

P.K. Yonge Developmental Research School



Being a Reader, Second Edition Pilot Gleans Strong Growth for Third-Grade Students

Introduction

P.K. Yonge Developmental Research School conducted a prepublication pilot and field test of the *Being a Reader, Second Edition* program for third grade in the 2022–23 school year. This research brief highlights progress monitoring data from Florida’s FAST Assessment. Results indicate that students scoring on or above grade level increased significantly over the course of the school year, with **29 percent meeting or exceeding benchmark scores at the beginning of the year, increasing to 83 percent at the end of the year.**



53

Grade 3 Enrollment



34%

Students Receiving Free/
Reduced Price Meals



2022–23

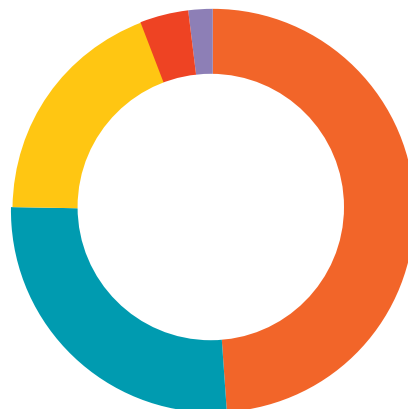
School Year



110 min./day

Reading Instruction
Five Days Per Week

- 49.0% - White
- 26.4% - Hispanic
- 18.8% - Black



- 3.8% - Asian/Pacific Islander
- 1.9% - Multiracial

Student Demographics

Narrative

OVERVIEW

Since 1934, P.K. Yonge Developmental Research School has served as a publicly funded, K–12 single-school district. Located in Gainesville, Florida and part of the University of Florida, P.K. Yonge works in collaboration with researchers to develop innovative solutions for students of all cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds. The school's student body is selected by lottery to ensure it is representative of Florida's racial and income demographics.

This research brief focuses on the pilot of *Being a Reader, Second Edition* in grade 3. *Being a Reader* debuted as a comprehensive reading program for students in grades 3–5 in 2023; P.K. Yonge implemented a pre-publication pilot and field test during the 2022–23 school year.

Being a Reader, Second Edition is an innovative program that uses evidence-based practices to integrate the essential components of reading, practice in reading comprehension strategies, and rich literacy experiences with activities that foster students' growth as responsible, caring, and collaborative people. *Being a Reader* utilizes whole-class and small-group instruction to teach essential word-recognition and language processes that need to be in place in order for students to read and understand complex texts.

THE JOURNEY/IMPLEMENTATION

As part of its partnership with the Center for the Collaborative Classroom, P.K. Yonge piloted the *Being a Reader, Second Edition* program in grade 3 during the 2022–23 school year. The program was provided in pre-publication format. The program materials for this grade were new to teachers, but the students had experienced the *Being a Reader* program in kindergarten through second grade.

The grade 3 cohort at P.K. Yonge was made up of 53 students, who experienced reading instruction five days per week for 110 minutes per day. Reading instruction was divided into three main strands: whole-class Word Study (20 minutes), whole-class Reading (30 minutes), and a 60-minute block for small-group instruction that included Book Clubs, Individualized Daily Reading, and reading intervention (*SIPPS: Systematic Instruction in Phonological Awareness, Phonics, and Sight Words*).

The 2022–23 school year brought changes to the assessment system in Florida. For the first time, students' reading progress was measured by The Florida Assessment of Student Thinking (FAST). The assessment is computer-based, and unlike previous state assessments, is administered three times per year—Fall, Winter, and Spring—and is designed to measure student progress



(continues)

Narrative *(continued)*

Achievement Level	Description
Level 5 Mastery	Students demonstrate mastery of the standards; they are highly likely to excel in the next grade.
Level 4 Proficient	Students demonstrate an above-satisfactory level of success with the standards; they are likely to excel in the next grade.
Level 3 On Grade Level	Students demonstrate on-grade-level success with the standards and may need additional support for the next grade.
Level 2 Below Satisfactory	Students demonstrate a below-satisfactory level of success with standards and are likely to need substantial support for the next grade.
Level 1 Inadequate	Students are just beginning to access the standards and are highly likely to need substantial support for the next grade.

