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## Mission Acceleration: Summary of Evaluation Data for Spring 2022

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# MISSION ACCELERATION



May 2022

Summary of Evaluation Data for Spring  
2022

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Center for Research Evaluation, University of Mississippi

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This document provides an overview of findings from the Spring 2022 semester evaluation data collection for the Mission Acceleration project.

## BACKGROUND

The University of Mississippi’s Center for Research Evaluation (CERE) serves as the external evaluator for the *Mission Acceleration* program (“the program”). The Center for Excellence in Literacy Instruction (CELI) at the University of Mississippi manages the program funded through GEER funds (Governors Emergency Education Relief funds) under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act). The program seeks to:

1. Positively impact academic outcomes;
2. Reduce the negative effects of the pandemic;
3. Increase the number of skilled reading Academic Guides (i.e., college-going tutors) in Mississippi;
4. Expand resources for parents to support reading development at home and
5. Increase the time a struggling reader spends on appropriate-leveled text.

The program offers targeted reading tutoring to students in grades K-5 and is currently in a pilot phase.

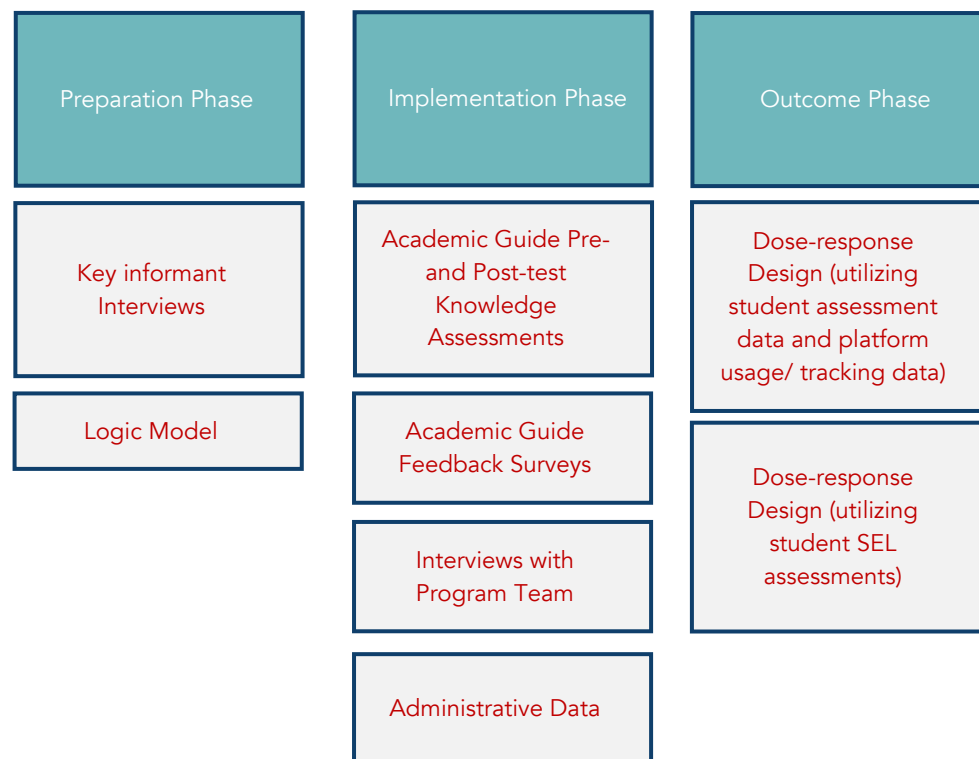
This report focuses on data collection and findings from the Spring 2022 Cohort. The purpose of this report is to provide feedback on program design, implementation and early outcomes, so that program leaders can refine the program for future semesters. To date, the evaluation has focused on the following key evaluation questions:

1. *Design & implementation*: How well was the Mission Acceleration program designed and implemented?
2. *Implementation—barriers & facilitators*: What were the barriers and facilitators to effective implementation?
3. *Outcomes*: To what extent did the program contribute to intended outcomes?

The evaluation for the program utilizes a mixed methods design, incorporating four key phases: preparation phase, implementation phase, outcome phase and cost effectiveness study.

Data collection thus far has included:

Figure 1: Data Collection Methods



## FINDINGS

Using this mixed-methods approach, CERE derived the following high-level conclusions about the program’s outcomes.

*Scholars participating in the Mission Acceleration program experienced academic gains in reading.*

- CERE calculated reading growth for each scholar who completed both pre- and post-testing by finding the difference in pre- and post-test grade level equivalence. Across the 314 matches, the **average reading growth per scholar was six months over the ten-weeks of program services.**

The Mission Acceleration program **significantly increased the STAR Unified Scores** of the scholars by an average of 47.162 points (SD = 62.274).

*Academic Guides believe they can positively impact scholar engagement.*

- Academic Guides reported a **high level of efficacy towards scholar engagement** as measured by the Teacher Sense of Efficacy (TESE) towards student engagement subscale.
- AGs (n=38) reported an overall TESE mean score of 7.44 (SD = .991) on a scale of one to nine indicating that they believe they can influence student engagement more than “quite a bit.”
- AG efficacy scores were also tracked over time. Across the 52 matches AGs scored 13.077 points (SD = 34.007) higher overall on the feedback-survey. This reflects a positive significant increase.
- Site Supervisor interviews highlighted the **high level of preparation of AGs (n=14, 100%)** and the **value of AG relationships with scholars (n=12, 86%)**.

*Program implementation varies across the project sites.*

- The Mission Acceleration program design is **evidence-based** and **follows best practice research**.
- **Group size** (ratio of Academic Guide to scholar) and **tutoring session length** have the **greatest variability** across project sites. For examples, tutoring session length ranged from 30 to 83 minutes and group size ranged from one to seven scholars.
- **Ninety-one percent** of scholars attending more than two tutoring sessions **completed both pre- and post- testing**. This reflects a **sustained improvement over the summer and fall**, when only 60% and 86% of scholars who attended more than two sessions completed both pre- and post- testing.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **Continue implementation.** The program results in promising early outcomes in reading and social emotional learning for Mississippi students impacted by COVID-19.
2. **Prioritize program non-negotiables (i.e., what can and cannot be adapted in the program design) for community sites.** Clear expectations should result in less variability in program implementation. This will continue to have importance as future scaling takes place.
3. **Share guidance provided to AGs with SSs during Feedback Friday sessions.** This should help clarify expectations for both groups.

4. **Continue implementing a program monitoring schedule.** Sites supervisors felt supported by the on-site visits conducted by program leadership. Program managers provided an additional layer for support for site supervisors especially as scaling occurred across sites.
5. **Set screening windows for STAR Reading and Early Literacy assessments – where and when possible, coordinate testing with school sites to reduce testing fatigue.** Communicate this information with community sites and provide updates on progress towards 100% tested. This will result in more reliable data by which to make program decisions and target student support.
6. **Define expectations for testing procedures/ protocols for sites.** This will provide additional support for community-based sites that may not have prior experience with student testing.
7. **Develop job-embedded professional development for AGs struggling with classroom management.** This is an area where site supervisors can continue to differentiate their role from Community Leads. As the program continue to experience scaling, in both the number of AGs and the number of scholars, specialized training is likely to be needed by different populations of AGs.
8. **Highlight value of AG experience in teacher preparation programs.** There is early evidence that the AG experience is helping future educators gain confidence in their abilities and increasing the number of people willing to consider teaching as a career.

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# BACKGROUND & METHODS

## Summary

- Mission Acceleration aims to positively impact academic outcomes in reading and reduce the negative effects of the pandemic on the academic and social/emotional well-being for students in kindergarten through fifth grade.
- A multi-phase mixed methods evaluation of the project aims to (1) generate feedback on program design and implementation to inform ongoing decisions about design and implementation and (2) inform programmatic decisions in preparation for future scaling up.

The University of Mississippi’s Center for Research Evaluation (CERE) serves as the external evaluator for the *Mission Acceleration* program (“the program”). The Center for Excellence in Literacy Instruction (CELI) at the University of Mississippi manages the program funded through GEER funds (Governors Emergency Education Relief funds) under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act). The program seeks to:

1. Positively impact academic outcomes;
2. Reduce the negative effects of the pandemic;
3. Increase the number of skilled reading Academic Guides (i.e., college-going tutors) in Mississippi;
4. Expand resources for parents to support reading development at home and
5. Increase the time a struggling reader spends on appropriate-leveled text.

The program offers targeted reading tutoring to students in grades K-5 and is currently in a pilot phase.

