



Consortium on Reaching Excellence in Education®

Getting Curriculum Implementation Right



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Getting Curriculum Implementation Right

Building leadership capacity, changing instructional practices and deepening the knowledge base

Implementing a new curriculum is a challenging process. Often the organization, layout, and even the instructional approach can be drastically different than the previously used curriculum. Change takes time, especially if that change includes learning new instructional practices. Taguma and Barrera (2019) cite teacher commitment, beliefs, and content and pedagogical understanding of the new curriculum as key factors that either facilitate or impede successful curriculum implementation.

Over the last 25 years CORE has worked with many school districts to implement new math and ELA curricula. Our approach is to provide teachers with sustained, relevant, job-embedded professional learning that helps them to master the subject matter and pedagogical skills necessary to deliver a new curriculum with confidence and enthusiasm.

We work in collaboration with district and school leaders to provide specific and rigorous implementation support for many ELA and math programs. In addition to classroom teacher coaching, lesson study and program planning, CORE provides support to academic leaders to ensure they understand how the new instructional program is designed, what effective implementation of a core curriculum and supplemental intervention programs looks like, and how to use data to improve improved achievement.

Our model is customized to your district's needs and can take many forms, including remote and in-person workshops, trainings, and coaching. Read on to learn how a few of the districts where we've worked have leveraged CORE's expertise to lead transformative instructional change and improve student outcomes.



A Focus on SIPPS Implementation Facilitates More Effective MTSS and Accelerates Reading Achievement in Pajaro Valley

When Dr. Michelle Rodriguez became Superintendent at Pajaro Valley Unified School District (PVUSD) in Santa Cruz County, CA, in the 2016-17 school year, she was particularly unsettled by the 14% of students in special education – despite the district's efforts to implement Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS). After some investigation, she realized that when Tier 1 foundational instruction failed, students were sent directly to Tier 3 rather than receiving supplemental Tier 2 instruction.

To correct this issue, Dr. Rodriguez believed the district needed to fortify foundational instruction at Tier 1 and strengthen Tier 2 intervention. That meant training teachers to provide stronger support to all students in core curriculum subjects and teaching them to identify issues and intervene earlier. One area the district concentrated on immediately was literacy, especially on reading foundational skills.

PVUSD had been using SIPPS (Systematic Instruction in Phonological Awareness, Phonics and Sight Words) as a supplemental or intervention foundational skills program for five years, and they weren't seeing progress. Dr. Rodriguez didn't believe SIPPS was the problem; the issue was that teachers weren't being trained to implement it well. So, she invited CORE to PVUSD to provide professional learning services around effective SIPPS implementation, as part of the reading foundational skills within the Tier 1 English Language Arts curriculum.

Work with CORE started small in October 2017 with three pilot elementary schools and is now expanding to all elementary schools in the district. CORE worked hands-on with K-2 classroom teachers and instructional coaches, as well as special education teachers, providing training within the context of the SIPPS curriculum and their own classrooms. CORE experts observed lessons and provided feedback, led lesson study and practice sessions, assisted with lesson planning and even modeled lessons to students. CORE also worked with administrators to ensure that the skills teachers built – and the higher scores students achieved – are sustained over time.



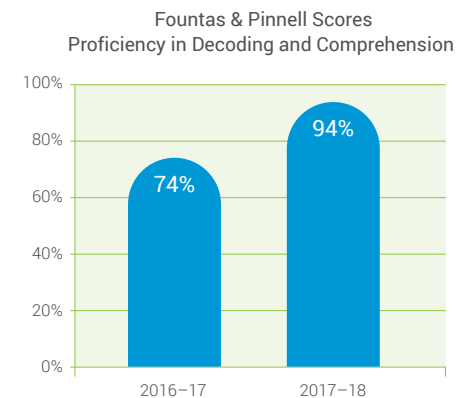
We weren't using SIPPS to fidelity. Specifically, teachers weren't given the instruction or training to implement it well.

– Dr. Michelle Rodriguez, Superintendent,
Pajaro Valley Unified School District

[Read PVUSD's full story.](#)

THE RESULTS

Since working with CORE to implement SIPPS and build capacity for MTSS, PVUSD has experienced a 20% increase in achievement among first grade students in the SIPPS program.



