



Educational Team Excellence Award

**Student Achievement
Focus Team
(SAFT)**



Hampton City Schools
Hampton, Virginia

The name of our team was selected by the team after brainstorming sessions and a consensus process.



Introduction of the Team

Dr. Patrick Russo, Superintendent of Hampton City Schools

Dr. Sally l'Anson, (former) Executive Director of Instructional Accountability

Dr. Vatara Slade, Principal of Bryan Elementary School in Hampton Virginia

Ms. Paula Brown, Benchmark Assessment Specialist

Introduce the team representing the many team members who make up the SAFT model.



Our Vision

Hampton City Schools is the first choice for academic and lifelong success for every single student.

Our Mission

Hampton City Schools will create school experiences to ensure that all students learn and demonstrate skills needed for lifelong learning.

We are firmly committed to our vision, our mission and our core values. We use our strategic goals to guide our decision making processes.



Core Values

We believe that the developmental needs of children are central to every aspect of the operation of Hampton City Schools and that all interactions with our stakeholders must be governed by our core values-integrity, responsibility, innovation, excellence, and professionalism.

Hampton City Schools will:

- Maximize every child's learning
- Create safe, secure, and nurturing environments
- Attract, train, and retain exceptional staff
- Develop parent and community ownership of our school system
- Manage and maximize fiscal and physical resources effectively and efficiently



We are firmly committed to our vision, our mission and our core values. We use our strategic goals to guide our decision making processes.

1.a How was the project selected?

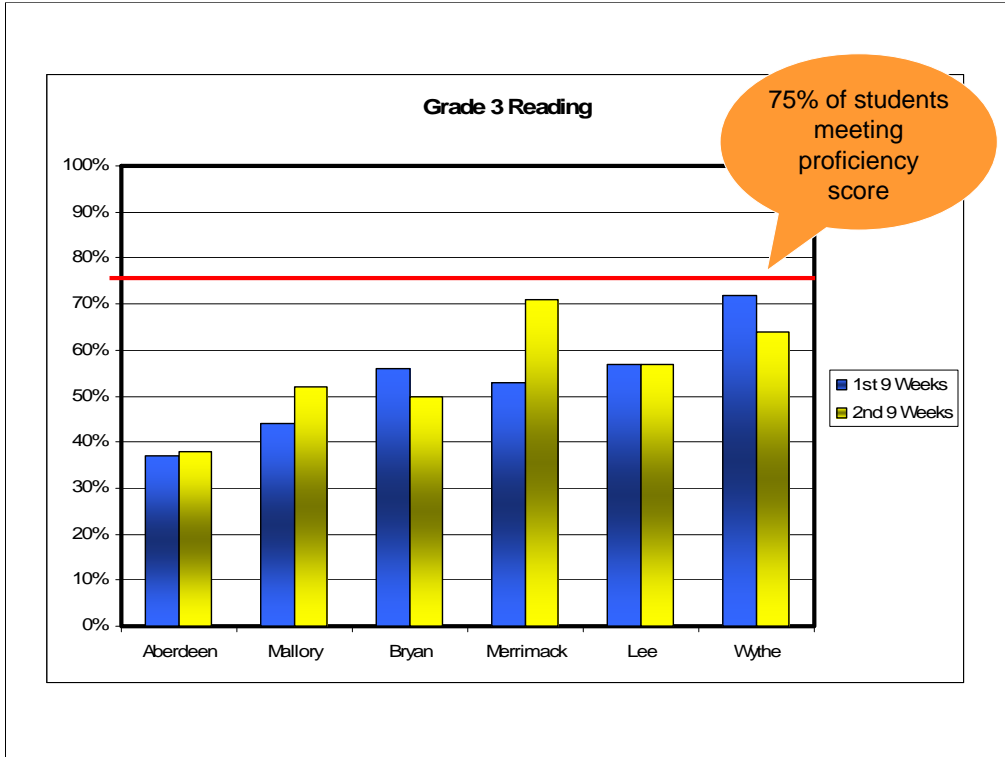
- A non-negotiable goal for the school division was 100% accreditation—meaning every school would meet state standards for performance
- Benchmark data was systematically examined by school, each core area, and each grade level. This allowed us to identify schools in danger of not making accreditation and pinpoint focus areas of improvement.

Accreditation is perhaps the single most important factor as far as public perception of school effectiveness. This is critical “in newspapers and press releases” community confidence in public education PDK quote

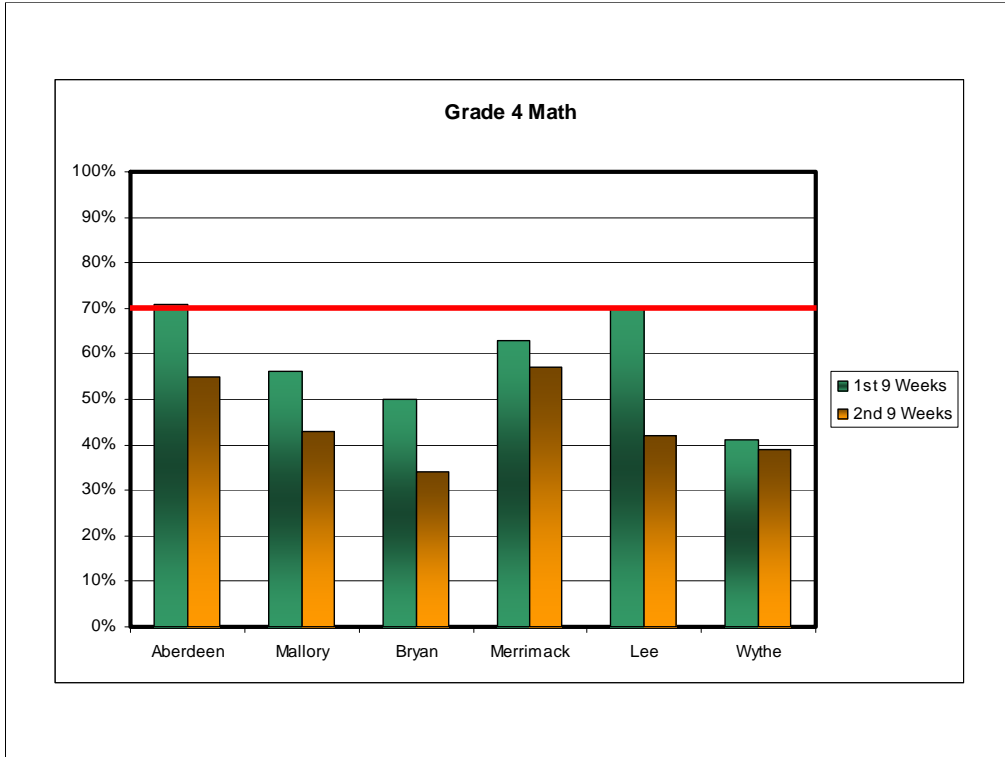
Accreditation Benchmarks



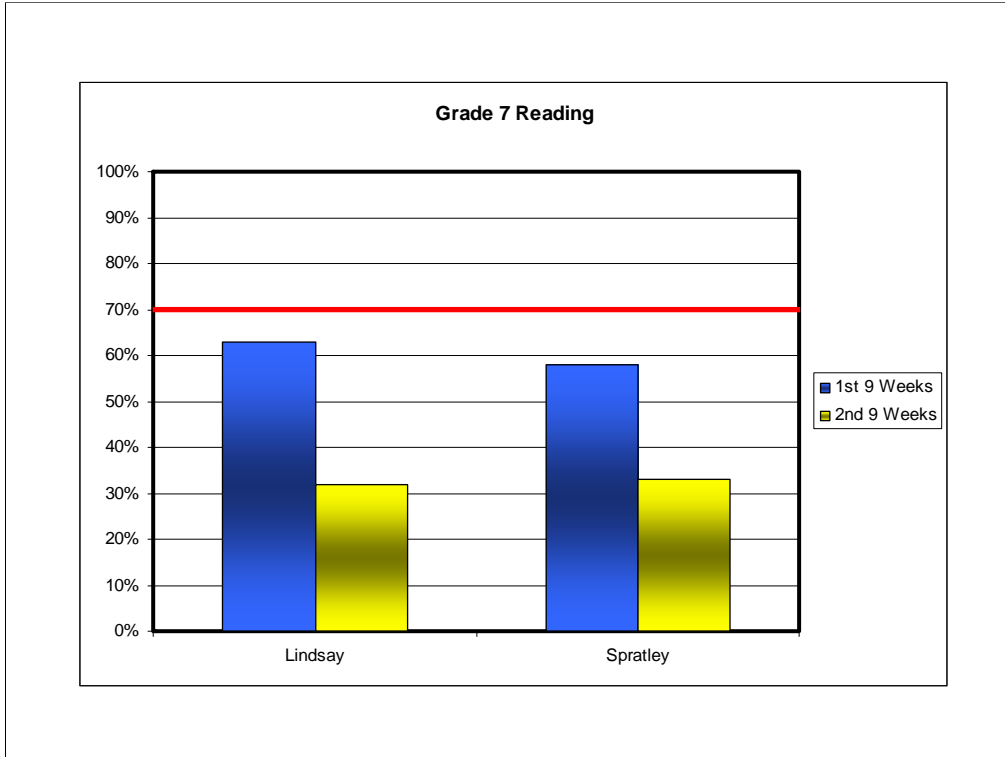
| | English | Math | Science | History |
|------------|---------|------|---------|---------|
| Grade 3 | 75 | 70 | 50 | 50 |
| Grade 4 | 70 | 70 | N/A | N/A |
| Grade 5 | 75 | 70 | 70 | 70 |
| Grades 3-5 | 75 | 70 | 70 | 70 |
| Grade 6-8 | 70 | 70 | 70 | 70 |
| EOC | 70 | 70 | 70 | 70 |



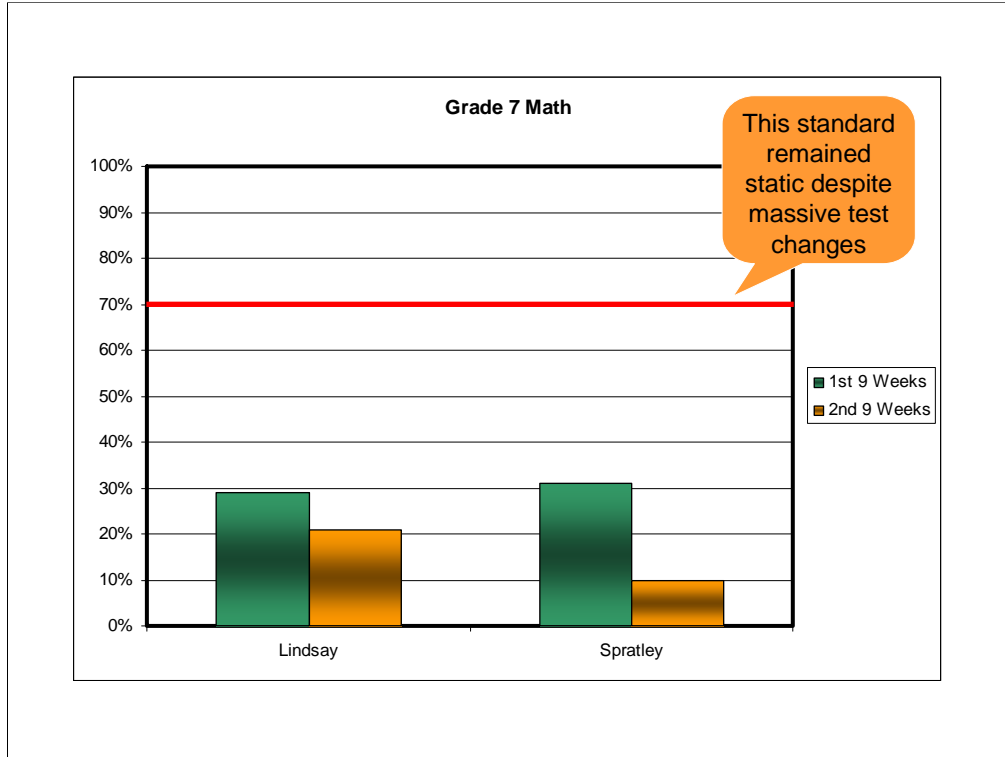
This graph captures a picture of what the third grade outcomes. 4th and 5th grades were similar. In Virginia the state allows divisions to combine test results for grades 3,4 and 5 if the aggregate is 75% or better. However at these schools, none of these grade levels combined would surpass 75% passing.



