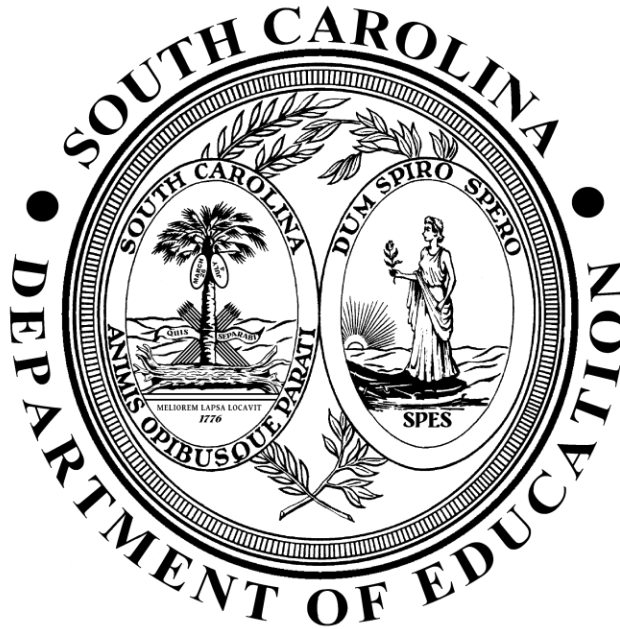


**STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

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STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION



Reading Partners 2019 Outcomes Report

Report to the South Carolina General Assembly

Pursuant to Proviso 3.6

July 2019

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Reporting Requirements

Per Proviso 3.6 of the 2018–19 Appropriations Bill:

“Funds appropriated to the Department of Education for Reading Partners 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, 2019 on the impact of the program.”

This report has been provided to the South Carolina Department of Education (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 of the organization is to establish reading centers at elementary schools in under-resourced communities. Reading Partners began in Charleston in 2013, and works closely with Charleston County and Berkeley County school districts. Reading Partners serves 17 Title I elementary schools across Charleston and Berkeley counties. Students in these schools receive one-on-one tutoring from volunteers using a structured research- and evidence-based curriculum. This curriculum focuses on improving three different measures of student reading proficiency: reading comprehension, fluency, and sight-word reading.

Summary of Outcomes

Reading Partners exceeded both the enrollment and growth goals for participating students. The organization had a total final enrollment of 909 students, surpassing the enrollment goal of 800 students. The program also exceeded the student growth goals for students enrolled at least 12 sessions. The average reading percentile rank increased by 13 percentage points, with the average student entering at the 24th percentile and exiting at the 37th percentile as measured by the Renaissance STAR Reading (STAR R) test for students in grades 3–5 and STAR Early Learning (STAR EL) test for K–2 students. K–2 students performed extremely well on the STAR EL test with 95 percent of students demonstrating mastery of grade-appropriate foundational literacy skills. Detailed 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. Students are allowed to select which books they will take home to keep for the summer from a selection of books on their reading level. Each student takes home five books over the summer. Each book comes with activities that the students can complete independently as well as activities 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 one summer camp for the 2018–19 school year. This is our third year in a partnership with the City of Charleston’s Recreation Department. This camp is running a modification of the classic Reading Partners program, where students will receive four 45-minute sessions per week and will be given a pre- and post-assessment 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 partner schools in order to become an integrated part of the school day. Program Managers (PMs) for Reading Partners attend school-level literacy team meetings to participate in discussions of students’ literacy progress and the assignment of interventions. Reading Partners encourages schools to view the organization as a Tier 2 intervention in order for students in need of more support to be seen by a school-level interventionist five days a week, while the classroom teacher can assist students in need of less support.

Reading Partners also collaborates with classroom teachers to think strategically about their literacy instruction. If several students from the same classroom are attending the Reading Partners program from one classroom, we try to arrange the schedule to ensure 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 teachers by providing them with a reduced class size and appropriate time to focus on their small group instruction.

The PM's relationship with school-level administration and literacy coaches builds capacity as well. PMs are constantly evaluating data, conducting student progress monitoring, and 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 meet the needs of each individual student.

