

CASE STUDY

100%: 1 District's Mission to Train Every Secondary School Teacher in the Science of Reading





Tiffany Goodman is passionate about literacy. As director of multi-tiered systems of support at Friendship Public Charter Schools in the Washington, D.C., area., Goodman oversees eight middle schools and high schools, where she aims to help all students become successful readers through the science of reading.

But when Goodman started at Friendship in 2023, in the aftermath of the pandemic, the majority of middle and high school students were reading below grade level.

Discovering the Disconnect

To close that opportunity gap, Goodman turned to her district data. According to teacher performance data and evaluations, some teachers were being rated as highly effective on the district’s instructional rubric—but student scores were still low. Goodman recognized the disconnect there—a need for professional learning that bridged the gap between high-quality instructional moves and best practices in reading.

“When I think about the students, it starts with the teachers. We have to provide them with targeted professional development. I believe that Lexia Aspire® [Professional Learning] is providing that quality professional development that’s needed for our scholars and our teachers in order for the teachers to then go into the classroom and deliver high-quality instruction that moves reading outcomes,” Goodman said.

Now, one year into a four-year science of reading implementation plan, Goodman’s story is an example of a thorough and flexible implementation that has both administrators and educators looking forward to the following year.

From the Top

In 2021, The Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) published its vision for literacy that included traditional and chartered public schools. Following the OSSE recommendations, Friendship CEO Patricia Brantley and CAO Vielka Scott-Marcus developed a local literacy plan for Friendship in collaboration with key stakeholders within the district. This literacy plan integrated the guiding principles for literacy instruction and literacy interventions to support all students in becoming successful readers and writers.

Friendship's literacy goal? One hundred-percent of teachers trained in the science of reading literacy strategies for vocabulary and comprehension.

With the full support of her leadership team, Goodman set out to implement this initiative for her secondary school teachers by continuing collaborative efforts with school stakeholders. "I designed a School Science of Reading Implementation Plan and Science of Reading Classroom Observation Look-Fors to achieve our literacy vision and goals for our district," Goodman said.

While Friendship's districtwide local literacy plan includes supplementary literacy programs like Lexia® Core5® Reading and Lexia® PowerUp Literacy®, Goodman's focus was on setting her secondary school educators up for success with science of reading-based professional learning. For that, Goodman turned to Lexia Aspire.

Based on the science of reading, Aspire is a professional learning solution designed to meet the needs of all educators teaching students in grades 4–8, from the content-area and classroom educators to interventionists and ELA educators.

"Lexia Aspire is just amazing. It directly aligns to the goals we have in the district for the science of reading—it exceeded our expectations," Goodman said.

This partnership included not just Aspire's professional learning courses, but a Success Partnership to help Goodman lay out her goals and keep the implementation on track. With her District Success Manager Jessie Stroven (whom Goodman now calls her "Work BFF"), Goodman created what would become a robust four-year implementation plan of Lexia® solutions, with a strong focus on professional learning to help teachers effectively leverage the science of reading to improve student literacy.

Why Lexia?

“Lexia is nationally recognized for their high-quality, science of reading professional development, curriculum, interventions, and assessments. As a result, we chose Lexia Aspire to provide science of reading professional development for our 6–12 teachers. Lexia Aspire is a comprehensive and robust professional development that directly aligns with FPCS's goal: 100% of teachers trained in SoR literacy strategies.”

– Tiffany Goodman, Director of Multi-Tiered Systems of Support, Friendship Public Charter Schools

Lexia Checks the Boxes

- Aligned to the science of reading
- Flexible
- Easy to implement
- Ongoing support

Getting Buy-In

To effectively implement her four-year plan with fidelity, Goodman knew she needed buy-in at all levels. She ran focus groups that included administrators, teachers, and staff from each school so the plan could be personalized to the needs of that school.

“Teachers’ and school leaders’ buy-in is very important. I cannot do my work effectively without them,” Goodman said. “I ask for teachers’ feedback with Lexia Aspire. Creating a collaborative environment also supports teacher engagement. If they’re seeing that I care about their voice, that makes a big difference.”

She’s also prioritized ongoing communication with everyone involved. “Transformation is always a dialogue and stakeholders need to see their impact on the plan,” Goodman said. “Communication is key—and making sure everyone understands the why.”

In addition to soliciting feedback and open communication across all functional groups, Goodman also saw the importance of leading by example. She and her fellow district leaders, including the CEO and CAO, are currently going through Lexia® LETRS® for Administrators. “I want my teachers to know I’m in this with them,” Goodman said. By holding themselves to high expectations, district leaders are seeing the culture shift in not just teachers, but students as well.





The Value of Partnerships

Once Goodman had all the input she needed from all levels of leadership, she worked with Stroven on her comprehensive plan and selected flexible and self-paced professional learning courses in Lexia Aspire. “I love that there’s a variety of courses we’ve been able to select from, that best supports what our goals are for this particular school year. So even though there are about 50-plus courses, Jessie and I sat down and worked on a Scope and Sequence aligned to our goals for this particular year,” Goodman said.

