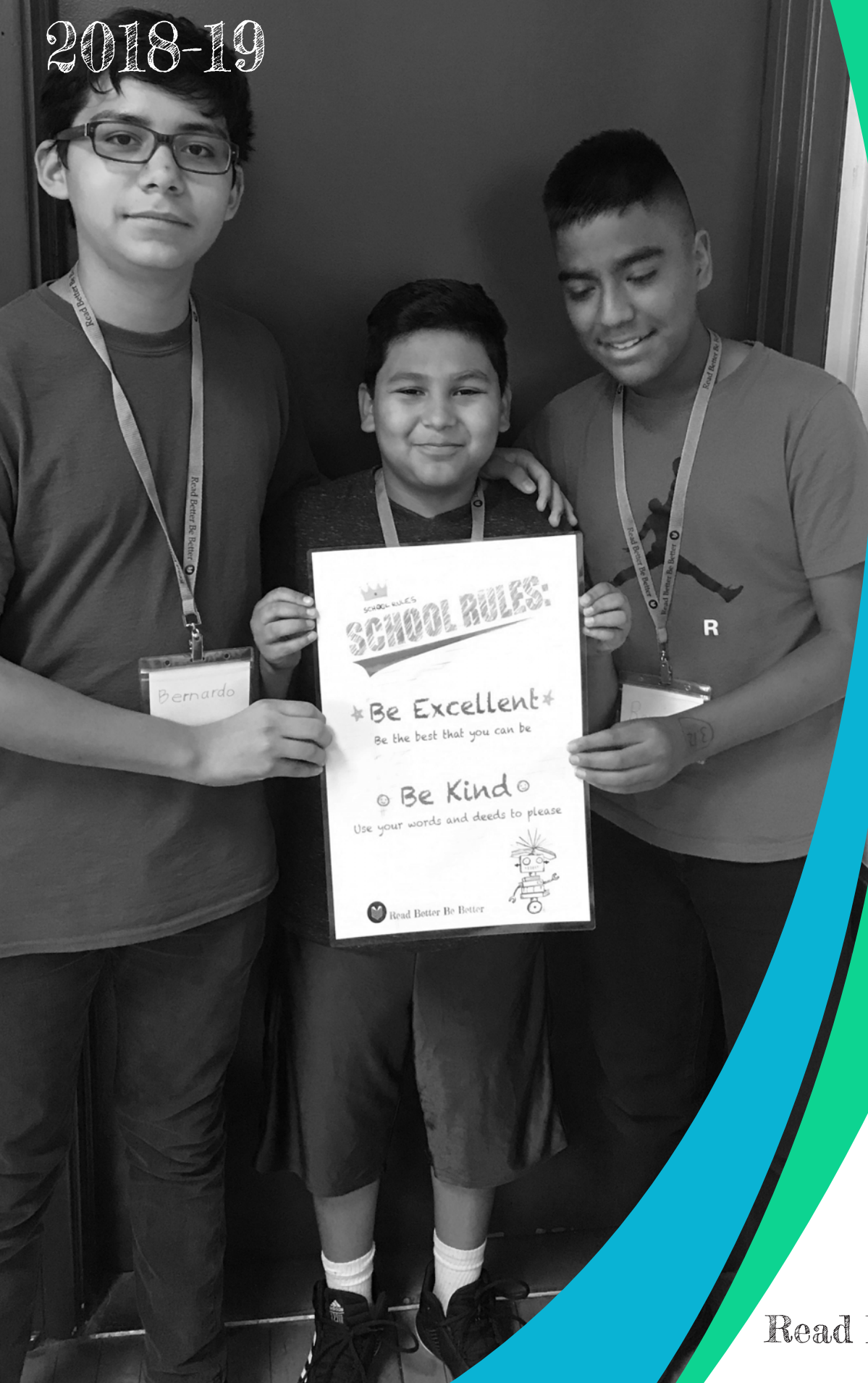


ANNUAL REPORT

2018-19



Read Better Be Better.

We create change by:



Improving
concentration



Encouraging an
active enjoyment
of reading



Helping develop
a deeper
understanding of
what is being read

MISSION

Read Better Be Better helps children improve literacy skills and become better learners.

VISION

A society in which all children master the foundational skills necessary to become independent learners.

VALUES

Be Excellent
Be Kind



Letter from the CEO

I feel like Read Better Be Better (RBBB) grew up a lot this year. Our organization is laser-focused on one issue: Arizona's literacy crisis. There comes an innate confidence from settling into doing one thing and doing it well: inspiring and equipping middle schoolers to help struggling 3rd grade readers improve their comprehension. In our fourth year of programming, our team, board members and the community are clear about who we are, what we do and why we do it. It has been a privilege to see an identity and a culture built around our mission to help children improve literacy skills and become better learners and also our values: Be Excellent and Be Kind.

