



WESTED PARTNERS WITH INNER CITY SCHOOL, INCREASES ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

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A school serving San Francisco's "toughest" housing project became a shining example of academic achievement -- for low-income and African American kids.

PR9.NET October 06, 2005 - Malcolm X Academy proves that ALL kids can achieve.

Prospects are improving for kids in the San Francisco Bayview Hunter's Point area, thanks to hard work at the Malcolm X Academy by teachers, parents, and students. This year's vastly improved test scores paint a rosier future for the neighborhood children, and provide the San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD) with a shining example of improvement under tough circumstances.

Just last year, the K-5 school, which serves children in this low-income and predominantly African American neighborhood, was threatened with closure due to two consecutive years of being labeled as a "state-monitored" school - the result of falling short of annual academic progress targets set by the state - also endangered the school.

But the 2005 California Standards Test (CST) results released by the California Department of Education show that Malcolm X has increased the schoolwide percent scoring at "proficient or advanced" in math from 8% in 2003 to 33% in 2005. Further, the school's African American students increased math scores from 10% in 2003 to 29% in 2005.

In English language arts, Malcolm X has increased the schoolwide percent scoring at "proficient or advanced" from 10% in 2003 to 19% in 2005. Further, its African American students increased English language arts scores from 7% in 2003 to 16% in 2005.

The improvements are largely the result of a turn-around process that began in 2002 when the school partnered with San Francisco-based WestEd and its School Assistance and Intervention Team (SAIT). "This wonderful neighborhood school community was in a tough spot. It would have been easy to throw in the towel because the indicators for success were not good," says Noelle Caskey, WestEd's SAIT team leader for Malcolm X Academy. "The teachers at Malcolm X had a well-deserved reputation for providing excellent emotional and social support for their students. Now I'm proud that their academic support equals all the other benefits children receive at Malcolm X Academy."

Arlene Ackerman, SFUSD Superintendent, adds, "I am happy that WestEd has entered into a collaborative partnership with Malcolm X Academy. My hope is that the end result will be higher achievement for the children who attend Malcolm X because they deserve the highest quality education available to them."

"This school is so very important to families all over Hunter's Point," says Principal Rosalind Sarah. "The kids can walk or take a short bus ride to a school where teachers care about them in every way." She adds, "We've collaborated with WestEd to improve our student achievement, and even though the SAIT process was not easy, I'm pleased that our hard work has paid off."

Malcolm X has now exited the state-monitored list of schools because it has made significant academic growth for two consecutive years. Fred Tempes, Director of WestEd's Comprehensive School Assistance Program, points out that in two years' time Malcolm X has built the structure and processes to maintain academic improvements in the coming years. "Their exceptional growth is not a fluke," he says. "Malcolm X Academy now has a sustainable model for quality academic instruction and increasingly higher test scores."

Principal Sarah agrees. "I really feel fortunate that we had such a great team from WestEd. Noelle assisted us by looking at the data first, and then outlining how to accomplish the change process ourselves. WestEd empowered our teachers, helped us to define our own direction, and the resulting change was more systemic and sustainable. We truly value the relationship with WestEd. They helped us to look at our strengths, and also helped us move forward with positive change. That they supported my role as an education leader is proof that we have a true partnership."

For more information on WestEd's SAIT, visit <http://www.WestEd.org/SAIT>

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About WestEd

WestEd, a national nonprofit research, development, and service agency, works with education and other communities to promote excellence, achieve equity, and improve learning for children, youth, and adults. WestEd has 16 offices nationwide, from Washington and Boston to Arizona and California. Its corporate headquarters are in San Francisco. More information about WestEd is available at WestEd.org.

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