

Pearson Efficacy & Quality

FARMINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
FARMINGTON, MICHIGAN

▶ SuccessMaker®

KEY FINDINGS

From 2010 to 2014, Farmington Public Schools (FPS) reduced the gap in the Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP) Reading proficiency rates between English Language Learners (ELL) and non-ELL students. While the percentage of non-ELLs achieving proficiency grew just over 1 point during that time, the percentage of ELLs achieving proficiency increased by over 11 points, from 41.1% in 2010 to 52.2% in 2014. This is also higher than the statewide ELL proficiency rate growth, which grew just over 9 points, from 27.2% in 2010 to 36.5% in 2014. The data suggest, and FPS ELL staff concur, that SuccessMaker®–Reading, which FPS used exclusively for ELL students, may have contributed to this growth.

DEMOGRAPHICS

The city of Farmington is located in Oakland County, just outside of Detroit, Michigan. As of fall 2014, Farmington Public Schools (FPS) served over 11,000 students in Farmington, Farmington Hills, and part of West Bloomfield. The district includes 19 schools for Pre-K through 12th Grade students and additional special services centers. FPS has nine elementary schools (Grades K–4), two upper elementary schools (Grades 5–6), two middle schools (Grades 7–8), and four high schools (Grades 9–12).

As of the 2013–2014 school year, 55.8% of the students in the district identify as Caucasian, 24.4% identify as African-American, 12.2% as Asian, 2.5% as Hispanic, and 5.1% as other. 23.5% of FPS students are eligible for free or reduced-price.¹ According to the Bilingual/ELL Department at FPS, ELLs make up 26% of the students.

Nearly 100 different languages are spoken in the district. A majority of the ELL population at FPS speaks Chaldean, a language spoken primarily in Iraq. The number of ELLs with high needs is on the rise at FPS. “There are many refugees, mostly from Syria and Iraq. Students are coming from war zones, and some have not been in school for 3–4 years. Some of these students have been traumatized,” reported Rola Masri, a bilingual paraprofessional who works with the ELL program and SuccessMaker. According to the ELL department staff, these new students typically have low literacy levels in their native language, score lower on newcomer assessments, and have lower proficiency levels in all subject areas. “But the students are resilient and strong. They have a drive and are hungry for education. They learn quickly. We work hard to create a comfort zone for them and accommodate all our students’ needs,” said Ms. Masri.

GOALS

FPS uses SuccessMaker–Reading exclusively for its ELL students, with the following goals:

1. Improve students’ reading skills to meet grade level and reduce the gap between non-ELLs and ELLs.
2. Evaluate and monitor growth in ELLs through data analysis.

IMPLEMENTATION

FPS purchased SuccessMaker with Title III funding in the spring of 2011. SuccessMaker is an interactive online course for supplemental instruction and practice in essential reading and math skills. Students begin with the Initial Placement Motion (IPM) in SuccessMaker to identify their place in the online program based on their abilities at the screening. The SuccessMaker program responds to each student individually upon completion of the IPM.

¹ <https://www.mischooldata.org/DistrictSchoolProfiles/StudentInformation/StudentCounts/StudentCount.aspx>

SuccessMaker is implemented in different ways at FPS. Some ELLs are pulled out for SuccessMaker instruction, and some General Education teachers use SuccessMaker on computers in the back of their classrooms. FPS also uses a co-teaching model in some classes in which an EL teacher and a General Education teacher work together.

SuccessMaker collects data on students as they work and these data contribute to reports about student usage, performance, and content mastery. The ELL team monitors student data from SuccessMaker to identify the areas of difficulty for each student and reports this to the General Education teachers, who then can adjust instruction to meet the individual needs of the ELL students in their classes. “Every two weeks I hand the reports to the General Education teachers, so that we can look at them together,” said Ms. Masri. “They can see what their students are doing, how much they are gaining, what goal we are setting, and where the student is in relation to that goal. It’s very visual and tells you what the problem areas are. I have teachers who love those reports. Teachers use the Areas of Difficulty reports to identify what to focus on in class and small-group instruction.”

In some schools the General Education teachers can adjust teaching on their own based on SuccessMaker data. In schools where there are higher-need ELLs, an EL teacher works with the General Education teacher to adjust the instruction. The bilingual paraprofessionals also provide EL teachers an end-of-year report from SuccessMaker for their students to monitor progress.

