

# My Reading Academy™

## Virtual school implementation of My Reading Academy empowered teachers and promoted substantial growth in students' reading skills



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### Key Findings

- Pre-kindergarten, kindergarten, and 1st grade students using *My Reading Academy* for an average of 14.8 hours over 17 weeks reached levels equivalent to the next grade level in reading as measured by the state-administered Star Early Literacy assessment.
- All educators reported wanting to continue using *My Reading Academy* as a resource to support their instruction and indicated that the program had a positive impact on their students' enjoyment in learning reading.

### Background

This study highlights the 2022–2023 school year implementation of *My Reading Academy* in a virtual school model at Epic Charter Schools, Oklahoma. It is the first study that focuses on students' use of the program outside of the classroom. The results build on prior evidence of the program's effectiveness in helping students make substantial gains in their reading skills while supporting educators' efforts to provide personalized instruction for their learners.

### Study Overview

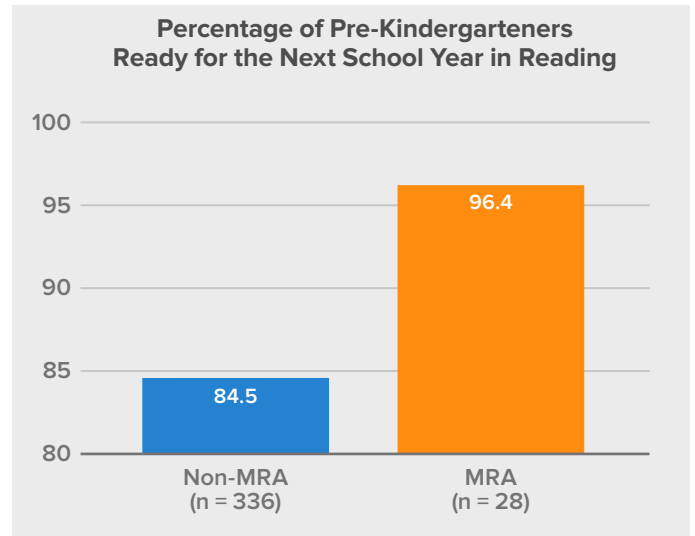
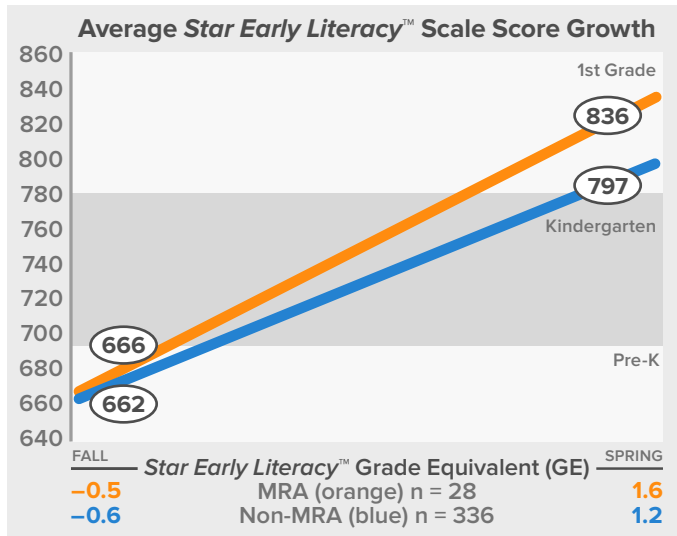
A total of 16 teachers working with early elementary grade students (pre-kindergarten through 2nd grade) used *My Reading Academy* (MRA) in a virtual school throughout school year 2022–2023. Across pre-kindergarten through 2nd grade, 212 students used *My Reading Academy*. Of these, 107 students had fall and spring Star Early Literacy assessment scores.

A total of 2,656 students (pre-kindergarten, kindergarten, and 1st grade) did not use *My Reading Academy*. Using a statistical technique called propensity score matching, comparison groups were created for each grade, where students who used *My Reading Academy* were matched with those who did not use the program based on the fall baseline assessment scores and key demographic characteristics (gender, special education, English Language Learner status). The results compare the performance of students who used MRA to the performance of comparable students who did not use the program.

