

The Literacy Clinic: Data Collection and Results

May 2024

To improve graduation rates and literacy among criminal-court-involved adults, K-2nd grade public school attendees, and Juvenile-Justice-Involved Youths, **The Literacy Clinic (TLC)** has focused its efforts on the following **intervention-** and **prevention-**based literacy improvement goals and actions:

1. Prevention – K-2: Annually move 75% of kindergarten, first, and second-grade children enrolled at Garyville Math & Science Magnet School, Lake Pontchartrain Elementary School, and Behrman Charter School from one proficiency level to the next proficiency level (i.e., well-below, below, at, or above benchmark) by evaluating phonemic awareness, phonics, or oral reading fluency using the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) assessment.

Actions:

- TLC collected, analyzed, and reported on baseline DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills) data for K, 1st, and 2nd-grade children at partnering schools.
- TLC worked with teachers and other support staff to move students along the literacy spectrum to be literary proficient at the start of 3rd grade.
- Interventions integrated throughout as literacy-building activities include parent-child read-along-night, an Accelerated Reader program and spirited competition, classroom libraries, Author's Corner, and literacy-focused field trips.
- Parent focus groups are used to gain insight into parents' perspectives on the impact of their children's participation in the Clinic over the project term. These focus groups provide frameworks for the Clinic to match families with services (e.g., through Families in Need of Services) who may need to support out-of-school learning. It also allows TLC to identify and troubleshoot other challenges at home that create barriers to student achievement.
- Assent and Consent forms were obtained from parents and/or guardians of K-2nd grade Clinic participants.
- Middle and end-of-year DIBELS data was collected, analyzed, and reported using regression analysis to indicate the impact/efficacy of school participation in The Literacy Clinic.

Results:

Successful Family Engagement Events (four Family Literacy and Financial Literacy Nights):

1. November 29, 2022: At the Behrman Charter School Family Literacy Night, New Orleans native Dr. Maychelle Cooper-Rodney, author of *Dear Black Butterfly: You Are a Queen*, served as guest speaker and presenter. Families enjoyed activity stations that promoted literacy and learning.

Survey Results:

2. January 26, 2023: At the Lake Pontchartrain Elementary Family Literacy and Financial Literacy Night, families were offered financial literacy resources, participated in a Carnival book reading and response activity, painted, and enjoyed king cake.

Survey Results:

3. November 14, 2023: At the Garyville/Mt. Airy Magnet School Family Literacy and Financial Literacy Night, families participated in science experiments, storytelling, dancing, art projects, and robotics.

Survey Results: The survey respondent (1) rated the event 5/5.

4. February 26, 2024: At the second Garyville/Mt. Airy Magnet School event, the Literacy/Poetry Family Engagement Event, families participated in reading and poetry events and recitals.

Survey Results: Of the 26 survey respondents, 100% liked the program and said they would return for future events.

Authors Corner

To inspire students to read and write, authors Dr. Maychelle Cooper-Rodney, Gerzalle Blanks, Nyla Choates, and Merlyna Mathieu Valentine visited Lake Pontchartrain Elementary, Behrman Charter school, and Garyville/Mt. Airy Magnet School. Authors interacted with students and read from their books, students completed learning activities with assessments, and attendees completed surveys.

- Nyla Choates: 100% of survey participants (50) rated Coates 5/5 and said they would like to attend a future event.
- Merlyna Mathieu Valentine: 100% of survey participants (8) rated Mathieu Valentine 5/5. Seven of eight participants said they would like to attend a future event.

Establishment of Classroom Libraries

To improve access to inspiring pieces of literature, the books *Dear Black Butterfly: You Are a Queen* (Dr. Maychelle Cooper-Rodney), *Goodbye Butterflies* (Gerzalle Blanks), *My Roots Are Rich* (Nyla Choates), and *Daisy the Very Special Flower*, (Merlyna Mathieu Valentine) were distributed to Behrman Charter, Lake Pontchartrain, and Garyville/Mt. Airy Magnet School.

