

FY2023 Buncombe County Strategic Partnership Grant Report

Organization Name:	Read to Succeed	
Project Name:	Community-Powered K-3 Literacy Support	
Reporting Quarter: (Check one)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Quarter 1 (July 1, 2022 - September 30, 2022)
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Quarter 2 (October 1, 2022 - December 31, 2022)
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Quarter 3 (January 1, 2023 - March 31, 2023)
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Quarter 4 (April 1, 2023 - June 30, 2023)

Narrative summary of grant related activities

Please provide a brief summary (no more than 1500 characters). You may attach supplemental documents if needed.

Quarter 1	<p>Q1 of our elementary tutoring program kicked off in July with widespread volunteer recruitment via eMarketing & social channels, flyering, posting in online and print outlets, and providing resources for returning volunteers and board members to spread the word.</p> <p>We hosted four new volunteer interest sessions and then launched into tutor training in August after our Literacy Programs Manager Olivia Fingold (and former AmeriCorps member) began full-time on Aug 1. Fingold co-trained alongside reading specialist Carley Stein, M.Ed., engaging 27 new volunteers in our two-hour Literacy 101 training, 15 of whom went on to complete an additional four hours of tutor training (Essentials of Foundational Reading Instruction). 16 returning tutors also attended a two-hour refresher training to reconnect and revisit the skills and procedures of the R2S lesson plan.</p> <p>Tutor Practice every Wed. & Fri. in the R2S office provided 31 new and returning tutors the opportunity to workshop the R2S lesson plan components. In total, 20 tutors spent 46.5 combined hours in practice sessions.</p> <p>R2S tutors will serve K-4 students one-to-one with one to two students this school year at Claxton ES (starting in Oct.), Johnston ES (starting in Oct./Nov.), and Ira B. Jones ES (starting Nov./Dec.). Our after-school partners where tutors will serve include Children First/CISBC and Chosen PODS (Arthur R. Edington Center).</p> <p>We work collaboratively with school partners to identify students for reading tutor support based on beginning-of-year mClass assessment data. Students are matched with tutors who then receive all the supplies, data, and additional training they need for their sessions.</p>
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Quarter 2	<p>R2S finished a second round of volunteer tutor training in October and matched a total of 18 volunteer tutors with 20 K-5 students by mid-November. Students attend Claxton, Ira B. Jones, and Johnston Elementary Schools, and one student is served at the Chosen PODS After-School at the Arthur R. Edington Center. 80% of students enrolled who have reported race/ethnicity data identify as Black/African-American; students represent the following grades: 2 - 1st grade, 7 - 2nd grade, 7 - 3rd grade, 2 - 4th grade, 2 - 5th grade.</p> <p>R2S reading tutors meet with one or more students twice a week in person, every week of the school year, except for the days/weeks in which ACS/BCS schools are closed/early dismissal. Lessons last an average of 45 minutes and are targeted to foundational reading skills where a student most needs support. In addition to ongoing coaching and practice with R2S Elementary Literacy Director Olivia Fingold tutors also completed a CORE Phonics assessment during Q2 with students in October and November - this assessment provides a detailed starting point for what phonemic awareness and phonics skills to work on with a student.</p> <p>R2S held volunteer meetings with tutors in October and December, providing continuing education opportunities for current volunteers to acquire new skills, like how to conduct repeated readings with students and how to mark up words for decoding. In December, six new volunteers completed 36 combined hours of tutor training to be matched with students in early 2023. R2S Elementary Literacy Director and reading specialist conducted observations of tutors in November and December.</p> <p>Local author Jorge Redmond visited R2S partner school Johnston Elementary for two student assemblies with K-4th graders, where he read his book and discussed its content with students. R2S also participated in Johnston's Pajama Reading Night in December.</p>
