

# A Smarter Approach to ELA Intervention with GROW

How Prairie Hills Elementary School District 144 increased 4th Grade-level ELA proficiency by 3.5x in 12 weeks —without adding staff.



**Size: 2,500 Students** | **FRL: 95%** | **Minority Enrollment: 100%** | **Focus: 4th & 5th Grade ELA**

## Challenge

Prairie Hills Elementary School District 144 (PHESD) in Illinois faced an all too common challenge: significantly more students below grade level than could be reached through Tier 1 classroom instruction alone. In addition to the deep learning gaps, the district faced teaching shortages, leaving multiple schools short-staffed, with many classrooms led by permanent substitutes.

Recognizing the urgent need for targeted support amid staffing shortages, PHESD turned to GROW to provide small-group interventions and accelerate learning for struggling students.

## Solution

In fall 2024, PHESD launched a 12-week GROW program to provide targeted ELA support for 4th and 5th graders who had fallen behind. GROW tutors worked with students in small-group settings, focusing on acceleration strategies to close learning gaps, while classroom teachers concentrated on core instruction.

This approach allowed the district to expand intervention efforts without needing to bring on additional staff, ensuring more students received the support they needed to progress.

## Impact

Over the 12-week GROW program, PHESD students demonstrated significant gains in i-Ready ELA scores from BOY to MOY.

### 4th Grade Outcomes

- Initial state: 4% on grade level at BOY
- Grade-level proficiency: 17% (↑ 350%)
- Students 2+ grade levels behind (↓ 35%)
- Students 3+ grade levels behind (↓ 60%)

### 5th Grade Outcomes

- Initial state: 0% on grade level at BOY
- Students at/near grade level: 41% (↑ 130%)
- Students 2+ grade levels behind (↓ 28%)
- Students 3+ grade levels behind (↓ 75%)

### Student Confidence Gains

- 84% felt prepared for new topics
- 74% reported confidence about tests

These results highlight the impact of targeted small-group tutoring in closing learning gaps and boosting student confidence. Despite staffing challenges, PHESD's success with GROW demonstrates the power of scalable interventions to support student progress.