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# Results

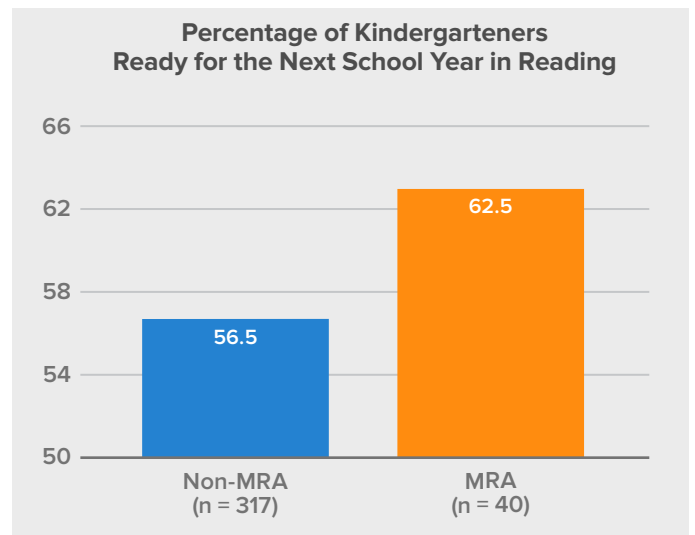
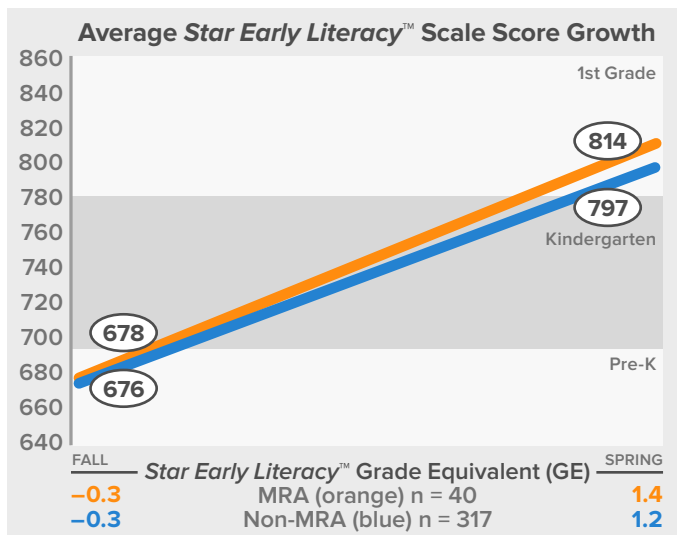


Among pre-kindergarteners, 96% reached kindergarten equivalency by using *My Reading Academy* for an average of 12 hours across 14 weeks.

Students who used *My Reading Academy* ended the school year scoring as well as a typical 1st grade student in the 6th month of instruction, and approximately four months ahead of their peers who did not use the program.

Compared to similar students who did not use the program, those who used *My Reading Academy* scored on average 38.9 points higher and were 12% more likely to reach kindergarten equivalency.

A multiple regression model predicting students' spring assessment score, controlling for fall baseline scores and student demographic characteristics (gender, special education status, English Language Learner status), showed that those who used *My Reading Academy* achieved significantly higher scores in the spring (effect size = 0.39,  $p < .05$ ).

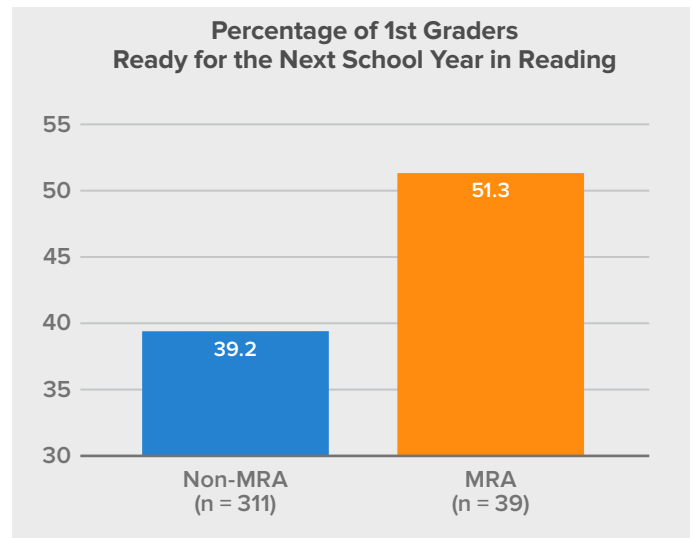
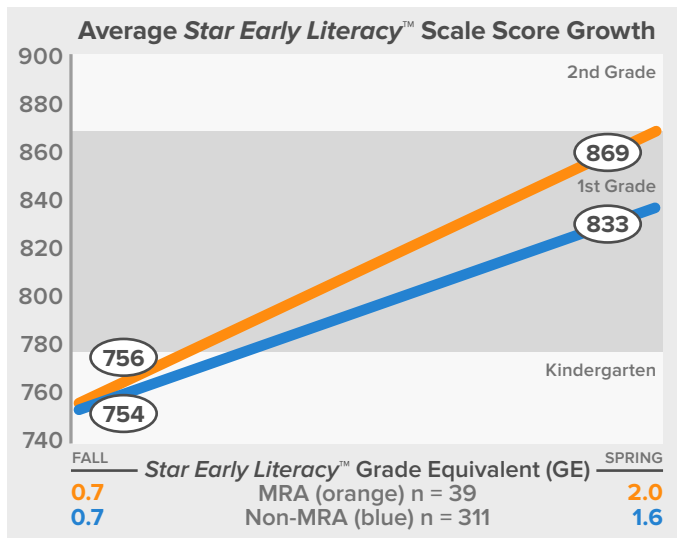


