

UA Early Literacy Project

February 2016

Written by:

Dr. Kevin Gorman, Director Student Services, Upper Arlington School District

Brett Tingley, President, Upper Arlington Kids Identified with Dyslexia (UA-KID)

In 2002 the International Dyslexia Association developed a detailed definition of dyslexia and is advocating that this definition be used in schools on a national level. The definition is inclusive and comprehensive and states: "Dyslexia is a specific learning disability that is neurobiological in origin. It is characterized by difficulties with accurate and/or fluent word recognition and by poor spelling and decoding abilities. These difficulties result from a phonological component of language that is often unexpected in relation to other cognitive abilities and the provision of effective classroom instruction. Secondary consequences may include problems with reading comprehension and reduced reading experience that can impede growth of vocabulary and background knowledge" (Shaywitz, 2003).

Case Study

In the Upper Arlington (UA) School District, a grass roots campaign began after children were not being identified as having dyslexia and a reading disability. The delay in the identification process can inhibit a child from being able to overcome some of the aspects of the disorder. There have been many brain studies completed on children before and after intervention is used. Early identification and remediation is significant in the process. The brain displays actual physical changes that coincide with a child's reading success. Thus, it is imperative that children be identified as early as possible to make a difference in not only their school careers, but also in their career opportunities and self-esteem.

The Upper Arlington parent group, henceforth referred to as Upper Arlington Kids Identified with Dyslexia (UA-KID), challenged the district in 2011 as to the identification process and the intervention utilized once a child was identified as having a reading disability. It took several years and the district went through two different directors, but the district finally determined that a new identification process must be developed to ensure that children would be found and would then receive the appropriate services to ensure they could learn to read.

Process

Beginning in 2012, all kindergarteners within the district are now screened using the Comprehensive Test of Phonological Processing- 2 (CTOPP-2). Letters are sent to all parents asking permission to assess their children. Teams of trained professionals screen and work with each child utilizing the CTOPP-2. It takes approximately thirty minutes for the assessment. These test results are utilized to determine who needs intervention, who needs assessment, and who simply needs regular classroom instruction. If a child needs intervention then the district offers Lexia, a computer program, which is evidence-based, to assist the child at school and at home. The district also offers a double dose of Foundations, an evidence-based program that ensures the child has a multi-sensory approach to instruction.

Currently in UA, Foundations is offered as a part of the regular reading instruction to all kindergarten, first and second graders. This is important to note because with the whole language approach to instruction, that most of the state utilizes, the phonological processing component is missing or is not based on evidenced research. The whole language approach to reading may assist about eighty-five percent of children, but the other fifteen percent need a more structured evidence-based approach. Foundations filled that gap in Upper Arlington. Prior to the implementation of Foundations, the district was over-identifying children thought to have dyslexia because of curriculum deficiencies creating reading casualties. With Foundations, the district is now catching those children who truly have dyslexia.

The other treatment program in the district for those children who do have dyslexia is Orton Gillingham, an evidence-based multi-sensory program that has been in existence since the 1930's. Proper instruction requires fidelity in the implementation and training of the professionals. It involves a minimum of fifty hours of instruction, and one hundred hours of hands-on practicum experience to truly get certified to teach the program. Fidelity is essential if the program is going to impact children positively. All of UA's instructors have the certification with the appropriate training and licensure necessary to make a difference.

Results

UA has been giving the CTOPP-2 as a screening mechanism to all kindergarteners for four years. The current third grade class is the first class that was screened four years ago. In our elementary school, which has also had the benefit of Foundations, Lexia and Orton Gillingham for all four years (one elementary, now referred to as elementary A, served as a pilot for each program before rolling out to the district) these third grade children are the first class in which all students passed the third grade reading guarantee on the first try. Please refer to Graph 1 below. The results, as compared to the rest of the district and state, are extraordinary.

In Graph 2 the data indicates that by identifying children with the CTOPP-2 in kindergarten and giving them proper instruction, almost all children's phonemic awareness is remediated. In the beginning of the 2013-14 school year, each kindergartener at elementary school A, was administered the CTOPP-2. Thirty children were identified by the CTOPP-2 as below average in phonemic awareness. The following year those same children were re-administered the CTOPP-2 after having received Foundations and Lexia in kindergarten and not a single child was below average in phonemic awareness. The following year, 2014-15, 28 kindergarteners scored below average in phonemic awareness after receiving the CTOPP-2. At the start of this school year (2015-16), those children were re-administered the CTOPP-2 as first graders and only one scored below average in phonemic awareness. See Chart 3 for raw data underlying these results.

