

IMPACT TEAMS

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One School's Journey

Putnam Elementary School
Impact Teams | Case Study

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For more information about Impact Teams visit LeadingImpactTeams.com

Case Study: Putnam Elementary School

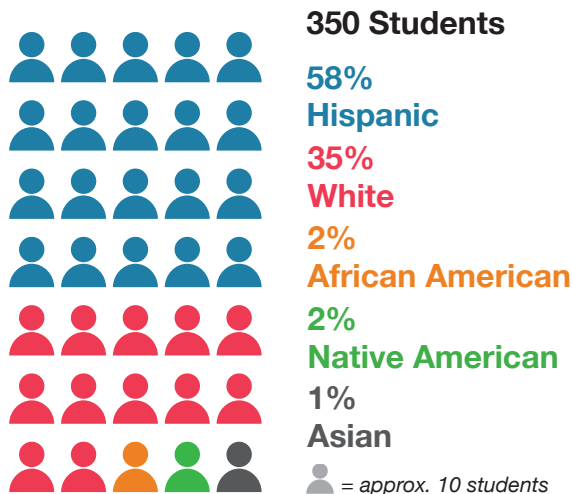
School Profile

Putnam Elementary School is a diverse pre K-5 elementary school in Fort Collins, Colorado.

Putnam is part of the Poudre School District and has an enrollment of approximately 350 students. Putnam demographics include 58% Hispanic, 35% White, 2% African American, 2% Native American, 1% Asian.

The population is diverse and includes:

- English Learners (33%)
- Students have an IEP with special education services (18%)
- Students qualify for free or reduced lunch (88%)
- Meet McKinney-Vento Homeless criteria (24%)
- School mobility rate (18%)



Problem of Practice

Putnam Elementary began their journey by noticing that both teachers and students were unclear about the learning focus/targets. Teachers were focusing primarily on what they were teaching from the text book rather than paying attention to what the students were learning. The school also found that teachers were not clear on what standards were a priority nor what those standards asked of the students. They also noticed that they were teaching the reading or math program, not the students, and spent most of their time planning the teaching rather than analyzing what students were learning.

This further led them to notice that students were not able to express where they were in their learning, what they saw as next steps, and how to reach the next step.

As the school continued their reflective work they noticed that learning targets were not aligned with the focus standards or performance tasks. Success criteria were ambiguous and vague. Learning was fragmented from class to class and across grade levels. As a result, teachers and students were unclear about what the daily (and unit) learning focus was. Ownership of learning was low.

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Our Learning Goal

Putnam's learning goal was for teachers to develop clarity around the focus standards, the depth and rigor of the standards, and co-construct learning pathways with the students to begin to build student ownership of learning. In more detail, they wanted to see consistency in practice and performance from classroom to classroom and student to student.

Why Is This Important?

Putnam studied and believes that when teachers develop a deep understanding of the focus standards they will:

- Create classroom clarity;
- Design and provide clear learning targets and success criteria so students can monitor their own learning;
- Use daily learning targets to design aligned instruction and performance tasks;
- Use standards-based success criteria to measure student growth and give feedback to move learning forward;
- Be intentional with instruction, assessment, and responsive planning;
- Build a coherent curriculum across grade levels; and
- Create opportunities for mastery experiences for both teachers and students, feel more successful, and build teacher and student efficacy.

Putnam studied and believes that when teachers develop a deep understanding of the focus standards they will:

- Articulate where they are in the learning process and what their next learning focus is;
- Give evidence-based feedback to each other;
- Show significant academic growth;
- Strengthen their meta-cognitive thinking skills; and
- Build self-efficacy around learning.

“Impact Teams has united our teachers with a common understanding of standards, the formative assessment process, and collaborative inquiry.”

- Kristen Dart, 4th grade
Interventionist/Impact
Team Coach

“The protocols are a powerful tool to allow us to focus on the work, sometimes having difficult conversations that push our thinking deeper.”

- Kerry Kehm, 1st Grade
Interventionist

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Steps to Success

1. Understanding Impact Teams

Putnam started by selecting school-wide focus standards in Reading and Writing. The school used these standards to build learning progressions and gain an understanding of the Impact Team process and protocols.

2. Classroom Clarity

They then used the Unpacking for Success Protocol to increase classroom clarity for these focus standards. The Principal and Instructional Coach facilitated the Unpacking Protocol with every grade level to design learning targets, success criteria, rubrics and performance tasks. Teachers used learning targets, success criteria and rubrics to plan instruction. Students used success criteria and rubrics as tools to learn and to monitor their progress.

