

Success Story

Newhall School District

VALENCIA, CALIFORNIA

For three years, Newhall School District witnessed continued growth in English and mathematics proficiency across all grades through the PLC at Work® process.



Solution Tree

Newhall School District

VALENCIA, CALIFORNIA

► DEMOGRAPHICS

- › **6,537** Students
- › **12.02%** Special education
- › **23.5%** English language learners
- › **48.4%** Hispanic
- › **2.3%** African American
- › **30.5%** Caucasian
- › **5.8%** Multiracial
- › **9.5%** Asian
- › **0.1%** Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
- › **0.4%** Native American

Newhall School District is a group of ten elementary schools located in Valencia, California, a neighborhood of approximately 61,000 residents in Santa Clarita, California.



► CHALLENGE

When superintendent Jeff Pelzel first arrived at the Newhall School District, Common Core State Standards for literacy and math instruction were also being rolled out across California.

Pelzel, then an assistant superintendent and content director for Newhall, knew that finding the right instruction strategy for its ten elementary schools—five of which were classified as Title I—would be critical to student success. Approximately 30 percent of Newhall's students at that time were English learners, and around 45 percent of students came from an economically disadvantaged background.

"Every other district around here adopted its math curriculum early, but I knew what was available was not good for us, so we delayed and delayed," Pelzel said.

After attending an Association of California School Administrators workshop, as well as watching Timothy D. Kanold's breakout session at a PLC at Work® institute, Pelzel said he knew he had found the answer.

► IMPLEMENTATION

Sarah Schuhl, a certified Mathematics at Work™ associate, began working with Newhall to implement the ten High-Leverage Team Actions detailed in the Mathematics Beyond the Common Core in a PLC at Work series. Four teachers from each school were involved in the rollout process, ensuring consistent implementation across the entire district.

In year two, Schuhl met with every K–5 teacher, focusing an entire day on each grade level, three times during the school year to unwrap standards for upcoming mathematics curriculum units. The ten High Level Team Actions were reviewed before, during, and after each unit as well.

In year three, sixth-grade teachers met with Schuhl three times during the year to unwrap standards and create common assessments, and response to intervention (RTI) practices were created across the entire district with a focus on Tier 2 mathematics interventions. Schuhl also met with new teachers three times during the year to share mathematics instructional and assessment practices.

“It’s been the most amazing relationship and partnership ... Our teachers, they love teaching math, and the kids love it. They’re confident in what they’re doing now.”

—Jeff Pelzel, superintendent, Newhall School District, California

► IMPLEMENTATION CONTINUED

In year four, Schuhl met with special education teachers for mathematics training three times. Leadership teams also met with Schuhl to refine the RTI pyramid and implement strong core instruction using the ten team actions and the four critical questions of PLC at Work.

► RESULTS

After several years of involvement with the Mathematics at Work™ process, Newhall’s learners are showing incredible results with Common Core standards.

According to the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress, Newhall’s students collectively improved their proficiency in mathematics from 54 percent to 71.85 percent over three years. English proficiency also improved from 67 percent to 71.13 percent in that span.

“Despite our higher English Learner numbers and higher poverty numbers, we are beating the odds and outperforming others around us with significantly lower numbers.” Pelzel said. “We know what the data typically tells us about poverty, and we are showing those odds can be beaten.”

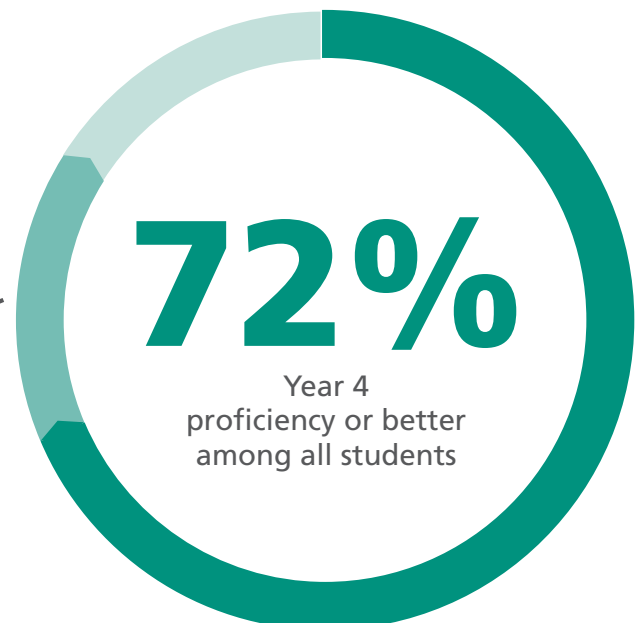
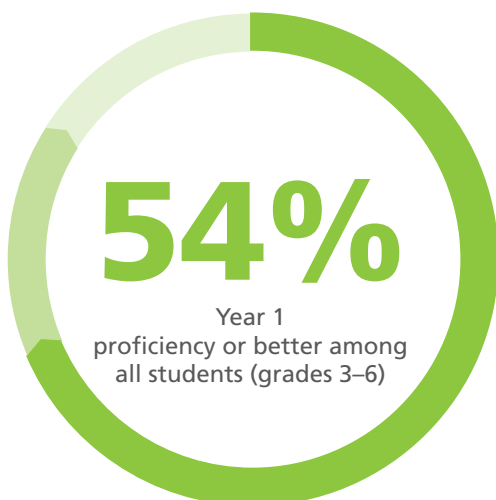
As for Newhall’s economically disadvantaged students, 48.1 percent are now meeting or exceeding state math standards, compared to the Los Angeles County rate of

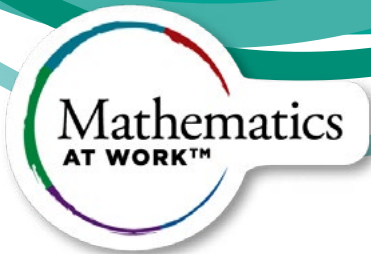
“If you’re going to invest in this work, it has to be about a long-term investment. Not one year, not two years, but a minimum of three-plus years of work,” Pelzel said. “If you can do that, you’re going to be in a much better situation.”

28.6 percent. Newhall’s English learner students are also outperforming the county 30.7 percent to 12 percent.

The progress at Newhall isn’t limited to test scores either. Pelzel said that some instructors now have more than 20 days of professional development backing up their hard work and that his district is united through the PLC at Work process, ensuring high levels of learning for all.

“Our teachers have bought into the philosophy around facilitating learning around kids, as well as using data to drive instruction and coaching to improve their practices,” Pelzel said. “To me, that’s what it’s all about.”





Start Your Success Story

Our Mathematics at Work™ experts will help you establish a reflect, refine, and act formative learning process for students, teachers, and mathematics education leaders. Establish math strategies for assessment, intervention, homework, and lesson designs that ensure every student can learn mathematics.

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