

# Castle South Middle School

## School Improvement Plan

2012-2013



### Committee Members

James Hood, Principal

James Flener, Assistant Principal

Mike Rust, Counselor

Erin Stalling, Teacher

Miranda Rideout, Special Education Teacher

Gina Scales, Teacher

Aimee Johnson, Teacher

Anne Loge, Chairperson/Teacher

Chrissy Hardin, Teacher

Travis Strange, Teacher

Tom Martin, Teacher

Sarah Stuart, Teacher

Susan Fouts, Parent/PTO

Kristin Griffin, Parent/PTO

# Castle South Middle School School Improvement Plan

Prepared in Compliance with Indiana Public Law 221  
(August 24, 2012)

This school improvement plan is submitted on behalf of Castle South Middle School. It was prepared under the leadership of the building principal working in cooperation with the school improvement committee appointed in compliance with Indiana Public Law 221. The plan is structured using the guidelines provided in rules approved by the Indiana State Board of Education. It is the goal of Castle South to provide for continuous improvement in student achievement. This plan is a statement to the community as to how the staff at Castle South Middle School expects to fulfill that commitment in the coming years.

## *I. Introduction*

### *A. Narrative Description of School, Community, and Educational Program*

Castle South Middle School is located at 3711 Casey Road in Newburgh, Indiana, and is a part of Ohio Township in Warrick County, which for many years has been one of the fastest growing townships in Indiana. Construction began on the building in 2008, and the school opened its doors for the 2009-2010 school year. Situated on a 24.5 acre site, the school consists of 142,000 square feet and houses grades six, seven and eight with a student population of 725. Castle South Middle School is a suburban school that serves students from low to middle to upper level income families. Twenty-six percent of the student population receives textbook assistance and free/reduced lunches. Approximately 87 percent of the student population is Caucasian, four percent multiracial, three percent black, three percent Hispanic, and three percent Asian.

At CSMS there are 39 certified staff members of which 72% have their master's degree. All of the teaching staff instruct in areas in which they are licensed. Also on staff are custodians, cafeteria workers, two secretaries, a media specialist, assistant principal, part-time computer technician, part-time computer coordinator, 3 remediation aides, a part-time athletic director, a registered nurse two and a half days a week and a health aide two and a half days a week, one counselor, a school social worker, nine special education aides, and an English as a Second Language instructor.

In an effort to stimulate and challenge students, Castle South Middle School offers a variety of courses of study ranging from intermediate to honors classes in math, language arts, science, and social studies. These classes are offered to all students in a team format. In addition, CSMS offers a self-contained life skills room. Also, an array of non-core curriculum courses provides students with a well-rounded education. These courses, known as Encore Classes, include general, vocal and instrumental music, art, industrial technology, health, physical education, language arts and math remediation, and curriculum enrichment, such as German on the 8<sup>th</sup> grade level, and computer skills on all grade levels.

Numerous clubs and athletic teams provide students with an opportunity to engage in additional activities, which enable students to receive a well-balanced education. Co-curricular events include vocal and instrumental contests and pep and jazz band. Extra-curricular activities are comprised of cheerleading, basketball, volleyball, football, track, wrestling, intramurals, dance team, student council, newspaper, yearbook, robotics team, Math Counts, Book Wars, honors art, and academic bowl.

### ***B. Curriculum-Description and Location***

The Castle South Middle School curriculum is closely tied to the curriculum for the entire corporation. It is based on and aligned with the standards adopted by the Indiana State Board of Education. Teachers at CSMS, under the direction of the building principal, provide enrichment of the curriculum with the assistance of district-wide personnel.

Copies of the curriculum and school improvement plan for Castle South Middle School are available in the media center and at the Warrick County School Corporation offices in Boonville, Indiana.

### ***C. Assessments-Used in addition to ISTEP+***

In addition to ISTEP+, many varied assessments are used at CSMS. Acuity (a McGraw-Hill Internet-based predictive and diagnostic assessment) tests all students four times a year in math, language arts, science and social studies for mastery on selected state standards that are directly correlated with ISTEP+. Algebra I students take the algebra Acuity exam. Those students who do not master the assessments are remediated on selected areas of weakness that are based upon the results of the predictive Acuity test. In addition to Acuity, CSMS administers the on-line Star Math and Star Reading tests that are part of the Accelerated Reader program which was developed and is maintained by Renaissance Learning. The first exam establishes a baseline math score and reading level, and the end of year exam will show if the students have made any gains in their math and reading levels. Also, Castle South administers the state of Indiana's on-line end of course assessment for Algebra 1, and alternative and authentic evaluations which include but are not limited to rubrics, teacher-created tests, national Olympiad assessments, speeches and other projects and products. Formative and summative diagnostic tests complete the assessment program.

## ***II. Statement of Mission, Vision, and Beliefs***

### ***A. Warrick County School Corporation Goals***

- Provide safe, healthy, and orderly schools that foster student learning and demonstration of appropriate behavior.
- Establish clear, rigorous, and relevant academic standards for all students, as well as high expectations of accountability and responsibility for all staff and faculty.
- Empower and engage all stakeholders to create a shared vision for continuous improvement of education and life-long learning.
- Effectively integrate technology into the curriculum to enhance student learning and educational achievement.
- Provide all employees continuous professional development opportunities aligned with Corporation and school goals.
- Align all available resources so that every investment of time, energy, effort, and funding maximize educational achievement.

***B. Castle South Middle School Mission Statement***

The mission of the Castle South Middle School community is to ensure the success of every student in a safe, nurturing environment that maintains high expectations which address and accommodate students' academic, physical, and social needs, provides a firm foundation for continued learning, and fosters a partnership with all school stakeholders.

**C. Castle South Middle School's slogan:**

**C**reating **S**uccessful **M**otivated **S**tudents through a safe and nurturing environment!



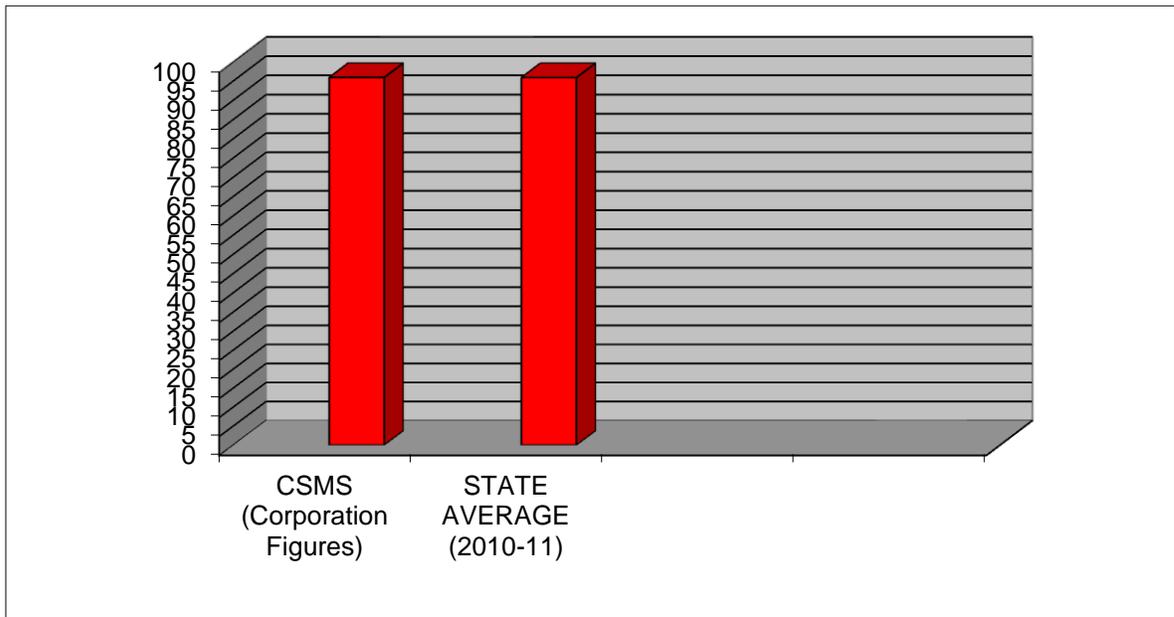
#### *D. Castle South Middle School Beliefs*

Our school values. . .

- ***SAFETY AND HEALTH:*** An effective classroom has the necessary physical materials and supplies to support a safe, secure and healthy learning environment.
- ***INNOVATION:*** An effective faculty is an innovative team whose members celebrate and support one another in an effort to create a student-centered atmosphere conducive to learning.
- ***ACADEMICS:*** A quality instructional program is educationally researched, effectively implemented and regularly evaluated to meet the academic needs of all students.
- ***MENTORS:*** A good school values all students and staff, thus creating an atmosphere in which staff can mentor students to function responsibly by using information to the best of his/her ability to promote personal growth.
- ***CHARACTER:*** A successful student embraces lifelong learning through intellectual and personal growth based upon the six pillars of character: citizenship, trustworthiness, responsibility, respect, caring and fairness.
- ***ENRICHMENT:*** A good teacher is knowledgeable, flexible, and through encouragement and enthusiasm creates an enriching, student-centered atmosphere conducive to learning.

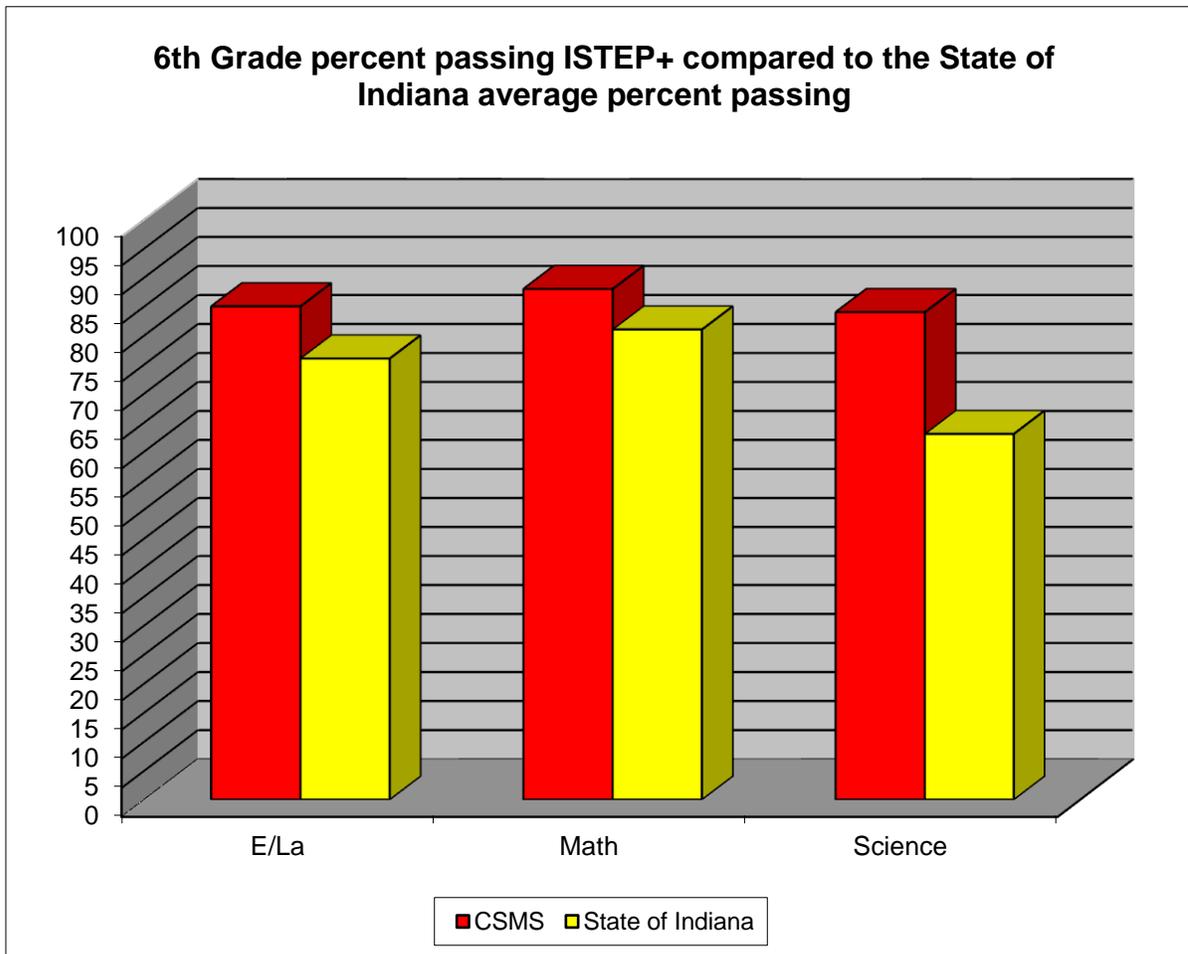
**III. Summary of Data, Derived from an Assessment of the Current Status of Educational Programming**

**A. Data, including Graphs, from the Annual Performance Report.**

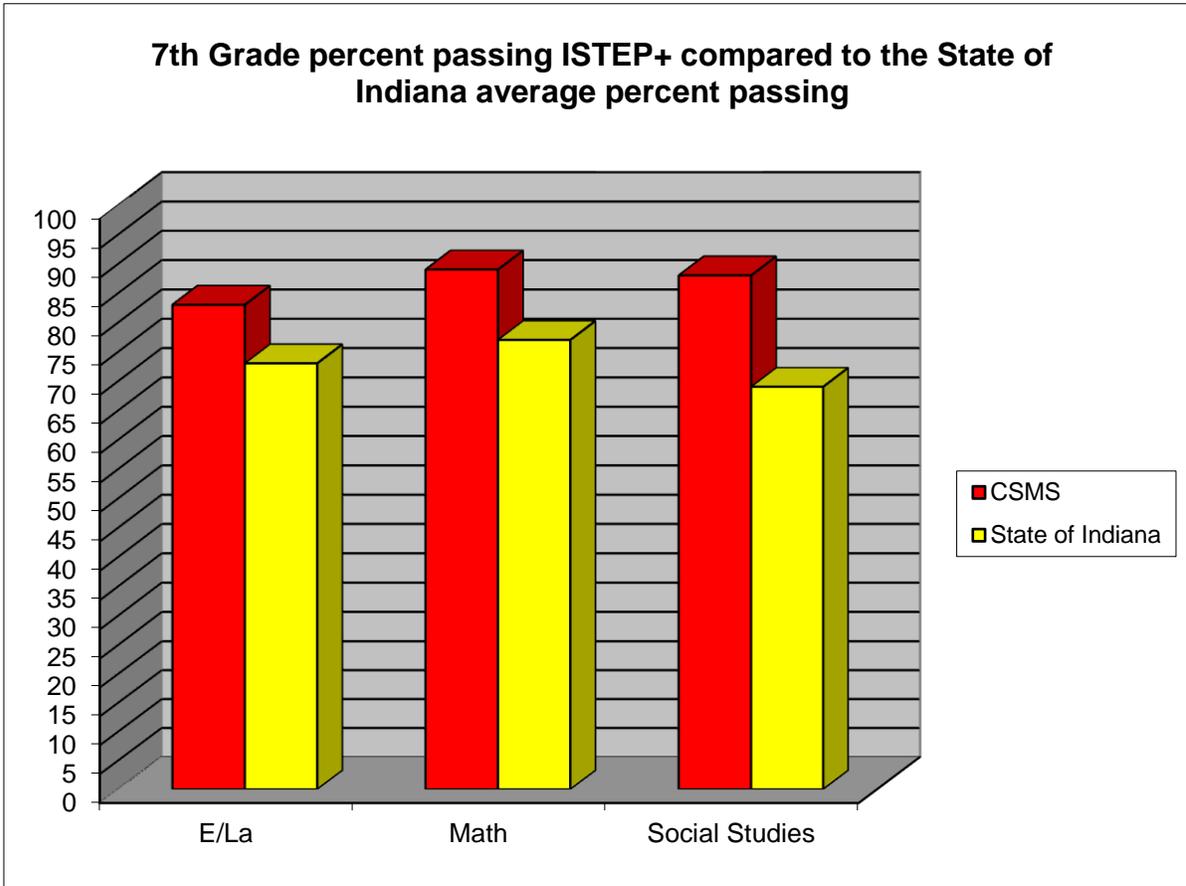


The average attendance rate for the 2011-2012 school year at Castle South Middle School was 95.93%. The Indiana statewide average attendance in the 2011-2012 school year was 95.9%, so CSMS has slightly exceeded the state average on daily attendance.

