AMERICAN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

Demonstration of Significant Progress: 1a - Student Median Growth Percentile in Math

American Leadership Academy has seen substantial growth in mathematic performance for this school year. While we are awaiting the results of our most recent benchmark assessment to determine the full measure of growth in our students, we have included data from our February benchmark to demonstrate that growth has occurred.

For the 2012-13 academic school year, American Leadership Academy (ALA) continued use of the Singapore Math curriculum. This curriculum has been empirically proven to help gain results and has helped the nation of Singapore place in the top three performing nations on the TIMSS math assessments for nearly two decades.

In order to ensure that the curriculum was being implemented correctly, ALA contracted with Smart Training to come and train our staff during the summer and then again after the first quarter. Half-day professional development days were also integrated throughout the school year to provide frequent opportunities for improvement.

Teachers were also required during summer training to work together to map the Singapore curriculum and create a shared pacing guide that was uploaded to a shared district calendar. Teachers reported their progress against the pacing guide to administration on a monthly basis.

Once the school year began, all students were assessed using the Galileo Assessment System by Assessment Technology Incorporated. The students received regular formative assessments throughout the course of the year and were administered two additional benchmark assessments prior to AIMS. This data was used to identify gaps in learning. The teacher's schedules were modified to provide them with several 45-minute shared planning times. Teachers were required to review data as a PLC each week and modify instruction accordingly. The Assistant Director at each campus participated in each grade-level's PLC once a week to ensure they were being completed. The lead teacher for each PLC was also required to submit a monthly report to administration accounting for their team. To ensure that there was sufficient time for response to intervention in math, an additional 30-minute block was added to the school day.

All teachers were subject to several informal reviews throughout the year. Where possible, it was the goal of administration to complete informal walk-throughs of each class once a week. The lead teacher for each grade level was also tasked with observing the teacher's within their grade level once a month and reporting their findings. Additionally, each teacher received two formal observations during the school year. These were performed by both the school director and assistant director and included a pre-observation meeting, 30 minute observation, post-observation meeting, and where necessary an additional goal review meeting.

Using the data obtained from Galileo, we were able to determine our previous efforts would not be sufficient to close the gaps in the Singapore Math curriculum in relation to Arizona State Standards. This finding led to the immediate purchase and implementation of the supplemental math program, Buckle Down. It also led to an increased emphasis on standards-based reporting. New reports were created for each grade level and data-walls erected within each school to provide a quick snap-shot of performance throughout the year.

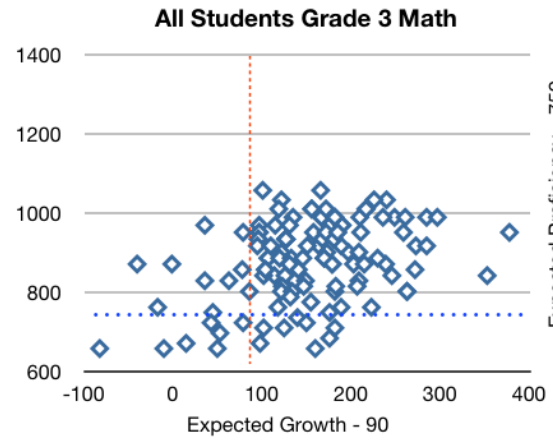
As a leadership school, we emphasize making goals at every level of our organization. As a district, one of our Wildly Important Goals (WIG) was to have all students at 80% proficiency or better in both math and reading. As our teachers became more familiar with the new Galileo Assessment System, we encouraged them to make more standard-specific goals within their classrooms. Our teachers responded positively and we were able to observe the spontaneous creation of data walls in classrooms throughout the district as classes measured progress toward their goals.

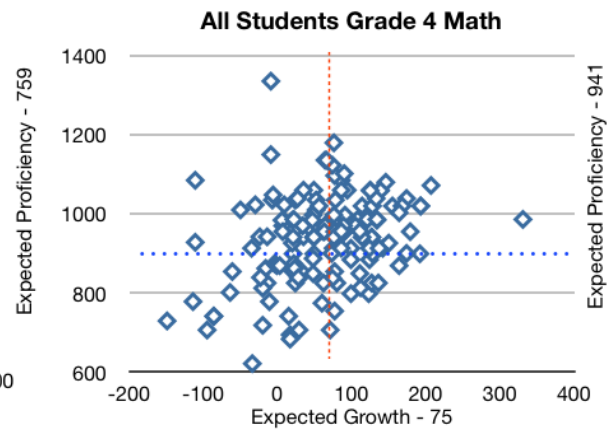
From the district level, our campus administrators were held accountable for results in weekly professional development meetings with the Executive Director and the Curriculum Director. During these meetings, the administrators for each campus had to account for student progress, test scores, and pacing for each grade level. Where deficiencies were found, plans were put into place to get back on track. In extreme cases, changes in personnel were made to ensure organizational goals were met.

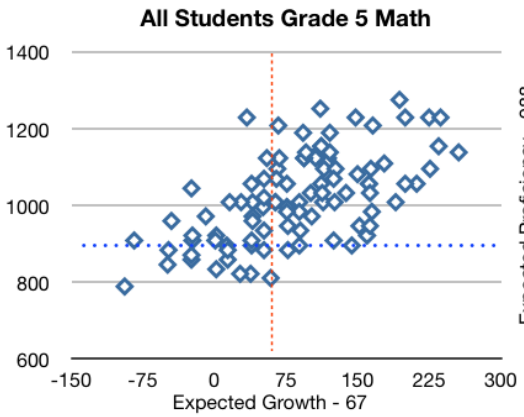
Though we have made significant progress this year, we continue to work to ensure we do even better next year. After review of our math program, we have determined to move to an alternate math program moving forward. More specifically, we will be utilizing the Saxon Math program moving forward. We have had a curriculum team in place all year and we have invited several high-performing teachers to join the curriculum team to work through the summer to map the new curriculum and create shared pacing guides.

