

Georgia Students have (Great) Writing “On Their Minds.”

Austin Road Middle School
Increases Already Stellar
Performance on Georgia
Middle Grades Writing
Assessment Thanks to
MY Access!®

Austin Road Middle School Principal Karen Waldron has nothing but praise for the teachers and students at her school. “We are excited about the exceptional performance of our students and the unmatched commitment of our teaching and support staff,” Ms. Waldron declared. “At Austin Road Middle, we are dedicated to high expectations in academics and in student conduct. We believe that every student, without exception, can and will consistently perform at high levels.”

Ms. Waldron has every reason to be proud of her students’ and teachers’ accomplishments and to be confident about continued success in the future. Since Austin Road opened in 1996, in Stockbridge, Georgia, it has consistently met or surpassed standards in all academic subject areas, including writing. The school’s writing scores have always been high; but in a decision which is clearly indicative of Austin Road’s commitment to excellence, educators felt there was still room for improvement in students’ writing.

With this in mind, in 2005, Rosetta Riddle, the Instructional Technology Coordinator for Henry County School District, began searching for the ideal writing improvement program. After

much research and comparison of products and competitors, Riddle recommended the MY Access!® online instructional writing program. She was particularly impressed with the immediate, detailed feedback that students receive on their essays, and how the program helps teachers target instruction to areas where students need additional assistance.

The District decided to first implement MY Access! in Austin Road. Austin Road, one of six middle schools in the Henry County school system, boasts a strong commitment to diversity, both in regard to ethnicity and economic background, including an 80% African American population, a 40% free and reduced lunch population, and a 10% Special Education student population.

In fact, it was the Special Education population that prompted the District to purchase MY Access!. “We realized our first challenge was with our Special Education population; therefore they

were our initial focus when we purchased MY Access! in the 2005-2006 school year,” Ms. Riddle notes.

That year, Austin Road took part in a pilot program of MY Access! with 50 students. The results were immediate and powerful – and provided an answer to the school’s ongoing question, “How can we do even better?”

Cheryl Harmon, the Instructional Technology Specialist and “MY Access! champion” at Austin

Road, was instantly impressed and intrigued by the program’s features and the possibilities it presents her students and teachers. “We were especially struck by the instant and extensive feedback the program offered,” she explains. “Not only does the program tell the student what he has done wrong, but what he needs to do to improve. This feedback is essential to not only improved test scores, but student academic confidence.”

In just one year of MY Access! use,

**In just one year of MY
Access! use, Austin
Road’s scores in the
Georgia Middle Grades
Writing Assessment went
from 90% to 95% in the
2005-2006 school year**
