

Polk County Public Schools Fast ForWord[®] Update

2008-2009

Summary

- During the 2008-2009 school year, Fast ForWord was rolled out to the middle schools and high schools in the Polk County Public School District. Some K-8 schools also used Fast ForWord at elementary levels.
- At most schools, the first students started using Fast ForWord by December.
- Throughout the 2008-2009 school year, 7,431 participants in kindergarten through high school enrolled in the Fast ForWord Modules.
- Data from sixth- and ninth-graders at FCAT Reading Level 1 or Level 2 were analyzed; at both grade levels, students who used Fast ForWord improved significantly more on the Reading component of the FCAT than non-participants.
- In all grades with at least 30 Fast ForWord participants, students showed significant improvements on Reading Progress Indicator, a test of early reading skills.

Overview

- Impact of Fast ForWord use on sixth- and ninth-graders was evaluated.
- Focus was on students who were at FCAT Reading Level 1 or Level 2.
 - 1,527 Level 1 and Level 2 sixth-graders used the modules and had FCAT scores available for analysis
 - 1,037 Level 1 and Level 2 ninth-graders used the modules and had FCAT scores available for analysis.
- 22% of the sixth-grade participants who were at Level 1 or Level 2 in 2008 performed at Level 3 or above in 2009 – the level required to be considered proficient.
- 9% of the ninth-grade participants who were at Level 1 or Level 2 in 2008 performed at Level 3 or above in 2009 – the level required to be considered proficient.
- Further analyses evaluated the percentage of students making Annual Learning Gains (ALG).

Annual Learning Gains (ALG)

Annual Learning Gains (ALG) were developed by the Florida Department of Education to evaluate how well students are progressing from year to year. A student makes ALG if he or she:

- 1) Improves his or her FCAT Achievement Level from one year to the next;
- 2) Maintains his or her proficient Achievement Level from one year to the next;
- 3) Remains within FCAT Level 1 or Level 2, but demonstrates more than one year's growth on the FCAT developmental scale.
 - For sixth-graders, students must improve reading scores by 134 points or more;
 - For ninth-graders, students must improve reading scores by 78 points or more.

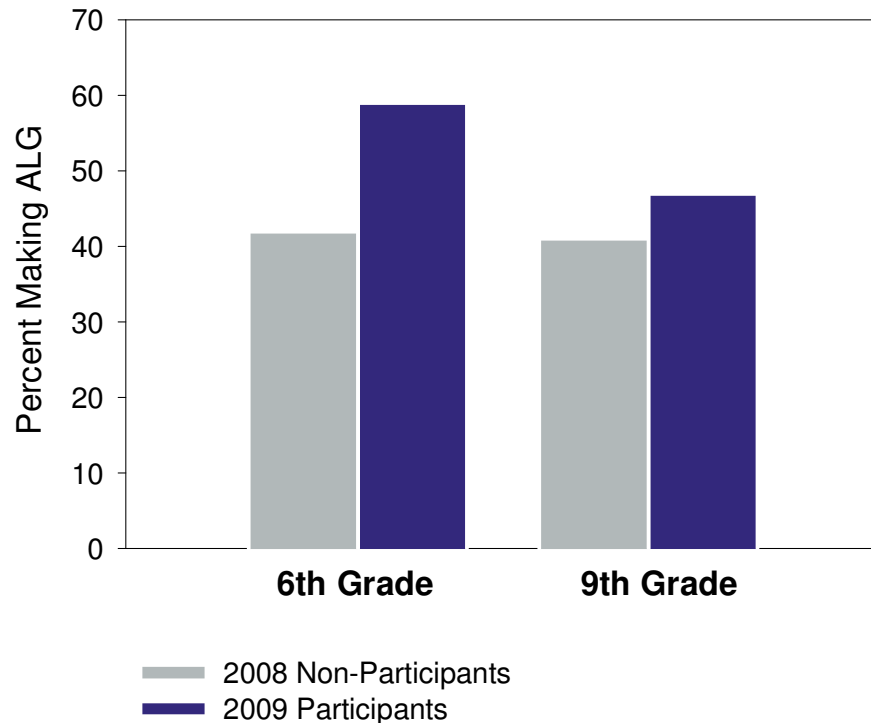
Analyses

The percent of sixth- and ninth-grade participants who made ALG in 2009 was compared to the percent of sixth- and ninth-graders making ALG in 2008 (prior to the roll-out of Fast ForWord). This analysis was done for:

- All Level 1 and Level 2 students.
- Level 1 and Level 2 students who were fluent.
- Level 1 and Level 2 students who were dysfluent*.