The next three graphs show the percent of students passing the ISTEP+ by area tested and grade level as compared to the statewide results in the 2010-2011 school year.

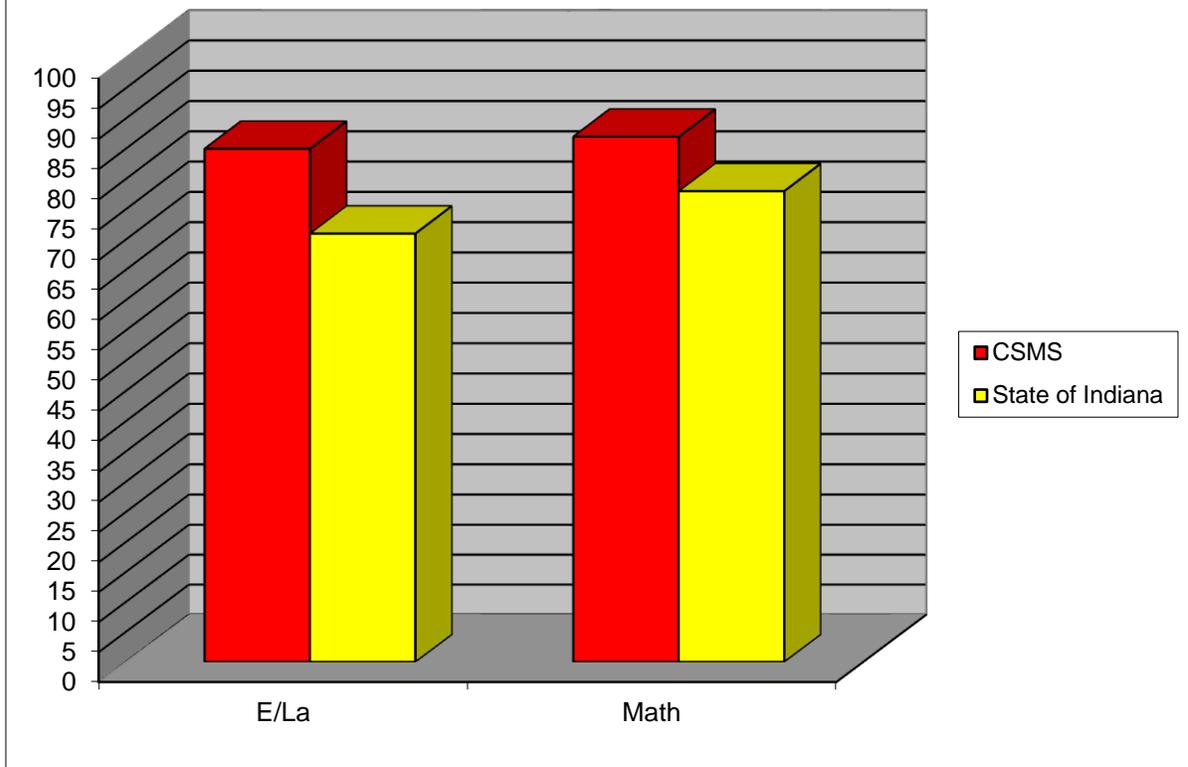


6<sup>th</sup> Grade English/Language Arts had a 85% passing rate compared to the statewide average of 76%. Mathematics had a 88% passing rate compared to the statewide average of 81%. Science had a 84% passing rate compared to the statewide average of 63%.



7<sup>th</sup> Grade English/Language Arts had a 83% passing rate compared to the statewide average of 73%. Mathematics had a 89% passing rate compared to the statewide average of 77%. Social Studies had an 88% passing rate compared to the statewide average of 69%.

### 8th Grade percent passing ISTEP+ compared to the State of Indiana average percent passing



8<sup>th</sup> Grade English/Language Arts had an 85% passing rate compared to the statewide average of 71% and Mathematics had an 87% passing compared to the statewide average of 78%.

#### ***B. Other Information about Educational Programming and the Learning Environment.***

The counseling department in conjunction with principal directed initiatives is providing Castle South Middle School with an extensive array of educational programs. These programs provide students with an opportunity to be involved in educational activities outside the regular classroom and affect all facets of a child's life. These programs include but are not limited to a career unit, college preparation, and various guest speakers addressing such topics as suicide prevention, drugs and alcohol, self-esteem, peer pressure and motivation.

Other educational programming instituted by the building principal and guided by teachers includes: academic bowl, spelling bee, science fair, invention convention, and band, music and choir competitions.

#### ***IV. Conclusions about Educational Programming Derived from an Assessment of the Current Status of Educational Programming.***

##### ***A. Curriculum and how it supports the Achievement of the Indiana Academic Standards***

The Castle South Middle School curriculum is closely tied to the curriculum for the Warrick County School Corporation. It is aligned with the standards adopted by the Indiana State Board of Education. A committee for the corporation reviews textbooks on the state adoption list to ensure that the proposed textbook is also aligned with Indiana's academic standards. Curriculum alignment is on-going in all departments. In addition, teaming of core classes ensures that cross-curricular connections are made among math, science, language arts and social studies.

##### ***B. Instructional Strategies that Support the Achievement of Indiana Academic Standards***

Teachers continually update their curriculum to ensure that all standards are being addressed in their lesson plans as well as in actual instruction. Departmental and team discussions are held to identify gaps and discuss strategies for integration of the curriculum through both vertical and horizontal planning. Teachers use effective instructional strategies daily in their classrooms, including but not limited to, the use of Simple Six, Hands-on Equations, Word within the Word, and differentiated instruction. Also, the Castle South Middle School staff and administration continue to use the above data from Acuity and ISTEP+ to better serve learners by coordinating curriculum issues, and questions regarding transitions, major initiatives and benchmarks at the school level.

##### ***C. Assessment of Student Achievement based on ISTEP+ and other Assessment Strategies***

According to the Indiana Department of Education, "Public Law 221 (P.L. 221) is Indiana's comprehensive accountability system for K-12 education. Passed by the Indiana General Assembly in 1999 (prior to the federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001), the law aimed to establish major educational reform and accountability statewide. To measure progress, P.L. 221 places all Indiana schools . . . . into one of five categories based upon student performance and improvement data from the state's ISTEP+ and End-of-Course Assessments.

- A (Exemplary Progress)
- B (Commendable Progress)
- C (Academic Progress)
- D (Academic Watch – Priority)
- F (Academic Probation – High Priority)

Castle South Middle School for the second year in a row has been designated an A school for showing Exemplary Progress in the number of students who mastered the ISTEP+ and who also showed growth on the state test. In addition, the Indiana Department of Education “uses a statistical model to calculate each student’s progress, or growth, on state assessments. The Growth Model [is] used to display students, school and district results [on the ISTEP+]. The Student Growth Percentile method assesses the growth of every student by comparing individual students to students who begin at similar levels of achievement to determine relative growth over time. The goal is to focus on the outputs of education and expect progress from all students, not just those close to passing.” Castle South Middle School, in 2010 showed “lower growth and higher achievement” on the aforementioned Growth Model in both math and English/Language Arts. In 2011, CSMS made great strides and showed “higher growth and higher achievement on Indiana’s Growth Model in both math and English/Language Arts.

The state assessment program in place at Castle South Middle School is the ISTEP+ for grades six, seven and eight. In the school year of 2011-2012, 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students attained levels that exceeded the state average ISTEP+ scores in language arts and mathematics. 6<sup>th</sup> graders also exceeded state average scores in science and the 7<sup>th</sup> grade exceeded the state average score in social studies. The Pass+ designation on the ISTEP indicates that a student not only met, but exceeded the standards for a particular grade level. The percentage of Castle South Middle School 6<sup>th</sup> grade students who were in the Pass+ range on ISTEP in English/Language Arts was 32% an improvement of 7% from the 2010-2011 school year, and in math 22% were Pass+ (an improvement of 11% from the previous year). In 6<sup>th</sup> grade science 39% were in the Pass+ range. In the 7<sup>th</sup> grade 19% of students scored in the Pass+ range of ISTEP in English/Language Arts (a decrease of 8 percentage points) and 36% scored in the Pass+ range in math (an improvement of 5 percentage points). In 7<sup>th</sup> grade social studies, 44% scored in the Pass+ range. In 8<sup>th</sup> grade, 15% of students in English/Language Arts (a decrease of 1%) and 26% of students in math (a decrease of 4%) scored in the Pass+ range on the ISTEP.

Students who did not master either Math or E/LA or both on the ISTEP+ in 2011 were placed in a Remediation class for a semester during the 2011-2012 school year. Depending upon a student’s schedule he/she was placed in remediation with a classroom teacher during the regular school day; or with a remediation during homeroom or Flex period; or with the resource teacher if he/she were a self-contained special education student. The charts on the next page show the results of the remediation program.

2011-2012 ISTEP+ REMEDIATION RESULTS				
	English/Language Arts		Mathematics	
6 <sup>th</sup> Grade	Total PASS	% PASS	Total PASS	% PASS
Teacher Remediation	5 out of 9	55%	2 out of 5	40%
Remediation Aide	1 out of 2	50%	0	0
Special Ed. Resource	2 out of 11	18%	2 out of 10	0%
Total for Grade 6	8 out of 22	36%	2 out of 10	20%

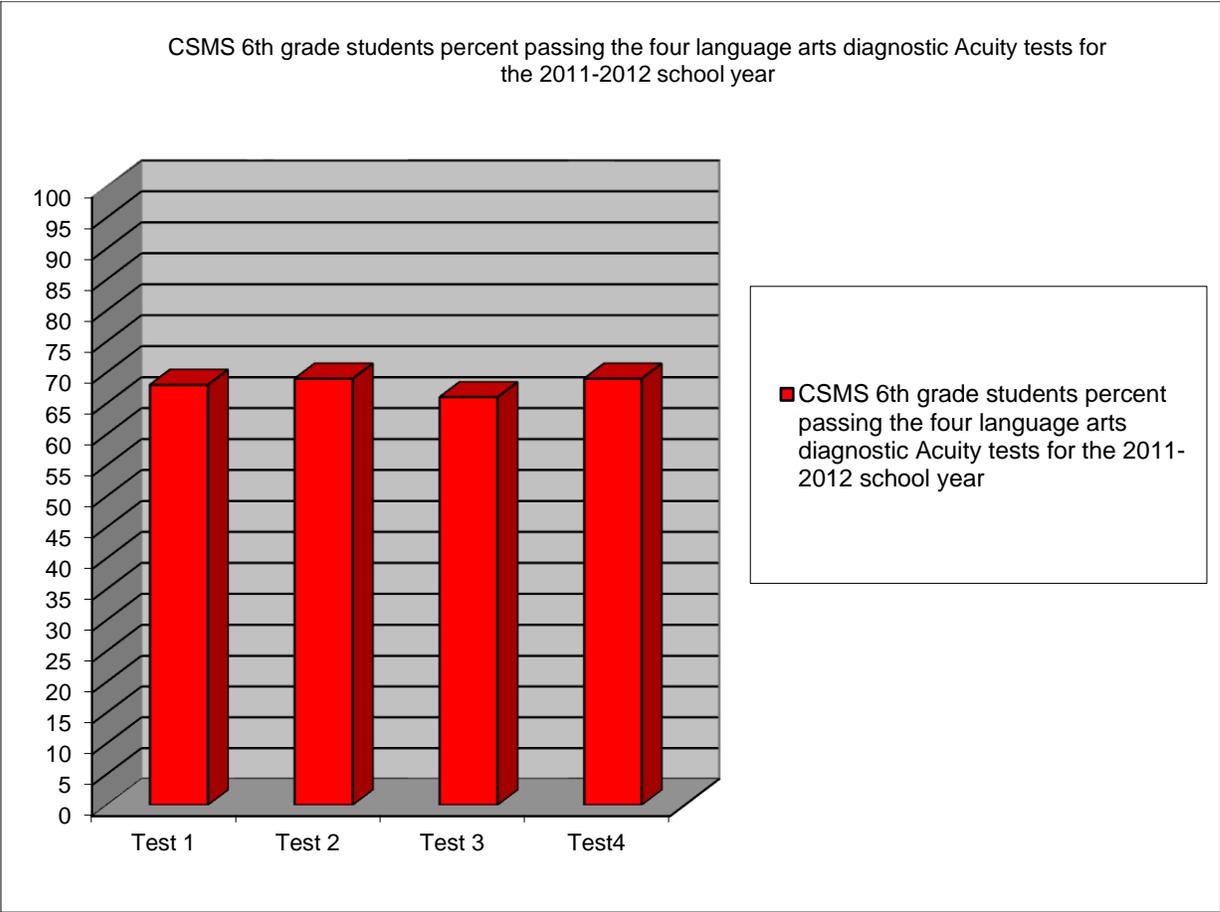
2011-2012 ISTEP+ REMEDIATION RESULTS				
	English/Language Arts		Mathematics	
7 <sup>th</sup> Grade	Total PASS	% PASS	Total PASS	% PASS
Teacher Remediation	10 out of 20	50%	9 out of 15	60%
Remediation Aide	2 out of 5	40%	4 out of 8	50%
Special Ed. Resource	2 out of 11	18%	4 out of 8	50%
Total for Grade 7	14 out of 36	39%	17 out of 31	55%

