

## RESEARCH UPDATE

# *READ 180*<sup>®</sup> Middle School Students Exceed Expected Yearly Growth on the FCAT

**PROFILE**

**District:** Northeastern Florida School District

**Evaluation Period:** 2008–2009

**Grades:** Sixth, Seventh, and Eighth

**Model:** Daily 90–Minute Instructional Model

**Assessment:** FCAT, SRI

**DISTRICT CHARACTERISTICS**

The district is home to more than 123,000 students and 172 schools, including 25 middle schools. Forty-four percent of students are African-American, 40% are white, 7% are Hispanic, 4% are multi-racial, 4% are Asian, 0.4% are American Indian. Fifty-two percent of students in the district receive free or reduced-price lunch through the National School Lunch Program. Thirteen percent are students with disabilities.

**IMPLEMENTATION OVERVIEW**

In 2007, the district wanted to close the reading achievement gap between proficient and nonproficient readers. As such, the district implemented *READ 180* with the goal of helping its most struggling readers achieve expected year-to-year gains on the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) Reading Test and eventually moving students from Level 1 to Level 2 (performing below grade level) and Level 3 on the FCAT.

**Implementation Model**

During the 2008–2009 school year, the district implemented *READ 180* with middle school students who had been identified as struggling readers. These students received instruction through one of the following two implementation models: 1) 90 minutes

of *READ 180* in addition to a full-period English class, and 2) *READ 180* and 30 minutes of writing (English Language Arts). For the purposes of this analysis, both *READ 180* models were evaluated together.

**Participants**

A total of 2,808 students participating in the *READ 180* program during the 2008–2009 school year comprised the sample described in this report. Of these, 982 were sixth graders, 984 were seventh graders, and 842 were eighth graders. All of the students in this sample completed a minimum of six *READ 180* sessions, had valid fall and spring SRI data, and had valid spring 2008 and spring 2009 FCAT data.

**Measures**

The FCAT Reading Test was used to assess the reading growth of middle school students from spring 2008 to spring 2009. The FCAT Reading Test is a criterion-referenced test administered to students in grades 3–10 that measures student progress toward meeting the state benchmarks in English–language arts standards. The test measures four content areas: words and phrases in context; main idea, plot, and purpose; comparison and cause/effect; and reference and research. The FCAT Reading Test provides vertically scaled Developmental Scale Scores (DSS) which range from 0–3000 and allow student progress to be tracked over time. In addition, the FCAT Reading Test offers information on “expected

growth,” which represents the average progress expected of students as they move from one grade level to the next.

Student progress was also assessed using the Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI), a test of reading comprehension. The SRI was administered to all participating students at the beginning and the end of the school year. Performance on the SRI is reported in Lexiles, and data on fall-to-spring expected Lexile gain was calculated based on each grade level's average pretest Lexile score.

## RESULTS

Findings revealed that, on average, all middle grade levels surpassed expected growth benchmarks and demonstrated significant growth on the FCAT Reading Test from 2008 to 2009. Further, results showed that the *READ 180* students demonstrated much greater DSS growth from 2008 to 2009 than did their peers in the district and state. For example, eighth-grade students showed the greatest DSS change score of 228 points. This DSS change is 139 points higher than that observed district-wide and 136 points higher than observed statewide. See Graph 1.

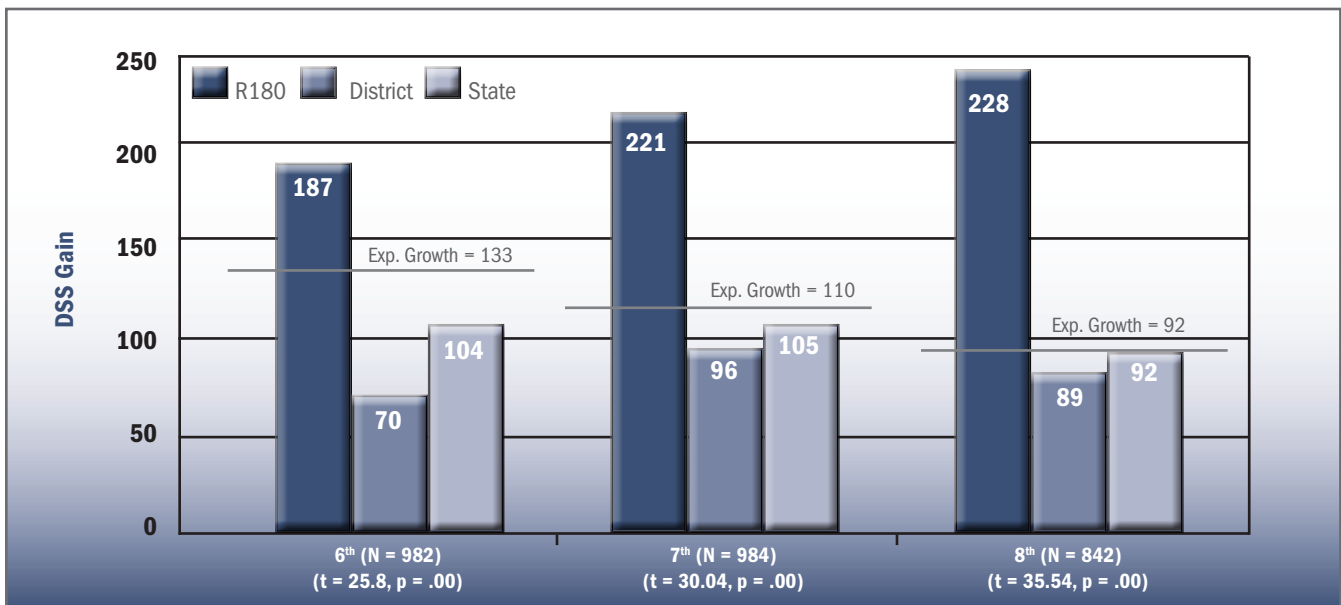
The FCAT Reading Test also provides Achievement Levels, from Level 1 (lowest) to Level 5 (highest). Level 3 is considered to be on-grade-level performance. The change in the percentage of students achieving Level 3 or higher from 2008 to 2009 was examined for the sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade *READ 180* students.

