

SUCCESS STORY

**Austin Middle School
Beaumont Independent School District**



ENVIRONMENT

Beaumont Independent School District (BISD) is located in Southeast Texas, just 30 miles from the Gulf of Mexico and 90 miles east of Houston. The district has approximately 20,000 students on 32 campuses. The demographics of the district are as follows: 64.6% African American, 17.2% White, 14.9% Hispanic, 3.2% Asian, 0.2% Native American, 9.1% Special Education, 9.1% Gifted and Talented, 6.7% Limited English Proficiency, and 69.1% Economically Disadvantaged.

CHALLENGE

At the present time, BISD is a Texas Education Agency Recognized school district. However, several campuses would have been rated Academically Unacceptable (AU) during the 2008-2009 school year if it were not for Hurricane Ike exemptions. Austin Middle School, one of the schools that would have been AU, was selected to take the "Ignite! Challenge" and pilot the Ignite! Learning Torch system. The Ignite! Torch is a plug and play digital curriculum solution designed to target specific instructional priorities. A Social Studies teacher and a Science teacher agreed to conduct the challenge in their classes.

SOLUTION

Social Studies – Austin Middle School 8th grade Social Studies classes participated in a case study with Ignite Learning's Torch learning system. Approximately 100 students took part in the study. They were divided into two groups. A group of 25 students were involved in extensive use of the Torch system. With these students, the Torch was used almost daily. The remainder of the students utilized the Torch 2-3 days a week. Due to the timing of the case study, it was decided that the Torch would be used as a part of the overall Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) review.

"The Ignite! system played an integral part in the success of these students."

"The passing rate for the 8th grade Science classes utilizing the Ignite! curriculum increased 20%"

**– Dr. Kimber Knight
Director of Performance Management & Instructional Technology**

About Beaumont ISD:

- **Midsized Urban District**
- **19,292 students**
- **64% African American**

About Austin Middle School

- **518 students (6th – 8th)**
- **86% Free or Reduced Lunch**
- **87% African American**



Prior to the implementation of the Torch system, students were given a pretest. The test used was the released 2009 TAKS Social Studies exam. Students had a passing rate of approximately 75% on this test. Closer examination revealed that the small group of 25 students had a passing rate below 70%. This group contained a significant number of Special Education students, as well as others who qualified for various modifications.

After using a tutorial program, which included the Torch, students took the 2010 TAKS Social Studies exam. The passing rate for all students on this exam increased to 92%. The group of 25 saw their passing rate rise from below 70% to approximately 88%.

Science – For the Ignite! Challenge, 49 8th grade Science students concentrated on Heredity. A pretest from the *Glencoe* textbook was given to the students and the results showed that 61.5% passed the test. The Torch was used as the primary teaching tool for the Science classes after the pretest.

Following the end of the Heredity unit, a posttest from the Torch Heredity unit was given. The posttest, according to the Science teacher, was much more difficult than the pretest from *Glencoe* and the passing rate for the test was 73.7%. Dr. Knight attributed the success to Ignite!. *“The passing rate for the 8th grade Science classes utilizing the [Ignite!] curriculum increased 20% or 28 points.”*

“Once the TAKS results were released, we saw a 9 point increase in Science and a 3 point increase in Social Studies scores in the All Student subgroup. Our African American and Economically Disadvantaged subgroups experienced gains of 3 points (AA) and 7 points (EcD) in Social Studies and 12 points (AA) and 8 points (EcD) in Science.”

RESULTS

“It is our belief that the [Ignite!] system played an integral part in the success of these students. Especially helpful were the TEKS correlations and review questions. TEKS correlations helped us to quickly pinpoint specific objectives to be targeted. The review questions allowed us to check for understanding, as well as re-teach problem areas.”

LESSONS LEARNED

Dr. Knight discovered that using the Ignite! curriculum:

- **Significantly impacted achievement in Science (20% gains) & Social Studies (18% gains)**
- **Brought success to African American & Economically Disadvantaged subgroups**
- **Provided variety and impact to the test prep/review process**

**All quotes submitted by Dr. Kimber Knight, Director of Performance Management & Instructional Technology*

