

Lexia[®]

Turning the Page

How LETRS Is Rewriting Literacy Outcomes Across South Carolina

A comprehensive look at statewide implementation, district leadership, and measurable impact on student reading outcomes — PreK through 12



✿ Agenda

15 min

01

The Executive Brief

Policy context, the science of reading urgency, and South Carolina's bold investment in LETRS

30 min

02

District Spotlights

Three groups. One shared destination: better outcomes for every reader.

15 min

03

Your Literacy System

Reflect on your role, identify next steps, and leave with practical tools for Monday morning

Meet Your Presenters



Stacie L. Wood, M.Ed.

Customer Success Manager of Professional Learning

- ▶ 25+ years in special education & literacy
- ▶ Adjunct Professor — Campbell University & William Peace University
- ▶ LETRS Vols 1 & 2, Early Childhood, Admin Certified
- ▶ Former National LETRS Facilitator
- ▶ The Reading League NC Board Member

Meet Your Presenters



Natalie Brubaker, M.Ed.

State Solutions Account Executive

- ▶ Former educator & literacy specialist
- ▶ 20+ years of classroom and district experience
- ▶ Science of Reading implementation partner
- ▶ Advocates for expert-led professional learning
- ▶ Drives educational equity through evidence-based practice

Part 1: The Executive Brief

Policy Context & Strategic Urgency



The Reading Crisis Is Real

National & South Carolina context

~68%

of 4th graders
read
below proficiency
(NAEP 2024)

1 in 5

students has a
reading-based
learning difference

95%

of students CAN
learn to read with
explicit instruction

The research is clear — and the urgency is now.

What the Science of Reading Tells Us

The evidence base behind LETRS

✗ Traditional Approaches

- ✗ Whole-language and three-cueing systems
- ✗ Guessing from pictures or context
- ✗ Leveled readers as the primary strategy
- ✗ Literacy as a developmental process ("they'll get it when they're ready")
- ✗ Limited explicit phonics instruction

✓ Science of Reading

- ✓ Structured Literacy — explicit, systematic, sequential
- ✓ Phonemic awareness & phonics as foundations
- ✓ Decoding, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension
- ✓ The Simple View of Reading:
Decoding × Language Comprehension
= Reading
- ✓ Evidence-based intervention for ALL learners

What Is LETRS?

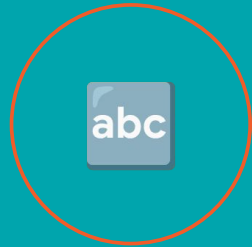
Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling

LETRS is a professional learning program that gives educators deep knowledge of **how reading works, why some students struggle, and what teachers can do about it** — grounded in decades of reading science.



