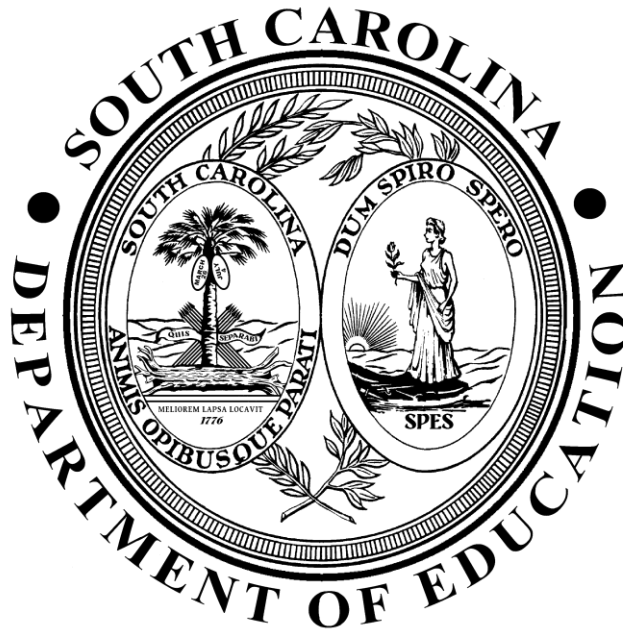


**STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

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*STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION*



## Reading Partners 2017 Outcomes Report

Provided to the South Carolina General Assembly

Pursuant to Proviso 3.6

June 15, 2017

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## **Reporting Requirement**

Proviso 3.6 indicates that funds be appropriated to the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) for Reading Partners to increase the number of reading interventions for students in low-performing schools in grades kindergarten through five. Planning criteria shall include, but are not limited to, pre- and post-assessment data, parental and family literacy engagement, summer learning support, and building school level capacity for intervention. The SCDE shall report to the Governor, the Chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, the Chairman of the Senate Education Committee, the Chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, and the Chairman of the House Education Committee by June 15, 2017, on the impact of the program.

This report has been provided to the SCDE by Reading Partners pursuant to Proviso 3.6.

## **Introduction**

Providing early intervention to assist students and close the reading gap with the poorest students takes the efforts of schools and communities together. The Reading Partners organization is a non-profit group that assists communities with literacy. The goal is to establish reading centers at elementary schools in under-resourced communities. Students in these schools receive one-on-one tutoring from volunteers using a structured, research and evidence-based curriculum that has been found to have optimistic and statistically important effects on three different measures of student reading proficiency: reading comprehension, fluency, and sight-word reading. This organization began in Charleston in 2013 and works closely with Charleston County, Berkeley County, and Florence County school districts. Reading Partners serves seventeen Title I elementary schools across Charleston, Berkeley, and Florence counties.

## **Reading Partners Scope of Work**

Reading Partners shall increase the number of reading interventions provided for students in low-performing schools in grades kindergarten through five. Planning criteria shall include, but are not limited to, pre- and post- assessment data, parental and family literacy engagement, summer learning support, and building school level capacity for intervention.

## **Summary of the Outcomes**

Reading Partners exceeded the student enrollment goal of 750 with a total final enrollment of 789 students, and the program also exceeded the student growth goals. The average percentile rank increased by twenty-two percentage points, with the average entry score being the twentieth percentile and average exit at the forty-second percentile as exhibited on the STAR Reading test for third through fifth graders. Kindergarten through second graders performed extremely well on the STAR early learning test with ninety-eight percent of students showing mastery of grade appropriate foundational literacy skills. End-of-year outcomes with goals, objectives, and activities are provided below.

## *Goal 1: Employ Five Full-Time Employees*

### Goal

Employ five full-time employees, including Master Reading Teacher Program Managers (PMs) who will provide literacy expertise and support to site-based coordinators and meet regularly with teachers and staff at each school and an AmeriCorps Liaison Specialist who will manage the overall AmeriCorps members and provide support to the AmeriCorps Member Site Coordinators.

