

Middle School Quality Initiative

The Middle School Quality Initiative (MSQI) is the New York City Department of Education's focused effort to expand the number of middle schools that prepare students for college and career success. The schools in Cohort One are from the bottom 25% of city schools in terms of student achievement, are persistently low performing, and serve high poverty areas.

Generation Ready partnered with the Department to support schools in implementing a comprehensive literacy framework designed to significantly increase the number of students entering high school reading at grade level. MSQI serves as the city's implementation plan to put recommendations from research into action in middle schools across the city. The initiative began in January 2012 with 24 schools and in September 2012 another 25 schools were added.

MSQI is a comprehensive approach to improving students' literacy outcomes through supporting schools in:

1. Implementing a strategic tiered assessment strategy
 - Track progress over time
 - Identify students for strategic secondary diagnostic assessment to target the appropriate intervention to support students
 - Monitor the impact of the interventions
2. Strengthening instructional expertise
 - Strengthen School Leaders' expertise, offering support to address the toughest challenges
 - Strengthen Tier One teaching by focusing on implementing the instructional shifts needed to align to the Common Core with a particular emphasis on explicit teaching of comprehension and small group instruction
 - Support content-area teachers with implementing discipline-specific literacy strategies
3. Strengthening teacher teams
 - Create a collaborative team structure within schools where multidisciplinary teams come together to analyze student work
4. Implementing strategic interventions
 - Look at school schedules to allow for a tiered intervention system that allows for small group guided reading and movement of students
 - Target the interventions to meet the needs identified in assessment
5. Providing both network-wide and school-based professional development to schools

Generation Ready's Role in MSQI

Generation Ready provides support to the DOE at two levels. Generation Ready's Chief Academic Officer, Sheena Hervey, has been contracted to work half time with the department as a thought partner in the role of Senior Literacy Adviser while Generation Ready educational consultants support implementation at the school-level.

Year 1 Involvement: January to June 2012

Hervey's role was to lead two areas of the initiative:

- Develop, plan, and implement a tiered assessment strategy. This involved working with the Department to design the strategy, working with schools to support the implementation, and collating the data across the cohorts of schools.
- Strengthen instructional expertise around reading across schools to ensure all schools have effective teaching in ELA, Social Studies, and Science classrooms. The majority of the schools had less than 20% of the students meeting State Standards. The professional development focused on:
 - Direct, explicit comprehension instruction in all ELA classrooms with teachers using common language to describe strategies
 - Small group, text-based, collaborative learning with students interacting with one another around a variety of texts
 - Ongoing formative assessment of students that include gathering information on students' use of comprehension strategies using a rubric

In her role, Sheena was responsible for designing and delivering two workshop series: *Young Adolescent Literacy* and *Discipline Literacy*.

Generation Ready Educational Consultants:

A team of Generation Ready educational consultants facilitated at the workshops series and followed up with in-school, job-embedded professional development. They worked in 13 of the original 18 funded schools.

Student progress is tracked through the Degrees of Reading Power (DRP) a nationally normed cloze comprehension assessment.

In the three months between the two data collection points the average growth in DRP was 2.5 times the national average over the same period. The greatest growth across all schools was in the group most at risk with an average increase of 3.0 between February and May. The middle schools where students in this group made the most significant improvement were X144 (an average of 9.5 DRP points), K096 (an average of 6 DRP points) and X131 (an average of 5.3 DRP points). All three schools had an Generation Ready consultant working with them.

Year Two Involvement:

The Department has 100 days of Sheena's time as a thought partner and to provide direct support to key schools to develop lab sites of effective practice.

Nine schools have purchased professional development support from their own funds. Educational consultants are working in a third of Cohort One schools.