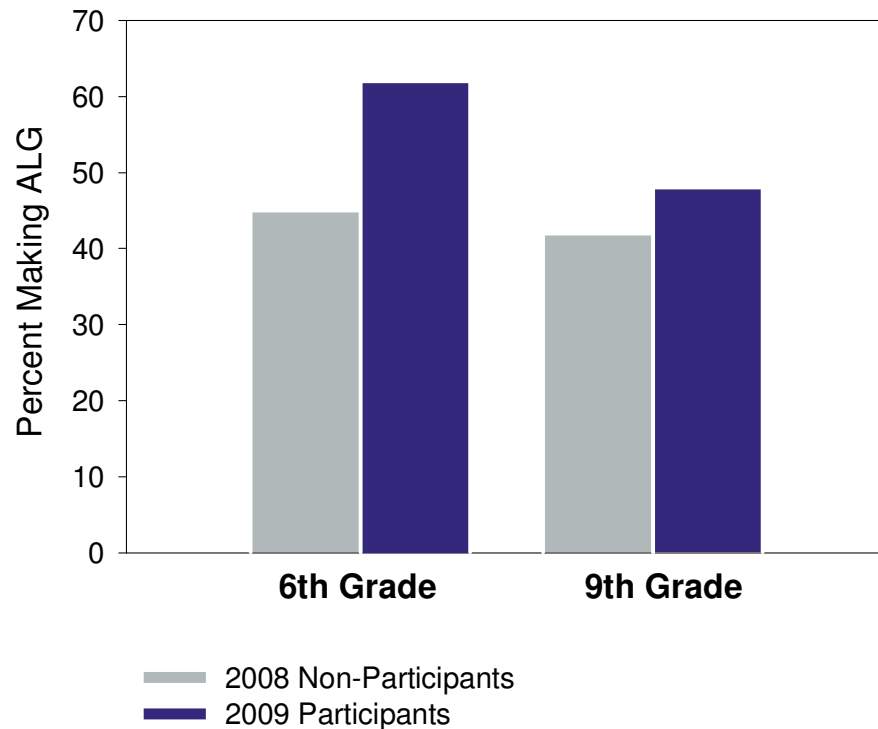
*Students with an FCAT Reading Level of 1 or 2 are tested for fluency using the DIBELS (elementary school), the FORF (middle school), or the MAZE (high school). Students who are not able to read rapidly enough to reach benchmark levels are considered dysfluent.

FCAT Level 1 and Level 2 Students



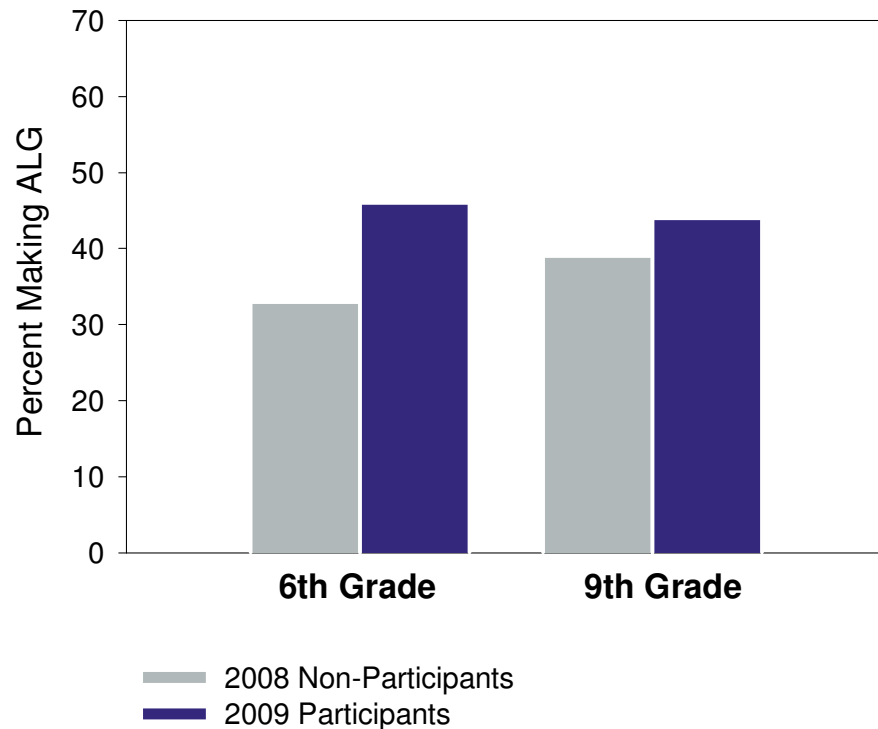
- In the sixth-grade, 59% of the participants made ALG compared to 42% of the comparison group.
- In the ninth-grade, 47% of the participants made ALG compared to 41% of the comparison group.

