

# Next-level literacy:

The impact and effectiveness  
of Amplify CKLA



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“This has been the single most powerful curriculum implementation I have seen in my 16 years of education.”

— Deanna Zarichansky, Assistant Principal,  
Trousdale County Elementary School, Hartsville, TN



## Bring the world to kids.

Amplify Core Knowledge Language Arts (CKLA) is a core reading curriculum for PreK–5 created to fulfill the mission of leveling the playing field for all children. **Every child deserves access to knowledge:** knowledge that sparks curiosity and wonder, and enables every child to discover the world.

### The why

When it comes to excellence and equity in education, knowledge can be an end in itself—but it’s also much more. **Knowledge is critical to comprehension.** “It actually makes learning easier,” confirms cognitive scientist Daniel T. Willingham, Ph.D., professor of psychology at the University of Virginia. “Knowledge is not only cumulative; it grows exponentially. Those with a rich base of factual knowledge find it easier to learn more. In addition, factual knowledge enhances cognitive processes like problem solving and reasoning.”

### History of Amplify CKLA

In 2013, Amplify partnered with the Core Knowledge Foundation to create and provide access to the high-quality, content-rich curriculum teachers and students needed. The result was CKLA, a curriculum that embodies today’s college-and-career-readiness standards that is truly based on early literacy research and real classroom experience.

The Core Knowledge Foundation, our partner, is a nonprofit organization founded in 1986. The Core Knowledge Foundation developed the Core Knowledge Sequence—a research-based sequence that identifies the content knowledge and skills essential to the development of literacy. Amplify CKLA is based on this sequence.

“We’ve never seen results this positive before. At mid-year, 60-65 of approximately 260 students are at core. A number have already reached year-end goals....This class of first-graders is the first to start with CKLA. We can’t wait to see them as fifth-graders.”

— Shannon Torres, Executive Director  
of Teaching, Wapato, WA school district



# The real deal with the reading gap

It's an unfortunate truth that some children bring more knowledge into the classroom than others. And if a student who's never heard the word "yacht" is asked to read and analyze a text passage about the Henley Royal Regatta, it's a good bet that they won't do as well as a student who has. Not all students visit museums, have a library of books at home, or travel outside of the state or country, much less leave the 10-block radius of their homes. They miss out not just on this text or that, but on the opportunity for exponential learning Willingham describes.

“The failure to build children’s knowledge in elementary school helps explain the gap between the reading scores of students from wealthier families and those of their lower-income peers—a gap that has been expanding....[W]ealthy children are far more likely to acquire knowledge outside of school. Poorer kids with less-educated parents tend to rely on school to acquire the kind of knowledge that is needed to succeed academically—and because their schools often focus exclusively on reading and math, in an effort to raise low test scores, they’re less likely to acquire it there.”

– The Atlantic, “Why American Students Haven’t Gotten Better at Reading in 20 Years”





**Jessica McNary**  
@mcnaryclass

Excited to launch Columbus and the pilgrims on Monday!  
@amplify #ckla #columbus #pilgrims



**TEACHER TWEET**



## TEACHER SPOTLIGHT

Do you have a favorite CKLA domain?

“I love teaching the Kings and Queens domain! My students come in with no prior knowledge of kings and queens and finish the domain being able to eloquently speak about the advantages and disadvantages of being royal! P.S. THEY ARE FIVE!”



**Alyssa Southerlin**  
Kindergarten teacher  
Propel Charter Schools

## Amplify CKLA helps level the playing field


Amplify CKLA closes the gaps in prior knowledge and vocabulary by intertwining the teaching of foundational skills and background knowledge, building both cohesively and cumulatively. Instead of activating prior knowledge like other curricula, CKLA builds it. We provide the early-grade preparation that research shows is critical for success in later grades.

**CASE STUDY**

**New York City Public Schools**

“Because CKLA is so dense and there’s such a richness to it, it gives our students access to mainstream culture.”

