

 Measuring Up.

Improving Test Scores with

*Measuring Up Insight
and Measuring Up*



Research

Improving Test Scores with *Measuring Up Insight* and *Measuring Up*

Garland ISD, Texas

School Profile

School: Garland ISD

District Enrollment: 57,000

Number of schools: 69

Grades: PreK–12

District Demographics

Free and Reduced Lunch 34%

English Language Learners 19%

District Status: Recognized

Made AYP: Yes

Title I District: Yes

THE CHALLENGE

As in districts elsewhere, curriculum directors at Garland ISD in Texas were facing a challenge in their efforts to formalize progress monitoring in classrooms: it was very time-consuming to create assessment questions that accurately reflected the state standards.

“We’d purchase assessment items from various sources and then have to spend many, many hours editing and massaging them to make sure they fit our state standards,” says Georgia Beatey, the elementary science coordinator at Garland. “It was always a struggle.”

Located north of Dallas, Garland ISD is a large urban district, serving nearly 60,000 students. The need to institute a progress monitoring and test review system that fully synched with the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS), was particularly important because of the high mobility in the district.

Brandenburg Middle School Science Department Head and Lead 8th Grade Science Teacher, Caryn Rosen was looking for concise review materials for the state test, then known as the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS), that could be teacher-led or completed independently.

“We have a lot of students moving within the district every year,” says Beatey, who supervises science instruction at the district’s 49 elementary schools. “We need to address the same content across all the schools and keep all our students on pace with the curriculum.”

THE SOLUTION

Several years ago, Garland ISD began working with Mastery Education, a New Jersey company that provides a variety of state-customized instruction and assessment products. After a successful pilot of *Measuring Up*®, the print-based program for TEKS review and progress monitoring, the district adopted an electronic version of

the product called *Measuring Up Insight*®. *Measuring Up Insight* was used to review for the state assessments and monitor student progress in fifth-grade science, as well as science and math classes at the middle and high school levels. Within the *Measuring Up Live*® platform, Garland ISD used both *Measuring Up Insight*, the online formative assessment system and includes instructional *Measuring Up* to the TEKS lessons that are available as downloadable pdfs.

“At first, we made it available just to see which teachers would use it and what they thought about it,” Beatey recalls. “Most teachers took to it like a duck to water because it was so easy to use. It requires little or no instruction on how to get it set up and running in a classroom.”

The district’s elementary science teachers typically log onto *Measuring Up Insight* once or twice a week from school or home to create short two- or four-question quizzes during the course of a unit, Beatey explains. They select from an easily searchable bank of assessment questions that are fully aligned to the TEKS. “Each year our district gives teachers the choice between using *Measuring Up Insight* or switching to another assessment program,” Beatey says. “More than 90 percent choose to stay with *Measuring Up Insight* because it is so well-aligned to TEKS.”

Once they create their quizzes from the *Measuring Up Live* platform, some teachers project the quiz questions on their whiteboards for students to answer with pencil and paper; others assign the quizzes for students to complete electronically in the school computer lab.

Based on *Measuring Up Insight* scores, teachers are directed to specific *Measuring Up* instructional TEKS-based lessons to reinforce that week’s topic. Rosen says the “design of the lessons, with the guided questions, directed questions, and apply the TEKS questions, helps keep students focused.”

THE RESULTS

When Rosen’s school first began using *Measuring Up Insight*, the plan was to use the program for two weeks before the state assessments. Between 2007 and 2009 the use model of the program evolved and the school garnered a dramatic increase in test scores. When the school decided to fully integrate the instructional lessons into their weekly topics throughout the year, passing rates jumped from 84% to a remarkable 94% in 2009.

Test results also help guide instruction. “The teachers are using *Measuring Up Insight* as a diagnostic tool to find out if they can move on to the next topic,” Beatey says. Rosen adds, “With the help of Mastery Education, we’ve been able to identify areas of concern, both for individual students and for the grade level as a whole. It has helped us plan better for reteaching.”

She went on to say, “I truly appreciate the extra 20 miles that the customer care team went to develop and make specific student reports for me. I have bragged to everyone I know about the report and the help I received!”

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~ Caryn Rosen

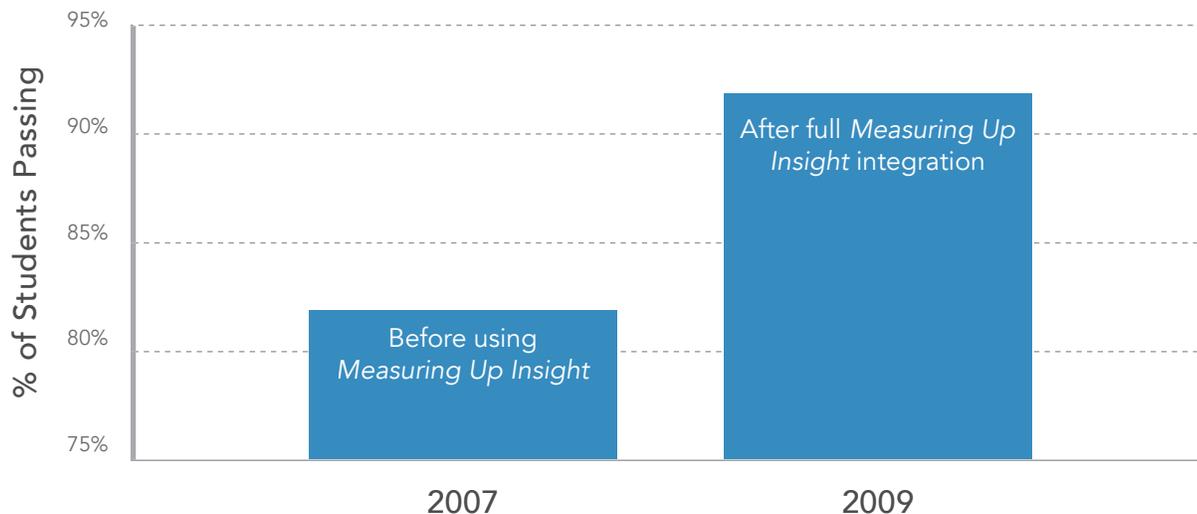
At Brandenburg Middle School, the key to success has been students' involvement in their own learning. "Now that we have implemented the online testing, we have seen the students paying closer attention to their performance, as they can get not only immediate results, but immediate feedback in their areas of weakness," says Rosen.

"Without a doubt, Measuring Up Insight has made a huge difference in helping to direct instruction," she adds. "It helps teachers diagnose weaknesses they might have missed if they had waited until the end of the unit or a district benchmark assessment. It gives them a much truer picture of what children are learning, and that's huge."

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Brandenburg Middle School TAKS Results, Science Grade 8



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