



PLC AT WORK™

EVIDENCE OF EFFECTIVENESS

U.S. Grant High School OKLAHOMA CITY, OKLAHOMA

In less than four years, U.S. Grant went from failing to meet student testing standards to nearly acing the state's A–F report card.



U.S. Grant High School students

DEMOGRAPHICS

- 123 Teachers
- 1,640 Students
- 89% Free and reduced lunch
- 30% Limited English proficient
- 15% Special education
- 8% African American

- 73% Hispanic
- 1% Asian/Pacific Islander
- 13% White

U.S. Grant High School is the largest school in Oklahoma City Public Schools, a multicultural district serving approximately 43,000 students.

CHALLENGE

The culture and media surrounding U.S. Grant High School has been historically negative. The school has been called a “dropout factory” and “ground zero of education reform in Oklahoma.” According to the Oklahoma City Police Department, five of the six known gangs in Oklahoma City reside within district boundaries. Staff spent their time focusing on compliance and order instead of student achievement.

On March 22, 2010, the Oklahoma City Public School Board of Education designated U.S. Grant a Turnaround School and allocated additional funding under a School Improvement Grant. For the 2010–11 school year, U.S. Grant did not make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) and was placed on the state “needs improvement” list for the sixth year in a row.

IMPLEMENTATION

Under the leadership of former Principal Tamie Sanders (currently director of secondary Turnaround Schools), U.S. Grant began its journey to become a professional learning community. The staff have focused their efforts on monitoring student learning on a timely basis, creating systems of intervention, and building teacher capacity to work as members of high-performing collaborative teams.

Teacher teams develop common assessments based on appropriate learning objectives and depth of knowledge. The teams give the assessments to students in a consistent manner and analyze the results for effective instructional strategies, curricular improvement areas, and student strengths/weaknesses. This drives instruction, which is supported by a team approach to enrichment and remediation. Following are some of the interventions teams use to provide additional time and support for learning:

1. Differentiated, tiered lessons
2. Flexible grouping among teachers to accommodate varying student learning levels
3. Intersession opportunities to remediate and allow students opportunities for success
4. Plans created and monitored for each senior to meet graduation requirements

Department chairs and team leaders are strategically selected based on collaborative and leadership skills, not seniority. These leaders participate in ongoing training to further develop their facilitation skills. Leaders and administrators regularly participate in the schoolwide leadership team and monitor the protocols of the department collaborative teams. Protocols include:

1. Establish and review SMART goals.
2. Focus on the four critical PLC questions in an effective and efficient manner.
3. Use effective frequent common assessments that truly measure and monitor learning.
4. Analyze data to the student level.
5. Monitor for conflicts and barriers that get in the way of student learning.

Key Attributes of Success

- Structured approach to implementing the professional learning communities process
- Daily teacher collaboration during the regular school day
- Development of authentic common formative and summative assessments
- Use of data to drive instruction
- Engaging students in monitoring their own learning
- Ongoing professional development provided by experts in the field of education



“Solution Tree helped expand how we utilize PLC time by guiding us to create group intervention plans; become vertically aligned; and use benchmarks, common assessments, and state exam data to identify students in need of intervention. The student achievement gains U.S. Grant has made in recent years were possible because we became a team of teachers, instead of individual teachers, with a clearly defined path to reach our goals.”

