



# Benchmark Phonics Intervention Students Outperform Peers on i-Ready Reading Test

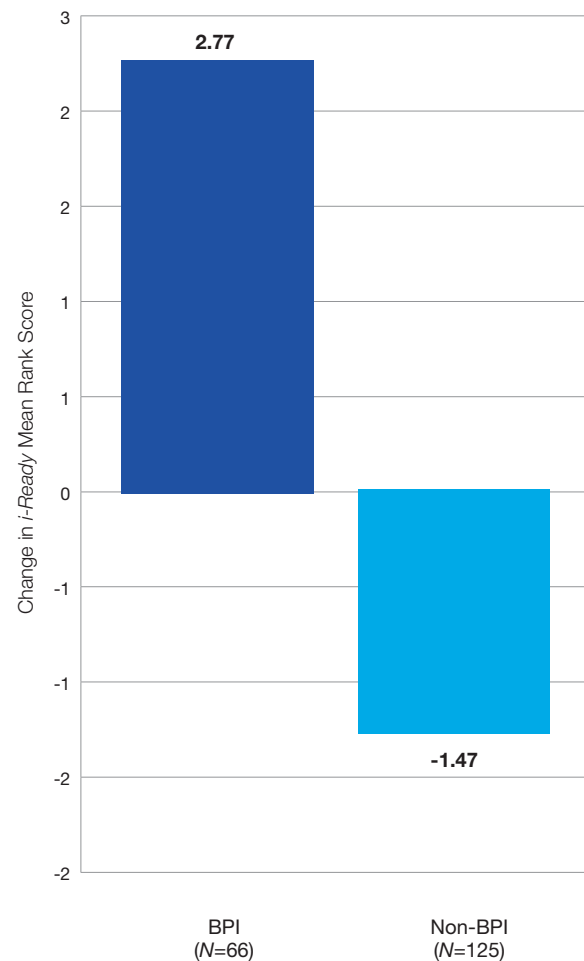
## Implementation

In the 2021–2022 school year, a midwestern school district partnered with Benchmark Education Company (BEC) to pilot the *Benchmark Phonics Intervention* (BPI) program as Tier 3 support for students two or more years behind in reading. 66 students in Grades 1–5 received BPI instruction for the full year (“BPI Full Year”), while 125 students at similar schools received traditional intervention support.

## Impact

BEC analyzed *i-Ready*® Reading scores for students who participated in *Benchmark Phonics Intervention* (BPI) against their nonparticipating peers. A Mann-Whitney U test showed there were no significant differences at the beginning of the year (BOY), with mean ranks of 105.08 for BPI and 91.21 for non-BPI ( $U = 4,724.00$ ,  $z = 1.65$ ,  $p = .099$ ). However, BPI students overall outperformed their peers by the end of the year (EOY), with significantly higher mean ranks—107.85 vs. 89.74 ( $U = 4,907.00$ ,  $z = 2.15$ ,  $p = .031$ ). BPI students also demonstrated greater gains in Mean Percentile Rank, increasing by 2.77 points, while the Comparison group declined by 1.47 points, underscoring the effectiveness of BPI in accelerating reading growth (see Figure 1).

**FIGURE 1.** Midwestern School District BPI Students and Non-BPI Students, Grade K-5 ( $N=191$ )  
Change in *i-Ready* Mean Rank Score from 2021 to 2022.



# BPI Students Make Significant Gains on Quick Phonics Assessment

A total of 55 students in Grades 1, 2, 4, and 5 completed the *Quick Phonics Assessment* (QPA) at both the beginning (Fall 2021) and end (Spring 2022) of the school year. The QPA, developed by Dr. Jan Hasbrouck, is an informal, criterion-referenced tool to measure students' ability to recognize and pronounce phonics patterns. Overall, students showed statistically significant growth, with average scores increasing from 70.33 at BOY to 135.36 at EOY ( $p < .001$ ,  $d = 1.68$ ). On average, students advanced from Skill Sets 1–4 (early phonics) to Skill Sets 3–8 [(multisyllabic decoding) (see Figure 2)].\*

**FIGURE 2.** Midwestern School District BPI Students, Grades 1, 2, 4, and 5 (N=55)  
Performance on the *Quick Phonics Assessment*, Fall 2021 to Spring 2022

Grade	N	Points Earned BOY 2021	Points Earned EOY 2022	BOY Average First Set	BOY Average Last Set	EOY Average First Set	EOY Average Last Set
All Grades	55	70.33	135.36	1	4	3	8
Grade 1	24	40.21	109.38	1	2	1	6
Grade 2	25	82.76	140.32	1	4	3	8
Grade 4	4	124.25	213.25	2	7	8	12
Grade 5	2	168.50	229.50	6	8	8	13