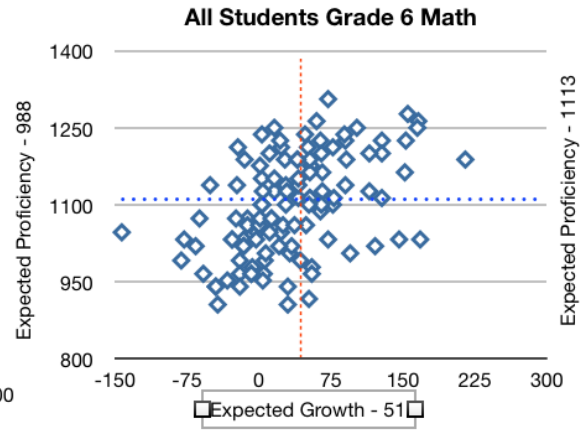
Attached you will find the data supporting the growth we have seen in our students this year. We are very confident with the growth we have seen in 3rd, 5th, and 6th grades. Our second benchmark of the year confirmed poor performance by our 4th grade team and an intensive remediation plan was put into place including staffing changes, curriculum support and coaching, utilization of supplemental materials, and weekly standards-based assessments. Between our second and third benchmark we saw phenomenal growth at this grade level as a result of our efforts. One class even saw a 35% increase in performance over just the short time frame between our December and February benchmarks. We know that this grade level has continued to grow since our last assessment, and has had much better growth than is represented in the graph to follow. As we have not yet completed our final benchmark, we are unable to display the full measure of growth we feel we have obtained.

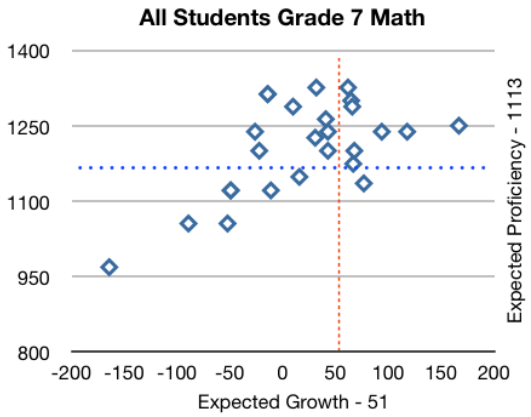
We are very confident in the growth we have seen in our students this year and anticipate ever greater growth in the coming school year.











Insufficient Data for 8th grade students (8 students between these 2 campuses)

Data derived from Galileo Assessment System. Expected Proficiency and growth measured by developmental level. Levels of expected growth and proficiency provided by Galileo.

Demonstration of Sufficient Progress in Reading: 1a - Student Growth Percentiles

American Leadership Academy (ALA) uses the Spalding Method for teaching phonics, spelling, and reading. In order to supplement the reading program, ALA secured subscriptions to Reading A to Z for the 2012-13 academic school. Additionally, ALA invested heavily in additional class sets of literature in order to make it more accessible for all students. Grammar is taught in grades K-3 using Shurley English and Hake Grammar in grades 4 - 8. Hake Grammar was adopted for this school year for its increased emphasis on writing over Shurley English.

ALA follows the Core Knowledge sequence. As a part of that sequence, we read several challenging texts throughout the year. Teachers read these texts with the students to scaffold as necessary and engage them in socratic discussion. These texts are incorporated into the regular language arts block.

As a part of our summer professional development time, teachers worked in conjunction with administration to align and map the reading curriculum. A pacing map was created for each grade level and hosted on a shared calendar within the ALA organization. Teachers reported on their progress against the curriculum map to administration on a regular basis. Administration reported on pacing for each subject to the district each week as a part of their weekly professional development meeting.

Teachers at ALA receive extensive training in reading instruction. First and second year teachers are required to take a 2-week training course on the Spalding Method for a combined 4 weeks of instruction in Spalding. These seminars are conducted by Spalding Certified trainers. After the school year begins, additional refresher courses are provided as necessary.

All students were administered a pre-test and subsequent benchmarks using the Galileo Assessment System. They are also given a DIBELS benchmark assessment. Depending on performance on the DIBELS assessments, students are place into groups based on reading ability. Students identified as needing intensive intervention are progress monitored on a weekly basis. Students identified as needing strategic intervention are progress monitored bi-weekly. All students are progress-monitored on a monthly basis.

Teachers are evaluated on a regular basis. Evaluations include short informal walk-throughs as well as more in-depth formal reviews. These evaluations happen during all areas of instruction and candid feedback is provided in a timely manner. Teachers that are identified as lacking necessary skills are given the necessary coaching and performance managed. Teachers that continue to fail to meet expectations have their employment terminated.

