Happy Numbers

Union School District Delivers Personalized Math Success with **Happy Numbers**

The Challenge

Union School District, located in the San Jose, Los Gatos area, serves approximately 5,000 students across six elementary schools and two middle schools in grades TK-8. The district has a strong focus on supporting multilingual learners and providing individualized instruction to meet diverse student needs.

Abe Goldman, a teacher on special assignment at Union, supports educators across the district with a particular focus on helping new teachers develop successful classroom strategies. In his role, Goldman observed a significant challenge common to many districts: addressing the diverse learning needs within each classroom.

"In most of our classrooms we have a really wide range," explains Goldman. "We have students performing a grade or two below grade level to students performing a grade or two or even three above grade level, and as a teacher individualizing instruction for all of those students is impossible."

After recognizing that traditional whole-class math instruction wasn't meeting their diverse student needs, Union adopted Happy Numbers - a personalized online math program designed to provide individualized instruction for students in grades PK-5. The results? Remarkable student growth, especially for the students initially below grade level, along with enthusiastic engagement from both students and teachers, who found the program easy to integrate into their existing routines.

Union School District

- **Location**: San Jose, Los Gatos area
- **Schools**: 6 elementary, 2 middle schools
- **Enrollment:** ~5,000 students
- **Grades:** TK-8
- **Focus:** Multilingual learners, individualized instruction

The Results

This evaluation followed 1,715 K-5 students in the Union School District over the entire 2024-2025 school year. Every student took the Happy Numbers' Placement Test and End-of-Year Assessment, giving us a true pre-/post-measure of progress. The difference between these assessment results in HN Scores was selected as the metric for growth. For reference, 100 points of growth in HN Score is equivalent to 1 grade level of progress.
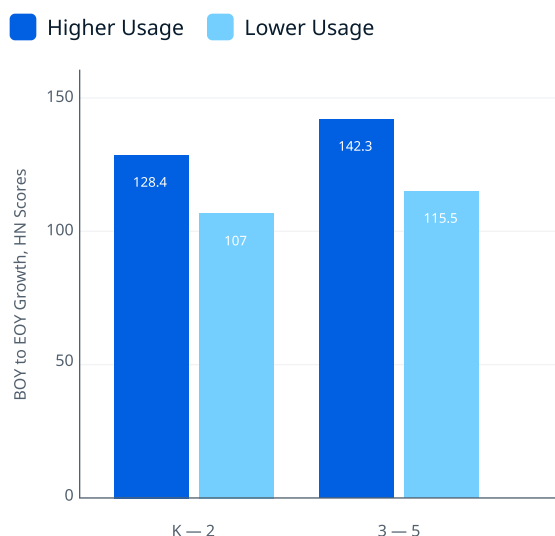
Consistent gains, K-5

Students who attained the recommended weekly time grew noticeably more from fall to spring than users with lower usage in every grade level. Students with higher Happy Numbers usage outperformed their lower-usage peers by 17 to 34 points of growth from beginning of year to end of year.

Biggest lift for those who need it most

Students who began the year below or far below grade level gained the equivalent of **about 1.2 to 1.4 grade levels** when they engaged at the recommended level of usage - enough to close long-standing gaps in a single year.

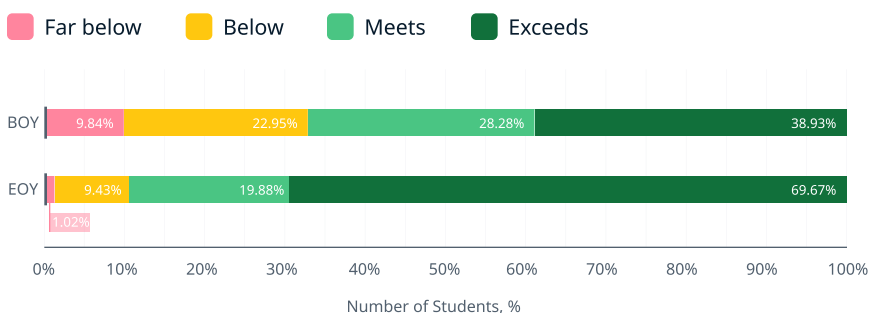**Average Fall to Spring Growth within "Below" and "Far Below" Initial Groups**

- Higher Usage
- Lower Usage

BOY to EOY Growth, HN Scores

	Higher Usage	Lower Usage
K — 2	128.4	107
3 — 5	142.3	115.5

The Results

Consistent gains, K-5

Within the high-usage group, the share of students meeting or exceeding grade-level expectations jumped from 67% in the fall to 90% in the spring. These results validate Goldman's observation that, "Our students showed real remarkable growth with Happy Numbers," particularly demonstrating how personalized, adaptive learning can accelerate progress for students who need it most.

K-5 Student Performance Growth: Beginning to End of Year (Higher Usage Group)

Far below   Below   Meets   Exceeds

	Far below	Below	Meets	Exceeds
BOY	9.84%	22.95%	28.28%	38.93%
EOY	1.02%	9.43%	19.88%	69.67%

Number of Students, %

Mastery of Essential Skills

The program also demonstrated strong results in building foundational math fluency. For instance, among 'meets grade' students, 97% of second graders mastered Addition within 20 fluency and 95% of first graders achieved Addition within 10 fluency.

