

# Results with Open Court Reading



Developed in collaboration with the **Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development** and the **Council of Chief State School Officers** by McGraw-Hill Education



# Results.

More than ever, attention is focused on the results that our classrooms produce. Expectations are higher. Student performance standards are in place for almost every subject. Teaching students to read is always an essential step in any effort to maintain high standards and expectations.

Every high school graduate who is literate starts to develop literacy in the earliest grades. To help every student succeed, we must look to schools where students are achieving the highest standards of literacy and identify the practices that enable them to reach those goals.

This report tells the stories of eight schools. It describes each school's history, the challenges it faces, and some of its efforts to meet those challenges. Following the case histories, we have included an appendix of research supporting instruction using *Open Court Reading*, which has been used by all the schools described to bring about demonstrable positive effects on reading achievement.

Each school's story focuses on results. Whenever possible, we present the most recently available information about growth trends and on the grade levels most directly affected by the reading program. The schools serve children with a range of socioeconomic, ethnic, and geographic traits. They share many characteristics, perhaps the most important of which is a set of results. The schools show an impressive reversal of the trend of failure, documenting improvements in performance and achievement that often dramatically exceed those of similar schools.

The schools and the effective reading program described here also share these characteristics:

- Implemented ongoing programs of professional development for their teachers
- Used assessments of student progress during the school year to ensure effective instruction
- Demonstrated the importance of the principal as the instructional leader
- Created exciting climates within their schools to encourage learning

Most important, these schools demonstrate the importance of maintaining high expectations for all students, not just the brightest or most privileged.

The leaders of the schools described here are eager to share what they have learned and to see their practices and experiences spread to other schools. Please feel free to contact the people who are identified in each article. We've provided telephone numbers, e-mail addresses, fax numbers, and addresses.

Let's learn from those who have successfully increased their students' achievement. Let's help teachers and supervisors use this information. Let's all work together to help our children become more effective learners.



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***The No Child Left Behind Act*** has forever changed the way educators measure success in the classroom. How can we ensure our students are receiving the best possible education? We can start by focusing on research, as well as on what we've learned from national reports on student achievement.

That research has demonstrated that the best primary school teachers effectively balance approaches to literacy instruction, constantly motivate their students, and carefully manage their classrooms.

The most fascinating portrait of what great teachers do in their classrooms emerges from studying how they engage their students in the process of learning to read and write. Great teachers flood their classes with motivation and achieve a balance between the elements of phonemic awareness, vocabulary, comprehension strategies, and self-monitoring.

For years, the world of literacy was divided, with one camp favoring phonics and the other holding to a whole-language approach. Excellent elementary literacy instruction balances skills instruction and holistic literacy opportunities.

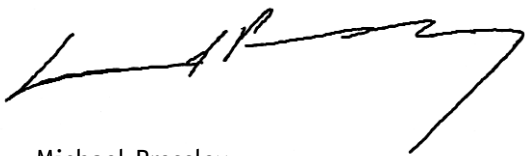
Research-based practices get results. For nearly 50 years, SRA/McGraw-Hill has structured its curriculum on classroom research. For decades, the achievement of students who have been taught with these programs has proven to be outstanding on state assessments and national standardized tests.

SRA/McGraw-Hill's *Open Court Reading* has steadfastly structured its curriculum for nearly five decades on the strongest lessons research could offer. As literacy research has grown in power and scope, *Open Court Reading* has adopted the best of the new findings.

*Open Court Reading* demonstrates that instruction based on tested, research-based practices gets results. Over and over, the achievement of students taught with *Open Court Reading* has been exceptional on state-mandated tests, national standardized tests, district tests, and many other specific measures.

By applying the lessons we have learned nationwide, we will ensure that all children, including those who fall into subgroups such as special needs or socioeconomically disadvantaged, reach their academic potential.

There may be no more important mission than turning the potential for teaching reading into reality.



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## Understanding Adequate Yearly Progress

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) is an important factor in understanding the results of instruction. It is the cornerstone of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act and measures student achievement in public schools. The law requires each state to establish a definition of Adequate Yearly Progress used each year to determine the achievement of each school and school district.

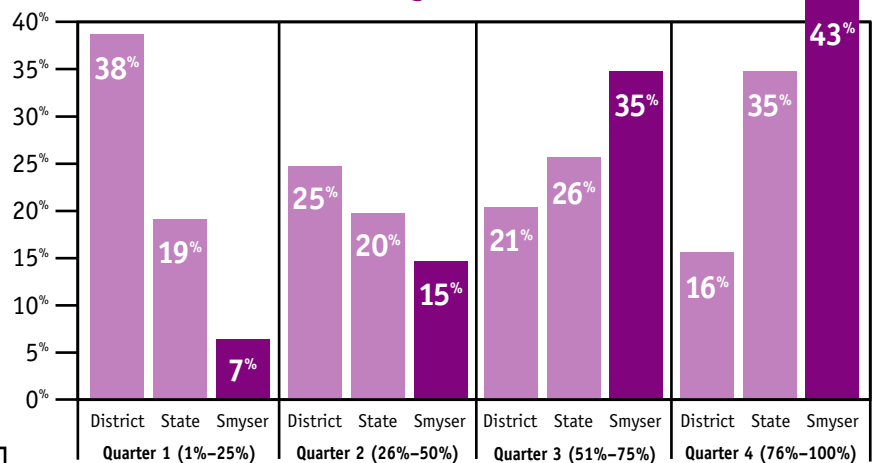
All subgroups of students, including minorities and children from low socioeconomic backgrounds, must score sufficiently on standardized tests to achieve AYP. If one group scores insufficiently, the entire school does not meet AYP. Schools that do not meet AYP for two consecutive academic years or more are identified as needing actions, which increase in severity over time, to improve academic achievement.

# Open Court Reading Leads to Fluent Readers and Above Average Test Scores

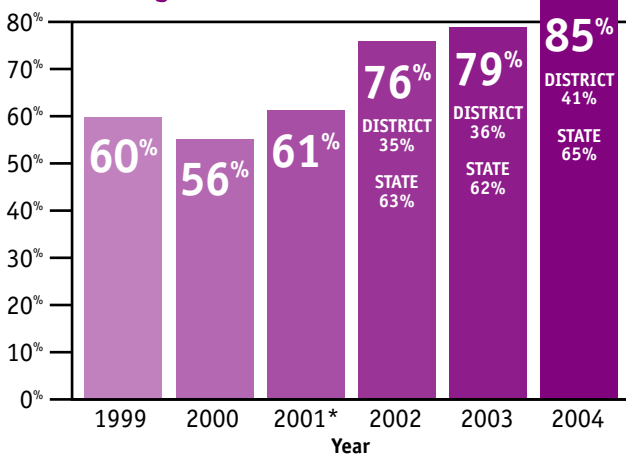
Principals at several Chicago elementary schools, including Jerry Travlos at Washington D. Smyser Elementary School, say *Open Court Reading* dovetails perfectly with the Chicago Reading Initiative. In 2001, the city implemented this initiative to boost reading proficiency among city schools, focusing on four components of reading proficiency: word knowledge, comprehension, fluency, and writing.

Travlos said *Open Court Reading* was new to him when he became principal. "I'm very impressed with the program's comprehensive nature," he explained. "The materials focus on phonemic awareness, fluency, writing, and comprehension, which tie in perfectly with the Chicago Reading Initiative. *Open Court Reading* has truly been a success story at Smyser, and our test scores reflect that."

**Comparison of Smyser Student Scores to District and State Scores 2004 Grade 3 ISAT Reading**



**Percentage of Grade 3 Students Meeting or Exceeding State Reading Standards**



\*Results after one year with Open Court Reading  
Source: Illinois Standards Achievement Test

Before *Open Court Reading* was implemented in Grade 3 during the 1999-2000 school year, only 60% of Grade 3 students met or exceeded state reading standards on the Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT). By 2004, that percentage increased to 85%, surpassing both district and state reading averages.

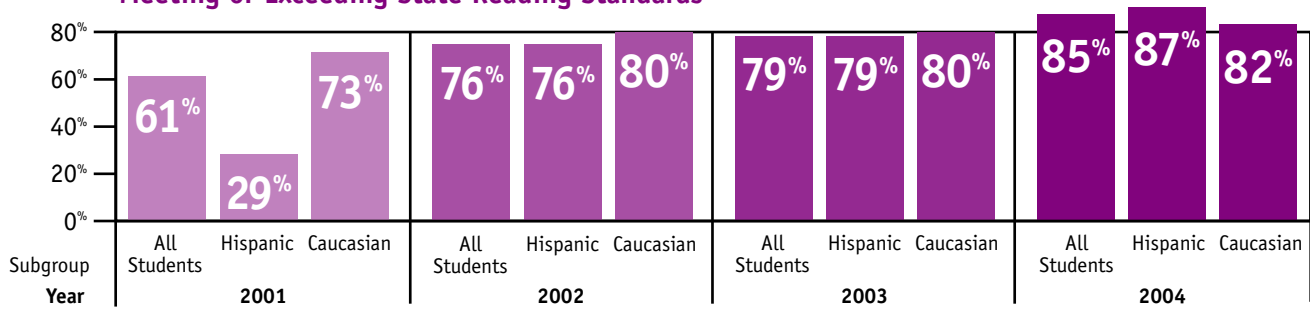
Smyser Elementary School students also scored very high relative to national norms on the 2004 ISAT. If Illinois students mirrored the nation, approximately 25% would be in each quarter. The majority of Smyser students rank in the highest two quarters.



