



LITERACY FOCUS GROUP ANALYSIS

Prepared for San Felipe Del Rio Consolidated
Independent School District

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PROJECT OBJECTIVE

San Felipe Del Rio Consolidated Independent School District (San Felipe) would like to better understand teachers' perceptions and needs regarding literacy curriculum initiatives.



- ✓ Understand how teachers **perceive** the literacy curriculum.



- ✓ Identify how teachers **experience** literacy initiatives.



- ✓ Explore **priorities and unmet needs** that exist among teachers that the district should address.

METHODOLOGY



The district worked with Education Service Center Region 15 to conduct **number (44) focus groups** with elementary school teachers and administrators across the district. Recordings of these focus group sessions were then analyzed and coded by Hanover Research for this presentation.

Note:

Qualitative research is exploratory and designed to add insight and a depth of understanding to a particular question or topic. Qualitative findings provide commonalities and trends but are not intended to be statistically significant or to provide generalizable conclusions.

RECOMMENDATIONS



1

Provide a thorough training in integration of Reading Street resources in the classroom for all grades.

2

Offer optional trainings in differentiated instruction, phonics, writing across content areas and writing workshop. Consider also providing ongoing optional trainings in other areas of literacy instruction such as comprehension strategies and explicit vocabulary instruction.

3

Consider providing fluency training for Kindergarten teachers.

KEY FINDINGS



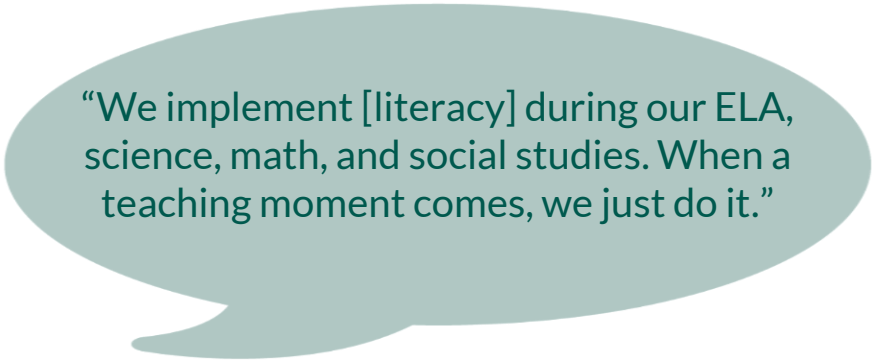
- **Teachers' adherence to the district's roadmap varies.** Some teachers say they follow the district roadmap closely, while others say they use it as more of a guide, pulling their own resources which align with the TEKS as they go. Some struggle finding adequate time to teach both writing and reading curriculum according to the roadmap.
- **Many use outside resources to supplement Reading Street curriculum.** Teachers say outside resources are especially needed to teach phonics, as many do not find the Reading Street resources for phonics to be engaging.
- **Many teachers say they were not properly trained in using the Reading Street resources "kit".** Teachers would appreciate trainings in several areas of teaching literacy. The most highly requested trainings are in differentiated instruction, phonics, writing across content areas and writing workshop.

The background of the slide is a grayscale photograph of a school hallway. On the right side, there are rows of lockers. On the left, there are metal support poles for a structure, possibly a staircase or a display. A semi-transparent green rectangular box is centered horizontally across the middle of the image, containing the title text in white.

USE OF CURRICULUM RESOURCES

TEACHERS IMPLEMENT LITERACY THROUGHOUT THE DAY

Teachers say they are able to easily implement literacy throughout the day where appropriate. In addition to the science, math, and social studies resources provided by Reading Street, teachers integrate literacy throughout their day by using:



“We implement [literacy] during our ELA, science, math, and social studies. When a teaching moment comes, we just do it.”

Science

- Reading nonfiction articles
- Weekly tests
- Note-taking
- Making flash cards
- Journaling
- Science text read-aloud
- Diary reading
- Passage writing
- Sight words, vocabulary (Kindergarten)

Math

- Word problems (CUBES strategy, first grade)
- Discussions of graphing (comprehension)
- Math-focused literature books
- Envision tiered literature component for math
- Different Shades built-in math component
- Journaling

Social Studies

- Passages, reading and writing about news articles and biographies
- Journaling
- Use of Teachers Pay Teachers for reading and writing materials

SOME TEACHERS FOLLOW THE DISTRICT'S ROADMAP MORE CLOSELY THAN OTHERS

To determine what to teach, teachers say they use the district's roadmap from the Planning Protocol dashboard in conjunction with the planning guides provided.

Some say they follow the roadmap closely, while others say they use it as more of guide, pulling their own resources which align with the TEKS as they go.



"Planning guides, the district provides those for what TEKS you're going to be teaching per week for the six weeks. Once we know that, that's when we go and we find something to align with what the district was saying."

"We follow a road map on our dashboard.
It's every six weeks and then once we've covered everything, we review skills based off data, based off summatives, quizzes, the benchmark. And then we just review. We spiral everything back."

"There is a road map, but it needed to be tweaked constantly, so it wasn't followed per se. But it was like, I guess, a guide."

