

CASE STUDY

# Cookie Cutter Doesn't Cut It: How a Research-Proven Reading Program Led to Growth

Somerset Academy Miramar,  
Broward County Public Charter Schools, Florida



## The Search Begins

“Year after year, we had been looking for a resource to improve reading among our students in grades 1 and 2,” remarked Alexandra Prieto, principal of Somerset Academy Miramar. Somerset had been using a technology-based literacy program, but Prieto was unhappy with the results. It was clear it was time to look for an alternative.

Challenged by the wide variety of literacy levels in the school, Prieto knew students needed a proven literacy program that would allow teachers to differentiate their instruction with real-time student progress monitoring. Her teachers required data that was reliable, actionable, and easy to interpret.

Michelle Rojas, a reading coach at Somerset, was tasked with evaluating potential literacy programs. Rojas knew that Somerset needed not just a comprehensive technology-based literacy program but a comprehensive implementation plan that included professional learning.

She especially wanted a program that would empower teachers and administrators to use the program with fidelity. As Prieto explained, “There’s no way of knowing at the end of the school year if the program has been beneficial if we’re not using it with fidelity.”

## Not Just Research-Based but Research-Proven

Rojas believed that a research-based program was not enough. To meet Somerset’s high standards, she wanted a literacy program that

was research-proven to be comprehensive and effective.

Rojas was impressed with the depth and research behind Lexia® Core5® Reading. It stood out to her as a rigorously researched, independently evaluated, and respected reading program. With its systematic and explicit approach to fundamental literacy skills, she believed the program could meet Somerset’s early literacy needs.

This inspired Rojas to take a closer look. Digging into Lexia’s case studies and testimonials, she found that schools using Core5 valued the program’s ability to engage and motivate students, making them eager to learn. The rave reviews about the program’s ease of use indicated that it would also be incredibly valuable to her busy teachers.

When she learned about Lexia’s patented Assessment Without Testing® built directly into Core5, she knew the specificity of the real-time progress-monitoring data would help teachers drive and differentiate their instruction—a key feature she and Prieto appreciated.

The discovery that Core5 went the distance in its support of Emergent Bilingual students was the icing on the cake for Rojas. As a quarter of Somerset’s students were Emergent Bilinguals, the program’s delivery of oral instructions in many of the students’ first languages was a critical component in her decision-making.

Rojas was impressed and happy to make an official recommendation to purchase Lexia Core5 Reading.

## “There’s Nothing More Important Than That”

Core5’s positive impact was noticeable from the beginning. “When we started using Core5, we immediately saw how effective it was,” remarked Prieto. “We found ourselves saying, ‘Oh, wow, this is so different—this program really works!’”

Lexia also provided the implementation plan and support for teacher empowerment that Rojas required. “The service we received from Lexia’s implementation team and their continued support have been absolutely excellent,” she said.

Somerset’s teachers were equally impressed, and restructured their lessons to take advantage of the adaptive blended learning model and all of Core5’s features. “The progress-monitoring data serves as a powerful tool to communicate with not only students, but with [other] teachers and parents as well,” said Esther Mesa, a second grade teacher at Somerset. “In addition, the program offers teachers scripted lessons ... and reinforcement activities for students to practice newly acquired skills.”

First grade teacher Jessica Largaespada believed Core5’s ability to engage students,

along with its offline instructional resources, were the key to its positive impact. “Core5 succeeds because it provides targeted reading activities for students to work through in a fun and interactive way,” she gushed. “Students enjoy learning and are eager to move on to the next level.”

The results were clear. Students in grades K–2 who met the recommended usage requirements achieved substantial growth. The percentage of students working in or above grade level in Core5 increased from 48% to 95% in less than one school year. Even more impressive, the percentage of students working below their grade level in Core5 reduced from 52% to 5% (see Figure 1).

“Our student growth in Core5 is strong and the feedback I’ve received from teachers is positive,” said Prieto. “Core5 is a program we will continue using.”

Rojas added, “There are so many reasons why we love Lexia, but the most important one of all is the growth we see in our students. There’s nothing more important than that.”



