

Horizons National Student Enrichment Program

Analysis of Student Evaluation Results and End of Summer Parent and Student Questionnaire

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I. INTRODUCTION

Horizons National is the headquarters organization for an award-winning network of six-week summer academic enrichment programs. Since 1964, Horizons programs have served low-income, public-school, K-8 students, supported by school-year components. In the summer of 2010, 19 Horizons sites served over 2000 students in ten states. Horizons programs offer three hours of academic instruction in reading, writing and math, and three hours of enrichment programming that includes swimming, arts, recreation and games, and science.

Horizons has a long history of student-centered evaluation, beginning with studies conducted by Yale University's Dr. Ed Zigler in the 1980s and 1990s. Horizons uses student assessment data as a program enhancement tool and to help instructors best understand how to work with their students each summer. Each year, assessment data is reviewed at the local level by teachers and program leadership, and at the national level across all Horizons affiliates to identify trends, best practices and other important information. Over the last three years, Horizons National has provided funding, training, assessment tools and other resources to affiliates as part of a Literacy Initiative promoting innovation and improvement. This combination has resulted in consistent student growth in reading across the network. With a growing learning community of 19 programs operating in ten states, Horizons' goal remains to continually improve programming through the use of training and data to create a significant and reliable impact for over 2,000 students.

II. HORIZONS STUDENT ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY AND REPORTED RESULTS

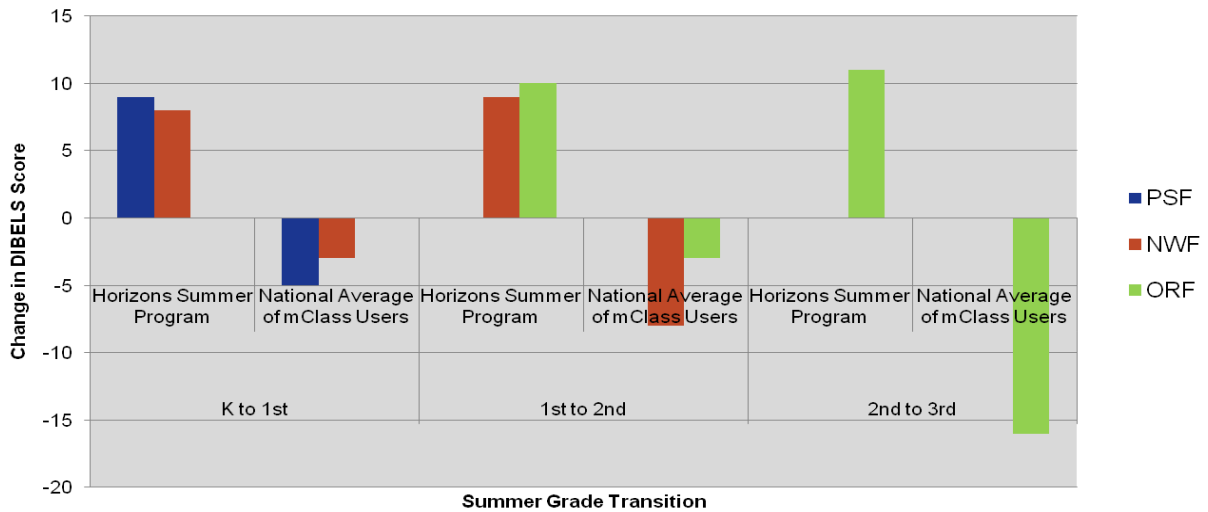
Horizons implemented two assessment tools to measure student performance in literacy. These assessments, STAR Reading by Renaissance Learning and mClass DIBELS by Wireless Generation, are used in a pre- and post-test format. Pre-testing is conducted prior to the summer session (2-3 weeks before) or on the first days of the program. Post-testing is conducted on the last week of the six-week summer session. Horizons National worked with Renaissance Learning and Wireless Generation to establish data processing guidelines in order to generate reports on the results of each assessment.

In order to better capture the effects of the program and changes in performance among typical student participants, parameters were set to create a more representative data set. Possible extreme cases or outliers such as students who were markedly below or above the grade level during pre-test (i.e., 3 grade levels below or 2 grade levels above), or having drastic grade changes at post-test (i.e., 1 grade level lower or 1.5 grade levels higher) were not included in the analyses. This more homogenous data set would allow the common characteristics of the participants to be more accurately measured.