## About Washington D. Smyser Elementary School

Located in the Chicago Public School District, this school serves nearly 900 students from two neighborhoods: Jefferson Park and Dunham Park. The student population is 63% Caucasian, 31% Hispanic, 4% Asian, and 2% African American. Fifty-three percent of the children are eligible for free or reduced-price lunches, and 34% have limited English proficiency.

### Percentage of Grade 3 Students by Subgroup Meeting or Exceeding State Reading Standards



Source: Illinois Standards Achievement Test

### Adequate Yearly Progress Achieved

Because of high state assessment scores in 2004, Smyser Elementary School achieved Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). Travlos said he and Smyser teachers were thrilled when the school achieved AYP because it means all students attained academic success. "We are very focused on subgroups of children who might fall through the cracks," Travlos said. "But we know if they experience *Open Court Reading*, these kids are capable of excelling in all subjects, not only reading." Subgroups of students continue to excel at Smyser Elementary. The chart above shows how Hispanic students (31% of the student population) scored compared to Caucasian students (63% of the population) on the reading portion of the ISAT.

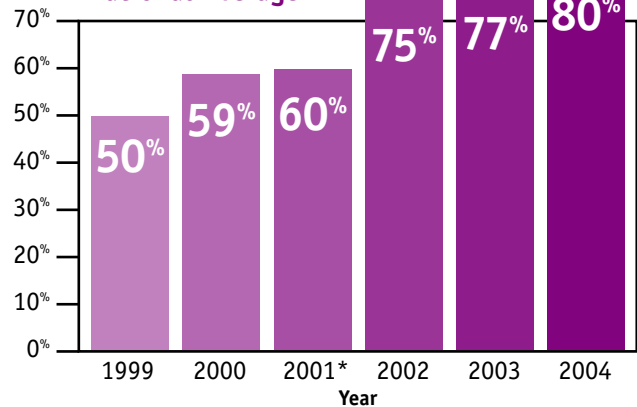
In addition to doing well on the ISAT, Smyser students excel on the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills. Before *Open Court Reading* was implemented at the start of the 1999-2000 school year in Grades K-4, half of Grade 3 students read below the national average. By 2004, 80% of Grade 3 students read at or above the national average.

### Open Court Reading Brings Success

Teachers at Smyser Elementary School were content with a basal reading program for several years during the mid-1990s until Past-Principal Jeannie Gallo researched programs that could offer students better opportunities for reading. "We chose *Open Court Reading* for its systematic phonics instruction and decoding strategies," she explained.

*Open Court Reading* was implemented in Kindergarten and Grade 1 during the 1998-1999 school year. It was expanded to Grades 2-4 the following year. Now it is used in Grades K-6. "*Open Court Reading*

### Percentage of Grade 3 Students Reading At or Above National Average



\*Results after one year with Open Court Reading  
Source: Iowa Tests of Basic Skills

produces fluent readers," said Gallo, who is now Area Institutional Officer for the district. "Once our teachers used it, they fell in love with it."

Bilingual Lead Teacher Pola Kurczaba said success was almost instantaneous. "At first, our primary grade teachers were reluctant to change reading programs, but once they used *Open Court Reading*, there was no turning back. We soon found that children were able to decode words and understand more difficult words very quickly," she said. "After hearing the children read so well, we decided to add *Open Court Reading* to the next grade level at the beginning of each new school year."

#### For more information



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# Open Court Reading Helps Florida District Achieve AYP

The Leon County School District was one of only two of the state's 67 districts to achieve Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in 2004 under the federal No Child Left Behind Act standards. It also was the only school district in Florida to adopt *Open Court Reading*.

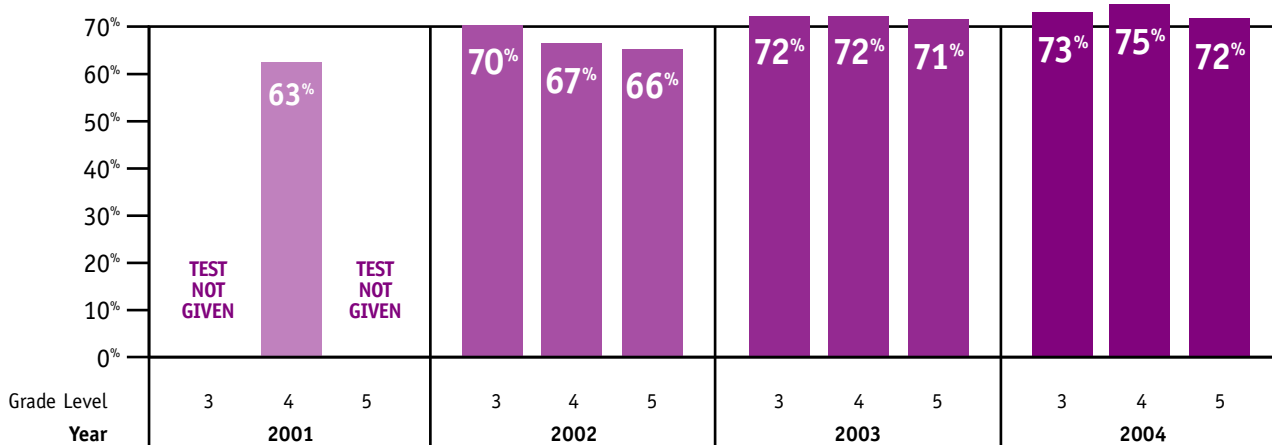
Assistant Superintendent Iris Wilson said *Open Court Reading* is one of the reasons why the district achieved AYP for the first time during the 2003-2004 school year. "It combines phonics with real literature and helps teachers target specific needs among students," she said. "*Open Court Reading* also addresses all students – from low-performing to high-performing."

All Florida public school students take the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) each year to measure their academic achievement, which helps to determine AYP. The FCAT includes five levels, with 1 being the lowest and 5 the highest. Now that

*Open Court Reading* is used in Grades K-5 in 23 of the district's 26 elementary schools, the percentage of students scoring at level 3 (proficient) and above in reading continues to improve.

Wilson said she supports mandated consistency among elementary schools. That's why Leon County is an *Open Court Reading* district. "We believe that every child can be successful if taught using researched methods of instruction," she explained. "*Open Court Reading* obviously works for our students because our district consistently ranks among the top five or six in the state for academic success as measured by the FCAT."

**Percentage of Grades 3-5 Students Scoring At or Above Level 3 on FCAT Reading  
LEON COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT**



## About Leon County School District

Serving more than 29,000 students in 82 schools, Grades Pre-K-12, the student population of the Leon County School District is 54% Caucasian, 40% African American, 2% Asian American, 2% Hispanic, and 2% multi-cultural. About 34% of students qualify for free or reduced-price lunches.





The state of Florida gives each school a letter grade each year based on its FCAT scores. In 1998 when the Leon County Public School District first began piloting *Open Court Reading*, only 32% of the district schools obtained an A or B. By 2004, 72% achieved an A or B.

## A Closer Look at One School

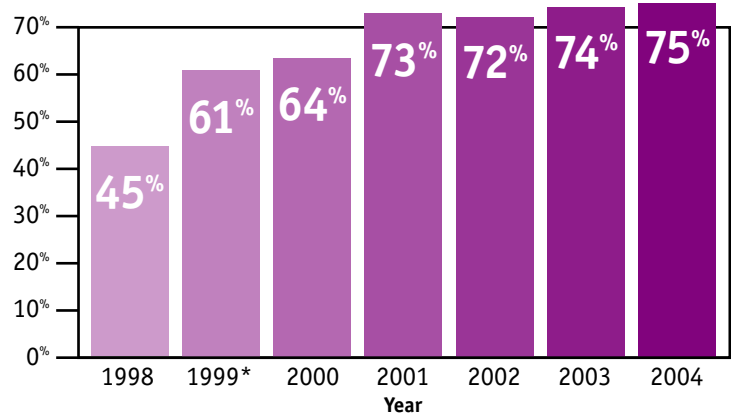
Frank Hartsfield Elementary School students have achieved continued success with *Open Court Reading*, but academic achievement in reading was a different story in the mid-1990s. The percentage of its Grades 3-5 students scoring at or above level 3 on the reading portion of the FCAT in 1998 was 45%. After implementing *Open Court Reading* that same year, the percentage increased significantly to 61% in 1999. By 2004, it soared to 75%.

Former Principal Scotty Crowe said he and his colleagues chose *Open Court Reading* for its phonics base. "We knew its systematic curriculum would meet the needs of our students," he said. "*Open Court Reading* embraces a philosophy that our teachers love. They are sold on the concept and the thoroughness of the curriculum. It's amazing to witness and be part of this process." Crowe is now principal of Gilchrist Elementary School in Leon County where he still uses *Open Court Reading*.

