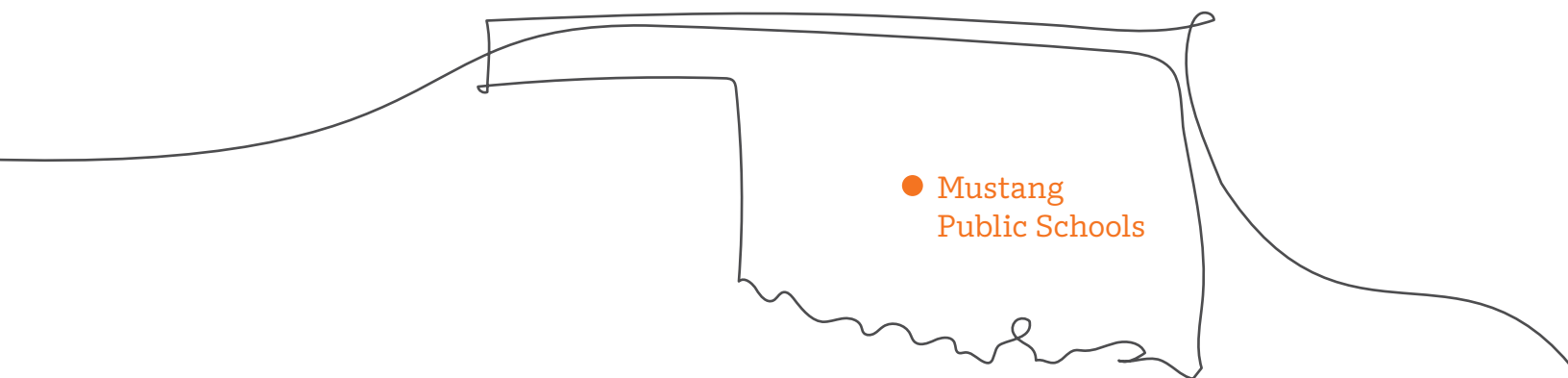


Achieving literacy growth and student engagement in middle school

Mustang Public Schools increases student performance with Amplify ELA.



Background

Mustang Public Schools, located in Oklahoma, serves a growing student population across three middle schools for grades 7 and 8. Under the direction of Robbyn Glinsmann, the intermediate and middle school curriculum director, the district works to align its curriculum with the Oklahoma Academic Standards (OAS). The school's mission is to ensure a consistent, high-quality educational experience for all students.



Challenge

In the 2022–2023 school year, Mustang Public Schools faced significant challenges in their approach to literacy instruction. Their existing curriculum failed to adequately meet the needs of teachers and their students. “We would have print options that were not available online or there were online stories that were not available in print,” Glinsmann said. “We are a district that is one-to-one where each of our students receive a Chromebook and so we wanted a curriculum with a digital piece to match.” Additionally, Glinsmann explained that within the district, reading and writing was often taught as separate entities. Therefore, the district was interested in finding a curriculum that could still work within Mustang’s structure while providing more opportunities for reading and writing integration.

The district also needed a program capable of performing in different environments. “Although our three schools are only situated about five miles apart, each has vastly different needs. Students frequently move between schools within our district, so maintaining a consistent and curriculum-driven approach is important.”

Lastly, the district was intent on finding a curriculum that could cater to the diverse learning needs of special education students. “It’s important for our special education students to still receive rigorous instruction. Their reading level may be one-to-two levels lower, but they still need to be exposed to grade-level text,” Glinsmann said.

Solution

When the Oklahoma adoption process began, Mustang Public Schools embarked on a diligent, teacher-driven evaluation process for its middle schools. The call for programs led them to Amplify ELA, a curriculum that stood out for its alignment with OAS, technological compatibility, and its engaging, diverse content.

“We go through an adoption cycle in Oklahoma every six years and this time, our teacher committee overwhelmingly chose Amplify ELA. They really liked how the units were broken up, the essential guiding questions, and the integrated reading and writing,” said Glinsmann. “When reviewing, our teachers looked into the rigor of each curriculum, and it was evident right away that they wanted Amplify.”

The focus on teacher involvement was fundamental to the selection process. “It was 100% teacher-driven, not administrator-driven. When it came time to vote, it was only our classroom and special education teachers, and they overwhelmingly chose Amplify,” Glinsmann noted.

The district implemented a structured rollout of Amplify ELA for the 2023–2024 school year, ensuring that teachers were supported at every stage. “The initial training was crucial in getting everyone on the same page. Our teachers were excited by what they were learning and how they could implement the program immediately.”

Results and Impact

Student engagement and teacher tools

Student engagement increased with the adoption of Amplify ELA. Units like Red Scarf Girl and The Tell-Tale Heart captivated students, fostering more enthusiasm in the classroom. Teacher resources within the program also made an impact. “We love that there are paired texts. We love that every unit has multiple selections with smaller texts that can be brought in,” noted Glinsmann. “The interactive panels in every classroom allow our teachers to show the kids what they should be seeing and utilize those aspects.”

