

CASE STUDY

# Building Teacher Capacity and Celebrating Growth Through Personalized Learning

Mayfield City Schools  
Mayfield Heights, OH

**Lexia**<sup>®</sup>  
ALL FOR LITERACY



## Challenge

Mayfield City Schools, a district near Cleveland, OH, restructured its educational model in 2016 to create a customized experience that places the learner at the center of the process. Its name: All-Access Learning. Through a focus on student agency, engagement, outcomes, and opportunity, district leaders believe students will graduate ready to compete in a global society.

As part of this initiative, the district put new technology in place for its elementary students. At the same time, a teacher leadership team was revamping Mayfield's literacy framework and searching for a personalized learning solution.

"The team really wanted to leverage the technology that was going to be in the hands of students to support teachers in providing individualized instruction," said Vickie Loncar, curriculum coordinator at Mayfield City Schools. "Teachers were looking for a tool in their toolbox

that could help them meet each student where they're at."

Each of the six buildings in Mayfield City Schools has an instructional leadership team that includes a teacher representative from each grade level. The leadership teams meet regularly to review student data in depth and determine strengths, weaknesses, and needs. Therefore, the literacy team was looking for a product with robust, actionable data tied to instruction and easy-to-use reporting.

As a teacher-driven initiative, building teacher capacity was a key factor. The team looked for a solution with solid professional development and ongoing implementation support to ensure students and teachers were getting the most educational benefit out of the program. The solution had to save teachers time—not just ask more of them.



Lexia® Core5® Reading helps us identify the exact skills students are working on or struggling with. It has been a game changer for us.

—Felecia Evans, Principal, Lander Elementary School

## Solution

For the 2018–2019 school year, Mayfield City Schools chose to implement Lexia® Core5® Reading with all students in grades K–5. Core5 is an adaptive blended learning program designed for elementary students of all abilities that pairs student-driven online activities with teacher-directed instruction in six areas of reading: phonological awareness, phonics, structural analysis, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. The district chose an Implementation Support Package to provide professional development and coaching to its educators.

### Dedicated Implementation Support

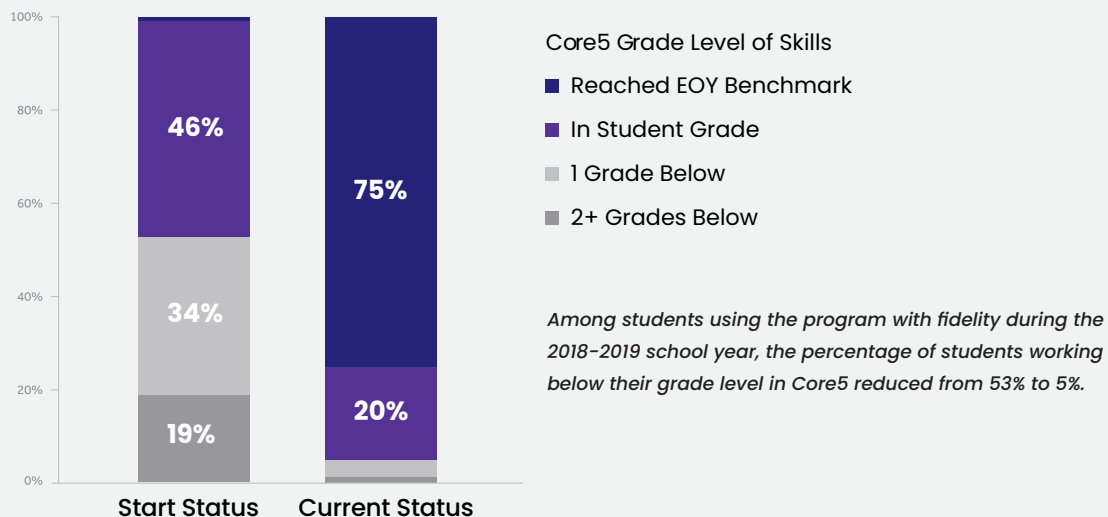
“Launching the program was really easy with the support of our Lexia implementation manager. She had ongoing meetings with our leadership teams at each building, which helped the teachers to feel comfortable with the product, understand their role in using it, and get the most out of it. She was really effective in working with them,” Loncar said.

As a dedicated, go-to resource, the implementation manager answered questions from district and building leaders throughout the year. She ran timely reports and broke down the data, helping administrators to support their teams.

