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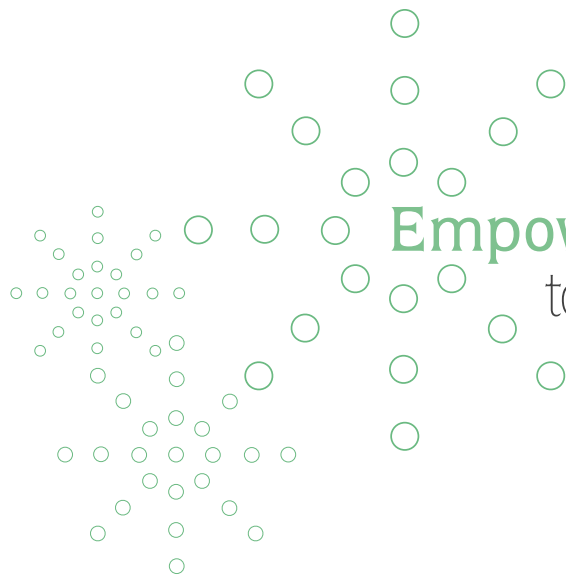
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■ BRIEFLY

- » WestEd's Academic Parent–Teacher Teams (APTT) approach engages families in their children's learning.
- » Teachers provide families with targeted strategies and resources to use with their children to reinforce academic goals.
- » Research indicates family engagement is a strong predictor of students' academic success.



Empowering Families to Improve Student Learning

When officials at North Elementary School in Okeechobee, Florida, cancelled the school's Carnival and Family Reading Night, parents were a bit confused and somewhat dismayed. Such events had been long-standing ways of encouraging them to get involved in their children's school. But North Elementary's principal, Pat McCoy, realized that "while events like a school carnival offer a nice chance to socialize, they don't actively engage parents in their child's learning."

So McCoy decided to take a different approach. To help families play a more informed and active role in their children's education, North Elementary adopted WestEd's Academic Parent-Teacher Teams (APTT) system. Developed in 2009 in the Creighton Elementary School District (Arizona) by Maria Paredes, now a WestEd senior program associate, APTT gives families concrete information on their children's academic progress and provides them with skills, strategies, and resources to use at home with their children to reinforce targeted grade-level learning goals.

"To be truly engaged in their child's education," says McCoy, "parents have to know what's happening in the classroom and know exactly what they can do at home to support learning."

Building on over four decades of research indicating that family engagement is one of the strongest predictors of students' academic success, APTT takes a more focused and academically oriented approach than most traditional school-family participation events. Over the course of the school year, the APTT model features three 75-minute team meetings that include the teacher and the parents of all the students in the class, along with

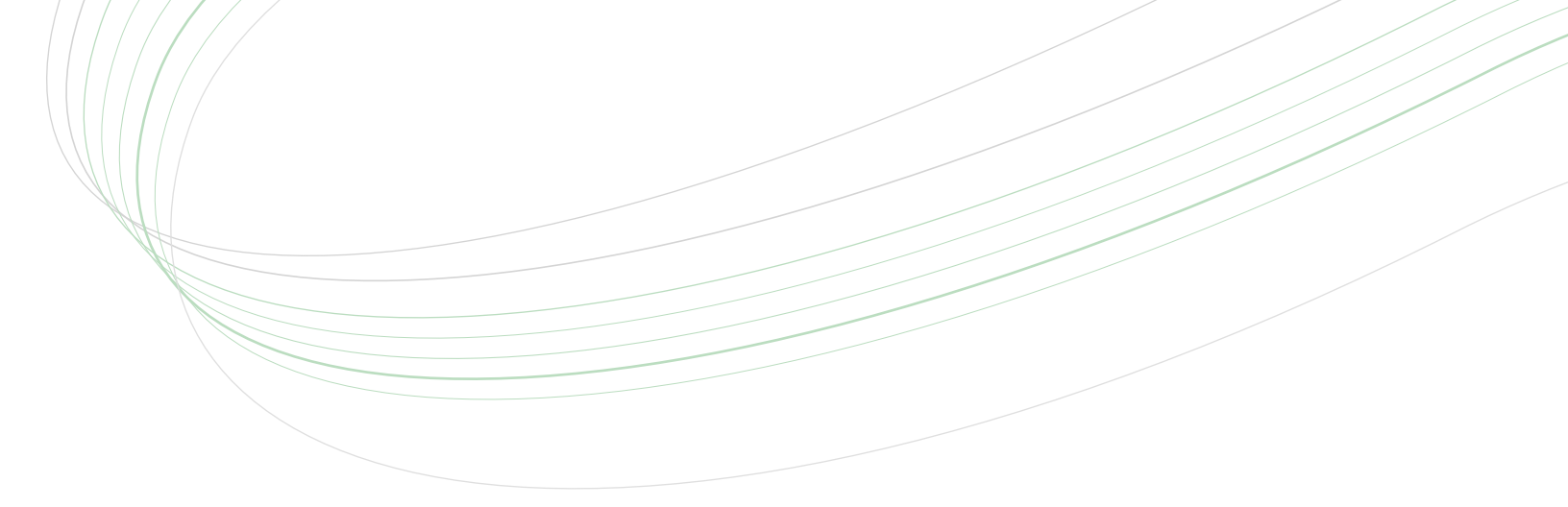
one 30-minute individual session between the teacher and each student and their parents.

