

**A University study confirms: Step By Step Learning®  
Significantly improves literacy skills  
of Kindergarten and First grade students**

A recent examination by Lehigh University's Center For Promoting Research to Practice shows that Step By Step Learning's comprehensive approach to literacy provides teachers with critical skills that have significantly increased student academic achievement. The results from this evaluation provide proof that the use of this comprehensive Response to Instruction and Intervention approach for improving literacy skills in Kindergarten and first grade.

This study reviewed students' scores across Kindergarten and first grade in the Hazleton (PA) Area School District, finding that Kindergarten students in the intervention group demonstrated significantly higher skills in phonological awareness, the identification of letters, and letter-sound correspondence. All of the skills that were dramatically improved are strong predictors of reading, writing and spelling success. In addition, the intervention group had significantly higher scores in letter naming fluency by the end of the school year. Among the first grade students, the Step By Step Learning® intervention increased letter-sound correspondence and phonological awareness scores dramatically.

These findings suggest that with one year of Step By Step Learning® intervention, students gained significantly higher skills in selected predictable literacy areas and had lower risk levels at the end of the school year. The Step By Step Learning® approach to literacy provided the Hazleton Area School District Kindergarten and first grade teachers with the skills they needed to dramatically and exponentially enhance their students' literacy.

The comprehensive approach to literacy employed by Step By Step Learning® (SBSL) included services to support teachers, specialists, and administrators through the school year. Administrators had attended all of the trainings and were actively involved in this approach to intervention so that they could sustain the process after Step By Step Learning had completed their work. School district staff received training in the administration of the various forms of assessment needed, allowing teachers to conduct assessments of students' literacy skills and provide progress monitoring through the school year. Step By Step Learning's professional development approach is comprehensive to allow for whole group teacher instruction, small group application assistance and one on one mentoring, modeling and coaching of every teacher through the application of this new knowledge. Parent training was initiated in the second year at Hazleton School District and not included in this first year study by Lehigh University.

**Hazleton Area School District – Step By Step Learning® results:**

The Kindergarten students who benefitted from the Step By Step Learning Response to Instruction and Intervention process increased academic achievement in Kindergarten the first year by 44% from the year prior. Growth of this nature has not been realized in Hazleton School District ever in the past years.

The first graders who received the SBSL methodology also experienced dramatic improvements, ending the school year at 61% benchmarked with only 14% still classified as intensive.

Hazleton's demographics consist of 64.5% Free and Reduced lunch; 12% Special Education and 11% English Language Learners. Hazleton has 10,650 students currently enrolled.

*The results of this University study confirm the use of Step By Step Learning's comprehensive RtI approach for improving literacy skills in Kindergarten and first grade.*

For more information, please contact Step By Step Learning® at 610-398-1231 or [info@sbsl.org](mailto:info@sbsl.org)