—Maria Wartchow, Algebra 2 and 3, Trigonometry, and Honors Precalculus teacher

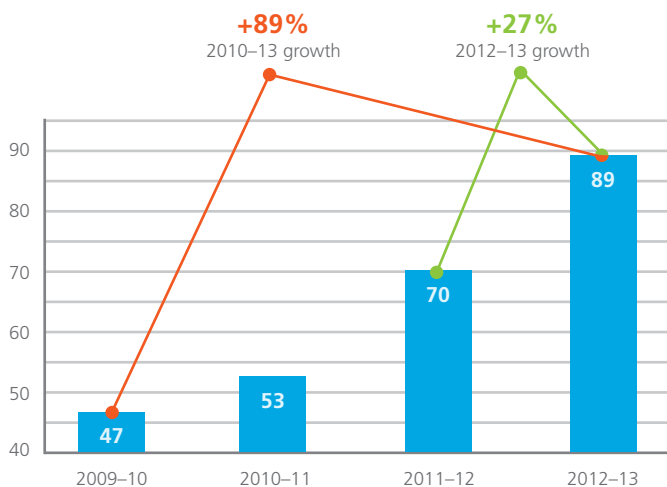
RESULTS

In Oklahoma, seniors must pass a minimum of four (of seven) End-of-Instruction (EOI) tests to graduate. At the start of the 2011–12 school year, 204 seniors had not met the state testing requirements for graduation. Administrators, counselors, and teachers analyzed the data on each senior to ensure they had the maximum opportunities and resources to meet the state requirements. The school focused on student learning and improving the culture simultaneously. On May 24, 2012, word began to spread of the positive changes going on at the school, with local news channel News 9 reporting that “Principal Sanders and her staff transformed the culture of Grant.” By the end of the 2011–12 school year, only four seniors had not met the state testing requirements, and 35 seniors passed all seven EOI assessments.

The academic growth that occurred during the 2011–12 school year made a huge impact and ignited motivation for continued improvement. The unprecedented success of that year’s seniors raised the bar for all students. For the 2012–13 school year, the number of seniors not meeting state graduation requirements was reduced to 85 compared to 204 for the previous year. For the 2013–14 school year, U.S. Grant has 117 seniors who have passed all seven EOI tests, with an additional 35 who need to pass just one more test to have passed all seven.

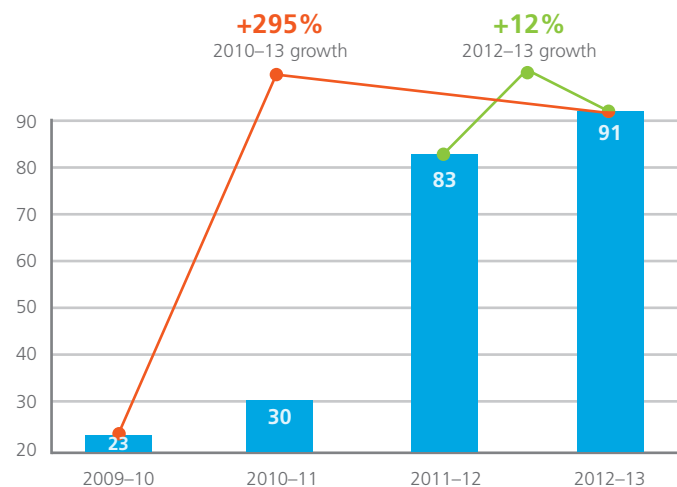
English III Year-to-Year Comparison:

Percent of students who passed End-of-Instruction (EOI) Assessment



Algebra I Year-to-Year Comparison:

Percent of students who passed End-of-Instruction (EOI) Assessment



Reach new heights of student learning

You're dedicated to helping your students succeed. At Solution Tree, our experts are committed to equipping you with solutions that directly impact student achievement. We invite you to explore the best of content-rich, research-based professional development and discover just how rewarding the journey can be.

Here are just a few ways we can work together:

Customized Workshops

Bring an expert to your school! Plan a dynamic one-day session or a series of trainings. Just tell us your goals, and we'll customize an experience for you and your team.

Standard Workshops

Ever attended one of our workshops and wished you could bring it back to the rest of your team? Now you can! Let our experts come to you.

Keynotes

Bring a keynote speaker into your school, and inspire your team to take the next steps on your professional learning journey! Keynotes typically include a slide presentation and a general question-and-answer segment.

Interactive Web and Video Conferencing

Get top-notch PD from the comfort of your office or classroom! Discover personalized, research-based support from our experts on more than 100 topics, including Common Core, RTI, and 21st century skills.

Long-Term Sustainable Plans

Let us put you on the path to long-term success. We'll partner with you to develop a comprehensive and sustainable professional development plan based on your most critical challenges.

Hybrid Events

Experience a PLC at Work™ Institute from the comfort of your own school! Live streaming video will deliver dynamic and engaging keynotes, breakouts, and panel discussions to your entire team.

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