



Evaluation Report

Summer 2019

Submitted To:

NewAlliance Foundation

Submitted By:

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November 2019



“READY for the Grade” Summary Results Report

Evaluation Services, 2019

I. INTRODUCTION

The NewAlliance Foundation’s, “READY for the Grade” (RfG) program has completed its seventh year, successfully funding an interval year between the 2nd and 3rd three-year cycles of funding summer reading programs at multiple libraries. The 3rd three-year cycle will commence summer 2020. As stated in prior evaluation reports, the goal of RfG is to provide students with consistent and comprehensive reading support and instruction during the summer to help participating students enter school in September ready to learn, solid in their retained reading skills, and with the same literacy advantages as peers who have been able to maintain their reading skills throughout the summer. The program served 1,069 children (including some who participated in multiple years), and their families during the first six years and added an additional 159 participants and their families during summer 2019.

For summer 2019, RfG was delivered by five libraries/sites.¹ Three of the libraries have completed two cycles and were in their seventh year, and the other two have completed one cycle and were in their fourth year. The seventh-year libraries included: Killingly Public Library, New Haven Free Public Library, and Rockville Public Library. The fourth-year libraries included: Manchester Public Library and West Haven Public Library. This document is the evaluation report for the interval year. Results from all five RfG programs are summarized in this report and where appropriate, site results are reported separately or presented as trends.

New this Year: All five participating sites used the *easyCBM* assessment² in order to standardize the pre- and post-testing process (results are presented in the final section of this report). The evaluation was conducted by Anita Baker, Evaluation Services for summer 2019, using the design developed for the previous two cycles.

“We expect to take what we’ve learned and make early childhood literacy a key strategic priority for our next plan and to implement a program that we can sustain long-term. So even though we are no longer a NewAlliance grantee, Wallingford will continue to benefit from what we learned from our participation in “READY for the Grade.” Comment from former RfG director from Wallingford.

Summary of Key Findings

- RfG continued to provide a solid model that can be and is modified as needed to fit local conditions. As recorded in summer program observations, there was variation in program delivery, but also adherence to the core elements of the program including regular, structured individual and group tutoring, family engagement opportunities, involvement of rising 1st – 3rd graders who have economic challenges and are reading below grade level.
- Multiple instructional strategies and materials were used to engage children in reading skills development. Very effective teaching was observed at all sites.
- At each site substantial support from the library and effective program management were apparent.
- The target population was being served and, at all but one site, enrollment was at the desired level.
- Many participants had very consistent attendance, including attendance by family members at family engagement sessions, but there was also variation in attendance by site.
- Review of *easyCBM* test results showed that reading skill loss was prevented at all sites, and many participants enhanced reading skills.

¹ The Wallingford Public Library discontinued participation in RfG after summer 2018.

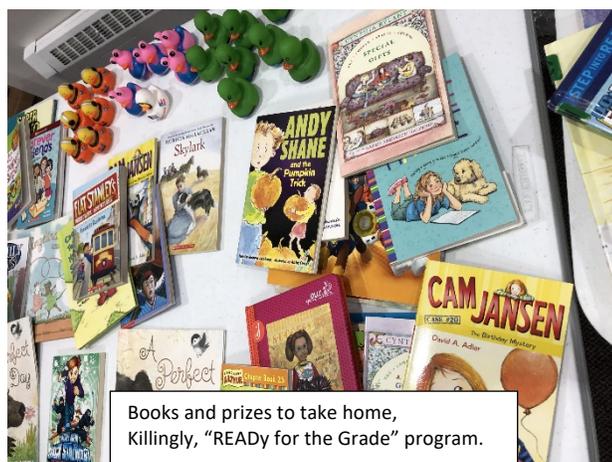
² The *easyCBM* is a reading assessment designed by the University of Oregon to identify areas of reading weaknesses.

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Detailed results of the review of operations and outcomes for 2019 are summarized as follows:

- The programs continue to represent urban, suburban, and rural settings. Most Programs have more than one collaborator and draw from a variety of schools to recruit participants.
- All programs include 1 or more professional staff that have certification in teaching. All Programs include support staff or interns and volunteers, and many staff and volunteers have participated for multiple summers.
- Program delivery strategies vary, offering a wide range of hours and number of days/weeks for participation. Opportunities for participation in instructional programming and family events ranged from 21 hours to 50 hours. Three of the five sites included structured family engagement opportunities.
- There were 159 children enrolled in the five RfG programs for 2019. This represents a 39 percent decrease (n=-102) in enrollment as compared to summer 2018. This decrease occurred because one site (Wallingford) discontinued providing services and also because the Manchester site was especially under-enrolled (total students = 8). While there were substantial increases in enrollment in each of the prior two years, during summer 2019 all but the New Haven and Killingly sites had fewer students than they had served in the past.
- Of the 159 children who participated summer 2019, 91% were free lunch eligible and all but three were in the proper grade range. Per site director reports, all children were reading below grade level.
- Children attended almost three-fourths of all hours offered at each site, including both instructional programming and family events. (This represents a larger proportion than the previous year -- 61% -- but this may be a result of change in attendance calculation.) In total there were 6200.5 hours of programming made available across the five sites and students attended an average of about 29 hours (4599.5 hours in total).
- For the 189 tests that were administered³ using *easyCBM*, results show an average gain from pre- to post-test of 8.6 points. The difference between mean pre- and post-test scores was statistically significant at $p < .05$. A total of 75% of the post-tests showed improvement and an additional 14% showed no change (i.e., no loss of reading skills). Only 11% of the tests showed evidence of skill loss (summer slide).



Books and prizes to take home, Killingly, “READY for the Grade” program.

³ Some children took more than one test, for example Letter Recognition and Letter Sounds. The results of all tests were combined for the achievement analyses. Test-specific results are presented in the site reports.

