

# Case Study

William D. Moseley  
Elementary School,  
Palatka, FL

## Becoming a School Where All Students Thrive

**For more of the consulting team members\* historical work visit  
[InstructionalEmpowerment.com](http://InstructionalEmpowerment.com)**

\*Instructional Empowerment's team members served Moseley D. Elementary School under another company led by CEO and Executive Director of Research, Michael Toth, before Instructional Empowerment was founded. Michael Toth and the Instructional Empowerment team have perfected and applied their own evidence-based school improvement approach. Team members who served William D. Moseley Elementary School team members: Year 1 - Phillip Carr (School Leadership Coach) and Shannon Pretorius (Faculty Coach/Staff Developer); Year 2 - Patricia Perry (School Leadership Coach) and Susan Schilsky, Jody Honaker, Jennifer McCluskey, Elizabeth Buzzanca (shared Faculty Coaches/Staffed Developers).

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## Moseley Elementary School Demographics

Number of students: **512**  
Number of core teachers: **35**  
Percent students eligible for free and reduced meals: **100%**  
Percent students homeless or in foster care: **14%**

Percent students receiving special education services: **25%**  
Percent Black: **78%**  
Percent White: **6%**  
Percent Hispanic: **5%**  
Percent two or more races: **11%**

## A History of Struggle

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William D. Moseley Elementary School in Putnam County, Florida, always had potential for greatness, though the school faced a difficult journey. Moseley serves a mobile and diverse student population, with 100 percent of students receiving free and reduced-price meals. Most students who come to the school have been historically marginalized, and 25 percent receive special education services.

Jonathan Hinke - Director of Strategic Initiatives and at the time of the interview Director of School Improvement - says the teachers and staff at Moseley work hard to fulfill the basic needs of their students, so that learning is possible. He says:

Many Moseley students experience barriers and trauma that impact their ability to focus on learning. Thankfully, they have a teaching and support staff that loves them and is committed to improving their educational success while also making sure they have a safe environment and are well cared for with clothes and meals. Whenever you walk into the front office at Moseley, you know you are in a school that wants all students to do well because they are constantly celebrating small, daily wins. It's a school that embraces their neighborhood, their community partners, and most importantly their students and families.

A parent of a Moseley student, Cornethia Foreman, agrees that Moseley had always done great things for students, though it didn't have the best reputation outside of the community. "People sort of looked down on Moseley," she says.

Moseley had a history of low achievement scores. The state rating fluctuated between the two lowest state accountability categories for nine years. In the 2016-2017 school year, Moseley was ranked by the state as having the fifth lowest performance of all traditional public schools in Florida.<sup>1</sup> The following year, Putnam County School district hired the consulting team members because the district believed that this investment would provide the right supports to lift Moseley out of comprehensive support and improvement (CSI) status and help it achieve its true potential.

### **Moseley's scores were among the lowest for traditional public schools in Florida.**

Putnam County School District is located in Palatka, a rural area in North Florida, and has a student enrollment of about 11,000 students. It is a fully Title I district. Putnam

<sup>1</sup> Rank derived from the Florida Department of Education's official school letter grades. "Traditional public schools" are defined as all schools besides charter schools, ESE centers, alternative schools, and district virtual schools.

County School District's mission is "to inspire every student to think, to learn, to achieve, to care, and to become a successful and responsible citizen." The district was excited to partner in their efforts to turn Moseley around, because the consulting team aligned with their mission. Director of School Improvement Jonathan Hinke says:

For a long time, our district had been focused on programs, but we wanted to partner with an outside expert to build sustainable practices that were not reliant on a specific program. One of the things that drew us to this partnership was that it was not program-based. Over time, we could substitute or replace curriculum materials or different programs but the practices would remain because the partnership helps to change educators' way of work, their classroom practices, and their expectations for students.

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Another important factor Hinke identified for Moseley's success was finding the right school leadership team. In August 2017, Sarajeon McDaniel became Moseley's principal and immediately set to work with her assistant principal, Brandon "Tony" Benford, and her instructional coach, Michelle Wilds. That year, the team had to hire 30 new instructional staff – including 20 teachers, as well as interventionists and others. They also had an influx of students from other schools.

McDaniel, Benford, and Wilds walked the classrooms and hallways of Moseley with the consulting team to assess the school's needs and areas for growth. McDaniel says, "We knew we had to tackle discipline and give students a purpose – that was our first



*William D. Moseley Elementary School in Palatka, Florida, serves a diverse student population in a small rural community.*

priority." Benford recalls a school meeting early on where he had to present the raw discipline data to the Moseley staff. He says, "Everybody got upset when I showed the data, saying, 'You don't know what it's like here.'" Wilds's first impression of Moseley was that the lack of structure created a challenging learning environment. She says, "The conditions were very broken. There was no consistency in teachers or structures, so the kids were sort of running the school." Aside from the learning environment, Wilds points to the lack of a consistent plan for instruction and an inconsistent curriculum as likely factors in students' low proficiency and low growth.

## Progress Toward Rigorous Instruction

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In September 2017, Moseley began an Intensive Supports Partnership with the consulting team members, which included the following components:

- **Assessment of school systems through scientific protocols.** Experts perform needs assessments and walkthroughs using evidence-based measurements to determine the root causes of the school's struggles then guide the school leadership team to use this information in setting goals.
- **Professional development and coaching for teachers and school leaders.** With support, the school establishes a new vision for instruction where all students can thrive. The consulting team provides professional development and coaching to build leadership capacity at all levels.
- **Student-led team learning implementation (also known as academic teaming).** Teachers shift to student-led team learning, a daily instructional process where students collaborate, peer coach, and peer teach while engaged in rigorous, standards-based tasks.
- **Constant tracking of student evidence.** Schools see visible evidence of student learning outcomes if student-led team learning is implemented properly. Teachers and leaders consistently track progress through digital tools, allowing for timely adjustments.

Right away, the Moseley staff and Putnam County School District leaders could see the Intensive Supports Partnership was different from anything they had experienced before. Director of School Improvement Hinke says that student-led team learning methods and

standards-based instruction with learning targets and success criteria were new for the school and district. He says:

The first thing that stands out is student-led team learning and the consulting external coaches' thinking about changing the role of students in the classroom and teachers in the classroom. The second thing is standards-based instruction and really honing in on the learning targets and success criteria. The success criteria piece was new for our district. It helps teachers and students create daily, specific expectations for learning and that's been beneficial to not only Moseley's success, but also to our district's learning.

