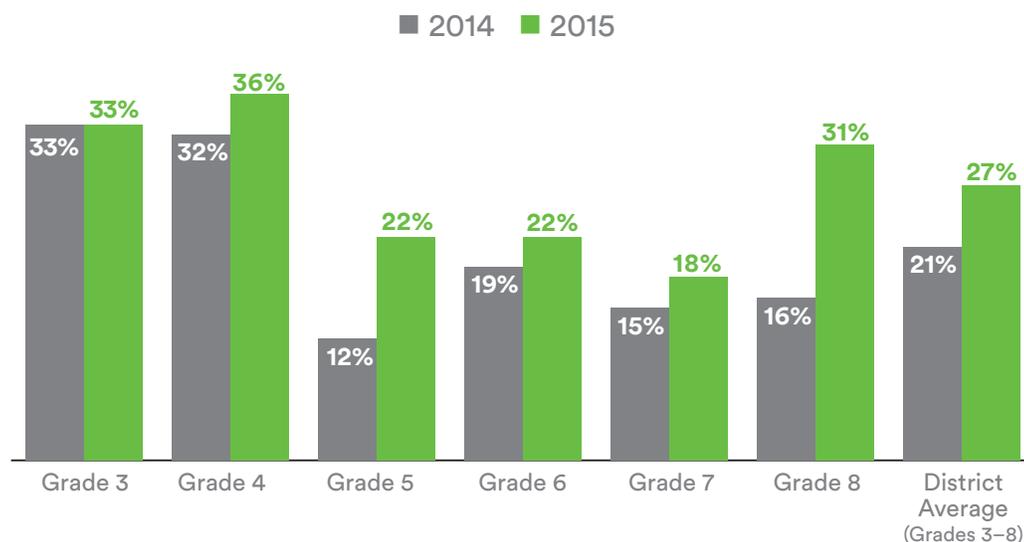


# More Students Achieve Mastery in Louisiana District

St. John the Baptist Parish, a public school district between New Orleans and Baton Rouge, has been using *Eureka Math* across the elementary, middle, and high school grades for nearly two years. The district serves more than 6,000 children in grades Pre-K through 12. Most are eligible for free and reduced-price lunch.

The district recently showed strong progress in math on the state accountability report card and made more growth than most Louisiana districts in the percentage of students working at the “mastery” level on the end-of-year PARCC tests. A student at this level has demonstrated competency with challenging subject matter and is considered well prepared for the next grade level. District leaders say more collaboration among educators and *Eureka’s* high-quality resources for parents are just some of the factors having a positive impact on teaching and learning.

## MORE ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST STUDENTS REACHING MASTERY AND ABOVE



St. John the Baptist’s Math Curriculum Facilitator Stephen Zafirau talked with us about his district’s math progress and its success with *Eureka Math* so far.

### HOW DID YOU CHOOSE EUREKA MATH?

We initially became interested in *Eureka* based on the guidance from the state department of education, which ranked *Eureka Math* highly, and we reviewed the curriculum against the standards. When we examined it closely ourselves, we really liked the level of rigor, the balance between procedural skill, application, and conceptual understanding, and the overall alignment to the standards.

## THE DISTRICT GOT A LETTER GRADE OF B UNDER THE STATE'S ACCOUNTABILITY REPORTS, UP FROM C LAST YEAR. TELL US ABOUT THAT ACCOMPLISHMENT.

We broke it down to see what the relative strengths and weaknesses were. Everything contributed, but we did see growth in math. The state released PARCC data showing that relative to other districts, we showed some of the strongest growth in students achieving at the “mastery” level or above. It’s significant the growth was at the level of mastery and above. That’s going to be the eventual state benchmark, and it speaks to the level of rigor we have in place now.

## YOU DIDN'T SEE THE SAME GROWTH AT THE “BASIC” LEVEL. WHAT ARE YOU DOING TO ADDRESS THAT?

We still have work to do closing gaps for lower-achieving students. We have several processes in place focused squarely on the quality of teaching and learning. First, we have developed a system of high-quality common district assessments that are aligned to the standards. Teachers use these assessments to set goals and gauge student progress. Second, we have emphasized teacher collaboration. Our district is using the “data teams” process, where teachers meet regularly to unwrap the standards, identify student needs, collaboratively plan instruction, and then look at the resulting student performance data to evaluate student progress. *Eureka Math* has been invaluable in providing many instructional strategies, but our systematic approach to teacher collaboration has been invaluable as well.

## HOW HAS THE SECOND YEAR OF EUREKA BEEN DIFFERENT FROM THE FIRST?

When we adopted it, we did experience some transitional issues, such as issues around pacing. But these issues have been less pronounced in our second year as we have prioritized our work as a district and our teachers have gotten more adept at using the curriculum. One thing that’s been awesome is Eureka has been increasing the number of home and parent resources our teachers can share with families, like Homework Helpers. Initially that was an issue — parents trying to help at home and feeling like the math was different from the math they had in school. Parents want to be able to help their kids. When they don’t know how to access the content themselves, it becomes a problem. But as we’ve sent home resources, we feel that we are addressing those concerns and that parents are more comfortable helping their children.