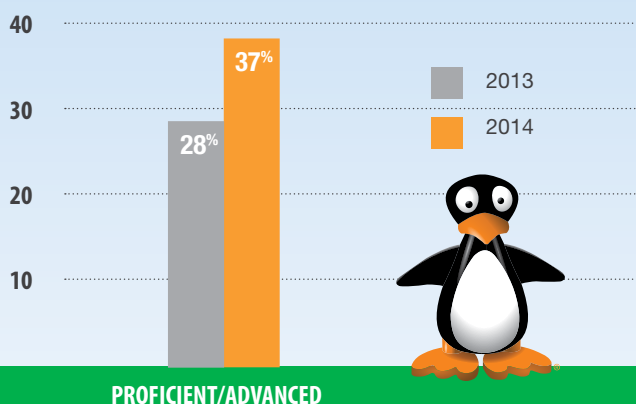


Randle Highlands:

Growing Academic Achievement through Effective Blended Learning

Between 2013 and 2014, third, fourth and fifth grade students at Randle Highlands Elementary School, in the District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS), showed an increase in the percentage of students testing “proficient” and “advanced” on the DC Comprehensive Assessment System (DC CAS) summative exam in mathematics. While achievement varied by grade level, the average increase for students testing in these three grades at proficiency or above was 9% year over year.

DC CAS Math Performance – 2013 to 2014 Results Comparison



Fifth grade performance was particularly strong, with a 19% increase in students classified as “proficient” or “advanced” in the year over year results



The percentage of students (tested at grades 3, 4, and 5) testing “below basic” dropped from 27% to 21% between the 2013 and 2014 testing years



Randle Highlands continues to move students from a ranking of “basic” to “proficient” and “advanced”

MIND Research Institute

A neuroscience and education social benefit organization
www.mindresearch.org | info@mindresearch.org



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High Title I Population

Blended Learning Model

Randle Highlands Elementary School

District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS)
 Washington, DC



335
PreK-5
STUDENTS

Implementation Grades



African-American
99%



Hispanic
1%

“ST Math has led to dramatic gains in student achievement, increased student engagement and their intrinsic value for learning.”

--Tracy Foster, Principal,
 Randle Highlands Elementary School
 District of Columbia Public Schools

From Bold to Blended: Transformational Success Via Blended Learning



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DCPS is in the midst of a digital transformation, taking an organic approach to increasing the usage of technology in its classrooms and making fundamental changes to instruction. The district has launched blended learning in a few schools each year, providing them with the guidance, support, hardware and software to transition to a blended approach.

“When we say blended learning, what we really mean is integrating technology into the curriculum in a smart way. It’s not just putting students in front of computers—it’s helping students learn better through a blend of technology-enhanced instruction and face-to-face teaching,” said Kaya Henderson, Chancellor of DCPS.

John Rice, Director of Blended Learning at DCPS, has been heavily involved in making sure the changes are effective. According to him, to build the nation’s best blended learning program they needed to first build the best infrastructure. They then needed to be thoughtful about the schools with which they started, the adaptive content they selected, and the support they provided to teachers and leaders. The partners they have selected have been an integral part of their success story, John said.

“ We know that blended learning is changing not only the current classroom environments, but also the futures of our students. ”

Among many schools with successes to celebrate, Randle Highlands Elementary School stands out. In a school in which 99% of students qualify for the federal free and reduced lunch program, students have made great strides in catching up to their wealthier counterparts, particularly in math.

Last year Randle Highlands moved nearly 20% of their 5th grade students from below proficient to proficient or advanced on the DC CAS in math, their high stakes summative assessment. Third graders also saw significant gains, with 13% of students moving up. For a district focused on increasing the achievement of African American students (99% of Randle Highlands students are African American), this is a big win. And it is in no small part due to the school’s implementation of ST Math, a visual software program that promotes deep conceptual learning. The creators of ST Math, the nonprofit MIND Research Institute, are now working with 46 schools in DCPS.

The principal of Randle Highlands, Tracy Foster, attributes their success not only to

the digital content they use, but also to the teachers and instructional model. Randle Highlands is one of several schools across DCPS that worked with Education Elements, a company that partners with districts to design and implement personalized learning, to create a new instructional model that would meaningfully integrate technology and instruction.

Working alongside the Education Elements team, teachers and school leadership designed a rotational model with a heavy focus on small group instruction and the use of data. The ability to know each student’s needs, and to be able to meet them daily, was of critical importance to the school.

While excited about the growth students experienced last year, the district is even more excited about the potential. “We have seen great early gains,” said John Rice. “And we expect to see even more in the years ahead. We know that blended learning is changing not only the current classroom environments, but also the futures of our students”.