

# SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

## CASE STUDY

### Sixth-Grade ITBS Reading Scores Increase 20 Percentage Points

#### One-year Growth Surpasses District Gains

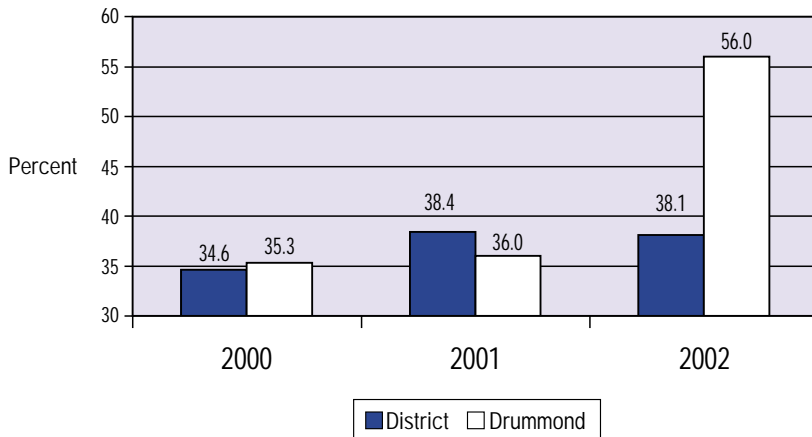
Source: Marcy LeMaster, teacher, Drummond Elementary School

Research conducted during the 2001–2002 school year, report submitted in 2002.

#### Introduction

Drummond Elementary School is an inner-city, Title I school with a predominantly Hispanic student body. After implementing Reading Renaissance® for one year, sixth-grade students at Drummond achieved major gains in their Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) Reading scores—the number of students scoring at or above national norms increased 20 percentage points.

Percentage of Sixth-Grade Students Scoring At or Above National Norms on the ITBS Increases



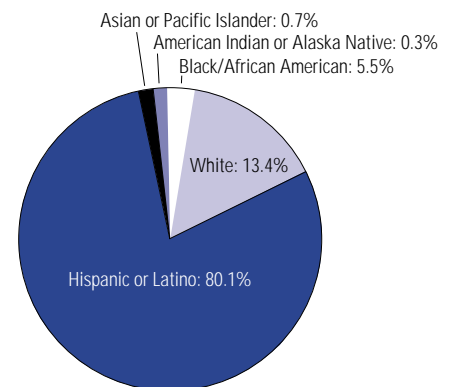
#### School Profile

Drummond Elementary School  
Students: 291, Grades: Pre-K–8  
Chicago, Ill.

#### Demographics:

Urban  
Inner-city, Title I  
Mobility: 30.8%  
Limited English proficiency: 25.4%  
Socioeconomic status: 90.7% low income

#### Race/Ethnicity:



#### Educator Background

**Marcy LeMaster** has been a reading/language arts educator in the Chicago Public inner-city schools for 17 years, teaching mainly sixth through eighth grade. While serving as a reading coordinator, she discovered Accelerated Reader. Initially, LeMaster used the software with small groups of students. The success of the program with these kids encouraged her to attend a 601: *Advanced Reading Renaissance* seminar, where she learned the techniques to implement the program in a full class.

(more information on back)

## Study Description

Drummond Elementary School began using Accelerated Reader® reading management software in 1998. In 2001, the reading resource teacher moved into a regular language arts classroom so she could implement Reading Renaissance techniques that she learned at the *601: Advanced Reading Renaissance* seminar.

For Drummond's sixth grade, the Chicago Public Schools system's mandated two-hour Language Arts instruction block was split. Students spent one hour every day reading books in their zone of proximal development<sup>1</sup> and taking Accelerated Reader quizzes. Students met regularly with their teacher to set individual goals for the marking period. The teacher took Status of the Class<sup>2</sup> and reading logs were reviewed daily to monitor and guide students' reading progress. Drummond Elementary's Reading Renaissance program included several motivational aspects designed to foster an atmosphere of support and cooperation. Every Friday the class participated in a ceremony to celebrate and recognize students who made progress toward their goals and those who had certified at one of the reading certification levels. Progress was charted visually on a "Point Board" and on a "Percent To Go Board" so students had daily reminders of their success. Additionally, students were organized into non-competitive teams that worked to encourage each other toward reaching their goals.

Students spread their enthusiasm for reading to their families, creating a culture of reading throughout the community. Students frequently requested a second copy of a book or asked to keep a book for an extra week so that their parents could read it. The culture of reading created unique opportunities for parents to discuss difficult issues with their teens.

## Results

Drummond's sixth-grade class made tremendous gains in reading ability as measured by the ITBS<sup>3</sup>. The number of students reading at or above national norms increased by 20 percentage points from 36% in 2001 to 56% in 2002—far surpassing the average growth in the district (see graph on reverse side). The principal highlighted the accomplishments of the students in a school assembly and in a letter sent to parents and community members.

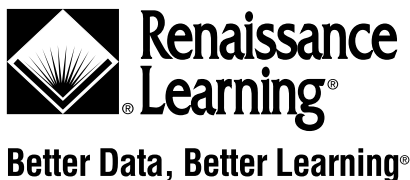
## Conclusion

The implementation of Reading Renaissance had a significant impact on learning at Drummond. After just one year, sixth-grade achievement on the ITBS surpassed the average scores of the district. In addition, Reading Renaissance helped Drummond create a culture of reading that extended to the students' families and homes.

<sup>1</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>2</sup>Status of the Class is an informal assessment that allows teachers to touch base with every student on a daily basis.

<sup>3</sup>Riverside Publishing. *Iowa Test of Basic Skills*. Itasca, IL.: Riverside Publishing, n.d.



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