

Enhancing Literacy Through Innovation: The Sound Wall Project at Eliot Battle Elementary School

Background/research/situation analysis For over 30 years, the Assistance League of Mid-Missouri's Links to Learning grant program has provided more than \$1.5 million to fund innovative classroom projects across Columbia Public Schools (CPS). In 2024, the program awarded 201 grants, totaling over \$139,000 in support of creative teaching ideas that enhance student learning. One such innovative project is underway in Brittany Baddings' special education classroom at Eliot Battle Elementary School. Baddings introduced a sound wall equipped with recordable buttons to promote phonemic awareness, an essential component of literacy education. This multisensory approach allows students to hear, see, and feel phonetic sounds, supporting diverse learning styles and increasing engagement. Research into literacy best practices reveals that early phonemic awareness is critical for reading success. Baddings' project aligns with this research, ensuring that students receive hands-on, immersive learning experiences that foster deeper understanding and long-term retention.

Goal To share with our target audience how the new sound wall enhances student engagement and improves phonemic awareness in early literacy education through innovative, multisensory teaching tools. Increase understanding of and engagement with phonemic awareness practices in literacy instruction while showcasing the impact of the Links to Learning grant program.

Objective **Share the Story (Create Awareness)** The video highlights how Baddings' innovative use of recordable sound buttons has transformed her classroom's sound wall into an interactive, multisensory learning tool. Students engage with the wall by listening to phonetic sounds, feeling how their mouths form those sounds, and interacting directly with the materials. This story underscores the power of the Links to Learning grant program in supporting creative educational initiatives. By sharing this video across multiple platforms, CPS will inspire educators, celebrate community partnerships, and highlight the transformative impact of innovative teaching.

Key Messages

1. **Innovative Learning Tools:** Creative, multisensory strategies like the sound wall promote deeper engagement and understanding in literacy education.
2. **Community Impact:** The Links to Learning grant program empowers educators to innovate, enhancing the educational experience for CPS students.
3. **Increased Engagement:** Interactive tools, such as recordable sound

buttons, create memorable, effective learning experiences that foster student participation and growth. Strategies 1. Digital Storytelling: Produce high-quality video content including interviews with students and teachers that seamlessly blends event coverage with personal testimonials, ensuring the story is both engaging and informative. 2. Multi-Channel Distribution: Air the video on CPS-TV and promote it through internal newsletters and encourage attending schools to share the video on owned social media channels to maximize reach. 3. Engagement: Using the CPS-TV distribution platform, capture viewership information. Evaluation Since airing on January 15, 2025, the viewing audience has watched the story 513 of times. Additionally, it has been viewed 102 more times since on-demand viewing became available. The video was also shared on the Sharing the Gold internal newsletter.