

Research Results

¡Arriba la Lectura! Illinois K–5 Impact and Implementation Study

Study Profile

District:

One Illinois district: Seven elementary schools

Grades:

K–5

Sample:

829 English learner students; 34 teachers

Evaluation Period:

2024–2025 school year

Study Design:

Retrospective, longitudinal single-group, pre-posttest

Study Conducted by:

Cobblestone Applied Research & Evaluation, Inc.

ESSA Evidence Level:

Tier 4: Demonstrates a Rationale

Outcome Measures:

- NWEA MAP Growth Reading
- HMH Spanish Growth Measure
- Teacher Survey
- Teacher Focus Group
- Administrator Interview

Executive Summary

Cobblestone Applied Research & Evaluation, Inc. (Cobblestone) conducted a retrospective longitudinal study to examine student literacy outcomes and educator implementation experiences associated with HMH *¡Arriba la Lectura!*™ during the 2024–2025 school year in one Illinois public school district. The study focused on English learner students in Dual Language classrooms and examined changes in reading performance from beginning-of-year (BOY) to end-of-year (EOY) in English and Spanish. Student outcomes were measured using

two district-administered assessments: NWEA® MAP® Growth™ Reading (Grades K–5) and the HMH Spanish Growth Measure® (Grades 2–5), providing complementary evidence of Dual Language literacy growth and progress toward grade-level expectations.

Students in Dual Language classrooms implementing *¡Arriba la Lectura!* demonstrated statistically significant growth in English and Spanish literacy from BOY to EOY. These parallel gains in English and Spanish

literacy are consistent with broader research on literacy development in Dual Language settings, including studies that have documented cross-linguistic transfer, although transfer processes were not directly measured in this study. This pattern was reflected across both measures, with Spanish gains evidenced by increased scaled scores and meaningful shifts in grade-level performance distributions, including fewer students below and more on or above grade level by EOY.

Educator survey and focus group findings provide instructional context for these outcomes, with teachers

reporting consistent program use, coherent pacing, and observed growth in students' Spanish literacy skills. Instructional components such as Read-Alouds, structured routines, and opportunities for discussion supported engagement with academic Spanish and development of oral language alongside reading. While the single-group design does not permit causal attribution, the findings provide locally relevant evidence aligned with state and district priorities for high-quality Dual Language programming and, in combination with a well-defined logic model, support classification of this study as meeting ESSA Tier 4 (Demonstrates a Rationale).

Key Findings

- Students in classrooms implementing *¡Arriba la Lectura!* demonstrated statistically significant growth in English and Spanish literacy from BOY to EOY. These parallel gains are consistent with research on cross-linguistic transfer in Dual Language settings.
- English learner students in Grades K–5 demonstrated statistically significant growth in English reading from BOY to EOY, as measured by MAP Growth Reading, indicating improved English literacy skills over the school year in Dual Language classrooms implementing *¡Arriba la Lectura!*
- Students in Grades 2–5 demonstrated statistically significant improvement in Spanish reading performance from BOY to EOY, as measured by the Spanish Growth Measure, reflecting growth in academic Spanish literacy aligned to grade-level expectations.
- Across Grades 2–5, Spanish Growth Measure results showed movement toward grade-level expectations over the school year, providing evidence that Dual Language instruction using *¡Arriba la Lectura!* supported growth in academic Spanish literacy skills, a foundational component of biliteracy development.
- Educators reported consistent implementation of *¡Arriba la Lectura!* in Spanish Language Arts, highlighting coherent pacing, linguistically authentic materials, and repeated exposure to key skills as supports for Spanish literacy development.
- Educators highlighted the role of program components such as Read-Alouds, Anchor Charts, and discussion-based routines in supporting engagement with academic Spanish and providing opportunities for oral language development alongside reading and writing.
- Teacher survey and focus group findings provided instructional context for student outcomes, with educators reporting growth in students' Spanish reading, writing, and decoding and emphasizing how the program's structure supported gradual skill development and academic language growth over time.

The Challenge

School districts across the United States serve increasingly linguistically diverse student populations, with Spanish-speaking students representing one of the fastest-growing groups in elementary schools. In many communities—including those with long-standing bilingual education and Dual Language programs—districts are tasked with supporting students’ literacy development in two languages while ensuring progress toward grade-level expectations across content areas.

Research consistently demonstrates that well-implemented Dual Language programs can support positive academic, linguistic, and long-term educational outcomes for multilingual learners. These programs are intentionally designed to promote biliteracy development, academic achievement, and cross-linguistic transfer by providing sustained, high-quality instruction in both the partner language and English. A growing body of research emphasizes the importance of maintaining the linguistic integrity of Dual Language instruction—ensuring that students receive rigorous, standards-aligned literacy instruction in Spanish rather than simplified or directly translated materials designed for monolingual English contexts.

Despite the documented benefits of Dual Language instruction, districts often face practical challenges in implementing and evaluating Spanish literacy programs. Compared to English literacy, fewer locally available data sources allow districts to examine whether students are progressing toward Spanish grade-level reading expectations over time. As a result, program evaluation and instructional decision-making may rely disproportionately on English-only outcomes, even in settings where Spanish literacy development is a central instructional goal.

This challenge is particularly salient in the elementary grades, where early literacy development establishes the foundation for long-term academic success in both languages. While growth in English reading

achievement remains an important indicator, it does not fully capture whether Dual Language programs are supporting students’ progress toward biliteracy and academic Spanish proficiency. Best practices in Dual Language education emphasize the use of language-appropriate assessments that align with grade-level expectations in each language of instruction and reflect the goals of the instructional model.

For districts serving large populations of Spanish-speaking English learners, this context creates a dual imperative. Districts must both (a) provide high-quality, research-aligned Spanish literacy instruction that supports additive bilingualism and leverages students’ linguistic strengths, and (b) examine student learning using evidence that directly reflects progress toward Spanish grade-level standards. Locally relevant research documenting student growth within authentic Dual Language settings is therefore essential for informing curriculum evaluation, strengthening instructional coherence, and supporting equitable literacy outcomes for multilingual learners.

The Solution

¡Arriba la Lectura!

To support high-quality Dual Language instruction and promote biliteracy development, districts increasingly seek Spanish Language Arts programs that are intentionally designed for bilingual contexts rather than adapted from English-only materials. Effective Dual Language solutions must provide rigorous, grade-level Spanish literacy instruction that supports reading, writing, and academic language development, while maintaining coherence with companion English literacy programs and broader district instructional priorities. Across diverse state and district contexts, research and practice in Dual Language education emphasize the importance of sustaining linguistic integrity, supporting additive bilingualism, and aligning instruction to grade-level standards in both languages.

