

# *i-Ready Personalized Instruction* Improves Post-COVID Recovery

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Recently, Curriculum Associates conducted a [large-scale longitudinal study](#) to examine if student academic growth is recovering or mirroring pre-COVID trends. The findings revealed key pockets of recovery: older students and those close to grade level in 2021 have largely recovered to historical levels of growth. Yet, the data also uncovered a few troubling trends. In particular, younger students and those furthest behind grade level in 2021 are not growing fast enough to keep pace with pre-pandemic trends.

One possible explanation is younger students and students below grade level require more targeted interventions than those implemented in recovery efforts, especially younger students who are building foundational skills. Varied patterns of growth by student group offer insight into the effects of recovery efforts. Implementation considerations (i.e., alignment between intervention and student population, implementation fidelity) may be key to recovery. To further explore this hypothesis, this brief report examines student growth among students using *i-Ready Personalized Instruction* (PI) as recommended. *i-Ready* PI provides tailored reading and mathematics instruction, systematic practice, and scaffolded feedback for students in Grades K–8. Leveraging the same longitudinal methods and analysis strategies, we modeled student growth among *i-Ready* PI users to see how their growth compared to national trends previously documented.

## Key Findings

- Compared to national post-COVID trends, students using *i-Ready* PI as recommended **kept pace—or exceeded—historical growth in reading**.
- Using *i-Ready* PI as recommended appeared to **support post-COVID recovery for younger students and students below grade level**. These were some of the nation's most impacted students according to national trends.

[Full paper with  
additional  
materials](#)



Figure 1. Differences in Student Growth in Reading by Cohort for *i-Ready* Fidelity Users

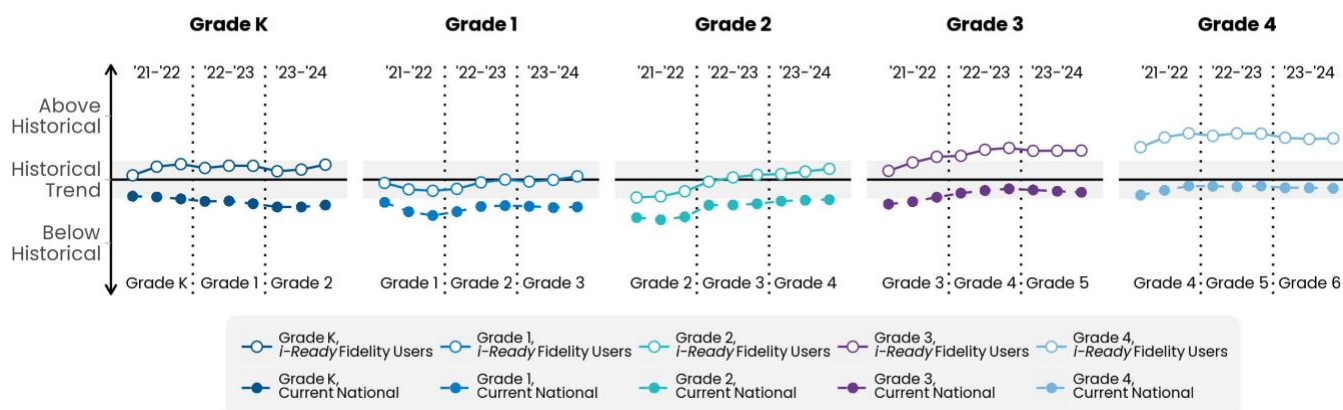
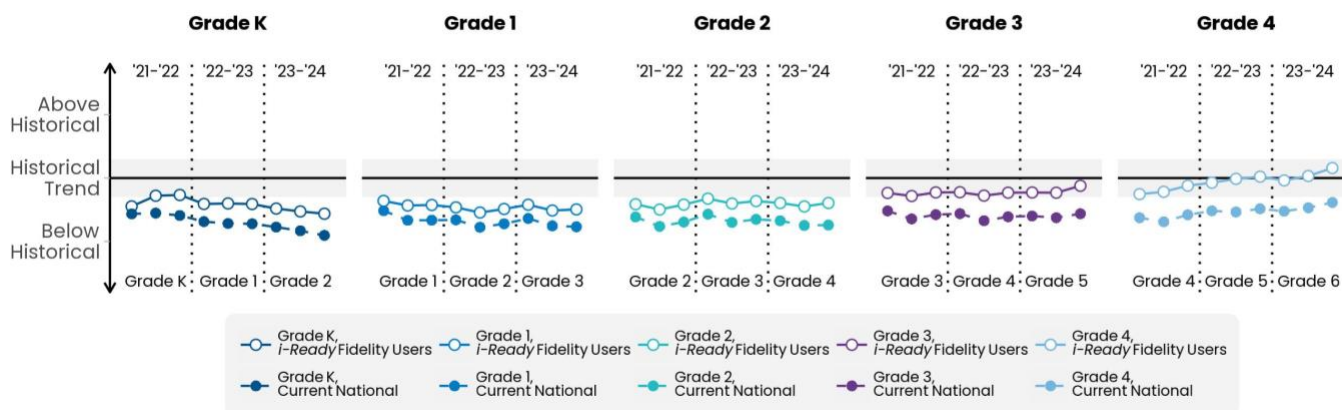


