



Success by Third Grade

Unlocking Reading Success with Reynoldsburg Elementary School March 2026

In fall 2024, staff at Waggoner Road Elementary School in the Reynoldsburg City School District knew they needed to improve their performance in early literacy. They lagged other Reynoldsburg elementary schools and Waggoner Road's principal at the time, Stephanie Bland, recalls, "We had really poor results on the fall English Language Arts MAP (Measurement of Academic Progress) tests, and we needed to do something."

Bland, teachers and teaching support and intervention coaches identified a lack of access to interactive, self-paced and engaging materials as one impediment to improved student success in reading and writing. They thought students may read and write more if each student could work at their own pace on an individualized Education Technology (EdTech) platform.

The district was already working with the Lexia EdTech literacy software, but not all students had access to it because the district had a limited number of licenses. Understanding the importance of mastering reading skills by the end of third grade, United Way's Success by Third Grade team agreed to collaborate with Waggoner Road by purchasing 111 Lexia software subscriptions for every third grader in the school. This would support in-classroom instruction with additional, self-paced reading and writing materials that students could

use in school and at home. Waggoner Road's current principal, Kayleigh Fowler, was the assistant principal last year and involved in the Lexia rollout. She said, "We thought expanding access to Lexia could address the skill gap."

With the subscriptions in hand by January 2025, Waggoner Road could focus on improving literacy among its third graders. Under Bland's leadership, the teacher coaches, Kelly Meddock and Erin Keane, started training teachers on how to successfully use Lexia to enhance classroom teaching and learning. The school then modified its school day to ensure all third graders had 15-minute concentrated sessions using Lexia from 8:15 to 8:30 a.m. every day.

Waggoner Road then shared information about Lexia with parents through a parent literacy night and linked to the Columbus Metropolitan Library system for additional access to reading materials and programs. Parents received access to the platform to monitor their child's progress and provide at-home assistance. Staff also began sending monthly reports to parents and set up incentives for students to reward Lexia use and reading progress through the school's Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) framework. Principal Fowler described these simple incentives, "Staff printed out Lexia certificates as students completed units to celebrate student

progress and meeting their goals. This was a part of changing the culture. They saw and felt the success.”

Bland said that these actions together triggered a “...virtuous cycle of success in reading.”

The results came quickly. The district observed that 63% of Waggoner Road third graders were meeting or exceeding Lexia usage time goals by the end of the 2024-2025 school year and English Language Arts Measurement of Academic Progress (MAP) scores quickly improved. MAP scores jumped most dramatically for students at the basic reading level; those who were scoring just below proficiency.

Then, in May 2025, Waggoner third graders took the Ohio English Language Arts assessment. Their hard work paid off as their diligent and consistent use of the EdTech software contributed to a 12 percentage point increase in students who scored proficient or better, from 42% to 54% proficiency. This increase was the largest improvement among the district’s seven elementary schools, and a clear outlier in Franklin County.

These excellent results contributed to Waggoner Road achieving a four-star (of five) rating on the Progress Component of the 2024-2025 state report card and 3.5 stars overall. This is significant growth. In addition, Waggoner Road surpassed other schools in Reynoldsburg in early grade literacy, which was a source of pride for Waggoner Road’s administrators, teachers, students and parents.

The Reynoldsburg City School District was impressed by these results. Reynoldsburg’s director of curriculum and instruction, Alyse Clark, noted, “When I look at [Waggoner Road] being able to make that kind of growth, I look at a few things because all schools have Lexia. Fidelity of usage comes to mind.”

The district was so impressed by these results that it has procured additional Lexia subscriptions for K-3 students and encourages other schools to modify their approaches for early grade reading to try to replicate Waggoner’s outstanding results. Principal Fowler has noticed the impact of universal access to Lexia this year, “The younger [students] have seen some excellent numbers and were able to show

tremendous growth. I am excited that the district decided that all primary grade (K-3) students have access to this program.”

This close collaboration between the Reynoldsburg City School District, parents, students, the Columbus Metropolitan Library and Success by Third Grade has produced several lessons learned:

1. Those closest to an issue, in this case teachers, teacher coaches and the principal, are best positioned to identify the specific challenges and solutions.
2. The well-structured and consistent implementation plan for using the EdTech literacy and reading software including daily 15-minute sessions, work in groups and teacher follow-up with students benefited Waggoner’s third graders substantially.
3. Training and supporting teachers on how to effectively use Lexia was vital to success.
4. Many people, including teachers, parents, the library system and nonprofit staff, can work together to support student success in early literacy.
5. While Waggoner made good progress, all Waggoner Road students are now poised to make even more progress as they will have access to Lexia for the whole school year.

Success by Third Grade is a collective impact movement that works with school districts, nonprofit partners, communities and local governments in Franklin County, Ohio, to support every child to read at or above grade level by third grade. Serving as the backbone organization for Success by Third Grade, United Way of Central Ohio partners closely with six school districts to address academic and nonacademic barriers to student success. Success by Third Grade has worked with Reynoldsburg City Schools since 2023.

Learn more about Success by Third Grade at:

<https://liveunitedcentralohio.org/what-we-do/success-by-third-grade/> and

<https://liveunitedcentralohio.org/what-we-do/sbtg-dashboard/>.