



## Celina ISD

### Executive Summary

Celina Independent School District, located in North Texas, is committed to providing high-quality, research-based literacy instruction. In response to challenges with phonics instruction consistency, the district adopted *Reading Horizons Discovery*® for kindergarten through third grade in the 2023–2024 school year. This decision aimed to align literacy instruction with the science of reading and provide systematic, explicit phonics instruction.

Initial implementation included a comprehensive teacher training program and ongoing professional development to ensure fidelity.

As part of the 2024–2025 school year improvements, the district introduced data-driven monitoring, pacing guides, and structured assessment alignment to support teacher accountability and student progress.

**These efforts resulted in increased reading proficiency, a decline in dyslexia referrals, and a reduced need for Tier 3 intervention.**

As Celina ISD looks ahead to the 2025–2026 school year, the district plans to expand *Reading Horizons Elevate*® to secondary schools for older students needing literacy intervention. Additionally, efforts will focus on enhancing student engagement through collaborative, interactive learning experiences while maintaining a commitment to structured literacy and ongoing professional learning.

## Consider Before You Begin Reading...

Use this Relevance Checklist to determine if Celina ISD's literacy initiative aligns with your school's needs.

### Does this sound like your school?

- You are an administrator seeking a Structured Literacy approach for K-3 phonics instruction and/or intervention for older students.
- Your school has struggled with inconsistent phonics instruction or frequent curriculum changes.
- You are focused on implementing literacy improvements district-wide rather than just a single campus.
- Your students include at-risk learners, and you are working to decrease dyslexia referrals and the need for Tier 3 interventions.

### Do you have the necessary support systems in place?

- A dedicated leadership team focused on improving literacy instruction.
- A benchmark assessment system to track literacy progress and inform instruction.
- Access to professional learning and coaching support for structured literacy methods.
- A master schedule that allows for consistent teacher training and professional development.

If these conditions resonate, Celina ISD's experience with Reading Horizons® may provide valuable strategies for your literacy initiative.

Checklist adapted from Danks (2023)





# Celina ISD

## Case Study

The Impact of the *Reading Horizons*® Method Implementation on Student Learning

### AT-A-GLANCE

Celina ISD  
2023–2024 Academic Year

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“The phonetic and decoding skills have helped my students with spelling multisyllabic words. My students enjoy proving the words and understanding how the vowel sounds change because of different phonetic skills.”

– J. ADAMS, 3rd Grade Teacher

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Where reading momentum begins™

A decorative graphic in the bottom right corner of the page. It features a light blue silhouette of a person sitting and reading a book. The background behind the silhouette is a pattern of small, light blue dots. In the foreground, there is a circular graphic with a green outline, containing a stylized bar chart with several vertical bars of varying heights.

## Background and Goals

Celina Independent School District, located in the growing North Texas region, is known for its strong community support and commitment to academic excellence. With a rapidly expanding student population, the district has remained focused on research-based literacy instruction to ensure all students develop strong foundational reading skills. As the district continues to grow, it remains focused on providing high-quality education that aligns with research-based best practices in literacy instruction.

To address gaps in phonics instruction and ensure alignment with the science of reading, Celina ISD supplemented its existing core reading program with *Reading Horizons Discovery*® (RHD) for students in kindergarten through third grades. The district aimed to ensure that the instructional practices it asked teachers to implement were aligned with its stated beliefs about effective literacy instruction. Recognizing the need for a systematic and explicit phonics program, the district sought to align its literacy instruction with the science of reading. Through the years, the district faced challenges with consistency in phonics instruction, having cycled through multiple programs. The frequent curriculum changes led to implementation fatigue and made it difficult to track student progress effectively. Additionally, the district has worked to align the district benchmark assessment practices to support structured literacy instruction and the science of reading.

## Implementation

In the 2023–2024 school year, Celina ISD enhanced its literacy instruction by integrating Reading Horizons Discovery as the primary phonics program for all K–3 students. To support a strong start, all teachers participated in a comprehensive six-hour training, delivered across two days. Recognizing the need for ongoing professional development, district leaders are

refining training schedules to give educators more time to absorb and apply the material effectively. As implementation progressed, the district identified key opportunities to strengthen instruction, including clearer guidance on Review and Transfer Days to ensure consistency across classrooms. Additionally, to better support students transitioning to fourth grade, the district is developing strategies to reinforce lesson continuity. Early results indicate meaningful gains in foundational literacy skills and increased teacher confidence in phonics instruction, positioning Celina ISD for continued success in building strong readers.