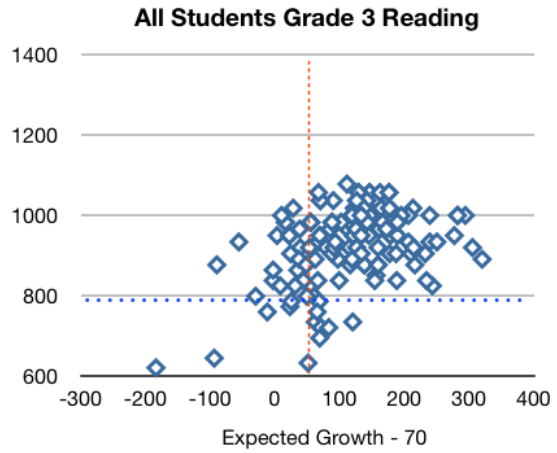
After each benchmark, administration at each campus reviews the data from their campus and makes adjustments as necessary. Administration discusses benchmark

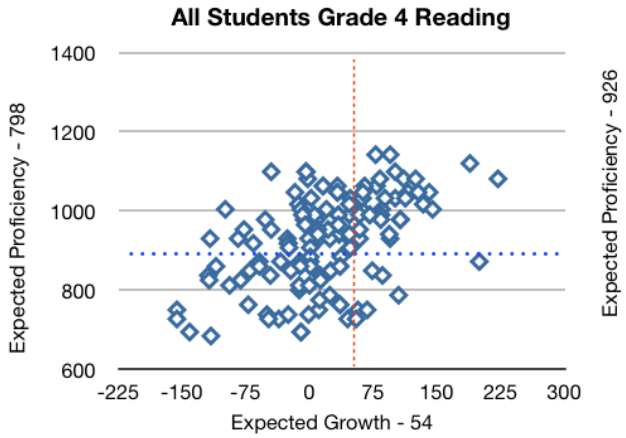
results with the Executive Director and Curriculum Director after each benchmark. Goals are set and adjustments made as necessary.

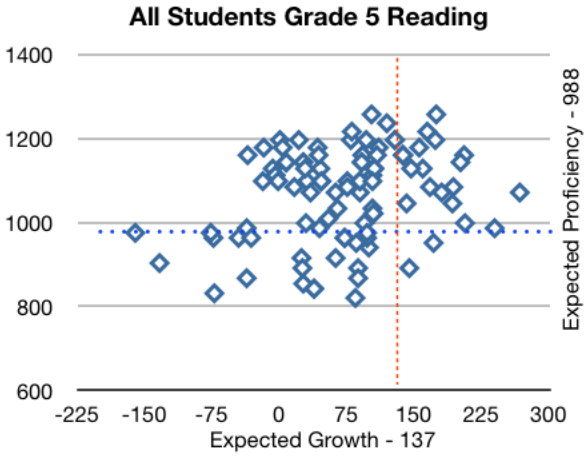
Using the Galileo system, teachers are able to monitor progress towards mastery of state standards. Teachers create data walls within the classroom in order to help students set and meet goals. Classroom and grade level mastery towards standards mastery is discussed within the PLC team's weekly meeting.

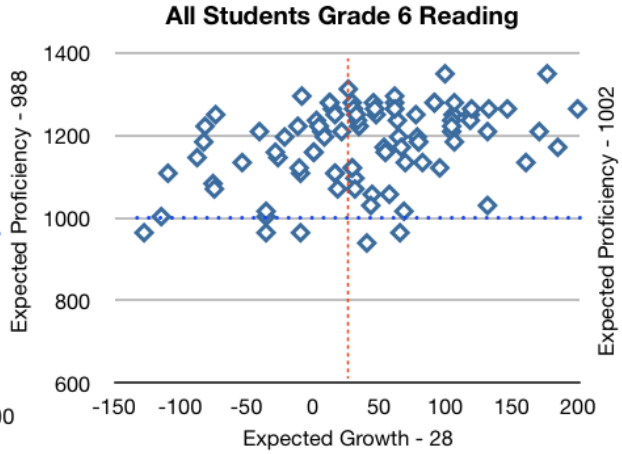
As demonstrated by the data below, our students have experienced growth in grades 4, 5, & 7 and more dramatic growth in grades 3 & 6.

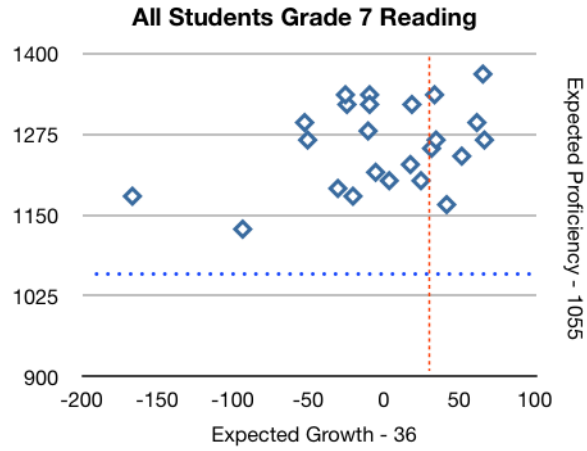
To ensure our students obtain even greater growth in reading next year, we will be adopting the Jr. Great Books program. With the shared inquiry methodology, this program helps students understand and dissect texts in a way that few other programs can match. We are also working to incorporate more literature and reading into other subjects such as science and history as a component of Common Core standards.


All Students Grade 3 Reading
1400
1200
1000
800
600
-300 -200 -100 0 100 200 300 400
Expected Growth - 70


All Students Grade 4 Reading
Expected Proficiency - 798
Expected Proficiency - 926
1400
1200
1000
800
600
-225 -150 -75 0 75 150 225 300
Expected Growth - 54


All Students Grade 5 Reading
1400
1200
1000
800
600
-225 -150 -75 0 75 150 225 300
Expected Growth - 137


All Students Grade 6 Reading
Expected Proficiency - 988
Expected Proficiency - 1002
1400
1200
1000
800
600
-150 -100 -50 0 50 100 150 200
Expected Expected Growth - 28


All Students Grade 7 Reading
1400
1275
1150
1025
900
-200 -150 -100 -50 0 50 100
Expected Growth - 36
Expected Proficiency - 1055

Demonstration of Sufficient Progress in Math: 1.b Bottom 25% Median SGP

American Leadership Academy (ALA) continued the use of the Singapore Math curriculum for all students, including the bottom 25% of students. However, in addition to Singapore Math, we introduced Buckle Down supplemental materials in order to better target specific standards.

