

CASE STUDY

# Newport News Public Schools



  
unique<sup>®</sup>  
learning system



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## Overview

Newport News Public Schools (NNPS) includes five early childhood centers, 24 elementary schools, seven middle schools, five high schools, and one middle/high combination school, as well as nine program sites in Newport News, VA. The district educates over 29,000 students and serves more than 4,000 students with disabilities.

**37**  
SCHOOLS

**29,000**  
STUDENTS

## The Challenge

Before implementing n2y's **Unique Learning System**, Newport News Public Schools did not have a curriculum for students with moderate to severe disabilities and autism. Teachers were left to create their own materials for lessons. "The challenge to develop lessons that provided exposure to the same information as their grade-level peers was difficult and time consuming for our teachers," said NNPS assistive technology coordinator Donna Waldman.

**4,000**  
STUDENTS WITH  
DISABILITIES

## Implementation

NNPS chose Unique Learning System for its dynamic, standards-based online curriculum designed to enable students to access the general education curriculum. District personnel involved in the search liked the fact that Unique Learning System is aligned with Virginia state standards and offers three levels of **differentiated instruction** to accommodate a diversity of learners.

The district initiated a one-year pilot program before fully implementing Unique Learning System. With approximately six subscriptions to use in select classrooms, NNPS chose several of its strongest special education teachers for the pilot. The teachers reported overwhelmingly positive results, so NNPS ultimately proceeded with full implementation of Unique Learning System and today uses it for all students identified with moderate to severe intellectual disabilities and in self-contained classes that service students with autism. The district now has been using Unique Learning System for more than 10 years and currently implements it in 39 classrooms.

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## Training and Professional Development

The district's assistive technology coordinator initially used n2y's online video tutorials and [archived webinars](#) to train teachers to use Unique Learning System. The district recently brought in trainers from n2y to provide in-person training to district teachers.

## Lessons Learned

NNPS offers the following recommendations for other districts considering a switch to Unique Learning System for their special education programs:

## Hold Mandatory Training

While NNPS provides training sessions on Unique Learning System, they are not mandatory for teachers to attend. NNPS has developed some alternative types of training to increase discussion and participation. Waldman said, "It is important to have teachers utilize the online webinars and how to videos provided by n2y and then engage in discussion via online Communities of Practice to ensure effective use of Unique Learning System district-wide."



## Utilize Teacher Trainers

Teachers who are more experienced and comfortable using Unique Learning System should lead training and demonstrations for their peers. Taking advantage of teachers' experience provides a powerful means to build support for the program and guides a better understanding of how to use Unique Learning System within the classroom, Waldman said.

## Provide Tiered Support and Enforce Fidelity

Make a distinction between the assistive technology and instructional teams. Give the assistive technology team responsibility for helping implement Unique Learning System with fidelity, and ensure teachers have the right resources to give their students access and solve any other technology issues. Finally, assign a separate team of administrators or others to ensure teachers are using the solution in their classrooms.



