Black Gold School Division

Rewriting the Story:

Systemic Leadership for Structured Literacy in Black Gold School Division

November 2026



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PRESENTERS

HELLO, we are...



Nicole Lakusta

Director, Curriculum & Instruction (K–6)



Julie Reed

Literacy Instructional Coach

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Black Gold School Division

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DEMOGRAPHICS

Student Population

TOTAL ENROLLMENT

13,622

Students educated across Early Childhood Services to Grade 12.

PROVINCIAL RANK

7th

Largest school division in Alberta.

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OUR SYSTEM AT A GLANCE

Dedicated to Quality Education

32

Schools

Inspiring environments fostering student growth and achievement across the division.

768

Teaching Staff

Certified educators committed to academic excellence and personal growth.

603

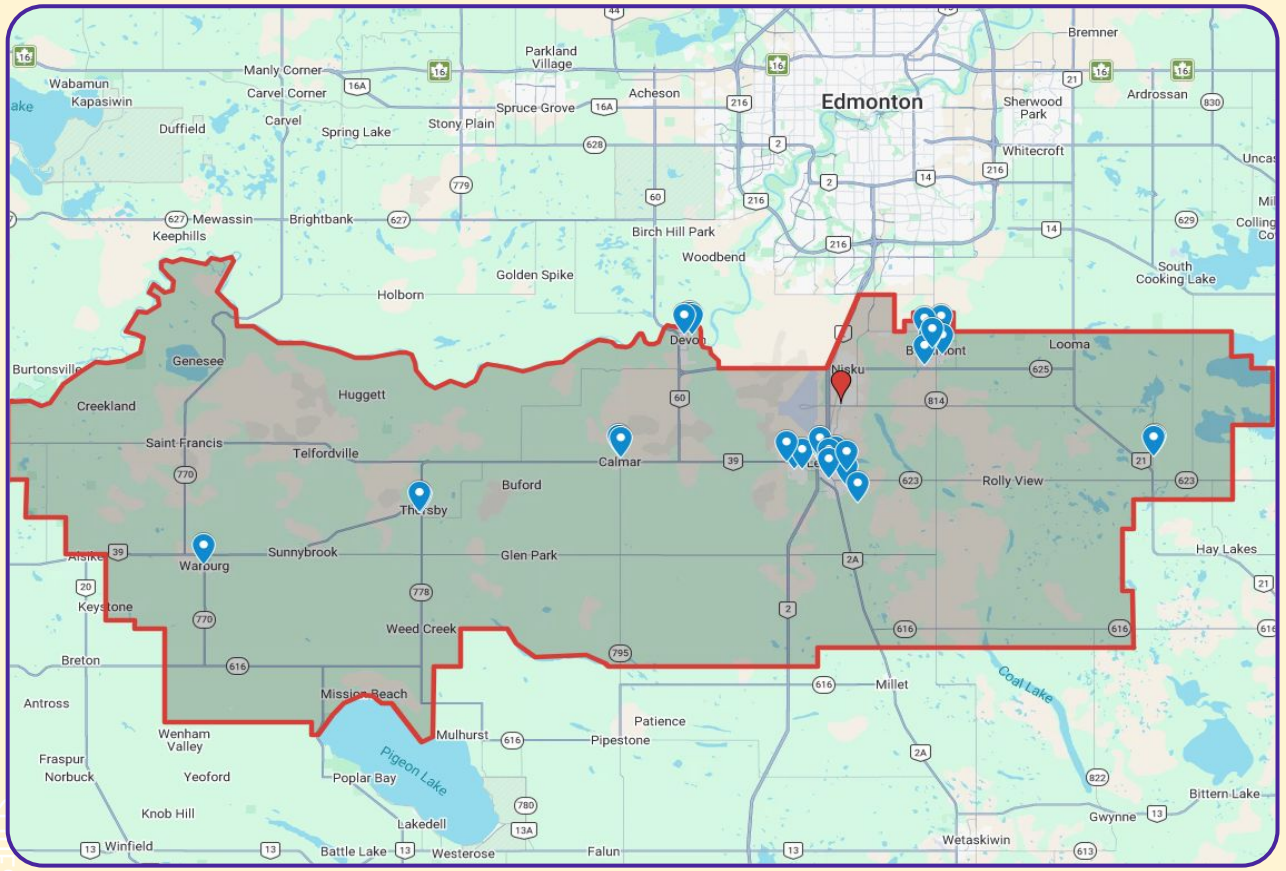
Support Staff

Dedicated team members ensuring seamless daily operations and student well-being.