— Principal, New York City



**0.9**

comparison schools

**2.5**

Amplify CKLA

In New York City, fall-to-spring literacy gains of Amplify CKLA students were more than double the gains of students at comparison schools on Woodcock-Johnson measures of basic reading skills, oral reading, comprehension, decoding, phonemic awareness, and spelling.



# What high-quality curriculum looks like

Our approach to building background knowledge is based on three pillars often overlooked in other curricula. It is:

### Content-specific.

Clearly-outlined content objectives are specific and support the development of knowledge in history, science, literature, culture, and the arts.

### Cumulative.

Topics and vocabulary connect within and across grades, allowing students to extend knowledge and revisit topics in increasing depth in later grades.

### Coherent.

When curriculum is fragmentary and disconnected, students face repetitions as well as gaps that can hinder learning. An intentional design ensures the curriculum fits together as a whole.

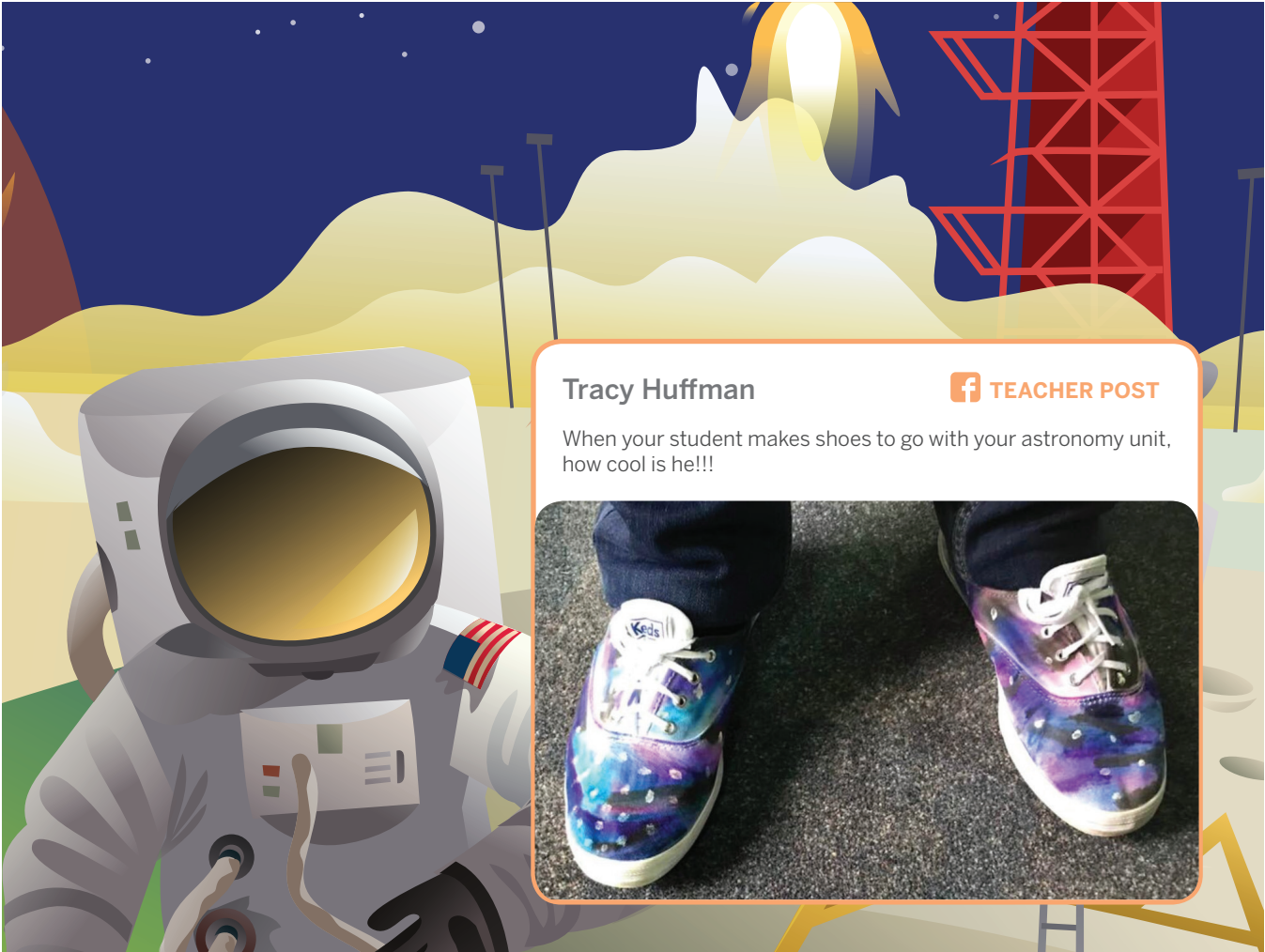
### TEACHER SPOTLIGHT

What are changes you’ve seen in your students since using CKLA?

“I was amazed by what they absorbed and the growth they made in so many areas. I had many parents compliment the lessons by telling me that their child ran off the bus so excited to share what they learned in CKLA today.”



Laura Palazzo  
2nd grade teacher  
Palm Beach County  
School District

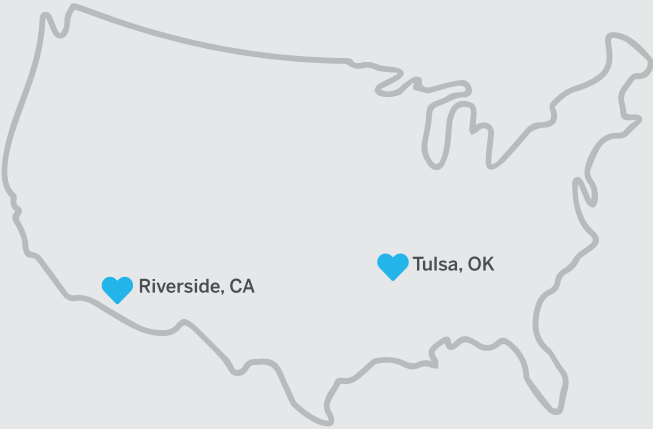


### CASE STUDIES

#### Bryant Elementary | Riverside, CA

“Core Knowledge brought the joy back to teaching for me”

— Courtney Austin, Grade 5 teacher, Bryant Elementary



Before Amplify CKLA

27<sup>th</sup>

place of the elementary schools  
in the district academically



After Amplify CKLA

7<sup>th</sup>

place of the elementary schools  
in the district academically

