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Mission Acceleration: Summary of Evaluation Data for Summer 2021 Pre-Pilot

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MISSION ACCELERATION

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Summary of Evaluation Data for Summer 2021 Pre-Pilot

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This document provides an overview of findings from the Summer 2021 Pre-Pilot 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.

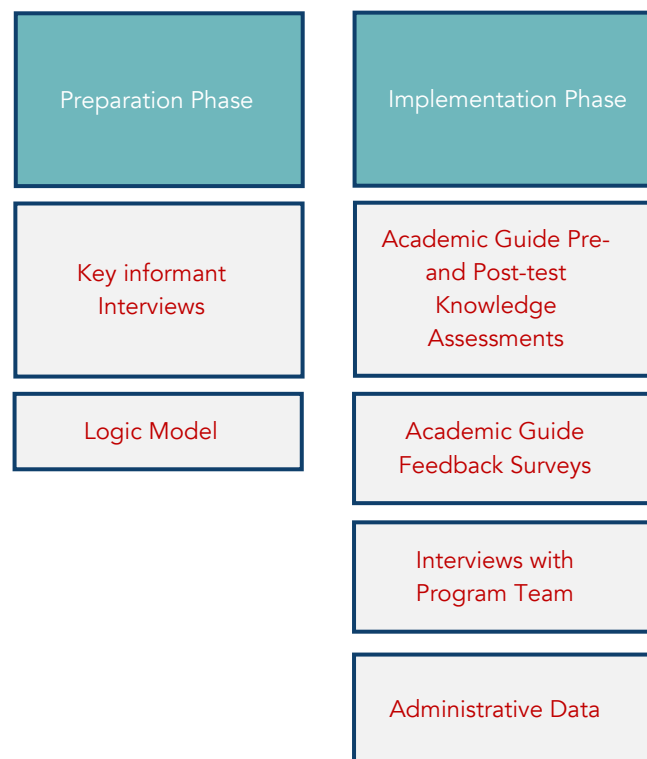The program offers targeted reading tutoring to students in grades K-5 and is currently in a pilot phase.

This report focuses on data collection and findings from the Summer 2021 Pre-Pilot. 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

Preparation Phase	Implementation Phase
Key informant Interviews	Academic Guide Pre- and Post-test Knowledge Assessments
Logic Model	Academic Guide Feedback Surveys
	Interviews with Program Team
	Administrative Data

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 52 matches, the **average reading growth per scholar was four months over the seven-week program**.
- The Mission Acceleration program **significantly increased the STAR Unified Scores** of the scholars by an average of 42.7 points (SD = 70.7).

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. Academic Guides (n=24) reported an overall TESE mean score of 7.73 out of nine (SD = .99) on the scale indicating that they believe they can influence student engagement more than "quite a bit."
- Community Lead and Liaison interviews highlighted the **overall quality of Academic Guides** and **level of preparation (n=5, 100%)**.

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 45 to 120 minutes and group size ranged from one to seven scholars.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Continue implementation.** The program results in promising early outcomes in reading and social emotional learning for Mississippi students impacted by COVID-19.
- **Develop and communicate program non-negotiables (i.e., what can and cannot be adapted in the program design) to community sites.** Clear expectations should result in less variability in program implementation. This will address barriers identified regarding lack of a clear plan/rushed implementation.
- **Implement a program monitoring schedule.** Periodic review of Academic Guide logs will provide an opportunity to be made aware of when community sites may be diverging from program expectations in regards to group size or tutoring duration.
- **Implement an on-site orientation day for Academic Guides in the communities where they will be providing tutoring.** This should help Academic Guides be more comfortable in the locations they are serving and provide an opportunity for Community Leads and Liaisons to meet the Academic Guides before the program starts. If a relationship exists between Academic Guides and Community Leads and Liaisons, they will be more likely to seek help if needed.
- **Create and share a quarterly newsletter that can be used to increase parent engagement.** Parent involvement/commitment to the program were identified as a barrier to program implementation. Sharing program outcomes, additional resources

and information on how parents can support their students should be included. This will help increase outreach and awareness of the program.

- **Set screening windows for STAR Reading and Early Literacy assessments.** 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.

- **Facilitate a conversation around recruitment of Academic Guides.** Successful recruitment and onboarding of Academic Guides is a primary concern of community sites. Clarify the intent and value of using college students as Academic Guides. There is a lack of understanding of why (beyond a superficial "because the grant says so") other categories of tutors, such as retired people, are not available to participate.

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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.

