ESSA Level 2 Evidence

95 PHONICS BOOSTER BUNDLE™ SUMMER SCHOOL

EVIDENCE PACKET

LXD RESEARCH
95 PERCENT GROUP

95 Phonics Booster Bundle™: Summer School Edition & Tune-Up

Level 2 ESSA Evidence: Efficacy Study with Acadience® Reading K-6

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Completion Date: 10/22/2021

Executive Summary

Summer programs are believed to counteract "summer loss" (Atteberry & McEachin, 2016), however, the effectiveness of these programs is not well known. There are widely varying recommendations regarding the defining features of an effective summer reading program regarding the optimal program length, professional development support, teacher-to-student ratio. Recent reports by the RAND Corporation call for summer programs to be anchored in commercially available and evidence-based curriculum, that can be standardized across district sites while also allowing for differentiation of instruction (Augustine et al., 2013). Indeed, more work is needed to determine the effectiveness of evidence-based summer curriculum materials, so that schools are able to select summer programs that not only slow the summer slide but also support greater learning growth.

The Summer School Edition and Tune-Up version of the Phonics Booster Bundle were developed by the 95 Percent Group, LLC to provide teachers with an explicit phonics program to quickly address learning loss during summer school and as school resumes in the fall. Educators use this 25-day structured literacy-based program during the summer or at the beginning of the school year to cover critical skills right away - even before all beginning-of-year assessments are completed.

The 95 Percent Group partnered with LXD Research to conduct a third-party evaluation of 95 Phonics Booster Bundle Summer School Edition (SSE) as it was implemented in two summer schools in 2021 in California and Arizona. The districts provided summer school with daily SSE instruction to rising first through third-grade students as the phonic component of their districtwide summer literacy programs. This report includes the results of those two studies, which are separated due to the very different implementation methods used at each site (the CA district taught SSE once a day over 6 weeks, while the AZ taught SSE twice a day over 10-15 days). Combined, these studies included nearly 1,000 students (479 summer school students and 479 statistically similar comparison students).

Evaluation Overview

The evaluation aimed to answer the following questions:

1. To what degree did students in the summer school group demonstrate early literacy outcomes that exceeded the outcomes obtained by the students in the matched comparison groups (that did not attend a summer school with the SSE)?
2. What is the relationship between scores on Acadience and scores on the SSE's pre-test and post-test?
3. To what degree did summer-school teachers find the program and its measures to be socially valid (i.e., acceptability of the goals, procedures, and outcomes)?
4. How did teachers perceive the SSE?

Methods

Study 1 in California used the SSE once a day over a 6-week long summer program, while Study 2 in Arizona used the SSE twice a day in an intensive program that ran over 4 weeks. Both districts assessed students using Acadience before and after the summer and used the SSE formative assessments to monitor growth at both the beginning and the end of the summer. LXD Research collected and analyzed quantitative data through teacher surveys and student assessments, reading achievement data shared by the district for students (Grades K-2, Spring 2021), and summer attendance data from Summer 2022.

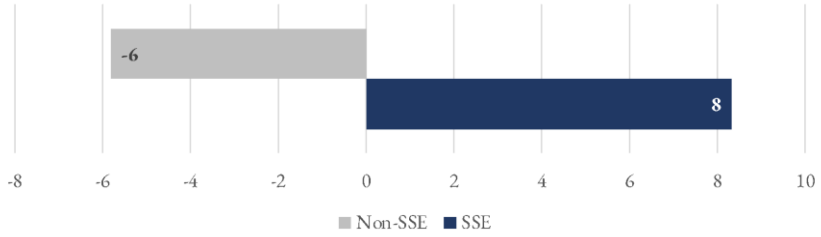
Highlighted Successes from Study 1

- **All Students:** Average composite scores on Acadience Reading K-6 significantly increased from Spring 2021 to Fall 2021 for all rising second graders (N=104; Figure 1 for additional details).
- **Well Below Benchmark Students:** Average composite scores increased for rising first and second graders (R1 N=63, R2 N=60; also Figure 1) who were Well Below Benchmark in Spring 2021.

Figure 1. Spring 2021 and Fall 2021 Acadience Composite Score Averages

- **Comparing Summer School to Non-Summer School Students:** For rising first graders (N=103), SSE students significantly outperformed the Non-SSE students on Fall 2021 Acadience (+8 points vs. -6points; Figure 2).

Figure 2. Composite Score Gains from Spring to Fall SSE and Non-SSE Students for Rising First Graders

