



Evaluation Report

Summer 2024

Submitted To:

NewAlliance Foundation

Submitted By:

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“REAdy for the Grade” Summary Results Report

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I. INTRODUCTION

The NewAlliance Foundation has completed its 12th year of funding for the “REAdy for the Grade” (RfG) summer reading program at multiple libraries. Summer 2024 included in-person instruction at six sites (the Willimantic site was suspended while the library underwent modifications and other programming decisions were considered). Most sites increased or maintained their enrollment numbers, many staff members returned and there were some important new staff additions as well. Despite some continuing recruitment and retention challenges, multiple students and their families were served. All sites except Hamden also reported accepting some older students who had been participants before, or who had eligible younger siblings, and who were struggling to keep up at school due to prior Covid-related instructional interruptions. As in all past years, participating libraries developed customized responses to meet overall RfG goals.

There were also many important accomplishments for summer 2024. 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.¹ Participating libraries also continued to help students make up for gaps created by the disrupted access to direct instruction during and since the Covid pandemic. Once again there were some site-specific constraints for RfG summer 2024, and participating libraries developed customized responses to meet overall RfG goals.

Since its initiation, summer 2013, RfG has served 1,684 children (including some who participated in multiple years), and their families. An additional 119 children and their families fully participated during summer 2024 (a 5% increase compared to totals for the same six sites 2023). Despite some recruitment challenges, as described above, REAdy for the Grade continued to provide a solid model that can effectively be replicated in new communities, can be sustained after key staff changes, and can be modified as needed to fit local conditions, including for example suspending or re-establishing programming with housing partners, adding dates/times to better accommodate local schedules. As in all prior years, comprehensive evaluation was conducted including site visits. This report includes details of site-specific and summary strategies, results and longitudinal findings.

- **Hamden** returned for its fourth year at the Brundage branch library multi-purpose room. A new coordinator, Nancy Shannon, managed the program, two of the highly qualified teachers returned, and a third highly qualified teacher was added to the staff.² Together they effectively ran the program and oversaw the work of a local SYEP teen to help work with the children. The program ran three days each week and the 18 students (almost half of whom are returning from 2023) had both group and individualized tutoring opportunities (enrollment at Hamden was essentially unchanged from 2023 when 19 students were enrolled). As in each past year, participants also regularly visited the library to read books, play chess, checkers or literacy-based games. Additionally, the Hamden site engaged an

¹ Core elements of RfG include regular, structured individual and group instruction, family engagement opportunities, involvement of rising 1st – 3rd graders who have economic challenges and are reading below grade level.

² One of the original tutors was unable to stay on after the first week, but Hamden was able to quickly make a replacement who was a good fit.

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outside provider (*Kidding Around Yoga*) to do a special program with the RfG participants and they conducted a family orientation and culminating family event. Hamden honored its first RfG graduate who had attended the program for three consecutive summers. Children regularly received books (127 were given away) and other incentives to promote regular attendance.

- **Killingly** had another productive summer with 7 weeks of programming taking place at the Killingly Public Library. A total of 22 students participated, including 5 who were engaged in one-on-one tutoring only (enrollment at Killingly was essentially unchanged from 2023 when 23 students participated; about 1/3 of 2024 students were returning). All the staff who ran the program in 2023 (two teachers from 2022 and their long-term aide) returned and together with program coordinator Allison Whiston, once again developed and delivered a very effective and integrated thematic program, including a Readers Theater culminating performance. No family education events were held, but the culminating session included families and an ice cream social. Participants regularly received books (420 were given away over the summer) and other small prizes and reading incentives. (Reinstatement of VAK program remains under consideration for future summers and the new director there is very open to future possibilities.)
- **Manchester** ran a fully staffed, 8-week program in the Squire Village resource room. Three highly qualified staff members, including two who had participated in 2023 were engaged, and the Family Resource Coordinator for Squire Village also continued regular involvement and support. A total of 15 children regularly participated (plus as many as 10 others who dropped in one or more times to investigate the program). Staff conducted small group reading and other literacy and arts-based activities and provided individualized assistance to participants as needed, for two hours two days a week, and on Thursdays RfG collaborated with Invent the Summer so students could also participate in weekly STEM challenges. The site continued to promote the voluntary nature of involvement (children were free to come and go), but many children attended consistently and those students were tested at the beginning and end of the program to help assess reading skill development/maintenance.
- During Summer 2022, with support from the Scripps Family Fund for Education and the Arts, **New Haven** initiated a new RfG program in the newly constructed **Stetson Branch** Library of the New Haven Free Public Library system. Now in its third year, the New Haven-Stetson RfG program was reconfigured, new staff were engaged, the program increased enrollment and experienced an especially productive summer. Darlene Walden a highly skilled, seasoned educator took on the leadership role for the site and together with Diane Brown and three other very experienced teachers, recruitment challenges were addressed, and program modifications were made. The Stetson team conducted both individual and small group work and regularly used computer-based instruction and learning games. Participants also checked out on-reading level books and participated in the mayor’s Summer Reading Challenge. There were 17 students enrolled in the daytime program. New Haven-Stetson also conducted Fun Family Nights weekly which provided opportunities for them to provide additional support and engagement for RfG participating children and their families, and some others who availed themselves of the opportunities.

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- **New Haven Wilson Branch** ran the comprehensive, pre-pandemic version of its READY for the Grade program for summer 2024. The program was again administered by three seasoned educators who have worked with the program for multiple years, including two who are bilingual. As they had in 2023, they recruited both new individuals and former participants, but they were challenged by families who signed on and then did not show up, even after repeated contact and promises to do so, or who changed plans after one or two sessions, or who participated briefly and then dropped out. A core group of 9 children participated very regularly and for them, RfG included both group and individual tutoring, AV/tech for reinforcements, continued use of live music options for sight word learning and engagement of collaborators (puppet shows, magician) to reinforce lessons. Family engagement was provided weekly on-site, and books were regularly distributed.
- The **Rockville** RfG program was operated at Skinner Road Elementary School for the fourth, summer 2024. A total of 38 children (four more than in 2023) many of whom were returning students, participated in group and individualized instruction. In addition to master teacher Maureen Kearney, Rockville engaged 3 paraprofessionals who had all worked with RfG in the past (and 4 5th grade former participant helpers). The use of weekly themes continued at Rockville for 2024 as did the use of many non-fiction books, robust reading activities including shared chapter book reading experiences, use of the puppets, and daily edible craft projects. Family events were not held in 2024.

Summary of Key Findings

- RfG was conducted for a total of 119 participants from urban, suburban and rural settings. This included 18 children from Hamden, 22 children from Killingly, 15 children from Manchester, 17 children from New Haven-Stetson Branch, 9 children from New Haven-Wilson Branch, and 38 children from Rockville. This represents an increase in participation compared to participation at these six sites in 2023, but overall enrollment still remains lower than in pre-pandemic years.
- As in past years, and consistently across all sites, effective group instruction and dedicated one-on-one instruction as well as use of multiple, customized strategies to engage children in reading skill development were observed. As in all past years, and for summer 2024, very effective teaching by all those working with children, and active engagement by participants was observed. All sites made books and other materials available. Many of the sites also engaged outside groups to visit with or work with the children summer 2024.
- There were key staff changes at the Hamden, Manchester and New Haven-Stetson sites, 2024, but there was minimal staff turnover for the other sites and there were returning staff at all six sites. All sites engaged experienced personnel including many with multiple years of RfG experience.
- Though strategies and intensity varied, site representatives from all the programs reported continued family engagement. This included engaging with children in reading at home, completing family activities sent home, and for some sites, participating in family learning opportunities on-site.

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- Library coordinators from each of the sites strongly supported the work of the RfG educators and facilitated the work of the evaluation. All the libraries anticipate participation in summer 2025.
- Many participants had very consistent attendance, there were multiple families with siblings in attendance, and there were multiple children who were attending for a second or third summer.
- As in all prior years, the sites reported that all or almost all participants maintained or in many cases enhanced/revitalized their reading skills. Parents/guardians continued to confirm positive reading outcomes including increased enjoyment, interest and confidence and they provided very positive ratings for the program and staff.



Independent Reading, New Haven – Stetson Summer 2024.



Reading for Details, New Haven – Wilson Summer 2024.



Reading for and to Mrs. Kearney, Rockville/Vernon Summer 2024.

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II. FINDINGS

As described in the Summary of Key Findings, at all six sites, RfG programs were effectively implemented and they produced positive results. This section of the report presents detailed findings for summer 2024, and where applicable limited longitudinal results as well.

Evaluation Summer 2024

The standard evaluation design was used again for 2024. As for each of the past 11 years, program design and delivery, enrollment, attendance, and achievement data were reviewed and parent input (collected since 2022) was also obtained. As for the past summers, most data for summer 2024 were collected electronically, and site visits were conducted to all sites as well for direct observation. Each site provided details on their summer practices through on-site and/or follow-up interviews and each submitted photographs and other documentation for independent review. All sites were fully responsive to evaluation requests which facilitated cross-site summaries.

A. Program Design, Operations and Outcomes Overview

The overall program design for summer 2024 was consistent with past cycles including some changes imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic. As shown in Table 1, RfG was undertaken in six communities during summer 2024, including Hamden, Killingly, Manchester, New Haven-Stetson and New Haven-Wilson, and Rockville/Vernon.³ The RfG sites represent urban, suburban and rural communities and continued collaborations with public schools and other governmental and nonprofit partner organizations.

As shown in Table 1, the six program models all adhered to the core elements of the RfG program. As always though, there were slight differences between the communities and as compared to any of the five previous summers or before (see also Evaluation Reports 2019 through 2023). Despite continued smaller program sizes, a substantial amount of programming was offered across sites (3900+ hours, a substantial increase compared to 2023) with variations as needed. Summer 2024 also saw continuation of the enrollment trends to include some older children in the target population, and a continuation of differing levels of family involvement. Opportunities for multiple session-based family involvement with RfG program staff were made available at both New Haven sites, Hamden and Killingly went with orientations and culminating sessions. The Manchester and Rockville sites did not conduct any family-specific programming, but Library and program staff interacted regularly with parents, as at all other sites, during pick-

³ The 2024 cohort included Hamden (in its fourth year) Killingly, Manchester, New Haven (with two sites Wilson Branch and the new in 2022 Stetson Branch), and Rockville (Willimantic suspended programming). The 2013 – 2015 cohort included Killingly, New Haven and Rockville; the 2016 – 2018 cohort added Manchester, West Haven and Wallingford (which discontinued participation after summer 2018); the 2019 through 2022 summers each varied – Manchester suspended all programming for 2021 and was limited for 2022, and West Haven discontinued participation after 2021. Any cross-site summaries/trends should be compared carefully as the number of programs has changed and conditions since 2020 are unique.

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up and drop off and via texts and emails as needed. All sites encouraged parents, guardians, siblings and other family members to continue helping students between sessions by playing educational games and engaging in reading practice. As always, staffing varied by site, and in comparison to past summers (see site-specific reports), but all sites engaged personnel experienced with reading skill development and deeply committed to the children and families they were serving. All sites but New Haven – Stetson, which had an entirely new staff, included multiple staff members familiar with RfG. Multiple instructor-selected curricular materials were used and shared, different incentive strategies were undertaken effectively, and all sites provided books for children to read and keep. As stated previously:

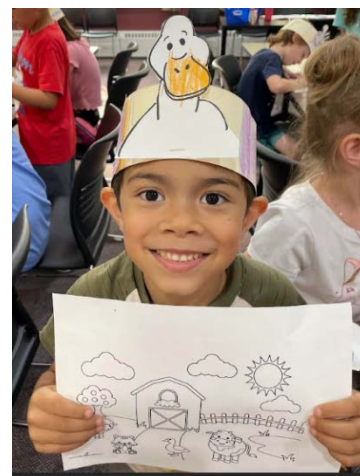
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As clarified by the Program Directors throughout summer, the site-specific strategies described above, resulted in good fits for local conditions.



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Table 1: READY for the Grade Implementation Summary, Summer 2024

Site	Direct Instruction	Book Distribution	Family Events	# Weeks	Incentives	# Students	# On-Site Staff	Parent Feedback	Achievement
Hamden	✓	✓	✓	6	✓	18	5 (1 coordinator, 3 teachers, 1 teen aide)	Positive	Most/all
Killingly	✓	✓	✓	7	✓	22	4 (2 teachers, 1 aide, + 1 teen helper)	Positive	Most/all
Manchester	✓	✓	✓	8	Prizes, books	15	3 (1 teacher, 2 resource coordinators, +1 student helper)	Positive	Most/all
New Haven Stetson	✓	✓	✓	7	✓	17	4 (1 coordinator, 2 teachers, 1 student teacher)	Positive	Most/all
New Haven Wilson	✓	✓	✓	7	✓	9	3 (1 coordinator, 2 teachers, +1 student helper)	Positive	Most/all
Rockville	✓	✓		6	✓	38	4 (1 coordinator, 3 paras, + 4 student helpers)	Positive	Most/all
TOTAL						119**			

* Aides are adult staff, helpers include both volunteer and paid pre-teenage and teenage youth, including some former participants.

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Table 1 also shows important summary data about program and participant outcomes across all sites. Parents/guardians provided positive feedback about how the programs operated and what they and their children got out of it, and program staff reported achievement by participants.