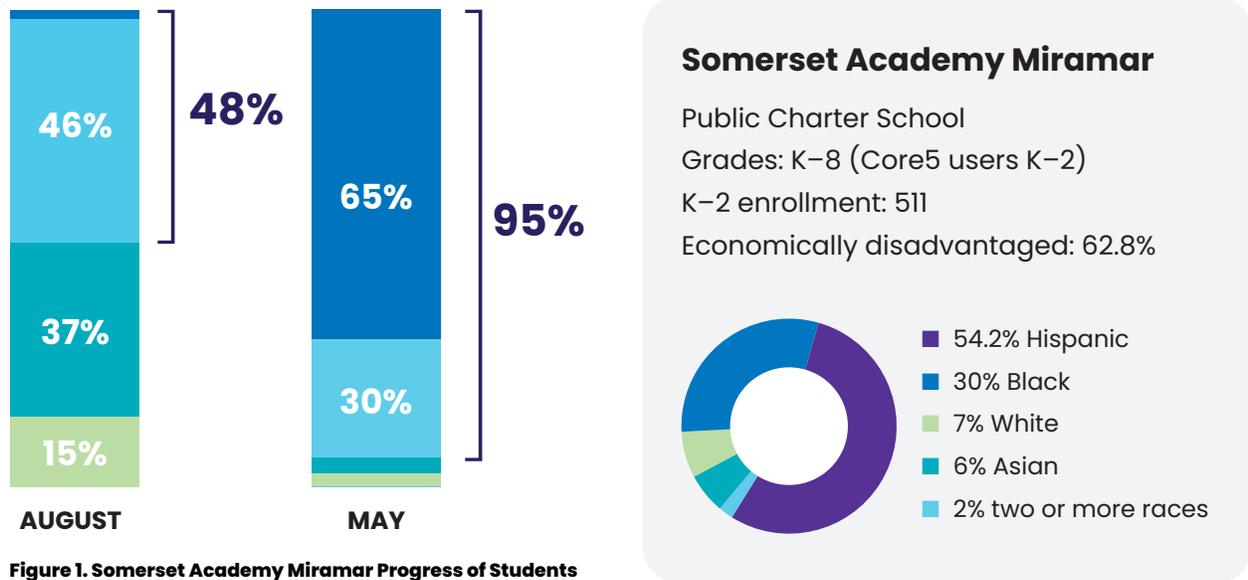
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—Alexandra Prieto, Principal, Somerset Academy Miramar, FL

## Success By the Numbers

The percentage of K–2 students working in or above grade level in Core5 increased from **48% to 95%** in less than one school year.

Of Somerset’s 511 K–2 students, 86% met their weekly usage targets at least 50% of the time for at least 12 weeks between August 2016 and May 2017.

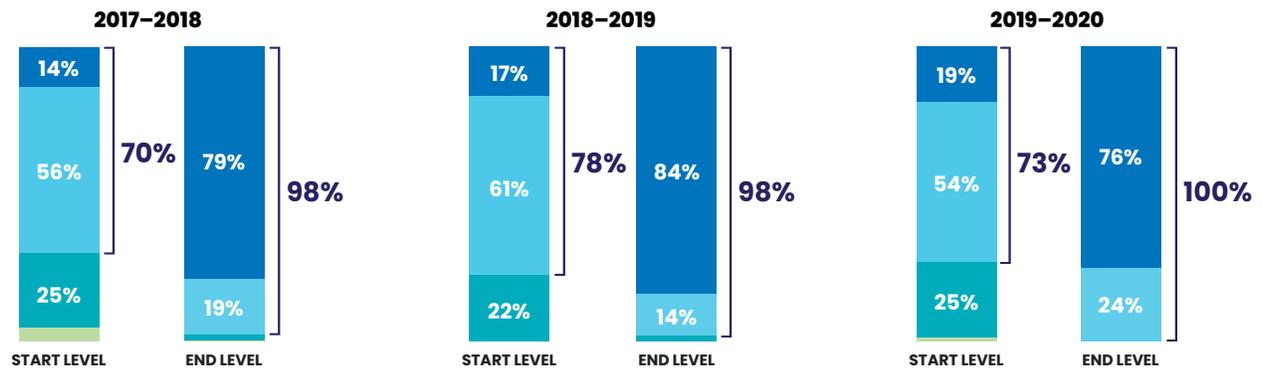


**Figure 1. Somerset Academy Miramar Progress of Students Meeting Usage (N=440)**

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

## Long-Lasting Gains

Somerset Academy Miramar continued to see improved student outcomes year after year. Even when the pandemic hit, all students using Core5 with fidelity were able to improve their reading skills to grade level or better.



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