Instructional Coach Wilds noticed that students were more engaged and took ownership of their learning when student-led team learning shifted the classroom dynamics to a more student-centered environment. Wilds says:

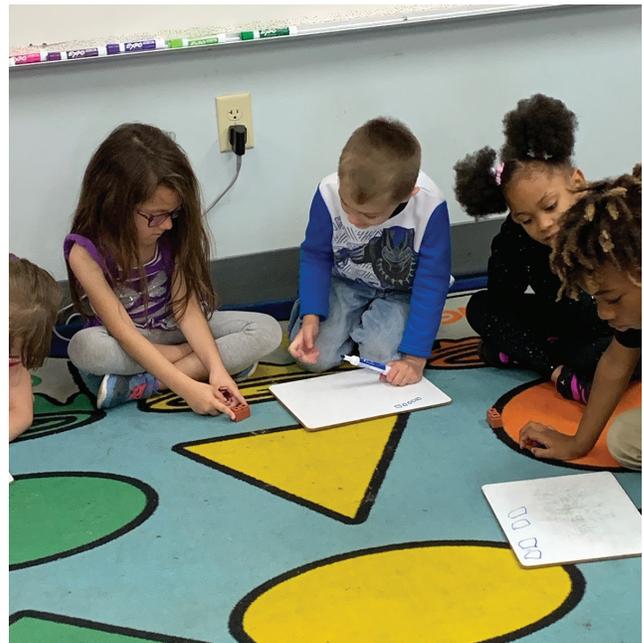
In the past, Moseley had been very teacher-centered because teachers thought they had to control the kids to prevent negative behavior. When we walked classrooms we wanted to hear quiet because that meant students were learning. The partnership and the consulting external coaches completely shifted our mindset. Teachers started to see that when students had some control in a positive way over their own learning, they wanted to learn. Now we expect to hear kids talking and processing information, and we see quiet as compliance. We need to go beyond compliant learning if we're ever going to move kids academically and close the achievement gap.

**“We need to go beyond compliant learning if we're ever going to move kids academically and close the achievement gap.”**

Student-led team learning was a huge shift in practice for many teachers at Moseley. Shanna Cribbs was in her first year of teaching when the consulting team partnered with the school. Cribbs taught first grade. Previously, she had some classroom management experience from working as a VPK (prekindergarten) teacher but did not have much experience with classroom instructional techniques. She says, “At the beginning of the year I had my students in rows. I would send them from the carpet back to their seats where they would do their work. Students didn’t communicate with each other. My classroom was quiet as a mouse unless I was talking and the students were answering questions.” Cribbs participated in the consulting team’s professional development but was nervous about shifting her classroom from teacher-directed instruction to student-led team learning. Cribbs says: “I told my teacher mentor I didn’t think I could do it. I was scared it would be chaos. I really wanted to do what’s best for the kids, but I was very nervous as a new teacher to try something unknown. My students were only six years old and I wasn’t sure they would have the attention span for teaming.” Cribbs’s teacher mentor asked her to just try the new methods, so Cribbs put her students into teams and started to use student-led team learning roles, norms, and resources. She says:

I called our leadership team to see my classroom, and we were all in tears because it was actually working. I had six-year-olds in teams and they were all talking, they were all on topic, and they were all learning from each other. The methods we learned through the partnership with the consulting external coaches are the only tools I have in my toolbox and it’s the only thing I will continue to use because it works. When you see the shift where children truly take ownership of their learning, it is like a rocket. They just take off.

**“I called our leadership team to see my classroom, and we were all in tears because it was actually working. I had six-year-olds in teams and they were all talking, they were all on topic, and they were all learning from each other.”**



*Moseley kindergarten students working in student-led academic teams.*

Student-led team learning started to take hold throughout the whole school. Shelby Bellamy is a second-grade teacher at Moseley. She started as an intern at the school and has been a teacher there for the past five years. She agrees that, “Everything changed when we got the whole school behind student-led team learning.” Principal McDaniel saw that with all of Moseley focused on implementing student-led team learning and other methods as part of the Intensive Supports Partnership, the school became more cohesive and

consistent since everyone was using the same practices and procedures. McDaniel says the consulting team gave the school a common language, which was not something she had experienced before as an instructional leader. She says:

I think the focus on what is really important and will move a child has shifted. The partnership brought a clear focus on the standards. The partnership and work with the consulting external coaches is very structured. You have to implement with fidelity, but it's not difficult. It's not something that feels impossible. Common language and common practices from kindergarten to fifth grade were huge. It allowed teachers to plan together and move to other grade levels if needed. The standards are different for every grade level, but the practices and procedures and focus are the same throughout the school. For example, success criteria and learning targets became second nature – staff started to use them even outside the classroom, on field trips.

After one year of hard work and partnership with the consulting team, Moseley began to lay the foundations necessary to help their scores rise. Under Florida's new accountability law, Putnam County School District had to implement a more intensive option by choosing an External Operator for the school. If the district did not select an External Operator, they would have to close the school or turn it into a charter school. As Moseley had already experienced significant progress in working with the consulting team, the district wanted to continue the partnership and support Moseley's positive trajectory.

In 2018, the consulting team became the External Operator at Moseley and took on primary responsibility for:

- All school academic programs
- Oversight, selection, placement, coaching,

evaluation, assignment of responsibilities, and re-assignment of school leadership and instructional personnel

- Professional development
- Identification, training, and coaching of professional learning community leaders
- Student academic assessment and development of curriculum and instructional materials

As Moseley transitioned to external operation, Director of School Improvement Hinke reflected that partnering early on had been a wise choice on the part of the district. He says:

We were very proactive in partnering with an external consultant prior to having to go the External Operator route and that was a benefit for us. The transition didn't create as much anxiety because the teachers were already familiar with the consulting external coaches. They were our partners, conducting a needs assessment for an entire year as they were getting to know the principal and the rest of the leadership team, the coaching staff, and the teachers. They had a really strong sense of what needed to change in the move to External Operator and what needed to remain consistent because it was working.

