

# Buckingham County School District

BUCKINGHAM PRIMARY, DILLWYN PRIMARY AND  
GOLD HILL ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS  
BUCKINGHAM, VIRGINIA

## DISTRICT PROFILE

**3,499 STUDENTS, GRADES PRE-K - 12**  
58% White  
40% African-American  
1% Hispanic  
1% Asian and American Indian

## PLATO ACHIEVE NOW™ IMPLEMENTATION

- Classroom/Family Homework Model
- 100% Home Deployment
- First Grade Title I, Began 2001
- Language Arts focus

## RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS)  
Achieve Now Progress Test

## RESEARCH TIME FRAME

2002-03 School Year

### FIRST GRADE STUDENTS DEMONSTRATE OVERALL GROWTH IN READING/LANGUAGE ARTS

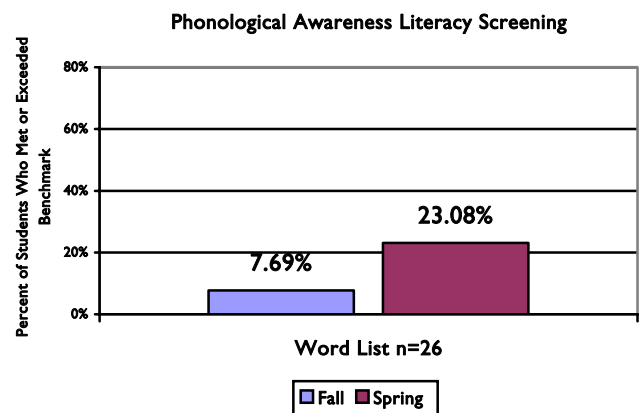
DURING THE 2002-03 SCHOOL YEAR, FIRST GRADE STUDENTS DEMONSTRATED OVERALL GROWTH IN READING/LANGUAGE ARTS, PARTICULARLY IN THE AREAS OF PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS, VOCABULARY COMPREHENSION, AND LISTENING COMPREHENSION. A COMPARISON OF FALL AND SPRING SCORES ON THE PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS LITERACY SCREENING (PALS) SHOWED AN INCREASE IN THE PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS WHO MET OR EXCEEDED THE WORD LIST, SPELLING, AND SUMMED SCORE BENCHMARKS. SPECIFICALLY, IN THE FALL, 7.69% OF STUDENTS MET OR EXCEEDED THE WORD LIST BENCHMARK, WHEREAS, 23.08% OF STUDENTS MET OR EXCEEDED THE BENCHMARK BY SPRING. IN SPELLING, 38.46% OF STUDENTS MET OR EXCEEDED THE BENCHMARK IN THE FALL WHILE 61.54% OF STUDENTS MET OR EXCEEDED THE BENCHMARK BY SPRING. ADDITIONALLY, 46.15% OF STUDENTS USING PLATO ACHIEVE NOW™ MET OR EXCEEDED THE SPRING LANGUAGE ARTS SUMMED SCORE BENCHMARK COMPARED TO 15.38% OF STUDENTS WHO MET OR EXCEEDED THE FALL LANGUAGE ARTS SUMMED SCORE BENCHMARK.

A COMPARISON OF PRE- AND POST- TEST SCORES ON THE ACHIEVE NOW PROGRESS TEST SHOWED THAT STUDENTS USING PLATO ACHIEVE NOW MADE AN AVERAGE GAIN OF 3.69 (p=.530) PERCENTAGE POINTS IN PHONICS, DECODING, AND WORD ANALYSIS SKILLS. ADDITIONALLY, THE STUDENTS POSTED AVERAGE GAINS OF 18.10 (p=.002) PERCENTAGE POINTS IN VOCABULARY COMPREHENSION AND 23.03 (p=.001) PERCENTAGE POINTS IN LISTENING COMPREHENSION. THE STUDENTS POSTED AN AVERAGE PERCENTAGE POINT LOSS OF 0.95 (p=.890) IN READING COMPREHENSION. NEVERTHELESS, IN TOTAL READING/LANGUAGE ARTS, THE STUDENTS REVEALED AN AVERAGE PERCENTAGE POINT GAIN OF 8.49 (p=.024).

