National Louis University

Digital Commons@NLU

12-2020

A Program Evaluation of the Effectiveness of Fundations and Reading Strategies Professional Development

Cecile Amy Farino
National Louis University

A PROGRAM EVALUATION OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF Wilson Language

Fundations® AND READING STRATEGIES PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Cecile Amy Farino

Educational Leadership Doctoral Program

Submitted in partial fulfillment

of the requirements of

Doctor of Education

in the Foster G. McGaw Graduate School

National College of Education

National Louis University

December 2020

NATIONAL LOUIS UNIVERSITY
1886

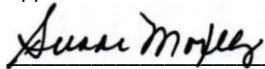A Program Evaluation of the Effectiveness of Fundations and Reading Strategies
Professional Development
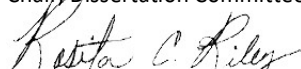
Cecile Amy Farino

Educational Leadership Doctoral Program
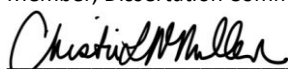
Approved:

_____

Chair, Dissertation Committee

_____

Director, Doctoral Program

_____

Member, Dissertation Committee

_____

Dean, National College of Education

_____

Dean's Representative

November 18, 2020_____

Date Approved

ABSTRACT

This program evaluation focuses on a research-based reading intervention program and the professional development provided in reading strategies implemented in a district to increase students reading achievement levels. The program evaluation identifies the effectiveness of the educator's training received on the use of the reading intervention program and the educator's training received in reading strategies. A problem I have identified with using a reading intervention program is it cannot identify student deficiencies, and educators lack the knowledge of basic reading foundational skills to help identify students' deficiencies. In my research, I examine one elementary school and the administrative team member's implementation of the reading intervention program. The literature I present focuses on two phases of reading: the learning to read phase, which occurs in the age groups of prekindergarten to 2nd grade, and the reading to learn phase, which must occur by 3rd grade. Also, I focus on building the capacity and knowledge of literacy skills in educators instead of relying on a boxed reading intervention program. The research reveals what is working well with the boxed reading intervention program, what is not working well with the boxed reading intervention program, and how to improve and overcome educators' challenges. In closing, I recommend implementing policies to enhance educators' knowledge in reading strategies and increase student achievement levels in reading.

PREFACE

On my educational journey, I taught, coached, and led students, teachers, and school leaders while holding true to my educational philosophy that every student can learn and read. In each job position, I gained insight and perspective about teaching literacy, including reading strategies and their impact on a student and the student's role in society within the community they live in. As an educator and reading teacher, I advocate literacy skills for all students and have a strong desire to ensure students leave high school equipped to understand their role as literate community members. My goal for evaluating the Wilson Language Fundations® program was to verify if a reading program coupled with building the capacity of a teacher in foundational reading skills would produce proficient readers.

During my educational career, I have had the opportunity to teach reading to secondary school students who have been in an intensive reading class year after year. I am familiar with struggling readers who have traveled in the same cohort, starting with elementary school and traveling with their peers to a high school reading class without receiving proper reading interventions. I endured wins and losses as a teacher, with some students meeting reading and writing graduation requirements and some dropping out of high school altogether. These students feel unsuccessful in reading and school. Struggling readers have difficulty in all classes and eventually struggle in life, unable to understand the fine print on rental agreements, contract terminology on a car lease, and manuals for operating equipment or safety procedures for work.

As a literacy coach, I had the opportunity to reach out to every teacher, including career technical educators, elective teachers, core content area teachers, and parents and

guardians. I provided opportunities for them to engage students in reading at school and home. I explained the importance and impact their role has on students' ability to read by providing them support and encouragement. I demonstrated cross-content connections in reading, shared data results to create next step lessons for teachers, modeled reading strategies, and engaged parents and guardians with reading lessons at home. As a literacy coach, I desired all educators to have a passion for teaching reading strategies in their classrooms regardless of the subject.

As an educational leader in the district and school site, I discovered advocating for literacy skills extend beyond the school doors and at an early age. I have a duty to share my vision of literacy for all and promote the value of reading with community members, local businesses, my staff and faculty, parents and guardians, and district leaders.   I shared the district's intentions to increase student learning by adopting a reading intervention program and closing the gap of non-readers by utilizing early warning indicators. To make a difference, educational leaders must enlist the help of all stakeholders in teaching basic foundational reading skills, promote a growth mindset for teachers to build their professional capacity to recognize early warning signs, and engage parents and community members to participate in the molding and shaping of our students' educational careers. With a shared vision, educational leaders can enlist stakeholders to help catapult student readers into the realm of literacy at a young age.

A significant leadership lesson I learned as a result of the evaluation is to be a bold leader. Bold leaders dare to disrupt the norm and take on challenges. A bold leader thinks outside the box and is willing to take a leap of faith to discover what works and does not work. A bold leader is consistently reflecting on the process and seeking feedback for improvement. As I completed the project, I discovered a bold leader dares to

have difficult conversations, be transparent with stakeholders, and seek support from all from students to their teachers. These characteristics are passed on to the stakeholders to carry out the vision of literacy for all. Leadership is about leaving a sustainable legacy for years to come, and stakeholders carry on even when the leader has left the building.

The experience of the program evaluation process has helped me grow in my leadership career. There are various roles and tasks expected of a school-based leader, but one area wherein I can utilize my strengths is developing and building the capacity of educators in literacy education and modeling expectations.   In addition, my prior experience in project management coupled with educational leadership is a perfect combination for overseeing and implementing a process improvement cycle. A positive return on investment will pay off when leaders invest in people, not programs, through job-embedded training, meaningful collaborative planning sessions, and reflective thinking.

The program evaluation and study has influenced me as a leader to ensure that every student leaving high school is equipped with basic literacy skills. Literacy is a powerful tool that should be afforded to all students regardless of race, socioeconomic status, or demographics. Educators and educational leaders must ensure all students leave high school with the basic skills of reading, writing, speaking, listening, and critical thinking so to shape and mold future contributing citizens of their community.

DEDICATION

During my research and study, I had some life discoveries about who I am, what I want to achieve spiritually, emotionally, and professionally - and how much I have already achieved. While there were ups and downs, I met some great people along the way that confirmed my love for education and offered words of affirmation. Thank you for your friendship and support – to my cohort of new doctors, Colleen, Matt, and Dr. Moxley.

I rekindled relationships with people who urged me to change my professional career and become a teacher. Thank God that they were persistent because this is one career that I feel passionately about and would not make a career change again. I also met people along the way that kept the passion alive. Their passion for teaching keeps me motivated to become a bold leader and a role model in the industry. Thank you for your unending support and advice – Heather (my sister forever), Linda (my mom forever), Larissa, Rob, Kimi, and Frank.

To my loves, Alexandrina and Genevieve, you are two special people who are godsent and motivate me to be a better person every day. You have joined me on this long educational adventure from my bachelors to my doctorate. You balance my soul and remind me of unconditional love, especially when I couldn't always give you my full attention. Since you were born, I have been in school (I even brought you to classes). I hope to instill the desire to be lifelong learners, always growing, and eager to know more. I love being your mommy, and thank you for watching me grow with you.

And finally – to all my reading students – you are my why! You are the future! Reading is your escape to a new adventure.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLES

FIGURES

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Alpha Public Schools (APS) (pseudonym) is located in southern state. It is home

to approximately 42,000 students (citation omitted to preserve anonymity). APS students

attend schools in mostly rural areas with a strong sense of community pride in military,

patriotism, and 'community raised' perspectives. The former APS superintendent is an

advocate for State Standards, literacy enrichment, and early childhood learning. When I

began my dissertation, the former superintendent's running platform was influential in

rekindling and revisiting our basic human rights in literacy. Literacy is an understanding

of written, read, and spoken language. Mangan (2016) confirms the foundations of

literacy to include the ability to decipher between sounds and letters, which eventually

leads to reading, writing, and speaking so that a person can comprehend, understand,

synthesize, and reflect on the words.

APS has a history of being a mediocre district with below par state assessment

scores. In the school year (SY) 2017-2018, the state awarded the school district with a B,

but 13 elementary schools remained in the bottom 300 list of low performing schools. In

2016 and 2017, the district's grade was a C ([State Name Redacted] Department of

Education, 2017). In 2016, approximately 45% of third grade students took the State

Standards Assessment (SSA) in English Language Arts (ELA) for reading and writing

and scored at a level 3 or above ([State Name Redacted] Department of Education, 2016).

These results indicated that approximately 55% of third grade students in APS are below

grade level in reading and writing. In 2017, about 55% of third grade students who took

the SSA ELA in reading and writing scored at a level 3 or above, which means 50% of

the third grade students performed below grade level ([State Name Redacted] Department of Education, 2017). The SSA scores are a reflection of how well the school district performs. Researchers discovered "third grade is a pivotal year for students to adjust to learning to read to reading to learn" (Kel-Artinian & Parisi, 2018). The problem was APS' third grade students continue to perform below the state average SSA ELA score. APS district leaders recognized a literacy problem and understood that students who were not reading proficiently in the third grade would most likely lag behind their peers in their school career.

In September 2017, Curriculum Associates iReady's diagnostic assessment was administered to all Kindergarten through second grade students to determine specific reading deficiencies. The results indicated the highest deficiency in phonics and phonemic awareness. The district discovered students entering the third grade did not have the necessary foundational reading skills needed to move from the learning to read phase to the reading to learn phase. Research has shown that 75% of students who struggle with reading in third grade never catch up and are four times as likely to drop out of high school (Kel-Artinian & Parisi, 2018). APS district leaders recognize the reading deficiency in primary grade levels of Kindergarten through second grade, which creates a ripple effect on the third grade students who have struggled to pass the state SSA ELA due to their deficiency in phonics and phonemic awareness.

Purpose of the Evaluation

After approval and distribution of the state reading fund, APS district leaders decided to use the monies to purchase and adopt a whole language curriculum program for Kindergarten through second grade with the intent of preparing primary grade

students with the necessary reading foundational skills to succeed in reading to learn by the end of third grade. As part of the district leadership team, I decided to evaluate the program developed by Wilson Language Training called Fundations® for my dissertation. It is a program solely devoted to supporting foundational reading skills, and it is a supplement to a core English Language Arts curriculum program. Wilson Language Training developed a program to support foundational reading skills in Tier 1 level instruction (in class) and provide Tier 2 interventions (additional support in small groups via pull out session).

Tier 1 level instruction is the core curriculum and the daily lessons every student receives. As educators, we hope all students can work and learn at Tier 1 ability. But when students start to fall behind their peers and cannot keep up with daily instruction, these students are provided with Tier 2 interventions as part of the Multi-Tiered Support System (MTSS). Tier 2 interventions specifically mean that a teacher specializes in instruction and lessons for an individual student's needs and at one year below grade level. With Wilson Language Fundations®, the program offers a Tier 2 intervention called Double Dose (Goss & Chiddy, 2012). It is an additional lesson and review to support the student struggling in a specific area. The last tier is Tier 3, an intervention provided to students who perform two or more years below grade level. Wilson Language Fundations® does not offer a Tier 3 solution, so these students are pulled into small groups to receive another district approved intervention program.

Per a new state statute, reading programs utilized in the classroom must include systematic and explicit instruction. Wilson Language has a successful multisensory and structured language program called Wilson Language Fundations®. It is just one of the

many programs available that meet the new state requirements. Wilson Language states

Fundations® is a "research-based reading program and provides materials and strategies

that include reading foundational skills, spelling, handwriting, reading, and whole

language and it lays the groundwork for life-long literacy" (Wilson Training Corporation,

2018, p. 30). It is a scripted program with short activities called Owlets. The owl is the

program's mascot named Echo, and it is the theme throughout the curriculum. The

students repeat what Echo asks them to do. The teacher follows the lesson plan to provide

three to five Owlets a day. Each Owlet is a lesson on learning letters, sounds of letters put

to motion, air writing letters with hand movement, spelling, and scooping sentences or

phrases. The teacher follows the scripted program, and the students repeat (echo) what

the teacher does and says. At the end of a unit, the students take an oral and written

language assessment. If they pass the assessment with a score of 80% or better, they may

move on to the next unit. Students who do not meet the pass rate receive a double dose

intervention (Tier 2 intervention) in guided reading time or small group with a teacher or

paraprofessional.

I became aware of Wilson Language Fundations® through my former position as

a district leader with Alpha Public Schools. The district leaders analyzed SSA ELA data

and the diagnostic assessment results, and we recognized a need for a whole language

program in primary grades. As a district leader in the curriculum department, it was also

part of my position to analyze the curriculum programs. I became aware of the gap and

deficiencies in the 2016-2017 curriculum. It lacked phonics and phonemic awareness, an

area the APS elementary schools were struggling in. The district leaders reviewed

reading programs that the district had previously purchased to see if any of these

programs would fill the gap. In addition, we reviewed programs that other neighboring districts were using with much success. An APS district director had prior knowledge and background of Wilson Language, wherein she utilized their services in urban schools and had much success in the early stages of reading with students. The district leadership narrowed the decision down to Wilson Language Fundations® as a supplemental program to be used with a core Language Arts program. Although the decision to purchase Wilson Language Fundations® was agreed upon in July 2017, the purchase process extended through late September 2017. The administrators and literacy coaches received a formal introduction and training of the new reading program in October 2017.

Schools were scheduled to receive one teacher kit per teacher in Kindergarten through second grade, but the purchase and legal process delayed the product arrival until the end of December 2017. The three-month gap between October to December, while waiting for the product, allowed the district leaders ample time to train the literacy coaches who brought the training back to each school. Due to the delay, APS district leaders were advised by school-based administrators to postpone the implementation of Wilson Language Fundations® in classrooms. Some school teams were eager to start, and they began their implementation mid-year.

In the research and discovery phase, APS district personnel realized a need for a strong Tier 1 program to support students in moving from the learning to the read phase to reading to learn phase. Wilson Language Fundations® qualified as a prevention program to help the multi-tiered system (MTSS) in Tier 1 instruction and Tier 2 intervention. "It is an integral multi-tiered system of supports, providing research-based instruction in Tier 1 as well as early intervention (Tier 2) for students at risk for reading

difficulties" (Wilson Language Training, 2018, p. 30). To increase student achievement

levels on the SSA ELA in third grade students, the district leaders chose to focus on

building capacity at earlier grade levels with primary grades in mind. Therefore, a

program that offered support in phonics and phonemic awareness deficiency was a must.

During a reading conference I heard the Just Read, State Director, mention that Wilson

Language Fundations® was used in other districts with great success. The data of the

student outcome reported by Indian River County School District showed that the

implementation of Wilson Language Fundations® improved the ability of a greater

number of their Kindergarten students to read and improving the rate of first grade

students who closed the gap and achieved developmentally appropriate levels of reading

(Wilson Language Training Corporation, 2015, p. 30).

APS had the perfect opportunity to adopt a primary grade-level reading program

that would help increase student learning. The Wilson Language Fundations® program

has a proven record of increasing foundational reading skills when used with fidelity for

20-35 minutes every day. This literacy change would result in growth over time and

improve the school district and individual elementary schools grade with reading

improvements showing up in third grade students. Therefore, the APS School

Improvement Plan identified early warning indicators such as reading interventions to

contribute to increasing student success and planned to use the weekly probes and

progress monitoring tools provided by Wilson Language Fundations®. The school

improvement plan states, "Student learning gains will increase by 15% in all tested

subgroups by June 2019, when the data analysis process is used to guide decisions that

result in timely instructional adjustments based on data implications." (State Department

of Education, 2018, p. 1). Wilson Language Fundations® has progress monitoring tools that allow teachers to capture data on their students' progress with the ability to plan and adjust lessons that respond to students' weaknesses. If a student is not making progress using Wilson Language Fundations®, the trained teacher intervenes in a timely manner using the progress monitoring tools.

The purpose of my evaluation was to discover if programs or people are more beneficial in teaching students to read and if the benefits produce increased student achievement levels. Reading is a powerful tool that opens many doors and opportunities. This program is important to me as I feel responsible as an educator to provide all students the ability to read and function in society. I also wish to increase student achievement in the primary grade levels.

When I was hired by the former superintendent, I received direct orders to fix the problem of students not being able to read. With 14 years of literacy coaching and teaching, I feel passionate about ensuring every student entering the third grade is a proficient reader because they have a chance to become successful literate adults. I have also taught high school students who struggled to find a place in the community because of their limited literacy skills. The evaluation of the Wilson Language Fundations® program allowed me to track the growth of student achievement in reading foundational skills as they moved from the learning to read phase to the reading to learn phase. "Data enables an 'early warning system' that helps schools determine when students are falling off track in order to help them before it's too late" (Gorman, 2015, para. 7).

When I was part of the district leadership team, one of my tasks was creating an early warning system, tracking data, and ensuring the schools' teachers and

paraprofessionals ran the program with fidelity. I also had the opportunity to collect data from the listening tours and listen to teachers' concerns to recommend changes. As a former district leader and educator, I felt a strong sense of purpose to ensure every child in the APS district could read by the time he/she left the third grade.

The evaluation of the program occurred over a specific time period to follow students' literacy growth in Kindergarten through third grade utilizing the Wilson Language Fundations® program. Initially, I planned on measuring student growth using the Spring SSA ELA third grade results. During the evaluation time period, district leadership changes shifted my job responsibilities and a global pandemic occurred. I had three different roles in the APS district, which allowed me to gain insight into the program from three different perspectives. Other constraints in the evaluation of the program during this specific time period included the adoption of a new language arts curriculum and two shifts in the district leadership team, including a new superintendent. A new leadership team chose to remove specific reading intervention programs that would conflict with the newly adopted language arts curriculum, including the Wilson Language Fundations® program. In 2020, a global pandemic, Covid19, swept through the nation and the State decided to cancel elementary grade level SSA testing. Since there are no third grade SSA ELA results for student achievement growth, I used Curriculum Associates' iReady assessments.

