



Team Read 2024-2025 Program Evaluation Overview

Team Read's 2024-2025 program evaluation was provided by Illuminate Evaluation Services LLC. The evaluation document in its entirety is 64 pages long. In this program evaluation overview, key findings and information from the evaluation are copied directly from the original document and presented here.

EVALUATION DESIGN

In 2024–2025, we employed a longitudinal, mixed-methods research design to assess program impact from the 2023–2024 to the 2024–2025 school year. This approach combined quantitative and qualitative data collection to provide a comprehensive understanding of implementation and outcomes. Qualitative data captured the experiences of key stakeholders—including Student Readers, teen Reading Coaches, Site Assistants, and Site Coordinators—and identified effective strategies, barriers to implementation, and perceived program impacts. It also informed recommendations for improvement and expansion. These insights were triangulated with quantitative data, including participation rates, intervention counts, assessment results, and survey responses, to assess the overall effectiveness of the program.

DATA SOURCES

To answer the evaluation questions, the following data sources and evaluation tools were used. All site visits occurred in-person.

Demographic and assessment data. We collected data from Team Read and from the assessment departments in the districts participating. The data collected included attendance and programmatic data from Team Read, as well as demographic and assessment data from each school district. Tukwila School District did not provide all of the data requested.

Program documents, existing reports, and data. We reviewed documents pertaining to Team Read, including materials, data, and previous evaluation reports.

Interviews and focus groups. We conducted interviews and focus groups with Team Read staff to learn more about program implementation and goals. Further, we conducted interviews, focus groups, and observations in-person at four sites. Participants included Site Coordinators, Principals, Reading Coaches (current and former), Site Assistants, and Student Readers. In total, 42 people participated in interviews and focus groups.

Surveys. We also administered online surveys to: (1) Principals, (2) Site Coordinators, (3) Referring Teachers, (4) Reading Coaches, (5) Site Assistants, (6) Families of Reading Coaches, and (7) Families of Student Readers. Survey questions focused on perceptions of implementation and impact. *The Families of Student Readers survey was translated into six languages, including Amharic, Chinese (simplified), Oromo, Somali, Spanish, and Vietnamese.*



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PARTICIPANTS

In the 2024–2025 school year, Team Read operated at 14 sites: one school in Highline Public Schools (HPS), two in Renton School District (RSD), two in Tukwila School District (TSD), and eight schools and one community site (serving students from three schools) in Seattle Public Schools (SPS). One school continued to offer online programming, while the remainder offered in-person programming.

Students participating in Team Read during the school year had a higher rate of being Female, non-white and bilingual compared to all students in Team Read schools.

EVALUATION FINDINGS

1: What are the intended activities, goals, and outcomes for program implementation?

Across all stakeholder groups, there is a strong shared understanding that Team Read is designed to help elementary students who are reading below grade level build confidence, improve their fluency and comprehension, and cultivate a love of reading. Principals recognize the importance of early literacy as foundational for long-term academic success: *“Without that key skill in elementary school, it isn’t feasible... Having mentors that look like them with shared experience is powerful.”* Site Coordinators emphasized the program’s focus on identifying students in need and providing targeted support: *“We want kids two to three grade levels below reading level, and we are getting them to grade level.”* Reading Coaches echoed these goals and highlighted the value of building relationships while developing literacy: *“It is giving them the confidence they can do it.”* Several noted the importance of supporting multilingual learners: *“Especially if English isn’t their first language—they practice reading and writing.”* Stakeholders also consistently noted the program’s dual focus on supporting both readers and teen coaches.

Student Readers clearly understand the purpose of Team Read – to improve their reading skills in a supportive and engaging environment. They consistently described Team Read as a fun, engaging, and supportive environment that made reading enjoyable and helped them build confidence. Students appreciated the variety of books and interactive elements. They also valued the social connections, games, and rewards: While a few students expressed that the routine could feel repetitive at times, most described the program as fun, motivating, and helpful for reading growth and preparation for state tests.