## About Frank Hartsfield Elementary School

With more than 500 students in Grades K-5, this school serves a diverse student base: 69% African American, 23% Caucasian, 3% Hispanic, 3% multi-cultural, and 2% Asian American. Sixty-two percent of the children qualify for free or reduced-price lunches, compared to a state average of 53%.

**Combined Performance of Students in Grades 3-5 Scoring At or Above Level 3 on FCAT Reading FRANK HARTSFIELD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**



\*Results after one year with Open Court Reading

Source: Prepared by Program Monitoring and Evaluation, Division of Teaching and Learning, Leon County School District

### For more information



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# Ohio School Becomes District Leader in Reading

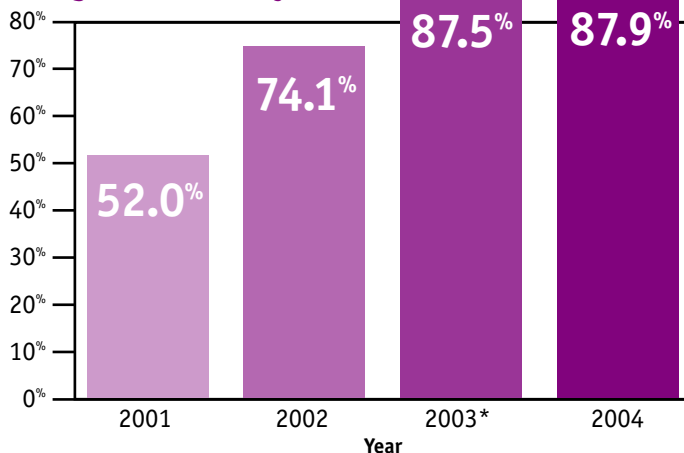
In just two years, Hale Road Elementary School transformed itself from a low-performing school to a district leader in reading scores. The percentage of Grade 4 students passing the reading portion of The Ohio Fourth-grade Proficiency Test jumped from 74.1% in 2002, before *Open Court Reading* began, to 87.5% the following year. By 2004, the percentage remained high at 87.9%.

Because of these high scores, Hale Road Elementary also achieved Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) both years it was measured in Ohio – 2002-2003 and 2003-2004. Principal Jack Miley said implementing *Open Court Reading* was a big contributing factor to the school achieving AYP both years. “Our Performance Index Score went from a 101.7 in 2003 to a 103.6 in 2004, which shows that the students who have experienced *Open Court Reading* excel a bit more each year.”

Ohio’s Performance Index Score reflects the achievement of every tested student and shows trends in school achievement. The scale is 0 to 120 points, with 100 being the goal. It is one of the measurements of AYP.

Ohio rates schools on student achievement. Ratings include Excellent, Effective, Continuous Improvement, Academic Watch, and Academic Emergency. In addition to achieving AYP for two successive years, Hale Road Elementary also has received a rating of Excellent from the state since *Open Court Reading* began.

Percentage of Students Passing the Reading Portion of The Ohio Fourth-grade Proficiency Test



\*Results after one year with Open Court Reading

## Teachers Love Program From the Start

When teachers complained that their current reading program did not challenge students to succeed, educators piloted *Open Court Reading* in Grade 1 during the 2000-2001 school year. “Our reading scores were low as well, and we hoped *Open Court Reading* would help our students succeed on the proficiency test,” Miley said.

Teachers loved *Open Court Reading* immediately because of its phonics base, and additional grades adopted it each year. By the 2002-2003 year, the program expanded to Grades K-4 and included learning-disabled and Title I students. “Our reading intervention teacher also uses



### About Hale Road Elementary School

Located 25 miles east of Cleveland on Lake Erie, Hale Road Elementary School serves nearly 350 children from low- to middle-income homes in Grades K-5: 93% Caucasian, 4% Hispanic, 1% African American, 1% Asian American, and 1% multi-cultural. Twenty-seven percent of the children qualify for free or reduced-price lunches, compared to 36% statewide.

*Open Court Reading* with all grades,” Miley added. “Teacher dedication and willingness to try something new has really paid off for all of our children.”

When *Open Court Reading* was adopted in Kindergarten, Miley challenged the Kindergarten teachers to ensure all students read before they left at the end of the school year. “We didn’t know if it was possible,” he said. “Now the majority begin reading by January and enter Grade 1 with strong reading skills.”

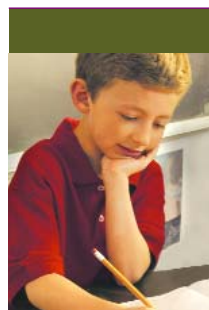
## Kindergarten Students Ready for Grade 1

Kindergarten Teacher Barbara Shuster had never used *Open Court Reading* until Hale Road Elementary adopted it. “I really think *Open Court Reading* is wonderful with phonemic awareness, including rhyming, syllables, as well as sounding and blending,” she explained. “I also like the Decodable Books and the shared Read-Alouds because of the terminology children learn, like characters and setting. When children move on to first grade, they remember this terminology.”

Grade 1 Teacher Marjorie Deak agreed. “The children are very well-prepared when they enter first grade,” she explained. “They can recognize and write letters, and sound out words. I really see their progress when I compare them to a child who is new to our school and hasn’t been exposed to *Open Court Reading*. The difference in skill level is unbelievable.”

Deak remembered one student who made great strides once he began *Open Court Reading*. “He repeated Kindergarten because he was very young. That means he was exposed to the program twice in Kindergarten. Now he’s a fourth-grader, and he’s doing very well in reading because he possesses the skills and confidence.”

### For more information



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# Washington Elementary Students Exceed State Reading Standards

When the state of Washington classified Lincoln Elementary School as Low-Performing in 2000, educators implemented *Open Court Reading* the next year to bring students up to grade level. By 2003, they scored well above average in reading compared to similar schools. A year later, the percentage of Lincoln Elementary Grade 4 students meeting or exceeding state reading standards rocketed to 80%, up from 42% the year before.

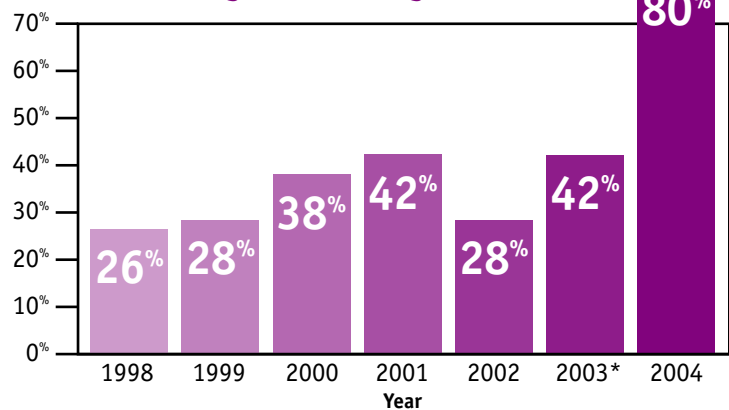
## Open Court Reading Helps English Language Learners

District Curriculum and Instruction Director Patty Schmella said *Open Court Reading* also supports English Language Learners (ELL), which includes more than half of Lincoln's students. "The Sound/Spelling Cards are so visual that ELL students grasp concepts much quicker than with other programs," she said. "The comprehension section using literature circles gives these children another boost with their language and vocabulary skills."

Most Lincoln Elementary School students are reading on grade level now, including ELL students. "That's because our teachers and paraprofessionals are committed to a program that works," Schmella said. "They have created a well-oiled machine that ensures student success."

By 2004, Grade 4 students had experienced *Open Court Reading* for two years. That year, 46% of ELL students met or exceeded state reading standards on the Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL). Two years before *Open Court Reading* was implemented in Grade 4, only 38% of ELL students met or exceeded state reading standards.

Percentage of Grade 4 Students Meeting or Exceeding State Reading Standards



\*Results after one year with *Open Court Reading* in Grade 4  
Source: Washington Assessment of Student Learning

## A New Beginning

At the start of the 2001-2002 school year, *Open Court Reading* was implemented in Grades K-3 at Lincoln Elementary School. The following year, it was added to the reading curriculum in Grades 4-5. By the 2004-2005 school year, *Open Court Reading* was used in Grades K-6.

Schmella was the reading coach at the school during the implementation. "At first, teachers resisted *Open Court Reading* because it required a paradigm shift from small reading groups to



### About Lincoln Elementary

Located about 150 miles southeast of Seattle, Lincoln Elementary is a Title I school in Toppenish School District 202. Serving nearly 400 children in Grades K-6, the school's student population is 90% Hispanic, 8% Native American, and 2% Caucasian. About 51% of the children are English Language Learners and 88% are eligible for free or reduced-priced lunches.



whole-class instruction,” she explained. “We also moved to 90-minute reading blocks, which meant we rearranged entire schedules.”

