Section 1: Introduction

Milestones Charter School was established in 1999 to provide preschool through school age children a safe and unique educational experience. Our first year as a charter school, under the Peach Springs Unified School District, Milestones opened in modular units on a North Phoenix neighborhood church's property with 45 preschool through third grade students. Milestones was granted both a Charter from the Arizona State Board of Charter Schools and a Federal Stimulus Grant for the 2000-2001 School Year. Achieving both of these feats allowed Milestones the support to continue to grow and make connections with more families in our community.

Within a few years, student growth required Milestones to look for a more permanent campus. Through The Industrial Development Authority of Pima County, Arizona and many supportive community members, Milestones was granted its first Educational Facility Revenue Bond. Milestones purchased a 5 acre vacant lot near Tatum Boulevard and Bell Road in Northeast Phoenix. Two buildings, equaling 23,000 square feet and surrounded by outdoor play areas, were constructed and opened to educate approximately 200 infant through sixth grade students in the fall of 2003. In 2005, through the support of our families, and an additional Educational Facility Revenue Bond, a middle school was constructed and opened. This new addition included a 20,000 square foot building; that housed middle school classrooms as well as a gymnasium, library, computer lab, and art room. Milestones is currently home to 350 students, and their families. Our students range from age one through eighth grade. The Milestones campus has become part of the community. Community organizations such as the YMCA, National Youth Sports, neighborhood home associations, and other non-profit groups, have all utilized our space after school hours.

The primary mission of Milestones is to provide an educational experience of the highest quality while offering a safe and unique environment to all students. The Milestones education program features small classes taught by involved, caring teachers who are responsive to the growing and changing needs of students. The program is committed to challenging academic standards and strong character development.

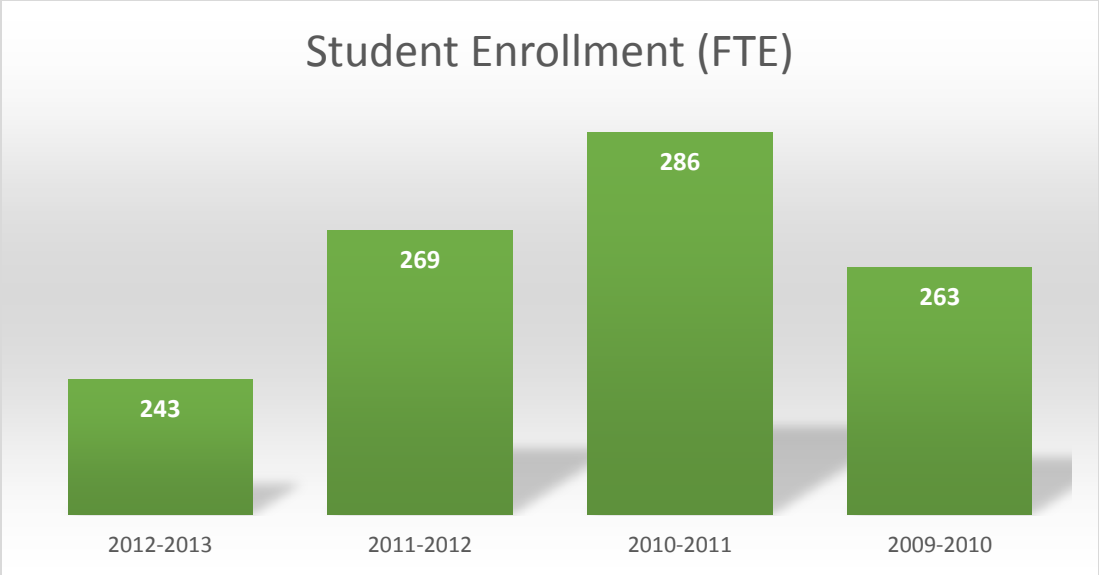
Milestones Charter School believes that individual connections made by the learner results in growth of knowledge. We believe that complex and

concrete experiences are essential for meaningful learning and teaching to occur. Using the Arizona College & Career Ready Standards (ACCRS) as a base, the core of Milestones' curriculum centers on children "making connections". By using this approach, children can build upon previous knowledge to construct new meaning. Lessons and activities are engaging and thought provoking, providing students with the opportunity to utilize problem solving, logical reasoning and analytical skills. Milestones believes that a variety of programs and resources are required to meet the needs of our students.

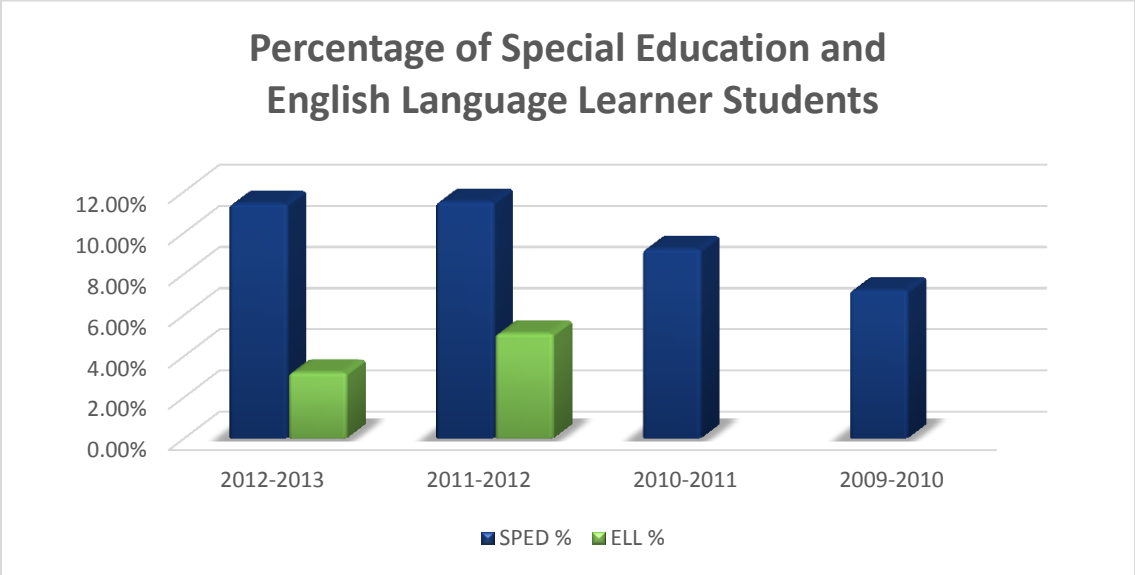
Milestones is committed to challenging academic standards and strong character development. The Milestones educational programs provide children with an environment for holistic learning, daily skills practice, hands-on experiences, technological awareness, and strong character development. The Milestones education program is designed to address, foster and support student responsibility.

Milestones is located in North Phoenix and has 27 district or charter schools within an approximate five mile radius. Nine of these schools opened in the last six years. Milestones is located within the Paradise Valley Unified School District and seven of the schools within our community have recently changed from traditional public schools to charter schools. This increase of educational choice for families has caused our student demographics to change.

Over the past three years, our student demographics have changed dramatically. To better support our changing population, our administration and faculty have established a tiered system to meet the needs of all of our students. Those students who demonstrate proficiency in academics through numerous assessments and teacher recommendations are considered Tier I students. Students who approach the standards and are able to demonstrate proficiency with some support are considered Tier II students. Tier III students fall far below their grade level standards and are in need of multiple accommodations, modifications, and resources.

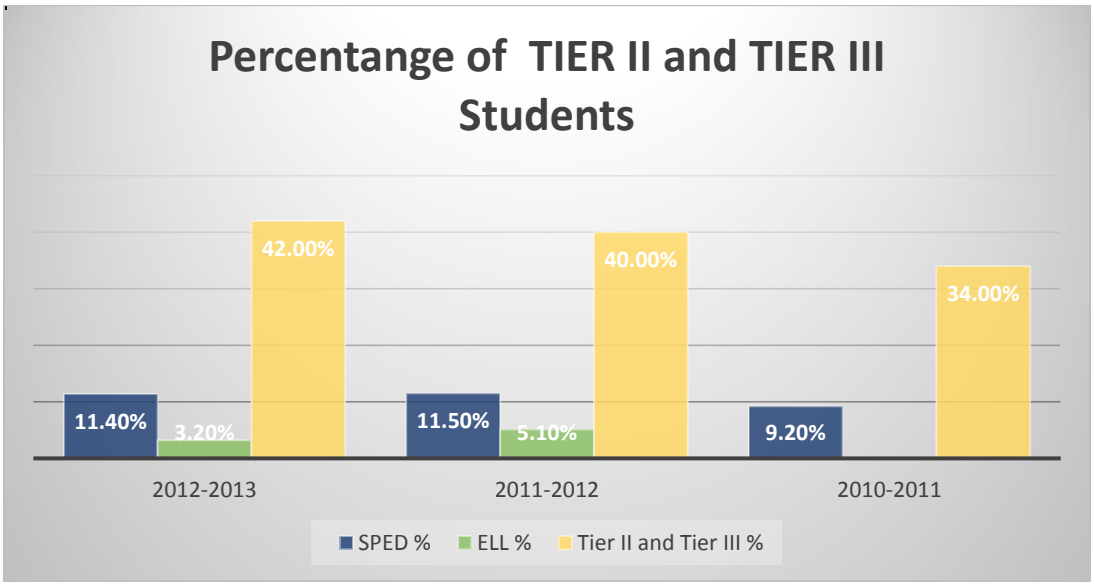


During the FY2012 and FY2013 our enrollment dropped by 16%. At the same time that our student enrollment decreased, our Special Education population increased by 4.2%, and our English Language Learner population increased by 5%.



