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# READ & RAISE

## 2012-2013 REPORT



GET ACTIVE!

CHANGE THE GAME!

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# READ & RAISE 2012-2013 REPORT



Husky Sport Assistant Director and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Elementary and Middle School point person, Leah Ward, with students after reading the book *SkippyJon Jones*.

## 2012-2013 REPORT

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*Changing the Game  
One Book at a Time*

## What is Read & Raise?

Read & Raise is a literacy initiative with pre-kindergarten to eighth grade students at three schools in Hartford, Connecticut. The three participating schools are John C. Clark Elementary and Middle School, Fred D. Wish Elementary and Middle School, and Dr.

Martin Luther King, Jr. Elementary and Middle School. Read & Raise involves partnerships among students, families, teachers, staff, Husky Sport personnel, the University of Connecticut community and the Hartford community.

## 2012-2013 Year in Perspective

Read & Raise 2012-2013 began in late January with school assemblies explaining the program and getting students excited for the competition. 2012-2013 marked the fourth year of Read & Raise for Clark, Wish and MLK schools. Point people Patricia Bellamy, Nicole Squadrito, Jenn Myatt, and Alicia Waring were placed at Clark, Evan Timme, Leah Ward, and Floyd Grier at MLK, and Alexander Piñeres and Shay Ingersoll at Wish. These point people visited each kindergarten-eighth grade class weekly to read with students and assist them in completing their reading response worksheets. For the first time Husky Sport created a curriculum of books and lesson plans for the kindergarten-third grades, using exercise and nutrition themed books like *Are You Ready to Play Outside?* by Mo Willems, *Growing Vegetable Soup* by Lois Ehlet, and *D.W. the Picky Eater* by Marc Brown. The Read & Raise curriculum allowed point people to further emphasize physical activity.

Over the four-month initiative students completed 7,613 worksheets at Clark, 6,441 worksheets at Wish, and 11,400 worksheets at MLK, for a total of 25,454 worksheets and 193,358 worksheets completed over the five years of Read & Raise.

On April 19th the top two reading classes at each school and the top two reading students from every other class—a total of about 175 students along with Husky Sport staff, teachers, school staff and family members—traveled from Hartford to the UConn Storrs campus for an end of the year community celebration. The day started off with brunch and an award ceremony in the Student Union. The field day portion began in the afternoon and everyone rotated through different physical activity and nutrition stations organized by UConn students in the Advanced Sports Based Youth Development course. Once again Read & Raise competed an exceptional year full of readings, physical activities and most importantly a lot of FUN!



Husky Sport staff member, Mike Chung, leads Wish students in a nutrition activity during the field day portion of the Community Celebration at UConn.



Clark students pose with Husky Sport volunteers and Clark point people Patricia Bellamy and Jenn Myatt.



## 2012-2013 Assessment

Throughout the Read & Raise initiative, Husky Sport staff has worked with teachers and administrators at the participating Hartford schools to make adjustments to the program for the benefit of the student participants. At the end of the 2012-2013 program year Husky Sport conducted a formal assessment in which surveys were administered to student participants and teachers. Teachers were also asked to participate in focus groups to better understand the impact of Read & Raise and to gather feedback on what areas need improvement. Husky Sport believes the opinions of students and teachers are extremely important in developing the program and making it the best it can be for program stakeholders.

### Student Surveys and Teacher Focus Groups

Surveys were completed by 621 student participants at the conclusion of Read & Raise for the 2012-2013 school year. Relatively even numbers of surveys were collected across grade levels at all three schools (Clark 219; MLK 208; Wish 193). Two different surveys were administered to accommodate differences in age and question comprehension.

- 306 student responses to Kindergarten-Third grade survey. Survey consisted of 13 items.
- 315 student responses to Fourth-Eighth grade survey. Survey consisted of 36 items.