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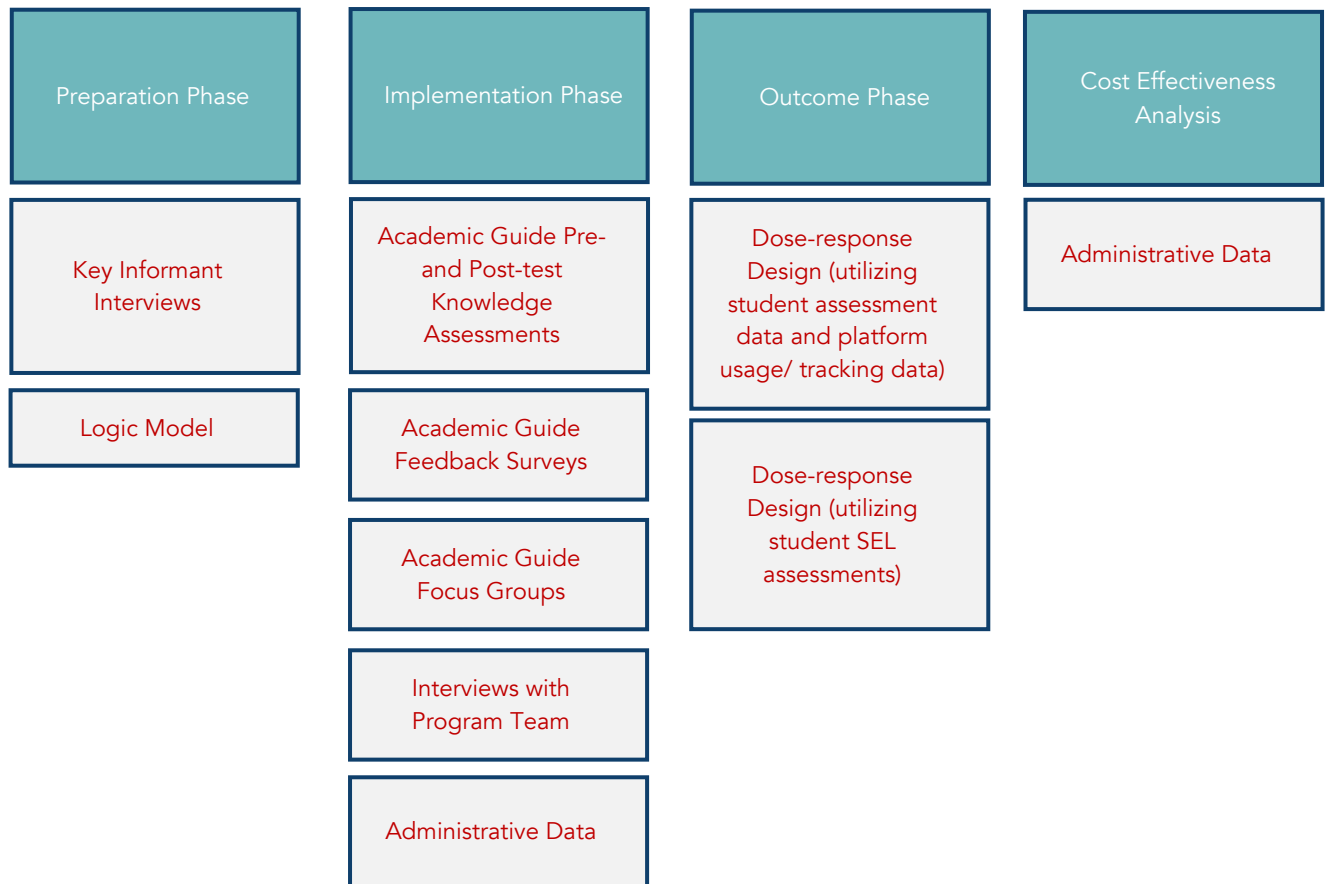
METHODS

CERE developed a mixed methods design that includes four 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 Leads, Liaisons and AGs and
- STAR Reading and Early Literacy Assessments.

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

Figure 2: Data Collection Methods

Preparation Phase	Implementation Phase	Outcome Phase	Cost Effectiveness Analysis
Key Informant Interviews	Academic Guide Pre- and Post-test Knowledge Assessments	Dose-response Design (utilizing student assessment data and platform usage/ tracking data)	Administrative Data
Logic Model	Academic Guide Feedback Surveys	Dose-response Design (utilizing student SEL assessments)	
	Academic Guide Focus Groups		
	Interviews with Program Team		
	Administrative Data		

Surveys

- **Pre- and post-test knowledge assessments for all Academic Guides:** This assessment examined knowledge of reading processes and pedagogy, phonemic awareness and morphology. The program team developed the pre-test and program staff distributed it online via Google Forms. Program staff then distributed the post-test knowledge assessment online via Qualtrics as part of a larger AG Feedback Survey described below. All 24 AGs who received the AG Feedback Survey responded to it (n=24, 100%).