### Objectives

- Utilize our national recruiting network to attract talent with the appropriate literacy and AmeriCorps expertise.
- Interview and extend offers to all full-time staff prior to August 1, 2016.

### Planned Activity

- Program Director will work with our national recruiting team to post for positions and screen for appropriate candidates.
- Program Director will assemble a team to screen candidates and move them through the recruiting process.
- When identified, the Program Director will extend offers to qualified candidates.
- Three weeks of onsite Reading Partners program orientation will be provided to our AmeriCorps members, as well as bimonthly trainings occurring the third Friday of the following months: October, November, January, March, and May. These were mandatory trainings and ninety- five percent of our AmeriCorps members attended all the trainings.
- Trainings will be conducted by PMs, and prepare AmeriCorps members to run a Reading Partners center at a Title 1 school smoothly and efficiently, as well as work with volunteer tutors.
- Beginning August 5, 2016, the assembled program team will work with thirty-five new AmeriCorps members who will undergo intensive Program Orientation that will cover:
  - Literacy intervention curriculum,
  - STAR testing,
  - Working with volunteers,
  - Managing a reading center,
  - Effective teacher and principal communication,
  - Student challenges,
  - Framework for understanding poverty,
  - Actions to educate students of poverty, and
  - Other topics that emerge during the year as needed.

### 2017 Outcomes

- All full-time staff were hired and trained by August 1, 2016, and began the AmeriCorps training program for site coordinators August 5, 2016. All PMs have at least a Master's degree in reading or literacy and at least eight years of teaching experience.

- Thirty-five AmeriCorps members were recruited and trained in the Reading Partners intervention curriculum, beginning foundations of literacy instruction, administration of the STAR tests, managing and coaching volunteers, effective communications, student behavior, understanding students of poverty, and other relevant topics. Three weeks of intensive Reading Partners program orientation took place in August 2016, as well as monthly trainings for AmeriCorps members, and weekly support provided by the PM.

*Goal 2: Purchase and administer STAR Assessments*

Goal

- Purchase STAR Early Learning (STAR EL) and STAR Reading Benchmark Assessment to gather pre- and post-assessment data on all students receiving interventions from Reading Partners.

Objectives

- Work with our research and evaluation team to identify the appropriate test for students.
- Provide training to staff and AmeriCorps members on the STAR battery of tests.
- Administer fall pre-test STAR assessment for placement in Reading Partners curriculum.
- Administer winter STAR assessment for instructional purposes.
- Administer spring post-test STAR assessment for program evaluation.

Planned Activity

- AmeriCorps members and PMs will administer assessments and work together to interpret results and create Individualized Reading Plans (IRPs) for students.
- PMs will monitor student IRPs to ensure proper placement and progression in the program.

2017 Outcomes

- All AC members were trained extensively and supported by PMs in the administration of the STAR battery of tests. All full-time staff were hired and trained by August 1, 2016, and began the AmeriCorps training program for Site Coordinators August 5, 2016. All PMs have at least a Master's degree in reading or literacy and at least eight years of teaching experience.
- All 444 kindergarten through grade two students were given the STAR EL beginning of the year test, middle of the year test, and the end of the year test. Upon mastery of all foundational literacy skills, all second graders (185) were also tested with STAR Reading. All third through fifth graders (345) were given the STAR Reading benchmark test at the same intervals mentioned above. IRPs were created by PMs and modified based on assessment information.
- An IRP was written for every student (789) enrolled in the Reading Partners program. Students were placed in specific curriculum based on STAR testing results and PM consult.

### *Goal 3: Provide Literacy Workshops for Parents*

#### Goal

- Provide literacy workshops for parents.

#### Objectives

- Reading Partners developed and offered workshops and take home materials for parents on the importance of building a literacy culture at home.
- Summer training materials will be provided to educate parents on the "summer slide" and the potential benefit of reading daily. Education will be provided to ensure understanding of the backpack that is coming home with their student for the summer.

