

# Performance Management Report

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*Michael & Susan Dell*  
FOUNDATION



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Performance  
Management  
Report

# Making the Grade

The statistics are frightening. It seems that everyday in America we hear facts and figures that should scare our country into action. A persistent achievement gap between students from different economic circumstances and racial and ethnic backgrounds plagues our communities. We hear that kids — especially minorities and those from low-income, urban areas — are not reading at their grade level, scoring shockingly low on standardized tests, and failing to graduate from high school.

# Making the Grade

More than **30 percent** of US students drop out before graduating from high school.<sup>1</sup>

Almost **50 percent** of minority kids drop out of high school.<sup>2</sup>

By 4th grade, Black and Latino students are on average nearly **3 years** behind their white peers.<sup>3</sup>

Black and Latino 17 year olds **do math at the same levels** as white 13 year-olds.<sup>4</sup>

**44 percent** of high school dropouts are not in the labor force and an additional **15 percent** are unemployed.<sup>5</sup>

Only **9 percent** of young adults from low income families graduate from college by age 24.<sup>6</sup>

Graduation rates are highly correlated with lifetime earnings. Without a high school diploma, a drop out will earn \$600,000 less over his or her lifetime than a high school graduate.<sup>7</sup> A college degree translates into a 73% lifetime earnings premium over just graduating from high school.<sup>8</sup> A professional degree holder earns more than three times what a high school graduate makes, despite the opportunity cost of six to eight years of additional education.<sup>9</sup>

A child's education will impact their entire life. Every child. From every city. Fortunately, in today's schools there are opportunities to change the course of a child's life. There are opportunities to intervene and address issues that arise. There are ways to help ensure a better future for children, regardless of their

race or hometown. But to help a child, teachers and school administrators must understand the issues a child is facing. They must be able to identify the obstacles each child must overcome to graduate.

Each fall at school campuses across the country, hundreds of students arrive with a clean slate. Teachers and administrators are not familiar with all of the students. They've had limited, if any, interaction with each child. Limited academic or background information is readily available or easily accessible on the student population. Each day of the school year, new information becomes available as students interact with the faculty. Attendance records are taken. Test scores are recorded. Behaviors are observed. Student progress is charted.



# Making the Grade

Students who complete Algebra II are more than twice as likely to graduate from college.<sup>10</sup>



Meanwhile, the central office is focused on making the school run smoothly. On any given day, the principal is evaluating the substitute teacher fill rate, trying to determine how many teachers are qualified to instruct advanced placement courses, and charting the students' success against standards set in math and science.

Policymakers and school administrators have stressed the importance of accountability. And federal, state and district indicators are designed to benchmark academic performance, student growth, college readiness and the quality of teaching. But how is the information being used for the betterment of the students, the faculty and the district?

The key to improving graduation rates, college readiness, academic achievement and ultimately life success may just lie in how

Students who complete a core curriculum in high school are eight percent more likely to stay in college and attain a bachelor's degree than those who do not.<sup>11</sup>

well districts can manage the performance of their students and teachers, indicate trends as they develop, and create incentives and actions plans before big problems arise. This type of type of data-rich, technology-enabled, action oriented approach in schools is called *performance management*.

Performance management is a leadership culture dedicated to positively affecting student achievement through technology to gather, share and act upon relevant and timely information. It provides educators insight into what is working and what's not,

including relevant, timely information at the district, class, and student levels. Tracking information such as attendance, teacher attrition and performance in certain courses can be invaluable. Having access to real-time information related to the number of students in the free lunch program to the number of classrooms in use each period is essential. But performance management is about more than just data and information. It's about the students — and helping them graduate high school and get to and through college and ready for life's many challenges.



# Anthony's Story

To truly understand how performance management can impact a student's achievement, one can look to the knowledge that can be gained by reviewing the data available on a single student and the steps that can be taken in a culture dedicated to responding to timely, relevant information.



# Meet Anthony Hall. He is a 9th grader in Ms. Reynold's homeroom class at Austin High School in the Austin Independent School District.

Using the academic dashboard, Anthony's teachers are able to compare his scores and data to other students at his grade level and determine his performance based on metrics such as student participation, academic performance, growth or student progress, academic rigor and college and career readiness.

Historically, Anthony has been an average student. His student snapshot in the district's performance management academic dashboard states that he is currently at grade level and has performed well this year. In all of his classes, Anthony is an active participant. Compared to others in his grade, he is on track for academic performance at his grade level and is being sufficiently challenged with his work. Though he's still at goal for college and career readiness, he is in the lower half

of his class in this category so his teachers will continue to keep a close watch on this performance metric to ensure he doesn't fall behind his classmates.

## The more you know about your students, the more they will learn.

The area in which Anthony is struggling is in growth or student progress. This is indicative of Anthony's current year grades, benchmark test scores, and changes in trajectory. Based on his grades, credit accumulation and state test performance, he is on track to graduate. However, his grades alone don't tell the whole story. Recent scores show he is falling behind in math. His state test scores have declined

to near fail in the past two years. He received a D in 8th grade pre-Algebra. In the first six weeks of school, he missed six Algebra I class periods and is now failing the first six-week benchmarks in that course.

Given that that students who fail Algebra 1 are four times more likely to drop out of high school,<sup>12</sup> Anthony's current average of 67 percent in the course is cause for some concern.

Even though Anthony seems to be headed in the right direction toward graduation, by leveraging the information available to them through performance management Anthony's teachers can intervene and address the issues he's having with math. His teachers can help manage his academic performance and help him improve before he fails the class.

