

SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

CASE STUDY

Average ITBS Reading Scores at a Harlem Elementary School Rise 5 Percentiles Per Year

Library Circulation Quadruples, Student Behavior Improves

Source: Agnes Sayaman, principal, and Emily Severance, reading specialist, Saint Paul School

Research conducted between 2000–2003.

Introduction

Since implementing Accelerated Reader (AR) in 2001, Saint Paul Elementary School has experienced dramatically improved Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) reading scores. On average, scores have increased five percentiles per year for the past two years. In addition, library circulation has quadrupled and students are more disciplined, responsible, and independent.

School Profile

Saint Paul School, Grades pre-K–8

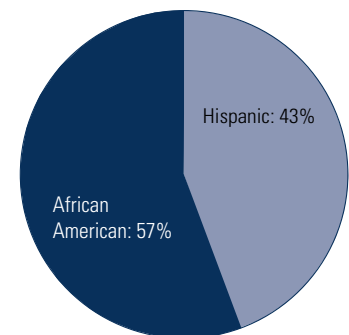
Students: 270

New York City, N.Y.

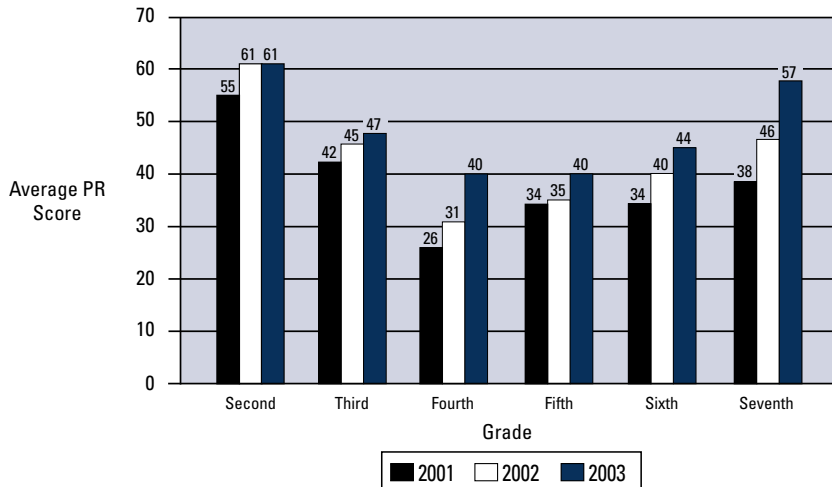
Demographics

Inner-City, Urban

Race/Ethnicity



ITBS Reading Scores Increase



Educator Backgrounds

An educator for 33 years, **Agnes Sayaman** has spent the last 22 years at Saint Paul School in the Harlem neighborhood of New York City. She began at Saint Paul teaching math, science, and English. She was appointed as principal five years ago. She holds a bachelor's in education and English from the University of Santo Tomas in the Philippines.

Emily Severance has been the reading specialist at Saint Paul for the last four years. She's been instrumental in the implementation of Renaissance Learning's progress-monitoring tools at the school. She holds a bachelor's in English from the University of Michigan and a master's degree in Studio Arts from The Art Institute of Chicago.

(more information on back)

Study Description

In 2001, Principal Sayaman decided to implement Accelerated Reader—a computerized, progress-monitoring system that tracks and motivates student reading. Saint Paul had the financial support of William Ruane, a well-known philanthropist who established a private charitable foundation to improve neighborhoods and schools in Harlem. Ruane provided Saint Paul with funding to purchase computers, Accelerated Reader software, books, and add additional staff.

Accelerated Reader enhances a school's existing curriculum with information technology, professional development, consulting services, classroom resources, and evaluation services to increase reading skills development and facilitate individualized instruction. Saint Paul hired a reading specialist to guide the implementation of AR best practices and it hosted an on-site Renaissance Learning professional development seminar.

With encouragement from the reading specialist, Emily Severance, educators at Saint Paul began implementing classroom techniques learned in the seminar. Severance helps classroom teachers review the students' progress toward the goals. And, each week she reviews diagnostic reports with the teachers to help them respond to the needs of at-risk students.

Saint Paul received Distance Consulting services from Renaissance Learning which provide the teachers and administrators with timely feedback in the form of reports. At the end of each marking period, these reports provide a snapshot of how each group of students is progressing. And at the end of the year, the Summative Analysis report highlights the annual growth of students compared to growth achieved during previous years.

Results

Saint Paul has experienced consistent and steady growth in academic improvement since their implementation of Accelerated Reader. Students in second through seventh grade gained an average of 10 percentiles on the reading portion of the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS)¹ since 2001. Seventh-grade scores increased the most over two years—19 percentiles. (See graph on front.) This overall improvement makes the school a model for other inner-city schools struggling to increase the reading achievement of their students.

In addition to increased reading scores, library circulation has quadrupled. Each student read an average of 158 books during the 2002–2003 school year—which equals 4 to 5 books per week.

And, perhaps most importantly, the school has experienced an improvement in student behavior. Students are now more disciplined and responsible. They behave in the library, on their own, and in small groups. Parents are also actively involved in promoting the culture of reading at the school. Parent volunteers come in during the day and after school to read with students.

Conclusion

The improvement of student achievement at Saint Paul is due to the dedication of the educators who work to ensure that every student achieves to their maximum potential and the school's implementation of AR and best classroom practices. Since in 2001, the school has experienced sustained reading growth as measured by the ITBS (scores increased an average of 10 percentiles over two years), increased library circulation, and better-behaved students.

¹Houghton, Mifflin. (n.d.). *Iowa Test of Basic Skills*. Itasca, IL: Riverside Publishing.



For more information, or for additional copies of this report, contact:

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