DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION

Data-Driven Approach

District-Wide Implementation

Student Engagement

> " Lexia offers a sense of independence for students who are struggling to read, and that's a really hard thing for them to be able to feel. That sense of accomplishment is very important. "
>
> — COURTNEY YOUNG, ELEMENTARY CURRICULUM COORDINATOR, WOBURN PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT

Woburn Public School District, MA

Massachusetts District Expands Tech-Based Literacy Program from SPED-Only to Helping All Struggling K–5 Readers

Challenge

Since purchasing Lexia Core5 Reading to support its special education students eight years ago, Woburn Public Schools (WPS) recognized a broader need for a differentiated literacy program. Common reading assessments had shown that there were struggling readers district-wide, not just in special education. The district wanted to support its lowest-performing elementary students by implementing a literacy program that offered differentiated, accelerated learning and progress monitoring data to support data-driven instruction in each of its seven schools.

Solution

After many years of the district utilizing Core5 within its Special Education programs, individual teachers requested the use of the program for more students. To fund the purchase, a group of teachers applied for (and won) a grant funded by the Cummings Foundation and awarded through the Woburn Community Educational Foundation in 2016—enabling WPS to implement Core5 district-wide over five years.

"Early on," said Courtney Young, elementary curriculum coordinator, "every building was asked how it wanted to use the new literacy program and was given the flexibility to utilize the program in a way that worked for its students. Given the district size and number of elementary schools, we quickly recognized that we needed a clear district vision." To achieve that goal, the district brought together key stakeholders and came up with a cohesive, district-wide implementation plan. In the beginning, they focused on certain grade levels and usage. Once usage was at the level it needed to be, "we then started to have the data coaching conversations in each of our buildings and began using the data to shift towards a more blended learning approach," said Young.

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Hurld Wyman Elementary School is one WPS institution that was quick to embrace and begin using the Core5 program. "We wanted to provide additional one-on-one instructional help for students," said second grade teacher Marlene Faulkingham. "At the same time, **we were looking at how to effectively reinforce concepts and differentiate the learning with diverse student learning styles.**"

At Hurld Wyman, Core5 is now being used with all students in grades 1–5 who fall below a specific benchmark level for their grade. Use of the program is integrated into enrichment blocks that are built into the school's schedule and address the needs of all students. During these blocks, Faulkingham has her lowest-performing students use Core5 to help them build their fundamental reading skills. "I have found that Core5 makes quite a big difference in the students' scores," said Faulkingham.

In addition, first-grade teacher Sharon Connolly uses Core5 for morning work each day with a group of below-grade-level readers this year. "They sit with an iPad for the first 15 minutes of class," said Connolly, "just to get that extra boost on top of what we're doing in the classroom."
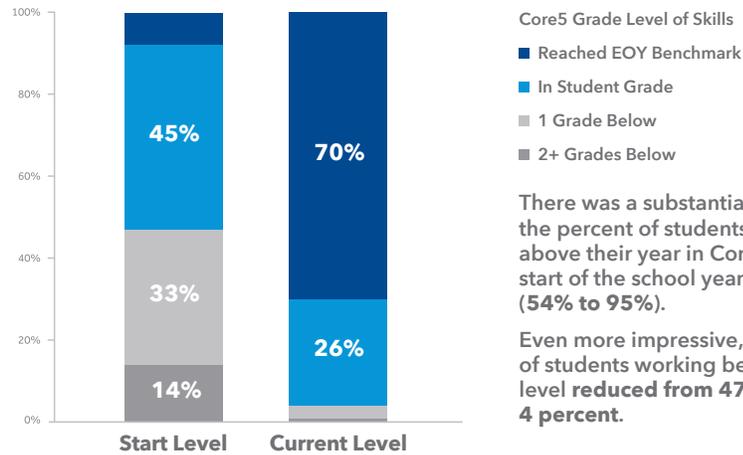
Faulkingham is so impressed with the program that she'd like to see it rolled out to even more students. "I would love for all kids in the school to be on Core5," said Faulkingham, "and not just those who don't hit their benchmarks." Teachers at the school use the program's data, as well as the offline resources (Lexia Lessons and Lexia Skill Builders), to drive instruction.

Leveraging this blended learning approach is a focus for the district this school year. For school Principal Kristen Maloney, the engagement is unmistakable. **"Students get excited about the program and love the certificates and rewards when they finish a level in the program,"** she said.

Results

At the district level, Young said having the program's data at her fingertips helps drive data-driven instruction while also enabling robust, data-centric conversations across grade levels.

Figure 1. Progress of Students Meeting Usage (N=1,166)

Core5 Grade Level of Skills
- Reached EOY Benchmark
- In Student Grade
- 1 Grade Below
- 2+ Grades Below

There was a substantial increase in the percent of students working in or above their year in Core5 between the start of the school year and 6/3/2018 (**54% to 95%**).

Even more impressive, the percentage of students working below their grade level **reduced from 47 percent to only 4 percent**.

Of the 1,166 total students in grades K-5 using the program during the 2017–18 school year, 53 percent of students met their usage targets.

Students in the district who were meeting usage made meaningful progress, with 70 percent reaching their end-of-year benchmark. As a result of their high use, there was a substantial increase in the percentage of students working in or above their year in Core5 between the start of the school year and June 3, 2018 (53 percent to 96 percent). **The percentage of students working below their grade level reduced from 47 percent to only 4 percent.**

As use of the program expands in each elementary school, Core5 is also helping the district move towards a more student-centered educational environment–where learners can move up the learning scale based on their individual capabilities. **"We can help students establish the right mindset, and then let them go off and accomplish tasks on their own,"** said Young, **"even when they're not in the classroom. This truly empowers and supports differentiated instruction and learning."**

Starting this school year (2018-19), WPS decided to also implement Lexia® RAPID™ Assessment for its secondary students. The district has consistently monitored student reading in grades K-5 and RAPID was chosen as a tool to continue this model in grades 6–12. RAPID, a computer-adaptive universal screener, is being used to assess the skills most predictive of end-of-year reading success.

Wendy Sprague, assistant superintendent of curriculum and instruction, summed it up best: **"Following our district's new strategic plan, Lexia is a tool that is creating equity amongst our schools while providing students with opportunities and support we have not previously been able to provide."**

Woburn Public School District Profile School Year 2017-18

• Grades	PK–12
• PK–12 Schools	11
• PK–12 Enrollment	4598
African American	7%
Asian	7%
Hispanic	10%
Native American	1%
White	73%
Multi-Race, Non-Hispanic	3%
Economically Disadvantaged	26%
SPED	16%
ELL	7%
• Location	Urban

Fig. 1: Lexia Learning students meeting recommended usage (N=1,166) over at least 20 weeks of use 8/1/2017-6/3/2018