



*Challenging young minds to soar.*

# **The Journey to Literacy on the Literacy Express Comprehensive Evaluation Report: Year 1, Year 2, & Extension**

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## **The Journey to Literacy on the Literacy Express**

Ashe County Schools  
Grant #S215G160126

### **Program Evaluation Report**

**October 2016 through September 2018**

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## Executive Summary

In 2016, Ashe County Schools (ACS) applied for and was awarded a two-year Innovative Approaches to Literacy (IAL) grant (PR/Award # S215G160126) by the U.S. Department of Education (USDE). This grant launched a project that would promote early literacy for young children, motivate older children to read, and increase student achievement by using school libraries as partners to improve literacy, distribute free books to children and their families, and to offer high-quality literacy activities. This was a 2-step process. The first step addressed the “summer slide” – the increase in the reading achievement gap that occurs over the summer months. The second step was to support literacy throughout the school year so that children were at grade level by the end of third grade and motivated to be lifelong readers. This would be accomplished through a mobile book lab and literacy resource room that would travel through the county during the summer months and visit school sites during the school year to be available for small groups for intervention and enhancement of literacy skills.

The implementation of the Literacy Express came to fruition on July 1, 2017. The completion and delivery of the unit fell behind time schedule and was delayed four weeks by the company. However, this did not halt the pre-planning, preparation, and excitement for the project. The following table shows which activities were implemented, were implemented with some modification, and were not implemented.

**Table 1. Reflection of Timeline and Implementation Actions – Year 1**

### The Literacy Express Management Plan – Year 1

Date	Activity	Implemented	Modification	Not implemented
10/2016	Research/Plan/Design RV	Yes		

10/2016	Development of IAL Team – all members as identified in the grant were selected	Yes		
11/2016 – 2/2017	Each member of the team was assigned specific tasks to complete prior to operation of RV	Yes		
3/2017	RV completion is delayed at factory in Iowa. This delayed equipping the RV; did not delay purchasing and interviewing and selection of personnel		Yes	
4/2017-5/2017	PR began and writing the grant for summer feeding program	Yes		
6/2017-8/2017	Due to delay in RV, the launch did not occur until July 1, 2017 At that time the RV started rotations throughout the county at the designated spots		Yes	
9/2017	Clean/replenish/analyze data Data analysis was delayed due to testing dates and a new Director of Testing/Accountability		Yes	
10/2017-5/2018	RV used for outside classroom for reading intervention/enrichment at each school site	Yes w/actual start date in September		
10/2016-5/2018	On-going meetings with IAL team and media coordinators	Yes		
3/2017-7/2017	RV was available at all county special events, eg Christmas in July, etc.	Yes		

### Summative evaluation of first year revealed challenges and successes:

#### Challenges:

- Staying in close contact with factory to ensure proper design and completion
- Delay of the unit
- The massive amount of books on the RV and the layout of the unit made it difficult to create a book shelving system familiar to media coordinators.

- Data analysis of first year check-out revealed a low circulation to high schools students. To make room for high demand books, 50% of the high school books were placed in the high school media center for usage by the English department and media center.
- Acclimation to the unit (e.g. space, storage, mechanics, digital devices)
- Not all sites were as frequently visited by children as others. A new location was added for the second summer.
- Internet connections
- Not all parents/guardians were eager to participate
- Weather (high winds, heavy rains and early snows)

#### Successes:

- Timeline of activities were 90% completed on time
- Each school media coordinator worked on the RV during the summer rotations
- Destiny, the library management system universal to the media centers, worked well on the RV. All students had access.
- The project coordinator and literacy specialists designed eight project based learning units integrating literacy and digital devices. This design allowed for multi-age grouping and choice.
- Books were given to every child in Pre-k through 8<sup>th</sup> grade, with multiple books for specified grades.
- Books were given to birth-3 years old during community events and special literacy nights
- Partnerships with the community and parents
- Dedicated personnel and volunteers
- Over 2,000 of Ashe County school age children engaged in reading and literacy activities and approximately 300 pre-school children

**Table 2. Reflection of Timeline and Implementation Actions – Year 2**

The Literacy Express Management Plan – Year 2				
Date	Activity	Implemented	Modification	Not implemented
6/2018	1 <sup>st</sup> -3 <sup>rd</sup> Grades Reading Camps – RV traveled to each Title 1 Elementary School for one week of camp – new initiative Rotations began last week of June	Yes		
7/2018-8/2018	Rotations to different sites for the summer – new site established based on evaluation	Yes		

9/2018-12/2018	Literacy intervention and enrichment – small groups at each school site	Yes		
6/2018-12/2018	On-going meetings with IAL Team and media coordinators	Yes		

**Challenges**

- Employing a new teacher assistant/tutor for the RV. The first assistant was promoted in the system.
- Introducing a new teacher assistant to all the schools
- Technical support for the ClearTouch interactive screen
- Weather was a huge factor beginning in November (ice/snow)

**Successes**

- The new teacher assistant/tutor incorporated blended learning and video, creating a level of learning that was different based on the assistant’s strengths.
- The continual usage and interest
- myON digital library
- Literacy family nights
- Seventy-one English Learners served including 58% of the parents

When evaluating outcomes of the project, the summer rotations were implemented to expected outcomes. Families were engaged in literacy throughout the summers. Book distribution and check-out were successful. Children two to eighteen years old experienced literacy activities that ignited curiosity and encouraged reading. Ongoing evaluation created an avenue to correct and redefine any concerns quickly. One example was the calculations of participation at each site and how to adjust the spots to reach the most population. Google tools were shared with all personnel in order to track participation, schedule groups, house instructional lesson plans, and complete specific surveys. Destiny, the school system’s library management system, tracked book check-out.

**Table 3. Book Check-Out on Literacy Express – retrieved from Destiny**

July 1, 2017 – August 31, 2018	1,079
September 1, 2017 – June 1, 2018	293
Jun 1, 2018 – August 31, 2018	440
September 1, 2018 – December 30, 2018	148
<b>TOTAL Number Check-outs</b>	<b>1,960</b>
<b>Books Available for Check-out on the RV – 2,935</b>	

As depicted in the table above, a total of 1, 960 books were checked by participants during July 1, 2017 through December 31, 2018.

Table 4 below contains information regarding participation during the implementation. A total of 538 children participated during the summer months and 2,026 during the 2017-2018 school year and first semester of the 2018-2019 school year.

**Table 4. Participation**

Summer 2017	Summer 2018	School rotations
*240 children ages pre-k-12 <sup>th</sup> participated with 280 total visits to the RV	*343 children ages pre-k-12 <sup>th</sup> participated with 491 visits to the RV	**2,026 pre-K through 12 <sup>th</sup> grades visited the RV with explicit instruction available to small groups at each site

**\*In addition, a parent, grandparent or guardian participated in literacy activities and was able to receive free adult literature**

**\*\*67% of students**

Outcomes pertaining to site, small-group interventions and enrichments were more varied due to the different cultures of each school environment and varied leadership styles of administrators. Data reveals that the mobile unit usage was focused on interventions and enrichment. However, the implementation of small group explicit reading instruction took longer than expected due to all students wanting to participate on the RV. Media coordinators at each school designed the usage aligned with student need. At all sites, the project contributed to improving literacy among the pre-k-12 student population in at least three ways:

- 1) the purchase and distribution of resources delivered directly to students. This was achieved through the utilization of the RV during the school day for multiple grades, family literacy

nights, back to school bashes, community events, books clubs, individual targeted grade levels, and focused groups. 2) The increased engagement of students using technology to enhance literacy skills. This was accomplished by using numerous tools to enhance teaching and learning. 3) Elevating the love of learning through all constructs of literacy—speaking, listening, writing and reading. The integration of video application became the lifeline of creating, collaborating, communicating and critical thinking at all sites.

### **Other notable outcomes:**

#### **Read To Achieve Data**

The 2018 Summer Literacy Camps utilized the RV for intensive instruction. The RV traveled to each elementary school. Literacy specialists, summer school teachers and the Literacy Express personnel worked with students in grades 1, 2 and 3 teaching reading strategies and incorporating blended and project based learning in order to increase student achievement and engagement. The at-risk students were engaged at a higher level due to the activities, one-on-one instruction, and the engaging and interactive environment. The table below depicts the data.

Table 5. Enrollment of students in the 2018 Summer Reading Camp

Site	Students 1 <sup>st</sup> - 3 <sup>rd</sup> grades	3 <sup>rd</sup> grade only
Blue Ridge	27	8
Mountain View	40	15
Westwood	47	19
<b>Total</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>42</b>

Of the 27 required 3<sup>rd</sup> graders, 12 students showed proficiency (44%). This was an increase from the 2017 Summer Reading Camp of 28% proficient, an increase of 12%.

#### **Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library and the Appalachian Regional Library**

Members of the local Board of Directors for the Imagination Library along with the Ashe site of the Appalachian Regional Library participated and partnered with the Literacy Express. Books were donated by the Imagination Library and a grant partnership, Alphabet Ready by 5, written by the library was implemented. Grab and take activities were prepared by the library consisting of books, manipulatives and activities for each letter of the alphabet. The project was examined by the regional library and their Board has requested funding for additional mobile units and personnel for Ashe County due to the success of the Literacy Express project.

### **School-based Media Coordinators and Director of Media and Technology**

All media coordinators were involved in the project as the grant stipulated. They trained, collaborated, planned, designed and worked to ensure the success of the project. Their knowledge and expertise in book selection, along with management of the inventory, created an environment that was familiar to the students. The Media Director was a member of the advisory team, and she scheduled and facilitated media coordinators' meetings to review, evaluate and guide the vision of the grant.

### **Ashe County Schools Child Nutrition Summer Food Service Program**

Every participant 18 and under had the opportunity to receive a free snack provided through the Summer Feeding Program Grant that was awarded to the system through Child Nutrition. Siblings were able to participate in the snack program as well. While the number of participants varied, free snacks were available throughout the day at each site location. The opportunity to receive a free meal located at the designated school site for the summer was also available.

## Introduction

Being literate is at the heart of learning in every content area and essential to future employment and postsecondary education. Ashe County Schools is committed to see every child reading on grade level by the end of third grade. In alignment with our strategic plan, initiatives and purpose of this award, the district aims to ensure that all students have the opportunity to experience a rich literacy environment that includes age-appropriate books, literacy activities, technology, and the support of families and communities. As a 2016 recipient of the Innovative Approaches to Literacy (IAL) grant, ACS implemented a mobile book lab, the *Literacy Express*, to travel through the county during the summer; and to use this lab at each school site to provide a fully loaded literacy classroom for literacy instruction, intervention, and enrichment. All schools across the district were involved in this program in partnership with the media coordinator at each site.