#### Tulsa Public Schools | Tulsa, OK

“When we talk about growth, it’s not just reading scores. It is their identity as readers that is growing.”

— Leslie Parr, teacher, Anderson Elementary, Tulsa Public Schools

Before Amplify CKLA

32%



After Amplify CKLA

63%

Increase in classes where students  
are engaged with high-quality texts  
surpassing district goal of 42%

# Foundational skills instruction that makes a difference

Amplify CKLA’s second design principle is a research-based approach to foundational skills that gets real results.

### Explicit.

Learning isn’t left to chance. All 44 sounds and their 150 spellings in the English language are taught, practiced, and mastered, with ample opportunity to encounter each sound-spelling in diverse settings.

### Sequential.

By moving in a sequence from easier to more complex in phonics and foundational reading skills, students master concepts before moving forward and gradually become more independent.

### Rewarding.

Learning to read should be fun. Decodable chapter-books that feature dynamic plots and characters make kids want to read more. Engaging stories include children who discover fossils and a grandmother who flies hang gliders.

## TEACHER SPOTLIGHT

What do you like most about CKLA?

“I enjoy seeing kids make connections as the year goes on. Hearing them remember what they previously learned is the best. Just recently, we were studying seasons and weather, and the lessons referred to plants sprouting, it was great to hear students referring back to when we studied plants. I also enjoy hearing parents talk about what their kids talk about at home from their learning!”



Jessica McNary, Kindergarten teacher, Gunnison Watershed School District

# The knowledge movement is growing

Teachers know how much content matters. But they want to spend time teaching it, not tracking it down.

