

Case study: Expand inclusive reading access with Sora



Westerville City School District | October 2025

THE CHALLENGE

Located in a populous suburb of Columbus, Ohio, Westerville City School District (WCSD) serves a large student population with varied learning needs. Ensuring flexible, equitable access to reading materials that motivate and support students across all instructional settings is a top priority.

“Like many districts, our student population has a wide range (of learning needs). Sora access is provided to all of our special education students in every instructional setting,” says Lindy Whitson, Special Education Coordinator. “Similar to all students within the state of Ohio, our students are working on phonological awareness, comprehension and encoding/decoding skills,” she adds, highlighting the importance of accessible resources.

THE SOLUTION: FLEXIBLE, STUDENT-CENTERED ACCESS IN SORA

After exploring multiple options, WCSD selected Sora as the best solution to fit student interests and instructional needs.

“We knew that many students benefited from accessing reading material through a variety of modalities and after exploring several options, we chose Sora,” says Whitson. “I appreciate that Sora has ebooks, audiobooks and read-along books, which promote reading at all ages and interest levels. I also appreciate that it can sync with their library card, which promotes more reading options,” she adds.

Importantly, Sora is also accessible across devices, on both district-issued Chromebooks and students’ personal devices, ensuring seamless integration into daily learning.

IMPLEMENTATION AND PROMOTION

WCSD introduced Sora to educators and families through a comprehensive communication strategy.

“Sora was introduced to teachers through email communications, staff meetings within their assigned buildings, as well as during larger professional development opportunities that district hosted,” Whitson explains. “A parent letter was created for families to be notified, as well as email communication and website information. During parent engagement events, this information was also shared.”

Students engage with Sora both independently and with teacher support. “Within Westerville City Schools, we initially obtained books that were an inherent part of our curriculum. We have also taken student requests that relate to (students’) schoolwork or projects.”

Furthermore, teachers play a key role in promoting Sora, helping students explore available titles and encouraging reading both in class and at home.

“Our teachers are very dedicated and student-centered,” says Whitson. “They actively promote reading in all aspects, which includes referencing Sora and making that available to them both at school and at home. They appreciate the multiple modalities.”



Lindy Whitson
Special Education Coordinator
Westerville City School District

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THE IMPACT

Since implementing Sora, WCSD educators have observed a spike in student enthusiasm for reading.

"I have noticed an increase in excitement around reading, as well as more curiosity," Whitson says. "I enjoy looking at our data based on usage. It is very exciting to see after hosting conversations about Sora and how it can be used in the classroom – then immediately seeing the usage of Sora drastically increase."

The platform has also strengthened the district's broader efforts toward access and inclusion. "Westerville has always made strides in ensuring our students have access to what they need. Making Sora available has only added to those resources available to our families and students," Whitson affirms.

Students and educators alike are energized by the possibilities. "They are always very excited about this tool and especially for teachers being able to assign books and curate their own collections that align with instruction," Whitson shares.

ADVICE FOR OTHER DISTRICTS

Whitson encourages other districts to take a global view of literacy and consider how tools like Sora can support their students.

"I would encourage schools to explore how reading is taught globally and to examine what resources are available to determine how a tool like Sora could be used for their student populations."

WHY IT WORKS: KEY TAKEAWAYS

- **Multimodal access meets diverse needs:** Ebooks, audiobooks, and read-alongs.
- **Inclusive availability:** Access for students receiving special education services.
- **Teacher-driven promotion:** Through PD, staff meetings, and family communications.
- **Student-centered curation:** Collections tied to curriculum and student requests.
- **Expanded choice:** Optional public library card sync gives students access to more reading options.

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