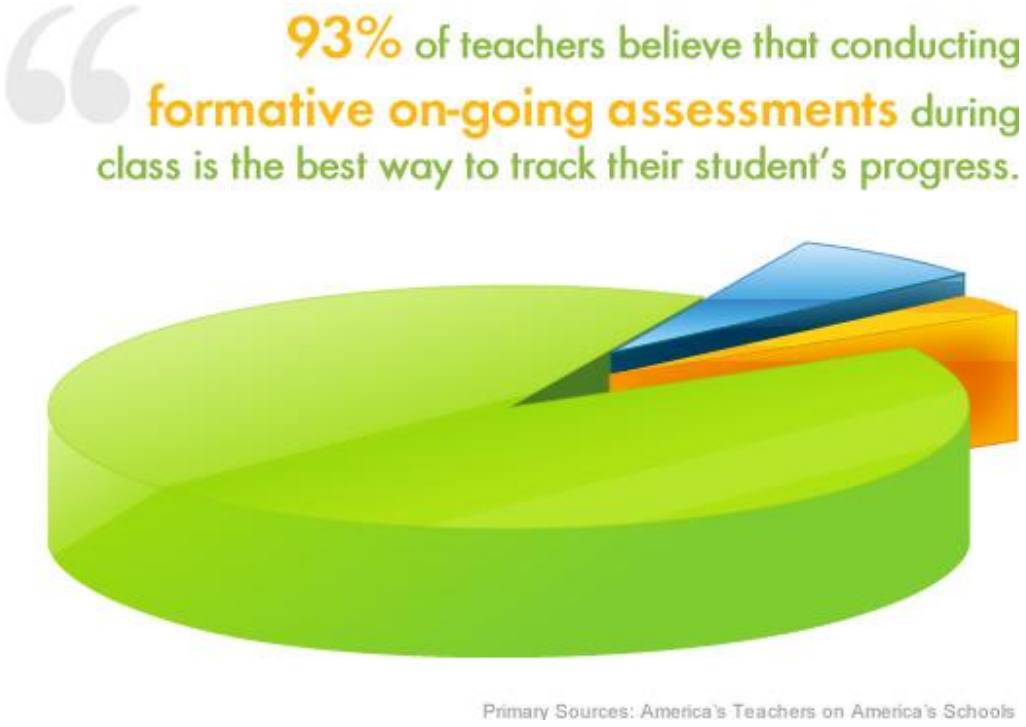
- Short cycle assessments provide initial benchmark and baseline data. Teaches can use that data to customize and differentiate instructional planning for the class, individual students and groups comprised of students with similar skills.
- It enables faculty to address RTI and other needs through focused and timely intervention and remediation.
- Streamlines assessment and instruction with NY Regents, COMMON CORE, NY Grade 3-8 ELA and Math Test, NY Grade 4 &8 Science Test, New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test as well as SAT and Advance Placement Tests
- Designates the prerequisite knowledge and advanced knowledge needed while helping guide and support targeted instructional planning.

Without a specific percentage, what is student growth?

- Short cycle assessments provide a snapshot of student growth from September to June and can be measured and monitored quarterly or with much shorter cycles.
- SGPs can be determined for each student and each class in a timely manner.
- Data dashboard can be customized for the teacher, principal, superintendent or any specific school professional

Formative Assessment

Insight 360 reports . . .



Formative Assessments

Renaissance Learning™

- State-aligned computerized adaptive assessments that provide accurate, useful information about student achievement and growth
- Tailored reports give educators information to guide decisions
- Ren Learn classroom resources help teachers directly apply assessment results to instructional planning

STAR Reading™ ENTERPRISE

FIVE DOMAINS
(Standards Based)

1. Word Knowledge & Skills
2. Comprehension Strategies and Constructing Meaning
3. Analyzing Literary Text
4. Understanding Author's Craft
5. Analyzing Argument and Evaluating Text

36 Skills / 400 Grade-Level Skills

STAR Early Literacy™ ENTERPRISE

THREE DOMAINS
(Standards Based)

1. Word Knowledge and Skills
2. Comprehension Strategies and Constructing Meaning
3. Numbers and Operations

10 Sub-domains
41 Skill Sets / 145 SKILLS

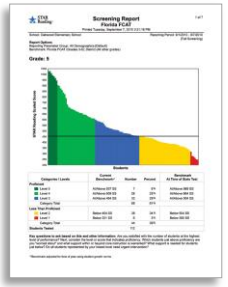
STAR Math™ ENTERPRISE

FOUR DOMAINS
(Standards Based)

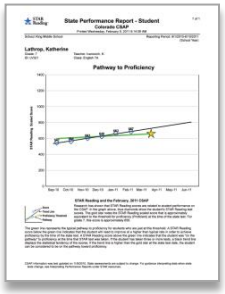
1. Numbers and Operations
2. Algebra
3. Geometry and Measurement
4. Data Analysis, Statistics and Probability

54 Skill Sets / 550 SKILLS

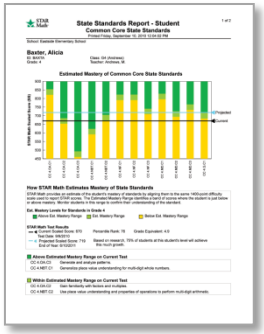
STAR Enterprise™



Universal Screening Based on State Test

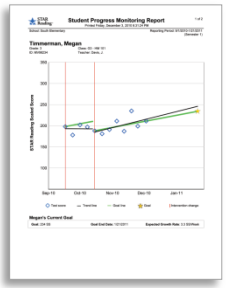


Predict State Test Proficiency



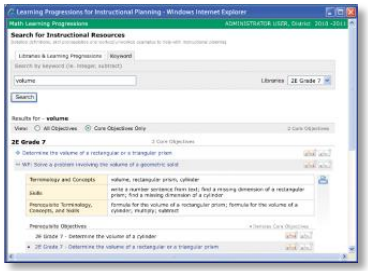
State Standards

Common Core State Standards



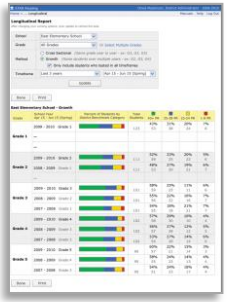
Progress Monitoring

Support for Differentiated Instruction



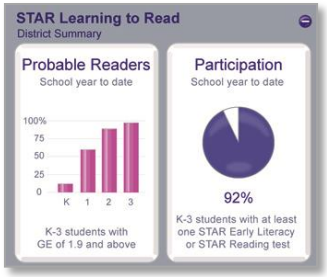
Learning Progressions

Instructional Resources



Year-to-year Longitudinal Progress

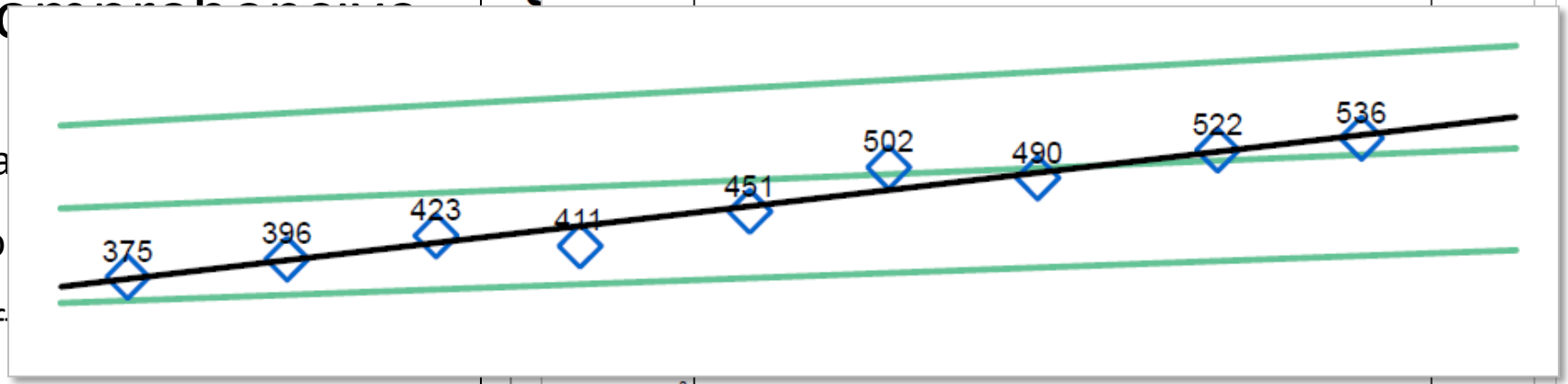
Instructional Planning



Learning to Read Dashboard

Practical and Co

- Dia
- No
- Dif
- Growth Trends
- Universal Screening
- Progress Monitoring



STAR Reading

Annual Progress Report

Printed Wednesday, May 26, 2010 3:14:25 PM

School: Liberty Elementary School

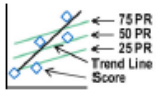
Reporting Period: 9/01/2009-6/11/2010

Class: HR101 Beeman

Grade: 4

Teacher: Beeman, Alice

2009-2010



Diamonds (blue) show scores for each STAR assessment in the school year. For three or more scores, a trend line (black) is displayed. The three lines in the background (green) approximate scaled score progress based on percentile ranking of same-grade students who participated in the national norming study. For additional information, see the *STAR Reading Technical Manual*, found in the software.

