

HOW IGNITE'S FOCUS ON PLAY AND DATA DROVE KINDERGARTEN READINESS AT CLAYTON COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS



The District

Clayton County Public Schools

Located just 17 miles south of downtown Atlanta, Clayton County is home to the world's busiest airport and one of the nation's largest school districts. Clayton County Public Schools (CCPS) ranks among the top 100 largest districts in the United States and is the sixth largest in Georgia, with nearly 70 schools. The student body is predominantly African American (69%) and Hispanic/Latinx (24%). CCPS also runs a robust pre-kindergarten program across 34 schools, serving 1,232 four-year-old students during the 2023–2024 school year.



The Challenge

The need for a tool to support kindergarten readiness through play & data

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*- Chanel Williams,
Instructional Specialist,
CCPS*

The goal of CCPS's pre-kindergarten program is to prepare children for kindergarten and set them up for success in early elementary school. To achieve this, two key factors are essential. First, learning in pre-K must happen through play. Second, there must be data to track children's progress and challenges, guiding instruction, support, and resources. Despite the need for this data, administrators in the pre-kindergarten program did not want to increase the burden of assessments on teachers. As Chanel Williams, an experienced early childhood professional and the instructional specialist in the CCPS Early Learning Department, explained, "I see the anguish for teachers when they have to assess 20 children, do it with paper and pencil, score it, and then upload it." To address this challenge, Williams sought a tool that provided both play-based learning and data—without the need for traditional one-on-one assessments.

The Plan

Implementing Ignite by Hatch™

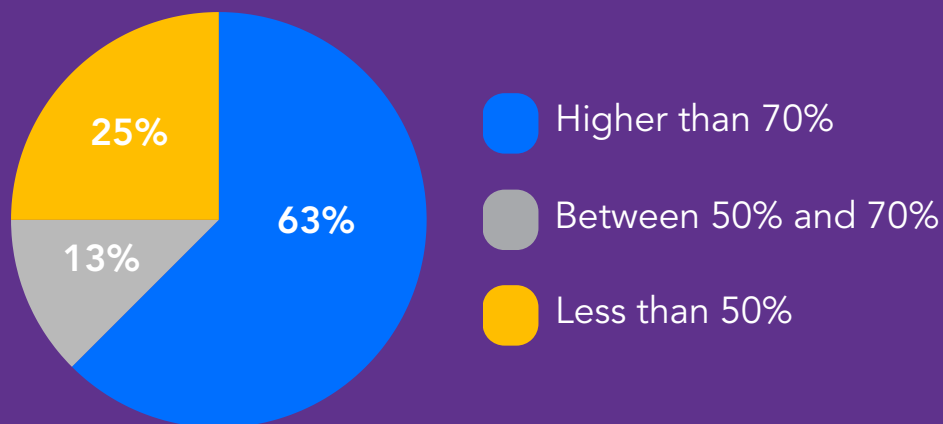
To incorporate more play and gather more data as ways to meet its goal, CCPS chose Hatch Early Learning's Ignite by Hatch™. Ignite is a digital learning platform that engages children through dynamic, play-based experiences while promoting growth across seven key developmental domains: Mathematics, Literacy, Language & Communication Development, Social and Emotional Learning, Science & Technology, Physical Development, and Social Studies. As children play, they progress through eight levels of increasingly challenging skills in each domain. This play yields actionable data for educators that is accessible via the Insights by Hatch™ dashboard, empowering teachers to personalize small-group instruction and classroom activities based on real-time evidence.



Williams noted that Ignite felt like a perfect fit for the pre-kindergarten program, particularly for today's tech-savvy generation: "Ignite gives them the opportunity to learn through a device, with intention, with play, and aligned with our standards." Additionally, Williams emphasized the value of the data provided by Insights, saying, "We need to pinpoint where the district will provide more [curricular] resources, and Insights helps us do that."

In the fall of 2023, Ignite was introduced in 16 pre-K classrooms across 10 sites within the pre-kindergarten program. For optimal learning outcomes and the most accurate data, Hatch Early Learning recommends that each child engage with Ignite for 30 minutes per week, totaling 15 hours over the course of a 9-month school year. Ignite implementation during the 2023–2024 school year was strong, with most CCPS classrooms (10 out of 16) using Ignite for 70% or more of the recommended time. Supporting the rollout of Ignite was straightforward, as Williams noted: "Ignite mimics what children use at home for fun! Now, they are using what they typically use [only] for fun, for learning."

