

# Independent Evaluation of the Colorado READ Act: Per-Pupil Funding Year 3 Summary Report



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## Colorado READ Act EVALUATION



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## **Executive Summary**

- **Reversing trends from the pandemic, during the 2021–2022 school year fewer students were identified as having an SRD. Nearly three times as many students were exited from SRD status compared with the previous year.**
- **Colorado Measures of Academic Success proficiency rates and reading subsection proficiency rates remain extremely low for students who have ever been identified with an SRD and even lower for students with an SRD who are also English learners or have an Individualized Education Program.**
- **The new requirement for 45 hours of evidence-based training in teaching reading was broadly impactful on teacher practice and has continued a trend towards alignment across districts in the adoption and implementation of reading instruction aligned with the science of reading.**
- **Site visit school and district leaders gave consistently strong, positive support for Early Literacy Grants. These leaders indicate the grants led to improved K–3 instructional practices and improved student performance on literacy assessments.**



In 2019, the Colorado General Assembly passed and signed into law SB 19-199, which included a provision mandating that an independent, external multiyear evaluation of the Colorado Reading to Ensure Academic Development (READ) Act program be conducted (see 2020 Annual Report on the Colorado READ Act for an overview of updates in SB 19-199).<sup>1</sup> The evaluation is now underway and is being conducted by an independent research team led by WestEd that includes APA Consulting and RTI International.

The key legislative goals for this evaluation are as follows:

1. Help state policymakers and district leaders understand impacts of READ Act funding and support on students, families, schools, and districts
2. Learn and share successes and best practices across districts and schools
3. Inform improvements to the READ Act by understanding how funds were used
4. Get direct feedback from school and district leaders about how the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) can best support further improvement in READ Act implementation

This report relies on numerous sources of information (see Appendices 1–2 for a detailed description of data collected and analytic methods used), including

- extant data from the student, school, and Local Education Provider (LEP) level from the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) and publicly available datasets;
- inventories of LEP staff and principals, reading coaches, and teachers at schools that received READ Act funding and participated in READ Act activities; and
- site visits with a sample of schools receiving Early Literacy Grants (ELGs) and LEPs that received READ Act funding, with a focus on schools and LEPs that have been successful (relative to others in

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<sup>1</sup> See <https://www.cde.state.co.us/cdedepcom/readactreport>.



the state) in moving students who have ever been identified with a significant reading deficiency (SRD) toward proficiency on the Colorado Measures of Academic Success (CMAS).

### Summary of Findings and Recommendations

***Modest gains in achievement levels indicate a return to prepandemic levels of performance for some students, but students with multiple identifications remain underserved.*** Analysis of 2021–2022 SRD designation and CMAS English Language Arts (ELA) scores suggest that there was a bounce back to prepandemic achievement levels in reading for early elementary students in Colorado. However, this trend was not evident for students identified with multiple designations<sup>2</sup> whose SRD identification rates remained higher and CMAS ELA proficiency rates remained much lower than for students identified with SRD without multiple designations. Despite this recovery, CMAS proficiency remains stubbornly low for students who have ever been identified with an SRD (4.1% in the 2021–2022 school year).

***Professional development requirements were seen as positively impacting teacher practice and alignment towards science of reading principles.*** There was consensus on statewide inventories and during site visits that the new requirement for 45 hours of evidence-based training in teaching reading was broadly impactful on teacher practice and has continued a trend towards alignment across districts in the adoption and implementation of reading instruction aligned with the science of reading.

### Postpandemic Recovery

***Reversing trends from the COVID-19 pandemic, during the 2021–2022 school year, fewer students were identified as having an SRD and more students exited from SRD status than in the previous year.*** In 2021–2022, 4.7% of students were newly identified as having an SRD. This is 1.2

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<sup>2</sup> For example, SRD and English learner or SRD with an Individualized Education Program.



percentage points lower than in the previous year. In addition, nearly three times as many students were exited from SRD status compared with the previous year (1.7% of K–3 students in 2020–2021 to 4.6% K–3 students in 2021–2022).

Additionally, the percentage of students who remained designated as not having an SRD in 2020–2021 or 2021–2022, nearly reset to prepandemic rates. From 2015–2016 through 2018–2019, between 53% and 55% of students remained designated as not having an SRD from year to year. During the 2020–2021 school year, that percentage fell to 33% as more students were designated as having an SRD during the pandemic. During the 2021–2022 school year, the percentage rose to 47%, that is, 47% of students who were not identified as having an SRD in 2020–2021 remained not identified with an SRD during the 2021–2022 school year.

Unfortunately, in line with findings from the previous 2 years, only 4.1% of students who had ever been identified with an SRD reached proficiency on the CMAS ELA exam in 3rd grade in the 2021–2022 school year compared with 55.2% of students who had never been identified as having an SRD reaching proficiency on the 3rd-grade CMAS ELA exam, the highest rate observed during the READ Act data collection period (2014–2015 to present). The findings when analyzing the Reading subscore of the CMAS ELA were similar to those when examining the overall score—students who were ever designated as having an SRD were unlikely to meet or exceed expectations on the CMAS ELA exam reading subsection.

**Recommendation: CDE and the external evaluation should focus attention on persistently low rates of proficiency on the CMAS ELA exam and explore the gap between students who are not designated with having an SRD (either through exiting SRD status or whose interim assessment scores are above the threshold for SRD status) but do not reach proficiency on the CMAS ELA exam.**



### Continued Challenges for Students With Multiple Identifications

In line with findings from the previous 2 years, *students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) or English learners (ELs) who were also identified as having an SRD reached proficiency on the CMAS ELA exam at lower rates than their general education peers who had been identified with SRDs.* Just more than 1% of students designated as having an SRD who also had IEPs demonstrated proficiency (1.3%). Students with IEPs who were not designated as having an SRD had different outcomes, with 34.3% reaching proficiency, which was in line with previous years.

A similar pattern exists for students who were learning English. Very few students designated with SRDs who were also ELs reached proficiency (2.5%). In contrast, 34.3% of ELs who were not designated as having an SRD reached proficiency, which was in line with the 2018–2019 rate. This suggests that students with dual identifications continue to be underserved by the READ Act on their journey to reading English at grade level by the end of 3rd grade. The evaluation of READ Act materials identified weaknesses in supports provided for ELs and students with IEPs.<sup>3</sup>

These challenges are likely related to continued challenges in serving students with multiple identifications identified by district- and school-based staff. District administrators reported less clarity about supporting non–general education students under the READ Act, specifically students with disabilities and ELs. In particular, exiting students with disabilities and ELs from SRD status, identifying which of their plans (READ Plan, IEP, etc.) should act as primary guidance, and understanding how to support students with multiple identifications (SRD and EL, etc.) were areas of confusion. A sizeable minority of teachers also reported feeling unprepared to support students with IEPs under the READ Act.

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<sup>3</sup> See <https://www.cde.state.co.us/coloradoliteracy/readactevaluationmaterialsummary>.



**Recommendation:** CDE should identify additional resources and strategies to better serve students with multiple designations. For example, additional professional learning that focuses on teaching reading to ELs and students with IEPs and specific recommendations and guidance for areas of confusion (primary guidance, exiting students with multiple designation).

### **The 45-Hour Professional Development Requirement Was Impactful on Teacher Practice**

By May 2023, some 13,218 teachers had completed a READ Act–required evidence-based training in teaching reading and had passed the end-of-course assessment. *Educator role groups showed high rates of perceived usefulness, applicability, and quality of the training program, according to this year’s teacher, coach, and principal inventories. Site visit schools uniformly reported seeing positive impacts on teacher practice resulting from the training requirement.* Perceived impacts showed up in several ways. First, schools reported greater teacher knowledge of evidence-based practices related to the five components of reading. Second, schools reported positive shifts in teachers’ instructional approaches more aligned with evidence-based practices taught in the trainings. In particular, teachers paid more explicit and systematic attention to teaching phonics and phonemic awareness. Third, schools reported that teachers were more effective at supporting the needs of different students. Site visit schools noted that teachers had improved their ability to identify student needs, design lessons and differentiate instruction according to those needs, and select materials targeted to meet needs in an engaging manner. Ongoing coaching from a literacy specialist and dedicated time to participate in professional learning communities with peers were cited as the most effective structures for supporting implementation of new practices learned in the training. While all site visit schools reported some type of impact on teachers, a sizeable number of schools also noted evidence of improved student learning as a result of the training.



This kind of pattern would not be surprising in the context of adopting a whole-school instructional reform such as the science of reading approach. Typically, shifts in student learning are first preceded by shifts in teacher practice, which in turn often require shifts in teacher knowledge, beliefs, and mindsets. In this sense, the findings related to professional development are consistent with expected patterns and will be a focus of the evaluation moving forward.

**Recommendation: CDE should continue to support districts and schools to provide ongoing, job-embedded coaching to sustain implementation of new teacher learning such that it translates into meaningful improvements in student outcomes.**

### **Strong, Positive Support for ELGs**

*Overall, school and district leaders in the site visits gave consistently strong, positive support for ELGs.* These leaders indicated that the grants led directly to improved K–3 teacher instructional practices and improved student performance on literacy assessments. School and district leaders reported that ELG funding produced direct, positive changes in student reading performance that would not have happened without the grants. These leaders often stated that student performance improvements happened very rapidly, even after just 1 year of ELG implementation.

Bringing in an external literacy expert on a monthly basis to work with teachers was typically identified by school and district leaders as the single most impactful element of ELG-funded activities. Such external experts were highly valued because they brought fresh perspectives and a high degree of credibility into schools. They also directly coached teachers, observed and modeled instruction, and leveraged extensive outside knowledge to help schools improve instruction. These outside consultants were routinely identified as the driving force behind needed changes to instructional practices and subsequent successes in raising student reading performance, which is consistent with



findings about coaching and literature on the importance of job-embedded professional learning.<sup>4</sup>

**Recommendation: CDE could consider providing periodic grant funds to support ongoing visits from external literacy consultants for schools that have successfully completed their ELGs to help sustain their impact and combat staff turnover. In addition, CDE could consider asking districts and schools to outline their plans and strategies for sustaining these positions past the life of the grant.**

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<sup>4</sup> See <https://www.cde.state.co.us/coloradoliteracy/readactevaluationmaterialssummary>.



# 1

## Introduction

**Three broad research questions guided the evaluation.**

- **How are LEPs and schools implementing READ Act provisions?**
- **To what extent has the implementation of the READ Act led to a reduction in the number of students identified as having significant reading deficiencies?**
- **To what extent do students identified with a significant reading deficiency achieve reading proficiency by the third grade?**



The importance of achieving early-grade reading proficiency for later student academic success is well documented. Researchers and education leaders consider the achievement of reading proficiency by the end of the 3rd grade to be crucial to a child’s future academic success and financial independence.<sup>5</sup> To help schools and districts support all children in achieving this goal, the Colorado State Legislature passed the Colorado Reading to Ensure Academic Development (READ) Act in 2012 to replace the Colorado Basic Literacy Act.<sup>6</sup> The READ Act provides school districts with funding and support to aid literacy development for kindergarten through 3rd-grade (K–3) students, especially those identified with significant reading deficiencies (SRDs) who are at risk of not reading at grade level by the end of 3rd grade.

### READ Act

Backward mapping intended outcomes identified in the READ Act through activities and inputs illustrates how authors of the Act intended the pieces to fit together to improve reading outcomes (Exhibit 1). To ensure that 3rd-grade students have the necessary reading skills to succeed in higher grade levels and beyond, the READ Act established mechanisms to ensure that all K–3 students receive reading instruction based on the science of reading and students identified with SRDs receive appropriate science-based interventions to address their needs. Teachers complete evidence-based training in reading that enables them to deliver instruction and provide support aligned with the science of reading. Local Education Providers (LEPs) select core instructional programs, interventions, professional development programs, and assessments from the

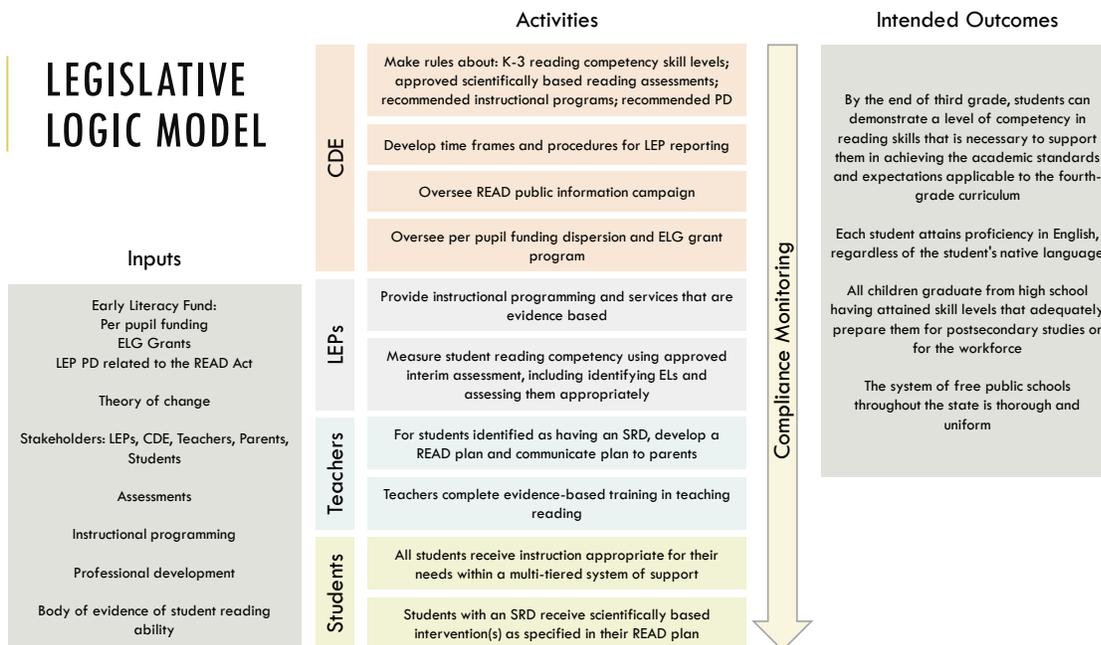
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<sup>5</sup> Hernandez, D. J. (2011). *Double jeopardy: How third-grade reading skills and poverty influence high school graduation*. The Annie E. Casey Foundation; Fiester, L. (2013). *Early warning confirmed: A research update on third-grade reading*. The Annie E. Casey Foundation. <https://www.aecf.org/resources/double-jeopardy>.

<sup>6</sup> The READ Act includes many of the same elements as the Colorado Basic Literacy Act, including a focus on K–3 literacy, assessment, and individual plans for students reading below grade level with the addition of (a) funding to support these efforts, (b) requirements for parent communication, and (c) an explicit focus on students identified as having a significant reading deficiency.



Advisory List of Professional Development and Instructional Programming that CDE has developed and disseminated. CDE also determines grade-level competency in reading, monitors LEP use of READ Act per-pupil funds, administers the ELG program, and oversees READ Act reports (Exhibit 1).



Under provisions of the READ Act, schools use an interim assessment from the Advisory List to identify students with SRDs. After screening, students are given a diagnostic assessment to identify areas of need and develop an individual READ Plan. The READ Act specifies certain components required in all READ Plans; however, each plan must be tailored to meet individual student needs and updated regularly based on progress monitoring.

The Colorado General Assembly placed four broad requirements on the State Board of Education and CDE to administer the READ Act: rulemaking, accountability, information dissemination, and funding dissemination.

Functionally, CDE’s activities can be placed into six categories: compliance, instruction, assessment, curriculum, prekindergarten to kindergarten transition, and State-Identified Measurable Result (Exhibit 2).



1. Managing compliance ensures that READ Act funds are used effectively and lawfully and educators understand READ Act requirements.
2. Informing human capital through training requirements and providing recommended lists of professional development programs ensures that teachers know how to provide reading instruction that is scientifically grounded.
3. Reviewing and approving K–3 reading assessments allows students identified with SRDs to be effectively identified and to receive appropriate interventions.
4. Reviewing and recommending curriculum and interventions ensures that students receive reading instruction that is scientifically grounded.
5. Aligning prekindergarten and kindergarten readiness standards with K–3 reading standards supports effective prekindergarten practices.

In addition to specifying that the Colorado State Board of Education must approve a set of reading assessments, the READ Act charges CDE with creating Advisory Lists Of Instructional Programming<sup>7</sup> and Professional Development<sup>8</sup> that are scientifically grounded and evidence based.

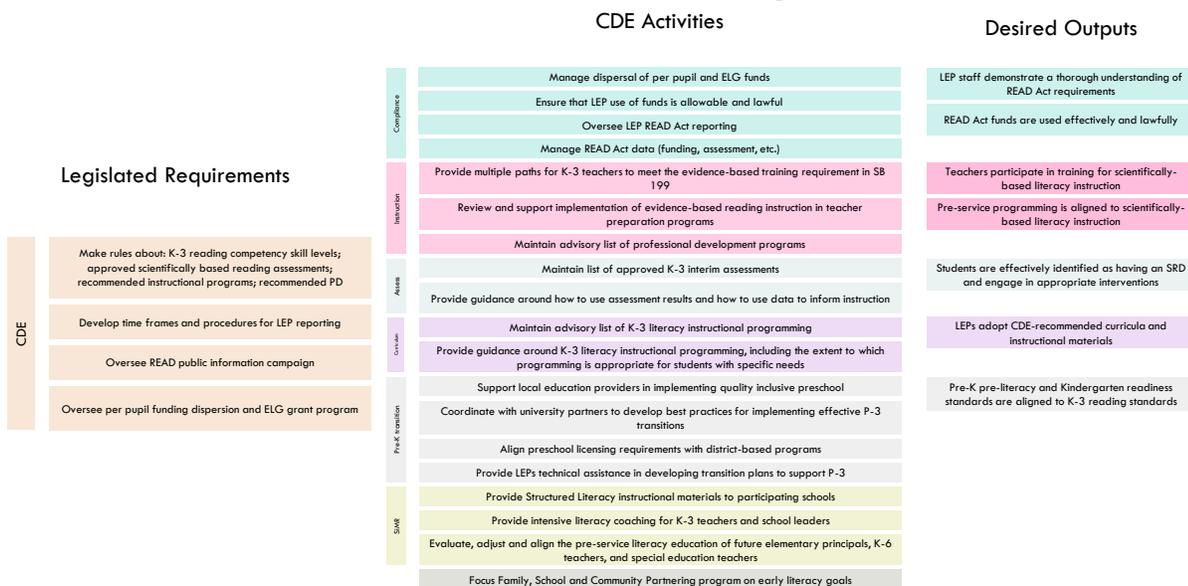
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<sup>7</sup> See <https://www.cde.state.co.us/coloradoliteracy/advisorylistofinstructionalprogramming2020>.

<sup>8</sup> See <https://www.cde.state.co.us/coloradoliteracy/readactprofessionaldevelopmentevidence/teachertraining>.



## Exhibit 2. CDE READ Act Roles and Activities Aligned With Outcomes



LEPs may use READ Act funds to purchase instructional programming from the Advisory List (they may also purchase instructional programs that are not on the Advisory List if they do not use READ Act funds since the READ Act specifies that all instruction should be evidence and scientifically based). The 2019 revision of the READ Act requires all K–3 teachers to complete 45 hours of evidence-based training in teaching reading. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the deadline for meeting this requirement was extended to August 1, 2022 (see Chapter 3 for discussion of the evidence-based training requirement).

The Comprehensive ELG program was also created in 2012 as part of the READ Act. This fund was created primarily to provide resources through ELGs for Colorado schools and districts to implement interventions, programs, and supports specifically for K–3 students identified with SRDs. Schools may apply individually or as part of a consortium of schools. To help ensure that these funds are appropriately targeted, the state has provided districts with a list of approved, evidence-based education interventions that have been supported by the ELG since 2012. Districts, in turn, are required by statute each year to provide information to CDE regarding their planned usage of funds to support students identified with SRDs. In 2018, House Bill 18-1393 allowed for the creation of two



grant programs in addition to the original Comprehensive ELG program. Sustainability grants allow districts and schools that have completed Comprehensive ELGs to receive additional funding to continue their activities. Annual Professional Development grants provide funding to districts and schools to support the implementation of evidence-based reading programming and strategies. In addition to these programs, supplemental awards are also made based on availability of funding.

### Evaluation of READ Act

In 2019, the Colorado General Assembly passed and signed into law SB 19-199, which included a provision mandating that an independent, external multiyear evaluation of the READ Act program be conducted (see 2020 Annual Report on the Colorado READ Act for an overview of updates in SB 19-199).<sup>9</sup> The evaluation is now underway and is being conducted by an independent research team led by WestEd that includes APA Consulting and RTI International.

The key legislative goals for this evaluation are as follows:

1. Help state policymakers and district leaders understand impacts of READ Act funding and support on students, families, schools, and districts
2. Learn and share successes and best practices across districts and schools
3. Inform improvements to the READ Act by understanding how funds were used
4. Get direct feedback from school and district leaders about how the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) can best support further improvement in READ Act implementation

Aligned with these goals, the evaluation is guided by three broad research questions:

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<sup>9</sup> See <https://www.cde.state.co.us/cdedepcom/readactreport>.



1. How are LEPs and schools implementing READ Act provisions?
2. To what extent has the implementation of the READ Act led to a reduction in the number of students identified with SRDs?
3. To what extent do students identified with an SRD achieve reading proficiency by the 3rd grade?

In addition, this year's report focuses special attention on three specific topics identified in last year's report. The first of these topics is classroom level implementation of the READ Act. In the first two years of the evaluation, we gained insight from district and school leaders about READ Act implementation and impact. This year we were able to conduct in-person site visits at schools who were successful at meeting the goals of the READ Act. These schools had relatively higher rates of helping students who had been identified as having an SRD partially meet, meet, or exceed proficiency on the Colorado Measures of Academic Success (CMAS) (See Appendix 1 for full discussion of site visit criteria.) During these visits, we observed classroom reading instruction and conducted in depth interviews with instructional staff in order to gain insight about READ Act implementation at the classroom level at schools who have successfully supported students under the READ Act. Secondly, given the new requirement for evidence-based training in teaching reading, we focused on the perceived impact of that training on teacher knowledge, beliefs and practices. Third, given the large numbers of students who do not reach proficiency on the CMAS at 3rd grade, we wanted to examine READ Act trends for students in 4th–12th grades.

In order to answer these evaluation questions and examine these special topics, the report relies on numerous sources of information (see Appendices 1–2 for a detailed description of data collected and analytic methods used), including



- extant student, school, and LEP-level data from the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) and publicly available dataset;<sup>10</sup>
- inventories of LEP staff and principals, reading coaches, and teachers at schools that received READ Act funding and participated in READ Act activities; and
- site visits with a sample of schools receiving Early Literacy Grants (ELG) and LEPs that received READ Act funding, with a focus on schools and LEPs and schools that have been successful (relative to others in the state) in moving students who have ever been identified with an SRD toward proficiency on the CMAS.

### Purpose and Organization of This Report

The report of the third year of the evaluation describes READ Act implementation during the 2022–2023 school year as well as findings related to three main topics identified in last year’s report: classroom-level implementation of the READ Act (Chapter 2), the new requirement for evidence-based training in teaching reading (Chapter 3) and READ Act supports beyond 3rd grade (Chapter 4). It also details findings related to ELGs (Chapter 5), READ Act per pupil funding and related spending (Chapter 6), and student outcomes (Chapter 7).

