

Evidence-Based ESSA Intervention Report

Design and Intent

The study was conducted in an urban school district with 43,000 students. Four elementary schools were selected. One school implemented the Standards Plus materials as the experimental treatment and three did not. All schools in the experiment had over 700 students. The schools were selected based on academic and demographic criteria. To ensure consistent and strictly compliant implementation, district office staff monitored and managed the Standards Plus implementation in the treatment school. All schools in the study, including the treatment school, employed the district's adopted curriculum. All schools in the experiment, including the treatment school, were closely monitored by district staff to ensure they complied with all district policies and school improvement measures.

Matching the Schools

Schools in the experiment were matched for comparison in two ways. One criterion was performance on the state's yearly achievement test across all schools. The other criterion was determined by demographics.

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The state established a one to ten scale for two comparison criteria. Schools were assigned two scores on a one to ten scale. On the first comparison, a score of **One** identified schools in the lowest 10% of all schools based on statewide test scores. The other one to ten score was based on similar school demographics. All state schools were divided into ten comparison groups according to demographics (English Learner percentage, average parent education, percent of students participating in free/reduced-price meals, etc.). Each school was assigned to a similar schools group. Thus, a second score of **One** indicated a score in the lowest 10% among the schools with similar demographics.

All the schools in this experiment were designated by the state as **One-One** schools. In other words, the four schools in this experiment were among the lowest 10% of all schools based on statewide achievement test results. They were also designated as scoring among the lowest 10% of schools with similar demographics. The district accepted these comparable school indicators as valid and rigorous criteria to match schools for this experiment.

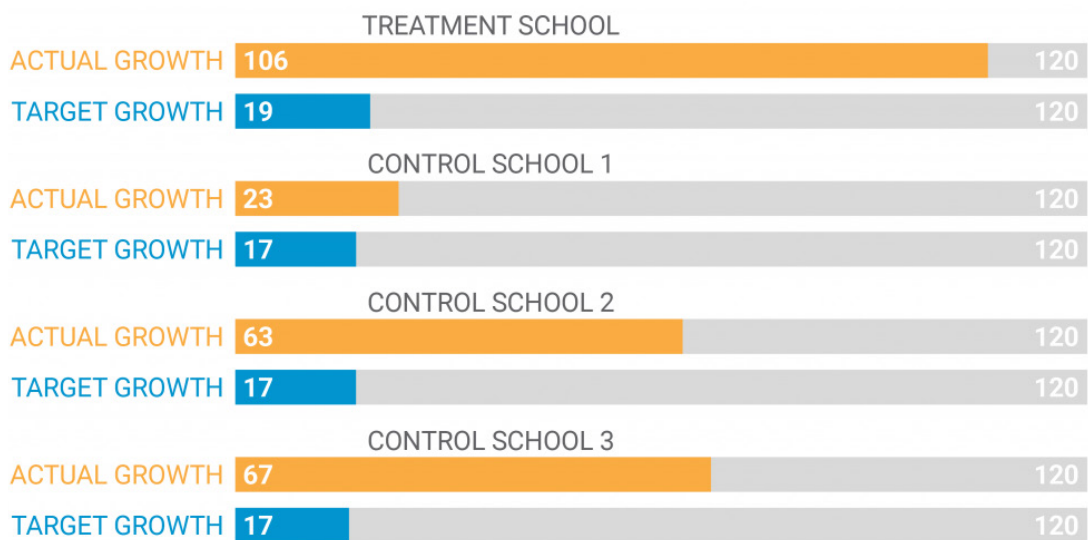
Establish Improvement Criteria

Performance data for this experiment came from the state's achievement test results. The achievement test provides one score for every school from a state developed scale. The assigned school score was based on student performance on the state's yearly achievement test. The school score was calculated from all the student scores for each school in Language Arts and Mathematics.

For this experiment, Standards Plus implementation outcomes were determined by the state's designated school score. The state established a performance target. The growth target for each school was based on the school's distance from the state's performance target. Schools were designated to be underperforming if they scored below the state target. The state required schools to improve their performance each year by a percentage of the difference between their school score and the state's target. For example, a school with a low school score would have a large growth target. A school with a higher score would have a lower growth target. Schools with very high scores did not have a state assigned growth target because they exceeded their achievement target.

The Federal Government accepted the state's system as a valid measure for school success. The district applied the state established school scores as valid and reliable growth indicators for each school and to consequently determine the successful outcome of the Standards Plus implementation.

Outcomes



The table shows the state determined growth targets for each school and each school's actual growth. All schools met their growth targets. The district was working under an improvement mandate and initiated multiple school improvement efforts. The district attributes the success of all the schools in the experiment to this circumstance. All the schools including the Treatment School implemented all the district initiatives and were closely monitored to ensure compliance. The Treatment School also implemented Standards Plus. The purpose of this experiment was to determine if the Standards Plus implementation led to a significantly different outcome than the Control Schools that did not implement Standards Plus. Analysis revealed that the Treatment School's growth was significantly different than the Control Schools' growth.

Conclusions

The district did not create the experiment with the intent to publish the outcomes or to provide reports to any other agency. The experiment was designed and conducted to fulfill the district's desire to meet the needs of its most impacted populations. The experiment was conducted to establish the content validity of the Standards Plus materials and revalidate the findings of the implementation design described in the Standards Plus white paper. In both cases the district deemed that the outcomes of the experiment provided incontrovertible evidence that the Standards Plus materials fulfilled all requirements for a Level Two ESSA designation, and lacking only randomized assignment, met the criteria for a Level One ESSA designation. The outcomes of the experiment were so convincing that the district implemented Standards Plus in every elementary school. Anecdotally, the district received an **Ed Trust Award for District-wide success in raising student achievement**. This was an unsolicited outcome of the district-wide Standards Plus implementation.

