

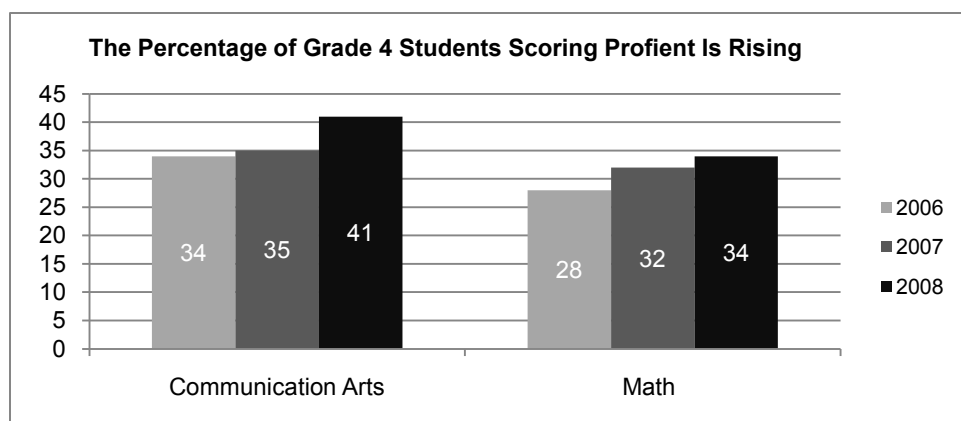
# White Paper Series

Hazelwood School District

Florissant, Missouri

The  
Leadership  
and Learning  
Center™

**The percentage of Hazelwood School District students reaching proficiency has increased for every subject area tested in grades 3 through 10 since 2005.**



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## Issues

- An extensive qualitative assessment, conducted early in the partnership with The Leadership and Learning Center (The Center), revealed a need for a comprehensive, long-term professional development plan.
- At the school level, staff members needed strategies to develop common formative assessments, analyze data from student work, develop and implement effective instructional strategies, and plan timely interventions when students did not make satisfactory progress.
- At the district level, the assessment revealed the need to increase the district's internal capacity to lead its own professional development.

## Solutions Provided by The Leadership and Learning Center

- A Hazelwood professional development plan was designed and implemented to foster proven practices and processes to increase collaboration at all levels within the district.
- Hazelwood educators received training in The Center seminars including *Data Teams* and *Decision Making for Results*. These seminars provided attendees with the tools to differentiate between unnecessary student data and the relevant data that they should use to drive instruction. Additionally, participants learned new strategies to collaboratively analyze student data, create measurable indicators, implement intervention, and track progress.
- The Center conducted certification training for Hazelwood educators. This helped the district build internal capacity and reach its long-term goal of providing professional development for every district educator.

## **1.0 Executive Summary**

The Leadership and Learning Center has worked with Hazelwood School District for more than a decade. In that period, a strong foundation for student success has been developed based on The Center's core work in standards and data analysis. This Success has been proven by the significant gains made by Hazelwood students on Missouri's standardized tests. The district has also achieved its objective to provide its own professional development through The Center's certification training program.

In addition, follow-up implementation support by Center personnel has also been instrumental in assisting Hazelwood educators after every training and professional development session. Hazelwood leaders and The Center's Professional Development Associates recognized early in their partnership that providing ongoing support throughout the district was essential to sustaining each initiative.

By using these strategies—teaching and testing student learning of the essential standards, proper use and analysis of data, certification training, and on-site follow-up support—the district has made great strides in improving teacher instruction and increasing student achievement.

## **2.0 The Needs of Hazelwood School District**

Hazelwood School District is the second largest school district in the St. Louis metropolitan area. The district consists of 30 schools serving about 19,000 students in kindergarten through grade 12. In its initial search for professional development support, leaders in the district were looking for an organization that utilized research-based strategies and had a track record of success in working with districts similar to Hazelwood. These leaders were familiar with the work of Dr. Douglas Reeves, the founder of The Leadership and Learning Center, and chose to partner with The Center based on its past accomplishments. The Center has now worked strategically with the Hazelwood School District for the past 12 years.

An extensive qualitative assessment, conducted early in the district's partnership with The Leadership and Learning Center, revealed a need for a comprehensive, long-term professional development plan. At the school level, staff members needed strategies to develop common formative assessments, analyze data from student work, develop and implement effective instructional strategies, and plan timely interventions when students did not make satisfactory progress. At the district level, the assessment revealed that Hazelwood needed to develop district leadership and increase the district's internal capacity to lead its own professional development.