It also important to note several limitations regarding this year’s report. First, as noted in last year’s report, in-depth analysis to determine the comparability of the interim assessments and the feasibility of establishing a common growth scale across assessments found that neither the content of assessments nor the student scores that identify students with an SRD are fully comparable and do not allow for the creation of a single growth-to-standard model. As such, this report does not include any quantitative analysis about growth-to-standard. Next year, with multiple years of post-pandemic achievement data and access to additional interim assessment data from districts participating in the Early

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<sup>10</sup> CDE’s publicly available is available here: <https://www.cde.state.co.us/cdereval>



Literacy Assessment tool we are planning to explore the feasibility of a regression discontinuity design to evaluate the impact of SRD identification. Second, this is first year that we have been able to conduct in-person site visits, so this year serves as another baseline in terms of observing and documenting classroom level implementation of the READ Act. In addition, CDE did not provide useable school level-literacy curriculum data which limited our ability to present trends in instructional material use in this year's report.



# 2

## Overall Approaches to Reading

- **There is consistent evidence of intentional district-wide alignment of reading approaches, instructional materials, and supports**
- **Building on findings from the first two years of the evaluation, districts, administrators, coaches and teachers reported widespread implementation of reading instruction aligned with the science of reading**
- **District administrators and staff at site visit schools cited the use of evidence-based instructional materials and the Advisory List as key drivers of increased student engagement and learning**
- **One challenge cited was the absence of 4th–5th-grade materials on the Advisory List which limited alignment within elementary schools**



### District Requirements, Guidance, and Support

The evaluation found consistent evidence of intentional districtwide alignment of reading approaches, instructional materials, and supports. Efforts to align materials and approaches across districts that were identified in last year's report were confirmed through the statewide inventory of district administrators. As of 2023, most districts either require or provide guidance on reading instructional materials, assessments, and minimum amounts of time spent on teaching the science of reading.

- Sixty-five percent of district administrators reported that decisions about instructional materials were made at the district level and all elementary schools used the same programs from the Advisory List. This was up from 59% of responding district administrators in 2022.
- Seventy-three percent of districts reported that decisions about assessments were made at the district level and all elementary schools within those districts used the same assessments from the Advisory List.
- Forty-three percent of districts reported that decisions about minimum amounts of time spent teaching the science of reading were made at the district level and all elementary schools had a minimum amount of time to spend teaching the science of reading. The majority of districts reported mandating daily instruction in phonemic awareness (67%), phonics (68%), fluency (63%), vocabulary (58%), comprehension (67%) and reading in the disciplines (53%).

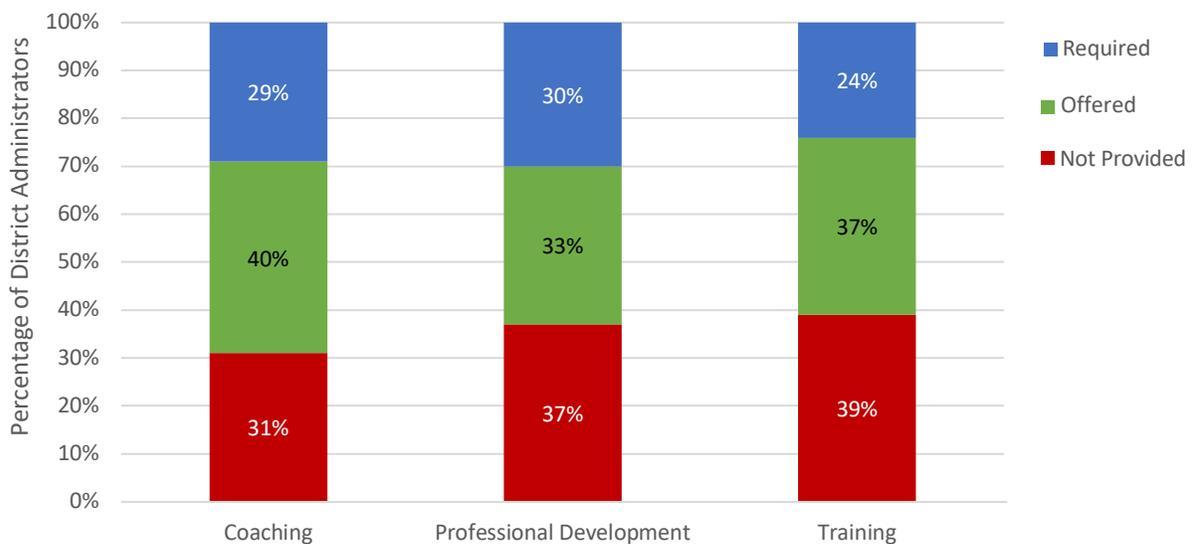
Staff from site visit schools corroborated these findings. Six of the 10 schools visited emphasized that their school's approach was driven by district guidance related to approach, materials, and supports aligned with the science of reading. One site visit school, for example, described a culture of data use and progress monitoring aligned with READ Act expectations. Staff noted that this approach was aligned with the district's science of reading expectations and that the district



provided monthly meetings for school leaders to address READ Plans along with assessments and instructional programs.

Seventy-six percent of district administrators reported on the inventory that they were providing or requiring at least one support beyond the required 45 hours of evidence-based training in teaching reading during the 2022–2023 school year. Additional supports included professional development (63% offered or required), coaching (69% offered or required) and training (61% offered or required) (see Exhibit 3). Notably, at least a third of districts reported that they did not provide professional development (37%), coaching (31%), or training (39%) related to the science of reading beyond the 45 hour requirement (Exhibit 3).

**Exhibit 3. District Support for Science of Reading**



### Continued Evidence of Reading Instruction Aligned With READ Act and Based on Science of Reading

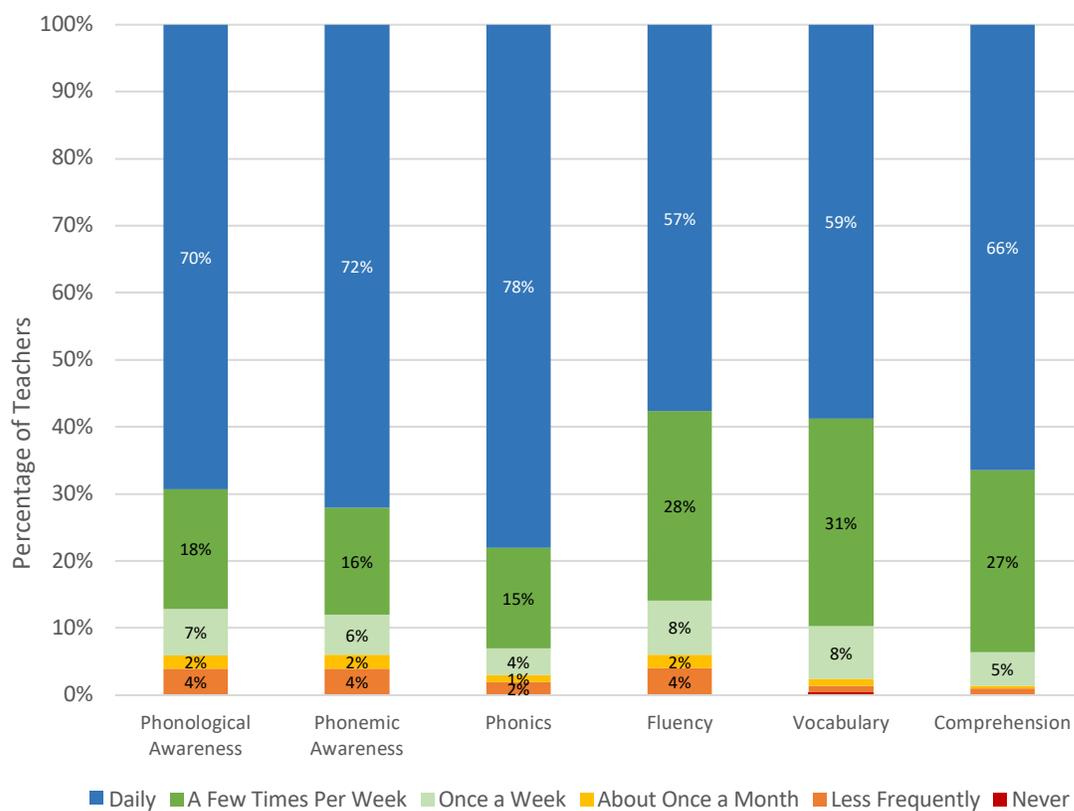
Building on findings from the first 2 years of the evaluation, there was consistent evidence of widespread implementation of reading instruction aligned with READ Act requirements that is focused on the five foundational reading



## Overall Approaches to Reading

skills. The majority of teachers responding to the inventory reported daily instruction in each of these foundational skills (Exhibit 4). Frequency also varied by grade. For example, 91% of kindergarten teachers reported daily instruction in phonological awareness compared with 45% of 3rd grade teachers (see Exhibit 5).

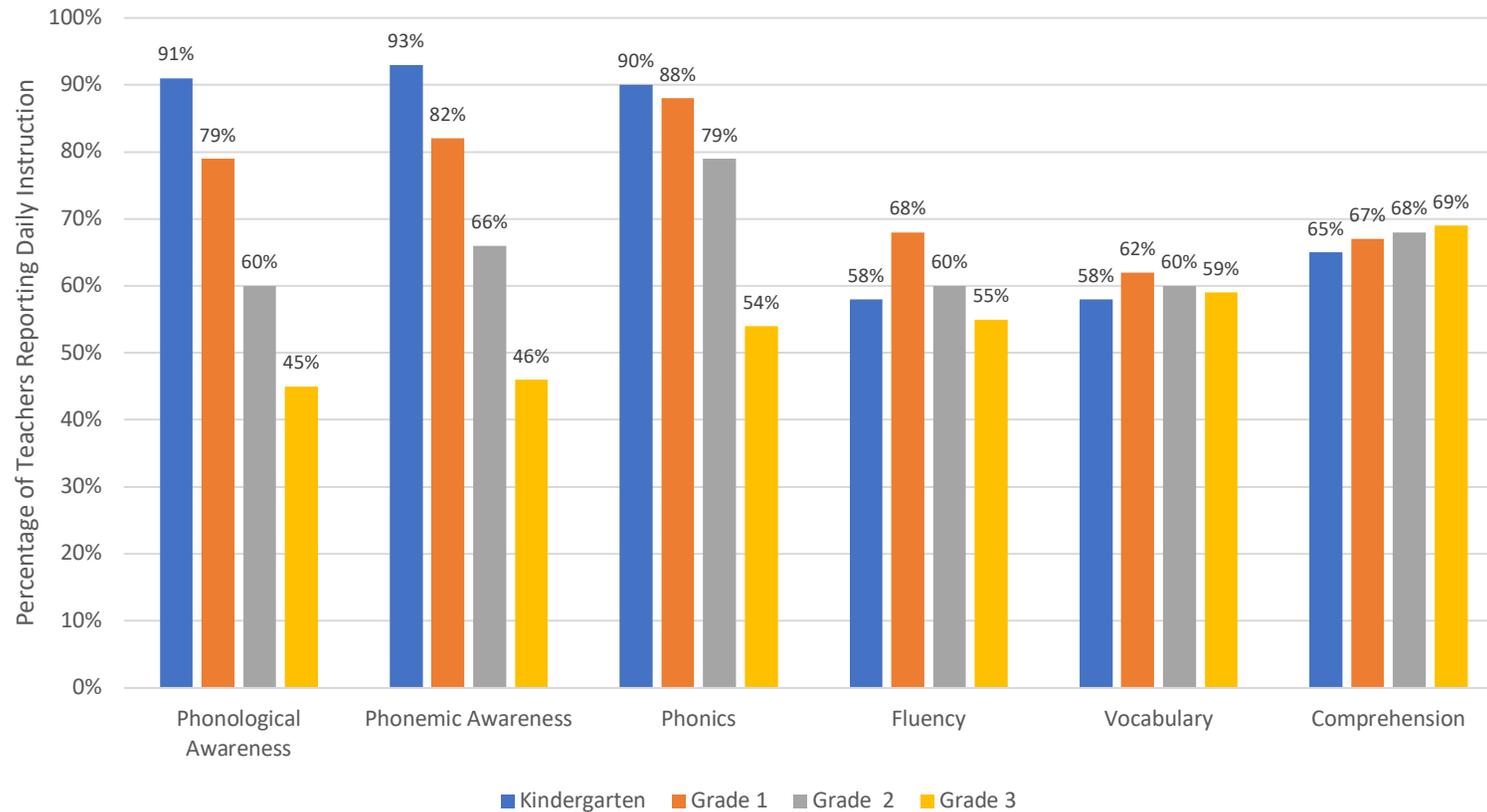
**Exhibit 4. Frequency of Instruction by Science of Reading Component  
2022–2023 School Year**



ELA Element	Daily	A Few Times Per Week	Once a Week	About Once a Month	Less Frequently	Never
Phonological Awareness	70%	18%	7%	2%	4%	0%
Phonemic Awareness	72%	16%	6%	2%	4%	0%
Phonics	78%	15%	4%	1%	2%	0%
Fluency	57%	28%	8%	2%	4%	0.40%
Vocabulary	59%	31%	8%	1%	1%	0.40%
Comprehension	66%	27%	5%	0.40%	1%	0%



## Exhibit 5. Daily Instruction by Science of Reading Component and Grade 2022–2023 School Year





Observations of classroom instruction during site visits confirmed that reading instruction in selected schools was aligned with the science of reading. As shown in Exhibit 6, there were numerous examples of systematic and explicit instruction in each of the five foundational skills during literacy blocks.

### New Focus on Science of Reading

ABC Elementary's approach to reading—a new one—was to focus on the science of reading. Teachers reported that using evidence-based materials aligned with the science of reading and seeing how these materials helped students learn to read shifted their focus to the science of reading. As a result, the district was in the process of selecting a new core program on the Advisory List.

### Exhibit 6. Examples of Class Instruction Aligned With Science of Reading

**Phonics.** The teacher displayed a ladder with 10 rungs, with each rung containing a high-frequency word. Students took turns “climbing the ladder” by reading a word. On individual erasable whiteboards, students wrote the words with symbols to show the phonics rule and the syllable split. The teacher used hand signals to help students break down or “chop” words into sounds and syllables. The teacher used these same hand gestures in the kindergarten class. Students worked on rhymes, and the teacher modeled sounds using the hand gestures.

**Fluency and Phonics.** Students practiced reading words on a list with fluency (read each word in a row, then read the row fast). Then the teacher asked students to get into their small groups for an activity (“odd one out”). The teacher presented four words (e.g., bee, these, seal, tree) and asked students to decide which one did not belong and why. Students worked individually first and then shared their response with their group members to come to a consensus. The teacher asked each group to share their decision. To end the lesson, students worked in pairs to find words in a set of sentences that included the “ee” or “ea” sound and to read the sentences (e.g., I see a peach seed).

**Vocabulary.** The teacher stated that they would review vocabulary. She told them to turn and talk to a neighbor about a tradition, which was one of the vocabulary words. The teacher called on students to say the vocabulary word's definition in their own words for each word listed on the chart paper.

**Comprehension and Fluency.** Students read a title of a story, “Can We Pat Tim?,” and the teacher asked students what they thought the story would be about. Students read the story out loud to themselves while the teacher listened. The teacher focused on comprehension by asking students questions about the story (e.g. “What is Tim?,” “What do Dot and Ted ask at the end of the story?”). Students answered (e.g., “Tim is a pig”) and practiced vowel sounds with the teacher providing a word and students pronouncing the sound that the vowel made. To end the lesson, students worked on sight word fluency by reading columns of words out loud quickly and accurately.



## Reading Instruction Based on Data, Targeting Specific Student Needs in Small Groups

In line with findings from the past 2 years, districts and schools used a data-driven approach to reading focused on intentional grouping and targeted interventions based on student needs. Classroom teachers and coaches were more likely to provide small group instruction for students identified with SRDs under the READ Act when compared with offering other types of reading support such as one-on-one instruction (Exhibit 6). The majority (67%) of teachers reported engaging in daily paired and small group instruction for students identified with SRDs. There was greater variability in the frequency with which teachers provided one-on-one instruction to students identified with SRDs, English learners (ELs), and students with reading disabilities (Exhibit 7).

**Exhibit 7. Frequency of K–3 Reading Activities 2022–2023 School Year**

Activity	Daily	A Few Times Per Week	Once a Week	About Once a Month	Less Frequently	Never
Providing Paired and Small Group Reading Instruction to K-3 Students with SRDs	67%	27%	2%	1%	1%	3%
Providing 1-on-1 Reading Instruction to K-3 Students with SRDs	28%	34%	11%	4%	11%	11%
Providing 1-on-1 Reading Instruction to K3 Students with Reading Disability Under IDEA (With an IEP)	21%	27%	6%	4%	15%	26%
Providing 1-on-1 Reading Instruction to K-3 EL Students	30%	29%	6%	3%	15%	17%

*Note.* EL = English learner; IDEA = Individuals With Disabilities Education Act; IEP = Individualized Education Program; SRD = significant reading deficiency.



Site visit participants also emphasized the importance of data-driven instruction and targeted interventions based on student needs and frequent monitoring of progress. This included providing quality core instruction for all students and supporting students identified with SRDs with supplemental and intervention programming aligned with specific areas for skill development as specified in their READ Plan.

### Data Driven Instruction for Students Identified with SRDs

Teachers at ABC Elementary consistently provided immediate feedback to students on READ Plans. For students on READ Plans and others who struggled with a particular phoneme, an observed phonemic awareness strategy in the kindergarten classroom was students wearing a star around their neck containing a phoneme to practice. This prompted any staff member in the school to stop them and ask them about it, then work with them briefly on that particular phoneme.

## Successes Related to Reading Approach

The main successes reported by district administrators and staff at site visit schools were centered on the adoption and implementation of evidence-based instructional materials and the usefulness of the Advisory List, both of which resulted in student engagement and learning. Sixty-one percent of district administrators responding to the inventory reported that instructional materials were successful or very successful in exiting students from SRD status. This was reiterated by staff at site visit schools who emphasized the importance of specific programs on the Advisory List when asked about successes related to their approach to K–3 reading. School staff reported that these evidence-based programs aligned with the science of reading helped students develop foundational skills and led to student engagement, viewed as a key mediator of growth in reading proficiency. The usefulness of the Advisory List was viewed as another success. Site visit participants reported that the Advisory List promoted the adoption of evidence-based programs aligned with the science of reading and that guidance from CDE was helpful for selecting programs and understanding the purpose behind the READ Act. Site visit participants reported that the adoption of these evidence-based programs from the Advisory list



supported the development of foundational skills and fostered student engagement.

### **Challenges Related to Reading Approach**

Challenges were cited with regard to instructional materials, the Advisory List, and supporting learning and adoption of new teaching practices. Several site visit schools reported that their core programs were not sufficient and had to be supplemented. This was exemplified in one school that cited challenges with a core instructional program that did not support seamless generalizability from learning a phonics skill in isolation, then transferring that skill to reading a decodable text at the kindergarten level. Another school indicated that its core program, which was on the Advisory list, was not aligned with state standards, which led to challenges and additional burden to modify the program and/or identify additional resources to meet state standards.

Although some schools reported that the Advisory List was useful and impactful in the adoption of evidence-based materials, they also reported challenges in the lack of inclusion of 4th- and 5th-grade materials, which would foster alignment across elementary schools. In addition, one school suggested that CDE provide a process or guidance for educators on how to select evidence-based materials aligned with the science of reading between the two-year reviews cycles given the constant influx of updated versions of programs and new materials.

Lastly, site visit school staff cited challenges with insufficient training, viewing the adoption of new materials and approaches as a learning zone where new practices conflicted with instructional staff's desire for proficiency and confidence. These conditions were further exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and demographic shifts which resulted in more students with reading difficulties and increased challenges engaging families with limited time.



# 3

## **Professional Development; Evidence-Based Requirements**

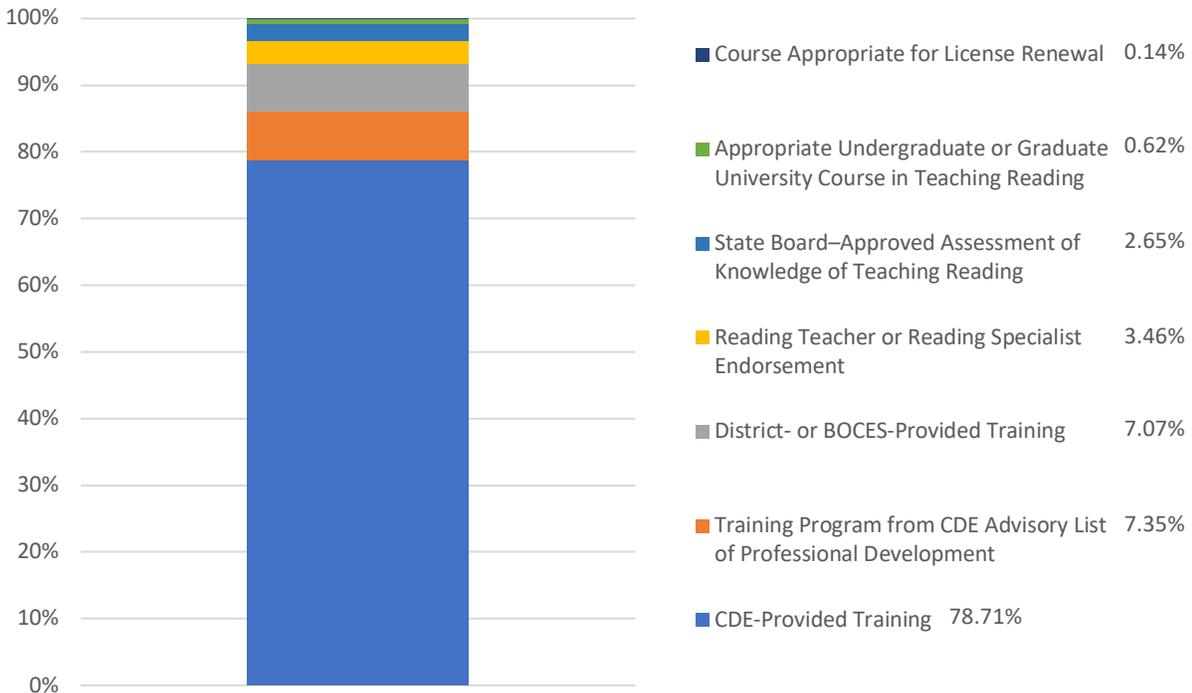
- **Site visit schools reported observing positive impacts on teacher practice resulting from the 45-hour training requirement.**
- **Most schools reported that positive impacts on teacher knowledge, instructional approaches, and ability to support different student needs had also led to increases in student learning.**
- **On the whole, educators found the training to be valuable but expressed frustration at the time commitment required and described challenges related to incorporating what they had learned into lesson planning in a timely fashion.**
- **Ongoing coaching from a literacy specialist and dedicated time to participate in professional learning communities with peers were cited as the most effective structures for supporting implementation of new practices learned in the training.**



## Professional Development; Evidence-Based Requirements

Colorado school districts receiving READ Act per-pupil funds were required to ensure that all K–3 teachers had completed 45 hours of evidence-based training in teaching reading by August 1, 2022. As described in the Year 2 report, over 70% of teachers and coaches and 30% of principals responding to the inventory had already completed this training as of April 2022. By May 2023, 13,218 teachers had completed a READ Act-required evidence-based training in teaching reading and had passed the end-of-course assessment.<sup>11</sup> Consistent with the trend from the Year 2 report, the majority (79%) did so by completing the CDE-provided training (Exhibit 8). Some schools reported that teachers in 4th and 5th grades, specialists, and interventionists completed the training as well, based on data gathered from site visits.

