

Using Evidence for Scaling Community-Based Interventions
That Work - CNCS Webinar Transcript

ANDREA: Hi, everyone. Thanks so much for joining us today. My name is Andrea Robles [phonetic] and I'm from the Office of Research and Evaluation at the Corporation for Research and Community Service. Our office's objective is to support our agency's mission by building knowledge on civic engagement, volunteering, and national service. We conduct in-house research but also fund research through competitive grants to researchers, scholars, and dissertators at institutions of higher education and support research and evaluation of our programs and grantees.

Our webinar series is one way we share our ongoing research and findings. Today we are very excited to host another research and evidence webinar titled "Using Evidence for Scaling Community-Based Interventions That Work: Perspectives from the Field." As we did in June of last year, we are very excited to welcome members from the Federal Evidence and Evaluation Community of Practice, who are both in the audience and online today. So, thanks for coming and listening. This webinar is part of a larger series of workshops organized by federal agencies and

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partnerships with the OMB Evidence Team as part of the Evidence and Evaluation Community of Practice. They aim to have one event per month and always post slides afterwards on the Community Max page.

And if you work for a federal agency and are interested in hosting an event or would like to learn more about the Community of Practice, please reach out to Erica Zielewski. And her email is on one of the slides right now. So, again, thanks for coming and I'm glad everyone's back to work.

Before we begin, we'd like to cover a few housekeeping items for Adobe Connect and I'll pass it to Emily.

EMILY: All right, thank you everyone for your patience with Adobe Connect. We want to let you know that this webinar will be recorded and posted online following the presentation. Unlike previous webinars, there is no dial in phone line. All audio is broadcast over the internet using your computer speakers. All participants will also be in "Listen Only" mode

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throughout the presentation. But you can ask questions at any time by using the chat box below.

As we mentioned earlier, this webinar is being recorded and if you have any questions or if you experience technical difficulties, please let us know in the chat box and we will send you a personal message to [unintelligible]. I believe that takes care of all the housekeeping items.

ANDREA: Okay, thanks, Emily. So, our program today will be as follows: I will now pass this to Dr. Mary High who's the Director of Research and Evaluation; Dr. Lee Sangapore [phonetic], who's a Research and Evaluation Manager; and Anthony Areno [phonetic], Research Analyst, all at CNCS, who will provide some context around scaling and then introduce the speakers. We will hear presentations from five CNCS grantees about their experiences scaling program models and have a brief concluding remark from Dr. High. Then we will open the discussion for Q&A.

During the webinar, please feel free to ask questions or provide comments in the chat box and we will get to

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them during the Q&A. So, I'm now going to hand this over to Dr. Mary High.

MARY: Thanks, Andrea, and welcome to today's webinar. I just wanted to put this in a bit of a larger total context for today. I think, hopefully, everyone knows that using data and evidence for decision-making continues to be a bipartisan priority for the federal government. The most recent example of this priority can be found in the recently signed Foundations for Evidence-Making Policy Act of 2018. Included in this foundation act is a set of evaluation and evidence-building activities in Title 1 that ask federal agencies to engage in a number of activities, including scaling evidence-based interventions.

Today we're going to focus on one of the important ways we can use evidence to inform our decisions within the federal context. And we're going to hear about folks who take evidence-based programs and practices and expand them across communities so that more people can benefit from what works. Specifically, here at CNCS, we have a number of examples of how

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AmeriCorps grantees have been taking evidence-based programs and bringing them to scale in their communities. We're going to hear directly today as part of our third webinar in our scaling series, directly from folks who have actively been engaged in implementing this notion of scaling evidence-based practice.

So, we're going to hear a little bit about their firsthand experience about the evidence interventions that they have, but also, some of the challenges and opportunities that are presented by taking these sorts of things to scale. So, those that are interested or may have already joined us for the two prior webinars, again, this is the third in a series on this topic. The first one sort of framed this notion and how we at CNCS are sort of examining and learning about scaling evidence-based interventions. The second one really talked about a program that has been scaled based on continuing evidence that it's built around its effectiveness. And today we're going to hear a variety of perspectives. So, it's going to be, I think, a really informative conversation. And with that I'm

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going to pass it onto Anthony Narena [phonetic] to introduce today's speakers.

ANTHONY: Thank you very much, Mary. One of the things that we have been thinking about as we engage in this project and the project is something that we've been working with our contractor on, our contractor Mathematica has helped to unpack what goes into scaling. What are the key components? What are the variants? What are the ways that grantees can look at their program? And scaling naturally follows from the demonstration of some evidence-based for impact.

So, in thinking about that and in thinking about how we can bring effective solutions to different communities, we thought it would be interesting to look at or informative to look at how the scaling takes place? Where might it take place with ease? Where might there be challenges? What are the things that are going on that would facilitate or impede this process? In the contract that we have now, some of the deliverables that we've received and there will be at some point six documents that lay documents out

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guidance for scaling for grantees. These will also be important for funders, foundations, and different groups that are interested in strengthening their impact. But before we release those, before they go through our clearance process, we thought it would be interesting to have a conversation with our programs that have demonstrated strong evidence. In the process of selecting these, we found five that met these criteria who have been evaluated and have been looking at and enacting scaling in their work.

So, today's webinar is really going to be a presentation followed by what we hope to be a very vigorous conversation, opening up these individuals for questions so that they may guide what you do. These are folks that are very skilled in this and we hope that they will bring you some information and some insight. We think as we move through this process that experiential learning and the development of guidance and development of technical assistance is going to be very helpful for all of our grantees. This webinar is a step in that process.

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So, as we go forward -- okay, oh, I need to do that. Okay. We'd like to ask the panel if they would address three basic questions in their brief presentation and these would include: what did you do to get evidence and what drove your decision to scale knowing that the on-the-ground circumstances are very important in that decision? What are the critical preparatory steps you have to take for your organization to support scaling? And what were the key challenges and what have you learned from effective scaling?

Today's panel is going to include LaVal Brewer former Executive Director of Playworks; Lara Dreier, Senior Manager of Federal Initiatives for College Possible; Sadie O'Connor, Managing Director Reading and Math; Adam Mauer, HR Consultant for Citizens Schools; and Dean Elson, Chief Knowledge Officer for Reading Partners. With that, I would like to pass it onto LaVal and we can begin the conversation.

LAVAL: Good morning. My name is LaVal Brewer and I'm the Former Executive Director for Playworks in Southern California. Playworks is a national non-profit that

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works at elementary schools around the country to bring safe and healthy play to every child. They do that but through bringing play through recess. And that recess time actually ends up changing the system and the impacts that are happening on school campuses on a daily basis. We do that through three very formalized programs. One is our coach program, who's hired by Playworks and often is an AmeriCorps member, is placed at a school every day, all day for the entire school year. And they help to transform the recess time and also to bring the value of games and play to children of that school.

The second opportunity is where we partner with a school and we have a staff person who's actually working with four schools. And that staff person works with that school every day for a week throughout the entire year. And they have four schools that they're working with.

And then our final way that we make this work now is by training schools to do this work to create systems change so that they can have safe play at their

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school, thus changing their school climate and increasing social and emotional learning during the playtime.

