

WASHINGTON COUNTY BUILDS TEACHER CAPACITY TO IMPROVE READING IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Challenge

- Low reading scores were a countywide issue.
- Many secondary students came into high school as struggling readers.
- Secondary educators had few strategies to reach struggling readers.
- Students were unable to apply what they learned in reading intervention classes into content areas.



Solution

DURING 2018-19 SY (YEAR 1)

- Integrated job-embedded professional learning at South Hagerstown High School through Reading Apprenticeship (RA) Framework:
 - South High is the most urban school in Washington County and has the highest percentage of students living in poverty.
 - Implemented core content-specific professional learning through RA teacher ~~institutes~~.
- The pilot group included 60 students.
 - 30% of the student in the pilot group were special education (SWD) students.
 - 40% of the students in the pilot group were minority students.
- Students were assigned to a reading intervention class. Teachers of English, science, social studies, and a reading interventionist also engaged in collaborative RA professional learning.

- Those core classes also included students who were not part of the intervention class. This design enabled students not in the pilot group also to benefit from high-quality professional learning focused on social, personal, cognitive, and knowledge-building skills.
- In monthly follow-up professional learning, teachers used Leading for Literacy protocols to look at student work and discuss strategies; a WestEd RA coach was brought in to support teachers with classroom visits and collaborative planning; teachers attended RA follow-up professional learning.

DURING 2019-20 SY (YEAR 2)

- Expanded to 3 middle and 3 high schools:
 - 128 students identified for intervention; again, the design was a deliberate spread to more than just intervention classes.
 - The district created literacy lead teacher positions for the 4 teachers at South High. These teachers opened their classroom for observations from other teachers.
- Monthly team meetings are held at all schools implementing RA in Year 2.
- Implemented a book study for *Reading for Understanding* with 22 participants from 9 middle and high schools encompassing a variety of grades and contents.

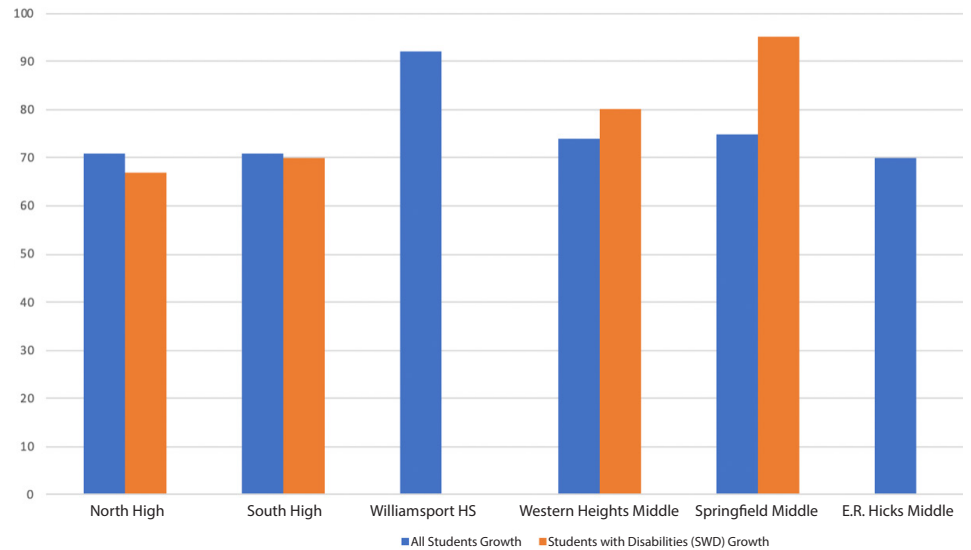
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Impact

- Growth was observed in all subgroups of students.
- Three additional middle schools began RA intervention class (Western Heights, E.R. Hicks, and Springfield Middle Schools).
- Kids were using RA.
- Teachers shared anecdotal notes indicating increased student engagement and participation.
- Changes in teacher practice included:
 - Improved progress monitoring/tracking of student data.
 - Increased involvement in professional development.
 - Increased interest in collaboration among content area teachers.
 - More time for independent reading and student-led discussion.
 - Increased disciplinary literacy instruction in all content areas.
 - Awareness of student difficulties and willingness to provide supports.
- District continued to:
 - Provide a stipend for literacy lead teachers.
 - Create opportunities for peer observation.
 - Build intervention classrooms that enhance reading.
 - Provide resources to classrooms to support instruction.

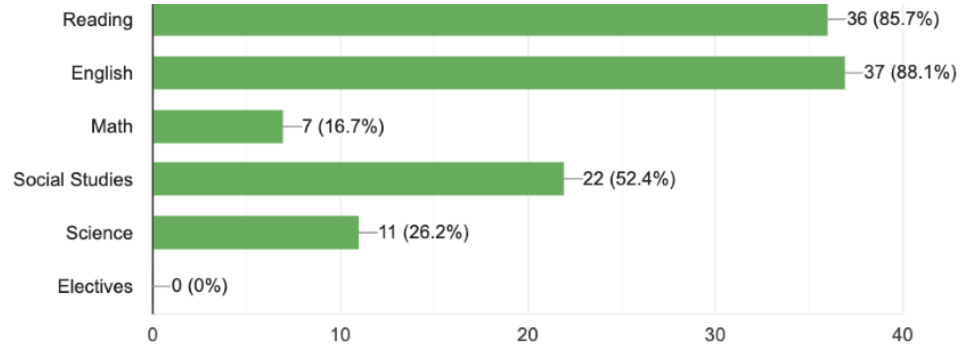
Washington County Public Schools Reading Apprenticeship growth December 2019



To students:

In which classes are the RA strategies most helpful?

42 responses



To students:

Do you use RA strategies in classes even when the teacher doesn't make you?

42 responses