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II. FINDINGS

As described in the Summary of Key Findings, RfG programs produced positive results. This section of the report presents detailed findings for the interval year, summer 2019, and where applicable longitudinal results as well. As for each of the past six years, program design and delivery, enrollment, attendance, and achievement were reviewed.

A. Program Design and Operations

The overall program design for summer 2019 was consistent with past cycles. There also continued to be modifications and some site-specific challenges at the local program level. As shown in Table 1, RfG operated in five communities summer 2019, including the original grantees from Killingly, New Haven, and Rockville (2013 – 2015 cohort) and Manchester and West Haven (new in 2016-2018).⁴ The five RfG sites represent urban, suburban and rural communities and continued collaborations with public schools and other governmental and nonprofit partner organizations.

Table 1: Program Leads, Urbanicity, and Collaborators

RfG Lead	Town/City and Type	Collaborators
Killingly Public Library	Killingly Rural	~ Killingly Public Schools ~ Village at Killingly ~ Friends of the Library ~ Caleb Foundation
New Haven Free Public Library Wilson Branch	New Haven Urban	~New Haven Free Public Schools
Rockville Public Library	Vernon/Rockville Suburban Rural	~ Public Schools (all 5) ~ Vernon Youth Services Bureau ~ Lutz Children’s Museum
Mary Cheney Public Library	Manchester Suburban	~ Squire Village Resource Coordinator ~ Lutz Children’s Museum ~ Youth Services and Adult Ed ~ Verplanck School
West Haven Public Library	West Haven Urban/Suburban	~ Savin Rock Elementary ~ Forest Elementary ~ Washington Elementary ~ Seth Haley Elementary ~ West Haven Board of Education

⁴ The third 2016 -2018 grantee from Wallingford discontinued participation after summer 2018. Any cross-site summaries/trends from the 2nd cycle (6 libraries) should be compared carefully with summer 2019 results (5 libraries).

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As shown in Table 2, the five program models all adhere to the core elements of the RfG program, but there are differences between the five communities and there were modifications for summer 2019 as compared to summer 2018 (see also Evaluation Report 2018). As shown, a substantial amount of programming was offered at each site with variations as needed. Opportunities for family involvement were made available in Killingly, New Haven and West Haven. Though not shown in the table, there was also considerable staff consistency and each program included both certified teachers and interns/volunteers as needed, which kept student-staff ratios low and provided multiple opportunities for small group, larger group and one-on-one tutoring available (see Appendix Table 1). Multiple teacher-selected curricular materials were used and all sites provided books for children to read and keep.

Table 2: Program Models for Instructional Programming and Family Events

Library	Number of Weeks	Program Days/Hours Offered per week/ per child	Family events Days/Hours Offered per week	Total Number of Program and Family events/ Hours Offered
Killingly Site 1: Library Program	7 weeks	2 evenings per week/14 days total 3 hours per week/ 21 hours total	Reading sessions with families offered 1 hour/6 hours total	21 hours offered total (family night combined with regular program 1 evening)
Killingly Site 2: Village Program	7 weeks	2 day per week/14 days total 4 hours per week/ 28 hours total	No family events were delivered at the VAK site, but VAK parents were invited to the library Star Lab	28 hours offered total
New Haven	6 weeks	2 days per week (total:12 days offered)/ 2 hours per session/ per child 1 day per week (total: 6 days offered) at 1 hour one-on-one tutoring/ per child Total Program Hours Offered: 30 hours	7 family events offered total/ 1.5 hours per family Total Family Night Hours Offered: 10.5 hours	40.5 hours offered total
Rockville	7 weeks	2 <u>Program Days</u> per week with AM and PM sessions/7 hours per week/ 49 program hours total	No Family events were offered.	49 hours offered total
Manchester	5 weeks	2.5 hours per day/ 4 days/week 10 hours per week	No family events offered	50 hours offered total
West Haven	6 weeks	Small groups 2/week, 1 on 1, 1/week Up to 5 hrs/week 24 hours total	Literacy lunches, weekly 1 hour	30 hours offered total

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Specific site and historical variations included the following.

- The Killingly Program utilizes two sites, one associated with the Village at Killingly the other at the main library, and the amount of available programming is slightly different between the two. Starting in summer 2019, the library site was operated in the evening and included family engagement one of the two nights that programming was conducted.
- The New Haven site continued to offer group sessions twice per week, opportunities for students to engage in one-on-one tutoring once per week, and weekly family engagement sessions. This program design was identical to the one used in 2018, but an additional group session was offered during 2019 so the total amount of programming increased slightly. Not all students accessed all available sessions every week.
- The Rockville site continued to offer programming as in summer 2018 and provided two different sessions (AM or PM) for each of the days programming was provided. Bus transportation was also provided for students, but no Family programming was available.
- The Manchester site was designed to provide programming 2.5 hours per day, 4 days per week for multiple children, to include field trips to the Lutz Children’s Museum and regular activities at Squire Village. The library was not used as a programming site and no family events were scheduled. While substantial, this represented a reduction in total programming available, as compared to summer 2018 both in terms of total hours and in family offerings. The program was also under-enrolled.
- The West Haven site made key changes to their delivery strategies. Unlike summer 2018 when a second library branch was used, programming in summer 2019 was only conducted at the main branch library. Tutoring was offered in small groups and one-on-one per arrangements made between instructors and families, and family engagement programming was conducted through weekly literacy lunches. The total amount of programming offered was the same as in Summer 2018.

As clarified by the Program Directors at the October 2019 RfG Library Convening, the site-specific strategies and changes described above, at all but the Manchester site, resulted in good fits for local conditions (see also the final section for more details about Manchester challenges).

