

Pearson Efficacy & Quality SOLUTION CASE STUDY

▶ SuccessMaker®

BALDWIN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
BALDWIN, GA

Habersham County School District

© 2014

KEY FINDINGS

Baldwin Elementary School adopted SuccessMaker® (SM) in January of 2012. The following school year (2012–2013), Baldwin experienced greater increases in reading and math scores for its 3rd through 5th grade population than either the district or the state. Significant increases were also witnessed in Baldwin’s Hispanic student population.

- ***Baldwin General Population Reading - increase of 10%***
 - Habersham General Population Reading - increase of 1%
 - Georgia General Population Reading - increase of 1%
 - ***Baldwin General Population Math - increase of 13%***
 - Habersham General Population Math - increase of 4%
 - Georgia General Population Math - increase of 3%
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- ***Baldwin Hispanic Population Reading - increase of 17%***
 - ***Baldwin Hispanic Population Math - increase of 14%***

DEMOGRAPHICS

District

Nested in the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains in Northeast Georgia, Habersham County School District serves 6,900 students. Educational opportunities are available for kindergarten through secondary grades with extensive opportunities for students with special needs. The district’s 14 schools include eight elementary schools, three middle schools, one high school, a 9th grade academy, and a success school serving grades 6 to 12. Habersham School District is very data oriented. Its administrators and teachers are very proud of its advanced placement students, who exceeded both state and global averages on the 2013 Advanced Placement Exams.

School

Baldwin Elementary School is located in Baldwin, Georgia, a rural community in Habersham County. It is one of the 8 elementary schools in the Habersham County School District. The school serves 458 students with 2 administrators, 36 teachers, and 24 additional staff members. The school boundaries spill over into Banks County and some of the students from Banks attend Baldwin.

The student population at Baldwin is 29% Caucasian, 63% Hispanic, 1% African American, 3% Asian, and 4% multi-racial. The mobility rate is 43% and 91% of the students qualify for free or reduced-price lunches. Baldwin principal Vicki Wade reports that, in terms of demonstrated student achievement, the significant student population coming from families living in poverty (90% of Baldwin students) represents a notable challenge.

Baldwin Elementary School’s mission is to be a place of lifelong learning for all learners—not just students, but also administrators, teachers, support staff, parents, and the community. The Baldwin staff has reached out to the community in a number of ways and has worked hard to make the school an inviting and safe haven for the entire community. There is a strong commitment to provide experiences and work that are meaningful to all, and thereby improve the school learning environment and the community at large. The underlying belief is that engaged learners see the value and develop a love of learning that will last a lifetime.

CHALLENGES

Despite Baldwin's efforts to create a lifelong love of learning and reaching out to the community, students often enter school without sufficient academic preparation or experience to be successful. Principal Wade estimates that 90% of Baldwin students lack the academic experience to be successful. For example, most kindergarten students have not had the advantage of Pre-K and are catching up from the very beginning. In addition, a large number of kindergarten students (51%) are Limited English Proficient (LEP) students. Consequently, the school realized a need to create a Response to Intervention (RTI) program, provide support for LEP students, fill gaps in learning, and improve scores on mandated state high-stakes tests.

IMPLEMENTATION

To help address these challenges, Rhonda Andrews, the Habersham District Director of Elementary Education, encouraged the use of SuccessMaker in the lower-performing elementary schools in the district. Principal Wade used Title I funds to purchase SuccessMaker for her school, and students began using the program in a limited implementation in January of 2012.

As a result of the promising impact SuccessMaker had on student achievement in the 2012–2013 school year, the district purchased SuccessMaker for all Habersham K–8 schools for the 2013–2014 school year. The district now has 5,000 licenses of SM V6 hosted locally. In addition, the district recognized the importance of professional development and ongoing support for teachers, and invested accordingly by including 45 days of Pearson-provided SM training and support. This additional professional development has helped to build teacher, support staff, and administrator capacity and has assisted teachers in implementing SuccessMaker with fidelity.

Although Baldwin started using SuccessMaker in January of 2012, it was not until the start of school 2012–2013 that a full-scale implementation was established.

Response to Intervention Program

Schools in Georgia deploy a three-tier intervention system. The general student population is included in Tier I. Tier II students perform below grade level and need additional help in skill remediation. Tier III students are the lowest-performing and need the most help and remediation.

The primary use of SuccessMaker at Baldwin is in support of the RTI program, and intervention time is built into the schedule for each grade level. Every student uses SuccessMaker for both reading and math. In SuccessMaker reading, students in grades 1 to 5 have 20-minute sessions and kindergarten students have 15-minute sessions. For SuccessMaker math, all students have 15-minute sessions. Tier I students go to Baldwin's SuccessMaker lab three days per week. Tier II students attend the lab four days per week and Tier III students attend five days per week. Most LEP students and those on an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) go to the lab five days per week. The focus of this program is to fill learning gaps, master skills, and increase scores on the state-mandated Criterion-Referenced Competency Tests (CRCT).

Baldwin has two computer labs. One is used for the teachers to take their students to use SuccessMaker. The other lab is part of an academic rotation that includes a computer class. Amanda Anderson is the teacher in that lab. During each class period she has intervention students in the lab working on SuccessMaker. Ms. Anderson has been instrumental in the success of the SuccessMaker implementation. She helped to get the implementation started, has created incentives to help keep students motivated, and runs the various reports for the teachers.

Keeping students motivated can be difficult, but Ms. Anderson has found a way to challenge and reward students as they make progress in SuccessMaker. Each student has a car and moves along the "Baldwin road to success" based on performance in SuccessMaker. Pit stops are placed along the road as achievement markers. Each time a student reaches a pit stop, he or she receives a small reward and recognition in class.



In the past, use of SuccessMaker was optional for kindergarten students until after the holiday break. This delay allowed the students to make the adjustment to school, as many of them had not previously been in a school environment. One kindergarten class in particular had a group of students who were struggling to learn to read. In January, all kindergarten students began to go to the lab for reading and math on SuccessMaker. According to Principal Vicki Wade, the growth in student reading levels, especially with this one class, has been significant. *Of the 14 students in the class, 71% showed a gain of more than .4 years in reading with no student showing less than a .33 years gain. In math, the data indicate that 64% of students showed growth gains of more than .5 years and 36% showed instructional levels above grade 1.* Based on this improvement in student achievement, it was decided that kindergarten students would start SuccessMaker at the beginning of the school year in 2014–2015.