Structurally, we added a 30-minute math RTI block to our day to have more time in remediation with our bottom 25% of students. We also modified our schedule to align key content areas and allow for differentiation between classes based on student needs.

To ensure teacher insight into each students' needs, we purchased and implemented the Galileo Assessment system. Using this system, we were able to assess all students at various times throughout the year. We were also able to create instructional dialogues that could be accessed online specific to each student. Students without access to internet at home were provided printed versions of the instructional dialogues and their answers were later input by the teacher.

Using Galileo, we were able to identify the bottom 25% of students using our pre-test. Once identified, this group of students received specific attention to help them increase their performance. Other resources such as Khan Academy and TenMarks were employed as the teacher felt appropriate to help reinforce difficult concepts for struggling students.

As a part of our professional development strategy, teachers received extensive training in Galileo, Buckle Down, and Singapore Math. Training in Singapore Math was provided by Smart Training, one of the foremost training experts in Singapore Math. Training on Galileo was provided both by Assessment Technology Incorporated representatives and internal staff. Due to the many options the system has, several training events were held throughout the school year to help teachers obtain mastery on the system. Teachers received an overview of the Buckle Down program and how it can be used in conjunction with Galileo and Singapore Math to target specific standards for remediation, review, or extension.

Once a basic level of mastery was obtained on Galileo, teachers were encouraged to use the system to remediate and extend classroom learning. Staff participated in creating instructional dialogues tied to school learning objectives, pacing maps, and student needs. This approach permitted teachers to measure progress towards standard mastery every week and modify instruction accordingly.

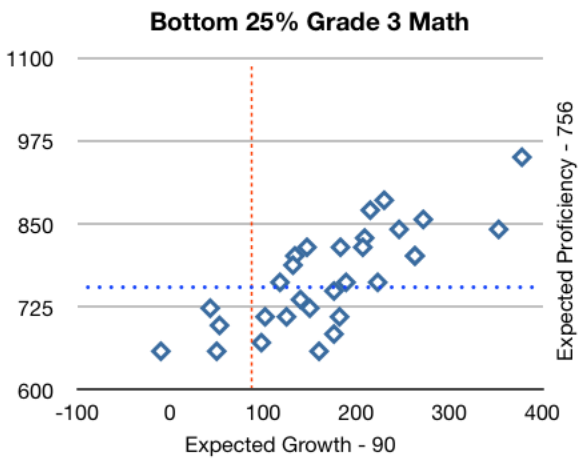
The school day was modified to provide several blocks of shared planning time for teachers throughout the week. Grade level PLCs were formed and staff received training on how to best utilize PLCs to analyze data and increase student performance. A member of administration participated in grade-level PLCs once a week to ensure that they were operating properly and that they remained data-driven. In our PLCs, teachers

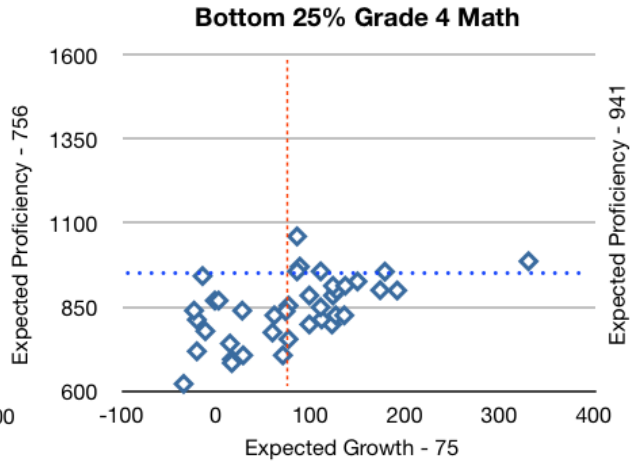
used data to discuss teacher efficacy and shared resources to aide each other in helping each student succeed.

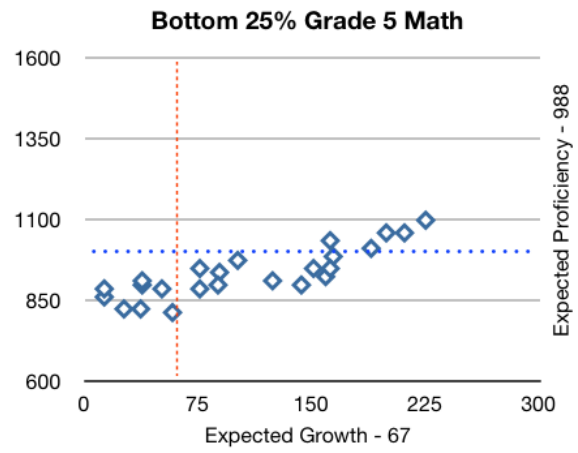
Students, particularly our lowest 25%, were encouraged to make specific standards-based learning goals and track progress towards achieving those goals. Students tracked progress towards personal and educational goals in leadership notebooks and then shared their progress with their parents in student-led parent teacher conferences.
Though Singapore Math is a phenomenal program, we will be moving to another more explicit math curriculum for the 2013-14 school year. Remediation, especially with the bottom 25% of students, is very difficult within the Singapore Math program. Since the Singapore Math program does not provide review, once a student falls behind they struggle to catch up. This effect grows the higher the grade level the student is in. As we have experienced a large influx of new students each year, we find ourselves constantly playing catch-up within the Singapore program. Though our teachers do a good job (as evidenced by the data), we feel that they would be even more successful with a more explicit curriculum that incorporates frequent reviews. As such, we are planning to move to Saxon Math Curriculum.