Chart 1 shows the reading results from summer of 2010 for grades K-2, compared to non-Horizons students with similar demographic profiles. These results were measured using mClass DIBELS

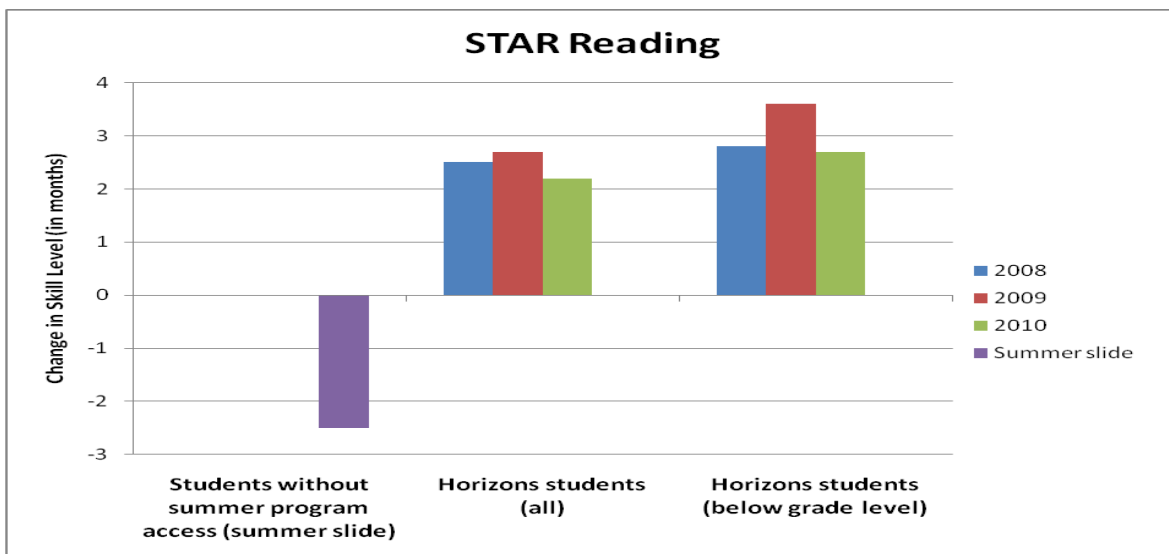
assessments, and compiled by Wireless Generation, who also provided the national data for comparison. Wireless Generation reported that the mClass DIBELS assessment comparison showed a 200-500% improvement for Horizons students over the non-Horizons students.

CHART 1
Comparison of DIBELS Growth over Summer at Horizons to National mClass Average



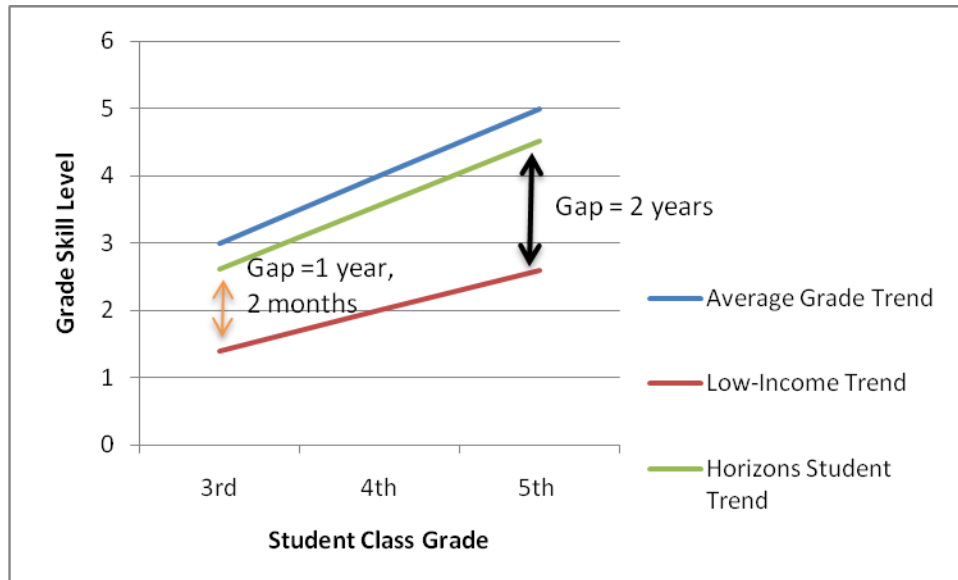
Similarly, Chart 2 shows the results from STAR Reading assessments for grades 3-8. Results continue to show impressive reading gains for all students. As would be predicted, students beginning the summer below grade-level show higher gains than those who began the summer at grade level, and all students are 5-6 months better off than the 3-month loss they might have otherwise experienced each summer.

