



SUCCESS STORIES

EDUCATORS, STUDENTS, & FAMILIES SHARE THEIR READING SUCCESS!

Struggling Reader to Confident Student



“Reading is one of my favorite things to do.”

Eric
Middle School
West Covina, CA

Picture a student who starts middle school as a beginning reader—and hating reading. Can you imagine that same student 17 months later and saying, “Reading is one of my favorite things to do,” and achieving an on-level 8th-grade reading score? Eric is one student whose life had a serious turnaround during his time in *System 44*.

Before middle school, Eric had a chaotic, troubled life in Arizona. “Being separated from both parents because of drugs, alcohol, and illness is hard, but not being able to read and having a learning disability is even worse,” Eric explained in a personal essay.

Eric came to California to live with his grandmother, and when he entered middle school he was placed in the *System 44* program as a beginning reader. “He seemed easily discouraged by his struggles with both writing and reading,” his teacher Brooks Atherton remembers. “Before gaining reading skills, I had no confidence,” Eric writes.

Despite his tough beginnings, Eric’s steady progress began to reveal a brighter future. Between August of 2009 and January of 2011, Eric achieved phenomenal growth. “He has grown an incredible 880 Lexile points—far more than any other student in my school and, as far as I am aware, in my entire school district,” explains Brooks.

The payoffs for Eric’s efforts are easy to see in his work, such as five-paragraph essays with well-argued ideas and complex sentences. However, the personal payoffs are even more meaningful. His grandmother says that he handles difficulties with confidence now. He earns higher grades. Reading success has translated into academic and personal success. “I read to lean and love it,” writes Eric.

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