



From Conversation to County-Wide Impact

How Partnership Sparked a Literacy Revolution in Phelps County



PHELPS COUNTY
COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

Phelps County Literacy Initiative

The Spark

One conversation
at the Summit

Shared urgency
around literacy

Rapid follow-up
and alignment

Strategic Partnerships

Aligning Education, Community, and Philanthropy to Drive Outcomes

A cross-sector coalition advancing early childhood, literacy, and workforce pathways across Missouri.



Building Trust



CONVENED ALL
SUPERINTENDENTS

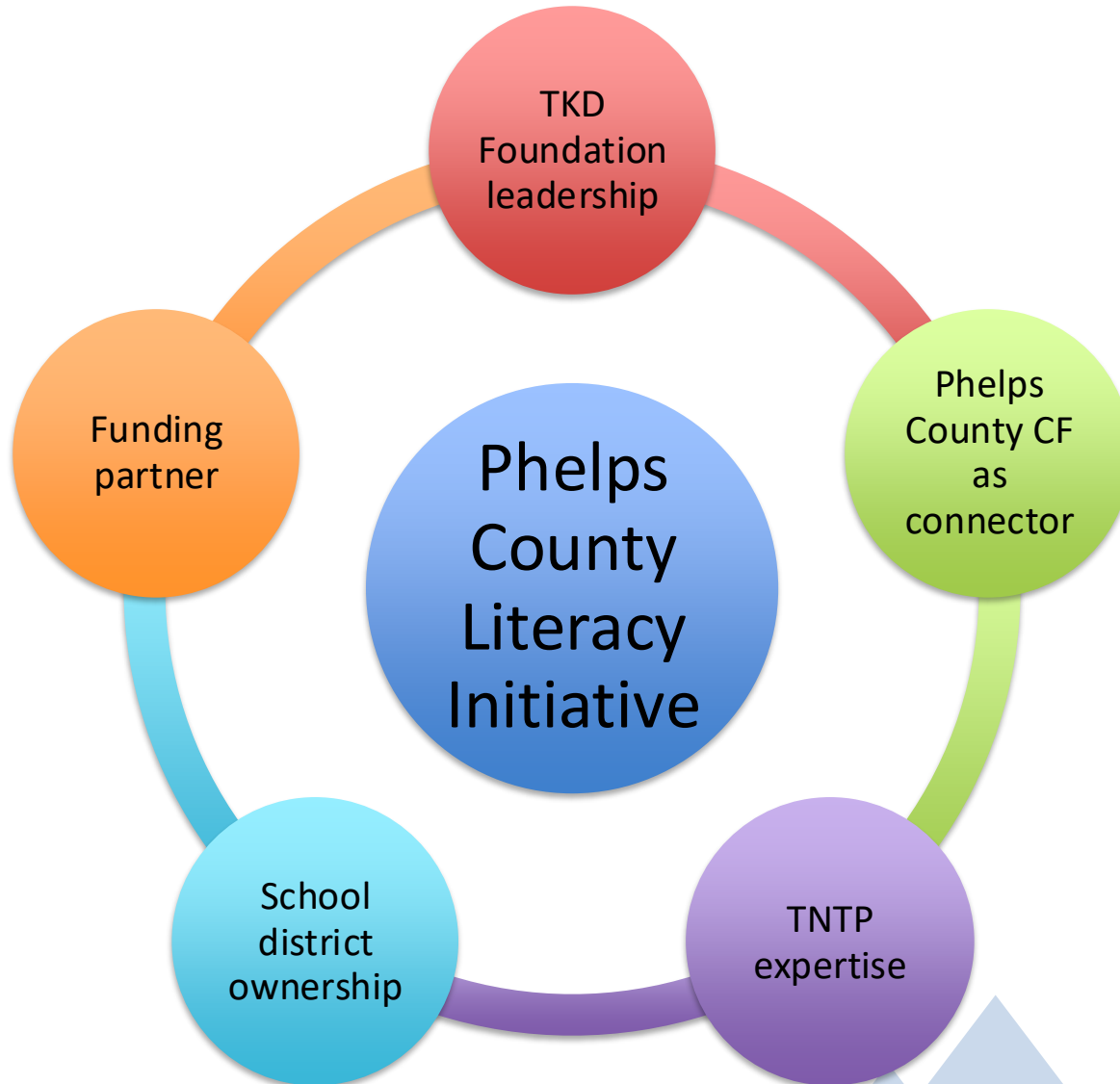


USED INTEREST
CONTRACTS



ENSURED CLARITY
AND COMMITMENT

Partnership Architecture





TNTP

**Missouri Schools
Early Literacy Collaborative**





Who We Are

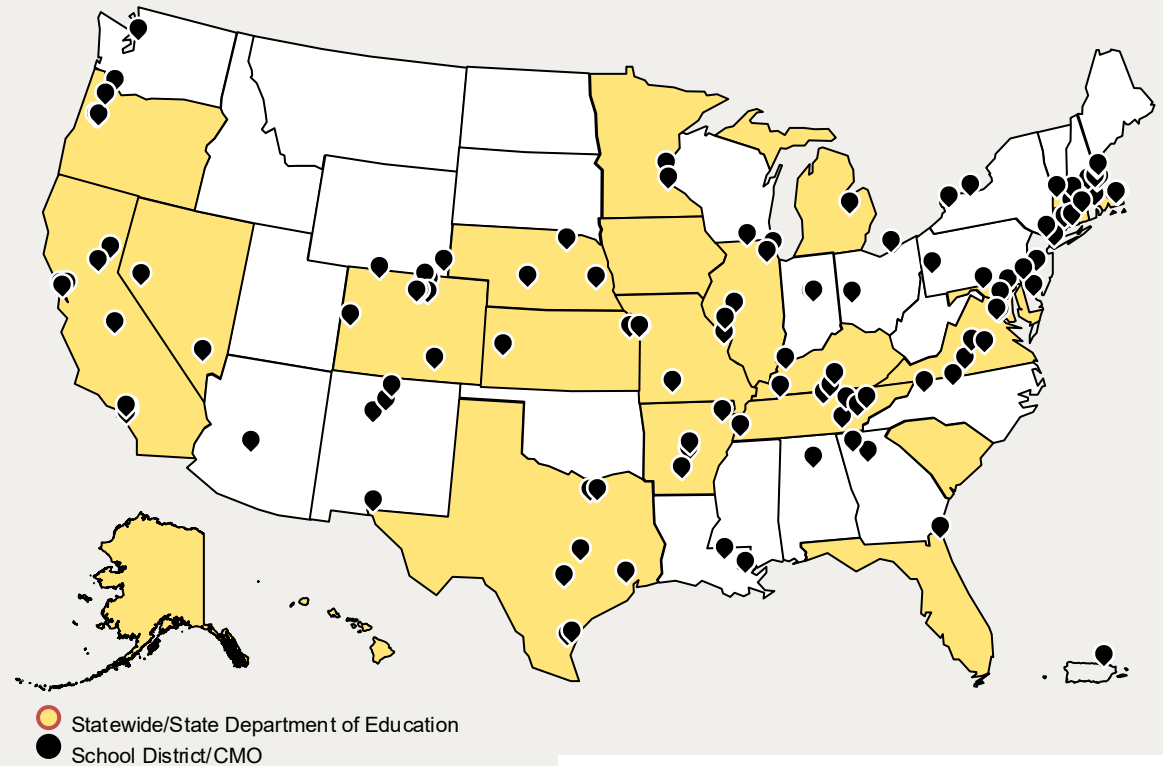
TNTP is a nationally recognized leader in education

Combining rigorous research, deep policy expertise, and hands-on consulting to ensure all young people have pathways to economic and social mobility.

