



LANGUAGE! Live Empowers Teachers and Improves Reading Outcomes for Students in Los Lunas Schools

In 2014, Los Lunas Schools, 25 miles south of Albuquerque, was one of 63 school districts out of 27,000 nationwide accredited by the North Central Association Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement (NCA CASI) and achieved the distinguished classification of District Accreditation. It remains the only public school district in New Mexico to achieve this standing. The pursuit of academic excellence at Los Lunas Schools reflects the deep belief that all students can learn and deserve high-quality instruction in the classroom. Highlighting this is the district's commitment to ensure its special education students have a consistent research-based literacy curriculum.

THE CHALLENGE

At the turn of the decade, Los Lunas Schools did not have a consistent research-based literacy curriculum for students in special education. Many of the New Mexico district's teachers had to piecemeal together antiquated and discarded general education curriculum, resulting in inconsistent instruction. With some students anywhere from two to three years behind in reading capabilities, the need to find a literacy curriculum that fit their requirements became urgent.

"Our goal is that our students graduate from Los Lunas Schools with the essential skills to succeed in post-secondary life, and our previous approach to teaching literacy was obviously not in the best interest of meeting the students' specialized reading needs," said Susan D. Chavez, assistant superintendent of special services for Los Lunas Schools, which serves 8,500 students in its 15 schools.



THE SOLUTION

Knowing improvement was needed in the curriculum and approach to helping special education students reach literacy goals, in 2013, Los Lunas Schools turned to Voyager Sopris Learning's *LANGUAGE!* Third Edition, an intensive, comprehensive literacy curriculum for students substantially below grade-level expectations.

Implementation of *LANGUAGE! Live* makes positive impact

Today, the district has 600 students using *LANGUAGE! Live*®, another Voyager Sopris Learning® comprehensive blended-learning solution for struggling readers that inspires a new level of confidence and drive to help them become proficient readers.



"LANGUAGE! Live assists our students with the fundamental reading skills needed to be successful."

**—Susan Chavez,
Assistant Superintendent
of Special Services,
Los Lunas Schools**



Authored by Dr. Louisa Moats, *LANGUAGE! Live* provides struggling readers with proven foundational and advanced reading intervention; peer-to-peer instruction; and literacy brain science. This captivating modern, digital platform helps students in grades 5–12 achieve reading success and did just that at Los Lunas Schools.

One of many benefits to using *LANGUAGE! Live*, Chavez said, is the program is aligned with the district's essential standards. Additionally, the program, aimed at adolescents who need to get to grade level, helps fill in the gaps of students' abilities.

"Some students need more than others in building foundational skills, and others need encouragement and motivation. *LANGUAGE! Live* is age appropriate and gives each student the help he or she needs," Chavez said.

Closing the literacy gaps

For Mary McGowan, director of compliance for Los Lunas Schools, *LANGUAGE! Live* academically helps close the skill gaps in reading and language for students, she said.

"For educators, the lessons are strategically planned and sequenced for effective teaching," McGowan said. "Personally, it makes students feel more confident and capable in their abilities, plus at times has helped to improve their behavior."

Teacher empowerment

Just as importantly, Chavez notes the high level of teacher engagement when using the program, which has been instrumental in ensuring the students' needs are met and, significantly, that the students now want to take ownership of their own learning.

"*LANGUAGE! Live* has empowered our teachers by providing excellent training and a user-friendly program," Chavez said. "It has been amazing to see how they have embraced the program and (it) motivates the students to do their very best."

THE RESULTS

Chavez noted students who previously were resistant to leave their general education classes are now eager to attend special education classes.

“Our students now show the confidence that in years past was lacking prior to *LANGUAGE! Live* being implemented in our district,” Chavez said.

Marked improvement in student achievement

More than 50 percent of Los Lunas Schools’ students are showing improvements over the years, Chavez said. Students are gaining about 1.6 years in one academic year during the first year of implementation, and about 1.9 years in the next two years of implementation.

“We also have seen many students who have been in *LANGUAGE! Live* for one to three years exit from the program due to their reading improvements,” Chavez said.

Cynthia Phillips, director of special education for Los Lunas Schools, said it has been very rewarding to see the district’s struggling students make such progress with *LANGUAGE! Live*.

“I was able to celebrate our special education students when they no longer needed the ‘Tier 3’ support of special education for reading due to the program’s fidelity, as well as the commitment to the program shown by teachers, parents, and students,” Phillips said.

One of *LANGUAGE! Live*’s most beneficial attributes, McGowan said, is that it helps build on students’ strengths and focuses less on their weaknesses. “When used correctly, it is very engaging,” she said. “I truly enjoy visiting our classrooms and watching our students in action.”



Support makes all the difference

Chavez praised Voyager Sopris Learning® for its support and help throughout the years with *LANGUAGE! Live*.

"It has been highly beneficial to have Cheryl Legard, our coach from Voyager Sopris Learning, come out each year to work with teachers so that they are using the program to its fullest. They receive side-by-side coaching and modeling and she is always giving valuable feedback.

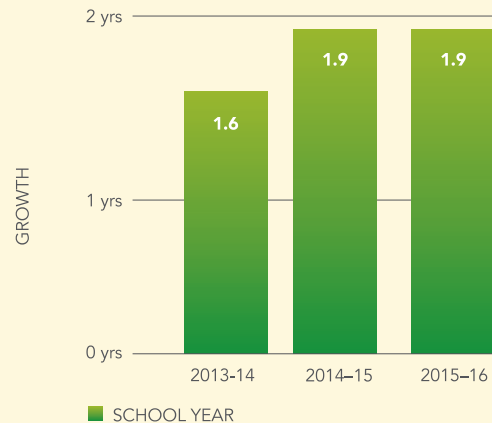
"In fact, the company's overall level of customer service has been fantastic," she says. "It has provided professional development, curriculum, and ongoing support to increase student achievement in reading."

With adoption of *LANGUAGE! Live*, Los Lunas Schools leaders are convinced they have found the right program to help close reading and writing gaps. Students are happier, reading scores are significantly improved, and teachers love using the program.

"We will continue to use *LANGUAGE! Live* because we continue to see great results with the students," Chavez said. "It's a win-win!"

LOS LUNAS SCHOOLS, NEW MEXICO

Year	Schools	Students	Classes	Days/Time Per	Population
2013-14	14	322	54	5 days 45 min	SPED
2014-15	15	448	56	5 days 30-45 min	SPED
2015-16	14	430	33	5 days 30-45 min	SPED



Sustained Growth After Three Years of Using *LANGUAGE! Live*

Students at Los Lunas Schools in New Mexico are gaining about 1.6 years in one academic year during the first year of implementation, and about 1.9 years in the next two years of implementation, showing great growth and consistency of implementation for students.

Scammacca, N.K., Fall, A., & Roberts, G. (2015). Benchmarks for expected annual academic growth for students in the bottom quartile of the normative distribution. *Journal of Research on Educational Effectiveness*, 8, 366-379.



Contact Us to Schedule a Consultation:

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