

Bonita Unified School District

Empowering Students to Love Reading: Using SIPPS as Tier I Instruction and Tier II Intervention in the Bonita Unified School District

PROFILE

The **Bonita Unified School District (BUSD)** is in Los Angeles County, and includes the cities of La Verne and San Dimas. BUSD serves just over 10,000 students across 8 elementary, 2 middle, and 3 high schools. Recognized at the state and national levels (including a National Blue Ribbon School award, 9 California Distinguished School awards, and 2 Gold Ribbon School awards), the district performs well in standardized achievement and culture measures. BUSD serves a moderately sized economically challenged community, with just under 40 percent of its students receiving free or reduced-price meals. Just under 6 percent of its students are English Language Learners (ELL). BUSD adopted SIPPS (Systematic Instruction in Phonological Awareness, Phonics, and Sight Words) as reading support and intervention for struggling readers in the 2004–05 school year.

CHALLENGES

Chris Ann Horsley was principal of Arma J. Shull Elementary from 2000 to 2017. During her time there, students demonstrated increased reading skills and proficiency using *SIPPS* as Tier I instruction and as Tier II intervention (RTI/MTSS). In addition to providing the necessary support to students at risk of falling behind, the repetition of patterns, spelling, and sounds helped propel her students, teachers, and school to achieve better-than-expected results not just in reading, but in other subject areas. Shull Elementary's students outperformed in standardized testing for literacy, science, and math; performed better than the expected range when adjusted for socio-economic factors; and performed better than other schools in the district. With *SIPPS*, the percentage of students needing special education services at Shull Elementary declined.



Photo courtesy of Bonita USD

(continues)

IMPLEMENTATION

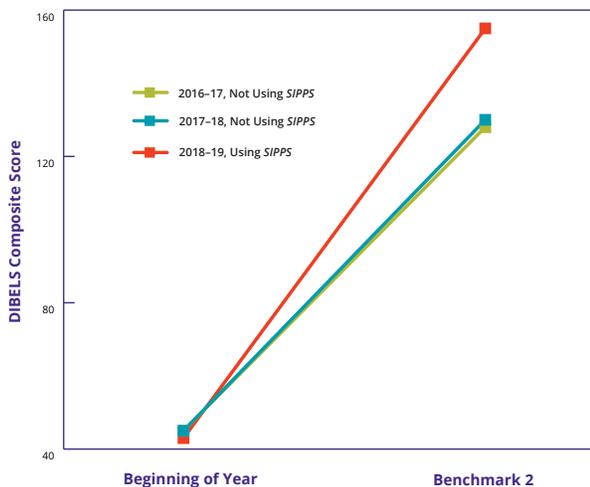
Horsley took on an expanded role by becoming Senior Director for Curriculum in 2017. In that role, Horsley and her district colleagues analyzed 12 years of DIBELS® data to identify schools and classrooms most in need of *SIPPS* to support students in accelerating their reading and writing skills. Horsley began to work across the district to increase adoption of *SIPPS* as Tier I instruction by showing teachers and administrators DIBELS academic data that demonstrated outcomes from the 48 BUSD teachers who were using *SIPPS* regularly.

To roll out *SIPPS* adoptions more widely, Horsley worked closely with Collaborative Classroom to set up professional development training as well as an onsite Collaborative Classroom consultant. The team used Collaborative Classroom lessons, the Learning Portal, and videos, and walk-throughs of lessons to help teachers and administrators see the power of the curriculum. “There is nothing like *SIPPS* to get them ready to teach reading,” says Horsley.

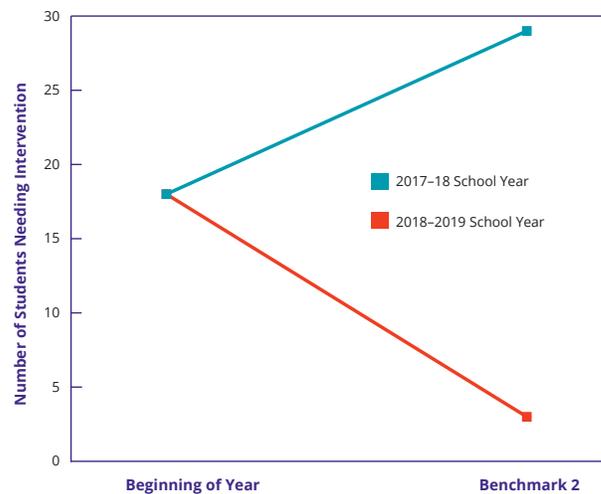
RESULTS

Using *SIPPS* has had a long-lasting impact on reading, comprehension, and literacy for BUSD students. That impact has extended into math, science, and other areas, as well as stayed with students into later grades. With *SIPPS*, BUSD reduced the number of students falling into Tier III intervention or special education to less than their average numbers. In addition, BUSD increased scores in reading comprehension and proficiency throughout the district. Another positive indicator of increased reading interest and fluency has been growth in utilization of libraries and increased circulation of books. In response to the increased utilization, BUSD opened its libraries for the summer. Shull Elementary received a National Blue Ribbon School award. The school had an enrollment of 475 when Horsley started, and now has over 605 students (and is consistently oversubscribed). Neighboring school districts have taken note of the success at BUSD as 25% of BUSD students move to the district due to its academic strength.

***SIPPS* use led to a 19.3% increase in DIBELS standardized test results.**



***SIPPS* reduced Special Education (Intensive and Strategic Intervention) needs by 89% year over year across three Kindergarten classrooms.**



For additional case studies, please visit collaborativeclassroom.org/case-studies.