



# Sustaining a Culture of Reading at Perry Elementary

Literacy is everyone’s business in Perry, an agricultural community in western New York State. When kids go to the grocery store, the clerk may ask about their reading activity. Members of the Rotary Club volunteer at the school and spread the literacy message throughout the town. Parents are involved.

“We go out of our way to ensure that everyone knows our literacy goals,” explained Stephen Haynes, the elementary school principal, “and we revisit the urgency of reading on a daily basis.” myON expands the school’s capacity to get more books into the hands of students and families, and engagement levels during the school’s first year with myON were impressive.

Elementary students are required to read independently for 30 minutes at school and another 30 minutes at home each day. Each 30-minute segment is broken into two 15-minute “steps.” Sharing this terminology community-wide, along with the goals, sustains Perry’s culture of reading. It’s easy for adults to reinforce the message with kids simply by asking, “Did you get your steps in today?”

Perry uses the Daily 5 framework for structured literacy time at school. Students can choose myON for two authentic

independent reading activities — “listening to reading” (by turning on the optional audio) and “reading to self.” They enjoy the high-interest books with engaging graphics and stories, Haynes said, and “the great read-aloud clarity” is a definite plus.

Students also read with myON at home all year long. With no budget for summer school, it’s especially important that they continue reading during summer break. The Perry outreach team works hard to ensure family engagement as they adapt to the community’s shifting socioeconomic and cultural demographics. Regular communication from the principal and opportunities for teaching staff to demonstrate and model myON for parents are key.

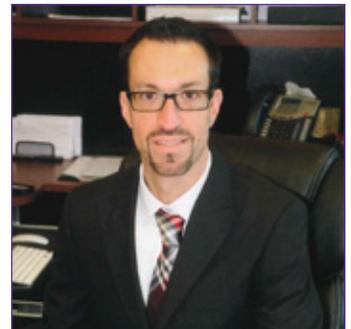
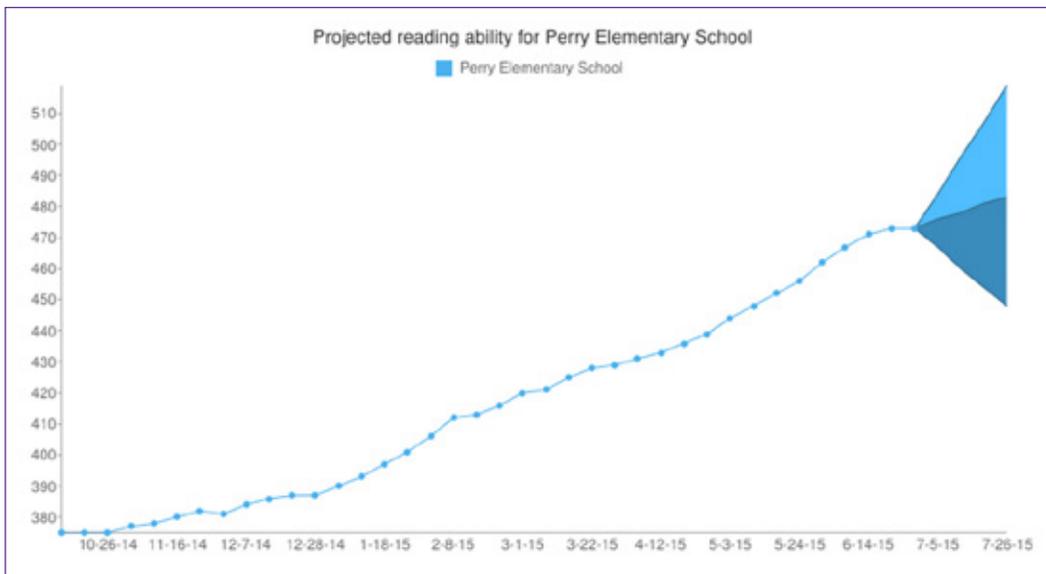
A combination of general fund dollars and parent organization support pays for the school’s myON subscription for PK-Grade 6. Haynes is working to increase utilization by students, parents and staff next year, further increasing their ROI. But their real bottom line is finding what Haynes calls “a progressive solution” to providing the right literacy resources for their students. “We live in an electronic age,” he said. “Putting electronic texts in the hands of our kids is essential.”

July 1, 2014  
through  
June 30, 2015

**20,275**  
books opened

**10,936**  
books read

**2,189**  
hours spent reading



**Stephen Haynes**  
Perry Elementary Principal  
Perry, NY • July 2015