So, what did we learn? How did we come to this decision? We also started at Stanford Mathematica a control study back in 2013. In that, we were able to confirm that our theory of change gave us the ability to scale outside of our own footprint and our own ability to do this work ourselves. So, 20 years ago when we started doing this work, we thought, well, we'll place an AmeriCorps member or a Caring Consistent adult, which is part of our theory of change, at a school campus and they will change the school climate through recess and children will have greater play. What we began to realize was that we wanted every child to have safe and healthy play in the United States and that our current theory of change and our current evidence said that we can do this by actually helping schools to have that safe and healthy place process. To take our theory of change and not say that we can deliver this ourselves, but that schools who have these Caring Consistent adults

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and who have a system for making this work happen, can actually do it themselves.

So, what we did was we tested it out. So, we do a lot of the valuation of Playworks. We evaluate every year. We ask principals what they think. We talk to students. We talk to schools. We talk to school partners. And we use a lot of the valuation to help us make decisions.

So, as we were moving forward in this process, we thought, are we actually achieving our vision? Are we actually helping every child in America have safe and healthy play or are we just having safe and healthy play at the schools that we currently have partnerships with and we're happy with our current impact? We realized we weren't happy with our current impact and that what we really wanted was to achieve the actual vision and that we would use our theory of change and the evidence that we've had on how to create safe and healthy plays at schools and we would bring that to schools around the country. And that we would actually unleash schools to have this ability to

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do this work themselves. So, if we were doing it ourselves and we were keeping it ourselves and we were the ones that were making this happen, we would have incremental change. We would have impact. But we wouldn't change the system and our evidence told us that the system would change even if we weren't the person doing it.

So, how do we do that? So, we had to say, "Well, how do we go about changing our system? How do we go about growing and scaling, not just having impact? In other words, not going from 10 to 20, but how do we go from one location to five locations? How do we actually scale up in different places? So, we began to say, "How do we test this?" So, the first thing we needed to do was we needed to figure out if our AmeriCorps funding in our local locations could expand to new locations outside of where we currently were? And in that case, it was in our metro. Can we get outside the metro? Can we get in new spaces?

So, I'm in California. We were thinking are there two places in California that we can grow that made sense

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for us to expand and scale so that we would have greater conversion within those spaces? We chose Riverside in San Bernardino and we chose San Diego. So, my role and responsibility was to go out and study those geographic locations to determine if the theory of change that we had and the school partners that existed in those spaces would be a good fit for us to do a test and to do a pilot to see if this would actually work by expanding our reach and expanding outside of our actual reach?

The second thing we did was we said, "What are our actual outcomes? What do we want to desire to have happen in these locations?" So that we could keep real clear what our actual goal was and that that goal would stay connected to the theory of change. That we wouldn't just scale and grow in order for scale and growth, but we would scale and grow in order for us to continue to implement the theory of change. And that we would stay within the evidence we know was working well. Thank you for moving that forward.

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So, we did that work and we started to go out and actually test that. So, did a small test in San Diego and we did a small test in Riverside and we found that the Riverside test was more productive than the San Diego test and that threw us off because San Diego is the second largest school district in California and Los Angeles has the largest school district in California. We thought it would be similar. And what we determined was that by doing the preparatory work, we would see that there was a different space in the scaling and we had to work through that process. So, the final thing -- what were the challenges? So, the challenges we found and what we determined in scaling is scaling is not easy work. You have to plan. You have to create your outcomes. You have to test small. And then you have to evaluate that test against your outcomes, not against how you feel but what are the outcomes? Actually get the outcomes you were deciding. And then you would go to a small pilot. And then you could take this pilot and you can expand that pilot across the country. That's what's currently happening right now.

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So, in scaling you really need to take your time. You need to determine what you can do. And you can also have to determine if you have the team members -- in our case, the AmeriCorps members -- who could actually do the work with the leadership team we had in place. Thank you.

LARA: Thanks, LaVal. My name is Lara Dreier and I am the Director of Federal Partnership at College Possible. College Possible supports students from low income backgrounds who are pursuing a college degree. And in our flagship model, students start with us doing programming as juniors in high school. And they're paired with a near peer AmeriCorps coach every year until they graduate from college. And so, that is our flagship model. We operate that in six metro areas around the country.

And a couple of years ago, we launched a new program called Catalyze. Catalyze serves students who are first generation and from low income backgrounds to our already in college. Many of these students may have participated in a college access program while

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they were in high school. But many of those programs don't offer continued support through college degree attainment, even though this is a group of students that has dramatically lower graduation rates than their higher income peers.

So, our Catalyze coaches are embedded on college campuses, supervised by college staff, and they're implementing the College Possible curriculum. And the idea is that this model has the potential to allow us to serve exponentially more students more quickly than if we were continuing to just expand our flagship program into more space and regions. That process, extending the flagship program, is extremely resource intensive since it requires us to build a whole staff to support the operation.

So, we are working to scale our Catalyze program. So, we'll talk a little bit about how we came to that conclusion. The first thing we looked at was our own internal data. That initially drove us to the realization that support through college graduation was critical. Though we actually started as a college

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access only program, so we worked with students only until they graduated from high school. And what we found when we started tracking student progress beyond high school was that our students weren't seeing the success we wanted once they got to college. So, that led us to developing the college success component of our flagship program.

We also turned to national data in helping us decide how or whether to scale. So, there's a lot of data out there. I'm sure many of you are familiar with it. Georgetown reports that there are 240,000 low-income students that graduate from high school every year who are college ready but who don't enroll. In addition to that, high-income students are significantly more likely to earn a college degree than students in the lowest income quartile. And there is a lot of economic data that demonstrates the increasing importance of having post-secondary credentials to sustain our workforce needs.

So, in our flagship program, we're serving about 3,000 high students every year, which is, we think, a

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critical service to those students, but it's a drop in the bucket in terms of the scope of the problem nationally. And so, we wanted to figure out a way to serve a lot more students really quickly. So, that is part of what drove us to explore how our services might integrate into existing infrastructures that already exist on college campuses rather than continuing to build something from scratch.

And then, another part of our decision hinged on sustainability. Our Catalyze model requires campuses to make an investment in the program, which reduces our reliance on grants to ensure that we can continue the program and sustain it financially.

So, ultimately, we found that our college success program was the component of our program that was the most scalable in terms of resource investment and it was also the greatest need in terms of solving the problem that we refer to as the degree divide -- the difference in degree attainment between high-income and low-income students.

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So, in terms of preparation for scaling, we learned some valuable lessons when we were expanding our flagship program into new cities and high schools around building relationships and buy-in before entering a new market. So, there was a lot of energy spent in listening sessions with various colleges and universities to ensure that the program that we were designing was the program that they would value. And while all colleges and universities, of course, want their students to graduate, there's a risk of folks feeling defensive or territorial if our approach appears to duplicate services they already provide. So, we wanted to be really careful about that.