Math also showed a very bleak picture for these particular schools



Two of our 6 middle schools struggled as well with English...



In 2006, Virginia made substantive changes in the area of middle school mathematics assessments. These tests became considerably more challenging—requiring collegiate level of test strategy as well as multi-step problem solving. Literally in one year, the middle school pass rate statewide went from 80-90% passing to 30 or 40% passing.



1.b Organizational Goal Alignment

Hampton City Schools

Strategic Goal #1:

Maximize EVERY Child's Learning

**1.2 100% of schools will meet or exceed all
state accountability benchmarks**

Early benchmark data indicated that a large percentage of students attending particular schools were unlikely to meet minimum performance standards. Our goal was to ensure that every school would be accredited. This required addressing grade level/ core subject data to assist individual teachers and schools.

We chose math and English because of its importance to both accreditation and AYP outcomes. They were also weaker than social studies and science and improving them would improve the other two cores as well.

1.c How were key stakeholders identified?

| Those important to the success of the project | Those MOST affected by the project |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">•School Board members•Central office staff•Building level administrators at targeted schools•Teachers at targeted schools | <ul style="list-style-type: none">•Students•Schools |

This graph shows the stakeholders on each side of the project.

1.c How were key stakeholders identified?

Those important to the success of the project were identified by the following factors:

- **Knowledge in Core instructional areas**
- **Skills to address testing weaknesses**
- **Ability to be decision makers**
- **Creativity**
- **Flexibility**
- **Initiative**
- **Willingness to change**
- **Ability to motivate and engage others**

There was a brainstorming session that looked at every department and every individual in the central office who could provide building level expertise.

1.c How were key stakeholders identified?

Schools were identified using advanced data analysis of:

- ◆ Cumulative results of first and second nine weeks benchmark data in the areas of English and Mathematics
- ◆ Prior year benchmark performance data
- ◆ Results of Standards of Learning (SOL) Assessment trend data
- ◆ Status of Accreditation for previous school year

In many of the target schools, less than half of the students were meeting the minimum pass rate.

1.d Key Stakeholders and Impact

First Phase Identified Schools: (School Year 2006-07)

- Aberdeen Elementary School
- Bryan Elementary School
- Merrimack Elementary School
- Lee Elementary School
- Mallory Elementary School
- Wythe Elementary School
- Lindsay Middle School
- Spratley Middle School

Second Phase Identified Schools: (School Year 2007-08)

- Aberdeen Elementary School
- Bryan Elementary School
- Cary Elementary School
- Lee Elementary School
- Mallory Elementary School
- Wythe Elementary School
- Lindsay Middle School
- Spratley Middle School

These are the names of the schools initially identified in the project. In the first FULL year of the project, the list changed slightly. We removed Merrimack as a focus school and added Cary. Schools that made improvements remained on the list to provide support for long term success.

1.d Key Stakeholders and Impact

Impact would involve:

- Principals received intensive leadership support
- Central office staff “moved into” identified buildings
- New processes replaced old processes
- Schedules for team staff and school staffs were modified to accommodate assistance
- 70% of instructional staff’s day was in identified schools
- Office work would be completed in 30% of the staff’s time
- Teachers received instructional packets, model lessons and classroom support
- Students experienced academic success—some for the first time (including special needs students)

This would be a radical change for everyone. Stakeholders on both sides would be in very new territory.

2.a Identification of Root Causes

Historical Excuses

- Inexperienced staff (new teachers/new to grade)
- Absenteeism of staff or staff departure
- Long term substitutes
- Inadequate teacher content knowledge
- Lack of teacher training to work with special needs students
- Students who are transient
- Cultural inhibitors

None of these things could be the root cause of ongoing failure because they happened everywhere.

2.a Identification of Root Causes

All of our schools were experiencing one or more of those factors and continuing to do very well on state-wide assessments.

What if we looked at this problem from a different angle?

What if we looked at alignment of content and instructional practices using our own data?

What if we could narrow our focus and remediate only what will change outcomes?

What if?

This situation required us to use our SOLAR (Standards of Learning Assessment Resource) data management system in a way to help us identify the real root causes of student failure.

2.a Identification of Root Causes

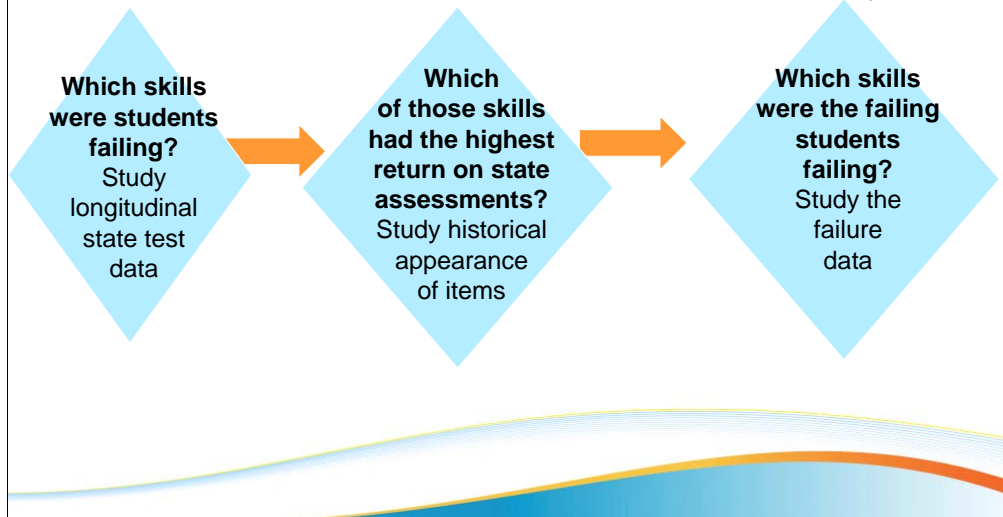
A highly structured process was used to determine which essential skills needed additional resources in order to improve student achievement on the English and mathematics SOL assessments.

This process allowed the team to develop a laser-like approach to using data to make significant changes in the pass rates in each of the struggling schools.

If all students become able to master what successful students at successful schools were learning, would we change the outcome for our students. We can't remediate everything. What if our data tools could show us what was affecting our failure by the largest amounts? Could we change outcomes?

2.a Identification of Root Causes

Ask a **NEW** question



If all students become able to master what successful students at successful schools were learning, would we change the outcome for our students. We can't remediate everything. What if our data tools could show us what was affecting our failure by the largest amounts? Could we change outcomes?

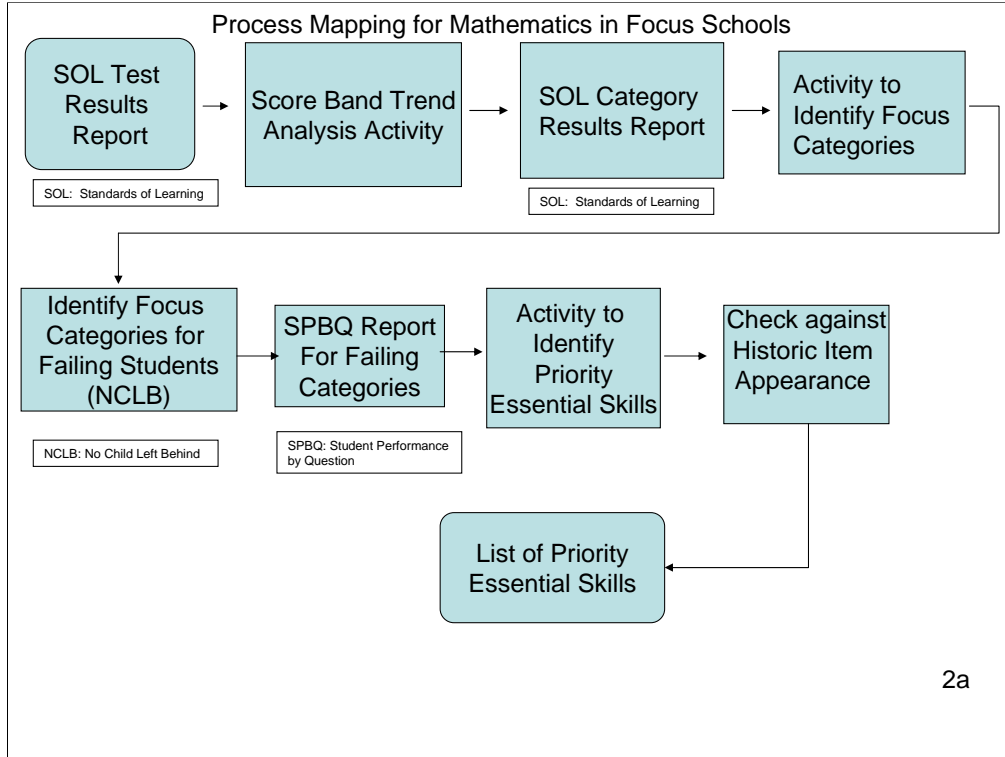
2.b Use of Data and Information

The PROCESS

The use of several data reports from our data management system (SOLAR) were used to narrow the fields until the root cause became clear.

- **Step I: Band Analysis**
- **Step II: Category Analysis**
- **Step III: Gap Analysis**
- **Step IV: Skill Analysis**

Standards of Learning Assessment Resource is the Hampton City Schools data management system. We use it to run our benchmark assessment program as well as for disaggregating our state assessment data.



This model (used in mathematics) was used with the team (and later principals, curriculum leaders, instructional leaders, teaching staffs, etc) to guide them through the various reports necessary for discovering the root causes for low performance in individual schools and grade levels. Every school had to have a personalized plan if this improvement model was going to work.

2.b Use of Data and Information

Step ONE: Band Analysis

- Using SOLAR disaggregator, pull five years of performance data
- Compare six performance bands across the years
- Looking at the failing bands, identify how many students are close to passing
- Predict future pass rate with narrowed focus

These are the actual directions given to staff to create their identified focus skills list. You can predict the future pass rate by looking at the percentage of students within 5 questions of passing.

