



2009–2010
Accountability Block Grant Mid-Year Report



pennsylvania
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Extra Time Makes a Difference...

"Student performance in regular math classes has improved due to students' having extra time to practice concepts and demonstrate understanding in a small group setting. In the 2009 PSSA, the proficiency in math improved by seven percentage points to 63 percent. For the first time, 17 percent of special education students at the high school level reached proficiency on last year's test. Since special education students are strengthening their math skills and understanding of concepts, some are being placed in an inclusion algebra class for the first time this year."

Pen Argyl Area School District



ABG FUNDING

YEAR	AMOUNT
2009-10	\$271.4 million
2008-09	\$271.4 million
2007-08	\$275 million
2006-07	\$250 million
2005-06	\$200 million
2004-05	\$200 million

HIGHLIGHTS

ACCOUNTABILITY BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM



In 2004-2005, Governor Rendell and the General Assembly launched the Accountability Block Grant, a landmark investment that has provided \$1.5 billion to Pennsylvania's school districts. The Accountability Block Grant program ensures that taxpayer dollars are focused in four areas most likely to increase student achievement.

1. Early Childhood Education Programs
2. Support for Struggling Students
3. Enhancing Teacher Quality
4. Support for Research-Based Programs

The mid-year report provides a brief description of each strategy and highlights of the data.

EARLY EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Pre-Kindergarten • Full-Day Kindergarten (FDK) • Class Size Reduction (Grades K-3)

\$199.5 M invested | 87,856 students served

School districts have overwhelmingly chosen to invest Accountability Block Grant funds in early childhood education. For 2009-2010, almost seventy-five percent of the grant resources are being used for programs that benefit our youngest students.

Pre-kindergarten programs, which are aligned with the Pennsylvania Early Learning Standards, reduce the need for special education and put our children on track to achieve. Full-day kindergarten programs ensure a strong social, emotional and academic foundation necessary for future success in school. Class size reduction in K-3 means more time for individualized attention.

PSSA results demonstrate the impact of implemented ABG strategies. Students that were enrolled in

FDK programs since the beginning of ABG funding in 2004-2005, took the 3rd Grade PSSA in 2008 and 2009. Comparing the PSSA math and reading results from prior years, improvements can be noted. For example, the students who attended full day kindergarten programs in 2004-2005 took the 3rd Grade PSSA in the Spring of 2008. Seventy-seven percent of 3rd grade students were proficient and advanced in reading in 2008 compared to sixty-nine percent of 3rd grade students in 2006*. These results were repeated in 2009. In addition, PSSA results demonstrate that economically disadvantaged children, those especially at high risk, progressed from fifty-six percent proficient/advanced in 2007 (prior to FDK) to sixty-three percent in 2009.

SUPPORT FOR STRUGGLING STUDENTS

Increased Instructional Time • Support for Academic Performance of Student Subgroups

Increased Instructional Time: \$16 M invested | 144,895 students served

Academic Performance of Student Subgroups: \$9.9 M invested | 79,819 students served

INCREASED INSTRUCTIONAL TIME

Increased instructional time is an effective intervention for students who are not proficient on the PSSA. Students in these programs receive at least 45 hours of personalized instruction in math and reading, before or after school, during study periods and/or over the summer months. The most often used strategy in this category is Tutoring Assistance.



SUPPORT FOR ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF STUDENT SUBGROUPS

Students in subgroups identified under the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) must also reach proficiency levels in reading and math. These subgroups include: Ethnic (White, Black, Asian/Pacific Islander, Latino/Hispanic, Native American, Multi-racial), students with IEP (Individualized Education Program), ED (Economically Disadvantaged) and LEP (Limited English Proficiency).

"Public Schools: High School Graduates 2007-08"*** published by the Department of Education, sites that all subgroups had increased graduation rates each year from 2002 to 2008. The subgroup strategy data in the 2009-2010 ABG Mid-Year Report Appendices shows that ABG funding is providing research-based interventions to help close the achievement gap for students in these subgroups.



FDK makes a Difference...

“Academically, the children who have attended the district’s full-day kindergarten program enter first grade with a solid foundation in reading and math. Kindergarten Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) scores in reading at the end of the 2007-2008 school year show 99 percent of these students were established or emerging in the area of initial sound fluency, while 100 percent were established or emerging in phoneme segmentation, the building blocks of successful reading.”

Riverside Beaver County School District

ENHANCING TEACHER QUALITY

Literacy and Math Coaching • Professional Development for Teachers and Administrators

Literacy and Math Coaching: \$20 M invested | 212,762 students served
 Professional Development for Teachers and Administrators: \$6.9 M invested | 375,512 students served

LITERACY AND MATH COACHING

Literacy and Math Coaching programs provide teachers with individualized job-embedded professional development aimed at increasing student achievement. Literacy and Math coaches model instruction, co-teach and provide feedback to teachers having an immediate impact on instructional effectiveness.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR TEACHERS AND ADMINISTRATORS

Many factors influence student achievement, but the most important factor is the quality of instructional techniques employed by teachers. Professional development must focus on the analysis of student achievement data, incorporating technology into instruction, curriculum alignment and how to implement research proven instructional strategies

SUPPORT FOR RESEARCH-BASED PROGRAMS

Science and Applied Knowledge Skills • Research-Based Improvement Strategies

Science and Applied Knowledge Skills: \$4.1 M invested | 127,526 students served
 Research-Based Improvement Strategies: \$4.2 M invested | 51,895 students served

SCIENCE AND APPLIED KNOWLEDGE SKILLS

Students learn better by “doing”. ABG provides schools with the tools to offer instruction based on real world scenarios and hands-on activities. These activities are supported by the development of higher order thinking skills using the hands-on inquiry approach, enhanced research skills and enhanced technology skills.