2018–19 Reading Partners Goals, Objectives, Activities, and Outcomes

Goal 1: Employ Five Full-Time Employees

Goal

Employ five full-time employees, including Master Reading Teacher 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 hired for the 2018–19 school year.

2018–19 Planned Activities

- Program Director will work with our national recruiting team to post for open 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.
 - Note: These trainings are mandatory (with make-up trainings offered when necessary) and 100 percent of our AmeriCorps members attended all the trainings and/or make-up trainings in 2018–19.
- 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, 2018, the assembled program team will work with 35 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.

2018–19 Outcomes

- All full-time staff were retained and received professional development during the year, and began the AmeriCorps training program for site coordinators on August 9, 2018. All PMs have at least a Master’s degree in reading or literacy and/or at least eight years of teaching experience.
- Thirty-five AmeriCorps members were recruited and trained in topics including:
 - 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 2018, 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 EL and STAR R assessments 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 STAR assessment for placement in Reading Partners curriculum.
- Administer winter STAR assessment for instructional purposes.
- Administer spring STAR assessment for program evaluation.

2018–19 Planned Activities

- 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.

2018–19 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, 2018. All PMs have at least a Master’s degree in reading or literacy and/or at least eight years of teaching experience.
- All 561 students enrolled in grades K–2 took the STAR EL beginning of the year test.
- All 348 students enrolled in grades 3–5 took the STAR R test at the beginning of the year.
- Every student (909) enrolled in the Reading Partners program had an IRP. Students were placed in specific curriculum based on STAR testing results and PM consult. IRPs for all students were created by PMs and modified based on assessment information.

Goal 3: Provide Literacy Workshops for Parents

Goal

Provide literacy workshops for parents.

Objectives

- Develop and offer workshops and take-home materials for parents on the importance of building a literacy culture at home.
- Provide summer training materials to educate parents on the "summer slide" and the potential benefit of reading daily. Provide information on the backpack that is coming home with their student for the summer.

2018–19 Planned Activities

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

2018–19 Outcomes

- Reading Partners offered two workshops 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.
- Reading Partners send home educational information 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 800 High-Poverty Students

Goal

- Enroll 800 high-poverty students identified by the school as in need of Tier 2 reading intervention.
- Eighty percent of K–2 students will master grade-appropriate foundational literacy skills as exhibited by assessment on STAR EL test.
- Seventy percent of grade 3–5 students will meet the end-of-year literacy growth goal of increasing their percentile rank by at least one percent, as exhibited on STAR R 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.

2018–19 Planned Activities

- All 16 reading centers in Berkeley and Charleston counties receive 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.
- K–5 reading level and interest level texts will be placed in each center to ensure students have 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 925 community volunteers receive 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 the 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 will be stocked with an engaging Core Read Aloud library, including materials on 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 will be 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 will be updated based on the literacy expertise that the PMs provide.
- Every student in the program will receive a backpack with five books, activity sheets, a reading journal, and a special pencil for the summer reading program. Students are able to choose their books from books chosen for their independent reading level.

2018–19 Outcomes

- 902 high-poverty students were enrolled in the intervention program. Grade breakdown:
 - Kindergarten: 210 students
 - Grade 1: 186 students
 - Grade 2: 160 students
 - Grade 3: 88 students
 - Grade 4: 146 students
 - Grade 5: 112 students
- We completed end-of-year testing for 813 students. Students who have 12 sessions or more are counted towards end-of-year outcomes.
- Students received an average of 35 one-on-one intervention sessions.
- Eighty-nine percent of students worked with volunteers who provided two sessions per week.
- Eighty-three percent of K–2 students mastered grade-appropriate foundational literacy skills (see Appendix A).
- Seventy-nine percent of grade 3–5 students met the primary end-of-year literacy growth goal of at least one percentage point (see Appendix B).

