



READS FOR SUMMER LEARNING REPORT

Legislative Report

Abstract

READS for Summer Learning (READS) is a program designed to counter summer learning loss in reading comprehension in low-income elementary students. The mission of READS is to improve reading comprehension by fostering children's engagement with books over the summer. Our five-year i3 research and scale-up plan began with a pilot year in the Durham Public Schools (North Carolina) in which we investigated different versions of the program to assess its effectiveness based on varying program elements and target population. Over the course of five years, we worked in 7 school districts and conducted 3 single year studies and one longitudinal study. Our evidence indicates that students who participate in READS tend to experience long-term reading comprehension gains. With program costs starting as low as \$125 per student, READS is a cost-effective summer learning intervention.

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Follow us on Twitter: @HarvardREADS

1 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

The purpose of this report is to fulfil the requirements of

PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITIES IN SCHOOLS LEARNING INITIATIVE

SECTION 8.17.(a) The purpose of the Harvard University Reads for Summer Learning Initiative, which is conducted in concert with Communities In Schools of North Carolina, Inc. (CISNC), is to help at risk children in grades two through four read at grade level by the fourth grade and to maintain their reading competency. Students who are enrolled in this initiative shall be exempt from mandatory retention requirements set out in G.S. 115C 83.7 and G.S. 115C 238.29F. Any student participating in this initiative and in need of more intensive intervention shall, however, be placed in a summer reading program as determined by the local school administrative unit and as approved by the child's parent or guardian.

SECTION 8.17.(b) CISNC shall report to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee on the initiative by November 1, 2015. This report shall include reading competency outcome data for all participating students.

SECTION 8.17.(c) Subsection (a) of this section expires at the end of the 2014 2015 school year.

2 READS HISTORY & MISSION

READS for Summer Learning is a research-based summer intervention developed by Dr. James Kim from the Harvard Graduate School of Education. READS stands for Reading Enhances Achievement During the Summer. The mission of READS is to improve reading comprehension by fostering children's engagement with books over the summer. READS is an evidence-based summer reading intervention for second through fifth grade students attending high poverty elementary schools.

READS is supported by over 10 years of research beginning with the first study conducted in Virginia in 2001. Studies have also been conducted in California and Boston. Key elements of the READS program are still visible today at the Virginia site.

The research principles that guide the READS program are that most high poverty students experience summer reading loss because they do not have access to books over the summer. Research on student engagement and motivation suggests that students will not read materials that are too hard and not interesting. Lastly, research suggests that when learning a new skill or behavior, it is important to have a scaffolding tool to encourage the desired behaviors.

READS has three core components, or the ABCs of the program design.



A – Access to a wide variety of high-quality narrative and informational books, across many genres and areas of high interest.



B – Books that are matched to students' individual reading levels and interests.



C – Comprehension activities that help establish a comprehension routine that students use at home during the summer. READS has integrated these comprehension activities in 3 settings: 6 teacher-directed READS lessons, 1 after-school family literacy event, and at home book-based comprehension activities that students complete over the summer.

3 READS: AN I3 2010 VALIDATION GRANT RECIPIENT

In 2010, READS for Summer Learning was awarded 15 million dollars, through a highly competitive grant process that was initiated by Communities In Schools of North Carolina, Durham Public Schools, and Harvard Graduate School of Education.

The monies awarded allowed for a series of random control trials (RCTs) using the READS program to be implemented in North Carolina. The RCTs were designed to develop and scale an effective summer literacy program.

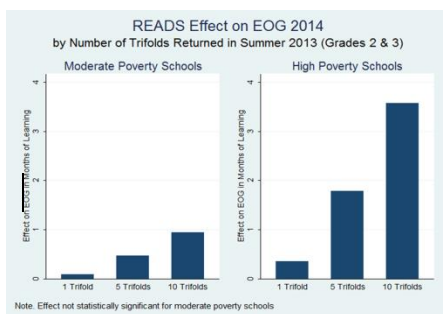
- Durham County Public Schools & CIS of Durham 2010-2015
- Cumberland County Public Schools & CIS of Cumberland 2011-2015
- Robeson County Public Schools & CIS of Robeson 2011-2015
- Randolph County Public Schools and Asheboro Schools Districts & CIS of Randolph County 2012-2015
- Wake County Public Schools & CIS of Wake 2012-2015
- New Hanover County Public Schools & CIS of Cape Fear 2012-2015

Over the course of the grant, READS has worked in 7 school districts, and served

- 70 elementary schools
- 979 teachers in second through fourth grade
- 9419 students in second through fourth grade
- 160 READS family night events have occurred. These events have reached 3,224 families.
- 94,190 books have been added to students' home libraries.

4 THE EFFECTS OF READS ON READING COMPREHENSION

READS uses a number of measures to evaluate the effect of READS on reading comprehension. The first measure is the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS). READS administers the ITBS twice a year, in the spring as a pre-test, and in the fall as a post-test.



During the 2013-2014 READS longitudinal study, students in second grade and third grade attending 59 elementary schools in NC were randomly assigned to receive one year or two years of the READS program.

Using the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) the test that READS uses to measure year to year growth and the North Carolina End of Grade Assessment scores one year later, found that students who completed more of the READS comprehension activities experienced larger and sustained reading comprehension gains one year later, compared to their peers not participating in READS. For students attending high

poverty schools, and completing the 10 tri-folds over the summer, the gains experienced were the equivalent of 3.5 additional months of learning!

READS will need to wait until the EOG scores from 2015-2016 school year to be released before speaking about the program's effectiveness in the Year 5 study cohort. However, using the EOG scores for the second and third graders participating in the Year 3 study, READS found that students attending high poverty schools who completed all 10 reading comprehension activities gained almost four additional months of learning. Not only does READS improve student reading comprehension, the effects are evident 9 months later!

5 SECONDARY READS EFFECTS

In addition to reading comprehension, we see effects of the program on levels of family engagement, completion of the summer reading comprehension activities, and overall book reading behaviors.

- 625 families in North Carolina attended a READS family night event during the 2014-2015 school year.
- Families who attend a READS Family Night event have students who read more READS books and complete more READS tri-folds than students of families who do not attend. (4.7 tri-folds completed compared to 2.3 tri-folds completed)
- 890 READS students who participated during the 2014-2015 school year returned at least 1 tri-fold this past summer. These students read 5172 books and tri-folds this past summer.

6 RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

Using the information from the past five years, READS recommends

Examination of education-related funding streams including state, federal, and local that could work together to support the continuation of the READS program. This funding could support the efforts of intermediary organizations, LEAs, or elementary schools directly to:

- Implement the READS program in high poverty elementary schools;
- Serve students beginning in the third grade;
- Provide the program for two consecutive years (third and fourth grade); and
- Conduct evaluations of the READS program to ensure that the program is helping to address the state's efforts to increase grade level reading proficiency.

In summary, READS is more than a free summer book program. The core components of the READS for Summer Learning program are research based and intentionally designed to address the contributing factors to summer learning loss, with the goal of fostering engagement and improving reading comprehension for high-poverty students.