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## School Improvement Technical Assistance Partner Profile

Background: MindPlay Represented by Close Education, LLC

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Mission Statement: Develop, publish, distribute cost-effective learning tools with clear objectives, inviting graphics, and sophisticated modern technology to support reading growth and development for all learners. Professional development is an integral part of our partnership with school districts to ensure effectiveness, data analysis, and sustained growth.

Close Education and MindPlay support the following: Effective Leaders, Ambitious Instruction, Collaborative Teachers, Supportive Environment, and Involved Families

Close Education LLC represents MindPlay, which includes ambitious instruction with a patented Synthetic Intelligence® enabling targeted reading instruction automatically, and yields result in hours, not years. Close Education's professional development team delivers implementation strategies to support effective leaders, collaboration among teachers through data analysis, and explicit teaching of ways to create a supportive learning environment, and parental involvement. MindPlay teaches reading to all ages including adults, and Close Education has partnered with school districts to provide open labs to the community to improve reading for parents and guardians as well.

We believe in the power of personalized adaptive technology to identify specific areas of weakness combined with the power of research-based instruction to accelerate learning for all. By closing gaps and accelerating learning, students see significant growth and are able to reach grade-level proficiency and above. MindPlay Literacy has been proven to help students with a wide range of abilities. Adequate for all ages, it can serve as an online reading program for Tier 1 students and intervention for Tier 2 and 3 students. Additionally, it can be used by students of several categories, including General Education, Special Education, English Language Learners, Bilingual Education, and readers with Dyslexia. MindPlay Literacy automatically analyzes student skills, assigns individualized instruction, and delivers targeted practice for students across your school or district.

The MindPlay Universal Screener (also an IDOE approved dyslexia screener) automatically provides benchmark assessments and progress monitoring for reading comprehension and fluency as well as a subset of skills that impede fluent reading. MindPlay Literacy includes the Universal Screener and direct, explicit instruction in all the essential reading components including linguistic processes. Individuals will have a different instructional path automatically assigned through continual diagnostics. The artificial intelligence identifies remediation needs through pre and post-tests as well as individual lesson practice.

MindPlay Literacy delivers a unique prescriptive plan for each student using scaffolded, explicit instruction provided by speech therapists and reading specialists who have infinite patience and provide

constant supportive, positive feedback in a one-on-one setting delivered online. Instruction is scaffolded, explicit, multi-modal, and includes practice exercises that are mastery-based. The MindPlay architecture includes a planned connection among the essential components of reading. This planned connection is one of the differentiators between MindPlay and other reading programs. Without intentionally connecting the components of reading and providing a duration of instructional time for each individual to achieve automaticity, many students fail to become proficient readers. This is one reason why MindPlay grows all readers where other programs fall short.

Instruction includes phonemic awareness and phonics instruction in a systematic way (following the Orton-Gillingham [OG] methodology) required for students with dyslexia to catch up. MindPlay increases reading fluency and provides grammar for meaning and vocabulary lessons and activities that build automatic word recognition in addition to teaching strategies to increase reading comprehension.

## **APPROACH**

Close Education's implementation team works with each district and school to customize an implementation and professional development plan based on individual needs. This approach includes supporting district and building leaders as well as teachers and students. We differentiate ourselves by providing the best instructional online tools that actually teach and provide extended teaching time beyond what classroom teachers can provide. Our professional development includes a close partnership and ongoing support at all levels in a district. Included is explicit instruction on utilizing the technology tool and interpreting data to enhance all instruction. Our approach empowers teachers and aids to provide targeted individualized instruction, utilizing the diagnostic data and print materials for teacher-led intervention. We partner with district leaders and provide data analysis and collaborate on the effectiveness and sustained growth. Our ideal partner district has strong leadership, believes all students can learn to read and is committed to a partnership to support and effectively implement this initiative.

## **EVIDENCE OF TRACK RECORD OF STUDENT AND SCHOOL OUTCOMES**

MindPlay Virtual Reading Coach is proven effective at increasing students' reading proficiency in all five components of reading according to ESSA and What Works Clearinghouse standards and results strongly correlate to increases in state test scores. Over 5,000,000 students have learned to read using MindPlay with students gaining 1-3+ years of growth in one school year.

