

Jacob Hiatt Magnet School

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Worcester, MA 01610
Principal: Patricia Gaudette

Jacob Hiatt Magnet School, a K-6 elementary school in Worcester, Massachusetts, has significantly modified its instructional program as part of a grant to implement expanded learning time (ELT). In partnership with the district, Hiatt has utilized a schoolwide program of data-driven decision making in implementing the grant, focusing on using data to improve teacher practice and ultimately, student performance.

- ◆ Elementary (Pre-K-6)
- ◆ 50% Hispanic
- ◆ 24% White
- ◆ 19% Black
- ◆ 3% Asian
- ◆ 67% Free or Reduced-Price Lunch

As part of the data-use vision, Hiatt established an Instructional Leadership Team (ILT). This team comprises school personnel representing all grade levels and special instructional areas in the school. This eleven member team meets bi-weekly to review and discuss student achievement as indicated by various data sources, including progress monitoring assessments and state achievement tests. The group also analyzes classroom assignments through student portfolios, which may include curricular chapter tests, writing samples, and math books. The utilization of many different types of data allows the ILTs to gain a more comprehensive picture of students' achievement in a given curricular area.

Early on, the team examined classroom- and student-level data from state, benchmark, and classroom assessments and identified an area of need—helping students master open response questions. As a result, staff created a schoolwide Instructional Focus Statement: all students will show measurable growth in their ability to read and respond to open response questions, using detail and relevant information from text for support. Teachers emphasized the term “measurable growth,” stating that their goal was to evaluate individual student progress, not simply count the students reaching benchmark.

The use of data at Hiatt is both student-centered and student-driven. Beginning with the preschool program, students participate in formative assessments by developing portfolios of work completed in each grade. The students design the covers of their portfolios, and regularly meet with teachers to showcase the work included in the portfolio. Teachers at Hiatt recognize that, in addition to providing a source of data teachers can use in evaluating students' achievement, the portfolio system allows students to “reflect on how they learn, what they learn, and how they feel about themselves as learners.”

Hiatt acknowledges and celebrates high-quality student work. They hold annual portfolio celebrations that allow students to display their portfolios to parents. The school also uses exemplar boards featuring the work of students who perform

particularly well on a given assignment. The school rotates this content regularly and makes sure to include work from each student several times each year.

Students also look at benchmark assessment data. Hiatt uses data boards to visually depict students' performance on benchmark assessments in math and English language arts. Student scores are depicted by personalized icons on a chart, such as cars on a race track or rocket ships in outer space. Icons are not visibly labeled with students' names; names and scores are recorded on the back. The boards are posted in the school's hallways, and icons are moved along the "track" as students progress through the year. In this way, students can anonymously compare their progress to that of their peers. In addition, teachers regularly meet with students individually to review progress and help them set improvement goals.

Following each benchmark assessment in reading, students are assigned a Lexile level¹, which indicates their level of reading comprehension. As students progress, their Lexile scores are adjusted accordingly. Books in classrooms and the library are assigned a Lexile level to allow students to easily see whether the text is within their current level of comprehension.

Hiatt has established a system of supports for a culture of data use. Teachers regularly collaborate around student data. The ILT meets biweekly and regularly contributes to The Strategic Framework for Whole School Improvement. In addition, teachers regularly collect informal data on their own performance through the Rounds program. In this model, each teacher will volunteer to have other teachers come in to observe his or her teaching for a class period. A pre-Rounds discussion allows the teacher being observed to explain the intent of the lesson and his or her expected outcomes for the students. Following the observation, the teachers participate in a post-Rounds discussion, where the observing teachers ask any questions and provide feedback about the lesson.

¹ The Lexile Framework® for Reading is a scientific approach to reading and text measurement. There are two Lexile® measures: the Lexile reader measure and the Lexile text measure. A Lexile reader measure represents a person's reading ability on the Lexile scale. A Lexile text measure represents a text's difficulty level on the Lexile scale. When used together, they can help a reader choose a book or other reading material that is at an appropriate difficulty level. The Lexile reader measure can also be used to monitor a reader's growth in reading ability over time. (<http://www.lexile.com/m/uploads/downloadablepdfs/WhatDoesTheLexileMeasureMean.pdf>)