"Today's youth are tomorrow's leaders. RBBB shows kids that obstacles are really opportunities. Kids want to do better - be better. Middle schoolers want responsibility. We give them the chance to fulfill their wants and needs by pairing them. In the end, we get kids who understand the power of collaboration and education."

-Sophie Etchart, Founder & CEO, RBBB

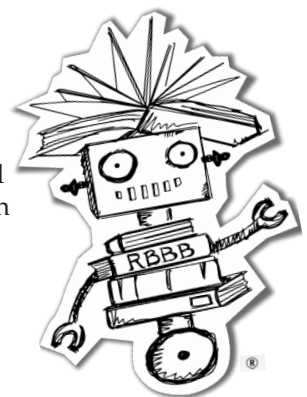
Having just one program means that our message to the community is simple: Did you know that only 31% of economically-disadvantaged 3rd grade students in Arizona scored proficient on the 3rd grade English Language Arts portion of AzMERIT? Did you know that reading below grade level proficiency makes them 4 times less likely to graduate high school? Did you know that if we can get them reading at grade level, then there is an 89% chance that they will graduate high school? Did you know that RBBB is a nonprofit that supports schools to improve 3rd grade reading proficiency by engaging middle schoolers to work through a curriculum, focused on comprehension, in an after-school setting? Did you know that students who complete RBBB improve nearly 21% more than their non-participating peers on standardized reading comprehension tests?

We can help **you** do something about this crisis.

We engage and empower our funders to work alongside us to address this social justice issue facing our most vulnerable communities. The confidence that RBBB has in our regularly produced impact data helps us build trusting relationships with our philanthropic community. That dynamic allows us the freedom to do what we do best, but also gives us the self-assurance to invite feedback to improve further. Just this last year, Marianne Mago Cracchiolo from the Steele Foundation helped us identify a gap in our internal Key Performance Indicators that led to a measurable boost in the number of students we have been able to serve per school. RBBB can do better as a result of these candid, confident conversations and partnerships.

Funders' confidence in RBBB's work also encourages them to offer unrestricted financial support, investing in RBBB to do what we know we do best. This year, that meant deciding to significantly augment our middle management team to invest in capacity at District levels to drive program quality and student attendance. We also added marketing, fundraising and data analytics positions. We know what we do well, now we can do more of it better, and then share that success with our community. It's a cycle of success.

Dr. Dave and I could not be prouder.



Supporters and Partners

GOAL: Be recognized among the communities we serve for what we do.

Our deepest gratitude for the support and dedication of our community partners and our brilliant volunteers.
Thank you for Being Better.



The Literary Society



The Nora Roberts Foundation



Governing Board



Sophie Etchart, Founder/CEO, Read Better Be Better

Sophie Etchart was born in Connecticut but raised and educated in England. She studied at the University of Newcastle-Upon-Tyne. Upon graduation, she joined a financial services agency specializing in board-level strategic HR consulting before Sophie committed to a full transition into the non-profit sector.

Once there, Sophie managed SKIP, an international development organization in northern Peru, and a team of 25 staff and volunteers working with 330 young people aged 3-17 for 2 years. Sophie met her husband, an Arizona native, in Peru and moved to Phoenix in 2012. She spent 2 years managing the JA BizTown® team at Junior Achievement. There, Sophie identified the need for basic reading comprehension support. The JA BizTown® program serves over 20,000 students per year, an alarming number of whom had neither the focus nor the foundational skills to obtain the most value from the experience. When the “Move On When Reading” law was announced, she decided that the timing was critical to support those 3rd graders at risk of being kept behind.

Read Better Be Better is based on the proven SKIP model and adapted to the current environment. In 2017, Sophie was recognized as one of Phoenix Business Journal's 40 Under 40 who are younger business leaders making an impact in the Phoenix area. She lives in the Encanto District of Downtown Phoenix with her husband Andy, her son Cody and two dogs.



Rachel Aja, Government & Regulatory Affairs Manager, Cox Communications

Rachel Aja is a native Arizonan, and attended the University of Arizona in Tucson. She has been involved in a variety of volunteer organizations, including the Hugh O'Brien Youth Leadership Program and the Luke Air Force Base Honorary Commander Program.

Rachel currently works in government affairs with Cox Communications, and in her free time she enjoys spending time with her family and friends, and watching her seven nieces and nephews play and learn. Rachel has volunteered as a Site Leader for Read Better Be Better since 2016.



Jonathon Gonzales, Family & Health Administrator, Catholic Charities

Jonathon is currently the Family and Health Administrator with Catholic Charities Community Services Westside Head Start Program. Previously, he was the manager for Phoenix Children's Hospital Center for Family Health and Safety. Jonathon worked as the State Director of the Arizona Head Start Association (AHSA) to strengthen member agencies and partners who enhance the lives of young children and families by serving as the unified voice of the diverse Head Start/Early Head Start community through advocacy, collaboration and education.