## METHODS

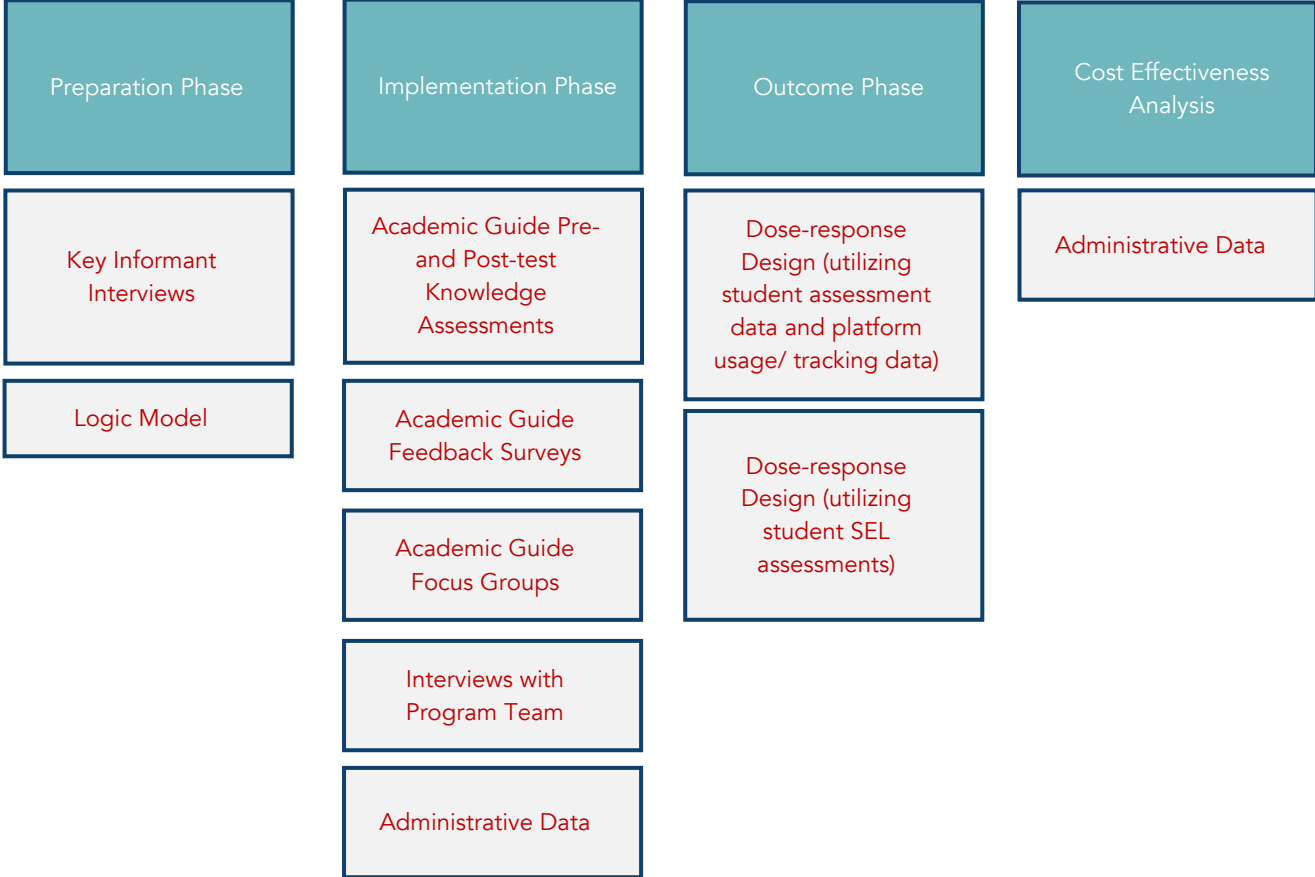
CERE developed a mixed methods design that includes five key phases (see Figure 2). To date, we have collected data from:

- Academic Guide (AG) pre- and post-knowledge assessments;
- AG Feedback Surveys;
- Interviews with Community Site Supervisors, AGs and scholars;
- STAR Reading and Early Literacy Assessments and
- Scholar Engagement Surveys

In later phases we will report on the full set of evaluation activities.



Figure 2: Data Collection Methods



Surveys

- This CERE-developed series of surveys captured data on (1) AG knowledge of reading processes and pedagogy, phonemic awareness and morphology, (2) AG perspectives/ feedback on the training and support, (3) AG sense of efficacy towards student engagement, (4) AG use of time and (5) Scholar engagement towards learning. The program team developed the reading knowledge assessment items. We adapted the AG sense of efficacy towards student engagement items from Tschannen-Moran & Woolfok Hoy’s (2001) Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale.
  - **AG Pre-Training Survey:** The pre-training survey (n= 124) collected data on (1) AG knowledge of reading process and pedagogy, phonemic awareness and morphology and

(2) AG sense of efficacy towards student engagement. This online survey was administered via Qualtrics prior to AGs completing training.

- **AG Post-Training Survey:** The post-training survey (n=74) collected data on (1) AG knowledge of reading process and pedagogy, phonemic awareness and morphology, (2) AG sense of efficacy towards student engagement, and (3) AG perspectives/ feedback on the training. This online survey was administered via Qualtrics following AG completion of training.
- **AG Feedback Survey:** The feedback survey (n=88) collected data on (1) AG knowledge of reading process and pedagogy, phonemic awareness and morphology, (2) AG sense of efficacy towards student engagement, (3) AG perspectives/ feedback on experiences in the program and (4) AG use of time at the end of the semester. This online survey was administered via Qualtrics at the close of tutoring.
- **Scholar Engagement Survey:** The scholar engagement survey (n=305) collected data on scholar level of engagement towards school. The online survey was administered via Qualtrics at the mid-point of the tutoring. The instrument consists of six Likert scale items and is adapted from the Panorama Student Survey.

## Interviews

- **Mission Acceleration Site Supervisor Interviews:** CERE invited all current Mission Acceleration Site Supervisors (CLSS) to participate in an in-depth interview focusing on their experiences implementing program activities this fall and to find out whether they thought they were making progress towards the program’s goals. CERE sent interview invitations weekly for two weeks at the beginning of April via email.



18 CLSS invited to interview



14 SS Interviewed

- **Mission Acceleration Scholar Interviews:** CERE conducted interviews (n=11) with scholars who were participating in the Mission Acceleration program. The participants were K-5 students at the participating sites. The interview protocol focused on collecting data about their experiences participating in the program.

## STAR Reading and Early Literacy Scores

- STAR Reading and Early Literacy Scores for Scholars:** Scholars (i.e., K-5 student receiving tutoring) completed pre- and post-testing using Renaissance Learning STAR Reading and Early Literacy assessments. The STAR Reading assessment is a 34-item, standards-based adaptive assessment aligned to state and national curriculum standards that takes on average less than 20 minutes. STAR Early Literacy measures the early literacy skills of beginning readers in grades pre-kindergarten through third. STAR Early Literacy assessment is a 27-item, standards-based adaptive assessment, which is aligned to state and national curriculum standards and takes on average less than ten minutes. Community Leads proctored the STAR Reading and Early Literacy assessments at each project site. Scholars took the pre-test during the first week of the program and the post-test when programs concluded at their respective sites.



327 scholars\* completed pre-tests



333 scholars\* completed post-tests



314 scholars\* had pre- and post-test matches

\*Scholars attending more than two sessions

## SPRING 2022 ACTIVITIES

The program offered the following activities during Spring 2022. Program leadership held AG trainings in early January virtually. Note, this report covers activities held through May 2022.



# FINDINGS

This section summarizes data relating to the following evaluation questions:

1. How well was the Mission Acceleration program **designed and implemented**?
2. What were the **barriers and facilitators** to effective implementation?
3. To what extent did the program contribute to **intended outcomes**?

## EVALUATION QUESTION 1

### How well was the Mission Acceleration program designed and implemented?

#### Summary

- The Mission Acceleration program model adheres to high-dosage tutoring intervention design best practices.
- Mission Acceleration program implementation varies at the site level.
- AGs were primarily women, black or white and non-education majors.
- AGs left training knowledgeable about resources and prepared to implement resources.
- AGs possessed a high level of efficacy towards student engagement and this increased over time in the program.
- AGs were not highly knowledgeable about reading instruction.
- AGs reported largely positive feedback towards the overall AG experience, with 91% sharing that they would serve as an AG in the future based off their experience in the program this semester.
- Three-quarters of AGs are more likely to consider teaching as a career option after serving as an AG.

#### *Design Best Practices*

The Mission Acceleration program design provides the trifecta of support for struggling readers in grades K-5 (i.e., the perfect group of three components necessary to impact academic outcomes): 1) an evidence-based intervention with explicit, systematic academic assistance in reading; 2) a digital platform to deliver appropriate texts for reading practice that can be monitored, assessed and used for parent/child/AG engagement; and 3) a meaningful connection with a role model for academic, social and emotional support. To combat pandemic-related learning loss due to extensive periods of time out of school or time

spent learning asynchronously, this intensive program will span five academic semesters: spring, summer, fall 2021; and spring, summer 2022.

