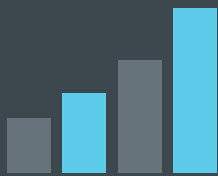




ACHIEVE3000®



# A Case of Achievement

Marlboro Township Public Schools 2016-2017  
Student Success Driven by District's Focus on Instructional Data





## ABOUT ACHIEVE3000®

### Differentiated Instruction. Accelerated Learning.

Achieve3000 is the leader in online differentiated instruction, serving over three million students worldwide. Based on decades of scientific research, Achieve3000's cloud-based solutions for grades PreK-12 and adult education reach students at their individual reading levels to accelerate learning, improve high-stakes test performance, and advance college and career readiness.

Our powerful platform also extends teachers' reach without adding to their workloads or time demands. By combining embedded assessment, differentiated instruction, regular skills practice, and targeted scaffolds in a single program, Achieve3000's solutions empower educators to increase their students' reading gains surely and steadily, level by level.

Achieve3000's platform is powered by a patented methodology that delivers grade-appropriate lessons to the entire class and simultaneously tailors them to each student's Lexile® reading level. Achieve3000's solutions have been proven to rapidly accelerate reading comprehension, language acquisition, writing proficiency, and vocabulary development.

**Learn more about Achieve3000's proven literacy instruction.**

[ACHIEVE3000.com](http://ACHIEVE3000.com)

800.838.8771

[info@achieve3000.com](mailto:info@achieve3000.com)

## IMPLEMENTATION CONTEXT

### Prioritizing Personalization for Instruction

Marlboro Township Public Schools (MTPS) is a suburban community school district in Monmouth County, New Jersey, comprising eight schools that serve grades PreK-8, with a large percentage of high-achieving students, deeply involved families, and an attentive and analytical board of education. From a pedagogical standpoint, according to MTPS Superintendent Dr. Eric M. Hibbs, "[The district] strongly embraces the concept of personalized learning [and] believes that personalized learning makes it possible to address the diverse needs of all students." In addition, Superintendent Hibbs said, "The district believes that instructional technology is a vehicle by which personalized learning opportunities are made as effective and individualized as possible for all students."

MTPS has demonstrated its strong embrace of personalized learning and instructional technology by making a significant investment in 21st-century tools and programming starting in 2012. At that time, a district-wide, one-to-one Google™ tablet and Chromebook™ initiative for students in grades 1-8 was partially motivated by the district's three-year plan for Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) preparedness: the new PARCC assessments, developed to test student mastery of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), would be administered online in the spring of 2015, and MTPS recognized that students needed practice. By the start of the 2014-2015 school year, the district intended that each student would be equipped with the necessary hardware.

## Marlboro Township Public Schools' Implementation of Achieve3000



EVALUATION PERIOD  
SEPTEMBER 2016  
TO MAY 2017



GRADES  
3-8



ACTIVE  
USERS  
3,715



NUMBER OF  
SCHOOLS  
7



AVERAGE  
LEXILE READING  
SCORE GAIN 163



PARTICIPATING  
TEACHERS 230

## WHAT'S NEXT AND WHAT'S BEST

Next, MTPS had to select online learning programs that would make its hardware investment worthwhile. The best-fitting software would address New Jersey grade-level content standards in multiple subject areas, differentiate instruction to meet individual students' needs, help students get ready for PARCC testing, offer anytime, anywhere learning access, and tie into established placement criteria for students in grades 3-8. MTPS teachers were looking for technology tools that supported legitimate models for independent work, blended learning, and targeted instruction. Finally, MTPS administrators needed to access usage and performance data to help schools maximize gains and to demonstrate how programs were being used and what the effects were—the board of education and families would be scrutinizing outcomes.

## MAKING SENSE OF DATA

To track progress toward hopefully improved outcomes and as part of a long-standing commitment to ensuring that processes were in place to leverage instructional data, MTPS created a digital dashboard that would help curriculum administrators monitor usage of the district's digital tools. In discussing their work with data at MTPS, Michael Ballone, Director of Curriculum and Instruction, made an essential point: "Any online program gives you data. Generating data is not enough; we have to make sure that we have processes in place to do something with that data, making sure our data is used, and used well." Superintendent Hibbs held the same view, saying, "It is the district's responsibility to use specific data to help students make individual learning gains." Implementing any new online learning program would mean making sense of new data to inform instruction at the school, classroom, and individual student level.

