

NYCPS DISTRICT 4 PS 171 CASE STUDY

A Multiyear Partnership Fuels Remarkable Literacy Gains



97% of Pre-K and Kindergarten Students on Track for Grade-Level Reading

PS 171 PROFILE (2023–2024)

Location:

New York City,
Geographic District #4

Enrollment:

81 students in pre-K¹; 693
students in grades K–8
(including 69 in kindergarten)

Springboard Program

Enrollment:

30 students

Demographics:

96% minority students
(59% Hispanic or Latino);
4% ELLs; 82% economically
disadvantaged

¹Pre-K enrollment was available only during the
2022–2023 school year.

PS 171 Patrick Henry Preparatory faced critical early literacy challenges: limited academic after-school programs, resource gaps, and a high-needs population with many students reading below grade level. This led to a multiyear partnership with Springboard Collaborative, whose science of reading-aligned program, part of a broader citywide literacy initiative supporting the NYC Reads Initiative, produced remarkable results. By Spring 2024, **97% of pre-K and kindergarten participants were on track to meet grade-level reading expectations**, spurring program expansion.

“The investment [Springboard and PS 171] have made in our families and teachers reflects a deep commitment to ongoing development and long-term success for our students, rather than a one-time contribution. The payoff has been enormous, and we are excited to continue our collaboration and see our students’ success in second, third grade, and beyond.”

— AHARON SCHULTZ, PS 171 PRINCIPAL

CHALLENGES

PS 171 faced critical barriers to early literacy success:

Limited Academic After-School Programs:

Most existing after-school programs were recreational, not academic, leaving a crucial gap for pre-K and kindergarten students.

Resource Disparities: Many families lacked essential reading materials, and language barriers hindered at-home learning support.

Achievement Gap: Despite improvements in grades 3–8, where the percentage of students scoring proficient or above in ELA increased from 62.3% in 2017 to 80.5% in 2022, a concerning 30% of kindergarten students began the 2023 school year reading below grade level. This was particularly concerning given that over 82% of students are economically disadvantaged.

30%

of kindergarten
students started the
2023–2024 school
year reading below
grade level.

SOLUTIONS

Springboard's **multiyear after-school program** was designed to build early literacy skills for pre-K and kindergarten students while actively engaging families to support long-term academic success. The primary goal was to ensure that students stayed on track to meet grade-level reading expectations by third grade.



High-Quality Instructional Materials (HQIM):

Evidence-based materials, including a standards-aligned, **science of reading curriculum and family resources in English and Spanish** (including digital texts), addressed the lack of literacy resources at home and ensured consistency between school and home learning.



Family Engagement: Family engagement was central to Springboard's strategy, focusing on enabling families in their children's literacy development. Resources for **Team-Building Huddles** (home visits) and **Family Workshops** were provided to cultivate strong family-teacher partnerships, directly addressing disparities in at-home support. The impact is evident from various perspectives.



Partnership Start Date: 2023

Program Details: Six consecutive after-school sessions² (average nine weeks each) across multiple years, maintaining a 15-to-1 student-to-teacher ratio and delivering a total of 24 hours of targeted instruction per session.

² Although PS 171 is currently in its second year of partnership and completing its sixth session with Springboard, the data presented in the PS 171 story reflects the outcomes from four consecutive after-school sessions: Winter/Spring 2023, Fall 2023, Winter 2024, and Spring 2024.



TEACHER
PERSPECTIVE

"One of my favorite aspects of [Springboard] is building lasting partnerships with families through the [Team-Building] Huddles and Workshops. Families are so involved and invested in their child's literacy journey, and this significantly impacts student growth."