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AREA

Communities Served

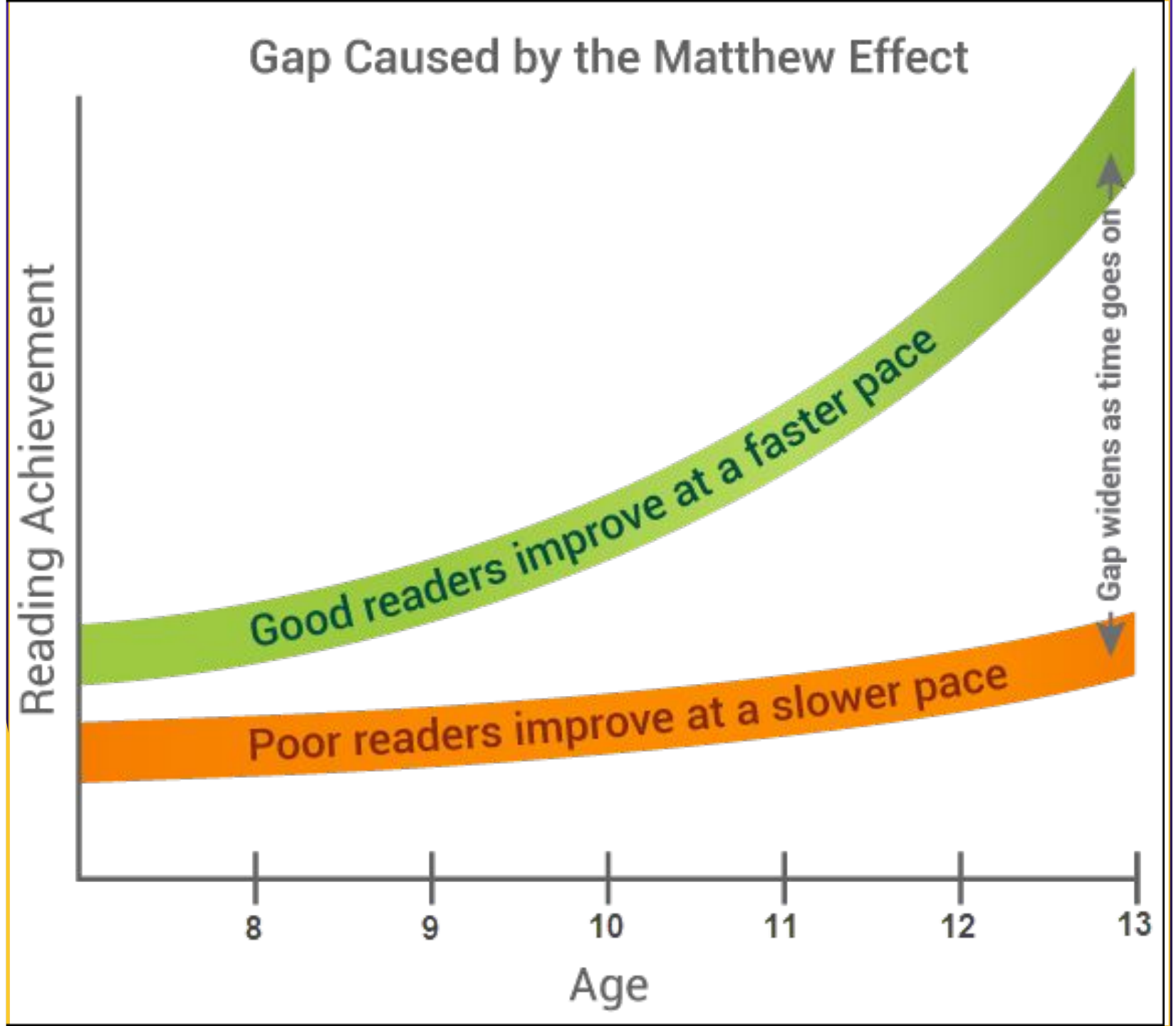


- Beaumont
- Calmar
- Devon
- Leduc
- Leduc County
- New Sarepta
- Thorsby
- Warburg

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Why Build a Structured Literacy Model?

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Gap Caused by the Matthew Effect
Reading Achievement
Good readers improve at a faster pace
Poor readers improve at a slower pace
Gap widens as time goes on
8
9
10
11
12
13
Age

REFLECTION PROMPTS

01

THE MATTHEW EFFECT

Where do you see the Matthew Effect playing out most visibly for our readers?

02

SYSTEMIC STRUCTURES

What existing structures inadvertently keep struggling readers trapped in low-level skills rather than grade-level text?

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The Reality of Change

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The goal is to turn data into information, and information into insight

Carly Fiorina (former HP CEO)

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PART A

Case Studies

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Case Study Analysis Framework

Analysis Prompts	 Case 1	 Case 2	 Case 3	 Case 4	 Case 5	 Case 6
1. Notice						
2. Not Notice / Wondering						
3. Prediction						

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Case Study Analysis and Discussion

01

What are you NOTICING?

• What surface data, symptoms, or staff anxieties are dominating?

02

What are you NOT noticing?

• Where are the systemic blind spots, curriculum gaps, or Tier 1 holes?

03

Predict the Turning Point:

• As system leaders, what high-leverage move will unlock progress?

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The Roadmap

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The Shift in Black Gold School Division

BEFORE

Reactive Pull-Outs

- Over-reliance on Tier 2 & 3 pull-out interventions
- Fragmented reading recovery models
- Low-level skill drills isolated from core curriculum
- Disconnected coaching and specialist caseload fatigue

NOW

Robust Tier 1 Foundation

- Universal structured literacy across specific grades 1–6 classrooms
- Explicit, systematic phonics, morphology, vocabulary, background knowledge within content-rich texts
- High-leverage instructional coaching embedded in schools

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Key Strategic Targeted Literacy Priorities

01 Coherent Instructional Alignment & Leveraging Curriculum

02 Strengthen Tier 1 Instructional Support & Early-Years Foundations

03 Strengthen Distributed Instructional Leadership

04 Design Sustainable Systems Responsive to Local Contexts



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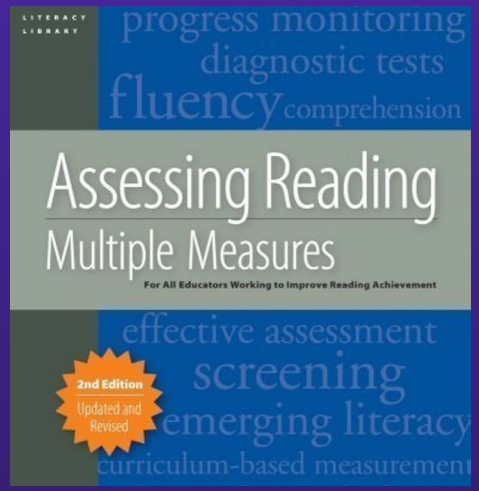
01

