

SUCCESS SPOTLIGHT

# Phoenix-Talent Schools Commits to Student Success in Math and Beyond



Phoenix-Talent Schools (PTS) in Phoenix, Oregon, is committed to supporting its 2,375 students and ensuring all of them have the same opportunities to become “responsible, creative, lifelong learners.”

“Each of our students has a unique story,” said Tiffanie Lambert, assistant superintendent of teaching and learning at the district. “Many have gone through a lot and continue to face challenges each day. Yet, they remain so resilient and eager to learn. It is our job to help them in any way possible.”

The district knew eliminating opportunity gaps while providing the highest-quality education possible day in and day out would be imperative to improving student achievement.



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—Tiffanie Lambert

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# What They Did

The district cultivated strong relationships with its students, families, and teachers through the years to support its ongoing success. It also used online and blended programs from Curriculum Associates—including *i-Ready Personalized Instruction*, *i-Ready Assessment*, *Teacher Toolbox*, and *i-Ready Classroom Mathematics*—to help guide teaching and learning in Grades K–8. Additionally, *i-Ready Assessment* data guided instruction at the high school level.

***i-Ready* has helped PTS educators with the following efforts:**

“From manipulatives and printed activity worksheets to the online instruction, there are so many resources available within *i-Ready* and *i-Ready Classroom Mathematics* to really engage and motivate my students during math instruction.”

—McKenzie Stewart



## Connecting with Students

Teachers across the district constantly work on building strong bonds with students while providing personalized, data-driven learning opportunities. “From manipulatives and printed activity worksheets to the online instruction, there are so many resources available within *i-Ready* and *i-Ready Classroom Mathematics* to really engage and motivate my students during math instruction,” said McKenzie Stewart, a first-year Grade 1 teacher at Talent Elementary School (TES). “I’m always so happy to see my students participate and take a risk. They get so excited, too, even when they experience the smallest bit of growth. You can see it in their faces, and it’s so special.”



## Supporting English Learners (ELs)

*i-Ready*'s supports for ELs have led to transformative learning growth. “One of my Spanish-speaking students struggled in math but began slowly progressing more and more,” said Miguel Gutierrez, a Grade 1 teacher with a two-way immersion class at TES. “She took an *i-Ready* quiz a couple of weeks ago and got 100 percent for the first time. She jumped for joy and was so happy to go home and tell her parents. She even took a picture of her perfect math score and sent it to her grandparents who are still back in her native country.”

“*i-Ready* helped instill that math mindset in her, and now she’s so excited to learn,” added Gutierrez. “And this makes me excited.”



## Engaging Families

The district understands the important role families play in their student’s education. “Each week, I receive a letter that really helps me understand my youngest son’s growth,” said Shawna Schleif, principal of Phoenix Elementary School (PES) and parent of two PTS students. “With this being his first year in a traditional school setting, this communication is really appreciated. I can also easily log on to *i-Ready* to see his progress—how many Math lessons he’s completed and how many tokens he’s racked up, for example.”



## Supporting Community

Communication with the district’s community was a top priority after a devastating wildfire destroyed homes and displaced families throughout the Phoenix-Talent area in September 2020. “We were immediately calling every family to see how they were, if they had food, and how we could help,” said Lambert.

“Even with everything going on, one of the concerns we kept hearing from our families was that their children lost their math books,” she added. “With the help of Curriculum Associates, we were able to get new books into our students’ hands in two days. This gave them a much-needed sense of normalcy despite the circumstances.”



## Embracing Professional Growth

PTS educators have created a collaborative atmosphere where best practices, tips, and ideas are readily shared. “During our [professional learning communities], we are always bouncing ideas off of one another and talking about ways to improve our practice,” said Gutierrez. “This is very helpful, especially as a first-year teacher.”

Educators’ cooperative mindsets and enthusiasm for professional development led to the quick dissemination of *i-Ready* best practices. “We really delve into the curriculum and discuss effective instructional and engagement techniques, such as using Turn and Talks, as we work through math problems,” said Karinn Calhoun, a PTS instructional coach. “Or I’ll introduce teachers to new resources, such as the ones from the Teacher Toolbox, they could use within their classroom. I’m continually learning something new myself that I’ll bring to our teachers.”

## What They Accomplished

These strong relationships, in addition to the implementation of best-practice instructional strategies and programs, have contributed to PTS’ growth in math, as well as its ongoing overall success.

At TES, for example, *i-Ready Diagnostic* data showed a 10-percentage point increase in the overall number of students who met grade-level math proficiency or higher from the 2018–2019 school year to the 2019–2020 school year. Additionally, PES experienced an increase in math proficiency, as measured by *i-Ready Diagnostic* data, during this same time frame.

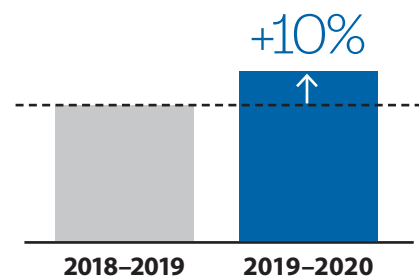
“We were especially glad we had these programs already in place once COVID hit,” said Lambert. “It helped our teachers continue to deliver quality instruction even as they taught remotely. It gave us a roadmap to follow.”

“We really look at data so much now, whether it is to guide our overall instruction or act as a baseline for the effectiveness of our summer school program,” she added.

These collective efforts have led the district to have the highest graduation rate in its county, including a graduation rate of 100 percent of its homeless students.

Lambert concluded, “It all goes back to helping our students in any way possible and eliminating the opportunity gaps.”

Students Who Met or Exceeded Grade-Level Standards in Mathematics



*“The i-Ready data gives us a pulse on where students are and what supports they need. This has been important to our students’ growth.”*

—Shawna Schleif



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