



OAKLAND UNIFIED
SCHOOL DISTRICT
Community Schools, Thriving Students

Ensuring Strong Readers by the Third Grade



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Ensuring Strong Readers by the Third Grade

No work we do is more important than making sure that our youngest students learn how to read and write.

That's why OUSD prioritized **Ensuring Strong Readers by the Third Grade** and selected Early Literacy as a major focus of our Strategic Plan back in 2021. Our students need a strong foundation in reading, writing, listening, and speaking to ensure a successful start to their education, and to carry on their success through high school graduation and beyond.

Developing students into skilled readers builds their confidence, sparks curiosity, and leads to a brighter future, both inside and outside the classroom. Below are several strategies we have implemented across the District to support early literacy:

- Implementing evidence-based literacy curriculum
- Supporting our educators with time, professional development, and coaching to improve our literacy instruction
- Strengthening our partnership with families in support of their children's reading progress
- Investing in proven and innovative models of literacy supports like one-to-one tutoring and small group tutoring
- Working with partners across the city to collaborate toward ensuring that we reach our literacy grade-level proficiency goals

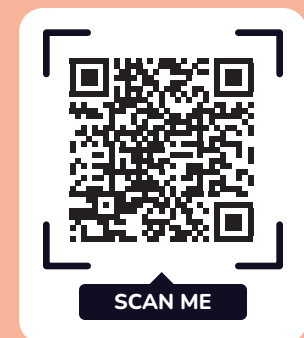
Read on to learn more about how our schools are finding ways to grow literacy outcomes and close gaps for historically marginalized groups of students.

Key Literacy Term Definitions



From Struggle To Strength - Advancing Literacy in Oakland

"From Struggle to Strength: Advancing Literacy in Oakland" is a 20-minute documentary highlighting the urgent need for literacy support in Oakland schools. It showcases the transformative impact of personalized tutoring, revealing powerful stories of student success and the importance of improving reading proficiency for a brighter future. Watch our Video on YouTube →



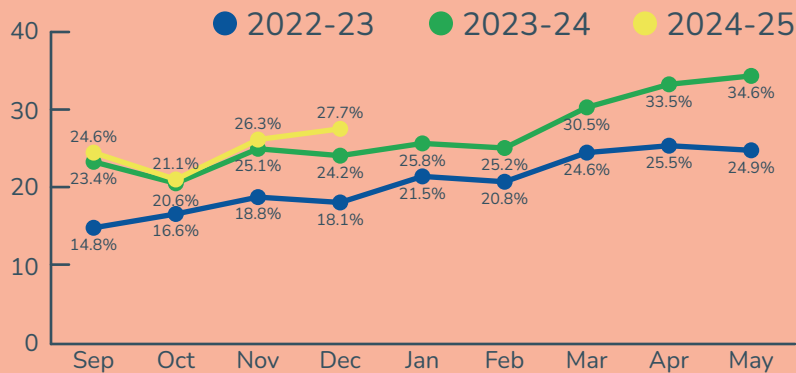
Ensuring Strong Readers by the Third Grade

Data Tells The Story

- 100% of Literacy coaches who attended Coaching Collaborative sessions in August, September and October reported that the sessions supported them in improving their practice as TSAs (teachers on special assignment)
- First Graders are continuing to improve in their phonics and decoding abilities, or in other words, their ability to read words by understanding the connection between letters and the sounds they represent.
 - Between December 2023 and December 2024, 3.5% more first graders were at or above grade-level in these abilities (as measured by SIPPS Mastery Tests). 27.7% of first graders in 2024 vs. 24.2% of first graders at the same point in time in 2023.
- Kindergarten students are also improving their literacy skills, specifically mastering their letter names earlier in the school year.
 - In December 2024, 80% of Kindergarten students knew 20 or more English lowercase letters, compared to 77.6% of Kindergarten students in December of 2023.