Phonological Awareness

Sound structure of language



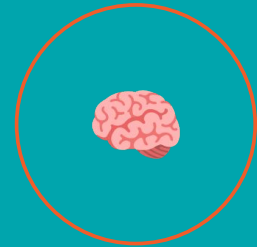
Phonics & Word Recognition

Decoding and encoding



Vocabulary & Language

Morphology, semantics

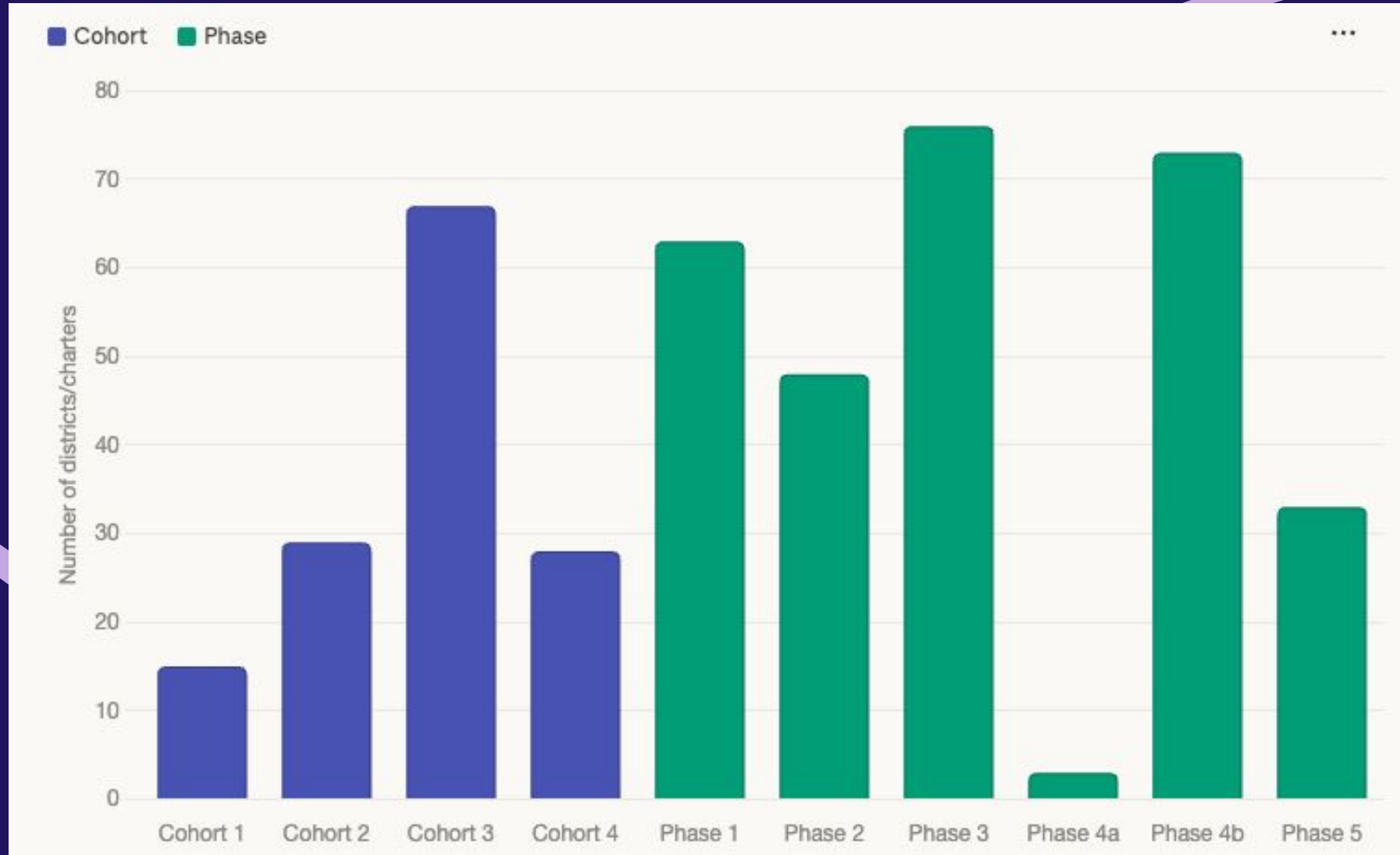


Reading Comprehension

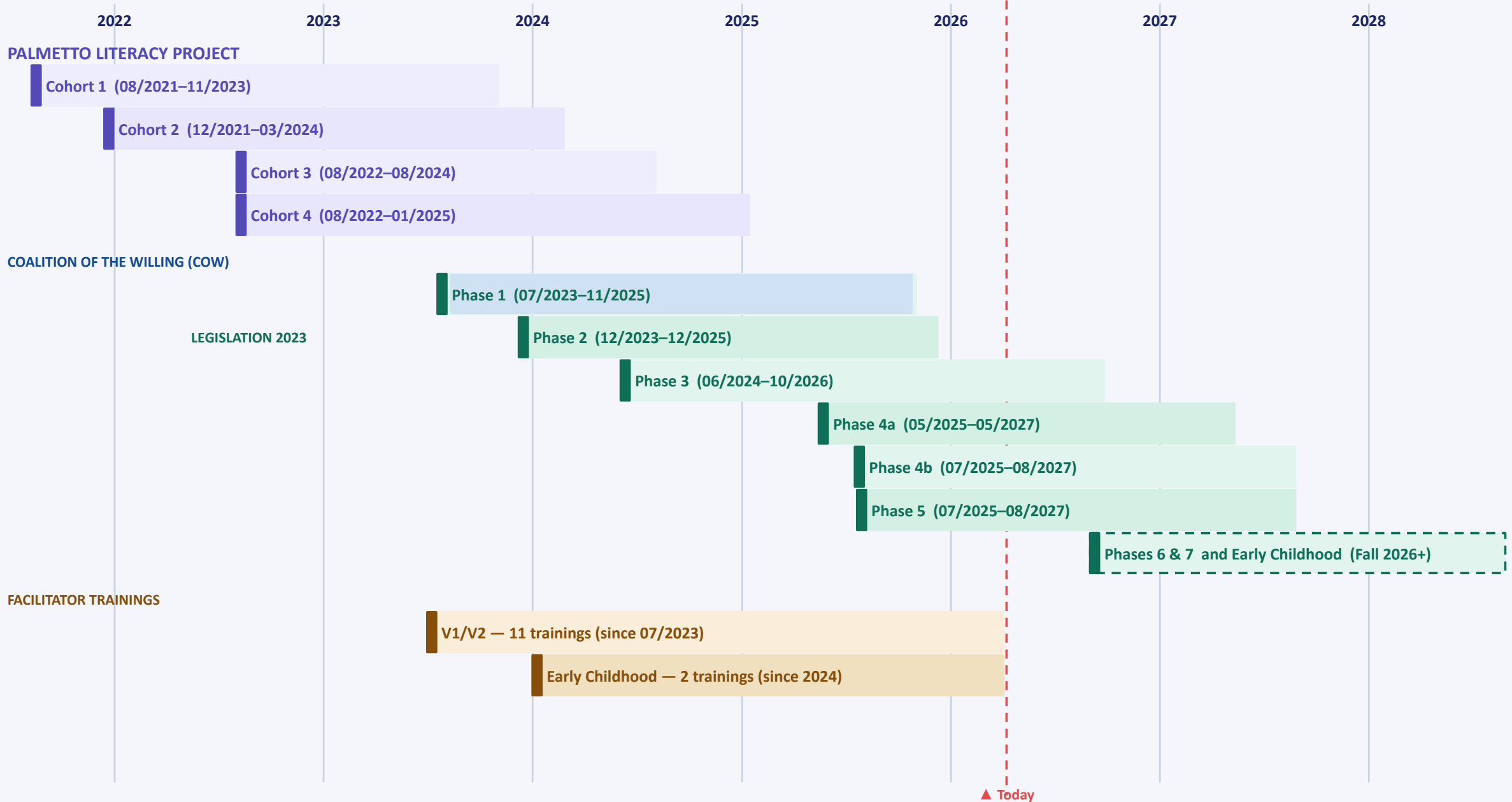
Meaning-making strategies

South Carolina LETRS Implementation Specifics

72 Districts and over 80 Charter Schools



South Carolina Implementation Specifics



Implementation Is Never Just About PD

The 6 pillars of a comprehensive literacy system

Effective literacy implementation requires alignment across ALL of these systems:

1

Leadership & Vision

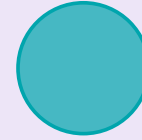
Administrator buy-in, coherent messaging, and sustained commitment



2

Professional Development

Deep teacher knowledge through LETRS – not just surface strategies



3

Assessment & Data Use

Screening, diagnostic, and progress monitoring aligned to instruction



4

Universal Instruction

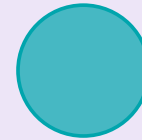
Evidence-based core literacy instruction for all students every day