**“We were very proactive in partnering with an external consultant prior to having to go the External Operator route and that was a benefit for us.”**

The consulting team committed to improving both student performance on the Florida Standards Assessment (FSA) and the school's performance while building Moseley's capacity to sustain improvement once the school was returned to full district control. The goal is to reach beyond school improvement and attain transformation of the school into a

scalable model of rigorous instruction and student engagement. The Intensive Supports Partnership provides a data-driven roadmap designed to empower district leaders and teachers as it aligns curriculum, culture, and instructional systems to attain and sustain high levels of performance.

**The goal is to reach beyond school improvement and attain transformation of the school into a scalable model of rigorous instruction and student engagement.**

The consulting team assigned Dr. Patricia Perry as the leadership coach for Moseley Elementary School to provide more intensive support. Dr. Perry has over 28 years of experience in education, having served as a school principal and at a district level as the Director of Special Education, Director of Curriculum and Instruction, Assistant Superintendent, Executive Director, and Regional Superintendent. Dr. Perry was excited to partner with Moseley's leadership team. Together, they created an action plan for the school based on their priorities, which included the following:

1. Ensuring all planning and instruction was standards-based
2. Continuing to adopt a common language and common procedures in all classrooms
3. Deepening teacher collaboration and peer support
4. Supporting new teachers
5. Developing teacher leaders
6. Creating transparency for students to see their own academic progress
7. Identifying students who needed additional support via MTSS (Multi-tiered System of Supports)
8. Instituting systems for monitoring student progress on a daily and weekly basis and providing timely interventions
9. Providing strategies to minimize missed instructional time for students
10. Implementing systems to monitor schoolwide trends

The Moseley leadership team began to work on these priorities with support from the consulting team. Director of School Improvement Hinke communicated with the consulting team and the school leadership team frequently. Each month, the consulting leadership coach scheduled an Executive Action Team (EAT) meeting with the Putnam County School District superintendent and the district leadership team. In the EAT meetings, the consulting team reported Moseley's progress and worked with the district leadership team to solve problems together. Consulting team member and National Practice Leader Dr. Jenny Reeves worked closely with the Putnam County School District the whole school year. She says:

Our partnership with Putnam's district leadership was very collaborative, and we were able to come to the best decisions for the school together. Besides our monthly EAT meetings, district leaders were on site to walk classrooms at Moseley. They also attended professional development so they could gain an understanding of the common language and be of assistance to Moseley. The district leaders wanted to learn alongside the school and be supportive, and that made a huge difference. Everybody from Jonathan Hinke to the superintendent was available and aware of everything that was going on in that school. We knew they would do anything required to help Moseley to succeed.

With this strong partnership in place, Moseley continued on their journey toward improved performance and becoming a school where all students could thrive.

## Timeline for Services at Moseley Elementary School

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### August 2017

Putnam County School District hired the consulting team to work with William D. Moseley Elementary School; the consulting team completed a needs assessment at Moseley.

### September 2017 – May 2018

The consulting team and the Moseley leadership team engaged in an Intensive Supports Partnership, which involved:

- Assessment of school systems through scientific protocols
- Professional development and coaching for teachers and school leaders
- Student-led team learning implementation (academic teaming)
- Constant tracking of student evidence through digital tools

### June 2018

The district hired the consulting team to be Moseley's External Operator and provide more intensive support to improve school performance the next year.

### August 2018 – June 2019

As the External Operator, the consulting team implemented data cycles to ensure constant monitoring of progress and achievement of the goals outlined in Moseley's action plan. There were four data cycles in the school year. The data cycles consisted of:

- Quarterly professional development days for all staff
- Twice-weekly PLC support for all staff, including new teacher planning days
- Weekly coaching for implementation for classroom teachers
- Daily to weekly school leadership coaching
- Quarterly Rigor Appraisals
- Daily action board meetings with the leadership team
- Weekly communication to the Director of School Improvement
- Monthly meetings with the Executive Action Team (superintendent and senior leadership), including a written report, to review progress and problem-solve through impediments

*Please note: This data cycle example is personalized to Moseley Elementary School. The frequency of each component depends on the needs of the school.*

## Student Behavioral Results

In the 2016-2017 school year, before McDaniel’s leadership team came to Moseley and began to work with the consulting team, challenging behavior was one of Moseley’s most pressing issues. That year, the school had 575 referrals. Assistant Principal Benford believed academic issues were a big part of the problem. He says, “When a child feels like they

just absolutely cannot do the work, the way to escape is through behavior.” After one year of the new leadership team’s work supported by the consulting team, referrals were down to 234 for the full year of 2017-2018, and 236 for the next year. Combined, these two years were still less than the 577 referrals recorded in the 2016-2017 school year.