As described in the IAL grant application, the purpose of the grant was to promote early literacy for young children, motivate older children to read, and increase student achievement by using school libraries as partners to improve literacy, distribute free books to children and their families, and to offer high-quality literacy activities. Two specific literacy needs were addressed: 1) the well-documented “summer slide” – the increase in the reading achievement gap that occurs over the summer and, 2) to support literacy throughout the school year so that children are at grade level by the end of third grade and are motivated to be lifelong learners. The *Literacy Express* provided the opportunity for all children, birth through 18 years of age, to have the opportunity to check-out age-appropriate and leveled books, participate in project-based, “hands-on” literacy activities, and receive free books through-out the summer months.

During the school year, media specialists scheduled blocks of time for whole, small and individual intervention and enrichment learning in the technology-rich mobile unit. The grant included professional development opportunities for media coordinators and teachers, as well as improving student access to literacy resources and technology.

*The Journey to Literacy on the Literacy Express's* main goal was to advance literacy and academic performance by engaging children and teens in reading and reading-related activities with embedded technology tools during the summer months and school year. Additional goals included:

- to foster a love of reading through the availability of the mobile classroom throughout the calendar year,
- to increase successful literacy experiences through facilitated instruction provided by Ashe County Schools teachers in small groups,
- to provide increased availability and opportunity to self-select, voluntary reading using quality print and electronic materials

Though the overall program design is much more detailed, (Appendix A1) the long-term desired impacts are to increase literacy skills of elementary students through diminishing the well documented “summer slide” and to support literacy throughout the school year so that children are motivated to be proficient, lifelong readers. The distribution of books, both print and electronic, was made available to children, from birth to eighteen, residing in the county. The access to the mobile book lab and literacy resource room created enthusiasm and excitement for reading throughout the county.

As described in the grant, two key activities were designed to help all children develop literacy skills at all levels and maintain that growth, and include:

- Design and equip a recreation vehicle to create a mobile education classroom equipped with resources and trained educators to be utilized during the summer months to

decrease the “summer slide” so children will begin the school year without achievement loss and (Appendix B1, B2),

- Utilize the mobile classroom during the school year for instruction to students across the county at all five school sites and the early learning pre-kindergarten center, emphasizing targeted small groups for intervention and enrichment.

This evaluation document follows two complete years and three months of program implementation (October, 2016 – December 31, 2018). This included two full summers and one and a half years of rotations to five schools and the early learning center, which houses the pre-kindergarten classes. To assess the program implementation, a formative evaluation focused on the two main activities (Decreasing the Summer Slide and Increasing Reading Achievement). These evaluation activities were designed to provide on-going feedback of program implementation for continuous improvement. Additionally, a summative evaluation was conducted to determine each component’s overall impact in achieving their respective goals and the overarching goal of improving student achievement outcomes.

The themes discussed in this comprehensive report are recognized to be most prevalent or significant for a mobile education classroom. In addition, many portions reveal the successes and challenges or *insights gained* discussing considerations and/or solutions about program implementation, program operation, the evaluation, or logistics.

ACS central office has a small staff in comparison to other school districts of size. The grant stipulated that the final evaluation would be conducted by the curriculum director and personnel such as literacy specialist and curriculum coaches. Through established partnerships with nearby institutions of higher learning, two retired professors assisted in the work along with the curriculum director. The information presented in the following report reflects the

aggregated data gathered over the two year span and aligns with the evaluation’s purpose and program goals.

## **Program Development & Planning**

### **Research & Literature**

This section details the supporting research and literature that informed *The Journey to Literacy on the Literacy Express* at the time of development.

The United States Department of Education published the Blueprint for Reform (2010) calling for states to “develop comprehensive, evidence-based, preK-12 literacy plans to align federal, state and local funds to provide high quality literacy instruction.” Two principles that guided the development of North Carolina’s literacy plan are (1) Families, communities, trained volunteers, businesses and all school personnel play important roles in developing readers. Supporting a child is best accomplished when all partners share common methods and basic understandings about the reading process; and, (2) the more students read, the better readers they become.

Research indicates that two-thirds of the ninth grade reading achievement gap can be explained by unequal access to summer learning opportunities during the elementary school years (Alexander, Entwisle and Olson, 2007). Research supports early intervention to encourage literacy development and the importance of parental involvement to support family literacy (Mullis, Mullis, Cornille, Ritchson, & Sullender, 2004). The phenomenon of the summer slide was studied extensively by Johns Hopkins University researchers Karl Alexander, Doris Entwisle, and Linda Olson (2007), whose longitudinal study tracked Baltimore students from 1<sup>st</sup> grade through age 22. Although low-income children in the study made as much progress in

reading during the academic year as middle-income children did, the economically disadvantaged students' reading skills diminished during the summer months. Most disturbing, it appears that summer learning loss is cumulative and that, over time, these periods of differential learning rates between low income and higher-income students contribute substantially to the achievement gap. Stephen Krashen (2011) has compiled research from four studies suggesting "increasing access to books can not only help students enormously—it can mitigate the effects of poverty on school achievement and literacy development."

These researchers concluded that efforts to close the achievement gap during the school year alone may be unsuccessful. The Campaign for Grade-Level Reading, a collaborative effort among dozens of foundations, lists summer learning loss as one of the three major obstacles to reading proficiency at the end of 3<sup>rd</sup> grade (Gewertz, 2011). According to a recent study by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, "one in six children who are not reading proficiently in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade does not graduate from high school on time, a rate four times greater than that for proficient readers (Hernandez, 2011).

## Program Description

### Background

The U.S. Department of Education maintains the Innovative Approaches to Literacy Program, which is a discretionary/competitive grant program, intended to support high-need LEAs with their local high-quality programs that promote student and family literacy. In July, 2016, Ashe County Schools applied for funds to support the proposed *The Journey to Literacy on the Literacy Express*. In September 2016, ACS received a total of \$538,237 to support *The Literacy Express* activities for two years of program implementation (10/01/2016 –

09/30/2018). Specifically, Year 1 (10/01/2016) was funded at \$422,310 and Year 2 (10/01/2017 – 09/30/2018) was funded at \$115,927. *The Literacy Express* was awarded an extension for an additional 3 months (2018) to continue implementing the program while maintaining the original budget.

### **Target Sample**

In the summer of 2015, our three Title I elementary schools offered participation in an eight day literacy camp to 100 students out of a total K-5 population of approximately 1600. Data shows that 80 students participated. Data from the Reading 3D assessment for end-of-year 2014-2015 and beginning of year 2015-2016 in kindergarten, first and second grades, district-wide, showed an average of 20% decrease of reading proficiency during the summer months. North Carolina's Read to Achieve legislation requires all students to be reading at grade level by grade three. This has proven to be an especially difficult challenge to meet and overcome in Ashe County. At the beginning of the 2015-2016 school year, the third grade beginning of grade assessment revealed that only 50 percent of the students were projected to be on grade level at the end of the year. This data revealed a need for an increased focus on reading among the students.

### **Program Goals**

The project name "*The Journey to Literacy on the Literacy Express*" was inspired by Ashe County's native artist, Stephen Sharpe Shoemaker. Stephen Shoemaker and writer Janet Pittard have teamed up to present a selection of Shoemaker's paintings and drawing and the stories behind them. The narrative, told in Shoemaker's voice, is informal and geared toward a general audience, suitable for children, as well as adults, particularly train buffs, lovers of

regional history, and fans of Shoemaker’s work. The story telling and pictures combine to entertain and educate about the unique culture and history of the mountain region served by the train called the **Virginia Creeper**, which ran from Abingdon, Virginia to Elkland, North Carolina. Following this theme, *The Journey to Literacy on the Literacy Express* conceptualized a mobile unit that would travel through the rural county providing printed text, exploring authors and engaging in literacy activities. While at the same time, drawing all ages and cultures of parents and children to the unit to promote early literacy for young children, motivate older children to read, and increase student achievement by using school libraries as partners to improve literacy, distribute free books to children and their families, and to offer high-quality literacy activities. The two main goals (See Appendix A1) and program activities (Appendix A2) are intended to improve student literacy.

**Goal 1.** To decrease the loss in student literacy gains by diminishing the “summer slide” which is defined as “the tendency for students to lose some of the achievement gains they made during the previous school year.” Often, summer break serves as a prolonged break in classroom learning.

**Objective 1.1** Advance literacy and academic performance by engaging children and teens in reading and reading-related activities with embedded technology tools during the summer months.

**Objective 1.2** Foster a love of reading through the availability of the mobile classroom throughout the calendar year.

**Objective 1.3** Improve access for children and their parents to literacy and activities that incorporate technology.

**Goal 2.** To support literacy throughout the school year so that ACS children are at grade level by the end of third grade and are motivated to be lifelong readers.

**Objective 2.1.** Increase successful literacy experiences through facilitated instruction provided by ACS teachers in small groups during the school year utilizing the mobile unit.

**Objective 2.2.** Make available self-selected, voluntary reading experiences through print and digital devices

**Goal 3.** To involve parents and the community in the literacy experience

**Goal 4.** Provide professional development for collaboration among media specialists and classroom teachers.

### **Program Activities**

#### *Access to Books – Goal 1 & 2*

*The Journey on the Literacy Express* provides participants with the opportunity to receive free, age-appropriate books as well as eBooks and online stories. This is combined with family nights and literacy events at the elementary and middle schools. Students have access to district-wide libraries through Destiny (a web-based district library catalog program), myON, the Appalachian Regional Library, in addition to a sustainable collection housed on the Express for check-out. This was available throughout the calendar year which led to a love of reading. This created an opportunity for multiple choices of different genres of books. Participants were encouraged to self-select best-fit books which promoted more reading.

#### *Access to Literacy Activities – Goal 1 & 2*

An instructional materials team made up of literacy teachers and the project overseer developed real-world reading and writing activities based on project-based learning strategies and aligned with books housed on the Express. Eight units were planned based on English Language Arts grade level standards identifying specific themes including dramatic play, plants, careers and communities, coding, etc. All learning was active with an emphasis on higher order thinking, reading non-fiction and fiction text, building on vocabulary, journaling and using technology. The topics related to the students' personal experiences and interests. All

instruction utilized current research based methods. During the school year, small groups had access to the Express to utilize all the technology, resources, plans and books. Explicit instruction incorporating literacy skills was provided throughout the school year at all school sites including Ashe Early Learning Center.

### Access to Technology – Goal 1 & 2

The Express houses a ClearTouch Interactive Display, Kindles, Chromebooks, iPads, 3D printer, color printers, green screen for video, Lego Mindstorms, LittleBits, Spheros and MacBook Airls. Students and their families were able to experience and be instructed utilizing all the digital devices which enabled the integration of literacy with technology. Younger children explored visual literacy through the use of video and imagery, talking about online sources rich in pictures and text, and exploring how online text differ from traditional print texts. The environment extended traditional literacy experiences with comprehension of information on the Internet; effective use of search engines to locate information; communication using word processing programs, video, various apps and interactive play.

