

# Ready<sup>2</sup> Evaluation Summary

Executive Summary / February 10<sup>th</sup>, 2014 / DEPC Evaluation Coordinator Patrick Curry

## Introduction

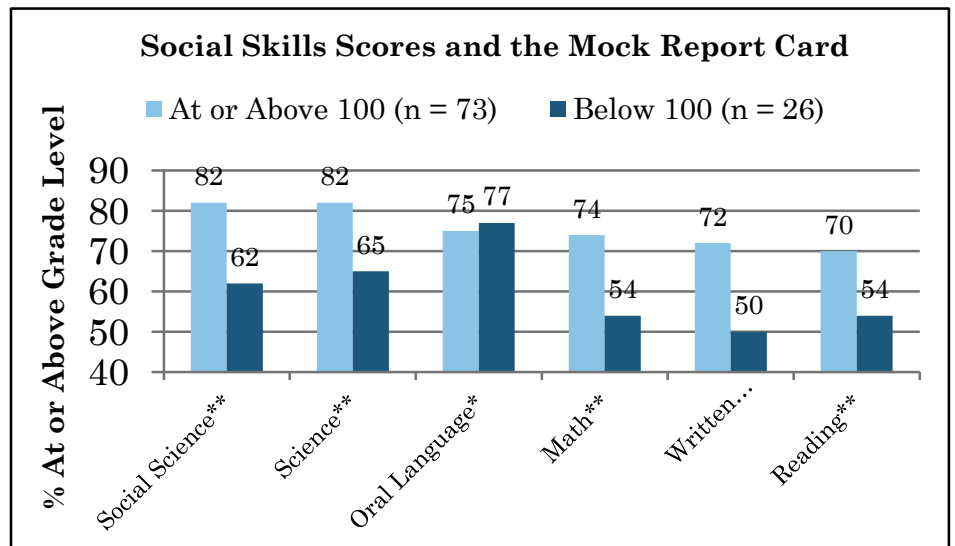
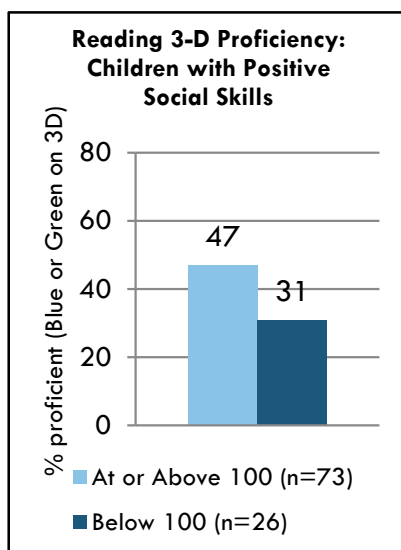
The Down East Partnership for Children (DEPC), with funding from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, has completed its fourth and final year of its Ready<sup>2</sup> Evaluation project. This project is designed to evaluate the impact of various components of the DEPC model of services: high quality early care & education, transition support, family support, Ready Schools and Ready Communities.

To accomplish this, DEPC recruited and collected information from a cohort of 250 children that entered kindergarten in four elementary schools in Nash-Rocky Mount Public Schools and Edgecombe County Public Schools in fall 2009. Children came from schools with two levels of intervention: schools that have only participated in the Ready Schools Initiative and schools that are participating in the Ready<sup>2</sup> Initiative, promoting family and community involvement via Ready Schools and Ready Communities.

This report contains the key findings and data analysis through the end of children's third grade year. 100 children remained in the sample this year. We compared the interventions each child has had within our model of services and compared them to the child's academic performance. This performance is measured by standardized test scores (e.g. Reading 3-D, End-of-Grade [EOG] math and reading) and the Mock Report Card (i.e. teacher assessment of student achievement).

## End-of-Third Grade Findings

- Children with positive social skills<sup>†</sup> score statistically significantly higher on Reading 3-D assessments, EOG math and reading tests, and most Mock Report Card subjects. This relationship is strong and consistent from kindergarten through third grade. Our data, as well as national data, indicate lower income groups are significantly less likely to be on grade level and have more fade out. However, income was a less significant factor for performance than positive social skills were in our cohort. Children with positive social skills also score significantly higher on all Mock Report Card work habits, which are each independently correlated with higher standardized test scores.