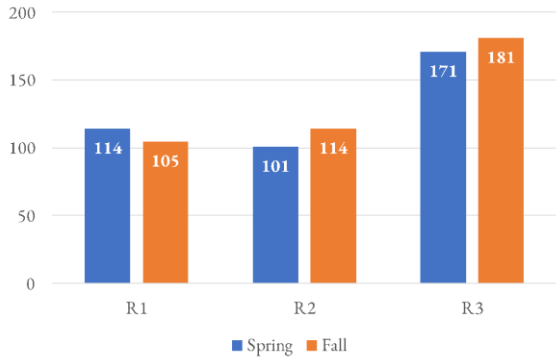


Highlighted Successes from Study 2

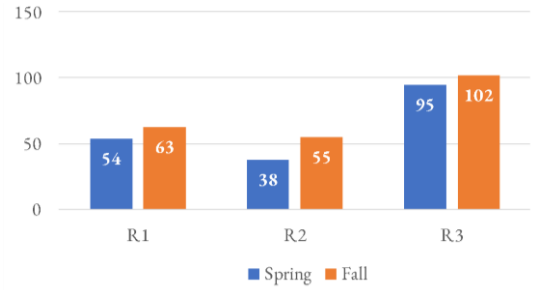
- **All Students:** Average composite scores on *Acadience Reading K-6* significantly increased from Spring 2021 to Fall 2021 for all rising second and third graders (R2 N = 141, R3 N= 217; see Figure 5 for additional details).
- **Well Below Benchmark Students:** Average composite scores increased for all grades (R1 N = 51, R2 N= 82, R3 N=51; Figure 5).

Figure 5. Spring 2021 and Fall 2021 Acadience Composite Score Averages by Grade

All Students

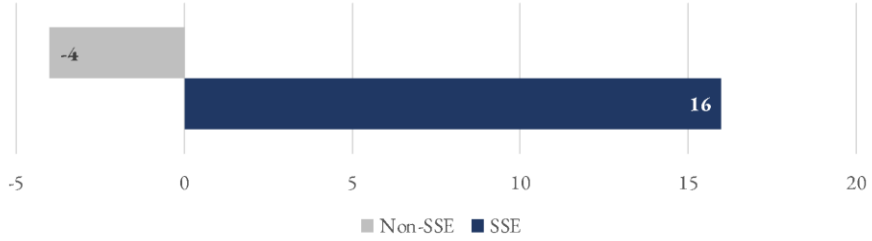


Well Below Benchmark Students



- **Comparing Summer School to Non-Summer School Students:** For rising third graders who were Well Below Benchmark in Spring 2021 (N=113), SSE students significantly outperformed the Non-SSE students on Fall 2021 Acadience (+16 points vs. -4 points; Figure 9). Notably, more than twice as many students advanced beyond the Well Below Benchmark category (24% in SSE and 11% in Non-SSE; see Figure 10 for additional details).

Figure 9. Rising Third Graders in SSE Make Significantly Higher Gains than Non-SSE



Teacher Survey Summary

Most of the 70 respondents noted that the pre-planned Booster Bundle teaching materials made the lessons much easier to follow and implement in the classroom given the minimal amount of preparation work needed (see Figure 11 for more details). Teachers also reported that students' abilities and prior knowledge ranged widely, and so it was difficult to meet all students' needs in whole group instruction (small group and 1-1 instruction was rarely provided). Overall, teachers thought the program helped their students learn phonics skills over the summer.

Complete Illustrative Quote

> *"I really like this program and am looking forward to our new phonics set in the fall. I liked that the workbooks had a set of chips for each student. I feel like completing all the lessons in such a short time did not allow for mastery, but the students did benefit from it. This program had some components that I was not familiar with, like the syllable mapping. This was a good addition to the syllable routines that we had used during the school year."*

Conclusion

Students and teachers at two similar districts in two separate parts of the nation used different implementations of the 95 Phonics Booster Bundle: Summer School Edition to support student preparedness for the Fall of 2021. This evaluation aimed to assess how exposure to SSE influenced students' reading achievement using Acadience K-6 as the outcome measure. Examining data from multiple sources, this report highlights and provides context for how SSE positively influenced student outcomes for all three grades across the two locations. Students who were Well Below Benchmark on Acadience in Spring 2021 gained the most benefits from using the SSE over the summer.

For additional information, please contact 95Percent Group Inc., at 847-499-8200 or info@95percentgroup.com.

Introduction

According to the reports on benchmark assessment progress during Winter and Spring 2021, students experienced up to 2.5 months of learning lag in ELA skills (Education Analytics, 2021) due to interrupted learning during the pandemic. Students who are economically disadvantaged or have English Learner status have fallen farther behind their peers (3.2 and 3.8 months, respectively). It is well known that reading difficulties can pose major barriers to academic success. Thus, in Summer 2021 many districts held larger than usual academic programs with research-based intensive instruction to prepare students for the 2021-2022 school year.

The effectiveness of summer reading programs, however, is not well-known. While summer programs are believed to counteract "summer loss" (Atteberry & McEachin, 2016), there are widely varying recommendations regarding the defining features of an effective summer reading program. These recommendations vary in how long the program should last (ranging from 34 to 80 hrs; Schwartz et al., 2018; McLaughlin & Pitock, 2009), the amount of professional development support and training necessary for teachers (Kim & Quinn, 2013; McCombs et al., 2011; Schwartz et al., 2018), and exactly how low the teacher-to-student ratio should be for optimal learning supports (ranging from one-on-one instruction to no more than 15 students; Christodoulou et al., 2017; Cooper et al., 2000; Schwartz et al., 2018). Recent reports by the RAND Corporation call for summer programs to be anchored in commercially available and evidence-based curriculum, that can be standardized across district sites while also allowing for differentiation of instruction (Augustine et al., 2013). Indeed, more work is needed to determine the effectiveness of evidence-based summer curriculum materials, so that schools are able to select summer programs that not only slow the summer slide but also support greater learning growth.