More recently, district leaders have further concentrated their efforts on leadership development, while also continuing to successfully implement the strategies and trainings that have taken place over the last decade.

### 3.0 The Role of The Leadership and Learning Center

Hazelwood School District utilized a number of strategies to accomplish the gains they have made. The following services and seminars, provided by The Leadership and Learning Center, were significant components of the district's success.

**Decision Making for Results and Data Teams:** The Center's seminars, *Decision Making for Results* and *Data Teams*, have been implemented throughout Hazelwood School District. These seminars provided all attendees with the skills to differentiate between unnecessary student data and the relevant data that they should use to drive instruction. Additionally, participants learned new strategies to collaboratively analyze student data, create measurable indicators, implement intervention, and track progress.

The primary goal of the *Data Teams* seminar is to maximize effective instructional practice via constant monitoring of prescribed materials. This seminar works in conjunction with The Center's *Decision Making for Results* seminar. Together, these seminars give participants the tools to analyze relevant student data effectively in collaborative teams. Results are applied not only to inform instruction for individual students, but also to evaluate and improve core general education practices and the overall effectiveness of interventions.

**Engaging Classroom Assessments:** This Center seminar provided participants with the strategies to identify and "unwrap" essential content standards—the Power Standards—and create assessments that aligned directly with these standards. In turn, these assessments provided an effective means to improve student performance in the classroom and on high-stakes standardized tests. Hazelwood educators learned why performance tasks and accompanying rubrics for assessing student proficiency are so powerful. Moreover, they learned of the compelling research that links writing across the curriculum with higher standardized test scores. Today, Hazelwood educators analyze student gains made on these assessments in Data Team meetings and utilize the results to drive classroom instruction.

**Common Formative Assessments:** For training in creating interim assessments, Hazelwood educators attended the *Common Formative Assessments* seminar. The Center helped grade-level teams design and format common formative assessments to mirror the district's assessments. Furthermore, The Center aligned the seminar with each school's goals to directly support using data to drive instruction. Educators administer common formative assessments to students in a grade level or course several times throughout the school year.

**Power Strategies for Effective Teaching:** This Center seminar introduced Hazelwood participants to instructional strategies that they can employ to significantly and quickly raise academic achievement in all subject areas. *Power Strategies for Effective Teaching* synthesizes decades of credible and documented research. In combination with careful examination of student work and frequent collaboration among teachers, widespread implementation of these “power strategies” produces dramatic results.

This interactive seminar allowed Hazelwood participants to practice some of the strategies before determining how to apply each one to their unique teaching situations. Participants also learned a specific “unwrapping” protocol to apply to the analysis of student work and how to connect specific strategies to evidence found in the work.

**Implementation Visits:** The Center’s Professional Development Associates and Hazelwood leaders recognized that focusing on implementation was essential for the success of school change and improvement. Collaborating with The Center, district leaders designed professional development implementation support for Hazelwood staff. During on-site visits, The Center’s Professional Development Associates worked closely with Hazelwood educators to concentrate on each school’s specific goals and needs. These implementation visits focused primarily on the work of school data teams. Today, implementation visits continue to be a significant component of Hazelwood’s professional development plan.

**Certification Training:** Certification training builds long-term support for professional development initiatives by building internal capacity and saving significant costs. In Center certification trainings, school leaders are prepared to guide professional development and effectively teach the content and implementation of The Center’s seminars within their own school. Certified Hazelwood trainers gained a deeper understanding of the seminar content and learned new tools to support fellow educators who were applying the content in their classrooms. The Hazelwood School District held on-site certification training in *Decision Making for Results*, *Data Teams*, and *Common Formative Assessments*.

## 4.0 Hazelwood School District Results

The Missouri Department of Education uses the Missouri Assessment Program (MAP) to test students in grades 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 10 in math, and grades 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 11 in communication arts. Districts also have the option to give assessments in social studies in grades 4, 8, and 11 on a voluntary basis.

The MAP is a standards-based test that measures specific skills defined for each grade by the state of Missouri. In general, performance on the MAP indicates whether students are making sufficient progress toward mastery of state content standards. MAP also includes sections from TerraNova, a national norm-referenced test, which is used to compare how well students are performing compared to their peers across the country.

MAP is scored according to four levels of achievement: *below basic*, *basic*, *proficient*, and *advanced*. The goal is for all students to score at or above the *proficient* level. Hazelwood has made significant gains on MAP and other standardized assessments over the past decade. Since the 2005-2006 school year, the percentage of students reaching proficiency has increased for every subject area tested in grades 3 through 10.

