



COLORADO
Department of Education

State Systemic Improvement Plan Phase III

Submitted to the

Office of Special Education Programs

U.S. Department of Education

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[Colorado Department of Education](#)
[Exceptional Student Services Unit](#)

Contents

A.	Overview of Phase III – Year Two.....	4
	Theory of Action for the State Systemic Improvement Plan	4
	State-Identified Measurable Result	5
	Measurable Targets	6
	Actual Data for FFY 2016	6
B.	Progress in Implementing the SSIP	7
1.	Description of the State’s SSIP implementation progress	7
	Improvement Strategy One	8
	Improvement Strategy Two	18
	Improvement Strategy Three.....	28
2.	Description of SSIP Implementation Progress and Stakeholder Involvement in SSIP Implementation and Evaluation	32
C.	Data on Implementation and Outcomes	40
1.	How the State monitored and measured outputs to assess the effectiveness of the implementation plan	40
	Return on Investment.....	44
2.	How the State has demonstrated progress and made modifications to the SSIP as necessary.....	50
D.	Data Quality Issues.....	67
E.	Plans for Next Year.....	67
	Appendices - Improvement Strategy One.....	71
	Appendices - Improvement Strategy Two.....	93
	Appendices - Improvement Strategy Three	108

INTRODUCTION

This report will provide the reader with information regarding the current status of the implementation of the Colorado Department of Education's (CDE) Office of Special Education's State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) which is focused on improving literacy knowledge and skills of students who are in kindergarten through third grade. This report primarily covers Year 2 of Phase III of the SSIP. (School Year 2016-2017)

To reacquaint the reader with the foundation of the SSIP developed in Phase I as well as some additional pertinent information from Phase II and III a brief summary has been included. For more in-depth information, we encourage the reader to review all of the reports which are available on the [CDE website](#).

For additional information or to request a hard copy of this report please contact:

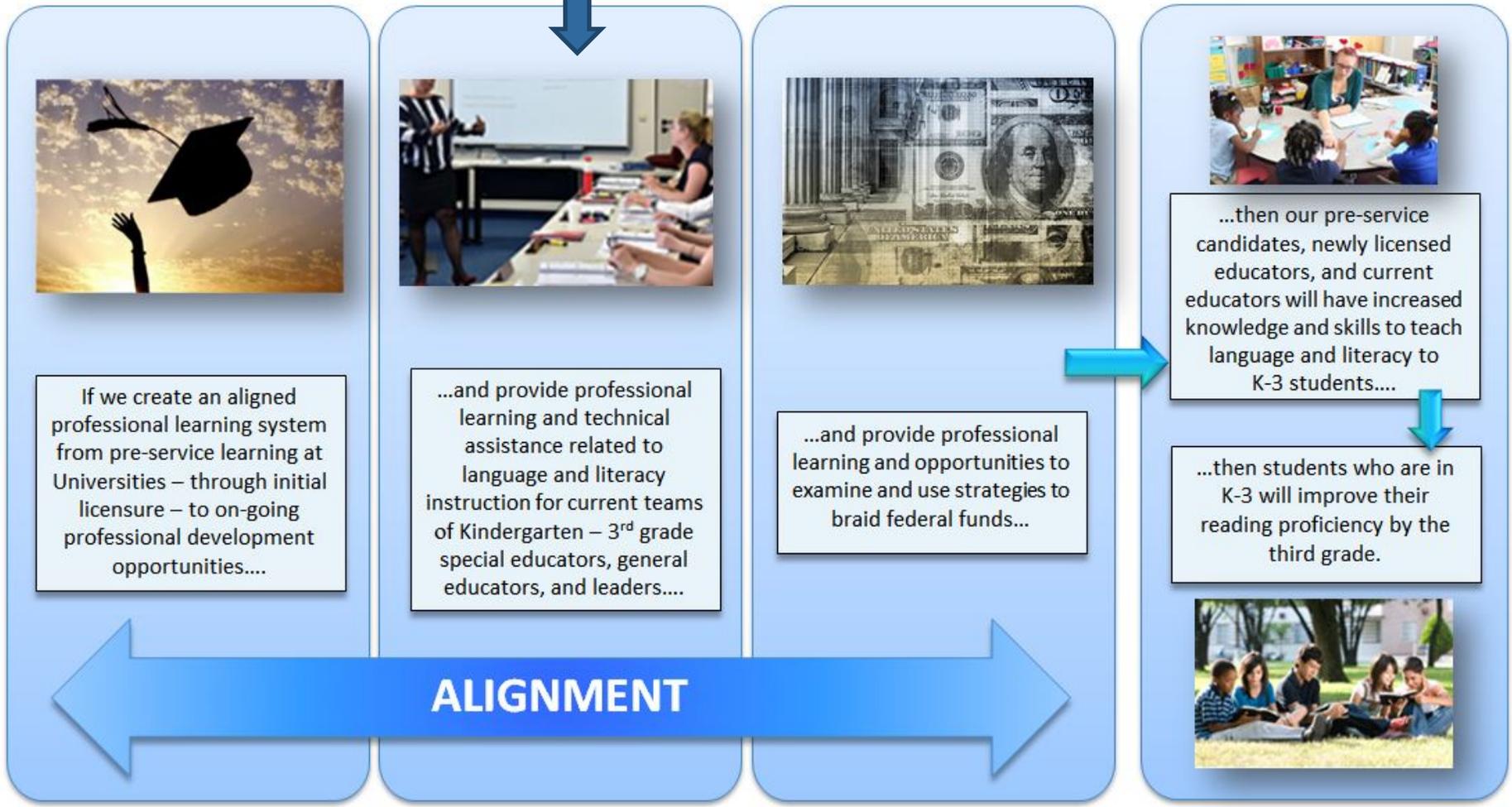
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A. Overview of Phase III – Year Two

Theory of Action for the State Systemic Improvement Plan

Figure One: Theory of Action

State-identified Measurable Result is based upon this portion of the Theory of Action.



State-Identified Measurable Result

Students** in kindergarten and first grades*** who are identified at the beginning of the school year as Well Below Benchmark according to the DIBELS Next Assessment, will significantly improve their reading proficiency as indicated by a decrease in the percentage of students who are identified at the end of the school year as Well Below Benchmark.



*Based upon the Structured Literacy Project – **(Measured by Improvement Strategy Two)**

** who attend one of the 22 SSIP project schools

***grade level cohorts will be added each year as students advance through third grade

Improvement Strategies

1. **Pre-Service Alignment**: In collaboration with key external stakeholders, Colorado Institutes of Higher Education (IHEs), we will evaluate, adjust and align the pre-service literacy education of future elementary principals, K-6 teachers, and special education teachers to improve the professional learning infrastructure of the State. Long term we expect to see an impact statewide in improved literacy data after pre-service candidates have completed the aligned programming and induction recommendations for new teachers are aligned to pre-service completion.
2. **In-Service Professional Learning**: In collaboration key stakeholders across the State Education Agency, Districts, and 22 Schools that are participating in a Structured Literacy Project, we will coordinate and deliver literacy training, professional learning, coaching, and mentoring for elementary school instructional leaders, special educators, kindergarten and first grade general educators and related service providers with a strong emphasis on follow-up and feedback to inform literacy instruction. We expect to see improved K-3 DIBELS data in the partner schools as demonstrated by students moving towards and maintaining “benchmark.” Long term we expect a reduction in the number of students identified with a Significant Reading Deficiency (SRD) and improved proficiency on the 3rd grade statewide assessment for matched cohorts.
3. **Leveraging Funds**: In collaboration with key stakeholders in the Unit of Federal Programs Administration (UFPA), districts, and participating schools, we will provide professional learning and opportunities to examine and use strategies for allowable uses of supplemental federal funding to meet the needs of high risk students, especially students with disabilities. We expect to see improved literacy data as schools and districts utilize strategies that address comprehensive systemic improvement to meet the needs of students who are at risk of failure.

Measurable Targets

The baseline represents all schools that were participating in the Early Literacy Assessment Tool Project (ELAT) when the targets were originally set. (Please see Phase I report, Pages 52-53, 59; Phase II report, Pages 12-16 for more information). The Structured Literacy Project began in first grade and since then Kindergarten was added. As we progress through the project we will add additional grades (2nd grade in FFY 2017 and 3rd grade in FFY 2018).

SiMR: Students identified at the beginning of the school year (BOY) as “Well-Below Benchmark” according to the *DIBELS Next*® Assessment, will improve their reading proficiency as indicated by a decrease in the percentage of students who are identified at the end of the school year (EOY) in the “Well-Below Benchmark” range.

Target: The number of students scoring in the “well-below benchmark” range at EOY should be “equal to” or “less than” the target.

Grade Level	Baseline Beginning of Year Sept. 2014	Target (End of Year 2015) FFY 2014	Target (End of Year 2016) FFY 2015	Target (End of Year 2017) FFY 2016	Target (End of Year 2018) FFY 2017	Target (End of Year 2019) FFY 2018
K	-	-	≤15.00%	≤13.00%	≤12.00%	≤11.00%
1	26.34%	≤23.00%	≤21.00%	≤19.00%	≤18.50%	≤18.00%
2	-	-	-	-	≤16.50%	≤16.00%
3	-	-	-	-	-	≤16.50%

Actual Data for FFY 2016

Table 2: Actual Data for FFY 2016

SSIP Project Grade Level (Matched cohorts)	Actual Data: percentage of students scoring in the “Well Below Benchmark” range at the BOY during 2016-2017	Actual Data: percentage of students scoring in the “Well Below Benchmark” range at the EOY during 2016-2017	Target EOY FFY 2016	Was the target met?
K (N = 1000)	30%	4%	≤13%	Yes
1 (N = 1,036)	35%	16%	≤19%	Yes

B. Progress in Implementing the SSIP

1. Description of the State's SSIP implementation progress

- a. Description of extent to which the State has carried out its planned activities with fidelity—what has been accomplished, what milestones have been met, and whether the intended timeline has been followed
- b. Intended outputs that have been accomplished as a result of the implementation activities



Please see the following pages for blueprints covering the list of activities, progress in implementation, and the planned timelines for Improvement Strategies I, II, and III. The last column includes outputs that are either provided in the Appendices of this report or information referring the reader back to the State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) – Phase III at [CDE State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report website](#).

Improvement Strategy One

In collaboration with key external stakeholders, Colorado Institutes of Higher Education (IHEs), we will evaluate, adjust and align the pre-service literacy education of future elementary principals, K-6 teachers, and special education teachers.

Goal 1—Teacher Preparation Improvement: Develop inventories of preparation practices and craft expected competencies for Pre-K through Grade 12 special education and Pre-K through Grade 6 general education teacher candidates around the delivery of developmentally-appropriate literacy instruction, assessment, and intervention practices for students with disabilities (SWDs).

Table 3: Improvement Strategy One, Goal 1

Objectives	Tasks	Lead/Responsible Parties	Due Date	Status	Output
Objective 1: ENGAGE STAKEHOLDERS Collaborate with various Colorado stakeholders to generate a list of promising practices in teacher preparation regarding best first instruction, assessment methods, and the use of scientifically- and evidence-based intervention strategies to	Task 1: Survey traditional and alternative teacher preparation program faculty regarding teacher candidates' literacy instruction and field experiences.	<i>Survey Committee:</i> Brian Sevier, Margaret Scott, Wendy Sawtell, Corey Pierce, Miki Imura, Faye Gibson	April 2017	Completed	Completed Report (Appendix A)
	Activity 1: Develop a survey of methods course work and practicum requirements.		September 2016	Completed	
	Activity 2: Disseminate survey to traditional and alternative teacher prep program faculty.		October 2016	Completed	
	Activity 3: Collect, collate, and analyze data to identify where prep coursework aligns with literacy practices identified in Task 1.	Qualitative Analyst: Augenblick, Palaich and Associates	April-May 2017	Completed	
	Task 2: Engage community stakeholders through focus groups (e.g., non-profits, BOCES, districts, families) to gather feedback regarding how well new PK-12 special education teachers and new PK-6 general education teachers are prepared for the (literacy) reform expectations for which Colorado educators are held accountable.	<i>Survey Committee:</i> Brian Sevier, Margaret Scott, Wendy Sawtell, Corey Pierce	February-March 2017	Completed	

Objectives	Tasks	Lead/Responsible Parties	Due Date	Status	Output
address significant reading deficiencies.					
	Activity 1: Develop focus group protocols for community stakeholders.		September 2016	Completed	
	Activity 2: Conduct focus groups with community stakeholders. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers • Principals • Parents • Directors of Special Education • Literacy Instructional Coaches 	Faye Gibson and Wendy Sawtell	February-April 2017	Completed	
	Activity 3: Collect, collate, and analyze data from community stakeholder feedback.	Qualitative Analyst: Augenblick, Palaich and Associates	October 2017	Completed <i>Updated timeline.</i>	
	Task 3: Create rough draft of strengths and opportunities for growth; the state of literacy (teacher) preparation in Colorado.		May 2017	Completed	
	Task 4: Present results to Colorado Council of Deans of Education, Colorado Special Education Advisory Committee, Colorado Department of Education Educator Licensing Unit, and other stakeholder groups (e.g., superintendents, principals, directors of special education) along with draft rubrics for outcomes/competencies in content knowledge and practices for teachers.		Spring 2018, <i>Updated timeline.</i>	Not Started	
Objectives	Tasks	Lead/Responsible Parties	Due Date	Status	Output
Objective 2:	Task 1: Identify scientifically- and evidence-based practices for literacy using national and Colorado resources (e.g., International Dyslexia Association,	<i>Literacy Committee:</i> Donna Bright, Ellen Hunter, Barb	July 2016	Completed	Literacy Content Knowledge,

Objectives	Tasks	Lead/Responsible Parties	Due Date	Status	Output
DEFINE LITERACY CONTENT KNOWLEDGE Draft list of outcomes/competencies that convey the (literacy) content knowledge expected of teacher candidates upon completion of special education, early childhood, and elementary teacher preparation programs.	International Literacy Association, CEEDAR Innovation Configuration, READ Act, CDE literacy framework rubric, community and family partnership tools, early learning and development guidelines, Literacy Research Association, CO Competencies for Early Childhood Educators and Administrators, etc.)	Johnson, Alisa Dorman, Ellen Spitler, Barbara Frye, Leslie Grant			Skills, and Practices Document (Complete) (Appendix B)
	Task 2: Engage traditional and alternative teacher preparation program leaders in creating developmentally appropriate expectations regarding literacy (academic) content knowledge.	Faye Gibson and Wendy Sawtell	Summer 2017	Completed	Field Supervisor / Student Teacher Reflection Tool (Currently being piloted in IHEs) (Appendix C)
	Activity 1: Utilize the <u>CO State Model Rubric</u> to craft basic-exemplary categories reflective of demonstrable literacy mastery at program completion-the student teaching apprenticeship (<u>Quality Standard I-Element B: Teachers demonstrate knowledge of student literacy development in reading, writing, speaking, and listening</u>).	Toby King	May 2017	Completed	
	Activity 2: Gather feedback from CDE Literacy Office, Educator Effectiveness Office, Colorado Council of Deans of Education, Colorado Special Education Advisory Committee, and other stakeholder groups (e.g., Early Learning and School Readiness).		July 2017	Completed	
	Activity 3: Field test (pilot) the expected competencies rubric with university supervisors and/or cooperating teachers.	IHE Field Service Supervisors	Sept. 2017 – May 2018	In Process	
Objective 3: DEFINE LITERACY SKILLS AND PRACTICES	Task 1: Identify scientifically- and evidence-based practices for literacy using national and Colorado resources (e.g., International Dyslexia Association, International Literacy Association, CEEDAR Innovation Configuration, READ Act, CDE literacy framework	<i>Literacy Committee:</i> Donna Bright, Ellen Hunter, Barb Johnson, Alisa Dorman, Ellen	July 2016	Completed	

Objectives	Tasks	Lead/Responsible Parties	Due Date	Status	Output
Draft list of outcomes/competencies that convey the scientifically- and evidence-based practices in literacy instruction, assessment, and interventions expected of teacher candidates upon completion of special education, early childhood, and elementary teacher preparation programs.	rubric, community and family partnership tools, early learning and development guidelines, Literacy Research Association, CO Competencies for Early Childhood Educators and Administrators, etc.) (Appendix C)	Spitler, Barbara Frye, Leslie Grant			
	Task 2: Engage traditional and alternative teacher preparation program leaders in creating developmentally appropriate expectations regarding <i>instructional delivery for all students in literacy.</i>	Faye Gibson and Wendy Sawtell	Summer 2017	Completed	
	Activity 1: Utilize the to craft basic-exemplary categories reflective of demonstrable inclusive and differentiated literacy instructional practices at program completion-the student teaching apprenticeship (<u>Quality Standard I-Element D: Teachers demonstrate knowledge of the...appropriate evidence-based practices and specialized character of the disciplines being taught; Quality Standard II- Element D- Teachers adapt their teaching for the benefit of all students, including those with special needs, across a range of ability levels; Quality Standard IV – Element A-Teachers demonstrate that they analyze student learning, development and growth and apply what they learn to improve their practice.</u>) (Appendix D)		May 2017	Completed	
	Activity 2: Gather feedback from CDE Literacy Office, Educator Effectiveness Office, Colorado Council of Deans of Education, Colorado Special Education Advisory		July 2017	Completed	

Objectives	Tasks		Lead/Responsible Parties	Due Date	Status	Output
		Committee, and other stakeholder groups (e.g., Office of Learning Supports).				
		Activity 3: Field test (pilot) the expected competencies rubric with university supervisors and/or cooperating teachers.	IHE Field Service Supervisors	Sept 2017 – May 2018	In Process	
		Task 3: Engage traditional and alternative preparation program leaders in creating developmentally appropriate expectations around <i>literacy assessment and intervention for all students</i> .	Faye Gibson and Wendy Sawtell	December 2017	Completed	
		Activity 1: Utilize state-approved lists and guidelines to inform the crafting of expected program-completer understandings and demonstrated use of <u>assessment</u> and <u>differentiated assessment pathways for SWDs</u> .		Summer 2017	Completed	
		Activity 2: Utilize state-approved lists and guidelines to inform the crafting of expected program-completer understandings and demonstrated use of <u>intervention</u>		August-December 2016	Completed	
		Activity 3: Gather feedback from key stakeholders CDE Literacy Office, Educator Effectiveness Office, Colorado Council of Deans of Education, Colorado Special Education Advisory Committee, and other stakeholder groups (e.g., Assessment Unit, Office of Learning Supports, Low Incident Advisory Committees, SLD Advisory Committee).		June 2017	Completed	
		Activity 4: Field test (pilot) the expected competencies rubric with university supervisors and/or cooperating teachers.	IHE Field Supervisors	Sept 2017 – May 2018 <i>Updated timeline.</i>	In Process	

Goal 2—Leader Preparation Improvement: Develop inventories of preparation practices around ensuring principal/leader candidates’ ability to determine quality, and developmentally-appropriate, literacy practices for all students, including students with disabilities (SWDs), in PreK-12 classrooms.

Table 4: Improvement Strategy One, Goal 2

Objectives	Tasks	Lead/Responsible Parties	Due Date	Status	Output
Objective 1: Collaborate with diverse Colorado stakeholders to generate list of promising practices that build the capacity of aspiring educational leaders to recognize (best first) literacy instruction, assessment methods, and scientifically- and evidence-based intervention strategies to address significant reading deficiencies.	Task 1: Survey traditional and alternative programs regarding the development of principal candidates’ competency in evaluating teachers’ literacy practices.	<i>Survey Committee:</i> Brian Sevier, Margaret Scott, Wendy Sawtell, Corey Pierce	Completed by April 2017	Completed	Completed Report (Appendix A)
	Activity 1: Develop survey of methods course work and practicum requirements and disseminate survey to traditional and alternative teacher preparation program faculty. Discuss initial results of the faculty Surveys.		November 2016	Completed	
	Activity 2: Identify where prep coursework aligns with literacy reforms and tools (e.g., READ Act, CDE literacy framework rubric, State Model Evaluation Rubric, community and family partnership tools, etc.) (<u>Quality Standard II - ELEMENT E</u> - Principals demonstrate a rich knowledge of effective instructional practices, as identified by research on best practices, in order to support and guide teachers in data-based decision making regarding effective practices to maximize student success.)	Toby King	April 2017	Completed	
	Activity 3: Collect, analyze, and collate data.		May 2017	Completed	

Objectives	Tasks	Lead/Responsible Parties	Due Date	Status	Output
	Task 2: Create rough draft of strengths and opportunities for growth; the state of literacy (principal) preparation in Colorado.	<i>Survey Committee:</i> Brian Sevier, Margaret Scott, Wendy Sawtell, Corey Pierce	May 2017	Completed	
	Task 3: Present results to Colorado Council of Deans of Education (CCODE), Colorado Special Education Advisory Committee, and other stakeholder groups (e.g., superintendents, principals, and teachers).		Spring 2018	Not Started	

Alignment of Professional Learning Systems

Goal 3: The Colorado State Leadership Team (CSLT) will provide input on standards and best practices for induction for recipients of initial licenses in Pre-K through Grade 12 special education and Pre-K through Grade 6 general education teacher and leader candidates.

Table 5: Improvement Strategy One, Goal 3

Objectives	Tasks	Lead/Responsible Parties	Due Date	Status	Output
Objective 1: Utilizing the inventories of preparation practices and expected competencies developed for the	Task 1: CSLT will develop recommendations for the proposed Colorado model induction program guidelines.	<i>Induction Committee:</i> Kim Watchorn, Toby King, Faye Gibson, Wendy Sawtell, Laura Marshall, Mary Bivens, Jenn Weber, Jen Simons	Spring / Summer 2018 <i>Updated timeline.</i>	In Process	Induction Recommendations (in development)

Objectives	Tasks	Lead/Responsible Parties	Due Date	Status	Output
Teacher and Leader Preparation Development, review and provide recommendations to CDE.	Task 2: Provide recommendations to the CDE Educator Talent Unit		Spring / Summer 2018 <i>Updated timeline.</i>	In Process	

Educator Preparation Program Approval/Evaluation

Goal 4: Provide recommendations for possible revisions to the state (CDHE/CDE) process for educator preparation program reauthorization (with specific attention to the evaluation of the training provided to prospective Pre-K through Grade 12 special education and Pre-K through Grade 6 general education teachers in literacy instruction for students with disabilities).

Table 6: Improvement Strategy One, Goal 4

Objectives	Tasks	Lead/Responsible Parties	Due Date	Status	Output
Objective 1: Determine the efficacy of state reauthorization in the continuous cycle of program improvement for traditional (IHE) and alternative preparation education programs.	Task 1: Collaborate with traditional and alternative preparation program leaders in order to understand the actionable take-aways from program reauthorization and site visits.	Not assigned yet	Re-visiting for CEEDAR 2.0 <i>Updated timeline.</i>	Not Started	TBD
	Activity 1: Develop focus group protocols (IHE and alternative) to collect specific evidence/ experiences/ examples relative to the utility of data or feedback garnered from the existing reauthorization process.			Not Started	
	Activity 2: Engage focus groups in discussions of possible ways to improve the process, possible forms of feedback with more			Not Started	

Objectives	Tasks		Lead/Responsible Parties	Due Date	Status	Output
		practical potential (with respect to improving literacy instruction preparation).				
		Task 2: Determine the role and perspectives of CDHE and CDE offices/staff members in relation to the existing reauthorization process.			Not Started	
		Activity 1: Conduct focus groups with state staff/offices (e.g., CDE Office of Literacy, Office of Standards and Instruction, Office of Licensure) to assess strengths and limitations.			Not Started	
		Activity 2: Engage focus groups in discussions of possible ways to improve the process, possible practices and measures in ascertaining educator program quality (with respect to literacy instruction preparation) and suggesting opportunities for improvement.			Not Started	
		Task 3: Draft document that details the existing perceptions of the usefulness of the state reauthorization process from the lenses of both the “reviewed” and “reviewer”.			Not Started	
		Activity 1: Present results to stakeholders across the preparation field (CDHE and CDE offices, CCODE, community groups, etc.) to inform			Not Started	

SSIP Implementation Progress

Improvement Strategy Two

In collaboration key stakeholders across the State Education Agency, Districts, and 21 Schools who are participating in a Structured Literacy Project, we will coordinate and deliver literacy training, professional learning, coaching, and mentoring for elementary school instructional leaders, special educators, kindergarten and first grade general educators, and elementary related service providers with a strong emphasis on follow-up and feedback to inform literacy instruction.

Goal 1— Develop implementation blueprint and build capacity of state staff to provide advance and just- in-time professional learning for partner elementary school principals and teachers during year one of the Phase III Structured Literacy Project.

