

# Evidence of Excellence



95%

of high school students **meet or exceed their growth targets in math**



BERRYVILLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS • BERRYVILLE, ARKANSAS

**70% FREE OR REDUCED LUNCH / 20% ENGLISH LEARNERS / 18% SPECIAL NEEDS****59.9% WHITE / 28% HISPANIC OR LATINO / 6.6% NATIVE HAWAIIAN OR PACIFIC ISLANDER / 2.3% MULTIRACIAL / 2% ASIAN / 0.6% AMERICAN INDIAN OR ALASKA NATIVE / 0.4% BLACK**

## CHALLENGE

Berryville Public Schools had a strong tradition of academic excellence, but over time, that reputation began to slip—and teachers and leaders were feeling the pressure. The number of students requiring special education support was rising, and despite the best efforts of staff, overall student achievement was declining. The district fell from being a regional leader to ranking in the bottom third of surrounding districts.

"We had to step back and ask, 'Are we really teaching students at grade level?' That question became our why," said Tammi Davis, the director of curriculum and instruction. "We're here to serve kids—and that means ensuring they learn at high levels every day."

Frustration grew among the staff who were working tirelessly but seeing limited results. The district lacked a system for collaboration, aligned intervention, and sustained professional development. Something had to change.

## IMPLEMENTATION

Berryville's journey with Solution Tree began with a spark of curiosity about intervention. After attending a Professional Learning Communities (PLC) at Work® Institute, district leaders began learning more about the PLC at Work process. That led to deeper engagement and ultimately a four-year partnership focused on building essential standards, improving leadership, and transforming school culture.

The district began at the foundation: creating a clear, unified vision and mission. Leadership invited

stakeholders—including teachers, support staff, and community members—to monthly meetings, where they developed a shared understanding of their purpose. While some educators initially resisted, viewing the process as just another compliance task, district leaders emphasized that this work wasn't about mandates; it was about transforming how they do business to better serve students.

Next came training. The district sent an initial group of 15 educators to a PLC at Work Institute, followed by structured support through Cohort 6, a three-year professional learning model. They brought in a PLC associate who helped teams rethink scheduling to make time for collaboration and targeted intervention. The associate worked side by side with principals, offering a fresh lens and helping create urgency and clarity in decision making.

District leaders also participated in monthly meetings with author and associate Janel Keating, who supported leadership development and reinforced consistent messaging across schools. This work emphasized that successful PLC implementation requires visible, sustained commitment from the district level. Superintendent Owen Powell played a key role in publicly supporting the work, prioritizing time for collaboration, and aligning decisions with the district's shared mission.

At the middle and high schools, "Smart Start Mondays" were launched, which included weekly collaborative time built into the calendar so teams could plan, reflect, and respond to student needs.

# *This is our why: We are here to serve kids and ensure they truly are learning.*

**TAMMI DAVIS / DIRECTOR OF CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION**

## RESULTS

Berryville's commitment to the PLC at Work process led to measurable academic improvement and a stronger school culture. The middle school rose from a D to a B rating and achieved the second highest growth in the state in literacy. Additionally, 95% of high school students met or exceeded their growth targets in math.

One of the most compelling outcomes was the **significant reduction in the number of students scoring at Level 1** (the lowest tier) on the ATLAS (Arkansas Teaching, Learning & Assessment System) state assessment from 2023 to 2024. This indicates that a higher number of students scored at higher levels on the ATLAS state assessment.

"Celebrating the small wins is something we've done since the beginning," said Tammi. "It keeps us positive and reminds us this is a journey."

With improved collaboration, protected team time, and ongoing leadership support, the district built momentum over the last four years, resulting in greater academic gains, higher morale, and a districtwide commitment to learning for all.

### DECREASE IN STUDENTS SCORING AT LEVEL 1 IN ELA AND MATH (2023–2024)



## PD MILESTONES

- PLC at Work® Institute
- PLC PD cohort
- On-site coaching
- Monthly meetings with Janel Keating
- "Smart Start Mondays" (built-in team time)
- Adoption of key resources: *Learning by Doing*, *Common Formative Assessment*, and *Leading PLCs at Work® Districtwide*



# Start your success story



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At Solution Tree, we share your vision to transform education to ensure learning for all, and we can help you make this vision a reality.

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LET'S SEE WHAT WE CAN DO TOGETHER



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Please note that all data and people mentioned in this story represent solely the time frame in which Solution Tree actively worked with the school or district and the time frame in which the school or district committed to implementing processes and practices set forth by Solution Tree. Building and district leaders and staff featured in Evidence of Excellence stories may have changed since the stories were published.