### Exhibit 8. How Teachers Completed 45-Hour Training Requirement



*Note.* n = 13,218 teachers. BOCES = Boards of Cooperative Educational Services; CDE = Colorado Department of Education.

<sup>11</sup> We were unable to calculate the overall percentage of teachers who completed the requirement since CDE was not able to provide an overall number of K-3 teachers who were eligible for the requirement.



### Impact of Training Program

Educator role groups showed high rates of perceived usefulness, applicability, and quality of the training program, according to this year's teacher, coach, and principal inventories. Specifically, 85% principals believed the training had been "very useful" or "somewhat useful" for teachers and coaches in their schools, compared with only 13% who found it "a little useful" and 2% who found it "not at all useful." Ninety percent of coaches and 88% of teachers rated the training as "very applicable" or "somewhat applicable" to their coaching and teaching, respectively. Additionally, 93% of coaches and 85% of teachers rated the training as "high quality" or "somewhat high quality."

Site visit schools uniformly reported seeing positive impacts on teacher practice resulting from the training requirement. Perceived impacts showed up in several ways. First, schools reported greater teacher knowledge of evidence-based practices related to the five components of reading. While participants expressed differing views on specific aspects of the program to which they attributed this shift in knowledge, schools in general reported that teacher awareness of evidence-based practices had grown as a result of the training's emphasis on the science of reading. In several instances, schools noted that this overall shift in knowledge had opened up greater dialogue among staff about research-based strategies to teach reading. Consequently, there was a greater sense of cohesion around the schools' approach to reading instruction.

Second, schools reported positive shifts in teachers' instructional approaches. Survey responses indicated that the training had an impact on actual instruction at schools, with 87% of principals and 85% of coaches rating the program as "very impactful" or "somewhat impactful" on instruction. Teachers expressed slightly lower levels of impact than principals and coaches, with 77% rating the program as "very impactful" or "somewhat impactful." Data from site visits supported the notion that instructional approaches had shifted in the selected schools. Participants reported that instruction was now more aligned



with evidence-based practices taught in the trainings. In particular, teachers paid more explicit and systematic attention to teaching phonics and phonemic awareness.

Third, schools reported that teachers were more effective at supporting the needs of different students. Site visit schools noted that teachers had improved their ability to identify student needs, design lessons and differentiate instruction according to those needs, and select materials targeted to meet needs in an engaging manner. A common theme across site visit findings was that teachers felt better equipped to diagnose skill deficits due to their increased awareness of the five reading components and the evidence-based practices for improving students' mastery of them.

While all site visit schools reported some type of impact on teachers, a sizeable number of schools also noted evidence of improved student learning as a result of the training. Eight of 10 sites specifically mentioned observing growth in students' reading abilities in addition to seeing changes to teachers' instructional practice. For example, three schools reported increases in the number of students meeting growth or proficiency targets for the year, a development they attributed to changes in instruction these students experienced from their teachers who completed the training. Other schools noted improvements in specific skills, such as students' ability to break down words. Two schools indicated that the trainings benefited lower-performing students especially, who saw improvements in their learning due to their teachers targeting instruction more effectively to meet their needs. Students in early grades appeared to benefit as well because teachers were more adept at explicit instruction in phonics and teaching students how to manipulate letter-sound relationships. For example, one school observed that more kindergartners were prepared for 1st grade than in previous years due to a more explicit instructional focus on foundational skills in phonics.



### Supports for Teacher Training

Data collected from site visits indicated that most schools supplemented the required training with additional professional development and ongoing peer learning supports.

A common support strategy was the use of professional learning communities. Six of 10 schools cited dedicated time for professional learning communities as important structures for enhancing teacher collaboration and cementing understanding around science of reading strategies. Topics covered in these professional learning communities included examining student data to inform reading instruction and continued study of the science of reading, for example through a staff book study. In some instances, the increased focus on science of reading was folded into existing professional learning community structures (e.g., in regular grade-level staff meetings), while in other instances new peer learning opportunities were created to accommodate the ongoing training needs of teachers. For example, in one school, administrators set aside time for a monthly professional learning community led by a literacy specialist to provide additional coaching support to teachers.

Whether part of a formal professional learning community or not, most (7 of 10) schools described using a literacy coach, interventionist, or similar role to help staff implement practices learned in the training and provide additional instructional support to students. In some instances, this individual was based at the school, while in others they were based at the district and shared by multiple sites. Coaches reported delivering a variety of supports, according to educator survey results. Most coaches (60%) provided small group instruction to students identified with SRDs on a daily basis; to a lesser extent, they also provided one-

#### Diverse Forms of Support

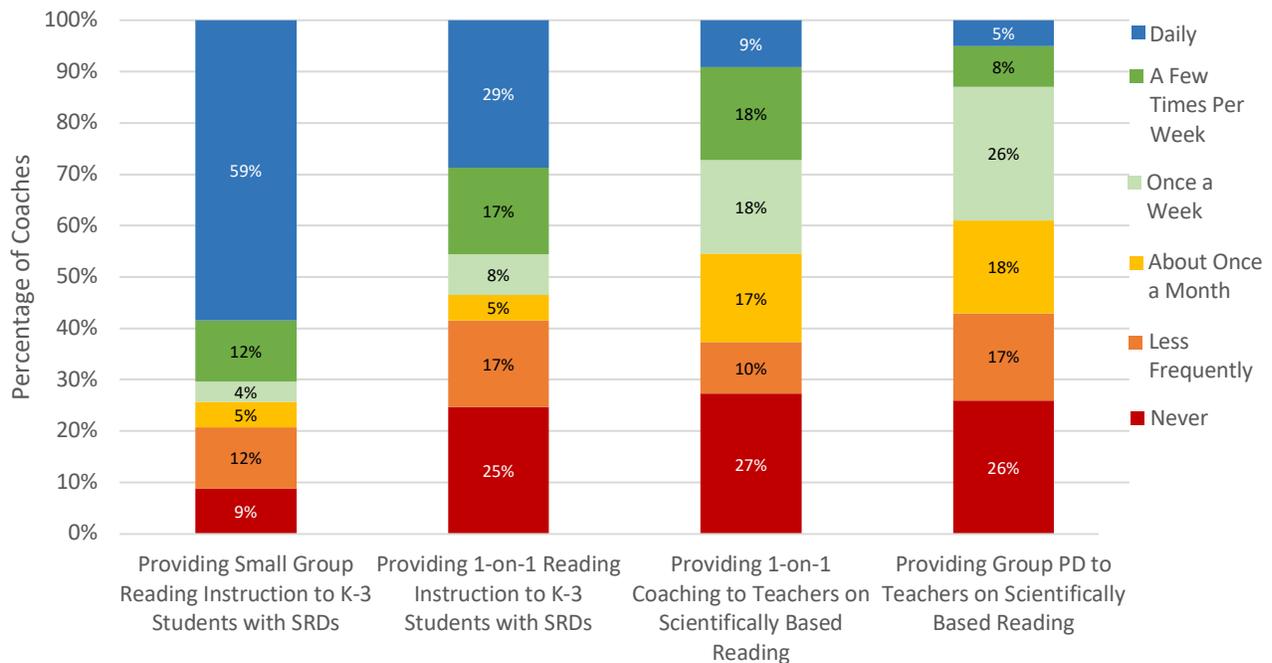
Educators at ABC Elementary reported receiving diverse forms of support, ranging from additional training and materials support (e.g., supplementary Orton-Gillingham training for school staff) to administrator support for class coverage, so that teachers could observe each other implementing practices learned in the training.



## Professional Development; Evidence-Based Requirements

one-one instruction to students with SRDs (Exhibit 9). About one quarter (26%) of coaches reported providing group professional development to teachers on scientifically based reading at a frequency of once per week; 18% reported doing so once per month, while an additional 13% did so at least a few times per week.

**Exhibit 9. Frequency of K–3 Coaching Activities 2022–2023 School Year**



*Note.* PD = professional development; SRD = significant reading deficiency.

### Successes and Challenges Related to Training Requirement

Consistent with findings from the Year 2 report, the training program was broadly perceived to be valuable and instructive, but difficult to complete due to the amount of time it required and due to other competing demands on teachers' time. Most schools reported that it took teachers longer than 45 hours to complete the training requirement and often necessitated time outside of school hours, despite the release time they were given to do it. Relatedly, schools reported some difficulty in implementing new learnings from the trainings and



effectively incorporating them into planning in a timely fashion, given the volume of training required and the shift in some teachers' mindsets that it required. With the exception of one school, the demanding nature of the training did not appear to dampen educators' appreciation of the new teaching strategies they gained through participation.

One school noted it would have been helpful to require all teachers in 4th and 5th grades, administrators, and paraprofessionals to take the training too, preferably at the same time as the rest of the school staff, to promote more cohesive understanding of instructional expectations schoolwide. Other schools noted the benefit of teachers going through the training at the same time, as it gave them an opportunity to support each other and promoted collaboration within the school, especially if the administration provided dedicated time for a professional learning community or similar structure to support continued professional learning. The CDE training, in particular, provided a "common language" around the science of reading that helped school teams achieve consistent understanding of instructional expectations. It also facilitated dialogue within the school about approaches to reading, encouraging a collaborative culture to flourish. Providing coaches with the opportunity to collaborate with each other was also cited as a successful support structure. According to one school, literacy interventionists participated in a monthly district meeting to network with interventionists at other schools, share best practices, review their data, and craft goals.

As noted above, the most immediate impacts observed were related to teachers' knowledge and instructional practice. However, some schools reported early signs that these shifts translated into increases in student learning as well. This pattern is not surprising in the context of adopting a whole-school instructional reform such as the science of reading approach. Typically, shifts in student learning are first preceded by shifts in teacher practice, which in turn often require shifts in teacher knowledge, beliefs, and mindsets. In this sense,



the findings related to professional development are consistent with expected patterns.

### **ABC Elementary's Experience with the Evidence-Based Training Requirement**

Opting for a whole-school approach to the training, all licensed K–5 instructional and paraprofessional staff completed the CDE course and had the opportunity to participate in monthly meetings to discuss the coursework. Staff described observing multiple benefits to this approach. Going through the training together allowed staff to develop a common language and understanding of effective approaches to teaching reading. Teachers were able to apply specific instructional strategies learned in the trainings within a schoolwide community of support. The school in turn reported observing strong evidence of student growth in specific reading skills as teachers learned to target instruction more effectively to their needs. The school also reported greater clarity around the alignment of CDE and district expectations related to reading instruction as a result of taking the CDE course. Most notably, school administration provided ongoing support structures to ensure that new teacher knowledge could be sustained and continually developed throughout the year. Professional learning communities provided collaborative time for staff to reflect on their practice, and administrators provided opportunities for teachers to take supplementary training if needed. Staff also participated in a book study.

ABC Elementary's experience was not without its challenges: educators reported that the CDE course was very time-consuming, and the training modules varied somewhat in their quality. There was a recognition that more work needed to be done to help students achieve higher levels of proficiency in skills like comprehension, despite the strong growth observed in components such as phonics, phonemic awareness, and fluency. However, ABC Elementary's experience demonstrates how a coordinated, whole-school approach to the training—reinforced by ongoing peer-to-peer support structures integrated throughout the school year—can result in meaningful changes in educators' knowledge and instructional practice.



# 4

## Identifying and Supporting Students With Significant Reading Deficiencies

- District administrators reported that state guidance was clear for serving general education students under the READ Act.
- District administrators had less clarity about clarity about supporting students with IEPs and English Learners. In particular, exiting those students from SRD status, identifying which of their plans should act as primary guidance, and understanding how to support students with multiple identifications. A sizeable minority of teachers also reporting feeling unprepared to support students with IEPs under the READ Act.
- READ Act interim and diagnostic assessments were important for informing READ Plan development and instructional strategies



## Process of SRD Identification

The vast majority of all parties responding to the inventories (more than 85% of principals, coaches, teachers, and district administrators) and 7 of 10 site visit schools reported using a body of evidence approach to identify students with SRDs. Interim assessments, curriculum-based measures, student’s classroom work (assignments, worksheets etc.), and to a lesser extent informal assessments informed their body of evidence (Exhibit 10). Nearly all respondents reported using interim assessments as part of the body of evidence approach, which is supported by data showing that 99.5% of student SRD designations align with vendor-assigned cut scores for SRD designation.<sup>12</sup>

### Using a Body of Evidence Approach

ABC Elementary provided staff with steps for SRD identification. First, staff tested students using Acadience Reading at the beginning, middle, and end of the year. Next, staff discussed students receiving a qualifying score at the grade-level professional learning community. Teachers considered a body of evidence to determine whether the student qualified. The body of evidence consisted of teacher observation, data collected from common grade-level unit assessments from SuperKids, and common assessments created by teachers to assess skills along the continuum such as letter identification, rhyming, deletion, substitution, and blending words. Additional items in the body of evidence included observations made by the literacy team, a review of students’ documentation from previous grades or schools, and communication with families and/or staff who worked with students previously. Finally, staff decided whether students needed more opportunity to learn before making a determination; or staff ensured the body of evidence showed a pattern of below-grade-level reading warranting SRD determination.

### Exhibit 10. Body of Evidence for Identification of SRDs by Role

Role	Interim Assessments	Classroom Work	Curriculum-Based Measures	Informal Assessments
Coach	98%	80%	87%	71%
Teacher	93%	80%	82%	72%
Principal	95%	77%	82%	75%

Note. SRD = significant reading deficiency.

<sup>12</sup> Observations corresponding to Indicadores Dinámicos del Éxito en la Lectura (IDEL) and Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening in Spanish (PALS Español), and interim assessments that are not currently approved by Colorado, do not have an SRD classification (in the dataset used for the evaluation) that is defined solely by the cut scores on the interim assessment.

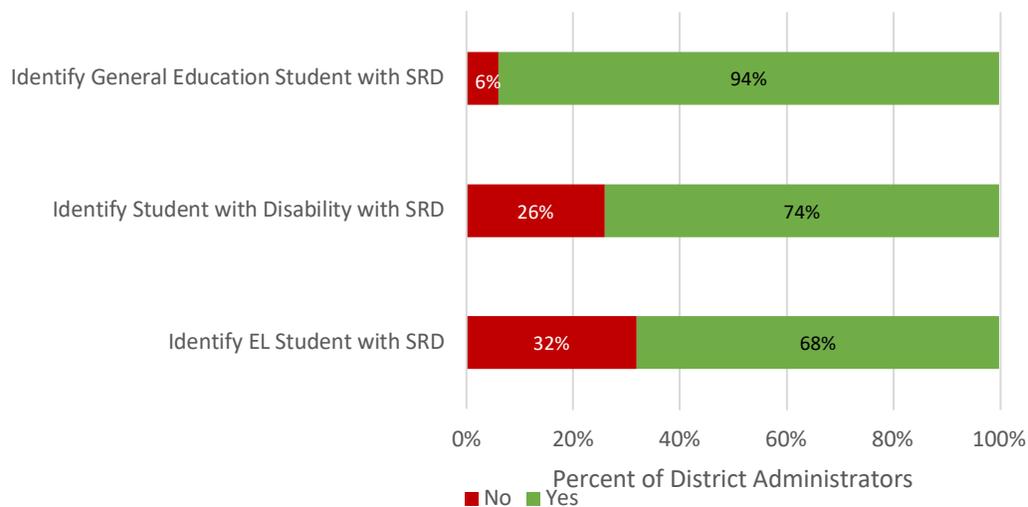


### Training and Support for READ Plan Development and Implementation

#### State and District Guidance

District administrators reported that state guidance was clear for serving general education students under the READ Act, in particular for identifying students with SRDs (94% agreement) and developing READ Plans to support them (86% agreement) (Exhibit 11). Teachers were slightly less confident in their ability to identify students with SRDs (70% were confident) and develop READ Plans (67% were confident). While these confidence levels are relatively high, the gap between district administrators' and teachers' confidence in their SRD identification may reflect on district guidance that communicates state guidance and district policies to teachers. All ten of the schools that participated in site visits relied on district guidance and support for identifying and supporting students with SRDs including templates, training, and district level staff who supported teachers as they developed and implemented READ Plans.

#### Exhibit 11. Districts' Perceptions on State Guidance for Identification of SRDs



Note. EL = English learner; SRD = significant reading deficiency.



District administrators reported less clarity about supporting non–general education students under the READ Act, specifically students with disabilities and ELs. In particular, exiting students with disabilities and ELs from SRD status, identifying which of their plans (READ Plan, IEP, etc.) should act as primary guidance, and understanding how to support students with multiple identifications (SRD and EL, etc.) were areas of confusion. Only 36% of districts reported having specific district policies with respect to developing, implementing, and monitoring plans for students with multiple identifications. Additionally, 31% of coaches and 29% of teachers indicated that IEPs and READ Plans were stand-alone documents, with only 13% of coaches and 25% of teachers indicating that they were fully integrated into a cohesive document. However, 70% of teachers indicated that they were confident or very confident supporting students with multiple identifications.

### **READ Plan Development and Implementation**

The majority (54%) of districts reported that schools in their district were responsible for collecting and reviewing their own READ Plans and monitoring the fidelity of implementation (55% of districts). Only 23% of districts indicated that the district reviewed all READ Plans. Thirty percent of districts reported monitoring fidelity, and 20% said that they sample READ Plans for fidelity of implementation. Fifty-two percent of principals reported being involved with READ Plan development and implementation most or all of the time, and 47% reported monitoring READ Plan implementation most or all of the time.

Coaches' role in READ Plan activities varied significantly from district to district. Teachers were the most likely to always be involved in READ Plan activities including communicating with parents (63% always); exiting students from READ Plans (34% always); reviewing (54% always), developing (53% always), and tracking progress on READ Plans (51% always); and conducting interim assessments (49% always). The majority of coaches and teachers indicated that they collaborated throughout the school year to discuss student



READ Plans, and the majority of coaches (63%) and teachers (68%) reported collaborating with teachers as students transitioned to the next grade.

## Supporting Students Beyond 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade

The number of students in grades four or higher who maintain READ Plans has grown every year from the start of READ Plan data collection, ranging from about 27,000 students to nearly 50,000 students per year.<sup>13</sup> In 2021–2022 school year, 8% of 4th–12th-grade students had a READ Plan. The majority these students are in elementary and middle school grades (see Exhibit 12). Fewer than 25% of post-3rd-grade students maintaining a READ Plan in any given year are in high school (9th–12th grades).

**Exhibit 12. Percentage of post 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students with READ Plans by year**

	2016–2017	2017–2018	2018–2019	2020–2021	2021–2022
<b>Grade 4</b>	15.3%	17.3%	19.5%	5.7% <sup>a</sup>	22.4%
<b>Grade 5</b>	11.8%	12.6%	15.4%	16.6%	3.1% <sup>a</sup>
<b>Grade 6</b>	7.8%	9.4%	10.8%	14.2%	12.9%
<b>Grade 7</b>	4.9%	6.5%	8.2%	11.4%	11.8%
<b>Grade 8</b>	0.0%	4.4%	5.9%	8.4%	9.8%
<b>Grade 9</b>	0.0%	0.0%	3.3%	6.2%	6.7%
<b>Grade 10</b>	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	4.1%	4.5%
<b>Grade 11</b>	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	2.5%	3.2%
<b>Grade 12</b>	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.9%

<sup>a</sup> Due to the pandemic, sample sizes for these grade levels are much smaller than in previous years.

*Note:* These data are reported from 2016–2017 onwards due to CDE data collection cadence and data quality issues in the earliest years of collection.

Notably, the majority of students maintaining READ Plans post 3rd grade are Hispanic (between 56.6% and 58.1% of the dataset per year). In general,

<sup>13</sup> Although SRD status and READ Plan statuses are not the same, CDE has indicated that for students post-third grade, their READ Plan status is a more reliable indicator of receiving reading supports than their reported SRD status.



non-White students are disproportionately represented among students post-3rd grade who maintain READ Plans (see Exhibit 12).

**Exhibit 13. Post-3<sup>rd</sup> Grade READ Plan by Race and Year**

Race	Group	2016–2017	2017–2018	2018–2019	2020–2021	2021–2022
AI/AN	Enrollment	0.7%	0.7%	0.7%	0.7%	0.6%
	Active READ Plan	1.0%	1.0%	0.9%	0.9%	0.9%
Asian	Enrollment	3.1%	3.2%	3.2%	3.2%	3.2%
	Active READ Plan	2.0%	2.1%	2.0%	2.2%	2.1%
Black	Enrollment	4.6%	4.6%	4.5%	4.5%	4.5%
	Active READ Plan	6.2%	6.9%	7.0%	7.7%	7.1%
Hawaiian/PI	Enrollment	0.2%	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%
	Active READ Plan	0.2%	0.2%	0.3%	0.4%	0.3%
Hispanic	Enrollment	33.5%	33.7%	33.6%	34.2%	34.5%
	Active READ Plan	56.6%	56.7%	56.8%	58.1%	57.5%
Two or More Races	Enrollment	4.0%	4.2%	4.4%	4.6%	5.0%
	Active READ Plan	2.9%	2.9%	3.0%	3.0%	3.3%
White	Enrollment	53.8%	53.4%	53.4%	52.5%	51.9%
	Active READ Plan	31.1%	30.2%	30.0%	27.5%	28.6%

More students in upper grades move off of READ Plan status each year than in K–3 and far fewer are newly given a READ Plan. Between about 6-10% of students in the dataset have their READ Plan removed year to year and no more than 1% are newly given a READ Plan. This trend is similar across student identity groups.

### Inform Instructional Decisions

READ Act interim, diagnostic, and summative tests were very important for informing K–3 instructional strategies (Exhibit 14) according to principals and coaches. READ Plans as well as assessments in addition to READ Act interim, diagnostic, and summative assessments were also indicated to be important sources of information for informing K–3 reading strategies, but by a lower proportion of coaches and principals. In contrast, only 32% of teachers indicated



that READ Act interim assessment data were used to inform their reading instruction. However, 79% of teachers reported that non-READ Act assessment data and READ Plans were used to inform reading instruction, in line with what coaches and principals reported.

### Exhibit 14. Percentage of Respondents Indicating Source is Important in Informing K–3 Reading Strategy

Source	Principals	Coaches
READ Act Interim Test	66%	63%
Diagnostic and Summative Tests	74%	69%
Non-READ Act Test	51%	56%
READ Plan	41%	49%

Note. READ = Reading to Ensure Academic Development.

About half of principals reported that staff in their schools used READ Plans for instructional decisions most or all of the time (47%). Both teachers and coaches varied in how much impact they felt READ Plans had on day-to-day instructional decisions, with 38% of coaches and 28% of teacher indicating that READ Plans had strong influence on work in small groups and one-on-one work with students.

There was a disconnect between the guidance districts provided and the guidance that school staff members believed they needed to make informed decisions about exiting students

from READ Plans and SRD status. A notable proportion of principals, teachers, and coaches still believed that district guidance on how to exit students from SRD status was completely or somewhat unclear (Exhibit 15). Seventy-six percent of districts reported providing written guidance regarding exiting students from READ Plans.

