



NEWS RELEASE

Utah State Board of Education

250 EAST 500 SOUTH P.O. BOX 144200 SALT LAKE CITY, UT 84114-4200
www.schools.utah.gov

August 8, 2023

For Immediate Release

Contact: Jennifer Thronsdon, director of teaching and learning
801-538-7739 · jennifer.thronsdon@schools.utah.gov

Alpine Overcomes Challenges and Increases Literacy Proficiency with LETRS

SALT LAKE CITY –Educators in Alpine School District have been presented with the challenging task of increasing literacy proficiency to the standards defined by recent legislation at Westmore Elementary, where 40% of students are multilingual learners (refugee population included). Furthermore, 60% of students are classified as low income.

In 2022, Utah lawmakers set an ambitious statewide goal to have 70% of third grade students reading on grade level by July 2027. The law they passed (SB 127 Early Literacy Outcomes Improvement) included funding to train educators in the science of reading, LETRS. LETRS is a comprehensive professional learning program designed to provide elementary educators and administrators with deep knowledge to be literacy and language experts in the science of reading. LETRS teaches the skills needed to master the foundational and fundamentals of reading and writing instruction including phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, and written language.

The kindergarten team at Westmore, in coordination with the school principal Vic Larsen, set rigorous goals to support each child in achieving key literacy outcomes and worked diligently in the 2022-2023 school year to achieve those goals. Through biweekly collaboration, implementing effective reading instruction, using trained paraprofessionals for instructional support, and a strong belief that every child can achieve at high levels they altered the lives of this group of children.

Using their knowledge learned from LETRS and collaborative teaming, Westmore went from 38% of all kindergarten students at the benchmark in reading at the beginning of the year to 89% of all students at the benchmark in reading by the end of the year. They also went from 15% of multilingual students, including refugee students, at the benchmark in reading at the beginning of the year to 76% at benchmark in reading by the end of the year. Additionally, they went from 9% of students with disabilities at the benchmark in reading at the beginning of the year to 63% at the benchmark in reading by the end of the year.

By the end of the 2022-2023 school year:

- 92% of Kindergarteners made typical or better progress.
- 88% of multilingual learners made typical or better progress.
- 63% of students with disabilities made typical or better progress.

USBE applauds the dedication of Westmore Elementary's leaders and educators to advancing literacy instruction in the elementary grades. The changes in outcomes are impressive and exceed typical outcomes. The magic these educators and staff have created has put these students on a great trajectory to be on grade level readers by the end of 3rd grade.

www.schools.utah.gov