

Miami-Dade County Public Schools

Third Grade Summer Reading Camps, 2016 Evaluation

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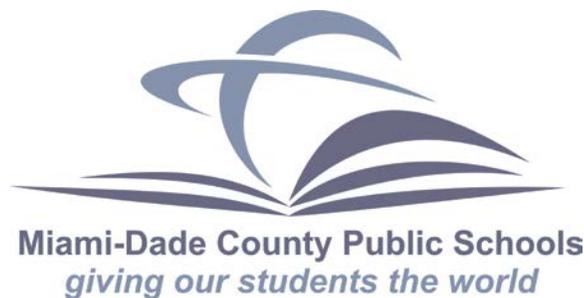
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The fundamental goal of the Third Grade Summer Reading Camp program is to bolster the reading skills of third-grade students scheduled for retention and to prepare them to demonstrate mastery of state standards in order to be promoted to the fourth grade. The Office of Program Evaluation undertook an evaluation to gauge whether students who completed the program in summer 2016 exhibited improved performance on the summer alternative assessment when compared to a comparison group of non-participants. The summer alternative assessment, the Stanford Achievement Test, Tenth Edition (SAT-10), was offered to students at the end of the Reading Camps and served as the posttest. The spring alternative assessment, the Iowa Test of Basic Skills, Edition C (ITBS-C), served as the pretest.

Nearly all administrators gave positive reports of each of the core aspects of implementation (i.e., planning, resources, transportation, instructional materials/supplies and curriculum). The Reading Camps curricula were also rated effective with the bulk of respondents agreeing that they should continue in their present form. However, separate analyses of program dosage for the reading instruction and test preparation portions of the program found less than half of the schools to have conformed to program guidelines: although the main curricular intervention operated in accordance with program specification, the amount of test preparation was less than specified; any observed programmatic effects must be viewed with this in mind.

Both the mean scores and passing rates of students who participated were significantly higher than those who did not, despite the fact that the program was not operated with complete fidelity. Therefore, it may be concluded that participation in the program helped students pass the alternative reading test, required for promotion to the fourth grade.

INTRODUCTION

The Third Grade Summer Reading Camps (Reading Camps) is an intensive reading remediation program designed to prepare the students to demonstrate grade level proficiency by earning a passing score on an alternative assessment given at the end of summer school. Students targeted for enrollment are retained third graders. The following report details the evaluation of the twelfth implementation of the camps (summer 2016) and focuses on their impact on the students' subsequent performance on the alternative assessment test.

Background

Florida Statutes currently prohibit social promotion and mandate that students with academic deficiencies be provided with intensive remediation with particular emphasis on the reading proficiency of students in grades K through 3. Districts are required to develop an academic improvement plan for each student who exhibited a deficiency in reading that would “identify the student’s specific areas of deficiency, . . . , the desired levels of performance in these areas, and the instructional and support services to be provided to meet the desired levels of performance” (*Public School Student Progression*, 2016). If the student’s reading deficiency is not remedied by the end of the third grade, the student is retained unless s/he meets one of the following six types of "good cause" exemptions:

- an acceptable level of performance on an alternative assessment;
- demonstration, through a portfolio, of the ability to read on grade level;
- status as an English Language Learner, with less than two years in English for Speakers of Other Languages programs;
- eligibility for special education (SPED) with an individual education plan (IEP) that indicates that it is not appropriate to participate in statewide testing;
- eligibility for SPED without testing exemption with an IEP or 504 plan demonstrating receipt of two years of intensive remediation in reading, a continuing deficiency in reading, and a previous retention in grades K through 3; or,
- receipt of two years of intensive remediation in reading, a continuing deficiency in reading, and two previous retentions in grades K through 3. (A student may not be retained more than once in third grade.)

Because large numbers of the state’s third graders have historically been in danger of retention due to achieving a score of level 1 on the previously administered Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test, the State called for districts to provide “intensive reading camps” during the summer, designed to prepare such students for the next opportunity to pass the test (Florida Department of Education, n.d.). The program has undergone numerous changes in format and length of delivery since its inception (i.e., 2003) and has produced mixed results.

Description of the Program

The Reading Camps' curriculum that operated in the summers of 2015 and 2016 represented a change from the curriculum that operated for the previous two summers (i.e., 2013 and 2014). It featured the rotation of small groups through various traditional and computer-based activities and one hour of whole-class test preparation. The program in place provided students with four

hours of reading and one hour of test preparation activities per day, five days per week, for four weeks. The curriculum that operated within the school day was *Flex Literacy* developed by McGraw-Hill.

The program vendor provided the teachers and assistant principals with a full day of training on all of the components of the program and instructional framework. District staff were also available to answer questions regarding M-DCPS instructional procedures. Teachers received specific training on the print and digital components of the program and on the delivery of test preparation activities for the retained students. The teachers also received Teacher's Edition manuals, test preparation materials, copies of student materials, and student schedules. The following day the teachers reported to their building to set up their classes, assisted by floating curriculum support specialists who were also available to answer implementation questions (Department of Language Arts/Reading, personal communication).

The research-based intervention program was principally organized around small-group instruction during which students interacted with comprehensive teacher-led print materials, digital instruction, and collaborative project activities. The following activities were included in the program:

- Teacher Guided Critical Thinking
- Text Connections
- Project Experiences
- Literacy Connections
- Writing Connections
- Adaptive Technology
- Interactive Readers

The Department of Language Arts/Reading periodically monitored the delivery of the curriculum during on-site visits to selected Reading Camps. The program vendor also visited every summer service site at least once. Reports of the findings from the vendor's visits were provided to district administrators (Department of Language Arts/Reading).

