

Berkmar High School

Gwinnett County Public Schools, Lilburn, Georgia

Location type: Large suburb

District enrollment: 169,150 students

School enrollment: 2,900 students

Percentage of students at school eligible for free and reduced price meals: 81

Key Takeaways

Berkmar High School participated in the OECD Test for Schools in 2014. Although the school performed well in science given its socioeconomic status, it realized that there was room for improvement, especially when it came to student performance at levels 5 and 6. The assessment also indicated areas for improvements within teacher-student relations.

Actions Taken

- ✔ To provide students with additional support in science, Berkmar High School took a number of actions, including:
 - Core subject teams now have daily common planning time during the school day to better respond to the needs of students.
 - All core subject teams are now involved in data collection and analysis, which allows staff to track student achievement and provide effective supports.
 - The school now uses “I Can” statements where standards are broken down into components to allow students to track what they can do and what they need to work on to reach each standard.
 - This practice has benefited teachers in that the “I Can” statements, along with the daily common planning time, have helped to clarify what each standard means, how to evaluate proficiency regarding the standards, and how to best support students.
 - The “I Can” statements have allowed students to take ownership of their education by engaging in self-evaluations, and parents are able to gain a clearer understanding of what the standards mean and how their child is performing.
 - The school also revised its writing initiative to better align with scientific writing.
- Previously, Berkmar utilized the RACE (restate the question, answer the question, cite evidence to support your answer, and explain the evidence) approach to writing. Staff later realized that this approach was better suited to language arts and social studies writing. In an effort to align writing to science, Berkmar has introduced CER (state your claim, provide evidence to support your claim, and detail your reasoning).

 - The school has also provided opportunities for students to participate in grade recovery or remediation during the school day. Students are able to go to a computer lab to engage in self-paced learning.
- ✔ The school also took action with regard to teacher-student relations to support deeper connections between students and teachers.
 - Berkmar made changes to its advisement program. Previously, only freshmen participated in daily advisement. Now, all grade levels attend daily advisement, which provides opportunities for staff to get to know students better and to make necessary interventions to support student achievement.
- ✔ Representatives from Berkmar attended the 2014 Convening of World-Leading Schools in order to gain a deeper understanding of the OECD Test for Schools Test and their results, as well as to share best practices with peers.

Those wishing to learn more about the practices at Berkmar High School may visit the school's website [here](#).