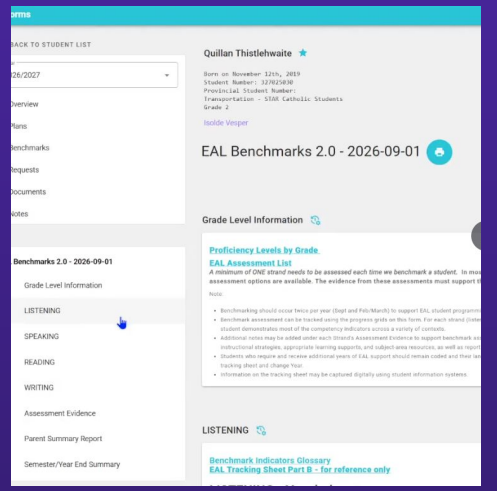
K–5 Screener Data

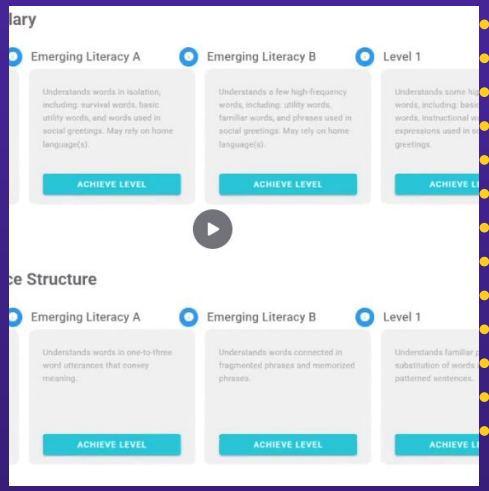
CORE Multiple Measures

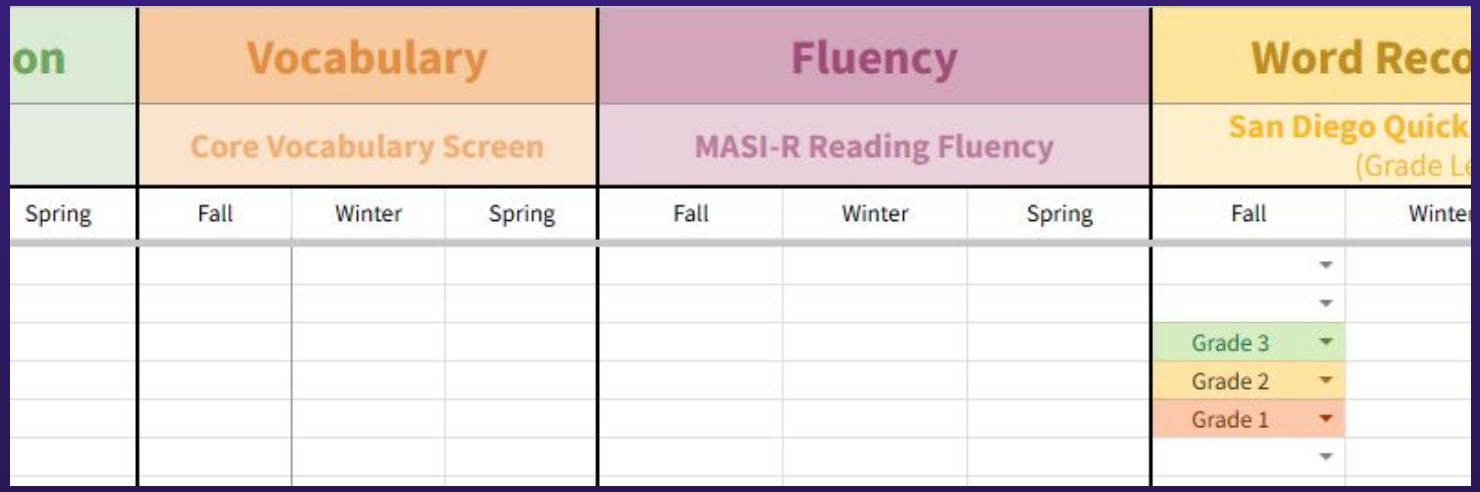
EAL Benchmarking

Progress Monitoring









• **CASS Consideration**

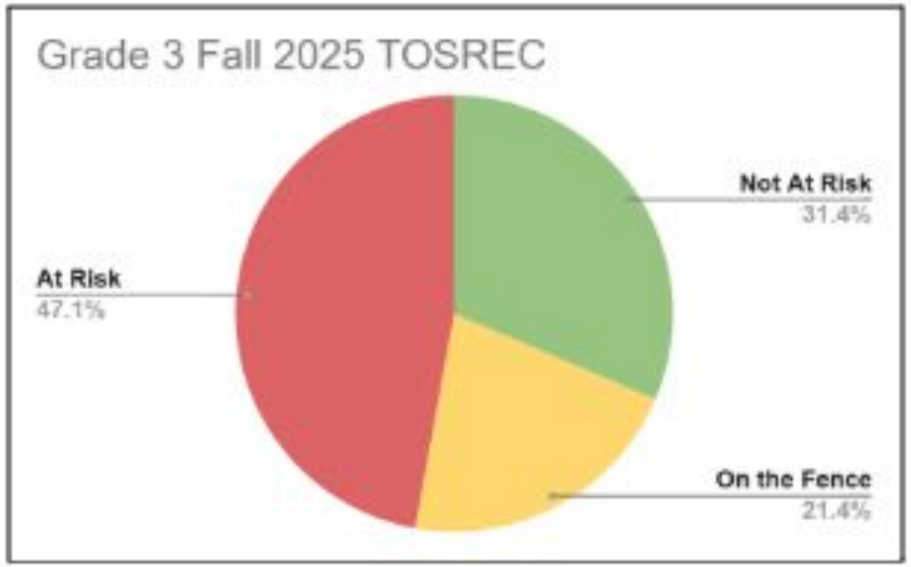
Align assessment, interventions & PL; use curriculum as catalyst.

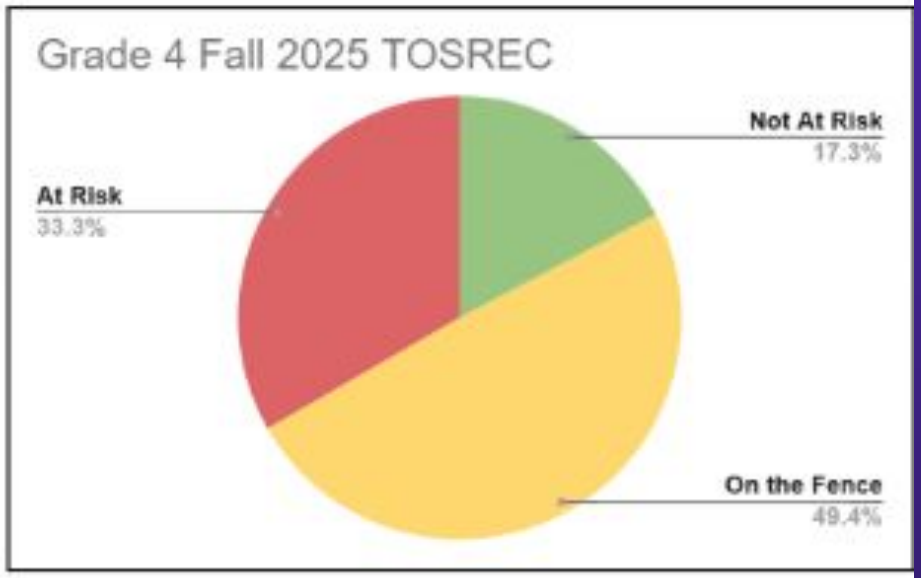
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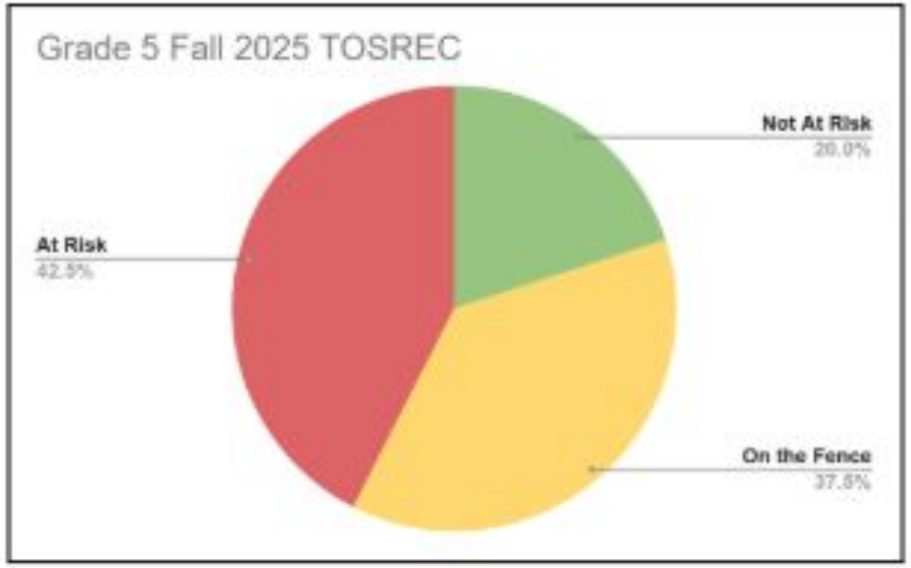