The program that was implemented in 2016 provided students with 20 full days of instruction prior to the alternative assessment. The District's *2016 Summer Implementation Document* (Department of Summer Services, 2016) limited participation in the Reading Camps to “retained third-grade students” (p. 8). Consequently, the students targeted by the program remained primarily the third graders who had been retained (i.e., were not assigned a “P” promotion code and did not meet one of the “good cause” exemptions).

Table 1
Features of the Third Grade Summer Reading Camps

Program Features					
	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Hours per day ^a	3	5	5	5	5
Days per week	5	5	5	5	5
Daily schedule	8:30-11:30	8:30-2:00	8:30-2:00	8:30-2:00	8:30-2:00
Weeks per term	5	4	4	5	5
Hours of instruction per term	60	100	100	100	100
Teacher-student ratio	1:18	1:18	1:18	1:18	1:18
Number of camps	34	25	25	30	31
Student enrollment	1,833	2,048	2,656	1,279	2,208

Note. Each column represents the schedule in effect for that year.

^a Includes ½ hour for lunch.

Table 1 provides information on various operational features of the Reading Camp program in each summer that it was implemented during the last five years. The instructional program that has operated since 2015 represents a change from the program that operated during 2013 and 2014. The Reading Camps that operated in 2016 are listed in Table 2.

Table 2
List of Reading Camps, 2016

<u>North Regional Center</u>		<u>Central Regional Center</u>	
5051	Ernest R Graham K-8	0201	Banyan
0761	Fienberg/Fisher K-8	5901	Carrie Meek/Westview K-8
2281	Greynolds Park	0801	Citrus Grove
2181	Joella C. Good Elementary	1601	Edison Park
3421	Marcus A Milam K-8	2501	Holmes
3141	Meadowlane	4401	Kelsey L Pharr
3661	Natural Bridge	1681	Lillie C Evans K-8
3941	North Miami	1441	Paul Laurence Dunbar
4341	Parkway	5001	Shenandoah
4541	Rainbow Park	5201	South Hialeah
		5441	Sylvania Heights
<u>South Regional Center</u>			
0261	Bel-Aire		
3621	Coconut Palm K-8		
0861	Colonial Drive		
1811	Dante B Fascell		
2651	Kendale Lakes		
2901	Leisure City K-8		
1371	Marjory S Douglas		
5281	South Miami Heights		

METHODOLOGY

Research Questions

An evaluation was undertaken by the district's Office of Program Evaluation to assess the implementation of the Third Grade Summer Reading Camps, to explore the attitudes of responding principals toward the program, and to gauge its impact. The evaluation was guided by two questions:

- 1. Were the Reading Camps implemented as planned?**
- 2. Did students who participated in the Reading Camps experience better reading achievement outcomes than students who did not participate?**

Data Sources

Data were gathered from four sources to address the evaluation questions. The first source of data consisted of a review of documents obtained from the District's Division of Language Arts/Reading, the District's School Choice and Parental Options, and the Florida Department of Education. The second source of data was an online survey of principals designed to measure various aspects of the summer program including enrollment, planning, staffing, transportation, resources, materials, supplies, and specific curricular factors. The third source and fourth sources of data were students' demographic and assessment records maintained on the District's mainframe computer system. Each of the data sources will be discussed in detail in ensuing sections.

Implementation

Implementation was examined so that any observed effects on participants' achievement could be properly attributed to the program. This portion of the evaluation was concerned with determining whether the Reading Camps were being operated as specified and whether or not sufficient planning, resources, and support were evident. Data were gathered from an online survey of principals entitled the Summer Reading Camps Implementation Survey to gauge implementation. (A copy of the survey may be found in Appendix A.)

The Summer Reading Camps Implementation Survey measures various aspects of the summer program including enrollment, planning, staffing, transportation, resources, materials, supplies, and specific curricular-factors (i.e.; dosage, frequency, and duration of treatment; engagement; and perceived effectiveness). The survey comprised 26 items of which 21 adhered to a Likert-type format with response options that varied. Two filter questions (15 and 27) were used to enable a branching process to bypass items that were not applicable to specific respondents. The first three items obtained identification, enrollment, and programmatic information; three items (4-6) assessed the adequacy of planning and staffing levels; three items (7-9) pertained to transportation; and two items (10-11) addressed the sufficiency of instructional materials and supplies.

Twelve program-specific curricular questions were also defined: three items (12-14) addressed the name, instructional format and dosage of the program; two items (16 and 18) examined the

duration of test preparation and the number of computer work stations. Three items assessed the adequacy of the curriculum and three items (19-21) assessed the adequacy of the curriculum in terms of differentiated instruction, engagement, and effectiveness. Four summary items (22-25) solicited respondents' impressions of the support that was available and of the program as a whole. Finally, space was provided to give respondents the option of suggesting areas for improvement. A total of 15 items measured implementation.

The survey was administered online to assistant principals charged with implementing the program at participating sites during July 2016. Key items were organized into one of four implementation categories: Planning, Resources, Transportation, and Curriculum/Instruction. The percentages of positive responses within a category are classified as 0-49.9% (not implemented), 50-69.9% (partially implemented), and 70-100% (fully implemented). Otherwise, the analysis of the results of the Summer Reading Camps Implementation Survey was limited to descriptive statistics.

