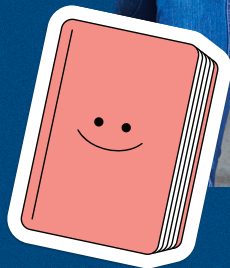


Evidence of Excellence



The PLC process helped this district implement a successful science of reading program



GLENS FALLS CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT • GLENS FALLS, NEW YORK



LET'S SEE WHAT WE CAN DO TOGETHER



5 SCHOOLS / 2,036 STUDENTS / 41.3% FREE OR REDUCED LUNCH / 19% SPECIAL NEEDS

85% WHITE / 6% HISPANIC OR LATINO / 6% MULTIRACIAL / 2% BLACK / 1% NATIVE HAWAIIAN OR PACIFIC ISLANDER

CHALLENGE

Glens Falls City School District faced a period of significant upheaval, with nearly the entire administrative team turning over, creating an urgent need to rebuild school culture and establish clear systems. Student achievement data highlighted the challenge: The district had a 14% dropout rate and a 70% graduation rate. In addition, the schools were dealing with behavioral challenges, attendance concerns, and students who were struggling to fully engage in learning.

At the elementary level, foundational reading skills were inconsistent, and students lacked a structured phonics program aligned to the science of reading. Teachers had to navigate multiple reading programs, and the lack of consistency across classrooms hindered student progress. Meanwhile, the middle school served a highly transient, socioeconomically diverse student population, including 20–25 seventh-grade students placed by the Glens Falls Common School District, many of whom needed additional Tier 2, Tier 3, or special education support. To meet these challenges, the district implemented a systemic approach to improve student learning, build staff capacity, and foster a positive school culture.

IMPLEMENTATION

The district partnered with Solution Tree to implement the Professional Learning Communities (PLC) at Work® process and strengthen instructional practices. The work began with professional development focused

on the science of reading. Teachers piloted four different reading programs across three elementary schools, evaluating each through surveys, pros-and-cons sessions, and student performance data. Using the PLC at Work process, they ultimately selected a program that provided a consistent, structured approach to phonics instruction.

Early implementation was challenging. Teachers and administrators had to adapt to a new curriculum, tiered interventions, and grade-level alignment. Virtual professional development sessions, recorded workshops, and summer refreshers supported staff while Solution Tree associates Scott Beattie and Matthew Treadway, EdD, provided hands-on guidance. Scott helped define essential learning outcomes and expectations for student writing, and Dr. Treadway led keynote sessions and small-group workshops to strengthen instruction in middle and high schools.

“Anytime we could get two more teachers in a session, that was a win for us. Those moments helped build momentum and teacher buy-in across the school,” shared Assistant Superintendent Amanda Simmes.

- Book study: *Learning by Doing, Make it Happen, and Taking Action*
- Administrators attended the PLC at Work® Institute in Rochester, New York
- Administrators attended RTI at Work™ (Portable Event)
- Coaching received from Scott Beattie
- Coaching and keynote received from Matthew Treadway



Before Solution Tree, our data meetings were unfocused. Now they're concise, effective, and principals and teachers know exactly which students need help and where to get it.

AMANDA SIMMES / ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT

The district also refined its RTI/MTSS process, creating focused, data-driven meetings to identify Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions.