She also shared a memorable story of classroom engagement. “I will never forget...one day we were doing academic walkthroughs. Our associate superintendents, our curriculum directors and principals, and I were in an ELA classroom. The classroom was doing the Gold Rush unit and the teacher was showing some of the pictures, asking the students what they noticed. And then she hit the ‘eyes up’ feature which locks all student screens and prompts them to look at the teacher. All of the kids immediately looked up, and the teacher had them. Everybody was like, ‘What magic did she just do?’ You don’t see student attention being captured like that very often.”

Differentiation and special education integration

Amplify ELA's built-in scaffolding tools and embedded differentiation were essential in supporting students. “The differentiation piece is a game changer in our middle schools. When [students] are responding to a story and sentence starters are already there, they now have help formulating their thoughts,” said Glinsmann.

Mustang's special education classrooms were also positively impacted. Amplify ELA's ability to adjust the curriculum to meet varied learning needs enabled more personalized instruction for all students. “In Oklahoma, our state test is online. So Amplify ELA's online features like the highlighting tools have been huge for our special education students,” Glinsmann shared. “It's those accessibility features that are available throughout the program that really make a difference. It's important for our special education students to still have that rigor. Their reading level may be one-to-two levels lower but they still need to be exposed to that grade level text.”

“We felt like the Amplify [ELA] curriculum brought us together as a district, aligned us with our standards, and really set a high bar for our students and teachers alike.”

Robbyn Glinsmann
Intermediate and middle school curriculum director
Mustang Public Schools



Academic growth

Amplify ELA demonstrated its effectiveness with quantifiable academic growth during its first year of implementation. Glinsmann explained their process for measuring outcomes. “We benchmark three times a year outside of Amplify using Star Renaissance. We look at that growth data to see how students are progressing, where their holes and gaps are, and then we can target that with pieces in the curriculum or other supports. The assessment gives four rating categories: Below basic, basic, proficient, and advanced.”

Mustang Public Schools saw notable improvements across all grades and significant improvements in state test scores for proficiency and advanced categories. “We saw double-digit gains in what we call proficient and advanced,” She told us excitedly. “What we saw was about 30% [of our students] were below basic in the previous year and we’re now down to around 20%.”

“Our internal benchmark data showed consistent growth,” said Glinsmann. “We’re doing well but we can always do things better and we know that those capabilities and features built into Amplify ELA will get us there.”

Professional development and ongoing support

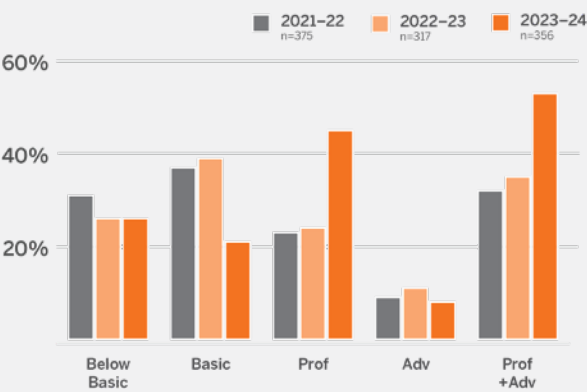
Professional development and ongoing support from Amplify ensured the program’s success. “We had a trainer who was exceptional and knew the climate and culture of our state. We even did a mid-year virtual training to revisit and get better at using some features we hadn’t fully tapped into,” Glinsmann recounted.

Moving forward, Mustang Public Schools plans to further leverage Amplify’s coaching and support services. “We are going to utilize the coaching aspect this year,” Glinsmann shared. “If I need professional development, I have a catalog to refer to, and I can easily ask questions. Your flexibility in offerings and support is greatly appreciated.”

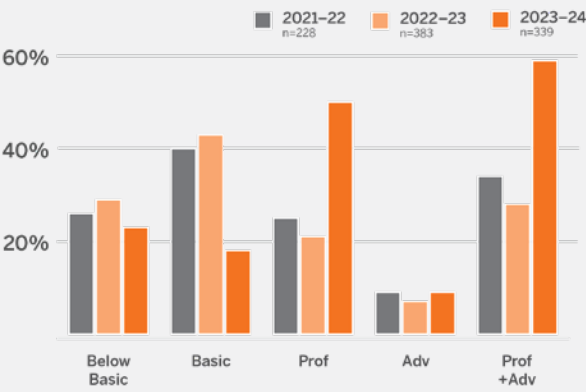
Overall, Glinsmann felt that Amplify ELA made a huge impact on Mustang Public Schools. “We felt like the Amplify [ELA] curriculum brought us together as a district, aligned us with our standards, and really set a high bar for our students and teachers alike.”