An attitudinal component measured principals' summative perceptions of the program. The issues addressed included technical support, effectiveness, satisfaction with the status quo, and suggestions for improvement. Data for this component were drawn from the Summer Implementation Survey. Two of those items (22 and 25) measured attitude. The analysis of the results for the attitudinal component was limited to descriptive statistics.

Program Impact

Design and Samples

A non-equivalent groups quasi-experimental design (Campbell & Stanley, 1963) was used to compare the performance of students who participated in the Reading Camps with students who did not, using pretest scores to equate the groups' performance prior to exposure and posttest scores to measure their performance afterwards. The groups were considered nonequivalent, because group membership was not assigned randomly.

Of the 27,314 students third grade students who took the Florida Standards Assessment English Language Arts (FSA/ELA) subtest and were active in the District at the end of the 2015-16 school year, 23.4% ($n = 6,397$) scored within achievement Level 1.

Of those students, 89.8% ($n=5,742$) faced mandatory retention under state statute, as indicated by their promotion code. A subset of those students ($n = 2,893$) qualified for one or more of the good cause exemptions delineated by the state. Table 3 lists the number and percent of students who utilized each exemption. Students listed as receiving an exemption based on a portfolio and/or an alternative assessment earned a passing score on one of those measures. The remaining 2,849 students were eligible to attend the Reading Camps.

Table 3
Good Cause Exemptions to Mandatory Retention
Granted to M-DCPS Third Graders, 2015-16

	n	%
English Language Learner ^a	1,044	36.1
Students with Disabilities ^b	493	17.0
Alternative Assessment	353	12.2
Portfolio Assessment	694	24.0
Other ^c	309	10.7
Total	2,893	100.0

Note. Percentages may not total to 100 due to rounding.

^aStudents with less than two years in an English for Speakers of Other Languages Program. ^bStudents with Disabilities who were previously retained and had two or more years of intensive remediation or for whom statewide assessment is not appropriate. ^c Includes students who received intensive remediation for two or more years and were previously retained for two years.

The students who **completed** the Reading Camps comprised the program pool. A comparison group was also defined which consisted of the eligible students who did not participate in the program. Students who participated but did not complete the program (n=84) and students who previously participated in the Summer Reading Camps (n=38) were excluded from both groups. As such, 95.7% of the 2,849 students slated for retention (n=2,727) were eligible to be included.

The program pool was comprised of the 2,105 students who completed the Reading Camps and the comparison pool was comprised of the 622 students who did not have current or previous exposure to the program. Thirty-five of the students in the program pool attended charter schools and were excluded from the analysis.

Of the 2,070 students in the program pool, 97.3% (n = 2,015) had valid pre- and post- test (i.e., spring and summer alternative assessment) scores, and constituted the program group. Of the 622 students in the comparison pool, only 17.4% (n = 108) had valid pre- and post- test scores, and constituted the comparison group. The characteristics of the final sample are described in Table 4. It lists for each subgroup, the percentage of students in the program group and the comparison group.

Table 4
The Groups' Demographic Characteristics as a Percentage of the Sample

Subgroup	Reading Camps	Comparison
Gender		
Male	58.1	54.6
Female	41.9	45.4
Ethnicity		
Black	44.4	31.5 ^a
Non-Black	55.6	68.5
Free/Reduced Price Lunch		
Eligible	95.3	78.7 ^b
Non-Eligible	4.7	21.3
English Language Learner		
Current	40.4	33.3
Former	4.0	6.7
Never	55.4	60.0
Special Education		
Disabled	16.5	14.8
Non-Disabled	83.5	85.2
Over Age for Grade		
Overage	17.1	18.5
Non-Overage	82.9	81.5
Age	9.5	9.5
N	2,015	108

Note. Statistically significant differences between the programs' demographic distributions within the subgroups are denoted by superscripts. Age is expressed in years.

^a $\phi(1,2,123) = .06, p < .01$. ^b $\phi(1,2,123) = .16, p < .001$.

Table 4 shows that the Ethnicity and Free/Reduced Price Lunch distributions differed significantly among the program groups.

Instrumentation

The posttest used for this analysis was the Reading Comprehension subtest of the Stanford Achievement Test, Tenth Edition, SAT-10, a standardized norm-referenced test designed to measure students' performance in comparison to a national normative sample, and to facilitate comparisons among individuals and groups. It is currently administered by the district to third grade students as an Alternative Assessment for Grade Three Promotion (AAGTP) at the end of summer school.

The Florida Standards Assessments, English Language Arts (FSA/ELA) served as the pretest. The FSA/ELA, a criterion referenced test administered statewide each spring to students in Grades 3-8, is the primary accountability measure used in the state of Florida.

Data Analyses

The question of whether participants benefited by attending the Reading Camps is complex. First, did students score higher on the alternative assessment than they would have had they not attended? Second, was the improvement, if any, sufficient to meet the passing criterion established for promotion? Demographic and pretest differences are known to influence achievement so that any between-group variation on such variables can mask the program's impact. Therefore, the application of the quasi-experimental design used regression analysis to compare the groups' posttest scores, while controlling for students' initial ability and demographic characteristics.

Improvement

The question of whether participants scored higher on the alternative assessment than non-participants was gauged through a regression analysis that estimated the impact of the program on the students' posttest scores, controlling for students' pretest scores and demographic characteristics. Students' demographic characteristics, pretest, and program participation were the main predictors in the model. Interaction terms were also included to determine if the impact of the Reading Camps program was affected by prior participation in the Rising Literacy program, or differed with students' pretest scores, or some combination of both.