¡Arriba la Lectura! is a research-based, comprehensive Spanish Language Arts program designed specifically for Dual Language and bilingual classrooms in Grades K–6. The program is grounded in principles of biliteracy development and is intended to support students’ Spanish literacy growth through explicit, systematic instruction aligned to Spanish language standards and grade-level expectations. Rather than functioning as a translated version of an English curriculum, *¡Arriba la Lectura!* provides linguistically authentic Spanish instruction that reflects the vocabulary, syntax, and discourse features of academic Spanish.

A defining feature of *¡Arriba la Lectura!* is its intentional alignment with Dual Language instructional goals, including sustained Spanish literacy development and cross-linguistic coherence. The program is designed to complement *HMH Into Reading*®, which serves as the district’s English Language Arts curriculum in monolingual classrooms. Together, the two programs support a coordinated approach to literacy across bilingual and monolingual settings, allowing districts to align instructional structures, skill progressions, and materials across languages while honoring the distinct instructional demands of each language of instruction.

Across grade levels, *¡Arriba la Lectura!* integrates explicit and systematic instruction in foundational literacy skills with opportunities for meaning making, knowledge building, and academic language development in Spanish. Instructional components are organized to support gradual skill development over time through repeated exposure, structured routines, and opportunities for application and practice. These design features are intended to strengthen Spanish literacy foundations while supporting students’ progress toward grade-level reading expectations within the Dual Language model.

In addition to instructional materials, *¡Arriba la Lectura!* includes assessments and data tools designed to help educators monitor students’ Spanish literacy development across the school year. When

implemented with coherence and supported by pacing guidance, the program is intended to support examination of both growth over time and students’ movement toward Spanish grade-level expectations—evidence that is critical for evaluating the effectiveness of Dual Language instruction. Within districts implementing Dual Language programs, *¡Arriba la Lectura!* offers a curriculum solution designed to support biliteracy attainment, instructional coherence, and equitable literacy outcomes for multilingual learners.

The Study

Study Design

The study was designed as a retrospective longitudinal study involving a single group of students and teachers from seven elementary schools within one specific school district in Illinois that implemented *¡Arriba la Lectura!* during the 2024–2025 school year. For students, the study examined changes in reading outcomes over the school year. For teachers, the study investigated implementation experiences associated with use of the program.

Purpose

The purpose of this research study is twofold: (a) to examine changes in English learner students’ literacy outcomes in English and Spanish associated with the use of *¡Arriba la Lectura!* and (b) to assess educators’ experiences implementing the program in Dual Language classrooms.

Research Questions

1. What changes in English and Spanish literacy outcomes were observed for English learner students over the 2024–2025 school year in classrooms implementing *¡Arriba la Lectura!* ?
2. What are educators’ experiences implementing *¡Arriba la Lectura!* ?

The District

One school district in Illinois agreed to participate in the study, involving all seven of their elementary schools. Based on publicly available data from the Illinois State Board of Education, the student population at the school district participating in the study was predominantly Hispanic (70.5%) in 2024, with a much higher representation compared to the state overall (28.1%). The second largest student racial group in the district's schools was White (19.9%), followed by smaller proportions of Asian (3.9%), American Indian (2.5%), and Black (1.9%) students.

The school district has an extensive multilingual learner population. To support these students in becoming biliterate, each grade level includes Dual Language classrooms (Spanish and English) that use *¡Arriba la Lectura!* for their Language Arts curriculum, as well as monolingual English classrooms that use *Into Reading* for their ELA curriculum. A separate study examining the impact of students' use of *Into Reading* in monolingual English classrooms in this district is also available.

Implementation

The 2024–2025 school year was the third consecutive year of the school district using the *¡Arriba la Lectura!* program. The program was piloted in 2022–2023 and fully implemented in 2023–2024 and 2024–2025. *¡Arriba la Lectura!* is the district's Spanish Language Arts curriculum in Dual Language classrooms, supporting Spanish-speaking students. To support language development in both Spanish and English, the balance between Spanish instruction—using the *¡Arriba la Lectura!* program—and English instruction—integrated through subjects like Science and Social Studies—shifts gradually across grade levels. In the early grades Spanish is emphasized, with Spanish comprising 80% of instructional time in Kindergarten, 70% in Grade 1, and 60% in Grade 2. By Grades 3–5, instruction is balanced evenly, with a 50/50 split between Spanish and English. The *¡Arriba la Lectura!* curriculum is used for Language Arts in Dual Language classrooms at all grade levels.

The *¡Arriba la Lectura!* materials and their instructional sequence were selected by the school district's Curriculum Directors in the Illinois elementary schools participating in the study. Throughout the school year, teachers followed a Pacing Guide created by the Directors, in collaboration with teacher representatives, outlining the specific materials and skills to focus on each week. This procedure was established by the district in 2023–2024 (i.e., the second year of using the program) to provide support for teachers and to promote student success. Specifically, district representatives reported the Pacing Guide aims to: (a) help teachers focus on the more essential components of the *¡Arriba la Lectura!* curriculum and reduce a sense of overwhelm; (b) maintain curricular consistency across the district's elementary schools and ensure all students receive similar instruction; and (c) align the curriculum of monolingual and Dual Language K–5 classrooms within the district.

Analytic Sample

Students

Given the focus of Research Question 1 on changes in multilingual learner students' reading outcomes in English and Spanish, the analytic sample was limited to English learner students (n = 829) enrolled in Dual Language classrooms implementing *¡Arriba la Lectura!* Non-English learner students (n = 101) enrolled in these classrooms were excluded from the analytic sample.

Student reading performance and demographic data were obtained from district administrative records. Cobblestone received data for a total of 1,049 Kindergarten through Grade 5 students enrolled in classrooms using *¡Arriba la Lectura!* during the 2024–2025 school year. Students were included in the analytic sample if they were classified as English learners and had valid BOY and EOY reading assessment data for at least one study measure.

Analyses focused on within-student changes in reading performance from BOY to EOY and were conducted using all available data for each assessment at each timepoint; therefore, sample sizes

vary by measure and grade level. NWEA MAP Growth Reading data were available for 800 students in Grades K–5, and Spanish Growth Measure data were available for 521 students in Grades 2–5, reflecting the grades in which each assessment was administered.

The final analytic sample was 52% male and 48% female; 75% of students qualified for free or reduced-price meals, and 13% had identified disability or special education status.

Measures

Reading Achievement

NWEA Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) Growth

The NWEA Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) Growth Reading assessment is a widely used, computer-adaptive interim assessment designed to measure students' reading achievement and growth over time. The assessment adjusts item difficulty in response to student answers, allowing for precise estimation of students' instructional reading levels across a range of achievement. In this study, MAP Growth Reading was administered at the beginning of the school year (BOY) and again at the end of the school year (EOY) for students in Grades K–5.