A sixth-grade student beams after solving a difficult question.

Catalyzing Change in the Field

Twenty-eight years working inside schools and districts mean we understand how systems work and how change takes hold. Last year alone we partnered with 4,500 districts and 35,000 schools across 39 states, reaching over 18 million students—and we are poised to grow.



Current TNTP Partners, December 2025

What We Do

Education Consulting

We help school systems strengthen curriculum and instruction, build coherent student experiences, and connect learning to real-world skills and careers—creating learning environments that accelerate academic growth and future readiness.

Research, Policy, and Advocacy

We publish research, shape policy, and advocate for change that ensures all students can access high-quality learning and have multiple pathways to high-wage, in-demand careers.

Leadership Development and Talent Services

We help schools build future-ready teams who can drive instructional excellence, bridge the gap between education and career, and leverage emerging tools to transform outcomes for students.

Community Engagement and Coalition Building

We mobilize stakeholders to take action toward shared goals and build coalitions strong enough to reshape practice, shift policy, and redesign pathways.

Reading Proficiency by Third Grade:

A Critical Milestone

Students reading proficiently by this milestone (3rd Grade) are **five times more successful at achieving college and career readiness** compared to their non-proficient peers.³

96%

Ninety-six percent of children reading at grade level by the end of 3rd grade **graduate from high school on time.**

Positive Outcomes

Enhanced Academic Success: Children who read proficiently by third grade are more likely to excel in subsequent academic pursuits.

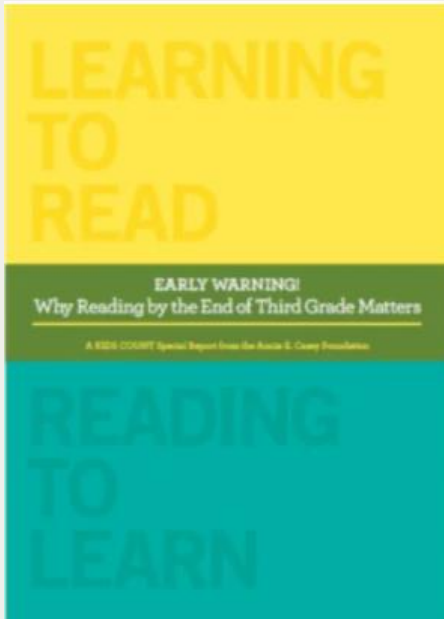
Higher High School Graduation Rates: Proficient third-grade readers are more likely to graduate from high school on time. Early reading skills set the stage for continued academic engagement and success, reducing the likelihood of dropping out.

Improved Economic Opportunities: Early reading proficiency is linked to better economic outcomes in adulthood. Individuals who develop strong reading skills early are more likely to pursue higher education and secure gainful employment, contributing positively to the economy.

Reduced Risk of Incarceration: There is a correlation between low literacy rates and higher incarceration rates. Ensuring children achieve reading proficiency by third grade can contribute to lower crime rates and reduced incarceration costs in the long term.

“Reading proficiently by the end of third grade can be a make-or-break benchmark in a child’s educational development.”

- The Annie E. Casey Foundation



- 75% of students who are poor readers in third grade **will remain** poor readers.
- Third graders who lack proficiency in reading are **four times more likely** to become high school dropouts.

Educational Attainment - Missouri Department of Corrections (2019)		
	Count	Percent
High School Diploma	2,777	10.9%
9-12th Grade	3,231	12.7%
6-8th Grade	7,514	29.6%
4-5th Grade	9,223	36.3%
0-3rd Grade	2,669	10.5%
Total	25,414	100%

Annie E. Casey Foundation. (2010). *Early warning! Why reading by the end of third grade matters.* https://assets.aecf.org/m/resourcedoc/AECE-Early_Warning_Full_Report-2010.pdf

Hernandez, D.J. (2012). *Double Jeopardy: How Third-Grade Reading Skills and Poverty Influence High School Graduation.* Baltimore: The Annie E. Casey Foundation.