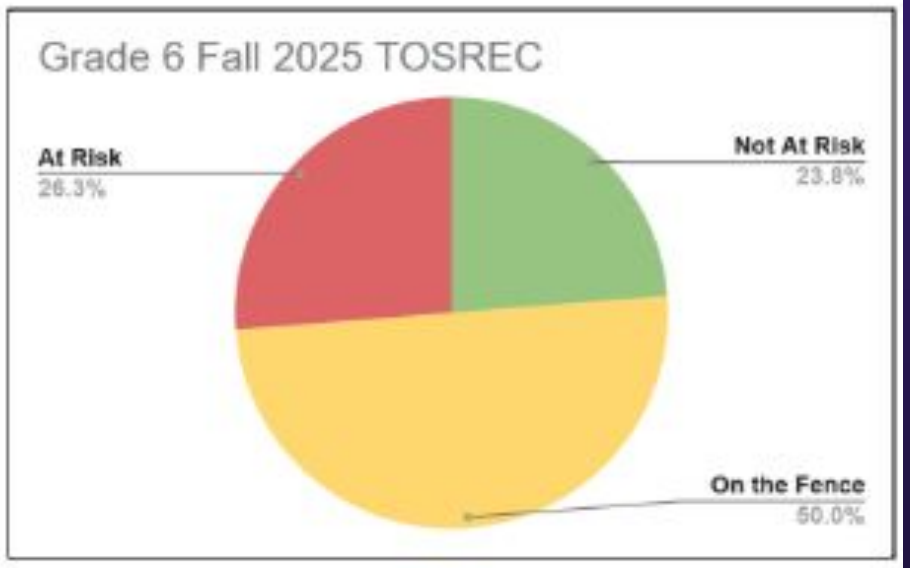
Nicole Lakusta

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Student Literacy Struggles

Varied Literacy Levels

Students enter school with a wide range of literacy abilities within the same grade, from emerging readers and writers to those with more advanced skills. This variability requires teachers to differentiate instruction constantly and provide individualized support to meet diverse learning needs.

Low Student Engagement and Stamina

Many students struggle to sustain attention and effort in longer writing tasks, showing limited perseverance with editing or completing extended assignments. Writing tasks often feel burdensome, and students are not intrinsically motivated to produce written work, share stories, or engage deeply with literacy activities.

Limited Family Literacy Support

Outside of school, literacy is often not emphasized or prioritized by families. Students' literacy growth tends to be reactive, relying on classroom instruction alone, rather than supported through a collaborative approach with parents, which increases pressure on teachers to provide all literacy experiences.

Weak Reading and Writing Skills

Students face consistent challenges in fundamental literacy areas. Reading comprehension is low, with some students unable or unwilling to analyze text, and reading for pleasure is uncommon. Writing skills, including sentence structure, grammar, punctuation, and fluency, are underdeveloped, making pencil-and-paper tasks particularly challenging.

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Building a Complete Literacy Picture

Black Gold's Strategic Path: From Screeners to Targeted Skill Development

Provincial Screeners

Broad benchmark data used to identify overall student literacy trends and highlight students requiring additional reading support.

- Initial baseline screening
- Early risk identification
- Division-wide oversight

CORE Diagnostics

Deep-dive assessment measures to isolate specific skill deficits across key reading components.

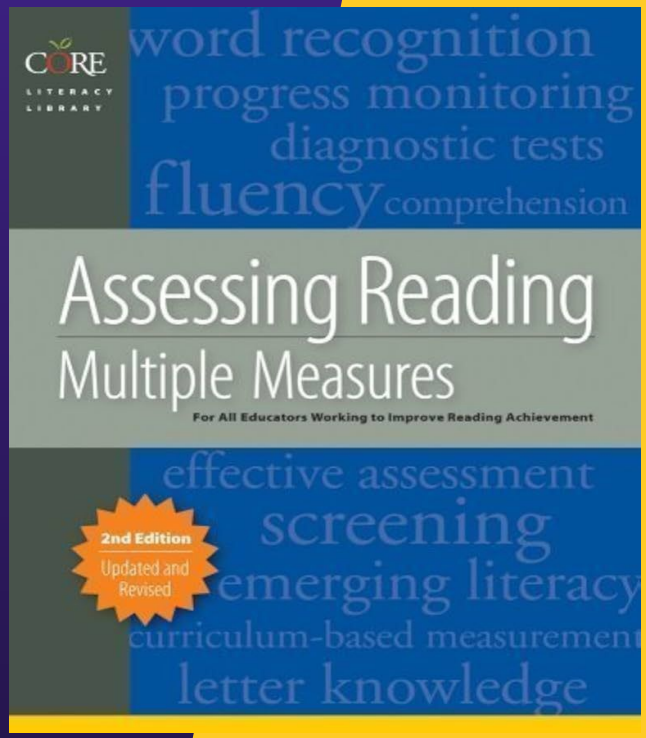
- Decoding & Phonics
- Reading Fluency (MASI-R)
- Vocabulary Screening
- Maze Comprehension

Outcome

Targeted Action

Provides teachers with a complete picture to deliver precise reading instruction and interventions.

- Actionable skill profiles
- Targeted word blocks
- Measurable progress
- Aligned resources



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Grade 2 example - CORE + screeners

Assessment Measure
Comprehension *(CORE Reading Maze Comprehension Test)* 3 min Whole Class
Vocabulary *(CORE Vocabulary Screening Test)* *Whole Class: Read orally 10 min*
Reading Fluency *(MASI-R Oral Reading Fluency Measure)* Three 1 min Individual (assess whole class)

Assessment Measure
Phonics Surveys *(CORE Phonics Survey: Sections A-M* 10-15 minutes Individual

Assessment Measure
LeNs *(Letter Name-Sound Test)* Cards 3-5 Individual
CC3 *(Regular/irregular real words/non-words)* Individual
BGWS *Whole Class*
PNSA *Whole Class*

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02 Shift from pull-outs; empower educators to move students in reading/writing skill-based groups.

PREVIOUS MODEL

Isolated Pull-Outs

Moving students out of the core classroom environment for intervention, creating fragmentation in instruction.

TARGETED DIRECTION

Classroom Skill Groups

Empower classroom educators to flexibly move students into targeted reading and writing groups based on specific skill needs.

• CASS Consideration

Prioritize inclusive Tier 1 foundations & classroom-embedded K–3.

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Division 1 Targeted Literacy Groupings

CORE Diagnostic & Flyleaf Scope Alignment (Grades 1-3)

RED TIER (Intensive)

Red Group 1: Consonant Sounds Focus



Single consonants & short /a/, 2-4 phoneme blending, sight words.