- All sites obtained very positive feedback from parents/guardians (see site-specific reports for details). The parents confirmed that the work students did, helped them gain confidence in reading abilities, develop interest in reading for learning and enjoyment, and helped develop or maintain key skills including comprehension, phonics, and identifying sight words. Even though most communities continued to have other options including free summer school, parents pointed out that RfG focused on reading skills students would need to be successful in the new school year and they appreciated the routine and guaranteed reading time, as well as the opportunity for small multi-week programs, access to the library, and enrichment and socializing options.
- Different tests were used to determine achievement, but program directors at all six of the sites administered initial and final assessments of most participants and all indicated that all or almost all of the students maintained or improved their reading skills.

Direct observations were conducted at all sites. Additionally, review of internal reports and/or interviews with site Coordinators were conducted to learn more about how sites worked with children and their family members, and how they implemented their plans. A summary of specific teaching and learning strategies that were observed or described during observations, interviews or report reviews, are shown below in Table 2. It can be seen in the table that, as they have been over all the years of the initiative, many effective practices were used at each of the sites and coordinators/directors reported they used these strategies and others regularly. Specific examples are described in the site-specific reports available in Section F. Additionally, sites continued extensive use of physical space for direct instruction in every community. Books and other instructional materials were made available to participating families at all sites.

Table 2: Use of Effective Practices, Summer 2024

	Hamden	Killingly	Manchester	NH-S	NH-W	Rockville
Building phonetic skills	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Children reading silently	HW	HW	HW	✓	HW	✓
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	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

* Done with small groups (2 – 3 students) only. HW = Homework

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

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B. Enrollment

Registration data were submitted for 119 enrolled students. This included 26 (22%) rising 1st graders, 34 (29%) rising 2nd graders and 33 (28%) rising 3rd graders. Participants also included two students (Manchester) who were younger than grade 1, and multiple students at all sites but Hamden, who were older. The grade level compositions of the sites were different, with each responding to specific needs/requests of the populations that engaged them, but all sites engaged the core RfG target group of rising 1st – 3rd graders.

Table 3a: Number of Registered Participants by site by Fall 2024 Grade Level

Site	K	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	TOTAL 2024	TOTAL 2023	TOTAL 2022	TOTAL 2021
Hamden	0	1	8	9	0	18	19	15	9
Killingly	0	7	7	7	1	22	23	23	31
Manchester	2	1	3	2	7	15	11	5	
NH – Stetson	0	2	3	6	5	17	9	8	
NH – Wilson	0	3	2	3	1	9	17	13	24
Rockville	1	12	11	6	9	38	34	33	14
West Haven						--	--	--	11
Willimantic						--	22	17	
TOTAL	2 (2%)	26 (22%)	34 (29%)	33 (28%)	23 (19%)	119	135	114	89

Note: the total for 2024 includes only 6 sites, there were 7 sites in 2023, 6 sites in 2022 and 5 sites in 2021. West Haven and Willimantic are included here as their population contributed to comparative totals for 2021 – 2023. Totals for 2020 are available but not shown here due to the substantial differences in program operation for that year. Note also that one student for 2024, NH-Stetson did not have a Fall grade level recorded.

The demographic characteristics of the 119 summer 2024 students are shown in Table 3b (following). This total number of students remained lower than the number of students in pre-pandemic years when the average number per site was closer to 30 students, but it was consistent for these sites for the last three summers. The sites providing services have changed over the years (see note above and footnote 3). As in the past, there were also some key differences in the composition of the cohort across sites. Specifically:

- Gender representation was even in 2024, 50% of all students were female and 50% were male.
- The racial/ethnic composition of the student group for 2024 was again fairly diverse: 5% of students were identified as Asian, 27% were identified as Black/African American, 12% of students were identified as Hispanic/Latinx, 34% were identified as White, and 21% were identified as having two or more racial/ethnic designations including Black/African American and White, Hispanic/Latinx and White. Racial/ethnic diversity was more pronounced at some sites than others (see individual site summaries).
- The proportion of students who were identified as Hispanic/Latinx was lower than it has been for previous summers, while the proportion of those identified as having two or more racial/ethnic designations (including those identified as Hispanic/Latinx and white) has increased. Changes in group composition are likely due to differences in site profiles, **but this should continue to be monitored** (and all comparisons should be made very carefully).

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- The primary language used at home for a total of 85% of the summer 2024 students was English, but 3%, a much lower proportion than in prior years, spoke Spanish as their primary language. Additionally, 11% spoke English and another language (such as Urdu, Gujarati, Pashto, Spanish, Twi) at home. Note that the decrease in the proportion of children whose primary language at home is Spanish is likely related to the decrease in overall population at the New Haven – Wilson site, but this should continue to be monitored for future summers to make sure that adequate outreach is happening for Spanish-Speaking families from any of the sites (see also the Enrollment Demographics summary in the Appendix). The variety of languages, and the fact that several students have parents who need some translation assistance to interact with the program also continues to signal a need for attention to language-related staff skills and materials for future summers. (Note that the parent survey was translated to Spanish for summer 2024.)

Table 3b: Demographic Characteristics of Total Enrollment

	2024 N=119	2023 N=135	2022 N=114	2021 N=89	2020 N=88
Grade in Fall					
PK/Kindergarten*	2%	2%	2%	4%	2%
First Grade	22%	24%	23%	36%	35%
Second Grade	29%	27%	35%	31%	25%
Third Grade	28%	32%	34%	28%	32%
Fourth Grade*	19%	15%	7%		6%
Gender					
Female	50%	58%	50%	58%	53%
Male	50%	42%	50%	42%	47%
Race/Ethnicity**	N=119	N=132	N=108	N=77	N=87
Asian	5%	9%	7%	6%	7%
Black/African American	27%	21%	17%	21%	25%
Hispanic/Latinx	12%	25%	31%	19%	32%
Native American	0	0	0	3%	0
White	34%	30%	35%	36%	25%
Two or more racial/ethnic designations	21%	15%	9%	10%	9%
Other	1%	0	0	4%	
Primary Language at Home					N=62
English	85%	79%	84%	76%	68%
Spanish	3%	10%	9%	14%	21%
English and/or other language	11%	12%	7%	10%	11%

* Siblings in PK and 4th grade were allowed to officially participate for summer 2020 and beyond

** Note all reported racial/ethnic data were recoded into single race/ethnicity categories to facilitate over-years comparisons, students in the “other” category 2021 and 2024, identified themselves as *Arabs*.

- Assessment of participants’ initial instructional reading levels were conducted as summer programming began at all the sites and participants at all but the New Haven - Wilson Branch also reported available entering reading levels. Outreach for summer 2024 continued to include connections with families that had participated in prior years, or among families that were known to have students reading below grade level (roughly 3/4 of participants were specifically identified as

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being below or well below grade level and key staff from all sites indicated almost of those participating definitely needed the help). Additionally, some parents, concerned about their children falling behind due to lack of consistent instruction during prior school years, enrolled their children to ensure they caught up and/or maintained skills they had caught up during 2023-24.

Directors/Coordinators and family members reported that all or almost all (about 82%) of the participants they worked with were eligible for free or reduced-price lunch.

C. Attendance and Achievement

In addition to running engaging programs, the sites also promoted regular attendance. Each program tracked and reported attendance somewhat differently (see site specific results for details), but all indicated that many/most participants attended consistently and took advantage of available programming (despite in most cases, the availability of other summer learning options and family summer-time interests). All the sites also pushed participants to achieve, to maintain and in many cases to enhance key reading skills. Once again the sites used different assessment strategies that focused on different skill development for summer 2024, but as shown in Table 4, it was clear that overall, participants demonstrated desired results, just as has been documented for every year of the initiative (see also site-specific results for additional details).

For the 92 cases from summer 2024 where both a pre- and post-test were administered: 37% of the post tests showed improvement and an additional 62% showed no change (i.e., no loss of reading skills). All but one RfG participant (99%) for summer 2024 achieved the desired stability and expected readiness for the next school year.

Table 4: Summer Reading Goal Results

Program	# Tests	Decreased Reading Score	Maintained Reading Score	Increased Reading Score
Hamden	11	0	9	2
Killingly	19	0	4	15
Manchester	10	1	8	1
New Haven-Stetson	10	0	3	7
New Haven-Wilson	7	0	4	3
Rockville/Vernon	35	0	26	9
TOTAL★	92	1%	62%	37%

★Children took different tests. This is a basic assessment of change across sites.

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D. Parent/Guardian Feedback

A total of 30 parents/guardians answered a brief survey⁴ about the RfG summer program 2024 (this included 4 from Hamden, 8 from Killingly, 2 from Manchester, 7 from New Haven-Stetson, 3 from New Haven-Wilson, and 6 from Rockville). As shown in Table 5, all parent respondents verified that their children benefited from participating in RfG summer 2024. Additionally, all respondents rated the program leaders as *excellent* and all reported they planned to sign up again next summer. Their comments regarding the staff and what they liked about the program and how it benefitted their children were especially enlightening (see site specific results in Section F).

Table 5: Parent/Guardian Feedback READY for the Grade Summer 2023 and Summer 2024

	2024 N=30	2023 N=36
% who rated the program <i>good</i> (10%) or <i>excellent</i> (90%)	100%	100%
% who rated the staff <i>good</i> or <i>excellent</i> (100%)	100%	100%
% who reported the RfG Program was <i>important</i> (17%) or <i>very important</i> (83%)	100%	97%
% who answered yes to the following		
As a result of participating my child/children read more over the summer	100%	97%
As a result of participating, my child/children feel more confident reading	100%	97%
As a result of participating my family was inspired to read more over the summer	100%	97%
We will sign up again next summer if eligible	100%	100%

*the scale for these items ranged from *poor* to *fair* to *good* to *excellent*.

E. Staff Descriptions

All sites continued to have diverse, highly-qualified staff working with the children. A total of 21 adults served as staff to the programs (please see also Table 1 for the breakdown of staff and assistants by site). About one third of the participating staff (7) were new to RfG for Summer 2024, but the rest, including 3 who had been participating for more than 5 years, have worked with the program for 2 or more years. The staff included 19 women and 2 males (from the Hamden and New Haven - Stetson sites). Most importantly they brought many qualifications to their work: they are public school teachers and resource coordinators, library staff, and other related positions. There were also teen aides at two of the sites, and student helpers at three sites. The instructors have worked with all grade levels, and in other supportive positions (e.g., Family Resource Coordinator).

⁴ The parent survey was administered by RfG staff at the sites in hard copy form and then transferred to Survey Monkey for analysis for this report. Surveys were translated to Spanish for administration at New Haven – Wilson, summer 2024.

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F. Site Specific Results

All six sites accomplished key outcomes for summer 2024 and provided important RfG benefits for participating families. The way they delivered services and what they accomplished specifically varied somewhat by site. Details for each site follow.

Hamden returned for its fourth year at the Brundage branch library multi-purpose room. A new coordinator, Nancy Shannon, managed the program, two of the highly qualified teachers returned, and a third highly qualified teacher was added to the staff.⁵ Together they effectively ran the program and oversaw the work of a local SYEP teen to help work with the children. The program ran three days each week and the 18 students (almost half of whom are returning from 2023) had both group and individualized tutoring opportunities (enrollment at Hamden was essentially unchanged from 2023 when 19 students were enrolled). As in each past year, participants also regularly visited the library to read books, play chess, checkers or literacy-based games. Additionally, the Hamden site engaged an outside provider (*Kidding Around Yoga*) to do a special program with the RfG participants and they conducted a family orientation and culminating family event. Hamden honored its first RfG graduate who had attended the program for three consecutive summers. Children regularly received books (127 were given away) and other incentives to promote regular attendance. Details follow.

Program Implementation

Individual and Small Group Instruction. The Hamden Library ran their READY for the Grade program Monday, Tuesday and Thursday from 9:30 until 12:00 for a total of 6 weeks. Throughout the summer, the group participated in an “Author Study” focusing on multiple strategies to better understand books by an individual author (Laura Numeroff summer 2024). For example, students discussed themes in the book, talked about characters and challenges, and demonstrated their understanding by participating in art-related and comparative activities. Staff used worksheets (e.g., character trait recording sheets), large, and individual white-boards, and literacy-based games and activities to help students practice sight words and vocabulary throughout each session and to achieve session objectives. Students worked with each of the tutors doing different, small-group and individualized literacy-based activities every day. For multiple days, the group took on different topics related to the book, e.g., themes, characters, lessons learned, exploring friendship, and read some additional selections that were similar for comparison purposes as well. Each day they focused on reading, comprehension, vocabulary and fluency through the different activities. As they have since the program started, Hamden RfG children also got opportunities in 2024 to visit the library together with staff on a regular basis and they had take-home activities to extend their classroom learning. Once again, observed instruction was excellent. Library time was spent reading books, using the AWE early literacy computer or playing chess and checkers. Students also spent 10 minutes at the end of each day outside to play games while waiting for parents to arrive. Kids were provided with snacks and drinks each day.

Special Program Activity. The students had an hour-long yoga/mindfulness class on the morning of August 5th. Sherri Sosensky from *Kidding Around Yoga* did a jungle-themed program that combined simple yoga poses,

⁵ One of the original tutors was unable to stay on after the first week, but Hamden was able to quickly make a replacement who was a good fit.

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stories and meditation techniques for kids. Each student was provided with a yoga mat that they were able to keep and take home with them. There were 12 students and one parent in attendance for the yoga class.