Each of the sites was visited during summer 2019 and formal, structured observations were conducted. Programming offered at all five libraries was of very high quality. Multiple examples of effective practice were witnessed and recorded (see the appendix for observation vignettes from each site and two family engagement sessions) and these results were in alignment with positive achievement results (see Section D). A summary of specific teaching and learning strategies that were observed during the visits is shown in Table 3. It can be seen in the table that many effective practices were used at each of the sites during the observation sessions. Additionally, directors reported they used these strategies and others regularly. Specific examples are described in the observation vignettes that are found in the appendix. Further, the physical space made available for each program was quite considerable and there were multiple examples of Word Walls and student art at each program site. There was also consistent access to books and other instructional materials.

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Table 3: Observed Engagement in Effective Practices During Site Visits, Summer 2019

	Killingly	Manchester	New Haven	Rockville	West Haven
Children reading silently	✓			✓	
Children reading to instructor/group	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Choral/Guided reading	✓		✓	✓	✓
Children discussing reading*	✓		✓	✓	✓
Identifying vocabulary (sight words, new words, unusual words)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Making connections to previous lessons/personal experiences	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Writing, movement or craft activities	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

*This included making predictions, stating preferences, checking comprehension.

NOTE this table only shows practices that were used during program observations. Directors reported these practices were used regularly at all sites.



Using technology to practice sight words at the New Haven “READY for the Grade” program.

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B. Enrollment

Registration data were submitted for 159 enrolled students, 41 (26%) of whom were rising 1st graders, 59 (37%) of whom were rising 2nd graders and 50 (31%) who were rising 3rd graders (this included a few students – mostly siblings of other participants – who were rising kindergarten students or rising 4th graders). The grade level composition of the five sites was roughly equivalent.

Table 4a: Number of Participants by site by Fall 2019 Grade Level

Site	Kindergarten	1st	2 nd	3rd	4 th	TOTAL
Killingly	0	10	11	10		31
New Haven	1	9	14	17		41
Rockville	0	12	18	14	2	46
Manchester*	0	2	3	2		8
West Haven	4	8	13	7	1	33
TOTAL	5 (3%)	41 (26%)	59 (37%)	50 (31%)	3 (2%)	159

***1 participant in Manchester is missing Fall grade level information**

The demographic characteristics of the 159 summer 2019 students are shown in Table 4b (following). This total number of students was substantially lower than the number of students in either of the previous two years, when there had been six libraries participating and all programs were fully enrolled. There were also some key differences in the composition of the cohort for summer 2019. Specifically:

- A total of 56% of all students in 2019 were female and 44% were male. This was very similar to the proportions of male and female students in both 2017 and 2018 but different from 2016 when more than half the participants were male.
- The racial/ethnic composition of the whole group was fairly diverse: 5% of students were identified as Asian, 17% were identified as Black/African American, 42% of students were identified as Hispanic/Latinx, 1% were identified as Native American, 25% were identified as White and 11% were identified as bi- or multi-racial. Racial/ethnic diversity was more pronounced at some sites than others (see individual site reports).
- Proportionately more students were identified as Hispanic/Latinx than in previous years (42% of students summer 2019 but only 33% in summer 2018 and 32% in summer 2017), and slightly fewer students identified as White or Black/African American participated. (In 2019 17% of students were identified as Black/African American, in 2016 24% of students were identified as Black/African American; in 2019 25% of students were identified as White, in 2016, 33% of students were identified as White.)
- The primary language used at home for a total of 66% of the summer 2019 students was English, but 22% spoke Spanish as their primary language and 12% spoke another language (like Urdu, Vietnamese) at home.
- The proportion of students speaking English as their primary language at home has decreased slightly over the past four summers (73% of summer 2016 students spoke English as their primary language, 21% spoke Spanish and only 6% identified some other language). This change in cohort characteristics may signal a need for some changes in staff skills and materials for future summers.

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Table 4b: Demographic Characteristics of Total Enrollment

	2016 N=177	2017 N=225	2018 N=261	2019 N=159
Grade in Fall				
Kindergarten	3%	3%	4%	3%
First Grade	30%	38%	29%	26%
Second Grade	41%	39%	40%	37%
Third Grade	26%	20%	27%	31%
Gender				
Female	44%	55%	55%	56%
Male	56%	45%	45%	44%
Race/Ethnicity**				
Asian	5%	6%	7%	5%
Black/African American	24%	23%	20%	17%
Hispanic/Latinx	36%	32%	33%	42%
Native American	2%	1%	1%	1%
White	33%	34%	28%	25%
Biracial	NA	4%	11%	11%
Primary Language at Home				
English	73%	72%	73%	66%
Spanish	21%	21%	19%	22%
Other	6%	7%	8%	12%

** Note all reported racial/ethnic data were recoded into single race/ethnicity categories to facilitate over-years comparisons.

As shown in Table 5, almost all students who participated in RfG (at least 91% in summer 2019) were eligible for free or reduced-price lunch. The proportion identified as eligible increased substantially from 75% in summer 2016 to 91% in summer 2019. Almost all participating students (90%) were reading below grade level spring 2019, including many who were reading well below grade level. The proportion of students reading below grade level has also increased from summer 2016 to summer 2019.

Table 5: Poverty and Reading Level

	2016 N=177	2017 N=225	2018 N=261	2019 N=159
Receive Free or Reduced- Price Lunch				
Yes	75%	83%	87%	91%
No	25%	17%	13%	6%
Don't Know				3%
Reading Level in Spring				
Below Grade Level	68%	71%	81%	90%
At/ Above Grade Level	32%	29%	19%	10%

Note: Spring Reading Level assessments were estimated based on pre- *easyCBM* data for all sites but Rockville where spring reading level was reported directly. The estimate shown above is for all five sites.

