## Clarkston, GA
## Indian Creek Elementary School – DeKalb County District

# SCHOOL RAISES CONTENT MASTERY 15+ POINTS IN ONE YEAR

### School Data

920 Students

Grades PreK–5

http://www.indiancreekes.dekalb.k12.ga.us/

### Student Demographics

| | |
|---|---|
| 31.8% | **African American/Black** |
| 0.7% | **American Indian/Alaskan Native** |
| 57.7% | **Asian/Pacific Islander** |
| 3.2% | **Hispanic** |
| 1.2% | **Multi-Racial** |
| 5.4% | **White** |

## CHALLENGES & SOLUTIONS

Indian Creek Elementary is a Title I school in Clarkston, GA, a refugee resettlement base. It is one of the largest elementary schools in DeKalb County. One hundred percent of students receive free breakfast and lunch, and 78 percent of students are English language learners (ELLs).

"Our students come from more than 40 countries. They bring with them 45 different languages and dialects, along with their rich cultures," said Stephanie Brown-Bryant, principal of Indian Creek Elementary.

"Literacy is one of our greatest challenges. I became aware of Learning A-Z at the Georgia Educational Technology Conference.

A 10-minute stop at the booth became a two-and-a-half-hour conversation because I was interested in all of the features and how they could be used with our students since we have such a high ESOL population. When we had a demo at the school, I was impressed with how easy the online reading resources were to use and the great quality of the leveled texts. We purchased the entire suite."

## Implementation

**Learning A-Z Complete Collection:**

- Raz-Plus ELL Edition
- Headsprout
- Science A-Z
- Vocabulary A-Z
- Writing A-Z

Indian Creek Elementary began using the Learning A-Z Complete Collection in 2017. Delivered online, the Complete Collection provides teachers with instant access to a library of reading, writing, science, and vocabulary resources.

The resources are offered at an array of developmental levels, and can easily be customized to fit the needs of individual, small-group, and whole-class instruction.

"We use the Learning A-Z products for everything we could possibly use them for," said Brown-Bryant.

"I have a computer science background and I love that the graphical user interface (GUI) is consistent from resource to resource. The GUI design is impeccable. It's engaging for kids and makes it easy to move between resources."

## Delivering schoolwide professional learning

Learning A-Z offers a variety of professional learning services — including onsite professional development, live and recorded webinars, and self-paced e-learning courses — to help teachers integrate the resources into their curriculum and use them to achieve their instructional goals. Indian Creek Elementary began with online professional learning, then moved to schoolwide training onsite. The onsite training was presented to grade level teachers including teachers specialized in instructing SPED, ESOL, and Gifted students.

"In our first year, we did a couple of virtual learnings with teachers and watched some online webinars," said Dr. Adam Nykamp, the instructional support specialist at Indian Creek Elementary. "During the 2018-19 school year, we began schoolwide face-to-face trainings with Learning A-Z and our implementation became truly wonderful."

## Personalizing reading instruction with Raz-Plus ELL Edition

At Indian Creek Elementary, teachers use Raz-Plus ELL Edition to deliver a personalized blended learning approach to literacy. Raz-Plus ELL Edition provides standards-aligned reading instruction with more than 50,000 resources that develop key 21st century skills. It personalizes reading practice with more than 3,000 developmentally appropriate books, games, activities, learning centers, lesson plans, and additional reading resources.

*"For many of our students, it is their first year in the United States. The fact that we can use Raz-Plus ELL Edition to differentiate instruction to meet the needs of more than 1,000 students with more than 40 different languages speaks to the robust nature of the program"*

– **Brown-Bryant**, Indian Creek Elementary

Since resources are available in printable, projectable, online, and mobile formats, teachers and students are able to use them in the classroom and at home.

"A teacher may have students at 20 different levels in one classroom. Raz-Plus ELL Edition is perfect for meeting the needs of all of those students at all of those levels," said Nykamp.

*Raz-Plus ELL Edition allows students to listen to books read aloud, read books at their own pace, and record themselves reading books to ensure fluency.*

"I use Raz-Plus ELL Edition every day," said first grade teacher Allison Calkins. "I like the ease of being able to differentiate to every level. I can do the exact same thing with my lowest students and my highest students, and they're equally benefiting. It's also simple for students to use on their own."

