

# Everyday Mathematics® Success Stories



## Committed to the Best in Virginia Beach City Public Schools

Virginia Beach is the most populous city in the Commonwealth of Virginia, with a population of nearly 500,000 residents. It is part of the Hampton Roads area, which also includes the cities of Newport News and Norfolk. The major industries in the area are agriculture, tourism, and U.S. military installations.

Virginia Beach City Public Schools is the second-largest school system in Virginia and among the 50 largest school districts in the country. Approximately 75,000 Grade K–12 students are educated in 55 elementary schools, 15 middle schools, and 11 high schools. Approximately one-third of the students are either military dependents or federally connected. Within the diverse student population, 26% qualify for the free or reduced-price meal program.

“We are committed to providing the children in Virginia Beach the best there is. That is the reason *Everyday Mathematics* is our elementary mathematics curriculum.”

*Judy Fisher,*  
*Elementary Mathematics Coordinator*

### A Plan to Improve

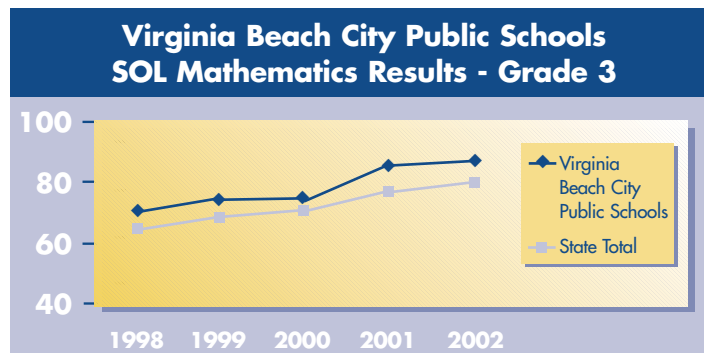
In 1999, the Virginia Beach City Public Schools undertook a Math Improvement Plan in Grades K–12. The plan

emphasized professional development of the teaching staff and added four math specialist positions at the elementary level to coach teachers on best practices. The plan also afforded an opportunity to adopt a standards-based elementary mathematics curriculum within the time frame of the Virginia state math adoption.

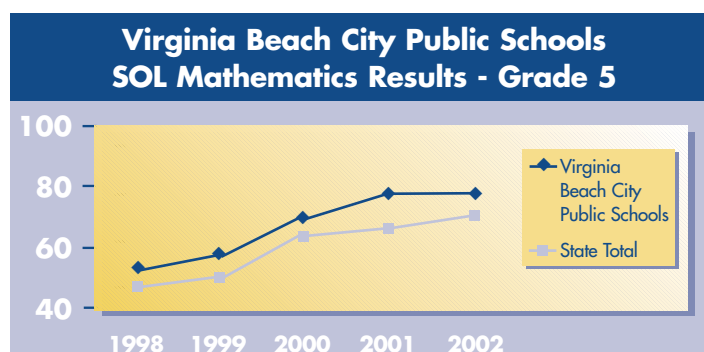
As Virginia Beach City Public Schools moved towards a math adoption, a curriculum committee was formed to review all state-approved textbooks.

The curriculum committee selected *Everyday Mathematics* as one of two finalists and sent samples of the two programs to all 55 Virginia Beach elementary schools for review. The teachers of Virginia Beach City Public Schools overwhelmingly voted to adopt *Everyday Mathematics*.

Judy Fisher, elementary mathematics coordinator for the district, notes, “In addition to the clear alignment to the NCTM standards, *Everyday Mathematics* most closely aligned



In 2002, 85% of Grade 3 students passed the Virginia SOL Assessment in mathematics.



At Grade 5, 78% of the students passed the Mathematics SOL Assessment.

with the Virginia Standards of Learning (SOL) and with Virginia Beach City Public Schools' mathematics objectives."

## Setting A Foundation

Virginia Beach City Public Schools used the 1999–2000 school year to lay the foundations for a successful implementation the following year. Based on recommendations from representatives of *Everyday Mathematics* to emphasize teacher/staff development and parental involvement, a group of teachers was selected to begin teaching with the *Everyday Mathematics* program; this group of early implementers would become teacher leaders for the district-wide adoption in the next year.

These teacher leaders also contributed to a curriculum handbook that accompanied the *Everyday Mathematics* program in the full implementation. The handbook correlated *Everyday Mathematics* with the Virginia Standards of Learning and the Virginia Beach City Public Schools' mathematics objectives. In addition, the handbook contained lesson-by-lesson instructional suggestions based on the experiences of the teacher leaders.

Staff development efforts on *Everyday Mathematics* also began during the year prior to the full implementation. "We wanted to make our teachers aware of *Everyday Mathematics* and to introduce important concepts of the program," recalls Fisher.

With dedication and commitment to the successful implementation of the program, coordinators, teacher specialists, and teacher leaders began an intensive staff development program that required each teacher of mathematics to attend a minimum of 30 hours of training over a three-year period. Teachers were trained in best

practices and mathematical content in the context of *Everyday Mathematics*. No fewer than 100 sessions have been offered to teachers. In addition, the coordinators and teacher specialists conducted an information night for parents at each elementary school during the first year of implementation.

In the summer prior to the full implementation, every teacher in Virginia Beach City Public Schools received a full day of grade-level professional development. As many as 12 grade-level sessions, conducted by *Everyday Mathematics* trainers, were offered over the summer in order to reach every teacher. Also that summer, the teacher specialists and teacher leaders traveled to Chicago for an opportunity to fine-tune their knowledge of *Everyday Mathematics*. While there, they prepared a comprehensive plan for city-wide training.

During the first year of the district-wide implementation, staff development in *Everyday Mathematics* continued, with follow-up sessions scheduled throughout the year to allow teachers to share their classroom experiences, ask questions, and anticipate coming units and lessons.

In conclusion, Fisher states, "Throughout the entire implementation process, the company personnel and the varied resources available to our schools through the company have been an essential part of our success. They got us through the hard times and never turned away. We are extremely fortunate not only to be able to use a wonderful program but to have the backup and support that is so vital to the success of this program in our system."

## State Assessment

In the mid-1990s, the Virginia Department of Education began specifying Standards of Learning. The SOL Assessments, first administered in

spring 1998, are criterion-referenced tests that address the specific learning goals at Grades 3, 5, and 8 as well as end-of-course exams given in high school.

"After our first year of implementing *Everyday Mathematics*, our scores on the Virginia SOL tests increased significantly," states Fisher. "This was very encouraging to all in Virginia Beach City Public Schools who had worked to increase student performance in mathematics. There was a great commitment to staff development from the administration, the office of curriculum and instruction, the math specialists, the building principals, the teacher leaders, and the teachers who invested their time in training. Everyone had a part in our success."

Students in the Virginia Beach City Public Schools have continued to improve their performance on the Mathematics SOL Assessments in Grades 3 and 5. In spring 2002, 85% of Grade 3 students passed the Mathematics SOL Assessment, and 78% of Grade 5 students passed.

"To find success with *Everyday Mathematics* requires a commitment to staff development and parental involvement," notes Fisher. "You have to guide and reassure the teachers that *Everyday Mathematics* will increase students' performance in mathematics. It is our continuing progress on the Virginia SOL Assessments that proves the point."

For additional information on SRA/McGraw-Hill's *Everyday Mathematics* program, please contact us toll-free at 1-888-SRA-4543 and visit our Web site at [www.sra4kids.com](http://www.sra4kids.com).

## Meeting All Expectations