2.b Use of Data and Information

In Virginia, scores range from 0-600

| | |
|---------|-------------------|
| 500-600 | Pass advanced |
| 400-500 | Pass Proficient |
| 350-399 | Fail: Basic |
| 0-350 | Fail: Below basic |

This graph came from one of the failing schools. (5th grade math) This shows very quickly that practices with low students are working, but “right there” students never move to passing.

2.b Use of Data and Information

SOLAR breaks trend data into 6 bands

This data is from a consistently failing school

| Looking at FAILING performance bands 2003-2006 | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 |
|--|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Band 4 375 to 400 (within 1 or 2 questions) | 7 students | 13 students | 13 students | 12 students |
| Band 5 350-375 (within 3 to 5 questions) | 6 students | 5 students | 8 students | 8 students |
| Band 6 0-350 | 12 students | 3 students | 5 students | 1 students |

This graph came from one of the failing schools. (5th grade math) This shows very quickly that practices with low students are working, but “right there” students never move to passing.

2.b Use of Data and Information

What does this tell us about this failing school?

1. Processes to help very low students were working
2. The number of students in the “right there” bands were stagnant
3. Deeper alignment to the curriculum and assessment would move a lot of students into the passing performance bands very quickly

The most amazing outcome of this analysis is that when later data is revealed through this process, teachers and staff can easily see and BELIEVE that improvement can be attained and in a short amount of time

2.b Use of Data and Information

Step Two: Category Analysis

- Each core subject is divided into reporting categories under which Standards of Learning (SOLs) are assigned.
- Categories are weighted using a blueprint that assigns a certain number of questions to each category.

Our state blueprints show this as well, but often are overlooked by teachers because they do not understand the influence this information has concerning pass rates.

2.b Use of Data and Information

Step Three: Gap Analysis

- SOL data contains components that report the *average raw score* at the class level, the school level and the division level.
- Comparing the *average raw score* to the number of questions in a category reveals a gap in performance.
- The larger the gap the more need there is to draw best practices and remediation efforts to those categories over the others in the core subject. It is important to note that the largest gaps are usually found in the categories with the largest numbers of questions. (Heavily weighted)

| Mathematics Grade 3 (2001 Standards) - 50 Questions | |
|---|-------------------|
| Reporting Category | Average Raw Score |
| Number and Number Sense (13 q) | 8.00 |
| Computation and Estimation (11 q) | 5.14 |
| Measurement and Geometry (12 q) | 7.36 |
| Probability and Statistics (7 q) | 4.29 |
| Patterns, Functions, and Algebra (7 q) | 3.86 |

Subtract the Average Raw Score in each category from the total number of questions. This identifies the size of the gap. Reducing the largest gap is the fastest path to student success on state tests.

By looking at only the failing students data, it is easy to see where performance can be improved quickly. This narrows the focus to *Computation and Estimation*.

The unique piece of this process is to remove the students that passed the assessment from the data. This will reveal what is exactly needed to improve the pass rates from one year to the next. This process also works with isolating the pass proficient students and identifying the category that will help them reach an advanced score.

Gap: Number and number sense: 5.00 Computation and Estimation: 5.86 Measurement and Geometry: 4.64 Probability and statistics: 2.71

Patterns, functions and Algebra: 3.14 These gaps are much wider when the passing students are removed. Sometimes it reveals shocking deficits.

2.b Use of Data and Information

Step Four: Skill Analysis

This report gives the student performance data for each question in each reporting category.

By going to the reporting category that was identified as having the largest performance gap, data can be reviewed for each question/skill assessed in that category.

A new feature added this year, allows us to look at only the performance of the failing students on those questions.

The state provide a report that allows us to know the name and score of every skill by student, by class, by school and by division. This is helpful in determining which skills are at the root of the problem.

2.b Use of Data and Information

| Reporting Category: Computation and Estimation 12q | Number of students tested | Number of students who answered correctly | |
|---|---------------------------|---|--------|
| 2370 - Find the quotient of a 4-digit dividend and a 1-digit divisor. | 74 | 59 | 79.73% |
| 4463 - Solve a problem involving subtraction of numbers from a table. | 74 | 63 | 85.14% |
| 9857 - Solve a problem by finding the product of two 1-digit numbers. | 74 | 51 | 68.92% |
| 4464 - Find the sum of two decimal numbers | 74 | 51 | 68.92% |
| 2368 - Solve a problem involving multiplication of two 2-digit numbers. | 74 | 58 | 78.38% |
| 2369 - Find the product of a decimal in tenths and a decimal in hundredths. | 74 | 48 | 64.86% |
| 2392 - Find the difference of a mixed number and a fraction. | 74 | 48 | 64.86% |
| 1953 - Find the quotient of a 3-digit number and a 1-digit divisor. | 74 | 62 | 83.78% |
| 1742 - Using a chart | 74 | 57 | 77.03% |
| 1743 - Solve a problem involving division of two whole numbers. | 74 | 55 | 74.32% |
| 0279 - Solve a problem involving subtraction of two 3-digit numbers. | 74 | 57 | 77.03% |

Skills that appear in yellow are under 70% proficiency, Noting that it looks like there are four skills that are the weakest in this category...

This again is the everyone data. It show us a weakness...

2.b Use of Data and Information

| Reporting Category: Computation and Estimation 12q | | | |
|---|----|----|--------|
| 2370 - Find the quotient of a 4-digit dividend and a 1-digit divisor. | 25 | 15 | 60.00% |
| 4463 - Solve a problem involving subtraction of numbers from a table. | 25 | 16 | 64.00% |
| 9857 - Solve a problem by finding the product of two 1-digit numbers. | 25 | 12 | 48.00% |
| 4464 - Find the sum of two decimal numbers | 25 | 14 | 56.00% |
| 2368 - Solve a problem involving multiplication of two 2-digit numbers. | 25 | 14 | 56.00% |
| 2369 - Find the product of a decimal in tenths and a decimal in hundredths. | 25 | 11 | 44.00% |
| 2392 - Find the difference of a mixed number and a fraction. | 25 | 13 | 52.00% |
| 1953 - Find the quotient of a 3-digit number and a 1-digit divisor. | 25 | 18 | 72.00% |
| 1742 - Using a chart | 25 | 14 | 56.00% |
| 1743 - Solve a problem involving division of two whole numbers. | 25 | 12 | 48.00% |
| 0279 - Solve a problem involving subtraction of two 3-digit numbers. | 25 | 12 | 48.00% |

BUT, when we take out the passing kids we see that there are 10 weak skills and “finding the product” is low in more than one area.

But this really tells us the true story about this group of students. SOLAR identifies skills below 70% in yellow.

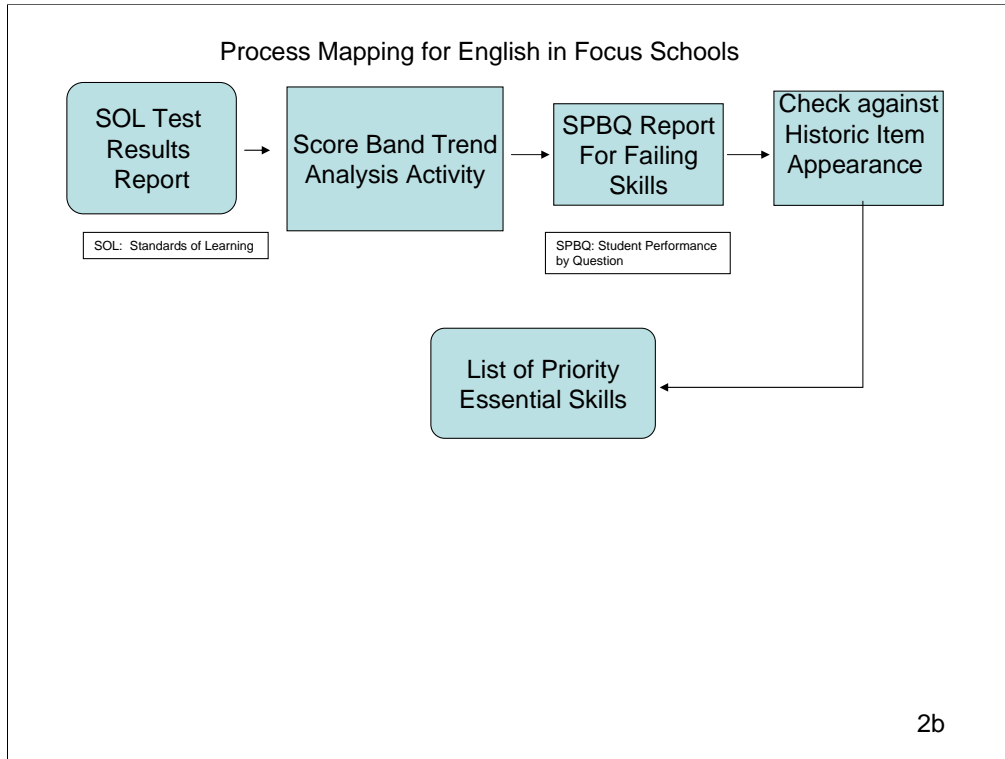
What is great about this process, is that it can be used at various levels of performance as well as from building to building or by the division as a whole

That means everyone can have identified areas for improvement and all levels will improve instead of just the failing students

2.b Use of Data and Information

In the area of **English**, there are only two categories; one with a large number of questions and one with a small number of questions. In order to provide strategic direction to teachers, this step must be skipped and the appearance of items has to be analyzed. This historical pattern of appearance revealed that certain skills are tested at a much higher rate than others

Because English only had two categories, one small and one very large, category data always said that comprehension of text was the problem. However with 75% of the tests on comprehension at each grade level, that was not narrow enough.



This model eliminates the category data steps. It creates a new step in the process called Historical appearance.

2.b Use of Data and Information (English Only)

The figure below shows that context clues are tested with more frequency (50%) than other skills in this reporting category. This was a consistent appearance over a five-year testing period.

| Reporting Category: Use word analysis strategies and information resources | 8q |
|--|----|
| 0685 - Use context clues to identify the meaning of a word. | |
| 4453 - Use knowledge of a prefix. | |
| 0685 - Use context clues to identify the meaning of a word. | |
| 0703 - Use knowledge of contractions. | |
| 0714 - Apply alphabetization skills to a list of words. | |
| 0717 - Use a dictionary entry to determine the meaning of a word. | |
| 0703 - Use knowledge of contractions. | |
| 0685 - Use context clues to identify the meaning of a word. | |

Context clue appears at a rate of 50% in the word analysis strand at every grade level 3-11. The skill is tested in the same presentation at all levels. Learning this skill early and well would prove very profitable to students for a long time.

Historic Appearance (English Only)

English Grade 4 (Focus Skills)

- ◆ **Word analysis: context clues**
- ◆ **Comprehension:**
 - **Details: Ask and answer questions**
 - **Main idea, summarizing, headings**
 - **Author's purpose, author's choice**
 - **Drawing conclusions, inferences**
 - **Characterization**
 - **Cause and effect**

This was also true for comprehension. The way comprehension skills are tested in Virginia (and on many other assessments) is very consistent through grade 11. Here is a sample of the skills that the teams chose from to make their plans.