Rationale

As an educator and reading teacher, I advocated for literacy and have a strong desire to ensure students leave high school equipped to understand their role as community members. I chose this program evaluation because of the possibilities of

discovering a program that would catapult early aged students' learning into the realm of literacy. When I began my dissertation, I had access to the data needed to answer and address the exploratory questions. I suggested necessary adjustments and changes to professional development in my former job position, including incorporating the program into daily lessons and monitoring its fidelity in schools. Later, I became an administrator in one of the bottom 300 schools, and I felt more empowered to support the teachers, students, and community to provide a better reading program.

A critical issue to address was the minimal professional development offered to teachers, paraprofessionals, and administrators on the Wilson Language Fundations® program. APS purchased the program without any professional development from Wilson Language. Still, district leaders hosted a training for all literacy coaches and administrators who were responsible for sharing the information back at their school sites. As part of the new administrative change, the former superintendent requested all district leaders conduct a listening tour. The listening tour gave district leaders a chance to hear the concerns from staff in all schools.

A crucial piece of evidence came about from the listening tours. The APS teachers voiced their concern for the lack of training of a new program and the need for individual student consumables. Due to a lack of funding, APS district leaders chose to invest in teacher kits rather than student kits. The district leaders attempted to explain the funding situation and justified their reasoning was building a teacher's capacity for learning outweighed the purchase of consumables. "Teacher capacity-building has been found to be the most productive investment for schools and far exceeds the effects of teacher experience or class size" (Greenwald, Hedges, & Laine, 1996, p. 411).

Building teacher capacity has a strong correlation to teacher effectiveness, and

therefore, professional development of any program is vital to the program's success and

increases student achievement. Building teacher capacity also creates a creative mind on

how to handle the lack of student consumables such as using blackline masters to make

copies, alternative materials using cookie sheets with magnetic letters, and small

whiteboards instead of the Wilson Language Fundations® student materials kit.

The 2017 State Legislative requirements address reading instruction and

intervention, professional development, and teacher preparation programs. I shared some

changes with the district leadership team that affected all district members from teachers

to students. This includes the 2017 state Statutes and Intervention Requirements s.

1001.215(8)

> To work with the state Center for Reading Research to identify
>
> scientifically researched and evidence-based reading instructional and
>
> intervention programs that incorporate explicit, systematic, and sequential
>
> approaches to teaching phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency,
>
> and text comprehension and incorporate decodable or phonetic text
>
> instructional strategies (Citation withheld to preserve confidentiality).

As a team, we decided to use the Wilson Language Fundations® program because the

reading intervention includes evidence-based strategies, individual instruction, and a

multisensory teaching approach.

The most important policy change that affected our district is s.1012.98(4)(b) 11.

to provide training to reading coaches, classroom teachers, and school administrators "to

integrate phonemic awareness; phonics, word study, and spelling; reading fluency;

vocabulary, including academic vocabulary; and text comprehension strategies into an explicit, systematic, and sequential approach to reading instruction, including multisensory intervention strategies" (Citation withheld to preserve confidentiality). In addition, the newly passed state statute s.1012.585(3)(f) mandated each district to "provide all elementary grades instructional personnel access to training" to implemented programs (Official Online Site of the State Legislature, 2017, para. 3). These policy changes affected the district's decision to choose curriculum, plan master schedules utilizing highly effective teachers, and conducting future professional development and training.

The program evaluation was important to the stakeholders: teachers and students, the district, and the educational community because literacy is the key component for learning. Also, increasing student achievement was the former superintendent's running platform for which she promised the community, teachers, students, and parents. Each stakeholder has an integral part in ensuring the program evaluation was effective. The stakeholders' buy-in and commitment, positive participation, and authentic cooperation were needed to ensure the evaluation's effectiveness.

The importance of the program evaluation to the district was due to the APS district leaders choice to tackle reading deficiencies in primary grades. It was with the good intention that the use of the selected program would increase reading scores over a span of time so to create lifelong learners. Understanding the data in the primary grades utilizing Wilson Language Fundations® and gathering questionnaire results from teachers, administrators, and paraprofessionals allowed the district to make decisions and changes to the program to ensure growth and progress in students' learning. Tackling

literacy is just one key component of creating an A district, and the Wilson Language Fundations® program evaluation allowed the district leadership team members to see if this was the correct research-based program for the district.

Teachers are evaluated based on student achievement scores in reading so the program evaluation took on great importance in terms of its efficacy to foster student gains. Teachers receive pay in the form of performance checks when students make learning gains, increase the school grade, and meet state specified proficiency levels. Teachers are willing to take a risk by using a research-based program to support the pedagogy that may earn them a higher score on the value-added measurement criteria. If teachers do not meet the value-added measurement criteria, they may risk being moved to another grade level and sometimes even a new school. Teachers who show significant growth are recognized for their abilities and often receive financial incentives from pay for performance checks to prime classroom locations and parking spots.

The program evaluation was important to students because students come to school to learn. We are doing them a disservice if they leave the third grade and are not able to read. We cannot afford to produce illiterate adults who will lead or be part of a tightly knitted community without the knowledge to be a productive citizen. It was the educators' responsibility to advocate for our students and produce literate citizens who will become part of Alpha County. The students rely on quality education so that they can walk across the stage at graduation, set off to work in the community or attend college, but more importantly, return to Alpha County to become the next business owner, community leader, or active resident of where they grew up.

The program evaluation was important to parents because the district's no homework policy had left parents and teachers feeling helpless. Wilson Language Fundations® program had an additional resource for parents to keep them involved in their child's learning, yet relinquished homework assignments from the teacher. The take-home program supported the teacher's lessons and gave specific instructions for parents to follow. Parent input was a valuable source for understanding if the program was able to help raise student achievement.

Goals of the Program Evaluation

My goal for the evaluation of the Wilson Language Fundations® program was to verify if a reading program coupled with building the capacity of a teacher in foundational reading skills would produce proficient readers. In my former high school reading teacher years, I have witnessed firsthand how students can feel separated from society when they do not possess the necessary literacy skills for basic communication. "Effective phonics instruction is important because letter-sound knowledge is the foundation needed to build up reading and writing abilities" (Wang, 2017, para. 28). Phonics and phonemic awareness are the basic building blocks for reading comprehension, spelling, vocabulary, and language. The building blocks are the base for all literacy learning. I believed that all teachers could learn to teach the building blocks of reading with or without a program and provide young children and adults the necessary literacy skills to become proficient readers.

I created Table 1 to show the progression of each grade level cohort's use of the Wilson Language Fundations® lessons. Class of 2017-2018's first grade students have the most valuable information to use in the data collection. The SY 2017-2018 first grade

student cohort is a group of students who would have taken the SSA ELA in the third grade in SY 2019-2020. I originally intended to use their scores to show growth in student achievement levels. But in SY 2019-2020, the new APS district leadership team members decided to discontinue the program's use, the global pandemic occurred, and the state canceled SSA testing. Due to the year's anomalies, I used Curriculum Associates' iReady progress monitoring scores to verify if the program's use increased or decreased student achievement levels.

I collected SY 2018-2019 second grade Curriculum Associates iReady data in English Language Arts and Reading to verify the Wilson Language Fundations® program's success. The program rolled out to 32 APS elementary schools in the school year (SY) 2017-2018 and X Elementary School's leadership team implemented the program in the second semester. X Elementary School's first grade students (Table 1) received one year (SY 2018-2019) and five months (2nd semester of SY 2017-2018) of the intervention program. Since the new APS district leaders decided to discontinue the program in the SY 2019-2020, I used the Curriculum Associates iReady diagnostic assessment and progress monitoring data instead of the SSA ELA score. Curriculum Associates iReady was given to students in Kindergarten through fifth grade three times a year to verify growth or deficiencies. At the end of SY 2018-2019, the second grade iReady data collected was analyzed to inform the readers of the Wilson Language Fundations® program's success in preparing students for the phase of reading to learn. This phase provides the students with the basic foundational reading skills needed to be successful third grade students who move to the reading to learn phase. This time period of data collection allowed me to verify if Wilson Language Fundations® is a program

with state statute required approaches of: systematic, multisensory, and sequential

learning as required by State Legislation in making student gains.

Table 1.

Progression Chart of Students Utilizing Wilson Language Fundations®

START	2017-2018 Spring 2018 = 5 months of Fundations®	2018-2019 End of 2019 = 1 full year of Fundations®	2019-2020 End of 2020 = 2 full years of Fundations®
Class of 2017-2018 Kindergarten students	At the end of 2018, Kindergarten students will receive five months of Wilson Language Fundations®.	This class will be first graders in Fall 2018. By the end of 2019, they will receive one year and five months of Wilson Language Fundations® while they were in Kindergarten and First grade.	This class will be second graders in Fall 2019. By the end of 2020, they will receive two years and five months of Wilson Language Fundations® while they were in Kindergarten, first, and second grade.
* Class of 2017-2018 first grade students	At the end of 2018, first grade students will have five months of Wilson Language Fundations®.	This class will be second graders in Fall 2018. By the end of 2019, they will receive one year and five months of Wilson Language Fundations® while they were in first and second grade.	This class will be third graders in Fall 2019. By midyear 2020, they will receive two full years and five months of Wilson Language Fundations® while they were in first, second, and third grade. They will take the SSA ELA Spring exam but due to Covid19, the state canceled testing.
Class of 2017-2018 second grade students	At the end of 2018, these students will have five months of Fundations®.	This class will be third graders in Fall 2018. By the end of 2019, Tier 1 students will receive five months of Wilson Language Fundations® when they were in the second grade.	This class will be fourth graders in Fall 2019. By midyear 2020, Tier 2 students will receive two full years (3rd & 4th grade) of intervention for 90 minutes a day prior to taking the SSA ELA Spring exam but

		By the end of 2019, Tier 2 students will receive one year of Wilson Language Fundations® Intervention for 90 minutes a day prior to taking the SSA ELA Spring exam.	due to Covid19, the state canceled testing.
Class of 2017-2018 third grade students	These students did not receive Wilson Language Fundations®.	This class will be fourth graders in Fall 2018. These students did not receive Wilson Language Fundations®.	This class will be fifth graders in Fall 2019. These students did not receive Wilson Language Fundations®.

Research Questions

Throughout the study, the research questions helped me discover how important it is to create proficient readers by the third grade and build confidence in our teachers to provide interventions. I also discovered the importance of professional development in reading strategies for teachers and building teacher capacity. For the purpose of this study, I studied and collected data from one school, X Elementary School, who utilizes the Wilson Language Fundations® program in their MTSS Tier 2 program and supplemental Language Arts curriculum.

1. What do X Elementary School's ELA Kindergarten through 3rd grade teachers, paraprofessionals, administrator, and literacy coach perceive is working well in the Wilson Language Fundations® program?

2. What do X Elementary School's ELA Kindergarten through 3rd grade teachers, paraprofessionals, administrator, and literacy coach perceive is not working well in the Wilson Language Fundations® program?

3. What do X Elementary School's teachers, paraprofessionals, administrators, and literacy coach using the Wilson Language Fundations® program perceive as the greatest challenges in the program?

4. What do X Elementary School's teachers, paraprofessionals, administrators, and literacy coach using Wilson Language Fundations® program perceive as ways to address the challenges (if any) or improve the program?

Secondary exploratory questions. Educators, not programs, make a difference in reading, so it was imperative for me to follow the program's rollout and implementation in depth on how the staff received training, including a follow-up program. A plan needed to be in place to ensure teachers and paraprofessionals received adequate time to implement the program, including checks and balances on how they should utilize the program.

1. What are the perceptions of X Elementary School's administrators regarding ensuring the Wilson Language Fundations® program is operating with fidelity?

2. What are the perceptions of X Elementary School's teachers regarding the quality of professional development received in reading strategies?

3. What are the perceptions of X Elementary School's administrators regarding the quality of professional development received in reading strategies by school literacy coach, district, and/or outside consultant?

I evaluated the program through a series of surveys, interviews, and data collection. The evaluation results were a correlation of program implementation and if it is affected student learning. I intended to interview all Kindergarten through second grade teachers, all Kindergarten through second grade paraprofessionals, and school site

administrators at X Elementary School. Since APS district leaders implemented the

Wilson Language Fundations® program in primary grade levels, I focused on X

Elementary School educators. A population of three-Kindergarten teachers and three

paraprofessionals; three-first grade teachers and three paraprofessionals; and three-second

grade teachers and three paraprofessionals. The interview questions addressed ways to

improve the program, what works well in the program, and what does not work well in

the program. I expected my research would inspire the leaders of X Elementary School

and/or Alpha Public Schools to make changes to improve the program, reconsider

training and professional development for teachers, and/or plan for implementation of

future trainings. Since the implementation of Wilson Language Fundations® affected

teachers and students, it was crucial to keep the dialogue open between educators and

leaders to gather the necessary feedback and survey results for my dissertation.

Conclusion

The dissertation research helped me determine whether a reading program or

carefully teacher-planned reading strategies taught promptly are best for the students.

One researcher states, "Many average and below-average urban children fail to respond

to commercial programs. They need alternative learning strategies delivered by a well-

trained teacher" (Cooter, Jr., 2003, p. 198). There are no quick fixes for teaching reading,

but the district leaders of Alpha Public Schools are aware that we need to build teacher

capacity in reading pedagogy, arm teachers with a systemic and multisensory program,

and provide professional development to support reflection and lesson implementation

before the district will see an increase in student achievement. All students, regardless of

their learning abilities and socioeconomic status, should be afforded the basic human

right of literacy. It is essential to have equal access to reading for all.

CHAPTER TWO

Review of Literature

Literacy is a fundamental human right with a foundation for achieving education for all that provides people tools to make informed decisions and participate in society (Read Educational Trust, 2017). Reading is an essential component of literacy, and it serves as a base for all other literacy standards, such as: reading, writing, speaking, and listening. All people, regardless of socioeconomic status, race, or background, should be afforded basic literacy skills so they can make sound life decisions. Reading allows people to function in society, be part of the community, and build a foundation for learning for all other subjects. Therefore, there was a real sense of urgency to ensure students read and understand by the end of third grade so as not to become a statistic of a high school dropout. The literature review focused on the importance of moving from a phase of *reading to learn* to *reading to understand* and why this transition needed to occur quickly. It also focused on understanding the components and quality of successful boxed reading intervention programs; and, more importantly, building the capacity of teachers who provide the reading program so if trending products disappear, good teaching remains.

Creating Readers and the Challenges

A child's formative years is a period of foundational learning that spans until a child is approximately eight to ten years old. Geske and Ozola (2008) suggested spending more time building reading skills with children under the age of 10 builds better readers. During these years, the child has the most opportunity to grow cognitively, socially, emotionally, and physically. These formative years was the reason why there seems to be

a sense of urgency to learn to read during this time. It was the opportune time to build basic reading foundational skills, including phonics, decoding, and sight words.

The phase of learning to read generally takes place as early as pre-Kindergarten and spans to the end of third grade. This phase is when children learn the foundations of reading, and it boosts them to the next phase of reading to learn, also known as reading comprehension and inquiry. In the learning to read phase, children learn basic literacy skills: they learn segments of sounds in speech, sounds of the alphabet and recognize the letters of the alphabet, realize the sounds and letters conjoin to make words, and increase their spoken vocabulary. It is an imperative phase of a student's life as the foundational reading skills enable students to read words, connect text, and increase fluency which moves them to connect all areas, so they can read to learn. Although learning to read and reading to learn phases should co-occur, the first phase is often sped through and is not given adequate time for students without equal resources or learning disabilities to catch up. The fast pace of learning means that portions of the foundational skills may get missed and leave deficits to remediate or attempts to remediate at a later grade level. Another issue came to light when teaching children to read, which is keeping their attention span through the process of repetitiously sounding out letters and drilling phonics.

A challenge encountered when teaching children to read was learning disabilities, coupled with motivation. Esther Tovli (2014) takes this notion another step further by addressing reading challenges using differentiated instruction (p. 71). Differentiated instruction provides students an opportunity to meet their individual capabilities, interests, and preferred learning styles while increasing their potential to learn. Since it is

challenging to diagnose disabilities at an early age, many students do not receive proper reading interventions in a timely manner. Sometimes, a child with a disability is classified as a student uninterested in learning, bored, or lazy. If a student is diagnosed with a lower intelligence level than peers, teachers can intervene sooner than later by providing corrective reading strategies coupled with an intervention program. Interventions should include methods that motivate students, such as piquing their personal interest and considering their cultural background.

While learning disabilities may hinder reading that requires interventions, there was another contention. The art of reading was competing with the digital age and fast-paced delivery of information from YouTube and TikTok to phone apps. It seems that children learn to hold a device before a book, and their attention span is rapidly decreasing due to the fast action of graphics and visually appealing animation. Bhat, author of Attention Spans in the Age of Technology (2017), states that children are growing up in a very different world with stimulation affecting them developmentally. The vast amount of information their brain was taking in means that they are trying to pay attention and organize the information all at the same time. They were also learning to multitask at a very early age, which leaves them incapable of focusing on a single task in which foundational reading skills are required. In the digital age, children are stimulated for instant gratification. In contrast, the art of reading takes time wherein words are used to elaborately tell a story that a child can picture with his/her imagination to create the image in their brain. Children may be losing the ability to stay focused on learning basic reading skills when there is so much mental stimulation.

