



## Ambridge Area School District

**Profile:** Ambridge Area School District is located just west of Pittsburgh, along the Ohio River in a previously booming steel town. The town of Ambridge possesses the highest crime rate in Beaver county. Serving approximately 2,600 students, the district is composed of 20% black and brown children. 50% are impoverished, as evidenced by the fact the entire district receives free and reduced lunches. The special education population is over 16%, a number above the state average.

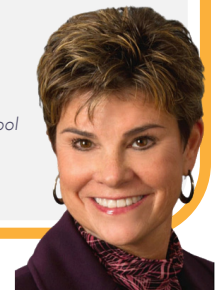
Three elementary schools serve the younger population. State assessment scores reflected 64% third grade reading proficiency in 2017. In 2018, this number dropped to 55%. In Ambridge’s elementary school (with the largest population of black and brown children and those in poverty), the proficiency number fell to 39% with only 2.4% scoring in the advanced range. Importantly, the eighth grade reading proficiency rate was 58%, suggesting the urgency of intervention at the primary level.

**Implementation:** Beginning with a literacy scan, a Literacy Outcomes Specialist worked with teachers and district and site administrators to determine what was in place and what could be improved. Together, we customized a professional teaching development for each school site and grade level. Part of this entailed instructing teachers in the use of a software program to quickly and efficiently assess students, guiding teachers to specific skills and lessons for each child. This process reduced the arduous task of analyzing data so teachers could focus on instruction.

In the first year of implementation (2018-2019), professional development and classroom support was provided to kindergarten and first grade teachers. The second grade portion was added in 2019-2020 and third grade teachers were brought in the final year (2020-2021). Through the A2i Professional Support System (PSS), a highly effective and unprecedented instructional environment was created by helping Ambridge teachers learn to effectively use centers, provide child-managed and teacher-managed instructional time (part of the research based discovery) and pursue activities differentiated for every child based on their individual needs.

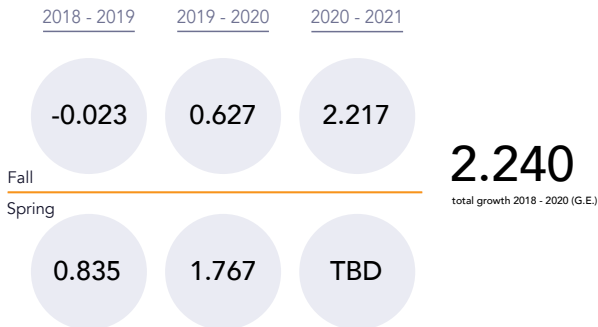
“Classrooms went from rows of desks to work areas and centers as students became more involved and more enthusiastic. Not only did the kids love collaborating, they enjoyed helping one another and their newfound independence. Now more engaged, the student became more responsible and self-motivated than we ever imagined.”

*Dr. Jo Welter, Ambridge Area School District Superintendent (retired)*



# A2i Professional Support System is CLOSING the Achievement Gap in Ambridge

## 2018 Kindergarten Cohort G.E. Averages



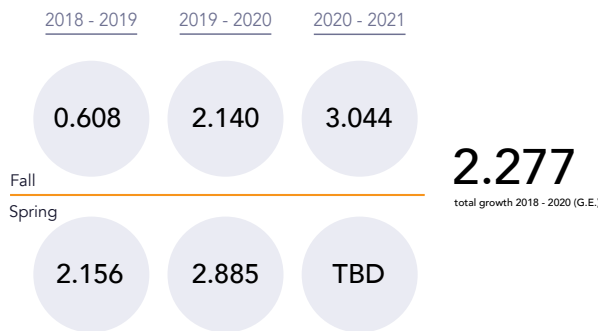
In the first year of implementation, kindergarten classrooms averaged nine months of grade equivalent growth and 1.2 years of age equivalent growth. This means their decoding skills were on track.

First grade classrooms averaged approximately 1 year and 5 months of grade equivalent growth and 2 years, 4 months of age equivalent growth.

From September to March, 2020, (year 2) when schools had to close due to COVID-19, kindergarten classrooms averaged 8 months worth of grade equivalent growth and 1.27 years of age equivalent growth. First grade classrooms averaged 1.3 years in grade equivalent growth and 1 year, 11 months in age equivalent growth.

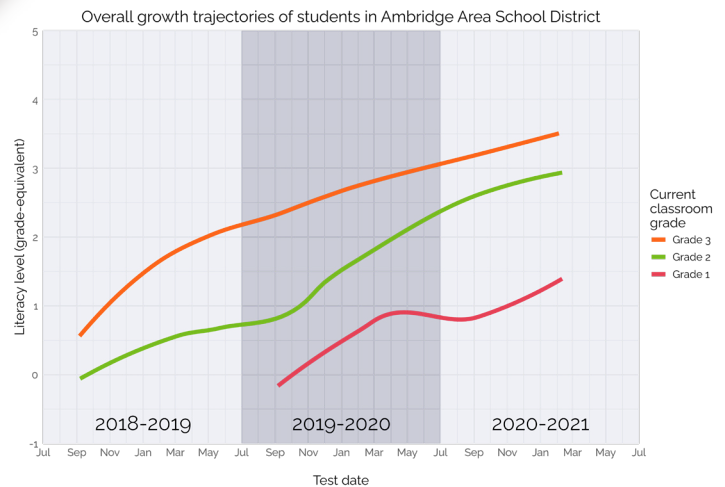
Second grade progress averaged 7 months of grade equivalent growth and 8.4 months of age equivalent growth.

## 2018 1st Grade Cohort G.E. Averages



## Fidelity to A2i Minute Recommendations Supports Student Engagement

With help from the A2i software platform, minute recommendations for instruction and support from their Literacy Outcomes Specialist, teachers were able to implement small group direct instruction, which proved to be much more effective than whole class instruction. Routines were put in place immediately and consistent from day to day. As a result, students took their responsibilities seriously. As the implementation progressed, students continued working independently and in small groups with little teacher guidance. According to Ambridge staff, the kids were so happy and outcomes were so impressive, second and third grade teachers began to contact kindergarten and first grade teachers to implement these routines into their classrooms before they officially begin their implementation of A2i PSS.



**Large gains in students' Grade Equivalencies made before the March 2020 shutdown mitigated the effects of the "Covid-19 Slide" for current 2nd and 3rd grade students.**