- **AG Feedback Survey:** This CERE-developed online survey captured data on (1) AG perspectives/feedback on the training, (2) knowledge gained through the training and (3) AG sense of efficacy towards student engagement. We adapted the AG sense of efficacy towards student engagement items from Tschannen-Moran & Woolfok Hoy's (2001) Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale. Program staff distributed the AG Feedback Survey online via Qualtrics to all 24 AGs. All AGs (n=24, 100%) responded to the survey.

|		
24 post- surveys sent to all AGs	24 (100%) unique surveys recorded	24 met our inclusion criteria*

*Consented, attended training, worked as AG

Interviews

- **Mission Acceleration Community Lead and Liaison Interviews:** CERE invited all current Mission Acceleration Community Leads and Liaisons (CLLs) to participate in an in-depth interview focusing on their experiences implementing program activities this summer 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 end of July 2021 via email.
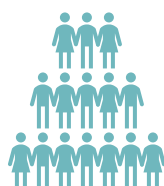
8 CLLs invited to interview	5 CLLs Interviewed

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.

69 scholars* completed pre-tests	52 scholars* completed post-tests	52 scholars* had pre-and post-test matches

*Scholars attending more than two sessions

SUMMER 2021 PRE-PILOT ACTIVITIES

The program offered the following activities during Summer 2021. Program leadership held AG trainings in early June 2021 virtually. Note, this report covers activities held through July 2021.

Site Selection
April 2021

AG Recruitment/Hiring
May 2021

AG Training
June 2021

Program Launch
June 7, 2021

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 FINDINGS

We analyzed responses from the AG Feedback Survey, CLL Interviews and the pre- and post-scores from the STAR Reading and Early Literacy assessments. For the AG Feedback Survey, rated survey items consist of response options on a five-point scale (AG Training/Knowledge Use items) or nine-point scale (AG Efficacy in Student Engagement), where higher ratings reflect a higher level of agreement. Knowledge Assessment items on the AG Feedback Survey were multiple choice items scored one for correct responses and zero for incorrect responses. The Knowledge Assessment assessed three constructs: reading process and pedagogy, phonemic awareness and morphology. CERE analyzed CLL interviews by coding common themes across the interviews.

EVALUATION QUESTION 1

How well was the Mission Acceleration program designed and implemented?

<u>Summary</u>

- 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.
- AGs were not highly knowledgeable about reading instruction.

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

Evidence-based Intervention	Digital Platform with Appropriate Texts	Meaningful Connection with AG

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.

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 Summer 2021, Mission Acceleration operated at five locations (Oxford, Tupelo, Starkville, Vicksburg and Jackson). Each project site occurred in a Campaign for Grade Level Reading Community across Mississippi (see Figure 3). Two communities opted not to participate in the Summer 2021 implementation of Mission Acceleration (Gulfport and Hattiesburg).

Figure 3. Mission Acceleration Program Map
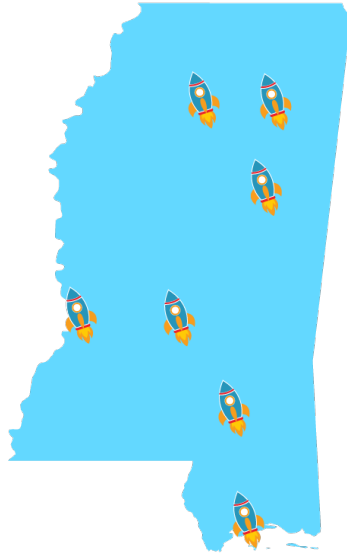
Across the five sites that participated, program activities occurred in one of three settings—schools, community organizations or religious organizations. At each site, Mission Acceleration worked with community partners to identify and recruit scholars to participate in tutoring. Below is a data snapshot of the summer 2021 Mission Acceleration program.

5 sites

24 AGs

106 scholars, 86 (81%) attending >2 sessions

66,054 tutoring minutes

863 tutoring sessions

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. Whether the site had a Community Lead (point person for communication and localized support), a Community Liaison (assists in data collection, manage logistics and provides support for AGs and students) or both;
3. Group size;
4. Session duration and
5. Session frequency.

