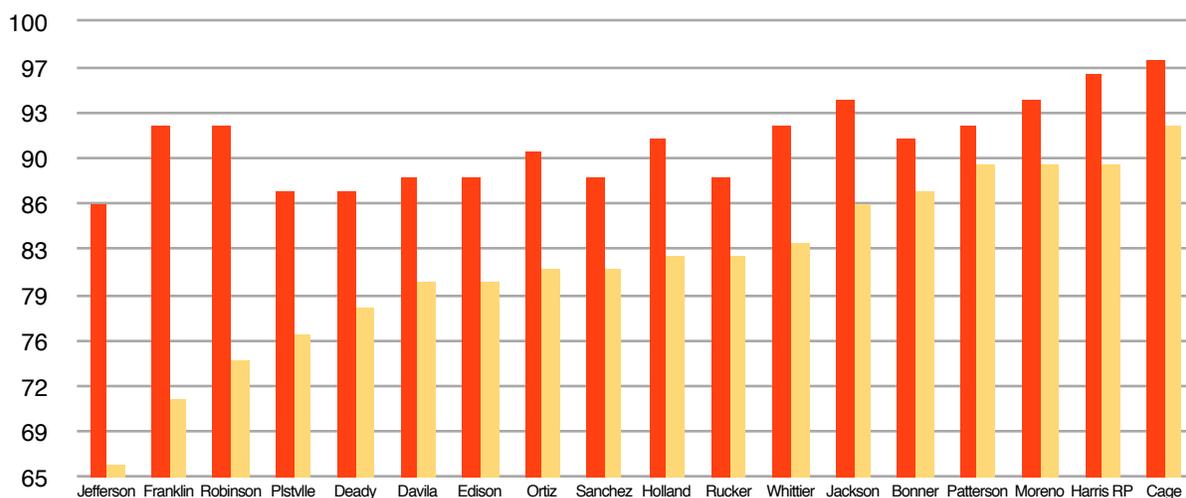


## Low Performing Schools Score Big

Houston Independent School District Case Study

In the 2009-2010 school year, the East Region administration of Houston ISD brought in Empowering Writers to improve student writing and test scores in 35 schools.

**Results: Lowest performing schools raised TAKS writing scores an average of 11.3%**



### Background

- Population of these schools consists of 94-99% minority students.
- More than 50% of the East Region's 35 schools ranked in the lower half of the entire district in 2009.
- 9 of these low performing schools ranked in the lowest 25%.
- Empowering Writers' approach needed to complement Houston ISD's existing writing program "6+1 Traits of Writing"

### Results after 7 months

- Students became better writers through learning specific skills.
- Teacher had clear strategies and lessons to correct writing deficiencies.
- Schools with the lowest performance in 2009 improved state test scores an average of more than 11.3% per school in 2010.
- **Improved commended performance on the TAKS an average of 23.7% per school.**

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## Empowering Writers Approach to Successful Implementation

### Houston Independent School District Case Study

Achieving success in district wide implementation of a curriculum requires more than just research based classroom instruction and resources. It requires experience and proven strategies to navigate the “real-world” challenges that school districts face. Empowering Writers understands these challenges and has developed proven implementation strategies for improving student writing and test scores across the district. These implementation strategies include:

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*Designing a Professional Development Strategy that Works for the District*

*Creating Accountability for Teachers*

*Providing Implementation Support for Principals*

*Working with the District Administration to Monitor Progress*

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### HISD’s East Region’s Implementation

After meeting with the East Region’s administration, Empowering Writers designed a comprehensive professional development plan for the 2009-2010 school year. This comprehensive plan provided professional development for teachers and specialists, follow up coaching for designated schools, and implementation strategies and support for principals and administration.

#### Professional Development Workshops

Teachers and specialists attended one of Empowering Writers narrative, expository, or kindergarten-1st grade workshops in August. These workshops provided the attendees with an understanding of the proven methodology and lessons for improving their writing instruction. Workshops were offered throughout the school year.

#### Coaching

EW provided monthly bulletins for each grade level which outlined the scope of instruction for the month.

The administration designated schools for follow-up work with EW trainers. This coaching included in-school visits throughout the year for modeling lessons and working with teachers. Teachers were able to receive one-to-one mentoring.

#### Principals

East Region principals received a 90 minute workshop on how to monitor and support implementation in their schools. Each principal received a implementation guide containing simple strategies to ensure proper instruction is taking place.

#### Monitoring Progress

Teachers were required to submit student samples to EW’s training team. By looking at student work, EW assessed the quality of writing instruction at each school and provided explicit instruction for improvement. This approach enabled the administration and EW to address problem areas immediately and keep proper implementation on track.