2011-2012 ISTEP+ REMEDIATION RESULTS				
	English/Language Arts		Mathematics	
8 <sup>th</sup> Grade	Total PASS	% PASS	Total PASS	% PASS
Teacher Remediation	8 out of 11	73%	6 out of 8	75%
Remediation Aide	2 out of 3	67%	1 out of 2	50%
Special Ed. Resource	3 out of 10	30%	3 out of 11	27%
Total for Grade 8	13 out of 24	54%	10 out of 21	48%

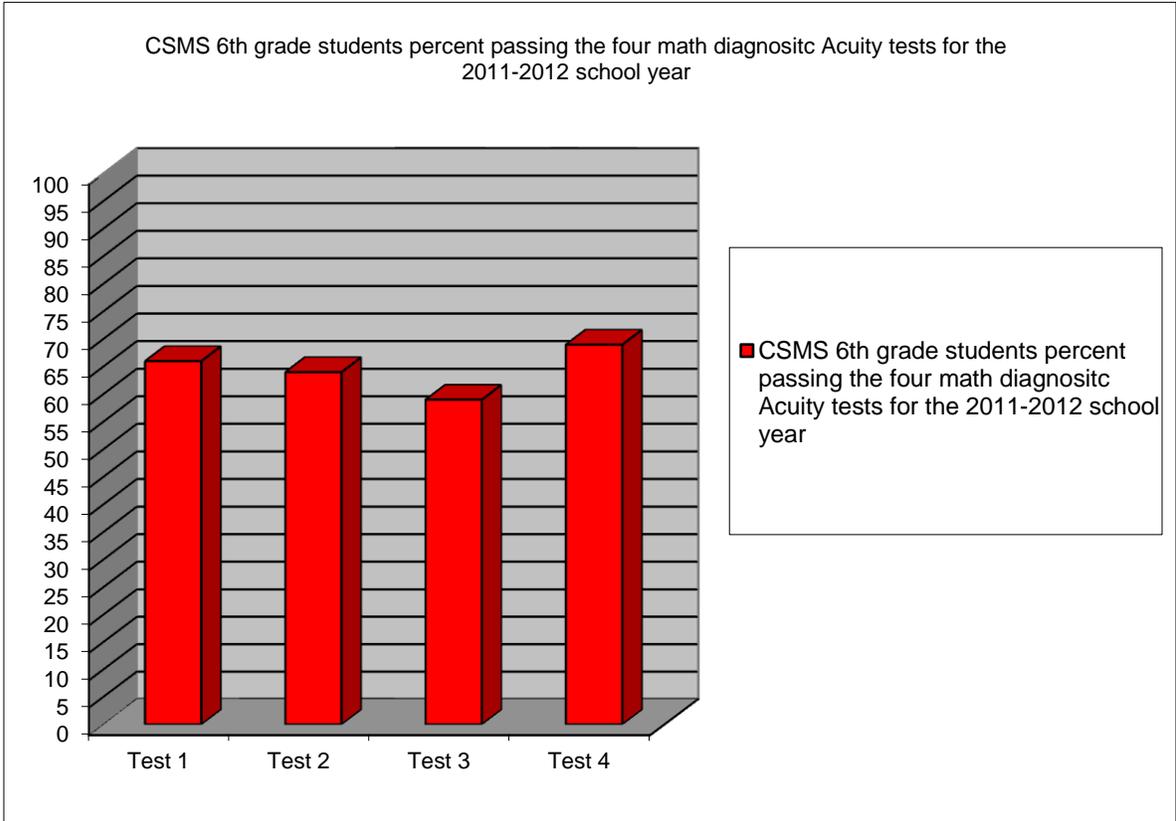
2011-2012 ISTEP+ REMEDIATION RESULTS				
	English/Language Arts		Mathematics	
All Grades	Total PASS	% PASS	Total PASS	% PASS
Teacher Remediation	23 out of 40	57.5%	17 out of 28	60.70%
Remediation Aide	5 out of 10	50%	5 out of 10	50%
Special Ed. Resource	7 out of 32	21.8%	7 out of 24	29%
Total for All Grades	35 out of 82	42.60%	29 out of 62	46.70%

Currently Castle South Middle School administers the Acuity testing program in grades 6 through 8. CTB/McGraw Hill states that the Acuity program “allow(s) teachers to quickly diagnose student achievement and predict student outcomes while creating targeted instructional opportunities at the student and classroom levels.” During the 2011-2012 school year CSMS administered the diagnostic portion of Acuity to all of its students. The Diagnostic Assessments test students cumulative knowledge gained in each of the four Core classes per quarter. An Acuity Predictive B test was also administered to those students who failed ISTEP+ the previous school year and/or were on the “bubble” (within 10 points) of the benchmark score for passing the ISTEP+ test. The Predictive Assessment accurately predicts if a student will pass or fail the ISTEP+. The Algebra I students take three predictive tests provided by Acuity. In the 2011-2012 school year 100% of students passed the End of Course Assessment test for Algebra I.

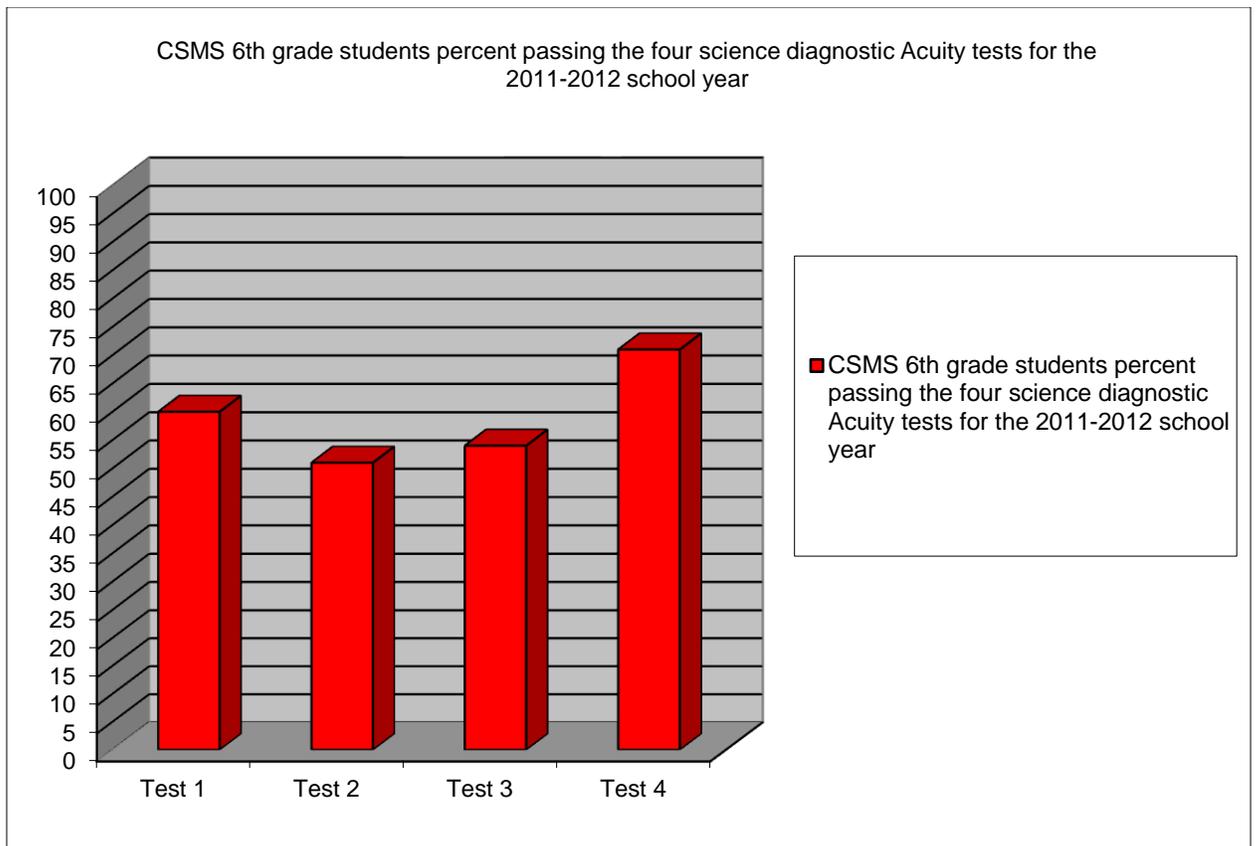
The graphs on pages 14 -25 show the Acuity test data by grade and subject area for each of the four Diagnostic Tests given throughout the school year.



The graph above shows the percentage of students who passed the four Diagnostic tests administered in English/Language Arts in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade. On Test 1, 68% students exceeded expectations; on Test 2, 69% of students mastered the Acuity; and on Tests 3 & 4, the percentage of students who passed the Acuity was 66% and 69%.

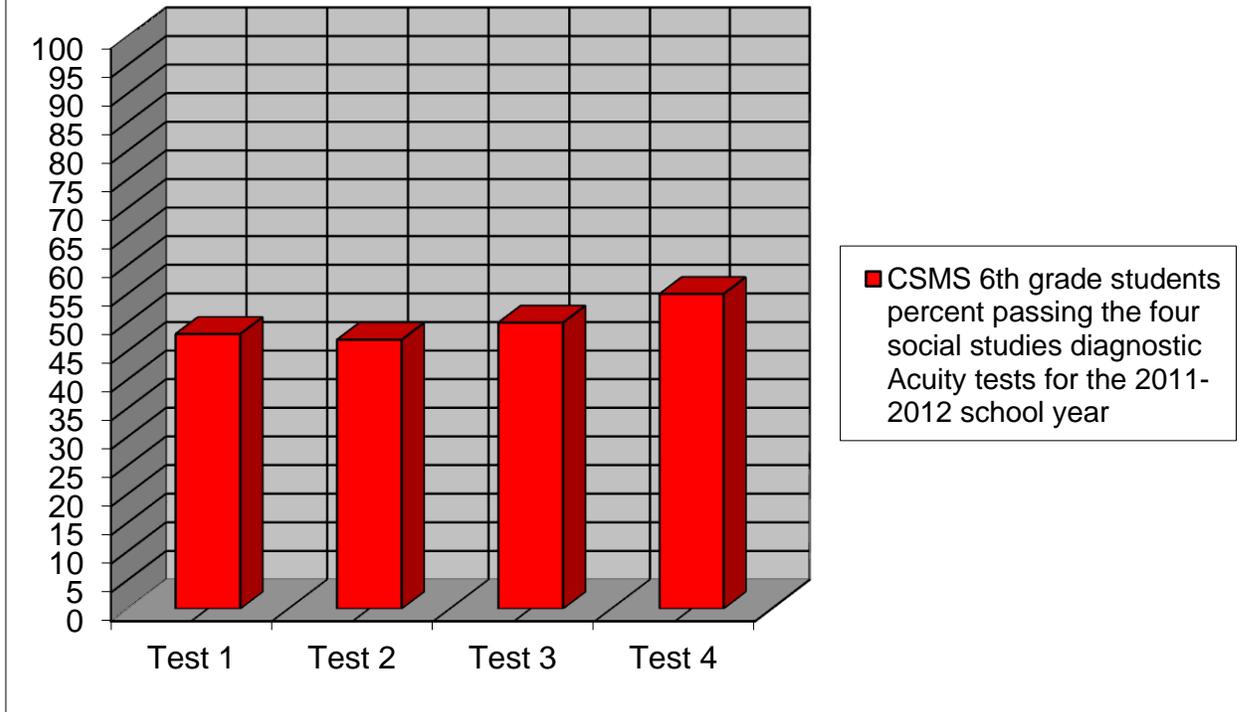


The graph above shows the percentage of students who passed the four Diagnostic tests administered in Mathematics in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade. On Test 1, 66% students exceeded expectations; on Test 2, 64% of students mastered the Acuity; and on Tests 3 & 4, the percentage of students who passed the Acuity was 59% and 69%.

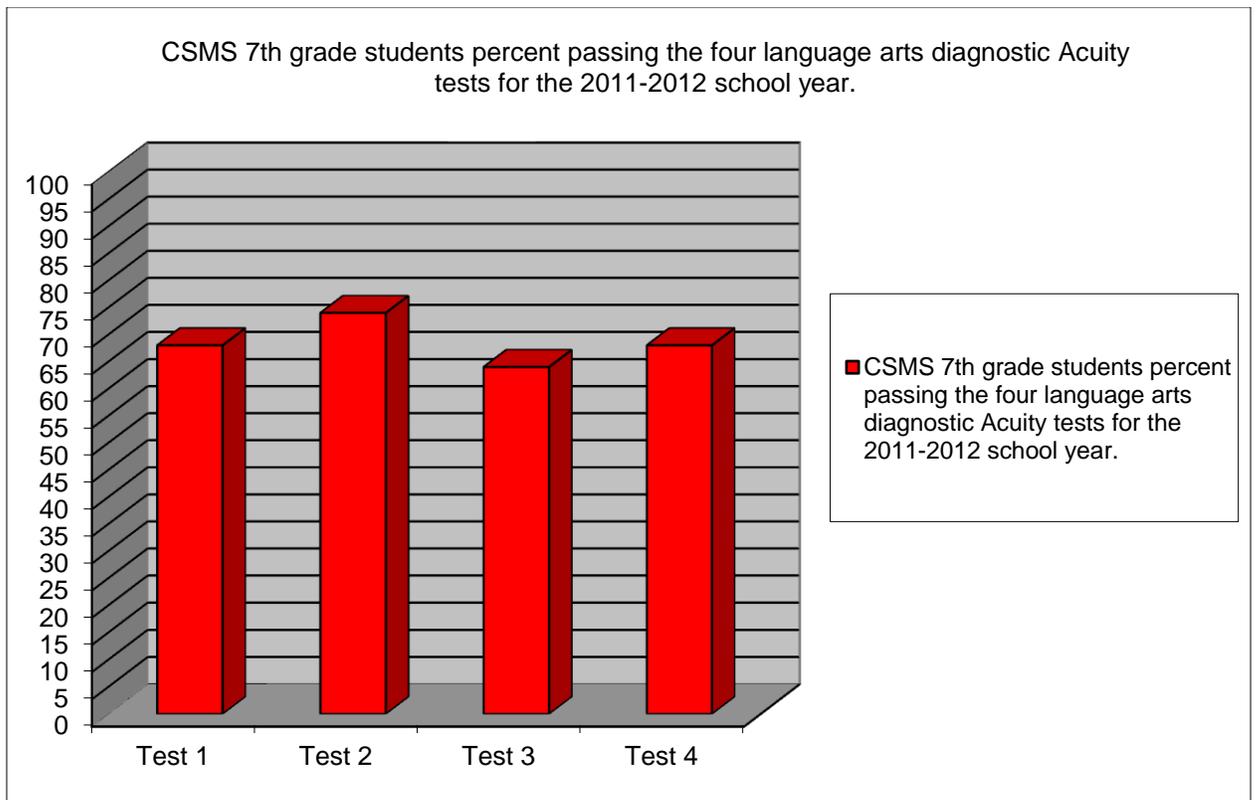


The graph above shows the percentage of students who passed the four Diagnostic tests administered in Science in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade. On Test 1, 60% students exceeded expectations; on Test 2, 51% of students mastered the Acuity; and on Tests 3 & 4, the percentage of students who passed the Acuity was 54% and 71%.

