

Franklin City Students Raise MAP Reading Scores with the Fast ForWord Program

Franklin City Schools

Franklin City, Ohio

District Statistics

Number of schools: 8

Number of students: 3,000

Grades: PreK–12

Website:

<https://www.franklincityschools.com>

Student Population:

93.6% Caucasian

2.2% Multi-Racial

2.0% African-American

1.5% Hispanic

0.6% Asian/Pacific Islander

52.8% economically disadvantaged

17.3% special education



Challenge

- High-poverty district
- Gaps in students' cognitive, language, and reading skills

Solution

- Fast ForWord®

Populations served

- Grades K–8 including:
 - All K–3 students
 - Struggling readers in grades 4–8

Results

- Gains in MAP® reading scores

"We see the Fast ForWord program as a key component of our efforts to address Ohio's Third Grade Reading Guarantee. We're getting a great return on our investment in terms of the number of students who are now passing the third grade test."

— Dr. Michael D. Sander, Superintendent

Research shows that children who are not reading on grade level by the end of third grade are likely to have trouble learning in all classroom subjects in higher grades. Ohio's Third Grade Reading Guarantee is designed to identify students in kindergarten through grade 3 who are behind in reading. But once students are identified, how can schools provide the help and support they need to get back on track for reading success?

In Franklin City Schools, Superintendent Michael Sander, Ed.D., is taking a brain-based approach and implementing the Fast ForWord program to directly address the root cause of students' difficulty. "This is the third district where I've implemented the Fast ForWord

program," he said. "I've had great results with it in my previous districts in closing the achievement gap and reducing the number of students who qualify for special education. We aim to achieve the same results here."

Addressing the Third Grade Reading Guarantee

The Fast ForWord program is a neuroscience-based intervention that uses a unique three-step approach to deliver fast gains to struggling students. It provides them with the foundational language and cognitive skills, intensive practice, and guided reading help that they need to catch up, once and for all.

Franklin City Schools began using the Fast ForWord program in fall 2015. All K-3 students and struggling readers in grades 4-8 work on the program 40 minutes a day, five days a week.

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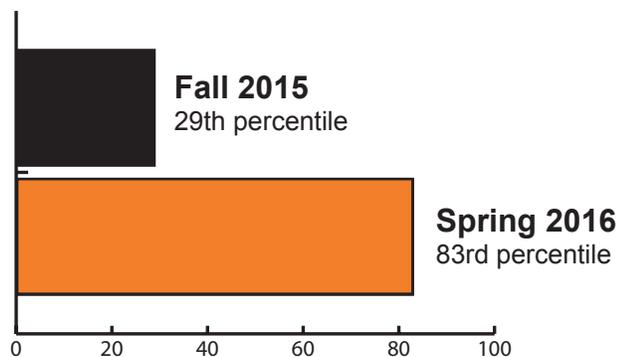
"We're a high-poverty district. Many students who enter kindergarten aren't prepared for school. They don't yet know the alphabet or numbers or colors. They're growing up in literature-poor homes with no books or other reading materials," said Sander. "We see the Fast ForWord program as a key component of our efforts to address Ohio's Third Grade Reading Guarantee and reach the goal of having 100 percent of our students reading at a third grade level by the end of third grade. We're getting a great return on our investment in terms of the number of students who are now passing the third grade test."

In addition to using the Fast ForWord program during the school day, many struggling readers also work on the program before and after school and in summer school. "Using the Fast ForWord program in summer school is a great way to prevent or reduce the 'summer slide,'" said Sander. "Last summer, we targeted second graders who would be entering third grade but who were not on track to pass the Third Grade Reading Guarantee. We didn't see the slide in reading skills we typically see in the summer, and every one of those students passed their third grade test."

Increasing MAP reading scores

Students have increased their MAP reading scores as well. For example, in the district's first year with the Fast ForWord program, students participating in full-day kindergarten classes scored at the 29th percentile on the MAP assessment in reading in September. By March, they were at the 83rd percentile.