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C. Attendance

A substantial amount of program delivery time was provided for the 159 participating students and many of them attended regularly. As shown in Table 6a, the total amount of programming hours available and average attendance varied somewhat by site. Specifically:

- The 159 RfG students of summer 2019 attended 4599.5 hours of programming over the summer and this represented almost three-fourths (74%) of available hours.
- In total, the average number of hours attended was 25.3 (this ranged from about 15 to 35 hours). The average for the Killingly sites was 14.9 (a little more than half of the available hours); the average at New Haven was 27.2 (about two-thirds of all available hours); the average for Rockville was 35.3 (about three-fourths of available hours); the average for the eight participants in Manchester was 31 (about two-thirds of all hours); and the average in West Haven was 17.4 (almost three-fourths of the small group and one-on-one time reported on).

Table 6a: Total Program Hours Offered and Average Attendance by Site

Site	#	Hours Available *	Total Hours Attended	Average Hours Attended
Killingly (both sites)	31	716	463	14.9
New Haven	41	1660.5	1113.5	27.2
Rockville	46	1932	1626	35.3
Manchester	8	320	249	31.0
West Haven	33	1572	1148	17.4
TOTAL	159	6200.5	4599.5	25.3

* Hours available = total possible hours for all students enrolled; hours attended includes all hours when students were recorded as present. Please note that sites like New Haven that made more hours available have somewhat lower proportional use of time. Note also that only West Haven reported adjusted student-specific hours available (e.g., when a student started the program late or left early), and the Killingly data were adjusted by student for the different time options at their two sites. Comparisons to prior years are not possible due to changes in calculations.

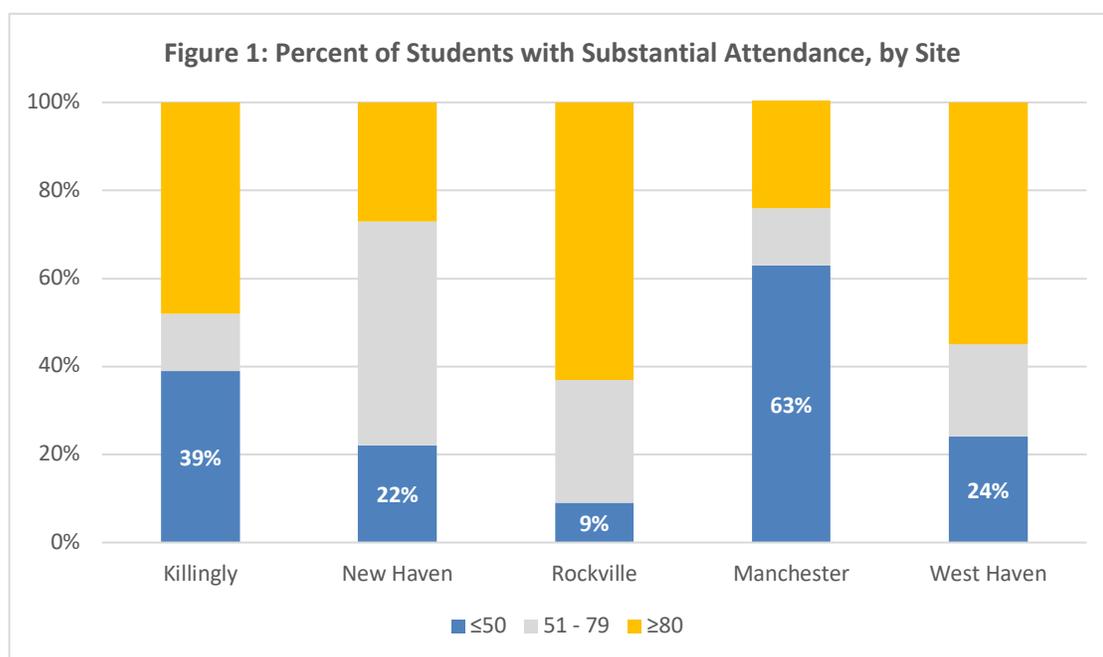
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- As shown in Table 6b and Figure 1 almost half (47%) of the students attended most (80% or more) of the available sessions.
- There was variation by site in the percent attending, with Manchester showing attendance challenges (in addition to being under-enrolled). Rockville, New Haven and West Haven had proportionately the most students attending more than half of available sessions. Variations in program delivery strategies are associated with these differences: Rockville, the site with the simplest design in many ways (two days/week, two timing choices, busing and no family engagement) has the best attendance. But each site has developed a delivery strategy that matches local conditions/needs.

Table 6b: Percent of Students Attending Less than 50%, 51% - 79% or 80% or More Sessions, by Site

Site	#	Percent Attending ≤ 50%	Percent Attending 51%-79%	Percent Attending ≥80%
Killingly (both sites)	31	39%	13%	48%
New Haven	41	22%	51%	27%
Rockville	46	9%	28%	63%
Manchester	8	63%	13%	25%
West Haven	33	24%	21%	55%
TOTAL	159	24%	29%	47%



