Due to low overall reading achievement, this year at Littleton STEM Academy, we began a Kinder through 4th grade Walk to Read program for our students. Walk to Read provides each student with the exact reading instruction that they need and grows their skills no matter what grade level they are in. The program is for thirty-minutes, four days per week and includes all Kinder through 4th grade teachers as well as several paraprofessionals. The Walk to Read program was started by and is overseen by our site reading interventionist. To increase collaboration, grade level Walk to Read liaison positions were created at each participating grade level. These teachers meet regularly with the reading interventionist to communicate ideas or issues that may need to be addressed. Additionally, the liaisons assist during each session’s data sort, where kids are re-shuffled into their new groups. Our program works as follows:

* At the beginning of the school year, all students in grades Kinder through 4th, are screened, using a phonics screener. This screener begins at letter names and sounds and moves through their knowledge of the reading building blocks, such as consonant blends and vowel teams, and ends with their knowledge of multisyllabic words. There are a total of fourteen skills.
* New students are screeded immediately upon arrival at our school and placed accordingly.
* Whenever a student reaches a skill that they do not pass, they are placed in this skill in Walk to Read to receive instruction for a period of approximately five weeks. Each instructional group consists of students that all need to learn the same skill. All students are placed in this fashion.
* Students receive thirty-minutes per day of direct instruction on the skill each student needs.
* At the end of the five-to-six-week session, all students K-4 are screened once again. Using this new data, students are placed in their new Walk to Read skill (called our data sort). This process continues throughout the entire school year.

Data is tracked from session to session to ensure growth (see attached). Ideal growth would be to see our numbers at the lowest level skills decrease while we see the numbers at our higher-level skills increase, including the number of students who pass all skills on the screener. Even though this is our first year, this is exactly what we saw. (\*Please note that the data reflects an increase in students for skills 1 and 2 at round two. Since most kindergarten students needed letters and sounds, kinder teachers simply kept their students throughout the first round. Their student numbers were added in starting with round two, which is the reason for the increase in number of students in these skills.) We began with a mere five students being able to pass all phonics screener skills at the beginning of the year and ended the year with an astounding ninety-four students passing all skills. Once students pass all of the skills on the phonics screener, they are provided with instruction on summarizing, main idea and public speaking skills that are attached to presenting book projects.

There is now excitement and energy surrounding reading achievement. Students look forward to seeing the new skill they have moved to and sharing this information with their Walk to Read teachers. Teachers look forward to seeing their hard work pay off from our session-to-session program growth. Collaboration has increased due to the fact that all teachers and paraprofessionals in our Kinder through fourth grade work together throughout the year to increase student reading achievement. Program data is used not only to inform Walk to Read, but also PLCs, individual classroom small groups, the Special Education referral process and it is used to give information to parents so that they can assist their child with reading at home.

We experienced tremendous success this year and will be adding on additional components to increase our effectiveness for next year. Some of our additions include increasing collaboration by implementing instructional walk-throughs and added coaching on Walk to Read program materials. In addition, we will be increasing the roles of the liaisons and adding on required fluency instruction (at each student’s reading level) once students pass all screener skills. We look forward to even more growth and collaboration in the upcoming school year!