**Behavior Referrals at William D. Moseley Elementary School**

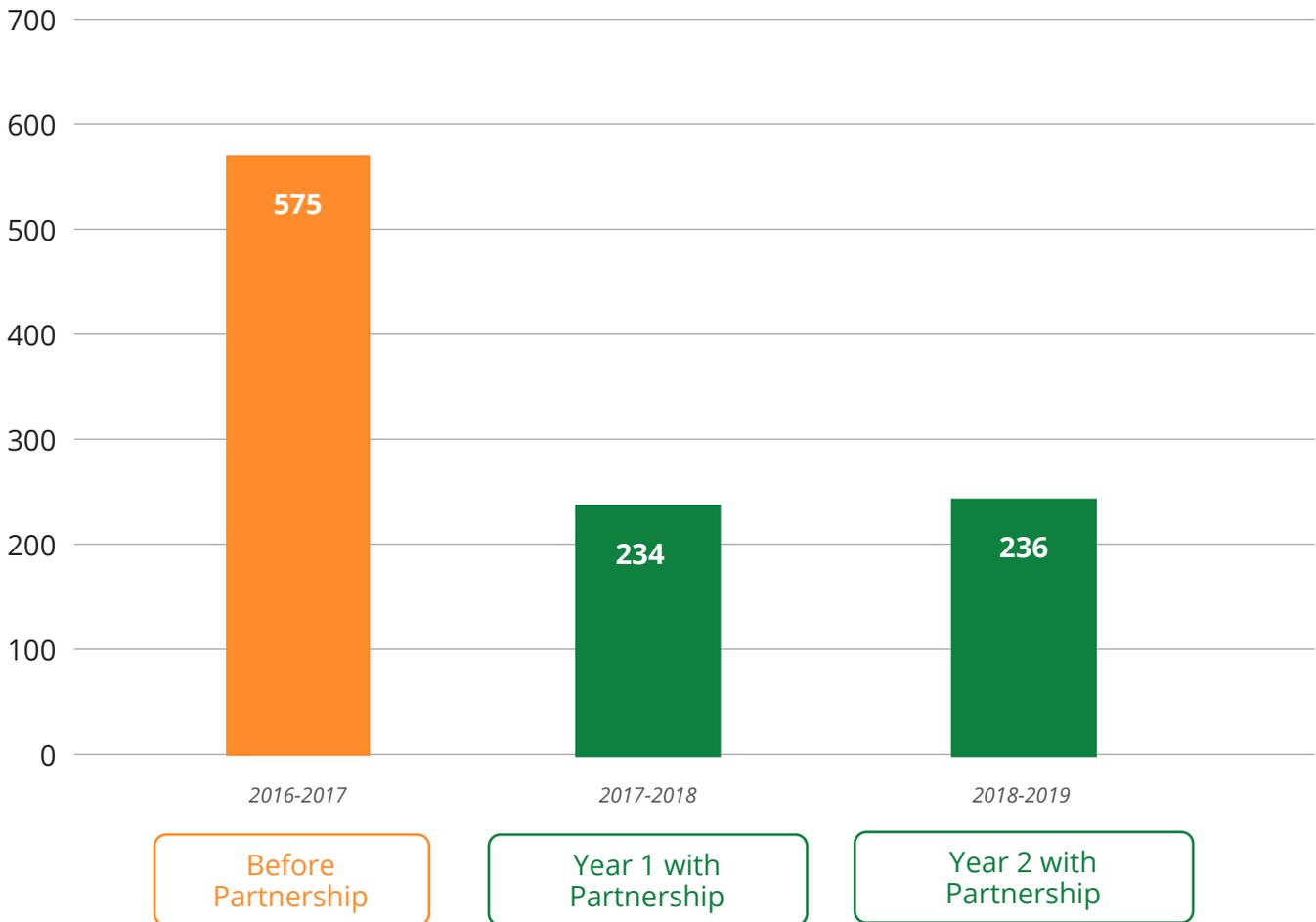


Figure 1. Referrals at Moseley dropped by more than half.

The consulting leadership coach, Dr. Perry, wanted to push the school even further in order to truly foster students' self-control and ownership of their own behavior. Dr. Perry says:

The conditions at Moseley were broken before Sarajeon and her team came in. By the time I got there, they were not broken, but they were still under some tight controls to keep behaviors in check. Teachers were hesitant to release control to kids. As the year went on, kids learned the routines. They walk in lines, but it's wasn't like the military. Teachers have very high expectations and the students have stepped up to meet those expectations and take ownership of their behavior. We get new students frequently and our kids will tell another student not to run in the hallway, for example. It's part of the school culture now and is just so natural.

While students developed more self-discipline and impulse control, at the same time, they began to develop other interpersonal and intrapersonal skills due to changes in the classrooms. Students gained self-confidence, empathy, and leadership while working in their academic teams. Second-grade teacher Bellamy saw students who had previously expressed challenging behaviors become engaged in their own learning and bond with their peers. Bellamy says:

Within my classroom and any Moseley classroom I visit, we have less negative behavior because the students are engaged. I think a step beyond that is how student-led team learning impacts students with learning disabilities or major learning gaps. Before, these students expressed themselves through anger because they didn't know what else to do. They acted out because they'd rather be perceived as the 'bad kid' than to be perceived as the 'dumb kid' by their peers. With student-led team learning, the barriers are gone for those students. Everybody has a role in their teams. Everybody has a job and everybody is important.

**“Before, students with learning disabilities or major learning gaps expressed themselves through anger because they didn't know what else to do...Now, the barriers are gone for those students. Everybody has a role in their teams. Everybody has a job and everybody is important.”**

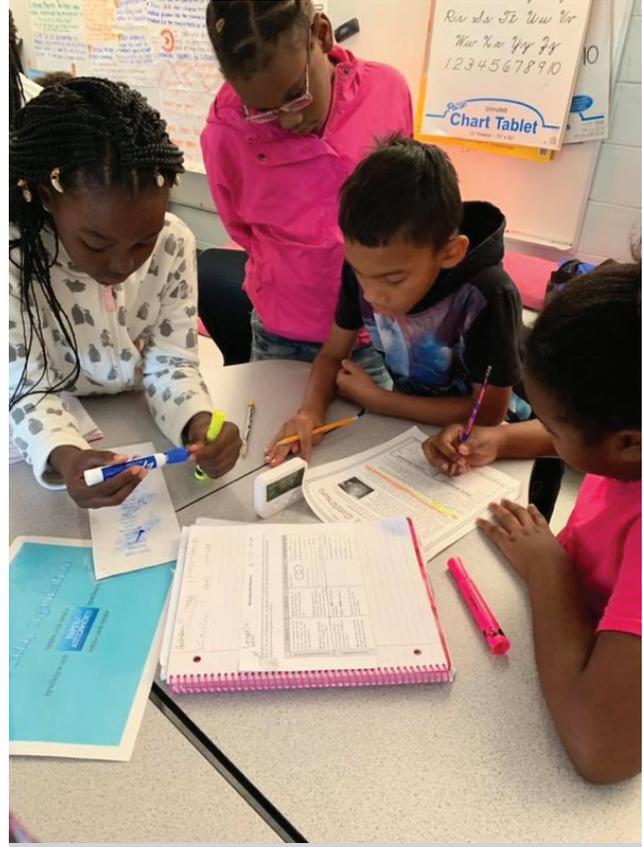
Bellamy says that student-led team learning not only benefits students who have struggled academically and behaviorally, it also helped her students who are high-achieving develop stronger interpersonal skills. Bellamy says:

Student-led team learning can make a positive impact on students who are naturally shining. I have a student who has always understood everything the first time his whole life, and he is so smart. Teaming forces him to listen to other people's perspective, instead of everyone just automatically picking his answer because they know he's smart... In a team, he has to work with students who don't always get it at first and he has to fully explain his thought processes and ideas.

