

RESEARCH UPDATE

Alsip School District #126

Chicago Suburb

Expert 21[®] Students Exceed Annual Individual Expected Growth on SRI

PROFILE**District:** Alsip School District #126**Evaluation Period:** 2012–2013**Grade:** 6–8**Assessments:** *Scholastic Reading Inventory* (SRI)**DISTRICT CHARACTERISTICS**

Located in the Chicago south suburbs, Alsip School District #126 (Alsip) is an elementary district serving approximately 1600 kids in Grades PK–8. There are four schools in the district, three of which serve Grades PK–6, and one which serves Grades 7 and 8.

At the time of this study, 54% of the students in Alsip were Caucasian, 28% were Hispanic, 13% were African American, 2% were Asian, 3% were two or more races, and <1% were Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander or American Indian. Half of the student body was low income, 15% were Limited English Proficient (LEP), and 17% were students with disabilities.

IMPLEMENTATION OVERVIEW

During the 2012–2013 school year, Alsip implemented *Expert 21* during the school day as its Tier 1 core English Language Arts (ELA) program. *READ 180* and *System 44* were also used in the district for Tier 2 and Tier 3 students respectively. A total of 15 teachers, 4 principals, and 3 district administrators were involved in the implementation, which started as part of the district's strategic plan for transitioning to the Common Core State Standards in 2011–2012.

Both years that the district implemented *Expert 21*, professional development was offered by Scholastic. Before beginning the program, teachers received training in the program. A model lesson was also conducted in which

select teachers were able to see the instructional routines in action. The district reported this had a profoundly positive impact on the faculty. Leadership training was provided to administrators to support the instructional shifts taking place in the classroom.

Throughout both years, teachers received monthly coaching sessions, as well as regular group cadre meetings. Training was provided on how to interpret student data, and trainers were available throughout the school year to answer questions from the administrative team.

Implementation Model

This report focuses on the sixth- through eighth-grade students who were participating in the *Expert 21* program over the 2012–2013 school year. The students received 90 minutes of *Expert 21* instruction daily that included explicit instruction, inquiry-based learning, contemporary and relevant literature and informational texts, real-world writing and projects, and supportive technology.

Participants

The *Expert 21* students consisted of 411 sixth- through eighth-grade students who participated in the program. Fifty-one percent of the participants were male, 1% were English language learners, and 4% were students with disabilities. Approximately 60% of the students were Caucasian, 27% were Hispanic, 10% were African American, 2% were Asian, and 1% were Other.

MEASURES***Scholastic Reading Inventory* (SRI)**

SRI is designed to measure how well readers comprehend literary and expository texts. It focuses on the following skills: identifying details in a passage; identifying cause-and-effect relationships and sequence of events; drawing

conclusions; and making comparisons and generalizations. During test administration, the computer adapts the test continually, according to student responses. Performance on SRI is reported as a Lexile® (L) scale score. The higher a student’s score, the more challenging material that student is likely to be able to read and understand. Scores can range from Beginning Reader (below 200L) to Advanced Reader (above 1700L). SRI was administered as a pretest during fall 2012 and as a posttest during spring 2013.

RESULTS

A total of 390 students who participated in *Expert 21* were included in the analytic sample. Lexile (L) scores from the *Scholastic Reading Inventory* (SRI) were used to measure fall-to-spring gains in reading achievement over the course of the school year. Overall, *Expert 21* students experienced a significant average fall-to-spring Lexile gain of 96L, with nearly three-quarters (74%) of students meeting or

