



We Teach Reading

## **District Reports 42 Percent Leap in Students *Exceeding Proficiency in Reading***

*Indiana third-through-sixth graders see literacy scores soar after eight months on MVRC*

**September 13, 2018, Tucson, AZ-----**MindPlay online reading and literacy publisher is pleased to announce that Washington Community Schools in Washington, Indiana, has dramatically moved the needle on literacy scores after just eight months on MindPlay Virtual Reading Coach (MVRC). With all district third-through-sixth graders using the program just shy of two semesters, schools saw “critical” readers decrease from 41 to 18 percent, and “exceeding” readers increase from 5 to 47 percent.

With a largely high-poverty student population of 2,600, the transitioning rural-urban district faces the challenges of an influx of English Language Learners (ELL) and other students who struggle with reading and literacy.

### **Unprepared for Middle School**

When he first arrived three years ago, Assistant Superintendent Kevin Frank says middle school teachers were concerned incoming students were not prepared for the higher level of work. And that lack of preparation was translating to other issues, such as behavior problems and absences. “We needed to invest in something to help kids learn to read,” says Frank.

After seeing MVRC’s results in the high school’s remedial classes, he opted to implement the program at the upper elementary levels in the fall of 2017.

### **ELL and Average Readers Show Most Dramatic Gains**

The district’s elementary schools saw huge gains in literacy. North Elementary reports their critical reader rate reduced from 29 percent to nine percent, with principal Jay Wildman pointing to some of the biggest gains among ELL students.

“The program meets students where they are, and for the first time, we have access to detailed data which makes it easy for teachers to implement the program and to keep track of each student’s progress,” he says.

North Elementary fourth-grade teacher Laurie Arnold agrees. “Besides bringing up non-readers, MVRC is sending our average readers over the top. The percentage of students exceeding in literacy skills has leapt from seven percent to 58 percent. It’s hitting like I’ve never seen.”

Many of the school’s students who began at a fourth or fifth grade reading level also moved up to 10<sup>th</sup> and even 11<sup>th</sup> grade proficiency.

Arnold says she appreciates how the program covers all the bases. “We had a pretty big lack of phonics, so it’s wonderful that MVRC covers phonics, fluency and everything else. Nothing I’d previously used has covered everything.”

### **Into the Future**

Washington Community Schools will be watching the performance of incoming seventh graders in the coming year, and plans to continue to use it with grades three through six in 2018-2019. Ideally, says Frank, the district will be able to expand the program at some point up through eighth grade for students with the greatest need.

“At Washington, we are embracing our increasing diversity and see it as a real benefit for our students and community,” says Frank. “We are dedicated to solving the new challenges we face, and are especially grateful that MVRC helps us give each student what they need.”

### **About MindPlay**

Founder Judith Bliss started the MindPlay Company more than 30 years ago to create a solution to the challenges of learning to read. After overcoming her own reading disabilities, her goal was to help struggling learners succeed in school and life. MindPlay’s mission is to develop, publish, and distribute cost-effective learning tools that support individual growth and skill development. The curriculum includes clear objectives, inviting graphics and technological innovations. [MindPlay educational software programs](#) appeal to multiple learning styles, identify individual student needs and differentiate instruction. [www.mindplay.com](http://www.mindplay.com).

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