The 95 Percent Group partnered with LXD Research to conduct a third-party evaluation of 95 Phonics Booster Bundle Summer School Edition (SSE) and Tune-Up (TU) as it was implemented in two summer schools in 2021 in California and Arizona. The districts provided summer school, with SSE instruction rising first through third-grade students as the phonic component of their districtwide summer academic literacy program.

95 Phonics Booster Bundle: Summer School Edition & Tune-Up Edition

The Summer School Edition (SSE) and Tune-Up (TU) of the Phonics Booster Bundle were developed to provide teachers with an explicit phonics program to quickly address learning loss during summer school and as school resumes in the fall. Targeting Grades 1 - 3, the program was created in response to the alarming EOY assessment results schools faced due to instructional challenges during the pandemic. These programs provide teachers with scripted phonics and word study lessons to

intensively catch up with students who have experienced gaps during the prior school year. Educators use this 25-lesson structured literacy-based program during the summer or at the beginning of the school year to cover critical skills right away - even before all BOY assessments are completed. The lessons require minimal teacher prep and can be used for whole-class or small group instruction, in person, or remotely.

Research Questions

The 95 Percent Group partnered with LXD Research to conduct a third-party evaluation of 95 Phonics Booster Bundle Summer School Edition (SSE) and Tune-Up (TU) as it was implemented in two summer schools in 2021 in California and Arizona. The districts provided summer school, with SSE instruction rising first through third-grade students as the phonic component of their districtwide summer academic literacy program.

The evaluation aimed to answer the following questions:

1. To what degree did students in the summer school group demonstrate early literacy outcomes that exceeded the outcomes obtained by the students in the matched comparison groups (that did not attend a summer school with the SSE)?
2. What is the relationship between scores on Acadience and scores on the 95 Percent Group SSE's pre-test and post-test? (Results of the validity study are written up separately and available upon request.)
3. To what degree did summer-school teachers find the program and its measures to be socially valid (i.e., acceptability of the goals, procedures, and outcomes)?
4. How did teachers perceive SSE?

To answer these questions, LXD Research collaborated with two school districts, one in California and one in Arizona, which both had high Hispanic student populations. One district had an intense 4-week program and the other covered more of the summer with a 6-week program. While the methods for each study were similar, the implementations and results were very different; therefore, the results are presented separately below.

Research Methods

Research Design

LXD Research collected and analyzed quantitative data through teacher surveys and student assessments, as well as reading achievement data shared by the district for students (Grades K-2, Spring 2021), and summer attendance data from Summer 2022. Both districts assessed students using Acadience at the end of Spring 2021 and the beginning of Fall 2021 used the SSE formative assessments to monitor growth from the first day of summer school to the last day. Teachers (results presented from Study 2 only) were surveyed once towards the middle of the summer.

Student Sample

Since all students in the district were invited to summer school in one of the districts, a combination of attendance records and SSE test completion was used to determine the eligibility of inclusion for the study ("SSE students"). Students with incomplete SSE tests or low summer school attendance were excluded (threshold for attendance was 10 days in CA and 8 days in AZ). To explore future student outcomes, LXD Research procured demographic and Acadience data from all students to create a statistically similar comparison group of students ("Non-SSE students") who did not attend the summer school program. Since the matching of SSE to non-SSE occurred before post-testing, 20 SSE students in each district needed to be rematched because their non-SSE counterparts did not have Fall 2021 data. The final sample had 958 students (479 summer school students and 479 statistically similar comparison students; see Table 1).

Table 1. Sample by Grade in Both Studies

Grade	Study 1	Study 2
Rising 1st Grade	118	210
Rising 2nd Grade	120	166
Rising 3rd Grade	98	246

Product and Assessments Skill Coverage

SSE and TU

Both SSE and TU cover key phonological awareness and phonics skills in the programs. The included assessment sections demonstrate the skills covered, comprised of key phonics skills taught during the previous school year (Table 2).

Table 2. SSE Pretest and Posttest Content

Grade	Section Content				
Rising Grade 1	Phonological Awareness	Word Completion	Sentence Dictation	Reading Comprehension	
Rising Grade 2	Sound Spelling Mapping	Syllable Sorting	Sentence Dictation	Syllable Match	Reading Comprehension
Rising Grade 3	Sound Spelling Mapping	Syllable Sort & Spelling	Sentence Dictation	Syllable Mapping	Reading Comprehension

Acadience Reading K-6

Acadience Reading helps teachers identify children at risk for reading difficulties and determine the skills to target for instructional support. Acadience assessments are standardized and assess core early literacy skills (Table 3). Because the weighting and timing of subtests change for each assessment period (User Manual), composite scores are used to compare reading ability in this report.

