



5120 Lee Way  
Minnetonka, MN 55345

February 7, 2017

Please find enclosed the Interim Report of the preliminary results at the four schools in the Rock 'n' Read Project state pilot, funded by a grant of \$100,000 from the 2016 MN Legislature.

We are working with Rep. Jennifer Loon to schedule a legislative site visit to one of the schools so that you can see students using the software program that uses singing to boost reading.

In the meantime, should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Thank you for your attention, and we look forward to your support for another bill this session.

Cordially,

Bill Jones  
Co-founder and Executive Director  
The Rock 'n' Read Project  
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Ann Kay  
Co-founder  
The Rock 'n' Read Project



## **The Rock 'n' Read Project**

**State Pilot 2016-2017**

# **Interim Report**

**February 1, 2017**

**To the MN Commissioner of Education and  
Minnesota Legislature Education Finance and Policy  
Committee Chairs and Ranking Minority Members**

**As required by**

**2016 MN Session Laws  
Chapter 189—HF No. 2749  
Sec. 62 Appropriations (495.1-495.9)**

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State Pilot 2016-2017  
Interim Report**

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**FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:**

**Bill Jones, Co-Founder and Executive Director**

**Ann Kay, Co-Founder**

**The Rock 'n' Read Project**

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## The Rock 'n' Read Project State Pilot 2016-2017

### Legislative Charge

Chapter 189—HF No. 2749, Sec. 62 Appropriations (495.1-495.9)

Subd. 13

#### **Singing-based pilot program to improve student reading.**

- (a) *For a grant to pilot a research-supported, computer-based educational program that uses singing to improve the reading ability of students in grades 3 through 5: \$100,000;*
- (b) *The commissioner of education shall award a grant to the Rock 'n' Read Project to implement in at least three Minnesota school districts, charter schools, or school sites, a research-supported, computer-based educational program that uses singing to improve the reading ability of students in grade 3 through 5. The grantee shall be responsible for selecting participating school sites; providing any required hardware and software, including software licenses, for the duration of the grant period; providing technical support, training, and staff to install required project hardware and software, providing on-site professional development and instructional monitoring and support for the school staff and students; administering pre- and post-intervention reading assessments; evaluating the impact of the intervention; and other project management services as required. To the extent practicable, the grantee must select participating schools in urban, suburban, and greater Minnesota, and give priority to schools in which a high proportion of students do not read proficiently at grade level and are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch.*
- (c) *By February 15, 2017, the grantee must submit a report detailing expenditures and outcomes of the grant to the commissioner of education and the chairs and ranking minority members of the legislative committees with primary jurisdiction over kindergarten through grade 12 education policy and finance.*
- (d) *This is a onetime appropriation.*

### Introduction

Founded in 2014, The Rock 'n' Read Project is a Minnesota 501(c)(3) nonprofit dedicated to "helping children read at grade level through singing." The organization has partnered with schools and the YMCA to implement a software program that uses singing to boost reading achievement. Students using TUNEin to READING (TiR) are rewarded for improving their singing accuracy, thereby motivating them to sing/read the same song repeatedly. Most children enjoy using the program. Research studies conducted at the University of South Florida found that struggling readers using TiR for thirty minutes three times per week for nine weeks (13.5 hours) gained an average of one year in reading achievement. TiR users substantially outperformed non-TiR users on the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Tests in year-over-year gains for five consecutive years. <http://www.tuneintoreading.com/summary.html>

The Rock 'n' Read Project bases its programs on neuroscience research studies that have found that 1) making music enhances auditory processing and this is correlated with higher reading achievement, 2) the ability to keep a steady beat is correlated with higher reading achievement; [www.brainvolts.northwestern.edu/projects/index.php](http://www.brainvolts.northwestern.edu/projects/index.php), and 3) dyslexia is a rhythmic entrainment problem in the brain that can be remediated with steady beat activities. [www.neuroscience.cam.ac.uk/directory/profile.php?ucg10](http://www.neuroscience.cam.ac.uk/directory/profile.php?ucg10)

