

CASE STUDY

Test Scores on the Rise and Library Growth Skyrocketing at Indiana Elementary School

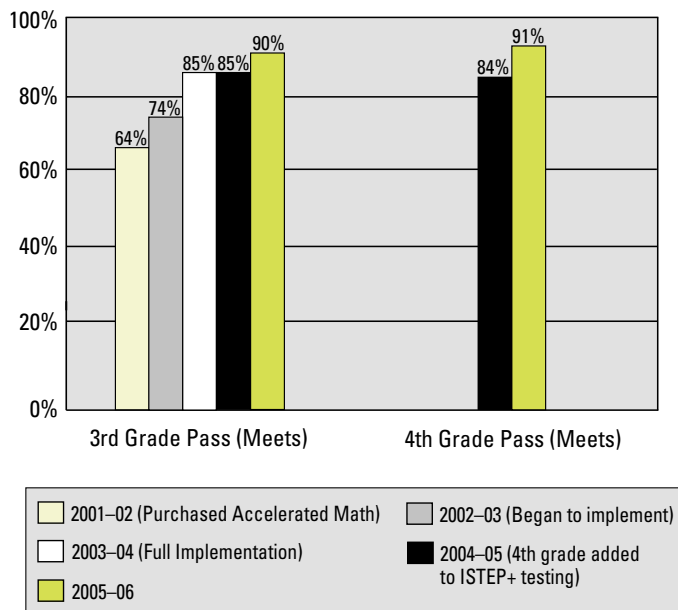
Sources: Lance Richards, principal; Mischelle Ferrell, teacher; Kathy Crimans, librarian

Introduction

“Accelerated Math allows for individual math instruction and a self-paced approach to learning. Accelerated Reader allows us to monitor not only the comprehension of books read but also the independent reading levels of books. These tools coupled with the STAR assessments allow us to better meet the needs of all our students.”

Lance Richards, principal at Morgan Elementary, is pleased with the growth seen in student scores on the Indiana Statewide Testing for Educational Progress (ISTEP+)¹ since implementing Accelerated Math™, MathFacts in a Flash™, and Accelerated Reader™ software at the school. Since that time, the percent of students meeting Indiana Academic Standards in both math and reading has been on the rise (see Graphs 1 and 2) and library circulation has grown astronomically (see Graph 3).

Graph 1: Percent of Students Meeting Indiana Academic Standards in Math on the ISTEP+



“Accelerated Math allows for individual math instruction and a self-paced approach to learning.”

Educator Background

Lance Richards has been the principal of Morgan Elementary for 8 years. Prior to becoming principal, Richards taught language arts for 9 years.

A second grade teacher, **Mischelle Ferrell** has been teaching at Morgan Elementary for 20 years.

Kathy Crimans has served as librarian at Morgan Elementary for 20 years.

School Awards

In 2006, Morgan Elementary received a No Child Left Behind National Blue Ribbon Award.

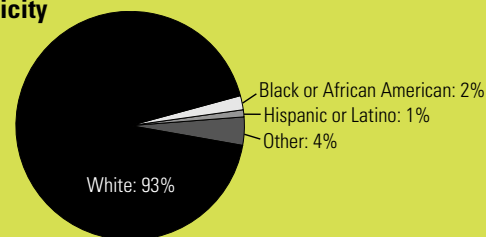
School Profile

Morgan Elementary
Students: 514, Grades: K-5
Palmyra, Indiana

Demographics

Rural
Title I
Free or reduced lunch: 46%
Mobility: 16%

Race/Ethnicity



Study Description

At Morgan Elementary, the well being of children is the number one priority. As a result, many programs have been developed to address each child's educational, social, and emotional needs. For example, because nearly half of the student population, or 46%, participate in the free and reduced lunch program, a breakfast program has been set up at the school. Academic tools, like Renaissance Learning's educational and progress-monitoring software, have also been implemented to better serve all students.

Morgan Elementary first purchased Accelerated Math as part of an academic intervention during the 2001–2002 school year. After attending Renaissance Learning's training in research-based best classroom practices² for this tool, the software was fully implemented in all classrooms, grades 2–5, within 2 years. This progress-monitoring system helps the school's educators manage day-to-day tasks by producing daily, personalized math practice for students, scoring work, and reporting results immediately.

