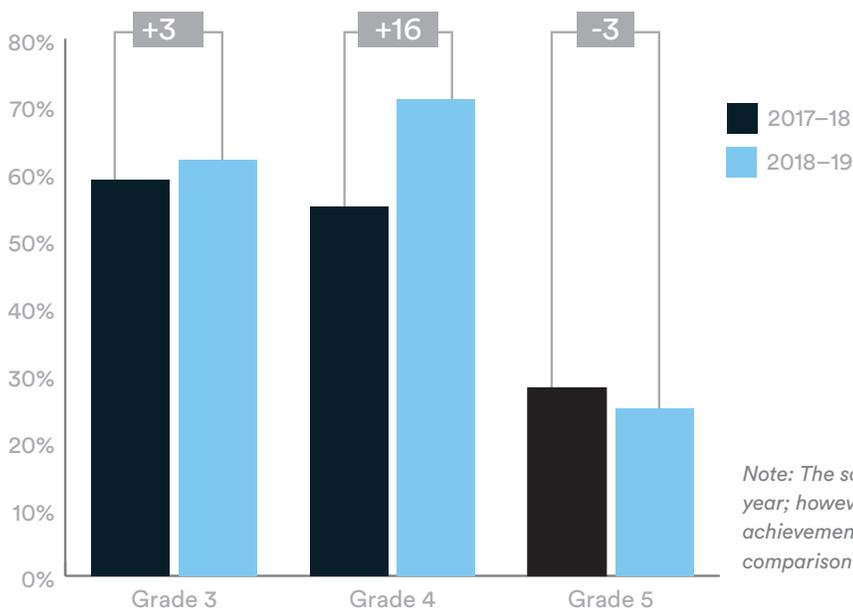


BROOKLYN CHARTER SCHOOL, BROOKLYN, NY

Engaging, Relevant Lessons Lead to Achievement Gains

When did the leaders of Brooklyn Charter School know that *Wit & Wisdom*® was having an impact beyond the impressive gains in achievement test scores, gains that averaged five percentage points in the past year alone?

% of students scoring 3 or higher on New York State test



SCHOOL PROFILE
 250 students in Kindergarten through Grade 5
 Adopted *Wit & Wisdom*® in School Year 2017-2018

Note: The school started using Wit & Wisdom in the 2017-2018 school year; however, because New York State began using a different achievement test in 2018, the SY 2016-2017 scores do not provide useful comparison data.

Pamptata Sanders, interim acting assistant principal, knew when she visited classrooms and observed students responding to questions about their books in detailed, complete sentences and noticed how engaged and excited the students were about what they were reading.

Sajeda Belayet, a Grade 2 integrated coteacher, knew when she could tell parents that their Grade 2 students were writing full paragraphs with topic sentences and supporting evidence.

Anna Toma, a Grade 3 integrated coteacher, knew the first time she reviewed the curriculum and saw the engaging topics and texts, the sentence starters, the linking words, and the focus on teaching students to support their point of view with evidence from the text. “My students just loved the first modules on the oceans, outer space, and immigration,” she says.

COHERENCE PLUS FLEXIBILITY

All these educators appreciate *Wit & Wisdom*'s comprehensiveness, coherence across grades, and flexibility. "The biggest plus is having a roadmap for the whole year, but you also can definitely make the modules your own," says Belayet. For example, she supplemented the civil rights unit with many videos of that era. Belayet and others have taken advantage of the many museums in New York City to supplement the art instruction, another widely appreciated feature of the curriculum. Toma says the media—the art, photos, and illustrations—make the curriculum more relevant and engaging for students.

Since adopting the curriculum in the 2017-2018 school year, the school's leaders have continued to make improvements. They have strengthened professional development, including providing access to the digital Teacher Resource Pack that Great Minds® offers. School administrators also make available on-demand support to teachers who request it. Toma, Sanders, and Ruby Doswell, a literacy specialist who once taught Grade 3 and Kindergarten, help teach some modules as well.

"YOU CAN'T WING IT"

In her new role as literacy specialist this year, Doswell is focused on helping teachers find extra resources aligned with each module and on annotating the visual resources with key vocabulary words.

What advice do these professionals from the charter school offer other schools that are just starting with *Wit & Wisdom*? Take advantage of all the professional development possible, such as the curriculum's Teacher Resource Pack. Make use of Facebook, Twitter, and other online tools to connect with colleagues. Listen closely and respond to teachers' concerns. And be ready to work hard. "You can't wing it with this curriculum," says Sanders. But the effort pays off for educators and students alike.

"The biggest plus is having a roadmap for the whole year, but you also can definitely make the modules your own."

— Sajeda Belayet Grade 2 integrated coteacher