

P.S. 290 CASE STUDY

A High-Demand Literacy Program for Students in Transitional Housing



72% of students met or exceeded their literacy growth goals

P.S. 290 PROFILE¹

School

P.S. 290

District

NYCPS DISTRICT 19

Location

East New York, Brooklyn, NY

Partnership Start Date

2024

Student Demographics

352 students, Pre-K-5

- Hispanic: 82%
- Black: 82%
- Multilingual Learners: 46%

Springboard Program Enrollment

320 Registered Pre-K-5 Students

"Our students don't always have consistency outside of school. This program gave them – and their families – a routine they could rely on."

— BRIGITTE NEWELL,
PRINCIPAL, P.S. 290

HOW P.S. 290 JUAN MOREL CAMPOS TRANSFORMED RESTRICTED FUNDING INTO SUSTAINED STUDENT GROWTH AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

P.S. 290 Juan Morel Campos served a student population marked by resilience and constant change. A significant number of students lived in transitional housing, navigating frequent moves, shifting routines, and limited access to consistent learning environments beyond the classroom.

Inside the classroom, educators faced wide-ranging literacy needs, including gaps in foundational skills and a high population of multilingual learners. Attendance challenges and inconsistent engagement made it difficult to sustain instructional momentum.

The school had access to Students in Transitional Housing (STH) funding, a Federal resource designed to support students experiencing housing instability; however, P.S. 290 faced challenges using those funds for academic programming. Like many New York City schools, P.S. 290 lacked a clear implementation structure, so STH funds were often directed toward immediate student needs rather than non-instructional needs. Recognizing the need for additional literacy support, school leaders sought a solution that could provide targeted instruction, meaningful family engagement, and a sustainable structure for students experiencing frequent transitions. They also wanted to leverage STH funding in a way that directly supported student learning and family partnership.

P.S. 290 partnered with Springboard Collaborative to implement a structured literacy program designed to build consistency for students, engage families, and accelerate learning. Over time, the program became highly sought after by families, with consistent waitlists and strong repeat participation across cycles.



¹ School enrollment and demographic data reflect the 2024-2025 school year.

PARTICIPANT PRAISE

“Our students needed structure. Once they had a routine they could count on, we saw a real shift in their engagement.”

— SANDY RAMRATTAN, PROGRAM LEADER

CHALLENGES

P.S. 290 faced several interconnected barriers to accelerating literacy and sustaining engagement:

- **Student mobility and inconsistent attendance:** Many students in transitional housing relocated frequently, disrupting routines and continuity of learning.
- **Foundational literacy gaps:** Students entered with significant needs in phonemic awareness, decoding, and comprehension, requiring targeted small-group instruction.
- **Lack of sustainable instructional systems:** Teachers needed clearer structures for small-group instruction, progress monitoring, and data-driven decision-making.
- **Barriers to family engagement:** Families often lacked the time, materials, and support needed to reinforce literacy learning at home.
- **Restricted funding:** STH funds were difficult to use for academic programming without a compliant, structured model.

SOLUTION

Springboard’s after-school literacy program provided P.S. 290 with a structured framework for literacy instruction, family engagement, and progress monitoring. Together, P.S. 290 and Springboard adapted the model to meet the needs of a highly mobile student population, leveraging STH funding to create consistent learning opportunities for students and families.

Structured Instruction and Data-Driven Small-Group Learning:

Springboard worked with P.S. 290 leaders and teachers to implement a structured instructional cycle grounded in assessment data, targeted small-group instruction, progress monitoring, and student celebration. Teachers used Springboard’s materials, instructional guidance, and DIBELS-aligned structures to identify student needs, group students strategically, and adjust instruction throughout each cycle.

This structure helped shift instruction from fragmented practices to a more sustainable cycle of assessment, instruction, and adjustment. For students experiencing instability, the consistency of the model was critical. P.S. 290 needed a sustainable approach that supported targeted skill-building while creating routines students and families could rely on.



PARTICIPANT PRAISE

"Sometimes you don't always know what to do to intervene. Having the activities labeled and connected to exactly what students needed was really useful and resourceful."

— MS. DANIELLE VITALE, P.S. 290 TEACHER

The structure was especially impactful for multilingual learners. Teachers used assessment data and differentiated materials to support students at varying skill levels, building confidence and engagement in reading.

Family Engagement Through Communication and Practical Support: Family engagement was central to the program's success. Sandy and her team used Springboard's Connect: Educator app and Google Voice to maintain consistent communication with families, sharing reminders, encouragement, and updates throughout the week.

Family Workshops provided clear literacy strategies and accessible materials that families could immediately use at home. Flexible scheduling, individualized support, and incentives helped sustain participation over time, even for families navigating demanding schedules and housing instability.



"I know how to read for myself, but reading to a child is different. Learning how to make reading fun and ask the right questions was very important. Sometimes we don't know what to do until the teachers explain it, and you realize, 'OK, I can do that.'"

