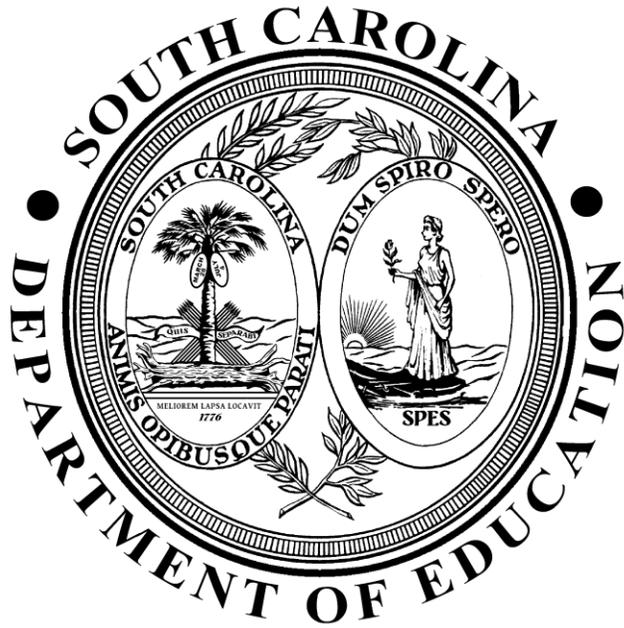


**STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

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STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION



Reading Partners 2018 Outcomes Report

Provided to the South Carolina General Assembly

Pursuant to Proviso 3.4

June 15, 2018

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Reporting Requirement

Proviso 3.4 for fiscal year 2017–18 indicates that \$400,000 in 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, 2018, on the impact of the program.

This report has been provided to the SCDE by Reading Partners pursuant to Proviso 3.4.

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 and Berkeley County school districts. Reading Partners serves seventeen Title I elementary schools across Charleston and Berkeley 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 832 students, and the program also exceeded the student growth goals. The average percentile rank increased by thirteen percentage points, with the average entry score being the twenty-first percentile and average exit at the thirty-fourth percentile as exhibited on the Renaissance STAR Reading test for third through fifth graders. Kindergarten through second graders performed extremely well on the STAR early learning test with ninety-six percent of students showing mastery of grade appropriate foundational literacy skills. End-of-year outcomes with goals, objectives, and activities are provided below.

Summer Support

Reading Partners works to provide student support in the summer in several different ways. Each child enrolled in the program receives a backpack filled with summer reading activities and books, as well as parent at-home literacy support information. The student is allowed to select which books they will take home to keep for the summer, from a selection of books on their level. Each student takes home five books over the summer. Each book is paired with activities that the students should be able to do individually and activities that are designed for families to participate in together. Reading Partners spends time talking to the students about these books and activities before they leave school for the summer.

Reading Partners is also participating in two summer camps for the 2017–18 school year. One camp is a partnership with the City of Charleston’s Recreation Department, and the other is a partnership with the Charleston County School District’s Read to Succeed Summer Literacy Camp (at one school site this year). These camps are running the classic Reading Partners program, where students will receive two, 45 minute sessions per week and will be pre- and post-tested with either Renaissance STAR Early Literacy or STAR Reading. Data will be collected and examined at the end of the summer to be shared with the partner organizations.

Building School Level Capacity for Intervention

Reading Partners works hand in hand with the schools that they partner with to become an integrated part of the school day. Program Managers for Reading Partners attend school level literacy team meetings where students are discussed, and most often assigned to different school wide interventions. Reading Partners encourages schools to view them as a Tier 2 intervention, so that students in need of more support can be seen by a school level, 5 day a week, interventionist, and students in need of less support can be supported by the classroom teacher.

Reading Partners also partners with classroom teachers to think strategically about their literacy instruction. If several students are going to attend the Reading Partners program from one classroom, we try to arrange the schedule to suit that the session happens during the teacher’s small group literacy instruction (this way the Reading Partners session can count as a small group rotation for one group of students). This approach builds the capacity of the teachers by allowing them a reduced class size, and appropriate time to focus on their small group instruction.

The Program Manager’s (PM) relationship with the school level administration and literacy coaches builds capacity as well. Reading Partners’ Program Managers are constantly running the data and working on ensuring that volunteers are providing high quality sessions for students. This information is fluid and transparent with school staff, and we work together to share data with schools and to provide what is needed individually for each student.

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.
- Retain and professionally develop all program staff members that were hired for the 2017–18 school year.