## State Pilot Project

In May 2016, the Minnesota Legislature allocated a \$100,000 grant to The Rock 'n' Read Project to implement a state pilot in 2016-'17 using TiR software. The Rock 'n' Read Project completed a grant application with the Minnesota Department of Education. Four schools were chosen:

- Bancroft Elementary, Minneapolis Public Schools
- College Prep Elementary, a public charter school in St. Paul
- Jefferson Community School, Minneapolis Public Schools
- Tesfa International School, a public charter school in St. Paul

The project began in September 2016. This interim report details the outcomes, expenditures, conclusions, and recommendations to date. A final report will be submitted in summer 2017.

## Process

### May-August 2016

- Using the MN Department of Education MN Report Card, The Rock 'n' Read Project identified schools around the state that had a majority of students not reading at grade level and a high percentage receiving free/reduced-price lunch.
- Principals were contacted, and seven schools expressed interest.

### September-October 2016

- The Rock 'n' Read Project selected four schools that would implement the program during the school day.
- All 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grade students (and 2<sup>nd</sup> graders at Jefferson) took the online FastBridge aReading assessment. Each school chose which students would participate and created a schedule to ensure that students a minimum of 90 minutes per week of TiR usage/student.
- The Rock 'n' Read Project purchased software licenses from the company, set up computer labs or downloaded the software into existing computer labs, provided staff development for the teachers, launched the program with the students, provided one week of lab help, and monitored progress during the fall.
- Schools began students on the program 1-2 months after school started.

### December-early January 2017

- 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grade students (and 2<sup>nd</sup> at Jefferson) took the FastBridge assessment again.

## Data

278 Rock 'n' Read students were compared with 387 non-Rock 'n' Read students for reading gains from fall to early winter on the FASTBridge aReading assessment. This is not a research study, but merely compares data from every single student who had a pre- and post- score. The results and demographics from each school are exhibited below. (Note: Because schools did not begin the program until one to two months into the school year, not all students have yet reached the research-suggested "minimum dose" of 13.5 hours. Thus, students who got 7.5 or more hours were included.)



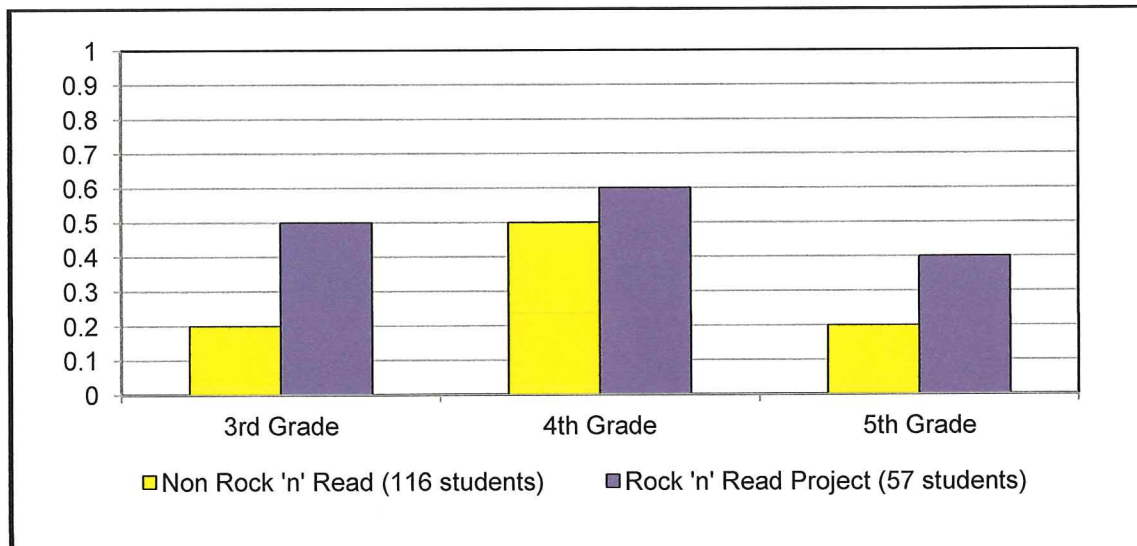


**The Rock 'n' Read Project  
Bancroft Elementary (Minneapolis Public Schools)  
Reading Gain**

September 26, 2016-January 13, 2017 (13 weeks of school)

A comparison of reading gains between students who sang for 7.5-18 hours with TUNEin to READING (TiR) software and students who did not. Both groups were reading below grade level in September. The FastBridge aReading assessment was used.