The other thing that we've done is really build out a robust staff to support it, which includes bringing in people with corporate and marketing backgrounds as well as nonprofit expertise. And this has really allowed us to help articulate the value proposition to the institutions, which, I will admit, is a different mindset and skillset than many of us nonprofit lifers might have in our toolbelt. So, that has been really valuable. You may not be able to see the details of

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the visual on this slide, but it's really just a visual representation of the business case that we're making for the program.

So, in terms of challenges that we face, I would say they fall into two main categories. Because our Catalyze program is more decentralized than our flagship programming and the day-to-day management and supervision is done by campus staff instead of college possible team members, there are just some really basic challenges around building the infrastructure to ensure that we continue to have really strong grant compliance. So, those of you on the call who have had host sites forever, if that is nothing new to you, you've been doing that probably since day one. But for us, it's a relatively new model to embrace and so it's been a learning curve. As we figure out how not to support members directly, but how do we support their supervisors?

And then I would say more fundamentally, that decentralized model also means, for better or worse, that the campus staff feel more ownership of the

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program. And so, in some cases, that means that they want to change things about the model and we have to decide what elements of our program are critical and require fidelity and where we think there's room for campus-specific modifications?

So, a really simple example of this is one of our partners who wanted to provide coaching only to first-year students, whereas our model at its core continues to coach students through graduation. So, we have a lot of discussions about whether that was an area we felt we could flex in and, ultimately, we worked with the campus so that our coaches could still support students through graduation but we focused our recruitment efforts heavily on first-year students so we could help the campus ensure that those students weren't falling through the cracks.

So, that's just a little bit about our experience and I will then turn it over to the next presenter.

SADIE: Good afternoon. My name is Sadie O'Connor. I am the Managing Director at Reading and Math Inc. and Reading

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Corps is one of the AmeriCorps programs that we administer. So, Reading Corps is a tutoring program that places AmeriCorps members into either preschools or elementary schools with the goal to help students become proficient readers by the end of third grade. In our preschool program, our tutors are placed into a classroom and they're working with all of the students in the classroom throughout the day, providing some one-to-one support, small group support, and even classroom-wide support to help those students acquire the literacy skills that they need to be successful for kindergarten.

In our Take 3 model in our elementary schools, a tutor is placed into the elementary school and they're really providing one-on-one, 20-minute intervention sessions with students throughout the day. So, they have a caseload of students that have been identified as being at risk that they're working with every day of the week.

We have what I articulated on this slide of sort of what we consider to be three pillars of our program.

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Evidence-based literacy interventions that are used consistently by all of our tutors. Database decision-making is really integral in looking at assessment and making changes to the interventions or the instruction that's happening to make sure we're meeting individual student needs. And then, providing onsite coaching for all of the tutors so that they get immediate feedback about their tutoring and we're ensuring fidelity to the model.

In our 16-year history that Reading Corps has existed, we've scaled from being 24 AmeriCorps members in a few locations to now having more than 1500 in 600-plus locations throughout the State of Minnesota and is replicated in 12 states.

So, the first question is what did we do to get our evidence and what really drove our decision to scale? And what you're seeing right now is a visual of how we think about how we build evidence within Reading Corps. And it starts with establishing promise and then moving into refining and evaluating, moving into scaling and improving, and then moving into continuous

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improvement. And when I started reflecting and thinking about these questions about building evidence and reflecting back to our earlier years as we were just getting started, I thought about establishing promise and how important those two key questions really were to help give us a really solid foundation that helped us build our evidence and then, ultimately, scale.

So, those two key questions: Is the program model stable? One of the things that we did early on was engage literacy experts in helping us design and develop what the model looks like. Right at the beginning, we looked to the research base to help us determine what interventions we would really use. And so, we defined interventions and assessment, a training program that could really be consistently applied across the whole program with all of our tutors.

And then is it promising? We had a legislator that initially gave us some seed money to get started and one of the things that she said was right at the get

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go this has to produce results. If it produces results, we'll continue to consider funding it. So, that was really baked into what we did right at the outset, was conducting evaluations, not largescale evaluations but small analysis that enabled us to show that we were making an impact and had some promise.

And then, what drove our decision to scale? I think it's pretty simple. For us, it was really demand. Demand from our school partners. We did offer it to any school in Minnesota that was interested in it. And as the principals started to talk to each other and they could see the results the program was having with their own students, we were starting to get more demand from school districts and schools. We're also getting more demand from legislators because we were starting to secure more state funding. And also demand from the philanthropic world.

So, the next question is what was critical trackwork that we did and how we are really supporting scale-up? I think on the outside, like I described earlier, the essential elements of our model were really clear. We

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got really clear about that right in the beginning. We wanted to make sure that the same model was used in all of our schools. So, if you went to a school that was in Northern Minnesota, close to Canada, if you went to school in the Twin Cities and you maybe went to one in Southern Minnesota, you'd see our AmeriCorps members delivering the same things -- the same interventions, the same assessments. They're all trained in the same way. So, that really allowed us to have a really stable theory of change.

The second thing is that these early results helped to prove that our model was effective. We did some really pretty low-cost match analysis, match sample analysis, for five consecutive years as we were just getting started. And that really was helpful to show that the impact that we were having was strong and, like I said, it was a low-cost thing to provide some early results.

The third thing is then finding people who influence resources, people who care about funding and implementing programs that work and who are also

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interested in this issue of third grade reading. Obviously, resources are essential to scale. So, finding those people, whether it was in the philanthropic community, education system, school district leaders, our state funding, our state legislators. People who care about scaling that works and nurturing those relationships with them. Getting them out to see our program in action. Talking to our tutors, talking to our principals, talking to the teachers so that they could become early adopters.

And then the fourth thing is just a constant refinement of our operational systems, which has just been 16 years in the making. So, as our program has grown, always rethinking how we're doing things to be efficient and effective and providing a good experience for our AmeriCorps members.

This is a really small example, but think about sign-in process that you have for a training. If you have a group of 30 members or 50 members, it's pretty easy to have paper sign-in sheets. If you have 1500 members coming to a training, paper sign-in sheets are no

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longer effective or efficient. So, something like that moving to scanned barcodes with name badges was just a small example of the types of operational systems that just have to change as we've grown and scaled.

And then finally, key challenges and what we've learned about effective scaling. It's hard to isolate these to just a few. We've learned so much over the years about what it takes to scale. But a few things that really came to mind. The first being thinking about a statewide infrastructure. We started Reading Corps and all of our staff were housed in the Twin Cities, in our office in the Twin Cities. But we were really serious about reaching all parts of Minnesota and being able to provide a good experience to those schools. And so, at a certain point in our history, we decided to open up regional offices so that we could have staff located throughout the state that could really directly support the AmeriCorps members in the schools. And so, now today we have seven regional offices throughout Minnesota. And now as we're scaling nationally, we also have offices in our other locations.