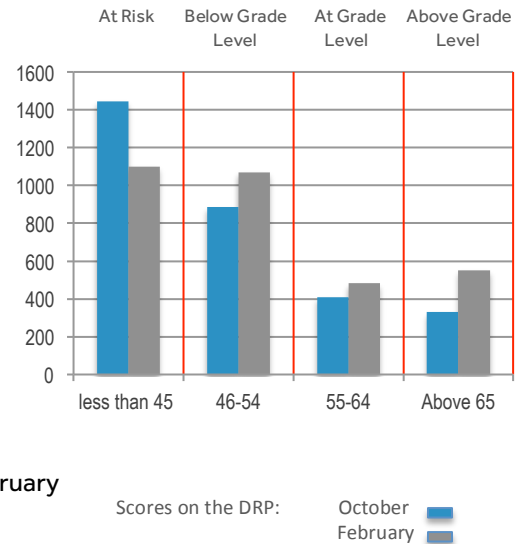
Results: MSQI

There are 7,891 students in the 49 schools that make up Cohorts One and Two. The results on this page are reference the 3,206 students in Cohort One from October 2012 - February 2013. Student progress is tracked through the Degrees of Reading Power (DRP), a nationally normed cloze comprehension assessment.

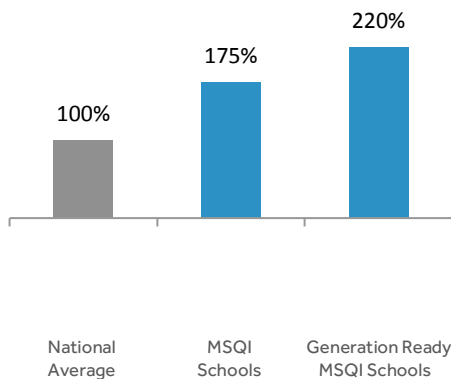
Findings So Far

- 1,444 students were identified as at risk in October; 344 students have improved to the point where they are no longer at risk
- 394 more students were reading at, or above, grade level in February

Graph Showing Numbers of Students in Each Quartile Group October - January 2013

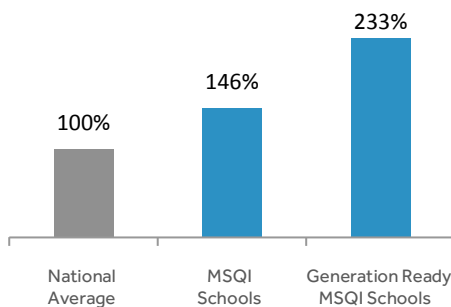


Average student growth in DRP 6th Grade October - February



- MSQI's average student growth for the 6th grade was 1.75 times the national average for six months
- MSQI schools that have an Generation Ready consultant had an average student growth more than double the national average for the six months from October to February

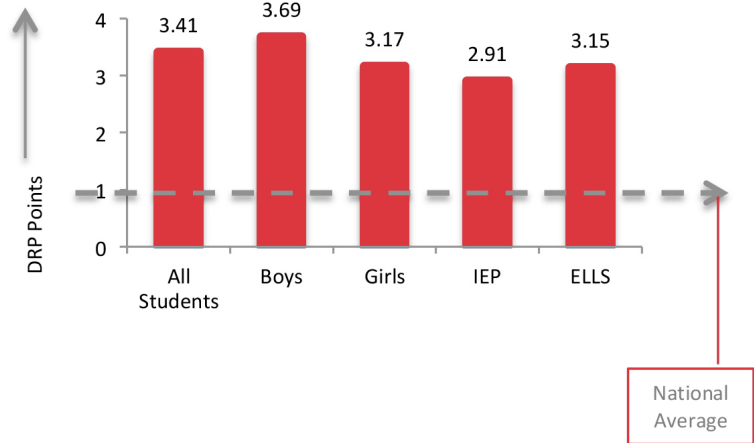
Average student growth in DRP 7th Grade October - February



- MSQI's average student growth for the 7th grade was 1.46 times the national average for six months
- MSQI schools that have an Generation Ready consultant had an average student growth more than double the national average for the six months from October to February

- The average growth for all students in MSQI schools was over two times the national average (for six months) for 6th and 7th grades
- The average growth for girls was higher than the average growth for boys
- In X371, X118, X384, K598, and K096 the average growth for boys was higher than for girls

Graph Showing Average Student DRP Growth in Subgroups Across all Students October – January 2013



Graph Showing Average 6th Grade Student DRP Growth by School in Cohort One: October 2012 – January 2013