Fourth-grade teacher Cribbs, who had taught first grade in her first year at Moseley and taught fourth grade in her second year, found student-led team learning made a big difference in the behavior management in both of her classrooms. She says, “I didn’t have to use clipboard tallies or any of the usual behavior management techniques.” She also found that student-led team learning fostered student leadership. She recalls one student in particular who transformed behaviorally and developed interpersonal skills as a result of student-led team learning. She says:

One of my students who comes to mind had been low academically. He wanted to be the class clown in the back of the room and not really participate or engage in the learning. Through student-led teaming techniques and through a lot of patience, I was able to see a true transformation in this student. He went from not doing the team roles to the best of his ability to becoming fully engaged with 100% ownership by the middle of the school year. He started trying so hard and he actually asked me if he could be the team facilitator. He fully committed to that role. At the end of the year, he received the award ‘Leader of the Pack’ because he went from being the child who wants to goof off to taking ownership of his learning and making sure that his team was also taking ownership of their learning as well. He knew what it was like to struggle, so he made sure he was constantly aware of all his team members. He went from being the one who was struggling to being the leader who helps those who are struggling.

**“My student actually asked me if he could be the team facilitator...He went from being the one who was struggling to being the leader who helps those who are struggling.”**



*Second-grade students engaged in student-led team learning.*

## Student Academic Results

As Moseley’s student-led team learning implementation became more advanced in their second year of partnership, the school saw large increases in student proficiency. In two years, ELA proficiency on the Florida Standards Assessment (FSA) increased by 20 percent and mathematics proficiency increased by 13 percent.

### ELA proficiency increased by 20 percent and mathematics proficiency increased by 13 percent

Moseley had a 33 percent increase in the percent of students who made learning gains, from 32 percent to 65 percent by the end of the 2018-19 school year. Principal McDaniel was particularly proud of the academic growth in Moseley’s bottom quartile. ELA learning

gains of the lowest 25 percent increased by 39 percent. She says:

In ELA especially, the learning gains in our bottom quartile were huge. In the past, the common practice with these students was just remediation, remediation, remediation. Those kids would be taken out of core instruction and the gap would widen. With our new methods, they still did get 45 minutes of intervention, but now they were exposed to and engaged with grade level standards in core instruction and they were part of conversations with other students, which wasn’t the case in the past. We had 73 percent growth in our bottom quartile in ELA this year, compared to 34 percent last year.

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**Moseley’s Achievement Scores**

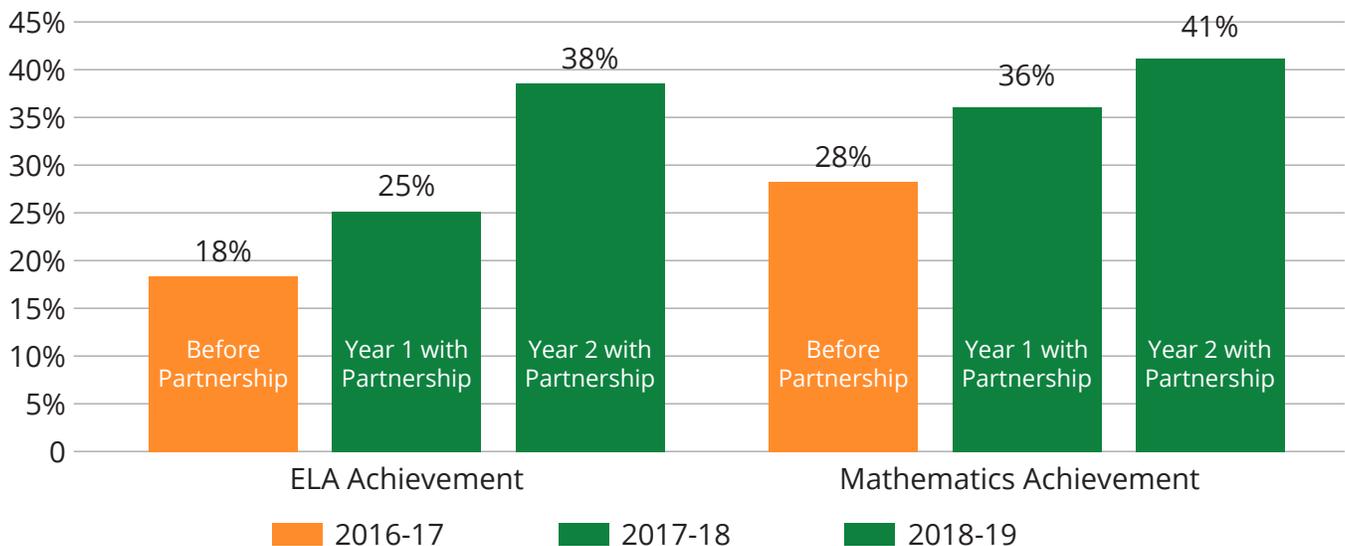


Figure 2. Moseley’s achievement scores went up for both ELA and mathematics

Instructional Coach Wilds agrees with McDaniel that moving students through the MTSS (Multi-tiered System of Supports) process and back into core instruction was a key factor in student's academic progress. Wilds saw students beginning to take ownership of their own intervention processes. She says:

In the second year of implementation we've had a lot less kids in the Tier 3 process. We had a lot of kids who stayed Tier 2 or went back to Tier 1. They were ready to be on grade level in the general population in their classroom and were really thriving. A lot of that had to do with kids being able to talk about what they didn't know and articulate it to their teachers. Students began to want to be better. They really became owners of their own interventions, wanting to move through the levels. We saw a lot of growth across the board.

**“[Students] really became owners of their own interventions, wanting to move through the levels. We saw a lot of growth across the board.”**

McDaniel believes student ownership of their learning and articulation of their academic progress and needs was a significant factor in students' growth. McDaniel says, “This past year, I've really seen student ownership and I've seen a shift in the students' academic vocabulary and the way that they can speak about their learning. The students and teachers have gone places where I didn't realize we were even able to go.”

Second-grade teacher Bellamy sees students in her classroom not just taking ownership of their own learning, but also taking ownership of their peers' learning in their teams.

Bellamy says:

I see students taking ownership of their whole teams when they say: “Wait a minute. We all three got this answer, but this person got something different. What part of the success criteria did they not understand? Why would we say they didn't meet their learning target? How can we help them?” I think that team ownership piece is what really stands out to me more than just individual student ownership.

