

Success for All Foundation

Scale Up and Evaluation of Success for All in Struggling Elementary Schools

**DID THE SUCCESS FOR ALL (SFA) MODEL HAVE A POSITIVE IMPACT ON
STUDENT READING SKILLS?**

Project Overview

THE INTERVENTION

THE PROBLEM: What Challenge Did the Program Try to Address?

Many students across the United States score below basic on reading assessments. Lacking reading proficiency impedes students' overall academic success. Moreover, low-income students are more likely to score below basic on reading assessments than other students.

THE PROJECT: What Strategies Did the Program Employ?

Using a 2010-2015 i3 Scale-Up grant,¹ the Success for All Foundation implemented the Success for All (SFA) model in 19 schools in five school districts to improve students' reading achievement. SFA is designed to improve the reading skills of all students but is targeted at schools serving large numbers of disadvantaged students. SFA includes a challenging reading program, whole-school reform, and continuous improvement to help students develop and strengthen reading skills. The program was evaluated using a randomized controlled trial (RCT).

¹ Scale-up grants provide funding to support expansion of projects supported by strong evidence of effectiveness to the national level. All i3 grantees are required to conduct rigorous evaluations of their projects. The quality of evidence required to demonstrate a project's effectiveness depends on a project's level of scale or grant type.

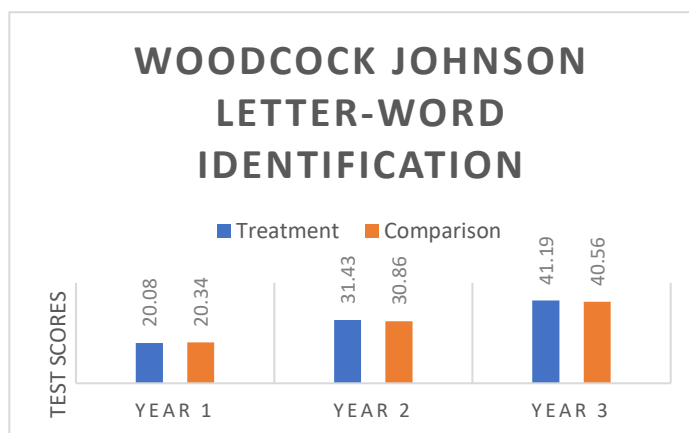
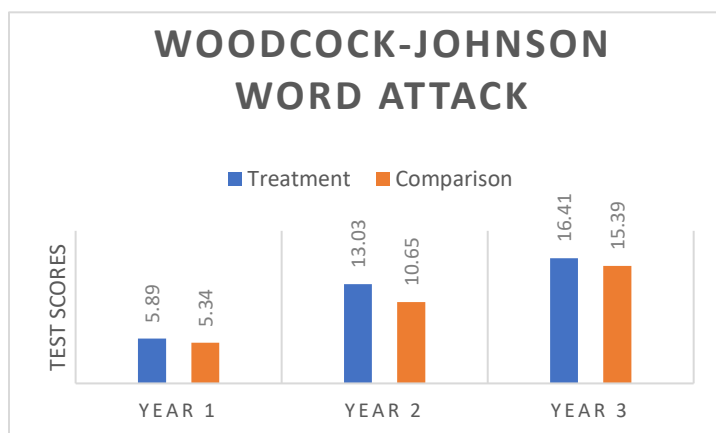
THE SUCCESS FOR ALL MODEL

- **Phonics.** The kindergarten through 6th grade reading program focuses on phonics for beginning readers and comprehension for all students.
- **Instruction.** Teachers use “scripted,” fast-paced lesson plans, incorporating cooperative learning in pairs and small groups.
- **Ability Grouping.** Cross-grade ability grouping is used for reading, meaning students often leave their homeroom for reading instruction from another teacher. Students are then regrouped each quarter.
- **Professional Development (PD).** Teachers participate in professional learning, including using data to monitor progress and set goals.
- **Assessments.** Teachers frequently assess student learning.
- **Tutoring.** SFA uses computerized small-group tutoring and individual tutoring for students who need additional assistance.
- **Committee Meetings.** Staff hold committee meetings to discuss academic, behavior, and attendance issues, and encourage parent and community involvement.
- **Social and Emotional Skills.** Schoolwide and classroom programs address social and conflict resolution skills.