Jonathon has served as the inaugural Regional Director and with South Phoenix Regional Partnership Council with First Things First. In the past, he worked as the Director of Community Outreach with Children's Action Alliance and Prevention Specialist with Maricopa County Tobacco Education and Prevention Program.

He is an alumnus of Brophy College Preparatory and holds a master's degree from Arizona State University. He serves in the Arizona Army National Guard as a First Lieutenant and Executive Officer with the 3666th Support Maintenance Company. He is a servant leader who thrives on serving his community and working with other Valley leaders to work towards better outcomes for children and families. Jonathon is married with 3 children ages 22, 20, 15.



Gary Linhart, Founding Partner, ViaWest Group

Gary is a Founding Partner of ViaWest Group, a Phoenix-based commercial real estate investment and development firm where he heads the capital markets activity, overseeing the sourcing of debt and equity for the company's various investment opportunities, including long-term programmatic and large-scale institutional investment partnerships.

Gary earned a BA in Economics from Northwestern University and an MBA in Finance from The Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania. He is fluent in Japanese and proficient in Spanish. He is currently active in the Arizona Chapter of the Young Presidents Organization (YPO), serves as the Vice Chair of the Executive Committee of the Urban Land Institute (ULI), Arizona Chapter and is the Chairman of a ULI national product council.

Gary is passionate about improving education in Arizona. He leads a real estate industry advocacy group for Expect More Arizona and is on the board of directors for Read Better Be Better. He lives in Phoenix with his wife Julie and their two sons, Zachary and Matthew.



Dr. Karen Ortiz, Vice President & Program Director of Early Childhood Education, Helios Education Foundation

Dr. Ortiz's work revolves around building and strengthening early childhood systems to promote language acquisition and emergent literacy for children birth through age eight. In this role, Dr. Ortiz works in conjunction with the Foundation's community investment team to identify partnership opportunities and implement the Foundation's strategic early childhood education investment goals in Arizona and Florida.

Dr. Ortiz brings more than 25 years of academic and professional experience in early childhood education. In addition to practical experience within school districts and classroom settings, she served as an early childhood policy advisor to Arizona's Governor Janet Napolitano and was Director of the State Board on School Readiness. Dr. Ortiz has helped lead statewide and national initiatives impacting children ages birth to eight and their families. Dr. Ortiz is a graduate of Arizona State University and holds Doctoral and Master degrees in Curriculum and Instruction, Early Childhood Education. She holds undergraduate degrees in business and nursing.



Andrew Steele, CEO, BeckonCall

Andrew earned a VVA in International Finance and Marketing from the University of Miami where he received the Henry K. Stanford Academic Scholarship, and is an alumnus of the executive MBA program at the J. Mack Robinson School of Business at Georgia State University, graduating Cum Laude with a concentration in Corporate Finance and Strategy.

Andrew is currently the CEO of BeckonCall - a cutting edge clinical communication platform that automates care team communication workflows and reduced communication cycle times by as much as 90% - which he launched in 2015 in partnership with Scottsdale, AZ based neurologist, Dr. Jeffrey Becker.

Under his leadership, BeckonCall won the prestigious Arizona Innovation Challenge and received a \$250,000 grant award from the State of Arizona, and was selected as portfolio company of Jumpstart Foundry, a preeminent health-care technology startup accelerator and seed fund based in Nashville.



Patty Tate, Former Superintendent, Osborn Elementary School District

Recently retired as Osborn Superintendent, Patty worked for almost 40 years as a volunteer, parent, teacher and educational leader to help Osborn students succeed. In addition to her commitment to public education, Patty serves as a Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) and CASA Peer Coordinator, speaking up for abused and neglected foster children in court and supporting other CASAs in this work. She and her husband Don, also a retired educator, are committed to improve the health, security and education of all Arizona children.



Jenny Volpe, CEO, Make Way for Books

Jenny Volpe is executive director of Make Way for Books – the Early Literacy Resource Center for Southern Arizona, a Tucson-based nonprofit organization that serves 31,000 children, parents, and educators each year. Jenny is passionate about helping children gain access to quality educational opportunities and believes in the power of literacy to change lives. In her work with Make Way for Books for the past six years, she has dedicated her time working to ensure that children in our community have access to early literacy services, are prepared to succeed the moment they step into the classroom, and have the chance to realize their fullest potential.

Jenny holds a bachelor of arts in literature and education from The University of Chicago and a master's in education from the Johns Hopkins University. Believing in education as a means to achieve social change, Jenny began her educational career as a Teach For America teacher and taught elementary school for five years before entering the educational publishing world and nonprofit sectors.