Student performance is reported using Rasch Unit (RIT) scores, an equal-interval scale that reflects reading achievement independent of grade level. RIT scores support comparisons of individual and group performance over time and allow for aggregation at classroom and grade levels. In this study, RIT scores were used to examine within-student growth from BOY to EOY, providing a longitudinal indicator of changes in reading achievement across the school year. Changes in mean RIT scores were interpreted as evidence of reading growth over time within classrooms implementing *¡Arriba la Lectura!*

HMH Spanish Growth Measure

Student outcomes were also examined using the HMH Spanish Growth Measure, a standardized assessment that provides vertically scaled scores aligned to grade-level reading expectations in Spanish. Analyses

incorporated both scaled scores and Grade Level Equivalence (GLE) categories, which translate scaled scores into interpretable performance levels indicating students' proximity to grade-level expectations. GLE categories are aligned to end-of-year grade-level expectations and provide a rigorous benchmark for interpreting students' proximity to Spanish grade-level performance.

For analytic clarity, the original five GLE bands were consolidated into three categories. All below-grade-level bands were combined into a single Below Grade Level category, while the On Grade Level and Above Grade Level bands were combined into an aggregated On or Above Grade Level category. Accordingly, results are reported as the proportion of students performing Below Grade Level compared to On or Above Grade Level.

GLE categories are derived from scaled scores and provide an interpretive framework for examining whether students are approaching, meeting, or exceeding grade-level reading standards. In this study, GLE outcomes were used to examine changes in the distribution of students across performance categories from BOY to EOY, providing a school-year growth perspective aligned with grade-level readiness. In the Results section, GLE categories are interpreted as indicators of students' proximity to Spanish grade-level expectations over the course of the school year.

Analysis

To examine changes in students' reading performance across the 2024–2025 school year, two sets of outcome data were analyzed: (a) MAP Growth Reading RIT scores (Grades K–5) and (b) Spanish Growth Measure outcomes (Grades 2–5), each collected at BOY and EOY.

For each grade level, changes in assessment performance over time were analyzed using repeated-measures models, controlling for available student demographic variables (sex, free or reduced-price lunch status, and special education status).

For MAP Growth Reading, models compared BOY and EOY RIT scores within grade. Similarly, for Spanish Growth Measure scaled scores, models examined within-student changes from BOY to EOY. Where required, appropriate corrections were applied to degrees of freedom consistent with the analytic approach.

In addition to continuous scores, categorical outcomes from the Spanish Growth Measure were analyzed. Distributions of students across GLE performance categories (Below Grade Level, On Grade Level, and Above Grade Level) were examined across the school year. These categories correspond to students' proximity to Spanish grade-level expectations. Chi-square goodness-of-fit tests were conducted to assess whether the distribution of students across categories differed significantly from BOY to EOY for each grade level and for Grades 2–5 overall.

Results

The following sections present findings from the outcome and implementation analyses conducted as part of this study. Results are organized by research question and include (a) student-level reading outcomes examining changes from BOY to EOY for students in classrooms implementing *¡Arriba la Lectura!* and (b) educator-reported implementation experiences that provide instructional context for the observed student outcomes. Together, these findings offer a comprehensive picture of both student reading growth over the school year and how the program was implemented in authentic classroom settings across the district.

Student Literacy Outcomes

To address Research Question 1, this section presents analyses of student reading outcomes examining changes in performance from BOY to EOY for students in Grades K–5 using *¡Arriba la Lectura!* Results are reported by grade level and include findings from the NWEA MAP Growth Reading assessment (Grades K–5) and the Spanish Growth Measure assessment (Grades 2–5), providing complementary indicators of students'

English and Spanish literacy development within a Dual Language context. See Appendix for additional details.

Kindergarten: Impact on Achievement:

NWEA MAP Growth Reading Performance

Controlling for demographic variables, Kindergarten students' EOY MAP Growth Reading scores ($M = 139.55$; $SD = 8.91$) were significantly higher than their BOY MAP scores ($M = 126.33$; $SD = 6.71$), $F(1,122) = 93.63$, $p < .001$, with a large effect size ($\eta^2p = .43$) (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Kindergarten Mean MAP Growth Reading RIT Scores, Beginning to End of Year, 2024–2025 SY

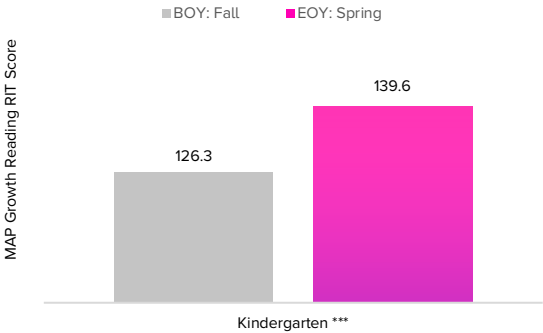


Figure note: $n = 126$, *** Significance at $p < .001$

These findings suggest that Kindergarten English learner students in Dual Language classrooms implementing *¡Arriba la Lectura!* during the 2024–2025 school year demonstrated substantial improvement in English literacy skills within a Dual Language context, where instruction is designed to support literacy development across both English and Spanish.

Grade 1: Impact on Achievement

NWEA MAP Growth Reading Performance

Controlling for demographic variables, Grade 1 students' EOY MAP Growth Reading scores ($M = 153.90$; $SD = 14.09$) were significantly higher than their BOY MAP scores ($M = 140.01$; $SD = 11.45$), $F(1,141) = 68.56$, $p < .001$, with a large effect size ($\eta^2p = .33$) (see Figure 2).

Figure 2. Beginning to End of Year Grade 1 Mean MAP Growth Reading RIT Scores, Beginning to End of Year, 2024–2025 SY

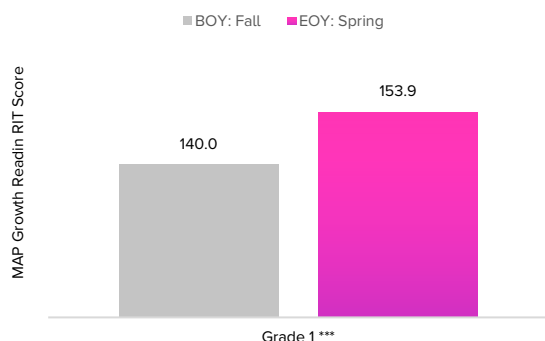


Figure note: $n = 145$ *** Significance at $p < .001$

These findings suggest that Grade 1 English learner students in Dual Language classrooms implementing *¡Arriba la Lectura!* demonstrated substantial improvement in English literacy skills within a Dual Language context, where instruction is designed to support literacy development across both English and Spanish.

Grade 2: Impact on Achievement

NWEA MAP Growth Reading Performance

Controlling for demographic variables, Grade 2 students' EOY MAP Growth Reading scores ($M = 171.48$; $SD = 14.26$) were significantly higher than their BOY MAP scores ($M = 158.66$; $SD = 12.06$), $F(1,134) = 87.71$, $p < .001$, with a large effect size ($\eta^2 p = .40$) (see Figure 3).

