

Bronson Elementary: “It’s about knowing the truth.”

How one Florida school is following the data—and their instincts—to aim for an A



“It’s always been the pinnacle I’ve reached for, that A.”
—Cheryl Beauchamp

Northwest Florida

Metro Location:	Rural
Grades:	P-K-5
Students:	600
Title I:	70%

Background

“It’s always been the pinnacle I’ve reached for, that A,” says Cheryl Beauchamp, Principal of Bronson Elementary in Levy County, Florida. “The school grade is a symbol to our community that our students are getting the best start we can give them.”

The majority of Beauchamp’s students have economic disadvantages. She tells her kids, “This education, what goes on here, has got to open doors for you.”

To meet student needs, the school has weekend food assistance programs, a Health Room with spare clothing and shoes, and a supply closet stocked by the local AMVETS post.

“Over half our kindergartners have no pre-K, no Head Start, and no day care,” Beauchamp says. “Many of them don’t know any letters on day one. So we’ve got lots of work to do.”

In 2015, Bronson Elementary slipped from a B to a C school grade as awarded by the Florida Department of Education, scoring 52 percent of the points available in the state’s performance framework for evaluating achievement and learning gains.

The results followed the very first administration of the new Florida Standards Assessments (FSA), which had been developed to more authentically assess more rigorous standards.

Challenge

For Bronson to improve from a C, the school needed to increase the number of students who demonstrated proficiency and learning gains on the FSA. And to achieve that, Beauchamp was resolved to take steps to maximize the efficacy of every student's school day.

Years before, Bronson had faced a math proficiency crisis.

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Melinda Chemin and Cheryl Beauchamp review student data.

“*i-Ready* first caught our eye for math because that’s where we were struggling most. We began with a goal of exposing our MTSS students to rigorous questioning and closing the gaps in their understanding.

—Cheryl Beauchamp
Principal

“Our triangle was upside down,” Beauchamp explains, describing what happens when the majority of students qualify for the most significant intervention.

She had purchased *i-Ready* with Title I funds for use with Bronson’s RTI students, and the program had successfully supported a course correction for math. After one semester, the school had added it for reading as well.

Having grown accustomed to the actionable insights *i-Ready* made available for RTI, Bronson leaders saw an application for it in the whole classroom.

Change

In 2015, Bronson began implementing *i-Ready* schoolwide and with fidelity, integrating the program’s adaptive Diagnostics and resulting personalized pathways into the assessment and instruction practices of the school.

Reading Coach and former RTI Specialist Melinda Chemin, a self-professed “data geek,” joined Beauchamp on a multiyear journey of unhurried, incremental, and data-driven decisions as they stewarded their *i-Ready* implementation to address Bronson’s needs.

Observing that some kids were not giving the Diagnostic their best effort, Chemin created Accountability Worksheets to ensure they kept alert and persevered from start to finish. Folders housed printouts of each student’s Personalized Instruction pathway and self-recorded progress.

Usage of *i-Ready*’s online lessons was monitored weekly and shortfalls were addressed in “data chats,” mini-conferences in which students sit individually with teachers or administrators. Teaching staff began using *i-Ready*’s Instructional Groupings to tailor instruction to prevalent skill deficits.

During the summer, school leaders met to examine the relationship between each student’s *i-Ready* data and state test result. They found a strong correlation, and the teaching staff took notice. Once they trusted *i-Ready* to be a reliable tool for pinpointing student needs with regard to demonstrating proficiency, the teachers were fully on board.

Impact

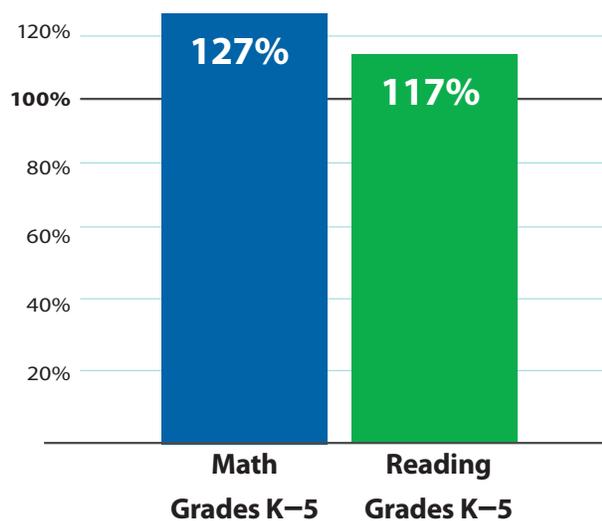
Visit Bronson today, and you'll find achievement posters, data trends, and motivational quotes—*Collecting data is the first step toward wisdom, but sharing data is the first step toward community*—papering the hallways.