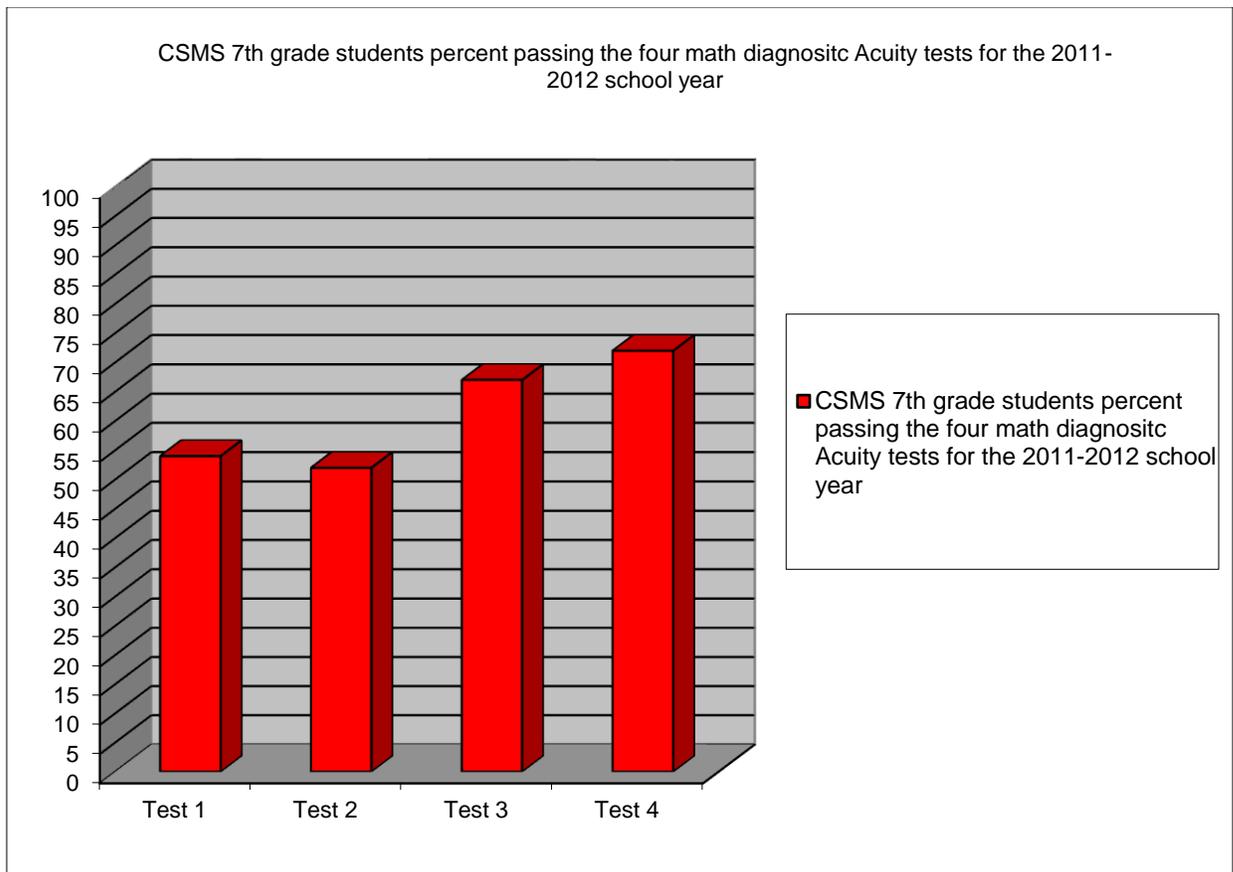
CSMS 6th grade students percent passing the four social studies diagnostic Acuity tests for the 2011-2012 school year



The graph above shows the percentage of students who passed the four Diagnostic tests administered in Social Studies in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade. On Test 1, 48% students exceeded expectations; on Test 2, 47% of students mastered the Acuity; and on Tests 3 & 4, the percentage of students who passed the Acuity was 50% and 55%.

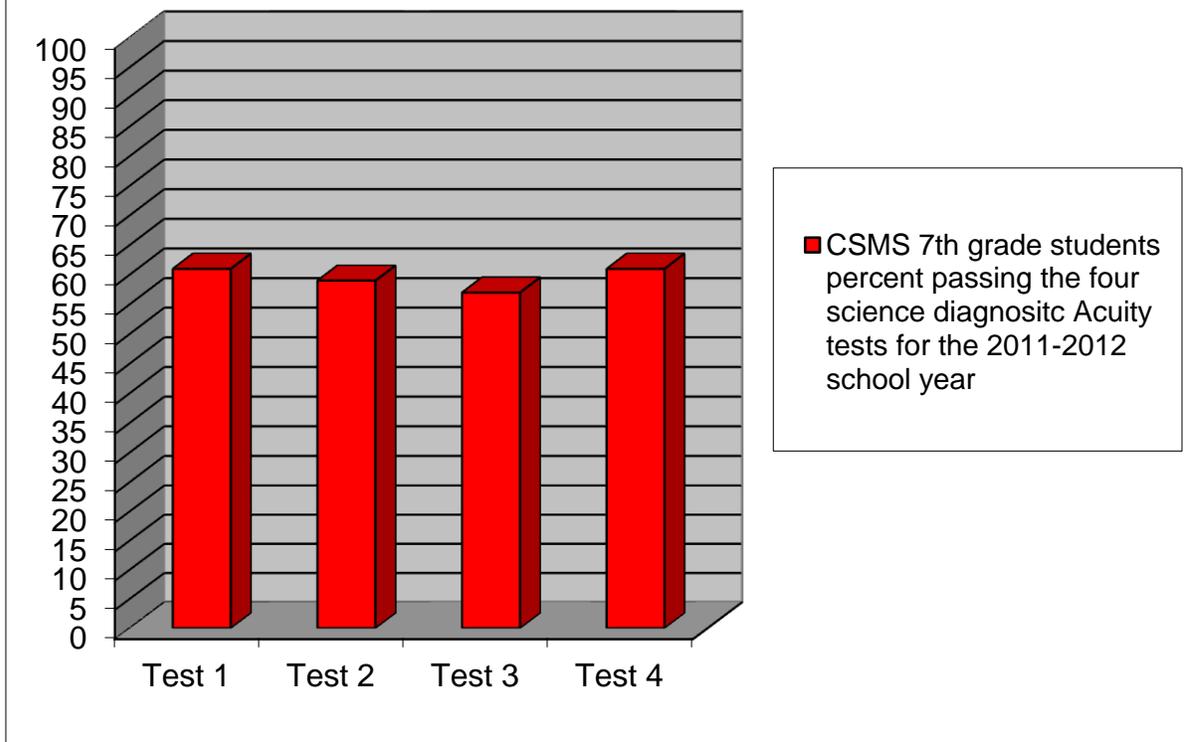


The graph above shows the percentage of students who passed the four Diagnostic tests administered in English/Language Arts in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade. On Test 1, 68% students exceeded expectations; on Test 2, 74% of students mastered the Acuity; and on Tests 3 & 4, the percentage of students who passed the Acuity was 66% and 68%.



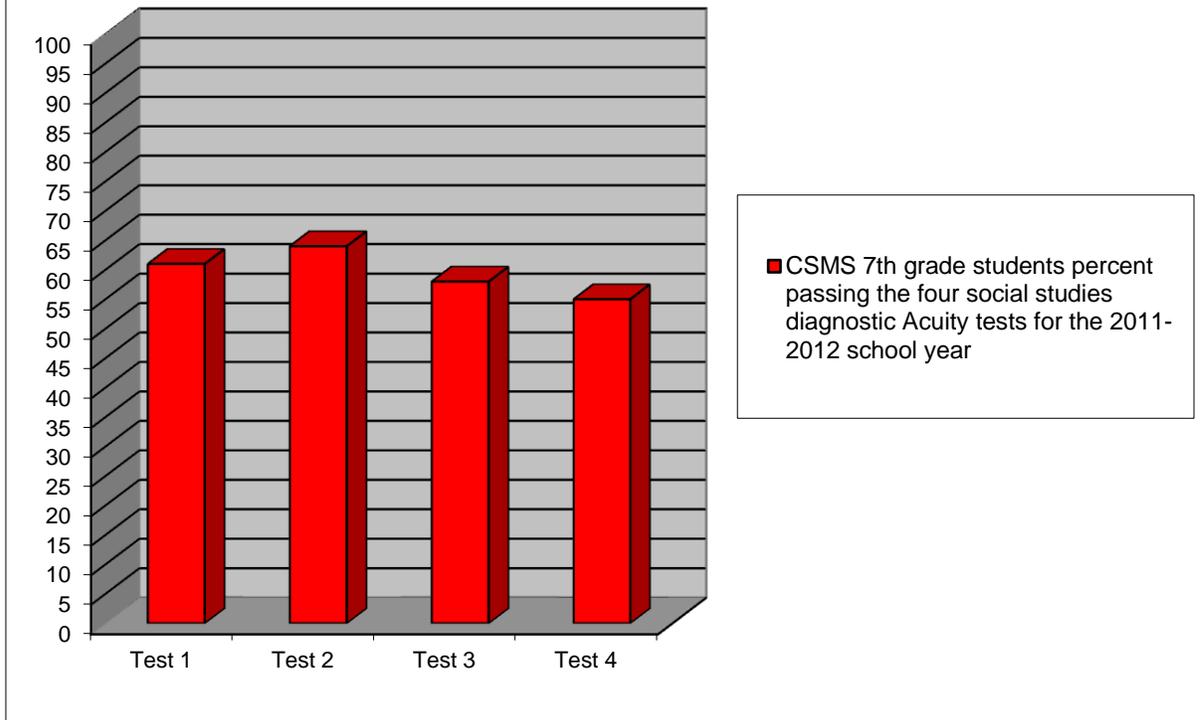
The graph above shows the percentage of students who passed the four Diagnostic tests administered in Mathematics in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade. On Test 1, 54% students exceeded expectations; on Test 2, 52% of students mastered the Acuity; and on Tests 3 & 4, the percentage of students who passed the Acuity was 67% and 72%.

CSMS 7th grade students percent passing the four science diagnostic Acuity tests for the 2011-2012 school year

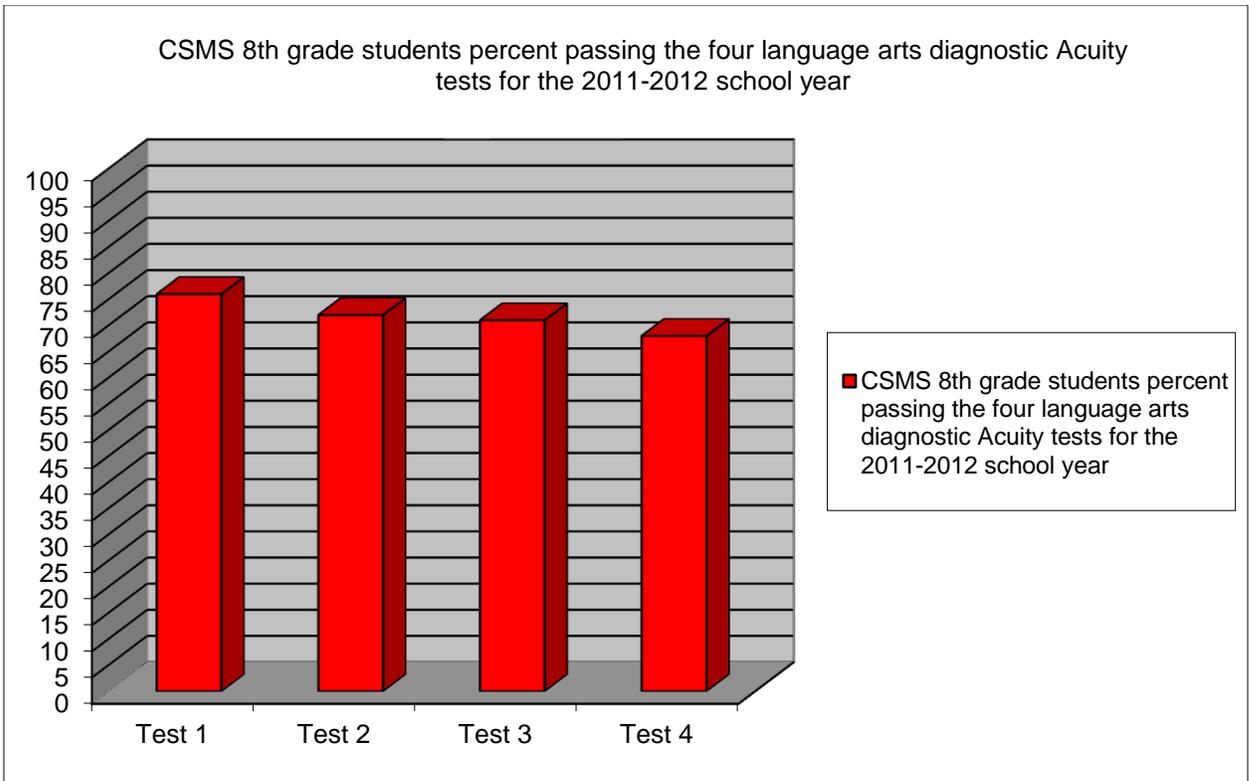


The graph above shows the percentage of students who passed the four Diagnostic tests administered in Science in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade. On Test 1, 61% students exceeded expectations; on Test 2, 59% of students mastered the Acuity; and on Tests 3 & 4, the percentage of students who passed the Acuity was 57% and 61%.

