

Evidence Based Research in Fairfax CPS on the Effectiveness of the Spring Forward intervention series September 2016

The U.S. Department of Education on Research

The U.S. Department of Education has stated that all schools should use instructional programs that have been proven effective in the classroom by “evidence based research.” To that end, a Fairfax County (VA) public elementary school and Benchmark Education Company took part in a year-long evidence-based research study during the 2015–16 school year.

The Benchmark Education Evidence-Based Research Study

From September 2015 through May 2016, Benchmark Education Company participated in an evidence-based scientific research study designed to determine the effectiveness of introducing Spring Forward literacy intervention series with on-site Professional Development in Grades K–6 classrooms.

The study was conducted in a diverse Fairfax County (VA) Public Elementary School with 61% Free/Reduced-Priced-Meals (Title I) and 48% Limited-English-Proficient students.

The school introduced Benchmark Education Company's Spring Forward targeted instruction and intervention series with on-site long-term Professional Development (PD) in Grades K–2 for its Tier II students in Fall 2015. The customized PD consisted of initial product training followed by monthly on-site coaching in whole-group and small-group differentiated instruction, close reading and analysis, and strategies to bridge the leap to complex text, both nonfiction and fiction.

The focus of this report will be to show new evidence of accelerated gains in English and Reading Proficiency by the 71 Grades K–2 Tier II students in the school on standardized assessments as a result of the introduction the Spring Forward intervention series with long-term PD. Gains by Tier II Special Education students will be presented separately.

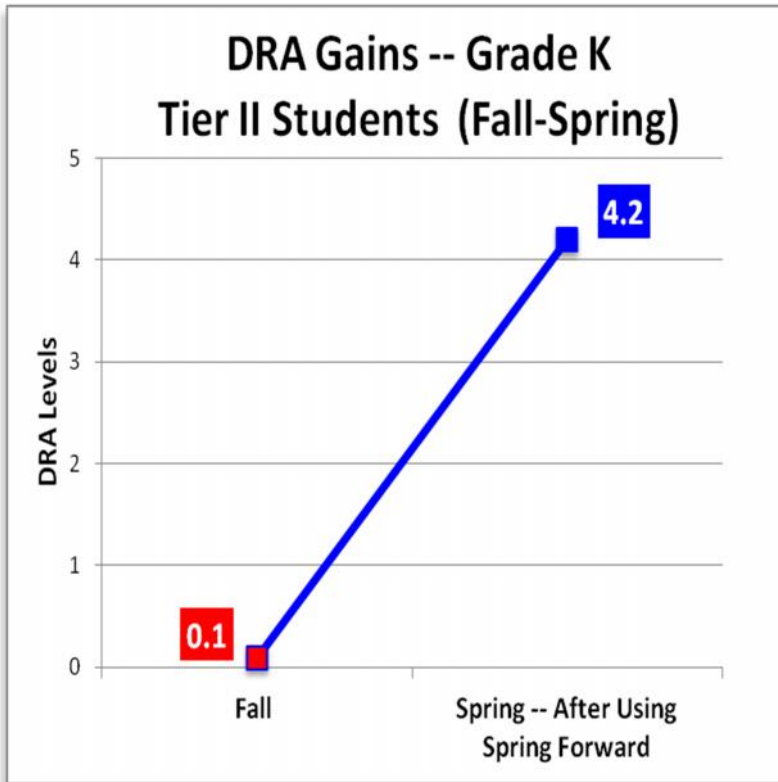
Demographics – Tier II Students

- 63 of 71 students – Free/Reduced-Price Meals (Title I)
- 62 of 71 students – English Learners
- 9 of 71 students – Special Education