Table 8: Improvement Strategy Two, Goal 1

Objectives	Tasks	Lead/Responsible Parties	Due Date	Status / Completion Date	Output
Objective 1: Identify partner schools and secure approval from District and School leadership in order to provide job embedded coaching, frontloaded TA, and just- in-time professional learning for elementary school principals and teachers.	Task 1: Secure agreement from District and School leadership for schools to be in the SiMR Structured Literacy Project.	Ellen Hunter and Barb Johnson	August 15, 2018 (annual completion)	In Process	<i>Please Note: Sample Documents for the structured literacy routine are available in the previous SSIP Report for Year One of Phase Three.</i>
	Return to Report Activity 1: Determine school selection criteria. Select and contact potential schools.		June 10, 2016	Completed	
	Activity 2: Meet with interested District and School leadership teams to discuss project requirements and expectations, and conduct a SiMR School Readiness Assessment, and invite recommended schools to participate in Project.		October 14, 2016	Completed	
	Activity 3: Secure the Literacy Collaborative Agreements for all participating schools. (Memorandum of Understanding)		August 15, 2018	In Process (This is gathered annually)	

Objectives	Tasks	Lead/Responsible Parties	Due Date	Status / Completion Date	Output	
Objective 2: Build capacity of State staff to meet project expectations and requirements.	Task 1: Hire seasoned coaches with deep understanding of scientifically-based-reading research and instruction as well as primary and/or special education teaching experience.	Faye Gibson, Ellen Hunter, and Barb Johnson	December 16, 2016	Completed		
		Activity 1: Update job description and post positions to the CDE website.		June 24, 2016		Completed
		Activity 2: Interview candidates with minimum skill set. Select and offer employment to chosen candidates.		December 16, 2016		Completed
	Task 2: Develop capacity of literacy coaches in CDE policies and procedures, project goals and expectations; provide professional learning in the Structured Literacy Routine and coaching.	Ellen Hunter and Barb Johnson	June 28, 2019	In-Process (Ongoing)		
		Activity 1: Attend professional learning events with assigned schools to develop relationships with teachers and learn the Structured Literacy Routine.	Literacy Coaches	June 28, 2019		In-Process (Ongoing)
		Activity 2: Attend monthly literacy coach meeting to build capacity and engage in peer-to-peer discussions.		June 28, 2019		In-Process (Ongoing)
Objective 3: Plan, prepare, and deliver a detailed budget and materials for one year's	Task 1: Plan and develop a budget itemizing teacher, principal, and leadership team training and materials required throughout the 2017-2018 school year for the Phase III schools.	Faye Gibson, Ellen Hunter, and Barb Johnson	April 15, 2017	Completed		

Objectives	Tasks		Lead/Responsible Parties	Due Date	Status / Completion Date	Output
implementation of Phase III of the SiMR Structured Literacy Project.		Activity 1: Develop year two blueprint for Phase III Structured Literacy Project Schools' professional learning needs, including classroom instructional materials for every participating teacher.		April 19, 2017	Completed	
		Activity 2: Purchase Project supplies and instructional materials for K-2 classroom teachers.		July 31, 2017	Completed	
		Task 2: Prepare the training materials and agendas for training Kindergarten, first, and second grades, special education and intervention teachers in the evidence-based Structured Literacy Routine.	Ellen Hunter and Barb Johnson	August 5, 2017	Completed	
		Activity 1: Modify the Structured Literacy Project scope and sequence for Kindergarten and first-grade, and create for second grade.		August 5, 2017	Completed	
		Activity 2: Create a crosswalk for 10 of the schools using McGraw-Hill <i>Wonders</i> as their core literacy resource.		August 5, 2016	Completed	
		Activity 3: Update a Structured Literacy Project lesson planning template to be used by all teachers to plan daily lessons.		August 5, 2017	Completed	
		Task 3: Research virtual coaching platforms for consideration to implement as one method to address sustainability and scalability.	Ellen Hunter and Barb Johnson	October 28, 2017	Completed	

Objectives	Tasks		Lead/Responsible Parties	Due Date	Status / Completion Date	Output
		<p>Activity 1: Evaluate a variety of virtual coaching software programs based upon the SIMR Structured Literacy Project’s needs.</p>		February 22, 2017	Completed	
		<p>Activity 2: Prepare and submit a Request for Proposal. Evaluate any submissions for alignment to project needs.</p>		November 15, 2017	<p>Based upon project “lessons-learned” we determined not to go with scale up to 100% virtual coaching model at this time. Instead there are ongoing stakeholder discussions regarding a blended learning and implementation model.</p>	
		<p>Activity 3: Select vendor to provide virtual coaching platform for Structured Literacy Project.</p>			N/A	

Goal 2— Provide ongoing professional learning opportunities that will lead to increased teacher knowledge of language, literacy, and evidence-based instructional practices, and effective use of assessment tools and data in order to positively impact early reading achievement (K-3) through a specific focus on improving instructional practice and accelerating literacy growth.

Table 9: Improvement Strategy Two, Goal 2

Objectives	Tasks	Lead/Responsible Parties	Due Date	Status	Output
Objective 1: Build capacity of newly hired school teachers through implementation of a new summer school offering to maintain sustainability in schools.	Task 1: Provide professional learning for the new educators at the partner schools	Ellen Hunter and Barb Johnson	July 28, 2019	In-Process (On-going)	Structured Literacy Routine
	Activity 1: Create a draft blueprint for the proposed summer school, solicit feedback for blueprint improvement from district/school leadership, and secure approval from the collaborating school district.		June 23, 2016	Completed	<i>Please Note: Sample Documents for the structured literacy routine are available in the previous SSIP Report for Year One of Phase Three.</i>
	Activity 2: Develop MOU with the district addressing school host responsibilities and CDE literacy specialist’s delivery of Structured Literacy Routine during summer school.		June 30, 2016	Completed	

Objectives	Tasks		Lead/Responsible Parties	Due Date	Status	Output
		Activity 3: Provide pilot school teachers with additional staff consultation and professional learning on implementing the Structured Literacy Routine in their classrooms during the upcoming school year.		July 28, 2016	Completed	
Objective 2: Conduct a baseline for additional measure as a needs assessment to identify professional learning needs of teachers across all of the Project schools.	Task 1: Use the Teacher Knowledge Survey that includes the most essential tasks to determine teachers' foundational literacy knowledge.		Ellen Hunter, Barb Johnson, and Literacy Coaches	May 2019	In-Process (Ongoing)	
		Activity 1: Update the Teacher Knowledge Survey utilized in the pilot project.		August 11, 2016	Completed	
		Activity 2: Give survey to every participating teacher and analyze results to identify baseline knowledge gaps for the development of targeted professional learning.		May 2019	In-Process (Ongoing)	
		Activity 3: Develop a schedule of formal professional learning opportunities.		August 15, 2018	In-Process (Ongoing)	
Objective 3: Ensure the teachers use the DIBELS Next tool accurately and adhere to the progress monitoring schedule established through the Office of Literacy's Early Literacy Assessment Tool Project.	Task 1: Coordinate with Amplify, the vendor contracted by CDE to educate end users, to provide PL on proper DIBELS administration procedures.		Ellen Hunter and Barb Johnson	July 28, 2019	In-Process (Ongoing)	
	Task 2: Work with teachers to develop progress monitoring schedule for each child based upon beginning (BOY) and middle of year (MOY) assessment data.		Literacy Coaches	July 28, 2019	In-Process (Ongoing)	

Objectives	Tasks	Lead/Responsible Parties	Due Date	Status	Output	
<p>Objective 4: Ensure that the basic Structured Literacy Routine is implemented in all participating kindergarten and first-grade classrooms.</p>	<p>Task 1: Develop and provide initial professional learning for Structured Literacy Routine for all participating teachers.</p>	Ellen Hunter, Barb Johnson, and Literacy Coaches	July 28, 2019	In-Process (On-going)		
		<p>Activity 1: Conduct 7 two-day professional learning sessions hosted by partner districts.</p>		September 15, 2018	In-Process (On-going)	
		<p>Activity 2: Provide participants with all teacher resources required to implement the Structured Literacy Routine.</p>		September 15, 2018	In-Process (On-going)	
		<p>Activity 3: Provide initial implementation coaching, modeled Structured Literacy lessons, use of evidence-based practices, and classroom and individual consultation.</p>		September 15, 2018	In-Process (On-going)	
		<p>Activity 4: Evaluate classroom and school instructional resources and purchase necessary items.</p>		July 28, 2019	In-Process (On-going)	
		<p>Activity 5: Gather baseline data of initial classroom implementation of the Structured Literacy Routine.</p>	Literacy Coaches	September 15, 2018	In-Process (On-going)	
	<p>Task 2: Coach teachers to implement the Structured Literacy Routine in targeted, flexible small-group settings.</p>	Ellen Hunter, Barb Johnson, and Literacy Coaches	June 28, 2019	In Process (On-going)		
	<p>Task 3: Coach teachers to create visual displays and/or data walls to inform instruction in each school participating in the SiMR Structured Literacy Project.</p>	Ellen Hunter, Barb Johnson, and Literacy Coaches	June 28, 2019	In Process (On-going)		
<p>Objective 5: Evaluate the embedded coaching program using teacher perception surveys.</p>	<p>Task 1: Provide teachers with link to Concerns Based Adoption Model (CBAM) Stages of Concern Questionnaire, review results, and identify new coaching strategies to use with teachers.</p>	Wendy Sawtell and Miki Imura	<p>This tool did not provide enough new data for the embedded coaches to warrant the request for teachers to take time complete this survey. It was</p>			

Objectives	Tasks	Lead/Responsible Parties	Due Date	Status	Output
			eliminated from our data collection.		
	Task 2: Provide teachers with a link to evaluate the updated survey to determine perceived effectiveness of the embedded coaching, review results, and make changes based upon stakeholder feedback to improve coaching practices.	Wendy Sawtell, Miki Imura, Ellen Hunter, and Barb Johnson	April 16, 2018	In-Process (On-going)	
Objective 6: Increase teacher knowledge of foundational literacy and scientifically-based reading instruction.	Task 1: Provide professional learning and coaching at school and individual level to continue building teacher capacity in understanding the underlying research that informs the use of the Structured Literacy Routine.	Ellen Hunter, Barb Johnson, and Literacy Coaches	June 28, 2019	In Process (On-going)	
	Activity 1: Schedule and deliver PL to teams of educators with similar needs.		June 28, 2019	In Process (On-going)	
	Activity 2: Provide embedded coaching to individual teachers to address specific areas of need.		June 28, 2019	In Process (On-going)	
	Task 2: To meet the needs of the cohort of students currently in grade one, provide professional learning to second grade teachers in the Structured Literacy Routine for implementation during the 2017-2018 school year.	Ellen Hunter, Barb Johnson, and Literacy Coaches	June 9, 2017	Completed	
	Activity 1: Develop schedule and deliver PL training in Spring/Summer 2017.		June 9, 2017	Completed	
	Activity 2: Purchase and provide participants with all teacher resources required.		July 30, 2017	Completed	

Goal 3— Increase the effectiveness of the comprehensive literacy programming at each of the participating schools.

Table 10: Improvement Strategy Two, Goal 3

Objectives	Tasks	Lead/Responsible Parties	Due Date	Status	Output
Objective 1: Evaluate the Structured Literacy Project Schools’ overall literacy programming.	Task 1: Gather baseline data of participating schools’ current effectiveness in comprehensive literacy programming. <i>(Universal Instruction, Interventions, Assessment, School Leadership Team, Professional Development, Data-Based Decision Making, and Community and Family Involvement)</i>	Ellen Hunter, Barb Johnson, and Literacy Coaches	September 2019	In Process (On-going) Baseline for each grade is gathered prior to the Literacy project being introduced into the grade.	Structured Literacy Routine <i>Please Note: Sample Documents for the structured literacy routine are available in the previous SSIP Report for Year One of Phase Three.</i>
	Activity 1: Complete the <i>Literacy Evaluation Tool (LET- Long Form)</i> , based on their knowledge of each of their assigned school’s overall literacy programming.		June 28, 2019	In Process (On-going)	
	Activity 2: Complete the <i>Literacy Evaluation Tool (LET- Short Form)</i> , collaboratively with each building principal.		June 28, 2019	In Process (On-going)	
	Activity 3: Analyze LET evaluation data to identify and prioritize areas of initial strength and challenge in each of their assigned schools.		June 28, 2019	In Process (On-going)	
	Activity 4: Analyze usage of time in coach logs to evaluate activities with high impact on student achievement.		June 28, 2019	In Process (On-going)	
Objective 2: Increase instructional leadership in	Task 1: Form strong collaborative relationships with building principals and develop their understanding of project goals and expectations.	Ellen Hunter, Barb Johnson, and Literacy Coaches	June 28, 2019	In Process (On-going)	

Objectives	Tasks	Lead/Responsible Parties	Due Date	Status	Output
the area of comprehensive literacy programing.	Task 2: Provide professional learning and coaching for instructional leaders to oversee the delivery of language and literacy instruction in their schools.	Ellen Hunter, Barb Johnson, and Literacy Coaches	June 28, 2019	In Process (On-going)	
	Activity 1: Create classroom / teacher observation forms to enhance Principal literacy knowledge and active participation in supporting the effective implementation of the Structured Literacy Routine.	Ellen Hunter and Barb Johnson	September 9, 2016	Completed	
	Activity 2: Ensure consistent utilization of the observation form with Principal feedback on teacher progress.	Literacy Coaches	June 28, 2019	In Process (On-going)	
	Activity 3: Evaluate need and interest for principal symposium during summer 2018.	Ellen Hunter and Barb Johnson	April 7, 2018	In Process	
	Task 3: Provide coaching on master scheduling that allow for targeted small-group instruction, effective use of staff time (e.g., flooding models, use of push-in instructional models), and deep analysis of progress-monitoring data.	Ellen Hunter, Barb Johnson, and Literacy Coaches	June 28, 2019	In Process (On-going)	
Objective 3: Provide literacy engagement activities with families and within the broader school community.	Task 1: Create and implement a series of parent activities and events, and family-friendly materials for home use with student(s).	Literacy Coaches	Ongoing June 28, 2019	In Process	
	Activity 1: Develop take home materials according to the scope and sequence of the Structured Literacy Routine.	Literacy Coaches	June 2, 2017	In Process	
	Activity 2: Plan and schedule event(s) to engage families and the broader community in the comprehensive literacy programing at each partner school.	Literacy Coaches	On-going June 28, 2019	In Process	

SSIP Implementation Progress

Improvement Strategy Three

In collaboration with key stakeholders in the Unit of Federal Programs Administration (UFPA), districts, and participating schools, we, the Exceptional Student Services Unit (ESSU), will align and leverage allowable uses of supplemental federal funding to meet the needs of high risk students, especially students with disabilities.

Goal 1— In collaboration with UFPA, the Office of Literacy, and the LEA Special Education and Title Directors, examine braiding of supplemental federal funding streams.

Table 11: Improvement Strategy Three, Goal 1

Objectives	Tasks	Lead/Responsible Parties	Due Date	Status	Output
Objective 1: We will examine the practice of braiding federal funds in order to strengthen the delivery of a coordinated set of services and activities for students with disabilities.	Task 1: In collaboration with Directors of Title I and Special Education examine current trends, allowable uses, and processes to consider any recommendations for adjustment.	Barb Goldsby	February 28, 2018	Completed	Alignment Document (Not Started) <i>Please Note: New date TBD – this output activity will become part of our systems alignment work across two CDE Divisions through our work with NCSI and NIRN.</i>
	Activity 1: Examine trends in finance reform and guidelines.		December 15, 2017	Completed	
	Activity 2: In collaboration, ESSU & UFPA will hold the second annual Excellence and Equity Conference for multiple stakeholders.	Faye Gibson, Wendy Sawtell, Jennifer Simmons	November 4, 2016	Completed	
	Activity 3: Develop a crosswalk of allowable use of funds.		TBD	Not Started – See Output Note	

Goal 2 – In collaboration with the Unit of Federal Program Administration (UFPA), we will coordinate a grant, Connect for Success, along with the provision of Technical Assistance using braided funds from Title I and IDEA.

Table 12: Improvement Strategy Three, Goal 2

Objectives	Tasks	Lead/Responsible Parties	Due Date	Status	Output	
<p>Objective 1: Develop and fund a collaborative grant opportunity in order to pilot braiding strategies designed to strengthen the delivery of services for students who are at risk of failure.</p>	<p>Task 1: Develop criteria and award grant for pilot braiding project (Funding period for cohort one is January 2016 – June 2018). Grant based upon High Achieving School (HAS) study jointly conducted by UFPA and ESSU in 2015-2016.</p>	<p>Nazanin Mohajeri-Nelson, Sarah Cohen</p>	<p>October 23, 2015</p>	<p>Completed</p>	<p>Connect For Success Strategy (Please see Appendix D for additional information)</p> <p><i>Please Note: Sample Documents for the Connect for Success strategy are available in the previous SSIP Report for Year One of Phase Three.</i></p>	
		<p>Activity 1: Notify eligible Title I schools of the Request for Proposal, review applications, award grants.</p>	<p>Nazanin Mohajeri-Nelson</p>	<p>June 28, 2019</p>		<p>In Process (On-going)</p>
		<p>Activity 2: Hire an Exceptional Students Service Unit (ESSU) Implementation Manager to coordinate grant.</p>	<p>Wendy Sawtell</p>	<p>January 11, 2016 Second coach was hired August 2017 as the program is expanding</p>		<p>Completed</p>
		<p>Task 2: Provide technical assistance for grant recipients during initial planning phase.</p>	<p>Nazanin Mohajeri-Nelson, Sarah Cohen, Carla McGuane, CfS Team</p>	<p>June 28, 2019</p>		<p>In Process (On-going)</p>
		<p>Activity 1: Coordinate kickoff event for 20 district and school leadership teams.</p>		<p>June 28, 2019</p>		<p>In Process (On-going)</p>

Objectives	Tasks	Lead/Responsible Parties	Due Date	Status	Output
	Activity 2: Provide training for District/School Implementation Coaches.		June 28, 2019	In Process (On-going)	
	Activity 3: Coordinate UFPA/ESSU collaborative teams for on-site school visits. Provide reports with areas of strengths and recommendations.		June 28, 2019	In Process (On-going)	
	Activity 4: Coordinate grantee school visits to High Achieving Schools (HAS).		June 28, 2019	In Process (On-going)	
	Activity 5: Review and approve schools' Connect for Success budgets and plans of action.		June 28, 2019	In Process (On-going)	
	Task 3: Provide technical assistance for grant recipients during implementation phase.	Nazanin Mohajeri-Nelson, Laura Meushaw, Carla McGuane, Stephanie VanMatre	June 28, 2019	In Process (On-going with each new cohort)	
	Activity 1: Coordinate networking and planning event for 20 district / school leadership teams.		June 28, 2019	In Process (On-going)	
	Activity 2: Provide ongoing technical assistance from CDE Implementation Lead (2016-2017) for District/School implementation coaches.		June 28, 2019	In Process (On-going)	
	Activity 3: Develop Tool for quarterly progress reports. Review grantee progress.		June 28, 2019	In Process (On-going)	
	Task 4: Repeat process for Cohort grantee recipients beginning with awarding grants to 8 new schools.	Nazanin Mohajeri-Nelson, Laura Meushaw, Wendy	June 28, 2019	In Process (On-going for each new cohort)	

Objectives	Tasks	Lead/Responsible Parties	Due Date	Status	Output
	(Funding period for cohort two is January 2017 – June 2019). Cohort 3: The Connect for Success grant is now embedded in the ESSA menu of supports offered to schools identified for Comprehensive and/or Targeted support. (Funding period for cohort three is January 2018 – June 2020).	Sawtell, Carla McGuane, Stephanie VanMatre			
	Activity 1: Review what worked and did not work with cohort one and make adjustments as needed. (Expectations, Processes and Timelines)	Nazanin Mohajeri-Nelson	June 28, 2019	In Process (On-going)	
	Activity 2: Hire additional part-time CDE Implementation Lead to coordinate grant.	Wendy Sawtell	May 15, 2017	Completed	
Objective 2: Evaluate the impact on student outcomes in schools participating in the Connect for Success collaborative grant.	Task 1: Determine baseline of each new cohort. (Statewide assessment, School Performance Framework, READ Act).	Nazanin Mohajeri-Nelson	June 28, 2019	In Process (On-going)	
	Task 2: Collect and analyze annual progress of cohort one. (Statewide assessment, School Performance Framework, READ Act)	Nazanin Mohajeri-Nelson	June 28, 2019	In Process (On-going)	
	Task 3: Repeat baseline process for each additional cohort.	Nazanin Mohajeri-Nelson	June 28, 2019	In Process (On-going)	
	Task 4: Repeat analysis process of impact for cohort two.	Nazanin Mohajeri-Nelson	June 28, 2019	In Process (On-going)	
	Task 5: Prepare final report for Phase III SSIP of collaborative grant opportunity regarding braiding strategies designed to strengthen the delivery of services for students who are at risk of failure.	Nazanin Mohajeri-Nelson	June 28, 2019	Not Started	

2. Description of SSIP Implementation Progress and Stakeholder Involvement in SSIP Implementation and Evaluation

- a. How stakeholders have been informed of the ongoing implementation of the SSIP (*active participants*)
- b. How stakeholders have had a voice and been involved in decision-making regarding the ongoing implementation of the SSIP (*discussion is woven throughout the narrative portions of this report*)
- c. How stakeholders have been informed of the ongoing evaluation of the SSIP (*active participants*)
- d. How stakeholders have had a voice and been involved in decision-making regarding the ongoing evaluation of the SSIP (*discussion is woven throughout the narrative portions of this report*)

Throughout the development and implementation of our plan, our stakeholders (e.g., educators, administrators, advocates, higher education leaders) have remained steadfast in their emphasis that students with disabilities are general education students first. They continue to communicate their expectations that our improvement strategies remain focused on emphasizing best first instruction in the general education environment. Throughout the entire process stakeholders have participated in decision-making and informed of the progress through ongoing stakeholder meetings, email, and web postings.

During Phase III of our plan, stakeholder participation continues to be essential since they are integral partners in both implementation and evaluation of the activities and goals. Each improvement strategy intertwines with the others; some stakeholders are engaged across all three strategies, while other stakeholders are primarily focused on one particular thread.



Improvement Strategy One is focused on aligning language and literacy instruction in pre-service education through induction opportunities and on-going professional learning of newly licensed educators. As co-recipients of a grant from the

Collaboration for Effective Educator Development, Accountability, and Reform (CEEDAR) Center, our primary stakeholders include three Institutes of Higher Education (IHE), the University of Northern Colorado, Metropolitan State University of Denver, and the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs. Regis University has been an additional partner since the beginning of the work. During this past year we have two new IHE partners come on board including Colorado Christian University, who joined in on developing the Reflection Tool that is being piloted during 2017-2018 school year, and Colorado College who expressed interest in future partnering as we move into the next phase of this work. We anticipate additional IHE members will continue to join the leadership team as this work progresses. Stakeholder representatives on the Colorado State Leadership Team (CSLT) include Deans, Assistant Deans, Department Chairs, and Faculty who teach language and literacy to pre-service candidates. Additionally, the Co-Chair of the Colorado Special Education Advisory Committee is a member of the CSLT and brings representation for parents and students with disabilities. Finally, we have had the Academic Policy Officer for Educator Preparation from the Colorado Department of Higher Education join the stakeholder team as well in December 2017.

As we move along the collaboration continuum towards transformational engagement, the CSLT has engaged in several activities together. Together we created and are piloting an observation/reflection tool in the partner Universities that will eventually be a tool that can be used by Field Service Supervisors and Student Teacher Candidates. Additionally we completed the higher education faculty surveys and IHE “customer” focus groups. A final report prepared by an external qualitative analyst has informed the leadership team of possible next steps to consider. Each member of the CSLT engages other stakeholders outside of the working group to bring in additional perspectives to inform the work. Based upon input from our stakeholders, CDE added a Higher Education strand to our annual READING Conference which hosted over 700 PreK-12 teachers and leaders, as well as many IHE leaders and faculty from across the state in October 2017.

Improvement Strategy Two is focused on the professional learning of educators who are currently teaching language and literacy to students in K-3 classrooms. The primary stakeholders in this project are the literacy coaches, classroom teachers, special education teachers, specialists, and the principals who oversee the comprehensive literacy programming in the partnering schools. Teacher and leader feedback regarding student progress and evaluation of the activities have been essential for strong implementation.

Currently there are 7 districts with 22 participating schools in Phase III. The school principals continue to be closely engaged with the embedded Literacy Coach in the development, implementation and evaluation growth of a comprehensive literacy program in each school. The input and recommendations from the Principals are foundational to the work of the project which is guiding timelines and identifying critical infrastructure needs for future scale-up. The teachers have been and continue to be the heart and soul of this project and without them the entire project would stall. These key stakeholders have influenced timelines, resources, and adjustments in coaching based upon their feedback on what works and does not work. Specifically the return on investment evaluation, additional targeted stakeholder input was gathered from Directors of Special Education, Facility Directors, a PhD Candidate with an MA in Literacy, an IHE Dean, and a secondary transition consultant during the Spring 2017 Special Education Directors Conference. More input was gathered from an external grant project evaluator at the Language and Literacy Collaborative through NCSI. Their feedback has been incorporated into the final ROI evaluation.



Improvement Strategy Three is focused on leveraging federal funds to provide a coordinated set of activities that support all children who are at risk of failure, specifically students with disabilities, students experiencing poverty, students of minority, and English language learners. The key internal stakeholders have been employees of the Department of Education’s Unit of Federal Programs Administration (UFPA) who oversee the Federal Title funds. This joint project, shared by the Exceptional Student Services Unit (ESSU) and UFPA, is the Connect for Success (CfS) grant that is designed to help low performing schools receive targeted technical assistance to improve school systems. Visiting each school that wants to participate in the CfS grant, a joint team from CDE meets with various stakeholders including district and building leadership, teachers, specialists, staff, parents, and students to hear their

perspectives. Bringing everyone to the conversation is a key component of this strategy. Through these active partnerships an action plan is developed utilizing high leverage strategies identified in Colorado high achieving schools. By providing the opportunity and encouragement for stakeholders to think about their funds in a different way, we anticipate seeing growth in student outcomes.

During the summer of 2017, this collaborative effort was incorporated into our CDE wide effort regarding supports offered to schools identified as needing comprehensive or targeted supports through the new federal accountability system under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). More information is available at [the CDE website for ESSA Methods and Criteria for Identification of Schools for Support and Improvement](#). More information about ESSA can be found at [the CDE website for Every Student Succeeds Act](#).



Stakeholders from the high achieving schools have also consistently participated in providing input and guidance regarding what works and does not work. Additionally, they have opened their doors to the CfS grantee schools to come for site visits and met with their staff to discuss strategies. In the Spring of 2018, four additional High Achieving Schools have been invited to join this project as stakeholders.

2. Description of SSIP Implementation: Specific Discussion of Strategy II Implementation Progress

As previously stated, the State-identified measurable result is based upon Strategy II of the SSIP, the Structured Literacy Project. The Project is being implemented in select schools across a combination of rural and urban districts.

Beginning the 2016-2017 school year, the Project included four returning Phase II pilot schools and eighteen newly-identified Phase III schools. Together these twenty-two schools had 1,255 enrolled Kindergarten students and 1,272 enrolled first-grade students. By the end of September of 2016 all students in the participating schools had completed their beginning-of-year (BOY) Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS Next[®]) benchmark assessment.

In early September, 2016, difficulties began to arise with two of four pilot schools. Changes in building leadership, building priorities and initiatives, and each school's perception about their decreased need for early literacy assistance were among the issues that were impeding forward progress with project initiatives. After numerous meetings with building and district leadership, both schools decided to terminate their participation in the project, leaving two continuing pilot schools.

Additionally, in early October 2016, two other schools were identified as well-matched to project criteria and goals and both schools were invited into the Project. An additional Structured Literacy Routine training occurred at the end of October for these two additional schools. With these changes the Project entered into November of 2016 with a total of 1,200 participating Kindergarten students and 1,231 participating first-grade students, leaving the project with approximately the same number of student participants.

