
READY, SET, READ!

2013-2014 REPORT



GET ACTIVE!

CHANGE THE GAME!

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UCONN
NEAG SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

READY, SET, READ!



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Strategic Change

Husky Sport has delivered a school-wide literacy skill building initiative, known as Read & Raise from 2009 – 2013 at Clark, MLK and Wish schools in Hartford, through a shared planning, delivery and evaluation process with principals, literacy coordinators, curriculum specialists, teachers, students and families. As each school has continued to evolve through changes in leadership and in an effort to better align with district initiatives and Common Core standards, Husky Sport restructured our approach to support Hartford students' skill development and love of reading. We hope that you find this report informative, as we have highlighted strategic changes, valued partners, curriculum and incentives delivered, evaluation findings, and proposed next steps.

Collaborative Effort

Beginning in January 2014, under the new title of "Ready, Set, Read!", Husky Sport implemented a more focused approach aimed at increasing direct and consistent engagement with students in grades K-3 by partnering with classroom teachers to facilitate a weekly curriculum that integrated physical activities and healthy nutrition lessons that complemented everyday literacy skill building efforts within each classroom. At the same time, Husky Sport maintained a school wide presence by providing a range of fun, active, and health-based incentives to K-8th students that met reading and comprehension benchmarks, as well as student behavior criteria, established by school staff and PBIS team leaders.

- Over 1,200 Hartford Public School students in K – 8th
- Over 100 Hartford Public School teachers
- 40 UConn student volunteers
- 25 classrooms of weekly engagement
- 12 Husky Sport Staff Leaders
- 10 Community Partners
- 6 Principals and Assistant Principals
- 5 Literacy Coordinators and Curriculum Specialists
- 3 PBIS School-Wide Leadership Teams



Thanks to the many team members who contributed to our success as a campus-community partnership. Pictured from left to right are Husky Sport Staff/ UConn Alumni; Evan Timme ('14, MPH) and Alex Piñeres ('14, MA) Hartford School Leaders - Kevin Geissler, Dr. Katy Wood, Karrie Rinaldi, and Amber Riley-Wilson.

Direct Engagement

With students and teachers in all K – 3rd grade classrooms at Clark, MLK, and Wish Schools (25 total classes), Husky Sport staff and student leaders visited each classroom for 30-45 minutes per week, aligning the strategic selection of books and hands-on learning activities with the Husky Sport pillars of nutrition education and physical activity so to fit the following specific themes:

January – What does it mean to be healthy?



February – How do you take care of your body?



April – Where does our food come from?

March – What are the things we need to grow?



Incentives System

School Wide – Classroom Literacy Benchmarks and Incentives



Developed by school literacy coordinators and teachers, students were provided with a “menu” of reading comprehension prompts that aligned with the teacher’s curriculum and the common core. Each month students were challenged to read level-appropriate books and complete a number of ‘Menu Prompts for Comprehension’. Upon completion students received a special reward: an activity planned and delivered by Husky Sport staff and students enrolled in the EDLR 3547 – Sport Based Youth Development course. Examples of incentives included healthy tastings, as well as additional recess and gym time physical activities that fostered teamwork and sportsmanship.

School Wide – Individual Behavior Benchmarks and Incentives

Agreed upon at each respective school by principals, literacy coordinators, and teachers, the Positive Behavior Intervention System (PBIS) benchmarks were awarded to students by classroom teacher nominations. Each month, the students who were nominated for the following behavior-based benchmarks were tracked and then rewarded with an end of the year trip to UConn for a morning award ceremony and brunch, followed by an afternoon of field day activities (i.e., yoga, track & field, basketball, team building activities).