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The second thing is just thinking about a system for student data management. When we first started, we were using sort of an off-the-shelf system for our student data that produced graphs and had some really nice capabilities. But as our program grew and our needs became more unique and we had more desire to be able to export the data files and manipulate and think about how we're using that data, we were just finding the off-the-shelf product really wasn't meeting our needs anymore. So, we did make a decision to invest in building our own student data management system that was completely customized for our program, which just allows us to have better access to our data, which is useful for us at the evaluation level but also really at the ground level for our tutors and coaches. And the third, of course, as all of you are aware, scaling and operating programs obviously require financial resources. So, just that constant attention and dedication to raising money to support the program. And I will say that the continuum of daily evidence is really important. And for us to not really be satisfied that outcomes are strong, but always

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challenging to think about how can we strengthen and improve and refine. And it helps funders continue to see us as leading in this field.

So, yeah, I'm happy to take questions in the Q&A, as all of the presenters above.

ADAM: Hi, my name is Adam Auer and I've had the opportunity to work with Citizen Schools in a number of capacities over the last six years. First, my role was as Chief Talent Officer and today I lead HR and many components related to AmeriCorps as a provider of outsource services through my company, Positively Partners. Positively Partners is a social enterprise that works with nonprofits in Boston and DC and across the country to deliver mission-aligned HR services at lower costs.

Today I'm speaking on behalf of Citizen Schools with a focus on its scale journey, which has significantly evolved over its past 20 years of operation. And I think it's a different journey than the stories that are being shared by other panelists because Citizen

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Schools achieved significant scale, then contracted, and is now thinking about scale in some different ways.

To look at our mission, as an organization Citizen Schools seeks to ensure that every adolescent has the skills, mindset, and networks needed to inspire them as lifelong learners in ways that position them to thrive in the 21st century. It's a mission that has remained the cornerstone of our work for more than two decades. But how we live it and execute this work continues to evolve and it's shaped the way we think about scale and opportunities to work both inside and outside of the existing education system.

Our goal is to be a disruptive innovator in support of middle school students and the broader ecosystem in which students exist. Our vision statement, the next slide, if I can move it along. Our vision statement, the longer-term aim of our work is now to serve one million adolescents by 2025. We're providing hands-on learning experiences for students that are led by experts from the community. And that's always been the core of our work. We link students with experienced

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experts across the professional discipline that help to engage middle school students and prepare them for college and careers.

And while hands-on learning experience is the core, how we make these experiences available to students, the approach to reaching more students and assuring the quality of those interactions has really evolved. And I think the best way to think about that is through the lens of Clay Christiansen's work on disruptive innovation. Like many organizations, we launched into this journey to effect systems change from a position outside the system. Thinking how we could build infrastructure to support that change and then kind of integrate that later into the system. And we did it through our after-school programs, which leveraged AmeriCorps teaching fellows. And we created an extended day for middle school students that connected them with these hands-on learning opportunities. And also, just help middle schools generally kind of think about how to serve the needs of students in the 21st century.

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Our journey to scale brought us to seven states at our largest and we had a cohort of almost 130 AmeriCorps members serving in our program. It also was a tremendous opportunity to learn about what worked better and to understand the challenges that middle schools face growing the skills and mindsets needed for success in the 21st century. It also relies on a really robust infrastructure to deliver a program. It often required us to build infrastructure that mirrored what was already in place across many schools. And that added cost. That meant that many schools that needed us, communities that could benefit most from our program weren't able to afford us. And that led us down a journey to think about scale differently, to consider ways we could better partner with schools to leverage what was already working, what could be buttressed, and when we could work as a member of the school community in different ways to support common goals.

So, the journey to think about a differently about how we could spark and support innovation from within the system caused us to evolved our program models in ways

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that continues to envision a kind of direct service, this provision of after-school programming, as the core of what we do. Yet disaggregated two components of our work in ways that allow us to scale in concert with school partners and rely on their infrastructure so that we can complement them, rather than sort of build structures around them. In essence, we evolved in a way that allows us to partner with schools as part of their existing school day as an alternative to our after-school program offering.

So, if you look at the slide, it starts with sort of expanding the school day at the core, our direct service component. And that provides the opportunity for us to continue to allow AmeriCorps members to serve and to do great work within schools and to establish proof points that demonstrate the larger impact on hands-on learning programming. But then we've evolved the first icon there, Catalyst, which provides the opportunity for us to teach and support others in the delivery of the hands-on learning experiences. And then the third component to the right, US2020, creates the infrastructure and

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scaffolding needed to introduce the experts, those skilled professionals into the school day. So, in concert, these three program elements provide a revised pathway to scale, which will continue to expand the organization's reach beyond what it was able to accomplish through direct service alone.

The next slide shows kind of our journey to impact. And this begins again with direct service at our core. But then in this megaphone sort of amplifies that impact through a new pathway to scale, which calls for us to nurture the supply chain for expert mentors who lead the hands-on learning, to grow the relationships and demand for our partnership with schools, to grow capacity for this program within communities, and then achieve broader scale in the form of a movement. And to bring that full circle, back to what I mentioned around Clay Christiansen, this is just achieving the goal of transformative education in a new way that sort of is more embedded in the system and is less reliant on the robust operational infrastructure for program delivery that Citizen Schools was kind of building and tweaking to ensure quality delivery.

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My last comments just kind of relate to how AmeriCorps continues to fit into this. It's been interesting as we kind of have shrunk a little bit our direct service offerings, AmeriCorps has continued to be such a prominent component of our work. Both through kind of traditional service opportunities, but has also given us a lot of opportunity to think about vistas for capacity building. And then just this larger movement building has helped us to envision career pathways differently for those AmeriCorps members to think about ways that they can participate in this movement after their service as community liaisons, but also embedded within schools [unintelligible].

Happy to answer questions at the end, but thanks for hearing a little bit more about our journey.

DEAN: Hi, everyone. I'm Dean Elson [phonetic]. I'm the Chief Knowledge Officer at Reading Partners. Reading Partners is proud to be celebrating our 20th Anniversary year of providing services to students and schools throughout the country. Our vision at Reading

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Partners is a future where all children in the United States have the reading skills necessary to reach their full potential. And our mission is to help children become lifelong readers by empowering communities to provide individualized instruction with measurable results.

Our program model is an evidence-based tutoring program. We work in public schools, including charter schools and as a public-school literacy intervention that is absolutely powered by AmeriCorps members. We're a proud national service program. Our AmeriCorps members and our community volunteers work in schools with students. The majority of our schools are Title 1 schools in under resourced communities and they work with them twice weekly for about 45 minutes. These are kindergarten through fourth grade students primarily who are struggling with reading and learning the basic foundational literacy skills they need to succeed in school in their life.

It looks like some of our slide content got cut off a little bit here, so I'll just help you as we move

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along. So, this first slide is talking about the question related to evidence building and our decision to scale-up. So, like many of the other presenters today, I'll share with you that we also have internal student assessment data for several years that showed we were looking and seeing strong results for our students and seeing strong improvement in their literacy skills and their growth during the school year. They were able to reduce grade level reading gaps with them. And so, before I joined Reading Partners back in 2011, the organization had begun a small-scale match comparison study with the design and the oversight from a university professor and some data analysis by a doctoral student. And this allowed us to engage in what I would call a lower stakes evaluation or study and it allowed us to learn a little bit more and engage in a more rigorous evaluation of our impact than the organization had ever done previously.

