

North Rose-Wolcott Elementary



Building Strong Readers
with Collaborative Literacy
and *SIPPS*



INTRODUCTION

This research brief underscores the significant positive impact of Collaborative Literacy, Collaborative Classroom’s comprehensive literacy program comprised of *Being a Reader*™ and *Being a Writer*™, as well as the aligned foundational skills intervention program *SIPPS*®, on literacy outcomes at North Rose-Wolcott Elementary School. Since beginning implementation of these programs in the 2020–21 school year, the school, located in North Rose, New York, has seen substantial growth across key literacy indicators:

- Students have demonstrated notable **gains in phonemic awareness and comprehension**, and **overall reading proficiency has improved** across all grade levels.
- **Oral Reading Fluency (ORF) benchmarks increased by an average of 15 percentage points** across grades 1 through 4 from the 2021–22 to the 2023–24 school year.
- Additionally, **i-Ready® data from the 2024–25 school year show a remarkable 169% average increase** in the percentage of students in grades 2–4 performing at or above grade level from the beginning to the end of the year.



353

Total Students



60%

Students Receiving Free/
Reduced-Price Meals



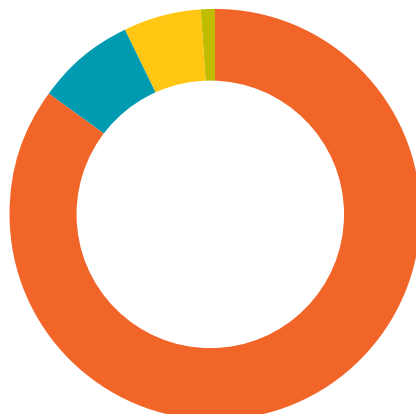
17%

Students Receiving Special
Education Services

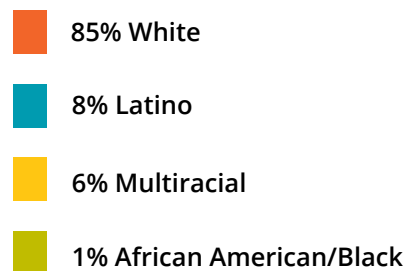


2021–2025

Implementation Years



Student Demographics



NARRATIVE

SCHOOL CONTEXT

North Rose-Wolcott Elementary School in North Rose, New York, serves 353 students from kindergarten through fourth grade. The school is committed to fostering a community where all children feel loved, respected, and encouraged to develop to their fullest potential. They seek to recognize the potential of each child and to guide students in building confidence, leadership potential, and academic and social skills in an environment that is safe and promotes respect for all. The staff at the elementary school is committed to working collaboratively with families and students in promoting excellence in education through high-quality, research-based instruction, coaching, and outreach as well as equipping students with a solid foundation in becoming reflective, lifelong learners and successful leaders of the global community in the 21st century.

During the 2023–24 school year, the student population was predominantly White (85%), with 8% Latino, 1% African American/Black, and 6% Multiracial students. Overall, 51% of students were female, 2% were English Learners (ELs), 17% were students with disabilities, and 68% were economically disadvantaged. This demographic profile underscores the school’s focus on meeting a range of academic and socioeconomic needs.



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THE JOURNEY/IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation methodology involved a full, five-day-a-week implementation of the comprehensive literacy curriculum Collaborative Literacy across kindergarten through fourth grade, with interventionists leveraging the *SIPPS* program for targeted foundational skills intervention. Regular data review days were established for grade-level teams to monitor student performance. A key factor in this success was the seamless integration of programs: Collaborative Literacy for Tier 1 instruction and *SIPPS* for aligned, Tier 2 intervention. This cross-tier alignment ensured a shared scope and sequence and consistent instructional routines, allowing foundational skills instruction to intensify appropriately by tier.

This integration was bolstered by a systematic approach to professional learning, which evolved from initial in-person learning sessions to dynamic web-based sessions during COVID, and from grade-band to single-grade focus. This continuous professional learning deepened educators’ understanding of the science of reading as well as Collaborative Literacy and *SIPPS*, enhanced their ELA instructional practices, fostered vertical consistency, and built confidence in maintaining program integrity while making effective instructional decisions.

Data-driven progress monitoring was integral; educators utilized aimswebPlus assessments (2021–22 to 2023–24 school years), i-Ready diagnostics (2024–25 school year), as well as in-program Mastery Tests. This system was woven into the school’s Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) to identify students needing intervention, track their progress, plan successful exits from interventions, and address summer regression. Using a “team within team” approach, every classroom received daily support from a reading interventionist or support person who delivered *SIPPS* instruction (or letter name instruction for pre-*SIPPS* students) to two groups of identified students each day. These groups were flexible and students were moved in and out based on progress monitoring data and grade level expectation. Special education educators also consistently used *SIPPS* throughout elementary

school for this cohort, supporting three students in special classes and working with others in consultant educator rooms. This consistency benefited students with disabilities by providing systematic, explicit literacy instruction aligned with their peers. Using the same structured program helped reinforce foundational skills, close gaps, create predictable routines that built confidence, and ensured smoother transitions between general and special education, supporting sustained literacy growth.