Red Group 2: Short Vowels Mastery



Short vowels (/o/, /i/, /u/, /e/), 3-5 phoneme blending, initial blends.

YELLOW TIER (Strategic)

Yellow Group 3: CVC Automaticity



Closed CVC words, continuous blending, double consonants, plot retell.

Yellow Group 4: Short Vowels & Digraphs



Digraphs (th, sh, ch, tch, ng, nk), closed syllables with blends, cause & effect.

GREEN TIER (Benchmark/Advanced)

Green Group 5: Multisyllabic Words



2-3 syllable closed words, C+le strategy, syllabification, main idea.

Green Group 6: Advanced Grade 3 Readers



Advanced multisyllabic decoding, phrase-cued prosody, author's purpose.

Gemini Notebook

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What We Are Achieving Together

Targeted Skill Mastery
Focusing instruction directly on individual student needs and learning goals.

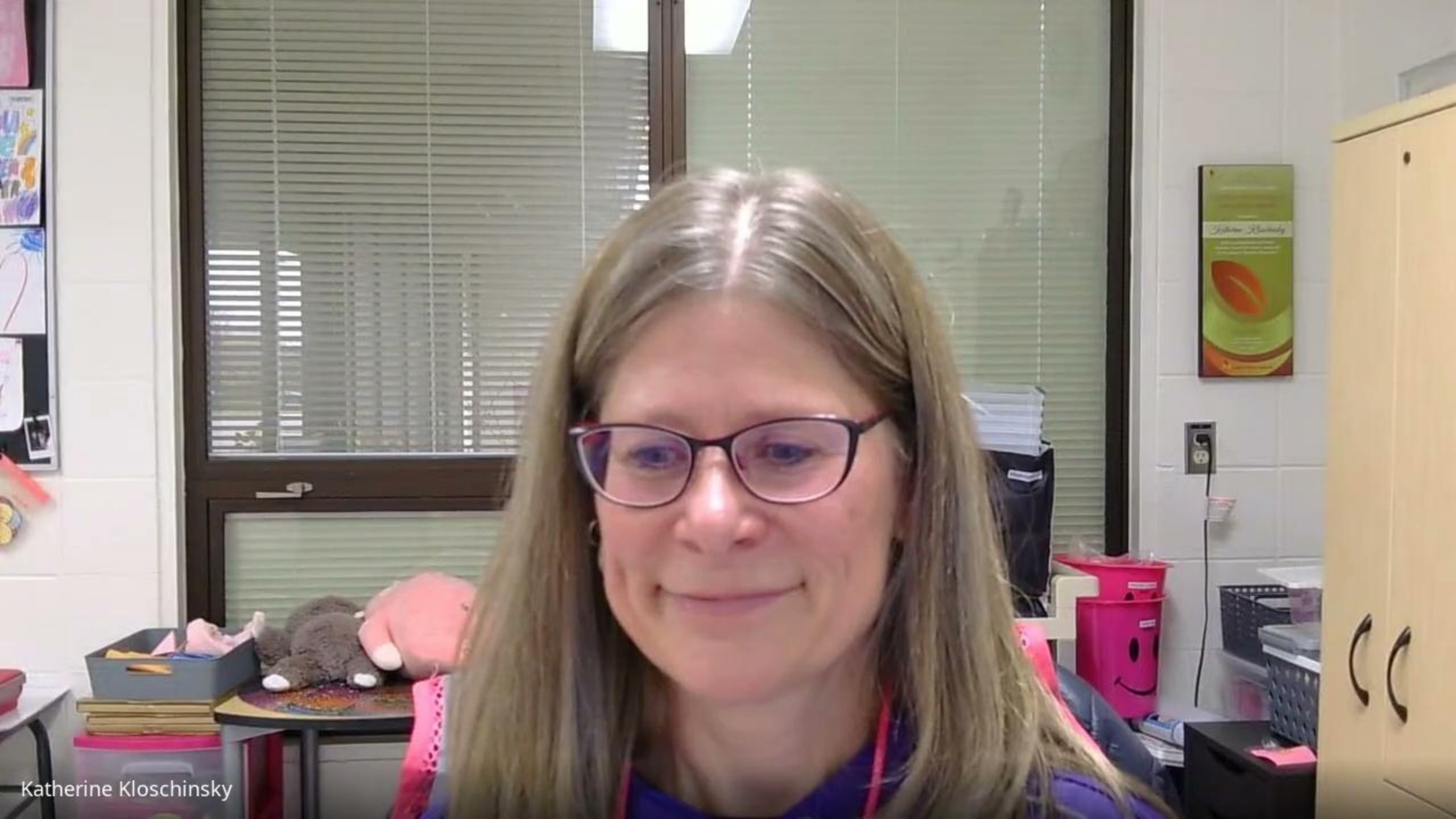
Immediate Intervention (Bill 6 Compliance)
Providing timely diagnostic support to ensure reader compliance and success.

Equitable Growth for All
Ensuring every learner receives high-quality, tailored reading pathways.

Flexible, Fluid Progress
Dynamic grouping that adapts instantly as student competencies evolve.

Building Confident Readers
Fostering lifelong comprehension, literacy enjoyment, and independence.

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Katherine Kloschinsky

Fall (both classes combined):
Beginning of the Year Screeners

GREEN: 19.6%
YELLOW: 30.4%
RED: 50%

Class 1 Fall

Fall Reading Screening - A

TOSREC		Complete TOWRE and Reassesss Winter
Paper Raw Score Entry	GLE	
25	4	
20	3.2	Yes
60	12.8	
18	2.8	Yes
25	4	
20	3.2	Yes
12	2	Yes
24	3.8	
17	2.8	Yes
19	3	Yes

Class 2 Fall

Fall Reading Screening - A

TOSREC		Complete TOWRE and Reassesss Winter
Paper Raw Score Entry	GLE	
39	9	
18	2.8	Yes
32	6.5	
29	5.5	
29	5.5	
0	0.8	Yes
35	7.5	
28	5.2	
28	5.2	
26	4.8	

June (both classes combined):
April data collected post Targeted Word Block: Feb - April
June data collected post Targeted Literacy Blocks end April - June

GREEN:80.3%
YELLOW: 11%
RED: 8.7%

Class 1 & 2 April to June

Comprehension		Vocab		Fluency			
Maze		Vocab		Masi-R			
April	June	April	June	Winter #	April	Score	June
0-11	0-13	0-14	0-14	23	0-70	51	0-82
16+	19+	23+	23+	122	120-...	81	0-82
12-15	0-13	23+	23+	45	0-70	89	83-104
16+	19+	0-14	15-22	104	95-119	99	83-104
16+	14-18	15-22	23+	66	0-70	100	83-104
16+	19+	23+	23+	96	95-119	101	83-104
16+	19+	23+	23+	149	143-...	102	83-104
0-11	19+	23+	23+	76	71-94	106	105-...
0-11	19+	15-22	15-22	77	71-94	110	105-...
16+	19+	23+	23+	104	95-119	124	105-...
16+	19+	23+	23+	108	95-119	124	105-...
16+	19+	23+	23+	120	120-...	130	105-...