The early results from that study, along with high satisfaction from principals we were working with, a long waiting list for new school partners, and also an

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aligned board and leadership team really pushed us to look for additional funding and opportunities to scale. We really believed that we had a successful program model and we wanted to bring it to more under resourced communities. And so, several foundations, individual donors, board members and others made introductions and that really allowed us to explore partnership opportunities in these states and districts. They also had become an AmeriCorps program back in 2010. And as a proud national service program, we work with state AmeriCorps commissions as well. And that has provided funds and support to our organization to be able to grow and bring the program to more states. We are currently serving approximately 11,000 students a year in 14 regions. And so, those regions are in nine states plus Washington, DC.

A turning point, a real catalyzing moment for Reading Partners happened back in 2010 and 2011 when we competed for and won a federal Social Innovation Fund or SIF grant through the Corporation for National Community Service. And that grant provided funding to us and opportunity to request matching funds from

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other donors and a way to share our work and get others excited about what we were doing. And really allowed us a new way to pay for our first time ever actually a large, independent, highly-rigorous program evaluation. And through this SIF grant and the support of the Edna McCullough Park Foundation and our partnership with MDRC, our research firm, we were able to launch and go through the process of a randomized control design study or evaluation. And so, that was carried out in 2012 to 2015. It was a big process or a large process for us as an organization to learn and grow as we went along. We learned a lot from that study and the outcomes were really helpful for us as we talked about the benefits that Reading Partners brought.

And I want to just highlight here that both that SIF study as well as the second SIF grant that brought us to the State of Colorado and a partnership with CNCS again in Mile High United Way allowed us to grow to Colorado. Both the SIF studies allowed us to look at implementation data as well and I find that really important. I want to underscore the need to do that.

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How do you learn? What are the lessons you can learn about your implementation fidelity and program quality that maybe you didn't know before? And I believe other presenters today had mentioned the same thing. You're not focused only on the impacts.

And then, lastly, just in terms of our decision to scale, I just want to highlight that our early evidence of success and student impact, those early studies along with the SIF studies as well and the valued asset, that school and district partners felt that we were and have really allowed us to continue to scale and bring our services to more schools and more districts over time.

This next slide focuses on the question on the critical preparatory work and how the organization supports scaling up. So, as with many other presenters today, we really focus on having a clear program model and theory of change and evolving that over time. We believe that ensuring the model has certain standardized elements that have been tested, I think you want to do that at least internally initially and

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then work toward external tests and evaluations as well.

I think it's important to ask, "What do you know about your program's success and how do you know it?" and "What are the first things first that you know you have to get right from the model to achieve success in a new location?" Some of our other presenters today talked about partnerships and that's certainly incredibly important here at Reading Partners. Fee for service and our philanthropic investment, local leadership, key staff roles, etc.

We also feel that alignment from the board, the leadership team, and also our Regional Executive Directors and boards around expansion and scaling up to address the challenge while focusing on continual improvement. All of that is important too.

Our key functions, many key functions need to have both good leaders with good talent, strong talent and functional expertise. And over time we're able to build that expertise and add more talent to the organization. We're very pleased that we've been able

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to do that. There is a program, data evaluation, development, finance, HRIT operation, etc.

We've also talked about the importance of having an expansion checklist and a clear timeline for go and no-go decisions. When in the year is the right time for you as an organization to make those decisions? And in our experience, the time that I've been here, we have looked at bringing the program to additional locations and decided not to, in fact, follow through. Sometimes during a rapid expansion cycle, some places it just wasn't feasible. We looked at our internal capacity and operational capacity to be able to so and, in some cases, we had to back off. I would recommend that you consider that carefully.

I think it's important to achieve clarity and being transparent about where we were going to scale and why and what the opportunities that existed around sustainable funding. We felt it was very important to not just think about the first year you go to a city, but more what's the three-year timeframe around expansion? And the discussions with school and

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district partners about the value, ahead of our model and how it aligned to their local vision or their blueprint to see success.

Obviously, as everyone talked about, it's important to continue to raise more funding for expansion and improvement and so that's really key. Making sure we're aligning annually as an organization on our key priorities and projects. We openly debate the must-have investments versus the nice-to-have investments and projects that might need to be pushed out farther.

And, finally, anyone that knows me knows my data matter a lot to me and the teams that I work with. And so, having data on learning and the ability to tell an impact story are important as well. And I underscore here again that qualitative data can be very important as well quantitative data.

I know I'm running short on time, so I want to go quickly through the next slide. I'd be happy to answer more questions as we get into the next section. But a few key bullets here about what are key challenges at

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Reading Partners and what we've learned about effective scaling? One is to document success. Have written programs, fidelity guidelines, and quality standards. Provide training on those guidelines. And use quality assurance processes that are tied to program operational and financial data.

It's important to balance scaling, I think, with core program improvement. So, while you're trying to continue to improve and reflect on and change certain elements potentially of your core model as you learn and you grow. Sometimes you only have so much capacity and so many resources to do. You can't do everything. So, trying to find the right balance for your organization with scaling and that core program improvement is important.

Encouraging innovation, fidelity to a model that's proven successful is really important to continued success. But we also believe an organization needs to have a certain degree of innovation and regional or site flexibility. So, within that, I think expanding the sources of innovation. Not all great ideas come

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from national headquarters. Think about the process you need to use to encourage and support innovative ideas and sharing across your network as you scale up.

The last few things: secure multi-funding commitments. I talked about that earlier. That's really important. You should expect everyone in the organization to be a fundraiser. I really like what was said earlier about the importance of adding talent sometimes outside the nonprofit space and thinking about corporate and marketing folks to join your organization as well.

And then lastly, operational efficiency certainly matters. Use cost and other financial metrics as well as operational metrics to drive your core business functions. And figure out when and how scaling provides same or similar levels of program success with fewer resources and which resources can get you to more with less.

Finally, prepare the talent bench. I think it's important to recognize that not everyone will be at the organization for 5-10 years. You will have important leaders and other folks leave the

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organization from time to time and so it's important to be aware of and plan for talent needs. Even before there are signs that someone might leave, you want to mitigate the potential loss of expertise and knowledge. And, again, that goes back to the importance of documenting your success in processes as well.

MARY: Okay, thank you. I think we heard a lot of great information. I just wanted to point out a couple of things that struck me as each of you were sharing your scaling experiences and journeys. I just thought it would be interesting to point them out and then certainly turn it over to questions that I'm sure folks have both in the room and on the phone.

So, one thing that really struck me as you were all talking was that you all seem to be nicely embedded inside of organizations that appreciate a culture of learning and really support a culture of learning. And by that, I mean, for whatever reasons, you all sort of have this story of having this openness to inquiry, to the pathway of continuous learning, not being afraid

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to realize that maybe you were on the wrong path and pivoting and taking another path. So, I think that's an important part of this scaling conversation, that you are able to operate in an environment that allows you to fail, to regroup, and to try again.