Figure 1: FAST Achievement Levels are designed to describe student performance toward mastery of the BEST Standards.

toward mastery of Florida’s Benchmark for Excellence in Student Thinking (BEST) Standards. Results are provided in Achievement Levels and Scale Scores. Achievement Levels range from a Level 1 to a Level 5, and are intended to describe student performance toward mastery of the BEST Standards (see Figure 1). A Level 3 is considered “on grade level,” while a Level 1 is the lowest achievement level and a Level 5 is the highest. Scale Scores, which are based on the difficulty of the assessment questions and the number of questions answered correctly, vary in range according to grade level and subject area. They help show how close a student is to scoring in the next achievement level.

RESULTS

Third-Party Measures: Florida Assessment of Student Thinking (FAST)

Fall, Winter, and Spring FAST results demonstrated effectiveness of the *Being a Reader*, Second Edition pilot. The first two progress monitoring windows (Fall and Winter) were considered formative data. The third progress monitoring installment (Spring) provided

summative information designed to accurately measure student progress toward the BEST standards at the end of the school year. In the years that follow, data from the Spring assessment will inform school accountability reports.

The grade 3 cohort in the 2022–23 school year included 53 students in the Fall and Winter assessments, and 52 students in the Spring assessment (see Figure 2). The number of students scoring in the Level 1 (Inadequate) and Level 2 (Below Satisfactory) categories significantly reduced over the course of the school year as follows:

- The number of students scoring in the Level 1 range reduced dramatically over the course of the year. In the Fall, 42 percent scored a Level 1. This number was reduced by half in the Winter, with 21 percent scoring in Level 1. By Spring, only 4 percent (2 students) scored a Level 1.
- The number of students with Level 2 scores also decreased, with 30 percent scoring Below Satisfactory in the Fall, reducing to 28 percent in Winter, and 13 percent in the Spring.

(continues)

Narrative *(continued)*

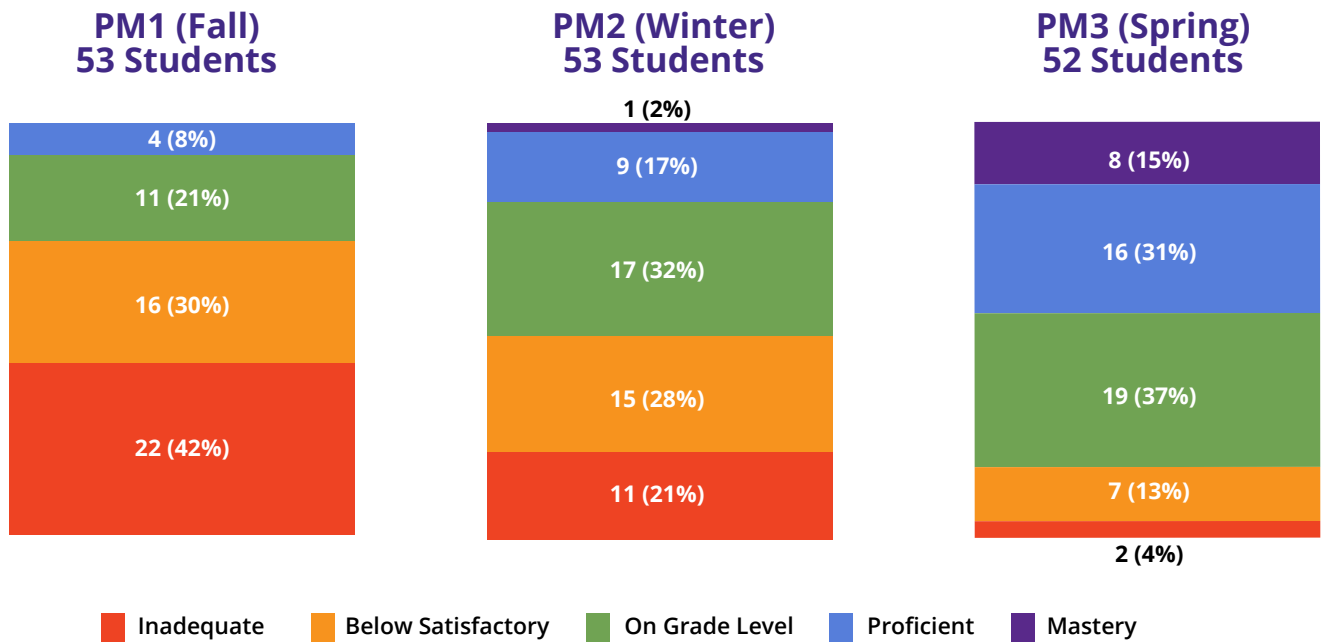


Figure 2: Progress Monitoring Data for Grade 3 Students in Fall, Winter, and Spring

