

Learning Plus Associates Case Study

Using Formative Assessment to Guide Instructional Decisions

Hacienda-La Puente Unified School District–Baldwin Academy

A professional learning community in action

Challenge

Baldwin Academy Elementary School is a predominately hispanic K-5 school of 815 students. About 43% of the total of all students are English Language Learners. 85-90% of Baldwin's student population is designated eligible for free or reduced lunch. Baldwin has battled the odds and has increased its API from 721 in 2003 to 816 in 2007. Baldwin has maintained a "similar schools ranking" of 10 on the California Academic Performance Index for over four years and a Title I Academic Achieving School for three years. Baldwin was named a California Distinguished School in 2006.

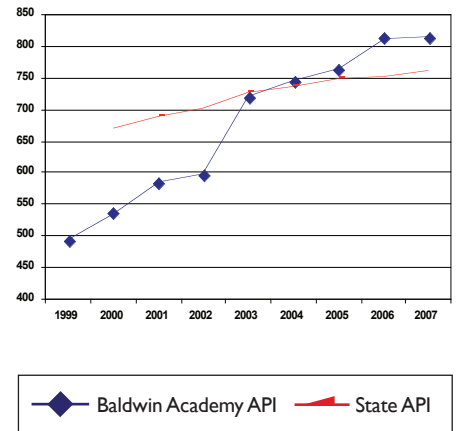
Solution

Bonnie Wilson has been Baldwin's principal for the past fifteen years. Wilson described Standards Plus as the vehicle that helped them to figure out how to teach the standards in a format that the students would learn them. Standards Plus enabled the students to see the connection between what they did each day and what they had to do on the state tests. "It was a blessing to have something already made and teachers didn't have to look for things to teach the standards." The teachers participated in Standards Plus product training. Everyone recognized that Standards Plus was not core curriculum and that the mini lessons needed to be taught briskly.

"Only teaching the standards isn't enough. You need ongoing assessment," said Wilson. The Baldwin staff used the Standards Plus weekly mini-tests as common formative assessment. Teachers focused on assessments at their grade level meetings. The assessment data guided teachers in determining which students needed reteaching opportunities and what standards to target in the reteaching. Once the staff understand how the Standards Plus assessments could help them make these determinations, it became a valuable tool for them. Wilson states that the Standards Plus program was "the missing piece we needed!"

Results

Baldwin has learned to be selective about what they focus on and the strategies they use to support their goals. The staff has become incredibly proficient in planning, teaching, assessing and using data to guide initial instruction and reteaching opportunities.



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—Bonnie Wilson, Principal
Baldwin Academy