



Monterey Ridge Elementary School Achieves Highest API Growth in District

COMPASSLEARNING ODYSSEY HELPS BOOST PERFORMANCE AMONG ALL STUDENT GROUPS

School Facts

Monterey Ridge Elementary School

Poway Unified School District
San Diego, CA

Students	768
Free/Reduced Lunches	11%
ELL.	17%
White.	38%
Asian.	29%
Filipino	14%
Hispanic.	7%
African-American.	3%
Other.	9%

Implementation

K-5; Odyssey Reading/Language Arts and Odyssey Math; Unlimited-User Access for all students.

Challenge

Achieving growth across all student groups

Monterey Ridge Elementary School in San Diego, California, opened in 2006 to serve the growing population in the area. Its parent district, Poway Unified School District, represents a cross-section of the nation, spanning a diverse range of student populations from low-income groups to highly affluent communities. Monterey Ridge has used CompassLearning Odyssey campus-wide for intervention and mainstream students since the fall of 2008.

The school's new principal, Dr. Rich Newman, confronted a challenge faced by schools and districts across the country: How does one marshal limited resources to tackle the varied needs of students from disparate backgrounds? "We wanted to see increases in all student groups — across every category — and increase the number of Proficient and Advanced students at every grade level," said Newman. "But in addition, we wanted to do much more. We really wanted to reduce the achievement gap with key subgroups."

The four key subgroups the school chose to target were African-American students, the English language learners (ELL), students from low socio-economic families, and the special education population. Newman acknowledged that these groups were already further behind than other students and would require targeted, intensive instruction and close monitoring of progress to close the achievement gap.

Photo: Superintendent Don Phillips cuts the first lock of hair from Monterey Ridge Elementary School's principal, Dr. Rich Newman. Photograph by Karin Lundquist



Prior to the 2008–2009 school year, Dr. Newman had challenged students to exceed their previous test scores, offering to shave his head if they did. In September 2009, in keeping with his promise, a large crowd watched as Superintendent Don Phillips cut the first lock from Newman's head while the students cheered.



Photography by julestrandem.com

Solution

Differentiated instruction with CompassLearning Odyssey

In addition to being Newman's first year, the 2008–2009 school year was also the first year that Monterey Ridge Elementary School had implemented CompassLearning Odyssey. "What's significant about Odyssey is that it's individualized to the discrete skill," said Newman. Odyssey's ability to import NWEA MAP scores and use them to automatically assign customized learning paths to individual students was a key component in the school's decision to adopt it.

Newman recalled the initial reactions of students to Odyssey. "Once they got on it, they loved it, and we actually have what I call some CompassLearning groupies who just can't get enough of it." And parents? "Parents were thrilled with CompassLearning. They were just on fire with it. It's probably the number-one requested program from our parents," said Dr. Newman.

The combination of classroom instruction and 60 minutes a week in the lab with Odyssey began to yield

significant results. In the words of fourth-grade teacher Lynne Harvey, "CompassLearning generated specific, differentiated activities for each student to practice needed skills for mastery, and it challenged them to take the next steps in their learning." Teachers and staff began to notice a difference in students' engagement and achievement as the year progressed.

When discussing these developments, Newman stressed planning. He explained that there is no substitute for rigorous classroom instruction, and he praised the efforts of everyone involved. When reflecting on other factors involved in the school's success, he added, "I really believe that CompassLearning was a huge part of that growth."

"We grew by 36 API points, which is one of the largest growths in the county and the largest growth of any school in our district," said Newman.

Results

Record increased test scores across all populations

In a single year, Monterey Ridge Elementary School's California Academic Performance Index (API), calculated from performance on statewide assessments across multiple content areas, rose significantly. API scores increased from 894 in 2008 to 930 in 2009. "We grew by 36 API points, which is one of the largest growths in the county and the largest growth of any school in our district," said Newman. In fact, the school's API score increase was seven times greater than the improvement goal set by the state.

Students in key populations were also successful. "We had targeted four specific subgroups, and all of them reduced the achievement gap, which is — as we all know — very hard to do, because that means they needed to grow even more than the rest of our school grew."

Superintendent Don Phillips has stressed his desire to continue

the district's relationship with CompassLearning. "We have been extremely pleased with the student performance results we are seeing through our partnership with CompassLearning and hope to expand our efforts with CompassLearning in the years ahead."

Odyssey is now a common element across the board at Monterey Ridge. "We use Odyssey as homework and in afterschool programs. We use it with struggling, mainstream, and gifted and talented students. Very few programs can provide access across all of those levels," said Newman.

"I see CompassLearning being an important program for years to come," Dr. Newman continued. "In my entire career, I've never encountered another program that has made such an impact across all boards — parents, community, and students. That, to me, is a huge tribute."