At the same time, Milestones experienced an increase in Tier II and Tier III population. A majority of these children were not successful attending larger sized classrooms found in traditional public schools. These students sought out Milestones due to our philosophy and reputation for supporting individual learners.

In addressing the many possible needs of Tier II and Tier III students, Milestones considers all options available including accommodations, modifications, additional instruction, and referral for possible special education eligibility. Even though the Multidisciplinary Evaluation Team considers all possible categories, many of these students do not meet special education eligibility requirements. During the current school year, for example, we evaluated ten Tier III students and only one student met requirements for consideration of special education services.



Also during this same critical period, ADE made the decision to discontinue AIMS and began to change their standards and testing to the ACCRS Model. Milestones student body is composed of students from diverse backgrounds, both socio-economic and academic. With these new factors identified, we redesigned our curriculum to promote academic persistence, self-efficacy, and stamina in our present population.

Section 2.1: Procedure Implementation

The recent years have catapulted Milestones onto a path of academic growth and cultural change. Data analysis clearly indicated necessary change in many areas in order to ensure continued positive development of Milestones. Areas of growth potential included implementation of definitive professional development in lesson planning and teaching, administrative monitoring of assessments and lesson plans as well as collaboration of ideas among

teachers and administration, and increased involvement of parents as partners in education.

Milestones Charter School has created a comprehensive system of planning, implementing, and measuring the effectiveness of curriculum to specifically enhance student growth and increase the percentage of learners meeting the standard. Initially, annual test results were studied. Data was disaggregated to expose trends to drive improvement. The Academic Intervention Program (AIP) at Milestones is similar in scope to a traditional Response to Intervention (RTI) model. As part of AIP, teachers and administrators meet to discuss and plan Tier I, II and III strategies based on students' strengths and needs. The new ACCRS and PARCC guidelines are also considered in these discussions. A timeline is established for collecting data using screening and benchmark assessments, determining strategic interventions and setting measurable goals to be used in whole class and small group instruction. Based this data, students (including these sub-groups; Bottom 25%, English Language Learners, and Special education) were identified. If a student does not show sufficient progress in Tier II, strategies are adjusted. For some students, a simple strategy adjustment may not be effective. In these instances, referral to the Multidisciplinary Evaluation Team for the purpose of determining eligibility for Special Education may be the next step.

Progress monitoring of assessment data is collected and discussed every two weeks. Lesson planning, teaching strategies and student groupings are adjusted to maximize potential for student growth. Teachers re-evaluate curriculum maps, student pacing and classroom resources at all grade levels to adjust for the more rigorous ACCR teams and administrators are required to ensure that academic strengths and remedial needs are addressed thus ensuring consistent educational experiences across grade levels.

Teachers possess a variety of instructional materials for use in planning and implementing the curriculum. In the area of Mathematics, teachers utilize *Houghton Mifflin Harcourt (HMH), AIMS (Activities Integrating Math and Science), Creative Mathematics, Study Island, Excel Math Program* and *Daily 5 Math* to provide instruction within the general curriculum. In the area of Language Arts, grades Kindergarten through two implement *Trophies, SuperKids, Edmentum, Words Their Way* and *Daily 5* to anchor instruction in phonics, decoding, comprehension, writing and grammar. In grades three through eight, *Trophies, Words Their Way, Edmentum,* and

Daily 5 are implemented to teach literacy skills and writing and grammar with an emphasis on non-fiction text.

In addition to curriculum planning, professional development continues throughout summer break. During the most recent summer break, Teachers were required to read The Book Whisperer by Donalyn Miller and The Reading Zone by Nancy Atwell. The Pre-Service training was extended to ten days to ensure adequate time for meaningful discussion of these works. Pre-Service sessions included *Daily 5*, book discussions on our summer reading, *Words Their Way*, *Creative Mathematics*, ACCRS Mathematical Practices, Planbook.com implementation, Microsoft Surface technology, Synergy, Donors Choose, *Love and Logic*, ACCRS and PARCC updates, benchmark assessments, ADE workshops, and Special Education Overview. Professional development continues throughout the school year with workshops covering Study Island, Reading Eggs, DIBELS, smart board technology, ADE workshops, and on-going discussions during our weekly individual, small group, and whole staff meetings.

All teachers are required to post lesson plans on Planbook.com. This allows administration to review each lesson plan online. Through this online environment, administrators and teachers communicate effectively and update lessons for maximum student impact. Planbook.com gives teachers the ability to easily locate and apply the appropriate standard(s) to each lesson. Teachers and administrators also monitor standards taught and assess where additional instruction is needed in order to improve student mastery of certain standards. Administrators meet with grade level teams weekly to discuss lessons, students and concerns.

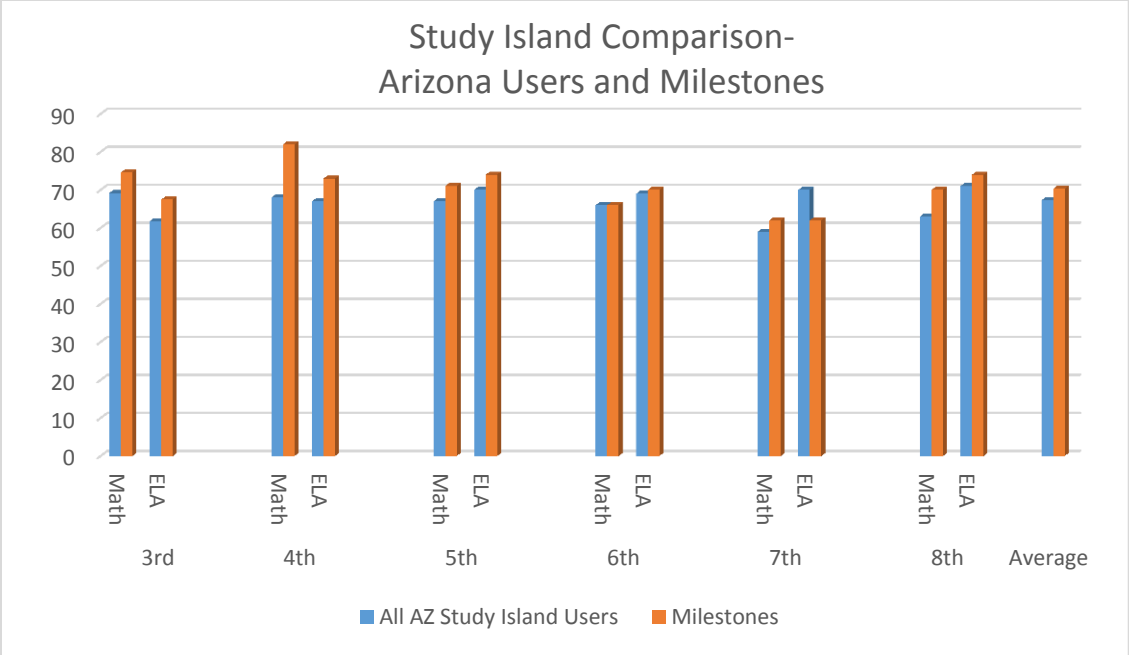
Teachers employ a variety of instructional strategies to implement lesson plans including direct instruction, cooperative learning, inquiry-based learning, informal instruction, computer and tablet technology, small group interventions, and individual conferencing. Teachers utilize data gathered from weekly planning sessions to guide instruction. This data is also used to make adjustments to curriculum maps, pacing guides, and tutoring groups based on performance objectives. Administrators participate in weekly meetings, monitor and review lesson plans and assessment data, conduct formal and informal teacher observations, and also conduct formal evaluations. Discoveries made during the monitoring process drive professional development planning for teachers, both individually and as a whole.

As part of our technology update, each classroom has the use of a Microsoft Surface Tablet as well as desktop computers for easy student access to online cross-curricular resources. The Milestones Technology Lab currently has 25 student computers. Students participate in two 45 minute technology classes each week during which instruction is provided in the areas of internet navigation and safety, keyboarding, composition of documents, research techniques, and PowerPoint creation and presentation. Students also use this time to access individualized activities and lessons available on Study Island, Reading Eggs, and Spelling City.