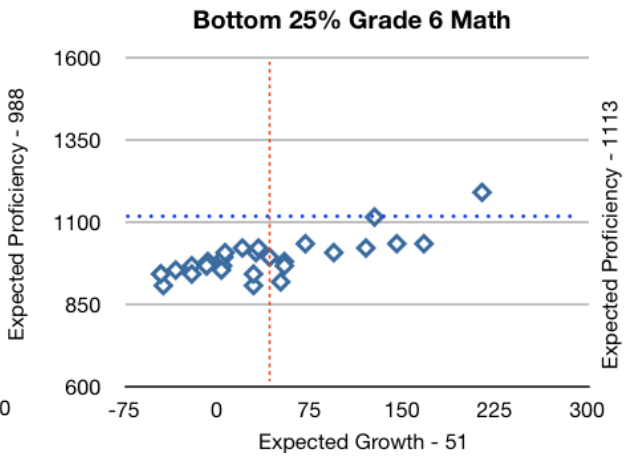
To increase our level of success within the Saxon Math program, we will be providing extensive training to our staff again this summer. In addition to our regular teaching staff, we will be adding several paraprofessionals for the coming school year. These paraprofessionals will receive specific training in using Saxon Math in a remedial capacity and will be used in both a push-in and pull-out capacity to meet the needs of our struggling learners.

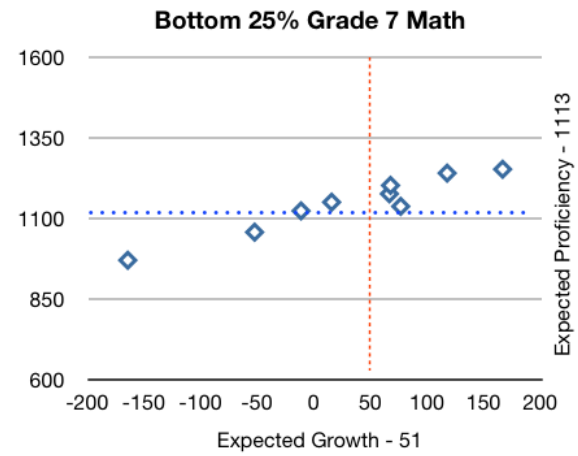
As you can see from the data below, we have experienced a tremendous amount of growth in the bottom 25% of our students, especially in grades three and five. As discussed previously, our other grade levels have also experienced a tremendous amount of growth though the full measure of their growth is not represented in the graphs below as the results from our last benchmark are not available at this time. Were there an easy way to combine the smaller, less formal assessments into a valid measure of growth that information would be provided as well.


Bottom 25% Grade 3 Math
1100
975
850
725
600
-100
0
100
200
300
400
Expected Growth - 90
Expected Proficiency - 756


Bottom 25% Grade 4 Math
1600
1350
1100
850
600
-100
0
100
200
300
400
Expected Growth - 75
Expected Proficiency - 941


Bottom 25% Grade 5 Math
1600
1350
1100
850
600
0
75
150
225
300
Expected Growth - 67
Expected Proficiency - 988


Bottom 25% Grade 6 Math
1600
1350
1100
850
600
-75
0
75
150
225
300
Expected Growth - 51
Expected Proficiency - 1113


Bottom 25% Grade 7 Math
1600
1350
1100
850
600
-200
-150
-100
-50
0
50
100
150
200
Expected Growth - 51
Expected Proficiency - 1113

1b - Demonstration of Sufficient Growth in Reading, Bottom 25%

In order to better reach the bottom 25% of students in reading, American Leadership Academy (ALA) increased accountability measures, added supplemental materials, and made structural changes permitting differentiation and remediation opportunities.

ALA increased accountability measures by adding the Galileo Assessment system and increasing the frequency of monitoring using the DIBELS and McCall Crabbs assessments.

Through the adoption of the Galileo Assessment System, teachers were able to obtain an almost immediate report of where there students were in relation to state standards as well as their developmental level. These same reports also permitted teachers and administrators to effectively identify the bottom 25% of students based on pre-test performance and initiate plans to remediate deficiencies.

Through frequent monitoring with the DIBELS program, teachers were able to have weekly updates on intensive students and bi-monthly updates on strategic students. These reports allow them to focus their efforts and make adjustments as necessary.

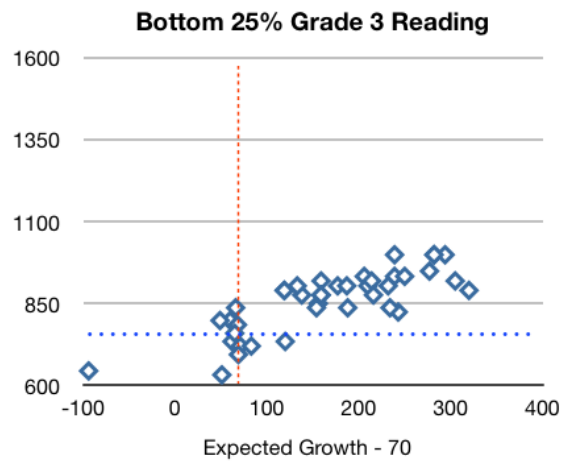
For the 2012-13 school year, ALA created an online monthly reporting form for shorter assessments. This permitted teachers and administrators to see monthly scores on McCall Crabbs, McCall Morrison, and phonogram assessments and track student and class progress throughout the year. These reports identify gaps in student learning and allow administration to identify areas for teacher coaching and improvement efforts.