Parent Engagement. Hamden kicked off their summer program with a family orientation night (12 families participated). Take home activities for children to complete with family members were sent home most weeks; and students were also given a take-home packet to review during the weeks after the program ended until school starts. They also held a family pizza and bingo party on Wednesday, August 7 from 6 to 7:30. A total of 10 families, 33 people in total, attended the family event.

Incentives. A total of 127 books were given away for students to add to their home libraries. Students also received a puzzle, maze or hidden picture workbook and some of the wooden paint kits that were left over from summer 2023. Each student who attended on a regular basis received a \$25 gift card to Target. Hamden RfG also gave special recognition along with a \$50 gift card to Old Navy to a student who had attended the READY for the Grade program for 3 consecutive summers. She is the Hamden Public Libraries first official READY for the Grade graduate.



Participants enjoy the Hamden Kiding Around Yoga event, summer 2024.



Sight word bingo at the Hamden RfG summer program.

Enrollment

As shown in Table 6a, a total of 18 students were enrolled for the Hamden READY for the Grade Summer program 2024. It can be seen in the table that the descriptive characteristics of those who participated have been shifting somewhat over the years. These data are annually combined with the enrollment data from all other RfG sites and continue to be useful to monitor recruitment trends each summer.

- The program served rising 1st (6%), 2nd (44%) and 3rd graders (50%). A total of 5 students were females (28%) and 13 students (72%) were males, including some siblings. Almost half of the students had participated before.

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- The student group was diverse in terms of race/ethnicity and representative of the local community; 2 participants were identified as Asian (including Indian/Asian), 3 of the participants were identified as Black/African American and 1 was Black/Caribbean; 2 were identified as Hispanic/Latinx, 5 were identified as White/Caucasian, and the rest were identified as having two or more racial/ethnic designations.
- Most students (17) spoke English as their primary language at home, and the other student spoke English/Kannada at home.

Table 6a: Enrollment Details, Hamden READY for the Grade

	2024 N=18	2023 N=19	2022 N=15	2021 N=9
Grade in Fall				
PK/Kindergarten	0	0	0	0
First Grade	6%	37%	40%	22%
Second Grade	44%	26%	40%	22%
Third Grade	50%	37%	20%	56%
Gender				
Female	28%	53%	27%	44%
Male	72%	47%	73%	56%
Race/Ethnicity (n=8)				
Asian	11%	12%	8%	50%
Black/African American	23%	12%	15%	13%
Hispanic/Latinx	11%	41%	38%	13%
Native American	0	0	0	0
White	28%	24%	23%	13%
Two or more racial/ethnic identities	28%	12%	15%	13%
Primary Language at Home				
English	94%	79%	71%	44%
Spanish	0	11%		
English and 2 nd language*	0	11%	21%	0
Other*	6%	0	7%	56%

* 1 student Kannada/English 2024; 1 student Kannada/English, 2 students Spanish/English for 2023; Spanish/English for 2022.

Attendance

As stated previously, Hamden conducted its program Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9:30 until 12:00 for a total of 6 weeks and 42.5 possible hours of instruction per student. Review of available attendance reports for the Hamden READY for the Grade program summer 2024 showed that most students attended all three days with the average group size being 15 a day. In total, about 635 hours of instruction were delivered (about 35 hours per student on average) which was greatly increased compared to prior years.

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Achievement

Achievement results were recorded for 11 of the 18 participants using DIBELS 8th pre- and post-assessments (see Table 6b). Each of the tested participants maintained (9 of 11) or improved their scores (2 of 11), and improvements in specific skills were documented for all participants. Like their peers in the other RfG sites, **these participants did not lose ground over the summer**. The program Coordinator and instructors confirmed again that while some students had substantial skill development needs, all were working on key skills and most made important progress. During the observation it was clear again, as in prior summers, that the small group strategy with regular 1:1 assistance made both theme-based group work and differentiated instruction possible. Children were called upon to demonstrate their reading fluency, comprehension, vocabulary skills and abilities to make comparisons throughout the lesson.

Table 6b: Assessment Results, Hamden RfG, Summer 2024

Grade	Starting Level Letter/ Word/Fluency	Ending Level Letter/ Word/Fluency	Assessment
1	19	18	Maintained
2	29	30	Maintained
2	29	29	Maintained
2	30	30	Maintained
2	30	29	Maintained
2	30	28	Maintained
3	30	30	Maintained
3	30	30	Maintained
3	27	30	Maintained
3	25	30	Increased
3	30	40	Increased



Students listen to multiple stories about friendship to practice comparison skills, summer 2024.

“REAdy for the Grade” Summary Results Report

Evaluation Services, 2024

Parent/Guardian Feedback

Only 4 parents/guardians answered the parent survey for Hamden, 2024, but all responses are in keeping with those collected in the prior two summers. As shown in Table 6c, and the following comments, all or almost all parent respondents verified that their children benefited from participating in RfG summer 2024.

Additionally, all respondents rated the program leaders *excellent* and all but one reported they planned to sign up again next summer (1 other parent respondent indicated they might sign up again). Their comments regarding the staff and the importance of the program were especially enlightening (see next page).

Table 6c: Parent/Guardian Feedback, Hamden, REAdy for the Grade

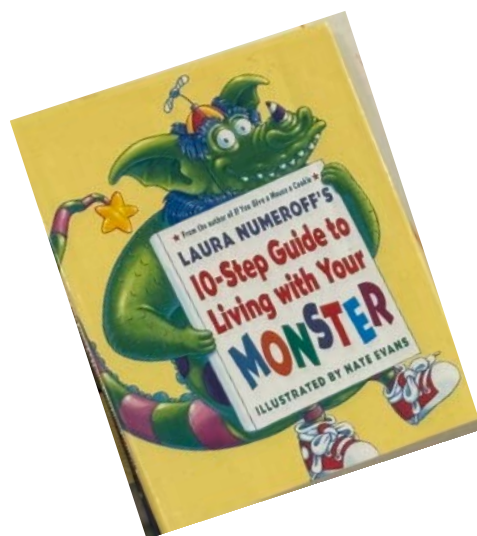
	2024 N=4	2023 N=11	2022 N=9
# who rated the program <i>good</i> or <i>excellent</i> (4) on a scale ranging from poor to excellent	4	11	9
# who rated the staff <i>good</i> or <i>excellent</i> (4) on a scale ranging from poor to excellent	4	11	9
# who reported the REAdy for the Grade Program was <i>important</i> (2) or <i>very important</i> (2)	4	11	9
# who answered yes to the following			
As a result of participating my child/children read more over the summer	4	11	9
As a result of participating, my child/children feel more confident reading	4	11	8
As a result of participating my family was inspired to read more over the summer	4	11	9

What did you like about the program?	What do you feel your child gained?
<i>I like that the teachers were patient and caring. We loved the incentives.</i> <i>Teachers were very friendly and easy to approach. They knew my sons name on the first day!</i> <i>Liked the easy schedule and how the teachers were committed to improving while making reading fun for my son.</i> <i>Multiple days offered, helped keep [my son] on track.</i> <i>The program helps with reading and getting ready for grade move up.</i>	<i>I like that my little one developed a little more confidence in attending the program.</i> <i>Reinforced reading for my son daily at home and while attending the program.</i> <i>Gained confidence in reading and socializing.</i> <i>“Comprehension.”</i>

Evaluation Services, 2024

The Hamden READy for the Grade program returned to their cozy downstairs space in the Brundage Community Branch Library for their fourth summer, 2024. Once again, the RfG team used the space very effectively and were able to use in-person programming, including group and individualized tutoring, for all sessions and events, and they regularly incorporated library time. The Hamden site effectively on-boarded two new staff members, including their lead coordinator and one tutor, and they continued to offer opportunities for an SYEP teen. They built on their outreach and recruitment strategies for participants, stabilizing their enrollment, attracting students back for a second year, or in the case of their first graduate, a third year. Hamden RfG continued use of an incentives plan similar to the one used since 2021. They shifted their focus from a single, shared book reading experience, to an author study for 2024, including comparison of the author's books to some other similarly-themed books. They did not conduct any field trips, but they did engage *Kidding Around Yoga* for a family-inclusive enrichment activity. They used the same streamlined parent engagement strategy (one orientation session, one culminating celebration and take-home activities in between) as in the past, and student attendance and parent feedback remained very positive. The program could probably increase enrollment somewhat for future summers while still maintaining the small group strategy. There are clear indications that they will have repeat consumers, have built a good reputation and are making key connections with educators in the two local schools that serve the community. The program maintained its program size as compared to summer 2023, and implementation and student outcome results were consistent and continued to mirror those achieved by the longer-established programs.

Like the other sites, Hamden engaged experienced staff who worked very effectively with students, conducted theme-based literacy activities and provided both home-based activities and meaningful opportunities for parent/family member involvement. Once again there was a continuous focus on reading skill development along with access to appropriate books, as well as group exposure to a planned reading experiences (for 2024, multiple books by a single author). The results, in alignment with those recorded for other sites, illustrated by consistent attendance, positive teacher and standardized reading assessment data and positive feedback from parents, provided clear evidence of success. **Hamden continued to fully demonstrate the strength and flexibility of the READy for the Grade model and remains well-situated to continue building for future summers.**



“REAdy for the Grade” Summary Results Report

Evaluation Services, 2024

Killingly had another productive summer with 7 weeks of programming taking place at the Killingly Public Library. A total of 22 students participated, including 5 who were engaged in one-on-one tutoring only (enrollment at Killingly was essentially unchanged from 2023 when 23 students participated; about 1/3 of 2024 students were returning). All the staff who ran the program in 2023 (two teachers from 2022 and their long-term aide) returned and together with program coordinator Allison Whiston, once again developed and delivered a very effective and integrated thematic program, including a Readers Theater culminating performance. No family education events were held, but the culminating session included families and an ice cream social. Participants regularly received books (420 were given away over the summer) and other small prizes and reading incentives. (Reinstatement of VAK program remains under consideration for future summers and the new director there is very open to future possibilities.) Details follow.

Program Implementation

Group and Individual Instruction. The staff conducted whole group activities to initiate, and sometimes close sessions and each student also worked as part of a small group in the evening program in the library. A total of five students participated only in individual one-on-one, phonics-based tutoring. During the library program sessions each week, the children practiced their reading skills using levelled readers, completed lots of written and other expressive activities that promoted comprehension and participated in other literacy-based activities such as games, crafts, sight word reviews, connected to the weekly themes (caring for plants, caring for/rescuing animals, the community, birds, oceans). They also selected books to take home for their personal libraries and extra reading practice. They were also encouraged to select library books. The three teachers each had their own ability-based groups where students had multiple opportunities to practice phonics, using reading support skills such as “tapping,” and to work on fluency and comprehension. Students also had multiple opportunities to use writing and drawing for expression, and staff were amazingly able to help multiple children in a group with different individual needs, all at one time. Observed instruction was excellent.

Special Programming. Summer 2024 included multiple special visitor sessions. During the week on Animal Rescue the children were visited by Nutmeg Acres Animal Rescue Opossum Program, and during the oceans theme week, students were visited by the Mystic Aquarium. Stories and hands-on opportunities characterized both these events.

Parent Engagement. RfG Killingly offered special family events at the beginning and end of the summer. An orientation session was held at the beginning of the summer, and at the end parents joined the children as they presented their Reader’s Theater version of *Click, Clack Moo*. Once again, the children were very excited about the opportunity to create costumes and scenery and to perform, and they were able to celebrate a job well done after the performance (see photos following). Throughout the summer, instructors continued to provide guidance for parents/guardians, to help them support their children’s reading skill development and they sent home opportunities for families to read and work together and extend learning.

Incentives. All children received a bookbag at the beginning of the summer that they decorated and used to transport their free weekly book selections. Killingly distributed 420 books summer 2024. Each child earned 2 weekly prizes/incentives from the mystery box, and each child who attended at least 9 out of the 14 days was given a \$50.00 gift card to Target and a thank you for participation. Most students who actively attended achieved this goal.

“READY for the Grade” Summary Results Report

Evaluation Services, 2024

Enrollment

As shown in Table 7a, the Killingly READY for the Grade program had as many participants summer 2024 as they had in summer 2023. It can be seen in the table that the descriptive characteristics of those who participated were both similar to, and different from those who participated in prior years.

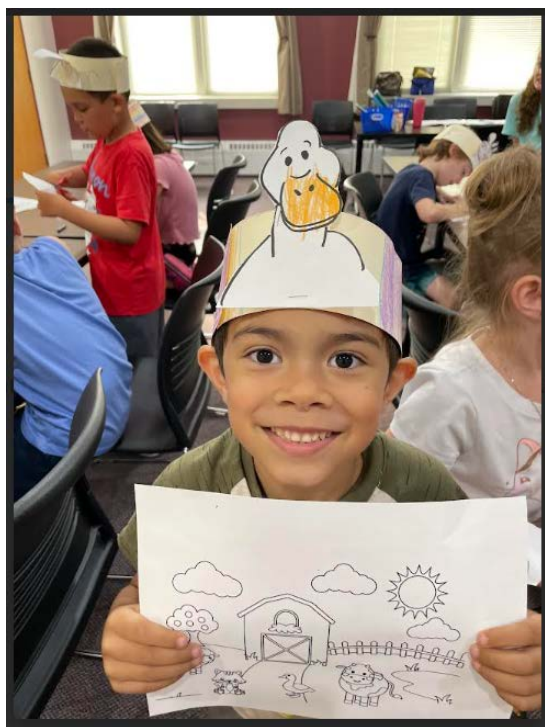
- The program served rising 1st (32%) 2nd (32%) and 3rd graders (32%), including 7 who were returning from summer 2023, and one 4th grader. Unlike in past years when the group was more evenly split, and opposite summer 2023, most participants (64%) were males.
- The student group was also somewhat different in terms of racial/ethnic diversity; 5% of the participants (1 student) identified as Hispanic/Latinx, no participants were identified as Asian or Black/African American, 82% were identified as White/Caucasian and 14%, were identified as having two or more racial/ethnic designations.
- All but one student spoke English as the primary language at home.