Community Sites B and E implementation followed the intended Mission Acceleration design with the least variance. 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.**

| Community Site	Setting	Group Size	Session Duration	Session Frequency	Quantity AG	Quantity Scholars*	Scholar* Attendance Rate
A	Religious organization	2-8	83 min	4 days a week	6	29	39% (11 of 28)
B	School	1-4	64 min	4 days a week	11	34	39% (9 of 23)
C	School	2-7	90 min	4 days a week	1	7	59% (10 of 17)
D	Community organization	2-8	63 min	2 days a week	5	9	63% (5 of 8)
E	Community organization	3-4	90 min	4 days a week	2	7	70% (14 of 20)
MA	-	1-8	73 min	4 days a week	25	86	53% (10 of 19)

*Scholars attending more than two tutoring sessions

Academic Guides

- Overall, 25 AGs served as tutors in the program with one AG leaving the program before the end of Summer 2021 (n=24). These AGs were primarily women (88%), Black/African American (46%) or White (46%) and non-education majors (62.5%).
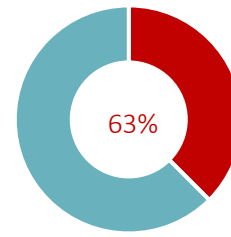
88%
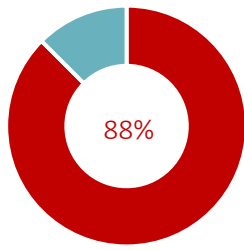
...identified as women, whereas 12% identified as men.

46%
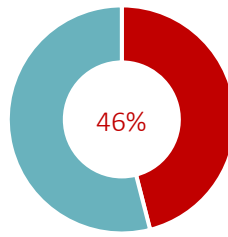
...identified as Black/African American. Additionally, 46% identified as White and 8% as Asian.

63%

...were non-education majors and 32.5% 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 3 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 was calculated along with scores for Reading Process and Pedagogy, Phonemic Awareness and Morphology (see Table 2). 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 was 60.2% (SD = 17.1), with 54% of AGs (n=13) 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. Reading Knowledge Scores
Descriptive statistics for Reading Knowledge assessment.

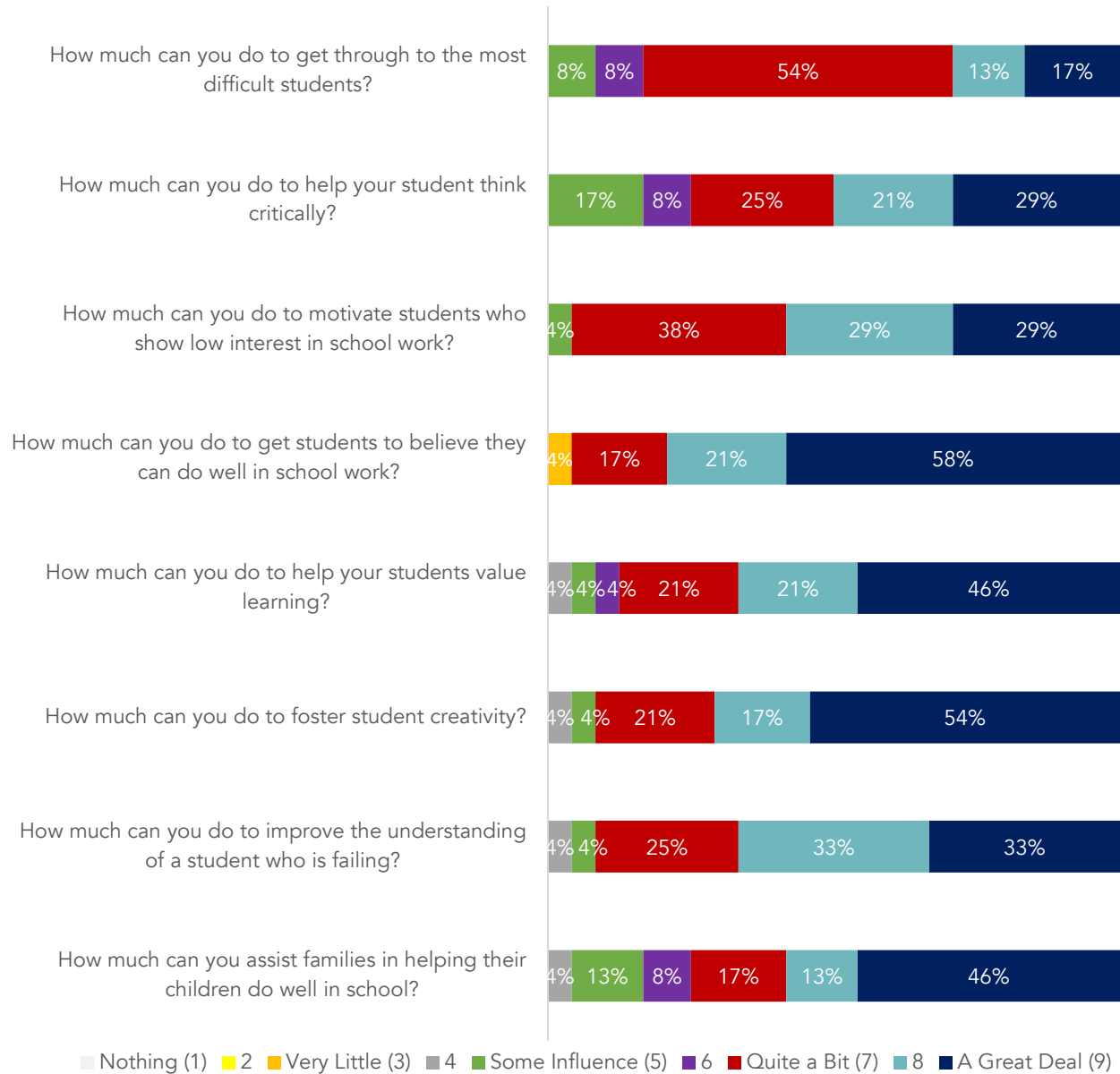| Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	Range	Minimum	Maximum
Morphology	68.1%	26.9	100	0	100
Phonemic Awareness	63.5%	27.6	100	0	100
Reading Process and Pedagogy	54.2%	16.7	66.7	16.7	83.3
Reading Knowledge	60.2%	17.1	61.5	30.8	92.3

