



District: Charlotte-Mecklenburg Public Schools

Location: Charlotte, NC

Enrollment: 135,600

FUSION READING PAVES THE WAY FOR CONTINUED SUCCESS

40 middle schools with a sizeable deficit in literacy requires a solid solution.

As the Secondary Program Specialist for Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools in Charlotte, North Carolina, Carly Kidder's district was experiencing a sizeable deficit in literacy proficiency for students in the Exceptional Children program.

"With the literacy solutions we were using at the time, we were not seeing the gains in proficiency levels that we were hoping to see. We reviewed many [reading intervention] options and were not sold on any of them," stated Carly.

Then, Carly and her team heard about Fusion Reading. "At a conference, we found out about Fusion Reading and its connection with The University of Kansas Center for Research on Learning, which greatly appealed to us," said Kidder.

After contacting the Center, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools agreed to participate in the pilot program for Fusion Reading, the reading intervention program that was developed through an IES grant.

Aided by extensive professional development and backed by district decision makers, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools soon trained on, introduced, and planned implementation of *Fusion Reading* across all 40 middle schools over a three year period.

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"The district level support was huge. We had full commitment from our leaders, which paired with the expertise of *Fusion Reading* coaches, I feel, led to us being across the board successful," added Kidder.

As one of the largest - and most economically, demographically diverse - public school districts in North Carolina, that success was measured by overall average reading grade level growth of 1.7 and an average reading grade level growth of 1.85 in Title 1 schools.

Though, *Fusion Reading* has been a resounding success in Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, the Program Specialist does credit that success to three factors - extensive professional development, intentional coaching plan, and implementation with fidelity.

"For our part, overall satisfaction with *Fusion Reading* was of course, highest with schools and teachers who stuck to a strict routine and implemented the program with fidelity," adds Kidder.

Whether teachers choose to offer the program 60 minutes of instruction a day, 90 minutes every other day, or even less than 60 minutes a day, *Fusion Reading* offers the flexibility necessary to be successful with the program.

To Carly, though the proficiency level gains speak for themselves, the survey results showing the overall impact of *Fusion* were just as impressive and inspiring.

"There are three important metrics that led us to the overall glaring conclusion this program was a success: 90% of two-hundred sixty students surveyed felt more things were possible as a result of *Fusion Reading*, 77% would recommend to a friend, and 6 of 7 principals strongly agree *Fusion Reading* makes a positive impact," said Carly, adding "When you have that kind of consensus in a school district our size, along with the sizeable gains, that speaks volumes about our success with *Fusion Reading*."

ABOUT FUSION READING

- **Explicit:** Provides instruction using age-appropriate leveled text to effectively teach reading skills and strategies and engage students
- **Proven:** Increases student engagement and reading outcomes supporting $1\frac{1}{2}$ year to 2 years of growth in one year of instruction
- **Flexible:** Adapts to various instructional settings and easily adapts to multiple block schedule formats
- **Research Based:** Developed and field tested through an IES grant at the University of Kansas Center for Research on Learning
- Engages students with reading materials relevant to their lives
- Invigorates students with skills and strategies they need to become successful readers
- Empowers students to move to the academic classroom with confidence

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