

[Case Study]

Teacher Advancement Program™



→ A New Direction for Success

TAP

TAP HELPS FOREST HILL ELEMENTARY “LEAP” TO NEW HEIGHTS

Title I school sees greatest academic growth throughout Rapides Parish, Louisiana

Teachers were not only working harder, but also “working smarter.”

TAP at Forest Hill Elementary

- Students reaching basic and above in math proficiency grew from 73% to 90%.
- School Performance Score increased from 105.2 to 124.5 after just two years of TAP.
- Awarded Louisiana Distinguished Title I School of the Year.
- Achievement gains for special education and ESL students.
- Every teacher received a TAP performance bonus.

“Every child, every day, whatever it takes!” That is the goal of Forest Hill Elementary, a rural Title I school in Rapides Parish, Louisiana, where 84% of the students are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch. To make sure they had the most effective teachers to educate every student, Forest Hill adopted the Teacher Advancement Program (TAP) in fall 2004.

As part of the TAP structure, Forest Hill put in place “mentor” and “master” teachers to guide all faculty on a path to success. They led collaborative TAP “cluster group” meetings on effective teaching strategies every week. They coached teachers on an individual basis and modeled lessons in the classroom. All teachers were held accountable for their performance through TAP’s fair evaluation system, built on clearly defined, research-based standards. According to Principal Nancy Rials, teachers were not only working harder, but also “working smarter.”

The results reflect their efforts. According to state LEAP fourth-grade test results, the number of Forest Hill students reaching basic and above in math proficiency grew from 73% to 90%, and from 76% to 85% in English/language arts. Similarly, Forest Hill’s School Performance Score, based on state assessments, increased from 105.2 to 114.7 after just one year of TAP, and by the end of the 2005-06 school year, jumped to 124.5—the largest growth in the entire parish. And the recognition didn’t stop there.

Teacher excellence → Student achievement → Opportunities for all

Teacher Advancement Program™

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Because of its extraordinary achievements, the State of Louisiana named Forest Hill a Distinguished Title I School of the Year, an honor presented to only two schools in the state. To mark this achievement, the school was honored at the National Title I Conference in Long Beach, California.

“The research-based strategies that we have implemented through TAP have made a large impact on achievement for all of our students, including notable gains for special education and ESL students,” said Principal Rials. “Our teachers exude confidence as they incorporate these strategies in their classrooms due to the on-the-job staff development that they receive. It is phenomenal for an administrator to watch.”

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Given Forest Hill’s increased teacher effectiveness and significant student achievement gains, it came as no surprise when every teacher received a TAP performance bonus.

“TAP gives new teachers effective teaching strategies and encourages veteran teachers to look at different ways to do things,” said special education teacher Denise Bankovic. “It’s a great help to me.”

Louisiana TAP has experienced dramatic growth since its implementation in five schools in the 2004-05 school year. Successes like those seen at Forest Hill add momentum to TAP’s expansion. In addition to its work now in five parishes, TAP was adopted by the Algiers Charter Schools Association in New Orleans to strengthen its charter schools in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.

TAP in Florida, Louisiana, Ohio, South Carolina and Texas has been funded in part through a \$1,980,000 grant to the National Institute for Excellence in Teaching from the U.S. Department of Education’s Fund for the Improvement of Education (FIE).

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