

CASE STUDY

# Superintendent Takes New Approach to Early Literacy Instruction, State Scores Soar

Marysville Public Schools,  
Marysville, Michigan





## Raising the Bar

As is true in most school districts, students in Michigan's Marysville Public Schools had varied levels of literacy proficiency. Superintendent Dr. Shawn K. Wightman knew the district needed a new approach to literacy instruction that would support differentiated and personalized instruction for every student to increase literacy levels, without putting an undue burden on educators.

Specifically, Wightman wanted a research-proven, blended learning program for grades pre-K-5 that would systematically build early literacy skills for all students, regardless of their current abilities, and accelerate learning for students not working in grade-level material.

After reviewing all of the options, Dr. Wightman chose Lexia® Core5® Reading as the best program to meet the district's diverse literacy needs. Not only is Core5 evidence-based, it is research-proven to help students of all abilities and backgrounds become successful readers and confident learners. Additionally, Core5 fits seamlessly into new and existing blended learning implementations, giving the district the flexibility to implement a personalized approach to literacy with Core5 in ways that work best for specific students.

## Data Makes the Difference

Wightman's leadership and commitment to implementing blended learning with Core5's data-informed instruction has had a tremendous impact on the district for both students and educators. Along with setting goals and expectations of 100% usage of Core5, the superintendent held his schools accountable. Communicating regularly with his principals and teachers about their use of Core5, he helped coach them on the value of the real-time student data reports in Core5 and how to use this critical information to focus instruction on the areas of greatest need. His approach with Core5 built instructional leadership skills for his principals and gave classroom teachers the added

insight necessary to ensure each student received the specific instruction they needed and deserved. It isn't enough to simply give a child a computer program and expect them to develop strong literacy skills, and Dr. Wightman knew this. Teachers are at the heart of student achievement, and the data Core5 provides is the key to helping them take the guesswork out of differentiating instruction.

"We love seeing how the data reveals growth, but even more meaningful is how our kids have become not only stronger readers, but more confident students," said Jennie Leishman, principal, Washington Elementary School.



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## Increased Performance and State Ranking

Michigan's Top-to-Bottom rankings measure a school's performance across English Language Arts, Math, Social Studies, and Science. In one year, Marysville's ranking moved from the 50th percentile to the 87th percentile. Wightman credits Core5 with impacting his schools' performance overall. "Literacy is the foundation for learning. I have no doubt that our students' use of Lexia Core5 Reading helped to dramatically improve our state ranking scores," Wightman said.

Notably, Morton Elementary and Gardens Elementary were named Reward Schools by the state for "Beating the Odds" by outperforming the schools' predicted rankings. In fact, Gardens Elementary skyrocketed from the 82nd percentile to the 95th percentile, placing the school in the top 5% of Michigan schools. "This has never happened before in Marysville," Wightman said.

"Knowing there's a strong correlation between Core5 and M-STEP, we can rely on Lexia's

progress-monitoring data to adjust our instruction in real time," explained Kathleen Quain, principal, Morton Elementary.

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## Success By the Numbers

Lexia® conducted an analysis that found a strong relationship between reaching benchmark in Core5 and proficiency in M-STEP. In a year-over-year comparison of district scores (across the three elementary schools), students working on Core5 material in or above their grade level grew from 36% to 88% by the end of one school year with 71% of students reaching their end-of-year benchmarks. (see Figure 1).

### Student grade-level reading progress with Core5 use

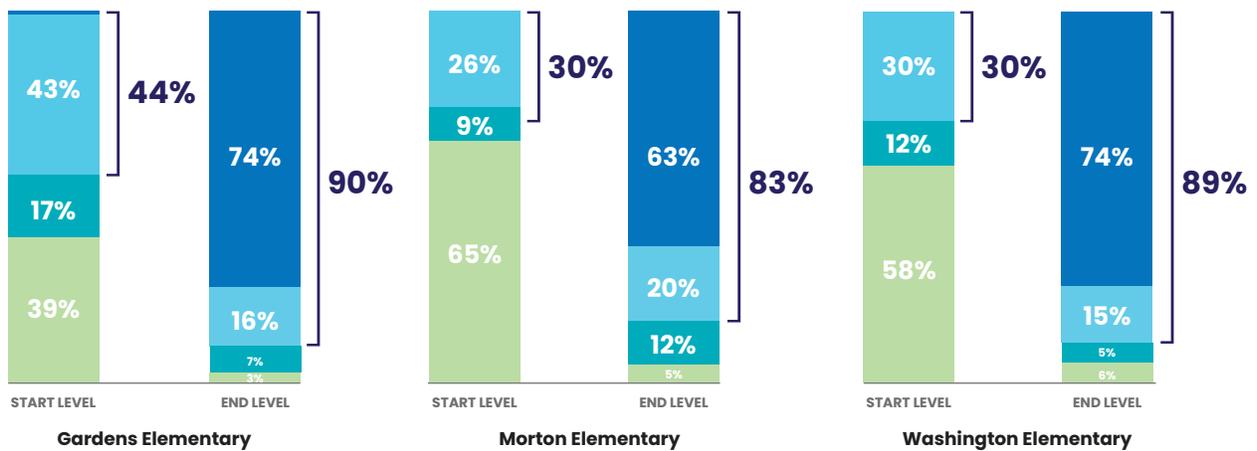


Figure 1. Progress in Core5 by School (Total N=623)

Core5 Grade Level of Skills: ■ Above Student Grade ■ In Student Grade ■ 1 Grade Below ■ 2+ Grades Below

## Profile: Marysville Public Schools—Marysville, Michigan

- Grades: Pre-K–5
- Pre-K–5 schools: 3
- Pre-K–5 enrollment: 1,258
- White: 97%
- Hispanic: 2%
- Economically disadvantaged: 27.5%

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Lexia is the Structured Literacy expert. For more than 30 years, the company has focused solely on literacy, and today provides a full spectrum of solutions for both students and teachers. With robust offerings for differentiated instruction, personalized learning, assessment, and professional learning, Lexia helps more learners read, write, and speak with confidence.

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