

LITERACY LEGENDS

MEET THE EDUCATORS
REVERSING THE CRISIS

Join the movement

Spark the change

Inspire your students



institute for
multi-sensory
education



READER LEADER

SECRETS REVEALED

2024 saw the launch of the Reader Leader movement. 2025 is going to be the year Reader Leaders expand the fight against the literacy crisis. **More than 27,000 educators around the country completed our trainings in 2024 and are living the change they want to see in their classrooms, schools, and districts.**

As an educator myself, I founded IMSE because I wanted to find a way to help every one of my students unlock literacy skills and experience for themselves the empowerment that comes with reading confidently. I also wanted to empower all teachers to teach reading effectively.

It is with no small measure of joy that I have witnessed the wins – big and small – that our community has accomplished this past year.

1,212

training
sessions
offered

50

states IMSE
conducted
training in

**Increased
access for
educators**

following the
IMSE Foundation
launch

Let's keep the momentum going.

We hope to see all of you on March 5 at the **IMSE Literacy Summit 2025. Reader Leaders Rising: Fueling a Future of Literacy Leaders** is a full-day virtual event designed to support and empower educators committed to ensuring all students learn to read.



Jeanne Jeup

CEO, IMSE



**LITERACY SUMMIT
REGISTER NOW**

When I started Kindergarten, I only spoke Spanish. I still remember some of the things my teacher, Ms. King, did to accommodate me and help me be part of her classroom community. Sitting at a table in the back of the class with me and a few other students, Ms. King engaged me in reading practice in a way that changed everything. It's a memory that has held a special place in my heart all of these years. Today, I know those lessons stuck because we were digging into sound awareness, articulation, and modeling. At the time, I just knew it helped me. Ms. King helped me.

So, for me, being a Reader Leader is multifaceted. I love going to classrooms in my district and spending time speaking with students and teachers. And I think the value of that time spent is magnified when I am able to take what I learn there and use it to identify opportunities to improve our approach to literacy.

Being a Reader Leader means making an honest assessment of your practices and not fearing the great unknown.

You will absolutely find things you don't like, but it is brave to acknowledge those disconnects and collaborate to find a new way.

In the 2018-2019 school year, Hoboken Public School District was at 55% proficiency on the state reading assessment. Today we are at 70%. The proof is in the pudding. Our teachers and administrators have taken up the banner of Structured Literacy as we've seen more and more gains over the past six years. The feeling that we are all on this crusade together is more inspiring than I can express.

As Reader Leaders, we can make sure that all of our students have experiences like I did – and all of our teachers have the tools Ms. King had. When we accomplish that, we change the course of literacy in this country.

This booklet is designed to help us get there. Whether you're taking that first step or working on expanding your efforts, the following pages have insights and inspirations from others on the same journey. Join us, won't you?

Sandra Rodriguez-Gomez

Assistant Superintendent of Schools
Hoboken Public School District



New Laws Spark Transformation at Wyandotte Public Schools



EDUCATOR SPOTLIGHT

Krissy Kobiljak
Literacy Coach

“Read by Grade 3,” a 2016 piece of Michigan legislation, prompted Wyandotte Public Schools (WPS) to adopt a new tiered literacy curriculum with a focus on research-backed elements of the science of reading and Structured Literacy.

Although the shift came with challenges, the district seized the opportunity to build a program that empowers faculty to understand their role in literacy development through training and district-wide practices. As part of this, the district hired embedded literacy coaches like Krissy Kobiljak to lead the charge and create consistent practices across the district.

With 60% of Wyandotte students eligible for free or reduced-price meals, the changes in literacy instruction there are part of an equity journey.

Historically, the district would see 50% of its students performing at the 50th percentile or higher.

In 2023, it saw 68% of kindergartners end their year above the 50th percentile – putting their outcomes on par with those of more affluent districts in the metro Detroit area.



I see the program we created as part of a sea change in education – more schools and districts are moving toward the science of reading, and **it's very inspiring to feel like you're coming together with other educators** to solve this entrenched problem."



YEAR-OVER-YEAR (2022 V 2023) INCREASE IN PROFICIENT READER SCORES



13.8%

KINDERGARTEN



10.9%

FIRST GRADE



READER LEADER



Two veteran Reader
Leaders share what
they've learned so far

MEET THE LEADERS



BRIANA PULLIAM

DISTRICT STRUCTURED
LITERACY SPECIALIST
HANCOCK COUNTY SCHOOLS



SANDRA RODRIGUEZ-GOMEZ

ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT
HOBOKEN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Q What does being a Reader Leader mean to you?

