

CASE STUDY



Student engagement and teacher support drive positive math results school-wide

At **BUCKMAN HEIGHTS ELEMENTARY**, teachers and school leaders seek to create intellectually stimulating environments that foster children’s natural curiosities and accept and celebrate all learners. When it came to teaching math, this school-wide goal led Buckman Heights to Zearn Math, a top-rated K–5 math curriculum focused on differentiation and engagement. The school has since experienced significant math achievement gains, and they’ve seen students’ enjoyment of math increase. From 2017 to 2018, the percentage of Buckman Heights students achieving proficiency on the NY State Math Assessment increased for all grade levels, with double-digit increases in 3rd and 4th grade. →

Buckman Heights Elementary

- Greece, New York
- 333 3rd-5th Grade Students
- 46% Free/Reduced Lunch
- 56% Caucasian, 17% Hispanic, 14% African-American

Increase in math proficiency across all grades

Percentage of students achieving proficiency (Levels 3 and 4) on the NY State Math Assessment

Source: 2017 and 2018 NY State Grades 3–8 Mathematics Assessment Data



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- RACHEL PIETROWSKI, 3RD GRADE TEACHER



ZEARN MATH REPORTS

Real-time data and insights provide visibility into student learning

TEACHER REPORTS

Pace

Keep students on track each week to meet digital lesson goals

Progress

Monitor progress through the curriculum to help students finish grade-level content

Tower Alerts

Identify specific areas of student struggle to address misconceptions

Sprint Alerts

Check in on procedural fluency to help prepare students for upcoming content

ADMIN REPORTS

School Goals

Track school, grade, and classroom level pace and progress

Completion Tracking

Monitor school-wide progress through grade-level content

Student Exports

Create custom analytics

Building a love of learning math for all students

Students at Buckman Heights are learning math deeply—and having fun along the way. Buckman Heights teachers have noticed that the daily mix of instructional formats built into the Zearn Math classroom model has had a real impact on students' level of engagement. Students now split their math time between Small Group Lessons, where they model math with concrete manipulatives and engage in math discussion, and self-paced learning in Independent Digital Lessons with interactive videos and digital manipulatives. "With Zearn, my students feel more in charge of their learning and are engaged the entire math block. They always seem to enjoy math," said Rachel Pietrowski, a 3rd grade teacher. Lynn Girolamo, a district-level Math Blended Learning Coach, has seen similar positive trends in other Buckman Heights classrooms and district elementary schools. "The Zearn Math digital lessons are so engaging that our kids really have fun with them as they learn," she explained. "And it's not just the digital lessons helping us move mountains for our students. It's the powerful combination of independent student learning and live teaching."

Differentiating instruction using reports and flex time

In addition to increasing student engagement, teaching with Zearn Math has allowed Buckman Heights teachers to better tailor math instruction to respond to the needs of individual learners. The Zearn Math model embeds a Flex Day into each week of instruction, which provides teachers with dedicated time to personalize learning for each student. At Buckman Heights, teachers use this time to teach mini-lessons that reinforce key math ideas, give students a chance to catch up on weekly Independent Digital Lessons, and play fun and enriching math games. Teachers plan for this flexible math block using the data on student pace, progress, and areas of struggle found in their Zearn Math Teacher Reports. "We have gotten really good at differentiating our math instruction with the help of Zearn," Pietrowski remarked. "We are able to use the Zearn Reports data to create groups based on need and plan our math workshop time. It's such a nice time for me to be able to conference with students."

Creating communities to support teachers

As teachers across Buckman Heights brought Zearn Math into their classrooms, community support was crucial to making the shift a success. For many teachers, using Zearn Math meant teaching in a small group rotational format for the first time and helping their students become familiar with a new way of learning. “My 3rd grade team is a wonderful resource,” Pietrowski shared. “Especially when we first began using Zearn Math, we always discussed what was going well and what wasn’t working. We could then brainstorm ways together to improve our math block.” Teacher initiative and assistance from school and district administrators and coaches have helped create a supportive culture at Buckman Heights. Educators also use Zearn’s online teacher community to tap into a national network of thousands of teachers. Girolamo noted, “It can be daunting to go it alone with blended learning and instructional technology. We’ve focused on building a professional learning community that all of our teachers can look to for inspiration and support.”

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- LYNN GIROLAMO,
GREECE CENTRAL DISTRICT MATH
BLENDED LEARNING COACH



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