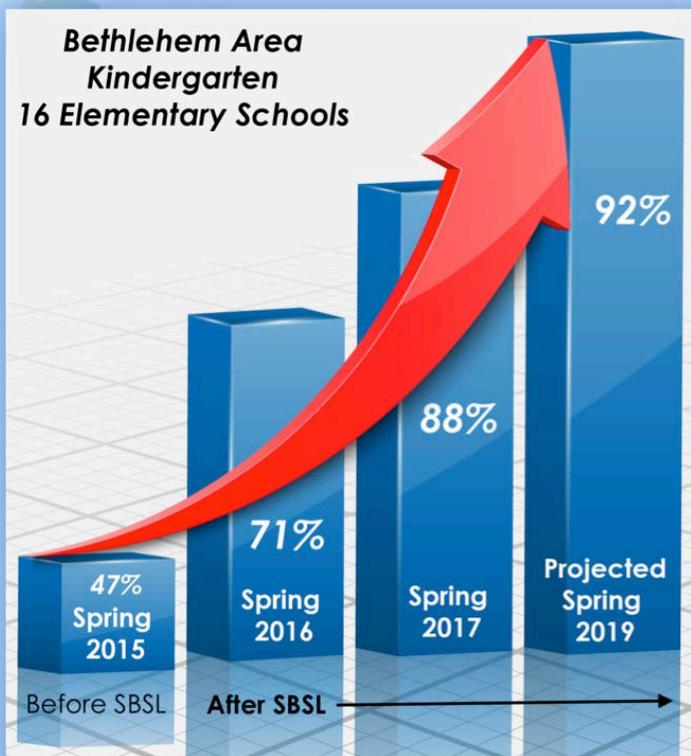


# BETHLEHEM AREA SCHOOLS MAKE STUNNING STRIDES IN READING



**KINDERGARTEN BENCHMARKS  
INCREASE FROM 47% TO 88% IN JUST  
TWO YEARS!**

*Sixteen elementary schools, in the 6th largest district in Pennsylvania, soar to success in raising their kindergarten benchmark scores to an unprecedented level of achievement by implementing a comprehensive MTSS process with Step By Step Learning®.*

Bethlehem Area School District (BASD), the sixth largest in Pennsylvania, knew they needed help to improve literacy skills and close the achievement gap for students at Lincoln Elementary, a Title I Focus School. Enter Step By Step Learning®, an organization dedicated to using evidence-based methodology to improve teacher effectiveness and student performance for even the most at-risk children.

The results? Today 90% of kindergarten students at Lincoln meet the end of year benchmark goals, up from 54% a few years ago.

“Lincoln, a school with significant challenges, was performing better than other schools in our district. So here was our proof. We knew we were on the right track,” says Kim Harper, District Supervisor of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment.



Contact Step By Step Learning® at [info@sbsl.org](mailto:info@sbsl.org)  
or by phone at 610-398-1231



The uptick was so impressive, the next year BASD engaged Step By Step Learning® to work with kindergarten teachers and students in all of the district's 16 elementary schools.

The reason is that, with nearly 20 years of in-classroom experience with teachers, Step By Step Learning® is recognized as the preeminent educational and literacy organization that achieves positive sustainable results in schools, benefiting every child. The plan for BASD included:

- o *Design and implementation of a data review process -- collection, analysis, evaluation, and interpretation of student data to identify students at-risk for reading failure*
- o *Instructional support needed to improve students' reading skills*
- o *Professional development for teachers to deepen their knowledge of the science of teaching reading and enhance their instructional techniques to promote more active student learning.*

Now, the Step By Step Learning® team works with kindergarten through third grade teachers to increase their knowledge and understanding of the science of reading and how to collect, interpret, and understand student data. Teachers benefit from customized lesson plans and classroom engagement techniques, as well as frequent in-person, side-by-side follow-up support, including:

- o *Personalized in-classroom modeling and coaching*
- o *LETRS® content training*
- o *Connecting to the Classroom® sessions, and*
- o *Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) protocols.*

Teachers can sometimes be wary of trying new things in their classrooms because they don't want their students to fail. But they soon learned that by making slight modifications to their teaching approaches, significant, quantifiable improvements in their students' understanding and retention can be achieved. The methodologies taught by the in classroom Step By Step Learning® consultants allow teachers to actively use the data they collect for each child and focus on the academic growth of all students.

Kim Harper believes teacher knowledge and coaching makes the difference. "The training is the first part. We had teachers tell us, 'Oh, we already did LETRS® training,' but they didn't have the component of how it translates to the classroom, what it looks like in the classroom. It's the combination – the knowledge and then the modeling/coaching – you need both."

BASD partnered with Step By Step Learning® specifically for the company's expertise in school improvement. Many Focus schools are spending money on their reading and literacy programs, but not improving at this pace. Step By Step Learning® teamed with the district, performed a systems and processes audit (Gap Analysis), and focused on building a collaborative culture. The teachers are seeing real improvement in their students' reading and comprehension.

"Our teachers are saying things like, 'They're doing things we never thought they could do before!' I always say, 'Because you taught them! Look at what kids can do when we teach them!'" Harper says. "You can't wait to reach a point where it's developmentally appropriate -- you have to push them beyond that if you want them to grow. One consultant said it's like the monkey bars – you can't stay in one spot and just hang there, you always reach for the next bar."

***In BASD's elementary schools, that's just what students and their teachers are doing.***

***If you have questions about the results, please feel free to contact:***

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