Promotion

The question of whether participants were more likely than non-participants to have scored high enough on the alternative assessment to be promoted was gauged through a logistic regression analysis that estimated the impact of the program on the likelihood that students' would exceed the criterion for passing the alternative assessment, controlling for students' pretest scores and demographic characteristics. The passing criterion was the attainment of a score at or above the 45th percentile on the AATGP, which is the cutoff for promotion to the fourth grade. Participation in *Literacy for Rising 3rd Grade Students* (a summer program designed to provide compensatory instruction to low achieving students entering third grade), which may have influenced the impact of the Summer Reading Camps, was also included as a covariate in the analysis.

Students' demographic characteristics (i.e., Gender, Ethnicity, Free/Reduced Price Lunch eligibility, English Language Learner status, Special Education participation, and over age for grade status), pretest, and program participation (i.e., Reading Camps, 1=participant, 0=non-participant and Rising Literacy (1=participant, 0=non-participant) were the main predictors in the model. Interaction terms (Reading Camps x Pretest, Rising Literacy x Pretest, and Reading Camps x Rising Literacy x Pretest) were also included to ascertain whether the impact of the Reading Camps program was affected by prior participation in the Rising Literacy program, or differed with students' pretest scores, or some combination of both.

RESULTS

The evaluation of the Reading Camps was guided by two research questions. The first question pertains to implementation and perception. The second question gauges the program's impact in terms of improvement and on their likelihood of meeting the criterion for promotion.

Return Rate

Administrators at 31 schools were targeted to receive the Summer Reading Camps Implementation Survey, which was administered online during the summer session. All completed the survey.

Implementation

Implementation was gauged so that any observed effects on participants' achievement could be properly attributed to the program. The online survey was used to make this determination, by measuring various aspects of the summer program including enrollment, planning, staffing, transportation, resources, materials, supplies, and specific curricular-factors, such as dosage (daily duration of treatment), format, engagement, and perceived effectiveness. Several schools operated more than one program during the summer. Table 5 lists the number and percent of the schools' administrators who reported operating each program.

Table 5
Programs that Operated in Conjunction with the Reading Camps

Program	n	%
Course Credit Recovery	4	12.9
Extended School Year Services	7	22.6
Literacy for Rising Third Grade Students	30	96.8
Voluntary Prekindergarten	1	3.3

Note. Two schools reported not operating any additional programs and most schools reported operating one additional program.

Of the 30 responding administrators, 67.7% (n=21) reported operating one additional programs, 22.6% (n=7) reported operating two, 3.2% (n=1) reported operating three, and 3.2% (n=1) reported operating four. The most prevalent program was Literacy for Rising Third Grade Students followed by Extended School Year Services.

Despite the multiple programs that operated in many cases, the enrollment at the schools was mostly below capacity. Although summer capacity ranged from 2.6% to 52.9% of spring capacity, half of the schools operated at or less than 18.9% of spring capacity and three-quarters of the schools operated at less than 27.6% of spring capacity.

The bulk of the implementation analysis was based on the results of ten Likert type responses that gauged principals' perception of the adequacy of each of the four major dimensions of implementation: Planning, Transportation, Instructional Materials/Supplies, and Curriculum. Table 6 lists the positive and negative response options (classified according to a rubric) for each implementation dimension.

Table 6
Response Option Categories Assigned
to Each Implementation Dimension

Implementation Dimension	Response Option Category	
	Positive Response Option	Negative Response Option
Planning	Adequate More than adequate	Less than adequate
Transportation	Usually on time Mostly on time	Mostly not on time Usually not on time
Instructional Materials/Supplies	An appropriate level More than needed Much more than needed	Less than needed Much less than needed
Curriculum	Average Good Very good	Poor Fair

Table 7 lists the number and percent of principals who responded positively and negatively to each item within each implementation dimension. A total line is also provided that summarizes the responses within each dimension. Total scores for each dimension are classified as: 0-49.9% (not implemented), 50-69.9% (partially implemented – dark), and 70-100% (fully implemented – light).

Table 7
Principals' Responses to Selected Items Addressing Implementation

Dimension/Item	Positive		Negative	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Planning				
4 How well was your summer location informed about the academic needs of the students who would be attending?	31	100.0	0	0.0
5 How well was your summer location informed of the number of students that would be attending?	30	96.8	1	3.2
6 How adequate were the instructional staffing levels at the school, relative to the number of students that attended	30	96.8	1	3.2
Total		97.8		2.2
Transportation				
8 To what extent did the arrival of the buses typically align with the schedule of the school?	29	93.5	2	6.5
9 To what extent did the departure of the buses typically align with the schedule of the school?	31	100.0	0	0.0
Total		96.8		3.2
Instructional Materials/Supplies				
10 How sufficient was the amount of curricular materials (i.e., books, workbooks, manipulatives, etc.) available?	30	96.8	1	3.2
11 How sufficient was the amount of instructional supplies (i.e., computers, whiteboards, pencils, paper, etc.) available?	27	87.1	4	12.9
Total		91.9		8.1
Curriculum				
19 How would you rate the ability of the curriculum to remediate different students with different learning problems in the same classroom at the same time?	29	93.5	2	6.5
20 How would you rate the engagement of students in the curricular activities?	31	100.0	0	0.0
21 How would you rate the effectiveness of the curriculum at addressing the skills deficits of the students?	27	87.1	4	12.9
Total		95.2		4.8

Note. Total scores for each aspect are categorized as follows: 0-49.9% (not implemented - orange), 50-69.9% (partially implemented - yellow), and 70-100% (fully implemented - blue). Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

The table shows that nearly all of the administrators rated planning, for the number and needs of students who would be attending their schools, positively. Staffing levels were assessed positively as a result. In terms of planning, the program may be considered to be fully implemented.