Dallas Independent School District » Bradcock High School » 9th Grade » Allison Reynolds' Class

STUDENT SNAPSHOT

Hello, Allison Reynolds | Help | Log out

Switch Dashboard Level... GO → Select a Student... GO → PRINT

**Anthony Hall** Grade 9  
Mrs. Fey's Homeroom

Student Information | Current Schedule | **Academic Dashboard** | Academic History

Overview | Student Participation | Academic Performance | Growth | Academic Rigor | College & Career Readiness

**Anthony Hall Profile**

Anthony is currently at grade level and has performed well; however, recent scores show that he is falling behind in math:

- TAKS scores declining to near fail for the last three years
- Received D in 8th grade pre-Algebra
- Failing first six-weeks benchmarks in Algebra I
- Missed 6 Algebra class periods in the last six weeks

Students who exhibit this profile may benefit from early intervention.

[View full profile and suggested interventions](#)

**SUMMARY** STATUS PEER COMPARISON

<b>Student Participation</b> Student is actively and productively engaged	<b>BELOW GOAL</b>	Bottom 1/4
<b>Academic Performance</b> Student is at grade level	<b>BELOW GOAL</b>	Third 1/4
<b>Growth</b> Student is making appropriate progress to remain on track	<b>ON TRACK</b>	Second 1/4
<b>Academic Rigor</b> Student is being challenged	<b>AT GOAL</b>	Second 1/4
<b>College &amp; Career Readiness</b> Student is on college or career track	<b>ON TRACK</b>	Second 1/4

## Student Snapshot Academic Dashboard Overview

The navigation bar offers public and FERPA-protected tabs that will be accessible based on user security rights.

The academic dashboard is the performance management analysis engine of the operation data store. This example contains 5 categories of performance metrics based on analysis of district and state scorecard best practices.

The profile section will summarize the student's current and projected performance to make it more easily understandable and actionable.

Every snapshot will have relevant peer comparisons (e.g. students can be compared to other students in their class, campuses to other campuses within their district etc.).

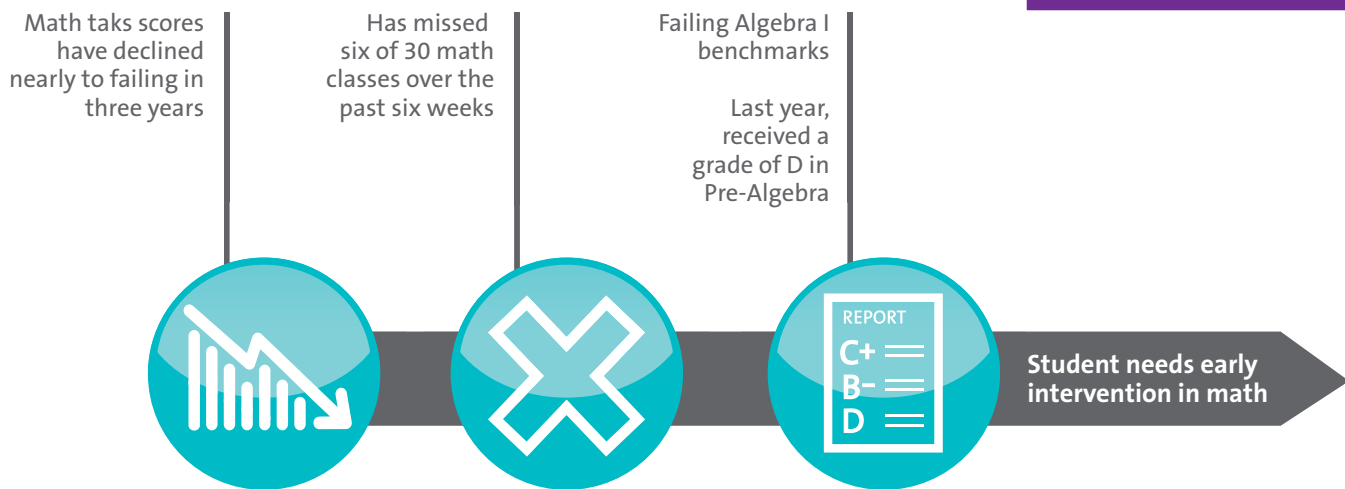
Data that requires intervention will be flagged to make it easier for teachers and principals to find it and to prioritize analysis.

# Anthony's Story

Time is the enemy of the educator — there's never enough of it. If teachers and principals can access information quickly about the performance of their students, they can create individualized instructional plans to turn

around that child's downward spiral. If useful information can be reviewed quickly and accessed when it is most convenient for the teacher, the educators can spend more time focused on the students.

Real-time data can shorten the cycle of intervention from months or years to weeks and days.



Leading indicators are designed to flag emerging issues before they become serious. A performance management system allows the teacher to capture the intervention selected and keep track of whether intervention is working. Performance management saves time and effort that teachers spend each year assessing and diagnosing their students.

By arming educators with powerful leading indicators and information beyond test scores and course grades to predict how well students will perform, real-time data can shorten the cycle of intervention from months or years to weeks and days. Schools already employing these platforms have found that several indicators can predict student academic performance and help them address needs and concerns before or as they occur. Indicators such as attendance and proficiency scoring have long been recorded in school districts.

But when combined with other interesting indicators — like the correlation between pass rates in freshman algebra and graduation rates or period by period attendance — the information exposes powerful insights that allow educators to develop plans for the classroom and individual students that can help them graduate high school and prepare for college. Performance management is making progress in school districts across the country, from New York to Chicago to Oakland to Dallas. These district public schools and

charter schools are employing strategies, cultures, tools and processes to drive toward academic excellence. This report provides an overview of the potential of performance management, its progress in some of the largest urban districts and charter management organizations in the country and a preview into how educators can get started in implementing a performance management initiative.





# What it Takes to Build an Environment for Performance Management

When a school district commits to implementing performance management and using data-driven decision making to drive student performance it is taking a major step toward building a culture of accountability and driving their students and faculty toward excellence. There are four essential elements to building such a culture.

# Goals and Strategies

All teachers want their students to learn. They want to see the kids be successful in life. They want their students to graduate. Central office employees have a vested interest in the students and seek to find the connection between their jobs and metrics such as graduation rates. They all want to see their students excel, graduate high school and progress to college and beyond.

