

# P.K. Yonge Developmental Research School

Being a Reader, 2e Year 2 Program Implementation Demonstrates Continued Strong Growth for Grade 4 Students



## Introduction

In the 2022–23 school year, third grade students at P.K. Yonge Developmental Research School participated in a pre-publication pilot and field test of the *Being a Reader™*, Second Edition program. Progress monitoring data from Florida's FAST Assessment indicated that students scoring on or above grade level increased significantly over the course of the school year. **The number of students meeting or exceeding the benchmark scores increased from 29 percent at the beginning of the year to 83 percent at the end of the year.**

The purpose of this extended research brief is to follow these students into grade 4 and examine outcome data for the 2023–24 school year.



**71**

Grade 4 Enrollment



**34%**

Students Receiving Free/  
Reduced-Price Meals



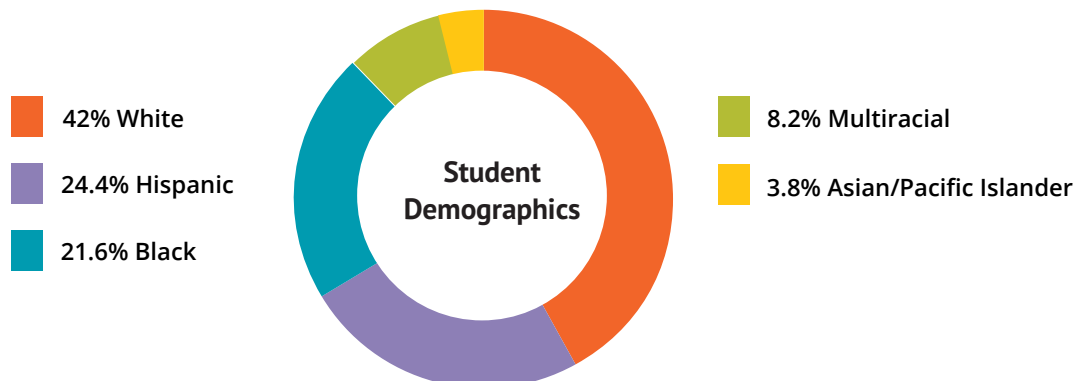
**2023–24**

School Year



**85 min./day**

Reading Instruction  
Four Days Per Week



## OVERVIEW

P.K. Yonge Developmental Research School is a publicly funded, K–12 laboratory school of the University of Florida, in Gainesville, Florida. P.K. Yonge collaborates 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 update focuses on the second year of implementation of *Being a Reader*, Second Edition.

## THE JOURNEY/IMPLEMENTATION

In partnership with the Center for the Collaborative Classroom, educators at P.K. Yonge implemented the *Being a Reader*, Second Edition program for the second consecutive year during the 2023–24 school year. Prior to piloting *Being a Reader* last year in third grade, many of the students also experienced the *Being a Reader* program from kindergarten through second grade.

The grade 4 cohort at P.K. Yonge consisted of 71 students. Fifty-two of those were returning students who participated in the pilot of *Being a Reader* the year prior. The rest of the students were new to P.K. Yonge. Grade 4 students received an average of 85 minutes of reading instruction on a minimum of four days per week. For the second year of implementation, students' reading progress was assessed using The Florida Assessment of

Student Thinking (FAST). This computer-based assessment was administered three times per year—Fall, Winter, and Spring—and is designed to measure student progress toward mastery of Florida's Benchmark for Excellence in Student Thinking (BEST) Standards.<sup>1</sup>

During the 2023–24 school year, professional learning for teachers focused on enhancing instructional practices through lesson demonstrations, learning walks, observations with feedback, lesson studies, and research in action days. Teachers participated in model lessons showcasing the *Being a Reader* program, which offered practical examples of classroom application. Instructional coaches, the principal, and a Collaborative Classroom consultant conducted learning walks in the Fall and Winter. These visits were designed to gather data, gain insights, identify instructional needs, and promote a collaborative learning environment across the grades. Teachers were observed by peers, mentors, and consultants, with constructive feedback provided to encourage reflection and improvement, reinforcing the school's culture of continuous growth. Collaborative lesson planning and refinement deepened teachers' understanding of effective methods and strengthened their commitment to student success. Teachers opened their classrooms to visitors, showcasing effective practices and building confidence in their methods. These visits highlighted student engagement and achievement, demonstrating the impact of the *Being a Reader* program and the school's professional learning community.



<sup>1</sup> Please refer to the 2022–23 Research Brief for additional details on the FAST Assessment.

