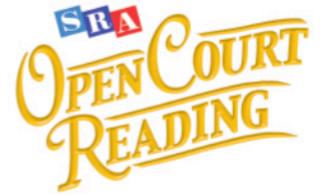




About the District:		About the Students:	
Grades:	K-12	African American:	3%
Number of Students:	5,500	Caucasian:	79%
Test(s):	DIBELS	Hispanic:	12%
Reduced Price Lunch:	52%	Asian:	3%
		Other:	3%
		ELL	-



## Open Court Reading Helps Bethel School District Excel

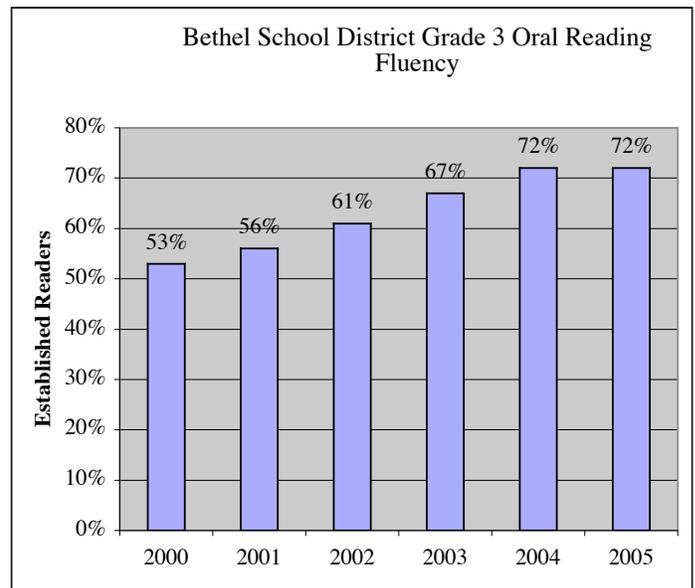
Once six of the seven elementary schools in the Bethel School District implemented *Open Court Reading* in Grades K-3 at the start of the 2000-2001 school year, reading scores gradually improved on DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy).

### Implementing the strongest program

During the late 1990s, district educators began searching for a reading program that could be implemented district-wide, thus helping transitory students catch up quickly when they moved from school to school. District Reading Coordinator Rhonda Wolter said the goal was to find a scientifically based program that would provide continuity throughout the district. “We were looking for a thoroughly researched, systematic phonics program that would allow teachers to teach the same ‘nuts and bolts’ across the district,” she said.

“When we began searching for the ideal reading program in the late 1990s, we had no idea we would find such incredible success with *Open Court Reading*. It remains an important component of our district reading curriculum, which we call the Bethel Reading Project, and it continues to be recognized nationally as a model reading program,” Wolter said.

Fairfield Elementary School was chosen to implement a pilot program of *Open Court Reading* in Grade 1 at the beginning of the 1999-2000 school year. “Our research told us that *Open Court Reading* combined the best of phonics instruction, research-based materials, and the love of authentic literature,” explained Jan Johnson, Grade 1 teacher. “We also found it to be an excellent resource for teachers.” Fairfield serves about 400 children in Grades K-5. The student population represents the lowest socio-economic levels in the district and the highest number of children learning English as a second language.





Upon seeing amazing results after just one year of implementation, educators at the remaining Bethel elementary schools investigated *Open Court Reading* on their own. Every school in the district eventually implemented *Open Court Reading* by 2000, except one elementary, which chose Direct Instruction, another SRA reading program.

### **Revealing Impact**

Johnson described a Grade 1 student who moved from another Bethel school into her classroom in January 2000. She was reading zero words per minute. “As a first-grade teacher, my personal goal is for students to read 60 words per minute at the end of the year. By the end of May, after five months with *Open Court Reading*, this little girl was reading 58 words per minute,” she said.

Bethel School District uses DIBELS to measure students’ reading success, diagnose problems early on, and ensure children stay on track. The district goal is for children to read 50 words per minute at the end of Grade 1, putting them on target to read 90 words per minute in Grade 2, and 115 words per minute in Grade 3. “If they are reading 115 words per minute in third grade, 97.5% of students will meet or exceed the third grade benchmark on the Oregon State Assessment,” explained Wolter. “If we keep them on track, they will read 150 words in fifth grade and do well on the fifth grade benchmark of the Oregon State Assessment.”

Wolter said this reading strategy starts as early as Kindergarten because that’s where *Open Court Reading* begins. “We know that other schools will not get the results that we are getting unless they implement *Open Court Reading* with a high degree of fidelity from the very beginning,” she added.

### **About Bethel School District**

As the third largest school district in Lane County, rapidly growing Bethel serves more than 5,500 students: 79% Caucasian, 12% Hispanic, 3% African American, 3% Asian, and 3% Native American. Fifty-two percent of the children qualify for free or reduced-price lunches. For more information about Bethel School District, visit [www.bethel.k12.or.us](http://www.bethel.k12.or.us).

### **For More Information**

If you would like to learn more about success with *Open Court Reading* in your school or district, please contact us today at **1-888-SRA-4543**.

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