At sites around the country, APTT has helped increase family engagement and improve student achievement. When working in Creighton during the 2011/12 school year, for example, Paredes used standardized test scores from grades 1 through 8 to compare the gains in reading and math of those students whose parents participated in APTT with those whose parents did not. She found that although 40 percent of APTT students entered school performing "well below average" in reading, that figure had dropped to 10 percent by spring. For non-APTT students, the amount of change in reading performance was lower: from 28 percent to 9 percent. In math, 71 percent of APTT students were performing "well below average" in the fall, compared with only 18 percent by spring. Their non-APTT peers went from 58 percent performing at "well below average" in math in the fall to 22 percent by spring.

MOVING BEYOND PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES

"Once parents saw the genuine partnerships we were building through APTT and how that was helping their





children," says McCoy, "they realized this approach is far more productive than the more socially oriented events we used to hold."

At the first team meeting, parents learn about one of the teacher's specific expectations for his or her students. In first grade, for example, this expectation might be that students can identify a certain number of sight words by the end of the semester. Parents are also shown academic performance data that indicate how close each child in the class is to meeting that expectation. (Teachers protect student privacy by identifying each child with a random number known only by his or her parents.)

McCoy says this information helps parents commit to the partnership. "They say, 'Oh, my child is not doing as well as he should, so I'd better learn how to help my child improve his skills.'"

Teachers then help parents set 60-day goals for their children, specifying, for instance, how many new sight words they want their child to learn and how much time per week they will dedicate to practicing specific activities with their children at home to meet those goals. "The parents practice the activities with the teacher and with each other," says McCoy, "and we send them home with a goal sheet and any necessary learning aids for their children, like word games and flash cards." The second and third team meetings, which take place in January and April, involve teachers sharing follow-up test data, introducing new target skills, and working with parents to set new goals for each student.

PROMOTING EQUITY

Children thrive in school when their home environment and community afford them the opportunity to explore unique ideas, meet new challenges, and tap into their social and cognitive potential with the support of caring adults, says Paredes. "But there are many children who struggle to catch up because they haven't been exposed to the same level of learning opportunities and high parental expectations," she adds. For too long, schools in disadvantaged communities have tried to erase those sort of disparities in children's home learning environments by "taking full responsibility and accountability for student learning and achievement," says Paredes.

APTT is allowing parents to share in that responsibility by ensuring they gain confidence with a whole new set of skills, strategies, and tools they can use with their children, says Paredes. "The APTT approach gives parents a deeper understanding of their roles and responsibilities. Sharing in that knowledge and building parents' confidence and ability to support their children's learning is what equity is all about."

McCoy notes that at North, where about 56 percent of students are non-native English speakers and 76 percent qualify for free or reduced-priced lunch, staff initially had to work hard to ensure parents attended APTT meetings. But by spring, attendance at six parent-engagement events at the school, four of which were APTT-related, totaled 1,428 — a figure more than five times the attendance recorded at any of the district's four other elementary schools. It was also a significant jump from parent attendance in previous years at North.

Over four decades of research indicate that family engagement is one of the strongest predictors of students' academic success.

Meetings are held first thing in the morning to best accommodate parents' schedules, notes McCoy. "Parents say it's easier to tell a boss, 'I'm going to be a few minutes late because of a meeting at my child's school' than to ask to leave work early."

BOOSTING STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Paredes is proud of the positive impact APTT is having at schools and districts across the country. For instance, a study of APTT in the Houston Independent School District during 2014/15 found that students whose parents attended APTT meetings had a higher, "statistically significant" rate of growth in word fluency skills than their peers whose parents did not participate. According to researchers, the gains were linked to the skills families learned in the first and second APTT meetings. Indeed, parents reported feeling more empowered, with one noting, "I think my child did better [after APTT] because I never knew how to help with her education before."

In another recent study, Johns Hopkins University evaluated two family engagement practices — APTT and home visits — used in 24 Washington, DC, schools from 2012 through 2014. The researchers found "near unanimous" support for APTT from parents and teachers. More than 94 percent of parents queried said APTT meetings improved the way they helped their children with schoolwork, and approximately 90 percent of teachers reported that APTT meetings enhanced family engagement and parent-teacher relationships.

