

DETROIT PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Math Proficiency on the Rise in Detroit Public Schools

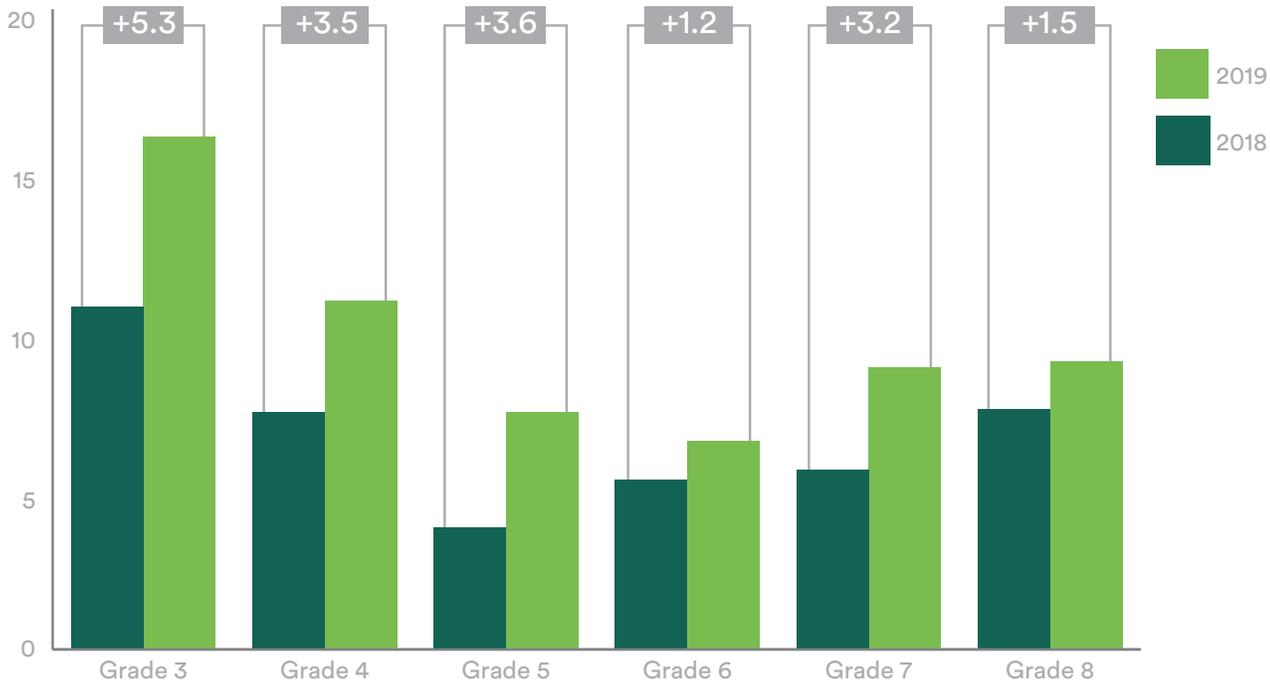
Detroit Public Schools adopted *Eureka Math*® in Grades K–8 in the fall of the 2018–2019 school year. And state test results show that, after just a year, the percentage of students considered proficient in math grew in every grade using the curriculum. Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction Beth Gonzalez recently reflected on the transition to *Eureka Math* and what’s next for Motor City schools.

Gonzalez says that before selecting *Eureka Math*, the district conducted a curriculum audit and discovered that its math curriculum for K–8, EnvisionMath, didn’t meet current college- and career-readiness standards. So the district formed a committee of teachers, principals, and administrators to review alternative curricular resources. The consensus was that *Eureka Math* would be the best choice.

That choice is paying off, Gonzalez says: “We are seeing the impact of *Eureka Math* in multiple ways.”

DISTRICT PROFILE
K–12
49,000 students
104 schools
Adopted Eureka Math
 • Grades K–8: 2018–2019

Detroit Public Schools Community District, Percentage of Students Scoring Advanced or Proficient on the M-STEP Math Assessment, SY 2017–18 to SY 2018–19



For one thing, Gonzalez says, teacher instruction has been much more effective. “Teachers are thinking about the mathematics differently. They are solving problems, talking to one another about mathematics, and using mathematical models in their practice that they were previously unfamiliar with,” she says.

As for students, Gonzalez says they are working at a new level. “During the 2018–2019 year, it was observable the difference in the level of engagement of students and the quality of the work that they were producing,” she says. She adds that a survey of students confirmed that they found the new curriculum’s academic work more rigorous and engaging.

And the increase in end-of-year proficiency scores on the state’s M-STEP Mathematics assessment was a big win. “The rate of growth (in Detroit) exceeded the rate of growth statewide in all tested grade levels,” Gonzalez says. “We are excited to move into our second year of implementation with momentum from our positive test scores.”

Switching to new curricular resources, of course, also brings challenges. In Detroit’s case, teachers needed coaching to meet the pacing requirements of *Eureka Math*.

Gonzalez noted that major shifts in instruction, like the one Detroit undertook, can’t succeed without a significant investment in teacher professional development. The district, in collaboration with Great Minds®, offered summer professional development for teachers. The district also took advantage of all of the curriculum’s available resources. For example, Gonzalez says, “teachers have access to *Eureka Math*’s library of professional development videos and are leveraging them in collaborative and individual planning.”

This year, instructional leadership teams, made up of administrators and master teachers, are discussing key topics over multiple weeks. And the district is working to build coaching leadership in its schools.

Parents needed help understanding why their children’s homework looked so different from past assignments. To help parents and guardians, the district set up a teacher-staffed homework hotline to answer their questions in real time. “This has been a really helpful strategy in reducing families’ anxieties around helping their children,” Gonzalez says.

When asked what advice she would offer schools considering *Eureka Math*, Gonzalez says they should make sure to invest in professional learning and not wait to shift to high-quality materials. Our kids deserve better, she says. Without a rigorous curriculum like *Eureka Math*, “they are not going to reach the levels of proficiency to succeed in higher-level mathematics and be on a trajectory in a math or science field in post-secondary school.”

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Assistant Superintendent of
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