Briana: “I’m here to help those teachers that feel like I felt in the classroom. As a teacher, I sat across the table from students for so many years, and I still think about those times when I did everything I could to reach them, and after they left, I still had to question myself. We all want to give our students the best possible instruction in reading we can. That means challenging myself, my administration and my teachers to never settle and always give our very best in the classroom.”

Sandra: “Something I hear often is ‘nothing in this district moves unless the literacy needle moves.’ What that means to me is literacy touches everything – the educational world of our children is enriched when literacy practices are enriched. So for me, being a Reader Leader means honest assessment, reflective inquiry, and collaborative discovery of better paths forward.”

Q What was the greatest obstacle to implementing a Structured Literacy approach, and how did you break through?

Briana: “To be honest, older teachers like me that had been through many pendulum shifts in education, we were a little leery of everything at first. We had had so many solutions thrown at us in the past that didn’t make an impact. Once we had the trainings, we realized that this was here to stay, and this was an answer to some of the difficulties we faced. We all bought in wholeheartedly knowing this would help our struggling students. Once we got past that initial proving ground, our teachers have been phenomenal – they work extremely hard. They are constantly asking questions and moving forward.”

Sandra: “In my opinion, most training opportunities and initiatives fail because they lack follow-through. And we certainly did not want that to be us. We thought about some other things that we’ve tried and why they didn’t succeed. The point that came up again and again was teacher support and resources. Teachers need time to learn and implement. They need time to connect with each other and leaders to unpack what they’re working on. That was something that we always kept in the back of our heads, and we turned the corner on it, but it was certainly an obstacle early on, and it’s something we still focus on.”

Q What advice do you have for those who are just starting their Reader Leader journey?

Briana: “Offer teachers as much support as they need. Classroom teachers are so busy, so the more ways we can find to help, encourage, and support them, the more successful we all can be in implementing Structured Literacy moving forward.”

Sandra: “Don’t be afraid to be afraid. There will be things you don’t understand and don’t like. Once you realize them, you can move toward solutions.”

Literacy Lab Takes Flight at Pinedale High School



EDUCATOR SPOTLIGHT

Faith Howard

Secondary Literacy Specialist

The weighty tasks of diagnosing and developing meaningful interventions for older students can leave secondary literacy educators feeling undertrained. For Faith Howard, IMSE's Orton-Gillingham Comprehensive Plus and Morphology Plus trainings provided the tools she needed to launch a Literacy Lab at Pinedale High School and help her students tap into their literacy superpowers.

For Faith, intentional exploration of morphology with students has increased their vocabulary, improved spelling, created a greater level of word consciousness, and unlocked their ability to determine the meaning of unknown words.

Meanwhile, the syllabication process she learned through IMSE OG+ has been transformative in her students' ability to decode multisyllabic words, resulting in significant gains in their oral fluency and improvement in reading speed.

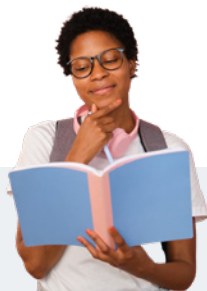


As a secondary literacy specialist, I knew that I needed approaches based on the science of reading. Intentional exploration in morphology with my students has ... **unlocked my students' ability to determine the meaning of unknown words...** and given them the **confidence to become stronger readers** at grade level!"



29%

**INCREASE IN 9TH GRADE
STUDENTS AT PROFICIENT AND
ADVANCED READING LEVELS**



51.69%

2021-22

VS

2023-24

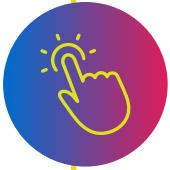
80%



READER LEADER SECRETS

Insights from folks
who've been there





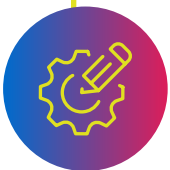
Touchpoints. Touchpoints. Touchpoints.

Implementing Structured Literacy is no small feat, but Reader Leaders across the board share that it's made infinitely more manageable with broad support and deliberate interaction. This can look like carving out time for teachers to connect with each other to workshop implementation and share best practices. Or, it can look like district leaders and administrators spending time in classrooms connecting with students and teachers to better understand what's working, what's progressing, and what might need more iteration.