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 (with make-up trainings offered when necessary) and one hundred percent of our AmeriCorps members attended all the trainings and/or make-up trainings.
- Trainings will be conducted by PMs, and prepare AmeriCorps members to run a Reading Partners center at a Title I school smoothly and efficiently, as well as work with volunteer tutors.
- Beginning August 9, 2017, 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.

2018 Outcomes

- All full-time staff were hired and trained by August 1, 2017, and began the AmeriCorps training program for site coordinators August 9, 2017. 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 2017, 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.

2018 Outcomes

- All AmeriCorps members were trained extensively and supported by PMs in the administration of the STAR battery of tests. All full-time staff began the AmeriCorps training program for Site Coordinators August 9, 2017. All PMs have at least a Master's degree in reading or literacy and at least eight years of teaching experience.
- All 537 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 (191) were also tested with STAR Reading. All third through fifth graders (295) 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 (832) 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.

2018 Outcomes

- Two workshops were offered to parents in conjunction with celebrations in the reading centers. Parents were invited to attend a mid-year reading celebration with students and tutors and an end of year celebration. Parents that attended these celebrations received information about the importance of literacy at home. They also received materials to help them implement strategies discussed during these workshops. The workshops were combined with the celebrations as an effort to increase parent participation from last year.
- 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.
- Seven 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 and Charleston 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 906 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.

2018 Outcomes

- 832 high-poverty students were enrolled in the intervention program. Grade breakdown:
 - Kindergarten: 160 students
 - Grade 1: 186 students
 - Grade 2: 191 students
 - Grade 3: 115 students
 - Grade 4: 101 students
 - Grade 5: 79 students
- End of year testing completed for 796 students.
- Students received an average of thirty one-on-one intervention sessions.
- Eighty-seven percent of students were enrolled with volunteers who provided two sessions per week.
- Ninety-six percent of kindergarten through grade two students mastered grade-appropriate foundational literacy skills (see Appendix B).
- Eighty-three 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 3.4

Proviso 3.4: (FY 2017-18 Lottery Funding) Funds appropriated to the Department of Education for Reading Partners [\$400,000] shall be allocated to Reading Partners and must be used to increase the number of reading interventions for students in low performing schools in grades K-5. The Office of Early Learning and Literacy shall specify planning criteria to be submitted by Reading Partners no later than July 15 of the current fiscal year. Planning criteria shall include, but is not limited to, pre and post assessment data, parental and family literacy engagement, summer learning support and building school level capacity for intervention. The department 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, 2018 on the impact of the program.

Appendix B: Percentage of K–2 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-six 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)