Jenny has spent considerable time traveling and volunteering in countries throughout Asia and Europe working with children and families in a variety of educational settings. In her role as executive director of Make Way for Books, Jenny is proud to lead a dedicated staff working to ensure that Arizona is a place where all children can succeed in school and in life.

Program Overview

The Problem



Students who do not read proficiently by 3rd grade are **4X less likely to graduate high school.**

-Annie E. Casey Foundation

Only **31%** of Arizona's economically-disadvantaged 3rd-grade students **scored proficiently on the AzMERIT 3rd grade English Language Arts Assessment.**

-Expect More Arizona

AZ ranks 44th in the US for PreK-12 education and ranks **46th in the US for 4th-grade reading proficiency.**

-US News and World Report

Our Solution

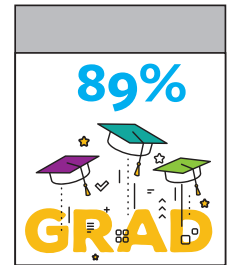


Read Better Be Better is the only nonprofit organization in Arizona that engages youth leaders to help solve the state's literacy crisis.

We train 6-8th grade students to implement a highly-structured after-school curriculum for 3rd-grade students considered to be at risk of being retained, in compliance with the Arizona State Literacy Plan.

3rd Graders + 6th-8th Graders | 2 x Per Week | 90 Minutes Per

GOOD NEWS!



89% of students reading at grade level by the end of 3rd grade will graduate high school irrespective of family income.

Reader Self-Perception Survey

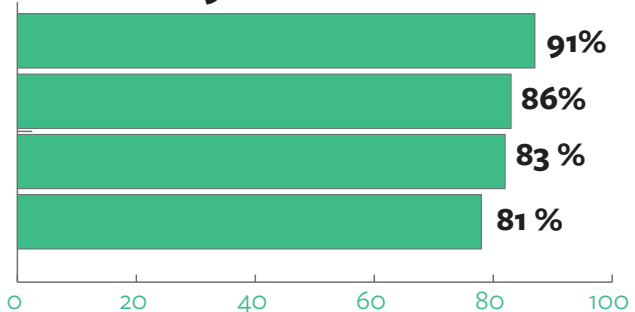
I am getting better at reading.

I read better now than I could before.

I understand what I read better than I could before.

Reading is easier for me than it used to be.

Fall 2018-19



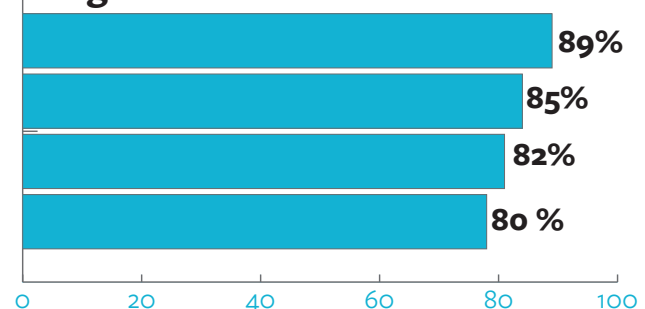
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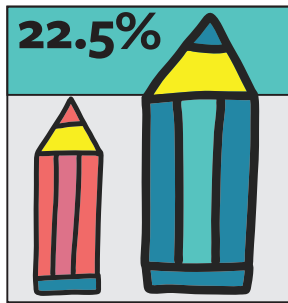
I understand what I read better than I could before.

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Program to Date



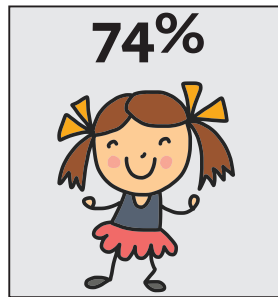
2018-19 Program Highlights



RBBB participants **outperform** non-participating 3rd grade students by **over 22.5%** on standardized comprehension tests.

"On my learning test I had a 36...but once I started (RBBB) I got a 79."

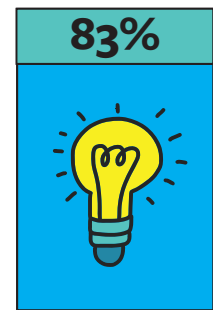
-Kaylynn, Reader, Wildflower School



After participating in RBBB **74%** of 6th to 8th grade Reading Leaders said they are, on the whole, **satisfied with themselves.**

"I am more social with friends at school. I also get out of my comfort zone more often at school."

-Hayden, Leader, Copper Trails School



83% of 3rd Graders agree strongly they **understand what they read better** than they could before participating in RBBB.

"I read bigger words and sentences with little problems."