#### Planned Activity

- Two workshops/take home education packets will be available to parents.
- Mid-year communication to parents and invitations to reading centers will be extended.

#### 2017 Outcomes

- Two workshops were offered to parents, but Reading Partners did not have any parent participation. Educational information was sent home three times during the year regarding the importance of reading at home, suggestions for engaging with their child about reading and how to support their child over the summer.
- Five percent of parents attended the middle of the year reading celebration.

### *Goal 4: Enroll 750 High-Poverty Students*

#### Goal

- Enroll 750 high-poverty students who are identified by the school as in need of Tier 2 reading intervention.
- Eighty percent of kindergarten through grade two students will master grade appropriate foundational literacy skills as exhibited by assessment on STAR EL test.
- Seventy percent of grade three through five students will meet the end of the year literacy growth goal of increasing their percentile rank by at least one percent, as exhibited on STAR Reading test.

#### Objectives

- Students are referred by principals/teachers.
- Students are tested using STAR and placed in the curriculum.
- Volunteers are recruited and trained to work with students two times a week.
- Students will receive a minimum of 30 one on one intervention sessions.
- Students are STAR tested upon completion of the program to evaluate program effectiveness.

### Planned Activity

- All seventeen reading centers in Berkeley, Charleston, and Florence counties received the Reading Partners curriculum and all updates.
- The Reading Partners evidence-based literacy intervention curriculum will be purchased for each reading center. Curriculum components will be reproduced monthly for use in the program by our volunteers and students.
- AmeriCorps site coordinators will ensure that each center has the appropriate curriculum for the students enrolled in Reading Partners.
- Kindergarten through fifth grade reading level and interest level texts will be placed in each center to ensure students have some ownership and investment in the texts used for the tutor read aloud portion of the lesson.
- Students will take books home weekly and will also take home a backpack of summer books with a high interest level, as well as appropriate reading level.
- Our community engagement team will work directly with the program team to develop training that will help our volunteers understand the unique needs of the students they are working with. The training is based on *The Framework for Understanding Poverty* by Ruby Payne.
- All 946 community volunteers received an orientation session upon signing up for tutoring, a personal reading center training session prior to tutoring and ongoing training and support while tutoring in the Reading Partners reading center.
- PMs will work with AmeriCorps Liaison and other staff to order appropriate read aloud books for centers to ensure a high level of student engagement in the center.
- Each reading center was stocked with an engaging Core Read Aloud library which includes tutor guidance and questions, as well as a read-aloud library that is chosen based on the ages served in specific Reading Center.
- PMs will work with AmeriCorps Liaison and other staff to order appropriate books for centers to ensure a high level of student engagement and participation in the Take Reading Home program as exhibited by the Take Reading Home chart in each center.
- Each reading center was stocked regularly with a Take Reading Home library which provided books every week for students to take home and keep in order to build their at home libraries.
- Our volunteers will be uniquely qualified to work one on one with our students with constant daily support from site coordinators and PMs.
- Students will receive twice weekly one-on-one intervention from a trained volunteer.
- PMs will track student progress and monitor volunteer tutoring. IRPs are updated based on the literacy expertise that the PMs provide.
- Every student in the program received a backpack with five books, activity sheets, a reading journal and a special pencil for the summer reading program. Students were able to choose their books from books chosen for their independent reading level.

### 2017 Outcomes

- 789 high-poverty students were enrolled in the intervention program. Grade breakdown:
  - Kindergarten: 135 students
  - Grade 1: 124 students

- Grade 2: 185 students
- Grade 3: 147 students
- Grade 4: 126 students
- Grade 5: 72 students
- End of year testing completed for 778 students.
- Students received an average of thirty-six one-to-one intervention sessions.
- Ninety-one percent of students were enrolled with volunteers who provided two sessions per week.
- Ninety-eight percent of kindergarten through grade two students mastered grade-appropriate foundational literacy skills (see Appendix B).
- Eighty-five percent of grade three through five students met primary end of the year literacy growth goals of at least one percentage point (see Appendix C).



