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LEARNING

District: Carlton Innovation School—Salem, Massachusetts

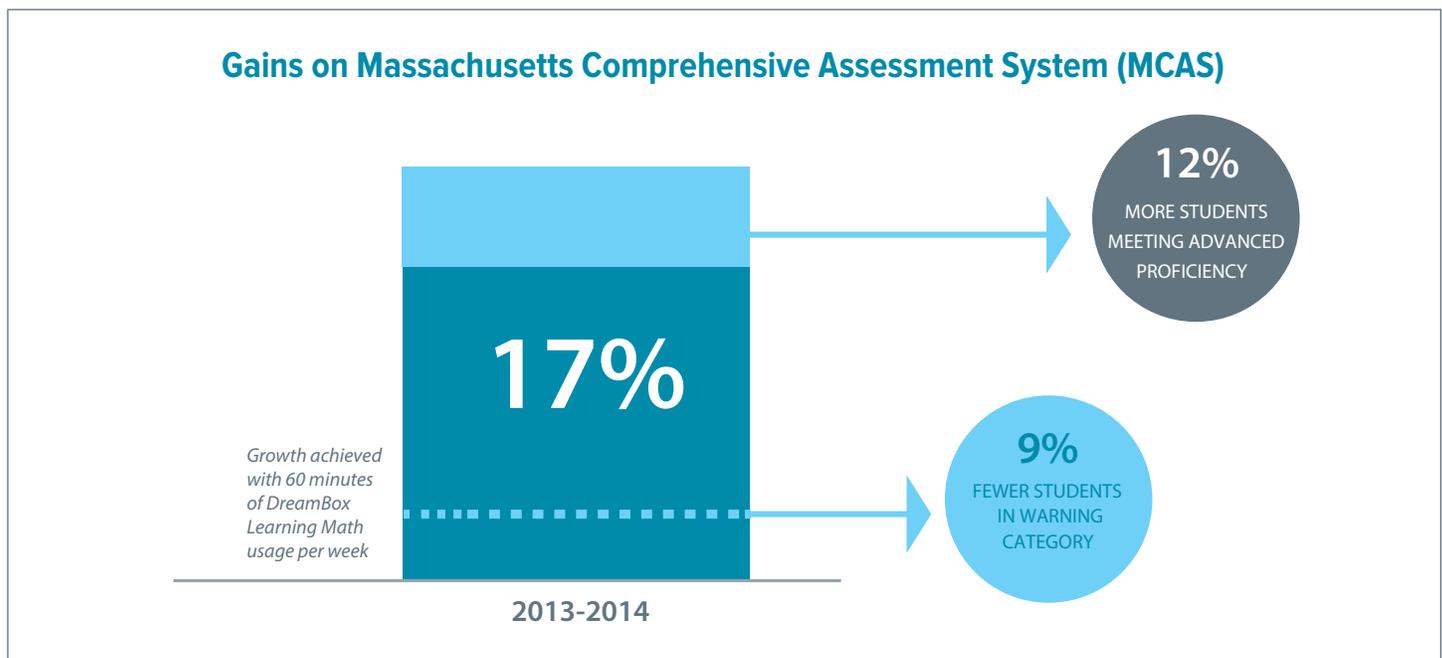# 17% Increase in Math Proficiency

Personalized learning fueled by continuous formative assessment

RESULTS AT A GLANCE

Between the 2013 and 2014 Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) testing period, Carlton enjoyed an increase of 17 percent in math proficiency school-wide. Twelve percent more students are now considered "advanced" under their measurement while 9 percent moved out of the "warning" category.

"I don't know what we'd do without DreamBox. It fills our unique need better than anything else."

—Teegan von Burn,
Assistant Principal
Carlton Innovation School

Gains on Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS)

17%

Growth achieved with 60 minutes of DreamBox Learning Math usage per week

2013-2014

12% MORE STUDENTS MEETING ADVANCED PROFICIENCY

9% FEWER STUDENTS IN WARNING CATEGORY

CHALLENGE

Meeting the math learning needs of every student

Carlton Innovation School, sanctioned by Massachusetts through the Innovation Schools program, pushes the boundaries of the existing school model. Carlton, which supports an underserved segment of the city's population, aims to transform the school into an incubator for fresh ideas in learning. How? By emphasizing a personalized approach to learning which is designed specifically to meet the individual needs of its diverse student body.

With its multi-age learning environment and instruction fueled by continuous formative assessment, decisions about student progression at Carlton are determined by whether a student masters the standards set by the state rather than by grade or age. As this model demonstrates, students don't learn in a straight line, and without support, teachers can't hope to differentiate instruction for every student. The challenge that school administrators at Carlton faced was finding a partner who could not only provide a curriculum adaptive enough to meet the needs of each student, but could also provide teachers with the insights needed to engage with students in more meaningful ways.

SOLUTION

Building a bridge between data and actionable insights

After evaluating a number of digital math curriculum partners, Carlton selected DreamBox Learning. According to Teegan von Burn, Assistant Principal at Carlton, the curriculum stood out because it uses formative assessment embedded within and between lessons to create the optimal learning experience for every student, every time. The system doesn't focus on age or grade level. Instead, DreamBox designs a custom path for students, monitoring whether he or she has mastered the objective, and providing support with varying strategies until mastery is achieved. "DreamBox's approach is similar to a spider web," says von Burn. "There are a multitude of ways for the student to progress, but they still end up at the same place—mastery of the concept."

"The wide range of learners in each classroom makes it difficult to know where each student is in their learning," says von Burn. "To really be proactive in meeting all of our students' needs we have access to data, but we also need to see quickly what that data means." By looking at student and classroom reports in DreamBox, teachers can make in-the-moment decisions about whether they should stay the course or pivot instruction for each student.

Every piece of data collected by DreamBox is transformed into actionable insights available at a glance through the Insight Dashboards. The insights help educators know when to intervene and when to celebrate success so that they can differentiate classroom instruction more effectively, allowing them to create personalized learning experiences that engage, reach, and teach every student, every day.

Students use DreamBox for 20 minutes at a time, at least three times per week, while other students are receiving targeted in-person instruction in small groups. The strategy has been particularly effective during Carlton's "success block," which remediates struggling learners with a double dose of support.

RESULTS

Innovation leads to an increase in learning outcomes

Under Massachusetts Innovation program, Carlton has to meet or exceed strict learning goals in order to retain its status. Thanks in part to the partnership between school administrators and DreamBox Learning Math, Carlton has become a model of what Innovation schools can accomplish.

Between 2013 and 2014's MCAS testing, Carlton enjoyed an increase of 17 percent in math proficiency school-wide. Twelve percent more students are now considered "advanced" under their measurement while 9 percent moved out of the "warning" category.

According to the school's leadership, DreamBox should get a lot of credit for that growth. "I don't know what we'd do without it," says von Burn. "It fills our unique need better than anything else."

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