## A PLATFORM FOR ONE AND ALL

Not every online program the district reviewed could support this level of commitment to data-driven and personalized instruction. Luckily, MTPS found one decisive solution in the Achieve3000 platform, which also fit closely with the district's priorities and approach regarding literacy across the curriculum and the new CCSS/PARCC landscape. Equally significant was students' potential use of the platform for anytime, anywhere learning on their tablets or laptops, even for offline learning when an internet connection was unavailable.

With the Achieve3000 platform, data-driven, differentiated instruction is paramount. Each student's unique traits, usage, and performance overlap to create a personalized learning and curriculum framework. As an example, consider an MTPS student we'll call Tianna. Tianna would see a New Jersey-customized version of the platform with articles and activities aligned to New Jersey standards at her grade level, MTPS-adopted textbooks, and any scope and sequence selected or designed by MTPS.

Across all content types, text and instructional guidance would be tailored to Tianna's individual reading level. This reading level is determined when Tianna first logs into the Achieve3000 program and takes the Lexile placement test,

LevelSet™, the world's only universal screener for reading comprehension of nonfiction text in English and Spanish. The assessment is adaptive, so it adjusts text complexity and selects appropriate items as a student takes it.

Based on her LevelSet score (and later in the program, based on adjustments automated by the system via certain achievement criteria), the content Tianna sees is automatically differentiated for her at 12 possible Lexile reading levels in English and 8 in Spanish. If Tianna scored significantly below grade level, she would receive MTPS-determined intervention scaffolds, such as shorter embedded assessments, longer time on activities, vocabulary and concept supports, and sentence-writing prompts. If she were an ELL student, Tianna would receive MTPS-determined language scaffolds, such as dual-language vocabulary and an audio toolbar. In her version of the Achieve3000 platform, Tianna's seventh-grade sister in the district's gifted and talented program would receive MTPS-determined enrichment scaffolds, such as extension activities and content at a higher level of text complexity. Using the Achieve3000 platform, Tianna, her sister, and all students in the district would access lessons specifically designed for building PARCC readiness, with assessment items that mirrored the PARCC formats.

## EDUCATORS LEAD FOR EFFICACY

In reporting for MTPS administrators and teachers, the Achieve3000 platform's validated forecasting tool utilized data from LevelSet to predict how individual MTPS students like Tianna and her sister might perform on the PARCC assessment in the spring. Classroom teachers and instructional leaders could search, organize, and assign topics based on instructional priorities, with the platform automating lesson suggestions based on specific student strengths and needs and whether lessons have already been assigned by another teacher. The platform offered additional usage and performance reports to classroom teachers and school and district administrators at the student, class, school, and district level. "Making sense of data" occurred directly within the Achieve3000 platform, where data were linked directly to action, with clear, research-based goals for fidelity of usage and performance.

Achieve3000's 5-Step Literacy Routine provided a flexible method that MTPS teachers could implement with independent work, direct instruction, blended learning, and flipped-classroom instructional models. Curriculum administrators were able to use the platform to help English language arts, social studies, and science teachers work cooperatively by parsing out topics to avoid instructional overlaps across subject areas, coordinating curricular pacing, and identifying gaps and opportunities.

## A LEXILE AND ACHIEVEMENT CULTURE

Another factor that drove success with the MTPS implementation of Achieve3000 was the district and community's embrace of the Lexile reading level score as a highly meaningful measure. The district worked to embed a "Lexile culture" into the wider community, educating parents on the measure and incorporating Lexile reading level grade

bands from the CCSS into the placement criteria for social studies and ELA classes for grades 3-8. Michael Bowman, MTPS's ELA supervisor, explains: "[This] is something parents and guardians—the whole community—have bought into. The vast majority of kids use it at home and parents share awareness. It's ... very easy for a parent or guardian to encourage or enforce and have the student do it at home. This is something that's very targeted, one component of the placement criteria that parents can hang their hat on."