OUR PROGRAM MODEL



Coach

Monthly coaching, in schools, with a literacy expert and bi-weekly virtual touchpoints.



Cohort

Quarterly virtual learning sessions with a cohort of like-minded teachers and leaders.



Capacity

Building walkthroughs and calibration with school-based administration and the SC RPDC to sustain the work.

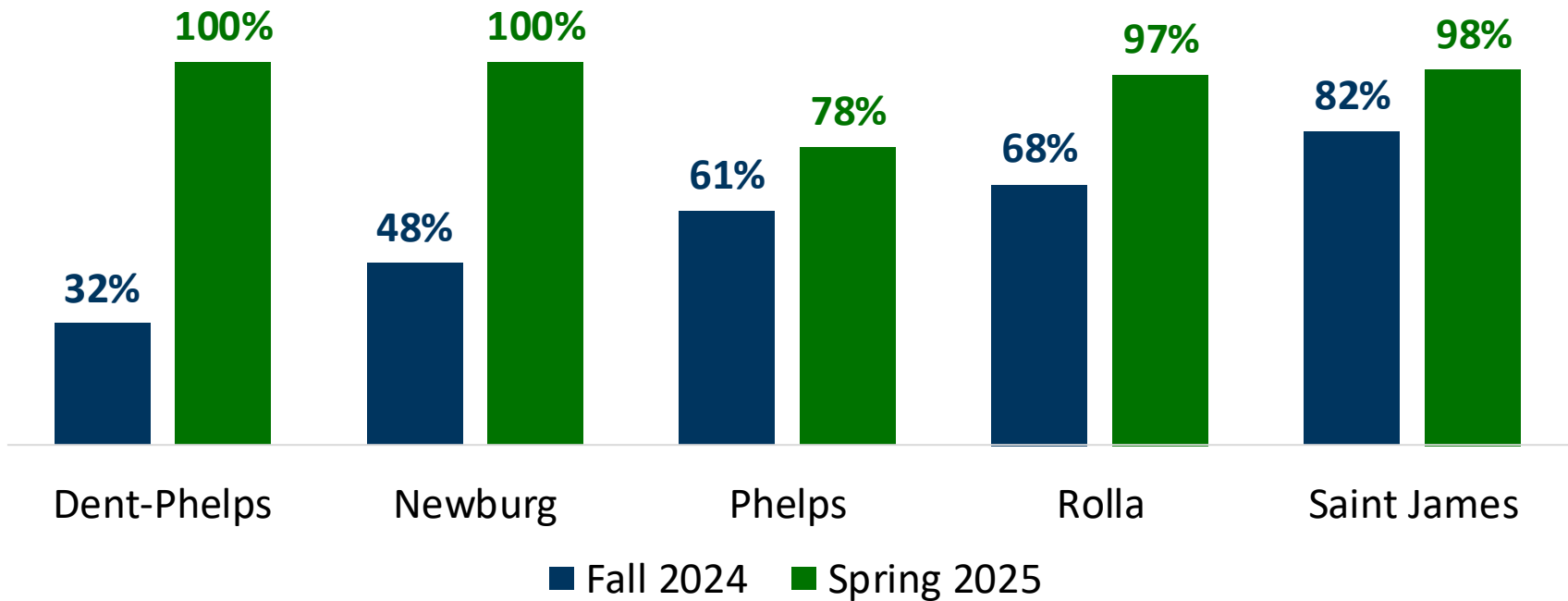


Certificate

Partner with Missouri S&T to develop a Literacy Coaching Certificate to help DESE scale the model across Missouri.