5

Intervention & Support

Tiered support via Core5, PowerUp, and Lexia English



6

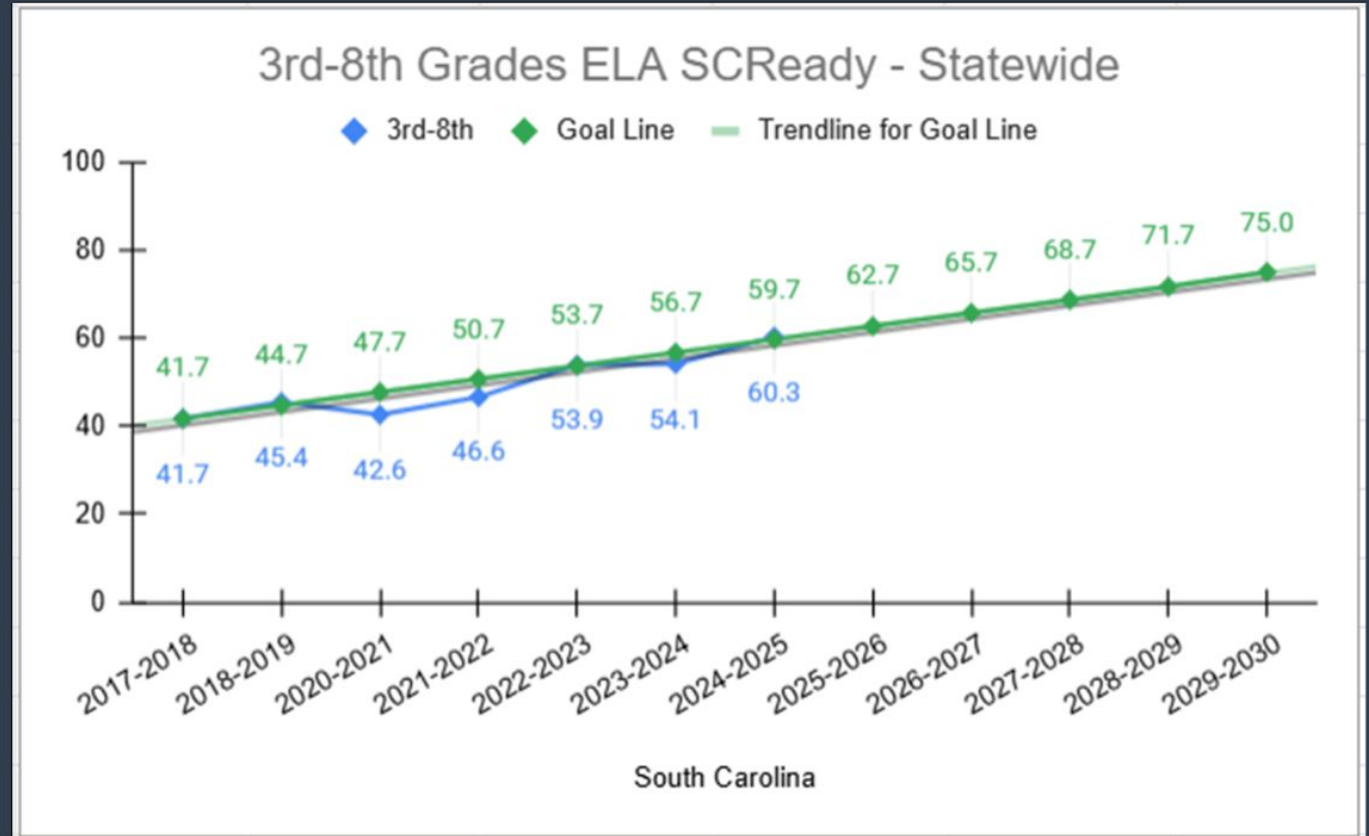
Family & Community

Families as partners – the often-overlooked component of sustainable systems



Reach for the Stars - ELA

South Caro	#	3rd-8th	Goal Line
2017-2018		41.7	41.7
2018-2019		45.4	44.7
2020-2021		42.6	47.7
2021-2022		46.6	50.7
2022-2023		53.9	53.7
2023-2024		54.1	56.7
2024-2025		60.3	59.7
2025-2026			62.7
2026-2027			65.7
2027-2028			68.7
2028-2029			71.7
2029-2030			75.0



Based on SCReady ELA data for 3rd - 8th grade from the annual [SC School State Report Card](#).



Part 2: District Spotlights

*Different Systems, Shared
Commitment •
30 minutes*



DISTRICT SPOTLIGHT

Horry County Schools Leadership & Professional Development



Horry County's LETRS Story

The journey, the shift, and what's different now

What led Horry County to LETRS?

- Student data revealed gaps in foundational reading skills.
- The SC Department of Education's Read to Succeed initiative and Science of Reading guidance provided a framework, while Superintendent Jones set a bold district goal: 95% of students reading on or above grade level by 2030.
- LETRS was the long-term investment to get there.

The most visible shift

- Instruction became far more intentional, systematic, and aligned to the Science of Reading.
- Teachers now deeply understand Scarborough's Reading Rope.
- Phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension are explicitly taught in concert, not treated as separate subjects.

Horry County's LETRS Story

The journey, the shift, and what's different now

What we wish we knew then

- LETRS is a transformational change in literacy understanding.
- True implementation requires ongoing coaching, protected time, and leadership support.
- The depth of commitment was greater than anticipated, but creates stronger instructional decision-making across schools.

Leadership & Professional Development

How Horry County built the structures that made LETRS stick

Getting administrator buy-in

Buy-in grew from shared data and urgency. Superintendent Jones' goal of 95% reading proficiency by 2030 set the tone.

District and school leaders were grounded in literacy research and student data together, making clear that LETRS was a long-term shift — not another initiative.

Consistent messaging, administrator professional learning, and ongoing coaching reinforced that commitment at every level.

Leaders in the room

Shared learning gave administrators a deep understanding of the Science of Reading and what strong literacy instruction looks like in classrooms.

Leaders became better equipped to support coaching, provide feedback, and analyze data.

Most importantly, it sent a clear message: this is a districtwide commitment, not just a teacher initiative.

Leadership & Professional Development

How Horry County built the structures that made LETRS stick

Protecting time

Horry County used scheduled PD days, substitute coverage, and collaborative planning to minimize disruption while sustaining learning.

Implementation requires an ongoing cycle of coaching and collaboration, moving beyond a one-time training model.

Handling skepticism

The approach shifted from compliance to support: ongoing coaching and collaboration opportunities for all staff.

As student response turned positive, buy-in grew organically. Successes were celebrated publicly to highlight strong implementation.

