

CASE STUDY

'Know Your Goals'—Literacy Growth Through a Systems Approach

Beaverton School District
Beaverton, Oregon

Lexia[®]
ALL FOR LITERACY™



In 2022, Dr. Gustavo Balderas, a former Superintendent of the Year, arrived at the Beaverton School District with a vision of success for all students.

“We’re trying to be more systematic, more unified,” Dr. Balderas said.

As superintendent, Dr. Balderas and his team, including Robin Kobrowski, executive administrator for Pre-K–8 and Language Arts K–12, built out a district strategic plan that included everything from foundations of success for early learners to college-and-career readiness for high school students.

“Literacy is embedded in all of those areas,” Kobrowski said. “Our schools have a very intentional focus on growing students’ literacy skills. They’ve set school goals around that, and our district goals are set around that. It’s given us a level of focus.”

Setting the Stage: Oregon’s Dyslexia Legislation Leads to Lexia LETRS

When Dr. Balderas and Kobrowski took on their roles, the district’s journey toward literacy growth was already underway.

“We were coming out of the pandemic, and there was quite a bit going on nationally about the shifts in reading instruction,” Kobrowski said. “And all of that dovetailed together in Oregon.”

In recent years, Oregon lawmakers have passed several pieces of legislation concerning literacy, including mandating professional development for teachers to better identify and support students with dyslexia.

SNAPSHOT Beaverton School District*



54 campuses

2,672 educators

37,826 students

60.1% students from diverse backgrounds

Almost **40%** qualify for free or reduced lunch

16.6% English Language Learners

Almost **100** languages spoken by students districtwide

*Data from Beaverton district website and Beaverton superintendent.

Beaverton district leaders identified Lexia® LETRS® Professional Learning as the best solution, not just to meet legislative requirements, but to begin the shift toward the science of reading.

“We started with academic coaches, knowing they’d be able to coach all teachers in their schools,” Kobrowski said. “But additionally, we’ve sought those most interested in doing the learning first—which has created a driving interest in wanting the LETRS training.”

In 2021, the first cohort of academic coaches started LETRS. Keeping the cohorts small and volunteer-based has served to drive teacher interest and engagement in LETRS across the district. “We haven’t had a shortage of interest in LETRS yet,” Kobrowski said. “Educators are interested in LETRS or other training to better understand the science of reading.”



Now the district's educators are on their fourth cohort. While the cohorts have remained small (40 elementary educators in each), leaders at Beaverton are optimistic about the growing interest as they look for additional ways to build teacher capacity and a stronger system.

"Time is our greatest struggle," Kobrowski said. "It's a big commitment."

New Curriculum, New Tools

Like many educators at districts across the country, Beaverton teachers saw scores trend downward after the pandemic. "Our district is still scoring above the state average, but we've trended down from where we were," Kobrowski said. "Now we're focused on building a system

where students move along a progression to proficiency through a Multi-Tiered System of Supports."

During the 2022–2023 school year, educators at Beaverton piloted Lexia® Core5® Reading for elementary-aged students, and Lexia® PowerUp Literacy® for students in grades 6–12.

Soon after, the Oregon legislature passed the Early Literacy Success Initiative under House Bill 3198, a comprehensive effort to enhance early literacy among children from birth through third grade. The subsequent Early Literacy Framework provided additional guidance for district leaders in implementing evidence-based curriculum and improvements in instruction to better support all students.

“

There's been pressure nationwide with the science of reading. And there is a science to reading. There is a methodology toward reading. You can't say there's the reading wars anymore. And I'm old enough to have experienced that a few generations, a couple times throughout my career. In the end, it's getting our youngest kids or youngest learners to be able to comprehend and read, and then keep it going.”

—**Dr. Gustavo Balderas**, Superintendent,
Beaverton School District, Oregon

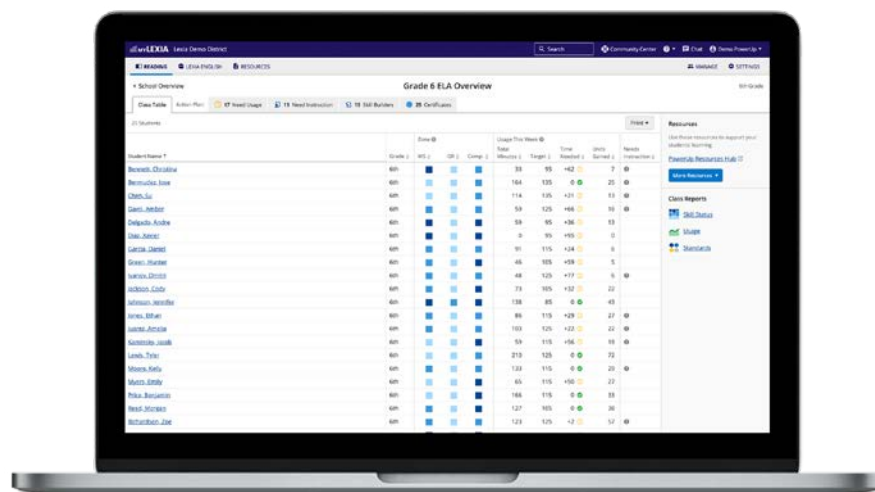
“The framework itself actually was a mentor text that we used in our K–5 adoption last year, because it really centers multilingual students and the importance of those foundational literacy skills,” Kobrowski said. “That’s such a large population in all of our classrooms, so the framework set the groundwork for all of the curriculum that was selected, the evidence-based practices that we’re working on with teachers through professional learning like LETRS, and the supplemental tools like Lexia Core5 and PowerUp.”