Fountas & Pinnell scores have moved from 74% proficiency in decoding and comprehension to 94% proficiency.

The Impact of CORE Professional Development on Student Reading Skills Growth

A third-party study finds that students in classrooms where teachers received CORE professional development have greater growth in their reading skills

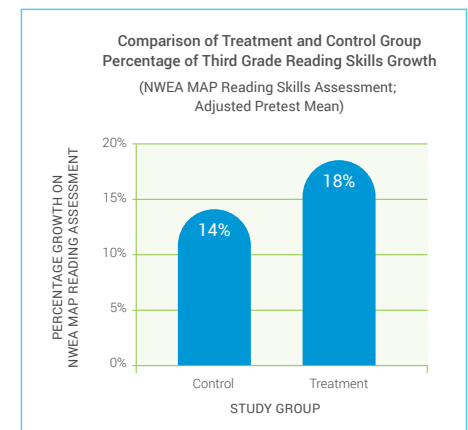
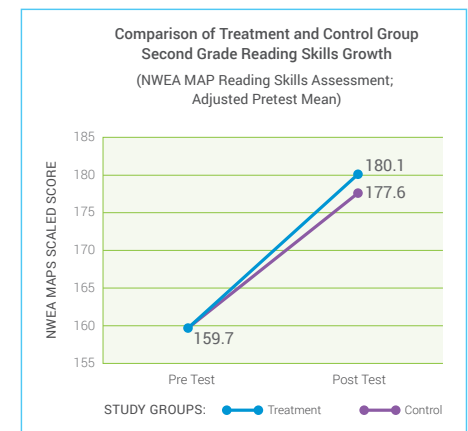


During the 2017-18 and 2018-19 school years, CORE provided professional development and technical assistance to elementary teachers and administrators in Pajaro Valley Unified School District implementing, in addition to their broader English Language Arts instruction, the SIPPS Reading Foundational Skills Program.

SEG Measurement looked at the reading performance of 182 third graders and 450 second graders in classrooms with teachers who participated in CORE professional development. These students were matched based on multiple characteristics to students whose teachers did not learn from CORE to create a control group.

Students in second and third grade classes with teachers participating in CORE professional development showed significantly greater growth in reading skills than did students in classes with teachers who did not receive CORE professional development.

SEG Measurement found an effect size for the CORE professional development of .17, or about a fifth of a standard deviation, at both grade levels.. This effect size, in the context of providing professional development is quite impressive. While other factors certainly contribute to student achievement, (e.g. curriculum and instruction) this study demonstrates that the professional development provided by CORE made the difference in student achievement.



Job-Embedded Professional Learning Flips Failing Math Scores in Just Seven Months at Priority Charter Schools

Priority Charter Schools in Central Texas reached out to CORE in the fall of 2017 when math scores were trending down. After analyzing their math curricula and instructional practices at every grade level, leaders found that curricular content was not an issue. Teachers needed support in instructional pedagogy and delivery. So, they hired CORE to provide monthly on-site professional learning to K-12 teachers, instructional coaches and principals during the 2018-19 and 2019-20 school years.

CORE consultants focused Priority Charter Schools' professional learning on improving understanding of the curriculum and implementing high-leverage instructional practices through direct work with site leadership and teachers in and out of the classroom.

Specifically, CORE worked closely with teachers to:

- review and analyze student assessment data
- identify specific math program implementation issues and plan appropriate supports
- identify key practices of effective math instruction
- plan for active student engagement and discourse
- model and observe teachers' ability to embed key mathematical practices into instructional delivery

CORE showed site leaders how to step inside classrooms and work hands-on with teachers. Consultants guided leaders on key look-fors of effective instruction during classroom walkthroughs and taught them how to provide ongoing support to teachers to ensure sustainable program implementation. Leaders also were trained to analyze the effectiveness of intervention programs, identify implementation issues and plan necessary improvements.

“”

Teachers' understanding of the content and utilizing the content within the curriculum was missing. We needed to support them in instructional pedagogy and delivery.