In addition, a Lexia professional learning facilitator (PLF) went onsite to coach teachers on using their specific student data.

“I think the biggest turning point last year is when we did the onsite training. Our PLF dug deep into the reports and trained teachers on how to use the data within their classrooms. That really brought all of our teachers up to speed and helped them understand the value of the product,” said Jeff Schiller, assistant principal of Center Elementary School. “You can see the results. We had a huge explosion of usage and more confident users by the spring.”

**Figure 1. Progress of Meeting Usage + Benchmark-Achieved Students (N=1,280)**



Felecia Evans, principal of Lander Elementary School, agreed. "All of our PD was absolutely phenomenal. Our implementation manager really got our leadership team members onboard, who were then able to support the grade levels," Evans said.

### Targeted Literacy Instruction

For students to accelerate development of foundational reading skills, it is important they meet the recommended minutes in the program.

At Lander Elementary School, students primarily get their usage during their literacy block, where Core5 is one of their Daily 5 choices (a literacy framework in which students choose from five independent reading and writing tasks). Students who need additional time can also visit the computer lab during their morning work.

Teachers are integral to student success with Core5. As students work on the online component, educators see onscreen indicators when students are struggling so they can step in. Furthermore, educators monitor progress in real time through myLexia®, the online educator dashboard. At a glance, teachers can see a classroom Action Plan showing which of their students need more usage, which are struggling with a skill, and which are ready to celebrate success with a printable achievement certificate.

The Action Plan also provides teachers with links to scripted, downloadable lessons that target specific skills and can be used for whole-class, small-group, or one-on-one instruction. Paraprofessionals and parent volunteers can also deliver the lessons.

"Our teachers have learned to identify when individual students or groups of students are struggling and to pull relevant instructional

materials from myLexia," Evans said. "Our ESL teacher, for example, has students in grades K-5 but is able to group students who are within the same Core5 level to teach similar skills."

Evans motivates both teachers and students to use Core5 with fidelity by making it part of the school culture. Each week, Evans gives a shoutout on the morning announcements to classrooms that met 100% of students' usage targets that week. School leaders also made a prominent wall display to recognize achievement.

"We created a 'Lexia Tree' in our hallway. Each time a student would pass a level, we'd write their name on a leaf. Our tree grew throughout the whole hallway, celebrating our kids' movement through the program," she said.





### **Actionable Data and Progress Monitoring**

Core5 serves as a progress-monitoring tool as part of Mayfield’s Response to Intervention (RTI) process. Easy-to-use reports at the district, school, class, and student levels help educators identify trends and patterns, and address individual student needs.

“Our professional learning communities meet weekly to go over student data and have important discussions about our activities and interventions. The data from myLexia helps us get the kids what they need more quickly,” Schiller said. “Core5 has been especially helpful for grades four and five, where we didn’t necessarily have reading intervention support.”

Teachers also use the reports during student conferences to celebrate growth and work on goal setting, Schiller said.

Before Core5, teachers would spend hours searching for resources and materials to use for reading intervention, Evans said.

“Core5 helps us identify the exact skills students are working on or struggling with, such as certain letter sounds in kindergarten, segmenting and blending phonemes, or letter identification,” Evans said. “It has completely shifted how teachers are able to spend their time, focusing on delivering the interventions rather than trying to create or find materials and diagnose kids. The program does that on its own. It has been a game changer for us.”

## Results

During the 2018-2019 school year, 1,668 students across four schools in Mayfield City Schools used Core5. Seventy-seven percent of these students used the online component of the program with fidelity by regularly meeting usage targets.<sup>1</sup>

Of the students who met usage, 53% started the program working on below-grade-level material in Core5. By the end of the school year, only 5% were working below grade level, and 75% had reached their end-of-year, grade-level benchmark.

### Alignment with Standardized Assessments

Lexia Research performed an analysis of the relationship between Mayfield students' performance in Core5 and the Ohio State Test, English Language Arts (OST-ELA), which is used as an end-of-year measurement tool.

The sample consisted of the 603 students in grades three-five who used the online component of Core5 with fidelity during the 2018-2019 school year. Of the 465 students who finished the year working in material above their grade level (i.e., reached benchmark) in Core5, the majority (92%) were also designated as Proficient, Accelerated, or Advanced on the OST-ELA.<sup>2</sup>

Mayfield leaders also assessed students' reading skills using Renaissance Star Reading®, which serves as a brief, computer-adaptive progress-monitoring tool. As with the OST-ELA, the majority (89%) of students who were working above their grade level in Core5 by the end of the year scored

at or above the 40th percentile (a common proficiency cutoff point) on the Star assessment.