Although McCoy doesn't yet have the data comparing students' academic performance, she believes that those children whose parents participated in APTT at North

last year made "significantly more progress" than those whose parents did not.

Paredes is also encouraged by how the APTT model continues to expand and impact more families and students. In the last couple of years alone, it has grown from being in place in schools in five states to reaching approximately 200,000 families in 18 states.

Critical to its success, Paredes says, is the high-quality professional development and technical assistance offered by WestEd consultants, who typically work with a school or district for two years. Consultants demonstrate to teachers how to discuss student goals in parent-friendly language, share student performance data, and model engaging activities for home practice. To ensure schools are well supported, consultants follow up on trainings with site visits to observe APTT meetings, debrief principals, and recommend strategies to improve outcomes for teachers and families.

Moving forward, Paredes hopes more schools will focus on strengthening and professionalizing family-school partnerships as a way to extend student learning time to 365 days a year. "The more we can empower families to engage with schools and support their children's learning," says Paredes, "the better off all students will be."

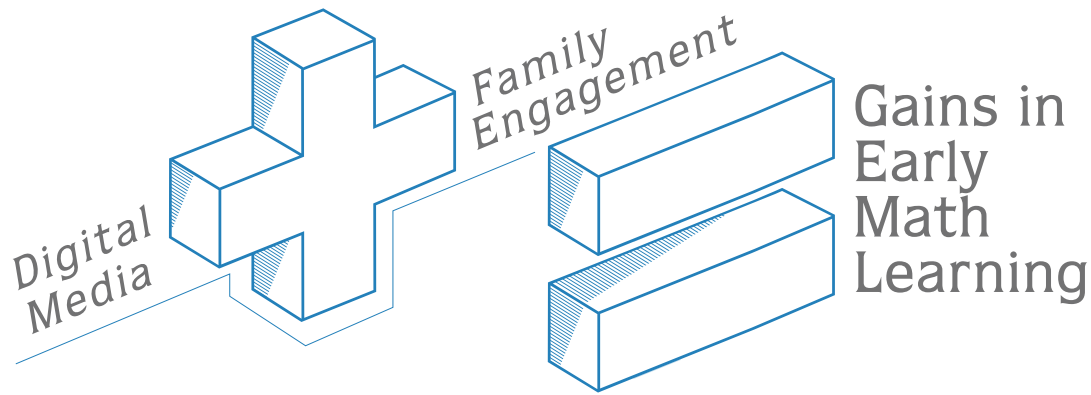


For more information about WestEd's Academic Parent-Teacher Teams (APTT) model, contact Maria Paredes at 480.823.9425, or mparede@WestEd.org.



BRIEFLY

- » Study followed low-income parents and their preschoolers to evaluate the use of PBS KIDS digital and hands-on learning materials.
- » Children using these learning materials with their families significantly improved their math knowledge and skills.
- » Parents' level of math awareness and engagement with their children's learning also significantly increased.



Think of a preschooler using a smartphone app or playing an online game and the accompanying image is likely to be that of a child with head down, eyes glued to the screen, disengaged from his surroundings. But a recent study presents a surprisingly different picture. WestEd researchers found that some digital media materials can actually generate social engagement and learning, enabling parents and their young children to work together to improve children's academic achievement.

The study followed low-income parents and their preschool-age children to evaluate whether using a suite of digital and hands-on learning materials at home could increase children's math skills. WestEd found that the intervention was positively associated with gains in children's math knowledge and skills and that parents' level of math awareness and engagement with their children's learning also significantly increased. These positive gains mirrored the results of earlier pilot studies.

These are very promising results, says Betsy McCarthy, a senior research associate in WestEd's Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) program and the study's principal researcher. Promoting math learning at the preschool age is particularly important, she says, as a large research base has shown that children who are well prepared for kindergarten math are more successful throughout their academic careers and more likely to graduate from high school.

The learning materials, which included digital games, short videos, and downloadable hands-on materials, were developed by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS). The work was funded by the U.S. Department of Education's Ready to Learn Initiative, which promotes early learning, particularly for children from low-income families — a population much less likely to be ready for kindergarten.