Test	Date Range	Number of Students	Scaled Score	GE	PR	PR Range	NCE	IRL	ZPD
1	09/13/2009 - 09/15/2009	29	375	3.3	33	29-35	40.7	3.2	2.7-3.8
2	10/14/2009 - 10/16/2009	29	396	3.4	36	30-41	42.4	3.4	2.8-3.9
3	11/12/2009 - 11/14/2009	29	423	3.7	40	35-43	44.4	3.5	2.9-4.2
4	12/10/2009 - 12/12/2009	29	411	3.6	35	33-47	42.0	3.5	2.8-4.1
5	01/12/2010 - 01/14/2010	29	451	4.0	40	35-48	44.8	3.7	3.0-4.5
6	02/08/2010 - 02/10/2010	29	502	4.6	54	49-59	52.1	4.2	3.2-5.1
7	03/09/2010 - 03/11/2010	29	490	4.5	48	42-53	48.8	4.1	3.2-5.0
8	04/13/2010 - 04/15/2010	29	522	4.8	54	48-60	52.2	4.3	3.3-5.2
9	05/11/2010 - 05/13/2010	29	536	5.1	54	49-59	52.3	4.4	3.5-5.5

Which students aren't reaching benchmark?

State Screening Report

STAR Reading

Screening Report
New Jersey ASK

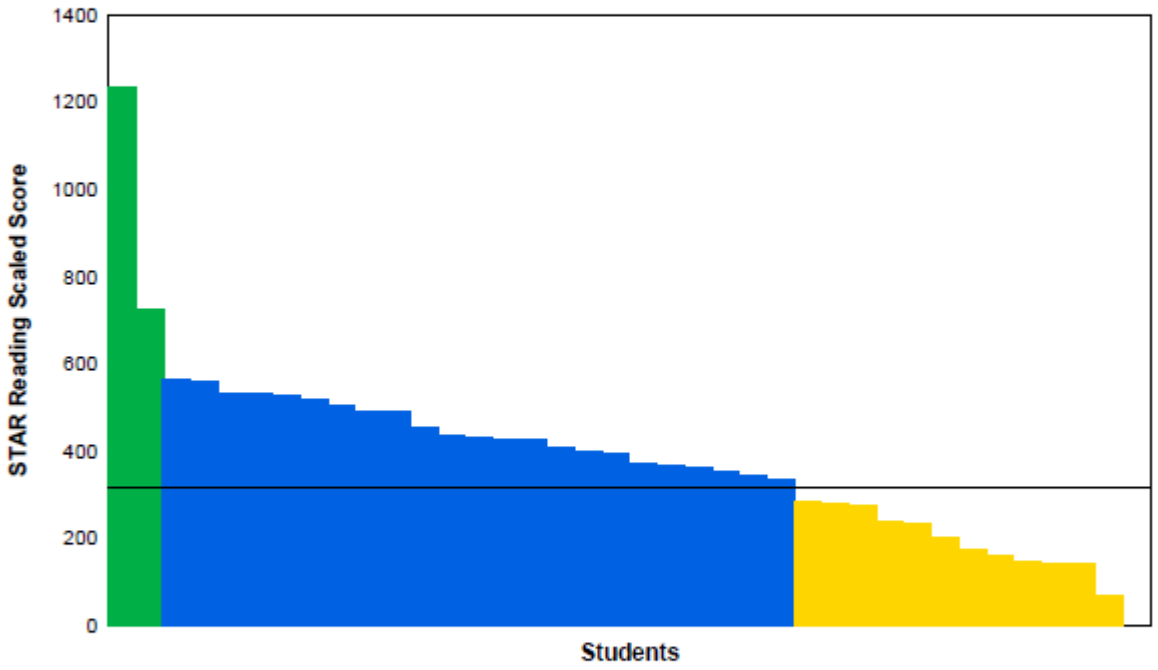
Printed Tuesday, December 13, 2011 1:57:27 PM

School: East Elementary School

Reporting Period: 9/1/2011 - 9/15/2011 (Fall)

Report Options
Reporting Parameter Group: All Demographics [Default]

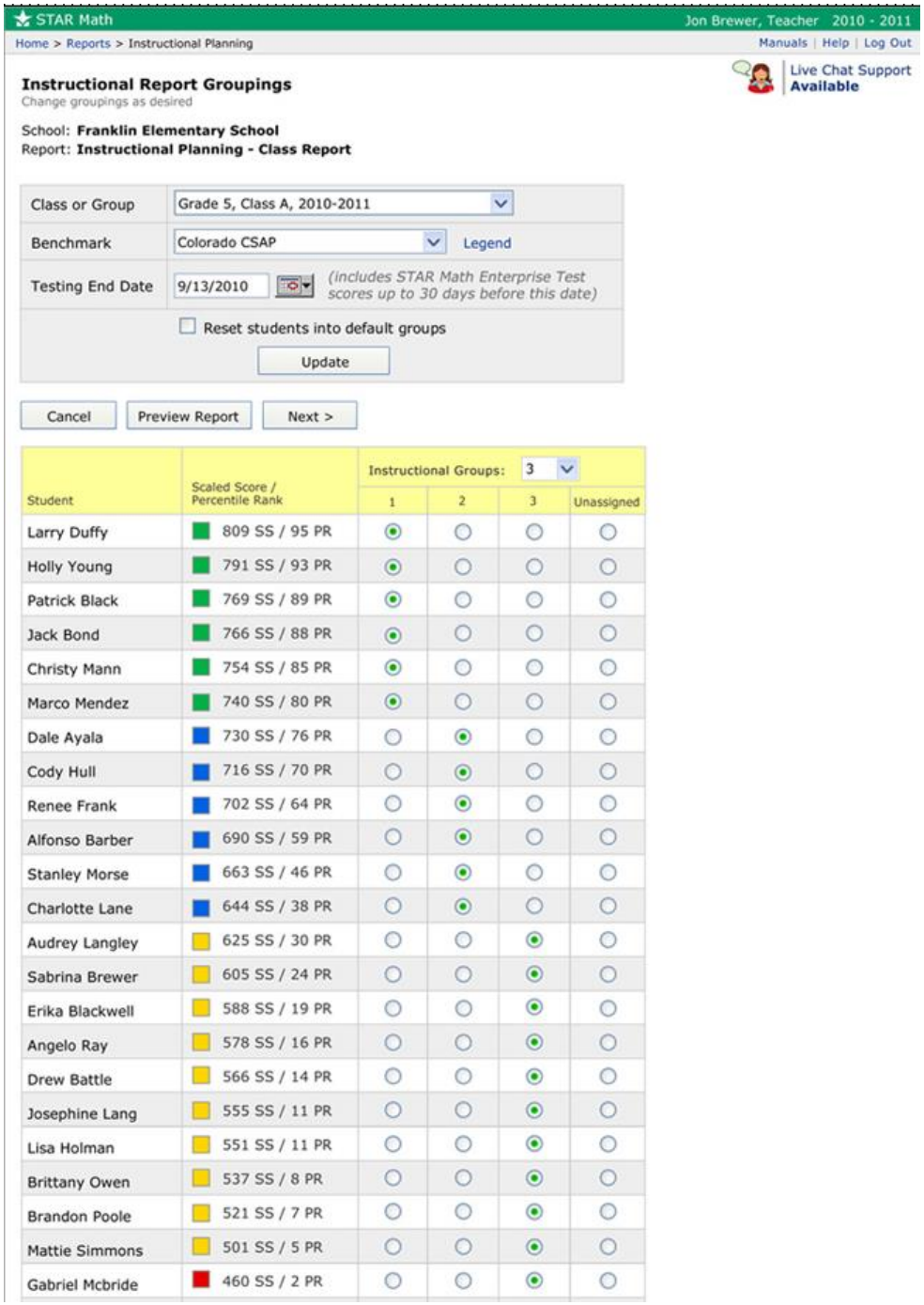
Grade: 3



Categories / Levels	Current Benchmark	Number	Percent	Benchmark At Time of State Test
Proficient				
Advanced Proficient	At/Above 615 SS	2	5%	At/Above 677 SS
Proficient	At/Above 319 SS	23	62%	At/Above 414 SS
Category Total		25	68%	
Less Than Proficient				
Partially Proficient	Below 318 SS	12	32%	Below 414 SS
Category Total		12	32%	

How can I best target instruction?

Instructional Grouping



What are my students ready to learn next?

Instructional Planning Report

STAR Math

Instructional Planning Report

for Lisa Stone

Printed Monday, September 13, 2010 10:03:15 AM

School: Oakwood Elementary School
Class: Math 4A

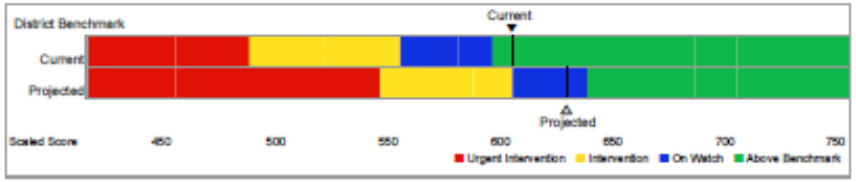
Teacher: Mrs. M. Adams
Grade: 4

STAR Math Enterprise Test Results

Test Date: 09/13/2010 Current SS (Scaled Score): 602 Projected SS for 06/10/11: 634

Algebra Readiness: Lisa has not yet met the end of year algebra readiness grade level expectations for grade 4.

Lisa's Current Performance



Skills to Learn

Skills listed below are suggested skills Lisa should work on based on her last STAR Math Enterprise Test. These skills should be challenging, but not too difficult for Lisa. Combine this information with your own knowledge of the student and use your professional judgment when designing an instructional program.

Numbers and Operations

Lisa understands larger numbers, including place value, and knows basic multiplication facts. Lisa should practice multiplying multi-digit numbers. Lisa should continue practicing multiplication and division facts until automaticity is achieved.