Graph 2 shows that the percentage of *READ 180* middle school students achieving Level 3 (proficiency) or higher significantly increased between 2008 and 2009. Results indicate there were 15% more sixth graders, 17% more seventh graders, and 8% more eighth graders achieving Level 3 in 2009 than in 2008. Moreover, the changes in percentages of students reaching proficiency are substantially larger than those seen at the district or state level; in many cases, the district and state data show declines in the percentages of students reaching proficiency.

Graph 3 illustrates that *READ 180* middle school students exceeded fall-to-spring gains on the *Scholastic Reading Inventory* (SRI). Further dependent t-tests indicate that each grade level achieved significant gains in their SRI Lexile scores from pretest to posttest, with sixth graders gaining an average of 128L, seventh graders 124L, and eighth graders 117L.

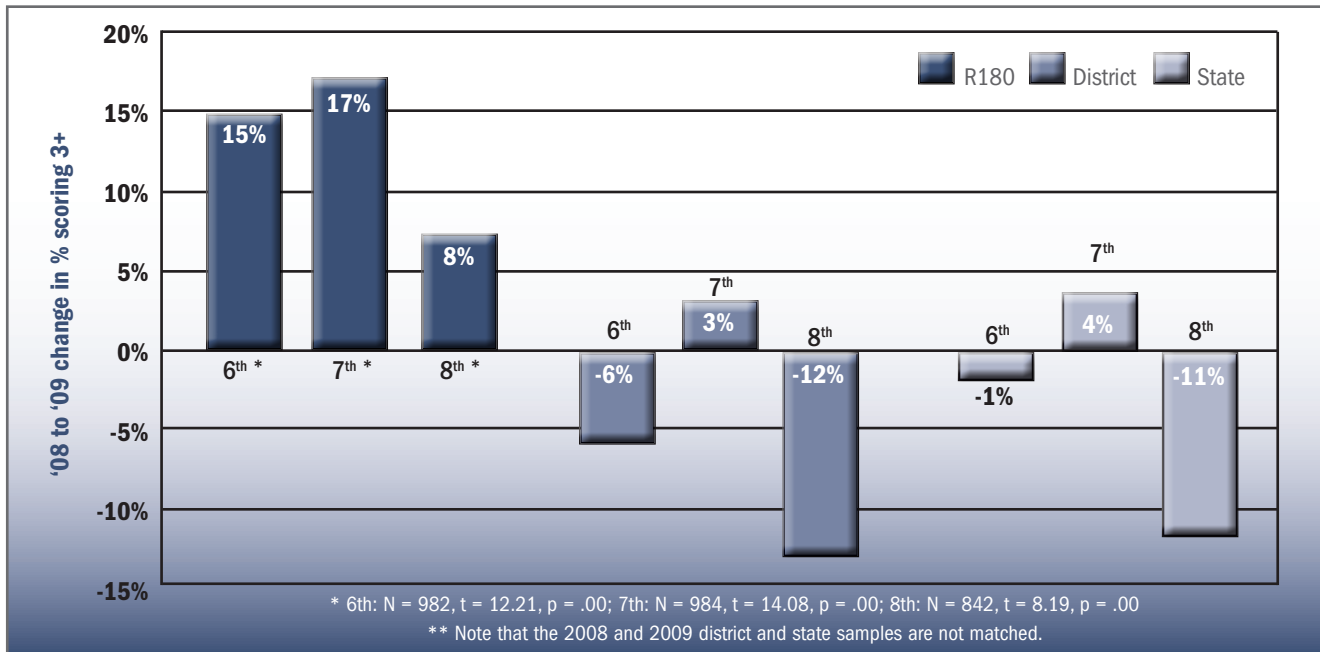
**Graph 1.**

*READ 180* Students (N = 2,808) Mean DSS Growth on the FCAT Reading Test from 2008 to 2009



**Graph 2.**

*READ 180*, District, and State Middle School Students Change in Percentage of Students Achieving Level 3 or Higher on the FCAT Reading Test from 2008-2009.



