Iron Springs Elementary School

READING HORIZONS IMPLEMENTATION AND RESULTS

A THREE-YEAR STUDY FUNDED BY THE UTAH STATE OFFICE OF EDUCATION
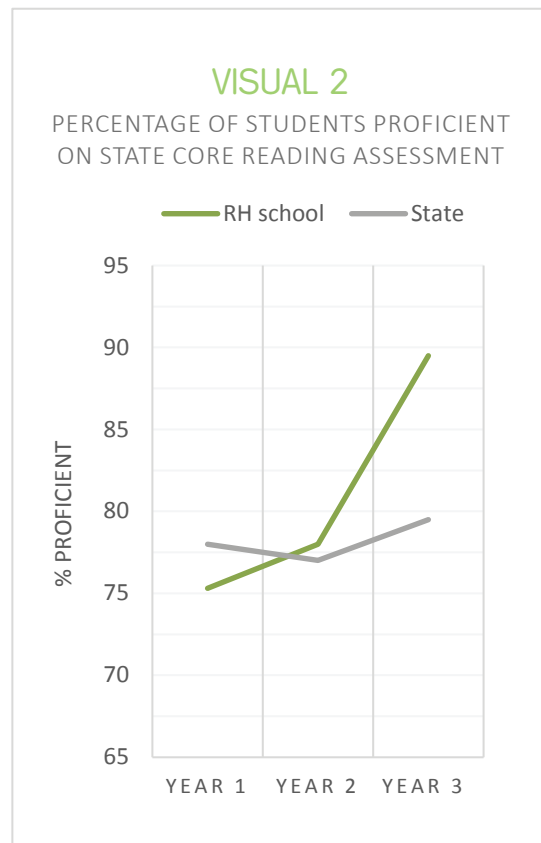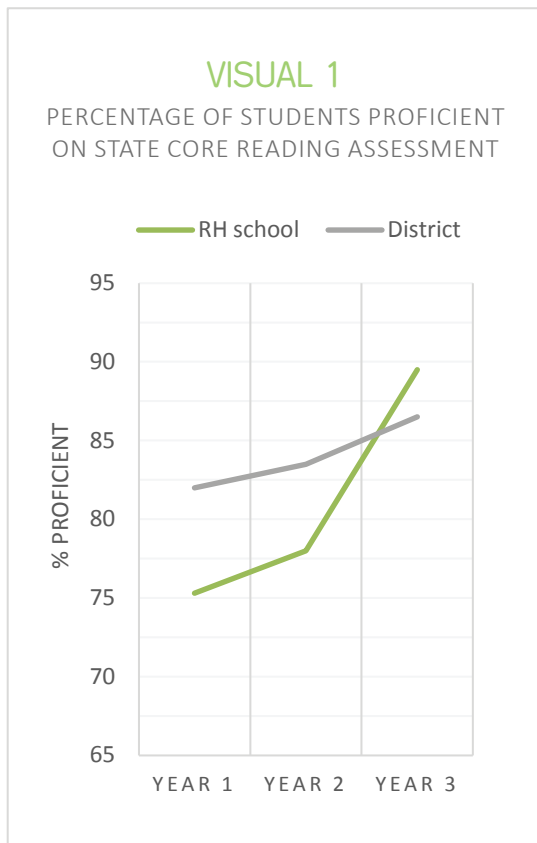
"**Literacy in an elementary school is everyone's business.**"

– Deon Goshorn, Principal, Iron Springs Elementary, UT

*Reading*Horizons ®

Iron Springs Elementary School

When Irons Springs Elementary in Cedar City, UT, first opened, the staff wanted to ensure that every student received a solid foundation in reading. To meet this goal, the staff planned to implement research-based instruction that was flexible and effective for students in all three tiers of the RTI model.

The Reading Horizons program was selected because it was used at another school in the Iron County School District where it was found to be affordable, engaging, and easy to implement. It also correlated to the National Reading Panel's research findings concerning effective reading instruction for all students.

To test the efficacy of the program, the Institute for Behavioral Research in Creativity (IBRIC), in partnership with the Utah State Office of Education and Iron County School District, conducted a three-year evaluation of Reading Horizons at Iron Springs Elementary. At the start of the study, kindergarten through third-grade teachers at the school were trained in the program and began implementing the curriculum in their classrooms. At the conclusion of the study, it was found that Reading Horizons instruction led to improved reading outcomes when compared to the district (Visual 1) and state (Visual 2) averages.

