

Arthur Academy Charter Schools Carry Their Direct Instruction Legacy Forward with *Reading Mastery Transformations*[®]

Arthur Academy Charter Schools in Oregon have a long and steady history with *Reading Mastery*, a K–5 ELA program within the Direct Instruction curriculum family. Direct Instruction is a research-validated approach that uses explicit teaching, carefully sequenced lessons, and consistent routines to support accurate and efficient learning. As the most current edition of the *Reading Mastery* series, *Reading Mastery Transformations* builds on this foundation with updates to vocabulary, language development, and lesson structure that reflect the needs of today’s students.

Educators around the world recognize the impact of this instructional approach, and Principal Tara Miller of Portland Arthur Academy and Principal Kandice Burton of Gresham Arthur Academy are two leaders with deep experience using it. Both began their careers in Direct Instruction classrooms nearly twenty years ago. In a fitting example of the close-knit nature of Arthur Academy schools, each started at the other’s campus before eventually leading the schools they now serve.

Reading Mastery shaped Miller’s and Burton’s practice from their earliest years in the classroom. “*Reading Mastery* shaped the kind of educator I wanted to be,” Miller said. “When I taught Kindergarten my first year, my students were reading by January. That was it for me. I knew this was the work I wanted to do for the rest of my life.”

Their paths reflect the broader culture of Arthur Academy Charter Schools. Both principals return often to the schools’ core value statement, which emphasizes that students, staff, and families should feel valued, respected, and welcomed in an environment where all children can thrive and develop a love of learning. This focus guides how they select curricula, support teachers, and build partnerships with families.

SCHOOL INFORMATION



Name:

Arthur Academy Charter Schools

Location:

Portland Metro Area, Oregon

Grades:

K–5

It was within this consistent and student-centered culture that *Reading Mastery Transformations*® was adopted. The decision was not about replacing what came before. *Reading Mastery*® *Signature Edition* remains an important part of instruction in the early grades. *Reading Mastery Transformations* offered ways to build on strengths the schools already trusted, with enhancements that aligned well with the instructional needs of their learners. It represented a practical next step in Arthur Academy’s long-standing commitment to ensuring every child learns to read with clarity, structure, and purpose.

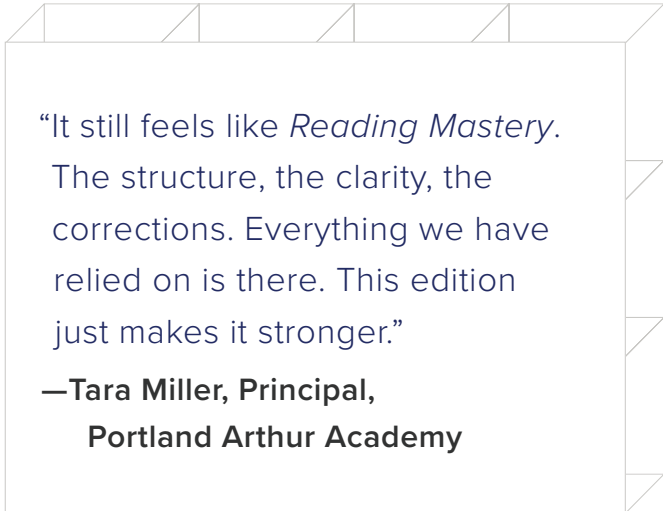
The Challenge

With decades of success using *Reading Mastery*, Arthur Academy teachers brought deep expertise to the implementation. They trusted the approach and had seen its impact year after year, but they also understood that any instructional shift deserved careful planning. “We had complete confidence in *Reading Mastery*,” Burton said. “Our focus was on being intentional as we brought the updated edition into our classrooms.”

Teachers spent time reviewing *Reading Mastery Transformations* closely to understand how the program would integrate with the strong instructional routines already in place. They were particularly looking for ways that *Reading Mastery Transformations* could deepen rigor in vocabulary and language comprehension, making their reading block even more robust for the learners they serve. For Arthur Academy, the challenge was not whether the program would work. It was how to implement it in a way that built upon the high standards and consistent routines that define their school culture.

