

CASE STUDY

# Third-Grade Students Surpass State Scores on Illinois Standards Achievement Test

*Communication Enhanced Between Administration, Staff, and Students*

Source: Pamela K. Preston, principal, Lewis School

Research conducted during the 2001–2002 school year.

## Introduction

The implementation of Accelerated Reader (AR) has enhanced communication between staff and students, increased test scores, and helped to create a more positive learning atmosphere at Lewis School. Second-grade Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS)<sup>1</sup> scores increased six percentile points (from 63 to 69) between 1997–1998 and 2000–2001, while Lewis School third-grade Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT)<sup>2</sup> scores surpassed those of the state during the 2000–2001 school year.

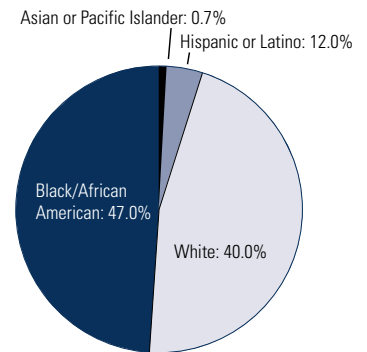
## School Profile

Lewis School  
 Students: 276, Grades 2–3  
 Carbondale, Ill.

## Demographics

Limited English proficiency: 9%  
 Free or reduced lunch: 78.5%

## Race/Ethnicity

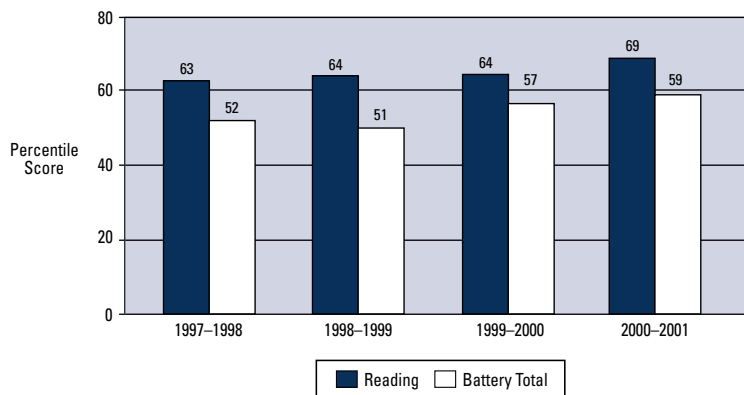


## Educator Background

**Pamela K. Preston**, an educator for 28 years, has been principal at Lewis School since 1999. She received a bachelor's degree in Elementary Education from St. Mary of the Plains College and a master's degree in Educational Administration from Kansas State University. During the 1999–2000 school year, Preston was principal over two schools, Parrish Elementary (a first-grade feeder school for Lewis School) and Lewis School. Both schools achieved Model School Certification. Lewis was the first school in Illinois to achieve Master School Certification.

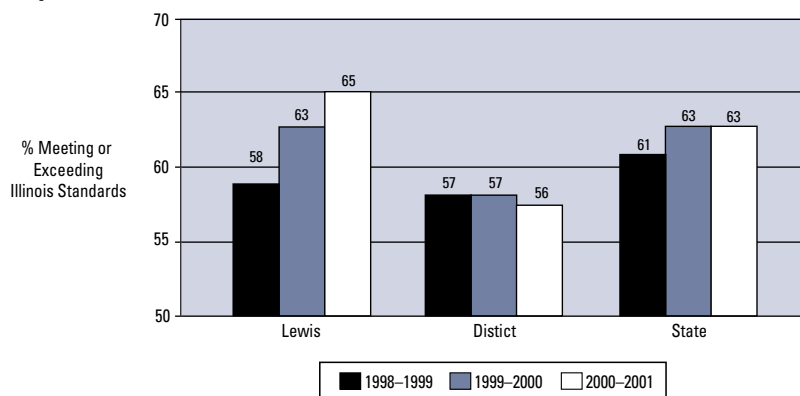
Graph 1:

Second-Grade Students Reading and Battery Total Percentile Score on ITBS



Graph 2:

Third-Grade Students Meeting or Exceeding Standards on Overall ISAT



(more information on back)

## Study Description

During the 1996–1997 school year, the Carbondale School District, including Lewis School, piloted Accelerated Reader—a computerized, progress-monitoring system—in every grade. The following year, the research-based best classroom practices were fully implemented districtwide.