CHART 2
STAR Reading Assessment Results: Horizons Participants vs Non-Horizons Participants



A comparison model using three years of results from the STAR Reading Assessment against the trend suggested by research on the effects of summer vacation on achievement test scores (Cooper, H. 1996) illustrates in Chart 3 that though Horizons students continue to be below grade level, their performance trend is similar to the normal grade progression and there appears to be a narrower achievement gap.

CHART 3
Comparison Model: 3 Year Results from the STAR Reading Assessment Against the Trend



III. SIZE OF IMPROVEMENT

Analyses of grade equivalent measures (See Table A) reflect a very positive improvement in students' performance. Among the 488 students, majority (n=359, 74%) had shown increases in their grade equivalent at the end of the program. Results show that 284 (58%) students increased between 0.1 to 1.0 grade equivalent, 44 (9%) increased between 1.1 to 2.0 grade equivalent, and 31 (6%) students increased between 2.1 to 3.3 levels. Meanwhile, 36 (7%) students showed no improvement and remained at the same grade equivalence; while 93 (19%) students experienced a drop-off or decrease.

TABLE A
Grade Equivalent Analysis Summary

Number of Students	Change in Grade Equivalent (GE)	Findings
31 (6%)	2.1 to 3.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 74% showed improvements in GE 58% improved up to 1 GE 9% improved between 1 to 2 GE 6% improved between 2 to 3.3 GE
44 (9%)	1.1 to 2.0	
284 (58%)	.1 to 1.0	
36 (7%)	.00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7% showed no change
93 (19%)	-.1 to -1.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 19% experienced drop off
488 (100%)		

The grade equivalent data indicate improvement in performance for majority of the students who completed the Horizons National Student Enrichment summer program. In comparison to the available national data, the improvements have been rather noticeable. While the results are exciting, they also underscore the need for further investigation and more in-depth analyses.

IV. STUDENT AND PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE ANALYSIS

Parents and students were asked to complete a questionnaire toward the end of the 2010 Summer Student Enrichment Program. Questionnaires were distributed to a random sample of Horizons sites. The Parent Questionnaire consisted of six questions; three were rating scale questions and three were open-ended questions. A total of 94 parents completed the Parent Questionnaire and were analyzed for this report. The Student Questionnaire consisted of seven questions; one was a rating scale question, one was a yes/no question, and five were open-ended questions. A total of 290 students completed the Student Questionnaire from the same seven sites as from the Parent Questionnaires and were analyzed for this report. Table B shows the number of parent and student questionnaires by site.

TABLE B
Number of Parent and Student Questionnaires by Site Location

Site Locations		# Parent Questionnaires	# Student Questionnaires
1	Colorado Academy	10	21
2	Dedham Country Day School	2	27
3	Greater Washington	57	148
4	Green Farms Academy	7	21
5	Harley School	6	35
6	Radcliffe Creek	2	19
7	Salisbury School	10	19
TOTAL		94	290

Of the 94 parents completing the Parent Questionnaire, 22 parents indicated that they had two or more children enrolled in the Horizons program.

A. End of Summer Parent Questionnaire 2010

1. How satisfied were you with your child's summer experience at Horizons?

Parents rated on a scale from 1 (Not at all) to 5 (Completely) how satisfied they were with their child's summer experience at Horizons. Ninety-five percent (95%) of the parents stated that they were completely satisfied. Four parents rated this question a 4 and one parent rated this question a 2. Table C shows the parent ratings of this question by site.

TABLE C
Parent Satisfaction of Child’s Summer Experience at Horizons

Site Location	Not at all								Completely	
	1	%	2	%	3	%	4	%	5	%
Colorado Academy	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	10	100%
Dedham Country Day School	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	2	100%
Greater Washington	0	-	0	-	0	-	2	3%	56	97%
Green Farms Academy	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	7	100%
Harley School	0	-	1	17%	0	-	1	17%	4	66%
Radcliffe Creek	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	2	100%
Salisbury School	0	-	0	0%	0	-	1	10%	9	90%
All Sites	0	0%	1	1%	0	0%	4	4%	90	95%

2. What did you find to be the strengths and weaknesses of the Horizons program?

Strengths – Eighty (80) parents commented on this question, providing a variety of positive responses ranging from the administrative services (parent/teacher communication, discipline, organization) to specific type of activities (academic program, variety of sports activities). Parents also made many complementary statements (e.g., excellent program, all was perfect) of the Horizons program.