TEACHERS COMMONLY SUPPLEMENT READING STREET

Teachers emphasize that they use Reading Street because it is required; however, many say they need to use additional resources to supplement the Reading Street curriculum.

Supplements are common

Readers and activities are useful

I think we all kind of supplement with other stuff, but our main stuff, **the readers we use, all come from Reading Street**. A lot of the activities we do usually comes from the workbook, too.

”

“ I try to stick to a lot of what is in Reading Street, but **I add on a lot because I feel like there's very low expectations in Reading Street** especially with sight words and stuff like that.

Reading Street is too basic for many

Some pay for more intense curriculum

I bought a really intense curriculum built on picture books because it includes interactive notebooks. I'm also using a lot of texts related to prior knowledge. **I like Reading Street because I utilize the online tools a lot** throughout the week. I also got a TPT to purchase a whole set of materials for a week.

”

TEACHERS USE MULTIPLE RESOURCES TO TEACH AND ASSESS LITERACY LEARNING PROGRESS

In addition to TPRI data, teachers mention use of many other resources to assess mastery in comprehension, fluency, spelling, and phonics. These resources include, but are not limited to:

- Summative six week assessments
- Formative assessments
- STAR Early Literacy
- STAAR Coach/Motivation
- Formal observations
- SuccessMaker
- Four Square
- Fast Focus
- KAMICO Writing
- Countdown
- Lone Star
- Texas Tornado
- Drops in the Bucket
- Motivation Reading

Many teachers say **Power Hour** is the time they use to determine learning gaps.

“We use STAAR Ready Review. I purchased that, and my coworker purchased it.”

“**Fast Focus** is also a really good one that we use. And I know they also have a bunch of different materials as far as paired passages. They have running records available for us to time the students, see **how much they can read in a minute**. So a lot of it is tied to fluency.”

“**Power Hour** is the timeframe where students would go to wherever they had a deficiency in. So if a student was struggling in fluency, then we would send them to that teacher, and that teacher had the support for that.”

MANY TEACHERS SUPPLEMENT READING STREET'S PHONICS

Many teachers say the phonics aspect of the Reading Street curriculum lacks **engaging activities**. Teachers often use a combination of resources they find online or from their peers to supplement the phonics curriculum. These resources can include, but are not limited to:

THE SPALDING METHOD

Many teachers find this program to be useful for helping struggle readers.

OTHER RESOURCES

- Teachers Pay Teachers
- Pinterest
- Pearson Ready Steps
- Sing, Spell, Read, & Write Kit
- Starfall
- Heggerty Phonemic Awareness Curriculum [Blue Book](#)

"The only program that we have for phonics is Scott Foresman. We don't have an extra one. So [we use] whatever they offer and then we Google other things that we can find."

"The 'ch', 'sh', 'th' [inaudible] is never taught in the Kindergarten Reading Street, and so I did that on my own."

"Some of us also use the Spalding to kind of reinforce what is being taught."

"I've done a lot of Pinterest and TPT. I've made packets."

MANY TEACHERS USE TPRI DATA TO ADDRESS LEARNING GAPS

“There's a report and it tells us where the gaps are. It could be phonics, phonemic awareness. It could be fluency, comprehension, word reading, alphabetic principle. It breaks it down and then it tells you what their needs are. It has their names. It groups it for you so you could do RTI. And then we do that in guided reading.”

“Those kids that are struggling with deleting initial sound or final sound, we work with manipulatives, letter sounds, or whatever. **We usually do it in small group.**”

Many teachers say they use six week summative TPRI data to assess student progress in order to **determine interventions**. They say they use the data to form small groups for guided reading and Power Hour.

Beyond using the data for regrouping interventions, teachers also find TPRI data useful for:

- Checking for comprehension mastery
- Assessing whole class instruction needs
- An overall end of the year progress report

In addition to using TPRI data, teachers will also regroup interventions based on their own informal assessments.



PERCEPTIONS OF MOST CRITICAL COMPONENTS VARY BY GRADE

PHONICS/LETTER RECOGNITION

Both administrators and teachers, alike, say phonics is a critical component of teaching literacy, **especially for kindergarten and first grade students.**

COMPREHENSION

Many teachers, especially those whose students can read in **second grade and higher**, prioritize comprehension.

FLUENCY

For many teachers of **second grade and higher**, fluency and comprehension tie together as top priorities.

“For kinder, I think the phonics, the letter recognition. [...] To me, that's your beginning reader stuff. And the other stuff, you can build on that, but **if you don't catch those, then you're going to struggle.**”

“I believe after the phonics, it would be comprehension. Because at the beginning, **I had a lot of students that could read, but they weren't understanding what they were reading.**”

“I would say they should have to have fluency. I mean, they can read. **Once that's done, then we can move into the comprehension** and kind of organize it into-- bringing it to higher-order thinking.”

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LITERACY RESOURCE & TRAINING NEEDS

THOROUGH TRAINING ON READING STREET RESOURCES IS NEEDED

Teachers from all elementary grade levels say they have attended a training for Reading Street; however, they consider the training to be inadequate. Many say they are not confident in using the Reading Street resources provided.

