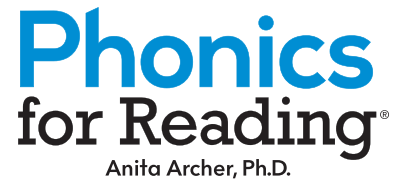
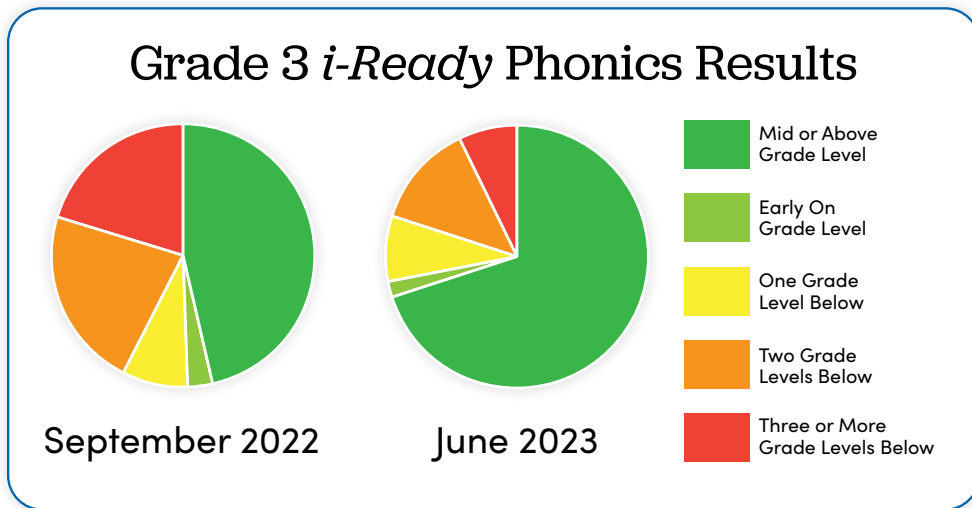


New York District Sees Major Phonics Gains




“Our [Curriculum Associates] team has been essential to this success.”

—Amy Staubitz, Director of Curriculum for Literacy and Intervention Services, Longwood Central School District




How a New York School District Drove 45% Gains in Grade 3 Phonics

At the beginning of the 2021 academic year, Grade 2 students in Longwood Central School District were actively engaged in enhancing their phonics proficiency, stemming from the obstacles encountered during Grade K, where school closures and COVID-19 protocols disrupted their structured learning environment, impacting systematic instruction. The district set a goal of having 75 percent of these students on grade level in phonics by the end of Grade 3 and adopted *Phonics for Reading* as a Tier 1 instructional tool to use with every third grader. The result? In one school year, the percentage of Grade 3 students performing on grade level in phonics jumped from 49.5 percent to 72 percent—a gain of 45 percent. Teachers also loved the program. In an end-of-year survey, 29 out of 33 teachers said they want to continue using it.



Longwood Central School District

Grades Pre-K–12



- White
- Hispanic/Latino
- Black
- Other

8.9K

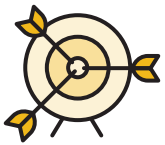
Students Enrolled in the School District

52%

of Students Are Economically Disadvantaged

“ I am able to not only teach phonics but also work on comprehension and vocabulary.”—Longwood Central School District

How Longwood Central School District Raised Achievement for Their Grade 3 Students



Meeting Today's Challenges Head On

One of the realities faced by this cohort of students, who were kindergarteners in 2020, was that school closures and COVID-19 protocols hindered systematic instruction. This had a significant impact on their overall reading performance. In addition to 50 percent of students needing remedial instruction in phonics, more than 60 percent of students were reading below grade level overall.

Faced with these challenges, district leaders set a goal to get 75 percent of students on grade level in phonics by the end of Grade 3. To achieve their goal, Longwood wanted to implement a phonics intervention program that was developmentally appropriate for Grades 3–5. However, they quickly realized there aren't many evidence-based phonics resources designed for students in Grades 3–5, as the assumption is these students have already gained these skills.

"We learned about *Phonics for Reading* at an *i-Ready* summit, and once we heard the program was geared toward third through fifth graders, we were sold," said Amy Staubitz, director of curriculum for literacy and intervention services.



Teaching with Direct, Systematic, and Explicit Instruction

In addition to being developmentally appropriate for remediation, Longwood chose *Phonics for Reading* because it required little-to-no prep time, provided direct, systematic, and explicit instruction, and aligned well with the *i-Ready*

Diagnostic and Personalized Instruction lessons they were also using for their Grade 3 students. Their learning specialists also advocated for it, as they had previous experience using *Phonics for Reading* and felt it would be effective for Longwood too.

To help ease some of the concerns about teaching phonics, Amy and her team had a Curriculum Associates trainer lead a 90-minute session for every Grade 3 teacher, coach, and learning specialist. Coaches joined teachers in classrooms to model lessons, co-teach, and support their planning.

"Once teachers got comfortable with the program, they could move through it pretty quickly," Staubitz said. "And they had *i-Ready* data that was congruent with the student progress they were seeing, which was encouraging."





Creating a Data Culture

Educators had a 30-minute block before students came in for common planning time and district planning time, and each grade level sat together monthly to look at data, which helped build collaboration.

