

School Case Studies

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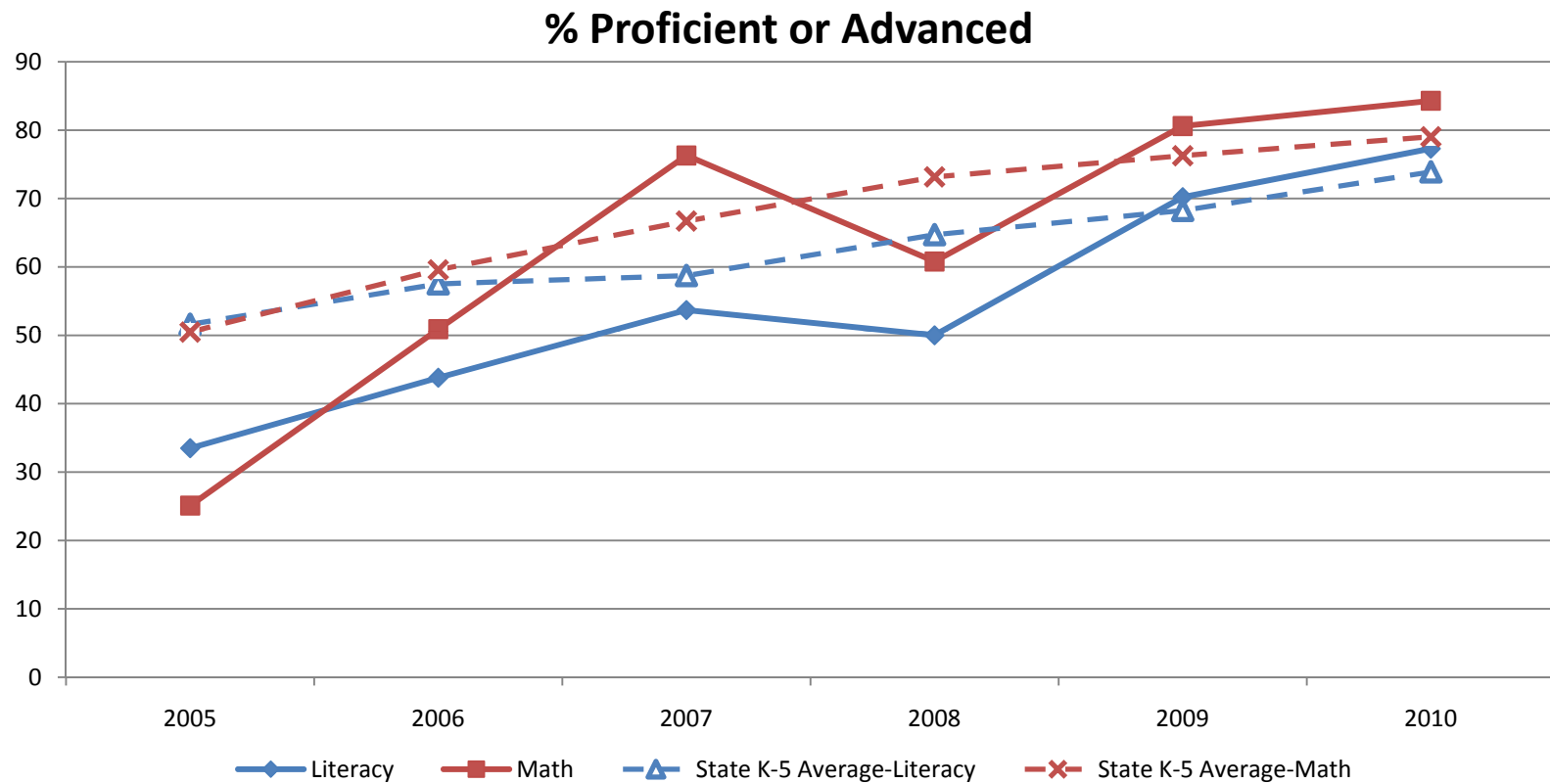
Case Study Objectives

- Examine schools that have achieved significant improvement and schools that have been unable to achieve gains. We wanted to see which strategies have worked and what issues have prevented improvement.
- Get an on-the-ground view of how the various school improvement initiatives (e.g., scholastic audit, federal school improvement grants, school improvement consultants, school achievement labels, etc.) fit together in a school across time.