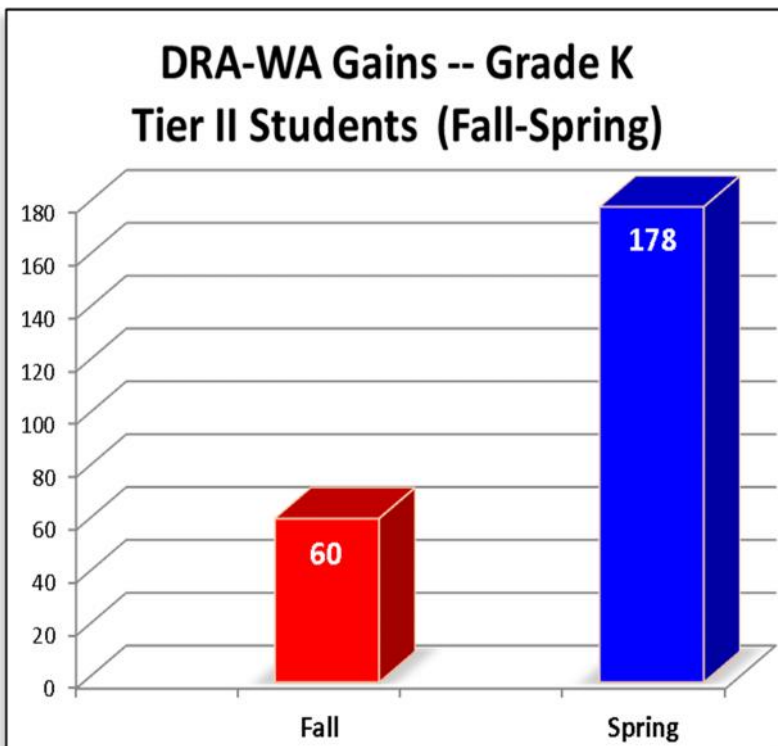
Assessments Used in the Study

- ✓ DRA Word Analysis—Developmental Reading Assessment® (Pearson)
- ✓ DRA2—Developmental Reading Assessment®, 2nd Edition (Pearson)
- ✓ ACCESS for ELLs 2.0® English Language Proficiency Test (WIDA)

HIGHLIGHTS — Spring Forward Research Study



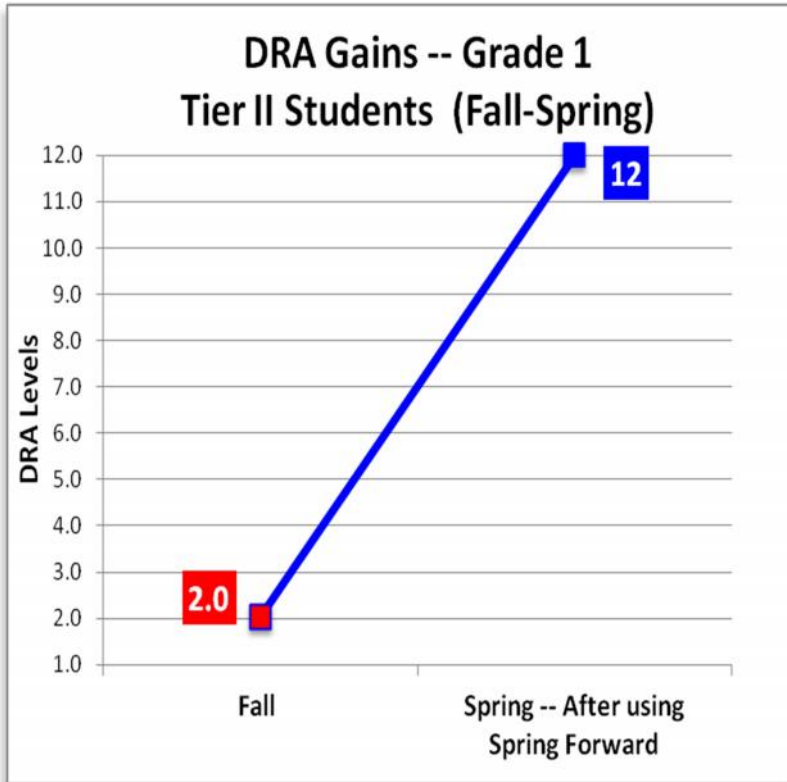
Starting in the fall as nonreaders, Grade K Tier II students ended the year as Emergent Readers attaining an average DRA level of 4.2 after using the Spring Forward intervention series.



The DRA Word Analysis assesses the skills needed for reading proficiency, including Phonological Awareness, Letter and Word Recognition, Syllabification, and Phonics.

