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## **700 ILLINOIS SCHOOLS AND DISTRICTS CUSTOMIZE STUDENT LEARNING USING LEXIA READING**

*Software Program Places Emphasis on Individualized Instruction and Offers  
Dynamic Approach for Reading Skills Development*

May 12, 2010 — CONCORD, Mass. — To boost the performance of struggling readers and improve reading proficiency for all students, more than 700 schools and districts in Illinois have turned to the [Lexia Reading](#)® software program. Schools in Chicago, Des Plaines, Bourbonnais and Berwyn are among the hundreds to use the technology-based reading program to improve student performance.

“Ensuring early literacy success is a wise investment because literacy skills are essential to success in all school subjects — literature, social sciences, natural science and mathematics,” said Carol Gibbs, principal of North Elementary School in District 62, Des Plaines, Illinois. “That’s why we selected the program from Lexia Learning Systems®. There is a strong research base for how children learn to read, how to prevent failure and how to intervene when reading difficulties occur — and *Lexia Reading* does all three very successfully.”

As one of the nation’s leading reading software programs, *Lexia Reading’s* distinctive and cost-effective technology offers more than 900 activities for reading skills development for students in grades pre-K through 12. Each of the age-appropriate, skill-specific activities conforms to federal guidelines. Students using the program work independently as the software automatically detects when they need additional practice. This “branching” technology ensures that students demonstrate mastery of each reading skill before proceeding to the next skill.

“Reading practice is a critical component of reading skills development and improved comprehension,” said Nick Gaehde, CEO of Lexia Learning Systems. “As an essential part of reading instruction, programs like *Lexia Reading* can seamlessly augment the core reading curriculum with a multi-sensory, Web-based program that is proven to support reading skills development.”

For North Elementary School Principal Gibbs, the school year began with 75 percent of kindergarteners unable to recognize or name a single letter of the alphabet. By incorporating the differentiated, guided practice offered through *Lexia Reading*, every child is now in North Elementary’s “green” (on-level) or “blue” (above-level) groups academically.

“While I firmly believe in a most flexible and robust core, selecting intervention programs that work well with the core and serve the school’s instructional goals can have a dramatic impact on student performance,” said Gibbs. “We have found such a program in *Lexia Reading*. It helps us to address the five big areas of reading in a systematic fashion across all grades, it provides performance data and it ties together many of the key programs and tools we use.”

Educators in the Chicago Public Schools are also seeing the impact of *Lexia Reading’s* guided practice and progress reporting, particularly in their efforts to support struggling students.

At Walter S. Christopher Elementary School, Principal Mary McAloon faced a problem common among many schools: students arrive at school displaying significant gaps in their educational backgrounds. In addition,

the school has a large special education and English Language Learner (ELL) student population, which creates the added challenge of finding an intervention program that helps teachers assist a diverse group of students. Christopher Elementary turned to Lexia to address these challenges.

“Lexia has helped many of our older ELL students who are no longer receiving ELL services, but still have problems with phonics,” said McAloon. “For some of these students, we have seen tremendous growth in a relatively short time. Lexia has been incredibly valuable to us in applying a practical and cost-effective approach to implementing individualized interventions at Christopher Elementary.”

Rachel Carson Elementary, also in the Chicago Public Schools, uses *Lexia Reading* in a targeted approach, placing an emphasis on subgroups that struggle to make academic progress.

“We targeted our ‘Safe Harbor’ scores for ELL students and students with disabilities since these two subgroups did not make Adequate Yearly Progress under NCLB,” said Javier Arriola-Lopez, principal of Rachel Carson Elementary. “We provided Lexia services before school four days a week and included it during guided reading as a center activity. Using Lexia’s data reporting features, teachers were able to monitor student progress and adjust instruction. As a result, Carson School made Adequate Yearly Progress for the first time in three years.”

McAloon notes that *Lexia Reading’s* data reporting features make a significant impact, helping with writing IEP goals, organizing reading groups, collecting information for Response to Intervention (RTI) and planning meaningful differentiated instruction.

West of Chicago, Berwyn South School District 100 has numerous schools using *Lexia Reading*, with more than 100 students at a given moment online, enhancing their reading skills. At Emerson Elementary in Berwyn, school Principal Laura Massarella noted that students are thriving on *Lexia Reading*.

“Our fourth- and fifth-grade students are making gains and maintaining those gains over time away from school,” said Massarella.

Also in Berwyn South, Heritage Middle School literature-plus teacher Nancy Simanek commented, “*Lexia Reading* is a program that has ‘some real teeth,’ especially for those older students who struggle with decoding and other proficiency issues.”

While many urban and suburban districts have implemented *Lexia Reading* to address challenges of large, diverse student populations, rural districts have also benefited similarly from the program.

“*Lexia Reading* is a practical and affordable solution to support reading instruction in rural school districts like ours,” said Dan Hollowell, assistant superintendent of Bourbonnais Elementary School District. “Because the program is scalable, we have access to the tools necessary to meet student needs regardless of the size of our district.”

In urban, suburban and rural settings, teachers agree that in addition to *Lexia Reading* being an effective instructional tool, the students truly enjoy using the program.

“The students love their time on Lexia; all are engaged and involved in what they are doing,” said McAloon. “It is rare that a teacher ever has to bring them back to task. Furthermore, they willingly come before school

starts and stay after school to work on the program. That’s what gets me excited about the future in education — engaging students, challenging students, and helping students succeed.”

For more information about *Lexia Reading*, visit [www.lexialearning.com/products](http://www.lexialearning.com/products).

#### About Lexia Learning

Lexia Learning Systems, Inc., headquartered in Concord, Massachusetts, is one of the most highly regarded reading software companies in the nation. Established in 1984, the company provides a flexible, Web-enabled technology that is scientifically based and proven to increase reading proficiency in students at all levels of ability, pre-K to adult. Today, Lexia’s programs, including its flagship product, *Lexia Reading*, are used as an essential part of reading instruction in more than 13,000 schools nationwide, and have helped more than one million students learn to read. In 2009, Lexia Reading was recognized as one of only 10 programs to have ever been deemed to show effectiveness in two or more Beginning Reading Skills categories by the What Works Clearinghouse. To learn more about Lexia, please visit [www.lexialearning.com](http://www.lexialearning.com) or call 1-800-435-3942.

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