Appendix A: Percentage of K–2 Students Who Mastered Foundational Literacy Skills

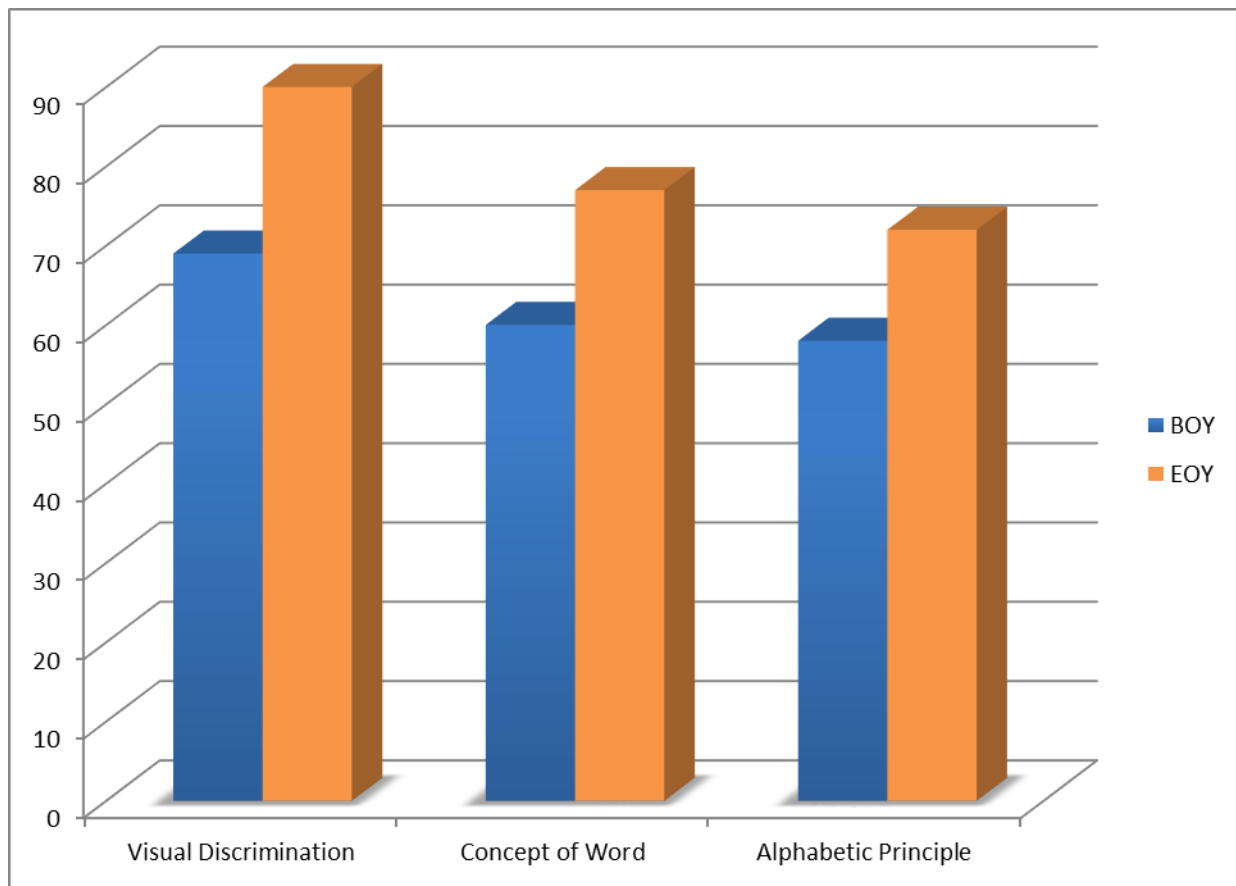
Goal

Eighty percent of K–2 students will master grade appropriate foundational literacy skills as exhibited on the STAR EL test.

Outcome

Eighty-three percent of K–2 students have mastered grade-appropriate foundational literacy skills.