Hazelwood School District leaders recognize that the results of professional development cannot be assessed by test scores alone. Teachers and staff throughout the district have made other significant gains in their professional development goals:

- Hazelwood has developed a strong district leadership team that is directly involved with the each initiative.
- The district has hired new principals and developed support for current leadership staff. Furthermore, the district has strived to provide strong leadership at all levels. Hazelwood leaders and The Leadership and Learning Center have developed leadership coaching that is directly aligned with the district's goals and objectives.
- A shift in the culture of professional development has occurred. The inquiry process is no longer a top-down practice reserved for district leaders. All Hazelwood personnel, including teachers and school leaders, are now engaged in examination of how well students are learning. District educators are continually reflecting on and learning from "What *is* working and why?" and "What *is not* working and why?" Initiatives have become increasingly about deeper and deeper learning.

## 5.0 Lessons Learned in Hazelwood School District

Hazelwood leaders and The Leadership and Learning Center recognize the following specific lessons as integral components of the district's success.

**Implementation:** The district ensured the plan would maintain a lasting impact by scheduling implementation visits led by Center Professional Development Associates. These visits allowed classroom educators to have direct access to Center consultants to address specific challenges and receive feedback at the classroom level. Customized implementation strategies were a significant factor in meeting the needs of educators as well as increasing student achievement.