Figure 3. Grade 2 Mean MAP Growth Reading RIT Scores, Beginning to End of Year, 2024–2025 SY

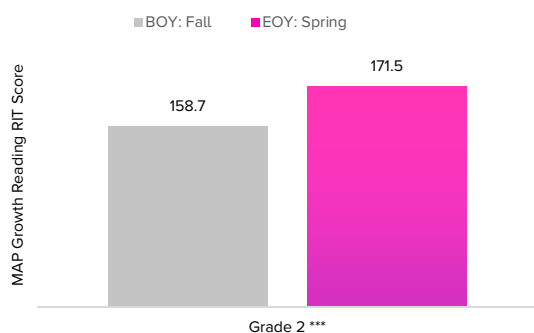


Figure note: $n = 138$. *** Significance at $p < .001$

HMH Spanish Growth Measure Performance

Controlling for demographic variables, there was a significant effect of time of measurement on Grade 2 students' Spanish Growth Measure scaled scores, $F(1,131) = 41.98$, $p < .001$, with a large effect size ($\eta^2 p = .24$). Pairwise comparisons indicated significant increases between students' HMH Spanish Growth Measure BOY scaled scores ($M = 250.19$; $SD = 15.16$) and EOY scaled scores ($M = 263.74$; $SD = 16.26$), reflecting an average gain of 13.55 points across the school year (see Figure 4).

Figure 4. Grade 2 Mean Spanish Growth Measure Scaled Scores, Beginning to End of Year, 2024–2025 SY

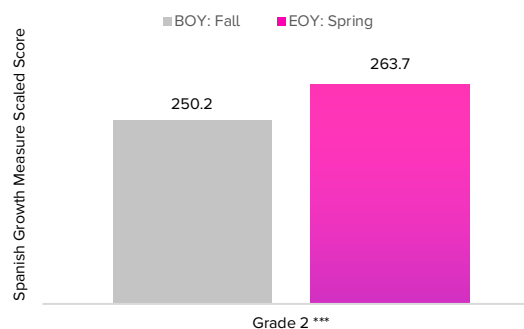


Figure note: $n = 135$, *** Significance at $p < .001$

In addition to scaled score gains, the distribution of Grade 2 students' Spanish Grade Level Equivalence (GLE) performance categories shifted significantly from BOY to EOY, $\chi^2(2) = 81.40$, $p < .001$, with a large effect size (Cohen's $w = 0.78$). By end of year, a smaller proportion of students were performing below Spanish grade-level expectations, while the proportion performing on or above grade level more than doubled.

Interpretation of Spanish Literacy Outcomes

Taken together, these findings indicate that Grade 2 English learner students in Dual Language classrooms implementing *¡Arriba la Lectura!* demonstrated meaningful improvement in Spanish reading performance over the course of the school year. As expected in early Dual Language settings, many students began the year earlier in their progression toward Spanish grade-level expectations; however,

increases in scaled scores and substantial movement across performance categories indicate measurable progress toward Spanish grade-level reading benchmarks by EOY. These results suggest strengthening of academic Spanish literacy skills during the instructional year. Together with observed gains in English reading performance, these findings are consistent with research on literacy development within Dual Language settings.

Grade 3: Impact on Achievement

NWEA MAP Growth Reading Performance

Controlling for demographic variables, Grade 3 students’ EOY MAP Growth Reading scores ($M = 180.66$; $SD = 17.13$) were significantly higher than their BOY MAP scores ($M = 170.87$; $SD = 14.43$), $F(1,140) = 39.32$, $p < .001$, with a large effect size ($\eta^2p = .22$) (see Figure 5).

Figure 5. Grade 3 Mean MAP Growth Reading RIT Scores, Beginning to End of Year, 2024–2025 SY

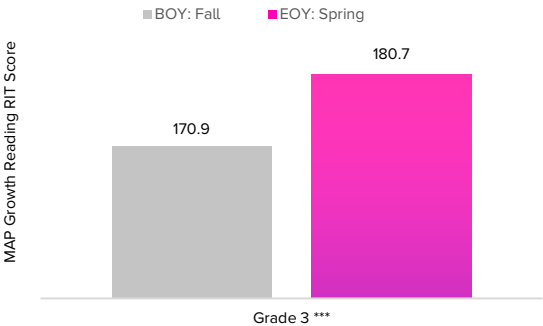


Figure note: $n = 144$, *** Significance at $p < .001$

HMH Spanish Growth Measure Performance

Controlling for demographic variables, there was a significant effect of time of measurement on Grade 3 students’ Spanish Growth Measure scaled scores, $F(1,128) = 23.32$, $p < .001$, with a large effect size ($\eta^2p = .15$). Pairwise comparisons indicated significant increases between students’ BOY scaled scores ($M = 336.34$; $SD = 17.46$) and EOY scaled scores ($M = 351.14$; $SD = 19.26$), reflecting an average gain of 14.8 points across the school year (see Figure 6).

Figure 6. Grade 3 Mean Spanish Growth Measure Scaled Scores, Beginning to End of Year, 2024–2025 SY

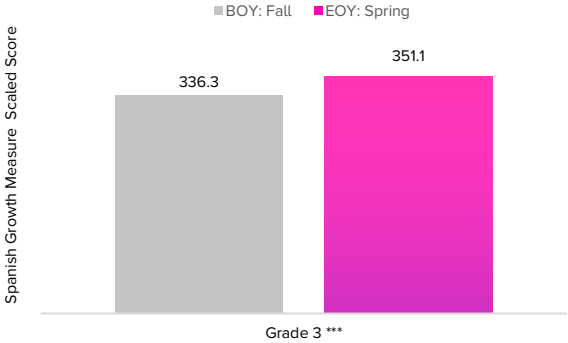


Figure note: $n = 132$ *** Significance at $p < .001$

For the analysis of Grade 3 students’ distribution across Spanish Grade Level Equivalence (GLE) performance categories, the “On Grade Level” and “Above Grade Level” bands were combined at BOY due to a frequency of zero in the “Above Grade Level”. The distribution of Grade 3 students across Spanish GLE categories differed significantly from BOY to EOY, $\chi^2(2) = 154.54$, $p < .001$, with a large effect size (Cohen’s $w = 01.08$). From BOY to EOY, the proportion of students performing below Spanish grade-level expectations decreased, while the proportion of students performing on or above grade level increased fourfold.

Interpretation of Spanish Literacy Outcomes

Taken together, the Grade 3 findings indicate continued growth in Spanish literacy for students in Dual Language classrooms implementing *¡Arriba la Lectura!* Students demonstrated statistically significant gains in Spanish Growth Measure scaled scores, along with meaningful shifts in grade-level performance distributions from BOY to EOY. Although relatively few students met end-of-year benchmarks at BOY, the proportion of students performing on or above grade level increased substantially by EOY. These results reflect steady progress toward Spanish literacy benchmarks and suggest continued strengthening of academic Spanish reading skills over the course of the instructional year.