Data & Student Outcomes

The Honest Story

How data conversations have changed

Conversations are now far more specific and instructional. Teachers and leaders dig into individual literacy components rather than just overall reading levels.

LETRS created a strong common language, with teachers now confidently identifying root causes of reading difficulties and adjusting instruction accordingly.

An honest implementation challenge

The sheer scale of sustained effort required was larger than expected. True implementation demands a continuous cycle of coaching, PD, and accountability.

Horry County strengthened collaboration between leadership and teachers, committing to continuous improvement rather than a one-time initiative.

Inside the Classroom

What changed when LETRS knowledge met daily instruction

Typical Literacy Block

Literacy blocks are now structured, explicit, and Science-of-Reading aligned. Teachers intentionally embed systematic phonics, targeted word work, and decodable text practice — allowing students to apply phonics patterns in authentic reading.

The biggest shift: phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension are taught in alignment rather than in isolation, with student data driving small-group instruction and differentiation.

Intervention Decisions

Horry County has always used student data and teacher knowledge to guide intervention. Since LETRS, that process has deepened significantly — additional screeners now examine specific literacy components rather than broad reading levels alone.

This targeted lens has created a more precise, aligned system of support based on specific skill deficits.

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“LETRS is transforming the way our teachers understand and deliver literacy instruction. The investment in our educators is translating directly into better outcomes for students — and that’s what this work is all about.”

— District Leadership, Horry County Schools

Family & Community Engagement

How Horry County brings families into the literacy journey

Strategies

“Literacy Under the Lights” events bring community-centered reading activities to high school football fields.

Parent resource centers offer take-home decodables, while quarterly data letters keep parents informed.

Partnerships

Community engagement is central to the district's vision of 95% of students reading on grade level by 2030.

Events unite families, schools, and the broader Horry County community in a celebration of reading.

Impact

The Superintendent’s Reading Challenge has created momentum, with K–12 students enthusiastically logging pages.

Families are now active partners, equipped with practical tools and clear school-to-home communication.

Contacts: James LaPier • Kelly Brown • Samantha Coy

DISTRICT SPOTLIGHT

Berkeley County Schools Turning the Page: How LETRS Is Rewriting Literacy Outcomes



Berkeley County's LETRS Story

What led Berkeley County to LETRS?

- Read to Succeed Legislation created urgency
- SC Ready data revealed systemic reading gaps across multiple schools, and a lack of cohesive instructional understanding led to inconsistent outcomes.
- BCSD committed all K–5 teachers — plus identified middle school special services teachers — to LETRS professional learning.

The most visible shift

- Literacy instruction has become more intentional and systematic, grounded in a shared understanding of how students learn to read.
- Decodable texts are now the backbone of primary classrooms.
- Teachers use a shared ELA Instructional Model with clear routines, common language, and data-driven small groups based on student skill needs.

Berkeley County's LETRS Story

The journey, the shift, and what's different now in Berkeley County

What we know now that we wish we knew then

Mindset Shift: How significant the mindset shift would be — and how much sustained support it requires. LETRS is not just PD; it challenges long-held beliefs about how reading is taught.

Practical Impact: We also underestimated the practical impact on time: balancing LETRS alongside new standards, HQIM, and a packed PD calendar required difficult trade-offs and multi-year planning.

Leadership & Professional Development

How Berkeley County built the structures that made LETRS stick

Getting administrator buy-in

Strategic Leadership: Central office and the superintendent led with district-wide literacy data showing persistent early reading gaps, paired with Read to Succeed state requirements.

Relational Buy-in: At the principal level, leaders examined their own school data, identified gaps, and developed a shared understanding of the “why”

Leaders in the room

District and school leaders participated in LETRS alongside teachers, building profound credibility and trust.

- Teachers were more receptive knowing principals were learning with them.
- Leaders provided more meaningful, informed coaching feedback.
- Improved recognition of strong literacy instruction in walkthroughs.

Leadership & Professional Development

How Berkeley County built the structures that made LETRS stick

Protecting time

LETRS was embedded into the PD calendar as a non-negotiable. Principals used early release days, common planning time, and staff meeting structures for learning and reflection.

Substitutes were used selectively to minimize instructional disruption.

The biggest challenge: protecting time from competing initiatives while maintaining fidelity — which required constant calibration and honest prioritization.

Handling skepticism

We approached resistance with empathy, recognizing it often came from feeling overwhelmed or skeptical based on past initiatives.

We created space for honest dialogue, differentiated support (coaching, study sessions, evening Office Hours), and kept messaging consistent: **this is a long-term investment, not a compliance task.**

Over time, as teachers saw classroom impact, hesitations shifted to engagement.

