

## Chris Steller

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**From:** Parsons, Nicole (MDE) <nicole.parsons@state.mn.us> on behalf of Unni, Adosh (MDE) <adosh.unni@state.mn.us>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, October 17, 2017 10:29 AM  
**To:** Rep.Sondra Erickson; Rep.Jenifer Loon; Eric Pratt (sen.eric.pratt@senate.mn); Carla Nelson (sen.carla.nelson@senate.mn); Rep.Carlos Mariani; Rep.Jim Davnie; Susan Kent (sen.susan.kent@senate.mn); Charles Wiger (sen.charles.wiger@senate.mn)  
**Cc:** Chris Steller; Revisor of Statutes (revisor@revisor.mn.gov); Dorene Kainz; Harry Kennedy; Spencer Crose; Emily Adriaens; Meagan Rice; Adrian Benjamin; Andrew Hasek; Maars Rudquist; Amy Roberts (amy.roberts@house.mn); Tim Strom; Cristina Parra Herrera; Blycie Bailey; Nancy Livingston; Greg Marcus; Jonathan Boesche; Gwenia Fiskevold Gould (gwenia.fiskevold.gould@senate.mn); Tricia Elite; Ann Marie Butler (AnnMarie.Butler@senate.mn); Bjorn Arneson; Jenna Larson  
**Subject:** Final Singing to Improve Reading Report  
**Attachments:** 2017 Final Rock n Roll State Pilot Funded by Grant 10.17.17.pdf

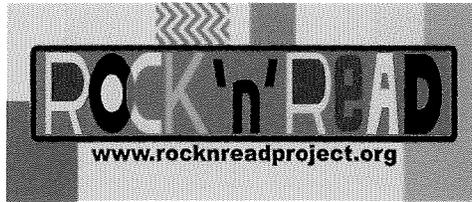
Chairs and Minority Leads:

On behalf of the Commissioner, I am providing you with the Final Singing to Improve Reading Report on expenditures and outcomes of grants for using singing to improve reading ability.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Best,

Adosh Unni, J.D.  
Director of Government Relations  
Minnesota Department of Education  
(w): 651-582-8292  
(c): 651-263-4981



## **The Rock 'n' Read Project**

**State Pilot 2016-2017**

# **Final Report**

**July 2017**

**To the MN Commissioner of Education and  
Minnesota Legislature Education Finance and Policy  
Committee Chairs and Ranking Minority Members**

**2016 MN Session Laws  
Chapter 189—HF No. 2749  
Sec. 62 Appropriations (495.1-495.9)**

**The Rock 'n' Read Project  
State Pilot 2016-2017**

**2016 MN Session Laws  
Chapter 189—HF No. 2749  
Sec. 62 Appropriations (495.1-495.9)**

**FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:**

**Bill Jones, Co-Founder and Executive Director**

**Ann Kay, Co-Founder**

**The Rock 'n' Read Project**

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## The Rock 'n' Read Project State Pilot 2016-2017

### Legislative Charge

Chapter 189—HF No. 2749, Sec. 62 Appropriations (495.1-495.9)

Subd. 13

#### **Singing-based pilot program to improve student reading.**

- (a) *For a grant to pilot a research-supported, computer-based educational program that uses singing to improve the reading ability of students in grades 3 through 5: \$100,000;*
- (b) *The commissioner of education shall award a grant to the Rock 'n' Read Project to implement in at least three Minnesota school districts, charter schools, or school sites, a research-supported, computer-based educational program that uses singing to improve the reading ability of students in grade 3 through 5. The grantee shall be responsible for selecting participating school sites; providing any required hardware and software, including software licenses, for the duration of the grant period; providing technical support, training, and staff to install required project hardware and software, providing on-site professional development and instructional monitoring and support for the school staff and students; administering pre- and post-intervention reading assessments; evaluating the impact of the intervention; and other project management services as required. To the extent practicable, the grantee must select participating schools in urban, suburban, and greater Minnesota, and give priority to schools in which a high proportion of students do not read proficiently at grade level and are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch.*
- (c) *By February 15, 2017, the grantee must submit a report detailing expenditures and outcomes of the grant to the commissioner of education and the chairs and ranking minority members of the legislative committees with primary jurisdiction over kindergarten through grade 12 education policy and finance.*
- (d) *This is a onetime appropriation.*

