

K-12 Case Study 3: Schools Under Registration & Review, NY

From 1994 to 1997, the [School Development Program \(SDP\) at Yale University](#) first integrated the Balanced Curriculum approach as one part of its intervention designed to help troubled schools improve student achievement and reform schools. The SDP emphasizes creating culture change through improved management and problem solving. The Balanced Curriculum approach was a natural fit for the program because of its emphasis on improving curriculum implementation processes and enhancing teacher accountability from year to year. It continued being part of the SDP through the early 2000s. It's important to note that Balanced Curriculum was not online yet when it was being used with SDP. Everything was done on paper! Adapting for a new decade, the paper-based approach successfully used in K-12 Case Study 1 was also used with SDP.

In New York State, schools having problems with student achievement may be classified as Schools Under Registration and Review (SURR). "Each year the State Education Department places a number of low performing schools on registration review, based on recent results of the Grades 4 and 8 ELA and math assessments (for CSD's), Regents cohort pass rates (for HS's), and dropout rates (also for HS's). Once placed on the SURR list, schools can be removed if they meet targeted improvements mandated by the state." (Toro, 2018, p. 18).

In the case of NY SURR schools, in 1994 there were 55 schools with that classification (Vitteriti & Kosar 2000). The combined enrollment of those schools alone was 61,117 students—96% of whom came from racial and ethnic minorities (Vitteriti & Kosar, 2000). Over 60% of the students in these schools came from low socioeconomic backgrounds.

A group of 20 New York City SURR schools which had received that classification from their 1993 to 1994 standardized test scores participated in the combined SDP and Balanced Curriculum intervention. When schools choose to undertake a big change, a lot depends on leadership. School leadership is critical for creating successful change, supportive cultures for learning, and helping to retain teachers (Day, Gu, & Sammons, 2016). If leadership effectively leading change, then comes how well the rest of the school's team implements the change intervention.

The results on the following page reflect those of 8 out of the 20 SURR schools participating in the combined SDP and Balanced Curriculum intervention. All these schools had leadership willing to create change and teams of teachers committed to improving student achievement. None of the other SURR classified schools demonstrated improved achievement, in part because they were unable to provide any evidence of actual implementation of any component of the SDP nor the Balanced Curriculum process.

The Results

Figure 1 illustrates the improvements shown in the participating schools that had good "intervention fidelity" when implementing the combined SDP and Balanced Curriculum intervention. As you can see, after the baseline results in 1994, the 8 participating schools all showed improvement. Also notable, many schools who implemented the intervention with their 3rd graders saw major jumps in achievement by 5th grade. The Balanced Curriculum part of the intervention helped ensure teachers taught all content required for the grade level, thus helping ensure students had the knowledge, skills, and abilities to perform well on tests.

The results shown in Figure 1 were the first to suggest that combining Balanced Curriculum with school and district-wide improvement interventions could produce sustainable results in student achievement on standardized tests.

