



Video

FULL DETAILS AND TRANSCRIPT

## Data Boards Help Students Set Learning Goals (Part 1)

Jacob Hiatt Magnet School, Massachusetts • April 2010

Topic: Using Student Achievement Data to Support Instructional Decision Making  
Practice: Student Use of Data

### Highlights

- Sixth-grade teacher Ann Ruchala discusses data boards. Teachers use data boards to depict student progress on the Measures of Academic Progress (MAP), a benchmark assessment administered three times yearly.
- Students decorate a symbol such as a race car or basketball and post it on the data board at their individual score point. Since names are on the back of the symbols, students can anonymously compare their progress to the finish line with their classmates.
- Before each benchmark assessment, teachers meet with each student individually and help them set a goal for their score.

### About the Site

Jacob Hiatt Magnet School  
Worcester, MA

Demographics  
50% Hispanic

24% White

19% Black

3% Asian

67% Free or Reduced-Price Lunch

Jacob Hiatt's nearly eight-hour expanded school day has led to visible student academic growth. Its 2009 scores showed Adequate Yearly Progress in all subjects for the first time since 2002. The pillars of the school day redesign approach taken by the school include:

- Implementation of school day redesign based on student assessment data,
- Individualizing and differentiating instruction based on student needs,
- Incorporating enrichment activities in academically classes,
- Facilitating collaborative planning meetings for teachers and program instructors,
- Fostering partnerships with local groups and organizations to provide extracurricular opportunities and resources.

## Full Transcript

The data boards that are around the school are placed in the hallways for everyone to see, and they are for every grade. And one of the things that they show are student achievement on measures of academic progress, which is a computerized test that all students from grades 2 through 6 here take three times a year. And what we are looking for with the data boards is to chart growth or progress throughout the year that we are hoping that all students are making.

The data boards reflect RIT\* scores, which would be student achievement. We are looking for all students to try to meet that particular RIT score or goal each time they take the MAP [Measures of Academic Progress] testing. And so for example, the sixth grade, we chose to do a theme of race cars, and what we would like them to do is continuously move down the track to reach a particular goal by the end of the year. But for each time that they take the MAP testing scores, there is a particular number in what we are looking for our students to try and reach for both English language arts and for math. And students are able to have their scores on the back, and we write those RIT scores on the back for each time they take it. So that would be for fall, for the winter, and for the spring. And what we are looking for is growth throughout the year and for students to try to reach that goal. And on every data board, there are numbers, and those represent the RIT scores. So we are hoping that our race cars in the sixth grade will eventually head towards the goal line by the end of the year.

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\* RIT stands for Rasch Unit, which is a unit of measure that uses individual item difficulty values to estimate student achievement. RIT scores create an equal interval scale. Equal interval means that the difference between scores is the same regardless of whether a student is at the top, bottom or middle of the RIT scale, and it has the same meaning regardless of grade level.

One of the things that we decided as a school was that the names were not going to be placed on whatever representation we were going to use on the data board. Students were able to—in our case in the sixth grade, the theme was race cars, and every student has their own race car. We have a reading board as well as a math board. Every student was able to design their race car the way that they wanted so they would know precisely which car was theirs. No one else really knew what design they chose. And when we come out and ask the students to come plot their race car on the board, it's done with just the teacher and the student. And the student is the one that staples the car to the board. They need to see their own growth, if they have made any, from MAP test to MAP test, whether that would be from fall to winter or winter to spring. Their names are on the back as well as their scores. And every time they take the MAP testing score, we add the new score to the back and they can visually see the race car either moving down, towards the goal line, it might stay around the same, or it might set back a little bit. And when students do that, it makes them aware of their own learning and their own challenges.

One of the ways that we come up with the theme is group collaboration amongst the classroom teachers. All the sixth-grade teachers, we get together and we just think of a theme that we would like to work on. Every classroom is different. We try to look at something that's age appropriate, something that would be appealing to the eye, and something that students would be interested in as far as charting their growth throughout the year.

The impact we have seen with data boards, I think—especially I could speak for the sixth graders—is a huge impact on them and the fact that they are always looking for growth within themselves. They are setting goal sheets every time that they take the MAP testing score. We also look at the previous grade and how well they did there. They look for in their differentiated instruction, whether it's in math or for reading, they are looking for growth within themselves. They are looking for themselves to make progress. And they fully understand that in order to reach their goal, there are certain things that have to be met.

On-screen text: To see Ann Ruchala model a conversation with a sixth-grade student on using data to set learning goals, view “Data Boards Help Students Set Learning Goals (Part 2).”