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Quarter 3	<p>In Q3, Read to Succeed trained 31 new community members in foundational reading skills, provided continuing education opportunities for current tutors, and matched new tutors with elementary students.</p> <p>In February, Co-Executive Director Jacquelyn Hall and Elementary Literacy Director Olivia Fingold facilitated 6 hours of training across two weekends for community members from Tried Stone Missionary Baptist Church & First Presbyterian Church plus additional interested folks. The training shared data about the race-based opportunity gap in Asheville, covered the fundamentals of the Science of Reading, and workshopped essential skills in teaching Phonemic Awareness and Phonics instruction.</p> <p>The majority of trainees opted to begin tutoring with R2S in the summer and fall of 2023; however, 11 total volunteers (from this and previous trainings in the school year) were matched with elementary students in March to tutor the rest of the 2022-2023 school year. Volunteers received tutoring materials to begin their one-to-one work with students and started building relationships through get-to-know you games and literacy activities.</p> <p>20 active tutors attended a virtual “Syllable Types” training covering all six syllable types and how to incorporate them into instruction during tutoring sessions with students. And we hosted Tutor Huddles in March by each school site for volunteers to receive organizational updates, workshop multisyllable word dictation, and hear about upcoming events.</p>
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Quarter 4	<p>In Q4, R2S strengthened student support across school sites and celebrated our volunteers for their commitment to community-powered literacy in Asheville. We invested in opportunities that allowed our network to learn more about the literacy crisis and what we can do to address it and better support students.</p> <p>In addition to continuing 1:1 tutoring sessions 2x/week through the end of May, R2S volunteer reading tutors also attended continuing education sessions in Q4, a volunteer appreciation lunch in April, and a wrap-up volunteer meeting in May. Elementary Literacy Director Olivia Fingold and Reading Specialist Carley Stein also conducted a second round of observations for the school year.</p> <p>After receiving end-of-year mClass results from students enrolled in the tutoring program, we learned that from the beginning-of-year to end-of-year assessments, 100% of students' composite scores (aggregated data across all foundational reading skills) increased, with the median percentage increase being 36%.</p> <p>100% of students tested in Phonemic Awareness (the ability to identify and manipulate individual sounds in spoken words) demonstrated growth. 94% of students also showed growth in Phonics (correlating sounds to letters and decoding text) when comparing the % of goal achieved from beginning of year to % of goal achieved at the end of year on their mClass report. For example, 3rd-grader C. Williams scored 4 out of 24 on the Decoding portion of the mClass assessment at the beginning year, effectively achieve 17% of the nationally normed goal; at the end of the year in the same category, Williams scored 12 out of 31, achieving 42% of the nationally normed goal.</p> <p>72% of students showed growth in Oral Reading Fluency (reading smoothly with prosody) from % of goal achieved at the beginning of year to % of goal achieved at the end of year on their mClass report.</p> <p>Tutors, students, and teachers completed end-of-year surveys in May and June, sharing their feedback on the R2S reading tutoring program and sharing their appreciation for students' effort and tutors' commitment. 100% of tutors said they felt well supported or extremely well supported by R2S in their preparation for working with a student this school year.</p> <p>R2S reading tutors branched out in Q4, volunteering additional hours at community and family reading events, including the Child Care for NC Rally, Spring Into Reading Family Night at the YWCA, and screenings of The Right to Read documentary at UNCA.</p> <p>Tutors delivered Spring Break and end-of-year reading book bundles to students sharing brand new culturally-responsive books along with fun reading guides, activities, and small toys.</p>
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Progress toward annual goals