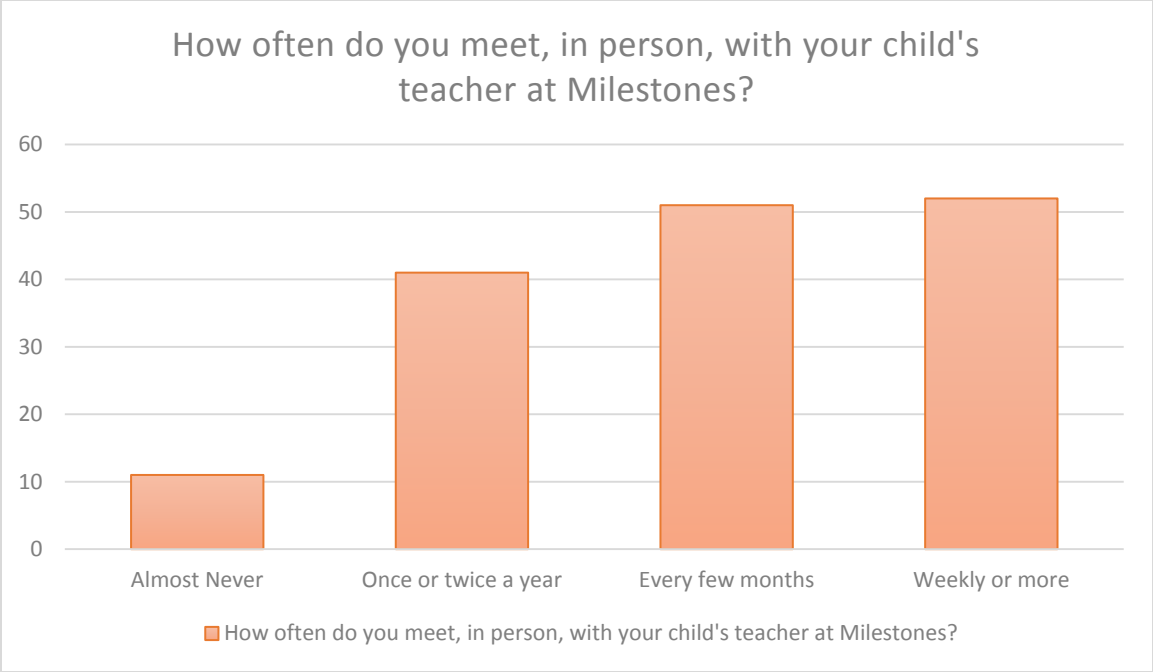
As part of our curriculum update, we implemented Study Island as an integral part of our lesson planning. Study Island affords us a systematic and formalized process for data collection and assessment. This program also has a component which allows students to practice the ACCRS in both Reading and Math.

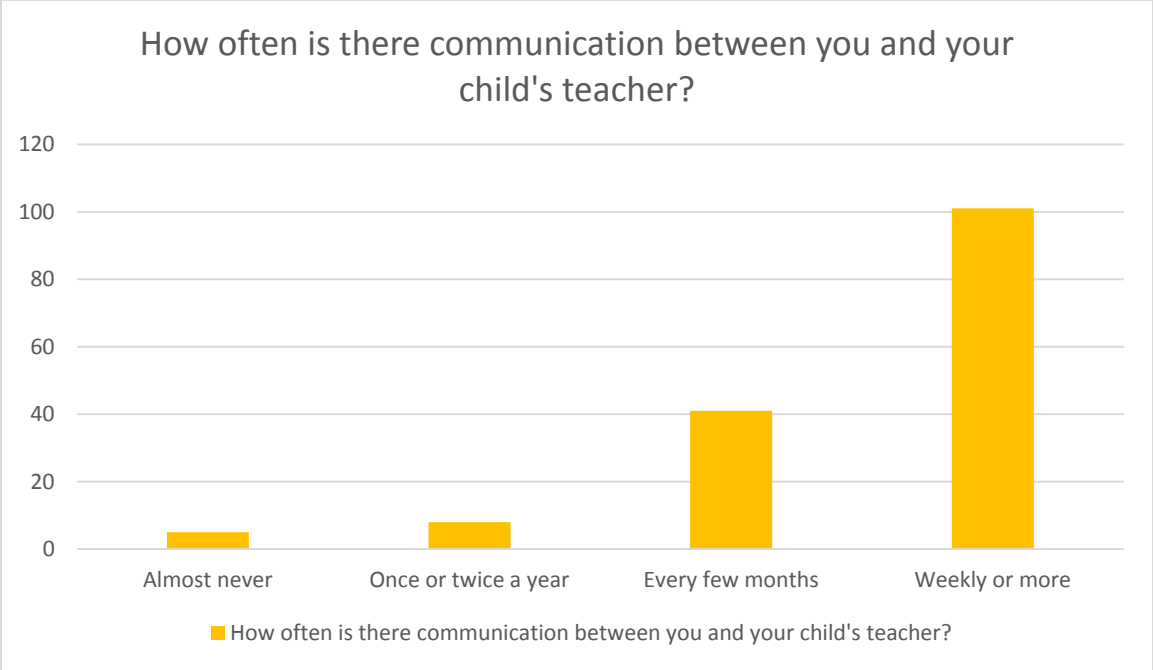
Study Island's programs are designed to help students master the content specified in ACCRS. Study Island provides rigorous content for math and English language arts in grades Kindergarten through eight, PARCC aligned item types, diagnostic pretests, and benchmark tests built specifically from the ACCRS. Teachers can easily pinpoint academic strengths and weaknesses through test results, and then automatically target these areas with Study Island's rigorous, standards-based content. Each student receives a unique learning path within Study Island based on their individual achievements. Study Island pinpoints areas of mastery and targets areas where help is needed.

Study Island diagnostics are very promising as they reflect marked growth this year and forecast a healthy increase in the percent of student who will meet or exceed the standard on the 2014 AIMS assessment. Below is a graph depicting student scores in math and language arts compared to other Arizona students utilizing Study Island. Milestones students consistently outperform other students across the state.



Milestones believes that parent communication is an integral aspect in the academic and social development of each and every student. Parents of all elementary students are required to sign their children into and out of school each day. The sign-in kiosk provides an opportunity for daily contact and communication between teachers and parents. Each teacher emails a weekly newsletter outlining upcoming events, classroom curriculum updates and other important information. Parents of students in grades fifth through eighth have electronic access to their child's grades and progress, and are encouraged to monitor their child's progress weekly. Teachers communicate as needed through email regarding upcoming assignments. Teachers inform parents electronically if their child has not completed an assignment. There are two student-led conferences each year. Teachers and/or parents are encouraged to schedule meetings if ever a concern arises. Parents of students who are in our Tier II or Tier III category meet with teachers twice each month to monitor goals. The graphs below outline the results from a parent survey on parent's viewpoints on communication with Milestones faculty and staff.





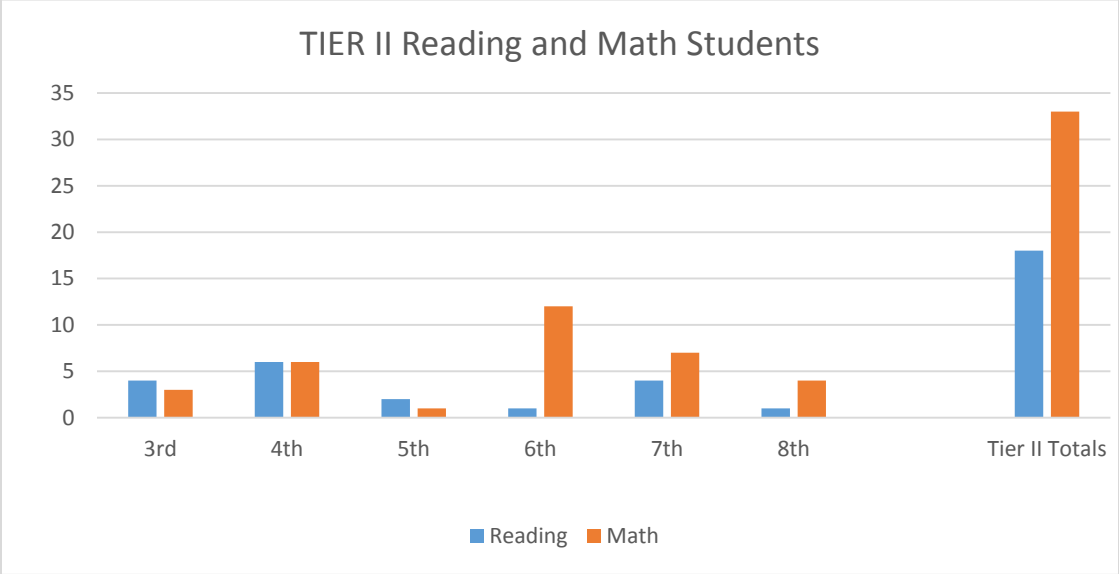
Section 2.2- Student intervention grouping

