2020-2023 Blended Learning Grant Program-Planning Grants
Letter of Interest (LOI) Application Due 11: 59 p.m. CT, September 18, 2020

Texas Education Agency®

NOGA ID

Authorizing legislation: **GAA, Article IX, Rider 41, 86th Texas Legislature; TEC 29.924; TEC 28.020**

Application stamp-in date and time

This LOI application may be submitted via email to **loiapplications@tea.texas.gov**

The LOI application may be signed with a digital ID, or it may be signed by hand. Both forms of signature are acceptable.

TEA mus receive the application by **11:59 p.m. CT, September 18, 2020**.

Grant period from: **October 23, 2020 to May 31, 2023**

Pre-award costs permitted from: **the date of award announcement**

Required Attachments

1. Excel workbook with the grant's budget schedules (linked along with this form on the TEA Grants Opportunities page)
2. All attachments as listed on page 4-5 of the Program Guidelines

Amendment Number

Amendment number (For amendments only; enter N/A when completing this form to apply for grant funds):

Applicant Information

Organization	Mineola ISD	CDN	250903	Campus		ESC	DUNS
Address	1695 West Loop 564	City	Mineola	ZIP	75773	Vendor ID	
Primary Contact	Jennifer Knipp	Email	knippj@mineolaisd.net	Phone	9035692448		
Secondary Contact	Kara Ledkins	Email	ledkinsk@mineolaisd.net	Phone	9035692448		

Certification and Incorporation

I understand that this application constitutes an offer and, if accepted by TEA or renegotiated to acceptance, will form a binding agreement. I hereby certify that the information contained in this application is, to the best of my knowledge, correct and that the organization named above has authorized me as its representative to obligate this organization in a legally binding contractual agreement. I certify that any ensuing program and activity will be conducted in accordance and compliance with all applicable federal and state laws and regulations.

I further certify my acceptance of the requirements conveyed in the following portions of the LOI application, as applicable, and that these documents are incorporated by reference as part of the LOI application and Notice of Grant Award (NOGA):

- ☒ LOI application, guidelines, and instructions
- ☒ General and application-specific Provisions and Assurances
- ☒ Debarment and Suspension Certification
- ☒ Lobbying Certification

Authorized Official Name: Jennifer Knipp Title: Director of Curriculum & Instruction

Email: knippj@mineolaisd.net Phone: 9035692448

Signature: Jennifer Knipp Digitally signed by Jennifer Knipp Date: 2020.09.18 11:48:38 -05'00' Date: 09/18/2020

Shared Services Arrangements

[X] Shared services arrangements (SSAs) are not permitted for this grant.

Statutory/Program Assurances

The following assurances apply to this program. In order to meet the requirements of the program, the applicant must comply with these assurances.

Check each of the following boxes to indicate your compliance.

☒ The applicant provides assurance that program funds will supplement (increase the level of service), and not supplant (replace) state mandates, State Board of Education rules, and activities previously conducted with state or local funds. The applicant provides assurance that state or local funds may not be decreased or diverted for other purposes merely because of the availability of these funds. The applicant provides assurance that program services and activities to be funded from this LOI will be supplementary to existing services and activities and will not be used for any services or activities required by state law, State Board of Education rules, or local policy.

☒ The applicant provides assurance that the application does not contain any information that would be protected by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) from general release to the public.

☒ The applicant provides assurance to adhere to all the Statutory and TEA Program requirements as noted in the 2020-2023 Blended Learning Grant Program-Planning Grants Program Guidelines.

☒ The applicant provides assurance to adhere to all the Performance Measures, as noted in the 2020-2023 Blended Learning Grant Program-Planning Grants Program Guidelines, and shall provide to TEA, upon request, any performance data necessary to assess the success of the program.

☒ The applicant will attend the mandatory BLGP Kickoff Summit. The 2020 BLGP Kickoff Summit will take place virtually on November 12-13, 2020. Attendance at the BLGP Summit is mandatory for all participating districts. The district BLGP Project Manager must be in attendance.

☒ The applicant will designate and provide a district-level project manager who will be available to dedicate at least 50% of his or her time to designing and implementing the BLGP plan.

☒ The applicant will list the proposed feeder pattern to be included in the district with a rationale as to why each school is included as part of this grant.

☒ The applicant will contract with a BLGP Design and Implementation vendor in the fall/winter of the Planning year.

☒ The applicant will implement a TEA approved software program in all grade levels selected to participate in the BLGP. Non-math blended learning pilot participants must gain TEA approval for their chosen software program. Different grades participating in the program within a given school (or district) may choose to implement different software programs.

☒ The applicant will submit the BLGP Strategic Plan in the spring prior to implementation. The Strategic Design component of the BLGP Strategic Plan is tentatively due to TEA in Jan/Feb of 2021. The remainder of the plan is tentatively due in May of 2021. Exact dates will be sent to grantees by email.

Statutory/Program Assurances (Cont.)

☒ The applicant will complete all BLGP Fidelity of Execution Requirements in program implementation, which include:

a. Weekly Student Software Progress: Achieve the vendor-specific weekly student software progress metrics of the selected software program

b. Weekly Teacher Software Usage: One teacher log-in per week is required

c. Weekly Data Driven Instruction (DDI) time: Execute DDI time, provide evidence of DDI time (TEA will provide a template), that will be delivered to TEA

d. Monthly Meaningful Learning Experiences (MLE): Execute MLE(s), provide evidence of MLE (TEA will provide a template), that will be delivered to TEA

e. Beginning, Middle, and End of Year Interim Assessment: Administer approved interim assessment and send campus growth report to TEA

Statutory/Program Requirements

1. **District Commitment:** Explain why your school district wants to join the Blended Learning Grant Program (BLGP) as a Math Innovation Zone (MIZ) or a non-math blended learning pilot. *(Recommended Length: 1.5-2 pages)*

a. Describe why the district hopes to become a MIZ site or a non-math pilot and how the BLGP planning and execution process will benefit the district and schools. Include how blended learning is connected to the district's long-term vision and near-term priorities, and demonstrate that the district has the capacity to dedicate time and energy to this work at the present time. If applicable, response may include why COVID has changed the district prioritization of blended learning.

b. Describe what problem or set of problems the district and schools are attempting to solve through the use of a blended learning instructional model.

c. At its core, blended learning represents innovation in how instruction is delivered. However, we know that through the BLGP's robust planning and execution processes, blended learning can also foster **broader operational benefits** at the district and school levels - these may include changes in staffing, scheduling, finance, etc. Please describe your district's willingness to explore and embrace these kinds of broader operational innovation.

Response

a. Mineola ISD's commitment to being a blended learning district began with our 2016 designation as a Raise Your Hand Texas non-funded blended site in 2016. At that time we recognized the need to transform our instructional practice into one that would allow more student agency, personalized instruction, and data driven decision making using research proven technology applications in the classroom. Our MISD Strategic Plan calls for an emphasis on blended learning with Strategy #2: We will ensure a culture of innovation among staff and students. Specifically, one result statement for that strategy is to "apply appropriate, effective, and efficient resources to provide a blended learning environment." Because our plan called for a shift in mindset and practice, we applied for and earned a spot as a RYHT site.

We began with a math pilot in our middle school and committed over $180,000 of our general operating expenses in the 2017 year to these efforts. We re-purposed staff, purchased personal devices for students, and invested in software that would assess and monitor student progress as well as support skills mastery. We began the work of supporting teachers through site visits and professional development with the support of the program planning and implementation group provided by RHYT. As a result we saw gains in our performance levels on Math STAAR at 4% in Approaches, 5% in Meets, and 5% in Masters. Our staff and student surveys reflected a growth in student ownership, teacher efficacy, and a growth mindset which changed conversations. Over the course of three years we expanded the blended learning model strategies into other content areas, used it to make curriculum choices, professional development plans, and in hiring decisions.

TEA awarded us the Math Innovation Zone grant in 2018 and we were fortunate enough to continue to scale and grow our blended learning experiences for teachers and students in math across 3 campuses. This amazing opportunity allowed us to continue to work with with the CA group, shift our Project Manager to a full time position as manager and coach,

Statutory/Program Requirements

1. Continued: Please use the additional space provided to respond to Program Requirement Question #1.

purchase software, build content, train more staff, and impact more students.

After seeing the results of our beginning of year data, we are more determined than ever to build upon the work and the model of blended learning. We had expected to see dismal gaps in our students mastery of skills and concepts due to summer slide and COVID slide combined. We were especially concerned with our math students as NWEA and other experts predicted students would start school more than 1.5 years behind. Instead, we found that in each of grades 1, 2, 4, and 5, students either met or barely missed math grade level norms projected growth points as measured from Fall 2019 to Fall 2020. Our growth in reading on beginning of year MAP is more concerning. Only grades 4 and 5 met or exceeded their RIT Growth Projections from Fall 2019 to Fall 2020. Grades 1, 2, and 3 fell far below expectations as measured by RIT Growth.

The pandemic and the sudden switch to complete remote learning brought us new challenges; however, nothing compared to the challenges that other districts were experiencing. While they were scrambling to find effective software, purchase devices for every student, work in an LMS, and train students, teachers, and parents on those devices and in the platforms, we concentrated on adjusting playlists, scheduling contact with students, and planning for remediation and intervention. We ensured that every student in our district had a device at home along with internet connection through the use of hot spots. Each campus put together a plan for remote learning that included Google Classroom codes, student playlists or menus with links to student resources, designated times for zoom meetings with students, and plans for initiating contact with parents. The district held staff-wide zoom meetings and allowed principals and teachers to demonstrate and highlight their strategies for remote learning. While it wasn't easy, it was not as burdensome had we just started from scratch. Certainly our experience in blended learning and instruction prepared us for this unusual time.

Four of the original campus and district leaders who began the blended learning journey are still in district. Our new campus leader and superintendent are poised and ready to learn from us. Because of our small district, leadership is often the lead on multiple initiatives and collaborative teams. Guidance from the design and implementation vendors is crucial. The expertise and support from an outside source has been instrumental in shifting the mindset of the leaders of the initiative which has trickled down to teachers and students to allow for sustainability of the model. Having more opportunity to plan for scaling blended learning into other content areas will be critical to our goal statement for blended learners: Learners will possess the courage and ability to set goals, navigate their progress, demonstrate mastery, and lead change.

b. Increase literacy skills for all

The demand for literacy skills are increasing, yet students are not keeping pace with the demand. A report published from Reading Next in 2004 highlighted research that high school graduates are demonstrating significantly worse reading skills. Fifteen years later, the Texas Tribune reported that 8th grade students in Texas still lag in reading. MISD reflects that unfortunate trend. Our 2019 TAPR shows that when compared to Region and State scores, grades 3, 4, and 5, our students scored lower at every single performance level in STAAR reading and writing for both 2018 and 2019. The results are better at middle school - the campus that started blended learning 4 years ago in Math and expanded to a few other classrooms. Only in 2018 were grades 6, 7, and 8 outscored in the performance bands; students overall outperformed the region and state in 2019. We believe that the focused efforts of the campus leader, the dedication by the staff returning, and the on-boarding with the new staff by our project manager and leadership is connected to the experiences and achievement of students who have been learning in a blended model for multiple years. There is still to work to be done in literacy achievement at middle school, and it's increasingly evident that instruction in reading at writing all grade levels must be transformed.

MISD serves a student body comprised of 12% English Learners and we project those numbers to increase annually. We are not realizing Goal 1 of our current District Improvement Plan which is to "Provide an exemplary instructional program for all students that promotes successful post secondary college and career readiness while eliminating the achievement gap." It's imperative that we continue our efforts in enveloping our students in blended learning experiences across all content areas and support for doing this in our Language Arts and Reading classrooms will have ripple influence as they learn science and social studies content and specifically help our EL students as they work on reading, writing, thinking, and speaking. The 2019 TAPR demonstrates that our ELs achieve at Approaches and Better as much as 30 percentage points lower than all MISD students in 2018 and 2019.