Table 3. Acadience Reading Subtest and Skill Coverage

Subtest	Indicators of These Basic Early Literacy Skills
First Sound Fluency & Phoneme Segmentation Fluency	Phonemic Awareness
Letter Naming Fluency	Indicator of risk
Nonsense Word Fluency	The Alphabetic Principle and Basic Phonics
Oral Reading Fluency	Advanced Phonics and Word Attack Skills, Accurate and Fluent Reading of Text, Reading Comprehension
Maze	Reading Comprehension

Study 1

Detailed Sample Description

Acadience results were collected from a public school district in California that used SSE for six weeks in the summer of 2021. This district is 61% Hispanic, has 78% Low-Income Families and includes nearly 1,630 students in grades K-2. Around 21% of students in each grade attended the summer program for some amount of time. Acadience tests were administered again when school began in August 2021. This paper compares students who attended summer school with strong attendance (92% of students attended summer school for 25+ days out of 30) with non-summer school students with statistically similar characteristics. This final group of 336 students (168 summer school students and 168 controls) were 25% White / 63% Hispanic / 12% Other, and 49% of students were girls (Table 4). Treatment and control groups showed no differences on Spring 2021 composite scores for all grades.

Table 4. Study 1 Demographic Sample Details by Grade

		Race/Ethnicity			Gender	
		Treatment	**Control**		**Treatment**	**Control**
Rising 1st Grade (N=118)	White Hispanic Other	18 (31%) 33 (56%) 8 (14%)	18 (31%) 33 (56%) 8 (14%)	Male Female	31 (53%) 28 (48%)	30 (51%) 29 (49%)
Rising 2nd Grade (N=120)	White Hispanic Other	16 (27%) 36 (60%) 8 (14%)	14 (23%) 38 (63%) 8 (14%)	Male Female	28 (47%) 32 (53%)	27 (45%) 33 (55%)
Rising 3rd Grade (N=98)	White Hispanic Other	9 (18%) 36 (74%) 4 (8%)	9 (18%) 35 (73%) 5 (10%)	Male Female	28 (57%) 21 (43%)	28 (57%) 21 (43%)

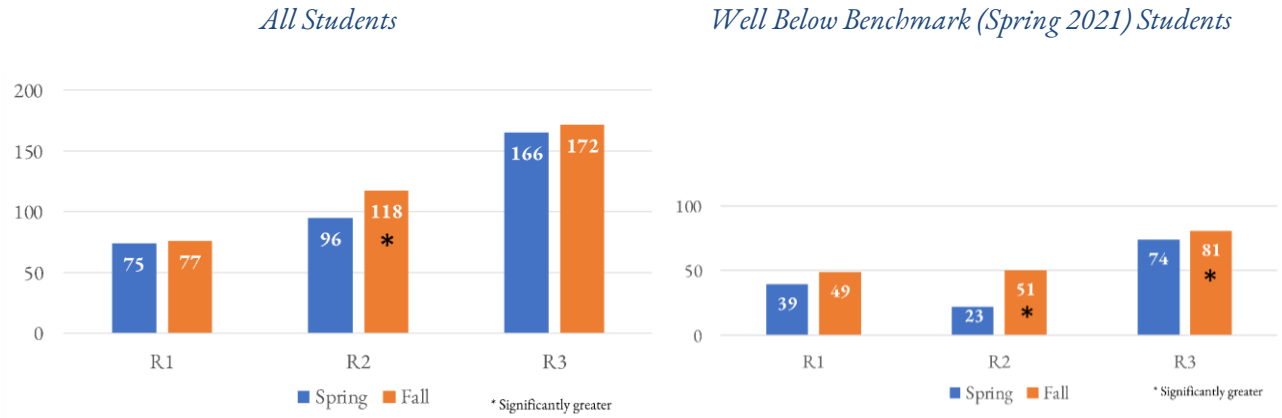
Results

All Students, Combined Groups

When examining all rising first through third graders, results differed by grade (Figure 1).

- All rising first and third graders (R1 and R3) had similar scores in both Spring and Fall.
- Rising second graders (R2) significantly increased from Spring to Fall (96 to 118 points[1]).
- When limiting the sample to only Well Below Benchmark (Spring 2021) students, both R1 and R2 grades significantly increased from Spring to Fall[2].

Figure 1. Spring 2021 and Fall 2021 Acadience Composite Score Averages by Grade

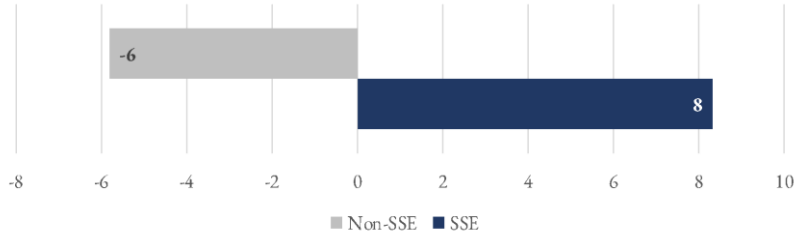


Comparing SSE to Non-SSE Students: All Benchmark Groups

Rising First Grade

In this study, the rising first graders in SSE significantly outperformed the comparison group. Figure 2 shows how SSE students gained eight points, while the Non-SSE students experienced a six-point loss on average composite scores from Spring to Fall[3].

