

FY2021 Buncombe County Isaac Coleman Grant Report

Organization Name:	Read to Succeed	
Project Name:	Equitable Opportunities for Literacy	
Reporting Quarter: (Check one)		Quarter 1 (July 1, 2020 - September 30, 2020)
		Quarter 2 (October 1, 2020 - December 31, 2020)
		Quarter 3 (January 1, 2021 - March 31, 2021)
	X	Quarter 4 (April 1, 2021 - June 30, 2021)

Narrative summary of grant related activities

Overall project updates:	<p>Learning and Engagement Manager Jaimee Stanley officially started with R2S on June 14th but worked in May and early June helping to prep trainings and establish our partnership with the Arthur R. Edington Center. Led by Stanley and Literacy Consultant Carley Stein, R2S trained 11 staff members working at the Edington PODS Summer Program on the essentials of foundational literacy instruction with practical strategies for supporting their students this summer. Staff members attended four hours of in-person training and were supplied with resource binders and Heggerty Primary Phonics curriculum to support literacy lessons with students. Resource binders included sample lesson plans, Foundations vowel and consonant keyword sheets, Foundations writing paper, and Wilson Language Systems Student Workbooks for students in K-3rd grade. This curriculum aligns with what students experience in ACS and BCS schools. Stanley assessed K-3 students in the Edington summer program using the Foundations Inventory Placement to provide guidance for staff on the level of instruction that would most benefit students. Stanley also modeled foundational skills lessons with students for the K-1st and 2-3rd grade PODS staff in June and plans to follow up on Tuesdays/Thursdays in July to provide ongoing observation and support. Conversations with Ms. Elinor Earle, director of Youthful HAND, revealed that they had recruited their own literacy specialists and staff support using separate grant funds for their academic summer program. We purchased iPads and headphones for the 11 rising K and rising 1st graders in their summer program as well as two mobile white boards to facilitate their daily phonological awareness lessons. R2S Interim Executive Director Jess McLean participated in meetings with Youthful HAND, ACS Superintendent Dr. Freeman, ACS board members, representatives from Serve to Lead and ACS schools, as well as Literacy Specialist, Amy Powchak, to discuss the work needed to replicate Ms. Earle's program in other ACS schools and neighborhoods. Ms. Earle also provided guidance on planning the summer reading carnival in Hillcrest set for Tues. 7/27/21. In June, R2S finalized plans for our inaugural summer reading carnivals that will take place in July in the Deaverview, Hillcrest, Woodridge, and Pisgah View communities, as well as at the Edington PODS. In addition to book-themed carnival games, like the "Frog and Toad" leap frog game, "The Hungry Caterpillar" ball toss game, and the "Not Norman" Fish Cup Toss game, we also planned reading-specific activity booths, including Digraph Detective and Word-Roll-a-Rama. Snacks, drinks, a photo booth, a temporary tattoo booth, and a bounce house will also be on-site for each carnival. We will also offer a Family Literacy Fun booth where children can pick up a special kit with books, literacy resources, a reading game, and information for their family from Buncombe County Libraries and Literacy Together about summer reading and accessing free books. Key conversations around training and program development continued in Q4 and revolve largely around opening literacy training to more community partners, including Youth Services libraries from BC Library System, and expanding support models to afterschool and community programs. R2S staff also met with HACA managers at the Deaverview, Pisgah View, and Woodridge sites to learn more about literacy program opportunities for families in those communities.</p>
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<p>COVID-19 impacts:</p>	<p>As COVID restrictions lifted more during Q4, in-person engagements with community partners opened up. In addition to participating in-person at the Edington PODS regularly, R2S staff were also able to join Creative Peacemakers, Youthful HAND, Children First, ACS, and HACA managers at their respective locations for partner meetings.</p> <p>COVID restrictions during April and May, however, did still prevent in-person volunteer engagement with many community partners and schools, limiting our ability to serve students; however, our staff and volunteers leveraged technology and virtual meetings as much as possible to continue to make an impact.</p>
<p>Activities related to increasing equity, diversity and inclusion:</p>	<p>Jaimee Stanley, R2S's first full-time Black employee, joined the team in June and spearheaded conversations with community partners and schools around equity-based literacy programming for the summer and upcoming school year. Our expansion beyond working *just* in the school systems plays a critical role in pursuing our mission to close the opportunity gap, including serving summer, afterschool, and early childhood programs.</p> <p>This spring, Jaimee Stanley, literacy specialist Carley Stein, and other R2S staff completed a review of R2S library resource materials used by tutors to identify those that support the Big Five literacy skills and promote multicultural perspectives, with characters, authors and illustrators that reflect like our young readers and their families.</p> <p>R2S contracted a local Black artist and parent, Nastassia Hearst, and a local Black DJ and parent, Brent Brown, to support the summer reading carnivals. Hearst is painting signs for the different areas of the carnival as well as hosting an ABC t-shirt making booth at the carnival in Hillcrest. Community involvement is an essential part of equity-based literacy programming, and R2S is committed to engaging the community every step of the way.</p> <p>Our IT Director attended Phase I of REI in April. Three of our four staff attended a virtual Black-led panel discussion exploring how white folks can show up at Black-centered events, both as volunteers and attendees, in supportive and respectful ways. We continued to share books and literacy resources on our blog and social channels that are culturally supportive of the families and communities we serve and celebrate Black excellence.</p>