Case Study Methodology

- Pulled historical data from ADE, NORMES, etc.
- Reviewed documentation: scholastic audits, grant applications, accreditation reports, etc.
- Read archived news accounts
- Visited each school and spoke with superintendent, principal, and teachers

Wonder Elementary, West Memphis



The only school in the state to be in year six or higher of school improvement and get out.

Other Schools Making Big Improvements

- Eudora Elementary (Lakeside School District)
 - 99% NSLA
 - In 2010, 100% of students proficient in math, 97% proficient in literacy
- Mildred Jackson Elementary (Hughes SD)
 - 87% NSLA
 - Increased math scores from 18% proficient in 2005 to 63% in 2011
- One to Watch: Trusty Elementary (Fort Smith)
 - Preliminary data suggest the school increased literacy proficiency from 41% to 60% in one year and math proficiency from 45% to 62%

Wonder Elementary, West Memphis

- K-6 elementary school
- 99% African-American
- 97% eligible for free or reduced price lunch
- 460 students in 2011
- Declining enrollment school in declining enrollment district



Leadership

- Superintendent: Bill Kessinger, has led the district for more than 25 years
- Principal: Ora Breckenridge has led Wonder Elementary for 26 years



Wonder's Challenges

- Was one of the first schools to be placed in school improvement in 2003
- Teachers were teaching “cover to cover” without any data about whether students were learning
- Teachers were not teaching writing at all
- Students lacked test-taking skills



School Improvement Consultant

- District hired Teachscape and later Elbow 2 Elbow to work with district schools
- Between 2006-07 and 2008-09, the district spent about \$2.35 million on services from E2E for all of its schools.
- With E2E's guidance teachers began :
 - Having students “write with a purpose,” examine passages and analyze content
 - Co-teaching to maximize resources and help each other
 - Using Marzano's high yield strategies

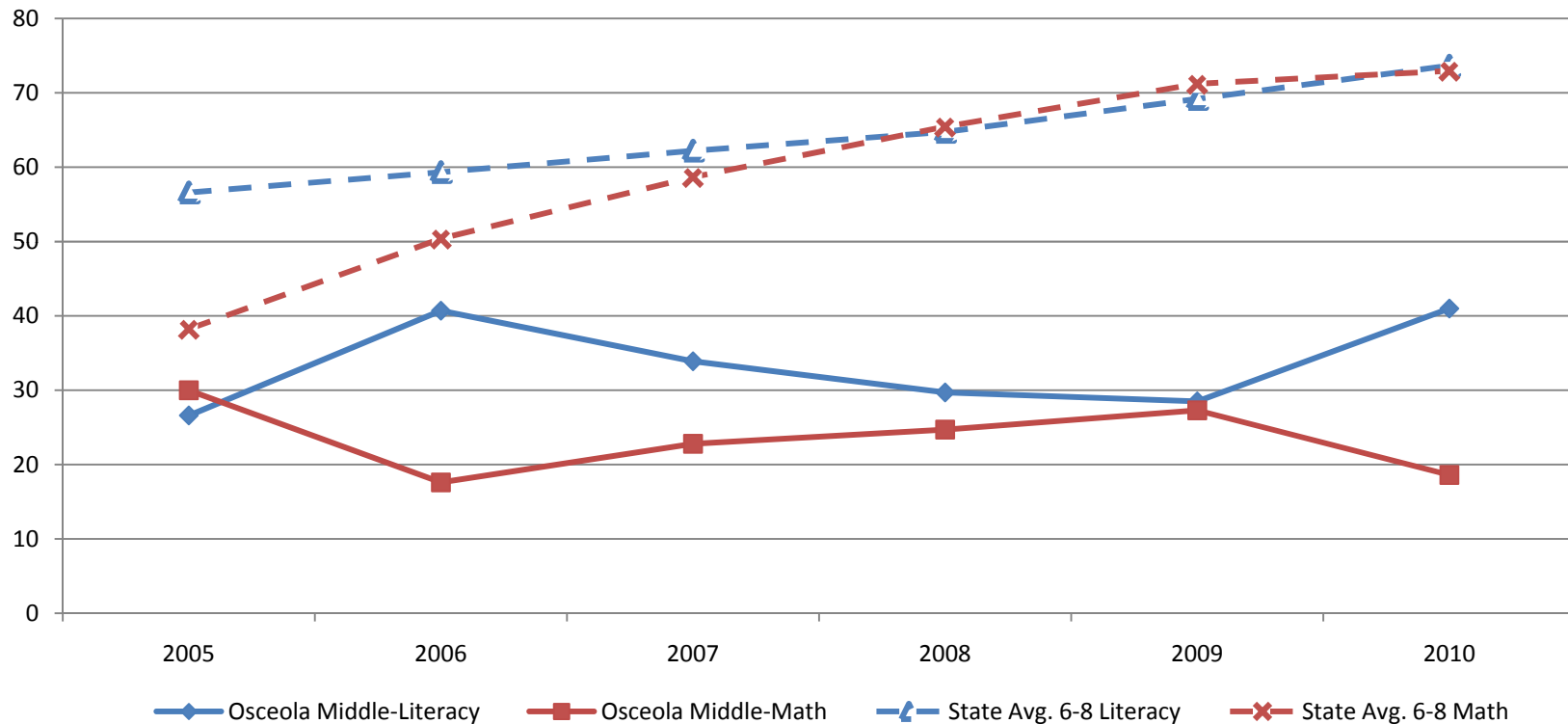
Delta Curriculum Alignment and Assessment Blocks (DCAAB)

