



LEARNING UPGRADE

**Learning Upgrade White Paper:  
How Schools Achieved School-Wide Gains  
In Reading and Math in 2011-2012**  
Results and a Model Plan for Schools

## **Overview**

A group of schools that implemented the Learning Upgrade program with model best practices achieved school-wide gains in math and reading for the 2011-12 school year. The schools improved significantly in school-wide test scores and APIs. Each school overcame challenges including high numbers of at-risk students (Title I, minority, English Learners).

The Learning Upgrade program consists of online courses for students to complete at school and at home. The courses are high-interest featuring songs, video, and games to motivate students and increase learning. Teachers track student progress to mastery, which is a gold certificate, through web-based reports. The courses have been successful moving far below basic students including Title I, special needs, and English learners to proficiency in reading and math within one school year.

This white paper documents schools that achieved their goal, including API and statewide test scores, to document the gains.

The success of these schools in achieving gains within one school year serves as a model template for other schools to implement. This document summarizes this model program.

## **The Plan: School Wide Gains Within One School Year**

Each school implemented a customized plan that was based on a common overall strategy:

1. Enroll every student in the appropriate math and English Learning Upgrade online courses
2. Develop a strategy for below-proficient students to complete the courses to a GOLD certificate with supervision and time-on-task
  - a. in math and English classes
  - b. in support, intervention, pullout, special needs, and English learner classes
  - c. after school, before school, Saturday programs
  - d. at home using web-based log-on, during the school year and during breaks
3. Monitor progress at the teacher, principal, and district level using web-based and emailed reports, with feedback to teachers and accountability
4. Motivate every student to achieve a gold certificate with incentives and acknowledgement
5. Keep up the effort all the way to the end of the school year

## **The Results: A Sampling of Schools**

Over 200 schools implemented the Learning Upgrade program in 2011-12 school wide, including all non-charter schools in San Diego Unified School District. Over the following pages, the results from a select group of schools with model implementations of the program are listed.

### **Alta Loma Junior High Alta Loma California**

#### **Plan & Strategy:**

- Focus on math intervention
- Offer daily one-period intervention classes for every below-proficient student, in addition to regular math classes
- Supervise student progress closely to ensure every student reaches a gold certificate

#### **Results: California CST School Wide Percent Proficient or Advanced**

	2011	2012	Gain
Math Grade 7	61%	70%	9%
General Math Grade 8	46%	69%	21%
Algebra Grade 8	55%	95%	40%
API Growth	837	874	37

#### **Student Demographics:**

- 28% Hispanic, 5% African American, 3% Asian
- 23% free or reduced price lunch
- 2% English learners

## Perry Elementary San Diego California

### Plan & Strategy:

- In-class daily individual sessions with Learning Upgrade courses using classroom netbooks
- Pullouts to a dedicated computer lab for specific classes and students not making progress
- Before and After School supervised time-on-task
- Instant reward of color certificate printed when gold certificates achieved
- Goal of 5 hours/week total on Learning Upgrade courses for each student (school & home)
- Motivation for students to complete lessons during breaks: Thanksgiving, winter, spring

### Results: California CST School Wide Percent Proficient or Advanced

	2011	2012	Gain
School wide ELA	68%	78%	10%
School wide Math	75%	83%	8%
3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade ELA	46%	76%	30%
3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade Math	76%	91%	15%
API Growth	853	905	52 Points

### Student Demographics:

- 32% Filipino, 27% Hispanic, 23% African American, 13% White
- 76% free or reduced price lunch
- 17% English Learners

## Pershing Middle San Diego CA

### Plan & Strategy:

- Focus on at-home time, student motivation
- Pullouts to computer lab for students and classes
- 11,668 Student Hours Time on Task, 12 hours per student average

### Results: California CST School Wide Percent Proficient or Advanced

	2011	2012	Gain
School wide ELA	74%	77%	3%
School wide Math	55%	64%	9%
8 <sup>th</sup> Grade Algebra	38%	54%	16%
API Growth	836	867	31 Points

### Student Demographics:

- 34% Hispanic, 9% African American, 6% Asian
- 41% eligible for free or reduced lunch
- 8% English learners

## **Marston Middle San Diego CA**

### **Plan & Strategy:**

- Address both English and Math in classes and pullouts
- 11,512 Student Hours Time on Task, Average 14 hrs/student

### **Results: California CST School Wide Percent Proficient or Advanced**

	2011	2012	Gain
School wide ELA	57%	65%	7%
School wide Math	45%	54%	9%
8 <sup>th</sup> Grade Algebra	30%	37%	7%
API Growth	787	818	31 Points

### **Student Demographics:**

- 51% Hispanic, 10% Asian, 6% African American
- 67% eligible for free or reduced lunch
- 25% English learners

## **Crawford MVAS High School San Diego CA**

### **Plan & Strategy:**

- Focus on students passing the CAHSEE high school exit exam

### **Results: California High School Exit Exam Passing Percentage**

	2011	2012	Gain
Math	59%	71%	12%
English	63%	71%	8%

### **Student Demographics:**

- 51% Hispanic, 25% Asian, 17% African American
- 94% eligible for free or reduced lunch
- 35% English learners

## **A Model Plan For Schools To Achieve School-Wide Gains**

Based on the results of the schools as described above, there are common elements which form a model plan for schools implementing Learning Upgrade listed below. The key is for each principal to meet with staff and develop a strategy to reach every student with the appropriate Learning Upgrade courses with completion before year-end testing.

1. Enroll All Students
  - a. Instead of limiting participation to below-proficient students, enroll every student with the goal of moving every student up one or more categories. Move below-proficient students to proficient, and proficient students to advanced.
2. Ensure Teachers are Trained
  - a. use resources including training sessions, videos, Teacher's Guides, peer teacher help, and phone/email contact with Learning Upgrade staff
3. Dedicated Time for Below Proficient Students
  - a. create or modify pullout classes so that every below proficient student gets daily dedicated time to complete the Learning Upgrade courses assigned
  - b. creatively use every opportunity: advisory classes, special needs classes, English Learner pullouts, 2-hour block classes, etc.
4. Maximize Use of After School Time
  - a. organize after school, before school, and Saturday time so that below-proficient students get dedicated sessions with Learning Upgrade
  - b. use teachers trained in Learning Upgrade, and set up monitoring for each group of students so after school time is maximized for completion of courses
5. Motivate Students To Complete Lessons At Home
  - a. offer incentives like extra credit, acknowledgement, prizes for work at home
  - b. have set goals which student and parent understands for at-home work
  - c. maximize time-on-task during breaks, such as assigning lessons during breaks
6. Monitor students and classes regularly
  - a. principals and lead teachers check reports on teachers and students regularly
  - b. offer alternatives for students not making progress, such as pull-out classes
  - c. make completion of Learning Upgrade courses for every student a goal and priority for each teacher
  - d. set a date for reaching a Gold certificate in math and reading courses, before statewide testing, with enough time for review at the end of the year