

SRA
Imagine It!
**TODAY'S
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***SRA Imagine It!* Ensures Reading Success for Tazewell County Students**

In the fall of 2010, only 49% of third graders in the Tazewell County Schools in Tazewell, Virginia were reading at or above grade level. Thanks to McGraw-Hill Education's *SRA Imagine It!* program, just two years later, 70% of third graders were reading at or above grade level and on their way to even greater success.

Prior to implementing the new program, consistency was a challenge. Each of the district's elementary schools, and sometimes even individual teachers, used different reading resources. For the large number of kids who moved among elementary schools throughout the year, reading achievement suffered even more.

"We really had no good grasp on what to do with students who were struggling," says Kristina Welch, Elementary Supervisor for the district. "They just kept falling further and further behind."

When the Elgin Foundation, a non-profit organization, took the initiative to support children's literacy in Southern Appalachian communities, Tazewell County Schools was selected to receive a grant for a new reading program. School administrators eagerly accepted the partnership. The foundation and the district agreed to implement *SRA Imagine It!* for K-3 students in the district's nine elementary schools.

SRA Imagine It! is an elementary reading, language arts and writing program based on decades of research validation. The program features strong assessment and differentiated instruction to provide materials and strategies for all reading levels.

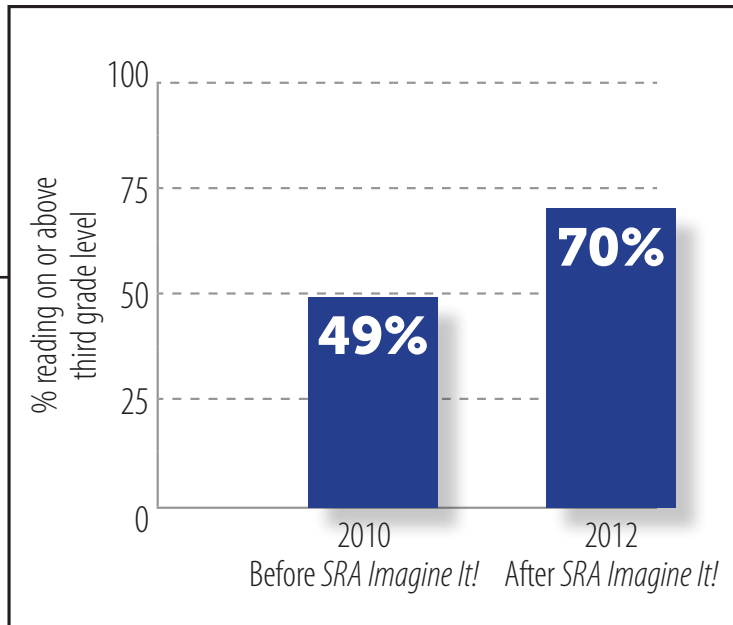


Consistency and Collaboration Foster Success

The Elgin Foundation and Tazewell County Schools established a six-year goal of having 90% of students in grade 3 reading at or above grade level.

While implementing a new program district-wide is a lot of work in the beginning, the district quickly embraced *SRA Imagine It!* and the teachers performed in an exemplary manner.

Richlands Elementary School principal Wendy Barringer says, "Everyone was involved, and the reading material was very



For more information

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easy to understand and work with from the beginning.”

The program immediately helps teachers feel more confident, adds Mrs. Welch.

Because teachers plan together more often and can now share students, an environment of collaboration, discussion and competence was created.

And, Mrs. Welch reports, the teachers love the *SRA Imagine It!* professional development. “We have reading coaches in the classrooms on a monthly basis. They check for stability of the program and offer extra assistance and support.”

The biggest success, Mrs. Welch says, is with the students who were struggling the most. “The program is structured to ensure that our students don’t fall behind,” she says. “And if they do, there is a net there to catch them.”

Clear and Convincing Evidence of Student Success

Mrs. Welch attributes the district’s success to the differentiated instruction at all levels, from helping

struggling readers to low-level readers, to those who excel and require more rigorous challenges. “Whether it is a special needs student or a Title I student, everyone speaks the same language about the same students.”

Mrs. Barringer agrees. “I can go into any classroom and see the same thing going on,” she says. “Grade level to grade level it’s spiraling. The same concentration is going on per grade level and it spirals up.”

Now in Year 3 of its six-year initiative, the district is experiencing encouraging results.

According to the Northwest Education Association (NWEA) Measure of Academic Progress (MAP) scores, the percentage of third graders in the district reading at grade level jumped from 49% at the beginning of the program in the fall of 2010 to 70% in the spring of 2012. This 21% increase represents great strides toward the district’s 90% goal.

“Now we can say ‘we have a reading program in the county,’” says Mrs. Welch. Both Mrs. Barringer and Mrs. Welch attribute the reading success of Tazewell County students to the love, commitment and dedication teachers have for the children they instruct.

About Tazewell County Schools

Tazewell County Public Schools is the largest employer in Tazewell County, serving nearly 6,400 students in nine Elementary, three Middle, three High Schools and as well as one career and technical center. The student population is 95% Caucasian, 3% African American, and 2% multicultural.