Many parents made positive statements of the staff. Examples of comments made by parents included:

- They love children and it shows.
- Very original. I really like the communication between parents and teachers.
- The caring of the staff members.
- Great treatment towards the children.
- The wonderful staff, from the exceptional teachers, caring counselors, and friendly administrators.

Parents also appreciated how the Horizon program was implemented. Comments made ranged from the administrative functions to types of activities offered. Examples of parent comments included:

- Incorporating class work, reading, and field trips with the summer learning theme.
- A good educational program that keeps my children caught up.
- Organized program, good discipline, consistency.
- Reading, swimming, arts.
- Good student character building.
- Good mix of physical activity and academics.
- Focusing during the summer on writing skills, reading, and math; socialization and fun activities.

Weaknesses – Seventeen (17) parents responded to this question, commenting on an area that could be improved. Other parents did not comment or stated they could not identify any weaknesses. Two weakness areas that were repeated more than once included increased discipline (e.g., use of inappropriate language) and the process of bus pick-up and drop-off.

3. How much did your child enjoy his/her summer with Horizons?

Parents rated on a scale from 1 (Not at all) to 5 (Completely) how much their child enjoyed his /her summer with Horizons. Ninety-seven percent (97%) of the parents responded with a rating of 5 (Completely). Only 3% of the parents rated this question a 4; while no one responded with a 1 (Not at all), 2, or 3. Table D shows the parents' ratings to this question by site.

TABLE D
Parent Rating of the Extent Their Child Enjoyed Their Summer with Horizons

Site Location	Not at all		2	%	3	%	4	%	Completely	
	1	%							5	%
Colorado Academy	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	10	100%
Dedham Country Day	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	2	100%
Greater Washington	0	-	0	-	0	-	1	2%	56	98%
Green Farms Academy	0	-	0	-	0	-	1	14%	6	86%
Harley School	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	6	100%
Radcliffe Creek	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	2	100%
Salisbury School	0	-	0	-	0	-	1	10%	9	90%
All Sites	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	3	3%	91	97%

4. What would you change about the program?

Majority of the parents stated that they would not change anything; they were happy with how the program was administered. A handful of parents recommended that the program be extended one-to-two more weeks during the summer. A couple of other parents want to see the program offered through high school. Two parents stated they would like to see more parent involvement. One of these parents went further and suggested:

“Invite parents/guardians to come in and participate in some of the activities as volunteers. Invite community leaders, businesses, etc. to come and share their knowledge/ideas that might contribute to student success. This could be a mini-career day at the elementary level.”

5. Would you recommend Horizons to a friend or relative?

All parents who responded to this question (N=89) stated that they would recommend Horizons to a friend or relative. Many parents responded with supportive words such as *absolutely yes*, *definitely*, and *very much so*. Examples of actual responses include:

- Yes I would highly recommend this program to family and friends.
- Yes I want my nephew to attend.
- Yes and I have.

6. How likely are you to enroll your child in the Horizons program next year?

All parents who responded to this question (N=94) stated, on a scale of 1 (not at all) to 5 (definitely), that they would definitely enroll their child in the Horizons program next year. No one marked less than 5 and no comments were given.

B. End of Summer Student Questionnaire 2010

Of the 190 students who completed the Student Survey, 183 students identified their grade level. Except for students in first grade, student participants in grades second through eight are evenly spread. Although the Summer Enrichment Program focuses on students in grades K-8, five students in the ninth grade participated in the program. Table E shows the grade level of students by site.

TABLE E
Grade Level of Students Completing the Student Questionnaire

Site Location	GRADE LEVEL										
	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	TOTAL
Colorado Academy	1	2	2	3	3	3	2	2	3	-	21
Dedham Country Day	13	14	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	27
Greater Washington	-	31	24	19	10	17	17	12	10	5	145
Green Farms Academy	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	4	3	-	21
Harley School	-	12	-	-	6	4	3	1	6	-	32
Radcliffe Creek	2	2	6	4	5	-	-	-	-	-	19
Salisbury School	-	-	2	2	3	2	3	4	2	-	18
All Sites	18	63	36	30	29	28	27	23	24	5	283*
Percent by Grade	6%	22%	13%	11%	10%	10%	10%	8%	8%	2%	100%

*Seven students did not provide their grade level.