We currently have in place plans to strategically increase the literacy achievement of our students. Participation in the

Statutory/Program Requirements

1. Continued: Please use the additional space provided to respond to Program Requirement Question #1.

BLGP will enhance and supplement our efforts. In addition to the Reading Academies that every teacher in the district K-3 is currently participating in, we have a reading specialist that is devoted to K-5 teachers and trained in the Science of Teaching Reading. She is trained in the Collins Writing program and trained extensively in Fountas and Pinell Classroom. Kris is also our reading academy cohort leader and supports and coaches our teachers in those strategies. She works closely with our reading consultant and their partnership will expand more at grades 3-5 for the 2020-2021 school year and beyond. Our district writing plan includes the Collins Education Associates who train and support our teachers in strategies for teaching critical thinking and writing across every content. We know that literacy is not solely the responsibility of the reading or English teacher; we have expectations for reading and writing in every core subject. Expanding blended learning for teachers of literacy will give them tools and and increased skills for meeting the needs of all students, differentiating and personalizing instruction, and diagnosing student knowledge.

c. Our recent past demonstrates our willingness to explore and embrace broader operational innovation. When we started our journey we made creative moves in how to self fund for assessment and progress monitor software, build and create content for blended classrooms, repurpose staff and hire new staff that fit our mission, adjust schedules to ensure, for example, PLC time more frequently, and make curriculum decisions that would support a blended learning model. That was before we were awarded any money from TEA through MIZ. We have built into our budget additional support from reading and math consultants who provide fresh eyes and voices and lead our teams. This support will continue as our teams analyze TEKS, plan for instruction, and respond to data.

We realize that to ensure sustainable transformation, we will examine our current practice in the ELAR classrooms, critically look at staffing and related decisions, investigate best use of funds in our general operating balance and prioritize. In order for blended learning to be "in the DNA" of our district and prepare students to be ready to succeed in the heavy content world of high school and beyond, we understand that transformation cannot be a narrow or isolated focus.

2. **Project Manager:** Who will lead this work at your district by serving as the **BLGP Project Manager** and why is this person the right person for this role? *(Recommended Length: 0.5 page)*

   a. Include information about the **experience, background, and ability to drive student results** of the BLGP PM.

   b. Please describe the prospective PM's commitment to and vision for the BLGP in the district. Why is this individual committed to implementing a high-quality blended learning model?

   c. Describe how the district will enable the PM to make decisions across functions (C&I, IT, etc.) and influence district leadership to drive instructional and operational change.

Response.
a. Kara Ledkins will continue in her role as Project Manager for the BLGP. Kara's past experience as a literacy teacher will serve her well, but her experience as Project Manager during the RYHT pilot (50% of the time) and then as PM for the MIZ grant along with coaching grant teachers (and sometimes nongrant teachers) ensures that she is the best choice. Kara is experienced at delivering professional development as well as supporting teachers in the classroom and having a direct impact on their instruction and planning. Kara has become verse in MAP, DMAC, and IXL. She assists teachers and campus administrators in the various software and data disaggregation platforms. She has been an integral part of the blended learning initiative from the very first application for the RYHT grant. She makes beneficial connections with other district project managers, has coordinated site visits for our teachers as well as visits from neighboring districts to MISD. Communication and relationship building are crucial to the position of Project Manager. Time and again teachers and administrators have expressed their gratitude and respect for Kara in this role and she asked for her input and her support.

Statutory/Program Requirements

2. Continued: Please use the additional space provided to respond to Program Requirement Question #2.

b. Kara was a reading teacher when she was in the classroom. She transitioned to the Media Technology Position where her technology skills and her ability to self-teach using platforms and software was heightened. She was asked to serve on the team to apply for the grant with RHYT and her role has expanded since. She has presented our progress to the public and school board, has on-boarded new and returning teachers to our blended learning framework, actively coaches teachers in the classroom, and attends, contributes, and leads PLCs. Kara's own growth in best practice, leveraging technology for student agency and growth, and leadership strategies is evident. Her close work with the support and implementation consultants has not only been a huge asset to our district and our work, but for her own professionalism. Kara is absolutely committed to the personalized blended learning goals and success.

c. Over the last four years Kara has been a valuable member of our decision making team as we plan, implement, adjust and monitor. Due to her close working relationship with teachers on the ground, Kara is able to offer guidance and insight with regard to progress, obstacles, and successes. She continues to be sought for advice regarding technology applications so that we can make decisions based on facts and experience.

3. How does the district **use data to drive decision making** about student achievement? *(Recommended Length: 0.5 page)*

a. Describe the **quantitative goals, metrics, and measures** that the district or charter school network tracks. Describe the progress towards these goals and the evidence the district collects to assess this progress. These indicators can include multi-annual, annual, and during-the-school-year goals. If available, include examples of data from the past few years to demonstrate how the district or open-enrollment charter school is tracking results.

Response:
The district has two overarching academic goals that will be supported by the BLGP funds:

1. The percentage of students in grade 3 who perform on or above grade level in reading and math will increase to 5% above state level by the year 2025 and students will maintain grade level performance through graduation.
2. The percentage of students in Algebra I scoring Approaches or above on the Algebra I EOC will be 10% above state level by the year 2025.

Progress towards these goals is measured in multiple ways from a variety of data sources. This is the fifth year we have used NWEA MAP to measure student growth three times per year. This data is used at the classroom level, the classroom content level, the campus level, and the district level. For example, the learning continuum that is generated from the MAP results informs teachers about what specific skills students have mastered (diagnose prior understanding), and which ones they are ready to learn (to include in learning plans). Teachers can use this report to group students and plan for instruction. Teachers and students can work together to set growth goals based on their cumulative progress. Teachers track student RIT stores on each assessment which measures growth as compared to like students. Principals use the data to get a grade level or teacher view of growth and plan for support or systems that need fine tuned. Our students take both the reading and language tests in addition to math and science. We use the projected proficiency summary reports to monitor progress toward campus and district goals for STAAR achievement.

Statutory/Program Requirements (Cont.)

3. Continued: Please use the additional space provided to respond to Program Requirement Question #3.

Benchmark data and unit assessment towards content mastery is assessed and disaggregated through DMAC. Teachers take this data into PLCs and dive deeper in order to determine spiraling back to reteach, planning for the next unit or 9 weeks, and progress towards mastery of all grade level TEKS. Teachers determine where misconceptions may have occurred in the items and analyze the TEKS further to ensure that their instruction and assessment is aligned.

The elementary and middle school campuses also use TEA Interim Assessments to gain another view of mastery of TEKS for review and planning purposes. They look at items to determine where misconceptions may have occurred. Probability of STAAR achievement is also tracked and monitored by teacher teams.

4. **NON-MATH BLENDED LEARNING PILOT APPLICANTS ONLY:** What on-line curriculum program is intended to be used in the district and schools? *(Recommended Length: 0.5 page)*

a. Describe why this program best meets the needs of students and teachers in the proposed BLGP site(s) and how a high-fidelity use of this program will lead to gains in student achievement.

Response:

Lexia Learning is our intended curriculum software for Grades K-5. It supports our blended learning model in the pillars of Student Agency, Personalized Instruction, and Data Driven lessons. Lexia is a research proven reading curriculum that personalizes learning on the fundamental reading skills students need. The program provides differentiated instruction for students of all abilities through explicit, systematic, personalized learning in the six areas of reading instruction. As the student works, pathways are created that target skill gaps. It provides teachers with the data and offers student-specific resources for individual or small-group instruction.

This is a truly blended learning program that combines technology with teacher instruction and lessons. Students work independently to develop critical reading and language skills through learning paths that are individualized. Students are motivated to work and achieve because they can see their progress in the moment, a game-like, engaging environment. Students work at their own pace, at their skill level. Teachers are notified when the students need support and the teachers can also monitor student progress along the way and then plan for next instruction or intervention.

Edmentum's Study Island is the intended software curriculum for ELAR at the middle school, grades 6-8. It too provides a blended learning experience for students. Students also work at their own pace in this program, and monitor their progress. Study Island allows for teacher progress monitoring so that he or she can make instructional decisions in the classroom and with provided lessons.

The software provides students with assessments that will quickly identify learning gaps. Each time students take the Benchmark, educators receive immediate data detailing student performance by reporting category, standard, and even by individual assessment item at the district, school, classroom, and student levels to drive both in-person and virtual instruction. The environment is engaging for students and teachers have the ability to make their own assessments in the system as well. The data integrates with NWEA MAP and the skills and concepts are fully aligned to the TEKS.

CDN 250903 Vendor ID Amendment #

Appendix I: Amendment Description and Purpose (leave this section blank when completing the initial application for funding)

An amendment must be submitted when the program plan or budget is altered for the reasons described in the "When to Amend the Application" document posted on the Administering a Grant page. The following are required to be submitted for an amendment: (1) Page 1 of the application with updated contact information and current authorized official's signature and date, (2) Appendix I with changes identified and described, (3) all updated sections of the application or budget affected by the changes identified below, and, if applicable, (4) Amended Budget Request. Amendment Instructions with more details can be found on the last tab of the budget template.

You may duplicate this page

Amended Section	Reason for Amendment

Application Part 2: **2020-2023 Blended Learning Grant Program-Planning Grants**

Authorized by: GAA, Article IX, Rider 41, 86th Texas Legislature; TEC 29.924; TEC 28.020

County District Number or Vendor ID:	250903	Amendment # (for amendments c

	Payroll Costs (6100)			
	Employee Position Title	**Estimated # of Positions 100% Grant Funded**	**Estimated # of Positions Less than 100% Grant Funded**	**Grant Amount Budgeted**
Academic/Instructional				
1	Teacher			$ -
2	Educational Aide			$ -
3	Tutor			$ -
Program Management and Administration				
4	Project Director		1	$ 6,250
5	Project Coordinator			$ 57,500
6	Teacher Facilitator			$ -
7	Teacher Supervisor			$ -
8	Secretary/Admin Assistant			$ -
9	Data Entry Clerk			$ -
10	Grant Accountant/Bookkeeper			$ -
11	Evaluator/Evaluation Specialist			$ -
Auxiliary				
12	Counselor			$ -
13	Social Worker			$ -
14	Community Liaison/Parent Coordinator			$ -
Education Service Center (to be completed by ESC only when ESC is the applicant)				
15	ESC Specialist/Consultant			$ -
16	ESC Coordinator/Manager/Supervisor			
17	ESC Support Staff			$ -
18	ESC Other: (Enter position title here)			$ -
19	ESC Other: (Enter position title here)			$ -
20	ESC Other: (Enter position title here)			$ -
Other Employee Positions				
21	(Enter position title here)			$ -
22	(Enter position title here)			$ -
23	**Subtotal Employee Costs:**			**$ 63,750**
Substitute, Extra-Duty Pay, Benefits Costs				
24	6112 - Substitute Pay			$ 2,100
25	6119 - Professional Staff Extra-Duty Pay			$ 6,000
26	6121 - Support Staff Extra-Duty Pay			$ -
27	6140 - Employee Benefits			$ 13,000
28	61XX - Tuition Remission (IHEs only)			$ -
29	**Subtotal Substitute, Extra-Duty Pay, Benefits Costs:**			**$ 21,100**
30	**Grand Total:**			**$ 84,850**
31	**Total Program Costs*:**			$ -
32	**Total Direct Admin Costs*:**			$ 84,850

***Complete the Total Program Costs (line 31) and Total Direct Admin Costs (line 32) lines. The sum of these lines must equal th otherwise the field will change color to red indicating an error. These amounts will automatically populate on the Program Bu**

For budgeting assistance, see the Allowable Cost and Budgeting Guidance section of the Grants Administrat Administering a Grant page.

FOR TEA USE ONLY	
Changes on this page have been confirmed with:	On this date:
Via telephone/fax/email (circle as appropriate):	By TEA staff person:

Application Part 2: **2020-2023 Blended Learning Grant Program-Planning Grants**

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County District Number or Vendor ID:	250903	Amendment #:

Professional and Contracted Services (6200)

NOTE: Specifying an individual vendor in a grant application does not meet the applicable requirements for TEA's approval of such grant applications does not constitute approval of a sole-source provider. Please provi the service and purpose.

