

The LETRS journey for Enid Public Schools began in 2015 with the introduction of 33 educators to LETRS Classic. Since then, we have trained approximately one hundred educators each year. Training groups include classroom teachers, interventionists, instructional coaches, administrators, and district coordinators. In 2019 we transitioned to LETRS 3rd Edition with a cadre of elementary principals. While LETRS training has been a district effort for a few years, we knew that increasing our success depended on my colleagues and I leading the way. When asked why LETRS implementation has been successful, one principal responded, “My teachers have been more successful understanding how students learn to read after attending LETRS training. It has made our PLC conversations richer digging into why certain students are struggling and helping pinpoint what their needs are. It has changed (especially in the early childhood grades) how sounds and letters are introduced and taught. It has been a game changer for my teachers.”

Enid Public Schools currently has 175 educators at varying stages of LETRS training. A majority are in Volume 1, refreshing learning from second edition, or beginning their LETRS journey. Our leadership cadre is ready to begin Volume 2. Due to the pandemic and extensive instructional problem solving needed this year, we’ve had to delay our start, but we are eager to continue LETRS next fall. We’re additionally working to develop a leadership team of local LETRS trainers. Sustaining our training means growing and developing a team dedicated to working with future LETRS participants. We currently have three local LETRS trainers who have successfully led training groups this year. We intend to add to that team as participants complete Volume 1 in May 2021.

Through growing knowledge of LETRS and the best practices in the science of reading, we’ve changed assessment protocols, intervention practices, and curriculum materials. One principal noted, “LETRS literacy professional learning has shifted the thinking of our staff for instruction and intervention. LETRS has been the driving force behind new curriculum that we have implemented and the language of LETRS has now changed the conversation during our PLCs. Teachers are using the scope and sequence to assess students and provide appropriate instruction and intervention for them. We have aligned our intervention so that it supports what is being taught in the classroom.”

We administer a universal screener which shows both achievement and growth rates of students. Adequate growth means students are progressing at an appropriate or higher than appropriate rate as compared to assessment norms. To determine the quantifiable impact that LETRS and our science of reading implementation has had on student growth, we pulled data from 2018-2019, the year before we began our science of reading efforts, and 2020-2021, two years into our implementation. The table below shows our progress.

| Grade Level | 2018-2019 Before SOR Implementation | 2020-2021 Year 2 of SOR Implementation |
|-------------|---|---|
| | Percentage of students showing adequate growth according to universal screening | Percentage of students showing adequate growth according to universal screening |
| 1st | 64% | 94% |
| 2nd | 65% | 81% |
| 3rd | 69% | 100% |

While we have gains to make in achievement, we are very encouraged by and excited about our growth. More students are making progress now than were before our science of reading implementation.

In addition to this quantitative data, we surveyed teachers to gather anecdotal data about what LETRS has meant in their classrooms. One teacher stated, “My first experience with LETRS was three years ago. I was involved in an eye opening four day training session. I soaked in as much as I could. I utilized phoneme grapheme mapping and other interactive vocabulary strategies. More recently, I have been involved in the new LETRS training where I am able to absorb the information and apply or reflect over what I have learned. Understanding how the brain processes the phonemes and transfers them to graphemes has made me more aware as a teacher. I know I have the tools to use when a child is not progressing. I know to look at a child’s phonemic awareness progress first. I know how to effectively use a sound wall and so do my students. I am thankful to work in a district that supports Science of Reading approved curriculums. It eases the difficult task of teaching new readers effectively.” Another noted, “Each week as I complete another session of LETRS I begin to notice new areas in reading instruction that I can address with individual students. Our district has chosen to use very effective assessments and curriculum that help us to provide explicit instruction where students need it. This is one of the best trainings I have ever been a part of.” Yet another teacher shared, “LETRS training transformed my spelling instruction (4th and 5th grade level). I learned how to use spelling tests to identify PA and phonics gaps. I learned how to tailor my PA warm-up to maximize the effectiveness of small group instruction.”

Our transformation in professional learning is ongoing. Specifically, at my site, 32 out of 34 faculty members are currently participating in LETRS training. LETRS has transformed our curriculum. One teacher summed it up well, “My school has implemented Wilson Foundations, Wilson Reading, and the Heggerty Phonemic Awareness Curriculum. This new curriculum that supports LETRS training helps give us the ability to apply our new knowledge of the teaching process and strategies we have learned.” The transformation to the science of reading has been evident as I observe in classrooms. Teachers have a better understanding of how to teach reading. Not only can teachers explain the why behind what they are teaching, the students can explain the why behind what they are learning. As I watch students engage in lessons, I can visibly see the connection from phonemic awareness to phonics to spelling to connected text. All of these observations make it clear to me that the science of reading is happening in our classrooms.