



**District:** Newton Conover City Schools  
**Location:** Newton, NC  
**Enrollment:** 3,140

## OVERVIEW

Newton Conover High School serves 969 students in grades 9-12 in Newton, North Carolina. Over half the students are Caucasian (51%), with a substantial portion of black (14%) and Hispanics (23%). More than half the students are eligible for subsidized lunch (62.35%). The North Carolina State Improvement Project (NCSIP) Coordinator helps improve instruction for students with disabilities. The NCSIP coordinator and another teacher implemented *Fusion Reading* improve the literacy skills of 20 ninth grade students that were reading at a second to third grade level.

*“Over the course of many years, I have used McGraw-Hill Education for intervention programs in reading and math. I appreciate that they are research based but most importantly, I have seen students be successful using them.”*

*- Cynde Gilmore, NC SIP Coordinator*

## IMPLEMENTATION

*Fusion Reading* was implemented in the Fall of the 2012–2013 school year at Newton Conover High School. They have two classes that offer *Fusion Reading*; one as part of a year-long English class and one as an elective class.

“With all of our high school students, we want to be college ready or work force ready. Students who are struggling readers will have difficulty meeting those goals, especially with 21st century skill requirements,” explained Rebecca Solarczyk, the high school teacher implementing the program.



According to the NCSIP Coordinator Cynde Gilmore, the district is adjusting to budget cuts and trying to do more with less. They are consolidating positions and focusing on science (5th and 8th), reading proficiency in K-5, and the proficiency of the black male population.

“After a presentation at an NCSIP network regional meeting, we began exploring *Fusion Reading* because of its text that would engage adolescent students, along with the specific strategy development that students could use in their other classes,” said Gilmore.

After identifying students (middle school and high school) that needed the instruction, highly-qualified teachers with certifications, and the willingness to learn *Fusion Reading*, were selected to teach the classes.

## REACTION

“You will have to sell the program and convince the students that it is going to pay off for them. Additionally, you must be willing to spend the time on ConnectED and be self-motivated as a teacher in order to learn all the parts of *Fusion Reading*,” said Solarczyk.

Once the students are convinced that they can learn, they find it quite easy to work through the text, as it relates their age level and interests.

“We have seen ongoing progress with all our students in *Fusion Reading* and watched this success carry over into their other content classes and testing,” said Solarczyk.

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## RESULTS

The students that began in *Fusion Reading* in September 2012, and completed the program in January 2014, have an average growth of 3.8 years on the Test of Silent Reading Contextual Fluency (TOSCRF).

“At the end of last year, we were sharing the TOSCRF data with the students individually so that they could see their progress. After seeing his score, one student commented, ‘Do you have one of these Fusion things for Algebra too?’” exclaimed Solarczyk. “Another student was so excited about his score that he asked if he could take a picture and show it to his mom. His attitude about school has also changed tremendously and he’s making plans for the future that he wasn’t making before.”

## ABOUT FUSION READING

- **Explicit:** Provides instruction using age-appropriate leveled text to effectively teach reading skills and strategies and engage students
- **Proven:** Increases student engagement and reading outcomes supporting 1 ½ year to 2 years of growth in one year of instruction
- **Flexible:** Adapts to various instructional settings and easily adapts to multiple block schedule formats
- **Research Based:** Developed and field tested through an IES grant at the University of Kansas Center for Research on Learning
- Engages students with reading materials relevant to their lives
- Invigorates students with skills and strategies they need to become successful readers
- Empowers students to move to the academic classroom with confidence