During the 2024–2025 school year, Celina ISD made strategic adjustments to improve implementation fidelity. Administrators leveraged Reading Horizons' real-time reports to track lesson completion, monitor instructional progress, and make data-driven decisions, ensuring that teachers remained on pace and students received consistent phonics instruction. The district introduced a benchmark pacing guide to ensure that all grade levels stayed on track with lesson completion. To reinforce accountability, Reading Horizons lessons were integrated into the assessments used for the district's standard based report card. These efforts, combined with enhanced training opportunities, helped to strengthen implementation. Teachers received additional support through professional development sessions, instructional walkthroughs, and coaching feedback. The district also provided opportunities for teachers to observe model lessons conducted by Reading Horizons certified trainers. As part of their commitment to continuous improvement, the district has also hosted educators from other districts interested in Reading Horizons, allowing them to observe teachers in action and witness the program's effectiveness firsthand.

While Reading Horizons Discovery was fully adopted for foundational literacy instruction, the district continued to use its core program

for language comprehension. However, rather than attempting to align phonics instruction between the two programs, Celina ISD opted to follow the Reading Horizons scope and sequence exclusively for phonics. This approach ensured systematic, explicit instruction and prevented instructional gaps.

## Results

The district has observed promising early results following the implementation of Reading Horizons Discovery. The district-wide assessment program is a computer-adaptive oral reading assessment that assesses students' decoding and word recognition abilities. Students are scored based on a variety of phonological awareness and phonics tasks and are grouped into a lower level of performance ("Foundational Skills") or into the higher level of performance ("Oral Reading"). All three elementary schools that used this assessment and implemented RHD saw an increase over time in the percentage of students who successfully scored in the Oral Reading level. Most notably, as a result of its first year of implementation, the percentage of students who scored in the Oral Reading (red) level of performance in the following fall leaped to 68.37% (Figure 1).

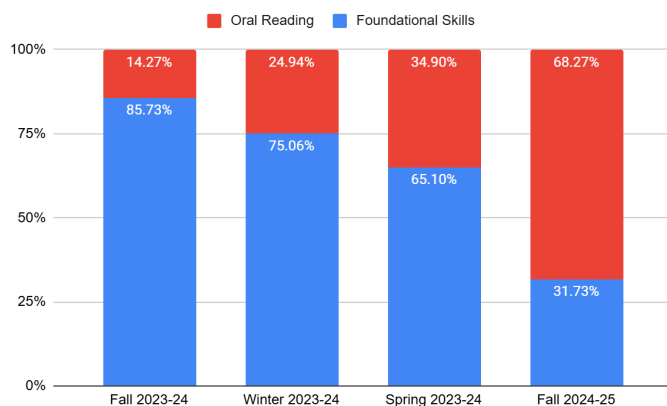


Figure 1. Percent of Students Scoring in the Oral Reading Level Over Time (All District)

In addition, Celina ISD reported a significant decrease in dyslexia referrals, which district leaders attribute, in part, to the adoption of Reading Horizons. At-risk student numbers in kindergarten and first grades dropped considerably, demonstrating the effectiveness of explicit phonics instruction at the Tier 1 level. Intervention teachers also noted a reduced need for Tier 3 support, further highlighting the program's impact on foundational literacy development.

Beyond student achievement, the implementation of Reading Horizons has also had a positive impact on teacher confidence. Educators appreciate the nature of the program, which provides clear instructional guidance. However, as the year progressed, teachers expressed interest in incorporating more engaging instructional strategies to maintain student enthusiasm, particularly in the latter half of the school year.

## Next Steps

As Celina ISD moves through its second year of implementation, district leaders remain committed to strengthening structured literacy instruction. A key priority for the 2025–2026 school year is the expansion of Reading Horizons Elevate to secondary schools, ensuring that older students with foundational literacy gaps receive targeted intervention. Additionally, the district is exploring ways to enhance student engagement, including the integration of collaborative, interactive learning experiences during the Reading Horizons phonics block.

To support ongoing professional learning, the district will continue to monitor implementation fidelity through principal oversight and data tracking, ensuring that Reading Horizons remains a cornerstone of its literacy initiative. With a clear vision and commitment to evidence-based practices, Celina ISD is poised to sustain and build upon its early successes in structured literacy instruction.