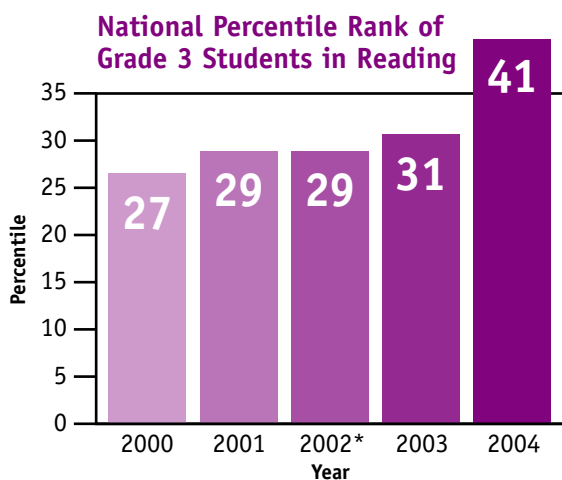
## Commitment Pays Off

Within three months of implementing the program, Lincoln Elementary School teachers witnessed great progress. “One teacher told me that in her 25 years of teaching, she had never had a day like the one she had that day,” Schmella said. “Her class had moved into Anthologies, and the kids could actually read and comprehend the material. Now she tells me she would never change from *Open Court Reading*.”

During the second year of implementation, teachers switched to *Open Court Reading* ©2002, and the school’s Kindergarteners advanced to Unit 3 of *Open Court Reading’s* Grade 1 curriculum. “We had no idea that these Kindergarteners could handle that much so soon!” Schmella said. “It was so unbelievable. I can’t tell you how thrilled the Grade 1 teachers were the following year to begin school with highly skilled students.”

Schmella said all the teachers support *Open Court Reading* now. “We’re so committed to the program that teachers offer 30 minutes of *Open Court Reading* pre-teach to Kindergarteners and first graders during Breakfast Club each morning.” Lincoln Elementary serves healthy breakfasts to students in Breakfast Club each day.

In addition to excelling on WASL, Lincoln students (including ELL students) are steadily increasing their scores on the reading portion of the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS).



\*Results after one year with Open Court Reading in Grade 3  
The national average is the 50th percentile

### For more information



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# School Uses Open Court Reading Successfully for Nearly 35 Years

In 1970, educators at Gulliver Academy chose *Open Court Reading* for the private school's Grades 1-4 students, who have consistently scored far above the national average in reading. The Academy's diverse population includes students from Africa, South America, Central America, the Caribbean, the Middle East, Asia, Europe, Canada, and the United States.

"*Open Court Reading* is as diverse as our students," said Patricia Martello, Principal of the Academy's Lower School. "We especially like the totally integrated language approach. We're using Sound/Spelling Cards because they are action-oriented, as are children. They support the strong phonics strand and really help students with their recall."

"Our reading scores reflect the program's quality literature. The vocabulary is advanced; you're setting goals for children to rise to each day. This definitely leads to greater learning. The more we use it, the better we get," Martello said. "Students who have experienced *Open Court Reading* for a number of years excel as older students as well."

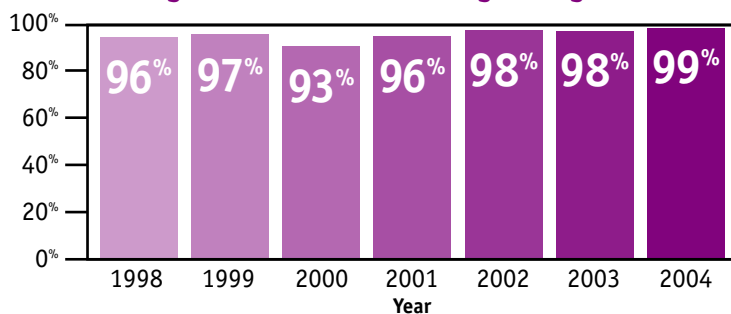
Academy students take the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS) each winter, and Grade 1 students consistently score far above the national average (50th percentile) on reading.

In addition to scoring well on the ITBS, Academy students also succeed on the STAR Early Literacy test. "This is significant," Martello explained. "Especially when you consider that one first-grader began the year reading on a Kindergarten level. After one year

with *Open Court Reading*, she improved two grade levels. There's no doubt that *Open Court Reading* was a huge part of her success. Her parents also spent a lot of time each night reading and reviewing Decodable Books with her."

When one particular Grade 1 class of 18 children took the STAR test in September 2003, almost all scored at 1.0 (Grade 1, month 0). When that same group of students took the STAR test in September 2004, after experiencing one year of *Open Court Reading*, their average score was 2.04 (Grade 2, month 4).

Percentage of Academy Grade 1 Students Scoring Above National Reading Average



Source: Iowa Tests of Basic Skills



## About Gulliver Academy

Founded in 1927, Gulliver Academy is one of the oldest private schools in Miami-Dade County. It serves more than 1,000 students in Pre-K-8 from approximately 50 countries.



Julie Patterson is the Grade 1 teacher who taught that group of 18 children. “I’ve used many reading series during my 14 years of teaching,” she explained. “But I like *Open Court Reading* best. It is especially helpful for bilingual speakers or slower readers because it gives them a strong foundation in phonics, allowing them to sound and blend words in context.” Roughly 40% of Academy students are bilingual, speaking both Spanish and English.

## Open Court Reading Allows Differentiated Instruction

When Academy educators changed their classrooms from a leveled basis a few year ago, teachers needed to find ways to use *Open Court Reading* in a differentiated instructional way to meet the needs of children at varying levels. Martello said, “We found that *Open Court Reading* could rise to the occasion because it allows stronger readers to model for slower readers.”

## Ask the Teachers

Martello said Academy educators especially like the *Open Court Reading* Teacher’s Editions because they are so relevant to current teaching methods, integrating all classroom subjects, including math, language arts, and music, into everyday lessons.

Grade 3 Teacher Barbara Wexler has experienced *Open Court Reading* both as an educator and a parent and is grateful for the program’s integrative approach. “I began teaching in the 1970s, and I liked it from the start. As a parent, I appreciated how it helped my children to read and comprehend so efficiently. Now as a teacher again, I love what it has evolved into because it’s all-encompassing – all areas of our curriculum are included in *Open Court Reading*.”

Wexler has taught *Open Court Reading* for a total of 19 years. “Year after year, I watch my students find the program’s units absolutely relative, such as friendship, imagination, and country life. I have a new student from Arkansas this year, and the first unit we completed was friendship, which was perfect for the entire classroom. *Open Court Reading* helps create community among students.”

### For more information



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# Colorado School District Earns State's Top Rating of Excellent Since 2001

**D**uring Colorado's spring 2004 state testing, Poudre School District's Grade 3 students achieved an all-time high reading proficiency rate of 86%, showing steady improvement during the seven years since *Open Court Reading* was implemented in 1997.

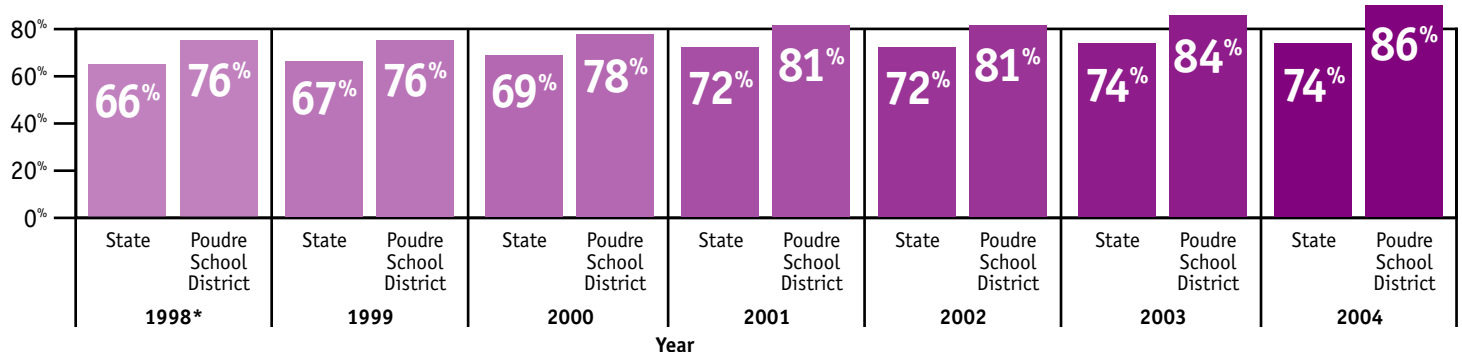
The proportion of proficient and advanced readers in the Poudre School District increased as the number of years spent using *Open Court Reading* increased. Grade 3 students consistently surpass the overall performance of students statewide by about ten percentage points each year in these two categories (proficient and advanced). In addition, the district has exceeded the state's targeted achievement levels of 80% or higher since 2001, earning it Colorado's top rating of "excellent" each year.

Jan Borman, Principal of Dunn Elementary School within the Poudre School District, said her students

have succeeded in reading for two reasons: *Open Court Reading* and excellent teachers. "If you give good teachers *Open Court Reading*, they can take the kids to the moon."

Dunn Elementary School teachers have used *Open Court Reading* in Grades K-6 since the district adopted it in 1997. They also use *Kaleidoscope*, a reading intervention program from SRA for Grades 2-6. "Not only do we like the variety of themes within *Open Court Reading*," she explained, "but we also like *Kaleidoscope* for struggling students because they still study the same themes, just on their level."