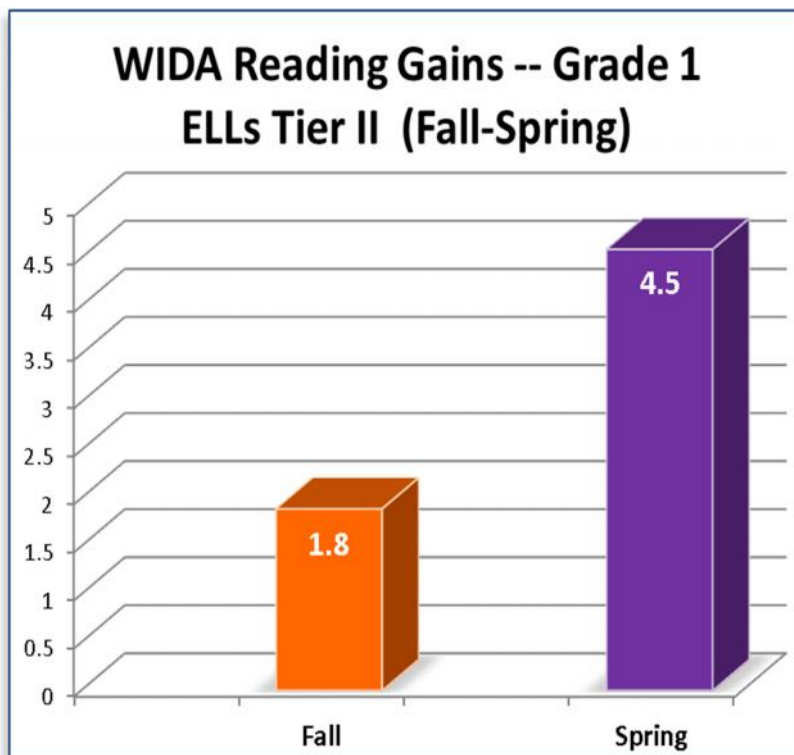
After using Spring Forward, the Tier II students in Grade K showed impressive growth in these skills by nearly tripling their average fall DRA Word Analysis score.

HIGHLIGHTS — Spring Forward Research Study



Starting the year as low Emergent readers, Grade 1 students achieved a 10-point average increase in DRA levels after using Benchmark Education materials accompanied by long-term Professional Development.

This acceleration in literacy growth occurred in a group of 25 Tier II students, 24 of whom were English Learners.

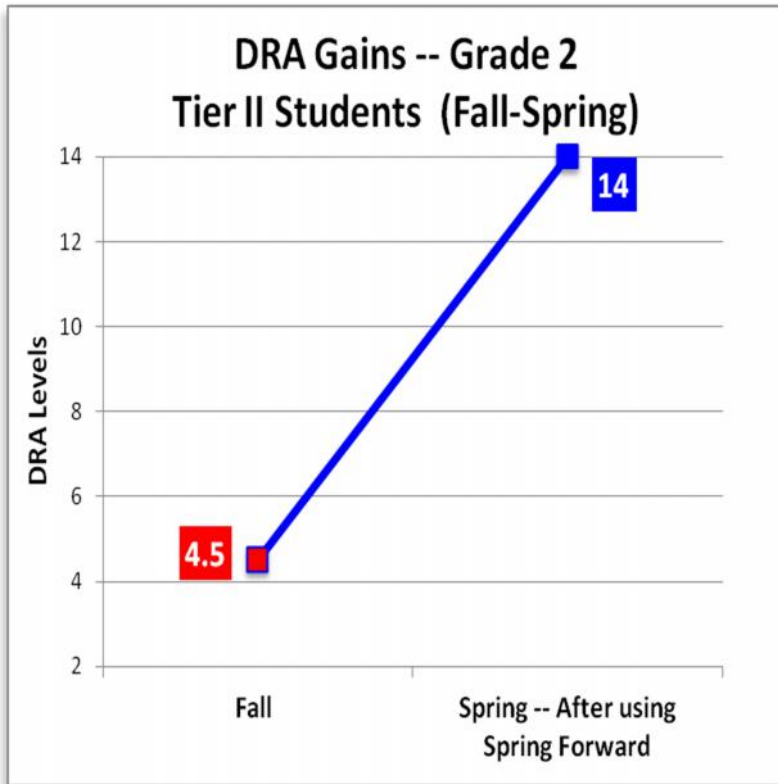


The WIDA Access for ELLs 2.0[®] Summative Assessment helps determine whether ELLs have attained the language proficiency needed to participate meaningfully in content area classrooms.

