

English Learners Show Significant Gains with Longman Cornerstone

Students and Teachers say Program Narrows the Achievement Gap

New York, NY September 30, 2009- Across the nation, English language learners (ELLs) must keep pace with their native English-speaking peers in all core academic subjects while, at the same time, learning English. This challenging learning curve keeps many ELLs from achieving at their highest potential and can negatively impact their ability to graduate from high school. But a school district in Colorado is rapidly turning the tide for these at-risk students with the help of the *Longman Cornerstone* program.

In 2008, the Roaring Fork School District in Glenwood Springs, Colorado, was one of five districts identified by the state as having the largest achievement gap between native speakers and English learners. District officials began a search for a new curriculum that would improve test scores for the more than one-thousand ELLs enrolled, and meet their Annual Measurable Achievement Objectives (AMAOs) as mandated by No Child Left Behind.

After extensive research district ELL coordinator Sharon Moya selected *Longman Cornerstone* to pilot for a full year in one of the district's elementary schools. Frequent benchmark assessments were given throughout the year to measure student progress and to ensure the efficacy of the program.

The results were remarkable. (see attached) After only five months with the program, the school reported these impressive gains:

- The number of first-grade students reading **below benchmark** (DRA*) **decreased by half**
- The number of third-grade students reading **below benchmark decreased by one-third**
- **48%** of first-graders were reading **above benchmark level**
- **26%** of third-graders were reading **above benchmark level**
- **28 %** of first graders demonstrated gains of **two or more years** in reading proficiency

First-grade teacher Jeanine King said, "In September, the kids came to me at below level in reading, writing, and speaking English. In January, when I retested them again with the DRA 2, I found that they have made at least a year's growth in only that four months' time. I'm so proud of them..to know they can go on next year in second grade and be part of a regular classroom to just be able to learn all that they've done, it's just amazing."

Students also rave about the program. Jairo Pelac, a fourth grader learning with *Longman Cornerstone* for the first time during the 2008-2009 school year, said, "I feel proud of myself because when I came here I didn't know English and now, I do. And, I have learned a lot...I'm proud of myself."

The remarkable improvements Glenwood Springs children experienced with *Longman Cornerstone* has led school officials to implement the program in every K-5 ELL classroom across the entire school district for the 2009-2010 school year.



Tamara and Layla, students in Gisella Dillow's ELL class at GSES, writing about Ted the tadpole and the life cycle.

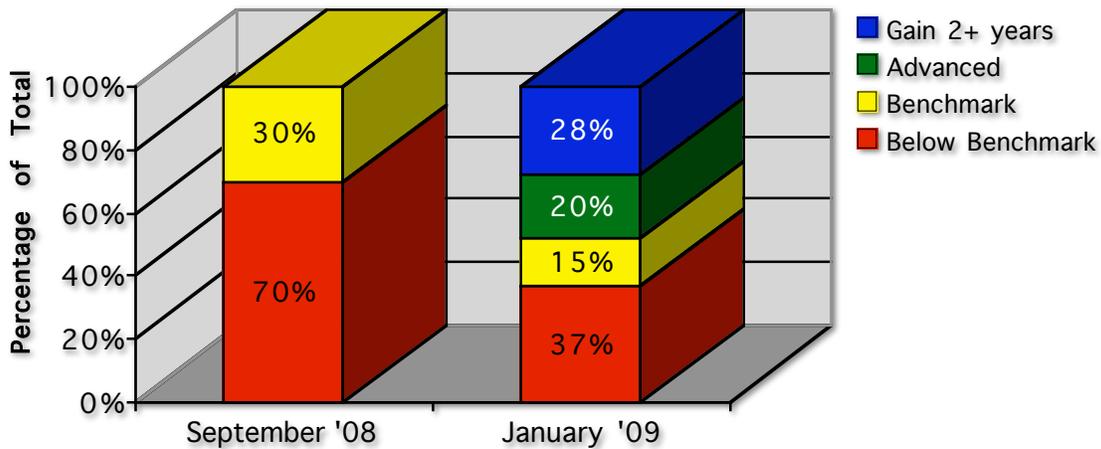
*DRA refers to **Developmental Reading Assessment**, an individual reading assessment that identifies a student's reading achievement through systematic observation, recording, and evaluation of performance in grades K-8.

Learner Verification Report Data

Glenwood Springs Elementary School,
Roaring Fork School District, Glenwood Springs, CO

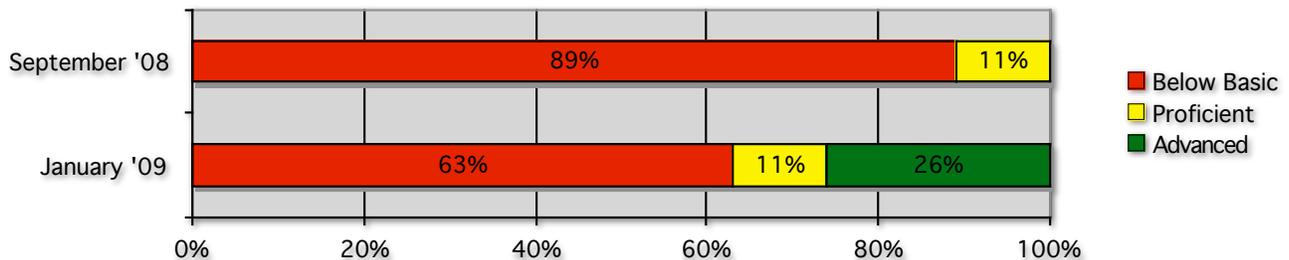
In September 2008, more than two-thirds of first grade students were reading below grade level. By January 2009, the number of these students dropped by half while 63% of the students were reading at or above benchmark level. Of these, 28% had made reading gains of two or more years. In fact, many of these students will be enrolled in mainstream classes in the Fall of 2009.

