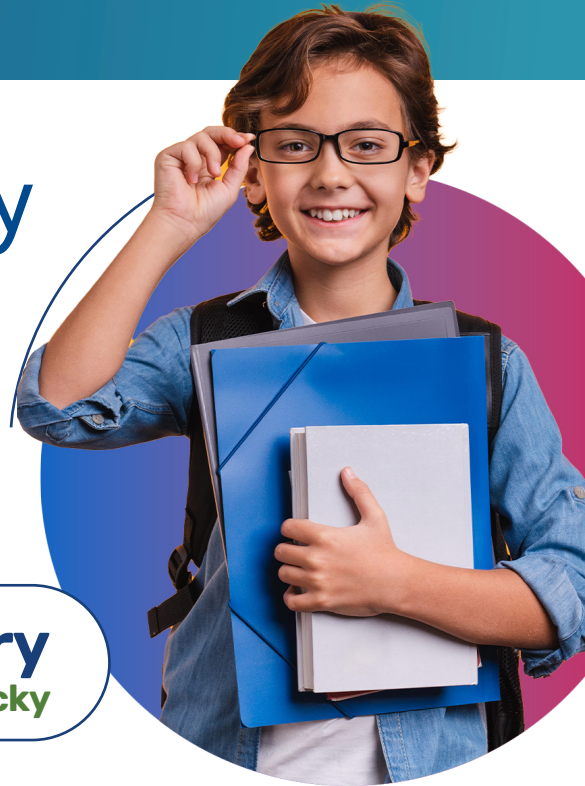




institute for  
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## CASE STUDY



# North Hancock Elementary

Lewisport, Kentucky

North Hancock Elementary School, located in Lewisport, Kentucky, is a public school serving 471 students from Pre-K through fifth grade. With a minority enrollment of 8% and 64% of students qualifying for free and reduced lunch, the school reflects the diverse needs of its community. As part of the Hancock County School District (HCS), North Hancock Elementary has played an instrumental role in leveraging evidence-based literacy programs to drive student literacy success.



## CHALLENGE

In 2021, HCS partnered with IMSE to enhance support for its students, more than half of whom were reading below grade level. As part of a district-wide initiative, all teachers received IMSE's Orton-Gillingham Plus training to tap into more effective literacy strategies.

After seeing remarkable improvements following the adoption of this evidence-based approach, teachers at North Hancock Elementary in grades three through five were inspired to deepen their expertise and expand their impact.

Specifically, despite seeing overall literacy gains, the district's NWEA MAP data consistently showed that vocabulary remained a challenge for students, prompting educators to recognize that advancing their knowledge through IMSE's Morphology+ training was essential to unlocking even greater student success and district outcomes.

### School Profile



**471 students**



**8% minority enrollment**



**64% Free and Reduced Lunch eligible**



*I have two students who are dyslexic learners, and from the start of the year to now, their ability to spell words and pick out word parts has improved significantly. You can look at their writing and clearly see how they've improved, and most importantly, students are so much more confident in their reading and writing abilities.*

**Kendal Maxwell**  
Fifth-Grade Teacher  
North Hancock Elementary



## SOLUTION

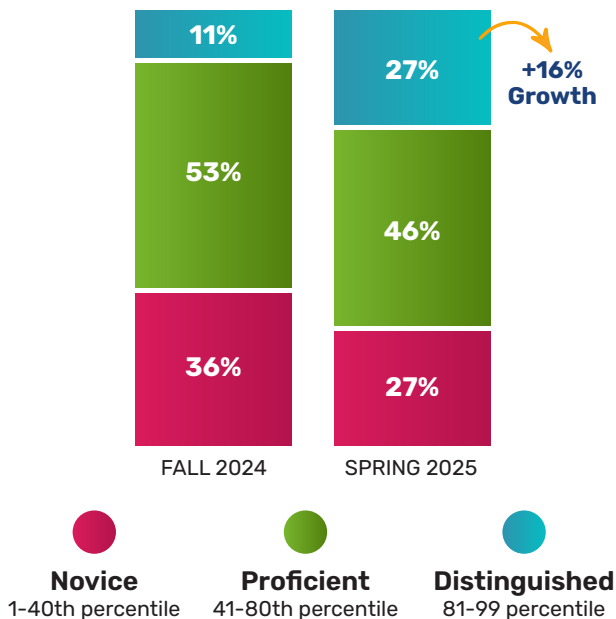
In order to fully benefit students, Morphology+ instruction needed to be prioritized on par with core subjects like math and social studies and intentionally integrated within the school day. In response, Hancock’s school and district administrators strongly supported the implementation of Morphology+ as a key component of ELA instruction and made it a central component of all students’ early literacy instruction. Recognizing the impact of morphology on vocabulary and reading comprehension, eight elementary teachers in the district completed training in IMSE’s Morphology+, prompting many of the district’s middle school teachers to follow in their lead.



## RESULTS

From fall of 2024 to spring of 2025, struggling readers decreased 9%, while many students who were previously proficient advanced into the distinguished range, resulting in a 16% increase in distinguished readers overall. The “distinguished” category reflects students performing at an advanced level of proficiency.

### NWEA MAP Performance Growth



These results further underscore the significant improvements following the implementation of IMSE’s Morphology+ approach.



*Vocabulary instruction has always felt like a bit of a gray area—we’ve known it’s important, but it wasn’t always clear how students should be taught. Morphology has brought structure and clarity to that process, which has been incredibly helpful. We often assume kids know certain words when they don’t, but teaching them how to break words down into morphemes has been so much more powerful than simply teaching students to memorize words. IMSE’s Morphology+ instruction has given them tools so they can decode and understand so many others.*

**Kendal Maxwell**  
Fifth-Grade Teacher  
North Hancock Elementary

The impact that IMSE’s Morphology+ has had at North Hancock Elementary School goes beyond its students becoming more proficient in vocabulary retention. With the tools to decode and fully understand morphemes, students can better engage with their curriculum across subjects. These results underscore that early and explicit morphology instruction is the key to setting every student up for success, not only in reading and writing, but in every area of their lives.



### 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.

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