Skills to Learn
1. C Multiply a 3- or 4-digit whole number by a 1-digit whole number
2. C Multiply a 2-digit whole number by a 2-digit whole number
3. Multiply a 3-digit whole number by a 2-digit whole number
4. Multiply three 1- and 2-digit whole numbers
5. C WP: Multiply a multi-digit whole number by a 1-digit whole number

Algebra

Lisa has a beginning understanding of numeric expressions and equations. Lisa should practice identifying and extending growing and repeating number, nonnumeric, and pictorial patterns.

Skills to Learn
1. C Identify a missing term in a multiplication or a division number pattern
2. Extend a growing pictorial or nonnumeric pattern
3. C Identify a missing figure in a growing pictorial or nonnumeric pattern
4. C Identify a missing figure in a repeating pictorial or nonnumeric pattern
5. C Generate a table of paired numbers based on a rule

Geometry and Measurement

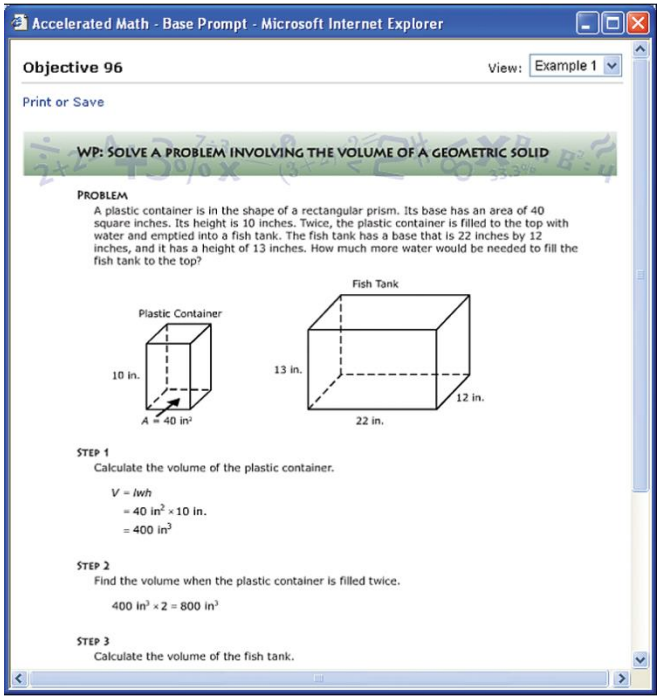
Lisa has an understanding of shapes, lines, and angles. Lisa should practice conversions of customary and metric units using whole numbers.

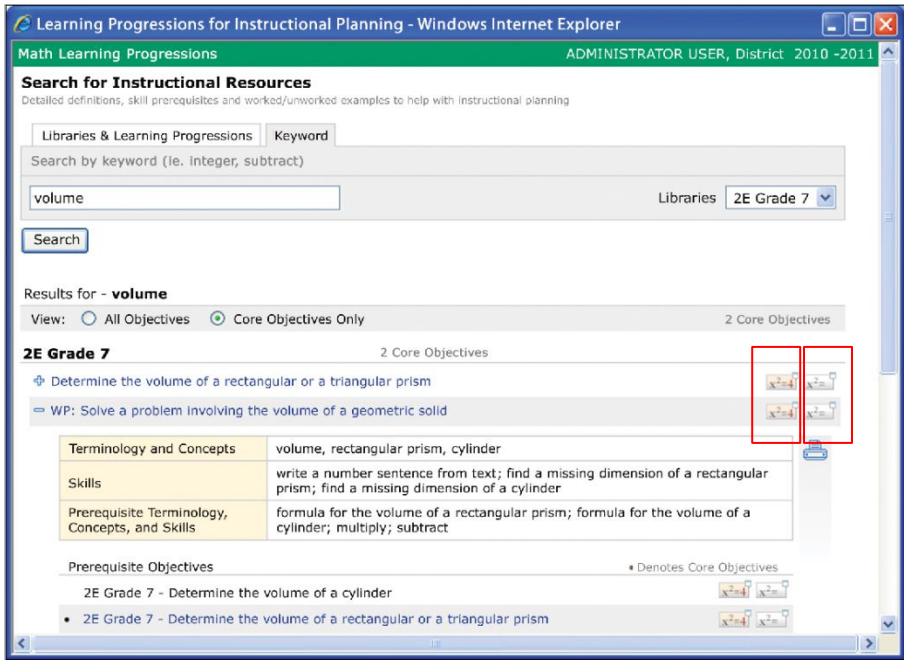
Skills to Learn
1. Convert between customary units of capacity using whole numbers
2. Convert between customary units of weight using whole numbers
3. Convert between metric units of capacity using whole numbers

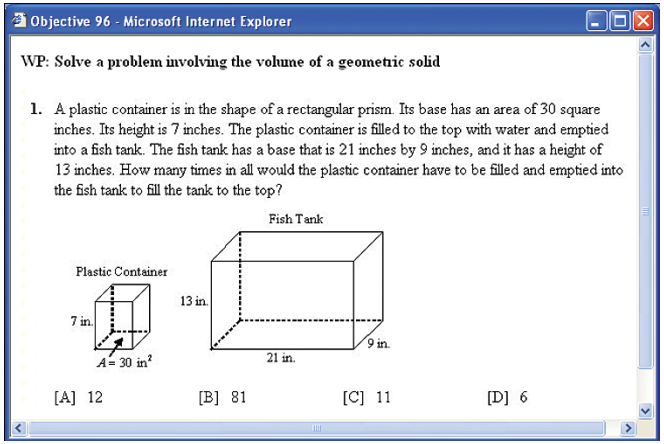
C Designates a core skill. Core skills identify the most critical skills to learn at each grade level.

Where can I find instructional resources for the skills I need to teach?

Learning Progressions

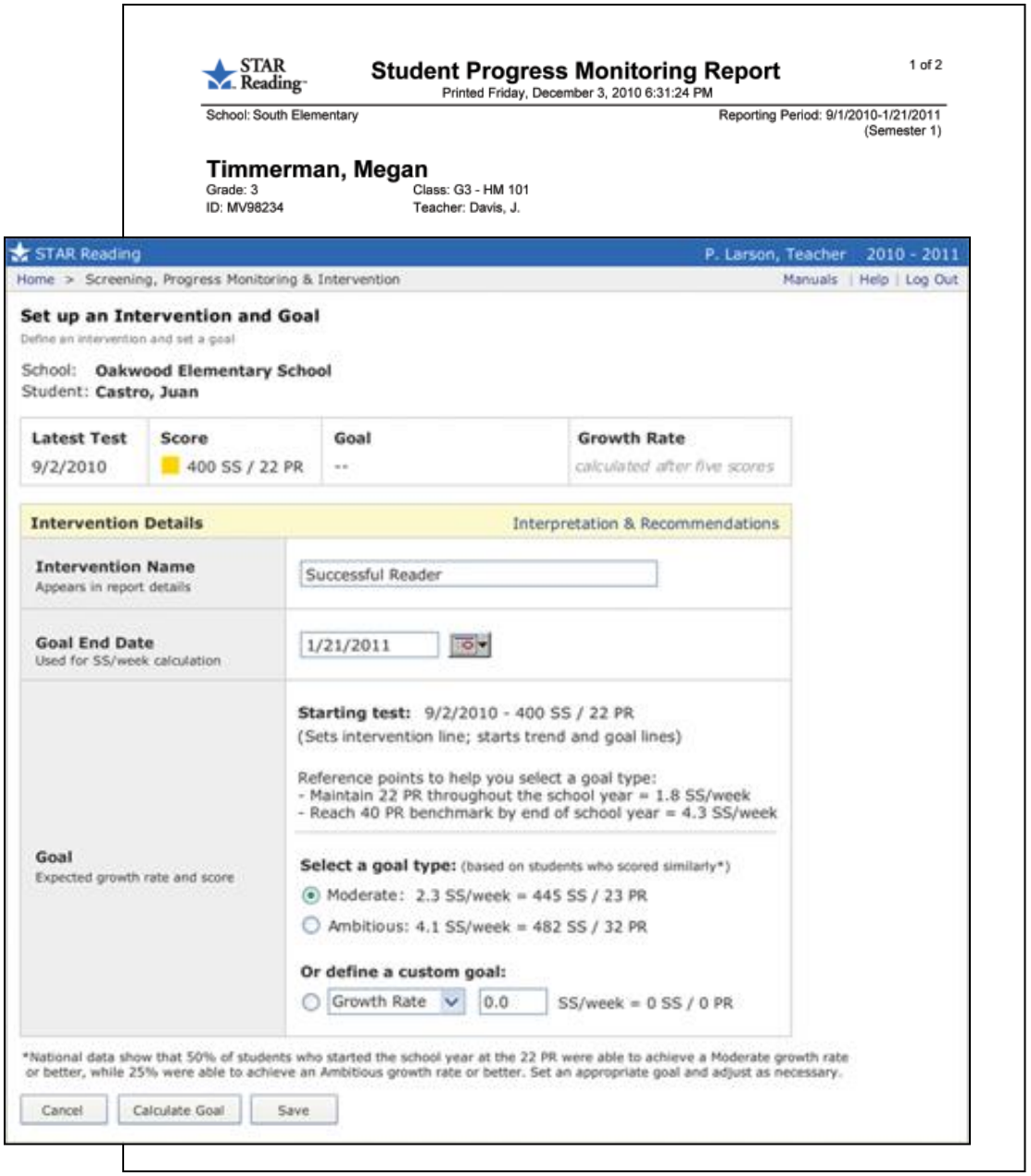






How well are my students responding to intervention?