Though longevity is important for a case study, our children's advances have demonstrated much success thus far in implementation of our district's early literacy program.

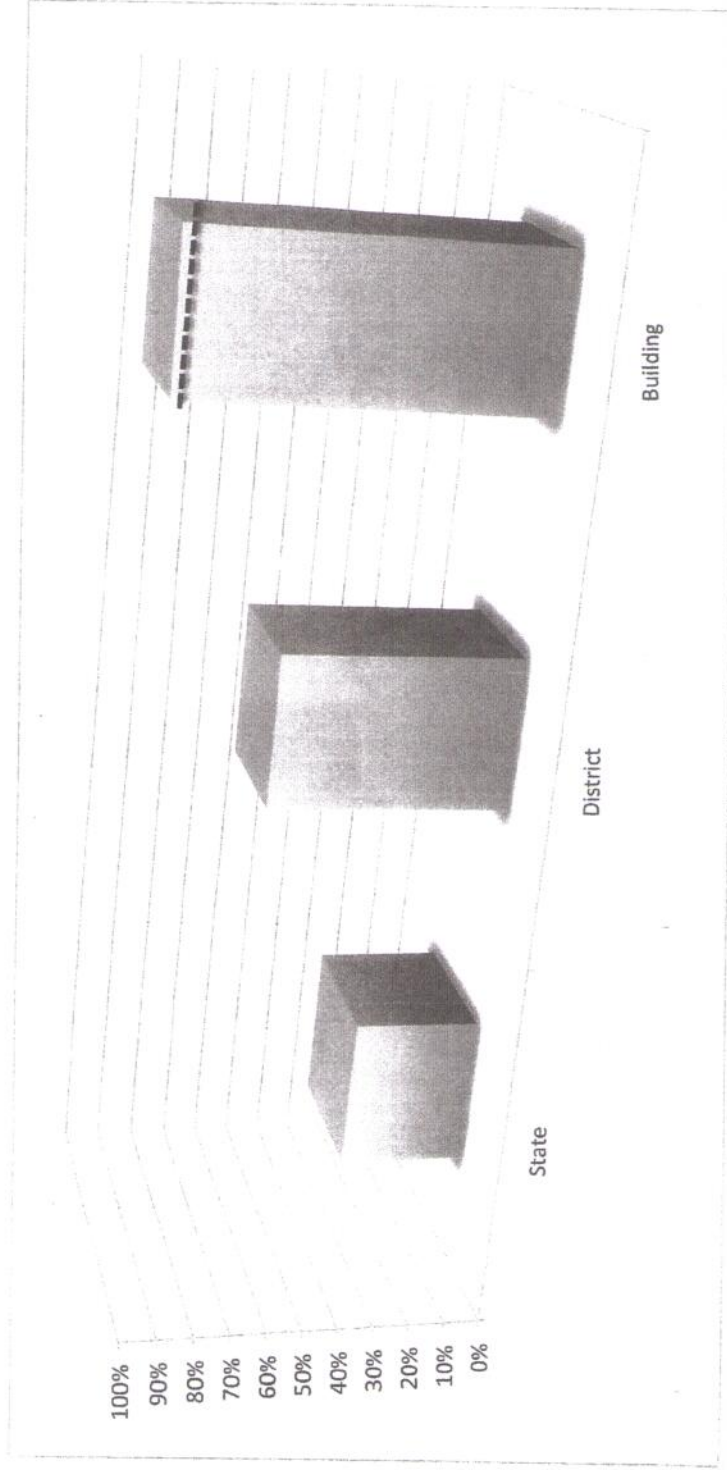
References

Gorman, K.A. (2013). *Breaking Down the Barriers, A Guide to Student Services Supervision*, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield Publishing.

Shaywitz, S. (2003). *Overcoming Dyslexia*, New York: Vintage Books.

