PowerSchool

Improving Instruction at Jane Bryan Elementary School

Student Population:

320 STUDENTS

88% LOW INCOME

37% MOBILITY RATE

Student Diversity:

94% AFRICAN AMERICAN

5% CAUCASIAN

1% OTHER

Only 30 percent of students passed the 2012 spring mathematics state assessment at Jane H. Bryan Elementary School (Bryan), located in Hampton, Virginia.

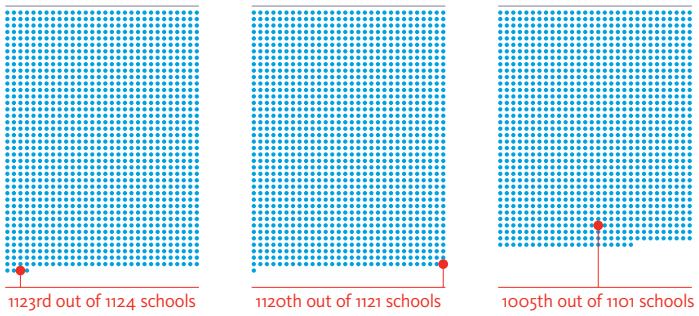
In 2013, to provide high-quality, timely, and accurate formative assessment data to administrators and classroom teachers, Bryan began using PowerSchool Assessment. PowerSchool Assessment is a web-based instructional improvement system (IIS) that delivers standards-aligned content, assessments, and instant reports for precise analysis of student achievement. Since then, the school has improved mathematics instruction, helped students become accountable for their performance in mathematics, and increased the percentage of students passing the Virginia Standards of Learning (SOL) mathematics assessments by up to 76 percent for some grades.

"In the past we were guessing at what our kids' needs were. With PowerSchool Assessment we are able to pinpoint areas that allow us to individualize their learning experience. We are able to pinpoint areas where they do well and those areas we need to revisit. That is the purpose of education, you meet the kids where they are."

–Michael Stutt, Principal

The Challenge

Bryan Elementary was a school "Accredited with Warning" by the state of Virginia and identified by the federal government as a priority school. A priority school is one whose students score in the bottom five percent on state assessments. In 2012, Bryan ranked 1123rd out of 1124 schools in 3rd grade math, 1120th out of 1121 schools in 4th grade math, and 1005th out of 1101 schools in 5th grade math. At the start of the 2012–2013 school year 89 percent of students were economically disadvantaged, had a disability, or were an English language learner. In many cases, students met more than one of these criteria.



The Solution

Bryan's plan for success was grounded in eight essential components providing a holistic approach to make changes that created big results that drove positive impact for students, teachers, instructional leadership, and administrators. Through the effective utilization of PowerSchool Assessment, Jane Bryan Elementary School was able to significantly change the outcomes for their students.

1 POSITIVE BEHAVIOR INTERVENTION SYSTEM

Bryan determined that they first needed to address student behavior to create a climate that allowed students to focus on their learning. The school leaders and staff developed a positive behavior intervention system designed to create and enforce shared expectations and consequences for every student. The entire staff, including a behavior-management coach, agreed on the consequences for specific behaviors and began the school year explicitly teaching the students to meet the established expectations. To provide ongoing support to the positive-behavior-intervention system, a biweekly analysis of student-behavior data was reviewed and lessons were designed to address the areas where students were struggling to meet established expectations.

2 EMPOWERING VISIBLE SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

Going hand-in-hand with the positive behavior intervention system was empowering the school leadership. The school principal and assistant principal made a conscious decision to be visible to students and staff throughout the school day. The school leaders spent the majority of their days in the classrooms, hallways, cafeteria, gymnasium, and playground versus their offices. School leaders consistently communicated a vision of excellence and empowered teachers and staff to take on leadership roles.

