CASE STUDY

One Size Doesn't Fit All

A Flexible Approach to Literacy in Arkansas

Lexia® PowerUp Literacy® in Bryant Public Schools
Bryant, Arkansas

Start Reading →

Case Study

One Size Doesn't Fit All:

A Flexible Approach to Literacy in Arkansas

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Introduction

PowerUp for Timeless Literacy Intervention

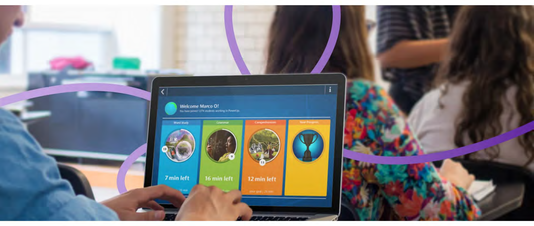
When Crystal Hall came on board as secondary district literacy specialist for Bryant Public Schools, the decision had already been made to adopt **Lexia® PowerUp Literacy®**, an Adaptive Blended Learning program that accelerates literacy gains for students in grades 6–12. By blending online student-driven instruction with offline teacher-delivered lessons and activities, the program addresses gaps in fundamental literacy skills and builds higher-order analytical skills through age-appropriate content and motivational elements. Previously, the district was seeking a new way to manage timely literacy intervention across all of its secondary schools. This mission aligned with Arkansas' Reading Initiative for Student Excellence (R.I.S.E.), a statewide reading campaign focused on community partners, parents, and teachers establishing the importance of reading in homes, schools, and communities.

The Science of Reading

Facing lower ACT Aspire reading scores, Bryant officials sought a solution that would help students in grades 6–9 improve their reading and grammar levels. They found what they were looking for in PowerUp, which provides systematic and timely intervention tools for teachers.

"Our teachers have always known what they need to do, but the planning and development of the learning materials for individual and small-group instruction was intimidating," Hall said. "PowerUp looked like a really good solution to address that issue."

Because the R.I.S.E initiative provides professional development in the science of reading, it pairs well with PowerUp. "Both follow the same science of reading approach," Hall said, "but PowerUp has the resources to match."



Two Different Approaches That Both Work

Bryant educators began using PowerUp for students in grades 6–9 for the 2021–2022 school year. Hall said the last instructional time due to the pandemic was a motivating factor for adopting the literacy platform, which is helping the district close literacy gaps across all four grade levels.

eBryant Middle School and Bethel Middle School use different approaches, both of which are working well. Bryant Middle School requires students to use PowerUp for 10 or 15 units per week and then gives those students a participation grade for meeting their weekly units, while Bethel Middle School adopted a flexible approach that leaves the actual usage requirements up to the individual teacher.

Both middle schools' study skills teachers use the PowerUp program in their classes once or twice a week. "Our Bryant Middle School choir teacher is one of our highest PowerUp users," Hall said. "She teaches study skills and really digs the program."

At Bethel Middle School, sixth grade teachers were asked to use PowerUp for at least one class period a week during study skills. Hall also created a class for the school's morning tutoring groups, thereby ensuring those students identified by PowerUp as needing additional instructional time were getting everything they needed to improve their literacy skills.

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>
> **—Crystal Hall**
> Secondary District Literary Specialist, Bryant Public Schools

Meeting and Exceeding Goals

To incentivize more teachers to use the platform, Hall's team held a five-week competition to see who could complete the highest average of units in each class period. "The winning classes received a free period during the English teacher's class period," Hall said. "Both the students and the teacher of the winning class were incentivized."

Currently, Bryant Middle School's sixth grade team has the highest PowerUp usage across all groups in the district. Bethel Middle School's seventh grade students had the highest number of students who met their Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) winter test growth goals. In fall 2021, just 43% of students met their growth requirements. By the winter test, 57% met their growth. According to the district, the sixth grade students showed a 16% increase on the state-standardized ACT Aspire Reading test from April 2021 to April 2022.

"Those were just the students who hit that growth mark, and not necessarily students who did well on the test," Hall pointed out. Bryant Middle School's seventh grade students also used the program. For the winter NWEA test, 49% of them had met their growth targets (versus 38% during the fall).

"When you look at our usage for the whole year, our highest months of usage in all of our schools were really October and November," Hall said. "That test was in January, and so we really book-ended those months of really high usage."

Right on Target

PowerUp provides data that's easily accessible and ready to act on as needed. Bryant's teachers primarily use the class table, which displays the units and minutes, while Hall uses the data to track entire-class and whole-group progress.

She also uses the report in Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) with teachers and incorporates the skill progression report. "We use that to identify the students who may be using the program but are not making progress," Hall said.

"That's how we know which kids we need to target," she added. "While they're not necessarily being flagged for needs instruction, it's taking them longer and they're not progressing as much as the other students are. We complemented that with the needs instruction and Skill Builder lessons to really target all of our students to drive improved academic outcomes."

Lexia PowerUp™ Literacy

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