

STAR Testing - First Grade 2016 - 2017

The First Grade Cohort group was comprised of 287 first grade students from Ohio County School District, Hartford, Kentucky. All students enrolled in first grade classes, including students with special needs and limited English Proficiency, were included in this study.

Demographics

Grade Level	First Grade	Ethnicity	%
Population	287	African American	1
Boys/Girls	53% / 47%	Asian	0
Assessment Instrument	Standardized Test for Reading Assessment (STAR) Early Literacy	Caucasian	92
		Latino/Hispanic	7
Reduced-cost Lunch	68%	Other	0
ELL	4%	IEP	6%

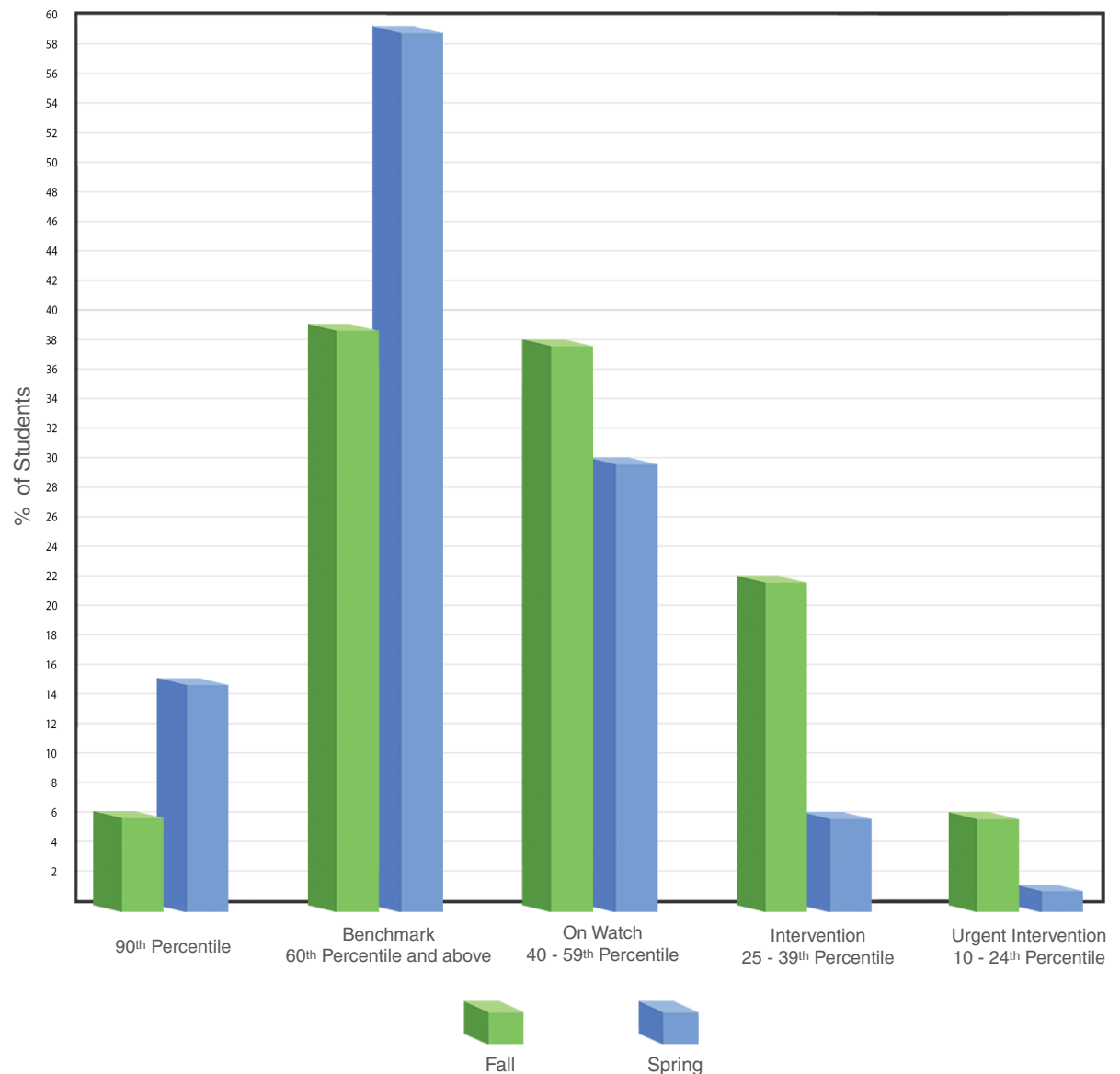


Figure 1. First Grade STAR Results – Spring. STAR Early Literacy results organized by category to determine proficiency and identify students in need of interventions.

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Methodology and Test Instrument

This cohort included 287 students in the 2016-2017 school year. Teachers in the study were credentialed to teach in their home state and were trained in the methodology and use of the *Zoo-phonics Multisensory Language Arts Program*. At the outset of this study, teachers, aides, and principals agreed to use the *Zoo-phonics Program* with fidelity.

The STAR Early Literacy Assessment was administered to all enrolled students at the beginning of the school year in August and again in May. All students were included in the study regardless of ability or language.

In order to raise the standards for teachers and students, the Ohio County School District set the benchmark at 60% rather than the 55th percentile benchmark which is established by STAR.

Analysis

A General Linear Model with Repeated Measures was used to determine proficiency levels and gains between assessment periods for this cohort.

- Data from the 2016-2017 school year were compared for six schools using a pre-post analysis of STAR Early Literacy scores. Scores for all schools were aggregated for analysis.
- The scores were divided into five classifications based upon scaled scores for each assessment period. Each classification was defined by a range between 300 and 900. Additionally, students were grouped by normed percentile rankings corresponding to each classification level.
- The benchmark for Ohio County Schools was set at the 60th percentile, which is higher than the 55th percentile benchmark established by STAR.