Extension Program

SuccessMaker is also used in the Extension Program at Baldwin. The program extends the school day by providing an opportunity for students who arrive at school early to work on SuccessMaker with support from teachers who staff the lab. In particular, it allows struggling students to receive increased one-on-one assistance. Teachers use the SuccessMaker Areas of Difficulty Report and custom courses designed to address specific standards to focus on students' individual areas of need. Dr. Mary Sangster, Baldwin's Academic Coach, created the custom courses.

The program requires additional funding for teacher salaries and is usually limited to one semester, but has proved to be so beneficial that continuing efforts are made to secure sufficient funding to start the program as early as possible. For the 2013–2014 school year the program was able to start in October and continue until CRCT testing in April.

Classroom and Other Uses

The use of SuccessMaker has spread from the lab to the classroom and the principal's office. Training delivered by Pearson Educational Consultant Kim Cowan has taught teachers to use the program with their SMART boards for large-group and small-group instruction. The teachers pull lessons on individual standards and also provide cross-content area support through the SuccessMaker reading lessons. Students who are placed in time-out in the principal's office are engaged in SuccessMaker for additional practice.

Data drives all areas of academic focus at Baldwin Elementary. The school uses a system of “data cards” to record and share student achievement information including progress, areas of difficulty, and growth against targets from the SuccessMaker reports. The cards are used to share information during:

- Weekly grade level teacher collaborative planning sessions
- Weekly teacher meetings with IEP and English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) support teachers
- Weekly general student review meetings with the administration, the academic coach, and teachers
- Monthly student achievement meetings with the administration, the academic coach, and teachers

The creation of the Parent Involvement Coordinator position at Baldwin has helped bridge the connection between parents and the school. The coordinator has been in place for three years and has been able to reach out to parents and build relationships that encourage parent participation in the school and in their children’s education. The number of school events involving parent participation increased by 63% between 2009 and 2014, and the number of parents attending these events increased by 118% over the same time frame. Consequently, the school staff reports that parents are attending more school functions and parent conferences, and are asking more questions.

Data from SuccessMaker reports is used during parent conferences to encourage parents’ support in areas where their child is struggling and/or progressing. In 2013–2014, 3rd grade teachers met with all parents and shared their child’s current instructional level and the instructional level the child needed to achieve.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN A STUDENT IS ENROLLED IN SUCCESSMAKER?

SuccessMaker Initial Placement Motion

SuccessMaker responds to each student individually. Upon enrollment in SuccessMaker, the student’s first step is to complete Initial Placement Motion (IPM), which assesses the student without his or her realizing an assessment is taking place. The system adjusts forward and backward as it evaluates the current instructional level of the student in each of 8 reading strands and 16 math strands. Once completed, the system calculates an average of the strand level scores and places the student at the appropriate level. For example, a student might have an instructional level of 4.3 in reading, but a vocabulary level of 3.9. This student would begin at the level at which he or she scored on the IPM for each strand, not at the average level of 4.3. In other words, this student would begin work in vocabulary at the 3.9 instructional level. The process is the same for math.

SuccessMaker Reading

Students working in SuccessMaker Reading are introduced to a skill, at their own instructional level, through guided instruction and practice. SuccessMaker provides a motion path dependent on the student’s responses. If the student has difficulty with the skill, the system introduces a related supporting skill. If difficulty continues, the student is given a prerequisite skill or a lower-level content-area skill. If the student demonstrates understanding, the system moves the student to independent practice and eventually to retention exercises. If after the three supports (related supporting skill, prerequisite skill, and/or lower-level content skill) the student still doesn’t demonstrate understanding, the skill goes into a holding pattern, called delayed presentation. Based on an algorithm in SuccessMaker, the skill will be re-introduced to the student at a later date. The teacher receives notice of the skill in delay through reports. In some cases a teacher may provide an intervention for the skill, or it may be the skill has not yet been introduced in the traditional classroom.

SuccessMaker Math

The motion path for SuccessMaker math is slightly different. A student is introduced to a new skill through “mixed presentation,” meaning the student doesn’t receive a series of problems that are all the same. For instance, when a student works on whole numbers, the sequence might include addition of single digit numbers, multiple digit numbers, place value, etc. If a student has difficulty, the system pinpoints the difficult skill and delivers sequential practice on that skill. Mastery is determined not by a percentage correct, but by a pattern of responses (see example below).

Two students are given 10 problems:

R=Correct Response I=Incorrect Response

Student One: R R I R I R R I I I Score 50%

Student Two: I I R I I I R R R R Score 50 %

Both students in this example scored 50%. However, for student two it appears understanding of the concept was demonstrated after problem six, because the student answered four questions correctly in a row. SuccessMaker considers this as the student demonstration of mastery and moves the student on to the next new skill.

If the student still has difficulty after sequential practice, SuccessMaker presents two additional supports, a tutorial and presentation of a prerequisite skill. Again there are three levels of intervention (sequential practice, tutorial, and pre-requisite skill) prior to sending the skill to delayed presentation, to be introduced again at a later date determined by the system. As in reading, the teacher is notified through the reporting system and is able to take targeted, evidence-based action and intervene accordingly.