Student Progress Monitoring Report (Tully)



STAR Reading

Student Progress Monitoring Report

Printed Friday, December 3, 2010 6:31:24 PM

1 of 2

School: South Elementary

Reporting Period: 9/1/2010-1/21/2011 (Semester 1)

Timmerman, Megan

Grade: 3
ID: MV98234

Class: G3 - HM 101
Teacher: Davis, J.

STAR Reading — P. Larson, Teacher 2010 - 2011

Home > Screening, Progress Monitoring & Intervention — Manuals | Help | Log Out

Set up an Intervention and Goal

Define an intervention and set a goal

School: **Oakwood Elementary School**
Student: **Castro, Juan**

Latest Test	Score	Goal	Growth Rate
9/2/2010	400 SS / 22 PR	--	*calculated after five scores*

Intervention Details — Interpretation & Recommendations

Intervention Name
Appears in report details: Successful Reader

Goal End Date
Used for SS/week calculation: 1/21/2011

Goal
Expected growth rate and score

Starting test: 9/2/2010 - 400 SS / 22 PR
(Sets intervention line; starts trend and goal lines)

Reference points to help you select a goal type:
- Maintain 22 PR throughout the school year = 1.8 SS/week
- Reach 40 PR benchmark by end of school year = 4.3 SS/week

Select a goal type: (based on students who scored similarly*)
- (•) Moderate: 2.3 SS/week = 445 SS / 23 PR
- ( ) Ambitious: 4.1 SS/week = 482 SS / 32 PR

Or define a custom goal:
( ) Growth Rate 0.0 SS/week = 0 SS / 0 PR

*National data show that 50% of students who started the school year at the 22 PR were able to achieve a Moderate growth rate or better, while 25% were able to achieve an Ambitious growth rate or better. Set an appropriate goal and adjust as necessary.

Cancel | Calculate Goal | Save

STAR Reading™ Performance Report

Printed Thursday, March 18, 2009 2:47:13 PM

District: Renaissance District

Last Consolidated: 3/18/2009 12:01 AM
Reporting Period: 09/02/2009-03/18/2010 (Outlook RP)

Report Options
Reporting Parameter Group: All Demographics [Default]
Reporting Level: District
Group By: School

East Elementary

	Student Performance Outlook[2] On the March 2010 State Reading Accountability Assessment										STAR Reading Participation 09/02/2009-03/18/2010			
	Less Than Proficient				Proficient									
	Academic Warning		Approaches Standards		Meets Standards		Exceeds Standards		Exemplary		Tested		Not Tested	
Grade	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
3	94	16	135	24	131	23	130	22	89	15	579	95	32	5
4	98	19	72	14	121	23	124	24	105	20	520	94	35	6
5	119	20	117	19	131	22	106	17	130	22	603	97	21	3
6	117	23	72	14	93	18	129	25	105	20	516	94	33	6
Summary	428	19	396	18	476	22	489	22	429	19	2,218	95	121	5

North Elementary

	Student Performance Outlook On the March 2010 State Reading Accountability Assessment										STAR Reading Participation 09/02/2009-03/18/2010			
	Less Than Proficient				Proficient									
	Academic Warning		Approaches Standards		Meets Standards		Exceeds Standards		Exemplary		Tested		Not Tested	
Grade	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
3	73	15	92	18	107	22	92	18	135	27	499	97	17	3
4	73	14	96	19	110	22	133	26	97	19	509	95	26	5
5	90	17	87	16	103	20	133	25	115	22	528	95	26	5
6	109	23	135	29	73	16	78	17	70	15	465	96	20	4
Summary	345	17	410	20	393	20	436	22	417	21	2,001	96	89	4

displays the statistical tendency of the scores. If the trend line is higher than the gold star at the state test date, the student can be considered to be on the pathway toward proficiency.

CSAP information was last updated on 11/9/2010. State assessments are subject to change. For guidance interpreting data when state tests change, see Interpreting Performance Reports under STAR resources.

Are my students mastering State Standards?

State Standards Report

STAR Math

State Standards Report - Student

Common Core State Standards

Printed Friday, September 10, 2010 12:04:02 PM

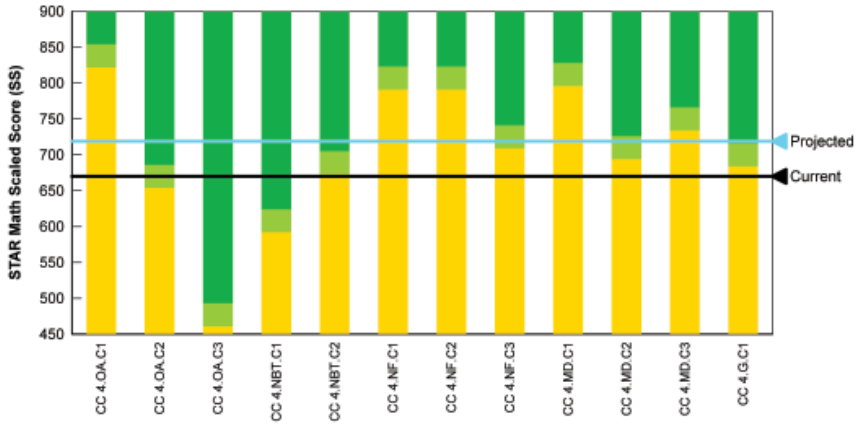
School: Eastside Elementary School

Baxter, Alicia

ID: BAXTA
Grade: 4

Class: G4 (Andrews)
Teacher: Andrews, M.

Estimated Mastery of Common Core State Standards



How STAR Math Estimates Mastery of State Standards

STAR Math provides an estimate of the student's mastery of standards by aligning them to the same 1400-point difficulty scale used to report STAR scores. The Estimated Mastery Range identifies a band of scores where the student is just below or above mastery. Monitor students in this range to confirm their understanding of the standard.

Est. Mastery Levels for Standards in Grade 4

Above Est. Mastery Range | Est. Mastery Range | Below Est. Mastery Range

STAR Math Test Results

Current Scaled Score: 670 — Percentile Rank: 76 — Grade Equivalent: 4.9
Test Date: 9/9/2010

Projected Scaled Score: 719
End of Year: 6/10/2011

Based on research, 75% of students at this student's level will achieve this much growth.

Above Estimated Mastery Range on Current Test

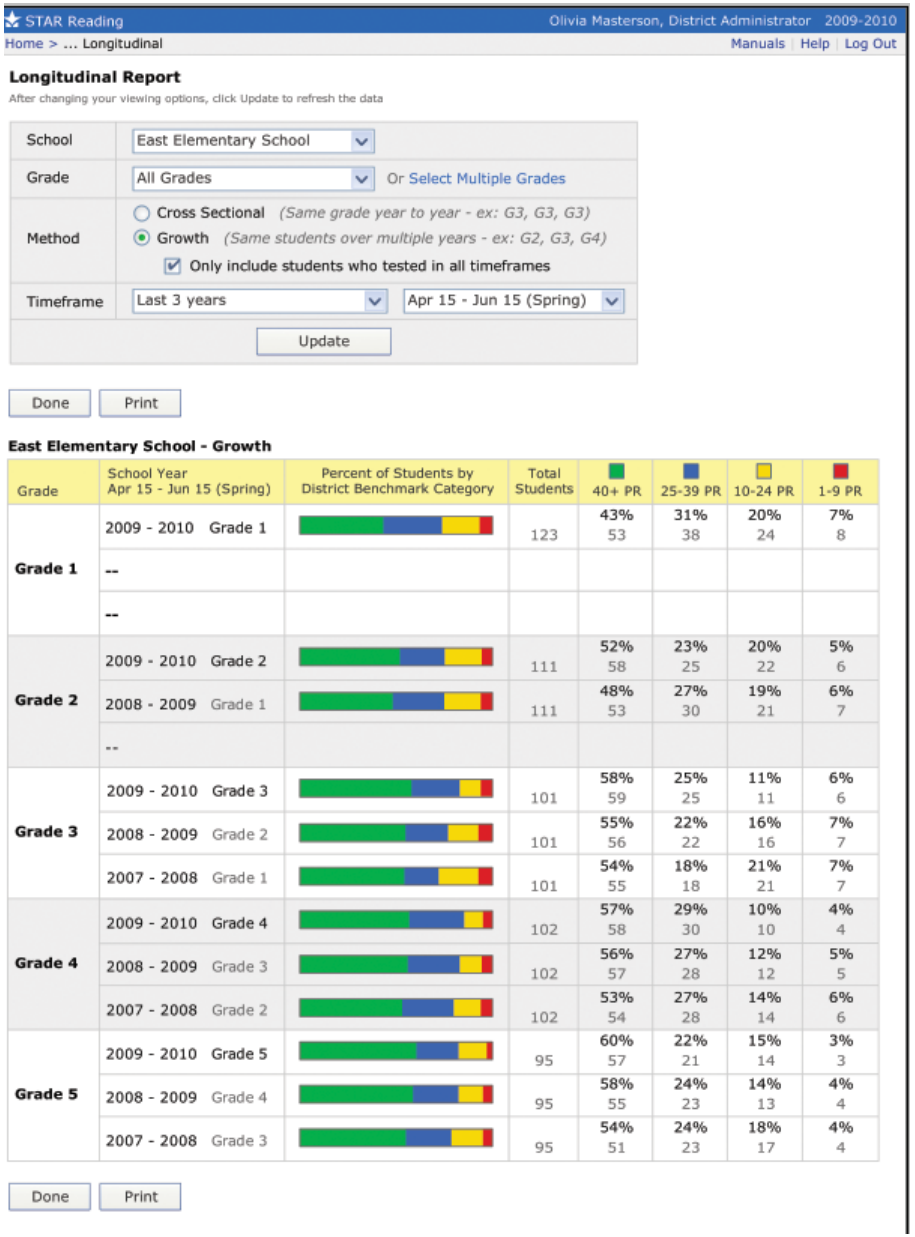
CC 4.OA.C3	Generate and analyze patterns.
CC 4.NBT.C1	Generalize place value understanding for multi-digit whole numbers.