The curriculum saw several enhancements, particularly the reintroduction and strengthening of phonics packets, which had been piloted during COVID and were well received. These were formally integrated into daily programming, supporting foundational reading skills. The standardization of Word Work across districts was praised by principals and staff as a critical step toward improving instructional consistency. Updates to the Power

MISSION & VISION

Mission:

“Team Read propels students to become inspired, joyful readers and teens to become impactful leaders, ready to succeed in school and life, building stronger communities for all.”

Vision

“We envision equitable learning communities that nurture and celebrate the strengths of young readers and teen leaders, and where every student gets the support they



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Reader Journal made it more user-friendly, increasing engagement and ease of use for both students and coaches. Monthly themes were distributed at the start of the year in site coordinator toolkits, helping to bring coherence and focus to each month's learning. Support for Site Coordinators and Reading Coaches was strengthened through improved communication, training, and onsite presence.

2: To what extent did program implementation occur as planned?

Across groups, respondents appreciated the structured format, the balance of fun and learning, and the opportunity to build meaningful relationships with their readers. A Reading Coach shared, *"Every session me and my reader had was nothing but fun learning. I had the chance to improve on myself, and my reader had the chance to improve on himself as well. Overall, the whole experience was top notch."*

Team Read was implemented with a high degree of fidelity during the 2024–2025 program year, as evidenced by strong ratings from Site Coordinators—89% rated fidelity an 8 or above, with an average score of 9.22 out of 10. Coordinators consistently noted that the program's structured curriculum and training helped maintain consistency across sites, with one stating, *"The readers and coaches are positively participating and attending regularly. Consistency is key for implementing the design of the program."*

Students are primarily selected for Team Read based on their reading proficiency, with a strong emphasis on serving those who are reading below grade level, typically in 2nd and 3rd grade, and occasionally in 4th grade. Site Coordinators and principals largely agreed that *"the correct students are in the program,"* with one Coordinator explaining, *"They are selected through the teachers by their reading scores. If they are below reading average, they are referred."*

Both Principals and Referring Teachers stressed the importance of expanding program capacity to meet student needs. As one principal noted, *"By expanding the program to support a greater number of students, we can increase access to individualized reading support and foster a stronger culture of literacy."* Referring teachers echoes this need: *"Increase capacity – serve greater quantity of students"* and *"I have 3 students who were not able to participate due to the program already being full."*

Quote
<i>"We need this support. Please find ways to keep this funded."</i> Principal

Across stakeholder groups, Team Read is consistently recognized as a high-quality program. More than 89% of respondents rated Team Read as a high-quality program. Stakeholders praised the program's structure, curriculum, and positive impact on both academic and social-emotional development. Site Coordinators noted the strength of the one-on-one model and well-organized materials, with one explaining, *"Team Read creates a safe, supportive environment where students feel encouraged."* Referring Teachers emphasized how Team Read reinforced classroom instruction and promoted phonics, fluency, and reading confidence, while principals highlighted the alignment with school goals and the leadership opportunities for teen coaches. As one principal shared, *"Their collaboration around school and administrative goals for students, as well as their year-round support, is what sets Team Read apart."*



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3: What is the impact on Student Readers?

Student Readers benefit from Team Read in multiple ways, most notably in their reading growth, confidence and mindset, peer relationships, and broader school engagement. Stakeholders across the board—principals, Site Coordinators, Reading Coaches, referring teachers, families, and the students themselves—reported meaningful improvements in reading performance. On the survey, there is a strong consensus that Student Readers have significantly

improved their reading skills, with 76% or more of respondents agreeing on this positive outcome. Principals pointed to measurable gains in Fountas & Pinnell levels and other data-driven indicators, with one sharing, *“Almost all of our students in Team Read have made significant growth based on their reading data scores.”* Students confirmed this progress, with many citing specific improvements such as, *“When I started, I was E, and now I’m in L,”* and *“Yes, because I practice a lot more. Now I’m on level I.”* Referring teachers echoed these observations, noting growth in phonics, fluency, and comprehension, and sharing stories of students advancing from kindergarten-level reading to grade-level proficiency.

