

LOCS Elementary Literacy Curriculum Presentation

February 11, 2026

Presenters:

Kerri Anderson, Director of Elementary Curriculum

Kate DiMeo, Student Service Coordinator and ELA Specialist

Sarah Dabrowski, 3rd Grade teacher Stadium Drive

Bri Metz, 4th Grade teacher Orion Oaks

Emma Palushaj, 2nd Grade teacher Orion Oaks

Michele Smyth, Kindergarten teacher Webber

Lorie VanArsdale, Kindergarten teacher Stadium Drive

Why this journey to a new elementary literacy curriculum started:

- ▶ MDE Dyslexia Law passed in October 2024
- ▶ Science of Reading Research
- ▶ MDE came out with a list of approved curriculum programs to choose from CKLA was rated the highest
- ▶ LOCS had to make a choice regarding curriculum programs on approved list in July 2025 to apply for the 35m grant money from MDE

Overall Score (Average of Phases 1-3)

Amplify CKLA, 3rd Edition (2025) received the following scores in Overall Series Alignment

Phase 1 Non-Negotiables: Research-Based Series Alignment	Phases	Percentage earned in each phase
Meets	PHASE 1: Research-Based Series Alignment	99%
	PHASE 2: High-Quality Instructional Materials Alignment Scoring Process	95%
	Phase 3: ESSA Levels of Evidence	100%
	Overall Percent	98%

Thank you to all the staff who went on this journey!

31 teachers from all six elementary schools with all grade levels represented.

Instructional Coaches:

Kate DiMeo - committee chair
Beth Bruce
Melissa Berndt
Lisa Jones
Andrea Moede
Emilie Schiff
January Stafford
Allison Webb

Michele Smyth	Kindergarten	Webber
Dawn Burks	Kindergarten	Webber
Sarah Masarello	Kindergarten	Webber
Lorie Vanarsdale	Kindergarten	Stadium Drive
Lauren Miller (S2 only)	First Grade	Webber
Katie McCall	First Grade	Webber
Danielle Carroll	First Grade	Webber
Claire Demoff	First Grade	Carpenter
Julia Moore	First Grade	Blanche Sims
Carly Riddle	Second Grade	Paint Creek
Morgan Battershell	Second Grade	Paint Creek
Amanda Bedient	Second Grade	Paint Creek
Hannah Ordiway	Second Grade	Webber
Erin Kawamoto	Second Grade	Stadium Drive
Emma Palushaj	Second Grade	Orion Oaks
Jodie Marsden	Second Grade	Orion Oaks
Nicole Shuler (S2 only)	Third Grade	Blanche Sims
Kari Robbins	Third Grade	Blanche Sims
Amanda Kulik	Third Grade	Blanche Sims
Adrian Carl	Third Grade	Paint Creek
Sarah Dawbrowski	Third Grade	Stadium Drive
Teresa Ratkowiak	Fourth Grade	Stadium Drive
Shelby McCumber	Fourth Grade	Orion Oaks
Bri Metz	Fourth Grade	Orion Oaks
Francie Robertson (S2 only)	Fourth Grade	Orion Oaks
Cami Giberson	Fifth Grade	Orion Oaks
Teresa West	Fifth Grade	Carpenter
Bethany Goll (S2 only)	Fifth Grade	Carpenter
Amy Ducharme	Fifth Grade	Carpenter
Dayna Brown	Fifth Grade	Webber
Jessica Soullier	Fifth Grade	Stadium Drive

