

CASE STUDY

North Chicago School District 187

In the 2018 – 2019 school year, North Chicago School District 187 collaborated with Chapter One to address the need for an intervention program that offered a novel approach to reading success. As a result of the implementation of Chapter One’s high impact tutoring program, 85% of kindergarten and first grade students were on track for grade level reading and the district has expanded the program to serve all K-5 students.



NORTH CHICAGO SCHOOL DISTRICT

- Nearly 4,000 students in grades preK-12
- 94% minority students
- 30% ESL students
- 85% eligible for free & reduced lunch

Challenges

North Chicago School District 187 (D187), located about 40 miles north of Chicago, serves nearly 4,000 PreK – Grade 12 students in 10 schools.

North Chicago has historically underperformed state averages on reading proficiency. In the 2018 – 19 school year, 12% of D187 third grade students were reading at grade level compared to 36% state-wide. Over 85% of D187 students qualify for free or reduced lunch, and over 30% are ESL students.

Implementation

Working with Chapter One, the D187 staff implemented Chapter One’s high impact tutoring in the 2018 – 2019 school year.

Chapter One provides high impact 1:1 tutoring by Early Literacy Interventionists (ELI) who meet with students 1–3 times per week. ELI’s are trained specialists who conduct 1:1 conferences of 5- 6 minutes each day to check for understanding, introduce new content, and set goals. Using Chapter One’s innovative software, ELI’s help students build a strong foundation in phonics, fluency, sight word acquisition, and comprehension. The students also receive 15 minutes of timely reinforcement practice each day using tablets provided by Chapter One, that are integrated into small group time during the literacy block. The tablets feature a variety of interactive and engaging learning activities.

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Chapter One's program is on the leading edge of a nationwide movement to provide high impact tutoring for students impacted by COVID-19.

Dr. Robert Slavin, Director of the Center for Research and Reform at John Hopkins University, called for a national deployment of high impact tutors to address the impact of COVID-19:

“What we and many other researchers have found is that the most effective strategy for struggling students, especially in elementary schools, is one-to-one or one-to small group tutoring. Structured tutoring programs can make a large difference in a short time, exactly what is needed to help students quickly catch up with grade level expectations. Effective tutoring is likely to enable these children to advance to the point where they can profit from ordinary grade-level instruction. We fear that without this assistance, millions of children will never catch up, and will show the negative effects of the school closures throughout their time in school and beyond.”

Summary

Although services were suspended in March 2020 when the district closed all schools due to COVID-19, the Chapter One program resumed in September 2020. Throughout the school year, the program was implemented in some combination of in-classroom instruction and remote instruction. The program resulted in nearly 80% of first grade students reaching grade level reading, compared to approximately 50% of students in previous years. Prior to the close of school in March 2020, nearly 85% of kindergarten and first grade students were on track for grade level reading. Due to the success of the partnership in raising student reading achievement, D187 has committed to a 3-year expansion of the partnership,

starting with a new summer school intensive catch-up program for 2021. During the 2021 school year Chapter One will serve all Kindergarten and 1st grade students, as well as all 2nd and 3rd grade students that are struggling to learn a basic phonics foundation.

“As an educational leader I have partnered with Chapter One in three districts, and dozens of schools, with very diverse student populations. In each case, and in each school, I have found that students and teachers utilizing the Chapter One suite of tools made dramatically more improvement in early literacy skills than comparison groups. Chapter One is a key aspect of the tools that our teachers and kids need to see the catch up growth that we hope all kids accomplish.”

– Dr. John Price, Superintendent of D187

Chapter One

Chapter One is a 501c3 non-profit that was founded in 1993. At Chapter One, we believe learning to read is a basic civil right with the power to transform lives. Fusing technology, corporate volunteerism and intensive support, we enable meaningful human interaction that is proven to improve literacy outcomes, promoting equity for all young children. We work to realize a world in which all children, regardless of background, are confidently reading to learn, grow, and thrive throughout life.

For 30 years, Chapter One has been building community partnerships and developing innovative software and human-powered solutions to advance early literacy. We collaborate with schools, districts, teachers, businesses, and students, and provide customized, technology-based tools for individualized instruction.