institute for
multi-sensory
education



CASE STUDY

Clark County Public Schools

Winchester, KY

Today, teachers across Clark County Public Schools in Kentucky are able to deliver effective reading instruction to all their students, day after day. Since committing to a consistent, evidence-based method built around ongoing coaching, Clark County has seen its kindergarten and first-grade phonics scores climb for three straight years, with double-digit gains in both grades.

The clarity and reliability of IMSE's Orton-Gillingham Plus (OG+) curriculum, along with support from IMSE Instructor Kim Woodard, are at the heart of these lasting literacy improvements.

District Profile

10
Schools

5,300
Students

45%
Students on Free or Reduced Lunch

> "Our teachers and schools were ready for greater consistency, stronger alignment across the district, and a clear, solid scope and sequence."
>
> **Alyson Hill**
> Instructional Specialist at Clark County Public Schools



THE CHALLENGE

Before IMSE, Clark County had no shared approach to phonics instruction across its four elementary schools. Each had landed on its own curriculum, with varying results.

And because instruction varied from building to building, students who transferred between Clark County schools could land in a classroom teaching phonics in an entirely different way than the one they'd just left.

Overall, foundational reading skills weren't sticking. Clark County knew its teachers deserved curriculum and professional learning that was clear, reliable, and evidence-based, so that they could give students the foundational skills they needed to succeed.

THE APPROACH

Rather than trying to fix every literacy challenge at once, Clark County's academic team narrowed its focus. The team landed on reading proficiency as the district's top priority, then narrowed further to phonics specifically. That kind of specificity is now what Clark County leaders would recommend to any district leader navigating a similar shift.

> "You can't do all the things you need to do at one time. So the first step is slowing down, looking at the big picture and saying, 'Where do we want to put our efforts first?'"
>
> **Alyson Hill**

Once phonics became the focus, a small group of instructional specialists and administrators completed IMSE's Orton-Gillingham Plus professional learning course, both to evaluate the program firsthand and to build internal buy-in before asking anyone else to commit.

From there, the district secured grant funding to train every elementary teacher and every elementary administrator over a single summer.

Training administrators alongside teachers was a deliberate choice: building leaders needed to recognize strong instruction during classroom walkthroughs rather than approve the program from a distance.

Clark County also built in support that extended well past that first 30-hour training:

- **Ongoing coaching.** Beyond the curriculum itself, perhaps the most important part of the district's approach is sustained coaching from IMSE. IMSE experts regularly return to run refreshers, and after each one, staff members gather for additional hour-long meetings to answer specific questions and address concerns stemming from the coaches' classroom visits.

  The district has made coaching available in a variety of settings, from classrooms to PLCs and staff meetings, to broadcast every best practice and useful insight that teachers uncover in the course of implementation.

  "Kim from IMSE has been an essential source of support for the district." – Alyson Hill

- **Protected instructional time**. Master schedules at every elementary school were rebuilt so IMSE's OG+ structure was given dedicated time during every school day.

- **New-teacher onboarding.** Every teacher hired since that first summer has received IMSE OG+ training.

- **A steady, repeated narrative.** District leadership kept communicating the same vision, grounded in data, so teachers understood the why behind the shift, not just the what. The consistency of that message mattered just as much as the training itself.

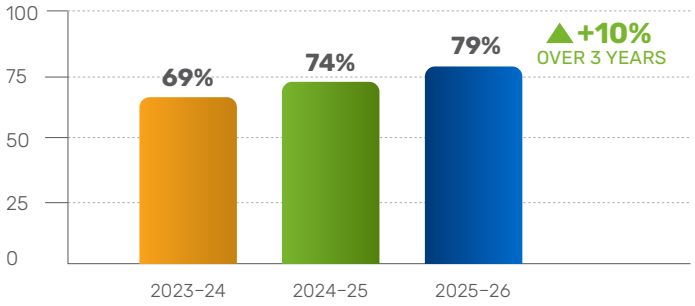
> "Having a consistent vision across the district gives our teachers a shared sense of purpose and direction. We're all working toward the same goal—creating meaningful learning experiences that help every student grow and reach their potential. When we have that consistency across our schools and classrooms, we're able to move forward together and continue growing greatness in our students."
>
> **Kelly Fithen**
>
> Chief Academic Officer & Assistant Superintendent, Clark County Public Schools

THE RESULTS

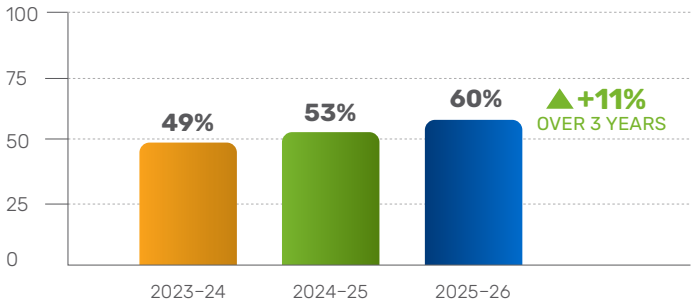
The data reflects the pace of the district's approach, with steady, compounding improvements each year.

Rise in Test Scores

Kindergarten end-of-year phonics readiness
(i-Ready, Window 3)



First-grade phonics readiness
(i-Ready, Window 3)



The cumulative double-digit gains are a meaningful signal that the approach is working and holding up as more cohorts move through it. Beyond the numbers, Hill points to a shift in teacher confidence as one of the earliest and most telling changes.

> "Our teachers are incredibly excited about these gains. One powerful impact we've seen across the district is the confidence and comfort teachers have developed with the IMSE routines. There's a sense of trust in the work and in the foundation they're building for students."
>
> **Alyson Hill**

A Better Foundation for the Long Term

Clark County's story is ultimately about durability, about finding an approach built to sustain itself over time.

With new-teacher onboarding, ongoing coaching from IMSE, and protected instructional time, the district has made its literacy program self-renewing as staff and student populations change.

That durability required fidelity and patience. Leaders committed to IMSE's OG+ curriculum and trusted the process. With its first full OG+-instructed cohort now in third grade, and a system built to keep training and supporting new teachers indefinitely, Clark County has built something designed to outlast any one leader, teacher, or school year.











ABOUT IMSE

IMSE is an education pioneer and the leading provider of Structured Literacy solutions based on the science of reading. IMSE solutions incorporate the Orton-Gillingham methodology and all five pillars of literacy to empower teachers from day one.

Visit imse.com or contact info@imse.com to learn more about our work with school districts around the country.

institute for multi-sensory education

2000 Town Center, Suite 2000
Southfield, MI 48075