A complete narrative discussion of the SSIP implementation activities and subsequent progress of the Project for August – December 2016, was included in the previous [SSIP Phase III – Year One report](#).

The Project began the second semester of the 2016-2017 school year with two Phase II pilot schools and twenty Phase III schools. With another slight adjustment to student enrollment, these 22 schools had 1,212 enrolled kindergarten students and 1,234 enrolled first-grade students. To address fluctuating student enrollment matched cohorts have been established. 94.4% (1,145 students) of the enrolled Kindergarten students and 95.6% (1,180 students) of the enrolled first-grade students had participated in the Project since the beginning of the 2016-2017 school year. By mid-January 2017, all participating schools had completed their middle-of-the-year (MOY) *Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills*® (*DIBELS Next*®) Benchmark assessment (Table 13). At the BOY for these 22 schools, the categories of Above Benchmark and At Benchmark were calculated together

Table 13: PILOT AND PHASE III PROJECT SCHOOLS: Kindergarten & First Grade BOY to MOY Data

DIBELS Next®	22 Schools: Kindergarten BOY to MOY 2016-2017		
	Beginning-of-Year 2016-2017	Middle-of-Year 2016-2017	
	n=1,255	Matched Cohort n=1,145	Unmatched Cohort n=1,212
Above Benchmark	-	47%	45%
Benchmark	46%	24%	25%
Below Benchmark	20%	16%	16%
Well-Below Benchmark	34%	13%	14%

DIBELS Next®	22 Schools: First Grade BOY to MOY 2016-2017		
	Beginning-of-Year 2016-2017	Middle-of-Year 2016-2017	
	n=1,272	Matched Cohort n=1,180	Unmatched Cohort n=1,234
Above Benchmark	-	39%	38%
Benchmark	50%	22%	22%
Below Benchmark	17%	14%	14%
Well-Below Benchmark	33%	25%	26%

Goals for Phase III Implementation for 2016-2017

Ten goals for the first year of Phase III implementation were established by the Project literacy specialists. The initial five goals address the training and project implementation phase that was completed during the first semester of the 2016-2017 school year and these were reported on in Phase III –Year One report as previously mentioned. Three additional goals were identified for implementation during the second semester of the 2016-2017 school year (Goals 6-8). The additional two goals (Goals 9-10) are overarching goals that will continue to be a focus throughout the duration of the Project.

6. *Increase teacher knowledge of assessment tools and use of data to inform instruction.*
7. Following the administration of the middle-of-the-year (MOY) *DIBELS Next*[®] benchmark assessment, coaches began to initiate an increased number of data conversations with their project schools and teachers. These conversations focused on increasing teacher knowledge and appreciation for consistent use of progress monitoring and using benchmark data to establish instructional goals for the second semester.

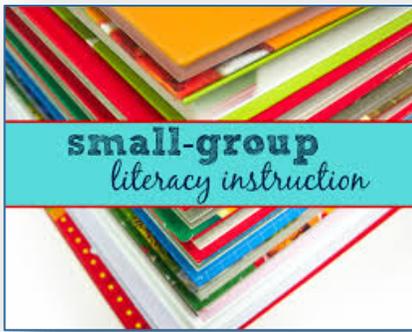
It was frequently necessary for project coaches to review *DIBELS* assessment administration procedures with participating teachers and specialists to assure valid and meaningful data. It was also necessary for coaches to review progress monitoring expectations for varying groups of students based on their MOY benchmark assessment results. Coaches frequently assisted in administering progress-monitoring probes as a means of checking on administration validity as well as assuring that students, whose performance was within the Well-Below Benchmark range, were assessed on a schedule consistent with the Early Literacy Assessment Tool Project (ELAT) expectations.

For additional information please see the [CDE Early Literacy Assessment Tool website](#).

Data discussions were completed with individual teachers, grade-level teams, building leadership teams, and principals. Coaches expressed varying degrees of satisfaction with the time allotted to such discussions at their schools. Coaches' obligations to multiple schools sometimes interfered with their availability to participate in regularly scheduled data discussions and PLCs. There is a strong consensus among project coaches that teacher understanding and effective use of data is an area requiring further focus. There is also a need to enhance principals' appreciation and understanding of assessment data.

8. *Begin to implement the Structured Literacy Routine in targeted small-group settings.*

The SSIP Team engaged in multiple discussions and planning sessions regarding the systemic creation of multi-tiers of literacy support in project schools. The Project goal is to assist participating schools in better understanding of how to increase time and intensity of instruction to meet the literacy needs of all students. Project specialists and coaches created a 'blueprint' of services that provides students with as many as four daily opportunities for literacy instruction and practice based on individual student need (By Name and By Need).



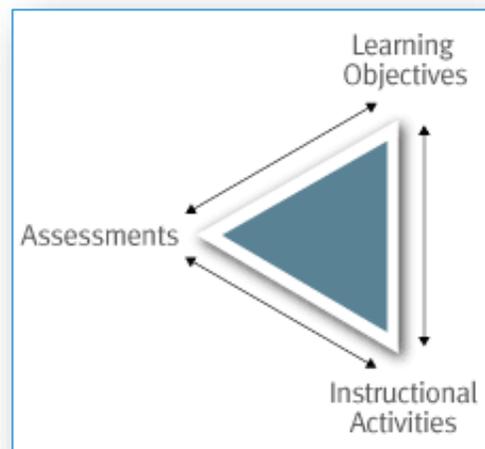
The first opportunity for all students is universal instruction, where classroom teachers effectively engage all students during the Structured Literacy Routine. Students requiring additional support in mastering foundational content presented during the Routine should receive small-group instruction from their classroom teacher sometime during the daily literacy block. This would be considered their second opportunity for literacy instruction and practice.

Students requiring additional literacy support would be scheduled to participate in a third instructional opportunity, commonly referred to as Tier II targeted instruction. Project

coaches initiated discussions with teachers about how to use and adjust the Structured Literacy Routine to address individual student literacy needs during focused small-group instruction within their classroom. Depending on individual school's staffing patterns this targeted instruction could be provided with either a push-in or pull-out model. Any student that continues to exhibit instructional gaps that have not been eliminated after these three increasingly-intensive instructional opportunities would be scheduled for additional focused literacy instruction, commonly referred to as Tier III intensive instruction.

During planning sessions project literacy specialists have emphasized how to adjust the Structured Literacy Routine for use in each tier of instruction to assure alignment and continuity of instruction. The SSIP team has encouraged all school interventionists and special education teachers supporting kindergarten and first-grade students in participating schools to attend all project trainings so they are better able to align their instructional efforts to project goals. The Team also began working directly with reading support staff including reading specialists, interventionists, EL and special education teachers, and paraprofessionals. During these training opportunities it was emphasized that increasing time and intensity does not require the use of additional reading programs, which often do not align to the scope and sequence of classroom instruction.

By the end of second semester some schools had actively begun the process of aligning early literacy instruction across all tiers of support, while others planned to initiate new schedules for small-group alignment during the 2017-2018 SY. Creating a solid understanding of how to provide aligned literacy instruction across a continuum of increasingly intensive instructional opportunities has been particularly challenging for many of the Project schools. The effective use of multi-tiers of support, common literacy language, and an aligned approach to meeting individual student needs has often been misunderstood. Even with specific guidance from the SSIP Team, some schools continue to interpret that each tier of instruction requires a different reading approach or program.



9. Create visual displays and/or data walls in each school participating in the Project

As coaches have initiated discussions regarding data at each of their participating schools they have introduced the Project goal of creating visual displays of data in each project school. The goal is to create visual displays that could be easily accessed by school staff but was fully protected from public access to assure confidentiality of personally identified information. Only two of the twenty phase III schools had a 'data wall' currently in use. School reactions to this project requirement were varied-ranging from full agreement to locate space and establish the display to full rejection to the concept of visual data sharing. Coaches emphasized the need to have accessible and current data available during each and every data discussion and PLC to aid in both the understanding of data and to reinforce the urgency in using data to inform instruction.

In ongoing discussions with school leadership each coach identified a suitable format for each school's visual data display. These formats included portable pocket charts, stationary wall charts, magnetic white boards with movable magnets, portable white boards on wheels, and the creation of data rooms. Choice of formats was dictated by the availability of space and requirements for confidentiality. Each school along with their embedded project coach has created a plan for full implementation of the visual displays at the beginning of the 2017-2018 SY.

10. Provide ongoing professional learning opportunities that will lead to increased teacher knowledge of language, literacy, and evidence-based instructional practices, and effective use of assessment tools and data.

Following the completion of all initial Structured Literacy trainings during first semester coaches have continued to support teachers' use of the basic Routine by offering individual and small-group trainings and planning sessions. Planning sessions have centered on the *Structured Literacy Scope and Sequence* and companion word lists. Trainings have addressed teachers' requests for further learning on specific

topics, e.g., syllabication, teaching vowel teams, teaching handwriting, error correction, etc. There has also been a need for additional training in the administration, calibration, and interpretation of *DIBELS Next*® data.



Coaches have also reported frequent teacher requests for classroom demonstrations and lesson modeling. Lesson demonstrations have been used to further teachers' understanding of instructional planning, delivery and pacing, use of extension activities to enhance vocabulary understanding, and effective use of formative assessment. Most of the professional learning for classroom teachers has

been accomplished within the embedded coaching model, which allows teachers to meet individually

with coaches. These coaching sessions are individualized and address a range of topics designed to match the teacher's level of implementation and desire for further learning.

In order to enhance project coaches' literacy knowledge and their ability to share current research with project participants, a series of professional learning opportunities were offered to project coaches. They were invited to participate in a series of forums, presentations, and trainings designed to deepen participant's literacy knowledge. The first of these was a presentation on dyslexia presented by Dr. Jack Fletcher. This topic was of significant importance to project specialists and coaches as there are a subset of children with dyslexia in each of our participating schools.

During monthly meetings, coaches had requested further training in the areas of morphological awareness and developing written language skills in young children. A two-day training opportunity with William Van Cleave was arranged to address these topics. Project coaches were actively engaged in a series of activities that enhanced their personal knowledge of morphology and written expression and provided them with insight into relevant research and strategies for furthering teacher and student knowledge in these areas.

In mid-June of 2017, project coaches also had an opportunity to attend a presentation on the importance of phonemic awareness in promoting literacy in young children. The presenter was David Kilpatrick, PhD, author of *Essentials of Assessing, Preventing, and Overcoming Reading Difficulties*. This session coordinated well with recent discussions regarding the Project's use of a specific phonemic awareness curriculum (*Phonemic Awareness: The Skills That They Need To Help Them Succeed!*). Project literacy specialists participated in a multi-month book study with Dr. Kilpatrick, which combined multiple virtual and in-person sessions with the presenter. These formal professional learning opportunities combined with frequent professional learning discussions at monthly coaches' meetings have furthered the Project's goal of bringing research-based reading knowledge and evidence-based strategies to the forefront of our work.

During second semester, the SSIP Team also began considering the professional learning opportunities to be offered to participating teachers during the upcoming 2017-2018 SY. One of the priorities for professional learning was planning the initial training for second-grade classroom teachers and interventionists who would be joining the Project in the fall of 2017. Consistent with the initial training offered to kindergarten and first-grade teachers at the beginning of Phase III-Year 1, the team determined to offer a two-day session in each of the differing geographic locations. All second-grade teacher-participants were trained in the use of the Structured Literacy Routine, received a copy of the second-grade *CDE Structured Literacy Scope and Sequence*, the basic sound deck, a second-grade morphology deck, and second-grade lesson plan template.

11. Increase instructional leadership in the area of comprehensive literacy programing.

At the end of November, coaches were asked to complete the *Literacy Evaluation Tool (LET-Long Form)*, based on their knowledge of each of their assigned school's overall literacy programming. Simultaneously, they were asked to complete the *Literacy Evaluation Tool (LET-Short Form)*, collaboratively with each building principal. Coaches are using information from this evaluation tool to identify and prioritize areas of initial strength and challenge in each of their assigned schools. The *LET* will be used to track school-wide improvement in literacy programming throughout the Project.



Project coaches and literacy specialists met with participating school principals throughout the second semester. In addition to providing each principal with current data and information regarding progress in the Project, coaches and specialists used these meetings to problem solve areas of concern and further principal's knowledge of literacy.

At the end of the 2016-2017 school year coaches were asked to complete the *Literacy Evaluation Tool (LET- Long Form)* for a second time. Coaches reported that their knowledge and understanding of their assigned schools' comprehensive literacy programming was significantly improved by May of 2017 when they were asked to complete the *LET-Long Form* for the second time. Coaches expressed concern that initial scores may have been somewhat inflated due to their limited interaction with assigned schools during the initial *LET-Long Form* completion. Coaches also reported concern that limited literacy knowledge among project school instructional school leaders was apparent in the principals' completion of the *LET-Short Form*. Principals' scoring of the effectiveness of their school's literacy programming was inconsistent with actual schedules, instructional practices and student data.



At the close of the school year Project literacy specialists held a series of meetings with participating school leadership. The purpose of these stakeholder meetings was to review the initial year of Project implementation and gather principals' perceptions of Project effectiveness. These discussions included a review of the project goals and data evaluation, coaching schedules, implementation fidelity during the year, and planning for the 2017-2018 school year.

C. Data on Implementation and Outcomes

1. **How the State monitored and measured outputs to assess the effectiveness of the implementation plan**
 - a. **How evaluation measures align with the theory of action**

Strategy Two - Structured Literacy Project's Theory of Action: If we provide professional learning and technical assistance related to language and literacy instruction for current teams of Kindergarten – 3rd grade special educators, general educators, and leaders then our current educators will have increased knowledge and skills to teach language and literacy to K-3 students and our students in grades K-3 will improve their reading proficiency by the 3rd grade.

State-identified Measurable Result: Students* in kindergarten and first grades** who are identified at the beginning of the school year as Well Below Benchmark according to the *DIBELS Next*® Assessment, will significantly improve their reading proficiency as indicated by a decrease in the percentage of students who are identified at the end of the school year as Well Below Benchmark.

*who attend one of the 20 SSIP project schools (*final adjustment to number discussed in section C.2.c.*)

**grade level cohorts will be added each year as students advance through third grade

The evaluation data gathered for the structured literacy project comes from a variety of sources which are identified in the Return of Investment (pg. 43) and Key Data Source charts on pages 44-47 of this report. The primary data collection tool used to initially identify our target population of students within the high risk category of “well below benchmark” is *DIBELS Next*®.

Amplify (2013), the vendor assisting the State with the *DIBELS* data, states “Traditionally we look at our *DIBELS Next* data and analyze what percent of students fall into each risk level. This information is excellent to assist in planning instruction and interventions. However, being able to take that to the next level and determining how well we are assisting our students in growth is extremely important.”

¹ The “Amplify Progress Planning Tool for *mCLASS*® *DIBELS Next*® utilizes data from the *mCLASS* users across the nation to provide schools and districts with a meaningful comparative perspective for their progress during the school year.”²

This tool (<https://www.cde.state.co.us/coloradoliteracy/elat17-18growthtoolwbb>) provides the SSIP Team assistance in determining the rate of progress our participating project schools have made in moving students out of the well-below benchmark range as well as assisting the schools to set future progress goals. These progress categories are: Well-Above-Average Progress, Above-Average Progress, Average Progress, Below-Average Progress, and Well-Below-Average Progress.

For more information about how the category ranges are determined, please see [DIBELS Pathways of Progress](#).

b. Planned data comparisons

Evaluation Question 1: Will Structured Literacy coaches' intervention increase teachers' knowledge of English language structure?

¹ <http://www.cde.state.co.us/coloradoliteracy/determininggrowthboytomoy>

² <http://www.cde.state.co.us/coloradoliteracy/elatresourcesdocuments>

Analysis 1: CDE literacy specialists administered the teacher knowledge survey at the beginning of the school year in year 1 before any coaching started. Additionally, as new teachers enter the project they also are given the teacher knowledge survey. All teachers will be asked to complete the same survey mid-way through the project and at the end of the project. The teacher knowledge survey measures the teachers’ knowledge on the structure of English language. The SSIP team expects a significant increase in the teachers’ knowledge of the English language structure from the beginning of their entry into the project and at the end. (To see a copy of the survey, please see Appendix R (pg. 178) in the Phase III-Year One SSIP report.)

Analysis 2: Project coaches formally complete the structured literacy implementation rubric for each teacher at the beginning of the year and at the end of the year. The structured literacy implementation rubric measures the extent to which the teacher follows the routines that are considered best practices for reading pedagogy. With coaching provided through the Structured Literacy Project, the SSIP team expects expect that when teachers reach a higher degree of fidelity implementing the structured literacy routine, the greater increase in knowledge the teacher will show on the teacher knowledge survey. (To see a sample of the Structured Literacy Implementation Routine, please see Appendix J (pg. 120) in the Phase III-Year One SSIP report.)

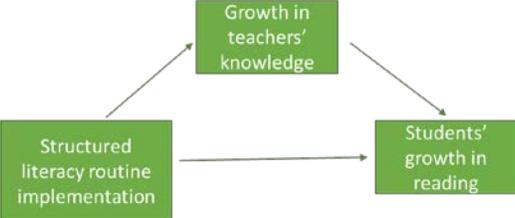
Evaluation Question 2: Will students attending the Structured Literacy Project Schools show improvement in reading proficiency?

Analysis 3: The SSIP team expects the schools participating in the Project to demonstrate at least average progress, according to the Amplify Progress Planning Tool for mCLASS[®] DIBELS Next,[®] -in moving students out of the risk category of “well-below benchmark.”

Analysis 4: The SSIP team expects that when teachers reach a higher degree of fidelity implementing the structured literacy routine, the greater the students’ proficiency will be in reading.

Analysis 5: If the hypotheses in Analyses 2 and 4 are true, The SSIP team expects teachers’ knowledge in English language to be the mediator between the structured literacy routine implementation and students’ improved reading proficiency (Figure 2). This mediation effect should be a partial effect, meaning the association between the structured literacy routine implementation and students’ improved reading proficiency should be weakened due to the introduction of the mediating variable – growth in teachers’ knowledge – however the direct effect should still be significant.

Figure 2 The Mediation effect in Analysis



Evaluation Question 3: Will schools with systemic, comprehensive literacy programming in place show greater improvement in students’ proficiency in reading?

Analysis 6: Each participating school was evaluated by a Structured Literacy Coach on the extent to which the school employs a comprehensive literacy programing via the Literacy Evaluation Tool. The literacy evaluation tool examines the effectiveness of various facets of literacy programing at the school universal instruction, assessment practices, data based decision making, family and community partnering to name a few. The coaches complete the literacy evaluation tool at the beginning of the year and at the end of the year. The SSIP team expects that the higher the score regarding the implementation of a comprehensive literacy program as measured by the categories of the literacy evaluation tool, the greater the students' proficiency will be in reading. The SSIP team will conduct an analysis of each category and line items to identify which are linked to improved students' reading proficiency. (To see a copy of the Literacy Evaluation Tool, please see Appendix V (pg. 205) in the Phase III-Year One SSIP report.)

Analysis 7: The literacy evaluation tool mentioned above is completed by the principal of the participating schools at the beginning and end of the school year. The SSIP team expects the more the principal's and coaches' evaluation scores are congruent, then higher reading proficiency scores will be achieved by the students.

Evaluation Question 4: How do effective structured literacy project coaches use their time?

Analysis 8: Each structured literacy coach makes note of what percentage of time is used for various activities such as classroom observation, classroom demonstration or modeling, administrative meeting, and data analysis every month. The SSIP team will conduct an exploratory analysis of multiple regression to examine if there are any particular ways of spending time for coaches that are linked to accelerated students' reading proficiency.

c. How data management and data analysis procedures allow for assessment of progress toward achieving intended improvements

In addition to planned analyses described previously, the following Return on Investment (ROI) (Table 13) provides an overall summary of school/district needs that the Project is addressing, the objectives and long-term goals toward achieving the intended outcomes, and the aligned evaluation activities. The ROI was reviewed by stakeholders who provided feedback on April 7, 2017 including 3 Directors' of Special Education at AUs, 1 Director of a Facility School, 1 IHE Dean, 1 PhD candidate with MA in literacy, and 1 CDE secondary transition consultant. Additionally, an external Grant Project Evaluator attending the Language and Literacy Collaborative through NCSI provided a review and feedback.

Return on Investment

Table 13: Return on Investment		
<p style="text-align: center;">Payoff Needs</p> <p>Students who are reading at grade level Teachers who are Highly Qualified to teach reading Strategic use of dwindling resources Reducing the achievement gap K-3 Reading Instruction aligned to Colorado Academic Standards</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">ROI Objectives</p> <p>Cost of all students in project considering those who were Well Below Benchmark and had a Significant Reading Deficiency, and those who score proficient on CMAS and maintain that level 3rd -5th grades (2019 - 2022)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cost of all teachers in project considering entry and exit scores on the TKS and Routine Rubric 2. Cost of all schools in project considering the instructional leadership and <i>LET</i> progress 	<p style="text-align: center;">Level 5 - ROI</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Total Cost and intangible benefits calculated at end of project for K-3rd Grade (June 2019)</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Total number of students, and <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Number of students who were <u>well below benchmark</u> and maintaining higher level in DIBELS b. Total number of K – 3rd grade students with a SRD; total number of students with a READ Plan c. Number of 3rd grade students scoring proficient on State assessment 2. Total number of teachers, and <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Total number of teachers scoring 95% or higher on <i>Teacher Knowledge Survey</i> b. Total number of teachers scoring proficient to expert, on <i>Structured Literacy Routine Rubric</i> c. Total number of teachers with at least a 75% confidence level attributing improvement to coaching on the <i>Embedded Coaching Program Survey</i> 3. Total number of schools, and <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Total number of schools scoring proficient/ exemplar in categories on <i>Literacy Evaluation Tool</i>
<p style="text-align: center;">School Needs</p> <p>Comprehensive Literacy Program Improved reading proficiency of students Decreased number of students with a Significant Reading Deficiency Decreased number of students identified with a Specific Learning Disability</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Impact Objectives</p> <p>Increased score on <i>LET</i> indicating a comprehensive Literacy Program is in place Improved Reading Proficiency (K-3rd Grade) Students maintaining reading proficiency expectations in 4th- 5th grade Decreased Significant Reading Deficiency Identification Decreased Specific Learning Disability Identification in Reading</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Level 4 - Impact Evaluation</p> <p>Literacy Evaluation Tool (<i>LET</i>) (Survey) DIBELS Next Data (K-3rd Grade) ELA CMAS Data (3rd-5th Grade) READ Act Data (K-3rd Grade) SLD Eligibility Data (K-5th Grade)</p> <p>Specific ROI targeted questions to isolate coaching and identify intangible benefits (Questionnaire)</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Performance Needs</p> <p>Teach the 5 components of reading Adjust instruction based upon data Differentiate instruction by name and by need</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Application Objectives</p> <p>Use the structured literacy protocol with fidelity Data interpretation informs daily instruction Individualized tiered interventions are fluid</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Level 3 - Application Evaluation</p> <p>Structured Literacy Routine Rubric (Observation: Classroom and Small Group) DIBELS Progress Monitoring Data</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Learning Needs</p> <p>Foundational Literacy Knowledge Structured Literacy Routine Data interpretation and differentiation Developmentally appropriate instruction</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Learning Objectives</p> <p>Improved teacher knowledge score Improved skills in providing developmentally appropriate instruction</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Level 2 - Learning Evaluation</p> <p>Teacher Knowledge Survey (<i>TKS</i>) (Test) Coach Program Evaluation (Perception Survey)</p>

Table 13: Return on Investment

<p>Preference Needs Embedded coaching Virtual coaching Modeling of good instruction Collaboration</p>	<p>Reaction Objectives Perceive coaching to be relevant to job and important to job performance Rate coach as effective Recommend program to others</p>	<p>Level 1 - Reaction Evaluation Coach Program Evaluation (Perception Survey)</p>
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d. Data sources for each key measure

e. Data collection procedures and associated timelines

Table 14: Data Sources, Procedures, Timelines, and Stakeholders

Date Source	Data Collection Procedure	Timeline	Planned Analysis	Stakeholder Representation
Teacher Knowledge Survey	<p>1. Completed prior to initial professional learning of the Structured Literacy Routine and scored by CDE Literacy Specialists and submitted to the Supervisor of Data Accountability & Achievement</p> <p>2. Updated mid-way through final year of project and submitted to the Supervisor of Data Accountability & Achievement</p>	<p>Fall 2016 (K & 1st grade)</p> <p>Fall 2017 (2nd grade and new K & 1st grade)</p> <p>Fall 2018 (3rd grade and new K, 1st, & 2nd grade)</p> <p>Winter 2018 (K & 1st, & 2nd, 3rd)</p>	<p>Related to: Evaluation Question 1: Analyses 1 & 2; and Evaluation Question 2: Analysis 5</p> <p>Conducted by the CDE Literacy Specialists and the Supervisor of Data Accountability & Achievement, Results Driven Accountability.</p> <p>Data discussions and recommendations for project adjustment gathered from stakeholders and implemented as appropriate.</p>	<p><u>Primary:</u> Directors of Special Education, Principals, and Teachers</p> <p>Institutes of Higher Education representatives from CEEDAR leadership team</p> <p>Colorado Special Education Advisory Committee</p>
Structured Literacy Routine Implementation Rubric	<p>1. Completed by the Literacy Coaches 3 times per year and submitted to the CDE Literacy Specialists</p> <p>2. Date submitted by the Specialists to the Supervisor of Data Accountability & Achievement annually</p>	<p>2016-2017; 2017-2018; 2018-2019 (Nov., Feb., May)</p> <p>June 2017 June 2018 June 2019</p>	<p>Related to: Evaluation Question 1: Analysis 2; and Evaluation Question 2: Analyses 4 & 5</p> <p>Conducted by the CDE Literacy Coaches and reviewed with each teacher and the Principals. Data analysis conducted by the Supervisor of Data Accountability & Achievement, Results Driven Accountability. Data reviewed and discussed by the CDE Team and School.</p> <p>Data discussions and recommendations for project adjustment gathered from stakeholders and implemented as appropriate.</p>	<p><u>Primary:</u> Principals and Teachers</p> <p>Directors of Special Education</p> <p>Institutes of Higher Education representatives from CEEDAR leadership team.</p> <p>Colorado Special Education Advisory Committee</p>