I think what was also striking about each one of your journeys is that you also had a very systematic approach not only to your evidence-building because you all did a very thoughtful, rigorous sort of approach to building your evidence in various ways, but also to your decisions around scaling. You realized that in addition to having to incrementally build your data and demonstrate the results and to prove your outcomes, you also had to make your decisions around whether or not you wanted to expand or not. And in some cases, expanding and then deciding to retreat a bit for whatever reason. So, I think that's also reflective of a willingness to embrace sort of this continuous learning and improvement cycle.

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Another thing that struck me as you all were speaking was the sort of tension between fidelity and flexibility. You all started your stories with, "We had to really figure out what our stable model was. We had to make sure we kind of knew what our core components were. That's what we could bring to our outcomes." But then you started, you know, bringing to to different campuses, to different communities, to different states and you realized that you needed some flexibility in there. And then what is that balance? What are the pieces that you absolutely have to keep in order to achieve your outcomes versus what pieces actually need to be flexible? Because I think the other piece that you all spoke to was the importance of your relationships and that this is not only an evidence-building process, but it's a relationship-building process. And that whether it's a partner in a school, whether it's a partner who's going to bring resources to your effort, or whether it's a partnership with folks inside of your own organization, this is a process that requires extensive relationship nurturing as well.

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And then, lastly, I think I would point out I think each of you spoke to the role that national service can play in expanding these solutions in communities. I think you spoke to different ways. They can be the actual service delivery providers. They can be someone that's helping you with your operational infrastructure, which also has the scale that you're scaling. And so, I think that was interesting to think about how national service can be a part of this sort of expanding solutions that have been proven to work. So, for those on the phone who perhaps are new to the national service world, thinking about ways in which streams of service might help you take some evidence-based practices or programs to scale. I think that's an interesting resource of folks to consider.

So, with that, thank you again. I'll hand it over to Andrea to facilitate some of the Q&A.

ANDREA: Okay. Let's see. We're going to open it up to Q&A. I'd like to just mention a few ways we can do this. First of all, we've had an incredibly active audience. Thank you so much for all on the chat. So, I have copied and

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pasted all your questions. So, I think we will take some turns, doing some on the chat box, opening the line, and then people in the room. So, for our in-person audience, please state your name before asking your question. For our online audience, can you ask a question by typing it in the Q&A box? You can also ask a question using the microphone on your computer by selecting the raised hand feature from the menu above and we will grant you microphone rights in the order the questions come in.

So, let's see. I'll just take a few from the chat and then turn to you. So, let's stop with Robert Rader. Can Playworks share a typical aligned output and outcome performance measure? I'll read a couple of these and then our speakers can take it. Carol Cutler White: How is evidence quantified? Alicia Sanders asks: How did you disseminate findings so that critical decision makers were aware of the results of reading core? So, I'll just start right there and then we'll take some from in here. So, any of the speakers want to answer?

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FEMALE: I can start with responding to the question about how we disseminated findings to critical decision makers. You know, what we found to work the best was having in-person meetings and usually sort of smaller meetings where we could really sit down face-to-face with that person to talk about what the results look like and meant. What we found is that if it's just an email or something that's sent to somebody, they really don't get the full context or maybe don't take the time to read sort of the meat of what's in there. So, we found that in-person, be able to walk through and present it usually on an individual basis was really critical.

We also found that actually bringing them out on a site visit if they had time and were able to, really helped them visualize and see what that model was to connect it to the results.

ANDREA: Anyone else?

LARA: This is Lara. I can respond to the quantifiable evidence question. I would say that we look at a

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number of different types of evidence to support and inform our programming. The first and sort of most obvious are student outcomes. Are students persisting in graduating? But, obviously, we can't wait around for four to six years to find that out. And so, we look for sort of predictive factors on a more intermittent basis. So, we look at things like have students registered for classes for the following semester? Have they filed their financial aid applications?

And then we also look at coaching metrics. So, our model is centered on coaching sessions between our AmeriCorps members and the students that they support. And so, we're tracking those activities in our database and taking a look at duration. We're taking a look at modality. Are they having a voice-to-voice conversation or is over text or Facebook? And then also what are the topics that they're discussing? What types of questions and concerns are the students raising?

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And then finally, we also look at students' survey results. So, we survey our students. We occasionally do focus groups and things like that to try to get more qualitative information around the student experience and how that intersects with what we're trying to accomplish.

ANDREA: Thank you. I'm just going to -- speakers, do you have any other thing you want to add to any of those?

DEAN: This is Dean from Reading Partners. I want to add one other thought around the question of dissemination. Absolutely agree that it's highly beneficial to have one-on-one sit-down meetings or potentially over the phone. We did at the conclusion of our NDRC evaluation, our first SIF grant, in that rigorous evaluation we held some webinar conversations as well and invited some of our key donors and stakeholders to those and had conversations in which we presented some information at a Q&A session much like this is going.

But the other thing we've learned in the last few years as well is very few people like to read a 50,

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100, 150-page report and so having an executive summary and even more so if possible, if you could find the resources in your community where someone is good at data visualization and can create a -- I'm blanking on the word. If someone could help me out here. It's a visual -- thank you, an infograph. We found that infographs have been helpful as well.

ANDREA: Thank you. So, we're going to take a few questions from people here in the audience. Could you say your name?

SINEAL: Yeah, hi. This is Sineal Eingarn [phonetic]. I just was wondering, this is touching on something Mary said about the organizations of how not only was a big part of all these presentations, the collection of evidence or data on evidence of effectiveness and impact. But also, there was quite a bit about expansion and moving into other areas. And so, I was wondering I think the three presentations in the middle, not necessarily the first or the last, all kind of smoke about the degree to which demand kind of played in their theory of change or the way they structured their data

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collections, evidence collections. And so, I'm kind of wondering -- and one of them actually talked about branding. And, I guess, is there a tension between and how do you resolve that kind of tension that may occur in making course corrections and on the one hand, changing programming based on data about the implementation process or data about the evidence or the impact versus, on the other hand, maybe whether people want it to happen anyway? And whether there's a demand for that particular service? And whether you should grow and expand even absent some of that harder data about efficacy? I don't know if that is something that anyone feels like speaking to.

ADAM: This is Adam from Citizen Schools. I mean, that's certainly the absence of understanding and distinguishing between what was robust support for a capital campaign that sort of facilitated that growth initially and differentiating between what was demand and also sort of available in district to fund. I think it took us longer than we should have to have done a significant research project to look at discretionary funding within districts and middle

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schools. And I think once we did that landscape analysis and found out the middle school principals have, I believe, somewhere around \$1200 for all discretionary programming, it became very clear to us that there was sort of a deficiency between kind of our theory of what would work and what was possible. I think as you're getting off and going and people are supporting scale and you continue to grow, there's a demand for it as long as you're paying. And so, really trying to do that landscape analysis team is quite common sensical, but for whatever reason took us a while to actually do in a kind of a robust way and that ended up informing some of our decisions.

And then also, continue to understand, as others talked about, what makes a good partner? There are so many kinds of residual or school-based factors that impacts the success of the program. We needed to become really good at sort of understanding not just kind of our program quality indicators, but what needed to be in place in order to create the ecosystem for us to be successful. And I think all of those

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certainly not just relate to demand but good demand,
the right demand to allow for sustainable scale.