**Percentage of Grade 3 Students Scoring Proficient or Advanced on Reading  
POUDRE SCHOOL DISTRICT**



\*Results after one year of Open Court Reading  
Source: Colorado Student Assessment Program

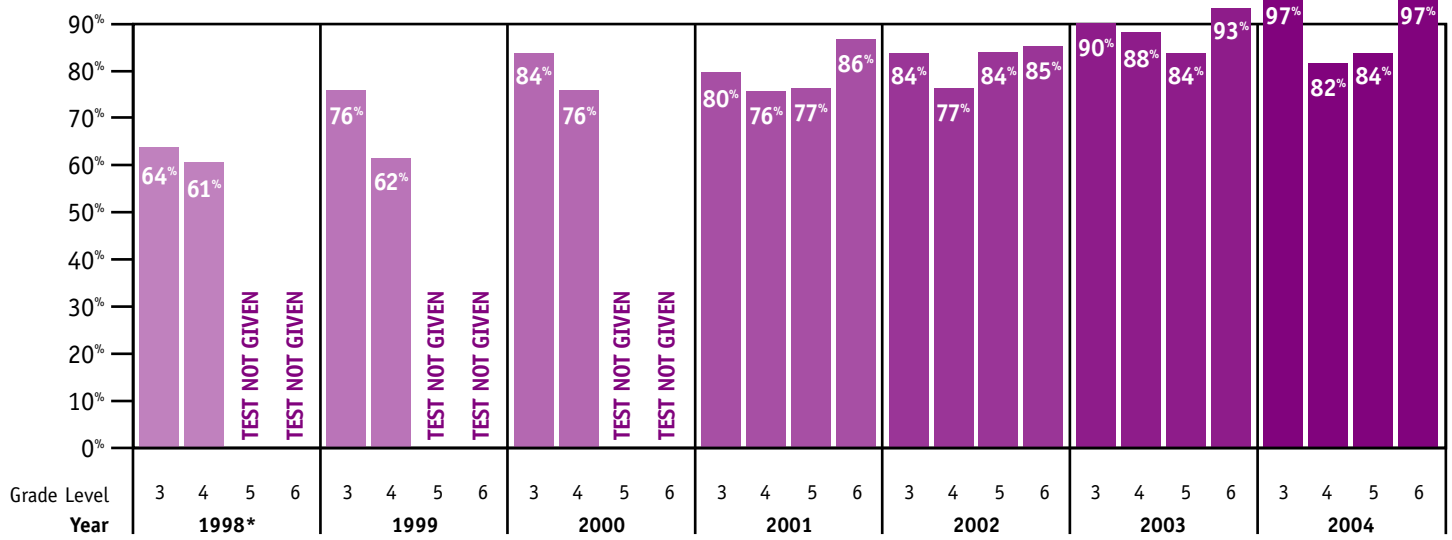


## About Poudre School District

The district serves more than 24,000 students in 45 schools. The student population is 81% Caucasian, 13% Hispanic, 3% Asian American, 2% African American, and 1% Native American. Twenty-seven percent of students are eligible for free or reduced-price lunches.



## Percentage of Students Scoring Proficient or Advanced on Reading DUNN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



\*Results after one year of Open Court Reading  
Source: Colorado Student Assessment Program

The success of the program has pleased the teachers. Borman said one of Dunn's Grade 1 teachers was sold on the whole-language approach to teaching reading before she began using *Open Court Reading*. "Since she's seen such dramatic results with *Open Court Reading*, she's also become an *Open Court* trainer."

## Open Court Reading Matches State-Measured Reading Skills

Now *Open Court Reading* is taught district-wide in Grades K-6. "It's not only a good curriculum, but it also matches the format by which our state measures reading skills," explained Tom Tonoli, retired Language Arts Coordinator. "*Open Court Reading's* re-teach material and its Intervention Guides are well-received by our teachers."

Lamb Caro taught Grade 5 in the district for nine years before becoming K-6 Reading and Language Arts Facilitator. He said the elementary schools using *Open Court Reading* consistently have shown growth in state assessments. "*Open Court Reading* covers gaps missed in other reading programs," he explained. "Its variety of literature is especially strong."

## About Dunn Elementary School

This Title I school serves more than 400 students in Grades K-6: 72% Caucasian, 11% Hispanic, 3% African American, 12% Asian American, and 2% Native American. Twenty-six percent of the children qualify for free or reduced-price lunches.



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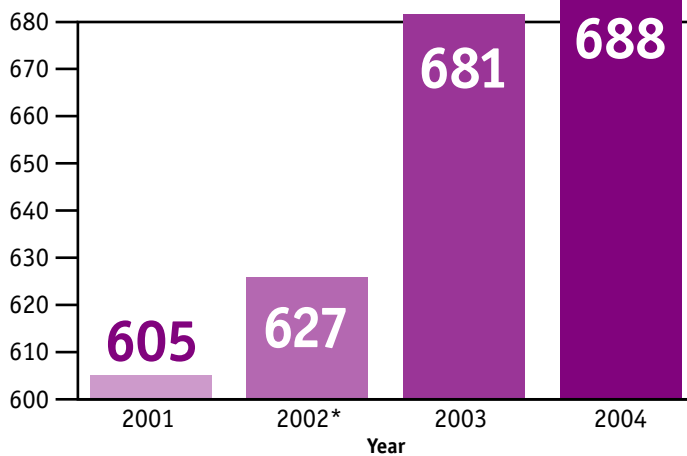
# California Elementary School's API Scores Increase with Open Court Reading

Since implementing *Open Court Reading* in Grades K-5 at the start of the 2001-2002 school year, educators at Ernest R. Geddes Elementary School have watched two indicators soar: reading scores and the school's Academic Performance Index (API).

The API measures academic performance and growth with a numeric index, ranging from a low of 200 to a high of 1,000. Before *Open Court Reading* was adopted at Geddes, its API score was 605 in 2001. After three years with the program, the API rose steadily to 688 by 2004. The school easily surpassed all growth targets each year.

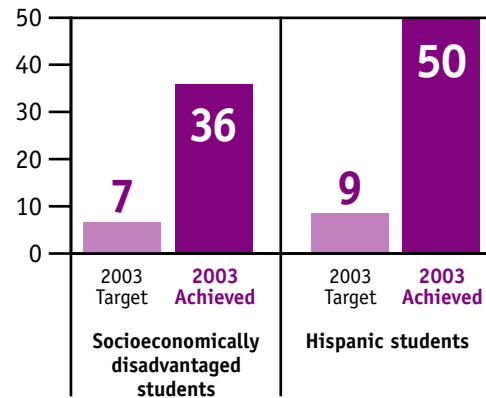
Because of these tremendous academic strides, Geddes Elementary achieved Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) both years it was measured: 2002-2003 and 2003-2004.

2001-2004 API Scores



\*Results after one year of Open Court Reading

API Growth for Subgroups of Students



In fact, subgroups of students also surpassed growth targets each year. The table above shows how Hispanic students as well as socioeconomically disadvantaged students surpassed individual API growth targets in 2003.

## Underperforming California School Reports Highest Scores in District

The school experienced good results soon after implementing *Open Court Reading*. Just one year earlier, the school was labeled Underperforming by

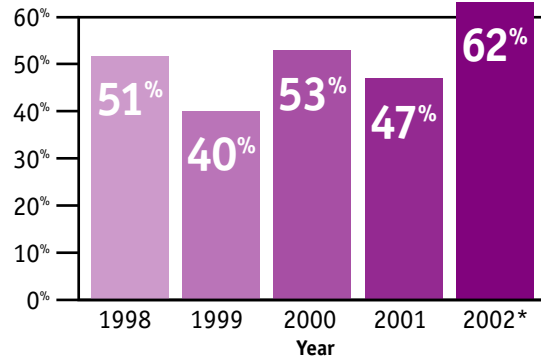


### About Ernest R. Geddes Elementary School

Geddes is one of 13 elementary schools in the Baldwin Park Unified School District. Serving more than 900 students, it is located about 30 miles east of Los Angeles. The student base is 90% Hispanic, 6% Asian American, and 2% Caucasian. About 45% of the students are English Language Learners, and 80% are eligible for free or reduced-price lunches.



**Percentage of Grade 1 Students Scoring At or Above National Average on SAT/9 Reading\*\***



\*Results after one year with Open Court Reading

\*\*California replaced the SAT/9 with the CAT6 in 2003, and the scores cannot be compared

the state. After only one year, teachers reported the highest Grade 1 scores in the district on the Stanford 9 (SAT/9) reading test in 2002.

Former Principal Terry Slater said teachers were thrilled with the opportunity to commit to and implement the program because many of them had previously used its phonics component with great success. "In order to field test *Open Court Reading* for the district, we composed a three-year plan with all reading goals tied to *Open Court Reading*."

That commitment paid off when an all-time high percentage of Grade 1 students scored at or above the national average on the reading portion of the SAT/9 in 2002. "That 62% in 2002 was a dramatic increase compared to 47% in 2001," Slater said. "The Grade 1 team attributed the increase to *Open Court Reading's* excellent teaching materials."

## Open Court Reading Correlates with Science and Social Studies

During the 2002-2003 school year, the district adopted a new science curriculum, and Geddes teachers were very grateful that the *Open Court Reading* units correlated with science and social studies. "It's

amazing to watch kids' brains make those wonderful connections between reading and science and reading and social studies," new Principal Kathy Warden said.