Table 3. AG Training Feedback Summary
AGs left training feeling knowledgeable of resources and prepared to implement resources.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Agree	Strongly agree
I know how to implement the resources (e.g., Voyager Passport) in my tutoring sessions.			8%	29%	63%
I will use the information presented on the Science of Reading in tutoring sessions this semester.			4%	46%	50%
The on-site training sessions reflected a balance between informational sessions and small-group interactions.			33%	38%	29%
The pre-tutoring training sessions reflected a balance between informational sessions and small-group interactions.			8%	42%	50%
The information provided throughout the pre-tutoring training has given me in-depth knowledge of the resources associated with the Mission Acceleration program.				63%	38%
The information provided throughout the pre-tutoring training has given me in-depth knowledge of the Mission Acceleration program.		8%		46%	46%

- AGs reported a high level of efficacy towards scholar engagement indicated by AG responses to the sense of efficacy towards student engagement subscale. AGs (n=24) reported an overall TESE mean score of 7.73 (SD = .99) 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 8.21 (SD = 1.35) on a scale of one to nine. Table 3 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.

Question	Some Influence (5)	6	Quite a Bit (7)	8	A Great Deal (9)
How much can you do to get through to the most difficult students?	8%	8%	54%	13%	17%
How much can you do to help your student think critically?	17%	8%	25%	21%	29%
How much can you do to motivate students who show low interest in school work?	4%		38%	29%	29%
How much can you do to get students to believe they can do well in school work?	4% (Very Little)		17%	21%	58%
How much can you do to help your students value learning?	4% 4% 4%		21%	21%	46%
How much can you do to foster student creativity?	4% 4%		21%	17%	54%
How much can you do to improve the understanding of a student who is failing?	4% 4%		25%	33%	33%
How much can you assist families in helping their children do well in school?	4% 13%	8%	17%	13%	46%

Legend: ■ Nothing (1) ■ 2 ■ Very Little (3) ■ 4 ■ Some Influence (5) ■ 6 ■ Quite a Bit (7) ■ 8 ■ A Great Deal (9)

EVALUATION QUESTION 2

What were the facilitators and barriers to effective implementation?

Summary

- The Voyager Passport program, relationships between AGs and scholars and quality of AGs are seen as key facilitators of Mission Acceleration program success.
- CLLs felt it was easy to communicate with program leadership and highlighted the high level of support received in solving site-level problems.
- Access to technology and inconsistent scholar attendance were common barriers to implementing the Mission Acceleration program.
- Three out of five sites experienced hurdles related to COVID-19.
- All sites are concerned about the recruitment or availability of AGs as the program expands.

Implementation Facilitators

Mission Acceleration CLL interview responses reflect the following program components that CLL consider implementation facilitators: AG selection and training, relationship between AG and scholar, curriculum and communication and level of support from program leadership.

AG Selection, Training, Level of Preparation
Interviews N=5, 100%

Relationship between AG and Scholar
Interviews N=4, 80%

Communication, Level of Support from Mission Acceleration leadership
Interviews N=4, 80%

Curriculum (Voyager Passport)
Interviews N=3, 60%

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

AG SELECTION, LEVEL OF PREPARATION, TRAINING (N=5, 100%)

For example:

- "I'm most proud of the Academic Guides' hard work and their dedication to this program. I mean, they showed up to their sessions, they were prepared, and built relationships with the students."
- "We had definitely top-notch Academic Guides that were very capable of delivering this curriculum."

