

EDUCATION WEEK

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i3 Grants: Findings From the First Round

The original 49 winners of the Obama administration's Investing in Innovation competition are finishing their final evaluations by the end of this year. Below is a selection of some of the largest grants among the 2010 grantees and what the evaluations have found so far.

Related Collection: [Federal i3: Giving Wing to Promising Ideas](#)

PROJECT NAME, Award amount

PROJECT SCOPE

EVALUATOR NAME

FINDINGS

KIPP FOUNDATION, \$50 million

KIPP Scale-Up: Train 1,000 future principals of KIPP and non-KIPP schools; increase KIPP school openings by 50 percent

Mathematica Policy Research

KIPP used leadership training programs to double the number of students enrolled from 27,000 at the start of the grant to more than 55,000 by 2014–15. The final evaluation found being admitted to a KIPP middle school via a lottery leads to significant improvement in students' average math and reading scores after two years. That's equivalent to a student moving from the 40th to the 50th percentile in the state in math and from the 37th to the 44th percentile in reading. It also found significant improvements in science and social studies.

TEACH FOR AMERICA, \$50 million

Grow teacher corps by more than 80 percent, to 13,500 teachers, train majority so they are rated "highly effective"

Mathematica Policy Research

First- and second-year Teach For America teachers recruited and trained during the grant were as effective as other teachers in the same high-poverty schools in teaching both reading and math. TFA teachers in prekindergarten-grade 2 significantly improved students' reading achievement, equal to 1.3 additional months of learning for the average student nationwide; no benefit was found for other subjects or grades.

SUCCESS FOR ALL FOUNDATION, \$49.3 million

Add up to 1,000 schools to its whole-school turnaround network, expand training, operate more cost effectively

MDRC

Second graders who had participated in the SFA program for three years significantly outperformed their peers who were not in the program on a measure of phonics skills, but on average did not perform better than the control group in reading fluency or comprehension. Among a subgroup of students who entered school with below-average alphabet skills and ability to sound out words, those who participated in SFA for three years performed significantly better than peers whose schools were not in the program on tests of phonics skills, word recognition, and reading fluency. There was no benefit for students who entered school with higher-than average skills.

OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY, \$45.6 million

Reading Recovery: Train 3,690 new teachers, 15 new teacher leaders

University of Pennsylvania

In a randomized controlled trial of 6,888 students, 1st grade students who participated in Reading Recovery for 12–20 weeks showed reading improvement equal to 18 percentage points on the ITBS Total Reading assessment. Their growth was more than 130 percent higher than the national average growth rate for 1st graders. Both English-language learners and rural students showed equally strong benefits. However, the sample size for this part of the study was too small to determine whether students who participated in Reading Recovery sustained their gains on state reading tests in 3rd grade.

CHILDREN'S LITERACY INITIATIVE, \$21.7 million

Implement "model classrooms" in 39 randomly selected schools; work with 456 K-3 teachers

American Institutes for Research

Kindergarten and 1st grade teachers who participated in the Children's Literacy Initiative showed significantly better literacy-instructional practices, including more use of vocabulary-building strategies and more-challenging classroom books, on an observational scale. Second graders whose teachers over three years had participated in the program showed significant improvement in reading skills, equal to moving from the 50th to the 57th percentile.

DENVER PUBLIC SCHOOLS, \$25.1 million

Collaborative Strategic Reading: Implement program in middle schools, with a focus on English-learners

SRI International

The program was originally intended to expand to eight schools in the Denver school district, but ultimately scaled to 20 schools. The evaluation found students who had participated in both the pilot program and its schoolwide rollout the next year performed significantly better on a state writing test than students who had less exposure to the program, but other measures were mixed.

GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY, \$28.5 million

Virginia Initiative for Science Teaching and Achievement (VISTA) Elementary Science Institute (ESI): Provide sustained, intensive science teacher professional development in 47 districts partnering with universities

University of Virginia and Oregon State University

The evaluation showed science teachers in grades 4-6 who participated in the VISTA professional development program showed greater understanding of problem-based learning instruction in science. A smaller subgroup of 3,556 5th graders showed no difference in performance on 5th grade science standards, based on whether or not their teachers participated.

JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY, \$30 million

Diplomas Now: Implement whole-school reforms to improve graduation rates in 41 middle and high schools in 13 districts

MDRC

By the second year of implementation, Diplomas Now schools differed from comparison schools in how much teachers collaborated in interdisciplinary teams, teacher professional development, and the use of data to identify struggling students. A third report, on the effects on students in the first year, is expected in June.

NEW SCHOOLS FOR NEW ORLEANS, \$28 million

New Orleans Charter Re-Start Project: Launch or turn around 19 schools in New Orleans and eight in Tennessee, help develop 3 new charter-management organizations in New Orleans

CREDO at Stanford University

There were only three schools in the first cohort of evaluated charters, but their effects for students were not positive. There were no learning gains for students who attended one of the 13 schools. Future reports are expected to look at a larger sample of schools and students.

NISWONGER FOUNDATION, \$17.8 million

Northeast Tennessee College and Career-Ready Consortium: Use dual-enrollment, online, and Advanced Placement to improve college readiness in 29 rural high schools

CNA Education

A 2015 site visit report found increases in individual course guidance and financial counseling to encourage students to enroll in accelerated courses, such as Advanced Placement, and take the associated tests. A report on student outcomes is forthcoming.

PARENTS AS TEACHERS NATIONAL CENTER, \$14.3 million

Baby Family and Child Education (Baby FACE): Expand early learning and parent-skills program for prenatal to age 3 to 22 Bureau of Indian Education schools

Research and Training Associates; Wilder Research

A qualitative study of 19 of 20 sites included in-depth interviews with parents and families of students. Parents and staff reported faster gross motor development of children in the program, and staff members reported more early identification of students with special needs, but there was no control group to compare this to. Many parents voiced frustration with the program ending at age 3. The program's Family Circle meetings had low attendance in a majority of sites.

SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION, \$25.5 million

LASER: Evaluate and refine a program in three states that builds school-based leadership teams to improve science instruction

University of Memphis Center for Research and Educational Policy

The evaluation tracked more than 9,000 students for three years, beginning in grades 3-5 through grades 6-8. Elementary and middle school students in LASER performed significantly better than nonparticipating students on the Partnership for the Assessment of Standards-Based Science in hands-on science tasks. The results for state math, science, and reading tests varied by school and grade.

UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI, eMINTS NATIONAL CENTER, \$12.3 million

eMINTS: Improve professional development in middle schools serving 10,500 students, 240 teachers

American Institutes for Research

Teachers at eMINTS schools had significantly higher scores on classroom observations and surveys on technology integration and inquiry-based learning practices. Students of those teachers also performed significantly better than students of teachers who did not participate in eMINTS in math, though not in reading or communication skills.

UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY, \$15.3 million

K-3 Smart Start Plus: Extend school year by 25 days in K-3, create smaller classes, in four districts in New Mexico

Center for Persons with Disabilities, Utah State University

Students who attended the summer program before kindergarten performed significantly better on tests of kindergarten readiness in expressive vocabulary, letter-word identification, applied math problems, and writing, but not in social skills or receptive language. By the start of 3th grade, students who had participated in four years of the summer program performed better than nonparticipating students in reading, math, and writing.

WESTED TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM, \$18.2 million

Reading Apprenticeship Improving Secondary Education (RAISE): Use the Reading Apprenticeship model of literacy instruction to reach 2,800 teachers, 400,000 students

Impaq International, Empirical Education Inc.

For the RAISE program, the evaluation found teachers who participated in professional development programs were significantly more likely than nonparticipating teachers to use practices that foster student independence, and to provide opportunities for students to practice different reading strategies, peer-to-peer learning, and collaboration. Science teachers who participated in RAISE also modeled more reading comprehension strategies. Students of RAISE science teachers showed significant improvement in their writing argumentation.

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