CKLA Amplify is built on the science of how kids learn to read



Word Recognition

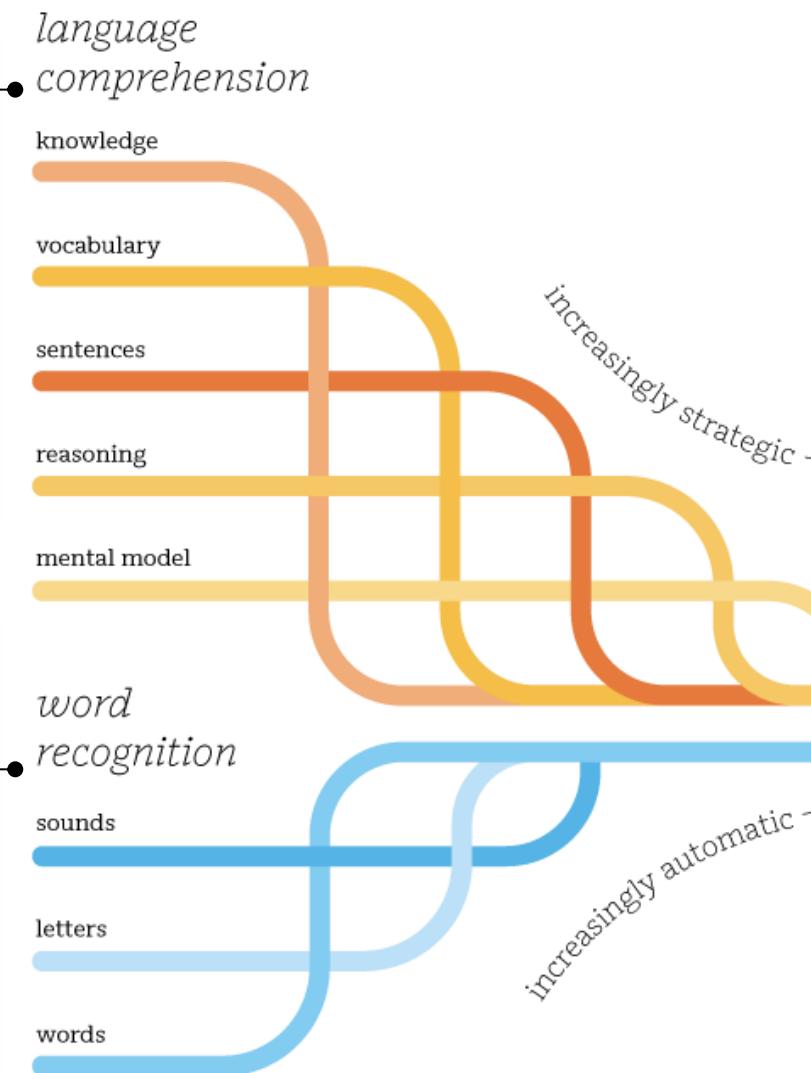
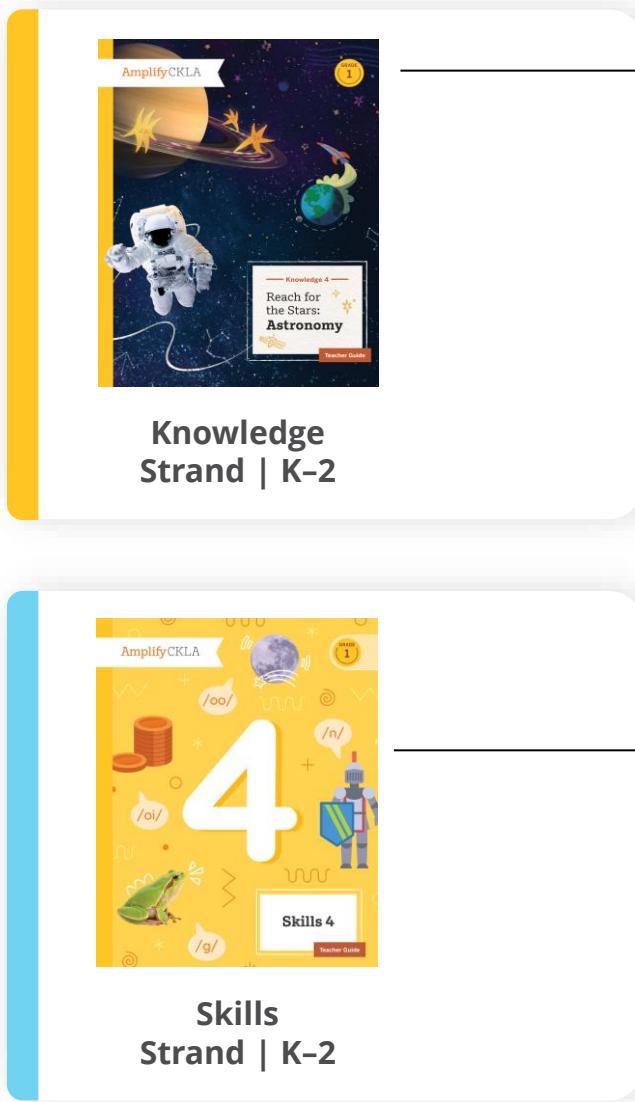
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Language
Comprehension