1. Overall, how much did you enjoy your summer at Horizons?

Students were asked to what extent they enjoyed their summer at Horizons. Ninety-three percent (93%) responded that they enjoyed the program a lot or they "loved it!" As indicated in Table F, only 2% stated that they did not enjoy the program or enjoyed it a little.

TABLE F
Student Enjoyment of Their Summer at Horizons

Site Location	Not at all		A Little		Some		A Lot		Loved it!	
	1	%	2	%	3	%	4	%	5	%
Colorado Academy	0	-	0	-	0	-	4	19%	17	81%
Dedham Country Day	0	-	1	4%	1	4%	1	4%	24	88%
Greater Washington	3	2%	2	1%	8	5%	34	23%	102	69%
Green Farms Academy	0	-	0	-	0	-	5	24%	16	76%
Harley School	0	-	0	-	3	8%	9	26%	23	66%
Radcliffe Creek	0	-	0	-	0	-	2	11%	17	89%
Salisbury School	0	-	1	6%	2	11%	7	39%	8	44%
All Sites	3	1%	4	1%	14	5%	62	21%	207	72%

2. What did you like best about Horizons?

Over half of the students stated that they like swimming. In addition, various other sports activities were mentioned as being enjoyable. Examples of these activities included tennis, soccer, gymnastics, and marshall arts. Field trips were the next most liked activity stated. Other areas students listed as liking best about Horizons included time with friends, having “cool” teachers, and learning new skills and subject areas (i.e., music, drama, art, cooking). A few students mentioned learning to read and math. The popular foods included pizza and popsicles.

3. What did students like least about Horizons?

Students mentioned a variety of activities or services they did not like; however, there was no pattern in the areas mentioned. The type of activities students mentioned as liking the least indicated personal tastes in what they did not like. For example, activities included art, swimming, drama, gardening, riding bikes, and indoor recess. The services that students mentioned they did not like included the bus rides and the type of food for snacks/lunch. Sandwiches seemed to be the least popular food.

4. Would you like to come back to Horizons next year?

Students were asked if possible, would they like to come back to Horizons next year. Eighty-eight percent (88%) of the students stated that wanted to return, 11% were not sure, while only 1% stated that they did not want to return. Table G shows the percent of students by site who want to return.

TABLE G
Number of Students Who Would Like to Attend Horizons Next Year

Site Location	Yes		No		Not Sure	
	1	%	2	%	3	%
Colorado Academy	20	95%	0	-	1	5%
Dedham Country Day	24	89%	0	-	3	11%
Greater Washington	133	90%	2	1%	13	9%
Green Farms Academy	19	91%	0	-	2	9%
Harley School	30	86%	1	3%	4	11%
Radcliffe Creek	12	63%	0	-	7	37%
Salisbury School	15	83%	0	0%	3	17%
All Sites	253	88%	3	1%	33	11%

5. Has Horizons changed the way you feel about school or learning?

The Student Survey asked students an open-ended question whether or not the Horizons Enrichment Program changed the way they feel about school or learning, and if so, how. Of the 162 students who provided definitive responses; yes, no, or not sure, 53% stated that the program did change how they feel about school and learning while 46% stated that it did not. Table H shows the responses by site.

Students who stated the program changed their feeling about school made comments covering academics, self-esteem and personal growth. Comments on academics included:

- Yes, it changed me because I pay more attention in math then I ever did.
- Yes because Horizons makes learning fun.
- I now like to learn
- Yes, I like to read now
- Yes because they helped me learn that reading is fun.
- Yes, I learned there are many different ways to learn.

Comments on self-esteem included:

- Yes, it has changed the way I feel about school or learning by helping me be less shy.
- I felt dumb before.
- Yes, I feel more confident.
- At first I didn't believe in myself as a learner but now I do.

Comments on personal growth included:

- Yes, it's made me think about the decisions I make.
- Yes, my sportsmanship has become better.
- It helped by not getting mad because people call me names.

Many of those students who stated the program did not change their feeling toward school or learning commented that they already like school and liked to learn. Comments students made about how they felt about school prior to their participation in the Horizons program included:

- No, I have always felt good about learning new things.
- No, I have always loved school.
- No because I kind of like school.