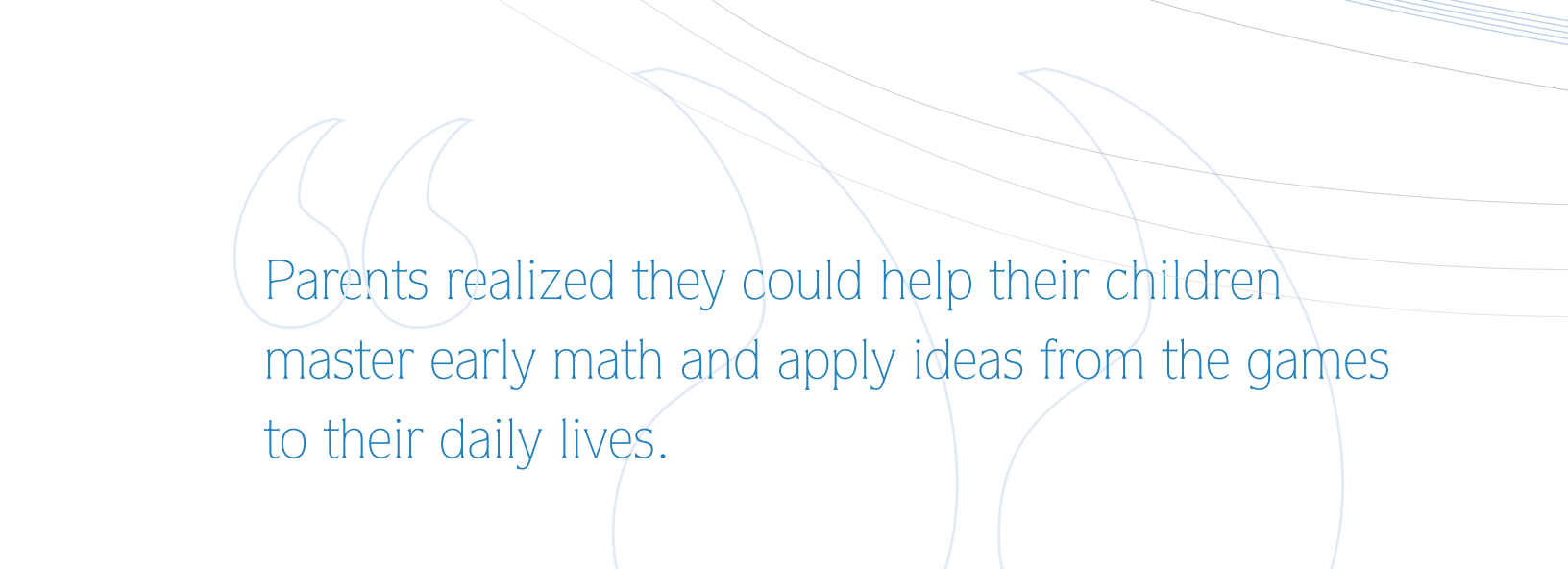
The study's results are also very exciting for staff at PBS, which has consistently focused on helping kids most at risk for starting school without sufficient math skills, says Sara DeWitt, vice president of PBS KIDS Digital. "We see great promise in the possibilities of scaling a project like this one. The outcomes have the potential to have a profound impact on kindergarten readiness for children in low-income communities."

ENGAGING DIGITAL CONTENT

WestEd researchers followed 153 children, ages 3 to 5, and their families in San Mateo County, California, as they participated in a nine-week intervention. Children and family members were asked to work together on "suites" of PBS KIDS digital-content activities for 30 minutes a day for four days a week, and parents and guardians were encouraged to attend weekly parent meetings at their child's preschool. "We were pleasantly surprised by how successful families were in accomplishing these goals," says McCarthy.

The transmedia suites used in the intervention were presented in several formats — including short videos, digital games, and mobile phone activities — accessible via digital devices such as computers, smartphones, and tablets. Connected by common storylines and curricular goals, the suites focused on two overarching math concepts: numbers and operations from 1 to 10, and shapes. Featuring many preschool children's favorite fictional





Parents realized they could help their children master early math and apply ideas from the games to their daily lives.

characters, such as *Curious George*, *Peg+Cat*, and *The Cat in the Hat*, the narrative in the digital media was designed to be fun and engaging for children and family members, says McCarthy.

"The games are also adaptive to children's ability level," she says. "If children have trouble, the content gets easier, and it only becomes harder as they're more successful."

IMPROVED MATH SCORES AND INCREASED ENGAGEMENT

By the end of the intervention, children's math scores on the stringent Test of Early Mathematics Ability, third edition (TEMA-3) were, on average, significantly higher than those for students in the comparison group.

Although low-income children began the study with lower baseline test scores in math, their mean test scores improved by an equivalent amount to the improvement made by their more affluent peers.

Far from being passive participants, kids enthusiastically collaborated in front of the screen, resulting in there being unexpected, yet welcome, social-emotional benefits for the children. This finding was consistent with those from other studies done by WestEd. When the researchers observed children in the classrooms while they were playing the digital games, they found that the students were almost always working through the content in pairs or groups, sometimes in mixed-ability groupings with students of different skills helping one another.

"In all our studies," says McCarthy, "we found that when more than one person was in front of the screen, the

children became more highly engaged than when they worked alone."

Parents also reported having fun watching the videos, playing the digital games, and engaging in hands-on math activities with their kids, and they learned new math concepts as well. Even adults who previously thought of the teacher as the sole content expert began actively supporting their kids to learn math, says McCarthy.

