



institute for
multi-sensory
education

CASE STUDY



Value Schools Los Angeles, California



Value Schools, a charter management organization that oversees a network of four public schools within the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD), serves a diverse TK-12 student population, including many English language learners and students facing academic challenges. When Value Schools leaders discovered IMSE, they believed they had found the key to reversing stubborn problems with the organization's literacy instruction curriculum. Reading assessments conducted since then confirm this belief, showing a dramatic upward turn in students' confidence and literacy skills.

School Profile



4
Schools



1,731
Students



TK-12
Grades



27%
English Language Learners



CHALLENGE

At the beginning of the 2023–24 academic year, literacy outcomes at Value Schools were concerning. Students across the network were consistently underperforming in reading and writing, and previous approaches had fallen short in delivering measurable progress. Fueling and compounding this academic underachievement was an all-too-common problem: many teachers were not equipped with the proper training or tools to effectively teach foundational literacy skills, especially to students with diverse learning needs.

These instructional deficits had serious implications. The network's charter renewal with the Los Angeles Unified School District was at risk, as the district's accountability benchmarks highlighted these deficiencies in literacy growth. Value Schools needed a comprehensive solution, one that would not only improve student performance but also establish a sustainable curriculum and system of support for its educators.

To secure the future of its schools and support the success of every student, the organization had to fundamentally rethink how literacy was taught.



SOLUTION

In response to these challenges, Carmen Vazquez, Chief Academic Officer at Value Schools, led a deliberate shift toward Structured Literacy grounded in the science of reading. Understanding the depth of the issue, she first committed to becoming a literacy leader herself. Carmen completed IMSE's comprehensive training courses, including Orton-Gillingham Plus, Morphology Plus, and Phonological Awareness. These gave her the foundational knowledge to not only understand the IMSE approach but also to support her teachers with clarity and purpose.



IMSE's training was incredibly helpful, and I thought to myself, If this is so helpful to me as a leader, I can't imagine how much it is going to change things for the teachers on the ground."

Carmen Vazquez
Chief Academic Officer
Value Schools

With her own training complete, Carmen focused on building a support system around implementation. She hired two reading specialists specifically to champion IMSE's Structured Literacy approach across campuses. These specialists received the same rigorous IMSE training and were tasked with modeling lessons to teachers and ensuring fidelity to the methodology.

Rather than expecting teachers to interpret and apply the science of reading on their own, Value Schools prioritized consistency and expert-led implementation.



Last year, our students were significantly struggling with literacy. This year, we've gone from survival mode to breathing, taking steps forward, and growing. The IMSE approach has really helped us expedite that growth."

Ligia Salazar
Reading Specialist
Downtown Value School

Value Schools then began to roll out the program fully: new and veteran K-2 teachers were enrolled in IMSE's training, ensuring that literacy instruction began with a solid, shared foundation. Recognizing the importance of having an IMSE coach, Carmen prioritized and invested in setting the team up for success. Central to this effort was Ligia Salazar, the school's dedicated reading specialist. Ligia attended all Orton-Gillingham Plus and Morphology Plus trainings, developed strong expertise in the program, and provided consistent, day-to-day support to teachers as they implemented IMSE strategies. She worked closely with classroom educators, offering coaching and facilitating hands-on practice with components such as the three-part drill, dictation exercises, and weekly assessments. This layered support helped foster teacher confidence, improved instructional quality, and built a school culture focused on continuous learning and literacy achievement.

By embedding IMSE's curriculum into the daily instructional routine and backing it with strong coaching and leadership engagement, Value Schools created the conditions for real, measurable progress.





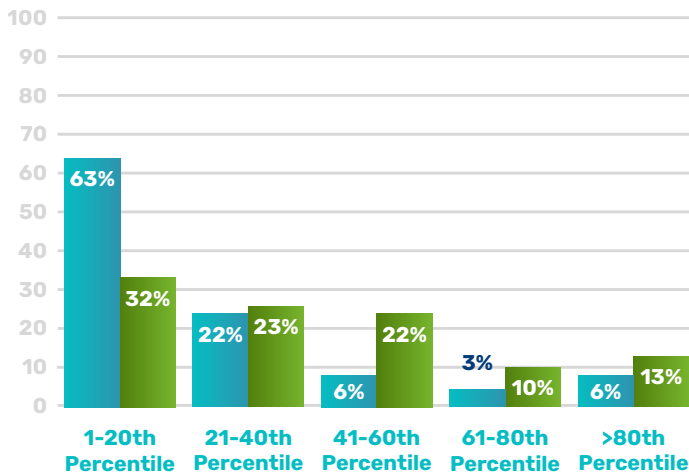
RESULTS

The shift to IMSE's Structured Literacy approach produced inspiring changes in both instruction and student performance, especially at Downtown Value School, the K-8 campus where the program has been implemented completely.

In fall 2024, 63% of Downtown Value School's 1st graders were reading at or below the 20th percentile nationally. By spring 2025, that number had dropped to just 32% as students moved into higher performance ranges — a powerful indicator of instructional impact through the IMSE OG+ program. These results showcase how Structured Literacy can transform early reading trajectories in under a year.

First Grade Achievement Fall 2024 to Spring 2025

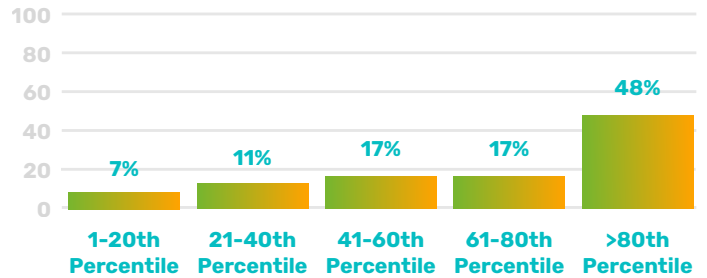
● Fall 2024 ● Spring 2025



In the beginning, students were struggling with forming letters. Now, they can write sentences. It's just incredible!

Carmen Vazquez

First Grade Growth Fall 2024 to Spring 2025



Key Takeaways:

- Median percentile increased from 15th to 33rd
- 65% of students showed high or very high growth (61st+ percentile)
- 48% showed exceptional growth (81st+ percentile)
- More than 1 in 4 students moved into the 41st percentile range or above

Value Schools' transformation illustrates how decisive instructional leadership, grounded in evidence-based practice, can catalyze academic change. Carmen Vazquez led from the front, learning the methodology, investing in staff, and building systems of accountability.

What began as a high-stakes intervention to improve test scores and secure charter renewal evolved into a district-wide movement for literacy excellence. As Value Schools looks ahead, the organization is focused on expanding IMSE training and sustaining high-impact coaching at all grade levels to ensure every student learns to read.



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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