

Scaling Success: From Intervention Wins to Tier 1 Gains

Waynesboro Area School District, located in south-central Pennsylvania, is taking a systematic, student-centered approach to early literacy. With four elementary schools and a deep commitment to improving foundational skills instruction, the district recognized that long-standing instructional routines rooted in balanced literacy were no longer serving all students. The district launched a multi-year initiative to align practice with the science of reading by combining high-impact professional development with evidence-based supplemental resources.

Their phased implementation of Really Great Reading has helped teachers build knowledge, strengthen Tier 1 instruction, and provide more consistent learning experiences across classrooms. Today, every K-2 classroom in the district uses RGR daily as part of the literacy block—and the data is proving the approach is working.

The Challenge

Waynesboro’s educators noticed a troubling pattern: students who appeared to be strong readers in kindergarten and first grade were hitting a wall in second grade. “We were spending 45 minutes on a shared reading story and 5 minutes on phonics,” said Alli. “The balance was clearly misaligned.”

Stagnant Acadience scores and inconsistent instructional practices highlighted a more profound need. Balanced literacy wasn’t closing the gap. Intervention staffing had been reduced, and foundational skills were not being taught systematically or consistently in Tier 1.

Waynesboro Area School District





District Overview



Waynesboro, Pennsylvania

6 Schools

| | | |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| 4 Elementary Schools | 1 Middle School | 1 High School |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|

-  Approximately **4,262** students
-  **260** teachers, **20** administrators
-  **38%** districtwide Students with Socioeconomic Disadvantages
-  **12%** Special Education

“We realized we couldn’t intervene our way out of the problem. This needed to be in the classroom.”

– Allison Beaudry,
Federal Programs Coordinator

The Turning Point

After participating in extensive professional learning, the district’s K–2 teachers developed a deeper understanding of orthographic mapping and structured literacy. What began as a Tier 3 intervention quickly revealed its value for all students. The district recognized that targeted support alone wouldn’t address the scale of the challenge. “We realized we couldn’t intervene our way out of the problem,” Alli said. “This needed to be in the classroom.”

What Worked

The district’s success was rooted in a strategic and thoughtful approach to change. Teachers understood the purpose behind the instructional shifts, which led to strong buy-in and greater alignment across classrooms. Leadership played a key role; in one school, a principal strategically moved a Kindergarten teacher into first grade to strengthen collaboration and reinforce structured literacy practices. Classrooms that fully transitioned from leveled readers to decodables showed the strongest student growth, highlighting the impact of using texts aligned with phonics instruction. Teachers also embraced data to drive flexible grouping, using the grouping matrix and playground results to target specific skill gaps. Across all tiers, the use of consistent routines and shared materials between classroom teachers and interventionists ensured students received coherent, high-impact instruction no matter their level of need.

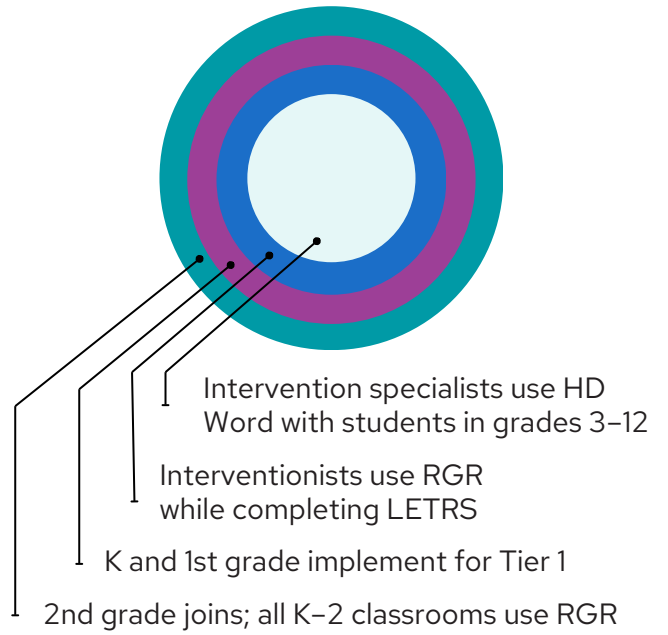
Outcome

Waynesboro’s literacy transformation illustrates how strategic layering of professional learning and high-quality supplemental instruction can drive measurable growth. By integrating Really Great Reading into the daily literacy block, teachers are better equipped; students are gaining essential foundational skills, and early reading proficiency is on the rise.

Acadience Benchmark Growth: 2021–2025

That 2022–23 spike marks the year the Waynesboro Area School District began implementing RGR.

Implementation for Foundational Skills



Tier Movement

- As program reach expanded, more students met grade-level expectations, reducing the need for Tier 2 and Tier 3 support.

Program Reach

- Kindergarten:** Proficiency jumped from 48% → 89% (biggest jump when RGR began in 2022–23)
- First Grade:** Scores rose from 51% → 68%.
- Second Grade:** Benchmarks improved from 52% → 66%