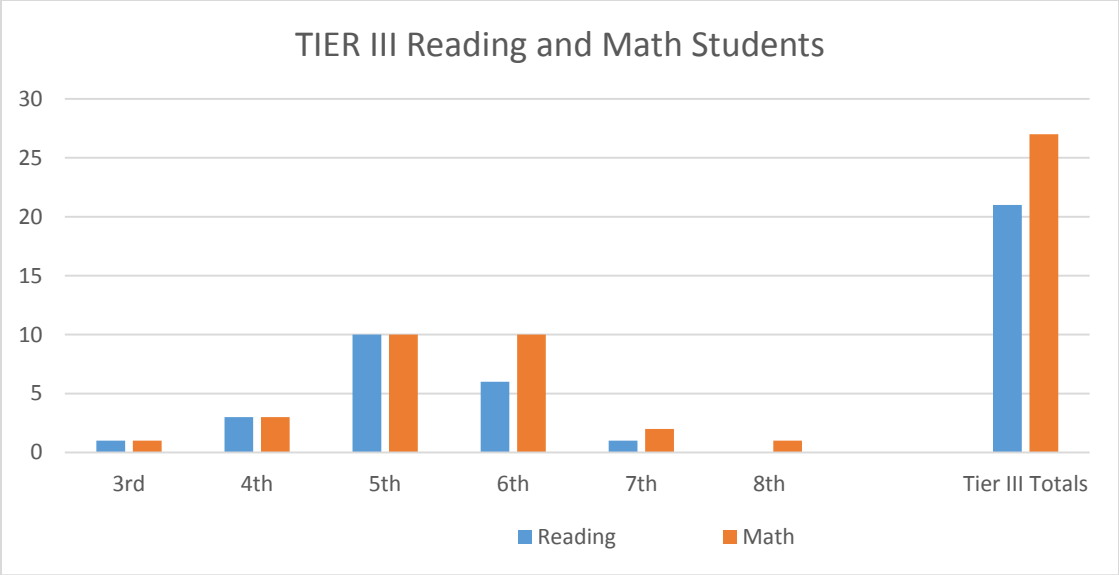
At the end of each school year, through careful consideration of teacher recommendation, parent conferences, yearlong assessments, and test scores Milestones establishes classrooms for the coming school year. Teachers then

meet to review data and curriculum maps. After working with individual students during the first weeks of school, together, teachers and students review results of benchmark testing to create specific plans that set measurable goals.

Tier I students in kindergarten through eighth were placed in a strong comprehensive instructional program called Milestones Accelerated Program for Enrichment (MAPE). MAPE provides a demanding, faster paced learning environment for students that are ready for curriculum extensions, increased work load and innovative projects. MAPE classrooms challenge students thinking strategies and problem solving skills while also providing opportunities for creative expression and growth.

Students identified as requiring Tier II & Tier III intervention in grades first through third, are placed in a setting with a lower student teacher ratio (1 to 10). Students in grades fifth through eighth identified as Tier II and Tier III were also placed in classrooms with a lower student teacher ratio (1 to 15). Additionally, teachers in fifth through eighth grade focus on specific subjects. The chart below outlines Tier II and Tier III students in reading and math for the FY2014 school year.





Tier II and Tier III students receive additional support in Math and English Language Arts through a variety of methods such as placement in leveled classrooms, Academic Intervention Learning Plans (AILP), and smaller teacher student ratio. Utilizing these methods, teachers are able to focus on areas of concern both for individuals and for small groups.

Subject Focused Teachers

While making a conscious effort to maintain a smaller student/teacher ratio for lower skilled students, Milestones also decided to have our teachers become subject focused. In fifth through eighth grade, teachers focus on one or two similar subjects. This allows teachers to have more time to create quality lessons and understand each student's specific needs in a specific subject. For example, a single teacher provides math and science instruction for both groups of fifth graders while another fifth grade teacher instructs the same two groups in Social Studies and Language Arts.

Academic Intervention Program (AIP)

The AIP program was developed to better support Tier II and Tier III students who do not necessarily qualify for Special Education services, or for students who are being closely monitored as a precursor for possible further evaluation. Students are identified for AIP based upon AIMS scores, classroom assessments, DIBELS, Study Island, Excel, progress reports, teacher recommendation, and even parent requests. In addition, teachers conduct 45 Day Screenings for all kindergarten through eighth grade students including returning students. 45 Day Screenings assist with early

identification and intervention. After analyzing results of these assessments, specific skill areas are targeted for each student. Targeted areas of need are then used to compose AIP goals in math and/or language arts. AIP goals are based on ACCRS standards within an Academic Intervention Learning Plan (ALIP). Lesson plans are geared to target these goals throughout the year and are modified quarterly as students meet the goals. In addition to quarterly reports cards, parents received quarterly progress reports outlining improvement made for each AIP goal.

Section 2.3: Proficiency: Math Tier II and Tier III

Methodical steps established for raising student proficiency in our lower 25% include concept assessments, analyzing test data to identify deficiencies in specific skill areas, creating smaller classes, creating opportunities for small group instruction, and offering additional tutoring and opportunities of exposure to math concepts for students in need.

After analyzing test data as well as teacher input, we found that a meaningful number of students underperforming in math are missing key understanding of concepts in basic number sense, problem solving skills, and connections of purpose to the development of math concepts. By thoroughly dissecting assessment data test scores, student demographics, and parental involvement, Milestones is striving to change our math fluency as we continue to increase the number of students who meet the standard in math.

Classroom Implementation

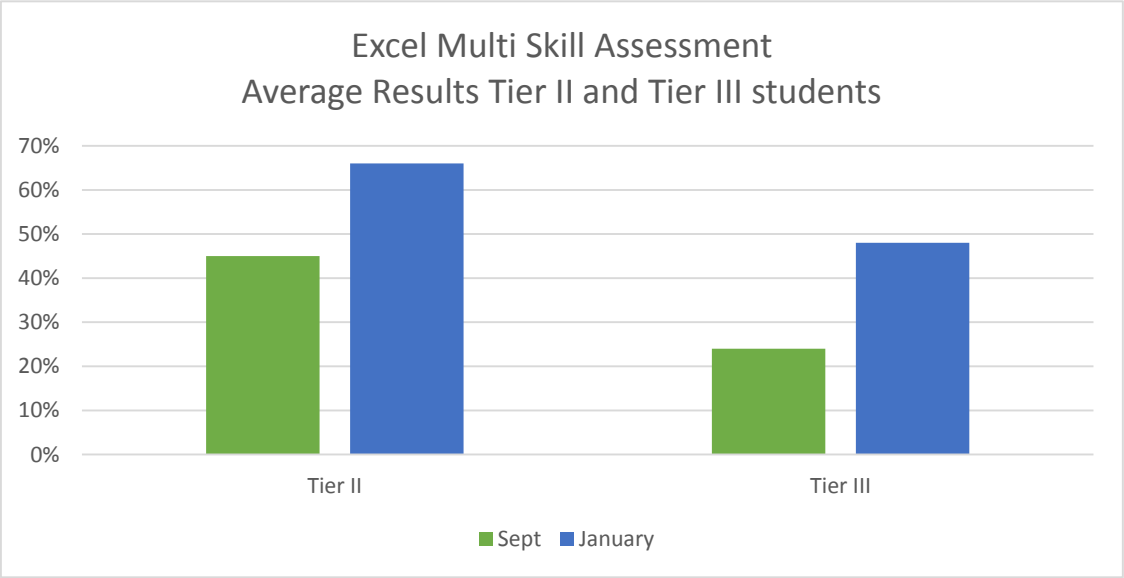
<u>Daily 5 Math Model</u>
The Daily 5 Math Model is implemented in Milestones classrooms. This process involves cooperative learning, provides for more hands-on opportunities, and also provides teachers opportunities for differentiation by learning styles and abilities. Daily 5 enables teachers to meet with small groups of students to work on and assess student understanding. Students also have an opportunity to work on basic math facts and real world applications independently, with peers, and during meaningful and focused mini-lessons.

Circle Time or DART (Daily Academic Review Time)

Classrooms meet daily to review math standards focusing on those which require daily practice to reach full understanding. Using *Creative Mathematic* concepts, teachers use hands-on activities and tools such as hundreds charts, number lines, graphing, arrays, and input/output tables to teach more abstract math concepts. The process produces a non-threatening environment in which teachers can introduce mini-lessons and serves as a continual review for struggling students as well as extensions for excelling students. Teachers take quick anecdotal assessments of student content knowledge within all skill areas during this time and adjust their lesson plans accordingly.

Excel Math Program (4th-6th)

The Excel Math Program was chosen because it employs strategically placed repetition of ACCR math standards. Excel Math gives teachers a resource to teach math concepts for long-term retention using a spiraling strategy. Excel allows teachers to present material in short mini-lessons and encourages critical thinking and math literacy. Students are exposed to and practice multi-skilled key concepts continually to ensure that there is ample practice and retained understanding of standards. Excel benchmark assessments are administered to students and results are analyzed. Below is a chart showing the growth made by Tier II and Tier III students on September and January Excel Benchmark assessments.



AIMS Foundation (Activities Integrating Math and Science)
This program involves an invaluable resource of activity filled books and internet lesson plans. AIMS assists teachers in introducing ACCRS in greater depth with a more hands-on, real world approach. The activities engage students and build conceptual understanding. Students are given an opportunity to talk and write about math. The activities encourage students to learn standards as well as gain techniques on how to work effectively in a group setting.