Table 7a: Enrollment Details, Killingly READY for the Grade

	2024 N=22	2023 N=23	2022 N=23	2021 N=31	2020 N=25
Grade in Fall					
PK/Kindergarten	0	0	0	0	0
First Grade	32%	17%	17%	42%	20%
Second Grade	32%	39%	39%	35%	32%
Third Grade	32%	39%	43%	23%	40%
Fourth Grade*	5%	4%	0	0	8%
Gender					
Female	36%	65%	52%	52%	56%
Male	64%	35%	48%	48%	44%
Race/Ethnicity					
Asian	0	4%	0	0	0
Black/African American	0	4%	9%	3%	0
Hispanic/Latinx	5%	4%	4%	10%	13%
Native American	0	0	0	6%	0
White	82%	74%	70%	61%	75%
Two or more racial/ethnic designations	14%	13%	17%	19%	13%
Primary Language at Home					
English	95%	96%	96%	92%	92%
English and Other Language**		4%	4%	4%	4%
Other	5%	0	0	4%	4%

* Grade level enrollment requirements relaxed since 2020, ** Spanish 2019-2022, Gujarati 2023, Spanish 2024

“READY for the Grade” Summary Results Report
Evaluation Services, 2024



An eager Readers’ Theater character, Killingly, 2024.



Getting ready for the Reader’s Theater performance, Killingly, 2024.



Celebrating with ice cream after a job well done, Killingly, 2024.



Earlier in the summer, participants got to visit with rescued possums.

“READY for the Grade” Summary Results Report

Evaluation Services, 2024

Attendance

Killingly conducted its 7-week group program for 17 students at the library on Mondays and Tuesdays in two-hour sessions from 4:30 – 6:30. Five additional participants were engaged in individual instruction earlier in the day. Review of attendance records for the Killingly program summer 2024 showed that most participants attended regularly.

- In total Killingly provided 414 hours of programming to the 22 students. This represents a substantial increase in total time available and participated in as compared to summer 2023.
- On average each student engaged in the group program participated for about 23.5 total hours (range was 8 – 29 hours). All but one of the five students engaged in tutoring came each week and received 7 or more total hours of individual instruction.
- As stated above all but one of the 17 group participants (94%), accessed the program for at least 9 of the 14 days (18+ hours total each), and many of them attended much more (average time 23.5 hours).

As has been the case since summer 2021, all participants were encouraged to do daily practice work and to read regularly between sessions using the books and other materials provided.

Achievement

A total of 19 students, including 4 of the 5 tutoring students participated in a reading assessment during initial and final RfG sessions. Of these, all but one participant maintained (16%) or increased their scores (79%), and the student whose score decreased remained at grade level for Fall 2024. Like each of the other RfG sites, **these participants did not lose ground over the summer – for Killingly, most improved skills.** As shown in Table 7b, students continued to hold their own regarding reading levels. The program coordinator and teachers confirmed that continuing to offer longer sessions, having small groups and making individualized instruction available continued to help enhance reading confidence. Once again, participants were excited to come to the program and interested in the topics and books in use. During the observation it was clear that the skilled instructors, effective use of levelled readers and continued use of integrated thematic activities made it easier to work on specific skills and helped participants stay focused. Staff reinforced each other’s lessons, used writing and games and creativity to help students work on key skills such as short vowel sounds, using context recognizing question words and sight words and demonstrating comprehension.

Table 7b: Achievement Data, Killingly READY for the Grade, 2024

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Pre</u>	<u>Post</u>	<u>RESULT</u>	<u>Grade</u>	<u>Pre</u>	<u>Post</u>	<u>RESULT</u>	<u>Grade</u>	<u>Pre</u>	<u>Post</u>	<u>RESULT</u>
1	6	8	Maintained	2t	24	28	Maintained	3t	13	21	Increased
1	8	8	Maintained	2t	15	28	Increased	3	17	28	Increased
1	4	9	Increased	2	27	34	Increased	3	38	53	Increased
1	6	10	Increased	2	61	69	Increased	3	42	68	Increased
1	7	15	Increased	2	73	97	Increased	3	58	94	Increased
1	8	13	Increased					3	66	55	Decreased*
1	9	14	Increased					4t	44	66	Increased

Teachers elected to use the *easyCBM* Assessment for Summer 2024. *Note the student whose score decreased remained at grade level for Fall 2024.

“READY for the Grade” Summary Results Report

Evaluation Services, 2024

Parent/Guardian Feedback

A total of 8 parents/guardians answered the brief survey about the READY for the Grade (Remarkable Readers) summer program in Killingly, 2024. As shown in Table 7c, and the following comments, all parent respondents verified that their children benefited from participating in RfG summer 2024. Additionally, all respondents rated the program leaders positively and all reported they planned to sign up again next summer.

Table 7c Parent/Guardian Feedback, Killingly, READY for the Grade, 2021-2024

	2024 N=8	2023 N=11	2022 N=13	2021 N=12
% who rated the program <i>good</i> (1) or <i>excellent</i> (7)	8	11	13	12
% who rated the staff <i>good</i> or <i>excellent</i> (8)	8	11	13	12
% who reported Remarkable Readers (RfG) was <i>important</i> (1) or <i>very important</i> (8)	8	10	13	12
% who answered yes to the following				
As a result of participating my child/children read more over the summer	8	10	13	11
As a result of participating, my child/children feel more confident reading	8	10	13	11
As a result of participating my family was inspired to read more over the summer	8	10	12	11

What did you like about the program?	What do you feel your child gained?
Really helped propel my child's reading skills and it occurred in an environment he felt comfortable learning in	I was extremely worried about my daughter as she lacked self confidence and was very afraid to read. However, she has become my little super star in reading, expressing herself and writing. The teacher did a magnificent job.
My son is learning AND having fun. He loves it!!	The program not only motivated my child to read but my child was excited about the many other activities they participated in while in the program. Arts and crafts and growing plants.
It was important for my child to practice reading this summer with someone else besides me. Also I really wanted him to keep up with the skills he has learned and not fall behind.	More self-confidence, more self-will, love for reading and writing.
Everything, availability, diversity in what was done, interaction, communication.	Confidence in reading and writing skills
Close to home and helped my child build confidence. I could drop off.	Confidence. And practice
The consistency	My child gained motivation to read over the summer. He was also able to socialize with other students from school and participate in fun activities. He has more confidence now.
That it is being taught by a teacher who knows how to teach reading to a child and that it is held at our local library	It kept her engaged!
The program really encouraged our daughter to continue her reading over the summer break!	

“READY for the Grade” Summary Results Report

Evaluation Services, 2024

Conclusions and Issues for Further Consideration

For 2024, the Killingly READY for the Grade program again offered extended hours (two hours twice weekly). They continued to use the library facility effectively and to make individualized instruction available for some students. Killingly RfG also regularly promoted and encouraged home-based reading practice and sent home activities and reading for extended learning opportunities. The library also welcomed visits from two outside organizations – Nutmeg Acres Animal Rescue Opossum Program, and the Mystic Aquarium. All 2023 staff members returned, and the team worked very effectively with students and each other. Literacy-based activities and many complementary enrichment activities including those students could work on at home were all made possible, and there was a continuous focus on access to appropriate books. The results, illustrated by consistent attendance, positive teacher and standardized reading assessment data and especially positive and consistent feedback from parents provided clear evidence of success. **Killingly served a comparable number of students to prior summers, even without the VAK site (though it is hopeful that programming will return there in 2025 or after). The current program design, including lessons from visiting organizations, was very well received by both participants and parents. Ongoing efforts to re-engage with VAK, to continue visiting organization visits, to increase enrollment slightly and to continue parent/family support will continue to be part of plans for 2025.**

Parent Comments about Staff and the Importance of the Program

I am not sure that there are sufficient words to describe these awesome people. Their dedication, follow up, showing empathy and concern for our family as our 7-yr old son did a double surgery and still pouring out their all into helping our daughter succeed. Super amazing people.

[They] are excellent.

Love that my child is with a teacher that will be at his new school for 2nd grade next year



Group reading activities at the Killingly library, Summer 2024.



Eagerly waiting for a turn to contribute to the summary, Killingly, Summer 2024

“REAdy for the Grade” Summary Results Report

Evaluation Services, 2024

Manchester ran a fully staffed, 8-week program in the Squire Village resource room. Three highly qualified staff members, including two who had participated in 2023 were engaged, and the Family Resource Coordinator for Squire Village also continued regular involvement and support. A total of 15 children regularly participated (plus as many as 10 others who dropped in one or more times to investigate the program). Staff conducted small group reading and other literacy and arts-based activities and provided individualized assistance to participants as needed, for two hours two days a week, and on Thursdays RfG collaborated with Invent the Summer so students could also participate in weekly STEM challenges. The site continued to promote the voluntary nature of involvement (children were free to come and go), but many children attended consistently and those students were tested at the beginning and end of the program to help assess reading skill development/maintenance.

Program Implementation



Kids playing sight word salad bar. Manchester RfG, 2024.

Group and Individual Instruction. As stated above, Manchester engaged three instructors to work with Squire Village residents throughout the summer 2024. As they had for summer 2023, the instructors, who included a teacher and two Family Resource Coordinators from a local school, including one person who grew up at Squire Village, actively engaged students in multiple reading, writing and craft-based activities to help students hone skills, gain knowledge, gain confidence, and have fun. Teachers alternated whole group activities (story reading and discussions) with hands-on applications (buddy-reading, puzzles, worksheets, games) and craft projects related to daily themes. During application time, staff worked with one or two individual participants to practice reading or work on skill development, while others worked on art projects related to the lesson content, or played literacy skill development games. Observed group instruction was excellent.

Family and Site Level Engagement and Incentives. Manchester did not conduct any regular parent education activities, but parents were encouraged to drop in and visit while programming happened, and as they had in 2023, the instructors regularly sent completed work and small projects and books home with children. Many of the children attended programming with siblings, including older siblings who helped and encouraged engagement. As she had in summer 2023, the Squire Village Family Resource Coordinator visited the program regularly and helped to coordinate family involvement (the meals program takes place in the Squire Village Resource Room and children can easily go from breakfast to RfG). The physical space continues to be ideally suited for the program as there are large tables that can easily be reconfigured for worksessions, a designated circle area with a rug for large group reading, plenty of space for the many supplies including books, literacy skill development games, and snacks and prizes. Children selected books and prizes to take home after each session.

“READY for the Grade” Summary Results Report

Evaluation Services, 2024

Enrollment

As shown in Table 8a, the Manchester READY for the Grade program served 15 students with consistent attendance throughout summer 2024. This represented a return to pre-pandemic levels of participation for Manchester and an increase over the number participating summer 2023. It can be seen in the table that the descriptive characteristics of those who participated were similar to those who participated summer 2024.

- The 2024 program served rising K/pre-K students (14%), 1st graders (7%) 2nd graders (20%), 3rd graders (13%), and 4th graders (47%) including as stated above older siblings. A total of 53% of participants in summer 2024 were females, 47% were males. (There were also a few other children who visited and tried out participation once or twice, or who were siblings even older than 4th grade. Data about them is not reported here.)
- The student group represents the diversity at Squire Village; 7% of the participants (1 student) identified as Asian, 87% of the participants were identified as Black/African American, and 7% (1 student) had two or more racial/ethnic designations.
- About two-thirds of the students spoke English as their primary language at home, but five of the students, from two families, spoke both English and Twi regularly at home.

Table 8a: Enrollment Details, Manchester RfG, 2023-2024

	2024 N=15	2023 N=11
Grade in Fall		
PK/Kindergarten*	14%	0
First Grade	7%	27%
Second Grade	20%	27%
Third Grade	13%	18%
Fourth Grade*	47%	27%
Gender		
Female	53%	45%
Male	47%	55%
Race/Ethnicity		
Asian	7%	9%
Black/African American	87%	82%
Hispanic/Latinx	0	9%
Native American	0	0
White	0	0
Two or more racial/ethnic designations	7%	0
Other	0	0
Primary Language at Home		
English	64%	64%
Spanish	0	0
English and 2 nd Language (Twi)	36%	36%

Attendance

Manchester conducted its program throughout the summer for 8-weeks at Squire Village on Tuesdays and, Wednesdays from 9:30 – 11:30; and on Thursdays, for the special STEM challenges, from 9:00-11:00. They

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operated the program on an open-attendance basis: children were free to come and go during the open hours and could elect to participate or not, on a daily basis. As for summer 2023, some parents chose to drop off and pick-up their children, but the children can access the resource room on their own – walking or biking from their residences.

Review of attendance records for Manchester READY for the Grade program summer 2024 showed that there was a consistent group of participants, and they attended regularly.

- In total Manchester provided 388 hours of programming to 15 students (up from 295 hours in 2023).
- On average each student participated for about 26 total hours (range was 8 – 42 hours).
- About two-thirds of the students participated more than half of the available hours, with many attending multiple days each week and multiple weeks throughout the summer.