"Parents realized they could help their children master early math and apply ideas from the games to their daily lives. One parent began having her child count out pieces of fruit in the grocery store, while another encouraged writing digits in flour when baking in the kitchen," she reported.

DeWitt is particularly excited by the model's ability to enhance parents' feelings of efficacy and engagement. "A few years ago, we conducted a survey that found parents had high levels of anxiety about working with their kids on math," she says. "It's wonderful to see parents become comfortable enough to work with the material and to be inspired to incorporate math into their daily interactions with their kids. The digital media can do a lot, but it's the parent-child involvement that will increase kids' excitement for learning as they enter school."

THE POTENTIAL FOR SCALING UP

The study was a scale-up of earlier pilot studies in which the WestEd research team was responsible for implementing the intervention and training parents in how to use the digital media suites with their children. In this study, however, the researchers "passed the baton" to preschool teachers: "With just 10 hours of training,

preschool teachers at low-income preschool sites were able to fully orchestrate the intervention by training parents and running meetings,” says McCarthy. “That experience gives us confidence in the potential for moving this sort of intervention to a more scalable model that wouldn’t need a third party to help implement it.”

Moving forward, all the materials are available for free at PBSKIDS.org. If preschools want to implement this model, they can download resources to learn how to facilitate meetings to show parents how to use the digital media and learning materials with their children. “The model WestEd created for training parents seems to be easily replicable,” adds DeWitt. “It doesn’t require a ton of heavy lifting.”

Many PBS stations are already bringing the content to kids through after-school settings or summer learning programs, DeWitt says. “I think this model is something we’ll want to get out to our station networks and continue to bring to more kids through our community partnerships — such as with United Way, Boys & Girls Clubs, and Head Start centers.”

As PBS takes such steps, she says, it will continue to evaluate the availability of smartphones and tablets in low-income households, as well as community access points to the Internet. “Access will improve with time,” she says, “but we know there’s a digital divide, so community connections at after-school centers, libraries, and community centers, for example, may be the best way to reach some of these families.”

WestEd has also done a number of assessments of technology accessibility, says McCarthy, and found that many

low-income families have smartphones, whether or not they have a data plan. “This provides an opportunity to reach them through apps that can be downloaded, then used even when they’re not online,” she says, adding that this approach was used in an earlier pilot study in Richmond, California.

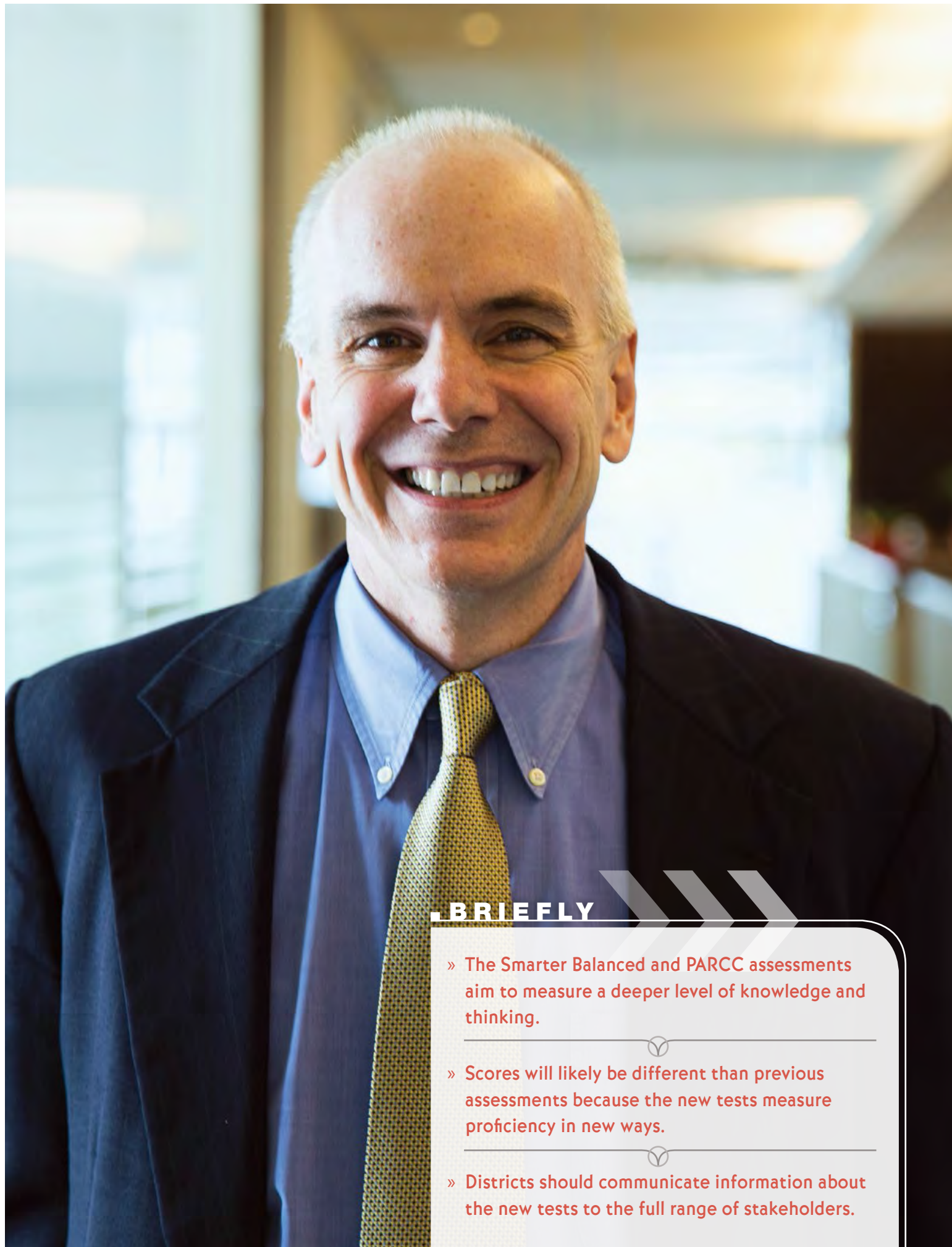
“Although there may be certain challenges in rolling out this intervention on a large scale,” says McCarthy, “now we know this digital-learning, parent-engagement model works.”

