



Windy Hill Middle School

SNAPSHOT FROM THE FIELD

“WHMS ranked first in their district in both English language arts and mathematics after implementing a personalized learning system.”



DEMOGRAPHICS

- 1,337 Students
- 57% Free and reduced lunch
- 7% Limited English proficient
- 18% Special education
- 42% Caucasian
- 13% African American
- 36% Hispanic
- 9% Other

Windy Hill Middle School is part of the Lake County School District. Located in Clermont, Florida, the school serves both rural and suburban communities.

CHALLENGE

With a school mission to “Promote the love of learning through a partnership with the students, parents, teachers, and the community, for success in the 21st century,” Windy Hill Middle School’s (WHMS) goal is to employ instructional strategies that align with the changing demographics of society as well as the technological needs of millennial students.

In order to best support their mission and provide effective differentiated instruction in a technology-rich world, the school decided to implement a personalized learning approach. By adjusting the pace and approach of instruction, school leaders felt they could best meet individual student needs and promote greater levels of success.

IMPLEMENTATION

WHMS began working with the Reinventing Schools division of Marzano Research in 2014 to prepare for pilot implementation of personalized learning for the 2015–16 school year. School leaders wanted all teachers to understand the philosophy and approach of personalized learning and to start slowly with invested teachers in pilot classrooms. To prepare for the launch of the pilot and the development of a four-year rollout plan, the staff visited other districts already implementing personalized learning and used the lessons learned—including starting small with volunteer teachers—to shape the school’s plan.

Marzano Research provided professional development to the initial cohort of teachers to build a common understanding of personalized learning. Marzano Research experts then provided in-depth professional development and coaching to the pilot classroom teachers on topics related to school and classroom culture and specific strategies designed to support student agency. Teachers learned how to work with students to develop classroom vision statements, codes of cooperation that define how students work together to achieve goals, and

standard operating procedures (SOPs) that serve as critical classroom management tools in a personalized learning environment. Students in the pilot classrooms began receiving standards-based instruction and also had the opportunity to develop important skills such as pacing, collaboration, tracking, initiative, and work ethic.

In the first year of implementation, nearly half of the teachers changed the culture of their classrooms to be more student-centered. Moving into the 2016–17 school year, teachers focused on developing standards-based units that incorporated student voice and choice and provided the foundation for developing individualized learning paths.

Work in year three will focus on learner profiles and competency-based progressions to assess mastery of the standards. In year four, WHMS will focus on establishing a flexible learning environment that incorporates learning opportunities, such as internships, beyond the classroom or school.



Having the feedback from expert consultants and being able to gauge the Marzano elements and witness how personalized learning—when implemented across the board—covers each element in unique and innovative ways, has been very beneficial.”

—Reshonda Scott, eighth-grade ELA teacher

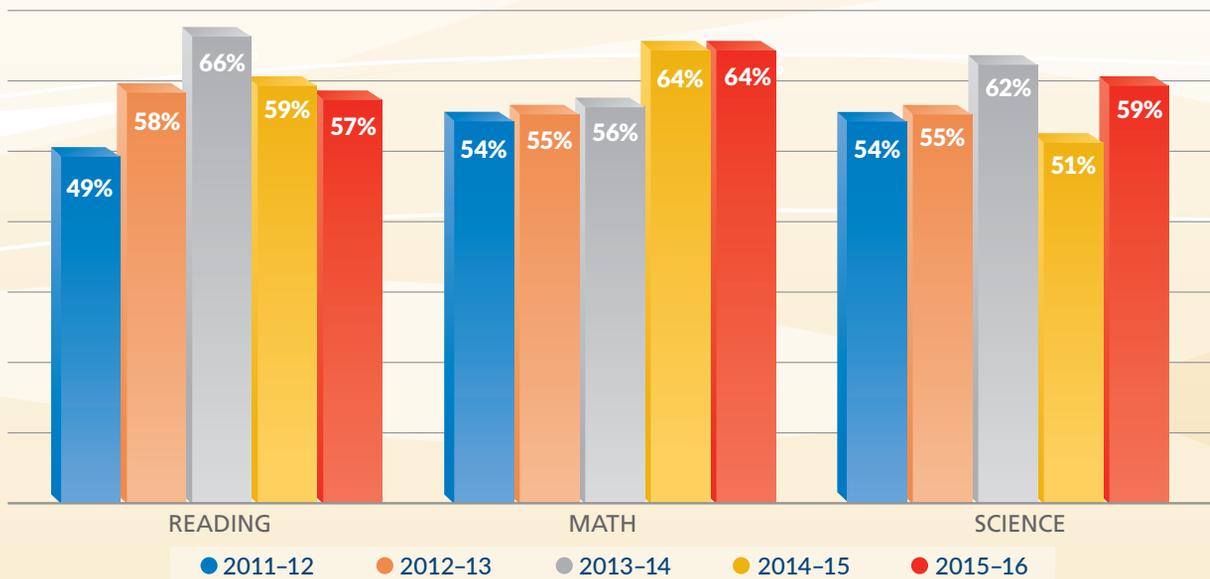
RESULTS

After implementing personalized learning strategies, WHMS saw improvements in student achievement on the Florida Standards Assessments (FSA), increased teacher collaboration, enhanced student engagement, and improved stakeholder communications.

At the end of the 2015–16 school year, WHMS ranked as follows:

- 8th-Grade ELA: 1st in the district: 12 points above the county and 7 points above the state
- 7th-Grade ELA: 1st in the district: 8 points above the county and 1 point above the state
- 6th-Grade ELA: 2nd in the district: 10 points above the county and 5 points above the state
- 8th-Grade Math: 1st in the district: 20 points above the county and 10 points above the state
- 7th-Grade Math: 2nd in the district: 4 points above the county and 3 points above the state
- 6th-Grade Math: 2nd in the district: 7 points above the county and 6 points above the state
- Algebra: 1st in the district: 173 students tested: 97% pass rate

WINDY HILL MIDDLE SCHOOL Student Achievement Historical Data 2011–2016



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