-Mario, Reader, Carol G. Peck Elementary School

Fun Facts

Total # of Sites



36

Total # Students



1,375

Total # Stories Read



10,453

Average Attendance of Readers



81%

Total Middle School Volunteer Hours



11,645

Average Attendance of Leaders



74%

"It made me love reading more at home!"
- Kaleb, Reader, Michael Anderson Elementary School

"I would like to know that I helped a third grader get better at reading because I know that it's something I struggled with in third grade."
- Sydney, Leader, Littleton Elementary School

Empowering Readers

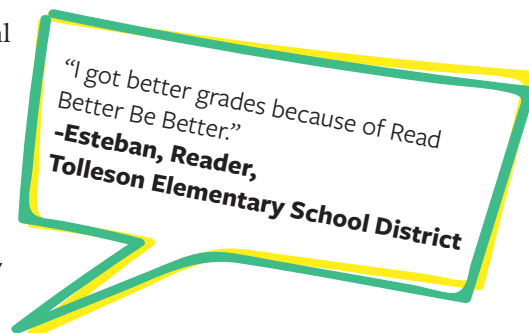
The Read Better Be Better focus couldn't be clearer: Help children improve literacy skills and become better learners. And for the fourth consecutive program year, RBBB has delivered with students outperforming non-participating peers by more than 20% on standardized reading comprehension tests.

It isn't difficult to see why our message resonates with struggling readers who are average third graders. Like most children, they are seekers of and receptacles for learning and positivity.

Avondale Elementary School District Principal, Lori Goslar made note of the program's impact on her campus this past Spring. "Behavior improves, confidence grows and students are gaining growth results in student work and test scores." In fact, RBBB students at Avondale ESD's Michael Anderson Elementary saw 23.6% more growth over their non-participating peers. Meanwhile, and only the first-year participating, Alhambra Elementary School District had 93% of parents reporting that their child could understand what they read better than before participating in RBBB. And Carol G. Peck Elementary Principal Melinda Schlosser went one step further, saying "The experience has been incredibly positive for everyone. Data is important, but I want to make sure the intangible effects get reported, because they matter. This program makes a difference in the lives of kids."

Because that is what RBBB does for Readers: we show students they have the power to learn where they once saw only difficulty. We make the academic world one of opportunity. RBBB shows each child that a perceived obstacle can be overcome with the right attitude and effort, and that gains beyond the initial goal of doing better in school and reading can be achieved: you also gain friends and habits that help you in everyday life.

Noah, a third grade Reader in the Avondale Elementary School District made note of how RBBB changed not only his reading comprehension but also liked how the program changed him for the better. "I will have kind manners and listen to teachers." And Kaleb, a Reader at Michael Anderson Elementary, said, "It made me love reading more at home!"



"I want to improve and succeed when I grow up."

-Rebecca, Reader,
Avondale Elementary School

"My [students'] DIBELS scores were much better after students were in RBBB."

- Ms. Alvarez, 3rd-grade Teacher,
Fine Arts Academy



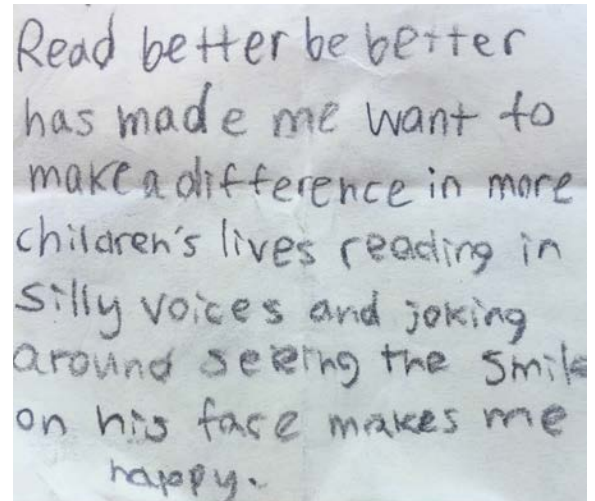
RBBB takes a different approach to tackling Arizona's literacy crisis. Our program develops community youth leaders through service-learning.

Reading Leaders are our superheroes. Middle school students make the decision to volunteer with younger students, often sacrificing other extracurricular activities and social activities. This commitment to excellence is their beginning journey to personal, academic and community development.

In fact, 86% of Leaders self-report that they have what it takes to be a good leader after participating in RBBB. Avondale Elementary School District Principal Lori Goslar noted, "Differences I have seen within the [middle schoolers] include their belief in themselves and their ability to articulate their role in service to our school community. They know they have made a new friend, served as a mentor and can add this experience to their own resume." Leader Natalie from Desert Thunder School shared her experience, "This program helped me because after school I would do things I wasn't supposed to and I wanted to change." By focusing on being a positive role model for their Readers, many students experience positive changes in their overall behavior.