Fluent FCAT Level 1 and Level 2 Students



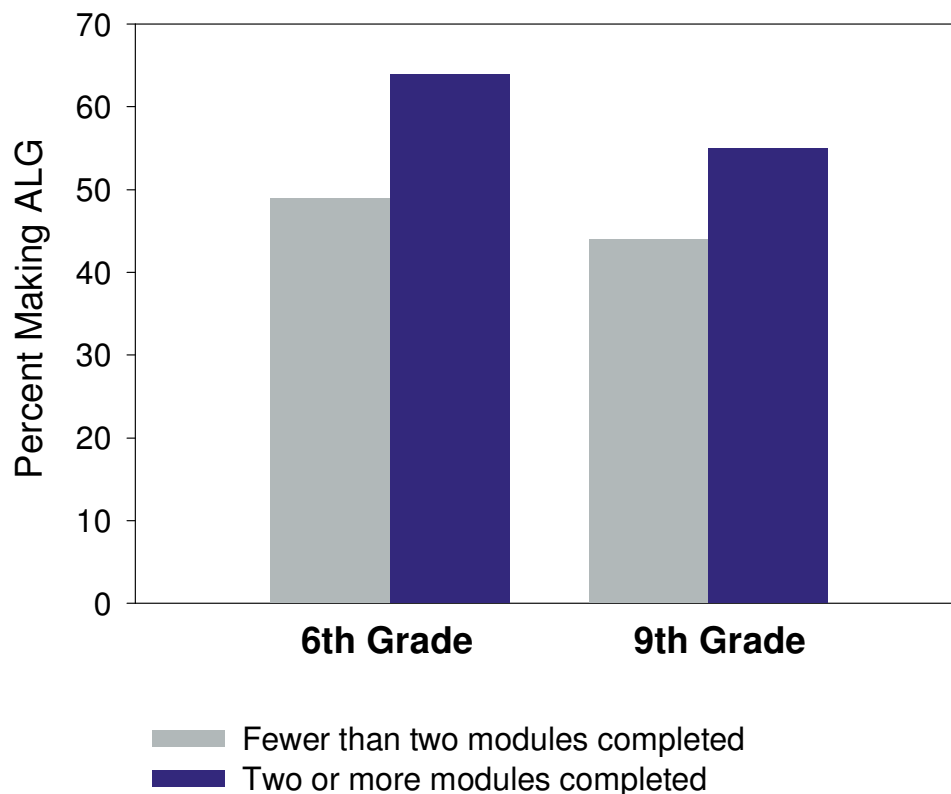
- In the sixth-grade, 62% of the participants made ALG compared to 45% of the comparison group.
- In the ninth-grade, 48% of the participants made ALG compared to 42% of the comparison group.

Dysfluent FCAT Level 1 and Level 2 Students



- In the sixth-grade, 46% of the participants made ALG compared to 33% of the comparison group.
- In the ninth-grade, 44% of the participants made ALG compared to 39% of the comparison group.

More Modules → Better Results



The Level 1 and Level 2 participants were divided into two groups:

- Students who completed fewer than two modules (36% of the sixth graders and 73% of the ninth graders).
- Students who completed two or more modules (64% of the sixth graders and 27% of the ninth graders).

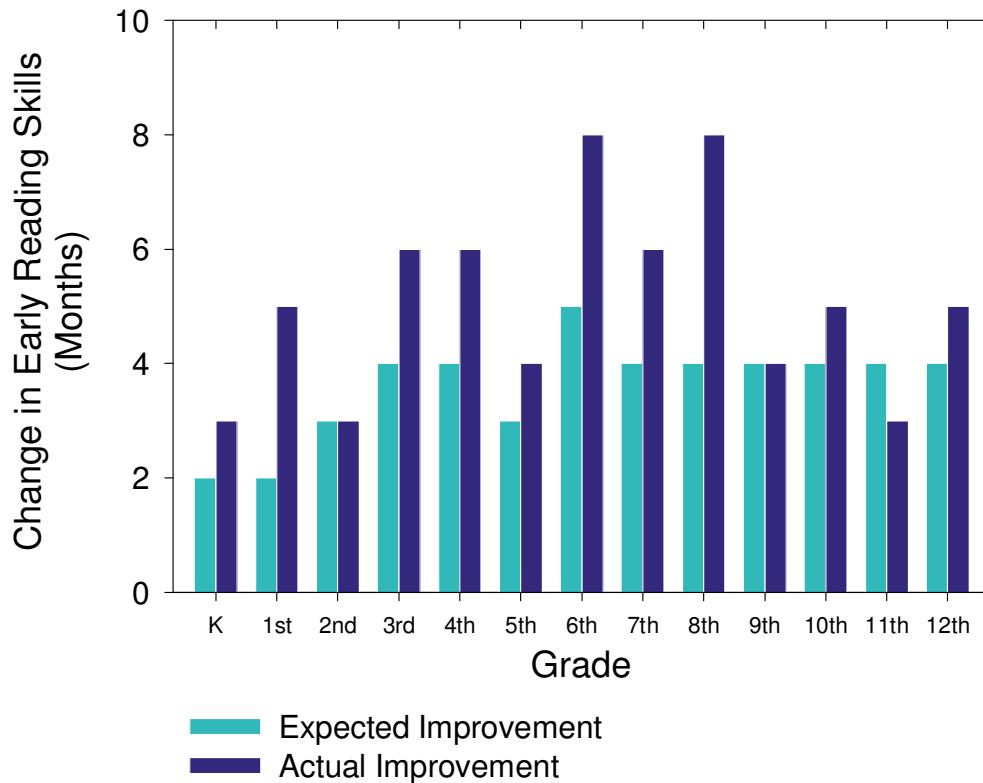
A significantly higher percentage of students who used two or more modules made ALG.

