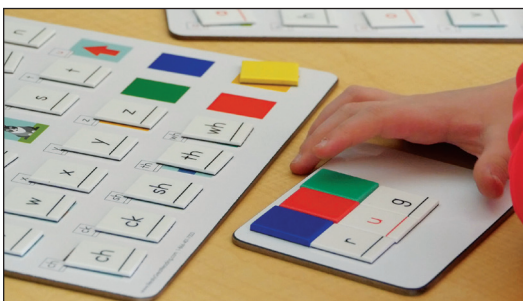


Improving Literacy Skills in a Small, Rural Elementary School

Successfully Implementing Really Great Reading

ABSTRACT

Pawhuska Elementary School is a small, rural elementary school in Oklahoma. About five years ago, half of all Pawhuska students were reading below grade level. Pawhuska implemented Really Great Reading's (RGR) Phonics Suite in Grades 3–6 to address the challenge. SEG Measurement studied reading skills growth in Pawhuska classrooms implementing Phonics Suite instruction during the 2017–2018 school year, comparing the beginning and end of school year DIBELS Next assessment results. Students showed statistically significant and educationally meaningful improvement in reading skills. Overall reading skills showed considerable improvement, with an average increase of nearly two standard deviations in Composite reading skills (Effect size = 1.95). Accuracy increased about three-quarters of a standard deviation (Effect size = .74) and students gained nearly a standard deviation and a half in Fluency (Effect size = 1.44). The success identified by the DIBELS scores was confirmed by the Pawhuska teachers and principal.



ABOUT REALLY GREAT READING

Really Great Reading (RGR) provides a comprehensive set of tools to help diagnose and teach reading to any type of reader, including dyslexic, adult and struggling readers at every skill level. RGR's Phonics Suite instruction can be used in a variety of settings including whole-group, small-group, and specialized settings.

Students practice what good readers do naturally, which is pay attention to every word, read with a high rate of accuracy, and use strategies for attacking unfamiliar and multisyllabic words.

RGR's research-based, multisensory programs, *Countdown*, *Blast Foundations*, *HD Word*, *Phonics Boost*, and *Phonics Blitz*, explicitly teach phonemic awareness, phonics concepts, and word attack skills. They also focus on reading accurately, which translates into better comprehension.

RGR offers diagnostic decoding assessments to help educators understand their students' decoding strengths and weaknesses, enabling students to be quickly grouped for instruction by skill level, or taught on an individual level, to get maximum benefits from the program.

RGR offers professional development that provides valuable insight into teaching with RGR's programs and provides teachers with a solid foundation to successfully diagnose, group, and teach struggling readers.

**Really Great Reading
provides educators with
materials to be successful.**

Pawhuska Elementary School is a small, Title I school located in rural northern Oklahoma on the Osage Nation Reservation, part of the Indian Territory established in 1872. Pawhuska has a population of about 3,500 residents, and Pawhuska Elementary School has an enrollment of 375 students in Grades 3–6. Over half (58%) of the students are American Indian, and a third (35%) are Caucasian. The remaining students are African American and Hispanic.

Pawhuska wrestles with poverty and high unemployment. Seventy-two percent of the students are from low-income families, and 78% of Pawhuska students qualify for free or reduced lunch. There is a statewide teacher shortage that is particularly severe in Pawhuska. All this challenges Pawhuska Elementary's commitment to delivering quality education to its students.

The Challenge: Improving Literacy

Pawhuska's Title I teacher, Sammie Frost, embraced the challenge: "We have to do something about the declining scores." The situation was particularly challenging due to the state requirement that all third graders must be able to read on a third-grade level in order to pass on to the fourth grade.

Pawhuska faced a significant uphill battle to improve literacy. According to Pawhuska's principal, Mr. Cowan, "About half of our students were below grade level." In fact, the teachers echoed that fifty percent of students were below grade level for reading when they arrived at Pawhuska in third grade and that some were two years below grade level.

Pawhuska has always prided itself on providing students with a sound, comprehensive education that enriches their lives and prepares them for their futures. However, they faced many obstacles while trying to deliver on this promise. Pawhuska teachers and administrators knew they had to get really serious about declining reading scores, and the teachers were open to a new solution.

"Even though we all have a lot of teaching experience, we are always looking for and willing to try new things," expressed one Pawhuska educator. Pawhuska started using Really Great Reading's (RGR) programs four years ago. At the start, the reading level for the third grade was disappointingly low; but with RGR, teachers had the tools to dramatically improve reading and met the challenge.

Results: Students Show Gains in Overall Reading Skills, Accuracy and Fluency

SEG Measurement, an independent research firm, evaluated the Grade 3 outcomes for the 2017–2018 school year. SEG analyzed the assessment data to determine the extent to which students using RGR's programs improved their reading skills. Pawhuska's teachers and administrators were surveyed, and the principal and several teachers were interviewed.

Pawhuska evaluates student reading skills using the DIBELS Next Assessment (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills), a widely used, third-party assessment of language skills. Students are assessed at the beginning and at the end of the school year, as well as periodically throughout the course of the year. The DIBELS Next results are used to track student performance over time and to gather information to guide instruction.

The DIBELS Composite Score along with the Accuracy and Fluency measures were examined for this study. Students were assessed at the beginning (August/September) and at the end of the school year (April/May) to determine the extent to which using RGR's programs improved their reading skills.

The Grade 3 DIBELS results show that students achieved overall reading skills, accuracy, and fluency gains during the school year that were both statistically significant ($p < .001$) and educationally meaningful (Figure 1).

The overall gains in reading skills as reflected in the DIBELS Composite Score was particularly large, with an average increase of more than 100 points (Composite Score gain = 105 score points). This is a gain of nearly two standard deviations in reading skills (Effect Size = 1.95), or a gain of about 47 percentile points. This is approximately double the amount of growth expected at this level based on DIBELS technical data.

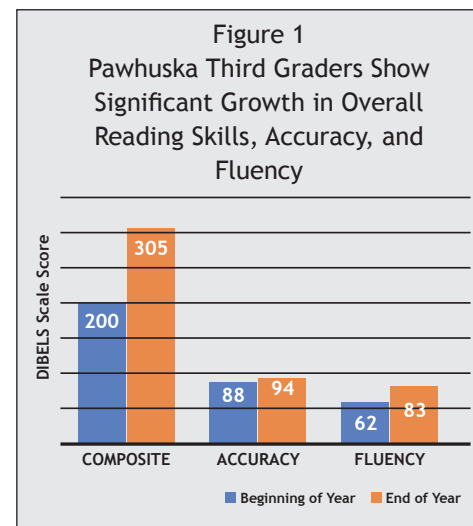
The Pawhuska third graders also showed substantial gains in Accuracy and Fluency on the DIBELS Assessment (Accuracy score gain = 6 score points). This is a gain of about three-quarters of a standard deviation in Accuracy and a gain of nearly a standard deviation and a half in Fluency (Accuracy Effect Size = .74; Fluency Effect Size = 1.44), or a gain of about 27 percentile points in Accuracy and 43 percentile points in Fluency.

