

# DRIVING RESULTS WITH SCHOOL BOOK DELIVERY

Emily Buser, Ed.M. • Kathy Shahbodaghi, M.L.S.



## Reading

is a critical life skill and this school year was a pivotal one for Ohio's public schools. The statewide Third Grade Reading Guarantee (TGRG) required that all third grade students pass a state assessment to move on to the fourth grade. Columbus Metropolitan Library (CML) in Columbus, Ohio began a book delivery program to elementary schools in two public districts, Groveport Madison (GPM) and Columbus City Schools (CCS) along with a charter school, Columbus Collegiate Academy (CCA), serving grades 6-8. The intent of the program was to get library books directly into students' hands through monthly deliveries to classrooms throughout the 2014-15 school year.

Third grade reading is one of three areas of focus in CML's top strategy, Young Minds. With a deep Children's expertise and a quality collection, school delivery service is a key CML support to these schools for third grade reading. Districts were chosen for the service due to low kindergarten readiness scores, low passage rate of the third grade reading assessment or the lack of school libraries, staff and current books. Classroom "kits" containing 30 high interest fiction and nonfiction books were delivered monthly to each class throughout the 2014-15 school year. The intent was for the books to support reading instruction and lesson plans.



### SCHOOL DELIVERY INFORMATION 2014-15 SCHOOL YEAR

	Number of Participating Buildings	Number of Participating Classrooms
Columbus City Schools	16	248
Groveport Madison Local Schools	6	105
Columbus Collegiate Academy	1	8
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>361</b>
Total number of books delivered per month:		<b>10,830</b>
Total number of books delivered (10 deliveries total):		<b>108,300</b>
Overall loss rate of books (damaged or not returned):		<b>2.3%</b>

## RESULTS

Evaluation of reading skills, measured through assessment scores, along with qualitative data collected via teacher surveys and a focus group of principals, provided the means for measuring impact. Survey data showed an almost unanimous response from teachers reporting the books had a positive impact on students' enthusiasm for learning. Students loved the books and were excited to open the kits to see what books were included. Most teachers used the books to support independent reading, either with silent reading or for student read alouds in the classroom. Among the public schools served, assessment scores provided mixed results. Several schools in both the GPM and CCS districts made exceptional gains. However, several schools had no gains or saw scores drop. The exception proved to be the charter school CCA. Every single classroom in each grade saw significant gains in the reading scores from fall to spring. In fact, CCA's lowest scoring sixth grade classroom (those students who needed to improve the most) saw the largest gains, over 20 points. According to the School Director, CCA "could not have achieved these (assessment) numbers without the help of the Columbus Metropolitan Library book drop-off program."

## SECOND-YEAR GOALS

- CML will maintain the School Delivery program at current levels for the 2015-16 school year.
- Staff will continue to track reading score improvements for possible expansion during the 2016-17 school year.
- CML will work with school administrators to ensure full usage of the books in each school and classroom.
- Together, library and school staff will establish criteria for usage of the books and work with school administrators to move the service to another school if usage remains low.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

## FOR LIBRARY LEADERS

- **Public libraries can play an important role in supporting reading acquisition at schools by providing quantities of quality children's books for students to access during the school day.**
- **Partnering with local schools to get high interest, quality children's books off public library shelves and into students' hands supports the community goal of ensuring all children learn to read and grow academically.**

## FOR COMMUNITY LEADERS

- **This new program shows the value of sharing resources through a public library, public school partnership in a way that benefits students in the community.**
- **Investments should always be made for evaluation measures to ensure there is more than perceived benefit; that is, that student reading skills are boosted in part by the availability of public library books in the classroom.**