Students scoring at or above a Level 3 (On Grade Level) increased significantly over the course of the school year. A summary of student progress for each level follows:

- Twenty-one percent of students scored a Level 3 in the Fall. This percentage saw a steady increase in Winter (32 percent of students) and Spring (37 percent of students).
- The number of students scoring at Level 4 (Proficient) also increased throughout the school year. In Fall, 8 percent of students met the criteria for Level 4, with numbers increasing to 17 percent in the Winter and 31 percent in the Spring.
- In the Winter assessment, one student (2 percent of the grade level) scored in the Level 5 (Mastery) range. By Spring, 15 percent (8 students) achieved a Level 5.

IMPLICATIONS

The third-grade instructional team scheduled and protected 110 minutes of instructional time each day for reading instruction. Professional learning for teachers was also a priority. Teachers participated in a launch session to preview and get acquainted with the pilot materials. They also engaged in collaborative planning, which included time to reflect on the previous unit before planning the next unit. Informal observations of lessons, check-ins to problem-solve challenges, and data collection also occurred in regular increments to ensure student success during the pilot.

In addition to ongoing sessions with a Collaborative Classroom consultant, a Learning Community Leader also supported program implementation. The Learning Community Leader role at P.K. Yonge is designed to provide instructional coaching for teachers and intensive intervention for students. Each Learning Community Leader is assigned two grade levels of focus.

(continues)

Narrative *(continued)*

VOICES FROM TEACHERS AND LEADERS

Educators' experiences and feedback on the pilot of Collaborative Classroom materials are essential to informed program revisions and future development. When asked about the *Being a Reader* pilot implementation and student performance, Learning Community Leader Dicy Watson shared: "We [the third-grade team] witnessed firsthand how this comprehensive literacy curriculum effectively supported our students' growth. The program encouraged our students to become active readers who asked thoughtful questions, made connections, and visualized scenes as they read. This program not only fostered exceptional growth in comprehension, but also translated into remarkable results on standardized tests. The *Being a Reader* program transformed our classrooms into vibrant hubs of engaged readers."

"Lessons were robust," said Natalie Andrews, third-grade teacher, "I really enjoyed the new *Being a Reader* program because of the expectations it set for the students. They were expected to use important vocabulary to discuss their thinking and respond to their reading in more in-depth ways than ever before. My striving readers were able to go beyond surface comprehension, and contribute in meaningful ways. I noticed that the students rose to meet these expectations, and this in turn made them more confident readers." Natalie also noticed that "students grew interested in exploring more about the different things they had learned in class, and requested more books on similar topics."

Elementary Principal Ashley Pennypacker Hill believes that "*Being a Reader* helped our students go deeper with their thinking and this supported them on the standardized test. We saw an increase in students achieving levels 3, 4, and 5 on FAST."

CHALLENGES/LIMITATIONS

In general, new implementations are challenging. Since *Being a Reader, Second Edition* was not yet published at the time of the pilot, teachers were provided with pre-publication page proofs in print and digital formats. While these proofs were similar to the anticipated final product, ease-of-use was compromised due to the incomplete nature of the proofs. The grade-level specific *Implementation Handbook*, which is designed to provide guidance and program essentials such as an overview, planning resources, and assessments, was not available at the time of the pilot. Teachers at P.K. Yonge were also in the first year of a new math adoption, and were simultaneously learning how to navigate those program materials as well.

The FAST assessment provided third-party assessment data to demonstrate student progress and program effectiveness. Given that the 2022–23 school year was the first year of FAST administration, limitations exist. For example, scores from previous years were not comparable because both the assessment and the standards were new. This first year of "field testing" with both BEST and FAST will likely inform future iterations.

Conclusion

The pilot results indicate that the program materials effectively provide comprehensive reading instruction that supports student mastery of Florida's BEST Standards for English Language Arts.

P.K. Yonge will continue to implement *Being a Reader*, Second Edition in grade 3 with dedicated, ongoing

professional learning. The pilot teachers will transition to the published materials. In addition, in 2023–24 program implementation will expand to include grades 4–5 so that the entire K–5 elementary school will use *Being a Reader* as its core reading program.



[Click to read more about the Being a Reader program](#)