All participants were encouraged to do daily practice work and to read regularly between sessions using the books and take-home activities provided.

Parent/Guardian Feedback

A total of 7 parents/guardians have answered the brief survey about the READY for the Grade summer program in Manchester, over the past two summers. As shown in Table 8b, and the following comments, all parent respondents verified that their children benefited from participating in RfG over the summer. Additionally, all respondents rated the program leaders positively and all reported they planned to sign up again next summer.

Table 8b: Parent/Guardian Feedback, Manchester, READY for the Grade, 2023, 2024

	2023-2024 N=7
% who rated the program <i>good</i> or <i>excellent</i> on a scale ranging from poor to excellent	7
% who rated the staff <i>good</i> or <i>excellent</i> on a scale ranging from poor to excellent	7
% who reported the READY for the Grade Program was <i>important</i> or <i>very important</i>	7
% who answered yes to the following	
As a result of participating my child/children read more over the summer	7
As a result of participating, my child/children feel more confident reading	7
As a result of participating my family was inspired to read more over the summer	7
We will sign up again next summer	7

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What did you like about the program?	What do you feel your child gained?
<i>The staff and the activities. My child looked forward to this program.</i>	<i>His reading increased, sounding out words and is being able to identify objects.</i>
<i>The amount of help and attention.</i>	<i>He met new people.</i>
<i>Everything.</i>	<i>Trust.</i>
<i>The engagement with the children.</i>	<i>Better reading skills.</i>
<i>They did more than reading.</i>	<i>Having a bit more patience.</i>

Conclusions and Issues for Further Consideration

The Manchester REAdy for the Grade program built on its successful, reinstated in-person program for summer 2024. They added STEM learning to their already appealing design for the community and they were able once again to provide extended hours for participation for multiple participants. Many books were distributed to children who participated regularly, and to those who dropped in too. **While in its re-inaugural year Manchester RfG did not test student achievement or offer structured assistance to parents/guardians, for 2024 pre- and post-testing was re-established and the site continued to build on its foundation for future programming, including parent/family involvement.** As stated previously, the three staff members, including one who was new in 2024, worked very effectively with students at the site, and they connected well with the families and the Squire Village Resource Coordinator as well. The results, illustrated by consistent attendance, staff recognition of children’s progress, test scores that show maintenance /improvement for all students and positive feedback from parents provided clear evidence of success. **Manchester was able to implement its revised RfG program for a 2nd summer, maintained good relationships with its site host, successfully integrated a new staff person and offer considerable participation time again for students during Summer 2024. The program design was very well received as confirmed by participants and parents.**



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During Summer 2022, with support from the Scripps Family Fund for Education and the Arts, **New Haven** initiated a new RfG program in the newly constructed **Stetson Branch Library** of the New Haven Free Public Library system. Now in its third year, the New Haven-Stetson RfG program was reconfigured, new staff were engaged, the program increased enrollment and experienced an especially productive summer. Darlene Walden a highly skilled, seasoned educator took on the leadership role for the site and together with Diane Brown and three other very experienced teachers, recruitment challenges were addressed, and program modifications were made. The Stetson team conducted both individual and small group work and regularly used computer-based instruction and learning games. Participants also checked out on-reading level books and participated in the mayor’s Summer Reading Challenge. There were 17 students enrolled in the daytime program. New Haven-Stetson also conducted Fun Family Nights weekly which provided opportunities for them to provide additional support and engagement for RfG participating children and their families, and some others who availed themselves of the opportunities.

Program Implementation

Individual and Small Group Instruction. RfG New Haven – Stetson Branch conducted small group and individual instruction for 17 participants summer2024. The program met Monday and Thursday for 14 participants and on Saturdays for 3 participants. Instructors worked with small groups and individuals in the mornings on sight word building, blends/digraphs/long vowel word knowledge, letter/sound recognition for those with only beginning skills, handwriting (line) practice, reading and re-reading to teachers or other students and



An exciting game of sight word Jenga

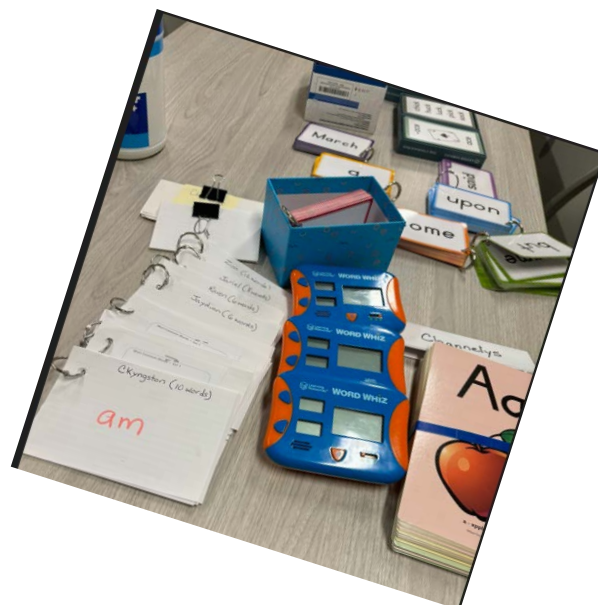


Students hard at work, RfG Stetson 2024

comprehension check-ins for those with more developed skills. The site also used a wide variety of learning games, and as reported by Ms. Walden, all levels of learning also involved computer reading skills and a digital reading library to read or listen to books and then answer questions for comprehension checks. Participants also checked out appropriate books for their reading levels weekly and were given time during the program to read them and other books selected during regular library visits, including books from the mayor’s Summer Reading Challenge. Participants also received one-on-one tutoring during each of the sessions, after group activities. All of these strategies were observed during the site visit and instruction was uniformly excellent.

Parent Engagement and Incentives. Fun family nights were held on Wednesdays providing family members and children additional learning opportunities. These events benefitted from extra support from Stetson Branch Manager Diane Brown and children’s librarian Phillip Modeen, and included two sessions with special guest involvement by local artists/educators. On 7/17 puppeteer and artist Iyaba Ibo Mandingo lead the family celebration, and on 7/31, local artist and educator Sheree Baldwin Muhammad facilitated a family canvas painting night (see images from these exciting evenings in the appendix). Students received incentives for each hour they spent reading during the summer and all students received a free book of their choice and a certificate for participating in the summer reading program.

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Enrollment

A total of 17 students were enrolled for New Haven – Stetson Branch 2024 READY for the Grade Summer program. Full registration data was available for all students. This continues to help establish descriptive information that can be monitored as the program continues to move beyond its initiation phase. The background characteristics of those who participated were similar to participants from other sites and reflective of the local community. The enrollment numbers for 2024 represent a substantial increase in participation and also show that the program, through new staff has been able to connect effectively with targeted students.

- The program served rising 1st graders (13%), 2nd graders (19%), 3rd graders (38%) and 4th graders (31%). About half (47%) of these participants were females, half (53%) were males.
- The race/ethnicity of 35% of the participating students was identified as Black/African American and the race/ethnicity of another 35% of the students was identified as Hispanic/Latinx. A total of 29% of the students were identified as having two or more racial/ethnic designations. All but one student, who spoke French/Creole, identified the primary language spoken in their homes as English.

Table 9a: Enrollment Details, New Haven – Stetson READY for the Grade

	2024 N=17	2023 N=9	2022* N=5
Grade in Fall			
PK/Kindergarten	0	1	2
First Grade	13%	2	1
Second Grade	19%	1	1
Third Grade	38%	5	1
Fourth Grade	31%	0	0
Gender			
Female	47%	6	2
Male	53%	3	3
Race/Ethnicity (n=8)			
Asian	0	0	
Black/African American	35%	8	5
Hispanic/Latinx	35%	1	
Native American	0	0	
White	0	0	
Two or more racial/ethnic designations	29%	0	
Primary Language at Home			
English	94%	8	5
Spanish and English	0	1	
English and 2 nd Language	0	0	
Other (see above)	6%	0	

* A total of 8 students were enrolled, but only 5 fully reported registration data in 2022.

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Attendance

As stated previously, New Haven – Stetson conducted its 7-week group program for 14 students at the library on Mondays and Thursdays in four-hour sessions from 10:00 – 2:00. Three additional participants were engaged on Saturdays. in individual instruction earlier in the day, and a few individuals connected through or in addition, to the Family Nights. Review of attendance records for the program, summer 2024 showed that most participants attended regularly.

- In total New Haven - Stetson provided 516 hours of programming to the 17 students.
- On average each student engaged in the program participated for about 30 total hours (range was 8 – 50 hours). This included time spent on weekdays, at family events and for some participants on Saturdays.

Participants were encouraged to do daily practice work and to read regularly between sessions using the levelled readers and other materials provided.

Achievement

As shown in Table 9b, achievement results were recorded for 11 of the 17 participants using pre- and post High Frequency Assessments. Each of the tested participants maintained or improved their scores. Like their peers in the other, more established RfG sites, **these participants did not lose ground over the summer.** The RfG team also noted that students had become more excited about reading and were eager to participate and show off their new skills. During the observation it was clear that the instructors connected easily with the students and kept them engaged in individual instruction, learning games and small group activities.

Table 9b: Assessment Results, New Haven - Stetson Branch RfG, Summer 2024

Grade	Test pre	Test post	RESULT
1	73%	86%	Increased
2	100%	100%	Maintained
2	73%	100%	Increased
3	81%	88%	Maintained
3	91%	100%	Maintained
3	54%	100%	Increased
3	85%	100%	Increased
4	39%	100%	Increased
4	84%	96%	Increased
4	87%	100%	Increased

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Parent/Guardian Feedback

A total of 7 parents/guardians answered a brief survey about the READY for the Grade summer program in New Haven – Stetson, 2024. As shown in Table 9c, and the following comments, all parent respondents verified that their children benefited from participating in RfG summer 2024. Additionally, all respondents rated the program leaders *excellent* and all reported they planned to sign up again next summer. Their comments regarding the staff and the importance of the program were especially enlightening.

Table 9c: Parent/Guardian Feedback, New Haven - Stetson, READY for the Grade

	2024 N=7
# who rated the program <i>good</i> or <i>excellent</i> (7) on a scale ranging from poor to excellent	7
# who rated the staff <i>good</i> or <i>excellent</i> (7) on a scale ranging from poor to excellent	7
# who reported the READY for the Grade Program was <i>important</i> or <i>very important</i> (7)	7
# who answered yes to the following	
As a result of participating my child/children read more over the summer	7
As a result of participating, my child/children feel more confident reading	7
As a result of participating my family was inspired to read more over the summer	7

What did you like about this program?	What do you feel your child gained?
<i>The amount of hours and days.</i>	<i>Confidence to read aloud. A better understanding in learning to read and write.</i>
<i>The consistent assignments. The teachers and their methods.</i>	<i>Confidence to read, try their best, routine summer reading, getting for the program twice a week, bravery, children feel good to finish a book</i>
<i>Small space, mixd age groups for children to learn all levels.</i>	<i>She caught up the sight words she needs to start and be prepared for 3rd grade.</i>
<i>Everything</i>	<i>I think he gains a lot more knowledge</i>
<i>The enthusiasm of the team</i>	<i>Not only did she learn how to spell her name, but she</i>
<i>Small group and the interaction with the kids</i>	<i>improved 2 levels up in reading and her confidence and motivation increased.</i>
<i>I enjoyed the family nights</i>	<i>Learned that reading with other family can be fun.</i>

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Conclusions and Issues for Further Consideration

The New Haven – Stetson Branch READY for the Grade program was reconfigured for 2024, new staff were engaged, the program increased enrollment and experienced an especially productive summer. The space is beautiful and very accommodating and provides a very effective space for program use. Additionally, site leadership used available resources to obtain additional books, learning games and other educational materials to fully support the multiple activities that take place each session. Very effective staff were identified to lead and teach in the program and there is continuing strong support among library staff. Program recruitment was successful and new connections to local schools will ensure that families with children who especially need the services are reached. Parent comments (collected via surveys and as reported by NHFPL leaders) confirmed that RfG efforts were appreciated and that there is continued interest to expand the program.

Like the other sites, New Haven-Stetson Branch engaged experienced staff who worked very effectively with participants and families, conducted meaningful literacy activities, modified and strengthened the program. There was a continuous focus on reading skill development along with access to appropriate books, as well as efforts to establish group exposure to shared reading experiences and access to the many resources in the library. The results, in alignment with those recorded for other sites including positive teacher and standardized reading assessment data and positive feedback from parents, provided clear evidence of success. **New Haven - Stetson Branch clearly demonstrated the strength and flexibility of the READY for the Grade model, moved beyond past recruitment challenges and solidified an effective program to serve the local community for summer 2024 and for the future.**

Comments about Staff

All the teachers are attentive, patient and caring. They cater to my children's learning level.

Always with smiles and great leaders. Great team work.

She is the best teacher, my daughter loves her

It is a dynamic and responsible team.

Ms. Darlene is awesome she is very caring.

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New Haven Wilson Branch ran the comprehensive, pre-pandemic version of its READY for the Grade program for summer 2024. The program was again administered by three seasoned educators who have worked with the program for multiple years, including two who are bilingual. As they had in 2023, they recruited both new individuals and former participants, but they were challenged by families who signed on and then did not show up, even after repeated contact and promises to do so, or who changed plans after one or two sessions, or who participated briefly and then dropped out. A core group of 9 children participated very regularly and for them, RfG included both group and individual tutoring, AV/tech for reinforcements, continued use of live music options for sight word learning and engagement of collaborators (puppet shows, magician) to reinforce lessons. Family engagement was provided weekly on-site, and books were regularly distributed.

