



**School Violence Prevention Demonstration Program
Center for Civic Education**

**Preliminary “We The People” Study
On Academic Growth
For the Year
2002 – 2003**

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Preliminary “We The People” Study

This evaluation attempts to determine the effects of the We the People social studies curriculum on the Reading and Mathematics achievement of students in grade 5 classes in the Allentown School District. The study evaluates preliminary data; it will be updated in February when the results of the state Writing assessments are available.

The analysis is based upon assignment of grade 5 students to a control group, Year 1 Implementation group or Year 2 Implementation group. The three groups of students are defined as follows. Control group students included all of the students who were not exposed to the We the People curriculum during the year. Year 1 students are students whose teachers were in the first year of implementation of the curriculum. Year 2 students are students whose teachers were in the second year of implementation of the curriculum; the students themselves had not been exposed to the curriculum previously. The PSSA (state assessment) & NWEA (nationally normed assessment) were used to measure achievement in Reading & Mathematics. Asian and American Indian/Eskimo subgroups were not considered because none were preset in the control group. Since the populations of the groups were not matched, results are interpreted cautiously. For example, the Year 2 group is over represented with students from the lowest performing elementary school in the District.

The Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) separates students into 4 levels of performance based upon the overall scaled score attained. These levels are as follows:

Advanced: Superior academic performance with in-depth understanding
Proficient: Satisfactory academic performance with solid understanding
Basic: Marginal academic performance with a partial understanding
Below Basic: Inadequate academic performance with little understanding

Students must achieve at either the Proficient or Advanced levels to be considered to be making Adequate Yearly Progress.

Abbreviations:

All = General Population
IEP = Special Education Students
LEP = Limited English Proficient Students
ED = Economically Disadvantaged
Wh = White
Bl = Black
Hisp = Hispanic

Table 1: PSSA Reading % Advanced or Proficient

	All	IEP	LEP	ED	Wh	Bl	Hisp
Control	38	12	9	30	49	42	28
Year 1	45	17	18	36	60	41	34
Year 2	41	12	20	34	60	31	31

- Overall, a larger percentage of students were proficient or advanced in Year 1 &

- Year 2 groups than Control group
- A larger percentage of IEP students were proficient in the Year 1 group than the control group
- A larger percentage of ED, White, LEP, & Hispanic students were proficient or advanced in Year 1 & Year 2 groups than the Control group
- Results were mixed for IEP & Black students

Table 2: PSSA Reading % Below Basic

	All	IEP	LEP	ED	Wh	Bl	Hisp
Control	37	57	65	42	29	31	46
Year 1	33	67	62	40	19	33	45
Year 2	31	76	40	36	16	47	36

- Overall, the percentage of students in the Below Basic category was lower in the Year 1 & Year 2 groups than in the Control group
- The same trend was evident in the LEP, ED, White, and Hispanic subgroups
- The results were mixed for the Black subgroup
- The percentage of IEP students increased in Year 1 & 2; however, since some IEP students are centered, a particular disability may be over represented at a given school
- Although Year 2 proficient/advanced levels were not uniformly higher than Year 1 levels, there are less Year 2 students than Year 1 students in Below Basic in all except two categories

The Northwest Educational Assessment is a norm-referenced, nationally normed functional skills test used to demonstrate growth in math and reading skills. The 50th percentile was chosen as a benchmark for proficiency since students at this level would achieve at the national median.

Table 3: NWEA Reading % of Students Above 50th Percentile

	All	IEP	LEP	ED	Wh	Bl	Hisp
Control	35	11	14	29	44	35	28
Year 1	41	14	18	32	59	32	29
Year 2	38	6	30	34	55	18	33

- Overall, a higher percentage of Year 1 & Year 2 students were above 50th percentile than in the Control group
- The same trend was seen in the LEP, ED, White, & Hispanic subgroups
- Results were mixed for IEP and Black subgroups

Overall, increased achievement in Reading appears to be greatest in the Year 1 & Year 2 groups as compared to the control group. In particular, achievement gains appear to be relatively consistent among the LEP, ED, White, & Hispanic groups. Results from the PSSA & NWEA are mixed for the IEP & Black groups. Differences in results between the two tests may be due in part to the differences in design and purpose of the PSSA & NWEA; they are not a completely “apples to apples” comparison.

Table 4: PSSA Mathematics % Advanced or Proficient

	All	IEP	LEP	ED	Wh	Bl	Hisp
Control	45	19	23	38	54	51	36
Year 1	52	29	31	44	68	43	41
Year 2	45	12	30	40	65	31	36

- Overall, there is no consistent pattern of achievement in % Proficient/Advanced in mathematics
- The subgroups with consistent gains are the White, LEP, & ED subgroups
- IEP, Black, & Hispanic subgroups show mixed or decreasing percentage

Table 5: PSSA Mathematics % of Students in Below Basic

	All	IEP	LEP	ED	Wh	Bl	Hisp
Control	33	57	53	38	21	32	42
Year 1	22	42	39	28	9	25	33
Year 2	27	71	40	30	10	44	32

- Overall, a lower percentage of students were in the Below Basic level in the Year 1 & 2 groups than the control group
- This trend also occurred in the LEP, ED, White & Hispanic subgroups
- Results were mixed in the IEP & Black subgroup

Table 6: NWEA Mathematics % of Students Above 50th Percentile

	All	IEP	LEP	ED	Wh	Bl	Hisp
Control	46	16	23	39	54	44	38
Year 1	53	23	30	44	71	46	39
Year 2	46	0	30	41	65	24	41

- Overall results are mixed for the NWEA Mathematics for all students
- The White, LEP, ED, & Hispanic subgroups demonstrated consistently higher Year 1 & Year 2 achievement levels
- Results for all other groups were mixed

Overall, the results for Mathematics achievement do not clearly indicate a link between participation in the program and increased Mathematics achievement. While decreases in the percentage of students in Below Basic were relatively consistent, they did not consistently translate into higher proficiency levels on the PSSA. The NWEA appears to indicate increases in Math achievement for the same groups that were identified in Table 5 as improving. At this time, no conclusions about the effect on Math achievement can be drawn.