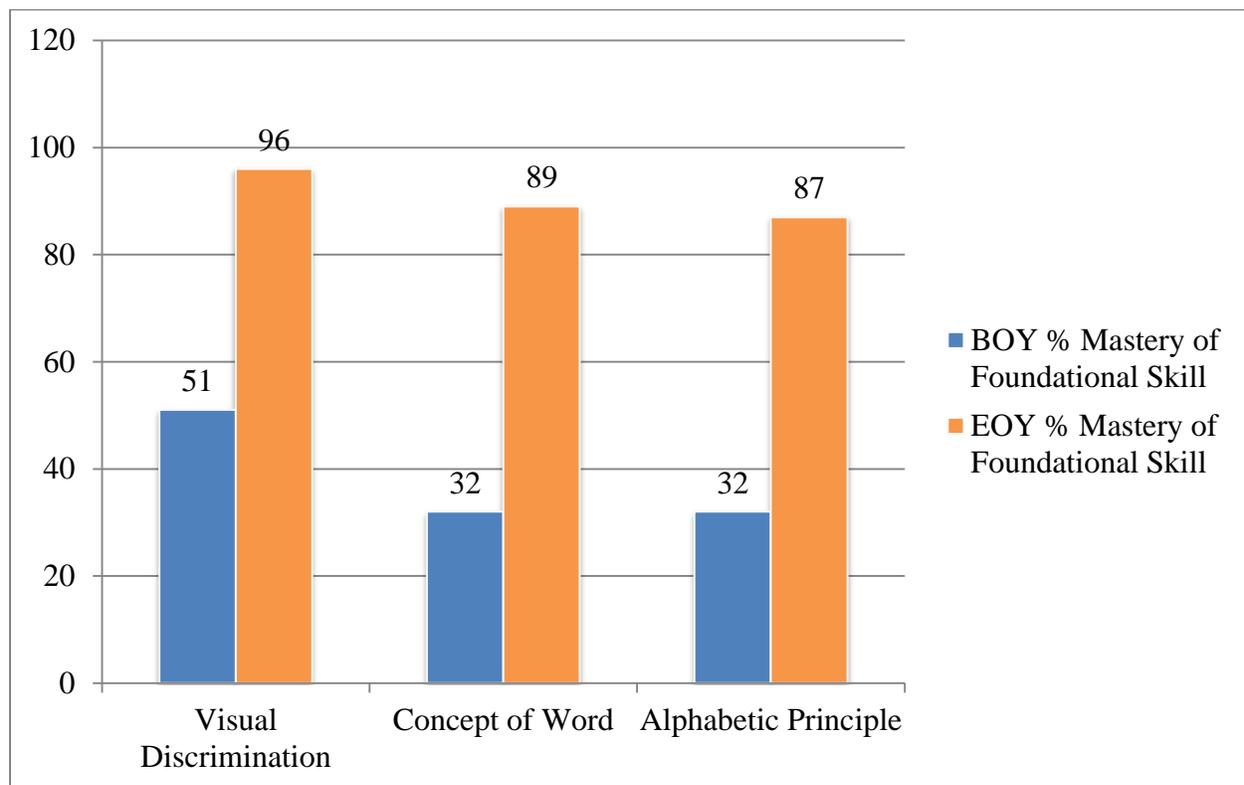


Figure 2. Percentage of Grade 1 Students Who Mastered Foundational Literacy Skills