Professional Development

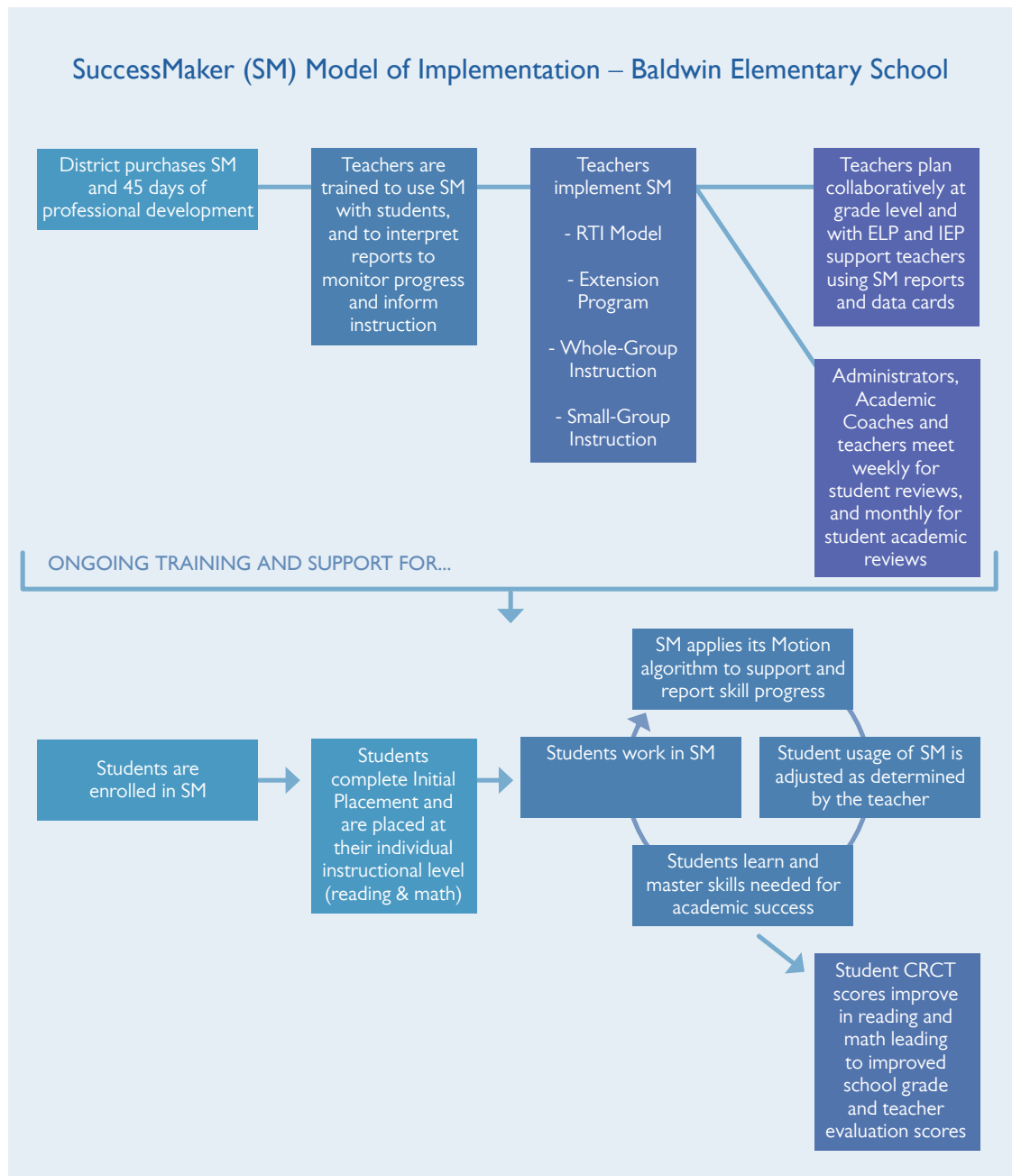
A successful implementation requires that administrators, teachers, and staff members understand how SuccessMaker works with their students and how to use the reports and monitor student progress. Pearson’s Educational Consultant Kim Cowan has provided professional development support for Habersham School District from the beginning of the SuccessMaker implementation. Ms. Cowan delivered training to several schools at a time as well as at individual school sites. The Professional Development schedule for the 2013–2014 school year began at the start of school and continued throughout the year. The service support plan included the following:

- August - Start of school initial training on how to use SuccessMaker
- October - How to read, interpret, and use reports to inform instruction and monitor student progress
- December - Re-enforcement for Academic Coaches on use of data and reports
- January/February - One day at each school site to review the prescriptive scheduling report, address issues, usage, progress, and make implementation adjustments.
- Spring - CRCT test preparation continued support
- End-of-Year closeout

The amount of support available enables teachers to have a good understanding of SuccessMaker’s impact on individual student progress, how to use the program in both large-group and small-group instruction, and the importance of interpreting SuccessMaker reports to monitor student progress, identify areas of difficulty for individual and groups of students, and inform instruction.

Figure 1 illustrates the implementation model of SuccessMaker at Baldwin Elementary School.

FIGURE 1.0



RESULTS AND DATA

Baldwin began using SuccessMaker in January of 2012, but with a limited implementation the program did not have an influence on the spring 2012 CRCT test scores. In fact, 2011–2012 test scores fell for both the general population and the Hispanic population. Principal Wade attributes the decrease to a combination of factors, including a lack of focus on test preparation and personnel changes. In addition, the “requirement” to achieve Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) had been removed, so schools considered 2011–2012 to be a “hold harmless” year. According to Principal Wade, the CRCT for 2011–2012 did not have significant changes and so was not causally related to the lower scores.

A full-scale implementation of SuccessMaker started in the fall of the 2012–2013 school year and the test scores for that year showed an increase from the previous year.

As seen in Figures 2.0 and 2.1 below, general population reading scores dropped by 5 percentage points from 2010–2011 to 2011–2012, but increased by 10 percentage points in 2012–2013. For the Hispanic population, scores dropped 11 percentage points from 2010–2011 to 2011–2012, but then increased by 17 percentage points in 2012–2013. Despite the drop in 2011–2012, the general population still had an increase of 5 percentage points and the Hispanic population had an increase of 6 percentage points in 2012-2013.