### Introduction

Founded in 2014, The Rock 'n' Read Project is a Minnesota 501(c)(3) nonprofit dedicated to "helping children read at grade level through singing." The organization has partnered with schools and the YMCA to implement a software program that uses singing to boost reading achievement. Students using TUNEin to READING (TiR) are rewarded for improving their singing accuracy, thereby motivating them to sing/read the same song repeatedly. Most children enjoy using the program. Research studies conducted at the University of South Florida found that struggling readers using TiR for thirty minutes three times per week for nine weeks (13.5 hours) gained an average of one year in reading achievement. TiR users substantially outperformed non-TiR users on the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Tests in year-over-year gains for five consecutive years. <http://www.tuneintoreading.com/summary.html>

The Rock 'n' Read Project bases its programs on neuroscience research studies that have found that 1) making music enhances auditory processing and this is correlated with higher reading achievement, 2) the ability to keep a steady beat is correlated with higher reading achievement; [www.brainvolts.northwestern.edu/projects/index.php](http://www.brainvolts.northwestern.edu/projects/index.php), and 3) dyslexia is a rhythmic entrainment problem in the brain that can be remediated with steady beat activities. [www.neuroscience.cam.ac.uk/directory/profile.php?ucg10](http://www.neuroscience.cam.ac.uk/directory/profile.php?ucg10)

## State Pilot Project

In May 2016, the Minnesota Legislature allocated a \$100,000 grant to The Rock 'n' Read Project to implement a state pilot in 2016-'17 using TiR software. The Rock 'n' Read Project completed a grant application with the Minnesota Department of Education. Four schools were chosen:

- Bancroft Elementary, Minneapolis Public Schools
- College Prep Elementary, a public charter school in St. Paul
- Jefferson Community School, Minneapolis Public Schools
- Tesfa International School, a public charter school in St. Paul

The project ran from September 2016-May 2017.

## Process

### May-August 2016

- Using the MN Department of Education MN Report Card, The Rock 'n' Read Project identified schools around the state that had a majority of students not reading at grade level and a high percentage receiving free/reduced-price lunch.
- Principals were contacted, and seven schools expressed interest.

### September-October 2016

- The Rock 'n' Read Project selected four schools that would implement the program during the school day.
- All 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grade students (and 2<sup>nd</sup> graders at Jefferson) took the online Fast Bridge aReading assessment. Each school chose which students would participate and created a schedule to ensure that students a minimum of 90 minutes per week of TiR usage/student.
- The Rock 'n' Read Project purchased software licenses from the company, set up computer labs or downloaded the software into existing computer labs, provided staff development for the teachers, launched the program with the students, provided one week of lab help, and monitored progress during the fall.
- Schools began students on the program 1-2 months after school started.

### December-early January 2017

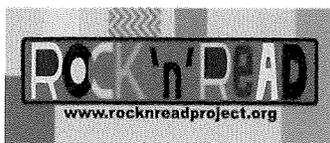
- 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grade students (and 2<sup>nd</sup> at Jefferson) took the Fast Bridge assessment again.

### May 2017

- All students took the Fast Bridge assessment again.

## Data

This is a comparison of data from students who had pre- and post-scores on the FastBridge aReading assessment. Out of the initial 278 students who started using the software in the fall, 214 students completed in the spring. The decrease was largely attributed to Jefferson's decision to shut down their computer lab due to continual damage of computers by students. One 2<sup>nd</sup> grade teacher chose to continue, and Rock 'n' Read installed computers in their classroom. The results of the four pilot schools are exhibited below.



