

# *i-Ready*® Efficacy: Clear Evidence from Real Classroom Practice

Today's classrooms are filled with students at many different starting points. Teachers need clear, timely information they can trust to target support and differentiate instruction before gaps widen. *i-Ready*<sup>i</sup> is designed to help them answer two urgent questions:

- What does each student know right now?
- What does each student need next?

It starts with an assessment that adapts to student performance and gives teachers a more precise picture of student learning. From an average of only **30–60 minutes of online testing time** three times per year, *i-Ready Inform*<sup>TM</sup> shows how each student is growing—down to specific skills—relative to the state standards and to their peers, providing both criterion-referenced and normative scores.

*i-Ready Personalized Instruction* then supports teacher-directed action with targeted instructional approaches and short, personalized lessons designed to help students build the skills they need to move toward grade-level work.

***i-Ready* is a limited, structured part of instruction**—not a replacement for teaching, but a support for it. It helps teachers do their work more effectively by turning assessment results into usable instructional insights as part of a broader, print- and discourse-based instructional program. Used 30–49 minutes per subject per week, ***i-Ready* lessons represent less than five percent of total instructional time.**

Most importantly, ***i-Ready* has been rigorously studied at scale.** The evidence base includes large quasi-experimental studies, longitudinal studies, third-party research, and independent external review. Across those studies, the pattern is consistent:

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When *i-Ready Personalized Instruction* is used as recommended,<sup>ii</sup> students show stronger reading and mathematics outcomes than comparable peers who do not use it or do not use it as recommended.

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To showcase a sample of our extensive evidence base:

- Across **1,500 schools** and more than **120,000 students nationwide**, a [third-party study](#) found that striving learners (defined as students who place two or more grade levels below their chronological grade) in Grades 2–5 who used *i-Ready* **outperformed non-users in reading**, with effect sizes from .12 to .14.<sup>iii</sup> The study was reviewed by What Works Clearinghouse.

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<sup>i</sup>*i-Ready Inform*<sup>TM</sup> is the new name for the adaptive assessment currently named "*i-Ready Diagnostic*."

- Across **1,000 districts** and more than **100,000 students in Texas**, [researchers found](#) that students in Grades 4–8 using *i-Ready* as recommended **outperformed non-users on the state assessment in reading and mathematics**, with effects described as **moderate to large** depending on grade and subject.
- Across **six districts** and more than **1,500 students in Massachusetts**, [researchers found](#) that Grade 5 students using *i-Ready* **outperformed non-users on the state assessment**, with effect sizes of .23 in mathematics and .12 in reading. The study was reviewed by Evidence for ESSA.
- Across **10 states, 13 districts**, and more than **9,000 students**, a longitudinal [third-party study](#) by the Human Resources Research Organization (HumRRO) found that students using *i-Ready* as recommended from Grades 3–5 scored **.24 standard deviations higher on state mathematics assessments** by Grade 5.
- Across **27 states**, more than **400 districts**, and over **964,000 students**, [researchers found](#) that students using *i-Ready* as recommended **scored higher on state tests**, with differences ranging from .14 to .24 standard deviations.

## What These Results Mean for Students

Effect sizes reported in standard deviations (SD) reflect real differences in student learning.

In education research, results in the **.10 to .25 SD range** are considered meaningful and are commonly associated with **additional months of learning over the course of a school year**. See [Kraft, 2020](#) for more information.

Across multiple studies, *i-Ready Personalized Instruction* demonstrates impacts in this range when used as recommended. This indicates that consistent, targeted use can contribute to measurable gains in student progress.

## Why This Research Matters

- The *i-Ready* evidence base includes studies **designed to meet**:
  - **ESSA Tier 2 evidence standards**, using a quasi-experimental design (QED) that compares similar students to estimate impact, thus reducing bias and confounding to more precisely estimate the program effect.
  - **ESSA Tier 3 evidence standards**, using a correlational design that shows whether stronger implementation is associated with stronger outcomes at scale.
  - These study designs include statistical controls to better isolate the effects of the program.
- **Consistent findings across student populations:** The research base also includes analyses of English learners, students with disabilities, and students who are socioeconomically disadvantaged, showing stronger outcomes across all student groups and settings.

- **Independent validation:** Third-party research from respected, national research organizations such as HumRRO, Johns Hopkins University Center for Research and Reform in Education (CRRE), and the National Opinion Research Center (NORC) at the University of Chicago, as well as reviews by Evidence for ESSA and What Works Clearinghouse
- **Real-world scale:** These are not small or isolated findings. They reflect real practice in real classrooms, with real teachers and large student populations across US states and districts.