2.c Use of Data and Information

- **This process was used with all of the identified schools and a list of focus skills by grade level was created in the areas of math and English**
- **Each school would have identified areas of need**
- **All schools would receive support for the identified skills**
- **The following chart shows a sample school...**

It was decided that in order to pass reading, (or reach advanced proficiency) students would need strong remediation in the 7 focus skills. One skill would not ensure success.

| School | Grade | English: Reading Focus Skills | Math Focus strand |
|--------------------|-------|---|--|
| Mallory Elementary | 3 | Context Clues Ask and Answer questions Main Idea Summarizing Supporting details Sequencing Drawing conclusions Characterization | Measurement and Geometry Computation and Estimation Number and Number Sense |
| | 4 | Context Clues Ask and Answer questions (details) Main Idea Summarizing Author's purpose Author's choice Drawing conclusions Characterization Cause and Effect | Measurement and Geometry Computation and Estimation |
| | 5 | Context Clues Ask and Answer questions (details) Main Idea Summarizing Author's purpose Author's choice Drawing conclusions Characterization Cause and Effect | Computation and Estimation Measurement and Geometry |

This is an example of a plan SAFT created for one of the focus schools. Historical appearance was inapplicable in mathematics due to the extremely large number of tested skills. Category analysis was used instead.

2.d Ensuring the Identification of the Root Causes

The complexity of the process itself ensures the identification of the correct root causes; however, the team recognizes the need to monitor a variety of contributing factors.

The following was also implemented:

1. Leadership coaching for all administrative staff at identified buildings
2. Improved communication processes
3. Regular meetings for the discussion of progress
4. SOL trend data for targeted schools
5. Benchmark data analysis

Each school also had other contributing factors to the decline in performance. Support was given to these as well.

3.a Identification of Potential Solutions

Process:

I. Brainstorming Research Questions:

- Which schools are being successful with similar demographics?
- How can we work differently with the same resources and staff?
- What BEST PRACTICES are working in other schools vs. the ones being used in focus schools in our own division?

There wasn't going to be any new funding for this project. The talent to solve this problem was located right in the school division. It just had to be used in a different way. Good questioning practices were always a part of the team's practices.

3.a Identification of Potential Solutions

Process:

II. Searched recent journal articles for process improvement in urban public schools

III. Phone interview with neighboring highly successful urban district

- ♦ **We consulted nearby Norfolk Public Schools, which recently received the \$1 million Broad Award, to ask them how they used their curriculum staff. It was their model we adopted for best practice in using HCS Curriculum Leaders and Teacher Specialists.**

Allow the Curriculum Leaders and Teacher Specialists in the English and mathematics departments to devote themselves to working exclusively in eight of the division's thirty-six schools in an effort to help those struggling schools meet the Virginia Standards of Accreditation requirements on the spring 2007 SOL tests.

3.a Best Practices

- **Data driven decision making**
- **Small group instruction**
- **Curriculum and assessment alignment**
- **Collaborative planning time**
- **Common lesson plans and common assessments**
- **Assessing solutions and adjusting as necessary**

This became a list of non-negotiables for the team. All of these practices were successful in pockets of the school division. A commitment to their consistent implementation in the focus schools was a must.

3.b Selection of Final Solution

The team met to review all gathered research and data to include:

- School SOL data and benchmark data
- Successful BEST PRACTICE models
- Composition of teacher teams at each site and identification of “superstar” teachers and their practices
- Current calendars and schedules

Meetings were well-planned and productive. There was no down time for this team.

3.c Final Solution Components

- Reorganization of the Division Leadership structure
- Creation of the Student Achievement Focus Team (SAFT)
- Analyze data to provide direction for all identified schools
- Create instructional RED PACKETS to focus on all identified weak skills
- Evaluate weekly and quarterly benchmark assessment results and reassign staff or resources accordingly
- Communicate progress to all stakeholders

These are the five components of the improvement model. Each was highly important and critical to the success of the project.

The English and the mathematics instructional staff then developed what were ultimately deemed “Red Packets.” They were called this because we chose bright red, over-sized manila envelopes to hold the focused instructional units that were delivered to each of the identified focus schools based on the skills their SOL data revealed during the process.

3.c Final Solution Components

- 1. The role of Accountability changed from reporting results to managing the process of getting the results**
- 2. The instructional departments of English and Mathematics reported to the Director of Accountability**
- 3. School leaders met monthly with the SAFT team and superintendent to provide ongoing feedback**

3.c Final Solution: Red Packets

“Red Packets” contents:

- a student centered, strategic, engaging, interesting, practiced lesson plan(s) focused on one priority essential skill
- all of the resources and materials for activities embedded in the lesson(s) – actual materials or a detailed explanatory list of materials.
- SOL formatted quiz(zes) to assess student comprehension of the essential skill taught.
- a test-taking strategy lesson or linkage to teach along with the content lesson to improve student performance on the priority essential skill.

These packets were designed to contain everything a teacher would need to ensure student success on SOL items on that essential skill or group of skills. The Red Packets were only delivered to individual teachers in the focus schools after the curriculum staff modeled the lesson(s) and discussed the use of materials and explained the assessment. This was a critical element in the success of these instructional materials. Teachers were given much support to ensure student learning of these targeted lessons.

3.c Final Solution

Expected Benefits:

- Best practices implemented
- Decisions concerning student achievement will be based on data points
- Experience and Maxwell's *law of intuition* will work through our leaders

AND

**all schools will become accredited by the
spring 2007 SOL assessment results**

We were certain this would work. We expected the highest levels of success for our schools and we wanted it duplicated.

3.d How expected benefits were determined

1. The data process model implemented by the SAFT team showed that most schools had large numbers of students in performance bands that were close to passing.
2. With support and alignment of curriculum and assessment, these students should get the one or two more questions correct (and maybe many more) they needed to move into the passing bands.
3. The instructional packets were based on sound language arts and mathematics practices and principles that have been successful with students for decades.

These are the expected benefits of our solution.

3.d How expected benefits were determined

- I. If student performance identified in benchmarks improved, then students would be successful on those same skills on state tests
- II. Success on heavily weighted skills and categories would improve pass rates and all schools would become
fully accredited

An if/then statement that has proven true over and over again since this project began.

4.a Planning the implementation of the solution

The Director of Instructional Accountability called an all day meeting for the team

During this planning session, the following details were discussed, reviewed, and put into a model for implementation:

1. Team name
2. Function of team
3. Responsibilities of team
4. Implementation of support model

In the beginning, was a group of highly intelligent, talented people who worked hard for children every day in a multitude of locations. On the first day, they had to become a team with one focus: school accreditation.

4.a Structure of the Model: Team Members' Schedule

- Daily - 70% of time spent working in focus/monitor schools
- 8:00 AM until 2:00 PM – schools (Monday-Thursday)
- 2:00 PM until 4:30 PM – offices (Monday-Thursday)
- All Day Friday – offices to prepare for the following week
- Workshops after school (e.g. 3PM-5PM) would allow you to be in your offices during the morning (e.g. 8AM-10AM).
- Starting early in secondary schools (e.g. 7:30 AM) would allow you to leave work at 3:30 PM.
- Pack your snack and lunch or buy lunch at school and wear comfortable clothes.
- Electronic weekly time sheets indicating where you will be and the times and tasks should be submitted every Thursday afternoon for the upcoming week.

This is a copy of the actual working model that the team aligned itself to every week.

4.a Structure of the Model: Team Members' Job Responsibilities

- Teacher training during planning periods (mini-workshops)
- Teacher observations
- Demonstration/model lessons
- Participating in data meetings (subject/grade level)
- Working with teachers writing classroom assessments
- Working with teachers grading student work
- Error analysis to determine cause(s) of student errors on classroom and benchmark tests
- Providing on-site teacher access to the knowledge and experience of the team members
- Preparing instructional packets
- Instructional support
- Grade level data meetings to discuss benchmarks results every nine weeks

Each team member used this list to create a schedule of their activities for every week.

4.a Planning the Solution

Facing challenges

1. Relationships with building staff
2. Communication between team, director, division leadership team, staffs, and principals
3. Schedules
4. Historical school culture practices

Many times, struggling schools are filled with staff members who feel unappreciated and unrecognized for their efforts with students. This team realized early on that great relationships would yield great results. That means communicating.

4.a Planning the Solution

Relationships

The team felt strongly that they could not be evaluators of teachers. They preferred to come alongside teachers as co-teachers providing models for best practices.

This was vital to the success of the project.

4.a Planning the Solution

Communication

Team members were charged with providing open and honest communication to the Executive Directors regarding administrator, teacher and student behavior and progress as it related to the Red Packets. The Executive Directors were expected to provide the team with specific feedback regarding what they were seeing in the focus school buildings and areas where they thought the team could be more effective or provide more or different assistance.

This process also formed relationships across job levels. Everyone would be needed if this was going to work and everyone had to be informed.

4.a Planning the Solution

Communication with Principals

A PowerPoint presentation was provided explaining the rationale for the team and how the process worked. This was designed for principals to share with their staff during a faculty meeting. Upon request a member of the team would take a staff through the process of identifying their priority essential skills by grade level and subject.

This was how the whole idea was introduced to each school. This would provide a time for asking questions and relieving fears.

4.a Planning the Solution

Communication with Principals

The team also provided principals with the list of essential priority skills by grade level and subject that were identified using the process.

Additionally, principals were provided the weekly schedule the Friday before the coming week.

The team made a commitment to communicate openly and honestly with principals regarding teacher and student behavior and progress with the implementation of the Red Packets.

Because the team would not be in every building on every day, principals had to be completely informed at all times. They were ultimately responsible for their schools and their commitment really made it work at their sites.

4.a Planning the Solution

Communication with Team Principals provided:

- master schedules for each grade level
- schedules for Title I reading and math teachers, City Reading Specialists, Reading Coaches, Special Education Teachers, Class Size Reduction Teachers, Teacher Mentors, Student Tutors and other resource personnel
- a detailed list of student and teacher activities for each week such as field trips, assemblies, planned teacher absences, professional conferences, Student Intervention Team meetings, parent conferences...
- coverage for teachers so that they could observe model lessons

Because no time could be wasted, schedules had to be current and accurate.

4.a Planning the Solution

Communication

Every two weeks the focus school principals, curriculum and accountability staff, executive directors, deputy superintendents, and the superintendent met for one hour to discuss the progress of the model, share what was working, and to ask questions. This served as a very effective form of communication across the identified schools.

Large group meetings helped principals feel supported and appreciated. It was a chance for them to hear their colleagues and share what was happening at their respective schools

4.a Planning the Solution

Schedules

The team provided the Executive Directors with the following information:

- a list of priority essential skills by school, grade, and subject
- a weekly electronic schedule every Friday afternoon for the following week indicating who will be in each building (including specific times), what they would be doing and with whom

Team members were held to complex schedules that maximized their time in the schools.

4.b Implementation of the Solution

Once schedules were created and approved, teams began a 10-week immersion into the schools

They were introduced in team meetings and began instruction immediately in:

1. Use of the small group model for reading and math
2. Instruction of the red packets

These two components were the most important to the success of the focus schools.