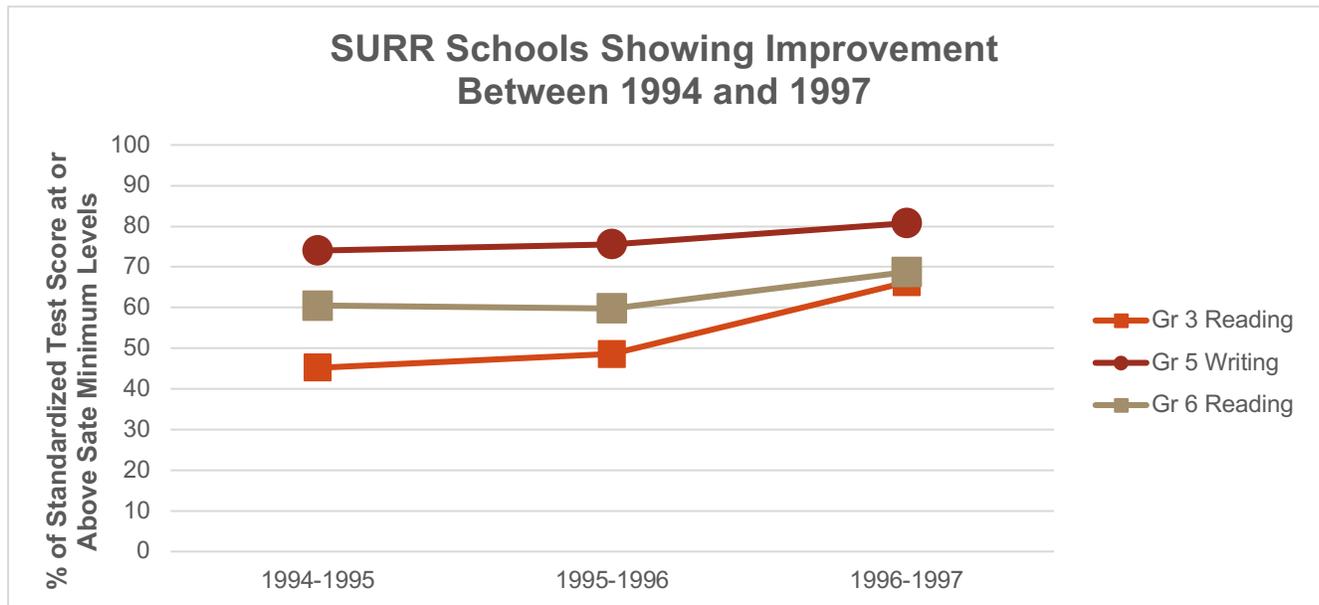


Figure 1

So Why Do These Results Matter?

We will use Grade 3 Reading as an example. In Grade 3, reading scores on standardized tests are important because kids make a critical transition in their reading skills between third and fourth grade. In third grade, students are still learning *how* to read whereas in fourth grade, they are *reading to learn* (Feister, 2010). If a child has not learned to read by Grade 3, then learning in Grade 4 and later on happens more slowly or not at all. Students become frustrated with school and are more likely to drop out later on in their life.

What is the Role of the Balanced Curriculum Approach in Promoting Student Achievement?

Applying the Balanced Curriculum approach--as part of or independent of a broader school or district-wide intervention aimed at improving student achievement--helps teachers guarantee to each other and to their students that the content a student needs to progress from one grade to another is covered during the school year. With Balanced Curriculum, teachers can still be creative with the learning strategies they use to help students succeed and implement them knowing that grade level educational standards are met.

References:

- Day, C., Gu, Q., & Sammons, P. (2016). The Impact of Leadership on Student Outcomes. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 52(2), 221–258. <http://doi.org/10.1177/0013161X15616863>
- Fleister, L. (2010). *Early Warning! Why Reading by the End of Third Grade Matters*. Baltimore, MD. Retrieved from <http://www.ccf.ny.gov/files/9013/8262/2751/AECFReporReadingGrade3.pdf>
- Forman, S. G., Olin, S. S., Hoagwood, K. E., Crowe, M., & Saka, N. (2009). Evidence-Based Interventions in Schools: Developers' Views of Implementation Barriers and Facilitators. *School Mental Health*, 1(1), 26–36. <http://doi.org/10.1007/s12310-008-9002-5>
- Reinke, W. M., Stormont, M., Herman, K. C., & Newcomer, L. (2014). Using Coaching to Support Teacher Implementation of Classroom-based Interventions. *Journal of Behavioral Education*, 23(1), 150–167. <http://doi.org/10.1007/s10864-013-9186-0>
- Toro, V.M. (2018). *A Collection of Acronyms and Jargon*. New York: New York City Department of Education. Downloaded from: <http://schools.nyc.gov/NR/rdonlyres/0C56D9B8-8DDB-46B8-AA5F-BF77AE8C2803/0/ACRONYMReferenceGuide.pdf>, February 24, 2018.
- Viterritti, J.P. & Kosar, K. (2000). *Civic Report No. 13: State of the New York City Public Schools 2000*. New York: Center for Civic Innovation at the Manhattan Institute. Downloaded from: https://www.manhattan-institute.org/pdf/cr_13.pdf, February 24, 2018.

Please cite this case study as:

Squires, D.A. (2018). *A Balanced Curriculum – K-12 Case Study 3: Schools Under Registration & Review*, NY. New York: ABC Education Consultants, LLC.