Pawhuska's principal and teachers confirmed the high level of success seen on the DIBELS Next results. Last year, 51% of the third graders were reading below grade level, and 49% were reading at grade level. At the end of the year, after using RGR's programs, 73% were reading on grade level and 27% were below grade level. "I absolutely attribute that to RGR and the teachers at Pawhuska Elementary," according to a Pawhuska teacher. While many schools in the district are struggling, several teachers noted that Pawhuska Elementary School is doing extremely well relative to other schools.

Pawhuska's teachers clearly see RGR's programs playing a central role in improving the reading skills of Pawhuska's third graders. One Pawhuska third grade teacher shared, "The data indicates that Really Great Reading has been effective! Before we started using the [RGR] program, I felt frustrated. I knew my students had gaps in their reading skills."

Cowan is pleased with Pawhuska's success, noting that over the four years of use, "Reading scores have increased from the

The overall gains in reading skills as reflected in the DIBELS Next Composite Score was particularly large, with an average increase of more than 100 points.



Pawhuska third graders also showed substantial gains in Accuracy and Fluency on the DIBELS Next.

The teachers believe that Pawhuska's success is the result of the use of Really Great Reading's programs.

All of the teachers felt that Really Great Reading's programs were easy to use and were helpful in improving their teaching. Pawhuska teachers and administrators knew they had to get really serious about declining reading scores, and the teachers were open to a new solution.



“The RGR program showed us what skills the kids are missing and how they can address gaps identified by the RGR diagnostic assessments.”

“We have seen the results year after year. The teachers don't want to use anything else.”

beginning to the end of year with RGR. Pawhuska made great gains almost immediately. Now, we use Really Great Reading with the 3rd and 4th grade classrooms and small groups in 5th and 6th grade.”

Pawhuska teachers are committed to RGR's programs. Teachers use Really Great Reading between three and seven and a half hours per week, and they review the students' scores on the RGR diagnostic assessments frequently. All of the teachers felt that RGR's programs were easy to use and were helpful in improving their teaching.

Cowan attributes part of their success to the professional development, delivered in cooperation with the Osage County Interlocal Cooperative, based on the most effective ways to teach reading. RGR provides educators with materials to be successful. “RGR has improved my overall teaching!” said one teacher.

Pawhuska has done really well in contrast with other schools in the district; the teachers believe that Pawhuska's success is the result of the use of Really Great Reading's programs. “The progress we see within our district is definitely attributed partly to RGR,” said one Pawhuska teacher.

“The RGR program showed us what skills the kids are missing and how they can address gaps identified by the RGR diagnostic assessments,” said another teacher. Teachers report that RGR's programs are particularly effective when they divide the students into smaller groups and drill down using RGR's tools to see what skills they are missing. “Diagnosing students' reading deficits using the RGR diagnostic assessment is important to teachers,” said a Pawhuska teacher. “We have a lot of veteran teachers at our school, no teacher turnover. They are vested in the RGR program and the community.”

The dramatic achievement of a fifth grader who entered Pawhuska Elementary in January illustrates the impact of RGR instruction. He had never been to school before. He received instruction using Really Great Reading's *Blast Foundations* program four days a week, and within two months has made considerable gains; he went from knowing the names of just four letters and none of the letter sounds to knowing all the letters. He can now read with minimal support. “We used RGR exclusively with him,” Cowan noted. The principal was pleasantly surprised when the student came into his office and read sentences to him.

The impact of sustained use of RGR's Phonics Suite instruction in Pawhuska was captured by a teacher who had used RGR for several years: “We have seen the results year after year. It has really worked well for us over the past three years. The teachers don't want to use anything else.”



Improving Reading Skills in a Small, Rural Elementary School

Successfully Implementing Really Great Reading

ABSTRACT

Santaquin Elementary School is a small, rural elementary school in Santaquin, Utah. About five years ago, the Nebo School District recognized that many students in the district were reading below grade level.

They began a search to find a reading program that could effectively improve student reading skills and, after reviewing and completing a pilot program, they selected Really Great Reading's (RGR) programs to address the problem. SEG Measurement studied reading skills growth in Santaquin classrooms during the 2017–2018 school year, comparing the beginning and end of school year DIBELS assessment results.

Students showed statistically significant and educationally meaningful improvement in reading skills.

Overall reading skills showed considerable improvement, with a nearly one standard deviation improvement in Composite reading skills ($ES = .82$). Fluency increased by one and one quarter standard deviations ($ES = 1.25$). The success identified by DIBELS scores was confirmed by the Santaquin teachers and their principal, Chad Argyle.

ABOUT REALLY GREAT READING

Really Great Reading (RGR) provides a comprehensive set of tools to help diagnose and teach reading to any type of reader, including dyslexic, adult, and struggling readers at every skill level. RGR's Phonics Suite instruction can be used in a variety of settings including whole-class, small-group, and specialized settings.

Students practice what good readers do naturally, which is pay attention to every word, read with a high rate of accuracy, and use strategies for attacking unfamiliar and multisyllabic words.

RGR's research-based, multisensory programs, *Countdown*, *Blast Foundations*, *HD Word*, *Phonics Boost*, and *Phonics Blitz*, explicitly teach phonemic awareness, phonics concepts, and word attack skills. They also focus on reading accurately, which translates into better comprehension.

RGR offers diagnostic decoding assessments to help educators understand their students' decoding strengths and weaknesses, enabling students to be quickly grouped for instruction by skill level, or taught on an individual level, to get maximum benefits from the program.

RGR offers professional development that provides valuable insight into teaching with RGR's programs and provides teachers with a solid foundation to successfully diagnose, group, and teach struggling readers.

**Really Great Reading
provides educators with
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Santaquin Elementary School is a small, rural elementary school near Provo, Utah. Santaquin has a population of about 11,000, and Santaquin Elementary School has an enrollment of 755 students in Grades K to 6. About 90% of the students are Caucasian and about 10% are Hispanic.

The Santaquin community struggles with low income. Nearly half (44%) of Santaquin's students come from low income homes and qualify for free or reduced lunch. Until recently, Santaquin Elementary was a Title 1 school. The principal, Chad Argyle, stated, "Now we have more students moving into the area that come from different backgrounds and expectations in education. This is unique to this area where for years there was little growth."

One particularly critical challenge is the high numbers of struggling readers. "At the beginning of the year, all but four of my students were below grade level in reading," reported one teacher.

The Challenge: Improving Reading Skills

Knowing that reading is essential to student success, Nebo School District recognized that they faced a significant uphill battle to improve reading skills in the district. They began a two-year search for an effective decoding program for their elementary school students. They reviewed 15 different reading and phonics programs — they did not want to purchase anything until they found exactly what they wanted to help their students.

In 2015, Nebo narrowed their search to two reading programs and conducted a pilot of three Really Great Reading programs and of another company's program in the district. Three weeks into the pilots, the teachers were convinced that RGR's programs were the best solution, so they were selected for the district.

During the 2016–2017 school year, Really Great Reading's programs were adopted by the entire school district for Kindergarten through third grade in their 30 elementary schools.

Santaquin Elementary, one of the district's larger elementary schools, embraced the challenge of striving to improve student reading skills. With RGR's programs, teachers had the tools they needed.