3 STUDENT PERFORMANCE DATA ANALYSIS

To affect real change in student performance, the principal believed that data analysis was critical and necessary to provide teachers and students with information about their progress and improvement. Before the school year began, the school leaders and staff engaged in a deep analysis, down to the individual question level, on each of the state mathematics assessments to identify skill gaps and areas of strength to plan for curriculum changes the following year. This in-depth analysis of summative data provided the curriculum map needed to address persistent weaknesses in student performance on the state math assessments.

"There is now a connection for students. Kids rarely get feedback on their benchmark scores. The PowerSchool Assessment student profile connected it for them. Now our students connect their formative weekly data in their data binder to their quarterly data and yearly performance. The data leads us into more and richer student conversations."

-Deanna Dunn
Data Management Coach

4 WEEKLY TRIAGE MEETING

The school's educators knew to better support the aggregate summative data, they needed interim data reports through formative assessments to monitor students' weekly performance. Bryan designed a weekly triage meeting to allow teams of general education, special education, math, and reading specialists as well as teaching coaches to discuss quarterly benchmark performance and individual student weekly progress on specific essential skills. During these meetings the instructional team would review short-term goals, identify areas of strength and weakness based on classroom observations, and establish instructional priorities for the week.

5 INSTRUCTIONAL INTERVENTION PROGRAM

The formative data analyses illuminated a pathway to provide individualized instructional interventions for teachers. The school employed a math interventionist to focus on improving math instruction. She planned with the teachers, modeled exemplar math instruction, and co-taught mathematics lessons. Utilizing PowerSchool Assessment, common assessments were created that included technology-enhanced items that were powerful in informing instructional gaps. The interventionist provided targeted instructional materials including vocabulary strategies, visuals and graphics, and a review plan to support lessons.

6 RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION PROGRAM

Not only was student performance data used to support teachers in their instruction, but the data was also used to support students in their learning. Built into Bryan's Response to Intervention Program for Tier II students were pre- and post-assessments on targeted skills, as defined by both formative and summative data analysis, administered every four weeks. Tier II students participated in two to three additional instructional sessions each week. These sessions focused on the weak skills identified in the pre-assessment. When students scored a 75 percent or higher on the post-assessment they would progress to the next skill. Tier III students, in addition to receiving the Tier II interventions listed above, also worked with a tutor in a small-group setting two vto three times per week.

"The ability to see the whole school division, a single school, a teacher, or a specific class section with simple changes in a dashboard selection is a great time saver for me."

-Dr. Cynthia Cooper
Executive Director of Research, Planning and Evaluation
Hampton City Schools

7 TEACHER COLLABORATION AND PLANNING

Because Bryan had a number of instructional specialists, instructional coaches, and tutors working with the general and special education teachers, they needed a way to communicate effectively and efficiently to impact student learning. Collaborative Learning Teams (CLTs) were created and met every two weeks to create lesson plans designed to address persistent weaknesses. These CLT meetings utilized Assessment to collect feedback on the strengths and weaknesses of the prior lesson in addition to planning for the next lesson. Each meeting included student-performance analysis using all available data sources through the Assessment data dashboards.