ANDREA: Thank you. Anyone else? Any other speakers? Any other
speaker want to reply to that? Okay. So, another
question from the room?

CLINT: I'm Clint Glass from the Congressional Research
Service and speaking for myself, not for my agency. I
have to say that or else I get fired. My question is
about heterogeneity contacts and clients. So,
borrowing some terminology from the medical field,
before you come in with a therapy, you do some
diagnosis. And I'm just wondering in how you
structured your offerings and you talk with folks out
there, how do you structure your conversations about
heterogeneity to assess fit for context and clients
not only at the outset kind of like the initial
diagnosis, but also as things move along? A patient in
working with a doctor or a team of doctors to decide,
"All right, this course isn't working well. Maybe we
need to adapt our program model, engage in some
adaptation, maybe get away from the core model in some

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ways." How do you structure those kinds of conversations? Or is that an area that's still developing?

ANDREA: Would a presenter take that? Or say why not?

DEAN: This is Dean.

LARA: Go ahead, Dean.

DEAN: No, no, go ahead, Lara.

LARA: I'll take a stab at it. Yeah, I mean, I would say for a college [unintelligible], I think the answer to that is somewhere in between doing as much prep work as possible. I think that a lot of looking into the evidence to sort of define what the program is that we believe works helps us then define what are the sort of key components or the non-negotiable parts of that. And then I think real life application in different markets and environments teaches us more about the context in which that particular model or that particular approach is effective. And so, I would say one part of my answer is a lot of thoughtfulness and

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prep work and research on the frontend around what we believe are those sorts of key ingredients. And then also that sort of constant negotiation and push and pull as we sort of take our model into new environments. And it is a lot of just sort of in the moment discussion and sometimes debate and conversation and then further analysis to see how we need to adapt so that we're being as responsive as possible to students without losing fidelity to the model.

DEAN: This is Dean for Reading Partners. I'll echo that. I think an illustrative example for us over time has been the curriculum and the model as it had been developed. I remember a program manager sharing with me that her perspective was, let's say, a second-grader would come in and be enrolled in the program. And the suggestion was that this student was going to move through the curriculum in the plan, scope, and sequence that we have made for the program and that those steps and sequences would happen no matter what those individual student's needs were. And that really pushed us to change and think about data collection

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and analysis in an ongoing way and what is now certainly a big thing that happens in most of all schools with teachers and the data that they look at is progress monitoring. And so, being able to differentiate our approach a little bit more so for each individual student and individualize what their needs are. We've always had an individualized reading plan, but I think we're getting better at that and I think we're getting better at the local coaching and support adaptation that's needed for each student. And we continually ask what we can change or might need to adapt further in our program model.

And then, there are exterior forces as well. Sometimes those are donors. Sometimes those are school district partners. It could be what else we see happening in the field and where there's other evidence of success. And so, in our case, an example of that would be that Reading Partners has been looking at and pilot testing different program models and approaches to summer learning. So, rather than just looking at our core program throughout the school year, what can we

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provide and support for students during the summertime?

ANDREA: Thank you. I'm going to read a few more from our chat box and this has to do -- more comments around the same issues that you all are mentioning. Someone said that all your presentations stressed the importance of process evaluations. And Jeff Sheldon writes, "It appears that process evaluations are based on a theoretical model of how the program is designed to work and outcome evaluations based on the theory of change." Just a comment, but again, maybe you can say something about the importance of this process evaluation and how you were able to think of your components.

SADIE: This is Sadie O'Connor with Reading Corps. And I would totally agree with the importance of that process assessment part. When we went through our pretty rigorous evaluation that CNCS actually commissioned NORC to conduct on Reading Corps a few years ago, one of the first things that they did was conduct a process assessment. And that involved going out and

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observing what was happening in schools, talking with tutors, talking with coaches, talking with teachers to really understand is the program being implemented like the theory of change is articulating? It should be. And when that process assessment was completed, then they had the confidence to move into a more rigorous, randomized control trial, which was really looking at our outcomes. Because we knew that the model was being applied consistently across all of our locations, so then could do an assessment of students that were getting Reading Corps, compared to an assessment of students that were not getting Reading Corps to see what the impact of Reading Corps really truly was. But that process assessment, I just think, was really super valuable in the whole process.

ANDREA: Thanks. Anyone else? Okay, and then thinking of the next step, Tara Wright [sic] writes, "Thank you all for your presentations. But how are your project monitoring and maintaining fidelity and quality of implementation once you scale up your program and services?"

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LARA: This is Lara. I can take a gander at that one since this is something that we sort of have been building out pretty actively in the last year or two. So, we have a couple of staff members at our main office, our Program Advisors, who directly support the supervisors on the campuses, who are directly in turn supervising the AmeriCorps members, the coaches. And so, the Program Advisors conduct monitoring visits on a quarterly basis where they physically go to the campus and do observations of the coachings. They also do weekly check-ins with the supervisors where a lot of it is spent sort of troubleshooting and answering questions. But they are also asking questions to try to ascertain if the program is being implemented as intended.

And then the other thing that we look at -- I mentioned this earlier -- but we look at a lot of outcomes, which include both, obviously, student outcomes like retention on that campus, but also things like the activities that the coaches are recording in our database and whether that's

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reflective of the types of coaching sessions that we ask them to do as part of our program.

SADIE: This is Sadie from Reading Corps and I'll chime in too. We have a role that we call an Internal Coach, though it's basically a supervisor at the school that's supervising and supporting the AmeriCorps members. And we actually have what we call fidelity checklists and the coaches do those two times a month. So, every intervention that we have and every assessment that we have has a corresponding checklist. So, when the coach is going in to observe the tutor, they're actually doing it with a checklist so we can actually measure and sort of monitor and support the tutor in getting true fidelity.

And then we also have three times a year before our assessment period in the fall, winter, and spring, our coaches are also monitoring and observing the fidelity of the assessment data. I think somebody else had a comment and sort of wondering how do you know that the assessment data is sort of true and accurate. So, making sure before they collect assessment data, that

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we're observing them to make sure that they're
conducting that correctly.

ANDREA: Wonderful. Anyone else?

DEAN: This is Dean from Reading Partners. The one other
thing I would add is if our partnerships with several
states AmeriCorps commissions and the ongoing cycles
with CNCS around evaluation requirements and
expectations has [unintelligible] a grant, I really
appreciate that we continue to do our work at Reading
Partners in terms of evaluation where we conduct more
studies rather than just these one-time implementation
and impact studies. And so, we're really proud of what
we've learned in the five-year process and study that
was in partnership with [unintelligible] Associates
here in Colorado in the last five years. Those results
came out in the fall. We continue to use that
information, as well as a two-year study we just
concluded in the fall in our four California regions,
which was much smaller than an exploratory study, but
built on the ATA and NBRC evaluations around certain
processes. For us that includes volunteer recruitment
and retention, the number of sessions we're able to

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provide to students. And looking at dosage, for example, those studies have had us looking in a more granular and specific way and it's causing our program team to have conversations and think about how we might change operations on a weekly and/or monthly basis, rather than think about half a year or the full year in terms of total doses that a student might get in terms of literacy intervention and tutoring and more about what are they getting every week and every month? So, there's a standardization and expectation for the program model and we've got program dashboards and regional dashboards that we follow a lot of data around. But those specific evaluations have pushed us to look at dosage in a new and different way.