	Description of Service and Purpose	Grant Amount Budgeted
1	6269 - Rental or lease of buildings, space in buildings, or land Specify purpose:	$ -
2	Service: Technical Assistance Specify purpose: BLGP Design and Implementation Vendor	$ 30,000
3	Service: Specify purpose:	$ -
4	Service: Specify purpose:	$ -
5	Service: Specify purpose:	$ -
6	Service: Specify purpose:	$ -
7	Service: Specify purpose:	$ -
8	Service: Specify purpose:	$ -
9	**Subtotal of professional and contracted services requiring specific approval:**	**$ 30,000**
10	Remaining 6200 - Professional and contracted services that do not require specific approval.	$ -
11	**Grand Total:**	**$ 30,000**
12	**Total Program Costs*:**	$ -
13	**Total Direct Admin Costs*:**	$ 30,000

***Complete the Total Program Costs (line 12) and Total Direct Admin Costs (line 13) lines. The sum of these li Grand Total (line 11) otherwise the field will change color to red indicating an error. These amounts will au on the Program Budget Summary worksheet.**

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County District Number or Vendor ID: 250903		Amendment #:
Supplies and Materials (6300)		
	Expense Item Description	**Grant Amount Budgeted**
1	Remaining 6300 - Supplies and materials that do not require specific approval:	$ 500
2	**Grand Total:**	**$ 500**
3	**Total Program Costs*:**	$ -
4	**Total Direct Admin Costs*:**	$ 500

***Complete the Total Program Costs (line 3) and Total Direct Admin Costs (line 4) lines. The sum of the Grand Total (line 2) otherwise the field will change color to red indicating an error. These amounts v the Program Budget Summary worksheet.**

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County District Number or Vendor ID: 250903	Amendment #:

Other Operating Costs (6400)

	Expense Item Description	Grant Amount Budgeted
1	6411 - Out-of-state travel for employees. Must be allowable per Program Guidelines and grantee must keep documentation locally.	$ -
2	6412 - Travel for students to conferences (does not include field trips). Requires pre-authorization in writing. Specify name and purpose of conference:	$ -
~~3~~	~~6412/6494 - Educational Field Trip(s). Must be allowable per Program Guidelines and grantee must keep documentation locally.~~	~~$~~
4	6413 - Stipends for non-employees other than those included in 6419.	$ -
5	6419 - Non-employee costs for conferences. Requires pre-authorization in writing.	$ -
6	6411/6419 - Travel costs for officials such as Executive Director, Superintendent, or Local Board Members. Allowable only when such costs are directly related to the grant. Must be allowable per Program Guidelines and grantee must keep out-of-state travel documentation locally.	$ 2,000
~~7~~	~~6495 - Cost of membership in civic or community organizations. Specify name and purpose of organization:~~	~~$~~
8	64XX - Hosting conferences for non-employees. Must be allowable per Program Guidelines, and grantee must keep documentation locally.	$ -
9	**Subtotal of other operating costs (6400) requiring specific approval:**	**$ 2,000**
10	Remaining 6400 - Other operating costs that do not require specific approval.	$ -
11	**Grand Total:**	**$ 2,000**
12	**Total Program Costs*:**	$ -
13	**Total Direct Admin Costs*:**	$ 2,000

***Complete the Total Program Costs (line 12) and Total Direct Admin Costs (line 13) lines. The sum of these li Grand Total (line 11) otherwise the field will change color to red indicating an error. These amounts will au the Program Budget Summary worksheet.**

In-state travel for employees does not require specific approval.

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County District Number or vendor ID:	250903	Amendment #
Grant Period:	**October 23, 2020 to May 31, 2023 Pre-award costs are permitted, if requested, from date of annoucement to October 23**	**Fund Code:**

Budget Summary

	Description and Purpose	Class/ Object Code	Source of Funds: Program Cost	Source of Funds: Direct Administrative Cost	Total Budgeted Cost
1	Payroll Costs	6100	$ -	$ 84,850	$ 84,850
2	Professional and Contracted Services	6200	$ -	$ 30,000	$ 30,000
3	Supplies and Materials	6300	$ -	$ 500	$ 500
4	Other Operating Costs	6400	$ -	$ 2,000	$ 2,000
6	**Total Direct Costs:**		**$ -**	**$ 117,350**	**$ 117,350**
7	* Indirect Costs:				**$ 5,867**
8	**Total of All Budgeted Costs :**		**$ -**	$ 117,350	**$ 123,217**

Direct Administrative Cost Calculation

10	Total of All Budgeted Costs from line 8:	**$ 123,217**
11	**Direct Administration** Cap per Program Guidelines (X%)	0.05
12	Maximum amount allowable for **direct administrative** costs:	**$ 6,160**

For current year indirect cost rates, please visit the Federal Fiscal Compliance and Reporting **Indirect Cost Rates page.*
Indirect costs are not required to be budgeted in the grant application in order to be charged to the grant. Indirect costs are calculate based on actual expenditures when reported in the expenditure reporting system, regardless of the amount budgeted and approvec application. Indirect costs claimed are part of the total grant award amount, not in addition to the grant award amount. Do not subn solely for the purpose of budgeting indirect costs.

*To calculate the maximum indirect cost, please use the **Maximum Indirect Costs Worksheet** on the Grants Administration Division's Administering a Grant page.*

FOR TEA USE ONLY	
Changes on this page have been confirmed with:	On this date:
Via telephone/fax/email (circle as appropriate)	By TEA staff person:

NON-MATH BLENDED PILOT APPLICANTS ONLY
District or Charter School Network Information Form
District Overview
Attachment 1B

The Blended Learning Grant Program takes a feeder pattern approach from pilot to scale. Please input your proposed feeder pattern below.

Instructions:

1) Input the school name for the proposed schools
2) Indicate the proposed launch grade for year one with an "x" in approriate grade level
3) If needed, provide a rationale for the intended grades for year one of BLGP
4) An example is provide immediately below for context

Please reach out to MIZ@tea.texas.gov with any questions about this document

SAMPLE Feeder Pattern			Grade To Be Launched in Year One														
Ref.	School Type	SAMPLE School Name	PK	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	SAMPLE Notes
NA	Middle School	Lone Star Middle School								x							Plan to start w/ earliest grade at MS and build up
NA	Elementary School	Red Elementary School		x			x										
NA	Elementary School	Blue Elementary School	x				x										Piloting program in Pre K at Blue ES

Feeder Pattern 1			Grade To Be Launched in Year One														
Ref.	School Type	School Name	PK	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Rationale (if needed)
1A																	
1B																	
1C																	
1D																	
1E																	
1F																	

Feeder Pattern 2 (if applicable			Grade To Be Launched in Year One														
Ref.	School Type	School Name	PK	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Rationale (if needed)
2A																	
2B																	
2C																	
2D																	
2E																	
2F																	

Feeder Pattern 3 (if applicable			Grade To Be Launched in Year One														
Ref.	School Type	School Name	PK	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Rationale (if needed)
3A																	
3B																	
3C																	
3D																	
3E																	
3F																	

NON-MATH BLENDED PILOT APPLICANTS ONLY

District or Charter School Network Information Form

Feeder Pattern 1 Form

Attachment 1B

Letter of Interest for 2021-2022 BLGP Planning and Execution Grants

Instructions

- Please submit the requested district or charter school information including information regarding the proposed campuses for the non-math blended learning pilot
- Input information relevant to the topic in column into **column B** (light blue cell) and follow the instructions in the cell; Only one feeder pattern should be included per tab. Duplicate tabs for additional feeder patterns as needed.
- Incomplete subsections or incorrect information are cause for rejection from this request for Letter of Interest
- In the case of more than 4 intended feeder elementary schools, please submit the below information as an appendix to the Letter of Interest
- Please reach out to MIZ@tea.texas.gov with any questions about this document

Application	Applicant Response
Please confirm that this application is for a non-math blended learning pilot (not Math Innovation Zones)	Non-Math Blended Learning Pilot
District or Open Enrollment Charter School Information	Applicant Response
District or Charter School Name	Mineola ISD
District or Charter School Network ID Number	250903
Personnel	
Superintendent Name	Cody Mize
LOI Author Name	Jennifer Knipp
LOI Author Title	Director of Curriculum and Instruction
LOI Author Phone	(903)569-2448
LOI Author E-mail Address	knippj@mineolaisd.net
District BLGP Project Manager Name	Kara Ledkins
District BLGP Project Manager Title	Learning
District BLGP Project Manager Email Address	ledkinsk@mineolaisd.net
District BLGP Project Manager Phone Number	(903)569-2466
District Details	
District Overall Performance - Numeric Grade Only	85
Total Students in District	1,438
Total Students Anticipated to Participate in Proposed BLGP Grade Levels in 2021-2022 School Year	350
District Classification (Rural, Urban, Suburban)	Rural
Education Service Center Region	Region VII
Name of school in district with most previous experience in blended learning	Mineola Middle School
Number of years the school (in previous answer) has used blended learning	4 yrs
Interim assessment district is planning to be used for BLGP grade levels, if known (NWEA MAP, Renaissance Star, STAAR Interims, etc...)	K-5: NWEA MAP, 6-8: STAAR Interim
Current **Student Information System (SIS)** in use throughout district (TxEIS, PowerSchool, Skyward, iTCCS, District-made system, etc...)	Skyward
List all **other TEA programs** in which the district is currently involved (i.e. Lone Star Governance, System of Great Schools, Additional Days School Year, School Action Fund, etc...)	Enter Text Response
Are your proposed BLGP campuses implementing calendars in line with TEA's Additional Days School Year (ADSY) program? If so, what is your anticipated ADSY model (e.g. Summer Learning, Intersessional Calendar, or Full Year Redesign)? If not, answer "No".	No
Is your district using or planning to use any curricular content provided through Texas Home Learning 3.0?	Yes
If your district is using or planning to use any curricular content provided through Texas Home Learning 3.0, for which grade levels and curricular content areas? Please list all. If not, leave blank.	Math Grades 3-5
If awarded this grant in Fall 2020, when does the district expect to be able to contract with technical assistance providers, given district **procurement policies**?	11/16/2020
Does the applicant and relevant district and school stakeholders commit to attending the **BLGP Kickoff Summit** virtually on November 12-13, 2020?	Yes
Blended Learning Grant Program Specific Questions	Applicant Response
Proposed Software Program and Fidelity Metrics	
What is the subject/content area for which the district is applying to be a part of this non-math blended learning pilot?	Reading
Which online curriculum program is the district and schools applying to use?	K-5: Lexia Core 5, 6-8: Study Island