“The Lexia Aspire team has been absolutely phenomenal. I’m talking about from the tech support team all the way to our rep and customer success manager. They have been so instrumental in our success, and I know that I can’t do this work without the team of Lexia,” Goodman added.

Implementing and Listening to Feedback

Friendship’s Lexia Aspire journey started with a kickoff meeting in August with all teachers. Goodman aligned the courses to the school calendar, using breaks to make sure courses weren’t scheduled around testing or other busy periods. Thanks to her active and open communication efforts, Goodman learned early in the school year that she’d assigned the teachers too many courses.

“When I first did the Scope and Sequence, I did it all wrong,” Goodman said. “It was way too ambitious. So, we went back to the drawing board.” With Stroven’s assistance, Goodman revised the Scope and Sequence down to 12 courses per year, based on feedback and teacher capacity. With a more modest and prioritized course load, Goodman had an easier job getting teacher buy-in, and teachers have since made impressive progress in the program.

“I love to celebrate teachers in order to help build that trust when it comes to Lexia Aspire. Bi-weekly, I send shout-outs, thanking teachers for completing courses. I recognize their hard work,” she said.

Goodman regularly hears from her teachers that Aspire professional learning is already helping them make a difference. Many teachers finished their courses ahead of schedule, eager for more. One teacher even noted that this year’s courses were particularly helpful for supporting her bilingual students. Hearing stories of science of reading strategies in action, she said, has made her really proud.

Staying Involved

Goodman visits her schools three days a week. “Seeing that students are really eager to learn and are highly engaged really lets me know we’re on the right track,” Goodman said.

But while student engagement is crucial, Goodman also looks at the data to ensure Friendship stays on track toward its goal. She pulls reports every two weeks, looking at course completion, how individual schools are performing, and evaluates teacher performance.

“We track progress and measure the success of our science of reading program with key district metrics such as teacher course performance with Lexia Aspire, teacher evaluation data with the Danielson’s Framework from instructional rounds, and student data through PowerUp reports,” she said.

To keep stakeholders involved and informed, Goodman also shares that data with district and school leaders which has been a great way to keep tabs on progress. She also conducted a mid-year data review and shared those results districtwide.

“I’m in classrooms often doing co-observations with school leaders—we’re norming around science of reading strategies and expectations. But we’re still supporting and coaching our teachers. That’s key,” Goodman said.

Friendship’s Blended Learning Model for Secondary Schools

Station 1: Teacher-direct instruction, supported by Aspire



Station 2: Independent learning using PowerUp



Station 3: Vocabulary and writing, supported by Aspire



Looking Ahead to PLCs and PowerUp Alignment

“When I think about my journey, I’m not quite where I want to be yet. There’s still so much I want to implement with the Lexia Aspire program,” Goodman said. This includes adjustments to the implementation plan, including adding in dedicated professional development days for educators to engage in Aspire courses.

“This past year, Lexia Aspire supported our teachers with the implementation of SoR literacy strategies for vocabulary and comprehension,” Goodman said. “Our plan next year is for Lexia Aspire to help teachers with implementing literacy in content areas and bridging to application through Professional Learning Communities in order to develop successful readers and writers.”

With 100% of her teachers trained in the science of reading, Goodman envisions PLCs that will focus on the skills and standards to support scholars with being college and career ready, Goodman explained. “How does literacy look in math? How does it look in science? Because it looks different in different subject areas across the curriculum. Lexia Aspire PLCs will help us infuse literacy into every content area,” she said.

As the first year of Friendship’s four-year implementation plan comes to a close, Goodman is eager to study the data from a full academic year and make correlations between Aspire progress and PowerUp student performance. “I believe that Aspire can make PowerUp implementation more effective,” she said. “By implementing Aspire PLCs, we can infuse explicit literacy instruction across the curriculum in content-area classes, accelerating student learning and growth in the Lexia PowerUp Domains.”




Recommendations For Implementing SoR at a Secondary Level

Based on her own experience with implementing this across-the-board curriculum, Goodman recommends these steps:

- 1 Start at the top by developing a local literacy plan.
- 2 Develop a school science of reading implementation plan that includes related committees.
- 3 Conduct focus groups for feedback.
- 4 Leverage teachers and staff leadership to develop and implement the school plan.
- 5 Utilize Lexia Success Partnerships for resources and support.
- 6 Stay actively engaged with reviewing and analyzing student literacy data to inform instruction and decision-making.
- 7 Create systems of accountability—celebrate wins, lead with love, and offer support—as schools and districts shift to a science of reading culture.

In this way, Goodman and other district leaders are infusing the science of reading across the Friendship Public Charter Schools community, and she can't wait to see where they'll be three years from now.

"We still have work to do with closing the achievement gap but we're on the right track," she said. "There's no program I would use other than Lexia."

 [See what Aspire can do for your district.](#)

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I love the Lexia programs and will remain a dedicated Lexia customer. I particularly appreciate the Lexia Success Partnership team and their support of the 6–12 literacy programs and professional learning, and the blended learning literacy model at FPCS.

— Tiffany Goodman, Director of Multi-Tiered Systems of Support, Friendship Public Charter Schools



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