Using a new approach to how information is used in the district and the classroom, performance management allows teachers and administrators to put action plans in place to influence student achievement and graduation rates before the child fails the grade level or the district fails to serve the needs of the child. It also guarantees

efficiencies in the central office that reduce the administrative burden on school leaders so they can increase their focus and time on tasks directly related to improving the quality of teaching and learning.

Performance management can't just be another initiative. The school board, central office, administration, and faculty must connect performance management to the strategic plan of the district. Everyone — from the superintendent to the janitors — must share the same mission and focus on changing behaviors for the betterment of the students. If all goals relate to student-centered work, it creates a common thread among all employees.

In Dallas, students who had three consecutive years of effective teachers improved their math test scores by 21 points, students with three years of ineffective teachers fell 30 points behind.<sup>13</sup>



# Culture & Leadership

As a culture and standard of measurement, performance management does more than provide reams of data to teachers and administrators. It makes the data actionable. It gives the data and information purpose. It empowers districts with information that helps predict and manage performance, rather than just track it.

Performance management is a leadership culture that must be adopted by the entire faculty in order to ensure the positive impact on students district-wide. It is a way to drive accountability, collaboration and information sharing within the district and between administrators and teachers and between schools and the central office.



The district leadership must communicate the importance of and expectation that performance management will allow the entire faculty to engage in data-driven decision making.

But let's face it: change is scary. And performance management requires some big changes. It also requires leaders within the districts who believe that access to timely, relevant information is essential. Leaders who recognize the value of addressing issues when they arise, rather than waiting until it is too late to impact the student outcomes. Leaders who can help

every district employee see how performance management will ease their jobs day-to-day. Leaders who can rally the teachers and administration to work together will embark on a journey toward change.

Transparency between district and classroom can help to build an environment and culture of cooperation. Driven by such collaboration, trust and information sharing, performance management provides insights and encourages goal setting between administrators and educators. It also holds the central office accountable to key targets in support of school and student progress.





Performance management technology ensures that the data is easily digested and understood in a short period of time.

## Technology & Tools

Technology is an essential enabler of performance management. It automates the collection and distribution of information of student performance data so every faculty member has access to timely and relevant information. Technology is what allows administrators and educators to share information and collaborate on action plans to address student and district performance.

The amount of data and information that must be processed at each campus and district to understand student needs, academic achievement and operational demands is overwhelming. Performance management technology ensures that the data is easily digested and understood in a short period of time. It also enables the central office, administrators, and teachers to address specific issues.

Dashboards are more effective at viewing data in finite period of time and are used to monitor daily operations and performance progress because the data and information is real time.

## TECHNOLOGY AND TOOLS IN ACTION

For administrators, a performance management dashboard provides a global view of the school. Given the importance placed on schools to meet state and national standards, principals must focus on “power standards” that are critical metrics by which each school is measured. This interface allows administrators to identify and focus on standards that are highly valued but in which the school has low success. Administrators can then assist teachers in identifying standards that need to be incorporated into lesson plans and revising daily lessons to improve student comprehension.

At the district level, providing actionable academic and operational data through technology can help districts ensure that their central services are effectively

supporting schools. The tools help them understand the data and what it means for the students tomorrow.

Efficiency in central services such as transportation is vital to schools. Bus drivers are often the first point of contact for students and parents in the school day. If that experience is a positive one, it sets the right tone for the child. Also, on-time arrivals at school have a direct impact on student achievement — how can a child be expected to master curriculum taught while the child was stuck on a tardy school bus?

Principals spend large amounts of time trouble shooting when teachers are absent. Substitute teacher fill rates are a major concern, because it requires immediate attention and takes principals away from

being instructional leaders. With online data that is refreshed in real-time, principals can track substitute fill rates easily and spend less time on the issue.

As most teachers begin to prepare for the school year, they are faced with the task of preparing lesson plans for students at various performance levels. Without a performance management system, teachers are only able to review students’ cumulative file — a compilation of hard copy documents that are stored behind locked doors in the central office. When teachers do have time in the day to review the files — usually afterhours or on weekends — they are unable to access the file cabinet in the central office. A performance management portal allows teachers 24-hour access to the information.



## DASHBOARD

A dashboard is an interactive collection of charts, gauges, reports, and other visual indicators that the user has selected to monitor. Unlike a “scorecard” that offers a snapshot of data at a particular moment in time, dashboards are more effective at viewing data in finite period of time (hours or minutes) and are used to monitor daily operations and performance progress because the data and information is real time.

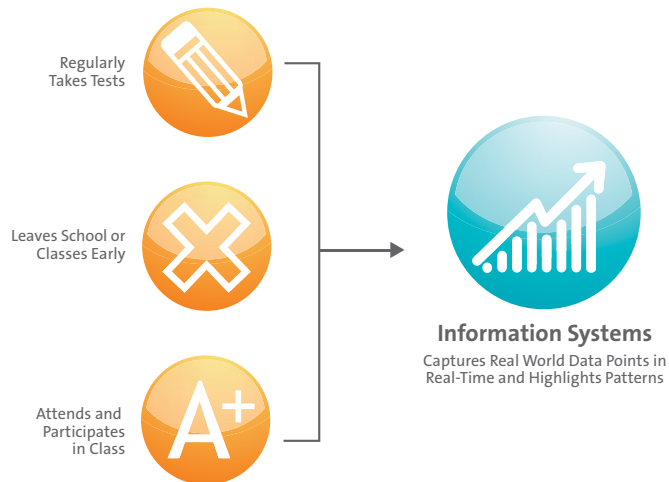
# Technology & Tools

Data points, often from a variety of information systems, are pulled together into metrics that reflect real world events. Teachers need to know about more than test scores to know enough to be an effective, exceptional teacher.

In the classroom, technology gives teachers access to historical, real-time and predictive information on all students to help manage academic performance and anticipate issues that could arise throughout the year. The process of data collection is automated, so teachers don't have to spend hours sifting through reports. So, not only do teachers have access to the data when it is convenient, the technology tools have allowed them to eliminate the timely process of pouring over spreadsheets with highlighters and rulers. They can access summarized, useful

information via a single dashboard on their computers. And, most importantly, they can spend less time accessing and analyzing data, and more time focused on meeting the needs of each individual student.

