

## Success Story

## Comprehensive School Improvement

# Brockton High School

Brockton, Massachusetts

- » 4,200 Students
- » 73% Minority
- » 72% Free/Reduced Lunch
- » 35% ESL
- » 10% Special Education

In partnership with the International Center, Brockton High School developed a total school focus built around providing a rigorous and relevant curriculum for all students.



### Sue Szachowicz Principal

"Brockton High School's enduring relationship with the International Center for Leadership in Education has helped make us a School of Champions.

"As a result of our work with the International Center, our faculty is deeply committed to providing a rigorous and relevant academic program for all students — one built on supportive relationships — and to preparing our students for their lives after Brockton High. Instructional decisions are data driven, and our goals-based improvement plan has consistently and significantly improved the academic achievement of all student groups within our large and diverse population.

"I am so proud to be Principal of Brockton High, a school that will fight for the success of every student. We have taken what is best in tradition and combined it with new strategies to prepare all students for a successful future."

## CHALLENGE

When the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) was initiated in 1998:

- 44% of Brockton students failed English language arts and only 22% reached proficiency
- 76% failed mathematics and only 7% reached proficiency

## APPROACH

By utilizing the International Center's **Learning Criteria to Support 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learners**, Brockton High School defied its challenging demographics and became a model for student achievement. Led by the School Restructuring Committee, Brockton focused on a few key initiatives:

- Increasing student achievement on the MCAS through a comprehensive school-wide literacy initiative
- Reversing the culture of low achievement by raising expectations for all students
- Identifying essential academic skills and knowledge and making instruction relevant to students' lives
- Fostering positive relationships between students and teachers

Brockton credits the International Center for helping the school reach the next level of performance.

### Honors and awards:

- Selected as a Secondary School Showcase for NASSP, 2010
- Featured in *Education Week's* Quality Counts Issue, 2010
- Featured in Harvard's Achievement Gap Initiative, 2009
- Bronze Medal Award from *U.S. News & World Report* as one of America's Best High Schools, 2008
- Commonwealth Compass School, Massachusetts Department of Education
- One of six schools to receive the National School Change Award, 2006
- International Center for Leadership in Education Model School, 2004-10

## PROCESS

Principal Sue Szachowicz and her Restructuring Committee used the four dimensions of the Learning Criteria to Support 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learners to gauge their current status in preparing students for the state assessments and for their future roles and responsibilities. Based on this analysis, the school created and implemented a highly successful literacy initiative that dramatically increased test results and improved student achievement.

### 1. Core Learning — the Literacy Initiative

- Defined literacy skills in four areas: reading, writing, speaking, and reasoning
- Shared the Literacy Initiative with the entire faculty, School Council, and local business community to ensure full support
- Introduced a plan to address literacy across all disciplines
- Trained the entire faculty of over 300 teachers using a train-the-trainer model
- Implemented a schedule that allowed students to experience the same literacy strategy across all content areas
- Monitored success through examining student work and exercising quality control
- Addressed the needs of special populations
- Changed the culture to reflect high expectations for all students, no excuses

### 2. Stretch Learning

New avenues to increase the rigor and relevance of the curriculum:

- International Baccalaureate
- Advanced Placement
- Freshman Academy
- Credit Recovery
- Academic Success Programs
- Inclusion
- College Tech Prep
- School Training and Educational Preparation Program (STEP)
- A+ Certification Program
- Small Learning Communities

# RESULTS

## 3. Student Engagement

The faculty operates on the belief that students who participate in the “life of the school outside the classroom” tend to be more productive, higher achieving, and happier. More than 3,000 students participate in co-curricular and extracurricular activities. Teachers consistently seek out students who are not active in extracurricular activities and encourage their participation.

- A wide array of electives to enhance students’ interests
- Over 45 clubs and student activities
- Award-winning band, chorus, and drama programs
- Award-winning athletic program
- Honor Roll assemblies
- Boxer of the Month
- Boxer-2-Boxer student mentoring program
- After-school MCAS and SAT preparation classes

## 4. Personal Skill Development

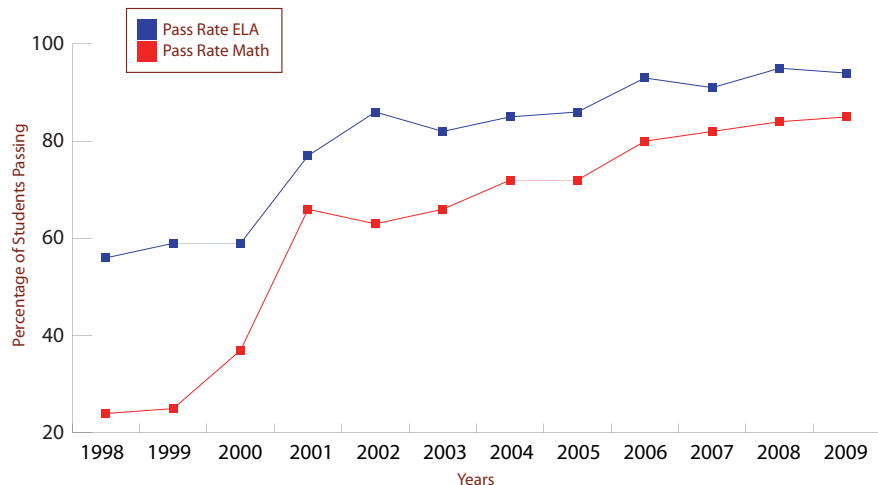
The school seeks to prepare students to be well-rounded for the world in which they will live and work.

- Academic Support Contracts
- Peer Advisory
- Access Centers
- Club Boxer
- Community Outreach
- Student Council
- Communities and Schools for Career Success
- Dress-for-Success Day
- Project Diploma

By 2009, Brockton had dramatically increased the number of students passing the MCAS. The pass rate for ELA went from 56% to 94% and for math from 24% to above 85%.

As a result, Brockton’s pass rates increased by 38% in ELA and 61% in math.

Pass Rate for Grade 10 ELA and Math





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Bill Daggett, Ray McNulty, and our team of skilled and experienced consultants represent the nation's finest education leaders, practitioners, and experts in leading, assisting, managing, and implementing change at all levels of K-12 education.

Contact us to discuss how we can assist you:



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