Program Implementation

Group Instruction. Every Tuesday and Wednesday the New Haven-Wilson RfG program conducted group instruction sessions from 2:00 – 4:00 at the library. As for the past two summers, these community-based sessions brought the students together to read a picture book (with all oral presentation in English and Spanish), practice sight words (including via song accompanied by guitar), and engage in movement, writing and arts-based literacy activities as children broke into smaller groups. Each week children also bring home books and library books and write reviews about them in their journals. Observed programming was excellent.

Individual Instruction. Each student was also assigned to and then worked 1:1 with one of the staff members in individual 1 hour instruction sessions once or twice each week. After an initial assessment of independent reading level, each session was tailored to the students’ reading level and specific areas of focus. All sessions were conducted at a time that worked for the family and tutor and all used *Reading A-Z* books <https://www.readinga-z.com/>. Each instructor worked with multiple students throughout the summer.

Family Nights. Family nights were conducted again through summer programming 2024. These sessions were held weekly on Thursdays for two hours including a meal. The sessions included stories and literacy activities for the children and activities that families could do together. The staff reported that parents continued to be very supportive of each other and the teachers during the weekly, well-attended sessions.

Partnerships. The New Haven-Wilson RfG program continued offering enrichment activities during group sessions and family nights. This included puppet shows about health and nutrition brought to the children by the Hispanic Health Council, a visit with animals from the Parks and Recreation department, and a magician who entertained the children and families on the final Thursday and reinforced the value and importance of reading.

Incentives. Students who attended family night, two groups and individual instruction received \$20 gift cards for each week, total for the summer = \$120.

Enrollment

As shown in Table 10a, the New Haven-Wilson READY for the Grade program served a diverse group of children summer 2024. It can also be seen in the table that the grade levels and descriptive characteristics of those who participated during summer 2024 were somewhat different than the groups that participated in

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prior summers. This was an unusually small group, due to some no-shows and individuals who did not sustain their involvement through the summer (their data are not included here).

- As shown, all the 2024 students were rising first (33%), second (22%), third (33%) and 4th graders (11%); a total of 71% were females, 29% were males. One student was returning from 2023.
- The students were diverse in terms of race/ethnicity; 56% of participants were identified as Hispanic/Latinx, 22% were identified as Black/African-American, one was identified as “Other” (Arab). No students were identified as White/Caucasian or Asian.
- About half of the students spoke English as the primary language at home, half spoke English and Spanish and one student spoke Arabic as the primary language at home.

Table 10a: Enrollment Details, New Haven READY for the Grade

	2024 N=9	2023 N=17	2022 N=13	2021 N=24	2020 N=30
Grade in Fall					
PK/Kindergarten*	0	0	0	0	0
First Grade	33%	24%	38%	33%	40%
Second Grade	22%	12%	23%	29%	33%
Third Grade	33%	29%	23%	38%	17%
Fourth Grade*	11%	35%	15%	0	10%
Gender					
Female	71%	45%	58%	58%	60%
Male	29%	55%	42%	42%	40%
Race/Ethnicity					
Asian	0	0	0	0	10%
Black/African American	22%	18%	17%	50%	40%
Hispanic/Latinx	56%	82%	83%	37%	47%
Native American	0	0	0	0	0
White	0	0	0	0	3%
Two or more racial/ethnic designations	11%	0	0	0	0
Other	11%	0		13%	
Primary Language at Home**					
English	44%	--	--	63%	50%
Spanish and English	44%	--	--	29%	40%
Other	11%	--	--	8%	10%

* Grade level enrollment requirements were relaxed somewhat for 2020.

** The primary language question was not asked summer 2022 – 2023, 2024, one student identified their language as Arabic.

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The RfG Wilson Branch participants are eager to add to the discussion about Monsters. New Haven – Wilson Branch, 2024



*Students studying the illustration and descriptions of the monsters in the book.
New Haven - Wilson Branch RfG program throughout summer 2023.*

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Attendance

New Haven RfG has always included multiple session types and optional individual sessions for participation each week. As shown in Table 10b, even though it was a small group, students took full advantage of this for Summer 2024.

- As many as 52 total hours per student were possible, and on average students attended 44 hours. Two of the students had perfect attendance, and all but one of the rest attended all but one or two of the possible sessions. Attendance for all options was very consistent.
- The 9 students with full attendance data participated in a total of 358 hours of instruction/participation during summer 2024 including 96 hours through family nights; 194 through group instruction and 68 hours through individual instruction. On average, each student participated in about 12 hours of family night instruction, 24 hours of group instruction and 8 hours of individual instruction, 44 hours total. These participation numbers all exceed attendance from the prior summer.

Table 10b: Attendance Details, New Haven – Wilson, Ready for the Grade, Summer 2024 n=9

	Total Hrs. Available Per Student	Total Hours Available	Total Hours Attended	Mean Hours Attended per Student
Family Nights	14	126	96	12
Group Instruction	28	252	194	24
Individual Instruction	10	90	68	8
TOTAL	52	468	358	44

Achievement

As in the prior summers, all students participated in a reading assessment during the first individual instruction session where their independent and instructional⁶ reading levels were determined using the *Reading A-Z* program. Staff used these assessments to customize instruction strategies and where possible engaged parents/guardians and other family members to help reinforce specific skills. The books used during individual sessions were available to participating families and all children were encouraged to read silently and to others in-between sessions.

As shown in Table 10c, achievement results were recorded for 7 of the 9 participants. Each of the tested participants maintained or improved their scores. While several students were still reading below their appropriate grade level (hence their need for RfG), like their peers in other RfG sites, **no students lost ground over the six weeks of the program**. The RfG team and parents also noted that students had become more excited about reading and were eager to participate and show off their new skills. During the observation it was clear that the children were engaged in the many different literacy-based activities and eager to apply their skills.

⁶ An independent reading level is the one where the reader knows most of the words and can comprehend the text without too much difficulty. A book at an instructional reading level is more challenging for the reader, but not too hard.

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Table 10c: Assessment Results, New Haven – Wilson Branch RfG, Summer 2024

Grade	Test pre	Test post	RESULT
1	D	G	Increased
1	D	F	Increased
1	A	C	Increased
2	F	G	Maintained
3	C	D	Maintained
3	K	L	Maintained
4	K	L	Maintained

Parent/Guardian and Student Feedback

A total of 5 parents/guardians have answered the brief survey about the READY for the Grade summer programming for New Haven-Wilson. As shown in Table 10d, all parent respondents verified that their children benefited from participating in RfG. Additionally, all respondents rated the program leaders positively and all reported they planned to sign up again next summer. The 9 children were also given a survey by the site this year and they unanimously concurred with their parents/guardians that they like the program and the books selected and they would recommend it to a friend.

Table 10d: Parent/Guardian Feedback, New Haven-Wilson, READY for the Grade, 2023, 2024

	2023-2024 N=5
% who rated the program <i>good</i> (0) or <i>excellent</i> (5) on a scale ranging from poor to excellent	5
% who rated the staff <i>good</i> (0) or <i>excellent</i> (5) on a scale ranging from poor to excellent	5
% who reported the READY for the Grade Program was <i>important</i> (0) or <i>very important</i> (5)	5
% who answered yes to the following	
As a result of participating my child/children read more over the summer	5
As a result of participating, my child/children feel more confident reading	5
As a result of participating my family was inspired to read more over the summer	5
We will sign up again next summer	5

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Conclusions and Issues for Further Consideration

New Haven RfG was able to deliver a very effective program again for Summer 2024, but did face recruitment and retention problems. The group served was smaller than usual, but those who participated benefitted entirely as has been the case over all previous summers. Longtime RfG educator Geoconda Berrios continued to provide important leadership for the team with support from Robert Kinney and Meghan Currey from NHFPL. Throughout the summer the motivated group of children received individual instruction and read selected books for group and family night sessions. They continued to regularly read books in English and Spanish and selected both fiction and non-fiction topics that interested the children and reflected community diversity. They also continued to use the live-music opportunities to promote learning and engaged in multiple literacy-based projects related to the books they read. Students were also encouraged to write regularly to evaluate books or demonstrate comprehension and to practice vocabulary. The team continued to build on their welcoming family appeal with full family night sessions and an end of the summer celebration. Excluding the no-shows and the few students whose families changed their minds after only the first week, attendance for those participants who sustained engagement was very consistent and the students clearly accomplished important results. Staff reported they continued to help students who were either new to the school system, or the country, or lagging behind given persistent disruptions from Covid, develop increased confidence and reading skills. The staff also reported that the children and their families were very happy to be part of the program, which was obvious during the site observation and is evident in the images of the participants. **Site staff plan to return for summer 2025 and are hopeful that they and the NHFPL managers will be able to engage more families, address their retention challenges and determine additional ways to more easily back fill spaces when families don’t stay connected. The content, strategies and outcomes of the program remain very beneficial.**

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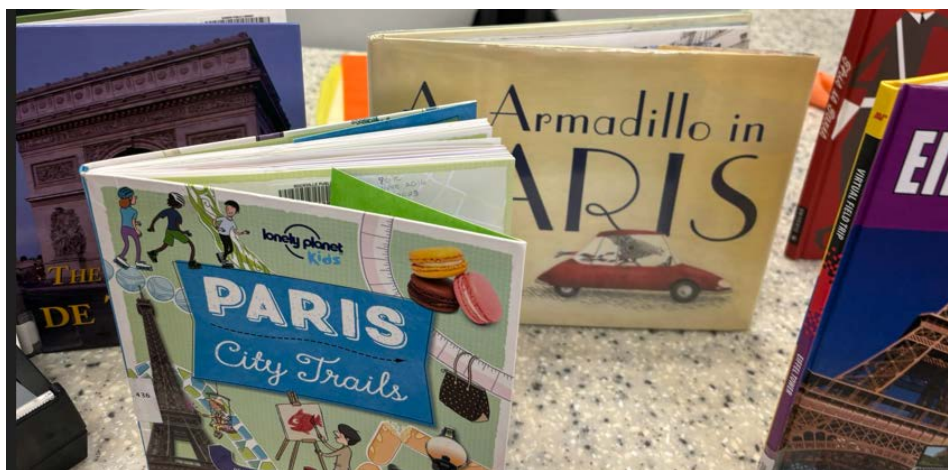
The **Rockville** RfG program was operated at Skinner Road Elementary School for the fourth, summer 2024. A total of 38 children (four more than in 2023) many of whom were returning students, participated in group and individualized instruction. In addition to master teacher Maureen Kearney, Rockville engaged 3 paraprofessionals who had all worked with RfG in the past (and 4 5th grade former participant helpers). The use of weekly themes continued at Rockville for 2024 as did the use of many non-fiction books, robust reading activities including shared chapter book reading experiences, use of the puppets, and daily edible craft projects. Family events were not held in 2024.

Program Implementation

Small Group and Individualized Instruction. The program ran for 6 weeks, every Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday from 8:30-11:30 (no lunches served, but snacks were provided). Just as in each of the past three summers, during the sessions each week, the children practiced their reading skills using pre-packaged levelled books, participated in themed literacy-based activities (e.g., listening to a book read by the instructor and discussing key information) and themed art enrichment activities (e.g., the theme for week the program was observed was the Olympics). Many non-fiction books were used, and robust reading activities and daily edible craft projects were once again undertaken. Children also had opportunities to work in small groups with Mrs. Kearney’s puppet collection (to work on settings, problems and solutions), and each day to work in very small groups or individually to practice reading skills silently and with an instructor using levelled books that they chose from pre-packaged offerings. Each week children selected books to take-home for their personal libraries and extra reading practice. The students had opportunities to receive individual instruction from Mrs. Kearney or one of the paras, and they got help with their craft projects from one of the four 5th grade student helpers too. All observed instruction and activities were excellent.

Parent/Family Member Involvement and Incentives.

Parent/Family member events were not conducted for summer 2024. Staff continued to send home books for parents/family members to read with children, and all children were encouraged to read together with family nightly. Books, snacks and small prizes were used as daily incentives and all participating families got gift cards from Rockville Library at the end of the summer.



There is so much to learn about Paris and the Olympics, Rockville 2024

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Enrollment

As shown in Table 11a, enrollment for the Rockville READY for the Grade program 2024 increased somewhat as compared to the two prior years. It can also be seen in the table that the descriptive characteristics of those who participated has also varied somewhat over the years. For 2024:

- The program served rising 1st (32%) 2nd (29%), 3rd (16%), and 4th graders (24%). These were all Skinner Road Elementary School students known to the instructor as in need of additional support and almost half of the participants returned from 2023. A total of 66% were females, 34% were males.
- The student group was diverse in terms of race/ethnicity and reflective of the local community; 3 (8%) of the participants were identified as Asian; 7 (18%) were identified as Black/African American; none were identified as Hispanic/Latinx, but many (26%) identified as having two or more racial/ethnic designations including some who were Latinx and White; 0 were identified as Native American; 18 (47%) were identified as White/Caucasian.
- All but four students spoke English as their primary language at home, 2 students spoke Twi/Fante and English at home and 2 students spoke Urdu and English.

