



## The Grow Network

### INNOVATIVE INSTRUCTIONAL REPORTING SYSTEM IMPROVES PERFORMANCE OF STUDENTS RETAKING OHIO GRADUATION TESTS

#### Findings from the Consortium for Policy Research in Education Support Pilot Project Developed by The Grow Network/McGraw-Hill

**New York, NY – June 10, 2008** – Research has confirmed that an initiative developed by The Grow Network/McGraw-Hill called the Personalized Assessment Reporting System (PARS) motivates students and provides educators with essential tools that help improve student performance on retakes of the Ohio Graduation Tests (OGT). Passing the test is an essential step to earning a high school diploma in Ohio.

PARS was developed on behalf of the Ohio Department of Education to provide educators, students, and parents with personalized reports, both in print and online, about student performance on the OGT. The reporting system also offers online instructional resources and professional development tools designed to help teachers address students' individual academic needs.

Researchers from the Consortium for Policy Research in Education (CPRE) conducted a scientifically-based evaluation of the first year of implementation of the system. Among other findings, the CPRE study reported: "Teachers thought the PARS reports could be useful in a number of ways, namely informing their instructional decisions, facilitating teacher-student communication around their OGT performance, expediting school responsiveness to students who needed to retake the OGT, and focusing school attention on students at risk of not graduating."

Specific quantitative findings included the following:

- Students who failed the March 2006 Ohio Graduation Tests, prior to the implementation of the pilot project, were up to **four times more likely** to attempt at least one retake of the test if they attended a school using the PARS resources.
- Students in PARS districts scored significantly higher on retakes compared to their counterparts in control districts. The largest effects occurred in Science and Social Studies, where students in treatment districts were **27% more likely** to score proficient in Science and **22% more likely** to score proficient in Social Studies than were students in control districts.
- Findings of higher retake scores were particularly robust for African-American students and students with limited English proficiency.
  - African-American students were about **40% more likely** to score proficient on a retake of the OGT than their counterparts in control districts.

- The researchers also found an exceptionally large positive effect in Writing for students with limited English proficiency (LEP). LEP students were **nearly four times more likely** to score proficient in Writing if they attended a school in a PARS district.

“This impartial and rigorous research study offers significant evidence that providing students with clear, detailed information about their assessment performance and personalized instructional materials can make a real difference in their academic achievement,” said Mark Malaspina, president of The Grow Network. “The report also demonstrates that Grow’s approach of integrating reporting and instructional materials can be a valuable resource and diagnostic tool for teachers who work with struggling students.”

The CPRE study included a random assignment of the PARS program to 30 out of 60 districts in Ohio, providing the basis for clear causal connection between PARS’ intervention efforts and student motivation and improvement. CPRE researchers noted that “results from this randomized field trial suggest that PARS has had many positive effects on student motivation and OGT outcomes for many students.... While PARS did not appear to impact the OGT scores of students taking the test for the first time, PARS did show positive impacts on the OGT scores and proficiency rates for students retaking the OGT. Many teachers involved in tutoring students who had failed the OGT were able to use PARS in meaningful ways to guide their support for students.”

Created in 1985, the Consortium for Policy Research in Education (CPRE) unites researchers from seven of the nation’s leading research institutions—the University of Pennsylvania, Teachers College Columbia University, Harvard University, Stanford University, the University of Michigan, the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and Northwestern University—in an effort to improve elementary and secondary education through practical research. Visit [www.cpre.org](http://www.cpre.org) for more information about CPRE.

To read a copy of the full report, go to:

[http://www.cpre.org/images/stories/cpre\\_pdfs/cpre%20ohio%20pars%20report.pdf](http://www.cpre.org/images/stories/cpre_pdfs/cpre%20ohio%20pars%20report.pdf)

### **About The Grow Network/McGraw-Hill**

Established in March 2000, The Grow Network/McGraw-Hill has become a nationally recognized leader in educational assessment reporting. The Grow Network/McGraw-Hill’s innovative patent-pending system offers dynamic reports and differentiated learning tools in print and online for families, teachers, and educational leaders. The Grow Network/McGraw-Hill is part of the Assessment and Reporting group of McGraw-Hill Education, a division of The McGraw-Hill Companies (NYSE: MHP). McGraw-Hill Education is a leading global provider of instructional, assessment and reference solutions that empower professionals and students of all ages. Additional information is available at <http://info.grow.net/>

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