Their leadership role in RBBB allows middle school students to discover unknown talents or skills they often don't know they possess. Leader Abbie at Copper Trails said, "I think about education problems differently and realize how many there are." Leader Connier at Encanto-Clarendon said, "The program changed me by letting me see through a 3rd grader's eyes and lets me see what struggles they go through."

Beyond building the academic success of 3rd graders, RBBB works to foster academic and social skills of future civic leaders who have a strong sense of community, who know how to problem-solve and who have a focus on education to find the solutions needed.



"It made me look on the bright side. I started looking forward to helping and started helping my brother more at home. He is in 3rd also."

-Isabella, Leader,
Buckeye Elementary School

"I believe more in myself that I can teach."

**- Maritza, Leader,
Desert Oasis Elementary School**



"RBBB changed me in some ways, like, I come home happy."

-Limariya, Leader,
Tolleson Elementary School

"If I were at home, I would be wasting time. But at RBBB, I am helping others."

-Khadiya, Leader,
Centerra Mirage STEM Academy

"It opened my mind more to different personalities, there are many. My buddy has ADHD and it was nice hearing about what's going on in his head, he'd tell me when he couldn't follow."

-Brisa, Leader,
Collier Elementary School

School Climate and Culture

Read Better Be concentrates on student growth in both reading and leadership. But students aren't the only ones that benefit from our program. School climate and culture receive positive gains. Across the board, students take the 'Be Excellent' and 'Be Kind' messaging learned in RBBB with them into their classrooms and beyond.

Whittier Elementary Principal Amy Rendon said, "We have seen tremendous growth. [Leaders/Readers] leadership, mutual respect, and behaviors curbed since RBBB! RBBB is building student

voice on campus." Teachers see the results of the program spilling into their classrooms too. "8th graders are always around either helping or just saying hi to the 3rd graders," said Mrs. Alvarez from Fine Arts Academy in Littleton Elementary School District. The inter-grade relationships developed in RBBB extend to their everyday interactions.

And RBBB doesn't stop at inspiring good relationships among students. We work closely with school educators and administrators to help address their literacy needs. Our reading intervention

is there to support the amazing work Arizona's educators do every day. But our relationship isn't limited to academics. Our team does its best to ensure we are a valuable part of the school's community, as well as be a way for schools to enhance the community and culture they want for their students. "...this was our first year as a K-8 school, so the community this program built was hugely positive for us," said Carol G. Peck Principal, Melinda Schlosser.

Workforce Development

Arizona faces a critical shortage of high-quality teachers. The 2018-2019 school year saw 1,443 vacant teaching positions; 3,357 classrooms were filled with under-qualified teachers who don't meet standard teaching requirements. 427 teachers severed their employment contract within the first few months of the school year (Arizona School Personnel Administrators Association, 2018).

To help address the shortage epidemic, Read Better Be Better works to develop a qualified workforce with student teachers. RBBB partners with higher

education institutions to give students the opportunity to gain invaluable classroom management experience and better prepare them for the demands of an under-resourced education system. In addition, students gain more experience working with the diverse student populations that make up our state.

Site Leader Alexa Clark said, "Working with RBBB has provided me with a great deal of assets to utilize as an Elementary Education major. The exposure and experience I have gained...as well as the behavioral management techniques taught to me...have greatly improved

my confidence in the classroom. I now feel that I am capable enough to facilitate productive lessons and help each and every one of my future students achieve their full potential."

The ability to work with school administrators creates opportunities for future job placement too. These factors add up to a teaching student better prepared for our education climate and for schools to receive highly-qualified, informed and experienced education professionals. Caroline Yarborough is an education major and a RBBB Site Leader. She found the hands-on work with students beneficial. "I plan on becoming a high school English teacher. I have gained confidence leading a classroom through RBBB and I will take that confidence into my future career," said Yarborough.

By giving education majors an opportunity to apply their learning to the classroom and to gain real-world experience in classrooms, RBBB helps build an education workforce prepared to meet the needs of Arizona classrooms.

"RBBB has provided me with a great deal of assets to utilize as an Elementary Education major. I now feel that I am capable enough to facilitate productive lessons and help...my future students achieve their full potential."

-Alexa Clark, RBBB Site Leader and GCU Elementary Education Major



Empowering Families

Read Better Be Better is laser-focused on 3rd-grade reading comprehension. What sets RBBB apart from other 3rd grade reading organizations, however, is that our impact doesn't start and end with reading growth. RBBB is the only Arizona literacy program that engages middle school leaders, inspiring them to become youth leaders – in the classroom and beyond.

RBBB's program trains middle schoolers to model critical thinking for reading comprehension. This effective modeling means 6th-8th graders memorize how

to better teach others. Why is this important?