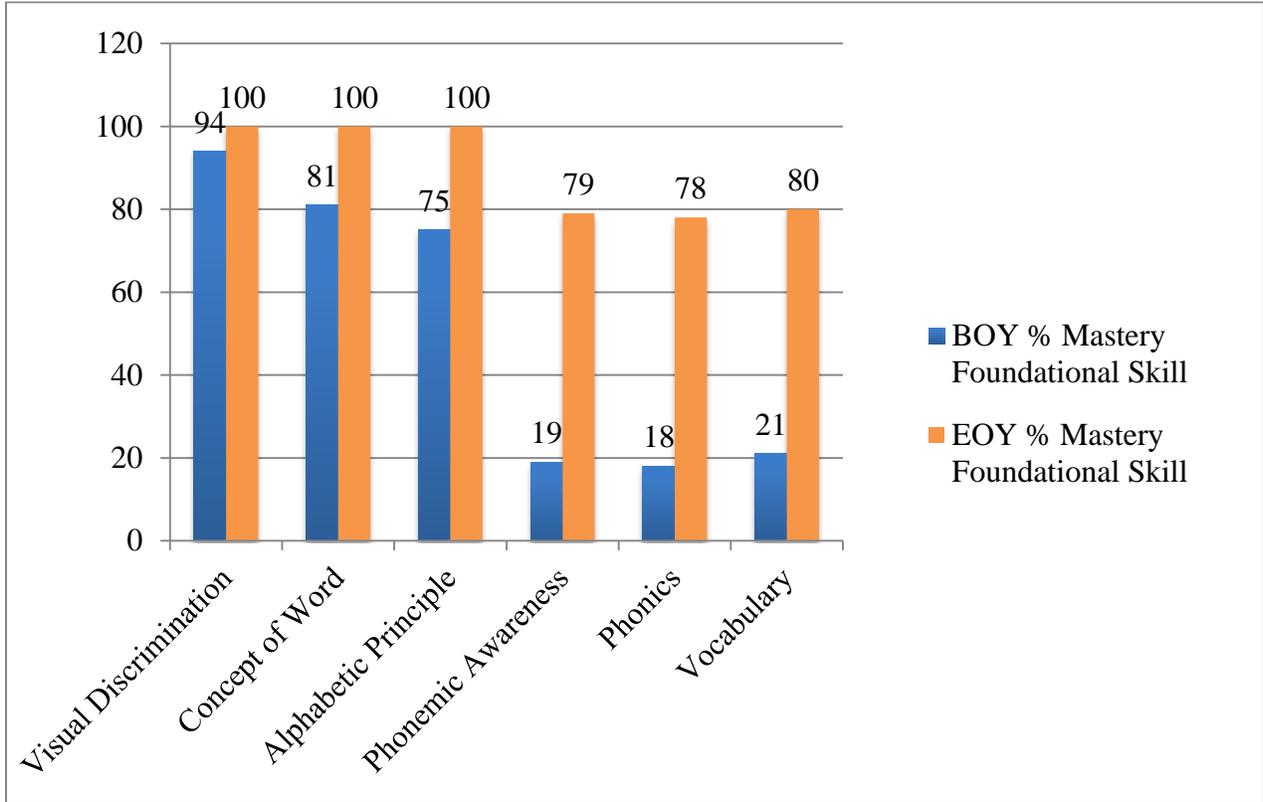
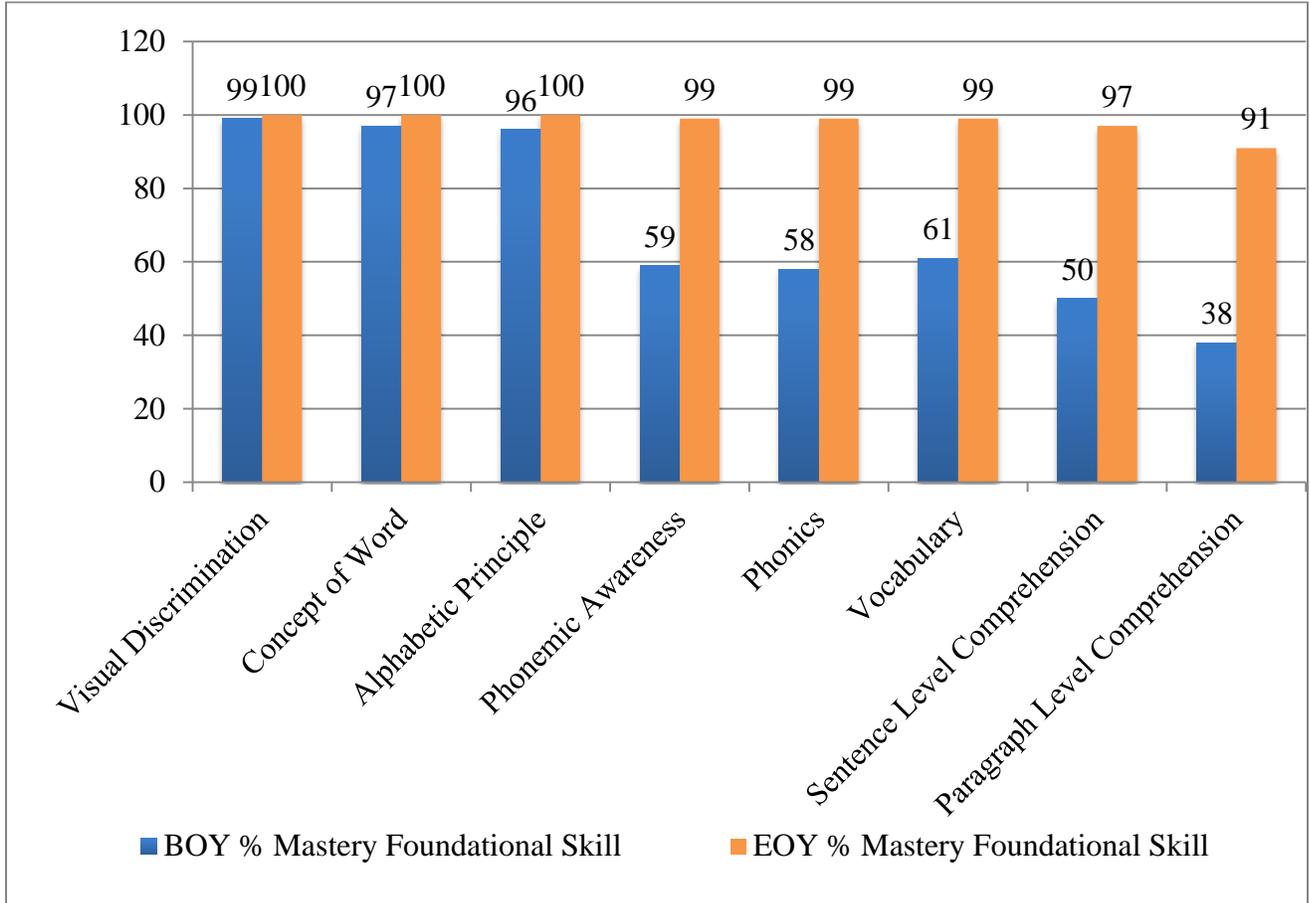


Figure 3. Percentage of Grade 2 Students Who Mastered Foundational Literacy Skills



Appendix C: Percentile Rank for Grades 3–5 Students

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-three 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 thirteen percentage points.

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

