



MARZANO
HIGH
RELIABILITY
SCHOOLS
NETWORK

Success Story



Flynn teachers demonstrate innovation in action

John E. Flynn A Marzano Academy

WESTMINSTER, COLORADO

This school surpassed its goal for state growth expectations in literacy and math for students enrolled in the free and reduced meal program while developing a safe, supportive environment for staff and students.



MARZANO Resources

John E. Flynn A Marzano Academy

WESTMINSTER, COLORADO



DEMOGRAPHICS

- › 296 Students
- › 72% Economically disadvantaged
- › 13% Special education
- › 54% Male
- › 46% Female
- › 60% Hispanic/Latino
- › 29% White
- › 9% Asian
- › 2.7% Two or more races
- › 1% American Indian
- › 1% African American

A Colorado innovation school in Westminster Public Schools, John E. Flynn A Marzano Academy welcomes all students in grades preK–8 and serves as an instructional laboratory for the district. Flynn is the first school in the United States to achieve Level 5 certification in the High Reliability Schools (HRS) Network.



► CHALLENGE

John E. Flynn A Marzano Academy lives up to its title as an innovation school. It is **designed around Dr. Robert J. Marzano’s vision of personalized education and the HRS framework**. The school has developed and continues to refine the processes and practices of competency-based education (CBE), a system in which students progress to the next level based on demonstration of proficiency rather than age or the end of a school year. As former principal of this school within an established CBE district, Dr. Brian Kosena knew the endgame he wanted to achieve. He just had to instill the systems and processes that would make his staff—and, ultimately, his students—successful.

While Flynn is an innovation school, it’s important to note that it operates as a local community school that welcomes all students.



The five levels of High Reliability Schools

► IMPLEMENTATION

Dr. Kosena designed his innovation plan based on the 16 School Level Indicators outlined in the Marzano Academies model. “The indicators are a precise scope and sequence of research-supported components which lead to a school becoming a high-reliability organization.”*

To establish a plan for success, Dr. Kosena used the High Reliability Schools framework. “I introduced the HRS framework with the staff as an improvement process for our school,” shared Kosena. “I framed it as something I was going to use as a way to better serve the teachers, the students, and the entire school community.”

As they tackled HRS Levels 1 (Safe, Supportive, and Collaborative Culture) and 2 (Effective Teaching in Every Classroom), the early work placed the onus on Kosena to figure out how he could best support his staff for success. Digging into the data presented new challenges and, at times, got really personal.

“As a leader, you have to be willing to look inward, face what this process reveals, and have hard conversations with yourself,” reflected Kosena.

At HRS Level 2, Kosena required every teacher to move through the High Reliability Teacher framework. This demanded the same self-reflection and

* <https://marzanoacademies.org/interventions-and-initiatives/slides>



The HRS process is the best PD a principal can have on leadership. It is a reflective process that research says is one of the best strategies for school improvement.”

—Dr. Jeni Gotto, chief academic officer, Westminster Public Schools

openness to change that he had modeled from the start. “It’s easy to ask teachers to turn the mirror on themselves if you’re already doing it,” he explained.

Having an instructional model in place provided a common language for staff, and the School Level Indicators were easily customized to this shared language at Flynn. The systems and processes of HRS made it clear to see whether their instructional model was being effectively practiced. This removed emotion from performance assessments, and responses became data driven. “We became open to change and began to see vulnerability as a strength at Flynn,” said Kosena.

HRS Level 3, Guaranteed and Viable Curriculum, is where Kosena and his staff took a hard look at what the external data was saying about their transformative work. This presented its own set of challenges. The external measure really forced them to connect their HRS work with their end goal of student success. The data was sometimes hard to face, which led to some tough goal setting. In the end, it moved Flynn to new levels of staff and student performance.

Levels 4 and 5, Standards-Referenced Reporting and Competency-Based Education, were already in place districtwide, thanks to district leadership and an unwavering commitment to establish Westminster Public Schools as a competency-based system. The early work allowed Flynn to embrace the Marzano Academy and HRS trajectory from day one.

The district relied on Empower Learning as their learning management system, which allowed Kosena to look at tighter indicators to ensure consistent application across all classrooms and content areas. Scheduling was an intricate part of the work at Flynn, as Kosena and his staff created a schedule that allowed students to transition to the appropriate level of instruction for each content area.

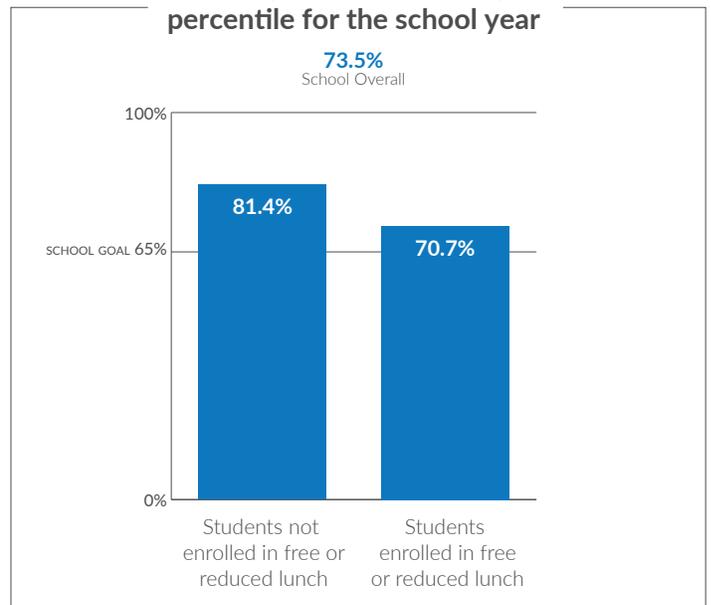
► RESULTS

The John E. Flynn school community celebrates students who level up throughout the year. Chief academic officer Dr. Jeni Gotto recalled one such Level Up Assembly occurring when visitors happened to be in the building. “Students stopped visitors in the lunch line to tell them how excited they were to be moving a level. This is intrinsic motivation, moving kids past that traditional thinking that nothing magical can happen until that last day of school.”