— Derrick Love, Ed.D., Assistant Superintendent, Priority Charter Schools

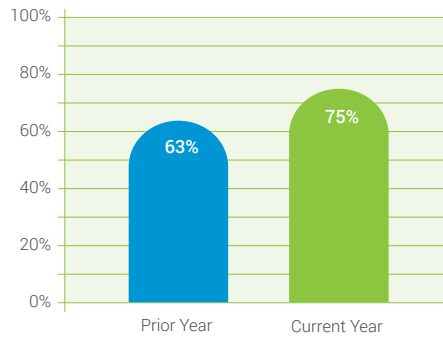
[Read Priority Charter Schools' full story.](#)



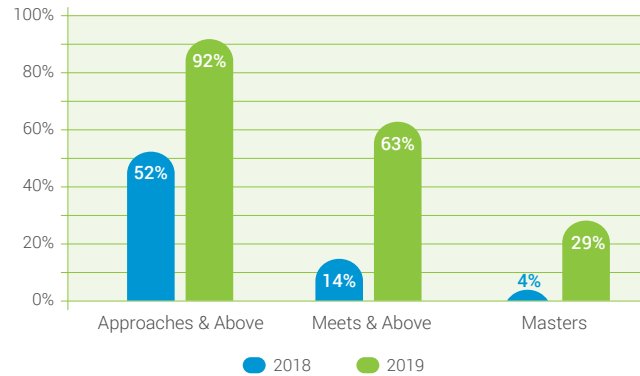
THE RESULTS FROM PRIORITY CHARTER SCHOOLS

Prior to working with CORE, Priority Charter Schools' overall Texas report card rating was an F. Now it's a B+. After the first year working with CORE, STAAR exam scores increased 12%.

Priority Charter Schools
Percentage of Students That Met Standards
for Mathematics



Priority Charter Schools
Algebra 1 EOC
2018 & 2019



The highest gains were in Algebra 1. In 2019, 90% or more of students passed the End of Course exam.

CORE's on-site, job-embedded professional learning with both math instructors and site leaders has impacted district and student outcomes significantly.

Not only has Priority Charter Schools made impressive strides in student achievement, but also teachers have a renewed sense of confidence and pride in instruction.



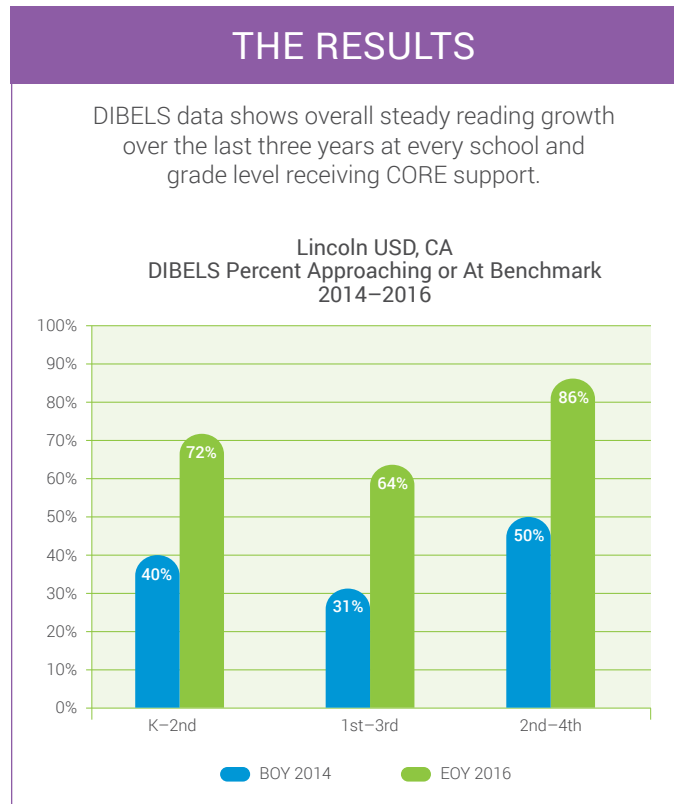
Teacher and Leadership Coaching Helped Lincoln Unified School District (USD) Achieve Reading Gains

Lincoln USD's relationship with CORE started with a focus on math curriculum implementation. Then, during the 2012-12 school year, the Stockton, CA district also began working with CORE to improve literacy instruction and achievement in grades K-3.

Initially, CORE simply provided reading instruction workshops in the district. However, the work grew to include on-site teacher and leadership coaching as the district implemented a new curriculum – and instructional quality and literacy gains grew with it.