Date Source	Data Collection Procedure	Timeline	Planned Analysis	Stakeholder Representation
<p>Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS Next)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Data gathered by Project school teachers during 3 benchmark windows BOY, MOY, EOY). Literacy Coaches provide data to Literacy Specialists when available 2. Progress Monitoring conducted by Project school teachers for students who are in the “Well Below Benchmark” category 3. BOY, MOY, EOY data gathered by CDE and consolidated annually and submitted to the Supervisor of Data Accountability & Achievement 	<p>Annually (2016-2017; 2017-2018; 2018-2019) (Aug.; Dec.; April)</p> <p>Recommended every 7-10 days</p> <p>June 2017 June 2018 June 2019</p>	<p>Related to: Evaluation Question 2: Analyses 3, 4 & 5; Evaluation Question 3: Analyses 6 & 7; and Evaluation Question 4: Analysis 8</p> <p>Analysis conducted by Teachers and Literacy Coaches for adjustment to instruction based upon student need. Data and interventions provided to CDE Literacy Specialists for review and any recommended changes.</p> <p>Analysis conducted by Teachers and Literacy Coaches for adjustment to instruction based upon student need.</p> <p>Conducted by the CDE Literacy Specialists and the Supervisor of Data Accountability & Achievement, Results Driven Accountability.</p> <p>Data discussions and recommendations for project adjustment gathered from stakeholders and implemented as appropriate.</p>	<p><u>Primary:</u> Principals and Teachers</p> <p>Directors of Special Education</p> <p>Institutes of Higher Education representatives from CEEDAR leadership team.</p> <p>Colorado Special Education Advisory Committee</p>

Date Source	Data Collection Procedure	Timeline	Planned Analysis	Stakeholder Representation
<p>Embedded Coach Program Evaluation-Teacher Perception Survey</p>	<p>1. Data gathered via electronic survey annually and submitted to the Supervisor of Data Accountability & Achievement</p>	<p>February 2017 February 2018 February 2019</p>	<p>Related to: Evaluation Question 1: Analyses 1 & 2; Evaluation Question 2: Analyses 4 & 5; Evaluation Question 3; Analysis 6; and Evaluation Question 4: Analysis 8</p> <p>Conducted by the CDE Literacy Specialists and the Supervisor of Data Accountability & Achievement, Results Driven Accountability.</p> <p>Data discussions and recommendations for project adjustment gathered from stakeholders and implemented as appropriate.</p>	<p><u>Primary:</u> Principals and Teachers</p> <p>Directors of Special Education</p> <p>Institutes of Higher Education representatives from CEEDAR leadership team.</p> <p>Colorado Special Education Advisory Committee</p>
Data Source	Data Collection Procedure	Timeline	Planned Analysis	Stakeholder Representation
<p>Literacy Evaluation Tool</p>	<p>1. Long form completed by the CDE Literacy Coaches 2 times per year and submitted to the Supervisor of Data Accountability & Achievement</p> <p>2. Short-form completed by Principal, with the Literacy Coach, 2 times per year and submitted to the Supervisor of Data Accountability & Achievement</p> <p>3. Long form completed by Principal, with the Literacy Coach, 2 times in final year of the project and submitted to the Supervisor of Data Accountability & Achievement</p>	<p>2016-2017; 2017-2018; (Nov., May)</p> <p>2016-2017; 2017-2018; (Nov., May)</p> <p>2018-2019 (Nov., May)</p>	<p>Related to: Evaluation Question 3: Analyses 6 & 7</p> <p>Analysis conducted by Principals, Literacy Coaches, and Literacy Specialists for adjustment to comprehensive literacy program.</p> <p>Analysis of annual data conducted by the Supervisor of Data Accountability & Achievement, Results Driven Accountability.</p> <p>Data discussions and recommendations for project adjustment gathered from stakeholders and implemented as appropriate.</p>	<p><u>Primary:</u> Directors of Special Education, Principals, and Teachers</p> <p>Institutes of Higher Education representatives from CEEDAR leadership team</p> <p>Colorado Special Education Advisory Committee</p>

Date Source	Data Collection Procedure	Timeline	Planned Analysis	Stakeholder Representation
Coach Logs: Use of Time	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Data collected by Literacy Coaches according to category 2. Data consolidated and reported to CDE Literacy Specialists via electronic form 3. Data consolidated and submitted to the Supervisor of Data Accountability & Achievement 	<p>Daily</p> <p>Monthly</p> <p>June 2017 June 2018 June 2019</p>	<p>Related to: Evaluation Question 4: Analysis 8</p> <p>Consolidated percentages analyzed by the CDE Literacy Specialists and the Supervisor of Data Accountability & Achievement, Results Driven Accountability.</p> <p>Data discussions and recommendations for project adjustment gathered from stakeholders and implemented as appropriate.</p>	<p><u>Primary:</u> Directors of Special Education, Principals, and Teachers</p> <p>Institutes of Higher Education representatives from CEEDAR leadership team</p> <p>Colorado Special Education Advisory Committee</p>

2. How the State has demonstrated progress and made modifications to the SSIP as necessary

- a. How the State has reviewed key data that provide evidence regarding progress toward achieving intended improvements to infrastructure and the SIMR
- b. Evidence of change to baseline data for key measures

Composite summary student data from the twenty schools who participated in the Structured Literacy Project through the entirety of the 2016-2017 SY are shown in Tables 15, 16, & 17 which highlight the growth seen in participating students in the matched cohorts.

In Kindergarten, there was an overall 25.5% decrease in students in the Well-Below Benchmark range; an 11% decrease in the number of students with scores in the Below Benchmark range; a 7.5% increase in students with scores in the Benchmark range, and a 29% increase in students achieving in the Above Benchmark range. Overall, there was a 36.5% increase in the number of Kindergarten students in the Benchmark or Above Benchmark range. At BOY, 50.6% of Kindergarteners in the matched cohort scored within the Benchmark and Above Benchmark range. At EOY, 87.1% of the Kindergarteners in the matched cohort achieved composite scores on the DIBELS at the Benchmark or Above Benchmark range.

In Kindergarten, there were 302 students (matched cohort) in the Well-Below Benchmark range at the beginning of the year. This number of students decreased to 47 students in the Well-Below Benchmark range at the end of the year. 84.4% of Kindergarteners who started in the Well-Below Benchmark range were moved out of that category by the end of the year.

Table 15

DIBELS <i>Next</i> ®	2016-2017 Project Schools: Kindergarten	
	Beginning-of-Year (n=1000)	End-of-Year Matched Cohort
Above Benchmark	32.8% (n=328)	61.8% (n=618)
Benchmark	17.8% (n=178)	25.3% (n=253)
Below Benchmark	19.2% (n=192)	8.2% (n=82)
Well-Below Benchmark	30.2% (n=302)	4.7% (n=47)

In first grade, there was a 17.4% decrease in students scoring in the Well-Below Benchmark range; a 3.9% decrease in students with composite scores in the Below Benchmark range; a 4.4% increase in the number of students scoring within the Benchmark range; and a 16.9% increase in the number of students achieving scores in the Above Benchmark range. At BOY, 47.9% of first-grade students in the matched cohort scored at the Benchmark or Above Benchmark ranges. At EOY, the number of first-grade students in the matched cohort, who scored within the Benchmark or Above Benchmark ranges increased to 69.2%.

In first grade, there were 355 students in the Well-Below Benchmark range at the beginning of the year. This number of students decreased to 174 students in the Well-Below Benchmark range at the end of the year. 50.9% of first graders who started in the Well-Below Benchmark range were moved out of that category by the end of the year.

Table 16

DIBELS Next [®]	2016-2017 Project Schools: First Grade	
	Beginning-of-Year (n=1036)	End-of-Year Matched Cohort
Above Benchmark	29.0% (n=300)	45.9% (n=475)
Benchmark	18.9% (n=195)	23.3% (n=241)
Below Benchmark	17.9% (n=186)	14.0% (n=146)
Well-Below Benchmark	34.2% (n=355)	16.8% (n=174)

Table 17 below shows the growth of all students in the matched cohort for the 2016-2017 school year. In total, there was a decrease of 21.4% in the number of Kindergarten and grade 1 students who scored in the Well-Below Benchmark range; a 7.4% decrease in the number of Kindergarten and grade 1 students scoring in the Below Benchmark range; and a 28.7% increase in the number of Kindergarten and grade 1 students scoring in the Benchmark and Above Benchmark range.

In both grades, there were 657 students in the Well-Below Benchmark range at the beginning of the year. This number of students decreased to 221 students in the Well-Below Benchmark range at the end of the year. 66.4% of all students who started in the Well-Below Benchmark range were moved out of that category by the end of the year.

Table 17

DIBELS Next [®]	2016-2017 Project Schools: Kindergarten and First Grade Combined	
	Beginning-of-Year (n=2,036)	End-of-Year Matched Cohort
Above Benchmark	30.8% (n=628)	53.6% (n=1,093)
Benchmark	18.4% (n=375)	24.3% (n=494)
Below Benchmark	18.6% (n=378)	11.2% (n=228)
Well-Below Benchmark	32.2% (n=657)	10.8% (n=221)

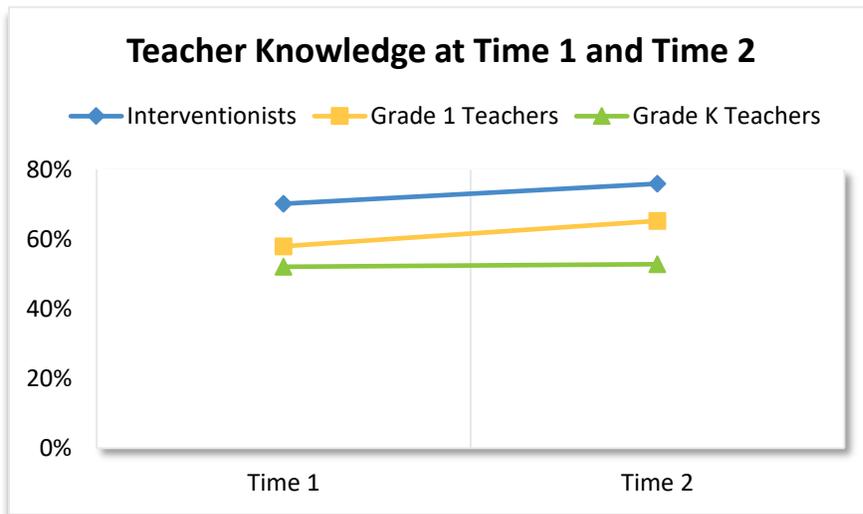
Evaluation Question 1: Will Structured Literacy coaches' intervention increase teachers' knowledge of English language structure and increase fidelity in implementing literacy teaching routine?

Analysis 1: One-hundred sixty-one personnel participated in the teacher knowledge survey in fall of 2016-17 school year (time 1). Among them, 87 participated again in winter of 2017-2018 school year (time 2). Among the 87 participants, 7 answered insufficient number of survey items in time 2, thus were excluded from the analysis. The final sample consisted of 80 personnel. A one-sample *t*-test indicated a significant increase in the participating personnel’s knowledge of English language from time 1 ($M = 55.90\%$ correct, $SD = 15.23\%$) to time 2 ($M = 60.90\%$ Correct, $SD = 17.52\%$; $t(79) = 3.93$, $p < .001$). Additionally, the correlation between the scores at time 1 and time 2 was $r(80) = .77$ ($p < .001$), which suggested that participating personnel’s previous knowledge of English language as measured at time 1 was a strong predictor of how they scored at time 2.

Though the 80 personnel who participated in the teacher knowledge survey showed a significant increase in their knowledge from time 1 to time 2, this increase might be dependent on the role the personnel play. To test this hypothesis, the teacher knowledge survey participants were divided into 3 groups: literacy interventionists ($n = 9$), 1st grade teachers ($n = 31$), and kindergarten teachers ($n = 32$). Kindergarten paras ($n = 3$) and special education teachers ($n = 5$) were excluded from this analysis due to insufficient number of personnel in respective groups. The significant increase in participants’ knowledge between time 1 and time 2; $F(1, 69) = 8.38$, $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .11$, was marginally dependent on the participants’ role; $F(2, 69) = 2.71$, $p = .07$, $\eta^2 = .07$.

As shown in Figure 3, compared to the interventionists and first grader teachers who increased their knowledge in English language from time 1 to time 2, kindergarten teachers’ knowledge gain was minimal. Additionally, the analysis also showed a significant difference in the knowledge of the participating roles; $F(1, 69) = 8.49$, $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .20$, such that kindergarten teachers’ knowledge was significantly lower than 1st grade teachers ($p = .03$) and interventionists ($p < .01$), but knowledge between interventionists and 1st grade teachers were not significantly different ($p = .09$).

Figure 3. Teachers’ knowledge of English language based on their roles at time 1 and time 2

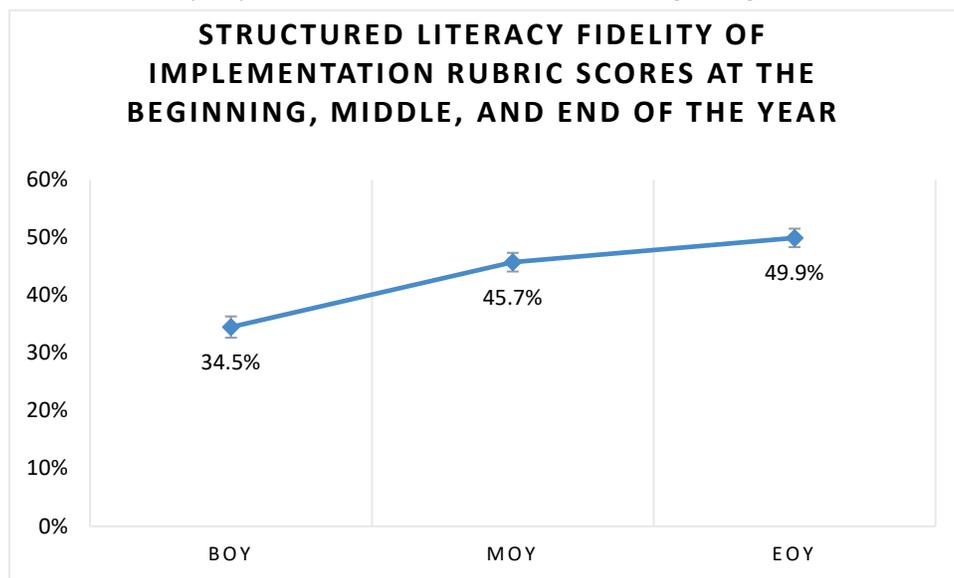


Analysis 2:

Coaches evaluated teachers on their fidelity of implementing the structured literacy routine at the beginning (BOY), middle (MOY), and end (EOY) of the 2016-2017 school year. 46 teachers were evaluated at all three time points, however, 10 were evaluated only at the MOY and EOY due to the coach being hired after the BOY evaluation was completed. The 10 teachers' MOY rubric scores were considered as BOY, since their MOY was the first measurement taken shortly after the intervention by the coaches had begun.

The teachers' level of implementing effective literacy routine improved significantly over the year; $F(1.263, 56.834) = 52.2$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .54$ (Greenhouse-Geisser correction was applied to the within-subject effect due to a violation of the sphericity assumption), Figure 2. The significant increase in the implementation of literacy routine was observed between BOY and MOY; $t(45) = 6.11$, $p < .001$, MOY and EOY; $t(45) = 5.54$, $p < .001$, and BOY and EOY; $t(45) = 8.42$, $p < .001$. Thus, the teachers did improve in the fidelity of implementing the structured literacy routine as evaluated by their coaches from the beginning-to-the-middle of the year and from the middle-to-the-end of the year.

Figure 4. Structured literacy implementation rubric scores at the beginning, middle, and end of the year.



Teachers participated in the teacher knowledge survey at the beginning of SY2016-17 and midway through the Project at the middle of SY2017-18. Teachers' knowledge of the structure of the English language at the beginning of the Project (SY2016-17) was significantly and positively correlated with the fidelity of implementing the routine as measured at the BOY SY2016-17; $r(56) = .34$, $p = .01$, and MOY SY2016-17 $r(46) = .31$, $p = .04$, but not related to EOY SY2016-17; $r(56) = .25$, $p = .06$, (Table 18).

On the contrary, teachers' knowledge of the structure of the English language as measured at the mid-point of the Project (winter SY2017-18) was significantly correlated with the fidelity of implementing routine as measured at MOY SY2016-17; $r(46) = .36, p = .01$ and EOY SY2016-17 $r(56) = .35, p < .01$, but not related to BOY SY2016-17; $r(56) = .23, p = .09$.

These results indicated that the teachers who had greater knowledge of the structure of the English language at the beginning of SY2016-17 tended to implement the literacy routine with greater fidelity at the beginning and middle of SY2016-17. However, the improved fidelity of implementing the literacy routine at the end of SY2016-17 had little to do with the teachers' initial knowledge of the structure of the English language at the beginning of the 2016-17 school year.

Similarly, teachers who showed greater knowledge of the structure of the English language at the mid-point of the Project (winter SY2017-18) implemented the literacy routine with greater fidelity at the middle and end of the year SY2016-17, while how much the teachers implemented literacy routine at the beginning of the year had little to do with the teachers' knowledge of English language as measured in winter SY2017-18.

Table 18
Correlation between teacher knowledge survey scores and literacy routine implementation

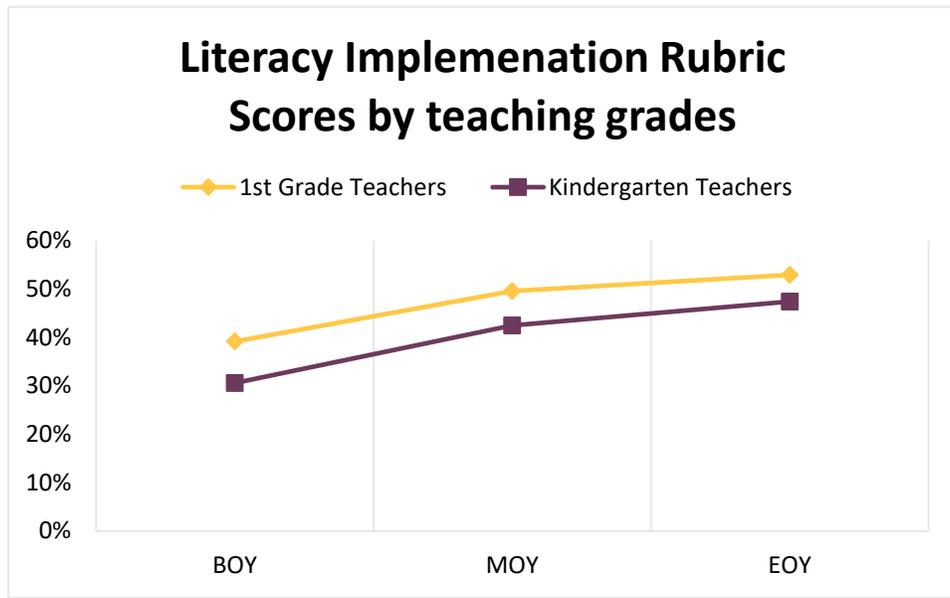
	1	2	3	4	5
1 Teacher Knowledge Fall SY2016-17	-				
2 Teacher Knowledge Winter SY2017-18	.77**	-			
3 % implemented literacy routines BOY SY2016-17	.34**	0.23	-		
4 % implemented literacy routines MOY SY2016-17	.31*	.36*	.44*	-	
5 % implemented literacy routines EOY SY2016-17	0.25	.35**	.47**		-
<i>M</i>	0.56	0.61	0.36	0.46	0.5
<i>SD</i>	0.15	0.18	0.12	0.11	0.11
<i>N</i> (teachers)	80	80	56	46	56

* Correlation was significant at $p = .05$

** Correlation was significant at $p = .01$

The SSIP team also examined if teachers' improved fidelity in implementing the structured literacy routine was dependent upon the grade level being taught by the teachers ($n = 21$ first grade teachers, $n = 25$ kindergarten teachers). As illustrated in Figure 3, both first grade teachers and kindergarten teachers showed improvement in implementation fidelity; $F(1.259, 55.399) = 50.38, p < .001, \eta^2 = .53$ (Greenhouse-Geisser correction was applied to the within-subject effect due to a violation of the sphericity assumption), however first grade teachers' implementation fidelity of the routine was at a greater extent than the kindergarten teachers $F(1, 44) = 6.79, p = .01, \eta^2 = .13$. Improvement in the teachers' fidelity of implementation of the structured literacy routine did not differ based on the teachers' teaching grade; $F(1.259, 55.399) = .473, p = .54$. Thus, teachers improved fidelity regardless of the grade level they taught.

Figure 5. Structured literacy implementation rubric scores at the beginning, middle, and end of the year by teachers' teaching grades.



The SSIP team also examined if teachers who showed greater knowledge of English language at the beginning-of-the-year had greater improvement in the fidelity of implementing literacy routine during the year. However, such effect was non-existent; $F(1.264, 55.62) = 0.36$, $p = .60$ (Greenhouse-Geisser correction was applied to the within-subject effect due to a violation of the sphericity assumption). This means teachers' initial knowledge of English language did not change the trajectory of their literacy routine implementation.

Evaluation Question 3: Will schools with systemic, comprehensive literacy programming in place show greater improvement in students' proficiency in reading?

Analysis 3:

The SSIP team expected the schools participating in the Project to demonstrate at least average progress, according to the Amplify Progress Planning Tool for mCLASS[®] DIBELS Next,[®] in moving students out of the risk category of "well-below benchmark."

As a whole project

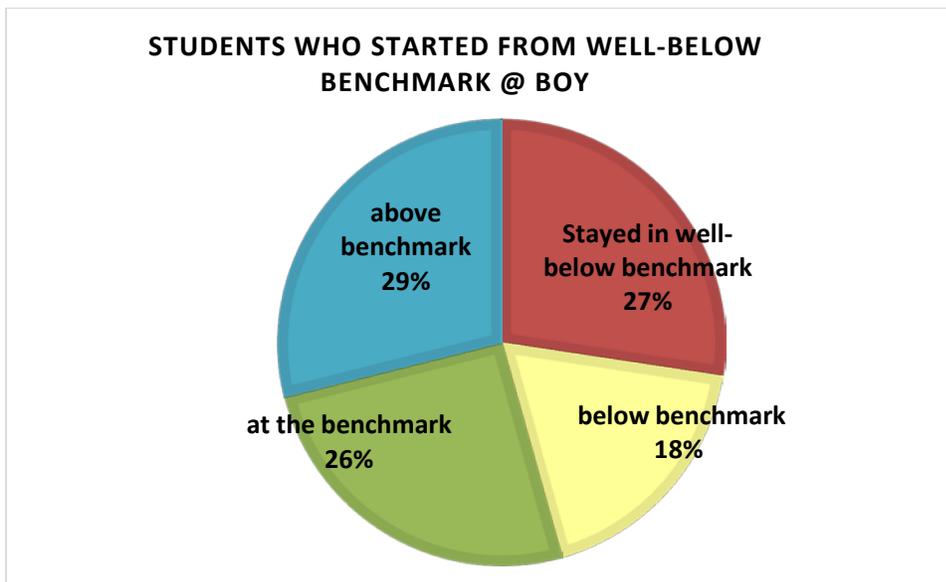
The Structured Literacy Project as a whole, 20 schools participated from the beginning to the end of the school year 2016-17, which included 1,000 kindergarteners and 1,036 first graders. DIBELS Next[®] publishes a progress planning tool³ which indicates if the progress made by a classroom, grade, or school from the beginning of the year to the end of the year is well-below-average progress, below-average progress, average progress, above-average progress, or well-above-

³ <https://www.cde.state.co.us/coloradoliteracy/elat17-18growthtoolwbb>

average progress. These progress categories are empirically tested with national sample, with strong predictive validity as demonstrated in the robust fit of the model. Among the 1,000 kindergarteners who participated in the current project, 30% were in the well-below benchmark category (the lowest level of reading in DIBELS Next[®]) at the beginning of the year. At the end of the year, 4% of the kindergarteners remained in the well-below benchmark category. The DIBELS Next[®] progress planning tool indicated that this was a well-above-average progress – the greatest amount of growth among 5 progress categories. Among the 1,036 first-graders who participated in the current project, 34% were in the well-below benchmark category at the beginning of the year, which was reduced to 14% at the end of the year. DIBELS Next progress planning tool indicated that this was a well-above-average progress.

Focusing on the students who were “well-below benchmark” at the beginning of the year more closely, among the 657 such students, 72.6% exited from the category by the end of the school year (Figure 6).

Figure 6. The end-of-year outcomes for students who started from the well-below benchmark category at the beginning of the year.



Further analysis revealed that the reduction in the number of students who started from the well-below benchmark was dependent on the students’ grade; $X^2(3, N = 657) = 71.40, p < .001$ (Table 2). The first graders who started from well-below benchmark were more likely to stay in well-below benchmark than kindergarteners; $X^2(1, N = 180) = 56.28, p < .001$. The distribution of the students who moved from “well-below benchmark” to “below benchmark” was not dependent on the grade; $X^2(1, N = 119) = 1.85, p = .17$. However, Kindergarteners were more likely to move to “at the benchmark” and “above benchmark” categories compared to the first graders; $X^2(1, N = 167) = 9.60, p < .001, X^2(1, N = 191) = 30.82, p < .001$, respectively.

Table 19 :The number of students who started from “well-below benchmark” category and their progress category at the end of the year.

