

Case study

District name:

Philadelphia Public School District

Partnership type:

Springboard Learning Accelerator

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My daughter was excited to go to the program each day, talked about what she learned, and has become a more confident reader. Her reading skills are much better!"

-A Springboard PPSD parent

Challenge

Learning disruption from the pandemic has proved to be an uphill battle for schools across the nation, but for rural communities like Philadelphia Public School District (PPSD) in Philadelphia, Mississippi, it's been particularly difficult. On top of COVID constraints, PPSD families not only have limited access to technology but also face longer commuting times to school. As a district, PPSD was looking to increase instructional time for students, with a specific focus on third-grade students who did not pass the third-grade EOY reading benchmark. They also wanted to engage families in their child's learning journey in an accessible way.

Solution

PPSD chose to work with Springboard because their goals around increased instructional time and accessible family engagement matched our programming model. Springboard increases instructional time by supporting learning at home. We also have the ability to customize programming specifically to fit within a school's local context. Because of PPSD's work in identifying what they'd like to improve for their students and families, this led the way for Springboard to create a fully customizable program. With these shared goals in mind, PPSD selected our Springboard Learning Accelerator (SLA) offering which, like all of Springboard's programs, is built around our Family-Educator Learning Accelerator (FELA) methodology. Using this methodology, teachers and family members team up to help students reach learning goals.

Participating students see their learning accelerated because they are both receiving direct literacy instruction from their teacher while also receiving reading coaching support from their families. Furthermore, families become more equipped with the tools they need to support their child's literacy development. Springboard's program team also conducts pre-program professional development to ensure teachers and leaders are set up for success.

These competencies form the basis for a sustainable partnership in which teachers share instructional strategies with parents in exchange for the commitment that families will practice these strategies at home. This creates enormous leverage: For every hour that a teacher leads a family workshop, families deliver ~25 hours of tutoring at home.



Planning

During the planning stages, Springboard's Program Director, Program Coach, Project Manager, and Program Leaders met on a weekly basis to help address PPSD's needs. Because many families had limited access to transportation and worked multiple jobs, it was decided that family workshops would be virtual. Many families were also headed by grandparents who did not feel comfortable using Springboard Connect, our SMS- and web-based tool that helps families and their children build reading habits and achieve reading goals during the program. As a result, Springboard created a paper version of Connect which allowed for much more usability.

Recruitment and enrollment efforts were further centered around accessibility. There were many efforts to recruit families into the program, which included posting fliers and posting on social media. The most successful strategy, however, came from Program Leaders and teachers personally calling families to invite them to be part of the program. Meeting basic needs like providing bus transportation and free meals throughout the summer was also an important factor in recruiting families and students. This, combined with opportunities for elective classes (art, music, PE, etc.), and a celebratory field trip (free of charge) to conclude the program, led to a cohort of over 60 K-3 students in a town with a population of just under 7000.

Once families were recruited, PPSD allowed them to register at their school's computer labs, with Springboard's Program Leader present to support as needed. Springboard and PPSD staff also helped register families online over the phone.

Implementation

During implementation, teachers were given the opportunity to participate in Springboard's professional development, with an emphasis on family engagement and assessment training for an assessment tool, DIBELS. This would help them accurately measure their students' progress over the course of the program.

Once programming started, PPSD students received instructional time from 8:30 am-12:30 pm, five days a week, with alternating lesson blocks of Reading Readiness and phonics, writing, small group instruction, read alouds, and shared reading. They also had time for breakfast, lunch, and an electives class.

Every week, teachers hosted virtual family workshops, which allowed families to learn and practice reading tips in real-time with their children. Through these workshops, families learned how to read with their child purposefully and ask questions to support their child before, during, and after reading. The workshops also served as a time for educators and families to easily check in about reading goals and student progress.



Results

Over 60 students enrolled in Springboard's program attended at least 25% of programming, with an 80% student attendance rate overall. Students in 3rd grade also achieved almost 50% more growth above what is expected through a five-week program.

Here's what some PPSD families had to say about the program:

"My daughter was excited to go to the program each day, talked about what she learned, and has become a more confident reader. Her reading skills are much better."

- **Springboard PPSD parent**

"The program motivated my child to want to do his very best. He focused more on reading to understand what he was reading."

- **Springboard PPSD parent**

"[Springboard] helped my daughter out a whole lot with her reading."

- **Springboard PPSD parent**