

El Dorado Middle School, KS



Kansas school uses MAP Skills to close gaps in learning for all students

El Dorado Middle School is using MAP® Skills™ from NWEA® to ensure every single student is getting instruction where they need it most. And it's already proving to have a huge impact on student growth and achievement. "MAP Skills has made a difference," says Kirstie Towner, an eighth-grade language arts teacher. Principal Karla King agrees: "This is a product that truly helps us impact student achievement."

In addition to empowering students to monitor their own learning, MAP Skills has enabled teachers to move students forward. "We've helped kids improve their skills by three or four grade levels within a year," says Vickie Boss, an eighth-grade science teacher. Students have also shown improvement on their state assessments and MAP® Growth™ tests, with 73% of students increasing their MAP Growth scores from fall to winter.

Improving each student's performance

The state mandates that El Dorado educators provide targeted, individualized instruction for all students. "MAP Skills provides a building-wide platform for this," says Boss. El Dorado targets all students—from low to high achievers. "It's been remarkable to see that students with high RIT scores can still improve," says Linette Liby, a former eighth-grade math and language arts teacher.

Special education students are also showing improvement. "We have students with disabilities who are making 15-point gains on MAP Growth," says Towner.

- + 73% of students increased their MAP Growth scores from fall to winter
- + All grades exceeded state benchmarks in language usage after implementation

As part of their individualized instruction plans, teachers have 23 minutes each day for math and reading intervention. With MAP Skills, they can use this time to focus on the skills students need. Being able to see the progression of skills—and having access to supplemental resources—has also been helpful for teachers at El Dorado, all of whom are required to teach math and reading intervention. "As a science teacher, it's awesome," says Boss. "MAP Skills lays out step by step what skill I need to cover." King adds, "As an administrator, when you can save teachers time, and they can see the impact that it makes on the students, it's a win-win."

How El Dorado teachers use MAP Skills

Teachers first analyze MAP Growth data to find the lowest instructional areas; then, they select a single strand to focus on in each subject. This year the focus was on number sense and language usage—two key areas of need. After assigning a Skills Locator test in the focus strands, they group students by missing skills and provide targeted instruction. Finally, they re-test using Mastery Checks within MAP Skills. El Dorado repeats this process until every student masters the skills that they were missing.

Because of these efforts, in combination with other district initiatives, both MAP Growth and state test results improved. “On state assessments we’ve moved from just a little below the state average in language usage to green across all grade levels. That was very impactful”, says King.

“I’ve been teaching for 25+ years, and I’ve seen a lot of products come and go. MAP Skills has provided some of the best support to monitor student progress and to guide instruction.”

Vickie Boss, Teacher
El Dorado Middle School, KS

Teachers also provide an individual data sheet for each student. Allowing the students to track their own progress helps them understand which skills they’ve mastered, what they need to work on, and why they’re in certain groups. “My favorite thing about MAP Skills is how the students respond. Watching them take ownership of their own learning has been amazing,” says Towner.

Tips for getting started

El Dorado piloted MAP Skills with eighth-grade students and teachers the first year. The following year, they expanded MAP Skills to grades six and seven, making it fully implemented across all grades.

Although they faced some initial challenges, like trying to work on too many strands and subjects at once, El Dorado teachers could see the potential for their students and continued to explore how to use MAP Skills within their building. “We jumped in headfirst,” explains Towner, “and learned the hard way that you should use your MAP Growth data as a starting point, find your lowest indicator, then go to MAP Skills.” King adds, “It’s about working smarter, not harder.”



District snapshot

EL DORADO, KS



STUDENTS IN GRADES PRE-K-12

2,000

ECONOMIC MARKERS

57%

OF STUDENTS QUALIFY FOR
FREE OR REDUCED-PRICE LUNCH

PRODUCT USE

IMPLEMENTED MAP GROWTH IN

2005

IMPLEMENTED MAP SKILLS IN

2015



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