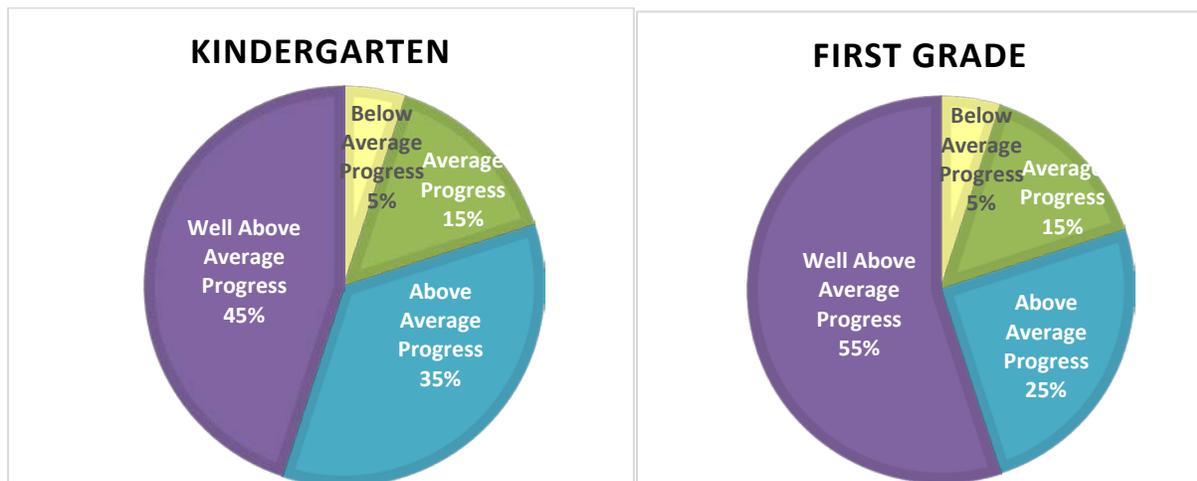
<i>n</i> =657	Stayed in well-below benchmark	Below benchmark	At the benchmark	Above benchmark	Total
Grade K	40	48	94	120	302
Grade 1	140	71	73	71	355

In summary, the current project was successful in moving students categorized as “well-below benchmark” in reading at the beginning of the year out of the category by the end of the year. The rate of progress according to the DIBELS Next® Progress Planning Tool was “well-above average progress” for both kindergarteners and first graders. Among the students who started from “well-below benchmark” at the beginning of the year, first graders were more likely to stay in the “well-below benchmark” category, while kindergarteners were more likely to move to “at the benchmark” and “above benchmark” categories.

School level

We examined the progress of each grade level in each of the participating 20 schools. In both kindergarten and first grade, all but one school showed “average progress” or greater. Moreover, 45% of Kindergarten classes and 55% of first grade classes made “well-above-average progress” (Figure 7). This school-level progress was not dependent on the students’ grade; $\chi^2(3, N = 40) = .53, p = .91$, meaning that both grades had a similar number of schools in each progress category.

Figure 7. The percentage of schools in each progress category by grade



Evaluation Question 3: Will schools with systemic, comprehensive literacy programming in place show greater improvement in students’ proficiency in reading?

Analysis 4 was not conducted for FFY 2016, but will be conducted for the FFY 2017 report after additional data points are gathered.

Analysis 5 was not conducted for FFY 2016, but will be conducted for the FFY 2017 report after additional data points are gathered.

Analysis 6:

The literacy evaluation tool score was available from 15 out of 20 participating schools at the beginning of the year (BOY) SY2016-17 and from 19 out of the 20 participating schools at the end of the year (EOY) SY2016-17. The SSIP team expected that the comprehensive literacy programming at the schools as measured by the literacy evaluation tool would improve from BOY to EOY, however, no significant difference was found between the level of literacy programming at the BOY ($M = 31.3\%$ implementation) and EOY ($M = 35.8\%$ implementation) as evaluated by coaches; $t(14) = 1.41, p = .18$. Coaches however anecdotally reported the difficulty of evaluating the school at BOY with the literacy evaluation tool due to their lack of knowledge of the school mere 1 month after they began to work with the school. In confirmation, the correlation between the BOY and EOY literacy evaluation tool scores that coaches gave to schools was $r = .20 (p = .49)$, meaning that how coaches rated the school's literacy programming implementation at BOY and EOY were not related. Coaches also believed that EOY was a better indication of the extent to which comprehensive literacy programming was implemented at the participating schools than BOY.

Given this knowledge and the non-significant correlation between coach's BOY and EOY ratings, rather than examining the association between the BOY-to-EOY literacy programming growth and students' growth in reading, coaches' BOY literacy evaluation tool score and EOY literacy evaluation tool scores were independently correlated with the % of students who started the school year at "well-below benchmark" and stayed in the "well-below benchmark" category at the end of the year (Table 20).

Despite the belief of coaches, the level of comprehensive literacy programming in place as evaluated at BOY was significantly correlated with students' improved reading proficiency ($r = -.56, p = .03$), whereas the comprehensive literacy programming in place as evaluated at EOY was not ($r = .41, p = .08$). Furthermore, the BOY comprehensive literacy programming score was negatively correlated with the % of students who stayed in the "well-below benchmark" category. This means that the more comprehensive literacy programming was in place as measured at BOY, a larger number of students who started in the well-below benchmark category at BOY moved out of the well-below benchmark category at EOY.

In comparison, although it was not a significant correlation, the EOY literacy evaluation tool score was positively correlated with the % of students who stayed in the well-below benchmark category. In other words, the more comprehensive literacy programming was in place as measured by the Literacy Evaluation Tool at EOY, the more students tended to start and stay

within the well-below benchmark category, which was contrary to the hypothesis. Thus, despite coaches' beliefs, their "first impression" of the level of the schools' comprehensive literacy programming as measured at the BOY seemed to be a better predictor of improved reading proficiency of students in the well-below benchmark category.

Since these analyses included 20 schools, and in addition, not all 20 schools had both the BOY and EOY literacy evaluation tool scores, the interpretation of these results require caution.

Table 20.

Correlation between literacy programming implementation % at BOY, EOY, and the % of students who stayed in the well-below benchmark category.

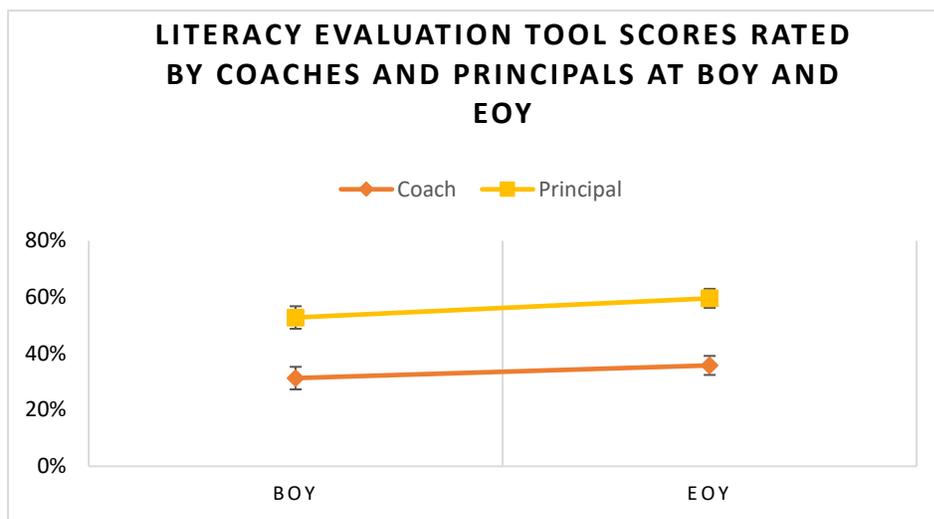
	1	2	3
1. Literacy Implementation % BOY	-		
2. Literacy Implementation % EOY	.20	-	
3. % stayed in well-below benchmark	-.56*	.41	-
<i>M</i>	.31	.36	.30
<i>SD</i>	.10	.11	.14
<i>N</i> (school)	15	19	20

* Correlation was significant at $p = .05$

Analysis 7:

Principals scored their own schools' comprehensive literacy programming implementation significantly higher than coaches; $F(1, 28) = 21.76, p < .001$, and coaches and principals together significantly increased the literacy evaluation tool scores from BOY to EOY; $F(1, 28) = 8.26, p < .01$ (Figure 8).

Figure 8. Literacy Evaluation Tool scores as rated by coaches and principals at the beginning and end of the school year.



Given the results from Analysis 7 that coach’s scores on the literacy evaluation tool did not increase from BOY to EOY, the overall increase in the literacy evaluation tool scores from BOY to EOY was due to principals’ increase in their ratings. From these results, the principals and coaches seem to be on different pages in terms of their evaluation of the extent to which the schools have a comprehensive literacy program in place. Examining the “agreement” of the evaluation results by principals and coaches more closely, we found that principals’ and coaches’ literacy evaluation tool scores were strongly correlated at BOY ($r = .59, p = .02$), and strengthened even more at EOY ($r = .69, p < .01$). These results together indicate that, although coaches’ and principals’ standards to which they use to evaluate the literacy programming implementation were incongruent, the degree to which they rate the prevalence of literacy programming implementation in the school was congruent.

Evaluation Question 4: How do effective structured literacy project coaches use their time?

We are not able to conduct this analysis at this time due to the small n size of coaches participating in the Project at this time. If we increase the number of coaches, we will be able to conduct an analysis at that time.

Embedded Coaching Perception Survey

A Teacher Perception Survey was conducted via Survey Monkey between March 5, 2018 and March 16, 2018. The Literacy coaches contacted each participant to encourage them to respond, gave them the link to the survey, and followed-up to remind them to respond. There are a total of 138 teachers, 20 Principals, and a variable number of specialists who are participating in the project during 2017-2018. There were 154 total respondents to this survey. The response rate for specifically for teachers was 97.8% (Table 21).

Table 21: Response Rate for Embedded Coach Survey		1 year in project	2 years in project	3 years in project
1.	Kindergarten Teachers	8	38	1
2.	First Grade Teachers	11	29	1
3.	Second Grade Teachers	41	5	1
4.	Specialists	4	10	2
5.	Administration	0	2	1
N (respondents)		64	84	6

In order to examine the general perception of the coaching from the teachers’ perspective, we administered a short survey. The survey contained seventeen questions, and respondents indicated the extent to which they agreed with each question using a 100% scale. The survey item, mean agreement %, and standard deviation for each question are listed in the table below (sorted from highest agreement to the lowest). Based upon the educator feedback from the survey conducted last year we modified and changed some of the survey statements. For the FFY 2016 survey: 7 statements are identical to FFY 2015, 3 statements had a stem phrase, “As a result of the coaching” added to the beginning of the statement, and 7 statements were modified to more accurately reflect the coaching we were providing. Table 22 indicates if the questions were the same, adjusted, or new.

The principal component factor analysis extracted two factors from the survey. The questions *without asterisks* loaded to the first factor, and the questions *with asterisks* loaded to the second factor. The first factor seemed to capture the effect of coaching on the teachers' ability to teach literacy, whereas the second factor seemed to capture the teachers' impression of the coaches. The second factor – teachers' impression of coaches tended to be the most agreed-upon questions, indicating the strong rapport the coaches cultivated with each teacher throughout the school year (Table 22).

Table 22: Teacher Perception Survey

Compared to FFY 2015:	Question	Mean	SD
Same	I feel comfortable seeking out the coach when I have a question or need.	92.54	19.79
Same	I am clear about what is expected of me as a result of the coaching.	85.53	21.46
Same	I am comfortable with the pace of the coaching.	83.90	22.57
New	The coaching I've received has expanded my knowledge so that I have a better understanding of the structure of the English language.	82.52	25.51
New	The coaching I've received has expanded my knowledge in the relationship between reading and spelling.	81.45	25.72
New	The coaching I've received has expanded my knowledge in the relationship between written language and spelling.	81.13	26.12
Same	The coaching has provided me with new teaching skills.	80.35	23.93
New	As a result of the coaching, I see improved student outcomes from building my skills in using the Structured Literacy Routine.	79.29	25.07
Adjusted	As a result of the coaching, I can more effectively use data to intentionally plan needs-based instruction (e.g., class, small group instruction, learning centers, individual).	78.77	26.71
New	The coaching I've received has expanded my knowledge to better use formative assessment to inform literacy instruction.	78.51	26.21
Same	The materials provided by the coach are essential to my success.	78.04	26.85
New	The coaching I've received has expanded my knowledge about oral language as a foundational skill in the development of early literacy.	77.97	28.20
Same	As a result of the coaching, I have higher academic expectations in literacy for all students.	77.77	31.32
Adjusted	As a result of the coaching, I can more effectively use direct and explicit instructional practices for all students including those with disabilities.	74.08	29.43
Same	As a result of the coaching, I can effectively match the needs of my students to literacy support personnel (e.g., paras, interventionists, tutors).	73.84	30.44
Adjusted	As a result of the coaching, I am better at meeting the diverse needs of each and every student in my classroom.	72.71	31.03

New	As a result of the coaching, I can more effectively use the Individual Education Plan (IEP) to align my small group reading instruction with student goals.	67.94	31.80
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When the same questions were asked in a survey at the end of SY2015-16, these items were also highly agreed upon then. The question “I am clear about what is expected of me as a result of the coaching” was the only question that seemingly increased in agreement compared to last year ($M = 80.1$ in 2015-16, $M = 85.53$ in 2016-17). The teaching ability questions were agreed to less extent than the coaches’ impression questions, presumably because teachers believed that there was still room to grow in their ability to teach literacy. The least agreed questions seem to be specific to the teachers’ ability in differentiating the instruction based on individual students’ needs, including students with IEPs.

For example, the question with lowest agreement was “As a result of the coaching, I can more effectively use the Individual Education Plan (IEP) to align my small group reading instruction with student goals” ($M = 67.94\%$, $SD = 31.80$), second lowest agreement was “As a result of the coaching, I am better at meeting the diverse needs of each and every student in my classroom” ($M = 72.71\%$, $SD = 31.03$), followed closely by “As a result of the coaching, I can effectively match the needs of my students to literacy support personnel (e.g., paras, interventionists, tutors)” ($M = 73.84\%$, $SD = 31.44$).

These three questions also showed higher standard deviations compared to other questions, indicating greater variability between teachers’ confidence in tailoring literacy instruction to individual students’ needs. Based on these results, the teachers might benefit from more coaching on how to differentiate instruction based on individual students’ needs and how to leverage IEP in instructional planning.

- c. How data support changes that have been made to implementation and improvement strategies.

PILOT SCHOOLS DISCUSSION (Work began in the pilot schools in the Fall of 2015. These schools are slightly ahead of the Phase III Structured Literacy Project Schools reported on in this report.)

One area that has shown to be difficult is the dedication of the school staff to the change process. It is hard work and some are not prepared for the level of on-going and long-term effort required to see results. As stated previously, the data is showing progress in schools willing to implement with fidelity.

As previously mentioned in the SSIP Phase III – Year One report (FFY 2015), there continued to be difficulties in project implementation, during the 2016-2017 school year, at one of the two remaining pilot schools. These differences in implementation fidelity across classrooms had been observed and brought to the attention of school leadership. Despite multiple meetings and follow-up discussions regarding project expectations, no adjustments in scheduling nor implementing the Project routines with fidelity were observed during the beginning weeks of second semester 2016-2017 SY. Repeated efforts by the embedded coach to engage participants

in project work proved unproductive. Additional efforts to address project deficiencies by the building Title I reading coach were unsupported by the building principal. As a result of this pilot school’s failure to implement agreed upon adjustments at the beginning of second semester, the pilot school’s participation in the Project was terminated.

During the course of the remaining pilot school’s second year of project participation, there was an increased focus on effective use of data. Schedule adjustments were purposely made to allow interventionists to meet consistently for data discussions with each grade-level team. This increased focus on data resulted in a significant refinement of the school’s visual data display and increased the active participation of teachers in student-centered data discussions. These activities heightened the awareness of the pilot school’s staff as to the importance of using data in forming effective groupings for targeted and intensive instruction.

In the Kindergarten classrooms the use of the daily Structured Literacy Routine was strengthened through lesson modeling and one-on-one embedded coaching. Both of the first year Kindergarten teachers demonstrated increasing skills in the delivery of evidence-based reading instruction as measured by the Structured Literacy Implementation Rubric. The effectiveness of instruction is best illustrated by the overall outcomes on the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) during the 2016-2017 SY in Table 23.

Table 23: PILOT SCHOOL ONLY Kindergarten BOY-MOY-EOY Data

DIBELS <i>Next</i> ®	PILOT SCHOOL: Kindergarten BOY-MOY-EOY 2016-2017				
	Beginning-of-Year	Middle-of-Year		End-of-Year	
		Matched Cohort	Unmatched Cohort	Matched Cohort	Unmatched Cohort
Above Benchmark	14%	74%	72%	73%	73%
Benchmark	4%	17%	18%	19%	19%
Below Benchmark	25%	0%	0%	5%	5%
Well-Below Benchmark	57%	9%	10%	3%	3%

In pilot-school first-grade classrooms it continued to be evident that the rigor of instruction during these students’ kindergarten year was not adequate to promote expected development and growth of reading skills during first grade. As a result, more than half of the incoming first-grade students began the year significantly Below Benchmark expectations. During second semester it became evident that instruction needed to be greatly intensified for a significant subset of first graders. As a result adjustments to these students’ schedules were made which allowed these students to receive multiple opportunities for instruction throughout the school day. A purposeful plan for the use of interventionists within the classroom was developed and implemented to assure alignment and consistency with instruction.

Table 24: PILOT SCHOOL ONLY First Grade BOY-MOY-EOY Data

DIBELS <i>Next</i> ®	PILOT SCHOOL: First Grade BOY-MOY-EOY 2016-2017				
	Beginning-of-Year	Middle-of-Year		End-of-Year	
		Matched Cohort	Unmatched Cohort	Matched Cohort	Unmatched Cohort
Above Benchmark	18%	29%	31%	34%	33%
Benchmark	14%	17%	17%	10%	9%
Below Benchmark	18%	2%	1%	17%	16%
Well-Below Benchmark	50%	51%	50%	39%	42%

While Table 24 shows an overall increase in the number of students in the Above Benchmark range (18% to 34% in the matched cohort), the decrease in the number of students in the Well-Below Benchmark range was only 11% (50% to 39% in the matched cohort). Although, schedule adjustments allowed for an increase in focused intervention, the schedule never included four opportunities, as the Project Specialists recommended, for aligned support and the instruction lacked the necessary rigor to close the significant literacy gaps in a large percentage of these first-grade students. Adjustments were made to the Scope and Sequence of the Kindergarten and First grade materials for implementation.

Finally, the pilot school initiated the first family/community literacy event in the Project as projected during their planning of the second year of project implementation (the Phase III schools will be offering family/community literacy events during their second year of project implementation). The pilot school chose to host a family event designed to support parents in engaging their student(s) in summer literacy activities. The event was held in the late spring and families received activity packets and a set of books that included both narrative and informational text appropriate for each grade level. The local public library participated by providing a modeled read aloud for families and offering library card applications for both parents and students. Every student in grades K-3 received a set of books and a summer literacy activity packet regardless of attendance at the family literacy event.

PHASE III SCHOOLS DISCUSSION

During the initial weeks of second semester project literacy specialists began addressing similar issues with project implementation fidelity in phase III schools. Project literacy specialists scheduled meetings with building principals at a select number of schools, where project implementation was not as strong as expected. In most cases additional support and clarification of project goals with building leadership was effective in furthering adherence to project implementation expectations. However, in meeting with one Phase III school, the principal and members of the school leadership team expressed their desire to use only portions of the Structured Literacy Routine and replace other segments with teacher-created activities that were not evidence-based. The principal expressed a strong belief that teachers should be allowed

maximum creativity in their classrooms. The school leadership team did not embrace the Project expectations for the use of evidence-based literacy strategies and practices and as a result, the school decided to terminate their participation in the Project.

CELEBRATIONS

During the second semester of the 2016-2017 SY, the Structured Literacy Project continued to see increased school participation and active engagement in project expectations. As classroom teachers became increasingly familiar with Structured Literacy and project routines and strategies, most participating teachers demonstrated an increased willingness to participate in coaching and engage in purposeful discussions related to student performance and data. Throughout the semester, project coaches continued to forge positive relationships with instructional staff and leaders in each of their assigned schools. These relationships strengthened the coaches' ability to successfully interact with teachers and students in classroom environments. As coaches developed a greater understanding of each school's schedule, culture, and leadership, they were able to engage in deeper conversations about possible changes or adjustments that might lead to increased student literacy outcomes.



Also during the second semester of 2016-2017 SY the final project literacy coach was hired. The addition of a sixth embedded coach allowed for a substantial adjustment in coaching responsibilities for the CDE literacy specialists. Prior to the hiring of the final coach, CDE literacy specialists were providing all the embedded coaching for one geographic cluster of participating schools. This time commitment impacted their availability to support the other five geographic clusters of project schools and their embedded coaches.

As a result of these project adjustments, the Structured Literacy Project completed the second semester 2016-2017 SY with one remaining phase II pilot school, nineteen phase III schools, and a full cadre of six literacy coaches.

In the Spring of 2017, the initial training of second-grade teachers began in one geographic cluster of schools. In preparation for this training the Primary Literacy Scope and Sequence was successfully expanded to include second grade as well as add enhanced resources for Kindergarten and first-grade teachers. The new and improved Primary Literacy Scope and Sequence was welcomed by teachers and school leaders, who expressed an appreciation for its organization, thoroughness, and usefulness. This initial training of second grade teachers was once again offered to elementary schools participating in the Project as well as non-participating schools in the same district.

- d. How data are informing next steps in the SSIP implementation. How data support planned modifications to intended outcomes (including the SIMR)—rationale or justification for the changes or how data support that the SSIP is on the right path



The Project was staffed by two literacy specialists and six literacy coaches who provided training, coaching, and leadership and instructional support in one hundred Kindergarten and first-grade classrooms.

As we reflect on our first year of full project implementation, the data, and the processes involved to move students who began the school year “well-below benchmark” out of that category, a number of important concerns have been elevated. The concerns from our combined and collaborative experiences include:

- An unexpected number of primary-level teachers are unfamiliar with the basic structure of the English language and how to teach this structure to young students.
- Teachers lack basic knowledge of oral language development and its pivotal role in the acquisition of early reading skills.
- Classroom teachers have had limited exposure to reading research and evidence-based strategies that inform the use of scientifically-based reading instruction.
- A significant number of classroom teachers have not been taught how to plan, organize, and deliver direct and explicit instruction in early foundational reading and literacy skills.
- Classroom teachers lack quality experience in the use of formative assessment and how to effectively use formative assessment to guide and adjust daily instruction.
- Both teachers and instructional leadership lack a depth of knowledge in the use and interpretation of interim and diagnostic assessments, progress monitoring, and observational data.
- Elementary principals do not appear well equipped to provide the necessary level of instructional leadership to the teaching of reading. They, too, lack literacy content knowledge, an in-depth understanding of how young students learn to read, and are unfamiliar with the most current research regarding reading instruction.
- Classroom teachers, interventionists and other instructional support staff frequently fail to align their instructional approach, instructional language, and scope and sequence of instruction to best meet the needs of early struggling readers. Further, their understanding of how to align instruction is limited.
- Teachers and instructional leaders demonstrate little regard for the urgency necessary when addressing the needs of young struggling readers.
- Elementary schools too often fail to place a priority on teaching young students to read and ignore the substantial research on the long-lasting effects of poor acquisition of reading in the early grades.

D. Data Quality Issues

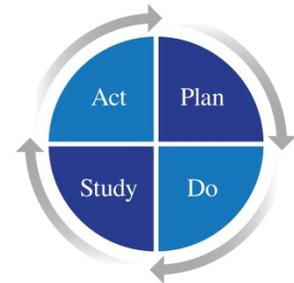
1. Data limitations that affected reports of progress in implementing the SSIP and achieving the SIMR due to quality of the evaluation data
 - a. Concern or limitations related to the quality or quantity of the data used to report progress or results

There are no concerns regarding data quality.

E. Plans for Next Year

1. Additional activities to be implemented next year, with timeline:

The following activities have been identified based upon our lessons learned. The timeline is not specific; rather these will take place in collaboration with the schools' professional learning schedules and within the coaching and mentoring process embedded throughout the 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 school years.



- I. The number of training days and professional learning sessions for teachers implementing Structured Literacy need to be expanded and provide further opportunity for literacy and data knowledge building.
 - II. Teachers need comprehensive training in direct and explicit instructional techniques.
 - III. Principal training must be more comprehensive.
 - IV. To be highly-effective, project coaches would need to be more frequently present in assigned schools.
 - V. We need to assure that participation in the Structured Literacy Project becomes more of a priority initiative in each of our participating schools.
 - VI. We must engage schools in meaningful dialog regarding the establishment of high expectations for all learners.
2. Planned evaluation activities including data collection, measures, and expected outcomes

In addition to all of the evaluation activities previously discussed, the Project literacy specialists hypothesize that the Project will be able to accelerate growth during the 2017-2018 SY for students in the matched cohort that ended the previous school year in the Above Benchmark range. It is further hypothesized that summer regression will be minimized for this category of student furthering the Project's goal of accelerating literacy growth. Based on these hypotheses, a close examination of EOY (2016-2017) and BOY (2017-2018) will be conducted.

3. Anticipated barriers and steps to address those barriers

The following challenges and steps to address the barriers are aligned with the planned activities identified above in section E.1.

- I. There is difficulty in locating adequate numbers of substitute teachers, as well as the additional expense of paying for substitutes, or paying stipends to teachers for participation in training during non-instructional days are significant barriers to expanding professional learning opportunities for teachers and literacy support staff. Along with commitment from the school to plan further in advance for PLC time, additional consideration will be given to increasing the budgeted allotment for substitute teacher reimbursement.
- II. Teacher knowledge and application of effective basic instructional practices was not the focus of the Structured Literacy Project. However, ineffective classroom practices that have significantly affected the implementation of the Project's structured literacy routine and other literacy evidence-based strategies. Project staff will continue to provide assigned schools access to training resources to support the use of direct and explicit instructional techniques in primary classrooms.
- III. Access to principals' time and attention has been challenging. Project staff have observed that most schools are attempting to address too many or competing initiatives simultaneously. Helping principals develop a greater appreciation for the correlative relationship between reading achievement and students' broader capacity for learning in other content areas will be a focus of further discussions with principals. Effective principals need a comprehensive understanding of early literacy development and instruction in order to provide purposeful instructional feedback to teachers. Working closer with principals will be a continued focus.
- IV. The number of Project literacy coaches is finite, limiting the opportunity for additional coaching in each of the participating schools. Project literacy specialists are exploring the potential of using virtual coaching to maximize coaches' availability for classroom observation and instructional feedback. During the 2016-2017 SY coaches provided coaching in one hundred Kindergarten and first-grade classrooms. During the 2017-2018 SY an additional forty-nine classrooms will be added to the Project's coaching schedules along with additional coaching responsibilities related to the implementation of small-group Structured Literacy interventions.
- V. Competing priorities and initiatives in schools diminish the focus on early literacy acquisition as an essential component of successful academic development and overall schoolwide performance. As stated above, working closely to further principals' literacy knowledge and instructional leadership capacities related to literacy will be emphasized in all interactions with participating schools' leadership.
- VI. Low expectations hinder the academic growth of our most at-risk students including those with disabilities. While changing school culture and beliefs is not the focus of the

Structured Literacy Project, limited belief that ALL students can learn has impacted successful implementation of Project routines and strategies. Coaching with individual teachers and interventionists will continue to include strategies to enhance learning for second-language learners and early struggling readers.

