mastery education

CASE STUDY

Measuring Up

Using *Measuring Up* to Improve Academic Performance and Mastering the Exit Program

Research

Using *Measuring Up* to Improve Academic Performance and Mastering the Exit Program

Sweetwater High School, San Diego County, California

School Profile

School: Sweetwater High School
School Enrollment: 2,735
English language learners: 52%
Students receiving free and reduced lunch: 69%
Students speaking a language other than English at home: 76%

District Demographics

Program Improvement (PI) Status: 5th Year as of 2007–2008
National City population: 54,280
Documented gangs in National City: more than 20
Adults over 25 that have not graduated from high school: 43%

THE SCHOOL

Located in an urban center in San Diego County, Sweetwater High School serves more than 2,700 students, approximately 52% of whom are English language learners and nearly 70% receive free and reduced lunch. It is the only high school in National City and one of the oldest high schools in the district, built in 1920.

THE CHALLENGE

For 5 years, Sweetwater High School had not met federal and state academic benchmarks for NCLB and was designated a "Program Improvement" school. The school knew it needed a way to help teachers individualize their intervention efforts for each specific student so ALL students could become proficient. The school's leaders zeroed in on boosting their CAHSEE scores as the best way to reach their goal of exiting Program Improvement.

The school had special CAHSEE preparation courses prior to using *Measuring Up*®, but the instructors were struggling to target their instruction to the students' specific needs. "We decided to use the *Measuring Up* program because of the strong diagnostic-prescriptive link between the assessments and instruction. Since we do not receive specific CAHSEE item analysis reports from the state, we hoped the *Measuring Up* assessment results would help us figure out specific deficiencies and proficiencies for each student," says Art Lopez, the school's CAHSEE Intervention and Technology teacher.

THE SOLUTION

Sweetwater High's principal, Wesley Braddock, and his teachers implemented dual English and math courses to give students more support in mastering the California Content Standards and passing the CAHSEE. The school purchased the *Measuring Up* to the California Content Standards CAHSEE Exit Level program for English Language Arts and Mathematics to use with the juniors and seniors who had not passed the CAHSEE during the extra class period for each subject area.

> *"Students have said that the program, the Diagnostic Practice Tests and the worktexts gave them the confidence to pass the CAHSEE."*
>
> ~Ricardo del Rio,
> AlternativeEducation Program Manager
> Sweetwater Unified High School District

The *Measuring Up* program was implemented in both 2006–2007 and 2007–2008. Teachers assessed all the intervention students online using the full-length Diagnostic Practice Test (DPT) in *Measuring Up Insight*. By giving students a test that mimicked the look, format, difficulty level, and length of the CAHSEE, teachers were able to pinpoint student weaknesses by specific California Content Standards and sub-standards. The automated prescriptive reports they received from *Measuring Up Insight* showed them which *Measuring Up* worktext lessons each student needed for instruction, review, and practice of particular sub-standards. The school's Computer Applications teacher and CAHSEE Intervention specialist, Art Lopez, says: "The DPT results gave instructors focal points of what to attack for intervention. Using *Measuring Up* in the extra English and math periods allowed teachers to efficiently use the time by targeting students' weak areas."

Teachers provided standards-based support and quickly built student proficiency using the *Measuring Up* instructional worktext and other classroom resources. While the worktext covers 100% of the CAHSEE-tested California Content Standards, having the data to show which lessons each student needs saved teachers time and effort.

Teachers monitored student progress by creating quick customized formative assessments online using *Measuring Up Insight*. They also administered another Diagnostic Practice Test as a post-test at the end of their program, to give students a last-minute dress rehearsal before retaking the CAHSEE. The reports from these additional assessments allowed teachers to redirect instruction for struggling students using the *Measuring Up* worktexts and to confirm the program's success.

