

SUCCESS SPOTLIGHT

# New Math Curriculum Helps Las Cruces Public Schools Drive 443% Growth in One Year

The second largest school district in New Mexico faced a dire situation—just 7 percent of its elementary students were proficient in math.

Las Cruces is the second largest city in New Mexico and is very spread out, consisting of both urban and large rural areas. With 25 Grades K–5 elementary schools and nearly 10,000 students in those schools, this Title I district has a large population of English Learners.

While Las Cruces Public Schools (LCPS) has historically struggled with low math performance, the pandemic made matters worse because of remote teaching, social distancing, communicating with masks, frequent student absences—sometimes 20 days or longer because of COVID-19 protocols—and overall teacher fatigue.

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—Lisa Hufstedler

Las Cruces  
Public  
Schools



GRADES  
K–5

ENROLLMENT  
10,000

TITLE I  
100%

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In fall 2020, LCPS implemented *i-Ready Classroom Mathematics*, a discourse-centered math program, and *i-Ready*, an online integrated formative assessment and instruction program, from Curriculum Associates. These blended mathematics programs are designed to foster student engagement and learning with rigorous practice opportunities and easy-to-read reports so teachers can pinpoint instruction and address learning gaps. But a year later, when students began to return to in-person school, the *i-Ready Diagnostic* for Mathematics indicated that only 7 percent of students were on or above grade level.

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## What They Did

To address the learning gap, the district strongly encouraged a daily 90-minute mathematics block including 60 minutes of whole class instruction and discourse using *i-Ready Classroom Mathematics* and 30 minutes of small group and intervention time including *i-Ready Personalized Instruction*.

The district's five instructional mathematics content specialists who support each of the elementary schools and work directly with the teachers knew what they needed to do. "Our district math content specialists grabbed hold of this product and were fully committed to supporting student success," said Lisa Hufstedler, district administrator for LCPS. "This effort complemented the hard work of the students, teachers, and administrators. As big believers in professional development alongside coaching and feedback, our specialists worked with the teachers to make sure they understood how to use the Curriculum Associates products and answer questions."

The buy-in at the teacher level was consistent as well as the implementation. The mathematics content specialists attended every professional development session with teachers that Curriculum Associates held, with three touchpoints per year. The teachers committed to using *i-Ready Classroom Mathematics* and *i-Ready* with fidelity.



### Leveraging Reports

LCPS teachers utilize *i-Ready Classroom Mathematics'* Prerequisites report to drive their instruction. The report identifies the critical skills students need to access grade-level content, which helps teachers address gaps to accelerate learning. The teachers with the most success also closely monitored Personalized Instruction usage to ensure their students were hitting the target usage number of 30 to 49 minutes each week.

"Everyone stepped up to the plate," added Hufstedler. Although the 2021 fall data was hard to swallow, the schools' commitment to using *i-Ready Classroom Mathematics* and *i-Ready* never wavered. Once students and teachers were face to face again, it didn't take long for them to start seeing real progress.

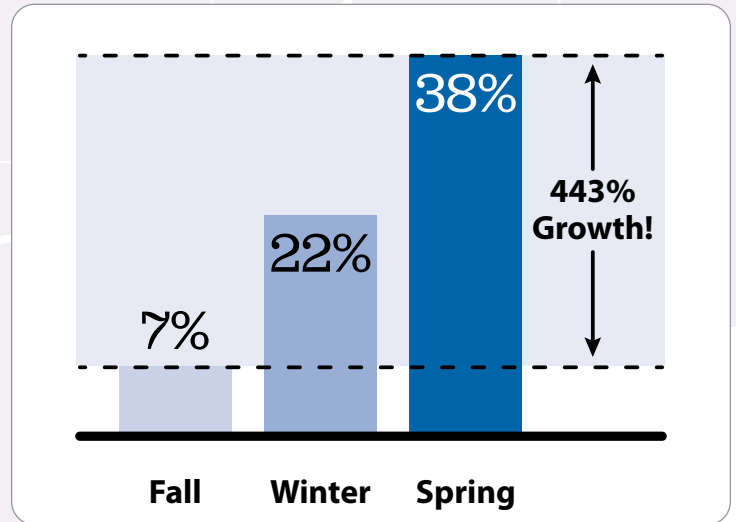
"When we saw our midyear data, the teachers were shocked," said Hufstedler. "The numbers had increased from 7 percent to 22 percent. It wasn't anything we had ever expected, especially in the middle of a pandemic, but the program was rigorous and fueled continuous growth through the spring, which brought hesitant folks on board."

# What They Accomplished

With strong leadership and focused instruction, LCPS Grades K–5 students demonstrated off-the-charts growth. In just one year, the number of students on or above grade level in mathematics more than quadrupled, growing to 38 percent overall by the end of the year. The district celebrated with visits to the top-performing schools from Curriculum Associates employees and content specialists who dressed up as some of the students' favorite *i-Ready* characters.

When Hufstedler presented the district's academic achievements and showed the elementary math growth to the school board, the audience broke out into applause. "I can't emphasize the collaboration enough," she said. "It's all the systems working together to do the absolute best we can. The Curriculum Associates team is incredibly supportive. I have all of them on speed dial and they get back to me right away."

LCPS picked a robust resource, worked together as a team, and supported teachers and their implementations. That commitment has now translated to the students, and the data proves that LCPS is finally getting closer to narrowing the learning gap.



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