4.c SAFT Team Support and Teacher Buy-in

Two key factors:

Beginning with the teachers who were the least resistant

- The value of the models
 - ♦ When the teachers began to see their students respond to the techniques and lessons modeled by the instructional team, they began to want more
- The value of the RED PACKETS
 - ♦ Teachers began to request assistance and they were quick to begin asking for more RED PACKETS

An effective relationship often began with “Can I help you with anything today?” This often opened closed doors and launched warm and caring relationships. As soon as students began being successful, work spread fast. It began to be hard to fill all of the requests. Executive directors and building leaders put pressure on resistant teachers to examine their teaching practices for alignment with data.

4.c Teacher Buy-in

Challenges

Resistant teachers were the most difficult challenge for the team.

Most of this resistance disappeared as results started to come in from informal and formal methods of testing.

Benchmark results were improving.

Intersession pre- and post-tests showed growth.

It is hard to resist when things are working well all around you.

This continues to be a challenge area. This year each curriculum team is creating a list of “best practices” that we will call the “non-negotiables”.

When practices are proven effective, teachers must do what is best for their students.

4.c Principal Support and Buy-in

Challenges

Principals provided the most positive help.

They could see quickly that this model was a very good thing for their schools.

Even when the team was in another school, they monitored the implementation of the processes.

Their buy-in was the most helpful in maintaining success.

Most principals welcomed help. They just want to be informed and knowledgeable about what is being done in their schools.

4.d Measuring Results

Because this team was lead by the department of Instructional Accountability, results were constantly being gathered and reported

- Red Packet Pre- and post-test results
- Intersession pre- and post-test results
- Third nine weeks benchmark results
- SOL results (the final story)

Data was at the beginning of the solution and data would continue to tell us where to work and what to work on consistently.

4.d Measuring Results

The first results (third nine week benchmark assessments) began to come in after the fourth week of implementation.

The progress was mixed. Some schools, grade levels and subjects were substantially improved; others weren't.

However, wherever there was a RED PACKET being taught, that skill improved.

It looked like we might be on to something great.

Results were often mixed because the teams were in the schools every other week. There were also intercession breaks for five of the eight schools. In the end, our data told us that whatever had been introduced first with the red packets and had had the longest exposure time with the students was also the highest performing skill.



4.d Measuring Results

**The Virginia SOL results came in at the end
of June in 2007.**

There was much to celebrate!

Four of the eight schools made accreditation in just 10 weeks. What would happen if we did this for a year?

4.d Sustaining Results

Because the solution was so successful in such a short time, it was decided to continue this model for the following school year.

Based on end of the year SOL test results, schools were selected to be focus schools for the 2007-08 school year.

They would receive continue support with new staff members and weak grade levels.

The team began the next school year with renewed intensity. More red packets were made in the summer. The spring SOL results were disaggregated and new focus skills would be identified.

4.d Sustaining Results

Other schools were added to the list as monitor schools.

- ◆ These schools would receive limited support, but could be brought in as a focus school if test results indicated a need.

All schools would be trained in the RED PACKET strategy model. These trainings would occur in the evenings and be similar to college courses with participants receiving all necessary support materials at the trainings.

The outcomes of this model had to be duplicated. The new “best practices” had to be shared. Every school could improve, especially with focused support.

4.d Sustaining Results

The Spring 2007 and Spring 2008 results show continuing and sustained progress for these once struggling schools.

The middle schools that had only slightly improved after ten weeks of support, made great gains at the end of the first full year of implementation.

Math in those middle schools improved by 20 to 50% in different grade levels. It was amazing...

5.a Selection of Team

Team members were selected using the following criteria:

- Knowledge of instructional practices and content (math and English)
- Knowledge of data and the interpretation of data
- Knowledge of federal and state practices concerning accreditation and annual yearly progress

This included: curriculum leaders, teacher specialists, data analysts and the director of instructional accountability

5.b Preparation of Team

- Anyone in the English or Mathematics department was a defacto member of the team
- Team members came to the team with a wealth of experience in instructional strategies and content knowledge
- Most were experts in co-teaching and had identified and implemented best practices in their content area
- What was new for the team was the depth of the data available for direction
- They learned “the process” and were able to focus their energy and skill base to very specific areas

The instructional staff in Hampton City Schools is a brilliant group of caring people. The model previous to this one had them running from school to school working on single situations. This model enabled them to think and work on a larger scale. Their excellent practices had to become a part of every schools day to day routines.

5.b Preparation of Team

Each team member received one month of formal and informal training on how to use the data process model used to determine the focus skills for the core areas

Team members received massive binders of data which was disaggregated to show various student population performance in each school

Each team member had to identify focus categories and skills for each of their schools using this data and the process they had learned from the data team members

Team members learned a new way of looking at data and they became very good at it.

5.c Contribution of Team Members

Team members met every Friday afternoon at 2PM.

This meeting lasted 2.5 hours each week. The following was discussed in detail at those meetings:

1. The progress of every focus school in each of the content areas
2. Successes and challenges with students, teachers and principals
3. Data review
4. Schedules for the following week
5. Concerns for the Director of Accountability to handle

These meetings were the lifeline for the team members. Members truly encouraged each other to “stick with it” and “keep going” every time they came to the table. Open and honest sharing became a wonderful time that they all looked forward to having with each other.

5.c Contribution of Team Members

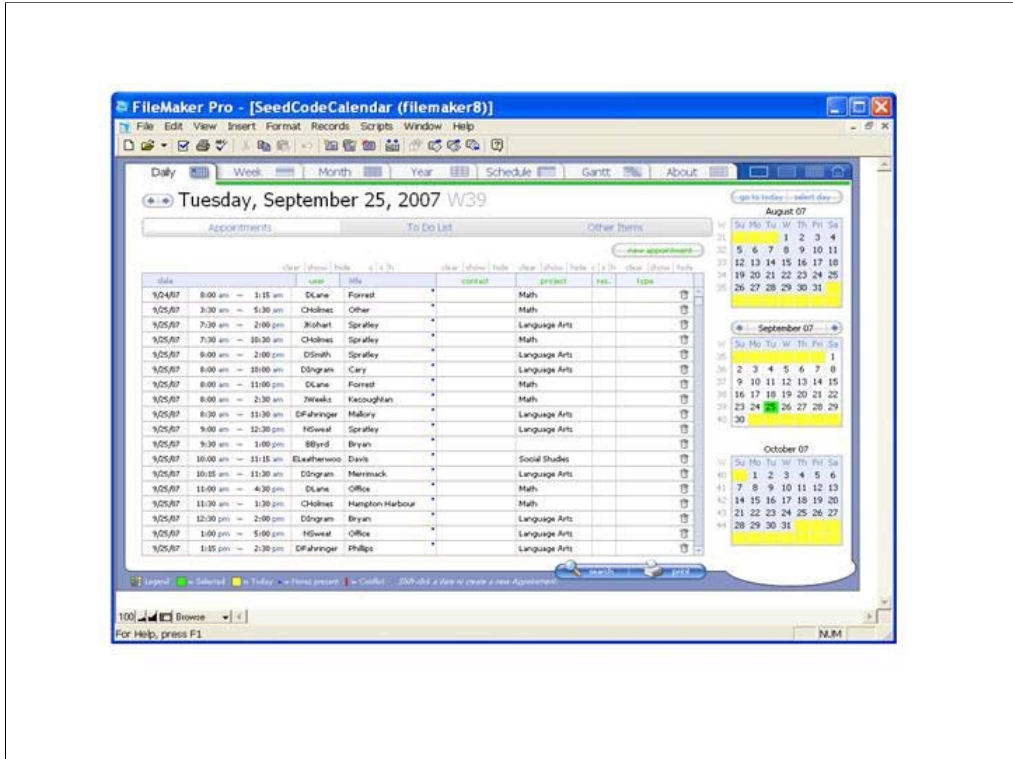
Team members were also responsible for keeping an electronic calendar with their locations and assignments for each day.

Schedules were updated frequently.

Every team member went beyond the call of duty to service all of the schools. There were many nights and long hours devoted to their success.

Self-monitoring was very appropriate for this conscientious team.

Using the electronic calendar, the teams showed all of their activities for the week. These were massive schedules with hundreds of different assignments.



This is a small example of a calendar page.

5.d Management of Team Performance

The team used the following data sources to monitor their progress

- Common assessments used by teachers at different school sites
- Benchmark assessment results
- Mid-nine week assessment results done by some schools
- Pre- and post-testing results used in intersession by year-round schools
- Virginia SOL assessment results

This is a list of the various assessment tools used by the team

5.d Management of Team Performance

Data Results:

- Third nine week benchmark results showed mixed outcomes.
- Some schools or grade levels improved by large margins and some did not.
- What did show improvement were skills or categories that were targeted by the team.
- There was also improvement in classrooms that embraced the small group instruction models.

One lesson learned: Whatever we focus on, gets better. How can we expand this focus to include more schools and grade levels?

6.a Results Achieved

Although there were many large gains for many schools, four of the eight schools did not reach full accreditation status after the first 10-week implementation.

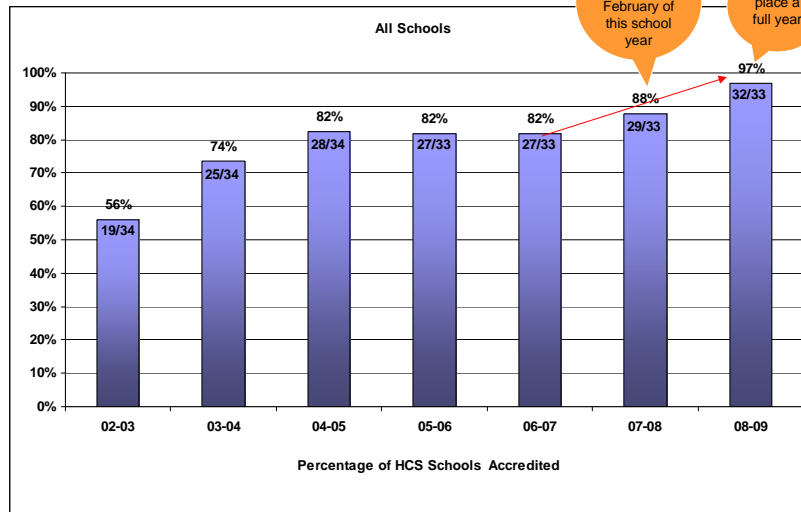
All of those schools saw gains, but not enough to reach accreditation.