Grade 1 DRA Results from September '08- January '09



In September 2008, DRA scores indicated that 89% of third grade students were reading below basic and only 11% of students were reading at grade level. By January 2009, the number of students reading below basic, according to grade level benchmarks, had decreased by 29% and more than a quarter of students were reading at advanced levels.

Grade 3 DRA Results from September '08- January '09



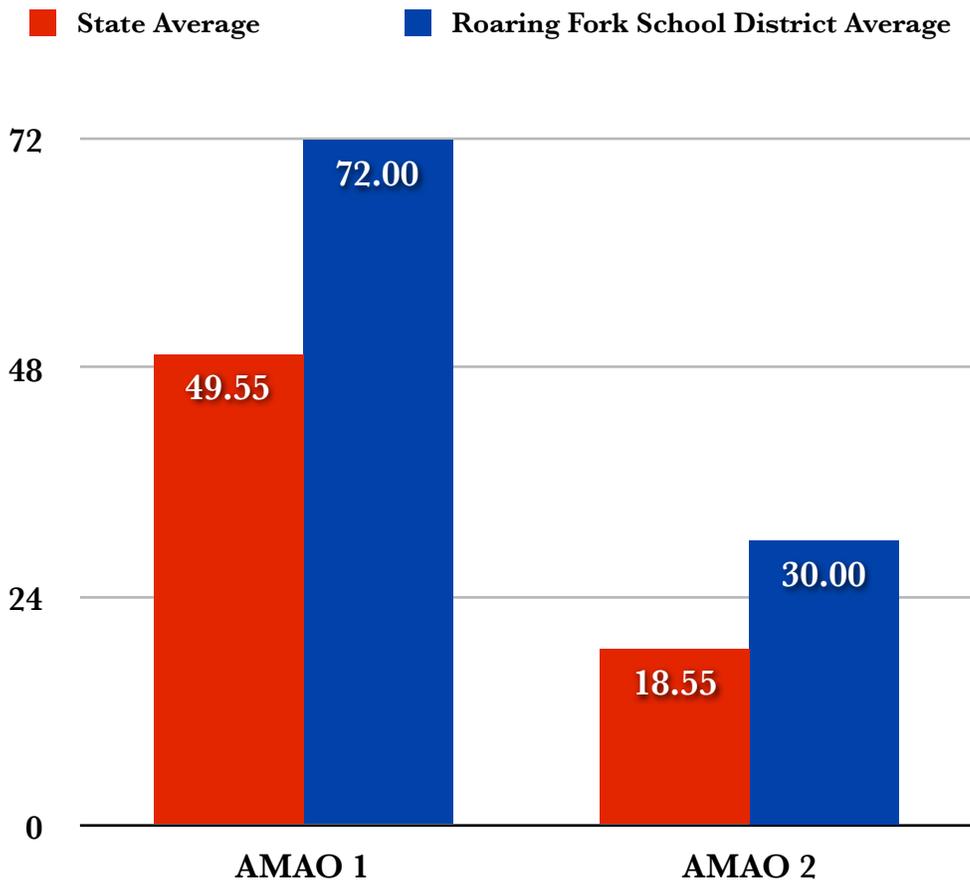
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2008-2009 AMAOs for English Language Learners (Roaring Fork School District Average vs. State-Wide Average)

The Roaring Forks School district exceeded the average state gains for AMAO 1 and AMAO 2, one of **two** school districts in the state of Colorado with over 1,000 English Language Learners to do so.

An AMAO is a performance objective, or target, for English Language Learners that Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) who receive Title III subgrants must meet each year. All LEAs receiving a Title III subgrant are required to meet the two English language proficiency AMAOs and a third academic achievement AMAO based on AYP information. The English language proficiency AMAOs are calculated based on data from the Colorado English Language Assessment (CELA Proficiency).



What Users Say About Cornerstone

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“There is often an assumption that all ELL students learn the same, and that’s not the case. Cornerstone is very purposeful in assessing where a student is in the learning process and personalizing it for that student.”

Judy Haponstall, Roaring Forks School District Superintendent

“One of the challenges with ELL kids is that they have a base in their native language, but they’re unable to make a link between what they know, and what they need to know in learning English. This program gives us a good base to move forward. In the classroom we are seeing kids who are very excited and engaged in learning”

Ted Donahue, Assistant Principal

“It’s authentic literature that’s content-based, which gives them so much academic knowledge and background.”

Darleen Osorio, Cornerstone teacher

“At the beginning of the year, these kids literally could not speak a word of English. Halfway through January they were already one or two levels above where I was teaching them.”

Gisella Dillow, Cornerstone teacher

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First grade students at GSES using the Longman Cornerstone program.

More about Longman Cornerstone

Read

John Stroud, of the Post Independent interviews administrators and teachers and reports on the success of the Cornerstone program.

<http://www.postindependent.com/article/20090507/VALLEYNEWS/>

Watch

An amazing transformation is taking place at Glenwood Springs Elementary School. The success will continue: Cornerstone is now in every K-5 ELL classroom across the district.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MEYmKbzmQBE>

For more information on the Pearson **Longman Cornerstone** program, contact your ELL specialist at **(800) 375-2375** or visit the website online at www.longmancornerstone.com