



## Pentucket Regional School District

### Location

Northern Essex County,  
MA

### District Type

Suburban

### Enrollment

2,224

### Employees

181

### Student Demographics

White/Non-Hispanic: 90.2%  
Asian/Pacific Islander: 1.2%  
Hispanic: 5.8%  
Black/Non-Hispanic: 0.4%  
Other: 2.4%

# Growth through Connections

## Advancing Literacy Scores By Connecting Phonemic Awareness and Phonics

With literacy scores in decline nationwide, Pentucket Regional School District beat the odds to increase elementary reading scores by implementing Heggerty district-wide and enhancing teacher knowledge of the Science of Reading.

### THE SITUATION *Literacy Scores in Decline*

In 2018, Assistant Superintendent Brent Conway and his team recognized a problem—reading scores were on the decline. The data revealed that students' phonemic awareness skills were not strong. A phonics program alone was not enough.

According to Conway, "It's not that we weren't teaching phonemic awareness, but it wasn't being done systematically across all classrooms in the same way. So we wanted something that was consistent."

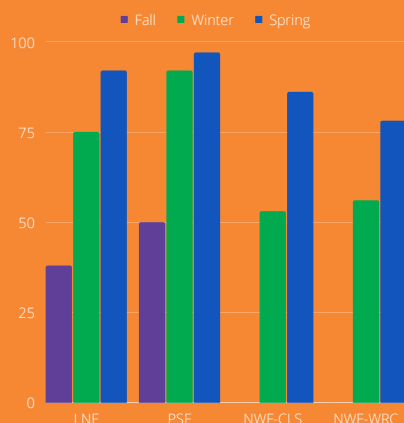
The Heggerty program was just what Pentucket was looking for: fast, engaging, and meant for the whole class.

### Why Phonemic Awareness?

Phonemic awareness (PA) is the ability to understand that spoken words are made up of individual sounds called phonemes, and it's one of the best early predictors for reading success. Kids who don't master phonemic awareness will inevitably struggle to learn to read.

## % of K Students Meeting/ Exceeding Benchmark '21-'22

DIBELS 8 results from one school within PRSD



**54% Increase**  
in Letter Naming Fluency

**47% Increase**  
in Phoneme  
Segmentation Fluency

**33% Increase**  
in Nonsense Word Fluency  
- Correct Letter Sounds

**22% Increase**  
in Nonsense Word Fluency  
- Words Read Correctly

## ABOUT HEGGERTY

Heggerty is the most trusted and effective phonemic awareness curriculum nationwide. For over 20-years, teachers have used Heggerty's curriculum and professional development resources to help kids acquire phonemic awareness skills in daily lessons of 12 minutes or less.

## THE ACTION *Understanding the Why*

Heggerty was rolled out to schools in Pentucket, including professional development for all teachers. The training not only helped teachers understand how to use Heggerty, but more importantly, it helped them understand the purpose of Heggerty and its role within broader literacy instruction.

Classrooms intentionally positioned their Heggerty lessons ahead of phonics instruction, as a daily oral warm-up, to help students make the connection between sounds and print.

This understanding of how and why Heggerty works was critical to Pentucket's success. Conway notes, "How to use Heggerty is simple. How to understand it, in the context of everything you do, that's where the training comes in."

## THE RESULTS *Knowledge is Power*

Armed with this new understanding, Pentucket went on to experience tremendous growth during an unstable time when most schools saw literacy scores declining.

Within their first year of implementation, 92% of Pentucket Kindergarten students passed the "at-risk" mark on the DIBELS Next assessment for phoneme segmentation fluency, far exceeding the 70% the district had reached in prior years.

The intentional connection between phonemic awareness and phonics instruction also enabled growth in word fluency metrics.

"Heggerty was really the big difference," says Conway.

**Learn how Heggerty's phonemic awareness curriculum is fast, effective, and fun at [Heggerty.org](https://Heggerty.org)**

To learn more about Heggerty, contact [Hello@Heggerty.org](mailto>Hello@Heggerty.org)