Quotes
<i>“Since Team Read, I started to read chapter books. This made me do reading more, and I am improving.”</i> — Student Reader

Confidence/Mindset. Beyond reading, Team Read fosters a positive shift in students’ mindset and confidence. Reading Coaches and Site Coordinators frequently described how students who were previously reluctant to read began taking risks, engaging more deeply with books, and expressing pride in their progress. One Site Coordinator reflected, *“Just gaining confidence to read and taking a risk. When they know the person isn’t a teacher, they feel safer to make mistakes.”* A Family Member of a Student Reader similarly shared, *“The confidence it has given my kiddo,”* while a Student Reader said, *“I work really hard. I have learned new words I never seen before, and I know most the meanings.”* Referring teachers observed that students became more willing to read independently and began to retell stories with confidence and excitement. One principal reflected, *“Students report feeling more motivated to read and show increased enthusiasm for books and reading activities,”* suggesting confidence builds a lasting connection to learning.

Quotes
<i>“I’m reading more books than I used to be and I’m trying harder,”</i> - Student Reader

Peer support. A cornerstone of the Team Read model is its peer-mentoring structure, which fosters meaningful relationships between Reading Coaches and Student Readers. This mentorship component helps create a welcoming, emotionally supportive space where students can thrive. Coaches consistently described the relationship with their Reader as the most rewarding part of the experience, saying *“Connecting with my student and seeing their progress,”* and *“Getting to connect with my reader and watch them grow.”* Site Coordinators reported that these relationships often led to improved behavior and emotional regulation, with one sharing, *“We have one reader, and his coach and him have such a bond... he used to run around and the coach gets him seated. He listens to her and is more calm.”* Families of Student Readers valued this dynamic as well, describing the powerful impact of older students mentoring younger ones: *“Instruction from young people to children is powerful,”* and *“My child enjoys having an older student help him and always feels included.”*



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Additional benefits. Team Read contributes to broader academic and behavioral improvements. Student Readers frequently mentioned gains in writing, phonics, and even math. One Student Reader noted, *“I’m improving in math, writing, and phonics,”* while another said, *“I try a little bit harder.”* Principals and Site Coordinators observed better attendance and more positive school engagement. One principal explained, *“We have kids with poor attendance, and the readers are attending school more... that has been a positive shift in culture, which is building their academics.”* Others cited the role of structured routines—like snack time and reflection—in helping students feel calm and ready to learn. Across all voices, there is a consistent narrative: Team Read is not only improving reading skills, but also empowering students with the confidence, relationships, and motivation they need to succeed in school and beyond.

Quotes

“Team Read is helping even the most struggling readers become more independent and motivated.” – Referring Teacher

4: What is the impact on teen Reading Coaches and Site Assistants?

Reading Coaches and Site Assistants described Team Read as a transformative experience that deepened their self-awareness while building job skills. Many Coaches discovered personal strengths—especially patience, adaptability, and leadership—with one sharing, *“I learned that I am able to stay grounded and patient even if a reader is very rowdy.”* Others found themselves more outgoing and capable than expected. Site Assistants and Reading Coaches gained confidence in communication and leadership, with one noting, *“I learned that I can lead a group and ask for feedback.”* Several said the experience helped clarify future goals and affirmed their career interests. Across both roles, participants reported growth in emotional intelligence, perseverance, and problem-solving. Another shared, *“I can make a difference in someone’s life positively.”* Overall, the experience provided invaluable insights into their capabilities, preferences, and potential career paths, fostering a well-rounded personal and professional growth journey. According to survey data, 58% of Reading Coaches reported that Team Read was their first job, and an additional 32% had previous informal work experience, marking the highest percentage of first-time jobholders in the past 10 years. Reading Coaches and Site Assistants cited several reasons for joining Team Read: it was accessible to those under 16, offered a flexible schedule that fit around school, and provided an opportunity to earn income. Many were also drawn to the chance to work with children and gain valuable work experience. Both in interviews and on surveys, participants consistently noted that Team Read is helping them build skills for future employment. On the Pulse Survey, 89–90% of Reading Coaches agreed that the program is preparing them with skills they will use in the future—a finding that has remained consistent year over year.