#### Using interim assessments and READ Plans to inform instruction

Teachers at ABC Elementary accessed the “Early Warning System” in the Infinite Campus student information system to view PALS assessment scores and see which benchmarks a student did not meet. The teacher then selected a skill area and an intervention, from a set of interventions, to add to the student’s READ Plan.

Typically, teachers selected one skill area at a time, unless the identified skill could be addressed better together with another skill in which the student scored low.



### Exhibit 15. Percentage of Respondents Indicating School or District Guidance Was Completely or Somewhat Unclear by Role

Role	School	District
Principals	n/a	31%
Teachers	33%	34%
Coaches	29%	29%

As with entering students into SRD status, a body of evidence approach was most often used to exit students from SRD status as well. To exit students from SRD status, districts often required the use of interim assessment scores (74% of district administrators), diagnostic assessment scores (59%), and determination of the extent to which students met READ Plan goals (52%). In addition, approximately 70% of district administrators recommended including student work and formative classroom information. There was more variability in incorporating parent input into exit decisions—20% required parental input, 52% recommended it, and 24% did not recommend it. District reports aligned with teachers' and coaches' input, who reported using diagnostic and summative assessments all the time to exit students from SRD status (58% coach; 49% teachers), determination of the extent to which students met goals in their READ Plan (43% coach; 40% teachers), then interim assessments (48% coach; 39% teacher) and other reading assessments (41% coach; 30% teacher). They reported similar variability in incorporating parental input.

According to principals, coaches, and teachers, exiting students from and reentering them in READ Plans was infrequent. Almost 70% of principals and coaches reported that students infrequently or never exit and then reenter a READ Plan. Teachers were more likely, however, to report higher rates of exiting and reentering READ Plans, with only 55% of teachers reporting that students infrequently or never exit and then reenter a READ Plan.



## Parental and Family Involvement

District and school employees reported high levels of variability in the extent to which parents were involved in SRD determination and implementation (Exhibit 16). According to coaches and teachers, parents were most likely to be involved in implementing READ Plan activities at home and least likely to be involved in progress monitoring.

**Exhibit 16. Percentage of Respondents Reporting Parental Involvement**

Amount of Time	Role	Identifying SRD	Developing READ Plans	Implementing READ Plan Activities at Home	Progress Monitoring
All or most of the time	Coach	25%	33%	43%	13%
	Teacher	36%	25%	50%	13%
Rarely or never	Coach	51%	45%	16%	73%
	Teacher	38%	59%	17%	63%

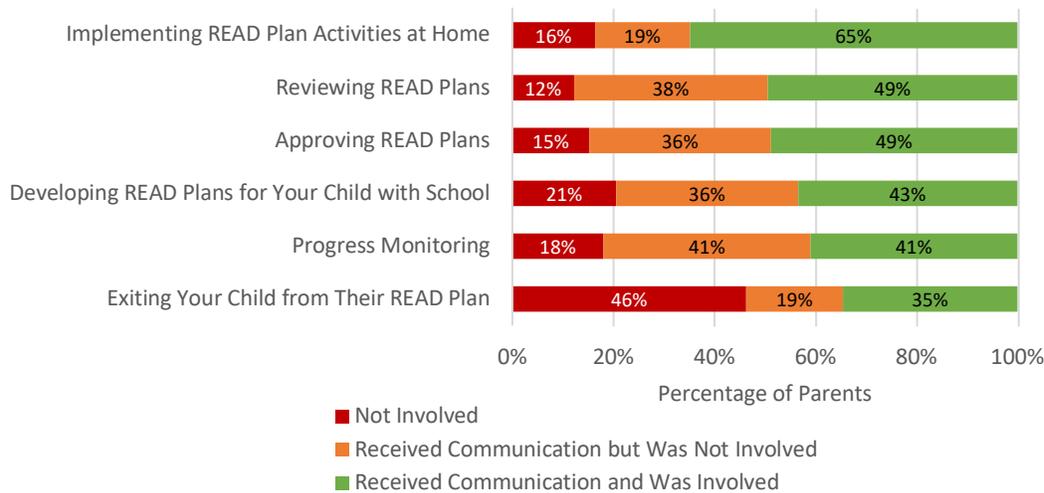
Note. READ = Reading to Ensure Academic Development.

Parents were most likely to report involvement with implementing READ Act activities at home (65%) with a smaller percentage (43-49%) reporting involvement in developing, reviewing and approving READ Plans (Exhibit 17). The majority of parents (71%) report that their school has supported them in implementing READ Act activities at home and feeling comfortable implementing those activities (75%). Parents were least likely to receive communication or be involved with exiting their child from their READ Plan (46% not involved). Sixty-one percent of parents reported that their child’s reading skills improved or improved greatly as a result of their READ Plan.

**Family and Community Involvement with the READ Act**  
 ABC Elementary found success in support from and collaboration with the community. Teachers held family connection meetings at the beginning of the year, in addition to hosting family learning nights to share data and strategies for supporting reading at home.



### Exhibit 17. Parent reports of involvement by READ Act Activity



*Note.* READ = Reading to Ensure Academic Development. N varied by number of responses to a particular item between 136 and 175.

### Successes and Challenges Identifying and Supporting Students with SRDs

Four of the ten site visit schools reported that using a body of evidence was helpful for designating students as having an SRD and pinpointing specific literacy learning challenges to personalize READ Plans. Several (4) schools also emphasized the success of district guidance and support for identifying and supporting students with SRDs as well as alignment across grade levels which promoted collaboration and consistency. Additional areas of success site by schools included continuous progress monitoring and opportunities to identify and celebrate student growth.

Following trends identified in the first two years of the evaluation, district administrators, teachers, and coaches reported challenges serving ELs and students with IEPs under the READ Act. In particular, exiting those students from SRD status, identifying which of their plans (READ Plan, IEP, etc.) should act as primary guidance, and understanding how to support students with multiple identifications (SRD and EL, etc.) were areas of confusion. A sizeable minority of teachers (29%) also reported feeling unprepared to support students with IEPs



under the READ Act. In addition, site visit school staff identified challenges connecting to families and providing clear supports for supporting their students' growth. Several schools (3) also cited staffing challenges as a clear impediment to successful READ Act implementation, reporting that there weren't sufficient teachers and support staff to support intervention support.

### **Challenges with Exiting Students**

CDE guidance for exiting students from READ Plans states that students stayed on a READ Plan until they demonstrated reading competency. ABC Elementary reported that it would benefit from better guidance from CDE on procedures for exiting students from READ Plans.

ABC Elementary had concerns about developing and implementing READ Plans for ELs and exiting them from READ Plans until CDE issued guidance addressing these issues in November 2022. ABC Elementary believed if this guidance were offered sooner, it would have helped alleviate their concerns.



# 5

## Early Literacy Grant

- Overall, school and district leaders in the site visits gave consistently strong, positive support for ELGs. These leaders indicated the grants led directly to improved K–3 teacher instructional practices and improved student performance on literacy assessments.
- Bringing in an external literacy expert on a monthly basis to work with teachers was typically identified by school and district leaders as the single most impactful element of ELG-funded activities.
- Challenges identified with regard to ELGs included finding a consultant whose instructional and curricular philosophies matched those of the district or school and teacher turnover and the resulting loss of institutional knowledge that was gained through ELG activities.



***Overall, school and district leaders in the site visits gave consistently strong, positive support for ELGs. These leaders indicated that the grants led directly to improved K–3 teacher instructional practices and improved student performance on literacy assessments.*** Notably, as discussed in more detail below, many school and district leaders reported that positive turnarounds in student achievement happened rapidly—sometimes within a single year after full implementation of ELG activities.

### **The ELG Application Process**

Site visit interviews included questions designed to gather information directly from school and district leaders about their experiences applying for ELGs. These questions are important not only to inform CDE and state policymakers about the application process but also to provide insight into whether the existing process might encourage or hinder future districts from applying for grants and whether districts that have been through the process have any lessons learned that could be shared with future school and district leaders.

In general, the ELG application process was reported to be time-consuming and onerous, with district leaders referring to this process as “extensive,” “lengthy,” and “challenging” to complete. Site visit participants from some smaller districts described the ELG application process as “overwhelming.” Participants indicated that having a liaison or contact person readily available at CDE to answer application questions would have been helpful. Some participants also commented that they benefited from having access to an experienced, external literacy consultant who could guide them through the application

#### **Challenges with ELG Application Process**

Site visit participants described the ELG application process as “extensive,” “lengthy,” “challenging,” and in some cases, “overwhelming.”



writing process and that providing more districts with the opportunity to access such external expertise to inform the application process would be of great benefit.

Participants also suggested that many small, rural districts simply did not have the staff available to take on the challenge of completing an onerous application process, and that this process could be streamlined to encourage more small districts to participate. Districts that had dedicated grant application managers on staff appeared to fare much better in handling the application process and in some cases were able to draw on prior successes applying for ELGs to reapply in later years for different schools in their districts.

With regard to the process for accessing ELG funds once grants were awarded, input from the 11 site visit districts was much more positive. CDE's structure for disbursing ELG funds was regarded as streamlined and well organized. The process benefitted from being handled electronically, with reimbursement requests filed online and funds received electronically straight into district accounts. Site visit participants also shared their appreciation that CDE allowed them to carry over unused ELG funds to the following school year if needed.



### How ELG Funds Were Deployed

Site visits explored how grantees used ELG funds. The most common use of funds included the following:

- Hiring an **external literacy consultant** to visit ELG school sites on a monthly basis to support and coach K–3 teachers.
- Hiring **additional school-level staff** to support K–3 literacy activities. Such additional staff typically included
  - full-time reading coaches (either district based, or school based) who came into ELG schools to directly coach teachers on literacy instruction; and
  - full- or part-time reading interventionists or reading tutors to support teachers and work directly with students.
- Purchasing **new core reading curricula** for K–3 classrooms as well as consumable materials designed to support implementation of the new core curriculum.
- Purchasing **supplemental literacy materials and intervention programs** for K–3 such as Systematic Instruction in Phonological Awareness, Phonics, and Sight Words (SIPPS) and Heggerty, a resource to teach phonemic awareness, to ensure a systemic approach to reading instruction.

#### Most Commonly Reported Uses of ELG Funds

1. Hiring **external literacy consultants**
2. Hiring **additional staff** in schools such as literacy coaches
3. Purchasing new core K–3 **reading curricula**
4. Purchasing new **supplemental literacy materials** and intervention programs

Elements of the four items above appeared in all ELG sites visited by the evaluation team. Some districts reported additional uses of funds, including the following:

- Use of ELG professional development funds to provide **LETRS training** to teachers on the science of teaching reading. Funds were used not only to help provide the training but also to provide stipends to teachers, which was viewed as an important investment to recognize teacher time needed to complete the training.



- Providing **professional development** for K–3 teachers to implement newly purchased core reading curricula or supplemental literacy materials.
- Purchasing **other literacy materials** designed to support instruction in the classroom or for parents to work with their children at home.

Districts reported that core curriculum purchases using ELG funds were guided by the state’s Advisory List of Instructional Programming. Districts relied on this list to ensure new curriculum purchases were research-based and approved by the state.

### **Successes and Challenges With ELG Implementation**

The 11 ELG site visits conducted by the evaluation team included a significant focus on exploring with school and district leaders the challenges and successes experienced during their ELG participation. Following is a summary of these successes and challenges followed by a brief set of recommendations and lessons learned for CDE and state policymakers to consider.

#### **Benefits of External Literacy Consultants**

Bringing in an external literacy expert on a monthly basis to work with teachers was typically identified as the single most impactful element of ELG-funded activities.

### **Successes Associated With ELGs**

**Bringing in an external literacy expert on a monthly basis to work with teachers was typically identified by school and district leaders as the single most impactful element of ELG-funded activities.**

Such external experts were highly valued because they brought fresh perspectives and a high degree of credibility into schools. They also directly coached teachers, observed and modeled instruction, and could leverage extensive outside knowledge to help schools improve instruction. These outside consultants were routinely identified as the driving force behind needed changes to instructional practices and subsequent successes in raising student reading performance.



Another theme that emerged consistently across site visits was the high value and positive impact associated with using ELG funds to pay for reading coaches and interventionists to work in schools. Site visit participants reported that having these personnel regularly in schools served a crucial role in reinforcing on a day-to-day basis the messages received during monthly visits from their external literacy consultants. These monthly visits, while crucial, needed more continual daily and weekly support that could only be provided by having personnel such as reading coaches in schools regularly, and site visit participants indicated that ELG funding made hiring these staff members possible.

### **Impact of ELG**

Schools reported that ELGs produced rapid, positive changes in student reading performance, sometimes in a single year, that would not have happened otherwise.

School and district leaders reported that ELG funding produced direct, positive changes in student reading performance that would not have happened without the grants. These leaders often stated that student performance improvements happened very rapidly, even after just 1 year of ELG implementation.

In one district, for instance, leaders indicated that their school struggled consistently with low student reading performance but that after receiving an ELG and cultivating high staff buy-in to ELG-funded activities, the school saw rapid performance gains and was awarded the Colorado Governor's award for being a top school in the state for student literacy growth. School and district staff attributed this success directly to the work accomplished with ELG funding.

In another district, leaders reported their student reading performance was among the lowest 5% nationwide. A key goal for the school was to raise achievement rapidly so that nearly 50% of K–3 students performed at or above grade level. The school met and exceeded this goal quickly during its ELG, with close to 60% of K–3 students reading at or above grade level by the end of the grant. School staff attributed these rapid gains directly to ELG participation.



Yet another district shared that prior to receiving the ELG, the district was nearing turnaround status with the State of Colorado due to low student performance. Leaders shared that implementation of their ELG had a direct impact on improving this performance. In fact, during a 4-year period in which their ELG was implemented, leaders stated that student performance rose rapidly, and the district was recognized as a Colorado district of distinction.

Rapid improvements in student achievement and in K–3 instructional practices were often facilitated by school and district efforts to generate *high staff buy-in* to ELG activities. Actions taken to help promote such buy-in are discussed below in the “Recommendations and Lessons Learned” section.

### Impacts of ELG Professional Development Funds

Districts that invested ELG professional development funds into providing LETRS training reported positive impacts on K–3 literacy instruction.

Districts that invested ELG professional development funds into providing their teachers the Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling (LETRS) training also reported significant positive impacts on K–3 literacy instruction. In particular, LETRS was reported to provide staff with in-depth knowledge of the science of teaching reading. Leaders recommended that all staff in the school complete this training, including K–5 educators, paraeducators, and school leaders. The provision of stipends for staff to complete the training was viewed as critical because it demonstrated that educators’ time was valued and that the training should be taken seriously.

Other examples of ELG successes cited by school and district leaders included the following:

- Improved **teacher collaboration** across classrooms and grade levels. The enhanced teacher collaboration that ELGs produced also resulted for some schools in a new emphasis on common planning



time for teachers, with schools modifying their daily schedules to ensure common planning time was protected.

- Increased **teacher proficiency in using data** to inform instruction. ELGs helped teachers learn to identify students with low reading performance and to monitor these students to ensure they saw a year's worth of growth every school year.
- Improved educator effectiveness **placing students into small, targeted groups** for literacy instruction.
- Enhanced **teacher attitudes and beliefs** around the value of using literacy assessment data to inform instruction.
- Improved ability of teachers to **develop appropriate interventions** for students with the highest literacy learning challenges. Schools reported that this enhanced capacity led directly to increased student literacy assessment scores.

### Challenges Associated With ELGs

Site visit participants uniformly indicated that the investment of ELG funds into bringing in an external literacy consultant to support teachers was one of the most impactful aspects of their ELG grant experience and that these external consultants sparked innovation and effective changes in K–3 literacy instructional practices. However, finding a consultant with the right fit was critical, and participants described certain challenges that arose. First, in some cases, districts or schools faced challenges in terms of finding an external consultant whose instructional and curricular philosophies lined up with those of the district or school. If such alignment was not present, friction or confusion with educators resulted, along with the perception of “mixed messages” being sent by the district and external consultant. Second, some schools and districts lost valuable time at the beginning of their ELGs when the consultant work was not aligned well with school or district philosophies, and districts were unclear if they were allowed to replace the consultants and what the process would be with CDE to execute such a replacement. Third, in a few cases, site visit participants



indicated that, even when there was a strong fit with an external consultant, over a period of years teachers experienced “consultant fatigue.” It could be beneficial to bring in a fresh consultant when this occurs. Ideas to address these challenges surfaced during site visit discussions. These ideas are discussed in the “Recommendations and Lessons Learned” section below.

Another challenge to successful ELG implementation that was identified was the need to overcome some veteran teachers’ resistance to a

### **Importance of Educator Buy-In**

Site visit participants often stressed the need to involve teachers in the decision-making process and to take steps to help generate strong educator buy-in prior to, and during, the ELG application and implementation process.

new literacy curriculum, coaching style, or core instructional philosophy. Site visit participants often stressed the need to involve teachers in the decision-making process and to take steps to help generate strong educator buy-in prior to, and during the ELG application and implementation

process. Ideas to help generate such buy-in are also presented in the “Recommendations and Lessons Learned” section below.

The greatest threat to sustainability of the ELG impacts that school staff identified was teacher turnover and the resulting loss of institutional knowledge that was gained through ELG activities. A lack of ongoing grant funding could exacerbate impacts of staff turnover when such funding ends and schools or districts eliminate components of the ELG program. Most critical is the need to find continued funding to support dedicated literacy coaches that could work regularly with teachers in schools to maintain an ongoing focus on literacy and on activities and training that began under ELGs.

Two additional challenges were cited by some site visit participants. First, it became difficult for some schools to pull teachers out of the classroom as a group for professional development due to current substitute teacher shortages. These shortages meant schools had to be extremely creative in providing professional development, such as



developing asynchronous professional development opportunities or providing stipends to encourage teachers to complete such professional development outside of the regular school day.

Second, some site visit participants reported that it was a challenge when materials that were at one time listed on the Advisory Lists of Professional Development and Instructional Programming were removed. Districts reported using ELG funds and significant internal resources to purchase new instructional programs as well as major investments of resources and staff time to complete training needed to implement these programs, only to find in later years that the programs were no longer approved. This represented an enormous lost investment that districts indicated was both not easy to recoup and that could demoralize staff who invested efforts into learning new materials.

### **Recommendations and Lessons Learned**

Based on the input discussed above that was received through the 11 site visits, the following recommendations and lessons learned were identified by the evaluation team:

1. Most site visit participants indicated that the work of ELG-funded external literacy consultants was the single most impactful element of their grants. Use of these consultants should therefore continue to be an integral component of ELGs awarded in the future. In some cases, site visit participants reported that valuable time was lost during the grant due to a lack of clear alignment between the district's instructional, curricular, and assessment philosophy and the external literacy consultant's coaching philosophy. Potential actions which could help address these challenges include the following:
  - a. CDE could make more information available regarding consultant backgrounds, experience, and philosophies to enhance district ability to determine the degree of alignment prior to selecting a consultant.
  - b. CDE could make clear in advance that schools may change external literacy consultants at any time.



- c. CDE could provide clear guidance on how to expediently replace external literacy consultants if needed when the fit is not right and could make staff available to support schools in changing external literacy consultants when needed, including communicating with and matching new consultants to districts.
  2. A key lesson learned across many of the site visits was **the importance of cultivating strong buy-in from teachers** and other staff prior to applying for ELGs and during key steps of ELG implementation. Future districts could and should learn from these experiences, and CDE could support this by sharing these lessons learned with future ELG applicants. For instance, districts experienced greater success with ELG implementation by doing the following:
    - a. Bringing school leaders and teacher leaders into meetings early in the ELG application process to gather their input and feedback on the grant's design.
    - b. Putting a process in place for vetting external literacy consultants with teachers prior to the start of their work in the school. Ideally this vetting should take place after the ELG award, rather than naming a consultant in the grant application. Teachers in particular should have a chance to meet with consultants and be comfortable with their fit in the school.
    - c. Providing information to teachers and instructional leaders in advance of ELG applications regarding new core reading curriculum options or new supplemental reading interventions and allowing educators to vote on their preferred options.
    - d. Emphasizing creation of a consistent message and approach to ELG implementation and literacy instruction across classrooms and grade levels.
  3. The single greatest threat identified to the lasting success of ELGs was a lack of **sustainability** over time due to staff turnover. Such turnover could mean that gains made towards building staff instructional capacity during the grants could be lost as teachers and leaders leave schools. Schools and districts identified several



options to combat threats to ELG's sustainability caused by teacher and principal turnover, including the following:

- a. Additional periodic grant funds could be provided to support ongoing visits from an external literacy consultant to schools that have successfully completed their ELGs. Such funding would be in addition to current ELG sustainability grants but provided at lower amounts. Consultant visits could take place at a greatly reduced frequency but would help maintain the momentum created during the grant period and ensure continuity through inevitable staff turnover.
  - b. Schools and districts could provide stipends or other compensation for teachers who participated in an ELG to enable them to serve as mentors to new teachers who were not at the school during the ELG. In this way, the progress made during ELGs could be passed along to successive teachers.
  - c. Continued funding of dedicated literacy coach positions that were funded through ELGs was identified as an effective strategy for sustaining practices beyond the life of the grant. These coaches played a valuable role in onboarding new teachers as turnover occurred and could sustain and perpetuate new instructional strategies and philosophies that began during ELGs. CDE could consider asking schools and districts to outline in their initial grant applications what their plans or strategies are for sustaining these positions past the life of the grants.
4. The ELG application process could benefit from CDE providing districts with additional **support during the application process**, particularly small districts. CDE could deliver such support by
- a. offering online workshops to support applicants, with the workshops recorded for any district applicant to access and view at a later time;
  - b. establishing online office hours with a staff person, CDE-appointed representative, or outside experts who could help answer application questions or support grant writing activities; and



- c. conducting a review of the application process itself, with input from district leaders who have been through the process and shown success with grant implementation to identify options for streamlining the process, including improved use of online forms to save progress and submit all required information.



## Funding

# 6

- Making decisions around READ Act per-pupil spending is a collaborative process, however, district literacy leaders and school principals have the most influence over these decisions.
- READ Act per-pupil funds are most frequently spent on salaries of reading coaches and on purchasing instructional programs.
- Schools and LEPs reported receiving insufficient funding and expressed a need for additional staff, instructional program materials, and guidance and resources for ELs and 4th- and 5th-grade students.
- Limitations of READ Act per-pupil funds have resulted in LEPs using other funding streams to meet READ Act expectations.



