

SUCCESS SPOTLIGHT

Streamlined Assessment Data Helps Spartanburg School District 7 Improve Learning

When it comes to student achievement, Spartanburg School District 7 in South Carolina has a clear goal: to meet or exceed the state average on statewide annual assessments, such as the South Carolina Palmetto Assessment of State Standards and South Carolina College- and Career-Ready Assessments (SC Ready).

In the 2018–2019 school year, Dr. Terry Pruitt, the district’s chief academic officer, began searching for a new formative assessment program that would help Spartanburg meet this objective. “What we really needed was data we could use throughout the year as a blueprint, showing us what we’re doing from one assessment to the next and letting teachers know, ‘This is how I need to target my instruction,’” he said. “With the tools we had at the time, I just didn’t see that happening.”



STUDENTS
7,300

GRADES
K–12

TITLE I
71%

AT
OR BELOW
POVERTY LEVEL
72%

“All our programs and initiatives are structured to intersect with the students at the heart of everything . . . If we make sure to keep that in place, we know we’ll get the results we desire.”

—Dr. Terry Pruitt, Chief Academic Officer

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What They Did

During the 2019–2020 school year, Pruitt asked one of the district’s most challenged, high-poverty elementary schools and three middle schools to pilot *i-Ready Assessment* and *Personalized Instruction*. The pilot program was such a success that *i-Ready* was implemented districtwide in the 2020–2021 school year.

“We’re making it clear why these tools were chosen to support our students. Everyone can get on board when you do that.”

—Dr. Terry Pruitt,
Chief Academic Officer

To ensure the districtwide implementation went as well as the pilot, Spartanburg leaders did the following:



Sought Teacher Buy-In

District leaders explained to teachers that all *i-Ready* resources were aligned to South Carolina standards, which gave teachers confidence in the program. “Change is hard for everyone—especially for adults who are used to doing things in a certain way,” said Dr. Edwina Perrin, district math coach/coordinator. “But the pilot year showed us how it worked. If you get 10 teachers to buy in, it will spread like wildfire.”



Maximized Educator Effectiveness

According to Perrin, bringing together all the required teacher materials into one location on *i-Ready*’s Teacher Toolbox was helpful in getting teachers onboarded and comfortable with the available resources.



Increased Student Engagement

Educators were very intentional about sharing students’ *i-Ready Diagnostic* data with them, creating transparency around students’ strengths and struggles. When students reviewed their data with their teachers, they gained a deeper understanding of where they need to improve, along with increased confidence and motivation to do so. Perrin noted that “data chats” also enabled more productive parent communication. Students took their Diagnostic reports home after discussing with their teachers and shared with their families for collaborative goal setting.



Delivered Professional Development

Teachers participated in professional development sessions led by curriculum specialists who explained the cross-curricular benefits of using *i-Ready*. This enhanced all teachers’ understanding of the impact they could have on student learning.



Encouraged Strategic Abandonment

Leaders asked educators to eliminate standalone programs with functions that could be covered by *i-Ready* and other key tools. Teachers appreciated the consolidation of resources and clear communication about why certain tools are the ones being retained and emphasized.



Celebrate Educators

The successful implementation was supported by Pruitt’s creation of “*i-Ready Champions*,” a designated group of educators across each building who were available to answer teachers’ questions as they began using the tool.



Kept Learning

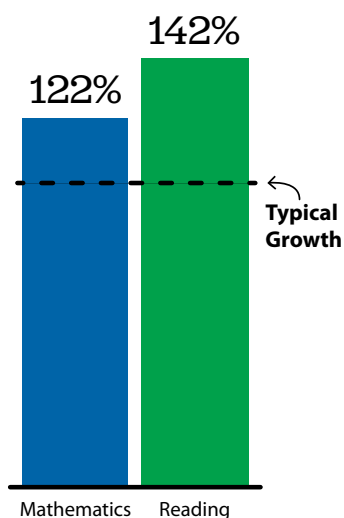
Several members of the district team attended a Curriculum Associates regional summit, which supplied them with useful new ideas for their implementation.

What They Accomplished

i-Ready and state assessment data showed that Spartanburg had accomplished the following:

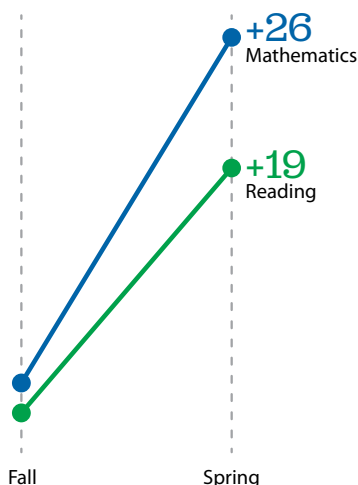
Typical Growth

i-Ready data showed that students met or exceeded their Typical Growth in math by 122 percent and in reading by 142 percent when students used *i-Ready* for 30 minutes and passed lessons with 70 percent or higher.



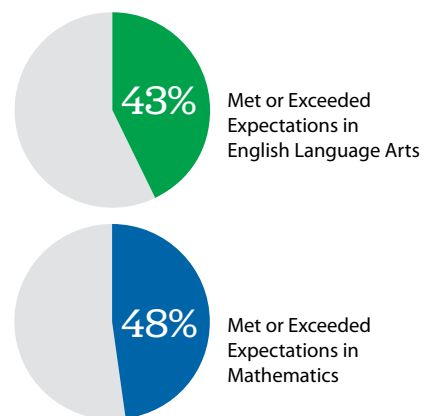
Placement Levels

In *i-Ready*, student placement levels grew 26 percentage points in math and 19 percentage points in reading from fall 2020 to spring 2021.



State Assessment Performance

25 percent of the district's fourth graders exceeded expectations on the SC Ready in English language arts, with 43 percent meeting or exceeding expectations overall. On the SC Ready in mathematics, 48 percent of third graders met or exceeded expectations.



Bolstered by strong student growth, a team of 50 Spartanburg teachers resumed a project that was set aside during COVID-19 school building closures: the development and implementation of a new instructional framework. "All our programs and initiatives are structured to intersect with the students at the heart of everything," said Pruitt. "If we make sure to keep that in place, we know we'll get the results we desire."

"Teachers want to be good at what they are doing. They want to be the best for our students . . . If a teacher is asked to use too many different tools, it's difficult to be great with all of them. But if the teacher only works with i-Ready, and i-Ready is a tool that meets each of our needs, the teachers can become really good at it."

—Dr. Terry Pruitt, Chief Academic Officer



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