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN AG AND SCHOLAR (N=4, 80%)

For example:

- "I really enjoyed watching all the interaction between the Academic Guides and the young children, because they really in a short time developed relationships."
- "The Academic Guides did just a wonderful job building those relationships in the beginning with the students so that they were very eager to come to the tutoring sessions. They didn't want to leave. They just were very excited every time the Academic Guides got there and it was their time to get to go with them."

COMMUNICATION, LEVEL OF SUPPORT FROM MISSION ACCELERATION LEADERSHIP (N=4, 80%)

For example:

- "There was constant communication between the Mission Acceleration team as well as the community leads as well as the guides."
- "So whatever challenges and whatever hurdles that you were experiencing at your local level, she is there to walk you through it, and to help you through it, and to guide you through it by a simple text message, Facebook message, email, you name it. She's on it, and has been a huge support trying to get the academic guides out there."

CURRICULUM (VOYAGER PASSPORT) (N=3, 60%)

For example:

- "So it tells them exactly what they need to do and what they need to say. And the program is also, it's evidence-based, and it's based on the science of reading. So as long as they're following our program, the students are getting the type of instruction they need that will increase and strengthen their reading."

Implementation Barriers

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

Access to Technology, Problems with Digital Platforms
Interviews N=5, 100%

Recruitment of AGs
Interviews N=5, 100%

Covid-19
Interviews N=3, 60%

Low/Inconsistent Scholar Attendance
Interviews N=3, 60%

CLLs also listed other barriers including:

- Lack of a clear plan/rushed implementation (N=3, 60%);
- Virtual sessions (N=3, 60%);
- Need for site orientation for AGs (N=3, 60%);
- Wrong curriculum materials (N=2, 40%) and
- Lack of host teacher buy-in (N=2, 40%).

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

TECHNOLOGY ACCESS (LACK OF DEVICES, WIFI, DIGITAL PLATFORM) (N=5, 100%)

For example:

- "Surprised me that we had that many tech issues and trouble getting the devices from the district."
- "They just didn't have the skill set yet to be able to get on their computers and get logged in and get to the program. They didn't have any of the addresses to Literra or their log-ins."

LOW/INCONSISTENT SCHOLAR ATTENDANCE (N=3, 60%)

For example:

- "Attendance was like a revolving door."
- "Attendance was hard this summer because I don't know if parents and children put as much emphasis on it."

COVID-19 (N=3, 60%)

For example:

- "COVID had an impact on the program and an impact on the number of tutors we were able to recruit."
- "One of the staff members got COVID and so we had to close."
- "But now that we're seeing this wave coming back, I just... I am more concerned about how it's going to affect our tutoring with attendance and with protocols as far as exposures."

RECRUITMENT OF AGs (N=5, 100%)

For example:

- "We were not able to go to the Boys & Girls Club at all because we didn't have enough tutors."
- "I think now finding academic guides is high on our priority list, because I think the students are waiting in line, but the academic guides are of extreme importance. And I know that the grant has been written where it's just college students. But somewhere along the line, we may have to look at that and think through that because it definitely has created a barrier and a challenge to think outside of the box."

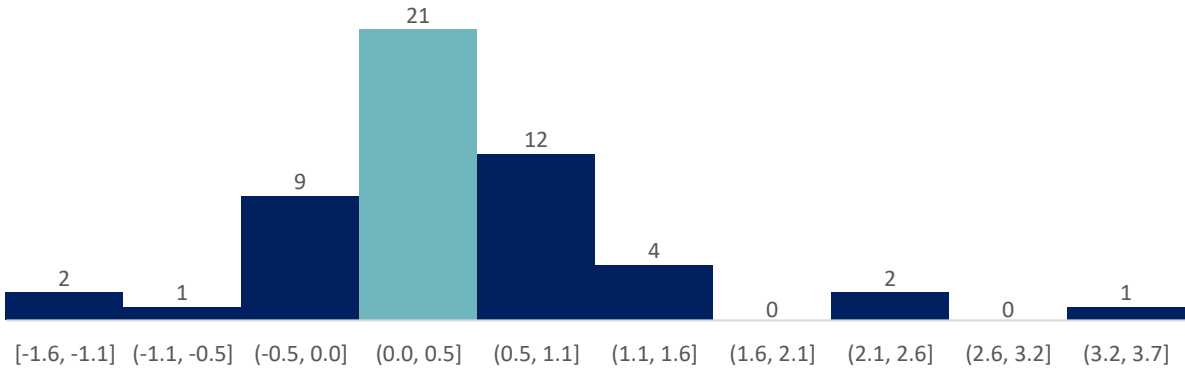## To what extent did the program contribute to intended outcomes?

Summary

- Scholars attending more than two sessions experienced average reading growth of four months during the seven-week program.
- Post-testing did not occur with fidelity at all program sites.
- Scholars experienced a positive significant difference in reading score between pre- and post- tests.
- CLLs observed social emotional learning gains as students formed relationships with AGs and peers.