Figure 2. Differences in Student Growth in Mathematics by Cohort for *i-Ready* Fidelity Users

## Methods

We leveraged the same data (i.e., historical data from fall 2016 to spring 2019 and post-COVID data from fall 2021 to spring 2024) and analytic approach as previous work (Young & Young, 2024). For each sample, we created five longitudinal cohorts that differed by starting grade in fall 2016 and 2021 for historical and post-COVID samples, respectively. The youngest cohorts (i.e., ages 3–4 during the pandemic), started in Grade K and the oldest started in Grade 4 ([see Table 1 in additional materials](#)).

We identified schools using *i-Ready* PI and flagged if students were using as recommended (i.e., fidelity users). These criteria were 1) using for at least 18 weeks per academic school year; 2) average weekly time was more than 30 minutes; and 3) average lesson pass rate was higher than 70%. If student *i-Ready* PI usage met the above criteria for at least two of three years assessed, they were coded as an *i-Ready* PI fidelity user ([see Table 1 in additional materials](#)).

## Results

Growth among *i-Ready* PI fidelity users was higher than post-pandemic national averages across all cohorts. For reading, *i-Ready* PI fidelity user growth showed recovery across all cohorts, with the two oldest cohorts even exceeding historical trends ([see Figure 1](#)). For mathematics, *i-Ready* PI fidelity user growth exceeded post-pandemic national trends and showed recovery among older cohorts (see Figure 2). Though in younger cohorts, all students remain behind historical trends, the use of *i-Ready* PI with fidelity minimized these differences. These patterns were most pronounced for students below grade level in 2021. For these students, using *i-Ready* PI as recommended appeared to buffer slowed post-COVID growth patterns, especially for the youngest cohorts.

## Discussion

Implementing *i-Ready* PI as recommended (i.e., with fidelity) appears to minimize differences between pre-pandemic and post-pandemic growth trends. In other words, recommended *i-Ready* PI usage appears to help students catch up, recover, or even exceed pre-pandemic trends, especially for reading. These results held for both young learners and students beginning below grade level who were most impacted by the pandemic. These findings suggest that well-designed and implemented interventions—those that align with the target population—can buffer, support, or accelerate growth post-pandemic.

Young, E., & Young, K. (2024). *Student growth in the post-COVID era*. Curriculum Associates. <https://cdn.bfldr.com/LS6J0F7/at/4rqc5wtpxqf85mk4pxj6rm7/ca-2024-summer-research-student-growth-technical-report.pdf>