



How De-tracking,
Open Access to AP,
a Focus on Literacy,
and Common
Syllabi Successfully
Transformed Our
High School

Introductions

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Oak Hill High School

2009-2010

Enrollment = 520



Maine Class B School

Regional School Unit #4

Rural Towns of Sabattus,
Litchfield, & Wales

NEASC Accreditation
Visit March 2010

2010-2011-Combined
Middle School for the First
Time

Our Past

- **School Union #44/CSD 15 CLAS (Common Local Assessment System)**
- **Design for Understanding Units-DFU's (UbD)**
Teacher collaboration in developing common units
- **Promising Futures Summer Institute (MDOE)**
Title I, CIPS (AYP)
- **National Governors' Association Grant School for Advanced Placement Incentive Grant (Open Access)**

The Big Ideas

- ◆ **Literacy Audit by Public Consulting Group Inc./ Center for Resource Management (PCG-CRM)**
- ◆ **Three-Year Literacy Action Plan Development (Consultant and Literacy Team)**
- ◆ **Consultant and Literacy Team Driven Professional Development Workshops**
- ◆ **School-Wide Literacy Initiative and Critical Friends Groups**
- ◆ **MEA, NWEA, and SAT Data Availability**

Literacy Initiative

OAK HILL HIGH SCHOOL
WALES, MAINE

ADOLESCENT
LITERACY
AUDIT
REPORT



JUNE 2006

Findings of Literacy Audit

Figure 1. Learning and Literacy Profile of Oak Hill High School Students

60% or More of Oak Hill High School Teachers Indicated that LESS THAN HALF of the Students They Teach:

- ✓ Like to read.
- ✓ Like to write.
- ✓ Are proficient readers.
- ✓ Do well presenting their work to others.
- ✓ Are motivated learners.
- ✓ Easily learn and use content area vocabulary.
- ✓ Participate actively in discussion.
- ✓ Give complete answers when responding to verbal questions.
- ✓ Give complete answers when responding to questions in writing.
- ✓ Are able to summarize information.
- ✓ Are able to analyze information.
- ✓ Use standard English language correctly when talking about what they are learning.
- ✓ Use complete sentences when asked to write about what they have learned.
- ✓ Can read aloud fluently and with expression.

Figure 4. Student Activities NEVER Implemented by 30% or More of Teachers

Students in Core Content Area Courses:

- ✓ Read different types of text material aloud during class.
- ✓ Produce a report of at least five pages on a topic they researched in the content area.
- ✓ Use technology to improve their reading skills in the content area.
- ✓ Use technology to improve their writing skills in the content area.
- ✓ Critique the work they have produced with one another.
- ✓ Present their written work to each other.
- ✓ Discuss assigned reading with one another.

Students in Other Courses:

- ✓ Read different types of text material aloud during class.
- ✓ Produce a report of at least five pages on a topic they researched in the content area.
- ✓ Use technology to improve their reading skills in the content area.
- ✓ Use technology to improve their writing skills in the content area.
- ✓ Critique the work they have produced with one another.
- ✓ Revise and edit their written work based on teacher feedback.
- ✓ Use technology to present information.

Fig. 12 Areas Where Oak Hill High School Teachers Are Less Knowledgeable

Reading Strategies

- Connecting state reading standards to instruction in content area
- Using strategies that help students self-assess their reading comprehension
- Determining how language structures and styles in written texts affect student understanding and comprehension
- Teaching students the different structures and features of the text material they use in the content area

Teaching reading comprehension strategies

- Modeling explicit reading strategies that students can use when “they read it but don’t understand it”

Writing Strategies

- Connecting state writing standards to instruction in the content area
- Providing instruction that strengthens students’ writing skills in the content area
- Having students follow the writing process for major writing assignments in the content area (plan, draft, conference, revise, edit, publish/share)
- Using a variety of assessment tools and strategies to help students gauge their progress as writers

Instructional Approaches that Support Literacy

- Using strategies to actively engage low-performing students
- Using strategies that help students with varying levels of proficiency (low-performing and advanced) learn and use major concepts in my content area
- Designing learning tasks that connect to students’ cultural or social backgrounds
- Assigning learning tasks that develop the critical thinking skills of low-performing students
- Providing classroom instruction that prepares students for a variety of literacy demands in the content area

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Literacy Instruction Across the Content Areas
- Immediately increase the Explicit Teaching and Frequency of Use of Research-Based Reading Comprehension Strategies Across All Content Area Classes
- Immediately Increase a Focus on Vocabulary Development Within and Across Content Areas
- Increase the Explicit Teaching of Writing and Frequency of Writing Across All Content Area Classes