FIGURE 2.0

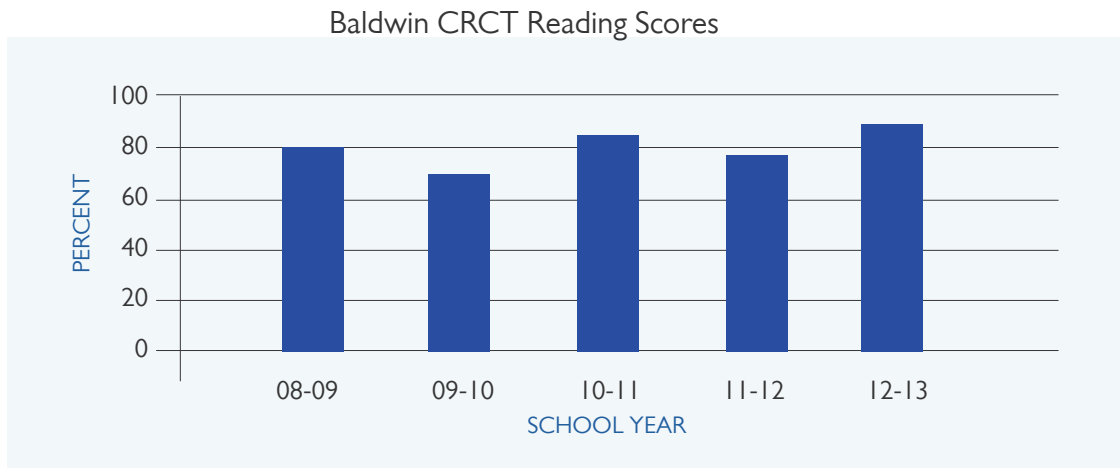
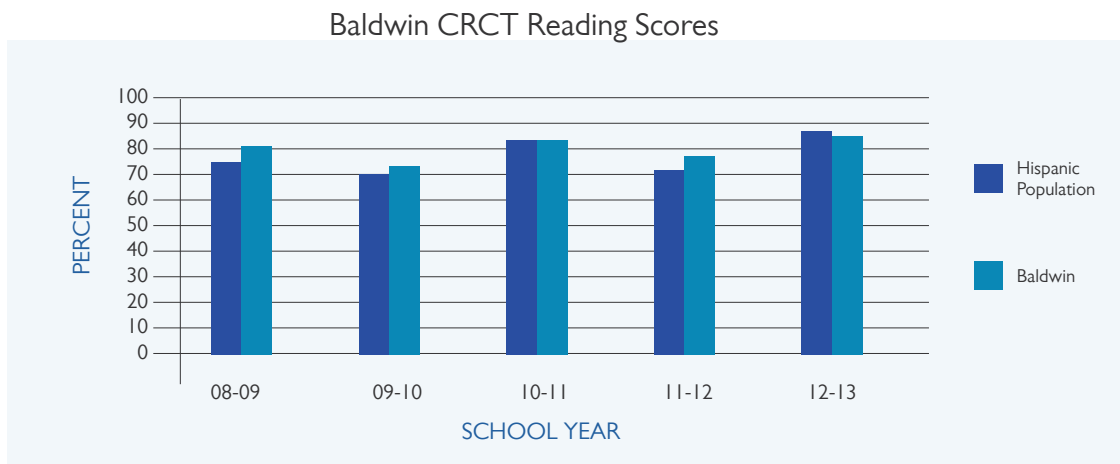
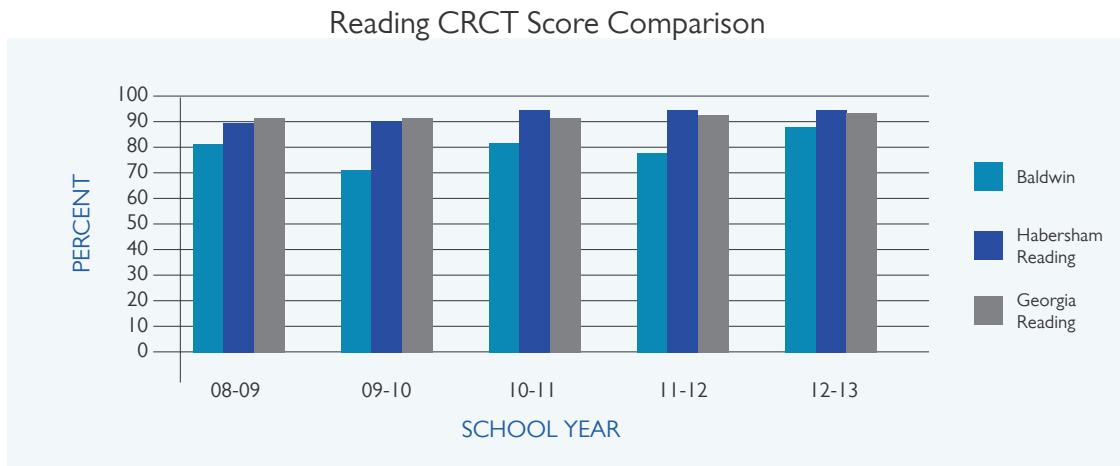


FIGURE 2.1



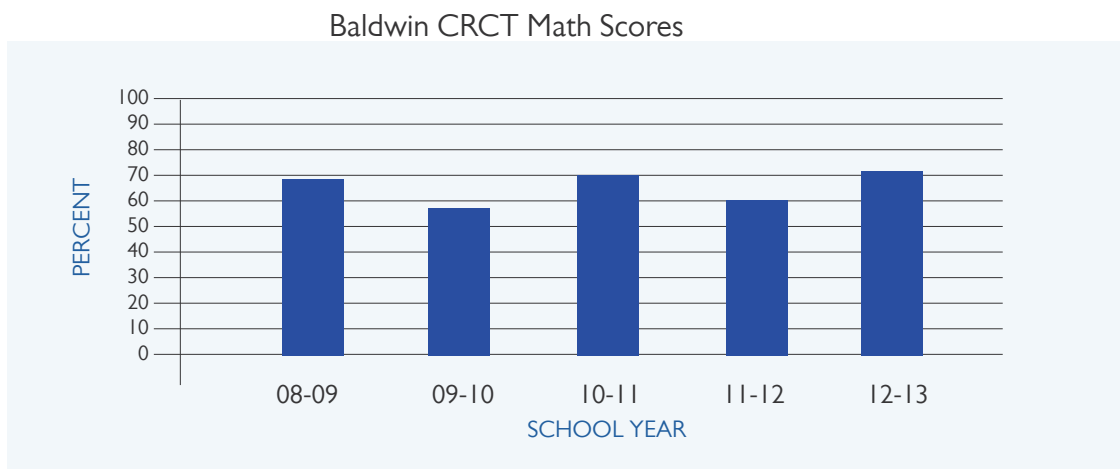
Habersham School District reading scores have been higher than the state level for the past three years. Although Baldwin is still lower than both the district and state scores, the school is experiencing growth and making gains against the district and state scores. As seen in Figure 2.2 below, Baldwin reading scores grew by 5 percentage points between the 2010–2011 and 2012–2013 school years while the district scores grew by only 1 percentage point, and the state scores grew by only 2 percentage points.