\*Skill Sets: 1: Letter Names; 2: Letter Sounds; 3: VC and CVC; 4: Common Beginning and Ending Consonant Digraphs; 5: CVCC and CCVC; 6: Silent e; 7: r-Controlled Vowels; 8: Advanced Consonant Sounds, Silent Consonants, and Consonant Digraphs/Trigraphs; 9: Vowel Digraphs, Diphthongs, and Advanced Vowel Sounds; 10: Common Prefixes and Common Suffixes; 11: Two Syllables; 12: Three Syllables; 13: Four Syllables

# BPI Students Show Growth on Quick Spelling Assessment

Of the 66 BPI students, 57 took the *Quick Spelling Assessment* (QSA) in Fall 2021 and Spring 2022. The QSA evaluates spelling and encoding across 13 Skill Sets. Students showed significant gains (see Figure 3), with average scores increasing from 73.39 to 111.37 and Skill Set progress from 2–4 to 3–6. A paired-samples t-test confirmed this growth was statistically significant ( $p < .001$ ,  $d = 1.35$ ).

**FIGURE 3.** Midwestern School District BPI Students, Grades 1, 2, 4, and 5 ( $N=57$ )  
Performance on the *Quick Spelling Assessment*, Fall 2021 to Spring 2022

Grade	N	Points Earned BOY 2021	Points Earned EOY 2022	BOY Average First Set	BOY Average Last Set	EOY Average First Set	EOY Average Last Set
All Grades	57	73.39	111.37	2	4	3	6
Grade 1	24	48.29	98.09	1	3	2	6
Grade 2	25	78.64	109.40	1	5	3	7
Grade 4	4	111.25	134.75	3	7	4	8
Grade 5	4	153.25	180.00	7	8	7	10

\*Skill Sets: 1: Letter Names; 2: Letter Sounds; 3: VC and CVC; 4: Common Beginning and Ending Consonant Digraphs; 5: CVCC and CCVC; 6: Silent e; 7: r-Controlled Vowels; 8: Advanced Consonant Sounds, Silent Consonants, and Consonant Digraphs/Trigraphs; 9: Vowel Digraphs, Diphthongs, and Advanced Vowel Sounds; 10: Common Prefixes and Common Suffixes; 11: Two Syllables; 12: Three Syllables; 13: Four Syllables.

# BPI Students Post Phonological Awareness and Phonemic Awareness Gains

A small subset of 12 BPI Full Year students completed the beginning of year (BOY) and end of year (EOY) *Phonological and Phonemic Awareness Assessment*, which includes 17 Skill Sets and a maximum of 170 points. Unlike the QPA and QSA, this assessment targets foundational auditory processing skills, such as rhyming, sound segmentation, and sound manipulation. Overall, students showed significant gains, with average scores increasing from 64.25 at the beginning of the year to 135.25 at the end of the year. On average, students advanced from Skill Set 1–12 to Skill Set 1–15. A paired-samples t-test confirmed the improvement was statistically significant ( $p < .001$ ) with a large effect size ( $d = 2.73$ ), indicating substantial growth in phonological and phonemic awareness.\*

**FIGURE 4.** Midwestern School District BPI Students, Grades 1, 2, 4, and 5 ( $N=12$ )  
Performance on the *Phonological and Phonemic Awareness Assessment*, Fall 2021 to Spring 2022

Grade	N	Points Earned BOY 2021	Points Earned EOY 2022	BOY Average First Set	BOY Average Last Set	EOY Average First Set	EOY Average Last Set
All Grades	12	64.25	135.25	1	12	1	15
Grade 1	10	58.60	130.00	1	11	1	15
Grade 2	2	92.50	161.50	1	15	1	17

\*Skill Sets: 1: Word Awareness; 2: Identify Rhyme; 3: Produce Rhyme; 4: Clap Syllables; 5: Blend Syllables; 6: Delete Syllables; 7: Segment Initial Sounds; 8: Segment Final Sounds; 9: Segment Medial Sounds; 10: Segment Sounds; 11: Blend Sounds; 12: Substitute Initial Sounds; 13: Substitute Final Sounds; 14: Substitute Vowel Sounds; 15: Add Initial Sounds; 16: Add Final Sounds; 17: Delete Sounds.

## Conclusion

This study examined the influence of BPI in a Midwestern district with an established intervention program. Students in the BPI Full Year group showed significantly greater growth on the *i-Ready Reading* assessment than their peers, suggesting successful transfer of phonics skills to broader reading performance. On the *Quick Phonics and Spelling Assessments* (QPA and QSA), BPI students demonstrated statistically significant gains in decoding and encoding skills, with large effect sizes (QPA:  $d = 1.68$ ; QSA:  $d = 1.42$ ). These results suggest a positive association between participation in BPI and improved foundational reading outcomes.