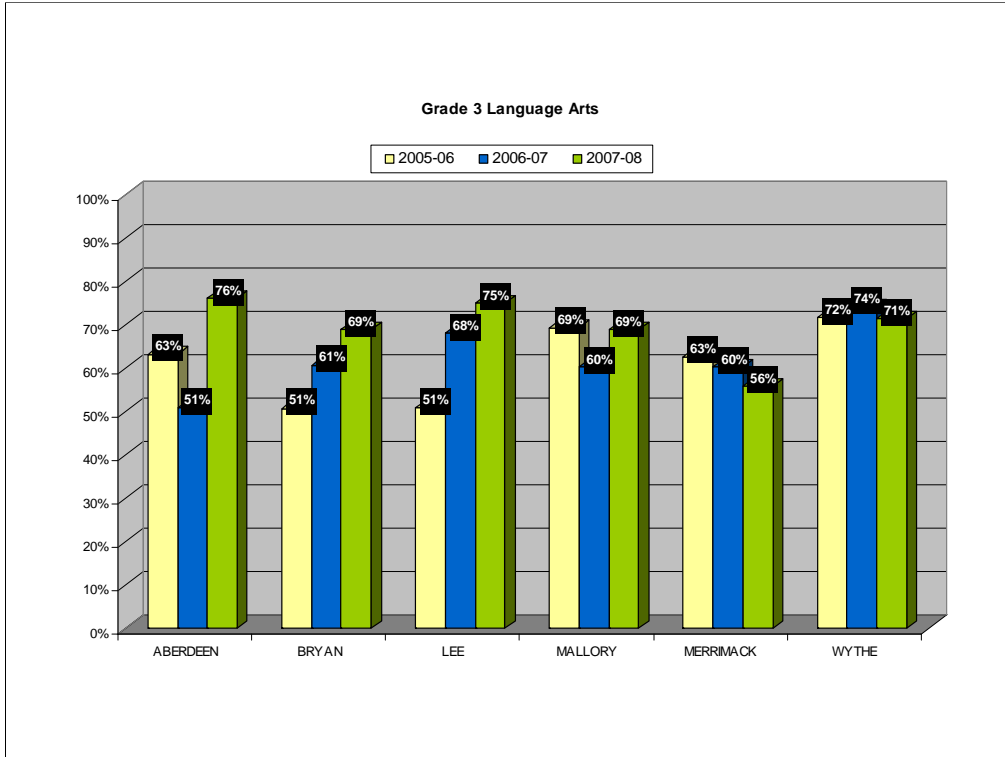
The following year (Spring 2008) after one year of full implementation, all but one of the eight schools met the requirements for full accreditation.

This truly shows the outcome of the project and its solution. We lost 100% by three students one question each.

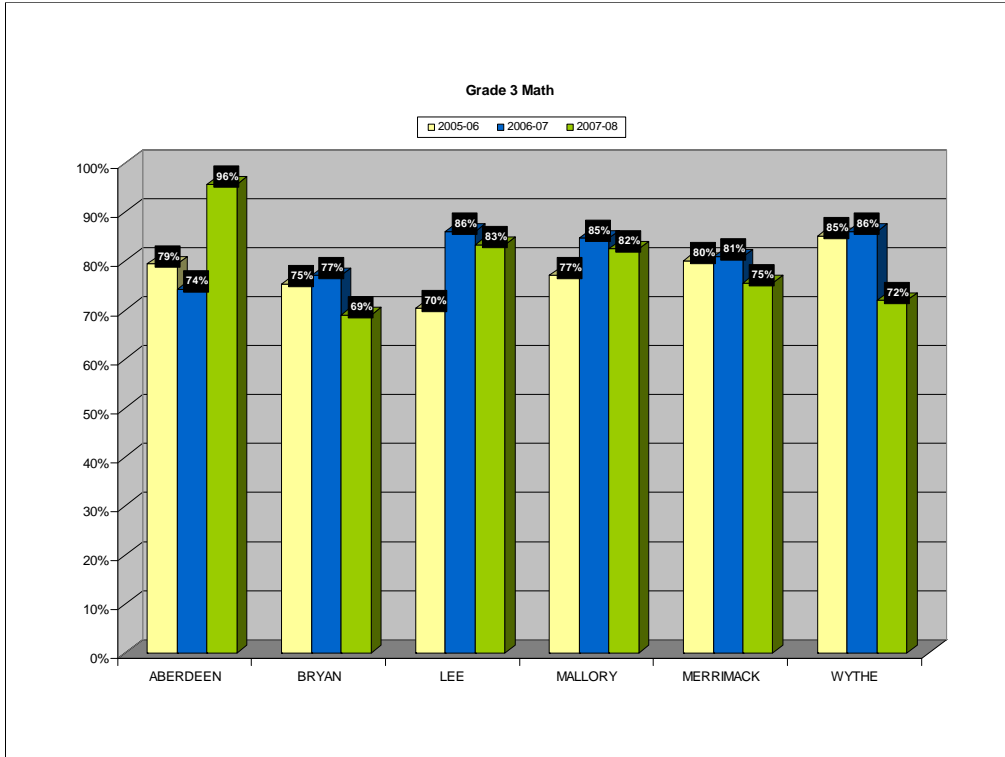
32/33 (97%) Fully Accredited

- ◆ 22/23 (96%) elementary schools
- ◆ 6/6 (100%) middle schools
- ◆ 4/4 (100%) high schools

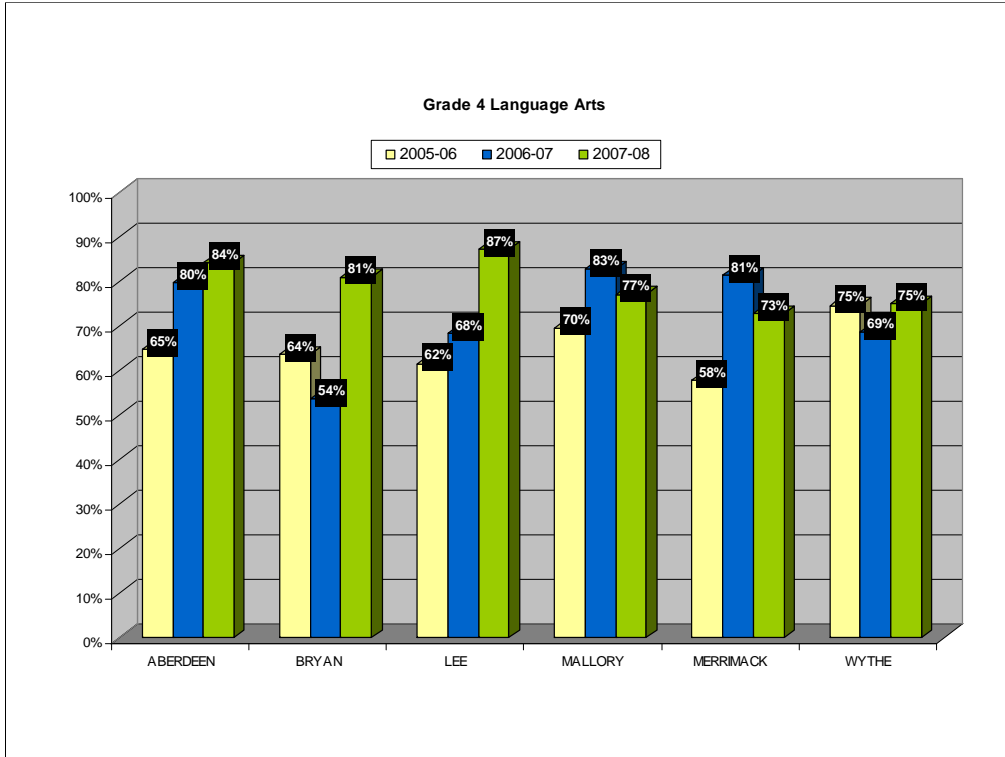




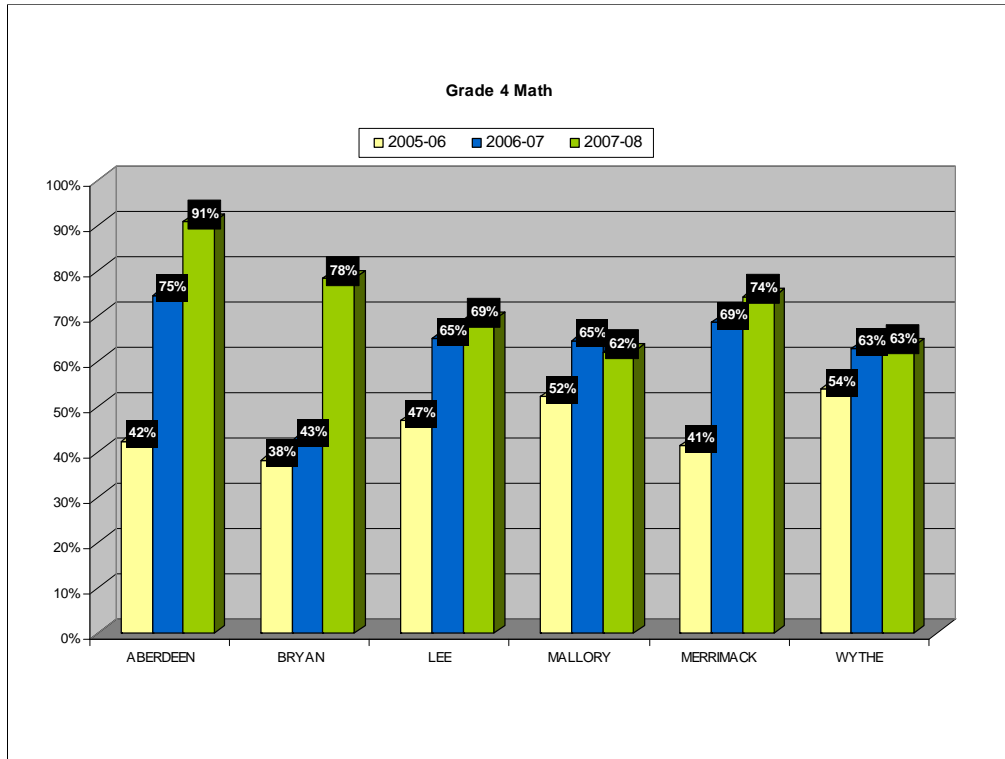
3rd grade language arts; Merrimack was dropped from the focus schools because of their overall performance in Spring 2007. However, as you can see, we are adding them back to the focus list this year.



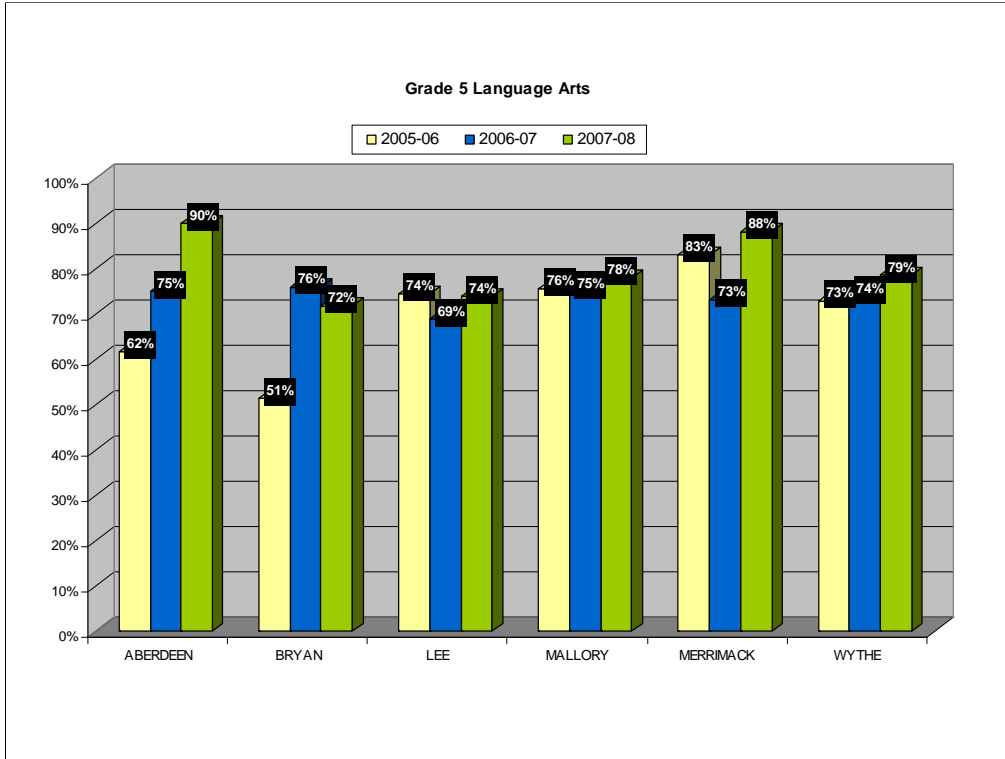
Third grade math. There are a lot of great stories here...