Given your knowledge of the online curriculum program, what metric do you expect the district and TEA to track on a weekly basis to evaluate student progress and program success? *Note: All non-math online curriculum programs must receive TEA approval of weekly student progress metrics	K-5: Personalized # of Units, 6-8: # of Blue Ribbons and Time	
Is the proposed online curriculum a supplemental or core curriculum? **Core curriculum:** a full course design for a given content area that covers all of the grade level standards and skills and is the primary curriculum used for teaching and learning. **Supplemental curriculum:** designed to enhance and align with the core curriculum used for instruction by targeting a specific set of content, skills, and/or goals, but does not replace the core curriculum.	Supplemental	
Please link a research study confirming a positive impact from this online curriculum program on student achievement results	programs-receive-strong-rating-evidence-essa	https://www.edmentum.com/resources/efficacy/essa-
Feeder Pattern 1	**No Response needed in this cell.**	
School 1A Details	Applicant Response	
School 1A Campus Name	Mineola Primary School	
School 1A Campus Total Students	365	
Lowest Grade at School 1A Campus (i.e. "6" for 6th grade)	PK	
Highest Grade at School 1A Campus (i.e. "8" for 8th grade)	2	
Personnel		
School 1A Campus Principal Name	Jole Ray	
School 1A Campus Principal Email Address	rayj@mineolaisd.net	
School 1A Campus Principal Phone Number	(903)-569-5488	
School 1A Campus BLGP Project Manager	Kara Ledkins	
School 1A Campus BLGP Project Manager Title	Learning	
School 1A Campus BLGP Project Manager Email Address	ledkinsk@mineolaisd.net	
School 1A Campus BLGP Project Manager Phone Number	(903)569-2466	
School Details		
Performance Results and Economic Indicators		
School 1A Campus Overall Performance - Numeric Grade Only	58	
Percent of Students at School 1A Campus Eligible for Free or Reduced Price Lunch	70%	
B39 Only)		
B39 Only)		
Percent of Students at **Approaches Grade Level or Above on 2019 STAAR (all grades tested, All Subjects**)		
Percent of Students at **Approaches Grade Level or Above on 2018 STAAR (all grades tested, All Subjects**)		
Only)		
Only)		
School 1B Details (if applicable)	Applicant Response	
School 1B Campus Name	Mineola Elementary School	
School 1B Total Students	315	
Lowest Grade at School 1B (i.e. "PK" for Pre-K)	3	
Highest Grade at School 1B (i.e. "5" for 5th grade)	5	
Personnel		
School 1B Principal Name	Brittany Thompson	
School 1B Principal Email Address	thompsont@mineolaisd.net	
School 1B Principal Phone Number	(903)569-2466	
School 1B BLGP Project Manager	Kara Ledkins	
School 1B BLGP Project Manager Title	Learning	
School 1B BLGP Project Manager Email Address	ledkinsk@mineolaisd.net	
School 1B BLGP Project Manager Phone Number	(903)569-2466	
School Details		
Performance Results and Economic Indicators		
School 1B Overall Performance - Numeric Grade Only	58	
Percent of Students at School 1B Eligible for Free or Reduced Price Lunch	69%	
B39 Only)	65%	
B39 Only)	74%	
Percent of Students at **Approaches Grade Level or Above on 2019 STAAR (all grades tested, All Subjects**)	66%	

Percent of Students at **Approaches Grade Level or Above on 2018 STAAR (all grades tested, All Subjects**)	73%
Only)	40%
Only)	32%
School 1C Details (if applicable)	Applicant Response
School 1C Campus Name	Mineola Middle School
School 1C Total Students	362
Lowest Grade at School 1C (i.e. "PK" for Pre-K)	6
Highest Grade at School 1C (i.e. "5" for 5th grade)	8
Personnel	
School 1C Principal Name	Kendall Gould
School 1C Principal Email Address	gouldk@mineolaisd.net
School 1C Principal Phone Number	(903)-569-5338
School 1C BLGP Project Manager	Kara Ledkins
School 1C BLGP Project Manager Title	Learning
School 1C BLGP Project Manager Email Address	ledkinsk@mineolaisd.net
School 1C BLGP Project Manager Phone Number	(903)569-2466
School Details	
Performance Results and Economic Indicators	
School 1C Overall Performance - Numeric Grade Only	82
Percent of Students at School 1C Eligible for Free or Reduced Price Lunch	60%
B39 Only)	85%
B39 Only)	77%
Percent of Students at **Approaches Grade Level or Above on 2019 STAAR (all grades tested, All Subjects**)	83%
Percent of Students at **Approaches Grade Level or Above on 2018 STAAR (all grades tested, All Subjects**)	75%
Only)	50%
Only)	43%
Only)	43%

If necessary, provide additional context including former campus names for accountability purposes or alternative feeder pattern approaches.

Mineola
INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

Mr. Cody Mize
Mineola Independent School District
Superintendent
1695 W. Loop 564
Mineola, Texas 75773

Friday, September 18th, 2020

Texas Education Agency
Blended Learning Grant Program Team
William B. Travis Building
1701 N. Congress Avenue
Austin, Texas 78701

Re: Blended Learning Grant Program Letter of Interest

It is my pleasure to write this letter of support on behalf of Mineola Independent School District's pursuit for continuing our innovative educational initiatives through a blended learning model. Since the district's receipt of the Math Innovation Zone grant in 2018, our staff and students have been learning together as they have sought to transform instructional strategies and improve student performance outcomes across our campuses. Not only has our district continued the work we have begun, but we have a deep desire to continue to transcend our instructional programs as we focus on English Language Arts at our Primary, Elementary, and Middle School Campuses as well.

In the short time that I have served as Superintendent at Mineola ISD, I have seen first hand the commitment to excellence that our principal supervisors, campus principals, and teachers have to raise the standard for all students at Mineola ISD. Our district's project manager has invested incredible amounts of resources in supporting our teachers and helping them transform their classrooms into areas in which student engagement is a priority, personalized learning needs are being met, and students and their families have a real understanding of the data in which to make learning choices from. It is because of this effort that we can't imagine stopping now what has been started as we seek to build Mineola ISD into one of the most innovative districts in our state.

By obtaining another grant opportunity to promote blended learning, our district would have the opportunity to continue to allow our project manager to work in this specific role of supporting teachers. We would also have the resources and support to continue the work with our campus principals and teachers as they implement the best practices they have learned over the last couple of years through the Math Innovation Zone grant opportunity.

As schools around the state navigate the complexities of COVID and the uncertainties that exist from the day to day operation of our school setting, personally, it is an exciting time for us as we deal with change and continue to transform our educational system as we know it to one that truly centers around student needs and best practices inside our classrooms as we continue to serve this generation of students. We look forward to and would be very thankful for an opportunity to continue this road forward.

Our best always,

J. Cody Mize

Mineola Primary School

Pride Through Excellence

1555 West Loop 564
Mineola, Texas 75773

Mrs. Jole Ray
Principal

Telephone: (903) 569-5488
Fax: (903) 569-5489

September 17, 2020

To Whom it May Concern:

Mineola Primary School works towards a shared district mission of preparing students academically, socially, and emotionally to be successful in order to lead. Through partnerships with the community we strive to develop lifelong learners and leaders prepared to contribute to a diverse and dynamic world. To assist in the development of lifelong learners, our vision is to provide an exemplary instructional program that promotes successful learners. Teachers work towards expanding their knowledge of personalized learning to implement differentiated instruction for students based on their current levels. Students are asked to know their data, their success criteria, and their personal goals to attain growth in their academic development.

Through the lens of blended learning, our campus instituted a system of using data to inform and drive instructional decisions and practices. Using criteria set forth by the grade level, teachers track student growth and mastery each nine weeks and adjust their small group instruction. Teachers regularly schedule goal setting conferences with students, analyze data in partnership with the student, and produce attainable goals. Bringing students into discussions about their data creates a culture ownership and accountability.

Supporting learning for all is imperative for success at Mineola Primary School. Personalizing student learning based on academic needs and allowing students to take ownership of their pathway gives each student a chance to succeed. As a campus principal, I can conference with students that know their reading levels, reading goals, and current NWEA reading and math scores. Shifting the discussion to teachers, students, parents, and administrators all intertwined in blended learning will clear the path to student achievement. Through our partnership with blended learning and MIZ, we have witnessed math knowledge and mastery increase over the last three years. The partnerships and knowledge of all involved in student learning continue to deepen as we strive to do what is best for students and their learning. Mineola Primary School is looking forward to continuing the support and implementation of blended learning to enhance student knowledge, mastery, and growth.

Sincerely,

Jole L. Ray
Principal, Mineola Primary School

Mineola Elementary School

900 W. Patten St.
Mineola, Tx 75773

Mrs. Brittany Thompson
Principal

Mrs. Angela Shine
Assistant Principal

September 17, 2020

To whom it may concern:

Our goal at Mineola Elementary school is to see every student grow and succeed in all facets of their life. We strive to collaborate with our teachers as well as various other stakeholders to support this goal. At the campus level, we work each and every day to build capacity and increase ownership of learning in our students. As a campus that utilizes blended learning in Math through the MIZ grant, we see the impact that these practices have on student learning as a whole. Students are becoming more comfortable with reading their data, tracking their progress and reflecting on how they can continue to achieve their goals. Teachers implement this with the use of data notebooks, daily review of success criteria and consistent goal setting.

Fidelity of implementation is vital to the success of any new program or practice. We do our best to support teachers in this endeavor by providing appropriate staff development, in class coaching and modeling, and providing time for campus teachers to collaborate with each other. We view this as a worthy investment in the cause of providing our students with the most effective and quality education possible. We are excited about the continued implementation of Blended Learning for our staff and students.

Sincerely,

Brittany Thompson
Mineola Elementary School
Principal

Kara Ledkins, M.Ed.

1877 E US HWY 80 Mineola, TX 75773
Phone: 903-780-6466, E-mail: ledkinsk@mineolaisd.net

Education

Master of Education, Elementary Education **May 2008**
Stephen F. Austin State University, Nacogdoches, TX

B.S. Agricultural Communications & Journalism **December 2006**
Emphasis in Public Relations, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX

Certification

T-TESS Appraiser Certification **September 2017 to Present**
Advanced Education Leadership (AEL) Completed September 2017

ESL Supplemental Certification **February 2020**
Texas Education Agency

Improving Schools: Art of Leadership **June 2018**
Harvard University, Graduate School of Education, The Principals' Center

Administration Certification **July 2016**
Stephen F. Austin State University, Principal Preparation Program

Gifted and Talented Teacher **December 2008**
Region VII Center, Kilgore, TX

Standard Classroom Teacher, 4-8 Generalist Certification **May 2008**
Stephen F. Austin State University, Post Baccalaureate Initial Certification Program

Employment

Mineola ISD, District **May 2018 to Present**
District Instructional Coach of Personalized Learning, TEA MIZ Project Manager

Raise Your Hand Texas and Mineola ISD **August 2016 to June 2019**
Project Manager for Blended Learning

Mineola ISD, Middle School Campus **June 2017 to May 2018**
Instructional Specialist, Technology Support

Mineola ISD, Middle School Campus **June 2014 to June 2017**
Technology and G/T Teacher, Instructional Technology Specialist

Mineola ISD, Middle School Campus **August 2008 to June 2014**
6th Grade Reading and G/T Teacher

Educational Activities

Establishing a Coaching Structure at MISD, PLC Facilitator, MISD Learning Framework Co-creator, MISD Professional Development Trainer, District Advisory Committee Member, District Strategic Planning Committee Member, Teacher Learning Leader Team Member, RYHT Blended Learning Grant Committee Member, Technology Vertical Team Leader, ELAR Vertical Team Member, Campus Site-Based Committee Member, Campus Improvement Committee Leader, AVID Committee Member, Model United Nations Sponsor, Middle School Robotics Sponsor, Summer School Instructor, Yearbook Sponsor, Education Study Abroad

Mineola
INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

To Whom It May Concern:

It has been my honor and privilege to walk alongside math teachers at Mineola ISD through the Math Innovation Zones (MIZ) implementation as the project manager and instructional coach of personalized blended learning. From this perspective, I have not only seen growth in our students but also in our teachers. Due to the support from TEA through the MIZ grant, we were able to provide teachers with full time, in the moment support that allowed us to grow quicker and refine our instruction at a higher level. Coaching allows for the personalized, ongoing professional development approach for our teachers that directly affects instruction and student growth.

Now Mineola ISD is ready to sustain this model by implementing it into our reading instruction and supporting those teachers to meet the goal of student-centered learning through a blended learning environment. However, as a rural district, this will only be possible with the support of TEA and the Blended Learning Grant Program. As a district we will always strive to grow our students, however, this grant would help to accelerate the process by providing teachers the support they need and consistent implementation of personalized blended learning.

If granted the opportunity to continue this work through BLGP, I would personally continue as the project manager and instructional coach. This dual-purpose district-level role is important in consistently implementing blended learning across our district since as the coach I have a direct connection and impact on classroom instruction. We look forward to the opportunity to continue working with TEA in expanding blended learning across the state.

Sincerely,

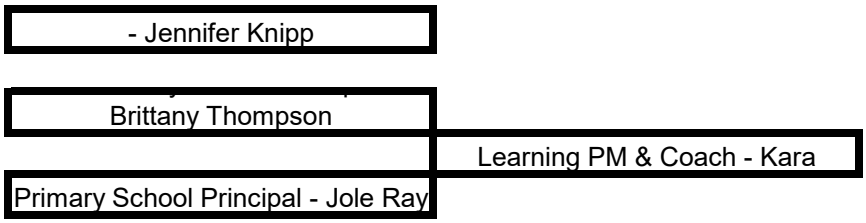
Kara Ledkins, M.Ed.
MIZ Project Manager and Instructional Coach of Personalized Learning

Mize

Schools - David Sauer

Sorenson

Gould


- Jennifer Knipp
Brittany Thompson
Learning PM & Coach - Kara
Primary School Principal - Jole Ray

Exploration of a Blended Learning Approach to Reading Instruction in Second Grade

Shani Wilkes
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Elizabeth Kazakoff
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Abstract: This study explores a blended learning approach, utilizing both online and offline materials, for reading instruction within general education second grade classes in a California elementary school receiving Title 1 funds. The blended learning program was implemented in two classes, with an additional class in the same school serving as a control. The study was carried out during the second half of the school year from February through May 2015. There were no significant differences between groups on the DIBELS® Next reading assessment at the start of the study, however, the intervention group significantly outperformed the control group on DIBELS Next at the end of the school year. These results support the use of a blended learning approach to reading instruction in general education, Title I second grade classes.

Introduction

Historically, in the area of beginning reading, the literature on computer-assisted instruction (CAI) found technological tools to be a valuable supplement to support reading acquisition, particularly for struggling students (Cheung & Slavin, 2012; MacArthur, Ferretti, Okolo, & Cavalier, 2001). However, researchers noted the need for additional studies to validate the effectiveness, generalizability, and areas of impact of technology-based educational interventions (Chambers et al., 2008). More recently, due to an increase in affordable new technologies, combined with educational budget cuts, teacher shortages, and a focus on individualized student progress, the concept of blended learning has come more to the forefront, especially in grades K-12 (Staker & Horn, 2012).

Instead of focusing solely on the effectiveness of teacher-led instruction or the effectiveness of technology-based intervention programs, blended learning is an innovative approach to K-12 education which combines student-led online with teacher-led offline instruction and represents a cultural shift in the classroom (Staker, 2011; Powell et al., 2015). Blended learning provides independent, personalized practice that may not be possible within a traditional classroom setting without technological support (Johnson, Perry, & Shamir, 2010) and re-envisions the

role of the teacher to be more that of a mentor, coach, and guide instead of solely a lecture-based role (Powell et al., 2015). Blended learning creates a way to focus on individual student's strengths, weaknesses, and learning needs, matching students with the right, personalized content, at the right time (Powell et al., 2015). Through the data provided in digital components of blended learning programs, teachers are able to quickly assess student needs and personalize instruction for students (Hilliard, 2015) which allows teachers to focus on small group or one-on-one instruction instead of whole-class lectures (Freeland, 2015).

Building on the need for additional studies on the effectiveness of blended learning, especially in elementary classrooms, this study examines a blended learning approach to reading instruction as part of an English Language Arts (ELA) curriculum. This study incorporates innovative educational strategies combined with a research-based and research-proven digital tool (Schechter, Macaruso, Kazakoff, & Brooke, 2015) to better understand if a blended learning approach could positively impact reading instruction practices in a diverse US elementary school. Specifically, this study used Lexia Reading® Core5®(Core5) as a blended learning literacy program in general education, second grade classes. A within-school comparison of reading skills (using DIBELS Next) was conducted using randomly-assigned intervention classes that used Core5 compared to control classes that did not integrate Core5 into the ELA curriculum.

Method

This study was conducted with second graders in a Title I California school from February - May 2015. The school principal organized the study to explore the benefits of a blended learning approach to reading instruction within the school. Title I supports elementary and secondary schools with a high percentage of students from low socioeconomic households by providing federal financial assistance for academic programming targeted to support students' educational growth. If a school has over 40% of the student population from low socioeconomic households, Title I funds may be used for school-wide programs that impact the entire student body.

Sample

Included in the following analyses are 74 second graders, 49 in two intervention classes and 25 in one control class. The three second grade classes were randomly assigned to two intervention classes and one control class. For the 2013-2014 school year (the most recent data available) this school's population was 96% Hispanic, 77% English Language Learners, and 93% socioeconomically disadvantaged. Teachers in the intervention and control classes are considered to be highly qualified. The two intervention teachers had more than 10 years of teaching experience and the control teacher had over 15 years of teaching experience.

Measures

Lexia Reading Core5 (Core5)

Lexia Reading Core5 (Core5) was used in the intervention classes in conjunction with the school's existing core curriculum for English Language Arts (ELA), Houghton Mifflin Reading (Medallion Edition). Control classrooms used the same core ELA curriculum without Core5. Core5 supports a blended learning approach to reading instruction. It is an adaptive reading program, combining student-led online lessons with teacher-led offline instruction, designed to support an interactive and collaborative model of personalized learning.

Students begin the program by taking an auto placement assessment, which assigns them to the appropriate start level in the program's scope and sequence based on their reading performance rather than age or grade. Students then progress through the online component of the program at their own pace, using mastery-based learning (i.e., students need to perform with 90% or 100% accuracy in order to move on in the program). Core5 adapts to each student's unique learning needs, personalizing the intensity of instruction based on a student's response. In Core5, an Assessment Without Testing® algorithm predicts, on a monthly basis, a student's likelihood of reaching end-of-year, grade-level benchmark in the program. The contents of Core5 align with recommendations from the National Reading Panel (National Institute of Child Health, & Human Development, 2000) and the English Language Arts Common Core State Standards (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010) to provide systematic instruction in six strands of reading skills: phonological

awareness, phonics, structural analysis, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension. Program activities are organized into 18 levels: preschool (Level 1), kindergarten (Levels 2-5), first grade (Levels 6-9), second grade (Levels 10-12), third grade (Levels 13-14), fourth grade (Levels 15-16) and fifth grade (Levels 17-18). Each level consists of five activities (four in Level 1) with multiple units designed to address various combinations of skills in the six strands listed above.

DIBELS Next Oral Reading Fluency (DORF)

The Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS Next) (www.dibels.org) consists of a set of fluency measures designed to assess students' literacy skills in kindergarten through sixth grade. DIBELS Next can be used as a progress monitoring tool to determine students' growth throughout the school year as well as a screening/benchmarking assessment administered at the beginning-, middle-, and end-of-year. The DIBELS Next Oral Reading Fluency (DORF) subtest was used as an indicator of reading proficiency for the second grade students in this study. DORF measures the number of words a student can correctly read aloud in a passage within one minute. Any hesitations, delayed self-corrections, skipped or incorrect words are calculated as errors; the number of correctly read words represents the student's oral reading fluency score.

Procedure

Students in the intervention and control classes received the same amount of overall reading instruction, including 120 minutes per day for standard ELA Instruction and 30 minutes per day for reading intervention. For the intervention classes, Core5 was used as part of the daily intervention time. Intervention students were assigned use of the online component of Core5 based on a Prescription of Intensity with recommended minutes (20 to 80 per week, depending on the student's risk of not reaching end-of-year benchmark in Core5). As a measure of implementation fidelity, all intervention students included in this analysis used Core5 over the sixteen-week intervention period and met their recommended usage for at least 10 weeks. All students in the intervention and control classes were pretested in January and posttested in June with DIBELS Next DORF.

Data were collected on participants' usage of the online component of Core5. These data include information about a student's time using the online program, the initial and final grade level of reading skills a student worked on in the program, the number of activities completed, and the student's rate and accuracy performance for each activity. The Core5 program reports real-time data for each student as he/she progresses through the program. In addition, DIBELS Next DORF pretest and posttest scores were analyzed for the intervention and control students to evaluate reading gains. The principal, an instructional specialist, and district administrators observed intervention and control classes to monitor fidelity of ELA instruction, including Core5 use.

Results

An independent sample *t*-test revealed no significant difference between students in the intervention group and the control group on DIBELS Next DORF mean scores at pretest (see Table 1). A comparison of gain scores (posttest -- pretest) showed a greater mean gain on DIBELS Next DORF for the intervention group (12.1) than the control group (3.3). An analysis of covariance revealed a significant group difference at posttest, using pretest scores as covariates, $F(1,71) = 4.7$, $p < .04$.

Group	Pretest Mean	SD	Posttest Mean	SD
Intervention (N=49)	76.5	40.3	88.6	42.1
Control (N=25)	69.1	30.9	72.4	37.1

Table 1: Second Grade DIBELS Next DORF Mean Scores

A similar outcome was obtained when comparing mean percent growth for the two groups. The mean percent growth for the intervention group was 24.9% compared to 6.4% for the control group. This difference in mean percent growth was significant, $t(72) = 2.0$, $p < .04$.

Further analyses were performed to examine changes from pretest to posttest in Instructional Categories on DIBELS Next based on DORF scores. Students could be categorized as needing Core Instruction, Strategic Instruction, or Intensive Instruction. As shown in Table 2 and Figure 1, 27% of students in the intervention group demonstrated an improvement in Instructional Categories (i.e., moved from Strategic to Core or moved from Intensive to Strategic/Core). In contrast, none of the control students improved in Instructional Categories. This difference in percent improvement is significant, $X^2(1) = 4.3$, $p < .04$.

	Pretest			Posttest
	Core Instruction	Strategic Instruction	Intensive Instruction	Improved Support Level
Intervention (N=49)	27	7	15	27% (6 of 22)
Control (N=25)	12	4	9	0% (0 of 13)

Table 2: Second Grade DIBELS Next DORF Instructional Categories

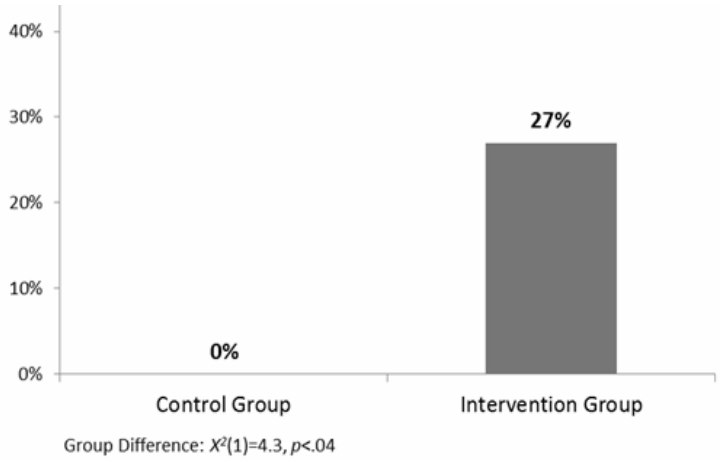

Figure 1: Improvement in DIBELS Next Instructional Categories

Regarding performance in Core5, 84% of the intervention students began the study one or more grade levels behind in the program. By the end of the study, 29% of the intervention students reached end-of-year benchmark in Core5 by completing all grade level material, and an additional 41% were working in their grade level material. These findings indicate that, in general, intervention students made substantial progress in Core5.

Reaching benchmark in Core5 was found to be closely associated with performance on DIBELS Next. End-of-year benchmark status showed a significant correlation with DIBELS Next DORF posttest scores (r=.60, $p <$ .01). In fact, 100% of intervention students who met end-of-year benchmark in Core5 were categorized as Core

Instruction on DIBELS Next compared to only 34% of intervention students who did not reach end-of-year benchmark in Core5.

Discussion

It should be noted that this study was conducted for less than half of the school year. Despite the limited amount of time, it was found that second grade students in the intervention classes made significantly greater gains in reading compared to control students. Most of the intervention students began the study behind grade level in reading skills in Core5, and approximately half of the students in both the intervention and control classes were categorized as needing Intensive or Strategic Instruction based on DIBELS Next scores. Following participation in the blended learning program, intervention students made four times the reading gains on DIBELS Next than control students and a significantly greater percentage of intervention students moved up Instructional Categories on DIBELS Next than control students. These results suggest that consistent use of a blended learning approach to reading instruction can lead to significant advances in reading skills. Future studies should examine the use of blended learning programs for reading instruction with full-year implementation and include additional grades.