1.0 = one year gain



**Minnesota Report Card 2016 (MN Department of Education)**

73% not reading at grade level

Race/Ethnicity	Count	Percent
Hispanic/Latino	158	28.1%
American Indian/Alaska Native	50	8.9%
Asian	16	2.8%
Black/African American	209	37.1%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0	0.0%
White	112	19.9%
Two or More Races	18	3.2%
All Students	563	100.0%
English Learner	220	39.1%
Special Education	84	14.9%
Free/Reduced Priced Lunch	465	82.6%
Homeless	34	6%

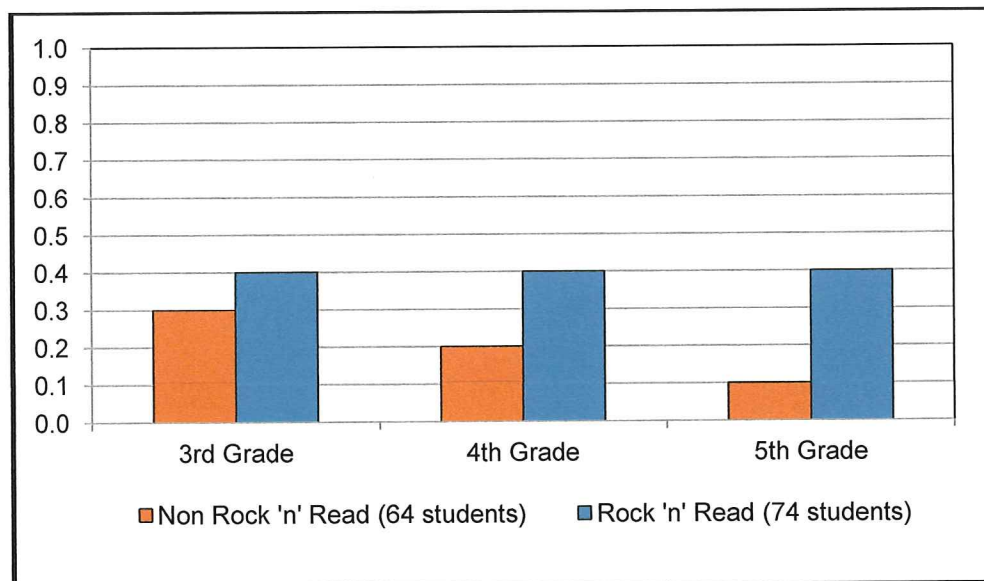


**The Rock 'n' Read Project  
College Prep Elementary  
Reading Gain**

September 16-December 12, 2016 (12 weeks)

A comparison of reading gains between students who sang for 7.5-19 hours with TUNEin to READING (TiR) software and students who did not. The Fastbridge aReading assessment was used.

