

# Bringing the Science of Reading to East Meadow Union Free School District

## How Research-Based Professional Learning Reimagined Literacy Instruction



Frank Lukasik

District leaders across New York face the challenge of making reading proficiency gains in all of their diverse school settings. According to the John Corcoran Foundation 2024 New York Report Card, nearly half, 47%, of high-income fourth grade students are not reading proficiently. The gap widens for economically disadvantaged students with non-proficiency at 77%. [Frank Lukasik](#), director of Literacy and Funded Programs at East Meadow Union Free School District (UFSD), New York, worked to address this widening literacy opportunity gap at his district.

Lukasik has spent the duration of his 22-year career in education working within the NYC Public School System and Long Island School districts. He's also a member of [Lexia's Customer Advisory Board](#), which represents a group of committed, focused, and passionate education leaders from across the country who advise how we can all continue to make incredible strides in literacy education and the future of all learners.

Here, Lukasik shares his district's experience finding a solution that benefits all students, which called for adopting literacy instruction grounded in research.

**Challenge:** Providing the knowledge for teachers about how to teach reading plus bridging this knowledge to practical, daily classroom support—all while transitioning away from unproven approaches.

**Solution:** [Lexia® LETRS®](#) (Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling) Professional Learning

### East Meadow Union Free School District\*, Long Island, New York

- 9 schools
  - 5 elementary schools
  - 2 middle schools
  - 2 high schools



#### Enrollment data from 2023–2024\*

- 7,743 K–12 students
- 5% English Language Learners
- 13% Students with disabilities
- 30% Economically disadvantaged

\*<https://www.emufsd.us/page/our-district>  
\*<http://data.nysed.gov>



- 38% White
- 30% Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander
- 25% Hispanic or Latino
- 5% Black or African American
- 2% Multiracial

## Educators felt empowered

“ So we’ve incorporated LETRS into our work. And the LETRS trainings that teachers have been going to have been invaluable. Teachers are starting to understand some of the concepts that we’ve done and some of the work that we’ve done in the past, but they have a deeper understanding of those ideas.”



## The status quo was challenged

“ And I’ll go back to my own time in the classroom as well, as we did all these assessments and we felt great because we were doing the assessments. But the connection to learning and instruction was not necessarily there. And now that we’re really focusing on, ‘What does all of this mean?’ and ‘How can we move kids forward?’ the conversations have gotten that much richer. And the confidence of the educators in our little part of the world has grown tremendously.”



Only **28%** of teacher preparation programs fully address all five components of scientifically based reading instruction. [Source](#)



## Data became actionable

“ And rather than using these benchmark systems [miscue system and three-cueing system], we went to the LETRS assessment. And we used that LETRS assessment and determined, what do kids need at each grade level? And we started working toward grade-level goals from the LETRS assessment. And that’s been helping our AIS [Academic Intervention Services] teachers, our classroom teachers, and our building leaders really dive into that data and say, ‘Hey, look, this kid is doing pretty well compared to the grade-level standards and outcomes that we’re looking for.’”



## And with that, equitable opportunities opened

“ So, the work that we’re doing is so valuable to helping these youngsters right now be proficient in their life. And really, I think that’s the passion play for me, is ensuring that these children that we’re working with at 5 years old, 7 years old, are going to be literate adults at some point.”



Effective literacy professional learning can build vertical and horizontal understanding between classroom teachers and administrators. See how Lexia® can support your district in accelerating learning for each student, regardless of language acquisition, socioeconomic status, disability status, or any other factor.



Explore resources and contact the dedicated Lexia New York team.



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