

## Anna R. Langford Community Academy, Chicago, IL

# TEST SCORES SOAR WITH HEADSPROUT READING PROGRAMS

Headsprout Early Reading and Headsprout Reading Comprehension resulted in remarkable improvements in DIBELS and ISAT scores.

### Improving academic performance

Named for the first African-American female alderman on the city council, Anna R. Langford Community Academy is a K-8 public elementary school situated on the south side of Chicago. It has about 350 students, almost all of whom are African-American. ESL learning is not a challenge at the school, since nearly all the students speak English at home. But Langford struggles with issues of poverty and low academic performance. Roughly 99 percent of Langford's students are considered low income and about 11 percent require special education.

In 2008, Dr. Lynn McGinnis-Garner joined Langford Academy as the school's principal. With a foundation in teaching and a track record as a turnaround principal, Garner was brought in to help improve students' academic performance and demonstrate progress.

"We believe that our scholars can do anything they put their minds to," says Garner. "We want to make sure that they are challenged and are provided the opportunity to make a true difference academically. But we also believe that education is a team effort: scholars, parents, teachers, staff, and administrators are all key players."

### Headsprout gets results

After her first few months as principal, Garner started looking at reading programs. "At the time," she says, "the children were being evaluated with the DIBELS program. Many of the primary students couldn't identify their letters or sounds – it was clear that we needed an intervention to support them. I was interested in anything that was going to help my students succeed."

*"The children really enjoy the program and it's not too labor-intensive for teachers."*

**Dr. Lynn McGinnis-Garner**  
Principal, Langford Academy

In 2014, Learning A-Z merged Headsprout's two elementary reading products — Headsprout Early Reading and Headsprout Reading Comprehension — into one adaptive, effective, and fun K-5 online reading program. From introducing early readers to key reading fundamentals to growing reading comprehension skills for more established readers, Headsprout is the perfect resource to help children become capable and confident readers.

## *LANGFORD'S THIRD-GRADE ISAT SCORES jumped from 46 percent of students meeting/exceeding reading standards to 73 percent!*

Garner evaluated a number of reading programs before deciding on Headsprout Early Reading for all her kindergarteners and first graders. "We tried it for the recommended 20 minutes a day and it worked."

Within a month or two, the school saw a remarkable improvement in its DIBELS scores. About 50 percent of student scores were on target, despite the fact that many of the students hadn't been exposed to computers prior to using the Headsprout program, and hadn't been read to at home.

"Headsprout was created in a really thoughtful way," says Garner. "It has a unique approach to teaching letters, sounds, and blends. The children really enjoy the program and it's not too labor-intensive for teachers."

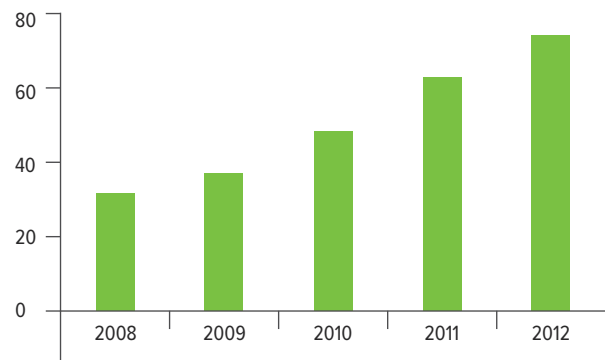
### **The importance of support**

After the initial success with the Headsprout program, the students at Langford Academy continued using it throughout the year. The following year, Langford Academy had a lot of support from the Headsprout representative. He implemented the program, trained the teachers, and created student benchmarks.

"The program was even more effective the second year, because we had the support we needed," explains Garner. That's when the school purchased Headsprout Reading Comprehension to support students in grades 2-4 and older students who were struggling with comprehension.

While Langford had seen growth in its ISAT reading scores, the biggest growth came between 2010 and 2012, when the school implemented the Headsprout program. During this time, Langford's third-grade ISAT scores jumped from 46 percent of students meeting/exceeding reading standards to 73 percent!

### **% Meet/Exceed Standards: 3rd Grade ISAT Reading**



Garner acknowledges the difference that Headsprout support can make in using the Headsprout reading programs: "I believe that Headsprout is an excellent program for improving literacy skills in schools. But it has to be implemented correctly and with fidelity to be effective."