Instruction was adjusted based on data trends to ensure tailored literacy support. Additionally, students' progression through the *Being a Reader* Small-Group Reading Sets was tracked and monitored throughout the year to indicate whether students were on track to meet grade-level expectations by the end of the school year. A noteworthy trend emerged when educators compared kindergarten cohorts over time: more students were entering Small-Group Reading instruction earlier, highlighting the impact of the early whole-class reading units in building reading readiness.

Data collected through the MTSS process was also used to monitor students who might require future interventions. Following each diagnostic assessment (October, February, and June), "data days" were held for grade-level teams and interventionists to review diagnostic scores, discuss summer regression issues and intervention progress, and develop exit plans for students who were ready to complete an intervention.

RESULTS

From the 2021–22 to the 2023–24 school year, the percentage of students achieving Oral Reading Fluency (ORF) benchmarks increased by an average of 15 percentage points across grades 1 through 4 as measured by the aimswebPlus assessment (see Figure 1). This sustained growth across grades demonstrates the consistent positive impact of the program over multiple years.

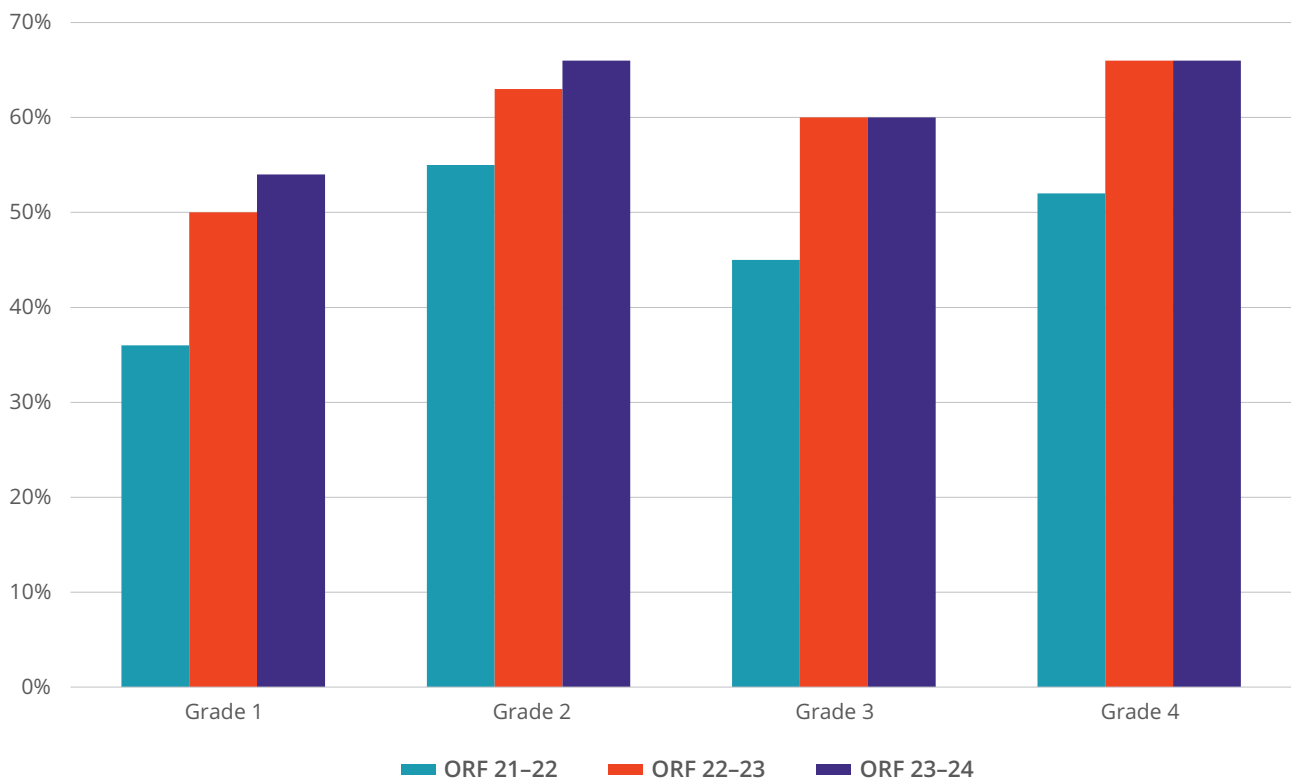


Figure 1. Percentage of students achieving Oral Reading Fluency (ORF) benchmarks as measured by the aimswebPlus assessment.