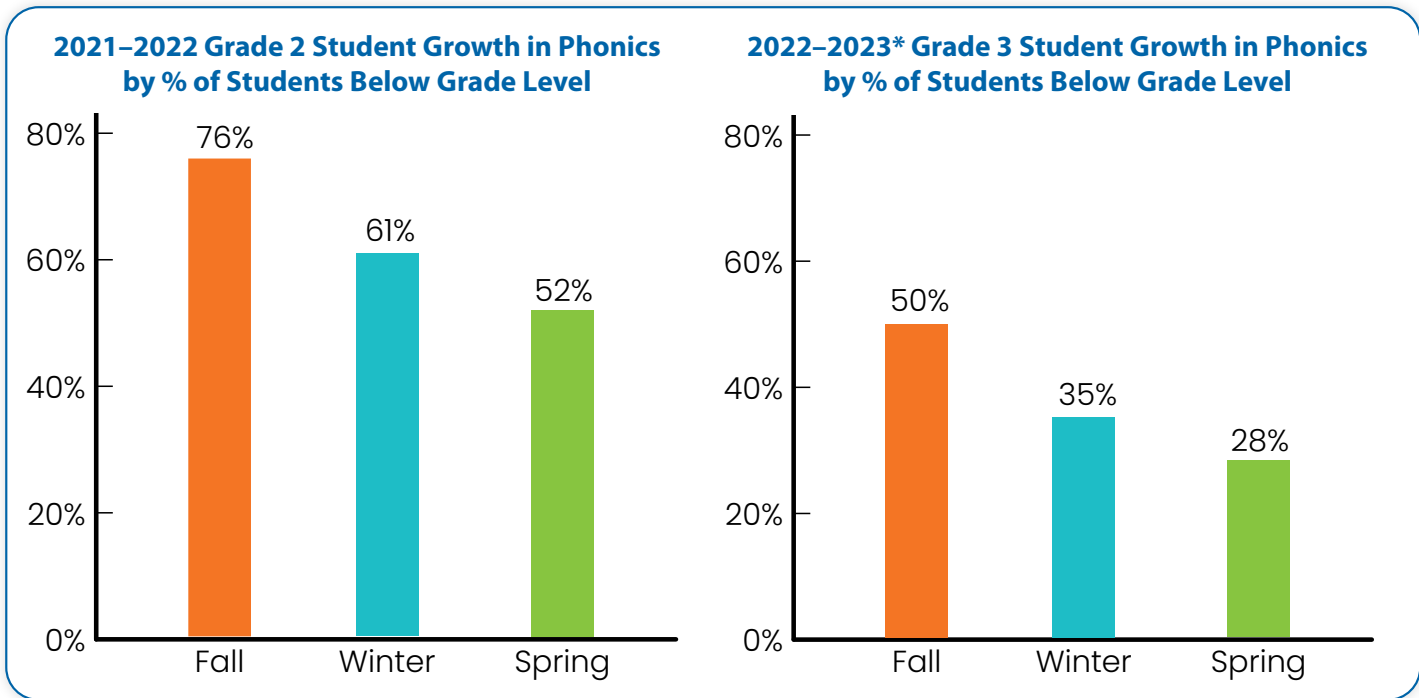
Additionally, the four elementary buildings held cross-building meetings every other month during which they reviewed data and discussed instructional strategies based on what the data was showing. Staubitz and her team received feedback on what worked well and what teachers would like to see change, and they made midyear adjustments in the program for their special education students and English Learners (ELs) where the data called for it.



Making a Lasting Impact

Longwood has seen more growth over historical data with the *Phonics for Reading* program, and students were effectively applying phonics skills in their reading, which had been a focus area for teachers. By the end of Grade 3, the district saw an improvement from 76 percent of students below grade level in phonics to only 28 percent of the cohort below grade level.

Student engagement in the program has also improved, as has teacher comfort with phonics instruction. In an end-of-year teacher survey, 29 out of 33 teachers said they want to continue using the program.



Phonics instruction interrupted March 2020 due to COVID. Students were engaged in independent phonics-based activities with minimal direct teacher instruction.

Foundations—Grade 2 skills being taught; many students not prepared for this level of instruction. Masks worn and shields between desks. 52 percent were below grade level based on the spring Diagnostic.

Grade K SY 2019–2020

Grade 1 SY 2020–2021

Hybrid—in school two days/week and virtual three days/week. Foundations taught daily with masks on. Inconsistent attendance on virtual days. Many absences due to contact tracing.

Grade 2 SY 2021–2022

Grade 3 SY 2022–2023

Introduced *Phonics for Reading*—Level 3 as core whole class instruction. Students who receive AIS are receiving instruction at Level 1 or Level 2 based on *Phonics for Reading* Placement Test.

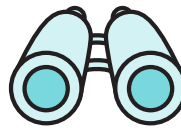
*This data includes ELs, ICT, and self-contained students.



Staubitz attributes some of Longwood’s success to their partnership with Curriculum Associates: “Our [Curriculum Associates] team has been essential to this success. Our educational sales consultant was so helpful with our plan for implementation and ordering, and our partner success manager has helped us look at our data and know where to pivot.”

The Curriculum Associates team meets with Longwood district leadership and building principals after every beginning, middle, and end-of-year assessment for professional learning and data analysis.

Looking to the Future



Longwood has already expanded *Phonics for Reading* to use in their Grade 5 special education classes,

with a dedicated coach to train those teachers. With the growth they saw this year, they’ll plan to transition to using it for intervention early next year. “Since we’ve been able to really teach foundations with fidelity in K, 1, and 2, fewer students need support when they get to Grade 3,” Staubitz pointed out.

Looking ahead, Staubitz said, “The research is changing to emphasize foundational skills for reading, so we’re focusing on building teacher capacity in all areas of reading instruction to improve overall growth.”

“ Clear and easy to use.
Having multiple lessons
on the same skills helped
students get familiar with
the skill and practice it.”
—Longwood Central School District



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