Quote

“I learned my strengths in areas where I’m good, and what I could do better.” – Reading Coach

Quote

“This gave my daughter a sense of independence and the ability to contribute positively to the community and earn her first paycheck.” – Family Member of Reading Coach

Overall, survey and focus group findings were very positive, showing that Reading Coaches and Site Assistants gain substantial benefits from participating in Team Read. Survey results were consistent with the previous year, with only minor fluctuations.

Team Read served as an essential early employment experience for Reading Coaches and Site Assistants, helping them build job readiness

skills that translate directly to future work environments. Reading Coaches and Site Assistants reported growth in time management, organizational skills, responsibility, and confidence using logistical tools such as attendance trackers and spreadsheets. Families of Reading Coaches echoed these insights, noting that their teens gained



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responsibility, coaching experience, and confidence. Many highlighted a new sense of independence and pride in earning their first paycheck. Survey results were consistent with qualitative data. On the survey, 100% of Site Assistants, 87% of Reading Coaches, and 95% of Families of Reading Coaches indicated that Site Assistants and Reading Coaches developed skills they can use in other work settings, now and in the future. Further, 100% of Site Coordinators agreed Reading Coaches gain career preparation skills by participating in Team Read.

A defining feature of the Team Read experience is the development of key life skills, such as leadership, communication, patience, and goal setting. Patience emerged as the most commonly cited trait, with one Reading Coach stating, *"Being patient—that's an incredibly important skill that I wished to improve, and Team Read helped with that a lot."* Teens also gained communication and leadership skills through public speaking, problem-solving, and interacting with diverse personalities. As one Reading Coach noted, *"I learned how to teach something to someone who has vastly different life experiences than me so that it is as clear and understandable as possible."* Several Site Assistants and Reading Coaches reflected on growing confidence, perseverance, and self-advocacy, saying the program taught them to *"work through obstacles," "take initiative,"* and *"be more assertive and direct."* Additionally, the program has fostered perseverance and goal-setting abilities, as participants work with students to achieve reading milestones. On the survey, 80% of Site Assistants, 90% of Reading Coaches, and 84% of Family Members of Reading Coaches agreed Team Read taught them to persevere, even when things don't come easily. Further, 100% of Site Assistants, 87% of Reading Coaches, and 88% of Family Members of Reading Coaches agreed Team Read taught them to direct themselves and take initiative.

The program has sparked a strong interest in education among many Site Assistants and Reading Coaches, encouraging them to consider teaching as a potential career path. Several also expressed interest in related youth-support fields such as social work, counseling, or pediatrics. Team Read was described as a *"perfect way to prepare"* for teaching careers, offering valuable experience with instructional techniques, behavior management, and mentoring. One Coach shared, *"Well, I want to be a teacher, so really my experiences working one-on-one with students has helped me understand more on how their minds work and what the best approach to them is."* Family members of Reading Coaches echoed this sentiment, noting their teens had discovered a passion for education: *"She really discovered a love for teaching,"* and *"They want to become a teacher!"* Principals and Site Coordinators also observed that the program helped teens see themselves as contributors and future educators. On the survey, 40% of Site Assistants, 44% of Reading Coaches, and 48% of Families of Reading Coaches indicated Team Read has made them/their child consider teaching as a profession.

Quote

"This job has been the perfect way to prepare for teaching ... I've learned so much about how students think and learn." - Reading Coach

In sum, Team Read is not just a literacy intervention for Student Readers—it is also a critical developmental opportunity for teen participants. By fostering professional readiness, life skills, community engagement, and long-term aspirations, the program empowers young people to grow into confident, capable leaders who are ready to make a difference.

5: In what ways are families engaged in Team Read?