The skill of learning to read was in intense competition with the modern technology age. Since reading is a modeled behavior on a digital platform or in print, good habits must start at an early age from monitoring the type of program to the amount of screen time. You can find adults modeling reading behaviors with enormous amounts of screen time as they peruse social media and YouTube channels. Children and students are picking up on this behavior too. Children's imaginations are not pushed to their limit when software, applications, and videos take most of the creativity away. Tara Books, a children's author, explains her frustrations of writing children's stories and how there is much more effort put into writing and getting a child to read by capturing strong visual context through words (Anderson, 2018). Developing reading cultures is a global issue. In this generation, educators are competing with the digital age. I considered articles for the literature review on engaging children to learn to read using alternative formats, including eye-appealing visuals and physical movements. Understanding the digital age and how it impacts a child's learning was valuable to my research because there are components that needed to be addressed when choosing corrective reading strategies and reading intervention programs.

By the time a student reaches secondary grades, learning to read using decoding skills is no longer a relevant point. "Teachers expect students to apply the sight-word and decoding skills, supposedly gained in the earlier grades, to new and challenging content area information" (Robb, 2002, p. 24). In these higher grades, classes are reduced to 45 minutes of teaching reading strategies, tackling the state test, motivating students to stay in school, and building endurance to keep them positive when taking high stake tests. Hence the reason for creating a sense of urgency to learn how to read at an early age, but

also to advocate for literacy as a basic human right because these students are citizens and future leaders of the community in which they live. If students are given the opportunity to learn and practice reading strategies at any age, they become lifelong readers and learn to love reading.

Early intervention in reading is imperative. If students do not receive interventions until high school, they may not graduate due to low state test reading scores. Some common issues high school students have shared with me in reflective conversations is that they did not have someone to read to them at home and they did not have access to books or learning aids in their early years. These high school students were placed in reading classes throughout their educational career. They missed opportunities to be with peers in elective classes because a reading intervention class replaced elective courses. Do these students have equal opportunity and access to resources as other students? If they did, they would be worrying about what to wear to graduation instead of how to graduate. This is one reason why this research is essential to my dissertation.

We often hear about the collaboration between teachers creating high achievement student scores. Still, the partnership of student, family, and teachers working side by side to build strong readers has an equally compelling argument towards higher achieving students. "One perspective on literacy is the idea of communities of practice defined as groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly" (Francois, 2013, p. 4). All students can learn to read and enjoy reading when collaboration for learning how to read is connected between home and school. There needs to be a strong partnership bonding between

parents, teachers, and administrators to provide equal access for all students by giving them options to read, to learn, and to grow. This can be in the form of free lending libraries, take home books programs, meaningful homework activities, literacy days and nights at school, parent engagement and learning opportunities, and neighborhood resource vans such as a mobile library. When everyone is excited about reading and it is seen as an everyday occurrence at school and at home and not as a treat, then we build a community of students who love to read every day and it becomes the norm.

Reading Intervention Programs

There are many boxed reading intervention programs available to educators, but the weight is placed on the products with backed research to produce positive results in a short amount of time. Educators choose reading intervention programs because the bulk of the work is done such as lesson planning, matching reading strategies, and regalia from posters to manipulatives. These products make it appealing to educators because much of the leg work is done for them. The main issue is discerning which program is right for the student before making a costly investment. In addition, a boxed reading program supplies the resources, but effective instruction relies on the teacher's delivery of the strategy and program.

Alpha Public Schools district has over 20 reading programs to choose from. The freedom is given to schools to purchase programs using state reading plan funds which adds an additional set of resources. With a plethora of programs to choose from, it can be mind boggling to choose the right program in hopes of attaining results. Since the programs are utilized in the school, it builds a more profound argument in my dissertation to discover a program that connects learning from school to home. The reading programs

may have extensions to work at home using computer-based programs or take-home activity sheets. Regardless, parents will need support in implementing the program at home too. This can be fulfilled during literacy events or parent engagement nights.

The adoption of a boxed reading program is important to me because my district's reading scores show that there is a trending decline in reading scores for third graders taking the state assessment. Kel-Artinan and Parisi (2018) argue third grade is an imperative time in a student's life because they are making a move from learning to read to reading to learn. Students who do not make a move to understanding what they read are more likely to drop out of school because basic comprehension is missing. Therefore, the district began a hunt for a reading intervention program that fulfilled characteristics and best practices of the state Reading Initiative to include multimodal and multisensory learning for all students. APS district leaders adopted Wilson Language Fundations®, a whole based reading intervention program developed by Wilson Language and this is why the data and study is important to helping me shape my dissertation as well as a push to ensure all students can read.

While there are several programs available, Wilson Language Fundations® seems to be a program of choice for other school districts too. Fisher observed Wilson Language Fundations® as a reading intervention program for at-risk students at a Title 1 School which has the same demographics as the school that I am working at. The results of the boxed reading program coupled with the use of technology, providing teachers with professional development, giving reading access to students at home, and regular progress monitoring showed an improvement on students' reading skills in class (Fisher, 2012, p. 38). Students who participate in a prescriptive program, such as Wilson

Language Fundations®, for the required amount of time, lessons delivered with fidelity as the program states, and consistently monitored for progress have shown increased reading achievement scores. Goss and Brown-Chiddy (2012) conclude their data of comparing boxed reading intervention programs are similar to other researcher's data with end results confirming that highly structured and explicit instruction has a higher impact on improving student achievement in reading when teachers receive proper training, follow the direct and scripted instructions, and make changes to the intervention by monitoring progress.

There has been much effort and support for learning to read programs and initiatives. The Program of Research on Reading Comprehension (PRRC) discovered there is evidence to support the transformation of learning to read has improved reading instruction and students have acquired foundational reading skills for many learners, especially the struggling reader (Fisher, 2012, p. 31). However, students' movement to progress to understand what they have read has made little changes over the years. There is a need to arm educators with the knowledge and tools to provide reading interventions.

In *The Early Detection of Reading Difficulties*, Marie Clay confirms the research about how observing student's reading behaviors and documenting details of reading behaviors can help detect and support specific interventions unique to a student's learning (Clay, 1985, p. 89). Clay's Reading Recovery program is a combination of direct teaching instruction and systematic evaluation that includes the process of teaching short intervention tutorials, observing, evaluating, analyzing, and interpreting the data. The cycle repeats until the student is brought to the level of his/her peers. Many boxed intervention programs follow this protocol. The key to implementing any program is

professional development of teachers. Teachers need to know when and how to provide corrective reading strategies. Teachers use cues and reading behaviors to design lessons that meet the needs of students.

Building the Capacity of People

A reading program is not always the answer. Dr. Richard Allington (2002) reminds educators that we need to build up the teacher and not the program. When we build the capacity of the teacher, they are more prepared to combat students struggling with reading and provide the correct intervention and the correct book. Building the capacity of the educator produces quality lessons because the teacher is able to choose the right texts, recognize miscues, understand the root cause of reading errors, and correct the student's reading error in a timely manner through progress monitoring.

It is known that research-based programs work when followed with fidelity, but not every school can afford the enormous costs of purchasing the latest trend in reading products. In addition, I still hold the idea that collaboration with families and providing tools and strategies that can be used at home builds better readers. Boxed reading products are not affordable to parents nor would the training be feasible. In my history of teaching, I have learned over fourteen different reading intervention programs, but what sticks in my mind is the reading strategies that I have gained along the way that can be used without a boxed program. These are the same strategies that I can pass along to families so to support further learning at home. Boxed reading programs will come and go but building the capacity of the educator has a lasting effect on the student, school, and society.

Deford et al (2003) conducted research for the SCRI (South Carolina Reading Initiative) which is a professional development reading program that provides instruction and delivery of reading skills and strategies to students. Rather than focus on a boxed reading program, the SCRI focused on building the capacity of teachers in growing their skills which resulted in positive effects on students' reading achievement. The research conducted by Deford, et al discovered major differences in student reading achievement results with those students taught by teachers who received the SCRI intensive professional development training. These teachers made best practice decisions to create lessons using corrective strategies, assess the students, and then reteach the students. The teachers receiving SCRI professional development were able to select appropriate reading materials for their students that matched the students' independent and instructional reading ranges and it increased the students' critical thinking and reading skills. Building the educator's capacity to provide reading strategies has a lasting effect.

In addition, when providing teachers with specific professional development in reading, they are taught how to hook their students into reading by learning to make personal connections. When teachers make a commitment to provide personalized reading recommendations, time to read, and conference in reflective feedback about their reading, there is a personal connection that is developed between teacher and student. Francois' study determined that teachers who take personal interest in their students from understanding their culture to involvement in personal interests creates better readers. These relationships helped teachers choose appropriate books to read including the creation of recommended book lists. These lists give students opportunity to expand their learning by taking books home and continue their interests with their family. It also opens

up avenues for discussions and conversations between connections from self to text with family members.

Quality professional development in reading strategies, cues, and assessments provide teachers the support needed to instruct their students in reading. Although boxed reading intervention programs come with scripts to follow, a properly trained teacher can make the necessary adjustment to the lesson to address students' deficits in reading through progress monitoring. A boxed reading program may provide the resources, but a teacher must provide the strategies. The National Center on Intensive Intervention (2013) recommends data-based individualization, a guide to give differentiation to students who have a persistent lack of response to interventions. Teachers will feel more confident when given the opportunity to grow their skills while reading from a teacher's manual.

This is an important topic to address in my dissertation because there is a time and place for multi-tiered support system (MTSS) and educators need to know when to intervene if a strategy or reading program is not working. Highly skilled educators who receive updated and rigorous training need to be used when programs and people are not working. Lemons, et al suggests "teachers need expertise in selecting and applying evidence-based reading interventions, using data to guide intervention and determine a need for modifications, and collaborating with other service providers, teachers, and parents" (Lemons, Al Otaiba, Conway, & De La Cruz, 2016, p. 93). Ruling out people or program can be done through fidelity checks and this allows administrators to verify that the program is being taught correctly and it also allows the administrator to observe the teacher's practice.

Conclusion

There is a need to move students from the phases of learning to read to reading to learn so to catch them before they progressively fall behind their peers. Reading intervention programs, highly trained educators, and informed parents and community are the support pillars for building a foundation of reading skills. Reading should not be viewed as a task or privilege, but a human right that all should be provided regardless of socioeconomic background, culture, race, and gender. The perfect combination to achieving high student reading performance is a research-based reading intervention program coupled with highly skilled and trained educators, a school fostering parent engagement with a commitment to learn at home and building community support around the love of reading with lending libraries and mobile resources. This combination creates a literate society with foundational skills to learn all other subjects and function as a productive citizen in the community.

CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

Research Design Overview

In the school year 2018-2019, Alpha Public Schools (APS) formally adopted Wilson Language Fundations® as a reading intervention program to prepare Kindergarten through second grade students in whole language skills of decoding, sounding and blending letters, spelling, writing, and reading. The district has great intentions to increase student learning by adopting a reading intervention program; their goal is to close the gap of non-readers and foundational deficient reading skills before students reach the third grade. Third grade students need to possess the necessary reading foundational skills to succeed in passing the state reading assessment, which focuses more on reading comprehension. Therefore, third grade teachers spend much of their time preparing and teaching lessons focused on the Language Arts State Standards in information reading and literature reading. The Wilson Language Fundations® program supports reading foundational skills and it is a supplement to a core English Language Arts curriculum program currently used.

If students are in Kindergarten through third grade and they are reading one or more years below grade level in phonics, then they are placed in the Wilson Language Fundations® program for an up to two MTSS (Multi-tiered Systems of Support) intervention blocks. Prior to beginning MTSS, every student not at current grade level in phonics is given a placement test in Wilson Language Fundations® to group students by his/her ability. For example, a first-grade student takes the placement test and scores at Kindergarten level. The interventionist (teacher or paraprofessional) will use the

appropriate ability level kit and in the case of the example, it is a K (Kindergarten) program kit to intervene. Teachers and paraprofessionals provide daily instruction that lasts from 45 minutes to 90 minutes during MTSS intervention blocks. Students receive progress probes every week to assess their ability and to ensure the intervention is appropriate.

The Wilson Language Fundations® program made its debut in the APS district in the Fall of 2017 in hopes of training as many employees as possible before the next semester. In October 2017, elementary school administrators and literacy coaches received an introduction of the product at their monthly meeting. In November 2017, literacy coaches received a three-hour training provided by the Director of Curriculum and Instruction. In December 2017, literacy coaches met for an additional two hours to share collaborative ideas on how to roll-out training to the teachers at their schools, and the Director of Curriculum and Instruction provided an overview training to 32 elementary school principals and assistant principals. Also, the arrival of the product to elementary school sites began before the winter break, which was just in time for the anticipated program start up in January 2018. The APS district team was confident that the administrators and teachers were ready to begin a new reading program regardless of a mid-year start up.

This program evaluation looked at the implementation of the Wilson Language Fundations® program which had a full year cycle at X Elementary School in 2018-2019. It was the perfect time to evaluate and seek feedback of the product's use and trainings. Evaluations help people decide if programs are worthy of using or in this case, keeping. Since APS recently implemented a new reading intervention program, I evaluated the

effectiveness of Wilson Language Fundations® and the offering of reading strategies in professional development. Patton states an "evaluation of something determines its merit, worth, value, or significance" (Patton, 2008, p. 5). The evaluation may serve to support the district and/or school's decision to further its use or possibly discontinue. I will set out to discover how the reading intervention program, coupled with reading strategies in professional development plays a vital role in creating proficient readers by the third grade.

I used mixed data collection of qualitative and quantitative data for this evaluation through a series of interviews, electronic surveys, observations, and data collection. The interview and survey questions addressed ways to improve the program, what works well in the program, and what does not work well in the program. The interview was conducted in person, whereas the electronic survey was conducted online and anonymously. The observations were conducted by the administrators using a Wilson Language Fundations® implementation checklist and collected for use in the evaluation. State Standards Assessment data will be collected and is public knowledge from the (Name withheld) Department of Education website. All identifying information will be removed before use in this evaluation.

The research methodology used to support the evaluation of the program was based on interviews, surveys, observations, and data collection. The information gathered gave me a better understanding if boxed intervention programs and/or professional development will constitute in higher academic scores. The data collected supported why literacy is a basic educational tool for all people to make informed decisions and participate in society (Read Educational Trust, 2017). Reading is a fundamental skill that

allows people to function in society, to be part of a community, and it builds a foundation of learning for all other subjects. Therefore, there is a real sense of urgency to ensure students receive basic literacy and reading skills in the primary grades. My research will contribute to the field of education by looking at the importance of moving from a phase of learning to read to understanding what is read. The data collected provided a better understanding of why this transition needs to occur quickly; understanding the components and quality of successful reading intervention program; and more importantly, building the capacity of teachers who provide the interventions so if trending products disappear, good teaching remains.

As an educator, my responsibility to X Elementary School and APS is to increase student achievement in the primary grades. The evaluation of the program will allow me to track growth in student achievement of basic reading foundational skills from learning to read to reading to learn with X Elementary School's teachers who utilized the Wilson Language Fundations® program in Kindergarten through third grade. I used mixed research methodologies to gather the data including surveys, interviews, and progress monitoring data. The data collected serves as an early warning indicator that additional interventions and/or professional development of staff are needed to ensure students are making growth in reading. In addition, my position requires me to keep a watchful eye on early warning indicator systems, tracking data, and ensuring programs and curriculum are taught with fidelity. I have a strong sense of purpose to ensure every child can read at grade level by the time he/she enters the third grade.

Participants

The participants include teachers, paraprofessionals, and administrators who provide the reading intervention and utilize the Wilson Language Fundations® program at X Elementary School. Their participation in the evaluation is vital to the success of the evaluation. It is vital to keep the dialogue open and to respect the opinion of the interventionist providers. One of the guiding principles for evaluators is to respect the stakeholders by ensuring their voice matters, respect the security and confidentiality of their responses, and to build a rapport (Patton, 2008, p. 27). Therefore, I respected stakeholders' time and interactions with the utmost care. Their honest responses have allowed me to gather the necessary feedback and survey results for my dissertation. I hope my research will inspire the X Elementary School and/or Alpha Public Schools to make changes to improve the program, offer training and professional development for teachers, and/or consider how changes and training will be implemented going forward.

I intended to interview and survey all Kindergarten through third grade teachers, all Kindergarten through third grade paraprofessionals, two literacy coaches, and school site administrators at X Elementary School. Since the program was implemented in primary grade levels, I explored in depth with all teachers in each grade level for one school: three-Kindergarten teachers; three-first grade teachers; three-second grade teachers; and four-third grade teachers. In addition, X Elementary School has over six paraprofessionals that contribute to the success of the classroom. I solicited the responses of 8 paraprofessionals, two literacy coaches, and two administrators. For this evaluation, the participants are: male or female teachers over the age of 21 years old and are employed at X Elementary School, male or female paraprofessionals over the age of 21

years old and are employed at X Elementary School, and up to two male or female

administrators employed at X Elementary School. The participants will have varying

degrees of experience in the program and education. The information they provide will

remain confidential and all identifiers will be removed.

Data Gathering Techniques

I provided an Invitation to Participate (Appendix A) to 24 educators which

include teachers, paraprofessionals, and administrative staff at an afterhours event hosted

by X Elementary School to promote camaraderie and team building. This is an invitation

to voluntarily participate in the Program Evaluation of the Effectiveness of Wilson

Language Fundations® and Reading Strategies Professional Development, which

includes an online survey, interview, data collection, and observations. The research

conducted for this evaluation will be conducted after contract hours, which may include

before or after school hours. If the participant wishes to participate, then they will sign

and return the Invitation to Participate to my mailbox at X Elementary School. Then an

Informed Consent for Survey, Informed Consent for Interview, and/or Informed Consent

for Administrators only was sent to participants who returned a signed Invitation to

Participate (Appendix A). Once these were in my possession, I started the process of data

gathering using Survey Questions (Appendix B), Interview Questions for Teachers and

Paraprofessionals (Appendix C), Interview Questions for Administrators and Literacy

Coaches (Appendix D), and Wilson Language Fundations® Implementation Checklist

(Appendix E).