## **Appendix A: Excerpt of Proviso 3.6**

Proviso 3.6: (FY 2016-17 Lottery Funding) WMC: ADD new proviso to direct expenditure of lottery funds for FY 16-17. Suspend, for the current fiscal year, the provisions of Section 2-75-30 regarding the aggregate amount of funding provided for the Centers of Excellence Matching Endowment. Direct that net lottery proceeds and investment earnings in excess of certified net lottery proceeds and investment earnings are appropriated and must be used to ensure that LIFE, Palmetto Fellows, and HOPE scholarships are fully funded for FY 16-17. Provide for lottery appropriations to be reduced on a pro rata basis, excluding LIFE, HOPE, and Palmetto Fellows Scholarships, if lottery revenue is less than the amounts appropriated. Authorize CHE to use up to \$250,000 of LIFE, HOPE, and Palmetto Fellows scholarship funds to support the awarding process and to fund a Scholarship Compliance Auditor. Authorize Higher Ed Tuition Grants to use up to \$70,000 of Tuition Grants funds to support the award process. Provide for the distribution of K-12 Technology Initiative funds. Provide for the allocation of Reading Partner funds to increase the number of reading interventions for students in low performing schools in grades K-5. Provide for the disbursement of Mobile Device Access and Management funds to school districts for high-speed mobile internet service for students who do not have internet access at home and who are participating in a course of study that requires such access. Direct that Workforce Scholarships and Grants funds are to be used to provide grants for tuition, fees, transportation, or textbook expenses to S.C. residents enrolled in a career education program that meets eligibility requirements. Provide for a pro rata reduction if revenue received is less than these appropriations.

## Appendix B: Percentage of Students Who Mastered Foundational Literacy Skills

Goal: Eighty percent of kindergarten through grade two students will master grade appropriate foundational literacy skills as exhibited by assessment on STAR EL test.

Outcome: Ninety-eight percent of kindergarten through grade two students have mastered grade-appropriate foundational literacy skills.

Figure 1. Percentage of Kindergarten Students Who Mastered Foundational Literacy Skills Between the Beginning of the Year (BOY) and End of the Year (EOY)

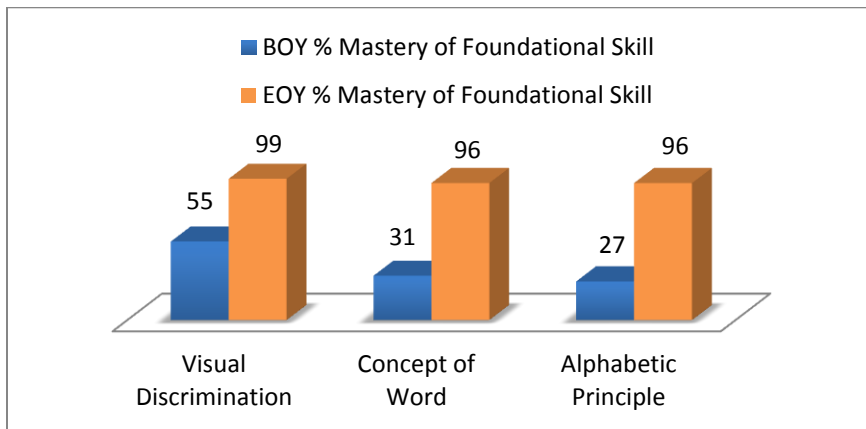


Figure 2. Percentage of Grade 1 Students Who Mastered Foundational Literacy Skills