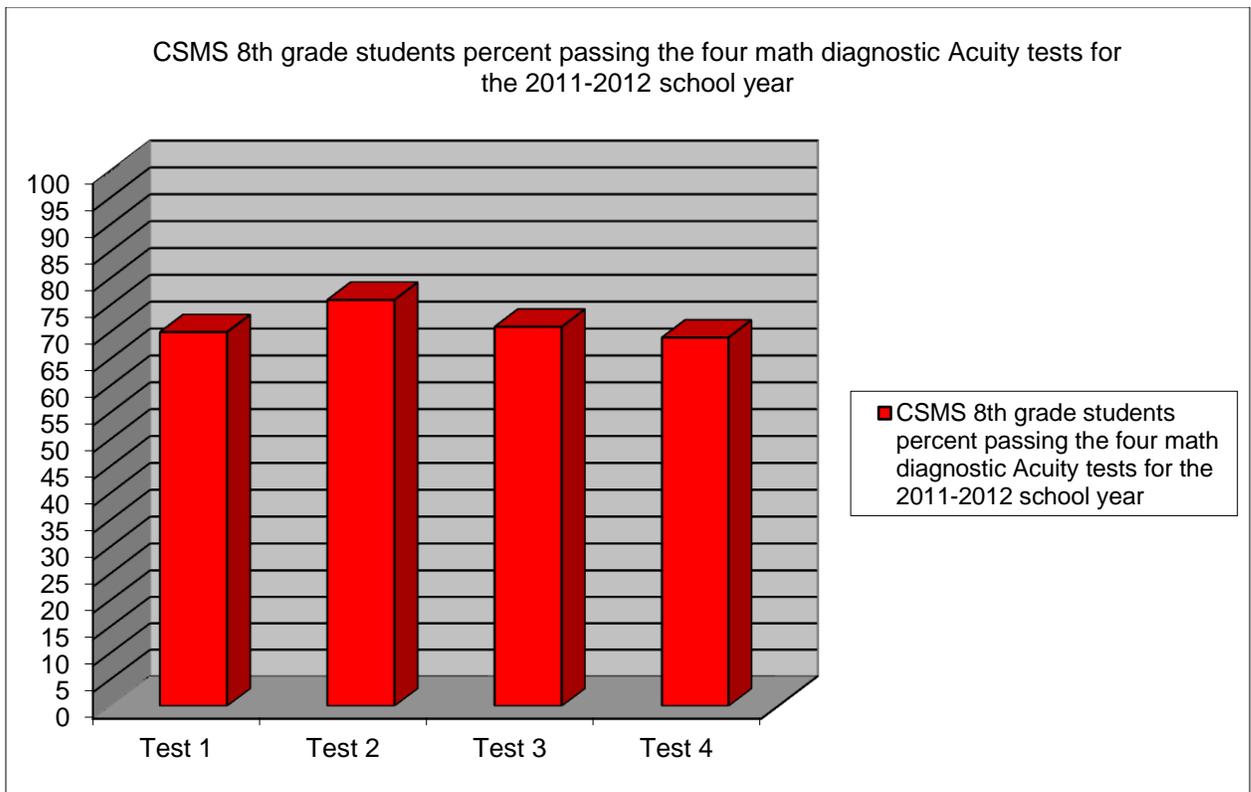
CSMS 7th grade students percent passing the four social studies diagnostic Acuity tests for the 2011-2012 school year



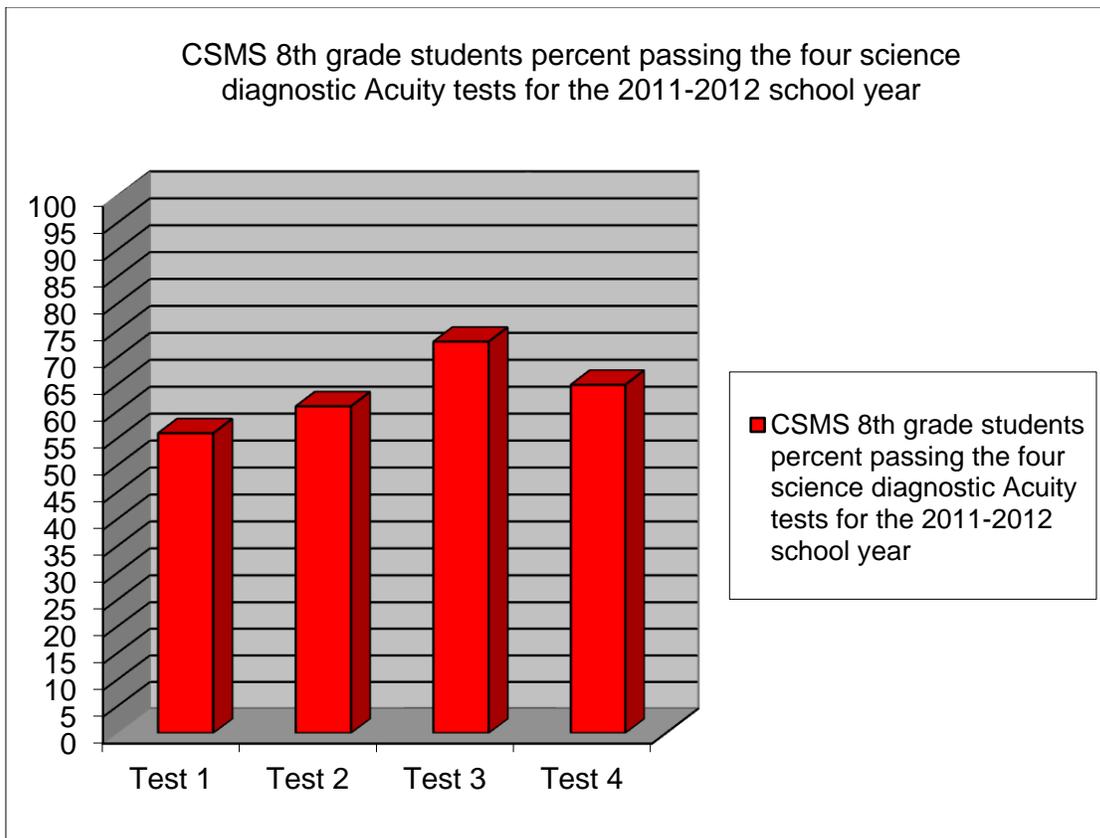
The graph above shows the percentage of students who passed the four Diagnostic tests administered in Social Studies in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade. On Test 1, 61% students exceeded expectations; on Test 2, 64% of students mastered the Acuity; and on Tests 3 & 4, the percentage of students who passed the Acuity was 58% and 55%.



The graph above shows the percentage of students who passed the four Diagnostic tests administered in English/Language Arts in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade. On Test 1, 76% students exceeded expectations; on Test 2, 72% of students mastered the Acuity; and on Tests 3 & 4, the percentage of students who passed the Acuity was 71% and 68%.

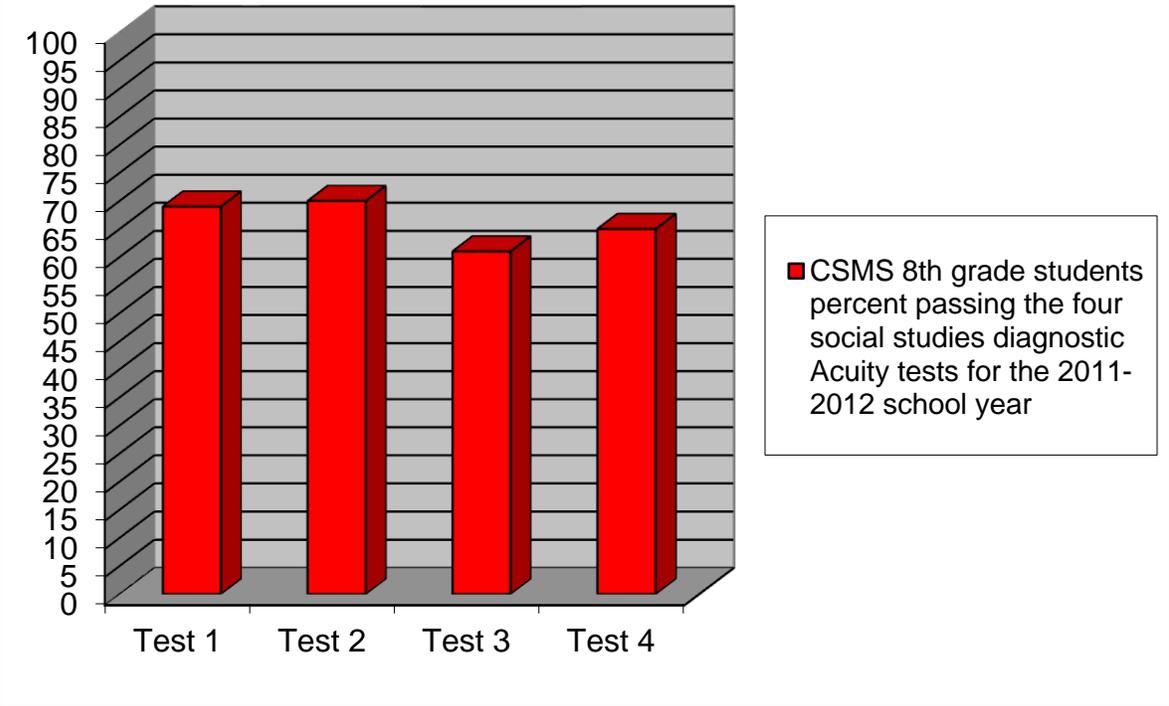


The graph above shows the percentage of students who passed the four Diagnostic tests administered in Mathematics in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade. On Test 1, 70% students exceeded expectations; on Test 2, 76% of students mastered the Acuity; and on Tests 3 & 4, the percentage of students who passed the Acuity was 71% and 69%.



The graph above shows the percentage of students who passed the four Diagnostic tests administered in Science in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade. On Test 1, 56% students exceeded expectations; on Test 2, 61% of students mastered the Acuity; and on Tests 3 & 4, the percentage of students who passed the Acuity was 73% and 65%.

CSMS 8th grade students percent passing the four social studies diagnostic Acuity tests for the 2011-2012 school year



The graph above shows the percentage of students who passed the four Diagnostic tests administered in Social Studies in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade. On Test 1, 69% students exceeded expectations; on Test 2, 70% of students mastered the Acuity; and on Tests 3 & 4, the percentage of students who passed the Acuity was 61% and 65%.

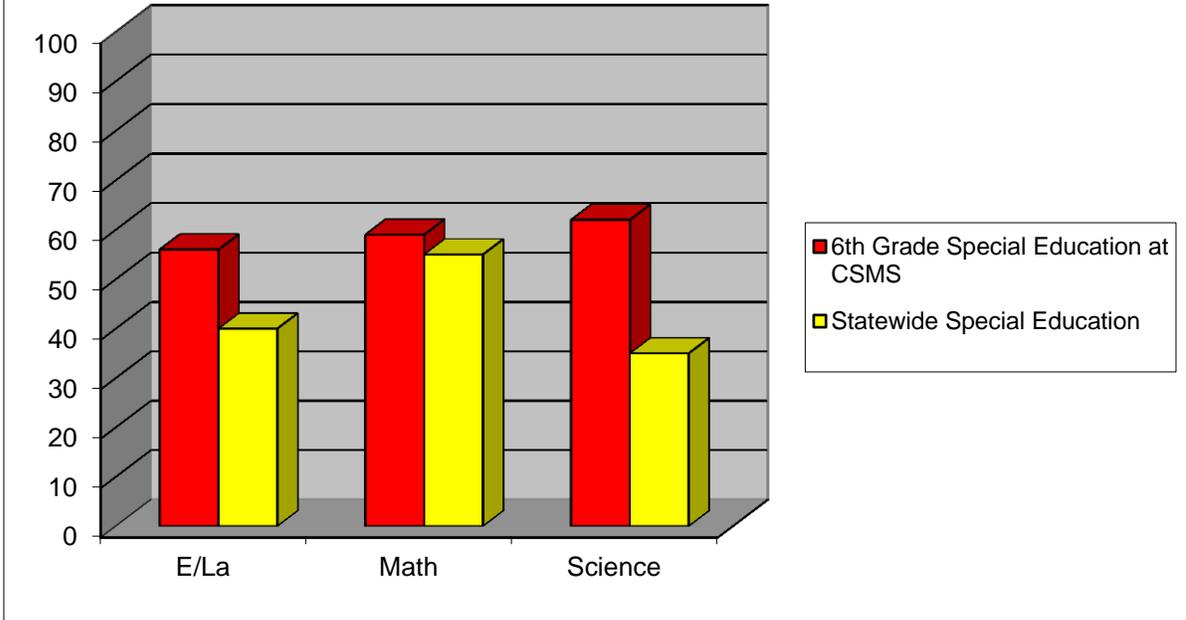
#### ***D. Cultural Competency***

Through research we know that one way to increase achievement for students living in poverty (or near poverty) is to build a positive, caring relationship with them. During the 2011-2012 school year, CSMS implemented a program whereby teachers selected one or two students that fit this category, and worked with these students throughout the school year to help them have a successful year. Several different strategies were used by teachers working with these students including student conferencing at the time of issuing midterms and report cards, encouraging students to keep their grades up if grades began to decline, helping with organization, and offering extra help on assignments that were difficult for the student. Overall, teachers focused on helping students celebrate their successes and learn from any mistakes or non-successes they experienced. Several teachers reported seeing a marked improvement in their students throughout the school year and believe it would be beneficial to continue the program.

Analysis of data for several subcategories including special education and socio-economically challenged students has revealed that while they fall below the general population at Castle South Middle School, both Special Education students and SES students scored well above the state average.