Lewis School began sending teachers to AR professional development seminars in 1997, and since then have continued to train teachers, with most having attended Renaissance Learning’s advanced seminar, as well as the past three National Renaissance Conferences.

Lewis School incorporates many of Renaissance recommended best practices including:

- Providing 60 minutes of Reading To, With, and Independently (TWI) reading practice time, within each student’s zone of proximal development (ZPD).<sup>3</sup>
- Utilizing Status of the Class, an informal assessment where the teacher conducts a brief, daily conference with each student to monitor reading progress and offer support and praise.
- Implementing schoolwide and individual goal setting.
- Incorporating power lessons, 10- to 15-minute skill lessons that teach a single objective and are integrated into individual reading work.
- Using the Duolog Reading<sup>4</sup> technique.

Furthermore, every Friday teachers turn in weekly diagnostic reports, facilitating efficient communication with the principal, Pamela Preston. Preston cites this increase in communication as a major benefit of Accelerated Reader. She feels the information taken from Accelerated Reader reports and shared between staff is invaluable at parent conferences and for identifying special-needs staffing. Students are also encouraged to bring their Diagnostic Reports to Preston, allowing her to have one-on-one time with every student.

## Results

Data from three sources were analyzed to examine the impact of Accelerated Reader and best practices on student reading achievement.

STAR Reading results from the first semester of the 2001–2002 school year show percentile increases of 17, from 44 to 61, for second-grade students. STAR Reading is a reliable and valid, computer-adaptive assessment of general reading achievement. Third-grade students show a percentile increase of 10, from 43 to 53, for the same time period.

ITBS and ISAT results also show increases in reading achievement at Lewis School. Second-grade students take the ITBS each spring. Test results demonstrate that reading scores increased six percentiles between the 1997–1998 and 2000–2001 school years. Battery totals increased seven percentiles during this same time period. (See Graph 1.) Graph 2 shows the ISAT growth of Lewis School third-grade students compared to district and state third-grade students between 1998–1999 and 2000–2001. Lewis School experienced a seven percentage point increase in the number of students meeting or exceeding Illinois standards. During the same period the percentage of students meeting standards grew by only two points in the state, and declined by one point in the district.

Since 1998, nearly every educator at Lewis has achieved Renaissance certification<sup>5</sup>, with many certifying more than once. In 2000 Lewis certified as a Model School in Reading, and in 2001 as a Master School in Reading.

## Conclusion

Educators, administrators, and students at Lewis School recognize the importance of reading. Through the successful implementation of Accelerated Reader, Lewis School has experienced enhanced communication between staff and students, increased test scores, and a more positive learning atmosphere.

<sup>1</sup>Riverside Publishing. (n.d.). *Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS)*. Itasca, IL: Riverside Publishing.

<sup>2</sup>Illinois State Board of Education. (n.d.). *Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT)*. Springfield, IL: Illinois State Board of Education, Student Assessment Division.

<sup>3</sup>The zone of proximal development (ZPD) is a student’s appropriate reading range. Reading within the proper ZPD allows a student to be challenged without becoming frustrated, and therefore leads to optimum reading growth.

<sup>4</sup>Duolog Reading is a structured tutoring technique that helps struggling readers develop reading skills and helps independent readers read more difficult text. Tutors work one-on-one with students and are able to provide timely assistance to students.

<sup>5</sup>Renaissance Certification is a professional recognition program for educators implementing Accelerated Reader and/or Accelerated Math according to Renaissance Learning’s research-based best practices.



*For more information, or for additional copies of this report, contact:*

Educational Research Department  
PO Box 8036 • Wisconsin Rapids, WI 54495-8036  
(800) 656-6740 • [www.renlearn.com](http://www.renlearn.com)