Interactive Notebooks
All students in grades five through eight create an Interactive Math Notebook. The interactive notebook becomes a portfolio of student work throughout the school year. It serves as both a formative and summative assessment which promotes writing, thinking, and organization. The ability to thoroughly document and to maintain clear, understandable records is a key skill that the mathematician must develop. In the classroom, the notebook is used to assess students' progress toward this objective. The goal is to help students construct knowledge and cultivate critical thinking skills. Students use this notebook as a reference for continued learning. Students also learn how to write about math which enables students to increase metacognition to build effective problem solving skills. This notebook also serves as a communication tool between student and teacher. Teachers are able to easily assess if students are able to apply and communicate their understanding of concepts.

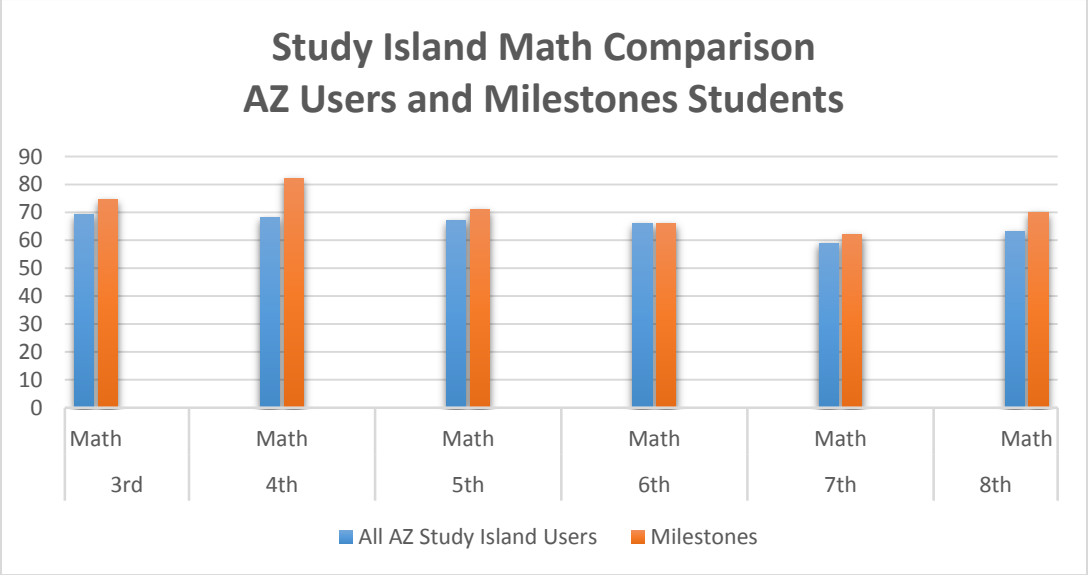
Common Core Mathematical Practices
Milestones Administration and staff participated in a workshop regarding the development of process standards of Mathematical Practices for students. The common core mathematical practices are on display and taught in each classroom. Each lesson focuses on one or two mathematical practices. These practices are continually referred to during lessons. Once a Mathematical Practice is taught, it becomes part of each student's interactive notebook and is continually referred to and applied in the demonstration of understanding math standards.

ACCRS/Goals Focus
As new standards are covered, the instructor presents the standard as well as the accompanying individual and class wide goals through both visual and auditory pedagogy. Students are encouraged to apply understanding of these standards and their real world applications.

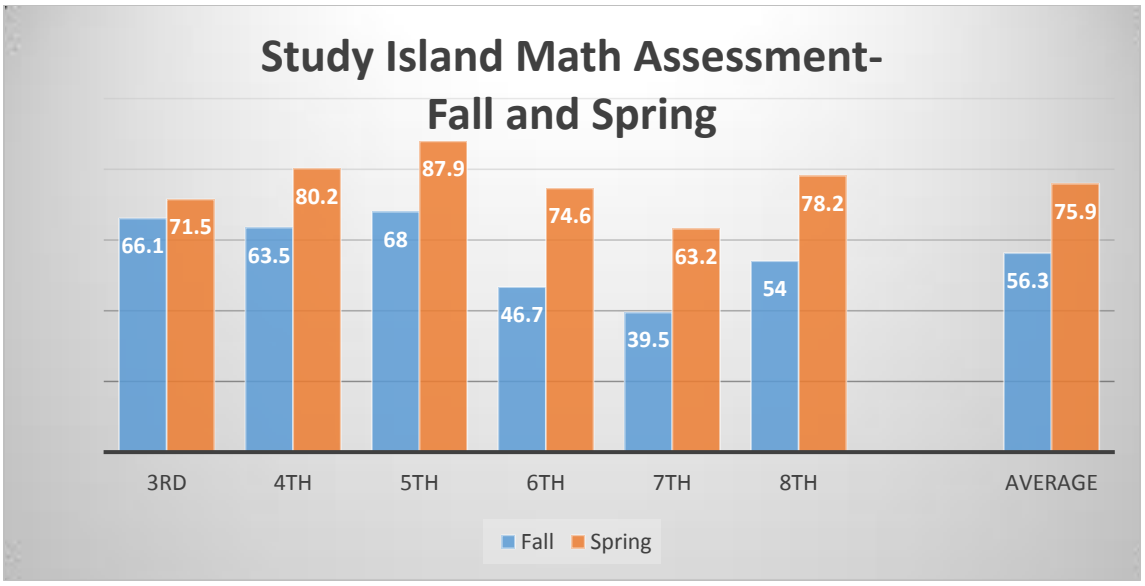
Technology

Technology is used to enhance instruction in math. Across all grades, students are exposed to math concepts by exploring online lessons in Study Island and Khan Academy. Study Island allows teachers the ability to comprehend individual student understanding of each standard. Teachers are able to gather this data and to quickly apply support when and where needed.

Below is a table that measures Milestones students' Study Island math scores compared to other Arizona students using the same program. This data was collect in March 2014.



In effort to obtain the best insight of student mastery of math concepts and specific areas of need, all students complete a baseline diagnostic test in math. This test is administered using Study Island in the fall and spring. Teachers review a report of each student's specific level of mastery under each grade level standard. This information directs the teacher's lesson plans and goal development. The following table demonstrates an increase in student knowledge of ACCR standards in grades third through eighth.



Section 2.4: Proficiency English Language Arts: Tier II and Tier III

"Children who become avid readers outperform their peers who are not." (Miller, Donalyn, Reading in the Wild). The systematic procedures established for increasing student proficiency in our lower 25% include comprehensive reading fluency and comprehension assessments, analyzing test data to identify the deficiencies in specific skill areas, creating smaller classes, creating opportunities for small group instruction, and offering additional tutoring to students in need.

Furthermore, data analysis indicates that a significant percentage of students who underperformed in reading could be identified as poor or reluctant readers. Milestones systematically disaggregates curriculum, instruction and resources in order to change the culture of reading, enhance student learning, and increase the percentage of students who meet or exceed the standard in the area of reading.

As a school, we strongly agree that children who read the most will outpace those who do not read on a regular basis. To this end, we adopted the Daily 5 Teaching Model, which enables teachers to manage instructional time in ways that include whole group instruction in the form of mini- lessons, individual conferencing, and small group instruction.

Classroom Implementation

The Daily Five

Milestones adopted The Daily Five as a classroom management system for the teaching of literacy in grades kindergarten through eight. The Daily Five is a structure in which students develop daily habits of reading, writing, and working with peers. These habits lead to a lifetime of independent literacy. Within the Daily Five, students participate in daily activities of Read to Self, Read to Someone, Listen to Reading, Work on Writing, and Word Work. Mini-lessons focus on specific standards-based learning goals which are integrated within these activities. Students are then given opportunities to work independently on activities in an order chosen by the learner. This model gives classroom teachers the opportunity to teach small groups of students or individual students for focused reading instruction.

- Read to Self - According to Donalyn Miller, author of The Book Whisperer and Reading in the Wild, students will read if we give them the books, the time, and the enthusiastic encouragement to do so. To keep our students reading, we have to let them. During Read to Self, students are taught to choose books based on their liking, understand various genres, and build reading stamina. Here, we start to build the foundation of the enjoyment of reading for understanding.
- Read to Someone - This portion allows more time for students to practice reading strategies, helps to build fluency, and gives time to share reading and check for understanding. During this time, students may read to a peer or teacher, practice listening to their peer, responding to what has been read, and practice reading fluency skills.
- Listen to Reading - Teachers use this time for “read-a-louds” of text in varied genres. Milestones has seen marked growth in the reading skills of students who hear examples of literature and fluent reading. This activity builds vocabulary and models fluent and expressive reading.
- Work on Writing - Milestones believes the best way to become a better writer is by practicing writing every day. For this choice, students may compose narrative of their choice in varied genres, including creative writing, personal narratives, poetry, letters and notes, reading responses, persuasive writing, non-fiction writing, summaries, reports, journals, and expository essays. Students also frequently take part in an activity called “Author’s Chair”, in which they present a piece of their own work to peers. Peers are given the opportunity to respond. During Work on Writing, students engage in

the Writing Process by following these steps: pre-writing, drafting, editing, revising, and publishing. Students also participate in peer editing and teacher conferencing.