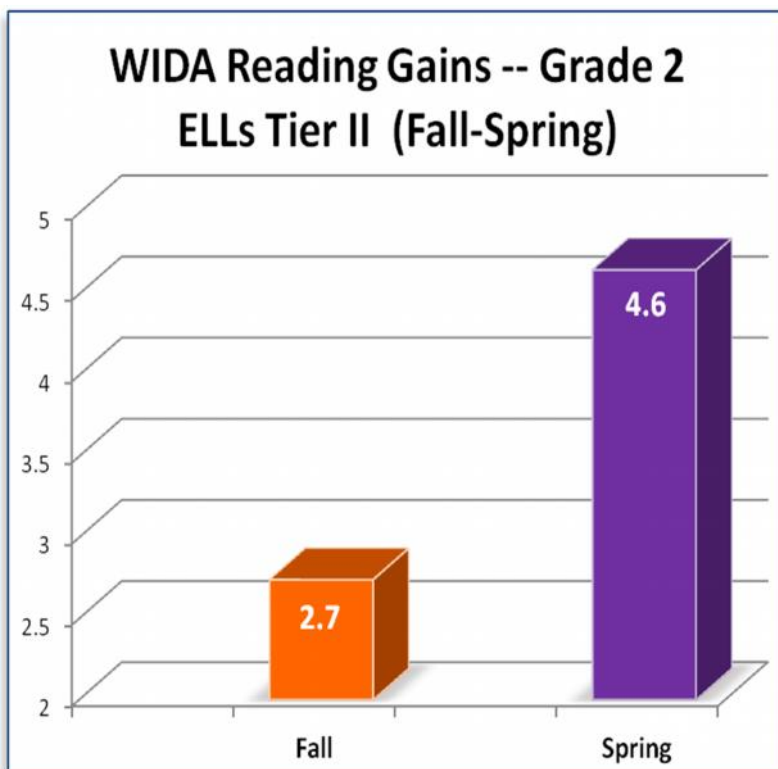
After using Spring Forward, Tier II ELLs in Grade 1 showed impressive growth averaging 4.5 in the Reading domain.

Ten of the 22 students who took both fall and spring WIDA tests scored 4.8 or higher, the level many districts would consider as the threshold for exiting the English Learner program.

HIGHLIGHTS — Spring Forward Research Study



Entering as Emergent readers in the fall, Gr. 2 Tier II students gained nearly 10 DRA points by year's end after the introduction the Spring Forward intervention series with long-term customized Professional Development.

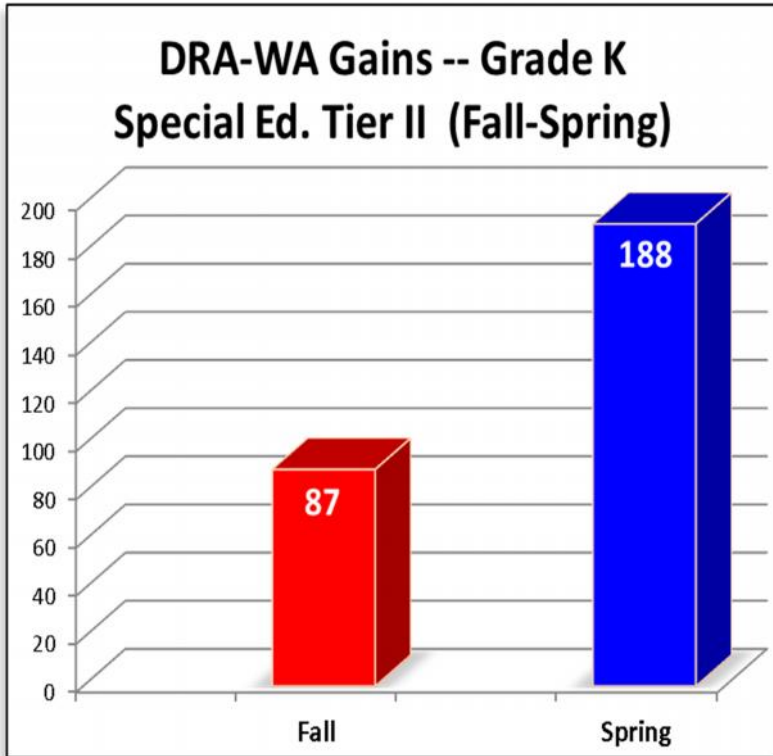


Grade 2 Tier II ELLs achieved a significant increase in their average WIDA Reading scores after using Benchmark Education materials.