Conclusion

We are still in the beginning stages of innovative integration of technology in U.S. classrooms. It is important to note that a blended learning approach to reading instruction is not solely about the technology. Instead, blended learning is personalized learning, using evidence-based curricula and pedagogy, combined with actionable, real-time data, to meet individual student's learning differences. The shift from traditional to blended learning approaches requires effective implementation of technology-based programs (Powell et al., 2015). This study explored the implementation of a blended learning approach to reading instruction, comparing second grade intervention and control classes in a school containing a high percentage of students from low socioeconomic households. It was found that students in the intervention classes made superior reading gains compared to students in the control class, providing evidence for the effectiveness of a well-implemented blended learning approach to reading instruction.

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Acknowledgements

The authors would like to thank Peter Dougherty, Lexia Account Executive, for his invaluable training and support leading up to and during this study, as well as Elsie Briseño Simonovski, Ph.D from Orange Unified School District. This study was funded by Lexia Learning, A Rosetta Stone Company.

Impacts of Study Island on Student Reading Achievement

June 2019

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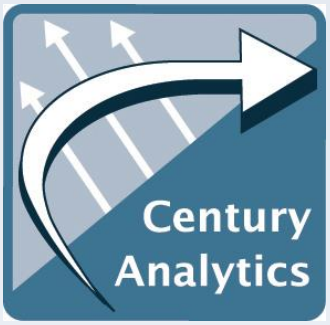

Executive Summary

Century Analytics conducted a rigorous evaluation of Edmentum's Study Island to estimate its impact on student achievement in reading in Grade 2 through Grade 8. Study Island is a flexible product that provides students with practice and instructional support on standards-based topics in mathematics, reading, science, and social studies. This study's quasi-experimental design (QED), analyses, and measures meet the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) 4.0 standards needed to achieve a rating of Meets WWC Group Design Standards with Reservations (WWC, 2017). This study also meets the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) guidance for Moderate Evidence (U.S. Department of Education, 2016).

Students were included in the Study Island group if they had completed at least half of the Study Island practice topics available in their grade level between their fall and winter administration of the Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) assessment. The MAP is a standardized educational assessment that meets WWC standards for validity and reliability. Students who had completed no Study Island topics during the same period were matched to the Study Island students in each grade level on their fall MAP test scores and the duration between their fall and winter MAP test administrations. At each grade level, Study Island students were within the WWC threshold for baseline equivalence on both fall MAP test scores and duration.

Analyses revealed statistically significant positive impacts of Study Island use on winter MAP reading achievement in Grades 2 through 8. Effect sizes ranged from 0.30 for Grade 2 to 0.07 for Grade 4 and improvement indexes ranging from 11.79 to 2.79. Improvement indexes show the expected change in percentile rank for an average comparison student if he or she had been in the intervention group.

Results suggest that students who complete at least half of the Study Island topics available in their grade level will make statistically significant gains in achievement relative to students who do not complete any Study Island topics. These results suggest that Study Island is providing students with practice in standards-based academic content that improves students' scores on standardized tests.

This study is not without limitations. The definition for the Study Island group focused solely on topic completion. The study does not shed any light on the potential impact of any other of Study Island's student resources (e.g., lessons, games, flash cards, printable worksheets) or the impact of Study Island when integrated into classroom instruction.

Many students in the Study Island group completed more than the minimum number of topics needed to be included in the Study Island group. In some cases, students completed more than double the number of topics available at their grade level. Whether this amount of practice can be attributed to Study Island or some characteristics of the students is a question unanswered by this study. In addition, the lack of any student demographic variables limits the generalizability of the study's findings.

Future research on Study Island should incorporate a broader definition of student usage in order to estimate the impact of the many student resources available beyond practice topics. This research also should include student demographic characteristics to help understand which groups of students may benefit most from Study Island and to support generalizing study findings. Although Study Island is designed primarily to provide students with practice on standards-based academic topics, it also has resources for teachers to help integrate Study Island into classroom instruction. Future research also should include student-level criteria and classroom-level criteria for inclusion in the Study Island group to better understand the impacts of Study Island on student achievement.

Introduction

Study Island is a flexible formative assessment tool that can be used for practice and instructional support on standards-based topics, test preparation, classroom assessment, and intervention support in four academic subjects: math, reading, science, and social studies (Edmentum, 2018). Study Island provides students with in-depth practice, immediate feedback on progress, and remediation when needed.

Study Island is structured around academic topics: a grouping of conceptual material within a subject area and grade aligned to one or more state standards. For each subject and grade, the topics cover the state standards in their entirety. Each Study Island topic includes practice items, lessons, and supporting instructional materials (e.g., games, flash cards, printable worksheets). If a student works through all topics in a grade and subject area, he/she will have practiced the full range of learning goals covered by the standards.

Students gain practice on topics by completing practice sessions. Practice sessions are online formative assessments composed of at least 10 multiple-choice practice items or technology enhanced practice items that are scored online. Students can earn virtual trophies by completing a practice session with a score of 70% correct or more. Students receive immediate feedback on their answer to each item in the practice session. Explanations of the correct answer appear if the student gets the item wrong, providing real-time remediation based on individual student performance. Students can revisit any items they answer incorrectly at the end of each practice session.

Study Island's real-time feedback and links to supportive instructional materials provide students with remediation based on student performance. For example, if the student scores 40% or lower on a practice session, Study Island routes the student to practice sessions for lower level topics that are building blocks for higher-level topics. Once the student demonstrates success at the lower level, they are routed back up to the higher level.

Study Island allows students to learn at their own pace, choosing which topics to work on in addition to topics assigned to them by their teachers. The program provides students with access to a variety of supporting instructional materials targeted to their learning needs. In this way, Study Island provides each student with an individual learning trajectory.

In addition to practice sessions and instructional materials targeted at individual students' needs, Study Island also provides a variety of features to support teachers and administrators. Teachers can customize Study Island practice to individual students by assigning students specific topics, selecting specific practice items, and customizing the score needed to earn virtual trophies. Teachers also can access lessons and supporting instructional materials aligned to each topic at the beginning and/or end of the practice activity.

Study Island's array of customizable reports allow teachers and administrators to identify student weaknesses and monitor student progress toward the mastery of standards-based content. If students fall behind or advance ahead, teachers can assign additional practice targeted to individual students while continuing to monitor progress. Teachers also can use information from Study Island to inform instruction or remediation within the classroom. With the formative information from Study Island integrated into classroom instruction, teachers can create individualized instructional assignments based on demonstrated student need to help students meet specific content benchmarks and standards.

One of the supporting features available to Study Island customers is Study Island's NWEA™ MAP® Link. This feature allows customers to upload student MAP scores and integrate them with Study Island to help target specific Study Island content and automatically target learner's individual needs. The program is available for Grade 2 through high school.

The following research question guided the design and analyses used in this study:

> What is the impact of Study Island usage on student reading achievement in Grade 2 through Grade 8 relative to students who did not use Study Island?

Method

The purpose of this study was to provide a rigorous estimate of the impact of Study Island use on student achievement in reading. Rigorous studies of educational interventions and estimates of impacts are needed by state and local education agencies to select and implement interventions that improve academic outcomes for students (U.S. Department of Education, 2016).

The study was designed to meet the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) 4.0 standards for quasi-experimental designs (QED) necessary to achieve a rating of *Meets WWC Group Design Standards with Reservations* (WWC, 2017). In meeting WWC standards, the study also was designed to meet the requirements of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) guidance for *Moderate Evidence* (U.S. Department of Education, 2016).

Data

Century Analytics obtained student data from Edmentum to conduct this study. These data included unique student identifiers, student grade level, identifiers for academic subjects, Study Island usage data, number of Study Island topics completed, and scores from the fall and winter administrations of the NWEA MAP assessment. No student demographic variables other than location were available for analysis. The study used data on fall MAP scores as the baseline measure and winter MAP scores as the outcome measure.

Study Island usage data. Data were compiled to summarize the number of distinct Study Island topics each student completed between the baseline (fall) MAP assessment and the outcome (winter) MAP assessment. Topics completed below and above students' grade level were included to capture personalized remedial or enrichment practice using Study Island. Actual assessments of topics (e.g., diagnostic tests) were not included in the number of topics completed. Practice sessions that were not completed also were not included. Customer-generated topics or customer-generated practice questions, although very rare, were filtered out. Any topics where the student was practicing in Study Island's "Game Mode," in which the student is motivated to complete practice topics with brief, interstitial video games, were excluded to ensure that the total number of topics completed was based only on topic practice that was directed towards improving academic skills.

A small number of students using Spanish reading programs, approximately one tenth of one percent of the total participants, were removed from the sample because the topics focused on reading Spanish-language texts not aligned to the outcome used, MAP scores on English reading tests.

NWEA MAP data. The data provided also included NWEA MAP scores uploaded to Study Island by Study Island customers. Data cleaning rules were applied to ensure the quality of the test score data. Only students with a valid test score of 100 or greater were included. Student records were dropped if multiple MAP scores were uploaded for a given content area and testing period in order to identify one score per test and student, per season. The MAP score data were merged to the Study Island usage data by student ID.

Measures

Student achievement, both at baseline (fall) and outcome (winter) was measured using the NWEA MAP. The MAP is a computer adaptive interim assessment that measures achievement in mathematics, reading, and other subjects for students in Grades 2 through 12 (NWEA, 2011). The MAP is designed to measure growth over time with all items anchored to a vertically-aligned equal-interval scale (RIT scale) across grade levels to provide a longitudinal measure of student growth. As such, the MAP provides scores for student achievement even if the student is performing below or above typical grade level expectations. The MAP is aligned to state standards and covers a range of skills across grade levels. The MAP meets the WWC standards for outcomes in terms of validity and reliability. Because the MAP measures content aligned to national and state standards it is not over-aligned to the Study Island intervention.

Design

This study used a quasi-experimental design (QED) in order to meet WWC (4.0) standards with reservations. According to the WWC, a QED uses a non-random process to form the intervention and comparison conditions (WWC, 2017). The WWC allows groups to be formed using a variety of methods as long as the groups are mutually exclusive. That is, units (e.g., students or schools) can only be analyzed as a member of a single group. Further, in a QED, the WWC accepts assignment to the intervention based on observed characteristics. Assignment to study conditions for this study was conducted at the student level.

Students included in this study were selected from Grade 2 through Grade 8 students enrolled in a Study Island MAP Link program during the 2018-19 school year. The sample excludes students enrolled in the Study Island Benchmark program. To be eligible for inclusion in the study, student records had to meet the following eligibility criteria:

- Baseline MAP scores occurring between August 5, 2018 and September 16, 2018;
- Outcome MAP scores occurring between November 25, 2018 and January 20, 2019; and
- Duration between baseline and outcome test score dates of 84 to 140 days.

This study focused on students in Grades 2 through 8. Students in Kindergarten and Grade 1 were not able to be included in the study because the Study Island MAP Link program does not include mappings between NWEA scores and Study Island topics for kindergarten and first grade. Grades 9 and above were not included in the study because sufficient sample sizes were not available.

Students meeting the eligibility criteria were then selected for inclusion in either the Study Island (intervention) group or the comparison group. The Study Island group included students who completed a total number of distinct topics equal to at least half of the available topics for that grade (see Table 1). The rationale for this is that students who have completed half of the available topics approximately

halfway through the school year are on track to have completed all available topics by the end of the year and therefore have been exposed to a broad range of topics that cover grade level expectations. Topics from below the student's grade level (remediation) or above the student's grade level (enrichment) were included as contributing to the total number completed because these represent practice targeted to students' individual skill levels. (See Appendix A for the number of lessons completed by students in the Study Island group.)

