



map GROWTH

From data-rich to data-driven

How a growing school network in Saudi Arabia built a culture of data-driven improvement

Al Forsan International Schools transformed their system practices to a highly aligned, evidence-driven network where NWEA® MAP® Growth™ and MAP Reading Fluency™ are core levers for improvement.

What began as an effort to “understand the data” has become a system-wide movement toward continuous improvement, shaping outcomes for more than 11,000 students learning at 4 campuses across 3 cities—Riyadh, Alkhuber, and Jeddah—in Saudi Arabia.

Through consistent data use, courageous self-reflection, and a culture of collective accountability, the school is achieving:

- Strong year-over-year gains
- Higher quality teaching
- Better early literacy outcomes
- Empowered, involved students



AL FORSAN INTERNATIONALSCHOOLS

Learning for a Lifetime of Discovery | Grades PK-12

LOCATION
Saudi Arabia

FOUNDED
2013

CAMPUSES
Four

ENROLLMENT
11,000

ACCREDITATION
Cognia

THE CHALLENGE

Al Forsan had years of MAP data and were ready to take the next step—building a unified, systemwide approach to using it across campuses. Leaders recognized several key opportunities for growth, including:

- Raising achievement levels beyond the 28th percentile
- Expanding analysis to include percentile growth
- Adding a midyear checkpoint for intervention impact
- Strengthening early-literacy insight (K-2)
- Building teacher data literacy and shared accountability
- Increasing student ownership through goal-setting and parent engagement

THE SOLUTION

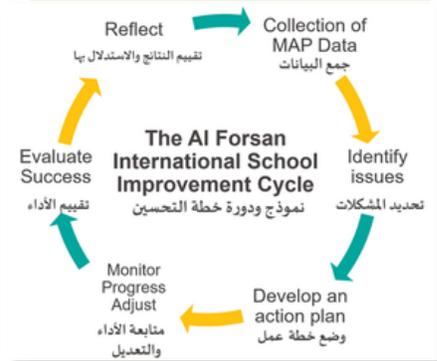
Al Forsan partnered with NWEA to implement MAP Growth and MAP Reading Fluency across all campuses, supported by professional learning and strong data routines.

- Growth-focused leadership: Added winter testing, strengthened data use, and introduced student goal setting.
- MAP Growth as the standard: Used percentiles and growth norms to guide planning and track progress across four campuses.
- Early literacy impact: MAP Reading Fluency in K-2 provided precise insights for 1,000+ students and identified foundational gaps.
- Continuous improvement: Aligned data to curriculum, replicated effective teaching, and increased student effort on MAP and national exams.



“We finally had a clear picture of where we were and what needed to improve. MAP Growth didn’t just give us numbers— it gave us a system.”

— **Christopher McKenzie**
Academic Director
Al Forsan International
Schools



Al Forsan’s school improvement cycle uses MAP Growth data to inform every step of its process—aligning leadership, instruction, and student goals across the school network.

“When you look at your data sets, you really need to understand how they connect; only then do you get a clear picture of where you are and where you need to go.”

— Christopher McKenzie
Academic Director, Al Forsan International Schools

THE RESULTS

Al Forsan’s commitment to evidence-based leadership produced system-wide gains:

Achievement & growth

- Math: From 28th percentile → 37th percentile
- Reading: Steady rise to 28th–31st percentile and improving yearly
- Verified growth independent of new 2025 norms by cross-checking RIT performance

Early literacy pipeline strengthened

- MAP Reading Fluency delivered accurate baseline data for early grades
- Allowed leaders to identify reading program gaps and overhaul instruction

Culture transformation

- Teachers, leaders, parents, and students share collective accountability
- Students engage in goal-setting and show increased test effort
- Impact extended to National Assessment (NAFS) through stronger academic discipline

Systemwide alignment

- Transparent, shared metrics across all campuses
- Consistent expectations for instruction, curriculum, and student support
- MAP Growth now serves as the central indicator of instructional impact



Conclusion: A model for international schools in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) region

Al Forsan International Schools has transformed their practices into a unified, data-driven system where evidence guides decisions from early literacy through schoolwide leadership. With MAP Growth, MAP Reading Fluency, and strong partnership with NWEA, the network of schools has:

- Elevated instructional quality
- Built a sustainable data culture
- Increased student effort and ownership
- Raised achievement across campuses
- Established a foundation for long-term excellence

Al Forsan now stands as a leading example of what GCC schools can achieve when data becomes a shared language and a catalyst for continuous improvement.

[Explore MAP Growth: nwea.org/map-growth](https://nwea.org/map-growth)