



Empowering Students with Disabilities to Succeed on Standardized Tests

Nina Scupp, Ed.M.
City on a Hill Charter Public Schools



+ **The Boston Compact**
Partnership, Purpose, & Process



The Boston Compact: Partnership

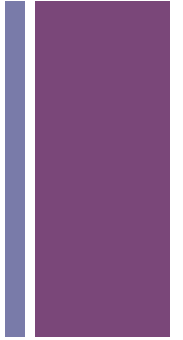


- 3 Boston education sectors
 - Charter
 - District
 - Independent Catholic

- Triad model
 - City on a Hill Charter Schools
 - New Mission High School
 - Cathedral High School



The Boston Compact: Purpose



- Foster communication across sectors
- Share resources and best practices
- Identify replicable strategies for supporting students with disabilities



The Boston Compact: Process



- 2 cycles of research over 3.5 years
 - Study skill strategies
 - Test prep case studies



+ Research Cycle 1
Study Skills

+ Guiding Questions



- Does explicitly teaching study skill strategies have a measurable impact on student outcomes?
- Are some strategies more effective than others for SWDs?



Research Cycle 1: Methods



- Examined schools' current strategies
- Created pool of strategies
 - Review packets
 - Flashcards
 - Practice tests
 - Online video platforms
- Isolated and tested strategies
 - 9th and 10th grade math
 - Straightforward unit test/re-test format
 - Concrete and skill based



+ Predict: Which strategy had the greatest impact?



Research Cycle 1: Outcomes



Study Skill	Type of Student	Gains	No Change	Decline
Practice Test	SWD	90%	0%	6%
	Non-SWD	63%	19%	18%
Flash Cards	SWD	81%	8%	12%
	Non-SWD	92%	0%	8%
Online Video	SWD	94%	8%	0%
	Non-SWD	79%	13%	8%
Review Packet	SWD	88%	12%	0%
	Non-SWD	78%	11%	11%



Research Cycle 1: Outcomes



- All yielded significant gains for all students
 - Overall 30% increase
 - Closed the gap between SWD and non-SWD by 16%
- Efficacy: Online videos, practice tests, review packets, flashcards
- SWD benefited more than non-SWD on 3 out of 4 strategies



+ **Discuss:** What caused these results?



Research Cyle 1: Outcomes



- SWD never explicitly taught study skills
- Rote memorization had lowest impact
- Online videos had greatest impact
 1. Familiar format
 2. Extrinsic rewards
 3. Immediate feedback
 4. Self-paced
 5. Mobile
 6. Reduced distractions
 7. Oral rather than written



+ Research Cycle 2
Test Prep Case Studies



Research Cycle 2: Methods



- Identified 4 schools with records of success
- Developed observation protocol
- Three rounds of site visits
- Focus groups and in-depth interviews
- Tested strategies at home institutions

+ Guiding Questions



- Are there any commonalities among these schools?
- Did any contribute to student success?
 - 1 **Curriculum and Instruction**
 - 2 **School Structure**
 - 3 **School Culture**
- Can any be replicated?



School 1: The Mary Lyon School



- Pilot school
- Grades 9-12
- 140 students; 44% SWD
- Full inclusion model
 - 14 general education students
 - 6 students with social-emotional impairments
- School focus
 - Explicit and hidden curriculum
 - Life skills, emotional behavioral skills



School 1: The Mary Lyon School



1. Curriculum & Instruction:

- Dual-certified teachers
- Spiraling content
- MCAS-style prompts all year with 1 week intensive
- Responsive data-driven instruction
 - Bimonthly data meetings
 - Action plans
 - Regroup students
 - Culture of sharing

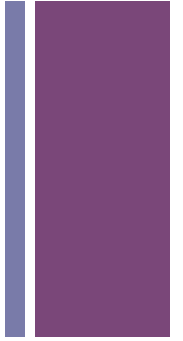
+ **School 1: The Mary Lyon School**



2. School Structure:

- Small student body
- Foundational classes
- Extended day

+ School 1: The Mary Lyon School



3. School Culture:

- Downplay the MCAS
- “This is important but not *that* important.”

