

CASE STUDY

The Right Way to Create & Scale a District-Wide Cultural Shift

[7-9 minute read]

WITH A STUDENT POPULATION OF NEARLY 60,000,

disparities in income and opportunity in the Arlington Independent School District (ISD) were leading to wildly different student outcomes from one school to the next.

With **72%** of students considered economically disadvantaged, there existed a **very real** barrier to equity within the district.

Create a Culture of Growth

Under the visionary leadership of Superintendent Dr. Marcelo Cavazos, Arlington ISD set their eyes on achieving an ambitious goal: to fundamentally shift the culture bit-by-bit until a wave of innovation swept across the district.

The key to accomplishing this was to engage all district teachers and leaders in individualized coaching on research-based competencies aligned to best practices before correlating professional growth data with student outcomes data, thereby paving the way for students to excel academically and in the real world.



The Strategic Solution



District leaders understood that a sustainable culture shift would require implementing a strategic and scalable plan to modernize teacher and learning, expanding internal capacity, and getting buy-in from those on the inside.

To do this, Arlington ISD selected engage2learn (e2L) as their partner in facilitating a 6-week strategic planning process that would design the foundational components necessary to ensure the district's success. The result of this work was three core components that the district would use to scale its district-wide cultural shift and ensure equity in the learner experience:

01

Cultural Tenets

- Own Our Work
- Make Every Interaction Count
- Respond Positively to Differences
- Promote Risk-Taking
- Get Better Every Day
- Put Students First

02

Active Learning Cycle

- Inspire
- Commit
- Acquire
- Apply
- Demonstrate

03

Learner Profile Skills

- Communicate Effectively
- Think Critically
- Collaborate
- Solve Problems
- Self Regulate
- Model Responsible Citizenship



Arlington
INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT
More Than a Remarkable Education



engage2learn

The Strategic Solution continued

Once these three core components were identified and put in place, the next step was to provide comprehensive training and support through a combination of teacher coaching, executive coaching for school principals, and Coaches Academy for instructional coaches.

In collaboration with e2L, Arlington ISD leadership identified the key competencies for coaching that aligned to district goals, including **Differentiation & Scaffolding, Assessment & Formative Feedback, and Standards Alignment.**

With guidance from the e2L Best Practices Rubric — a research-based, formative professional growth tracker — job-embedded coaching began.



growe lab

The all-in-one **teacher support and instructional coaching** platform for educators.

Utilizing **GroweLab, e2L's integrated smart professional learning platform**, to document, monitor, and analyze coaching and growth data, the district began to move toward its desired culture shift. Each year since the partnership began, cohorts of district leaders, instructional coaches, and teachers have received training and ongoing, job-embedded coaching on competencies aligned to best practices. This strategic support has been critical in the overall culture shift, ensuring every Arlington ISD student gains the vital skills they need to succeed in and out of the classroom.



Prior to the partnership with e2L, the district had multiple coaching models and documentation tools already in place. Once the district experienced the power of e2L's comprehensive coaching model paired with GroweLab, Arlington ISD leaders opted for one system that provided simplicity and robust data. In the process of modernizing the professional learning experience, the district transitioned to using GroweLab across all schools to streamline processes, document coaching conversations, identify areas of need, celebrate patterns of growth, and draw a straight line between teacher growth and student achievement.

The Outcome



Despite pandemic-related disruptions in learning and temporary pauses in state-level assessments, Arlington ISD has been able to monitor the positive impact of 1:1 coaching by analyzing educator growth, job satisfaction, and teacher retention data in GroweLab. That data is clear: Teachers and staff receiving individualized support through coaching are almost guaranteed to stay in their role.

For example, after the 2020-2021 school year, the district retained all 1,104 teachers who received coaching — an especially impressive feat when considering the sharp increase in teacher attrition that schools were experiencing on a national level at that same time.



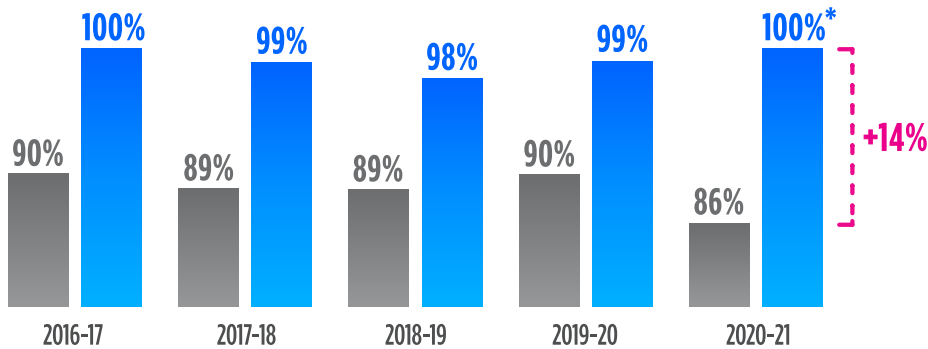
“All of our data was trending with **DOUBLE DIGIT GAINS** [before COVID-19]. We were primed to go from an ‘F’ rating to closer to a ‘B’ rating **IN JUST ONE YEAR.**”

- **Katina Martinez**, Principal of Short Elementary School, Arlington ISD

Raising Retention Rates

Coached vs. Not Coached Teachers

Not Coached | Coached



% of teachers retained based on whether or not they received coaching (source: district-provided teacher retention data)

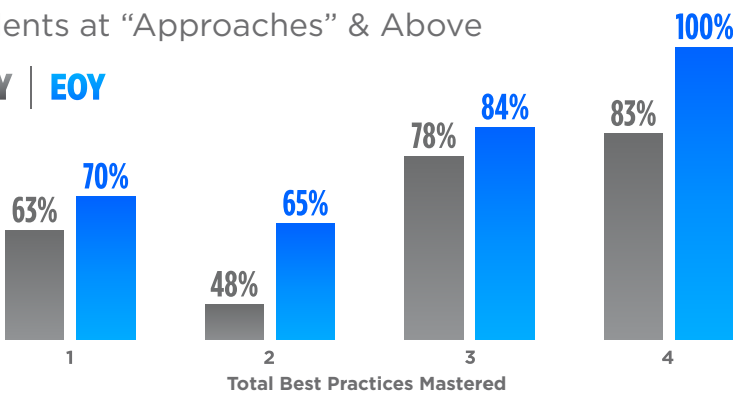
*2,823 coached teachers out of 3,218 total staff

Even without consistent, quantifiable student data over the past couple of years, Arlington ISD leadership felt confident that the continual educator growth would eventually point to accelerated student achievement. And it has! The latest data tells us that as more teachers master instructional best practices, more students master standards across the board.

CA Math Performance

% Students at “Approaches” & Above

BOY | EOY



Looking at either the teacher retention data or student achievement data on its own would be impressive enough — indicative of a district headed in the right direction. Side by side, however, this powerful combination of data sets speaks to a fundamental, district-wide culture shift. This consistent growth is a direct result not simply of coaching, but of a responsible rollout of coaching over time. Beginning in the 2016-2017 school year, Arlington ISD has gradually increased the number of teachers receiving coaching year after year, and today, it has the correlated growth data today to prove that it works.

CA Reading Performance

% Students at “Approaches” & Above

BOY | EOY