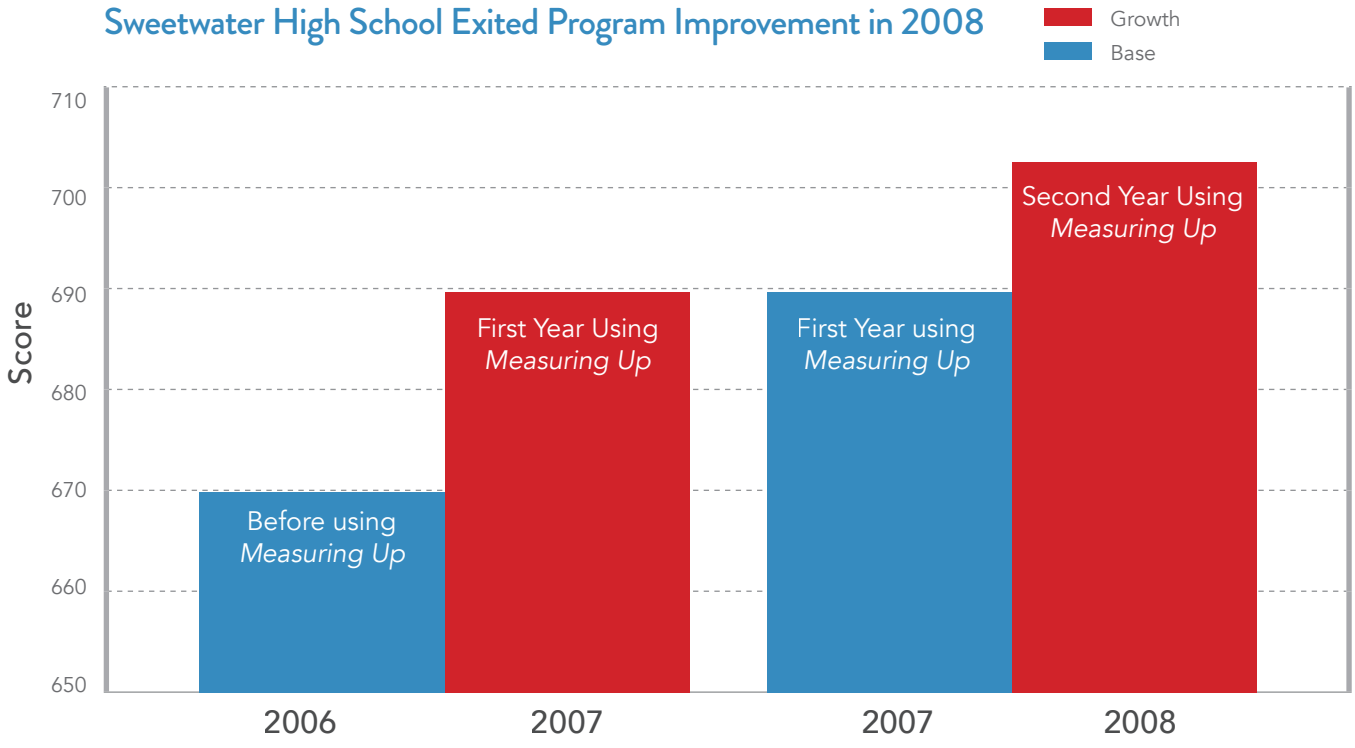
> *"Giving struggling students the information about what they do and don't know helps them feel motivated, less overwhelmed, and excited to learn. Measuring Up certainly helped us accomplish this . . . the program was one of the variables that helped us succeed in exiting program improvement.*
>
> ~|Art Lopez,
> CAHSEE Intervention/Technology Teacher
> Sweetwater High School

THE RESULTS

After two years of using *Measuring Up*, Sweetwater High School is one of only two high schools in the state that exited Program Improvement in 2008. In order to do this, a school must meet their academic performance goals for two consecutive years. In addition, the school met Adequate Yearly Progress in every sub-group. Their Academic Performance Index, California's school ranking indicator based on state test results and academic growth across all content areas, skyrocketed over 60 points, from 642 in 2005, to 706 in 2008. The school showed the fifth largest increase in the state of California for schools similar to their demographics.

Wesley Braddock, the principal, says that **"*Measuring Up*, in the hands of our wonderful teachers, has contributed to our success."** This outstanding accomplishment could not have been achieved without the students' hard work and dedication, the school leaders' commitment to investing in their students growth, and the strong support and guidance of the teachers to help their students master the standards.

Sweetwater High School Exited Program Improvement in 2008



Sweetwater High School Base and Growth API 2006–2008

	2006–2007	2007–2008
Base	670	691
Growth	**691**	**706**