Figure 3. Mission Acceleration Model



Mission Acceleration is designed to be a high-dosage tutoring intervention. AGs meet with their scholars at least three times weekly, in small groups of three to four scholars for 45-60 minutes per session. The Mission Acceleration model occurs outside of the traditional school day and is in addition to, rather than replacing, Tier I and Tier II instruction that occurs inside the school. The program is designed to run for 10 weeks with a goal of each scholar receiving 30 hours of intervention.



1 AG to 3-4 Scholars



3 days per week



45-60 minutes  
per session

### *Evidence Base for Mission Acceleration Model*

The design of the Mission Acceleration model is deeply rooted in best practice and relevant literature from the field. Robinson et al. (2021) list the following key designs principles for effective tutoring:

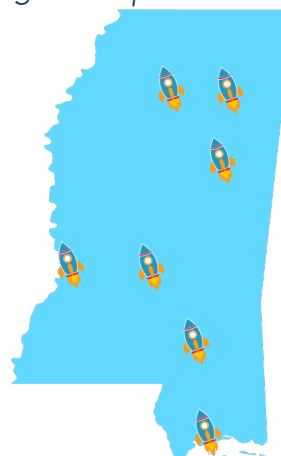
- Three or more sessions per week;
- Adequate training for tutors with ongoing support;
- High-quality instructional materials;
- In-person delivery (although there is emerging evidence for tutoring at a distance);
- No more than three to four students at a time;
- Consistent tutor;
- During school day interventions;
- Prioritization of students at low performing grades or schools;
- Ongoing data use and informal assessments and
- Early grades focus for reading interventions.

A strong evidence base supports high-dosage tutoring—defined as more than three days per week or at a rate of at least 50 hours over 36 weeks—as one of the few school-based interventions with demonstrated large positive effects on reading achievement (Fryer, 2016). Tutoring appears to be increasingly more effective as the number of sessions per week and number of weeks increases (Nickow et al., 2020; Robinson et al., 2021). The use of “paid volunteers” who are highly trained and provide support as compared to unpaid volunteers shows promise as an avenue for addressing learning loss (Slavin & Steiner, 2020). Additionally, DuBois et al. (2011) found that programs that have a mentoring component “show evidence of being able to affect multiple domains of youth functioning simultaneously and to improve selected outcomes of policy interest” such as academic achievement (p.57).

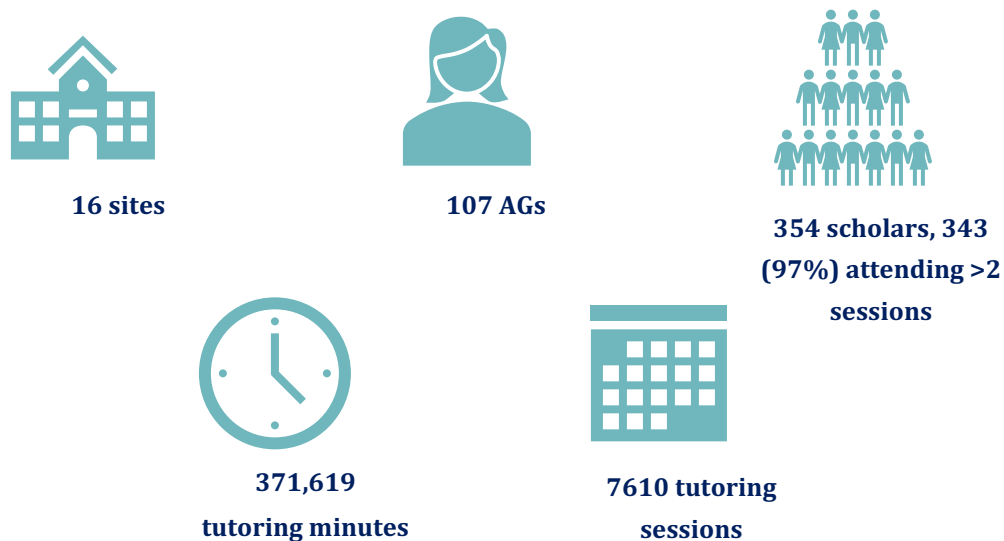
### Implementation

During Spring 2022, Mission Acceleration operated in 16 sites. Each project site occurred in a Campaign for Grade Level Reading Community across Mississippi (see Figure 3). Across the eight sites that participated, program activities occurred in one of two settings— schools or community/religious organizations. At each site, Mission Acceleration worked with community partners to identify and recruit scholars to participate in tutoring.

Figure 4. Mission Acceleration Program Map



Below is a data snapshot of the spring 2022 Mission Acceleration program.



The implementation of Mission Acceleration differed at each community site. Table 1 provides a summary of each site’s delivery model. The greatest variance from the intended model occurred in group size and session duration. Program implementation varied on several dimensions:

1. Where program activities occurred (at a school, community organization or religious organization);
2. When program activities occurred (during or after school)
3. Format (in person or virtual);
4. Group size and
5. Session duration

Appendix A includes narrative descriptions of each site’s implementation model.

Table 1: Site level implementation of the Mission Acceleration model  
Implementation varied across sites.

Site	Setting	Format	Group Size	Avg. Session Duration	Session Frequency (per week)	Quantity AG	Quantity Scholars*	Scholar Attendance Rate
A	AS, C	In person	2-4	50 min.	3 days	6	18	15 of 30 (50%)
B	AS, C	In person	3-7	47 min.	3 days	6	25	19 of 30 (63 %)
C	AS, C	In person	2-5	55 min.	3 days	6	21	19 of 30 (63 %)
D	AS, C	In person	2-4	63 min.	3 days	6	16	24 of 30 (80%)
E	AS, C	In person	3-6	50 min.	3 days	4	13	11 of 30 (36%)
F	AS, C	In person	5-7	83 min.	3 days	4	19	26 of 30 (86%)
G	AS, C	In person	2-4	60 min.	3 days	6	22	19 of 30 (63%)
H	DS, S	Virtual	1	33 min.	3 days	5	5	25 of 30 (83%)
I	DS, S	In person	2-3	36 min.	3 days	9	23	24 of 30 (80%)
J	DS, S	In person	4-5	30 min.	3 days	10	44	24 of 30 (80%)
K	DS, S	In person	4	45 min.	3 days	5	15	31 of 30 (103%)
L	DS, S	In person	2-4	50 min.	3 days	6	18	30 of 30 (100%)
M	AS, S	In person	2-3	45 min.	3 days	13	34	24 of 30 (80%)
N	DS, S	In person	2-3	50 min.	2-3 days	12	28	23 of 30 (76%)
O	AS, C	In person	2-5	50 min.	3 days	6	30	14 of 30 (46 %)
P	AS, C	Hybrid	2-4	55 min.	3 days	3	12	24 of 30 (80%)
<b>MA</b>	-	-	2-5	50 min	3 days	107	343	22 of 30 (73%)

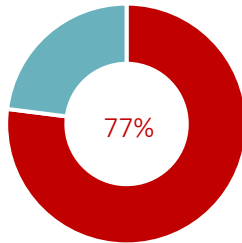
\*Scholars attending more than two tutoring sessions

AS = Afterschool, DS = During school, C = community, S = school

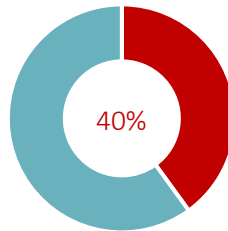


## Academic Guides

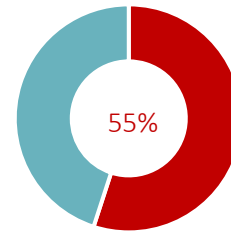
- Overall, 107 AGs (n=88) served as tutors in the program. These AGs were primarily women (77%), White (40%) or African American/Black (35%) and non-education majors (55%).



...identified as women, whereas 8% identified as men.



...identified as White. Additionally, 35% identified as African American/Black, and 5% as Asian American.



...were non-education majors and 31% were education majors.

- AGs reported largely positive feedback towards AG training, saying they left the sessions with increased knowledge of Mission Acceleration resources and indicating that they knew how to implement program components. Table 2 summarizes AG responses across the six items collecting training feedback.
- Having said that, AGs do not possess a high level of knowledge about reading instruction. We calculated a total Reading Knowledge score along with scores for Reading Process and Pedagogy, Phonemic Awareness and Morphology (see Table 3). Data indicated that AGs had the highest level of knowledge of Morphology, followed by Phonemic Awareness and Reading Process and Pedagogy.
- The mean total Reading Knowledge score on the AG Feedback Survey was 51.4% (SD = 26.5), with 54% of AGs (n=38 of 71 who completed Reading Knowledge Assessment) scoring a 60% or higher. While this does contribute to the program goal of increasing the number of highly qualified reading guides in Mississippi, due to the scripted nature of the curriculum, a high level of Reading Knowledge may not be needed for AGs to be successful.

