

A case study about how Aurora Public Schools used the Brightpoint Literacy Middle School Reading Intervention Program to increase the achievement of middle school special education students

About Aurora Schools

Aurora Public Schools is the sixth largest district in Colorado, serving a student population of 36,967.

Students are:

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| Native American | 0.9% |
| Asian | 4.7% |
| Black | 20.2% |
| White | 23.5% |
| Hispanic | 50.8% |

39% of students are second language students. These students speak 95 different languages with 89% of this group being Spanish speakers.

63.4% of students receive free and reduced lunch.

There are 56 schools in the district:

- 2 preschools,
- 27 elementary schools,
- 4 K-8 schools,
- 1 K-9 school,
- 6 middle schools,
- 1 academy for grades 6-12,
- 4 comprehensive high schools,
- 3 pilot schools,
- 1 vocational/technical college,
- 1 gifted and talented K-8 school
- 6 charter schools.

More information about Aurora Public schools can be found on their Website at

<http://www.aps.k12.co.us/communications/docs/General.pdf>.

Summary

During the summer of 2010, the Aurora Public Schools special education educators began a review of reading programs. They were looking for resources that aligned with a long-term district professional development initiative to accelerate the achievement of their middle school special education students. After careful consideration, they selected the Brightpoint Literacy Middle School Reading Intervention program, a collection of resources for small-group differentiated instruction, literature discussion, and independent reading.

“We noticed that there were many students who were not reading at grade level and had difficulty with comprehension. We needed resources that focused on comprehension strategies with text our students could read and would *want* to read,” commented Mary Moneagle, Special Education Literacy Consultant. “We found the instructional component, High Wire, to be highly engaging—an important factor in our decision. Most importantly, we want our teachers to be the instructional decision-makers so these resources are the perfect fit.”

Professional development is a critical component of the implementation that began in the fall of 2010 in 12 middle and charter schools across the district. Teachers attend at least one day of intensive professional development each month. Ongoing support is provided by district consultants who visit classrooms each week and meet regularly with teachers for planning sessions.

The Writing and Reading Assessment Profile (W.R.A.P.) is the foundation of the intervention program. It provides teachers with the tools they need to assess students, measure their progress, and inform instruction. “We needed to improve how we assessed students so we made it the focus of our professional development this year,” added Ms. Moneagle. “When teachers know where students are reading, they are better able to choose appropriate materials and strategies. And, that has to make an impact on student achievement.”

Results

Results from the first year of implementation will be reported following the release of data from the spring 2011 Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP) exam.