Even better, it may have broader applications than its original design. The model doesn’t have to be limited to math, says McCarthy, or just to these suites of digital media and learning materials. For instance, she says, WestEd has begun working with Twin Cities Public Television on a project that will combine television programming, interactive games and apps, and online communities to bolster the science knowledge of young children living in low-income households.

“WestEd will continue to study the effectiveness of digital learning for young children,” McCarthy says, “but the completed research already points to profound changes in parent behavior and ways to prepare kids for academic success.”



For more information about these studies, contact Betsy McCarthy at 650.381.6441 or bmccart@WestEd.org.



BRIEFLY

- » The Smarter Balanced and PARCC assessments aim to measure a deeper level of knowledge and thinking.
- » Scores will likely be different than previous assessments because the new tests measure proficiency in new ways.
- » Districts should communicate information about the new tests to the full range of stakeholders.



Implementing and Understanding the *Smarter Balanced* and *PARCC* Assessments

An Interview with WestEd's Andrew Latham



Aiming to improve how we measure students' readiness for college and careers, the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium and the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) have spent the last several years developing and field-testing assessments aligned to the Common Core State Standards. 2014/15 was the first year of full implementation, with 17 states administering the Smarter Balanced assessments and 11 states and the District of Columbia administering the PARCC tests.

As schools and districts are receiving their students' 2014/15 scores — and looking ahead to 2015/16 — we sat down with WestEd's Andrew Latham to discuss the benefits and challenges of the new assessments, how educators can interpret and communicate the results, and how WestEd is supporting states with implementation.

Latham is the Director of the Standards, Assessment, and Accountability Services (SAAS) program at WestEd and the federally funded Center on Standards and Assessment Implementation (CSAI). SAAS has played a significant role in the consortia, including acting as the project management partner for Smarter Balanced and conducting test development as a subcontractor for PARCC.

Q: What are some key differences between states' assessments and the Smarter Balanced and PARCC assessments?

Answer: The new assessments are based on the Common Core State Standards and attempt to measure a deeper level of knowledge and thinking than many state assessments of the past. When analyzing the complexity of thinking involved in state assessments across the country, researchers found that the vast majority focused on lower levels of knowledge — recall, reproduction of content, skills, and concepts — with little measurement of

more complex, cognitively demanding knowledge that involves strategic and extended thinking.

The new assessments include more questions that test those upper levels of knowledge. For example, rather than simply providing five potential synonyms for a vocabulary word, a test might incorporate a vocabulary word within the context of a paragraph and ask, "What does this word mean?" This requires interpretation of contextual clues to derive meaning, rather than simple memorization.

The new assessments focus more on open-ended responses, which can teach us a lot about students' knowledge, though there's still an ample role for multiple-choice questions. In the new tests there's a greater use of multiple-select options, which allow for less guessing than traditional multiple choice. Moreover, the new tests often couple a multiple-choice question with an open-ended question.

For example, the test might present students with a graph of product sales versus marketing expenses and ask students to select which level of marketing expenses will maximize profits. The follow-up question then asks students to explain how they derived this answer. To



The new assessments measure deeper thinking on more rigorous standards.

achieve full credit, students must provide compelling mathematical analysis of the information in the graph.

Q: Are the new assessments administered differently?

Yes — the Smarter Balanced and PARCC assessments are fully computerized, though paper-and-pencil alternatives are offered in districts that lack the necessary technological infrastructure.