CULTURE

- **Declare Literacy as a School-wide Focus for 2006-09**
- **Ignite a Passion in Students for Reading, Writing and Thinking**
- **Establish a Collaborative Climate to Support Teacher Use of Literacy Support Strategies**

SCHOOL SUPPORTS

- **Provide Faculty Professional Development with Implementation**
- **Establish a Liaison Literacy Committee With Representatives from Sending Middle Schools**
- **Establish School-wide Policies and Expectations for Literacy Instruction in All Content Areas**
- **Establish a Structure and Procedures to Ensure Effective Use of Reading Assessment Results Across Content Classes**

SCHOOL SUPPORTS

- **Identify and Use Common Sets of Literacy Strategies for Each Content Area**
- **Connect the Literacy Improvement Initiative to All Other School Goals and Priorities**
- **Hire or Designate a Literacy Coordinator**
- **Strengthen and Expand the Role of the Literacy Team**
- **Integrate a Focus on Literacy into Common Planning Time or Department/Faculty Meetings**
- **Strengthen Existing Community Partnerships**

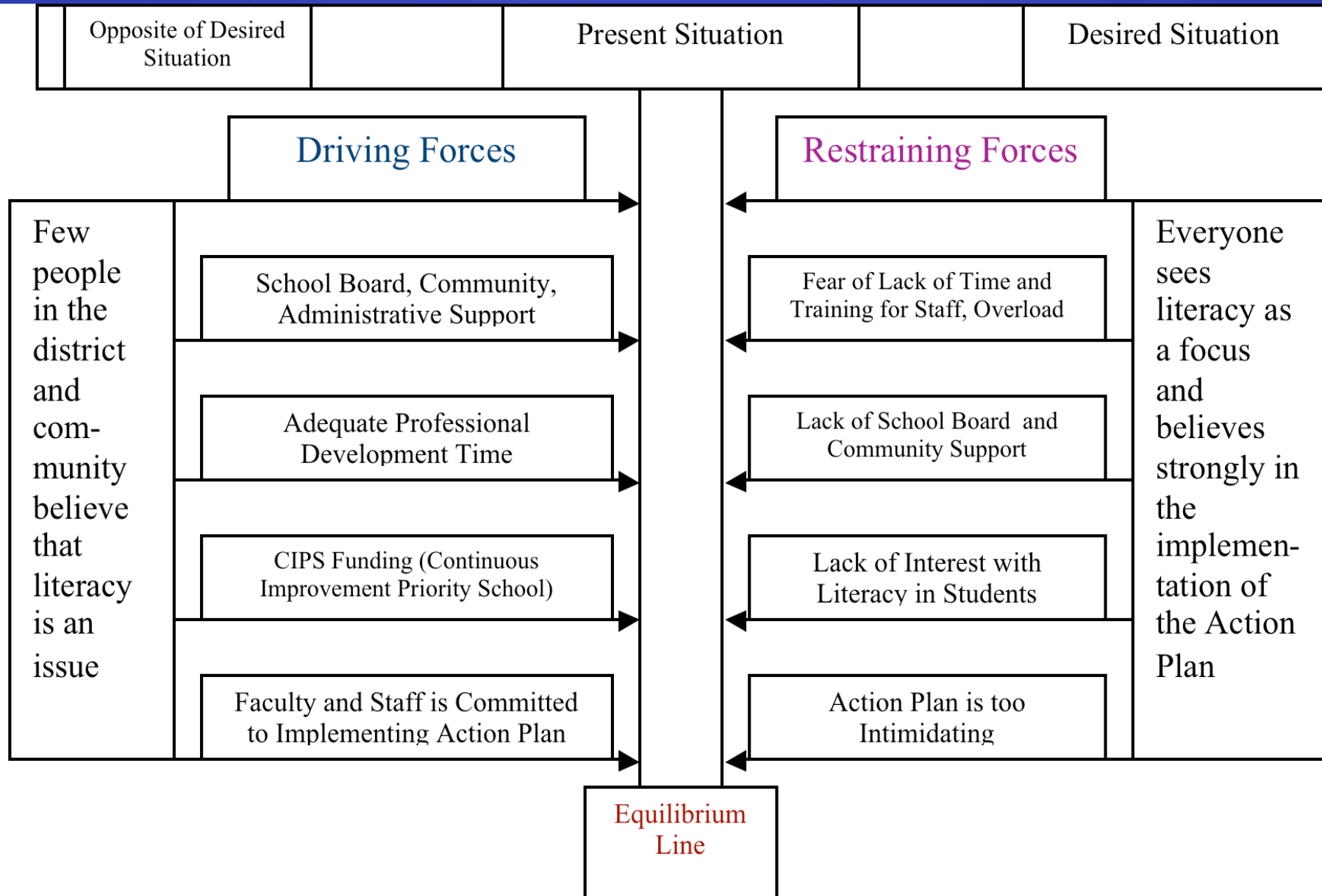
SCHOOL SUPPORTS

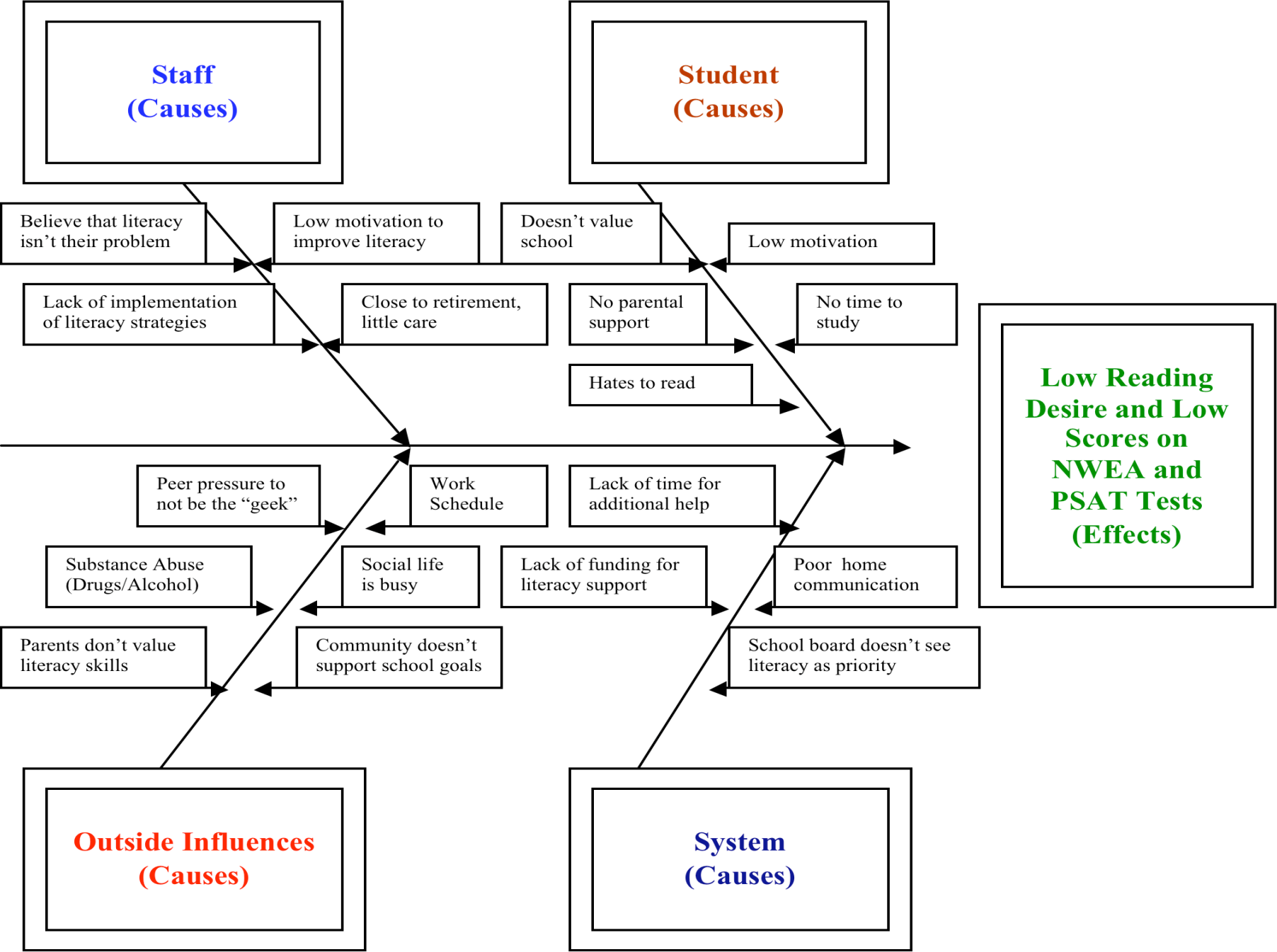
- **Purchase a School-wide Common Set of Literacy Strategy Resources for Faculty**
- **Purchase or Obtain Support Materials for Struggling Learners**
- **Identify and Purchase Differentiated Curriculum Resources**

Critical Friends Groups

- **Facilitators = Members of Literacy Team**
- **Met in groups across content areas once/month to share strategies created/implemented**
- **Became an opportunity for collaboration, warm & cool feedback**
- **Evolved into opportunity to share student work using literacy strategies**