Figure 2. Composite Score Gains from Spring to Fall SSE and Non-SSE Students for Rising First Graders



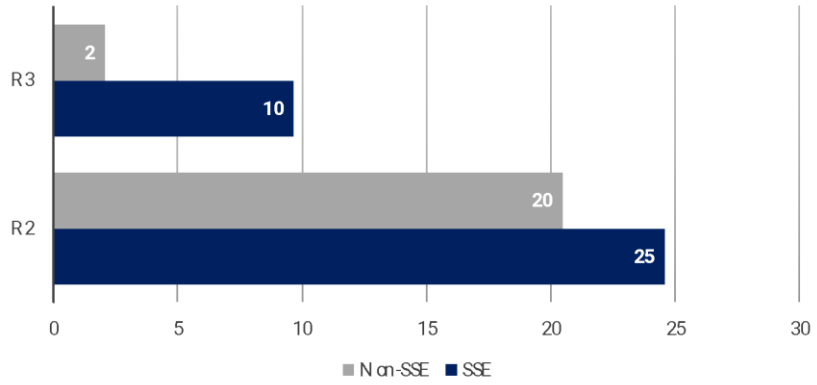
[1] R2: t(103) = -5.6, p < .001

[2] R1: t(62) = -3.63, p = .001; R2: t(59) = -4.97, p < .001

[3] R1: t(102) = -2.75, p = .007

When comparing SSE students to Non-SSE students, there were statistically similar gains on composite scores between the Spring 2021 scores and the Fall 2021 scores for rising second and third graders (Figure 3).

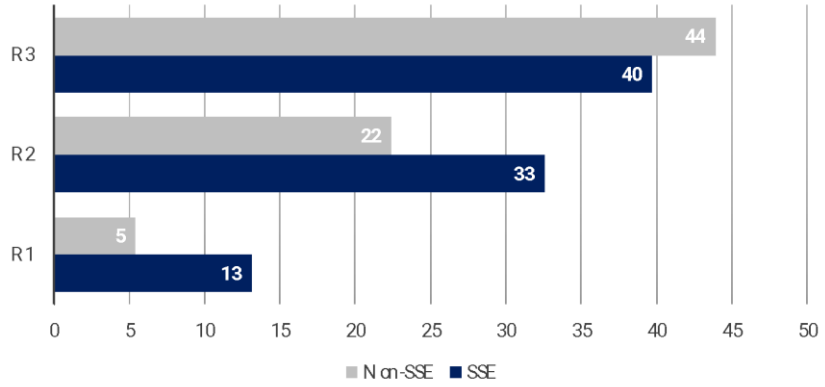
Figure 3. Change in Composite Scores from Spring to Fall Was Similar for SSE and Non-SSE Students



Comparing SSE to Non-SSE Students: Well Below Benchmark Only

Traditionally summer school programs focus on the students who are the farthest behind. When limiting the sample to students who were Well Below Benchmark in Spring 2021, there were no significant differences between SSE and Non-SSE groups on composite score change from Spring to Fall (Figure 4). Students in both groups made statistically similar gains (R1 N=63; R2 N=60; R3 N=47).

Figure 4. Well Below Benchmark in Spring, Made Statistically Similar Gains in All Groups



Study 2

Detailed Sample Description

Students

Acadience results were collected from a public school district in Arizona that used SSE for four weeks in the summer of 2021. This district is 45% White / 39% Hispanic, has 48% Low-Income Families, and includes nearly 4,000 students in grades K-2. Between 25-30% of students in each grade attended the summer program for some amount of time. Acadience tests were administered again when school began in August 2021. This paper compares students who attended summer school with strong attendance (at least 8 days out of 12) with non-summer school students ("Non-SSE") with statistically similar characteristics. This final group of 622 students (311 summer school students and 311 controls) were 45% White / 46% Hispanic / 6% Black, and 52% of students were girls (Table 5). Treatment and control groups showed no differences on Spring 2021 composite scores for all grades.

Table 5. Study 2 Demographic Sample Details by Grade

		Race/Ethnicity			Gender	
		Treatment	**Control**		**Treatment**	**Control**
Rising 1st Grade (N=210)	White Hispanic Other	56 (53%) 41 (39%) 8 (8%)	44 (42%) 53 (50.5%) 8 (7.5%)	Male Female	45 (43%) 60 (57%)	60 (57%) 45 (43%)
Rising 2nd Grade (N=166)	White Hispanic Other	39 (47%) 37 (45%) 7 (8%)	37 (45%) 37 (45%) 9 (10%)	Male Female	46 (55.4%) 37 (44.6%)	35 (42.2%) 48 (57.8%)
Rising 3rd Grade (N=246)	White Hispanic Other	54 (44%) 54 (44%) 15 (12%)	51 (42%) 64 (52%) 8 (6%)	Male Female	52 (42%) 71 (58%)	59 (48%) 64 (52%)

Teachers

During the last week of the summer program at the Arizona district, LXD Research distributed a 95 Percent Booster Bundle Teacher Survey to all teachers. Out of the 70 respondents who completed the survey, 21 taught rising 1st Grade (30%), 17 taught rising 2nd Grade (24%), and 29 taught rising 3rd Grade (41%). Teachers may have taught multiple grades, for example, there were also

4 respondents who taught rising 4th Grade (4%) and one who indicated they taught K-8 (1%). There were 57 respondents who had used 95 Percent Group materials prior to the 2021 summer session (83%). For 12 teachers, this summer program was their first time using these materials (17%).