— PS 171 TEACHER

SOLUTIONS



Dedicated Support Team: Springboard's internal team was crucial for program implementation and maintaining progress over the multiyear partnership:

- **Preprogram Training:** Teachers and paraprofessionals received training in evidence-based literacy instruction and family engagement strategies, while leaders received additional skills in leadership, management, and other essential topics.
- **Professional Learning Communities (PLCs):** Data-driven sessions refined teaching practices and effective family workshop facilitation.
- **Ongoing Coaching:** Weekly coaching supported teachers in enhancing their practice and family engagement. Coaching for leaders emphasized leadership and management skills.



This structured support system **maximized program effectiveness, built staff capacity,** and **empowered families** to actively support literacy development at home.



“[Springboard] is excellent at providing materials, professional development, and ongoing learning communities for teachers and parents.”

— AMY WRIGHT, PROGRAM LEADER



SOLUTIONS

The program's implementation unfolded in several key stages, ensuring effective instruction and strong family engagement.



PLANNING AND SETUP

Program Alignment: Springboard supported planning and implementation, ensuring alignment with citywide initiatives.

Recruitment and Inclusive Materials: Springboard assisted with student enrollment campaigns and provided program materials in both English and Spanish for accessibility.

Teacher Training: Teachers and paraprofessionals received comprehensive training in evidence-based literacy instruction with an emphasis on family engagement and the use of assessment data for guiding instruction.

Springboard assisted with student enrollment campaigns and provided program materials in both English and Spanish



PROGRAM DELIVERY

Supplemental Literacy Instruction: Targeted literacy instruction took place after school three days a week for eight to 10 weeks per session.

Curriculum Focus: The curriculum prioritized foundational literacy skills through **reading readiness and phonics**, directly addressing skills assessed by DIBELS 8th Edition. Teachers also incorporated **shared reading and read-alouds to build fluency and comprehension**.

Family Workshops: Weekly Family Workshops (both synchronous and asynchronous) enabled families to practice literacy strategies with their children, fostering communication about reading goals and encouraging positive reading habits at home.



RESULTS



Students achieved an average of **4.4 months of growth in just eight to 10 weeks** on DIBELS 8th Edition subtests (Phonemic Segmentation Fluency and Nonsense Word Fluency).



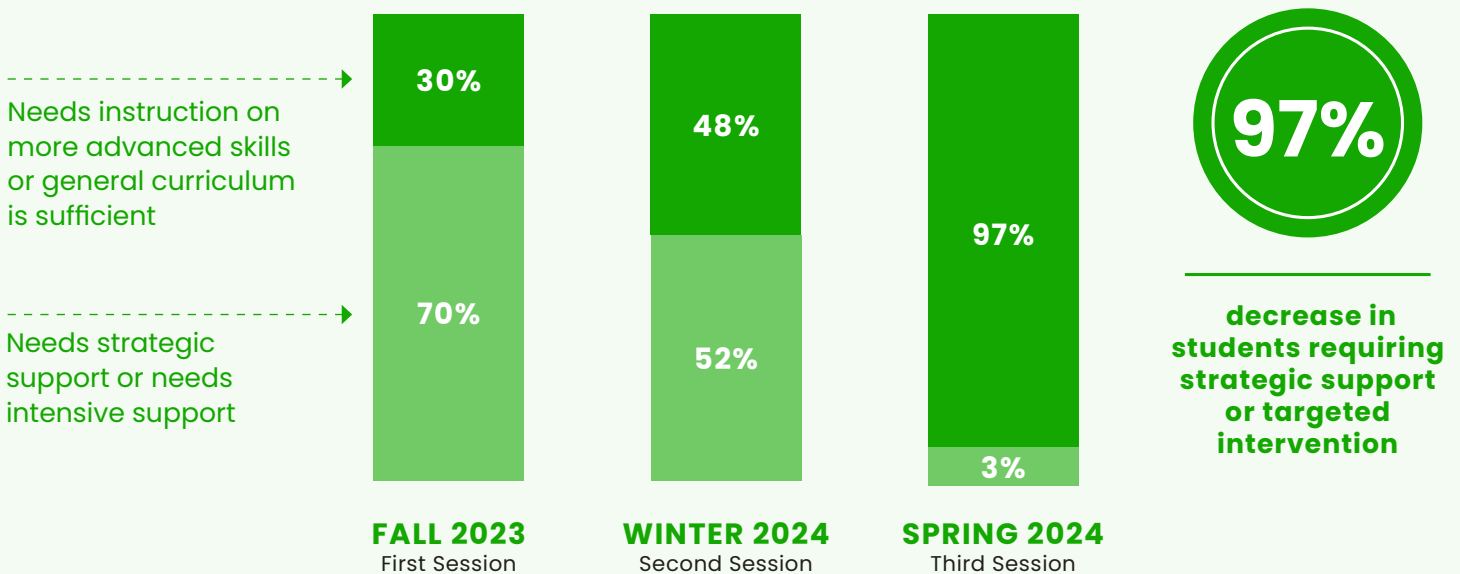
Students meeting grade-level expectations (defined as students in the “needs instruction on more advanced skills or general curriculum is sufficient” proficiency bands) leaped **from 30% to 97% between Fall 2023 and Spring 2024**.



