

# West Baton Rouge: Continuing Gains After 3 Years

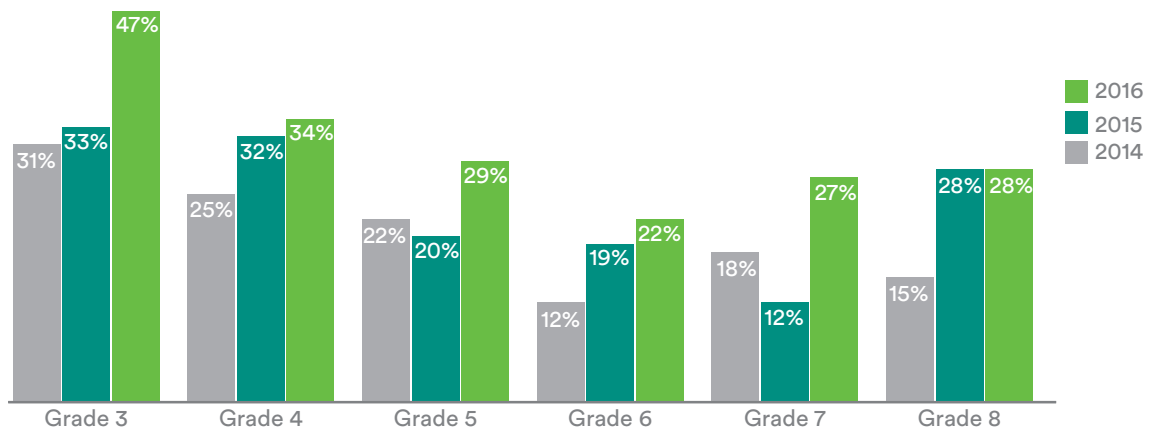
West Baton Rouge Parish Schools (LA) was among the first districts to adopt Eureka Math™—in all five of its elementary schools in the 2013–2014 school year and in all three of its middle schools in 2015–2016.

Students continue to make steady progress based on multiple measures, including the standards-based state exams. In 2016, three out of the six elementary and middle schools with assessment scores received bonus points in math on their overall School Performance Scores, up from only one the previous year.

Students: 3,823  
Special education: 9%  
Economically disadvantaged: 69%  
Whites: 43.1%  
Blacks: 51.8%  
Hispanics/English Language Learners: 4.3%

We spoke to Cindy Ourso (primary curriculum supervisor) and Dawn Henry (secondary curriculum supervisor) about how the district has managed to sustain its gains and how it's addressing current challenges.

Percentage of West Baton Rouge Students Scoring Mastery or Above, 2014–2016



## WHAT ARE YOU SEEING IN YOUR CLASSROOMS THIS YEAR?



Cindy Ourso

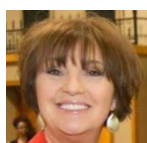
**Cindy:** We're now in our fourth year of implementation in elementary schools and we've seen a real evolution. The first two years were focused on learning the materials and learning the math. Since then, our teachers have really started to customize their lessons,

focusing on the major content in each grade and how to support students who are struggling. They used to be reluctant to veer from the lesson, but are now more confident in making judgments about what to condense.

“[Teachers] used to be reluctant to veer from the lesson, but are now more confident in making judgments about what to condense.”

— Cindy Ourso

Primary Curriculum Supervisor



Dawn Henry

**Dawn:** We're seeing more students coming into middle school on grade level with a better understanding of math. We're also seeing a lot of teacher collaboration, talking about modules, and sharing benchmark assessments. Teachers and students are taking more ownership of learning the math.

## HOW ARE YOU HELPING STUDENTS WHO ARE BEHIND CLOSE THE GAPS?

**Cindy:** In 5th grade, for instance, we've identified a cohort of students to whom we're giving extra support before they have to tackle fractions in the second semester. We're giving them extra instructional time to go back over 3rd and 4th grade math so that they have a solid foundation when fractions come up later in the year. As a result, they have so much more confidence and, in some cases, they're doing better than the students who didn't need the extra help.

## WHAT OTHER CHALLENGES ARE YOU EXPERIENCING?

**Dawn:** In middle school we've had some turnover so we're starting over with new teachers who haven't taught this way before. They're having to master both the content and pedagogy. Thankfully, we have coaches at every school who are a huge part of our implementation.

**“Teachers and students are taking more ownership of learning the math.”**

— Dawn Henry  
Secondary Curriculum Supervisor

## WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO COLLEAGUES WHO ARE JUST STARTING WITH EUREKA MATH?

**Dawn:** Having a math coach at every school allows collaboration across grade levels and grade bands. Really listening to teacher feedback makes implementation so much more positive. We're small [10 schools], which makes this collaboration easier. In middle school, we've also focused a lot on our feeder elementary schools, with coaches and teachers working together.

**Cindy:** Make friends with other districts. We work a lot with Vermilion, for instance. We also send teams of coaches and teachers to every state PD session. Take advantage of Eureka training and all the online tools.