January: Most Responsible Student

February: Most Engaged in PE Class

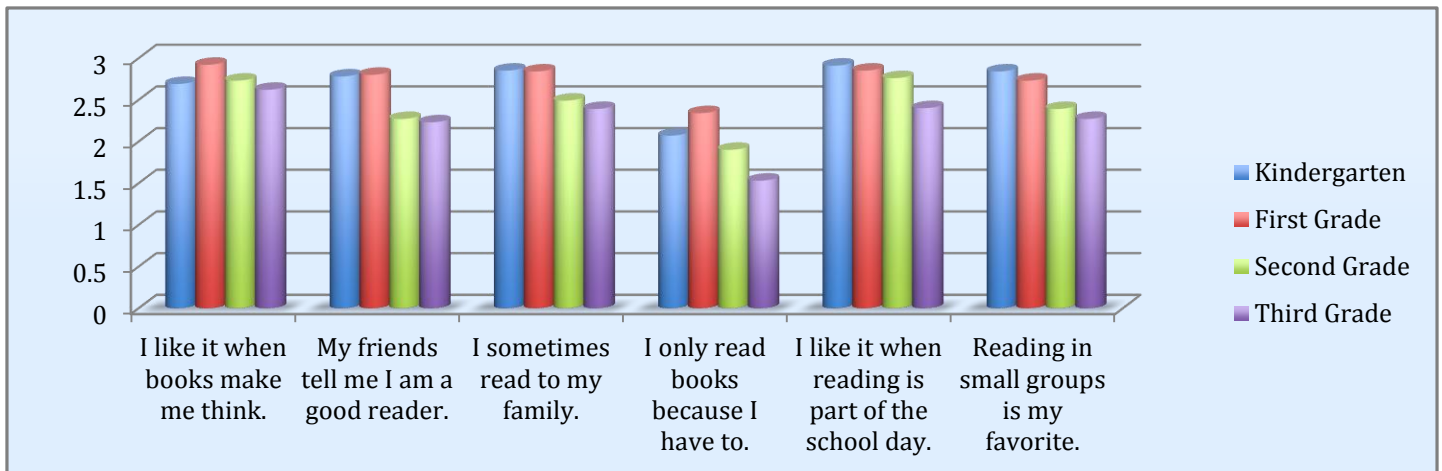
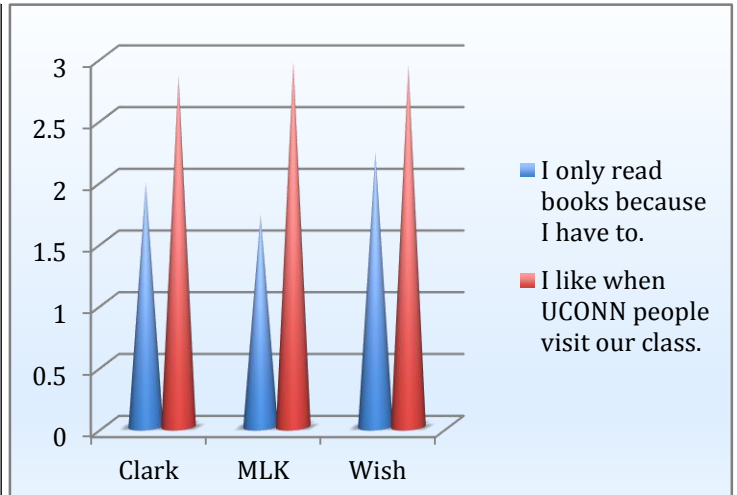
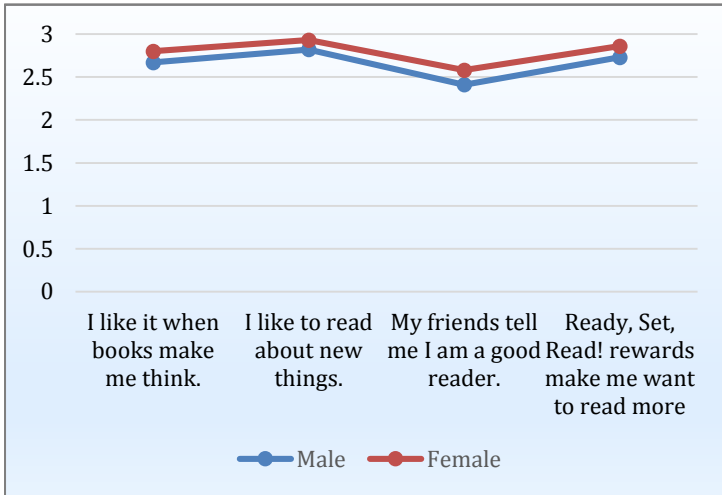
March: Most Hard-Working Student

April: Most Involved in Ready, Set, Read!