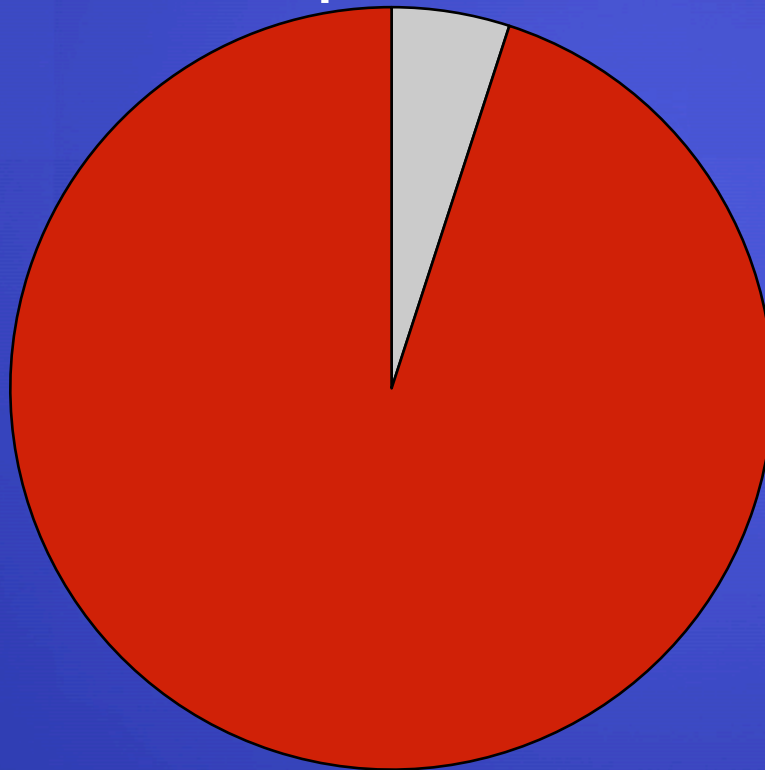
2006-2007 School Year





Data

Oak Hill High School Literacy Strategy Implementation Participation of Staff as of March 6th, 2007

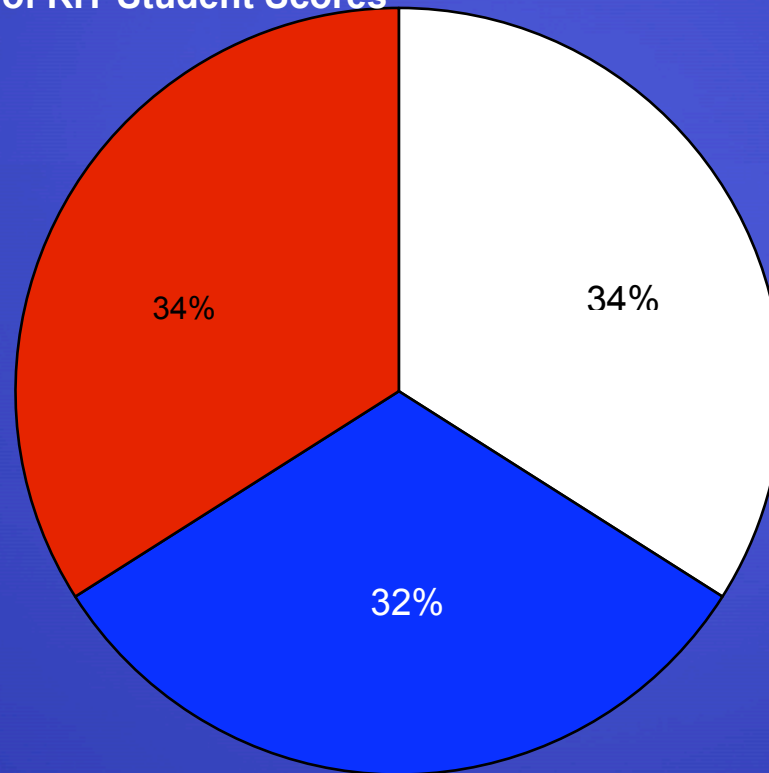


□ Implementation of One
Literacy Strategy in Class
(2/42)

■ Implementation of More
Than One Strategy in Class
(40/42)

Data

Oak Hill High School Class of 2009
Spring 2006 NWEA Reading Comprehension
Percentages of RIT Student Scores

