

SUCCESS SPOTLIGHT

# *i-Ready* Supports Riesel ISD in Improving Its Accountability Rating from an F to an A

Riesel Independent School District (Riesel ISD) in McLennan County, Texas, has 681 students across two schools: Foster Elementary for Grades Pre-K–6 and Riesel School for Grades 7–12.

When this small district’s elementary school received an F rating for Accountability by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) in 2019, they were completely blindsided and knew something had to change.

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—Christina Flores

Riesel Independent School District



GRADES  
Pre-K–12

ENROLLMENT  
681

TITLE I  
100%

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“Administrators and teachers were shocked because they thought they were doing all they could to ensure students received a high-quality education,” explained Christina Flores, assistant superintendent at Riesel ISD. Although, admittedly, some teachers felt their current assessment program was falling short on delivering the data they needed to adequately inform instruction, no one realized the full impact of that limitation until it was too late. After taking some time to process what happened, the district used the F rating as its motivation for change.

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## What They Did

In 2020, Riesel ISD piloted Curriculum Associates' *i-Ready Assessment* and Personalized Instruction for Mathematics and Reading to begin Foster Elementary's recovery process. They also hired an instructional specialist on a contractual basis to help focus their efforts. But managing instruction through the ups and downs of the pandemic was tough on everyone. The teachers were overwhelmed, so they leaned on the much-needed support and professional development provided by Curriculum Associates. After learning how to group the curriculum into lessons to address the critical areas where students were missing skills, teachers began to see what *i-Ready* could do.

### Incremental Growth

The initial results prompted Foster Elementary to invest more time in using *i-Ready*. In the 2021–2022 school year, they put additional systems in place and started looking at the data to form more focused small group instruction. That year, the school saw significant growth, testing at a 69. (This number would have been much higher, but they didn't obtain all the forms for the COVID-19 free and reduced-price lunch program—which impacted their score.)

They used *i-Ready* as an independent station and ensured the students were using it with fidelity. “Teachers started noticing that students were more engaged and excited about their growth,” said Flores. “They were elated to see the progress initiated by student-created goals and data trackers.” She highlighted the four strategies that were most instrumental in their overall improvement:



**Ensuring all teachers are using the same resource—*i-Ready***



**Incorporating *ThinkUp!*™ in some grade levels** to provide the rigor they needed to master specific Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS)



**Participating in Texas Instructional Leadership** to better understand how the TEKS are assessed



**Using data to inform all instructional decisions**

When teachers let the data inform their instruction, it made a big difference. “The great thing about *i-Ready* is that teachers get feedback on exactly where students are and how much they grew every single time they logged in,” Flores added. “Our teachers meet with the kids every other week to show them what they've done and how much progress they've made.”

# What They Accomplished

In the previous year, *i-Ready* results were so closely aligned with the actual STAAR® results that administrators could closely approximate their latest score. “We knew good things were coming,” Flores said. “I told my administrators that it looked like we’d be sitting at around 87 or 88 for the year. When we got everything back and were at 92, we just about died!”

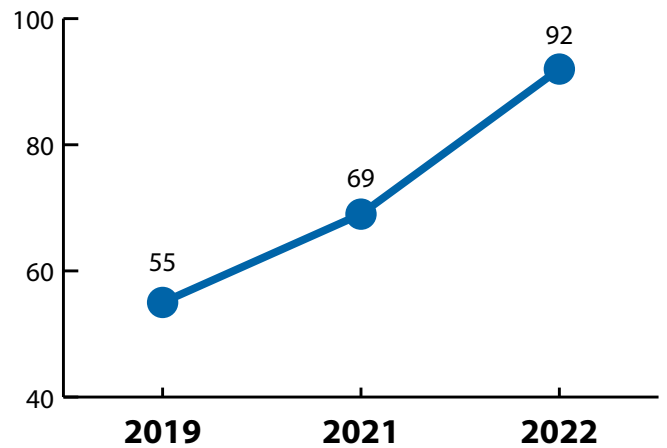
Foster Elementary’s accountability rating started at 55 (F) in 2019, and after their second year of using *i-Ready*, their score jumped to 92 (A). The *Waco Tribune* also featured Foster Elementary as the most improved school in the area.

## What Else Has Changed at Riesel ISD over the Past Two Years?

The conversations have changed. The level of understanding about the accountability system and how to promote growth for all students has increased astronomically. Teachers are talking about what’s next and being proactive instead of reactive. Small group instruction is allowing teachers to better connect with students at similar levels. Data trackers are up on the walls, which are constant reminders that goals are within reach. Teachers are working together more than ever before. “We’re all a team now,” said Flores. “We’ve built a culture of collaboration.”

The staff at Riesel ISD are now focused on promoting growth and ensuring every student continues to move in the right direction. They could not be prouder of what they’ve accomplished in such a short time. “I get tickled pink when we talk about data,” said Flores. “These teachers go above and beyond to make sure they’re doing what’s best for our kids.”

**TEA Accountability Ratings,  
Riesel ISD—Foster Elementary**



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