ACHIEVE**3000**®
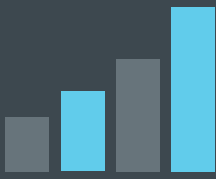
A Case of Achievement

Bloomingdale School District Sees Winning Student Performance on New Jersey PARCC with Achieve3000

98%
LEVELSET™

74%
AVERAGE FIRST
TRY SCORE

72%
STUDENTS LOGGED IN
AFTER SCHOOL

SUMMARY

In 2012, when Bloomingdale School District was moving to a new national assessment exam, their supervisor of curriculum at the time, Kristine Duldo, was uncertain about how well the district would be able to prepare students for the change from the NJASK (NJ Assessment of Skills and Knowledge) exam to the new Common Core-aligned PARCC (Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for Colleges and Careers) exam. In addition, the district had historically focused on student mastery of fictional text, whereas the PARCC test also requires students to master reading and writing around informational text.

At that time, after reviewing several other literacy software platforms, the district chose Achieve3000. "We were moving forward with the PARCC assessment, and needed to do something with state testing and everyday learning to promote higher-level thinking skills, and help students work with informational text. And, we were looking for
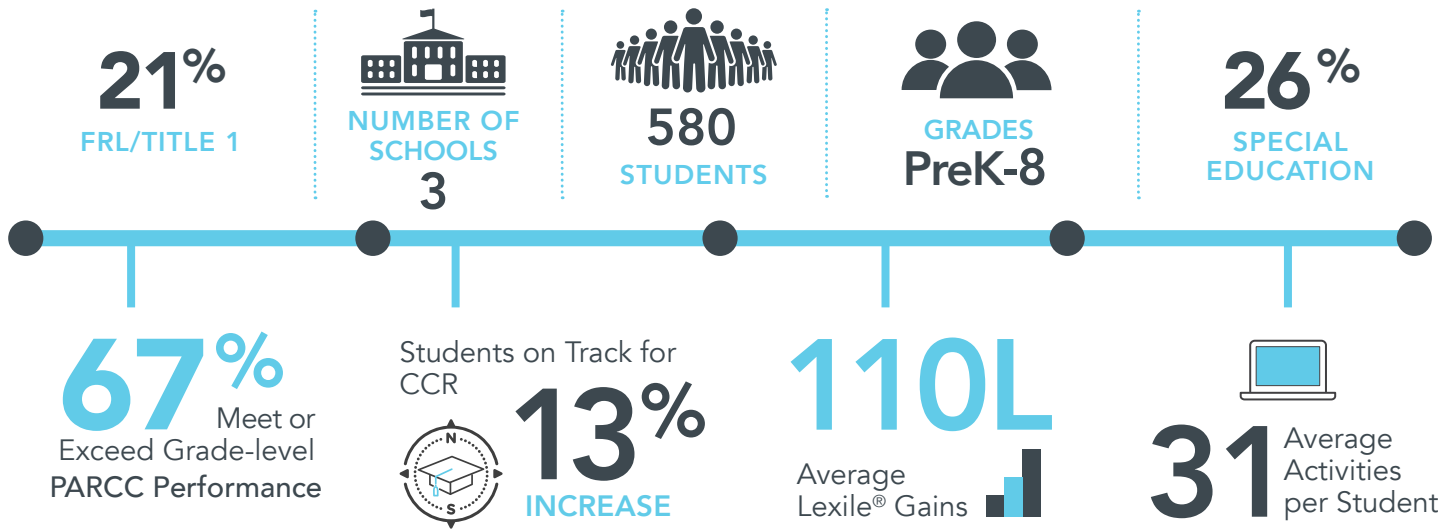
something to meet the needs of all of our students," said Kristine. "Not only gifted and talented, but special education, mainstream, and ELL students. Achieve was able to meet all of those needs for every student."

Five years later, Duldo's successor, Kerridyn Trusheim, enjoys bragging about the district's high levels of students whose scores meet or exceed expectations on the PARCC exam, "We have about 67% of students meeting expectations on PARCC, which is a whole 12% higher than the state average of 55%. And when we look at 8th graders alone, it's up to 75%."(See chart below.) Trusheim credits much of their success to the decision the district made to adopt Achieve3000. "If it weren't for Achieve3000, our teachers would still be scrambling to plan lessons around non-fiction text, our ELA scores wouldn't be as high, and we wouldn't be in as good of a place."

PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS WHO "MEET" OR "EXCEED" EXPECTATIONS ON SPRING PARCC ELA EXAM, 2015-18

BLOOMINGDALE SCHOOL DISTRICT				
	2015	**2016**	**2017**	**2018**
Grade 3	58%	65.1%	54.3%	62.1%
Grade 4	52%	59.6%	78.7%	58.6%
Grade 5	49%	43.0%	56.2%	78.8%
Grade 6	61%	70.0%	54.2%	61.4%
Grade 7	35%	70.8%	66.1%	60.3%
Grade 8	66%	72.2%	87.7%	76.7%

5-YEAR implementation period

21%
FRL/TITLE 1

NUMBER OF SCHOOLS
3

580
STUDENTS

GRADES
PreK-8

26%
SPECIAL EDUCATION

67% Meet or Exceed Grade-level PARCC Performance

Students on Track for CCR
13% INCREASE

110L Average Lexile® Gains

31 Average Activities per Student

THE SEARCH FOR A LITERACY SOLUTION

When the district began to research solutions that could help increase literacy levels for all of their students, including English language learners and special education students, they came across a variety of free literacy program options. However, they quickly realized that these options required a lot of manual input, which was impractical for their busy teachers and administrators, and in addition, left room for inaccuracies. Because they were looking for a solution that would be easy for their teachers to use, one area of particular concern was the fact that Lexile reading levels—the quantitative measure of a student's reading ability—would need to be input and updated manually. "There are free services out there, but you have to preset the Lexile levels yourself," Kristine said. "They don't move the students along, and you don't know the quality and accuracy of the information you're giving to students."

She also found that many homework programs did not assess student comprehension very thoroughly. And when it came to how well materials were aligned to the PARCC test, she added that many companies seemed to simply take their existing materials and claim that they were PARCC and state-aligned without any evidence to back those claims. Then, she discovered Achieve3000.

BLOOMINGDALE SCHOOL DISTRICT'S EVALUATION CRITERIA

Proven-Effective: "We wanted something that was proven, and research-based," said Kristine. "Achieve has been around for many years. The research is there. I was able to see that it was doing what they say it does."

Standards-Aligned: In assessing Achieve3000, Kristine found that the materials represented the "closest simulation to the PARCC assessment." She also found that the standards-aligned writing component and the free standards-aligned bonus lessons really helped move the students forward.

Ease of Use: With a very brief overview of the solution, Kristine said that even her new teachers caught on quickly. "Achieve3000 provides one-stop shopping for even the most novice teachers," she said. "They have resources at their fingertips—standards, instructional guides, lesson models, and the writing center. All of these resources just keep getting better."

Flexible Access: Kristine noted that the ability to access Achieve3000 outside of the classroom benefits not only students, but parents and teachers, as well. "We had a teacher who had to take partial leave, but with Achieve3000 was able to monitor students when not in school," she said. She also credits Achieve3000 with helping to extend student learning beyond the classroom, citing that 72 percent of students used Achieve3000 after hours.

Affordability: Kristine noted that although Achieve3000 is affordable, they did have to invest in computers, laptops, and infrastructure such as updating their wireless connection, in order to support the program. "We're making it work," she said. "We're ensuring that the funding is there because it has proven to be effective in our district."

GETTING STARTED AND STAYING ON TRACK WITH DIFFERENTIATED LITERACY INSTRUCTION

Bloomingdale School District—which began with Achieve3000 four years ago—has a primary school that serves students in PreK-1st grade, an elementary school for 2nd - 4th grades, and a middle school for 5th - 8th grades. Before implementing Achieve 3000, the district had one computer lab in each of their three schools and the middle school was just getting hotspots installed, Kristine reported. Now, they have a wireless connection, a computer lab, and four laptop carts for the middle school and two computer labs in the elementary school, providing more online accessibility. In addition, all teachers have SMART® boards and projectors in their classrooms.

Throughout the Achieve3000 implementation, and after, Kristine was impressed by how quickly Achieve3000 staff responded to their needs. "The responsiveness of the company is so highly commendable," she said. "They were always able to help us with any glitch we had and move us forward."

As far as usage in the classroom, the district's implementation model has changed over time. At the start, students in the English language arts classes were completing a mini lesson in Achieve3000 one day each week. Now, Kerridyn says that students in 3rd - 6th grades utilize the platform two days per week. Teachers assign an *Article* as homework. The next day, students complete the lesson's *Activity* (embedded assessment) in class before having a whole-group discussion to prepare students to answer the *Thought Question*. Then, students read the *Stretch Article*, which is designed to expose students to higher-level text, together as a class. "This ensures that all students have the opportunity to continually develop their critical thinking and reading comprehension skills," Kerridyn explains.

Students continue using Achieve3000 in their English language arts classes during the 7th and 8th grades, maintaining their pace of completing about two lessons every week. Kerridyn continues by pointing out how much the students enjoy working with Achieve3000 now that they are about to start year six of their implementation: "It's like seeing the kids light-up. They are reading and discussing it together. Our 8th graders love using the Career Center because they get to see where they are [in terms of their Lexile measure] and get to see where they need to go to reach their goals."

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Kerridyn Trusheim
Supervisor of Curriculum, Bloomingdale, NJ