VISUAL 1

PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS PROFICIENT ON STATE CORE READING ASSESSMENT

— RH school — District

VISUAL 2

PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS PROFICIENT ON STATE CORE READING ASSESSMENT

— RH school — State

" I really feel like Reading Horizons is the **best phonics program** I've ever taught. And I've taught for over 18 years with several other phonics programs."
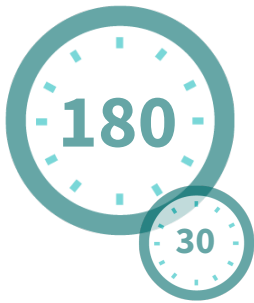
– Bonita Turnbaugh, Second Grade Teacher, Iron Springs Elementary, UT

" Reading Horizons is effective at supplementing curricular materials because **it's pure**. It's not watered down by the same constraints as basal programs. Also, teachers like to implement it."

– Stacy Hurst, Reading Specialist, Iron Springs Elementary, UT

Implementation Model

Tier I

During the study, reading was taught in every Iron Springs Elementary classroom for three hours a day. All teachers, kindergarten through second grade, taught Reading Horizons in their mainstream classrooms for about thirty minutes of the literacy block each day. Every student received explicit and systematic phonics instruction in tier one.

Tier II

Teachers at Iron Springs Elementary met every week for thirty minutes to collaborate and discuss the needs of tier two students. In this meeting, classroom teachers, tier two teachers, the reading specialist, and special education teachers decided what each struggling student needed and what could be done to help the student.

Tier two instruction was conducted by highly trained aides, teachers, and the reading specialist. After the mainstream teacher completed her daily instruction, the students who needed additional help were pulled out for thirty minutes of instruction and practice with Reading Horizons.

Tier III

Students who continued to struggle after tier two instruction were tested and referred for special education services, in this case, tier three instruction. The school held a "student to teacher assistance team review" to come up with additional interventions for each tier three student. Parents were involved throughout the process.

Students were brought into a small group situation of two to three pupils, providing a more intense and systematic approach to instruction. Students needing a tier three intervention received thirty extra minutes of reading instruction each day.

Because Reading Horizons was used in every tier, the same language was used from one classroom to the next. This built instructional continuity between teachers at every level.

180
30

TIER I
180 minutes of reading instruction (including **30 minutes** of Reading Horizons instruction)

30

TIER II
30 minutes of additional Reading Horizons instruction

30

TIER III
30 minutes of additional Reading Horizons instruction

" I enjoy using the pages that the kids have to prove the words. There's been a few times when we're proving a word and the kids almost **jump out of their seat** because they get it. At first, they don't know what the word is, and then after we prove it, they're just jumping up, almost screaming the word **because they understand.** "
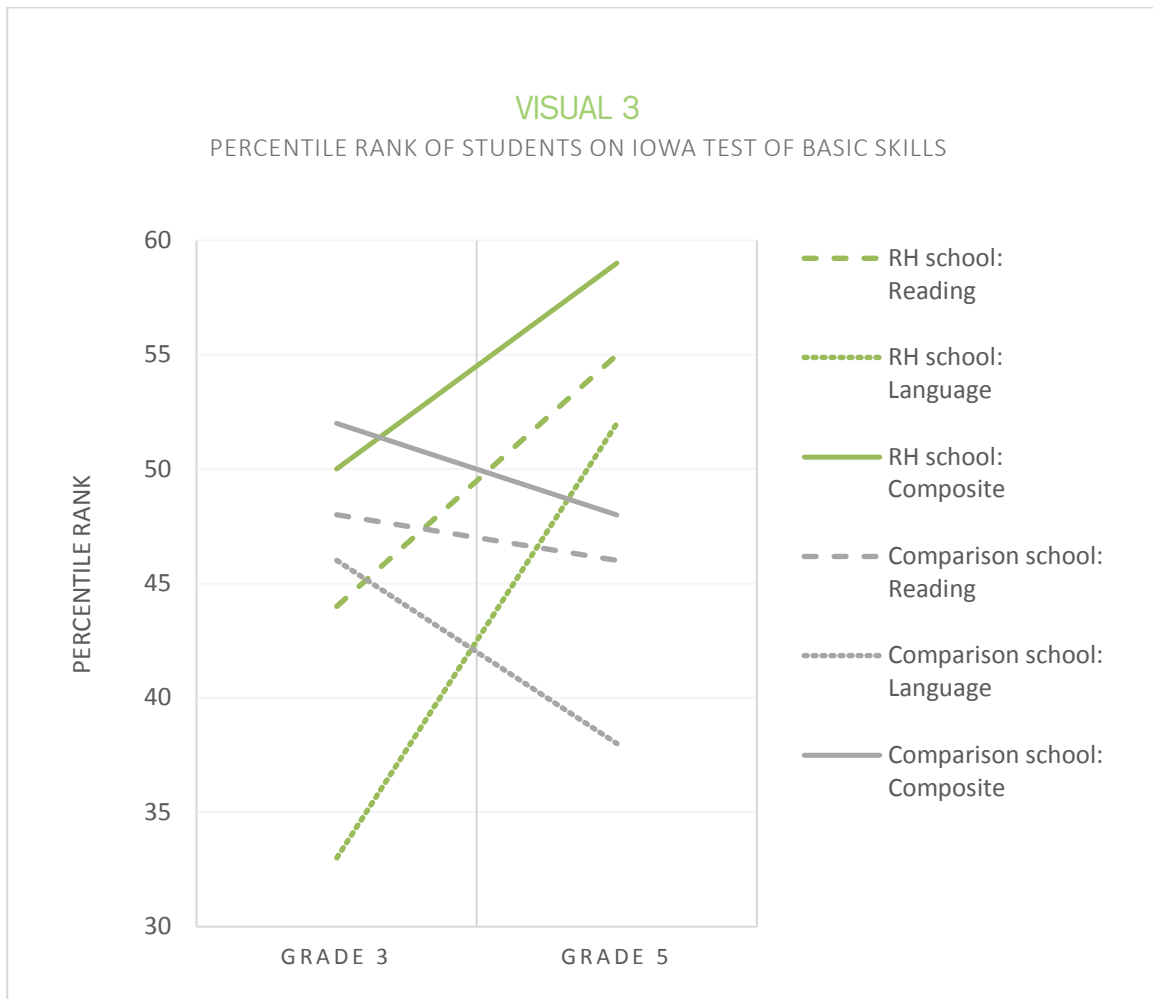
– Wendy Moon, Reading Aide, Iron Springs Elementary, UT