## Background on READ Act Per-Pupil Funding

Annually, READ Act per-pupil intervention funds are allocated to LEPs based on the number of eligible students in the LEP (i.e., K–3 students in public schools, operated by the LEP, who were identified as having an SRD and as receiving instructional services pursuant to READ Plans in the previous year). Currently, the statute permits that LEPs use the per-pupil funding only for one or more of the following seven allowable categories:

- Operate a summer school literacy program
- Purchase core reading instructional programs that are on the Advisory List
- Purchase and/or provide approved, targeted, evidence-based or scientifically based intervention services to students which may include services provided by a reading interventionist
- Provide technology, including software, that is on the Advisory List; may include professional development for use of technology
- Purchase from a Board of Cooperative Educational Services the services of a reading specialist or reading interventionist
- Purchase tutoring services focused on increasing students' foundational reading skills
- Provide professional development programming to support K–3 educators in teaching reading

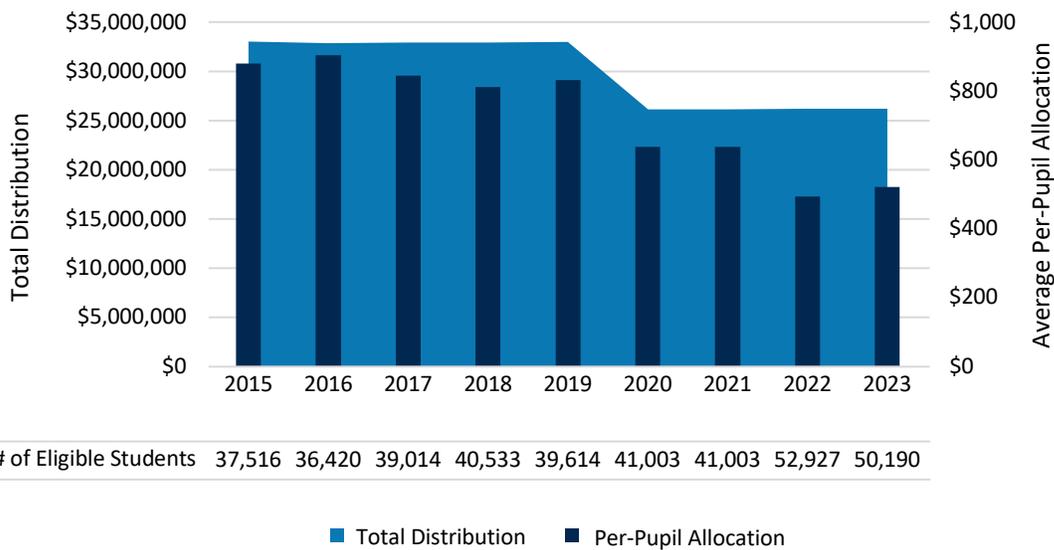
The total amount of READ Act per-pupil intervention funds provided to LEPs has decreased over time, particularly after the COVID-19 pandemic, while the number of eligible students increased from approximately 37,000 students in the 2014–2015 school year to 50,116 students in the 2022–2023 school year (Exhibit 18). Over time, “some of the READ intervention funds are redirected to the external program evaluation, state-provided teacher training, public



information campaign, and ELG program, thereby reducing the per-pupil distribution to districts” (CDE, 2023).<sup>14</sup>

Due to limitations of READ Act per-pupil funding, LEPs and schools used other funding streams and investments to implement READ Act requirements. These are outlined later in the chapter.

### Exhibit 18. Change in READ Act Per-Pupil Funding Over Time



Note. READ = Reading to Ensure Academic Development. READ Act per-pupil funding in 2020–2021 was based on the number of eligible students from 2018–2019 as testing did not occur in 2019–2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

### Influence Over Use of READ Act Per-Pupil Funding

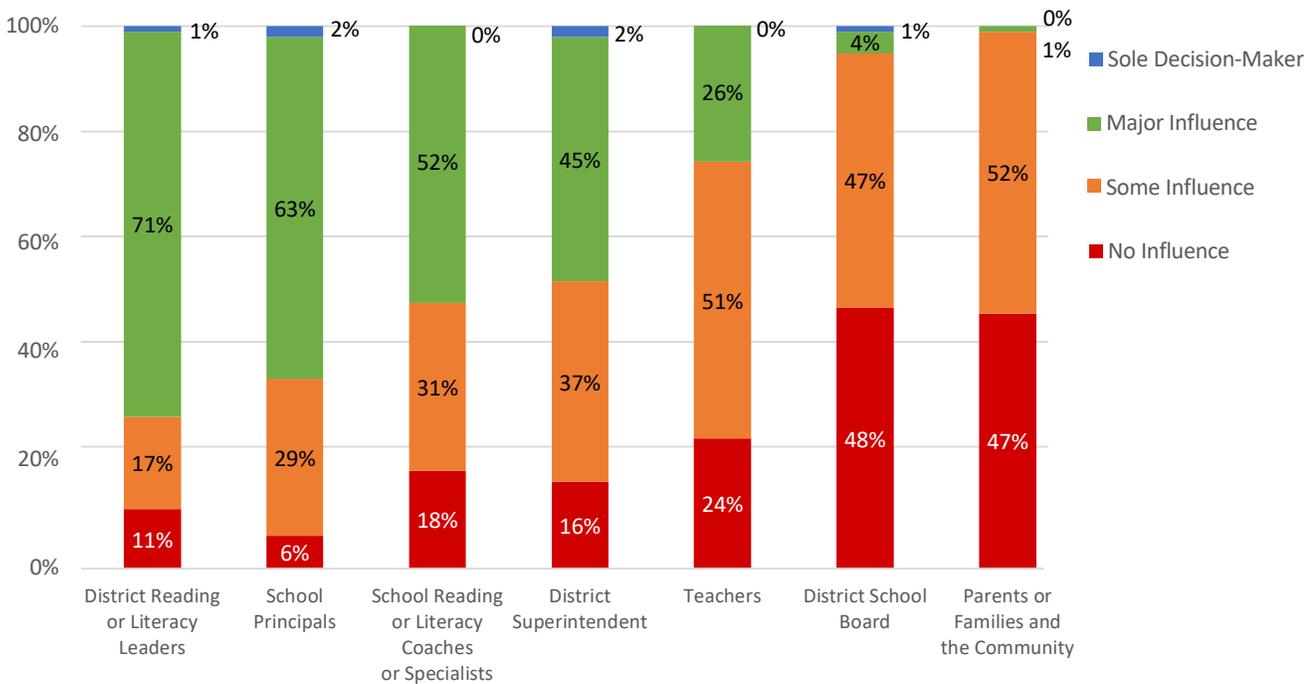
According to LEP inventory respondents, making decisions about how READ Act per-pupil funding is spent is a collaborative process, with only 6% of district administrators reporting that any entity is the sole decision-maker in determining how these funds should be spent (Exhibit 19).

<sup>14</sup> Colorado Department of Education. (2023, April 21). *READ budget submissions*. <https://www.cde.state.co.us/coloradoliteracy/read-budget-submissions>



Some district and school entities, however, were reported as having higher levels of influence over these decisions than others. District administrators reported that school principals and district reading or literacy leaders had the most influence when making decisions about per-pupil spending, with 94% and 89% of administrators reporting that principals and district literacy leaders, respectively, had at least some influence on these decisions. District superintendents, school reading or literacy coaches and specialists, and teachers were also generally reported as having at least some influence (84%, 82%, and 76%, respectively). However, almost a quarter of administrators reported that teachers had no influence over these spending decisions. Finally, district school boards, and parents or families and the community were reported as having the lowest levels of influence, with almost half of administrators reporting that these groups had no influence on per-pupil spending decisions.

**Exhibit 19. District Administrators on Influence of Entities in Decisions About READ Act Per-Pupil Funding**



Note. READ = Reading to Ensure Academic Development.



Principals and literacy coaches were also asked for their perspectives on the extent to which they had control over how READ Act per-pupil funds were spent in their school. Their opinions about their level of influence over these decisions differed markedly from opinions of district administrator respondents. While only 6% of district administrators reported that principals had no influence on decisions about READ Act per-pupil spending, over one-third of principals (34%) reported that they had no control over how these funds were spent in their school. In contrast, 11% of principals reported that they were the sole decision-maker, while only 2% of district administrators reported that principals were the sole decision-maker. Similarly, while less than one-fifth (18%) of district administrators reported that school-level literacy coaches had no influence over these spending decisions, over two-thirds (69%) of coaches reported having no input in these decisions.

### **Use and Success of READ Act Per-Pupil Funding**

According to principal inventory respondents, per-pupil funding was spent on numerous resources to meet READ Act implementation requirements. READ Act funds were most frequently used for the salary of reading coaches and to purchase K–3 core, supplemental, or intervention instructional programs on the Advisory List of Instructional Programming<sup>15</sup> (Exhibit 20), with about half of respondents reporting these uses. Principals also reported using funds to provide one-on-one or small group tutoring to students identified with SRDs (24%), purchase K–3 interim or diagnostic and summative assessments on the Advisory List of Assessments<sup>16</sup> (22%), and purchase K–3 supplemental or intervention materials or programs not on the Advisory List of Instructional Programming (20%). Few principals reported using these funds for professional development

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<sup>15</sup> For more information on the Advisory List of Instructional Programming, see <https://www.cde.state.co.us/coloradoliteracy/advisorylistofinstructionalprogramming2020>.

<sup>16</sup> For more information on the Advisory List of Assessments, see <https://www.cde.state.co.us/coloradoliteracy/readact/resourcebank>.



purposes, and nine (9%) principals reported not being aware of how READ Act funds were spent in their school.

**Exhibit 20. Use of READ Act Per-Pupil Funds According to School Principals**

READ Act Funding Use	Percentage of Principal Responses (Frequency)
Purchase of K–3 core, supplemental, or intervention instructional programs on the Advisory List of Instructional Programming	46% (n = 46)
Purchase of K–3 supplemental or intervention materials or programs not on the Advisory List of Instructional Programming	20% (n = 20)
Purchase of K–3 interim or diagnostic and summative assessments on the Advisory List of Assessments	22% (n = 22)
Purchase of K–3 professional development programs on the Advisory List of Professional Development	12% (n = 12)
Purchase of K–3 professional development programs not on the Advisory List of Professional Development	3% (n = 3)
Covering part or all of the salary for (a) reading coach(es)	51% (n = 50)
Purchasing external consultant services to provide teacher professional development	6% (n = 6)
Providing one-on-one or small group tutoring to students with significant reading deficiencies	24% (n = 24)

Note. READ = Reading to Ensure Academic Development.

Site visit participants also reported multiples uses of READ Act funding. Educators from eight of the 10 sites reported spending READ Act funds on core, supplemental, and/or intervention instructional programs and materials. Funds were also frequently used for the salaries of reading interventionists or coaches. Site visit participants, however, placed more emphasis on using funding for tutoring services and professional development resources than did respondents to the principal inventory. Funding was also used by schools and LEPs to operate summer school literacy programs.<sup>17</sup>

In discussing the role of READ Act per-pupil funds in contributing to their school’s success around reading, site visit participants emphasized the

<sup>17</sup> The evaluation intended to use READ Act Budget Submission data to more accurately report uses of READ Act funds, however, there were concerns regarding the reliability of the current data.



usefulness of hiring additional staff, purchasing core and/or supplemental instructional and intervention programs, and increasing teacher resources. Participants reported that hiring additional staff (e.g., reading interventionists or coaches), which decreased instructional group sizes and increased tutoring opportunities, was helpful in supporting reading instruction and serving and meeting the needs of students requiring reading support. They also noted that purchasing core and/or supplemental instructional and intervention programs and associated materials (e.g., Heggerty, Learning A–Z’s Raz-Plus, Lexia Core5) helped support reading instruction and helped teachers better assist students in targeting specific skills and reach students at all levels of performance. Finally, participants reported using READ Act funding to increase teacher professional learning resources to assist teachers in increasing knowledge, building a common language, and aligning K–3 reading instruction with the science of reading, using data for interventions, and increasing attention on improving skills of students identified as being below the 20th percentile in reading.

In the LEP inventory, district administrators also reported on the success of READ Act per-pupil funding in exiting students identified with SRDs off that status and in raising 3rd-grade reading achievement levels. District administrators provided similar responses in discussing the success of per-pupil funds in achieving these two READ Act goals (see Exhibit 21). Only about 10% of administrators reported that per-pupil funding was “very successful” in achieving these READ Act goals; about a third reported that the funding was “successful,” and slightly more reported that it was only “somewhat successful.” Administrators typically rated school grade-level teams, school professional learning communities, the mandated professional development for instructional staff (i.e., 45-hour requirement), and CDE-recommended or -approved instructional materials as being more successful in achieving these goals.



### Exhibit 21. District Administrators on Success of READ Act Per-Pupil Funds



Note. READ = Reading to Ensure Academic Development; SRD = significant reading deficiency.

### Challenges Associated with READ Act Per-Pupil Funding

Site visit participants cited a number of challenges in using READ Act per-pupil funds in their school. Some participants expressed that funding was insufficient to fully implement expectations of the READ Act. Some also reported that funding fluctuations (due to loss of funds when students exit from READ Plans) resulted in reduced staffing and difficulties in continuing to provide supplemental instructional programs to students previously on READ Plans.

Alongside these funding concerns, site visit participants also discussed the need for additional staffing (e.g., reading interventionists), additional approved supplemental instructional program options for addressing fluency and comprehension, as well as guidance and materials to monitor the progress of these skills, and additional resources to address the needs of ELs on READ Plans. Some participants also cited difficulties in addressing the needs of 4th- and 5th-grade students with reading challenges. They advocated for additional



guidance to help these groups and/or for the READ Act to be extended to higher grade levels.

### **Other Funding Streams or Investments for READ Act Purposes**

Site visit participants reported using multiple funding streams to implement READ Act services to students, including COVID-19 relief funds, Early Literacy Assessment Tool funds, Comprehensive Literacy State Development funds, Title III funds, Mill Levy Override funds, and general school and LEP funds. This use of multiple funding sources was also reflected in the LEP inventory, with 57% of district administrators reporting that their LEP used funding related to the COVID-19 pandemic (CARES [Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security], ESSER [Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief], GEER [Governor's Emergency Education Relief], CRF [Coronavirus Relief Fund]) on literacy-related activities for students.

Site visit participants and district administrators reported that these additional funding streams or investments were typically used to purchase core instructional materials, assessments, and intervention programs and materials; hire additional literacy-related staff (e.g., reading coaches, specialists, or interventionists; instructional support staff; classroom aides); finance after-school programs, tutoring services, and/or summer school programs; and fund additional professional development.



# 7

## Student Outcomes

- Overall, analysis of SRD status and CMAS proficiency suggests that there is a bounce back to pre-pandemic levels for students except those with SRDs who have multiple designations
- In the 2021–2022 school year, fewer students went from not being designated as having an SRD to having an SRD and nearly three times as many students when from being identified as having an SRD to no longer identified as having an SRD
- CMAS proficiency rates and reading subsection proficiency rates remain extremely low for students that have ever been identified with an SRD and even lower for students with an SRD who are also EL or have an IEP



### **Alignment Between State-Reported SRD Classifications and Interim Assessment SRD Classifications**

The first step in identifying whether a student has an SRD is the use of an interim reading assessment approved by the Colorado State Board and the assessment-specific cut scores defined by the vendor.<sup>18</sup> These results are typically used alongside results of a diagnostic assessment and other materials (e.g., classroom work, curriculum-based measures) in a body of evidence approach to finalize the SRD determination (see Chapter 4 for additional detail).

In line with findings in last year's report, while district staff, teachers, principals, and coaches report using a body of evidence approach to determine SRD determination, our analysis showed that state-reported SRD classification for students nearly always matched the SRD determination that students would have received based solely on their interim assessment score (see Chapter 4 for additional detail). Of students whose records show they have both a state-reported classification of having an SRD and an interim assessment score that indicates they have an SRD according to the assessment vendors' guidance (over 90% of the sample),<sup>19</sup> only 0.5% have a state-reported SRD classification that is different from the classification determined solely by performance on the interim assessment. This rate was smaller following the return to in-person instruction in 2020–2021 (0.2%) than the rate prior to the assessment pause in 2019–2020 (0.6%). Among these differences in classifications, 83% occurred because students who were classified as not having an SRD (according to the state) actually scored below the SRD cut score on their respective interim assessment. In other words, a small number of students who were identified as

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<sup>18</sup> For information on the SRD determination process and other requirements of the READ Act, see <https://www.cde.state.co.us/coloradoliteracy/readplans>.

<sup>19</sup> Observations corresponding to Indicadores Dinámicos del Éxito en la Lectura (IDEL) and Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening in Spanish (PALS Español), and interim assessments that are not currently approved by Colorado, do not have an SRD classification (in the dataset used for the evaluation) that is defined solely by the cut scores on the interim assessment.



possibly having an SRD according to their interim assessment score were classified as not having an SRD by their school or LEP.

### **Alignment for students with IEPs and English Learners**

Some student groups (i.e., ELs, students with disabilities, students with IEPs) were more likely than their peers to have a state-reported SRD designation that did not match designations provided by the interim assessment. For example, two-thirds of observations with different state and assessment SRD designations belonged to ELs, although the EL population made up less than 18% of the sample for the evaluation. Additionally, ELs who had different state and assessment SRD designations were more likely to be non-English proficient than ELs whose state-reported SRD designation matched their interim assessment designation. These discrepancies may be because the interim assessments used are not well suited to measuring the achievement levels and proficiency of students with a variety of learning styles and needs.

The following analysis uses the state-reported SRD classification, unless otherwise specified, as this classification is used for official READ Act purposes.

## **Changes in Students' SRD Statuses**

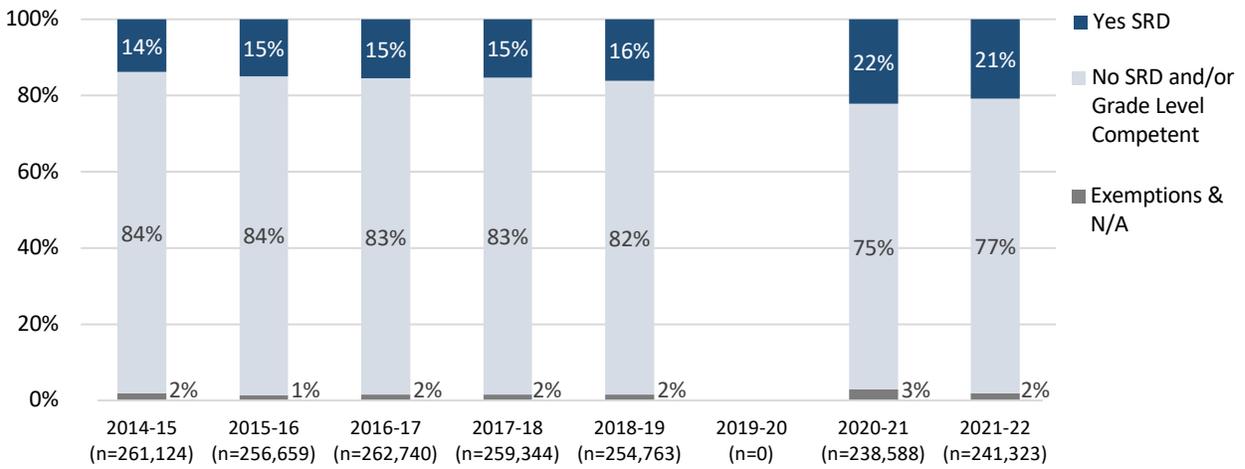
### **Students Assessed and Overall Trends**

The total number of students assessed in 2022 rose from the dip experienced during 2021, when schools continued to grapple with the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Schools assessed nearly 3,000 more students in 2022 than in 2021. Although there was an increase, the 2022 total was still approximately 13,000 less than the total assessed in spring 2019 (testing was not reported during the 2019–2020 school year due to a statewide assessment pause during the COVID-19 pandemic). Additionally, while the total number of students identified with SRDs was lower during the 2021–2022 school year than during the historic high of the 2020–2021 school year, it has not returned to the average of previous school years. While the percentage of students identified



with SRDs in spring semesters had been holding at around 15% for the last several years (i.e., from 2015–2019), it jumped to 22% in the 2020–2021 school year and remained higher than usual at 21% during the 2021–2022 school year (Exhibit 22).

**Exhibit 22. Statewide Student SRD Status by School Year**



Note. SRD = significant reading deficiency.

### Student Movement Between SRD Statuses

Looking at movement between SRD designations gives a more nuanced picture of student pathways. Students SRD statuses can be broadly categorized into a few categories: being designated as having an SRD, being designated as not having an SRD, or being exempt from SRD classification. Students move between these statuses year to year based on their classifications which are guided by their interim assessment scores during the Spring semester. Prior to the 2020–2021 academic year, around 12,000 to 13,000 students per year went from being designated as not having an SRD to being designated as having one in the following year (about 4.7% to 5% each year), while approximately 7,300 to 8,400 students went from being designated as having an SRD to no longer having one (about 2.9% to 3.3% each year). Over 14,000 students went from



having a designation of no SRD in the 2018–2019 school year to having one a designation of having an SRD in the 2020–2021 school year (5.9%), while only 4,000 students were moved from being designated as having an SRD to no longer having one (1.7%). That is, more students than usual were designated as having an SRD after being identified as not having one in the 2018–2019 academic year (5.9%), and fewer students were exited from SRD designation (1.7%). The trend reversed in 2021–2022—fewer students went from not being designated as having an SRD to being classified as having an SRD—4.7%, 1.2 percentage points lower than last year—while nearly three times as many students went from having an SRD status to no longer having an SRD status (1.7% (3,995 students) in 2020–2021 to 4.6% (11,112 students) in 2021–2022) (Exhibit 23).

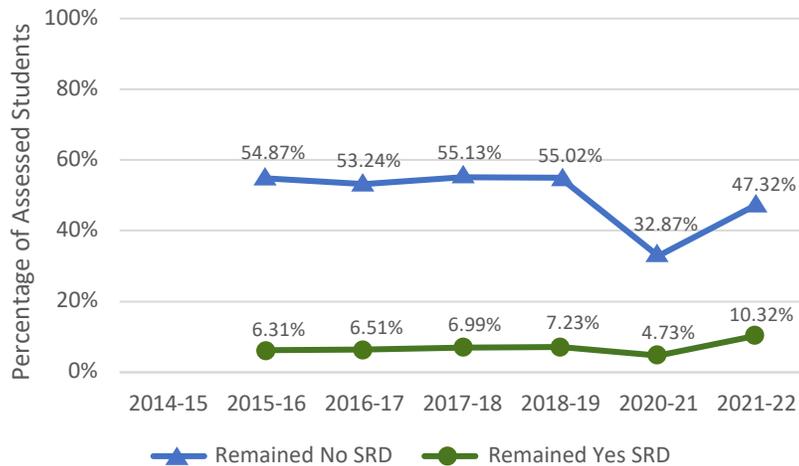
### Exhibit 23. Assessed Students Moving to or from an SRD Designation Over Time

Percentage	2015–2016	2016–2017	2017–2018	2018–2019	2020–2021	2021–2022
<b>No SRD to Yes SRD</b>	4.8%	5.0%	4.7%	5.0%	5.9%	4.7%
<b>Yes SRD to No SRD</b>	3.0%	3.0%	3.3%	2.9%	1.7%	4.6%
<b>Counts</b>						
<b>No SRD to Yes SRD</b>	12,201	13,071	12,221	12,638	14,098	11,453
<b>Yes SRD to No SRD</b>	7,623	7,819	8,447	7,335	3,995	11,112

Additionally, the percentage of students who remained designated as not having an SRD in 2020–2021 or 2021–2022, nearly reached prepandemic rates. From 2015–2016 through 2018–2019, between 53% and 55% of students remained designated as not having an SRD from year to year. During the 2020–2021 school year, that percentage fell to 33% as more students were designated as having an SRD during the COVID-19 pandemic. During the 2021–2022 school year, the percentage rose to 47% (Exhibit 24).



**Exhibit 24. Percentage of Assessed Students Remaining Yes or No SRD Over Time**



Note. SRD = significant reading deficiency.