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Division 2 Targeted Literacy Groupings

Division 2 literacy instruction transitions students from "learning to read" to "reading to learn." Based on CORE diagnostic assessments, students are placed into **fluid, skill-based reading groups targeting foundational orthography, morphology, or advanced comprehension strategies.**

Red Group 1a

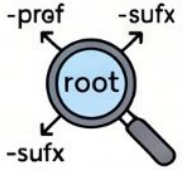
Foundational Spelling & Fluency



Focuses on Sound, Structure, Spell, transitioning to Code-Breaker's Club upon skill mastery.

Red Group 1b

Foundational Spelling & Morphology



Skill-based Grade 4-6 instruction combining phonics, morphology, annotation, and fluency using ABEd resources and BookPagez.

Red/Yellow Group 2

Advanced Foundational & Comprehension



Utilizes Flyleaf Series (ER Red / RS2 Yellow) for advanced decoding, critical thinking, and inquiry skills.

Yellow Group 3

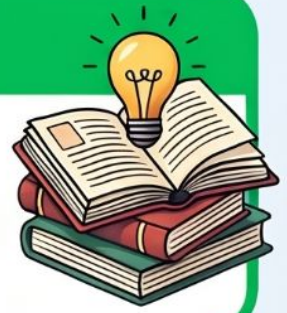
Decoding to Comprehension Bridge



Uses Word Connections and Morpheme Madness to directly connect word decoding with deep comprehension.

Green Group 4

Advanced Novel Study



Utilizes BookPagez novel studies for students reading at or above grade level.

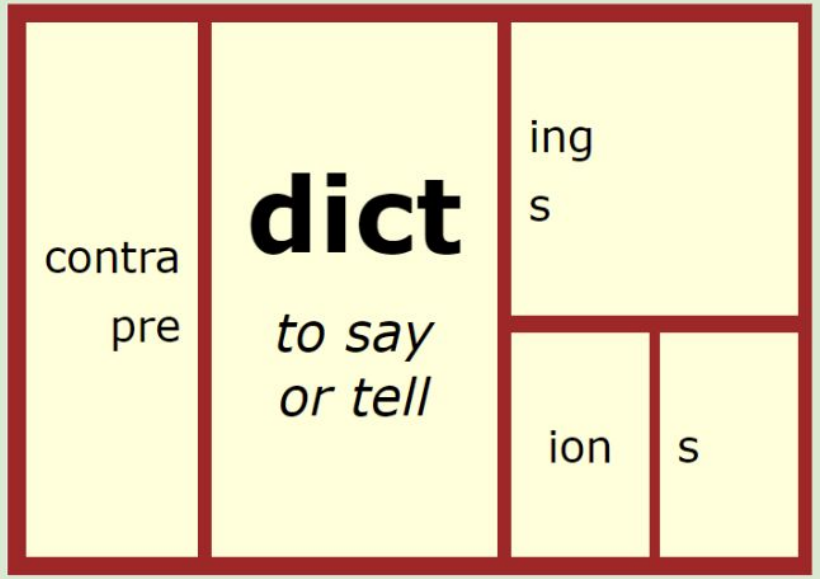
Gemini Notebook

Morphology Scope and Sequence Grades 4-8				
Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8
form	cede/cess/ceed	aqua	cept	act
port	cred	cent	claim/clam	aud
scrib/script	fer	civ	cogn	bene
spec/spect	jac, ject	dic/dict	corp	cede/ceed
struc/struct	leg	fract/frag	cred	circum
flect/flex	pend, pense	mov/mot/mob	gen	fin
dic/dict	vent	port	grat	fort
mit/mis	rupt	duc, duce, duct	ject	jur/jus/jud
duc/duce/duct	tain, ten	rupt	loc	liber/liver
pel/puls	tend, tent	sci	man/manu	mit/mis/miss
fac/fic/fact/fect	verse, vert	ped	ped/pod	nov
cur/curs	vis, vise	tend	pend/pens	scrib/script
aud	vit, vita, viv	aer/aero	pop	struc/struct
pos/pound	auto, chrono, mono, tele, graph	arch	socio	vac
plic/ply	hydr, sphere, geo, bio, lith	astro	sol/soli	vid/vis
phon, photo, graph/tele	ast, mechan, poly, neo, morph	dem/demo	spect	viv/vit
auto, chron, gram, mono, cycl	crat, demo, eco, psycho, logy, paleo			
cycle, geo, sphere, therm		m		
bio, eco, logy, zoo		archa		
chrom, phobia, stereo, techn				
biblio, hydro, lex phys				
mech, metr, micro, scope		p		
hyper, mega, poly, mania				

Word Building: Week 7, Day 2

Prefixes:
contra = against
pre = before

Suffixes:
-ing = happening now
-ion = state of being, action, or quality
-s = regular plural or 3rd person present tense verb



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Flyleaf Publishing Reading Series 3 (RS3) Scope and Sequence: Foundational Skills

All foundational skills and strategies noted in the Scope and Sequence chart are listed *only* at the point where they are introduced or formally consolidated. The skills and strategies students acquire are cumulative and, though they are not repeatedly listed in the chart, will be applied in the reading of subsequent books in the series.

Magenta: Vowel Team Syllable Words with Vowel Digraphs			
Book	**Target Letter-Sound Correspondence**	**High-Frequency Words**	**Additional Foundational Skills and Strategies** INTRODUCED
PRE–READING SERIES 3 SKILLS ASSESSMENT			
1 ***Lin-Lin and the Seagulls***	Long /ē/ sound spelled ***ea***	father, loved, some	**Decoding/Encoding** Syllable knowledge: consonant-*le* syllables, vowel team syllables (vowel digraphs) Word reading: Read by Analogy Strategy Recognize a Word Part Strategy Identify a Vowel Pattern to Predict a Pronunciation Strategy **Morphology** Derivational affixes: ***–ness***, ***–or***, ***–er***, ***–y***, ***–ly*** Final stable syllables: ***–ture***
2 ***Shep the Sheep of Caladeen***	Long /ē/ sound consolidation: /ē/ ***ie***, ***ee***, ***ea***, ***y***	again, doing, many, most, ones	
3 ***Tracking with Uncle Joe***	Long /ō/ sound spelled ***oa***, ***oe***, ***ow***	says	
4 ***Plates, Quakes, and Glowing Magma***	Long /ō/ sound consolidation: /ō/ ***o_e***, ***oa***, ***ow***	another, away, hold, people, right	
5 ***Snail Hits the Trail***	Long /ā/ sound spelled ***ai***, ***ay***	air, going	
6 ***Keeping Track of Snail Facts***	long /ā/ sound consolidation: ***a_e***, ***ai***, ***ay***	write	
7 ***Oh My! It Must Be the Sky!***	Long /ī/ sound spelled ***y***	own, pretty	
8 ***Butterfly Life Cycle***	Long /ī/ sound consolidation: /ī/ ***i_e***, ***y***	cold, does, during, growing, kinds, newly, outer, warmer	
POST–VOWEL DIGRAPHS FORMATIVE ASSESSMENTS			

