

reading  plus®

SUCCESS STORY

LINDSAY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT



COLLEGE & CAREER
READINESS

LINDSAY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Empowering and Motivating for Today and Tomorrow



LINDSAY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Lindsay, CA

9 LEARNING COMMUNITIES

- Lindsay High School
- J.J Cairns Continuation High School
- Loma Vista Charter/Community Day
- Jefferson Elementary
- Lincoln Elementary
- Washington Elementary
- Kennedy Elementary
- Roosevelt Elementary
- Reagan Elementary

Current # of High School Learners: 1,150

Lindsay Unified School District, which serves more than 4,000 learners, is located in California’s agriculturally rich San Joaquin Valley. Lindsay is a small, rural community and is home to a large population of immigrant families. Lindsay is composed of a high percentage of families living below the federal poverty level and many of the district’s learners come from migrant families who work in the surrounding fields and production areas. In 2007, the district began the work of transformation to better serve its learners and implemented the Performance Based System, a competency-based grading model that emphasizes mastery and personalizing in learning.

COLLEGE / CAREER READINESS		
Improved Graduation Rates		
	2011-2012	2012-2013
Lindsay Unified School District	74%	83%
Lindsay High School	79%	91%
J.J Cairns Continuation High School	74%	83%

- ▶ Five Years of District-Wide Academic Gains
- ▶ ELA Grade 9: LHS had an API Gain of 31 Points
- ▶ Increases in the Percentage of Learners on the Content Levels Consistent with Their Grade Level:
 - All Learners ELA: 7%
 - English Learners ELA: 6%
 - Migrant ELA: 9%
- ▶ Increases in the Percentage of Learners on the Content Levels Consistent with Their Grade Level (ELA Dual Immersion Program):
 - All Learners: 13%
 - English Learners: 16%
 - Migrant: 37%

“MASTERY AND COMPETENCE MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN LINDSAY”



AMALIA LOPEZ | LINDSAY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Amalia Lopez is a Curriculum and Instruction Specialist in Lindsay Unified School District. At the core of her work is the guiding belief that all learners can learn if all educators are willing, all opportunities are present, and if learners are empowered to take control of their learning. She develops curriculum and assessments for learners in 6th - 12th grade in Lindsay's Performance Based System, provides support and professional development for district personnel, and facilitates the instructional use of district curriculum support systems, including Reading Plus.

PERSONALIZED INSTRUCTION / ALIGNMENT WITH CCSS

Q: What advice would you offer to educators who are preparing students for college and careers?

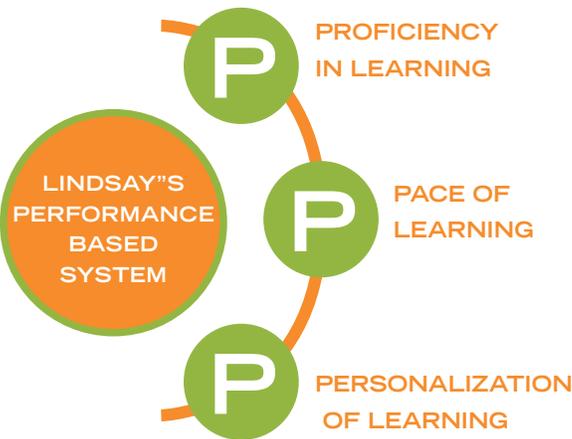
A: I think there are two key questions that every educator focused on college and career readiness should ask themselves:

1. How will you provide personalized reading instruction to every one of your kids?
2. Do you know what each student's specific needs are for college and career readiness? Exactly which standards need attention? Is it text structure? Comparative reading skills? Or something else? Which standards does that specific student need to develop?

I don't know a single teacher who can answer these questions honestly without a program like Reading Plus.

Q: How well does Reading Plus align with Common Core State Standards?

A: It's my favorite thing about it. The way Reading Plus aligns to the CCSS allows us to hold the students to mastery of those standards. Reading Plus provides a clear view of student performance for each standard - we can look at R1, R6, R9, and see how that student is performing and focus development on the standards that need it. Reading Plus has also helped us, as a district, consider what the broader needs for instruction are. I can't imagine our lives without it now.



