



institute for  
multi-sensory  
education



## CASE STUDY



### **Pinedale High School** Pinedale, Wyoming

Pinedale High School (PHS), based in Pinedale, Wyoming, partnered with IMSE to provide its teachers with the tools they need to close literacy gaps and support high school struggling readers. Following their discovery of IMSE and the science of reading, the school has started a movement in evidence-based approaches to reach every student with effective literacy strategies. The school serves 304 students and has a student-teacher ratio of 15:1.

#### School Profile



**3.6% of students are English Learners (EL)**



**16% of students experience poverty**



**11.8% of students have disabilities**



**22% of students are eligible for Free and Reduced lunch**



## CHALLENGE

PHS is seeing a growing number of struggling readers, partly caused by shifting demographics of the community and a long-standing gap in early literacy instruction. While elementary schools today are incorporating strategies based on the science of reading and Structured Literacy, that wasn't the case a decade ago. Many current high school students were taught using instructional methods in their early years that did not adequately support the development of essential reading foundations—resulting in significant gaps in their literacy skills today.

Most teacher preparation programs do not prepare teachers to teach reading or identify and address gaps effectively, especially at the high school level. As a result, students who need support often slip through the cracks. By the time they reach high school, many still can't read proficiently but have developed coping mechanisms to hide their struggles, making it even more difficult for teachers to identify that these students need help. And what's more—many teachers aren't trained to offer older students foundational literacy support. Teaching high schoolers to read requires a different approach, one that relies on the data to uncover hidden gaps and confronts the problem head-on. Otherwise, struggling students will continue to get by without receiving the help they truly need.



*We're talking about students who are years behind. And really, it's not about their ability to identify a text's theme or central idea; They cannot sound out the words to read correctly, as they lack the fluency to read large amounts of text. This causes students to give up because they don't have the stamina to grapple with upper-level material. Unless we can target those students, they are not going to improve, and we're just going to keep pushing them along and helping them pass classes so that they graduate. But what is that doing for their lives after high school?"*

**Faith Howard**  
Literacy Specialist  
Pinedale High School



*I showed another teacher the strategies I'd learned, and she started seeing her own students using them successfully. That's when she asked to take the training herself. It's really grown through word of mouth. Now, all three of the special education teachers in my building have completed IMSE training—either Morphology+, Orton-Gillingham+, or both. As we work to expand our impact, more teachers are noticing the results I'm seeing with students. It's been a really organic process—the more they see Structured Literacy working, the more they want to be part of it."*

**Faith Howard**  
Literacy Specialist  
Pinedale High School



## SOLUTION

Three years ago, Faith Howard joined PHS with a mission to find meaningful, effective ways to support struggling high school readers.

Recognizing that she needed to try something new to better support her students, Faith turned to IMSE's Morphology+ training and Structured Literacy approach. Equipped with evidence-based strategies and tools, Faith launched what is referred to as the "Literacy Lab" at her school, giving struggling students the tools they needed to become confident, capable readers.

By prioritizing building trust, leading with empathy, and helping each student set goals based on where they were, not where they were expected to be, Faith was able to remind students that they weren't alone. The U.S. literacy crisis has left many without the foundational skills they should have gained in their early education, and this simple truth shifted students' mindsets: their reading challenges weren't a personal failure, but instead, they had never been taught the skills they needed to succeed.

Since few resources are designed specifically for older students, Faith applied her Morphology+ and OG+ training and adapted her instruction to be systematic and explicit, grounded in the science of reading and tailored to the core skills her students had missed in elementary school. Part of this process was making sure the new materials were relevant and engaging, especially for teens.



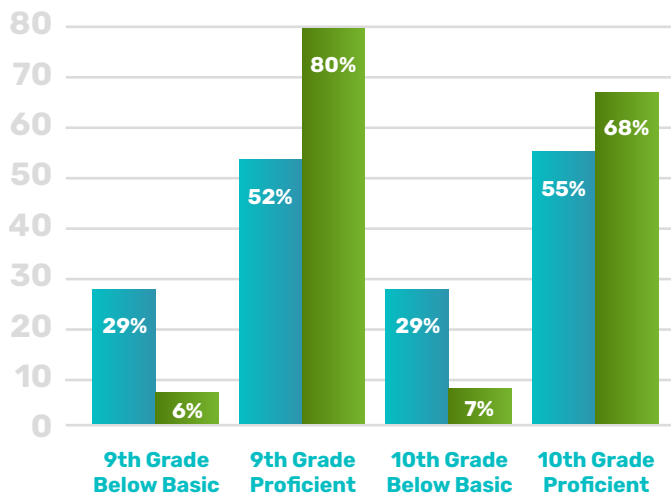


# RESULTS

Students have made significant and consistent gains after the integration of Faith's Literacy Lab based on IMSE's Structured Literacy approach. This has allowed students to start reading with the confidence to improve and grapple with texts at and above their grade level.

● 2021-2022 ● 2023-2024

## Student Performance



These results have given students the tools to read proficiently and confidently, and empowered other teachers throughout PHS to adopt the same strategies. As Structured Literacy and Orton-Gillingham+ continue to be widely adopted throughout PHS, more teachers have seen how practical the evidence-based approaches are for all students at every level.



*Being a leader in literacy means thinking beyond the traditional approach and constantly learning, growing, and adapting to meet your students' needs. You have to lead with empathy, recognizing that many students come in with misconceptions and coping strategies to cover gaps in their learning. It's about helping them unlearn and relearn in a supportive way that makes them feel seen while being honest about where they are without sugarcoating it."*

**Faith Howard**  
Literacy Specialist  
Pinedale High School

The most important takeaway from PHS's literacy success story is that it is never too late to teach students to read. No matter what age students are, literacy strategies based on the science of reading are essential to setting every student up for success in school and beyond.



## ABOUT IMSE

IMSE is an education pioneer and the leading provider of Structured Literacy solutions based on the science of reading. IMSE solutions incorporate the Orton-Gillingham methodology and all five pillars of literacy to empower teachers from day one.

Institute for Multi-Sensory Education  
2000 Town Center, Suite 2000  
Southfield, MI 48075

Contact [info@imse.com](mailto:info@imse.com) to learn more about our work with school districts around the country.