The Solution

Implementation across Arthur Academy Charter Schools was guided by collaboration and continued commitment to effective teaching. Teachers quickly recognized that *Reading Mastery Transformations* preserved the structure they trusted while strengthening areas that support students more effectively today. Vocabulary instruction became more intentional, with new visual images that helped students connect more quickly to meaning, especially multilingual learners. As Burton explained, “We appreciate how *Reading Mastery Transformations* strengthens vocabulary instruction and builds in visuals that help students make immediate connections. Those supports make a noticeable difference for our multilingual learners, and it is helpful to have them built right into the lessons.” Teachers also found that the language routines across grade levels deepened oral language development and better equipped students for reading comprehension. Throughout the implementation, teachers found that the core of *Reading Mastery* remained intact. Lessons were still clear, routines were still consistent, and correction procedures continued to reinforce mastery.



“It still feels like *Reading Mastery*. The structure, the clarity, the corrections. Everything we have relied on is there. This edition just makes it stronger.”

—Tara Miller, Principal,
Portland Arthur Academy

The Results

The impact of *Reading Mastery Transformations*[®] is most visible in the students themselves. One boy entered third grade unsure of his reading ability and frustrated by how hard school felt. Within a few months of steady instruction, teachers watched him shift. He raised his hand more often. He leaned into reading instead of away from it. The change in how he carried himself told the story long before the data did.

Another young student who had only recently begun speaking came to school overwhelmed and far behind her peers. In first grade, she scored in the 3rd percentile for reading. A year later, after steady instruction through *Reading Mastery*, she entered the 43rd percentile and now reads with fluency. “Her whole world opened up,” Miller said. “She is proud of herself, and she should be.”

Burton explained that when older students arrive with significant gaps in foundational skills, *Corrective Reading*[®] Decoding, a Direct Instruction intervention program, gives them a clear and structured path to rebuild decoding skills. She has seen its impact firsthand. She recalled a pair of twin fifth graders from earlier in her career who entered school significantly below grade level. They were older, aware of their struggles, and discouraged from years of not being able to read like their peers. With steady support from *Reading Mastery* and *Corrective Reading*, they began to make real, measurable progress. As their decoding strengthened, their confidence returned. “You truly change the trajectory of their lives,” Burton said. “When students finally understand that they can read, everything shifts for them.”

Stories like these are common across Arthur Academy Charter Schools. Students who begin here build steady, consistent growth year after year. Students who transfer in later often make rapid gains once they experience the structure and consistency of explicit, systematic instruction.

“Every kid can read at our school. That just does not happen everywhere.”

—**Kandice Burton, Principal,
Gresham Arthur Academy**

The stories shared by Miller and Burton reflect more than isolated successes. They show what becomes possible when consistent instruction, strong school culture, and proven programs work together over time. With *Reading Mastery Transformations*, Arthur Academy Charter Schools have built a model that supports every learner. The work continues, and so does the commitment.





Moving Forward

Arthur Academy Charter Schools remain centered on a clear mission: every student reads. That mission guides how teachers plan instruction, how principals support their teams, and how every classroom maintains the consistency that allows students to thrive. *Reading Mastery*® will continue to anchor this work.

Looking ahead, teachers will continue using *Reading Mastery Transformations* to build and strengthen the full continuum of reading development. The program’s focus on explicit instruction, vocabulary growth, oral language, and strong comprehension routines align with what Arthur Academy values most: instruction that works for all students. Whether students begin their journey at Arthur Academy in Kindergarten or join later with unfinished skills, this approach provides a clear, steady path forward.

Flexible, mastery-based grouping will also stay at the heart of instruction. Careful placement, regular progress monitoring, and responsive regrouping allow students to move at the pace they need. Those who arrive behind will continue to receive the structure and support that help them rebuild confidence, reconnect with learning, and experience success.

“When students know how to read, everything opens up for them. *Reading Mastery* gives them that chance.”

—Tara Miller, Principal,
Portland Arthur Academy



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