During that same year, Geddes teachers noticed reading gaps in Grade 5 because those students did not experience *Open Court Reading* when their elementary education began. In response, they created The Learning Center (TLC) for reading intervention. Teachers identified 164 at-risk readers and placed them in TLC in February 2003.

Resource Teacher Eileen Sloman said at least 25% of the Grade 5 students read on grade level after three months with *Open Court Reading*. "Before we introduced them to the program, they struggled with reading because they had poor decoding skills," she said. "With *Open Court Reading*, they began to decode and spell at a higher level. Teachers told us they saw light bulbs going on all over the place! Dramatic results continue to occur because kids make all the necessary connections."

### For more information



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# Idaho School’s Native American Pre-Kindergarteners Flourish with Open Court Reading

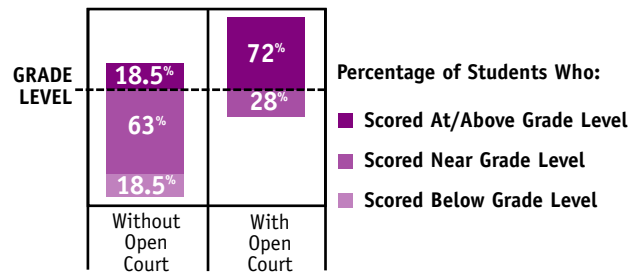
Since 1998, all K-6 students within the Plummer-Worley School District on the Coeur D’Alene Reservation have used *Open Court Reading* with good results. During the 2002-2003 school year, *Open Court Reading* was taught in Pre-K for the first time at Lakeside Elementary School.

Preschool Special Education Teacher Marita Verhei said she was thrilled to add the program to the Pre-K curriculum. “I knew it would help me prepare students for *Open Court Reading* in Kindergarten,” she said.

Although there is no formal testing in Pre-K, Verhei noted that before *Open Court Reading* was implemented, the highest-achieving children left her classroom recognizing between 9-13 upper case letters of the alphabet. After one year with *Open Court Reading*, the majority of pre-Kindergarteners left her classroom recognizing all upper case letters and about half of the lower case letters.

“They had rhyming down perfectly, which had never happened before,” Verhei said. “The phonemic skills they gained through this program were incredible. When I took my students to Kindergarten for orientation, they already knew how to use the Sound/Spelling Cards in the classroom. Children from other classrooms who hadn’t experienced *Open Court Reading* were definitely not at that level.”

## Kindergarten Scores on 2004 IRI



## All Kindergarten Students Who Had Open Court Reading in Pre-K Scored At, Above or Near Grade Level

The chart above shows how 45 Kindergarteners scored on the Idaho Reading Indicator (IRI) test given in the fall of 2004. One group of children experienced *Open Court Reading* in Pre-K, while the other did not. Seventy-two percent of the children who experienced the program scored at or above grade level, while 18.5% of the children who didn’t experience the program scored at that same level.



### About Lakeside Elementary School

Lakeside Elementary School is on the Coeur D’Alene Reservation, about 30 miles south of Coeur D’Alene, Idaho. About 65% of the student population is Native American, while the remaining 35% is Caucasian. The majority of students come from rural, low-income households; 59% qualify for free or reduced-price lunches. About 20% of children in the Pre-K program have developmental delays.

## Overcoming Developmental Delays

Verhei said one Native American pre-Kindergartener made excellent growth with his literacy skills after experiencing *Open Court Reading*, despite his speech and motor delays. "Because he could recognize only a few words, he had trouble following instructions," she said. "Yet I wanted to ensure he would begin Kindergarten with the knowledge he needed, such as spelling his name and knowing the letters of the alphabet. I decided that if he couldn't say the letters, he could sign the letters."

After one year with *Open Court Reading*, the student recognized all upper case letters and a good portion of lower case letters. "Not only was he signing the letters, but he began speaking them too. His next step is to relate the words to print," she said.

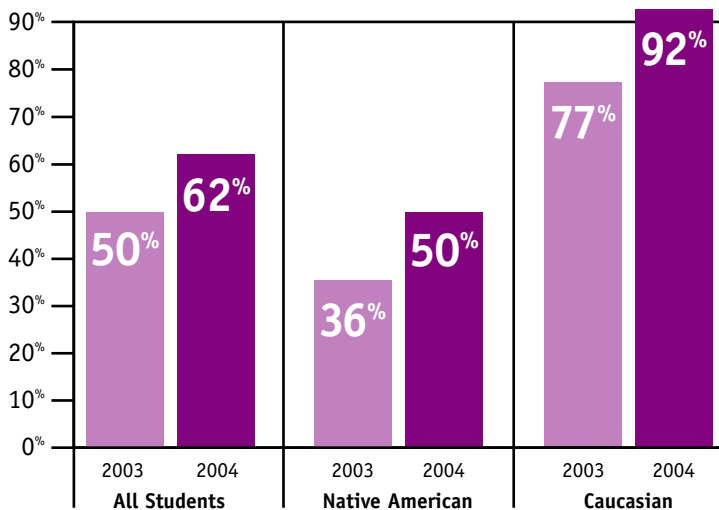
Verhei plans to continue to use *Open Court Reading* with her Pre-K students. "I adore this program because it validates the theory that young children really can learn letters," she said. "My students love

every moment of *Open Court Reading*, including the finger plays and awareness games. It's a wonderful tool; I can't say enough good things about it!"

## Achievement Gap Narrows Between Native American, Caucasian Students

Pre-Kindergarteners are not the only students excelling with *Open Court Reading*. For example, Grade 4 students are doing well on the reading portion of the Idaho Standards Achievement Test (ISAT). The chart below shows that the achievement gap is narrowing between Native American students and Caucasian students. Lakeside Elementary School achieved Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for the first time in 2004. "That's because subgroups of students surpassed all growth targets," Principal Joe St. John said. "Excellent teachers, a solid curriculum, hard-working students, and parental support are the reasons for our progress."

Percentage of Grade 4 Students Scoring Proficient and Above on ISAT Reading



### For more information



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# And the Success Continues...

Other schools across the country continue to show remarkable results with *Open Court Reading*.

## Los Angeles Unified School District

### Los Angeles, California

When many of its elementary schools were scoring low on California's Academic Performance Index (API), administrators in the Los Angeles Unified School District decided it was time to change the way educators taught reading. Most of the district's elementary schools adopted *Open Court Reading* in Grades K-2 at the beginning of the 2000-2001 school year. Now they use it in Grades K-5 district-wide.

In 2001, before the district began using *Open Court Reading*, the mean API score among elementary schools was 609. It rose to 654 in 2002 and to 696 in 2003. By 2004, the average elementary school API increased again to 701.

Assistant Superintendent of Instruction Ronni Ephraim said student achievement within the elementary grades continues to rise year to year. "Teachers and administrators have truly embraced the use of

*Open Court Reading* as a comprehensive, balanced literacy program," she said. "We're learning that as we implement the program with increasing fidelity, our students are the ultimate winners."

In 2003, California replaced the SAT/9 with the CAT6 (California Achievement Test). While the scores of these two norm-referenced tests cannot be compared, the trend based on scores from each test is clear. Grade 2 scores are rising.

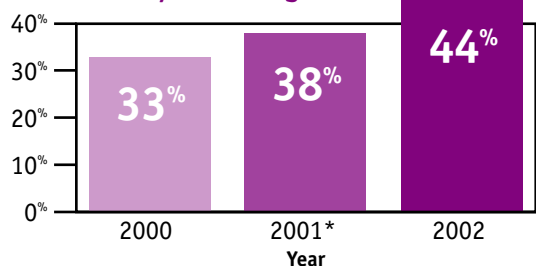
## About the Los Angeles Unified School District

Serving more than 718,000 students in Grades K-12, the student population is 72% Hispanic, 11% African American, 10% Caucasian, 5% Asian American, and 2% Filipino American. Seventy-two percent of students qualify for free or reduced-price lunches.



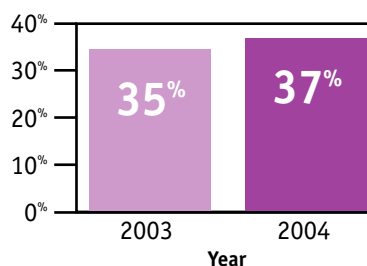
### LAUSD Student Performance Continues On an Upward Trend Regardless of the Standardized Test

Percentage of Grade 2 Students Scoring At or Above National Average on SAT/9 Reading

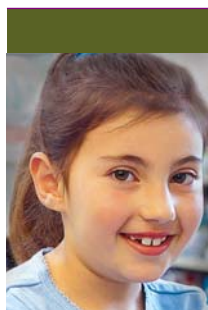


\*Results after one year with Open Court Reading

Percentage of Grade 2 Students Scoring At or Above National Average on CAT6



### For more information



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## Fort Worth Independent School District

### Fort Worth, Texas

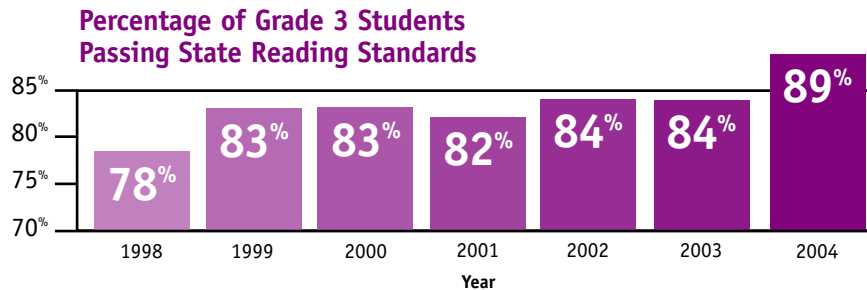
The percentage of elementary students in the Fort Worth Independent School District passing state reading standards has increased significantly since the late 1990s, reflecting an extraordinary improvement among schools serving the city's economically disadvantaged.