1.0 = one year gain



**Minnesota Report Card 2016 (MN Department of Education)**

83% not reading at grade level

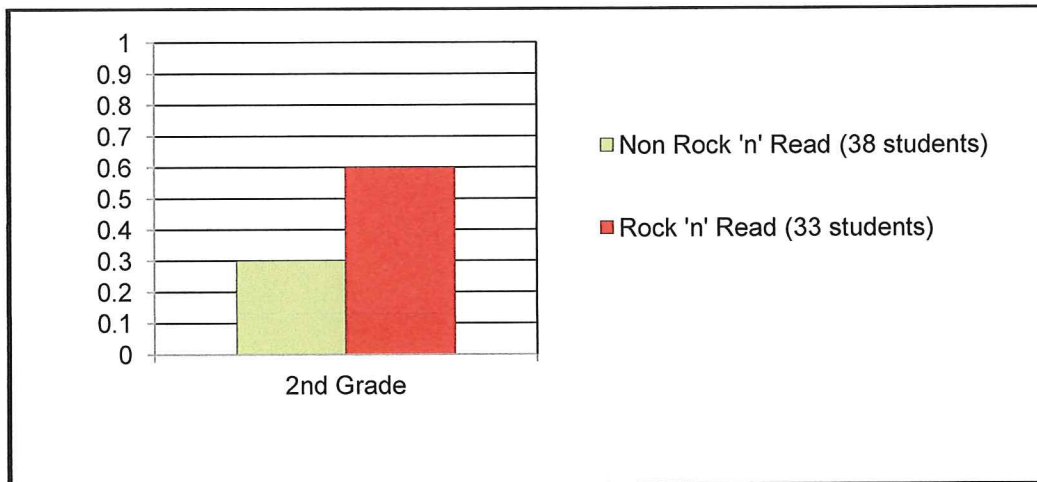
Race/Ethnicity	Count	Percent
Hispanic/Latino	3	0.9%
American Indian/Alaska Native	0	0.0%
Asian	291	83.6%
Black/African American	35	10.1%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0	0.0%
White	6	1.7%
Two or More Races	13	3.7%
All Students	348	100.0%
English Learner	260	74.7%
Special Education	42	12.1%
Free/Reduced Priced Lunch	317	91.1%
Homeless	10	2.9%



**The Rock 'n' Read Project**  
**Jefferson Community School (Minneapolis Public Schools)**  
**Reading Gain**  
 October 24, 2016-January 13, 2017 (10 weeks of school)

A comparison of reading gains between students who sang for 7.5-15 hours with TUNEin to READING (TiR) software and students who did not. (3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> graders had not yet amassed enough hours on the program to report.) The FastBridge aReading assessment was used.

1.0 = one year gain



**Minnesota Report Card 2016 (MN Department of Education)**  
 82% not reading at grade level

Race/Ethnicity	Count	Percent
Hispanic/Latino	299	43.6%
American Indian/Alaska Native	19	2.8%
Asian	21	3.1%
Black/African American	300	43.8%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	2	.3%
White	35	5.1%
Two or More Races	9	1.3%
All Students	685	100%
English Learner	402	58.7%
Special Education	121	17.7%
Free/Reduced Priced Lunch	643	93.9%
Homeless	76	11.1%



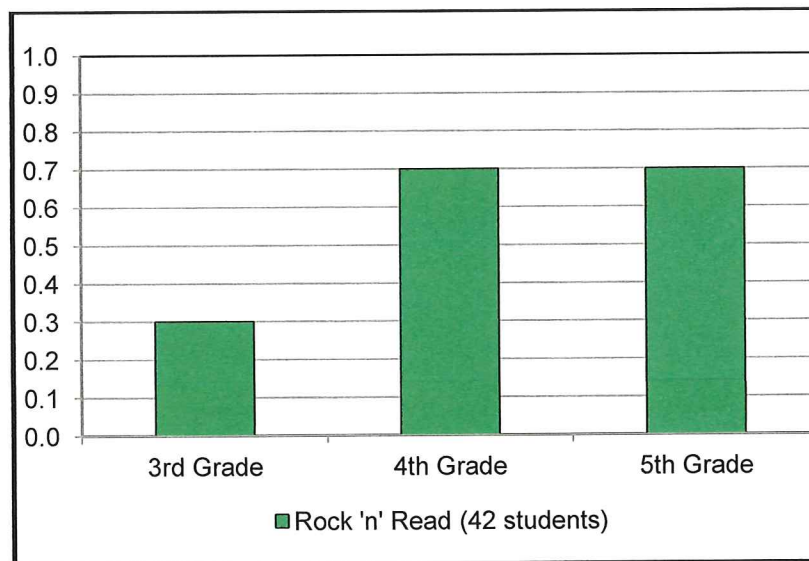


**The Rock 'n' Read Project  
Tesfa International School  
Reading Gain**

September 21-December 19, 2016 (14 weeks)

The reading gains for students who sang for 7.5-24 hours with TUNEin to READING (TiR) software. The FastBridge aReading Assessment was used to assess achievement.