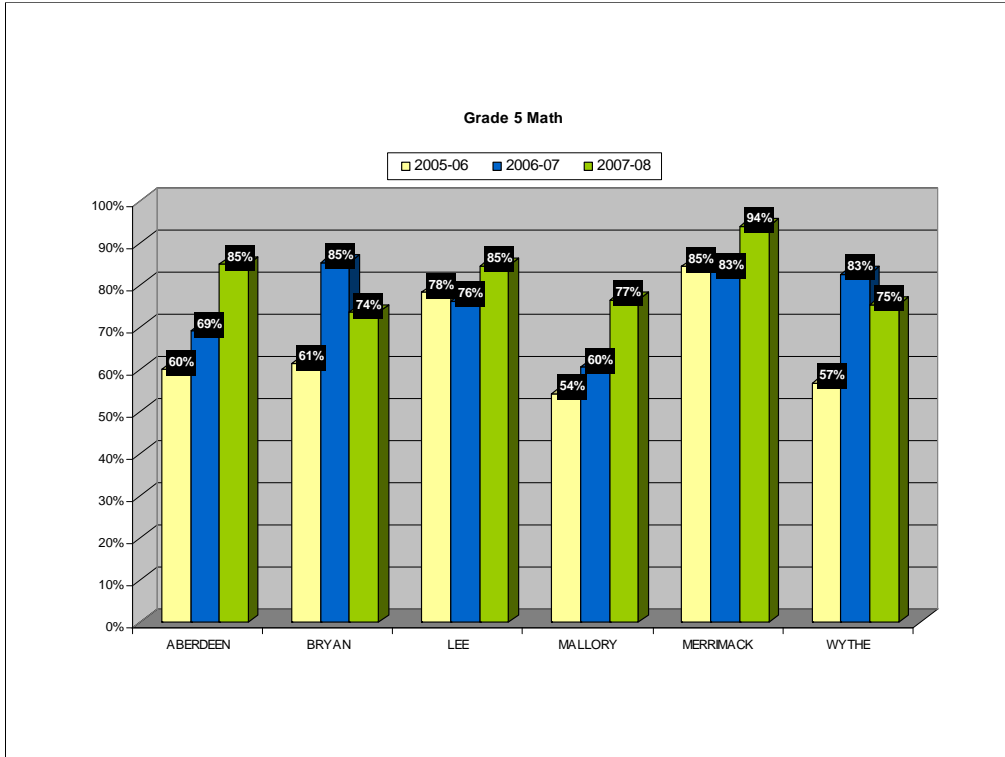
4th grade reading: very improved



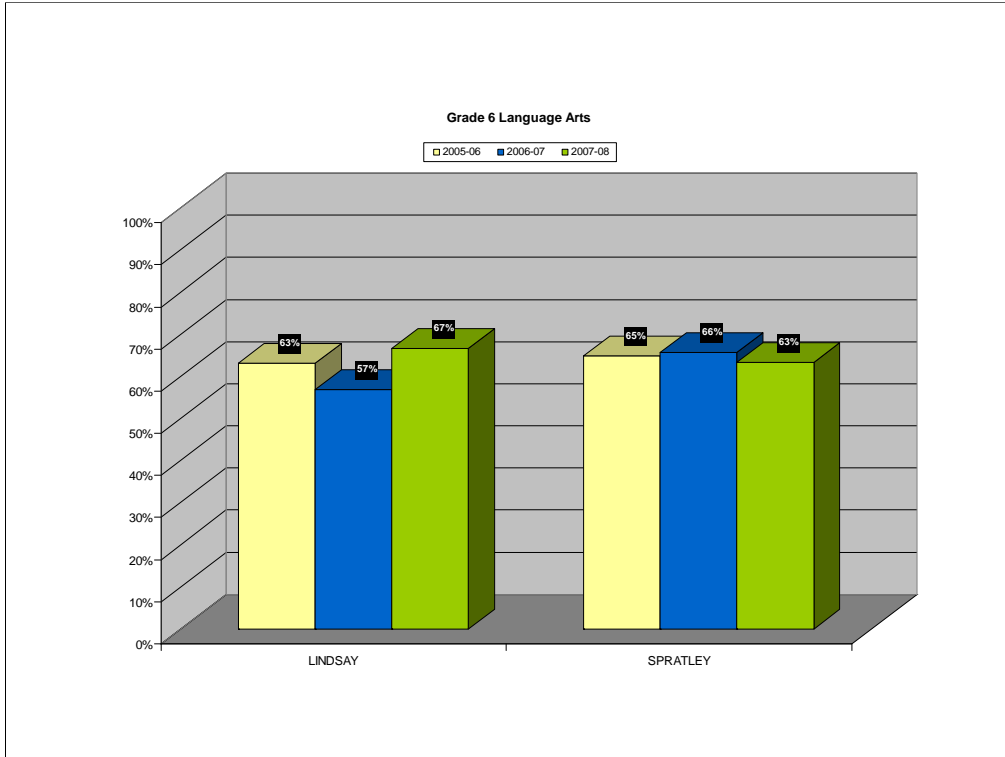
4th grade math: This is a new test as of 2006 and the gains are quite significant



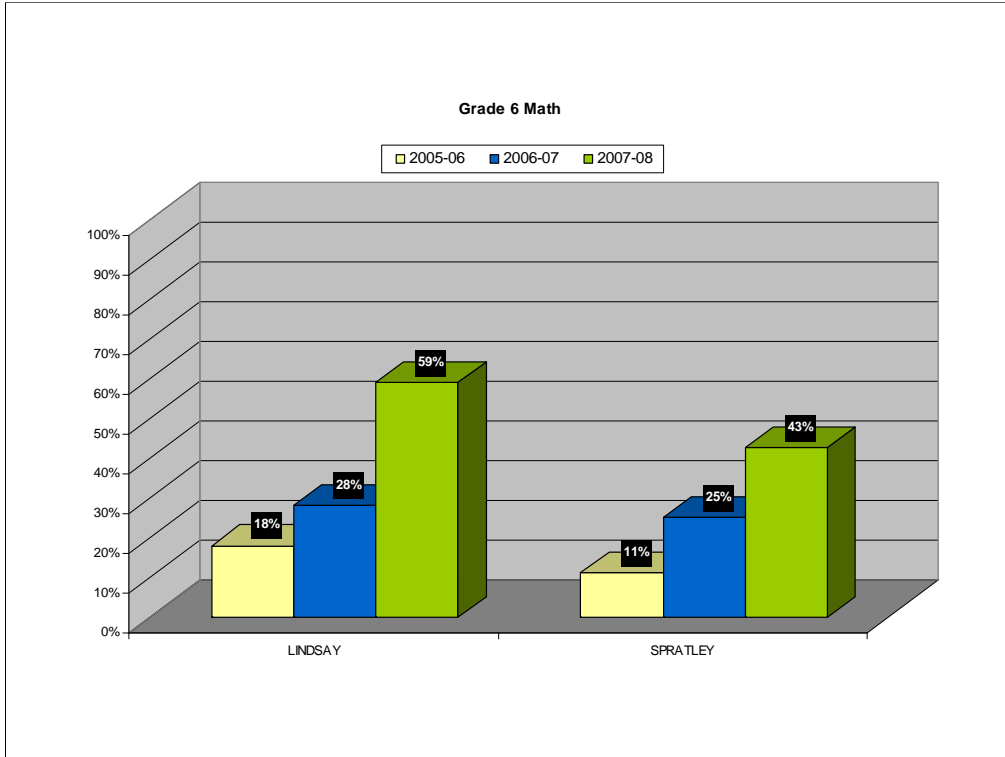
5th grade reading A continually strong performance here



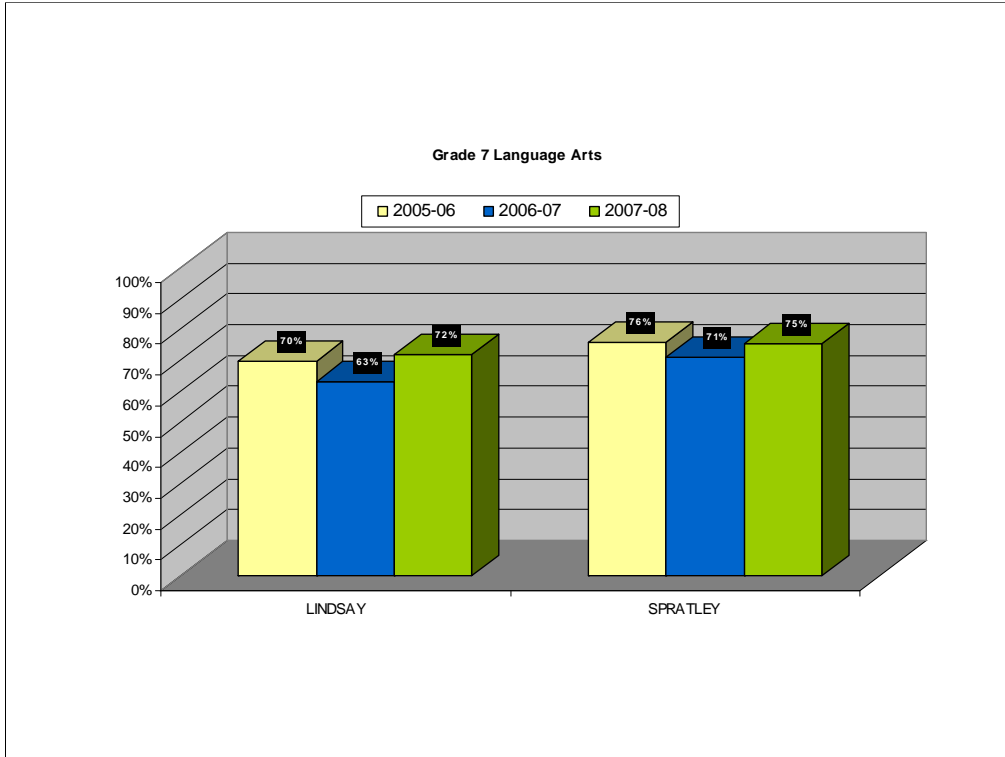
5th grade math... Merrimack, a great example of a great team using all of the best practices in math