Table 1. Study Island (Treatment) Group Criterion

Grade	Minimum Reading Topics Completed
2	22
3	24
4	26
5	24
6	22
7	22
8	22

Students eligible for inclusion in the comparison group included those students who met the above eligibility criteria and had completed zero Study Island topics. Propensity score matching was used to match eligible comparison students to Study Island group students separately by grade. One-to-four matching was conducted using the nearest neighbor method and a logistic regression model with the fall MAP score and duration (time between fall and winter MAP test administrations) as the matching variables. Duration is an exogenous variable (i.e., not related to or affected by group selection) because it was based on the MAP test score data uploaded to Study Island by customers prior to the conduct of this study.

Students in both the Study Island group and the comparison group were administered the MAP and were exposed to any features or services available through the MAP. Thus, the difference between the two groups in terms of the educational instruction and implementation (i.e., the intervention contrast) was use of Study Island. In this way, this study design estimates the impact of student use of Study Island, defined as completion of the prescribed number of topics.

Baseline Equivalence

In order to meet WWC standards with reservation for a QED, baseline equivalence must be established for the analytic samples of the Study Island (intervention) and comparison groups. In addition, baseline equivalence needs to be established separately for each grade level included in the analyses. Finally, baseline equivalence must be established using a measure that meets WWC standards.

Baseline equivalence was established using fall MAP scores and duration separately for the analytics sample in each grade level. As described above in the Measures section, the MAP assessment meets WWC standards for baseline and outcome measures. All grades had baseline differences between students in the Study Island and comparison groups that were under the WWC threshold for baseline equivalence (i.e., ≤ 0.25 standard deviation) using a WWC accepted method for calculating baseline differences (WWC, 2017). Appendix B provides the statistics for baseline equivalence. Also included in Appendix B is information on the distribution of students in both groups across states.

Analyses and Results

Data were analyzed to estimate differences between students in the Study Island (intervention) group and the comparison group on the winter MAP reading assessment. Impact analyses were conducted using the following linear regression model fit to the data separately for each grade level.

$$Y_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1(\text{GROUP})_i + \beta_2(\text{FALLMAP})_i + \beta_3(\text{DURATION})_i + e_i$$

Where: Y_i is student *i*'s winter reading MAP score. β_0 is the regression adjusted comparison group mean. β_1 is the adjusted mean difference between the intervention and comparison groups, and GROUP represents the group status of student *i* coded as 0 = comparison and 1 = intervention. β_2 is the regression slope for the fall (baseline) MAP reading score and β_3 is the regression slope for duration. FALLMAP is student *i*'s fall MAP score in reading, and DURATION is the number of days between the fall MAP administration and winter MAP administration for student *i*. e_i is the residual for student *i*.

Impact analyses yielded statistically significant positive impacts for all grade levels in reading except Grade 8 (Table 2). Output from the regression analyses are provided in Appendix C. Adjusted mean differences between the intervention and comparison groups ranged from 1.11 points on the MAP RIT scale for Grade 4 to 4.37 points for Grade 2. These differences translate into effect sizes ranging from 0.30 for Grade 2 to 0.07 for Grade 4.

In addition to translating the impacts of Study Island use into effect sizes, the improvement index is another useful method to aid in the interpretation of the practical importance of impacts. The improvement index represents the difference in percentile rank at the mean (i.e., the 50th percentile) between the intervention group and the comparison group (WWC, 2017). The improvement index shows the expected change in percentile rank for an average comparison student if he or she had received the intervention. Percentile improvements for Study Island use in reading ranged from 2.79 for Grade 4 to 11.79 for Grade 2. Most improvement indexes were greater than 5. This is equivalent to a comparison student improving from the 50th percentile to the 55th percentile. An improvement index of 11.79 is equivalent to a comparison student improving from the 50th percentile to nearly the 62nd percentile.

Finally, normative data from the MAP can help interpret results from this study. These normative data show the average achievement levels by grade at the beginning, middle, and end of the school year based on data collected from 2011 to 2014 (NWEA, 2015). The MAP norms also provide educators with information on the normative growth on the MAP assessment.

The average achievement levels from the norms can be compared to the average achievement for the study groups on the winter administration of the MAP (Table 3). These data show that the students in this study had similar levels of achievement to the national norms. In the lower and upper grade levels, students participating in the study had slightly higher average scores than the norms, and in the middle grade levels study students had average achievement similar to the norms. Rather than indicating impacts, the comparison of achievement levels between the students in this study and the norms shows that the students in this study are likely to represent typical students in terms of achievement and not either especially low or especially high achieving students. This suggests this study's results are broadly generalizable.

Table 2. Impacts on Reading Achievement

	N	Mean MAP Score	SD	Adjusted Mean Difference (SE)	Pooled Standard Deviation	Effect Size	Improve Index
Grade 2							
Comparison	680	184.47	14.73	4.37***	14.46	0.30	11.79
Study Island	136	188.84	13.05	(0.75)			
Grade 3							
Comparison	1450	198.06	13.36	1.18*	13.46	0.09	3.59
Study Island	290	199.25	13.97	(0.47)			
Grade 4							
Comparison	1500	201.25	15.94	1.11*	15.74	0.07	2.79
Study Island	300	202.36	14.68	(0.48)			
Grade 5							
Comparison	1355	208.15	14.94	2.31***	14.74	0.16	6.36
Study Island	271	210.46	13.70	(0.49)			
Grade 6							
Comparison	1385	211.67	15.99	2.40***	15.84	0.15	5.96
Study Island	277	214.07	15.05	(0.51)			
Grade 7							
Comparison	610	218.35	14.84	2.12**	15.19	0.14	5.17
Study Island	122	220.47	16.86	(0.77)			
Grade 8							
Comparison	610	220.74	16.17	3.02***	15.87	0.19	7.53
Study Island	122	223.77	14.27	(0.79)			

Note. MAP scores are on the RIT scale. Numbers in table rounded to 2 decimals. M = mean. SD = standard deviation. SE = Standard error. Improve Index = Improvement index. Effect size measured as Hedges' *g*.

* = *p*-value < .05. ** = *p*-value < .01. *** = *p*-value < .001.

Table 3. Study Island Impacts and MAP Norms

Grade	Middle Year MAP Mean	Comparison Group Average Winter Score	Study Island Group Average Winter Score	Study Island Impacts
2	184.2	184.47	188.84	4.37***
3	195.6	198.06	199.25	1.18*
4	203.6	201.25	202.36	1.11*
5	209.8	208.15	210.46	2.31***
6	214.2	211.67	214.07	2.40***
7	216.9	218.35	220.47	2.12**
8	219.1	220.74	223.77	3.02***

Notes. All scores are on the RIT scale. Normative data from NWEA (2015).

* = *p*-value < .05. ** = *p*-value < .01. *** = *p*-value < .001.

In addition to the average achievement provided by the norms, data on normative growth can be used to aid in the interpretation of the impacts found in this study. NWEA calculated the average amount of growth students show on the MAP between the beginning of the year and middle of the year administrations (the same time period used in this study). This normative growth is shown in the first column in Table 4. These normative growth values can be compared to the impacts of Study Island to provide some additional meaning to the difference in scores between students who used Study Island and those in the comparison group. Dividing the impact by the normative growth shows the impacts in terms of a percentage of normative growth (last column of Table 4). Using this method, the impacts of Study Island represent between 16% and 159% of the typical growth seen by students during the first half of the school year. In grade 2 for example, students in the Study Island group scored 4.37 points higher than students in the comparison group. This 4.37 point difference represents 46% of the typical growth on the MAP for Grade 2 students. The impact relative to growth for Grade 8 is very high because Map growth in Grade 8 is only 1.9 points.

Table 4. MAP Normative Growth and Study Island Impacts by Grade

Grade	Beginning to Middle Year Normative Growth	Study Island Impacts	Impact as Percent of Normative Growth
2	9.5	4.37***	46%
3	7.3	1.18*	16%
4	5.4	1.11*	21%
5	4.2	2.31***	55%
6	3.2	2.40***	75%
7	2.5	2.12**	85%
8	1.9	3.02***	159%

Notes. All scores are on the RIT scale. Normative data from NWEA (2015).
* = *p*-value < .05. ** = *p*-value < .01. *** = *p*-value < .001.

Interpretation of the Study Island impacts as a percentage of normative growth should not be confused with a difference in growth between Study Island and comparison group students. For example, Study Island students in 2nd grade did **not** grow 46% more than comparison group students. Study Island and comparison group students were not compared in terms of growth but only compared on their average winter MAP assessment scores (regression adjusted).

Summary

Using a rigorous design and analytic strategy, this study estimated the impact of Study Island use on students' reading achievement as measured by the Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) at the level of rigor needed to meet WWC standards with reservations (WWC, 2017). Baseline equivalence was established between the Study Island (intervention) group and the comparison group. The Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) was used as the baseline measure and the outcome measure of student reading achievement. The MAP is a standardized educational assessment that meets WWC standards for validity and reliability. The baseline and outcome measures are aligned to national and state academic content standards and so are not over-aligned to the Study Island intervention. The study had no confounds.

The study also meets criteria set forth by the Every Students Succeeds Act (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). The Department of Education considers a quasi-experimental study to be "well-designed and well-implemented" if it receives a *Meets WWC Design Standards with Reservations* rating

or is of equal quality (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). The study also meets the ESSA criteria for statistically significant positive effects. These two aspects of the study mean it qualifies as providing Moderate evidence (Level 2) of Study Island's effectiveness.

Study Island had a statistically significant impact on student reading achievement at every grade level. These impacts occurred on the winter administrations of the MAP assessment. Students who met the definition for inclusion in the Study Island (intervention) group—completion of at least half the grade level topics in reading between their fall and winter MAP assessments—showed greater gains in reading achievement than students who completed zero Study Island topics.

The results of this study suggest that students who use Study Island and complete topics in reading will make gains in achievement relative to students who do not complete any topics. The statistically significant gains made by students in the Study Island group over those students in the comparison group also suggest that practice on academic topics using Study Island helps students improve their reading knowledge and skills.

The data on topic completion in Appendix A show that many students completed many more than the minimum number of topics needed to be included in the Study Island group. In some cases, students completed more than double the number of topics available at their grade level. These data suggest that many students in the Study Island group spent a considerable amount of time practicing academic content, perhaps more than can be reasonably expected of typical students. But Study Island is designed to provide students with the resources to practice as much as they want. Few would doubt that time spent practicing academic content is positively correlated with test scores. The question unanswered by this study is whether Study Island is the cause of this time spent in practice, if the practice time is driven by student characteristics, or some combination of the two.

Limitations

This study has several limitations worth noting. It used a focused definition for the intervention group: students who had completed at least half of the available Study Island topics for a specific grade (Table 1). But Study Island involves much more than practice of academic topics, and use of Study Island cannot simply be measured as completion of topics. Study Island includes additional resources, such as lessons, games, flash cards, and printable worksheets; summarizing Study Island use as simply the number of 10-item practice sessions completed likely represents an incomplete picture of usage.

This study did not estimate the impact of use of any of Study Island's additional resources. Students in the Study Island group, or in the comparison group, may or may not have used these additional resources to varying degrees. The use, or lack of use, of these resources could be influencing student achievement and, therefore, the findings in this study. Given the study design, it is possible that the key difference between the Study Island group students and the comparison group students was not completion of topics but use of additional resources, and the additional resources are, in fact, responsible for the higher levels of achievement among the Study Island students.

This study used a design sufficient to meet WWC standards with reservations. The Study Island students and comparison students were equivalent on baseline reading achievement (fall MAP scores). Students in the two groups also were equivalent in terms of the duration between their fall and winter MAP administrations. Both the students' fall reading scores and their test durations were used as statistical

adjustments for estimating impacts on reading. No other student characteristics, however, were available or included in the study.

This study used a rigorous quasi-experimental design (QED) that is acceptable to meet WWC standards with reservations. Along with the statistically significant positive impacts, this study meets ESSA Level 2 standards. That said, the study was unable to control for student characteristics other than baseline (fall) achievement and duration. It is possible that students in the two groups differed on some key characteristic(s), and this difference was responsible for the difference in winter MAP scores rather than the difference in completion of Study Island topics. The lack of student demographic characteristics also limits the generalizability of the study results. It is unclear from this study what types of student were included in the Study Island group or if students of differing backgrounds experienced differing impacts from Study Island usage.