=

Reading to
gain meaning

CKLA program structure is grounded in research



Scarborough (2001)



K-2nd Grade Program Structure

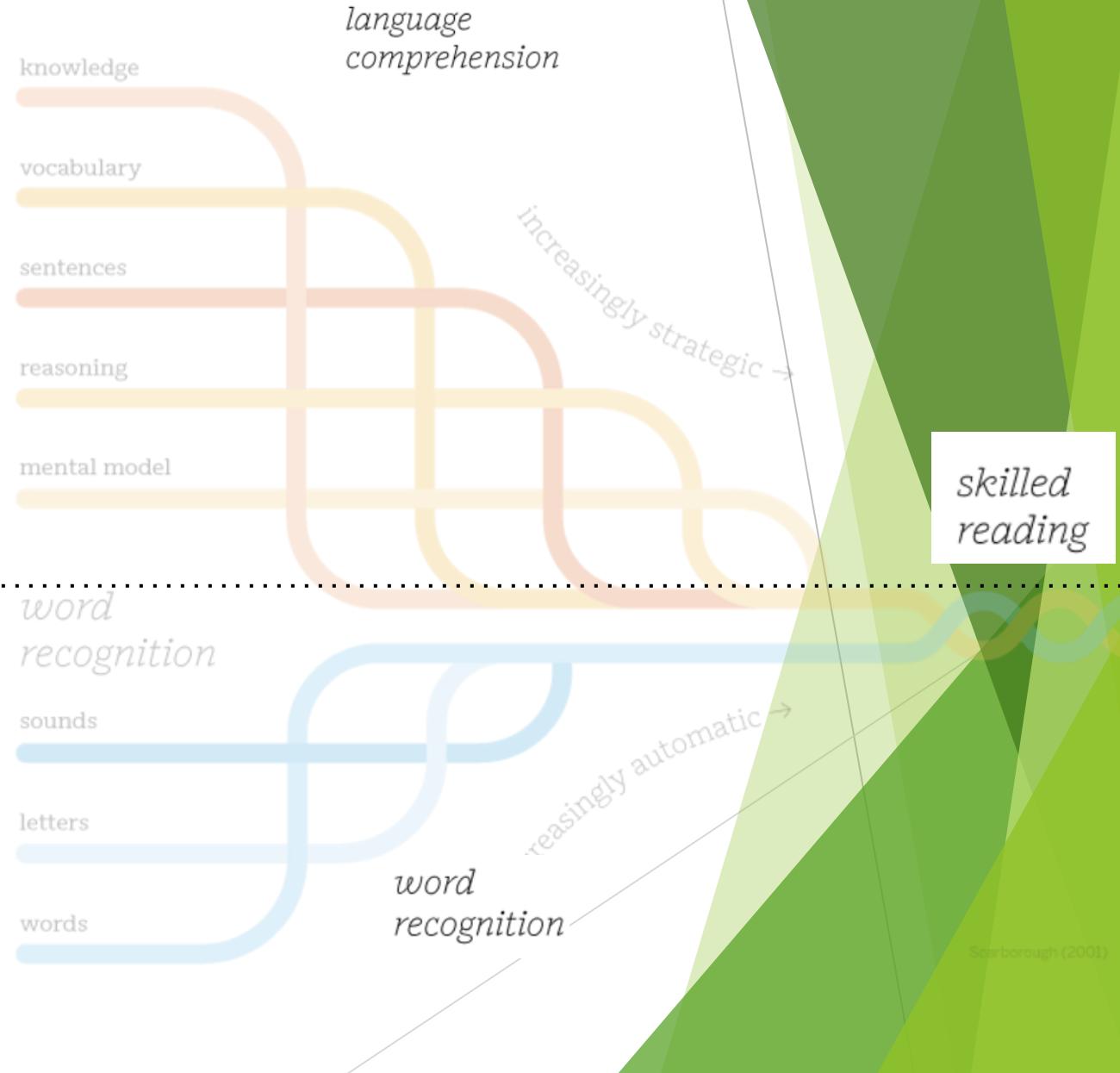
Knowledge Strand

- Building knowledge
- Vocabulary
- Sharing ideas



Foundational Skills

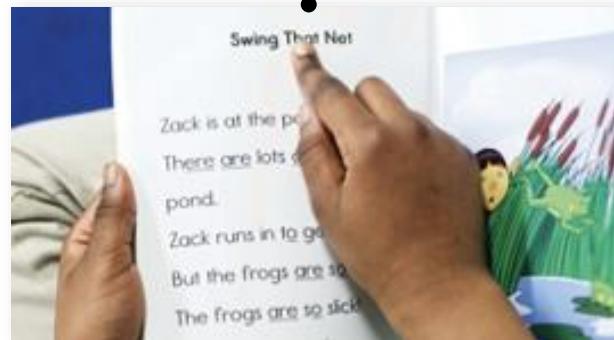
- Phonemic awareness
- Phonics
- Deliberate reading and writing practice



Comprehensive Skills Instruction



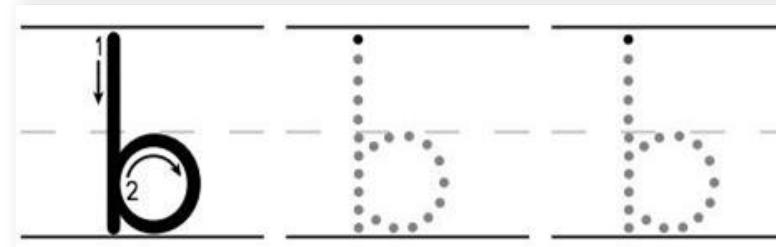
map sounds to letters



read decodable texts



write about text



daily practice and reinforcement

Kindergarten



Units 1-2 Purely Oral Phonemic Awareness

Units 3-5 One-to-one letter-sound correspondences; CVC words with "short" vowel sounds like *cat*, *dog*, *bed*

Unit 6 Consonant Clusters, CCVC words like *flag*, CVCC words like *dust*, CCVCC words like *blast*.

Unit 7 Consonant sounds written with digraph spellings (e.g., 'sh', 'ch', 'th', 'ng')

Units 8-9 Tricky Words; double-letter spellings like 'ss', 'ff', 'ck'

