A Community Report: Springfield’s Progress On 3rd Grade Reading Proficiency

Our Goal
All of Springfield’s Children Reading Proficiently by the End of 3rd Grade!

What we know about the importance of reading

Reading is the cornerstone of academic success. In fact, educators attest that until third grade, a child learns to read. After third grade a child reads to learn. Further, a child who enters fourth grade able to read proficiently is far more likely to graduate from high school, become an effective citizen, and develop the skills essential for contributing to the 21st century economy.

Up to 3rd grade, a child learns to read; after 3rd grade, a child reads to learn.

Read! Reading Success by 4th Grade (RS4G) is a Springfield community-wide initiative that works to create a culture of literacy in which families, schools and the community support children – from birth – as they begin the journey towards reading proficiently by the end of third grade.
How We’re Reporting Progress

RS4G knows that no one program can move the needle on grade-level reading proficiency by itself. We are using data in a community-wide Results-Based Scorecard to measure progress in achieving reading proficiency for all of Springfield’s children.

How We Get There

Community partners, working together, use data to develop strategies in five areas that research tells us will increase children’s grade-level reading proficiency:

1 School Readiness
2 School Attendance
3 Summer Learning
4 Healthy Children
5 Family Engagement

Our Results-Based Scorecard

Work on these indicators will lead to early literacy success for our children

See the data:
https://www.readby4thgrade.com/scorecard

The collaboration to improve reading proficiency in Springfield is grounded in research.

- Research shows that students who don’t read proficiently by the end of third grade are 13 times more likely to drop out of high school.
- Those who graduate from high school earn about a half million dollars more over a lifetime than those who drop out.

The indicators on our scorecard were developed by the experts in our community who work with children every day. These indicators, updated regularly, will help us assess the progress leading to grade-level reading proficiency.

See All of the Data!
Go to: https://www.readby4thgrade.com/scorecard
School Readiness

Too many children enter school already far behind.

The Readiness Gap
Low-income children hear as many as 30 Million fewer words than their more affluent peers.

Access to books in the home:
- Middle-Income: 13 books per child
- Low-Income: 1 book per 300 children

Community partners, working together, develop strategies to support children from birth to make sure they enter kindergarten ready to succeed. Progress on these school readiness strategies is measured on the scorecard.
Goal: Springfield Children Enter School Ready to Learn

Indicator: More Children Attending Pre-K

% of 3- and 4-year-old children in Pre-K or early education settings

This indicator measures the percentage of all 3- and 4-year-old children who are enrolled in any type of formal early education program (public, private, family child care, center-based preschool).

Why Is This Important?

Based on extensive research, we know that a high-quality early childhood education experience has significant long-term effects on a person’s life outcomes, ranging from their achievement in K-12 school to their economic success, and they are far less likely to be involved in the juvenile justice system.

Indicator: Foundational Reading Skills at Kindergarten Entry

% of kindergartners who enter school with foundational reading skills

Entering kindergartners are given the Kindergarten Reading Assessment (KRA) to measure whether children enter with the basic skills that prepare them to learn to read. Early childhood educators and others who work with very young children use this data to inform instruction in their programs.

Why Is This Important?

If students enter kindergarten with the pre-literacy and language skills that are developmentally appropriate for their age, they will be prepared to build upon those skills and excel in their first years of elementary school and read at or above grade level by the end of 3rd grade.

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Too many children miss too many days of school, even for excused absences. Missing even two days each month is considered CHRONIC ABSENCE.

1 in 10 kids in kindergarten and 1st grade are chronically absent. In some schools, it's as high as 1 in 4.

2 in 10 low-income kids miss too much school. They're also more likely to suffer academically.

2.5 in 10 homeless kids are chronically absent.

4 in 10 transient kids miss too much school when families move.
Goal: All Springfield Children Attend School Regularly

Indicator: Rate of Chronic Absenteeism is Declining

% of children chronically absent (10% or more school days) - public preschool

This indicator measures the percentage of preschool children in the Springfield Public School District who were absent from school for more than 10% of school days for any reason.

Why Is This Important?

Common sense tells us that if students are not in their classroom, they are missing out on educational opportunities. Attendance habits begin in preschool. As early as kindergarten, students who are chronically absent are more likely to fall behind their peers in academic achievement. As they get older, chronic absence in middle school predicts dropout rates in high school.

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Summer Learning

Children lose ground over the summer months when they don’t participate in a summer program or don’t read for 20 minutes every day.