Table 2. AG Training Post Survey Summary (n=74)

AGs left training feeling knowledgeable of resources and prepared to implement resources.

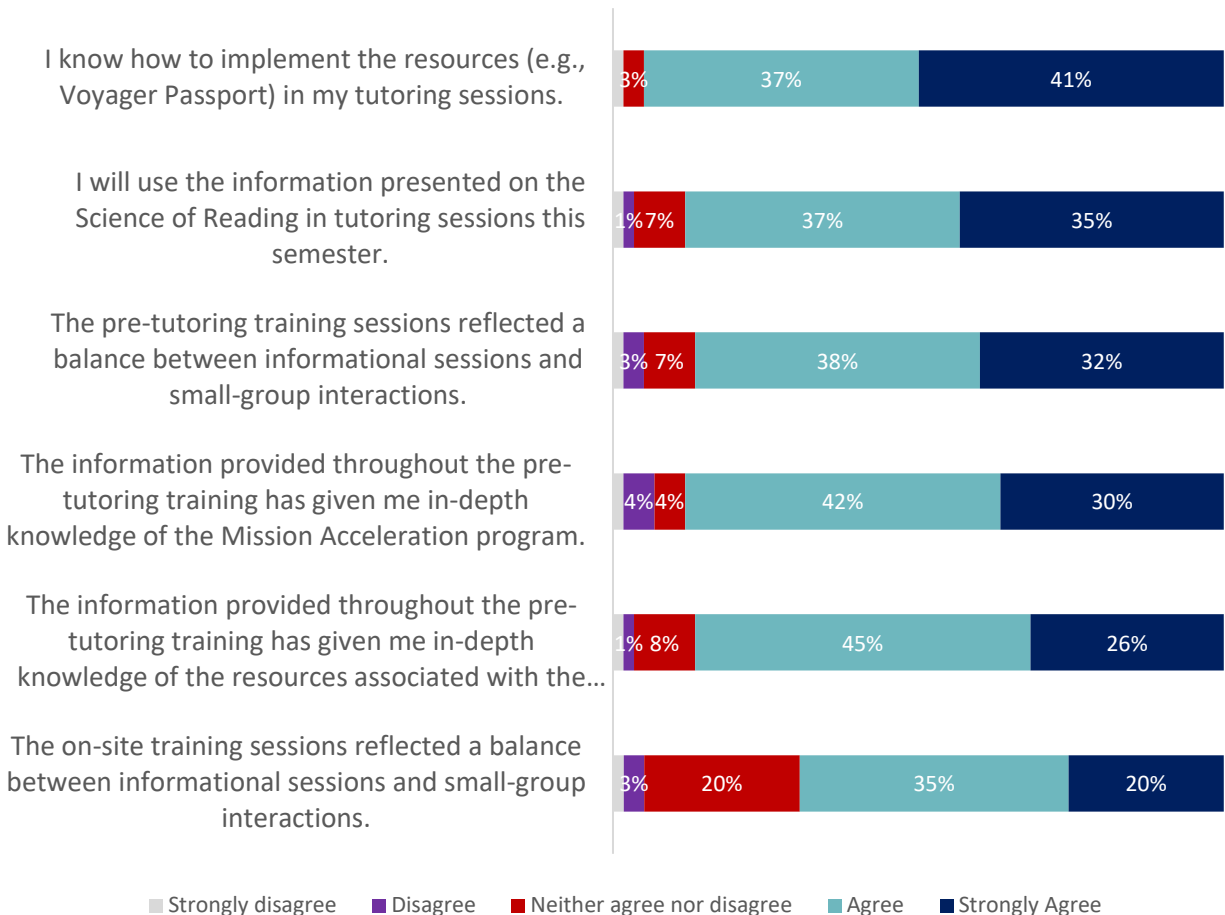


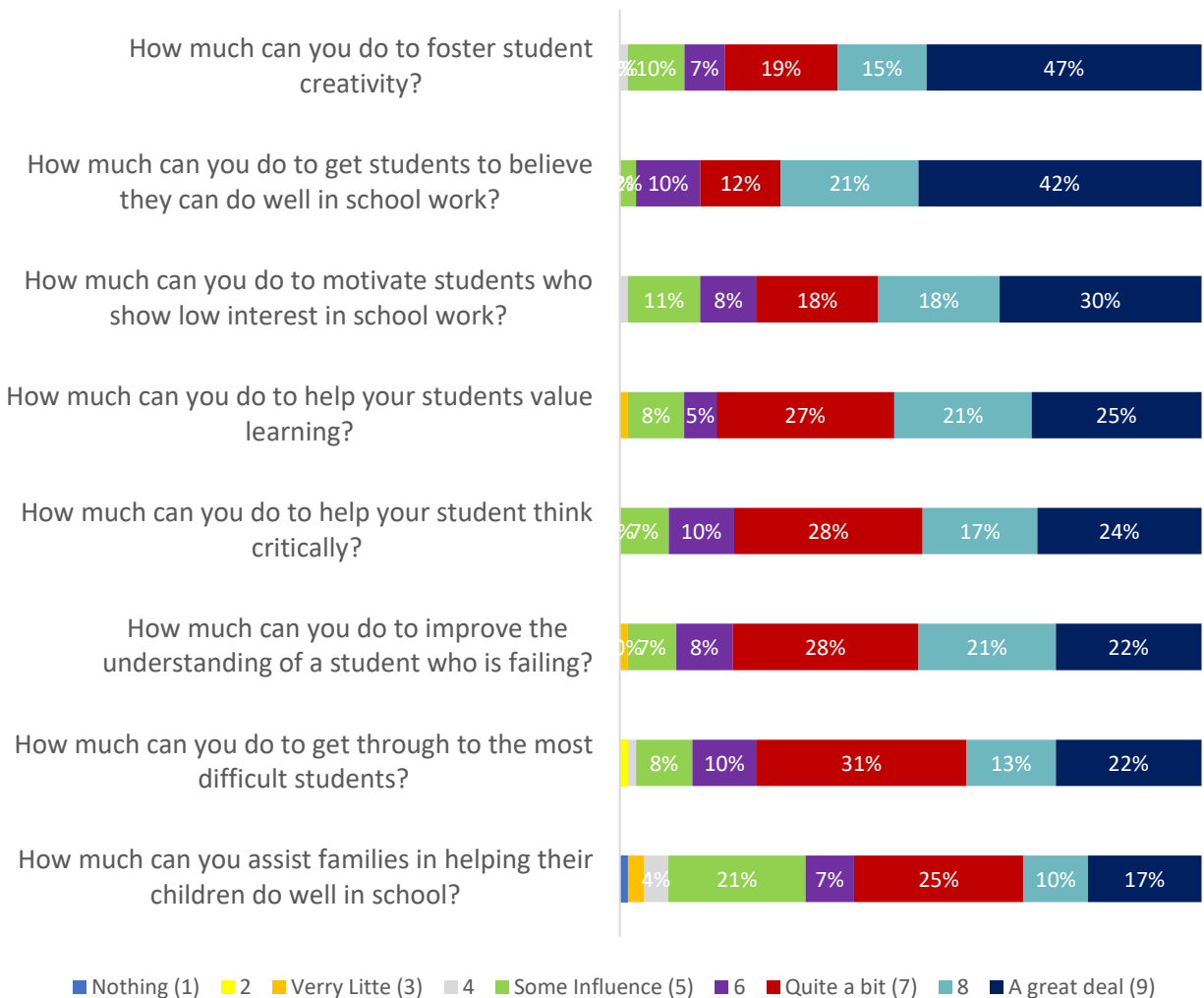
Table 3. Reading Knowledge Scores

Descriptive statistics for Reading Knowledge assessment.

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	Range	Minimum	Maximum
Morphology	55.8%	34.5	100	0	100
Phonemic Awareness	45.8%	32.9	100	0	100
Reading Process and Pedagogy	44.4%	25.2	100	0	100
<b>Reading Knowledge</b>	<b>51.4%</b>	<b>26.5</b>	<b>69.2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>100</b>

- AGs reported a high level of efficacy towards scholar engagement indicated by AG responses on the feedback survey to the sense of efficacy towards student engagement subscale. AGs (n=88) reported an overall TESE mean score of 7.44 (SD = .991) on a scale of one to nine indicating that they believe they can influence student engagement more than “quite a bit.”
- Of particular interest, AGs highest scoring item was “How much can you do to get students to believe they can do well in school?” with a mean score of 8.04 (SD =1.156) on a scale of one to nine. Table 4 summarizes AG responses to the eight items on the Teacher Sense of Efficacy Subscale.