Within Estimated Mastery Range on Current Test

CC 4.OA.C2	Gain familiarity with factors and multiples.
CC 4.NBT.C2	Use place value understanding and properties of operations to perform multi-digit arithmetic.

Are my students growing from year to year?

Longitudinal Reporting



STAR Reading — Olivia Masterson, District Administrator 2009-2010

Home > ... Longitudinal — Manuals | Help | Log Out

Longitudinal Report

After changing your viewing options, click Update to refresh the data

School: East Elementary School

Grade: All Grades — Or Select Multiple Grades

Method: Cross Sectional *(Same grade year to year - ex: G3, G3, G3)*; Growth *(Same students over multiple years - ex: G2, G3, G4)*; Only include students who tested in all timeframes

Timeframe: Last 3 years — Apr 15 - Jun 15 (Spring)

Update

Done | Print

East Elementary School - Growth

Grade	School Year Apr 15 - Jun 15 (Spring)	Percent of Students by District Benchmark Category	Total Students	40+ PR	25-39 PR	10-24 PR	1-9 PR
Grade 1	2009 - 2010 Grade 1		123	43% 53	31% 38	20% 24	7% 8
	--						
	--						
Grade 2	2009 - 2010 Grade 2		111	52% 58	23% 25	20% 22	5% 6
	2008 - 2009 Grade 1		111	48% 53	27% 30	19% 21	6% 7
	--						
Grade 3	2009 - 2010 Grade 3		101	58% 59	25% 25	11% 11	6% 6
	2008 - 2009 Grade 2		101	55% 56	22% 22	16% 16	7% 7
	2007 - 2008 Grade 1		101	54% 55	18% 18	21% 21	7% 7
Grade 4	2009 - 2010 Grade 4		102	57% 58	29% 30	10% 10	4% 4
	2008 - 2009 Grade 3		102	56% 57	27% 28	12% 12	5% 5
	2007 - 2008 Grade 2		102	53% 54	27% 28	14% 14	6% 6
Grade 5	2009 - 2010 Grade 5		95	60% 57	22% 21	15% 14	3% 3
	2008 - 2009 Grade 4		95	58% 55	24% 23	14% 13	4% 4
	2007 - 2008 Grade 3		95	54% 51	24% 23	18% 17	4% 4

Done | Print

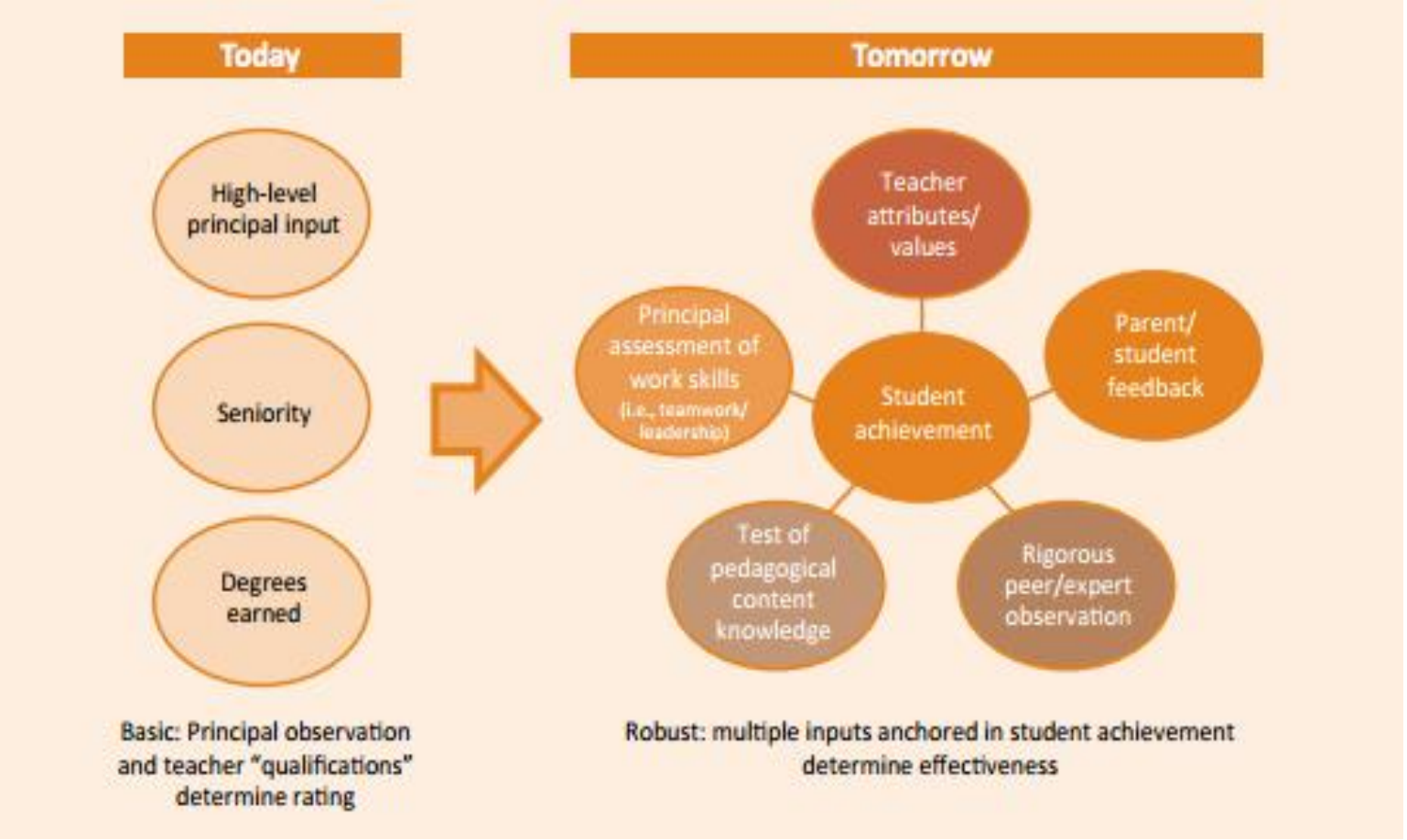
Benefits . . .

- **Pros**
  - **Tool that provides data for instruction**
  - **Aligned to state standards**
  - **Computer based - timely results**
  - **Classroom resources to help translate data into targeted lessons (online PD)**
- **Cons**
  - **Is program most effective?**
  - **Cost effective for all districts?**
  - **Use in evaluating teacher effectiveness?**

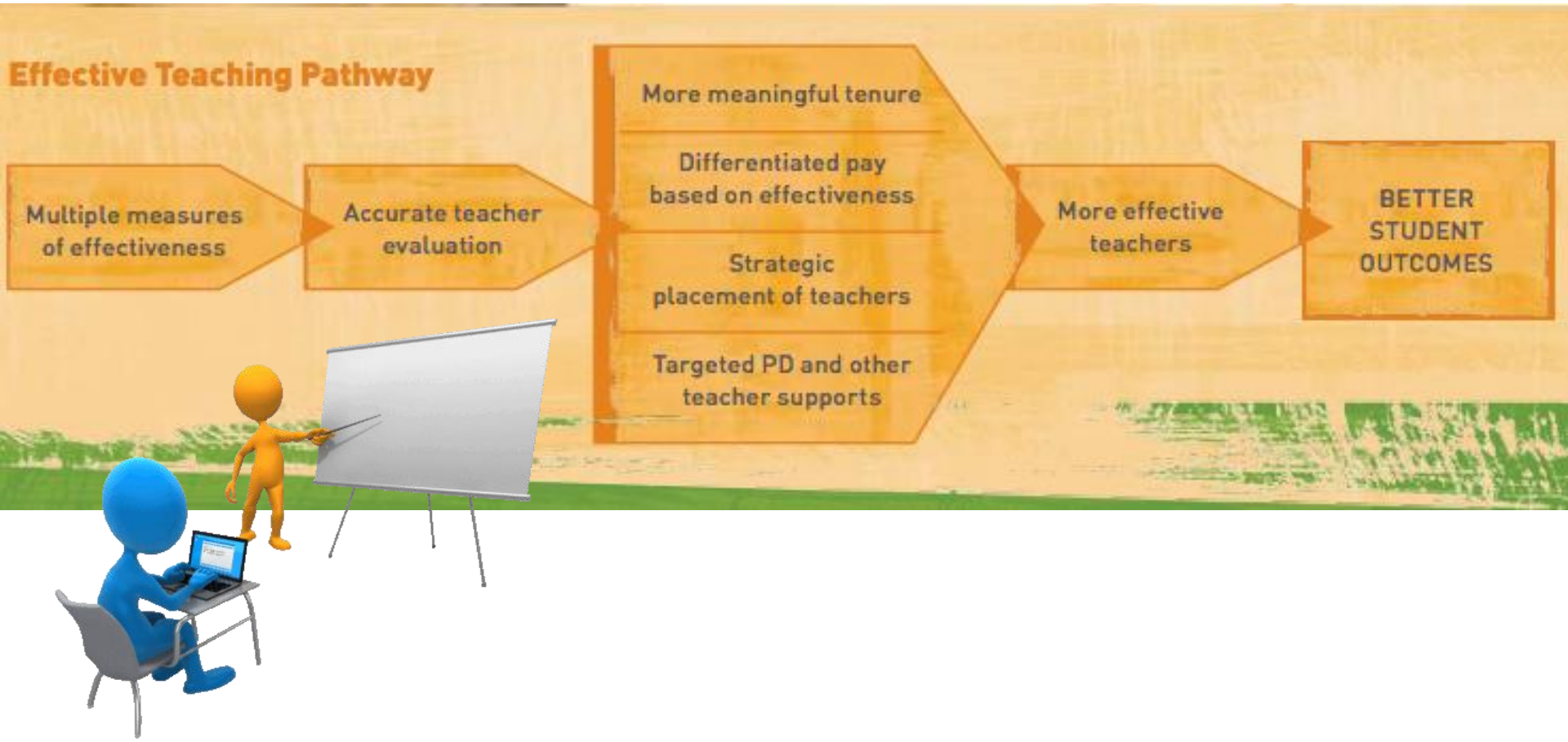
Linking Student Achievement to Teacher Practice

More than two decades of research findings are unequivocal about the critical connection between teacher effectiveness and student learning. The research shows that student achievement is strongly related to teacher quality; highly skilled teachers produce improved student results.