Literacy Field Trips

TLC hosted a field trip for students to visit the strawberry fields of Lake Pontchartrain. The trip was designed to:

- Foster and encourage a love of reading through connection to real-life activities.
- Provide students with relevant connections to build knowledge and relate classroom context to lived experience.
- Provide families and children opportunities to engage in educational activities outside school, fostering interactive and supportive learning.

2022-2023 Summative DIBELS Lake Pontchartrain (Early Literacy Skills)

- Kindergarten: 20% of students are **at** or **above** grade level in early literacy skills (12% increase in student achievement). Students progressed from **well-below** to **below** by 23%.
- 1st grade: 65% of students are **at** or **above** grade level in early literacy skills (6% increase in students achieving at or above). Students progressed from **well-below** to **below** by 22%.
- 2nd grade: 40% of students are **at** or **above** grade level in early literacy skills (4% decrease in students achieving at or above). Students progressed from **well-below** to **below** by 4%.

2022-2023 Summative DIBELS Behrman Charter (Early Literacy Skills)

- Kindergarten: 95% of students are **at** or **above** grade level in early literacy skills (43% increase in student achievement.)
- 1st grade: 54% of students are **at** or **above** grade level in early literacy skills (14% decrease in students achieving **at** or above). Students progressed from **well-below** to **below** by 17%.
- 2nd grade: 32% of students are **at** or **above** grade level in early literacy skills (17% decrease in students achieving **at** or **above**). Students progressed from **well-below** to **below** by 2%

2. Intervention – Adults: Annually provide 10 adults pleading to probation for non-violent, non-sex-related offenses in the 40th JDC support in enrolling in literacy instructional courses; Match these 10 adults with continuing educational services, as needed, to complete HiSet within eighteen months of program enrollment; Monitor their progression over 18 months.

3. Intervention – Youth: Within 18 months of program enrollment, bring juveniles who are involved in the justice system in the 40th JDC (and who have literacy deficits and/or are one more grade levels behind) to grade-level reading.

Actions:

- Provide 10 adults and/or juveniles pleading to probation for non-violent, non-sex-related offenses in the 40th JDC support in enrolling in and completing literacy instructional courses at River Parish Community College or with other comparable literacy support service provider.
- Refer Juvenile-Justice-Involved Youth with literacy challenges to River Parish Community College or another qualified educational service provider for a literary proficiency assessment.
- Provide the youth with tutoring services from retired, pre-service, and/or in-service educators who work one-on-one with the youth to provide instruction aimed at eliminating deficits in reading and writing and show movement from nonliterate to literate.

Results:

As of October 2, 2023, 10 participants (7 adult and 3 juvenile) have been enrolled at the behest of the 40th JDC. The TLC engaged the services of Thoughts Before Actions_(TBA)—a 501(c)3 non-profit organization providing various programs that provide a nurturing, safe, environment for Louisiana students—to support/coach Adult Literacy Clinic client progress. TBA has been monumental in providing candidate support and documenting participant progress. Their reports yield the following findings:

- 3 lost contacts (KE 2021 Cr 360, JM 2022 Cr 155, Juvenile “U.”)
- 3 incarcerated again (RM 2021 Cr 78, JM 2022 Cr 128, 2023 CR 34)
- 1 successful candidate preparing to take the HiSet exam (CH 2021 Cr 351)
- 1 successful candidate who moved out of the jurisdiction and continues attending classes (J-19273)
- 1 successful candidate who has passed the Reading and English exams and is preparing to take the Math exam (22 CR 172)
- 1 successful candidate recently enrolled; learning issues have been identified and candidate is in the process of being paired with appropriate resources.

“22 CR 172 continues to amaze me. She’s still doing well in her classes, and she’s scheduled to take her math exam again. Once she passes her math exam, she is done with the program. After speaking to her instructor, I learned that she’s to be honored at an upcoming ceremony for her efforts in the classroom. I’m very happy with her progress.”

“CH 2021 Cr 351 is still moving in the right direction. He still seems motivated, but he did express that work has been hectic. This may affect his focus in the class, but that has yet to be determined. I’m still pleased with the fact that he’s diligently taking classes despite his busy schedule.”