Grade 4: Impact on Achievement

NWEA MAP Growth Reading Performance

Controlling for demographic variables, Grade 4 students' EOY MAP Growth Reading scores ($M = 189.16$; $SD = 17.57$) were significantly greater than their BOY MAP scores ($M = 181.37$; $SD = 14.82$), $F(1,146) = 23.18$, $p < .001$, with a large effect size ($\eta^2 p = .14$) (see Figure 7).

Figure 7. Grade 4 Mean MAP Growth Scores, Beginning to End of Year, 2024–2025 SY

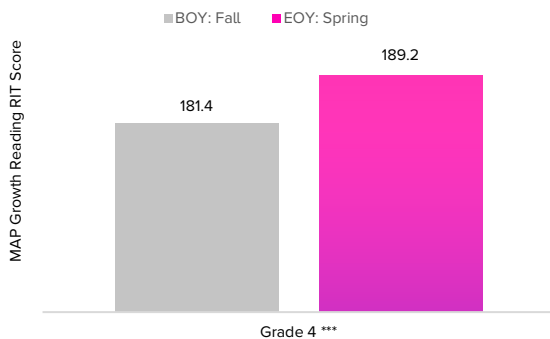


Figure note: $n = 150$, *** Significance at $p < .001$

HMH Spanish Growth Measure Performance

Controlling for demographic variables, there was a significant effect of time of measurement on Grade 4 students' Spanish Growth Measure scaled scores, $F(1,144) = 16.11$, $p < .001$, with a moderate-large effect size ($\eta^2 p = .10$). Pairwise comparisons showed significant increases between students' BOY scaled scores ($M = 429.16$; $SD = 17.08$) and EOY scaled scores ($M = 440.08$; $SD = 18.85$), reflecting an average gain of 10.92 points across the school year (see Figure 8).

For the analysis of Grade 4 students' distribution across Spanish Grade Level Equivalence (GLE) performance categories, the "On Grade Level" and "Above Grade Level" bands were combined at BOY due to a frequency of zero for "Above Grade Level". The distribution of Grade 4 students across the Spanish GLE categories differed significantly from BOY to EOY, $\chi^2(2) = 46.57$, $p < .001$, with a large effect size (Cohen's $w = 0.56$). From BOY to EOY, the proportion of students performing below Spanish grade-level expectations decreased,

while the proportion performing on or above grade level quadrupled.

Figure 8. Grade 4 Mean Spanish Growth Measure Scaled Scores, Beginning- to End-of Year, 2024–2025 SY

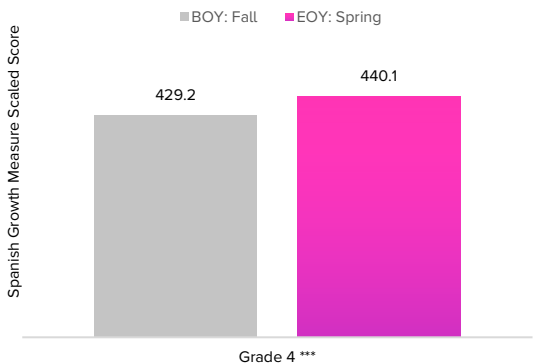


Figure note: $n = 148$, *** Significance at $p < .001$

Interpretation of Spanish Literacy Outcomes

Taken together, these findings indicate that Grade 4 students in Dual Language classrooms implementing *¡Arriba la Lectura!* demonstrated statistically significant improvement in Spanish reading performance over the course of the school year. Gains in scaled scores were accompanied by meaningful movement across grade-level performance categories from BOY to EOY. As expected, many students began the year earlier in their progression toward end-of-year benchmarks; however, increasing proportions met or exceeded grade-level expectations by EOY. These results suggest continued development of academic Spanish literacy as instructional demands increased in the upper elementary grades.

Grade 5: Impact on Achievement

NWEA MAP Growth Reading Performance

Controlling for demographic variables, Grade 5 students' EOY MAP Growth Reading scores ($M = 191.29$; $SD = 15.49$) were significantly greater than their BOY MAP scores ($M = 182.14$; $SD = 15.13$), $F(1,93) = 16.47$, $p < .001$, with a large effect size ($\eta^2 p = .15$) (see Figure 9).

Figure 9. Grade 5 Mean MAP Growth Reading RIT Scores, Beginning to End of Year, 2024–2025

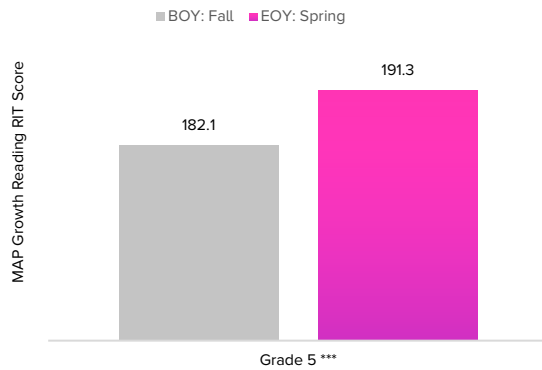


Figure note: $n = 97$, *** Significance at $p < .001$

HMH Spanish Growth Measure Performance

Controlling for demographic variables, there was a significant effect of time of measurement on Grade 5 students' Spanish Growth Measure scaled scores, $F(1,102) = 5.29$, $p = .023$, with a medium effect size ($\eta^2 p = .05$). Pairwise comparisons indicated a significant increase between students' BOY scaled scores ($M = 521.97$; $SD = 20.66$) and EOY scaled scores ($M = 531.37$; $SD = 22.33$), reflecting an average gain of 9.40 points across the school year (see Figure 10).

Figure 10. Grade 5 Mean Spanish Growth Measure Scaled Scores, Beginning to End of Year, 2024–2025 SY

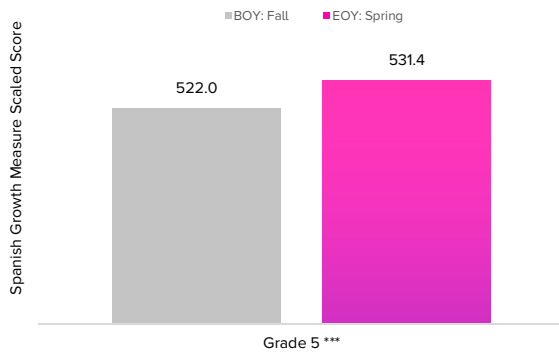


Figure note: $n = 106$, *** Significance at $p < .001$

For the analysis of Grade 5 students' distribution across the Spanish Grade Level Equivalence (GLE) performance categories, the "On Grade Level" and "Above Grade Level" categories were combined at BOY due to a frequency of zero for "Above Grade Level". The distribution of Grade 5 students across the

Spanish GLE categories differed significantly from BOY to EOY, $\chi^2(2) = 13.43$, $p < .001$, with a medium effect size (Cohen's $w = 0.36$). From BOY to EOY, the proportion of students performing below Spanish grade-level expectations decreased, while the proportion performing on or above grade level more than doubled.

