

## Case Study #5:

Maine School Administrative District #37



**How did one of the lowest performing districts become the highest performing district in their state in only two years?**



**A commitment to excellence, conscientious educators, and the Thoughtful Classroom Program.**

A semi-rural community with students having diverse social, language, and economic backgrounds, Maine SAD #37 had made a commitment to increase the academic performance of all of its students. Dissatisfied with the numbers of students not meeting the state standards, Dr. Harvey Silver was asked to introduce the Thoughtful Classroom model to teachers during the 2002-2003 academic year.

In July of 2003, 57 teachers from all five elementary schools worked with facilitators from Silver, Strong & Associates to integrate the Thoughtful Classroom Program into their professional practices. They participated in an intensive five-day workshop with the goal of refining their knowledge and use of instructional tools and research-based strategies to better address the individual learning needs of their students. The following year, teachers expanded their strategies for effective differentiation of instruction and assessment as well as thoughtful curriculum development aligned with state standards.

Throughout the 2003-2005 academic years, teachers joined professional Learning Clubs. Teams of teachers, from across grade levels and throughout multiple schools, discussed their personal applications of the strategies and examined their own students' work.

Thoughtful Classroom coaches modeled new strategies and assisted teachers with their unit planning. Sharing their professional reflections, teachers visited each others' classes to better practice and adapt the tools and materials. To develop a stronger collegial learning community, the superintendent and principals participated in Learning Walks with the teachers. Working together, administrators and teachers reviewed the instructional activities and their effects on student engagement and achievement.

### **The results are in...**

**After a two-year implementation of the Thoughtful Classroom Program, the Maine State Department of Education recognized SAD #37 as the top performing elementary school district in the state.** By Spring 2004, the numbers of students meeting and exceeding standards in the core areas of math and reading soared. In reading, 77% of all fourth graders met or exceeded standards. Fourth grade students not meeting standards in math decreased from 24% to 1%. The percentage of eighth graders not meeting standards in math declined by more than half.

### **Results from Maine Educational Assessment**

	2001				2002				2003				2004			
	E	M	PM	NM	E	M	PM	NM	E	M	PM	NM	E	M	PM	NM
<b>4th Gr Math</b>	0%	17%	59%	24%	9%	36%	47%	7%	9%	57%	33%	1%				
<b>8th Gr Math</b>	0%	13%	33%	53%	1%	17%	54%	28%	3%	32%	41%	24%				
<b>4th Gr Reading</b>	1%	50%	40%	9%	2%	63%	31%	4%	3%	74%	24%	0%*				
<b>8th Gr Reading</b>	2%	33%	57%	8%	1%	49%	40%	10%	0%	47%	46%	7%				

**Key:** E=Exceeding standards M=Meeting standards  
PM=Partially meeting standards NM=Not meeting standards

\*Please note that statistics have been rounded for clarity, and may not equal 100%

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