Everyday Mathematics® Success Stories

Horry County Students Lead Way in Mathematics

Horry County is the easternmost county in the state of South Carolina. Located along the Atlantic coast, Horry County includes coastal regions and the city of Myrtle Beach. This culturally and economically diverse county school system also serves rural areas where the primary industry is agriculture. Horry County Schools operates a total of 45 school buildings and enrolls approximately 34,000 students in Grades K–12. Close to 60% of students are eligible for free or reduced-price lunches.

Horry County Schools is the third largest district in the state, and has gained a reputation as one of South Carolina's fastest improving and strongest performing school districts. The district consistently outperforms the state on all state assessments. Thirteen Horry County Schools, almost twice as many schools as any other district, earned honors in 2005 from the state's Education Oversight Committee for closing the achievement gap for all students.

Student achievement in elementary mathematics matches the district's overall record of consistent improvement. Results in mathematics on the Palmetto Achievement Challenge Test (PACT) in Grades 3–5 have dramatically improved in Horry County Schools since the test was first administered in 1999. That year, approximately 45% of the students in Grades 3–5 scored in the Below Basic category in mathematics.

By 2003, only 10% of the students were in the Below Basic category while 90% of students in these grades scored at the Basic, Proficient and Advanced categories in mathematics. Horry County students who score in the Below Basic category in one or more subjects receive individualized academic plans that address how students' weaknesses will be remediated.

The high level of achievement in mathematics was maintained through 2004 and 2005. In 2005, Horry County Schools were the second-highest scoring district in math in the state.

Horry County Schools began piloting ***Everyday Mathematics*** in Grades K–2 during the 1996–97 school year. The program was completely implemented in Grades K–5 during the 2000–01 school year.

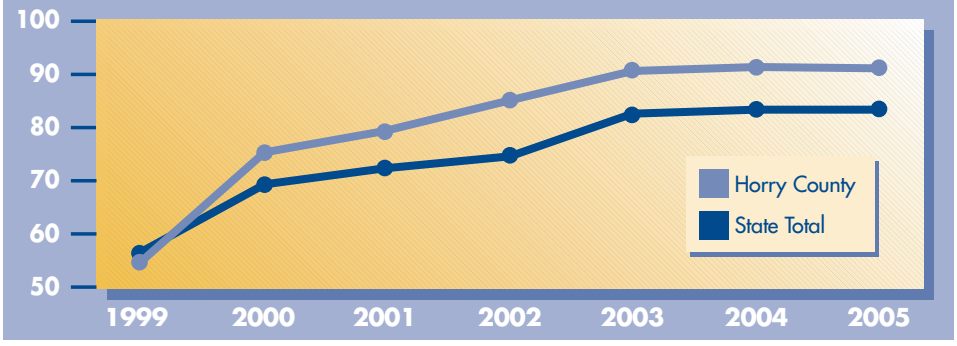
Student Achievement

According to Gloria Brown, Learning Specialist for Elementary Math, Horry County students today have more mathematical knowledge than students did before the implementation of ***Everyday Mathematics***. As cohorts of students had more years of learning with the program, the effect on the students' math skills was noticed by teachers, administrators and the students themselves. Results on the PACT mathematics test confirmed their impressions.

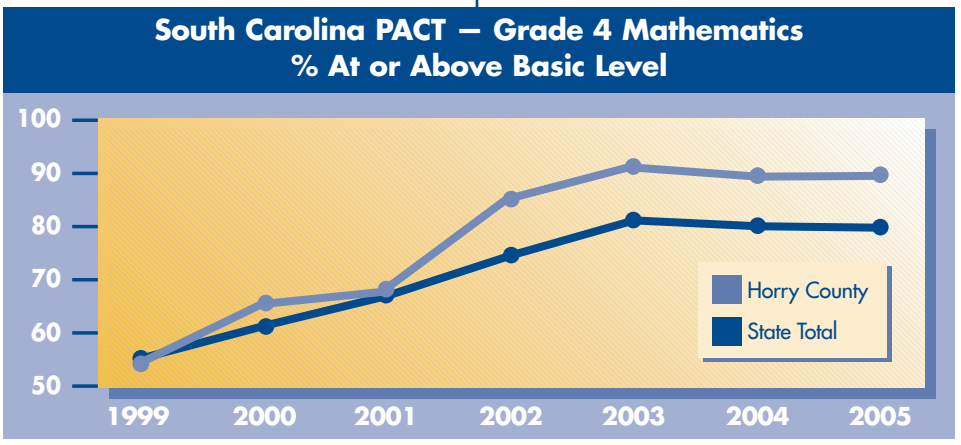
"The students today have a better basic understanding of mathematical concepts," states Brown. "The use of alternative strategies in ***Everyday Mathematics*** strengthens the students' problem solving skills. When students explain how they