Table 11a: Enrollment Details, Rockville READY for the Grade

	2024 N=38	2023 N=34	2022 N=33	2021 N=14	2019 N=46
Grade in Fall					
PK/Kindergarten	0	3%	0	0	0
First Grade	32%	27%	12%	43%	26%
Second Grade	29%	24%	48%	36%	39%
Third Grade	16%	30%	36%	21%	30%
Fourth Grade	24%	15%	3%		
Gender					
Female	66%	65%	61%	64%	50%
Male	34%	35%	39%	36%	50%
Race/Ethnicity					
Asian	8%	6%	9%	7%	2%
Black/African American	18%	9%	15%	14%	20%
Hispanic/Latinx	0	0	27%	14%	16%
Native American	0	0	0	0	0
White	47%	45%	39%	50%	36%
Two or more racial/ethnic designations	26%	39%	9%	14%	25%
Primary Language at Home					
English	92%	91%	91%	79%	93%
Spanish	0	0	3%	14%	0
English and 2 nd Language*	0	3%			
Other	8%	6%	6%	7%	7%

Note: full registration data were not collected summer 2020. Enrollment guidelines relaxed since 2020.

*2 students Twi/English, 2 students Urdu/English

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Mrs. Kearney starts the day with a chapter from the Magic Tree House, Hour of the Olympics book.



Time for facts about the Olympics – note all the eager contributors.



A very comfy reading spot – and someone to listen too.



Reading, reading, reading, and time for a one-on-one with Mrs. K.



Everyone gets a chance to plan, act, listen and learn.

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Attendance

As stated above, Rockville conducted its six-week program at the Skinner Road Elementary School for three days each week from 8:30 to 11:30 (a total of 54 possible hours per student). This equates to 9 hours each week covering much of the “out-of-school” summer time. Review of attendance records showed that most participants attended regularly.

- In total Rockville provided 1641 hours of programming to the students.
- On average each of the students participated for 43 total hours (range was 18 - 54 hours). This represents a substantial increase as compared to summer 2023.
- All but one student attended more than half of the possible hours, attending multiple days each week for multiple weeks (33 students attended three-fourths or more of the possible hours including 3 who attended all but 1 session and 9 who had perfect attendance).

Achievement

All 35 (1st – 4th grade) students with pre- and post-test data maintained (26 students) or increased (9 students) their scores. Like each of the other RfG sites, **these participants did not lose ground over the summer.**

Table 11b: Assessment Results, Rockville READY for the Grade, 2024

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Pre</u>	<u>Post</u>	<u>RESULT</u>	<u>Grade</u>	<u>Pre</u>	<u>Post</u>	<u>RESULT</u>	<u>Grade</u>	<u>Pre</u>	<u>Post</u>	<u>RESULT</u>
1	B	B	MAINTAINED	2	C	C	MAINTAINED	3	K	K	MAINTAINED
1	B	B	MAINTAINED	2	D	D	MAINTAINED	3	K	K	MAINTAINED
1	B	B	MAINTAINED	2	D	D	MAINTAINED	3	M	M	MAINTAINED
1	B	B	MAINTAINED	2	F	F	MAINTAINED	3	K	L	INCREASED
1	B	B	MAINTAINED	2	F	F	MAINTAINED	3	J	K	INCREASED
1	C	C	MAINTAINED	2	H	H	MAINTAINED	4	K	K	MAINTAINED
1	C	C	MAINTAINED	2	J	J	MAINTAINED	4	N	N	MAINTAINED
1	D	D	MAINTAINED	2	J	H	INCREASED	4	O	O	MAINTAINED
1	D	D	MAINTAINED	2	J	K	INCREASED	4	O	O	MAINTAINED
1	D	D	MAINTAINED	2	J	K	INCREASED	4	M	N	INCREASED
1	D	D	MAINTAINED	2	J	L	INCREASED	4	N	O	INCREASED
1	F	F	MAINTAINED					4	N	O	INCREASED

Note: The RfG instructor from Rockville uses F & P tests from pre-program July to post-program October.

Parent/Guardian Feedback

In addition to informal sharing with Mrs. Kearney, a total of 6 parents/guardians answered the brief survey about the READY for the Grade summer program in Rockville, 2024. As shown in Table 11c, and the following comments, all parent respondents verified that their children benefited from participating in RfG summer 2024. Additionally, all respondents rated the program leaders *excellent* and all reported they planned to sign up again next summer. Their comments, such as the following, regarding the staff and the importance of the

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program were especially enlightening. *Mrs. Kearney & the rest of the staff were exceptional. My son came home every day excited to tell me what the staff had planned for that day.*

Table 11c: Parent/Guardian Feedback, Rockville, READY for the Grade, 2022 - 2024

	2024 N=6	2023 N=4	2022 N=4
# who rated the program <i>good</i> or <i>excellent</i> (5)	6	4	4
# who rated the staff <i>good</i> or <i>excellent</i> (6)	6	4	4
# who reported the READY for the Grade Program was <i>important</i> (1) or very <i>important</i> (5)	6	4	4
# who answered yes to the following			
As a result of participating my child/children read more over the summer	6	4	4
As a result of participating, my child/children feel more confident reading	6	4	4
As a result of participating my family was inspired to read more over the summer	6	4	4
Will you sign up again next summer	6	4	4
What did you like about the program? <i>Activities and crafts</i> <i>My son's confidence in reading grew exponentially.</i> <i>That it is allowed for my child to be creative while reading.</i> <i>Keep the kids active in schooling.</i> <i>Staff, location , schedule, activities.</i> <i>They came home and talk about their fun times.</i>	What did your child gain being part of the program? <i>Confidence in their reading.</i> <i>Taught my child to move onto chapter books.</i> <i>She was more confident in her abilities to read.</i> <i>Connection, summer routine, reading skills.</i> <i>Perseverance.</i>		

Conclusions and Issues for Further Consideration

Summer 2024 was another great summer for the Rockville RfG program. Comments made through the parent survey further confirmed that the program met parents/family member and student needs. Everyone continued to be excited about and grateful for the option to participate, and even though Mrs. Kearney retired from her school year teaching positions, she has committed to continuing with RfG. The Rockville Public Library and Skinner Road Elementary school collaboration continued to work very well, the principal continues to want to expand it, and the program remained fully implemented and easily replicable for summer 2025.

II. CONCLUSIONS AND ISSUES FOR FURTHER CONSIDERATION

READY for the Grade was successfully conducted at six sites summer 2024. Each of the sites successfully developed plans and engaged multiple families for multiple weeks. Program implementation varied as appropriate by site, but all sites were effectively able to deliver important supports to local families. At all six sites, participants had positive achievement outcomes and parent/guardian feedback across the board was decidedly positive as well. In every case, parents/guardians reported directly or through RfG staff that RfG experiences were making an important contribution to sustaining and advancing student literacy skill development. The distribution of books and other literacy materials continued at each site throughout the summer, and sites once again engaged additional partners (e.g., Mystic Aquarium, Hispanic Health Council, Kidding Around Yoga, Invent the Summer, local New Haven artists) to provide additional enrichment. Once again, the sites brought high quality instruction to learners through deployment of highly skilled staff, including several who were new for 2024, who connected well with each other, the children and their families. As stated throughout the report, the individual sites, were able to customize their programs to meet local needs while still implementing the key components of the RfG model: the sites, were able to discern what was needed, make and shift partnerships and maintain RfG presence and programming designed to once again help participating students enter school in September ready to learn.

The Program served 119 students during summer 2024. In total there have been 1,684 participants (duplicated count) across the twelve years RfG has been operational. Each year this has included: students with various racial/ethnic identities. Almost all of these students were receiving free or reduced-price lunch and most of those recruited were reading below grade level. Following continued instability during the 2019-20 through 2021-22 school years and accumulated losses, all students remain potentially behind for each new school year. Each program focused on rising 1st, 2nd and 3rd grade students for summer 2024 but also included some older and younger students who were former participants or siblings of age-eligible participants. Total hours of programming varied by site and in accordance with specific strategies, but each of the programs provided opportunities to engage students for multiple hours weekly throughout multiple weeks during the summer. Despite continued smaller program sizes, a substantial amount of programming was offered across sites (3900+ hours, a substantial increase compared to 2023). All sites sustained participation over the summer, and they encouraged and supported the efforts of families and students to continue reading and using their skills at home and after the programs concluded. At all six sites there was clear evidence that students maintained or enhanced reading skills. Despite some challenges “READY for the Grade” continued to provide powerful opportunities to promote literacy skill development and academic preparation.

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Challenges and Next Steps

Summer 2024 included increasing or stable enrollment at all sites but New Haven - Wilson, continuation of the full in-person programming in Manchester and re-configuration of staffing and the overall program at the New Haven-Stetson site. The sites, except Rockville, all still continue to have room to grow, and future summers should see increased numbers of participants overall. All sites will need to continue monitoring and promoting regular attendance and building on current efforts to accommodate complicated family schedules (including vacations). All sites need to sustain the very successful strategies they have undertaken to effectively maintain or enhance students' reading skills. All sites should continue to monitor and build on, as needed, their efforts to engage families and to continue interacting with outside partners/collaborators. All sites should ensure that their very talented staff members have what they need to continue delivering high quality programs. The following are additional site-specific recommended future action steps.

- Hamden - continue attention to enhanced and targeted outreach to those families/students most in need of the services, continue engagement of enrichment partners.
- Killingly - determine next steps regarding VAK for summer 2025; continue attention to ensuring that families/students most in need of the services participate, continue engagement of enrichment partners.
- Manchester – continue building on 2024 program strategies including engagement with enrichment partners, continue to consider family programming.
- New Haven: Stetson Branch – continue building on 2024 program strategies including effective Family Nights and engagement with enrichment partners; respond to community interests for program extensions.
- New Haven: Wilson Branch - continue to ensure that families/students most in need of the services participate, over enroll as needed and determine additional strategies to ensure that replacements for no-shows or individuals who do not sustain involvement can readily be made.
- Rockville – return to consideration of the family engagement work undertaken during summer 2023, continue to remain vigilant to ensuring that families/students most in need of the services participate.

It is the plan for summer 2025 to continue all cross-site evaluation strategies (on-site observations, collection of standardized enrollment, attendance and achievement data, staff surveys and parent surveys), though NewAlliance Foundation will need to secure the services of a new evaluation partner with full assistance for the transition as needed from the 2019 – 2024 partner. The evaluation reporting timetable will continue to operate on the regular Board schedule (November reporting).

APPENDIX

Hamden: A Busy Day with an Exciting Ending Activity

For the first two years, Hamden RfG read the book *Frog and Toad*, a new chapter each week with corresponding activities. For summer 2023, the Hamden program selected a new book: *A Friend for Dragon*, but continued the same strategy of shared reading experiences with activities. For summer 2024, participants were engaged in comprehensive, multi-day activities related to individual books. The day I visited Hamden, students were involved in an Author Study of Laura Numeroff, and were working on comparison activities related to the book: *10 Step Guide to Living With Your Monster*.

Students started the day in circle time - talking about titles of books and how they help readers know what a book is about, and they talked about comparing. Ms. Jody then read short sections from multiple books (*A Friend for Dragon* chapter 2, *Frog and Toad* chapter four, and *One*), and had the children compare them, identify similarities for the characters, and point out different ways the characters were showing patience, cooperation, friendship and harmony. After circle time, participants rotated through four centers – 1) working on a collaborative Friendship mural, 2) sight-word bingo, 3) library visit, (4) journaling. Individual children also visited tutors for some one-on-one assistance.

At the end of the day, Ms. Nancy, the new lead coordinator, called all the children back to the carpet to play a rousing game of “Grown-ups Vs. Kids” – involving sight words and rhyming words. (The rules included reading the words, rhyming the words, demonstrating comprehension. Kids get points when they get one right – adults only get points if the kids miss.) The words were pretty tricky, e.g., history, finger, enemy, and the kids were on the edge of their seats, screaming out the words, helping each other and enjoying a victory, with Miss Nancy regularly commenting that she needed to get harder words.



Killingly: A Summer of Learning and Caring.

The Killingly RfG program themes for 2024 included Read, Renew, Repeat, Caring for Plants, Caring for the Community/Recycling, Animal Rescue/Endangered Animals, For the Birds, Oceans, and Reader's Theater. Each week the group read books all together and then worked in small groups on literacy activities guided by the themes. I visited during Birds week, and it was busy. Before starting the first group activity, the instructor asked the children what they knew about birds, and they provided some good answers (they fly, they have wings and lay eggs). She also asked the children to clarify whether the book they were going to read was fiction or non-fiction and they were able to correctly identify it as non-fiction, "because it is true" and "not a story." After the whole group finished the book, they spent some time reviewing some facts and vocabulary by labeling a drawing of a bird.

After their group reading activity, the children went to their stations (by age/ability groups). The Red group was working on short vowel sounds and sight words which they love as it includes word puzzles and contests to see how many words they have learned from their word walls. After sight words the red group worked on paragraph reading.



The Green group practiced writing question words on white boards, and thinking about questions they could answer about birds. Later they eagerly practiced reading sentences with new vocabulary, using context to help read tricky words. Each time the teacher called on them and flashed up a new sentence, they would respond with comments like "I want a hard one," or "that's so easy."

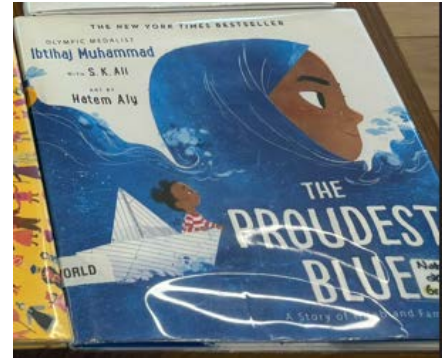
The Blue group was writing in journals. Their assignment was to write sentences and then draw pictures to illustrate their sentences and read and share them with the whole group.