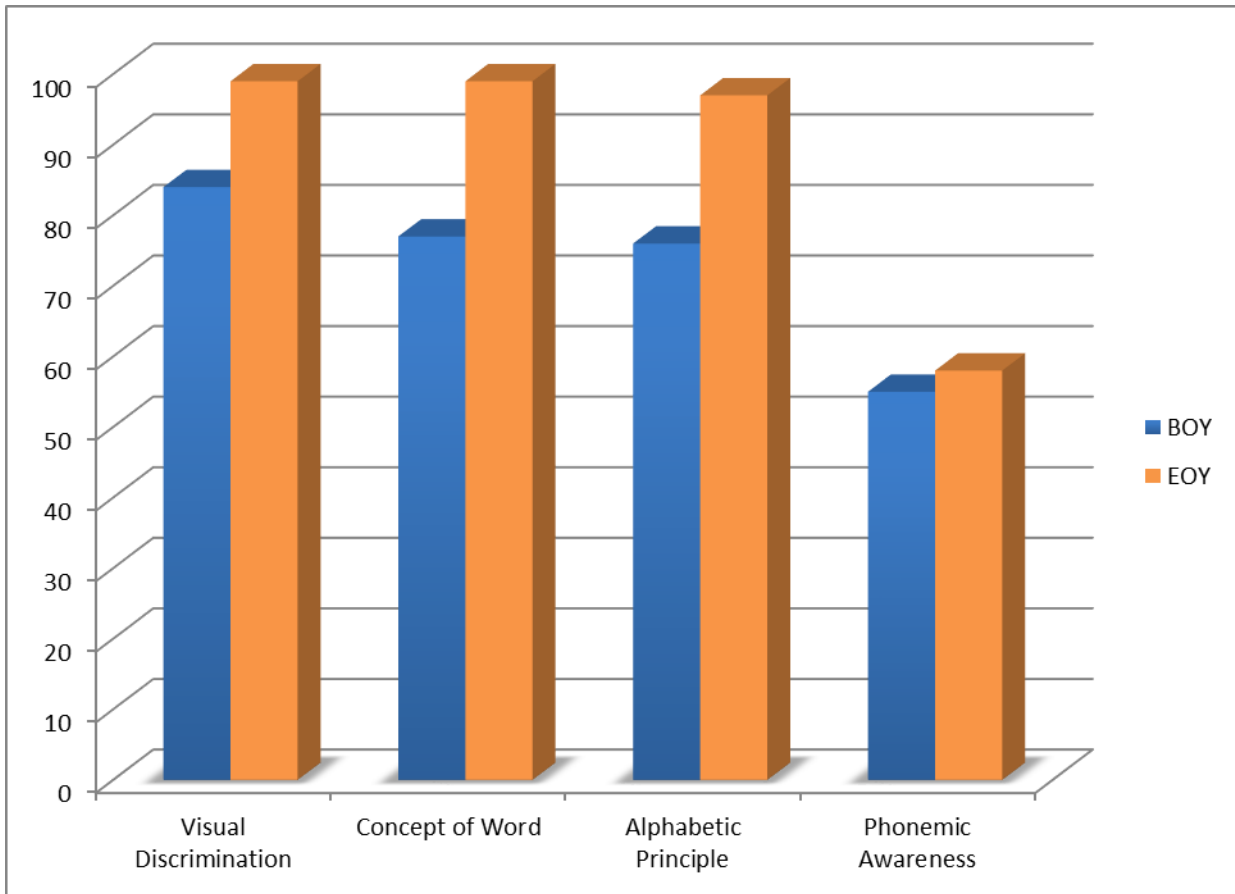
Figure 1: Percentage of Kindergarten Students Who Mastered Foundational Literacy Skills between the Beginning of the Year (BOY) and End of the Year (EOY) Assessments



Note: STAR EL has changed “mastery” to represent a minimum score of 80 vs. a previous minimum score of 70.

Source: Reading Partners Outcome Data (2019).