They progressed from 2.7 in the fall to 4.6. Nearly half the students scored between 5.3 and 5.8

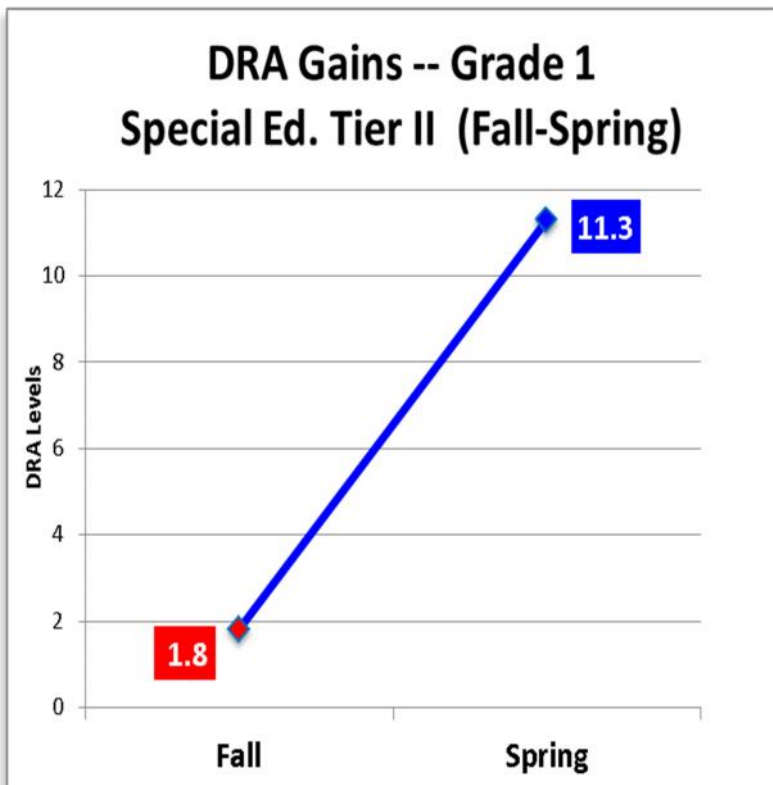
WIDA scores of 4.8 represent the level many districts would consider as the threshold for students to exit the English Learner program.

HIGHLIGHTS — Spring Forward Research Study



The DRA Word Analysis measures the skills needed for reading proficiency, including Phonological Awareness, Letter and Word Recognition, Syllabification, and Phonics.

Special Ed students using Spring Forward in Grade K showed excellent growth in these skills areas with a 101-point increase in average DRA Word Analysis scores.



Starting from a low Emergent level, Grade 1 Special Ed. students gained almost 10 DRA levels after the introduction of Spring Forward with customized Professional Development.

This equaled the reading-level growth of their non-Special-Ed Grade 1 Tier II classmates.

What Administrators had to say:

Spring Forward is a great balanced literacy intervention for our struggling readers. Teachers had the flexibility to use the pacing and components in a way that met the needs of their readers in a slow and methodical way.

Pairing fiction with non-fiction texts while teaching metacognitive and comprehension strategies played on the strengths of English Language Learners. These students not only honed their skills learning how to read, but they discovered how to make meaning as well, the essential part of reading.

Our students felt successful, teachers felt successful, and most important we saw it translated into success in our classrooms.

Literacy Coordinator

Teachers using Spring Forward as an intervention found it to be user friendly and comprehensive. An added strength of the series is that each lesson begins with non-fiction and fiction text, as well as nonfictional and fictional poems.

The professional development provided by an experienced reading teacher assisted our literacy coach in providing ongoing planning, support, and modeling of best practices. This professional development support was so valuable!

What were the results? Students achieved a minimum of one year's DRA level growth even though our implementation lasted less than a year.

This year we plan to expand our implementation because it has proven to be both comprehensive and impactful. I look forward to continued growth in our literacy instruction and student results.

Karim Daugherty
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