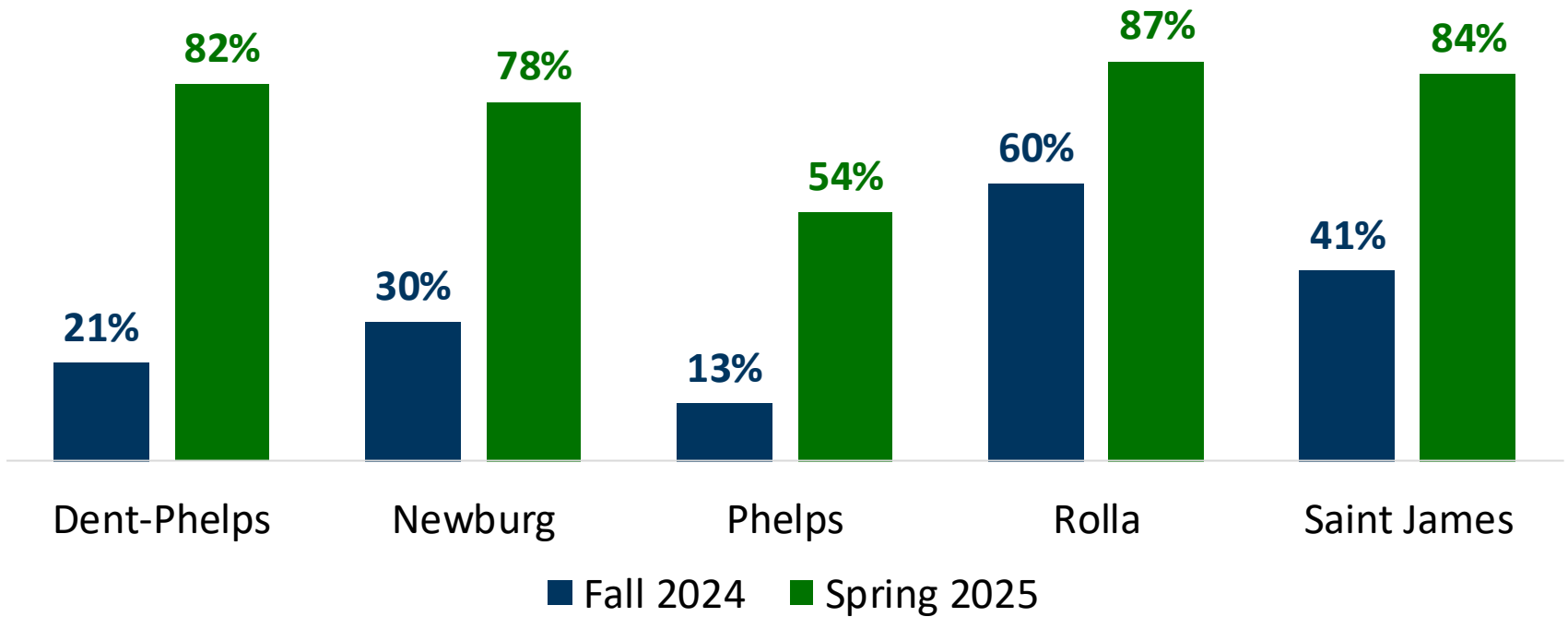
Kindergarten Students Reading At or Above Grade Level



As measured by STAR Early Literacy assessment in Newburg, Rolla, and Saint James.
As measured by iReady assessments in Dent-Phelps and Phelps



1st Grade Students Reading At or Above Grade Level



As measured by STAR Early Literacy assessment in Newburg, Rolla, and Saint James.
As measured by iReady assessments in Dent-Phelps and Phelps

Early Impact

Rapid K–1
reading gains

Instructional
consistency

Teacher
adoption

Sustainability

Capacity over programs

Philanthropy as partner

Scalable model

Key Takeaways



TNTP

- Relationships drive change
- Alignment is critical
- Invest in capacity
- Focus on early literacy

Connect with Panelists

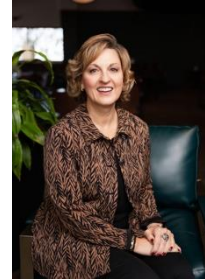
For follow-up or partnership questions



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