8 STUDENT ACCOUNTABILITY FOR LEARNING

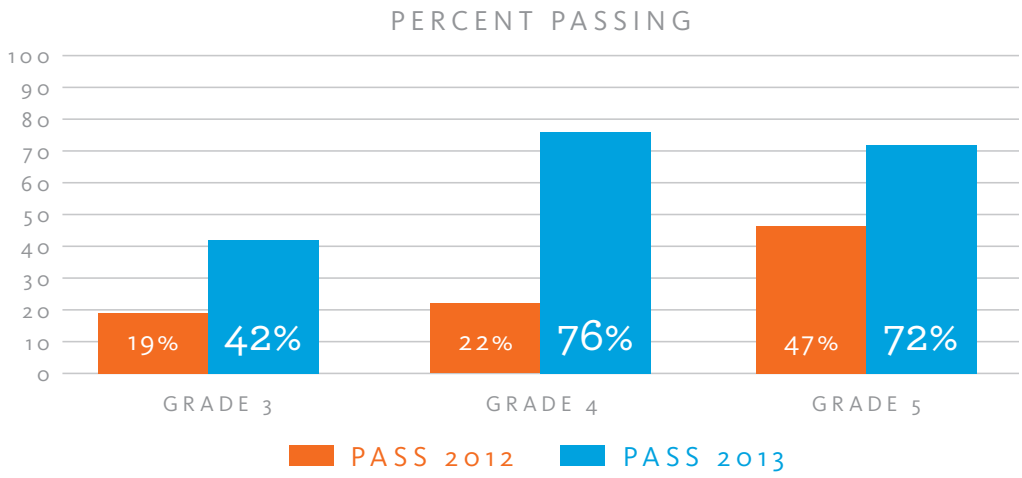
Bryan leadership and staff believe that students play a critical role in their own academic success. Building on the work of John Hattie's visible learning model, students maintained a binder that included a variety of assessment data, including formative and interim Assessment reports. Students also included in their binder one good and one bad work sample in each of the four core areas, learning goals based on pre/post data, and weekly behavior goals. Students graphed their progress toward their learning goals and were regularly recognized for their achievements. In addition to documenting and charting their progress, students were taught how to share their binder, showing their learning progress with their parents during student-led conferences.

The Results

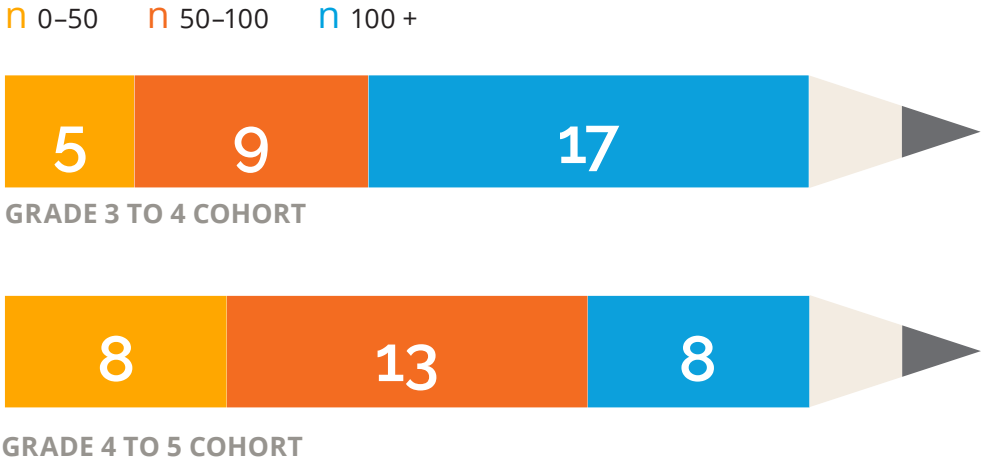
The students passing showed significant increases across 3rd, 4th, and 5th grades.

The growth was exceptional in the 4th grade, where the percentage increased 54 points from 22 percent passing in 2012 to 76 percent passing in 2013.

Overall Math Pass Rates



Growth in Points



Individual students at Jane Bryan showed significant improvement on state summative tests. Among the Grade 3–5 cohorts, more than 26 students showed over a 100-point gain and 21 students showed a 50-to-100 point gain on the state math summative test.

The results at Jane Bryan Elementary School are not typical. However, with proper data-analysis tools used to implement a strategic plan with precision and fidelity, much can be achieved.

About POWERSCHOOL

PowerSchool, the #1 leading provider of K-12 technology solutions, serves more than 40 million users and over 15 million students in 70+ countries, playing a central role in K-12 education around the world. PowerSchool provides industry leading best-in-class secure, compliant school operations solutions including Student Information System and Student Enrollment solutions. PowerSchool also provides innovative digital classroom capabilities, enabling a consistent user experience for managing attendance, grading, assignments, assessments and analytics to empower teachers and drive student growth.

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