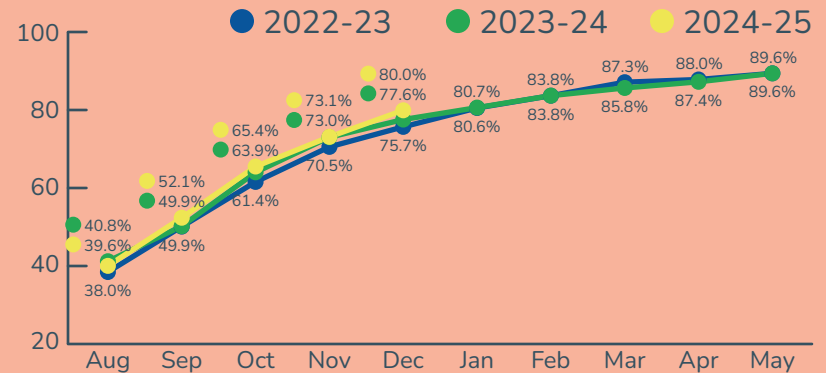
Grade 1

Percent of Students at Benchmark SIPPS



Kinder Letter ID

Percent Students Who Know 20 or More English Lowercase





Ensuring Strong Readers by the Third Grade

Data Tells The Story

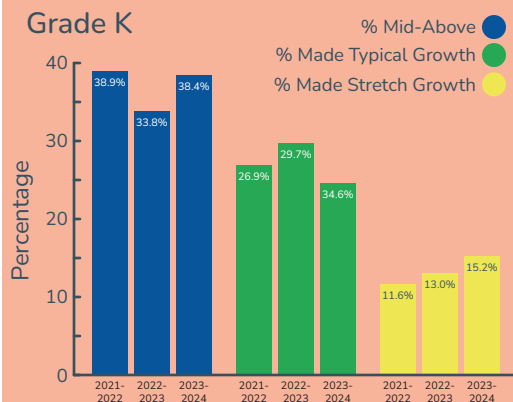
Our i-Ready data, which measures a student's performance in foundational skills like phonics, vocabulary, and comprehension, also highlights the progress made by our Kindergarten, 1st and 2nd grade students in terms of proficiency and growth over the last year.

Spring 2023-Spring 2024 Proficiency and Growth

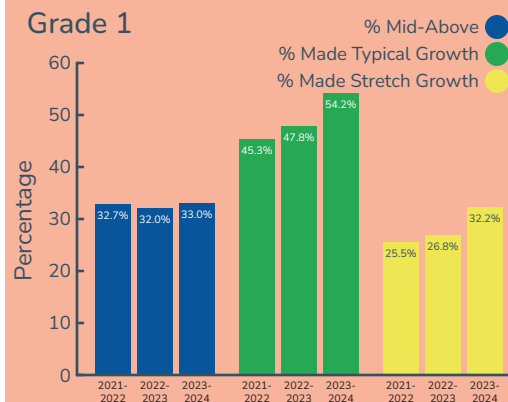
Grade	i-Ready Reading Proficiency			i-Ready Reading Growth		
	% Mid-Above Spring 2023	% Mid-Above Spring 2024	% Change Mid-Above Spring 2023 to 2024 (pp)	% of Students Meeting Typical Growth Fall-Spring 2022-23	% of Students Meeting Typical Growth Fall-Spring 2023-24	% Change Students Meeting Typical Growth (pp)
K	33.8%	38.4%	+4.6%	29.7%	34.6%	+6.7%
1	32.0%	33.0%	+1.0%	47.8%	54.2%	+6.4%
2	30.5%	31.1%	+0.6%	54.7%	58.9%	+4.2%

iReady Diagnostic Reading

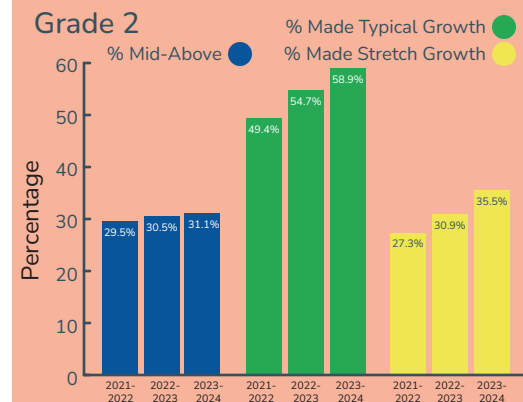
Spring Mid-Above & Fall-Spring Growth 3 Year Comparison