Average Rate of Recommended Ignite Usage by Classrooms



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The Impact

Through play and data, Ignite supported kindergarten readiness



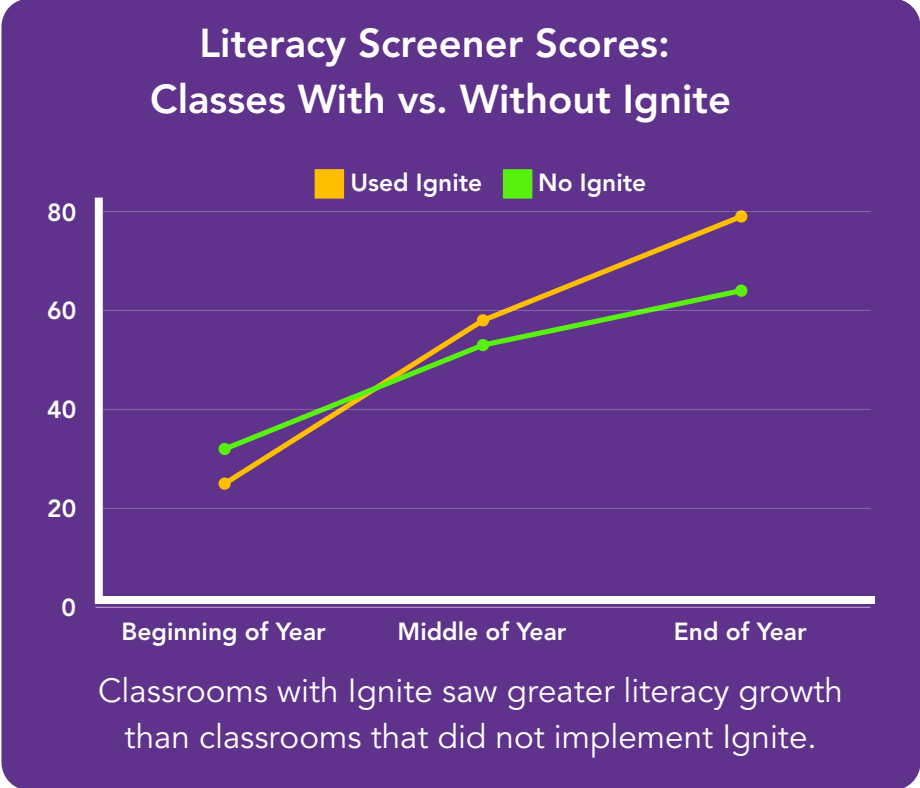
CCPS educators saw the benefits of Ignite. They appreciated how the platform offered children more opportunities to play, using devices that truly captured their attention. As a result, many teachers who used Ignite during the 2023–2024 school year were eager to continue using the tool. The data provided by Insights was equally valued. Williams emphasized how this data shapes planning for classroom visits: “I

choose activities based on where I see challenges [displayed] in Insights. I also order books and materials based on the full district view of children’s Ignite progress in the Insights dashboard.”

Beyond the anecdotal benefits of Ignite, the tool has a measurable impact on children’s progress toward kindergarten readiness. All children in CCPS’s pre-kindergarten program complete a literacy screener at the beginning, middle, and end of the year. Classrooms in which Ignite was implemented saw greater gains in their literacy screener scores across the school year compared to classrooms that did not implement Ignite. Despite starting the 2023–2024 school year at similar literacy levels as classrooms that did not use Ignite, classrooms with Ignite ended the year with higher average literacy screener scores.

Williams noted, “Great teachers couldn’t do this on their own. Ignite meets children where they are, reinforcing what was taught to support this level of success.”

Through a strong implementation of Ignite, the pre-kindergarten program at CCPS successfully enhanced both play and data collection without adding to teachers’ assessment burden. By following its vision of a pre-K education that prioritizes and emphasizes play, CCPS, with the support of Ignite, further bolstered kindergarten readiness. As a result, 4-year-olds were better prepared for their learning in early elementary school during the 2024-2025 school year.



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