BUCKINGHAM COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS PURCHASED PLATO ACHIEVE NOW™ WITH TITLE I FUNDS AND BEGAN IMPLEMENTING THE PROGRAM IN THREE ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS IN FALL 2001. THE GOAL OF THE PROGRAM WAS TO INCREASE PHONEMIC AWARENESS, READING COMPREHENSION AND VOCABULARY. THE IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION DESIGN TARGETED FIRST GRADE TITLE I STUDENTS PERFORMING IN THE LOWEST QUARTILE AT THE END OF KINDERGARTEN. STUDENTS USED PLATO ACHIEVE NOW ONCE A WEEK IN THE PALS TUTORING PROGRAM. STUDENTS WERE ASSIGNED ONE ACHIEVE NOW ADVENTURE® CD PER TWO-WEEK PERIOD FOR HOME USE. ASSESSMENT OF STUDENTS USING THE PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS LITERACY SCREENING AND ACHIEVE NOW PROGRESS TESTS TOOK PLACE IN SEPTEMBER 2002 AND MAY 2003.

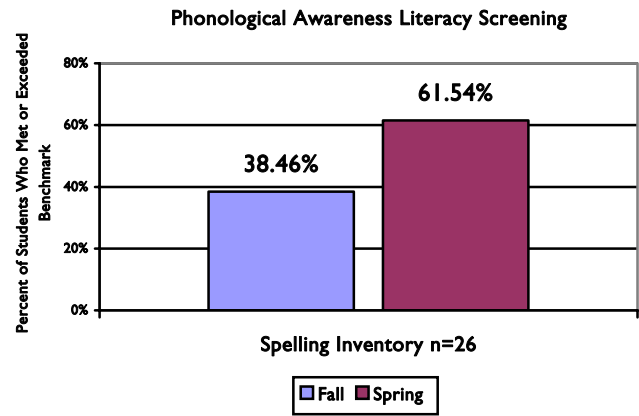
## Growth demonstrated by first grade students in Word List category

By spring, 23.08% of first grade students using PLATO Achieve Now met or exceeded the Word List benchmark compared to 7.69% who met or exceeded the fall PALS Word List benchmark.



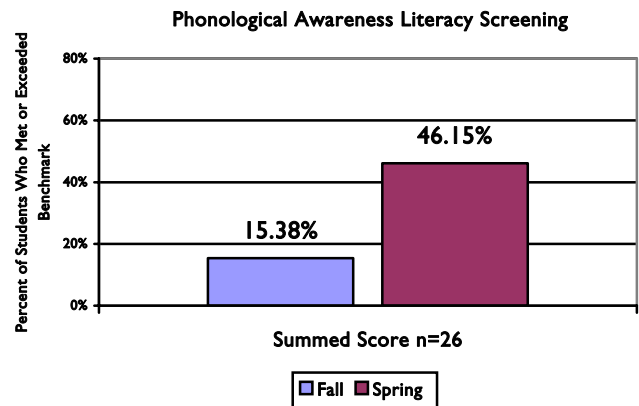
## Gains posted by first grade students in Spelling

By spring, 61.54% of first grade students using PLATO Achieve Now met or exceeded the Spelling Inventory benchmark compared to 38.46% who met or exceeded the fall PALS Spelling Inventory benchmark.



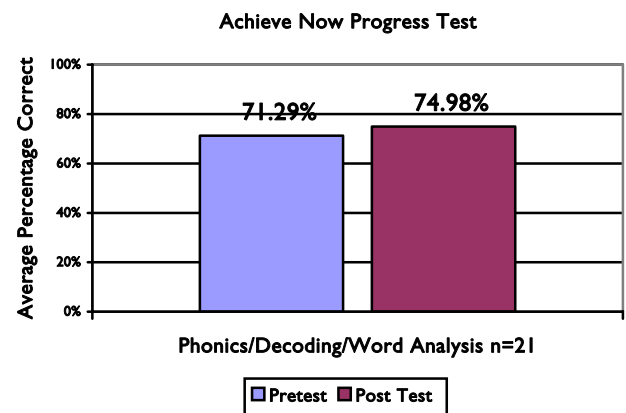
## Language Arts Summed Score Benchmark met by first grade students

By spring, 46.15% of first grade students using PLATO Achieve Now met or exceeded the Language Arts Summed Score benchmark on the Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS). PALS pretest scores reveal that 15.38% of students met or exceeded the fall Summed Score benchmark.



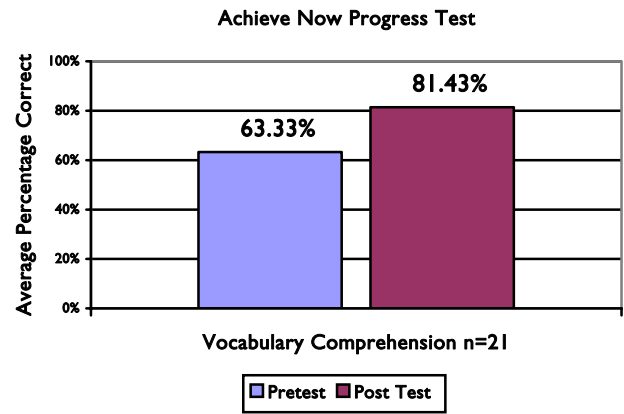
## First grade students showed progress in Phonics, Decoding, and Word Analysis skills

On the Achieve Now Progress Test, first grade students using PLATO Achieve Now demonstrated an average gain of 3.69 percentage points in the areas of Phonics, Decoding, and Word Analysis when fall and spring scores were compared. The result is not statistically significant.



