Success for All Foundation

How Texhoma Elementary Rebuilt Reading Success with the Complete SFA Model

A small rural school recommitted to the full system—and built the routines, support, and shared responsibility to make it work.

School: Texhoma Elementary School
Location: Texhoma, Texas
School Type: Rural, Title I
Recognition: Dr. Robert Slavin Award, 2025
SFA Implementation: Began in 1997; recommitted to full implementation in 2017

BY THE NUMBERS

THE TEXHOMA STORY

100%
of students passed the STAAR Reading & Language Arts exam

10
teachers

37%
English learners

2017
After being identified as an "Improvement Required" school, Texhoma recommits to the complete SFA model.

Why is reading growth in 2nd and 3rd grade so important?

Reading proficiency in elementary school is a critical skill for success in later schooling and life. Research consistently shows that students who are not reading proficiently by the end of 3rd grade are significantly more likely to struggle academically and are at much greater risk of dropping out of high school. **Helping more students reach proficiency by 3rd grade is one of the most reliable predictors of long-term academic success.**



THE CHALLENGE

Over time, parts of the model had fallen away.

Texhoma Elementary first implemented Success for All in 1997. Over the next two decades, however, the school moved away from some of the structures and routines that are designed to make the model work as one coordinated system.

By 2017, Texhoma had been identified as an "Improvement Required" school because of low student achievement.

School leaders did not respond by adding another literacy initiative. They made a different decision: return to the complete Success for All model and implement it with greater consistency.

Working closely with SFA Coach Angela Davis, Texhoma rebuilt the routines, instructional practices, and schoolwide structures that had faded over time.

"Our coach helped us get back to being very meticulous with the SFA structure and routines."

> "And from then on, we went back up to an A-rated school in Texas."
> **— Missy Cartwright, Principal, Reading Facilitator, and Curriculum Director**

THE SOLUTION

Making a complete schoolwide system work with a team of 10.

Texhoma is a small school. That meant the team could not simply copy the staffing structures of a larger campus.

They had to organize their people and schedule deliberately around what students needed.

GROUP STUDENTS BY WHAT THEY'RE READY TO LEARN

During Success for All's 90-minute reading block, students are grouped by their current level of reading mastery rather than simply by grade.

Because reading happens at the same time across the school, students can move across grade levels to receive instruction matched more closely to what they are ready to learn next.

For a school with only 10 teachers, making those groups work requires careful planning. But the structure allows Texhoma to use the staff it has strategically, keep reading groups focused, and distribute responsibility for student progress across the school.

> "Teachers aren't responsible for the success of a grade level—they're responsible for the success of their kids."
> **— Missy Cartwright**

BUILD EXTRA SUPPORT INTO THE DAY

Texhoma also had to answer a practical question: how could students receive tutoring without being pulled away from other instruction?

The school built a 30-minute Intervention Time into the daily schedule so students who need more support can receive tutoring without missing class.

Rather than operating as a separate program, additional reading support fits into the same instructional system students experience during the rest of the day.

BUILD EXTRA SUPPORT INTO THE DAY

Texhoma intentionally placed the reading block immediately before recess.

When teacher aides take students outside, teachers can talk while the lesson is still fresh—asking questions, comparing strategies, and working through instructional challenges together.

As Cartwright explains:

> "You don't usually remember a question at 4:00 p.m., but right after, you might say, 'Hey, I had this come up today. What do you typically do to teach this?'"

At Texhoma, implementation is not something teachers are expected to figure out alone. The schedule itself creates time for the team to keep getting better together.

SUPPORTING ENGLISH LEARNERS

Predictable routines leave more room to focus on learning.

Thirty-seven percent of Texhoma's students are English learners.

School leaders noticed that the consistency of SFA's routines helped those students know what to expect during instruction. Instead of spending cognitive energy figuring out what was going to happen next, students could focus more fully on the reading, language, and thinking in front of them.

The structure also gives students regular opportunities to practice the language skills measured by the Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS): speaking, listening, reading, and writing.

> "With SFA's visuals and the routines, students who are learning English don't have to worry about what's coming next. They only have to focus on the educational component."
> **— Missy Cartwright**

Students regularly speak using sentence stems, listen to peers, write responses, and read in English—making language practice part of everyday instruction rather than a separate experience.

THE RESULTS

The effects of consistent, schoolwide implementation showed up across the school.

Eight years after Texhoma recommitted to the complete SFA model, the school reported results that extended well beyond a single reading measure.



of students passed the STAAR Reading & Language Arts exam



average daily attendance



participation in parent-teacher conferences



discipline referrals during the 90-minute reading block

In 2025, Texhoma also received the Dr. Robert Slavin Award, recognizing schools that exemplify the kind of aligned systems, leadership, instruction, and sustained student growth Success for All was designed to support.

For a school that had been rated "Improvement Required" in 2017, the change was significant.

But the numbers tell only part of the story.

WHAT CHANGED FOR TEACHERS

Strong instruction became something the whole team could share.

As Success for All became more consistent across Texhoma, teachers developed a common set of instructional routines and expectations.

That consistency mattered in a small school where educators may need to work flexibly across grade levels and reading groups. Teachers understood the instructional process, students knew the routines, and colleagues had a common language for talking about teaching and learning.

The result was not only greater consistency for students. It also gave teachers a shared foundation they could continue building on together.

"SFA doesn't just bring children further along in their learning."

> "It also gives teachers—regardless of where they are in their career or what subject they teach—a solid instructional foundation to become the best educator they can be."
> — **Missy Cartwright**

WHAT TEXHOMA SHOWS

Fidelity is not about following rules. It is about making the pieces work together.

Texhoma had used Success for All for years before recommitting to the complete model in 2017. Its experience demonstrates the difference between having individual elements in place and building a coordinated system in which instruction, regrouping, tutoring, collaboration, and coaching reinforce one another.

Small schools can build significant capacity by organizing differently.

A team of 10 cannot solve staffing challenges by simply adding more people. Texhoma used common instructional time, cross-grade regrouping, built-in intervention, and protected collaboration to make better use of the people and time it had.

Consistency supports adults and students.

Shared routines give teachers a common instructional foundation. For students—including students learning English—predictability can make it easier to focus attention on reading, discussion, writing, and learning.

Texhoma's story is not about finding one strategy that changed everything.

It is about what became possible when a school brought the pieces back together and committed to making the complete system work.

BRING SFA TO YOUR SCHOOL

SFA works in schools of all kinds. See how it can work in yours.

Success for All brings evidence-based literacy instruction together with the coaching, data, tutoring, and schoolwide structures that help strong teaching become consistent practice.

Ready to transform your school?
Visit www.successforall.org or email us at sfainfo@successforall.org.

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