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CASE STUDY

Washington Local School District Toledo, Ohio

Washington Local School District is located in Lucas County in Toledo, Ohio. The Washington Local School District covers 17 square miles in Toledo, Ohio, serving approximately 6,800 students at seven elementary schools, two single-grade junior highs, and a comprehensive high school campus. Washington Local's mission is to "cultivate empathy, integrity, communication, adaptability, lifelong learning, and critical thinking in our students by championing safe and inspiring schools."

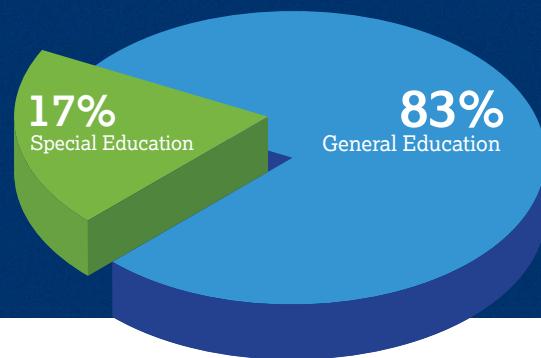


6,800+ STUDENTS

361 EDUCATORS

11 SCHOOLS

The district's mission is "Every Student Matters. Every Moment Counts."



CHALLENGE

Dr. Kadee Anstadt became Superintendent of Washington Local Schools in 2019. Almost immediately, she recognized a need for elevated reading instruction in her district. Since 2014, teachers had been using an array of resources in their classrooms to elevate low reading scores. Some were using Teacher Pay Teachers, along with samples from different companies. With the help of her team of educators and administrators in the district, she recognized a need for a standardized approach to teaching reading so that each student could carry the same foundational skills from grade to grade.

"We needed a systemic approach. I appreciate systems and having common language, especially when you have multiple schools and grades. When it comes down to something as important as foundational skills, we have to have a system and standard so that each student receives an equitable education. We really needed to be able to say that this is static across schools and grades."

Dr. Kadee Anstadt
Superintendent, Washington Local School District

Anstadt, along with Molly Chamberlin, Washington Local’s Curriculum Consultant and former literacy coach who joined the district in 2020, Katie Spenthoff, Curriculum Director, several other key team members and administrators, set out to find an approach that could be applied to the entire district and create consistency in the education of the district’s students.

The 2022 Nation’s Report Card revealed that about one-third of Ohio school districts did not meet statewide standards for early literacy. This gap in learning has not gone unrecognized. Ohio legislators are now beginning to implement significant changes in state legislation around reading instruction.

As a result of the recent multi-million dollar education budget proposal by Governor Mike DeWine, districts across Ohio are now pushing to get teachers trained in the Science of Reading – but thanks to Anstadt, Chamberlin, and the dedicated staff of educators in their district, Washington Local has been ahead of the curve.

SOLUTION

In 2013, Anstadt and Chamberlin were introduced to Helen Brandon, Training Consultant and Instructor at IMSE at a previous district. In 2019, Director of Curriculum Katie Spenthoff began facilitating IMSE OG training with the support of Anstadt. At first, the

district was focused on training interventionists and reading specialists in Tier 2. When Chamberlin joined the team in 2020, training progressively moved to include all K-3 teachers. The training began with just three-day sessions, but it wasn’t long before educators in the district started asking for more and began completing the full five-day training.

“Before we trained our teachers in OG, we didn’t have a strong methodology or professional development for our teachers on how to teach foundational skills. If students weren’t making gains, before IMSE, we didn’t have a method for helping students with decoding and encoding. This approach is necessary for many students, but good for all.”

Katie Spenthoff

Curriculum Director, Washington Local School District

In the fall of 2021, Chamberlin was invited to a 6th-grade classroom to teach fluency skills. After conducting a DIBELS assessment, she learned that the students were reading 45-65 words per minute and struggling to decode words. For two days a week for the entirety of the school year, Chamberlin taught using her knowledge from OG about decoding

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“We invest in people, not programs. This is a people investment.”

Dr. Kadee Anstadt

Superintendent, Washington Local School District



multisyllabic words. In March of 2022, she began introducing fluency training and rereading passages.

After three years of training, Washington Local now has the majority of its primary staff trained in IMSE's OG, with about 75 teachers having completed training. With the help of IMSE, as well as LETRS and several other tools, Washington Local has taken steps to integrate the Science of Reading into the core curriculum of its K-3 classrooms. In the district, Tier 1 students are receiving Orton-Gillingham as a core phonics foundation in grades K-2. Many teachers in the district also use Orton-Gillingham as a supplement for phonics and morphology. In Tier 2 and 3, students receive Orton-Gillingham in correspondence with other resources.

Within the district, Greenwood Elementary has been a model school for Orton-Gillingham. With the help and support of principal, Bill Colon, along with a team of inspiring educators, the school saw an immense improvement in early literacy.