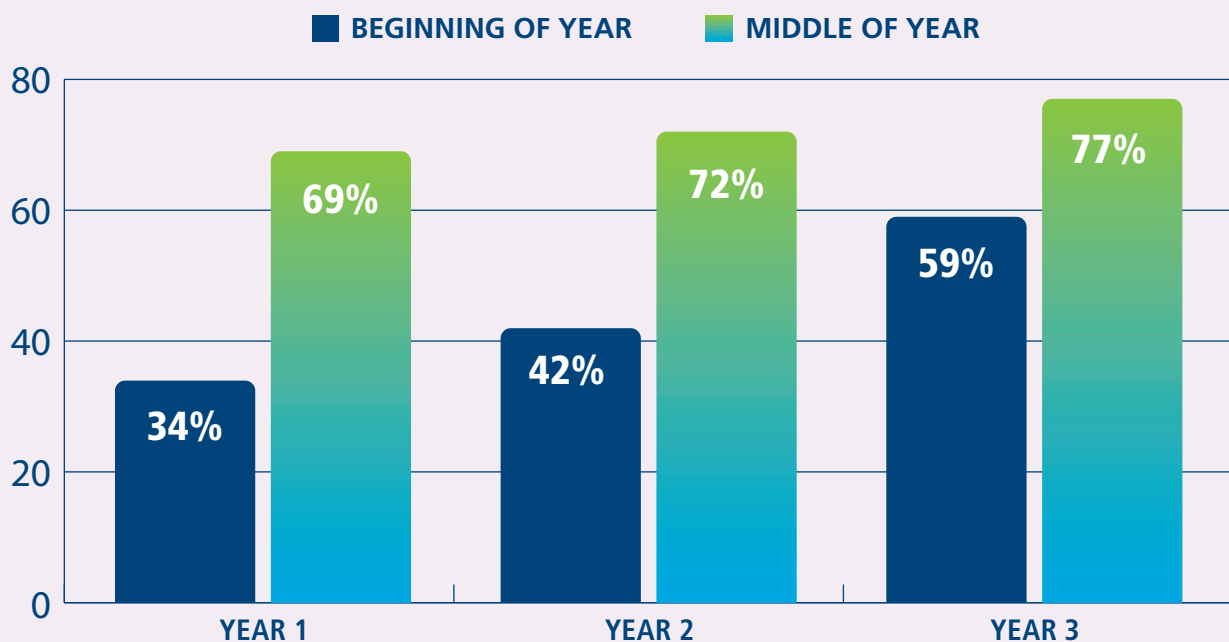
“Before Solution Tree, our data meetings were unfocused. Now they're concise, effective, and principals and teachers know exactly which students need help and where to get it,” reported Amanda. In middle and high school, algebra with lab was phased in to provide intervention time separate from regular instruction. Over time, this structured approach strengthened teacher collaboration, engagement, and clarity, turning a reactive environment into a proactive, thriving system.

RESULTS

After three years, Glens Falls has seen measurable improvements in reading. Students who participated in the phonics program showed significant growth, particularly in lower-income schools. Third-grade reading achievement grew steadily: Year 1, 34% began on grade level, rising to 69% above grade level by midyear; Year 2, 42% to 72%; Year 3, 59% to 77%.

Teacher collaboration and data-driven practices are now embedded in daily routines, and RTI/MTSS meetings are focused and actionable. The district has shifted from survival to a proactive culture, emphasizing student needs, instructional consistency, and equitable support.

THIRD-GRADE READING GROWTH: BEGINNING AND MIDYEAR



Start your success story



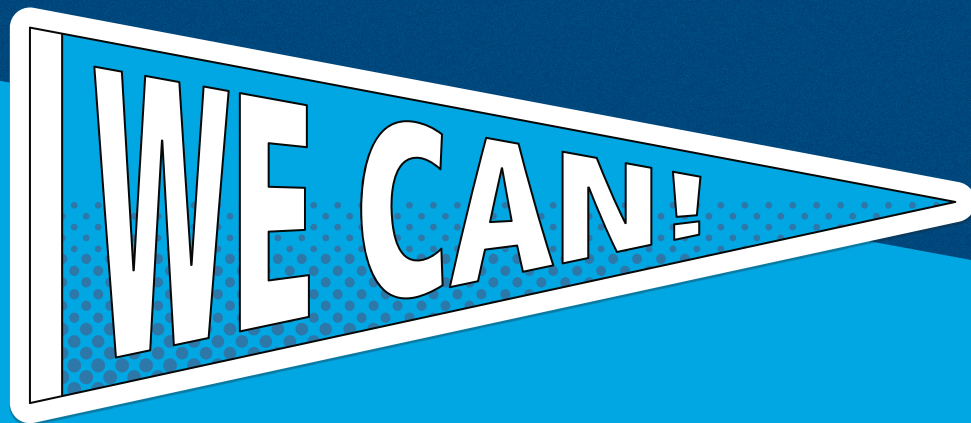
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Please note that all Evidence of Excellence stories, data, and personnel reflect the specific period of Solution Tree's active partnership with the school or district. Staffing and leadership roles may have changed since publication.