### Involvement of Family and Community – Goal 3

Family support contributed to the successes of the utilization of the Express. Comprised of parents from all five schools, a parent group was organized. The group met two times preceding the implementation of the Literacy Express and once during each summer of operation. The elementary parents were more consistent with attendance and suggestions. Comments collected were evaluated and decisions were made that supported the vision of the grant. Parent-teacher organizations collected reading materials for families during the summer rotations. Parents, grandparents and guardians of pre-school children and students

accompanied the participants to the unit and interacted with the literacy instruction, check-out and “fun” environment. During those times, parents were involved in the learning and literature was available for them to access and take away as well. English Language Learners participated in the experience while personnel worked with parents. The partnership between Appalachian State University and our school system opened doors for graduate students to volunteer and retired and practicing professors to actively be involved.

Businesses, faith-based organizations, and community leaders in the county contributed to the success of the Express through sponsorship. Skyline/Skybest installed Internet access throughout the county at various “hot spots”. Many businesses allowed space for parking the unit eg. McDonalds, Ingles, and locally owned businesses. Collaboration with the regional library provided extra projects-facilitating the learning on site and book bags filled with print related activities for early childhood participants.

#### Professional Development - Goal 4

Media Coordinators and teachers worked together to increase their knowledge of digital devices, project-based learning, coding and robotics, 3D printing, Reading Foundations, Letterland, myON and manipulation of the Clear Touch Interactive Display. By employing multiple teachers to work on the Express during the summer, ownership of the project became wide-spread throughout the district. The teachers learned how to advance blended learning specifically with literacy and technology.

#### **Alignment of Goals and Activities**

The program activities served to contribute to the bulk of objectives outlined in Goal 1 and Goal 2. Aligning back to the identified priority, free high-quality fiction and nonfiction

books and/or reading materials will be distributed to students and families along with research-based reading interventions and activities across the county during the summer months to reduce the summer slide. The Express was used during Literacy Camps at each Title I elementary school to address the third grade NC Read To Achieve legislation and requirements.

Goal 2. Books and magazines were collected for adults from each media center to house on the Express for distribution. The Express was available for special events in the county sponsored by Ashe County Arts Council, Ashe County Chamber of Commerce and Ashe County School System – Christmas in July, Spring Fest, The Very Special Arts, and Literacy Weeks. It was also for all “Back to School” events and Open Houses. Books were distributed at each event as well as each school Pre-K through 12<sup>th</sup> grades. Each school scheduled the Express for enrichment and intervention small group instruction throughout the school year. Finally, all activities and objectives were aligned with the program’s overarching purpose stated in Goal 1. myON reader, a personalized literacy environment that engages students at all reading levels by providing digital books, was available to all kindergarten through sixth grade students to read 24/7, in and out of school. The data after the first year revealed a high usage and it was recommended to extend the subscription. The data reveals hundreds of hours read.

**Table 6. myON Data from myON Reports reflecting the schools with subscription.** *An explanation of the data is found at the end of the tables.*

**September 1, 2017 through June 30, 2018**

**Westwood Elementary**

Grade Level	Student Count	Average Lexile	Books Finished	Reading Time Hours
Kindergarten	68	-35	0	0
1st Grade	92	BR20L	195	22.11
2nd Grade	60	89L	1645	236.67
3rd Grade	76	245L	1363	295
4th Grade	86	364L	2383	608.33

5th Grade	96	550L	1557	391.67
6th Grade	81	627L	1372	591.67

**Mountain View Elementary**

Grade Level	Student Count	Average Lexile	Books Finished	Reading Time Hours
Kindergarten	85	-35	134	14.64
1st Grade	65	50	1167	163.1
2nd Grade	79	135	823	187.27
3rd Grade	90	350	1743	432.36
4th Grade	89	495	1139	284.14
5th Grade	76	585	950	414.75
6th Grade	90	690	333	140.23

**Blue Ridge Elementary**

Grade Level	Student Count	Average Lexile	Books Finished	Reading Time Hours
Kindergarten	72	BR 34L	1,126	129.40
1 <sup>st</sup> grade	61	44L	1,986	354.51
2 <sup>nd</sup> grade	89	250L	1,854	430.49
3 <sup>rd</sup> grade	68	303L	1,778	441.23
4 <sup>th</sup> grade	79	447L	2,145	782.27
5 <sup>th</sup> grade	97	515L	723	345.23
6 <sup>th</sup> grade	76	598L	783	381.50

**July 1, 2018 through February 14, 2019****Westwood Elementary**

Grade Level	Student Count	Average Lexile	Books Finished	Reading Time Hours
Kindergarten	78		0	0
1st Grade	68	BR17L	188	15.86
2nd Grade	71	71L	642	67.73
3rd Grade	87	157L	2052	371.67
4th Grade	86	389L	1969	536.67
5th Grade	82	467L	1328	380
6th Grade	106	622L	806	291.67

**Mountain View Elementary**

Grade Level	Student Count	Average Lexile	Books Finished	Reading Time Hours
Kindergarten	68	BR30L	3	31
1st Grade	92	BR15L	1,265	195.26
2nd Grade	69	120L	1,267	212.00
3rd Grade	76	250L	2,007	441.16

4th Grade	86	385L	1,473	389.01
5th Grade	96	570L	2,147	900.49
6th Grade	81	590L	784	300.22

**Blue Ridge Elementary**

Grade Level	Student Count	Average Lexile	Books Finished	Reading Time Hours
Kindergarten	62	-35	294	32.21
1st Grade	92	50	1167	354.46
2nd Grade	70	135	823	529.39
3rd Grade	76	350	1743	810.39
4th Grade	86	495	1139	594.25
5th Grade	98	585	950	490.38
6th Grade	81	690	333	179.57

The Summer Reading Campaign supported through myON, put forth by The Literacy Express, was overall a successful endeavor that increased summer reading throughout the county across the grade levels. The data collected depicted approximately 900 out of 1565 elementary age students participated in the campaign with a total of 13,770 hours read . A correlation was found with the school that logged the most hours (42.5%) of reading to the greatest growth in language arts. The top readers, which were selected through hours of participation, were recognized and received literacy enriched STEAM kits to continue their developing journey in reading at the September Board of Education meeting held for Ashe County Schools. Upon reflection, the suggestion to include hardcopy reading logs to incorporate printed text in future campaigns has been acknowledged in order to reach students who lack digital accessible required for such programs such as myON.

## Evaluation Approach

The primary focus of this report is to present the findings from a project-level evaluation (Kellogg Foundation, 2004) examining *The Journey to Literacy on the Literacy Express* project. The purpose of the evaluation has been two-fold. First, the evaluation served to provide on-going suggestions for program improvement and adjustment; these recommendations were applied primarily to improve upon program implementation, process, and logistical details. Second, this evaluation served to document longitudinal and summative findings across two years of operation, and to ascertain the degree to which program goals and outcomes were achieved. This evaluation followed an Objectives/Goal-Oriented Outcomes evaluation approach (Fitzpatrick, Sanders, & Worthen, 2011) and placed a strong emphasis on involving stakeholders and program participants as much as possible throughout the process.

The greatest appeal for the objectives-oriented approach is its clarity and accessibility. This stance is easily understood, explained, and implemented (Fitzpatrick, Sanders, & Worthen, 2011). The objective of a goal-oriented approach is to hold the program accountable for what it was designed to accomplish. Specifically, to determine the extent to which a program has met the objectives it has outlined from its beginning. Thus, this approach usually lines up with the stakeholders' evaluation purpose, to determine if the overall goals have been achieved and to what extent.

A major strength of this approach is that it is simple and addresses the question of whether or not a program has successfully accomplished what it intended to do. However, a potential flaw with this approach is that the goals of a program are not always meaningful to pursue or possible to meet. Research shows that involvement from stakeholders in the

evaluation process increases program ownership and use of its results (Abma & Widdershoven, 2008; Shaw, Greene, & Mark, 2006). In light of this, the evaluation strongly emphasized engagement from various stakeholder groups (i.e., program staff, media coordinators, and teachers) to ensure the most meaningful evaluation process and product. In this instance, stakeholder participation benefited all involved and helped foster a culture of commitment, and yielded significant data used for continuous improvement.

For the purposes of this evaluation, the role of the evaluators was “evaluator as teacher” (Patton, 1997). The evaluators paid careful attention to explain the evaluation process and educate the stakeholders in understanding the evaluation findings. Additionally, value judgements about the findings were done in moderation. For example, any conclusions that required a content expert to understand, the evaluators did not draw conclusions but rather described at length and in great detail any findings. However, any claims of success as it relates to the program goals were judged by the evaluators if the results were not ambiguous. The guiding practice of the evaluators was based upon the Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation (Yarbrough, Shula, Hopson, Caruthers, 2011). The standards are used to ensure that the evaluation is geared toward meeting the stakeholders’ needs, that the process is accurate and timely, the practices are ethical, that the evaluation is honest and trustworthy, and that the evaluation has proper documentation and accountability.

### **Methodology**

The evaluator attended *The Journey to Literacy on the Literacy Express* events to better understand student engagement and enthusiasm, parent engagement, as well as teacher and media coordinator engagement. Participating in this sense enhanced the evaluator’s

contextual understanding of the program stakeholders and primary beneficiaries, the program itself, and the concept of the mobile unit, the Express. In turn, the evaluator was able to serve as a communication link with the project coordinator and the schools and staff. In more detail, this allowed for the examination of what worked well across the district, as well as challenges and barriers.

In order to explore the extent to which the overall program activities were implemented and stated goals and objectives/outcomes were attained, this evaluation was designed to facilitate the collection of quantifiable, outcome-oriented data as well as qualitative data (e.g., from open-ended survey items, interviews, secondary analysis of document review, etc.) Moreover, the evaluation used multiple measures and multiple data sources as a means of increasing the validity and accuracy of findings. The evaluation is goal-oriented and focused on assessing the extent to which evidence indicates that the activities implemented throughout the project are having the desired impact (Fitzpatrick, Sanders, & Worthen, 2004). The design has served both formative and summative purposes, intended to provide useful information to program staff for future program improvement and for ongoing dissemination. The evaluation plan includes quantitative and qualitative methods to produce a more complete representation of the complexity of the programs' activities and results.

The evaluation was designed to address the project activities and outcomes and assess the extent to which the project is achieving its objectives, but also to be responsive to emerging issues that arise during project implementation.

