

AARP Experience Corps in SDP

Program Implementation and Student Literacy Gains, 2015-2016 SY

This brief summarizes the findings of a mixed methods study conducted by the Office of Research & Evaluation (ORE) which focused on the relationship between student participation in AARP Experience Corps (EC) and their early literacy outcomes. The full report is available upon request.

Study Overview

To understand the role of participating in EC on students' reading outcomes, ORE examined student reading level data and feedback from teachers, EC tutors, and principals. Two main research questions were the focus of the study:

1. Do students who participate in EC demonstrate improvements in their reading outcomes?
2. Do teachers and/or principals find EC beneficial to students and the learning environment?

Why is this study important to SDP?

- **Research has shown that one-on-one tutoring is effective for the literacy growth of new readers.** One-on-one tutoring programs that utilize community volunteers have been found to help improve the reading ability of lower performing beginning readers (Meier and Ivernizzi, 2001).
- **Student participation in EC has been linked to improved reading outcomes in other settings.** A pilot evaluation investigated the role of participating in EC on students' Maryland School Performance Assessment Program (MSPAP) during the 1999-2000 SY. The study randomly assigned 1,000 Baltimore youth to either an eight-month EC Baltimore program or a control group. Findings show that third grade students who participated in EC had statistically higher scores on the MSPAP than their peers who had not participated in the EC program (Rebox et al., 2004).
- **Anchor Goal 2 from the District's Action Plan 3.0 is that 100% of 8-year olds will read on grade level.** We wanted to explore the impact of EC as a strategy for encouraging early literacy growth since this is the first time that EC was implemented in SDP schools.

Program Features

The AARP Experience Corps (EC) tutoring program pairs K-3 students who are reading below grade level with a tutor age 55 and over.

In the 2015-2016 SY, 194 EC tutors spent 56,865 hours with students. The amount of time spent with students varied by mentor:

Hours	%
≥ 20	19%
21 – 40	28%
41 – 60	32%
61 – 80	20%

Sample Snapshot

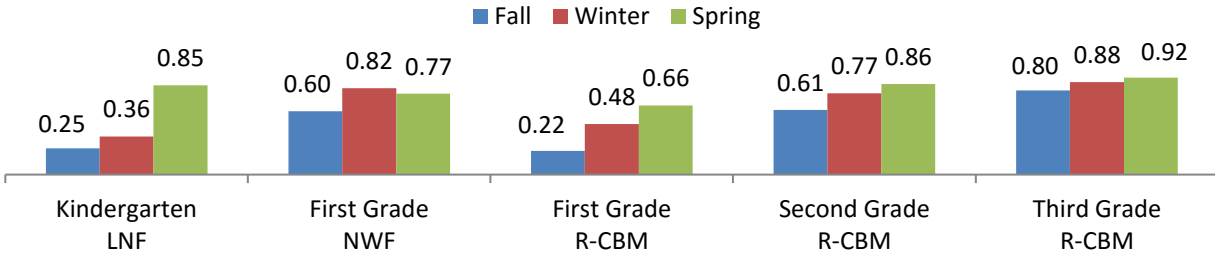
Schools : 22
Classrooms: 176
Students: 1,352

Students in the sample were:

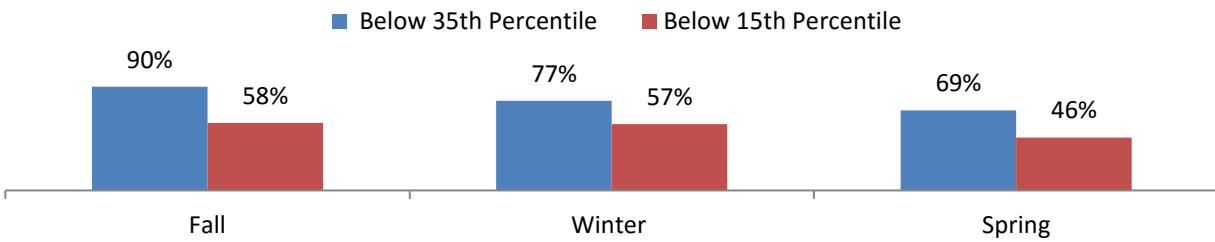
	%
Asian	4
Black	60
Latino	24
Other	7
White	6
Female	48
Male	52
Special Education	9
ELL	11

Findings

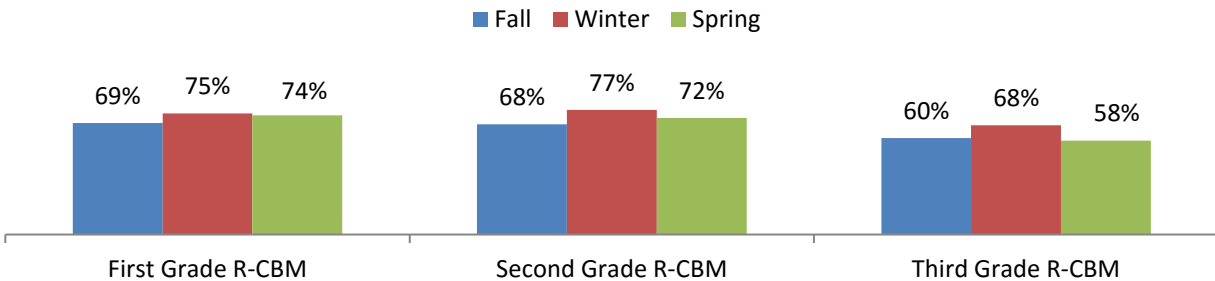
The average accuracy scores (number words read correctly) of K-3 EC students increased during the three testing periods.



The percent of kindergarten students performing at the lowest reading levels decreased.



The percent of 1st – 3rd graders at the lowest readings levels remained relatively steady.



Teachers and principals found the program beneficial to students.

	1 (No Benefit)	2	3 (Some Benefit)	4	5 (Great Benefit)	Average
<i>How beneficial do you feel this AARP Experience Corps program is for the participating students?</i>	0%	3%	8%	22%	68%	4.54

Conclusion

Students' average reading accuracy (number of words read correctly) increased while they were in the EC program; it is important to note, though, that progress throughout the year is expected. The amount of kindergarteners performing at the lowest reading levels also decreased. Even though teachers and administrators found EC beneficial for all students, the percent of 1st to 3rd graders reading at the lowest levels remained relatively steady.