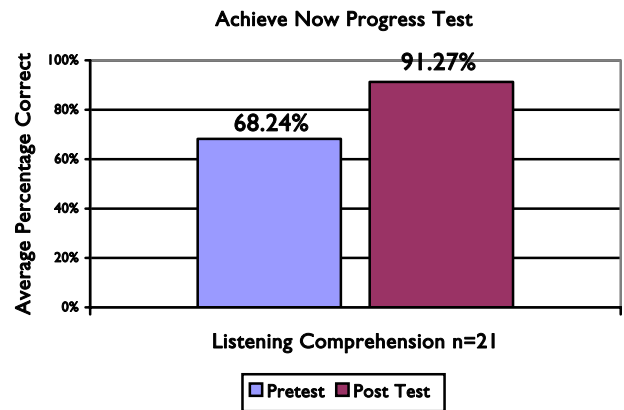
## Gains posted in Vocabulary Comprehension

On the Achieve Now Progress Test, first grade students using PLATO Achieve Now demonstrated an average gain of 18.10 percentage points in Vocabulary Comprehension when fall and spring scores were compared. The gain is statistically significant.



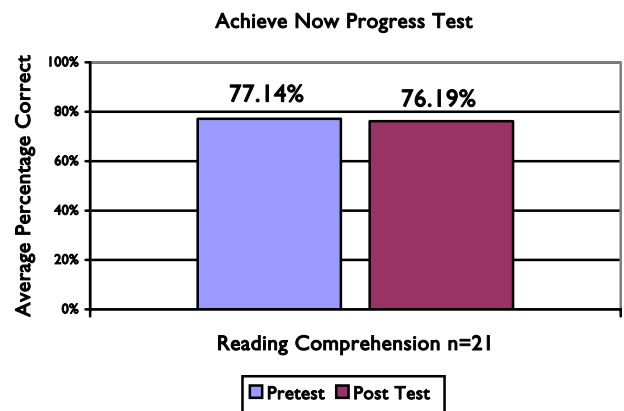
## First grade students improved Listening Comprehension

On the Achieve Now Progress Test, first grade students using PLATO Achieve Now demonstrated an average gain of 23.03 percentage points in Listening Comprehension when fall and spring scores were compared. The gain is statistically significant.



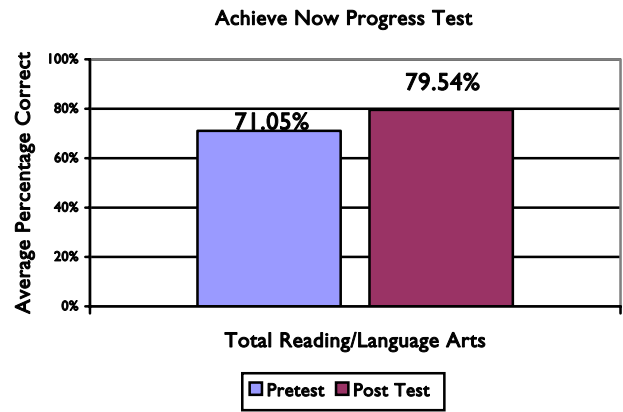
## First grade students witnessed a slight decline in Reading Comprehension

On the Achieve Now Progress Test, first grade students using PLATO Achieve Now demonstrated an average loss of 0.95 percentage point in Reading Comprehension when fall and spring scores were compared. The loss is not statistically significant.



## First grade students demonstrated overall growth in Total Reading/Language Arts

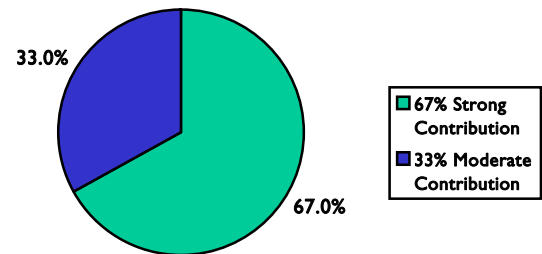
Overall, first grade students using PLATO Achieve Now demonstrated an average gain of 8.49 percentage points in Total Reading/Language Arts when fall and spring scores were compared on the Achieve Now Progress Test. The gain is statistically significant.