You may not be able to automatically make the connection between technology, or access to technology, and how it creates a quality teacher. By receiving information on a regular basis, teachers can make adjustments in their instruction and address the actual needs of their students.



Finally, student attendance seems like such a simple issue, but we know students who spend less time learning in school are less likely to graduate. With more granular detail available — such as hourly attendance versus daily attendance — teachers and principals

can see patterns, such as students who are regularly missing first period or groups of students who miss class right after lunch. The staff can take action to ensure those students aren't missing out on classes.



Founded as a non-profit charter management organization (CMO), Aspire Public Schools opened its first two schools in 1999. Across California, Aspire now serves approximately 7,600 students from grades K-12 at 25 school sites in the Bay Area, Central Valley and Los Angeles. By inspiring and preparing students to succeed in college, Aspire seeks to transform communities in which few opportunities to pursue higher education currently exist. The cornerstone of its model is summed up by the organization's philosophy: "College for Certain."

Aspire has been tracking teacher effectiveness and student mastery of state standards for years. By evaluating student achievement data, principals know when to give teachers more support and teachers know what to re-teach to students. By tracking student performance on California Standards Tests and Aspire benchmark tests over time, Aspire identifies the degree to which each of their teachers and students have increased proficiency levels in English language arts (ELA), math, and science, and provides instructional support to minimize decreases in proficiency

from year to year. Instructional coaches and lead teachers help teachers look closely at student data to determine individual student needs and provide targeted support to increase student learning. Teachers, in turn, use data to identify the efficacy of their practice to continue to grow as professional educators.



# Technology & Tools



## TECHNOLOGY IMPLEMENTATION

Performance management technology must meet a number of requirements to ease implementation. Schools must define the data standard and have a clear map of its technical infrastructure. Administrators must have a clear plan to guarantee data quality and governance over the system. It must include a compelling user interface that organizes information for the ease of use by the faculty.

To ensure the successful integration of a performance management platform, principals, and teachers must receive on-going professional development on how to use the data. Often content area specialists can be hired to help interpret data, suggest ideas, and act as sounding boards for teachers. Each district must have someone at all levels — in every department — who can process the information and help others understand the data. Without ongoing training, using

performance management to improve student achievement will fail. Without ongoing training and continuous communication around uses for data, districts create technology tools that go unused. Educators trained in all of the tools available are able to benefit students more because they're able to leverage all of the tools at their disposal.

Large urban districts such as those in New York and Texas have already engaged performance management approaches to improve the quality of their schools and teachers, accountability and incentive standards, and student achievement. Their employees are witnesses to the impact their performance management platforms are having on everyone from the maintenance staff to the teachers to the kids.



## AUSTIN INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

The Austin Independent School District (AISD) administrators and teachers have worked together to implement a performance management system that focuses attention on the objective and activities that are critical to driving continuous improvement of teaching and learning in its classroom.

Students can't learn at school if they aren't at school. Dashboards specifically designed for various audiences — the school board, district leaders, principals, and teachers — have enabled AISD's staff to link policies to leading indicators, designate and diagnose issues by campus, and measure against weekly and daily attendance metrics that are immediately actionable.

One example of the district's efforts comes from Johnston High School, where in 2007 (as in all of the AISD high schools) the school began utilizing the dashboards to address the poor attendance rates of its students. At the classroom level, Student Teacher Advisory Reports (STAR) allowed teachers to view weekly and daily attendance reports that flagged the students with two or more class period absences. Teachers could review attendance codes to determine if an absence was medical-related, a field trip, or an unexcused absence. For the first time, STAR provided teachers and administrators insight into the attendance records of students in real-time, and they were able to quickly identify students with a critical number of unexcused absences by class period and to provide the necessary targeted interventions.

In the district-level six-week dashboard, teachers, principals and district administrators could monitor the impact of their interventions and could see, not only average daily attendance, but also which periods students were missing, for what reason and with what frequency. At Johnston High School, interventions resulted in a 7.3 percentage increase in attendance over the previous year for the sixth six-week period.



Districts rely on strong leadership to empower administrators, teachers, and faculty to take action.

# Processes

Data and information is only as effective as the processes with which it is used. Several key elements must be present throughout all stages of the process of implementing and utilizing performance management: regular reviews of the key metrics at each level, a cultural expectation that follow-through and action is valued, and ongoing training and professional development. The process for implementing performance management is different for every district or school. Typically, they begin with a diagnostic assessment to identify gaps in data, leadership, goals, and technology, and processes.

Even before kicking-off development of a performance management platform, administrators and teachers must work together to develop a list of critical milestones to achieve throughout the development process. The district needs to

have a clear sense of where it wants to go over the next five years. An overall, strategic plan helps leaders focus. They must track their progress against the milestones. And they must develop a list of success metrics, such as usage rates, that can be utilized once the system has been put in place. Districts rely on strong leadership to empower administrators, teachers, and faculty to take action.

Once the technology is in place, building a culture of accountability and excellence using performance management takes time, dedication and stamina. Districts and schools must develop and implement structured data inquiry protocols and processes. Teachers must be allowed time to review the data and understand the implications of the knowledge being offered on each student and their own instruction.

# Processes

Beyond individual districts, schools and classrooms, educators will have an opportunity to increase graduation rates across the U.S.



As soon as access to information becomes possible, teachers and principals, and other staff can start making different decisions based on the information. Students feel the effects immediately. The information can be put to use, as administrators and teachers collaborate to create action plans based on the data that will best serve the needs of the students. Most importantly, there must be a standard for the ways in which teachers can follow-up on those plans.