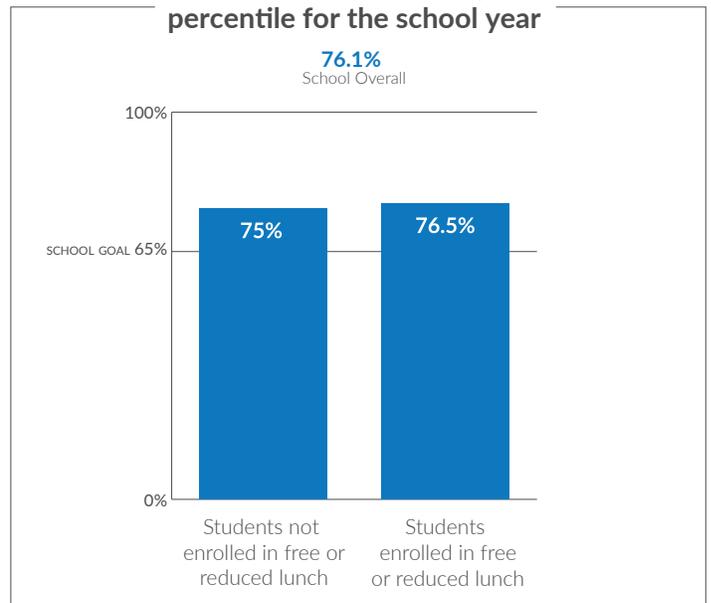
One of many significant positive outcomes since instilling the HRS process in the daily work of staff was that 70.7% of students enrolled in the free and reduced lunch program met or exceeded the state of Colorado’s annual growth expectation in literacy, and 76.5% of this student population met or exceeded state expectations in math. This surpassed Flynn’s goal of 65% for the school year.

“One evolution in my understanding is that this is a continuous improvement process and not a list of tasks to check off once you’re done,” said Dr. Kosena. “You’re always looking at what’s being implemented, assessing your success, and adjusting. That’s the power of the HRS framework. It’s such a driving force for continuous improvement, and it can work for any school, regardless of status—from a turnaround school to one that is already high performing.”

Star Reading current student growth percentile for the school year



Star Math current student growth percentile for the school year



Transform teaching with research-based practice

Marzano Resources is dedicated to helping K–12 educators advance student achievement. Built on the foundation of Dr. Robert J. Marzano’s 50 years of education research, Marzano Resources supports teachers and administrators through customizable on-site professional development, educator events, virtual coaching, books, videos, and online courses. Our associates and authors are thought leaders in the field of education and deliver research-based guidance for all major areas of schooling, including curriculum development, instruction, assessment, student engagement, and personalized competency-based education.

Here are just a few ways we can help you achieve your goals—whether you’re teaching online or on-site:

Books & Videos

Browse our specialized K–12 resources to discover proven strategies on the most critical topics in education—from assessment and grading to competency-based education, technology, and student engagement.

Events

Explore our workshops and conferences to find your perfect fit. Our experts will help you maximize classroom engagement, assess student growth, foster a standards-based learning environment, and more.

PD Services

Bring Dr. Marzano and his associates to your school or district. Choose from on-site or virtual options to plan a dynamic one-day session or a series of trainings. Just tell us your goals, and we’ll tailor the experience for you and your team—or you can choose a carefully designed staff development option based on our most popular topics.

High Reliability Schools Certification

Be recognized as a High Reliability School. For schools and districts that have attained one or more levels of reliability, Marzano Resources offers formal certification to share with your community and stakeholders.

High Reliability Teacher Certification

Our multileveled High Reliability Teacher certification process recognizes the advancement of a teacher’s pedagogical skills and knowledge in three specific areas and four online courses. This program empowers educators to grow professionally in instruction, assessment, and feedback; improve student achievement; develop expertise; and expand career opportunities.

Critical Concepts

Analysts at Marzano Resources have identified, as objectively as possible, a focused set of learning progressions for each K–12 grade level in the content areas of English language arts (ELA), mathematics, and science. Maximize your instruction with this invaluable resource.

Avanti

Avanti is an online resource that blends relevant, timely professional development and customized professional learning video playlists with actionable strategies that teachers can use immediately. The platform features more than 250 expert videos, each just three to five minutes in length, that help teachers hone their craft in topic areas like student engagement, relationship building, direct instruction, learning goals, and assessment.

Global PD Teams

Empower your teams to best support student success. Global PD Teams is your one-stop digital resource for professional learning by renowned experts in preK–12 education. With one building-wide site license, every team member can access practical strategies and professional guidance that will strengthen their collaborative work to ensure high levels of learning for all.

Learn more
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