



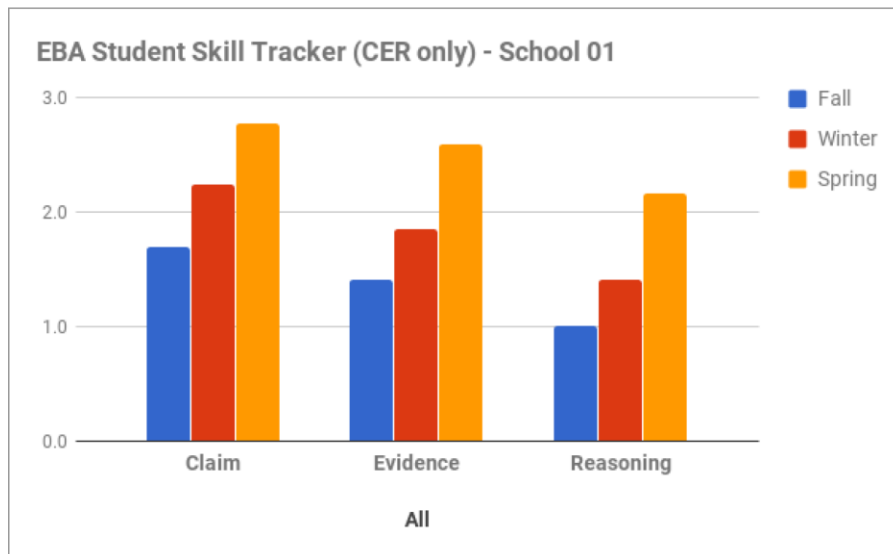
BOSTON DEBATE LEAGUE

Evidence-Based Argumentation School-wide Initiative: Impact

IMPACT ON STUDENTS: COMMON CORE SKILLS

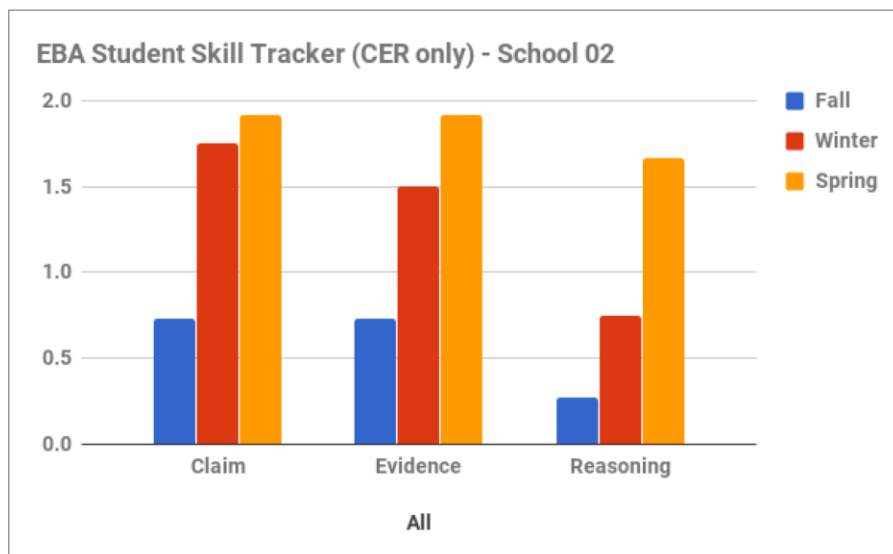
Evidence-Based Argumentation (EBA) helps improve student's skills needed to meet Common Core State Standards. Common core aligned assessments at a BPS EBA school found significant increases in student argumentation skills.

In the 2016-17 school year, EBA teacher leaders designed and implemented authentic, content-specific argumentative writing assessments in the fall, winter, and spring. They used a common rubric to grade the assessments. The scores reflect significant growth in the EBA skills of developing strong claims, relevant evidence, and deep reasoning. In 2017-18, teacher leaders across all Year 2 and 3 EBA partner schools are implementing similar assessments.