Additionally, students in the SuccessMaker program chart their own data. “We have students even as young as first graders who write logs for themselves. For instance, ‘What is my percentage when I logged off?’” said Jeanine Clever, English language learning coordinator for FPS. Older students chart their gains on the wall of the classroom or on a goal sheet. Students also identify areas in which they would like to improve and use their SuccessMaker data to set their individual goals each week in conjunction with their teacher. Then, the teacher works with the student to determine how classroom work can support the student’s goal. By charting their own goals, students are motivated to learn and understand why they are working on specific topics. “When students get 100%, they are on cloud nine,” said Ms. Masri.

IMPLEMENTATION SUMMARY, BASED ON THE WORK OF THE ELL TEAM

Distinct features of the SuccessMaker implementation at FPS are (1) the staff to support it and (2) the use of frequent 15-20 minute sessions.

- Student SuccessMaker sessions are in short increments of time, scheduled multiple times a week: 15 minutes for math and 20 minutes for reading, 2-3 times a week, per SuccessMaker guidelines.
- EL teachers run the EL program for each school.
- Bilingual paraprofessionals
 - Work directly with students in the SuccessMaker labs.
 - Run, interpret, and share SuccessMaker reports for General Education teachers and help them adjust their teaching to meet students’ individual needs.
 - Foster student motivation by asking students to:
 - Chart their SuccessMaker growth.
 - Identify areas in which they would like to improve.
 - Set their individual goals with their teacher.

RESULTS AND DATA¹

The state of Michigan assesses students with Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP) in Grades 3 through 8 in reading and mathematics. Students are assessed in the fall of each year on the prior year’s expectations. Due to FPS’s emphasis on SuccessMaker–Reading, this study considers MEAP—Reading scores only. A total of 258 ELL students in Grades 3–8 at FPS used SuccessMaker–Reading in the 2013–2014 school year. Students in Grades K–2 do not take MEAP. The MEAP Performance Levels include:

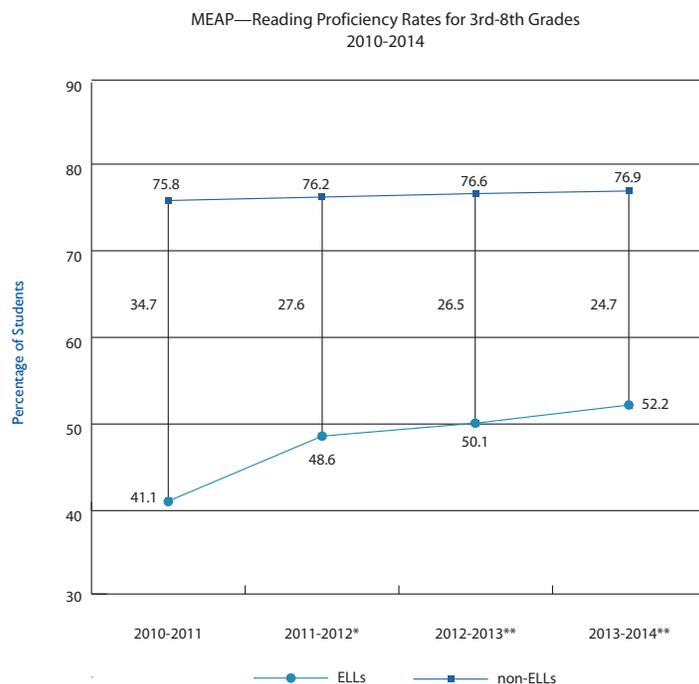
- Level 1—Advanced
- Level 2—Proficient
- Level 3—Partially Proficient
- Level 4—Not Proficient

² <https://www.mischooldata.org/DistrictSchoolProfiles/AssessmentResults/Meap/MeapPerformanceSummary.aspx>

Levels 1 and 2 are considered proficient, and Levels 3 and 4 are considered not proficient.²

Because FPS implemented SuccessMaker in spring 2011 and the MEAP is given in the fall to test the prior year, ELL performance on MEAP—Reading for school years 2010–2011 to 2013–2014 is examined here.

Between 2010 and 2014, Farmington improved its MEAP—Reading proficiency rates for all students, but saw higher gains in its ELLs. While the percentage of non-ELLs achieving proficiency grew just over 1 point during that time, the percentage of ELLs achieving proficiency increased by over 11 points, from 41.1% in 2010 to 52.2% in 2014 (Figure 1). FPS reduced the gap between ELLs' and non-ELLs' MEAP—Reading proficiency rates by ten percentage points. This reflects FPS's hard work and progress toward its goal of reducing the gap between its highest and lowest achieving students.