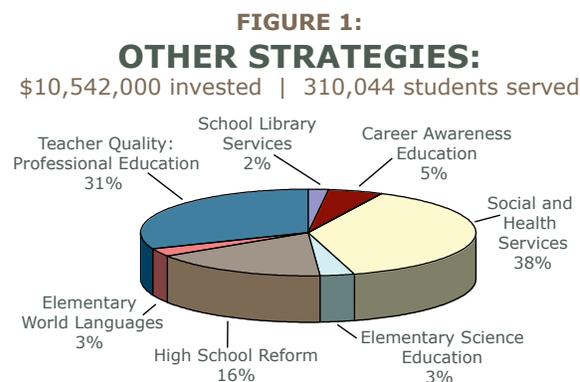
An external evaluation of inquiry-based elementary science education programs*** supported with ABG funding, found the following results from 2008-2009:

- a high level of student interest in science,
- a positive relationship between inquiry-supported modules and student learning in science,
- a greater positive change in students’ scores from the pre- to post-tests.

strengths and weaknesses, districts select a research-based program that will best apply to their students’ needs. Districts must ensure the Department that the research-based strategies are implemented with fidelity.

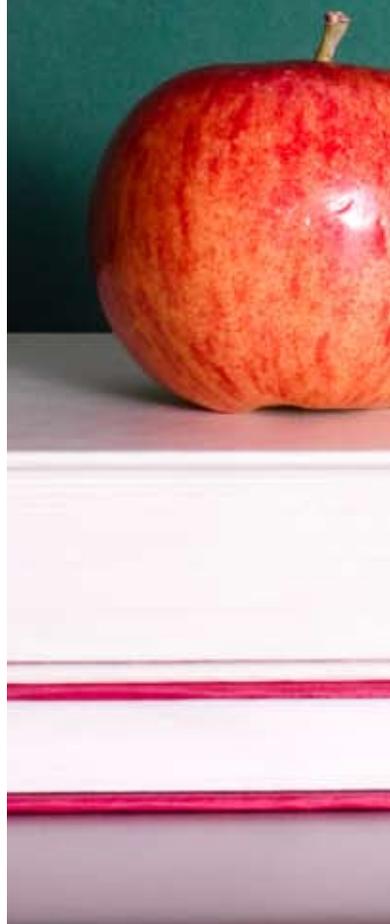
Other ABG strategies provide districts with the ability to choose research based programs and/or promising practices that are supported by clear evidence of student achievement.

These strategies and percentage of investment can be seen in Figure 1 below:



RESEARCH-BASED IMPROVEMENT STRATEGIES

School districts can also investigate and select programs best suited to their individual students. Based on data driven analysis of student academic



Closing the Achievement Gap...

"Data suggests the achievement gap is narrowing as demonstrated in 2009 PSSA. Eighth grade reading results showed 87 percent of non-disadvantaged students were proficient while 74 percent of the economically disadvantaged students were proficient; compared to 2006 performance numbers, where 80 percent of non-economically disadvantaged 8th graders reached proficiency in the PSSA in reading while only 59 percent of the economically disadvantaged reached proficiency."

Solanco School District:



CONCLUSION

Since the inception of the ABG program in 2004-2005, seventy percent of each year's funding has provided Early Childhood Education strategies and this trend continues in 2009-2010.

Students that were enrolled in FDK programs since the beginning of ABG funding in 2004-2005, have already demonstrated on the 3rd Grade 2008 and 2009 Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) increased numbers of those who are proficient and advanced than in prior years.

These students will be taking the 5th grade PSSA this school year. It is expected that their performance on the PSSA will continue to demonstrate the academic benefits provided to them through the ABG funding.

The purpose of the Accountability Block Grant funding is to improve Pennsylvania's students academic performance in reading, mathematics, writing and science, so that they graduate from our high schools adequately prepared for college and the high-skilled workforce in the 21st century.

Through the hard work of Pennsylvania's school districts and funding made available through the Accountability Block Grant, significant progress has been made over the last six years. The number of students that are advanced and proficient in reading and math in every grade level is increasing. The achievement gap is closing. All Pennsylvania's children are receiving the high quality education they richly deserve.

PURPOSE OF THE ACCOUNTABILITY BLOCK GRANT MID-YEAR REPORT

This Mid-Year Report and enclosed Appendices meet the requirement of 24 PS 25-2599.2 (b)(5) which requires that the Pennsylvania Department of Education report to the members of the General Assembly;

1. the district allocations,
2. the strategies the districts are selecting and allocation per strategy
3. number of students per district strategy.
4. the history of how many years the districts are funding each program.

This information is contained in the appendices to this report.

FOOTNOTES:

* 3rd Grade was not tested in Spring, 2005.

** website: http://www.education.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/graduation_education_rates/7426/public_schools_high_school_graduates_and_postsecondary_education_rates/509961

*** "Science: It's Elementary — Year Three Evaluation Report", July 2009.