During the first year of implementation (2016–2017), for Grades K–3, RGR's *Countdown Pilot* and *Blast Foundations* and *HD Word* programs were used. Lessons were taught each day for a total of 15–20 minutes in a whole group setting, as mandated by the district.

Results: Students Show Gains in Overall Reading Skills, Accuracy and Fluency

SEG Measurement, an independent research firm, evaluated the first grade outcomes for the 2017–2018 school year. SEG analyzed the assessment data to determine the extent to which students using RGR's programs improved their reading skills.

Santaquin’s administrator and first grade teacher team were interviewed.

Santaquin evaluates student reading skills using the DIBELS Assessment (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills), a widely used, third-party assessment of language skills. Students are assessed at the beginning and at the end of the school year, as well as periodically throughout the year. The DIBELS results are used to track student performance over time and to gather information to guide instruction.

The DIBELS Composite Score and the Oral Reading Fluency (ORF) measure were examined for this study. Students were assessed at the beginning (August/September) and at the end of the school year (April/May) to determine the extent to which students using RGR’s programs improved their reading skills.

The first grade DIBELS results show that students achieved overall reading skill, accuracy, and fluency gains across the school year that were both statistically significant and educationally meaningful.

To help evaluate the impact of RGR’s programs in this school, SEG compared the beginning and end of year DIBELS Scores for Santaquin first graders using paired sample t-tests. Both the overall (Composite Score) and Oral Reading Fluency scores were examined.

Table 1
T-Test Comparisons
Beginning and End of Year Student Test Scores

DIBELS Test	Beginning of Year	End of Year	SD	N	T	Sig	Effect Size
Composite	95	153	71	104	8.47	0.001	0.82
Fluency	3	18	12	126	14.23	0.001	1.25

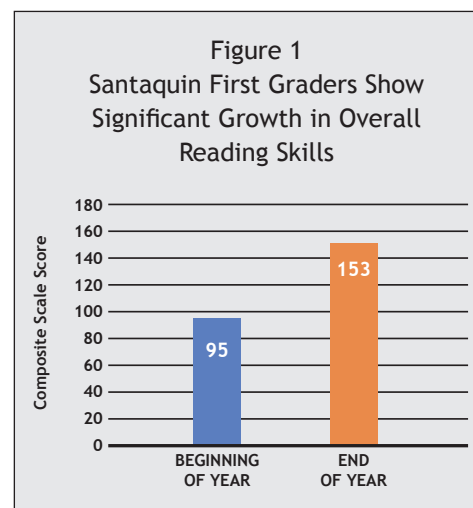
The average first grade DIBELS Composite reading score at the beginning of the year (Mean = 95) was compared to the average DIBELS Composite reading score at the end of the year (Mean = 153) using a paired sample t-test. Santaquin first graders showed statistically significant overall gains in reading skills ($t = 8.47$; $df = 104$; $p < .001$). This is a gain of more than three quarters of a standard deviation in overall reading skills (Effect Size = .82).

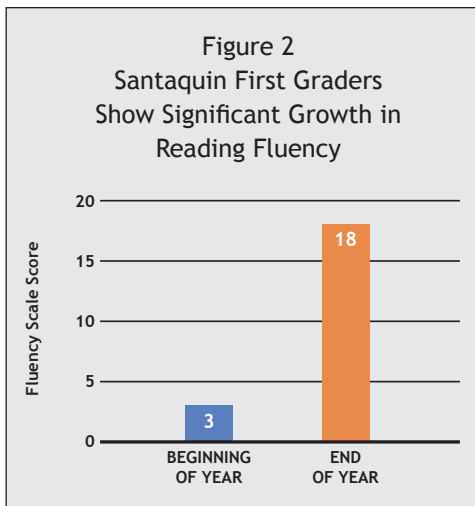
Reading fluency is critical to reading success. The average first grade reading fluency score at the beginning of the year (3) was compared to the average DIBELS reading fluency score at the end of the year (18) using a paired sample t-test. Santaquin first graders showed statistically significant gains in Fluency on the DIBELS Assessment ($t = 14.23$; $df = 126$; $p < .001$). This is a gain of about one and a quarter standard deviations in Fluency (Fluency Effect Size = 1.25).

All of the teachers and administrators interviewed for the case study agreed that Really Great Reading’s programs have been effective, and all indicated that the delivery of Really Great

The first grade DIBELS results show that students achieved overall reading skill, accuracy, and fluency gains across the school year that were both statistically significant and educationally meaningful.

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All of the teachers interviewed for the case study agreed that Really Great Reading’s programs have been effective, and all indicated that the delivery of Really Great Reading’s instruction is easy.

Almost all (83%) of the teachers felt that the programs have improved their teaching of reading.

“I know that the program helps the English language click for my students.”

Reading’s programs is easy. “We are doing better this year. Last year, we were ranked at the bottom of 29 schools in reading according to our district data, and now we are ranked 10th.” “Do you think Really Great Reading has contributed to that?” “Absolutely...,” said one Santaquin Elementary School teacher.

One Santaquin teacher indicated that while nearly all his students were reading below grade level at the beginning of the year in his class of 22 students, “that has now flipped to having just three students below grade level.”

Almost all (83%) of the teachers felt that the programs have improved their teaching of reading. “There has been a focus in all grade levels that has strengthened the school relationships and brought teachers together with a common purpose. The understanding students have now as it relates to phonics has greatly enhanced their ability to read fluently with increased accuracy and comprehension,” said Argyle.

A teacher recounts the story of one particular student at Santaquin. “I have a student who came into first grade not knowing any of his letter sounds or sight words. By doing an intervention with *Countdown* for re-teach, then *Blast* in class, he was able to move from a pre level to level one! His confidence in himself has grown so much and he loves to tell people that he is a reader! He is doing awesome and I continue to see amazing growth from him. He is now on grade level reading and is so excited to come to the back table to read with his group...”

“I really struggled with the majority of my class not knowing their letter names and sounds. I even had one student that only knew three sounds and no letter names. The online review letters really helped my students to see the grapheme alone instead of part of a big thing called the alphabet. To see the progress they made in January, I was thrilled!” said a first-grade teacher at Santaquin Elementary School.

The impact on the community has been dramatic according to one Santaquin teacher. “We held a literacy night where we taught parents about the phonics program. They were impressed by the advanced vocabulary that their first graders were able to use. I have also had parents comment that they are amazed at their child’s reading and writing growth. They often say it just seems to click for her. I know that the program helps the English language click for my students.”

The Study. Between the 2015/16 and 2018/19 school years, 29 schools in the Nebo School District (Utah) implemented Really Great Reading programs in Grades K through 3. Specifically, *Countdown* was implemented in Kindergarten, *Blast Foundations* in Grades 1 and 2, and *HD Word* in Grades 2 and 3. This study examined available district data from the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills Next (DIBELS) assessment¹ as well as student demographic data collected by the district. The percentage of students who met DIBELS benchmark goals in composite scores and individual subtests in each year and grade was calculated. Analyses use DIBELS data from the fall and spring of each school year.²

FINDINGS

Following districtwide implementation of Really Great Reading, the percentages of students in Grades 1, 2, and 3 who met DIBELS composite benchmark goals increased during the 2016/17, 2017/18, and 2018/19 school years.

