

Transforming Literacy Outcomes Together:

Strategic Tech Integration to Support the Science of Reading

Friday, March 20



Intros + What You'll Leave With

You'll leave today's session with:

- A practical 4-step Curriculum–Tech Alignment Method
- A real district implementation sequence
- A downloadable technology pilot guide

Today's Speakers:



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Quick Show of Hands:

How many of you are...

Rolling out or refining a new ELA curriculum?

Quick Show of Hands:

How many of you are...

Responsible for Tier 2 structures?

Quick Show of Hands:

How many of you are...

**Responsible for trying to reduce
teacher planning load?**

Michigan's Literacy Landscape

Across Michigan districts, leaders are navigating:

- New literacy legislation & accountability pressures
- Core curriculum shifts
- Expanded Tier 2 expectations
- Teacher capacity & planning load concerns
- Pressure to use technology meaningfully



What We Mean by “Science of Reading”

Evidence base explaining how students learn to read



Language Comprehension

Background Knowledge
facts, concepts, etc.

Vocabulary
breadth, precision, links, etc.

Language Structures
syntax, semantics, etc.

Verbal Reasoning
inference, metaphor, etc.

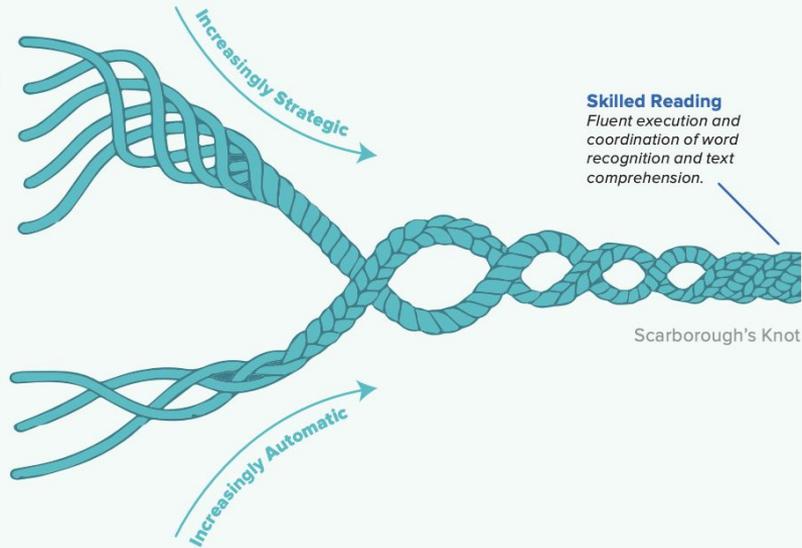
Literacy Knowledge
print concepts, genres, etc.

Word Recognition

Background Knowledge
facts, concepts, etc.

Vocabulary
breadth, precision, links, etc.

Language Structures
syntax, semantics, etc.



What our NWEA assessments revealed



Significant
foundational
skill gaps (K–3)



Inconsistent
phonics
instruction across
classrooms



Large % of
students below
30th percentile

Conclusion

Our curriculum & instruction were not sufficiently explicit.

The Sequence That Made Change Stick

1 Educator Lens

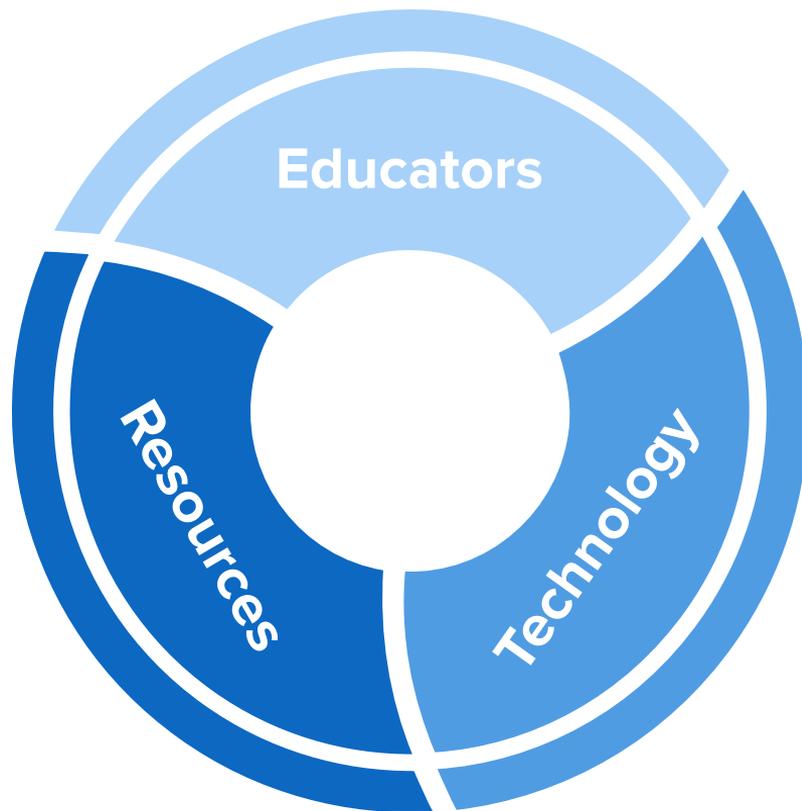
Build teacher knowledge & coaching infrastructure

