



# case study

## *Using Data to Raise Student Achievement*

Across the nation, every school is using data in some way to better understand student performance and to change instruction to raise student achievement. What happens with this data and how effectively it is used varies widely from school to school. Research shows that an effective use of assessment data can bring about a significant improvement in achievement. Editure PD (formerly known as AUSSIE) guides schools to a better understanding of how to make the best use of assessment data to ‘drive’ instruction. The three key elements to this process are:

- designing effective district and school-based assessments;
- collecting the data in an efficient and easy-to-use format;
- analyzing the results so that they can impact instruction.

In New York City, two low-performing schools (Elementary and Middle School X279 and Middle School X331) faced the challenge of implementing new assessment practices within a standards-based, differentiated mathematics curriculum. Both turned to AUSSIE to help them reach these goals.

### FINDING A SOLUTION

AUSSIE/Editure supported these schools in raising student achievement in mathematics through more effective use of their data. This began by taking a close look at the experience level of the teachers and how much professional development they needed.

Next, a review of their current assessment practices took place to see how they were collecting, analyzing and using their data. Finally, the focus shifted to the curriculum being used. Together the schools and AUSSIE/Editure looked at how well aligned the curriculum was to the standards, how effectively the curriculum was being delivered, and how well classroom instruction was based on assessment data and aligned to the standards-based curriculum. The answers to these questions shaped a professional development plan that centered on:

- identifying and implementing a quick means for assessing students’ knowledge of their grade-level content. By doing this teachers were able to spot any gap in a student’s understanding and respond promptly;
- grade-level meetings where AUSSIE/Editure worked with teams of teachers to evaluate their understanding of the standards, as well as how effectively they were covering the standards assessed in the state exam;
- teacher group sessions that helped guide a better alignment of their curriculum to the standards and improved teacher understanding of the standards;
- training for coaches so they could help model assessment, curriculum and instructional best practices and reinforce them on a daily basis.

One of the most common concerns throughout this work was that teachers felt they lacked adequate time to teach the entire curriculum. By focusing the curriculum on

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our results

## Raising Math Achievement in a Failing Urban High School

Since 2004, one New York City public school has worked tirelessly to improve teacher performance, deepen teachers' math content knowledge, implement a solid math curriculum and boost creativity. The aim was to significantly raise math achievement and get off the failing school (New York City Schools Under Registration Review - or SURR) list. Together, AUSSIE/Editure and the school leadership created a professional development plan that led them to:

- implement a cohesive standards-based mathematics curriculum where instruction was driven by assessment data and adapted to address student needs. It was designed to be free of the gaps which had previously existed in the curriculum;
- use side-by-side training and group workshops to build teacher expertise in mathematics and help make teachers more comfortable teaching mathematics;
- find ways to engage students with math and move beyond repetitive exercises;
- address class management issues to help teachers develop routines and carve out more time to teach;
- create a clear set of expectations and enforce them consistently.

In the end, the teachers had the resources, capacity and commitment needed to teach the right mathematics content at the right time in the most effective way. This once failing school was removed from the SURR list and experienced significant gains in student achievement in mathematics.



### POSITIVE GAINS

- level 3s increased from 6.8% to 50.6% from 2002-2007;
- levels 3 and 4 increased from 7.6% to 67.7%;
- between 2002 and 2007, percentage of students in level 1 Math decreased from 67.9% to 12.2%.

*"The goal was to help the teachers be at the top of their game. We worked together to increase teacher skills and confidence so that it could have a meaningful impact on student achievement."*

- AUSSIE/Editure Consultant Rick Swan

assessable standards and using data to direct instruction, the teachers began to rethink the way they were teaching. Grade-level meetings and teacher group sessions provided the guidance and resources they needed to realize change in their classroom practices.

Success in reaching the schools' achievement goals required commitment, time and ongoing collaboration and communication between AUSSIE/Editure, school leadership and teachers. As the initial work began to unfold it became a priority to ensure that the schools had the internal capacity and processes to keep the new assessment, curriculum and instructional practices moving forward.

Based on his experience, AUSSIE/Editure consultant Chris Coombes knew how to address the needs of the schools. His training and wide experience have given him the ability to craft professional development that fits each school's needs. The professional development plan is always built upon:

- ensuring that the curriculum matches the standards;
- using assessment data to impact instruction;
- providing support to teachers to achieve the above.

The options for implementing this professional development plan required flexibility and customization to ensure success. This is what AUSSIE/Editure brought to Elementary and Middle School X279 and Middle School X331 to help them achieve the assessment, curriculum and instructional goals that led to significant gains in student achievement.



### POSITIVE GAINS

- a significant decrease in the percentage of students scoring at the lowest New York City achievement level (level 1) - from 35.5 in 1999 to 8.0 in 2007;
- a significant increase in the percentage of students scoring at the highest New York City achievement levels (levels 3 and 4) during the same period - from 21.7 in 1999 to 64.7 in 2007.