

Davenport School of the Arts Empowers Students and Closes Literacy Gaps with SRA *Corrective Reading*® Decoding

Davenport School of the Arts (DSA) is a magnet school in Davenport, Florida. Following an innovative arts-infused curriculum, the K–8 school is one of 172 schools within the Polk County School District and serves a diverse student population—with minority enrollment at 69 percent and economically disadvantaged enrollment at 37 percent.

While core reading performance at DSA is above average in the district, with 71 percent of students scoring at or above proficiency, curriculum leaders were in search of an intervention program that would bolster efforts to help students who were performing below grade level in reading.

To accomplish this goal, DSA turned to *Corrective Reading*—a Direct Instruction program for Grades 3 and up that provides intensive, accelerated reading intervention through tightly sequenced, carefully planned lessons. *Corrective Reading* has two strands, Decoding and Comprehension, and DSA implemented the Decoding strand to help close achievement gaps.

In a recent interview, Assistant Principal Kimberly Best, Reading Coach Ayla Boscarino, and Third Grade ELA Teacher Yadira Misla described their experience with their school’s implementation of *Corrective Reading*. “We began using the *Corrective Reading* intervention program for our third through eighth graders at the beginning of the school year, and we’ve already seen amazing growth in such a short amount of time,” Best said.

DISTRICT INFORMATION



Name:

Polk County Public Schools

Location:

Polk County, Florida

Grade:

K–8

The Challenge

DSA had been using several intervention programs to help bring its struggling readers up to grade level, but teachers and reading coaches just weren't seeing the literacy gains they were looking for.

One student who was finding reading to be particularly challenging was Yadiel Fuentes. Currently a third grader in Misla's *Corrective Reading* group, Fuentes had been retained in second grade and is both an ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) and ESE-OHI (Exceptional Student Education-Other Health Impairment) student.

"I was Yadiel's second grade ELA teacher, and it was very difficult watching him struggle in the regular classroom setting," said Boscarino. "At the time, he was a Level A reader with the grade-level core curriculum—which means that he was a non-reader. Yadiel had no self-esteem and wouldn't even attempt blending or other reading skills."

***Corrective Reading* Decoding**

Level A:

For students who need to start at the beginning

Designed for learners who:

- Struggle with phonics and basic decoding
- Have significant gaps in foundational reading skills
- Are non-readers or read well below grade level

Level A delivers explicit, teacher-led instruction to help students build decoding skills with confidence—one step at a time.

Misla added that her experience was very similar to Boscarino's at the beginning of his third-grade year. "Yadiel was shut down and didn't want to try to read because he was scared. He definitely had his guard up. So, when school first started, I worked to bring him out of that by sitting down with him and coming up with some goals. He said he wanted to be able to read, and I told him we will definitely make that happen."

The Solution

DSA began using *Corrective Reading* during the 2024–2025 academic year, strategically selecting a specific group of teachers to use the intervention program with their students.

Misla said she was excited to be one of those selected teachers. "This is my first year at DSA and also my first year doing *Corrective Reading*. At other schools, I had struggled knowing that some of my students had deficits and gaps in their reading development—but there just didn't seem to be a single cohesive program that would meet them where they are. I knew it was important to close those gaps without the student feeling singled out and the teacher feeling overwhelmed."

Boscarino said they like the fact that *Corrective Reading* has a structured, research-proven approach to developing core foundational reading skills, with all students receiving the support they need to master concepts efficiently. She added that they especially appreciate that it's based on the Direct Instruction approach—which promotes student engagement through frequent feedback, ensures consistency with sequenced, prescribed lessons, and supports data-driven decision-making by continually monitoring progress.

Best pointed out they also appreciate that the levels in *Corrective Reading* build upon one another. “Throughout our implementation, we’ve found that students who have gone through Level A, found mastery, and have now progressed to Level B1 are much more prepared for the next level of material.”

The Results

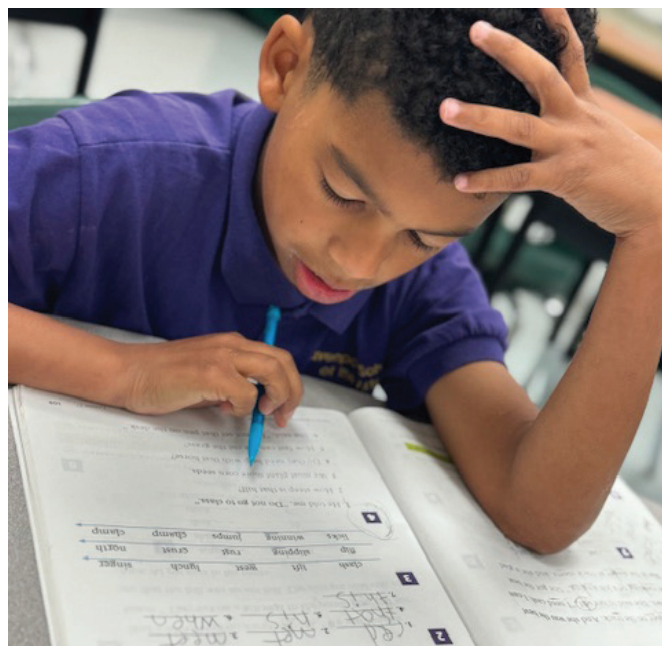
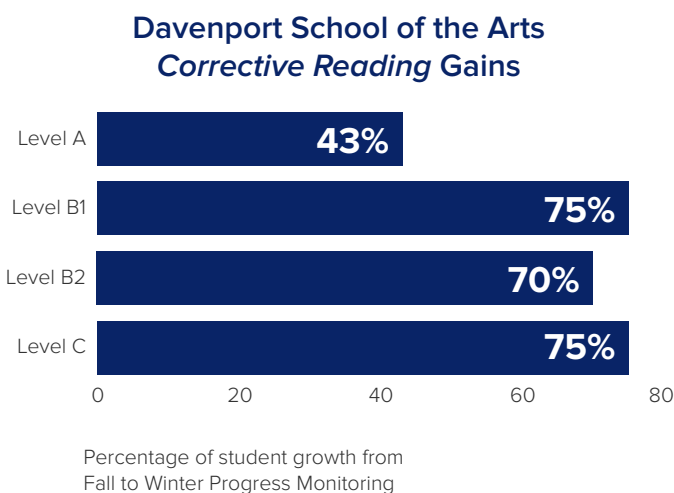
DSA saw positive results very early on after implementing *Corrective Reading*—specifically with its most struggling third, fourth, and fifth graders. From Fall to Winter Progress Monitoring, **43% of Level A students are showing significant reading growth**—fueling confidence for what’s next. This progress is especially impressive considering that Level A students are those who haven’t demonstrated the ability to read yet.

