

## SUCCESS SPOTLIGHT

# West Virginia District Rises from 16th to Third in the State for Math in One Year

In the 2017–2018 school year, education leaders at Wood County Schools (WCS) decided they needed to better equip their students for the rigorous state standards by modernizing their district’s math curriculum.

They invited five low-performing elementary schools—each school had received a “D” on its last report card from the West Virginia Department of Education (DOE)—to participate in a mathematics curriculum pilot. They all accepted.

The programs these five schools would be trying out? *Ready® Mathematics*, Curriculum Associates’ discourse-centered, teacher-led math program, and *i-Ready*, an integrated formative assessment and instruction program.

Wood County Schools



STUDENTS  
12,350

GRADES  
Pre-K–12

TITLE I  
47%

“We’ve had a paradigm shift in this county . . . we are looking at growth for every single kid, whether it’s the lowest [scoring] kid that we have in that grade or the highest. That was a mindset shift we had to make.”

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—John McKown, Director of Federal Programs

Grades K–5 at Fairplains Elementary School saw a sharp decrease in Tier 3 placements following one year of piloting *Ready Mathematics* and *i-Ready*.

## What They Did

Throughout the school year, the five pilot schools used *Ready Mathematics* and *i-Ready* to drive student learning. “The performance of the pilot schools caught everyone’s attention,” said John McKown, director of federal programs for WCS. “Schools that had been at the bottom in the county for years and years were no longer there.”

**Using *Ready Mathematics* and *i-Ready* enabled educators at the five pilot schools to:**



### Save Teachers Time

McKown said *i-Ready* won colleagues over with its ability to save teachers time: “Previously, our teachers had to piecemeal together their plan for intervention. They had to plan groups—who to pull, which group needs which skills, and where to find the good lessons to teach those skills. That took a long time.”



### Modernize Math Instruction

Students began thinking—and talking—about mathematics in the ways that STEM careers require, planting new seeds of opportunity for education and beyond.

With *Ready Mathematics*, educators slowed down their lesson pacing to encourage focus. Topics were introduced using real-world problems, and before any discussions took place, students participated in multiple reads, asking questions like, “What are we trying to find out?” and “What information is most important?”



### Deliver Professional Learning

WCS education leaders worked with their Curriculum Associates partners to build an extensive professional learning schedule featuring sessions on onboarding new teachers, interpreting Diagnostic data, facilitating discourse, and monitoring grade- and school-level growth.



### Give Proactive Support

Christie Willis, director of curriculum and instruction for WCS, deployed support for teachers at the first sign of need, dispatching coaches, tech specialists, and even retired WCS educators to come in.

“*Ready Mathematics* has been a game changer for us . . . The first year, I heard, ‘It’s too hard’ or ‘It doesn’t sit right’ a lot. Because it’s different—a mindset change. But now, as teachers enter the second year, they’re saying, ‘It’s easier this year. The kids get it!’ From every level within WCS, this has truly been a team effort to improve student learning.”

—Christie Willis, Director of Curriculum and Instruction

# What They Accomplished

Over the course of the 2018–2019 school year, WCS rose from the 16th ranked district in the state for math proficiency (spring 2018) to the third most proficient district (spring 2019) as measured by the state summative assessment. This outstanding student growth got the attention of the West Virginia DOE. As McKown relayed in an email with the WCS *i-Ready Partners* team: “Scores in WCS are looking very good. You will be shocked when you see them. Folks at the West Virginia DOE spent an hour and a half on the phone with us asking what we are doing. You have been with us on this journey from the start. I just wanted to drop you a note so you can share in the joy of our success!”

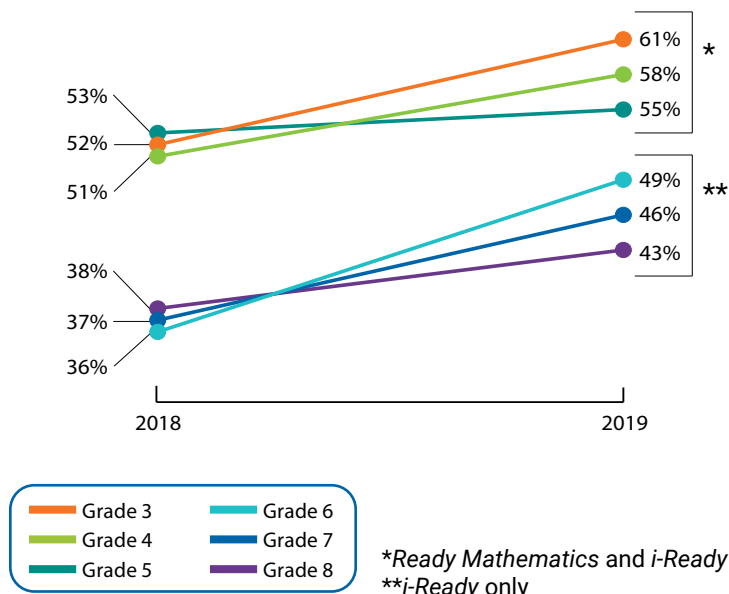
1st

**Statewide growth ranking.** Grades 3–8 students grew their assessment scores in mathematics by a combined total of 45 percentage points—the most growth in the state.

52%

**Percentage of students in Grades 3–8 proficient in mathematics**—up from 44 percent the previous year

**Mathematics Proficiency Rates on the General Summative Assessment**



As WCS looks to the future, its leaders plan on spreading the new math best practices that have helped their students own their learning. “We’ve had a culture shift,” said Will Hosaflook, superintendent for WCS. “We started with focusing on the low socioeconomic students and the Title I schools, which led to raising the bar for the entire county. Last year, we had the top growth in our state for math in Grades 3–8. We’ve seen incredible results, and we’re going full steam ahead.”

“*i-Ready* is a fantastic Response to Intervention tool for our students who struggle. We’re a non-Title I school, and I only have two interventionists. *i-Ready* allows teachers to pull students according to their instructional grouping, give those small group lessons to reinforce the concept, and then send the kids back and let them soar.”

—Justin Hartshorn, Principal, Blennerhassett Elementary School

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