Mischelle Ferrell was one of the first teachers in the building to use Accelerated Math. She discovered the software when she served as mathematics curriculum coordinator and felt that it was a tool the school could use to enhance and supplement their core math program.

Since then, math scores at Morgan Elementary have improved and Ferrell has been involved with training new staff members, mentoring teachers and teaching assistants that use Accelerated Math, and hosting visitors from the community, district, and neighboring school systems that come to observe this tool at work in her classroom.

MathFacts in a Flash was implemented at the school on the same time frame as Accelerated Math to provide students in grades 1 and 2 with practice on basic math skills such as addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, squares, and fraction/decimal conversion.

Accelerated Reader has been in use at Morgan Elementary since 1999, but was fully implemented schoolwide in fall of 2001. This computerized, progress-monitoring tool provides

feedback that motivates students and helps educators carefully monitor and guide independent reading.

“Our students are very involved in reading. Students ask to read any free moment of the day. We cannot keep the books shelved in the library,” Ferrell notes.

“Our students love learning and I feel that your programs have really helped foster that attitude throughout our building.”

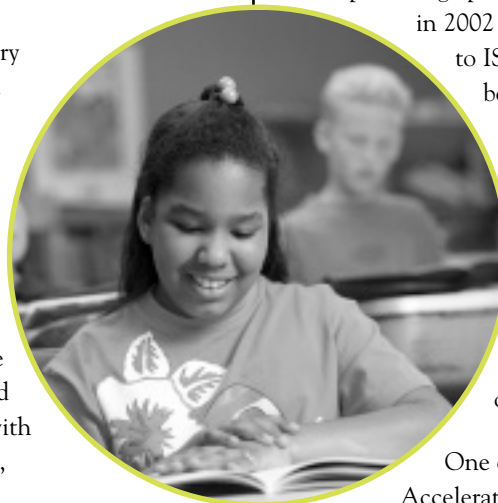
Each day, educators at Morgan Elementary use information about their students' progress provided by Accelerated Math, MathFacts in a Flash, and Accelerated Reader to plan large and small group lessons, as they implement these tools according to Renaissance Learning's recommendations. Teachers take daily Status of the Class³ and use individual TOPS reports⁴ to connect with students in the classroom, and use Parent Reports to explain students' development and set goals during parent–teacher conferences. Renaissance Learning's standardized STAR Reading and STAR Math assessments are administered throughout the year to measure growth and document overall development.

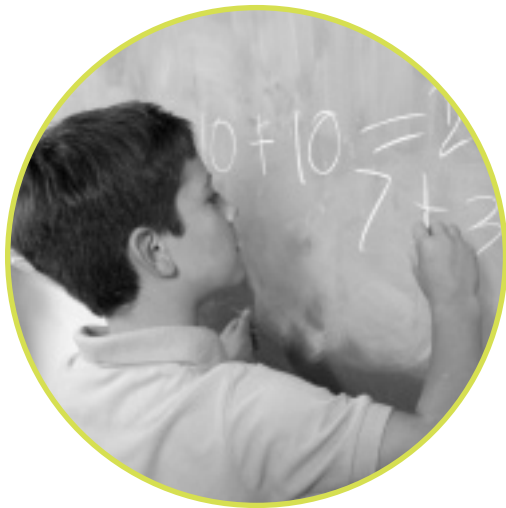
Results

After implementing Accelerated Math and MathFacts in a Flash in 2001, third-grade math scores have grown 26 percentage points from 64% of students meeting standards in 2002 to 90% in 2006. Fourth graders were added to ISTEP+ testing in 2005 and have seen a 7% boost from 84% of students *passing* in 2005 to 91% in 2006.

Accelerated Reader has had a similar effect. Third-grade scores in reading have jumped from 62% in 2002 to 91% in 2006, a 29 percentage point increase, and fourth graders scores improved 2 percentage points in their first two years of testing, from 2005 to 2006.

One of Renaissance Learning's best practices for Accelerated Reader is that teachers ensure students have an appropriate amount of time for teacher-guided, independent reading of self-selected books. Incredible growth in library circulation in the years since Accelerated Reader was implemented at Morgan Elementary underscores the impact of this recommendation. Librarian Kathy Crimans reports a





phenomenal over-600% increase in library numbers from 31,770 books checked out during the 2003 school year to 243,871 books in circulation during 2005–2006.