In the **subsequent session**, students meeting growth goals rose from **80% to 87%**.

CHART 1: This chart shows substantial gains in reading proficiency achieved by the same group of students across three sessions (Fall 2023, Winter 2024, Spring 2024), significantly reducing the percentage of students needing strategic or intensive support. The dramatic 97% decrease in students needing extra support demonstrates the program’s effectiveness.

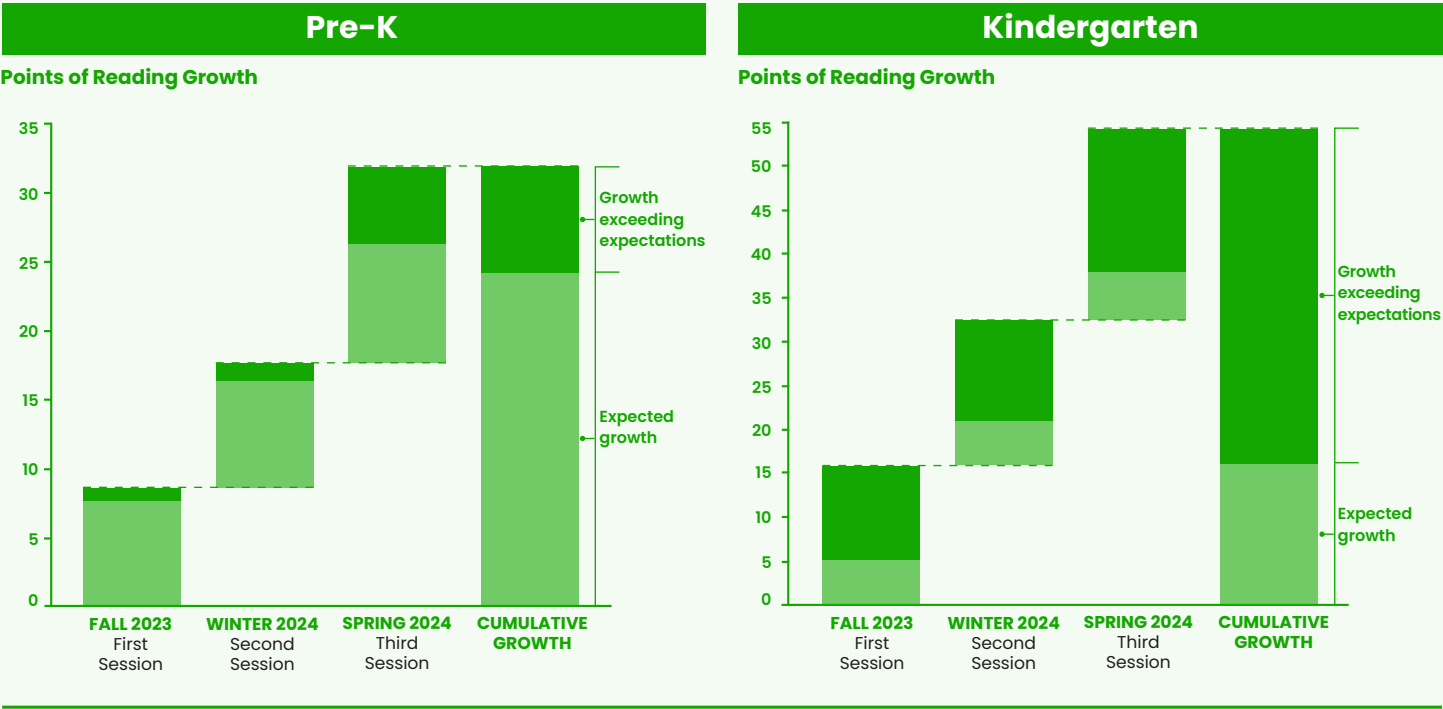
GRADE-LEVEL READING PROFICIENCY GAINS



Note: N=30 students (88 assessment data points). The same students participated in each session. Each session for the proficiency band analysis lasted 8–9 weeks. Student proficiency was measured using DIBELS 8th Edition Nonsense Word Fluency–Correct Letter Sounds.

CHART 2: This chart illustrates the cumulative impact of multiple program sessions on pre-K and kindergarten students’ reading growth. Actual growth substantially exceeded expectations, highlighting the program’s effectiveness in building upon prior learning and the increasing impact of multiple sessions.

CUMULATIVE GROWTH ACROSS PROGRAM SESSIONS



Note: N=58 students. The same students participated in each session. Each session was 8-9 weeks. Kindergarten student growth was measure using DIBELS 8th Edition Nonsense Word Fluency-Correct Letter Sounds. Pre-K student growth was measured using DIBELS 8th Edition Phonemic Segmentation Fluency.

RESULTS



88% of families noted **increased reading engagement** and a more **positive reading identity** for their children.



88% of families gained **skills and confidence** in supporting their children’s reading at home.



Six months post-program, **92% of families** reported **reading with their child** at least a few times a week or daily, reflecting increased enthusiasm for reading.

98%

Family Workshop attendance rate

PARENT
PERSPECTIVE

