

Making the shift to the Science of Reading

Ohio's Gallia County Local School District expands student knowledge with Amplify CKLA.



Gallia County

The image shows a minimalist line-art map of the state of Ohio. A specific county in the southern part of the state is highlighted with a solid orange dot. The text 'Gallia County' is written in orange below the dot.

Background

The Gallia County Local School District, located in rural Appalachian Ohio, serves 2,700 students across an area of 450 square miles. Every day, district buses transport students more than 4,000 miles to four elementary schools, a middle school, a grades 6–12 school, and a high school.

All elementary schools in the district have extensive Title I programs, with the majority of students qualifying to receive free breakfast and lunch.

The district reports that its students are 94% white, 2% Black, 0.7% Hispanic or Latino, and less than 1% Asian or Pacific Islander. About 3% of students are biracial.

Bostic realized that “something needed to change” when it came to literacy instruction in Gallia County.



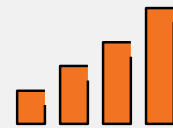
Challenge

On Ohio’s ELA state test, reading proficiency hovered around 50 to 60% at most grade levels.



Solution

Looking to implement a knowledge-building curriculum with quality skills instruction, Gallia County Local School District decided on Amplify CKLA.



Results

Students made significant improvements in reading, writing, and vocabulary.

Challenge

During the 2020 school year, Gallia County literacy coach Edie Bostic was tasked with writing a district literacy plan. Throughout the process, Bostic realized that “something needed to change” when it came to literacy instruction in Gallia County.

On Ohio’s ELA state test, reading proficiency hovered at around 50% to 60% for most grade levels. The district had been using a traditional basal reading program, but it wasn’t meeting the needs of teachers and students. “We were really concerned about our Tier 1 instruction,” Bostic said. “At the time, our teachers were supplementing so heavily that they were not following any particular curriculum.”

Searching for an approach that would standardize literacy lessons and build student knowledge in a rural area, Bostic found the Science of Reading. Listening to Amplify’s Science of Reading: The Podcast and American Public Media’s Sold a Story, she grew confident that making the shift could help address Gallia County’s literacy challenges.

Bostic then spoke with literacy consultants who bolstered her interest in the Science of Reading and identified Amplify Core Knowledge Language Arts® (CKLA) as a frontrunner.

Solution

During the curriculum selection process, Gallia County Local Schools’ leaders and teachers took the LETRS professional development course. Bostic recalled the training as essential for building an understanding of the Science of Reading.

“The professional development gave us a lot of reasons to be confident that Amplify CKLA was a good fit for us,” Bostic said. “CKLA is building background knowledge and vocabulary, skills that many of our students were lacking. Professional development gave us the reasons why we should use the curriculum and how to use the curriculum in the proper way.”

Bostic also noted that teachers preferred CKLA’s Skills lessons to those in EL Education, the other finalist curriculum in the selection process.

With resounding approval, Gallia County Local School District decided on Amplify CKLA and began implementation in the fall of 2021.

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Edie Bostic
Literacy coach
Gallia County Local School District

Results

Teacher commitment

Many teachers who had previously been creating their own literacy lessons have embraced Amplify CKLA over the past two school years. Now in its third year with Amplify CKLA, Gallia County Local School District is committed to the Science of Reading.

“At this point, for the teachers who have implemented it well, I believe it would be hard to get them to go a different way,” Bostic said. “They can see how much it’s helping their students learn.”

Reading improvement

At the beginning of the 2022–2023 school year, Bostic reported that 46% of all Gallia County first grade students scored in the “well below” category on their district-administered Acadience reading assessment and needed a reading improvement plan. Just one year later, the number of students scoring “well below” and needing a reading improvement plan cut nearly in half, with 27% of students needing a reading plan at the beginning of the 2022–2024 school year.

“At the end of last year, our kindergarteners knocked it out of the park on their assessments,” Bostic said. “Then they actually came into first grade with very similar results, so there wasn’t much summer slide.”

Bostic explained that she expects to hear from her first-grade teachers about these results, as their students are coming in more prepared each year since implementing Amplify CKLA.

“At the end of last year, our kindergarteners knocked it out of the park on their assessments”

Edie Bostic
Literacy coach
Gallia County Local School District

Writing

Gallia County teachers have reported that students are starting the year with a stronger foundation in writing than ever before.

“These kids are actually coming in writing paragraphs and the teachers weren’t used to that,” Bostic commented. “We’re seeing that the curriculum is addressing needs and making writing possible for our kids.”

Knowledge and vocabulary

Students have also shown long-term retention of information. With Amplify CKLA, they're forming a deeper understanding of the world.

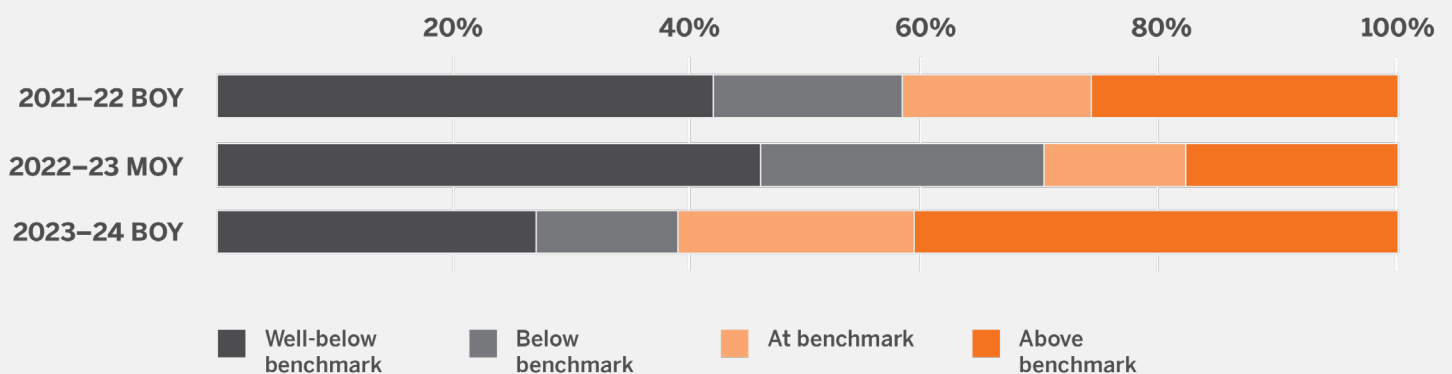
"I went outside one day, and students had drawn the solar system. Everything was correct in their spelling. Everything was proportional and in the correct order. The teacher came up to me and she said, 'You realize that this is from our unit that they completed about 4 months ago!'" Bostic said.

"I can't stress enough how important vocabulary and knowledge building are for our students, who have limited access to different experiences," Bostic said. "It's crucial for us to build that background knowledge in a very explicit and systematic way. Amplify CKLA provides that for them."

"The Science of Reading really works. I'm seeing students becoming proficient readers. I do not believe many of these student would be as solid in their foundational reading skills if we did not make this change."

"During the 2022–23 school year, our kindergarten teachers successfully implemented our Tier 1 curriculum, Amplify CKLA, so that many fewer students are entering first grade needing a Reading Improvement Plan," Bostic said. The chart below shows the beginning-of-year Acadience scores for first grade over the last three years. **Gallia County moved from 46% of students needing a Reading Improvement Plan to 27%.** This sets students up for success in first grade.

Gallia County Local School District first-grade Acadience BOY comparison



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Science of Reading-based complete
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