On the issue of transportation, all administrators reported that the arrival and departure of the school buses aligned with the school schedule. In terms of transportation, the program may be considered to be fully implemented.

On the issue of Instructional Materials/Supplies, nearly all of the administrators felt that the amount of curricular materials and instructional supplies was adequate. In terms of instructional materials/supplies, the program may be considered to be fully implemented.

Curriculum was an important area of inquiry and as such was addressed by four items, one of which asked respondents to identify the primary program operating in their school. While 96.7% of the administrators (n=29) identified Flex Literacy as the principal curricular program operating in the Reading Camps, 3.2% (n=1) identified Reading Theater and 3.2% (n=1) identified Scoring High as such.

All respondents felt that the curricular subject matter was engaging to students; while nearly all, 93.5% (n=29), felt that the curriculum “was able to remediate students with different learning problems within the same classroom,” and “was effective at addressing their skill deficits.” On the issue of curriculum, the program may be considered to be fully implemented.

Finally, administrators were asked to indicate the daily time and format for delivery of the principal curriculum, the presence and quantity of computer workstations, and the estimated time in test preparation activities, the number of computer workstations, and the format of the program allotted to the curriculum. The recommended daily dosage is 225 minutes for Flex Literacy and 60 minutes for SAT-10 Prep as per program guidelines. The minimum ranges encompassing those recommended times are 225 to 274 minutes for Flex Literacy and 60 to 89 minutes for SAT-10 Prep. Therefore, schools that implemented Flex Literacy for 225 minutes or more, and SAT-10 Prep for 60 minutes or more, were judged to have been properly implemented.

While all schools reported implementing operating the principal curricular program (Flex Literacy), three schools did not provide daily test preparation activities as specified. Table 8 lists the estimated time spent in test preparation and Flex Literacy instructional time.

Table 8
Crosstabulation of Daily Flex Literacy Dosage x SAT-10 Prep Dosage

Flex Literacy (minutes)	SAT-10 Prep (minutes)				Total
	Less than 30	30 to 59	60 to 89	90 or more	
75 to 124	0	0	0	0	0
125 to 174	0	0	0	0	0
175 to 224	0	0	1	0	1
225 to 274	4	5	6	0	15
275 or more	2	4	6	1	13
Total	6	9	13	1	29

Note. Schools that implemented Flex Literacy for 225 minutes or more and SAT-10 Prep for 60 minutes or more were judged to be properly implemented (shaded). Two schools (not shown above) that did not report using Flex Literacy were considered to have not properly implemented the program.

Cells in the rows four through five of the table depict schools that correctly implemented the Flex Literacy portion of the curriculum, while cells in the fourth and fifth columns depict schools that correctly implemented the SAT-10 Prep portion of the curriculum. Only those schools that satisfied both criteria (the shaded region of the table) correctly implemented that entire program, as evidenced by exposure to each component that is greater than or equal to that specified by program guidelines.

Table 8 shows 90.3% of the schools (28 of 31) properly implemented the Flex Literacy portion and 45.2% of the schools (14 of 31) properly implemented the SAT-10 Prep portion of the program. Moreover, three additional schools not shown in the table did not report using Flex Literacy. As such, only 41.9% of the schools (13 of 31) properly implemented both components. Although, all but one administrator reported that “groups of students rotate through different activities” and all of the administrators affirmed that “the curriculum . . . featured computer assisted instruction;” less than half of the administrators (48.3%, n=15) reported operating six or fewer computer workstations simultaneously in the same classroom as specified by program design. **Regarding the dosage format and elements of the curriculum, the program cannot be judged to be properly implemented.**

The attitudinal component of implementation measures administrators’ overall perceptions of the program. The issues addressed included technical support, effectiveness, satisfaction with the status quo, and suggestions for improvement. Table 9 lists the number and percent of principals who responded positively and negatively to the pertinent items.

Table 9
Administrators’ Attitudes Toward the Program

Item stem	Positive		Negative	
	n	%	n	%
How would you characterize the support provided by staff from the M-DCPS Office of Language Arts/Reading?	31	100.0	0	0.0
How effective do you believe the Reading Camps were at helping students improve their reading skills?	22	71.0	9	29.0
To what extent do you agree that the program should continue to operate in its current form?	22	71.0	9	29.0

Note. Positive responses: (Average to Very Good and Agree to Strongly Agree). Negative responses: (Poor to Fair, and Strongly Disagree to Unsure). Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

The table shows that all administrators endorsed the level of technical support provided by staff from the M-DCPS Office of Language Arts/Reading and affirmed that those staff members visited their schools as required by program guidelines. Finally, fewer than three-quarters of administrators endorsed the effectiveness of the program at improving the students’ reading skills and agreed that the program should continue to operate in its current form.

Space was also provided for administrators to provide open ended comments. A total of 54.8% of the administrators (n=17) responded to that item, with several addressing multiple topics.

Of the 22 comments in total, two were positive and 16 were negative/critical. Table 10 lists the number and percent of comments that fell within each of the previously listed dimensions of implementation.