## Data Collection

- The surveys were administered in paper format or by online surveys via Google forms. The medium used was dependent on which the evaluator believed would receive the best response rates.
- All interviews and focus groups were conducted in person by the evaluators. Notes were transcribed and collected data was organized for analysis.
- Qualitative data collected was examined and put into categories and rated.
- Quantitative data (i.e., test scores, surveys) was analyzed using standard statistical procedures (descriptive statistics).
- Evaluation findings were discussed and confirmed with relevant stakeholders (program director, teacher assistant/tutor, summer personnel (teachers)).

## Evaluation Questions

- 1) What were the outcomes for students in regard to literacy development as a result of their participating in *The Journey to Literacy on the Literacy Express*
  - a. Did participants show growth in literacy skills as measured by Reading 3D, and EOG language arts assessments? (**GPRA outcomes**)
  - b. What other student outcomes are reported from participation in the project activities?
- 2) To what degree did the percentage of schools participating in the project whose book-to-student ratios increased?
  - a. Do media centers show improvement in the circulation of media center items?
- 3) What was the percentage of participating children who received at least one free grade and language appropriate book of their own?
  - a. What steps were taken to ensure students received a specified book
- 4) To what extent did the amount of parent/family literacy support increase as a result of the Journey to Literacy on the Literacy Express program?
  - a) Do participating parents show improvement in engagement with their children in regards to literacy activities?
  - b) Do participating parents show improvement in the amount of support received in regards to literacy matters?

- c) How valuable were the services and facilities provided by participating parents and families?

### **Evaluation Instruments: Development, Administration, and Lessons Learned**

#### **Teacher Interviews/Focus Groups**

Interviews and focus groups were conducted to gain deeper insight into the impact the Express was having at the schools with the media coordinators, teachers, parents, and students. The interview and focus group questions queried both program implementation and summative outcomes. The interview questions covered how the Express was functioning at the schools, which aspects were going well and which were challenging, how the Express may be impacting literacy development and how participating increased a desire to read and engagement in literacy activities.

The interviews and focus groups allowed the evaluator to not only form personal connections with the stakeholders, but facilitated a participatory process for the stakeholders in that they were able to have their voices heard, make recommendations/improvement, and offer a time of reflection. Furthermore, the information shared during the interviews and focus groups proved to be helpful in process and implementation improvement efforts.

Due to the first year being dedicated to the design and construction of the Literacy Express, the data and participation did not begin immediately. The implementation of the Express began in July 2017. Mini evaluations were completed in September 2017 and May 2018. The final evaluation took place in November 2018. At each point, all stakeholders were interviewed for reflection and to make adjustments in program design.

## **Lessons Learned**

Summer utilization of the Express: Even though the media coordinators and teachers had read the grant and been instructed on what the goals and outcomes would be, there was still not a clear understanding of the purpose of the Express in the extent of not just a mobile book library/distribution unit; but also a place for literacy activities to be facilitated and students to be engaged. This was overwhelming for some of the coordinators due to the multiple age groups and unstructured coming and going of participants. Getting outside their comfort zones and normality for them was awkward. Usage as an enrichment/intervention unit was much smoother because the media coordinator scheduled blocks of time, using the Google calendar, for small groups, large groups and intentional focus groups. A thorough understanding of goals/outcomes and selection of personnel to fit those goals is imperative to create the best learning environment for participants.

## **Teacher/Student/Parent Surveys**

In addition to the interviews and focus groups mentioned above, surveys were conducted to probe different areas and perspectives from each stakeholder group (Appendix C1, C2, C3, C4, & C5). The instruments surveyed implementation of the Express, participation of the express, facilitating of instructional activities, and parent awareness/suggestions regarding the locations and travel schedule.

A survey was given to teachers regarding specific job duty tasks they would feel effective during the facilitating of literacy activities on the Express. The results of this data revealed a need for evaluating the hours of when the unit was opened for best participation.

The parent surveys were conducted in English and Spanish. One school has the majority of EL students, which is a fluid percentage of 9 percent and greater, depending on the agriculture growing seasons in the county. The parent survey was available to all parents whose students participated in the Express. These surveys were available from our website, open house, and family literacy nights. This enabled the project coordinator to receive information to make adjustments, answer questions about the Express, and build excitement and engagement with the parents.

### **Lessons Learned**

Teachers and students were more apt than parents to complete the survey immediately. Surveys are abundantly used in public schools. Parents tend to put these on the “back burner” and forget to complete in a timely manner. Immediate feedback, face-to-face, would provide a greater amount of information to analyze. In the future, parent surveys will be completed immediately using a clip board/paper process with one or two explicit questions. Even though parents had adequate availability through ACS homepage and on site during events/time spent on the RV, surveys were not completed in large enough numbers to give give viable information. Ninety percent of the parental surveys were positive in nature. Regular classroom teacher surveys revealed a need for a scheduled professional development time for the RV and the resources housed inside. Many were reluctant to utilize the unit due to the unknown. A professional development day will be planned for Summer, 2019. Surveys also reflected an assumption that the RV was just for elementary students. This was addressed at principal and directors’ meetings, through social media – eg. Facebook and Twitter. Student

surveys revealed a greater need for one-on-one instruction. This was addressed during the second summer by employing a college intern to work part-time.

The EL surveys revealed that parents of English Learners prefer literacy nights that are specific to them. They are more apt to come and participate. The RV was scheduled for an EL literacy event and participation was 85% higher than just a regular literacy night.

**Table 7. Number of Collected Parent Surveys by Year of Program Implementation**

School	Summer 2017		SY 2017-18		Summer 2018		SY 2018
	Eng.	Spa.	Eng.	Spa.	Eng.	Spa.	
Ashe High	no data		no data		no data		
Ashe Middle	no data		no data		no data		
Blue Ridge	15	0	3	0	17	0	no data
Mountain View	12	0	30	18	50	6	no data
Westwood	10	0	2	0	4	0	no data

Administration of Surveys: Teacher surveys were published on Google forms and were open to complete through the ACS website/homepage. Students completed surveys with iPads online with the assistance of the teacher assistant. Typically, the parent surveys were given at either literacy events or specific Express events (i.e. rotations during the summer, after small group instruction, Open Houses).

### Analysis of Participation

Parent Engagement was varied at each location and varied by child's age. It was a requirement that parents stay with their child/children while they were active on the RV. During the visits, parents were given English Language Arts pamphlets, adult reading material and a calendar/schedule of where the RV would be parked in the county over the summer. They were also allowed to interact with their child during instruction of literacy through

project-based learning and digital technology engagement. It was apparent that excitement built through the grant period based on participation, knowledge of the opportunities of learning and the leadership of all the media coordinators, teachers and assistants that worked on the RV. As the participants arrived, all workers greeted the individuals and students were offered snacks provided through the Child Nutrition Program. Participation increased by 43% from the first summer to second summer in total visits.

Data revealed that participation was higher at one location than others during the first summer. As a result, a new location, in the same western region of the county was established to serve the high participation. The mobile unit also was invited to the regional library, summer after-school programs, and special events in the community which increased participation.

Summer 2017 – 240 children, pre-k through 12<sup>th</sup> grades, participated with 280 visits to the RV.

Summer 2018 – 343 children, pre-k through 12<sup>th</sup> grades, participated with 491 visits to the RV.

In addition, a parent, grandparent or guardian participated in literacy activities and was able to receive free adult literature.

**Table 8. Participation by sites during implementation**

Location	Summer 1 (July 17-August 17)	Summer 2 (July 2018-August 18)	Total Participants
West Jefferson, NC McDonald's	35	49	84
Jefferson, NC Mount Jefferson Baptist Church Parking Lot	40	118	188
Creston, NC Riverview Community Center	12	This site was changed due to low participation	12
Warrensville, NC Warrensville Fire Department	90	102	192
Fleetwood, NC Fleetwood Fire Department	Cancelled due to road construction	Cancelled due to road construction	n/a

Lansing, NC Lansing Fire Department	n/a	New location 68	68
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## Personnel

The Innovative Approaches to Literacy Grant afforded our county the opportunity to reduce the summer slide through the utilization of the mobile unit. This grant provided the opportunity during the summer and school year for literacy intervention/enrichment/book give a-ways/check-outs to every child in our county birth through 18. The project overseer was hired and approved by the Board of Education on April 3, 2017. This person remained in this assignment throughout the project which gave stability to the grant goal and objectives. The project overseer's ability to assist with the development of the curriculum and integration of technology enabled the project to be successful. The summer weeks required modification regarding employment. Instead of one or two teachers working the summer 6-week period, adjustments were made that multiple teachers and teacher assistants would work throughout the summer weeks. These employees brought a variety of experience and skills to the implementation. Employees had experience in many certifications which enhanced the project based learning literacy skills. During the school year, one teacher assistant worked to keep the continuity between school and with all the various classroom and literacy teachers. After evaluation of the first summer, a college intern was employed to be another "set of hands" to the multi-age children who participated on the RV. A survey was given to all personnel for the summer weeks in order to determine the schedule, drivers, and specific job duty.

*"We are LOVing the Literacy Bus here at the middle school! Thank you so much for the unimaginable amount of thought and work that went into this project. (Media Coordinator)*

*“As a teacher on the RV, the Literacy Express gave me the opportunity to meet new students and parents from across the county, schools and grade levels. It allowed me to work with teachers that I haven’t had the opportunity to work with before. It was so exciting to tell the community about the mobile unit and all the great activities available to all children in our county.” (Summer Teacher Personnel)*

### **Evaluation Findings**

The following section presents the findings from the four evaluation questions (EQ) and relevant sub-questions, each corresponding to a respective program goal. EQ1 relates to students (Goal 1), EQ2 investigated the schools participating in the project book-to-student ratios increase (Goal 2), EQ3 examined the number of participating children who received at least one free grade and language appropriate book of their own (Goal 3), and EQ4 focused on parent/community support and engagement (Goal 4).

#### **EQ1. What were the outcomes for students in regard to literacy development and academic performance as a result of their participation on the Literacy Express?**

##### **EQ1-A. Student Literacy Skills per Standardized Assessment (GPRA outcome)**

This section reports on student outcomes, specifically literacy gains as measured by the designated standardized assessments, EOG, i-Ready/Reading 3D, (2016-27, 2017-18). For the purposes of the Literacy Express Program, and as defined by the grant and program activities, the focus was on fourth and eighth graders.

Third grade ELA academic base line data for year 1 (2016-17) was collected through the state’s Beginning of Year 3<sup>rd</sup> grade assessment and the i-Ready diagnostic. Benchmarks were collected throughout the year with the End of Grade Test being the summative and final

assessment. As students moved to fourth grade in year 2 (2017-2018) data points were benchmarks, i-Ready and the 4<sup>th</sup> grade End of Grade Test. Eighth grade students began with a cohort in 7<sup>th</sup> grade (2016-17) and then followed to 8<sup>th</sup> grade (2017-2018). The ELA End of Grade test was used for measurement.