“My daughter started pre-K knowing only the alphabet song. Just four months into the program, she’s asking how to spell words and write her alphabet! This program has given me the guidance I needed to support her reading at home.”

— PS 171 PARENT

Positive Schoolwide Impact: Springboard students actively shared their new skills within their classroom communities, helping peers with reading. As Amy Wright observed, “They’re taking their learning and helping their classmates,” illustrating the program’s broader impact. This enthusiasm among students has also been echoed by parents, as Amy Wright noted: “Our parents are eager to enroll their children in the program. We had waiting lists and even referrals from parents of older students.”

Success: PS 171’s success showcases the transformative power of early literacy prevention. High-quality pre-K and kindergarten programs, coupled with strong family engagement, prepare young learners for success.

“This is my second year with Springboard, and the growth I’ve seen in students over three sessions is remarkable. It’s amazing watching the growth compared to other students in my regular classroom.”

— KIM, PS 171 TEACHER

NATIONAL PROGRAM IMPACT: Demonstrating Effectiveness Across the Country

Springboard’s early literacy program has proven effective on a national scale. Data from the 2023–2024 school year indicates impressive reading growth for kindergarten students across the country:

Kindergartners
gained approximately

4.5
MONTHS

of **reading growth** in
essential literacy skills
during 8- to 10-week **school**
year sessions.

Kindergartners
gained approximately

3.5
MONTHS

of **reading growth** in
essential literacy skills
during 4- to 5-week
summer sessions.

To learn how Springboard can help your pre-K and kindergarten students build a strong literacy foundation and cultivate a love for reading, visit springboardcollaborative.org.