7.7% pp increase in Grade K % Typical Growth since 2021-22



8.9% pp increase in Grade 1 % Typical Growth since 2021-22



9.5% pp increase in Grade 2 % Typical Growth since 2021-22

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School Spotlight

Burckhalter Elementary School



The Burckhalter Elementary School community is doing phenomenal work having leveraged district investments in curriculum, professional development, tiered supports, and assessment systems to greatly improve literacy over the past several years. Literacy work at Burckhalter features a highly collaborative and trusting culture, shared ownership of curriculum implementation, consistent schedules and routines, and a daily foundational skill block that utilizes various staff positions to provide small group instruction.



The Burckhalter team and students were celebrated this Fall at the launch of Steph and Ayesha Curry's Eat. Learn. Play. Multi-million dollar investment in high dosage tutoring for students in OUSD. Several Burckhalter students receive one-on-one, intensive foundational skills tutoring daily due to the generous contribution of Eat. Learn. Play.



In the years of in-person learning post pandemic, Burckhalter students made significant progress on i-Ready, OUSD's diagnostic screening assessment. Burckhalter's median student made 134%, 108%, and 112% of typical growth in 2021-22, 2022-23, and 23-2024 respectively, outpacing OUSD schools and national averages. Further, all grades 1st through 5th made above-average growth!

Burckhalter has also seen improvement on SBAC English Language Arts, the state assessment taken by all 3rd - 8th graders, moving the distance from standard (DFS) closer to grade level for students rising



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School Spotlight

from grades 3 to 4 and 4 to 5. The **Core Districts** publish a growth metric which accounts for demographic factors and compares impact on student performance across schools in California. Burckhalter was one of 8 OUSD schools designated as “high growth” in 2022-23, landing in the 73rd percentile (50th percentile = average growth).

This past year, Burckhalter continued this trend of strong literacy progress, placing among our top 6 schools for the percentage of their students meeting typical growth goals. Fifth grade in particular has shown outstanding growth, and students are now exiting Burckhalter more literate than they were pre-pandemic. Over 40% of students met or exceeded the standard in 2022-23 and in 2023-24 as compared to 14% of students in the last year prior to Covid (**California School Dashboard**, CDE).

These consistent gains have been made within the context of extremely challenging times. Due to a number of environmental factors, the pandemic and labor actions, chronic absenteeism in 2023 skyrocketed at Burckhalter to over 72%, almost 3 times

the state average (Chronic absenteeism is defined by the percentage of students with an absence rate greater than 10%). As such, one would not expect Burckhalter students to be outpacing the district and national averages for literacy growth over the past few years, but they are! We congratulate Burckhalter students, families and staff on these tremendous gains.

In May, 2024, dozens of education leaders from across the country converged on Burckhalter Elementary School to learn about the work happening at Burckhalter and across the district. The visit was hosted by the William Julius Wilson Institute at the Harlem Children’s Zone.

Discussions were focused on Oakland’s community schools model which leverages community partnerships and resources so schools become hubs of support and opportunity for students, families, and community members. These partnerships have been proved crucial for literacy recovery and acceleration at Burckhalter. Dr. Carin Geathers, Burckhalter Principal explained how the pandemic dramatically increased the need for all schools to offer more support, which is what Burckhalter

did in the community schools model. “It really hit home and it really forced us inside of schools, inside of classrooms, and actually helping inside of homes, to really foster what it means for folks to actually thrive in a social emotional way.”



The Burckhalter Team hosted Geoffrey Canada and the William Julius Wilson Institute with the Harlem Children’s School Zone in May 2024.



Ensuring Strong Readers by the Third Grade

Community Partner Impact

The **Eat. Learn. Play.** and **Kenneth Rainin** foundations have been essential philanthropic partners in our efforts to improve students' literacy outcomes and build out our Multi-Tiered Supports Strategy (MTSS).