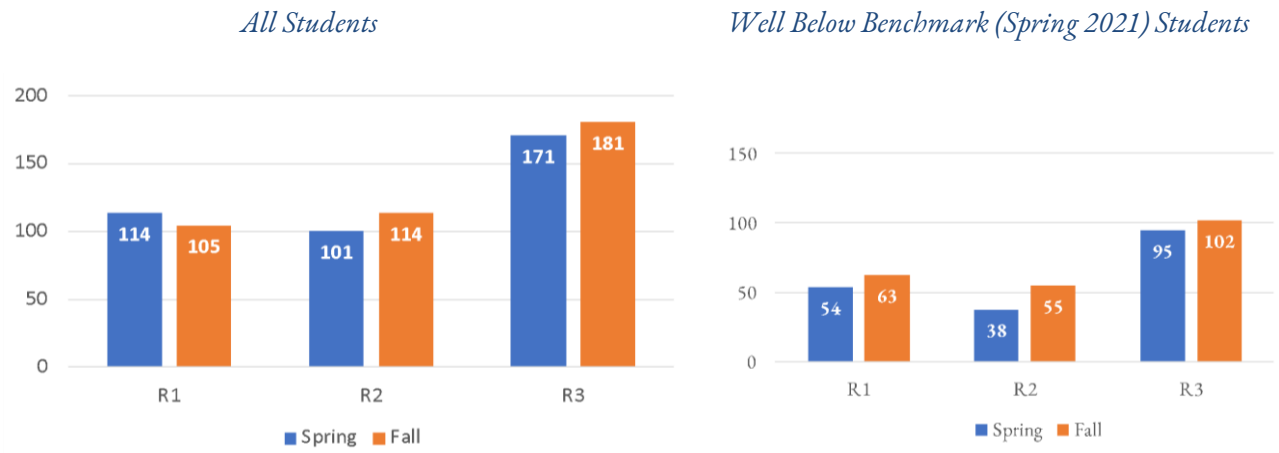
Results

All Students, Combined Groups

When examining all rising first through third graders, results differed by grade (Figure 5).

- All rising first graders (R1) experienced a "summer slide" between Spring and Fall, with students' scores significantly decreasing an average of nine points[4].
- Rising second and third graders (R2 and R3) significantly increased from Spring to Fall (14 and 10 points respectively).
- When limiting the sample to only Well Below Benchmark (Spring 2021) students, all three graders significantly increased from Spring to Fall[5].

Figure 5. Spring 2021 and Fall 2021 Acadience Composite Score Averages by Grade



[4] R1: t(172) = 4.41, p < .001; R2: t(140) = -4.05, p <.001; R3: t(216) = -2.69, p = .008.

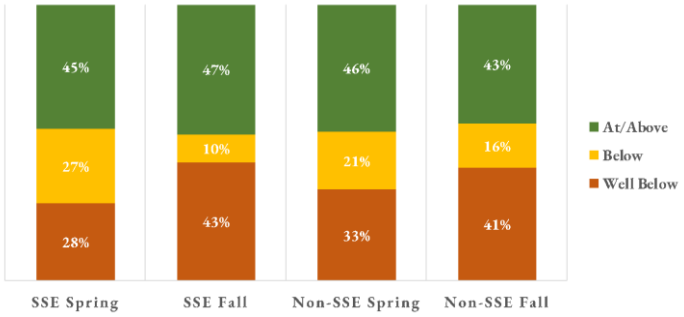
[5] R1: t(50) = -2.19, p < .033; R2: t(81) = -314, p =.002; R3: t(50) = -4.57, p < .001.

Comparing SSE to Non-SSE Students: All Benchmark Groups

Rising First Grade

The SSE students' summer slide was significantly greater than Non-SSE students (13 points compared to four points change on average composite scores)[6]. The proportion of students who moved into the At/Above Benchmark group, however, followed the opposite pattern with SSE having a 2 point increase and Non-SSE having a 3 point decrease in At/Above Benchmark students (Figure 6). Additional follow-up conversations with first grade educators are recommended to learn more.

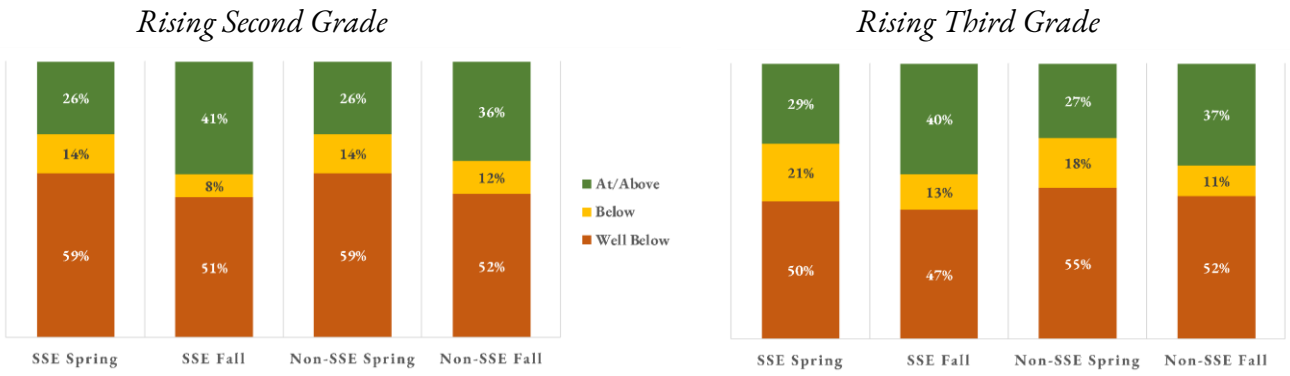
Figure 6. Benchmark Status Change for Rising First Graders



Rising Second and Third Grade

When comparing SSE students to Non-SSE students, there were similar gains on composite scores between the Spring 2021 scores and the Fall 2021 scores for rising second and third graders (Figure 7Figure 3).