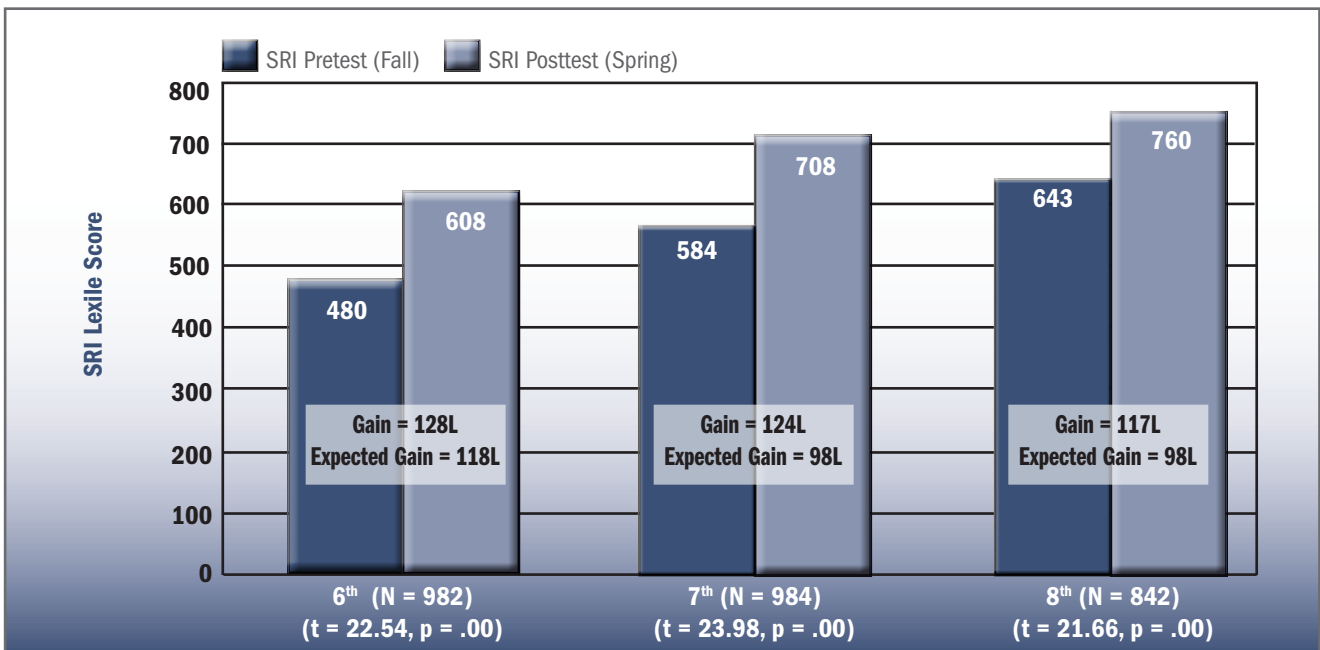
**CONCLUSION**

Findings indicate that this sample of struggling middle-school students using *READ 180* demonstrated significant gains in their Developmental Scale Scores on the FCAT from 2008 to 2009. In addition, when compared to the district and state as a whole, data showed that the *READ 180* students made substantially larger gains in Developmental Scale Scores on the FCAT from 2008-2009.

There were also more *READ 180* students achieving Level 3 or higher on the FCAT from 2008-2009 than their non-*READ 180* peers at the district and state. Finally, middle school *READ 180* students exceeded yearly growth expectations on the FCAT and the SRI. These indicate that *READ 180* can play a powerful role in improving student achievement.

**Graph 3.**

Middle School *READ 180* Student Performance on the SRI in fall 2008 and spring 2009.



# RESEARCH UPDATE



Scholastic Inc.  
557 Broadway  
New York, NY 10012  
1-800-SCHOLASTIC

Scholastic is committed to developing innovative educational products that are grounded in research and proven to work. We collaborate with school districts and third-party research organizations to conduct evaluations that provide useful information to help school leaders assess and advance school change and improvement. In addition, Scholastic publishes professional papers authored by our nationally renowned Author and Advisor team. For more information, please visit the Scholastic Research Web site at <http://teacher.scholastic.com/products/research>.