*Reflects one semester of SuccessMaker implementation

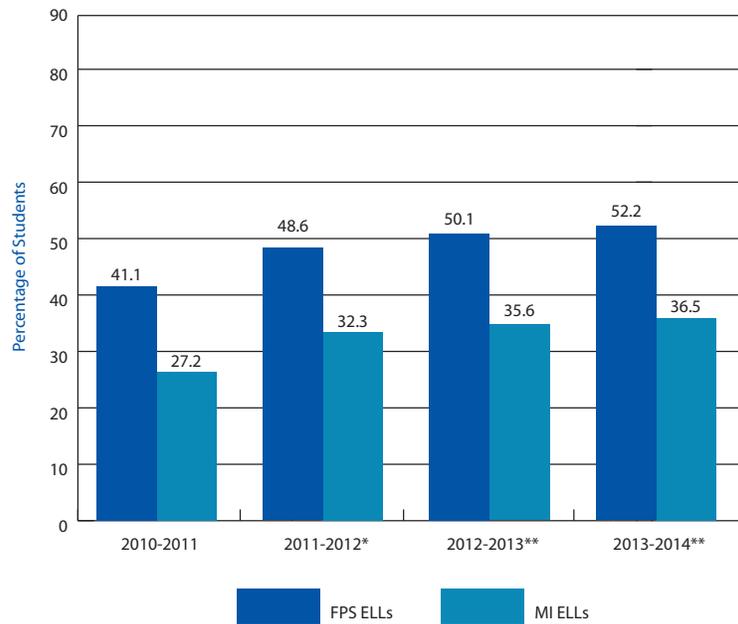
**Reflects a full year of SuccessMaker implementation

Figure 1: From the 2010–2011 school year to the 2013–2014 school year, the percentage of Farmington’s ELLs who earned a proficient or higher on MEAP—Reading grew at a faster rate than that of non-ELLs at FPS.

The percentage of Farmington’s ELLs in Grades 3–8 who scored a proficient on MEAP—Reading was consistently higher than ELLs in the state of Michigan, from 2010 to 2014 (Figure 2). FPS’s overall growth in the percentage of ELL students achieving proficiency on the MEAP—Reading assessment increased by 11.1 points, from 41.1% in the 2010–2011 school year to 52.2% the 2013–2014 school year. This is also higher than the state, which grew just over 9 points, from 27.2% in 2010 to 36.5% in 2014.

³ http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/2013_Guide_To_Reports_448577_7.pdf

MEAP—Reading Proficiency Rates
3rd–8th Grades, 2010–2014



* Represents one semester of SuccessMaker use in FPS

** Represents a full year of SuccessMaker use in FPS

Figure 2: From the 2010–2011 school year to the 2013–2014 school year, the percent of Farmington’s ELLs who earned a proficient or higher on MEAP—Reading was consistently higher than that of ELLs in the state of Michigan.

USER EXPERIENCE

“SuccessMaker has so much information-based content; it’s helpful for ELL students. The Common Core includes many informational and essay-type items, so SuccessMaker supports that as well,” reported Ms. Clever. “Students love the program and the SuccessMaker characters. It’s fun for them. They work individually at their own pace and are excited about their independent work. It’s a great tool,” said Ms. Masri. Among the ELL staff, the bilingual paraprofessionals spend the most time with SuccessMaker, assisting and motivating students, coordinating the schedules, and communicating results with teachers. “We feel like SuccessMaker has impacted our bilingual and ELL students in a positive way,” she said.

“We use the data to monitor the students’ work,” said Ms. Clever. “I can drill into areas of difficulty and share the data with classroom teachers to identify areas where students are doing well and areas in which they need to do additional intervention work. SuccessMaker is linked to standards, and you can tie it back to direct instruction with the students.” The ELL staff reported that teachers are interested in seeing their students’ progress and gains. “SuccessMaker has been a very positive experience for me, and I want to keep it up,” said Ms. Masri.

CONCLUSION

The goal of the administration at FPS was to raise the MEAP—Reading scores of ELL students so that they achieved proficiency at rates closer to those of their non-ELL counterparts. After implementing SuccessMaker and providing ELL support staff to work with students in the program, FPS continues to demonstrate gains in MEAP—Reading scores to close the gap. The MEAP—Reading assessment data, and the FPS staff, suggest that SuccessMaker may have contributed to this growth. Student achievement improved, and the proficiency gap between the ELL and non-ELL groups decreased.

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