Data & Student Outcomes

The Honest Story

How data conversations have changed:

LETRS increased buy-in for phonemic awareness and phonics-based curricula like UFLI and Heggerty. Teachers are excited to collect LETRS spelling screener data, focus small groups on specific skill gaps, and use Oral Reading Fluency data to drive instruction.

This year's focus: helping teachers connect HMH Into Reading with LETRS learning through Tier 1 small group data conversations.

An honest implementation challenge:

Strategic Balance: Balancing the depth LETRS requires against competing district priorities — new standards, HQIM, and existing initiatives — stretched staff thin.

Infrastructure: Implementation required substantial backend systems: cohort tracking, audit systems, and honorarium management.

Our Approach: We worked through it by acknowledging challenges openly, streamlining initiatives, and providing job-embedded coaching.

Inside the Classroom

What changed when LETRS knowledge met daily instruction in Berkeley County

Typical literacy block now

A primary ELA model now centers explicit phonemic awareness and phonics instruction, while the upper elementary model emphasizes morphology and fluency. Decodable texts are the backbone for whole group, small group, and independent centers.

Key Structure:

Small groups target skill-specific gaps, with an ELA Instructional Model covering all four strands of ELA standards with prescribed minutes and aligned curricula.

Intervention & Screening

Using the SCDE Decision Tree for MTSS, the district analyzes iReady Reading, Easy CBM, Dibels, and UFLI Progress Monitoring for Tier 1 screening. The LETRS Spelling Screener identifies specific gaps for placement.

Oral Reading Fluency data — new this year — has refocused conversations on decodable texts and restoring a love of independent reading.

Voices from the Field



“LETRS is the best professional development that I have ever experienced. I wish I would have received this information and training earlier in my career.”

— Peggy Weatherford

Teacher, Berkeley Middle School (Volume I)

Family & Community Engagement

How Berkeley County brings families into the literacy journey

Intentional family engagement strategies

Family literacy nights with interactive stations where educators model simple, practical reading strategies using everyday household materials — no specialized programs needed.

Curriculum-provided family letters give parents clear tips and ready-to-use activities. What resonates most: the practicality.

Key Outcome: Parents want to help; they just need to know how. Confidence-building is the key.

Community partnerships

The district's close relationship with the Lexia District Liaison has been instrumental throughout the LETRS journey.

Support Provided:

- Ongoing support and resources
- Alignment between district implementation and Lexia's tools and content

Removed for redesign

Family & Community Engagement

How Berkeley County brings families into the literacy journey

Impact

Families report feeling more confident and empowered to support their children's reading development. The home-to-school connection has strengthened through consistent, approachable communication and practical, take-home resources — building the trust and partnership critical to long-term student success.

Key Contacts:

Sharon Snyder (PD Coordinator) | **Jennifer Croley** (Chief of Academics & Innovation) |
Theresa Berard (Elementary ELA Coordinator)

DISTRICT SPOTLIGHT

Spartanburg 6 County Schools Leadership & Professional Development



Spartanburg 6's LETRS Story

THE JOURNEY, THE SHIFT, AND WHAT'S DIFFERENT NOW

What led Spartanburg 6 to LETRS?

Universal screener data revealed gaps in phonemic awareness and phonics.

A district-wide book study of Burkins & Yates' *Shifting the Balance* and a deep dive into systematic, explicit phonics instruction confirmed the opportunity.

The most visible shift

LETRS moved Spartanburg 6 toward a structured literacy framework with direct, explicit foundational instruction in Tier 1 for K–2.

Teachers now understand Scarborough's Reading Rope and have reformatted the literacy framework to include both foundational literacy and language comprehension.

This created clear alignment between research-based practices, the 2024 SC state standards, and the newly adopted HQIM.

Spartanburg 6's LETRS Story cont.

THE JOURNEY, THE SHIFT, AND WHAT'S DIFFERENT NOW

What we know now that we wish we knew then

Ongoing support for the “how” is essential. LETRS provides foundational understanding, but teachers and interventionists need coaching cycles, workshops, and PLCs to apply it.

Spartanburg 6 followed up with targeted training on:

- Phonemic awareness strategies
- Visual and auditory drills
- Vocabulary and fluency
- Handwriting workshops for K-1 (next year)

Leadership & Professional Development

How Spartanburg 6 built the structures that made LETRS stick

Getting administrator buy-in

A LETRS training schedule was co-created with principals built around coaching cycles and during-the-day training.

The superintendent approves the LETRS calendar nine months in advance and shares it with all principals, ensuring consistent district-wide participation and time to secure substitutes.