Unit 10 Basic code spellings for /ee/ spelled 'ee', /ae/ spelled 'a_e', /oe/ spelled 'o_e', /ie/ spelled 'i_e', and /ue/ spelled 'u_e'; Tricky Words

K-2 CKLA Skills Code Progression Overview

Grade 1

Unit 1 Review of CVC, CCVC, CVCC, CCVCC words; Tricky Words

Unit 2 Basic code spellings for /ee/ spelled 'ee', /ae/ spelled 'a_e', /oe/ spelled 'o_e', /ie/ spelled 'i_e', and /ue/ spelled 'u_e'; Tricky Words

Unit 3 Basic code spellings for vowel sounds /oo/, /oo/, /oo/, /oo/, and /aw/; Tricky Words

Unit 4 Basic code spellings for r-controlled vowel sounds /er/, /ar/, /or/; past-tense endings; two-syllable words; Tricky Words

Unit 5 Common spelling alternatives for consonant sounds (e.g., 'tch' for /ch/, 'g' for /j/, 'wr' for /r/); Tricky Words

Unit 6 Common spelling alternatives for consonant sounds (e.g., 'c' for /s/, 'kn' for /n/, 'wh' for /w/)

Unit 7 Spelling alternatives for long vowel sounds (e.g., 'ai' and 'ay' for /ae/, 'oa' for /oe/)