Keep in mind, most schools already have a way to review data in place because of the No Child Left Behind requirements and state-level requirements. But those processes are often expensive, incomprehensive, and inefficient. Schools either dissect the

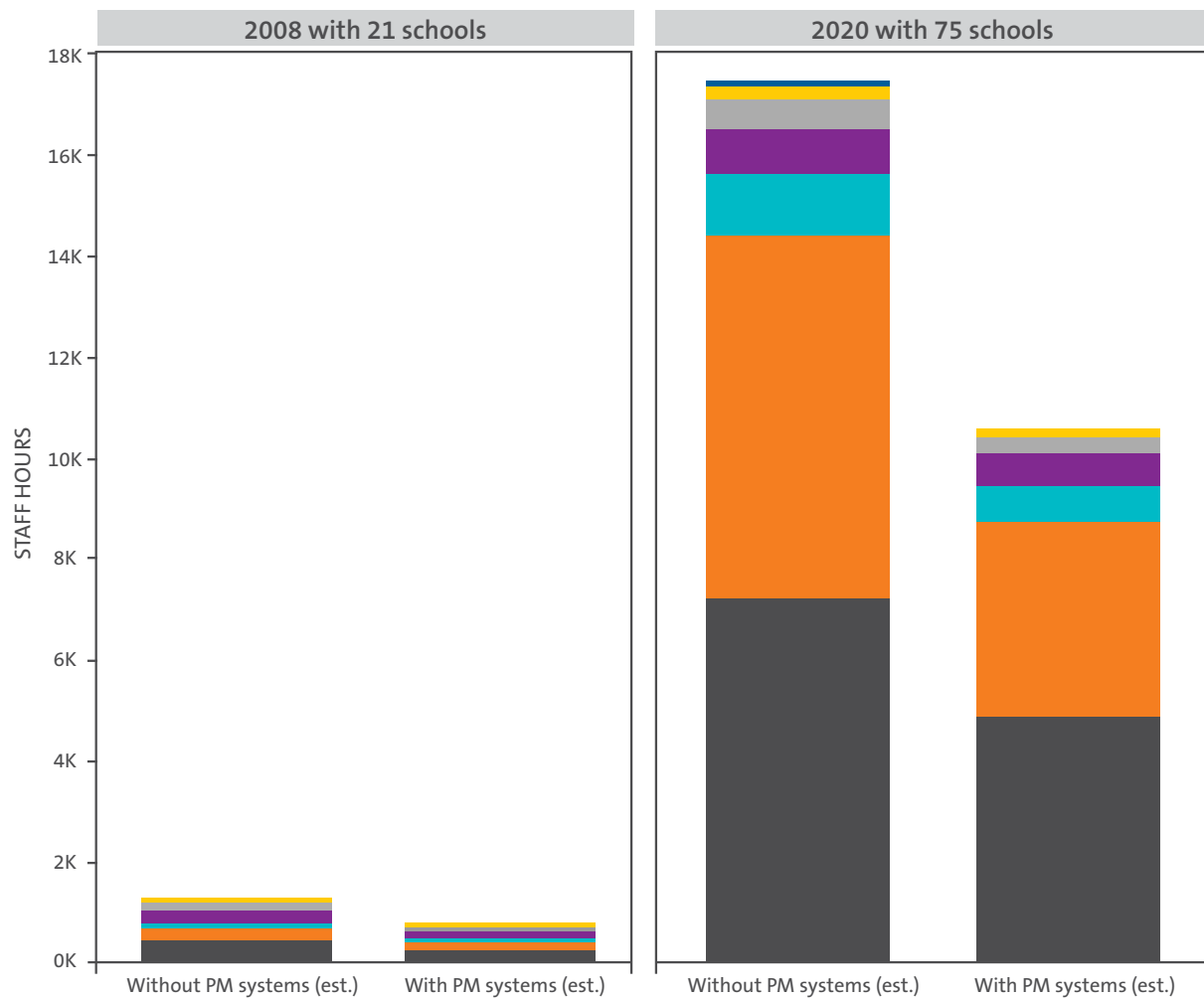
limited data they have themselves or they hire a consultant firm to help them take inventory of what's available and come up with a solution.

President Obama recently announced a competitive grant program under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) to provide funds to implement statewide longitudinal data systems. With a statewide data system, education agencies would be able to track individual kids from early childhood through college, using data now spread among district public schools, charter schools and government agencies. Beyond individual districts, schools and classrooms, educators will have an opportunity to increase graduation rates across the U.S.



Still in an early stage of development, the Aspire performance management system has already begun to deliver tangible benefits to educators and administrators. One small example illustrates this point. The MyStudents dashboards are designed to facilitate student performance data analysis by offering multiple ways to quickly summarize and view student data. Early versions of these dashboards have considerably reduced the time needed to summarize data and, eventually, are expected to reduce staff time by 39%. These dashboards allow home office staff to extend targeted instructional support to schools. Because Aspire plans to open several new schools each year for the next ten years, today's investment in performance management systems will, over time, allow Aspire to increase the efficiency of data analysis and direct more dollars into each classroom. The following chart shows anticipated time savings using the MyStudent dashboards as Aspire grows to scale.

## HOURS REQUIRED TO PROVIDE CRITICAL STUDENT PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS



Time savings will allow Aspire to avoid hiring 3 staff while providing more services to schools

- Aspire State Standards Test targets
- Redesignated students
- Teacher State Standards Growth & Strand
- Projected AYP and State Standards Test Results
- Priority State Standards
- Benchmark assessment distribution analysis
- State Standards Test Summary Analysis

The background of the page is a solid blue color. On the right side, there is a series of white, curved lines that originate from the top right corner and curve downwards and to the left, creating a sense of motion and depth. The lines are of varying lengths and curves, some overlapping each other.

# Performance Management in Action

Is performance management working in schools? Teachers and administrators at schools in New York, Austin, and Chicago can attest to the impact performance management platforms are having on their work and the lives of their students.

“We’re going to change the world.”



**NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
ACHIEVEMENT REPORTING AND INNOVATION SYSTEM (ARIS)**

In 2007, the New York City Department of Education (DOE) launched the Achievement Reporting and Innovation System (ARIS). In 2008, the DOE invited all 90,000 educators in New York City’s 1,600 schools to log in, and in 2009, the DOE invited families of all 1.1 million students to log in. Since then, educators and families have been using ARIS to diagnose students’ learning needs, track and analyze student progress, and collaborate with colleagues. This performance management system is enabling educators to professionalize instructional practice and accelerate student achievement as never before.

As the largest system of public schools in the United States, the New York City Department of Education (DOE) serves about 1.1 million students. Every school collects many pieces of information about every child throughout the year, generating enormous amounts of student achievement data. Before the DOE created ARIS, that information was stored in

old data systems only accessible on a small number of computers to a small number of programmers. Now, classroom teachers can log in any time, from any computer, and access all the data the district collects about their students.

The task of building a performance management system that would grant educators access to relevant, timely data and information was daunting. The platform had to collect information from many different data systems, protect the security and confidentiality of that data, and present it to teachers in a user-friendly way. The system had to be built for many different kinds of teachers — new teachers and experienced teachers; teachers comfortable using technology and teachers new to the Internet; teachers strong in data analysis and teachers without quantitative skills.



# Performance in Action



[www.arisnyc.org/aris](http://www.arisnyc.org/aris)



In the last school year, more than 66,000 New York teachers logged on to ARIS.

For teachers, the first challenge was understanding how to diagnose student needs and how to use the performance management system's features to support that work. To teach educators how to use data to inform instruction and how to use ARIS to track student progress throughout the year, the district invited the principal and up to three teachers from each school to training sessions, at which these educators learned how to log in and use the system. These "experts" in each school then held training sessions at their own schools for their peers. All of the faculty members received the URL via postcard, so they could access ARIS when it was convenient for them. Additional training sessions were offered by the DOE for anyone interested in learning how to use ARIS.

Today more than 66,000 New York teachers and families of more than 170,000 students have logged on to ARIS. They are now able to see information about their students in one location. They are using the powerful diagnostic data and collaboration tools in ARIS to improve their own schools and accelerate student learning. Teachers can see reports showing priority data on all students by subject as well as high school students' progress to graduation, and teachers in grades 3-8 can see English Language Arts and math state test scores. Also, a student's high school credits by subject, biographical and enrollment data, attendance records, and complete student profile are all viewable by teachers and parents in ARIS. This information is allowing teachers to be better prepared to teach the unique students in each class and increase their own effectiveness.

At Brooklyn Public School 53, teachers used ARIS to identify reading comprehension as a key area in need of improvement for their students. Specifically, administrators determined that students were most

challenged by identifying the main idea, understanding cause and effect, and recalling details of stories. Classroom teachers at the school assisted the inquiry team in developing curriculum that would directly address the students' weakest skills. Building on teachers' intuition about areas of student strengths and weaknesses, the information available in ARIS gave school officials evidence of the progress of each student. With that information came the power to tailor lessons to the needs of each child.

By organizing data and providing a medium for sharing quality content, ARIS is saving teachers the time they used to spend compiling information from multiple sources, preparing for classes, and conquering the challenges that some students present. In the process, ARIS is also enabling collaboration among teachers, making it easy for them to contribute content and work together to design solutions for their students.

Teachers at JHS 143 Eleanor Roosevelt are collaborating to identify the obstacles that their students are facing, beginning with a sampling of students reflective of the entire student population. Using ARIS throughout the process, teachers identified students for the sample group, collectively identified concepts that could be reinforced in every subject the children studied, developed lesson plans, and charted the success of their efforts. The result was a methodology that teachers could replicate for all students at the school, thus enabling them to improve the achievements of all of their students.

The next phases of ARIS include ARIS Local, which will enable teachers to share even more information on a student's classroom performance and find insights that will help them be more effective in the classroom.

As ARIS continues to grow, so too will the success of New York's teachers and students.

# Using data to help students graduate



## CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS KELVYN PARK HIGH SCHOOL

School administrators at Kelvyn Park High School recognized a few years ago that something had to be done to address the low graduation rate. A significant number of students were not graduating, but administrators had few tools to help them identify the students who most needed help. Teachers might recognize that particular students were struggling, but only after months of having the student in class. If there was an issue to be addressed, teachers were tasked with trying to address the issue alone without the help of other teachers who might have also noticed the child falling behind. Meanwhile, a significant percentage of Kelvyn Park students were failing to graduate and enter the real world with a diploma in hand.

Before 2008, there were few effective tools to give teachers real-time reports on their students' performance on tests. No central system that provided insights into student behavior in previous years. No mechanism for teachers to work together to address issues with their students.

Things at Kelvyn Park High School have changed over the past year. In the past 12 months, Kelvyn Park utilized a program developed by the Department of Graduation Pathways at Chicago Public Schools (CPS) to keep the school's freshman on track to graduate. Two data and information specialists (also called On Track Coordinators) were assigned to the school to help build a repository of information that could be used by the faculty and restructure the way the information was being used at the school.

The goal within Chicago Public Schools was to take a data-driven approach to identifying and intervening with freshmen who are at risk of dropping out or falling behind in class. Prior to the school year, Kelvyn Park was provided with a "Freshmen Watch List." The reports are available on the CPS Principal Dashboard, an interactive, performance management tool accessible by principals at all Chicago Public Schools. The Watch List, populated with each student's 8th grade grades, attendance, test scores, and discipline actions, assigned a color code to each student with risk factors.

# Performance in Action



www.CPS.edu



After just one year, 69% of 9th graders were on track to graduate on time, a 10 percent increase over the previous year

For example, a student with nine absences in 8th grade was flagged for attendance intervention in 9th grade before the school year started. Principals, counselors, and teachers used the reports to develop interventions with the Watch List students. As soon as ten weeks into the school year, principals had access to the current year's updates via a "Freshmen Success Report" on their Dashboard. The report identified the freshmen with too many unexcused absences or grades of D or lower in core subjects. Additionally, the On Track Coordinators supplemented the information on Watch List by creating a database, accessible by all teachers, with detailed biographical, behavioral, and academic information for each student.