A quasi-experimental study published in [\*Frontiers in Education\*](#) (2019) was designed to look at the efficacy of an online reading program, MindPlay Virtual Reading Coach (MVRC), which emphasizes the mastery of basic reading skills to support the development of reading fluency. MVRC focuses on basic foundational skills that diverge from the goal of increasing reading motivation. And its focus on reading fluency, vs. broad literacy achievement, offers an alternative to already existing reading enrichment. Three school districts participated in the study. One district provided data from elementary schools that used the MVRC program in Grades 2 to 6 ( $N = 2,531$  total). The other two districts participated in a quasi-experimental design: Six 2nd-grade classrooms and nine 4th-grade classrooms were randomly assigned to one of three conditions: (1) instruction as usual, (2) instruction with an alternative online reading program, and (3) instruction with MVRC. Complete data sets were available from 142 2nd-graders and 172 4th-graders. Three assessments from the MVRC screener were used: They assessed reading fluency, phonic skills, and listening vocabulary at two-time points: before and after the

intervention. Results show a clear advantage of MVRC on reading fluency. Correlations were high:  $r_{MAP} = 0.68$ ,  $r_{TOSWRF-2} = 0.54$ ,  $r_{TOSCRF-2} = 0.49$ ,  $ps < 0.01$ .

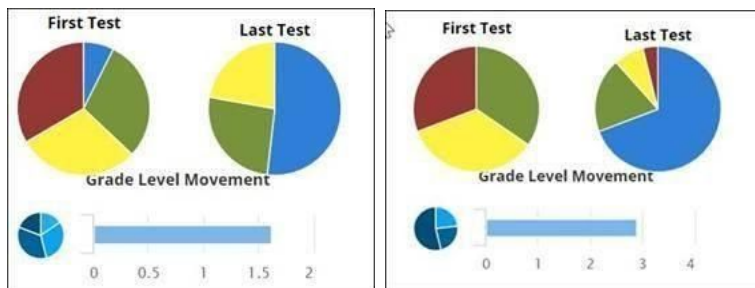
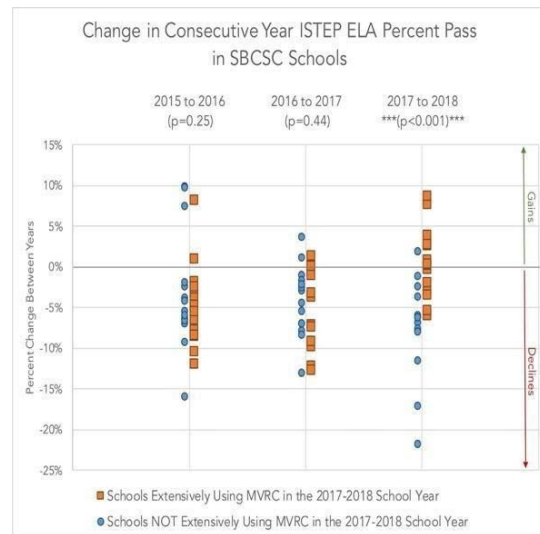
A third-party analysis of ISTEP+ score changes in South Bend conducted by enFocus found schools using MindPlay Virtual Reading Coach for 30 minutes a day during the 2017-18 school year compared to those which did not use MindPlay there was a statistically significant ( $p$ -value of  $p < 0.001$ ) increase in ISTEP+ pass rates in the MindPlay schools.

### ISTEP ELA Average Percent Pass between MindPlay and non-MindPlay South Bend Schools Over Time

Schools that used MindPlay in the 2017-18 school year had better changes in ISTEP+ English Pass Percentage than the schools that did not use MindPlay.

MindPlay was used only in certain elementary (Madison, Nuner, Harrison, Lincoln, Warren, and McKinley) and intermediate schools (all except LaSalle).

The change in ISTEP+ is statistically significant with a  $p$ -value of  $p < 0.001$ !



In Washington, Indiana, two 3<sup>rd</sup> grade classrooms have demonstrated incredible reading growth. MindPlay grows all students from those who are two or more grade levels below to those who are already exceeding grade-level expectations after six months of use.

77% of students and 88% of students are meeting or exceeding grade-level expectations after gaining 1.61 and 2.89-grade levels in one year!