Among kindergarteners, 63% reached 1st grade equivalency by using *My Reading Academy* for an average of 15.2 hours across 16.6 weeks.

Students who used *My Reading Academy* ended the school year scoring as well as a typical 1st grade student in the 4th month of instruction, and approximately twomonths ahead of their peers who did not use the program.

Compared to similar students who did not use the program, those who used *My Reading Academy* scored on average 16.4 points higher and were 6% more likely to reach kindergarten equivalency (effect size = 0.13, ns).

## Results (continued)



Among 1st graders, 51% reached 2nd grade equivalency by using *My Reading Academy* for an average of 16.7 hours across 19.3 weeks.

Students who used *My Reading Academy* ended the school year scoring as well as a typical 2nd grade student at the start of the school year, and approximately four months ahead of their peers who did not use the program.

Compared to similar students who did not use the program, those who used *My Reading Academy* scored on average 35.8 points higher and were 12% more likely to reach 2nd grade equivalency.

A multiple regression model predicting students' spring assessment score, controlling for fall baseline scores and student demographic characteristics (gender, special education status, English Language Learner status), showed that those who used *My Reading Academy* achieved significantly higher scores in the spring (effect size = 0.33,  $p < .05$ ).

## Educator Feedback

On end-of-year surveys, 93% of educators (n = 14) indicated that *My Reading Academy* had a positive impact on their students' reading skills as well as their enjoyment in learning to read. They made comments such as "I love knowing my students are getting to practice the skills in a fun way."

Additionally, 93% of the educators indicated that the programs empowered them in their work as teachers with comments such as "I could use the data to see what my kids were working on and what they might need a little more help with," and "I felt confident that my students were learning and practicing the skills that were taught." All educators indicated that *My Reading Academy* is a resource that they would like to continue using.

These survey results were further supported in teachers' end-of-year interviews.

*"I had some parents take pictures to show me how their kids can't wait to get to My Math or My Reading Academy. A lot of my students really did enjoy those programs and most of them were decently consistent. It's really important for us to have those supplements, especially since we are a virtual school, and us teachers are not with them every single day."*

—Pre-K–2nd grade teacher

## Educator Feedback (continued)

*“I have all those students—English learners, students with IEPs, students diagnosed with vision or hearing impairments, advanced students—and the only way those kids can play is because of the initial placement that puts them where they need to be. It can differentiate for my 2nd grader who is SPED and is more like a kindergartner and still help him feel successful at the level that he is at.”*

—K–2nd grade teacher

*“I had a 1st grader who knew her sight words, and by the end of the year, I was working with her little kindergarten brother, and she was reading his test questions to him! These test questions aren’t written on a low level. They’re not sight words! So her confidence shot up because she was really shy at first. This huge growth in her reading goes hand in hand with her confidence.”*

—Pre-K–1st grade teacher

*“I loved the fact that the program was adaptive. It allowed the children to go at their own pace. For example, I had some that were struggling, and they got the scaffolding to help them build those skills. But I also had some that were well above grade level, and they went on to more advanced skills because they had shown that they had mastery in the earlier ones. So that was nice.”*

—Pre-K–1st grade teacher



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