The Read Better Be Better program has a ripple effect. Participating students have siblings, cousins, friends - even older family members - who benefit from the literacy skills and techniques implemented in RBBB. Students often tell RBBB Site Leaders how the program helps them with family members.

"It encouraged me to help my little siblings at home," said Sophia, a Leader at Whittier Elementary. And she isn't the

only Reading Leader to report success using RBBB's program at home. "Now, when my sisters ask [me] to teach them something, I will have a better understanding of what to do," said Michael Anderson Elementary Leader, Natalie.

With RBBB's classroom rules of excellence and kindness, students reap more rewards than extending academic skills in program. Reading Leaders' personal growth within the program impacts to their home life and builds stronger families.

"...my reading teacher said I am reading better and my grades got higher."

- DeAngelo, 3rd Grade,
Sunset Elementary



Empowering Companies

The development of a statewide quality workforce relies upon ensuring students read at grade-level.

The consequence of students exiting school and entering the workforce without proper reading proficiency and academic success is directly correlated to corporate investments in high caliber employees. To guarantee productivity, businesses must address the deficiencies of any student entering their workforce: including reading proficiency and comprehension. Employee retraining is expensive and ultimately may prove ineffective.

Read Better Be Better addresses reading proficiency gaps in students prior to their leaving elementary school, making them more successful in higher learning. RBBB bolsters our state's and nation's quality workforce.



"Our economic future is directly related to how well our youth read! Without early reading strength, graduation rates decline and this results in deficiencies in the Arizona workforce"

-Rick McCartney, CEO,
InMedia Company

"...decreased workplace productivity comes about because the adult is struggling to understand instructions or read directions...they're a struggling reader and that could, in many ways, prevent them from...producing more output for the employer that they're working for."

-Dr. Karen Ortiz, Director of Early Childhood Education,
Helios Education Foundation and RBBB Governing Board

Full Circle Club

The Read Better Be Better after-school reading program began in 2014 with our pilot program at Whittier Elementary School. We are proud to announce that out of our first class of struggling third-grade students several chose to return to the program as middle school Reading Leaders during the 2018-2019 school year.

Christopher, Bernardo, Raymundo,

and Angel (not pictured) are the first members of the Read Better Be Better Full Circle Club.

We are honored to have been with you on your journey of academic success and youth leadership. Thank you for embodying 'Be Excellent' and 'Be Kind'.



Empowering Communities

"Ford Fund's mission is to strengthen communities and help make people's lives better. In Phoenix, we've provided grants to outstanding literacy-focused nonprofits like Read Better Be Better... to advance literacy skills."

-Stephanie Jarnagan, Operation Better World Phoenix Coordinator, Ford Motor Company Fund

"Companies...have to be focused not just on the immediately-available workforce, but also have a vested interest in the long-term quality of the workforce. The percentage of students...at-grade-level reading proficiency in 3rd grade is a tremendous indicator of high-school graduation rates, an issue on which RBBB is laser-focused."

-Gary Linhart, Founding Partner, ViaWest Group and RBBB Governing Board Member

"We are THRILLED and grateful to have learned about RBBB and its mission..., and we are committed to supporting programs that recognize critical factors in making sure all children have an opportunity to achieve their dreams. RBBB's approach is fresh, creative and produces tangible results!"

-Marc and Kelly Wing, RBBB Funders



"The heart of Read Better Be Better's impact is authentic social justice work. By building positive connections through literacy, RBBB is creating more opportunity and building a more equitable and inclusive community."

-Jenny Volpe, CEO, Make Way for Books and RBBB Governing Board Chair

"We are connected to the community. We rise and fall with the community. Education and economy are inexplicably linked...It's a tragedy that thousands of Arizonans are walking around not realizing their economic potential simply because we did not get to intervene in 3rd grade."

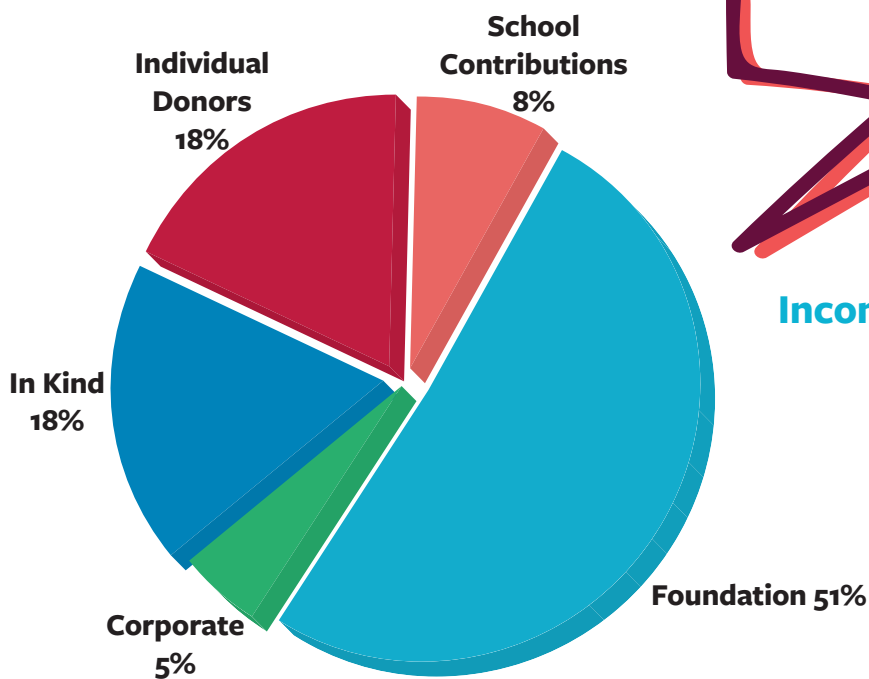
-Adam Goodman, President, Goodman Interior Structures

