



Teaching and Learning

newsletter

Fall 2026

LOOK AT WHAT YOU DID!

Before we dive into a new year, can we pause for a minute and look at what you accomplished? Since 2023, 131 fewer K-3 students are reading below grade level. One hundred thirty-one! That progress reflects teachers, interventionists, and paraeducators studying the evidence, adjusting instruction, and relentlessly focusing on what each student needs.

BIG DEAL!

WORD ORIGINS

LITERACY FOR THE YEARS AHEAD

UFLI helped us build a strong early-literacy foundation. Word Origins is the next step. It teaches students how English words are built, not only how they sound. Students study meaningful word parts and relationships while strengthening reading, spelling, vocabulary, and writing.



HERE IS THE PLAN

Grades 3-5: the new word-study curriculum for all students.

Grade 6: ELA students will use Word Origins this year.

Grades 3-12 special education and intervention: targeted use to close foundational literacy gaps with materials that respect the age of the learner.

Here is what I love about this: students will hear the same language and move through a connected sequence across grades. When a student has a gap, we can identify it more precisely and respond without handing an older student materials that feel like they belong in first grade.

WORD ORIGINS PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

August 31, 8:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.
Saltar's Point Elementary
ProDev Course 849. Register by August 30.

A lot of words. A lot of practical ideas. Bring your curiosity.



CAN WE TALK ABOUT THIS?

131

fewer K-3 students reading below grade level than in 2023

38%

districtwide reduction in students reading below grade level

THAT IS A BIG DEAL.

MORE TO BUILD ON

Preliminary results give us bright spots: SHS ELA stands at 80%, SHS math at 47%, district grade 5 science at 68%, and Pioneer grade 8 science at 51%. Those strengths give us practices to study, share, and build on.

Preliminary state results are based on raw scores. Finalized data will be available in mid-October.

AN EDUCATOR'S WORK IS NEVER DONE.

These results tell us the work is making a difference. We celebrate the progress, learn from it, and keep moving. Then we ask who still needs us to respond differently.



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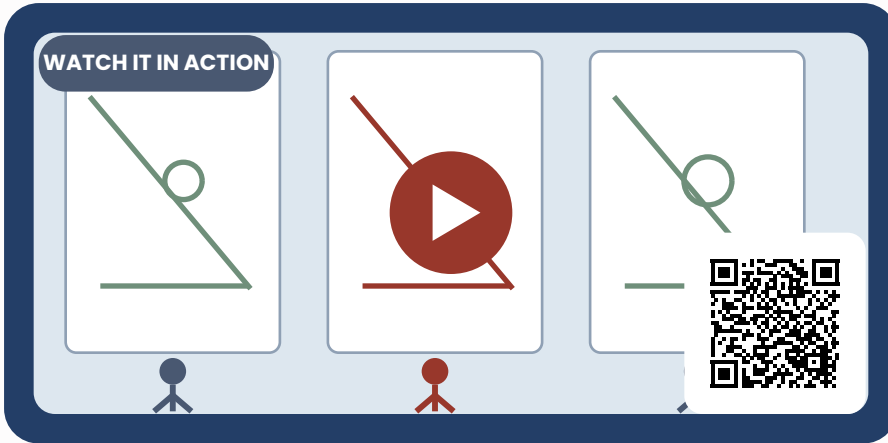
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LET'S GET STUDENTS DOING THE THINKING!



If you have ever asked a great question and watched the same three hands go up, this is for you!



A quick look at real classroom practice.

Building Thinking Classrooms is not about turning your room upside down overnight. It starts with three smart shifts: a task worth thinking about, visibly random groups, and students working on vertical non-permanent surfaces. When thinking is visible, more students participate and we can respond to what they actually understand.

Try one move. Watch what happens. Bring what you notice to your PLC. That is how this becomes practice instead of one more thing we learned in August.

KEEPING THE GOOD STUFF GOING

Last year, many of you took a risk and tried Be GLAD strategies in secondary classrooms. Students had more ways to talk, process, read, write, and show what they knew.

This year, we will keep building that work around academic language, structured interaction, and access to grade-level content. It is especially helpful for multilingual learners and, honestly, it is good teaching for a whole lot of students.

Interested? Contact
Dr. Vallieres

TRY A BTC STRATEGY. THINKING GOES BEYOND MATH.

Thinking belongs everywhere. Start small, notice who joins the thinking, and build from there.

1 A TASK WORTH THINKING ABOUT

Choose something with more than one entry point. Let students puzzle before you rescue them.

TRY IT. WATCH. REFINE.

2 VISIBLY RANDOM GROUPS

Random groups change status, widen participation, and keep the same students from always carrying the work.

TRY IT. WATCH. REFINE.

3 GET STUDENTS VERTICAL

Use whiteboards, windows, or another erasable surface. Standing and visible thinking change the conversation.

TRY IT. WATCH. REFINE.



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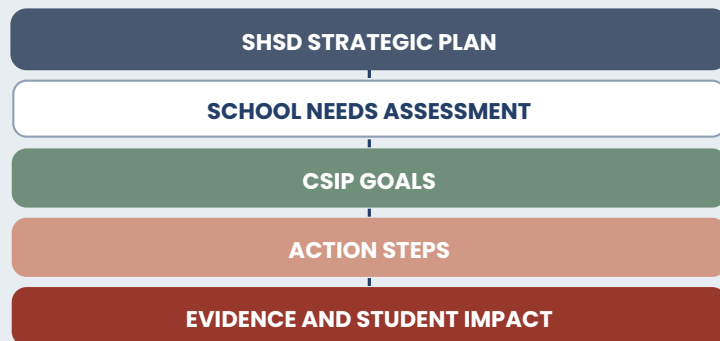
6 SCHOOLS. 1 MISSION.



This year, our new SHSD Strategic Plan becomes the throughline for every school, driving each CSIP goal and action step. It is not a district plan sitting on a shelf with the elf. It is the shared direction that moves six very different schools toward one mission: the best education for every student.

FROM PLAN TO IMPACT

August and September: staff study evidence, identify priorities, craft goals, and name the action steps together. Throughout the year: teams return to those steps, study the impact on students, and adjust the work.



SCHOOLINKS IS HERE

SchoolLinks is our new High School and Beyond Plan platform at Pioneer and SHS. Course planning, career exploration, graduation requirements, and postsecondary planning now live in one place.

Teachers will become acquainted with SchoolLinks before students arrive during our back to school training days.

The goal: a living plan students understand and use, not a checklist they finish at the end.

WHAT'S HAPPENING AROUND SHSD

Different plans. One very clear throughline: students.

ANDERSON ISLAND

Anchored in Excellence means digging into evidence, making sure every student is known, and bringing family voice into the plan.

CHERRYDALE

Chasing Edges means finding the next right step through data, scope and sequence, and Success Conferences with families.

CHLOE CLARK

i-Ready, Try-Discuss-Connect, and a joint K-2 literacy inquiry are putting student thinking and alignment front and center.

SALTAR'S POINT

Saltar's Point is jumping in with BTC, Word Origins, paraeducator supports, and clearer IEP accommodations and modifications.

PIONEER

The Power of Expectations anchors stronger PLCs, SchoolLinks, and the idea that literacy and math belong to every department.

STEILACOOM HIGH SCHOOL

MTSS, attendance, a data walk, BTC, and clearer PLC assessment agreements. That is a lot of alignment in one opening week!