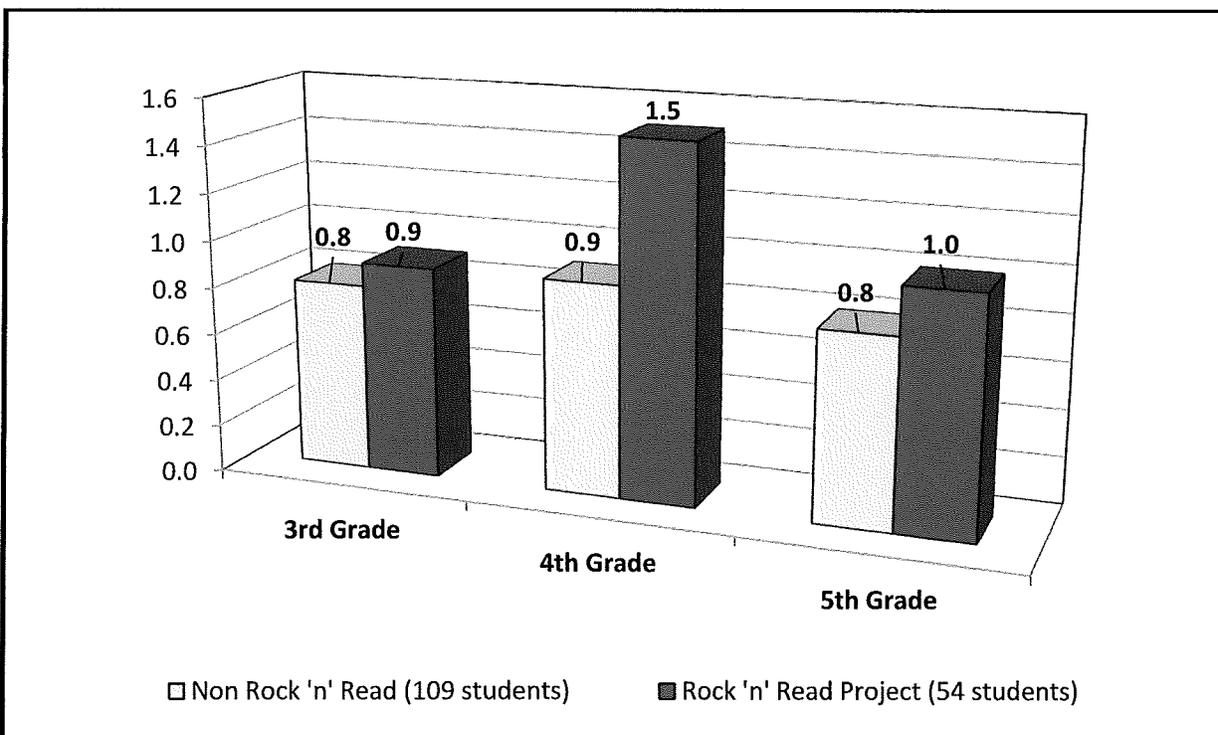
## The Rock 'n' Read Project

### 2016-'17 Reading Gain

#### Bancroft Elementary School (Minneapolis Public Schools)

- A comparison of reading gains between students who sang with TUNEin to READING (TiR) software for 7.5-54 hours and students who did not.
- Both groups were reading below grade level on the pre-test in the fall.
- The FastBridge aReading assessment was used to assess achievement.