Student Feedback

At the end of the 4 month initiative, surveys were conducted with all students in grades K-3, with the assistance of teachers and Husky Sport staff. Feedback from over 600 students were tallied using ANOVA and a mean score was established.



Teacher Testimonials

At the conclusion of Ready, Set, Read! focus groups were conducted with teachers at John C. Clark, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., and Fred D. Wish Schools. Six total group conversations were facilitated, with a minimum of 5 teachers involved during each conversation representing grades K-3 and 4-8 from each school. Here what they had to say:

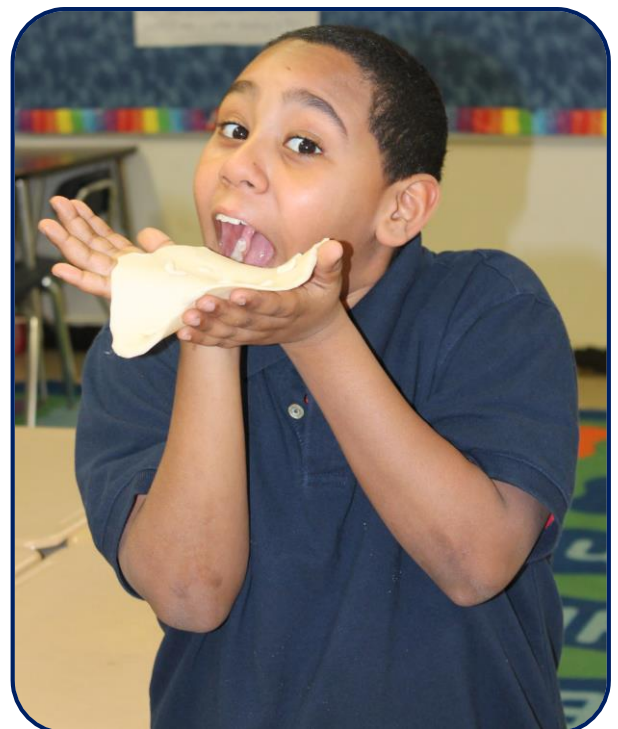
K-3 Themes



Positives	Improvements
Tie in to SBAC principles – in particular setting and summary prompts for younger grades helped with DRA scores	Counting pages was too hard for younger grades. Have K-2 nd count books, 3-5 th count chapters, 6-8 th count pages
3-4 students from each class going to UCONN was better and more motivating	Parent engagement – how do we get students to want to read outside of the classroom?
Menu prompts did a better job of preparing students for testing and aligned with Common Core – just need some redesign for grade level and format	Implement a buddy system with older students – pair a middle school student with a younger student for reading time

4-8 Themes

Positives	Improvements
Working with the literacy coordinators at beginning of the year to develop Menus was good and fostered a relationship that continued throughout the year	Have a read-a-thon after school where students come together in the gym for an hour or two and get to all read together – have a healthy snack to go with it
Prompts were good and motivating for students to engage with – especially across ability levels	Insert some lower level questions into upper level Menus for struggling readers
Impressed by the planning that went into the program this year – the folders were a nice touch and were an extra incentive for students to take pride in the program	Missed having UCONN visibility with no classroom weekly visits – a motivating factor for reading and for college attainability



Looking Ahead



Despite a program name change, various campus and community leadership changes and a more enhanced approach to our traditional literacy efforts, Husky Sport has successfully maintained a consistent and positive presence at three Hartford schools, over the last six years. As we evaluate and look to enhance our program's effectiveness, it is important to remember our capacity and how this makes our organization a quality and authentic program. Therefore, in the 2014-2015 school year, we plan to focus our efforts at one school (Clark) for weekly reading engagement and extend the initiative to 5-months in length. The stronger focus at one school will allow our programs to interact with specific students through multiple programs throughout the week. (RSR!, the In School Program, P.E. Classes and afterschool activities.) Although our commitment to MLK and Wish will be limited we still plan to engage with students, teachers and families through PBIS incentive-based efforts, throughout the spring of 2015. Regardless of our involvement at each school, our mission is the same; to provide students an opportunity to engage in literacy efforts that challenge them physically, mentally and emphasize healthy nutrition.

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