Orange County Public Schools

Read2Succeed Accelerates Early Reading Achievement with In-School Tutoring and the SIPPS Program

The Read2Succeed program within Orange County Public Schools, Florida provides tutoring services to support reading development among students in grades K–2. In the 2021–22 school year, the *SIPPS* program was implemented to support kindergarten Read2Succeed students with foundational skills acquisition. **As a result, 97.3% of the participating kindergartners demonstrated overall growth in reading, as measured by i-Ready® Assessment.** Significant growth in phonological awareness, phonics, and high-frequency words was also evident in the i-Ready data.
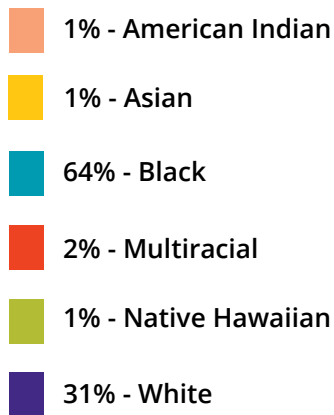
~440
Students Enrolled

19
Title I Schools

20%
ENG
English Learners

2021–2022
School Years

1% - American Indian

1% - Asian

64% - Black

2% - Multiracial

1% - Native Hawaiian

31% - White

Student Demographics

Narrative

OVERVIEW

Located in the heart of central Florida, Orange County Public Schools (OCPS) is the eighth largest school district in the country, and the fourth largest in Florida. The district has 210 schools, of which 140 are elementary and K–8 schools. The district boasts a student enrollment of over 207,000.

Embedded within the district, the **Read2Succeed Program** (R2S) is designed to bring community members together to support students in learning how to read. The program began 22 years ago with a focus on students in first and second grades. In 2020, it expanded to include kindergarten. The program operates in partnership with the Foundation for Orange County Public Schools (FOCPS) and the OCPS Curriculum and Digital Learning department. Read2Succeed is funded by grants from local and national community partners. The tutoring services are offered at no cost to the students.

Photo courtesy of Read2Succeed

The Read2Succeed Program strives to give students in grades K–2 the attention needed to succeed in school by providing tutoring services. Tutors are provided a specific adopted curriculum for each grade level, which is aligned to a specific reading need. In kindergarten, the focus is foundational skills; in grade 1 the focus is on vocabulary; and in grade 2 the focus is on fluency. Pre- and post-tests are used to monitor student progress.

This research brief highlights the impact of Read2Succeed tutoring services with kindergarten students. To support students in foundational skills acquisition, kindergarten tutors utilized the *SIPPS* (*Systematic Instruction in Phonological Awareness, Phonics, and Sight Words*) ® program, specifically Beginning level, for students at participating elementary schools. The program spanned 19 schools, and while 525 students participated, outcome measure and progress monitoring data were available for approximately 440 students. Tutors were recruited and trained, and participated in ongoing professional learning to ensure that program implementation was strong.

THE JOURNEY/IMPLEMENTATION

In Florida, all kindergarten students are screened at the beginning of the school year using the Florida Kindergarten Readiness Screener (FLKRS) to determine readiness. R2S uses FLKRS results to identify students who are categorized as emergent readers or below emergent readers and therefore eligible for tutoring services.

With the goal of developing essential reading, or foundational, skills in mind, R2S selected the *SIPPS* program for kindergartners. *SIPPS* is a multilevel program that develops word recognition strategies and skills. *SIPPS* Beginning level is developmentally appropriate for kindergartners starting as nonreaders. At this level, students master alphabetic strategies for reading and writing, and they receive instruction

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in phonological awareness, phonics, and high-frequency words. They apply this knowledge to both reading and spelling. *SIPPS* Beginning level includes 55 lessons that are aligned to state standards for kindergarten foundational skills. The *Learning Letter Names* component that accompanies *SIPPS* Beginning level provides targeted instruction to ensure student mastery of letter identification, a prerequisite for instruction. In 2020, *SIPPS* was used for R2S in six schools. In 2021, R2S expanded to using *SIPPS* in 19 schools with 21 tutors.

In the 2021–22 school year, 36.4% of the kindergarten R2S students began the program unable to identify letter names. Tutors began instruction with the *Learning Letter Names* component of *SIPPS* Beginning level.

Kindergarten tutors are paid, and are often retired teachers. Tutors ensured students received the *SIPPS* intervention for a minimum of 30 minutes per day, 4 days per week. Students were placed in groups of four. Tutors worked with approximately 25 kindergartners at each school.

RESULTS

Third-Party Measures: i-Ready

The i-Ready Assessment is a computer-based, adaptive diagnostic that students participate in three times during the school year (beginning, middle, and end). Of the kindergarten R2S cohort in the 2021–22 school year (approximately 400 children) who participated in both beginning- and end-of-year i-Ready assessments, 97.3% showed improvement (see Figure 1).

FIGURE 1

Percent of Read2Succeed Kindergarten Students Showing Improvement in i-Ready Assessment Scores (2021–22 SY)

Total students*	Total improved	Percentage improved
403	392	97.3%

*These data exclude students who did not have a start and/or ending school year i-Ready Reading Assessment score.