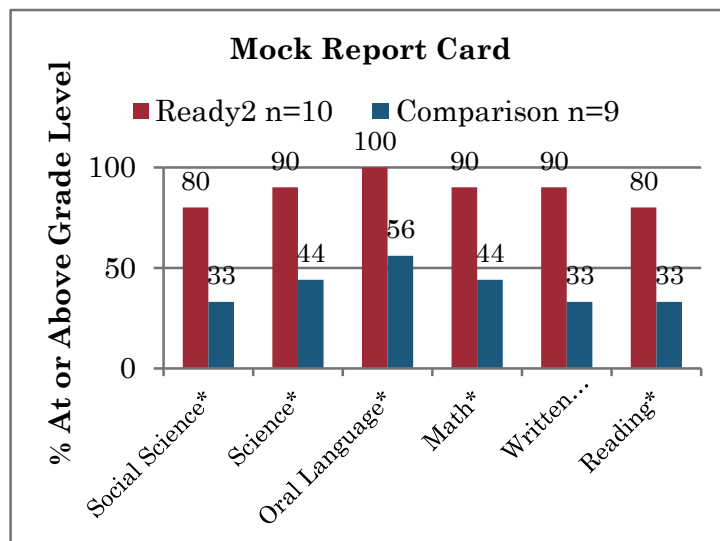
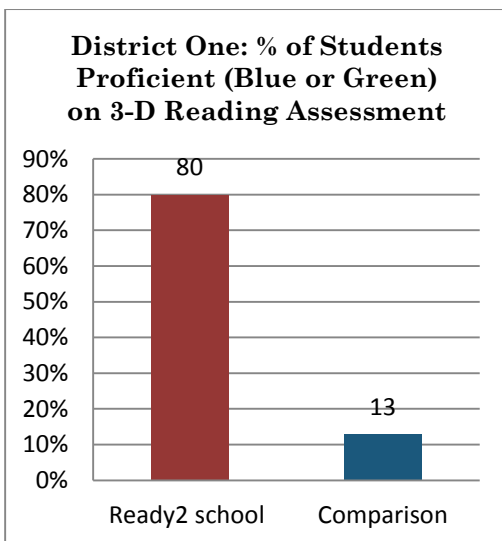


<sup>†</sup> Positive Social Skills represents scores at or above 100 on Pre-Kindergarten Behavioral Scales.

\*\*Correlation significant at the 0.01 level. \* Significant at the 0.05 level.

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- Data from all three previous years showed a clear relationship between children with early care and education and higher scores on the assessments. However, this year's data shows that these children were not statistically more likely to achieve higher scores. We lost many of the lower performing children with no early care and education experience from the sample, which skewed the results on this variable.
- Teacher communication has stabilized from drops in previous years. "Teacher contacted me" and "teacher asked me to help out" are significantly correlated with higher 3-D Reading scores (at a 0.01 level). This may be a key strategy for identifying and addressing performance issues earlier. Having clear expectations about the child's learning goals and feeling welcome by the teacher and by the school were correlated with reading EOG scores. There were no such correlations with math.
- Attending PTA/PTO meetings was positively correlated with higher Reading 3-D scores, but not EOGs. One might argue that parents with extra time can attend PTA/PTO meetings as well as have more time than other parents to help their child with studies, but the standardized scores were not correlated with parent self-ratings of "I have enough time and energy".
- A district Ready<sup>2</sup> school versus a comparison school showed highly statistically significant scores on the Reading 3-D Assessment and had higher EOG (reading and math) and Mock Report Card scores. The Ready<sup>2</sup> school also had higher PTA/PTO participation than the comparison.



## Conclusions

Interventions associated with higher student performance at the end of Third Grade are enhanced social and emotional skills, increased family engagement (especially in Ready<sup>2</sup> schools), early literacy, and high quality early education (indicated in previous year data). As a result, we should focus our initiatives and programs on these interventions. We are also greatly interested in further evaluating the importance of health (i.e. nutrition and physical activity) relative to student achievement, given national research and our experience that healthy children are more successful learners.