Survey. The survey results answered research questions by giving teachers,

paraprofessionals, and administrators an opportunity to rate the program and skills

provided to students to improve student achievement and reading. These results gave me

an understanding of how the program worked to increase student achievement levels in

the school. Upon receiving a signed Invitation to Participate (Appendix A), I sent 24

Informed Consent Letters for Adult Participant Survey with a hyperlink to an electronic

online survey. The participants can access the online survey questions (Appendix B) at

their own convenience and with anonymity. The survey contains five parts asking

questions about: participant's information and experience, program information,

professional development received, grade level specific questions, and administration or

literacy coach questions. Most of the questions are based on a Likert point scale of one to

five so that varying degrees of opinion can be calculated and averaged. Since the

participant can take the survey without logging in personal information, this will give

participants a chance to express their opinions freely and they may be able to share more

information about the Wilson Language Fundations® program and/or the professional

development received without fear of retribution or bias. Results will not have identifiers

and will only be used for this research study.

Interview. The interview results will answer research questions by allowing

teachers, paraprofessionals, and administrators to be candid with responses as it applies

directly to their job. An interview will enable them to speak openly and for me to see

facial expressions and body language as they respond to areas of the program. Their

responses will be applied towards the research and compared to student achievement

results.

Upon receiving a signed Invitation to Participate (Appendix A), I sent 24

Informed Consent Letters for Adult Participant Interviews and two Informed Consent for

Administrators and Literacy Coaches Interviews. Then I scheduled interviews with educators providing a reading intervention. Interviews were held during non-contractual hours which was after school hours and off-site. I conducted interviews in person and participants chose to attend at their own will. I gave interviewees the option to meet at a location that they recommend ensuring that they were in a comfortable setting. Interviewees were given a pseudonym and the results were used for this research study only. All identifiers were removed and kept confidential. I used Interview Questions for Teachers and Paraprofessionals (Appendix C) or Questions for Administrators and Literacy Coaches (Appendix D). The interview questions complement many of the survey questions. The interview questions allow participants to respond more candidly. I will be able to confirm the validity of their interview answers with the survey responses. The interview process took approximately 45 minutes to complete and I sent electronic mail to the interviewees when I needed a clarification.

Observation data. The observation data in the Wilson Language program is a form of a checklist utilized by the administrative leaders to verify the fidelity of a program. This information was used to answer research questions by specifically looking at the implementation and intervention process provided by teacher or paraprofessional. The fidelity of a program is important to capture because it can skew the data results. The checklist data will be considered along with the survey and/or interview responses. This will give me a better idea of how much training a teacher or paraprofessional received prior to implementing a program and if it effects the student achievement. I removed the interventionist's name and any student identifiers to maintain anonymity.

In addition, Wilson Language includes an implementation checklist for administrators to use as an observation tool to ensure the program is taught with fidelity. An administrator uses the implementation checklist to gauge the efficacy of the Wilson Language Fundations® program by observing the interventionist and checking specific areas of the program. Wilson Language Fundations® Implementation Checklists (Appendix E) are conducted once a month by an administrator (principal or assistant principal) and literacy coach and it is completed for each teacher or paraprofessional hosting an intervention in Wilson Language Fundations®. The original plan was to gather the monthly checklist from each educator providing the Wilson Language Fundations® intervention. Unfortunately, there was an administrative change in the leadership team at X Elementary School and no Wilson Language Fundations® Implementation Checklists (Appendix E) were completed or collected.

Student data. I used the (Name withheld) Department of Education website to gather information on the third grade students in school year 2018-2019. State Standards Assessment (SSA) data was used to follow third grade cohort from 2018-2019 but I could not follow the second year 2019-2020 for trends due to the cancellation of the SSA. Due to a global pandemic, Covid19, the data collected was limited to one year of State Standards Assessment for school year 2018-2019. In addition, I used Curriculum Associates iReady diagnostic and progress monitoring data. There were no Wilson Language Fundations® Implementation Checklists to collect, but educators shared their data records during the interview process. Individual student data was not collected or used.

Document review. The School Improvement Plan for X Elementary School year 2018-2019 and APS District Strategic Plan 2017-2019 is public knowledge and accessible via the State's Department of Education website. I used these two documents and the research to reflect on meeting literacy goals. The School Improvement Plan and District Strategic Plan both focus on increasing student achievement in reading. Therefore, this program evaluation has potential to assist APS' district decision-making process in choosing an effective intervention program to build phonics and reading foundational skills in grades Kindergarten through third grade.

Data Analysis Techniques

Once the data was collected, I analyzed the responses by sorting qualitative and quantitative data. The interview and observations data will be reported using transcripts, recordings, notes, and videos. I was able to create a narrative analysis based on the participants' responses to their experience with the program and/or professional development. Also, some of the interview questions correlate to survey questions. Therefore, I verified the participant's responses from interviews to surveys looking for themes. The survey data was reported using a Likert scale wherein the numbers may be calculated for frequencies, differences, and averages. The data supported the evaluation of the effectiveness of the Wilson Language Fundations® program and whether further professional development would be required in the program or in reading strategies.

Surveys. I conducted an anonymous electronic survey to identify strengths and weaknesses of the program, and I will include questions on ways to improve the program. The survey is modeled after a Likert type point scale. I used a one to five linear scale to solicit a varying degree of opinion from the respondent with a one equivalent to strongly

ineffective and a five equivalent to strongly effective. The quantitative data was analyzed for frequencies, averages, and differences. I used the survey results to determine if teachers, paraprofessionals, or administrators required more training on the product or if they need additional supports to continue the implementation of the program.

Interviews. I conducted individual interviews with participants and document responses using recordings, transcripts, and notes. I analyzed their responses seeking a correlation to the depth of their opinion on the survey questions. The qualitative data allowed me to code responses to themes within the research. The individuals interviewed depict a detailed description of their opinion of the intervention program, description of professional development courses taken or in need of and determine a level of knowledgeability in teaching reading strategies.

Observations. The observation data collected through the Implementation Checklists were used to verify if the program is taught with fidelity. The data are categorized in two areas: observed or not observed. The number of times the interventionist is observed implementing the Owlets (lessons and strategies) is an indicator of the program being used to its fullest extent. Interventionists demonstrate their knowledge of the program by implementing and teaching each Owlet. This data demonstrated if the program was being implemented correctly and if the students were receiving appropriate interventions. Some responses correlated to the survey and interview questions in identifying the interventionist's knowledgeability of reading foundational skills.

Student data. The third grade State Standards Assessment English Language Arts results are public knowledge and posted on the (Name withheld) Department of

Education website by school and district. This data was used to look for trends between

school year 2018-2019 which was when Wilson Language Fundations® completed a full

year of usage in the district. Unfortunately, the APS district leadership team members

chose to stop use of the Wilson Language Fundations® program in school year 2019-

2020 and concurrently, the nation experienced a global pandemic which canceled State

Standard Assessment testing. For this reason, the Curriculum Associates iReady

diagnostic and progress monitoring data was used to verify growth or deficit in student

achievement levels.

Document review. I analyzed the School Improvement Plan School Year 2018-

2019 for X Elementary School and APS District Strategic Plan 2017-2019. The district

and school have set goals for improvement in state test scores and the data gathered

provides a means to look for trends that the program is supporting, learning gains,

proficiency levels, and reading improvements.

Ethical Considerations

I ensured all participants understood that their participation is voluntary and did

not use them in any other way except for the data for the dissertation as explained in the

Invitation to Participate (Appendix A), Informed Consent for Survey, Informed Consent

for Interview, and Informed Consent for Administrators only. I gave the participants an

opportunity to participate via an electronic survey with hyperlink and in person via

interview. Results did not have identifiers and were only used for this research study.

Participants had the option to participate in the interview, survey, or both. Participants

had the choice to complete the survey in the privacy of their home or wherever they felt

comfortable doing so. Participants had the choice to schedule in-person interviews that fit

their person schedule and location. They also had the choice to stop their participation in the evaluation at any time without fear of retribution. Participants may or may not have benefitted from the research study, but their involvement in this study contributed to a better understanding of the implementation process of Wilson Language Fundations® and reading strategies in professional development at X Elementary School in APS district.

This evaluation does not pose a physical or emotional risk to the participants and all data will continue to remain confidential. Personal student data will not be used. To protect the adult participants, I removed participant identifiers and replace with pseudonyms. A pseudonym was used for the school and school district's name. All data was kept confidential in a locked storage in my home and on a password protected hard drive. After five years after the completion of the study, all survey data will be shredded. I plan to publish the research results in my dissertation and a copy of the completed study as requested will be available.

Limitations

There were a few limitations that hindered the data collection for the program evaluation. When I started the program evaluation, I was part of the district leadership team members in Alpha Public Schools. Then I moved into the school administration team at an elementary school and high school. The job changes gave me three different perspectives of how programs are implemented in the school and district and another viewpoint for professional development offerings in the school and district sites.

There was also a district leadership team members change in school year 2019-2020. The new district leadership team members revamped the Multi-Tiered Systems of

Support (MTSS) intervention programs and removed the use of the Wilson Language Fundations® program. The decision was based on the adoption of a new Language Arts curriculum and asking teachers to learn an additional program while they were still in the beginning of phases of implementing the Wilson Langauge Fundations® program. The district leadership team members realized that there was a conflict in how phonics and decoding were being taught between the two new programs.

Another limitation occurred, the novel Covid19, essentially brought school systems all over the world to a hault in March 2020. In 2019-2020, the 1st grade cohort (Table 1) would be third grade students taking the SSA ELA for the first time. But due to the global pandemic, Covid19, the SSA test was canceled. Therefore for this study, the SSA results are used as an informational reference point, and the Curriculum Associates iReady diagnostic assessment and progress monitoring results are used to demonstrate growth or decline in student achievement levels.

Conclusion

The research design is a culmination of qualitative and quantitative data from voluntary participants who provide Wilson Language Fundations® interventions at X Elementary School in APS district. The participants' personal and identifying data will be removed and kept confidential so that they can freely share their opinion about the program, thoughts on professional development reading strategies, and ways to improve in both areas. Participants will share responses via online survey, individual interviews, and observations. The results will help me evaluate Wilson Language Fundations®, which is utilized in Kindergarten through third grades and its effectiveness towards raising reading achievement scores at X Elementary School.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

Findings

Overview

The research conducted included the use of surveys, interviews, SY2018-2019 state released reading scores, and implementation checklists to develop the program evaluation of the Effectiveness of Fundations® and Professional Development in Reading Strategies. The data collection helped me answer the exploratory questions for the program evaluation of Wilson Language Fundations® and Professional Development in Reading Strategies. The surveys were provided to the paraprofessionals, teachers, literacy coaches, and administrators who were teaching and using the Wilson Language program called Fundations®. Also, interviews were solicited from the same group of educators to attain a better understanding of the survey results. The school data collection was completed by reviewing the (Name withheld) Department of Education's released state reading results and the teachers' intervention binders with probes, data, and implementation checklists. The findings of the data and collection methods allowed for a well-rounded approach to the program evaluation of the effectiveness of a boxed intervention reading program and the importance of professional development in reading strategies.

Survey Results

Teachers, paraprofessionals, and literacy coaches of X Elementary School were given an invitation to participate (Appendix A) and an Informed Consent Adult Participant Survey during an after hours social gathering. Administrators of X Elementary School were given an Invitation to Participate (Appendix A) and Informed

Consent School Site Administrator to Conduct Research at School Site. I distributed a total of 24 Informed Consent Adult Participant Survey forms and I received twenty signed Informed Consent Adult Participant Survey forms from eleven teachers, six paraprofessionals, one literacy coach and one administrator. In addition, I received one Informed Consent School Site Administrator to Conduct Research at School Site from an administrative leader at X Elementary School. After receiving the consent forms from the staff, I sent an email with the survey link to Survey Questions for All Participants (Appendix B). I sent two reminders to complete the survey within 30 days from the initial email. Of the twenty-four invitees, I received twenty completed surveys with a response rate of 83% returned.

 Background. The purpose was to gather background information on the teachers, paraprofessionals, literacy coaches, and administrators at X Elementary School. Questions one, two, and three provided information on the number of years spent in teaching or education, inquiry on reading endorsement that is a new state statute for teachers providing intervention, and the number of years teaching the Wilson Language reading program, Fundations® or another reading program. The background information allowed me to consider the implementation of the program, teaching experience, and professional development needs as I looked at the study as a whole. To understand my findings, I reorganized the questions to be more coherent and grouped by topic. The questions may or may not be listed in sequential order.

 For question three, I asked the respondents: teachers, paraprofessionals, literacy coaches, and administrators; how long they have been in education. I received one response (5%) in the category of new to education with less than one year. The

respondent is a teacher who is new to the education field without prior education experience and possesses a temporary teaching certificate. Seventeen (85%) responded in the experience in the education category with more than six years. One response (5%) was in the four to five-year category, and another response (5%) was in the two to three-year category. The staff at X Elementary School has a seasoned staff with minimal turnover. Teachers and paraprofessionals had the longest careers at X Elementary. The administrator, literacy coach, and one third grade teacher were the newest to the staff at X Elementary School. Figure 1 depicts this data.
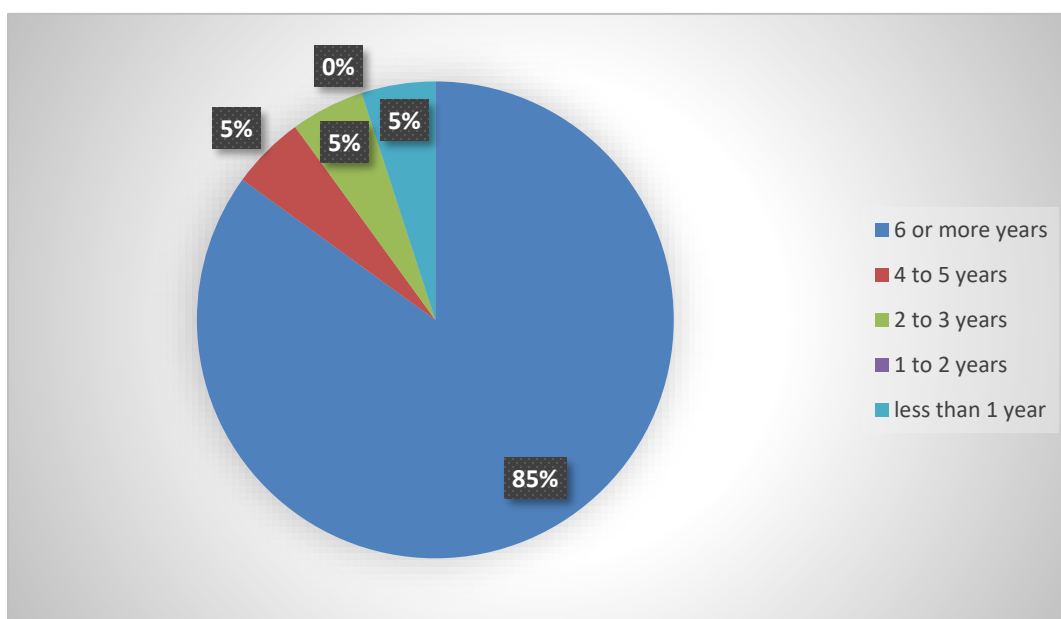
Figure 1. Question 3. Years of experience in education results (n=20)

For question two, I inquired about the addition of the reading endorsement to the teaching certification. It is important to note that only teachers, literacy coaches, and administrators are eligible to add on the reading endorsement. In addition, the State's statute requires teachers to prescribe a reading intervention to hold a reading endorsement by the school year 2020. Three teachers and one administrator (10%) have added the reading endorsement or reading certification to their teaching certificate. Nine teachers

and one literacy coach (71%) do not possess a reading endorsement or reading

certification. Adding a reading endorsement to a teaching certificate is extensive training

of up to 300 credit hours in reading training. A reading endorsement builds teacher

capacity to provide foundational reading skills to reading comprehension. I would expect

the teachers who possess a higher degree in reading or have added a reading certification

within the last five years have the most knowledge and ability to apply reading strategies.
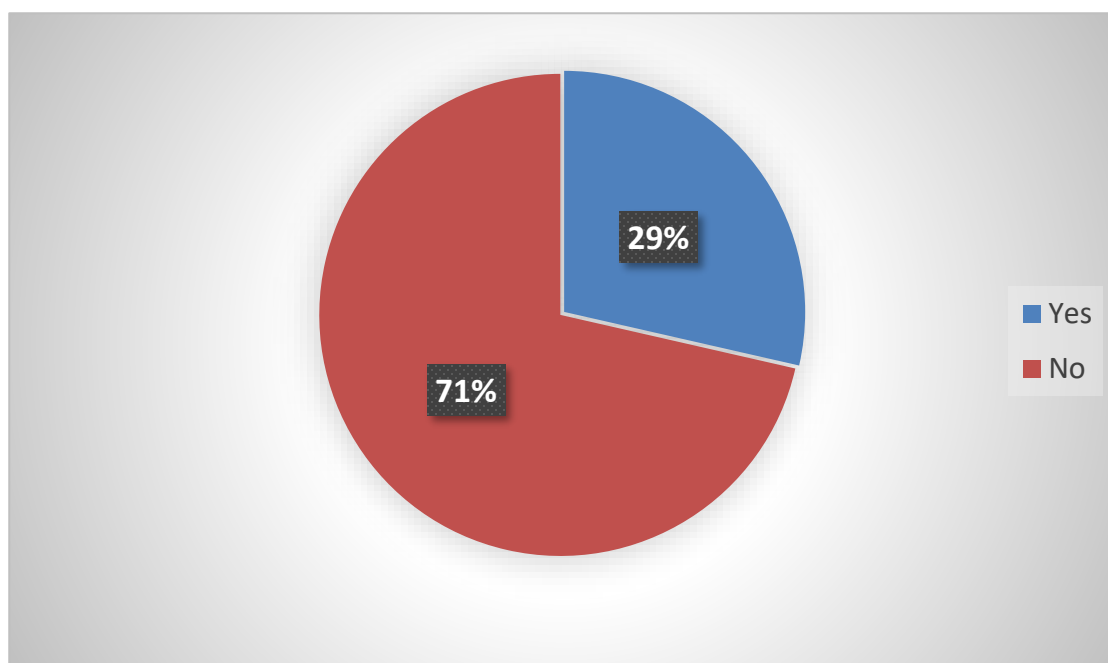
Figure 2. Question 2. The addition of the reading endorsement to the teaching
certification results (n=20)