4. The State describes any needs for additional support and/or technical assistance

The State continues to benefit greatly from the partnership and TA provided through the National Center for Systemic Improvement's (NCSI). The learning collaboratives that have been provided, as well as networking opportunities with other States, have proven to be valuable. Professional learning, resources, and technical assistance available at both the cross-state convenings and monthly virtual meetings and have been directly applied to the work of the SSIP. Additionally, the State has begun engagement with the National Implementation Research Network (NIRN) to aid the State in implementation efforts at the Department level through a transformation zone. Exploration activities regarding the use of the Structured Literacy Project as the Evidence-based practice will take place during the Spring of 2018. The expertise provided by these TA centers is anticipated to remain extremely beneficial.

Figures		Page
Figure 1	Theory of Action	4
Figure 2	The Mediation Effect in Analysis	41
Figure 3	Teachers' knowledge of English language based on their roles at time 1 and time 2	50
Figure 4	Structured literacy implementation rubric scores at the beginning, middle, and end of the year	51
Figure 5	Structured literacy implementation rubric scores at the beginning, middle, and end of the year by teachers' teaching grades.	53
Figure 6	The end-of-year outcomes for students who started from the well-below benchmark category at the beginning of the year.	54
Figure 7	The percentage of schools in each progress category by grade	55
Figure 8	Literacy Evaluation Tool scores as rated by coaches and principals at the beginning and end of the school year	57

Tables		Page
Table 1	Baseline and Targets	6
Table 2	Actual Data for FFY 2016	6
Table 3	Progress Implementing SSIP: Improvement Strategy One, Goal 1	8
Table 4	Progress Implementing SSIP: Improvement Strategy One, Goal 2	13
Table 5	Progress Implementing SSIP: Improvement Strategy One, Goal 3	14
Table 6	Progress Implementing SSIP: Improvement Strategy One, Goal 4	15
Table 8	Progress Implementing SSIP: Improvement Strategy Two, Goal 1	17
Table 9	Progress Implementing SSIP: Improvement Strategy Two, Goal 2	20
Table 10	Progress Implementing SSIP: Improvement Strategy Two, Goal 3	24
Table 11	Progress Implementing SSIP: Improvement Strategy Three, Goal 1	27
Table 12	Progress Implementing SSIP: Improvement Strategy Three, Goal 2	28
Table 13	Pilot and Phase III Project Schools: Kindergarten & First Grade BOY to MOY Data	34
Table 13	Projected Analyses: Return on Investment	43
Table 14	Data Sources, Procedures, Timelines, and Stakeholders	44
Table 15	2016-2017 Project Schools: Kindergarten Matched Cohorts (BOY/EOY)	48
Table 16	2016-2017 Project Schools: First Grade Matched Cohorts (BOY/EOY)	49
Table 17	2016-2017 Project Schools: Combined Kindergarten and First Grade Matched Cohorts	49
Table 18	Correlation between teacher knowledge survey scores and literacy routine implementation	52
Table 19	The number of students who started from "well-below benchmark" category and their progress category at the end of the year.	55
Table 20	Correlation between literacy programming implementation % at BOY, EOY, and the % of students who stayed in the well-below benchmark category	57
Table 21	Response Rate for Embedded Coach Survey	58
Table 22	Teacher Perception Survey	59
Table 23	Pilot School Only: Kindergarten BOY-MOY-EOY Data	61
Table 24	Pilot School Only: First Grade BOY-MOY-EOY Data	62

Appendices - Improvement Strategy One

Appendix A



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**Strengths and Promising Practices of Colorado Educator
Preparation Programs and Perceived Preparedness of New
Educators for Early Literacy Instruction**

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**Prepared for
Collaboration for Effective Educator Development, Accountability, and Reform Center
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Contents

Background	74
Approach	74
Summary of Findings	75
Colorado’s Current Literacy Context	77
First-Best Instructional Practices in Language and Literacy	79
Differentiating Language and Literacy Instruction to Ensure the Success of All Students	81
Language and Literacy Assessment Practices, Assessment Tools, and Data-Based Decision Making.....	82
Articulation and Communication of Students' Literacy Strengths and Areas for Growth	84
Developmentally Appropriate Language and Literacy Instruction.....	86
Additional Comments	88
Conclusions	88
Recommendations.....	90

Background

In 2017, Colorado's State Leadership Team of the Collaboration for Effective Educator Development, Accountability, and Reform (CEEDAR) Center set out to understand the strengths and promising practices of educator preparation programs – for both teachers and administrative leaders – and the perceived preparedness of new educators in prekindergarten through sixth grade (preK-6) to support literacy instruction particularly for students with disabilities. Open ended surveys were conducted with faculty of teacher and school leadership preparation programs in three partner institutions: Metropolitan State University of Denver, the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs, and the University of Northern Colorado. Focus groups were conducted to gather input from parents of students with disabilities, literacy coaches, and district special education directors from across the state.

The data gathered in the surveys and focus groups provided both the perspectives of those who prepare new educators (preparation program faculty) and those who see the performances of new educators (community stakeholders such as parents, literacy coaches, and district special education directors) once they are employed in schools. The data offer interesting comparisons of these varying views on the ultimate goal of ensuring all Colorado students, including students with disabilities, receive quality literacy and language instruction.

Approach

A workgroup made up of members from the Colorado State Leadership Team (CSLT) developed six questions for the survey and focus groups and feedback was provided by the larger CSLT before finalizing the questions. The expectation of the CSLT was that the data from the survey would provide a counterpoint to data gathered in community stakeholder focus groups to allow for compelling comparisons regarding the perceived preparedness of new school teachers and leaders from multiple stakeholder groups.

Both the surveys and the focus groups questioned the participants on educator preparation in terms of the following six domains considered to be fundamental in the preparation of new educators for literacy instruction:

1. Colorado's current literacy context;
2. First-best instructional practices in language and literacy;
3. Differentiating language and literacy instruction to ensure the success of all students;
4. Language and literacy assessment practices, assessment tools, and data-based decision making;
5. Articulation and communication of students' literacy strengths and areas for growth; and
6. Developmentally appropriate language and literacy instruction.

For the surveys, through the support of the Colorado Council of the Deans of Education, a letter of explanation about the purpose of the survey and a link to the survey was distributed via email to all faculty members at partner universities who teach literacy in their courses. The leadership preparation survey returned 11 useable responses out of 14 that were distributed and the teacher preparation survey returned 19 useable responses out of 27 that were distributed.

In order to conduct the focus groups with continuity, the CSLT hired an expert in facilitation from the University of Northern Colorado who trained six facilitators recommended by the partner universities. All six facilitators were doctoral candidates and highly qualified in literacy who partnered in teams of two. Two of the six facilitators were not needed.

The CSLT originally sought to have participants in the focus groups who represented five groups: teachers, principals, literacy coaches, directors of special education, and families. The Colorado Department of Education's Office of Literacy was asked to provide a list of principals and teachers participating in the Early Literacy Assessment Tool project who had experience in overseeing and providing a comprehensive literacy program and these individuals were invited. All Colorado administrative unit directors of special education were invited, as well as every literacy coach involved in the State Systemic Improvement Plan's Structured Literacy Project. The Colorado Special Education Advisory Committee was asked to invite families. All groups were contacted via email with an explanation of the purpose of the focus group along with an invitation to participate with options that included different days, differing times, various locations, as well as the option to access virtually. Weather conditions impacted one of the days offered for families, principals, and teachers. The focus groups totaled 20 participants represented by 2 parents, 6 literacy coaches, and 12 directors of special education. There were no current teachers and principals who participated, however, the literacy coaches and directors were able to offer perspectives from that viewpoint as many previously had been teachers or principals prior to entering their current roles. Information relayed from these sources provides direct and detailed data on the participants' personal and professional knowledge and experience in preparing educators, coaching new teachers, coordinating special education programs, and parenting diverse learners.

Interpretations and conclusions from the surveys and focus groups are limited by the small number of participants in each data collection process. While these methods highlight topics and issues that deserve attention as the CEEDAR Leadership Team and stakeholders consider how to improve the educator preparation system, the findings do not generalize to wider populations and are not intended to make broad causal conclusions. Rather the survey and focus group data provide counterpoints to allow for comparisons regarding the strengths and promising practices in the educator preparation programs and the perceived preparedness of new school teachers and leaders from multiple stakeholder groups.

Summary of Findings

In general, the feedback from all participants painted a picture of varying offerings among preparation programs and inconsistent levels of quality in the literacy instruction. While there were examples of stellar programmatic offerings at the preparation institutions and exemplar teaching and leadership in the preK-6 classrooms as recounted by participants of this study, the feedback received indicates there needs to be greater consistency in the depth of skill building opportunities for pre-service candidates. The faculty of the education preparation institutions, for instance, reported various course and field experience offerings which contribute to inconsistent preparation of the six domains across programs and candidates. Along the same lines, the focus groups of parents, literacy coaches, and special education directors reported that the teachers and leaders they encounter exhibit varying commands of the principles of effective literacy instruction.

In some instances, there were overlaps in the elements that parents, coaches, and special education directors reported as important for educator competence and the elements that the faculty members reported as strengths of their program offering. For example, several faculty of the preparation programs described full year residencies for their field experiences that allow aspiring educators to build professional relationships and hone their crafts in real classroom settings throughout a full school year. Similarly, directors of special education indicated that hands-on year-long field training is invaluable to adequately prepare new educators to meet student needs, especially those with disabilities. These types of overlap indicate that those who prepare new teachers and those who work with new teachers agree to some extent about certain effective components of preparation.

The community stakeholders' (parents, coaches, and special education directors) feedback about new educators, however, are not always clearly aligned with the preparation faculty's perceptions of their programs' strengths. Within the data gathered, there exist two levels of misalignment – one across different preparation programs and another between the production of new educators and the performance of new educators. In the instance of field experience for instructional practices to train administrator candidates to be instructional leaders, one preparation faculty stated in the survey that “field experience is student dependent based on placement and mentor support.” While another stated,

“School leader candidates complete activities during their principal internship related to each of the Colorado principal standards. These include establishing, implementing and refining appropriate expectations for curriculum, instructional practices, assessment and use of data on student learning. This requirement includes further understanding of Colorado's current literacy contexts through data analysis and curriculum evaluation, implementation and supervision.”

The difference in these two responses could be the result of different interpretations of the survey question, but the first response would imply in itself a variance in the field experiences candidates receive within that particular program. The second response describes a much more involved experience of learning classroom strategies and concepts specifically related to literacy. These kinds of differences suggest varying levels of training for leadership candidates.

Another misalignment was observed between the preparation faculty's accounts of program strengths and the community stakeholders' experiences in working with new educators. The coaches and directors reported that the ability to use assessment data is critical to effectively teach literacy, especially to students with disabilities. Yet, they saw very few new educators effectively demonstrate this skill. The majority of preparation faculty described offering relevant assessment training in courses and field experience that address using assessments to drive instruction, specific assessment techniques, and using data to effectively differentiate. The information collected in this project paints very different pictures of how the new educators were prepared and how they are performing in classrooms. These findings suggest a lack of consistent standards among preparation programs, as well as a lack of consistent alignment between the preparation standards and the needs of students in the classroom.

Given the findings of this current inquiry and its implications for the education systems, that include many professionals who work very hard to ensure the success of all Colorado students in both k-12 and higher education, it is important to point out the specific observations about new educators are not directly attributed to the new educators prepared by the programs in this study necessarily. However, the inconsistent pictures that are painted warrant at the least more questions and more opportunities for collaboration among system leaders to arrive at solutions.

These observations would suggest that the needs of the preK-6 classroom students might not be consistently met by the new educators when they arrive at their new posts with their various levels of training in essential skills. The compounded effect of the two levels of misalignment – among preparation programs and between the preparation offerings and the perceived performances of new educators – could result in inconsistent educational outcomes. To ensure all Colorado students are receiving effective literacy instruction, the disconnect between the preparation system and the preK-6 system warrants examination and reflection. Each of the six domains of literacy instruction preparation will be discussed in more detail for both new teachers and new leaders and from the perspectives of all the study participants. (One highlight is bolded and italicized in each section as an important takeaway.)

Colorado's Current Literacy Context

The study participants were asked about teachers' and leaders' preparation for Colorado's context of literacy needs including Colorado Academic Standards (CAS), Colorado Early Learning and Development Guidelines (CELDG), READ Act legislation, and state assessments. Preparation faculty reported addressing these Colorado specific items and contexts in their coursework and field experience offerings, but community stakeholders observed new educators only understand compliance and possess mere basic knowledge of certain laws but lack the deep understanding of why and how the laws can drive student success. ***Principals in particular are observed by literacy coaches and special education directors as lacking classroom experience and focus on Colorado literacy context in terms of compliance and requirements as building managers, but not necessarily in terms of instructional leadership.***

Educator Preparation Programs' Perspective

The faculty of the three teacher preparation institutions participating in this study's surveys mostly responded about their programs' courses being matched to these same state standards and requirements – CAS, CELDG, READ Act, etc. They also reported providing instruction on nationally accepted professional standards and tools such as EdTPA, the National Reading Panel report, the International Dyslexia Association standards, and the International Literacy Association. A couple of these faculty members wrote about focusing on thinking routines, literacy strategies, and five components of literacy. A couple of others wrote that the strength of his or her program is that they teach the candidates to apply literacy skills across different content areas. In addition to preparing teachers for specific legislative requirements, faculty also reported preparing their candidates to work with diverse student populations through multicultural text analysis and case studies of learners with different learning needs, including those with disabilities.

Understanding the needs of diverse Colorado preK-6 students in field placement is also important to teaching in the current Colorado literacy context. Teacher preparation faculty wrote about the importance of providing different placement settings to give candidates the right variety of experiences serving different student populations. Tying course work to the characteristics of the field experience, matching candidates to an effective mentor who will model using literacy concepts to drive instruction, carrying out lesson plans, and observation/feedback cycles were a few of the strong characteristics of programs shared by faculty. A couple of faculty stated their program offers a full year clinical experience and were proud that this level of extensive preparation offers candidates a thorough understanding of the needs of students throughout an entire school year.

The leadership preparation faculty discussed many of the Colorado context of requirements and policies that drive their programs, such as Colorado's Academic Standards, the READ Act, and the Colorado educator evaluation system. Many of these faculty also indicate that they value real-world training tied to coursework, for instance coursework aligned with school leader candidates' learning to conduct actual teacher evaluations. Leadership preparation faculty also value activities that contribute to the principal candidates' abilities to be instructional leaders and to meet principal evaluation standards in using data, curriculum decisions, instructional practice, and assessments.

Some of the faculty respondents cited specific program shortcomings. For instance, one leadership preparation program faculty member cited that there was "minimal discussion of the state assessment"

in a leadership preparation program, and one teacher preparation faculty indicated that, “The CELDG [Colorado Early Learning and Development Guidelines] are not included in any of our ECE [Early Childhood Education] courses.” It appears that the candidates receive varying experiences in terms of contextual experience with regard to assessments. One respondent said the candidate’s exposure to assessments depends on the placement of principal internship. A couple of the faculty stated that their candidates get preparation in courses regarding the READ Act, but do not learn about specific READ Act related practices or requirements in the field placements.

Perceptions of Educator Preparedness

From the perspective of the literacy coaches, special education directors, and parents, new teachers and principals have been taught some of the content of Colorado’s literacy context, but there are deficits in skills and not always a consistent focus on the needs of students. For example, the coaches noted that new teachers are familiar with academic standards. However, they do not always have the depth of knowledge of why certain legislation was put in place and why it is important. The coaches reported the new teachers do not always understand the content of the READ Act such as the parental component of the law. The new teachers know the Act as a requirement with which they have to comply in terms of assessing students and other requirements, but they lack the deep understanding of how to assess children properly, why the assessments are important, how to effectively communicate the results to parents, and how these early literacy assessments are critical to the spirit and intent of the READ Act.

Similar impressions about the new school leaders were shared during the focus groups. The coaches and directors noted that some principals may be prepared to be instructional leaders when it comes to supporting teachers through observations, evaluations, and proper literacy instructional practices, but it is not always the case in their experiences. They reported many principals are focused on the compliance aspects of legislation and do not always know how to guide necessary instructional practices. Many principals are simply consumed with managing the buildings and lack actual knowledge and experience with early literacy, which is problematic for observations and evaluations of teachers because the teachers then do not receive valuable feedback.

The parents reported mixed experiences when it came to teachers’ and leaders’ awareness of the Colorado literacy context. They were particularly concerned with how prepared new teachers and administrative leaders were to serve their children with disabilities such as dyslexia and other reading challenges. For example, one parent witnessed teachers struggling with applying grade level standards to students with disabilities who may not have been performing to grade level standards. These parents’ general impressions of new classroom teachers in their experiences were not always well-equipped to address students with special needs. Although they observed that the special education teachers from their experiences typically had more knowledge about special education needs than the general education teachers. Parents also expressed an impression that, while new teachers are less experienced and knowledgeable about challenges such as dyslexia, some may be more amenable to suggestions and more willing to be flexible than more veteran teachers. One parent who was experienced with educational issues in Colorado said that early career teachers seem to be confused about Colorado Academic Standards versus Common Core and do not discuss actual standards in Individual Education Plan (IEP) meetings.

The parents reported mixed experiences with principals in their children's schools. Some had positive interactions with principals working with their children with disabilities but observed that it may not be the norm among all schools; another encountered a principal who deferred IEP duties to a more knowledgeable and responsive associate principal. When it came to knowing Colorado literacy requirements and contexts, the parents reported a general lack of knowledge and expertise among school leaders. One parent stated, "If they know anything about it, they are not showing it."

First-Best Instructional Practices in Language and Literacy

All participants in the study were asked to describe their experiences either in preparing or working with new teachers and leaders on "first-best" instructional practices in language and literacy such as universal design in general education classes. ***The availability of exemplary instructional practices in existing classroom settings are particularly important in this domain of preparation. If there lacks model first-best instructional practices demonstrated by veteran teachers and leaders, then candidates lack adequate field learning experience opportunities.***

Educator Preparation Programs' Perspective

The teacher preparation faculty described the importance of the five components of literacy, the use of best practice methods with diverse populations of students, and using research-based practices. Several of the faculty described focusing on phonemic awareness, classroom design, lesson planning, and applying literacy concepts across different content areas. The faculty reported developing field experiences that would entail putting these methods into practice and tying them to the coursework and theory. One program with a year-long residency component described this area as a perceived strength of their field experience as it includes time in the placement school to build each candidate's relationships with existing onsite teams to not only learn mentor teacher classroom practices, but also to build working relationships with colleagues.

The leadership preparation faculty described the strengths of their programs as key fundamentals such as the five pillars/components of literacy to ensure effective observation and feedback as instructional leaders. One faculty member specifically stated, "From a sociocultural and cognitive perspective, we explore language acquisition as well as the key components of literacy development." Others discussed using evidence-based practices to make professional development decisions, examine curricula, tailoring instruction to needs of special education students and English language learners, and using data. Faculty members indicated that candidates in leadership training programs are provided with field experiences that allow them to apply the best practices learned in their courses in real world settings. One faculty member specifically stated that their candidates must complete activities related to "establishing, implementing and refining appropriate expectations for curriculum, instructional practices, assessment and use of data on student learning."

A few responses from both teacher and leadership preparation faculty stood out by pointing to the fact that field experience is candidate-specific and depends on the quality of the assigned mentors and teachers in the placement school. One respondent pointed out that current teachers in the field often do not follow best practices and, in these instances, the program must work to redirect their candidate's

experience away from what they observed in the school setting. These accounts confirm an existing lack of consistency for candidates' learning experiences.

Perceptions of Educator Preparedness

The instructional coaches who provided input into this study were in agreement about the lack of depth most new teachers exhibit when it comes to instruction that is in line with best practices in the field. One coach said new teachers can typically recite the five components of literacy, but do not grasp the in-depth knowledge to apply them into practice. Their perception of new principals is similar to that of new teachers in that many new principals arrive in schools with only a superficial understanding of literacy terminology, and lack the deep content knowledge needed to observe, guide, and model best practices in the classroom. The principals with whom they have worked have very little classroom experience themselves by the time they arrive at their principalships and are taught to adhere to district and state requirements as managers, but not truly as instructional leaders. The coaches acknowledge that many of these results are because of systemic problems such as human capital challenges which drive districts to place underqualified candidates into open leadership positions. For instance, focus group participants discussed one example of a school where a physical education teacher was promoted to be principal and lacked valuable experience in literacy instruction.

The directors of special education provided similar feedback with regard to working with new teachers and leaders. Their main concern was that the on-going need for deep professional development in this area is significant and that budgetary restrictions limit the availability of such professional development to adequately address the issue. When budget cuts are made, they have seen professional development being limited. If candidates are not adequately prepared in their preparation experience and professional development is not always available to remediate, then they have few other opportunities to learn best practices. Respondents indicate that the preparation provided at higher education institutions can help to ensure educators' readiness to use first-best instructional practices given the uncertainty of training and learning opportunities after the candidates arrive in schools. They observe that the quality of the principals across their districts is inconsistent in terms of having strong knowledge of classroom literacy instruction and leadership. Again, they confirmed the literacy coaches' accounts of promoting educators to be elementary principals with no literacy or classroom experience. One example was the promotion of a high school assistant principal to an elementary principal position. This is problematic because the job duties are vastly different and early literacy is not part of the experience of a typical high school assistant principal.

The parents described experiences which corroborate the inconsistent levels of preparedness as seen and reported by the coaches and directors. One parent had to change schools for her child with disability until she felt she received the support her child needed. Even then, she felt the new teachers were lacking in preparation to work with children with disabilities and specialized staff were relied upon to support the student. Another parent had her child in a school that was very strong in supporting her child with special needs in using evidence-based strategies to teach phonemic awareness and the leadership as well as the staff were excellent at identifying and addressing her learning needs. These two accounts show very different experiences of educators using best practices with students.

Differentiating Language and Literacy Instruction to Ensure the Success of All Students

Participants were asked to describe their experiences related to candidates' and new educators' preparation in differentiating instruction for all students (tier two and three practices, grouping, etc.). ***Educator preparation faculty describe plenty of exposure and opportunities to practice differentiation for their candidates. Yet the literacy coaches and special education directors observe that most experienced teachers do not even begin to tackle it until their fourth or fifth years, let alone brand-new teachers. These findings warrant an examination of expectations on new teachers to master this complex skill and address preK-6 student needs and new educator training according to realistic existing conditions.***

Educator Preparation Programs' Perspective

The teacher preparation faculty described whole group planning, small group planning, cultural awareness, English language learners' needs, and differentiating for students with disabilities as strengths in preparation. Several emphasized the importance of using data to effectively differentiate. One program requires differentiation as a part of every activity the candidate completes. As the faculty explained, "Students are expected to include differentiation in every activity and lesson that they plan and instruction in how to include differentiation to make it meaningful is a part of each course." Many of the faculty said their programs emphasize field experience to be paired with coursework, meaningful reflections on what is observed and modeled in their placement classrooms, and tailoring to student needs.

The leadership preparation faculty focused on concepts of meeting the needs of diverse learners in terms of English language learners, students with disabilities, and students at varying proficiency levels. A couple of faculty elaborated on candidates' exposure to Multi-Tiered Systems of Support and specific tools they use such as Elkonin boxes and Lindamood LiPS. As one faculty put it:

"The general concept of differentiation is taught throughout the early classes so when they get to their methods classes they understand the concept. In addition[,] they learn about MTSS and the tiers of support in early classes as well. When they get to the special education reading course they examine differentiation for students at many levels. Students are provide[d] examples of tier one, two and three curricula can look different to support students (for example how SIPPS may hit phonemic awareness compared with how Lindamood LIPS hits phonemic awareness and who might benefit from each of these programs) and then general differentiation..."

One faculty emphasized the importance of holding every student to high expectations and every staff member accountable to student learning. Yet another stated that differentiation for literacy is an area in the program that requires more development and that the candidates are not required to learn these concepts in coursework.

Perceptions of Educator Preparedness

From the perspective of literacy coaches, directors of special education, and parents, the new educators are too overwhelmed with their basic job duties to truly implement effective differentiation. There was

wide agreement among the coaches that new teachers are barely able to focus on core instruction with minimal ability to teach to tier 1 and tier 2 of differentiated instruction. The coaches observed a disconnect for new teachers between foundation of knowledge and methods of identification of tier 1 and connecting instructional learning with classroom practice is hard for new teachers. “Survival mode” is used to describe the experience of new teachers and often the coaches do not see attempts at differentiation until the teachers’ fourth or fifth years. The principals are mainly focused on compliance to rules and regulations and defer much of the instructional leadership duties on differentiation such as observation and feedback to literacy coaches, if and when there are professional staff available with these qualifications and capacities such as literacy coaches.

The special education directors largely agree that new educators are simply not equipped to differentiate effectively in the classroom. This observation is common enough that one school district does not even expect new teachers to be able to differentiate. They stated that this is the single most requested form of professional development. One director lamented the need for professional development is substantial in other areas such as best practices that the efforts seem insufficient to address all the needs including differentiation all at once. There was general agreement that differentiation is an area of great need for new teachers and even veteran teachers. The group of directors acknowledge that perhaps new teachers are not adequately prepared to differentiate effectively because the teachers they are learning from during their field experiences must be masters of differentiation before they can model it. The directors do not see new principals as typically being prepared to support differentiated instruction because they simply lack the classroom experience that is needed to master and understand differentiation. In the directors’ observations, the administrators are trained to manage buildings, but these administrators would not have in-depth classroom literacy instruction experience such as differentiation unless they were literacy teachers at one time.

Parents that provided input on this topic indicated that they have few opportunities to see specific differentiation strategies being implemented in the classroom. However, parents do report witnessing teachers talking about concepts of differentiation but that teachers often have a hard time applying differentiation strategies to their students with disabilities, instead deferring to other specialists or coaches who have these more advanced instructional skills. Similar to other concepts discussed with the parents, their experiences varied by the school when it came to leadership. One parent experienced an open-minded principal who understood concepts of differentiation and was willing to try new strategies and who encouraged their staffs to explore differentiation practices such as “flooding” (all students participate in small group instruction led by all/most/many adults in the building) and tackling such concepts in their professional learning communities. Another witnessed the principal who did not show a lot of experience with differentiation and instead simply delegated to specialists to ensure that students with disabilities’ needs were met.