TABLE H
Students Stating Horizons Changed the Way They Feel about School or Learning

Site Location	Yes		No		Not Sure	
	1	% by site	2	% by site	3	% by site
Colorado Academy	15	100%	-	-	-	-
Dedham Country Day	4	33%	8	67%	-	-
Greater Washington	37	45%	44	53%	2	2%
Green Farms Academy	9	82%	2	18%	-	-
Harley School	9	45%	11	55%	-	-
Radcliffe Creek	5	50%	5	50%	-	-
Salisbury School	7	64%	4	36%	-	-
All Sites	86	53%	74	46%	2	1%

6. Most important thing you learned at Horizons.

When students were asked what was the most important thing they learned at Horizons, students provided a variety of different responses. The clusters most mentioned included learning specific content areas, the importance of education, increased confidence, and getting along with others.

The comments of students relating to subject areas they learned in the Horizons program that was most important to them included:

- Reading books
- Math and writing
- Doing homework
- I learned how to swim
- My multiplication tables
- Learning to write

Many students commented on the importance of education and what they needed to do to obtain their education. Comments included:

- The most important thing I learned is that if you keep your grades up you will get rewarded with something great.
- To have fun and studying about a lot of stuff.
- Learning how to work hard and read a lot.
- Paying attention to the teacher.

- The most important thing that I learned in Horizons this summer is that education is important and the knowledge is one thing that can never be taken from you.

The Horizons program was a confidence builder for many students. Students commented on what they learned to increase their ability to pursue their education. These comments included:

- To never give up even if you think you can't.
- I learn to never give up because you will learn from your mistake.
- It has showed me that I can do anything if I put my mind to it.
- The most important thing was that I can be myself.
- (I learned) self-confidence in the pool.
- I learned how to be brave in front of other people.

Interpersonal skills were another area that students commented as being the most important thing they learned while participating in the Horizon program. Students made the following statements:

- Getting along with others.
- That fighting isn't always a good thing to settle your problems.
- How to get along together more and to have fun.
- What you say can hurt people.
- To be a good sportsman.
- How to care about friends.
- How to participate and how to keep self-control.
- To not be rude to other people.
- Honesty
- It showed me how to work within groups. It made me more social.

7. Horizons is...?

When students were asked to make a general statement about Horizons by completing the sentence, "Horizons is...?", most student used one answer responses and all were positive. The more common words used include *awesome*, *cool*, *fun*, and *great*. A few students were more descriptive, describing their feelings of Horizon. Examples of these comments include:

- The best experience a kid could have during summer.
- A great place to meet friends, learn and or better your grades in school.
- Horizons is a fun and educational place for children.
- A really cool camp that helps you do better in school.

V. SUMMARY OF PARENT AND STUDENT SURVEY FINDINGS

Survey results from both the parents and students show that the Horizons program was well received and indicators demonstrate that students gained from their participation.

Parents were very satisfied with their child's experience at Horizons and they felt that their child enjoyed their participation in the program. All 94 parents who responded to this question stated that they will enroll their child in Horizons next year and 100% of the parents who responded to this question (N=89) stated that they would recommend Horizons to relatives or friends.

Parents commented how caring the teachers, counselors, and administrators were toward the students. Many of the students also commented on how much they liked their teacher and how supportive they were when teaching reading and math. The relationships that staffs develop with the students are a strong feature of the program.

A variety of activities were offered to students allowing students to gain different experiences. When asked what they liked best about Horizons, a number of different activities were listed as favorites. Types of activities ranged from various sports (i.e., swimming, tennis, marshall arts, basketball) to fine arts (i.e.,

drama, art, music) to basic household skills (i.e., cooking). Horizons academic focus is reading and math. However, students also mentioned their interest in learning about other subject areas such as the ocean and different countries.

Based on the findings of the surveys, especially the student survey, Horizons is much more than an academic program. Comments from students indicate growth in positive self-esteem, increase in self-confidence, increased interpersonal skills, as well as understanding the value of having an education.

VI. CONCLUSION

As supported by the findings of the various standardized quantitative measures and the student/parent-centered qualitative surveys, the Horizons National Student Enrichment Summer Program has been successful in promoting considerable improvement in reading ability among the majority of the student participants. Qualitative data also shows improvements in attitude toward reading, increased interest in school, and increased self-esteem towards learning. These findings confirm the efficacy of the summer program. It also accentuates the needs and the desires for the Horizons program to be responsive to the unique challenges faced by its students.