"When I was in the classroom, I'd do running records one on one. A student would read aloud and I'd follow along and mark off the paper," said Nykamp.

"Now, with Raz-Plus ELL Edition, students can read aloud into the microphone, send it to their teacher, and the recording is in their in-basket. The teacher can listen to the recording in their own time, and it doesn't take days away from classroom instruction."

"I started using that this semester and it's amazing. The audio components are also very helpful for English learners," said Calkins. "The Learning A-Z programs are even great for virtual learning because I can assign books and my students can record themselves reading aloud at home and send me their recordings."

## Teaching foundational reading skills with Headsprout

Headsprout is an adaptive reading program that uses interactive online episodes to teach K-5 students the reading fundamentals and comprehension skills they need to become successful readers.

"Our K-2 students have the highest usage of Headsprout. They greatly benefit from it," said Nykamp.

"My goal next year is to make sure our preK classes have the same access to Headsprout because we've seen how much our K-2 students have grown," said Brown-Bryant. "If we can start earlier, students will achieve even greater gains."

7/2020

"When I was teaching fourth grade, my coworker used Headsprout with students who were new to the country and just beginning to learn the English language, and it really helped them, too," said fifth grade teacher Shermain Jessie.

"Whether students are below, at, or above grade level, they can work at the level that's right for them," said Calkins. "Headsprout is engaging and my students love it."

## Blending science and literacy with Science A-Z

Science A-Z blends science and literacy into one K-6 curriculum. It delivers thousands of resources in life science, earth and space science, physical science, engineering, and process science. In addition to a library of multilevel informational texts, it delivers science experiments, hands-on activities, project-based learning resources, and other collaborative learning opportunities that allow students to think and act like scientists.

"Science A-Z is very kid-friendly and easy for students to navigate," said Jessie. "I like all of the resources that are available in the instructional units, like the skills packs, focus books, and vocabulary cards. I also use Science A-Z to run individual student reports for progress monitoring for Response to Intervention."

## Connecting vocabulary instruction with online practice with Vocabulary A-Z

Vocabulary A-Z helps K-5 students build vocabulary and increase reading comprehension. Teachers can differentiate vocabulary instruction and practice with premade and customizable word lists, printable and digital lessons, and online game-based activities and quizzes. In addition, by combining Vocabulary A-Z with other Learning A-Z products for reading and science literacy, teachers can quickly integrate vocabulary into reading lessons and assign practice in multiple modalities.

"Several of our teachers use Vocabulary A-Z to introduce vocabulary before teaching reading lessons, which is helpful for ELLs," said Nykamp.

"The audio and imagery are great for ELLs," said Calkins.

## Improving writing skills with Writing A-Z

Writing A-Z delivers lessons and resources to teach writing, and interactive online writing tools for students.

"Writing A-Z is user friendly and my students love it. It's neat for them to be able to see their writing on screen and add pictures to it," said Calkins.
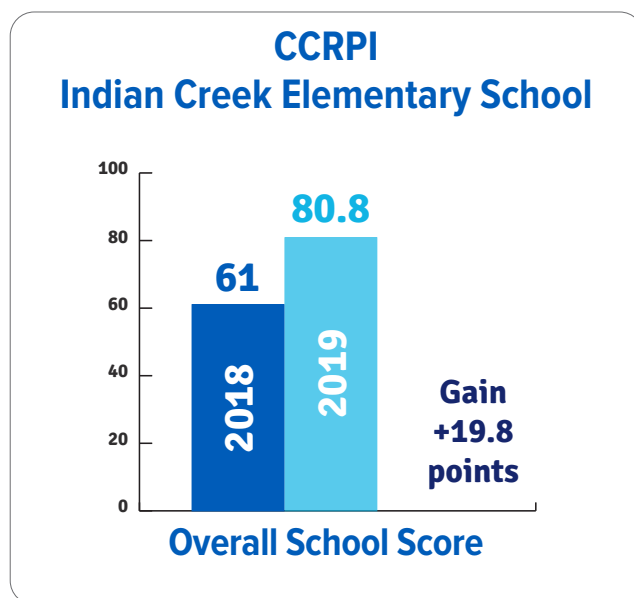
"I was extremely excited to see the publishing feature in Writing A-Z. Students like that they can publish and share their writing, and we enjoy it, too," said Brown-Bryant.