The consulting leadership coach, Dr. Perry, points out that students are now taking their academic conversations home with them as they share their progress with their parents. She says:

Kids were going home and having conversations with their parents and parents were calling the school saying, “My child is talking about their academic performance, about their iReady scores, and about their goals for where they want to be.” That was huge, and it was a simple shift. Instead of the teachers owning each student's progress, they shared it openly with the students themselves.

Parent Cornethia Foreman's son is in fifth grade and has been at Moseley since kindergarten. She says, “The past couple of years have been the greatest years here. There are things in motion I have never seen before.” Her son was in the gifted program when he was younger, but when the program dissolved, Foreman says her son didn't have the same motivation. His grades started to slip. That changed when her son's teacher started using the student-led teaming techniques. Foreman says, “When the partnership began, my son got more motivated. The new work they were doing made the kids try harder.” Now, Foreman is proud to point out that her son's grades are back up and he is more engaged in his academics.

## Students Become Leaders at Moseley

In 2018, Moseley started a new student leadership group called The Voices of Moseley with support from the consulting team. Twelve fourth- and fifth- grade students were involved in the group. Instructional Coach Wilds says The Voices of Moseley students weren't necessarily the top academic performers, but they had shown initiative in wanting to help others. Each week, students got together to talk, write, and interact in their authentic voices. Parent Cornethia Foreman says, "My son was involved in The Voices of Moseley group. He was able to share his perspective on how he felt and what changes he wanted to see in the school."

As the year went on, students in The Voices of Moseley began to lead schoolwide changes. Dr. Perry says, "They didn't just share their experiences—they actually had ideas about what they wanted to do at the school." The students formed a safety patrol to teach younger students the school norms and to help monitor the hallways so teachers wouldn't have to. They presented their idea to Assistant Principal Benford, discussing their plan and why they wanted to start the safety patrol. Dr. Perry says, "The staff helps facilitate the safety patrol, but it's really on the students. They started it, and they own it."

**"They didn't just share their experiences—they actually had ideas about what they wanted to do at the school."**

Students in The Voices of Moseley also mentored younger students in the classroom by supporting student-led team learning.

Instructional Coach Wilds says:

They helped with teaming in classrooms, mentoring younger students and helping them grasp the concepts they were struggling with. The students in The Voices of Moseley were learning because they were teaching other students. They became almost like interventionists themselves. That would have never entered my mind before the partnership with the consulting external coaches.

**"They became almost like interventionists themselves. That would have never entered my mind before the partnership with the consulting external coaches."**



*Teacher Shanna Cribbs working with students for feedback on her lesson plans.*

In addition to assisting teachers in the classroom, students in The Voices of Moseley also began to help their teachers in the planning process by providing feedback on lessons. Fourth-grade teacher Cribbs says:

At their leadership group meetings, The Voices of Moseley students started to build their confidence when they talked about what they did that day to be successful and how they used academic teaming resources and methods in their classrooms. Once, my ELA partner and I were sitting in the same room as their Voices of Moseley meeting and our students just started giving us input on what worked for them in the lesson that day, what didn't work for them, and some challenges they faced. It helped us see things like when something was worded in a confusing way. I've never personally worked with a child on lesson planning before, but it was very, very positive. It made me want to get feedback from all of my children, so I added a place for feedback on my success criteria sheets.

**“I've never personally worked with a child on lesson planning before, but it was very, very positive.”**

Students from The Voices of Moseley were invited to participate in the 2019 Building Expertise Conference, where they presented on a national stage in front of 70 people. It was one of the most widely acclaimed sessions of the year. One attendee commented, “After 25 years of teaching, this session was the most inspiring, career changing, and motivating two hours! I left in tears, filled with new passion and pride in our profession.” Consulting leadership coach Dr. Perry hopes The Voices of Moseley will continue to evolve. She says, “I would really like to see these kids visit other schools and become ambassadors. They could talk to educators about how to include student voice

and they could talk to other students about how to lead. This could potentially spread to other districts and other states.”

**Students from The Voices of Moseley were invited to participate in the 2019 Building Expertise Conference, where they presented on a national stage.**



*A fourth-grade student from The Voices of Moseley holds up a banner of himself at the Building Expertise Conference, where he presented with his classmates.*

## Educator Professional Growth and Morale

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The work Moseley did in partnership with the consulting team not only had positive outcomes for the students, it also benefited the professional growth of teachers and school leaders. Assistant Principal Benford points out that the student-led team learning strategies helped new teachers get to the same level as veteran teachers more quickly. Benford says:

When I saw some of the new teachers using the strategies from the external coaches and they were at the same level as the more experienced teachers—or even surpassed those teachers—that’s when I knew the partnership was working. The external coaches’ methods were turning a teacher who had almost no experience in education into almost a veteran teacher in the first couple of months. It evened the playing field. When I saw one of our second-year teachers was able to be on the same level as a teacher who has been teaching for 20 some odd years, I knew this was working.

**“The external coaches’ methods were turning a teacher who had almost no experience in education into almost a veteran teacher in the first couple of months.”**

Cribbs had been one of those new teachers. She gained confidence when she became more advanced with student-led team learning. She says:

In a short amount of time I went from not being confident as a teacher because I was very new, to being proud that when people walk in my classroom students are smiling and doing their work and completely engaged. The biggest thing I got from the partnership and

coaching was confidence as a teacher, because I know my kids are learning. I know I’m doing everything I can to give them exactly what they need to be successful.

Fellow teacher Bellamy, who had been at Moseley for five years, found that the shift in classroom instruction made a big impact on her morale. She says classrooms shifts changed the entire culture of the school and restored her passion for teaching. Bellamy says:

The transformation Moseley has gone through in the past two years is—well, I don’t even have a comparison. Before Sarajeon and her team came and the partnership with the external coaches began, that year before was depressingly one of the darkest periods of my life because I was in a classroom with basically no support. I was considering leaving my career. It was really horrible. When I found out Sarajeon was coming I knew the school culture would change, but I felt that was going to have a lot more to do with the adults. I thought teachers on campus would probably be happier because Sarajeon makes things fun. But I think the partnership is what made the true change in the classroom, which is what actually transformed the culture of the entire school. The change in students I think can be attributed directly to the strategies that we learned from the partnership.