Activities related to increasing operational excellence:	<p>We continue to offer our volunteer trainings and orientations virtually via Zoom, which provides more accessibility to volunteers and other community partners who want to attend. In May, two educators from the Department of Special Education at the University of Education, Winneba in Ghana (with ties to UNCA) attended Literacy 101!</p> <p>Carley Stein, M.Ed. of Impact Literacy, LLC continues to offer her reputable expertise and guidance in developing our programming and trainings. She is working closely with Learning & Engagement Manager, Jaimee Stanley, to align our work and curricula with the local school systems and summer/afterschool programs.</p> <p>We updated the volunteer staff/web portal during Q4 to improve the user interface, streamline the navigation, and tailor the experience for volunteers and staff when they are logged in. From RSVP'ing for training to inputting volunteer hours, verifying background checks, accessing online tutoring resources, and more, our web portal provides a one-stop-shop for volunteers and staff to complete mission-critical tasks.</p> <p>Finally, onboarding Jaimee Stanley to oversee all literacy programming, including K-3 tutoring, community engagement, and 0-5 early childhood, tremendously increased our operational excellence. Her background in teaching and reading specialty, plus her community connections and passion and dedication to children in Asheville has already had far-reaching effects for our organization and the partners with whom we work.</p>
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Progress toward annual goals

Measure	Annual Goal	Actual Results (Enter Data)				Progress
		Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	
# of rising kindergarteners participating in summer programming at Youthful Hand	25	5	n/a	n/a	n/a	5
% of rising kindergarteners that are kindergarten ready	95%	data requested	100%	n/a	n/a	100%
# of school-aged children participating in summer programming at Pisgah View	15	0	n/a	n/a	n/a	0
% of school-aged children demonstrating improved literacy scores	80%	reported at end of year	reported at end of year	reported at end of year	TBD	0%
# of new literacy programs identified	5	0	1	3	3	7
# of families participating in literacy programs at Deaverview	10	0	0	0	0	0

Comments:

COVID fully disrupted plans for supporting Youthful HAND's program hands on; however, we were able to purchase more technology and supplies to help power their work with students. Mrs. Earle at Youthful HAND recruited literacy specialists through another grant partner and did not have data to share with R2S in regards to the summer program (which was also impacted by the implementation of summer school). Deaverview similarly saw a reduction in family participation during COVID, however, a summer reading carnival was planned for the community (for July 28, 2021). Similarly, a summer reading carnival for the Pisgah View community in July 2021 was discussed with Children First and the PVA PODS staff and is being finalized.

We were approached by ACS leadership, Shaunda Sanford and Kidada Wynn, in late May 2021 about supporting the summer program at the Arthur R. Edington PODS because they were seeing the effects of COVID/remote learning on young students who were struggling to read. Roughly 25% of students R2S assessed in the program in June were reading below grade level according to the Foundations Inventory Placement. We plan on reassessing at the end of the summer to see what progress was made after staff training and classroom resources were provided for daily phonics and phonemic awareness lessons.

The new literacy programs identified include the community engagement and training with Edington PODS, the equity-focused R2S summer reading carnivals, and the Book Bundle partner program executed this past May by Junior League (and hopefully more partners in the future!).

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Report of use of funds to date and any budget considerations

Spending Category	Modified Budget	Total Spending (Enter Data)				Amount
		Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	
Personnel	\$ 57,465	\$ 6,057	\$ 6,057	\$ 6,057	\$ 8,265	\$ 31,029
Training						\$ -
Supplies/Materials	\$ 3,656		\$ 390	\$ 2,000	\$ 183	\$ 1,083
Meetings						\$ -
Equipment/Furniture	\$ 10,846	\$ 566	\$ 5,090	\$ 653	\$ 4,493	\$ 10,802
Printing/Marketing	\$ 1,700	\$ 262			\$ 120	\$ 1,318
Licensing/Memberships/Dues/Subscriptions						\$ -
Client Support						\$ -
Contracts	\$ 1,250			\$ -	\$ 1,250	\$ -
Professional Services						\$ -
Insurance and Bonds						\$ -
Building Maintenance						\$ -
Mileage	\$ 1,350				\$ 50	\$ 1,300
Cell Phone	\$ 540					\$ 540
Summer Carnival-Families and Children	\$ 7,444				\$ 5,227	\$ 2,217
	\$ 84,251	\$ 6,885	\$ 11,537	\$ 8,710	\$ 19,588	\$ (39,276)

Comments:

After an approved budget modification, we reallocated funds in late May toward planning summer reading carnivals this summer for students in Asheville and Buncombe County. Some of the vendors we contracted did not take deposits (i.e., bounce house company, DJ, artist, etc.) so we were unable to use all the reallocated funds by the end of the quarter, since the carnivals are all happening at the end of July 2021. We appreciate the modification though and it helped us plan for all the games, activities, booths, prizes, food/drinks, and family literacy supplies we would need for the events serving 200 children.