Interpretation of Spanish Literacy Outcomes

Taken together, findings for Grade 5 students in Dual Language classrooms implementing *¡Arriba la Lectura!* indicate sustained growth in Spanish reading performance over the course of the school year. Students demonstrated statistically significant gains in Spanish Growth Measure scaled scores, along with continued movement across Spanish grade-level performance categories from BOY to EOY. As expected, given the rigor and end-of-year alignment of Spanish grade-level benchmarks, many students began the year earlier in their progression toward grade-level expectations; however, increases in the proportion of students performing on or above grade level by EOY indicate meaningful progress toward Spanish literacy benchmarks. These results suggest that students were continuing to strengthen academic Spanish reading skills as part of ongoing Dual Language instruction in the upper elementary grades. Together with observed gains in English reading performance, these findings are consistent with broader research describing parallel growth in English and Spanish.

Grades 2–5: Impact on Achievement

HMH Spanish Growth Measure Performance

The distribution of students in Grades 2–5 across Spanish Grade Level Equivalence (GLE) performance categories differed significantly from BOY to EOY, $\chi^2(2) = 230.15$, $p < .001$, with a large effect size (Cohen's $w = 0.66$). From BOY to EOY, the proportion performing on or above grade level nearly tripled.

Progress Toward Spanish-Grade Level Reading Expectations

When examined collectively, Spanish Growth Measure results for students in Grades 2–5 indicate clear progress toward Spanish grade-level reading expectations across the school year. From BOY to EOY, the overall distribution shifted significantly, with fewer students performing below grade level and substantially more performing at or above grade level. These shifts, alongside gains in scaled scores, indicate sustained advancement toward Spanish literacy benchmarks and, in combination with parallel gains in English reading, are consistent with broader patterns of literacy growth observed in Dual Language programs.

As expected, given that Spanish grade-level benchmarks are aligned to end-of-year expectations, many students began the school year earlier in their progression toward grade-level performance. However, the observed movement across performance categories indicates measurable progress over time. Collectively, these findings suggest that students in Dual Language classrooms implementing *¡Arriba la Lectura!* demonstrated strengthened academic Spanish reading skills across multiple grade levels within the Dual Language model. Instructional components such as Read-Alouds and structured discussion routines further supported student engagement with academic Spanish and provided opportunities for oral language development alongside reading growth.

Educator Experience and Implementation

Educators

To gather educators' experiences implementing *¡Arriba la Lectura!* in K–5 classrooms, a total of 34 teachers completed a survey at the end of the 2024–2025 academic year, evaluating the extent to which they used the various program components, their satisfaction with the program resources, and their

assessment of student engagement. In addition, seven of these teachers participated in a focus group interview to provide additional feedback.

Responding teachers represented all seven schools participating in the study, with three schools representing more than half of the respondents. The distribution of grade levels taught during 2024–2025 was fairly equal. Over half (55%) of the teachers reported having 1–10 years of experience teaching Grades K–5, and approximately a third (30%) reported having 11–20 years of experience teaching at these grade levels. Most (94%) reported having 1–10 years of experience at their current grade level. Most (86%) held a master's degree.

Implementation Context and Instructional Time

The implementation context described below provides a foundation for understanding teachers' observed impacts on students' Spanish literacy development within Dual Language instruction.

The majority of teachers (67%) reported that 2024–2025 was either their second- or third-year teaching with *¡Arriba la Lectura!*, although 18% of the teachers were in their first year of implementation.

Over half of the teachers (56%) reported that students spent 61 to 90 minutes a day on *¡Arriba la Lectura!* activities, including instruction, practice, and assessment activities, and nearly a third (29%) reported that students spent 31 to 60 minutes on *¡Arriba la Lectura!* activities, with an additional 15% reporting 91 to 120 minutes of use per day. In addition, over half (56%) of the teachers reported spending 16 to 30 minutes a day on *¡Arriba la Lectura!* writing activities with an additional 24% of teachers reporting 31 to 60 minutes of daily *¡Arriba la Lectura!* writing activities.

Nearly all surveyed teachers (94%) reported that their students used the HMH online platform, *HMH Ed™*. Several teachers shared appreciation for the online student-facing platform which allowed students to view their assessment scores and track their

progress. For example, one teacher noted *“I like the student-facing platform where they can see their scores on their quizzes and their Growth Measure... that’s very motivating to them.”* In addition, all surveyed teachers reported using the teacher-facing version of *HMH Ed*, the HMH online platform. Most teachers reported using the platform for multiple purposes, including to review student data and reports (100%), find resources (97%), administer assessments (82%), and teach lessons (74%).

Educator survey and focus group findings identified both strengths of program implementation and areas for continued refinement. While teachers frequently highlighted program resources, instructional routines, and supports for Spanish literacy development, they also noted challenges related to assessment rigor, the complexity of some vocabulary and texts, and the need for additional authentic Spanish literature and implementation supports. These perspectives provide important context for understanding program use within Dual Language classrooms.

Educator-Reported Spanish Literacy Development

Overall, teachers reported observing substantial improvement in students’ Spanish literacy development after implementing *¡Arriba la Lectura!* as part of Spanish Language Arts instruction in Dual Language classrooms. Educators described growth in students’ Spanish reading, writing, and decoding skills, as well as increased ability to engage with grade-level Spanish texts and academic language over the course of the instructional year.

Teacher responses reflected varied perceptions of vocabulary instruction, with some educators describing it as robust and supportive, citing structured routines and repeated exposure to academic Spanish, while others noted challenges related to the complexity, pace, or consistency of vocabulary development, particularly when students were still developing the ability to independently apply new terms in reading, writing, and oral language contexts. Rather than representing conflicting evidence, this

range of perspectives highlights the inherent complexity of academic vocabulary development in biliteracy contexts, where students build meaning, usage, and language knowledge across two languages.

In this context, the level of challenge described by some educators may also reflect the rigor of grade-level academic language demands embedded in the program, as well as students’ active engagement in acquiring and applying sophisticated vocabulary in Spanish. Educators’ observations of repeated exposure, cumulative learning, and opportunities to revisit key concepts across modules align with a spiraled instructional approach, in which vocabulary knowledge is reinforced and deepened over time. Together, these findings suggest that vocabulary instruction functioned as both a productive area of challenge and a key mechanism for supporting the development of academic Spanish, an important component of biliteracy development.