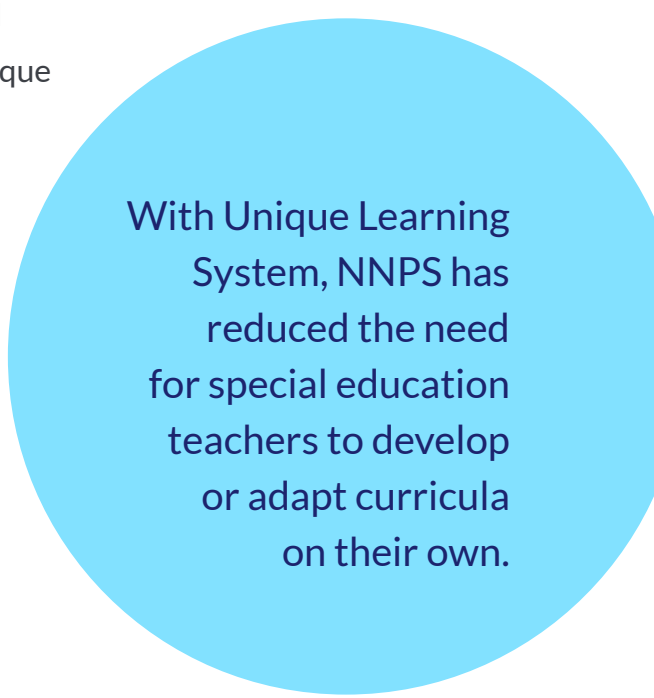
## Outcomes

With Unique Learning System, NNPS has seen increased student engagement in the classroom and a reduced need for special education teachers to develop or adapt curricula on their own. Teachers have become more proficient at using all the solution's tools and are especially enthusiastic about Unique Learning System's **Goals, Preferences and Skills (GPS)** data collection and student assessment component, which tracks student, classroom and program goals and helps teachers monitor what their students are learning.

## Administrator and Teacher Response

NNPS administrators and teachers have come to depend on Unique Learning System's GPS. Many building principals require their teachers to provide data on student progress, and teachers appreciate how easily Unique Learning System generates reports, enabling them to fulfill administrators' requests for data with the touch of a button. In addition to the GPS, NNPS staff say Unique Learning System's alignment with Virginia state standards and its three levels of differentiated instruction to accommodate a diversity of learners are key advantages in their classrooms.

These features are why NNPS views its implementation as successful. The district says it has achieved the goals it set out to meet 10 years ago when Unique Learning System was deployed.



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## Enhancing Student Achievement

According to NNPS, Unique Learning System impacts student achievement in several ways:

- Provides comprehensive access to the general education curriculum for students with moderate to severe disabilities, for whom the district previously had no appropriate curriculum materials
- Delivers age-appropriate, standards-based materials in three levels of differentiated instruction so that students with significant disabilities can learn at their own level. No further need to cobble together materials or resort to Sesame Street® and Barney™ for middle and high school-aged students
- Aligns with Virginia state standards, contributing to improved student pass rates on the state alternate assessment
- Provides teachers and staff with lesson plans and curricular support to help them deliver high-quality instruction to all students



## Improving Student Outcomes

Assessments in Unique Learning System empower the district's special educators to:

- Monitor student progress and growth. Teachers and administrators now can see the tangible results of increased student engagement in the classroom
- Track progress using monthly checkpoints, benchmark assessments and daily performance to gain insight into how students are meeting individual IEP and classroom goals
- Provide administrators with a view of how teachers are using the solution so they know what kind of additional staff support is needed

## Demonstrated Growth by NNPS Students

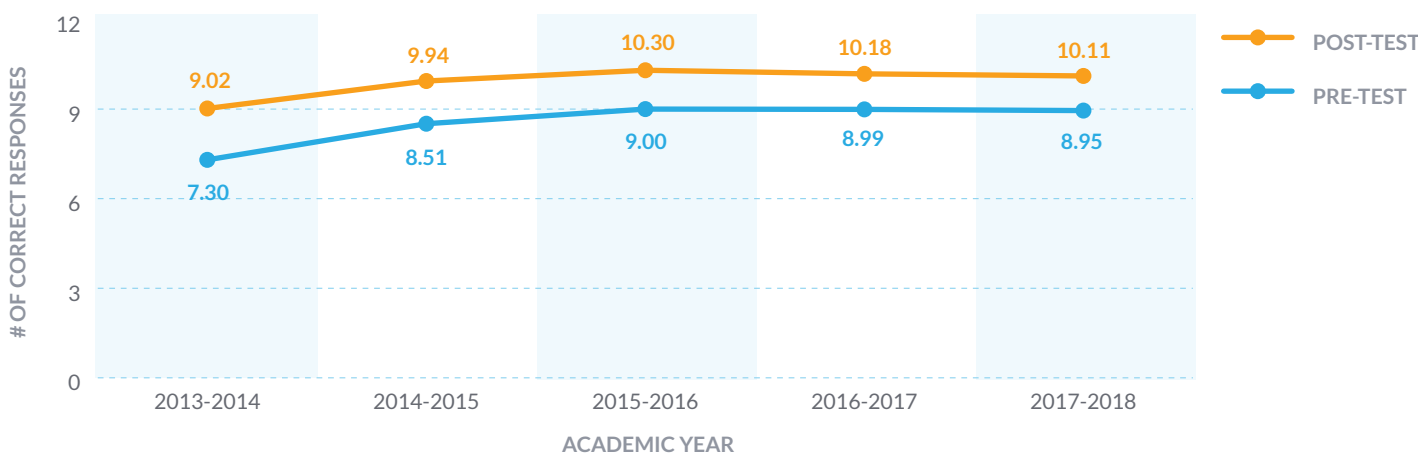
n2y's internal assessments measure **student progress** over the course of an academic year. All data herein was provided by n2y. To determine growth, the following data and filters were used:

- All test scores, all grades, all levels
- Word Recognition Levels 2 & 3
- Reading Levels 2 & 3
- Math Levels 2 & 3
- Level 1 appropriate tests  
(this showcases students requiring Level 1, most intensive supports)

# Results Summary

## OVERALL

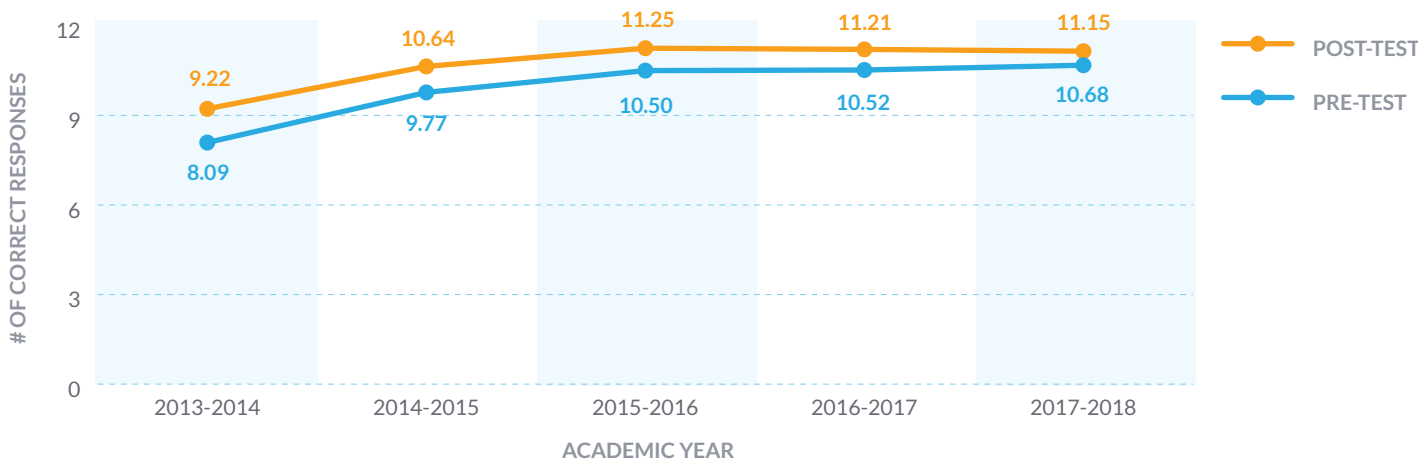
Average post-test Checkpoint scores indicate an **overall 12.08% increase in accuracy** for students across grade bands and subject areas requiring support at Levels 1 through 3, indicating that scores are improving with the use of Unique Learning System. On average, there was a 15.91% yearly increase between pre-test and post-test scores.



\* Checkpoint Assessments are administered at the beginning and end of each month. They assess a consistent set of pre-identified skills in ELA and Math. Checkpoints measure what students know before and after instruction.

