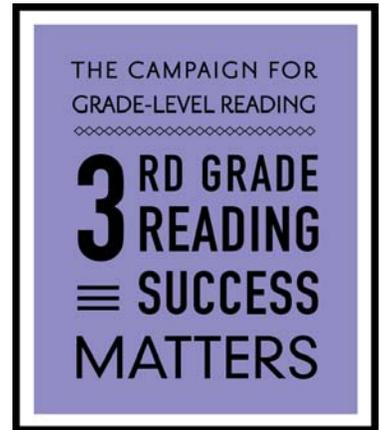


BRIGHT SPOTS

High Opportunity Schools



Humboldt Elementary, Dewey, AZ

Six years ago, Humboldt Elementary was inches away from becoming one of the district's "underperforming" schools. Thanks to a major initiative launched in 2005, student reading scores then shot up, and the school — despite poverty and large class sizes — is now among the highest performing in Arizona.

Principal Cole Young attributes much of the school's success to highly trained teachers and support staff, as well as better use of student data and guided reading. With professional development funds from Title 1, the state of Arizona, and the gaming industry, District reading coaches received intensive training in [LETRS](#), Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling. The Reading Coach shares her training with Humboldt's teachers, observing and collaborating with them in monthly grade-level meetings.

Keeping tabs on progress

Humboldt assesses each student within the first week of school, using [SRI](#) (Scholastic Reading Inventory) and [DIBELS](#) (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills) to measure phonemic awareness, alphabetic principle (phonics), fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. Teachers also look at student performance on [AIMS](#) (Arizona's Instrument to Measure Standards), disaggregating the data and "really drilling down" to develop appropriate reading groups. Equipped with these data, and Lexile measures, which match students with appropriate books and other reading materials, Humboldt staff identifies which students need intervention and at what level — Title 1 tutoring, reading lab interventions, while providing guided reading, or whole-group instruction in the classrooms. A color-coded chart in the reading lab lets teachers keep tabs on each child's progress.

"The days when we spent the first week on icebreakers are over," says Young. "We start teaching on Day One, and we never stop."

WHO THEY ARE

480 students, K–6th

84% White, 13% Hispanic

70% FARM

\$6,310/district pupil (\$7,051 state average)

11 years teaching experience on average

30 average class size

WHAT THEY ACHIEVE

2010 reading performance on AIMS (Arizona's Instrument to Measure Standards):

3rd grade 89%

4th grade 89%

2010 Blue Ribbon School

CONTACT

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Dewey, AZ

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Cole Young, Principal

Motivation takes many forms

Humboldt uses the district-wide Houghton Mifflin reading series, which includes guided reading tools and differentiated instruction for students at their individual levels. With the [guided reading](#) model, teachers help small groups of students learn to use reading strategies such as context clues, letter and sound knowledge, and syntax or word structure.

Students in need of significant intervention are asked to do “cold” reading of unfamiliar passages in the [Read Naturally](#) program in the Reading Lab. After practice and hearing the passage read aloud, students then do a “hot” reading of the same, now-familiar material, earning stickers as rewards for increased fluency and comprehension. Phonics for Readers helps students fill gaps in their phonics skills. Additional reading instruction includes:

- 90-minute reading blocks each day in classrooms, with whole-group and guided reading in aptitude groups.
- 30-minute Title 1 tutoring blocks.
- 30-minute blocks in the reading lab.

Reading Counts, a competitive leveled reading program designed to motivate students to read at their own level, is very popular at Humboldt. Small wonder, for Principal Young offers abundant rewards such as shaving his head and subjecting himself to a dunking booth if students meet reading goals. This year, if Humboldt students reach 35,000 points, Principal Young promises to eat insects.

INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES

- **Reading coaches trained in Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling ([LETRS](#))**
- **SRI, DIBELS, AIMS testing to identify skill levels**
- **Guided reading in small groups**
- **Read Naturally programs for “cold” and “hot” reads**
- **Reading Counts for motivation**