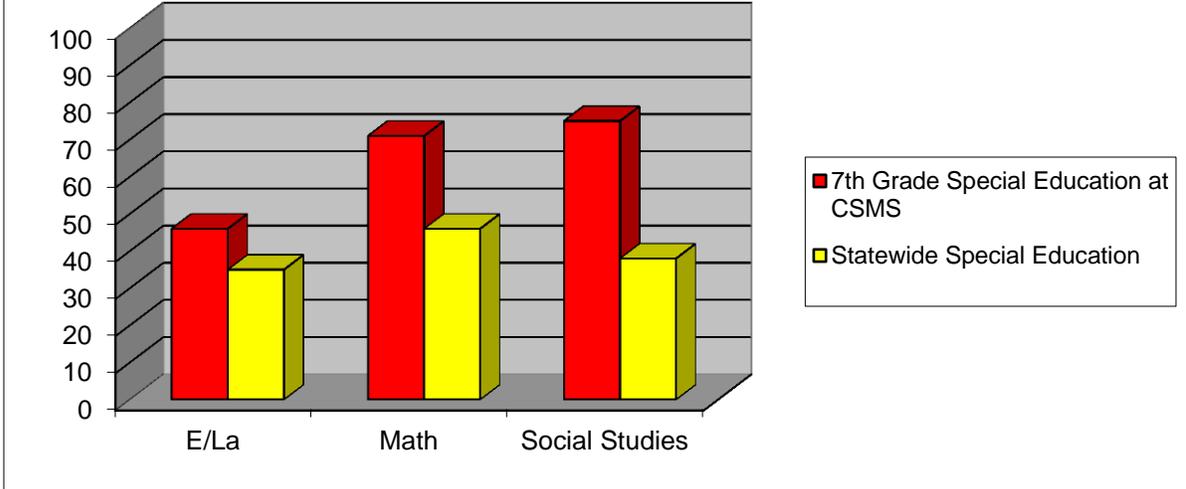
The graphs on pages 27 through 32 indicate the percentage of students in the subcategories of special education and socio-economically challenged (SES) students who scored above the minimum passing standard on the math and language arts portions of the ISTEP in the spring of 2012. These graphs also provide a benchmark for Castle South Middle School to track achievement on the state-mandated test for these sub-categories.

**6th Grade special education percent passing ISTEP+ compared to the State of Indiana average percent passing for all special education students**



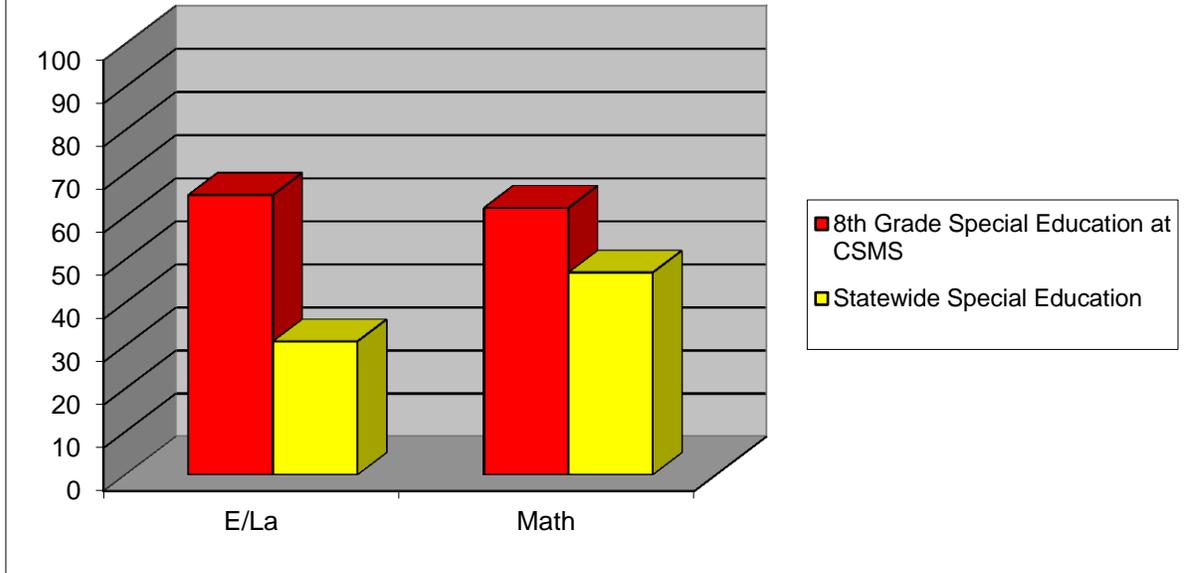
6<sup>th</sup> Grade Special Education students passing the English/Language Arts ISTEP+ testing was 56% (a decrease of 8% from the same students in their 5<sup>th</sup> grade year) as compared to the statewide special education pass rate of 40%. Those students passing math at CSMS was 59% (an decrease of 14% from the same students in their 5<sup>th</sup> grade year) as compared to the statewide special education pass rate of 55%. Students passing science at CSMS was 62% as compared to the statewide special education pass rate of 35%.

**7th Grade special education percent passing ISTEP+ compared to the State of Indiana average percent passing for all special education students**



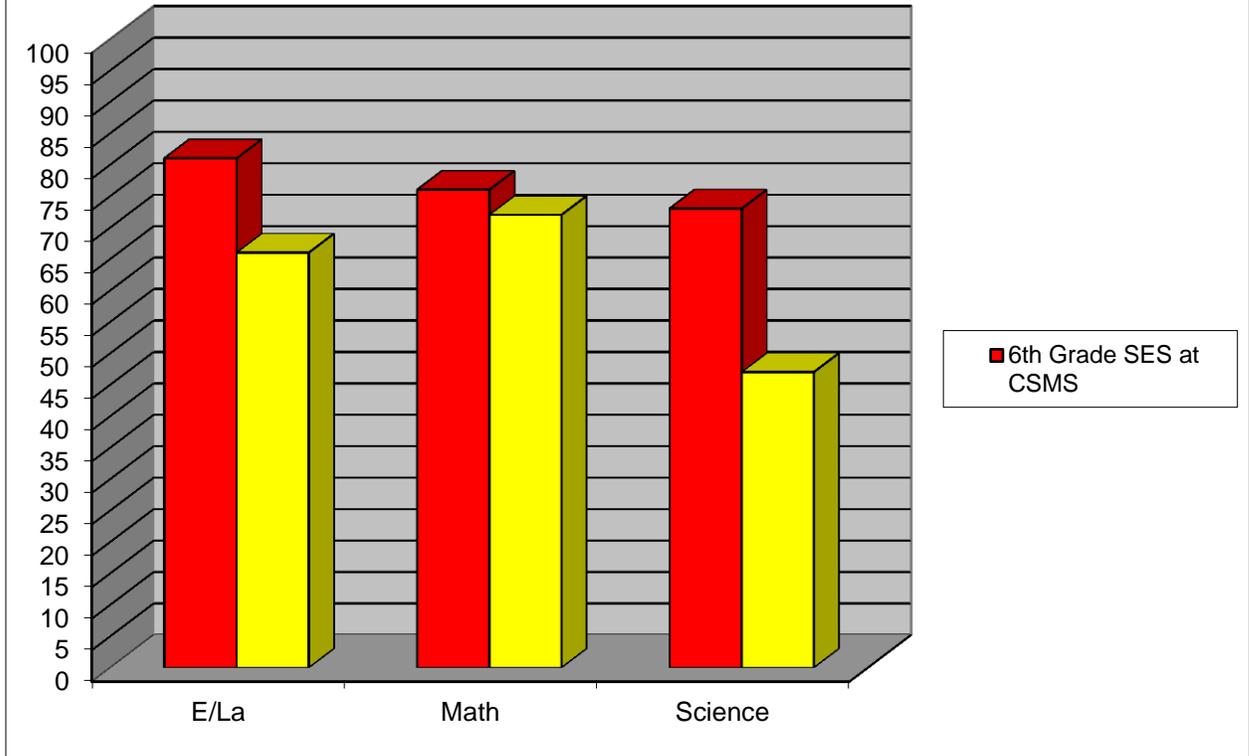
7<sup>th</sup> Grade Special Education students passing the English/Language Arts ISTEP+ testing was 46% (an increase of 18% from the same students in their 6<sup>th</sup> grade year) as compared to the statewide special education pass rate of 35%. Students who passed math at CSMS was 71% (an increase of 11% from the same students in their 6<sup>th</sup> grade year) compared to the statewide special education pass rate of 46%. Those passing Social Studies for CSMS was 75% compared to the statewide special education pass rate of 38%.

**8th Grade special education percent passing compared to the State of Indiana average percent passing for all special education students**



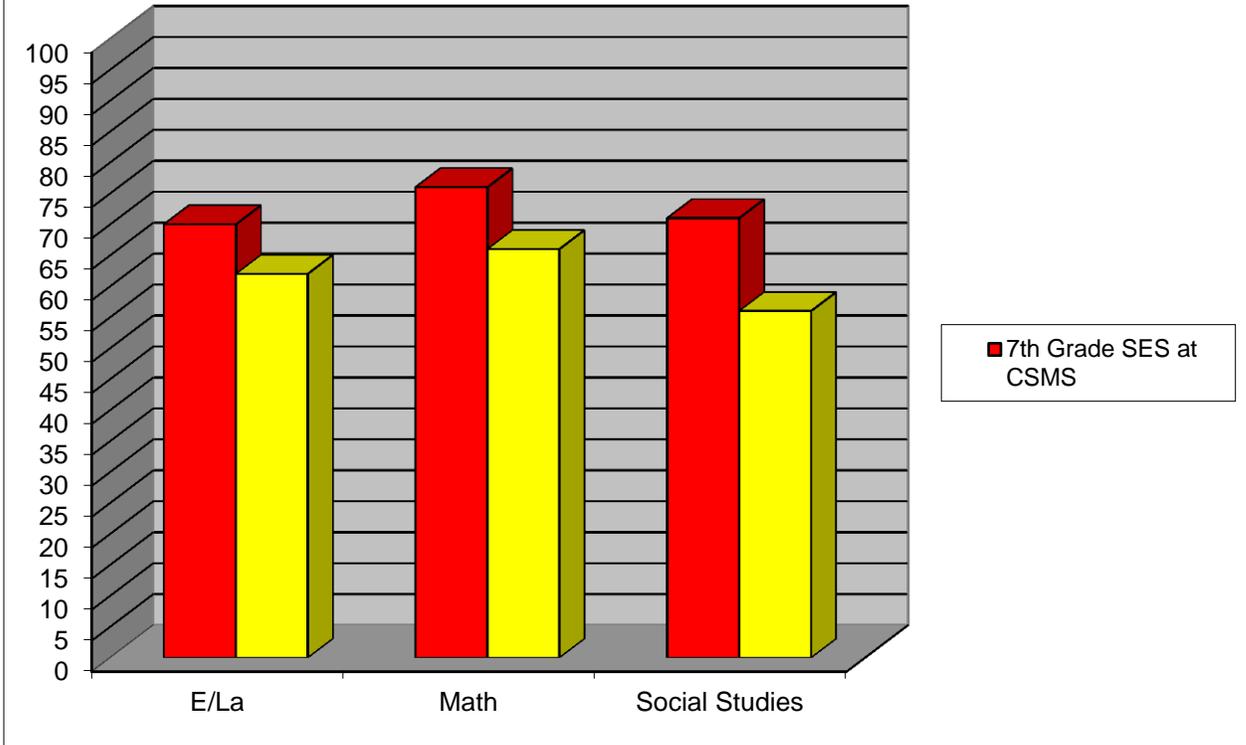
8<sup>th</sup> Grade Special Education students passing the English/Language Arts portion of the ISTEP+ was 65% (a 1% increase from the same students in their 7<sup>th</sup> grade year) as compared to the statewide special education pass rate of 31%. Those passing math for CSMS was 62% (a decrease of 2% from the same students in their 7<sup>th</sup> grade year) compared to the statewide special education pass rate of 47%.

### 6th Grade SES percent passing compared to the State of Indiana average percent passing for all SES students



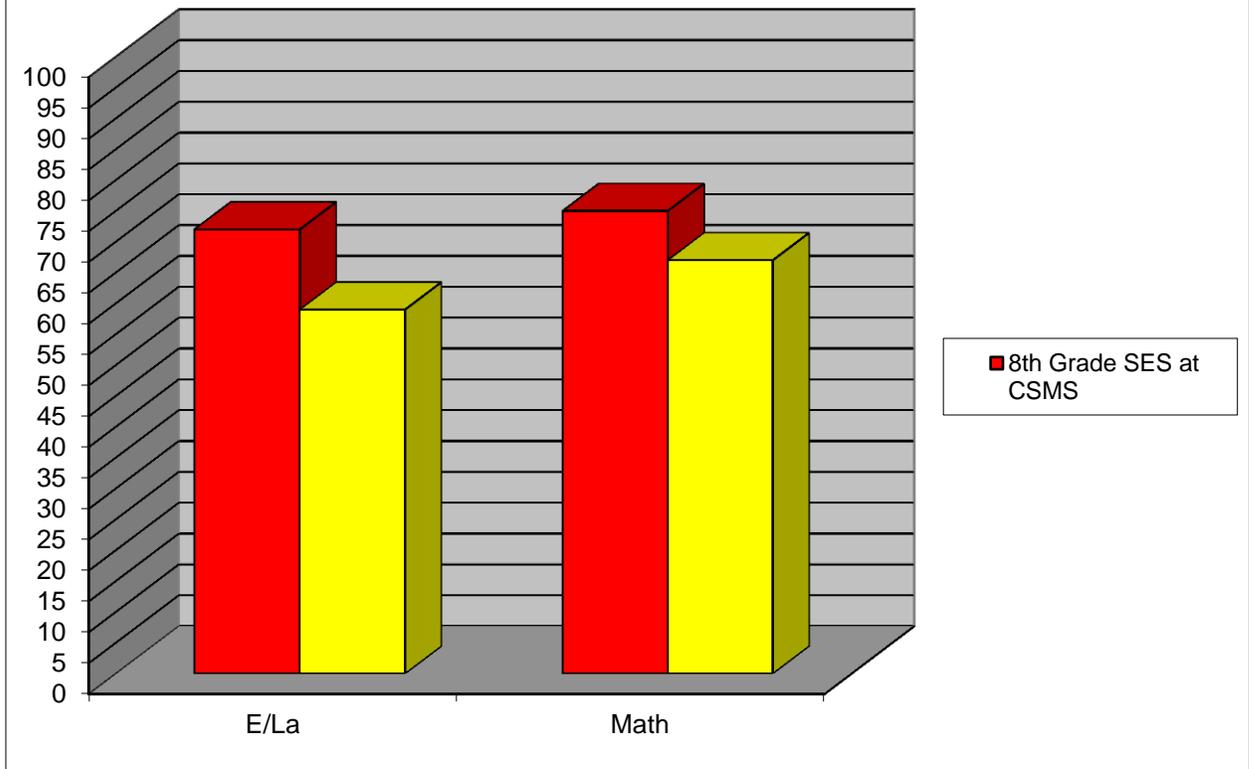
Those 6<sup>th</sup> Grade SES (Socioeconomic Status) students passing for English/Language Arts ISTEP+ was 81% (a decrease of 1% from the same students in their 5<sup>th</sup> grade year) as compared to the statewide SES pass rate of 66%. Students passing math for CSMS was 76% (a decrease of 6% from the same students in their 5<sup>th</sup> grade year) as compared to the statewide SES pass rate of 72%. Students passing science for CSMS was 73% compared to the statewide SES pass rate of 47%.