In addition, teachers described how students increasingly applied academic Spanish in new contexts. As one Grade 5 teacher noted, *“Something that students really enjoyed was using vocabulary words in a new context, reviewing academic vocabulary and using it in new situations.”* These observations suggest that students were engaging with content and applying and extending academic vocabulary through discussion and use, supporting both comprehension and the development of oral language and academic expression in Spanish.

Teachers emphasized that the program’s repeated exposure to key skills and structured instructional routines supported students in building and applying Spanish literacy knowledge over time, resulting in deeper understanding and transfer within Spanish literacy development. For instance, one teacher shared: *“I really like to look at the growth with the skills that are being targeted. The way the program works, if they don’t master the concept the first time... they will have access to that later on in another module, which is great because then you’re forming*

that connection... and by the end of the year, they're able to make these connections."

Teachers highlighted how the cumulative design of instruction allowed students to make connections across lessons and progressively develop more sophisticated literacy skills in Spanish. By the end of the year, students were able to build on earlier learning experiences to read, write, and decode increasingly complex Spanish text. Teachers also described how this progression was supported through opportunities for reflection and discussion, which encouraged students to revisit prior ideas, reconsider their thinking, and articulate evolving perspectives over time. As one teacher noted, *"Seeing how their mindset changes throughout the module is very surprising and engaging for them to realize, like, 'I still have the same opinion,' or 'my opinion has shifted.'"*

Together, these patterns—connecting prior learning, revisiting and refining ideas, and applying knowledge over time—are consistent with research describing the development of metalinguistic awareness, as students build a more flexible understanding of language and literacy concepts within Spanish. These findings suggest that students were actively engaging with content while deepening their ability to think about and use language in increasingly sophisticated ways.

In addition, one teacher reported that the ample practice embedded in the curriculum was key to students' skill development and mastery, especially among those struggling. It was also emphasized that the curriculum's alignment with age-appropriate language development standards was highly beneficial. One teacher explained: *"Before we had a curriculum... I was trying to meet the needs of the students and then looking at the standards, but I wasn't always getting to every skill. Now, because it is embedded within the instruction, I am going to target it, I am going to cover it, and it's going to align with the standards."*

Finally, several teachers noted that implementation of *¡Arriba la Lectura!* becomes increasingly easier and

more effective over time. One teacher explained: *"I feel that every year I have learned something new about the program that I didn't know before. Therefore, I feel that every year my teaching gets better as well."*

These teacher-reported outcomes along with the student achievement findings, suggest that instruction supported the development of academic Spanish literacy skills and English literacy skills, consistent with research on biliteracy trajectories.

Educator Feedback: Best Aspects

Teachers reported various best aspects of the *¡Arriba la Lectura!* program, particularly emphasizing supports for Spanish literacy development within Dual Language classrooms. Several educators highlighted the availability of linguistically authentic instructional materials and the extent to which these resources supported students in engaging with Spanish text and academic language in ways that reflect the structure and usage of Spanish as a language of instruction. For example, one teacher noted: *"I truly appreciate all the resources and teacher support, [such as the] Teacher Guide with prompts, the games for students to review, etc."*

Others emphasized the value of tools that allowed students to monitor their learning in Spanish, including the online Student-Facing Platform, which supported engagement with assessment data and progress tracking in Spanish literacy development.

Kindergarten teachers, in particular, highlighted how the program's foundational components supported early Spanish literacy development and prepared students for continued learning across grade levels. One teacher described: *"¡Arriba la Lectura! built that foundation so well, enough that I could say they are ready to move on to first grade and have that foundation of phonemic awareness and sounds."* Similarly, another Kindergarten teacher observed: *"I've noticed a lot of growth with my students. They come in not knowing how to read or even identify any of the letters and by the end of the year, they're able to read and write and even decode very difficult words."*

In addition, one teacher noted *“the high-quality and diverse books offered, [which] made reading genuinely enjoyable and fostered increased reading motivation. The program’s engaging activities were key to making the learning process interactive and fun, ultimately contributing to improved reading comprehension. Furthermore, the clear and accessible materials ensured that participation was seamless, and the supportive environment created a positive atmosphere that truly enhanced my overall experience with reading.”*

Taken together, these teacher-reported outcomes complement the student achievement findings and provide instructional context for observed literacy growth. These findings, alongside observed gains in English reading performance, are consistent with research on coordinated literacy development across languages and support the broader goals of biliteracy development.

Educator Feedback: Most Useful Components

Teachers cited multiple *¡Arriba la Lectura!* instructional components as useful for supporting Spanish literacy instruction in Dual Language classrooms. Several educators reported frequently using Anchor Charts, including the smaller versions used during Tabletop Minilessons, as tools for reinforcing Spanish language concepts, vocabulary, and comprehension strategies in ways that align with authentic Spanish usage. For example, one teacher shared: *“I feel as though sometimes those Tabletop Anchor Charts explain [the materials] in a way better than I would have come up with myself.”*

Related, teachers identified the Tabletop Minilessons as valuable for supporting Spanish literacy development through visually supported instruction, structured discussion, and opportunities to connect small-group and whole-group learning in Spanish Language Arts. These components were described as helping students make connections across lessons and apply literacy skills within linguistically meaningful contexts rather than through isolated skill practice.

In addition, teachers reported that the Module [at a Glance] (module overview) supported both instructional planning and student readiness by providing a clear structure for upcoming Spanish language content, including vocabulary, comprehension, and language development goals. Further, the Digital Platform was cited as a useful tool for supporting communication, assignment access, and monitoring student progress. As one teacher explained: *“The digital component [is highly useful]... [for] monitoring and sending students their documents, and [for] teachers to be able to communicate.”*

Other components identified as useful included the Read-Alouds, which teachers described as supporting comprehension and exposure to extended Spanish text, and the Answer Key, which supported instructional planning and content understanding, particularly in relation to Spanish literacy assessments.

Collectively, these teacher-reported instructional supports highlight how program components function together to reinforce Spanish literacy development and academic language growth through linguistically authentic instruction within Dual Language classrooms.

Across teacher responses, there was a consistent emphasis on the importance of linguistically authentic Spanish instructional materials—resources that reflect the vocabulary, syntax, and discourse structures of academic Spanish rather than direct translations from English. This emphasis reinforces the role of language-specific, standards-aligned instruction in supporting Spanish literacy development as well as the broader goal of biliteracy, where students build proficiency across distinct but connected language systems within Dual Language instruction.

Conclusion

This study examined student literacy outcomes and educator implementation experiences associated with *¡Arriba la Lectura!* during the 2024–2025 school year in one Illinois public school district. Using a retrospective longitudinal, single-group design, the

study analyzed reading performance for students in Dual Language classrooms from BOY to EOY, alongside survey and focus group data describing program implementation in authentic instructional settings.