FIGURE 2.2



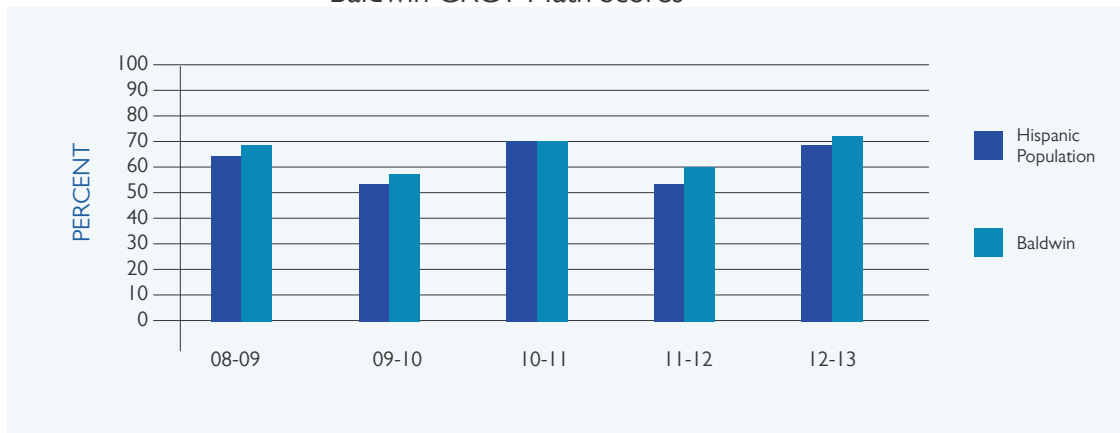
Math CRCT scores also dropped in the 2011–2012 school year. The general population experienced a drop of 10 percentage points while the Hispanic population experienced a drop of 16 percentage points. In 2012–2013 the general population’s score grew 3 percentage points over the 2010–2011 school year, while the Hispanic population did not quite return to the 2010–2011 70% score and fell short by 2 percentage points. See Figures 3.0 and 3.1.

FIGURE 3.0



Baldwin CRCT Math Scores

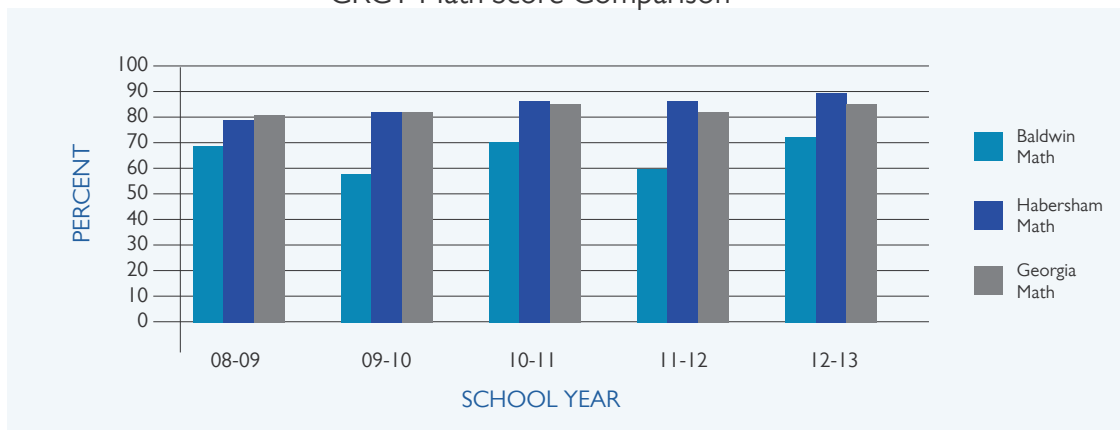
FIGURE 3.1



A comparison of Baldwin scores to the district and state since 2010–2011 shows that Baldwin and Habersham School District both had increases of 3 percentage points from 2010–2011 to 2012–2013 while the state score did not change. See Figure 3.2.

CRCT Math Score Comparison

FIGURE 3.2



Overall Baldwin has made significant progress in closing the gap between the school’s CRCT scores in reading and math as compared to the district and state CRCT scores. The gap in reading scores between Baldwin and the district went from 17% in 2011–2012 to 8% in 2012–2013, a decrease of 53%. The gap in reading scores between Baldwin and the state decreased by a greater margin—56%.

Math scores also experienced a significant decrease in the gap size relative to district and state scores. The gap between Baldwin math scores and the district scores went from 25% to 16% over the same time frame. This represents a decrease of 36%. As compared to the state scores, the gap went from 22% to 12%, a decrease of 45%. See Figures 4.0, 4.1, and 4.2.

FIGURE 4.0

CRCT Score Gap Analysis

	2011-2012 CRCT Score	GAP	2012-2013 CRCT Score	GAP	% Change
Baldwin Reading	77	17	87	8	53% decrease
District Reading	94		95		
Baldwin Reading	77	16	87	7	56% decrease
State Reading	93		94		
Baldwin Math	60	25	73	16	36% decrease
District Math	85		89		
Baldwin Math	60	22	73	12	45% decrease
Math	82		85		