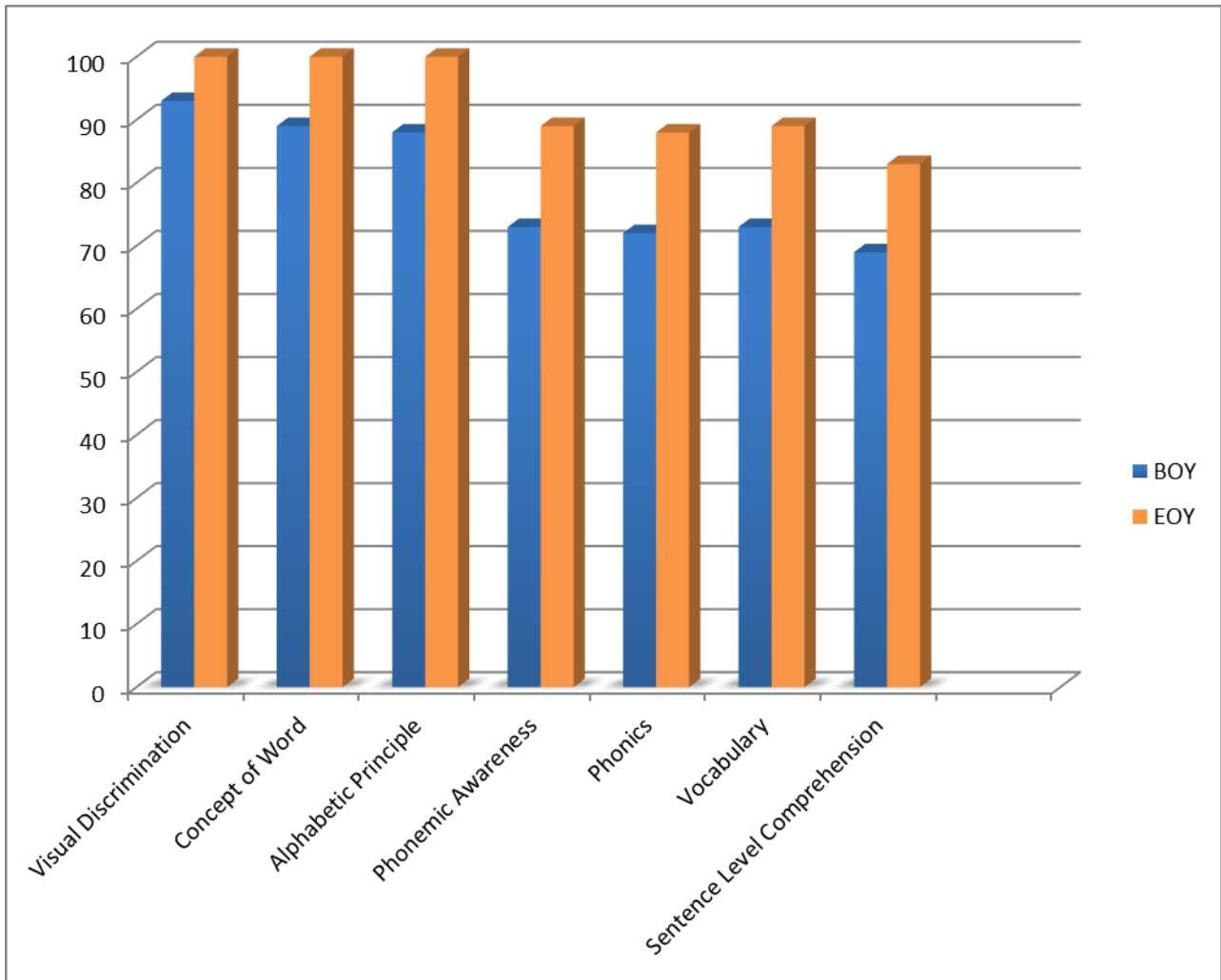
Figure 2: Percentage of Grade 1 Students Who Mastered Foundational Literacy Skills between the BOY and EOY Assessments



Note: STAR EL has changed “mastery” to represent a minimum score of 80 vs. a previous minimum score of 70.

Source: Reading Partners Outcome Data (2019).

Figure 3: Percentage of Grade 2 Students Who Mastered Foundational Literacy Skills between the BOY and EOY Assessments



Note: STAR EL has changed “mastery” to represent a minimum score of 80 vs. a previous minimum score of 70.