- Word Work - For this portion of the Daily Five, student goals include active teaching and study of vocabulary, spelling patterns, and phonetic skills. The curriculum chosen to target these skills includes *Words Their Way*, giving students skills to gain fast, accurate recognition of words and their meanings in texts, and fast, accurate production of words in writing so that readers and writers can focus their attention on deriving meaning.

Reading Curriculum

Based on the Daily 5 model, Milestones makes a variety of reading resources available to teachers and students as to foster reading opportunities and to boost reading scores. Milestones has built its own comprehensive program which includes the teaching of reading fluency, comprehension, phonics, spelling patterns and vocabulary to build connections between these skills and create overall fluent readers. This is accomplished through small group and individual instruction. Reading activities include but are not limited to Harcourt *Trophies* Reading activities and lessons, *Superkids* (Rowland Reading Foundation) activities and lessons, read-a-louds, Guided Reading, the Daily Five, small group and individual reading instruction, literary elements, reading response and strategies, fluency instruction, author studies, and comprehension instruction.

Classroom Libraries

According to the 2005 National Assessment of Education Progress Report, students in classrooms with well stocked and designed classroom libraries interact more with books, spend more time reading, demonstrate more positive attitudes towards reading, and exhibit higher levels toward reading achievement. Therefore, Milestones has created extensive libraries in each classroom. There are over 500 books in each classroom. The association between Scholastic Book Fairs and Milestones allows us to update our classroom literature inventory several times each year. Teachers use books in their classroom libraries to discuss elements of genre, explore titles and authors and research cross curricular topics that expand student knowledge.

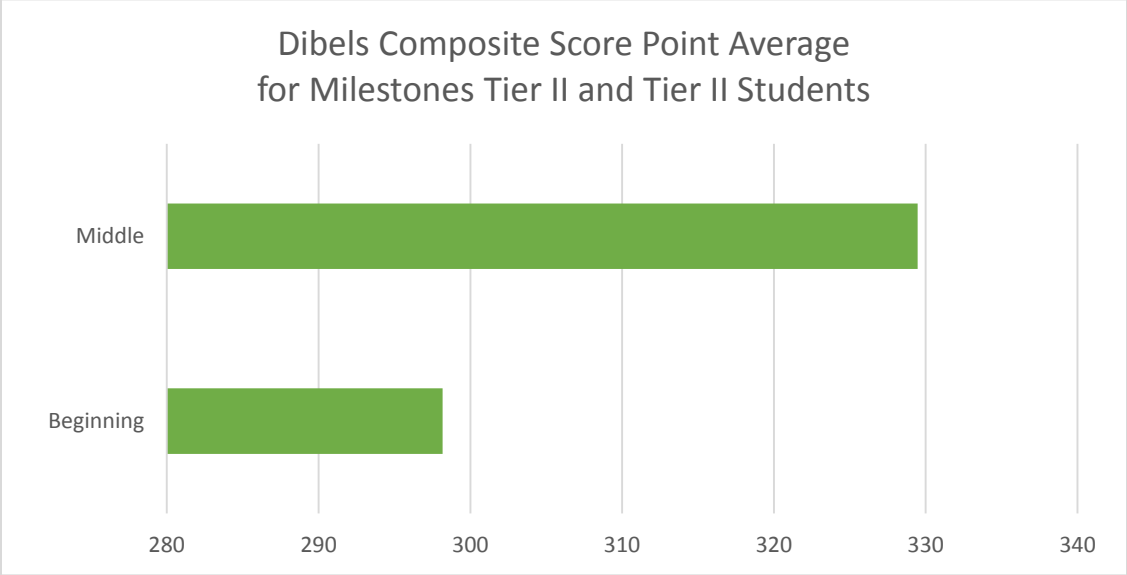
Teacher/Student conferencing

The Daily Five as a management system allows teachers the opportunity to conference with individual students and small groups on a daily basis. We

have found that conferencing is the most optimal method of meeting students' individual needs including the needs of Tier II and Tier III students. Teachers are able to focus on specific goals outlined in students' Academic Intervention Learning Plans and Individualized Language Learner Plans.

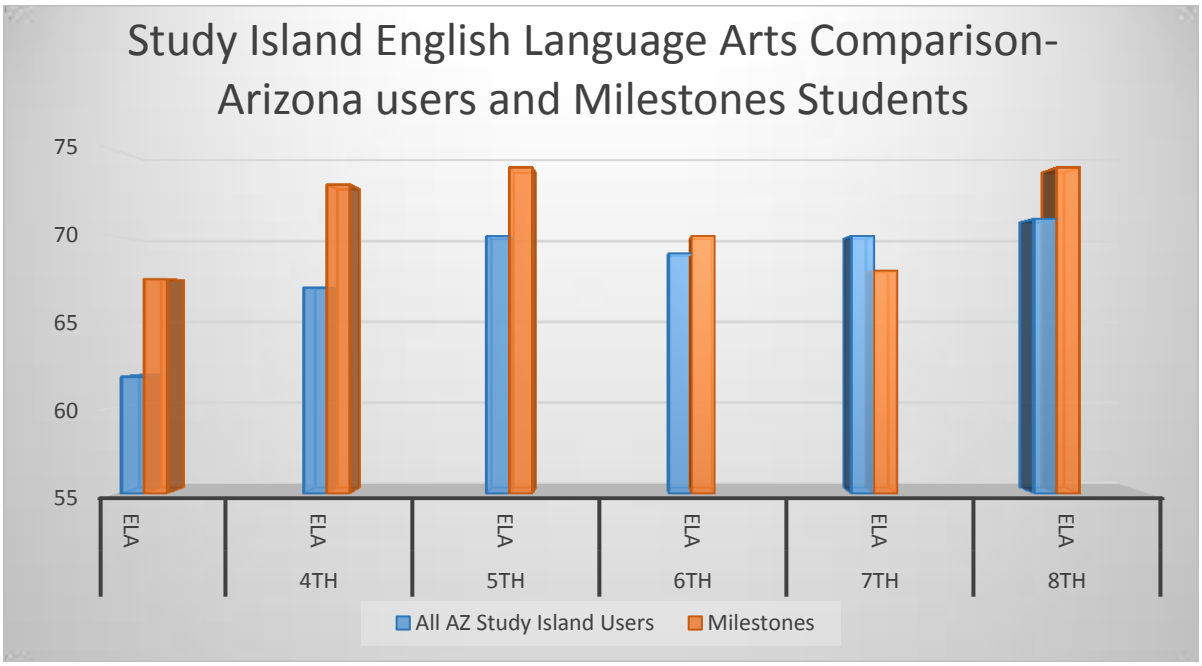
DIBELS

The Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) was chosen as our research-based measures for assessing the acquisition of early literacy skills from Kindergarten through sixth grade. DIBELS is specifically designed to provide fluency and comprehension measures used to monitor the development of early reading skills. Incorporating DIBELS into our instruction allows us to identify children in danger of not meeting grade-level reading standards. DIBELS supports targeting teaching. DIBELS assessments take place at the beginning of the school year, during the 3rd quarter (middle of the year), and at the end of the school year. Regular progress monitoring and classroom assessments take place during the intervals between DIBELS assessments. Student DIBELS scores from the current school year are encouraging. Tier II and Tier III students have shown an average increase of 30 points growth in composite scores from beginning of the year to mid-year assessments across grade level as outlined in the graph below.



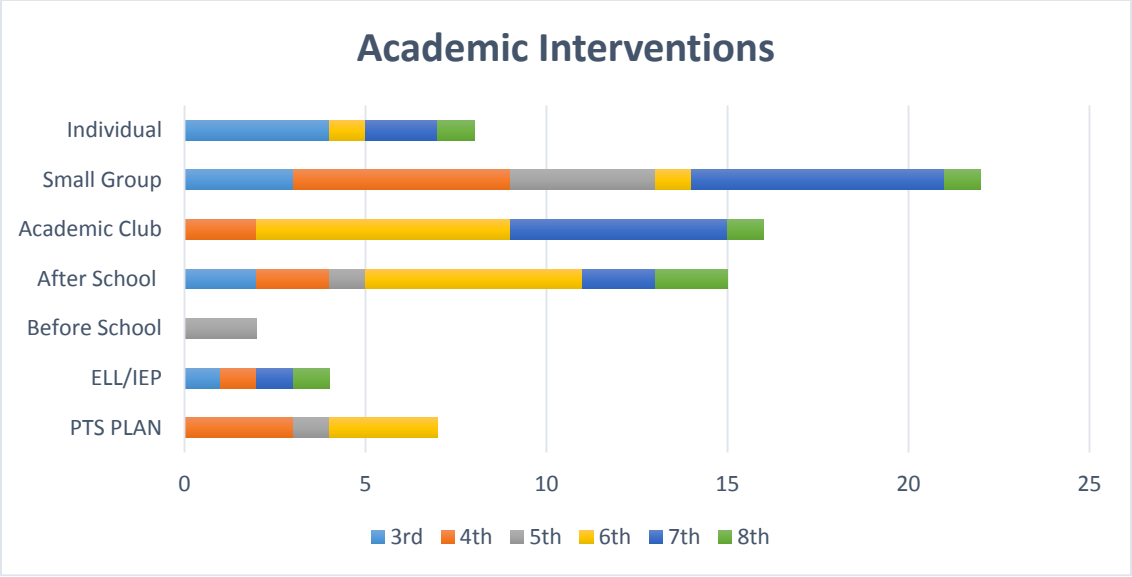
Technology

Technology is used to enhance instruction in Reading. In lower grades, students receive additional practice through internet access to Reading Eggs, Spelling City, and Study Island. Below is a graph outlining Milestones student performance in ELA standards compared to other Arizona students.