**7th Grade SES percent passing compared to the State of Indiana average percent passing for all SES students**



7<sup>th</sup> Grade SES (Socioeconomic Status) students passing the English/Language Arts portion of the ISTEP+ was 70% (an increase of 8% from the same students in their 6<sup>th</sup> grade year) as compared to the statewide SES pass rate of 62%. Those passing math for CSMS was 76% (an increase of 10% from the same students in their 6<sup>th</sup> grade year) as compared to the statewide SES pass rate of 66%. Those students passing social studies for CSMS was 71% compared to the statewide SES pass rate of 56%.

### 8th Grade SES percent passing compared to the State of Indiana SES average percent passing for all students



8<sup>th</sup> Grade SES (Socioeconomic Status) students passing the English/Language Arts ISTEP+ test was (a decrease of 3% from the same students in their 7<sup>th</sup> grade year) compared to the statewide SES pass rate of 59%. Those passing math for CSMS was 75% (a decrease of 2% from the same students in their 7<sup>th</sup> grade year) compared to the statewide SES pass rate of 67%.

### ***C. Parental Participation in the School***

Parental involvement and participation are welcomed at Castle South Middle School. Through the efforts of the staff, teachers, parents, and the PTO, activities are planned to benefit the students. Many of these activities allow parents who work full-time or part-time to get involved in their child's school and education. Opportunities for parent involvement and participation include but are not limited to:

- 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Orientation acquaints all 6<sup>th</sup> grade students with the school staff and PTO. School rules and regulations, dress code, PTO activities, etc., are discussed.
- Open House invites all 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade parents to meet the entire CSMS staff in the gym followed by a brief "meet and greet" with the child's teacher in the classroom.
- Academic Bowl invites families to watch students participate in an academic game with parent volunteers needed to help judge, work and set-up.
- Invention Convention and Science Fair are all day events for students with parents helping at various stations.
- Parents are invited to all assemblies and student programs.
- Parents are also members of the School Improvement Team.

The Parent Teacher Organization is an ongoing support group of concerned parents and teachers that serve as sponsors of events in and outside the school. Specific activities include:

- Dances.
- "Helping Hands" (a very active volunteer program)
- Eighth Grade Event - spring dance and activities.
- Fundraising activities. All funds raised go directly to support students and teachers.
- Honors Reception, which is held in the spring for students who maintain a 3.5 or higher grade average for at least 4 of the first 5 grading periods.
- Refreshments are served at several events during the school year.
- Science Fair and Invention Convention give parents an opportunity to see projects made by the students during these school-day events.
- Spirit Wear committee sells CSMS spirit wear throughout the school year at various sporting events, school functions, etc.
- Parents volunteer to help in the school's media center.

Plans for local businesses include but are not limited to:

- *Donated goods.* Pizza, sandwiches, ice cream, movie passes and cash prizes donated to the school or PTO for prizes and student and teacher incentives.
- *Guest speakers.* Deaconess Hospital, South Central Communications, and other private industry provide in-classroom guest speakers and visitations to supplement our students' learning with real world expectations.
- *Fundraising.* The PTO conducts an annual fundraiser.
- A local bank provides a liquid certificate of deposit to store the PTO's funds.
- *Manpower.* Many local businesses release their employees to work our annual Science Fair.
- Parents, through their places of work, are a major source of business partnership initiatives. Their help, on a per project basis, is invaluable.

#### ***F. Technology as a Learning Tool***

Since Castle South Middle School is a new building, much technology was integrated into the classrooms and the building as a whole. Some of these pieces of technology include LCD projectors, computers and printers on each teacher desk that have access to the Internet, WINN TV, the use of a document camera and blue-tooth capability. Four sets of Quizdom Remotes are used to facilitate Acuity Testing and Star Reading and Star Math tests, as well as for use by the general classroom teacher. The wireless Internet system will be completed in the fall of 2012 to allow for more Internet capabilities. Furthermore, teachers are incorporating Promethean boards in 18 classrooms. Warrick County School Corporation and Castle South Middle School technology personnel continue to strive to keep staff up-to-date on technological advances in the field of education.

Currently, students have access to three networked computer labs with 90 computers, 26 laptops in the media center, a business lab with 30 computers, a part-time computer technician, and a part-time computer coordinator, availability of the Internet for Web searches and an Instructional Learning System (I.L.S.) from Odyssey that provides standards-based activities in math, language arts, and science.

Most teachers in the building have been trained in the use of PowerPoint and regularly develop presentations for classroom lessons and activities. All teachers have been trained in word processing and the Gradebook program that is used to facilitate dissemination of information and better communication with parents. Teachers can also access the Gradebook program from a remote site and have the capability to enter disciplinary problems onto the Total Discipline Tracker. Parents can access their student's grades through Parent Internet Viewer, a feature of the Gradebook program.

Castle South Middle School has established a Website to disseminate information to the public. Email addresses, team homework websites, and on-line textbooks are also available for all staff through this website. The school website can be found at <http://www.warrick.k12.in.us/schools/castlesouth/index.php>.

A computer technician is available on-campus to help students and teachers access and utilize tools to create documents specific to each content area. The following list shows how these tools are presently used and indicates plans to implement others.

- 1) The Science Department creates word processing documents and makes charts and graphs using a spreadsheet.
- 2) The Language Arts Department uses computers for Internet searches, PowerPoint, and word processing.
- 3) The Math Department utilizes the I.L.S. and is working to expand usage of spreadsheets.
- 4) The Social Studies Department creates brochures and PowerPoint presentations for reports in both geography and history.
- 5) The Music Department writes letters to the public, produces autobiographies and PowerPoint presentations on musical artists. They also have a piano lab available for student use.
- 6) The Art Department plans to incorporate Internet research capabilities and use of the drawing and graphic components offered in the software.
- 7) The I.T.E. department uses Synergistic systems which is a computer lab-based program using computers as informational tools. This program also utilizes peripheral inputs such as a wind tunnel, temperature readings, and velocity measurement.
- 8) The Business Department utilizes and instructs students how to use digital communications, computer applications, and career and college readiness programs.

The goals for the future include providing the latest technology in the classroom which helps move us toward the elimination of paper products, paper data analysis reports, and heavy and expensive paper textbooks. State-of-the-art electronic devices must be included that enhance student learning, such as student input tools which facilitate instant formative assessment. Wireless portable systems must be available for staff and student to use which allows internet access, program access, individual and group storage spaces, presentation tools and communication tools. Systems must be in place to facilitate communication between schools and their community, such as an automated call out phone system and voice communication tools.

### ***G. Safe and Disciplined Learning Environment.***

Castle South Middle School has taken the following steps to help prevent violent acts from occurring in our school:

1. Limited access to the building by locking all outside doors except the front which enters only into the main office.
2. Required all employees to wear I.D. badges and all guests to report to the office to sign in and receive I.D. badges.
3. Established and consistently enforced policies that deal with security situations such as: student discipline and dress code, drug and weapons possession on school property, gang organization, and the reporting of crimes on school property to local law enforcement agencies.
5. Created a School-Wide Student Discipline and Behavior Improvement Plan as required by HEA 1419.
4. Established and revised the Administrators' Handbook of Procedures in Emergency Situations.
5. Acquired a hand-held metal detector.
6. Alerted teachers and administrators to take all threats seriously and to investigate each thoroughly.
7. Encouraged students to report threats and rumors of violent acts to school personnel.
8. Implemented Safe School Alert which is an anonymous tip line for reporting any bullying activities or harmful activities in school.
9. Used prevention programs including, but not limited to, the following:
  - a. Peer Mediation/ Conflict Resolution
  - b. Teaching of self-worth and respect for others
  - c. *Break the Silence; Stop the Violence* video available from the Media Center
  - d. Identifying the early warning signs that a student might be capable of committing a violent act and getting help for the student.
  - e. Gun Safety taught in Health classes
  - f. QPR (Question, Persuade, Refer)- Research based best practice for identifying students at risk for suicide. Given to students annually.
  - g. Peers Project- Taught in Health classes by high school students teaching students to abstain from all risky behaviors.
  - h. Parents in Partnership available on our school website
  - i. Why-Try program- A researched based program for children that is SAMHSA approved.
  - j. Anti-Bullying Programs taught in homeroom, during special callouts with students by Administrators, and by guest presenters.
10. Facilitated regular intervention by police and drug dogs.
11. Provided supervision at critical times (before and after school, lunch time, and passing time between classes).
12. Worked with a school resource officer (Deputy Sheriff), a school social worker, the Warrick County School Safety Commission and the corporation school safety specialist.
13. Cameras in the hallways.

## *H. Professional Development.*

Castle South Middle School staff and administration are dedicated to professional development that enhances student learning. The following goals reflect our commitment to continuous improvement and educational excellence:

- to make all teachers aware of the changes from Indiana Academic Standards to Core Standards that are being made at the state and national level .
- to ensure that all teachers align their classroom curriculum to the Indiana state-developed curriculum maps and national Core curriculum maps when they are available.
- to continue to train staff members in the use of effective instructional strategies in the classroom.
- to utilize and address the creation of and collection of data in the area of assessments designed to reflect the ISTEP+ in all courses.
- to train all teachers in the use of teaming in the middle school classroom.
- to train all teachers and staff in the use of new technological testing tools from implementation to and the disaggregation of data in programs such as Acuity, Star Math, Star Reading, and Accelerated Reader.
- to train staff members in appropriately accommodating lesson plans, assignments, projects, quizzes and tests for all special education students.
- as the need arises and based upon our student population, various types of professional development will be utilized.

**V. *Student Achievement Objectives, Derived from an Assessment of the Current Status of Educational Programming, Including the Following:***

**A. *Attendance Rate***

To stress the importance of daily student attendance and its impact on learning, Castle South Middle School plans to:

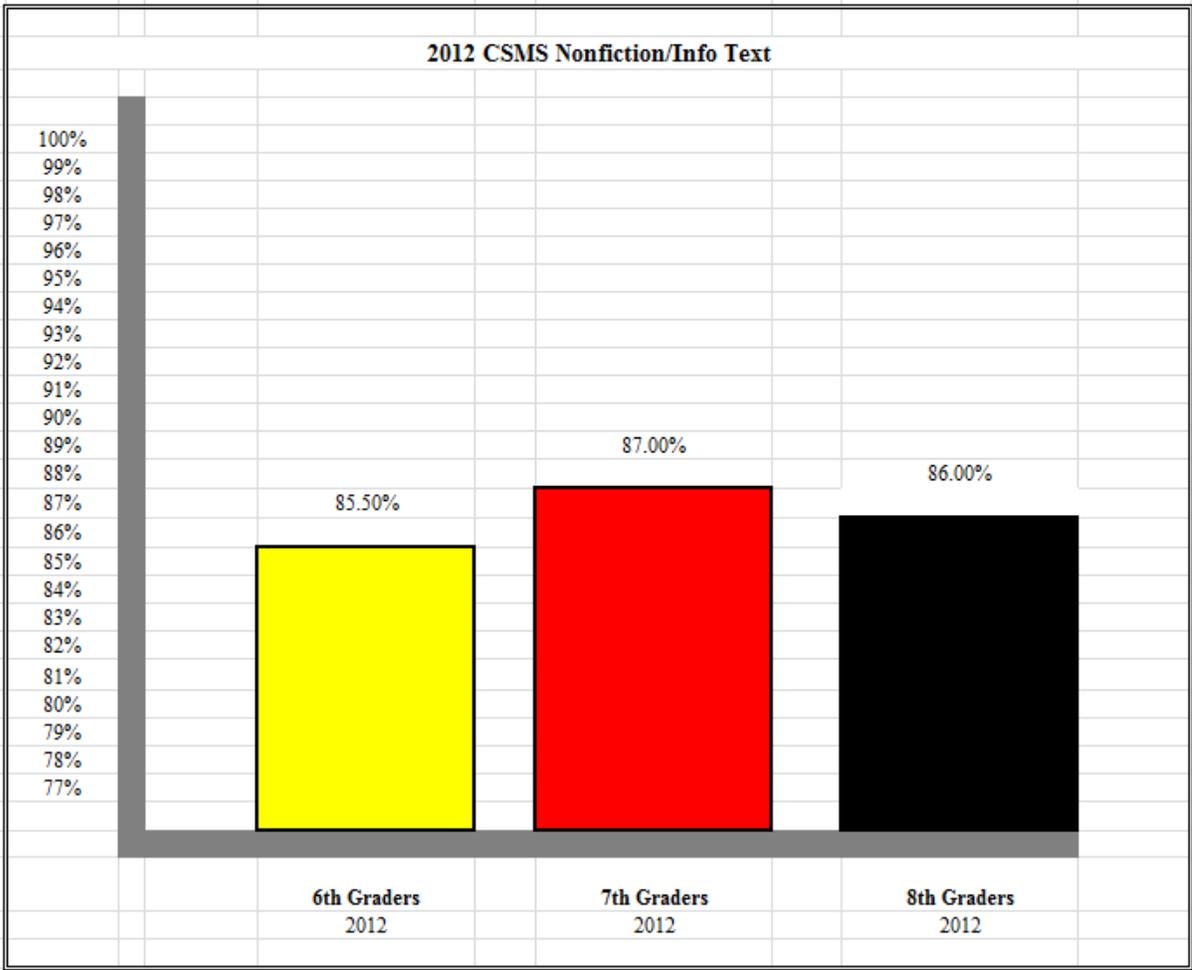
1. Fully incorporate the computerized attendance program.
2. Work with the counselor, social worker and resource officer to encourage those students who have attendance problems to come to school.
3. Provide incentives for students to attain perfect attendance and/or exemplary attendance.