Students were grouped by normed percentile rankings corresponding to five classification levels. Ohio County School District administration set the benchmark at the 60th percentile because they wanted to raise the standards and student performance in their schools. This is higher than the “default benchmark” established by STAR, which is set at the 55th percentile. The “On Watch” category was set between the 40th and 60th percentiles and the two Intervention categories were set below the 40th percentile.

Findings

The results of the fall assessment revealed that 45% of the cohort scored above the benchmark, leaving 38% in the On Watch category and another 28% in the two Intervention categories.

By the end of the school year, the spring assessment indicated that a major shift had taken place. The cohort demonstrated significant gains in proficiency with about 75% of the students scoring at or above the District’s 60th percentile benchmark. An additional 30% also made significant gains but were just below the benchmark in the On Watch category. About 6% of the students remained in the Intervention category and 1% ended the school year in the Urgent category, indicating that a small number of students had special learning needs and will require additional educational support.

Conclusion

With the STAR test, in addition to alphabetic proficiency, students are tested in Alphabetic Principles, Concept of Word, Visual Discrimination, Phonemic Awareness, Phonics, Structural Analysis, Vocabulary, Sentence-Level Comprehension, and Paragraph-Level Comprehension. Scores from this testing are used to place students in one of four literacy classifications: Probable, Transitional, Late Emergent and Early Emergent. Students in the first two classifications are at or above the benchmark and the latter classifications are below the benchmark. Students also receive a grade level placement.

The use of the *Zoo-phonics Multisensory Language Arts Program* in an array of diverse first grade classrooms resulted in significant findings. STAR Early Literacy Assessment demonstrated strong and rapid learning of first-grade literacy skills and that most students are able to reach and often surpass established benchmarks. This study demonstrated that all children, regardless of their demographic characteristics (gender, language, education ability, or economic status) can make significant gains in literacy skills quickly and easily, in a concrete, fun, playful, and physical way, using the *Zoo-phonics Multisensory Language Arts Program*.



For more information view the full study at:

<http://www.zoo-phonics.com/research>



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