Narrative *(continued)*

While several domains are assessed in the i-Ready Assessment, the following assessed domains are also part of the targeted instruction in the *SIPPS* program, making i-Ready an appropriate outcome measure for phonological awareness, phonics, and high-frequency words. Data indicate significant growth from the beginning to the end of the year in each domain for R2S kindergartners (see Figure 2).

FIGURE 2

Kindergarten R2S Beginning-of-Year to End-of-Year Progress
in i-Ready Domains Covered by *SIPPS*

i-Ready domain	% of students who made progress	% of students whose scores increased 25 points or more (≥1 year of growth)	% of students who met or exceeded the EOY scale score target (≥362)
Phonological Awareness	87.1% 351/403*	73.9% 298/403	80.6% 355/440
Phonics	89.6% 361/403	79.4% 320/403	71.6% 315/440
High-Frequency Words	91.1% 367/403	79.2% 319/403	70.7% 311/440

*When the total is 403 students, beginning and ending scores were needed for that domain. When the total is 440 students, only an ending score was needed for that domain.

Narrative *(continued)*

Progress Monitoring: *SIPPS* Mastery Tests

The *SIPPS* program is mastery-based, meaning that as a result of instruction students should be able to demonstrate mastery of the skills taught. *SIPPS* Mastery Tests are designed to be used at regular intervals to assess whether students are mastering the sounds and high-frequency words taught. In *SIPPS* Beginning level, Mastery Tests are administered individually and occur every 5–10 lessons. The suggested passing criterion is 80%. Figure 3 outlines the pass rate for each Mastery Test administered to Read2Succeed students. The number of Mastery Tests each student took varied depending on program placement and any re-teaching that might have occurred.

FIGURE 3

SIPPS Program Data: Beginning Level Mastery Test Progress
Percentage of Read2Succeed Kindergarten Students Passing

Mastery Test #	Number of students	Number of students who passed	Percentage of students who passed
1	343	332	96.8%
2	417	379	91.0%
3	407	384	94.3%
4	309	302	97.7%
5	146	141	96.6%
6	78	78	100%

IMPLICATIONS

To be effective in their roles, tutors participated in ongoing professional learning across the school year. These professional learning sessions ensured that the program was implemented as intended, and that student performance (i.e., Mastery Test data) was considered as part of instructional decision-making.

Because R2S tutoring sessions happened within the school day, schools and individual teachers had to commit to sharing a quiet space for tutors to work with small groups. An additional request was for tutors to have accessible wall space for posting essential program materials. Flexibility around scheduling and instructional time was also critical.

VOICES FROM TUTORS AND TEACHERS

The R2S program offered a unique opportunity for classroom teachers and tutors to connect through the shared goal of building student success with reading.

Tutors shared:

- "My students came each day and we followed the *SIPPS* program. All students made learning gains on the end-of-year i-Ready assessment. Most made very significant gains. The program is supported wonderfully by the Read2Succeed team. I do not think it could get much better. The team guiding the program is top-notch."

- "I saw the most success with my kindergarten students. Their eagerness to learn sight words and the use of the program made a difference that their teachers could see."

Kindergarten teachers shared:

- "[The tutor] was very successful in supporting our students with different reading skills. The kids in her group made great growth because they met with her routinely each week and because of the systematic approach she used when working with them. One of my students came in with a below-average knowledge of letter sounds. She had very little confidence in the beginning of the year and refrained from wanting to participate when we did whole-group phonics and phonemic awareness practice. After working with [the tutor] for a few months, this student not only learned a lot but was an active participant when it came to any activity related to reading and writing. This extra support from [the tutor] was very beneficial in her growth academically and socially."

- "I saw great improvement in my students . . . One of my students learned all letter sounds and was blending and reading sentences at the end of the year. I love the consistency of the tutors who came daily; they were willing to share how students were progressing in the program and the skills worked on."

CHALLENGES/LIMITATIONS

Consistent access to instruction that's matched to student needs is essential for response to intervention. R2S data indicate attendance concerns for the duration of the program, with an average of 8% of the students in the kindergarten R2S program missing one day of school per week.

Another notable challenge was coordinating the R2S tutoring services within the school day such that they occurred at a time that did not interfere with other instruction.

CONCLUSION

The program results indicate that consistent small-group instruction with a systematic curriculum, such as *SIPPS*, enables students to achieve significant growth over the course of the year. This is especially notable given the theme of widespread learning loss as a result of the global pandemic. The accelerative nature of the *SIPPS* program efficiently solidified foundational skills for these students.

Moving forward, the R2S program is expanding. To fill tutoring vacancies, the district has partnered with the teacher education program at the local public university. Preservice teachers will be recruited to serve as paid tutors. This partnership will serve dual purposes: while closing achievement gaps for K–2 students, preservice teachers will also build their professional repertoire and experiences, providing authentic preparation for their future careers.

Click to read a blog about the Read2Succeed program's use of SIPPS

Click to read more at the SIPPS Program Page

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