Measuring teacher effectiveness



Consequences of Proper Evaluations



Bergenfield's Outcomes

Based on evidence our observations have become a treasure hunt versus

Versus a witch hunt

Let’s get rid of our most expensive teacher???

SUPPORT

School Improvement Panel

- Oversee mentoring of **teachers** and conduct evaluations of teachers, including annual summative evaluations.
- Identify professional development opportunities for all instructional staff members that are tailored to meet the unique needs of the students and staff.
- Conduct mid year evaluations of any teacher who is evaluated as **ineffective** or **partially effective** in his/her most recent annual summative evaluation.

Mentoring

- A board of education must implement a **research-based mentoring program** that pairs **effective,** experienced teachers with first year teachers to provide:
  - Observation and feedback;
  - Opportunities for modeling; and
  - Confidential support and guidance in accordance with the Professional Standards for Teachers and the **evaluation rubric.**

Professional Development

- BOE, Superintendent or Principal must provide teaching staff members with ongoing **professional development** that supports student achievement and with an individual professional development plan.
- To the greatest extent feasible, professional development opportunities shall be developed in consultation with the **school improvement panels** in order to be responsive to the unique needs of different teachers in different instructional settings.

Corrective Action Plan

- Written plan developed by a supervisory and teaching staff member to address deficiencies in evaluation.
- Must include **timelines, responsibilities of teaching staff member and district, and specific support to be provided by district.**

Utilize our own Human Capital to help each other

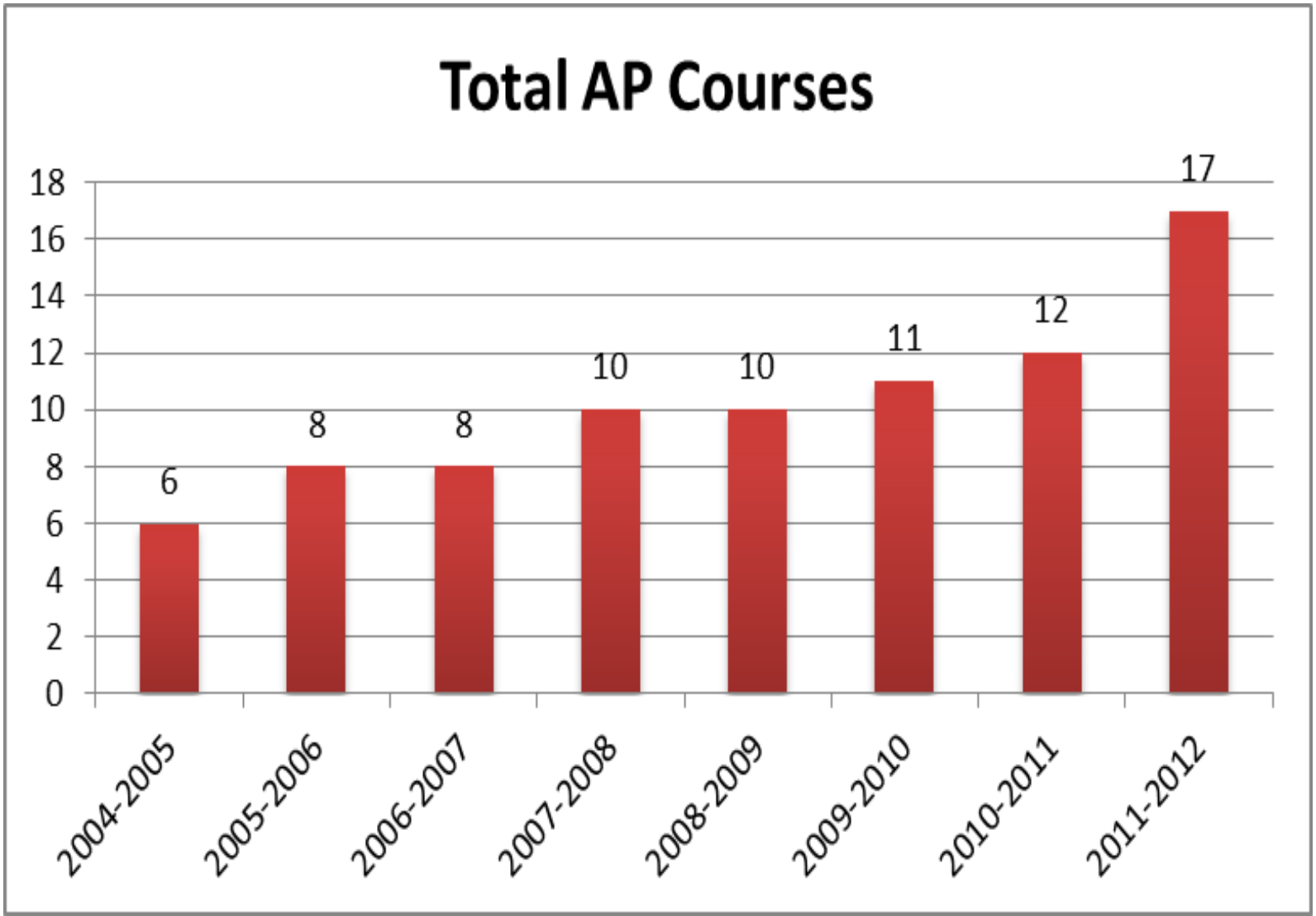
- One 5th grade teacher had 90% of her students Advanced Proficient in Math for 3 years in a row when district average was 20%
- Best practices are identified and shared within building and within district through a Best Practice Wiki
- Identify students by individual skill versus wide range of support
- Give parents access to Ren Learn and NWEA for skill support
- Involve all staff in process. It is not the programs that are effective, it is the people who use the programs. Expansive Leadership. Utilize the experts in you buildings- the teachers.
- Administrators must be honest and committed to continuous growth of the teacher. If everything is always great, are we not really just infantilizing the teacher? We all can and must keep growing.

Utilize our own Human Capital to help each other

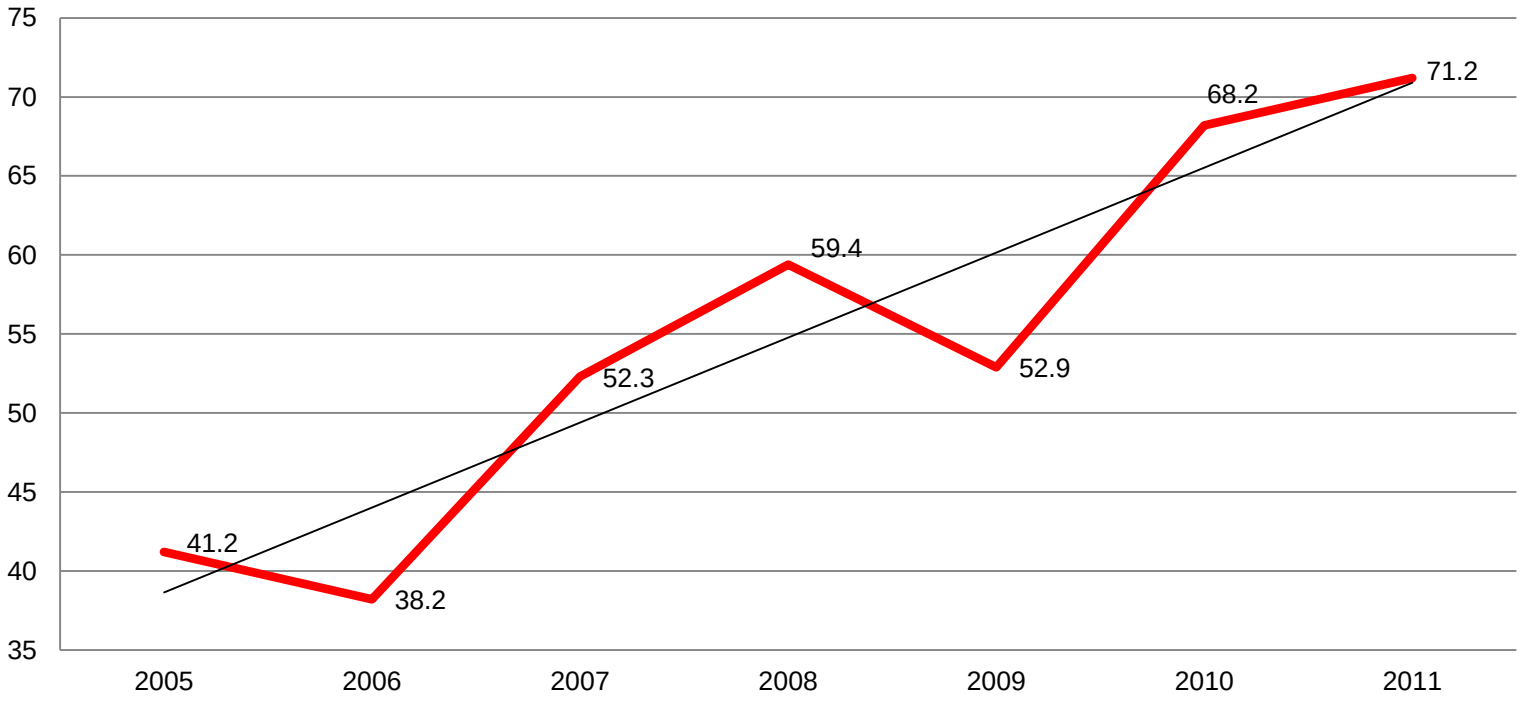
- Added math coaches
- Changed the roles of Reading Specialists to Literacy Coaches
- Redefined how Basic Skills, ESL, Special Education services are delivered to be truly inclusive
- Created Extended Day Program and Summer School for added enrichment