- District-designed pacing guide organizing curriculum into 4- and 5-week blocks.
- Grade-level teachers throughout the district teach the same curriculum at the same time.
- Students are tested at the end of each block.
- Coaches across the district meet to review block test scores and compare schools' scores.

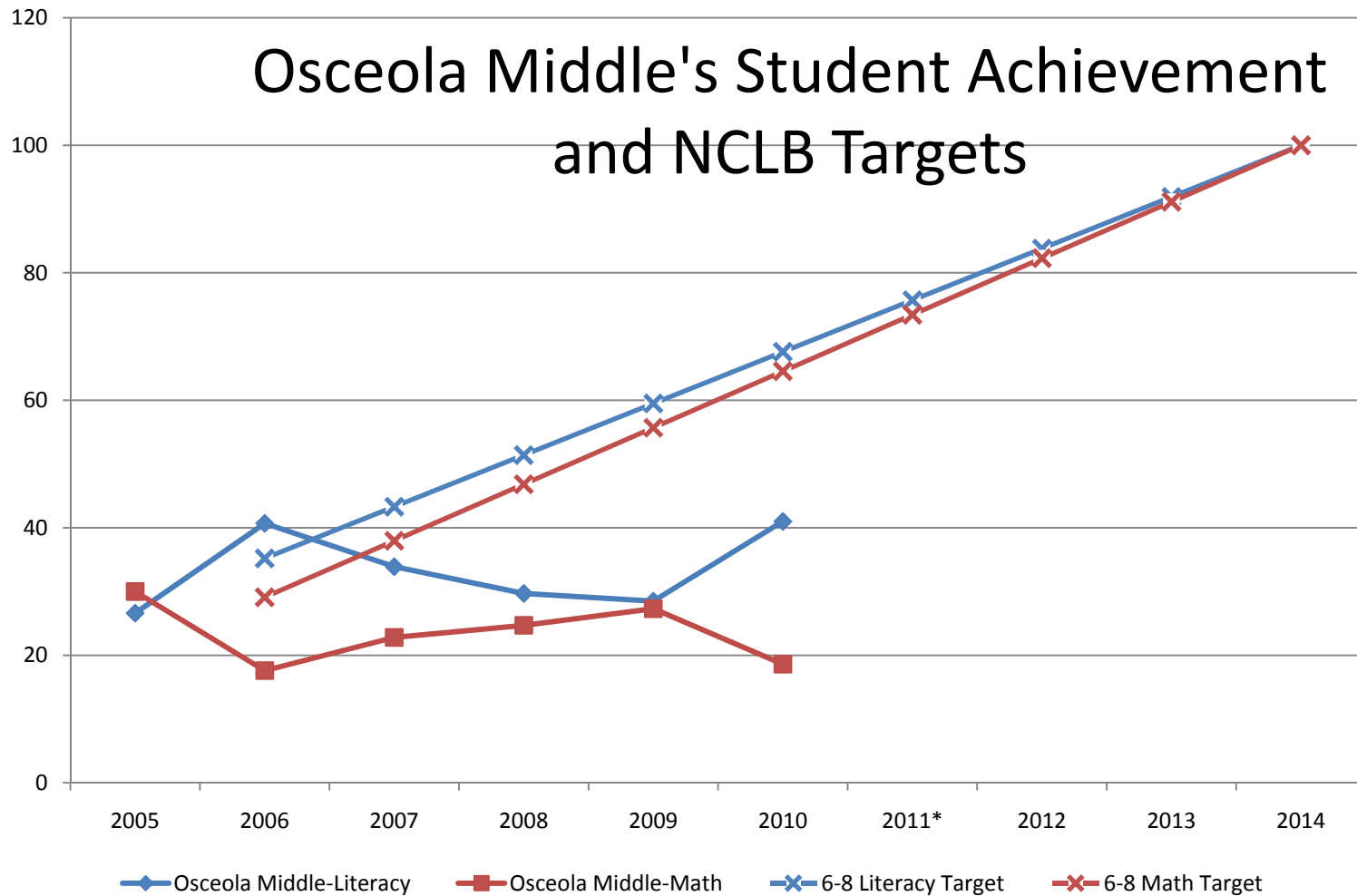


Osceola Middle School

% Proficient or Advanced



In 2010, OMS had the lowest percent proficient or advanced in math (18.6%)



- In 5th year of school improvement
- Designated “persistently lowest achieving”

Osceola Middle School, Osceola

- Serves grades 6-8
- 98% eligible for free and reduced price lunch
- 95.5% African American
- 156 students in 2011
- Declining enrollment school in a declining enrollment district



Osceola Middle's Challenges



- Superintendent: teachers not held accountable, high absenteeism rate
- District in fiscal distress from 2009-2011
- In 2010 all of Osceola's schools had accreditation violations
- Difficulty replacing superintendent because district couldn't afford to buy out contract

Charter Schools in Osceola

- Members of the community have pushed for charter schools for more than a decade.
- District opened conversion charter—ACE—in 2002 for 5th-8th grades
- Open enrollment charter—OCABS—opened in 2008 for high school students; added 7th and 8th grades in 2009
- In 2010, State Board of Education revoked ACE charter
- In 2011 the BOE revoked OCABS's charter
- The Osceola School Board is pursuing another charter



School Improvement Initiatives

- Hired JBHM: spent \$1.7 million between FY2009 and FY2011
- School received a school improvement grant of nearly \$1.3 million for FY2011 and FY2012
- Doubled JBHM consulting days to 200



