



PLATINUM PERFORMERS

Leaders in Implementation. Outstanding Results.

Martin Luther King Elementary School Edison, New Jersey

Challenge:

Despite reading intervention efforts, Martin Luther King Elementary School did not make AYP in 2005 due in part to low NJ Assessment of Skills and Knowledge (ASK) Language Arts Literacy scores.

Martin Luther King Elementary (MLK) is a Title I school serving approximately 560 students in Grades K–5. Although formal ESL instruction is provided at an alternate school within the district, MLK also serves a high percentage of bilingual students. Intervention for struggling readers at MLK had been historically focused on



Martin Luther King Elementary was not effectively meeting the needs of its basic skills readers. After not achieving AYP, addressing the issue became a top priority.

- 16% Economically Disadvantaged
- 8% Special Education

Solution:

With a shift in focus from lower to higher elementary grades and the implementation of *READ 180*, MLK saw dramatic improvements in test scores and made AYP.

students in the lower grades, but the results of the 2005 NJ ASK Language Arts Literacy test turned the administration’s attention to fourth and fifth grade students. That year, MLK did not make AYP and was labeled a “Year 1 or Early Warning” school. It was time to find an effective solution for struggling readers that would improve their skills and test scores. 🐼

What is READ 180? *READ 180* is a research-based intervention program for struggling readers in Grades transitional 3 and above. By combining small-group learning, adaptive software, independent reading, and direct teacher instruction, *READ 180* provides a comprehensive solution that helps students become automatic, fluent readers. *READ 180* meets the guidelines for No Child Left Behind and is now in use in over 14,000 classrooms across the country.

A New Approach For Basic Skills Readers Yields Results

When Marilyn Clark first became a Literacy Development teacher at MLK, basic skills reading students—about 19% of the student body—were served using a push-in reading cart and small group pull-outs during their regular language arts classes. Clark worked specifically with the at-risk students (the most severe of the basic skills students). A reading specialist and paraprofessional worked with the remainder of the basic skills students. Clark observed, however, that some of these basic skills reading students were reading so far below grade level that daily, 30-minute sessions simply were not enough.



“READ 180 is the best! When I wasn’t in READ 180 I hated reading. But when I am in READ 180 I love to read and write. I think I am reading and writing much better.”

—Jaashir
Grade 5

Working with Dr. Rose Traficante, the Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction for the district, Clark investigated different reading intervention programs in search of something that could be taught in smaller class sizes, which she knew would promote active engagement of all students. She also wanted a program that was research-based and proven with ESL and special education students. After visiting a *READ 180* classroom in a nearby district, Clark became convinced that *READ 180* was the right program for MLK.

A Well-Supported Replacement Literacy Program

MLK was among four Title I schools in Edison Township to implement *READ 180* in the 2005–2006 school year—one other elementary school and two middle schools were also selected.

Based on the results of the NJ ASK, which drew administrative attention to students in fourth and fifth grades, *READ 180* was implemented in one class at each of those levels. Each classroom included basic skills and classified special education students. Instead of the push-in/pull-out supplement, *READ 180* was implemented as a replacement for the Balanced Literacy curriculum for those students.

Clark says all levels of the school and district administration fully support *READ 180* with frequent classroom visits and close monitoring of data. “We have meetings with administration often,” notes Clark. “They check our scores of course, but they also want to know what our issues are: what’s working and what’s not. They are very involved and supportive.”

Because *READ 180* relies heavily on technology, the Edison Township school district made a special commitment to train technology staff

specifically on *READ 180*. Additionally, they have established procedures to ensure *READ 180* technology requests receive top priority to ensure no instructional time is lost.

Increasing Proficiency Each Year

Among *READ 180* students at MLK, the percentage of students passing the NJ ASK Language Arts Literacy test rose from 59% in 2004–2005 to 89% in 2005–2006. In particular, Clark’s fifth-grade class made tremendous gains with the percentage of students passing the state test rising from 55% to 100%. Her fourth-grade class made commendable first year gains as well, rising from 63% to 70% passing state tests. During the second year of *READ 180*, 90% of those same students—then in fifth grade—passed the state test.

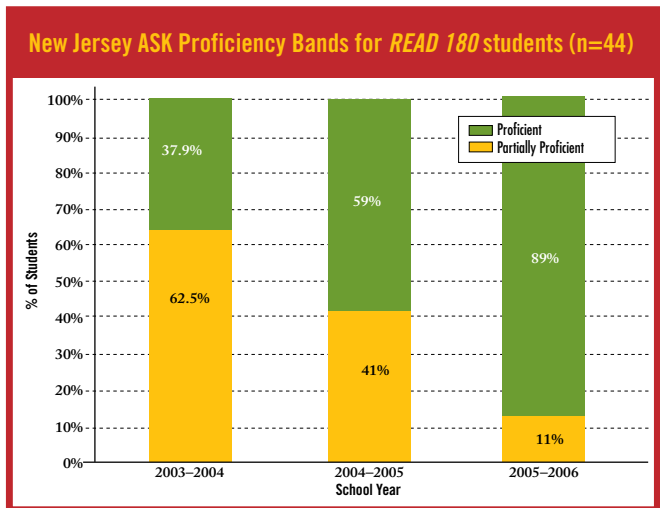
Reflecting on her students’ progress, Clark adds, “Those students now in fifth grade are doing fantastic. Every one of them has increased their Lexile® score. More than half have grown by more than 200 Lexiles.”

In the 2005–2006 school year, MLK made AYP. In 2007, the school made AYP again and was removed from the Early Warning list.

“Skyrocketing” Self-Esteem

Based on successes at MLK and the three other Title 1 schools in the district, *READ 180* has now been implemented in four of the 11 elementary schools, all four middle schools, and both high schools in the district.

Clark is exceptionally proud of her students’ accomplishments—measured and otherwise. “These kids are working so hard and taking it very seriously, and you can see the change in them. When struggling readers are in a regular classroom with kids reading on or above grade level, they know there’s something different about their books and materials and they come in here defeated. But with *READ 180* and the success they are now experiencing, their self-esteem has just skyrocketed and that’s huge.”



Marilyn Clark
Literacy Development Teacher
Martin Luther King Elementary School

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Marilyn Clark is happy to share her *READ 180* experiences and implementation recommendations with you. You can reach her at marilyn.clark@edison.k12.nj.us



It Can Be Done.

READ 180
students passing the
state test increased
30%
in one year.

100% of
targeted fifth graders
passed the state test
in the first year of
implementation.

**To find out how to get results like these in *your* school,
visit www.scholastic.com/read180 or call your regional Scholastic representative.**

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PLATINUM PERFORMERS: THE CRITERIA

- ✓Quantifiable Results
- ✓Visionary Goal
- ✓On-Model Scheduling
- ✓On-Model Implementation
- ✓Principal, Teacher, and Student Satisfaction

**For a complete list of criteria, or to nominate your school as a PLATINUM PERFORMER,
go to www.scholastic.com/read180**