	State	District	Building
% Passing 3GRG in First Round	34%	66%	100%

Graph 1

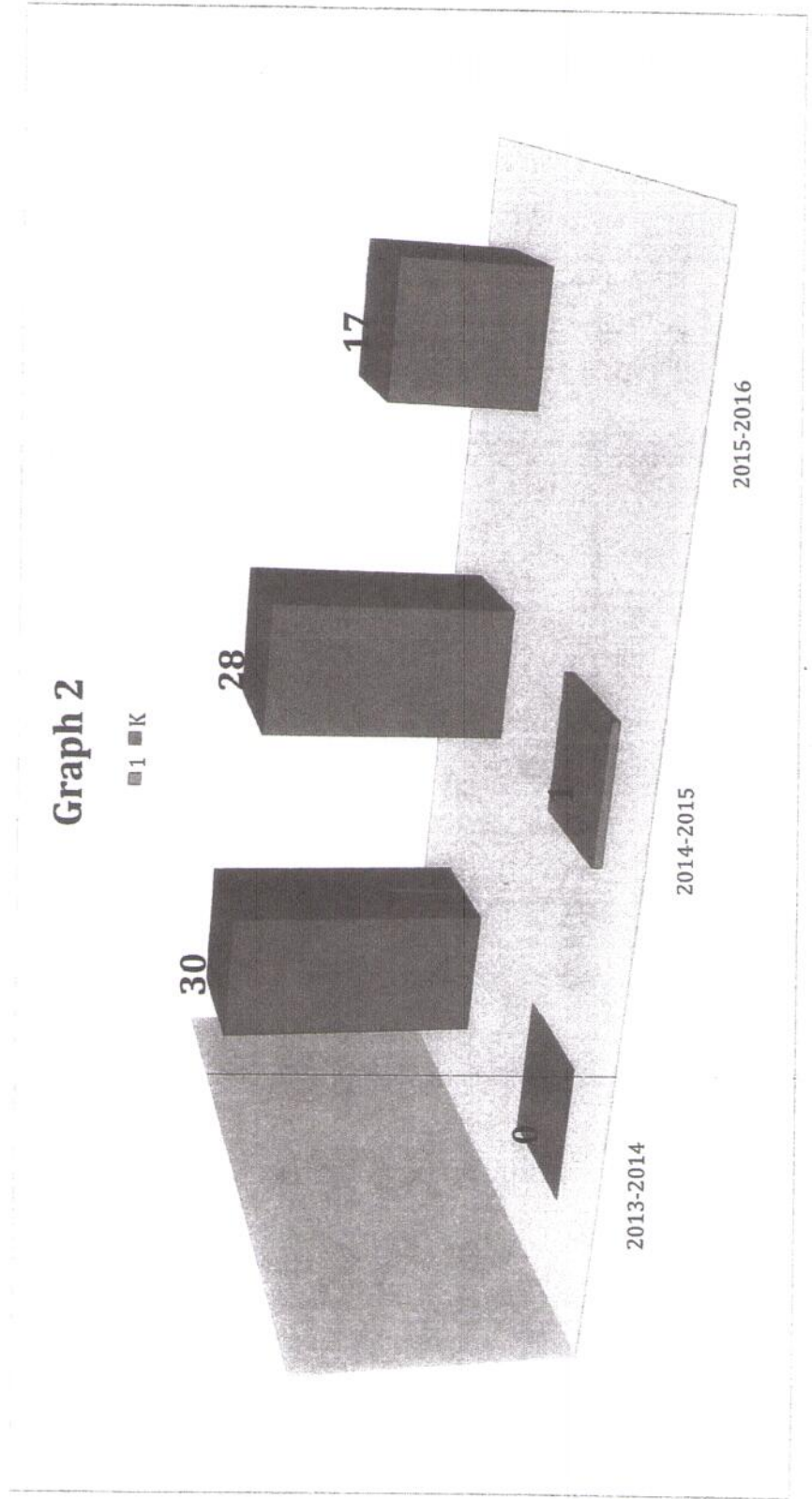


3GRG: Third Grade Reading Guarantee

*94% of students passed AIR Reading Subtest; The state of Ohio now also accepts a score of 559 or higher on the Terra Nova Reading assessment to meet 3GRG. Therefore 100% of building students passed the 3GRG

Building CTOPP Results

The Red Bar displays the number of kindergarten students who scored below average in the area of Phonological Awareness on the Comprehensive Test of Phonological Processing. The Blue Bar directly in front of each Red Bar depicts the same group retested in first grade after the implementation of Wilson Foundations Classroom instruction and Lexia, for those who were below average. Kindergarten students from 2015-2016 only have one column, as they will be retested during the 2016-2017 year.



	Kindergarten	Retested in Gr. 1	Where are they now? 2015/16
# of students below average in Phonological Awareness 2013-2014	30/116 (25%)	0	1 Student is being evaluated for Reading Disability
# of students below average in Phonological Awareness 2014-2015	28/110 (25%)	1	Qualified for S/L Services & in process of full evaluation.
# of students below average in Phonological Awareness 2015-2016	17/109 (16%)	TBD 2016- 2017	TBD 2017-2018