For question one, I asked each interviewee about their number of years of

experience in teaching Fundations® or another scripted/boxed intervention program. Ten

percent (2) of the respondents have six or more years of experience in teaching

Fundations® or a scripted reading intervention program. Twenty-five percent (5) of the

teachers, paraprofessionals, literacy coaches, and administrators have four to five years of

experience teaching Fundations® or a scripted reading intervention program. Thirty

percent of the respondents (6) have two to three years of experience in teaching

Fundations® or a scripted reading intervention program. Thirty-five percent (7) of the

respondents have less than one year or have never taught Fundations® or a scripted

reading intervention program. I expected veteran educators with six or more years of

experience in education to have the most training in reading intervention programs, yet

this was not the case at X Elementary School. Veteran teachers, administrators, coaches,

and paraprofessionals only produced two respondents with six or more years of teaching

experience, and they also had six or more years of experience in teaching Fundations® or

a reading intervention program. For an experienced staff at X Elementary School, they

had a very novice level of expertise in teaching a reading program such as Fundations®

or a scripted intervention reading program.
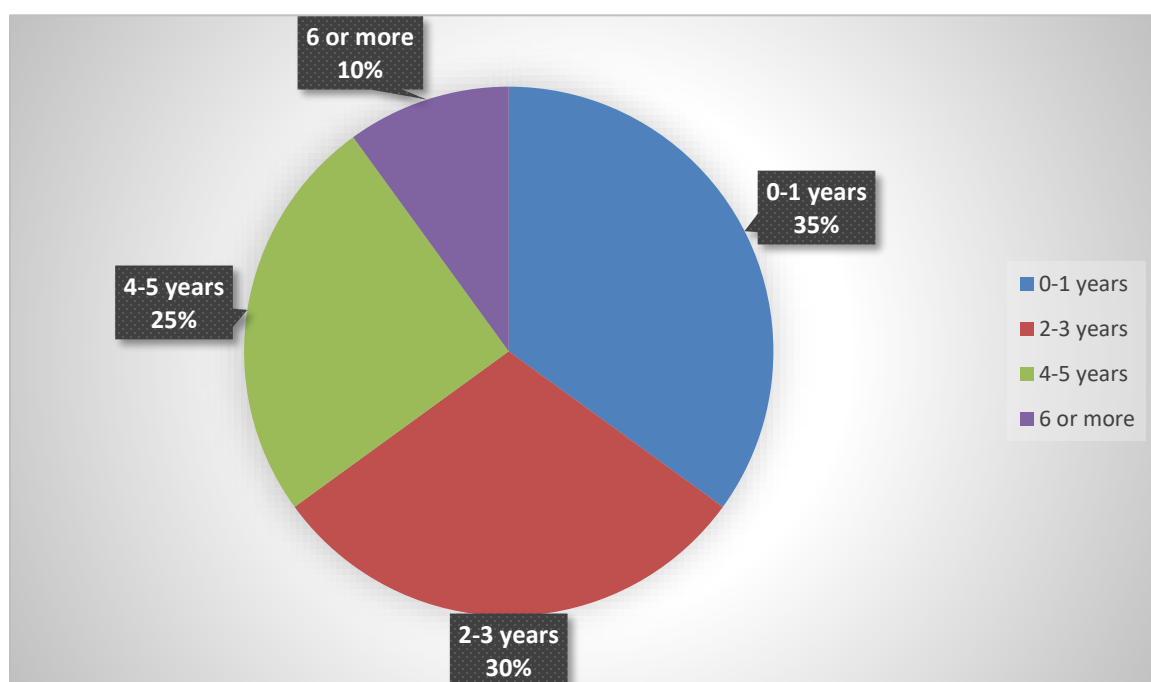
Figure 3. Question 1. Experience in teaching reading programs results (n=20)

Fundations® training and experience. The next set of questions focused on the

Wilson Language Fundations® program. The inquiry was to determine the effectiveness

of the implementation and professional development specific to Wilson Language Fundations®. The data collected allowed me to consider the effectiveness of implementing future programs, follow-up and reflective processes, considerations for improvement, and future needs of any program to sustain the efficacy. For this section, seven questions in the form of a Likert scale, short responses, and single choice response will be discussed out of sequential order so that the responses can be categorized within the topic of Fundations® Training and Experience.

For question four, I inquired with twenty respondents about receiving and attending Wilson Language Fundations® training and who facilitated the training. Eighteen respondents (90%) received training on the Fundations® program, and two (10%) respondents did not receive training in the first year of implementation. In the first year of implementation, six respondents (30%) received Fundations® training provided by APS Elementary Education department's program specialists. Six respondents (30%) received training provided by the literacy coach employed at X Elementary School. APS district implemented a train the trainer model for literacy coaches to give the school's staff training on Wilson Language Fundations®. Five respondents (25%) received informal training through a peer or colleague within their school. The informal training is when a staff member provides training without receiving formal certification or attending a train-the-trainer program. In this case, the training was offered by a peer to a peer so they could provide small group intervention in the classroom to support the teacher. One respondent (5%) received training provided by a consultant of Wilson Language Fundations®. Two respondents (10%) did not receive formal or informal training in their first full year of implementation.
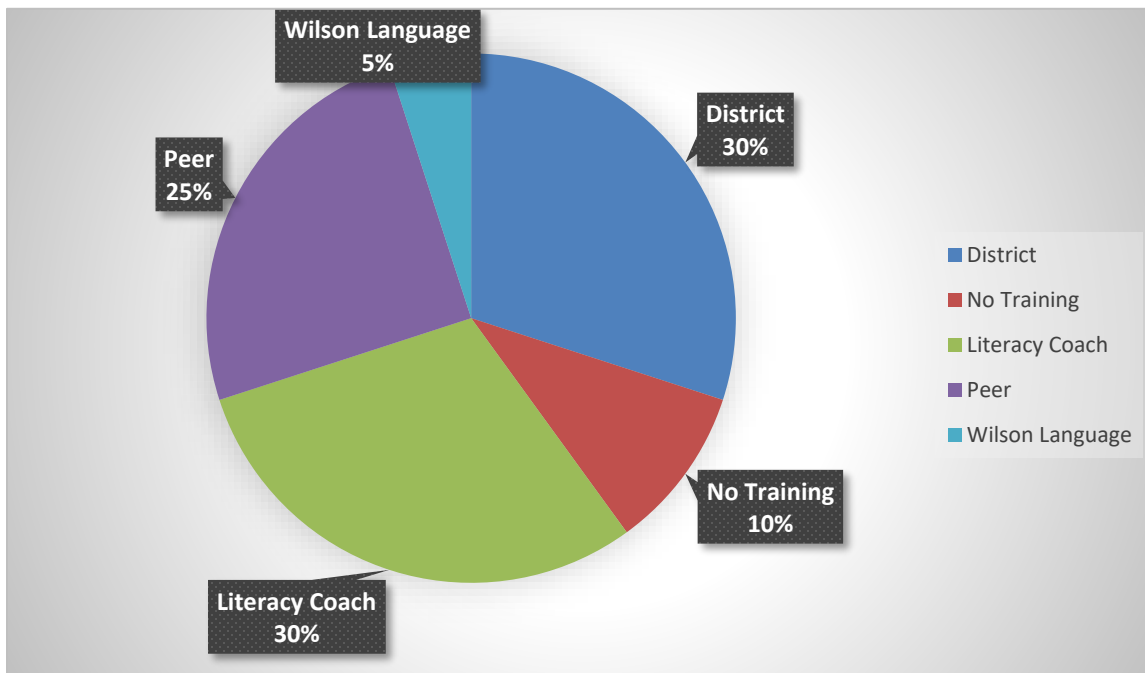
Figure 4. Question 4. Fundations® training provided question results (n=20)

For question five, I asked the respondents about the total number of hours of training in Fundations® that they received in the school years 2017-2018 and 2018-2019. The trainings were conducted on in-service half days, voluntary Saturday workshops, and Tuesday collaboration meetings held during the teacher's planning period. Nine respondents (45%) received eight or more hours of instruction on how to teach Fundations® in a two-year period. Five respondents (25%) answered that they received six to seven hours of training. Two respondents (10%) responded that they received four to five hours of training. One respondent (5%) received one hour of training, another respondent (5%) received two to three hours of training, and two respondents (10%) did not receive training at all. Many of the Fundation learning sessions were offered off-contract hours, which gave teachers, paraprofessionals, literacy coaches, and administrators a choice to opt-out of training. This data supports that follow up training and refresher course training was limited or not provided at all. New teachers often did

not receive a full day of training or on-board training in a timely manner. Hayes Mizell of Learning Forward suggests, "educators benefit the most by learning in the setting where they can immediately apply what they learn" (Mizell, 2010, p. 8). In this case, a classroom setting with hands-on-learning in real-time would be beneficial for those having to provide an intervention reading program, and it would give them a chance to gain more hours in training in a regular classroom setting.
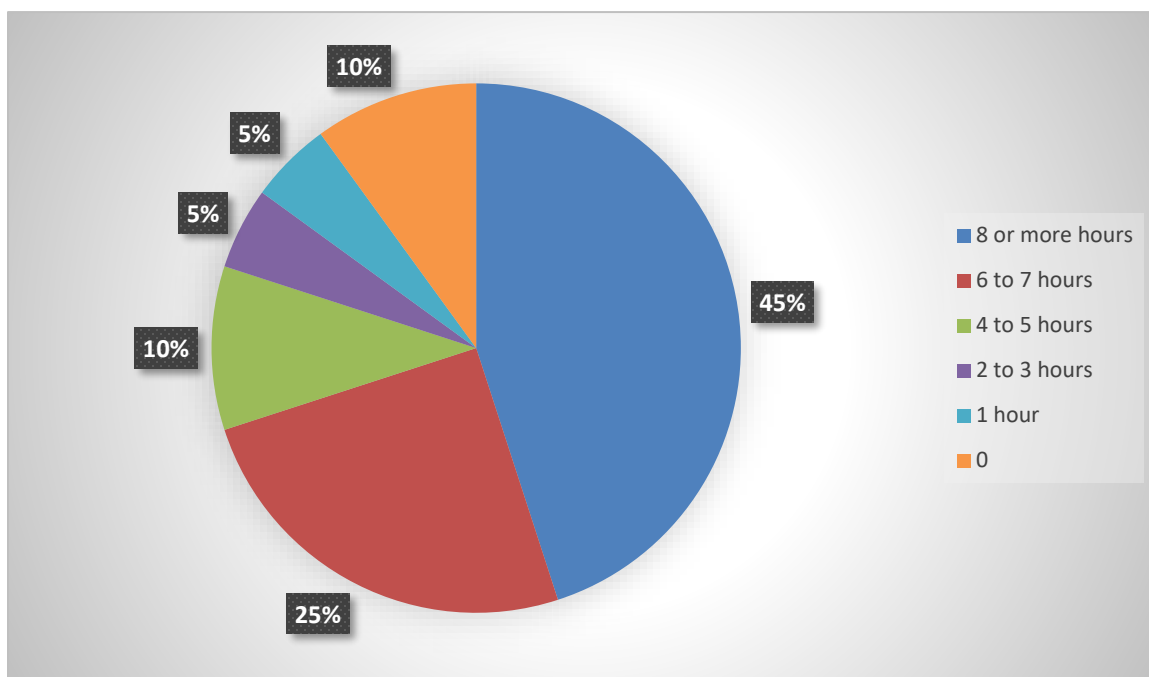
Figure 5. Question 5. Fundations® training provided during school year 2017-18 and 2018-19 cumulative hours question results (n=20)

For question seven, the respondents were asked to rate their overall training experience in Wilson Language Fundations®, regardless of who provided the training. A Likert scale was used to measure the effectiveness of Fundations® training, with one being strongly ineffective and five being strongly effective. Four respondents (20%) rated the training received as strongly effective. Eight respondents (40%) chose effective, level 4 on the Likert scale. Five respondents (25%) felt the training was neither effective nor

ineffective, and this included the two respondents who did not receive training. Two

respondents (10%) chose ineffective, and another respondent (5%) chose strongly

ineffective for their experience with Fundations® training. The respondents indicated

they were comfortable with the training received if they had some prior experience in

teaching a boxed reading intervention program. The respondent who received an hour of

training also chose the lowest score on the Likert scale. The responses may also be biased

and possibly a rate is given based on who facilitated the training when the training was

offered, and if they chose to attend or were asked to participate by an administrator.

Question eight asks the respondents to use a Likert scale to rate the effectiveness

of Fundations® in increasing student achievement in the classroom. I asked this question

to see if educators felt the Fundation program was making a difference in their students'

capacity to gain foundational reading skills. This question was based solely on the

respondents' opinions and data record-keeping. Six respondents (30%) chose level five

with Fundations® as strongly effective in increasing student achievement. Six

respondents (30%) chose a level four of Fundations® being effective in raising student

achievement. Five respondents (25%) chose a level three choosing no opinion towards

the effectiveness of Fundations®. These five respondents included two educators who did

not receive training. One respondent (5%) chose Fundations® was ineffective in

increasing student achievement, and two respondents (10%) chose Fundations® as

strongly ineffective in raising student achievement in the classroom.

For questions seven and eight, I discovered 60% of the respondents who had an

effective to strongly effective training felt equally the same about the Fundations®

program, increasing student achievement. These educators also kept more accurate data

and intervention records that were shared in the interview process. The five respondents who chose neither effective nor ineffective for their experience with Fundations® training were the same five who chose neither effective nor ineffective for increasing student achievement. Two respondents with over six years of experience in education felt the experience in Fundations® training was effective but chose effective and ineffective for increasing student achievement. A respondent with more than six years of experience in education felt the training was ineffective but chose effective for increasing student achievement. In this case, experience from using other reading programs or knowledge of pedagogy may have been a factor in deciding if the program was effective or ineffective regardless of the training received. Educators tend to prefer the way they teach reading based on previous experience.
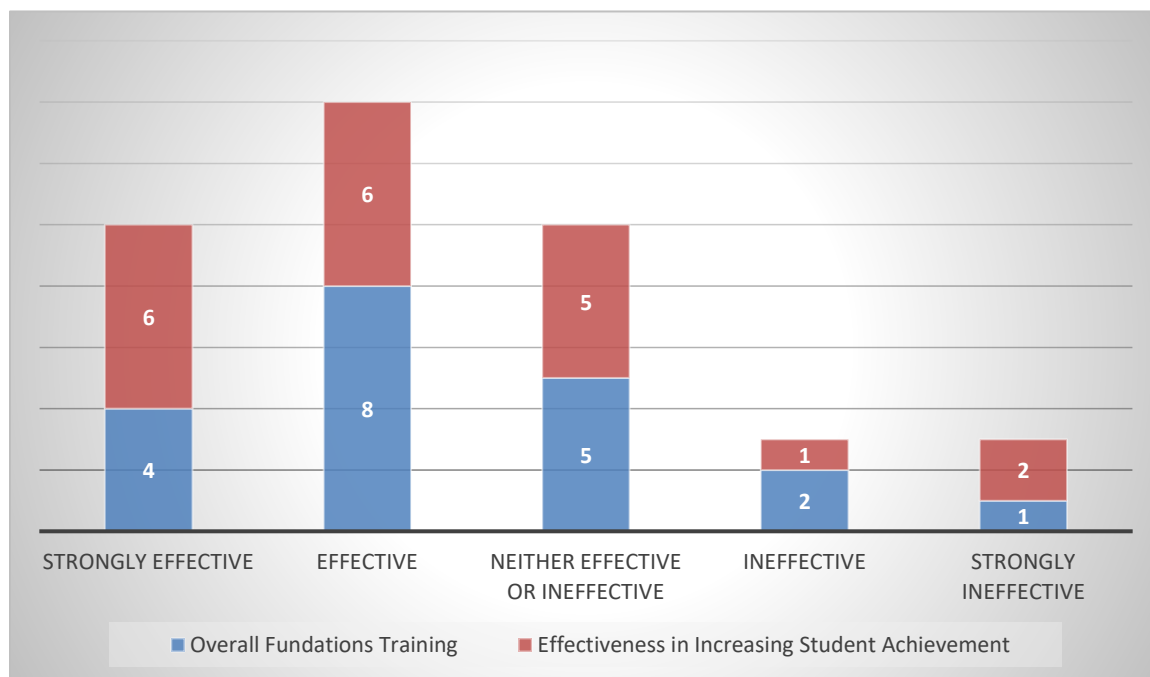
Figure 6. Question 7 and 8: Fundations® training and effectiveness of Fundations® in the increase of student achievement question results (n=40)

For questions nine, ten, eleven, and twelve, the respondents were asked to give a short response to assess better their expectations and opinions of the Likert scale questions five, seven, and eight. The short responses are in addition to the interview questions, and it allowed respondents to share anonymously. The questions were also open-ended, so respondents could choose to share more openly than using a scale or single response. I intended to capture raw opinions about the Fundations® program and give the respondents a chance to share how they would improve the program. No every respondent answered the short answer response. From the responses, I determined themes to help make suggestions for the Wilson Language Fundations®' program implementation.