These results indicate that reaching benchmark or working on grade-level material in Core5 is consistent with a higher reading standard.

### Personalized Learning Model

In addition to academic gains, Mayfield City Schools has embraced Lexia as part of its culture of celebrating growth and personalizing learning.

"Lexia has been a critical component of being able to bring All-Access Learning to our district," Loncar said. "Now, the teachers have data at their fingertips about their students. They know when to intervene and how to intervene. The ease of use has really helped our teachers be successful and see children grow in their reading skills."



<sup>1</sup> Fidelity defined as students with 20+ weeks of use and who met their usage targets at least 50% of those weeks or reached end-of-year, grade-level benchmark.

<sup>2</sup> Lexia Research, Mayfield City School District Research Report: 2018-2019 Lexia® Core5® Reading and Ohio State Test, English Language Arts and Renaissance Star Reading

Students have responded positively as well, said Kate Rateno, principal at Center Elementary School.

"I think our students have really appreciated the self-paced instruction across our whole school, including Core5 and beyond," she said. "We have a philosophy now: Direct instruction is limited to about 10 minutes. It's not just the teacher standing up front talking and the kids just sitting there listening.

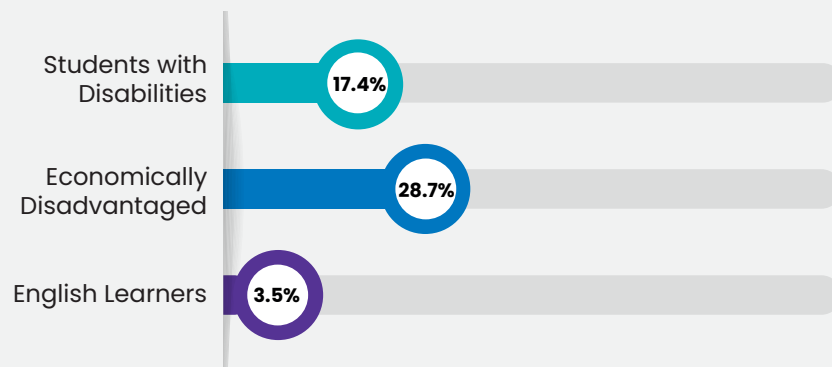
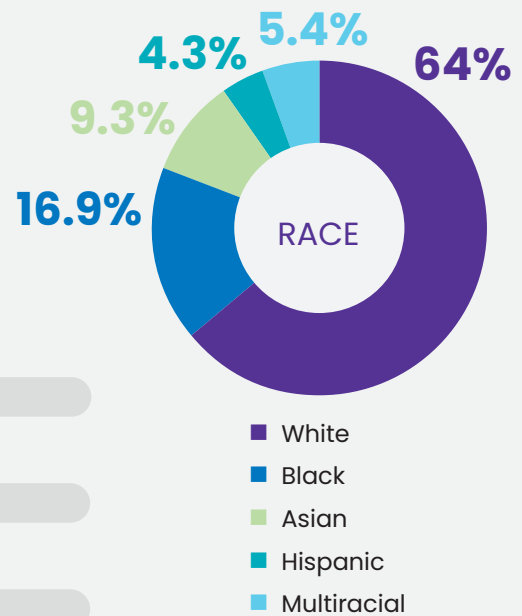
"Students are actively engaged during the class period," Rateno added. "We've had a really good response from the students for that."

The first year of Core5 implementation was so successful, Loncar said, that for year two, the district added Lexia® PowerUp® Literacy, a program designed to help struggling students in grades six and above become proficient readers and confident learners.

"Our middle-level educators have their own children in our elementary schools, so they know firsthand how much their kids enjoy using Core5," Loncar said. "We look forward to seeing how PowerUp can benefit struggling readers at the middle level as well."

### Profile: Mayfield City Schools, Mayfield Heights, OH

**4,195**  
ENROLLMENT  **Pre-K-12**  
GRADES





Lexia®, a Cambium Learning Group company, is a leader in science of reading-based solutions. For 40 years, the company has focused on pre-K-12 literacy and today provides solutions for every student and educator. With a complete offering of professional learning, curriculum, and embedded assessment, Lexia helps more learners read, write, and speak with confidence.