Summary of Results

DID THE SUCCESS FOR ALL (SFA) MODEL HAVE A POSITIVE IMPACT ON STUDENT READING SKILLS?

The SFA model had a statistically significant effect on students' reading skills specific to phonics, but the model did not have a statistically significant impact on students' letter-word identification, reading fluency, or comprehension.



- **PHONICS KNOWLEDGE AND DECODING SKILLS.** Students demonstrated an increased phonics knowledge and decoding skills as measured by their Woodcock-Johnson Word Attack scores ($p < 0.03$). SFA students' scores on the Woodcock-Johnson Letter-Word Identification measure were not different than those of the comparison group.
- **READING PREPAREDNESS.** SFA kindergarteners who entered school with the least reading skills (bottom 50%) had statistically significant increases in the reading skills of phonics, decoding, and fluency compared to their counterparts in schools without SFA. There was not; however, a statistically significant difference in the groups' reading comprehension.

Please see Appendices B and C for information about the evaluation's design and the quality of the evidence, respectively.

SECONDARY FINDINGS

- Students whose Letter-Word Identification baseline scores were below the median level for the primary sample demonstrated greater letter-word recognition after completion of the treatment than their counterparts in schools without SFA ($p < 0.074$).

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Further impacts on disadvantaged students and teachers were studied and are included here.

- **IMPACT ON DISADVANTAGED STUDENTS.** The SFA model has the greatest impact on helping students who enter kindergarten with the least reading skills, of which many are from disadvantaged backgrounds. Given SFA's impact on students from low-income backgrounds, districts and schools that serve a large percentage of students receiving free- and reduced lunch may want to consider the benefits of the model in improving students' reading literacy, particularly in phonics.
- **IMPACTS ON TEACHERS.** SFA teachers were more likely to group students by ability, especially across grades, used cooperative learning strategies more often than non-SFA teachers, and followed the SFA curriculum more closely than non-SFA teachers. These effects were noted in the implementation study.
- **IMPACT OF THE GREAT RECESSION.** At the point that SFA was recruiting schools for the i3 scale-up, many schools and districts were trying to restore positions and services that had been cut or to cope with their losses. Furthermore, principals felt that they had less discretion in spending their schools' allocations than had been the case in the past. These circumstances added a new dimension to the challenges already associated with selecting and implementing a new and demanding reading program in high-poverty schools and may have influenced results.

For More Information

Evaluation Reports

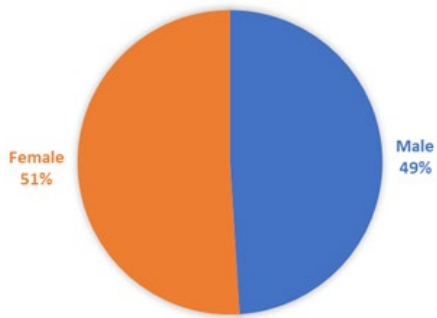
[Scaling Up the Success For All Model of School Reform: Final Report from the Investing in Innovation \(i3\) Evaluation](#) (MDRC, 2015)²

² The information and data for this result summary was collected from the most recent report as of 02/10/2020: MDRC (2015). *Scaling Up the Success For All Model of School Reform*. Retrieved from https://www.mdrc.org/sites/default/files/SFA_2015_FR.pdf

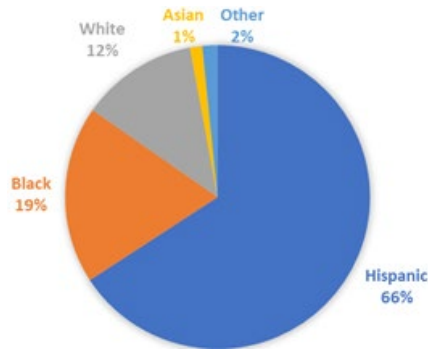
Appendix A: Students Served by the Project³

GRADE(S)													
PK	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12

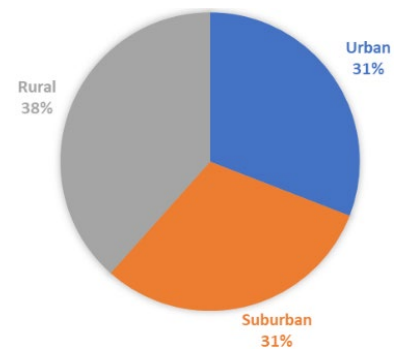
GENDER



RACE/ETHNICITY



COMMUNITY



HIGH-NEED STUDENTSⁱ

Free/Reduced-Price Lunch	English Learner	Students with Disabilities
87.5%	26.4%	5.9%

³ These data reflect the entire student population served by the intervention, not just the evaluation sample used in the impact study.