**“I think the partnership is what made the true change in the classroom, which is what actually transformed the culture of the entire school.”**

Director of School Improvement Hinke saw the change in teachers and Moseley's school culture as well. He started to hear more feedback from teachers on their own professional progress. He says:

When teachers start making the point of sharing their reflections and realizations about what they're trying out in their classrooms and how that's working for students, that's big. We started hearing from them about specific students who were becoming successful and all of a sudden taking on leadership roles. Teachers would also share things that didn't go well and how they planned to adjust their approach. To me, that proves there is not only teacher buy-in, but also a strong desire on the part of teachers to create classrooms where all students can be successful. Teachers feel a lot of pride, students feel pride, and leaders in the front office celebrate student success. When you walk in, you're hearing all these stories about students. That proves to me that something special is happening at Moseley.

As Moseley transformed, not as many teachers were leaving the school. Teacher turnover decreased by 39 percent compared to the year before. Previously, Principal McDaniel had to replace 20 teachers who had chosen to leave. In the 2017-2018 year, she only had to hire eight teachers, and in the 2018-2019 school year, she only had to hire six teachers.

### Teacher turnover at Moseley decreased by 39 percent.

A culture of professional learning developed at Moseley which extended to school leaders. Assistant Principal Benford felt comfortable to share his ideas and receive feedback from others. He says, "The partnership has definitely helped me become a better instructional leader. The external coaches helped us create an atmosphere where we weren't afraid to fail. We were all able to

### Teacher Turnover at Moseley

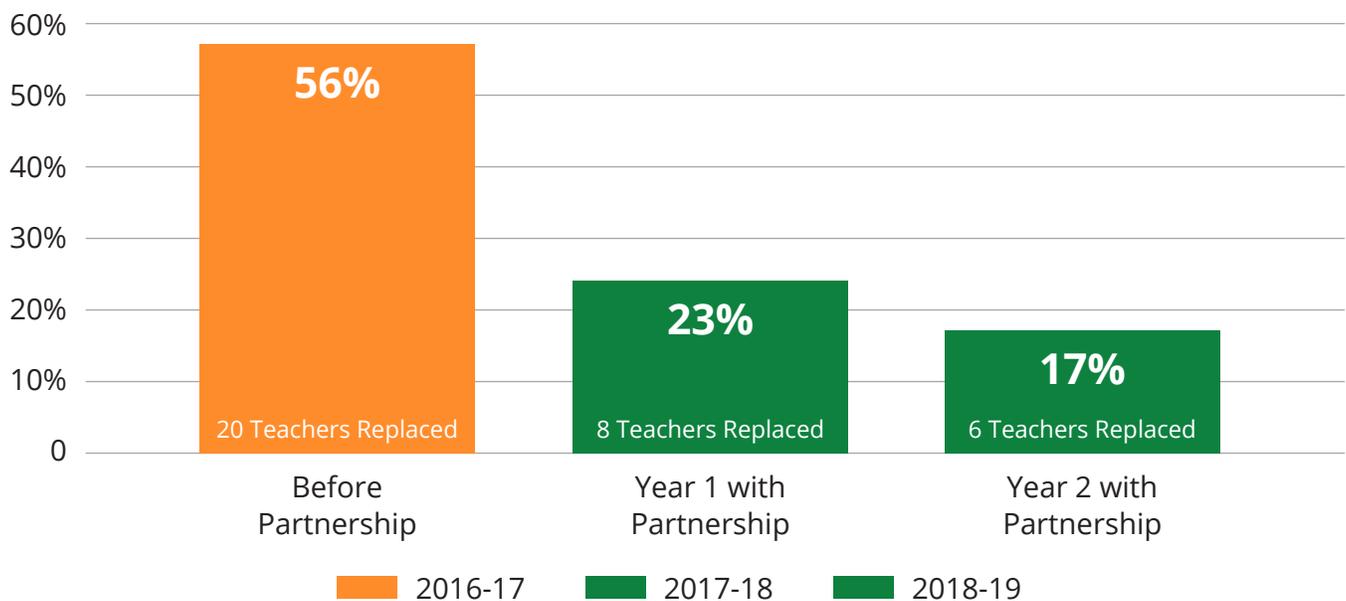


Figure 3. Teacher turnover at Moseley decreased by 39 percent from the 2016-2017 school year to the 2018-2019 school year.

grow together.” Leadership coach Dr. Perry says Benford branched out of his comfort zone, which was student discipline, and began to take on an active role in observing instructional rigor on classroom walks.

The staff’s elevated morale and desire for professional growth radiated out to the community members as well. Parent Cornethia Foreman volunteers at Moseley. She’s always been actively involved, but noticed other parents started to get more involved as well. She says:

Moseley is an amazing place. When you walk on campus, the principal is on the sidewalk greeting everyone. It’s like a pep rally every morning. It actually makes you want to go work there and be a staff member. I think it makes you want to be a better parent at home, too—like spending more time helping with homework. At Moseley, I have the opportunity to share my ideas and do anything I can to help the school. And having the partnership with external coaches in the school has just been a phenomenal experience as well.

## What Does the Future Hold for Moseley?

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After a year of intensive work, Moseley gained a hard-earned nine percentage points and exited the need for Comprehensive Support services.

At the end of the school year, as Moseley's school leaders reflected on what it's been like to work with an External Operator, they agreed that there was a lot of value in the partnership with the consulting team. Principal McDaniel says, "The relationship has been great. The consulting external coaches feel like a part of Moseley. It's more than partnering with a business—I feel like everyone truly cares and is invested in Moseley, in the leadership team, and in the teachers and parents. That's what it takes: for everyone to have the same mindset and belief together." Instructional Coach Wilds felt working with the consulting team helped make Moseley's tough journey out of Comprehensive Support possible. She says:

I feel the partnership was such a huge part of our success. It was a team effort—our external coaches jumped in and they were right there with us. I've worked in education for a long time, and sometimes you have partners that come in and it's like, "Oh gosh, they're here," but not with this partnership. It was a true partnership. Teachers would meet with them, and the kids had a relationship with them too. When the partnership began, it made our work much easier and much more attainable. The beauty of the partnership is it wasn't just something extra to add in.

**"It's more than partnering with a business—I feel like everyone truly cares and is invested in Moseley."**

Director of School Improvement Hinke thought that the consulting team was a great fit as Putnam County School District's External Operator partner. He predicts Moseley is on the path to becoming a true model school in the district and believes the investment in Moseley will benefit more than just those at the school. Hinke says:

You have to identify the type of External Operator you want. We chose a route that would hopefully give us a return on investment that wasn't just about Moseley. And I think for a lot of districts in that position, the decision is never easy. We worked really hard at trying to make sure we involved the school and the community in that decision-making process, and we were very transparent and honest along the way. We want Moseley to become a demonstration model school for our whole district to learn from. We're trying to replicate the work in small amounts in buildings where we have some buy-in. We are making an investment in the partnership at Moseley, and in the long run it will benefit all of the schools in our district.

