



## **Executive Summary: My Home Library Spring 2020 Reading Survey Findings**

The My Home Library (MHL) Reading Survey is a brief measure of student outside of school reading. The Barbara Bush Houston Literacy Foundation (BBHLF) engaged experts in reading motivation and development to develop this customized survey. Using the most recent research on reading motivation, experts from the Children's Learning Institute (CLI) at UTHealth developed and evaluated the utility of this survey. Three core indicators of reading interest that relate to the MHL program: (1) student motivation to read, (2) amount of reading outside of school, and (3) number of books at home. Key findings from the initial testing of this survey are summarized below.

For students to be successful readers, abundant research demonstrates that students must spend time reading texts that are at appropriate reading levels (e.g., Therrien, 2004; Wigfield & Guthrie, 1997). The MHL theory of change speculates that students are more likely to choose to read outside of school when they have access to books they are interested in reading. Indeed, there is empirical evidence that reading motivation relates to reading outcomes (Schiefele & Löweke, 2017; Soemer & Schiefele, 2018

In Spring 2020, BBHLF and CLI staff surveyed over 547 students at four MHL partner elementary schools in Houston Independent School District (HISD). Students who completed this 12-item reading survey included Grade 3 (n=198 students), Grade 4 (n=172), and Grade 5 (n=177). Over 98% of students at these elementary schools are economically disadvantaged.

*Key Finding 1: The MHL Reading Survey is a reliable instrument.*

This initial evaluation of the MHL Reading Survey demonstrated **good reliability** of 11 items measuring student motivation to read ( $\alpha = .76$ ). These findings informed minor revision of the survey for future use in the MHL program.

*Key Finding 2: Students who have more books at home spend more time reading.*

There was variability in the number of books students reported having at home. A small fraction of students (5%) reported having no books at home. About 24% of students reported having 1-5 books at home and 18% having 6-10 books. A majority of students (53%) reported having 11-20 books at home.

Students' reported number of **books at home** relates to their reported amount of recreational reading outside of school. We found that a greater number of books at home predicts more time spent reading with this relationship being significantly greater than chance. This supports the MHL theoretical framework that increasing access to books at home is an important step in ensuring students experiencing poverty have the resources to become successful readers.

*Key Finding 3: Students who spend more time reading are more motivated to read.*

**Reading amount** is positively associated with reading motivation in these survey responses. On average, students reported reading outside of school several times a week, but most did not read daily (item 14). We found that a greater amount of reading predicts higher reading motivation with this relationship being significantly greater than chance. This also supports the MHL theoretical framework that increasing time reading recreationally, outside of school promotes a positive outlook about reading that may be important for students to become successful readers.

*Key Finding 4: Students who own more books and girls select more challenging levels of texts.*

We explored what genres and levels of books students eligible for the MHL program selected to add to their personal home libraries. The **number of books at home** was positively associated with the levels of books selected, such that students who have access to more books selected more challenging texts to add to their home libraries. In addition, there was significant gender difference in the levels of books selected, with **girls selecting higher levels of books**. There were no significant relations between student characteristics/motivation and selection of informational versus narrative genres.

This initial survey supports the theoretical framework of the MHL program that seeks to increase students access to books as a means for improving amount of recreational reading as well as motivation to read. Future studies will consider how the MHL's unique model for allowing students choice in selecting books they want to add to their home library relates to reading motivation and reading achievement.

## References

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