**B. *Percentage of Students meeting Academic Standards under the ISTEP+ Program.***

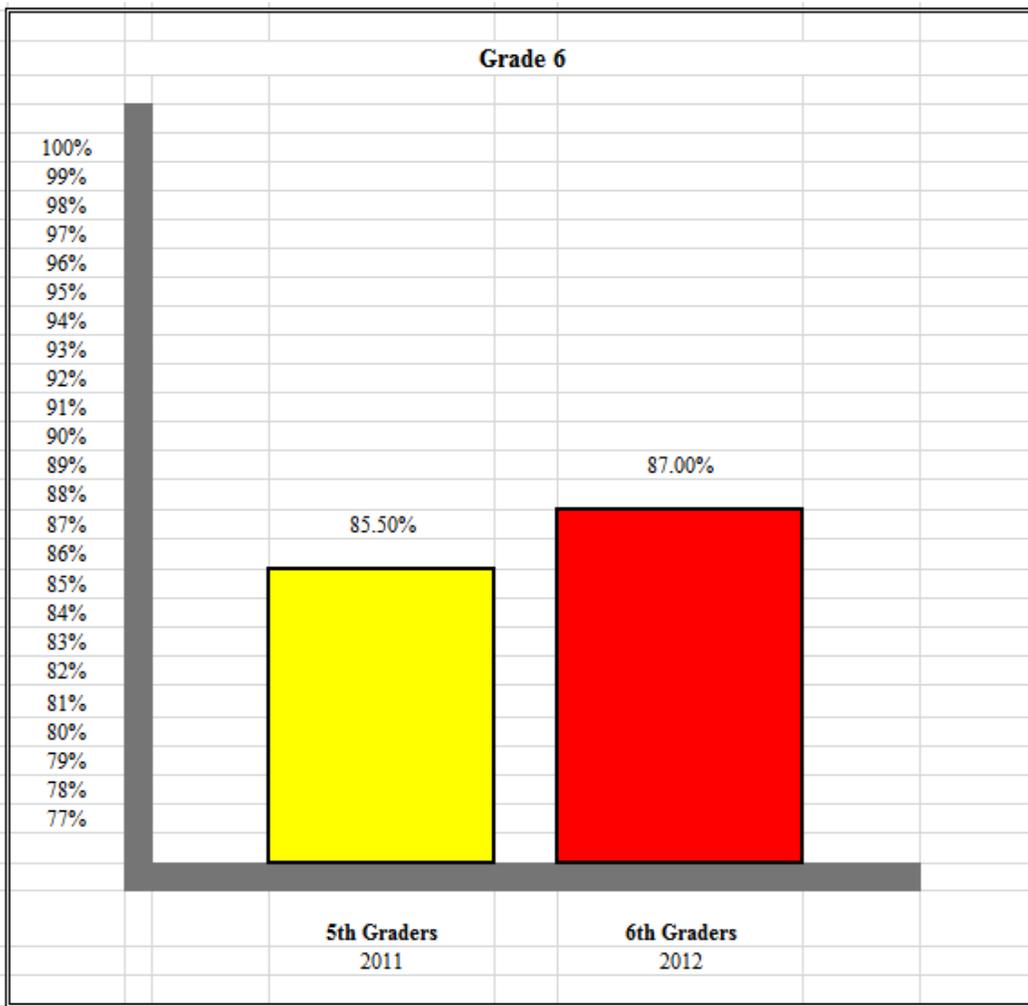
Student achievement objectives are to increase mastery of the state standards. Since CSMS is a relatively new school (this being the fourth year of operation), the Spring 2010 ISTEP+ data was the benchmark year for creating goals based upon this information. Our ultimate goal is to have 100% of students passing in all the core tested subject areas of mathematics, English/language arts, science, and social studies. CSMS is making positive strides toward reaching this goal (See graphs on pages 6, 7, and 8) as we continue to show an increase in the total number of students who master the ISTEP+. In 2012 in English/Language Arts, CSMS showed a 1.5% increase in mastery in all grades. In Math, a 1.9% increase was seen in mastery in all grades.

Based on results from the 2009-2010 and 2010-11 ISTEP data, Castle South Middle School made one of its School Improvement goals to increase overall scores in the area of nonfiction/info text. To implement a baseline for all students, teachers at each grade level administered a pre-test (nonfiction/info text which covered material in all core curricular areas) at the beginning of the school year. Pre-test scores were recorded in Excel spreadsheets at each grade level. A focus in the area of nonfiction/info text was placed not only in the language arts classes, but across the curriculum at Castle South Middle School during the 2011-2012 school year. Various strategies were used including the piloting of Zaner Bloser's *Read for Real* curriculum. Flex periods were used at the seventh grade level to reinforce nonfiction/info text strategies to students. Thematic units were planned and executed, which included an emphasis on nonfiction text. The post-test was then administered at the year's end at each grade level. Scores were recorded, and results concluded that student understanding of the concept showed growth at each grade level. More importantly, ISTEP results from the 2010-11 school years showed a marked gain at each grade level in the area of nonfiction/info text.

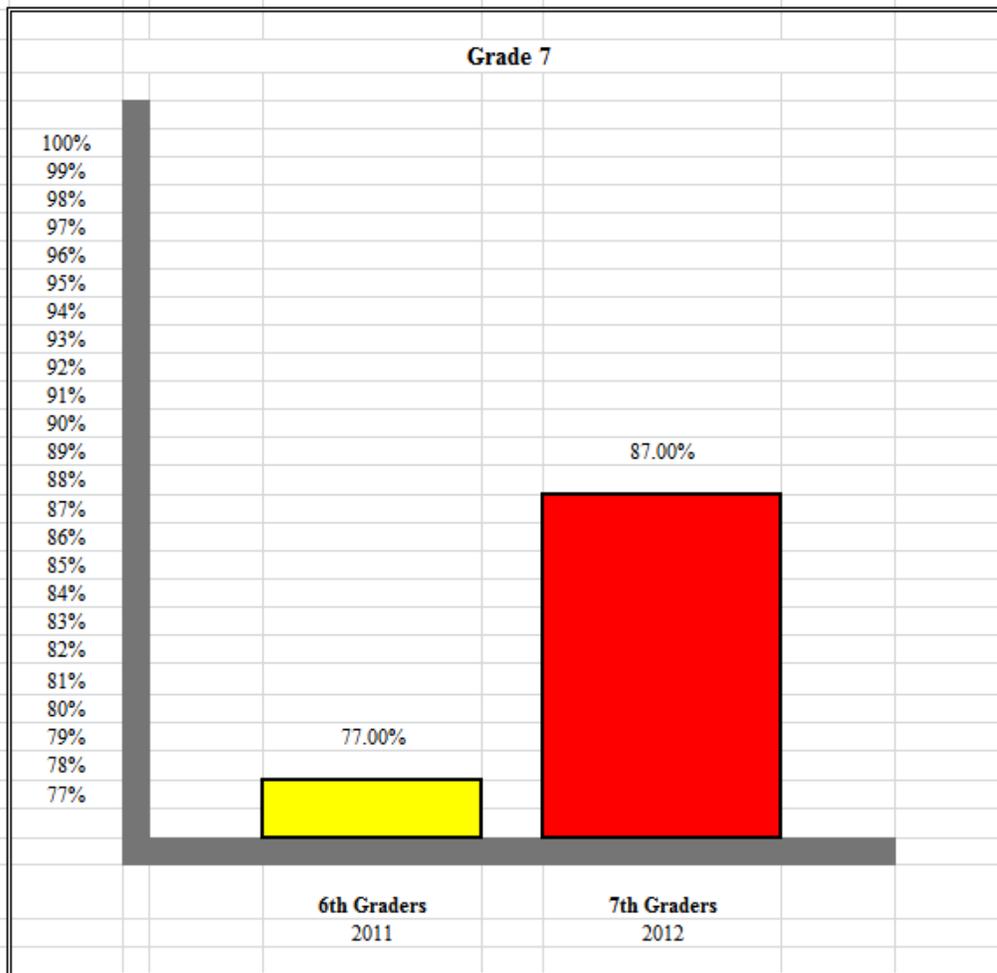
The following four charts show the gains for all grades combined and each grade level individually that were made in Standard 2, Nonfiction/Info Text on the 2012 ISTEP+.



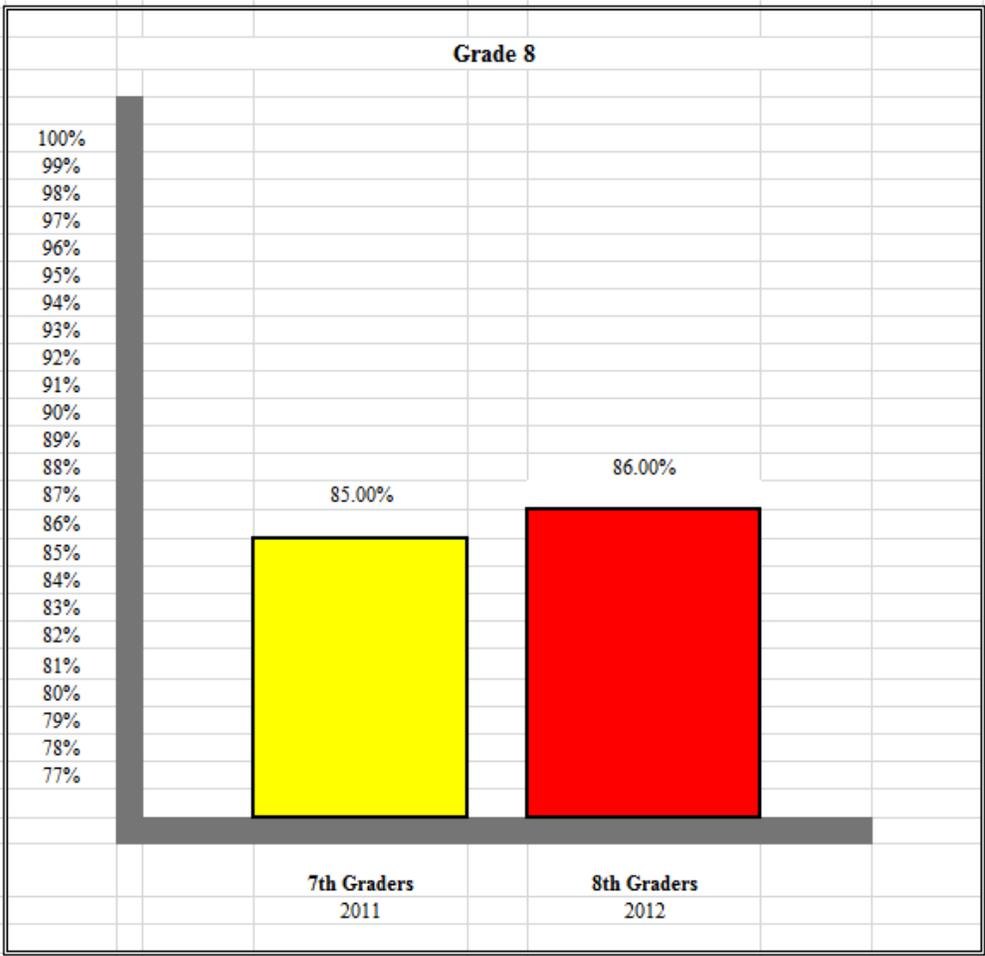
The graph above shows the results of the ELA Standard 2, Nonfiction/Info Text all three grade levels in 2012 by percentage of mastery.



The graph above shows that sixth graders in 2012 raised the percentage of mastery of nonfiction/info text by 1.5% from their previous year as fifth graders.



The graph above shows that seventh graders in 2012 raised the percentage of mastery of nonfiction/info text by 10% from their previous year as sixth graders.



The graph above shows that seventh graders in 2012 raised the percentage of mastery of nonfiction/info text by 1% from their previous year as seventh graders.

***VI. Specific areas where improvement is needed.***

Raising the number of students who master the ISTEP+ is a priority. Those students who did not meet standards on the ISTEP+ are placed in English/language arts remediation and/or math remediation. The remediation program itself will be reevaluated and the focus of the remediation aide will be to remediate students during homeroom time who cannot obtain remediation from the regular classroom teacher due to scheduling conflicts. Also, the remediation aide will spend more time in the regular classroom helping those students who have been identified, through the disaggregation of data, as being in the bottom 25% of the grade level. The special education resource period will also be used as a math and English/Language Arts remediation period for students who are in self-contained special education classes.

In addition, data gathered from the Acuity tests and Star Math and Reading tests, as well as the ISTEP+, will indicate where students are weak in specific skill areas in both math and language arts. Remediation and added review in the regular classroom will address these weak skill areas. Reading comprehension will continue to be targeted for improvement across the curriculum. Also, probability and measurement, two weaker skills according to 2011 ISTEP+ data, will be emphasized across the curriculum. Furthermore, all SES students who did not master ISTEP+ in 2011 will be mentored by a core teacher in an attempt to help these students in this particular sub-group master the ISTEP+. Finally, all areas of the transition of 5<sup>th</sup> grade students to 6<sup>th</sup> grade at Castle South Middle School will be evaluated to determine what can be done to alleviate the decrease in ISTEP+ scores and the number of students who do not master the state test.

***VII. Benchmarks for Progress that Specify How and to What Extent the School Expects to Make Continuous Improvement in all Areas of the Education System.***

CSMS staff and administration want to show continuous school improvement, excellence in education, and higher levels of student achievement; therefore, it is our (CSMS) ultimate goal for 100% of students to master the ISTEP+ with an incremental increase of 2% per grade level per year in math and language arts until we attain 90% mastery on the ISTEP+. When that level is attained, CSMS will adjust the goal to 1% per grade level per year in math and language arts.

### ***VIII. Proposed Interventions Based on School Improvement Goals.***

Based on school improvement goals, proposed immediate interventions will be made through the full implementation of Acuity testing, Star Reading, Star Math, and a modified Accelerated Reader program, and any resulting remediation. Also, a concentrated effort will continue in the support of team teaching, implementation of RTI (Response to Intervention) plans, the transition of 6<sup>th</sup> graders into the middle school, and the implementation of effective instructional strategies in the classroom. The CSMS incentive program to help motivate those special education students and remediation students who have yet to master the ISTEP+ will continue. The Teacher/Student Mentor Program that targets SES students who have not mastered the ISTEP+ will be fully implemented. In the special education department, resource periods will be used for remediation/ISTEP prep in all grades. Also in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade the special education teacher and a regular classroom math teacher will pilot the co-teaching of a math class. The Special Education department will begin using a program called *LANGUAGE!* in the self-contained English/Language Arts classes. This program is a comprehensive literacy curriculum that provides explicit, sequential, linguistically logical, and systematic instruction for struggling readers, writers, speakers, and spellers to increase reading achievement. Finally, a recognition committee will be formed to celebrate students' successes in academic achievement by holding 4 celebrations throughout the school year and continuing other 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade recognition ceremonies already in place.

### ***IX. Professional Development that is coordinated with Proposed Interventions and that Supports Sustainable School Improvement Efforts.***

Professional development time will be provided for classroom teachers to learn about differentiated instruction and using ISTEP+, Acuity, Star Math, Star Reading and Accelerated Reader data to drive curriculum decisions. The administration will provide the opportunity for teachers to collaborate with experts and among themselves to encourage discussion of teaming, making accommodations on assignments and tests for special education students, and effective instructional strategies in the classroom.

### ***X. Yearly Implementation, Review, and Revision.***

Castle South Middle School improvement plan includes yearly implementation, review and revision of strategies designed to meet our school improvement goals and provide for continuous improvement. The school improvement team will evaluate the plan yearly to prioritize and utilize the proposals for review and revision of programs based on state mandates, test score results, school board decisions and availability of funds.