

CASE STUDY

Louisiana Elementary School Overcomes Literacy Crisis with Lexia's Core5

Bossier Elementary School, Bossier City, Louisiana



Bossier Elementary Uses Lexia Core5 Reading to Take School From 'F' to 'C' Grade

Four years ago, educators at Bossier Elementary School in Bossier City, Louisiana, received the news no one wants to hear: State of Louisiana officials placed the school on its watch list, labeling it as “Comprehensive Intervention Required” (CIR). As an “F” school, the 200-student institution had to become a “C” school for two-consecutive years, effectively showing it could attain and sustain that higher grade.

Bossier Elementary’s Michael Gollow, M.EDLE, was hired as its new instructional coach in 2020—the year the school began using Lexia® Core5® Reading.

“Our teachers were telling us that their students couldn’t read,” Gollow said. “In January 2020, **we shut down the whole school to focus on reading** and to do our literacy-based response to intervention (RTI).” As a CIR school, Bossier Elementary was required to continue its Tier 1 instruction, so the “shutting down” took place during Tier 2 time.



Building Teacher Capacity

When he joined Bossier Elementary, one of Gollow's first projects involved building teacher capacity through the use of accurate, actionable data. The school began using Core5 and especially liked its user-friendly interface. "As an instructional coach, it's easy for me to coach my teachers on how to look at the Core5 data and apply it moving forward," Gollow said.

Bossier educators also benefited from the platform's differentiated instruction capabilities. Knowing they were **on a deadline** to achieve certain academic improvements, teachers used Core5 to differentiate instruction for every student within the school—and all concurrently.

When teachers receive alerts about students who are struggling with a certain skill, they can easily go in, review the alert, and find related lessons to share with students. Paraprofessionals also help redeliver lessons and otherwise support ongoing RTI efforts. Teachers also use Core5 when working with small groups of students who can begin working in the platform and then are pulled out to receive additional one-on-one support during their literacy block.

Gollow said when one student was struggling with a specific skill, the teacher printed out the Core5 lesson and handed it to him. "I went to that student and delivered the lesson, and it was easy, breezy," Gollow explained. "Really, anyone off the street could come in and redeliver that part of the lesson because it's specific, scripted, and gives you everything you need to be successful in delivering the content."

From an 'F' Grade to a 'C' Grade

As Bossier educators were making headway on the path to improving the school's overall grade, the global pandemic temporarily sidelined that goal. When state officials decided not to recognize any new scores for 2020—and instead used 2019's scores—**Bossier was again labeled an "F" school.**

Educators were understandably frustrated. "Had the new scores actually come out for 2021, we would have already been showing some growth," Gollow said. "We'd grown by eight points by 2021 and, as such, would've been a 'D' school."

But Gollow and his fellow teachers didn't let circumstances of the pandemic and lack of state assessments stop their progress. The school **gained seven more points** during the 2021 school year, with some of that progress attributed to more standards-based RTI being used in the upper grades. That push got even stronger as educators began to successfully close students' literacy deficits.


Today, Bossier Elementary is a "C" school. And once the 2022–2023 school year scores come back, educators are confident they can maintain that growth and remove the CIR label. "Once we maintain that growth, we will finally be out of this status," Gollow said. Bossier students were tested in spring 2023 and are now awaiting state assessment scores to be released later this year.

High Fidelity and Usage

According to Bossier Elementary’s 2021–2022 school year Core5 data, 83% of meeting-usage students advanced at least one grade level of material. The school’s strongest usage was in grades K–2, where more than 50% of each grade used the online program with fidelity.

Also, 60% of Bossier Elementary students who started using Core5 for the 2021–2022 school year—and who were initially working below grade level—advanced at least one grade level of material.

Reflecting on the school’s progress so far, Gollow said, “Usage is definitely key.” When teachers began with Core5, the goal was for students to use the platform frequently. “We weren’t necessarily looking at where our students were or anything like that. We started with the usage time,” Gollow said. “With us having 50 minutes of RTI every day, there’s no reason why they couldn’t get their minutes completed.”

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The percentage of students working in or above grade level increased from 22% to 67% in one school year with recommended program usage.

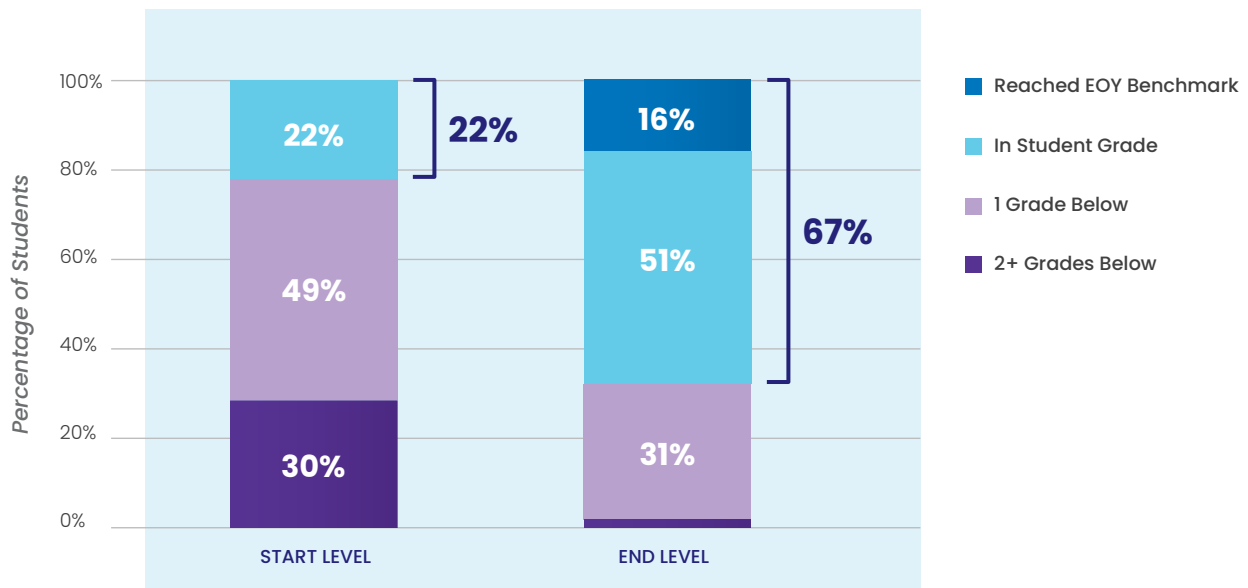


Figure 1. Progress in Core5 during 2021–2022 for meeting-usage students (N=88)

Morning Shoutouts

Today, Bossier Elementary's students spend at least 10 minutes per day using Core5. For the remainder of the 50-minute time slot, students are pulled into small groups and participate in other activities.

"They're on Core5 every day and they enjoy working with the program," said Gollow, who along with the school's principal enjoys rallying the troops and **recognizing students for their individual and collective accomplishments.**

"Our principal is all about culture. Anytime students move up a level in Core5, we call out their names on the morning announcement, which takes place on Google Meet so all teachers can log in and get up to speed on everything that's going on at the school," Gollow said. **"The students love hearing the shoutouts every morning.** It's the perfect way to provide them with the extra attention they so richly deserve for all the hard work they are doing to improve their literacy skills."

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