+ **School 2: Boston Collegiate**



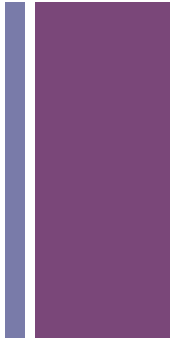
- Charter school
- Grades 5-12
- 300 students; 21% SWD
- Inclusion classes and small sub-separate cohort
- College prep focus

+ School 2: Boston Collegiate

1. Curriculum & Instruction:

- Anticipated needs and doubled support staff
- Co-taught classes
 - 2 content teachers
 - 1 content and 1 special ed teacher
- Extensive and intensive explicit MCAS prep
 - 12 weeks/one class a week
- Data-driven instruction
 - Baseline and benchmark exams

+ School 2: Boston Collegiate



2. School Structure:

- Extended day
- Mandatory weekly after school tutoring session
- Tutoring run by certified math teachers
- Individual in-school academic support interventions
- Weekly department meetings
- Vertical alignment

+ School 2: Boston Collegiate



3. School Culture:

- Banners in school entrance
- Party morning-of exam
 - Rock paper scissors tournament
 - Faculty dance off
 - Video montage of encouragement messages
- Results party
- T-shirts
- Web page



School 3: Fenway High School



- Pilot school
- Grades 9-12
- 300 students; 19% SWD
- Slow transition to full mainstreaming
 - Sub-separate program
 - Inclusion classes
- Partnerships with local colleges
 - Interns
 - Tutors



School 3: Fenway High School



1. Curriculum & Instruction:

- Five weeks of explicit test prep
 - Aligned with senior internships
 - Senior teachers become MCAS prep teachers
- Incentivized opt-in after school support
- Explicit test taking strategies
- Data-driven instruction
- Spiraling curriculum



School 3: Fenway High School



2. School Structure:

- Dual-certified teachers through Boston Teacher Residency Program
- Weekly meetings for student data
- Flexibility to regroup students in adjacent rooms
- Weekly double block “labs”



School 3: Fenway High School



3. School Culture:

- Positive framing
- Reduce anxiety through repetition
- Urgency
- Community responsibility



School 4: Codman Academy



- Charter school
- Grades 9-12
- 150 students; 38-50% SWD
- Maximum inclusion goal
 - Inclusion with small group pull out
 - Inclusion associates
 - One sub-separate classroom with push-in
- School focus
 - Expeditionary learning
 - Restorative justice



School 4: Codman Academy



1. Curriculum & Instruction:

- Use MCAS-style language throughout the year
- Demand students show work to mimic open response
- Explicit multiple choice and annotation strategies
- Data-driven instruction
 - Complete diagnostic test in December
 - Use Quia to drill down to specific weak strands
 - Regroup students with targeted work
 - Repeatedly track and analyze data



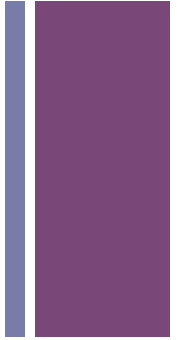
School 4: Codman Academy



2. School Structure:

- Bimonthly Saturday school
- Extended day
- Average class size 20
- Bimonthly field work day
- Extensive teacher PD and meeting time
 - 3 full weeks a year; half day every Friday

+ School 4: Codman Academy



3. School Culture:

- Teacher-created MCAS pump-up videos
- “The less we explicitly talk about it the better.”
- Reduce anxiety
- Positive messaging
- Strong relationships



Commonalities and Conclusions



- Low student : teacher ratio
- Inclusion models
- Strong relationships
- Data-driven instruction
- Positive framing
- Explicit test taking strategies
- Common planning time



+ Q&A

Methods, Findings, Impacts



+ Thank You

Questions? Email nscupp@cityonahill.org