Six weeks in the fall are spent re-learning old material to make up for summer learning loss.

Equivalent of One month of overall learning is lost after summer vacation.

2–3 hours per week during summer vacation are needed to prevent any learning loss.

Two months of READING SKILLS are lost over the summer.

Spread the Word, Use/Share These Bookmarks!
Goal: Springfield Children Do Not Experience Summer Learning Loss

Indicator: Summer Programs Maintain/Improve Literacy Skills

% of summer programming for Springfield children entering kindergarten through 4th grade that have a specific focus on literacy skills

Summer learning program providers from public schools and community-based organizations, working together, agreed that a specific focus on literacy skill development in their programs would help to stem summer learning loss. They created a survey to inventory programs with a specific literacy skill component and share this information with parents and the community in a Summer Learning Program Guide.

Why Is This Important?

According to the National Summer Learning Association, “For the more than 25 million low-income public school students in America, summer is often a time when children, youth and families struggle to find and afford food to eat and a safe place to be. Summer learning loss is one of the most significant causes of the achievement gap between lower and higher income youth and one of the strongest contributors to the high school dropout rate.” (http://www.summerlearning.org/)

This indicator measures the number and types of literacy interventions in Springfield’s existing summer programs and promotes sharing of best practices among programs.

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Healthy Kids are healthy readers. Healthy development from birth onward greatly affects children’s ability to learn. Children who are on track in their physical, social and emotional development are more successful learners from their earliest years and are more likely to become proficient readers.

Focusing on several health determinants of early school success, we are using data to develop strategies to ensure that more children attend school regularly and more children are ready for kindergarten.

We know that:
- Managing children’s asthma helps reduce absences
- Screenings catch developmental and vision problems before they interfere with learning
- Regular oral health care prevents lost learning time
- Social and emotional development builds curiosity and supports learning
- Prenatal care supports early brain development
Goal: All Children are Healthy and Ready to Learn

Data collection has begun on several health indicators. Here’s what we are working on:

- Number of SPS kindergartners who have completed vision screenings
- Number of children ages 0–5 who receive a routine developmental screening
- Number of children ages 3–5 and 6–9 who have had a dental visit in the past year
- Rate of asthma-related emergency room visits by children 0–9 years old
- Percentage of births with adequate prenatal care

Why Is This Important?
Healthy kids are healthy readers!

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Reading aloud to a child, beginning at birth, is the single most important thing a parent or family member can do to help their children prepare for reading and learning.

Families play an important role in a child’s brain development by having conversations. Beginning early, ask your child questions and then wait for them to answer. At the dinner table, have back-and-forth conversations about what is going on in the world around them.
Goal: Springfield Families are Reading Together for 20 Minutes Every Day

Beginning at birth, parents should read, share books, tell stories and sing to their children. It doesn’t have to be in 20-minute segments - it can be short segments in the car, on the bus or walking to school. Let your child see you reading. You are your child’s role model.

Why Is This Important?
Parents are their children’s first and best teachers. Learning happens in the everyday moments families share. Families play an important role in a child’s development and learning by reading and talking together.

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What You Can Do To Help

Read to a young child, beginning at birth, for 20 minutes every day

Send your child to school every day, beginning in preschool

Enroll your child in a summer learning program with an early literacy component

Post a selfie reading to a child using #413reads!

Opt-in to our community texting program 413families/413familias at www.413families.com

Tell your legislators to support early literacy and early childhood education funding in our state budget

Visit our Results-Based Scorecard online!
https://www.readby4thgrade.com/scorecard

Visit Readby4thgrade.com

Follow Reading Success by 4th Grade on Facebook!
We Are Making Progress in Springfield!

Chronic absenteeism is declining. The percentage of K–3 students who were chronically absent declined from 18.2% in 2012–13 to 14.6% in 2015–16.

We are stemming summer learning loss. The percentage of rising third graders participating in a summer learning program who maintained or improved their reading level during the summer increased from 76.7% to 83.4% between 2012 and 2016.

More children are reading proficiently. Springfield saw an 11% increase in third graders scoring proficient in reading from 2014-15 to 2015–16. 44% of Springfield 3rd graders are proficient readers, as demonstrated by the 2016 MCAS.

% of 3rd graders scoring at or above proficiency in reading (MCAS/PARC)

As we set a new baseline in 2017 with the next generation of MCAS, we will continue to monitor the reading proficiency progress of Springfield’s 3rd graders.

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