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Reading Series 3 (RS3) Scope and Sequence: Close Reading

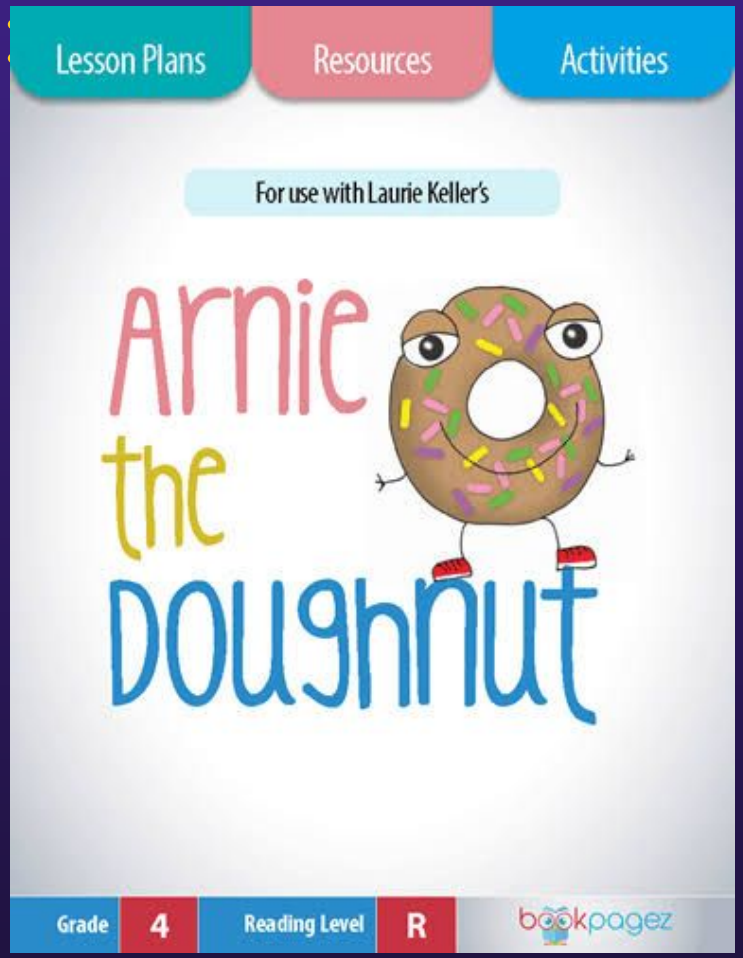
All comprehension skills and strategies, genre study skills, and vocabulary words and skills noted in the Scope and Sequence chart are listed in **bold** at the point where they are introduced. The remaining content in the chart illustrates spiraled repetition of instruction.

Magenta				
Book	**Comprehension Skills and Strategies**	**Reading-Specific Background Knowledge**	**Vocabulary**	**Additional Literacy and Language Skills and Strategies**
1 ***Lin-Lin and the Seagulls***	Activate background knowledge to deepen understanding and prepare to gain information. **Make lexical, predictive, or elaborative inferences based on the text.** **Summarize and synthesize story elements to arrive at a deeper understanding of the story.**	**Analyze the main character's actions, feelings, plan or goal, and motivations that impact the story, using illustrations and details from the text.** **Analyze plot elements, including the sequence of events, the problem and/or challenges or obstacles, and the resolution.** Infer multiple themes, or central messages, within a text using text evidence.	**Monitor and clarify meaning of words and phrases using context clues, synonyms, or background knowledge (*swells, flocked, bobbed, distressed*).** Identify, use, and explain the meaning of synonyms (*joyful/**lighthearted/overjoyed, dismayed**/miserable/gloomy/**distraught/fretful, thankful, satisfied***). Identify, use, and explain the meaning of character trait words (***kind, unselfish, generous, considerate, carefree***). Use academic vocabulary: *character, setting, setup, reaction, initiating event, resolution summarize, character trait.*	**FLUENCY** **Read dialogue with appropriate expression, rhythm, and phrasing.** Use proper phrasing to read a text with expression. Reread texts to recognize words automatically. **TEXT FEATURES** Use information generated from text features, including diagrams, glossary, and boldface headings to understand the topic and details of the text. **AUTHOR'S CRAFT** Describe how the author uses language and tone to achieve a specific purpose. Analyze the author's use of imagery, literal and figurative language. Analyze the author's use of descriptive language. **Determine the tone of a text.** **Identify the author's purpose and/or message.** **ORAL LANGUAGE** **Engage in collaborative analysis to deepen comprehension of texts.** **Orally synthesize and summarize**
2 ***Shep the Sheep of Caladeen***	Use metacognitive strategies to develop and deepen comprehension. **Make lexical, predictive, or elaborative inferences based on the text.** **Summarize and synthesize story elements to arrive at a deeper understanding of the story.** **Generate questions about the text and actively monitor comprehension to deepen understanding and gain information.** Make connections to one's own life.	Analyze the main character's actions, feelings, plan or goal, and motivations that impact the story, using illustrations and details from the text. Analyze plot elements, including the sequence of events, the problem and/or challenges or obstacles, and the resolution. **Identify and express claims of a story's central message supported by text evidence.**	**Monitor and clarify meaning of words and phrases using context clues, synonyms, or background knowledge (*royal, fleece, unneeded*).** Identify, use, and explain the meaning of synonyms (***discouraged**/gloomy/dismayed/distraught, distressed/**forlorn**/miserable, delighted/content/**satisfied**/thankful*). Identify, use, and explain the meaning of character trait words (***sensitive, hesitant, pessimistic***). Use academic vocabulary: *character, setting, setup, reaction, initiating event, resolution summarize, character trait.* Student uses newly-acquired vocabulary to	

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Comprehension | Phonics & Word Study | Vocabulary | Fluency | Worksheets

- Asking Questions
- Understanding Text Structure
- Comprehension Assessment
- Compound Words
- Vocabulary Connections
- Inside a Busy Bakery
- Cause and Effect



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Nicole Lakusta

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03 Strengthen Distributed Instructional Leadership

EMBEDDED PROFESSIONAL LEARNING SYSTEM



Collaborative Professional Learning Across Roles

School Administrators

Building instructional leadership and supporting system alignment during Lead Learners and School Visits/Learning Walks

Learning Support Teachers

Co-designing targeted literacy interventions and scaffolded support with aligned resources

Classroom Teachers

Explicit modeling, co-teaching, and implementing evidence-based classroom practices

CASS Consideration

Classroom-connected professional learning grounded in instructional leadership and direct coaching partnerships.