Mustang’s middle schools’ ELA performance by year

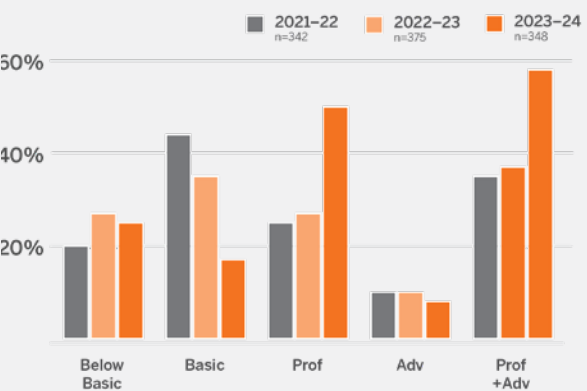
Mustang North Middle School, Grade 7



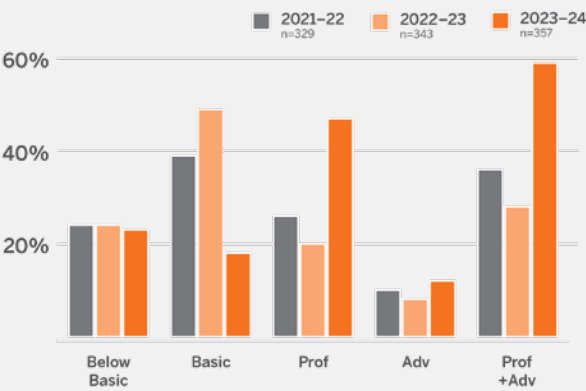
Mustang North Middle School, Grade 8



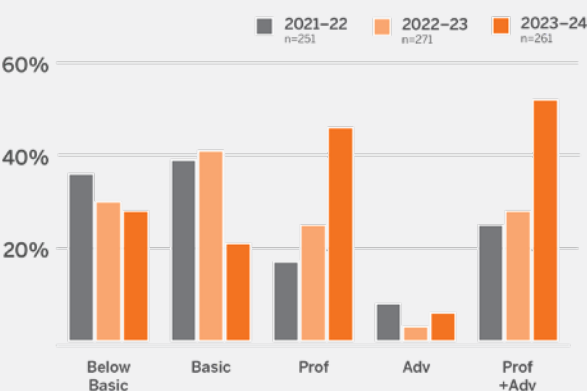
Mustang Middle School, Grade 7



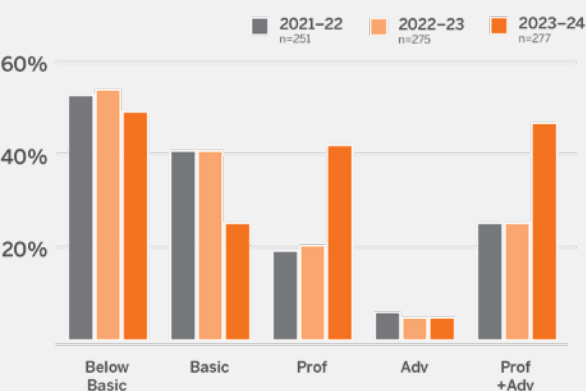
Mustang Middle School, Grade 8



Mustang Central Middle School , Grade 7

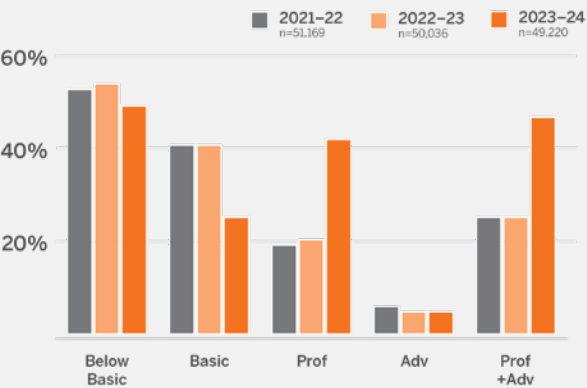


Mustang Central Middle School, Grade 8

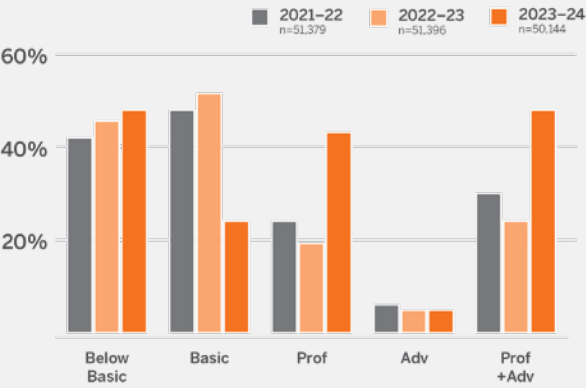


Oklahoma State ELA performance by year

State ELA Performance Grade 7



State ELA Performance Grade 8



“Everybody knows that during the first year of implementing a curriculum, you’re usually going to see your test scores dive down. We did not. We saw higher gains, especially in the schools that [used Amplify ELA] more effectively and used all of the aspects of the curriculum”

Robbyn Glinsmann
Intermediate and middle school curriculum director
Mustang Public Schools

For more information on Amplify ELA,
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