Reading Progress Indicator

- Reading Progress Indicator is an embedded assessment of early reading skills that was developed in partnership with Bookette Software Company and was normed on more than 7,000 students.
- 4,551 students from Kindergarten through High School were evaluated before and after Fast ForWord participation.*
- According to the initial Reading Progress Indicator assessment, before participation, students' early reading skills were typically below grade level. On average:
 - Elementary school students performed several months below grade level.
 - Middle school students performed 1½ years below grade level.
 - High school students performed three to six years below grade level (9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th graders all had early reading skills that averaged at the mid-sixth grade level.)

* Some students were not given post-tests either because they stopped using a module prior to completing enough content, or because they elected not to take the assessment.

Reading Progress Indicator



- It is expected that students will improve their skills by one month for each month of school attended.
 - Low performing students have a history of not meeting expectations while high performing students exceed expectations.
- Following Fast ForWord participation, students met or exceeded expected improvements at nearly all grades.

Fast ForWord Use

Fast ForWord use can be described in terms of:

- Days of Use: The number of days a student uses a module.
- Percent Complete: The percent of the content within a module that the student completes. A student is generally ready for the next module when 80 – 90% of the content has been completed.
- Participation: The amount of time each day a student uses a module relative to the selected Protocol. If a student is supposed to use the 40-Minute Protocol, and partakes for 30 minutes a day, Participation will be 75%.
- Attendance: The number of days a student uses a module relative to the Protocol which is five days a week. If a student shows up four days a week, Attendance is 80%. Weeks where there is no use are not included (Winter Vacation, Spring Break).

6th Graders Used in Analyses*

Module	Number of Students	Days Participated	Number of Calendar Days	Percent Complete	Participation Level	Attendance Level
Fast ForWord Reading Prep	282	16.5	39.0	75.8%	89.3%	75.1%
Fast ForWord Reading Level 1	1341	24.8	60.0	91.5%	84.7%	72.6%
Fast ForWord Reading Level 2	1358	35.0	85.0	84.9%	85.3%	73.7%
Fast ForWord Reading Level 3	1022	41.6	101.0	66.8%	86.9%	74.2%
Fast ForWord Reading Level 4	389	29.9	67.0	57.4%	86.2%	76.8%
Fast ForWord Reading Level 5	90	21.7	54.0	19.9%	78.4%	70.7%
Total**	1527	92.7	223.3	--	--	--

* Students at FCAT Reading Level 1 or Level 2 who had scores from both 2008 and 2009.

** Students typically use multiple modules. Days are calculated across all modules a student used.

9th Graders Used in Analyses*

Module	Number of Students	Days Participated	Number of Calendar Days	Percent Complete	Participation Level	Attendance Level
Fast ForWord Reading Prep	98	15.5	51.0	69.8%	87.6%	71.1%
Fast ForWord Reading Level 1	28	21.4	80.0	77.0%	83.3%	57.0%
Fast ForWord Reading Level 2	369	25.3	85.0	72.5%	85.5%	58.4%
Fast ForWord Reading Level 3	700	30.7	99.0	67.1%	85.1%	60.1%
Fast ForWord Reading Level 4	684	26.4	79.0	68.1%	88.5%	65.8%
Fast ForWord Reading Level 5	276	25.0	68.0	30.5%	89.6%	66.0%
Total**	1037	55.8	174.2	--	--	--

* Students at FCAT Reading Level 1 or Level 2 who had scores from both 2008 and 2009.

** Students typically use multiple modules. Days are calculated across all modules a student used.

Future Directions

- Start Fast ForWord as early in the school year as possible.
- Encourage all Level 1 and Level 2 students to use Fast ForWord.
 - During the 2008-2009 school year, participants included:
 - 61% of Level 1 and Level 2 sixth-graders;
 - 31% of Level 1 and Level 2 ninth-graders.
- Increase number of modules used.
- Expand to additional grades.