Language and Literacy Assessment Practices, Assessment Tools, and Data-Based Decision Making

The participants were asked to discuss their experiences in preparing and working with new educators on assessment practices, approved assessments, and assessment tools as well as making decisions based on data. This domain is critical to the success of several, if not all, of the other preparation domains – differentiating effectively, communicating about student progress, and tailoring developmentally appropriate instruction, etc. At the same time, adequate preparation in this realm is challenging because of the wide range of assessments that districts use for different purposes. *Instead of focusing on any one*

specific assessment, the special education directors recommended teaching deeply the concepts and processes behind assessments for formative and instructional purposes.

Educator Preparation Programs' Perspective

One faculty member believed the strength of his or her program lies in exposing the candidates to as many assessments and their related tools as possible, as well as pushing them to understand and intelligently discuss the “what, why, and how” of assessments. Other faculty respondents discussed their focus on assessments as related to state requirements for purposes of driving instruction. The field experiences in programs largely focus on tasks related to running records, adjusting to student proficiency levels, and lesson planning according to data collected. DIBELS, DRA2, VB Mapp, and Emergent Literacy Assessment were a few assessments and tools that were specifically mentioned.

The leadership preparation faculty's responses to the strengths of their programs' preparation in assessment practices is yet another example of the inconsistent training new leaders are receiving. One faculty member reported that their program offers instruction in assessment techniques including “running records, observational protocol, rubrics, checklists, and some standardized measures” and “norm-criterion-based assessment, validity and reliability, formative/summative assessment as well as more specialized assessment such as screening, progress monitoring, diagnostic, and summary assessments.” While another faculty member stated, “I am unaware of any specific assignments that address assessment practices, specifically as they apply to literacy.” A couple of the faculty expressed their leadership field experiences specifically relate to state requirements and principal quality standards related to assessments.

Perceptions of Educator Preparedness

When instructional coaches were interviewed, they agreed as a group that new teachers do not tend to know how to use assessments for formative and instructional purposes. They can understand summative values, benchmarking cutoffs, and compliance to state laws in terms of assessment scores, but they have minimal knowledge of applying assessments formatively. The special education directors agreed with this observation, but pointed to the challenge of preparing candidates for all the assessments that are used across different districts. Given the wide range of possible assessments that candidates might encounter across the different districts, the directors felt that the role of the preparation institution should be to teach major concepts that would help the candidates using assessments such as interpreting data, understanding the validity and confidence of the data interpretation, using data with other pieces of evidence to write IEP goals and share with colleagues, and using data to drive instruction. In terms of new leaders, the directors have seen principals take on learning assessment practices, analyzing data, and interpreting data on their own because it is so important to accountability systems, but they are not prepared before they become principals and sometimes they are too overwhelmed with the logistics of administering assessments to focus on the formative value of the tests.

The parents' experiences were that teachers were overall unprepared to use and administer assessments. One parent was frustrated that her child's general education and special education teachers did not know how to use assessment tools nor did they know how to make necessary accommodations for her child with special needs to take the assessment. Another parent also experienced frustrations over the fact that

her child's general education teacher did not understand the content of the student's IEP as it related to her assessments. The parents' experiences with principals revolved around making appropriate testing accommodations for their children with disabilities and reported being pleased with the level of involvement the principals showed in the assessment process. It appeared that the coaches and special education directors were concerned with the use of assessments for instructional purposes and the parents were more concerned with how their children can take the assessments with appropriate accommodations and their IEPs.

Articulation and Communication of Students' Literacy Strengths and Areas for Growth

The participants shared their experiences with new educators' preparation in terms of communicating students' learning in literacy including strengths and areas for growth (e.g., READ plans, student IEP goals) to parents and colleagues. ***While effective communication skills are always important in relaying student results and progress, literacy coaches, special education directors, and parents in this study all agreed more in-depth and meaningful literacy skills and content knowledge are even more important for new educators to possess for these purposes.***

Educator Preparation Programs' Perspective

The teacher preparation faculty relied on the following techniques to teach about communication:

- Teaching about teacher dispositions and professional conduct;
- Role playing to practice communicating with colleagues and families;
- Practice writing parent letters informing of learning objectives;
- Creating plans for stakeholder involvement in a student's intervention strategy; and
- Carrying out the parent requirements of the READ Act.

Some of the faculty indicated their programs prided themselves on the specifics of preparing candidates to effectively communicate and engage other stakeholders in student learning. Others indicated that this is an area where programs could improve and is not a current program strength overall. Faculty members also indicated that their programs' field experiences do include opportunities to create plans and for communicating plans to all stakeholders involved.

According to the respondents of the leadership preparation survey, the preparation of leaders is similar to that of teachers in terms of writing plans and communicating the details of the plan. The difference for the principals lies in engaging the larger community as well as staff and families of individual students. Simulations and practice family meetings are carried out. A couple of leadership preparation faculty described this area as elective for their candidates: "This area is covered in field experiences and the practicum if the candidate chooses to allocate time here." Another described the topic area as one that is "student dependent." The survey responses available do not offer contextual information to elaborate on these points. However, these responses would imply that this is not an area which the preparation programs have prioritized in the candidates' training experiences.

Perceptions of Educator Preparedness

The instructional coaches discussed new teachers' abilities to communicate adequately with parents. They rarely see parent communication happen outside of parent-teacher conferences; and new teachers' abilities to effectively relay students' academic struggles is particularly lacking. Parents often do not grasp the gravity of their children's learning challenges because the teachers do not fully convey these challenges. This is particularly highlighted in situations where the parents themselves struggle with reading and it is even more emotionally and technically challenging for teachers to lead these hard conversations.

The directors of special education echoed the concerns of the instructional coaches, and discussed in more depth the specific challenges associated with communicating about students with disabilities. Basic communication with parents is taught to candidates before they become teachers. However, meaningful communications with parents about a student with special needs' learning progress is more challenging and requires in-depth knowledge about reading fundamentals and assessment data. This is one area they agreed is strongly related to new teachers' knowledge of the core literacy components and ability to use assessment data. If new teachers were well-versed in the concepts of literacy and language acquisition and able to use data to drive instruction, they would be more equipped to communicate their students' literacy challenges to parents. Communicating with parents effectively about a student's progress in literacy requires confidence and meaningful progress monitoring, but new teachers often lack this necessary experience with data and assessments. Simply using percentiles to demonstrate a student's strengths and areas of growth is superficial and uninformative to parents.

The parents interviewed expressed similar experiences with new teachers not being fully prepared to communicate student learning plans because of their lack of confidence in using assessments and weaknesses in other areas of literacy knowledge. One parent has seen new teachers be open to working with instructional coaches on using assessments, but they are still not experienced in using their literacy knowledge and assessment practices to explain and defend their educational decisions such as those contained in IEPs. Another parent indicated that she only receives communication from her child's learning specialist when she herself initiates the communication, and that overall communication from the teacher is lacking. The parent expressed the need for consistent and frequent communication about her daughter's progress.

With regard to the effectiveness of principals in communicating on education plans for students, parents offered several observations. For instance, one parent found that the principal was effective in sharing data, but not in communicating about the specifics of the IEP for her child. Another parent of a child with disabilities experienced a principal who deferred much of the communications responsibility to a learning specialist or depended heavily on assessment scores, rather than discussing in-depth the progress of her child and the needed plan for future learning. Sometimes, it felt to this parent that the principal was "learning on the spot" about her daughter's learning needs during IEP meetings. The parent indicated having had effective meetings with school administrators that led to better results for her daughter, but that this was not a consistent experience and only happened after many previously failed attempts to get in touch with school leaders.

Developmentally Appropriate Language and Literacy Instruction

Participants were asked to share their experiences in preparing and working with new educators in terms of providing developmentally appropriate language and literacy instruction that takes into consideration the whole child. The skills involved in this domain are complex and new teachers are described in this study as relying on learning specialists to accomplish related tasks such as scaffolding and new principals are relying on teachers and coaches to accomplish these goals rather than delivering it themselves. ***New educators need to be prepared to have the content knowledge and skill sets to meet their students' needs. When educators are not able to meet these needs, additional support is needed to help them master the content and skills so that preK-6 student achievement is not compromised.***

Educator Preparation Programs' Perspective

The teacher preparation faculty described their programs as using educational psychology content, using appropriately differentiated instruction, using assessments to understand where students are developmentally, knowing concepts of child development in addition to literacy developments, meeting the needs of English language learners and students with disabilities with appropriate instruction, and to move students along the entire continuum of learning to the next level. While some teacher preparation program faculty ensured that these goals are applied in their field experiences, another faculty member acknowledged this is an important area that his or her program could further improve.

A couple of the leadership preparation faculty described this component of their programs in depth. One wrote, "One of the main activities candidates engage in is an analysis of the academic standards to see how they progress from year to year. We discuss within this how texts are leveled as well as the effect of background knowledge on text comprehension. We also work through the basic theories that explain how people learn and work through examples of how these manifest in different grade levels." Another wrote, "We discuss emergent literacy and stages of development in reading/writing. We discuss typical development of specific skills in area of language, reading and writing. Candidates are provided with typical development guidelines in their special education literacy methods course. We discuss typical mistakes that students make and when they typically move on from those mistakes..." A couple of the faculty indicated that developmentally appropriate instruction is woven into other aspects of their programs.

One program places candidates in various grade levels in their field experience so they are exposed to multiple developmental stages of students. Another program requires their candidates to conduct case studies of struggling students to give them experience in tailoring developmentally appropriate instruction to the students. Yet another program aims to provide candidates with "purposeful leadership experiences that would develop an understanding of children and developmentally-appropriate instruction" in their field experiences that align with their coursework.

Perceptions of Educator Preparedness

From the coaches' perspective, new teachers generally do not fully appreciate the idea that the basic principles of sound literacy instruction apply to all students, and do not necessarily have to be developmentally appropriate. As one coach puts it, "All special education students are general education students first." They find that new teachers often lack the initiative and commitment necessary to teach all students literacy effectively. They observe some new teachers overly relying on labels of developmental appropriate instruction yet not understanding the concepts behind the labels. Their training often does not equip them with the skills such as differentiation and scaffolding needed to serve all kids in the classroom. Learning awareness and phonics are also observed by one coach as lacking in new teachers' knowledge. These disconnects, the group of coaches noted, may happen between taking relevant courses in a preparation program and actually applying the concepts into practice in a prek-6 classroom years later. Overall, the group observed that new teachers do not have fundamental knowledge and experience to recognize when a student has demonstrated learning.

Along the same lines, the coaches report principals generally rely on teachers and instructional coaches to deliver instruction that is developmentally appropriate. Principals often follow the district priorities to drive practice, rather than using their own knowledge and experience. They observed that administrator preparation programs seemed to focus on legal compliance issues rather than developmentally appropriate instruction. This lack of knowledge and experience is unfortunate for the students because it means principals do not develop the ability to recognize when a teacher is not meeting the developmental needs of students.

The special education directors agree with some of the coaches' observations with a few additions. The directors find a key difference between a new teacher and a veteran teacher is the difference in their repertoire of tools to meet students' developmental needs and literacy challenges. A veteran teacher might, for instance, have five to ten tools to use, while a new teacher starts with none. The elementary level, from the directors' perspective, is where literacy can be supported effectively for young learners because there is often a literacy specialist and elementary teachers are specifically taught about literacy. Often, when students arrive at middle and high school without being fundamentally prepared in literacy, they will go on with even less support because those higher-level educators are not taught to specifically teach literacy. The directors believe the collaboration of elementary general education teachers and special education teachers are key to teaching all students with developmentally appropriate instruction.

The directors observe that principals' level of preparedness on this front largely depends on where the principal is hired. They often react to what the school and district is focusing on at the moment. For example, mental health and educating the whole child are popular focuses right now and principals are therefore more likely to stress these areas as being the focal point for interpreting what developmentally appropriate instruction means for students.

The parents, again, had vastly different experiences with new teachers in terms of their children receiving developmentally appropriate instruction. One parent with a visually impaired child simply said, despite the teacher's best intentions, she had no idea how to tailor instruction to the child. Another parent believed new teachers are much more prepared for developmentally appropriate instruction than in the past. One parent believed this is one area where principals can really make a difference in their staff's

teaching practices, but the parents interviewed have not had personal experiences that showed the new principals with whom they have interacted consistently have the in-depth knowledge, skills, or initiative to ensure developmentally appropriate instruction.

Additional Comments

The study participants naturally discussed potential solutions as they shared their experiences and challenges in their work. These potential solutions are not necessarily within the purview of CEEDAR but are worth noting from the participants' conversations. Below is a list of these items:

1. Dual endorsements and licensure in general education and special education can break down some of the siloes when working with students with disabilities allowing special education teachers to know more about literacy and general education teachers to be more equipped to work with students with special needs.
2. Full year residencies for all candidates can allow them to develop their skills in a meaningful way that gets them closer to the level of mastery that a more experienced educator would have before they become teachers of record. This gives the candidates the experience of a full school year and more preparation in challenging aspects such as classroom management.
3. School leaders need to be prepared in literacy specific coursework and be licensed for different grade levels because the job now requires such different knowledge and skills between elementary and higher levels.

Conclusions

The CEEDAR Center and Colorado Leadership Team want every child to receive quality literacy and language instruction so that they can succeed in other content areas and advance through their academic careers with excellence. From all accounts, the instructors and administrators of educator preparation programs, district staff, school staff, and families want the same outcomes for every student. Yet, there are real and concrete challenges to providing this level of high quality education to all Colorado students. The survey and focus group input received through this study highlight some of those challenges and opportunities as voiced by those who work closely to train, support, and partner with educators.

The surveys and focus groups offer snapshots of real experiences of those who are stakeholders in the education of students. These snapshots show gaps and disconnects between some of the expectations and performance of the systems that work together to ensure educational achievement. At the same time, they also show similarities in values and goals of the different systems. Therefore, these findings yield areas ripe for improvement with great opportunities for collaboration and growth.

In the narratives shared by educator preparation faculty, it is clear they value meeting the goals that the state has set for their candidates in legislation and giving the candidates hands-on, real world experiences that truly prepare them for the challenges of classrooms and schools. The literacy coaches and directors of special education echoed these sentiments in the need for new educators to gain the experiences that meaningfully train them to be effective with students. The parents also want their children's teachers and principals to be ready to help their kids learn no matter what school they are in.

Even though these broad agreements exist, the systems are falling short of ensuring that the strong language and literacy educational outcomes are being met for each and every student. The teacher preparation programs offer varying coursework and field experiences with some faculty acknowledging shortcomings of their programs in some of these areas. This self-reported information shows there are not clearly outlined expectations for all the programs to meet and that there is a lack of coherence in the preparation system as a whole. As one teacher preparation faculty member aptly stated, “I’m relatively new to my role in higher education, coming from administration in K-12. When I was a K-12 principal it was clear to me that most of my ‘fresh out’ elementary teachers did not have a strong grasp of first-best literacy instruction and assessment. I have resolved to fix that in the teacher prep program for which I am now responsible. If CEEDAR’s work is going to, in part, result in more clearly defining what good literacy instruction should/could look like in teacher prep programs, then count me in.”

The coaches, directors, and parents all spoke of positive experiences they have had with new educators, but the level of effectiveness was not consistent. Their conversations depicted new educators as lacking depth in their knowledge and skills to provide highly effective literacy and language instruction, but they also acknowledged systemic problems that contribute to these challenges. They spoke about root causes of learning difficulties such as poverty, constantly shifting district priorities that overwhelm educators, human capital challenges that lead to high turnover and ineffective leadership pipelines, budget restrictions that limit supports for new educators, and accountability measures that sometimes skew the focus away from actual learning. These larger scale challenges are confirmed in some of the preparation faculty’s responses stating that candidates’ field experiences are dependent on where they are placed. If a candidate is placed in a school setting experiencing many of these systemic challenges and not following best practices, the candidate’s learning experience could be significantly compromised.

A key challenge described by coaches and directors is that many new educators focus on the processes of state requirements and on policies of accountability, educator evaluation, and assessment benchmarks to do their jobs correctly, but they miss the goal of ensuring student learning. The faculty described their programs as preparing their candidates for these same state requirements and policies. The alignment seems to be in place for what educators need to be able to perform their jobs, but the true learning of children goes missing in the process. Simply learning about the requirements and policies are not sufficient in ensuring deep educator candidate as well as preK-6 student learning. The survey shows that preparation faculty want to ensure their candidates are performing up to par. As one respondent wrote, “While the Colorado principal quality standards are central to our program goals, the program’s mission statement would indicate that we strive to also develop the type of leader who would continue to learn and grow and encourage others to the same...” However, not all new educators are exhibiting this level of self-initiative and grit in the experiences of the coaches and directors.

The access to highly effective educators appears to be spotty in the experiences of the parents who have children with disabilities. One parent reported changing her child’s schools repeatedly to find a school that she believed met her basic educational needs. Another parent has had her child with disabilities continuously in a supportive school with a principal who is knowledgeable about special needs and is highly involved with literacy and language instruction. These two contrasting accounts show not all students are receiving equal educations and there are gaps in the system.

These patterns in the results from surveys and focus groups show the gaps and disconnects between new educator preparation and consistent preK-6 student success. However, these conclusions cannot be generalized to all preparation programs and all schools. Nor can these findings draw any direct

connections between any one experience of those working with new educators to the preparation programs where faculty were surveyed.

These findings do, however, show the need for the CEEDAR Colorado Leadership Team, Universities, and the State to reflect and come to agreement on some questions:

1. What are realistic expectations to master complex skills such as differentiation and assessments for novice educators on the first day of their jobs given the current conditions of preK-6 classrooms?
2. How to adequately support pre-service candidates to succeed in the classroom and if they arrive in the classroom lacking certain skills, what are the proper mechanisms to support them in-service?
3. How does the state ensure every educator candidate receives a quality field experience that contributes to their success as new educators?
4. What is the balance in teaching new educators to meet the requirements of state laws and rules in compliance versus meeting the intentions and goals behind the requirements?
5. How do CEEDAR and its partners work to make progress in the face of various systemic challenges that are beyond its scope and purview?

Recommendations

The current study has highlighted some challenges in teaching literacy effectively to all students including students with disabilities through quality new educator preparation in Colorado. The study participants brought different perspectives to the forefront for examination and showed where there is potential for improvement and collaboration. As the CEEDAR Leadership Team, Universities, and the State of Colorado explore how to advance the education systems, the accounts shared in this study provide valuable information on possibilities. Below are possible recommendations to consider:

1. **Strengthen practice-based opportunities within field experience along the following dimensions:**⁴
 - a. **Focus:** Whenever possible, a variety of field experiences should be offered and should emphasize literacy content and opportunities to work with students with disabilities.
 - b. **Duration:** As directors of special education pointed out and preparation program faculty noted, a full year residency allows the candidates to experience an entire cycle of learning in a classroom setting to get hands-on experience in assessments and other skills while also building meaningful professional relationships.
 - c. **Coherence:** Many focus group participants called for a closer link between coursework and field experiences within preparation programs. Candidates need experiences to build onto their coursework so the learning is all relevant and cohesive to what they need to accomplish as new educators. (See “First-Best Instructional Practices in Language and Literacy” section for related study findings.)

⁴ The research base for the three dimensions of practice-based opportunities can be found in “Learning to Teach: Practice-Based Preparation in Teacher Education” on page 3: http://ceedar.education.ufl.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Learning_To_Teach.pdf.

2. Training for mentors to emphasize common and consistent expectations in literacy.

The preparation faculty, literacy coaches, and special education directors all acknowledged the challenge of consistently placing candidates with effective mentors or cooperating teachers. One tool that can be helpful to train mentors is the CEEDAR Literacy Observation and Reflection Tool that is under development. This tool serves as a guideline for standards and expectations of classroom teachers that is observable and clearly defined. It would not only give the mentor teacher a concrete tool for mentoring a teacher in training, but also to check their own classroom protocols. (See “First-Best Instructional Practices in Language and Literacy” for related study findings.)

3. Better training for principals on literacy fundamentals and special education needs of students such as the five components of literacy, components of IEPs, etc.

Furthermore, create a mechanism for supplemental training and support for new principals who do not have a background in early literacy instruction. The participants of the focus groups commonly observed principals as building managers of the schools and not instructional leaders. Training may not entirely address the larger challenges associated with the role of principalship, but it would allow the principal to know how to best support the staff and delegate instructional duties as necessary. (See “Colorado’s Current Literacy Context” for related findings.)

4. Deeper training for principals and teachers on how to use assessment data to inform instructional decisions.

It is impossible and also ineffective to expose educator candidates to all the range of assessments they might encounter when they are eventually hired. It is much more effective to focus on the concepts and processes that make assessments useful for instructional and formative purposes. This would also ensure more effective differentiated instruction and communication of student progress with parents and other educators. (See “Language and Literacy Assessment Practices, Assessment Tools, and Data-Based Decision Making” and “Articulation and Communication of Students’ Literacy Strengths and Areas for Growth” for related findings.)

5. Clearly define the realistic skills that novice teachers need to have in literacy and language instruction when they arrive on their first day in the classroom.

Ensure definition of the skills novice teachers need are shared between preparation programs and in-service support providers like mentors and principals. Again, the CEEDAR Literacy Observation and Reflection Tool can serve as guidance for effective classroom practices. If new teachers are not arriving in the classroom with all the complex skills mastered, the tool can highlight the gaps and where support can be targeted. (See “Differentiating Language and Literacy Instruction to Ensure the Success of All Students” for related findings.)

6. Provide continued professional development on differentiation and literacy assessments.

As the instructional coaches and special education directors observed, even veteran teachers request professional development in differentiation and have a hard time utilizing assessments. The need for this support is crucial for new educators but also for more experienced educators to serve their children as well as potential mentors to new educators. (See “Differentiating Language and Literacy Instruction to Ensure the Success of All Students” and “Language and Literacy Assessment Practices, Assessment Tools, and Data-Based Decision Making” for related findings.)

7. Give special education and general education new educators more time to collaborate, learn from each other, and meet the needs of students.

The fields of special education and literacy are complex and new educators cannot possibly grasp all the knowledge within both fields with expertise in the time allotted for preparation. Adequate time for them to collaborate allows for more effective IEPs and parent communications. They can learn from each other and better meet individual children’s needs. (See “Developmentally Appropriate Language and Literacy Instruction” for related findings.)

Appendices - Improvement Strategy Two

Appendix B

Content Knowledge, Skills, and Practices

Pre-Service Candidates / Newly Licensed Educators

Teachers should be able to create an environment that promotes language and literacy.

Developmental Levels of the Children:

- Take into consideration the developmentally appropriate learning experiences consider a child's developmental abilities, temperament, language and cultural background, needs and learning styles while recognizing factors such as family characteristics and community influences. Fully understanding the importance of child growth, development, and learning means all children are valued individually and inclusivity is expected and respected. (Intro 8.01(1)) (9.08 (3) (b) (i))
- Identify and address children's diverse developmental abilities. (8.01 (1)(a))
- Understand the similarities and differences as well as educational implications of characteristics of various exceptionalities. ((9.005 (1)(c) (ii & iii))

Collaboration:

- Value families in the context of their culture, language, home and community to build strong connections for collaboration. (8.013)
- Collaborate with general education and other colleagues to create safe, inclusive, data driven, culturally responsive learning environment to engage all children in meaningful learning activities and social interactions. (9.005 (2) (a))
- Collaborate with colleagues to ensure that appropriate supports are provided to all students according to need within a multi-tiered system of supports. (8.02 (1) (d))
- Maintain a supportive environment for staff and families so that they can engage in effective communication, problem-solving, and teaming. (8.01 (4)(d))

Daily Routine:

- Include access, participation, and support for each and every child within a multi-tiered system of supports (Division for Early Childhood (DEC) and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC))
- Set and communicate high expectations for the growth of all children (9.04 (5) (c) (ii))
- Plan and implement a balance of experiences for children that address various levels of pro-social interactions, emotional expression, play, activity levels, self-regulation. (8.01 (8) (f & h))
- Plan, implement, and support intentional experiences that promote children's growth, development and learning in all developmental and academic domains as defined by the Colorado academic standards. (8.01 (8))
- Embed curricula and learning within the daily routines and natural environments so that learning is authentic, functional and meaningful to the child and family (8.01 (8) (a))

- Implement the concepts of universal design for learning within a multi-tiered system of supports. (9.08 (3) (a) (i))
- Create an inclusive and supportive culture that is fostered through providing both individual and group guidance strategies. (8.01 (4))
- Modify general and specialized curricula to make them accessible to individuals with exceptionalities. (9.005 (3) (c))
- Provide augmentative and alternative communication systems and a variety of assistive technologies to support the communication and learning of individuals with exceptionalities. (9.005 (5) (c))

Language and Literacy Instructional Practices:

Teachers should be able to design, create, develop, and plan purposeful and appropriate sequenced language and literacy instruction with intentional learning opportunities that are responsive to student need.

- Select appropriate texts for instruction, the role of reading level, complexity, genre, interest, and types of texts (e.g., decodable, controlled, predictable).
- Provide opportunities for a variety of intentional literacy tools in play opportunities (e.g., theme, snack time, outside)
- Intentionally provide daily opportunities for read aloud, shared, guided, and independent reading
- Intentionally plan for and scaffold opportunities in: speaking, listening, oral language, writing, visually viewing, and representing (e.g., alphabet knowledge, phonological awareness, rapid naming of letters and digits, rapid naming of objects and colors, writing or writing name, phonological short term memory, concepts about print, print knowledge, reading readiness, and visual processing)
- Use formative assessment to appropriately group students for reading instruction with emphasis on time, pacing, and intensity.

Teachers should be able to orchestrate meaningful student engagement by providing, delivering, and teaching intentional, purposeful, and appropriately sequenced literacy instruction that is responsive to student need.

- Connect new content to prior knowledge and children’s life experiences.
- Begin lessons with an explicit goal/objective that is presented in child-friendly language to help children understand expectations.
- Ask open-ended questions and use wait time for children’s responses appropriate to individual children.
- Model I do (direct instruction), you do (independent), we do (collaborative) for scaffolded learning (e.g., Introduce, Check for Understanding, Guided Practice, Independent Practice)
- Apply principles of gradual release of responsibility

- Modeling and demonstrating skills and strategies
- Intentionally engage in frequent, varied, and distributed opportunities for guided and independent practice
- Adjusting instructional scaffolds based on student need
- Formative assessment to determine independence
- Use concepts of time and intensity to adjust instruction based on student need in a multi-tiered system of support (embedding throughout every routine)

Teachers should be able to assess purposeful and appropriately sequenced literacy instruction that is responsive to student need.