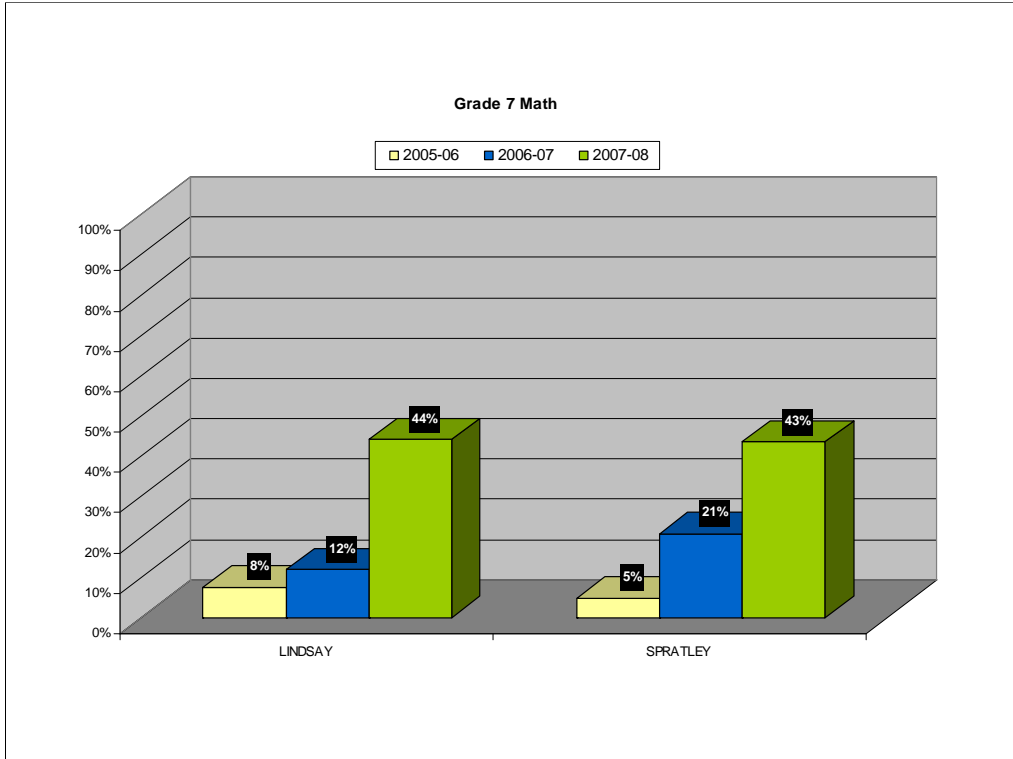
English: reading performance in grade 6



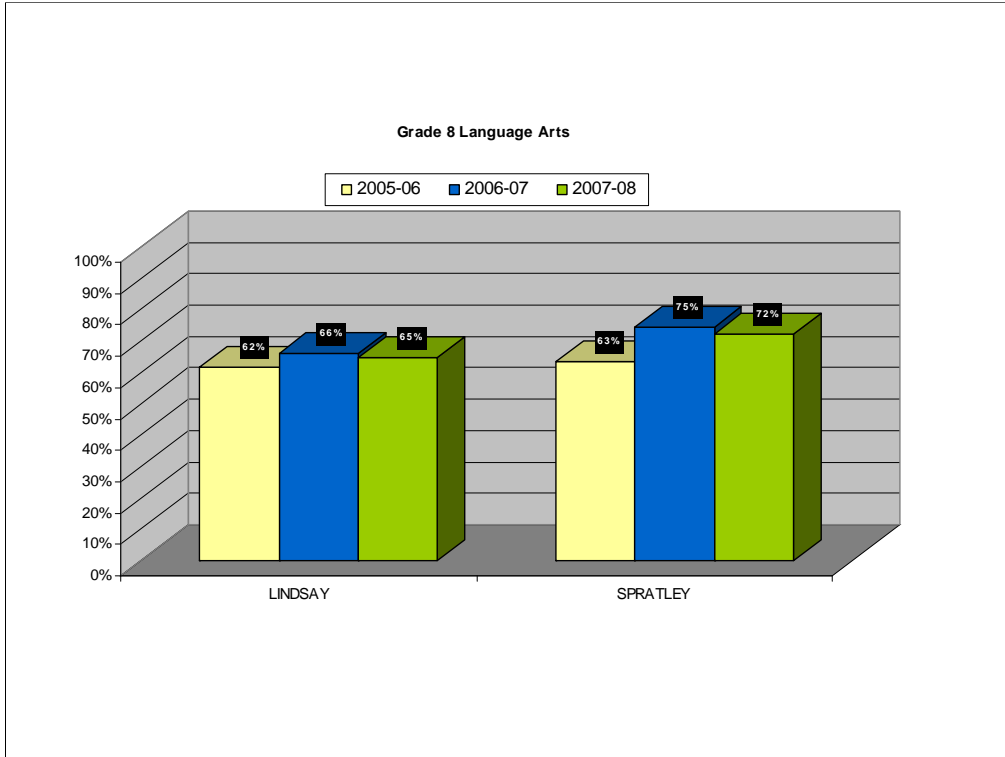
6th grade math is going up



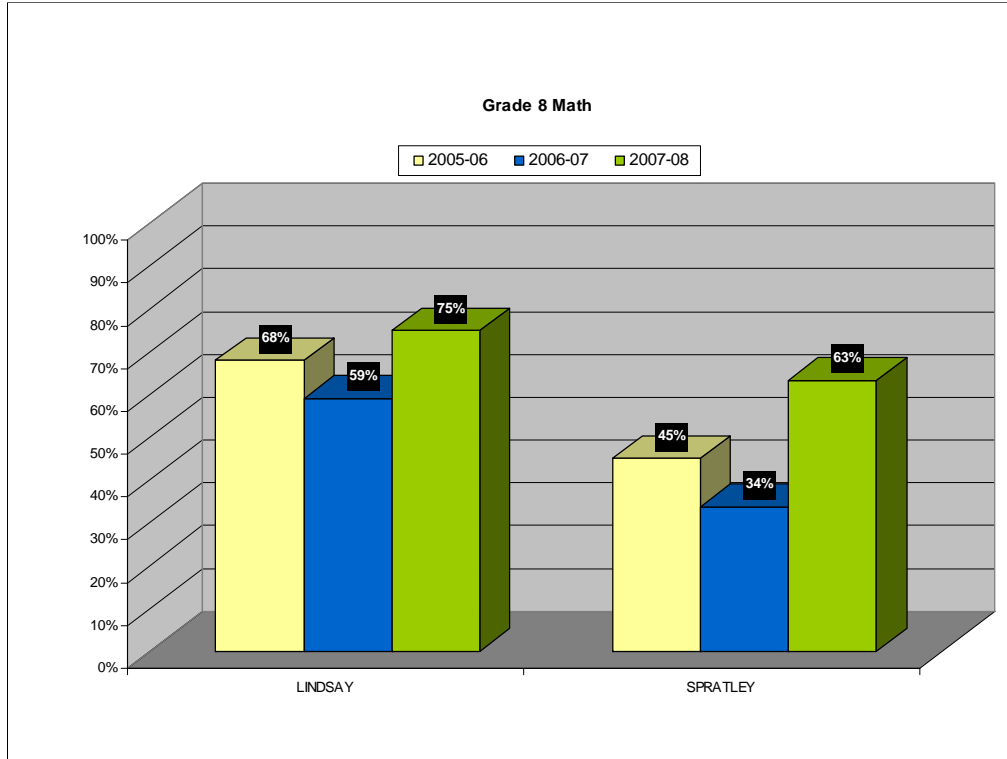
7th grade reading is even higher when the scores are adjusted by adding in recovery scores. This is a process where the state gives us a bonus for every student who turns a failure from the previous year into a passing score for this year. Lindsay is at 80% passing in 2008



7th grade math: this shows steady increases but the outcomes are still too low. Recovery scores put both of these much higher.



8th grade English continues to hold steady. 8th grade writing scores improved this year which helped both of these schools



Big gains for 8th grade math. Using the process, the algebra strand was targeted all year. This category has 16 questions. Failing students at both schools were not even getting 8 correct out of 16. Focusing on improving this category yielded a great outcome. The recovery gains in this grade level were enormous.

6.a Results Achieved

At Lindsay and Spratley Middle school, hundreds of students became successes in the first full year of the model.

Students who turn from failure to success are awarded bonus points in the overall data results.

This pushed their final scores over the 70% passing mark in both English and mathematics.

For example, as a school Spratley gained 149 bonus scores for successfully remediating students in mathematics



6.b Results Impact

Hampton City Schools
Strategic Goal #1:

Maximize EVERY Child's Learning

1.2 100% of schools will meet or exceed all state accountability benchmarks

After 10 weeks of the SAFT intervention model, our accreditation rate jumped from a stagnant 82% to 88%. After a year of implementation, it grew to 97%.

We came within 3 students one question each of making 100% accreditation.



6.c Results Sharing

As soon as preliminary results were calculated, the Superintendent of Schools notified every Hampton home via an audio messaging system.

Announcements were sent out to all employees via email.

The Hampton City Schools website created a front page display announcing the results.

A live broadcast of the monthly school board meeting announced the results in detail.

We have an audio clip we will add here if we are chosen to come to Nevada.



6.c Results Sharing: Website

PRELIMINARY DATA SHOWS 100% ACCREDITATION FOR HAMPTON SCHOOLS

According to preliminary accreditation data, it is projected that for the first time ever, 100% of Hampton's 33 schools have met accreditation status! Hampton School Board Chairman Fred Brewer stated that the credit must go to "the hard work of our partners both internally and externally, who believed in Hampton City Schools."

This appears on the front page of our web site: www.sbo.hampton.k12.va.us



6.c Results Sharing: Website

PRELIMINARY DATA SHOWS 100% ACCREDITATION FOR HAMPTON SCHOOLS

All of Hampton's 23 elementary schools, six middle schools, and four high schools are projected to be accredited for school year 2008-2009. This represents a jump from 88% of schools accredited the previous school year.

Notable accreditation accomplishments include:

- * *147 perfect scores in 4th grade reading*
- * *An overall gain of 28% in 7th grade math (from 43%-71%)*
- * *Above 90% passing English at all four high schools*

This appears on the front page of our web site: www.sbo.hampton.k12.va.us



6.c Results Sharing: Website

PRELIMINARY DATA SHOWS 100% ACCREDITATION FOR HAMPTON SCHOOLS

Hampton Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Patrick Russo, said, "the dedication and commitment by everyone in the division is to be applauded, and their efforts have certainly been rewarded."

This appears on the front page of our web site: www.sbo.hampton.k12.va.us

6.c Results Sharing: Newspaper

Schools meet state goals on SOL tests

**Tutors and extra time help Hampton students
improve scores.**

By Cathy Grimes • July 3, 2008



**HAMPTON - For the first time since students began
taking state Standards of Learning tests, all 33 of
Hampton's elementary, middle, and high schools
have met *Virginia's* accreditation achievement
goals.**

This is an excerpt from our local newspaper: The Daily Press www.dailypress.com

6.c Results Sharing

**Run the race...
WIN the prize!**



This was our personal motto and the message that was communicated to the stakeholders over and over again.