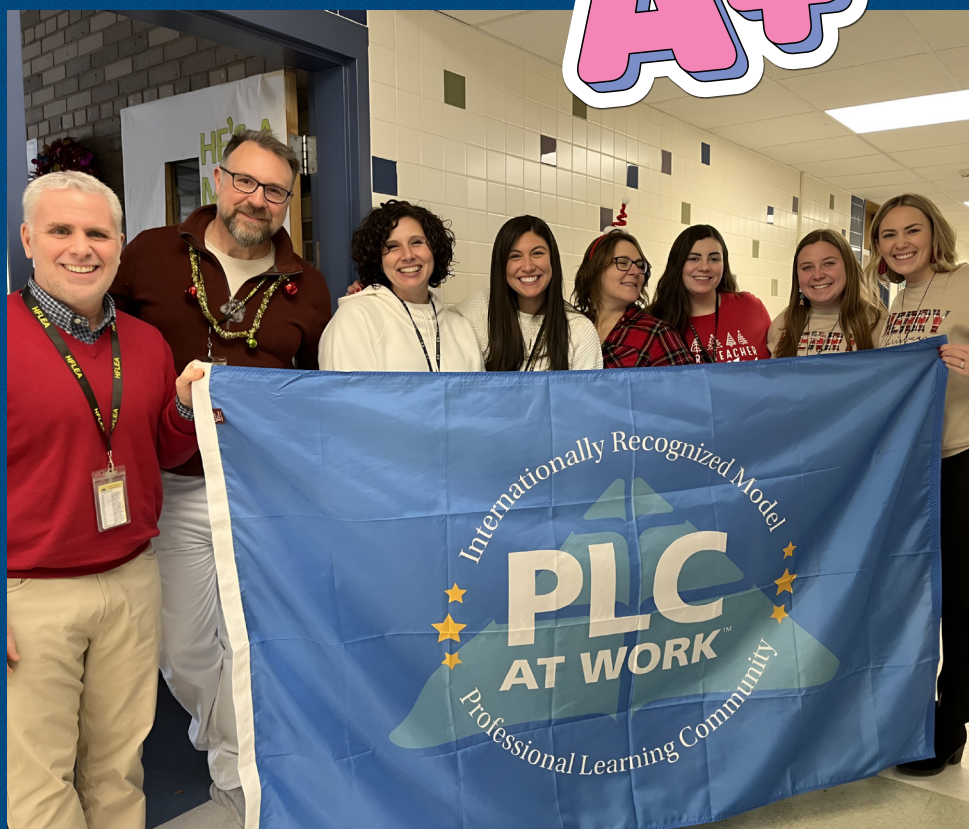


# Evidence of Excellence



In three years, one student cohort improved ELA proficiency by

**28%**



HONEOYE FALLS-LIMA CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT • HONEOYE FALLS, NEW YORK



Solution Tree



LET'S SEE WHAT WE CAN DO TOGETHER





**2,046 STUDENTS / 19% FREE OR REDUCED LUNCH / 2% ENGLISH LEARNERS / 11% SPECIAL NEEDS**

**90% WHITE / 4% HISPANIC / 1% ASIAN OR FILIPINO / 1% BLACK / 4% MULTIRACIAL**

# Targeted teamwork drives steady academic gains districtwide

## CHALLENGE

When Holly Sidebottom arrived at Honeoye Falls-Lima Central School District in 2017, she joined Superintendent Gene Mancuso, who had been leading the district since 2013. Together, they pursued a shared vision of creating a genuine professional learning community (PLC).

Collaboration was not fully integrated into teaching practices at HF-L, and many educators worked independently. The district also lacked a guaranteed and viable curriculum as well as common assessments. And while overall enrollment began to decline, student needs increased significantly, with more English language learners, students with disabilities, and students qualifying for free or reduced-price lunch.

## IMPLEMENTATION

The journey to achieving a culture of collective teacher efficacy at HF-L started when district leaders attended their first PLC at Work® Institute in 2017. That fall, collaboration structures were strengthened, and teacher leadership roles were realigned to support professional learning teams.

By the 2018–2019 school year, the district partnered with Solution Tree associate Jamie Virga to focus on building accountability systems and consistency. Through on-site coaching, teams refined the use of essential standards charts and common assessments, ensuring students in every classroom had access to the same high-quality instruction.

During the summer of 2020, in a virtual session with Response to Intervention (RTI) at Work™ associate

Mike Mattos, educators applied their essential standards to confront learning loss and identify targeted supports for students. From this session, staff began a book study on *Taking Action: A Handbook for RTI at Work™* by Mike Mattos, Austin Buffum, Janet Malone, Nicole Dimich, Sarah Schuhl, and Luis F. Cruz. This resource helped HF-L educators continue to refine multitiered system of supports in every building.

- PLC at Work Institute
- PD with associates Jamie Virga, Jack Baldermann, and Mike Mattos
- *Taking Action* book study
- PD with Anthony Muhammad
- Collaborative Common Assessment PD with Sarah Schuhl and Nicole Dimich
- PD with Chad M. V. Dumas, Dave Ludy, Dave Chiprany, Matthew Treadway, and Kenneth C. Williams
- Assessment Collaborative Institute
- PD with Anthony R. Reibel
- *Embracing Relational Teaching* book study
- *Beyond PLC Lite* book study

Next, HF-L hosted a two-day institute with associate Anthony Muhammad. This deepened their focus on transforming school culture, sustaining a nurturing daily environment and collective responsibility for all students.