Results indicate statistically significant growth in literacy across both English and Spanish. Evidence from NWEA MAP Growth Reading showed significant improvement in English reading for students in Grades K–5, while results from the HMH Spanish Growth Measure for Grades 2–5 demonstrated significant gains in scaled scores and shifts in grade-level performance distributions. While not directly measured in this study, these parallel gains are consistent with broader research on literacy development in Dual Language settings, including studies that have documented cross-linguistic transfer, as one feature of biliteracy development.

Findings from educator data provide important instructional context. Teachers reported consistent use of *¡Arriba la Lectura!* in Dual Language classrooms and emphasized coherent pacing, repeated exposure to key skills, and linguistically authentic materials reflecting the structure and usage of Spanish. Educators described observable growth in students' Spanish literacy development, including reading, writing, and decoding, and highlighted how the program supported gradual development of academic language over time.

Variation in teacher perceptions of vocabulary instruction reflects both the rigor of grade-level academic language expectations and the complexity of biliteracy development, as students build meaning, usage, and cross-linguistic connections through vocabulary use in new contexts and repeated exposure. Instructional components such as Read-Alouds and structured discussion routines supported engagement with extended Spanish text, contributing to comprehension and oral language development.

While the single-group design does not permit causal attribution and findings reflect one district context, the observed patterns of growth align with research on effective Dual Language programs. This study contributes locally grounded evidence examining Spanish literacy development—an essential component of evaluating progress toward biliteracy and grade-level readiness.

Overall, the findings add to the evidence supporting *¡Arriba la Lectura!* as a comprehensive Spanish Language Arts solution for Dual Language instruction. In combination with a well-defined logic model, the results support classification as meeting ESSA Tier 4 (Demonstrates a Rationale). The findings suggest that, when implemented as part of coherent, year-long Dual Language instruction, the program can support literacy development in both Spanish and English, contributing to the goals of biliteracy development and grade-level reading achievement.

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Appendix

Table 1. ¡Arriba la Lectura! K–5 Student Assessment Performance, 2024–2025 Beginning-of-Year to End-of-Year Analyses

Grade Level	Assessment	<i>n</i>	BOY Performance	EOY Performance	Test Statistic	<i>p</i> Value	Effect Size
Kindergarten	NWEA MAP Growth Reading RIT Score	126	<i>M</i> = 126.33 (<i>SD</i> = 6.71)	<i>M</i> = 139.55 (<i>SD</i> = 8.91)	<i>F</i> (1,122) = 93.63	<.001	η^2p = .43 (large)
Grade 1	NWEA MAP Growth Reading RIT Score	145	<i>M</i> = 140.01 (<i>SD</i> = 11.45)	<i>M</i> = 153.90 (<i>SD</i> = 14.09)	<i>F</i> (1,141) = 68.56	<.001	η^2p = .33 (large)
Grade 2	NWEA MAP Growth Reading RIT Score	138	<i>M</i> = 158.66 (<i>SD</i> = 12.06)	<i>M</i> = 171.48 (<i>SD</i> = 14.26)	<i>F</i> (1,134) = 87.71	<.001	η^2p = .40 (large)
	HMH Spanish Growth Measure: Scaled Score	135	<i>M</i> = 250.19 (<i>SD</i> = 15.16)	<i>M</i> = 263.74 (<i>SD</i> = 16.26)	<i>F</i> (1,131) = 41.98	<.001	η^2p = .24 (large)
Grade 3	HMH Spanish Growth Measure: GLE Bands	135	Below Grade Level: 73% On Grade Level: 23% Above Grade Level: 4%	Below Grade Level: 45% On Grade Level: 39% Above Grade Level: 16%	χ^2 (2) = 81.40	<.001	Cohen's <i>w</i> = 0.78 (large)
	NWEA MAP Growth Reading RIT Score	144	<i>M</i> = 170.87 (<i>SD</i> = 14.43)	<i>M</i> = 180.66 (<i>SD</i> = 17.13)	<i>F</i> (1,140) = 39.32	<.001	η^2p = .22 (large)
	HMH Spanish Growth Measure: Scaled Score	132	<i>M</i> = 336.34 (<i>SD</i> = 17.46)	<i>M</i> = 351.14 (<i>SD</i> = 19.26)	<i>F</i> (1,128) = 23.32	<.001	η^2p = .15 (large)
	HMH Spanish Growth Measure: GLE Bands	132	Below Grade Level: 93% On Grade Level: 7% Above Grade Level: —	Below Grade Level: 66% On Grade Level: 29% Above Grade Level: 5%	χ^2 (2) = 154.54	<.001	Cohen's <i>w</i> = 1.08 (large)
Grade 4	NWEA MAP Growth Reading RIT Score	150	<i>M</i> = 181.37 (<i>SD</i> = 14.82)	<i>M</i> = 189.16 (<i>SD</i> = 17.57)	<i>F</i> (1,146) = 23.18	<.001	η^2p = .14 (large)
	HMH Spanish Growth Measure: Scaled Score	148	<i>M</i> = 429.16 (<i>SD</i> = 17.08)	<i>M</i> = 440.08 (<i>SD</i> = 18.85)	<i>F</i> (1,144) = 16.11	<.001	η^2p = .10 (moderate-large)
	HMH Spanish Growth Measure: GLE Bands	148	Below Grade Level: 97% On Grade Level: 3% Above Grade Level: —	Below Grade Level: 86% On Grade Level: 12% Above Grade Level: 1%	χ^2 (2) = 46.57	<.001	Cohen's <i>w</i> = 0.56 (large)
Grade 5	NWEA MAP Growth Reading RIT Score	97	<i>M</i> = 182.14 (<i>SD</i> = 15.13)	<i>M</i> = 191.29 (<i>SD</i> = 15.49)	<i>F</i> (1,93) = 16.47	<.001	η^2p = .15 (large)
	HMH Spanish Growth Measure: Scaled Score	106	<i>M</i> = 521.97 (<i>SD</i> = 20.66)	<i>M</i> = 531.37 (<i>SD</i> = 22.33)	<i>F</i> (1,102) = 5.29	.023	η^2p = .05 (moderate)
	HMH Spanish Growth Measure: GLE Bands	106	Below Grade Level: 95% On Grade Level: 4% Above Grade Level: 1%	Below Grade Level: 88% On Grade Level: 11% Above Grade Level: 1%	χ^2 (2) = 13.43	<.001	Cohen's <i>w</i> = 0.36 (moderate)
Grade 2–5	HMH Spanish Growth Measure: GLE Bands	521	Below Grade Level: 89% On Grade Level: 9% Above Grade Level: 1%	Below Grade Level: 71% On Grade Level: 23% Above Grade Level: 6%	χ^2 (2) = 230.15	<.001	Cohen's <i>w</i> = 0.66 (large)