FIGURE 4.1

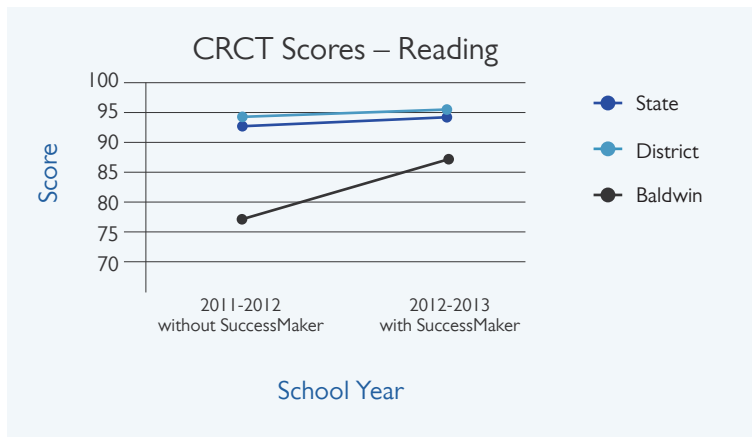
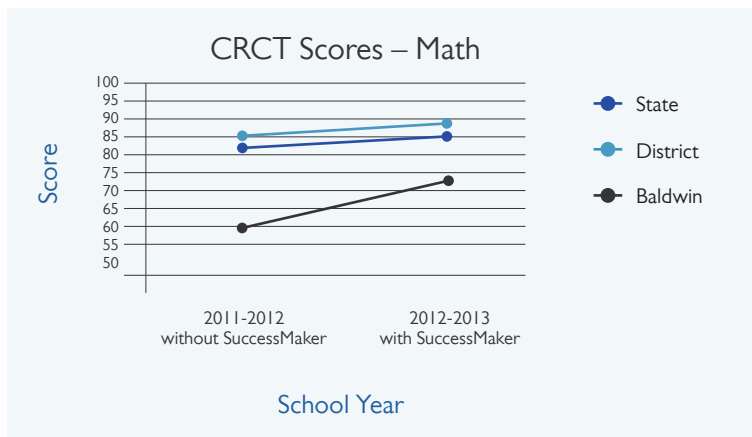


FIGURE 4.2



2013–2014 SCHOOL YEAR PROGRESS

Students responded well to the 2013-2014 implementation of SuccessMaker. Baldwin kindergarten students—who began SuccessMaker midway through the year (January 2014)—demonstrated notable growth in reading and math. More than two-thirds of all kindergarten students (69%) scored more than .5 years of growth in reading and more than three-quarters of kindergarteners (86%) scored more than .5 years of growth in math. Additionally, of the 72 kindergarten students, 11 (15%) scored more than 1 year of growth in reading and 28 (39%) scored more than 1 year of growth in math.

Grades 1 and 2 also demonstrated strong results. Data indicate that 53% of grade 1 students showed more than 1 year of growth in reading and 74% grew more than 1 year in math. Grade 2 students demonstrated growth as well, with 62% scoring more than 1 year of growth in reading and 41% demonstrating more than 1 year of growth for math. See Figures 5.0 through 5.3.

FIGURE 5.0

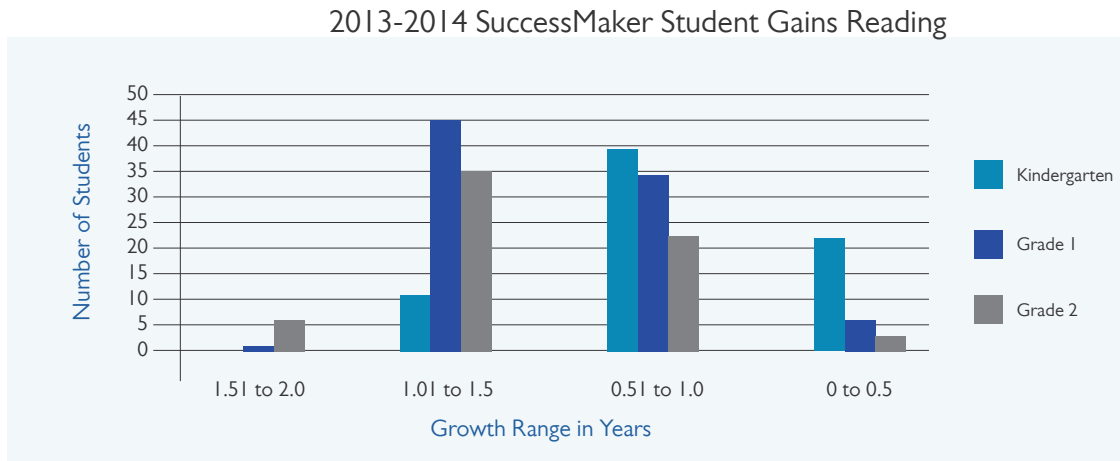
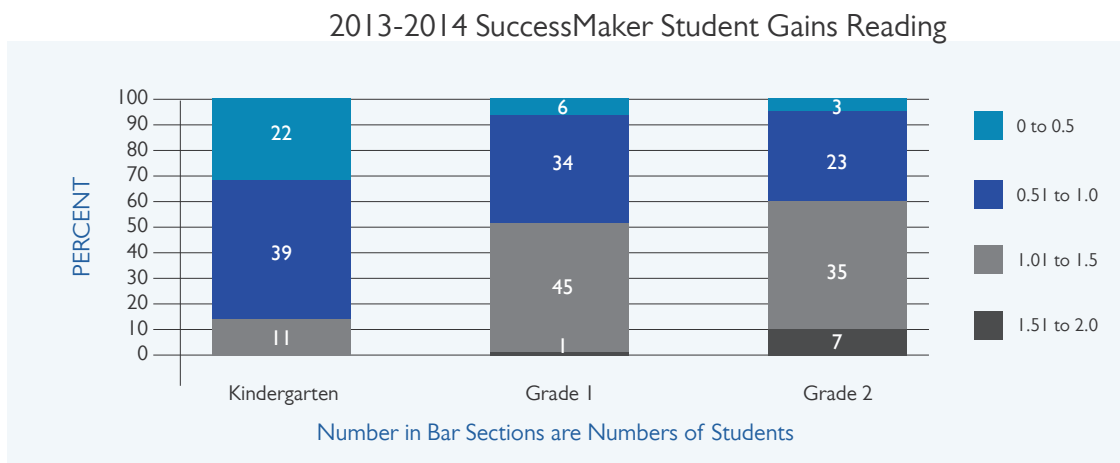
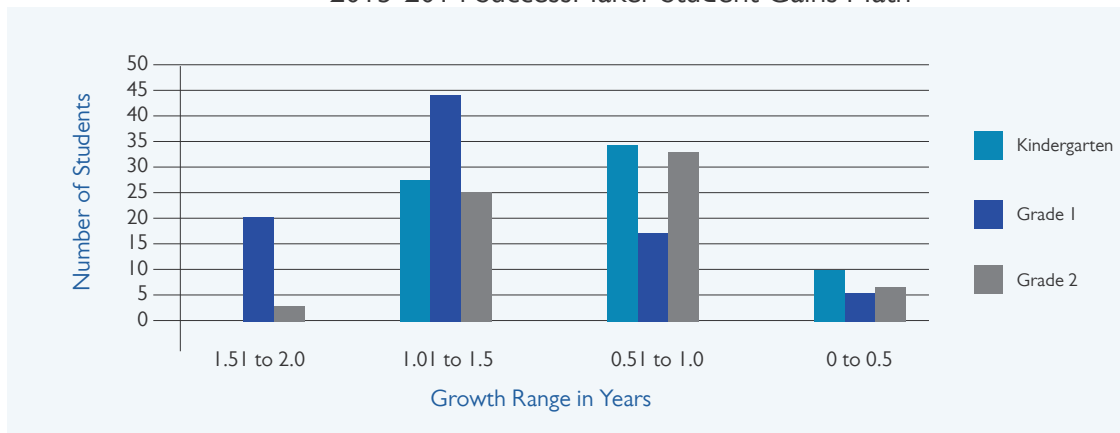