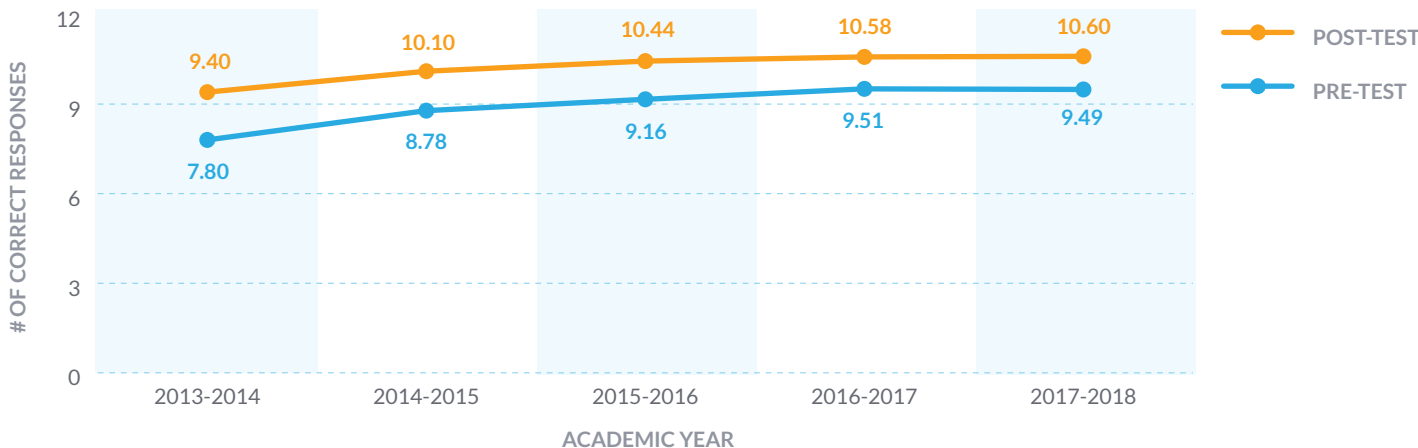
## WORD RECOGNITION LEVELS 2 & 3

Average post-test Checkpoint scores indicate an **overall 20.93% increase in accuracy** in Word Recognition for students requiring Level 2 and Level 3 supports. There was, on average, a 7.89% yearly increase between pre-test and post-test scores.



