

## ***NCLB* Summer Reading Achievers 2004 Pilot Program Evaluation Report**

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2003, the Atlanta Public Schools (APS) partnered with the U.S. Department of Education in a pilot of the *No Child Left Behind* Summer Reading Achievers Program. The program was designed to encourage Atlanta students in grades K-8 to read during the summer months and help prevent fall-off in reading skills during the summer vacation. Eighteen thousand three hundred ninety-six of Atlanta's 41,000 students took part in the program and almost 10,996 met the goal of reading at least 10 books. The total number of books read was 158,732.

In 2004, the U.S. Department of Education expanded the previous year's pilot to include 10 cities and one State, to help create a model for nationwide expansion. The Atlanta Public Schools conducted an evaluation of the *No Child Left Behind* Summer Reading Achievers Program. In 2004, Atlanta had 9,268 students participating and 5,727 completing the program by reading 10 or more age-appropriate books. The total number of books reads over the summer months by participating students was 105,997.

This report presents a rigorous and careful evaluation of the *No Child Left Behind* Summer Reading Achievers Program in APS. It is designed to address the following central questions that arise in the use of an intervention (students reading 10 or more age-appropriate books during the summer months and briefly describing the books they have read) to mitigate the summer fall-off in reading skills:

- What is the impact of participation in the *No Child Left Behind* Summer Reading Achievers Program on the reading achievement of elementary (grades 1-5) and middle-level (grades 6-8) students?
- Is there a change in reading achievement and reading efficacy of fourth- and sixth-grade students from prior to and after completion of participation in the *No Child Left Behind* Summer Reading Achievers Program?
- Does participation in the *No Child Let Behind* Summer Reading Achievers Program have an effect on the reading self-efficacy of elementary (grades 1-5) and middle-level students (grades 6-8) in an urban school district?

#### Critical Findings

- $H_1$ : First-grade students who participate in the Summer Reading Achievers Program will have significantly higher reading achievement scores than first-grade students who do not participate. This hypothesis was rejected.
- $H_2$ : Second-grade students who participate in the Summer Reading Achievers Program will have significantly higher reading achievement scores than second-grade students who do not participate. This hypothesis was accepted.
- $H_3$ : Third-grade students who participate in the Summer Reading Achievers Program will have significantly higher reading achievement scores than third-grade students who do not participate. This hypothesis was rejected.
- $H_4$ : Fourth-grade students who participate in the Summer Reading Achievers Program will have significantly higher reading achievement scores than

fourth-grade students who do not participate. This hypothesis was rejected.

*H*<sub>5</sub>: Fifth-grade students who participate in the Summer Reading Achievers Program will have significantly higher reading achievement scores than fifth-grade students who do not participate. This hypothesis was rejected.

*H*<sub>6</sub>: Sixth-grade students who participate in the Summer Reading Achievers Program will have significantly higher reading achievement scores than sixth-grade students who do not participate. This hypothesis was rejected.

*H*<sub>7</sub>: Seventh-grade students who participate in the Summer Reading Achievers Program will have significantly higher reading achievement scores than seventh-grade students who do not participate. This hypothesis was rejected.

*H*<sub>8</sub>: Eighth-grade students who participate in the Summer Reading Achievers Program will have significantly higher reading achievement scores than eighth-grade students who do not participate. This hypothesis was rejected.

*H*<sub>9</sub>: Elementary and middle-level students who participate in the Summer Reading Achievers Program will have significantly higher sense of reading efficacy ratings than elementary and middle-level students who do not participate. This hypothesis was rejected.

*H*<sub>10</sub>: Elementary and middle-level students who participate in the Summer Reading Achievers Program will have significantly higher enjoyment of

reading ratings than elementary and middle-level students who do not participate. This hypothesis was accepted.

### Conclusions

Although only 2 of the 10 research hypotheses were upheld, several trends in the data are noted. The phenomenon of summer reading loss did not occur for this sample. Both the treatment and control groups experienced gains from pretest to posttest. *No Child Left Behind* Summer Reading Achievers Program participants had higher scores on average than control group students at all grade levels. Although no statistically significant differences in reading achievement were found for first graders and grades 3-8, the *NCLB* Summer Reading Achievers Program intervention did appear to have an effect the reading achievement levels. The finding of no summer reading loss suggests that the district's sustained focus on student achievement, whole-school reform implementation, and standards-based reform initiatives may be "paying off."

### Recommendations

1. It is recommended that the study be replicated.
2. It is recommended that "practical" or educational significance be considered along with statistical significance in evaluating program effectiveness and potential benefits to students disadvantaged by low achievement and poverty.
3. It is recommended that program effectiveness be explored across participating sites.