For question nine, respondents were asked what is working well in the Fundations® program. For this question, respondents gave examples of the skills and strategies that they believed worked well in the Wilson Language Fundations® program. Based on the survey, fifteen percent (3) educators gave a detailed response, whereas the majority gave short answers based on a single element of the program. Their responses led me to believe that there are two groups of educators responding. There is one group who has experience and comfort in teaching reading programs and another group that is not comfortable teaching the program with little to no experience in teaching reading programs. Ten percent (2) respondents shared tapping out sounds. Ten percent (2) respondents shared the program offered repetition and structure that continued at each level. For example, a second-grade educator stated what works in the Wilson Language Fundations® program is "the systematic approach and the way the concepts build upon each other. The kids feel successful." In addition, an English Language Learners (ELL)

paraprofessional shared what works for his/her small intervention group is the repetition because most of the time is spent teaching Kindergarten students the English language, but Fundations® gives these students another year of phonics filling in the gaps they missed when they get to first grade. To add to this statement, another respondent shared the program is consistent and predictable. A first-grade teacher shares that she sees significant improvement in letter formation and students applying the skills learned in reading and writing. A third grade educator used the second-grade kit for her intervention and shared that her students are transferring the skills learned in Fundation to their reading and writing. One of the more experienced educators shared the systematic teaching of phonics is very beneficial. She said, "I believe the order of the patterns taught is generally helpful in supporting reading and written expression." While reviewing this data, I wondered if the responses were based on the comfort level of providing reading strategies or the comfortability in teaching Fundations® adequately to their students. The one area that stands out the most for working well in the program is repetition with the ability to build on to the next level, which can be found in each level of the program. The interview respondents agreed that the repetition found from one level to the next level helped students feel comfortable as they moved from one grade to the next.

For research question 10, I explored was the perception of the staff at X Elementary towards what is not working well in the Wilson Language Fundations® program. Ten percent (2) respondents shared that they were hesitant at first, but the program is great and did not list any specific area. Five percent (1) respondent shared that she was taught reading rules should be taught in order and did not agree that 'silent e' was taught towards the end of the curriculum. Five percent (1) respondent shared that

there are not enough sight words taught in the Kindergarten level, which concurs with another respondent who felt that her higher-achieving students were not engaged and bored. An experienced educator stated what is not working in Wilson Language Fundations® program® for her is learning the glued sounds so that she can teach it to her students. She said that she dislikes teaching those units as they were too much alike and confusing. Ten percent (2) respondents shared their students had a difficult time marking the words and scooping, and both are techniques of the Wilson Language Fundations® program. Twenty five percent (5) respondents shared that they did not have enough supplies. Fifteen percent (3) respondents stated their challenge is the timing of the curriculum and felt that they could not complete all the units in a school year. Five percent (1) respondent gave a detailed response that she has spent a great deal of time analyzing learning theories and learning frameworks as they apply to the Wilson Language Fundations® program® program. She found too many learning opportunities consisted of passive and rote learning. The lessons are isolated from actual reading practice, and that the program did not engage a large percentage of her students.

Based on the responses, I felt the respondents would have benefited from more specific training that is usually offered in follow up or refresher courses. I expected that when educators are not comfortable teaching a program, they will revert to what is convenient for them and not teach the program with fidelity. Since funds were limited, APS district only purchased teacher kits, which led to X Elementary school, creating make-shift student magnet boards by using cookie sheets and magnetic letters. Respondents shared more detailed information in the interview process of how they felt

they were asked to provide a program yet lacked the necessary materials to teach with fidelity.

In the survey question eleven, respondents were asked to list their greatest challenges in using the Wilson Language Fundations® program® program. In this case, I intended to see similar responses to question ten but with more details. I could feel the passion of the respondents' challenges in their written short answer responses. Ten percent (2) respondents shared that they did not feel comfortable teaching the program, and they had to learn the content before they could teach it comfortably and with fidelity (it was a daunting task). Twenty-five percent (5) respondents shared that there is just not enough time in the day and schedule. They wrote that balancing small groups was difficult, reteaching is time-consuming, and moving on even though everyone is not ready occurs at times. Five percent (1) responded that her greatest challenge was to offer differentiation to help meet students' Individual Education Plans (IEPs) while teaching whole groups. Another responded that the greatest challenge is getting students to apply what they learn, and yet another respondent felt that students just memorized (it) rather than learn to decode. Ten percent (2) respondents shared the new Language Arts curriculum does not match the Wilson Language Fundations® program® program, and there is no common language. Twenty-five percent (5) repeated that the lack of supplies for each student was the greatest challenge. Ten percent (2) responded to the inconsistency in using the program within the grade level and, in other grades, stated that not everyone is using the program. Still, it would help if they did so, the students would have a common language. She continued further by clarifying that it made a huge difference for her students, and it gave incoming students a better chance at success if

everyone used it. Five percent (1) respondent stated that she has prior experience in Wilson Language Fundations® program® and knows that this is not a 'whole reading program' but a program with excellent reading elements.

When I read the interviewees' responses, I felt they would benefit from additional training and more in-depth professional development on reading strategies. I expected that if the educators are comfortable understanding reading pedagogy, then the lack of supplies, fear of learning something new, and inconsistency of teaching within grade levels would dissipate. I expected that teachers and paraprofessionals would feel more comfortable teaching reading strategies in small group sessions and differentiating for students' needs if hands-on or on-the-job training were provided. I suggest providing a literacy coach or district support in the classroom, which would give teachers and paraprofessionals a chance to see the program in action and receive immediate feedback.

An exploratory research question inquires about the programs' challenges and explores ways to resolve or improve the program. For survey question twelve, respondents were asked how to resolve the challenges of Wilson Language Fundations® program®, if any, or how they would improve Wilson Language Fundations® program®. I discovered the three themes in challenges reiterated from the responses in question ten and question eleven. Respondents stated time was a challenge, and they would improve it by shortening the activities. Another respondent built upon the time challenge by stating the strategies could be used throughout the Language Arts block. The other theme that seemed to resonate as a challenge is how to make Wilson Language Fundations® program® work with the newly adopted Language Arts curriculum. The respondents felt that the training for the newly adopted Language Arts curriculum was not extensive

enough, and they received very little information on how to make it work with Wilson

Language Fundations® program®. The next major theme that 16 out of 20 respondents

shared was the need for ongoing coaching and professional development. One of the

respondents shared that they would prefer to receive training during school hours and

have someone knowledgeable to share the data with so she could make adjustments to her

lessons. Two respondents stated their challenge was no training, and that they had to

learn from others. These responses empowered me to push for a phased approach to

implement any type of program by using a change management cycle. Change

management cycles include choosing a small pilot group, providing extensive training,

listening to feedback, making necessary changes, and reflecting. With X Elementary

School being a smaller size school, the school would be a perfect candidate for piloting

the new program and new curriculum. Testing a small school implementation would

address the challenges, and the district could be proactive about implementing any

program on a full scale when they have questions and concerns addressed ahead of time.

Professional development in reading strategies. In the next set of questions, I

focused on the professional development in reading strategies. Teachers,

paraprofessionals, literacy coaches, and administrators need ongoing professional

development specific to reading strategies. Researchers discovered teachers who are

offered more opportunities to engage in learning reading strategies and comprehension

throughout the school year could pass this information on to their students who, in return,

engage in learning and increase student achievement scores (Sailors and Price, 2010, p.

316). My goal was to gather information to provide APS district recommendations for

professional development in reading strategies to consider changes and offerings for the

near future. For this section, six questions in the form of a Likert scale, short responses, and single choice responses will be discussed out of sequential order so that the responses can be categorized within the topic of Professional Development Reading Strategies.

For question six, respondents were asked how many hours (s) of professional development in reading strategies they received in the last year (2018), including any follow-up training. Five respondents (25%) chose they have received eight or more hours in professional development in reading strategies. One respondent (5%) chose six to seven hours of professional development in reading strategies. Two respondents (10%) chose four to five hours, and two respondents (10%) chose two to three hours of professional development in reading strategies. Ten respondents (50%) chose 0 to 1 hour of training in professional development in reading strategies. The question did not specify who provided the training, so educators could include training provided by the district or through their pursuit in higher education or workshops. I was pleasantly surprised to discover educators sought out professional development to grow their skill set in reading. Educators who seek professional development display dedication and passion for developing personally and supporting the district in an area that it would like to improve upon. On the other hand, I discovered that more than half of the educators who are providing a reading intervention are not receiving basic foundational skills, refresher courses, and updated information about reading strategies.
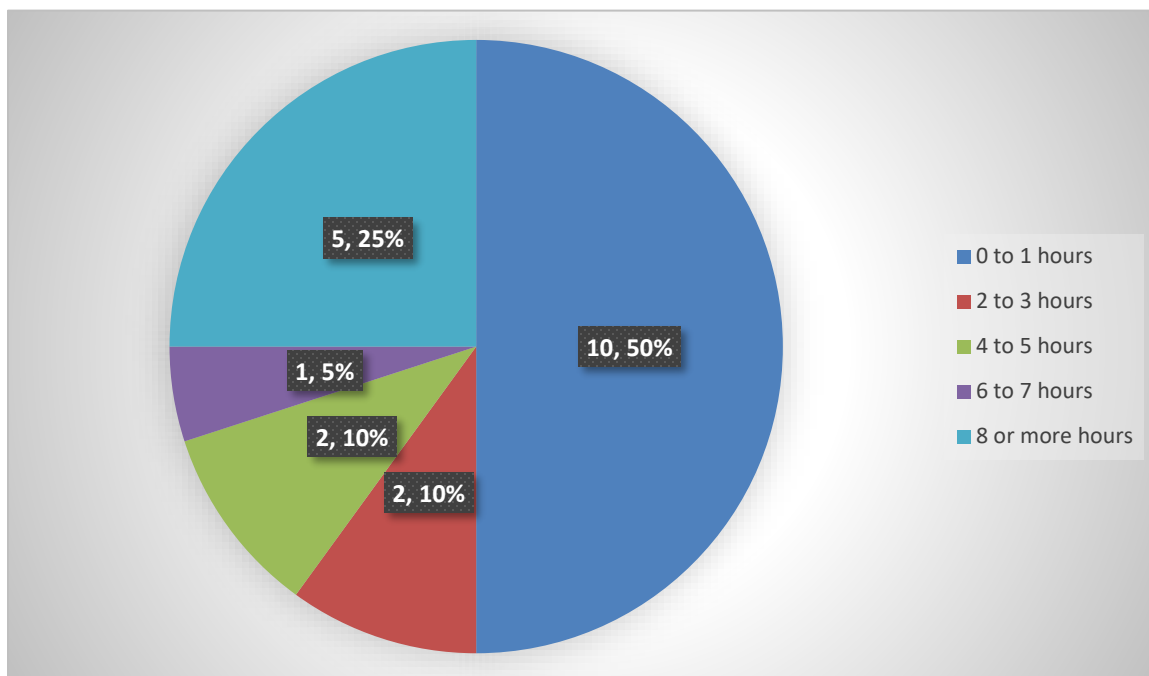
Figure 7. Question 6. Wilson Language Fundations® program® training hours provided in Professional Development in Reading Strategies question results (n=20)

For question 13, I inquired with teachers, paraprofessionals, literacy coaches, and administrators on how they would rate the effectiveness of using reading strategies learned in professional development to increase student achievement. I used a Likert scale to measure professional development training's effectiveness, with one being strongly ineffective and five being strongly effective. Two respondents (10%) rated strongly effective for the use of reading strategies learned in professional development to increase student achievement as strongly effective. Six respondents (30%) chose effective, a Likert scale score of four. Seven (35%) respondents chose neither effective nor ineffective. Three respondents (15%) chose a Likert scale score two, ineffective, and two respondents (10%) chose Likert scale score 1, strongly ineffective. I was surprised by the results and expected the respondents to rate their professional development in reading strategies would increase student achievement. Typically, I discovered more experienced

educators bring the newly learned strategies into the classroom to engage students in

learning, which in turn increases student achievement. But in this case, I discovered that

even more experienced educators chose the mid to low end of the Likert scale. The

findings brought about questions in regards to the quality of professional development

that they are receiving.
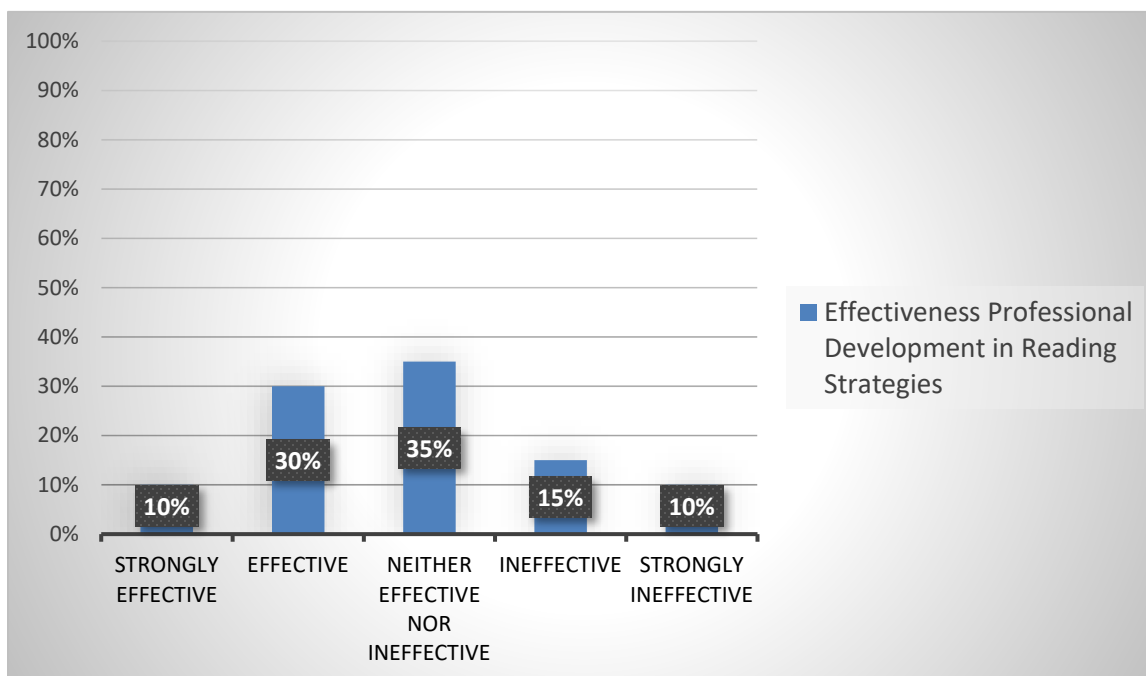
Figure 8. Question 13. Effectiveness of professional development in reading strategies question results (n=20)

For question 14, I inquired about how often the teachers, paraprofessionals,

literacy coaches, and administrators use newly learned reading strategies in their

classroom. In this question, respondents had to choose a phrase that best fits their use of

reading strategies in the classroom. Eight respondents (40%) chose that they use the

newly learned reading strategies upon returning to the classroom. Nine respondents

(45%) chose they dabble with the newly acquired reading strategies here and there.

Three respondents (15%) chose they do not generally use the strategies until they

receive more guidance. No one decided that they stick to their own strategies. In

reviewing these results and along with question 13's responses, educators could benefit from on-the-job training with a literacy coach. It seems that their comfort level to carry out the newly learned strategies is not quite there, and they could use classroom modeling and a chance to discuss what is working or not working. In this case, weekly meetings to discuss feedback, follow up, and reflection may increase the use of newly learned reading strategies. It would also give educators the confidence to know that they are implementing the strategies correctly by being able to share their thoughts and concerns promptly. Holding weekly collaborations or professional learning communities (PLCs) gives the educators, coaches, and administrators a chance to share immediate feedback.
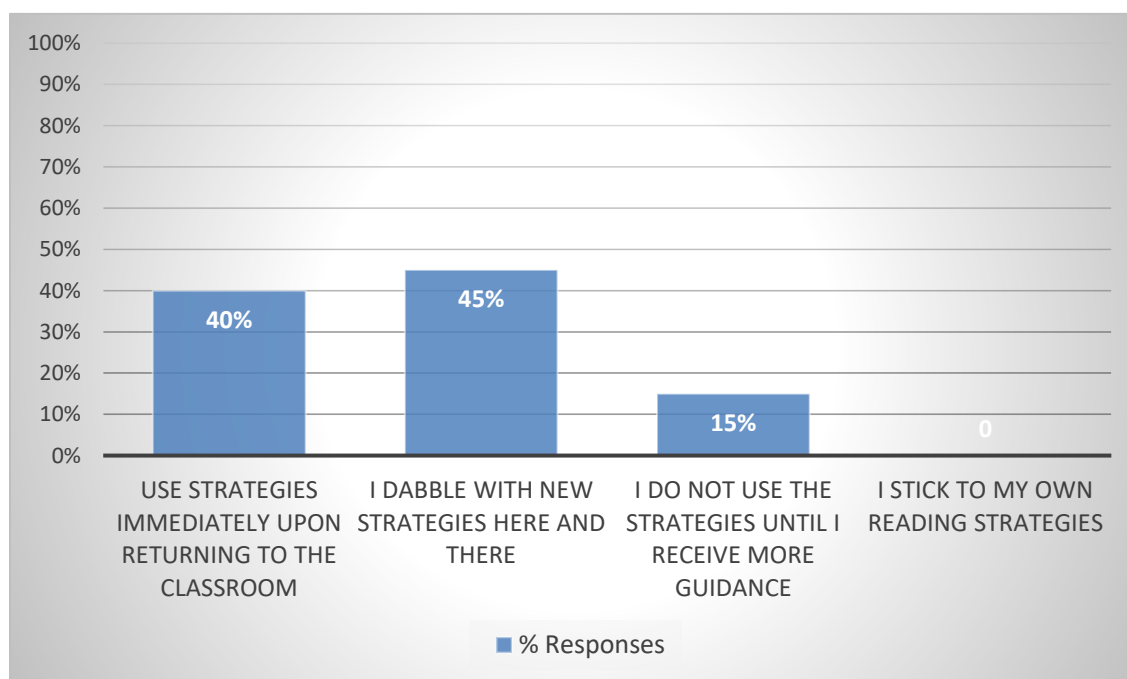
Figure 9. Question 14. Using newly learned reading strategies question results (n=20)

For question 15, I asked the respondents to rate their overall training experience in the professional development of reading strategies provided by the literacy coach, administrator, district office, and outside consultant. More respondents (70%) rated the

training experience provided by an outside consultant to be strongly effective and effective ratings. Outside consultants consisted of the program trainers and educational consultants. Forty-five percent of the respondents rated their training experience provided by a school administrator to be strongly effective and effective. The school administrator gains the respect of their staff when they are knowledgeable about educational practices. Therefore, administrators need to stay up to date with best practices and research. Fifty percent of the respondents rated their training experience with the district office to be ineffective to strongly ineffective, and fifty percent of the respondents rated their training experience in the professional development of reading strategies with the literacy coach to be neither effective nor ineffective.

