

# Making the shift to the Science of Reading

Salemburg Elementary School in North Carolina achieves incredible reading gains less than one year after implementing Amplify Core Knowledge Language Arts.



# Background

Sampson County Schools (SCS) serves approximately 7,800 students across 18 public schools in North Carolina. SCS's student body is 43.3% Hispanic, 34.4% White, 16.9% Black, 4% two or more races, and 0.9% American Indian. Roughly 99% of the students in SCS are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch. Salemburg Elementary School follows the same demographic makeup as the district overall.

Salemburg Elementary School began implementing Amplify Core Knowledge Language Arts® (CKLA) at the start of the 2022–2023 school year.

18

Campuses

7,800

Students

99%

Eligible for free or  
reduced-price lunch

# Challenge

SCS was looking for a new curriculum that aligned with the Science of Reading to better support their student population. They were looking for a comprehensive curriculum with a robust knowledge-building foundation for their students, many of whom do not have opportunities to venture far beyond their neighborhoods. They were also looking for a program with a strong, structured sequence of foundational skills building to support all students in becoming independent readers.

# Solution

To best serve the population of SCS, the district formed a local committee of principals, instructional coaches, and central office stakeholders to vet materials aligned to the Science of Reading. After reviewing several different curricula, “[Amplify] CKLA just seemed perfect for what we needed,” said Dr. Suzanne Sell, Principal of Salemburg Elementary School.

Dr. Sell and her team determined that Amplify CKLA was comprehensive, which meant there was “no trying to make sure that a phonics scope and sequence from another company was going to align with it. It came with all of those parts, complex text that our students were going to be able to grapple with, a lot of scaffolding, and a lot of support for the students in Sampson County.”

Not only did Amplify CKLA provide the deep foundational skills instruction that SCS was looking for, but it also provided the background knowledge critical to the success of their student population.

“Our students don’t get to experience a lot of things that students from larger districts get to experience, so the knowledge portion of [Amplify] CKLA really helps to provide that for them.”

Feedback from students and teachers implementing Amplify CKLA in SCS has been overwhelmingly positive. According to Dr. Sell, “The kids love it! We haven’t found a single topic that the students are not interested in [within Amplify CKLA]; they absolutely love it!”

Most importantly, the students in SCS are making progress with the implementation of Amplify CKLA. The decodable Readers within the Skills Strand “are not predictive at all [and let] students experience at young ages [what it’s like] reading a chapter book,” Dr. Sell said. “For a six-year-old to hold a chapter book in their hand and say, ‘I read a whole book,’ it just really makes them want to read more for their teachers.”

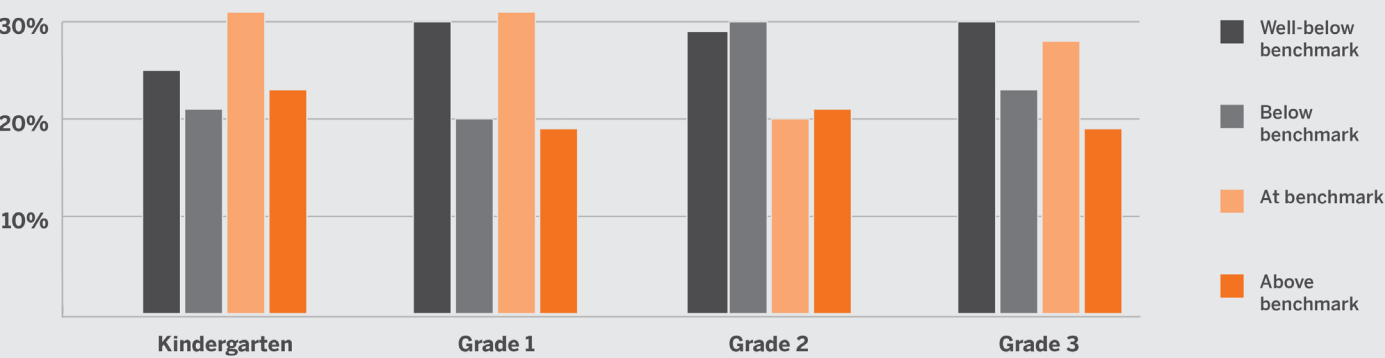
# Results

According to Dr. Sell, the program has resulted in astronomical student growth. “When we tested our students at the beginning of the year, and then we compared their scores in the middle of the year, we had students [who] were making between 80 and 100 composite points of growth in one semester,” she said, adding that this is the most growth she’s ever seen students make in just half a school year.

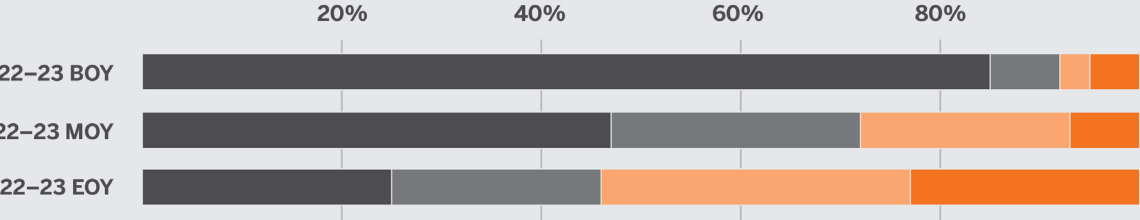
“[Amplify CKLA] provides all of the supports, all of the scaffolding that students will need in order to learn really complex skills. We know as we’re studying and making the shift to the Science of Reading that teaching reading is really brain science. You’re changing the shape of a student’s brain ... the way the brain functions. This program provides all of those pieces that teachers need to make that happen inside of a child’s head.”

**Dr. Suzanne Sell**  
Principal, Salemburg Elementary School

Salemburg Elementary Kindergarten through Grade 3 end-of-year composite scores



Salemburg Elementary Kindergarten composite scores



For more information about Amplify's Science of Reading-based complete early literacy suite, visit **[amplify.com](https://amplify.com)**.

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