



ENGLISH LEARNERS

District-Wide Approach
Implementation Support
Progress Monitoring

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– JEFF MOSELY, EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR OF ACADEMIC PROGRAMS,
MARIETTA CITY SCHOOLS

Supporting Literacy Gains for English Learners with Personalized Learning Program

Marietta City Schools Marietta, GA

Challenge

Marietta City Schools has a growing English Learner population. At over 1,600 students (20% of the district), the district's share of students with limited English proficiency is one of the highest in the state of Georgia.¹

“A number of immigrant families move here looking for work. Many of our students are new to the country and have gaps in their formal education,” said Jeff Mosely, Executive Director of Academic Programs at Marietta City Schools.

A large number of these students are economically disadvantaged and face challenges at home such as crowded or unstable housing, Mosely explained.

For an increasing number of students, an older sibling is the primary caregiver.

“There are so many outside factors that are influencing or complicating life for our students. Many of them don't have opportunities to be supported in their education at home,” said Jennifer Williams, the district's K-12 English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) coordinator and an assistant principal at Marietta High School.

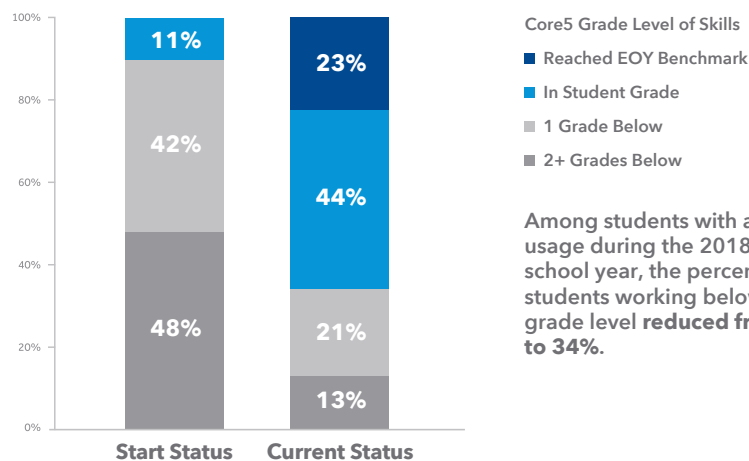
Marietta City Schools offers sheltered content-area classes with specialized instruction for ESOL students. In recent years, the district found that while its ESOL students were seeing growth in language skills, they were lagging behind in literacy achievement on state tests.

¹ Sugarman, Julie and Geary, Courtney. 2018. English Learners in Georgia: Demographics, Outcomes, and State Accountability Policies. Washington, DC: Migration Policy Institute.

“One of the benefits of Lexia is flexibility. Different schools in our district found different ways of incorporating the programs, based on their ESOL population. Lexia’s implementation support team helped us pivot and readjust without disruption to the students.”

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Figure 1. Progress of K-5 Students Using Core5 (N=1,000)



Among students with any Core5 usage during the 2018-2019 school year, the percentage of students working below their grade level **reduced from 90% to 34%**.

“We wanted to find a program to support both language and literacy simultaneously,” Williams said.

Marietta City Schools required a personalized learning solution with implementation support, intervention resources for teachers, and easy-to-use reporting. The solution had to be flexible enough to support the different instructional models of ESOL programs at each of its schools.

Solution

Marietta City Schools purchased Lexia® Core5® Reading (designed for grades pre-K-5) and Lexia® PowerUp Literacy® (designed for grades 6-12) to incorporate into its ESOL programs districtwide. Both products are adaptive, technology-based programs that support educators in differentiating literacy instruction with explicit, systematic instruction, personalized learning paths, easy-to-use progress monitoring data, and student-specific offline resources. Marietta City Schools also chose a Lexia Implementation Support Package to help staff hit the ground running with training, data coaching, and ongoing consultation from a dedicated team.

The district uses WIDA ACCESS for ELLs, a leading English proficiency assessment, to assign students to either Core5 or PowerUp as an intervention. Students with a WIDA score of 3.9 or below, which is the majority of the district’s ESOL students, use one

of Lexia’s programs. While Core5 is designed for elementary students of all abilities and PowerUp specifically for struggling adolescent readers, Marietta also finds Core5 helpful for some secondary students entering the district with significant gaps in their formal education.