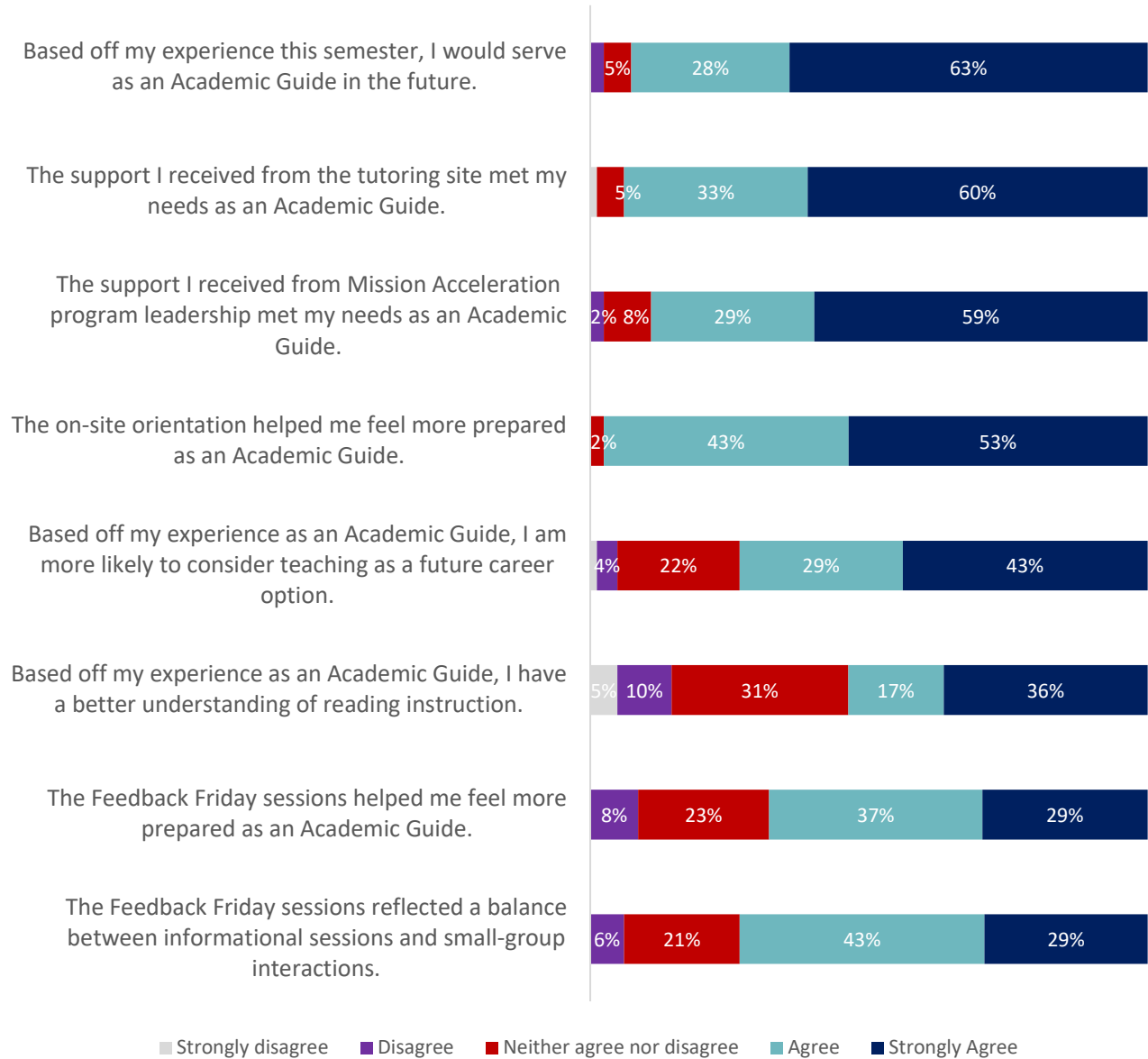
Table 4. AG Sense of Efficacy Towards Student Engagement  
AGs believe they have a great influence on Mission Acceleration scholar engagement.



- AG efficacy scores were also tracked over time. Pre- and feedback-survey matches (n=52) of data were analyzed by conducting a dependent samples t-test. On average, AGs scored  $M_d = 13.077$  points (SD = 34.007) higher on the feedback-survey. The dependent samples t-test revealed that this increase was significant,  $t(51) = 2.773$ ,  $p < .05$ . This is of particular interest since it could have implications for teacher preparation programs regarding the importance of field experiences in building pre-service teacher efficacy towards student engagement.
- AGs reported largely positive feedback towards the overall AG experience, with 91% sharing that they would serve as an AG in the future based off their experience in the program this semester. **Additionally, three out of four AGs (72%) are more likely to consider teaching as a career option after serving as an AG.** Table 5 summarizes AG responses across the six items collecting training feedback.
- Of note, only roughly half of AGs (53%) reported a better understanding of reading instruction. This aligns with the data from the AG Reading Knowledge Assessment collected during the AG Feedback Survey discussed earlier in the report.

Table 5. AG Experience Feedback Summary

AGs felt supported in their roles and more willing to consider teaching as a career based of their experience as an AG.



## EVALUATION QUESTION 2

### What were the facilitators and barriers to effective implementation?

#### Summary

- The relationship between AG and scholar, AG level of preparation, support from MA Leadership and curriculum are seen as key facilitators to MA success.
- SS felt it was easy to communicate with program leadership and highlighted the value of the program managers in providing support this semester.
- MyON usage and weather closures were common barriers to implementing the Mission Acceleration program.

#### *Implementation Facilitators*

Mission Acceleration Site Supervisor (SS) interview responses reflect the following program components that SS consider implementation facilitators: relationship between AG and scholar, AG level of preparation, support from MA leadership/value of CLSS Feedback Fridays, curriculum and value of in-person tutoring.



#### **AG Level of Preparation**

Interviews N=14, 100%



#### **Relationship between AG and Scholar**

Interviews N=12, 86%



#### **Support from MA Leadership**

Interviews N=12, 86%



#### **Curriculum (Voyager Passport, MyON)**

Interviews N=10, 71%

When asked about which aspects of the Mission Acceleration program contributed the most to achieving Mission Acceleration goals, CLSSs highlighted:

**AG LEVEL OF PREPARATION,  
(N=14, 100%)**

For example:

- “I am going to be very honest with you. The five that I had, they were very responsible. They were on time. They had all of their ducks in a row. If they had a question, they came early and stopped and talked to me.”
- “I would give them a 10. They knew how to handle any problems that occurred.”
- “They knew what to do. And then after, after every session we always got together and talked about, you know, what the kids were struggling in and how can we make it better, how we can help them out to encourage them to want to read, read and do something. But we had a discussion after every, after every meeting, after every class.”

**RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN AG  
AND SCHOLAR (N=12, 86%)**

For example:

- “I think that the greatest impact has been made with the relationships that the tutors have built with the students.”
  - “And when the academic guides come, they are excited to go in there with them and they're working versus them not just, you know, not doing anything. It's different from school and them being here doing it. It's like, they be excited. They want to do it. The academic guides help them out so much.”
- “It helped a lot with social, emotional because they formed relationships and everything with their tutors.”

**LEVEL OF SUPPORT FROM MA  
LEADERSHIP (N=12, 86%)**

For example:

- “Always supportive, I email or give them a call, they always get back to me, very on it, and they are always there and willing to help...”
- “They checked on us all the time. They made sure that we had what we needed. They made sure they were really accessible for the AGs. So, I think the program was rad.”

**CURRICULUM (VOYAGER  
PASSPORT, MyON) (N=10,  
71%)**

For example:

- “I know that the implementation of the MyON reading and so that built some fluency and things like that with some students and most of them, or some of them, really did try to meet their minutes. They just got an interest in reading, I feel like.”
- “I think the fact that it's research based, it's consistent and follows the same pattern every lesson. It does touch based on a lot of reading foundations that we need.”

## Implementation Barriers

Mission Acceleration CLL interview responses reflect the following Mission Acceleration program components that CLLs consider implementation barriers:



### **MyON Usage**

Interviews N=7, 50%



### **Weather Closures**

Interviews N=6, 43%



### **Classroom Management**

Interviews N=5, 36%



### **Testing Fatigue**

Interviews N=5, 36%



### **Clarity of Feedback Friday Information**

Interviews N=4, 29%



CLLs highlighted the following aspects as barriers to achieving Mission Acceleration goals:

**MyON Usage (N=7, 50%)**

For example:

- “The only other thing is we didn't get a chance to really do the MyON online. I wanted to, and I think that's because since I already had an established program set up, the parents were looking for help with homework.”
- “There was an issue with signing on at the first. And then I could not personally hold the kids accountable for 60 extra MyON minutes.”
- “The lack of my kids getting on MyON. It frustrated me, because I made the little badges with their sign- ons.”