— YISSEL GARCIA, P.S. 290 PARENT

Families also valued receiving materials and resources in both English and Spanish, helping ensure accessibility and stronger communication with multilingual families.

Strategic Use of Funding and Strong Implementation Systems: With Springboard's support, P.S. 290 became the first school in NYCPS to effectively leverage STH funds for literacy programming. The school shifted from using funds primarily for basic needs to investing in instruction, family engagement, and targeted student support.

Springboard also provided teachers and leaders with professional development, ongoing coaching, and implementation support that strengthened instructional practice and family engagement.

Systems and Leadership That Sustain Participation: Student mobility required more than strong instruction; it required systems that could sustain participation and continuity over time. Springboard provided implementation structures, communication tools, planning support, and ongoing coaching that helped P.S. 290 establish consistent processes for enrollment, family communication, attendance tracking, and student transitions between cycles.

PARTICIPANT PRAISE

"It really takes a team. Once we had systems in place, we were able to keep things running — even when students were coming and going."

— SANDY RAMRATTAN, PROGRAM LEADER

These systems enabled the school to maintain full enrollment across sessions despite frequent student movement. Teachers maintained a pipeline of students ready to join as openings occurred, while ongoing communication helped families stay connected to the program.

Springboard's support also helped strengthen leadership capacity. Through professional learning, coaching, and implementation support, Program Leader Sandy Ramrattan continued refining the program to meet the needs of her students and families while maintaining consistency across cycles. This combination of strong systems, shared ownership, and visible leadership helped ensure the program remained stable, responsive, and sustainable over time.

"As I continue to [teach in the program], I feel more confident in what I'm doing, and the more confidence I have, the better the experience is for the students."

— MS. DANIELLE VITALE,
P.S. 290 TEACHER

RESULTS

Since launching the partnership in 2024, P.S. 290 has seen strong gains in literacy growth, family engagement, and sustained participation — demonstrating what's possible when structured instruction and intentional family partnerships are paired in a highly mobile context.

Early Literacy Growth and Increased Student Confidence

- During Springboard's 8- to 10-week after-school literacy sessions held throughout the year, students demonstrated strong growth in foundational literacy skills. Across program years, students achieved an average of **4.6 months of reading growth** on DIBELS Nonsense Word Fluency (NWF) measures during Springboard sessions.
- The percentage of students meeting grade-level expectations increased from **30% before participation to 56% after participation** across all program years.
- Additionally, **72% of students met or exceeded their literacy growth goals** during program participation.

Families also described noticeable shifts in student confidence and willingness to engage with reading independently.

PARTICIPANT PRAISE

“By having the parents come and be included in the intervention, it has definitely made more of an impact than traditional after-school programs.”

— MS. DANIELLE VITALE, P.S. 290 TEACHER

Sustained Family Engagement and Growing Program Demand

Family Workshop attendance remained strong across program cycles, averaging **71% overall attendance, including 70% attendance among families of multilingual learners**. As families experienced the value and relevance of the workshops, participation remained consistent and engagement deepened over time.

Family surveys reflected strong engagement and confidence:

- **97% agreed** Springboard **improved their confidence** supporting reading at home.
- **97% learned new literacy strategies** to help their children.
- **94% reported improved family reading** routines during the program.

Families returned consistently across sessions, and participation remained strong despite frequent housing transitions. Each cycle reached full enrollment, with waitlists remaining consistent and requiring intentional student selection.

Families also described the program as a critical source of additional literacy practice and support beyond the regular school day. For many families, the structured after-school time provided students with the repetition, reinforcement, and individualized attention needed to continue building foundational reading skills.

Strong Staff Engagement and Leadership Development

The program also strengthened teacher practice and family partnership capacity. Across survey responses:

**100% OF
STAFF
AGREED**

- **Coaching helped them develop strategies to communicate with families.**
- **Springboard helped them develop as educators.**
- **Family Workshops helped strengthen relationships with families.**

P.S. 290 also maintained strong staff continuity, with **86% returning staff participation across sessions**.



A Model for Sustained Literacy Support

P.S. 290's partnership with Springboard demonstrates what's possible when schools design for their context. By aligning structured instruction, intentional family engagement, and strategic use of funding, the school created a model that provides consistency where it is needed most — helping students and families stay engaged in literacy learning despite frequent transitions.

In a school community shaped by mobility and changing circumstances, the program became more than an after-school intervention. It became a reliable structure for students, families, and educators working together to support literacy growth.



"I'd recommend this program because I've seen the positive change and outlook in my child's educational journey. She is so excited for her after-school days, and she's super engaged when it comes to reading and picking out her favorite books!"

— P.S. 290 PARENT

Springboard Collaborative offers a proven, research-based solution for accelerating literacy outcomes while building lasting capacity within school districts.

Partner with Springboard to rewrite the story of early literacy in your community and empower all students to reach their full potential. www.springboardcollaborative.org.