Rates of movement between SRD designations differ by student identity. ELs, students with disabilities, and students with IEPs experienced higher rates of movement between SRD designations than their peers, that is, these students were more likely to go from being designated as not having an SRD to having an SRD in the following year and were also more likely to be exited from their designation of having an SRD to either not having an SRD or an exemption status. This finding was consistent across years (Exhibit 25).

**Exhibit 25. Student Movement between Yes and No SRD Designations by Identity**

	2015–2016	2016–2017	2017–2018	2018–2019	2020–2021	2021–2022
<b>All Students</b>						
No SRD to Yes SRD	4.8%	5.0%	4.7%	5.0%	5.9%	4.7%
Yes SRD to No SRD	3.0%	3.0%	3.3%	2.9%	1.7%	4.6%
<b>English Learners</b>						
No SRD to Yes SRD	7.8%	7.6%	7.4%	7.5%	9.3%	6.3%
Yes SRD to No SRD	5.2%	5.3%	5.6%	4.7%	2.7%	7.1%
<b>Students with IEPs</b>						
No SRD to Yes SRD	9.0%	9.6%	8.8%	8.9%	10.7%	7.2%
Yes SRD to No SRD	5.3%	5.6%	6.0%	5.5%	3.0%	6.2%

Note. IEP = Individualized Education Program; SRD = significant reading deficiency.



**Student Movement Between SRD Status by Race and Age**

SRD designations and movement patterns vary by student race. A higher percentage of Black students are reclassified as having or not having an SRD each year than their peers (Exhibit 26). American Indian/Native Alaskan students and Hispanic students also experience higher rates of reclassification between statuses than their peers who are White, Asian, or two or more races (Exhibit 27). While being designated as SRD may increase the supports given to those students, a higher percentage of students of particular races moving between designations (disproportional to their percentage of enrollment) may indicate that supports are not equally targeted, effective, or consistent across students of different races.

**Exhibit 26. Percentage of Assessed Students by Race Moving from Not Being Designated with an SRD to Being Designated with an SRD by Year**

	2015– 2016	2016– 2017	2017– 2018	2018– 2019	2020– 2021	2021– 2022
Asian	2.6%	3.0%	2.9%	2.5%	3.0%	2.9%
American Indian/Native Alaskan	6.8%	7.5%	6.3%	8.5%	8.0%	6.8%
Black	6.0%	6.7%	5.8%	6.1%	7.5%	5.2%
Hispanic	7.0%	6.9%	6.7%	7.1%	8.6%	6.1%
Native Hawaiian	4.1%	2.9%	5.1%	4.2%	6.2%	5.6%
White	3.4%	3.7%	3.5%	3.7%	4.3%	4.0%
Two or More Races	3.6%	4.2%	3.9%	4.0%	4.7%	3.9%

Note. SRD = significant reading deficiency.

**Exhibit 27. Percentage of Assessed Students by Race Moving from Being Designated with an SRD to Not Being Designated with an SRD by Year**

	2015– 2016	2016– 2017	2017– 2018	2018– 2019	2020– 2021	2021– 2022
Asian	2.5%	2.6%	3.2%	2.9%	1.6%	3.6%
American Indian/Native Alaskan	4.2%	4.2%	3.6%	4.1%	1.7%	5.8%
Black	6.0%	6.7%	5.8%	6.1%	7.5%	5.2%
Hispanic	3.6%	3.9%	4.6%	3.9%	2.2%	6.5%
Native Hawaiian	2.6%	4.2%	2.0%	3.6%	1.8%	5.6%
White	2.1%	2.0%	2.4%	2.2%	1.3%	3.4%
Two or More Races	2.4%	2.5%	2.6%	2.5%	1.6%	3.5%



*Note.* SRD = significant reading deficiency.

Additionally, older students were more likely than younger students to continue to be classified as having an SRD in the following year. Of the kindergarten students who were classified as having an SRD, 31% were no longer classified as having an SRD at the end of 1st grade, however, only 24% of 2nd-grade students who were classified as having an SRD moved off of their SRD designation by the end of 3rd grade.

### **Student Movement Between READ Plan Statuses**

During the Year 3 evaluation, patterns of student movement on and off of READ Plans was also examined. Under ideal implementation of the READ Act, all students designated as having an SRD are given a READ Plan which lays out supports they will receive in areas needed. Even if students are no longer designated as having an SRD, their READ Plan should remain with them until they are reading at grade level according to assessments. In practice, site visits revealed some confusion around READ Plan implementation, integration with other student plans such as IEPs, and READ Plans following students past the 3rd grade (See Chapter 4 for additional discussion).

Student READ Plan status is indicated in one of three ways: having a READ Plan, not having a READ Plan, or not eligible for a READ Plan (implying students have never been designated as having an SRD). So, while one would not expect the rate of students moving off of SRD status to track with the rate of students no longer having a READ Plan, one would expect the rate of students moving onto SRD status to track with the rate of students newly having a READ Plan. The data show that this was not the case—from 2015–2016 to 2021–2022, a lower proportion (between 2.5 and 4 percentage points) of students per year went from not having a READ Plan to having a READ Plan than students not being designated with an SRD to being designated with an SRD. Students who were at one point designated as having an SRD and exited and identified as no longer having an SRD who then were reidentified with an SRD in a later year



might explain part of this difference, as they would have continued to carry their READ Plan with them if they were not reading at grade level. Across all years, 14% of students who exited SRD status were redesignated with an SRD in a later year.<sup>20</sup>

### **CMAS Proficiency and SRD Status**

Students first take the CMAS assessment in the 3rd grade, the final year in which interim READ Act assessments are given. Since the goal of the READ Act is to identify struggling readers and provide them with the support they need to read proficiently by the end of 3rd grade, 3rd-grade CMAS scores provide one way to gauge the extent to which early literacy instruction and interventions have moved students towards 3rd-grade reading proficiency. Since the 2014–2015 school year, fewer than 4.5% of students per year who had ever been identified as having an SRD achieved proficiency on the CMAS ELA exam in the 3rd grade (i.e., met or exceeded expectations).

In Year 2 of the evaluation, students who had at any point in K–3 been identified with an SRD had very different success rates on the CMAS ELA exam than their peers who had never been identified with an SRD—more than half of students who had never been identified with an SRD met or exceeded proficiency on the CMAS ELA exam in 3rd grade, compared with less than 5% of students who had ever been identified with an SRD. That trend continued in the 2021–2022 school year, with only 4.1% of students who had ever been identified with an SRD reaching proficiency (Exhibit 28). However, among students who had never been identified with an SRD, 55.2% reached proficiency on the 3rd-grade CMAS ELA exam, the highest rate observed during the READ Act data collection period (2014–2015 to present).

It is worth noting that the number of assessed students remains depressed from the 2018–2019 school year, although the composition of

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<sup>20</sup> Note that this analysis only includes students who have recorded READ Act data following their first reclassification to not having an SRD (n = 46,138).



identities of students assessed remains comparable to previous years (race and ethnicity, English-language proficiency status, disability status, etc.). Additionally, schools that received ELGs were examined to see if there were differences in CMAS proficiency rates. Proficiency rates of students who have ever or never been designated as having an SRD were comparable at sites that had ever received an ELG to sites that had not.

**Exhibit 28. Statewide 3rd-Grade English Language Arts CMAS Proficiency by SRD Status**

SRD Status	Rating	2014–2015	2015–2016	2016–2017	2017–2018	2018–2019	2020–2021	2021–2022
Ever SRD	Did not yet meet, partially met, or approached expectations	99.3%	98.7%	97.4%	96.4%	95.6%	96.0%	95.9%
	Met or exceeded expectations	0.7%	1.3%	2.6%	3.6%	4.4%	4.0%	4.1%
Never SRD	Did not yet meet, partially met, or approached expectations	55.0%	54.7%	47.9%	47.2%	45.9%	48.3%	44.8%
	Met or exceeded expectations	45.0%	45.3%	52.1%	52.8%	54.1%	51.7%	55.2%

Note. CMAS = Colorado Measures of Academic Success; SRD = significant reading deficiency.

**CMAS Reading Sub score**

This year, the Reading subscore of the CMAS ELA exam was examined in addition to the overall composite score. The findings are similar to those when examining the overall score—students who were ever designated as having an SRD were unlikely to meet or exceed expectations on the CMAS ELA exam reading subsection. Students who had never been designated as having an SRD met or exceeded expectations at a rate of between 51.3% and 55.8% over the same period (Exhibit 29).



### Exhibit 29. Statewide 3rd-Grade English Language Arts CMAS Reading Subscore Proficiency by SRD Status

		2017– 2018	2018– 2019	2020– 2021	2021– 2022
Ever SRD	Did Not Meet Expectations	95.8%	94.8%	95.8%	95.4%
	Met or Exceeded Expectations	4.2%	5.2%	4.2%	4.6%
Never SRD	Did Not Meet Expectations	47.4%	45.6%	48.7%	44.2%
	Met or Exceeded Expectations	52.6%	54.4%	51.3%	55.8%

Note. SRD = significant reading deficiency.

### CMAS and SRD for students with IEPs and ELs

As in Year 2, students with IEPs or ELs who were also identified as having an SRD reached proficiency on the CMAS ELA exam at lower rates than their general education peers who had been identified with SRDs. Only 1.3% of students designated as SRD who also had IEPs demonstrated proficiency. Students with IEPs who are not designated as having an SRD had different outcomes, with 34.3% reaching proficiency which is in line with previous years. 2.5% of students designated with SRDs who are also learning English reached proficiency. In contrast, 34.3% of students learning English who are not designated as having an SRD reached proficiency which is in line with the 2018–2019 rate. Only 0.5% of students with an IEP, EL designation, and SRD designation reach proficiency, compared with 16.4% of their peers who are not identified with an SRD. This suggests that students with dual identifications continue to be underserved by the READ Act on their journey to reading English at grade level by the end of the 3rd grade.

Alongside these findings that certain characteristics significantly affect the likelihood of being proficient on CMAS, the grade level in which a student is first identified as having an SRD also effects proficiency rates in 3rd grade. After controlling for EL status, IEP status, and race and ethnicity, students first identified with SRDs in 1st grade were about 2 times more likely than students identified with SRDs in kindergarten to not meet proficiency expectations on



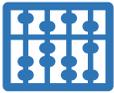
CMAS. Similarly, students who first received an SRD designation in 2nd grade were 3.5 times more likely to not meet proficiency standards compared with students identified with SRDs in kindergarten—students first identified in 3rd grade were 6 times more likely. These results emphasize the importance of early identification and the necessity for early intervention to improve students' chances of meeting proficiency standards at the end of 3rd grade.



# 8

## Conclusions

- Reversing trends from the pandemic, fewer students were identified as having an SRD and more students exited from SRD status than in the previous year
- There are continued challenges for students ever identified as having a SRD achieving proficiency on the CMAS ELA exam in third grade, particularly for those students with multiple identifications
- The requirement for evidence-based reading was perceived as highly impactful, promoting collaboration, a common language, and instruction grounded in the science of reading
- Districts and schools who received ELGs reported strong, positive support for the grants



With 3 years of evaluation data collected, the evaluation team is framing its conclusions to align with each of the four legislative priorities, including recommendations for CDE to best support further improvement in READ Act implementation.

### **1) Help State Policymakers and District Leaders Understand Impacts of READ Act Funding and Support on Students, Families, Schools, and Districts**

#### **Postpandemic Recovery**

*Reversing trends from the pandemic, during the 2021–2022 school year fewer students were identified as having an SRD and more students exited from SRD status than in the previous year.* In 2021–2022, 4.7% of students were newly identified as having an SRD. This is 1.2 percentage points lower than in the previous year. In addition, nearly three times as many students were exited from SRD status compared with the previous year (1.7% of K–3 students in 2020–2021 to 4.6% K–3 students in 2021–2022).

Additionally, the percentage of students who remained designated as not having an SRD in 2020–2021 or 2021–2022 nearly reset to prepandemic rates. From 2015–2016 through 2018–2019, between 53% and 55% of students remained designated as not having an SRD from year to year. During the 2020–2021 school year, that percentage fell to 33% as more students were designated as having an SRD during the COVID-19 pandemic. During the 2021–2022 school year, the percentage rose to 47%.

Unfortunately, in line with findings from the previous 2 years, **only 4.1% of students who had ever been identified with an SRD reached proficiency on the CMAS ELA exam in 3rd grade in the 2021–2022 school year** compared with 55.2% of students who had never been identified with an SRD reaching proficiency on the 3rd-grade CMAS ELA exam, the highest rate observed during the READ Act data collection period (2014–2015 to present). The findings when



analyzing the Reading subscore of the CMAS ELA were similar to those when examining the overall score—students who were ever designated as having an SRD were unlikely to meet or exceed expectations on the CMAS ELA exam reading subsection.

### **Continued Challenges for Students With Multiple Identifications**

In line with findings from the previous 2 years, *students with IEPs or ELs who were also identified as having an SRD reached proficiency on the CMAS ELA exam at lower rates than their general education peers who had been identified with SRDs*. Less than 1% of students designated as having an SRD who also had IEPs demonstrated proficiency (.3%). Students with IEPs who were not designated as having an SRD had different outcomes, with 27% reaching proficiency, which is in line with previous years.

A similar pattern exists for ELs. Less than 1% of students designated with SRDs who are also ELs reached proficiency (.6%). In contrast, 29% of ELs who are not designated as having an SRD reached proficiency, which is in line with the 2018–2019 rate. This suggests that students with dual identifications continue to be underserved by the READ Act on their journey to reading English at grade level by the end of 3rd grade. The evaluation of READ Act materials identified weaknesses in supports provided for ELs and students with IEPs.<sup>21</sup>

These challenges are likely related to continued challenges in serving students with multiple identifications identified by district- and school-based staff. District administrators reported less clarity about supporting non–general education students under the READ Act, specifically students with disabilities and ELs. In particular, exiting students with disabilities and ELs from SRD status, identifying which of their plans (READ Plan, IEP, etc.) should act as primary guidance, and understanding how to support students with multiple identifications (SRD and EL, etc.) were areas of confusion. A sizeable minority of teachers also reporting feeling unprepared to support students with IEPs under the READ Act.

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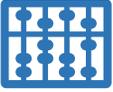
<sup>21</sup> See <https://www.cde.state.co.us/coloradoliteracy/readactevaluationmaterialsummary>.



### **The 45-Hour Professional Development Requirement Was Impactful on Teacher Practice**

By May 2023, some 13,218 teachers had completed a READ Act–required evidence-based training in teaching reading and had passed the end-of-course assessment. ***Educator role groups showed high rates of perceived usefulness, applicability, and quality of the training program, according to this year’s teacher, coach, and principal inventories. Site visit schools uniformly reported seeing positive impacts on teacher practice resulting from the training requirement.*** Perceived impacts showed up in several ways. First, schools reported greater teacher knowledge of evidence-based practices related to the five components of reading. Second, schools reported positive shifts in teachers’ instructional approaches more aligned with evidence-based practices taught in the trainings. In particular, teachers paid more explicit and systematic attention to teaching phonics and phonemic awareness. Third, schools reported that teachers were more effective at supporting the needs of different students. Site visit schools noted that teachers had improved their ability to identify student needs, design lessons and differentiate instruction according to those needs, and select materials targeted to meet needs in an engaging manner. Ongoing coaching from a literacy specialist and dedicated time to participate in professional learning communities with peers were cited as the most effective structures for supporting implementation of new practices learned in the training. While all site visit schools reported some type of impact on teachers, a sizeable number of schools also noted evidence of improved student learning as a result of the training.

This kind of pattern would not be surprising in the context of adopting a whole-school instructional reform such as the science of reading approach. Typically, shifts in student learning are first preceded by shifts in teacher practice, which in turn often require shifts in teacher knowledge, beliefs, and mindsets. In



this sense, the findings related to professional development are consistent with expected patterns and will be a focus of the evaluation moving forward.

## **2) Learn and Share Successes and Best Practices Across Districts and Schools**

### **Consistent Evidence Of Intentional District-Wide Alignment of Reading Approaches, Instructional Materials, and Supports Aligned With the Science of Reading**

Building on findings from the first 2 years of the evaluation, there was consistent evidence of widespread implementation of reading instruction aligned with READ Act requirements that is focused on the five foundational reading skills. The majority of teachers responding to the inventory reported daily instruction in each of these foundational skills. Site visit participants also emphasized the importance of data-driven instruction and targeted interventions based on student needs and frequent monitoring of progress. This included providing quality core instruction for all students and supporting students identified with SRDs with supplemental and intervention programming aligned with specific areas for skill development as specified in their READ Plan.

### **Strong, Positive Support for ELGs**

Overall, school and district leaders in the site visits gave consistently strong, positive support for ELGs. These leaders indicated that the grants led directly to improved K–3 teacher instructional practices and improved student performance on literacy assessments. School and district leaders reported that ELG funding produced direct, positive changes in student reading performance that would not have happened without the grants. These leaders often stated that student performance improvements happened very rapidly, even after just 1 year of ELG implementation.

Bringing in an external literacy expert on a monthly basis to work with teachers was typically identified by school and district leaders as the single most impactful element of ELG-funded activities. Such external experts were highly



valued because they brought fresh perspectives and a high degree of credibility into schools. They also directly coached teachers, observed and modeled instruction, and leveraged extensive outside knowledge to help schools improve instruction. These outside consultants were routinely identified as the driving force behind needed changes to instructional practices and subsequent successes in raising student reading performance, which is consistent with findings about coaching and literature on the importance of job-embedded professional learning.<sup>22</sup>

### **Adoption and Implementation of Evidence-Based Instructional Materials**

The main successes reported by district administrators and staff at site visit schools were centered on the adoption and implementation of evidence-based instructional materials and the usefulness of the Advisory List, both of which resulted in student engagement and learning. School staff reported that these evidence-based programs aligned with the science of reading helped students develop foundational skills and led to student engagement, viewed as a key mediator of growth in reading proficiency. The usefulness of the Advisory List was viewed as another success. Site visit participants reported that the Advisory List promoted the adoption of evidence-based programs aligned with the science of reading and that guidance from CDE was helpful for selecting programs and understanding the purpose behind the READ Act. Site visit participants reported that the adoption of these evidence-based programs from the Advisory List supported the development of foundational skills and fostered student engagement.

### **Evidence-Based Training in Teaching Reading Promoted Collaboration and a Common Language**

Site visit schools noted the benefit of teachers going through the training at the same time, as it gave them an opportunity to support each other and

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<sup>22</sup> See <https://www.cde.state.co.us/coloradoliteracy/readactevaluationmaterialsummary>.



promoted collaboration within the school, especially if the administration provided dedicated time for a professional learning community or similar structure to support continued professional learning. The CDE training, in particular, provided a “common language” around the science of reading that helped school teams achieve consistent understanding of instructional expectations. It also facilitated dialogue within the school about approaches to reading, encouraging a collaborative culture to flourish. Providing coaches with the opportunity to collaborate with each other was also cited as a successful support structure. According to one school, literacy interventionists participated in a monthly district meeting to network with interventionists at other schools, share best practices, review their data, and craft goals.

### **Body of Evidence Approach Helpful for Designating Students and Pinpointing Specific Areas of Literacy Learning Challenges**

Four of the 10 site visit schools reported that using a body of evidence was helpful for designating students as having an SRD and pinpointing specific areas of need to personalize READ Plans. Four schools also emphasized the success of district guidance and support for identifying and supporting students identified with SRDs as well as alignment across grade levels which promoted collaboration and consistency. Additional areas of success cited by schools included continuous progress monitoring and opportunities to identify and celebrate student growth.

### **3) Inform Improvements to the READ Act by Understanding How Funds Were Used**

According to principal inventory respondents, per-pupil funding was spent on numerous resources to meet READ Act implementation requirements. READ Act funds were most frequently used for the salary of reading coaches and to purchase K–3 core, supplemental, or intervention instructional programs on the



Advisory List of Instructional Programming<sup>23</sup> (Exhibit 30), with about half of respondents reporting these uses. Principals also reported using funds to provide one-on-one or small group tutoring to students identified with SRDs (24%), purchase K–3 interim or diagnostic and summative assessments on the Advisory List of Assessments<sup>24</sup> (22%), and purchase K–3 supplemental or intervention materials or programs not on the Advisory List of Instructional Programming (20%). Few principals reported using these funds for professional development purposes, and nine (9%) principals reported not being aware of how READ Act funds were spent in their school.

### Exhibit 30. Use of READ Act Per-Pupil Funds According to School Principals

READ Act Funding Use	Percentage of Principal Responses (Frequency)
Purchase of K–3 core, supplemental, or intervention instructional programs on the Advisory List of Instructional Programming	46% ( <i>n</i> = 46)
Purchase of K–3 supplemental or intervention materials or programs not on the Advisory List of Instructional Programming	20% ( <i>n</i> = 20)
Purchase of K–3 interim or diagnostic and summative assessments on the Advisory List of Assessments	22% ( <i>n</i> = 22)
Purchase of K–3 professional development programs on the Advisory List of Professional Development	12% ( <i>n</i> = 12)
Purchase of K–3 professional development programs not on the Advisory List of Professional Development	3% ( <i>n</i> = 3)
Covering part or all of the salary for (a) reading coach(es)	51% ( <i>n</i> = 50)
Purchasing external consultant services to provide teacher professional development	6% ( <i>n</i> = 6)
Providing one-on-one or small group tutoring to students with significant reading deficiencies	24% ( <i>n</i> = 24)

*Note.* READ = Reading to Ensure Academic Development.

In the LEP inventory, district administrators also reported on the success of READ Act per-pupil funding in exiting students identified with SRDs off that status and in raising 3rd-grade reading achievement levels. District

<sup>23</sup> For more information on the Advisory List of Instructional Programming, see <https://www.cde.state.co.us/coloradoliteracy/advisorylistofinstructionalprogramming2020>.

<sup>24</sup> For more information on the Advisory List of Assessments, see <https://www.cde.state.co.us/coloradoliteracy/readact/resourcebank>.



administrators provided similar responses in discussing the success of per-pupil funds in achieving these two READ Act goals. Only about 10% of administrators reported that per-pupil funding was “very successful” in achieving these READ Act goals; about a third reported that the funding was “successful,” and slightly more reported that it was only “somewhat successful.”

#### **4) Get Direct Feedback From School and District Leaders About How CDE Can Best Support Further Improvement in READ Act Implementation**

In the final legislative priority, the evaluation is tasked with identifying actionable recommendations that can help CDE better support districts and schools:

**Recommendation 1: CDE and the external evaluation should focus attention on persistently low rates of proficiency and explore the gap between students who are not designated as having an SRD (either through exiting SRD status or whose interim assessment scores are above the threshold for SRD) but do not reach proficiency on the CMAS ELA assessment.** Despite a return to prepandemic rates of SRD identification and exit from SRD status, proficiency rates on the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade CMAS ELA exam, a key goal for the READ Act, remain stubbornly low, especially for students who have ever been identified as having an SRD (4.1.% in 2021-22 school year).

**Recommendation 2: CDE should identify additional resources and strategies to better serve students with multiple designations. For example, additional professional learning that focuses on teaching reading to ELs and students with IEPs and specific recommendations and guidance for areas of confusion (primary guidance, exiting students with multiple designation).** Third grade proficiency rates on the CMAS ELA were the lowest for students with multiple identifications. Less than 1% of students designated as having an SRD who also had IEPs and 2.5% of students identified as having an SRD who were learning English demonstrated proficiency on the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade CMAS



ELA exam. These rates are likely related to continued challenges identified by district- and school-based staff serving these students under the READ Act.