There is some background for a possible low rating. The district office's professional development team was new to the district in 2017. The literacy coach joined X Elementary School in 2018 and administrators of X Elementary started mid-school year 2017-2018. In my discussions with the administrative team and literacy coach, I discovered that they were new to the district and school and that they had not built a relationship with the teachers yet. Educators understand that students learn when teachers take the time to build relationships and make connections. In this case, the district leadership team members and literacy coach would benefit from building relationships quickly to gain trust and connect with educators.
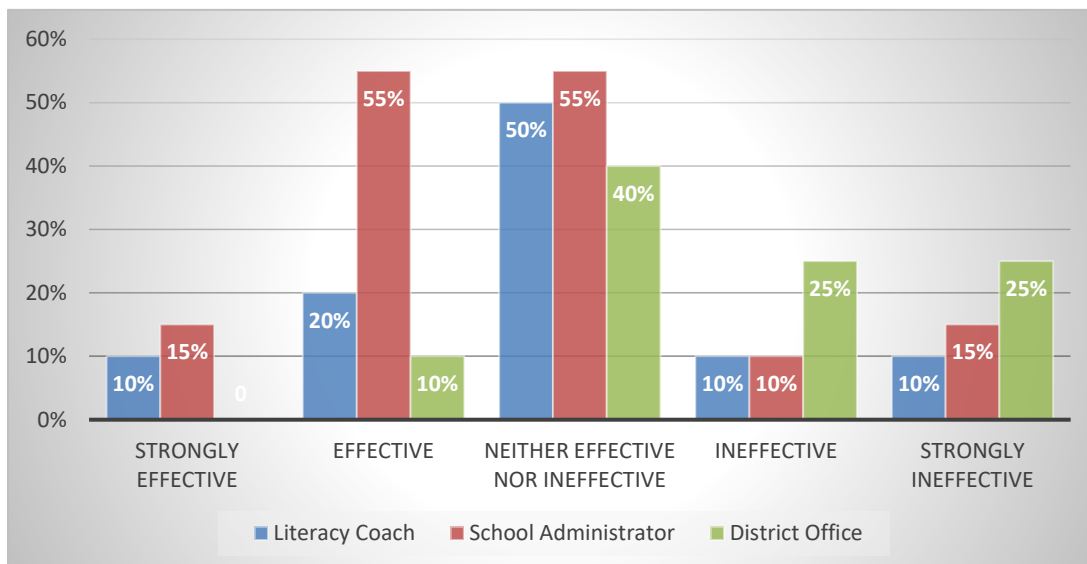
Figure 10. Question 15. Overall training experience provided question results (n=20)

For question 16, I asked the respondents if they felt they had been provided with enough professional development in reading strategies. This question was posed as a choice between yes or no. Fourteen respondents (70%) felt they were not provided with enough professional development in reading strategies. Six respondents (30%) felt they were provided with enough professional development in reading strategies. Upon further inquiry, I discovered four of the respondents are teachers who are in the process of taking reading endorsement courses, and four teachers and an administrator already possess the add-on of a reading endorsement to their teaching certification. The reading endorsement courses are approximately 300 hours of extensive in the classroom and out of the classroom professional development and very specific to reading skills and strategies. Paraprofessionals are also offered professional development in reading strategies specific to Tier 1 and 2 interventions at least once a year through the district office on an early release day. For this question, I compared the results from question six, which inquired about the number of hours of professional development in reading

strategies received to question 16 if they had been provided with enough professional development in reading strategies. From analyzing the data, I discovered that the staff of X Elementary School is seeking to grow his/her skillset in reading strategies as required by the new state statute. Furthermore, my research uncovered that the staff at X Elementary School feel that they are not receiving enough professional development in reading strategies. Professional development needs to be more specific to what is required to be successful in the classroom and more specific to the students' needs.
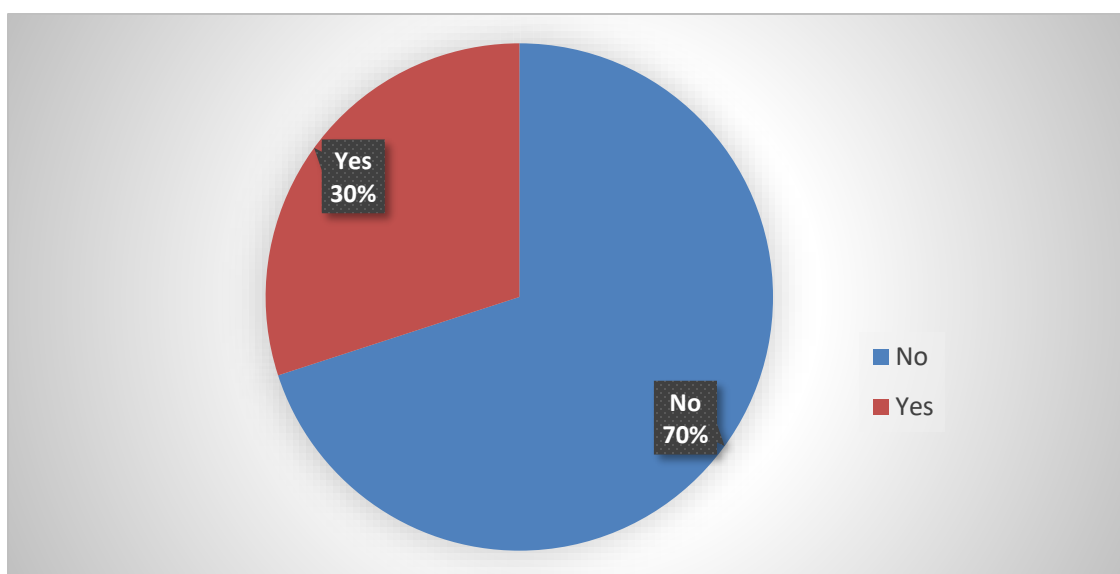
Figure 11. Question 16. results for survey question about being provided with enough professional development in reading strategies (n=20)

For question 17, the respondents were asked to give a short answer response to their perceptions of the quality of professional development received in reading strategies. I narrowed down their responses to three themes: useful information, requires modeling in the classroom setting, and needs to be tailored. Thirty-three percent (6) respondents wrote about their experience with the quality of professional development providing useful information that it helped improve students' ability to read. Another

thirty-three percent (6) respondents wrote about the professional development needing improvement and the need to see strategies modeled in the classroom. If educators accommodate students' learning with visuals, hands-on, and cooperative learning activities, then the same needs to be provided for the adult learner. The thirty-five percent (7) respondents wrote about professional development being an overview of the product, redundant information, and not specific enough or tailored to needs. I have discovered from earlier responses, the same themes of needing on the job training and classroom modeling to increase student achievement occur throughout the survey results. The staff at X Elementary School are more likely to attend professional development when it relates to their specific students. I recommend the use of a qualified and trained literacy coach or district personnel working with teachers who have similar needs, utilizing demonstration classrooms, and follow up meetings to discuss feedback and changes.

Grade level specific questions. I asked teachers and paraprofessionals of their specific grade level to respond to questions about reading skills and strategies found in Wilson Language Fundations® program. The question types are close-ended questions leading to one single response of yes, no, or unsure. In my discovery of this part of the survey, the only paraprofessionals who are grade-specific are at the Kindergarten level. Paraprofessionals in grades 1 through 5 are utilized to provide interventions and aid in small group centers in the classroom for multiple grade levels, so they may choose to answer in more than one grade level. The results gave me a better assessment of the teachers' and paraprofessionals' ability to understand reading skills and strategies but also their perception of the quality of the Wilson Language Fundations® program.

The 3ʳᵈ Grade teachers or paraprofessionals. Third grade is the most important grade level in elementary school. It is the year that students who do not receive a proficient score (level 3) on the State Standards Assessment in English Language Arts are retained. Therefore, the third grade students are grouped into three levels of multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS). Tier 1 is categorized for students working on or above grade level. Tier 2 is for students working a year behind grade level. Tier 3 is for students working two or more years behind grade level. The Tier 2 third grade students are working with an interventionist (teacher or paraprofessional) utilizing Wilson Language Fundations® program for 2ⁿᵈ grade. The group size is no more than six students per interventionist.

Questions 18 through 24. These questions are specific to the quality and characteristics of a reading program. Teachers and paraprofessionals were asked to provide a yes, no, or unsure response to discover if Wilson Language Fundations® program had the elements specific to a reading program. For questions 18, the respondents were asked if there is an emphasis on fluency practice for each phonics component (e.g., sound identification, CVC (consonant vowel consonant) blending, word recognition, multisyllabic words, and text reading). One hundred percent (2) respondents answered yes to an emphasis on fluency practice for phonics components found in the Wilson Language Fundations® program. For question 19, the respondents were asked if the program provided teachers modeling of a think aloud strategy to aid in multisyllabic word analysis. Again both respondents answered yes to this question. For question 20, respondents were asked if the instruction is explicit in the use of syllable types (e.g., open, closed, vowel consonant, -e vowel combinations, r-controlled, and consonant –le).

One hundred percent (2) respondents answered yes to this question. For question 21, respondents were asked if the program encourages the teacher to model speed, accuracy, and prosody. One hundred percent (2) respondents answered yes to this question. For question 22, respondents were asked if there are processes involved in using a strategy taught over a period of time to ensure understanding and correct application. One hundred percent (2) respondents answered yes to this question. For question 23, respondents were asked if the program instruction enables students to establish and adjust purposes for reading (e.g., reading to understand, to interpret, to inform, to enjoy, and to solve problems). One hundred percent (2) respondents answered yes to this question. For question 24, respondents were asked if the program provided instruction for students to become self-directed in comprehension strategies (e.g., rereading, paraphrasing, making explicit connections from text to prior knowledge, underlining and note-taking, and visualizing relationships and events in the text. One respondent answered yes and the other respondent answered no.

Upon further review, the two respondents were one teacher and one paraprofessional. Although X Elementary School has a total of four 3rd grade teachers and four paraprofessionals who participated in the survey, I was surprised to see the least responses from a critical grade level. The low response rate could be due to the number of questions to respond to or not enough time to respond. Usually, I found more veteran and experienced teachers in this grade level, yet the response was from the newest teacher with less than a year of experience. I would suggest that this grade level receive the most attention when it comes to providing literacy coaching and professional development that is specific to the students' needs.
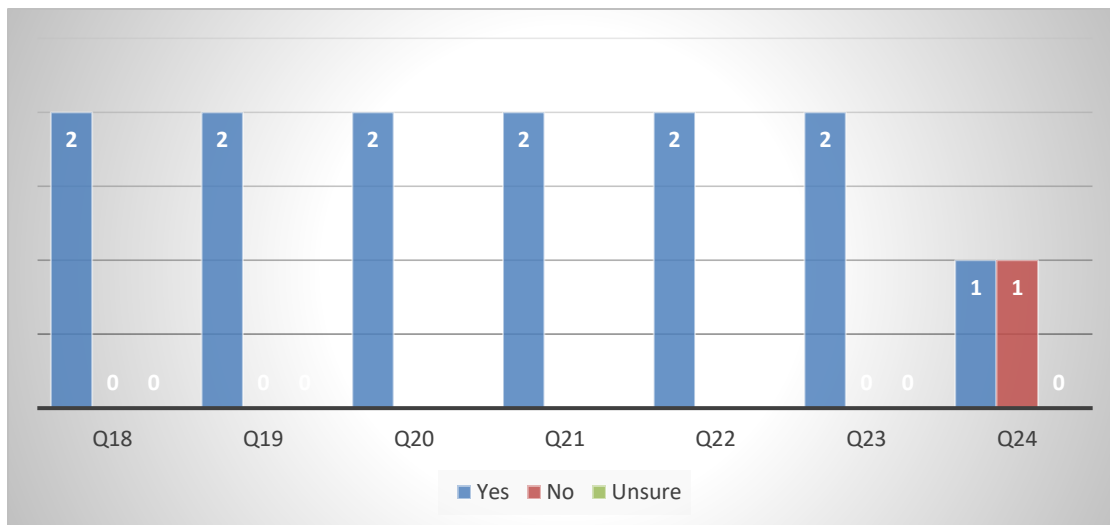
Figure 12. Questions 18-24. 3rd grade program quality check with Wilson Language Fundations® Program (n=2)

The 2nd Grade teachers or paraprofessionals. Second grade is a pivotal grade level in elementary school wherein students are reading when they leave this grade level. These students are in the learning to read phase. By the time students exit the second grade, they should be ready to move to the reading to learn phase, which is understanding what they are reading via comprehension. Since these students do not take the state assessment, they are monitored for progress in growth and improvement through Curriculum Associates' iReady. iReady, a supplemental reading program purchased by Alpha Public Schools, data is used to inform teachers and administrators if the students are reading on grade level. Therefore, the second-grade students are grouped into three levels of multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS). Tier 1 is categorized for students working on or above grade level. Tier 2 is for students working a year behind grade level. Tier 3 is for students working two or more years behind grade level. The Tier 2 second grade students are working with an interventionist (teacher or paraprofessional) utilizing

the Wilson Language Fundations® program for 2nd grade. The group size is no more than six students per interventionist.

Questions 25 through 35. These questions are specific to the quality and characteristics of a reading program. Teachers and paraprofessionals were asked to provide a yes, no, or unsure response to discover if Wilson Language Fundations® program had the elements specific to a reading program.

For questions 25, the respondents were asked if the instruction progressed from simple to more complex concepts (e.g., CVC words before CCCVCC words and single syllable words before multisyllabic words) and one hundred percent (6) six respondents chose yes.

For question 26, respondents were asked if the program includes explicit instruction in irregular words and decoding strategies for decodable parts of words (clarifying that the letters represent their most common sounds as well as the irregularities of certain letters). Sixty-seven percent (4) respondents chose yes and thirty-three percent (2) respondents chose no.

For question 27, respondents were asked is there frequent and cumulative reviews of previously taught concepts and words, and eighty-three percent (5) respondents chose yes, whereas seventeen percent (1) respondent chose no. For question 28, respondents were asked is there sufficient practice with individual letter-sounds before larger orthographic multisyllabic words. One hundred percent (6) respondents replied, yes.

For question 29, respondents were asked are processes involved in using a strategy taught over time to ensure understanding and correct application. Sixty-seven

percent (4) respondents chose yes, seventeen (1) respondent chose no, and seventeen (1)

respondent chose unsure.

For question 30, respondents were asked is instruction explicit in the use of

syllable types (e.g., open, closed, vowel-consonant –e, vowel combinations, r-controlled,

and consonant –le). Eighty-three percent (5) respondents chose yes and seventeen percent

(1) respondent chose no.

For question 31, respondents were asked once advanced phonics strategies have

been mastered, are they immediately applied to reading and interpreting familiar and

unfamiliar connected texts. Eighty-three percent (5) respondents chose yes and seventeen

(1) respondent chose one.

For question 32, respondents were asked if the program provided teacher

modeling of a think aloud strategy to aid in multisyllabic word analysis. Sixty-seven

percent (4) respondents chose yes and thirty-three (2) respondents chose no.

For question 33, respondents were asked is the decoding strategy taught so that it

becomes automatic. One hundred percent (6) respondents chose yes.

For question 34, respondents were asked if the program instruction enables

students to establish and adjust purposes for reading (e.g., reading to understand, to

interpret, to inform, to enjoy, and to solve problems). Thirty-three percent (2) respondents

chose yes and sixty-seven percent (4) respondents chose no.

For question 35, respondents were asked if the program provides instruction for

students to become self-directed in comprehension strategies (e.g., rereading,

paraphrasing, making explicit connections from text to prior knowledge, underlining and

note taking, and visualizing relationships and events in the text. Sixty-seven percent (4)

respondents answered yes and thirty-three percent (2) respondents answered no.