## Narrative *(continued)*

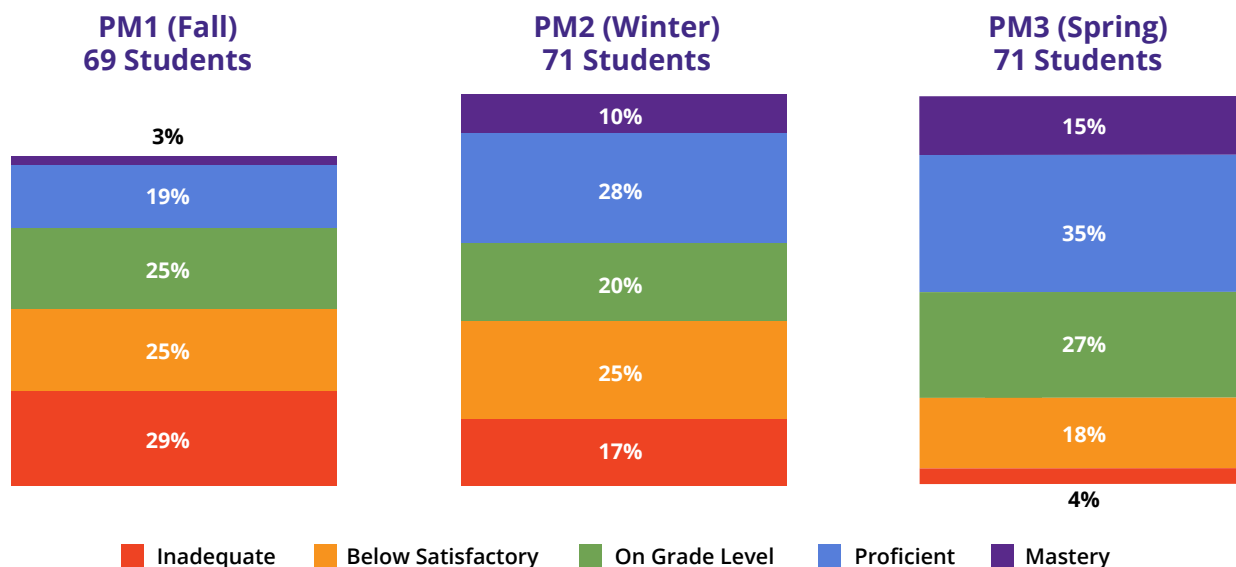


Figure 1: Progress Monitoring Data for Grade 4 Students in Fall, Winter, and Spring of the 2023–24 School Year

## RESULTS

The grade 4 cohort in the 2023–24 school year included 69 students in the Fall and 71 in the Winter and Spring (see Figure 1). Students' progress over the course of the year improved as follows:

- The percentage of students scoring Below Grade Level (Level 1: Inadequate and Level 2: Below Satisfactory) decreased from 54% in the Fall to 22% in the Spring.
- On the flip side, the percentage of students scoring At Grade Level and above (Level 3: On Grade Level, Level 4: Mastery, and Level 5: Proficient) increased from 47% in the Fall to 77% in the Spring.

For the second year in a row, FAST Assessment results demonstrated the effectiveness of the *Being a Reader*, Second Edition program. In the 2023–24 school year,

the percentage of grade 4 students meeting or exceeding the benchmark scores increased from 46 percent at the beginning of the year to 77 percent at the end of the year. Results from the third progress monitoring window (Spring) demonstrated that grade 4 P.K. Yonge students scored significantly above state standards in English Language Arts, with 77 percent of students meeting or exceeding benchmark scores, compared to 53 percent state-wide (see Figure 2). This reading performance placed P.K. Yonge as the top performing school district in the state of Florida for students in Grade 4. These results are consistent with FAST data from the previous school year for the majority of these students (see Figure 3).

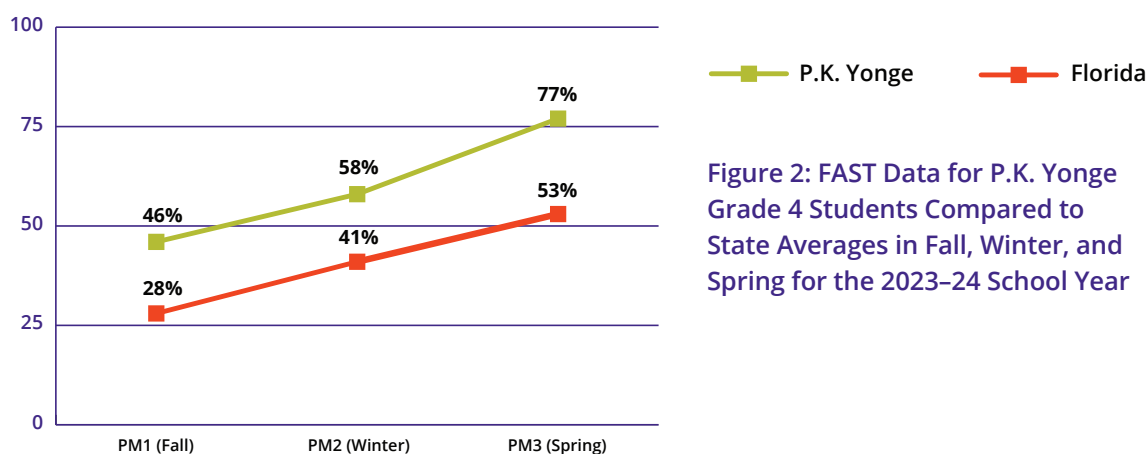


Figure 2: FAST Data for P.K. Yonge Grade 4 Students Compared to State Averages in Fall, Winter, and Spring for the 2023–24 School Year