Section 2.5: Additional Academic Interventions Tier II and Tier III

Tier II and Tier III students are offered before and after school tutoring and frequent monitoring. Parents are encouraged to participate through frequent parent teacher conferences either in person, by email, or by phone. All students who have been identified at Tier II or Tier III, receive additional support either through after school academic clubs, and/or individual/small group tutoring. Students are placed on an individual student plan with bi-weekly meetings involving parents, teachers and administration.



Before/After School

All teachers are available before and after school for students. Students are encouraged and sometimes required to make use of this time with their teacher to receive small group or individual instruction and clarification on subjects taught. Students who have trouble completing homework are required to attend during this time to ensure completion of essential practice activities.

Academic Clubs

A majority of Tier II and Tier III students are involved in an after school math club. Grades first through fifth offer a Math club in which students work on individual assignments focused on number sense. Students also focus on understanding of numbers and memorization of basic math facts. GEMS (Girls Excelling in Math and Science) and BROS (Boys Rock Outrageous Science/Math) club are geared towards our middle school Tier II and Tier III students. These after school clubs are focus primarily on problem solving and making connections between math and science concepts.

PTS Plans (Parent/Teacher/Student)

PTS plans are created together with Parents and Teachers and sometimes utilize student collaboration. This is to ensure that all participants are working together with the sole purpose of academic growth. Goals are set

during the creation of this plan and then new meetings are held every other week to evaluate the progress towards completion of the goals.

Small Groups/Individual
Teacher dedicate time before and after school or during school hours to reach Tier II and Tier III students individually or in small groups.

English Language Learners/Special Education Students
Students identified as English Language Learners or that require Special Education services that fall within this model have either an Individual Language Learner Plan (ILLP) or an Individual Education Plan (IEP), teachers work together with the English Language Learner Supervisor and the Special Education Department to ensure that all modifications, and accommodations are implemented so that goals are met. These students either receive services outside the classroom in small groups or individually, or within the classroom as outlined in their individual plans.

Section 2.6: Special Education Math & Reading

The number of Special Education students attending Milestones increased from 7% to 12% of the total population going into the 2011/2012 school year. This increase included students entering Milestones with existing Individual Education Plans (IEPs) as well as students identified by the Milestones Multidisciplinary Evaluation Team. Special Education staffing has adapted to meet the needs of a changing student population. With these adaptations, changes in staff have also occurred. During the previous five school years, Milestones has employed four special education teachers and four Speech Therapists. To be sure, there was never a midyear change in staff. However, consistency in staff can be an important factor in continued student growth.

Milestones currently employs a part time certified Special Education teacher, a Director of Special Education, a Speech/Language Therapist, a Speech/Language Assistant, an Occupational Therapist, and a School Psychologist. These professionals are contracted and are on campus throughout each week to plan, create and implement all the services required by each student's IEP. Students with a wide variety of disabilities are served both inside (push in) and outside (pull out) the regular classroom. We have been able to serve all categories of eligibility including Speech and Language Impairment, Specific Learning Disabilities, Autism and Emotional

Disabilities. We also serve students with 504 Accommodation Plans and those who have physical disabilities.

Upon admission to school and before the 45th day of enrollment, teachers complete a 45 Day screening for all students. This screening targets specific areas of reading, math, written expression, vision, hearing, communication (articulation and language), behavioral/emotional, fine and gross motor, and adaptive development (self-care, social skills, understanding directions, coping behaviors) to determine any possible special needs that student may have. If students fail to make sufficient progress while receiving classroom interventions over several weeks, teachers may initiate a referral to our Child Study Team (CST). This is an opportunity for teachers, (and possibly parents, special education staff and any other related providers) to meet and discuss the child's areas of strength and needs. The team designs a specific, documented plan of intervention to measure the student's progress for a reasonable period of time. When the team reconvenes, if sufficient progress is not evident, the child may be referred to the Special Education Department. At this stage, the Multidisciplinary Team (MET) is convened to discuss the need for possible further evaluation (which may include the collection of formal data). If the MET determines further testing is necessary to determine the student's present levels and possible eligibility, testing is carried out within the timeframe required by state and federal guidelines. Further testing may include Speech and Language or Psycho-Educational (academic, cognitive, behavioral). The MET then determines if the child is eligible for Special Education Services and under which eligibility category. A specific plan is created to meet the student's needs. Students who qualify may receive specialized instruction within the Resource Room in carefully designed small groups based on area(s) of need. Students may also receive specialized instruction within the general education classroom.

A Specialized Reading Curriculum is developed using multiple programs and resources specifically designed for remediation. These instructional plans are aligned with materials and methods used in regular classrooms, thus providing consistency for students. However, specialized instruction is completely tailored to individual deficits and learning challenges. Intensive phonics is emphasized to improve students' understanding of language mechanics. The phonics-based Wilson Reading System is employed to build vocabulary. The Rewards Reading System is used to build comprehension and fluency. Read Naturally activities and Evan Moor workbooks are utilized to improve reading performance.

Remedial Math instruction is also closely aligned with programs used in regular classrooms. Special Education students may be working at an adjusted pace with more time to review concepts and apply these skills to new problems. Materials including Touchmath and Evan Moor are utilized to augment math curricula entering the resource room from the general education classroom. Technology is used for self-paced math instruction using Study Island and other online resources. Hands-on demonstrations are utilized for math instruction, including cognitive task-specific graphic organizers and manipulatives. Students are encouraged to be actively engaged in curriculum content to acquire key concepts using meta-cognitive, goal setting and self-monitoring techniques to support academic growth. Students are encouraged to be independent and confident as they measure the increase in their abilities.

Progress toward annual IEP goals is monitored frequently by the Special Education staff using internally created cumulative assessments. The Special Education staff utilizes a variety of educational resources when preparing these assessments that include Study Island and the Common Core materials.

The Special Education Director and service providers meet regularly (formally and informally) with classroom teachers, lead teachers, and school administrators to ensure that attention is given to any modifications and/or accommodations required in regular classroom settings so that students are able to access the general curriculum with the appropriate supports as determined by each student's IEP team. At the beginning of each school year (and as necessary when students enroll midyear) general education teachers are provided with relevant sections of each student's IEP. Relevant sections include present levels, accommodations/modifications (for instruction and testing), and goals. Students with special needs have access to computers, tablets, and other electronic devices for instruction in the resource room and are included in all regular classes and extra-curricular activities.

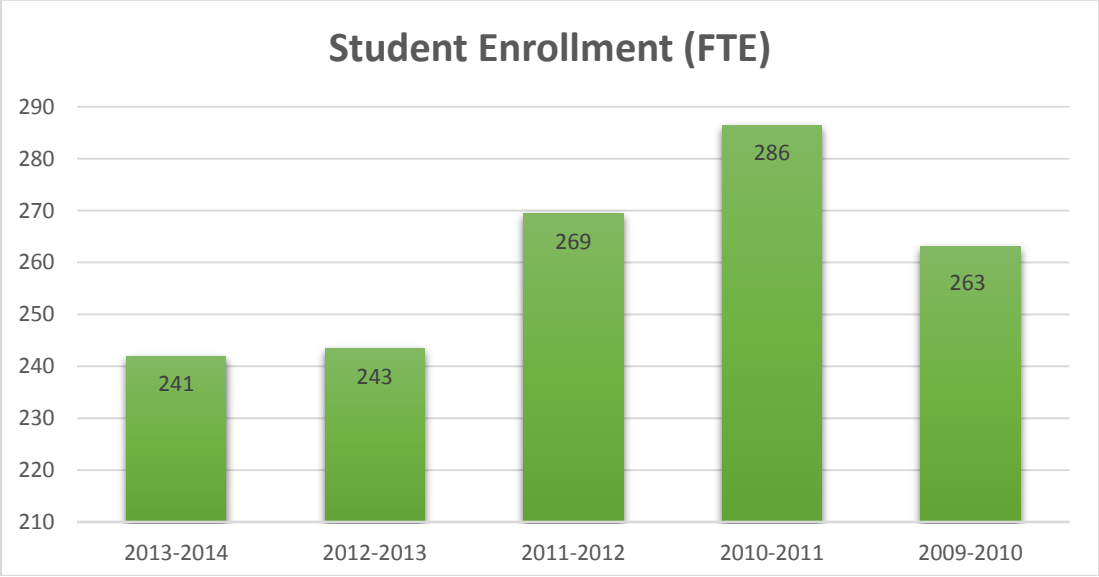
In order for our staff to continue to be well-informed and up-to-date on Special Education laws, methodologies and instructional practices, Special Education staff attends the ADE Directors Institute at the beginning of each school year. They receive 18 credit hours in the area of Special Education and receive training on developing successful Individual Education Plans, meaningful goal writing, and differentiated classroom management. Updates on laws and regulations, most current research-based curriculum, adaptive

resources, and guidance to support building productive parent-teacher relationships are all aspects of Special Education professional development. Throughout the year, teachers and therapists attend conferences/workshops to improve their practices.