For all analyses presented in this document, only students who were enrolled in the 2016-2017 school year and with a complete test score profile were included. A complete test score profile is having base line data to ensure a relevant analysis. For the purposes of this document, the student outcomes are organized by grade level and relevant assessment to simplify discussion of student outcomes. The same groups of students were followed for the two year longitudinal study based on the target sample data to ensure all students are reading on grade level by end of third grade.

**Longitudinal Cohort Tracker by Grade and Standardized Assessment**

*The award notification of the grant was on September 28, 2016. This first year of the grant was designated to the design and construction of the RV. The first year of data began in 2017-18.*

**Table 9. i-Ready Data for 2017-2018**

**3<sup>rd</sup> Grade**

	BOY	EOY
BRES	60 %	84.25
MVES	52 %	84.4 %
WWES	45 %	81 %
All Elem. Schools	52.3%	83.22%

**4<sup>th</sup> Grade**

	BOY	EOY
BRES	35%	71%
MVES	59%	71%
WWES	29%	59%
All Elem Schools	35%	71%

**ACMS**

	BOY	EOY
7 <sup>th</sup> Grade	57.7%	74.4%
8 <sup>th</sup> Grade	57%	77.4%
ACMS 7 <sup>th</sup> & 8 <sup>th</sup> Grades	57%	75.9%

**Table 10. Reading 3D**

	BOY	EOY
BRES	60%	73%
MVES	32%	78%
WWES	47%	65%
All Elem. Schools	47% at or above grade level	72% at or above grade level

**Table 11. iReady – Progress to annual growth August, 2018 – December, 2018**

**3<sup>rd</sup> grade**

	MOY
BRES (79/80)	43% has met annual growth
MVES (78/82)	44% has met annual growth
WWES (74/74)	51% has met annual growth
All Elem. Schools	46%

**On target to exceed 70% by EOY**

**4<sup>th</sup> Grade**

	MOY
BRES (60/60)	43% has met annual growth
MVES (82/85)	37% has met annual growth
WWES (78/82)	49% has met annual growth
All Elem Schools	43%

**On target to exceed 70% by EOY**

**ACMS**

	MOY
7 <sup>th</sup> Grade (226/246)	42%
8 <sup>th</sup> Grade (212/232)	42%
ACMS 7 <sup>th</sup> & 8 <sup>th</sup> Grades	42%

**On target to exceed 70% by EOY**

**Table 11. Reading End of Grade 2016-17**

School Site	Grade	End of Grade Reading
BRES	3	69.12
MVES	3	61.72
WWES	3	62.22

<b>ACMS</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>65.73</b>
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**Table 12. Reading End of Grade 2017-18**

<b>School Site</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>End of Grade Reading</b>
<b>BRES</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>73.44</b>
<b>MVES</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>64.10</b>
<b>WWES</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>55.29</b>
<b>ACMS</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>81.00</b>

*The following section elaborates on the observed student growth of the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade cohort (school year 2016-2017 baseline) as measured by identified assessments for year 2017-2018 and year August 2018-December 2018.*

Based on the sample target of third grade students and specified goals, the following section elaborates on the observed student growth of the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade cohorts as measured by identified assessments for school years 2017-2018 and 1<sup>st</sup> semester August 2018-December 2018 as applicable.

For the 2017-2018 school year, i-Ready data reveals that out of a possible 228 student population that 216 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students tested. These students grew +37 scale score points above their targeted growth. Out of a possible 7<sup>th</sup> grade 223 student population, 204 were tested. These students grew +15 scale score points above their targeted growth. Reading 3D data reveals a 72% growth in 3<sup>rd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> grade. End of Grade assessments in 3<sup>rd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> grade shows growth in achievement in two of our three elementary schools with the highest achievement at 73.44%. End of grade assessments in 7<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> grade shows growth in achievement from 65.73% to 81%.

#### EQ-1B. Additional Student-Level Outcomes

The Literacy Express sought to foster a culture of literacy both at home and at school, to maximize literacy development and reaching achievement of all children. As intended, the project affected students beyond assessment scores.

*The following comments reflect how the project helped students develop their literacy skills and promote interest in reading according to administrators, teachers, parents and students.*

*Administrators:*

*“As the principal of Westwood Elementary School, I absolutely love the Literacy Express. During the time it was parked at WWES, every class signed up for a time and the assistant on the bus was wonderful. It houses age appropriate materials that align with 21<sup>st</sup> century skills! Students from kindergarten-6<sup>th</sup> grade were so excited when it was their turn to go visit the Literacy Express. Every child in our school also received a free book of their choice, and students especially enjoyed the technology, story boards, and the using the green screen to video skits they had written. Our older students also explored apps to gain an understanding of a variety of literacy skills. I am so excited that our students have this opportunity! Not only is it wonderful as it travels to places in our community, but students are so excited when it is parked at our school to use as well. I feel that it is another way to get students excited about literacy, learning, and working cooperatively!” Jennifer Holden, Principal*

*“The enthusiasm is continuing to grow for our Ashe County Schools Literacy Express. In November, Blue Ridge Elementary showcased the Literacy Express on our Creative Leaders Parent Night. Parents had the opportunity to visit the bus, view the extensive book library and receive an overview of the various available technologies. Parents even used the Clear Touch board to complete literacy activities using the Snowflake app. In December, the Literacy Express was utilized to host a Battle of the Books Party. Students enrolled in the Battle of the Books stayed afterschool to partake in the many amenities of the Literacy Express as a reward for their reading success.” Callie Grubb, Principal*

*“My class thoroughly loved the environment. They created an interview based on a non-fiction book they had read on the bus, recorded each group using an iPad, used the green screen to depict the environment of each region, and presented to the whole class. It generated a different level of engagement. They couldn’t wait until the next literacy project on the RV!” Erin Hayes, 5<sup>th</sup> grade teacher*

*“The kids loved it! It was a different and exciting environment for them to explore and learn.” Mandy Keziah, 3<sup>rd</sup> grade teacher*

EQ2. To what degree did the percentage of schools participating in the project whose book-to-student ratios increase?

The following section addresses the media coordinator and book distribution within their school site. Due to the partnership with the media coordinators and the fact that all 5

media coordinators had ownership in the project, each school site increased in book distribution of free books. Media coordinators worked weeks during the summer on the Literacy Express to provide their expertise and facilitation of projects. Students from their individual schools felt safe with them on the unit. During the school year, they were the “hub” for all regular and specialist teachers to schedule time slots for utilization of the RV, with special emphasis given to literacy teachers with small groups. Book distribution totaled 6,744 books among the schools.

EQ 2-A Do media centers show improvement in the circulation of media center items?

Library Circulation Statistics for 2016-2019 showed an increase at the three Title I elementary schools. An increase of 53% was depicted in the data. This data does not include summer circulation. The table below depicts the statistics for library circulation at each school site for the period of August, 2016 through June 1, 2019 (applying projections and past historical data)

**Table 13. Library Circulation Statistics**

<b>Library Circulation Statistics for 2016 - 2019</b>				
<b>School</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Circulations</b>	<b>Months</b>	<b>Projected</b>
<b>ACHS</b>	2018 - 2019	5818	Aug - Jan	>1%
	2017 - 2018	11,651	Aug - June	
	2016 - 2017	12,072	Aug - June	
<b>ACMS</b>	2018 - 2019	6,259	Aug - Jan	>1%
	2017 - 2018	12,510	Aug - June	
	2016 - 2017	15,362	Aug - June	
<b>BRES</b>	2018 - 2019	18,490	Aug - Jan	12.66%
	2017 - 2018	32,823	Aug - June	
	2016 - 2017	34,167	Aug - June	
<b>MVES</b>	2018 - 2019	15,250	Aug - Jan	22.52%
	2017 - 2018	24,894	Aug - June	

	2016 - 2017	24,947	Aug - June	
<b>WWES</b>	2018 - 2019	15,854	Aug - Jan	17.69%
	2017 - 2018	26,943	Aug - June	
	2016 - 2017	30,432	Aug - June	

EQ3. What was the percentage of participating children who received at least one free grade and language appropriate book of their own?

Major focus was put on providing books for every student that participated in the project, which totaled 2026 participants. Multiple books were given to certain grade levels based on age, level and school site media coordinator and literacy teacher recommendations: prekindergarten, third grade, seventh grade and high school students in English classes during the grant period. English learners also received a variety of books determined by EL teachers. Material was given to parents pertaining to adult literacy opportunities along with print in the specified language. The mobile unit was stationed at the Ashe Early Learning Center which serves our prekindergarten children in our county. Participation in special focus weeks allowed distribution to children from birth to pre-kindergarten. Media coordinators were able to share their knowledge of picture books and children’s literature with the pre-k teachers and parents. All children came away with multiple age-appropriate books and instructional literacy activities to take home. All children who participated in the school’s county-wide pre-k and kindergarten screenings received multiple books and each rising kindergartener received a specific book for exploration and further activities during the first week of kindergarten at each elementary site. Table 14 below depicts the distribution of free books by sites, events and time periods. A total of 8,868 age-appropriate and leveled books were given away to ages 0 through 18 throughout the county, not just public school children.

**Table 14. Distribution of Free Books**

Sites	Summer, 2017 July 1- August 31	Year 2 September 1 – June 1, 2018	Summer, 2018 June 1, 2018-August 31, 2018
AELC – Pre-K		720	
Blue Ridge		417	
Mountain View		474/EL books 432	
Westwood		560	
ACMS		460	
ACHS			
Literacy Express Events/Rotations	678	n/a	483
Read To Achieve Literacy Camps – Grades 1-3			1,020 books with Grab and Go Bag Literacy Activities (70)
<b>SUB-TOTAL</b>	<b>678</b>	<b>3,006</b>	<b>1,503</b>

Sites	Year 2 September 1 – June 1, 2018	Summer, 2018 June 1, 2018-August 31, 2018	Extension September 1 – December 30, 2018
AELC – Pre-K	500	720	
Blue Ridge	188		100
Mountain View	100/EL books 300		68 + 18 literacy bundles for EL
Westwood	98		
ACMS	100		750
ACHS	260	153	
Literacy Express Events/Rotations	n/a		344
<b>SUB-TOTAL</b>	<b>1,546</b>	<b>873</b>	<b>1262</b>

**TOTAL NUMBER OF BOOKS GIVEN AWAY – 8,868**

### Print Materials

The number of print materials purchased to create a mobile unit for checkout was used to examine the degree to which the summer check-out contributed to improvement of book circulation at the school media centers. In making print material purchases, the schools' media

coordinators selected new titles based on student recommendations, and professional lists such as School Library Journal, Starred Book Reviews and Horn Book. Each media coordinator selected books from different categories and genres:

- Non-fiction based on
  - high-interest books such as animals, sports, military, famous brands, etc.
  - how to books (social media projects, creating using everyday objects, science projects, etc.)
  - science and social studies

Note: The above selection was aligned with the project based learning activities that were provided during the summer rotations.