Commitment to *i-Ready* begins the first week of school as teachers and students work together to establish goals for the first Diagnostic. Second graders excitedly move clothespins from one paper plate to the next to mark their achievement of online lesson milestones.

“There’s no fairy dust,” laughs Chemin.

“When you start looking at that data and following the trends—whether it’s student, classroom, cohort, or school data—it is revealing. It’s about knowing the *truth*, which helps you make better decisions, and better decisions move schools forward.”

Percentage of *i-Ready* Growth Target Achieved at End of Year 2016–2017



In the hallways, Beauchamp and Chemin overhear steady chatter about recent accomplishments and rewards for *i-Ready* lesson content mastery, such as the kindergarteners’ ice cream party or the fourth graders’ honorary “Lunch Bunch.”

Beauchamp says she is glad to be equipping teachers with actionable information to expose needs and support targeted instruction.

“When you have multiple levels in one classroom, you have a heterogeneous grouping,” she says. “It is so hard to meet the needs of the high-performing students, the strugglers, the on grade level. It’s almost impossible. *i-Ready* supports us in drilling down to the individual needs of each child, and that is so helpful to the teacher.”

Bronson has fully integrated *i-Ready* and the insights it provides into their culture and day-to-day life.

Chemin agrees, noting that interest in the data is contagious and has spread to Bronson parents: “The data just draws you in, and you want to see more.”

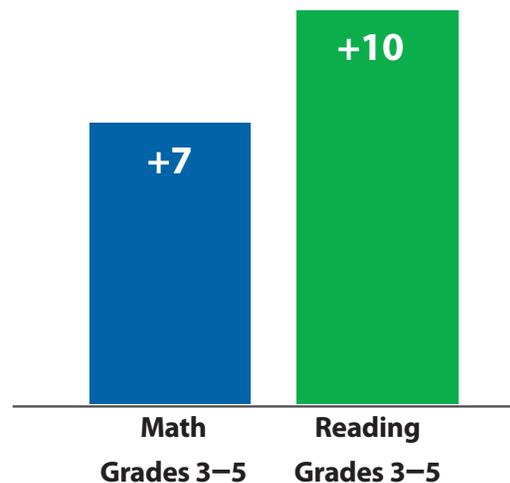
There’s no fairy dust, but in Beauchamp and Chemin, Bronson Elementary has surely benefitted from two resourceful leaders who identified and embraced a needed change while owning and pacing their implementation to best suit their school.

"Sometimes I think people look at data and think they have to make a giant change now," says Chemin. "And then they wonder, 'How will we implement it, support it, maintain it?' Our implementation has been successful because we decide what we can change and when. We stay the course and tweak what we can each year."

Visit Bronson today, and you may bump into a film crew—Bronson's achievements were featured on the local news—or visitors receiving a tour.

"The DOE's Differentiated Accountability Team is putting our name out there, and we're getting calls from a lot of schools requesting to come visit," Beauchamp says. "So we're telling them about *i-Ready*, and how it has supported us and our work here."

Percentage Point Gains on the FSA 2014–2015 to 2016–2017



“ My advice to others would be to embrace the program, but don't try to do it all the first year. We surely didn't! Be strategic about your yearly goals and stay the course.

—Cheryl Beauchamp
Principal ”

And Bronson's school grade? Beauchamp and Chemin believe an enduring dedication to *i-Ready* has supported a decrease in guesswork associated with differentiation alongside impressive increases in preparedness and, indeed, the number of students testing as proficient on state standards.

In fact, the school's overall performance scores have climbed from 52 percent to 59 percent. A score of 62 percent earns an A. They're getting close!



Are you equipped to make the most of every child's school day?

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