**TESTING FATIGUE (N=5, 36%)**

For example:

- “The one thing that I really don't think is a very good indicator of that is the post assessment that we take, because it falls at the time of the year where all the kids are doing is being tested. So, it's, ‘Oh, it's another test. Oh, I'm tired of this. Oh, I just did this in my classroom.’ So, depending on the kid, you might not get the best results, especially if they just walked out of a classroom from taking a test and turn around and have to take another one.”
- “I think that we've made progress, but not as much as I would like, only because the spring semester is full of testing.”
- “Then we had benchmark assessments and then the school, with it being the school, it's a little different than after school program, because we have other things that are going on throughout the school also.”

**WEATHER CLOSURES (N=6, 43%)**

For example:

- “I mean, we had two afternoons that we let out almost back-to-back because of weather.”
- “There were issues that were out of our control, but things such as bad weather days. We had several of those.”

**CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT (N=5, 36%)**

For example:

- “And there were only a couple that didn't probably have the classroom control that would have helped them even benefit more.”
- “He would be trying to give his lesson and they would be having a total to other conversation. I felt bad... Not bad a couple of times, but a couple times I would step into his room and say, ‘Guys, he's trying to present the lesson. Y'all need to be paying attention to him.’ And so yeah, I did have to give him a little more support than others sometimes.”

**CLARITY OF FEEDBACK FRIDAY MESSAGES (N=4, 29%)**

For example:

- “Maybe it be that we all have feedback sessions together. I don't know. Just to ensure that we're all getting the same information. Because sometimes, they're confusing me because I don't know what they heard and I thought they heard something, but then they said they didn't.”

## EVALUATION QUESTION 3

### To what extent did the program contribute to intended outcomes?

#### Summary

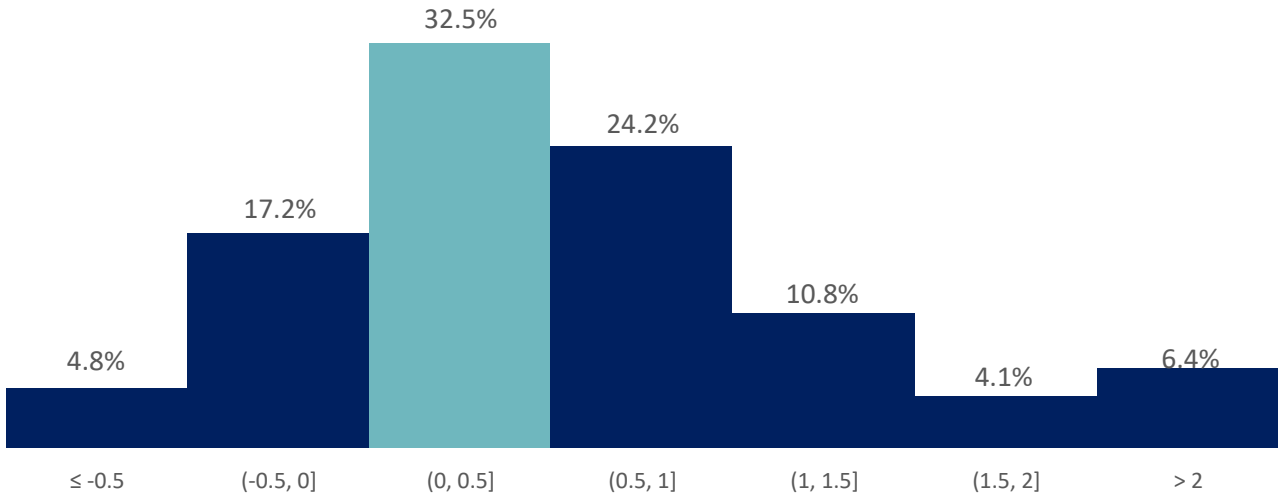
- Scholars attending more than two sessions experienced average reading growth of six months during the ten-week program.
- Scholars experienced a positive significant difference in reading score between pre- and post- tests.
- Site supervisors observed social emotional learning gains as students formed relationships with AGs and peers and increased academic confidence.
- Ninety-one percent of scholars attending more than two tutoring sessions completed both pre- and post- testing.

#### *Reading Achievement*

- Scholars completed STAR Reading or STAR Early Literacy assessments at the onset of the program (n=327) and at the end of the program (n=333). Pre- and post-test matches (n=314) of data were analyzed by conducting a dependent samples t-test. On average, scholars scored  $M_d = 47.162$  points ( $SD = 62.274$ ) higher on the post-test. The dependent samples t-test revealed that this increase was significant,  $t(313) = 13.420$ ,  $p < .001$ .
- We calculated reading growth scores for each scholar who completed both pre- and post-testing. Across the 314 matches, the average scholar experienced six months reading growth over the ten-week program. See Figure 5 for histogram of reading growth scores.
- We analyzed dosage, student level of engagement (SEL score) and change in STAR grade equivalent score data for matched samples to determine if there was a relationship between dosage, student level of engagement and reading growth. However, the data did not meet the assumptions for multiple regression. We recommend continuing to explore this relationship in future semesters with a larger data set.
- We also examined the data for emerging patterns between dosage level and reading growth level that may not be statistically significant, but provide insight into the relationship between the two factors (see Figure 6). For this analysis, low growth was defined as less than one month of growth for each month in program, mid growth was growth equivalent to time in program, and high growth more than one month of

growth per month in program. Dosage levels were broken into 500-minute increments, with level one represents less than 500 minutes dosage and level five representing more than 2000 minutes dosage. There does not appear to be a relationship between dosage and level of growth.

Figure 5. Reading growth scores.  
The average reading growth was 6 months.



\*.1 represents one month of growth.

Figure 6. Reading growth by dosage level.  
At Level 5, a greater proportion of students achieved high growth (78.9%) as compared to at Levels 1-4 (61.6-65.9%)

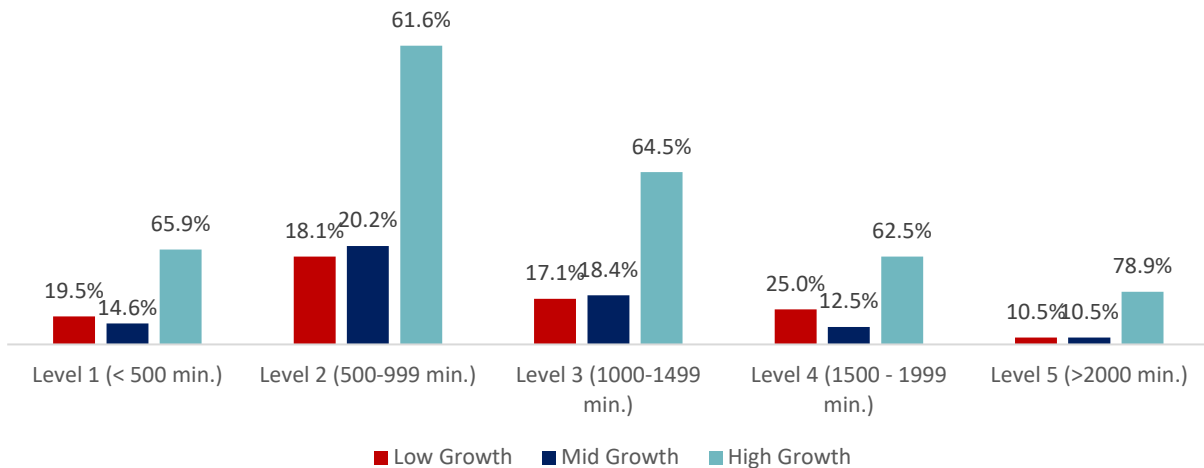
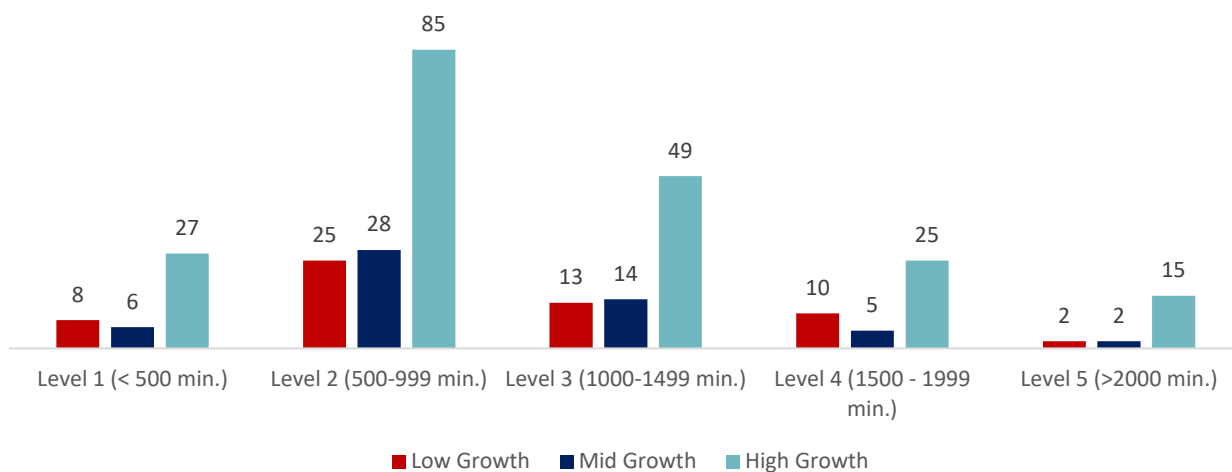


Figure 7. Reading growth by dosage level.  
Number of students at each dosage and growth level.