FIGURE 5.1



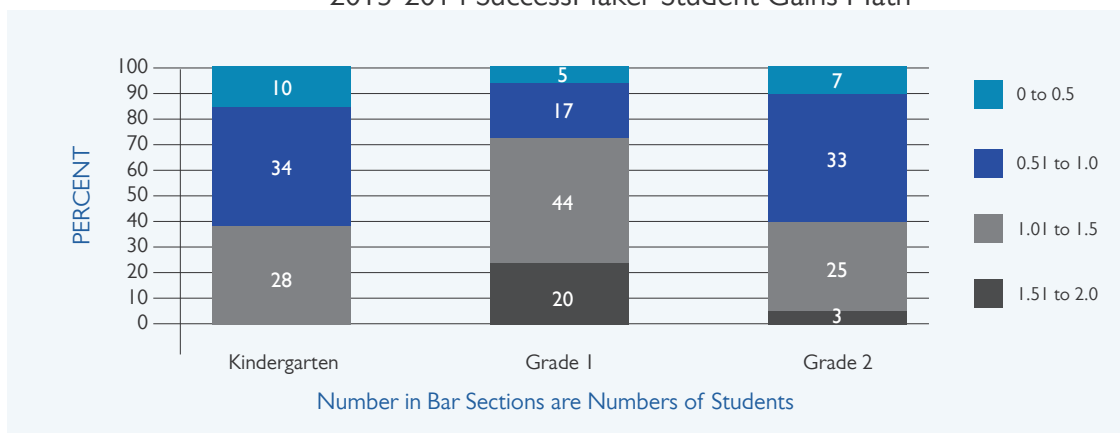
2013-2014 SuccessMaker Student Gains Math

FIGURE 5.2



2013-2014 SuccessMaker Student Gains Math

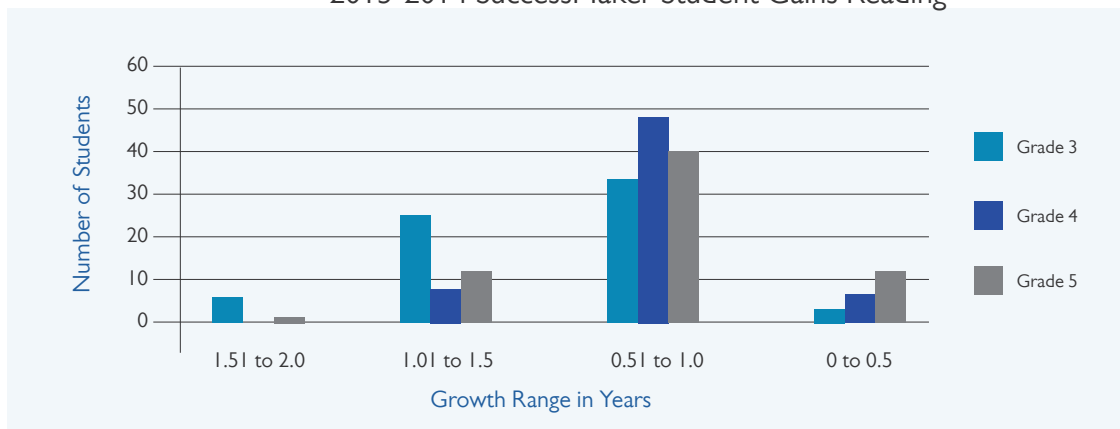
FIGURE 5.3



Grades 3 through 5 took the CRCT in the spring of 2014. Those scores are not yet available. However, these students have shown growth in both reading and math levels on SuccessMaker. Grade 3 data report that 46% of students have shown greater than 1 year of growth in reading and 58% have grown more than 1 year in math. Grade 4 data report that 14% of students have more than 1 year of growth in reading. In math, 6% of students have grown more than 1 year. For Grade 5, 20% of students show more than 1 year of growth in reading and 26% show more than 1 year growth in math. See Figures 6.0 through 6.3.

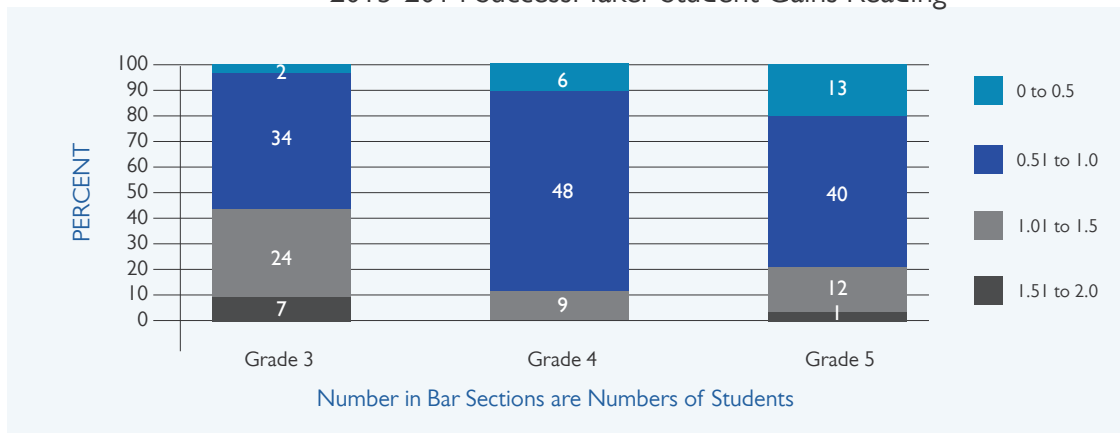
2013-2014 SuccessMaker Student Gains Reading