Dr. Balderas’ team is currently focused on core instruction and building a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS). When students are identified as needing more intensive support, educators have a bucket of tools to draw upon, including Core5 and PowerUp. Across the district, Lexia® programs are mainly used as a Tier 2 tool. Core5 is available in all Title I elementary schools, while PowerUp is used at both middle and high schools within that intervention system.

The system Dr. Balderas and his team are building ensures students who need extra support have the time and space during the school day to get that extra support. That means not every student needs or uses Core5 or PowerUp, but when they do, the tools are in place.

“In our middle schools, PowerUp has been a really powerful tool to use as part of their WIN (What I Need) time, because many students do have a need in this area,” Kobrowski said.





At the elementary level, Kobrowski described a station rotation model as the ideal setup. Core5 supports this blended learning model with opportunities for independent learning on the computer and small-group work with teacher-led instruction. Student data (such as that in the image above) gives teachers insights into where they need to focus—and there’s a lot of opportunity to make the instruction more efficient.

“We’re still fine-tuning how to best use Core5’s data to group students during class time; in elementary, our opportunities to work with students during the day are limited, so we have to be strategic,” Kobrowski said.

SUPPORTING READING IN MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL

“

PowerUp is one tool that can really adapt to student needs. What I like about PowerUp is that it provides students with work in foundational skills, and that can be a hard area for secondary educators—it’s not something they were trained in. But it also places an emphasis on the role of the teacher. It generates timely lesson plans for small-group work. And when we look at the data, the strongest results are in schools that are using the data, where teachers are using the reports and doing small-group work with the students. It’s not simply putting students on the computer and spending time on the program, it’s also time with the teacher.”

—**Robin Kobrowski**, Executive Administrator for Pre-K–8 and Language Arts K–12

Goal-Oriented

District leaders are still early in their district strategic plan and shifting literacy efforts. While there is a level of urgency around building greater teacher capacity and supporting student literacy, Dr. Balderas and Kobrowski are ensuring their efforts are scaled within their systems approach.

“It’s not just the product or intervention,” Dr. Balderas said. “But how we implement the product in terms of the overall support of our educators.” Kobrowski added, “We’re using data to drive that conversation. We have outcomes and strategies identified.”

Both district leaders emphasized the importance of articulating and aligning districtwide and schoolwide goals. “Know your goals ahead of time,” Kobrowski said. “Know what systems exist to support this work.”

When district leaders keep their goals in mind, what students and educators need and what tools will help become clear. Beaverton’s leaders are focused on growing student literacy skills through a systems approach, and with MTSS, they are able to gather the data they need to drive those conversations.

“We see LETRS and Core5 and PowerUp as some of the really key tools in that work, based on data, on what our students need,” Kobrowski said.



ADVICE FROM BEAVERTON'S SUPERINTENDENT

“

Have a plan that’s intentional. Don’t just jump in the deep end. Know what you are doing and why you are doing it. Beaverton is unique, we have more capacity and a few more resources than most districts in Oregon. But we’re still trying to be more systematic, moving from an autonomous system to a unified approach. We’re making sure we’re doing this right. In the end, it’s just trying to get our youngest learners to be able to comprehend and read, and then keep it going in our system.”

—**Dr. Gustavo Balderas**, Superintendent,
Beaverton School District, Oregon

Success by the Numbers*



- 14,485 students in grades 6–12 used PowerUp post-placement at least once during the 2023–2024 school year.
- The number of students working on Advanced skills in Word Study nearly tripled in a single academic year, while students working on Advanced skills in Comprehension nearly doubled.
- When students used the program with fidelity, (using the program for at least 20 weeks and meeting usage targets at least 50% of the time), 99% of students moved up least two zones in a single year, with nearly all students ending the year in the Advanced zones for Word Study (98%), Grammar (93%), and Comprehension (99%).



- 4,007 students in grades K–5 used Core5 post-placement at least once during the 2023–2024 school year.
- The number of students working on skills at or above grade level increased by 10% regardless of program usage.
- 40% of students who started working on skills below grade level advanced at least one grade level of material, regardless of program usage.
- When students used the program with fidelity (using the program for at least 20 weeks and meeting usage targets at least 50% of the time), the number of students working on or above grade level nearly doubled, from 35% to 65%.



What Educators Say About LETRS*

Ninety-six percent of Beaverton educators who have taken at least one LETRS professional learning session agreed they can apply the skills and concepts they learned from the session in their school.

In later surveys, **100%** of educators agreed they are able to identify and target the instructional literacy needs of students based on the science of reading.

*Core5 and PowerUp data sourced from Lexia Analytics Hub, Detailed Usage and Progress Reports.
LETRS Survey data sourced from Lexia Analytics Hub, LETRS professional learning session survey summaries.



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