Measure	Annual Goal	Actual Results (Enter Data)				Progress
		Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	
Number of volunteer reading tutors trained and matched	35	0	18	11	4	33
Percent of students served who identify as Black	75%	N/A	80%	82%	79%	82%
Percent of students trained by tutors who improve phonemic awareness skills	75%	N/A	N/A	100%	94%	100%
Percent of students who improve phonics development skills	75%	N/A	N/A	35%	100%	100%
Percent of students who improve reading fluency	75%	N/A	N/A	21%	72%	72%

Comments:

NOTE: We have received race/ethnicity data from all of the 38 students currently being tutored; of those, 31 (79%) identify as Black/Mixed per their R2S family permission form.

NOTE: We have not yet received EOY assessment data from schools for 19 students (after multiple requests to school and district). Of the 19 students for whom we did receive EOY mClass reports (one was a STAR assessment), 100% who were tested in phonemic awareness indicated growth from the beginning to end of year; 94% of students also demonstrated growth from BOY goal achieved to % of EOY goal achieved in phonics (decoding) according to the mClass report and 74% in Oral Reading Fluency.

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Use of funds to date and any budget considerations

Spending Category	Starting	Total Spending (Enter Data)				Amount
		Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	
Personnel	\$ 31,100	\$ 7,431	\$ 9,246	\$ 7,686	\$ 6,737	\$ -
Training						\$ -
Supplies/Materials						\$ -
Meetings						\$ -
Equipment/Furniture						\$ -
Printing/Marketing						\$ -
Licensing/Memberships/Dues/Subscriptions						\$ -
Client Support						\$ -
Contracts						\$ -
Professional Services						\$ -
Insurance and Bonds	\$ 4,500	\$ 3,187	\$ -	\$ 1,313	\$ -	\$ -
Building Maintenance						\$ -
List other cost						\$ -
List other cost						\$ -
List other cost						\$ -
Total	\$ 35,600	\$ 10,618	\$ 9,246	\$ 8,999	\$ 6,737	\$ -

Comments:

Q4 Strategic Partnership Grant Report (Apr 1 - Jun 30, 2023)

Summary

In Q4, R2S strengthened student support across school sites and celebrated our volunteers for their commitment to community-powered literacy in Asheville. We invested in opportunities that allowed our network to learn more about the literacy crisis and what we can do to address it and better support students.

In addition to continuing 1:1 tutoring sessions 2x/week through the end of May, R2S volunteer reading tutors also attended continuing education sessions in Q4, a volunteer appreciation lunch in April, and a wrap-up volunteer meeting in May. Elementary Literacy Director Olivia Fingold and Reading Specialist Carley Stein also conducted a second round of observations for the school year.

After receiving end-of-year mClass results from students enrolled in the tutoring program, we learned that from the beginning-of-year to end-of-year assessments, 100% of students' composite scores (aggregated data across all foundational reading skills) increased, with the median percentage increase being 36%.

100% of students tested in Phonemic Awareness (the ability to identify and manipulate individual sounds in spoken words) demonstrated growth. 94% of students also showed growth in Phonics (correlating sounds to letters and decoding text) when comparing the % of goal achieved from beginning of year to % of goal achieved at the end of year on their mClass report. 72% of students showed growth in Oral Reading Fluency (reading smoothly with prosody) from % of goal achieved at the beginning of year to % of goal achieved at the end of year on their mClass report.

Tutors, students, and teachers completed end-of-year surveys in May and June, sharing their feedback on the R2S reading tutoring program and sharing their appreciation for students' effort and tutors' commitment. 100% of tutors said they felt well supported or extremely well supported by R2S in their preparation for working with a student this school year.

R2S reading tutors branched out in Q4, volunteering additional hours at community and family reading events, including the Child Care for NC Rally, Spring Into Reading Family Night at the YWCA, and screenings of The Right to Read documentary at UNCA.

Tutors delivered Spring Break and end-of-year reading book bundles to students sharing brand new culturally-responsive books along with fun reading guides, activities, and small toys.

In-Depth Narrative

Tutor/Student Support

In Q4, our 33 tutors' goals revolved around getting as much time together with their students as possible as the school year came to a close. For some tutors, this meant taking on another student and spending extra time with them, for others, they even added an additional day to their already busy schedule to try and give that end-of-year boost.

In April, Co-Executive Director Jess McLean and Elementary Literacy Director Olivia Fingold held a new volunteer orientation for folks we trained in March to acclimate them to systems and protocols all volunteers adhere to. Throughout April, Tuesdays and Fridays served as open office hours for new and existing volunteer tutors to come in and practice the foundational reading skills covered in the Read to Succeed lesson plan. At the end of the month, we held a Volunteer Appreciation Lunch with a taco bar catered from Mamacita's in Asheville, along with a thank you video with clips from both school and community partners.