1.0 = one year gain



**Minnesota Report Card 2016 (MN Department of Education)**

80% not reading at grade level

Race/Ethnicity	Count	Percent
Hispanic/Latino	0	0.0%
American Indian/Alaska Native	0	0.0%
Asian	0	0.0%
Black/African American	128	92.1%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0	0.0%
White	11	7.9%
Two or More Races	0	0.0%
All Students	139	100.0%
English Learner	68	48.9%
Special Education	6	4.3%
Free/Reduced Priced Lunch	134	96.4%

## Analysis

- Bancroft: Rock 'n' Read students made substantially more gain than non-Rock 'n' Read students who were also reading below grade level in September.
- College Prep: Rock 'n' Read students made double the gain of non-Rock 'n' Read students.
- Jefferson: Rock 'n' Read 2<sup>nd</sup> graders made double the gain of non-Rock 'n' Read students. (Because no 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> graders had yet achieved the recommended "dose" of 13.5 hours, they are not included in this analysis).
- Tesfa: Rock 'n' Read students (all students except a few new to country) made more than one-half year gain.

## Conclusions

The data overall indicate that:

- Rock 'n' Read students made nearly double the gain of non-users who were reading below grade level.
- Rock 'n' Read students made almost one-half year gain in 7.5-24 hours of usage.
- More time using TiR yields more gain (see Tesfa students).
- Rock 'n' Read students are on track to make more than one year of reading gain during this school year.
- EL students (English is their second language) benefit from using TiR.

## Expenditures

	<b>The Rock 'n' Read Project MN State Grant</b>	<b>\$100,000</b>
	Expenditures August 29, 2016--December 31, 2016	
100	Oversite Administration	\$4,000
100	FastBridge Administration	\$10,400
100	Professional Development	\$10,900
100	Lab & Technology Coordinator	\$11,600
300	Mileage	\$1,620
400	Assessment Licensee Fee	\$300
400	Hardware Rental Fee	\$2,400
400	Lab Rental	\$2,000
400	Software License Fee	\$15,980
400	Technical set-up Fee	\$2,000
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$61,200</b>

## **Explanation of Expense Categories**

Break down of contract expenses for period August 29, 2016—December 31, 2016.

### Oversite Administration

Oversee and administrate the grant for each school. This includes drafting contracts and agreements involved in the program and allocating expenses based on each school.

### FastBridge Administration

Coordinate and review administration of the FastBridge online reading assessment of students, review results, and use student scores to establish the reading levels for students in TiR. The FastBridge was administered prior to starting TUNEin to READING (TiR) in the fall, and a second time between December 1<sup>st</sup> and January 15<sup>th</sup>.

### Professional Development

Train teachers and/or lab administrators to supervise students, review lab reports, edit student lists and oversee usage.

### Lab & Technology Coordinator

Review hardware and lab facility and internet access. Install necessary software links to access TiR software program. Coordinate software updates and resolve ongoing issues. Provide one week of full coverage in the lab when students start TiR. Provide regular monitoring of lab usage and ensure the lab has proper staff support. Coordinate additional training and communicate with each school regarding students' progress on TiR.

### Mileage

Reimbursement for mileage expense at current IRS rate for contractors and volunteers supporting implementation of program.

### Assessment Licensee Fee

Fee paid to FastBridge for use of FastBridge.org assessment licenses.

### Hardware Rental Fee

Rental fees for computers and hardware used to implement TiR.

### Lab Rental

Expense for rental of space for a computer lab.

### Software License Fee

Fee paid to Electronic Learning Products for TiR licenses.

### Technical set-up Fee

Fee paid to Electronic Learning Products to set up individual schools for secured internet access.

## **Final Report**

A final report will be submitted in summer 2017.