Leaders in the room

Principals, assistant principals, the MTSS director, the MLL coach, and all literacy coaches completed LETRS training.

This created shared language, opened alignment across tiered instruction, and allowed coaches to provide targeted, knowledgeable support.

Leadership & Professional Development cont.

How Spartanburg 6 built the structures that made LETRS stick

Protecting time

The calendar is planned nine months in advance. Three full training days per unit are offered so all teachers can participate and subs can be secured.

Dates are approved by both the superintendent and principals to prevent conflicts with other school and district events.

Handling skepticism & celebrating success

- Successes were celebrated at each school as teachers completed their training.
- The district focused on making LETRS meaningful and applied – not completed for compliance – by providing targeted support throughout the year.
- To deepen that support, the district pursued facilitator training to lead Volume 1 cohorts in person, ensuring alignment with state standards and HQIM implementation.

Data & Student Outcomes

Student Outcome Data

Assessment tools used:

- Universal screener (online) – subdomain data including phonemic awareness & phonics
- LETRS Phonics Screener
- Heggerty or PAST Phonemic Awareness Screener
- Oral Reading Fluency (ORF) on-grade-level screener
- CRST and/or LETRS Spelling Screener as additional data points

What the data drives:

Screeners identify not just that a student needs support, but exactly where they are struggling.

This precision allows targeted grouping and targeted intervention – matching each student to the specific skill they need.

Data & Student Outcomes

The Honest Story

How data conversations have changed:

Teachers and interventionists now use subdomain data from universal screeners alongside in-person diagnostic results to speak to specific student strengths and areas to target — rather than just knowing a student is “below benchmark.”

An honest implementation challenge:

Teacher capacity was stretched in Volume 2 while implementing new standards, curriculum, and LETRS. The goal was ensuring LETRS felt meaningful and applied, leading to pursuing in-person facilitator training.

Inside the Classroom

What changed when LETRS knowledge met daily instruction

Typical K–2 Literacy Block

A systematic, explicit approach:

- Phonemic awareness warm-up
- Visual and auditory drills
- Phonics: review & new skill introduction
- Word work: sound boxes/chains
- High-frequency word review
- Application to decodable text

Comprehension includes interactive read alouds and vocabulary. Writing focuses on handwriting and composition.

Intervention Decisions

Spartanburg 6 uses a targeted approach, combining universal screener data with diagnostics (LETRS Phonics, PAST, ORF, CRST) to place students in the right groups.

Inside the Classroom

What changed when LETRS knowledge met daily instruction

How intervention decisions have changed:

Spartanburg 6 uses a targeted approach – combining universal screener subdomain data with in-person diagnostics to identify exactly what each student needs and place them in the right group for the right support.

- LETRS Phonics Screener
- PAST / Heggerty
- ORF (Oral Reading Fluency) & CRST (Chunk Reading Strategy Training)
- Spelling Screener

Voice of the Educator

”

“LETRS uncovered so many blind spots that we had, and challenged us to pull up our sleeves and make changes that have had nothing but positive impacts on student learning. It sparked a fire in our teachers to want to learn and grow more than ever before, and that fire is still burning even years after completing LETRS training.”

— Kimberly Terry, Literacy Coach, Arcadia Elementary | Spartanburg 6

Family & Community Engagement

How Spartanburg 6 brings families into the literacy journey

Intentional family engagement strategies



Family Literacy Nights

Hosted at each school, focused on helping parents understand and support phonemic awareness and phonics at home.



"Raising Readers" Newsletters

Monthly newsletters sent home with practical, research-aligned strategies parents can use to support reading growth.

What All Three Districts Had in Common

Cross-district patterns from LETRS implementation

Despite different entry points, contexts, and challenges – the districts that moved the needle shared these commitments:

They played the long game

No district saw transformational results in Year 1. Those who sustained momentum beyond the initial rollout saw the most significant student gains.



Leaders spoke the language of reading science

When superintendents and principals could talk about phoneme-grapheme correspondence and orthographic mapping, teachers felt seen and supported.



What All Three Districts Had in Common

Cross-district patterns from LETRS implementation

Despite different entry points, contexts, and challenges – the districts that moved the needle shared these commitments:

They treated implementation as continuous improvement

They monitored, adjusted, and revisited. Implementation wasn't a checkbox – it was an evolving process tied to real data.



