

Learning Plus Associates Case Study

Using Standards Plus to Supplement Core Instruction

Westmorland Union Elementary School District–Westmorland Elementary School

Help teachers to meet targeted mathematics standards

Challenge

Westmorland Elementary School is a small rural school in the Imperial Valley. Sixty percent of the students are English Language Learners, and the California Department of Education designated 100% of the students as socio-economically disadvantaged. The school improved 256 API points (455 API to 711 API) between 1999 and 2007. Westmoreland's Comparative Schools Rank also jumped from a two to an eight between 1999 and 2007.

Solution

Linda Morse, Superintendent/Principal, and her staff analyzed the core Math program and found instructional gaps and weaknesses in the core mathematics program. Standards Plus was selected to help fill the gaps in content and instruction.

Morse believed that the consistency in instruction and the focus on standards that was provided in the Standards Plus lessons would make a difference. She shared, "It was an easy implementation. It was also easy for me to monitor the program."

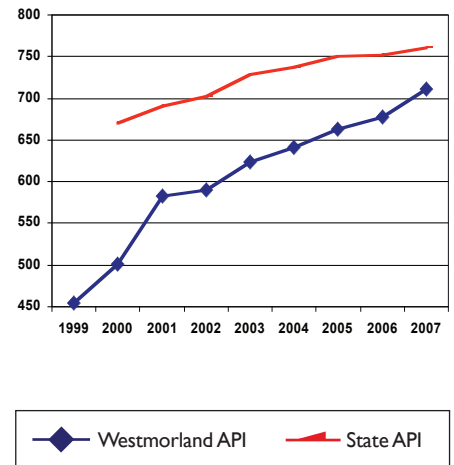
In the first year, Morse built a core group of teachers that supported her school improvement efforts which included the initial implementation of Standards Plus in grades 2-6. In grade level groups, the teachers looked at CST data and identified students' specific gaps. Standards Plus lessons were selected to target those skills. According to Morse, one of the added benefits of this process was "Teachers truly became more knowledgeable about the standards."

Standards Plus lessons were also used in an academic after school program where students received additional standards based instruction. Test Taking Strategies were emphasized with these students because many had had difficulty performing well with standardized testing.

In the second year, Standards Plus Math was implemented in grades K-1, 7th, and 8th. By the third year, Language Arts was in all grades. Believing strongly in staff development, Morse scheduled a Standards Plus Overview training on a Buy Back Day and Model Lesson training after the school year started.

Results

Morse attributes initial gains in standardized test scores to their use of Standards Plus. She stated that first year the only big change they made was incorporating Standards Plus. "The initial increase in Mathematics test scores gave them hope for achieving continued success", states Morse.



"Teachers truly became more knowledgeable about the standards."

—Linda Morse, Principal
Westmorland Elementary School