

EverydayMathematics® Success Stories



New Traditions in Aurora East School District 131

In the far western suburbs of Chicago, approximately 40 miles from the city, recent years have seen the development of new highways, housing subdivisions and shopping centers. Yet the city of Aurora was founded here in the 1830's, in Kane County, with the east and west sides of the city separated by the Fox River. The Aurora East School District 131 serves the portion of this long-established area just east of the river, and is now populated by a predominantly Hispanic community.

Aurora East School District 131 enrolls 11,400 students in Grades PK-12. One of three school districts serving the Aurora community, School District 131 serves the oldest sections of the city. In fact, Aurora East SD 131 is one of the oldest school districts in the state of Illinois. The 12 elementary school buildings, many constructed 100 years ago, are located in neighborhood settings, meaning that all of the children can walk to school. The Aurora East SD 131 has never bussed students to school.

The diverse student population is 78% Hispanic, 12% African-American and 9% Caucasian. The socioeconomic status of the community is middle to lower-middle income, and 63% of the students qualify for the free or reduced-price meal program. All of the district's elementary schools are identified as Title I buildings.

Many of the schools in the Aurora East SD 131 are ports of entry for students

who are recent immigrants to the United States. A significant number of students arrive from the southern states of Mexico. Approximately 30% of the students have Limited English Proficiency; the mobility rate is 27%.

'Wonderful Kids, Wonderful Teachers'

Dr. Christie Aird, Director for School Improvement K-5, explains, "In the district, we see the diversity of our students as a strength. The culture of the district is like that of a family. There is a positive feeling in the schools, and a high degree of dedication on the part of teachers and principals, some who have served the district for many years."

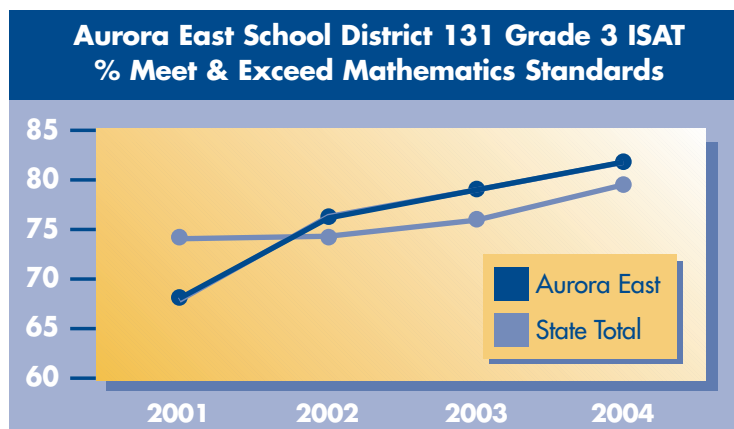
One-third of East Aurora's elementary students are enrolled in bilingual, self-contained classrooms, and the district subscribes to the Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE) model. The goal of TBE is to have students develop proficiency in

English and to transition into the general program of instruction. Children entering Kindergarten and Grade 1 receive instruction mainly in Spanish, while teachers continue to deliver English as a Second Language and monitor their English proficiency. By the second semester of Grade 2, many students are ready to transition into English.

"Third and fifth grade students in our TBE program are required to take the state Illinois Measure of Annual Growth in English (IMAGE) test, which is given in English," notes Dr. Aird, "therefore it is important to prepare them by working towards English proficiency." The state of Illinois administers the Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT) in reading and math to all other elementary students in Grades 3 and 5.

Everyday Mathematics Adoption

When Aurora East School District 131



In 2004, 82% of Aurora East students in Grade 3 met or exceeded state standards in mathematics on the ISAT exam.

began investigating elementary mathematics curricula several years ago, district administrators determined that a district-wide mathematics adoption would provide consistency across buildings and ultimately benefit students who transferred between schools.

A textbook committee reviewed all of the traditional basal programs available at the time as well as the standards-based program, **Everyday Mathematics**.

According to Julia Doverspike, elementary math specialist for the district, the decision to adopt **Everyday Mathematics** was finalized after visiting a nearby community with a similarly large Hispanic population that had been successfully using the **Everyday Mathematics** program for many years.

East Aurora School District 131 implemented **Everyday Mathematics** in Grades K-5 in the fall of 2000.

Supporting Teachers with Everyday Mathematics

Extensive teacher training was provided through the publisher of **Everyday Mathematics** during the first year of implementation. In order to sustain professional development for teachers in the district, pacing charts aligned with the state standards were developed. In addition, an elementary math specialist was hired to provide coaching assistance for teachers and new hires.

Everyday Mathematics Spanish Editions

Transitional Bilingual Education classrooms in East Aurora use **Everyday Mathematics** Spanish Editions primarily in Kindergarten and Grade 1, although new immigrant students are supported in native language through Grade 5. Generally, most TBE classrooms begin their transition into English in math at Grade 2 and use the **Everyday Mathematics** English editions.

According to Dr. Aird, the philosophy and methods of **Everyday Mathematics** meet the needs and learning styles of the district's English Language Learners. Aurora East schools place students in self-contained sheltered classrooms prior to fully including them in the general program of instruction. In a sheltered classroom, students receive additional support for developing cognitive academic language skills. The style of teaching in the sheltered program makes use of higher-level thinking, problem solving, hands-on activities and manipulatives, elements found readily in **Everyday Mathematics**.

"**Everyday Mathematics** is very complementary to the methods of the sheltered program. **Everyday Mathematics** allows students to construct their own knowledge, to explore different ways of solving a problem and to work with each other. The emphasis on vocabulary allows students to talk about math, developing higher-level thinking skills and improving their own mathematics vocabulary. It's a powerful program."

Family Support

Many of the parents in the district have limited experience with mathematics, having learned mostly arithmetic using the most traditional algorithms. Dr. Aird recalls her experience when she distributed copies of the Grade 3 ISAT mathematics exam at a family night. The parents were surprised to see the level of mathematics expected by the state of Illinois.

Aurora East SD 131 involves parents in Curriculum Nights, conducted in both English and Spanish. Teachers and administrators explain the philosophy of the **Everyday Mathematics** program so that parents will be able to help support their children. There is also fun encouraged, such as playing the **Everyday Mathematics** games and

trying the hands-on activities.

The district has also instituted a very popular math contest for high-achieving students in Grades 4 and 5. Students from each school come together for a competition that includes individual tests and team problem solving. The winners receive trophies to recognize their participation and academic achievement. This past year, close to 400 parents turned out for the math contest.

"After several years with the **Everyday Mathematics** program, I can report that there are a lot more kids who like math now."

Dr. Christie Aird,
Director for School Improvement, K-5

Mathematics Results

Student achievement in the Aurora East School District 131 is noteworthy, with a rising trend in mathematics at Grades 3 and 5, posting mathematics scores that exceed the 2004 state averages. Student performance on the ISAT has shown increases since the implementation of **Everyday Mathematics** in the district.

On the 2004 ISAT, 82% of all Grade 3 students met or exceeded state standards in mathematics, compared to the 79% of the state total. In Grade 5, 74% of all District 131 students met or exceeded state mathematics standards, versus 72% of the total state. Moreover, the district's Hispanic, African-American and Low Income subgroups for both Grades 3 and 5 each performed well above the state average.

For additional information on the **Everyday Mathematics** program, please contact us toll-free at 1-800-648-2970 and visit our Web site at www.WrightGroup.com.

Meeting All Expectations