“One of the benefits of Lexia is flexibility,” Mosely said. “Different schools in our district found different ways of incorporating the programs, based on their ESOL population.”

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Both Core5 and PowerUp prescribe weekly usage targets for the online component for each student. At Marietta City Schools, teachers fit online usage into student schedules in different ways: during morning work, rotation centers, literacy centers, or intervention blocks.

Lexia’s educator platform, myLexia, offers easy-to-use reports at the individual, classroom, school, and district levels.

“I use the Lexia reports daily as part of our MTSS process. I’m constantly monitoring progress and usage data and sharing reports with school principals, assistant principals, and teachers,” Williams said. “myLexia makes it easy to pull those reports and share with staff at the level of detail they need.”

In addition to producing reports, myLexia helps teachers make the most of their intervention time with targeted resources for direct instruction.

“The teacher platform is super user-friendly, and provides great on-demand reports, charts, certificates, feedback, and resources,” said Barbie Esquijarosa, ESOL teacher at Burruss Elementary School in Marietta, where she uses Core5. “The program assigns Lexia Lessons® based on student needs, which gives teachers the opportunity to address missing skills.”

Because Lexia Lessons are fully scripted, they can also be delivered by paraprofessionals or volunteers with fidelity, freeing up more teacher time.

Esquijarosa was named the district’s 2020 Teacher of the Year for her commitment to helping students persevere through challenges and overcome adversity. According to Esquijarosa, while Core5 is a practical tool that helps her close gaps with her students, it’s also an opportunity to recognize their achievement. When students complete a level, they receive a printed Lexia certificate.

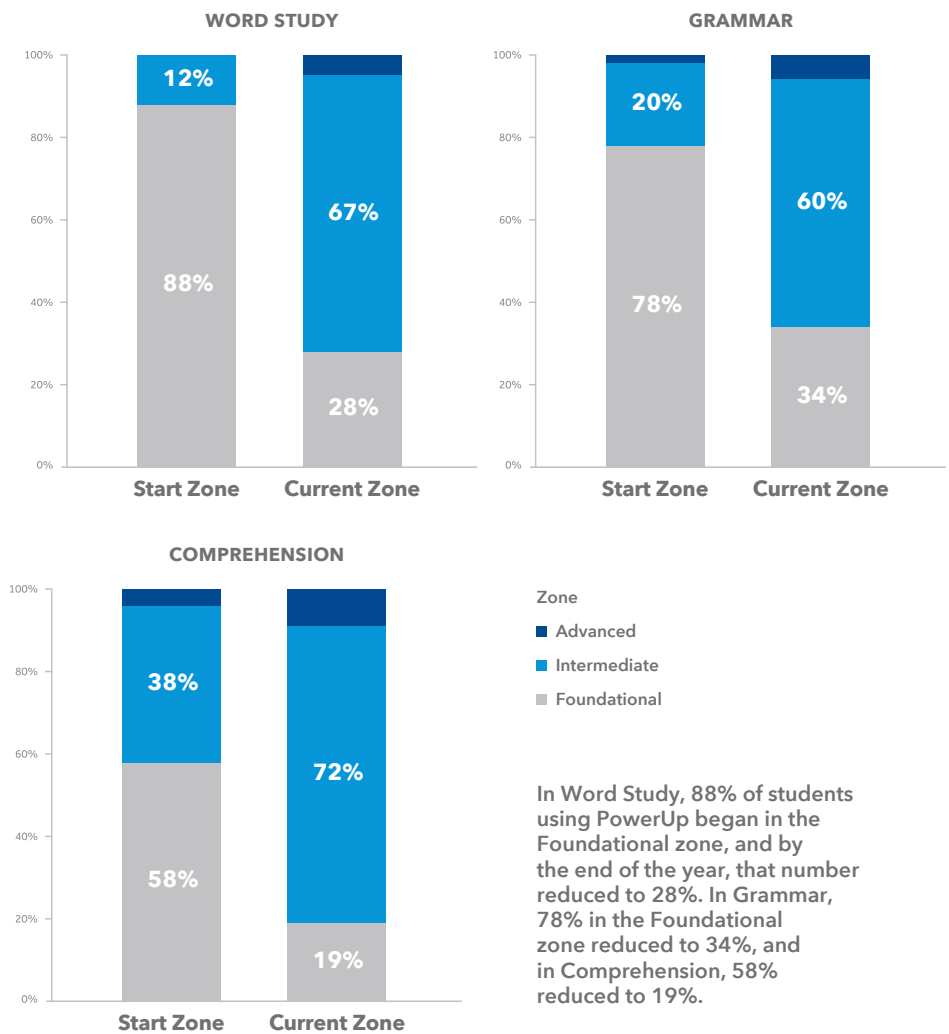
“We have monthly assemblies where students receive their certificates, and parents are invited. Being able to give out Lexia awards during assemblies has allowed students who don’t normally get awards to have a time to shine in front of the school community,” she said.