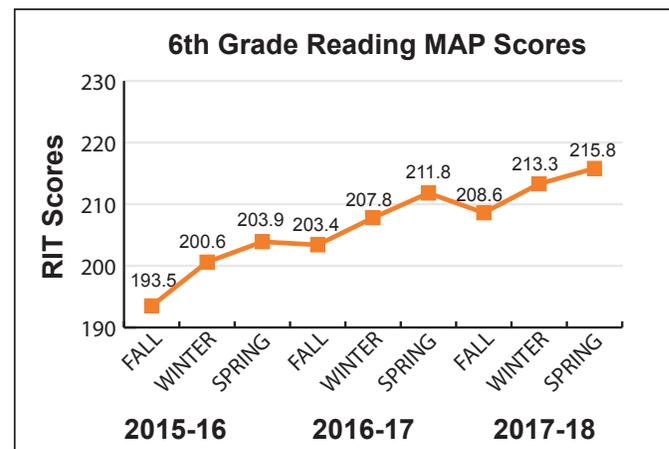
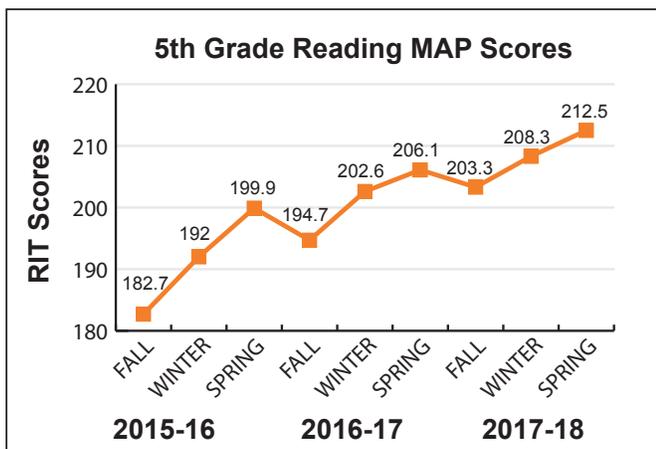
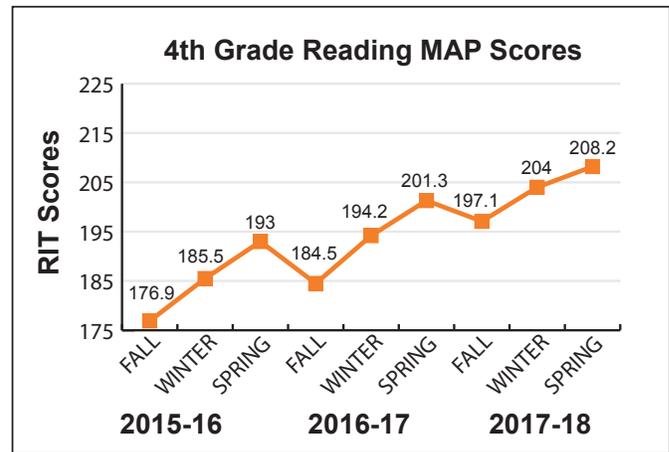
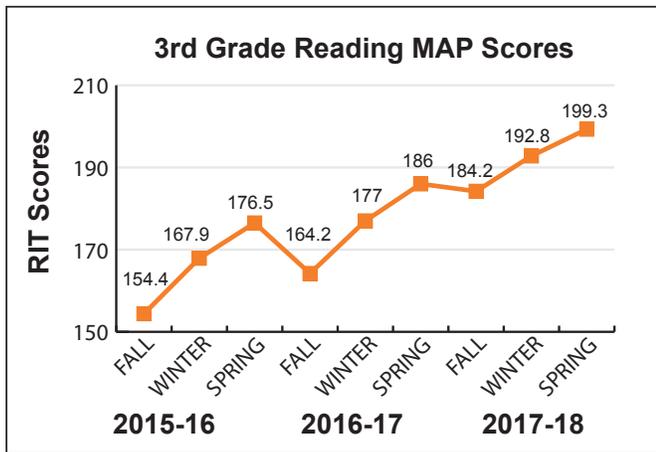
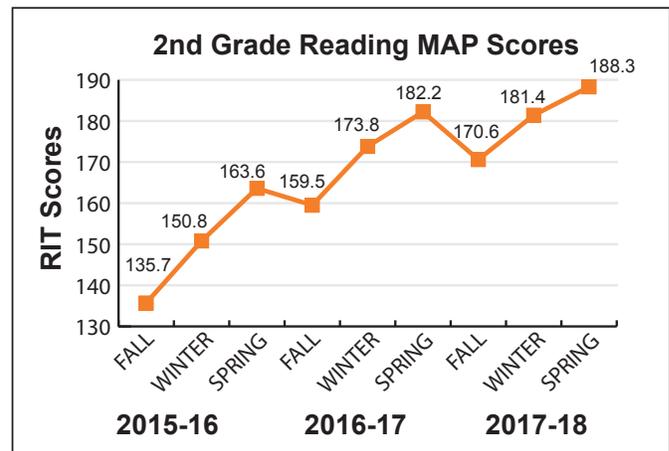
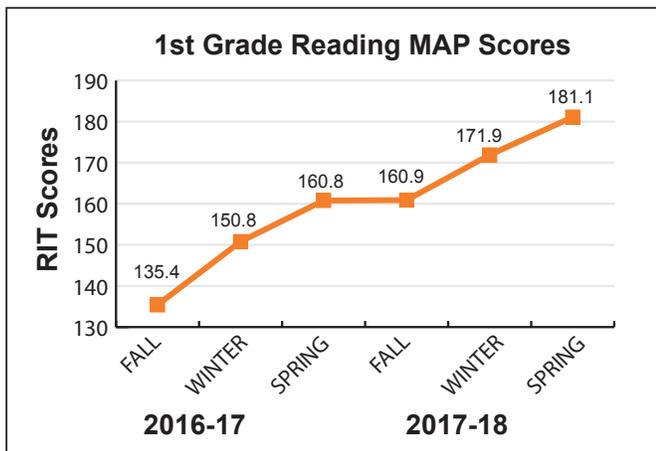
**Franklin City Schools Full-Day Kindergarten
MAP Reading**



“We’ve had tremendous results with our students. With our instructional practices and the Fast ForWord program, we’re able to close gaps in kindergarteners’ skills so they’re ready for first grade material when they enter first grade,” said Sander. “We now have first graders scoring close to the national average when they begin the school year. As they progress through the year, we’re even seeing students scoring at the 97th or 98th percentile in reading.”

Students continue to see improvements as they progress from one grade level to the next.

District Reading MAP Scores by Cohort Fall 2015 – Spring 2018





“While we have always emphasized good instructional practices, we previously weren’t seeing the level of growth we wanted to see. With Fast ForWord, we’re helping students develop strong brain connections. Even though we can’t physically observe their brains changing, we can see the difference it’s making. Their growth is phenomenal and a big piece of this growth is due to the Fast ForWord program,” said Sander.

According to Sander, one of the keys to the district’s success is the consistent implementation of the Fast ForWord program. “You have to hold that time sacred for your students. In our district, the time they spend working on the Fast ForWord program is non-negotiable,” he said. “When parents ask about it, we share the research and evidence behind the program to get them on board as well. For us, the Fast ForWord program is a short-term investment that is delivering long-term results.”

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