

Phoenix Charter Case Study: School-Wide Adolescent Literacy Transformation

THE CHALLENGE

50% of the high school student body (ages 14-22) were reading below a 5th grade level.

Despite dedicated literacy intervention, reading scores and engagement lagged among beginning readers.

“We had no idea how to teach fluency. That is not something you learn as a high school teacher.”

THE SOLUTION

Reading Intervention	Core Instruction
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Leveraged culturally inclusive content that centers the interests and identities of older students at a range of levels, replacing the remedial texts meant for young childrenIntroduced an intervention program that was crafted specifically for teens, which enabled educators to tackle decoding, fluency, and comprehension simultaneouslyEmpowered students to monitor their own reading progress and track growth over time	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Provided alignment and scaffolding to connect foundational skills practice coherently with core curriculum across every subject (ELA, social students, science, math) so students can learn rigorous grade level conceptsIncorporated a series of multi-media supports (audio, video, images, and more) so all students could learn concepts, regardless of reading levelHelped students develop strategies for tackling more complex texts
Hands-on Consulting	Professional Learning
<ul style="list-style-type: none">The partnership began with a deep needs assessment, which enabled the Storyshares team to provide Phoenix with:<ul style="list-style-type: none">Schedule adjustments to make room for literacy intervention during the school dayA model for reducing the student-teacher ratio to 6:1 for reading blocksSpecifically targeted instructional routinesOnsite visits, dynamic observations, data-driven feedback, and on-the-spot modeling	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Ensured all teachers (regardless of subject) had a basic understanding of phonics, decoding, fluency, and ways to support struggling readersAdded time for reading intervention teachers to share learnings on striving readers that were gained in smaller settingsEquipped teachers with differentiation strategies and comprehensive lessons to support readers of all different abilities

“We get books, training and ongoing coaching, a deep dive diagnostic visit, student workbooks, and teacher guides for every lesson. The program is completely integrated with what students are learning at the phonetic level. We just couldn't have done that on our own. We don't have the expertise. By partnering with Storyshares, we were able to actually get all the pieces of the puzzle.”

~ Josh Zoia, Head of School at Phoenix Charter Academy Chelsea