The data speaks volumes

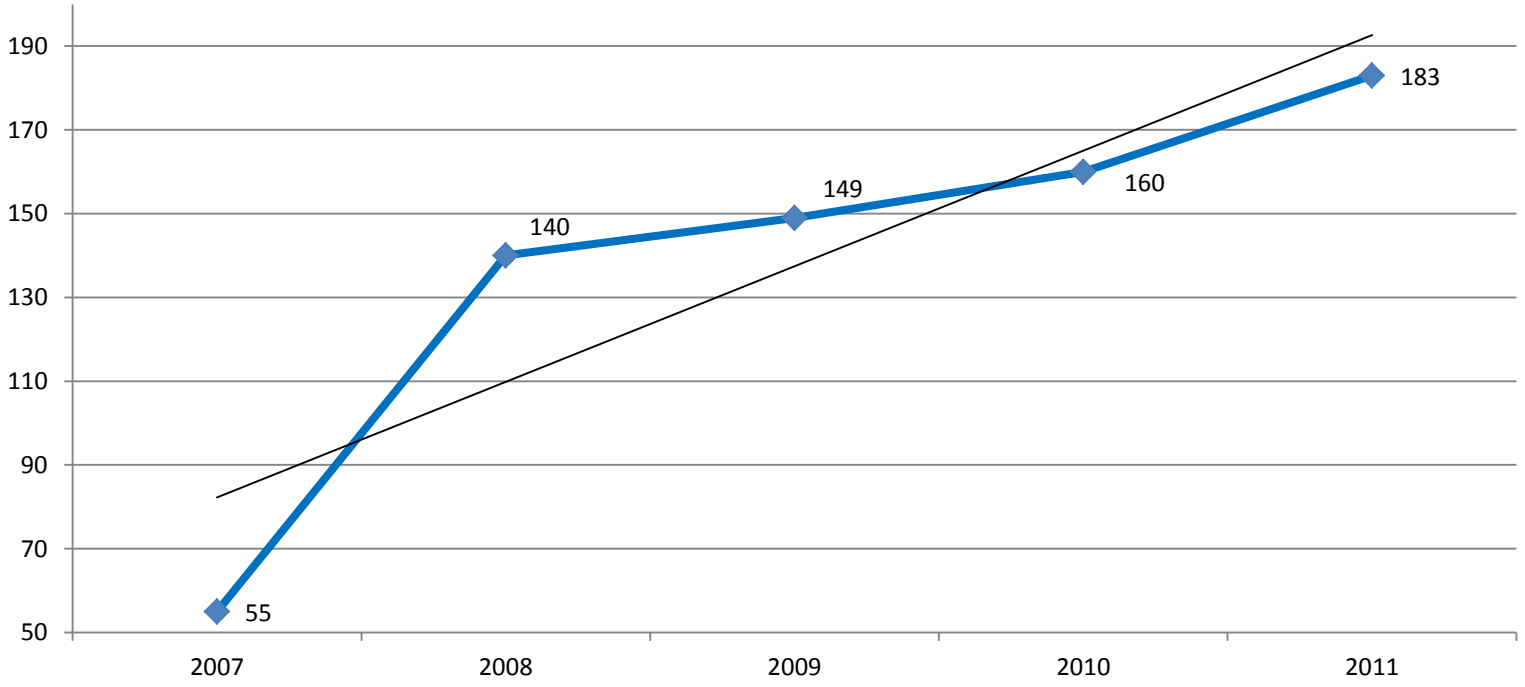
Open Enrollment AP Courses



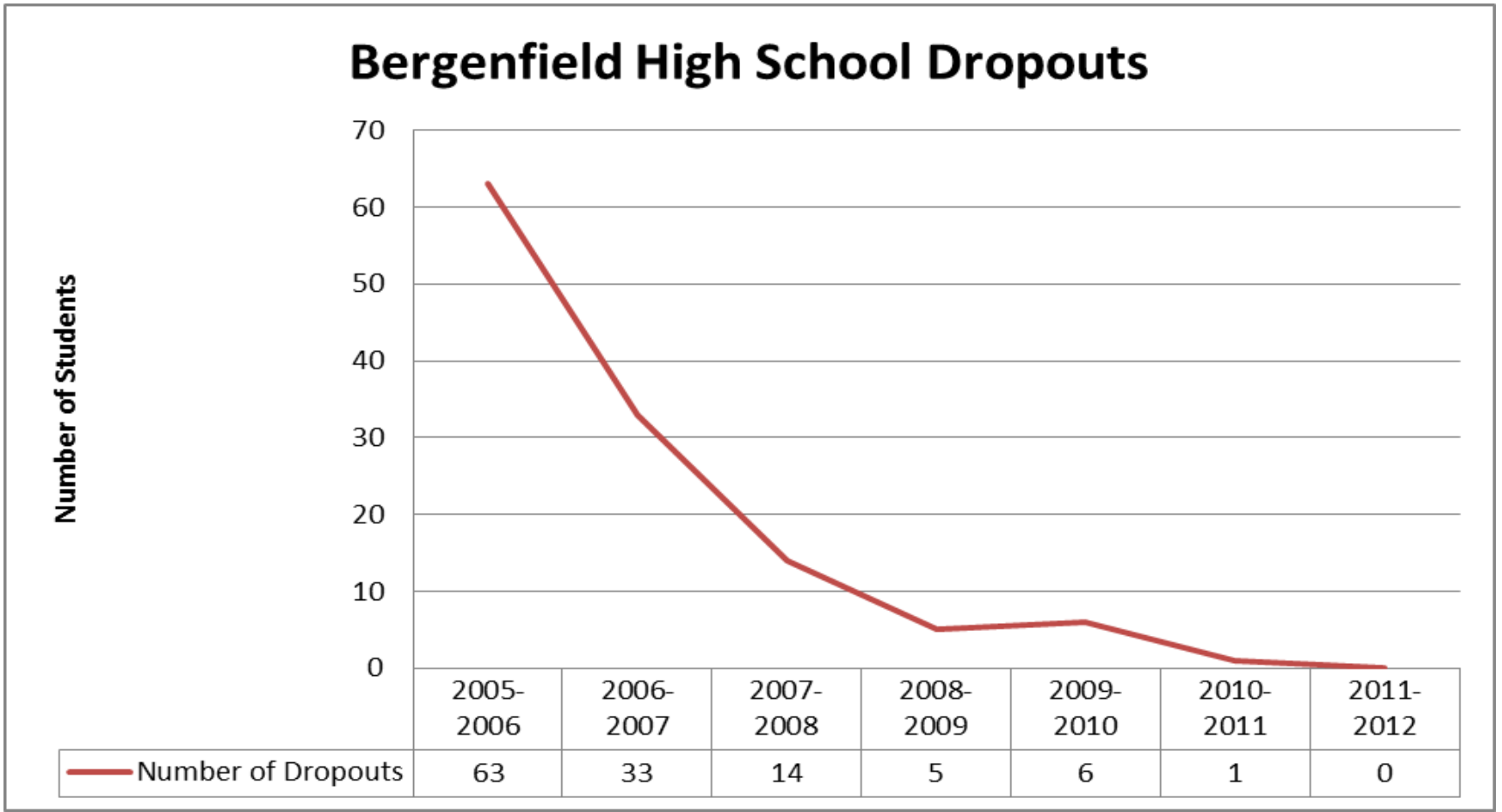
% of Total AP Students with Score 3+



4 Year College Attendance Rate



Dropout Data



Decrease dropouts from 63 to Zero

9th Grade Academy- Middle School Teaming

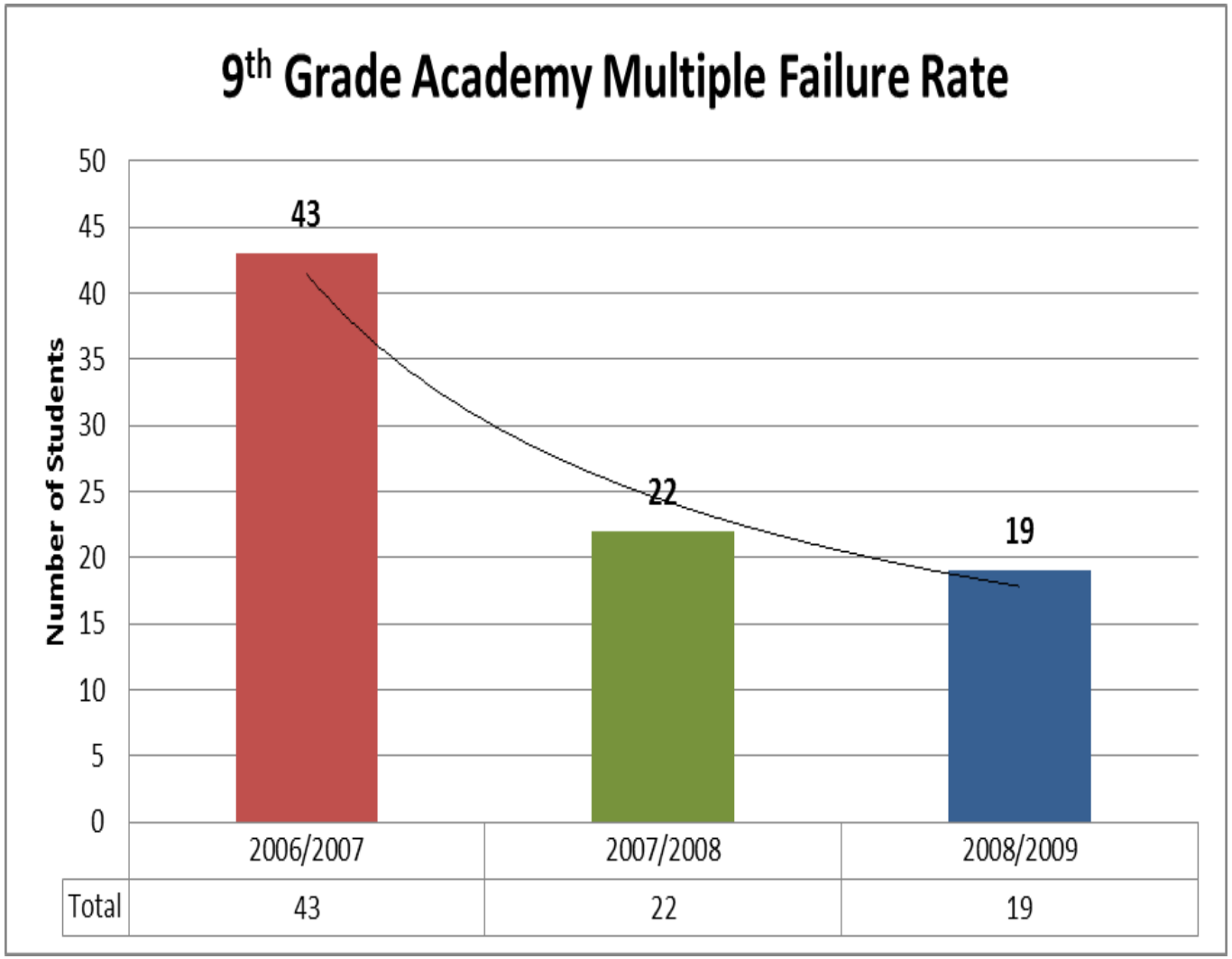
Reading Intervention- Accelerated Reader

Alternative High School which was truly alternative and not a “dumping ground.”

Credit Recovery Program both in seat and Computer based (Accellus Program)

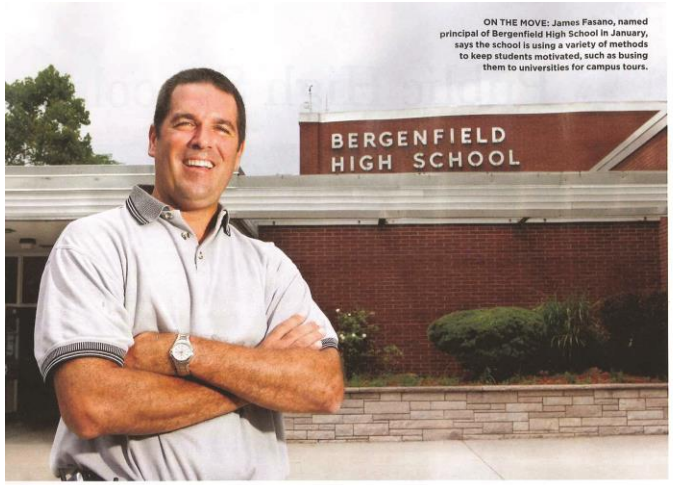
Mentorship of Adult with students- partnered with Big Brother Big Sister of Northern NJ

Impact of the 9th Grade Academy



Most Improved High School

New Jersey MONTHLY



ON THE MOVE: James Fasano, named principal of Bergenfield High School in January, says the school is using a variety of methods to keep students motivated, such as busing them to universities for campus tours.

PHOTOS: COLIN ARCHER/ AGENCY NEW JERSEY

Making up Ground in BERGENFIELD

BY JACQUELINE MROZ

School officials in Bergenfield, a working-class, largely immigrant community tucked among the wealthier boroughs of Bergen County, have been striving for years to improve academic performance at the high school. That hard work seems to be paying off.

Bergenfield High School was the fastest rising school in this year's *New Jersey Monthly* survey of the Top High Schools, jumping nearly 100 spots, from 234 to 136.

"We've been breaking our backs," says Bergenfield schools superintendent Michael Kuchar. "We've really revolutionized the place."

Originally settled by Swedish and Dutch immigrants, Bergenfield later attracted new arrivals from Italy and Ireland. Today, the town of 25,600 residents is mainly home to families with children who are on their way to being first-generation college students. The high school's population of 1,250 students is 30 percent Filipino, 30 percent Hispanic, and about 30 percent white, says Kuchar. "Their parents want the best for their children," he says. "They want them to have a part of the American dream."

Despite big cuts in state aid and an increase in enrollment, Bergenfield High School has managed to reduce class size, achieve better test scores, have fewer kids drop out, and send more students to four-year colleges since the last survey, published in 2008.

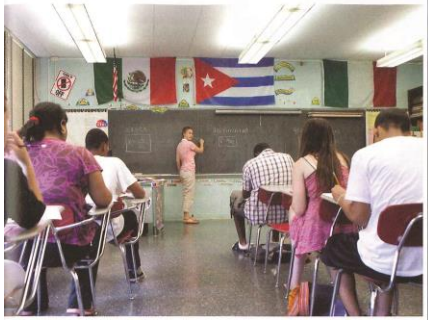
How did they do it?

Over the past few years, school officials have focused intensely on academic achievement, creating pro-

(Continued on page 79)

Top 10 Most Improved High Schools

2010 Rank	2008 Rank	2-year rank change	High School	County
136	234	98	**Bergenfield**	Bergen
163	245	82	**Liberty** (Jersey City)	Hudson
117	196	79	**Creative and Performing Arts** (Camden)	Camden
221	292	71	**Cicely Tyson Performing Arts** (East Orange)	Essex
217	287	70	**Hillside**	Union
113	178	65	**David Brearley** (Kenilworth)	Union
141	198	57	**North Arlington**	Bergen
106	162	56	**Dumont**	Bergen
110	166	56	**Dunellen**	Middlesex
138	194	56	**North Warren Regional** (Blairstown)	Warren



LESS IS MORE: Despite an increase in enrollment, Bergenfield High School has reduced class size.

