

Enhancing Instruction for English Learners with The SIOP® Model

Student Population:

- 12,220 students
- 83% low income
- 24% limited English proficient
- 18% special education
- 16% mobility rate

Student Diversity:

- 87% Hispanic
- 8% Caucasian
- 3% Asian
- 2% African-American
- 0.1% Native American

District Web Site:

<http://www.lawrence.k12.ma.us>

Lawrence Public Schools, Massachusetts

In Lawrence Public Schools (LPS), more than 80 percent of students speak a language other than English at home. To help provide high quality instruction for English learners (ELs) — and all students — in content-area teaching, LPS implemented *Enhancing Instruction for ELs with The SIOP® Model*, a comprehensive professional development program from Pearson. Since then, the district has improved the quality of instruction, strengthened the relationships between teachers and students, and improved student achievement.

The Challenge

LPS is an urban district in Lawrence, MA, located approximately 30 miles north of Boston. While only 24 percent of students are considered English learners (EL), nearly 83 percent identify a language other than English spoken at home. In most homes, Spanish is the primary language.

In 2002, Massachusetts voters replaced a state law that provided for transitional bilingual education in public schools with a new law requiring that, with limited exceptions, “all public school children must be taught English by being taught all subjects in English and being placed in English language classrooms.”

While LPS had a sheltered English immersion program for ELs, as required by the new law, it felt more needed to be done.

“To meet students’ needs and help them achieve success, we needed to accelerate English language acquisition in content areas,” said Dr. Wilfredo T. Laboy, superintendent of LPS. “Our district is unique in that we have the highest concentration of Latino students, by size and proportion, anywhere east of Texas. We felt we needed to give all our teachers another tool in their toolbox to differentiate and improve instruction for English learners and all our students.”

The Solution

In 2006, LPS implemented *Enhancing Instruction for ELs with The SIOP® Model*, a professional development program that helps educators teach academic content to ELs while promoting their English language development. The Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) Model is a model for lesson planning and implementation of high quality sheltered instruction for all educators across content areas.



LPS worked with Pearson to build a sheltered instruction model to address their specific needs and improve student achievement. The district employed a “train the trainer” approach with a master cohort of 50 preK-12 teachers and 15 central office staff receiving on-site training from Pearson. The master teachers and Pearson trainers then provided face-to-face professional development to preK-8 teachers district-wide. In 2006 and 2007, teachers received training in the eight components and 30 features of the SIOP model, with a focus on implementing four of the eight components in the first year and adding the other four in year two. Training for high school teachers began in fall 2007.

“We know that good teaching equals good results and outcomes for students,” said Laboy. “SIOP is good instruction no matter who it’s being delivered to. The eight components and 30 features are good pedagogy. It helps teachers to meet the needs of all students.”

The features within the eight components make up the observation protocol, where educators assess the level of sheltered instruction in their classrooms. The information is used to re-evaluate sheltered instruction practices, and refine and improve lessons. This form of lesson analysis helps educators prepare an appropriate lesson plan to share and expand instruction to better meet the needs of ELs in their classrooms.

“When you look at any school system in America serving linguistically diverse students, you’ll find that most people delivering instruction are not ethnically diverse. A key benefit of SIOP is that it first serves as an educational tool for adults,” said Laboy. “Often, teachers find themselves at a loss as to how to differentiate instruction to meet the needs of linguistically diverse students. SIOP creates the kind of sensitivity and awareness teachers need to understand the students who appear before them every day. It provides concrete strategies to differentiate instruction, and it helps teachers take a deeper look and reflect on how to help all students in their classroom.”

In LPS, teachers work in collaborative teams to review, assess, and prepare sheltered lesson plans across content areas. To further enhance its implementation, LPS launched “SIOP Resident Classrooms,” an extension of the Resident Classrooms program instituted by Laboy. In Resident Classrooms, teachers can observe other teachers who demonstrate mastery on a given subject or strategy across all content areas. Teachers can then debrief with the master teacher and return to their classrooms to try what they learned. The district also employs full-time coaches who participate in the visits to Resident Classrooms and help guide teachers in their work.

Results

“If you look at some earlier sheltered instruction models, they were geared primarily toward language development. There was a strong emphasis on language acquisition and later they brought in content,” said Laboy. “SIOP, on the other hand, has a great balance in that it provides specific language goals and content goals for students in the same lesson. So, teachers are able to help students get content a lot quicker. The more content, the more academic language students develop. That’s where we want to bring the student — to content language, not just basic communication skills. That’s the power of SIOP.”

“We’ve just completed our first full year of the SIOP program, and we’re already seeing the impact,” he said. “Teachers feel better about delivering instruction this way and enthusiastically embrace SIOP as an instructional model. We have great expectations.”

Thanks to many endeavors district-wide and the hard work of students, teachers and staff, students achieved steady gains in reading and mathematics on the *Measures of Academic Progress* (MAP) assessment from fall 2006 to spring 2007. LPS uses the MAP to monitor the growth of all students over the course of the school year.