Throughout the multiyear Achieve3000 implementation and the evaluation period, parents became progressively more engaged in student reading efforts. When given information about Lexile levels required for specific careers, both parents and students embraced the "real-world" impact of the Achieve3000 literacy platform and recognized the direct value of their Achieve3000 efforts. This home-school connection was a key factor powering the impressive percentage of students who worked on Achieve3000 outside the classroom.

## IMPLEMENTATION OF ACHIEVE3000 EXCEEDS ALL EXPECTATIONS

In fact, the percentages and results are impressive across the board from the 2016-2017 evaluation of MTPS's implementation of Achieve3000's cloud-based literacy platform in seven district schools. According to usage data from the evaluation period, MTPS students completed 266,276 New Jersey-customized lessons during the 2016-2017 school year. After-school, weekend, holiday, and vacation logins to the platform totaled 72,339, with 91% of students working on Achieve3000 outside their classrooms. In terms of performance, students completing two Achieve3000 activities per week showed an average Lexile reading score gain of 191L during the evaluation period, and 91% of students exceeded their expected growth in reading. Superintendent Hibbs wrote recently, "We honestly could not be happier with the results our students demonstrate. ... We currently utilize Achieve3000 in grades 3-8; it has become a part of our educational fabric. This fabric allows our teachers to differentiate and reach all levels of learners, improving reading instruction and results."

This fabric Dr. Hibbs mentioned was woven and strengthened by many educators at MTPS. Recognizing that regular student usage was necessary for achieving significant results, MTPS curriculum administrators leveraged their digital tools dashboard to monitor how often each student used Achieve3000, as well as areas where teachers spent the most time. Mr. Bowman met weekly with an analyst to look at Achieve3000 data. He was

especially curious about the number of uses per week of different sections in Achieve3000's 5-Step Literacy Routine. Research cited earlier using a sample of over one million students indicates that the quantity and quality of activity (Step 3) completion was a critical indicator for literacy success, so Mr. Bowman and his team would note if any

classrooms were completing fewer than two activities per week, and if so, address this directly. Administrators at each school also collaborated with classroom teachers, discussing how to address skill gaps and leverage the Achieve3000 platform based on specific implementation data.

The district's efforts were supported by an array of services provided by Achieve3000. In partnership with the district and based on schools' identified goals and priorities, Achieve3000 created a comprehensive implementation plan that would help MTPS's struggling, on-level, and above-level students obtain strong literacy growth. Achieve3000's experts in literacy, differentiation, and instructional technology designed

and delivered customized professional learning sessions for teachers and administrators. Modules for principals focused on literacy leadership, while classroom teachers worked on best practices for blended learning with a focus on immediate, actionable results and addressing teachers' diverse needs based on real-time data.

## TAKEAWAY

As evidenced by MTPS LevelSet data and as a direct result of the district's implementation and use of the Achieve3000 platform during the 2016-2017 school year, MTPS students significantly exceeded their expected Lexile growth, and almost 800 more students were on track for college and career readiness. This success demonstrates that:

- Giving teachers and administrators access to forecasting analyses and proven fidelity of implementation benchmarks empowers them to be more precise in prioritizing vital aspects of instruction, which in turn leads to enhanced student achievement and a more defined path to college and career readiness for all students.
- Appropriately embedding a single measure like the Lexile reading score into district and community culture and providing an effective tool for increasing that score leads to broad acceptance and a more successful implementation.
- Given the incredible success of the partnership between MTPS and Achieve3000, Superintendent Hibbs was right when he said that "instructional technology is a vehicle by which personalized learning opportunities are made as effective and individualized as possible for all students."

“ My literacy students have CRUSHED Achieve3000 this year, exceeding all my expectations. Our current class average for increasing Lexile is +190. One student has grown +575 Lexile points since September! Using Achieve3000 and their reading strategies has helped my students succeed in all subject areas. I am SO proud of them!”

– Mrs. Leister, Grade 5 Teacher,  
Frank J. Dugan Elementary