

SUCCESS SPOTLIGHT

Teacher-Assigned Standards Mastery Drives Learning in Tennessee's Largest District



Memphis-Shelby
County Schools



STUDENTS
107,000

GRADES
Pre-K-12

TITLE I
56%

Memphis-Shelby County Schools (MSCS) is the largest public school district in the state of Tennessee and one of the 25 largest school districts in the United States.

Since 2017, MSCS, which was known as Shelby County Schools until early 2022, has used *i-Ready Standards Mastery*, a component of the *i-Ready Assessment* suite, to give educators insight into whether students have mastered important learning standards.

However, in 2021, MSCS district leaders realized that if they implemented teacher-assigned Standards Mastery, they'd be giving classroom educators a powerful diagnostic tool. Instead of district or school leaders alone determining when and how to use Standards Mastery, teachers would be able to assign formative assessments after initial instruction on a specific standard and use the results to inform reteaching and further instruction.

Following the cancellation of state testing in spring 2020 due to the COVID-19 global pandemic, school leaders across MSCS could see the importance of teachers having more tools to support effective benchmark assessment and reteaching. With teacher-assigned *i-Ready Standards Mastery*, teachers can use two prebuilt Standards Mastery assessment forms—each known as a “Mastery Check”—to evaluate students’ performance on key academic standards.

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What They Did

MSCS is subdivided into several zones, each of which has an instructional leadership director. After the educators in Instructional Leadership Director Rita White's zone completed preliminary trainings, White started her schools off with a zonewide assessment, effectively launching teachers' foray into control of students' standards proficiency.

With teacher-assigned *i-Ready Standards Mastery*, MSCS educators discovered they were able to:



Learn the Ins and Outs Quickly

When teachers first heard they'd be learning about a new online formative assessment program, they expected it to be a cumbersome process. However, they quickly discovered that the program was easy to use. Seeing students' results showed them it was also highly effective.



Have Greater Agency

White explained that teacher-assigned Standards Mastery quickly altered how educators approached instruction. "It really created some ownership and buy-in for the reteaching process that we've never seen before," she said. "Teachers now know they have the support to use something that's been vetted and has been proven to be standards aligned."



Demonstrate Student Readiness for State Assessments

Before implementing teacher-assigned Standards Mastery, MSCS teachers didn't have a reliable, centralized way to demonstrate that their students had a firm grasp of key standards. With teacher-assigned capabilities, they had clear evidence that students were ready to succeed on the state assessment.



Increase Student Ownership

Teacher-assigned Standards Mastery enabled classroom educators to show students which skills they have mastered and which were still a work in progress. This gave students true ownership over their learning and put teachers in a better position to support their success.

What They Accomplished

The impact of teacher-assigned Standards Mastery at MSCS can be summarized simply: It fostered ownership in the classroom.

Standards-aligned data helped teachers understand exactly where and why their students were struggling and gave them the instructional tools they needed to teach and reteach standards until students were proficient. Having clear data also equipped MSCS teachers to explain to students why they were being reassessed or receiving repeat instruction on a particular area. This clarity led to understanding, ownership, and, ultimately, learning success.



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