Families of Student Readers overwhelmingly praised Team Read for its individualized support, meaningful relationships, and positive impact on reading growth and confidence. On the survey, 97% agreed it is a high-quality

Quote

"Team Read made me feel like the community cares about my child and her education." - Family of Student Reader



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program, and 96% would recommend it to others. Many families appreciated the one-on-one attention their children received. Several families noted that their children began to enjoy reading. The mentorship from older students was another widely appreciated aspect. One family commented, *“Instruction from young people to children is powerful,”* while another noted, *“My child enjoys having an older student help him and always feels included.”* Several were touched that *“some of the coaches were once elementary students at the school,”* which created a meaningful sense of continuity and inspiration. Families also described visible growth in their children’s confidence. Others highlighted the program’s positive structure and approach: *“Balance on reading and fun.”*

Families of Reading Coaches expressed strong appreciation for Team Read, with 100% of survey respondents agreeing that their teen benefited from being a tutor and had a positive experience. As described above, they described the program as a transformative first job that fostered responsibility, leadership, and confidence. Many noted that their teens developed greater patience and learned how to support and motivate younger students, skills that led to increased self-discipline and personal growth. One parent observed, *“Getting to interact with people at different levels and helping them reach their goals was incredibly beneficial,”* while another shared, *“My teen learned to be more self-disciplined, communicate better, and know herself better.”* Families valued how the program helped teens manage schedules, navigate real-world expectations, and contribute meaningfully to their communities. Across the board, families emphasized how Team Read helped teens grow into more independent, capable, and community-minded young people.

6: What are the contextual factors influencing the Team Read program implementation?

Several contextual factors support and hinder implementation of Team Read. These include staffing and scheduling challenges, coach accountability and professionalism, funding constraints, and availability of snacks for coaches.

Staffing and scheduling challenges. Team Read sites experienced ongoing staffing disruptions, including mid-year turnover of Reading Coaches and substitute needs for Site Coordinators. Although survey results indicated that most coaching turnover was due to scheduling conflicts with spring sports or other extracurricular activities, it created challenges for maintaining stable and effective pairings.

Coach accountability and professionalism. Site Coordinators highlighted the need for stronger systems of accountability and support to effectively manage and develop Reading Coaches, particularly for those new to the role. Site Coordinators expressed interest in additional professional development focused on supervising teen employees, setting expectations, and providing meaningful feedback to strengthen coach accountability and program quality.

Funding constraints. Several principals pointed to limited budgets as a core challenge. A principal reflected, *“I put money into it as a Tier 3 reading program, using flexible funds... Having to pay for the coordinator was tough.”* Stakeholders emphasized the need for consistent support to cover staffing and site coordination.

7: What makes the Team Read program model successful?

Information was gathered through survey responses from Site Assistants, Reading Coaches, Site Coordinators, and Families of Student Readers, as well as from interviews.

Respondents provided evidence for their positive ratings. Team Read’s program model is widely recognized as a powerful and effective approach to supporting both literacy growth and youth development. Stakeholders



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across all groups, including Reading Coaches, Site Assistants, Site Coordinators, Families, and Principals, praised the model's structure, mentoring relationships, and dual benefits for younger and older students alike. Feedback highlights four core elements that contribute to the program's success.

Structured yet flexible model that supports learning. Team Read's consistent structure, including leveled materials, daily routines, and phonics and fluency activities, was widely praised across all stakeholder groups. Reading Coaches appreciated the clear format and ability to tailor sessions to student needs, with one noting, *"There is a good balance between fun and actual learning."* Site Coordinators described the model as *"grounded in research and well organized,"* and Principals recognized its strategic alignment: *"They utilize data... making certain there are leveled processes."* Despite some suggestions to enhance materials for struggling or advanced readers, stakeholders agreed the framework enables both academic and personal growth.

Community and Relationships. Strong one-on-one relationships between Reading Coaches and Student Readers were central to the program's success. Coaches described how meaningful it was to connect with their Readers: *"It is an amazing program for connecting younger students to older students... they wanted to be with their buddy and read a book."* Families echoed this impact, sharing that their children became more confident and engaged through these connections. Site Coordinators observed that this mentorship also built community: *"It is like a sorority or fraternity they will carry forever."* These relationships were seen as foundational to both literacy growth and social-emotional development.