After attending trainings, the Special Education Director meets with the staff on a regular basis to go over best instructional practices to use in the classroom with students who have disabilities. Teachers learn ways of incorporating differentiated instruction with assistive technology, as well as how to vary curricular content, the learning environment and activities, based on student readiness, interest, or their learning profile. Teachers are provided with tools to create instruction that focus on ensuring students learn curricular concepts and principles when modifying lessons and individualized assessments. Teachers meet with the Special Education Director and other special education staff regularly to discuss each student's progress and review the current IEP goals to further develop strategies to facilitate student growth.

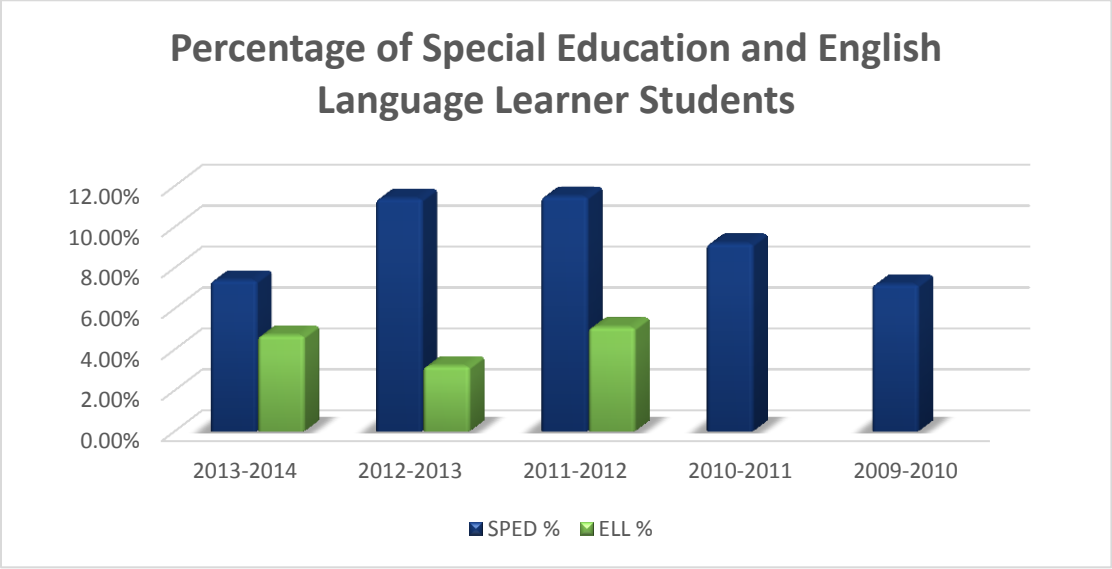
Section 3: Conclusion

During the current school year, Milestones enrollment stabilized from the decrease experienced during the previous two years. Stabilization in student population allows us the opportunity to work with students for multiple years, building their foundational skills and reducing the achievement gap. The graph below outlines FY2014 enrollment as compared to the previous four years.

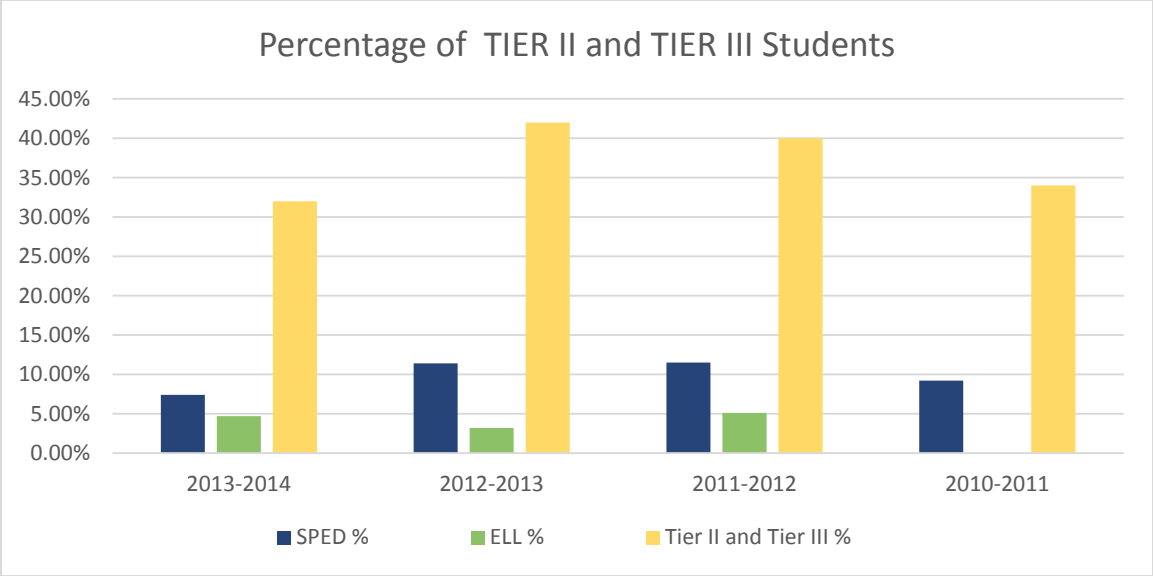


As of March 2014, Milestones has 70 new student applications. An approximate 15% rate of attrition is expected. During the previous 15 years, Milestones has not budgeted funding for marketing. New enrollments are the result of family and community connections. Also this year an area charter school is closing and encouraging their families to consider Milestones as their new home. Taking this into account Milestones should see a slight growth in enrollment numbers for the next school year.

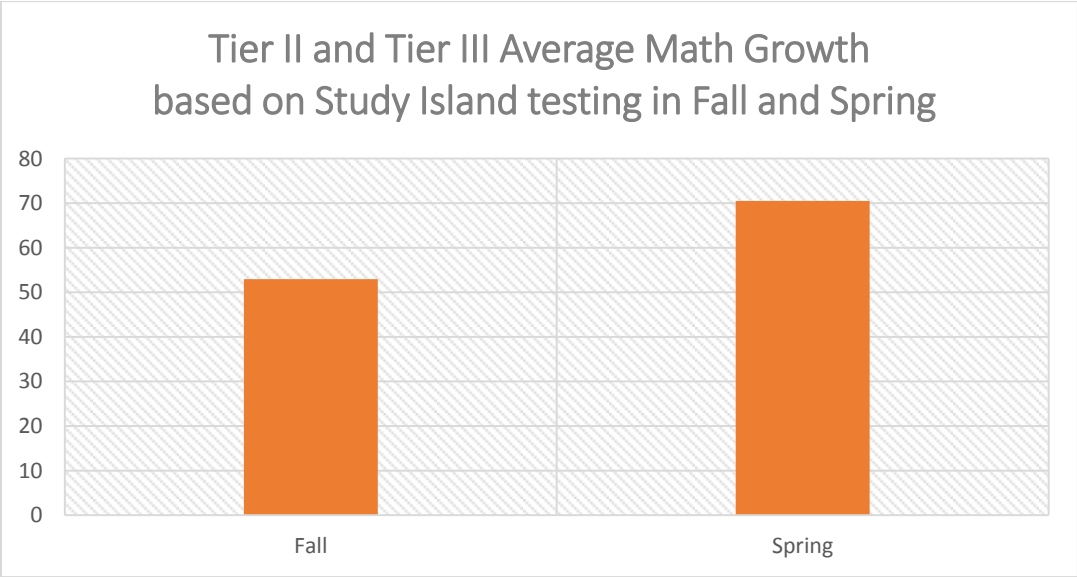
Between the 2011-2012 school year and the current school year, the Milestones Special Education population dropped from 12% to 7% of the total population. This decrease has allowed our Special Education department to place a greater focus on the goals of their current students. We are expecting our Special Education population remain stable for the upcoming school year.



Our current indicators reflect a significant decrease in our Tier II and Tier III students from the previous school years.



Using current data as indicators, Milestones concludes that Tier II and Tier III students are demonstrating adequate growth, indicating that interventions are working. We conclude that with continued interventions, Tier II and Tier III population will continue to decrease.



Our FY2011 and FY2012 Arizona Departments of Education A through F accountability ratings were Cs. Based on data as well as the effective and systemic structures in curriculum, instruction, assessment, and professional development detailed throughout this document, Milestones is confident that

we are on track to continue providing an educational community and environment conducive to student learning, growth, and success. This in turn will certainly improve the rating of our school.