3. Understanding Student Learning

Teams used the Calibration Protocol to calibrate their understanding of student learning and discuss what proficiency looked like for each standard. Teams made adjustments to instruction, success criteria, and rubrics.

4. Analyzing Student Work

Teams used the EAA Team Meeting Protocol to analyze student work. Teams demonstrated vulnerability by showing their work and built relational trust through open conversations about instructional improvement. Teams used the learning progressions to intentionally design next learning steps for all students.

5. Unpack and Discuss Student Work

Grade levels used the same process as the school-wide focus standard to choose other standards to unpack and discuss student work. Grade level teachers were trained on facilitation of protocols and began to lead Impact Team meetings.

6. Supporting Impact Teams

The Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) designed structures to support Impact Teams. The ILT created a daily schedule where every grade level could meet as an Impact Team. The Principal and the ILT led professional learning days and staff meeting times to build understanding of learning targets & success criteria. The ILT conducted and used the Evidence Walk Protocol to focus on learning targets & success criteria. The ILT shared feedback about school-wide next steps and planning.

7. Impact Teams Success Criteria Checklist

The Impact Team Success Criteria checklist was used as a discussion starter and momentum builder to check progress and set targets on things the school wanted to work on next. This provided a great reason for the school to revisit progress as well as open quality discussion on areas of next effort. This sequence provided a true “loose-tight” relationship between goals and expectations so that the school had a more clearly articulated and empowered path because it was a path they chose to focus on.

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Our IMPACT

“Impact Teams has united our teachers with a common understanding of standards, the formative assessment process, and collaborative inquiry. As a result of this protocol driven collaboration, trust and collective efficacy among teachers is high, students are engaged, and outcomes are exponential.”

- Kristen Dart

4th grade Interventionist/Impact Team Coach, 14 years at Putnam, former 2nd & 4th grade teacher

“Impact Teams has helped our team create a culture of growth and problem solving. The protocols allow our team to think critically about instruction have deeper, more meaningful conversations. These conversations lead to clarity about quality instruction, learning progressions, differentiation, and student expectations. **Impact Teams allows our team to never be stagnant in our practice.**”

- Kacey Hendrickson

4th Grade Teacher, 4 years at Putnam

“Rather than focusing on factors that our outside of our control, there is a feeling in our school that our collective expertise will move students’ progress forward. **The protocols are a powerful tool to allow us to focus on the work, sometimes having difficult conversations that push our thinking deeper.**”

- Kerry Kehm

1st Grade Interventionist, 13 years at Putnam, former Kindergarten teacher



“When Success Criteria came to my life, I was so much better... I was so shocked how it helped me and how it did it.”

- Hociel

Third grade student



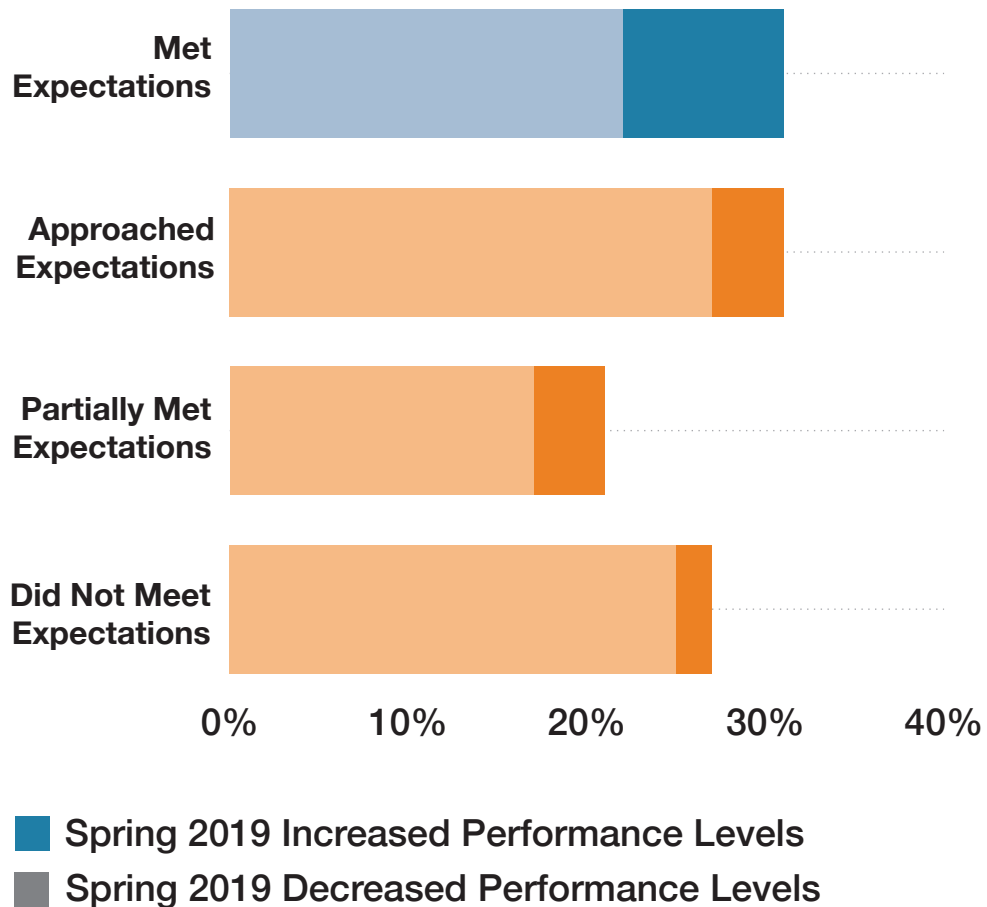
Watch Hociel's Flipgrid video reflection

