

McLean County Unit District No. 5

1809 West Hovey Avenue

Normal, Illinois 61761-4339



To: Unit 5 Board of Education
Dr. Weikle, Superintendent
Michelle Lambole, Assistant Superintendent

From: Maureen Backe, Director of Elementary Education

Re: K-2 UFLI, Elementary Curriculum Adoption

For the past year and a half, 107 of our K-2 elementary staff have piloted UFLI (University of Florida Literacy Institute), a comprehensive, evidence-based, and systematic phonics program. The goal of this task force was to identify a research-based phonics curricular resource that strengthens phonics, spelling, reading, and writing while promoting student engagement and confidence, as a targeted component within our district's comprehensive literacy framework.

Within the district's comprehensive literacy approach, student achievement data reflect strong performance and continued growth across K-2. STAR assessment results show that a high percentage of students are performing at or above district benchmarks: Kindergarten – 90.2% at or above benchmark (Winter); 1st Grade – growth from 83.5% (Fall) to 89.9% (Winter); and 2nd Grade – growth from 84.3% (Fall) to 85.9% (Winter). These outcomes build upon prior year baseline data and reflect the combined impact of strong core instruction, targeted phonics support, and consistent instructional practices across classrooms.

In addition to student outcome data, teacher feedback provided further evidence of UFLI's impact. Fifty-four task force members completed a recent [UFLI survey](#), and all respondents strongly supported districtwide adoption. Teachers reported measurable growth in phonemic awareness, decoding, encoding, and application across reading and writing. Students who previously struggled demonstrated accelerated growth.

Staff highlighted UFLI's clear scope and sequence, teacher-friendly design, and multi-sensory approach using whiteboards, magnetic letters, and word trays. Moving forward, additional tasks include aligning sight words and assessments with district expectations and providing ongoing professional learning to maintain fidelity and consistency across classrooms.

Based on strong student outcomes and overwhelming staff support, I recommend districtwide adoption of UFLI for K-2 in the 26-27 school year. UFLI implementation will provide a strong phonics foundation for long-term success in reading, writing, and spelling.