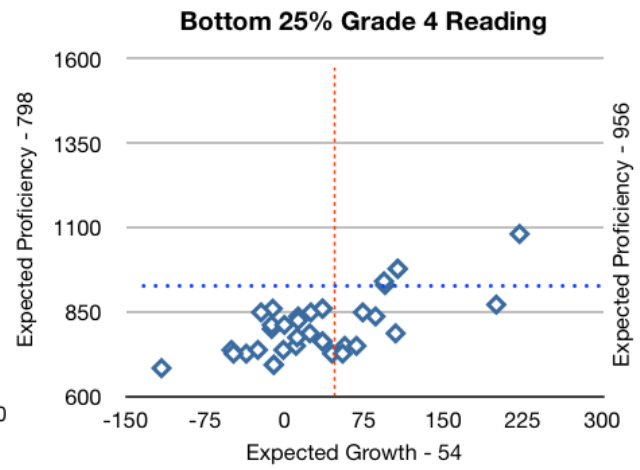
In order to provide a wide variety of leveled readers, ALA utilizes Reading A to Z. This program permits teachers to enter the student's reading level and content area and find challenging skill-appropriate texts for the student. Although used with all students, this program was designed to help meet the needs of the bottom 25% of students who struggle with more challenging Core Knowledge literature read-aloud texts.

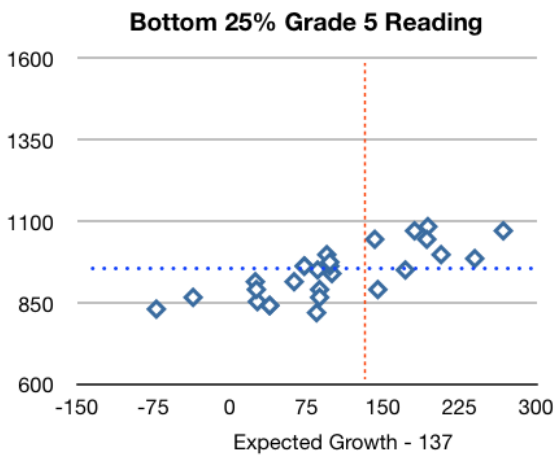
In addition to Reading A to Z, ALA also purchased several additional classroom literature sets aligned to Spalding and AZ State Standards. These texts permitted teachers greater access to high quality literature they study with their students.

Lastly, ALA made important structural changes AIMS at helping meet the needs of the bottom 25% of students. These changes include the altering of the daily schedule to provide opportunities for differentiation between classes and shared planning time for teachers to review data.

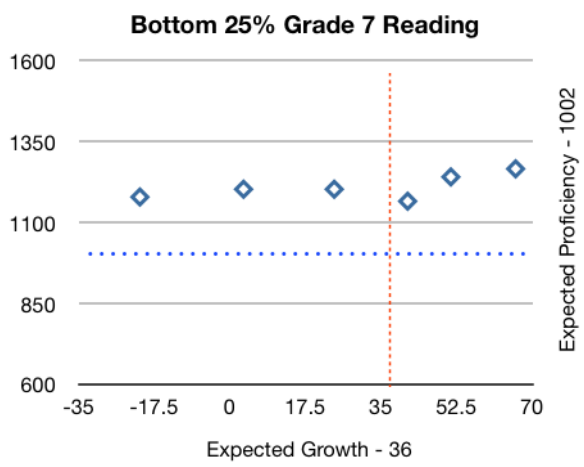
In order to better target the bottom 25% of students, ALA will be adopting a new remedial reading program from the 2013-14 school year. This program will be taught by both special education staff as well as paraprofessionals in both a push-in and pull-out capacity. Training will be provided in this program over the summer with additional professional development through the year as necessary.


Bottom 25% Grade 3 Reading
1600
1350
1100
850
600
-100
0
100
200
300
400
Expected Growth - 70


Bottom 25% Grade 4 Reading
Expected Proficiency - 798
Expected Proficiency - 956
1600
1350
1100
850
600
-150
-75
0
75
150
225
300
Expected Growth - 54


Bottom 25% Grade 5 Reading
1600
1350
1100
850
600
-150
-75
0
75
150
225
300
Expected Growth - 137

Bottom 25% Grade 6 Reading
Expected Proficiency - 956
Expected Proficiency - 1002
1600
1350
1100
850
600
-50
0
50
100
150
200
Expected Growth - 28


Bottom 25% Grade 7 Reading
Expected Proficiency - 1002
1600
1350
1100
850
600
-35
-17.5
0
17.5
35
52.5
70
Expected Growth - 36

2.a Demonstration of Sufficient Progress: Percent Passing Math

As discussed in sections 1a and 1b of this document, ALA has put a significant amount of effort into increasing our performance. One very important metric in our quest has been the percentage of students predicted to pass the AIMS assessment. To ensure that we have the highest percentage of students possible pass, we have implemented a new assessment system, supplemented our curriculum, provided additional training, and increased accountability.