Principals, teachers and students alike benefited from the literacy coaching and support provided by CORE consultants. Site leaders heard positive feedback from teachers and noticed strong instruction in the classrooms that received CORE coaching, including more small group instruction. Teachers reported that students were entering their classrooms with stronger reading skills than ever.

Improving principals' instructional leadership skills and teachers' instructional delivery skills helped develop more successful students at Lincoln USD – and reading scores prove it.



In addition to what the hard data tells us, we are hearing positive comments from teachers and beginning to see some strong instruction in several classrooms at several grade levels. Teachers are saying that their students are coming in knowing more than ever before. We are also seeing more small group instruction, and most teachers have a better understanding of the needs of each student, and (even more important) what they should know and be able to do.

— Debbie DeGanna, Former Director of State and Federal Programs, Lincoln Unified School District

[Read Lincoln USD's full story.](#)

Professional Learning Around Eureka Math Implementation Raised Student Achievement in Lincoln Unified School District (USD)

In fall 2013, Lincoln USD in Stockton, CA, implemented Eureka Math in grades K-8. Four years after adopting Eureka Math, district leaders were still seeing teachers struggle to implement the program and student performance was flat.

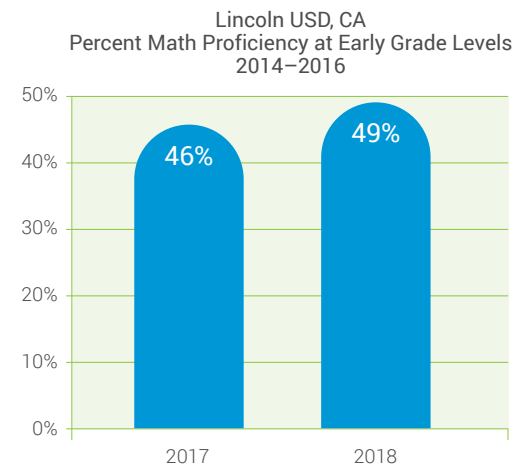
In spring 2017, the district approached CORE about providing professional learning around best practices for using Eureka Math in the classroom. CORE offered curriculum implementation training in 2017-18 to educators in nine Lincoln USD schools spanning grades K-8. Training consisted of three days of intensive, on-site, job-embedded support tailored to specific grade levels and two hands-on workshops. One workshop covered preparation and planning within the program; the other taught educators to utilize fluency activities within the curriculum.

Over the course of 90 professional learning days, teachers learned the knowledge and skills to effectively implement Eureka Math in their classrooms and improve instruction, including:

- An overview of the program organization and the mathematical alignment and articulation built into the curriculum
- How to plan, customize and pace lessons to accommodate specified timeframes
- Tips for adapting lessons for struggling and at-risk learners
- Strategies for blending fluency activities into instruction

THE RESULTS

Lincoln USD achieved a 3% increase in math proficiency at the early grade levels in one year, moving from 46% proficiency in 2017 to 49% or more students proficient in 2018.



Helping Students Achieve Literacy by Third Grade in Santa Ana Unified School District (USD)

Santa Ana USD in Santa Ana, CA, is large. It is responsible for educating 54,000 students across 61 schools in grades PreK-14. A majority of its students, 65%, are ELL, and the district has a 30% bi-literacy rate — five times the state average.

Because of the district's size and diverse mix of students, language acquisition and reading instruction became a critical focus. Over the years, district leaders have implemented plans and programs to improve instruction, provide better support for teachers, and help students reach reading proficiency earlier — by third grade. A partnership with CORE assisted the district as they worked to achieve these goals.

Santa Ana's relationship with CORE started during the 2014-15 school year and focused specifically on lower grade levels in select schools. By the 2016-17 school year, the CORE team was working with 14 schools in the district. CORE consultants visited Santa Ana throughout the year to provide a variety of professional learning services, including supporting the implementation of SIPPS (Systematic Instruction in Phonological Awareness, Phonics and Sight Words) as a supplemental or intervention foundational skills reading program.

Some consultants engaged directly with teachers to monitor instruction, model lessons and provide coaching. Others spent time with administrators and school leaders to improve instructional awareness so that they could provide ongoing support to classroom teachers. CORE has assisted in developing, implementing and expanding literacy programs for more teachers and students in higher grade levels across the curriculum.