Grade 2

Unit 1 Review of basic code spellings for /a/, /i/, /e/, /o/, /u/ and all consonant sounds; spelling alternatives for /s/, /j/, /ar/, /er/, /ir/, /ur/; tricky spellings 'c', 's', 'g', 'n'

Unit 2 Review of basic code spellings for /ae/, /ee/, /ar/, /er/, /oe/, /oo/, /or/, /oo/, /er/, /ar/; spelling alternatives for /ee/, /oo/, /er/, /ar/

Unit 3 Spelling alternatives for /ae/, /oe/, /er/, /ue/, and /aw/; tricky spellings 'a', 'o', 'r'

Unit 4 Spelling alternatives for /er/, /ar/, /er/, /oe/, and /aw/; tricky spellings 'e', 'ow'

Unit 5 Spelling alternatives for /u/ and /oi/; tricky spellings 'a', 'e', 'o', 'o_e', and 'ou'

Unit 6 Spelling alternatives for /er/, /oo/, /ar/, /er/, /oo/

3rd-5th Grade Program Structure

language
comprehension

knowledge

vocabulary

sentences

reasoning

mental model

word
recognition

sounds

letters

words

increasingly strategic →

skilled
reading

increasingly automatic →



Scarborough (2001)

Integrated Strand

Using Skills to Build Knowledge

- Close Reading
- Unpacking Complex Text
- Writing to Evidence
- Vocabulary in Context
- Response to Text
- Collaborative Conversations
- Morphology
- Grammar
- Spelling

Connections within and across grades

Amplify CKLA's systematic and spiraling approach to knowledge building improves students' reading fluency, vocabulary, and text understanding.



Star Light, Star Bright: Nursery Rhymes and Fables	The Moral of the Story: Fables and Tales	Fortunes and Feats: Fairy Tales and Tall Tales	Timeless Tales: Classic Stories	My Story, My Voice: Personal Narratives	In My Own Words: Personal Narratives
See, Hear, Smell, Taste, Touch: The Five Senses	From Nose to Toes: How Your Body Works	The Birthplace of Democracy: Ancient Greece	Fur, Fins, and Feathers: Animal Classification	Knights and Castles: Europe's Middle Ages	Early Americas: Maya, Aztec, and Inca
Underdogs and Heroes: Stories	Common Threads: Different Lands, Similar Stories	Legends and Heroes: Greek Myths	Rhythm and Rhyme: Poetry	Meaning and Metaphor: Poetry	Visions in Verse: Poetry
See How They Grow: Plants	Reach for the Stars: Astronomy	Our Planet: Cycles in Nature	Rise and Fall: Ancient Rome	Eureka! Student Inventor	A Knight's Tale: Don Quixote
Moo, Cluck, Oink: Farms	Charting the World: Geography	Butterflies, Bees, and Beetles: Insects	Our Solar System and Beyond: Astronomy	Our Planet: Geology	The Deep Blue World: Oceans
Deep Roots: Introduction to Native American Cultures	A World of Homes: Animals and Habitats	A House Divided: The American Civil War	Regions and Cultures: Native Americans	Road to Independence: The American Revolution	Cultures and Histories: Native Americans
All Around the World: Geography	A New Nation: American Independence	Sounds and Stanzas: Poetry	Unit 7	Unit 7	Unit 7
Unit 8	Unit 8	Unit 8	Unit 8	Unit 8	Unit 8
Unit 9	Unit 9	Unit 9	From Blues to Bebop: All That Jazz	Inspiration and Ingenuity: American Innovation	Building Up the World: Global Architecture
Shaped by Nature: Art and the World Around Us	Adventure Stories: Tales from the Edge	Taking Flight: The Age of Aviation			



Student Quotes:

- ▶ I loved the poetry unit. I liked Haiku. I remember that haiku needs to be 5-7-5.
- ▶ I like learning how to there are so many ways to write poems.
- ▶ My favorite unit is poetry. I like the poem "Mother Doesn't Want a Dog." I remember in the poem Mother doesn't want a dog and she kept saying that she doesn't want a dog, but the child was telling the story and then the child said that I guess you want a snake.
- ▶ My favorite unit is Rome because I like learning about Ancient Rome and all the fun characters. It will always be my favorite unit.
- ▶ My favorite unit is Ancient Rome. I liked learning about Julius Ceasar. I remember looking at pictures of Ancient Ruins in Rome.
- ▶ My favorite units were Ancient Rome and Animal Classification. I liked learning about Julius Ceaser and the duck billed platypus. I will remember that the duck billed platypus is a mammal, but it lays eggs.
- ▶ I loved learning how Julius Ceasar lived and how it was when they lived in Rome. Julius fought for the poor.
- ▶ I liked learning about Ancient Rome. I remember when Julius crossed the Rubicon River and when he helped Cleopatra become Queen of Egypt.

Parent Quotes:

Andi came home beaming with excitement about the game show and how you dress up and make it so special. Was thinking she'll remember that forever. Thanks for always going the extra distance to be exceptional about job to the benefit of your students ❤️

Oh, and as a side note, if you are discussing the “body systems” part of the curriculum in your meeting, I just wanted to say that as a parent I find it wonderful! Eleanor is coming home and sharing so much information that she is retaining amazingly. I feel that with this subject matter she is leaps and bounds ahead of my older daughter. She finds the material interesting and engaging, and she’s learning to speak about her body and what it is doing in an eloquent and well “defined” manner. Again, I think this is a great subject matter to teach for their age group. I also say this as someone in the medical field as well. I thought I would share just in case you need a “parent perspective.”

Also, he's been talking about reading a lot. He was telling me about The Tall Tales last weekend. We found a Paul Bunyan movie to watch that he liked. Figured I'd give some feedback on the reading curriculum. He's never talked about reading lessons before! 😊

Ms. McCall, we believe that the CKLA is offering up very good applicable learnings for Aria. She shares information with us especially on the knowledge units discussed and taught in class, and tries to relate to real scenarios. I believe this new program integrates practical aspects of their learnings well. The Although we do not see this being an issue with Aria, the learning pace is noticeably accelerated with additional content compared to our observation when our son was in 1st grade. We really only limited data points, therefore we cannot tell whether others in the class are impacted by this. Overall we are pleased with what Aria has been introduced to and learns in this new program.

A parent at conferences mentioned how much she loved the new reading units. She said that her daughter is always coming home and sharing about the topics. Her twin brother who was in the class next door was not a part of the CKLA pilot and did not come home talking about ELA as much.

Boost Reading

- **Student-driven**, digital practice program
- Data places students into **personalized, adaptive learning path**
- Delivers effortless **differentiation for ALL students**
- Systematic foundational skills practice **aligned to CKLA's scope and sequence** in games and e-reader texts
- **Proven** to boost reading proficiency





		Phonological Awareness	Letter Combinations	Early Decoding	Advanced Decoding	Comprehension Processes	Key Ideas & Details	Craft & Structure	Integration of Knowledge & Ideas	Vocabulary	App
Placed Out	Placed Out	On Grade	On Grade	On Grade	On Grade	Not Expected	Not Expected	On Grade	On Grade	On Grade	App
Placed Out	Placed Out	On Grade	On Grade	On Grade	On Grade	Not Expected	Not Expected	On Grade	On Grade	On Grade	App
Below Grade	Below Grade	Below Grade	On Grade	On Grade	Below Grade	Not Expected	Not Expected	Below Grade	Below Grade	Below Grade	App

CKLA BOOST

Usage Calendar

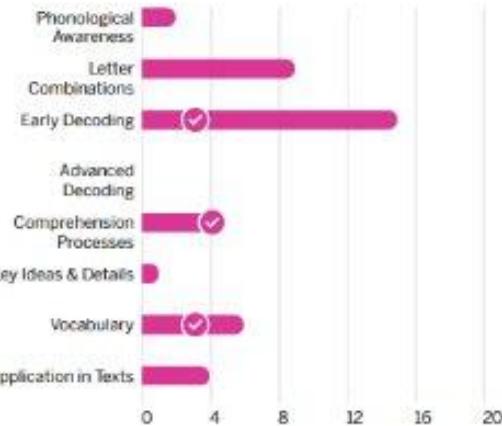
This calendar shows when Amalea has used Boost Reading. We recommend 30-45 minutes of weekly Boost usage, ideally spread across 2-3 sessions (15 minutes per session).