The Yellow group went into a back area of the library and worked on painting cute little bird houses which will go home with them later in the summer. Each group went to two age/ability-appropriate literacy activities and then got to work on their birdhouse.

At the very end of the session they began working on their Reader's Theater project. The instructor read the story Click, Clack, Moo, and the children learned which parts they were assigned. They also learned they would be making headbands and scenery and that soon they would be practicing every day. The very last activity of the day was a trip to the Mystery Bag for a Super Duper prize, and then selection of a book to take home. As always, the children were extra excited about this.

Manchester: Stories and Games in the Squire Village Resource Room

Manchester RfG started its program on the day of the observation, with a group reading session. The children went to the carpet and listened to the story “*The Proudest Blue*.” The *Proudest Blue* is described on the book jacket as “A powerful, vibrantly illustrated story about the first day of school – and two sisters on one’s first day of hijab – by Olympic medalist and social justice activist Ibtihaj Muhammad). The book had beautiful illustrations and was related to the children’s Olympic theme. As they read, to demonstrate comprehension, students were guided to answer questions about different words in the book and different actions, and they were asked to think about how the main characters were feeling. The children also discussed cultural traditions and dress more generally, and talked about the importance of understanding one another and being kind rather than mean.



After the group reading session, the children moved to the worktables and played learning games. Two stations were set up: one for Sight Word Salad Bar for the younger participants, and the other for Sight Word SPLAT for the older participants. Instructors helped each group play and use the games for skill development. When the groups rotated, the older children played a game of Hangman – with phrases and very challenging words, and the younger children moved to a SPLAT session at their ability level. (SPLAT is a Word or letter matching game. When participants complete all their matches they yell “Splat.”)

After the second game cycle concluded, about 10 minutes before program end time, participants and the staff lined up to play musical chairs. The kids really enjoyed a few minutes of good old-fashioned fun. All children left the session with books and a prize to take home.



New Haven Stetson Branch: Multiple Strategies for Literacy Skill Development

Room 211 C was very full and very busy with children working in small groups, one-on-one with instructors and also independently. All students were working on specific skills based on their individual needs such as long vowel sounds or certain blends. Several of the students were reading quietly by themselves, or were listening to or reading books using tablets or computers. Instructors were situated around the room working with individual students, listening to reading, providing tips and phonics reminders and reviewing sight words. Also strategically around the room were small groups of students working together on specific skills that had been assigned to them, or playing one of the many learning games available. As children complete one assignment or lesson they move to another using different strategies, taking turns with an instructor or joining a group engaged in a game. Around noon the RfG participants took a break for a pizza lunch, and then returned wholeheartedly to very competitive versions of favorite games – e.g., sight word Jenga, SPLAT, with instructors competing or cheering competitors on. Children very seamlessly moved from learning games to independent work to time with a tutor using the many resources that are available to them in the classroom. The day concluded with a celebration of all the hard work done and then a visit downstairs to select library books. The children made their way amid excited conversations regarding what selections will be made and ended their day with big smiles regarding their choices.



Small group and independent work at Stetson RfG, summer 2024.

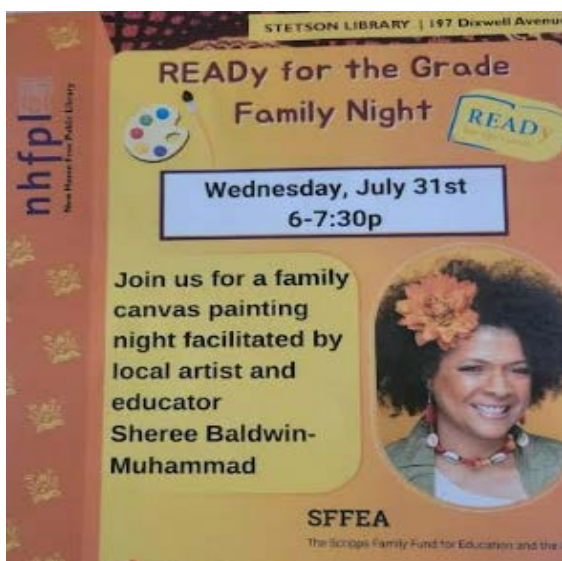


RfG participants reading their new selections, 2024.



Multiple materials are always available for RfG participants.

Additional Images from Family Fun Nights @ New Haven – Stetson RfG



Additional Images from Family Fun Nights @ New Haven – Stetson RfG

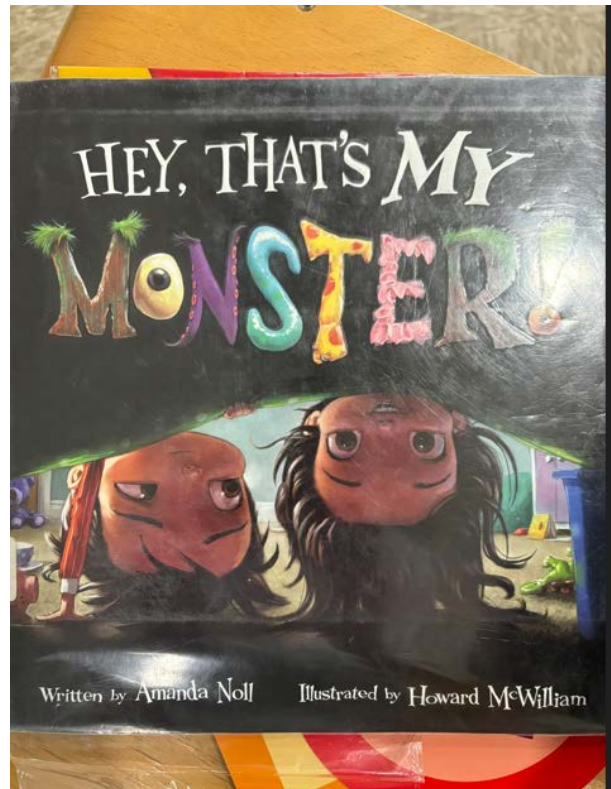


New Haven Wilson Branch: Monsters! – A Typical Tuesday, Group Instruction at RfG

After some nice warm ups, singing and rhyming and practicing sight words, the children were ready for their main activities: reading “*Hey, That’s My Monster*,” working on descriptive words, and participating in a creative art project to round out their day.

This part of the session started with Ms. Wanda introducing the book and then reading it to them, stopping along the way to check on comprehension. At the beginning, she asks the children to look at the cover and make some predictions about what the story is about, and as she reads, she asks the children other questions like whether the girl in the story is scared, how they know and whether they would be scared if what is happening in the story was happening to them. She also asks the children to describe the main characters (a little boy and his younger sister and several monsters who visit them at night) and to continue predicting what will happen throughout the story. After they finish the story, Ms. Wanda asks the children to take turns telling the group which part of the story is their favorite part. Hands shoot up and they are all eager to share their opinions.

Once the reviews of the story are completed, Ms. Wanda engages the children in another task. She asks them to look closely at each of the pages, which are beautifully illustrated, and describe each of the monsters. The children shout out different characteristics – like spiky hair, yellow monster, sharp teeth, slimy, and Ms. Wanda writes these down on giant post-it notes, with “help” from the children with spelling.



Following the story and review, the children head to their tables to make and write about their very own monsters. Each child gets some construction paper and however many eyes, noses, mouths, arms etc. they want, and they set out to make their monsters, and to complete the description sheets, including a name. Ms. Wanda reminds them to think about how to begin and end each sentence (capitalization, punctuation), how to spell words, how to space their writing, and how to be descriptive. Kids work on their own and they make amazing monsters – all of which are different.



Look at all these monsters! Made by creative RfG participants, New Haven Wilson-Branch 2024

Next up is snack time while the children finish their monsters, enjoy some treats, and watch the video version of the *Hey That's My Monster* book. After snack, all kids put their monsters on the table. Each child points to their monster, introduces them by name and tells the others about them. The instructors ask the children to continue thinking about their monsters for homework, to write in their reading journals, and to add some more to their monster descriptions.

The session ends with the children heading back to the carpet to do their goodbye song and to hear about what will be happen tomorrow.



Students introduce their monsters to each other, New Haven Wilson-Branch 2024

Rockville: The Paris Olympics Inspire RfG participants

The Rockville session observation was conducted while Mrs. Kearney was doing the week all about the Olympics, which also gave the students the opportunity to learn all about Paris too. The session started out with a chapter from the *Magic Treehouse* book featuring the Olympics and providing the children with opportunities to predict what will happen next in the story, and to compare the Olympics of the Greek era featured in the book to the modern-day Olympics. The children, the staff (and the evaluator) all learned that women were not part of the Olympics until the first Paris version, 1900. After the story chapter the children and staff enjoyed a breakfast snack and while eating updated me and each other on the sloth and the dolphin whose movements they are tracking with a tracker app.

Next up Mrs. Kearney moved everyone to the reading room and using books of course, everyone reviewed more facts about Paris and the Olympics, then took a few minutes to turn and talk to a friend - discuss one thing they have learned. Mrs. Kearney peppered the students with questions like: *What is the name of the big river?*, *What are some things Paris is famous for?* *What language do they speak?* *What did you learn about volleyball games?*, *How does the torch travel?*, encouraging them to shout out answers and they did. The students remembered or knew multiple facts about the Olympics and Paris but were eager to learn even more.



After the whole group reading session, the students moved to four stations. These included: Puppets, where students got to pick puppets, identify a problem, solution, characters and setting and do a short performance. As always, everyone alternated between audience and performing.

The other three stations included: a food craft activity, an Olympic medal writing activity and torch making activity, and independent reading.

The food project involved crafting an Olympic torch with snacks, which students got to eat their way through while discussing upcoming Olympic events and how the torch travels over water.

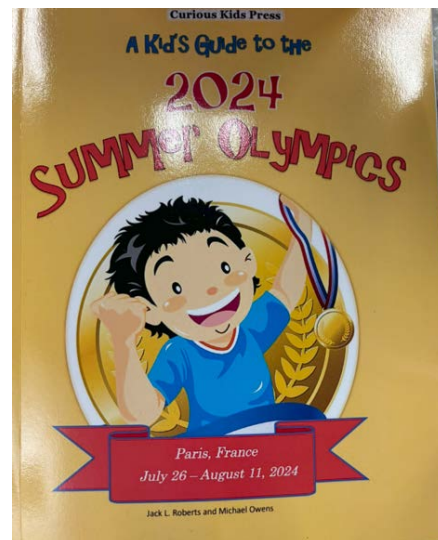
The writing activity was a continuation of a project from the day before when students thought about medals they could earn for different types of activities (sports and others). Students also got to practice following directions and being creative while constructing an Olympic torch of their own to bring home (see next page).



The puppet shows all had Olympic themes as well. For example, in one, the setting was Paris, the problem was that the Olympic torch was missing. One of the characters (Ostrich) recruited other characters to help find the torch. The solution was that the team hunting for the torch found that Anteater had taken it because she was afraid of the dark. The torch was restored, Anteater got a flashlight, happy ending.

As always, the students had time to read silently, or to a para, a helper or Mrs. Kearney, from leveled readers designated for them. This gave the instructors time to hear every individual child read and demonstrate their skill building, and to receive assistance with specific challenges as needed.

The day ended as it had started with a little chapter reading and more discussion and predictions about the Olympics with lots of opportunities to learn and use new and impressive vocabulary like medallion, Mona Lisa and Arc de Triomphe.



RFG Summer 2024 Demographic Characteristics of Total Enrollment

	Hamden N= 18	Killingly N= 22	Manchester N= 15	NH - Stetson N= 17	NH - Wilson N=9	Rockville N=34	TOTAL* N=119
Grade in Fall							
PK/Kindergarten	0	0	14%	0	0	0	2%
First Grade	6%	32%	7%	13%	33%	32%	22%
Second Grade	44%	32%	20%	19%	22%	29%	29%
Third Grade	50%	32%	13%	38%	33%	16%	28%
Fourth Grade+	0	5%	47%	31%	11%	24%	19%
Gender							
Female	28%	36%	53%	47%	71%	66%	50%
Male	72%	64%	47%	53%	29%	34%	50%
Race/Ethnicity							
Asian	11%	0	7%	0	0	8%	5%
Black/African American	23%	0	87%	35%	22%	18%	27%
Hispanic/Latinx	11%	5%	0	35%	56%	0	12%
Native American	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
White	28%	82%	0	0	0	47%	34%
Two or more racial/ethnic designations	28%	14%	7%	29%	11%	26%	21%
Other	0	0	0	0	11%	0	1%
Primary Language at Home							
English	94%	95%	64%	94%	44%	92%	85%
Spanish	0	5%	0	0	44%	0	3%
English and 2 nd language**	0	0	36%	0	0	0	7%
Other	6%	0	0	6%	11%	8%	4%
Free/Reduced Lunch							
Yes	39%	45%	93%	81%	89%	100%	76%
Unknown	28%	5%	0	13%	0	0	18%
Reading Below Grade Level*	73%	38%	38%	60%	--	92%	74%

Note: ** Primary language at home: 1 student Kannada/English (Hamden); 1 student Spanish & English (Killingly); 5 students Twi/English (Manchester); 1 student Creole/French (New Haven – Stetson); 4 students Spanish, 1 Arabic (New Haven – Wilson); 2 students Urdu/English, 1 student Twi/English (Rockville).