(Continued from page 56)

grams that increase the rigor of coursework. They set up after-school clubs for kids who struggled with homework. They started a ninth-grade academy that helps students with the transition from middle school to high school. They used mentors to start a program for incoming freshmen interested in engineering and math. They created partnerships with New Jersey colleges and universities that allow students to take courses for college credit. And they doubled the number of Advanced Placement classes.

Jim Fasano, principal of Bergenfield High, says the school has worked hard to get students interested in going to college, busing them to different universities for tours.

And they created an alternative high school within the school system, where students are placed if they are at risk of dropping out or have fallen behind. There, they receive individualized attention in a small-class setting. Students from nearby schools are also sent there to help offset the cost.

"We've had twelve students graduate from high school this year that were in line to drop out," says Kuchar. "That's a miracle."

Like many other towns in the state, Bergenfield had a tough year financially. The school district lost $1.6 million in state aid last year and another $2.88 million under the Christie budget for the new school year.

Despite that, Bergenfield has not had to lay off any teachers—in part because of a large number of retirements. According to Kuchar, there were seven teacher retirements at the high school, which he describes as "tremendous breakage." However, he says the district was able to replace four of those teachers, and fifteen existing teachers will make up for some of the remaining gap by teaching additional periods under a "generous settlement" with the teachers' union. Further, the district has cut the number of administrators and consolidated some positions. For instance, in addition to being superintendent of schools, Kuchar will serve as director of guidance at the high school this year—at no extra salary. Last year, when Fasano was named principal, his previous position as assistant high school principal was eliminated, leaving only one assistant principal where in past years there had been two.

Shifting resources also enabled the high school to reduce average class size from about 24 students to 21, in large part by turning basic-skills teachers into classroom teachers.

"Our motto is, 'children come first,' and that translates into classrooms come first," says Kuchar, who is in his sixth year as superintendent and was previously the high school principal for four years. "We put all our time, money, and resources into where it hits most—the classroom." ■

Bloomberg Businessweek: 2nd best place to raise kids in NJ

100 Best Communities for Young People

- Only community in New Jersey to be selected in 2012

April 2013

- *The Washington Post* ranked Bergenfield High School #1509 on their list of America's Most Challenging High Schools.
- This places BHS in the top 5.5% of America's 27,575 high schools.

Questions

Our presentation can be found on www.bergenfield.org

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