

## Mississippi Project: 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Gate and Irlen

**Project Description:** Test the effects of Irlen colored overlays on ability to pass Mississippi's 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Reading Gate. The 3<sup>rd</sup> grade reading gate, formally entitled "Literacy-Based Promotion Act", is state legislation that requires school districts to retain all 3<sup>rd</sup> graders not reading at or above grade level by the end of the 2014-15 school year (May, 2015). If this school had been required to implement the legislation in 2014, they would have retained one-third of all 3<sup>rd</sup> graders.

**Methodology:** In the fall, all students in grade 3 at North Bay Elementary school were given a baseline measurement of their reading performance (NWEA Fall assessment). Then all 3<sup>rd</sup> graders were pre-screened for symptoms of Irlen Syndrome, with a total of 175 students identified as "at-risk" for Irlen Syndrome. These students were split into the test and control groups. The test group was formally screened for Irlen Syndrome and given their optimal colored overlay to use for 3 months. The control group received no intervention during the first 3 month period. At the end of this 3 month period, both groups were given the NWEA Winter assessment. After the NWEA Winter assessment, the students in the control group were formally screened for Irlen Syndrome and were given their optimal colored overlay to use (delayed treatment), while the test group continued to use their optimal overlay for an additional 3 months. At the conclusion of this second 3 month period, all students will be given the NWEA Spring assessment.

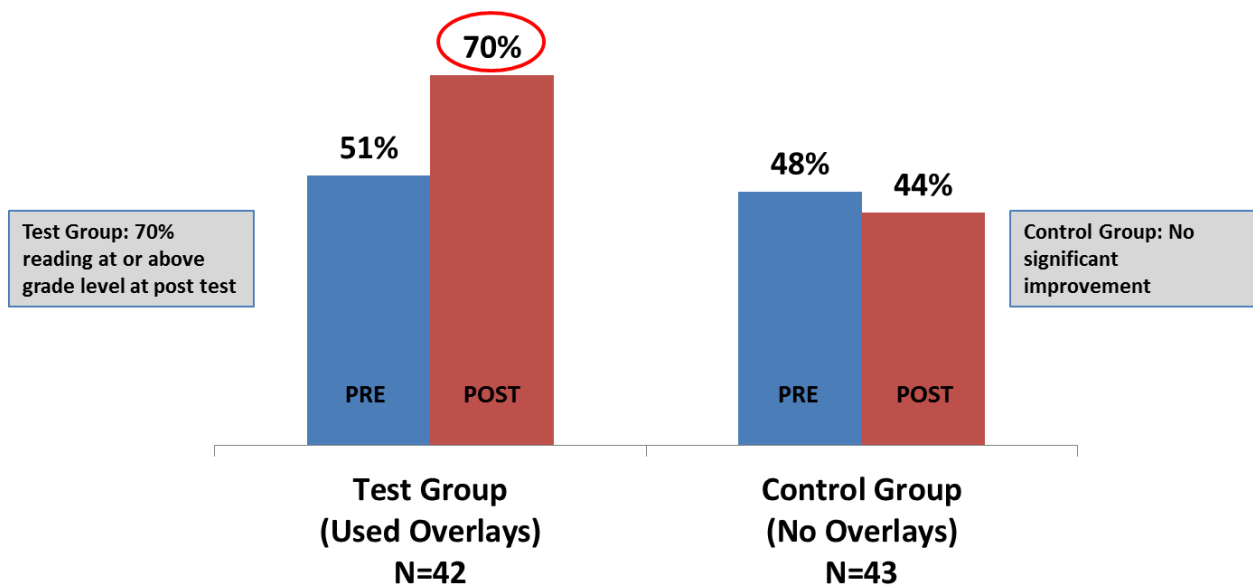
**Outcome Measure:** Northwest Evaluation Association

- Computer Adaptive Assessments (Reading, Language, Math)
- Administered 3 times per year (Fall, Winter, Spring)
- Nationally Normed
- Aligned to *Common Core State Standards*
- *Provides Diagnostic Data*

### Preliminary Results

	3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade	
	Test Group (n=42)	Control Group (n=43)
% of Students who Met or Exceeded the National Norm		
Fall (Baseline)	51%	48%
Winter (Post)	70%	44%

- At baseline measurement, the test and control group perform equally as well, with about 50% of kids in each group meeting or exceeding the fall national norm
- **After 3 months of overlay use, the test group shows significant improvement, with 70% of kids now meeting or exceeding the norm, whereas the control group shows no significant improvement during this time**
- “One immediate stat that speaks volumes to me as a school board member is the number of 3<sup>rd</sup> graders who have moved from the at-risk range. Twenty-one 3<sup>rd</sup> graders in the test group (N=75) were identified as at-risk for repeating 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. Eight of those students have been moved out of at-risk range due to the intervention of prescribed Irlen overlay. That is just the test group. Control group in progress with results pending.”



### 2016 Project Update

At the completion of the initial 3 month intervention period, children in the control group were given their preferred Irlen Overlay to use for the rest of the year, and 100% of the 3<sup>rd</sup> graders at North Bay Elementary passed the NWEA and were allowed to progress to 4<sup>th</sup> grade. Based on these pilot test results, the Bay St. Louis/Waveland School District in Mississippi has expanded their project district-wide, screening all children in grades K-12 for Irlen Syndrome. Training was provided to school personnel in July, 2015, for ten screeners, at least two at each school. The curriculum director maintains on-going tracking/data, and an end-of-year report will be generated in June 2016.