2 Resource Lens

Align materials to the new instructional expectations

3 Technology Lens

Scale differentiation & precision once instruction was strong



Build Capacity First

Professional Learning Investments

8 LETRS-trained district facilitators

Structured K–3 training sequence

Embedded implementation coaching

Coaching Infrastructure:

25 building-based literacy coaches

2 district-level coaches

80% coaching / 20% intervention model

Leadership Principle:

Teacher knowledge precedes tool adoption.

Change Management in a Large District

Strategic Moves:

- Mandate core shifts (LETRS, curriculum)
- Offer optional high-value supplemental PD
- Provide ready-to-use resources
- Leverage early adopters

Result: Organic momentum & peer-driven adoption



Align Materials to Instruction

Bridge Resource Strategy:

Supplemental phonemic awareness & phonics supports

Differentiation tools aligned to SoR principles

Practical resources teachers could implement immediately

Optional PD to build early momentum

Curriculum Review & Adoption:

Reading League-aligned evaluation rubric

Multi-role district committee

10 vendors → 4 → 2 → 2-year pilot

Final selection: CKLA (K–5)

Leadership Principle:

Materials must reinforce the instructional shift — not compete with it.

Align Materials to Instruction

Instructional Integration (K–3)

Personalized pathways driven by NWEA MAP Growth

Biannual data refresh cycles

Teacher-assigned lessons aligned to CKLA units

Used during centers & Tier 2 blocks

Technology as Workflow Support

Reinforces Skills & Knowledge strands

Increases Tier 2 precision

Reduces teacher search & planning time

Maintains student engagement during independent work

Leadership Principle:

Technology should amplify strong instruction — not replace it.

A Practical Blueprint for Curriculum–Tech Alignment

Step 1: Start with the Educator Lens

- ✓ Clarify instructional expectations (SoR-aligned)
- ✓ Define what strong Tier 1 looks like
- ✓ Protect coaching structures
- ✓ Identify Tier 2 constraints (time, group size, staffing)

Step 2: Anchor to the Resource Lens

- ✓ Identify the exact curriculum unit & lesson
- ✓ Define the target skill or objective
- ✓ Clarify which students need reinforcement (and why)
- ✓ Avoid disconnected “extra practice”

Step 3: Apply the Technology Lens

- ✓ Select tools that reinforce current objectives
- ✓ Use assessment data to personalize
- ✓ Ensure tech reduces — not increases — planning load
- ✓ Define what evidence you will review (student growth + teacher efficiency)

What Alignment Looks Like in Practice in Utica Community Schools

Educator Lens in Action

- Teachers deeply trained in foundational skills
- Clear Tier 1 / Tier 2 expectations
- Coaches reinforcing instructional moves

Resource Lens in Action

- CKLA unit & lesson as the instructional anchor
- Skills and Knowledge strands explicitly taught
- Tier 2 priorities defined by lesson objective

Technology Lens in Action

- Assessment data informs personalization within eSpark
- Targeted practice via eSpark reinforces current objective
- Independent work stays aligned to instruction

A Leader's Decision Filter for Technology

Before adopting or expanding any literacy technology, ask:

1. Does this reinforce our current curriculum objectives?
2. Does it reduce teacher planning time?
3. Does it personalize without fragmenting instruction?
4. Does it produce actionable evidence — not just usage data?
5. Does it fit inside our existing instructional blocks?





Utica's eSpark Integration

Adaptive, student-centered ELA & Math practice

Adaptive learning paths and targeted, teacher-driven assignments aligned to district core curricula

Ensures equity and consistency across classrooms through data-driven differentiation at scale

Supports both struggling learners and gifted/high-flyers





Growth Outcomes

Consistent eSpark Users Achieved:

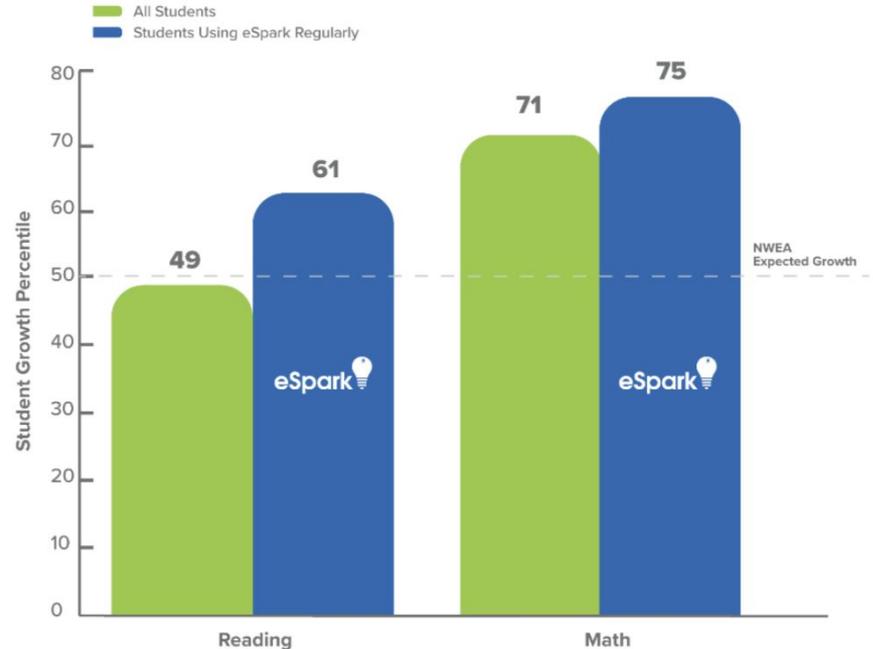
 **+10 percentile points** beyond expected growth (Reading)

 **+25 percentile points** beyond expected growth (Math)

Highest gains among students starting in the lowest tercile.

NWEA Growth by Subject (Spring 2024-25)

Students who consistently used eSpark grew faster in both reading and math, outperforming their peers by 12 percentile points in reading and 4 points in math on the NWEA MAP.



Common Missteps

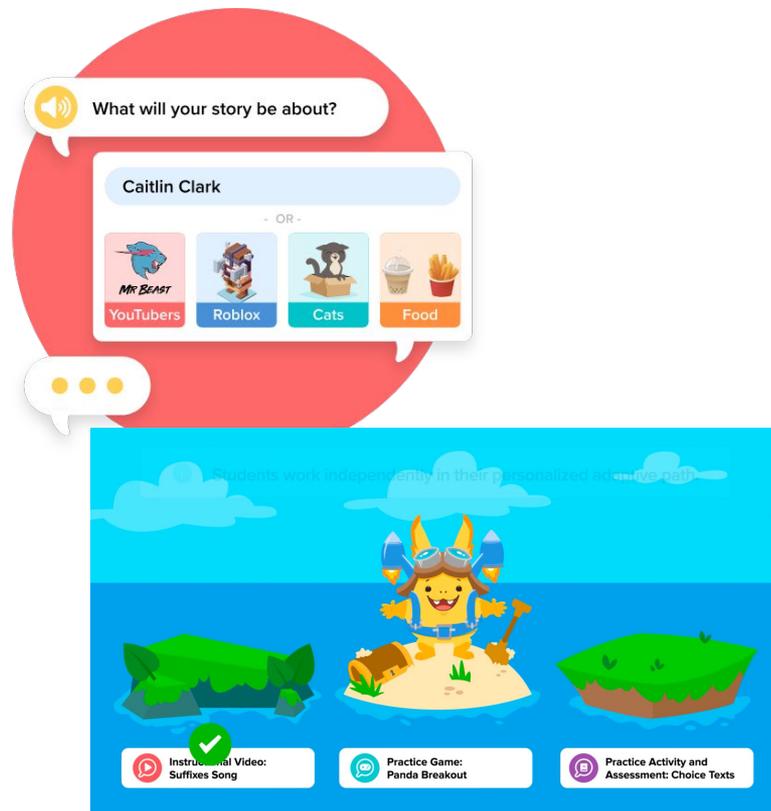


- ❌ **Introducing technology before instructional clarity**
- ❌ **Allowing tools to operate outside the core curriculum**
- ❌ **Measuring usage instead of impact**
- ❌ **Adding tools without removing others**
- ❌ **Overloading coaches with intervention duties**

Evaluate Alignment Through a Structured eSpark Pilot

eSpark 60-Day Pilot Structure

- ✓ Defined 60-day instructional window
- ✓ Anchored to your current curriculum (e.g., CKLA units)
- ✓ Personalized pathways driven by NWEA MAP Growth
- ✓ Teacher-assigned lessons aligned to current objectives
- ✓ Clear success criteria established in advance
 - Student growth
 - Tier 2 precision
 - Teacher planning efficiency



Download Your Pilot Guide



Questions?