1.0 = one year of reading achievement





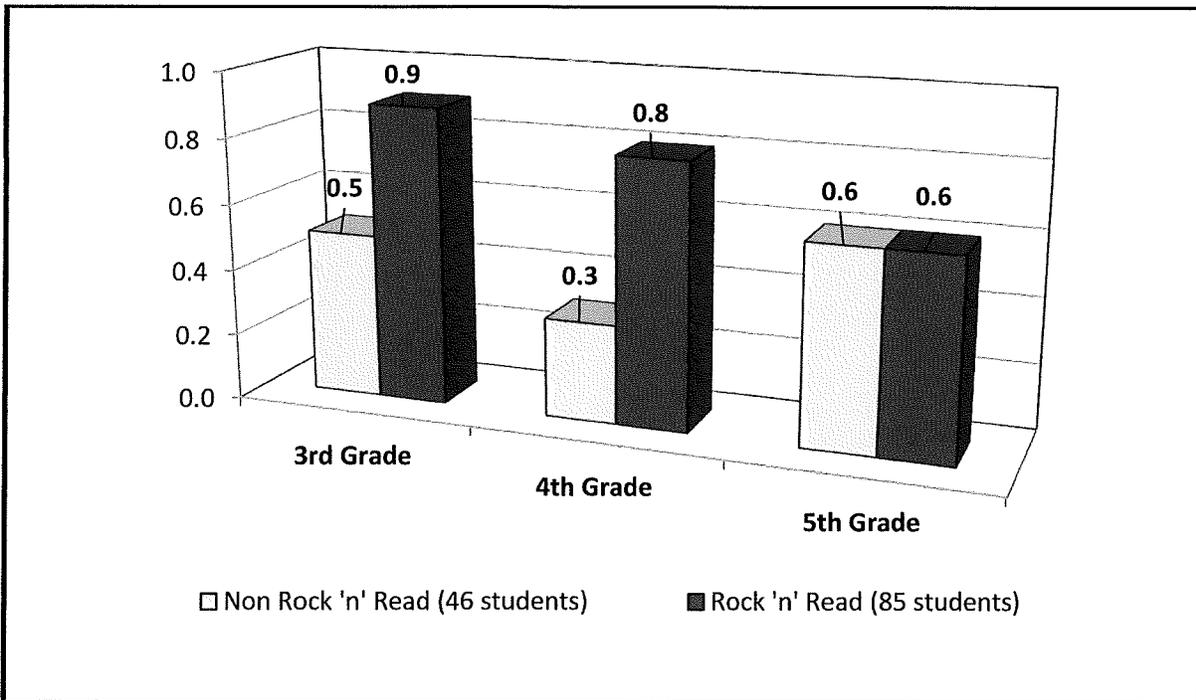
## The Rock 'n' Read Project

### 2016-'17 Reading Gain

#### College Prep Charter School (St. Paul, MN)

- Reading gains for students who sang with TUNEin to READING (TiR) software for 14-40.5 hours and students who did not.
- Both groups were reading below grade level on the pre-test in the fall.
- The FastBridge aReading assessment was used to assess achievement.

1.0 = one year of reading achievement





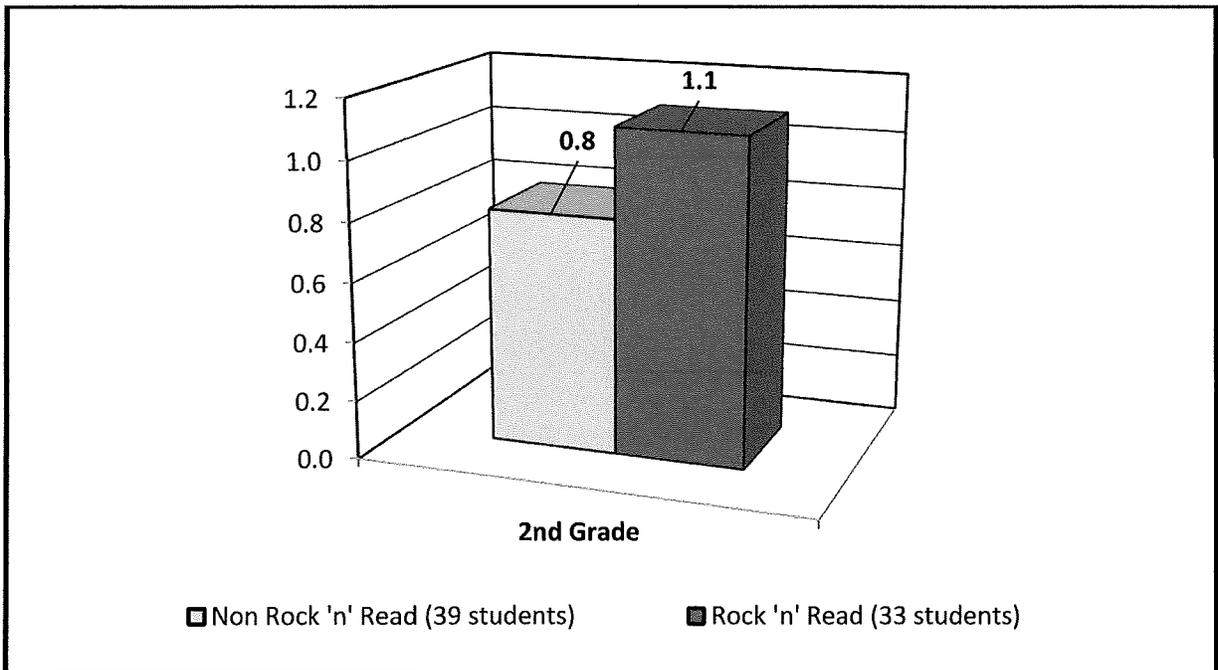
## The Rock 'n' Read Project

### 2016-'17 Reading Gain

#### Jefferson Community School (Minneapolis Public Schools)

- A comparison of reading gains between second grade students who sang with TUNEin to READING (TiR) software for 7.5-54 hours and students who did not.
- The FastBridge aReading assessment was used to assess achievement.