Ninth grade students were divided into three "houses" or groups, each with 120 students. The teachers assigned to each house were then trained how to understand and use the data and information provided by their principals, counselors and information specialists, recognize trends, and create interventions to deal with issues they uncovered with their students. Utilizing the insight provided by the Freshman Watch List, Freshman Success Report, and school-developed database, school staff could give students the support they need.

At the beginning of the year, data available to the teachers included attendance, performance in previous years at feeder schools, and biographical information. Throughout the year, teachers and counselors could use the database developed by the On Track Coordinators to record notes related to behavior issues, the number of times a parent has been contacted by the school, and previous interventions attempted with the child. Each student's performance in all of their classes was recorded in the centralized dashboard. Teachers held weekly meetings to discuss students' performance and address issues as a group.

Teachers could now look at a student's profile and see that a particular child — who lives with his grandparents, has two siblings who didn't graduate from high school, and had previous behavior issues — was scoring consistently low in all of his classes.

Because they were sharing information, Kelvyn Park teachers could take action such as adjusting class schedules when they recognized a group of students who were distracting one another. Groups of three or four teachers — one always being a teacher with whom the student was comfortable — would have in-person interventions with students to address concerns and help the students understand how they could improve their own performance.

Parents also became involved. Working with the Logan Square Neighborhood Association, Kelvyn Park utilized parent mentors to make home visits for students who missed three or more days of school to share information about the effect of poor attendance on graduation rates. Because the parent mentors were members of the community and often acquaintances of the families requiring a visit, the mentors were successful at addressing concerns raised by the school. They were also successful at bringing the families of the at-risk students to the school campus so teachers could speak directly to them. The parent mentors made over 1,000 home visits.

After just one year, the school's administration were thrilled with the impact the program had on their freshman class. After the end of the year, 69 percent of 9th graders were on track to graduate on time, a 10 percent increase over the previous year. Kelvyn Park also saw the annual attendance rate increase by 4.2% over the previous school year.

Teachers and administrators at Kelvyn Park are determined to continue their good progress toward increased graduation rates. They know it could mean the world to their students.



# Taking a proactive and engaging approach



## AUSTIN INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT LANIER HIGH SCHOOL

At Lanier High School, Vicki McCall receives one salary but fills the dual role of English teacher and student advisor. She's tasked with instructing hundreds of students in the classroom each day, then four times a week, acts as an advisor to 20 students. In each of her roles at the Austin Independent School District (AISD), Vicki uses the Student Teacher Achievement Report (STAR Report), on a daily basis.

Just three years ago, Vicki and other school officials had such limited access to student level data that it was difficult to address issues in a timely way. Vicki could only see students' grades in her own class and a limited history of their performance on the Texas state achievement tests. She had no idea if a student who missed her class was absent the entire day, or if the student missed only Vicki's class period. If she did want to address an issue with a student, there was no scheduled time during the day to discuss it. She had to schedule time before or after school — a sacrifice many students weren't willing to make — and their

conversations were limited to the student's performance in Vicki's class. There was no mechanism to review the student's grades in other subjects, behavioral information or background to identify major issues or circumstances beyond her classroom that might be impacting the student's grades.

Then came the STAR Report.

Since its creation, the STAR Report has provided real time information uploaded on a daily basis. The report is a snapshot of the student's attendance record, current grades in every class, state test scores, GPA, discipline incidents, and current credits towards graduation. Vicki and other advisors are responsible for up to 20 students each year. During the advisory period, which meets four times a week, Vicki can monitor the real time academic performance, attendance and discipline of her 20 advisees, discuss major changes with the individual student, and plan appropriate interventions in a timely way. She doesn't have to wait until problems become a crisis.

# Performance in Action



[www.austinisd.org](http://www.austinisd.org)

The STAR Report is often the conversation starter needed to engage kids in a frank discussion about issues that might be impacting their performance at school.

The STAR Report provides Vicki with insight into her students' overall educational experience and performance so she can appropriately advise the child. Together, she and the student can view course credits and ensure that the student is on track to graduate with the classes needed for graduation. In the past, a student's GPA was little more than a nebulous number the kids requested their junior or senior year, often too late to significantly improve that average. Now because of the STAR Report, students are aware of their GPAs from the time they enter high school, they understand how it is computed, and they can discuss with Vicki ways to increase their average over time. For Vicki and other teachers, the STAR Report is often the conversation starter needed to engage kids in a frank discussion about issues that might be impacting their performance at school. It is available to parents, providing the opportunity to chart their child's educational activities and see their child's grades in each subject before the final letter grade is issued.