Table 10
Number and Percent of Positive and Negative Comments by
Implementation Dimension

Dimension	Total		Positive		Negative	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Planning	9	40.9	0	0.0	9	100.0
Curriculum	9	40.9	1	11.1	8	88.9
Support	1	4.5	1	100.0	0	0.0
General	3	13.6	3	100.0	0	0.0
Total	22	100.0	5	22.7	17	77.3

The positive comments consisted mostly of general expressions of satisfaction. One administrator said, “M-DCPS employees do an excellent job in organizing and delivering a wonderful program for our students” and another administrator opined, “The Third Grade Summer Reading Camp is just as good as it was last year. Very good literature selection.” The negative comments consisted mainly of specific critiques about the planning and curricular aspects of the program’s implementation.

Several of the comments critical of planning pertained to the implementation of technology. One administrator noted,

The technology rotation had some . . . issues [in that] most students did not remember their username and password so it took some time to get them on the program . . . Also, it takes a few days for the students to adjust to the format of the technology portion of the [Flex Literacy] program.

Another administrator reported, “The technology component still has issues giving staff members . . . timely access to Flex Literacy and or Reading Labs.”

Still another asserted, “Schools should check adequacy of computer system in classrooms prior to the onset of summer program.”

Other planning concerns included the desire for more accurate student-teacher ratios, the availability of participating students’ statewide assessment results, and the need for review of the reading selections. Also expressed was the need to more for greater test preparation.

Several of the comments critical of the curriculum also pertained to technology, as one administrator reflected,

The current program relies heavily on technology [so] open summer sites need to be evaluated prior to the start of the summer session [as] too much time is wasted trying to get technology to appropriately function for teachers and students.

Another administrator felt, “Many of the students need additional instruction in decoding from an instructor, not a computer based program.”

Another curricular concern pertained to the rotation between work stations. One administrator related,

My concern is with the independent center during the rotation schedule. Due to the fact that many of the students are low, although clear explanations are provided to students, they still need redirection and support with independent activities.

A second administrator echoed that sentiment noting that “the team feels that the retained curriculum is in need of more content that is aligned with the assessment and fewer rotations.”

In sum, nearly all administrators gave positive reports of each of the core aspects of implementation (i.e., planning, resources, transportation, instructional materials/supplies and curriculum). However, open-ended comments, which offered universal acclaim for the support received, also uncovered some weaknesses concerning program planning and the curriculum. The Reading Camps curricula were rated effective with the bulk of respondents agreeing that they should continue in their present form. However, separate analyses of program dosage for the reading instruction and test preparation portions of the program found less than half of the schools to have conformed to program guidelines: although the main curricular intervention operated in accordance with program specification, the amount of test preparation was less than specified; any observed programmatic effects must be viewed with this in mind.

Program Impact

The quasi-experimental designs were applied by using regression analyses to compare the posttest scores of participating and non-participating students. The analyses controlled for students’ demographic characteristics and initial ability as measured by their pretest scores. **Of the 2,123 students included in this analysis, 22.0% (n=444) of the students who attended the Reading Camps and 17.6% (n=19) of the students who did not, passed the AATGP administered at the end of summer school.**

Improvement

Regression analysis was used to apply the quasi-experimental non-equivalent groups design to compare the groups’ posttest scores in order to estimate the program’s impact on the students’ reading achievement, regardless of whether or not the students passed the alternative assessment. Table 11 depicts the results of the analysis and lists for each effect, the mean and standard error of its unstandardized predictor weight, followed by the standardized weight, followed by the results of a test which gauges the statistical significance of that weight. The model R^2 is an effect size that classifies the proportion of variation in the outcome explained by the predictors in the model as .01 (weak), .13 (moderate), and .26 (strong), Cohen (1988).

All continuous predictors are expressed as deviations from their sample mean value. Therefore, the intercept gives the value of the outcome variable when all dichotomous predictors are at their reference values (i.e., non-Black, non-ELL, non-SPED/non-Gifted, non-Reading Camps participant) and the continuous predictors are equal to their sample mean values. The table gives the incremental impact of a one point change in each predictor on the students’ posttest scores, when all the remaining predictors are included in the model. The second through fifth predictors are dichotomously coded so their predictor weights give the difference in the outcome variable between the group coded “1” (i.e., the listed group) and the group coded “0.”

Table 11
Regression Analysis of the Posttest Scores ($R^2 = .36$, $n = 2,123$)

Predictor	Unstandardized (B)		Standardized (β)	t
	M	S.E.		
Intercept	598.10	2.84		210.63 ***
Black	-4.62	1.20	-0.08	-3.86 ***
English Language Learner – Current	-7.29	1.20	-0.13	-6.08 ***
Free/Reduced Price Lunch	-5.63	2.20	-0.05	-2.56 *
Over Age for Grade	-4.11	1.31	-0.06	-3.13 **
Special Education	-10.29	1.35	-0.14	-7.60 ***
Pretest	1.27	0.04	0.52	28.88 ***
Literacy for Rising 3 rd Grade Students	6.91	1.52	0.08	4.55 ***
Reading Camps	9.29	2.28	0.07	4.08 ***

Note. The weights represent the influence on the criterion variable of a unit change in the predictor. All predictors are expressed as deviations from the sample mean (i.e., grand-mean centered). Unstandardized weights are in original units. Standardized weights result from rescaling all variables to zero mean and unit variance. The t statistic represents the ratio of the mean weight to its standard error and tests whether the weight is significantly different from zero.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$

Table 11 shows that Black, Current-ELL, Free/Reduced Price Lunch eligible, over age for grade, and SPED students scored lower on the posttest. Each one scaled score point increase in the pretest score above the sample mean (162.84) predicts a 1.27 point increase on the posttest. Students who previously participated in the Literacy for Rising 3rd Grade Students program scored 6.91 scaled score points higher on the posttest than students who did not participate. **Students who participated in the Reading Camps scored a significant 9.29 points higher on the posttest than students who did not participate.** Examination of the standardized weights for the main effects show students' pretest scores to have the strongest effect on the posttest followed by SPED status and English Language Learner status. Less influential were classification as Black and previous participation in the Literacy for Rising 3rd Grade Students program.