Positive impact on Student Readers. Team Read was consistently described as a valuable literacy intervention aligned with school goals. Principals appreciated how the program complemented school-day learning and targeted students most in need of support. One noted it is *"a reading program... using leveled processes."* Families of Student Readers appreciated the accessible, local format, and many praised the program's supportive environment: *"My kindergartener... learned to read this school year and advanced in leaps and bounds."* Site Coordinators appreciated having structured tools and roles that aligned with school-day literacy priorities, saying the program *"targets specific students and helps them improve with the main goal of improving the reading."*

Youth development and leadership. Beyond literacy, Team Read provides a critical platform for teen development. Reading Coaches and Site Assistants reported gaining professional skills such as leadership, communication, and time management. One Site Assistant reflected, *"I've worked at Team Read since my freshman year... it has helped me feel satisfied when I help my students get better."* Site Coordinators praised the model for hiring *"responsible teens... supporting a diverse group of students."* Families of Coaches noted that the experience helped their teens grow into *"independent, community-minded young people."*

8: What recommendations emerge based on evaluation findings?

Expand Access by Increasing Funding and Program Capacity. Over the past three years, 47% of Referring Teachers reported that eligible students are unable to participate in Team Read. In addition, the percent of teachers reporting that this is due to limited slots has increased by 10 percentage points. This trend highlights a growing demand for the program, particularly in schools with high numbers of students reading below grade level and limited resources to support them. Principals and referring teachers consistently expressed a strong need to expand access, noting that more students could benefit from the program if additional spaces, tutors, or sessions were available. As part of ongoing strategic planning efforts, Team Read should explore opportunities



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to secure increased funding, through public, private, or philanthropic partnerships, to expand capacity at existing sites and potentially scale to new schools. This may include analyzing demand across districts, identifying funding gaps, and piloting models such as staggered sessions or rotating cohorts to reach more students.

Reinforce Student Entry Requirements. To ensure that Team Read serves its intended purpose, it is recommended to reinforce and clearly communicate entrance requirements with principals and reading specialists. This year, a large percentage SPS students were at grade level upon entering Team Read, according to district interim assessments. Given that the program is designed for students reading one or more years below grade level, it is essential to prioritize enrolling those who will benefit the most. Although certain exceptions are made, such as for siblings, reviewing the criteria with stakeholders can help align student selection with the program's objectives. This will optimize the impact of Team Read and provide the greatest benefit to students who are most in need of literacy support.

Implement strategies to increase access to student data. To improve access to student data, Team Read should implement a multi-faceted approach that ensures consistent data collection and demonstrates program impact. This will help ensure data is consistent across districts, sensitive to the evaluation, and available more timely. To this end, we recommend that Team Read pilot the administration of an assessment at a few sites next year. The literature review from the 2023-2024 report provides information on appropriate assessments that can effectively gauge student progress. Additionally, collect all data internally and develop data-sharing agreements between Team Read, the districts, and external evaluators. This comprehensive strategy will provide robust data, making evaluations more cost-effective and demonstrating the program's impact on student learning, which is essential for securing ongoing funding.

Continue to improve program and curricular materials. Team Read's curriculum is widely praised for its clarity, structure, and developmental alignment, with high satisfaction reported by both Site Coordinators and Reading Coaches.

Enhance Professional Development and On-Site Support. Team Read's multi-tiered professional learning model is a core strength, with high satisfaction across roles. However, there are opportunities to deepen training and coaching practice.

Strengthen Communication with Referring Teachers. Internal communication among Team Read staff is strong, but external communication with schools—especially referring teachers—remains a key area for improvement.

Continue to improve communication with Families of Student Readers. Team Read should continue using popular communication channels like TalkingPoints, text, and email while exploring efforts to provide more personalized updates about individual student progress. Families expressed a desire to better understand what their child is learning and how they are growing as readers. To address this, the program could implement brief progress summaries, monthly learning highlights, or simple paper handouts that share student-specific updates and tips for supporting reading at home. Providing this information in multiple languages and including reading resources or coach introductions would further enhance engagement. Additionally, offering optional Family Nights or Zoom sessions focused on reading strategies can provide valuable opportunities for connection and learning.