January

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
	5 35m	6 36m	7 32m	8 10m	9	10
11	12 33m	13 44m	14 21m	15	16	17
18	19	20 7m	21 31m	22 8m	23	24
25	26	27 21m	28 30m	29	30	31

Progress this Year

Amalea has completed 41 out of a goal of 24 subskills this year.



Current Quest & Activities



Quest 14: Samuel's Secret

The quest is the storyline that frames your student's Boost experience. All students in a class experience the same quest storylines as they progress through the program.

The diary references a secret room inside the Wen House, and Viola is eager to find a way in.

You portal into the diary to find clues about the secret room, and your Curioso inspires Viola to put the pieces together.

You discover that each of the Bookerton Founders had a unique personality trait that Olivia valued.

Discussion Starter

Activities and Skill Practice

Amalea receives activities appropriate to their reading level. The list below the skill games, eReader texts and interactive lessons from their current quest.



Why Warthog Goes About on His K

Not Started
Grade 1 Book 8: Why Warthog Goes About on His Knees



Read All About It

Not Started
Words with: ch, qu, th (voiced), ng, ee, oo, sh, ou, th (unvoiced), aw, er, ck, ol, ar, tch, wr, ai, kn, or, wh, ow...



Ink Blott

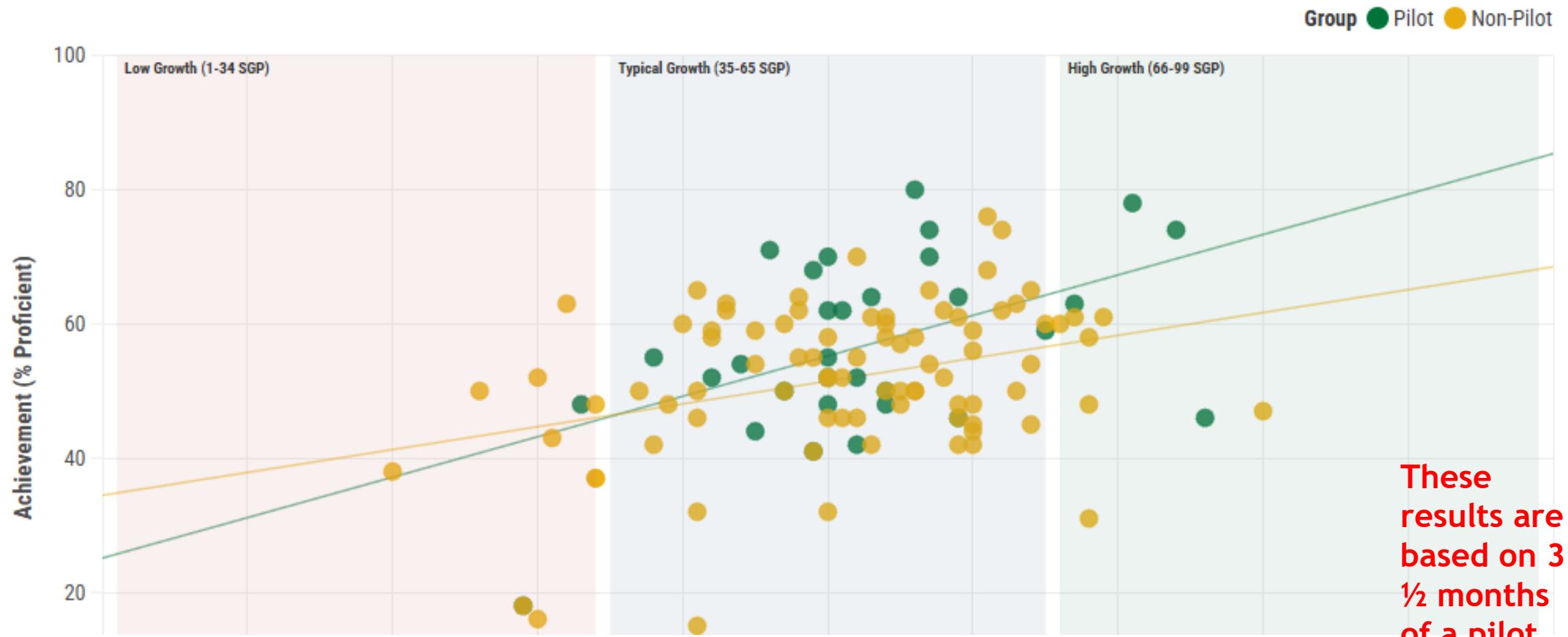
In Progress

CKLA BOOST

CKLA Star Growth Proficiency – Winter 2026

Pilot vs. Non-Pilot Comparison

All



Change Outcomes

FINDINGS

Amplify CKLA significantly improved vocabulary and knowledge scores.

- The treatment group [CKLA students] outperformed the control on proximal vocabulary assessments, with a statistically significant effect size of 0.55.
- The treatment group [CKLA students] outperformed the control on proximal social studies knowledge and science knowledge assessments, with statistically significant effect sizes of 0.97 and 0.26, respectively. Differences in the magnitude of effects between the proximal science and social studies knowledge outcomes likely reflect the topics being assessed.
- Statistically significant effects were also found for standardized measures of generalized vocabulary (effect size 0.09).



Research and Efficacy Studies

FINDING 1

Test scores significantly improved with the Core Knowledge curriculum.

- The treatment group outperformed the control group on all state reading tests, with a statistically significant effect size of 0.473.
- From kindergarten to sixth grade, the cumulative long-term gain for the Core Knowledge students was approximately 16 percentile points.

