



Read To Succeed Survey Results

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## Results

### Respondent Profile

A total of 454 people participated in the *Read To Succeed* online survey with a total of 420 surveys completed (92.5%). Ages of respondents ranged from 12yrs to 83yrs, with the average age being 42yrs ( $m = 42.75$ ,  $SD = 13.80$ ). A majority (96%) of survey respondents had received postsecondary education, resided in Murfreesboro (70%), owned their own homes (82%) and described themselves as either city or county school employees (29.5%) or professionals (25.7%). In addition, respondents identified themselves as Rotarian (2.4%), Council or Board members (7.7%), *Read To Succeed* Volunteer (16.1%) and other (68.1%). **An alarming 56% of respondents said they personally knew of an adult that could not read or reads at a very low level. Approximately 60% of respondents, at time of survey, were affiliated with some type of a literacy project or program.**

Approximately 80% of survey respondents currently had a library card with only 20% reporting they had visited a library in the last 12 months compared to 19% that visited the library at least nine times or more in the last 12 months. Survey findings indicate respondents were more likely to visit the library at least once in the past 12 months. Three reasons were commonly identified as why individuals did not visit their libraries: internet use, purchased instead of checking out books, and use of school libraries.

### Familiarity and Affiliations

Respondents were most familiar with *Read To Succeed* programs, *Reading in the Schools Day* (81.9%), *Adult Literacy* (58.8%) and *Celebrity Spelling Bee* (51.2%). The least familiar programs appear to be *Express Yourself* (9.8%) and *Books to Boardwalk* (6.9%). When respondents were asked about their familiarity with the organization of *Read To Succeed*, over 69% were aware that volunteers are used to promote existing services, 68% understood that the program is a non-profit organization that relies on individuals and grants for funding and 77% were familiar with the program's mission statement. When asked how they heard about *Read To*

*Succeed*, the following were stated in order of frequency: something other than options offered, the Daily News Journal, church, library, current survey, Rutherford County schools, Murfreesboro schools, and WGNS radio.

Over 86% of respondents had heard of the phrase “*Literacy Matters*”. **Over 95% of respondents agreed that *Read to Succeed* has a favorable impact on literacy in the Rutherford County. Over 80% of respondents noticed an increase in literacy related activities in the school system and public awareness within the last five years, with 67% noticing an increase in reporting literacy more often in local media outlets.** Over 67% indicated they knew how to contact *Read To Succeed* if they wanted to and approximately 58% of respondents, at time of survey, visited the website at least once and 13% visited it more than 6 times.

## Needs Assessment

Respondents were asked a host of survey questions to assist *Read To Succeed* in better understanding the perceived literacy needs of the community. When asked to rank the impact of adult literacy on their community, 349 (or **83% of the respondents indicated literacy has a serious or major impact on their community**). Individuals having a high school education were less likely to report literacy as a major problem (44.4%) in their community when compared to individuals receiving a GED (60%), some college/technical school (57.1%), bachelors’ degree (58.7%), masters’ degree (61.9%) and a doctoral degree (60%). Individuals residing in Smyrna were less likely to report literacy as a major problem for their community (53.3%) than Murfreesboro residents (65.3%) or Lavergne (68.4%). Overall, a majority of respondents (**86.2%**) believe literacy needs to be one of Rutherford County’s top concerns. Interestingly, a cross-tabulation indicate respondents renting their home are statistically more likely to believe literacy is receiving enough attention in their communities versus individuals owning their own home ( $X^2 = 6.19, p = .045$ ).

Of the 454 respondents, **172 (37.8%) knew of family, friends, coworkers, clients, or customers that were in need of adult literacy (45.9%), child tutor (51.2%), family literacy support (43%), access to books or other reading materials (55.2%), and literacy information (54.7%). In addition, 408 (90%) respondents identified the following literacy**

**needs for Rutherford County: reading programs for children (85.3%) reading programs for adults (87.3%), more access to books (46.1%), more information on literacy programs (61.5%), reading programs and support for families (75.2%).**

### **Program Effectiveness**

To gain a better understanding of how the program is perceived by the community, respondents were asked to rate *Read To Succeed* effectiveness, the content of their E-Newsletter, and frequency in which they visited the website ([www.readtosucceed.org](http://www.readtosucceed.org)). Over 73% of respondents, having an opinion, find the overall *Read To Succeed* program effective, and agreed the program has had a favorable impact on literacy in Rutherford County ( $\chi^2 = 31.37, p \geq .05$ ). Of those individuals, 53.7% found the program to be “very effective”, in addition to 77.8% polled found the content of the E-Newsletter informative and helpful.

There is a statistically significant relationship between a respondents’ level of involvement in a literacy program or project and how they rated program effectiveness (Spearman’s rho = .322,  $p = \geq .05$ ). Individuals not involved with any type of literacy program were more likely to have no opinion on program effectiveness (46.5%) when compared to individuals newly involved or creating literacy programs (20.8%). Both of these categories were more likely to have “no opinion” on program effectiveness when compared to individuals having an affiliation with literacy programs over the past five years (15.6%). Respectively, 22.6% of those uninvolved with a literacy program found the overall program very effective compared to 41.7% recently involved, and 50.4% which had increased their involvement with literacy programs over the past 5 years. When asked to identify organizations/institutions associated with promoting literacy with *Read To Succeed*, a majority of the respondents identified city and county schools, Linebaugh Library, and the Rotary Club as the top three choices.

### **Discussion**

**In summary, survey findings indicate Rutherford and surrounding counties identify the need for additional and/or expanded literacy programs for adults and children. Results clearly suggest an increase in public awareness over the last 5 years.** This awareness may, in part, be associated with the various literacy programs provided through *Read To Succeed* program volunteers, website, E-Newsletter, on-line survey and community partners such as

Linebaugh Library, Rutherford and Murfreesboro schools, and the Rotary Club. Overall, ***Read To Succeed*** is perceived as an effective and needed service to local communities.

Despite the overall favorable program findings for *Read To Succeed*, individuals perceive literacy as having a continuing negative impact on their neighborhoods and communities. Recommendations for the future include increasing public awareness on literacy and existing programs and services, with a focus on community outreach, recruiting more volunteers, and expanding or creating new partnerships with local media to facilitate for public service announcements.