The share of Horry County third graders who scored at the Basic, Proficient or Advanced Levels on the PACT increased from 54% in 1999 to 91% in 2005.

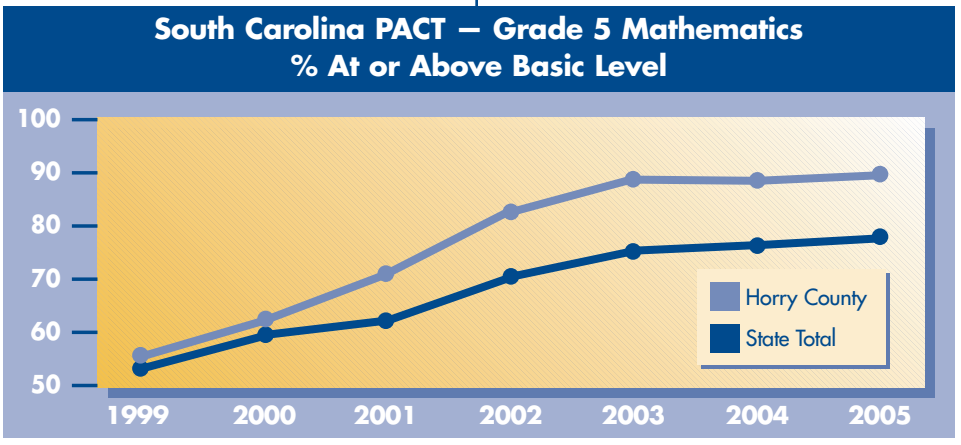
South Carolina PACT — Grade 3 Mathematics
% At or Above Basic Level



In 2005, 89% of fourth graders scored at the Basic Level and above, compared to 54% in 1999.



At fifth grade, 89% of students scored at the Basic, Proficient or Advanced Levels in 2005, compared to 66% of students in 1999.



solved a problem, they are thinking and communicating mathematically. Problem solving, along with mathematical thinking and understanding, are the keys to success on the PACT mathematics assessments," explains Brown.

"When teachers see results with ***Everyday Mathematics***, they want to work more fully with the curriculum. They trust the program's philosophy."

Training

One of the challenges facing Horry County Schools is the rapid growth in Myrtle Beach and rural areas, and the need to build new schools. Approximately 120 new elementary teachers begin with Horry County Schools each year. Each fall, these new teachers receive an introduction to ***Everyday Mathematics*** where the big ideas of the program are presented.

In addition to regular in-service training, Horry County Schools relies on an ***Everyday Mathematics*** support system in each school building. The school district identified a group of teachers who had readily understood the methods and goals of ***Everyday Mathematics***. This group became teacher leaders. The teacher leaders helped their colleagues by sharing ideas on working with the ***Everyday Mathematics*** curriculum. "This proved to be a better way of training," recalls Brown, "with teachers training other teachers."

Raising Expectations

The long-term implementation of ***Everyday Mathematics*** in Horry County Schools has changed not only how math is taught in the district, but has also raised expectations for students. Teachers are able to differentiate instruction based on student achievement levels, with many fifth graders moving into Sixth Grade ***Everyday Mathematics***. For the past 3 years, approximately 350 students, about 20% of the class, are taking an on-line pre-Algebra course in the second semester of fifth grade for enrichment.

In Horry County Schools, Brown reports that the students are talking about math outside of the classroom. One of her favorite impressions of ***Everyday Mathematics*** is hearing first graders use words like 'decimal,' 'algorithm,' and 'polyhedron.' "There is much earlier exposure to math vocabulary in the ***Everyday Mathematics*** program.

"Our teachers in Horry County Schools are responsible for our students' success in mathematics," states Brown. "Teachers have embraced the ***Everyday Mathematics*** program and have found success in schools all across the district."

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

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