Eat. Learn. Play., Steph and Ayesha Curry's foundation, announced a 25 million dollar investment in foundational literacy intervention during an August event earlier this year. This investment will support our tier 2 and tier 3 supports and help OUSD provide 1:1 high dosage tutoring to students who demonstrate the need for additional targeted support. They have also supported us with external evaluation to analyze the impact of our tiered support programs.

The Kenneth Rainin Foundation continues to invest deeply in bolstering our capacity to support schools with their literacy programs by funding central Early Literacy Coaches. This investment comes after several years of investment in our early literacy tutor program, coaching and PLCs for tutors, and central leadership.

Additionally, The Oakland REACH and Collaborative Classroom have been essential community partners in our Tier 2 Literacy Liberator programming support, providing our Early Literacy tutors with professional learning and coaching support. They have also partnered with us on unique recruitment and retention strategies, such as the Literacy Liberator Fellowship.

The Oakland Literacy Coalition is another community partner that has continued to be a strong advocate for aligning the Oakland literacy ecosystem. The team supported us with launching our External OUSD Literacy Partner partnership process in October and has been meeting with supplemental providers to help them make shifts to ensure that their direct to student support aligns with the OUSD language and literacy framework and OUSD's curriculum.

OUSD Multi-Tiered Supports Strategy

TIER 1 - All Students

- Daily 1-hour Core Literacy Block - Standards-based tasks from core curriculum (EL Ed/Benchmark) and EL Ed Labs or ALL Block for English only programs
- K-2 Daily Foundational Skills and designated Daily ELD (ideally grouped by language proficiency)
- iReady Reading MyPath (45-60 minutes/ week, 70% passing) and aligned independent work daily
- Communication with all families on progress toward grade level standards
- All teachers receive coaching on curriculum implementation

TIER 2 - Students Performing at 1 Grade Level Below

- Daily 30 minutes differentiated SIPPS and/or Bookshop Fonética small group instruction
- Teacher assigns and monitors i-Ready/ASR Lessons based on student needs
- Small group language intervention (Newcomer and language support)
- More frequent progress monitoring (2x-3x per month)

TIER 3 - Students Performing at 2+ Grades Levels Below

- Provide 1:1 or smaller group multi-sensory literacy support (e.g Ignite/Open Literacy/Hoot tutoring)
- Provide 1:1 support additional dosage of targeted SIPPS routines based on need
- Ongoing parent communication about progress between parent meetings



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Key Insights

Our students are showing progress in literacy! We see an increase in the percentage of students who are at or above grade-level on their foundational skills curriculum assessments (SIPPS mastery tests) and their letter identification assessments. We also saw an increase in the percentage of students who were meeting their typical growth goals in literacy from the 2022-23 school year to the 2023-24 school year in our reading diagnostic, i-Ready. Although we are seeing signs of progress as stated, we have yet to move the needle significantly in our reading proficiency data. We know that this will take time, improving our attendance rates, stabilizing our teaching force, continuing our focus on coaching as well as professional learning and improving the quality of our literacy instruction so that students meet their literacy goals year after year.

Our focus on coaching has received positive feedback. In our Coaching Collaborative sessions, professional learning led by central literacy experts to support site based literacy coaches, we have had 100% of our site based coaches agree or strongly agree that the sessions this Fall supported them in their literacy leadership. We believe that improving our literacy coaching is a necessary strategy to deepen our curriculum implementation and improve classroom instruction.

We expanded our Tiered Literacy support for students through 1:1 high dosage literacy tutoring. We launched a pilot last year in 18 schools serving about 600 students and increased the number this school year to about 1400 students in 33 schools. An external evaluation conducted by Public Profit showed strong overall reading growth by students receiving T3 tutoring compared to a cohort matched group that did not receive tutoring.

We have also worked to ensure that all of our community partners that serve students and focus on literacy are aligned to our vision, Language and Literacy framework, and curriculum. In October, we launched an external literacy partner partnership process.