Source: Reading Partners Outcome Data (2019).

Appendix B: Percentage of 3–5 Students Who Mastered Foundational Literacy Skills

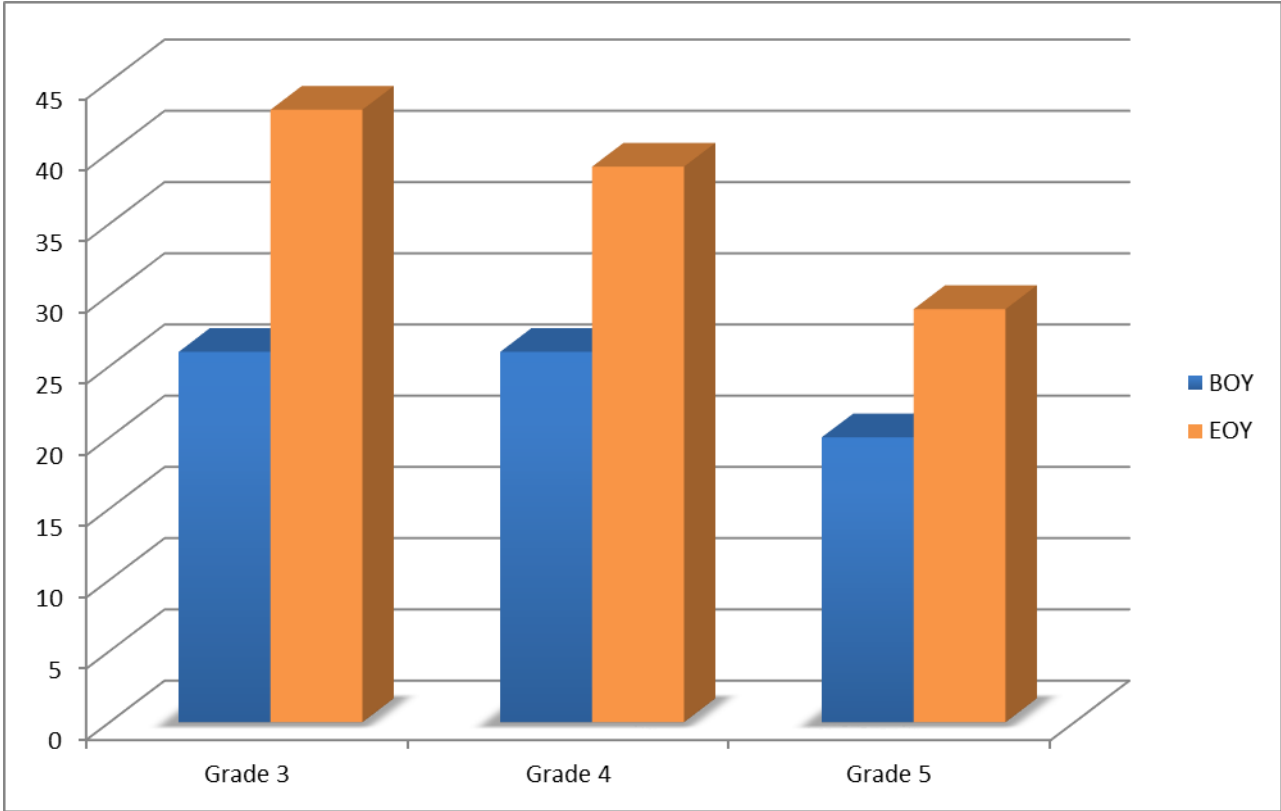
Goal

Seventy percent of grade 3–5 students will meet the end-of-year literacy growth goal of increasing their percentile rank by at least one percent, as exhibited on the STAR Reading test.

Outcome

Seventy-nine percent of grade 3–5 students have met the primary end-of-year literacy growth goal of at least one percentage point. Average percentile rank increase was thirteen percentage points.

Figure 4: Grade 3–5 Percentile Changes on STAR Reading



Source: Reading Partners Outcome Data (2019).