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D. Achievement

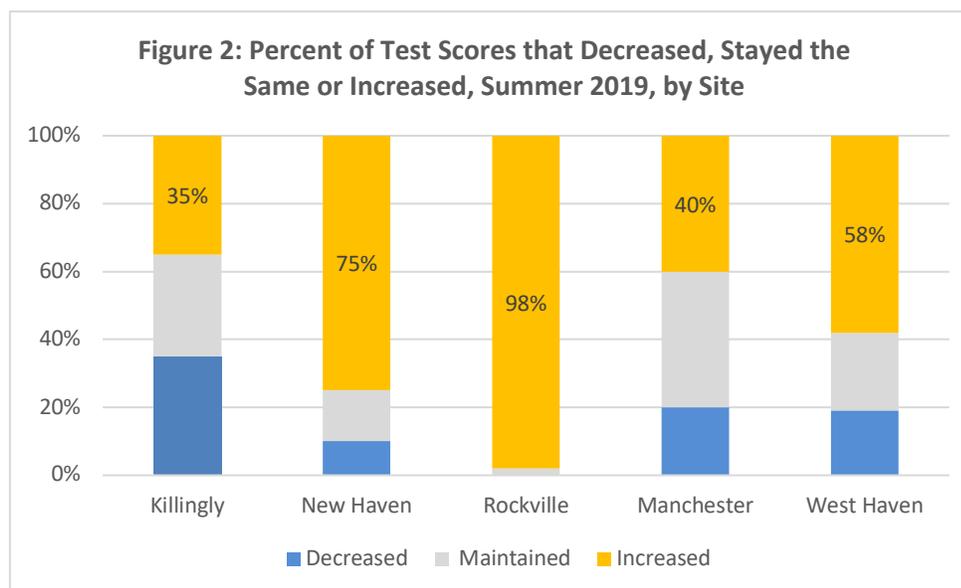
In addition to running engaging programs and effectively promoting consistent attendance, all the sites also pushed participants to achieve, to maintain and, in many cases, to enhance key reading skills. As shown in the achievement summary in Table 7, participants did demonstrate desired results. Specifically, for the 189 pre- and post-tests that were administered using *easyCBM*:

- Results showed an average gain from pre- to post-test of 8.6 points and this was a statistically significant change.
- A total of 75% of the post-tests showed improvement and an additional 14% showed no change (i.e., no loss of reading skills). Only 11% of the tests showed evidence of skill loss (summer slide).
- There were some variations in outcomes by site, but except at Killingly where a few students had lower post-test scores than pre-test scores, the average change reflected increases. (The expectation for students who don’t get access to programming is for the change to be negative – sometimes reflecting losses that take months to recapture.) Across all sites, almost 90% of the tests showed maintained or increased reading test scores (for Rockville that number was 100% and for New Haven it was 90%).

Table 7: Program Results of Meeting Summer Reading Goal

Program	# Tests	Decreased Reading Score	Maintained Reading Score	Increased Reading Score	AVG Change
Killingly	20	35%	30%	35%	-2.4
New Haven	80	10%	15%	75%	+9.2
Rockville	58	0%	2%	98%	+12.2
Manchester	5	20%	40%	40%	+5.8
West Haven	26	19%	23%	58%	+7.4
TOTAL*	189	11%	14%	75%	+8.6*

*Multiple children took more than one test. * This difference is statistically significant at $p < .05$



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III. CONCLUSIONS AND ISSUES FOR FURTHER CONSIDERATION

The RfG interval year was successfully conducted during summer 2019. With the exception of the Manchester site where partnership challenges that lead to under-enrollment and less than desirable attendance were experienced, the programs operated smoothly. Participants at all five sites had very positive achievement outcomes and each site, including Manchester, delivered quality instruction and experienced staffing stability, key elements in effective program design. As stated throughout the report, the individual sites are able to customize their programs to meet local needs while still implementing the key components of the RfG model: the sites are able to discern what is needed, make and shift partnerships and maintain stable service delivery. Even at the Manchester site where one key partnership was challenging, productive new partnerships were formed and new strategies were developed for strengthened future implementation. Throughout the summer, targeted students that participated were provided with consistent and comprehensive reading support and instruction designed to help them enter school in September ready to learn.

The Program served 159 students during summer 2019 and in total there have been 1,228 participants (duplicated count) across the seven years RfG has been operational. Each year this has included students with various racial/ethnic identities (Asian, Black/African American, Hispanic/Latinx, Native American and White). Almost all students served in 2019 were receiving free or reduced-price lunch and those recruited were reading below grade level. In total, 6200.5 hours of programming were made available to participants (including hours of family engagement opportunities at three of the five sites), and much of that time (74%) was utilized. While access varied for individual students, on average participants attended 25.3 hours (4 or more hours per week). Participants sustained participation over the summer, and they were encouraged and supported in their efforts to continue reading and using their skills at home and after the program concluded. Almost all *easyCBM* test results (89%) showed that students maintained or increased their reading skills. “READY for the Grade” provided powerful opportunities to defeat the summer slide.

Challenges

- Enrollment was more robust and attendance more consistent at some sites, and for some children than for others. At all but the Manchester site, there were strong ties with schools that should continue to be supported so eligible children can access RfG. Site-specific strategies for early identification of eligible children and development of waiting-lists for full participation should be continued.

More about Manchester. The Manchester site was previously supported by a very productive relationship with the Resource Coordinator at Squire Village. During summer 2019 that position was not filled consistently and recruitment of children was limited. Additionally, some of the children who signed up to participate did not attend consistently. However, the site Director was able to maintain participation by key instructors and to establish a new collaboration with the Lutz Children’s Museum. Bus services were also provided that allowed participants to travel to the museum and there are plans to utilize that partnership and the main library more regularly next year. Additionally, all but one of the five children with regular attendance who was tested maintained/increased test scores. So, while the site under-performed for 2019, which also affected initiative-wide results, important lessons were learned, important connections were made and the model continued to work. Additional assistance and review of Manchester efforts will be useful next year to restore vitality to the site.