- Table 5 summarizes the pre- and post- test data by community site. Ninety-one percent of scholars who who attended more than two tutoring sessions completed both pre- and post- testing. This reflects a substantial improvement over the summer, when only 60% of scholars who attended more than two sessions completed both pre- and post- testing. This is also an improvement over the fall semester when 86% of scholars who attended more than two sessions completed both pre- and post-testing.
- Eleven of sixteen sites experienced acceleration in overall reading growth (more than twice the growth in the amount of time), three sites experienced more than expected reading growth but not acceleration and two sites experienced less than expected reading growth.
  - We explored the data and were unable to determine a relationship between site level factors and average reading growth or student level of engagement.
  - We recommend collecting student level demographic data in future cohorts to explore if there is a relationship between student level factors and reading growth. Potential variables of interest include: age, socioeconomic status, race, 504/IEP status and English language learner.

Table 5: Site-level testing and reading growth.

Mission Acceleration scholars saw reading gains of 6 months during the 10 weeks of the spring program.

Site	Quantity Scholars (attending >2 session)	# Pre-Tested	# Post-Tested	# Matches	Pre- Mean GLE	Post- Mean GLE	Mean Reading Growth
A	18	16	16	16	1.6	2.2	.6
B	25	26	27	25	2.5	3.8	1.3
C	21	22	23	21	3.2	3.8	.6
D	16	17	18	16	2.9	3.0	.1
E	13	15	15	13	1.4	1.5	.1
F	19	18	19	16	2.5	3.8	1.3
G	22	21	21	20	1.4	2.3	.9
H	5	5	5	5	2.4	2.7	.3
I	23	25	23	23	3.7	4.4	.7
J	44	43	44	41	.2	1.1	.9
K	15	15	15	15	1.9	2.1	.2
L	18	10	10	10	3.3	3.6	.3
M	34	28	29	28	1.8	2.3	.5
N	28	27	26	26	1.6	2.1	.5
O	30	28	30	28	2.2	2.6	.4
P	12	11	12	11	3.1	3.6	.5
<b>MA</b>	<b>343</b>	<b>327</b>	<b>333</b>	<b>314</b>	<b>2.1</b>	<b>2.7</b>	<b>.6</b>

## Social-Emotional Learning Outcomes

Mission Acceleration SS interview responses reflect positive scholar social-emotional learning outcomes over the course of the program.

### INCREASED RELATIONSHIP SKILLS (N=8, 57%)

For example:

- “It helped a lot with social, emotional because they formed relationships and everything with their tutors. So, I feel like they were engaged for the most part.”
- “Oh, the kids have come out of their shell. When the academic guides left, they cried. And coming from being locked in your house with COVID to having social anxiety about getting back in the swing of things of school, and the fact that they were able to make such a connection with someone they did not know, and they were not afraid of it, I was very proud of that.”
- “I think because it's a small group setting, and at any time the academic guides always ask, how are you today? So I think it does bring a little bit in, because sometimes the kids weren't real receptive. Just for whatever reason, maybe they had a bad day at school or so, the academic guides were really bringing in other experiences because they're so young to be able to connect with the students.”

### INCREASED ACADEMIC CONFIDENCE

For example:

- “I think that it is right on track with academic and SEL, because most of the students that we serve, we have had teachers to come back and say that they see an increase in the confidence level in the students, which in turn, increases their academic achievement in the classroom. I think that it does a really good job at the academic focus and the SEL focus.”
- “I think so, yes. We had confidence. I think that made the most impact was just having that small group to where they could feel comfortable answering the questions and when they understood the concept, then they were more willing to say things even when they went back to the classroom. We saw those gains transfer to the classroom because of that little extra practice.”

*Scholar Interviews*

These themes were echoed in the scholar interviews (n=11). Scholars highlighted the small group size of the program which encourages participation and relationships and receiving support with different reading strategies/ elements of readings including decoding, vocabulary and reading comprehension as facilitators of increased confidence with school generally and reading specifically.

**SUPPORT WITH READING STRATEGIES/ ELEMENTS OF READING (N= 7, 64%)**

For example:

- “The teacher has to do things we forget. That they don't teach or things that they don't teach us at school because everybody at school knows English.
- “It’s kind of like learning about a little more about vocabulary words and about how to read a little better.”
- “We learn what words mean, and we also learn how we go back and understand what we read.”
- “We get to learn new stuff, like syllables, and vowels, and consonants.”

**INCREASED ACADEMIC CONFIDENCE (N= 6, 55%)**

For example:

- “She helps me because she tells us what I’m doing wrong, and then she goes back and then I understand it more. But I’m doing better since I started the program.”
- “And pay attention a lot, because like some of this stuff actually help you in class.
- “I make better grades. I’m a stronger reader.”

**SMALL GROUP SIZE ENCOURAGES PARTICIPATION/ RELATIONSHIPS (N= 6, 55%)**

For example:

- “There’s one other girl in our program and she’s in our class and we just have fun with doing the [reading] stuff.”
- “Everybody in the little group gets a turn to read.”
- “Here I feel like everyone knows me and I like to talk to them.”
- “I think because when we read all together, we all on different paces, and sometimes we reading slower than the other, one time we move faster. But then when we do one on one, it helps us better.”

Across the interviews, there was no prevailing theme among the recommendations suggested by scholars. Below is a sampling of their recommendations:

- “I wish more of my friends were here.”
- “The timing, its hard having it at the end of the day.”
- “I would change how much work we got to do. We could do two pages a day, instead of three or four.”
- “Make the time with our reading, the lessons, a little bit shorter, because then when we try to do homework in a little bit, my father comes in, comes pick me up and I don't really get time to finish all my homework.”
- “Learn more about what we are doing in actual class.”
- “Reading more books.”

## CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

### Summary

- Scholars participating in the Mission Acceleration program experienced academic gains in reading.
- AGs believe they can positively impact scholar engagement.
- Program implementation varies across sites.
- Mission Acceleration should:
  - Continue implementation, as early findings are promising;
  - Continue to implement the program monitoring schedule to help maintain implementation expectations; and,
  - Explore student-level factors that could be contributing to different reading growth outcomes for students.

The Mission Acceleration program presents promising early outcomes for students in Mississippi. Although the program faced several challenges, the data summary provides input to adapt. Key findings are presented below.

### KEY FINDINGS

- Mission Acceleration program model adheres to high-dosage tutoring intervention design best practice.
- Mission Acceleration program implementation varies at the site level.
- AGs left training feeling knowledgeable of resources and prepared to implement resources.



- AGs possessed a high level of efficacy towards student engagement.
- AG level of efficacy towards student engagement increased over time.
- However, AGs were not highly-knowledgeable of reading instruction.
- SSs see the Voyager Passport program, relationship between AGs and scholars, and level of preparation of AGs as key facilitators of Mission Acceleration program success.
- SSs felt it was easy to communicate with Mission Acceleration leadership and highlighted the benefit of having the program managers to provide additional site support this semester.
- SSs identified MyON usage, testing fatigue and classroom management as common barriers to implementing the Mission Acceleration program.
- Scholars attending more than two sessions experienced average reading growth of six months during the ten-week program.
- Our analysis showed a positive significant difference in reading score, when comparing reading pre- and post- tests for scholars.
- SSs observed social emotional learning gains as students formed relationships with AGs and peers.
- Ninety-one percent of scholars attending more than two tutoring sessions completed both pre- and post- testing. This reflects a sustained improvement over the summer and fall, when only 60% and 86% of scholars who attended more than two sessions completed both pre- and post-testing.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on these findings, the evaluation team suggests it may be useful for the project team to consider the following recommendations.

1. **Continue implementation.** The program results in promising early outcomes in reading and social emotional learning for Mississippi students impacted by COVID-19.
2. **Prioritize program non-negotiables (i.e., what can and cannot be adapted in the program design) for community sites.** Clear expectations should result in less variability in program implementation. This will continue to have importance as future scaling takes place.
3. **Share guidance provided to AGs with SSs during Feedback Friday sessions.** This should help clarify expectations for both groups.
4. **Continue implementing a program monitoring schedule.** Sites supervisors felt supported by the on-site visits conducted by program leadership. Program

managers provided an additional layer for support for site supervisors especially as scaling occurred across sites.