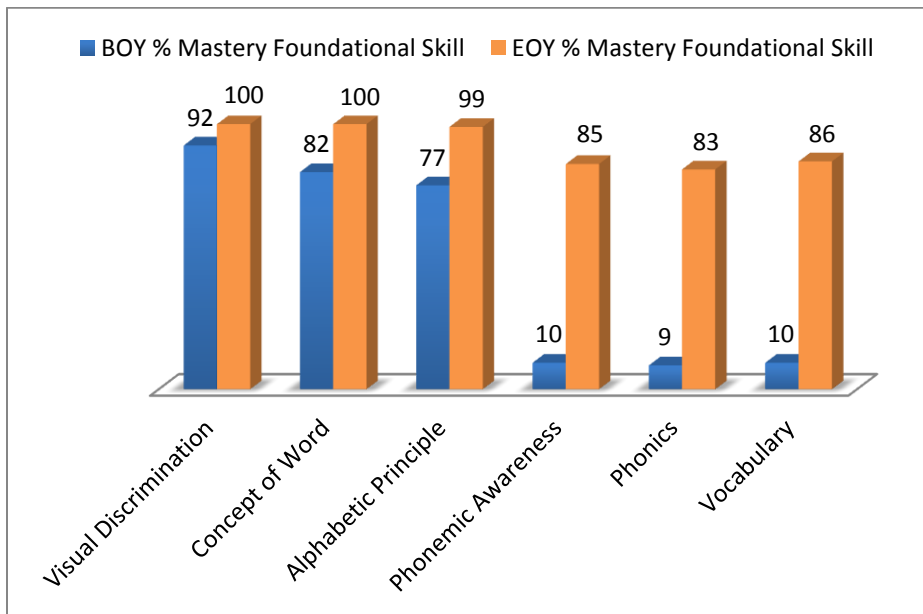
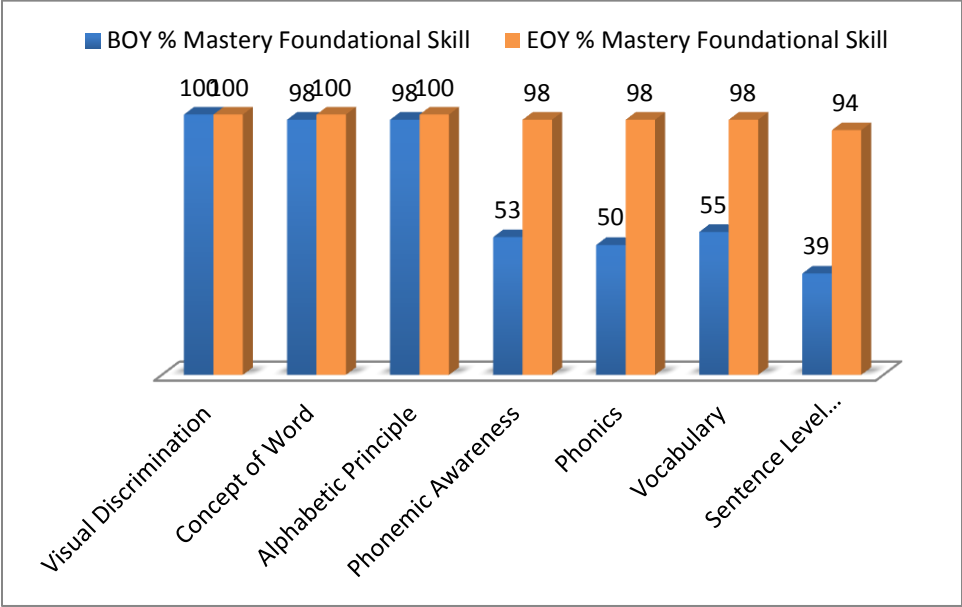


Figure 3. Percentage of Grade 2 Students Who Mastered Foundational Literacy Skills



## Appendix C: Percentile Rank

Goal: Seventy percent of grade three through five students will meet the end of the year literacy growth goal of increasing their percentile rank by at least one percent, as exhibited on STAR Reading test.

Outcome: Eighty-five percent of grade three through five students have met primary end of the year literacy growth goal of at least one percentage point. Average percentile rank increase was twenty-two percent.

Figure 4. Grade 3 through 5 Percentile Rank on STAR Reading