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- A new library will be selected for participation summer 2020. This will provide new opportunities to get services to more children and families in an additional community, but of course some initiation challenges may occur. Lessons learned from the seven-year history of RfG should inform strong program implementation moving forward.
- Review of enrollment data shows that the population of children is shifting somewhat. Proportionately more children identified as Hispanic/Latinx, many of whom speak Spanish as their primary language at home, as well as children who identified their home language as *other* (e.g., Urdu, Vietnamese) participated in summer 2019 as compared to previous summers. This may necessitate more support for instructional staff as they work to assist both the children and their families in the development and maintenance of key reading skills.
- Family engagement opportunities were not offered at all sites, but the potential for productive family learning services is certainly supported by the RfG model. There will be an ongoing need to balance site-specific model specifications with efforts to provide these services.
- Grade-level reading remains challenging for many of the participants whose initial test data and other enrollment information show they are very behind. The summer instruction is definitely helping to keep them from falling further behind. The teachers, who all were observed being quite masterful at their work, must provide support for students with substantial challenges and the programs must provide continued support for those teachers.
- Summer 2019 was an Interval year and the first year for Evaluation Services oversight of evaluation tasks. New protocols for observation were developed and reports from the observations were added to the evaluation. Summer 2019 was the first year that all sites only used the *easyCBM* to measure achievement and the evaluation reporting timetable was adjusted forward (so this report would be available for the November NewAlliance Foundation board meeting). The submission of attendance and achievement data went very well, but data collection at the sites varied somewhat which made aggregation challenging. For summer 2020, more specific submission requests will be made so that comparable test data can be better used (to describe the entering grade level reading scores as well as to assess achievement changes) and so that exact hours available and hours attended can be collected and aggregated more efficiently. The current enrollment files have also been set to make possible the identification of new and returning students.

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Appendix Table 1: Staffing by Site

Site	# Coordinators	# Professional (Teachers)	# Support Staff (paraprofessionals)	# Volunteers and Interns
Killingly (both sites)	1	2	2	2 + summer Youth @The Villiage
New Haven	1	5		5 (volunteers)
Rockville	1	1	2	6
Manchester	1	3	3	0
West Haven	1	5	Children’s Librarian	0

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Killingly

As the observation started, the children were just finishing their dinner. They were called to the carpet in the center of the room to hear a story, as cookies were handed out. The book was *Grandpa takes me to the Moon* (by Timothy Gaffney), a fitting addition to their astronomically-themed evening. The instructors reminded the children that the previous Saturday was the anniversary of the original moon walk and then they asked the children questions about the story and the moon landing event. After the whole-group reading, the children retreat to their small groups where multiple activities take place for each group.

Group 1: The children are reading from a book with “finger tips” (fake appendages they slip over their real fingers to help them stay focused on the words). Each child takes a turn reading aloud to all the other children and each receives some phonetics reminders as needed from the instructor.

Group 2: This group is talking about the Moon. They are engaged in an activity where the instructor asked the children to read descriptive words and place them on a Venn diagram – distinguishing characteristics of the moon from the earth (some words are for the Moon only, some for the Earth only, some could fit in both categories).

Group 3: The children in this group are learning about Neptune. They have viewed a video and are now reading questions out loud and then filling in answers on a work sheet.

Group 4: The children in Group 4 are practicing sight/high-frequency words. They are also talking about asteroids and playing a game where there are multiple asteroids (balls of foil with a site word attached) – that they read and then throw into the “galaxy” (a large piece of cardboard with a big hole that they must aim through). The asteroid/words fall into a box and were counted and scored.

Group 5: is reading new vocabulary words from a card in preparation for reading a book together. Once the reading commences, the children each take a page with the teacher helping each reader and also asking all group members to make predictions about what will happen next, and inquiring about whether they have had experiences similar to those the main character is experiencing.

At the end of group time, children return to the main rug for some group games and then opportunities to select books for silent and paired reading, the final activities of the evening.



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New Haven

Children enter the room via the front desk where they sign in and receive pre-activities. The pre-activities include a word-search for words in the book the participants will read as a group. Each child proceeds to the tables and starts to work on their activities. They greet each other and the instructors. Everyone has a nametag and everyone knows exactly where to go and get started.

After sign-in/pre-activities are completed the children are called to the rug for a group activity. (I overhear one child saying *awwww* – since she hasn’t finished her pre-activity yet, and another saying *don’t worry we have 3 more weeks* [for “READY for the Grade”], *Yay*). They are asked to show the instructor, using ASL, whether they have read the book that is the group topic for the evening, then they are asked to review the word wall. The instructor points to and pronounces the word, then directs the children to say it with her – this is done in English and Spanish for all the words on the word wall. (While the Instructor works with the children, the other teachers are observing them to determine who will win a special secret prize for good listening.)

After the review of words on the word wall, the instructor initiates an app which is projected and with which the children are very familiar. They repeat each word louder and louder, three times and also sing along with the chorus. At the end of the group session, the other three teachers select children who get prizes for especially good effort and give them a shout out.

Once the whole group activity has concluded, the children move to their small groups to work with the teachers at tables, on multiple activities. The activities, such as playing sight word bingo, identifying cause and effect from a story, writing and completing worksheets that include making sentences, and practicing sight words through song, are switched often and all children have opportunities to work on multiple skills.

In addition to table time, the groups also move to other spaces where they sit in circles on the rug or along the wall forming reading circles. In one group the teacher has supplied each child with story cards. As volunteers read sections of the story, she peppers them with questions about whether they can relate to the story and checks on their comprehension. The children read echo style (one reads and then all read the same section) and there are opportunities for vocabulary review and phonetic reminders. Each time the teacher asks for a volunteer to go next – there is forest of hands requesting a chance to be the reader.

In another group of slightly younger children also involved in a reading circle, the students practice spelling with physical movements. They also make short booklets of their own to take away and to use in the group for reading practice. This group also practices echo reading: as one child reads a sentence, the whole group then repeats the sentence. The reading from the letter/sound recognition-focused “O Book” also includes a poem (about Oscar the Octopus) and coloring opportunities.

At the end of the session there are snacks and a final trip to the rug before a reminder about Family night and individual dismissal.

The children have been taught the signs for Yes, No, agree/same, bathroom and water – so they can communicate without speaking. The instructor gives them a quick quiz at the beginning of the session to make sure they remember the signs.