Appendix B: Impact Evaluation Methodology⁴

RESEARCH DESIGN:

Design:	Randomized Controlled Trial (RCT)
Approach:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ RCT ▪ Districts consented to participate in the intervention ▪ Schools were randomly chosen to participate in SFA ▪ The primary analysis focused on K-2 ▪ The report presents evidence of baseline equivalence between the intervention and comparison groups of students
Study Length:	Three years

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

Study Setting:	Thirty-seven schools in five school districts located in northeast, south, and west in or nearby midsize or large cities
Final Sample Sizes:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Intervention Group</i>: 19 Schools ▪ <i>Comparison Group</i>: 18 Schools
Intervention Group Characteristics: ⁵	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Free/Reduced Priced Lunch: 87.5% ▪ English Language Learner: 26.4% ▪ Special Education: 5.9% ▪ Female: 51% ▪ Male: 49% ▪ White: 12.4% ▪ Black: 18.9% ▪ Hispanic: 65.8% ▪ Asian: 1.3% ▪ Other Race/Ethnicity: 1.6%
Comparison Group Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Free/Reduced Priced Lunch: 88.5% ▪ English Language Learner: 20.6% ▪ Special Education: 6.4% ▪ Female: 51.1% ▪ Male: 48.9% ▪ White: 12.6% ▪ Black: 17.8% ▪ Hispanic: 66.9% ▪ Asian: 0.9% ▪ Other Race/Ethnicity: 1.4%
Data Sources:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Woodcock-Johnson Letter-Word Identification ▪ Woodcock-Johnson Word Attack ▪ Test of Word Reading Efficiency (TOWRE-2) ▪ Woodcock-Johnson Passage Comprehension

⁴ These data reflect only the evaluation sample in the impact study, not the entire population served.

⁵ Page 19 of final evaluation report, Table 2.4.

Investing in Innovation (i3) Grantee Results Summary

Scale-up, 2010-2015

Key Measures:

- Woodcock-Johnson Letter-Word Identification
- Woodcock-Johnson Word Attack
- TOWRE-2
- Woodcock-Johnson Passage Comprehension

Appendix C: Quality of the Evidence

Although an evaluation may not have been reviewed by the time of publication for this summary, it is possible that the study will be reviewed at a later date. Please visit the websites found in the footnotes on this page to check for updates.

WHAT WORKS CLEARINGHOUSE REVIEW⁶

STUDY	RATING
Scaling Up the Success for All Model of School Reform. https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/Study/32024	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Study meets WWC standards without reservationsAlphabetic outcomes: Statistically significant positive effects found

EVIDENCE FOR ESSA REVIEW⁷

STUDY	RATING
Not reviewed as of 02/10/2020	N/A

NATIONAL CENTER ON INTENSIVE INTERVENTIONS REVIEW⁸

STUDY	RATING
Not reviewed as of 02/10/2020	N/A

⁶ <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/FWW>

⁷ <https://www.evidenceforessa.org/>

⁸ <https://intensiveintervention.org/>

Investing in Innovation (i3) Grantee Results Summary

Scale-up, 2010-2015

The [*Investing in Innovation Fund \(i3\)*](#), established under section 14007 of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, is a Federal discretionary grant program at the U.S. Department of Education within the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education (OESE). i3 grants help schools and local education agencies work in partnership with the private sector and the philanthropic community to develop and expand innovative practices that improve student achievement or student growth, close achievement gaps, decrease dropout rates, increase high school graduation rates, and/or increase college enrollment and completion rates for high-need students.

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ⁱ “High-need student” refers to a student at risk of academic failure or otherwise in need of special assistance and support, such as students who are living in poverty, attend high-minority schools, are far below grade level, who have left school before receiving a regular high school diploma, at risk of not graduating with a diploma on time, who are homeless, in foster care, have been incarcerated, have disabilities, or who are English learners. For more information see: [*Applications for New Awards; Investing in Innovation Fund-Development Grants, 81 FR 24070 \(April 25, 2016\)*](#).