" We love the computer software. We use it as a reinforcement for what we've been teaching in tiers 1 and 2. We also use it when we have students that move in halfway through the year from other districts and other states. We can put them on the software and be assured that they're receiving the same kind of instruction that we're delivering without taking time away from a teacher or an aide."

– Stacy Hurst, Reading Specialist, Iron Springs Elementary, UT

Lasting **Results**

Students who received Reading Horizons instruction at Iron Springs Elementary in third grade showed improvement on all portions of the IOWA Test when retested in fifth grade. The percentile rank scores of students at the comparison school declined on all three portions of the IOWA Test included in the study (Visual 3).

VISUAL 3
PERCENTILE RANK OF STUDENTS ON IOWA TEST OF BASIC SKILLS

Legend:
- RH school: Reading
- RH school: Language
- RH school: Composite
- Comparison school: Reading
- Comparison school: Language
- Comparison school: Composite

Y-axis: PERCENTILE RANK (30–60)
X-axis: GRADE 3, GRADE 5

> "Reading Horizons is systematic and explicit. The other programs I have used in the past have not been so and haven't provided the support I needed for teaching each skill."
>
> – Marcy Christensen, Special Education Teacher, Iron Springs Elementary, UT

ReadingHorizons

About Reading Horizons

Reading Horizons is designed to help struggling readers learn to read in a way that is automatic, fluent, enjoyable, and meaningful. The Reading Horizons methodology delivers engaging, explicit, systematic phonics instruction through a multisensory approach based on Orton-Gillingham principles. Instruction is cumulative and is organized in a sequence that enhances learning and simplifies teaching. Each sound of the English language is explicitly taught along with the letter(s) that represent the sound. Five Phonetic Skills are taught to help students recognize short and long vowel patterns in words and syllables. Two Decoding Skills are presented to show students how to decode multisyllabic words.

The multisensory approach used with the Reading Horizons methodology boosts memory by engaging auditory, visual, and kinesthetic modalities simultaneously during instruction. A unique marking system is employed to draw student attention to the features and patterns of English as well as to give visual cues for pronunciation. Throughout the course of instruction, students are provided with motivating activities for practice with and application of the skills learned.

Reading Horizons Discovery™ is designed to teach the Reading Horizons methodology to students in kindergarten to third grade. *Reading Horizons Elevate™* is used with elementary students in fourth through sixth grade.
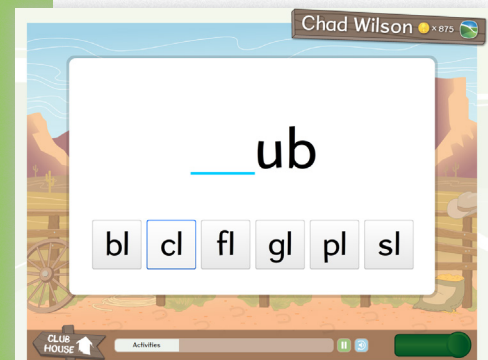
Both the *Reading Horizons Discovery* and *Reading Horizons Elevate* programs correlate with the five pillars of effective reading instruction as identified by the National Reading Panel (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development [NICHD]) in 2000. (See the Reading Horizons Research Base White Paper for more detailed information at **www. ReadingHorizons.com/RESEARCH**.)

“ As a principal it makes me feel good to know that with Reading Horizons, **teachers are happy, children are happy,** *and* **we are having success.”**

– Deon Goshorn, Principal, Iron Springs Elementary, UT

ReadingHorizons ®