

South Carolina Junior High Students Meet Target Growth in Reading with Imagine Sondag System

Background

In 2006, over one third of students in Dillon School District (Dillon SD) were reading at least three grade levels below their enrolled grade, with many 7th and 8th graders reading at a 1st–2nd grade level.

Dillon Schools began using the NWEA MAP Growth assessment, and the Winsor (now Imagine Learning) Sondag System reading intervention to inform and deliver instruction for its students receiving intervention/special services. The goal of the initiative was to build basic reading skills for students who were struggling readers to increase their proficiency in the classroom. Winsor Learning also provided a series of services to Dillon SD to support the use of the Sondag System in other schools. The services included initial training which introduces the multisensory language instruction methodology and instructional materials through modeling and practicum exercises. Winsor Learning provided additional support during the three-year period in the form of ongoing coaching. This coaching consisted of in-class or small group sessions and shoulder-to-shoulder modeling conducted between Dillon SD personnel and Winsor Learning implementation experts. During the sessions, the experts showed intervention teachers how to use assessment data to optimize instructional decisions and how to implement the decisions effectively with the Sondag System instructional materials.

Dillon School District, SC

School Demographics	
White (Non-Hispanic)	45%
Black or African American	46%
Hispanic or Latino	4%
Below Poverty	37%

Retrieved from the 2022–2023 National Center for Education Statistics Education Demographic and Geographic Estimates Database

Results

Before using Sondag System in the 2006–2007 school year, only 33% of the lowest performing students met their reading targets, and after implementing Sondag in the 2007–2008 school year, that number increased to 54%. After two years of implementation that number rose to 68% of these students meeting targeted growth (Figure 1). The average increase of grade levels in literacy was 3.1. Beyond academic achievement, discipline referrals decreased by 36% as a result of improved student engagement. Ultimately, after years of unsatisfactory performance, in 2008, J.V. Martin Junior High School made expected progress on state testing and finally came off the Palmetto Priority Schools list for the first time in history.

Figure 1. Percentage of Junior High Students Meeting Target Growth in Reading by School Year

