



The Case for SMART

Our Vision

An Oregon where every child can read and is empowered to succeed.

Our Work

We engage community volunteers to read one-on-one with PreK through third-grade children who need reading support. Participating children also receive new books each month to keep and read with their families. SMART partners with low income (at least 40% of students enrolled in the National School Lunch Program) schools and Head Start programs across the state, targeting students most at risk for falling behind.

The Need

The third-grade reading level is widely recognized as a key indicator of a child's future educational success. A student who can't read on grade level by third grade is four times less likely to graduate by age 19 than a child who does read proficiently in third grade.ⁱ Currently, more than one in four Oregon third graders – 29.8 percent – is reading below benchmark level.ⁱⁱ

Add poverty to the mix, and a student is 13 times less likely to graduate on time than his or her proficient, wealthier peer.ⁱⁱⁱ Right now in Oregon, nearly one-quarter of children are living in poverty.^{iv}

Our Results

Eugene Research Institute

An independent study by the Eugene Research Institute measured short- and long-term impacts of the SMART program, and discovered a wide range of statistically significant outcomes that demonstrated the program's effectiveness in improving children's reading abilities. Among outcomes, students in the program were significantly superior to the comparison group in word identification and oral reading fluency.

- Children who participated in SMART as first graders were **60 percent more likely** to reach state reading benchmarks in fifth grade than were similar students who did not participate.

Annual Survey Data

Each year, we survey volunteers, parents and educators statewide in an effort to evaluate our services and maintain a dialog with our program participants.

- Seventy-six percent of principals/teachers felt that SMART contributed significantly to the literacy outcomes in their schools.
- Eighty-seven percent of SMART teachers and principals felt that students participating in SMART benefitted significantly.
- Nine in 10 parents surveyed indicated that SMART helped their children become stronger readers.
- Parents reported that their children improved in the following ways because of their participation in SMART:
 - Has improved reading skills: 77 percent
 - Seems to enjoy reading more: 76 percent
 - Talks about books more often: 71 percent
 - Gained more confidence: 66 percent

SMART Student Milestones

In April 2012, SMART teachers were asked to report progress they have observed for each participating SMART student throughout the year in a variety of outcomes, including the child's reading performance. Teacher participation was voluntary.

- The number of students showing grade-appropriate reading performance increased from **21 percent** at the beginning of the year to **59 percent** by the end of the year.
- About **nine in 10** SMART students showed some to significant improvement in attention span, confidence, self-esteem, enthusiasm for reading and increased comfort in conversation.

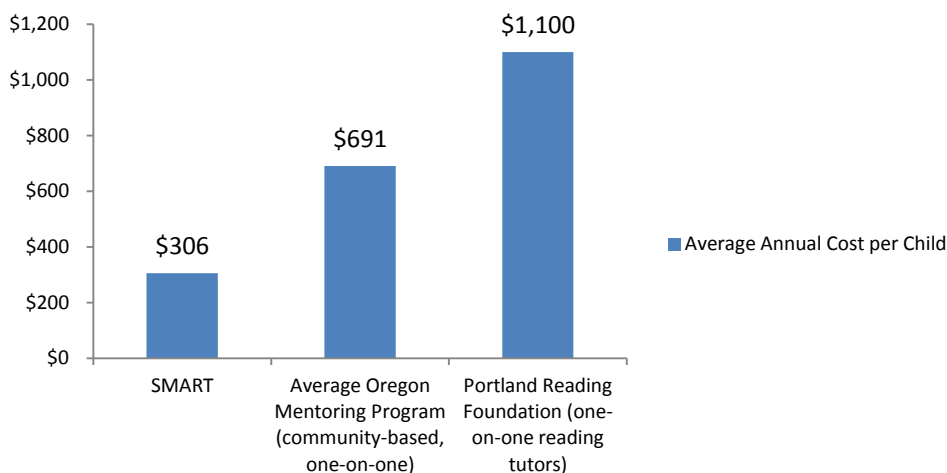
SMART's Cost-Effectiveness Cost of Service

SMART's average cost per child is \$306 per year.

Where does the money go?

- Volunteer recruitment, training and management
- Criminal history checks for volunteers
- On-site program management
- 14 new take-home books
- Data collection & analysis
- Program research and evaluation

Average Annual Cost per Child



Endorsements

What Works Clearinghouse

As an initiative of the U.S. Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences (IES), the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) was created in 2002 to be a central and trusted source of scientific evidence for what works in education. Published research of SMART met the WWC evidence standards for an evidenced based supplemental reading intervention.

The Coalition for Evidence-Based Policy

The Coalition for Evidence-Based Policy recognized SMART as one of five national K-12 intervention programs yielding positive results in well-designed, randomized, controlled trials. The Coalition cites SMART as a "low-cost intervention (that) has sizable positive impacts on students' reading abilities." For more information, visit www.evidencebasedprograms.org.

The Chalkboard Project

The Chalkboard Project – a coalition of five Oregon charitable foundations working to improve K-12 public education – released a report endorsing SMART as a model program for helping struggling K-3 students get the extra literacy support they need.

ⁱ Double Jeopardy: How Third-grade Reading Skills and Poverty Influence High School Graduation. Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2011.

ⁱⁱ Source: ODE (Oregon Dept. of Education) <http://www.ode.state.or.us/apps/Navigation/Navigation.Web/#/PAGR>

ⁱⁱⁱ Double Jeopardy: How Third-grade Reading Skills and Poverty Influence High School Graduation. Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2011.

^{iv} Source: Children First for Oregon: 2012 Progress Report – The Status of Children in Oregon http://www.cffo.org/site/download/progress_reports