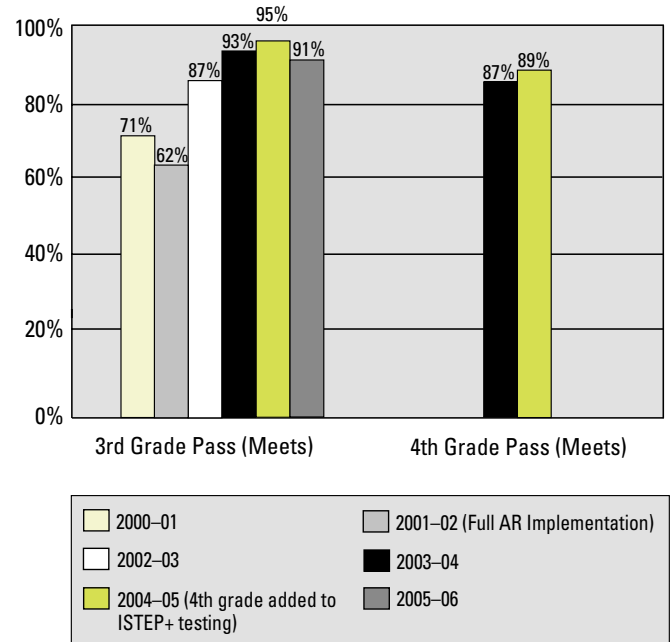
What's more, during this time frame, Morgan Elementary has seen little difference in performance between low and high Socio-Economic Status (SES) groups on the ISTEP+. In 2003, 89% of the free/reduced lunch population received passing scores versus 100% of paid lunch students. For math, the inverse was true—the free/reduced lunch population outpaced the paid lunch students by achieving 89% passing as compared to that group's 84%.

Conclusion

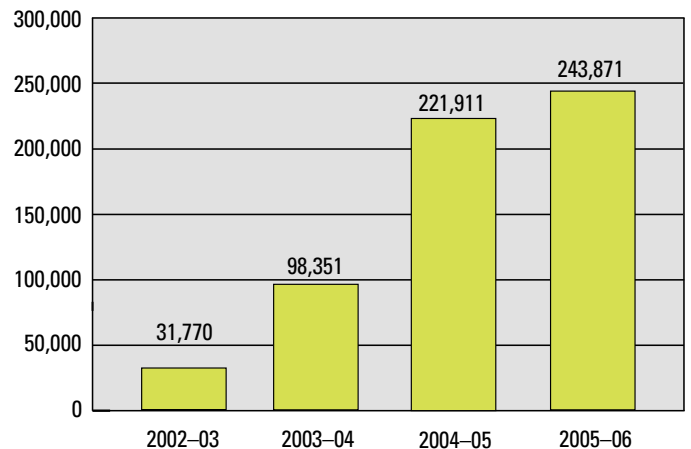
All of the efforts of the students, parents, and staff at Morgan Elementary paid off in a big way in 2006 when the school was named a No Child Left Behind Blue Ribbon School by the U.S. Department of Education.

According to Richards and Ferrell, the educators at this school attribute this success, in part, to tools such as Renaissance Learning's progress-monitoring software and assessments. "Our students love learning and I feel that your programs have really helped foster that attitude throughout our building."

Graph 2: Percent of Students Meeting Indiana Academic Standards in Reading on the ISTEP+



Graph 3: Morgan Elementary Library Circulation Growth



(more information on back)

¹State of Indiana Department of Education. (2000). *Indiana Statewide Testing for Educational Progress (ISTEP+)*. Monterey, CA: CTB/McGraw-Hill.

²Through professional development opportunities, Renaissance Learning provides educators research-based recommendations for classroom implementation shown to improve student learning.

³Using Accelerated Reader, Status of the Class is an informal assessment where teachers have brief, daily conferences with students to monitor and guide reading practice and offer support and praise. Accelerated Math includes a Status of the Class Report that provides teachers information about specific students needing intervention and the particular objectives with which they are struggling.

⁴TOPS reports print automatically after a quiz is taken in Accelerated Reader and after each practice, exercise, and test students scan into the Accelerated Math software to provide immediate feedback about that activity as well as cumulative information. Teachers use TOPS reports to monitor progress and make data-driven decisions, while students are motivated by immediate feedback and can take them home to share with parents and others.



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

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