



SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

EVIDENCE OF EFFECTIVENESS

John Marshall

Mid High School

OKLAHOMA CITY, OKLAHOMA

State test scores in Algebra 1
rose 25%.



DEMOGRAPHICS

- 707 Students
- 75.5% Free and reduced lunch
- 6.6% Limited English proficient
- 23% Special education*
- 71% African American
- 11% Hispanic
- 1.8% Asian/Pacific Islander
- 6.5% Other

*Percentage is based on 162 students currently enrolled in the special education program.

John Marshall Mid High School is located in northwest Oklahoma City, which has a population of more than 600,000. The school is in the Oklahoma City Public School System, an urban district that serves 46,000 students.

CHALLENGE

Like many schools, John Marshall Mid High School had pockets of excellence, but no consistent schoolwide culture that supported the success of every student. Students were struggling with math and reading in the middle school grades. There were so many unknown variables that teachers didn't know where to begin to address underperformance. The data was there, but the staff didn't know how to use it to inform instruction. "We didn't have a way to see how students were doing individually," said Principal Aspasia Carlson.

"We were looking at student averages only." As a result, instruction was not targeted for each student's learning needs. While staff would celebrate the students who succeeded, they did not question why others were struggling. The pervading culture was that John Marshall was not a high-performing school, and this belief extended from the school leaders and teachers to the students, their families, and the community. Everyone wanted improvement, but no one knew where to start.

IMPLEMENTATION

John Marshall's journey of school improvement started with a book study. The school leadership team used the book *Learning by Doing* as a guide to how to become a successful, sustainable professional learning community. Building a collaborative culture was an important first step. Teachers worked in teams to become more strategic. Key agenda items were addressed and followed up with action.

With the support of Dr. Sharon V. Kramer, their on-site consultant, the staff of John Marshall delved deeper

into their improvement efforts. What started as simply preparing for Dr. Kramer's visits became the daily culture of doing business at school. Teachers started to break down learning standards and how they were going to assess students. They examined how the blueprints for state tests aligned with what was taught in class. Soon, teachers were able to look at student performance at an individual level. Interventions became more specific and intentional. "Every time Sharon visited we would uncover new things that we could improve," Carlson reflects.



Every time Dr. Kramer came out, we spent two intensive days digging into our data, our systems, how kids were placed in classes, how we handled remediation—everything. Every time we discovered new opportunities for improvement. We became more strategic when it came to how our practices would impact academic achievement. I know these strategic moves made a positive impact on our test results.”

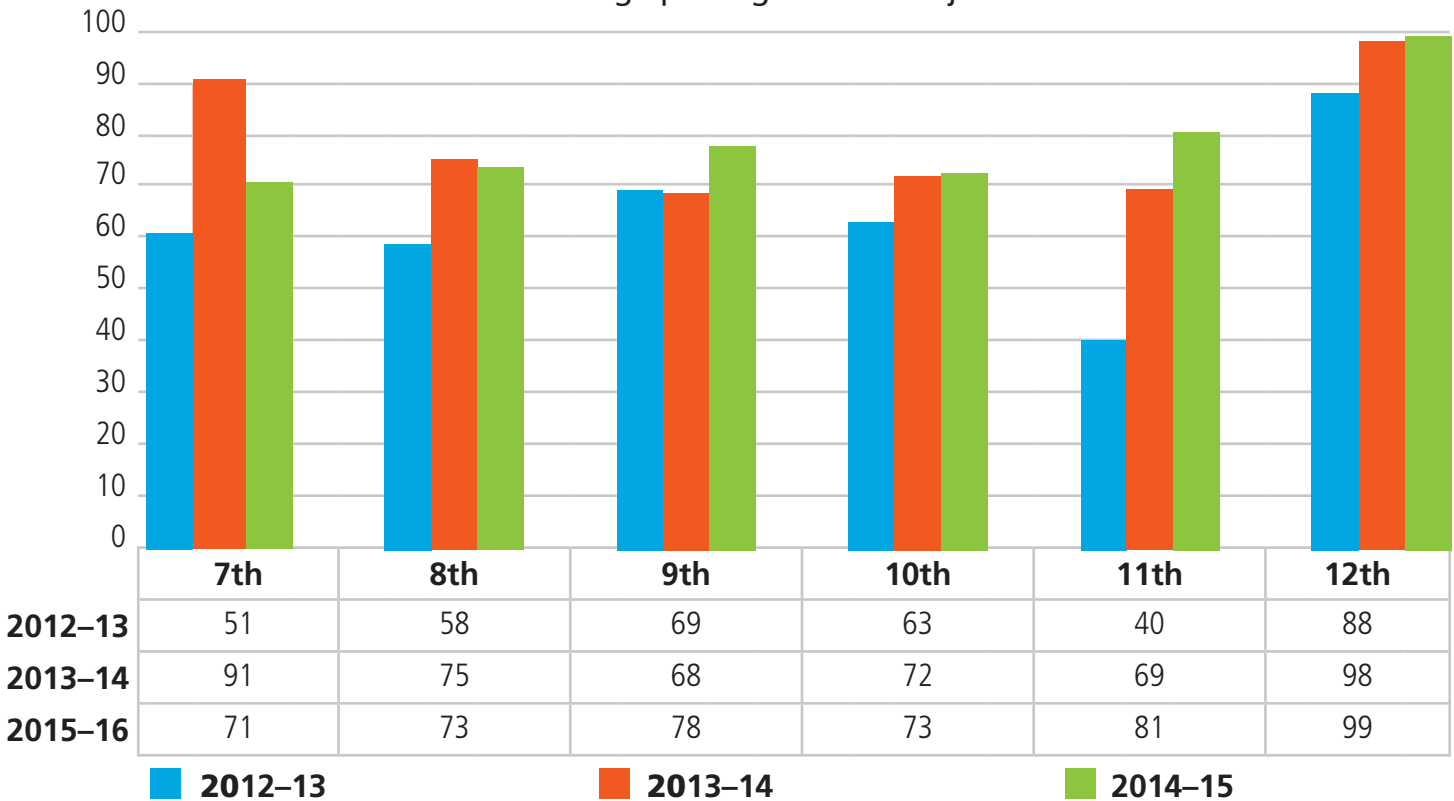
—Principal Aspasia Carlson

RESULTS

Today, teachers are invested in the success of every student at John Marshall. Students are invested in their own learning too, using individual trackers to check their progress. This attention to the success of each child has impacted the overall performance of students at John Marshall. The percentage of students passing all core

subjects is showing an upward trend. State test scores in the spring of 2015 rose 25%—from 42% to 67%. In addition, students at John Marshall earned the top scores in biology in the district. Only one school, an application school, scored higher.

Percentage passing all core subjects



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