Another difference is that the Smarter Balanced test is computer adaptive. In the past, most states exclusively used linear tests, which ask all students the same set of questions regardless of proficiency. So students at the low end of the skill range still get the hardest questions, even though they may not be able to answer mid-level questions correctly. That's a less efficient — and more frustrating — way to measure students' knowledge. Computer-adaptive testing efficiently determines a student's level of knowledge by reducing the measurement area and asking increasingly difficult questions only if the student answers previous questions correctly.

Q: What are some of the main challenges of the new assessments?

One challenge is that testing for strategic or extended analysis of information takes much more time, effort, and money than testing for recall of facts. For example, writing an essay explaining the causes of the Civil War takes more time than answering a multiple-choice question about the Battle of Gettysburg. And open-ended questions must be scored by hand.

So the new assessments involve a significant tradeoff. We have to figure out how much testing to do to guide instruction, identify gaps that need to be addressed,

and inform education policy without subtracting unduly from classroom time. A lot of good people disagree on where that line is.

Q: How are teachers reacting to the new assessments?

The jury is still out about how well teachers will accept the new assessments. Many are frustrated by how much time is required and skeptical about how these assessments will help improve teaching and learning. Ultimately, assessments provide only one piece of evidence about students' performance and must be viewed within the larger context of other evidence, such as students' classroom performance and feedback from their teachers. Ideally, though, the next wave of interim assessments will serve as a tool to not only identify areas of students' weakness but also help guide instruction in a meaningful way.

Q: What can schools expect from the first batch of scores that are coming out from 2014/15, the first official year of implementing these assessments?

Everyone is widely expecting that fewer students will be judged as proficient on the new consortia assessments than on their old state assessments. And results from the first few states suggest this will be the case, though the drop has not been as dramatic as some have predicted. But you can make a compelling argument that such comparisons aren't really valid and shouldn't be made. The new assessments measure deeper thinking on more rigorous standards, and, as such, they're establishing a new baseline for student achievement. Therefore, it will be much more informative to see how student performance changes between years one and two of the new assessments.

Q: What advice would you offer to school and district administrators about how to communicate about the new scores?

Communicate early and often. Don't wait until the scores are being released. Get out in front of it. Explain what the new assessments are, how they're measuring proficiency or meeting standards in new ways, and why scores are likely to be different. Also, communicate to the full range of stakeholders — including teachers, parents, students, school boards, and policymakers.

Administrators will need to explain that we have moved to more rigorous standards. If lower numbers of students are judged proficient on these standards, that's because we've shifted the target, so it's wholly inappropriate to interpret these drops as evidence that education is getting worse or that students are learning less. We need to wait until we assess against the new standards again next year before we can compare "apples to apples."

Q: What has WestEd been doing to support states, districts, and educators with implementing the Common Core-aligned assessments?

One of the biggest needs in the field is gaining a better understanding of how other states are wrestling with similar implementation issues. Through the CSAI, we developed an online tool called *State of the States*, which provides data about each state's progress in implementing rigorous standards and assessments. You can use the tool to search broadly to find commonalities across states, or you can focus on a particular state to find out things like which standards the state is using and what the state's current testing programs are.

Along with Stanford University, we've also developed teacher training modules called Building Educator Assessment Literacy (BEAL), funded by a Hewlett Foundation grant and offered mainly in California and Hawaii at this time. BEAL uses Smarter Balanced performance tasks to show teachers what the assessments look like, how they're being scored, and how to interpret them.

We've also provided technical assistance to states pursuing their own state-specific standards — for example, helping them to record data to meet federal reporting requirements. WestEd also has a website called Raising the Bar on Instruction, which offers resources, guidance, and services focused on helping educators implement the college- and career-ready assessments.

Q: What would you like to tell administrators, educators, and parents as they prepare for the 2015/16 Smarter Balanced and PARCC assessments?

To help teachers and parents digest the new tests, both *Smarter Balanced* and *PARCC* offer detailed interpretive tools. Each website contains a wealth of information, including digital libraries and learning materials, and a rubric explaining how answers are scored and how the assessments differ from traditional ones.

Q: How effective do you think the new standards and assessments will be?

Ultimately, the data will tell the story. In the meantime, I believe that these are rigorous standards and assessments — the best yet at determining college and career readiness. I also believe that Smarter Balanced and PARCC will advance the field, that the assessments built to measure the new standards are innovative and forward thinking.

Whether people are supporters or detractors, these changes are bringing standards and testing to the forefront of the national debate. We have good reason to be optimistic, but assessments can always be improved. We can always figure out ways to get better validity or to be more efficient. Yes, this is a paradigm shift in testing, but we'd best not rest on our laurels.



For further information about Smarter Balanced and PARCC, contact Andrew Latham at 415.615.3154 or alatham@WestEd.org.