They brought families into the story

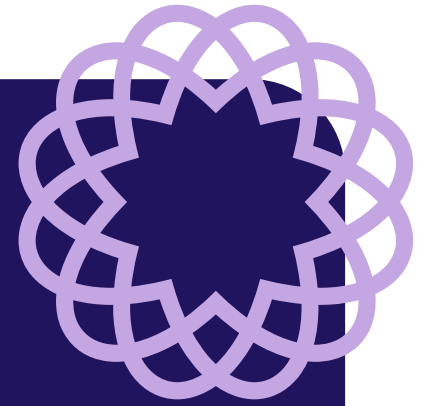
Every district that saw sustained gains had an intentional family engagement strategy – not as an add-on, but as a core system component.



They made space for honest reflection

The most effective teams held regular debrief conversations about what wasn't working – not just celebrations of progress.





Part 3: Your Literacy System

Reflection & Next Steps

Think About This...

Individual or table reflection • 5 minutes

Consider the 6 pillars of a comprehensive literacy system:

Leadership • Professional Development • Assessment • Universal Instruction • Intervention • Family Engagement

1

Which pillar is strongest in your district or school right now — and what evidence do you have?

2

Which pillar, if strengthened, would create the greatest lever for student reading improvement?

3

What is one action — within your sphere of influence — that you could take within the next 30 days?

Turning the Page in Your District

Practical next steps for literacy leaders

If you're a District Leader

1. Audit all 6 literacy system pillars — identify your biggest gap
2. Ensure leaders are participating in LETRS, not just observing
3. Build coaching capacity before expanding PD reach
4. Connect LETRS data to student outcome dashboards

Turning the Page in Your District

Practical next steps for literacy leaders

If you're a School Administrator

1. Schedule LETRS-aligned classroom observations this month
2. Host a data conversation connecting teacher growth to screener results
3. Create a literacy night specifically designed for families to experience structured literacy
4. Identify your top two coaching priorities for the next 90 days

Turning the Page in Your District

Practical next steps for literacy leaders

If you're a Coach or Literacy Leader

1. Map your coaching cycle explicitly to LETRS units
2. Create a classroom look-for tool based on Science of Reading practices
3. Build a bridge between LETRS vocabulary and other data sources
4. Pilot one family engagement strategy and measure participation

From Professional Learning to Student Impact

Every Lexia product is built on the Science of Reading — designed to work alongside LETRS-trained teachers.

Assessments Within LETRS

PreK – 12

DIAGNOSTIC & FORMATIVE TOOLS

LETRS equips teachers with targeted assessments that reveal exactly where students are in their reading development — informing precise, data-driven instruction.

- ▶ Phonological Awareness Screening Test (PAST)
- ▶ Phonics & Word Reading Survey
- ▶ Spelling Screener & Spelling Inventory

From Professional Learning to Student Impact

Every Lexia product is built on the Science of Reading – designed to work alongside LETRS-trained teachers.

Lexia Core5 Reading

PreK – 5

READING

Adaptive program targeting all 5 domains of reading with real-time data on student skill gaps – aligned directly to LETRS knowledge.

- ▶ Explicit phonics & phonological awareness practice
- ▶ Auto-assigns based on screener & progress data
- ▶ Frees teacher time for small-group instruction
 - ▶ Tied to WIDA standards for ELL progress monitoring
 - ▶ Spelling Screener & Spelling Inventory

From Professional Learning to Student Impact

Every Lexia product is built on the Science of Reading – designed to work alongside LETRS-trained teachers.

Lexia PowerUp Literacy

Grades 6 – 12

ADOLESCENT LITERACY

Accelerates reading gains for struggling secondary readers. Targets morphology, vocabulary, and comprehension – the skills LETRS teachers teach explicitly.

- ▶ Closes foundational skill gaps in secondary students
- ▶ Builds academic vocabulary and text comprehension
- ▶ Blended: independent + teacher-facilitated instruction
- ▶ Tied to WIDA standards for ELL progress monitoring
- ▶ Spelling Screener & Spelling Inventory

From Professional Learning to Student Impact

Every Lexia product is built on the Science of Reading – designed to work alongside LETRS-trained teachers.

Lexia English

Grades K – 12

ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING

Supports English learners developing oral language, vocabulary, and literacy skills simultaneously – a critical and underserved population.

- ▶ Oral language development alongside phonics
- ▶ Culturally responsive content and scaffolding
- ▶ Tied to WIDA standards for ELL progress monitoring

***Every student in South Carolina
deserves a teacher who
understands how reading
works.***

***Every teacher deserves a
leader who makes that
learning possible.***



THANK YOU

**The page is turning.
The question is:
Who's turning it with you?**

CONNECT WITH US

Stacie Wood

stacie.wood@lexialearning.com

Natalie Brubaker

natalie.brubaker@lexialearning.com