So, I think ongoing work on the process and qualitative side can be really valuable and helpful as well.

ANDREA: Thanks. So, turning from that to funding, Carol Cutler White asks, "Have any programs been successful in getting state funding for long-term sustainability?" I think that one or two of you spoke about that.

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SADIE: Yes, this is Sadie from Reading Corps. And our state funding has really been part of our financial sustainability. We started with \$150,000 from the state in 2003 and in Minnesota that's grown to be about 6.5 million annually. Reading Corps is a state appropriation so it's built into the base, which is great that it's built into the base. Just over the years, we've continued to request an increase to that. This current year we also have launched our program in Wisconsin, but this past current year we also have received state funding in Wisconsin.

ANDREA: Fantastic. Any other speakers?

LARA: College Possible has received state funding in Minnesota as well. And that has been, echoing Sadie, a pretty important part of our financial assisting ability there. And it is something that works [unintelligible] in some of other states but seems to be more feasible in some of our larger, more mature sites.

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ANDREA: We're all saying that we're moving to Minnesota. Okay. Do any of you want to say a little bit more not just state funding but funding in general? I mean, I know you mentioned it in some of your presentations.

Okay. So, Sadie, just a question. Someone would love to hear about the platform that Reading Corps built their student data management system on.

SADIE: Sure. I wish it was a simple answer. It has been something that we've custom-built. So, we kind of use it for IDF programming frameworks and we have a team of developers that are working on it. So, feel free to reach out to me if you'd like more information, but it's not a simple answer.

ANDREA: Okay, great. I'm looking at the time. It's 3:22 and we have lots of questions that we may not be able to get to. So, I think I'm going to say it now. If we don't get to your question, please email us at evaluation@cns.gov. Some of them might have been answered already as speakers have been answering other questions. And we will get it to the right speaker and

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be able to answer that. So, let's see, just in terms of -- I'm trying to see something that we haven't talked about. Magdalena Bianchi says, "Great presentation. Sadly, we're at 34% literacy in San Bernardino County. I'm a nonprofit CEO, Executive Director, tuning in from San Bernardino." And I think it's just for those of you who are working on it, just a comment that you have that low literacy rate. I'm sure some of you have faced that in your own schools. Where do you start?

MALE: AmeriCorps, naturally.

DEAN: This is Dean from Reading Partners. Yeah, I'll share that's a fairly consistent rate in terms of literacy at the elementary level in the schools in which we partner. And in many of our schools, it's actually substantially lower. We look at those school and district proficiency rates on the third or fourth grade state reading tests. And in some of our districts it can be as low as 5%. And so, we've collected and looked at those data both at the district and/or school level, but we've also looked at

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the rates for the individual students that we serve. I would say for us over time, the importance of growing and expanding and scaling our program, we really thought about the importance of looking for resources, how to look for high quality resources that are already out there in existence as much as we have built a proprietary curriculum and a model and a program that we think really works and we've got evidence to show for that. We also know the need is great in millions of students. And so, it's important to us and I think to you in your program that you think about looking for partners, looking for coalitions, other places that bring together resources or high-quality resources that can be used. I would look to your local community and see if there are volunteers who would be interested in getting involved and getting the word out. There may be low entry kinds of programs to just get started. But I would certainly look to what's out there in terms of resources and I would look for the evidence that's there and use impactful models.

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ANDREA: Thank you very much and thanks for the question. So, just turning a little bit in terms of member recruitment and experience, probably AmeriCorps, "Curious how" -- this is Robin Harris -- "Curious how" -- and this is to any presenter -- "solve the member recruitment experience change during scale. What worked? What didn't? Any unique member benefits? Are members paid above the minimum living allowance if full-time?"

LARA: This is Lara from College Possible. One of the really big benefits of our Catalyze model and the fact that the campuses are taking so much ownership over the program that's being implemented on their campuses instead of doing our sort of widescale, cast a wide net, recruit as many members as possible. Those campuses do pretty targeted recruitments on their campuses. And so, generally, they're able to find alums of their campus to serve as coaches on that campus. And because most of them are recruiting between two and five people instead of our organization recruiting 300 people, they're able to be pretty targeted and have, I would say, an easier time

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in general filling their spots. I think all of us have probably experienced some recruitment challenges in the last couple of years. And so, that's been a really big benefit.

The other thing that a lot of our campuses are doing is because they want those numbers to be so embedded on their campus, they're offering room and board in some cases. And so, that's been also a really big benefit for our members to make the living allowance and all of that more doable.

ANDREA: Thank you. Anyone else? AmeriCorps recruitment and benefits?

SADIE: Yeah, this is Sadie from Reading Corps and I would echo what Lara said about really engaging partners in the recruitment process. We really work closely with our school partners so that they can recruit from their own communities. Parents, grandparents, community members that they know. And we're still experiencing recruitment challenges, but that has

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consistently been a really good strategy to find members.

ANDREA: Okay, thank you. And this is the last question I'm going to mention. So, Carol Cutler White asks about "Have any of these results been published in peer review journals? If so, is there a list of references?" So, we just said in the chat box to look at our web page under evaluation or evidence and change where we have reports and papers probably from all the speakers you heard from. Again, you can write to us at evaluation@cns.gov, and we will send the questions to the right individual. Anything else? Any other place? Okay.

So, before I close, I just want to turn to Mary, Lily, Anthony, anything you want to add? We're at 3:28.

ANTHONY: I would just like to add, I thought this was a wonderful conversation. And the fact that we have talented presenters who are willing to share their experiences with other grantees is remarkable. And I think it's a trend that we need to foster and we need

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to continue here. There's an emerging science, at least as we understand it, around scaling that allows for all of the different variations in programs on the ground and circumstances on the ground, but identified core components. And each one of the speakers today touched on those core components. And I think rehashing them and learning them and applying them is a critical element to moving forward with this. It's a long journey, but I believe that many of the folks who are listening can see a path forward if we support them, we provide them with this information and this knowledge.

So, I'd like to see this continue and I'd like to say this was a wonderful introduction to our guidance documents that will be put together that we'll be releasing shortly. So, a lot of the information is contained in those things. We expect high traffic there from all of you. And any questions, please direct them back to us. Thank you very much.

ANDREA: Okay. So, as we mentioned before, this is being recorded and will be on our website in a couple of

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weeks. So, we want to thank you again, especially to our speakers and our audience today for such a great discussion. And I saw that again all of you were signing in from all over the place. We had over 300 people register and we've had over 160 participate. So, that is fabulous.

I also want to thank Emily Ranos [phonetic] of ICF International and our colleague, Greg Wallinger, for their technical support and coordination because that is its own very big task. And Erica Zielewski of L&B for helping us coordinate the workshop series. We will be sending out a post-webinar survey, so please let us know your thoughts and any webinar ideas for the future. And that's it. So, thank you so much and have a nice evening.

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