During the 2016/17 and 2017/18 school year, declines in scores among Kindergarten students were reduced after implementation of Really Great Reading. During the 2018/19 school year, the percentages of students who met benchmark goals increased in all grades, including Kindergarten.

Similar patterns of pre/post increases were observed for some DIBELS subtest measures. Increases in percentages of students meeting benchmark goals during each year after implementation of Really Great Reading were observed for: Nonsense Word Fluency: Correct Letter Sounds (Grade 1), Nonsense Word Fluency: Whole Words Correct (Grade 1), Oral Reading Fluency (Grade 2), Oral Reading Fluency: Retell (Grade 2), and Daze (Grade 3). Percentages of students meeting benchmark goals decreased during the year prior to districtwide implementation and each subsequent year for the Oral Reading Fluency: Retell Quality subtest (Grade 3). Selected findings from these analyses are presented in charts on the subsequent pages.

KEY FINDINGS

Analyses of the percentages of students who met DIBELS composite benchmark goals suggest student growth after implementation of Really Great Reading.

► Analysis of DIBELS subtest measures reveal similar patterns for some measures.

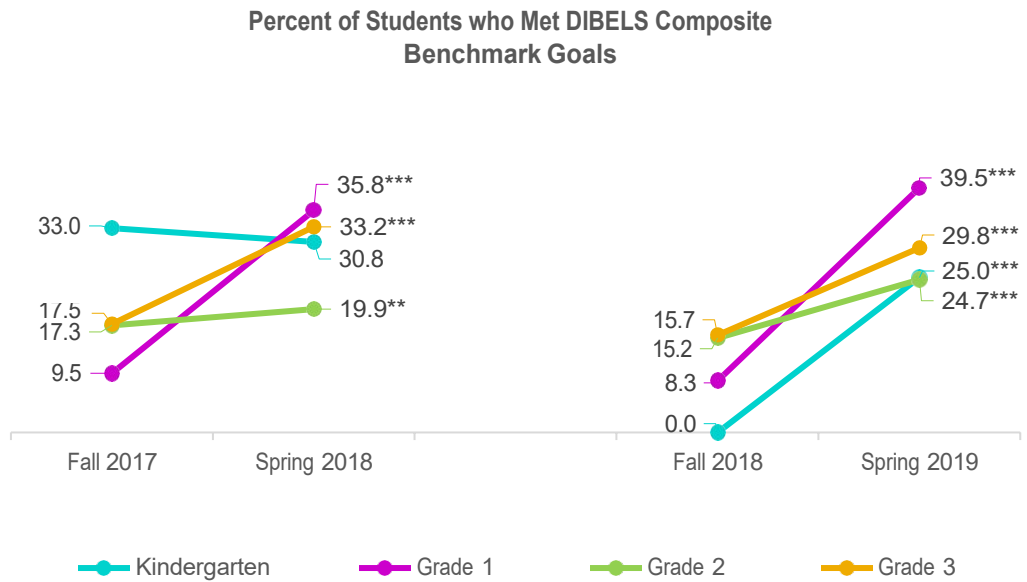
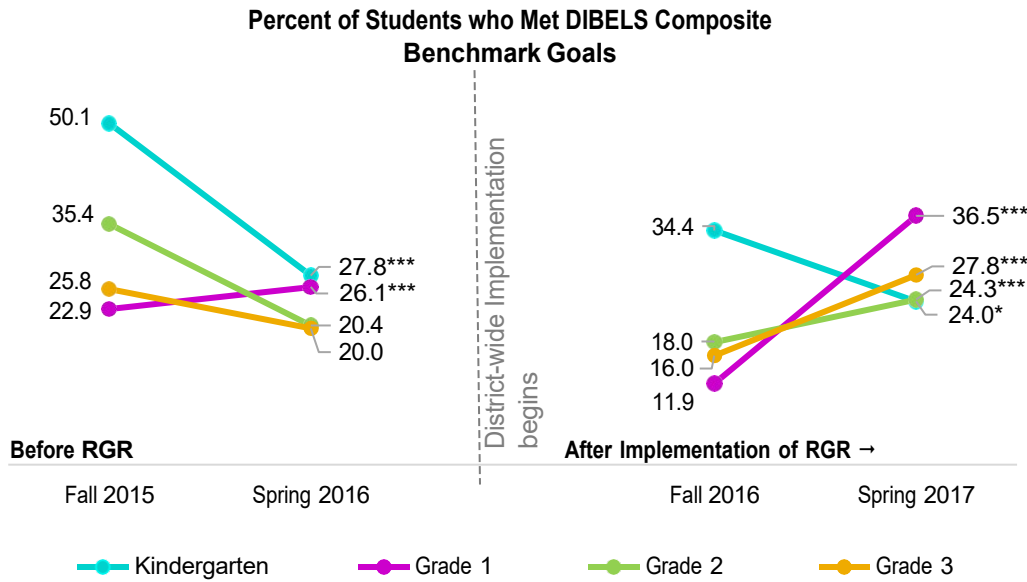
Percentages of students who met DIBELS benchmark goals varied by demographics.

► The percentages of students who met DIBELS benchmark goals varied by gender, race/ethnicity, English language learner status, free- and reduced-priced lunch eligibility, or special education status.

¹ DIBELS benchmark goals are criterion-referenced target scores for the DIBELS composite measure and subtests that represent adequate reading progress.

² Fall and spring data with the same group of students in each school year were analyzed to examine student growth. Sample sizes (respectively, by year for each grade) with both fall and spring data in each year are as follows: Kindergarten (335 in 2015/16, 221 in 2016/17, 273 in 2017/18, 204 in 2018/19), first grade (1,487 in 2015/16, 1,568 in 2016/17, 1,644 in 2017/18, 1,368 in 2018/19), second grade (1,360 in 2015/16, 1,006 in 2016/17, 990 in 2017/18, 945 in 2018/19), and third grade (1,105 in 2015/16, 1,124 in 2016/17, 1,058 in 2017/18, 1,025 in 2018/19).