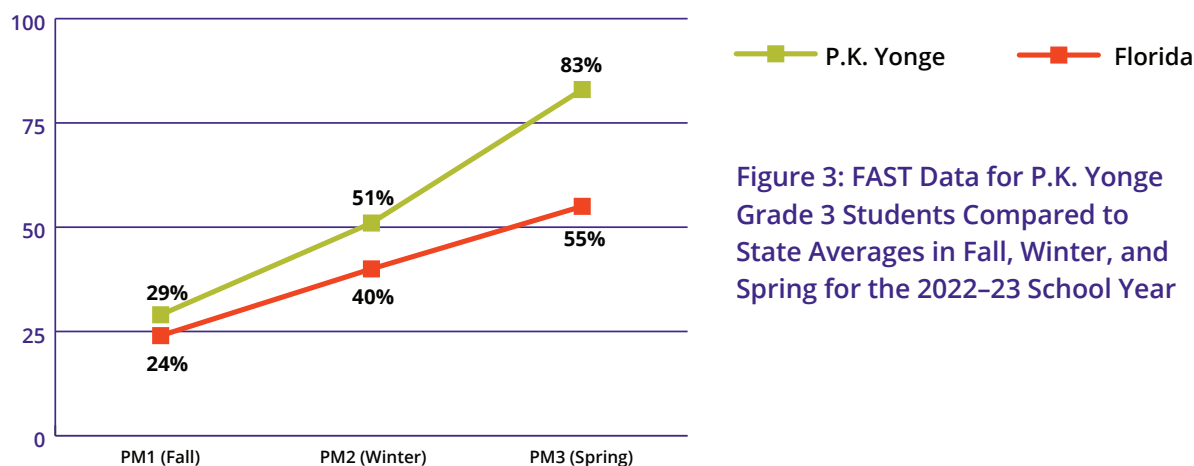


Figure 3: FAST Data for P.K. Yonge Grade 3 Students Compared to State Averages in Fall, Winter, and Spring for the 2022-23 School Year

## IMPLICATIONS

The 2023–24 school year was the second year of implementation of the *Being a Reader*, Second Edition program. The majority (75%) of the students had engaged in the program for one year. By comparing PM1 from the 2022–23 school year to the PM1 from the 2023–24 school year, as well as PM3 from 2022–23 to the PM3 from 2023–24, it is clear that the students in this second year of implementation started and ended the year stronger than in the first year of implementation (see Figures 2 and 3). If this trend continues in the 2024–25 school year, it might indicate that gains made by students are cumulative, meaning the more years students receive *Being a Reader* instruction, the stronger the results. Subsequent implementation follow-ups will examine the assessment results to investigate whether these conclusions hold.

## VOICES FROM TEACHERS AND LEADERS

Educators’ experiences and feedback on program implementation are essential to inform future program development and to understand program implementation. Angela Flavin, a fourth grade teacher, shared: “I completely loved the *Being a Reader* program. . . . Week by week I could see the growth in my students. The texts that were chosen for instructional purposes were superb examples of what each lesson focused on. My students were highly engaged, which made it easy for them to apply the strategies being taught to them. The word study lesson structure was helpful in increasing their understanding of how words work and how meaning can change.”

Principal Ashley Pennypacker Hill added: “Our fourth grade teaching team did a great job as we implemented this new curriculum. We were thrilled to see our students rise to the challenge and excel. This data reflects the dedication of our teachers, the effectiveness of our updated instructional strategies, support from families, and most importantly the hard work of our students.”

## CHALLENGES/LIMITATIONS

In general, program implementations are challenging. One such challenge voiced by a P.K. Yonge educator was that while the majority of students had experienced the *Being a Reader, Second Edition* program the year prior, 25 percent of them had not. Grade 4 teachers had to be creative to ensure that the new students were able to attain the same skills that the students who had experienced the program in grade 3 had acquired. Educators relied on program, district, and assessment data to make

sure these new students' progress was on par with that of returning students. Another challenge was that grade 4 teachers had no prior experience with the *Being a Reader, Second Edition* program. While the majority of students received the program in grade 3, grade 4 teachers were implementing the program for their first year. As mentioned above, professional learning was prioritized and teachers received substantial implementation support.

## Conclusion

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The purpose of this Extended Research Brief was to document the results of a second-year implementation of the *Being a Reader, Second Edition* program at P.K. Yonge Developmental Research School in Gainesville, Florida. Results from the 2023–24 FAST Assessment demonstrated that the program materials effectively support educators in providing comprehensive reading instruction for their students and that students receiving the program instruction make significantly more progress than their peers at the state level.

P.K. Yonge Developmental Research School will continue to implement the *Being a Reader, Second Edition* program in the 2024–25 school year. Future updates will continue to look at the effectiveness of the program and its impact on student achievement at the local and state level. An open question is whether the effects of *Being a Reader, Second Edition* on student performance are cumulative, with students receiving program instruction for two or more consecutive years achieving greater gains than students receiving program instruction for the first time. This analysis will be a focus for any future program implementation.



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