



The HCC Data Story

BYRAM HILLS
CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

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How do we assess what we value?

For the past two decades, the District has been exploring this question in many ways. As a result, we have pockets of examples throughout our schools which have been shared through the District website, at various Board of Education meetings, and in the Special Recognition documents, for example.

We strive to systematize this type of data through the questions: *How do we show progress toward the District mission and our departmental purpose and priorities?* By doing so, we show the **value added** to a Byram Hills education.

The **HCC Data Story** highlights “stories” from each department. The data stories are designed to **capture inquiry questions and research** into specific topics that will ultimately lead to evidence of our District mission and departmental purposes. These slides summarize the findings and conclusions from the inquiry conducted by each department and their next steps as a result.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DEPARTMENT	TOPIC	SLIDE
English	Student-led learning	Slide 4
Math	Rich tasks & thinking classrooms	Slide 5
Social Studies	Civic readiness	Slide 6
World Language	Speaking proficiency	Slide 7
Fine Arts	Shared students in ensembles	Slide 8
Guidance	Wellness	Slide 9
Physical Education	Use of technology	Slide 10
Special Services	Less restrictive environment	Slide 11
Technology	Technology & wellness	Slide 12

Student-led learning

How do student goal-setting and reflection improve the clarity and coherence of their writing?

Findings & Conclusions

Sixth graders showed significant improvement in crafting **thesis statements** and supporting them with textual evidence. They integrated quotes smoothly, with 60% of students rating themselves at Level 3 (“Amazing”) in this skill.

Sixth graders demonstrated growth in **self-evaluation** by reflecting on their writing progress using personalized portfolios. Their ability to provide evidence from their work to support their assessments was a major success.

Given the opportunity to reflect on reading, seventh graders cited ***The Outsiders* as a standout text**, with many students citing its relatable characters and themes. This engagement led to students producing strong essays supported by textual evidence.

Seventh graders valued **collaborative projects**, such as group writing and peer editing, as it enhanced their understanding of different perspectives and improved their writing.

Eighth graders reported that **previewing vocabulary** before reading texts such as *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* and *Of Mice and Men* significantly improved comprehension and critical thinking skills.

Students in grade eight **demonstrated growth in structuring essays**, particularly in writing seamless quote introductions and maintaining focus on their claims throughout their writing.

Next Steps

Continue to **explore feedback mechanisms** to help individualize teacher recommendations and student peer-review sessions.

Explore the possibility of **diversifying reading lists** to include more fiction genres, like historical fiction and mystery, to match student interests and encourage deeper engagement.

Continue to refine **goal setting** processes to help students identify areas in need of improvement related to analytical writing, in particular.

Read the [full story here](#).

Rich tasks & thinking classrooms

How do rich tasks foster student autonomy in a thinking classroom?

Findings & Conclusions

Student growth in risk tasking: Across all grade levels there was notable growth in students' willingness to take risks and work autonomously, as well as increased recognition of the value of persistence.

Improvement in collaboration and communication: Communication and collaboration skills also improved significantly, with students sharing ideas and problem solving strategies as well as engaging in math conversations with peers and explaining their reasoning.

Engagement in Rich Tasks: The integration of nontraditional problems created a more dynamic learning environment, encouraging creativity and exploration, with students pushing themselves to explore multiple strategies.

Read the [full story here](#).

Next Steps

Surveying Students: Administer surveys after rich tasks to gather feedback on accessibility, autonomy, and confidence. This will provide valuable insights into students' learning experiences and help gauge the effectiveness of the tasks in promoting autonomy.

Refinement of Tasks: Based on observed student experiences as well as survey results, teachers will refine tasks to ensure they continue to challenge students while also supporting collaboration, creativity, and deep mathematical understanding across all grade levels.

Civic readiness

How might we develop “expert citizens” in preparing students for active civic engagement?

Findings & Conclusions

Active Participation: A significant portion of students across all grade levels reported engaging in various civic activities, such as community service, volunteering, and participation in school clubs, suggesting that the approach is effective in encouraging students to actively participate in civic life and develop a sense of responsibility towards their communities.

Awareness and Knowledge: Many students demonstrated awareness of local and global issues suggesting that the instructional program effectively provides students with knowledge about civic responsibilities and encourages them to stay informed about relevant issues affecting society.

Reflective Practice: Students showed an ability to reflect on their own civic behaviors and actions, indicating a level of self-awareness and critical thinking fostered by the instructional program suggesting that the program encourages students to think critically about their role as citizens and consider how their actions contribute to the well-being of their communities.

Next Steps

Skill Development: Incorporate more opportunities for students to develop leadership and advocacy through hands-on experiences.

Meaningful Action: Increase opportunities to reflect on the outcomes of students’ civic efforts, as well as, an increase in opportunities to explore ways to address root causes of social issues through collective action and collaboration with community partners.

Read the [full story here](#).

Speaking proficiency

How do specific classroom instructional activities contribute to speaking skill development?

Findings & Conclusions

Instructional Guidelines and Practices:

- New York State continues to implement updated guidelines for instructional and curricular planning.
- When speaking tasks align with proficiency expectations, students successfully meet the required standards.

Student Performance and Standards: Scaffolding instructional practices enhances student output and performance.