At the beginning of the 1998-1999 school year, Fort Worth schools implemented either *Open Court Reading* or Direct Instruction in Grades K-2. By 2001-2002, all elementary schools had adopted one or the other in Grades K-5. This impact is reflected in the steady increase in Grade 3 reading scores. Initially, educators administered the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS). In 2003, a more rigorous Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) was implemented. Grade 3 reading scores continued to rise.

"We must continue on this path," Director of Reading Marsha Sonnenberg said. "We've made such great progress so far, and there are many more children coming into our system who deserve this same approach to reading education."

## About the Fort Worth Independent School District

Serving more than 80,000 students in an urban, multi-ethnic environment, the district's student population is 50% Hispanic, 29% African American, 19% Caucasian, and 2% Asian American. Twenty-four percent of the students are English Language Learners, and 70% qualify for free or reduced-price lunches.



Source: Texas Assessment of Academic Skills, Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills

### For more information



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# Appendix

## Research Supporting Instruction in Open Court Reading: A Selected Annotated Bibliography

Following is a summary of several of the most significant studies in reading instruction from the past thirty years. Each study has reported results providing insights into at least one element critical to a successful reading program. These studies and many others serve as the cornerstone of the instruction found in *Open Court Reading*. The authors of *Open Court Reading* continue their efforts to update the program as new studies are published and new research on instructional methods becomes available. Several of the studies listed below actually used and/or cited portions of *Open Court Reading* in their investigations for successful practices. Others used instructional methods incorporated in *Open Court Reading*. The sum of the knowledge revealed by these studies continues to support and enhance the philosophy of this program.

Adams, M. J. (1990). *Beginning to read: Thinking and learning about print*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press. Draws from decades of research on the nature and development of reading proficiency to show the role that phonics should play in a complete program of beginning reading instruction. Offers research support for the use of systematic, explicit phonics instruction.

American Federation of Teachers. (1998). *Building on the best, learning from what works: Seven promising reading and language arts programs*. Washington, D.C.

Part of a series about research-based programs that show promise for raising student achievement (especially in low-performing schools), this report describes seven promising reading and language arts programs that show evidence of high standards, effectiveness, replicability, and support structures. The seven programs are: (1) *Cooperative Integrated Reading and Comprehension*; (2) *Direct Instruction*; (3) *Exemplary Center for Reading Instruction*; (4) *Junior Great Books*; (5) *Multicultural Reading and Thinking*; (6) *Open Court Collections for Young Scholars*; and (7) *Success for All*.

Anderson, R. C., Hiebert, E. H., Scott, J. A., & Wilkinson, I. A. G. (1985). *Becoming a nation of readers: The report of the Commission on Reading*. Washington, D.C.: The National Institute of Education.

A landmark report that contains a synthesis of extensive research findings on the nature of reading and reading instruction. Proposes that (1) the knowledge is now available to make worthwhile improvements in reading throughout the United States, and (2) if the practices seen

in the classrooms of the best teachers in the best schools could be introduced everywhere, improvement in reading would be dramatic.

Anderson, R. C., & Pearson, P. D. (1984). *A schema-theoretic view of basic processes in reading*. In P. D. Pearson, R. Barr, M. L. Kamil, & P. Mosenthal (Eds.), *Handbook of reading research* (pp. 255–292). New York: Longman.

Argues (1) that one of the most basic insights about learning is that it depends to a large degree on prior knowledge, and (2) that the system of understandings, or knowledge structures, about a concept that students bring to learning is more important than facts they may know or not know. Labels this view of learning schema theory. Explains that in schema theory, knowledge, or schema, is a large network of abstract mental structures that represent individual, personal understandings of the world. Relationships among schemata are like webs, with each schema interconnected to many others. Schemata grow and change as we acquire new information through experience and reading.

Ball, E. W., & Blachman, B. A. (1991). Does phoneme awareness training in kindergarten make a difference in early word recognition and developmental spelling? *Reading Research Quarterly*, 26, 49–66.

Finds that seven weeks of explicit instruction in phonemic awareness combined with explicit instruction in sound-spelling correspondences for Kindergarten children was more powerful than instruction in sound-spelling correspondences alone and more powerful than language activities in improving reading skills.



Bereiter, C. & Scardamalia, M. (1993). *Surpassing ourselves: An inquiry into the nature and implications of expertise*. Chicago: Open Court.

Examines the nature of expertise and discusses expert-novice comparisons, which look at what experts in a particular field know and at what they do that novices in the field do not know or do, or do differently or less often than experts. Concludes that these findings are valuable in education because they show what the results of successful learning look like.

Beck, I.L., & McKeown, M.G. (1999). Comprehension: The sine qua non of reading. *Teaching and Change*, 6, 197–211.

Discusses the relevance to classroom instruction of reading-comprehension research. Notes how knowledge of the world and active engagement with ideas in a text influence comprehension. Examines the power of background knowledge, reading aloud and discussing literature with students, active engagement in independent reading, and questioning the author.

Brown, A., & Campione, J. (1990). Communities of learning and thinking, or a context by any other name. *Human Development*, 21, 109–125.

Discusses the distinction between “experts” and “novices,” noting that students are “universal novices,” faced constantly with new learning tasks. Argues that the aim of instruction should be to help students to be intelligent novices who, although they do not possess knowledge of a particular subject, know how to get that knowledge and how to learn from texts rather than to memorize facts.

Bruer, J.T. (1993). The mind’s journey from novice to expert. *American Educator*, 17, 6–15, 38–46.

Examines the field of cognitive science research — the study of thinking and learning. Argues for the use of teaching methods based on cognitive science and calls these methods “the educational equivalents of polio vaccine and penicillin.” Notes, in particular, that such methods have been shown to produce increases in reading comprehension.

Chall, J.S. (1967). *Learning to read: The great debate*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

A landmark examination of a large body of reading- and learning-related research. Concludes that, as a complement to connected and meaningful reading, systematic phonics instruction is a valuable component of beginning reading instruction.

Cunningham, A.E. (1990). Explicit versus implicit instruction in phonological awareness. *Journal of Experimental Child Psychology*, 50, 429–444.

Finds that explicit instruction in how segmentation and blending are involved in the reading process is superior to instruction that does not explicitly teach Kindergarten children to apply phonemic awareness to reading.

Notes that the children who received explicit instruction in phonemic awareness did better than did a group of first-grade children who had no such instruction.

Ehri, L.C. (2000). Learning to read and learning to spell: Two sides of a coin. *Topics in Language Disorders*, 20, 19–36.

Draws from research findings to discuss similarities and differences between learning to read and learning to spell words.

Felton, R.H. (1993). Effects of instruction on the decoding skills of children with phonological-processing problems. *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, 26, 583–89.

Describes a longitudinal study of Kindergarten through second-grade children that compared the efficacy of reading interventions defined as code-based, which emphasized identification of words based on letter-sound relationships and patterns, and meaning-based, which emphasized the identification of words based on context and supplemented by partial letter-sound cues (i.e., beginning and ending sounds). Reports that at the end of second grade, children who had received the code-based instruction earned significantly higher mean scores than did children who had received the meaning-based approach on measures of word recognition and spelling. Concludes that five elements are critical to a beginning program for children at risk of reading failure: (1) direct instruction in language analysis; (2) explicit teaching of the alphabetic code; (3) simultaneous teaching of reading and spelling; (4) explicit, systematic reading instruction; and (5) using decodable words and texts to enhance automaticity.

Foorman, B., Francis, D., Beeler, T., Winikates, D., & Fletcher, J.M. (1997). Early interventions for children with reading problems: Study designs and preliminary findings. *Learning Disabilities: A Multi-disciplinary Journal*, 8, 63–71.

Describes a study in which 260 children were randomly assigned to a Kindergarten curriculum that focused on the explicit, systematic teaching of phonemic awareness and sound-spelling correspondences (n=80) and a standard curriculum (n=160) that consisted of developmentally appropriate practices described by the state of Texas’s essential elements for Kindergarten. Reports that (1) the explicit, systematic instruction in sound-spelling correspondences was more effective in reducing reading disabilities than was instruction in a print-rich environment characterized by reading interesting stories; (2) the children in the explicit-instruction curriculum made significant gains in phonemic awareness over the year; and (3) the greatest gains occurred when explicit instruction involved teaching sound-spelling correspondences along with phonemic awareness. Concludes that explicit, systematic instruction in sound-spelling patterns in first- and second-grade classrooms can prevent reading difficulties in children at risk of reading failure.