CASE STUDY OF REALLY GREAT READING AT NEBO SCHOOL DISTRICT



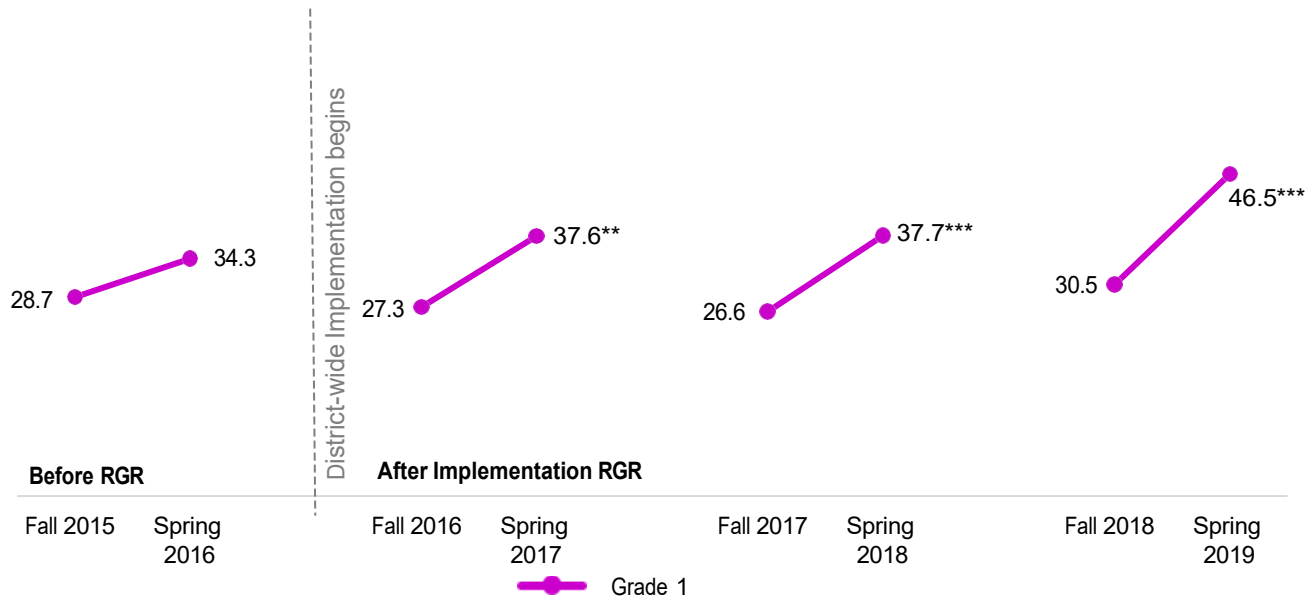
Note: Paired sample *t*-tests³ were conducted to examine fall-to-spring differences. Statistically significant results are noted as follows: ***p* < .01, *** *p* < .001.⁴

³ Paired samples *t*-tests are used to compare differences between matched pretest and posttest scores for a group. They compare the difference between the scores for each case and test to see if the average difference is significantly different from zero.

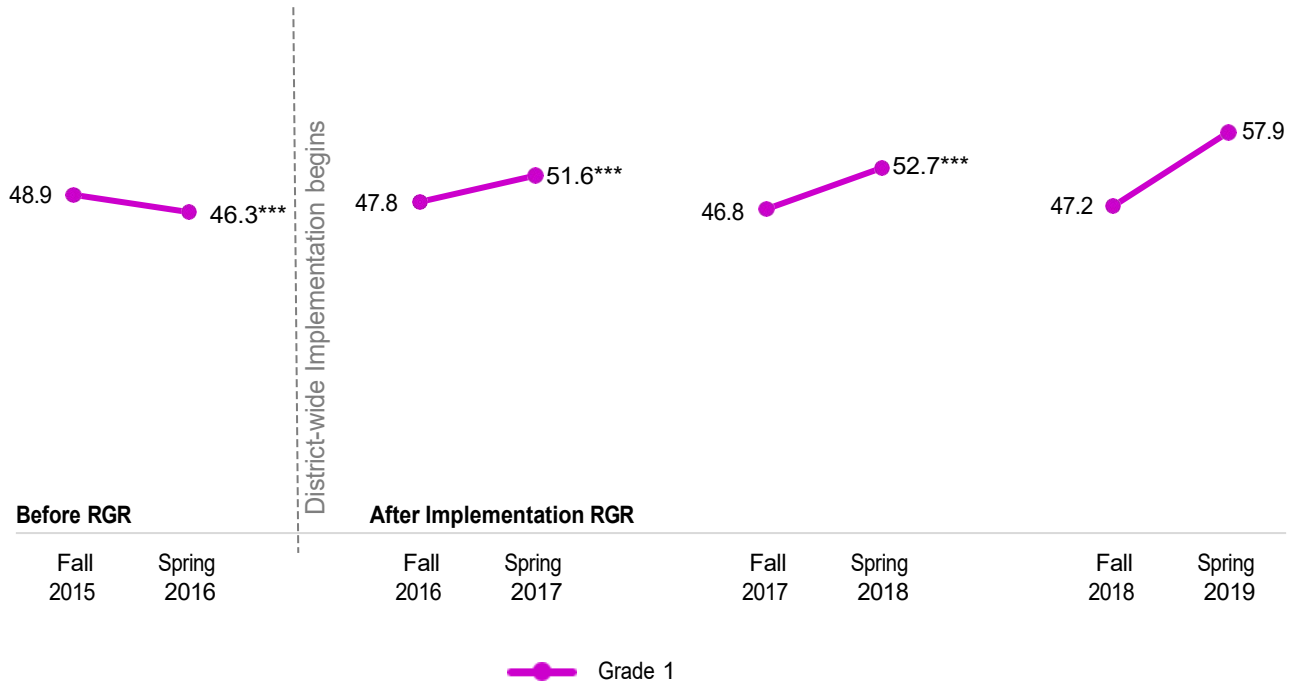
⁴ *p*-value is an indicator that represents the likelihood that observed results occurred by chance. In education research, values of *p* < .05 (i.e., values indicating that observed results had a less than 5% chance of occurring by chance) are typically used to identify results that are statistically significant. Lower *p*-values indicate a smaller likelihood that observed results occurred by chance and are therefore associated with statistically significant findings.

CASE STUDY OF REALLY GREAT READING AT NEBO SCHOOL DISTRICT

Percent of Students who Met DIBELS Benchmark Goals for Nonsense Word Fluency: Correct Letter Sounds



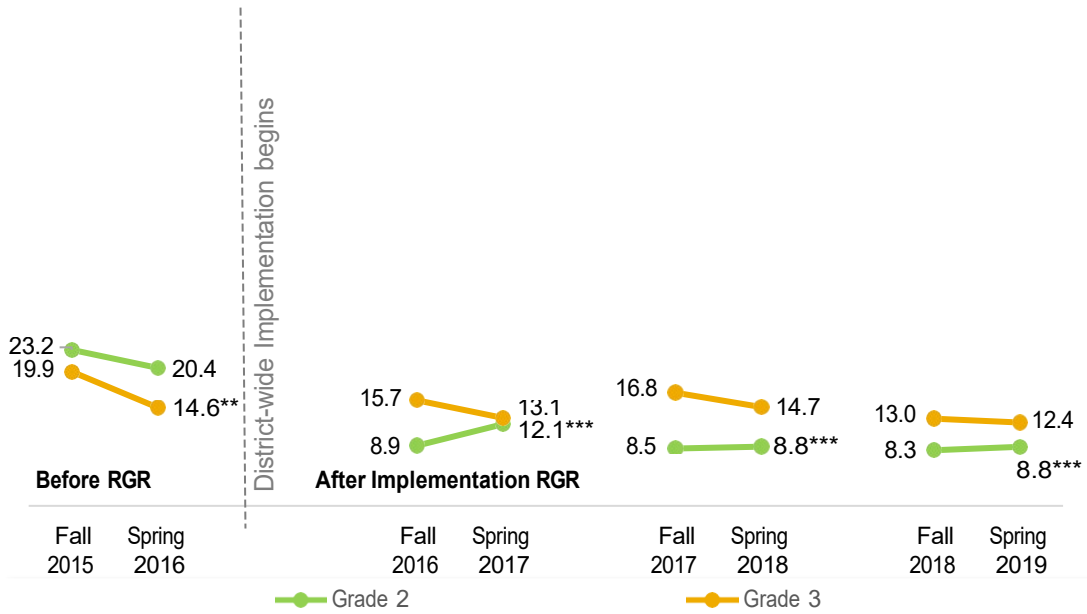
Percent of Students who Met DIBELS Benchmark Goals for Nonsense Word Fluency: Whole Words Correct