“READY for the Grade” Summary Results Report

Evaluation Services, 2019

Rockville

The theme for the session is Volcanoes (and the lead instructor reminds me that she incorporates a lot of non-fiction literature into her program). After a few minutes of pre-session and check-in activities, the lead instructor calls all the children to the front of their room where three books about volcanoes are displayed. The three books are introduced by a senior intern (who has been with the program a long time), and the instructor. They use a chart that captures what children already know about volcanoes, and they introduce some important vocabulary terms such as dormant, active, eruption and magma.

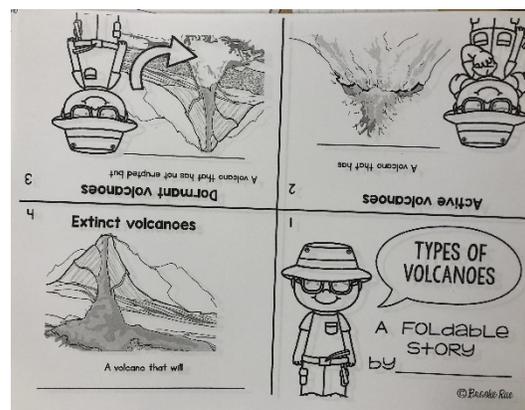
After these preliminary activities, the instructor begins reading the first book, a National Geographic Book on Volcanoes. She has the children inspect the cover as they prepare to read the book – making sure they distinguish this book as non-fiction and reviewing with the children the difference between fiction and non-fiction. She reads one page, finds a big word (dormant) and has the children sound it out, practice saying it, and explains the meaning. This strategy continues as they read through the first book. The second book includes many pictures of active volcanoes and the instructor engages the children in conversations and Q/A about each picture. There are multiple opportunities to discuss vocabulary.

After the 2nd book is read, the instructor announces the transition for snacks and then moving to the four stations that will be conducted for the remainder of the session.

Station 1: Children make an Ice Cream volcano – children have the opportunity to follow directions, illustrate “lava” and get a treat in the process.

Station 2: Puppets. The Rockville site has an extensive set of puppets (animals, and muppet-like characters), and a puppet theater. Each group includes 2 performers and 3 – 4 audience members. The children are charged with making up a story, performing it and then as a group identifying the problem, the solution, the characters and the setting in the story. Every child gets a chance to be in the audience and to be a performer. After everyone has participated in a show, the senior intern running the group then reads aloud to the children from the 3rd book about volcanoes (*The Magic School Bus Blows Its Top: A Book About Volcanoes*).

Station 3: Constructing and reading a book about volcanoes. Each child receives foldable ditto sheets with sections of a book about volcanoes. The children volunteer to read each page then they color in the pictures, write in answers to questions on the pages and fold the book. The children can then take home and share the book they have made with family members.



Station 4: Individual reading takes place in another small room where each child works on levelled readers that are in their book bags. The instructor has children sitting in an easy chair reading aloud to her, while others read silently while they wait their turn (and practice) for reading to an adult.

“READY for the Grade” Summary Results Report

Evaluation Services, 2019

Manchester

The children assemble in the Squire Village Community Room while they await the bus for their field trip to the Lutz Children’s Museum. During the initial activities each child is engaged with a teacher either singly or in a small group, playing reading-focused educational games. Once the children reach the museum, they are treated to a session with the Museum Educator focused on Pop Art. She references the book *Uncle Andy*, by James Warhola and proceeds to engage the children in a lively discussion about Andy Warhol and his art that is followed by an art-making activity to reinforce the main topics of the lesson.

The educator starts the session by asking each child to identify his/her name and age. Since the youngest person was 6, she promises to provide the children with 6 facts about Andy Warhol. The first fact is that Andy Warhol changed his name from Andy Warhola – to Andy Warhol and then she has each child try adding an “a” to the end of their own name. The second fact is that his birthday is August 5th, and she asks everyone to say when their own birthday is. She tells the children that Andy Warhol had 25 cats, 24 named Sam and then has them skip counting with their fingers, by twos, the number of cats named Sam. The third fact is about Andy’s 40 silver wigs which she also skip counts on her fingers by 5 and the children follow along. The fourth fact is about having the same lunch every day – ½ a sandwich and a bowl of tomato soup. She asks each child what they eat for lunch every day. The last fact is that Warhol was born in Pittsburgh, PA and everyone talks about where they were born.

Lastly, they talk about “Pop Art” and about Andy Warhol’s strategies. She clarifies that it stands for popular art and she asks the kids to clarify what the term popular means to them. She then tells them about where he got his ideas (billboards, newspapers) and shows them pictures of some of his most famous images. She clarifies that he painted the same images over and over and in different colors and then goes on to present information about the differences between warm and cool colors.

After the presentation part of the session has concluded, the children move to a table where they make their own art using multiple images of animals. The children get to make as many images in frames as they are years of age. She asks them to paint (with water colors) warm colors on the animals, and cool colors on the backgrounds of their images, painting over and over to make their own versions of “Pop Art.” While the children were painting, the educator circulated and peppered them with questions while remarking on their artwork – reiterating over and over the facts she had shared in a playful and memorable way.



After the Museum Educator’s lesson, the children had the opportunity to visit the various museum stations and then to visit the animal exhibition as well. Staff allow them to freely explore and play in the museum rooms and then use the visit to the animal exhibit as an opportunity to encourage the children to read the signs and discuss the interesting features of the animals and their habitats.

“READY for the Grade” Summary Results Report

Evaluation Services, 2019

West Haven

This session included small groups and 1 on 1 tutoring. Each of the teachers engages the children in multiple activities and then at the end of the session allows the children to select books they can take home with them. The teachers know each child’s reading level and made sure they select books that would be challenging without being too difficult. The individual meetings included the types of activities described below. Children entered and left on pre-determined schedules and were able to pick up with ongoing activities.