**Recommendation 3: CDE should continue to support districts and schools to provide ongoing, job-embedded coaching to sustain implementation of new teacher learning such that it translates into meaningful improvements in student outcomes.** There was widespread agreement among principals, coaches, and teachers that the requirement for evidence-based training in teaching reading was highly impactful, resulting in greater knowledge of evidence-based practices, positive shifts in instructional practice, and increased effectiveness at supporting the needs of different students. In line with research, site visit schools cited ongoing coaching from a literacy specialist and dedicated time to participate in professional learning with peers as highly effective structures for supporting and sustaining these changes.

**Recommendation 4: CDE could consider providing periodic grant funds to support ongoing visits from external literacy consultants for schools that have successfully completed their ELGs to help sustain their impact and combat staff turnover. In addition, CDE could consider asking districts and schools to outline their plans and strategies for sustaining these positions past the life of the grant.** Districts and schools who received ELGs gave consistently strong, positive supports for the grants and reported improved instructional practices and student performance as a result of the funding. External literacy consultants were viewed as critical to those improvements and the lack of continued funding for these experts was cited as a key barrier to sustain the impact of the grants, especially given staff turnover.



## Appendices

- **Appendix 1: Site Visit Selection**
- **Appendix 2: Data Sources**
- **Appendix 3: Additional Student Outcomes and Reading Approach Exhibits**
- **Appendix 4: Protocols**



## Appendix 1: Site Visit Selection

Based on findings from the initial 2 years of the evaluation and goals of the READ Act (helping students with SRDs achieve proficiency at 3rd grade), site visit selection in Year 3 shifted its focus to identify schools (and their LEPs) who have relatively high rates of students who have ever been labeled SRD who partially meet, meet, or exceed expectations on the 3rd-grade CMAS ELA exam. The evaluation team selected sites to understand what, if any, commonalities exist among sites that have higher rates of students scoring just below, at, or above proficiency on the CMAS ELA.

To select schools for this year’s site visits, the evaluation team created a dataset of school- and LEP-contextual data from publicly available CDE and U.S. Department of Education sources combined with CDE-provided funding information about ELGs. Evaluation team analysts first determined which schools and LEPs were eligible for site visits. While all schools that had received ELGs (either as part of a cohort or as a professional development grant) or per-pupil funds through their LEPs were eligible, the analysts first eliminated schools or LEPs that had participated in site visits during Years 1 and 2 from the potential pool to reduce their administrative burden. In the case of particularly large LEPs, such as Denver Public Schools, this was not always possible. Next, analysts sorted schools by the percentage of students who had ever been designated as having an SRD who scored in the bands of “Partially Meets,” “Meets,” or “Exceeds Expectations” on the CMAS ELA exam during the 2020–2021 school year (or, for ELG sites, within the last 3 school years).<sup>25</sup>

While a representative sample of sites was not the intention of the site visits during this year, a limited set of school-level characteristics were examined

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<sup>25</sup> Bands were originally limited to “Meets” or “Exceeds Expectations” but expanded to include “Partially Meets” to have enough schools for the sample.



alongside the percentage of scorers to encourage a balanced set of site visit schools. Additional school-level characteristics in the analyses included

- ELG types (for representation from all cohorts and professional development grant years, with an emphasis on more recent years and cohorts);
- Colorado regions (for a diversity of regions); and
- urbanicity (for the representation of cities, suburbs, towns, and rural areas),

Analysts used the dataset to choose school sites using the procedures and rules of thumb that follow. The process is rooted in data but also relies on evaluation team analysts' judgment as well as practical considerations including geographic location because this year's LEP visits were in person. Because of the timing of the site visits occurring during winter, there were some limitations on geographies accessible to the staff performing the site visits. Additionally, some schools or districts initially selected were unable to participate in the site visits due to timing, staff shortages, and so on and were replaced with the next-best available school choice. Other limitations and considerations taken into site selection are discussed below. If another set of analysts were using the same data and followed the same procedure, the lists would be expected to be similarly composed but not necessarily include the exact same schools.

#### LEP Procedure:

- Ensure the district had not yet received a site visit.
- Sort LEPs that have at least 15 Ever SRD students meeting one of the three proficiency categories in the 2020–2021 school year.
- Within an eligible LEP, look for the school with the highest percentage of Ever SRD students meeting one of the three proficiency categories of the eligible schools in the district that also has
  - at least five students, preferably more, that meet the parameter in a given year,



- comparable percentages of movement, and
- comparable number of students moving in other years of data.

### ELG Procedure:

- Ensure the school had not yet received a site visit.
- Sort ELG schools that have about five, preferably more, Ever SRD students meeting one of the three proficiency categories in the last 3 years and examine the
  - percentage of students meeting the parameter, and
  - percentage and number of students meeting the parameter in recent years.

Analysts selected 21 sites to visit: 11 ELG sites and 10 LEP sites. If a site was unable to participate, analysts selected an alternative site with a similar rate of student movement to proficiency and, if possible, school characteristics. This was not always possible, particularly when choosing ELG sites. There are a limited number of ELG sites due to the nature of the grant. In addition, several sites that met the selection parameters had already been visited. Lastly, there are a limited number of schools who received an ELG that met the parameter of moving at least five students in a given year who had ever been designated as having an SRD who scored in the bands of “Partially Meets,” “Meets,” or “Exceeds Expectations” on the CMAS ELA exam in the 3rd grade. After discussions with CDE, LEPs, and school sites, three ELG sites were selected by CDE based on their perceptions of successful READ Act implementation and related student outcomes; one ELG site was selected to explore its dual participation in the ELG and Structured Literacy programs.



## Appendix 2: Data Sources

### Available Data

The evaluation drew from a wide range of data sources, including

- extant student-, school-, and LEP-level data from CDE and publicly available datasets;<sup>1</sup>
- inventories of LEP staff and principals, reading coaches, and teachers at schools that received READ Act funding and participated in READ Act activities; and
- site visits with a sample of schools receiving ELGs and LEPs that received READ Act funding, with a focus on schools and LEPs that were successful (relative to others in the state) in helping students that were ever identified as having an SRD to score in the top three proficiency bands of the 3rd grade CMAS ELA exam.

The following sections describe these data sources and detail data processing procedures and data issues that arose and decisions that were made to resolve these issues.

### Extant Data

The evaluation relied on a variety of student-, school-, and LEP-level extant data obtained directly from CDE and from publicly available resources, including CDE's Education Statistics page and the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). These data provided information regarding K–8 students' performance on READ Act interim assessments and state-level assessments, demographic characteristics of K–12 students, READ Act literacy program data, READ Act budget information, ELG financial data, and school- and LEP-level contextual data.



### Student-Level Data

#### READ Act Collection

CDE requires districts annually to report information regarding the prevalence of SRD classifications among K–3 students, through their READ Act collection, to determine the per-pupil funding for districts. The READ Act data available for the evaluation currently span from 2013–2014 through 2021–2022 (with the exception of 2019–2020, due to the statewide assessment pause during the COVID-19 pandemic). Due to data irregularities in the 2013–2014 school year (i.e., the first year of data collection for the READ Act) and discussions with CDE, the first year of data used for the analysis is from the 2014–2015 school year.

Through this collection, CDE collects, for each student, the name of the READ Act–administered interim assessment, along with the student’s score and date of administration, SRD and READ Plan designations (including exemption status), intervention supports, retention information, and demographic data (i.e., gender, race/ethnicity, free and reduced-price lunch status, special education status, EL status, and gifted status). These data are reported for all K–3 students enrolled in each district at the time of data submission. READ Plan designation and demographic information is also provided for 4th–12th-grade students who exited 3rd grade and remain on a READ Plan.<sup>26</sup> Analysts created additional variables to aid analysis, for example, indicators of student movement between LEPs and schools and more granular categorizations of how students transition between SRD statuses.

The READ Act data used for the evaluation consisted of 1,774,541 K–3 observations across 7 years and 250,641 4th–12th-grade observations across 5 years. The 4th–12th-grade observations for the 2014–2015 and 2015–2016 school years were not included due to a large percentage of grade

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<sup>26</sup> Approximately 23% of the 4th–12th-grade students provided in the READ Act file were never classified as having an SRD in K–3 (according to the data provided for the evaluation), and about 8% were never given a READ Plan in K–3.



misclassifications. Over 90% of K–3 student observations are recorded as taking a READ Act interim assessment that is currently approved by the state. Some analyses for the evaluation are restricted to students taking these currently approved assessments.<sup>27</sup> These interim assessments include the following:

- aimswebPlus (English and Spanish)
- Acadience Reading
- Indicadores Dinámicos del Éxito en la Lectura (IDEL)
- FastBridge
- i-Ready
- ISIP (Reading and Lectura Temprana)
- PALS (English and Spanish)
- Star Early Learning

### State-Level Assessment Data

To evaluate student growth and expand the understanding of how proficiency on READ Act interim assessments align with state-level educational outcomes, WestEd requested additional state-level assessment data from CDE, in particular CMAS scores and their alternatives (which included the Colorado Spanish Language Arts [CSLA] assessment for eligible ELs<sup>28</sup> and the Colorado Alternate Assessment [CoAlt] for students with significant cognitive disabilities). The CMAS and CoAlt data available for the evaluation currently span from 2014–2015 through 2021–2022 (with the exception of 2019–2020) for 3rd through 8th grades, and the CSLA data available currently span from 2015–2016 through 2021–2022 for 3rd and 4th grades.

As there are 10 different READ Act interim assessments that K–3 students can take, the CMAS, CSLA, and CoAlt data provide the only consistent measure of academic success that is delivered statewide. Each year, CDE provides

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<sup>27</sup> The list of currently approved READ Act interim assessments can be found at <http://www.cde.state.co.us/coloradoliteracy/readinterimassessments>.

<sup>28</sup> The eligibility criteria for the CSLA assessment can be found at <https://www.cde.state.co.us/assessment/csla>.



CMAS ELA and math composite scores, proficiency levels, and reading scale scores; CSLA composite scores, proficiency levels, and reading scale scores; and CoAlt ELA and math proficiency levels. The reading scale scores for CMAS and CSLA are available beginning in the 2017–2018 school year.

### **Demographic Data**

CDE collects student demographic information in two different collections (i.e., an October collection and Student End-of-Year [SEOY] collection). The data available for the evaluation span from the 2014–2015 through 2021–2022 school years and include K–12 students in the October collection and K–8 students in the SEOY collection. These data have been used to facilitate analyses, including comparisons of student performance over time across a variety of peer and identity groups that are based on the following demographic characteristics: gender, race/ethnicity, EL status, free and reduced-price lunch status, IEP status, Section 504 handicapped status, gifted status, migrant status, homeless status, language proficiency, language background, disability type, and school Title I status. For the K–3 data (which are used for the primary analyses for the evaluation), analysts elected to use SEOY demographic data as suggested by CDE. October demographic data were used when SEOY demographic data were unavailable for a particular student or variable. Due to the shift in data source, some results may be slightly different from results in previous years, especially those pertaining to the identification of a student (i.e., EL status, IEP status).

Student-level datasets (i.e., READ Act data, state-level assessment data, and demographic data) were merged together using the masked student identifier that uniquely identifies each student across the state, and other identifiers such as grade level, school code, and district code, to create a single student-level longitudinal file describing demographic characteristics and academic performance of each student in each year available. The K–3 and 4th–12th-grade data were maintained in separate datasets as the evaluation focused primarily on the earlier grade levels.



## School and LEP-Level Data

### Literacy Program

Following the legislative update to the READ Act in 2019, CDE requires LEPs to report the READ Act–administered interim and diagnostic assessments in use in the LEP, along with their core, supplemental, and intervention instructional literacy programs for K–3 for each school in their district. Additionally, LEPs using READ Act and/or ELG funding for teacher professional development are required to provide information on how their professional development plan aligns with scientific and evidence-based literacy instruction.<sup>29</sup> These data are currently available for the 2020–2021 and 2021–2022 school years; the instructional literacy program data are also available for the 2022–2023 school year. These data will be discussed in future reports as it was not provided to the evaluation team at the time of analysis.

### READ Act Budget Data

CDE requires LEPs to submit their budget and a narrative explanation about the use of the READ Act funding received from the state. In the submission, LEPs must select from a list of “allowable activities” to indicate the ways in which they plan to use READ Act funds in the upcoming budget year (e.g., purchasing tutoring services, providing professional development programming to support educators in teaching reading) and provide a brief description of their plan to implement each selected activity. Finally, LEPs must submit a budget request that provides an expected cost per activity that they plan to conduct using READ Act funds. The READ Act budget data are available for the 2020–2021 and 2021–2022 school years; however, the 2020–2021 budget data will not be used for the evaluation due to data quality issues identified by CDE.

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<sup>29</sup> Additional information about literacy program data and reporting requirements can be found at <https://www.cde.state.co.us/coloradoliteracy/readdatapipeline#literacyandassessment>.



### ELG Data

The ELG program was established in 2012 to provide funds to schools to support their efforts to improve student literacy. Grants may be awarded to an applying LEP on a district-wide basis or to individual schools of the school district. Also, an LEP may apply individually or as part of a group of LEPs. The program consists of 1) the Comprehensive ELG program which provides funds to help insert essential components of reading instruction into all elements of K–3 teaching and 2) the ELG Annual Professional Development program which provides funds intended for early literacy professional development of elementary educators.

To date, there have been six cohorts of Comprehensive ELG grantees, with over \$30 million awarded in total across the lifespans of the first four cohorts (i.e., cohorts that completed the grant). As of 2018, the grant follows a 4-year cycle, with grantees having the opportunity to apply for an additional 1-year Sustainability Grant. The majority of the Comprehensive ELG data were obtained directly from CDE, with the remainder coming from CDE’s website on these programs.<sup>30</sup> In general, data include the cohort of the school, an indicator of whether the school was part of a group (or not) during the ELG application process, school-level ELG funding (by year) for schools that were not part of a group, the total amount of Comprehensive ELG funding for a school or group of schools, and an indicator of whether the school received the additional sustainability funding.

In 2018, the revised READ Act also authorized the ELG Professional Development program. To date, the Professional Development Program grants have been awarded four times (i.e., once per year from the 2019–2020 school year through the 2022–2023 school year). As with Comprehensive ELG data, the majority of ELG Professional Development data were obtained directly from

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<sup>30</sup> The publicly available Comprehensive ELG data can be found here: <https://www.cde.state.co.us/coloradoliteracy/comprehensiveelg>



CDE, with the remainder coming from CDE’s website on these programs.<sup>31</sup> In general, data include an indicator of whether the school received the ELG Professional Development grant, an indicator of whether the school was part of a group (or not) during the ELG application process, and ELG Professional Development funding amounts.

### **Publicly Available Contextual data**

Publicly available school- and LEP-level data for the 2014–2015 through 2021–2022 school years were retrieved from CDE’s Education Statistics website and select federal data sources, to provide contextual data about the sample of students used in analysis. Overall, data relate to the following and were retrieved from CDE’s website: grade-level, demographic, and instructional program enrollment; free and reduced-price lunch eligibility; mobility rates; LEP setting, rural-small rural designation, and region; and READ Act funding, per-pupil funding, and locale, state, and federal funding. School-level locale was retrieved from the NCES publicly available resources.

Student-level data discussed previously were merged with ELG program data and publicly available school and LEP contextual data using school and district codes to create two longitudinal datasets (one for K–3 students and one for 4th–12th-grade students). The K–3 file was provided to CDE, along with an accompanying codebook with a description of each variable and its associated values/codes. The 4th–12th-grade dataset does not currently include CMAS, CoAlt, and CSLA scores as additional identification data were needed to match 4th–8th-grade state assessment data with READ Act and demographic data.

### **Issues in Merging Student Data**

Three student-level datasets were used to create the primary K–3 longitudinal file used for the evaluation: 1) READ Act dataset; 2) CMAS, CSLA, and CoAlt state assessment dataset; and 3) demographic dataset. In merging

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<sup>31</sup> The publicly available ELG Professional Development data can be found at <https://www.cde.state.co.us/coloradoliteracy/elgprofessionaldevelopment>.



these datasets, analysts attempted to use student ID, grade level, school code, and district code, to ensure that the correct students were merged across each file. This method was also useful as some students had multiple observations within the demographic file due to switching schools and/or districts during the school year. As documented below, some data issues arose in cleaning and merging the three student-level files for the 2021–2022 school year. Once the 2021–2022 data was finalized, data were appended to the Year 2 evaluation dataset which contained the information for previous years of the evaluation (i.e., 2014–2015 through 2020–2021).

In merging the 2021–2022 CMAS, CSLA, and CoAlt state assessment data with the 2021–2022 READ Act data, about 3.5% of 3rd-grade students in the CMAS, CSLA, and CoAlt file did not match with a corresponding observation in the READ Act file. Given that the focus of the evaluation is on READ Act data, these students were not included in the analysis or dataset. Additionally, about 0.5% of 3rd grade students in the READ Act file did not have a corresponding CMAS, CSLA, or CoAlt score during the school year. Once the READ Act and state assessment data were combined, demographic data were merged to provide additional characteristics of students. Approximately 99.6% of students in the 2021–2022 assessment file had a corresponding match in the student end-of-year demographic file or October demographic file.

After the three student-level datasets were merged together and appended with the Year 2 evaluation file, analysts compared common variables across the datasets to examine whether there were further data issues. Most notably, there were 114 students across all 7 years of the evaluation that had a grade level in the READ Act file that was different from the grade level stated in the demographic file. Given the focus on individual grade levels, the evaluation team elected to drop these observations following discussions with CDE. Additionally, 10 students were observed as moving from a higher grade level in one school year to a lower grade level in the following school year. These



students were also dropped from the evaluation as there were concerns that different students may have been assigned the same student state ID.

The final Year 3 working data file for K–3 students contained 1,774,541 student-level observations, with each student observation containing assessment data, demographic information, and contextual information about the LEP and school they attended in a given year. The final 4th–12th-grade dataset contained 250,641 student-level observations and was cleaned in a similar manner; however, these data did not contain CMAS, CSLA, and CoAlt scores due to the unavailability (at the time of reporting) of new student IDs for 4th–12th grades (Exhibit A-1).

**Exhibit A-1. Data Elements and Sources**

Data source(s)	Enrollment <sup>a</sup>	Race/Ethnicity Distribution <sup>b</sup>	Other Enrollment of Interest <sup>c</sup>	Mobility Rate <sup>d</sup>	READ Act Funding	Grade-Level Distribution of Sample	Race/Ethnicity Distribution of Sample	Free/Reduced-Price Lunch Status of Sample	Other Student Demographics	Interim Assessment Usage	Interim Assessment Scores	READ Act Interventions	Student Movement Between SRD Designations	CMAS, CSLA, and CoAlt Scores and SRD Status
Publicly Available LEP- and School-Level Pupil Membership Data <sup>e</sup>	X	X	X	X										
Demographic Data, Provided by CDE						X	X	X	X					
READ Act Significant Reading Deficiency and READ Plan Data, Provided by CDE						X				X	X	X	X	X
CMAS, CSLA, and CoAlt Assessment Data, Provided by CDE						X								X
READ Act (Per-Pupil and ELG) Funding Data, Provided by CDE					X									





**Exhibit A-2. Geographic Characteristics of LEP Inventory Respondents**

Geographic Characteristic	Frequency (%) Among All LEPs in Colorado	Frequency (%) Among LEP Inventory Respondents
<b>Rural Designation<sup>a</sup></b>		
Rural	27.2% (n = 40)	33.3% (n = 25)
Small Rural	72.8% (n = 107)	66.7% (n = 50)
<b>Region<sup>b</sup></b>		
Northwest	11.1% (n = 22)	10.4% (n = 10)
Southwest	12.6% (n = 25)	11.5% (n = 11)
Northeast	17.1% (n = 34)	21.9% (n = 21)
Pikes Peak	15.1% (n = 30)	13.5% (n = 13)
West Central	7.0% (n = 14)	6.3% (n = 6)
North Central	10.6% (n = 21)	10.4% (n = 10)
Southeast	15.6% (n = 31)	14.6% (n = 14)
Metro	11.1% (n = 22)	11.5% (n = 11)
<b>Setting</b>		
Remote	42.8% (n = 86)	38.5% (n = 37)
Outlying Town	24.4% (n = 49)	31.3% (n = 30)
Urban-Suburban	8.5% (n = 17)	11.5% (n = 11)
Denver Metro	7.5% (n = 15)	9.4% (n = 9)
Outlying City	6.5% (n = 13)	9.4% (n = 9)
Colorado BOCES	10.0% (n = 20)	0% (n = 0)

<sup>a</sup> Rural designation only pertains to standard school districts (i.e., not including BOCES, Charter School Institute, or Colorado School for the Deaf and Blind).

<sup>b</sup> Region does not include Charter School Institute.

*Note.* BOCES = Boards of Cooperative Educational Services; LEP = Local Education Provider.

**Principal, Coach, and Teacher Inventory**

WestEd also inventoried principals, K–3 reading coaches, and K–3 reading teachers for the Year 3 evaluation. Primary topic areas inventoried were staff’s educational and professional backgrounds; perceived levels of influence in decisions about READ Act per-pupil spending; use of READ Act funds; use of different types of data and documentation to inform K–3 reading strategies; coaching and reading activities; methods to identify and exit students with SRDs



(including students with multiple identifications); the development, implementation, and integration of READ Plans; available support for coaches and teachers (including use of core, supplemental, and intervention curricula); overall district and state guidance; identifying and supporting students with an SRD after 3rd grade; professional development; and the 45-hour teacher training requirement. Inventories were administered from February 6 to April 28. In total, 108 principals (from 94 schools), 83 reading coaches (from 58 schools), and 289 teachers (from 87 schools), completed their respective inventory and had their responses used for the evaluation. School staff respondents were relatively representative of the overall school population in Colorado in terms of school locale (Exhibit A-3), with school respondents most likely to come from city schools and suburban schools. However, the distribution of LEPs of these school respondents differed from the overall state, with school respondents more likely to come from rural districts (rather than small rural districts) and LEPs in the Denver metro area.