Though it has already been discussed in this document, the importance of the Galileo Assessment System cannot be under-estimated for our organization. This assessment system has given us far deeper insight into what is happening within our organization than before. When we noticed unsatisfactory performance on our first two benchmarks, it was determined that our efforts to close the gaps in Singapore Math is relation to AZ State Standards. In response to this finding, supplemental curriculum was purchased and utilized to fill any the identified gaps. This is not to say our teachers were not providing useful instruction, but that they weren't instructing in all of the items that are found on AIMS.

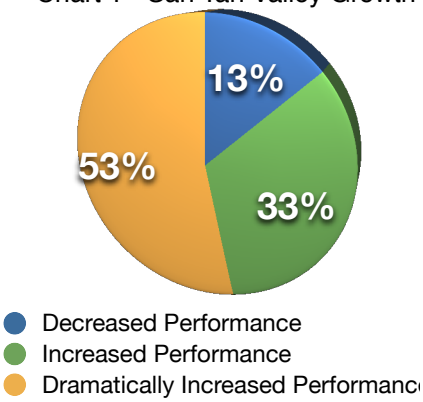
By requiring frequent benchmarks and holding teachers accountable for results, we have been able to make a tremendous amount of progress this year. Since we have only had one benchmark since the implementation of this supplemental program, we are left to make predictions with limited information. Between our first and second benchmark, we observed an unsettling drop in performance due to the issues discussed above. From the second benchmark to the third, we observed a dramatic improvement. It is our prediction that our final benchmark (and AIMS) will reflect an additional increase in performance over our third benchmark. Table 1 on the following page provides some sample data from our Gilbert Campus fourth grade to support this claim.

Results from smaller formative assessments as well as qualitative data support this hypothesis as well. Specifically, when given small 10-question quizzes made to target troublesome standards, students scored very well. Additionally, after taking AIMS, students commented to their teacher that they felt very good about their performance and felt as thought they were well prepared.

Table 1 - Sample Student Passing Data: Grade 4, Gilbert Campus

Teacher 1			
Row Labels	2012-13 ATI AZ-IE Pretest Math 04 Gr.	2012-13 ATI AZ CBAS Math 04 Gr. #1	2012-13 ATI AZ CBAS Math 04 Gr. #3
(FFB)	5%	39%	21%
(AS)	32%	39%	18%
(MS)	55%	22%	61%
(ES)	9%	0%	0%
Teacher 2			
Row Labels	2012-13 ATI AZ-IE Pretest Math 04 Gr.	2012-13 ATI AZ CBAS Math 04 Gr. #1	2012-13 ATI AZ CBAS Math 04 Gr. #3
(FFB)	3%	37%	4%
(AS)	14%	30%	8%
(MS)	62%	22%	73%
(ES)	21%	11%	15%

Chart 1 - San Tan Valley Growth



After noticing a troubling drop in performance in our second benchmark, we adjusted our curriculum and realized dramatic growth on our third benchmark. We predict further growth on our AIMS scores and final benchmark. Table 1 shows actual sample data from our Gilbert campus while Chart 1 shows the percentage of teachers demonstrating growth from benchmark 2 to benchmark 3 at the San Tan Valley Campus

Table 2 - Percent Passing on Benchmark 3

Gilbert Math Percent Passing, CBAS#3						
	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	TOTAL
(FFB)	4%	27%	19%	29%	12%	17.7%
(AS)	4%	19%	26%	21%	9%	15.1%
(MS)	29%	49%	28%	38%	44%	36.9%
(ES)	63%	5%	28%	13%	35%	30.3%

San Tan Valley Math Percent Passing, CBAS#3						
	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6		TOTAL
(FFB)	12%	40%	15%	38%		26%
(AS)	12%	11%	23%	18%		16%
(MS)	24%	45%	43%	39%		38%
(ES)	53%	4%	20%	5%		20%

Table 3 - Prediction for 2012-13 Percent Students Passing

AIMS Percent Passing- Math		
Campus	2011-12	2012-13
Gilbert	63%	70%
San Tan Valley	57%	64%

2.b - Composite School Comparison for Math and Reading

American Leadership Academy strives to provide a curriculum that is accessible to all students including ELL students, FRL students, and students with disabilities. In order to facilitate the needs of all students, ALA has provided additional training and expanded student services.

Traditionally, we have had a very low ELL population. Due to our growth, we are gaining more ELL students each year. In response to this change, we have sought out additional training for both administration and staff. Administratively, we designated a new AZELLA coordinator and sent her to a series of trainings with the state. From there, she has provided direction and insight to campus administrators to help them meet the needs of ELL students. Additionally, we have brought in third party trainers to help all members of our staff get their SEI endorsements. Since we offer spanish instruction to all students K-12, we always have a staff members present at each campus that are fluent in Spanish.

We have also expanded the services that we offer students. These services are important to ensure that students can get to/from school, get the necessary nutrition, and receive the assistance they need to be socially and academically successful.

Since we do not participate in the Federal Free and Reduced Lunch program, we provide lunch for free to students that require it. This permits them to obtain the necessary nutrition and enables them to pay more attention in class.

We have also expanded our transportation program to offer more bus routes. Bus fees may be waived for families in need to ensure that students can make it to and from our campus without incident.