1.0 = one year of reading achievement





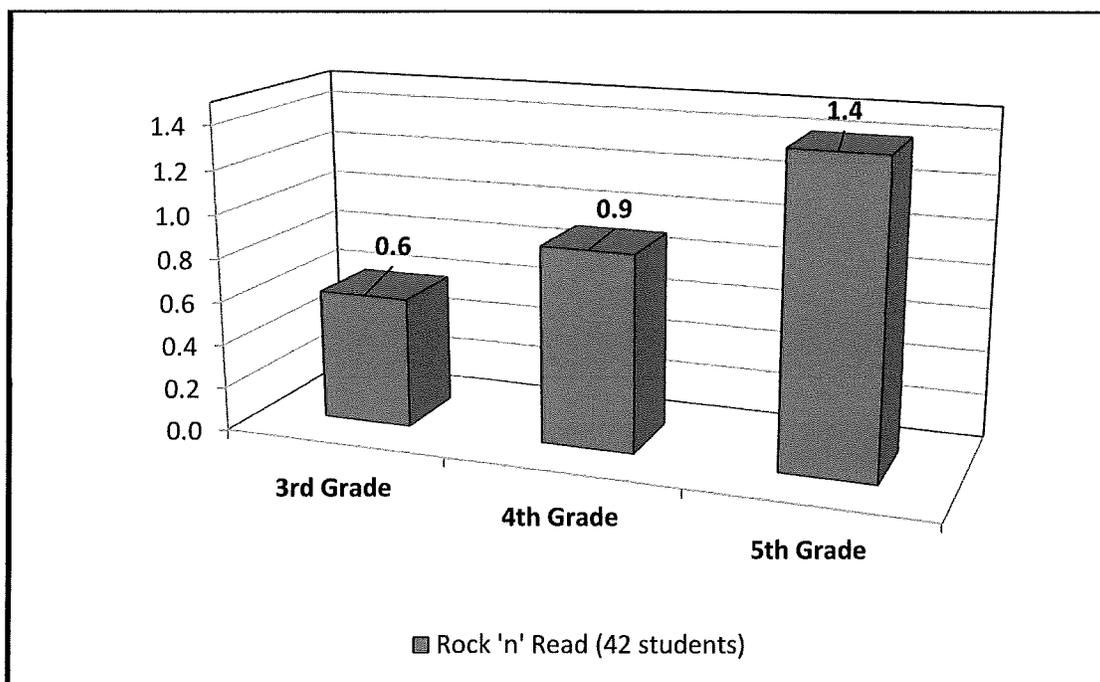
## The Rock 'n' Read Project

### 2016-'17 Reading Gain

#### Tesfa International Charter School (St. Paul, MN)

- Reading gains for students who sang with TUNEin to READING (TiR) software for 14-54 hours.
- The FastBridge aReading assessment was used to assess achievement.

1.0= one year of reading achievement



## **Results of Fast Bridge aReading Assessment**

Bancroft: Rock 'n' Read students made 36% (avg.) greater gain than non-Rock 'n' Read students who were also reading below grade level in September. (39% English Learners in 2016.)

College Prep: Rock 'n' Read 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> graders made 113% (avg.) greater gain than non-Rock 'n' Read students who were also reading below grade level in September. Rock 'n' Read 5<sup>th</sup> graders showed no difference in gain compared with non-Rock 'n' Read students who were also reading below grade level in September. (75% English Learners in 2016.)

Jefferson: Rock 'n' Read 2<sup>nd</sup> graders made 38% (avg.) greater gain than non-Rock 'n' Read students. (59% English Learners in 2016.)

Tesfa: All students participated in Rock 'n' Read, except for a few who were very new immigrants, so there was no comparison group. Rock 'n' Read students made 1 year (avg.) gain. (49% English Learners in 2016.)

## **Conclusions**

- Overall, Rock 'n' Read students made substantially more gain than non-Rock 'n' Read students who were also reading below grade level in the fall.
- English Language (EL) students benefit from using TiR.

## **Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCA)**

Results from the pilot schools have not yet been received and analyzed.

## **Expenditures**

The final expenditure report has already been submitted to MDE.