TRADITIONAL (Time Based Learning)	PBS (Performance Based Learning)
Movement based on time	Movement based on mastery of content
Learning happens only in the classroom	Learning takes place anytime, anywhere
Driven by textbooks	Driven by needs of learners
Teacher-centered decision making	Learner-centered decision making
Focus is learning basic skills in different subject areas	Focus on critical thinking and problem-solving skills across content areas
Teacher is the only judge of quality student work	Self, Peers, teachers, administrators, other stakeholders judge student work
Prepares learners for industrial-age jobs	Prepares learners for 21st century jobs

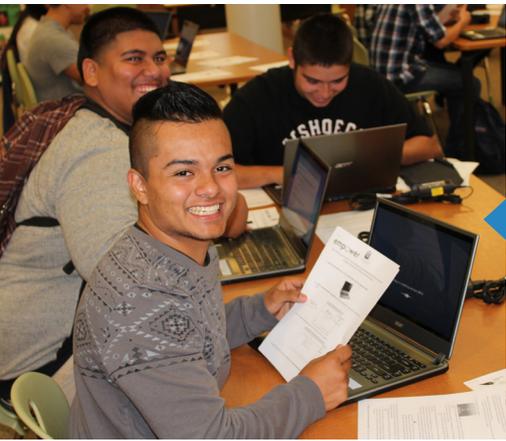
UNIQUE NEEDS OF HIGH SCHOOL READERS: STAMINA, INTEREST / MOTIVATION

Q: Developing reading skills at the high school level can be different from earlier grades. In your experience, what are some of the key factors for achieving success with high school students?

A: I was a high school English teacher. Our district began with Reading Plus at the high school level. One of the key factors for these readers is stamina. When students reach high school and struggle with reading,

Q: Motivation is often mentioned as another unique issue for high school readers. Has Reading Plus helped in this area?

A: We hear it from all our teachers. Apathy and negative attitudes are critical obstacles to overcome. At the outset, most of these readers lack academic confidence. When they're asked to read, it's not something they're excited about- especially if they have a history of struggling with literacy. But Reading Plus has changed the way they think about reading. When they can pick the type of text they want to read, and when they can engage with that



“AFTER USING READING PLUS, THEY’RE READY TO MEET THE INDEPENDENT READING DEMANDS OF COLLEGE AND THE WORKPLACE.”

they just don't have the stamina they need. But when students go through Reading Plus, they build that stamina and it alleviates frustration. After using the program, they're ready to meet the independent reading demands in college and the workplace.

Another critical factor is helping students become critical consumers of text. It's essential that these students have comprehension skills like understanding the author's intent, drawing conclusions, and more. Reading Plus has established a bank of texts that help kids develop these skills and push them to be good, critical consumers of text.

text online, the way they want, when they want - then reading becomes something better. It becomes more like what they're used to outside school. Now they're experiencing the reading in school in a very different way than what they're used to, and they're more interested and excited about it.

Q: How has the online access to Reading Plus impacted your students?

A: We're a 1 to 1 district. We've put an online device into the hands of every student. So, Reading Plus allows us to provide our high school students with the ability to develop their reading skills outside the classroom. Now they can go home, spend time at night, over vacation breaks, and over the summer, and continue to develop as readers. We can monitor their work at home and the reading goals they've set in a way we'd never been able to do before.

“OUR LEARNERS SAW SIGNIFICANT GAINS IN LEXILE GROWTH IN JUST 25 HOURS.”



INDIVIDUAL EXAMPLES OF STUDENT SUCCESS

Q: Are there any specific examples of student success with Reading Plus you’d cite?

A: There are so many wonderful examples. One that comes to mind is a student who graduated last year. She had struggled with reading for a long while. And as she entered her senior year, she really wanted to graduate. She used Reading Plus and had great results - in fact, she grew 6 grade levels in one year. Our high schools have an exit panel to interview graduating seniors. This high school graduate told the panel - “I don’t know where this program was 5 years ago. Because I learned how to read this year.”

RESEARCH-PROVEN RESULTS

Q: How have you measured your results with Reading Plus?

A: Our districts receive federal funding, so we’re held accountable for reading improvement. We use the Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI). So, programs that are proven to deliver results are essential for our district. In fact, we have a research coordinator on staff and he dug deeply into the claims that Reading Plus makes about effectiveness. Specifically, he looked at the claim that “40 hours use of Reading Plus delivers significant gains.” His findings showed that it didn’t even take 40 hours.

Our learners saw significant gains in Lexile growth in just 25 hours. So, what Reading Plus says about effectiveness is even more true for Lindsay kids. Our learners saw significant gains in half the time that you’re reporting.

Q: How has Reading Plus impacted the way you work with your teachers who are developing high school readers?

A: Using Reading Plus has essentially allowed us to give our teachers a crash course on what it means to teach reading. We’ve invested time with our teachers to address how reading must be developed through the grades. We’ve been able to change the notion that you teach kids the foundational skills and then you’re done. Adolescent reading begins after the foundational skills. Once the foundational skills are learned, it’s time for the learner to “read to learn”.

We’re in a very rural area of California and developing new teachers is an ongoing task. Reading Plus helps us maintain a bridge to teaching reading. We can make it clear to our teachers why the skills that Reading Plus develops should follow the foundational skills that are taught in programs like Lexia.

COLLEGE
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READINESS

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