Give Everyone A Voice

Broad initiatives have no hope of success without support, buy-in, and consistent implementation. Given the opportunity to start fresh, many Reader Leaders would choose to launch their initiatives with as many voices as possible in the room. What works to support implementation in elementary schools likely looks different in middle and high schools. Likewise ELA teachers, literacy specialists and coaches, and special education teachers might all have different needs or challenges to consider. Planning that includes every perspective – particularly that of the teachers working hard to implement these changes with fidelity – can feel complex but often ends up more comprehensive and complete.



Customize and Course-Correct

Consider everything from the size of the school or district to the makeup of students and teachers. What makes sense at the outset of this journey might not hold up a year or five years in the future. For instance, Reader Leaders who have a heavily veteran teaching staff will need to contemplate mindset and skillset and how those elements shift as significant numbers of teachers retire and the core group of educators starts to have a different mix of experience. Similarly, if a school or district is “on the bubble” between small and medium or medium and large, it will be beneficial to plan to accommodate that growth from the outset or document what adjustments will need to be made.

Teachers and Students Get Reps at the Raising Hands Reading Lab



EDUCATOR SPOTLIGHT

Mary Clairmont

Practicum Supervisor and Director

When Raising Hands Tutoring, a charity providing free IMSE Orton-Gillingham tutoring to kids from low-income families, created a scholarship for teachers, Mary Clairmont was the first to apply. The program provides teachers with scholarships to work toward IMSE certification and immediately apply their learnings by tutoring students in the program.

After several years operating virtually, the IMSE Foundation joined forces with Raising Hands to launch The Reading Lab, an in-person IMSE Orton-Gillingham certification center.

Mary was instrumental in bringing the model to a brick-and-mortar context and today acts as the lead practicum supervisor, setting the standard for the training and tutoring.



I've had so many teachers reach out to me from all over the country. They need scholarships and want this wonderful training. Meanwhile, we have children who need this opportunity and wouldn't otherwise be able to access tutoring.

It's a win-win for everyone, and a really good number of children will get intensive intervention this year."



**AT-RISK STUDENTS
RECEIVE MORE THAN**



**55 OF FREE
HOURS TUTORING**

HAVE AN IDEA LIKE MARY'S?

Get in touch via **info@imse.com** to learn how we can help bring it to life.

READER LEADER RUBRIC

Explore these IMSE trainings to supercharge your literacy approach

Comprehensive Orton-Gillingham Plus

This 30-hour course is a hands-on, interactive, and personalized class that provides a complete understanding of **IMSE's enhanced Orton-Gillingham method, the essential five components to literacy, and the tools necessary to apply it in the classroom.** After participating in this accredited Structured Literacy course, teachers will understand the structure and foundation of the English language as well as the research behind the science of reading. Educators will have a basic knowledge of how to assess and teach students in all three tiers of RTI as well as students with dyslexia.



[REGISTER NOW >>](#)



Since I have started implementing IMSE techniques with fidelity, **students have made major growth in reading fluency, decoding, and comprehension.** It's amazing to watch the growth and to have the correct tools to track the growth with this evidence-based program."

— **Phoenix Ginder**

5-8th Special Education Resource Teacher

Morphology Plus



[REGISTER NOW >>](#)



This 30-hour course is a hands-on, interactive, and personalized class that provides a complete understanding of **morphology, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension and how to apply it in the classroom.** After participating in this accredited Structured Literacy course, teachers will have an understanding of the structure and foundation of the English language. Educators will have an understanding of where to begin instruction with students with dyslexia as well as students in all three tiers of RTI.



I would recommend the Morphology Plus training to any and all secondary teachers because of the **incredible opportunities** this approach can provide in **transferable word knowledge** for our students!"

— **Faith Howard**
Secondary Literacy Specialist

This 12.5-hour course provides educators with a deeper understanding of **phonological awareness and its importance in learning to read.** After this training, educators will better understand assessing and teaching phonological awareness to students of all ages in all three tiers of RTI.



I was able to immediately implement the curriculum in my classroom, and **my struggling readers are making steady, consistent growth.** Most importantly, they are seeing that growth and gaining confidence in their reading abilities!"

— **Anna Shepherd**
2nd Grade Teacher

Phonological Awareness



[REGISTER NOW >>](#)





IMSE LITERACY SUMMIT 2025

Reader Leaders Rising:

Fueling a Future of Literacy Leaders



institute for
multi-sensory
education



Help us end the literacy crisis
one student success at a time.

- A full-day virtual event designed to **support** and **empower** educators
- Discover **innovative tools** and **strategies** to ignite **literacy transformation**
- Hear from speakers on topics ranging from **inspired** and **collective leadership** to **implementation** best practices for system-wide changes

Join us virtually
on March 5, 2025

Learn more and register >>