- Teachers say they were given a “kit” at this training, but many do not know how to use it.
- Some new teachers receive a “crash course” training from other teachers.
- Some teachers say they have not been trained in two years and would like a refresher course.
- Some say the roadmap is not easy to follow.

“We went to a training, but they were just modeling what was in the kit. **They didn't show us how to use it. And they didn't give us examples.** They kept saying “it's self-explanatory.”

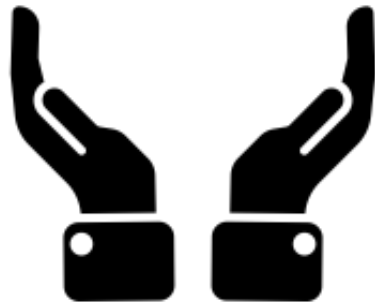
“They weren't trained on how to train us, I don't think. So we got a resource. **We just don't know how to use it.**”

“I'm a second-year teacher, and they just told us, ‘There's resources in your room,’ but we never got proper training. They never told us, ‘This is for this. This is for that.’ And **yes, I can figure it out, but I didn't know how to integrate it in a systematic way.**”

MANY TEACHERS WANT MORE DIFFERENTIATION TRAINING

Regardless of past training received, teachers from all grade levels say they would appreciate additional training in differentiated instruction.

However, some teachers are unaware that their resources provide differentiation support.



“ I think it's always great to get ideas for differentiated instruction, although I might have my ideas of what I need to do. There may be somebody who has better ideas. ”

“ I didn't know about the workbook that went along with the leveled books. And I didn't know that the books were leveled. They just handed me all these boxes the first day of school and it's like, "Okay, here." ”

PHONICS REFRESHER IS NEEDED FOR ALL GRADES

"We've never been properly trained for phonics."

"I think it's been a while that I've gotten phonics instruction."

"I'd go with the phonics because I can't remember phonics. It's been a while."

Several teachers say they would appreciate a thorough phonics training.

Many say would appreciate the opportunity to be trained in phonics, either because the first training did not thoroughly cover the phonics resources, or because they feel it is time for a refresher course.



MANY WOULD LIKE WRITING INSTRUCTION TRAINING

“Writing across the content areas. I do it, it's just not-- I don't think it's as good as it should be. [I would like it to] make it more purposeful.”

“I would like more about writing across the content areas.”

Many teachers request training in writing across content areas and writing workshop.

Many would like to improve upon the their current approach.



KINDERGARTEN TEACHERS REQUEST FLUENCY TRAINING

“I will say fluency instruction [is needed] because I don't think we've ever been trained on that, not for kinder. [...] But a lot of our kids are leaving as readers, almost 100%, even the bilingual.”

“Maybe fluency instruction would be something that we would need at a kindergarten level.”

Some kindergarten teachers say they would like to attend fluency training.

They explain that fluency is becoming more applicable to kindergarten, as their students are starting to read at an earlier age.



SOME TEACHERS ALSO REQUEST THE ADDITIONAL TRAININGS

Some teachers also say they would like the following trainings:

- Comprehension Strategies
- Alphabet Arc
- Conferencing
- Explicit Vocabulary Instruction
- Read Naturally
- Guided Reading
- Literacy Achievement Academies
- Features of Effective Instruction

"I don't feel very comfortable when I'm doing guided reading. I think there needs to be more training."

"I have been shown the Alphabet Arc but not really in progress. They've given it to me and said, "This is what you're supposed to do." But I haven't really watched it done."

"I struggled with conferencing because I felt like I was giving them all the negatives."

"I would say explicit vocabulary instruction [training is needed] because that covers all grade levels, especially the upper-grade kids as well because they lack on vocabulary."

MOST DO NOT NEED TPRI ADMINISTRATION TRAINING; HOWEVER SOME WANT TRAINING ON ANALYZING DATA

While, a strong majority of teachers interviewed emphasize that they feel confident with TPRI administration, a few teachers say they would like training in disaggregation of TPRI data.



"I wouldn't need the TPRI administration."

"I think that the TPRI, the desegregation of data [training is needed], because, yeah, we can look at it and be like, 'Oh, they're doing well here or there.' But I know there's a whole part on there, with the words and breaking it down **that would probably be super helpful if you understood what to do with it.**"

"I feel confident in the TPRI. I feel like I can administer that."

TEACHERS SAY THEY LACK ENOUGH TIME TO TEACH BOTH WRITING AND READING CURRICULUM DAILY

Several teachers say they do not often have enough time to teach writing and reading for a consistent amount of time every day. Many say integration of writing throughout the day is key to assisting in getting students the writing practice they need.



"I have two hours to teach both [reading and writing]. So it's always just like, 'Ugh.' I have to hurry up with that routine and that structure for the kids. **To be able to get through everything always felt really rushed.**"

"You're either consistent with the writing process or you're consistent with teaching grammar. **But you're so constrained with time you can't do both.**"

"I noticed I didn't have enough time because I was doing phonics and I was trying to do that reading. Writing became 15 to 20-minute lessons of grammar. And then Wednesday, Thursday, Friday I would try to do just the writing process with them. **But I couldn't do both. There's no way.**"



Thank you.

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