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Table 1 - English Language Arts

Colorado State Testing - Comparison Tables - ELA 2018 to 2019 – Putnam Elementary 4th and 5th grade students (tested grades) – change in percentage by performance group. **Putnam increased the number of students Meeting Expectations by 9% while decreasing the number of students in every other performance group.**

Spring 2018 Performance Levels vs. Spring 2019 Performance Levels

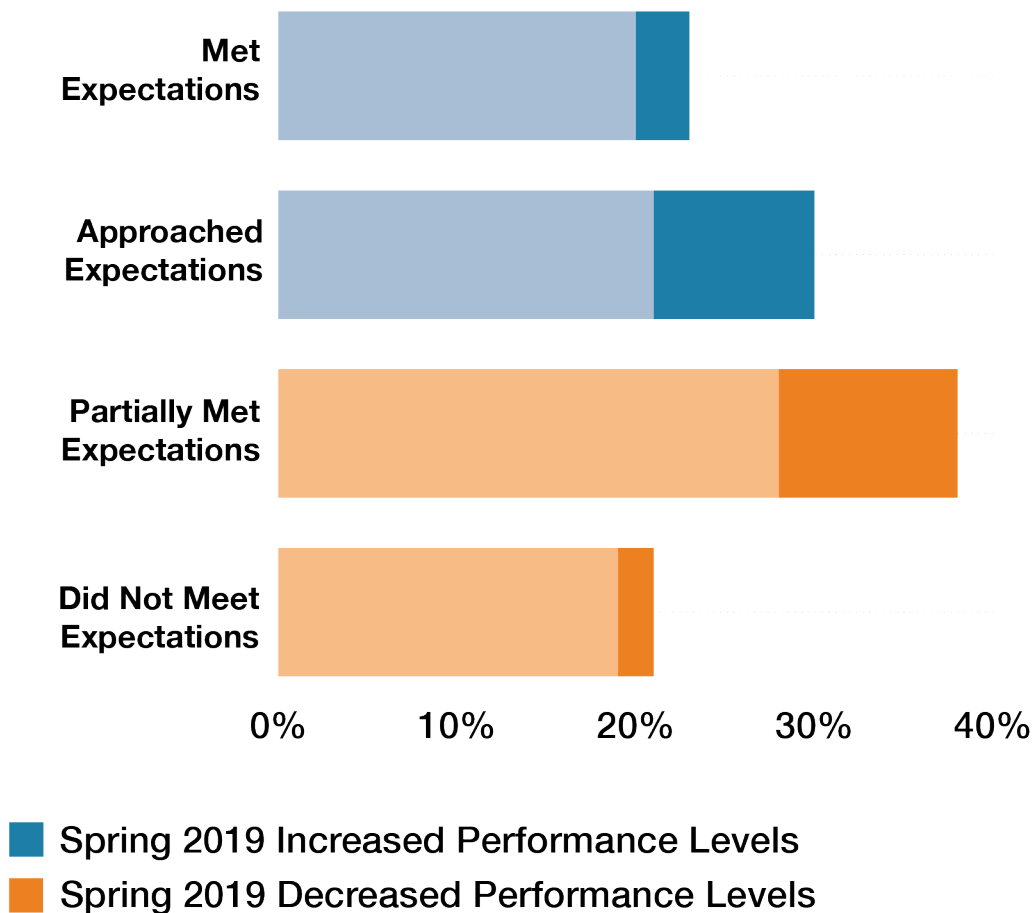


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Table 2 - Mathematics

Colorado State Testing - Comparison Tables – Math 2018 to 2019 – Putnam Elementary 4th and 5th grade students (tested grades) – change in percentage by performance group. **Putnam decreased the number of students that Partially Met and Did Not Meet Expectations by 10% and 2% respectively while increasing the number of students in Met Expectations by 3%.**