- Titles that were required summer reading at the high school by English department
- Titles that were on the Battle of Books list for elementary, middle and highs
- Titles that students loved to read evidenced by circulation

**The total number of books purchased to house and check-out on the Literacy Express was 2,935 for grades pre-k through 12<sup>th</sup> grades.**

### **Electronic Materials**

Kindles were purchased through the funding to allow students a different tool to use to increase their reading experience. The Kindle was most effective with the books clubs and special focus groups such as the elementary and middle school Battle of the Books students. Being able to flip back to a page electronically was a plus for these students. Another advantage of the Kindle, was the collection of books was greater due to limited space on the mobile unit. The Kindle is lighter and easier to store. The Appalachian Regional Library provided access to free e-books. However, since all three elementary schools are Title 1 schools, the lack of personal electronic devices and Internet access at home did create some challenges. The evaluation showed that students were more apt to check-out the physical book.

### **Technology**

The district's Director of Technology and Media was part of the team that drove the grant. Guidance was given throughout the development and implementation of the grant. Digital devices were chosen based on purpose – integration of literacy and technology to enhance student achievement. Many subscriptions related to literacy were already purchased through the district. The team did not duplicate, but purchased items that were easily used without much professional learning and not a great need for technical support. The devices were purchased with the idea they would fit into the curriculum for students but at the same time engage and motivate the learners. Features were considered that aligned with mobility and portability, expense, and durability. Apps and software were investigated for range availability to use with a variety of devices. Accessories, peripherals and ports were discussed for proper protection and connections. The technicians from each site worked with the initial deployment, customization and on-going management. Accessibility to multi-age students and those with particular learning needs was another factor in selection. Other considerations were given to replacements, consumables, compatibility, shared usage, products with higher resolution and interactive capabilities, offline capability, and access to the internet.

### **Partnerships**

Ashe County Schools partnered with various businesses, agencies and faith-based groups to fulfill the implementation of the summer rotation to reduce the “summer slump”. A local provider was generous to equip the mobile unit with Internet access at each sight – seven in all. Partners included: Skyline/Skybest, Ingle's, McDonalds, West Jefferson First Baptist Church, Lansing Fire Department, Warrentsville Fire Department, Riverview Community Center, Ralph Davis-retired business land owner, and Appalachian Regional Library. Volunteers

consisted of a retired pastor, Appalachian State University which included professors, student interns and student teachers. Many of the student teachers were completing their 5<sup>th</sup> year program with a Master's Degree in reading. This allowed them to model literacy specialists and media coordinators on a regular basis. The Reading Recovery Organization assisted during school visits. All of these volunteers were trained in Reading Foundations. Parent Teacher Organizations at each site collected free materials to distribute to parents and adults.

### **Professional Development**

Trainings were offered in:

- Letterland – a multi-sensory program for teaching foundational reading skills to younger students.
- Reading Foundations (Reading Research to Classroom Practice) – Researched-based instructional practices in reading
- Clear-Touch Training – Provided by company on usage of the interactive board and software
- Project-Based Learning (PBL) – Teaching method used during summer rotations
- Integrating Technology with Literacy Instruction – Integration of digital tools to teach the Common Core literacy standards aligned with North Carolina
- International Society for Technology in Education Conference – To gain knowledge of literacy based approaches embedding technology tools (available to one due to expense)

i-Ready Diagnostic provided detailed reports that pinpointed student abilities and areas of need, down to the sub-skill level. The reports allowed for our reading specialists to create detailed, individual lesson plans for differentiating instruction with small groups who utilized the RV during the school year at each elementary site.

**EQ4. To what extent did the amount of parent/family literacy support increase as a result of the Literacy Express?**

A key component of the Literacy Express, with major emphasis during the summer rotations, was to extend the opportunity to which parents were engaged in literacy activities with their children. This engagement had many forms and included promoting literacy by reading with their children, encouraging their child to spend time reading by checking out age-appropriate and best interest books, engaging directly in the literacy activities with their children, and attending literacy oriented events at their school site and in the community. Program staff sought to discover how much participation in the Literacy Express and exposure to the various activities (i.e., school-wide book giveaways, literacy nights, adult book and magazine distributions, active project-based learning with child) could influence the desire to read and improve skills.

The three areas of interest include: how often parents engage with their children in regard to literacy activities, the degree to which the Literacy Express has helped provide parents support in literacy matters, and how much parents are engaging in external literacy activities (i.e., community events).

Parent survey data from the 2017-2018 school year and the 2018 first semester were analyzed for the purpose of the investigating impact of the Literacy Express on the parents. For the purpose of this evaluation, the parent survey served as the primary source of data informing these three areas. Data collected through the media coordinator and teacher focus groups also informed parent involvement from the teacher's perspective, and thus are included in the analysis when pertaining to the area. The data sources used to inform impact of the program on parents are as follows: Parent Survey, Media Coordinator Focus Groups, Teacher focus Groups

## Parent Engagement

### ***Year 1: 2016-2017***

The Literacy Express did not officially launch until the second year of the grant, there was no ***data collected in regard to the participating parents during year 1.***

### ***Year 2: 2017-2018 (Summer)***

The 1<sup>st</sup> summer period of implementation, parents/grandparents/guardians were actively involved with their child/children by being actively engaged in the literacy activities offered on the RV as well as reading with their child/children. Many of these returned multiple times to the RV, sometimes just for return and check-out of books as well as spending time with ongoing activities. Data revealed 280 visits to the RV with parent attendance equaling 168. Many of the children that visited were in the same family.

Over the course of the first summer, there grew an increased confidence in parents to be involved in literacy activities. Parents posed questions to be clarified and were actively engaged with their child. As the mobile unit rotated throughout the county, parents became more involved and comfortable in their ability to assist their child in reading and book selection. Through surveys administered, evidence reflected that parents saw how important it is to be involved in their child's reading at home in order to develop literacy skills.

During the 2<sup>nd</sup> summer period of implementation, the number of participants increased by 46% which showed enthusiasm and interest for the project. Below are quotes from participating parents on the Literacy Express sharing how the project-based learning influenced literacy activities with their children (Appendix D1).

*“The teacher assistant/tutor is truly perfect for the job. She’s flexible, friendly, and smart. I think it takes a special person to work with so many age groups as gracefully as she does. This is a wonderful experience for our students in Ashe County.” (Parent)*

*“Reading with my child has made me feel confident that he will reach his next level.” (3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Parent)*

**Lessons Learned:**

Parent engagement is indeed a priority in increasing literacy development; however, the Literacy Express project acknowledges that many of these families may have low levels of engagement of literacy activities because they may not have access to literacy resources. Thus, this project afforded all children across the system the ability to have literacy materials, check-out books, and provide adult text and magazines for parents.

### Conclusions and Recommendations

This evaluation collected information and evidence to state that The Literacy Express project was implemented with fidelity. This report displays the substantial progress that was made in achieving the specified program goals. The evaluation findings summary on Goal 1 revealed the engagement of children and teens throughout the county involved in project-based literacy activities using a variety of technology tools and devices during the summer rotations. Exit slips revealed the engagement of parents with their child/children during the learning experiences and multiple check-outs of age-appropriate and leveled books. Participants received free books along with free literature for their parent/guardian. This was all accomplished through the availability of the mobile classroom throughout the school year. Through findings related to small group instruction during the year, the mobile classroom was utilized 85% of the time at each location. Teachers utilized the rich technology and literacy environment to facilitate instruction as determined by need and enrich students' understanding and application of literacy through multiple avenues. Goal 3 included the involvement of the community and parents. The community embraced the project by supporting the vision through providing areas to park, contributing to public relations, providing Internet access and volunteering multiple hours. Evidence through surveys revealed parents were eager to engage in the project and encouraged their students to read. A drastic increase in engagement was observed with 87% of English Learner parents participating compared to the previous year of 33%. The professional development opportunities enabled to media coordinators, teachers, volunteers and student teachers to grow in reading instruction, blended learning embedding technology, and creating and executing project based learning activities to increase literacy skills.

## Recommendations:

For this evaluation, recommendations are most appropriate in consideration of context of implementation. For this reason, most of the recommendations are presented as “lessons Learned” through the Evaluation Finding section of this report. Other findings related to program design and implementation is presented below:

- The Literacy Express was available to every child in Ashe County. Through the use of Google Tools, sign-in documents of participants were collected. Due to the limited number of parent surveys completed on the school’s website, consideration of requiring a check-out and completion of exit survey online would be recommended for valid data.
- A time during the school year for all staff to explore the mobile unit and rich literacy environment will aid in ongoing and future use.
- The evaluation showed evidence of community involvement. It is recommended to also include community professionals to be guests during the summer rotations to view the impact of the mobile unit for ongoing sustainability.
- Due to the time to design and construct the mobile unit, data was a year behind in relevance to baseline, collection and longitudinal evidences. It is recommended that ongoing data be analyzed to see the correlation between the increased engagement of literacy activities during the summer months and student growth in all tested areas.
- Reflecting on the data from myON and the hours read, it would be beneficial for the school system to continue this service with the elementary schools. The correlation of high growth to the percentage of time on reading is astounding.

