

Herricks Union Free School District

New Hyde Park, New York

Location type: Large suburb

District enrollment: 3,914 students

Percentage of students in district eligible for free and reduced price meals: 6

Key Takeaways

Herricks Union Free School District had its only high school participate in the OECD Test for Schools beginning in the 2013-2014 school year. On average, the scores of Herricks students were very highly competitive with students across the world as well as the US. However, there was concern about the percentage of students scoring below level 3, which the district believed should be the minimum for all students. There was also concern that the percentage of students achieving scores of 5 or 6 was less than desired. The results provided valuable information for both the school and district leaders and prompted extensive discussions at the district level regarding ways in which the district and high school could develop students' critical deeper learning skills so that more perform at the higher proficiency levels.

Actions Taken

-  After receiving the OECD Test for Schools results, leaders at Herricks Union Free School District asked the district's K-12 teachers to answer 4 to 5 selected questions from the OECD Test for Schools during faculty meetings and professional development workshops. This exercise provided teachers with firsthand knowledge regarding the quality of the questions that students are expected to answer on the OECD Test for Schools.
-  Staff members were also asked to bring a quiz, test, or major homework assignment to these sessions and then compare them to the proficiency level rubrics for math, reading, and science, which prompted fun and fruitful discussions among district staff and allowed teachers to refine their materials to support the development of students' deeper learning skills.
-  The district opened AP courses to all students. Over time, this has raised the percentage of graduates taking at least one AP course from 30 percent to 80 percent.
-  Opportunities for research in math and science have expanded, providing opportunities for a wide variety of students to develop their critical thinking and problem solving skills.
-  The district created capacity to provide support to students who are not on track to meet the goal of performing at the 70th percentile in English language arts and math on NWEA's MAP Assessment by the end of 8th grade.
-  Herricks has also provided substantially increased time and resources for professional development with an emphasis on higher order skills.
-  The district also de-tracked the English program at the middle and high school level so that what had previously been honors level became open to all students.
-  There has been an increased focus on literacy across all subject areas.
-  Project Lead the Way was implemented in science and technology for K-5 so that students can begin to develop the skills that will allow them to perform at globally competitive levels.
-  Since 2013, five district officials have participated in multiple Global Learning Network virtual convenings with topics ranging from understanding the OECD Test for Schools results to communicating about the results to successful strategies to improve students' reading performance. Herricks representatives have also attended the 2013 and 2014 national convenings.

The 2014-2015 administration of the OECD Test for Schools showed that some progress has been made: the number of students performing below level 2 decreased 9 percent in reading and 3 percent in science. Instrumental motivation in science also rose; most notably, the percentage of students agreeing with the statement "I study school science because I know it's useful to me" increased by 18 percent, while agreement with "I will learn many things in my school science subject(s) that will help me get a job" rose 10 percent.

Those wishing to learn more about the practices at Herricks Union Free School District may visit the district's website [here](#).