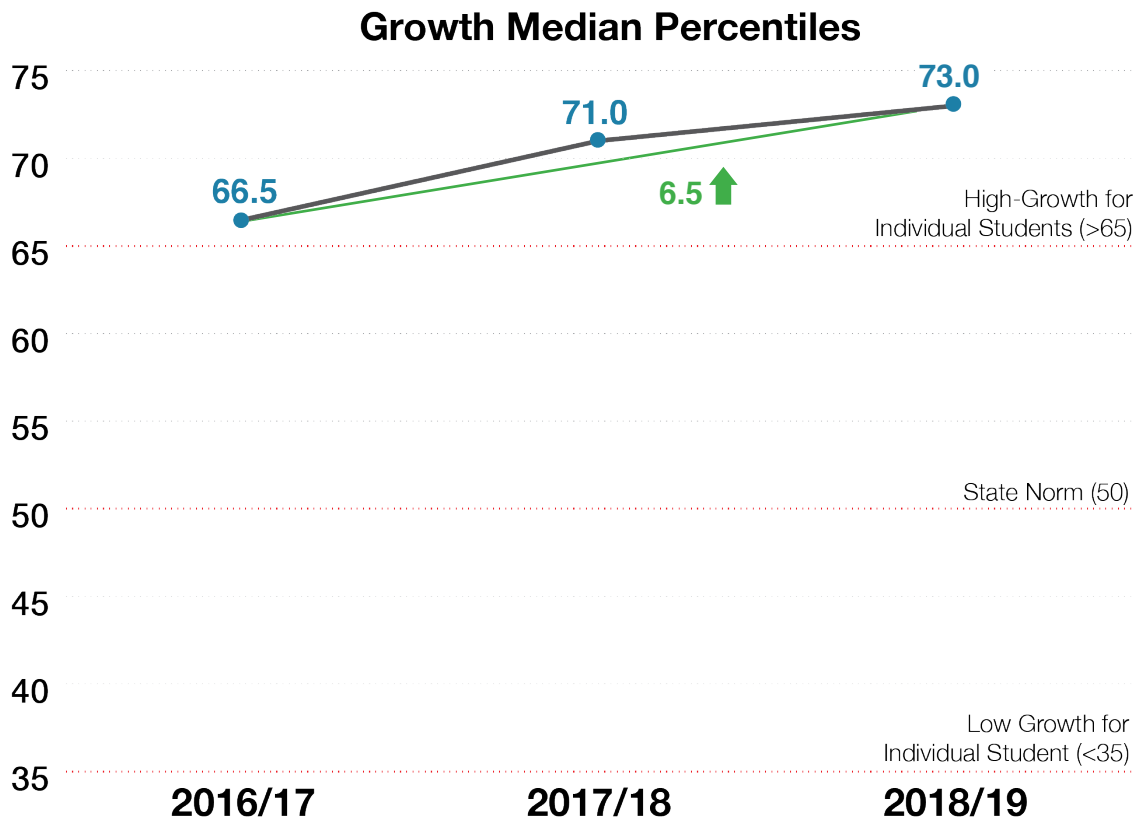
Spring 2018 Performance Levels vs. Spring 2019 Performance Levels



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Table 3 - English Language Arts

Colorado State Testing - ELA 2016/17 to 2017/18 to 2018/19 – Median Growth Percentiles Over Time. Putnam has increased the Median Growth Percentile from 66.5 to 73.0 over the last three testing cycles.



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Table 4 - Mathematics

Colorado State Testing - Math 2016/17 to 2017/18 to 2018/19 – Putnam Elementary all students – Median Growth Percentiles Over Time. **Putnam has increased the Median Growth Percentile from 64.0 to 72.0 over the last three testing cycles.**