Figure 7. Change in Benchmark Status from Spring to Fall Was Similar for SSE and Non-SSE Students



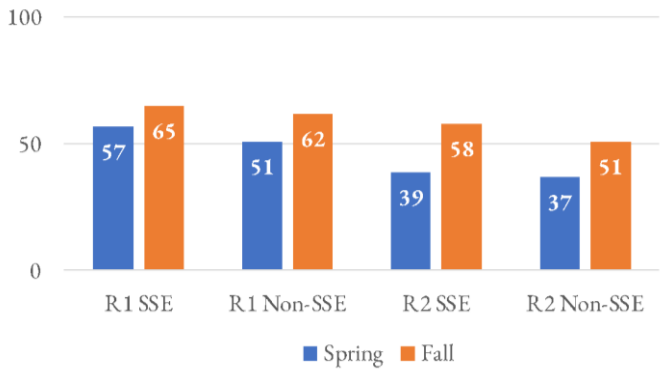
[6] R1: $t(171) = 2.21$, $p = .029$

Comparing SSE to Non-SSE Students: Well Below Benchmark Only

Rising First and Second Grade

Traditionally, summer school programs focus on the students who are the farthest behind. When limiting the sample to students who were Well Below Benchmark in Spring 2021, there were no significant differences between SSE and Non-SSE groups on composite scores (Figure 8). Students in both groups made statistically similar gains (R1 N=50; R2 N=82). Notably, rising first graders in this group made gains and did not slide like the grade as a whole.

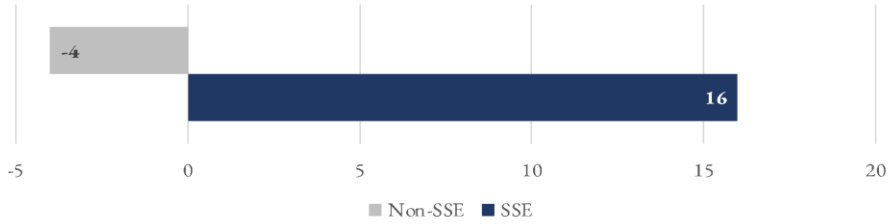
Figure 8. Rising First and Second Graders, Well Below Benchmark in Spring, Made Similar Gains in Both Groups



Rising Third Grade

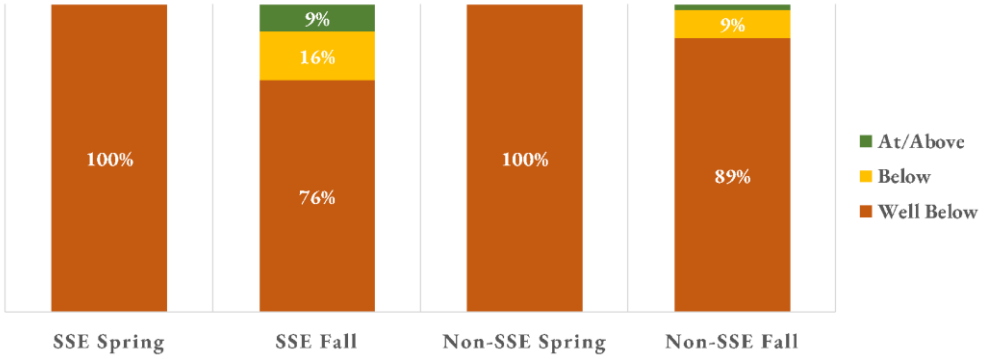
The oldest students (N=113) who were the farthest behind gained the most from the SSE summer school (Non-SSE lost 4 points, SSE gained 16 points; see Figure 9)[7]. More than double of the students in SSE advanced from Well Below Benchmark to start third grade Below or At/Above Benchmark than in Non-SSE (24% vs. 11%; Figure 10).

Figure 9. Rising Third Graders in SSE Make Significantly Higher Gains than Non-SSE



[7] t(112) = -2.44, p = .016

Figure 10. Percent of Rising Third Graders Advancing Benchmark Status in SSE Double Non-SSE



Teacher Survey Results Summary

Most of the 70 teachers who responded to the survey noted that the pre-planned Booster Bundle teaching materials made the lessons much easier to follow and implement in the classroom given the minimal amount of preparation work needed (see a sample of responses in Figure 11). Implementation varied greatly in terms of the amount of time teachers spent teaching reading, even within a single district. The most common challenge teachers reported was having a wide range of abilities and prior phonics knowledge within a single room, but almost all their instructional time was whole-group lessons. By the end of the program, most teachers reported seeing growth in their student's abilities. The repetition and structure of the lessons helped students follow along and recall the new information. Given their experience with the summer program, many teachers are looking forward to the fall.