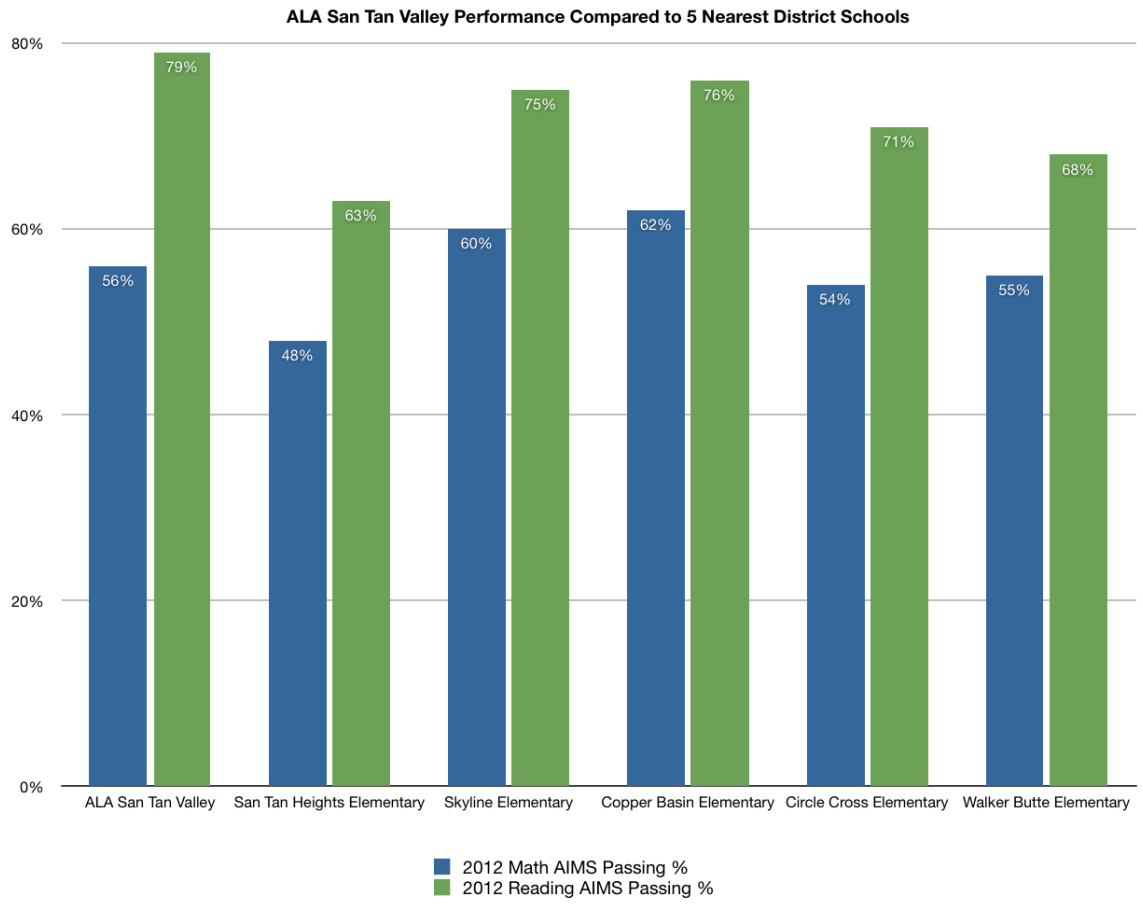
Our San Tan Valley campus has formed a partnership with the local Boys and Girls club whereby students may be picked up from the school and participate in after-school programs. Our Gilbert campus has partnered with various third-party entities to provide after-school care, homework help, activities, and more. Teachers at all campuses are required to provide free tutoring at least once a week. Many teachers provide free tutoring several times a week to help all students succeed.

To ensure that students with special needs get the assistance they require, they are flagged in our student information system and specific information is given to the teachers. Resources are made available, as necessary, to ensure that these students have full access to our curriculum and that they are tracking well academically. These students' performance data is reviewed weekly by their teacher to verify proper growth and performance on Arizona State Standards.

Chart 1 below shows ALA San Tan Valley's academic performance compared to the five nearest district schools. Though there is certainly room for growth from our 2012

performance, we are in the range of the schools around us and exceed all schools in reading performance.

Chart 1 - Comparison of San Tan Valley Schools



2.c Subgroup Comparison - Special Education Math

Please refer to section 1.b - Math for a full treatise on the steps taken to improve our math curriculum, the training provided to ensure proper administration of that curriculum, the assessments given, and the accountability measures.

Thanks to the hard work of our special education staff, ALA garnered a reputation in our community for helping special needs students. Though we pride ourselves on this reputation, it led to a large influx of special needs students that surpassed our ability to adequately accommodate their needs. We struggled finding qualified staff to meet the demand. To ensure we did not have the same problem this year, we hired additional staff over the summer and worked with our Board of Directors and attorneys to put into place the necessary policies to ensure we keep an adequate student to teacher ratio in the special education department.

In addition to these measures, we also designated a District Special Education Director and contracted additional third-party consultants and service providers. With oversight from our district special education director, these third-party resources were placed as needed to alleviate the stress put on our special education department.

As discussed previously, we are moving to another math curriculum next year that we feel better meets the needs of both general education and special education students. Due to its design, small incremental learning coupled with continuous review and spiraling of content, this curriculum will be far more accessible to students.

As a part of the regular special education process, all students on IEPs receive constant progress monitoring through our special education department. Both regular education teachers and special education teachers are given access to student assessment data to ensure that those who need it can access it.

3a - State Letter Grade

Through implementation of all the measures previously discussed, the data shows that our campus letter grades will improve as well as our overall charter letter grade. Last year our Gilbert campus received a “C” as did our San Tan Valley campus. Based on our data, our San Tan Valley campus falls squarely into the “B” rating. Our Gilbert campus is also falling into the upper “B” rating with a good chance of obtaining an “A” rating.