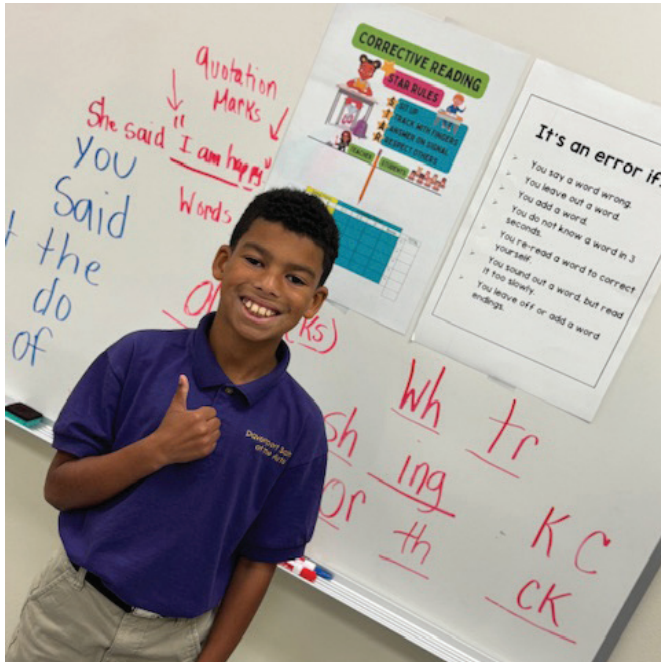
Also impressive is the fact that 75 percent of Level B1 *Corrective Reading* students demonstrated progress—while 70 percent of Level B2 students and 75 percent of Level C students achieved significant growth as well.

“This is from just one hour a day of truly on-level instruction,” said Boscarino. “And because our students are experiencing a feeling of success and academic empowerment, they have a huge boost in their self-confidence and in their ability to catch up to their peers.”

Misla is experiencing the same enthusiasm with her third-grade *Corrective Reading* group. “The pacing is perfect, and there’s this fun competition among the students,” she said. “They’re excited to beat each other’s reading times or see who has the fewest errors, and they’re even asking to test again. I’ve never seen anything like it.”

While she celebrates the success of all her students, Misla said she is especially proud watching the progress of Yadiel—who has gone from Decoding Level A (non-reader) to embarking on Decoding Level B1. She added that during the program’s individual checkouts, Yadiel is now reading his short passage within a minute to a minute and 10 seconds with minimal errors.





Yadiel was very eager to share his accomplishments. “I feel good because I can sound out the words in my *Corrective Reading* class,” he said. “Now I only miss one or two words when I read stories, and Mrs. Mislá does fluency with me. And I can help other students in my group—and if they’re not in my group, I would tell them *Corrective Reading* isn’t scary. It helps them learn how to read.”

“It’s so inspiring to see Yadiel’s face light up when he conquers a fluency passage with Mrs. Mislá,” Boscarino said. “I love seeing him in a place where he can truly shine.”

Moving Forward

Boscarino said a program like *Corrective Reading* is a breath of fresh air because it gives struggling students the best chance for success.



To learn more about our program, visit:
mheducation.com/corrective-success

Best added that this is particularly true for the school’s sixth through eighth grade students who are currently taking a *Corrective Reading* class. “After our initial screening process, some of our middle schoolers said they weren’t even aware they had challenges with reading—whether it was with fluency or phonemic awareness or phonics,” she said. “We talked about being able to build that solid foundation, and they were really motivated to move through the levels as quickly as they could.”

When asked what advice they would give other schools exploring the idea of implementing *Corrective Reading*, Best and Boscarino emphasized that it’s important to get on board quickly with its proven efficacy and Direct Instruction approach to reading intervention.

Mislá elaborated on this by saying that it’s also imperative to have everything planned out and ready to go at the beginning of the school year and then be consistent with the levels and follow the program’s routines exactly as they are laid out.

“I can’t wait to see how much our students have progressed by the end of the school year, during our state testing,” Best said. “And we’re really looking forward to our second year of using *Corrective Reading*, to see how much our kiddos continue to grow in their reading development.”

