

SUCCESS SPOTLIGHT

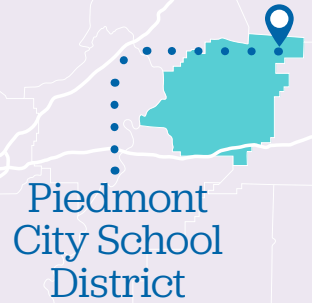
Piedmont City School District Recognized across the State for High Math and Reading Proficiency Rates

Piedmont City School District (PCSD) is a small, rural district in Alabama located about 20 miles from the nearest interstate.

Like many rural communities, the community has experienced a significant economic downfall in the past 15 to 20 years, but its educators and the community at large take tremendous pride in PCSD's students and schools. The district has invested heavily in technology—through its one-to-one device initiative and wireless network, every student in the district has access to computers and the internet.

When Chris Hanson—a graduate himself of PCSD—became principal of Piedmont Middle School (PMS) more than five years ago, his school had earned a "C" on the state report card. In order to drive student learning and improve his school's state rating, Hanson knew that it was crucial to focus on students' individual growth in math and reading. Hanson was a champion for the personal success of each student. He and his team of dedicated educators felt the school needed to provide an age-appropriate, challenging curriculum that would meet the specific learning needs of its students.

Piedmont's goal was to ensure that every student reached a high level of academic achievement.



STUDENTS
1,186

GRADES
Pre-K-
12

AT
OR BELOW
POVERTY LEVEL
65%

SEE
MORE



To meet this goal, Hanson and the instructional team at PMS realized they needed a consistent, research-based curriculum in math and reading that could be used in every classroom. After much deliberation, they implemented *i-Ready* as a supplemental program that helped bridge students' learning gaps. Students first took the *i-Ready Diagnostic*, which then enabled *i-Ready Personalized Instruction* to create a personalized path of online lessons based on students' individual needs. In *i-Ready*, students received instruction and practice in the areas they needed the most support. While students were working on their paths, teachers reviewed ongoing, targeted data that informed their daily instruction and helped group students. Since the implementation of *i-Ready* in 2018, the school has increased to a "B" on the state report card. Hanson credited much of this improvement to his students' growth in math and reading.

What They Did

Hanson and his instructional team at PMS have worked hand in hand to implement *i-Ready*, making adjustments to class schedules, student expectations, and more to ensure they had consistent usage of the program across all grade levels in the building.

i-Ready became embedded in the school's daily routine for both students and teachers. Students knew their expectations and responsibilities for completing their individualized paths in *i-Ready Personalized Instruction*, and teachers reviewed the data each day to really understand how their students were progressing, who was struggling, and how they could best help students to provide additional instructional support. **This dedication to the fidelity of implementation was underpinned by their continuous drive for all students to experience growth and success throughout the school year. A few notable changes included:**



Increased Instructional Time

PMS adjusted its class schedules so all students received 80 minutes of mathematics instruction daily (compared to the 50 minutes received in years prior). This allowed for consistent time to use *i-Ready* at the beginning of the class period—three days a week for 15 minutes—without sacrificing additional instructional time. The school followed a similar instructional model with *i-Ready* for reading instruction in English language arts classes. Students used *i-Ready* for a total of 45 minutes each week and were challenged to pass at least one lesson per week. While students completed their *i-Ready Personalized Instruction* path online, the classroom teachers worked one on one or in small groups with students who needed additional support.



Celebrated Academic Success

Together, administrators and teachers came up with ways to motivate students and celebrate their academic accomplishments in *i-Ready*. Cheyenne Crider, Grade 7 math teacher, awarded an *i-Ready* student of the month based on who passed the most lessons with the highest pass rate.

She also encouraged competition among her Grade 7 classes, which helped drive peer-to-peer learning. "My students checked in with one another to see who had not passed the lesson yet and were willing to help one another with hard concepts so the whole class could be successful," said Crider.

Hanson enabled teachers to think of creative ways to inspire student learning growth. "We're a very competitive school when it comes to athletics, so we tried to create the same drive academically for our kids," he said.

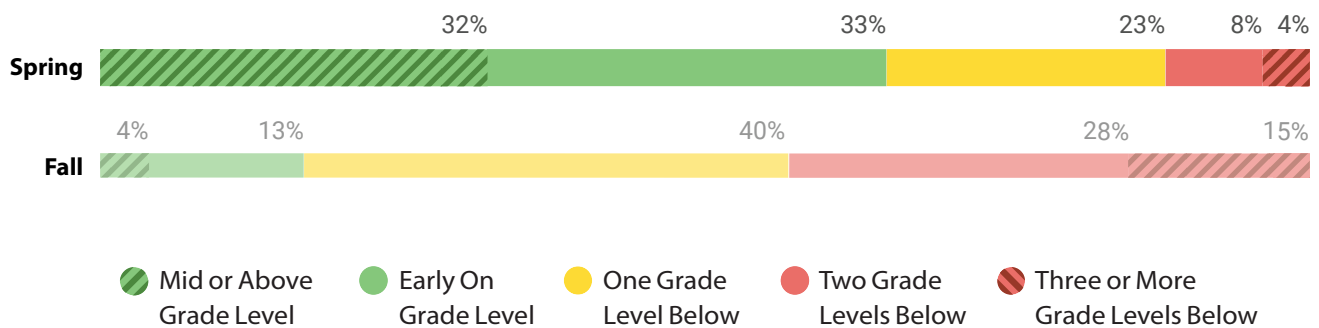
What They Accomplished

Today, PMS is recognized across the state for the success its students are having in reading and math. In 2021, the Alabama Education Lab identified PMS and Piedmont Elementary School (PES), which also uses *i-Ready* for reading and math with its Grades 4–5 students, as two of Alabama’s high-flying schools—schools that “. . . outperform their peers despite having high rates of student poverty and low levels of local funding.” PES and PMS are two of only 43 high-flying schools across the state. Their students scored better in math and reading than their peers, including many of their higher-income counterparts.

“*i-Ready* has helped the school drive growth with all its students—those who have grade-level gains to make and those who are working above grade level—including my own son,” said Magan Glover, instructional coach at PMS.

For example, the number of Grade 6 students performing Mid or Above Grade Level in math increased from four percent as measured by the first *i-Ready Diagnostic* to 32 percent at the end of the year, while the number of students performing Three or More Grade Levels Below decreased from 15 percent to just four percent between fall 2020 and spring 2021. *i-Ready* has helped PMS accelerate growth among its entire student population, ensuring all students achieve academic success in reading and math.

Grade 6 Placement-Level Changes from Fall to Spring



“**We wanted to make sure that each and every kid was growing.** I didn’t care if you were number one in the class or if you were number 23. We had to figure out how we could push you. I have the philosophy that each kid has an opportunity to grow, and we need to develop that. And I think that’s what we’ve been able to do when you look at what *i-Ready* Math and Reading has provided.”

—Chris Hanson, Principal



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