5. **Set screening windows for STAR Reading and Early Literacy assessments – where and when possible, coordinate testing with school sites to reduce testing fatigue.** Communicate this information with community sites and provide updates on progress towards 100% tested. This will result in more reliable data by which to make program decisions and target student support.
6. **Define expectations for testing procedures/ protocols for sites.** This will provide additional support for community-based sites that may not have prior experience with student testing.
7. **Develop job-embedded professional development for AGs struggling with classroom management.** This is an area where site supervisors can continue to differentiate their role from Community Leads. As the program continues to experience scaling, in both the number of AGs and the number of scholars, specialized training is likely to be needed by different populations of AGs.
8. **Highlight value of AG experience in teacher preparation programs.** There is early evidence that the AG experience is helping future educators gain confidence in their abilities and increasing the number of people willing to consider teaching as a career.

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# Appendices

## Appendix A: Site Descriptions

### *Site A*

Program site A activities occurred at a community organization afterschool program. Scholars received in person tutoring in groups ranging from two to four participants per Academic Guide. Sessions lasted 50 minutes on average and occurred three days a week. There were six Academic Guides and 18 scholars (who attended more than two sessions) participating at the site. The scholar attendance rate was 50% and a total of 30 tutoring sessions were offered. Site A completed pre-testing for 16 students and post-testing for 16 students. The mean growth for scholars in the program was six months with a range of nine months loss to 19 months growth.

### *Site B*

Program site B activities occurred in a community organization's afterschool program. Scholars received in person tutoring in groups ranging from three to seven participants per Academic Guide. Sessions lasted 47 minutes on average and occurred three days a week. There six five Academic Guides and 25 scholars (who attended more than two sessions) participating at the site. The scholar attendance rate was 63% and a total of 30 tutoring sessions were offered. Site B completed pre-testing for 26 students and post-testing for 27 students. The mean growth for scholars in the program was 15 months with a range of four months loss to 66 months growth.

### *Site C*

Program site C activities occurred in a community organizations' afterschool program. Scholars received in person tutoring in groups ranging from two to five participants per Academic Guide. Sessions lasted 55 minutes on average and occurred three days a week. There were 6 Academic Guides and 21 scholars (who attended more than two sessions) participating at the site. The scholar attendance rate was 63% and a total of 30 tutoring sessions were offered. Site C completed pre-testing for 22 students and post-testing for 23 students. The mean growth for scholars in the program was six months with a range of four months loss to 27 months growth.

### *Site D*

Program site D activities occurred during a community organization's afterschool program. Scholars received in person tutoring in groups ranging from two to four participants per Academic Guide. Sessions lasted 63 minutes on average and occurred three days a week. There were six Academic Guides and 16 scholars (who attended more than two sessions) participating at the site. The scholar attendance rate was 80% and a total of 30 tutoring sessions were offered. Site D completed pre-testing for 17 students and post-testing for 18 students. The mean growth for scholars in the program was one month with a range of nine months loss to 13 months growth.

### *Site E*

Program site E activities occurred during a community organization's afterschool program. Scholars received in person tutoring in groups ranging from three to six participants per Academic Guide. Sessions lasted 50 minutes on average and occurred three days a week. There were four Academic Guides and 13 scholars (who attended more than two sessions) participating at the site. The scholar attendance rate was 36% and a total of 30 tutoring sessions were offered. Site E completed pre-testing for 15 students and post-testing for 15 students. The mean growth for scholars in the program was one month with a range of 16 months loss to 14 months growth.

### *Site F*

Program site F activities occurred in a community organization's afterschool program. Scholars received tutoring in groups ranging from five to seven participants per Academic Guide. Sessions lasted 83 minutes on average and occurred three days a week. There were four Academic Guides and 19 scholars (who attended more than two sessions) participating at the site. The scholar attendance rate was 86% and a total of 30 tutoring sessions were offered. Site F completed pre-testing for 18 students and post-testing for 19 students. The mean growth for scholars in the program was 15 months with a range of five months loss to 41 months growth.

### *Site G*

Program site G activities occurred in a community organization's afterschool program. Scholars received tutoring in groups ranging from two to four participants per Academic

Guide. Sessions lasted 60 minutes on average and occurred three days a week. There were six Academic Guides and 22 scholars (who attended more than two sessions) participating at the site. The scholar attendance rate was 63% and a total of 30 tutoring sessions were offered. Site G completed pre-testing for 21 students and post-testing for 21 students. The mean growth for scholars in the program was nine months with a range of 15 months loss to 38 months growth.

### *Site H*

Program site H activities occurred during a school's instructional day. Scholars received virtual tutoring with one participant per Academic Guide. Sessions lasted 33 minutes on average and occurred three days a week. There were 5 Academic Guides and 5 scholars (who attended more than two sessions) participating at the site. The scholar attendance rate was 83% and a total of 30 tutoring sessions were offered. Site H completed pre-testing for five students and post-testing for 5 students. The mean growth for scholars in the program was three months with a range of one month loss to seven months growth.

### *Site I*

Program site I activities occurred during a school's instructional day. Scholars received in person tutoring in groups ranging from two to three participants per Academic Guide. Sessions lasted 36 minutes on average and occurred three days a week. There were nine Academic Guides and 23 scholars (who attended more than two sessions) participating at the site. The scholar attendance rate was 80% and a total of 30 tutoring sessions were offered. Site I completed pre-testing for 25 students and post-testing for 23 students. The mean growth for scholars in the program was seven months with a range of 12 months loss to 32 months growth.

### *Site J*

Program site J activities occurred during a school's instructional day. Scholars received in person tutoring in groups ranging from four to five participants per Academic Guide. Sessions lasted 30 minutes on average and occurred three days a week. There were 10 Academic Guides and 44 scholars (who attended more than two sessions) participating at the site. The scholar attendance rate was 80% and a total of 30 tutoring sessions were offered. Site J completed pre-testing for 43 students and post-testing for 44 students. The mean growth for scholars in the program was nine months with a range of six months loss to 30 months growth.

### *Site K*

Program site K activities occurred during a school's instructional day. Scholars received in person tutoring in groups of four participants per Academic Guide. Sessions lasted 45 minutes on average and occurred three days a week. There were five Academic Guides and 15 scholars (who attended more than two sessions) participating at the site. The scholar attendance rate was 103% and a total of 30 tutoring sessions were offered (some scholars received additional tutoring sessions based on Academic Guide availability). Site K completed pre-testing for 15 students and post-testing for 15 students. The mean growth for scholars in the program was two months with a range of three months loss to eight months growth.

### *Site L*

Program site L activities occurred during a school's instructional day. Scholars received in person tutoring in groups ranging from two to four participants per Academic Guide. Sessions lasted 50 minutes on average and occurred three days a week. There were six Academic Guides and 18 scholars (who attended more than two sessions) participating at the site. The scholar attendance rate was 100% and a total of 30 tutoring sessions were offered. Site L completed pre-testing for 10 students and post-testing for 10 students. The mean growth for scholars in the program was three months with a range of six months loss to 14 months growth.

### *Site M*

Program site M activities occurred during a school's afterschool program. Scholars received in person tutoring in groups ranging from two to three participants per Academic Guide. Sessions lasted 36 minutes on average and occurred three days a week. There were 13 Academic Guides and 34 scholars (who attended more than two sessions) participating at the site. The scholar attendance rate was 80% and a total of 30 tutoring sessions were offered. Site M completed pre-testing for 28 students and post-testing for 29 students. The mean growth for scholars in the program was five months with a range of eight months loss to 29 months growth.

### *Site N*

Program site N activities occurred during a school's instructional day. Scholars received in person tutoring in groups ranging from two to three participants per Academic Guide. Sessions lasted 50 minutes on average and occurred two to three days a week. There were 12 Academic Guides and 28 scholars (who attended more than two sessions) participating at the

site. The scholar attendance rate was 76% and a total of 30 tutoring sessions were offered. Site N completed pre-testing for 27 students and post-testing for 26 students. The mean growth for scholars in the program was five months with a range of four months loss to 20 months growth.

### *Site O*

Program site O activities occurred during a community organization's afterschool program. Scholars received in person tutoring in groups ranging from two to five participants per Academic Guide. Sessions lasted 50 minutes on average and occurred three days a week. There were six Academic Guides and 30 scholars (who attended more than two sessions) participating at the site. The scholar attendance rate was 46% and a total of 30 tutoring sessions were offered. Site O completed pre-testing for 28 students and post-testing for 30 students. The mean growth for scholars in the program was four months with a range of five months loss to 17 months growth.

### *Site P*

Program site P activities occurred during a community organizations afterschool program. Scholars received hybrid (in person and synchronous virtual) tutoring in groups ranging from two to four participants per Academic Guide. Sessions lasted 55 minutes on average and occurred three days a week. There were three Academic Guides and 12 scholars (who attended more than two sessions) participating at the site. The scholar attendance rate was 80% and a total of 30 tutoring sessions were offered. Site P completed pre-testing for 11 students and post-testing for 12 students. The mean growth for scholars in the program was five months with a range of seven months loss to nine months growth.