FIGURE 6.0



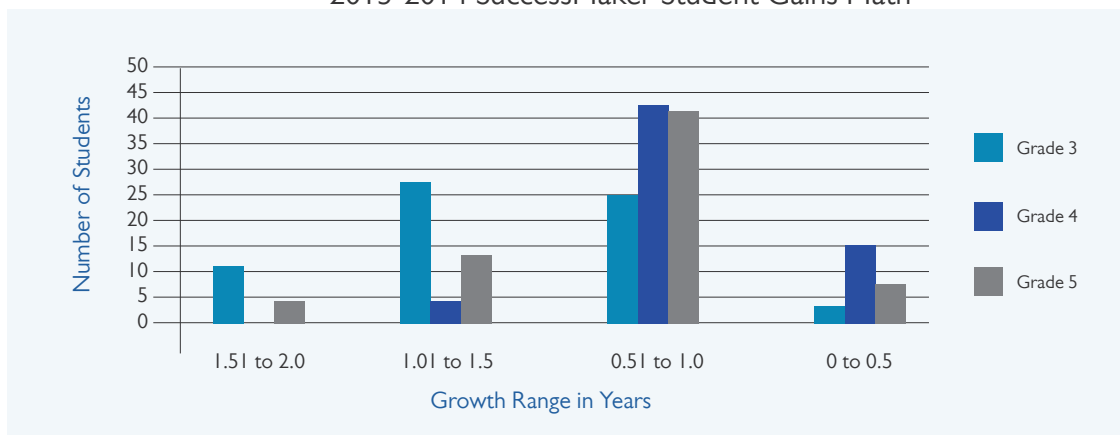
2013-2014 SuccessMaker Student Gains Reading

FIGURE 6.1



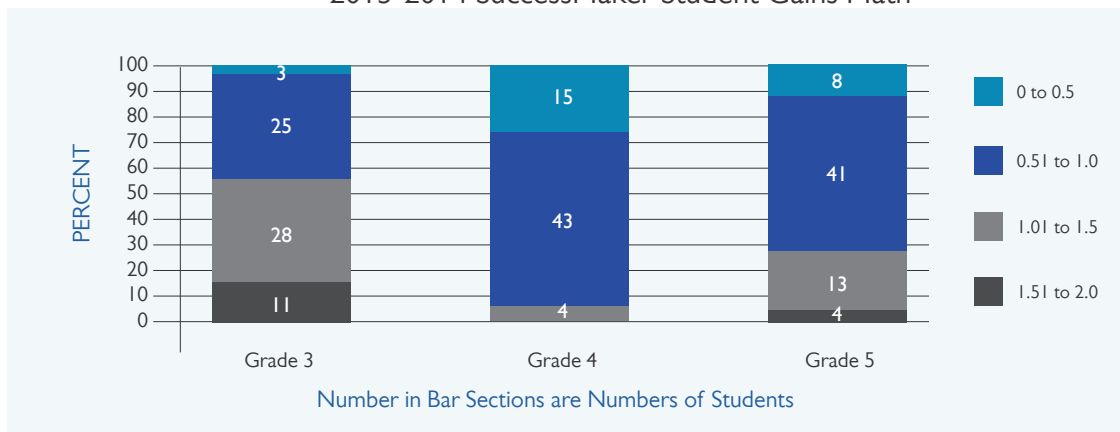
2013-2014 SuccessMaker Student Gains Math

FIGURE 6.2



2013-2014 SuccessMaker Student Gains Math

FIGURE 6.3



ADMINISTRATOR, TEACHER, STUDENT, AND PARENT EXPERIENCE

Administration at Baldwin is very positive about SuccessMaker and its impact on student learning. “The thing that SuccessMaker does that helps all students is build background knowledge,” states Principal Wade. She recognizes that encouragement and support from District Elementary Education Director Rhonda Andrews, and Pearson’s Educational Consultant Kim Cowan, have been instrumental in Baldwin’s success. “SuccessMaker helps keep us competitive—it has really helped increase our scores.”

When asked how the teachers feel about SuccessMaker, Principal Wade indicated that teachers’ initial apprehension related to SuccessMaker has shifted. With training and support the teachers have come to appreciate firsthand the value of the program and how it helps inform their instruction. The teachers also make use of the Prescriptive Scheduling Report to help determine how their students will perform on the state-mandated high-stakes test. Teachers use this report to adjust student usage of SuccessMaker in an effort to improve the projected student test results. The new teacher evaluation process will include a review of students’ gains in SuccessMaker as well as their scores on the state CRCT.

Student response to SuccessMaker has been positive as well. Principal Wade reported that students seem to enjoy SuccessMaker and that there are very few students that are not “on board” with the program. Teachers share student data one-on-one with their students, which has helped to keep students motivated and informed. The students like having a goal to shoot for and can see their progress toward that goal.

As stated earlier, parents see student progress during parent/teacher meetings or student support team meetings. SuccessMaker reports are shared with the parents, but Principal Wade feels that parents typically do not have a good understanding of how SuccessMaker impacts students’ learning. “Parents want their children to be successful but do not always know what will help them in school.”

CONCLUSIONS

SuccessMaker has added to the progress of this school in its goal to increase scores on its state-mandated high-stakes test. With many of the students coming to school with limited background knowledge, SuccessMaker has helped students to fill the gaps. Among students in grades 1 through 5, no less than 81% have shown at least .5 years of growth in reading and no less than 73% have shown at least .5 years of growth in math. Kindergarten students have had noteworthy results as well. In approximately 3.5 months, the percent of students showing at least .5 years of growth is 57% in reading and 85% in math. Progress has been achieved despite high poverty, high mobility, and a large LEP population.

The district has indicated its confidence in SuccessMaker and its impact on student learning by doing a district wide purchase for all K–8 schools. The program is also used in the alternative school and may expand to the 9th Grade Academy as well.

Principal Vicki Wade has seen the increase in scores and the success of her students using SuccessMaker. She reflects that the individualization, targeted instruction, and format of the presentation have helped Baldwin students. “I really believe SuccessMaker has helped us increase our test scores.”