Respondents had the opportunity to address any strengths and weaknesses with the lesson structure of the program. For the rising first graders, teachers found that Letter-Sound Correspondence was the most effective lesson plan, while students struggled with the Reading, Writing, and High-Frequency Words portions. According to their teachers, rising second graders benefited most from the Sound-Spelling Mapping and struggled with the Passages and Comprehension. Lastly, rising third graders also did well with the Sound-Spelling Mapping and struggled with the Passages and Comprehension lessons.

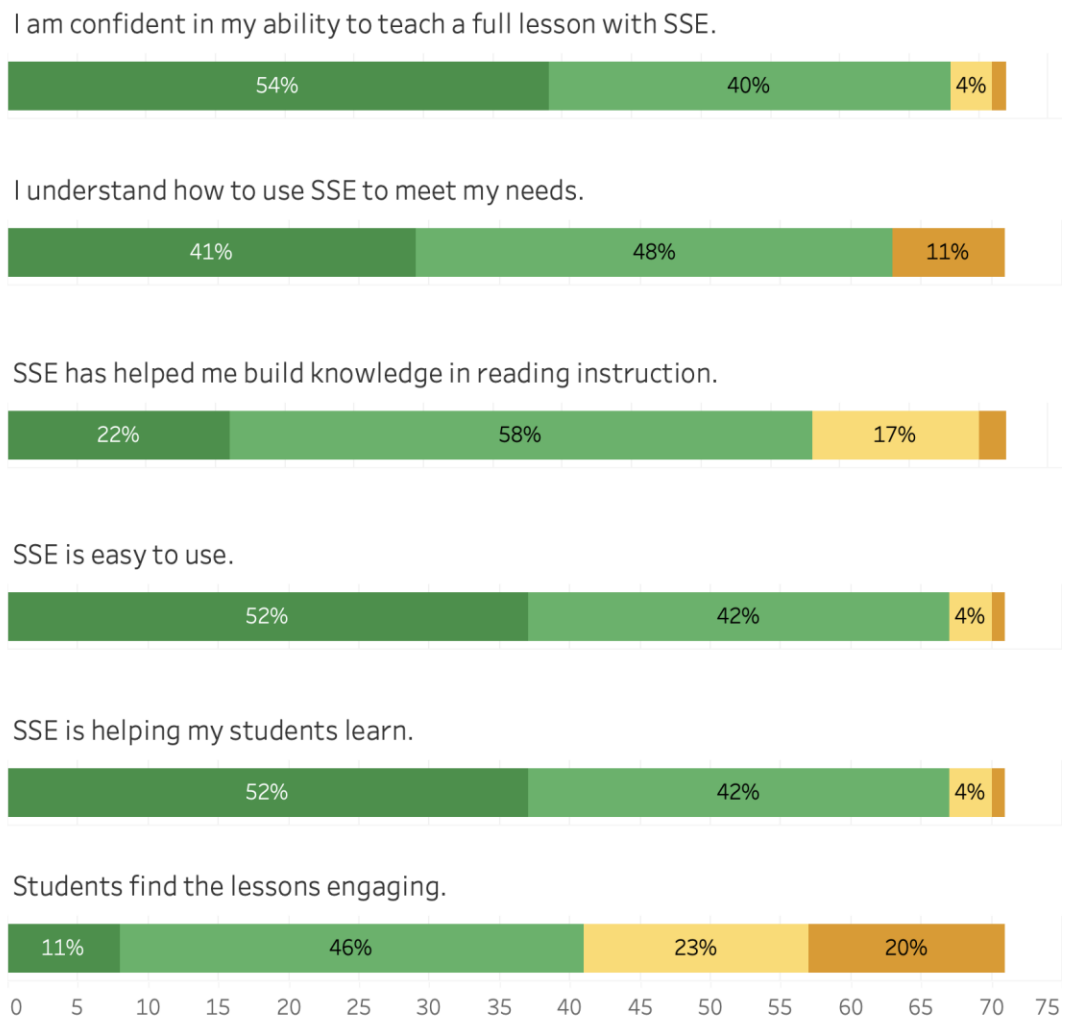
Sample of Positive Quotes from Teachers

- "The program has all the components needed for explicit phonics instruction."
- "I have never taught phonics before and I was pretty comfortable and understood the format after one day."
- "The workbooks are absolutely life-changing."
- "Had a blast this summer and saw HUGE growth in these kiddos!"

Complete Illustrative Quote

> *"I really like this program and am looking forward to our new phonics set in the fall. I liked that the workbooks had a set of chips for each student. I feel like completing all the lessons in such a short time did not allow for mastery, but the students did benefit from it. This program had some components that I was not familiar with, like the syllable mapping. This was a good addition to the syllable routines that we had used during the school year."*

Figure 11. Teachers' Level of Agreement for Each Statement about SSE Implementation



Conclusion

Students and teachers at two similar districts in two separate parts of the nation used different implementations of the 95 Phonics Booster Bundle: Summer School Edition to support student preparedness for the Fall of 2021. This evaluation aimed to assess how exposure to SSE influenced students' reading achievement using Acadience K-6 as the outcome measure. Examining data from multiple sources, this report highlights and provides context for how SSE positively influenced student outcomes for all three grades across the two locations. Students who were Well Below Benchmark on Acadience in Spring 2021 gained the most benefits from using the SSE over the summer.

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