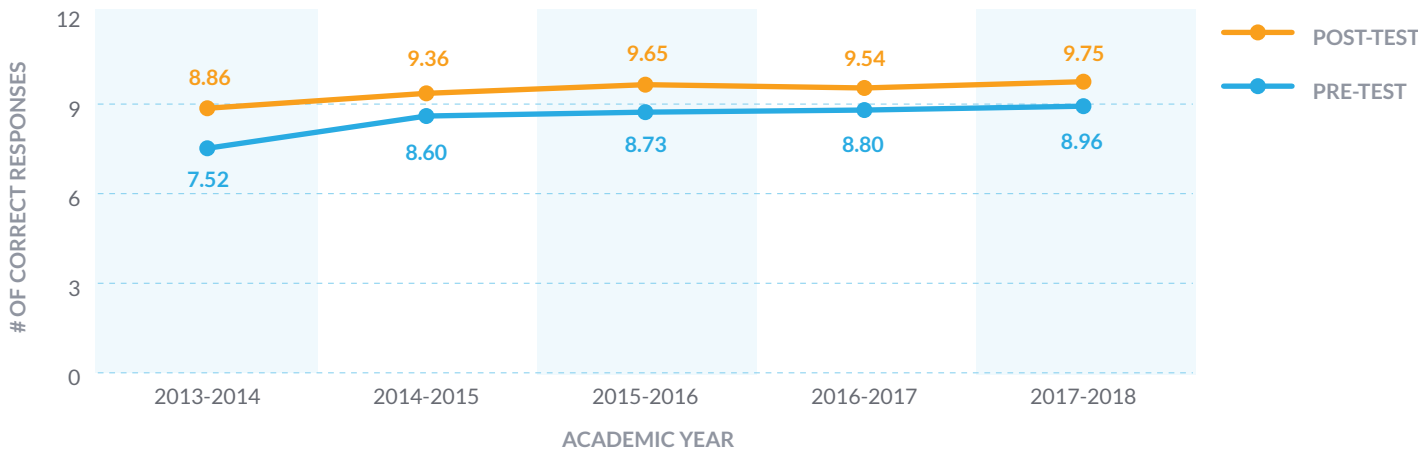
## READING LEVELS 2 & 3

Average post-test Checkpoint scores indicate an **overall 12.77% increase in accuracy** in Reading for students requiring Level 2 and Level 3 supports. There was, on average, a 14.26% yearly increase between pre-test and post-test scores.



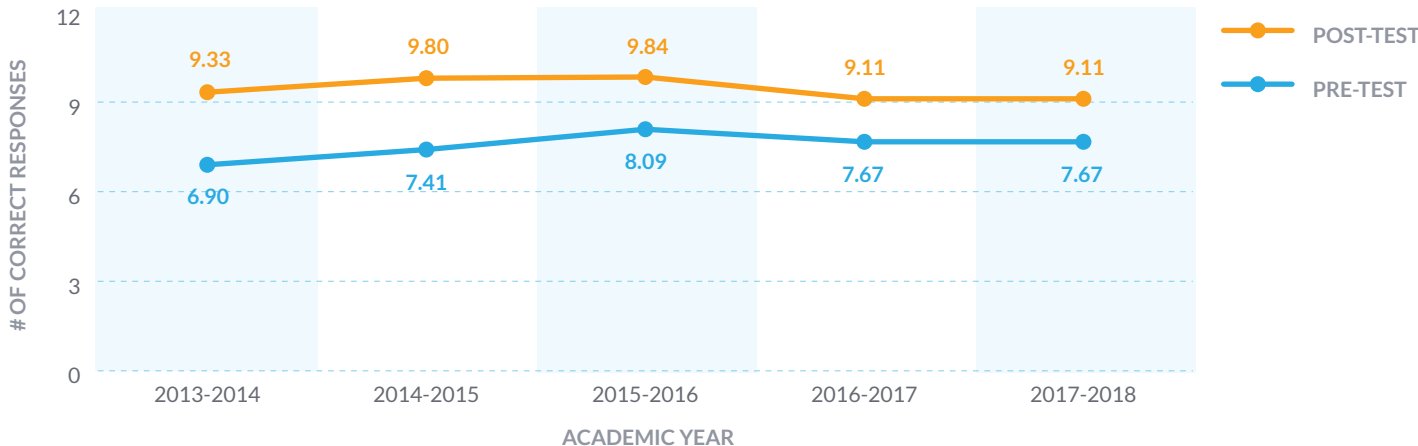
## MATH LEVELS 2 & 3

Average post-test Checkpoint scores indicate an **overall 10.05% increase in accuracy** in Math for students requiring Level 2 and Level 3 supports. There was, on average, a 10.88% yearly increase between pre-test and post-test scores.



## LEVEL 1 TESTS

Post-test Checkpoint scores indicate, on average, a **25.04% yearly increase** between pre-test and post-test scores for students requiring Level 1 supports (most intensive supports).



## ABOUT N2Y

For over 20 years, it's been n2y's mission to support special educators, transforming not only the classroom, but also the lives of teachers and administrators, therapists and paraprofessionals, families and all the students we proudly serve. We believe everyone can learn, and every student has the right to reach their full potential. n2y offers the first comprehensive program serving at the epicenter of the entire IEP team. Our differentiated solutions are designed specifically to help unique learners access the general education curriculum in any learning environment, from self-contained to resource, inclusion, therapeutic, home or virtual settings. For more information, visit [n2y.com](http://n2y.com) and join us on Facebook and Twitter.



## NEXT STEPS...

### Schedule a Demo With Your Account Executive

See for yourself why educators across the country rely on n2y's products and vision to elevate the quality of education for students with unique learning needs.

 **SCHEDULE A DEMO**

**EVERYONE** Can Learn®

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