Assessment and Testing Concerns: The AAPPL lacks inter-rater reliability and does not offer instructors or students access to practice test formats. Would students perform differently if the assessment were graded?

Next Steps

Continue to utilize the AAPPL assessment for measuring speaking proficiency.

Develop a Checkpoint A assessment to measure student proficiency levels for speaking, listening, writing, and reading.

Read the [full story here](#).

Watch the [full video here](#).

Shared students in ensembles

How has dual-enrollment in music ensembles affect skill progression and student engagement?

Findings & Conclusions

Increase in “Doublers”: With students participating in two ensembles in Wampus (23-28% of 5th graders), more students are continuing at HCC (10% of this year’s 6th grade class).

Grading: Students enrolled in two ensembles had *slightly* lower grades. More study is needed to determine if this is due to missing assignments, less time in each ensemble, lower skills, or something else.

Student Perception of Growth: Most students felt they had kept up with work in both classes; there was a split in how “musically successful” and “prepared” students felt in both ensembles. Students reported a desire for more chorus time, more practicing, and less homework.

Read the [full story here](#).

Next Steps

Classroom

- Posting review materials to Google Classroom
- Utilizing more singing in instrumental ensembles
- Using social connections like stand-pairing students as mentors

Department

- Asking elementary music teachers for placement recommendations
- Aligning musicianship goals between ensembles
- Continuing to grade growth and more detailed tracking of skills (not only missing assignments)
- Avoiding “double” assignments and assessments

Wellness

To what extent do the “chill spaces” contribute to positive student experiences and improved overall school experience?

Findings & Conclusions

Utilization: Overall usage of the Chill Spaces showed that students utilized the space for counseling, lunch, book club, cross-grade interaction, and social connections.

Feedback: Survey feedback indicated a strong preference for the chill space as a fun and relaxing area for socializing and unwinding.

Belonging: Students were able to build social connections while using the Chill Spaces.

Read the [full story here](#).

Next Steps

Meaningful action: Introduce the Chill Space to 6th graders and encourage greater use of the space throughout the school year.

Surveying students: Utilize Iceberg activities to gather student feedback and identify potential opportunities for using the Chill Space.

Use of technology

How does technology contribute to student awareness and understanding of their physical health and wellness?

Findings & Conclusions

Utilizing technology enabled HCC teachers to easily and efficiently collect and record student fitness scores.

Technology use provided teachers with a convenient way to access and analyze their student fitness data.

Teachers can easily communicate this information with their colleagues, share with teachers in other buildings, and make necessary curricular adjustments, such as targeted interventions for students with low fitness scores and incorporating health and fitness apps for informed decision making; these adjustments enhance students' awareness and understanding of their health so they make more informed, healthy lifestyle choices.

Regular fitness testing allows for comparative analysis against county and state obesity rates, for example:

- Obesity rate for middle school students: HCC - 8.2%; Westchester - 15.6%; NYS - 21.8%
- Obesity rate for all students: District - 6.8%; Westchester - 14.8%; NYS - 20.6%

This data suggests, in part, that the District's fitness programs is effective.

Fitness testing helps to identify students who are at risk of obesity or other health-related issues and provide early, targeted intervention to improve student health.

By comparing data with broader statistics, the district can continuously improve its fitness programs to maintain or further reduce obesity rates.

Next Steps

Continue to analyze the correlation between HCC obesity rates and HCC fitness testing.

Study HCC students to help determine other factors that contribute to obesity rates, such as:

- Socioeconomic status
- Health education
- Peer and parental pressures

Read the [full story here.](#)

Less restrictive environment

How does the interplay of services and supports impact the success of students in a less restrictive setting?

Findings & Conclusions

Students were highly successful: According to teacher-ratings, students who moved to a less-restrictive setting were overall highly successful (74% of these moves were rated with a score of 4 or 5 on a 5 point scale).

Strong Social-Emotional Benefits: One positive change observed for students was their social-emotional well-being. This was demonstrated through teacher reports of:

- Students being more vocal in resource room when asking questions
- Students actively participating in counseling sessions, with improved self-esteem and social skills
- Students displaying willingness in group activities

Additional Supports that helped students: Students benefited from these additional IEP and building level supports when moving to a less-restrictive environment:

- Modified homework
- Attending Homework Center and Math Center regularly
- Having resource room to ensure the reinforcement and reteaching of content and skills
- Having specialized Google Classrooms that allowed students regular access to specially designed instructional materials.

Next Steps

- Continue to study the long-term trajectory of students as they move to a less-restrictive environment, focusing on their success in high school.
- Examine specific specially designed instruction delivered in the co-taught classroom and how that helps students move to a less restrictive environment.

Technology & wellness

How does an intentional, balanced use of technology support overall student well-being?

Findings & Conclusions

Self-Awareness: Students indicated moderate to high recognition of digital technology's impact on their well-being.

Screen Time Management: Many students are struggling to manage their screen time effectively.

Healthy Online Behaviors: Students indicated they often demonstrate positive online behaviors.

Emotional Well-being: There was a high variation of response, reflecting a moderate ability to maintain emotional well-being with digital device use.

Next Steps

Develop tools to help build self control to combat digital distractions.

Engage parents, students, and teachers to be intentional in digital technology use.

Read the [full story here](#).



Creating the Leaders of the Next Generation