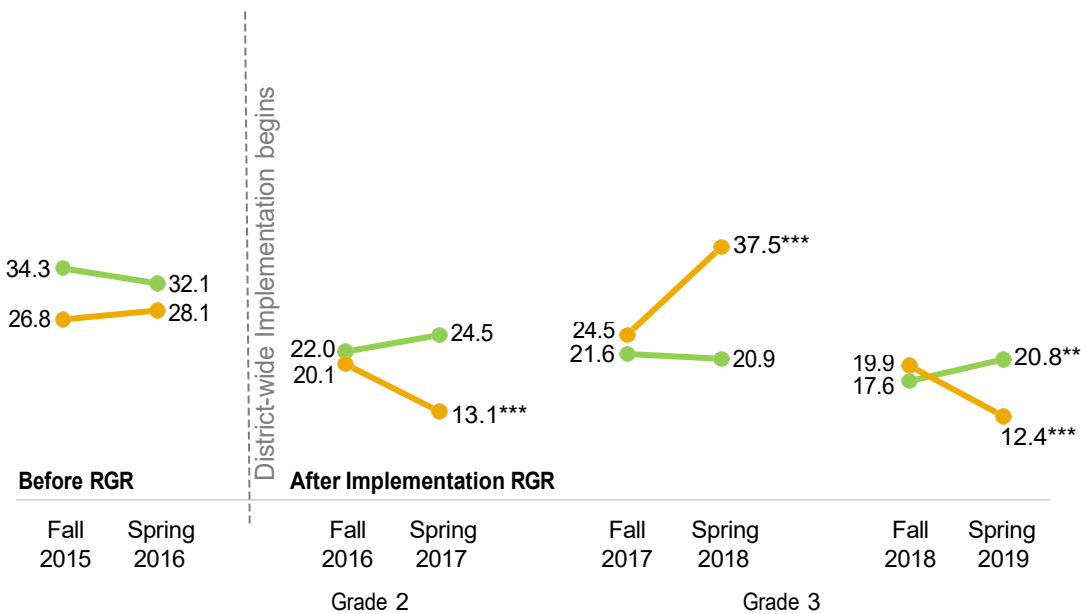
Note: Paired sample *t*-tests were conducted to examine fall-to-spring differences. Statistically significant results are noted as follows: ***p* < .01, ****p* < .001.

CASE STUDY OF REALLY GREAT READING AT NEBO SCHOOL DISTRICT

Percent of Students who Met DIBELS Benchmark Goals for Oral Reading Fluency

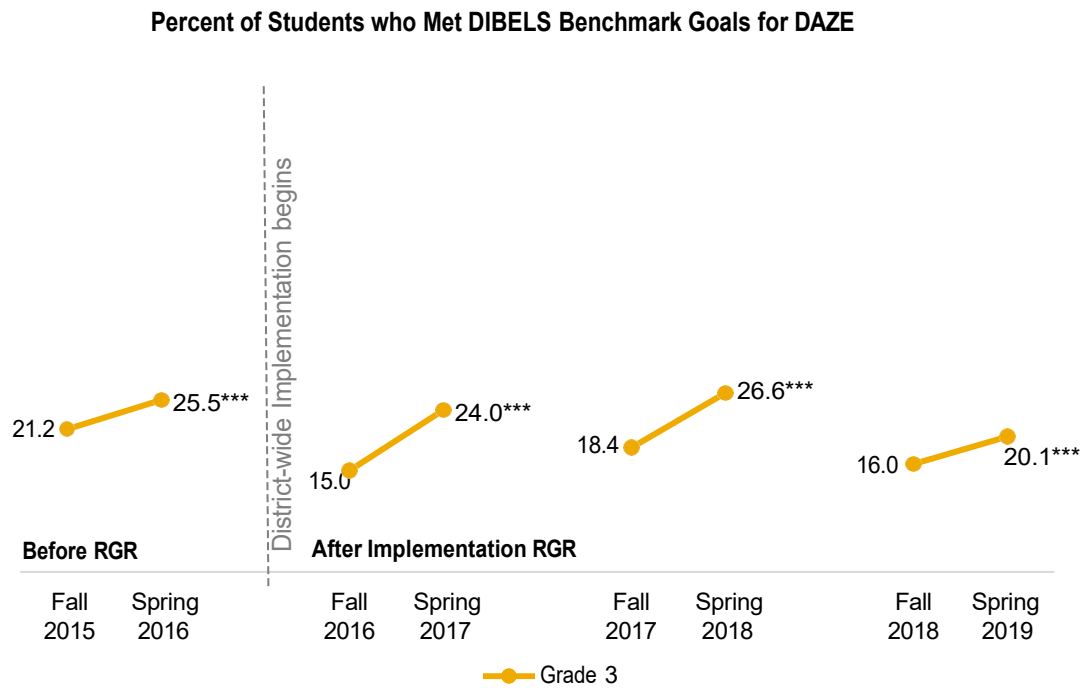
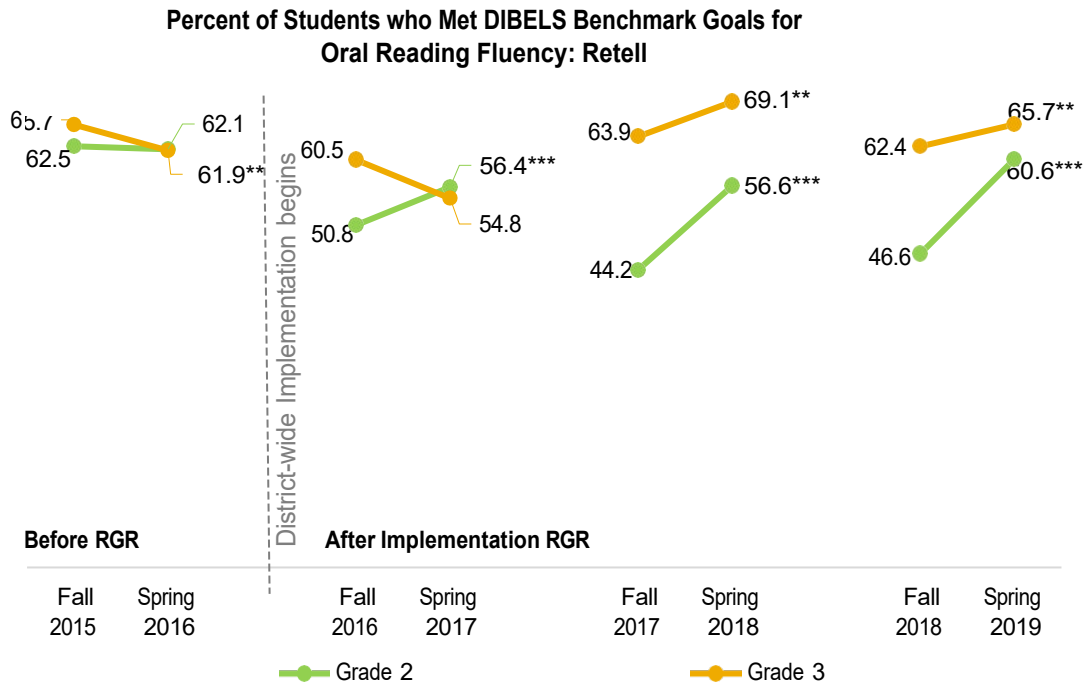


Percent of Students who Met DIBELS Benchmark Goals for Oral Reading Fluency: Accuracy



Note: Paired sample *t*-tests were conducted to examine fall-to-spring differences. Statistically significant results are noted as follows: ***p* < .01, ****p* < .001.