With CORE's help, educators learned to pinpoint what strategies would deliver student success. The resulting student performance data was proof that those strategies were effective.



We're working on this at a systems level. As a system, we're focusing more and more on making sure students are reading by third grade. With this goal in mind, there's a variety of strategies we use, and CORE is one of them. Our relationship with CORE is an essential part of our initiative.

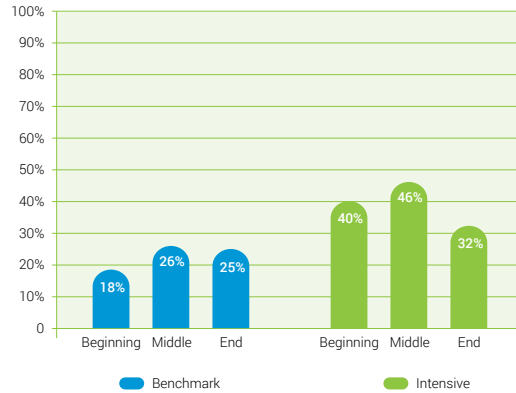
— Nadia Hillman, Former Executive Director of Elementary Education, Santa Ana Unified School District

[Read Santa Ana's full story.](#)

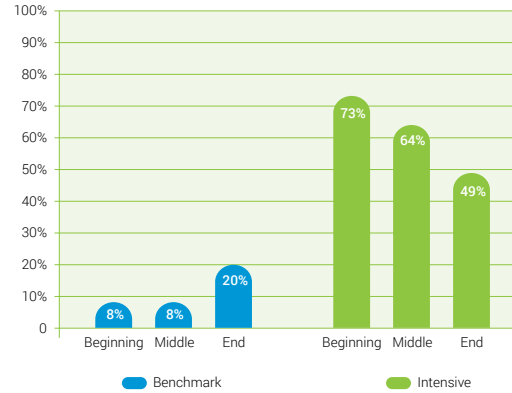
THE RESULTS FROM SANTA ANA USD

Data points to literacy gains in lower grade levels, with students increasingly reaching DIBELS reading benchmarks.

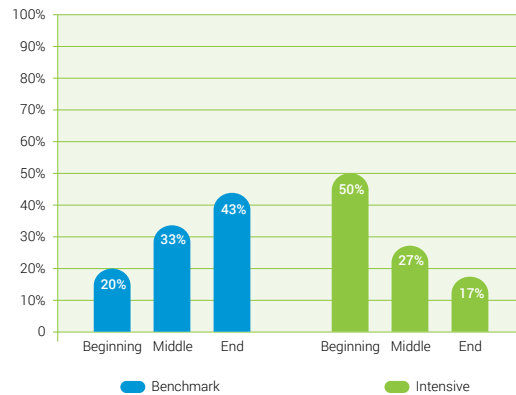
Monte Vista Elementary, CA
DIBELS: Within-Year Data Analysis
Grade One – 2016



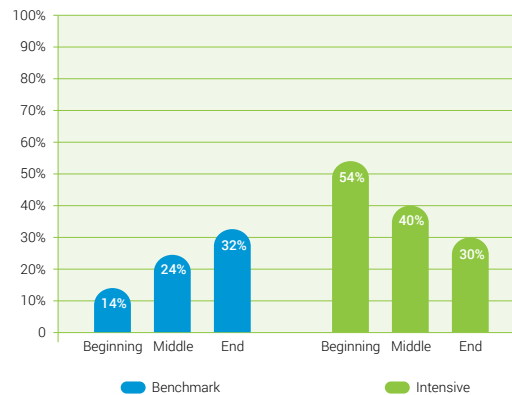
Monte Vista Elementary, CA
DIBELS: Within-Year Data Analysis
Grade Two – 2016



Walker Elementary
DIBELS: Within-Year Data Analysis
Grade One – 2016



Walker Elementary
DIBELS: Within-Year Data Analysis
Grade Two – 2016



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CORE's curriculum experts can help educators throughout your site or district develop the skills, knowledge, and tools to implement high-quality curricula. For more information about our curriculum implementation support services, including remote and in-person options, please contact us.

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