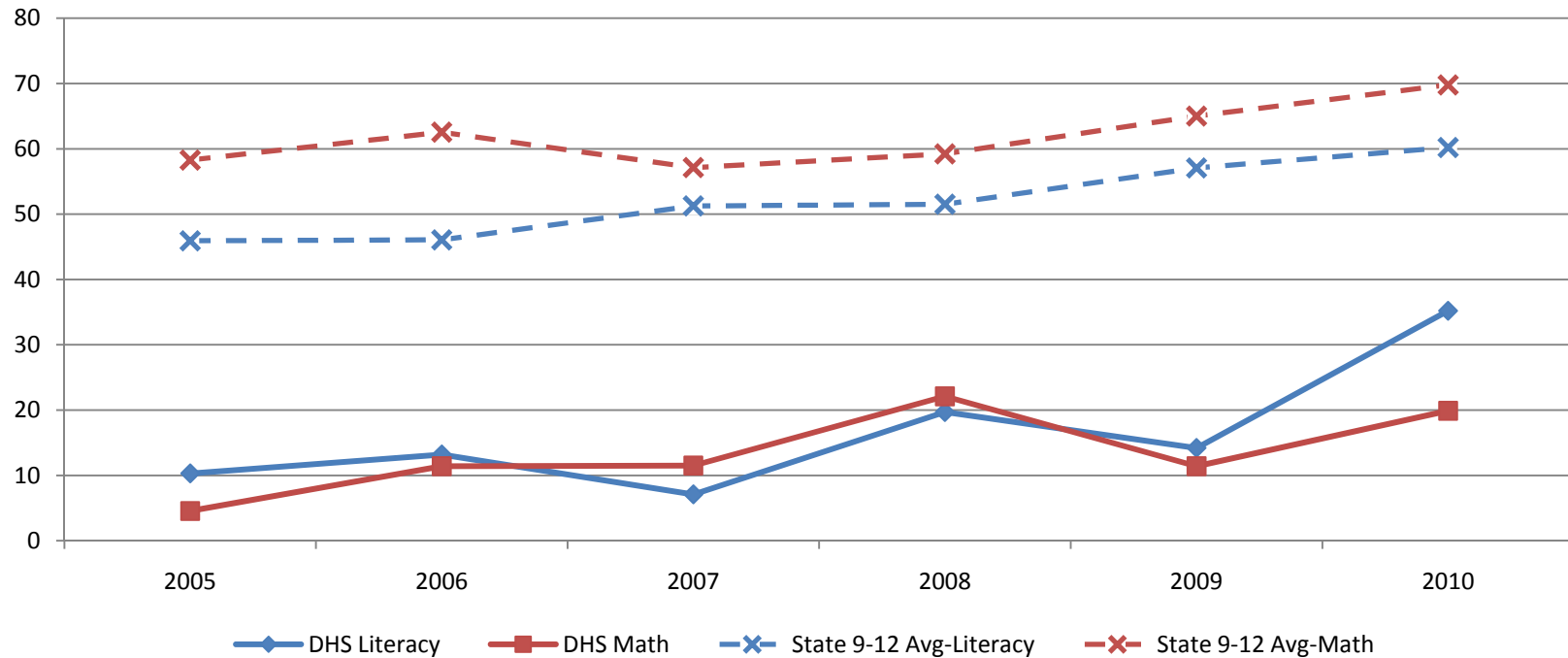
Osceola Middle's Progress



- Two years of gains in literacy scores, from 28.5% proficient in 2009 to 50% in 2011
- One year of gains in math scores: 19% proficient in 2010 and 39% in 2011

Dollarway High School

Student Achievement: % Proficient or Advanced



- In 5th year of school improvement
- Designated “persistently lowest achieving”
- In 2010, school with the second lowest percent proficient or advanced in math (20%)

Dollarway High School, Pine Bluff

- Serves grades 9-12
- 90% eligible for free and reduce price lunch
- 94% African American
- 474 students in 2011
- Declining enrollment school in a declining enrollment district



Dollarway High's Challenges

- High superintendent turnover: three superintendents in four years
- History of fiscal distress
- Dilapidated buildings
- Disorderly campus environment





Faculty Challenges



- Many teachers are disillusioned and unmotivated
- Some teachers are set in their ways and resistant to change
- High teacher absenteeism
- Many teachers discouraged by testing pressure
- Lower salaries than surrounding districts

School Improvement Initiatives

- Working with JBHM and Academic School Turnaround
- Hired literacy and math coaches
- Contracted with The Learning Institute for formative testing
- Started after-school enrichment program
- Received a School Improvement Grant of nearly \$2 million for 2011-12



Dollarway's Progress

- Two years of gains in literacy scores: from 14% proficiency in 2009 to 41% in 2011
- Two years of gains in math scores from 11% in 2009 to 26% in 2011