"I wanted to let you all know what a great job R2S is doing. All of the presentations are professional and helpful as a tutor. I always feel supported and know that I can ask any question. All of my interactions at the office and online have been super helpful. [Jess] and Olivia have made this experience a great one for me. It's clear that you have the students and the tutors' best interests at heart. The focus of R2S on providing services for underserved students in Asheville is a cause that I feel strongly about. Thanks for all you do!" - R2S Tutor

After connecting with school partners around the end-of-year testing schedule, we concluded the tutoring program on May 19th to allow students and teachers alike to prepare for their end-of-year mClass tests. Before their last session, tutors gave their students a survey about how the school year went with two options depending on comfortability with writing; one with an emoji scale and the other with a long answer format.

Our student survey utilized an emoji Likert scale with five emojis – beginning with a frown and moving toward a very happy face. 90% of student respondents (20 total) indicated that they felt good or very good about the experience of working with their reading tutor. Some notable comments about students' experience with tutors included, *"My reading tutor is cool and kind and nice and she [is] a fun and cool person"* and *"That when I get stuck with a word he will help me," among others.*

Early Literacy Director Maggie Fox and Olivia Fingold attended Johnston Elementary's Kindergarten Registration Day, distributing culturally-responsive books and materials to community partners and families. Around the same time, Read to Succeed hosted a film screening of "The Right to Read" at the Arthur R. Edington Center, a documentary highlighting the literacy crisis as a civil rights issue that can be remedied by an evidence-based curriculum that focuses on phonics and phonemic awareness above all.

Volunteer tutors also showed up at non-tutoring program-related events like the YWCA's 'Spring Into Reading' Night hosted by R2S, facilitating games with pre-k students and families,

distributing books and literacy kits, and representing community-powered literacy. They also joined us at the NC Child Care Rally in Carrier Park where we distributed books and hosted Jorge Redmond, who did a read-aloud of his book *“Black Boy, Black Boy”* for the childcare workers, children, and their families who all showed up in support of better working conditions for child care centers in Asheville and across the state.

June was all about reconvening to plan for the future and reflect on the year past. Co-Executive Directors, Jess and Jacque, sat with Literacy Consultant Carley Stein and Olivia Fingold to discuss high points and takeaways from this year’s tutoring program overall. We also met with the Chosen PODS team to discuss opportunities for R2S tutors to continue supporting students and their academics over the summer. We also hosted our last Volunteer Meeting of the year, which gave reading tutors the chance to share stories from their time working with students and connect over the experience with R2S staff and peers.

Each student received a book chosen by their tutor as an end-of-year gift, along with a fidget tool and eraser. 83% of tutors indicated that they would like to return to tutor again next year if possible, indicating the strong relationships built between tutors and students over the course of the school year. 100% of tutors said they felt well supported or extremely well supported by R2S in their preparation for working with a student this school year.

A teacher from Johnston Elementary said in a video testimonial, *“Thank you to [the volunteer reading tutors] for adding to our school community here and for believing in our students as individuals, building relationships with them; our students love to meet with their tutors every week. You have gotten to know them as students and bring things into the lessons that meet their academic needs and help them grow as people.”*

Tutor Coaching/Observations/Continuing Education

Stein and Fingold completed a second round of observations in Q4 (13 total hours), visiting each tutor with their student and giving feedback on their lesson together. The takeaways from these observations serve as progress monitoring check-ins and strengthen our program to ensure lessons are being completed with accuracy.

In this round of observations, there was a noticeable improvement with almost every student and tutor pair since the beginning of the year. One Ira B. Jones student who was hesitant to read aloud, was giving each character a different voice and tone by the end of the year and had started to get excited about the chance to read each time he met with his tutor. Another student at Claxton had progressed through the Foundations systematic phonics program to the point of grade level understanding, reflected in his “On Benchmark” test results.

Next Steps

As we finish out another year of the tutoring program, R2S is excited to strengthen our support through additional materials and building out the options volunteers have for resources tailored to their individual student’s needs. We are looking forward to training a new group of prospective tutors in the essentials of foundational reading instruction as well as newly made student

behavior management.

Each school year provides a deep well of information for us to learn from, and this year in particular, being the first mostly uninterrupted school year in quite a while, gave us the chance to try new things and deepen relationships with school and community partners. With new R2S staff on board, we look forward to this growing process and believe that next school year will bring more community members and literacy advocates into the world of equitable literacy in Asheville and Buncombe County.