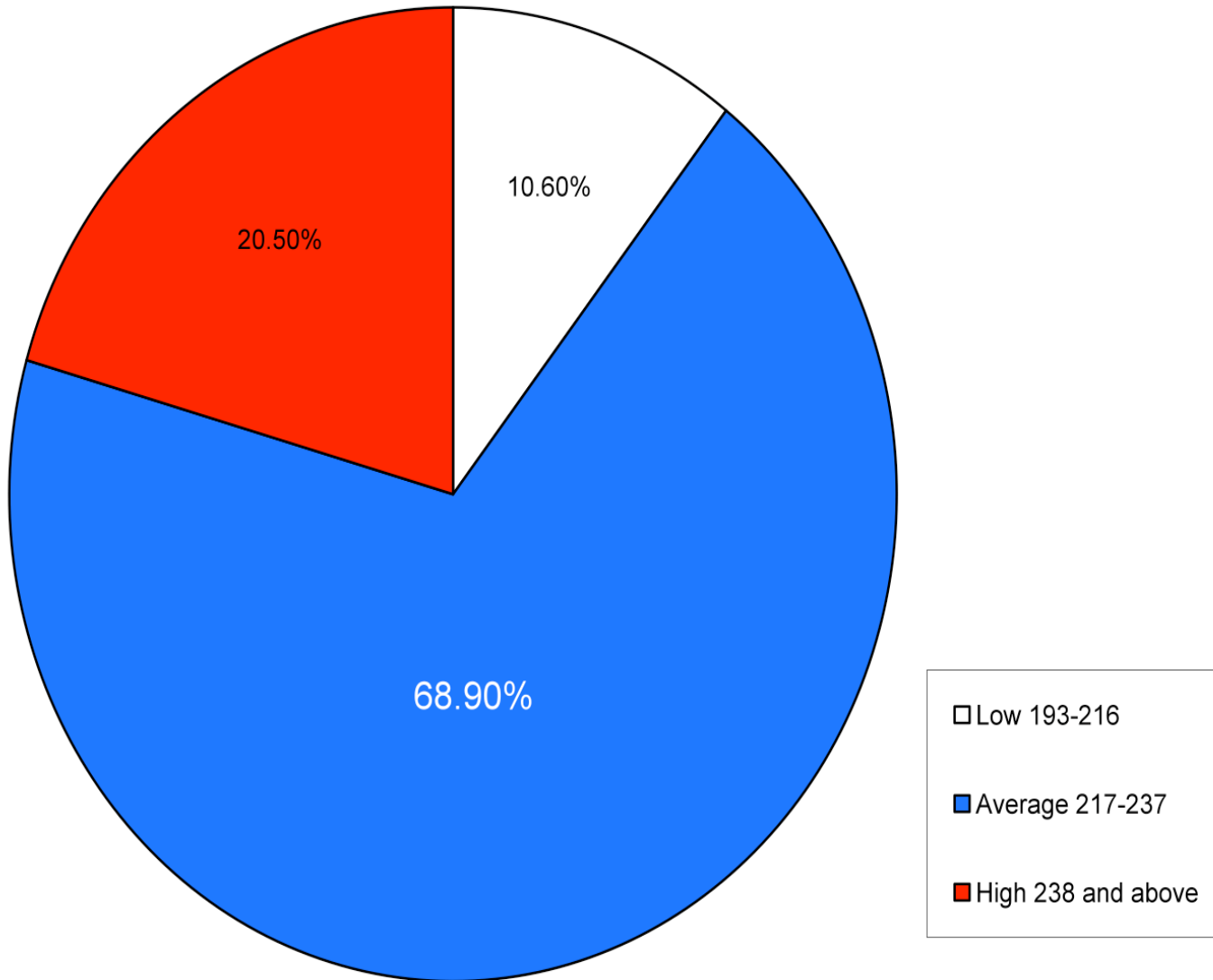


□ Low 193-216

■ Average 217-237

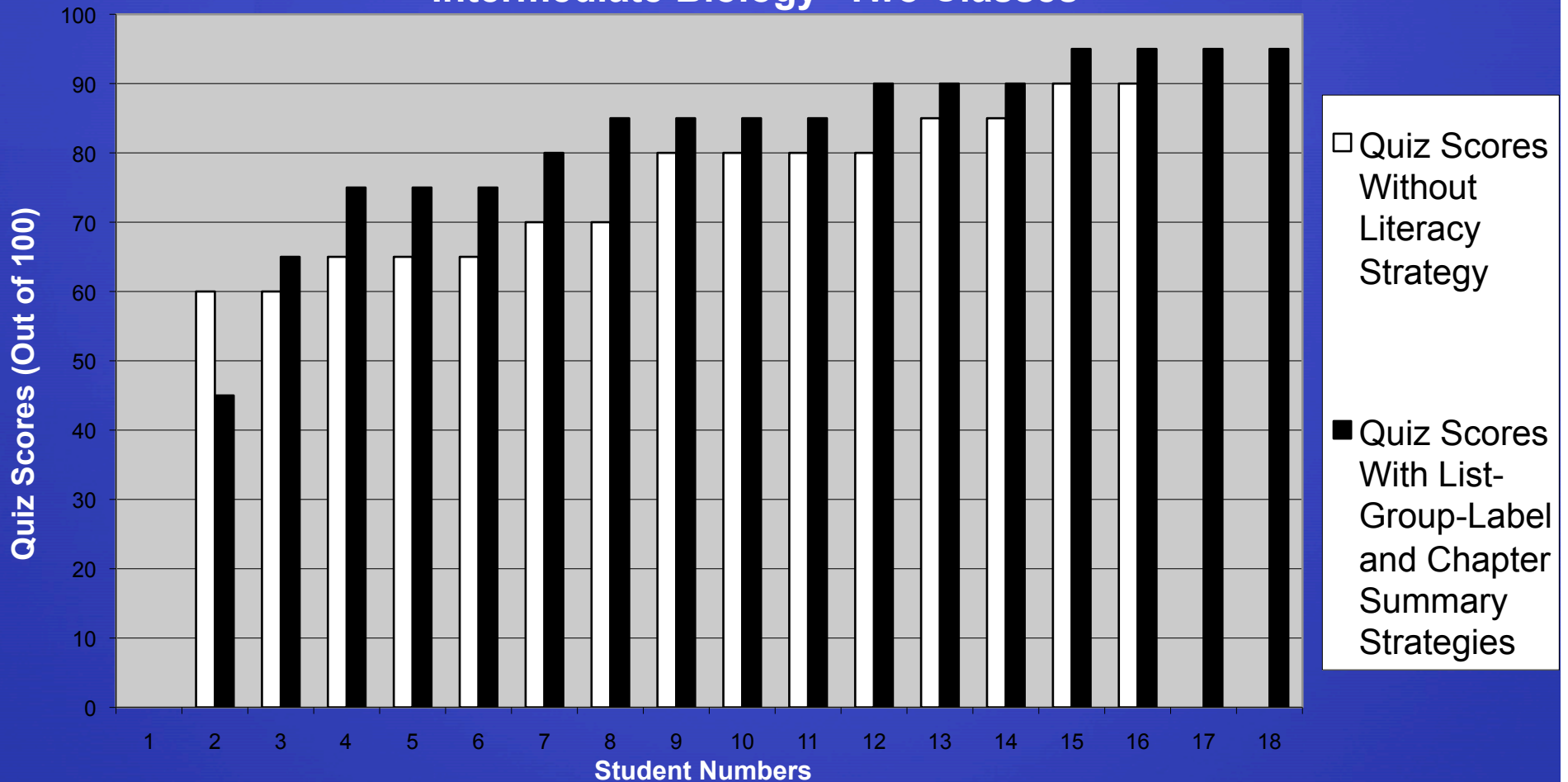
■ High 238 and above

Oak Hill High School Class of 2009
Spring 2007 NWEA Reading Comprehension
Percentages of RIT Student Scores



Data

Animal Kingdom Quiz Scores
Intermediate Biology--Two Classes



Maine Course Pathways Syllabus Project

- **We were approaching the 10 year review for accreditation by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges**
- **We became aware of the syllabus pilot project to address Maine Learning Results pathways to success and accountability**
- **The Advanced Placement course audit process was just completed**
- **We were moving toward one college and career ready level of instruction with a guaranteed curriculum**

What Did We Learn

- **The development process is deeper than putting pen to paper**
- **This creates a real opportunity for school change**
- **Growth and intellectual change among faculty took place through departmental discussions and personal reflection of practice**
- **Decisions about the syllabus needed to be made in advance by our school, departments, and teachers**