**Continuity:** Hazelwood School District continues to work with The Leadership and Learning Center in an active and ongoing partnership. In the 2009-2010 school year, The Center will conduct additional seminars and implementation visits throughout the district. The Center will also continue to customize its seminars to ensure that each school's individual goals remain at the forefront of the design of The Center's seminar contents.

**Build on Results:** Hazelwood leaders recognized that early efforts in data-driven decision making would be the foundation for future work and these practices remain the core of all work. Using this work as a foundation, Hazelwood and The Center now focus on deeper implementation of key strategies. This work has evolved as the needs of the district have changed.

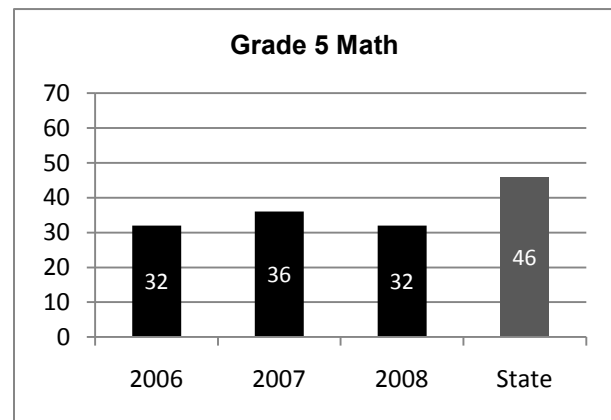
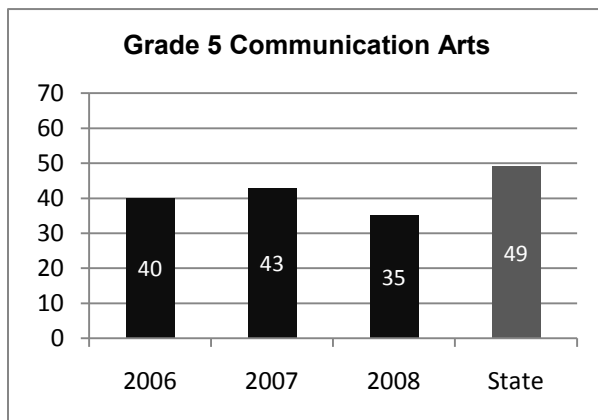
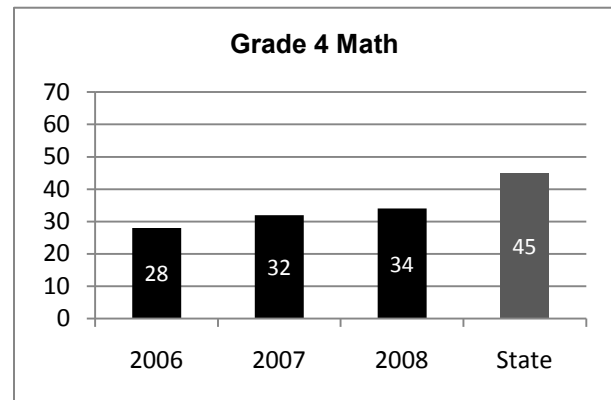
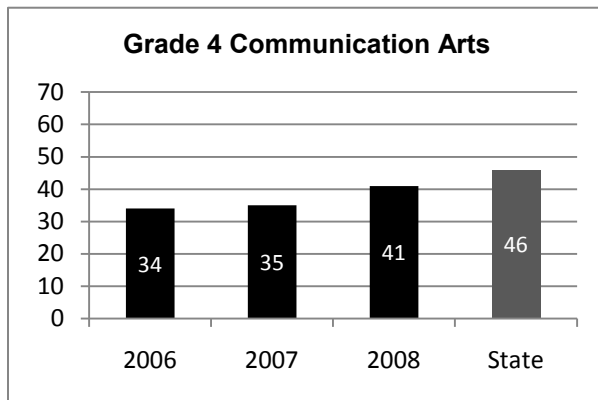
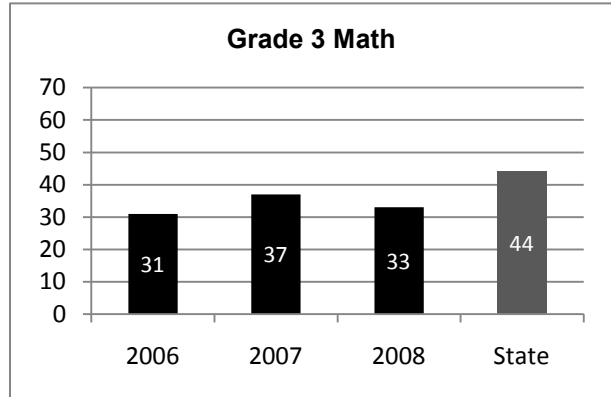
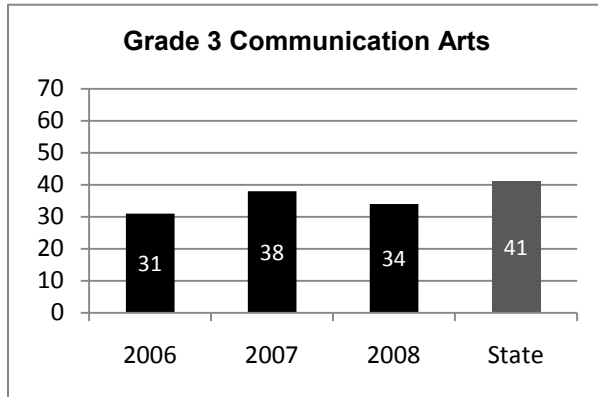
**On-Site Certification Training:** Hazelwood leaders invested in professional development sustainability by certifying teacher-leaders to guide professional development and teach The Center's seminars within the district. On-site certification also enabled the district to build internal capacity and save money on future professional development costs.

