

Letters are coming alive in some Boise elementary schools



BOISE, Idaho (KBOI) —

Imagine seeing animals jump from the page, and into your classroom. That's what some Boise elementary students get to experience through the [Letters Alive](#) program. "The 3D animation in letters alive captures my student's attention like nothing I've ever experienced before," said Melissa Ball, a kindergarten teacher at Morley Nelson Elementary school.

Using the technology of augmented reality, students get to not only see the picture of "F for Frog", but see a 3D frog jump and ribbit in the projector screen in front of them. "They're eager and excited," Ball said. "It's time to go to recess and they're like, 'Can we learn another letter? We want to know what the next letter is!'"

The program uses cards that trigger a 3D animation, combining both sounds and sights to help students enjoy learning. But children aren't just learning letters either--they're being taught colors, verbs and full sentences, too. Using the letter cards, students can spell out full questions like "can the wolf run," and see the wolf shake his head yes and run across the screen. They can also spell out "the frog is red" and have the amphibian morph into the red shade before their eyes. The program is especially helpful for ESL students---those learning English as their second language.

"When those letters come alive on screen it doesn't matter if you speak Spanish, if you speak English, or if you speak Swahili," Ball said. "That powerful visual just breaks straight through that language barrier."

This is the first year Boise Public Schools has used the Letters Alive program, and right now, it's only being offered in Title 1 elementary schools. But Ball fully believes the animations, bring reading to life in a way she's never seen before in her years of teaching. "We're building sentences to the point where we've never had in kindergarten," she said.