Promotion

The program's impact on the likelihood that participants would pass the alternative assessment, and ultimately be promoted, was gauged through a special regression analysis that compared the odds of exceeding the cutoff for participating and non-participating students after their demographic characteristics and pretest scores were taken into account. The posttest scores were converted to pass/fail outcomes based on whether or not the scores met or exceeded the criterion for promotion (i.e., 45th percentile). The analysis estimates the impact of the various predictors including the program impact in terms of the odds¹ of passing.

Table 12 lists for each effect, the predictor weight (B) and its standard error (SE) followed by the change in the odds ratio due to the predictor, and the Wald statistic used to gauge its statistical significance.

¹ Odds, which represent the likelihood of passing divided by the likelihood of failing, enable the discontinuous change from failing to passing to be mathematically modeled as a smooth transition called a logistic curve.

Table 12
Logistic Regression Analysis of the Posttest Scores ($R^2 = .26$, $n = 2,123$)

	B	S.E.	Odds Ratio	Wald
Intercept	-2.16	0.29	0.12	55.02 ***
White/Other	0.75	0.31	2.12	5.88 *
Over Age for Grade	-0.35	0.16	0.70	4.65 *
Special Education (SPED)	-0.77	0.20	0.46	15.56 ***
Pretest	0.10	0.01	1.11	245.24 ***
Literacy for Rising 3 rd Grade Students	0.37	0.16	1.46	5.66 *
Reading Camps	0.64	0.29	1.90	4.90 *

Note. All predictors are grand-mean centered. *B* gives the predictor weight, which is the influence of the indicated effect on the outcome variable expressed on a log-odds scale. Wald is a measure of statistical significance given by the square of the ratio of *B* to its standard error. The odds ratio is found by raising the base of the natural logarithm to the power given by the predictor. This gives the probability of meeting the criterion divided by the probability of not meeting the criterion.

* $p < .05$. *** $p < .001$.

The Intercept gives the odds (0.12 to 1) of passing (i.e., 10.7%), for a student who is in the reference group, i.e., Black/Hispanic, non-over age for grade, non-Special Education (SPED)/Gifted with a pretest score equal to the sample mean (ASRA scaled score 162.84, 17th percentile).

The odds of passing were lower for over age and SPED students and higher White/Other students than their on grade level, non-SPED/non-Gifted counterparts, respectively. Each one scaled score point increase in the pretest above the sample mean predicts a 1.11 to 1 increase in students' odds of attaining the promotion criterion (i.e., a score of 618 or higher on the AATGP). Prior participation in the Literacy for Rising 3rd Grade Students program predicts a 1.45 to 1 increase in students' odds of attaining the promotion criterion. **The odds of passing the test for students who completed the Reading Camps were, on average, a significant 1.90 times higher than those who did not participate**, once their pretest scores, demographic characteristics, and prior participation in the Literacy for Rising 3rd Grade Students program were taken into account.

In sum, students who completed the Reading Camps had significant higher AATGP scores and were significantly more likely to be pass the test and to be subsequently promoted to the fourth grade than non-participating students.

DISCUSSION

The district undertook an evaluation to gauge whether students who completed the state-mandated Third Grade Summer Reading Camps exhibited improved performance on the alternative assessment when compared to a comparison group of students who did not participate.

Summary

The evaluation of the Reading Camps described the operation and assessed outcome measures for the program that operated during its twelfth year of implementation. Conducted by the district's Office of Program Evaluation, the study was guided by a series of questions that can now be answered.

1. Were the Reading Camps implemented as planned?

Nearly all administrators gave positive reports of each of the core aspects of implementation (i.e., planning, resources, transportation, instructional materials/supplies and curriculum). The Reading Camps curricula were also rated effective with the bulk of respondents agreeing that they should continue in their present form. However, separate analyses of program dosage for the reading instruction and test preparation portions of the program, found less than half of the schools to have conformed to program guidelines: although most schools fully implemented the instructional component, fewer provided the specified level of test preparation. Results must be interpreted keeping this in mind.

2. Did students who participated in the Reading Camps experience better reading achievement outcomes than students who did not participate?

Both the mean scores and passing rates of students who participated were significantly higher than those who did not, despite the fact that the program was not implemented with complete fidelity. Therefore, participation in the program may be judged to have helped students pass the alternative reading test, required for promotion to fourth grade.

Conclusions

An evaluation of the Summer Reading Camps found participating students' reading skills improved sufficiently relative to similarly scoring non-participants to result in promotion to the fourth grade even though the test preparation component of the program was not fully implemented. Nearly all administrators gave positive reports of each of the core aspects of implementation and the curricula were also rated effective with the bulk of respondents agreeing that the program should continue in its present form.