Tutoring: 1 instructor, two children. The children are practicing sight words from flash cards and preparing to read a book together. Before they start the book, the instructor gives them a “quiz” about book handling. She asks them what the title of the book is and has them practice using the table of contents to find certain sections. She also asks them to point to a “caption” in the book. As they start the reading process, she asks them how they want to read, one child chooses to echo-read, and the other chooses to read silently. When they conclude the reading the children and the teacher discuss the book together and she shows them additional information on her phone in answer to some of their questions. When they are finished with their tutoring session, each boy asks to pick a book from the book shelf. She tells the first child to select a book quietly (as there are other children and tutors working in the room), and he literally tiptoes over to the book shelf. Each child asks if they can pick a chapter book with one exclaiming (“I can’t read this yet, but my brother can”). For each boy the instructor does a check of some sight words related to the books of choice and then sends them back for more appropriate selections. They are not yet ready for chapter books but are eager to get to them. Ultimately each boy selects a book that is appropriate and that he is excited to keep and promises to read at home.

Tutoring: There are three children in this group, one girl who has been with the tutor for some time and two boys who have just joined. The children are practicing writing sentences on hand held whiteboards. After their writing activities they are also associating pictures with sounds and doing a word sort. The teacher reviews some phonetics rules (e.g., when the word has two syllables the “Y” sounds like an “e” and clarifying the differences between consonants and vowels. Before beginning to read a book out loud to the children, the teacher reviews with them how to handle books – reading titles, using pictures to help clarify what is going on in a story.

Later, during Literacy Lunch the children all get an opportunity to hear a story and practice vocabulary words and sequencing with the help of the children’s librarian (see description next page).

“READY for the Grade” Summary Results Report

Evaluation Services, 2019

Observations of Family Engagement Opportunities

Literacy Lunch at the West Haven “READY for the Grade” Program

Literacy Lunch starts off with opportunities for all family members to select some food and to get talk with their children about how tutoring sessions went and to look at books together.

After a few minutes of eating, the Children’s Librarian joins the group and asks for all the students to come to the front of the room in the smaller chairs so she can read them a story.

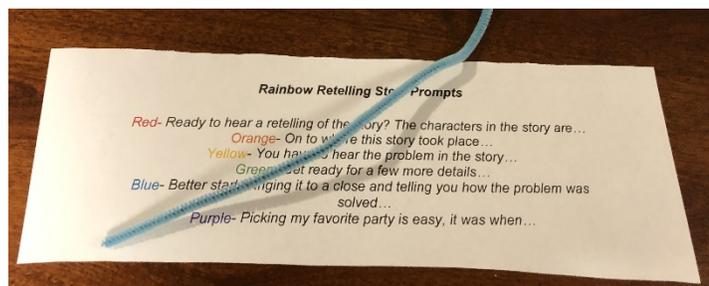
As the children come to the front the Librarian hands them each a “Magic Bag,” and distributes some Magic Bags to parents with younger children who are sitting behind the rows of students. Each Magic Bag has a series of little pictures that will be used during the story reading. The Librarian introduces the book she will be reading (*Armadillo Rodeo*, by Jan Brecht) and tells the families that they will be working on listening to details in a story and story re-telling.

Before the librarian starts her reading, she asks if anyone knows anything about armadillos and gets information from the children. As she reads the story, she stops occasionally to ask the children to check their bags for different pictures (e.g., red boots) that illustrate important events in the story. This allows her to check comprehension and attention to detail and also to make important references to other important literacy skills (such as recognizing adjectives – descriptive words).

As she reads, she demonstrates and let’s children practice certain actions in the story such as squinting, and she continues to ask children to check their bags for various items and asks them to predict what will happen and to distinguish between fiction and non-fiction. At the end of the story, she tells the children to put all the pictures back in their bags and then take them out and again and tell their family members the story – in order – using the pictures. The family members have also received some information to help them guide their children back through the story-telling process using the Magic Bags.

Just as the children are getting ready to return to their families, a special guest –

Andy the Armadillo (from Texas Roadhouse) appears and hands out gift certificates for the children.



“READY for the Grade” Summary Results Report

Evaluation Services, 2019

Observations of Family Engagement Opportunities

Family Night at the New Haven “READY for the Grade” Program

Family Night at the New Haven RfG program is a weekly occurrence. The event is very well attended with program children, their siblings and multiple family members (and even some former participants too). The children will be participating in a book reading and art-making activity (*Curious George at the Aquarium*) and all the staff are dressed up like Curious George characters.

The group is welcomed (in English and Spanish) and families are given some time to access food and eat together before splitting into two groups. The children and their younger and older siblings are called to the main carpet for their activity and the other family members (including babies) are sent to another room for their activity.

While the children listen to the story and get a chance to make puppets, the parents are engaged in an information-sharing session and discussion, again with access to a translator. The session is facilitated by the parent of a former participant and also the bilingual RfG instructor (Ms. G.). The session starts with a brief presentation of available services and an opportunity for parents to ask about things they want or need. (They identify needs such as babysitting during GED preparation classes, opportunities for older children to access RfG, the need for other summer programs and meetings during the school year). After requests are acknowledged and recorded the facilitator presents strategies for parents to talk effectively with their children’s teachers. She shares a video about being a champion for your child and then family members share both stories about good teachers and identify things they wish their children’s teachers would do (for their children and for them). The family members are presented with positive advice and the session concludes.



As the family members and children reunite in the main room, the children tell their family members what they worked on and the program staff announce prizes. All attending children get passes to the Yale Peabody Museum, 10 children win \$10 Target cards and all receive books. The children are reminded that there will be a special surprise for all children who complete the program. The families file out with statements of gratitude to the program staff, listening intently to the children’s continued descriptions of what they worked on.