The Syllabus

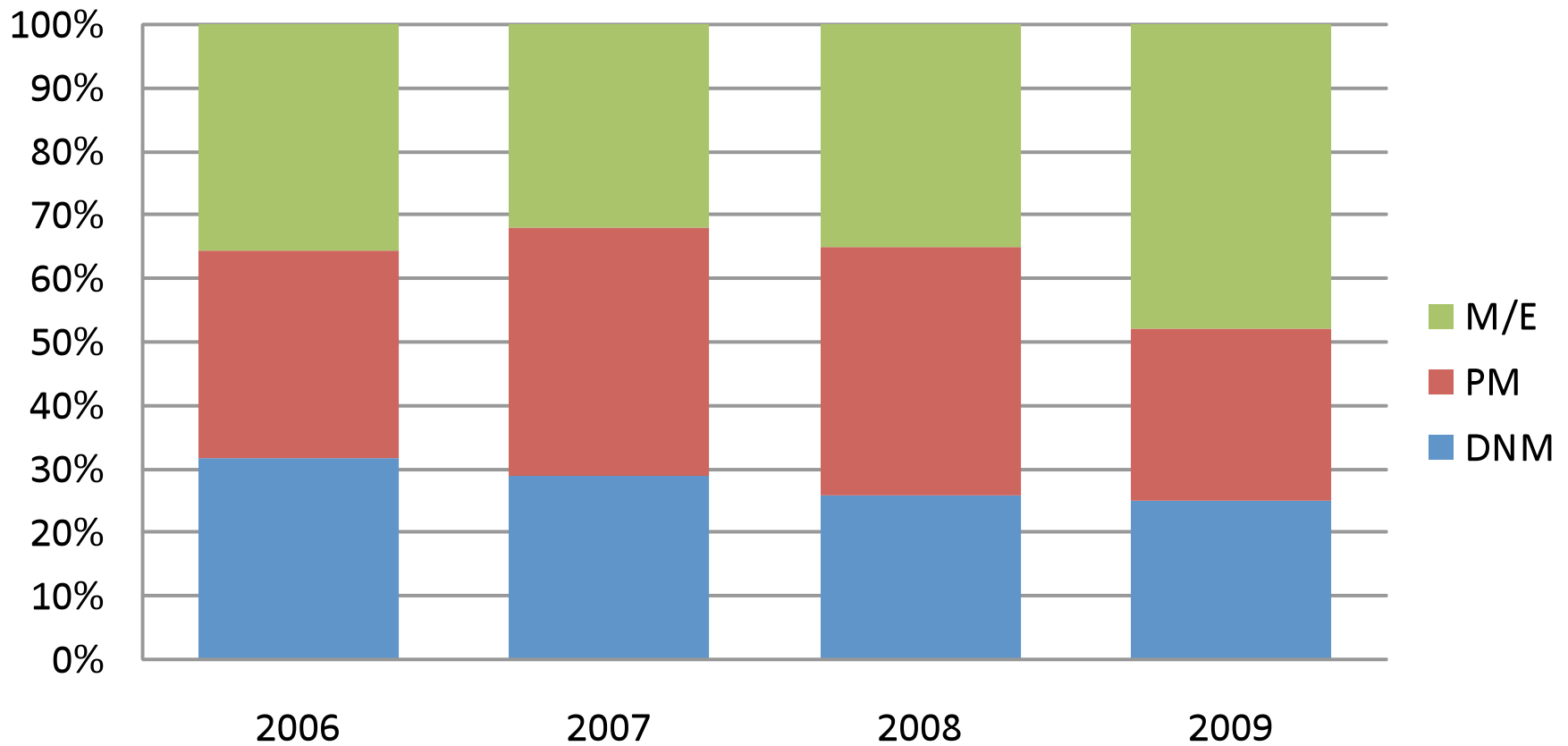
- Commitment at the Management Team level to the development of syllabi as the only curriculum documents
- The new syllabus model was inclusive of all the elements of the existing written curriculum
- Commitment to include MLR's, Literacy Strategies, Habits of Mind, and Oak Hill Mission and Expectations for Student Learning
- Create one syllabus – as syllabus of record – all teachers of that course agree to teach from that document