CASE STUDY OF REALLY GREAT READING AT NEBO SCHOOL DISTRICT



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CASE STUDY OF REALLY GREAT READING AT NEBO SCHOOL DISTRICT

Subgroup analysis among students showed the percentage of students who met DIBELS benchmark goals varied by student demographics in Fall and those variations persisted in Spring.

Subgroup analyses were conducted to examine whether the percentage of students who met DIBELS benchmark goals differed by student demographics. Descriptive findings indicate that the percentage of students who met DIBELS Composite benchmark goals varied by gender, race/ethnicity, English language learner status, free and reduced-priced lunch eligibility, or special education status. Disproportionately small percentages of English language learners (11-21%), special education students (13-19%), and students eligible for free and reduced priced lunch (12-48%) met DIBELS composite benchmark goals in fall or spring of each school year.⁵ Findings were consistent prior to and subsequent to Really Great Reading implementation.

Findings for gender and race/ethnicity were less consistent across fall and spring. For gender, findings generally suggested that disproportionately small percentages of male students (23-29%) met DIBELS composite benchmark goals.⁶ For race/ethnicity, findings generally suggested that disproportionately small percentages of Hispanic students (12-17%) met DIBELS composite benchmark goals while disproportionately large percentages of White students (27-34%) met the same benchmark goals.⁷

Study Limitations and Implications for Future Research

Because DIBELS score calculation varies by grade and time of year, DIBELS scores may not be used to calculate student growth over time. Therefore, these analyses compare the percentages of students who met DIBELS benchmark goals for each implementation year. Future studies may target districts using scores from outcome measures that can be reliably compared over time.

The analyses in this study are descriptive and do not indicate causal relationships. Changes in student performance may be related to implementation of Really Great Reading, typical student growth, or other factors. Future research that compares outcomes among Really Great Reading participants and nonparticipants using a rigorous design would allow for stronger statements about impact.

⁵ In 2018/19, no English language learners or special education students were designated as receiving Really Great Reading so subgroup analyses could not be conducted.

⁶ For gender, significant findings were found for fall of 2015/16 and spring of all 4 school years.

⁷ For race/ethnicity, significant findings were found at all timepoints except fall of 2016/17 and fall of 2018/19.

The Study. Between the 2015/16 and 2018/19 school years, Aragon Elementary School in the Fountain-Fort Carson (Colorado) School District implemented Really Great Reading programs in Grades K through 4. Specifically, *Countdown* was implemented in Kindergarten, *Blast Foundations* in Grades 1 and 2, and *HD Word* in Grades 2 through 4. This study examined available district data from the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills Next (DIBELS) assessment¹ as well as student demographic data collected by the district. The percentage of students who met DIBELS benchmark goals in composite scores and individual subtests in each year and grade was calculated. Analyses use DIBELS data from the fall and spring of each school year.²

FINDINGS

Most comparisons show pre/post increases in the percentages of students who met DIBELS benchmark goals in the 2015/16 and 2016/17 school years when Really Great Reading was implemented.

In the 2016/17 school year, all grades except for Grade 2 demonstrated an increase in the percentage of students who met DIBELS composite benchmark goals. Statistically significant increases were observed for students in Kindergarten and Grades 3 and 4.

Similar patterns were observed for individual DIBELS subtest measures, including Oral Reading Fluency (ORF), Nonsense Word Fluency (NWF), Retell Fluency (RTF), and Daze. Statistically significant increases for the ORF measure were observed for students in Grades 3 and 4 and for the RTF measure in Grades 2 and 4.

KEY FINDINGS

Analyses of the percentages of students who met DIBELS composite benchmark goals suggest student growth in the 2015/16 and 2016/17 school years.

- ▶ Similar patterns were observed for individual DIBELS subtest measures

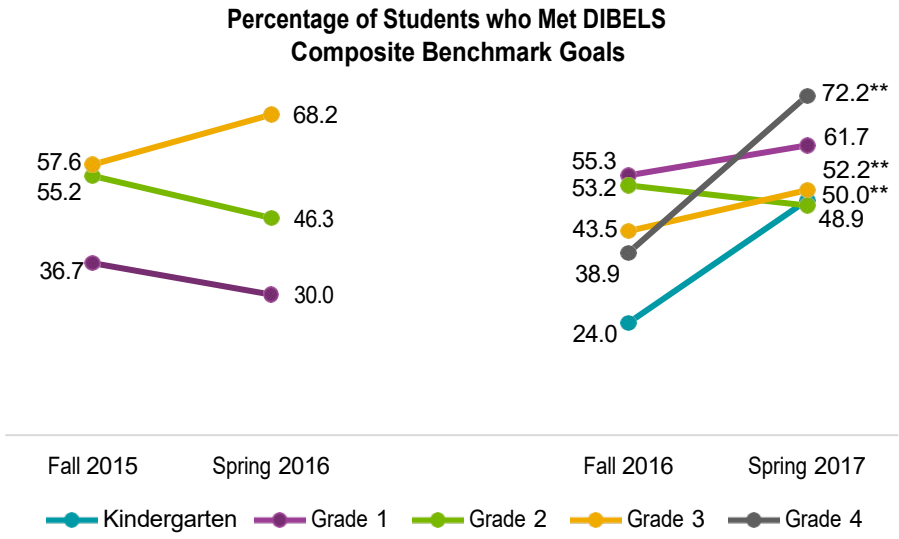
Percentages of students who met DIBELS benchmark goals did not vary by demographics.

- ▶ Descriptive findings indicate that the percentage of students who met DIBELS benchmark goals did not vary by gender, race/ethnicity, English language learner status, free- and reduced-priced lunch eligibility, or special education status.