The Process

Union's implementation of Happy Numbers proved remarkably flexible, allowing teachers to integrate the platform seamlessly into their existing math instruction. "It's been very easy to incorporate Happy Numbers into our existing routines," Goldman notes. "The recommended length of time is 45 minutes a week, which if you break it up per day, it's really nothing - 9 minutes a day."

Teachers across the district adopted Happy Numbers in various ways to meet their classroom needs.

- **Differentiated Learning Groups**

The most common implementation was during math centers, where teachers could pull small groups for targeted instruction while other students worked independently on Happy Numbers. "Teachers love pulling small groups, and having Happy Numbers as an option for students that are at their desks and not with the teacher has been great," Goldman explains.

- **From Data to Action**

The platform's comprehensive reporting proved invaluable for instructional decision-making. "The data that we get back is incredible," Goldman explains. "It allows teachers to see not only who's struggling but exactly what they are struggling on, and then it gives them ideas and assignments for them to work on to build those gaps."

Tanya Yates, Grade 1
Alta Vista Elementary School

"As a teacher, I like the dashboard of student data, the leveled placement, and the assessment data. I also like the layout of the screen that the kids see. I like the strategies that are being taught."

Katherine Tucker, Grade 1
Alta Vista Elementary School

"I like how differentiated it is and my ability to assign tasks to individual students as needed. It solidifies my students' math comprehension and gives them the opportunity to work further in math."

- **Pre-Assessment Power**

Many teachers also discovered the power of using Happy Numbers for pre-assessments. Before beginning a new unit, teachers would assign specific topics through the platform's assignment feature, then use the results to form instructional groups. "I had a lot of teachers that really enjoyed doing a pre-assessment on Happy Numbers before teaching subtraction up to 10 in their kindergarten class, and then being able to make those groups for centers based on the results," Goldman shares.

The Process

- **Personalized Practice**

Some educators assigned Happy Numbers as homework or used it as a productive activity for early finishers, ensuring students always had meaningful math practice available. The platform's individualized learning paths meant that, "everybody in the room can be working on a different math lesson at different levels and different grade levels, which is just awesome." This approach transformed math instruction at Union schools, moving from a one-size-fits-all model to truly personalized learning that met each student where they were academically.

Grade 4 Teacher,

Lietz Elementary School

"My fourth graders love working at their own pace. The possibility of covering higher grade level material is enticing to them!"

Key Results

1,700 +

students participated

70% to 90%

met/exceeded grade level fall to spring

1.4 grade

level growth for "below" students

97% of Grade 2

mastered addition within 20

95% of Grade 1

mastered addition within 10

What Students and Teachers Loved

Student Engagement and Success

Happy Numbers transformed students' attitudes toward mathematics at Union School District. "Kids like using it, they enjoy being on Happy Numbers," Goldman observes, noting this engagement was essential for learning success. The platform's visual and interactive approach resonated particularly well with students who had previously struggled with traditional math instruction.

For multilingual learners and students with special needs, the program's accessibility features made math more approachable. The visual, tactile learning environment allowed students to, "understand the math even if there are some language barriers," while the professional Spanish voice-over helped Spanish-speaking students feel included and supported.

Tanya Yates, Grade 1

Alta Vista Elementary School

"I LOVE that I can provide differentiated instruction for my students so that those who need more review or more challenge can get what they need."

Annemarie Guido, Grade 2

Lietz Elementary School

"They love how gamified Happy Numbers is, and also enjoy the opportunity to be challenged based on their math knowledge. I also LOVE that everything can be translated to Spanish!"

Instructional Effectiveness

Teachers appreciated how Happy Numbers simplified their instructional planning while improving student outcomes. "The return on investment from Happy Numbers has been happier teachers - teachers that are not working as hard to provide better individualized math content for their students," Goldman explains. New teachers found particular value in the platform's assessment capabilities. Goldman was impressed watching, "teachers new to the profession creating small groups based on assessment data from Happy Numbers, and how easily they were able to do that." The ability to seamlessly integrate pre-assessments with their existing curriculum gave teachers confidence in their instructional decisions.

Perhaps most importantly, Happy Numbers allowed teachers to focus on what they do best. As Goldman notes, his mission is to, "take things off the teacher's plate that allows them to focus on what they do best, which is forming relationships with students, meeting individual needs of students." The program's automatic individualization freed teachers to concentrate on building connections rather than managing differentiated worksheets and materials.

Looking Forward

The Future of Individualized Math Instruction

Union School District's success with Happy Numbers demonstrates the power of combining engagement with deep conceptual understanding. "There's lots of products that are super engaging but there's no educational value - Happy Numbers is a great blend of being engaging and also having educational value," Goldman observes. The platform proved that students don't have to choose between enjoying math and mastering it.

"In the next few years, I think math instruction is going to continue to get more individualized," Goldman predicts. "Ideally, each student will have individualized assessment, individualized instruction, and individualized support." Educational partners like Happy Numbers are, "pioneers on that journey," toward truly personalized education.

For other districts considering implementation, Goldman's recommendation is straightforward: "I would strongly encourage it. I've had nothing but positive feedback from the teachers that I work with, from the students in the classrooms that I see, and probably most importantly, the data really supports that it is helping."