## Families noted PLATO Achieve Now as a moderate to strong contributor to their child's reading performance

On the Achieve Now family survey conducted at the end of the school year, 100% of families at Dillwyn Primary School reported that they felt PLATO Achieve Now made a moderate to strong contribution to their child's performance in reading.

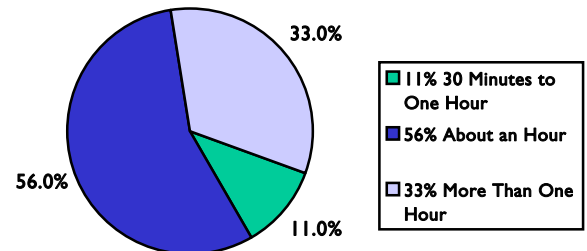
FAMILIES' OPINION ABOUT PLATO ACHIEVE NOW AS A CONTRIBUTOR TO THEIR CHILD'S READING PERFORMANCE



## Families spent time working with their child on PLATO Achieve Now

At home, 100% of Dillwyn Primary School families reported they averaged thirty minutes or more per day working with their child on PLATO Achieve Now. Thirty-three percent of families reported working with their child for more than one hour per day, 56% reported working with their child for about one hour, while 11% reported working thirty minutes to one hour per day on PLATO Achieve Now.

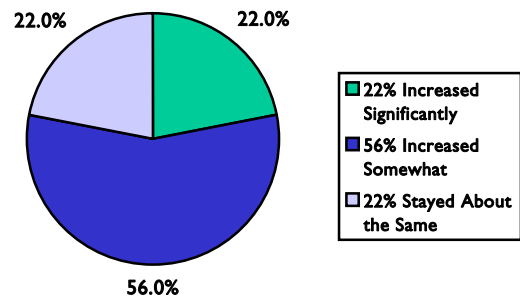
AVERAGE TIME PER DAY FAMILIES SPENT WORKING WITH THEIR CHILD ON PLATO ACHIEVE NOW



## Families noted increased student motivation

At home, Dillwyn Primary School families witnessed an improvement in their children's attitude about school and learning. On the PLATO Achieve Now survey conducted at the end of the school year, 78% of families felt their child's interest and motivation toward school increased as a result of working with PLATO Achieve Now.

PLATO ACHIEVE NOW'S IMPACT ON STUDENT MOTIVATION-FAMILY'S VIEW



## Buckingham County School District Background

Buckingham County School District is located in rural central Virginia and has one high school, one middle school, two primary schools, and two elementary schools. School system goals are as follows: "to set high expectations for all students to achieve their potential, to provide students with individualized educational experiences that maximize abilities, to create a safe secure environment in each school and facility, to create opportunities for all parents for meaningful involvement in the schools, and to foster an environment that facilitates open, honest and clear communication within the system and in the broader community."

Buckingham Primary, Dillwyn Primary, and Gold Hill Elementary, all Buckingham County Title I elementary schools, began implementing the standards-based PLATO Achieve Now™ curriculum in September 2001 with first grade students chosen to participate in the PALS tutoring program. Targeted students met with PALS tutors daily for language arts instruction. In the PALS classroom, the PLATO Achieve Now implementation enhanced the ability of the teacher to integrate technology, to provide small group instruction, and to foster independent growth in a learning center. In the home, the implementation helped to foster the home-school connection. In addition to the PLATO Achieve Now program, the schools use The PLATO Network® and PLATO Reading Center™ so families and students have access to interactive language arts and mathematics learning activities, as well as home learning resources.

Professional development was provided throughout the year, and included analysis of student data and alignment of program materials to student needs. The PALS coordinator and PALS tutors used PLATO Achieve Now to reinforce curriculum content in the tutoring classroom and at home. Students took home one language arts Achieve Now Adventures® CD every two weeks and were encouraged to explore the learning activities contained on that CD at least three times per week. In support of Buckingham County's commitment to family involvement, three family nights were held during the 2002-03 school year to provide time for parents and students to interact with Achieve Now programs. Opportunities were also provided to familiarize families with the goals of the PLATO Achieve Now program as well as to celebrate student successes.

Results of the implementation were measured by spring and fall administrations of the Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening, Achieve Now Progress Tests, teacher surveys, and family surveys. Future plans for the PLATO Achieve Now program include continuing to providing support to PALS tutors in aligning program materials to individual needs, modeling classroom lessons, expanding use of PLATO Achieve Now resources, and integrating the program with The PLATO Network in the PALS classroom. Through PLATO, access to technology has been made available in an equitable manner for all Title I first grade students. Furthermore, the PLATO Achieve Now program involved families in their children's education, linked families to the school, and

motivated student learning at school and at home.



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