Forman, B., Francis, D., Novy, D., & Liberman, D. (1991). How letter-sound instruction mediates progress in first-grade reading and spelling. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 83*, 456-469.

Describes a study in which 80 first-grade children in classrooms that differed in the amount of sound-letter instruction offered daily were administered tests of phonemic segmentation, reading, and spelling. Reports that although no differences were found on phonemic segmentation tasks in the various classrooms, children in classrooms that provided more letter-sound instruction showed more spelling and reading improvement.

Forman, B., Francis, D., Fletcher, J., Schatschneider, C., & Mehta, P. (1998). The role of instruction in learning to read: Preventing reading failure in at-risk children. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 90*, 37-55.

Reports on a study in which first- and second-grade students (n=285) received instruction in one of three types of classroom reading programs: (1) direct instruction in sound-spelling correspondences; (2) less direct instruction in sound-spelling correspondences; and (3) implicit instruction in the alphabetic code as part of reading connected text. Results show advantages for reading programs that emphasize explicit instruction in sound-spelling correspondences.

Graves, M.F., Juel, C., & Graves, B.B. (2000). *Teaching reading in the 21st century*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Drawing from what is known from research, theory, and classroom experiences, this book presents a comprehensive plan to increase literacy levels and to assist students in becoming lifelong readers. Chapters titles are (1) Reading and Learning to Read; (2) Reading Instruction; (3) Emergent Literacy; (4) Word Recognition; (5) Vocabulary Development; (6) Scaffolding Students' Comprehension of Text: Teacher-Directed Approaches; (7) Guiding Students toward Independence in Reading; (8) Teaching for Understanding in Content Areas; (9) Writing and Reading; (10) Literacy Instruction for Non-Native Speakers of English; (11) Classroom Assessment; and (12) Classroom Portraits.

Grossen, B. (1997). *A synthesis of research on reading from the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development*. Eugene, OR: University of Oregon.

Examines and synthesizes 30 years of reading research carried out by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD). Presents seven key research-based principles of effective reading instruction: (1) begin teaching phonemic awareness directly at an early age; (2) teach each sound-spelling correspondence explicitly; (3) teach frequent, highly regular sound-spelling relationships systematically; (4) show children exactly how to sound out words; (5) use connected, decodable text for children to practice the sound-spelling relationships they learn; (6) use interesting stories to develop language comprehension; and (7) balance the use of interesting stories with decoding instruction.

Juel, C., & Minden-Cupp, C. (2000). Learning to read words: Linguistic units and strategies. *Reading Research Quarterly, 35*, 458-492.

Analyzes word recognition instruction in four first-grade classrooms. Concludes that (1) differential instruction may be helpful in first grade; (2) children who enter first grade with low literacy levels benefit from early and intense exposure to phonics; and (3) a structured phonics curriculum that includes a focus on onsets and rimes and sounding and blending phonemes within rimes is effective.

Kuhn, M.R., & Stahl, S.A. (2000). *Fluency: A review of developmental and remedial practices*.

CIERA-R-2-008. Ann Arbor: Center for the Improvement of Early Reading Achievement, University of Michigan.

Provides findings of a survey that examined theoretical papers and practical studies that related to fluency instruction and reading development. Among the findings reported are (1) teacher-assisted approaches to fluency instruction, such as reading-while-listening, seem to be more effective than non-assisted approaches, such as repeated reading; and (2) effective fluency instruction moves beyond automatic word recognition to include rhythm and expression, or the prosodic features of language.

Lyon, G.R. (1997). *Report on learning disabilities research. Testimony given before the Committee on Education and the Workforce in the U.S. House of Representatives*.

Argues that the development of phonemic awareness, the development of an understanding of the alphabetic principle, and the translation of these skills to the application of phonics in reading and spelling words are nonnegotiable beginning reading skills that all children must master in order to understand what they read and to learn from their reading sessions.

Moats, L.C. (1999). *Teaching reading is rocket science: What expert teachers of reading should know and be able to do*. Washington, D.C.: American Federation of Teachers.

Argues that well-designed, controlled comparisons of instructional approaches have consistently supported the following components and practices in effective reading instruction: (1) direct teaching of decoding, comprehension, and literature appreciation; (2) phoneme awareness; (3) systematic, explicit instruction in the alphabetic principle; (4) daily exposure to a variety of reading materials, as well as incentives for children to read independently; (5) vocabulary instruction that includes a variety of complementary methods designed to explore the relationships among words and the relationships among word structure, origin, and meaning; (6) comprehension strategies that include predicting, summarizing, clarifying, questioning, and visualizing; and (7) frequent student writing to enable deeper understanding of what is read.

National Reading Panel. (2000). *Teaching children to read: An evidence-based assessment of scientific research literature on reading and its implications for reading instruction*. Washington D.C.: National Institute of Child Health and Human Development.

Presents the findings of the National Reading Panel, a group of reading educators and researchers, who were charged by the United States Congress to assess the status of research-based knowledge about reading, including the effectiveness of various approaches to teaching children to read. The panel's conclusions include the following: (1) systematic phonological and phonemic awareness instruction contributes strongly to reading success; (2) systematic instruction in phonics, stressing letter-sound correspondences and their use in spelling and reading, produces significant benefits for students in Grades K–6 and for students having difficulty learning to read; (3) teaching students to use a range of reading comprehension techniques is the most effective way to improve comprehension.

Pressley, M., & Symons, S. (1995). Reading comprehension strategies. In M. Pressley & V. Woloshyn (Eds.), *Cognitive strategy instruction that really improves children's academic performance* (2nd ed.). Cambridge, MA: Brookline Books. Reviews research indicating that specific instruction in reading comprehension strategies is effective in improving comprehension for students at various grade levels, including those with learning disabilities. Identifies the reading strategies used by highly competent readers, including summarization, mental imagery, question asking and answering, and activating prior knowledge.

Stahl, S. A., Duffy-Hester, A. M., & Stahl, K. A. D. (1998). Everything you wanted to know about phonics (but were afraid to ask). *Reading Research Quarterly*, 33, 338–355. Reviews what research has revealed to be the basic principles underlying word learning and phonics instruction. Concludes that effective phonics instruction (1) develops an understanding of the alphabetic principle; (2) develops phonological/phonemic awareness; (3) provides a grounding in alphabetic knowledge (the names and shapes of letters); (4) does not teach rules, does not dominate instruction, limits the use of worksheets; (5) provides sufficient practice in reading words in isolation and in stories and in writing words; (6) leads to automatic word recognition; and (7) is only one part of reading instruction.

Stanovich, K. E. (1994). Romance and reality. *The Reading Teacher*, 47, 280–291.

Concludes that the role played by direct instruction in the alphabetic principle in facilitating early reading instruction is one of the most well-established conclusions in all of reading-related science, and that, conversely, the idea that learning to read is just like learning to speak is accepted by no responsible linguist, psychologist, or cognitive scientist in the research community.

Tan, A., & Nicholson, T. (1997). Flashcards revisited: Training poor readers to read words faster improves their comprehension of text. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 89, 276–288.

Describes a study in which second- through third-grade students were placed in two instructional groups. Students in one group received instruction that emphasized word recognition and fluency, with only brief attention given to the meanings of the words. Students in this group practiced recognizing target words until they could read each word without hesitation. Students in a second group received instruction that was heavily oriented toward developing their understanding of the meanings of the target words, with no attention given to the development of word recognition. Reports that the students in the group that received word recognition and fluency instruction answered correctly more comprehension questions than did students in the group that did not receive such instruction.

Torgesen, J. K., & Mathes, P. (1999). What every teacher should know about phonological awareness. In Consortium on Reading Excellence (CORE), *Reading research anthology: The why? of reading instruction*. Novato, CA: Arena Press. Based on extensive research findings, concludes that phonological awareness should be a part of reading instruction for every child, and that this instruction should be combined with systematic, explicit instruction in the alphabetic principle and with frequent opportunities to use both oral and written language and to read good literature.

Torgesen, J. K., Wagner, R., Rashotte, C. A., Alexander, A. W., & Conway, T. (1997). Preventive and remedial interventions for children with severe reading disabilities. *Learning Disabilities: A Multi-disciplinary Journal*, 8, 51–61.

Summarizes ongoing research that is designed to generate new knowledge about the relative effectiveness of different approaches to the prevention and remediation of reading disabilities in children, particularly difficulties in acquiring accurate and fluent word reading skills. Subjects, 180 kindergarten children who varied widely in their general verbal ability and home literacy environments, were in one of four instructional conditions, varying in content and level of explicit instruction in phonological/phonemic awareness and sound-spelling correspondences. Results indicate that, at the end of the second grade, children who received the most explicit instruction in the alphabetic principle had much stronger reading skills than did children in all the other instructional groups. In addition, children who received the most explicit instruction showed the lowest need to be held back a grade. Other analyses show that growth in reading skills was mediated by improvements in phonological processing skills.

Tunmer, W. E., Herriman, M. L., & Nesdale, A. R. (1988). Metalinguistic abilities and beginning reading. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 23, 134–158.

Concludes that the performance of children on tests designed to measure their concepts about print predicts their future reading achievement and is related strongly to other, more traditional measures of reading readiness and achievement.

# Results with Open Court Reading

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