"It's really important to have leadership behind you. We continue to educate each other," said Chamberlin. "Having a strong leader in the building really helped Greenwood stand out."

Brandon returns to the district several times a year for professional development days where teachers are given refresher training to build on skills they developed in their initial training. She continues to train new cohorts of teachers as they enter the district.

The district plans to hold training this summer and fall. Washington Local also continually provides training to special education teachers to meet state legislation and ensure they have the proper resources for their students.

The district monitors the progress of students through periodic assessments and teacher observation, all showing positive momentum. Next year, the district plans to implement DIBELS assessments to track the improvement of students.

"Our children are back on target and growing," said Chamberlin.

RESULTS

Today, every K-2 teacher in the district has been trained in OG, with the majority of 3rd-grade and reading interventionists also having received the training. The district is in a good place to contend with new dyslexia laws in Ohio, which require all K-1 teachers to be trained by 2023 and all 2nd and 3rd-grade teachers by 2024. It also aligns with Gov. DeWine's new budget proposal to get the Science of Reading into all of Ohio's public schools.

At the end of the 2022 school year, Chamberlin conducted the DIBELS assessment on the 6th grade class where she had spent the year implementing Orton-Gillingham in the form of decoding and found that **every child doubled or tripled their scores.**

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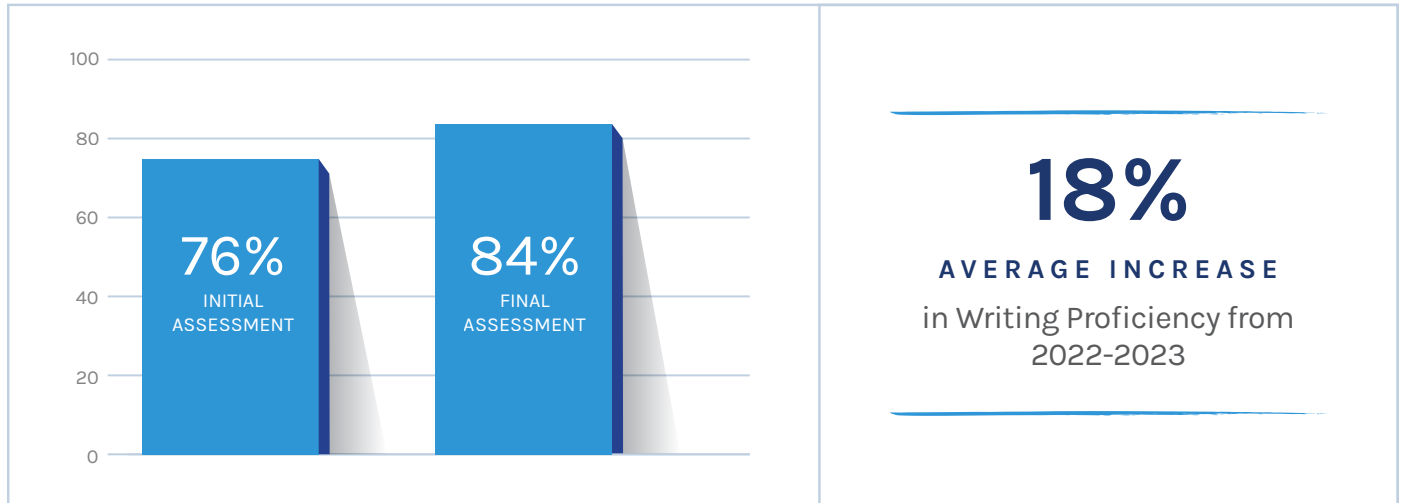
“I have seen tremendous growth in reading. I love this program, and utilizing it in all areas (Tier 1, 2, 3) has really helped.”

Teacher

Washington Local School District



Districtwide 1st-Grade Writing Proficiency '22-'23



“They were in awe of themselves,” said Chamberlin.

The majority of teachers at Washington Local immediately embraced the new instructional approach and recognized the undeniable impact Orton-Gillingham has on the growth of their students.

One teacher said, “IMSE has done a wonderful job with the OG+ (I’ve actually been trained on the classic version in the early 1990s - a couple times now... so many great changes that make the product less clunky! Loving the teacher’s manual as well! Very helpful. Thank you for your hard work and for asking us to share our thoughts and dreams!”

“We invest in people, not programs. This is a people investment. When we invest in this kind of knowledge base, the benefits last forever. When it comes down to something as important as foundational skills, we have to have a system and standard so that each student receives an equitable education.”

Dr. Kadee Anstadt

Superintendent, Washington Local School District



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ABOUT IMSE

IMSE is an education pioneer and the leading provider of Structured Literacy solutions based on the Science of Reading that incorporates the Orton-Gillingham methodology and all five pillars of literacy to empower teachers from day one.

Institute for Multi-Sensory Education

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Contact info@imse.com to learn more about our work with school districts around the country.