FINDING 2

Income-based achievement gaps were eliminated.

- While students from high- and middle- income areas also outperformed the control group, students from the low-income area experienced even greater gains.
- The effect size for the treatment group from the high-income area was 0.445—a strong effect size for an instructional program in K–12 education. For the low-income area, the effect size was a remarkable 1.299—virtually unheard of in studies of K–12 program impact.
- Students in the low-income area also saw increases in state math test scores in third and sixth grade, as well as gains in state science test scores in fifth grade.



“To put this into perspective... national student gains [in reading] similar to the gains realized in this intervention would place the U.S. among the top five countries.”

Daniel Willingham
Professor of Psychology, University of Virginia



Student Data

Student Data

Student with an IEP

9/11/25	22:40	863	2	9	21.8	1.1	44
1/14/26 ^b	01:27:46	963	3.5	30	39	3.2	87

Student that went from high to higher

9/11/25	28:16	1042	5.9	81	68.5	4.9	136
1/21/26	28:24	1083	8.4	91	78.2	6.6	177

Student that had large growth

9/9/25	27:26	963	3.5	37	43	3.2	87
1/13/26	25:13	991	4.2	44	46.8	3.7	104

High Growth

Student that speaks English as a second language

9/11/25	24:07	950	3.3	31	39.6	3.0	80
1/13/26	28:22	987	4.1	42	45.8	3.7	102

Teacher Voice

100% of pilot teachers felt that CKLA is superior in vocabulary to our current program.

100% of pilot teachers felt that CKLA has a better scope and sequence for print, grammar and conventions and is consistent with current research.

100% of pilot teachers felt that CKLA supports executive functioning skills for students.

100% of pilot teachers felt that CKLA is stronger with phonics and phonemic awareness.

Pilot team is recommending CKLA Amplify for the K-5 Literacy curriculum adoption.

Amplify CKLA



Budget

- ▶ \$945,610.32 Total cost for Amplify CKLA & PD grades K-5
- ▶ -\$614,553.00 35m grant (received spring 2025)
- ▶ \$331,057.32 LOCS contribution
- ▶ Reminder that there is a potential for a 5% deduction in the student foundation allowance from MDE if a district does not adopt a literacy program from the MDE approved list. LOCS would also have to write a letter to the community stating why they have chosen not to adopt one of the MDE approved literacy programs.
- ▶ 35m grant must be fully spent by September 30, 2026.





Questions?

Thank you for your time!