- Administer a wide variety of ongoing formative and summative assessments that are developmentally appropriate, responsive to the needs of diverse learners, reliable and valid measurements of targeted skills, and inclusive of adopted content standards.
- Use evidence-based practices to assess and address children’s individual needs with respect to culturally responsive curricula and environments.
- Engage in a continuous authentic assessment process to ask questions, collect information (i.e., data), interpret the information and then make instructional decisions that are individualized and culturally responsive.
- Use data to identify students who require additional support and the areas in which additional support is needed.
- Use data to plan and adapt instruction to address the specific areas of need. (e.g., Code-focused interventions, Shared-reading interventions, and language-enhancement instruction)
- Recognize there is a need for additional assessment information and are aware of available resources within a multi-tiered system of support
- Apply appropriate assessment accommodations.
- Work in collaboration with colleagues and families use multiple types of assessment information in making decisions about individuals with exceptionalities

Observation Protocol DRAFT

Appendix C

CEEDAR Literacy Reflection Tool DRAFT – PILOT DOCUMENT

What is the purpose of the CEEDAR Literacy Reflection Tool?

The purpose of the tool is to provide faculty supervisors and hosting teachers a vehicle for a consistent approach to observing and coaching student/novice teachers. As supervisors assess the prospective educators' instruction and employed strategies, this tool gives them a framework for providing technical assistance, guidance and support.

The goal of this tool is to promote a literacy-rich environment. The literacy-rich environment emphasizes the importance of speaking, reading, and writing in the learning of all students. Creating this environment involves the selection of materials that will facilitate language and literacy opportunities; reflection and thought regarding classroom design; and intentional instruction and facilitation by teachers and staff (Access Center).

How was the tool developed?

This tool was developed through a partnership among representatives from the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) Exceptional Student Services Unit, the CDE Office of Literacy, the Collaborative for Effective Educator Development, Accountability and Reform (CEEDAR) Center Project, and Colorado institutions of higher education.

Who will use this tool?

This tool can be adapted for use in a variety of programs. The authors anticipate that faculty/field supervisors will utilize the tool in their observations and follow-up conversations with prospective educators. As educators engage in the induction process, mentors and/or directors of induction programs can use the tool to observe literacy instruction in the classroom. The tool offers strong support when recommending changes or improvement in practice. While the tool is not intended for evaluative purposes, principals will find it helpful in observing and understanding best first instruction in literacy.

Observation Protocol DRAFT

How do I use this tool?

This tool is divided into two parts: the observation protocol and the post-observation conference protocol. It is also divided into **Conditions for Effective Literacy Instruction** and **Components of Literacy Instruction**.

In the first column below, the references are to the Rules for the Colorado Educator Licensing Act of 1991 and the Colorado Teacher Quality Standards. Those documents can be located respectively at:

[Colorado Educator Licensing Act of 1991](#) and [A Common Vision of Great Teaching: The Colorado Teacher Quality Standards](#).

Category	Look Fors	Observation Notes
<p>1.a—Learning Environment and Climate</p> <p>Child Development: 8.02(2)(a,b,c);</p> <p>Classroom Environment: 8.02(3)(a,b,c); 9.005 (2) (a); 8.01 (4)</p> <p>Teacher Quality Standards: 2a, 2b, 2c, 2d, 2e, 2f, 3a, 3b, 3c</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the classroom organized for effective literacy instruction and seamless transitions? • Are classroom learning spaces uncluttered and orderly? • Are student groupings established and clear to both teachers and students? • Are visual distractions minimized? • Is classroom space used optimally and designed to minimize distractions, noise, and interruptions? • Is there evidence of established classroom routines? • Are there opportunities for all learners to participate in the grade level curriculum at an appropriate instructional level? • Does the teacher embrace the inclusion of all children? 	<p>Evidence:</p>

Observation Protocol DRAFT

Category	Look Fors	Observation Notes
<p>1.b—Learning Resources</p> <p>Curriculum Development: 8.02(1)(a,b,c); 9.005 (3) (c); 9.005 (5) (c)</p> <p>Teacher Quality Standards: 3b, 3c, 3d</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are a wide variety of learning materials readily available? • Are the materials aligned to the stated lesson goal or objective? • Are student materials well-organized, clear, and easily understood and used by students? (e.g., print, instructional and assistive technology, books at appropriate ability and interest levels, adapted materials, etc.) • Do students have opportunities to use technology to enhance their learning when appropriate? 	<p>Evidence:</p>
<p>1.c—Teacher Knowledge</p> <p>Curriculum Development: 8.02(1)(a,c); 9.08 (3) (a) (i)</p> <p>Child Development: 8.02(2)(b,c,d); 8.01(1)(a), 4 (d); 08 (3) (b) (i); 9.005 (1)(c) (ii & iii)</p> <p>Teacher Quality Standards: 1f, 2a, 2b, 2c, 2d, 2e, 3b, 3c</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are concepts taught correctly? • Does the teacher address errors and provide feedback in an appropriate manner (e.g., timely, respectful, checks for student’s understanding, checks for clarity of teacher instruction)? • Does the teacher identify strengths of the student and build upon them? • Are tasks appropriately designed and aligned to the level of student need? • Do instruction and tasks build on cultural diversity and background knowledge of students? 	<p>Evidence:</p>

Observation Protocol DRAFT

Category	Look Fors	Observation Notes
<p>1.d—Instruction</p> <p>(Includes universal instruction in whole group and small group settings)</p> <p>Curriculum Development: 8.02(1)(a,b,c); 9.04 (5) (c) (ii)</p> <p>Child Development: 8.02(2)(a,b,d); 8.01(1)(a); 9.08 (3) (b) (i); (NAYEC / DEC)</p> <p>Literacy Development: 8.02(5)(a,b,c,d,e,f,g)</p> <p>Teacher Quality Standards: 1f, 2a, 2b, 2c, 2e, 3a, 3b, 3c, 3d</p>	<p>Preparation for instruction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does instruction begin in a timely manner? • Is there evidence of pre-planning of instructional tasks? • Is there a clearly-stated, rigorous yet achievable objective for the whole/small-group lesson? • <p>Instructional approach matched to need and content:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is instruction direct and explicit? • Is gradual release of responsibility evident (e.g., I do, we do, you do)? • Is the lesson designed to provide adequate practice? • Is teacher questioning and feedback appropriate to task, student group, and grade level? • Are there frequent checks for understanding? • Is instruction appropriately paced? • Is the lesson directly addressing at least one of the essential components of reading/literacy? • Are materials and instruction differentiated based on learner needs? 	<p>Evidence:</p>

Observation Protocol DRAFT

Category	Look Fors	Observation Notes
<p>1.e—Motivation and Engagement</p> <p>Curriculum Development: 8.02(1)(a,b,c); 8.01 (8) (f & h); 8.01 (8)(a)</p> <p>Child Development: 8.02(2)(a,b,c)</p> <p>Classroom Environment: 8.02(3)(a,b,c)</p> <p>Teacher Quality Standards: 2a, 2b, 2c,2d, 2f, 3a, 3b, 3c, 3d</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the lesson intentional and designed to promote active engagement and success in the learning tasks? • Is there evidence that students understand and are engaged the instructional routine(s) being used? • Is there evidence of literate engagement (e.g., students talk about it, read about it and write about it)? • Are multiple response strategies used (e.g., whip-around, think-pair-share, choral response, whiteboards)? • Are materials and tasks engaging? • Do materials reflect student interests and background? • Are opportunities for student choice provided? • Are opportunities for collaborative, independent, and group work and practice provided at the student’s instructional/independent success level? 	<p>Evidence:</p>
<p>1.f—Assessment</p> <p>Curriculum Development: 8.02(1)(b)</p> <p>Assessment (General): 8.02(4)(a, b, c)</p> <p>Assessment Administration and Interpretation: 8.02(7)(c, d, f)</p> <p>Teacher Quality Standards: 3b, 3d, 3h</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there evidence that data (formal and informal) have been used to inform flexible grouping and choice of lesson focus? • Is there evidence that formative assessment is being used to guide planning, lesson pacing, questioning, instructional adjustment, clarification, and the quantity of practice? • Is there evidence of a system for recording data (e.g., performance data, benchmarking data) as it becomes available during instruction? 	<p>Evidence:</p>

Observation Protocol DRAFT

Category	Look Fors	Observation Notes
<p>2.a—Oral Language</p> <p>(Including but not limited to receptive language, expressive language, vocabulary development, and listening comprehension)</p> <p>Literacy Development: 8.02(5)(a,c,d,e,f)</p> <p>Fluency: 8.02(10)(a)</p> <p>Vocabulary: 8.02(11)(a,b,c,d,e)</p> <p>Teacher Quality Standards: 1b, 2d</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the teacher model appropriate grammar and syntax? • Are students provided with varied opportunities to engage in oral language activities? For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Paired conversations ○ Question and answer ○ Story retells ○ Oral sharing ○ Language and vocabulary games • Are there varied opportunities to engage in listening comprehension activities? For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Shared reading activities (e.g., students can see text, there is interaction between teachers and students, and teacher models effective reading strategies like questioning and prediction) ○ Following directions ○ Purposeful topic discussions • Does the teacher intentionally use strategies such as repetition, sentence stems, and modeling to support oral language development? • Are students provided structured opportunities to use new and varied vocabulary as part of their oral language development? For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Intentional tracking of uses of new words ○ Pair/share ○ Role playing ○ Word charades ○ Facilitated discussions 	<p>Evidence:</p>

Observation Protocol DRAFT

Category	Look Fors	Observation Notes
<p>2.b—Reading</p> <p>(Including but not limited to phonological awareness, phonics, automaticity/fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension)</p> <p>Child Development: 8.02(2)(a)</p> <p>Classroom Environment: 8.02(3)(a,b,c)</p> <p>Literacy Development: 8.02(5)(a,b,c,d,e,f,g)</p> <p>Structure of Language: 8.02 (6)(a,b,c,d,f)</p> <p>Phonology: 8.02(8)(a,b,c,d,e,f)</p> <p>Phonics and Word Recognition: 8.02(9)(a,b,c,d,e)</p> <p>Fluency: 8.02(10)(a,b,c,d,e,f,g,h)</p> <p>Vocabulary: 8.02(11)(a,b,c,d,e)</p> <p>Text Comprehension: 8.02(12): (a,b,c,d,e,f)</p> <p>Teacher Quality Standards: 1b, 1d, 2a, 2c, 2d, 2f, 3a, 3c, 3d</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there evidence that all essential components of reading have been considered in lesson planning? For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Phonological awareness ○ Phonics ○ Fluency ○ Vocabulary ○ Comprehension • Is some portion of the primary reading block devoted to explicit instruction in speech sounds and phonological awareness? For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Blending and segmenting sounds ○ Rhyming ○ Alliteration ○ Identifying specific speech sounds and syllables • Are appropriately leveled phonics skills explicitly introduced and reinforced through purposeful practice? • Are there opportunities for students to practice foundational decoding/word-reading skills to increase automaticity and fluency? • Is there evidence of specific classroom routines and strategies for teaching new vocabulary? • Is there explicit teacher modeling of reading comprehension strategies? For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Before, during, after ○ Think alouds ○ Citing evidence from text ○ Discussions? • Is there a range of text available (controlled, decodable, leveled) that is matched to student need and interest? • Is independent work aligned to student need and designed to assure purposeful and targeted skill practice? • Is there evidence that whole-group and small-group reading instruction occurs daily? 	<p>Evidence:</p>

Observation Protocol DRAFT

Category	Look Fors	Observation Notes
<p>2.c—Written Language</p> <p>(Including but not limited to handwriting, spelling, conventions of print, sentence and paragraph development)</p> <p>Literacy Development: 8.02(5)(a,b,c,d,e,f,g)</p> <p>Phonics and Word Recognition: 8.02(9)(d)</p> <p>Text Comprehension: 8.02(12)(c)</p> <p>Writing: 8.02(13)(a,b,c)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there evidence of direct handwriting instruction (print or cursive) followed by the provision of intentional practice? • Does the daily literacy block include specified time for instruction in the structure of the English language to promote knowledge and use of accurate spelling? • Does teacher provide meaningful spelling feedback to support spelling knowledge and minimize rote memorization of words? • During writing instruction is there adequate emphasis on the basic conventions of print? For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Correct grammar and syntax ○ Punctuation ○ Capitalization • Are students engaged in explicit instruction in basic and more advanced sentence formation? • Does written expression instruction support students’ understanding of topic sentences and supporting details as a prerequisite to paragraph development? • Is there adequate opportunity for feedback to allow for effective revision and editing? • Are students exposed to rich and varied materials that model a variety of writing styles and genre? • Do students have access and opportunity to compose in a variety of formats and with the assistance of technology when appropriate? For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Narrative ○ Stories ○ Poetry ○ Nonfiction ○ Persuasive ○ Letter • Do students have opportunities to write both to topics of choice and to prompts? 	<p>Evidence:</p>

Post-Observation Reflection Conference Protocol DRAFT

General Questions

The guiding questions provide opportunities for teacher reflection about the planning, implementation, and assessment of the lesson based on evidence from the lesson. They are designed to be open-ended to elicit that reflection without judgment. They are also designed so that a teacher could use them to guide his/her work in general and not simply to follow an observation. Teachers who are struggling may need more probing questions to help them reflect.

General questions that may be asked during the observation conference:

- Was the lesson effective? How do you know?
- What evidence indicates that students met the learning objective?
- Explain your thinking behind....?
- How did you establish the groups?
- How were objectives adapted for particular students, how were they met, and how do you know?
- What are your next steps?
- When you (did something) students (responded in this way). Why do you think that happened and what was the result?

Post-Observation Reflection Conference Protocol DRAFT

General Questions

Category	Guiding Questions	Conference Notes	Next Steps
1.a—Learning Environment and Climate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What features of the learning environment enhanced the lesson? • How did you ensure that all students were able to participate? 		
1.b—Learning Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How did you decide on the materials and resources you used? • How did they facilitate learning and enhance the lesson? 		
1.c—Teacher Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What aspects of the lesson did you feel well-prepared for? • Where do you need support? • What influenced your decision to teach this lesson and how you taught it? • How did you adapt the lesson on the spot and why? 		
1.d—Instruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How did you plan for the lesson? • What influenced your choice of instructional approach(s) for this particular lesson? • If you were to teach this lesson again, what would you do the same and what would you do differently? • Now that you have taught this lesson, what will you do next? 		
1.e—Motivation and Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How engaged were students and how do you know? • How did the choice of materials and activities enhance student engagement of all students? 		
1.f—Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What assessment data did you consider and how did it influence your lesson plan? • How did you form student groups? • What information did you gain in this lesson? • What information do you need to move forward? 		

Post-Observation Reflection Conference Protocol DRAFT

General Questions

Category	Guiding Questions	Conference Notes	Next Steps
2.a—Oral Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How did you include opportunities for oral language development? • How effective were they and how do you know? 		
2.b—Reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What influenced your choice of skills and strategies for the lesson? • How did the choice of materials enhance the lesson? • How did the choice of instructional approach enhance the lesson and how do you know? 		
2.c—Written Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What influenced your choice of focus for this lesson? • How did you adapt the instruction for the different learners' ability and needs? • What did you do to prepare children for success in this lesson? • What will you do next based upon the results of this lesson? 		

Appendices - Improvement Strategy Three

Appendix C



COLORADO
Department of Education

Progress Report of CDE Supports for Low-Performing Districts and Schools

Nazanin Mohajeri-Nelson, Director of Data Program, Evaluation and Reporting, Federal Programs

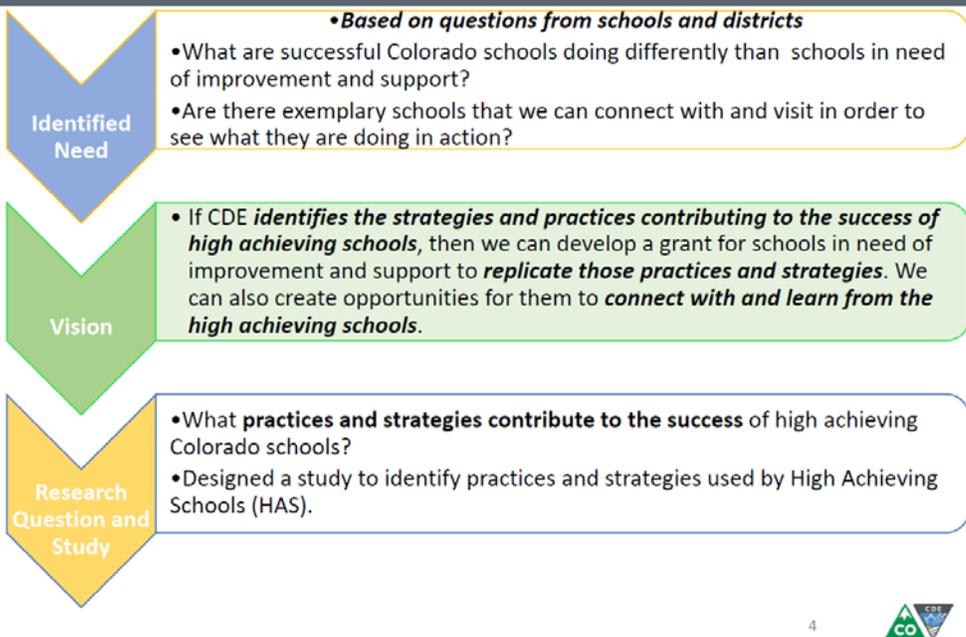
January 10-11, 2018

Goals for Today

1. To provide an overview and results of the Connect for Success grant which is an option available to Colorado districts and schools in need of support
2. To provide an update on the process for districts to request supports, as CDE begins to implement the state's Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) plan, with regard to school improvement



Connect for Success (CFS)



Connect for Success (CFS) Overview

- Goal is to assist school and district leaders in implementing strategies shown to be effective through the [High Achieving Schools \(HAS\)](#) study:
 - Leadership
 - Assessment for learning
 - Climate and culture
 - Instruction
 - Intentional and focused implementation of a few key initiatives
- Schools hire experienced educators as implementation coaches to progress monitor implementation and engage with CDE staff
- Currently, there are two cohorts with an opportunity for a third cohort
 - Cohort 1: 19 out of 20 schools are in the third year of implementation (1 school is closed)
 - Cohort 2: 8 schools are in the second year of implementation
 - Cohort 3: Currently open for participation
- Grants include up to \$20K for year one and up to \$80K for years two and three each, supported by federal school improvement funding



Who Are the CFS Schools?

• Cohort 1

- 19* schools in 9 districts
 - Title I
 - Elementary (2 K-8)
 - On the Accountability Clock
- 1 charter school
- 3 rural schools
- 15 in metro regions
- 3 in outlying areas (Northeast, Pikes Peak, and Southwest)

*20 schools were awarded; 1 school is closed as of 2017-2018

• Cohort 2

- 8 schools in 4 districts
 - Title I
 - Elementary (1 K-8)
 - On the Accountability Clock
- No charter schools
- 1 rural school
- 7 in metro regions
- 1 in outlying area (Southwest)



CFS School Demographic Data

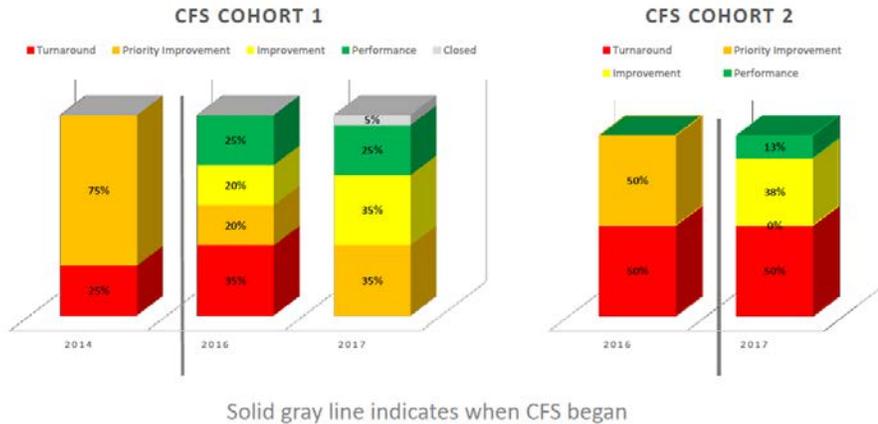
Demographics (K-12 Students)	Connect for Success Schools	State
Total # of Students Served	10,708	870,674
English Learners	45%	15%
Free/Reduced Lunch	82%	42%
Students with Individualized Education Plans	12%	10%
Minority Students	82%	46%

CFS Cohort	Years of Participation	# of Schools
Cohort 1	January 2016 – June 2018	20*
Cohort 2	March 2017 – June 2019	8
Cohort 3	January 2018 – June 2020	TBD

*1 school is now closed



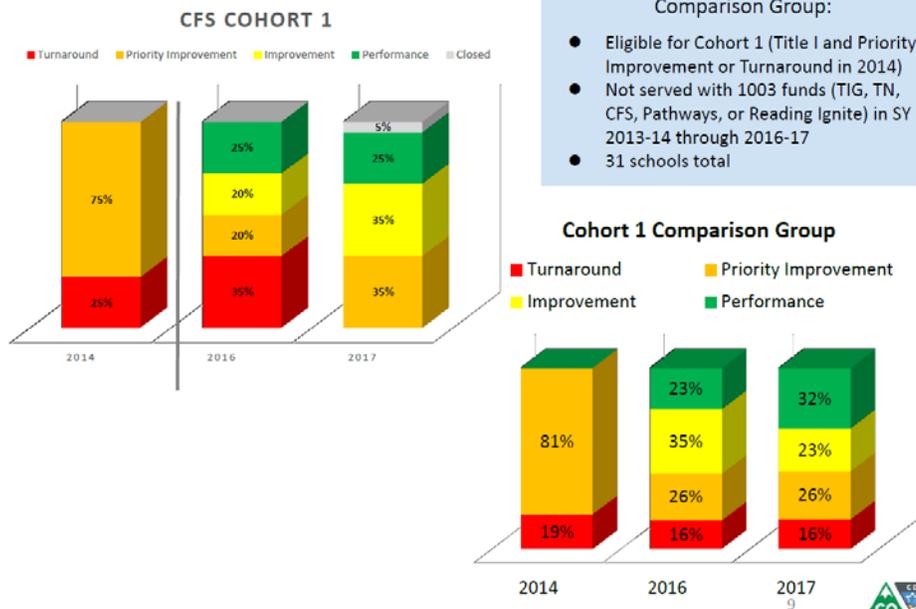
How Are CFS Schools Doing? (based on final ratings)



8



Cohort 1 Versus Comparison Group Performance (based on final ratings)



9



What Have Connect for Success Schools Been Doing?

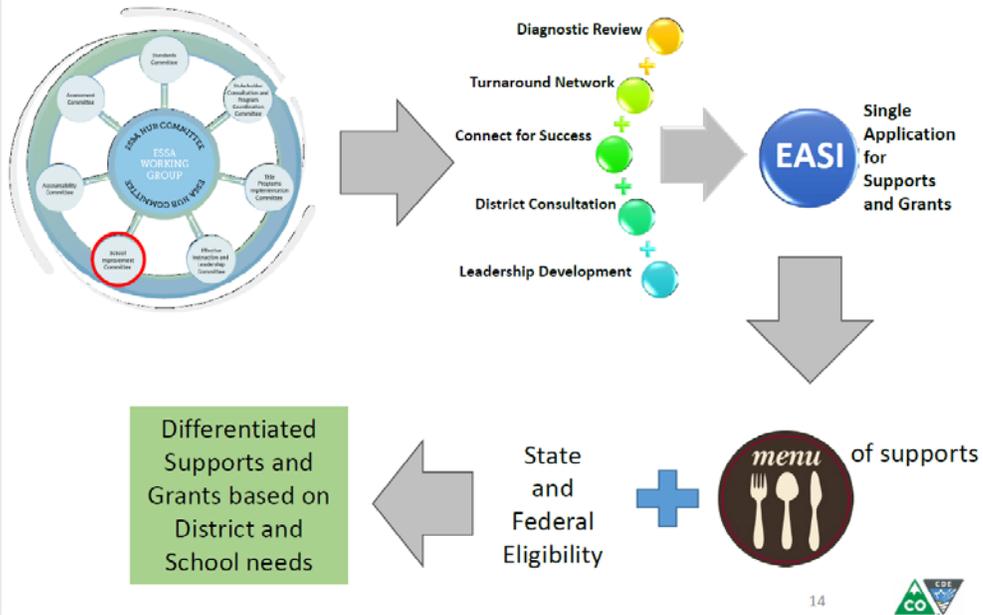
Activities to Learn From and Replicate High Achieving Schools (HAS) Practices and Strategies	Cohort 1	Cohort 2
Kickoff Meeting – CFS schools meet and connect with HAS	January 2016	March 2017
CFS schools visit HAS site(s)	Spring 2016	Spring 2017
CDE conducts a diagnostic review of CFS Schools	February – April 2016	March - May 2017
CDE sends report to CFS schools based on diagnostic review visits	April - May 2016	May - June 2016
CFS schools hire an Implementation Coach and develop an implementation plan	By August 1, 2016	By August 1, 2017
CFS replicate HAS practices in specific areas that were recommended by CDE based on the CDE site visit to the school	Areas of Focus <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instructional practices (17 schools) • Multi-Tiered System of Supports (17 schools) • Capacity building (17 schools) • School culture (14 schools) • School structures and routines (13 schools) • Parent & family engagement (10 schools) • Prioritizing and limiting initiatives (1 school) 	Areas of Focus <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Currently under study by CDE

Our Key Learnings

High-leverage focus areas for CDE include:

- Exemplars and bright spots
- District systems development
- Leadership development
- Strategic use of smaller grants
- 4 Domains
 - Culture shift
 - Leadership
 - Talent Development
 - Instructional Transformation

Moving to a Needs-Based Approach



Next Steps

- Identify a second cohort of High Achieving Schools
 - Replicate study to identify practices, strategies, and programs contributing to the performance of high achieving *middle* and *high* schools
 - Expand the CFS grant to include middle and high schools, in addition to elementary school
- Conduct an evaluation of the Cohort 1 Connect for Success schools to determine which implemented practices contributed to improved performance