**Exhibit A-3. Geographic Characteristics of School Inventory Respondents**

Geographic Characteristic	Frequency (%) Among All Schools in Colorado <sup>a</sup>	Frequency (%) Among School Inventory Respondents
<b>School Locale</b>		
City: Large	22.3% (n = 432)	24.7% (n = 23)
City: Mid	10.9% (n = 211)	5.4% (n = 5)
City: Small	2.9% (n = 56)	8.6% (n = 8)
Suburb: Large	23.4% (n = 454)	21.5% (n = 20)
Suburb: Mid	2.6% (n = 51)	4.3% (n = 4)
Suburb: Small	2.5% (n = 48)	2.2% (n = 2)
Town: Fringe	1.9% (n = 37)	3.2% (n = 3)
Town: Distant	1.9% (n = 37)	3.2% (n = 3)
Town: Remote	7.4% (n = 144)	11.8% (n = 11)
Rural: Fringe	8.5% (n = 165)	6.5% (n = 6)
Rural: Distant	5.9% (n = 114)	0% (n = 0)
Rural: Remote	9.9% (n = 191)	8.6% (n = 8)
<b>Rural Designation</b>		
Rural	27.4% (n = 40)	75.9% (n = 22)
Small Rural	72.6% (n = 106)	24.1% (n = 7)



Geographic Characteristic	Frequency (%) Among All Schools in Colorado <sup>a</sup>	Frequency (%) Among School Inventory Respondents
<b>Region<sup>b</sup></b>		
Northwest	10.5% ( <i>n</i> = 19)	12.9% ( <i>n</i> = 12)
Southwest	12.2% ( <i>n</i> = 22)	1.1% ( <i>n</i> = 1)
Northeast	17.7% ( <i>n</i> = 32)	2.2% ( <i>n</i> = 2)
Pikes Peak	15.5% ( <i>n</i> = 28)	9.7% ( <i>n</i> = 9)
West Central	7.2% ( <i>n</i> = 13)	10.8% ( <i>n</i> = 10)
North Central	11.1% ( <i>n</i> = 20)	11.8% ( <i>n</i> = 11)
Southeast	15.5% ( <i>n</i> = 28)	4.3% ( <i>n</i> = 4)
Metro	10.5% ( <i>n</i> = 19)	47.3% ( <i>n</i> = 44)
<b>Setting</b>		
Remote	47.3% ( <i>n</i> = 86)	6.5% ( <i>n</i> = 6)
Outlying Town	26.9% ( <i>n</i> = 49)	14.0% ( <i>n</i> = 13)
Urban-Suburban	9.3% ( <i>n</i> = 17)	20.4% ( <i>n</i> = 19)
Denver Metro	8.2% ( <i>n</i> = 15)	48.4% ( <i>n</i> = 45)
Outlying City	7.1% ( <i>n</i> = 13)	10.8 ( <i>n</i> = 10)
Colorado BOCES	1.1% ( <i>n</i> = 2)	0% ( <i>n</i> = 0)

*Note.* BOCES = Boards of Cooperative Educational Services. Geographic data from the 2021–2022 school year was used as school locale was not available on the National Center for Education Statistics website for the 2022–2023 school year (at the time of reporting). The values in Column 2 pertaining to district characteristics (i.e., rural designation, region, and setting) may differ from the exhibit containing geographic characteristics of LEPs if there was no school corresponding to an LEP in the publicly available data. <sup>b</sup> Schools associated with the Charter School Institute are not associated with a region.

### Parent Inventory

WestEd also inventoried parents of K–3 students for the Year 3 evaluation. Primary topic areas inventoried were child’s EL, disability, and IEP status; sufficiency of EL and IEP resources; overall understanding of the Colorado READ Act and SRD designations; the child’s SRD status; notification method of child’s SRD designation; involvement with SRD identification process; knowledge about services available to students classified as having an SRD; child’s READ Plan status; involvement with developing, reviewing, and approving a READ Plan; involvement with progress monitoring; implementing READ Plan activities at home; exiting the child from a READ Plan; comfort with implementing READ Plan activities at home; availability of school supports to implement READ



Plan activities at home; and improvement of reading skills due to the child's READ Plan.

The inventory was administered from March 23 to April 28. In total, 284 parents completed the inventory. However, only parents who reported that their child was identified as having an SRD at some point during their schooling (n = 109) and/or reported that their child was provided with a READ Plan (n = 180) are included in the report.

### **Site visits**

#### **LEP Site Visits**

From January to March 2023, evaluation team members conducted on-site visits at 10 schools that received READ Act per-pupil funding (see Appendix 1: Site Visit Selection Criteria for a full discussion of the selection process and Exhibit A-4 for the list of schools). Prior to each site visit, district and school staff members were asked to provide artifacts such as sample redacted READ Plans that could provide additional context regarding READ Act implementation. They were also asked to identify district and school staff who could answer questions about the use of READ Act and ELG per-pupil funds and READ Act implementation. During the on-site visit, evaluation staff toured schools during reading blocks to observe staffing, approach to reading, and READ Plan implementation. They also conducted interviews and focus groups with school staff to obtain information about the K–3 reading approach, use of READ Act funds, identification of students under the READ Act, READ Plan development and implementation, and training for teaching reading during the 2021–2022 school year (see Appendix 4 for site visit protocol).

Upon completion of the site visits, evaluation team members analyzed the input received in each of these three topic areas and produced a summary report for each school/LEP. These summary reports were then used to identify common themes that surfaced across the 10 sites, identify lessons learned, and help state leaders understand READ Act implementation.



**Exhibit A-4. Site Visit Local Education Providers and Schools**

Local Education Provider	School
Lewis- Palmer 38	Prairie Winds Elementary School
Academy 20	Douglass Valley Elementary
Windsor RE-4	Range View Ridge Elementary
Douglas County RE-1	Soaring Hawk Elementary
Cherry Creek 5	Red Hawk Ridge Elementary
Boulder Valley RE-2	Alicia Sanchez International School
School District 27J	West Ridge Elementary School
Poudre R-1	Lopez Elementary School
Adams 12 Five Star School	Glacier Peak Elementary School
Weld RE-8	William Butler Elementary School

**ELG Site Visits**

The evaluation team conducted virtual site visits to gather data and information about how schools and districts across Colorado used their ELGs. From February to April 2023, the evaluation team conducted virtual site visits at 11 ELG districts (Exhibit A-5). In addition to criteria described in Appendix 1, these districts were selected to represent a variety of locales across the state, including urban, suburban, rural, and mountain communities. Selected districts also were drawn from across the six ELG funding cohorts that have taken place over time, with some districts having already completed their multiyear ELGs, while others had recently started or were in the midst of implementing grant activities. This mix of districts allowed the evaluation team to hear from educators and school and district leaders that represented a variety of settings and perspectives.

Site visits were conducted virtually, typically in 90-minute interviews that included school- and/or district-level leaders as well as teachers. Evaluation team members reviewed data from CDE regarding the amounts and timing of ELG funding received at each site. A common interview protocol was used to ensure consistent data gathering across the 11 sites (Exhibit A-5). The protocol covered three main topics on ELG experiences: background on the ELG application



process, how ELG funds were deployed, and successes and challenges with ELG implementation.

Upon completion of the site visits, evaluation team members analyzed the input received in each of these three topic areas and produced a summary report for each school/LEP. These summary reports were then used to identify common themes that surfaced across the 11 sites, identify lessons learned, and help state leaders understand ELG implementation.

**Exhibit A-5. Early Literacy Grant Site Visit Schools and Local Education Providers**

Local Education Provider	Early Literacy Grant School
Pueblo City 60	Bessemer Elementary School
Dolores RE-4A	Dolores Elementary School
Englewood 1	Clayton Elementary School
Canon City Re-1	Canon Exploratory School
Meeker RE-1	Meeker Elementary School
Sangre De Cristo	Sangre De Cristo Elementary School
Westminister	Sherrelwood Elementary School
Harrison	Centennial Elementary School
Steamboat Spring RE-2	Soda Creek Elementary School
South Conejos	Guadalupe Elementary School
Moffat RE-1	Sunset Elementary School



## Appendix 3: Additional Student Outcome and Reading Approach Exhibits

### Student Outcomes

**Exhibit A-6. Limited English Proficient and Non-English Proficient Students' 3rd-Grade English Language Arts CMAS Proficiency by SRD Status**

SRD Status	Rating	2014–2015	2015–2016	2016–2017	2017–2018	2018–2019	2020–2021	2021–2022
Ever SRD	Did not yet meet, partially met, or approached expectations	99.7%	99.2%	98.2%	97.7%	97.5%	97.6%	97.5%
	Met or exceeded expectations	0.3%	0.8%	1.8%	2.3%	2.5%	2.4%	2.5%
Never SRD	Did not yet meet, partially met, or approached expectations	75.05%	73.3%	66.8%	66.9%	65.4%	71.3.8%	65.7%
	Met or exceeded expectations	25%	26.7%	33.2%	33.1%	34.6%	28.7%	34.3%

Note. CMAS = Colorado Measures of Academic Success; SRD = significant reading deficiency.

**Exhibit A-7. Students with IEPs' 3rd-Grade English Language Arts CMAS Proficiency by SRD Status**

SRD Status	Rating	2014–2015	2015–2016	2016–2017	2017–2018	2018–2019	2020–2021	2021–2022
Ever SRD	Did not yet meet, partially met, or approached expectations	99.8%	99.6%	99%	98.9%	98.3%	98.6%	98.7%
	Met or exceeded expectations	0.2%	0.4%	1.0%	1.1%	1.7%	1.4%	1.3%
Never SRD	Did not yet meet, partially met, or approached expectations	81.6%	78.9%	73.5%	69.2%	66.5%	67.1%	65.7%



SRD Status	Rating	2014–2015	2015–2016	2016–2017	2017–2018	2018–2019	2020–2021	2021–2022
	Met or exceeded expectations	18.4%	21.1%	26.5%	30.8%	33.5%	32.9%	34.3%

Note. CMAS = Colorado Measures of Academic Success; IEP = Individualized Education Program; SRD = significant reading deficiency.

## Reading Approach

### Exhibit A-8. Site Visit Schools Reading Approach

School	Reading Block	Intervention
1	60 minutes Mini lessons, guided reading, and interactive read-alouds.	40 minutes four times a week Focused attention on skills, with students grouped according to skill needs. Interventionists and classroom teachers, including special education teachers, delivered interventions in small groups.
2	90 minutes Whole group mini lesson (15–20 minutes), shared reading, and interactive read-alouds, then differentiated instruction.	30 minutes daily The reading interventionist met with small groups of students with targeted needs for 30 minutes per day outside of the classroom.
3	145 minutes, kindergarten 120 minutes, 3rd grade On average students received 45–60 minutes of daily reading instruction. Primarily through whole group instruction, with students engaging in independent practice as well as small group instruction based on their skill needs. Reading groups were fluid, meaning that students moved in and out of groups based on their progress in skill acquisition.	The classroom teacher was responsible for the needs of all students. In some cases, paraprofessionals provided additional support. These services were provided within the classroom.
4	2 hours daily Mini lessons, whole group instruction, small group instruction based on need, and individual conferences. Teachers provided instruction in a whole group lesson for about 15–20 minutes, then differentiated instruction.	The rest of the instructional time was dedicated to differentiated instruction within the classroom, while some students received targeted instruction in areas of need. These small group targeted instruction sessions involved special services staff and included students with Individualized Education Programs. After small group instruction time, students returned to the classroom for whole group reflection.



School	Reading Block	Intervention
5	<p>The day-to-day schedule for reading included whole group time, small group time, and intervention time.</p>	<p>In kindergarten and 1st grade, paraprofessionals implemented an all-grade intervention for 10 minutes a day. They targeted these interventions to the needs of students.</p> <p>In 2nd–5th grade, students participated in interventions with instructional paraprofessionals. Teachers aligned these interventions with students' needs. Small group interventions also occurred in classrooms, led by a teacher or paraprofessional.</p>
6	<p>In kindergarten, students spent 70 of 105 minutes of the literacy block in small groups. First-grade students spent 90 of 135 minutes in small group instruction, while 2nd- and 3rd-grade students spent 65 of 105 minutes in small groups.</p> <p>Daily whole group instruction and daily small group time, during which students received a second dose of instruction targeted to their reading needs. Small group instruction time occurred within each classroom with the classroom teacher and instructional paraprofessional. The interventionist also worked individually for an additional 10 minutes with students who were not making progress.</p> <p>Teachers delivered instructional programs primarily in small groups.</p>	<p>During the daily block of What I Need (WIN) time, teachers, instructional paraprofessionals, and the interventionist provided instruction in small groups aligned with students' skill needs. Teachers at each grade level worked with the instructional coach or interventionist to form WIN groups based on analysis of data. As a result, some students traveled to other classrooms during WIN time to work with other students who had the same needs.</p>
7	<p>The school schedule included three blocks focused on literacy. During the 30-minute literacy block, literacy teachers worked with the class in a whole group or had students work in small groups on reading skills.</p> <p>A second 30-minute block was designated for providing supplemental instructional programming, with grade-level teachers and literacy aides providing programming for small groups to reinforce or extend a previously taught skill or concept. Small groups were based on student reading needs as determined by progress monitoring and individual student testing.</p>	<p>The schedule included 30 minutes of intervention time during which interventionists provided intervention instructional programming for students needing more intensive assistance. Teachers grouped students by need for intervention time. Teachers and literacy aides provided additional supplemental instructional programming to students not involved in intervention instructional programming during the intervention time.</p>



School	Reading Block	Intervention
8	Core instructional program during a 60-minute instruction block on the master schedule. This time included whole group explicit instruction using HMH Into Reading and individualized and small group instruction, as directed by classroom teachers. An additional 30 minutes was spent on explicit phonics instruction using the supplemental instructional program Foundations.	Both teachers and interventionists administered intervention programs.
9	Daily 45-minute blocks of WIN time for K–5, core reading instruction, and both supplemental and intervention reading time. Students accessed whole group, small group, and independent work within the literacy block. Teachers provided differentiated instruction in small groups. Staff provided one-on-one intervention outside of classroom activities both within and outside the classroom.	Daily 45-minute blocks of WIN time for K–5, core reading instruction, and both supplemental and intervention reading time. Students accessed whole group, small group, and independent work within the literacy block. Teachers provided differentiated instruction in small groups. Staff provided one-on-one intervention outside of classroom activities both within and outside the classroom.
10	45-minute reading block for core reading instruction that classroom teachers conducted.	Grade-level teachers, reading interventionists, and paraprofessionals supported students with supplemental and intervention programs in small groups for 45 minutes. To address phonics and phonemic awareness skill gaps, teachers implemented an additional 20–30-minute instruction block in K–3 using Orton-Gillingham – Institute for Multi-Sensory Education.



**Exhibit A-9. Instructional Programs Used by Site Visit Schools**

School	Core	Supplemental	Intervention	4th–5th Grade	Other
1	Fountas & Pinnell <sup>a</sup> In process of adopting HMH Into Reading	Fundations (Wilson Language Training) to help with phonics i-Ready (Curriculum Associates) Raz-Plus (Learning A–Z) for text reading fluency	i-Ready, Fundations, and Orton-Gillingham – Institute for Multi-Sensory Education (IMSE) Lexia for special education students	The school used the same instructional programming for 4th and 5th grades as it did for K–3 except for Fundations. Instead of Fundations, the school used Really Great Reading’s HD Word. One of the district’s criteria for selecting a new core instructional program was that it extends to 5th grade.	The school did not use other K–3 reading materials outside of those on the Advisory List.
2	Benchmark Workshop	K–1: Bridge the Gap (Hegerty) <sup>a</sup> K–3: Orton-Gillingham – IMSE, MobyMax <sup>a</sup> 1st grade: Boost Reading (Amplify) 2nd grade: CR Success Learning 3rd grade: Reading Plus	K–2: Blast (Really Great Reading) K–3: Orton-Gillingham IMSE 3rd grade: HD Word (Really Great Reading)	The school used the same core instructional program (Benchmark Workshop) for 4th–5th grades as for K–3. The school also used Reading Plus and MobyMax as supplemental instructional programs for 4th–5th grades.	The school did not use other K–3 reading materials outside of those on the Advisory List.
3	Benchmark Advance	K–2: Bridge the Gap	Blast Bridge the Gap HD Word Yoshimoto Orton-Gillingham	The 4th- and 5th-grade core, supplemental, and intervention programs were the same as for K–3.	The school did not use other K–3 reading materials outside of those on the Advisory List.
4	Benchmark Workshop	Fundations	Benchmark Phonics Intervention	The school used Benchmark Workshop for core instruction in 4th and 5th grades and	The school used the following reading materials in addition to instructional programs:



School	Core	Supplemental	Intervention	4th–5th Grade	Other
		Heggerty Phonemic Awareness Curriculum (Literacy Resources) i-Ready MyPath (Curriculum Associates)	(Benchmark Education) i-Ready instructional lessons Yoshimoto Orton-Gillingham	Benchmark Advance for core instruction in 6th grade.	The Teaching Reading Sourcebook (CORE Learning) Structured Literacy Interventions (Louise Spear-Swerling) Keys to Beginning Reading (Joan Sedita, on the Advisory List) Speech to Print: Language Essentials for Teaching Reading (Louisa Moats and Susan Brady)
5	K–2: SuperKids for 3rd grade: ReadyGEN <sup>b</sup>	K–2: Core5 Reading (Lexia), Delivering SMARTER Intervention (Ascend Learning; 1st grade only), Heggerty, Imagine Language & Literacy (Imagine Learning) 3rd grade: Core5 Reading, Imagine Language & Literacy	K–2: Delivering Smarter Intervention(1 <sup>st</sup> grade only), Core5 Reading, Imagine Language & Literacy, Heggerty 3rd grade: ReadyUp! (ReadyGEN) <sup>a</sup>	The school used ReadyGEN for the 4th- and 5th-grade core curriculum and Imagine Language & Literacy for intervention programming.	The school selected other materials by considering state reading standards, assessment data, and knowledge of the science of reading. Three teachers were trained in Orton-Gillingham programs, so they incorporated Orton-Gillingham materials into teaching. The school used additional materials for reading comprehension, authentic literature from existing books in addition to decodable books for 2nd grade, and vocabulary strategies for kindergarten.
6	Reach for Reading (Cengage) <sup>c</sup>	Heggerty Phonemic Awareness Curriculum in K–2.	K–3: Reach into Phonics Foundations (Cengage)	The school reported using 95 Percent Group programs for students who needed to work on	The school reported using Orton-Gillingham IMSE materials on a limited basis



School	Core	Supplemental	Intervention	4th–5th Grade	Other
		The district provided Heggerty to all schools. Teachers also used Raz-Plus as a supplemental program, primarily as a resource for decodable texts.	1st and 2nd grades: Screener for Intervention, Phonological Awareness Lessons Deluxe Package (95 Percent Group), Core5 Reading  3rd grade and 1st–3rd grades for students with disabilities: Teaching Blending, Phonological Awareness Screener for Intervention, Phonics Chip Kit, Phonics Lesson Library, Multisyllable Routine Cards	multisyllabic word lessons or targeted phonics instruction. Some students used Read Live (Read Naturally) (on the Advisory List) for its fluency component. All 4th-grade students in intervention programs who had Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) and Reading to Ensure Academic Development (READ) Plans continued to read at a 1st- or 2nd-grade level. All 5th grade students in intervention programs who had IEPs and READ Plans continued to read at a 2nd-, 3rd-, or 4th-grade level. The school reported strong growth from using intervention programs for these students.	because only two teachers were trained on and had access to the program. Orton-Gillingham IMSE was on the Advisory List.
7	HMH Into Reading	K–1: Heggerty Phonemic Awareness, Raz-Plus, Core5 Reading  2nd–3rd grades: Foundations, Raz-Plus, Core5 Reading  The school reported using HMH Into Reading and Core5 Reading as	Wilson Reading Systems in special education as an intervention program. Interventionists used Really Great Reading as an intervention program with all students on READ Plans. Teachers used Foundations as supplemental instructional	The school used the same instructional programming for core, supplemental, and intervention in 4th and 5th grades as in K–3.	The school did not use other K–3 reading materials outside of those on the Advisory List with the exception of National Geographic materials (Reach and/or Inside the USA) as supplemental instructional programming for English learners.



School	Core	Supplemental	Intervention	4th–5th Grade	Other
		supplemental programming to address fluency and comprehension.	programming with all students during small group instruction that occurred in Tier 2 time. The school reported that teachers and interventionists used Core5 Reading as an intervention program.		
8	HMH Into Reading	Yoshimoto Orton-Gillingham training as both a supplemental and intervention program	Foundations Yoshimoto Orton-Gillingham training as both a supplemental and intervention program	The school started implementing HMH Into Reading as the core instructional program for 4th–5th grades in 2022–2023, with a plan for full implementation in 2023–2024.	The school did not use other reading materials outside of those on the Advisory List.. Teachers created skills- or standards-based lessons for students when they were not using Foundations or Orton-Gillingham for intervention support.
9	K–2: SuperKids 3rd grade: Wonders	Kindergarten; 1st–3rd grades, if needed: mCLASS Amplify Reading Edition K–1 and 2nd–3rd grade students with READ Plans or multi-tiered system of support (MTSS) Reading Plans: Lexia Core5 Reading K–2: Heggerty Phonemic Awareness	1st–3rd grades: Teaching Blending, Phonics Chip Kit, Phonics Lesson Library, Vocabulary Surge Level A & B (all 95 Percent Group) K–1 and 2nd–3rd grade students with READ Plans or MTSS Reading Plans: Core5 Reading Kindergarten; 1st–3rd grades if needed:	The school used Wonders as the core instructional program in 4th and 5th grades. The school reported that it was eligible to select a new reading curriculum for the 2023–2024 school year pending a list of curricula approved by the district. The school used i-READY as a supplemental and intervention program, mCLASS Amplify Reading Edition as a supplemental program when needed, and Take Flight as an intervention program in 4th–5th	K–2: SuperKids 3rd grade: Wonders



School	Core	Supplemental	Intervention	4th–5th Grade	Other
		<p>1st–3rd grades: i-READY</p> <p>2nd–3rd grades: Take Flight (Texas Scottish Rite Hospital for Children)</p> <p>3rd grade: Systematic Instruction in Phonological Awareness, Phonics, and Sight Words (SIPSS) (Center for the Collaborative Classroom); Teaching Blending, Phonics Chip Kit, Phonics Lesson Library, Vocabulary Surge Level A &amp; B (all 95 Percent Group); all 3rd-grade students worked on morphology components of lessons and some accessed full lessons for intervention</p>	<p>mCLASS Amplify Reading Edition</p> <p>2nd–3rd grades: Take Flight (Texas Scottish Rite Hospital for Children)</p> <p>3rd grade: SIPPS; all 3rd-grade students worked on morphology components of lessons and some accessed full lessons for intervention</p>	<p>grades. The school used Teaching Blending, Phonics Chip Kit, Phonics Lesson Library, and Vocabulary Surge Level A &amp; B as supplemental and intervention programs in 4th–5th grades.</p>	
10	ReadyGEN <sup>b</sup>	<p>Kindergarten: Heggerty Phonemic Awareness</p> <p>K–3: i-Ready, Orton-Gillingham IMSE</p>	<p>K–2: Heggerty Phonemic Awareness<sup>d</sup></p> <p>K–3: i-Ready, Orton-Gillingham IMSE,</p>	<p>Instructional programming for core, supplemental, and intervention programs for 4th and 5th grades were the same as for K–3.</p>	<p>The school used the Sounds and Letters for Readers and Spellers (Sopris West) as an additional supplemental and intervention program because</p>



School	Core	Supplemental	Intervention	4th–5th Grade	Other
			Phonics for Reading (Curriculum Associates) 3rd grade: Heggerty Bridge the Gap <sup>a</sup>		the program was sequential and explicit in how it helped students develop skills, which the school found worked well with many of its students. This program was not on the Advisory List. The school selected the program based on an analysis of student needs. The school used the Sounds and Letters program in conjunction with programs on the Advisory List.

<sup>a</sup> Not on approved list

<sup>b</sup> The program was not on the Advisory List of Instructional Programming. Elementary School 5 used ReadyGEN for 3rd grade. District X adopted ReadyGEN for all schools in 2019. The school reported that they depend on the district’s process and cycle of adoption for new reading programs. The district had not communicated to the school a timeline for adoption of a new core instructional program at the time of the site visit

<sup>c</sup> The program was on the Advisory List of Instructional Programming as a supplemental approved program for vocabulary and comprehension, but is the core program for the school

<sup>d</sup> The program was on the Advisory List of Instructional Programming as a supplemental approved program, but is an intervention program for the school



## Appendix 4: Protocols

See attachments.