"That's such a motivator for my students because they want to get to that point where they can make a book and publish it," said Calkins.
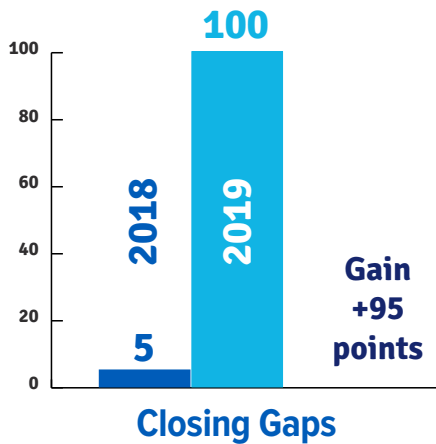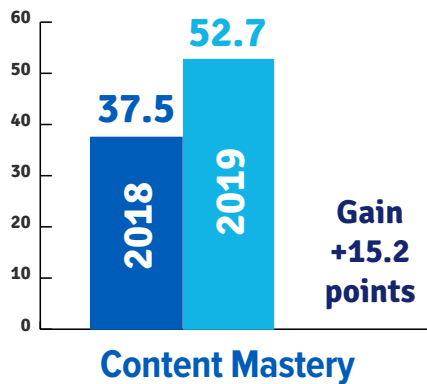
## RESULTS

- Improved school score
- Increased content mastery
- Improved academic achievement for student subgroups

Thanks to the hard work of students, teachers, and administrators, Indian Creek Elementary has achieved gains on the Georgia Department of Education College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI).

### CCRPI
### Indian Creek Elementary School

61 — 2018
80.8 — 2019
Gain +19.8 points

**Overall School Score**

## CCRPI
## Indian Creek Elementary School

**Content Mastery**

- 2018: 37.5
- 2019: 52.7
- Gain +15.2 points

**Closing Gaps**

- 2018: 5
- 2019: 100
- Gain +95 points

Source: Georgia Department of Education releases 2019 CCRPI reports

https://www.gadoe.org/External-Affairs-and-Policy/communications/Pages/PressReleaseDetails.aspx?PressView=default&pid=720

From 2018 to 2019, the Overall School Score increased by almost 20 points. Learning A-Z was part of the educational experience. Students showed a gain of more than 15 points in Content Mastery, which includes achievement scores in English language arts (ELA), mathematics, science, and social studies.

"In ELA, the gain was 17.29 points, moving it closer to district and state averages," said Nykamp. "This is notable considering Indian Creek's sizeable ELL population."

In addition, Indian Creek Elementary is improving performance and closing academic achievement gaps among all student subgroups, including economically disadvantaged students and ELLs.

"I have the most fantastic teachers in the world, and my ESOL teachers are phenomenal. We have several initiatives to make sure we're meeting the needs of our students. We are very intentional with our training. We provided schoolwide training for the Learning A-Z products, which has assisted us in our growth. With the Learning A-Z resources, we can provide consistency across our building while meeting every individual student where they are," said Brown-Bryant.

Another factor that has contributed to the students' growth is the school's commitment to data-driven instruction. "Before, we had some teachers who thought they were doing well in specific areas, but when we looked at the data, we didn't see growth. When they increased their use of the Learning A-Z products, we saw an increase in the progress of those classes because of the quality of the products. It provides so many options for teachers that it takes away excuses for not providing great instruction," said Brown-Bryant.

In addition, in 2018-19, teachers in grades 3-5 began using NWEA MAP data to project how students would perform on state assessments.

"This helped teachers hone in on individual students and groups to determine how to better meet their needs. We left it up to teachers to decide how to best address those needs, and time after time, they chose to utilize the Learning A-Z products. Overall, they have had a great impact on how we've gotten kids to move forward in our school," said Nykamp.

"We know the implementation of the Learning A-Z products helps our students, and we see the gains," said Brown-Bryant. "We can isolate specific skills and focus on what every student or group needs to drive their growth throughout the year."