EMK Academy for Health Careers

- Grade 9 History
- Grade 10 Chemistry
- Grade 11 History
- Grade 12 ELA



Timilty Middle School

- Grade 7 English as a Second Language

IMPACT ON STUDENTS, TEACHERS, AND SCHOOLS

Teachers Say... In the 2017-18 EOY survey:

Over 90% of teachers surveyed agreed that:

- EBA helps them plan effective lessons
- EBA engages all students
- EBA helps build a student-centered classroom
- EBA helps students use a common language of argumentation across content areas

About using EBA in their classrooms:

- “EBA is directly aligned with the Common Core, and I believe the skills I teach through EBA are crucial to our students' college and career readiness. I appreciate how EBA has provided the teaching staff with a common language that is transferable across all content areas.”
- “EBA activities bring in students who might otherwise be outliers.”
- “EBA prepares my students for real-world problem solving.”
- “EBA forces students to talk to one another and to defend their points of view.”

“Why EBA?” Headmasters/Principals Say...

Linda McIntyre, Burke High School (Alumni School)

My number one heartfelt thought: EBA is about equity. When I hear students stand up in a classroom and use their voice, with a thought process, with evidence, that's a beautiful thing. Because most of our students are marginalized, they haven't had voice in any process. First, with EBA they get a voice. Second, EBA provides a process to think about how students learn and think. We ask, “What are your processes to come to that conclusion? Where is your evidence to support your thinking?” In addition to supporting students, EBA also explores, what do teachers need to know? EBA gives them an opportunity to learn without feeling vulnerable; it helps create psychological safety in the community.

Matt Holzer, Boston Green Academy (Alumni School)

EBA is awesome! To understand what it means to be “green” requires the ability to make and evaluate arguments, and to have the skill set to grapple with complex problems. This is exactly what sustained, school-wide EBA work provides.

Jeff Cook, Urban Science Academy (Year 3 School)

The intensive and differentiated coaching support provided by BDL is the major reason. So often, we roll out initiatives without providing our faculty with the necessary support for effective implementation. The EBA model solves this all-too-common dilemma. And second, the beauty of having a common language (Claim, Evidence, Reasoning) centered around our instructional focus area is just incredibly powerful. Already, in just a few short months, EBA has become deeply engrained at USA - across all content areas. I am really excited to see the impact this partnership will have on our students over the course of the next three years!

Dania Vázquez, Margarita Muñiz Academy (Year 2 School)

EBA is aligned with our mission of developing students' linguistic skills in two languages using an authentic framework for learning... Our dual language focus connects profoundly with the BDL value ‘power of language.’ We believe that every student has the potential to develop their thinking and skills in two languages, fostering a deep sense of value for diversity and empowerment.

BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS



The Mildred Avenue K - 8 School

12 June 2017

To Whom It May Concern:

It is my honor to write this letter of support for the Boston Debate League Evidence – Based Argumentation (EBA) Program. Through the last three years, EBA has quite simply transformed our school community at The Mildred Avenue K – 8 School. Based on the dedicated efforts of the EBA team and their strong collaboration with our teacher-leaders and school leadership, EBA practices have permeated our school and the student learning experience has improved greatly as a result.

EBA has become a major force in revitalizing our collective instructional practice at the Mildred Avenue. Through frequent EBA-led professional development sessions, one-on-one coaching sessions, and biweekly team meetings, instruction at the Mildred Avenue has become far more student-centered and rigorous. When walking into Mildred classrooms today, it often takes a few moments to locate the teacher. After a moment or two, the teachers will often be located sitting at a table conferring with students, engaged in debate or providing feedback. This pedagogical paradigm shift has occurred because students have taken on great ownership in their learning, and teachers have phased out lectures and independent work in favor of becoming true facilitators of learning, exploration and discussion. Debate, student discourse and written argumentation have become daily tenets of instruction.

EBA has also played a major role in transforming our professional learning community. Our EBA coach has invested great time in building teacher leadership capacity and collaborative structures for sharing best practices. Through focused work with EBA teacher-leaders, our coach has built their EBA acumen while simultaneously strengthening their leadership and facilitation skills. By establishing looking-at-student-work protocols and fostering peer observation opportunities, our EBA coach helped to build the collaborative ethos of our teaching team. As we look to build a sustaining and thriving school, the work that the Boston Debate League has done to strengthen our professional learning community has been critically important.

In conclusion, EBA is truly a game changer. They are the very best instructional partner that I have seen in action in Boston. I highly, highly recommend EBA as a partner in the work of any school and am always happy to talk further about our experiences with the Boston Debate League program at the Mildred Avenue K – 8 School.

Sincerely,
ARollins

Andrew Rollins, Principal of The Mildred Avenue K – 8 School