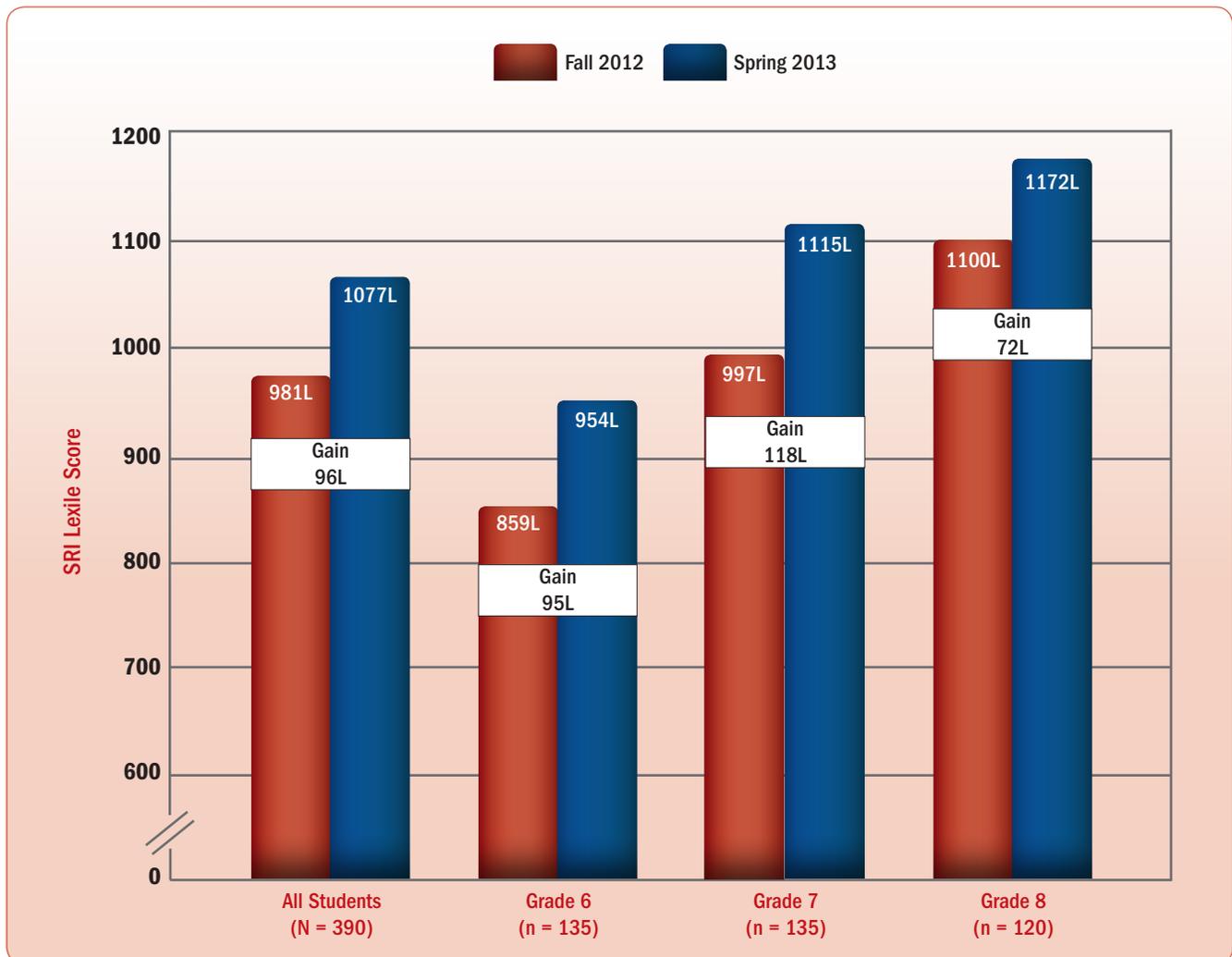
exceeding their individual yearly Lexile growth expectations of 43L (see Graph 1). When broken down by grade, the Lexile gains experienced by grades 6–8 were significant with sixth graders gaining 95L, seventh graders gaining 118L, and eighth graders gaining 72L. Sixty-six percent of sixth graders met or exceeded their individual yearly Lexile growth expectations of 51L, 85% percent of seventh graders exceeded their individual yearly Lexile growth expectation of 41L, and 71% of eighth graders exceeded their individual yearly Lexile growth expectation of 36L.

CONCLUSION

Students enrolled in *Expert 21* demonstrated significant reading achievement over the 2012–2013 school year. At each grade level, students made significant gains in SRI Lexile scores from the fall of 2012 to the spring of 2013 exceeding their individual growth expectations. Overall, these results demonstrate that *Expert 21* is an effective core ELA program for middle school students.

Graph 1.

Alsip School District #126 *Expert 21* Students (N = 390)
Performance on SRI by Grade Level, 2012–2013



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