
MEMORANDUM

TO: Superintendents
CC: Curriculum Directors and Principals
FROM: Jess DeCarolis, Division Director, Student Pathways Division
SUBJECT: ReSolve Mathematics Study Opportunity
DATE: January 22, 2024

Background

Vermont supervisory unions/districts (SU/SDs) are invited to participate in the [ReSolve Math Study](#). The study aims to further a base of research focused on a well-known debate in mathematics: whether students' mathematics proficiency—in both the short and long-term—is better served by instruction that systematically supports building mastery in unfinished learning ("Broad Foundation Skill Building") or by instruction that is highly targeted to unfinished learning in just the prerequisite concepts thought to be essential to succeed in grade level content ("Focused Just-In-Time Skill Building"). Focused on fourth and fifth grade mathematics learners, the study will use two digital math products to deliver supplementary instruction. Both Curriculum Associates i-Ready instructional platform, as well as Renaissance Learning's Star Math Assessment/Freckle, will be used. The study is funded by the U.S. Department of Education and will be led by [MDRC](#) with support from Digital Promise, Public Strategies, RAND, and Westat.

Study Information

Participating schools will receive free licenses and associated teacher training for one of the two study products for two years. ReSolve will provide funds for districts to offset costs involved in data collection activities and payment for teacher time spent in professional learning. ReSolve researchers are currently recruiting schools nationwide to participate in this two-year study.

The Agency of Education is sharing this information with educational leaders as part of an effort to address state summative assessment data that suggests that many Vermont learners are not meeting progress benchmarks and lag in proficiency. Our hope is that opportunities such as the ReSolve study may support SU/SDs' efforts in addressing Vermont students' unfinished mathematics learning and improve outcomes for students.



Contact: Kevin Feal-Staub at kevin.feal-staub@vermont.gov

Digital math products that supplement core teacher instruction are a promising option backed by multiple research studies. Schools that participate in this study will provide fourth and fifth grade students with supplementary instruction, and importantly, the ReSolve study will help to provide data-backed evidence about how to most effectively address unfinished math learning through electronic platforms.

Details

Timeline: The study will take place during the 2024-2025 and 2025-2026 school years.

Eligibility: Districts involved in the study must have Title 1 eligible schools in which 50% or more of fourth graders scored below proficient on the latest state-level math assessment. The researchers are hoping to recruit schools that enroll at least 25 fourth graders, however, there may be flexibility in this threshold. School leaders at smaller schools are still encouraged to contact the ReSolve project leads to discuss this effort and their potential participation.

Intervention: Students involved in the study will be assigned to groups receiving either the Broad Foundation Skill Building approach or the Focused Just-In-Time Skill Building approach students will use a digital learning product for approximately 60 minutes per week to receive supplemental instruction. Three times per year the students will take an assessment to benchmark their progress. The instructional time (as well as the assessment time) can be during students' regular math block or at another time during the school day. Schools participating in the study will receive free use of one of the digital products for two years, along with training and technical assistance in the use of the products.

Additional Requirements: Teachers will be required to participate in three to six hours of training at the outset of the study followed by 20-minute surveys administered twice per year. Supervisory Unions/Districts will also need to be prepared to share student/district data with ReSolve researchers.

How to get involved

MRDC will hold Informational webinars to answer questions on two upcoming dates:

- Tuesday, January 30, 2024, 11 a.m. – 12 p.m.
- Thursday, February 1, 2024, 4 – 5 p.m.

Schools or districts wishing to be involved in the ReSolve study, or to get more information should contact Maggie Hennessy from MRDC at margaret.hennessy@mdrc.org or Kevin Feal-Staub at kevin.feal-staub@vermont.gov.