"RBBB has had an incredible effect on the lives of so many kiddos....It is truly an honor to be part of such important work for the children and families in Arizona."

-Dawn Wallace, Former Senior Advisor for Education to Governor Ducey

Statement of Financial Position

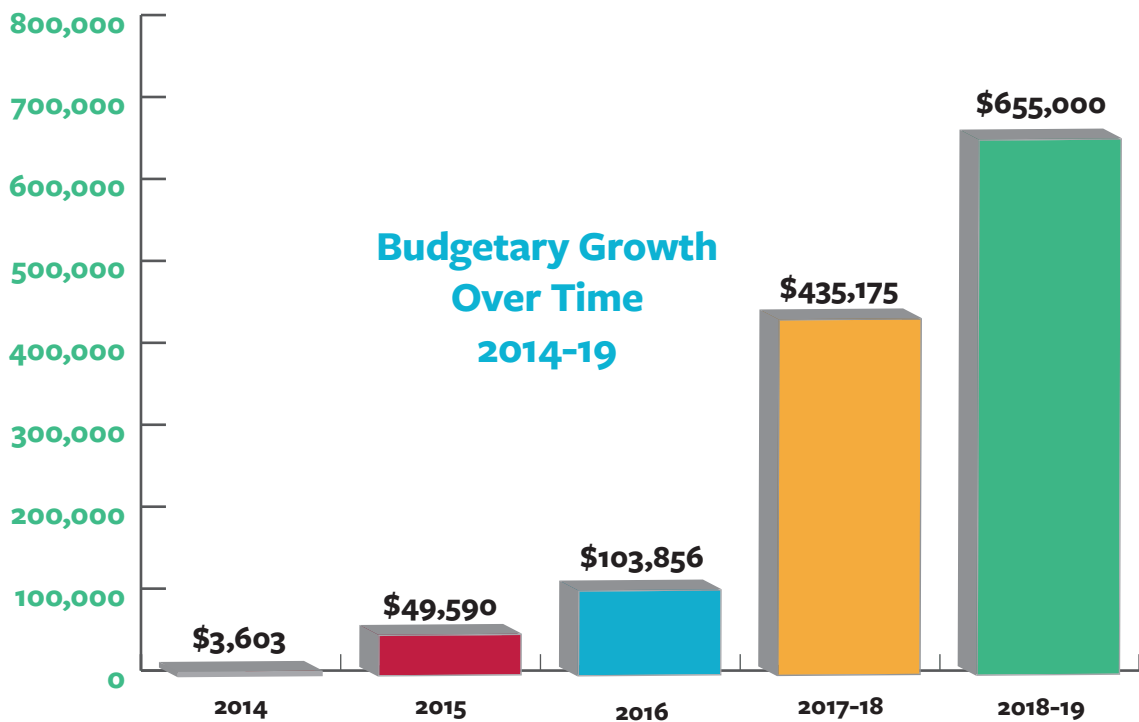
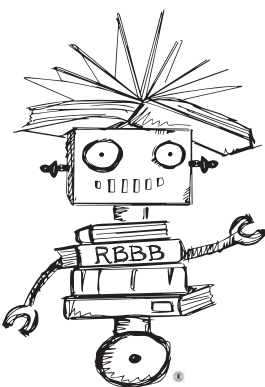
GOAL: Generate 40% of revenue from school contributions by 2020-21 school year



"It has been amazing to see the continued impact of Read Better Be Better as they have diversified and multiplied their outreach to move beyond the school setting to also include strategic partners like the Boys & Girls Clubs of Metro Phoenix."

-Katie Campana, VP Community Affairs Officer, Wells Fargo

Income By Funding Source
TOTAL INCOME
\$665,950



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Read Better Be Better



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@readbetteraz



Read Better Be Better

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Read Better Be Better.