*We have a structure to survive any shift now.  
We're in this mode. This is what we do now.*

— **GENE MANCUSO** / SUPERINTENDENT, HONEOYE FALLS-  
LIMA CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT, NEW YORK

During this same school year (2021–2022), Solution Tree provided focused support on working with organizational resistors to solidify the shift in culture. Teams also continued to attend PLC at Work Institutes, including a virtual keynote with Kenneth C. Williams to expand shared purpose.

HF-L's focus then shifted to include quality assessment. Associate Sarah Schuhl provided targeted training on developing collaborative common assessments, and Nicole Dimich led workshops on building a balanced assessment system. The team followed this with an Assessment Collaborative Institute in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. Throughout the 2022–2024 school years, associates Chad M. V. Dumas, Dave Ludy, Dave Chiprany, Matthew Treadway, and Anthony R. Reibel also provided crucial expertise in leadership, multitiered system of supports (MTSS) alignment, and evidence-based teaching.

## RESULTS

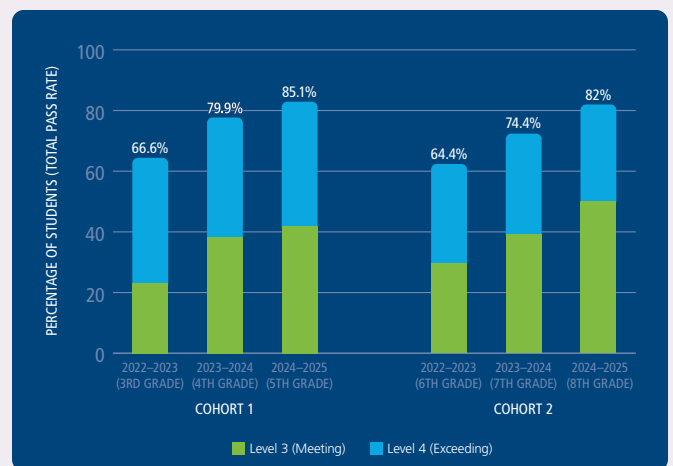
Over the past several years, HF-L's sustained commitment to the PLC at Work process has yielded significant, measurable gains across the district. The collaborative culture drove consistent improvement in student proficiency and efficacy. Data on the same students tracked over three years demonstrate the power of collective efficacy in action.

- More than 40% of students in key cohorts now exceed state standards (Level 4 proficiency)
- Current sixth graders saw 28% growth in ELA proficiency over three years (Grades 3–5).
- Current ninth graders achieved 27% growth in ELA proficiency over three years (Grades 6–8).

The district also achieved critical operational outcomes:

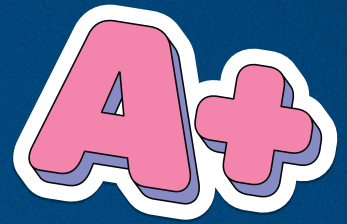
- Manor Intermediate was recognized as a Model PLC at Work® school in 2023.
- The district saw a significant decrease in discipline referrals.
- Staff report a stronger sense of purpose, shared responsibility, and heightened collective efficacy.

## HONEOYE FALLS-LIMA CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT ELA PROFICIENCY RATES





# Start your success story



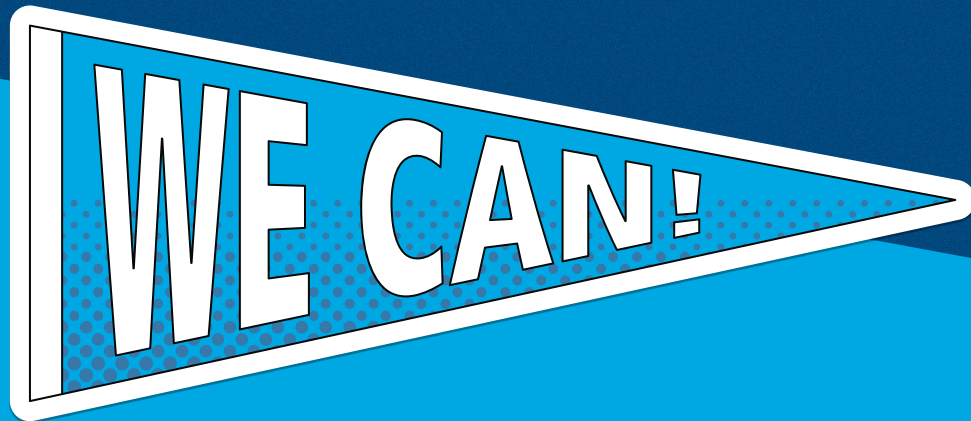
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Please note that all data and people mentioned in this story represent solely the time frame in which Solution Tree actively worked with the school or district and the time frame in which the school or district committed to implementing processes and practices set forth by Solution Tree. Building and district leaders and staff featured in Evidence of Excellence stories may have changed since the stories were published.