Teachers Bellamy and Cribbs hope that Moseley’s scores will continue to rise. Bellamy says: “I think that it’s only going to go up from here. Teachers from other schools in the county are coming to watch us and ask questions and learn.” Cribbs says, “I envision Moseley becoming a model school because I know what we’re doing is beneficial and it’s what’s right for the kids. My vision is that we’re able to share our learning with other schools and teachers, especially new teachers, because if I wouldn’t have had this, I don’t know where I would be.”

Parent Cornethia Foreman is proud of Moseley’s progress this year and the school’s important role in the community. She says Moseley is becoming a school that other parents are eager to enroll their children in. Foreman says:

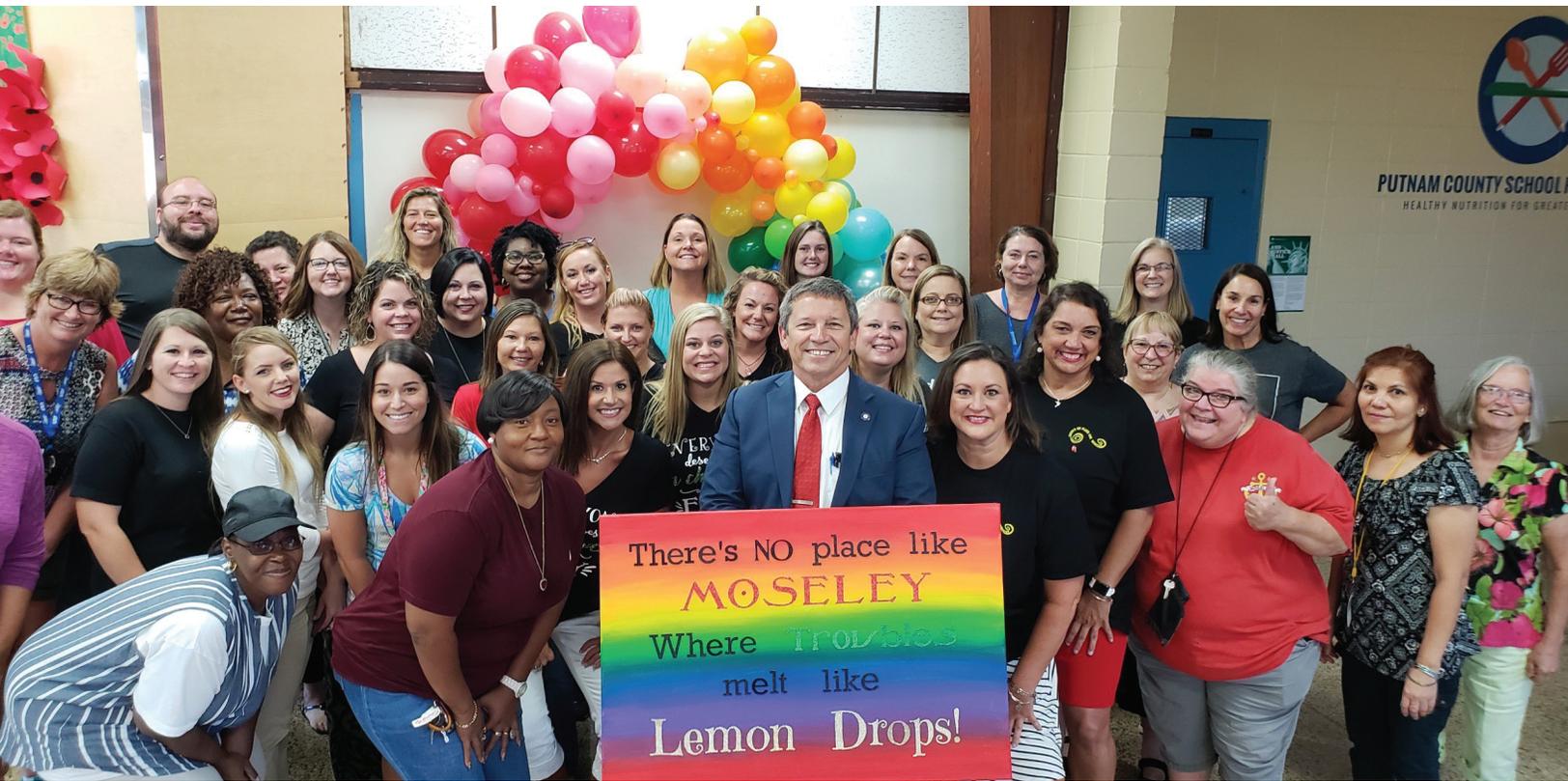
I think Moseley is the best school we have in Putnam County – the staff supports every student to excel. We knew it would take more than a year. In the second year we started blooming. Parents were on Facebook bragging about Moseley. People are trying to get their kids into Moseley now. They have to drive—sometimes far out of their way—to get their kids here. Even upscale people who can be picky want their kids here. It wasn’t like that at first, but they see the change in Moseley.

My son has learned so much from being here. I hate that he has to move on, now that he’s graduating to middle school. All my grandkids will go to Moseley. I’m definitely proud to be a Moseley parent.

Instructional Coach Wilds hopes that Moseley’s rigorous instruction will continue to attract parents. She says, “I want to see it become the school that people are fighting to get their kids into because of the level of instruction that’s here.” Wilds believes Moseley will continue to thrive even if the school leadership team moves on, because of the now sustainable systems at Moseley. She says, “We want to leave it where the school can continue growing and become a demonstration school for our district and for other districts.”

District	School	Before Partnership State Rating 2017	Year 1 with Partnership State Rating 2018	Year 2 with Partnership State Rating 2019	Change
Putnam	William D. Moseley Elementary	28%	35%	44%	▲ 16%

Figure 4. In two years, Moseley increased 16 percent points on their state accountability score, which means they increased their rating by two categories.



**District Superintendent, Dr. Rick Surrency, celebrating Moseley's achievement with the school team.**

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