After shifting from AimsWeb to i-Ready for ELA assessment in 2024–25, North-Rose Wolcott Elementary saw a continued upward trend in students meeting grade level standards. The percentage of grades 2–4 students performing at or above grade level rose markedly from fall to spring (see Figure 2). This upward trendline illustrates the significant progress made within a single academic year after the shift to i-Ready.

This upward trend of students displaying on or above grade-level skills yielded an impressive average increase of 169% for all students over the academic year as measured by i-Ready (see Figure 3). These gains reflect significant progress in students’ reading skills and their ability to engage with grade-level texts.

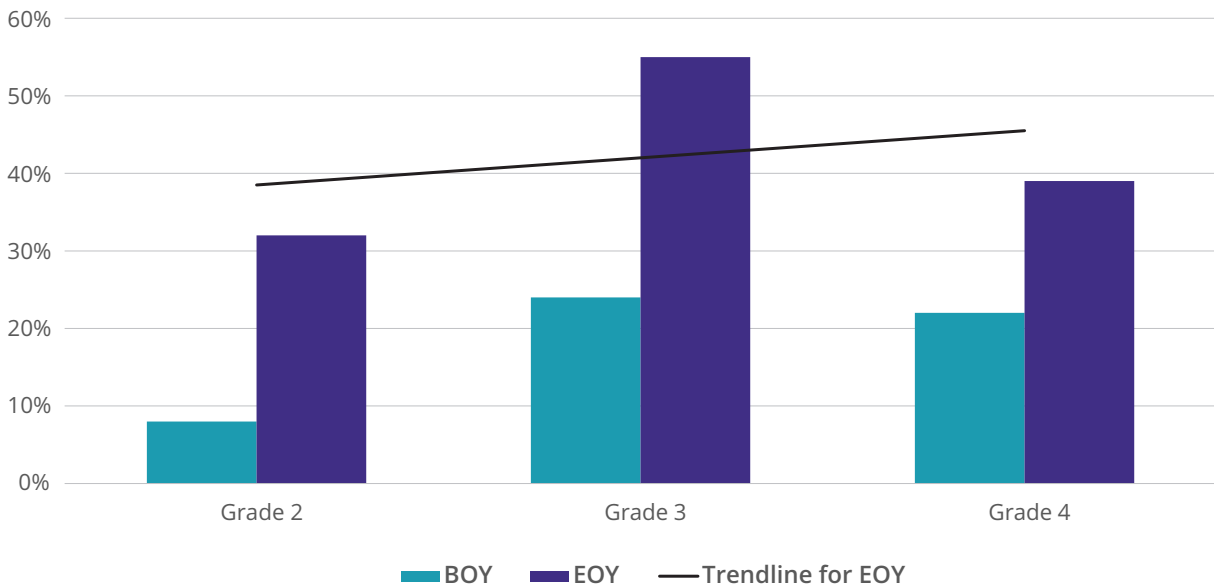


Figure 2. Percentage of students displaying on or above grade-level skills as measured by the i-Ready assessment.