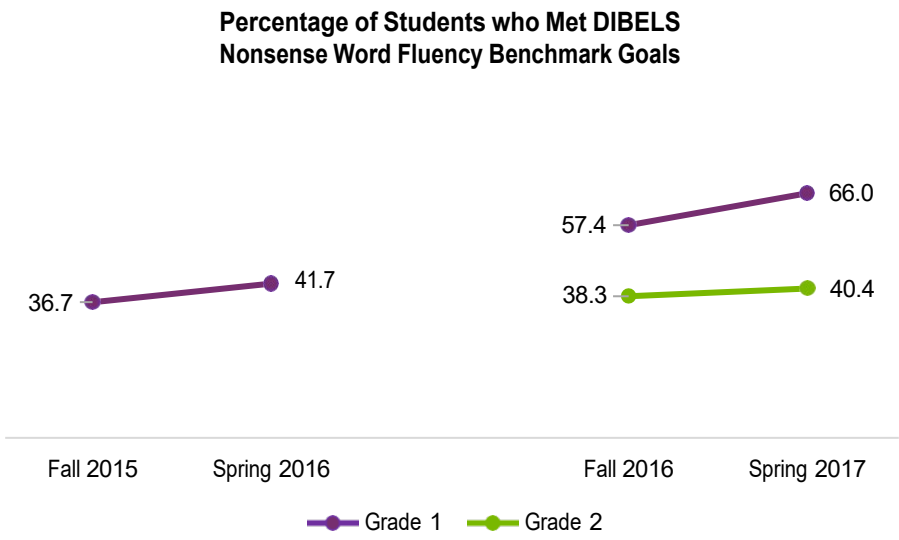
¹ DIBELS benchmark goals are criterion-referenced target scores for the DIBELS composite measure and subtests that represent adequate reading progress.

² Fall and spring data with the same group of students in each school year were analyzed to examine student growth. Analysis of growth during 2017/18 was not conducted due to missing spring data in that year. The earliest reported data for Kindergarten and fourth grade is fall 2016/17 because that was the first year that Really Great Reading was implemented in those grades. Sample sizes (respectively, by year for each grade) with both fall and spring data in each year are as follows: Kindergarten (50 in 2016/17), first grade (60 in 2015/16 and 47 in 2016/17), second grade (67 in 2015/16 and 47 in 2016/17), third grade (66 in 2015/16 and 69 in 2016/17), and fourth grade (54 in 2016/17).

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Note: Paired sample *t*-tests³ were conducted to examine fall-to-spring differences. Statistically significant results are noted as follows: ***p* < .01, ****p* < .001.⁴

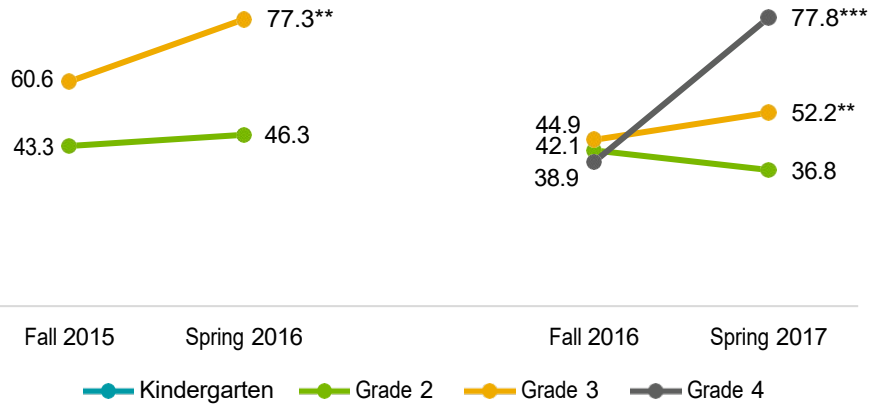


³ Paired samples *t*-tests are used to compare differences between matched pretest and posttest scores for a group. They compare the difference between the scores for each case and test to see if the average difference is significantly different from zero.

⁴ *p*-value is an indicator that represents the likelihood that observed results occurred by chance. In education research, values of *p* < .05 (i.e., values indicating that observed results had a less than 5% chance of occurring by chance) are typically used to identify results that are statistically significant. Lower *p*-values indicate a smaller likelihood that observed results occurred by chance and are therefore associated with statistically significant findings.

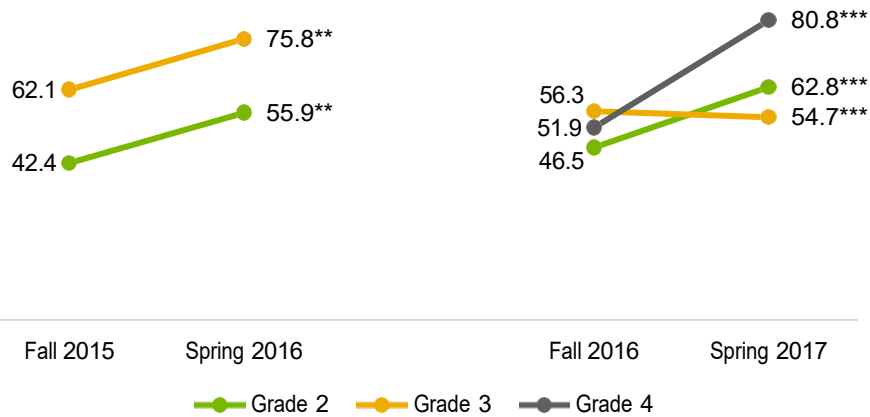
CASE STUDY OF REALLY GREAT READING AT ARAGON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

**Percentage of Students who Met DIBELS
Oral Reading Fluency Benchmark Goals**



Note: Paired sample *t*-tests were conducted to examine fall-to-spring differences. Statistically significant results are noted as follows: ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

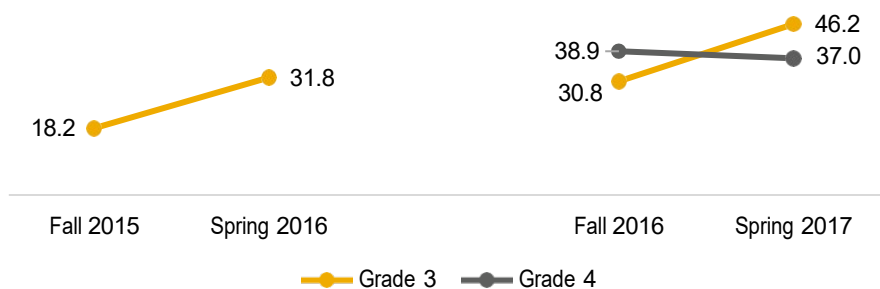
**Percentage of Students who Met DIBELS
Retell Fluency Benchmark Goals**



Note: Paired sample *t*-tests were conducted to examine fall-to-spring differences. Statistically significant results are noted as follows: ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

CASE STUDY OF REALLY GREAT READING AT ARAGON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

**Percentage of Students who Met DIBELS
Daze Benchmark Goals**



Subgroup analysis among students showed the percentage of students who met DIBELS benchmark goals did not vary by student demographics.

Subgroup analysis was conducted to examine if the percentage of students who met DIBELS benchmark goals differed by student demographics. Descriptive findings indicate that the percentage of students who met DIBELS benchmark goals did not vary by gender, ethnicity, English language learner status, free and reduced-priced lunch eligibility, or special education status.

Study Limitations and Implications for Future Research

Because DIBELS score calculation varies by grade and time of year, DIBELS scores may not be used to calculate student growth over time. Therefore, these analyses compare the percentages of students who met DIBELS benchmark goals for each implementation year. Future studies may target districts using scores from outcome measures that can be reliably compared over time.

The analyses in this study are descriptive and do not indicate causal relationships. Changes in student performance may be related to implementation of Really Great Reading, typical student growth, or other factors. Future research that compares outcomes among Really Great Reading participants and nonparticipants using a rigorous design would allow for stronger statements about impact.