In order to gain a greater understanding of what teachers thought worked well for their students and what could be improved in the future, a focus group of teachers was held at each school. Each focus group was made up of a small group of teachers (3 to 4) from a range of grade levels. Teachers responded to questions and gave feedback specific to their experience with Read & Raise. Teachers also completed a survey with 50 items to assess the impact and effectiveness of the Read & Raise program.



MLK 2nd grade teacher Ms. Bouldin and her class after playing tag inspired by the book *SkippyJon Jones*.



# Student Survey and Teacher Focus Group Results

The following are results from the student surveys and teacher focus groups:

## On the nutrition and physical activity component of Read & Raise:

- Grades 4-8 were asked if they learned about nutrition and physical activity through the Read and Raise program.
  - 70.4% of students said Read and Raise taught them about healthy nutrition.
  - 80.9% of students said Read and Raise taught them about physical activity.
- Grades 4-8 and Teachers were asked if the Read & Raise helped them to make healthier choices.
  - 68% of students said this was true
  - 76.9% of teachers said this was true
- Teachers were asked if the connections that Read & Raise makes to physical activity and good nutrition were beneficial to their students.
  - 96.2% of teachers said this was true



Clark third grade students play outside.

## On the life skills component of Read & Raise:

- Grades 4-8 were asked if Read & Raise increase their desire to attend college
  - 81.9% of students said this was true
- Grades 4-8 were asked if they learned to work better with their classmates through Read & Raise.
  - 61.2% of students said this was true
- Teachers were asked, if during Read & Raise they noticed their students encouraging one another to read.
  - 92.3% of teachers said this was true

### On the academic excellence component of Read & Raise:

- Grades K-3 and 4-8 were asked if it was important to them to be good readers.
  - Grades K-3: 94.8% of students said this was true
  - Grades 4-8: 76.1% of students said this was true
- Grades 4-8 were asked if Read & Raise helped them become overall better students.
  - 81.3% of students said this was true
- Teachers in focus groups discussed the value of Read & Raise and how it encourages students to understand the importance and fun of reading:
  - “The program really does promote students to push themselves to read more and think about what they are reading by a written response... it kind of reinvigorates them [mid-year] to get a fresh start.” – 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Teacher



MLK students  
complete Read &  
Raise worksheets.

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## Learning from This Year & Planning for 2013-2014

As another year of Read & Raise concludes Husky Sport is excited to begin planning for the 2013-2014 program year, which will be the sixth year of Read & Raise! Based on the following feedback from teacher focus groups, we are making a few changes to the Read & Raise program this year, starting with a change in name from Read & Raise to **Ready, Set, Read!**

### Structure of Contest:

- Students will keep track of the number of pages read instead of the number of books read. Teachers or parents will be required to sign-off on the tally sheet.
  - “It would be helpful to find a way to level the playing field between the younger grades reading shorter books and the older students reading longer chapter books.” -4<sup>th</sup> Grade Teacher

**Incentives:**

- Instead of the top reading classes going on the end of the year field trip to UConn, the individual recipients of monthly behavior-based incentives from each class will go.
  - “Because you never had a class where everyone in the class deserves the reward.” – 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Teacher
  - “You could even have different topics each week. You know like the child that read the most that week or most motivated, most energetic, most you know whatever the topic is so that even if your kids are struggling they can get some recognition and not throw in the towel right away.” –3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Teacher



MLK 6<sup>th</sup> grade students with UCONN service-learning students at the Community Celebration.

**Topics for Readings:**

- Teachers would like Husky Sport to focus on incorporating more non-fiction reading material.
  - “They need more non-fiction books . . . we don’t have enough exposure to them” –1<sup>st</sup> Grade Teacher
  - “I love the idea of articles and current topics and things in the news.” –3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Teacher



Husky Sport staff members Alexander Piñeres and Shay Ingersoll with Jonathan the Husky after Wish’s Read & Raise school assembly.

**We’re excited to keep working with our partners to make the program the most beneficial it can be for all stakeholders of the program!**