A recent survey showed that K–2 teachers in Tennessee spend an average of 4.5 hours per week sourcing ELA materials. “We have to stop expecting teachers to be curriculum curators. If you just give teachers the materials they need, and allow them to do what they do best, which is to teach and to lead learning, that has a dramatic impact on student learning. Knowledge matters, and teachers need high-quality materials,” says Courtney Bell, director of educator engagement for SCORE (State Collaborative on Reforming Education), an independent, nonprofit, and nonpartisan educational research and advocacy group.



### CASE STUDY

Sullivan County | Sullivan County, TN

Robin McClellan  
@robin\_mcclellan

You want numbers? We have numbers. Here’s what high-quality curriculum looks like in the hands of incredible teachers and leaders. Kinder winter vs. spring at 1 school. Amen and Amen. #ckla @chielsforchange @TNTP #theywillrise @SCORE4Schools #equity

WINTER

SPRING

CASE STUDIES

Kalkaska Public Schools | Traverse Bay, MI

“The TRUE CKLA A-HA moment is when [the teachers] read the actual activities and questions being asked and compare those between their current core program and CKLA... BOOM! They go weak in the knees... THEY, FOR THE FIRST TIME...UNDERSTAND what they are NOT doing to meet the standards....”

– Ashley Troy, Administrator,  
Traverse Bay Area Intermediate School District, MI



63%

of its first-grade students showed growth  
between two semesters of Amplify CKLA

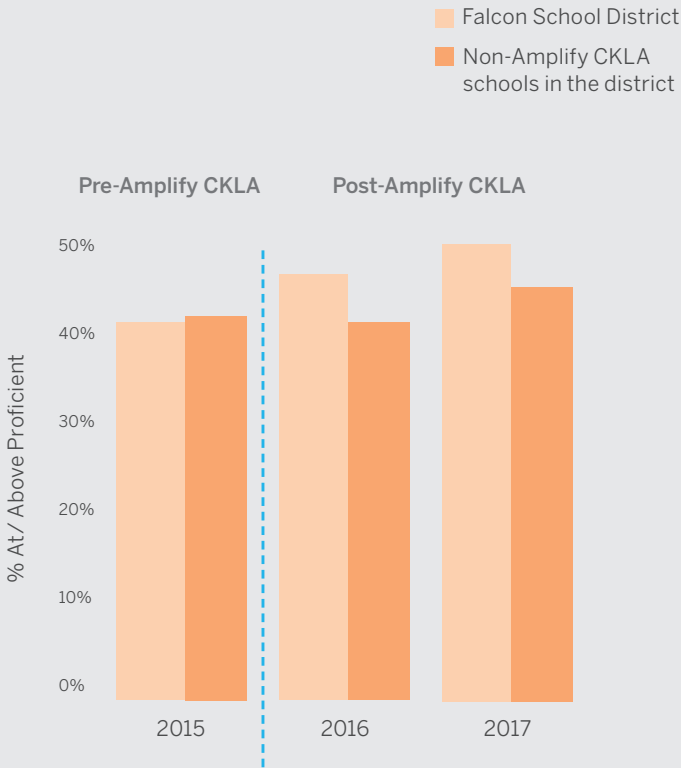
89%

of students now working on grade-level skills

Falcon School District 49 | Falcon, CO

“Parents are relaying their positive feedback on how students are talking differently at home.”

—Principal, Meridian Ranch Elementary,  
Falcon School District 49, CO



Join the knowledge movement.

We don’t just sell you a curriculum and move on to the next district. We are passionate about helping you create learning experiences that have meaningful impact for students and teachers.

We are also continuously engaged in further studying the efficacy of our programs with partner districts and schools across the country. We are always here to work with you, and we are always learning from and with you, too.



Experience Amplify  
CKLA in your classroom.  
Request a sample at  
**[amplify.com/CKLA](https://amplify.com/CKLA)**.



Amplify.