



# High School Sees Dramatic Improvements in Number of English Learners Passing State Tests

Brockton High School, Brockton, Massachusetts  
Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP®)

## Demographics

- › Suburban Boston district
- › 4,200 students
- › 71% free and reduced lunch
- › 55.5% black (African American, Cape Verdean, Haitian, Jamaican)
- › 28% white
- › 11.2% Hispanic
- › 8% Native American

## Challenge

More than 50% of students at Brockton High School speak a language other than English at home, and approximately 11% are enrolled in bilingual/sheltered immersion programs.

In 2003, when the state of Massachusetts began to require that students pass the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) in order to graduate from high school, only 22% of English learners (ELs) at Brockton High School passed the English language arts (ELA) MCAS and only 26% passed the math MCAS.

## Implementation

In 2002, Massachusetts mandated English immersion as the primary means of instruction for most ELs, and in 2003 educators at Brockton High decided to invest in a program model with a confirmed history of improving EL achievement. The school selected the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP®) Model because its research-based approach makes subject matter concepts comprehensible while promoting English language development.

Many features of SIOP®, including cooperative learning, reading comprehension strategy instruction, and differentiated instruction, support high-quality instruction for all learners, while many additional features, such as the inclusion of language objectives in content lesson planning, development of background knowledge, and emphasis on academic literacy practice, are specifically designed to support the academic success of ELs.

“It works because SIOP® gives ALL our teachers, our EL teachers and our general education teachers, a structured and reliable format that can be implemented in their classrooms,” said Principal Sue Szachowicz.

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Starting in 2005, the district trained all general education and bilingual/ESL/immersion teachers, as well as administrative staff, on the SIOP® model for sheltered content instruction, and Brockton High adopted a school-wide literacy initiative in which all teachers were expected to teach reading, writing, speaking, and reasoning.

Intensive professional development helped teachers to provide instructional feedback and reinforced SIOP® strategies. Teachers learned how to consistently analyze assessment data, identify problem areas, and create targeted strategies to address ELs’ deficiencies in literacy skills. Administrators used both formal and informal teacher evaluations to monitor the efficacy of the new literacy strategies.

Since then, the professional development effort has continued to target the school’s general education faculty with school-wide workshops. Training has focused on the eight SIOP® components:

- **LESSON PREPARATION:** Content and language objectives, grade-level concepts, content adaptation, supplementary materials, meaningful activities
- **BUILDING BACKGROUND:** Connections with students’ prior experiences and knowledge, vocabulary development
- **COMPREHENSIBLE INPUT:** Appropriate speech, clear explanation of tasks
- **STRATEGIES:** Explicit learning strategies, teacher scaffolding, various question types
- **INTERACTION:** Frequent student/student and student/teacher interaction, appropriate grouping, increased wait time, clarification in the native language as needed

- **PRACTICE/APPLICATION:** Practice with hands-on materials, integrated language skills development
- **LESSON DELIVERY:** Meeting language and content objectives, student engagement, appropriate pacing
- **REVIEW/ASSESSMENT:** Review of key vocabulary and concepts, regular feedback on student output, informal assessment

SIOPI® has also improved performance for students across the board, according to Principal Szachowicz. “SIOPI® increases the achievement of all of our students, particularly our ELs,” she said.

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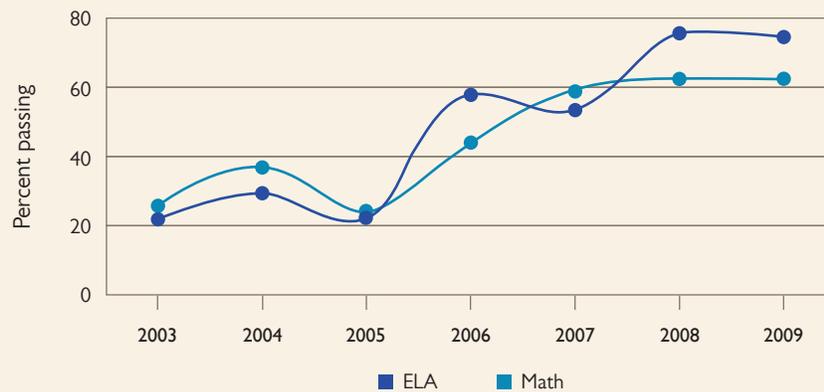
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## Results

Between 2003 and 2009, as Brockton High consistently implemented the SIOPI® model, the percentage of ELs passing the MCAS improved dramatically, with a 255% increase in English language arts and a 158% increase in math.

Based on these improvements, the Rennie Center for Education Research & Policy in Cambridge, Massachusetts, designated the bilingual program at Brockton High as the most effective EL program among urban high schools in the state.

Pass Rate for ELs Increases by 255% in ELA and 158% in Math on State Tests



Percentage of Brockton High School ELs passing the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS)