



Student Growth with Reading Apprenticeship: Aligning Leadership, Literacy Instruction, and Professional Learning

Amid many challenges common to schools in the early 2020s, **Rich Township High School (RTHS) District 227's** ninth-graders nearly doubled their reading growth in 2023-24. This notable achievement is the result of a strategic and sustained approach to literacy and professional learning.

Located in South Cook County outside of Chicago, RTHS's student population is predominantly African American, and the district serves over 2,300 high school students. RTHS has experienced many of the challenges shared by districts all over the country since the pandemic—decreased student engagement, consolidation of schools, and lower student proficiency in core academic subjects. RTHS leaders have also noticed less dialogue and collaboration in classrooms. To get their community reengaged and moving forward together, RTHS set goals, sought out evidence-based supports, and shared learning experiences for their teachers and administrators.

RTHS Goals and Teacher/ Administrator Supports

- Improve students' literacy performance and engagement in school
- Provide teachers and administrators shared support for three years to create a professional, positive culture for both faculty and students
- Engage leadership in instructional change and professional learning alongside teachers
- Identify specific measurable goals and related measures shared districtwide

Once RTHS determined that [Reading Apprenticeship](#) was a match for their district's teacher and student learning goals, they developed a multiyear implementation plan. The district identified literacy as a keystone to districtwide improvement and began their work by engaging ninth grade teachers and their administrators in Reading Apprenticeship professional learning.

RTHS teachers report that Reading Apprenticeship is making an impact: Students' use of academic language in class has improved, as has their ability to have more substantive, text-based dialogue. This change is showing up in their reading and writing benchmarks and standardized assessments. **The ninth-grade students have demonstrated exceptional growth, achieving a 17 percent increase in PSAT 9 scores.** Assistant Superintendent of Education Services Dr. Kevin Gallick noted that a remarkable 87 percent of students achieved expected or higher than expected growth. Teachers also shared that they have observed that their students are demonstrating greater persistence and problem-solving skills when facing difficult texts.

To read a more detailed success story about RTHS, check out the [link to our website](#).