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I just wanted to say thank you for sharing so much of your knowledge with us. Your enthusiasm, passion, and generosity in supporting others in any way possible is truly amazing.

I also really appreciate that the resources we are implementing are grounded in the latest research-based practices. It feels meaningful and purposeful to bring those ideas into our classrooms. I love your positive energy and your clear understanding of what it's actually like to be in a "real" classroom — that authenticity really shines through in your presentation style.

You have personally inspired me, and I'm sure many other teachers as well, to keep learning and to feel excited about trying new things in our classrooms.

Grade 3 Teacher

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04 Master timetable scheduling

Timetable Scheduling

Design flexible, balanced master schedules that maximize instructional time, streamline course pathways, and foster district-wide collaboration.

CASS CONSIDERATION

Evaluate scalability, affordability, stability & local context.

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I appreciate the opportunity to utilize resources that will be aligned across elementary schools. It allows our teachers to collaborate and share across the district as they are speaking about the same materials yet may have different groupings or schedules. It is great to share the sharing of successes and how schools have overcome barriers like scheduling….

Principal

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Nicole Lakusta

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The Complete Literacy Picture

Provincial Screeners

Broad benchmark data used to identify overall student literacy trends and highlight students requiring additional reading support.

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CORE Diagnostics

Deep-dive assessment measures to isolate specific skill deficits across key reading components.

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- Reading Fluency (MASI-R)
- Vocabulary Screening
- Maze Comprehension

Targeted Action

Provides teachers with a complete picture to deliver precise reading instruction and interventions.

- Actionable skill profiles
- Targeted word blocks
- Measurable progress

Resources

Alignment

Chosen resources for targeted skill development.

- FlyLeaf Publishing
- Shelly Blackwell
- Book Pagez
- AbEd Phonics & Morphology Intervention (NLA)

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PART B

Case Studies



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Case Study Analysis Framework

Analysis Prompts	 Case 1	 Case 2	 Case 3	 Case 4	 Case 5	 Case 6
1. Student impact						
2. Teacher impact						

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Nicole Lakusta

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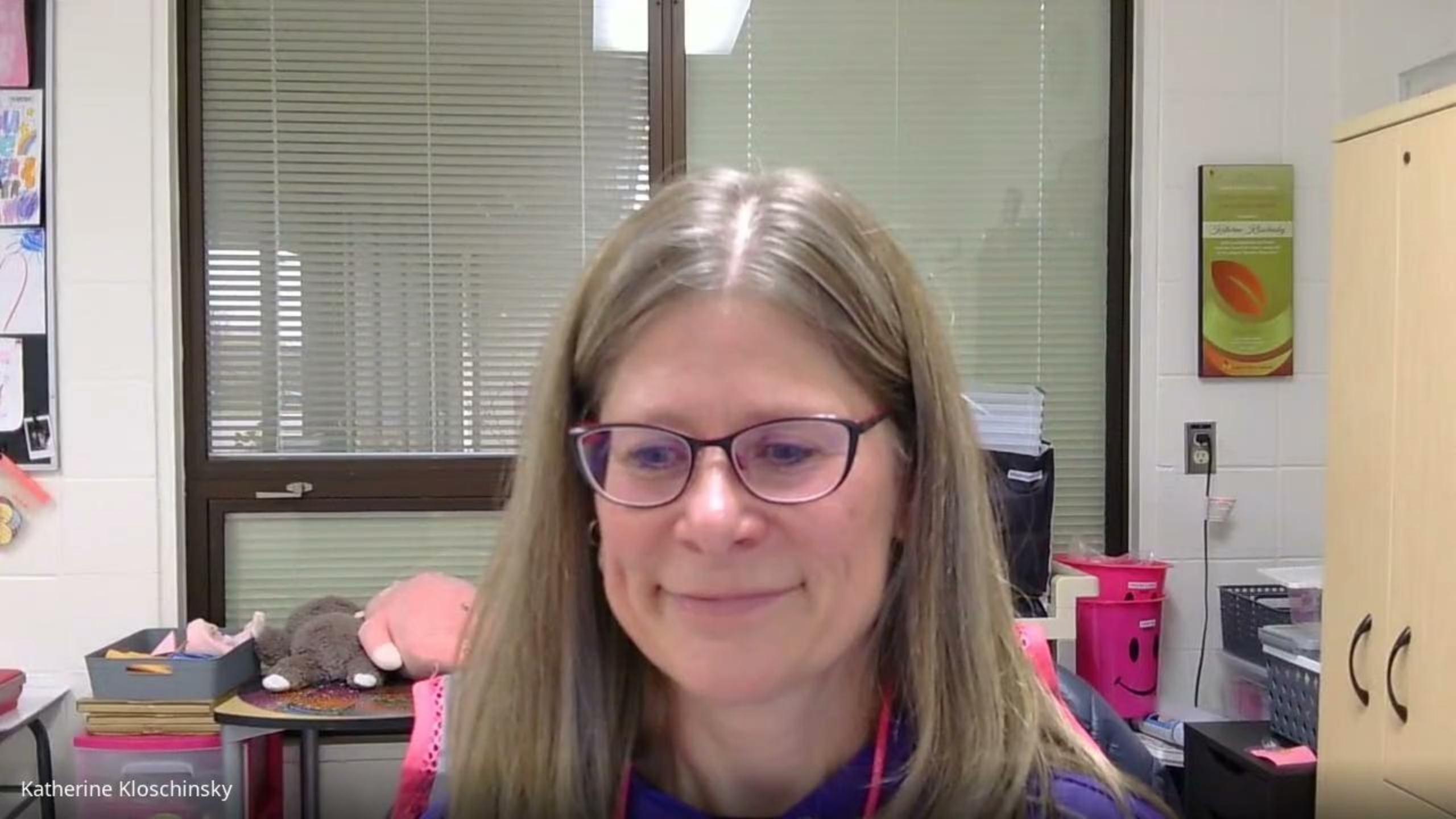
The teachers at our school love targeted Literacy Blocks, and especially Flyleaf. They speak so highly of the impact it had on their students' success as well as how it reduced their stress and planning, that I now would like to try it as well!

Flexible Pathways Teacher (multigrade complexity classroom)

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Katherine Kloschinsky



"The most powerful part of the day was having a space where staff could learn alongside one another, be curious, and feel comfortable asking questions," *says the Principal.* ***"The PD connects directly to what teachers and support staff are and will be doing in their classrooms. We are excited about the positive impact this will have for our students."***

September 18, 2026
PD day

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Thank you

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References and Resources

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