**Resources:** Hazelwood leaders continue to invest in books and other resources for classroom teachers and school leaders to align with the professional development initiatives.

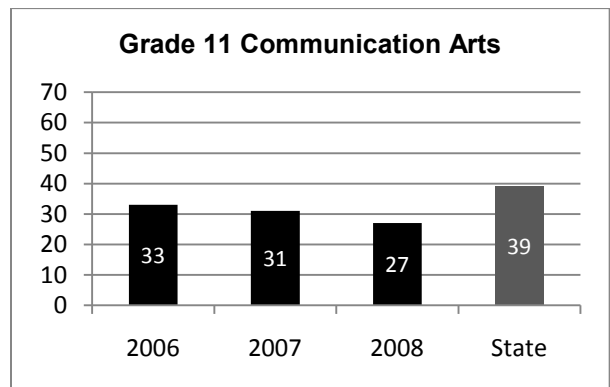
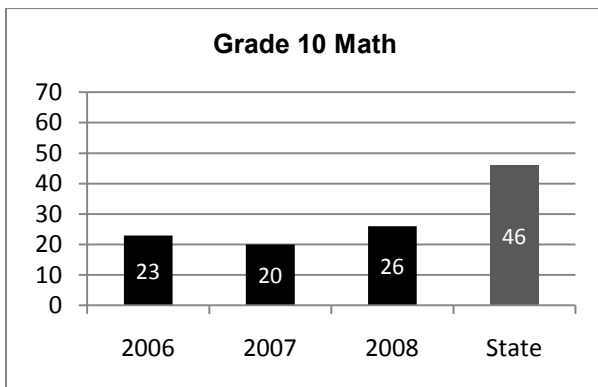
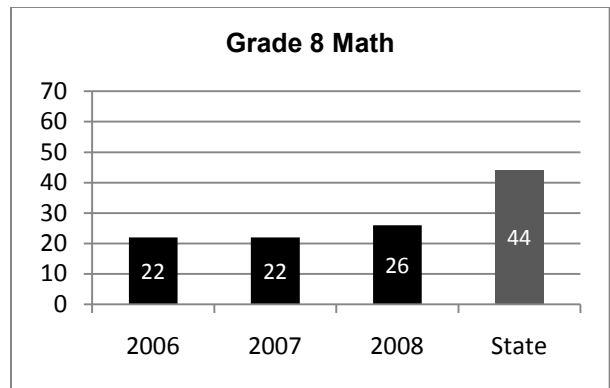
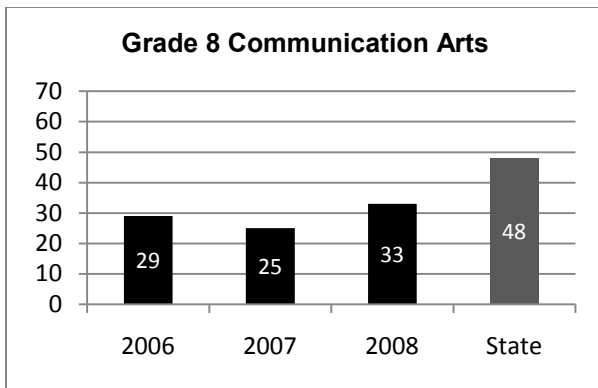
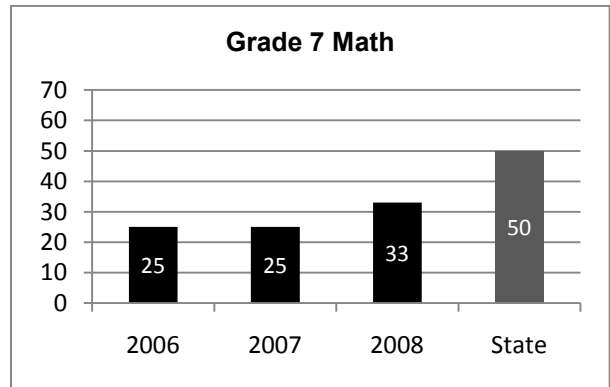
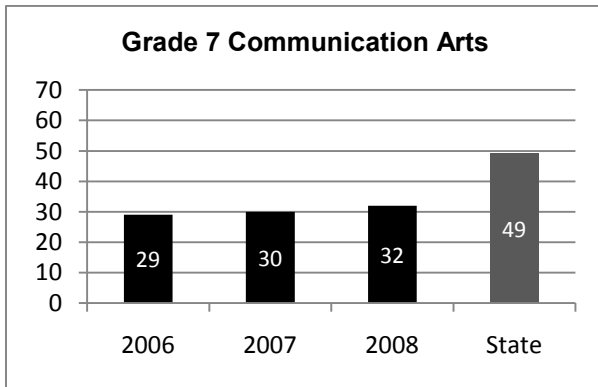
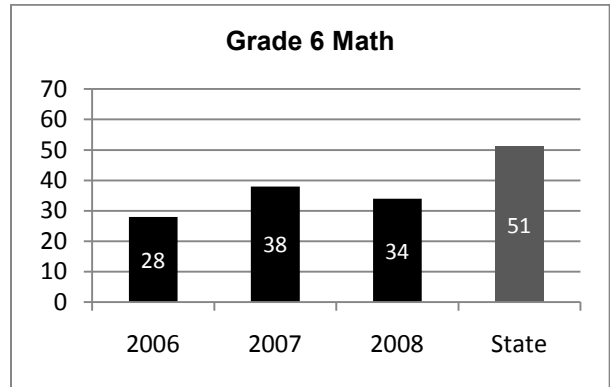
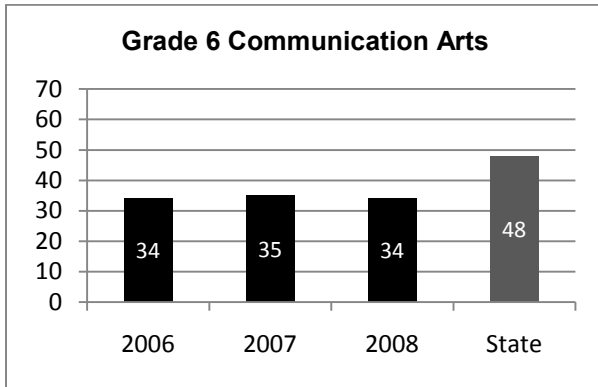
Hazelwood School District and The Leadership and Learning Center continue to work together in a strong partnership based on meeting the needs of Hazelwood staff and ensuring future student achievement success.

## Appendix

### Hazelwood School District MAP Proficiency Results 2006–2009



**Appendix (Continued)**



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