In addition to systematic, explicit instruction and motivational elements, Core5 and PowerUp have a key feature specifically for ESOL students: the option to hear directions in other languages.

“Native language support is a huge benefit for our ESOL students. It gives them the opportunity to feel successful while engaging in the platform,” Williams said. “It makes them feel connected to something because they’re understanding what’s being fed to them.”



Figure 2. Progress of Students Using PowerUp (N=88)



Results

At Marietta City Schools during the 2018-2019 school year, 1,000 ESOL students in grades K-5 used Core5, and 88 students in grades 6-12 used PowerUp.

Among all K-5 ESOL students with any usage of the online component of Core5, **90% began the year working on material below grade level in Core5. At the end of the year, this number reduced to 34%.** Additionally, 90% of those students advanced at least one grade level of material in the program.

Of K-5 students who started Core5 below grade level and used the online component with fidelity,² **67% caught up to grade-level or above material.**

In PowerUp, students are auto-placed into their appropriate skill levels within three areas: Word Study, Grammar, and Comprehension. **In Word Study, 88% of students using PowerUp began in the lowest (Foundational) zone, and by the end of the year, that number reduced to 28%.** In Grammar, 78% in the Foundational zone reduced to 34%, and in Comprehension, 58% reduced to 19%.

NWEA MAP Growth Correlation

A correlational analysis by Lexia Research compared Marietta students' end-of-year Core5 results to their end-of-year reading proficiency scores in NWEA MAP Growth, a progress-monitoring tool administered three times a year.³ **The analysis found strong, significant, positive correlations between performance in Core5 and MAP at each grade level.**

Additionally, students' scores at the end of the school year on MAP were aligned with end-of-year performance in Core5. Most students (63%) who ended the school year having met benchmark on Core5 were classified Proficient in MAP Reading.⁴

MAP assigns growth goals to each student. According to Esquijarosa, it is expected that at least 50% of students meet their growth goal, but few of her ESOL students typically do.

"Last year, 63% of ESOL students met their growth goal, and most of those students used Lexia. I believe that Lexia usage played a big part in that growth percent increasing," she said.

Based on these first-year results, both Williams and Mosely recommend partnering with Lexia to other districts.

"Our goal was to find a program that supports both language and literacy, and Lexia has demonstrated that support. Our data is reflective of that. It's engaging for students, it's easy for teachers to maneuver and understand, and the support from the corporate level has just been phenomenal," Williams said.

"Progress monitoring with Lexia is easy. That's refreshing for me as a district administrator, because I need to make sure my principals can access the data they need to support teachers and students," Mosely said. **"Lexia gave our English Learners an opportunity to experience success in a way that they may not have found outside of this program."**

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— BARBIE ESQUIJAROSA, ESOL TEACHER,
BURRUSS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Profile: Marietta City Schools, Marietta, GA

• Enrollment	8,900
• Grades	K-12
• Race/ethnicity	
Black	39%
Hispanic	37%
White	19%
Two or more races	3%
Asian	2%
• Special education	10%
• Limited English proficiency	20%
• ESOL program	15%
• Economically disadvantaged	56%

² Fidelity defined as students with more than 20 weeks of use who met their usage targets at least 50% of weeks or reached their end-of-year, grade-level benchmark. N=783

³ Sample included 888 Marietta City Schools students in grades K-5 who met usage in Core5, defined as at least 20 weeks of use and meeting usage targets at least 50% of weeks.

⁴ Lexia Research, Marietta City Schools Research Report: EL Students, 2018-2019 Lexia Core5 Reading and NWEA MAP