Reading Achievement

- Scholars completed STAR Reading or STAR Early Literacy assessments at the onset of the program (n=86) and at the end of the program (n=52). Pre- and post-test matches (n=52) of data were analyzed by conducting a dependent samples t-test. On average, scholars scored M_d =42.7 points (SD = 70.7) higher on the post-test. The dependent samples t-test revealed that this increase was significant, t (51) = 4.35, p<.001.
- We calculated reading growth scores for each scholar who completed both pre- and post-testing. Across the 52 matches, the average scholar experienced four months reading growth over the seven-week program. See Figure 4 for histogram of reading growth scores.

Figure 4. Reading growth scores.
The average reading growth was 4 months.

Histogram showing reading growth scores by interval:
- [-1.6, -1.1]: 2
- (-1.1, -0.5]: 1
- (-0.5, 0.0]: 9
- (0.0, 0.5]: 21
- (0.5, 1.1]: 12
- (1.1, 1.6]: 4
- (1.6, 2.1]: 0
- (2.1, 2.6]: 2
- (2.6, 3.2]: 0
- (3.2, 3.7]: 1

*.1 represents one month of growth.

- Table 5 summarizes the pre- and post- test data by community site. Only 60% of scholars who attended more than two tutoring sessions completed both pre- and post- testing. It is critical that community sites find ways to complete testing for scholars. AGs follow the prescriptive tutoring plan that is based off the data collected during pre- and post-testing.

Table 5: Site-level testing and reading growth.
Mission Acceleration scholars saw reading gains of 4 months during the 2 months of the summer program.

Community Site	Quantity Scholars (attending >2 session)	# Pre-Tested	# Post-Tested	# Matches	Pre- Mean GLE	Post-Mean GLE	Mean Reading Growth
A	29	17	13	13	1.5	2.1	6 months
B	34	30	21	21	1.6	2.2	6 months
C	7	6	4	4	2.9	2.8	- 1 month
D	9	9	7	7	1.6	1.8	2 months
E	7	7	7	7	1.6	2.0	4 months
MA	86	69	52	52	1.7	2.1	4 months

Positive Social-Emotional Learning Outcomes

Mission Acceleration CLL interview responses reflect positive scholar social-emotional learning outcomes over the course of the program. In future semesters, a short SEL survey will be administered to scholars periodically through program activities to collect data on scholar perceptions of SEL factors and how they may change as a result of participation in the Mission Acceleration program.

INCREASED CONFIDENCE (N=4, 80%)

For example:

- "There was a little girl spelling words with great pride and excitement and enthusiasm."

- "He was just a little leader at [MA] where at school he hung back and didn't jump out there."

INTERACTIONS WITH PEERS (N=4, 80%)

For example:

- "They were more comfortable in the setting and interacting with peers of the group."

- "It had positive impacts on their eagerness to come."

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;
    - Develop and communicate program non-negotiables to community sites; and,
    - Implement an on-site orientation day at community sites for AGs.

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.
- However, AGs were not highly-knowledgeable of reading instruction.
- CLLs see the Voyager Passport program, relationship between AGs and scholars, and quality of AGs as key facilitators of Mission Acceleration program success.
- CLLs felt it was easy to communicate with Mission Acceleration leadership and highlighted the high level of support received in solving site-level problems.
- CLLs identified access to technology and inconsistent scholar attendance as common barriers to implementing the Mission Acceleration program.
- Three out of five sites, experienced hurdles related to COVID-19.
- All sites are concerned about the recruitment or availability of AGs as the program expands.
- Scholars attending more than two sessions experienced average reading growth of four months during the seven-week program.
- Post-testing did not occur with fidelity at all program sites.

- Our analysis showed a positive significant difference in reading score, when comparing reading pre- and post- tests for scholars.
- CLLs observed social emotional learning gains as students formed relationships with AGs and peers.