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Appendix A
Summer School Implementation Survey

Summer Reading Camps Implementation Survey, 2016

Instructions

This survey is designed to assess various aspects of the implementation of the Summer Reading Camp for Retained 3rd Graders offered at the school to which you are assigned during the 2016 summer. The information that you provide will be used to furnish formative feedback and inform future planning in the areas of logistics, human resources, and curriculum for this program. Please reflect honestly on your experience as a summer administrator and answer each item in the survey to the best of your ability. If you have any questions or need assistance with this survey you may contact Dr. Steven M. Urdegar at (305) 995-7538 Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Preamble

1. Please select the name/location number of the summer location about which you will be completing the items that follow from the drop down list provided.

(Select only one from drop down list)

Introduction

The items that follow pertain to the school to which you are assigned during the summer.

2. Approximately, how many students are participating in one or more of the programs offered during the summer at your present summer location?

(Provide only one response)

Planning

The items that follow pertain to ALL the programs operating at the school during the summer session.

3. Which other programs operate during the summer at your present summer location?

(Select all that apply)

- Course Credit Recovery
- Extended School Year (ESY) Services
- Literacy for Rising 3rd Grade Students (between 26th and 49th percentile) on the SAT-10, Grade 2 Reading Comprehension Subtest)
- Summer Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten (VPK)
- Other (specify):

4. How well has your present summer location been informed about the academic needs of the students who would be attending?

(Select only one)

- Less than adequately
- Adequately
- More than adequately
- Not applicable

5. How well has your summer location been informed of the number of students that would be attending?

(Select only one)

- Less than adequately
- Adequately
- More than adequately
- Not applicable

6. How adequate are the instructional staffing levels at your present summer location, relative to the number of students that attended

(Select only one)

- Less than adequate
- Adequately
- More than Adequate
- Not applicable

Transportation1

7. Is bus transportation provided to your present summer location?

(Select only one)

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

Transportation2

8. To what extent does the arrival of the buses typically align with the schedule of your present summer location?

(Select only one)

- Mostly not on time
- Usually not on time
- Usually on time
- Mostly on time

9. To what extent does the departure of the buses typically align with the schedule of your present summer location?

(Select only one)

- Mostly not on time
- Usually not on time
- Usually on time
- Mostly on time

Instruction

The remaining items in this survey pertain ONLY to the Summer Reading Camps program for third grade students slated for retention

10. How sufficient is the amount of curricular materials (i.e., books, workbooks, manipulatives, etc.) available?

(Select only one)

- Much less than needed
- Somewhat less than needed
- An appropriate level
- More than needed
- Much more than needed

11. How sufficient is the amount of instructional supplies (i.e., computers, whiteboards, pencils, paper, etc.) available?

(Select only one)

- Much less than needed
- Somewhat less than needed
- An appropriate level
- More than needed
- Much more than needed

Curriculum1

12. What is the name of the principal curricular program that operates in your present summer location?

(Select only one)

- Flex Literacy (McGraw-Hill)
- After the Bell (Scholastic)
- Time Warp (Voyager)
- Other (specify):

13. How are the classrooms in your present summer location organized for the majority of instruction?

(Select only one)

- Whole class works on the same activity
- Groups of students rotate through different activities
- Each student practices a different skill
- Other (specify):

14. How many minutes daily does your present summer location devote to instruction as opposed to test preparation?

(Select only one)

- Less than 75
- 75 to 124
- 125 to 174
- 175 to 224
- 225 to 274
- 275 or more

Curriculum2

15. Does your present summer location provide students with dedicated practice taking the SAT-10?

(Select only one)

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

Curriculum3

16. How many minutes daily do students at your present summer location practice taking the SAT-10?

(Select only one)

- less than 30
- 30 to 59
- 60 to 89
- 90 or more

Technology1

17. Does the curriculum that operates at your present summer location feature computer-assisted instruction?

(Select only one)

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

Technology2

18. What is the maximum number of computer-workstations/laptops simultaneously in use within a single classroom at any given time in your present summer location?

(Select only one)

- 1 to 2
- 3 to 4
- 5 to 6
- 7 to 8
- 9 to 10
- 11 or more
- Not applicable (all computers are in the media center)
- Other (specify):

Effectiveness

19. How would you rate the ability of the curriculum to remediate different students with different learning problems in the same classroom at the same time?

(Select only one)

- Poor
- Fair
- Average
- Good
- Very Good

20. How would you rate the engagement of students in the curricular activities?

(Select only one)

- Poor
- Fair
- Average
- Good
- Very good

21. How would you rate the curriculum's effectiveness at addressing the skills deficits of the students?

(Select only one)

- Poor
- Fair
- Average
- Good
- Very Good

Summary1

22. How would you characterize the support provided by staff from the M-DCPS Office of Language Arts/Reading?

(Select only one)

- Poor
- Fair
- Average
- Good
- Very Good
- Not applicable

23. How many times per week did staff from the M-DCPS Office of Language Arts/Reading visit your present summer location to monitor implementation?

(Select only one)

- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

Summary2

24. How effective do you believe the Summer Reading Camps program was at helping third grade students slated for retention to improve their reading skills?

(Select only one)

- Poor
- Fair
- Average
- Good
- Very Good
- Not applicable

25. To what extent do you agree that the program should continue to operate in its current form?

(Select only one)

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Unsure
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Summary3

26. Optionally, share any additional thoughts you might have about the Third Grade Summer Reading Camps.

(Provide only one response)