CHART 1

MAP Reading—Percent of Students Scoring in Basic and Proficient Combined (Passing)

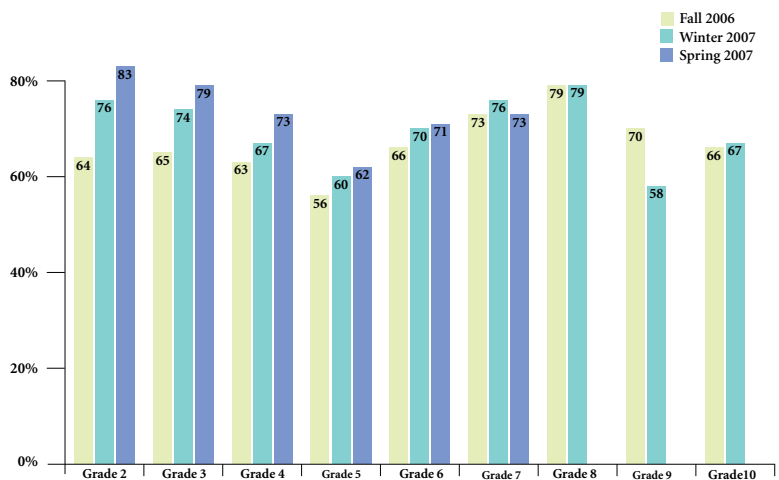
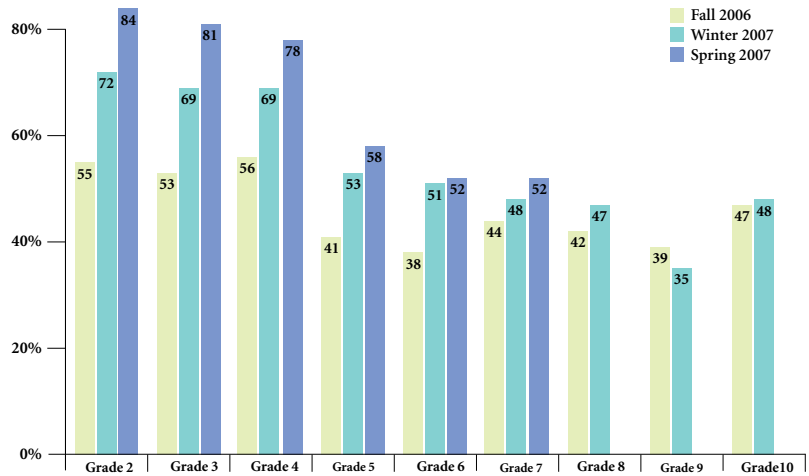




CHART 2

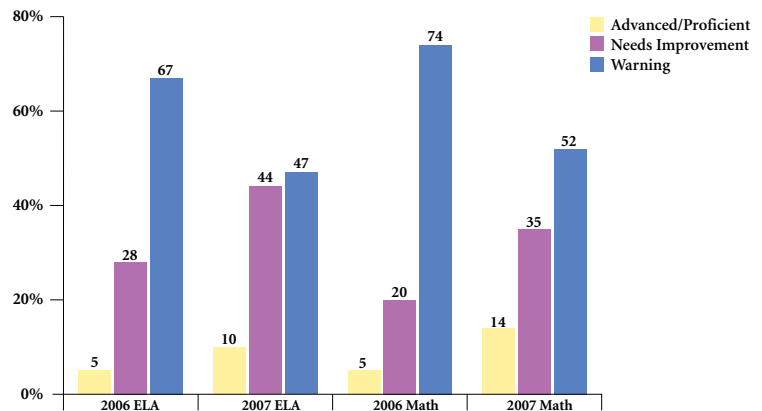
MAP Mathematics—Percent of Students Scoring in Basic and Proficient Combined (Passing)



In addition, preliminary results from the 2007 *Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System* (MCAS), the statewide assessment in English language arts (ELA) and mathematics, show measurable improvements by English learners. The number of EL elementary and middle school students earning scores in the Warning category decreased, while an increase was noted in the Proficient or Advanced categories.

CHART 3

MCAS—Middle School (EL Students Grades 3–4)



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At Pearson, our mission is to improve teaching, as we believe this is the most effective way to improve student learning. To facilitate improvement, we collaborate with districts and schools to ensure they are ready for change, have the framework in which transformation can take place, and have the tools to change the learning environment to impact student achievement. Our professional development services transform the culture of teaching to achieve better student outcomes, district wide.

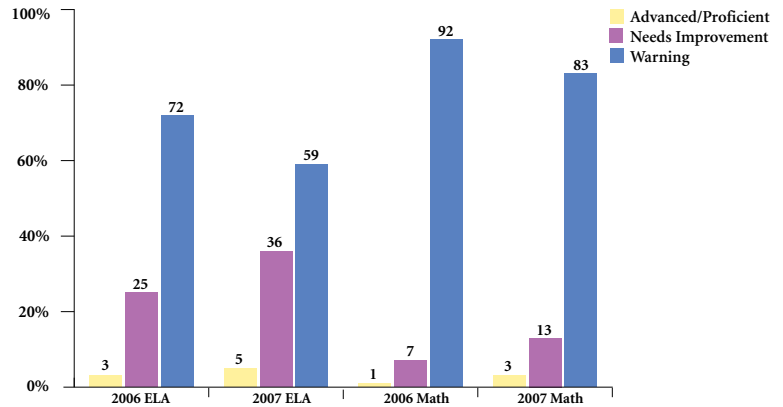
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CHART 4

MCAS—Middle School (EL Students Grades 5–8)



“The most fundamental change in reforming any system or school is the relationship between the teacher and student,” said Laboy. “SIOP gets teachers to think deeply about all their students — not just shoot to the middle and hope that some at the lower end and some at the upper end get it as well. If you can change the fundamental relationship between the teacher and student, and deepen the understanding to make us think carefully about how to meet the needs of all of our students, transformation is easy to achieve. It’s the natural result.”