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 project results in promising early outcomes in reading and social emotional learning for Mississippi students impacted by COVID-19.
2. **Develop and communicate program non-negotiables to community sites.** Clear expectations should result in less variability in program implementation. This will address barriers identified regarding lack of a clear plan/ rushed implementation.
3. **Implement a program monitoring schedule.** Periodic review of AG logs will provide an opportunity to be made aware of when community sites may be diverging from program expectations in regards to group size or tutoring duration.
4. **Share pre-pilot outcomes disaggregated by project site with CLLs**. This will allow sites an opportunity to notice how variability from the program model results in inconsistent outcomes for participating students.
5. **Create opportunities for CLLs to collaborate.** Barriers highlighted were frequently found across multiple sites. Developing a community of practice may relieve program leadership of some of the day to day problem-solving as peers learn from each other. This will result in greater capacity building and sustainability in the future.
6. **Evaluate whether there is a need for increased training to enhance AG knowledge of reading instruction.** AG do not currently possess a high level of knowledge of reading instruction; however, this may not be an area that results in much improvement in outcomes due to the scripted nature of the curriculum.
7. **Implement an on-site orientation day for AGs in the communities where they will be providing tutoring.** This should help AGs be more comfortable in the locations they are serving and provide an opportunity for CLLs to meet the AGs before the program starts. If a relationship exists between AGs and CLLs, they will be more likely to seek help if needed.
8. **Provide an extended opportunity for new AGs to become familiar with the Voyager Passport lesson format.** This can occur by AGs recording a lesson or on-site with a peer or the Community Liaison. This will result in increased comfort with the resources and help ensure that tutoring sessions have a strong start.

9. **Develop and communicate protocols for addressing COVID-19 at sites.** Since some of the programs occur in community organization locations, a Memorandum of Understanding may be necessary to reduce confusion on when and how quarantine, contact tracing or closure needs to occur and who is responsible for making those decisions.

10. **Create and share a quarterly newsletter that can be used to increase parent engagement.** Parent involvement and commitment to the program was identified as a barrier to program implementation. Program outcomes, additional resources and information on how parents can support their students should be included. This will help increase outreach and awareness of the program.

11. **Set screening windows for STAR Reading and Early Literacy assessments.** 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.

12. **Assess whether a threshold for student attendance should be implemented.** While 106 students were involved with Mission Acceleration at some point during the summer, 19% attended only one or two times. If there is no threshold for student attendance and no value placed on it, this may have contributed to the lack of consistent attendance on the part of families.

13. **Identify and share program "best practices" or strategies for addressing technology access issues.** Troubleshooting resources may help community site feel like there are supports in place for when similar problems may happen in the future.

14. **Facilitate a conversation around recruitment of AGs.** Successful recruitment and onboarding of AGs is a primary concern of community sites. Clarify the intent and value of using college students as AGs. There is a lack of understanding of why (beyond a superficial "because the grant says so") other categories of tutors, such as retired people, are not available to participate.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Site Descriptions

Site A

Community site A program activities occurred in a religious organization's summer program. Scholars received tutoring in groups ranging from one to eight participants per Academic Guide. Sessions lasted 83 minutes on average and occurred four days a week. There were six Academic Guides and 29 scholars (who attended more than two sessions) participating at the site. The scholar attendance rate was 39% and a total of 28 tutoring sessions were offered. Site A completed pre-testing for 17 students and post-testing for 13 students. The mean growth for scholars in the program was six months with a range of nine months loss to 37 months growth.

Site B

Community site B program activities occurred in a school's summer program. Scholars received tutoring in groups ranging from one to four participants per Academic Guide. Sessions lasted 64 minutes on average and occurred four days a week. There were 11 Academic Guides and 34 scholars (who attended more than two sessions) participating at the site. The scholar attendance rate was 39% and a total of 23 tutoring sessions were offered. Site B completed pre-testing for 30 students and post-testing for 21 students. The mean growth for scholars in the program was six months with a range of 12 months loss to 24 months growth.

Site C

Community site C program activities occurred in a school's summer program. Scholars received tutoring in groups ranging from two to seven participants per Academic Guide. Sessions lasted 90 minutes on average and occurred four days a week. There was one Academic Guide and seven scholars (who attended more than two sessions) participating at the site. The scholar attendance rate was 59% and a total of 17 tutoring sessions were offered. Site C completed pre-testing for six students and post-testing for four students. The mean loss for scholars in the program was one month with a range of 16 months loss to nine months growth.

Site D

Community site D program activities occurred in a community organization's summer program. Scholars received tutoring in groups ranging from two to eight participants per Academic Guide.

Sessions lasted 63 minutes on average and occurred two days a week. There were five Academic Guides and nine scholars (who attended more than two sessions) participating at the site. The scholar attendance rate was 63% and a total of eight tutoring sessions were offered. Site B completed pre-testing for nine students and post-testing for seven students. The mean growth for scholars in the program was two months with a range of four months loss to nine months growth.

Site E

Community site E program activities occurred in a community organization's summer program. Scholars received tutoring in groups ranging from three to four participants per Academic Guide. Sessions lasted 90 minutes on average and occurred four days a week. There were two Academic Guides and seven scholars (who attended more than two sessions) participating at the site. The scholar attendance rate was 70% and a total of 20 tutoring sessions were offered. Site B completed pre-testing for seven students and post-testing for seven students. The mean growth for scholars in the program was four months with a range of zero to nine months growth.