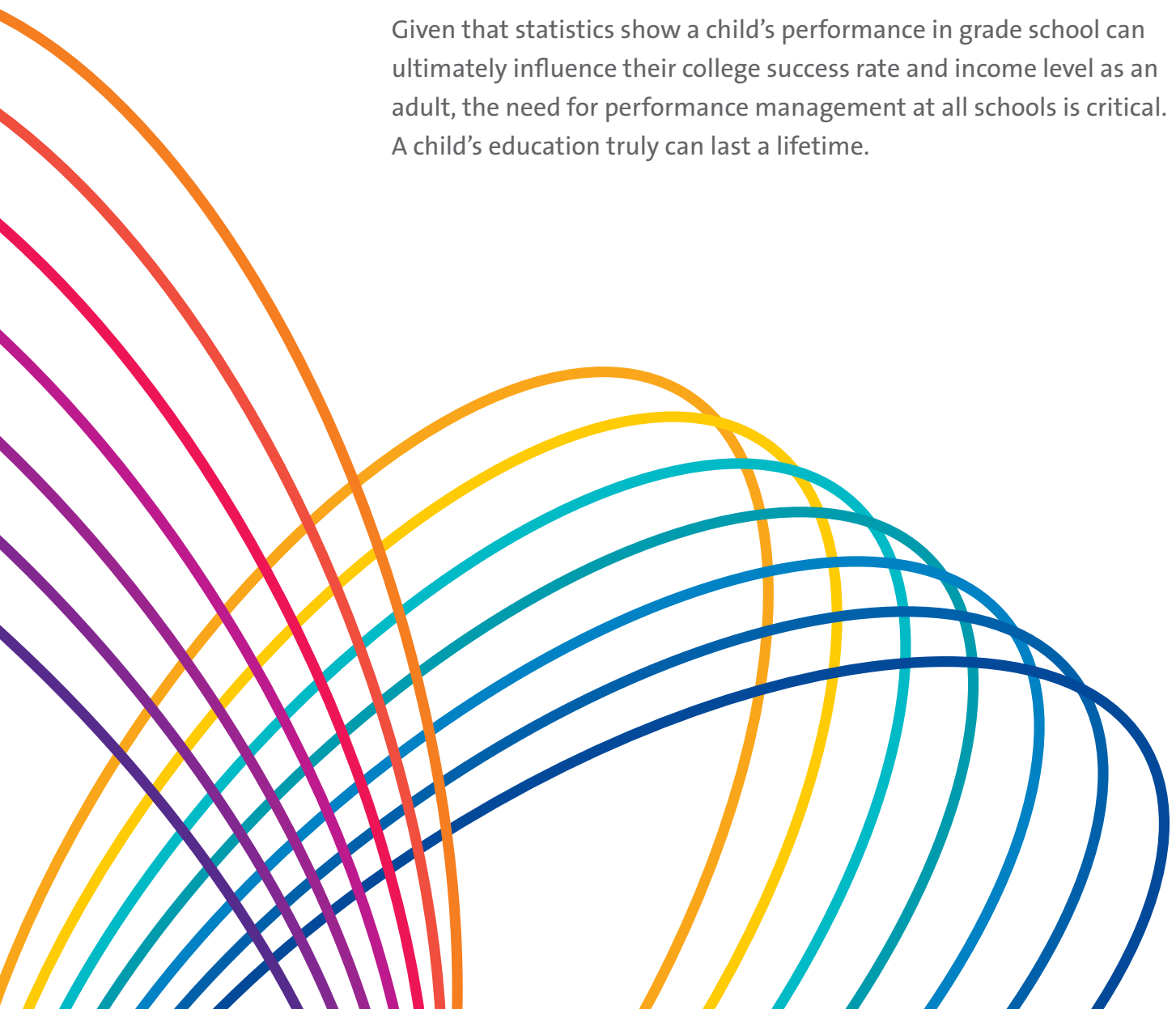
Students appreciate and utilize the STAR Report, too. They've taken responsibility for selecting the courses they need to graduate. And the direct conversations with their assigned advisors during school time ensures each student takes an active interest in their education, instead of waiting until their junior or senior year to seek the counsel of an academic advisor.

Vicki McCall knows that the real time information provided by the STAR Report is critical if AISD is to achieve higher graduation rates across the district. And as a teacher, watching her students graduate is the best payment she can ever receive.

# Conclusion

Performance management is not only a way to monitor the achievements of students — although the ability to do so arms administrators and teachers with priceless information. Performance management platforms can be the catalyst for change necessary to result in a better education, improved grades, and higher graduation rates for our children.

Given that statistics show a child's performance in grade school can ultimately influence their college success rate and income level as an adult, the need for performance management at all schools is critical. A child's education truly can last a lifetime.





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<sup>1</sup> Committee on Education & Labor. “High School Dropout Crisis Threatens U.S. Economic Growth and Competiveness, Witnesses Tell House Panel,” May 12, 2009.

<sup>2</sup> Bridgeland, John M., Dilulio, Jr., John J., Balfanz, Robert. “On the Front Lines of Schools. Perspectives of Teachers and Principals on the High School Dropout Problem,” June, 2009, Civic Enterprises in association with Peter D. Hart Research Associates for the AT&T Foundation and the America’s Promise Alliance.

<sup>3</sup> National Center for Education Statistics (NECS), “Achievement Gaps: How Black and White Students in Public Schools Perform in Mathematics and Reading on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP),” Web: <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/pdf/studies/2009455.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> National Center for Education Statistics (NECS), “Achievement Gaps: How Black and White Students in Public Schools Perform in Mathematics and Reading on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP),” Web: <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/pdf/studies/2009455.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> Adelman, Clifford. “The Toolbox Revisited: Paths to Degree Completion from High School Through College.” February 2006, U.S. Department of Education.

<sup>6</sup> U.S. Department of Health & Human Services. “Vulnerable Youth and the Transition to Adulthood,” July 2009.

<sup>7</sup> Current Population Survey, U.S. Census Bureau and Bureau of Labor Statistics.

<sup>8</sup> NELS 1988; Baum, Sandy and Payea, Kathleen, “Education Pays: The Benefits of Higher Education for Individuals and Society,” 2004, The College Board.

<sup>9</sup> NELS 1988; Baum, Sandy and Payea, Kathleen, “Education Pays: The Benefits of Higher Education for Individuals and Society,” 2004, The College Board.

<sup>10</sup> U.S. Department of Education, NCES, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Summary Data Tables, subset of states, data for public schools.

<sup>11</sup> “What We Know about College Success: Using ACT Data to Inform Educational Issues,” 2008, ACT, Inc., p. 5.

<sup>12</sup> Florida International University Study, 2006.

<sup>13</sup> Bemby, Karen L. et al. “Policy Implications of Long-term Teacher Effects on Student Achievement.” Dallas Independent School District (1998) [http://www.dallasisd.org/depts/inst\\_research/aer98rm1/aer98rm1.html](http://www.dallasisd.org/depts/inst_research/aer98rm1/aer98rm1.html)





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Michael & Susan Dell Foundation  
P.O. Box 163867  
Austin, Texas 78716

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