This interview was conducted in fall 2015.

CELEBRATING 50 YEARS of excellence



In 2016, WestEd reaches a significant milestone — 50 years of high-quality work aimed at improving learning and healthy development at all stages of life.

From helping school districts dramatically turn around their underperforming schools, to providing direct support to over 30 states on assessment systems and policies, to evaluating urban violence prevention initiatives, WestEd staff tackle pressing real-world challenges every day by bridging research and practice.

While WestEd currently carries out successful research, training, and technical assistance projects in a growing number of areas, the agency's deep and wide-ranging capacity was not attained overnight. The roots of WestEd go back to 1966, when Congress funded regional laboratories across the country to find practical ways to improve the education of our nation's children. Two of these labs — the Far West Laboratory for Educational Research and Development (FWL) and the Southwest Regional Educational Laboratory (SWRL) — grew in vision and scope, eventually merging in 1995 to create WestEd.

Over the years, WestEd's work has positively impacted the lives of millions of children and adults. This timeline presents a small sample of some of our agency's accomplishments.

1960s

» The Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 first authorizes federal funding for regional educational laboratories (RELs).

» Among the RELs established across the country in 1966 are the FWL and SWRL, which merge three decades later to form WestEd.

» SWRL develops the **Beginning Reading Program**, featuring the "I See Sam" reading series; more than a million children learn to read using this program.

» FWL develops "**minicourses**" on **effective classroom strategies**; they're distributed nationwide, and the approach is adapted for other professions beyond K-12 education.

1970s

» Both SWRL and FWL continue to serve as RELs but also expand with numerous other funding sources, including private foundations, universities, local school districts, and businesses.

» FWL conducts the **Education Information Market Study** — the most comprehensive sampling survey of uses of information ever done in the field of education.

» A national study of 100 federally funded programs finds that FWL's **Experience-Based Career Education** is one of only two that continue after federal funding ends.

» SWRL develops a **Proficiency Verification System** that guides numerous school districts in monitoring student achievement in reading and mathematics.

1980s

- » SWRL establishes a national reputation for **high-quality work beyond K-12 schooling**, including evaluating substance abuse and teen pregnancy prevention and conducting influential research on youth risk and resilience.
- » SWRL's **Curriculum Alignment Program** begins in two schools in the Los Angeles Unified School District and proves so effective that LAUSD soon expands it to every elementary school in the district.
- » Findings from a FWL study on the experiences of Chapter 1 students are used in the 1988 Hawkins-Stafford Amendments reauthorizing the federal Chapter 1 program.
- » FWL becomes a national leader in developing **teacher cases** as a means to improve teacher education and classroom effectiveness.

1990s

- » FWL's study on Utah's statewide **career ladder system** has far-reaching impact – helping state policymakers and serving as a resource for career ladder experiments nationwide.
- » FWL and SWRL officially merge in 1995, to form WestEd; the agency becomes increasingly national, including acquiring New England-based Learning Innovations.
- » A study shows that teachers who participate for two or more years in case-based discussions developed by WestEd's **Mathematics Case Methods Project** improve their math knowledge by over 20 percentage points.
- » WestEd establishes a strong portfolio in **assessment and standards development**; for over a decade, the U.S. Department of Education designates the Regional Educational Laboratory West at WestEd as the nation's "lead laboratory" in assessment.

2000s
to present

- » WestEd continues to grow its national reputation as a "go-to" source for evidence-based, rigorous information and nonpartisan policy guidance, based on demonstrated impact in areas such as early childhood education, English learners, assessment, special education, juvenile justice, and school turnaround.
- » WestEd's **Program for Infant/Toddler Care** becomes the most widely used system for training caregivers of infants and toddlers in the United States and is selected as a model initiative by the National Center for Children in Poverty.
- » Three randomized controlled studies find that students whose teachers participated in WestEd's **Reading Apprenticeship** professional development make statistically significant gains in reading comprehension and subject-area achievement.
- » The U.S. Department of Labor formally recognizes WestEd's institutional commitment to supporting **diversity in the workplace**; also, WestEd is selected in multiple years as one of the **top-10 employers** among similarly sized companies in the Bay Area.
- » A National Science Foundation-funded study finds that students whose teachers participated in WestEd's **Making Sense of SCIENCE** training outperform their peers by nearly 40 percent.
- » As the lead agency of several federally funded centers – including two **National Content Centers**, three **Regional Comprehensive Centers**, and a **Regional Educational Laboratory** – WestEd's staff provide technical assistance and research support to state leaders and educators throughout the country.

R&D Alert covers issues affecting schools, communities, and human development professionals throughout the United States. Current and previous issues are available at WestEd.org/R&DAlert. Your comments are welcomed. Please address them to Ricky Herzog at rherzog@WestEd.org.

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