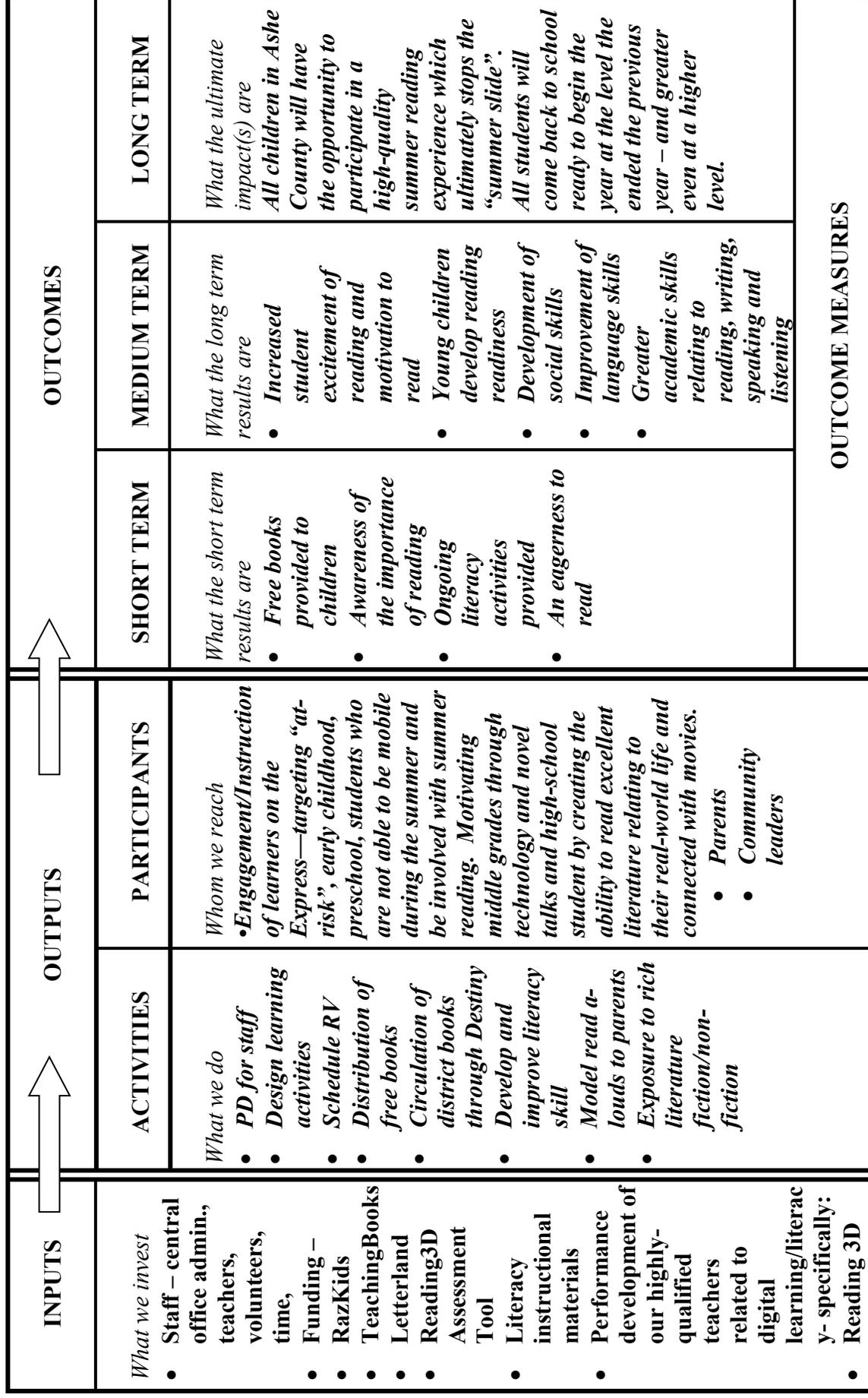
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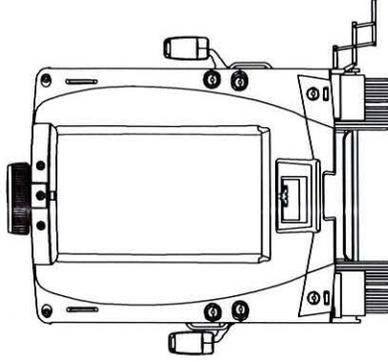
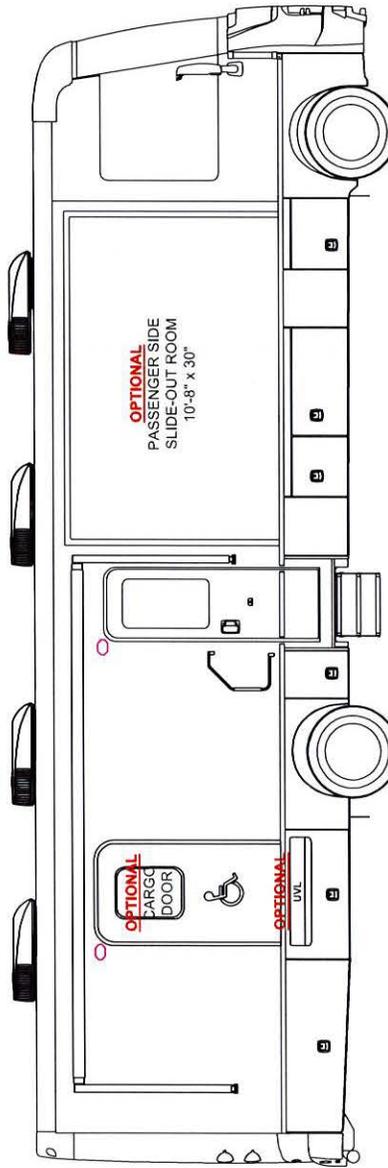
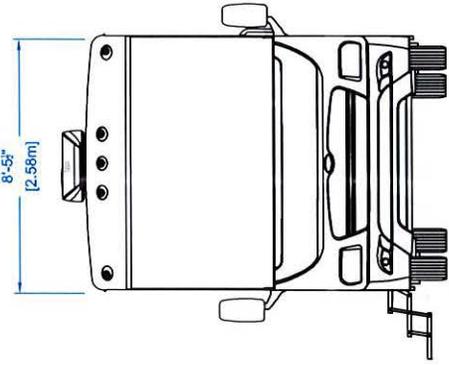
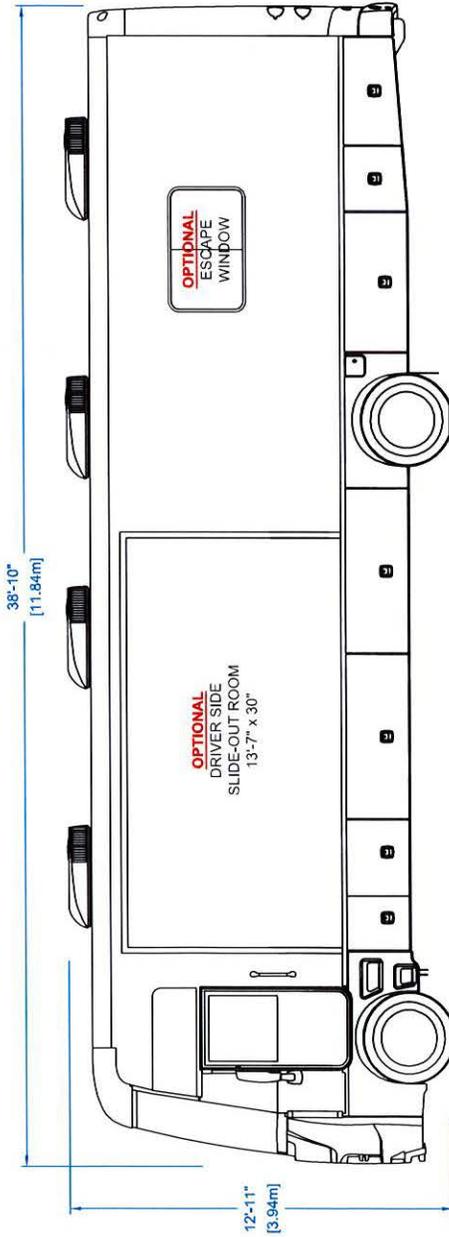
## Appendix A1 - Logic Model – Innovative Approaches to Literacy Project – Program Logic Model (ACS)

**Goal(s):** Stop the “Summer Slide” by advancing literacy and academic performance by engaging children and teens in reading and reading-related activities with imbedded technology tools during the summer months.



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● SMART</li> <li>● iPads/Kindles</li> </ul> <p>Grant funding RV fully equipped to inspire, engage, motivate and diminish the “summer slide”.</p>			<p>Benefits for all the schools will be monitored regarding student achievement and family partnerships.</p>	<p>Families will experience enhanced self-efficacy, better understanding and more positive experiences with educators and schools.</p>	<p>This positive outcome should be across all families from all diversities, cultures, ethnic groups, linguistic and socioeconomic backgrounds.</p>
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Appendix B1-Exterior Plans for Mobile Unit



**EXTERIOR ELEVATIONS**

**MAKE/MODEL:** WINNEBAGO 2018 - WFJ38S  
**CHASSIS:** Ford V-10 Gasoline or Freightliner Diesel  
**G.W.:** 26,000 lbs.  
**DESC:** 39 FT. Mobile Platform  
w/ LH & RH Slide-outs

**DIMENSIONS:**  
EXT: 38'-10" L x 8'-5.5" W x 12'-11" H (W/ ROOF A/C)  
METRIC: (11.84m L x 2.58m W x 3.94m H)  
INT: 30'-8" L (BEHIND CAB) x 8'-1/2" W x 7'-0" H  
METRIC: (9.35m L x 2.45m W x 2.13m H)

**OPTIONAL SLIDE-OUT ROOMS:**  
LH Slide-Out: 13'-7" (4.14m) L x 30" (.76m) W  
RH Slide-Out: 10'-8" (3.25m) L x 30" (.76m) W

**WINNEBAGO**  
[www.winnebagoind.com](http://www.winnebagoind.com)  
605 W. Crystal Lake Rd  
Forest City, IA 50436  
Toll Free: (800) 492-9135  
Phone: (641) 585-6261  
Fax: (641) 585-6682  
Email: [dhall@wgo.net](mailto:dhall@wgo.net)

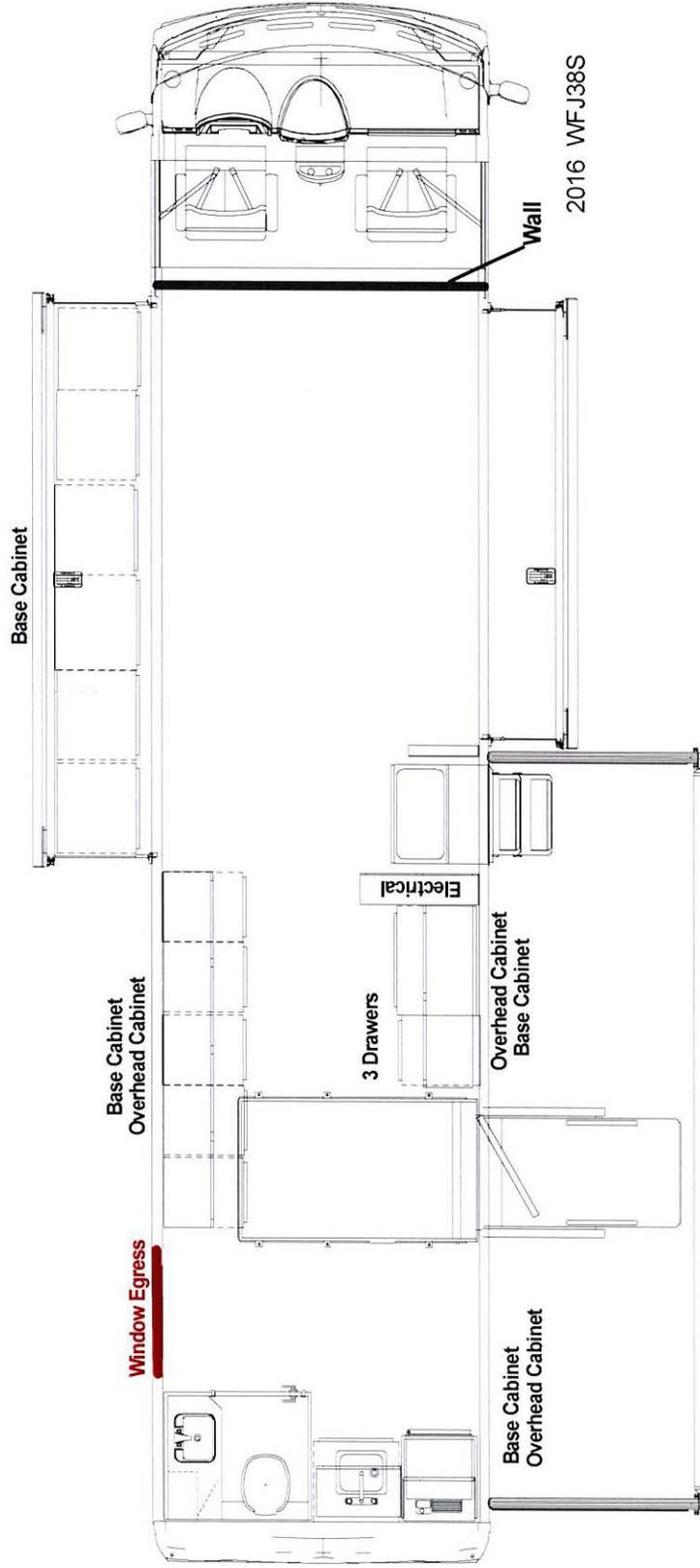
**PROJECT NAME:**  
Winnebago Industries  
2018 - 38' WFJ38S  
Exterior Elevations w/ OPT Slide-Outs