Grouping Practices

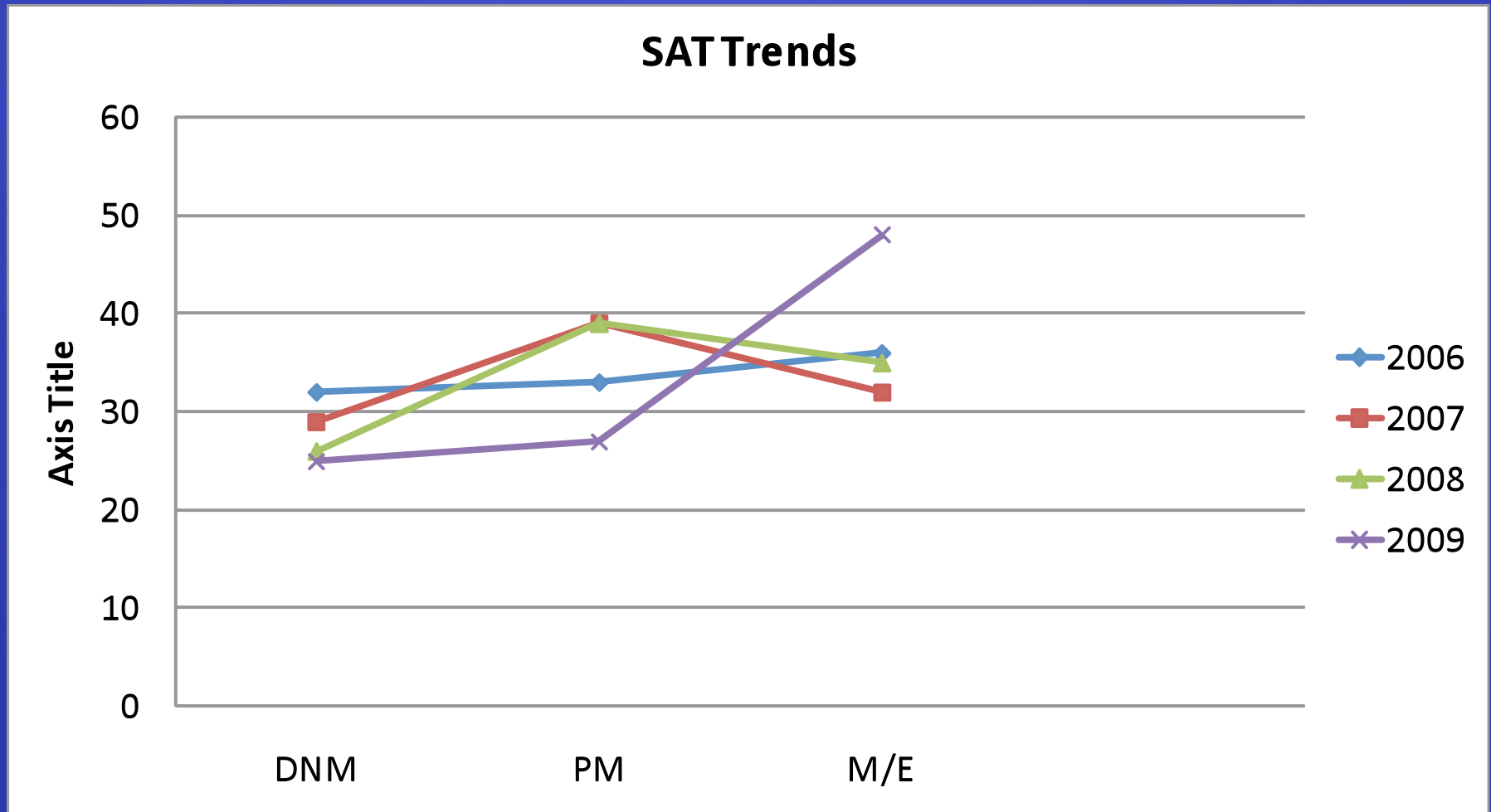
- **Have one college and career ready level of instruction with open access to Advanced Placement**
- **Support learners with literacy strategies, differentiation, and common rubrics to measure expectations for student learning**
- **Support learners with in classroom Ed. Techs. when needed**
- **Vertically align curriculum**

SAT Reading Scores 2006-2009

SAT Reading Scores 2006-2009



SAT Reading Score Trend Data



MHSA COMPARISONS

2008 - 2009

- READING

- WHOLE SCHOOL

● 2008	NO. TESTED	NO. PROFICIENT	PERCENTAGE
●	122	44	36%
● 2009	NO. TESTED	NO. PROFICIENT	PERCENTAGE
●	113	56	50%

- ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED

● 2008	NO. TESTED	NO. PROFICIENT	PERCENTAGE
●	34	9	26%
● 2009	NO. TESTED	NO. PROFICIENT	PERCENTAGE
●	36	16	44%

MHSA COMPARISONS CONT

- MATH

- WHOLE SCHOOL

● 2008	NO. TESTED	NO. PROFICIENT	PERCENTAGE
●	123	42	34%
● 2009	NO. TESTED	NO. PROFICIENT	PERCENTAGE
●	113	51	45%

- ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED

● 2008	NO. TESTED	NO. PROFICIENT	PERCENTAGE
●	34	6	18%
● 2009	NO. TESTED	NO. PROFICIENT	PERCENTAGE
●	36	11	31%

MHSA COMPARISONS CONT

- SPECIAL EDUCATION

- 2008 NO. TESTED NO. PROFICIENT
PERCENTAGE

- 14 1 7%

- 2009 NO. TESTED NO. PROFICIENT
PERCENTAGE

- 11 3 27%

Reform

- ❑ Open Access AP Classes (9)**
- ❑ Eliminated Levels in All Areas but Math**
- ❑ EPIC Common Syllabus Project through Maine Course Pathways**

Scalable Initiatives

- ✓ **Literacy Strategy Development and Implementation**
 - **Teacher-led Critical Friends Groups**
 - **Coaching Model with Consultant**
 - **Administrative Support for a Professional Development Plan**
- ✓ **Common Curriculum, Assessments, and School-wide Rubrics**

The Future

- ✧ **Sustain Work Done with Literacy Initiative**
- ✧ **Transition from Critical Friends Groups to Professional Learning Communities**
- ✧ **Differentiated Instruction**

Thank You!

**“It is not the strongest of
the species that survives,
nor the most intelligent,
but the one most
responsive to change”**

-Charles Darwin