Students were the unit of assignment to the intervention and comparison groups. Study Island usage typically differs by students, so using students as the unit of assignment is appropriate. Study Island, however, is not used by students in isolation. Study Island also makes resources available to teachers and can be used to supplement regular classroom instruction. Teachers can use Study Island to assign individual students practice in areas of need, select specific practice items, and revise the score needed to advance to the next topic. Like the additional resources available to individual students, the features of Study Island for classroom and school use likely have an effect on student achievement. This study, however, was unable to estimate the impacts of any of these additional features of Study Island.

Further Research

This study provides a rigorous estimate of the impact of student completion of Study Island topics on student achievement in reading. Additional research is needed to understand how other features of Study Island impact student achievement. Future research also should address the limitations of this study. In addition to including student demographic characteristics as part of future analyses, further research also should examine other aspects of student usage and how these might impact student achievement. These could include student use of lessons, flash cards, and printable worksheets.

Although Study Island is designed primarily as a resource for students to gain practice and instructional support on standards-based topics as a means of test preparation, Study Island is still used within the classroom context. Integration of students' use of Study Island into classroom instruction likely magnifies the benefits of its use. A future study at the classroom level, that includes both student-level criteria and classroom-level criteria for inclusion in the Study Island group, could shed additional light on the impacts of Study Island on student achievement.

An unbiased estimate of Study Island's impact can only be provided by a randomized controlled trial (RCT). In this type of study, students (or classrooms) are randomly assigned to either use Study Island or conduct business as usual, creating two groups that are equivalent in expectation on all characteristics, known and unknown. This equivalence means any difference in achievement between the study groups can be attributed to Study Island usage. A well-conducted RCT eliminates the possibility that differences between intervention and comparison groups on outcome measures are caused by differences in baseline characteristics rather than the intervention under study, a limitation of the present study.

Finally, impact studies are best conducted in parallel with studies of implementation fidelity. Findings from the two studies complement each other and aid in the interpretation of results. Studies of

implementation fidelity inform the impact research by aiding in the definition of intervention group and communicating to the research audience what level of usage resulted in the impacts. Studies of impact inform implementation research by estimating impacts at different levels of implementation and helping to focus on how much usage is needed to produce statistically significant and meaningful increases in student achievement.

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Appendix A
Study Island Reading Topics Completed

Table A.1. Number of Study Island Students Completing Reading Topics by Grade Level

Topics completed	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8
22 Topics	11				27	19	16
23 Topics	7				34	11	17
24 Topics	10	27		18	22	12	16
25 Topics	7	26		11	22	9	14
26 Topics	13	31	38	24	26	5	9
27 Topics	9	23	31	17	18	6	7
28 Topics	10	19	34	15	21	9	6
29 Topics	11	12	18	14	18	5	5
30 Topics	10	14	19	13	13	4	7
31 Topics	8	16	24	9	11	6	3
32 Topics	1	11	17	11	9	0	3
33 Topics	1	15	12	8	11	3	6
34 Topics	3	5	13	9	6	4	1
35 Topics	3	9	15	10	9	2	3
36 Topics	3	5	14	11	4	0	2
37 Topics	4	5	9	6	3	5	0
38 Topics	1	7	9	6	7	1	1
39 Topics	2	6	8	5	4	3	0
40 Topics	5	4	3	7	2	2	1
1-50 Topics	14	33	15	41	9	12	2
51-60 Topics	2	11	12	26	1	3	2
61 or more Topics	1	11	9	10	0	1	1
Total	136	290	300	271	277	122	122

Note. Minimum number of topics completed varies by grade level. See Table 1.

Appendix B
Baseline Equivalence

Table B.1. Fall MAP Reading Baseline Equivalence by Grade

	N	M	SD	Adjusted Mean Difference	Pooled SD	Effect Size
Grade 2						
Comparison	680	176.16	15.34	0.99	15.18	0.07
Study Island	136	177.15	14.32			
Grade 3						
Comparison	1450	191.83	13.66	0.03	13.65	0.00
Study Island	290	191.87	13.58			
Grade 4						
Comparison	1500	196.43	16.80	0.33	16.69	0.02
Study Island	300	196.77	16.16			
Grade 5						
Comparison	1355	204.54	15.52	0.24	15.50	0.02
Study Island	271	204.78	15.41			
Grade 6						
Comparison	1385	209.67	16.08	0.39	15.96	0.02
Study Island	277	210.06	15.34			
Grade 7						
Comparison	610	216.31	15.71	-0.58	15.95	-0.04
Study Island	122	215.73	17.07			
Grade 8						
Comparison	610	218.66	16.58	-0.75	16.46	-0.05
Study Island	122	217.91	15.88			

Note. Numbers in table rounded to 2 decimals. M = mean. SD = standard deviation. Effect size measured as Hedges' *g*.

Table B.2. Duration Baseline Equivalence by Grade

	N	M	SD	Adjusted Mean Difference	Pooled SD	Effect Size
Grade 2						
Comparison	680	118.26	13.43	-0.43	13.15	-0.03
Study Island	136	117.83	11.62			
Grade 3						
Comparison	1450	111.13	14.84	-0.65	14.30	-0.05
Study Island	290	110.48	11.18			
Grade 4						
Comparison	1500	112.17	13.74	-0.18	13.47	-0.01
Study Island	300	111.99	12.02			
Grade 5						
Comparison	1355	115.00	14.42	-0.17	14.37	-0.01
Study Island	271	114.83	14.10			
Grade 6						
Comparison	1385	114.53	11.94	-0.44	11.77	-0.04
Study Island	277	114.08	10.88			
Grade 7						
Comparison	610	108.31	15.30	0.34	15.14	0.02
Study Island	122	108.66	14.29			
Grade 8						
Comparison	610	105.20	12.66	-1.08	13.14	-0.08
Study Island	122	104.11	15.34			

Note. Numbers in table rounded to 2 decimals. M = mean. SD = standard deviation. Effect size measured as Hedges' *g*.

Table B.3. Student Island and Comparison Group Students by Grade and State

State	Grade 2		Grade 3		Grade 4		Grade 5		Grade 6		Grade 7		Grade 8	
	SI	C	SI	C	SI	C	SI	C	SI	C	SI	C	SI	C
AR									11		20	4	3	1
AZ			12	40	3	68	18	43	5	59	1	49	1	36
CA		1	23	1	14	2	35	1	87	4	7	2	28	
GA	125	37	144	53	149	34	143	19	277	48	112	1	80	4
IL	24	4	51	3	75	5	40		96	8	24	2	61	
IN	128	37	264	63	241	57	69	52	201	92	124	31	102	20
KS	23		71		31		35	14	11		38		16	
KY	54	3	230	16	202	63	219	5	168	6	120	6	145	6
MI		1	1		5		2	3	26		13	1	3	
MN							1							
MO	2	10	1				2		10	4	1			1
MS	4	2	10	16	8	9	4	18	3	4	3	1	19	
NE			4		28		48		8		5	14	3	
OH	233	38	478	57	558	33	502	86	399	35	128	5	116	46
OK												2		
PA	16		33	23	33	1	50	4	24	2	2			
SC	1	2	30	12	7	17		2	1		4		14	
SD	5		2		4		7		8		3		1	
TN							3		2					2
TX	65	1	96	6	142	11	148	4	26	10	5	4	18	6
WI							29	20	22	5				
Total	680	136	1,450	290	1,500	300	1,355	271	1,385	277	610	122	610	122

Note. SI = Study Island group. C = comparison group.

Appendix C
Regression Analysis Output

Table C.1. Grade 2 Estimates of Regression Coefficients

Parameter	Coefficient	Std. Error	*t* value	*p*-value	95% Conf. Int.	
Study Island	4.37	0.75	5.84	0.00	2.90	5.83
Fall MAP score	0.80	0.02	42.6	0.00	0.76	0.83
Duration	0.00	0.02	0.1	0.92	-0.04	0.04
Intercept	43.94	4.53	9.7	0.00	35.05	52.83

Std. Error = standard error
95% Conf. Int. = 95% confidence interval

Table C.1. Grade 3 Estimates of Regression Coefficients

Parameter	Coefficient	Std. Error	*t* value	*p*-value	95% Conf. Int.	
Study Island	1.18	0.47	2.5	0.01	0.26	2.11
Fall MAP score	0.83	0.01	63.77	0.00	0.80	0.85
Duration	0.06	0.01	5.06	0.00	0.04	0.09
Intercept	32.77	2.88	11.39	0.00	27.13	38.41

Std. Error = standard error
95% Conf. Int. = 95% confidence interval

Table C.1. Grade 4 Estimates of Regression Coefficients

Parameter	Coefficient	Std. Error	*t* value	*p*-value	95% Conf. Int.	
Study Island	1.11	0.48	2.32	0.02	0.17	2.05
Fall MAP score	0.83	0.01	77.39	0.00	0.81	0.85
Duration	0.00	0.01	0.14	0.89	-0.02	0.03
Intercept	38.56	2.62	14.72	0.00	33.42	43.70

Std. Error = standard error
95% Conf. Int. = 95% confidence interval

Table C.1. Grade 5 Estimates of Regression Coefficients

Parameter	Coefficient	Std. Error	*t* value	*p*-value	95% Conf. Int.	
Study Island	2.31	0.49	4.71	0.00	1.35	3.27
Fall MAP score	0.82	0.01	69.15	0.00	0.80	0.84
Duration	0.04	0.01	3.24	0.00	0.02	0.07
Intercept	35.75	2.74	13.07	0.00	30.38	41.11

Std. Error = standard error
95% Conf. Int. = 95% confidence interval

Table C.1. Grade 6 Estimates of Regression Coefficients

Parameter	Coefficient	Std. Error	*t* value	*p*-value	95% Conf. Int.	
Study Island	2.40	0.51	4.69	0.00	1.40	3.40
Fall MAP score	0.87	0.01	72.47	0.00	0.84	0.89
Duration	0.01	0.02	0.72	0.47	-0.02	0.04
Intercept	28.91	3.13	9.23	0.00	22.77	35.06

Std. Error = standard error
95% Conf. Int. = 95% confidence interval

Table C.1. Grade 7 Estimates of Regression Coefficients

Parameter	Coefficient	Std. Error	*t* value	*p*-value	95% Conf. Int.	
Study Island	2.12	0.77	2.77	0.01	0.62	3.62
Fall MAP score	0.82	0.02	45.25	0.00	0.78	0.85
Duration	0.02	0.02	0.94	0.35	-0.02	0.06
Intercept	39.36	4.17	9.43	0.00	31.16	47.55

Std. Error = standard error

95% Conf. Int. = 95% confidence interval

Table C.1. Grade 8 Estimates of Regression Coefficients

Parameter	Coefficient	Std. Error	*t* value	*p*-value	95% Conf. Int.	
Study Island	3.02	0.79	3.83	0.00	1.47	4.58
Fall MAP score	0.83	0.02	45.54	0.00	0.80	0.87
Duration	0.01	0.02	0.43	0.67	-0.04	0.05
Intercept	37.63	4.24	8.88	0.00	29.32	45.95

Std. Error = standard error

95% Conf. Int. = 95% confidence interval

From: Mize, Cody
To: Wehrman, Charlotte
Cc: Jennifer Knipp
Subject: Authorization for Blended Learning Grant
Date: Tuesday, September 29, 2020 5:57:37 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

Ms. Wehrman,

Good evening! Please accept this email as documentation for Ms. Jennifer Knipp to have the authority on behalf of Mineola ISD to make an application for the Blended Learning Grant. Ms. Knipp serves as the Director of Curriculum and Instruction at Mineola ISD.

Thank you for your consideration.

Our best,

Cody Mize
Superintendent, Mineola Independent School District

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"For I know the plans I have for you--this is the Lord's declaration--plans for your well-being, not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope." Jeremiah 29:11
Discipline = Freedom