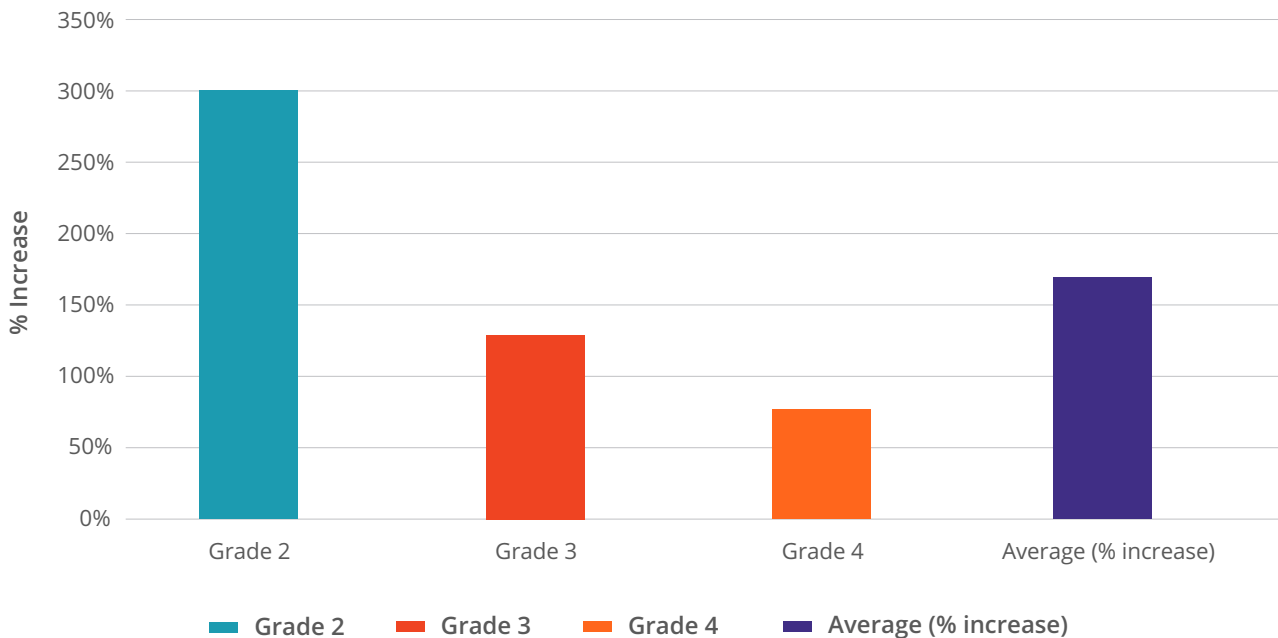


Figure 3. Percent increase in students on or above grade level by grade.

BEYOND ACADEMICS

Alongside academic gains, students have demonstrated strong engagement, with increased reading and writing stamina, more reading and writing for pleasure, higher engagement during read-alouds, and consistent application of learned strategies. An average of 18% of students are now testing out of phonemic awareness sections on diagnostic assessments. Social skills development also thrived, evidenced by strengthened student motivation, increased love for reading and writing, deeper classroom discussions, and consistent application of respectful discourse. Educators also reported feeling more knowledgeable and confident, and observed increased student excitement and productive collaboration.

Importantly, these outcomes go beyond test scores: they reflect children discovering the joy of reading, building confidence, and seeing themselves as capable learners. The curriculum has fostered a genuine love for reading and writing, with students often so engaged that they are reluctant to stop writing. Student motivation and confidence have grown, leading to richer classroom discussions around texts and consistent use of respectful discourse protocols. Additionally, the embedded collaborative structures developed students' abilities to engage in meaningful conversations in which differing opinions were welcomed and valued.

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EDUCATOR PERSPECTIVES

The robust professional learning experiences described earlier empowered educators, leading to the increased knowledge and confidence reflected in their perspectives. As they gained a deeper understanding of the curriculum and effective literacy practices, educators reported feeling more knowledgeable about best practices in ELA instruction and observing greater consistency in vertical alignment of instruction. They also expressed improved confidence in literacy instruction and noted that students are more familiar with protocols from year to year, engaging in more meaningful discussions, and showing excitement about reading.

Melisa Mason, a fourth-grade educator, shared: *“Being a Reader gives students the structure and support they need to become more fluent and independent.”*

Catherine Arns, another fourth-grade educator, shared: *“Being a Writer is highly engaging . . . protocols like think-pair-share allow collaborative reflection, and the rubrics help students analyze and enhance their work.”*

Meagan Pentycofe, instructional coach, shared: *“We’re seeing vertical alignment we’ve never seen before. Students are reading earlier, reading at higher levels, and thoroughly enjoying literacy.”*

CONCLUSION

The implementation of Collaborative Literacy and *SIPPS* at North Rose-Wolcott Elementary have driven significant improvements in student literacy and instructional quality. These sustained academic gains, including an average 15-percentage-point increase in Oral Reading Fluency (ORF) benchmarks across grades 1 through 4 over multiple years and a remarkable 169% average increase in the percentage of grades 2–4 students performing at or above grade level in a single academic year, serve as vital indicators of future academic success and long-term achievement for every student. By prioritizing literacy development today, the district is building a foundation for equitable education and lifelong achievement for every student.

This success stems from several critical factors: the comprehensive integration of literacy and social skills development throughout the school day, consistent implementation across all grade levels, ongoing targeted professional learning, data-informed instructional decisions, and strong instructional alignment and coherence across tiers and grades. Together, these elements have created a sustainable and effective instructional model.

North Rose-Wolcott’s experience highlights the power of sustained investment in structured, research-based literacy instruction and offers a compelling, scalable model for other districts seeking to enhance early literacy through collaborative, comprehensive, and data-driven practices.



LEARN MORE

Learn more about our curriculum. [collaborativeclassroom.org/programs/](https://www.collaborativeclassroom.org/programs/)



EXPLORE

Explore the research and evidence base for our curriculum. <https://www.collaborativeclassroom.org/evidence-base/>