## How *i-Ready* Is Used in Practice

***i-Ready* is designed to support teachers and their effective practice, not to replace them.**

No tool—digital or otherwise—can replace the undeniable effects of high-quality teaching. The assessment is given up to three times each year, with each administration taking about 30–60 minutes per subject. This is typically broken into shorter sessions for younger students.

Teachers use assessment results to decide **how to group students, what to reteach, where to intervene, and how supports fit within broader classroom instruction.** *i-Ready* gives educators clearer direction so they can adjust whole class teaching, work better in small group supports, and target intervention for students who need it the most.

Lessons are then used in time-bound, structured sessions—typically **30–49 minutes per subject per week**, or roughly **five percent of instructional time** over the course of the school year. This serves as a complement to teacher-led instruction, which is driven by discourse, hands-on learning with peers, and print materials.

At any time, teachers can assign lessons or adjust each student’s lesson pathway to align with in-class instruction. They can also readily monitor usage metrics (e.g., pass rates, time in lessons) to ensure students’ time is productive, balanced, and within recommended guidelines.

## Shared Accountability for Results

With proven efficacy across millions of students over more than a decade, Curriculum Associates is now working with select districts to pilot **outcomes-based contracting (OBC)**. OBC is a model that ties a meaningful share of the payment it receives to agreed-upon student outcomes rather than simply to site licenses purchased.<sup>iv</sup>

In plain terms, it means **putting revenue on the line** because the expectation is not just simply usage, it is **for results that come from effective usage**. In an outcomes-based partnership, districts and vendors align early on shared goals, strong implementation, educator supports, and clear ways to measure whether students are making progress. It pushes everyone to focus not just on a given product (print, digital, or otherwise), but on using it as intended to deliver real results for students.

## A Note about Randomized Controlled Trials

To directly note, the *i-Ready* evidence base is not centered on randomized controlled trials, as education researchers have widely acknowledged that **fully experimental data is too narrow a standard to evaluate daily classroom practice** in America’s schools.

Schools are highly complicated places to measure, contain real classrooms, and not laboratory settings, making randomized studies impractical to conduct in ways that reflect how teaching and learning actually happen.

*i-Ready* has been studied through large-scale, quasi-experimental research that consistently demonstrate its efficacy.

## Closing Perspective

*i-Ready* is not asking schools to take its value on blind trust. It has been studied across large samples, multiple states, diverse student groups, and rigorous research designs. The findings are consistent: **when *i-Ready* is used as intended, students make stronger progress in reading and mathematics.**

*i-Ready*'s responsible-use guidelines are explicit that digital time is limited, intentional, and tied to a clear academic purpose.

The case for *i-Ready* is not a case for technology; it is **a case for a research-backed instructional tool** that helps teachers act on student needs and helps more students move forward.

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*i-Ready Inform* and *i-Ready Personalized Instruction* are owned and published by [Curriculum Associates](#), an education company founded in 1969. Developed and reviewed by experts with deep pedagogical expertise, the *i-Ready* portfolio spans print and digital resources, including the core curricula *i-Ready Classroom Mathematics*, *Magnetic Literacy*<sup>™</sup>, and *Stile Education*<sup>®</sup> for science, as well as print-based supplemental and intervention programs like *Dr. Anita Archer's Phonics for Reading*<sup>®</sup> and *BRIGANCE*<sup>®</sup>.

<sup>i</sup>*i-Ready* usage guidelines are **30–49 minutes of active lesson time per subject per week**, consistently throughout the school year (at least 18 weeks), and progressing through appropriately targeted lessons, passing at least 70 percent of lessons.

<sup>ii</sup>An effect size is a **standard measure representing the magnitude of an impact**. In education research, an effect size often represents the magnitude of the difference, typically reported as standard deviations (SD) between the academic performance of students who used a program or intervention and that of a control group. These differences are generally classified as small (< .05 SD), medium (.05–.2 SD), or large (> .2 SD). See [Kraft \(2020\)](#) for more information.

<sup>iii</sup>The traditional purchase model for *i-Ready Inform* and *i-Ready Personalized Instruction* is a site license, where a school or district purchases the number of student licenses appropriate for their building enrollment and adoption cycle upfront. We do not base pricing on product usage or how much time students spend using it.