NOTE: THIS PLAN IS THE INTELLECTUAL AND SOLE PROPERTY OF WINNEBAGO INDUSTRIES, INC. AND IS NOT TO BE COPIED OR PASSED ON TO OTHER PARTIES WITHOUT WINNEBAGO INDUSTRIES, INC.'S WRITTEN PERMISSION.

PO NUMBER:	S/N NUMBER:
DRAWN BY: BAF	SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"
REV #0	DESCRIPTION
	DATE
	INITIALS
	BAF
	02-02-17

APPROVED FOR PRODUCTION  
DATE

Appendix B2-Floor Plans for Mobile Unit



UVL Wheelchair Lift Location  
Lower Compartment Application

CLIENT APPROVAL  
 X \_\_\_\_\_  
 DATE \_\_\_\_\_

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 WINNEBAGO INDUSTRIES INC. PO BOX 152, FOREST CITY, IA. 50436

Appendix C1

# Teacher's Response - Literacy Express

Literacy Express Reflection

Your email address ([lesia.goodman@ashe.k12.nc.us](mailto:lesia.goodman@ashe.k12.nc.us)) will be recorded when you submit this form. Not [lesia.goodman](#)? [Sign out](#)

1. What was a positive about your experience on the Literacy Express?

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2. What was an area of need for the future?

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3. What other resources would you like to see on the Literacy Express?

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4. Mark only one oval.

Option 1

Send me a copy of my responses.



Appendix C2

# Literacy Express Worker Reflection

Open Response Reflective Survey for THE LITERACY EXPRESS Grant

Your email address ([lesia.goodman@ashe.k12.nc.us](mailto:lesia.goodman@ashe.k12.nc.us)) will be recorded when you submit this form. Not [lesia.goodman](#)? [Sign out](#)

\* Required

1. Please provide a reflective narrative of your teaching/working experience on the RV. \*

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2. What aspects of your working experience went well? \*

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3. What aspects of your working experience could have gone better? \*

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---

---

4. Suggestions for the future of the RV include: \*

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Send me a copy of my responses.

## Appendix C3

**THE LITERACY EXPRESS Student Survey**

This is a survey to collect your thoughts on THE LITERACY EXPRESS.

\* Required

1. **Email address** \*

---

2. **What is your first name?** \*

---

3. **What school do you attend?** \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- Blue Ridge Elementary
- Mountain View Elementary
- Westwood Elementary
- Ashe County Middle School
- Ashe County High School
- Homeschool
- Private School
- Preschool
- Ashe Early Learning Center
- Ashe County Early College

4. **Are you planning on visiting the RV this summer?** \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- Yes
- No

5. **Did you visit the RV last summer?** \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- Yes
- No

6. **Did your teacher take you on the RV this school year?** \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- Yes
- No

**7. If you did get to go on the RV during the school year, what did you do during your time on the RV?**

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**8. What is your favorite thing about THE LITERACY EXPRESS RV? \***

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**9. What would you like to see added to the RV? \***

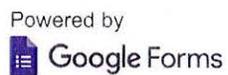
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## Appendix C4

# Literacy Express Parent Survey

This is a survey for Parents to share their thoughts about THE LITERACY EXPRESS. The Ashe County Schools Literacy Express will be traveling through the county again this summer. The goal is for students to have the opportunity to check-out books and be involved in hands-on learning. In order to best serve you, we would like your input. This year, the RV will be located in Warrensville, the Lansing Fire Department, McDonalds, and Mountain View Elementary.

**\* Required**

**1. Email address \***

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**2. Please provide us with the following information: Your name, how many children you have, the age of your children, and where your children attend school. \***

---

**3. Did you visit THE LITERACY EXPRESS last year? \***

*Mark only one oval.*

Yes

No

**4. Are you planning on visiting THE LITERACY EXPRESS this year? \***

*Mark only one oval.*

Yes

No

**5. How many times have you visited the RV? \***

*Mark only one oval.*

None

1-3 Times

3-6 Times

Over 7 times

**6. Which location (last year) did you visit most? \***

*Mark only one oval.*

- Warrensville
- Riverview
- Mt. Jefferson Baptist
- McDonalds
- I did not visit.

**7. Which location will you visit this year? Check all that apply. \***

*Check all that apply.*

- McDonalds
- Warrensville
- Lansing Fire Department
- Mountain View Elementary
- Ashe Early Learning Center
- I do not plan on visiting.

**8. If we were to add a new location site, where would you like that location to be located? \***

\_\_\_\_\_

**9. What is your favorite aspect/activity offered on THE LITERACY EXPRESS? \***

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**10. If you have anything you would like to comment on regarding locations, availability, and running times of the RV, please let us know.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



Nombre del niño(a) \_\_\_\_\_ Nivel(es) del libro recibido \_\_\_\_\_

Nombre del maestro(a) \_\_\_\_\_ Firma del Padre \_\_\_\_\_

**Preguntas para los padres:**

1. ¿Le gustó leer los libros nuevos con su hijo(a)? Si o no
2. Menciona algo que usted aprendió de la lectura con su hijo(a).

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**Preguntas para el/la estudiante:**

1. ¿Le gustó leer los libros nuevos? Si o no
2. Escribe algo que aprendiste al leer los libros.

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Nombre del niño(a) \_\_\_\_\_ Nivel(es) del libro recibido \_\_\_\_\_

Nombre del maestro(a) \_\_\_\_\_ Firma del Padre \_\_\_\_\_

**Preguntas para los padres:**

1. ¿Le gustó leer los libros nuevos con su hijo(a)? Si o no
2. Menciona algo que usted aprendió de la lectura con su hijo(a).

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**Preguntas para el/la estudiante:**

1. ¿Le gustó leer los libros nuevos? Si o no
2. Escribe algo que aprendiste al leer los libros.

---



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Child's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Book Level(s) Received \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature \_\_\_\_\_

**Parent Questions:**

1. Did you enjoy reading the new books with your child? YES or NO
2. Name one thing you learned from reading with your child.

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**Student Questions:**

1. Did you enjoy reading the new books? YES or NO
2. Name something you learned from reading the books.

---



---



---



Child's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Book Level(s) Received \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature \_\_\_\_\_

**Parent Questions:**

1. Did you enjoy reading the new books with your child? YES or NO
2. Name one thing you learned from reading with your child.

---



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**Student Questions:**

1. Did you enjoy reading the new books? YES or NO
2. Name something you learned from reading the books.

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To Ashe County Schools:

*It is with great pleasure that I write this letter of appreciation for the Ashe County Schools Literacy Express RV Camper. As a mother and teacher, I am grateful for the opportunities that this experience has provided to my personal children as well as students in my classes. During the 2017 summer, I frequently took my 5 year old daughter to visit the Literacy Express at Riverview Community Center and Warrensville Fire Department locations. At both places, my family was well received and invited to explore the RV and its technology and literary resources. My daughter enjoyed activities centered on pattern making, reading, animal investigation, transportation, and more. She also enjoyed a free snack and library check-out to borrow brand new books to bring home. Sometimes, we were even given a new book to add to our family library. I firmly believe that positive experiences with the Literacy Express helped bridge my daughter's transition between home and starting kindergarten, through encouraging an appreciation of reading at an early age. Additionally, I was thankful that I could recommend the Literacy Express to other local families as a tool of support and fun. Since we live in a disadvantaged socioeconomic region, our students have a need for exposure to a variety of literature. The Literacy Express provided an outreach service that was unparalleled in our community and encouraged the idea that school and home work together to support children in an inclusive manner. Also, I have appreciated that the Literacy Express travels to local elementary schools for rotational visits with different student populations. My students have enjoyed activities like robot building technology. Overall, I am very thankful that Ashe County has been blessed with such an awesome resource for families. I look forward to seeing how the Literacy Express continues to evolve students in reading and motivation to learn.*

*Best Regards,*

*Allie Shoemake*

*1199 Rich Hill Road*

*Creston, NC 28615*

# The Literacy Express

more than just books...

3D PRINTING

Hands-On Inquiry

## Digital Tools WEEKLY ACTIVITIES

Free Literature Checkout

Open to ages 3 - 18

### Summer Reading Camp Schedule

Week One: June 13-18 Blue Ridge Elementary

Week Two: June 19-22 Mountain View Elementary

Week Three: June 25-28 Westwood Elementary

July 7th

Christmas In July

## LOCATION SCHEDULE

2 July  
McDonalds

3 July  
McDonalds

4 July  
Closed

5 July  
Early Learning Center

6 July  
Early Learning Center

Daily Times: 10 AM- 4PM

Monday  
Warrensville

Tuesday  
Lansing Fire Dept.

Wednesday  
McDonalds

Thursday  
Mountain View

Running July 9th through August 9th

powered by

Appendix F1 - Image of The Literacy Express



Appendix F2 - Image of students participating on The Literacy Express





Appendix F4 - Student choosing books at The Literacy Express



Appendix F5 - Student participating during the Summer Rotations at The Literacy Express



Appendix F6 - Student receiving a free class set book