At X Elementary School, there are three 2nd grade teachers and five

paraprofessionals who provide reading interventions. For this survey, three experienced

teachers and three paraprofessionals with more than five years of experience contributed
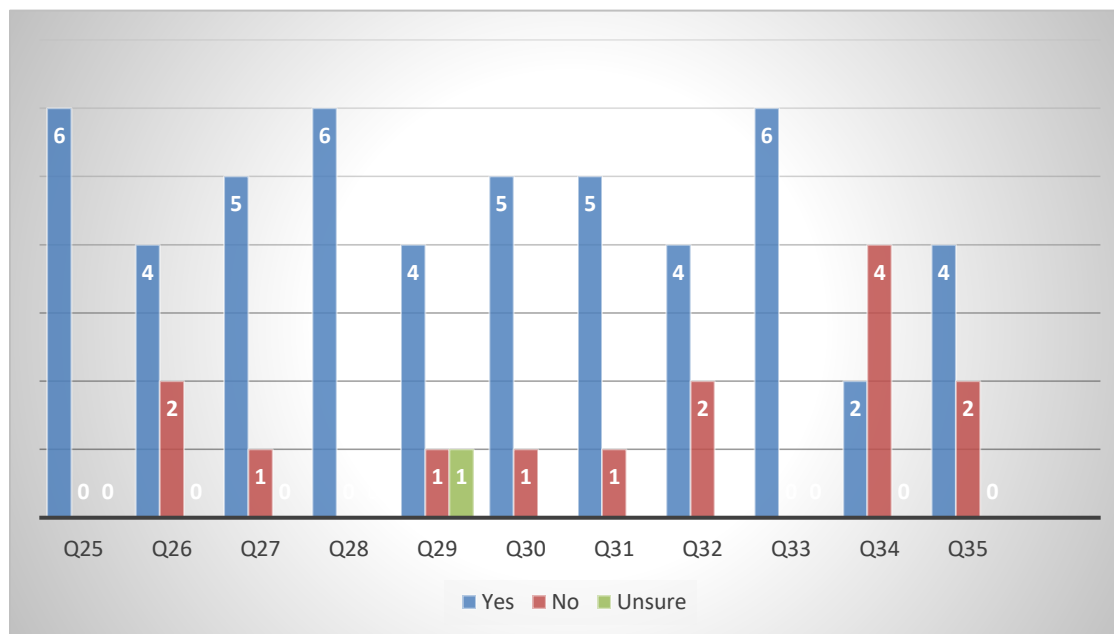
to the results of this portion of the study. The teachers and paraprofessionals rated the

Wilson Language Fundations® program with having the necessary skills to teach

foundational reading skills. This grade level had teachers who felt the most comfortable

teaching a reading program and understanding the concepts of skills and strategies. They

also expressed that this program is very similar to other programs that they have used.

Figure 13. Questions 25-35. 2nd grade program quality check with Wilson Language
Fundations® Program (n=6)

The 1st Grade teachers or paraprofessionals. At this grade level, students can

recognize letters and they are aware that sounds match letters (phonemes). They can

recognize over 150 sight words (Wilson Language Fundations® program® calls sight

words – tricky words), and form sentences with punctuation. While in the learning to read phase, these students are growing their vocabulary and writing skills. First-grade students do not take the state assessment, so they are monitored for progress in growth and improvement through Curriculum Associates' iReady and Pearson Assessments Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA). The data is used to inform teachers and administrators if the students are reading on grade level. Therefore, the first-grade students are grouped into three levels of multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS). Tier 1 is categorized for students working on or above grade level. Tier 2 is for students working a year behind grade level. Tier 3 is for students working two or more years behind grade level. The Tier 2 students are working with an interventionist (teacher or paraprofessional) utilizing the Wilson Language Fundations® program for 1st grade. The group size is no more than six students per interventionist.

Questions 37 through 44. These questions are specific to the quality and characteristics of a reading program. Teachers and paraprofessionals were asked to provide a yes, no, or unsure response to discover if Wilson Language Fundations® program® program had the quality and characteristics found in a boxed reading intervention program.

For question 37, ten respondents were asked if the instruction includes physical representation (e.g., clapping, boxes with markers, counters, tiles, fingers, or auditory clues) to help students make the connection between sounds and print (the alphabetic principle), and 100 percent (10) responded yes.

For question 38, respondents were asked when phonemic awareness activities are at the phoneme level, do the students' activities target the sound in words and then move

to the last sound in words, and finally focus on the middle sounds in words. Fifty percent (5) teachers and paraprofessionals chose yes and fifty percent (5) respondents chose no.

For question 39, respondents were asked if the instruction progresses from simple to more complex concepts (e.g., CVC words before CCCVCC words and single syllable words before multisyllabic words). One hundred percent (10) respondents chose yes as their answer.

In question 40, respondents were asked if the instruction follows the continuum of word types (beginning of CV and CVC words), incorporating continuous and stop sounds and blends in an appropriate sequence. Ninety percent (9) respondents chose yes and ten percent (1) chose no.

For question 41, respondents were asked if the program provides teacher modeling of a think aloud strategy to aid in multisyllabic word analysis. Seventy percent (7) respondents chose yes, twenty percent (2) respondents chose no, and ten percent (1) respondent was unsure.

For question 42, respondents were asked if the decoding strategy was taught so that it becomes automatic. Eighty percent (8) respondents chose yes, ten percent (1) respondent chose no, and ten percent (1) respondent was unsure.

For question 43, respondents were asked if the program provided instruction to enable students to establish and adjust purposes for reading (e.g., reading to understand, to interpret, to inform, to enjoy, and to solve problems). Ten percent (1) respondent chose yes, seventy percent (7) respondents chose no, and twenty percent (2) respondents chose the unsure category.

In question 44, respondents were asked if there are instructional routines for comprehension strategies for before, during, and after reading (e.g., setting a purpose, prediction, story grammar, main idea, summarization, graphic organizers, and answering and generating questions. Twenty percent (2) respondents chose yes, sixty percent (6) chose no, and twenty percent (2) chose the unsure category.

This group had the most number of respondents with three 1st grade teachers, two special education teachers, and five paraprofessionals responding. This group of respondents has experienced teachers and paraprofessionals with over six years of experience in teaching elementary education with one teacher with a Masters in Reading. These teachers have expressed that they possess the expertise and knowledge to teach reading skills and strategies without a boxed reading or boxed reading intervention program.

Questions 27 through 42 focuses on the learning to read phase wherein students are building foundational reading skills. The majority of the teachers and paraprofessionals agreed that the Wilson Language Fundations® program® program offered foundational reading skills. Questions 43 and 44 focus on the purpose of reading and routine comprehension strategies. Seventy percent of the respondents felt strongly about the fidelity of Wilson Language Fundations® program® not providing enough instruction and strategies in the reading to learn phase. According to best practices as communicated in professional development sessions in which I participated, the Wilson Language Fundations® is not a stand-alone reading curriculum and should be used in conjunction with a balanced language arts curriculum.
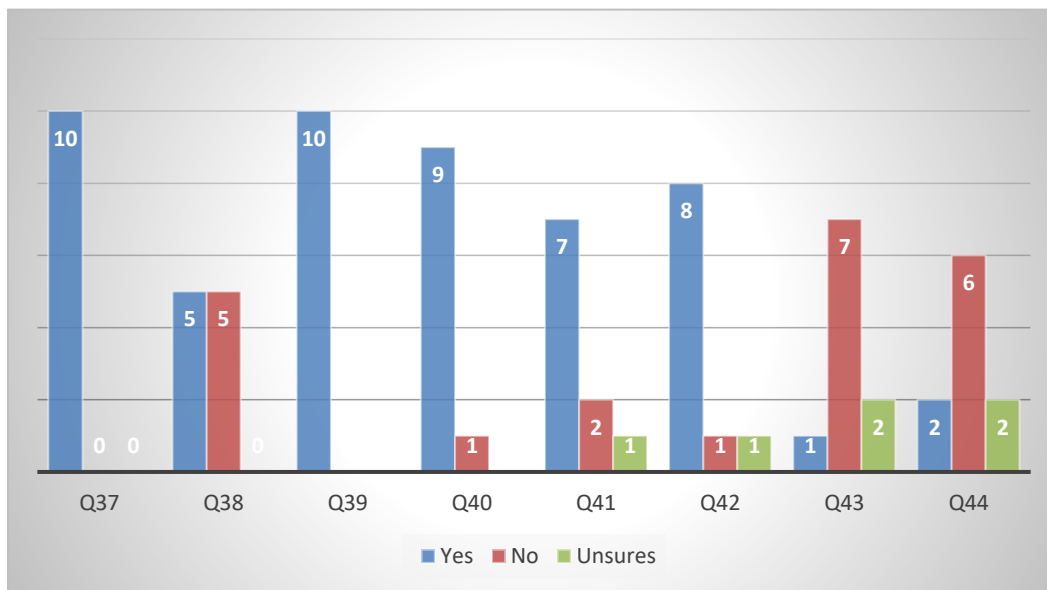
Figure 14. Questions 37-44. 2nd grade program quality check with Wilson Language Fundations® Program (n=10)

Kindergarten teachers or paraprofessionals. Kindergarten students are learning to identify letters and sounds, tracking words on a page, recognize 50-100 sight words (Fundations® calls sight words – tricky words), and they are learning print formation such as writing his/her name. These students are in the beginning phase of learning to read, and they are growing their vocabulary and reading skills. Kindergarten students do not take the state assessment, so they are monitored for progress in growth and improvement through Curriculum Associates' iReady and Pearson Assessments Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA). The data is used to inform teachers and administrators if the students are reading on grade level, and grouping Kindergarten students into their multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS) levels. Tier 1 is categorized for students working on or above grade level. Tier 2 is for students working a year behind grade level. Tier 3 is for students working two or more years behind grade level. The Tier 2 students are working with an interventionist (teacher or paraprofessional) utilizing the

Wilson Language Fundations® program for Kindergarten. The group size is no more than six students per interventionist.

Questions 45 through 51. These questions are specific to the quality and characteristics of a reading program. Teachers and paraprofessionals were asked close-ended questions and to provide a yes, no, or unsure response. This information helped me discover if the Wilson Language Fundations® program had the quality and characteristics found in a boxed reading intervention program.

In question 45, one respondent answered yes to phonemic awareness starts with larger units (words and syllables) and progresses to smaller units (phonemes). For question 46, respondents were asked if phonemic awareness starts with rhyming and progresses to phoneme isolation, blending, segmenting, and manipulation and a single response of yes was recorded. For question 47, one respondent answered yes to the activities follow the continuum of word types (beginning with short words that contain 2 or 3 phonemes). For question 48, a single response of yes was recorded for the program includes explicit instruction in irregular words and decoding strategies for the decodable parts of words (clarifying that the letters represent their most common sounds as well as the irregularities of certain letters). For question 49, the respondents were asked if the decoding strategy is taught so that it becomes automatic, and the respondent chose yes. For question 50, respondents were asked if the program instruction enables students to establish and adjust purposes for reading (e.g., reading to understand, to interpret, to inform, to enjoy, and to solve problems), and the respondent chose yes. For question 51, respondents were asked if there are instructional routines for comprehension strategies for before, during, and after reading (e.g., setting a purpose, prediction, story grammar,

main idea, summarization, graphic organizers, and answering and generating questions, and the respondent chose yes.

Of the three teachers and three paraprofessionals in this grade level at X Elementary School, only one person chose to respond to questions 45 through 51. This group of teachers and paraprofessionals consists of one teacher with less than five years of experience and the rest of the educators are considered veteran teachers. In addition, this group of paraprofessionals are dedicated to the Kindergarten classrooms and they received their Fundations® training through the literacy coach and teacher. For this set of data, I discovered the veteran teachers and paraprofessionals did not participate in the survey as expected. They had the most push back about implementing the reading program therefore, I expected this group to give more feedback. I would recommend that this group have a chance to express their concerns about implementing any program with an administrator and district personnel from the professional development department.
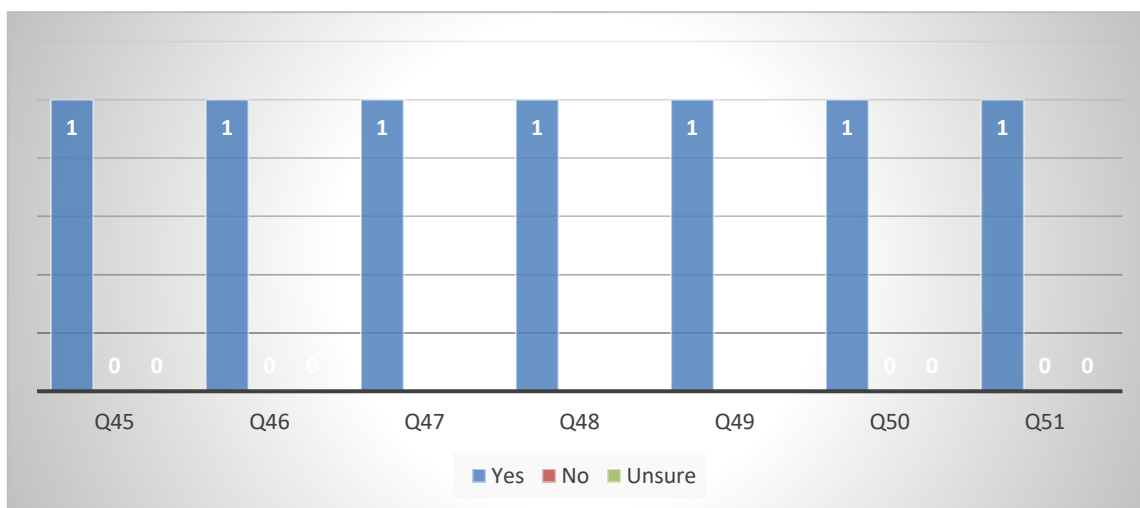
Figure 15. Questions 45-51 Kindergarten program quality check with Wilson Language Fundations® Program (n=1)

Administrators and Literacy Coaches survey. The literacy coaches' role in implementing the Wilson Language Fundations® program was to provide in school

training with an overview of the program as learned in the train-the-trainer session. The literacy coaches held after school sessions for teachers and paraprofessionals who needed additional support. They utilized Wilson Language Fundations®' website that provided teaching activities and videos of teachers modeling the lesson. They used this website as additional resources to share with the educators. Also, the administrators attended a voluntary after school introduction to Fundations® and a detailed professional development on providing reading interventions using multi-tiered systems of support. Both positions championed programs that would produce results and increase student achievement. There was one coach and one administrator that participated in the survey.

Questions 52 and 53. The next two questions are geared to the literacy coaches and administrators, and the questions are used to answer my inquiry to secondary exploratory questions. The respondents were asked to give a short response to open-ended questions. The questions provide the respondents with a chance to share their perception of the Wilson Language Fundations® program and professional development in reading strategies.

For question 52, literacy coaches and administrators were asked, as a school leader, what is your perception in regards to ensuring the Fundations® program operates with fidelity. The theme from two respondents was observations and immediate feedback is key to ensuring the program runs with accuracy. The intervention programs occur throughout the day and with many people teaching small groups that a schedule had to be created so to see each group in action. When this information is compared to how teachers and paraprofessionals felt about the program, the constant theme was the need for quality feedback and classroom modeling. I believe the educators would have a better

rapport between the literacy coaches and administrators if they could provide support for the program that was more specific to their needs.

For question 53, literacy coaches and administrators were asked, as a school leader, what is your perception of the quality of professional development received in reading strategies by the literacy coach, district, self, and outside consultant. The respondents' answer was all stakeholders needed more extensive training and that all training should have been mandated without options to attend. The administrator wrote everyone, including self, could use in-depth training and specific to grade-level training provided by a consultant with quarterly follow ups. The administrator added Curriculum Associates visited the school every quarter which gave the staff a chance to build a connection and relationship and to discuss data that was sometimes 'hard to look at", but the staff was comfortable with the trainer.

I agree with the administrators' responses in that our teachers and paraprofessionals need to have an opportunity to meet with an expert in the program, at least once a quarter, and to be able to have difficult conversations about what is working or not working. Research on professional development that supports reading strategies recommends teachers should: have a choice in the content, be provided with the level of support needed, given support in the classroom or group setting, be monitored by knowledgeable staff, and be given an opportunity to reflect on their practice (Sailors and Price, 2010, p. 303). The educators at X Elementary School have expressed similar concerns through the data collection in interview question three and survey question 15. They need more specific training based on their experiences, on the job training such as

modeled lessons or differentiation for small groups, and grade level meetings with the ability to share experiences or hear feedback so lessons can be adjusted.

Interview Results

I received twenty signed Informed Consent Adult Participant Survey forms from eleven teachers, six paraprofessionals, one literacy coach, and one administrator. These individuals were invited to participate in the interview portion and were sent Informed Consent Adult Participation Interview. I sent two reminder emails to twenty participants requesting a date and time that would fit their schedule for a personal interview. After 30 days passed, I received four responses, but only three participants confirmed time and followed through with meeting me to discuss the interview questions. The questions used were Interview Questions for Teachers and Paraprofessionals (Appendix C) and Interview Questions for Administrators and Literacy Coaches (Appendix D). I received a 15% response rate for completed interviews and participation.

I interviewed three participants: one third grade teacher, one paraprofessional, and one literacy coach. I crafted questions that will help support the research questions: what do X Elementary School's ELA Kindergarten through 3rd grade teachers, paraprofessionals, administrators, and literacy coaches perceive is working well, not working well, address challenges, and ways to improve the Wilson Language Fundations® program? In the interview process, I reassured the participants that their responses would be held to the utmost confidentiality, and they should feel comfortable explaining their needs to help increase student achievement. I shared my research with X Elementary School and Alpha Public Schools to make suggestions for change in the program, improving training and professional development for teachers, and

considerations for future implementation of programs and professional development in reading strategies. In addition, I addressed options for improving the implementation of the Wilson Language Fundations® program and usage in the classroom.

Background. For the purpose of a evaluation of the effectiveness of Fundations® and professional development in reading strategies, I asked 18 questions to gather information from the teachers and paraprofessionals; and an additional 17 questions posed to administrators and literacy coaches at X Elementary School. The inquiry explored their educational experience, reading program experience, and training received. To analyze the interview transcripts, I reorganized the questions to be more coherent and grouped by topics: Fundations® experience, Reading Skills and Strategies Knowledge, Professional Development in Fundations®, and Professional Development in Reading Strategies. The interview responses were analyzed to provide qualitative data. I used the transcript from the interviews and coded the responses to discover themes within the respondents' answers. This allowed me to explore further the participants' responses to the quantitative data gathered from the survey responses.

Teachers and paraprofessionals' interview. To gain a better insight into the teachers and paraprofessionals, I asked questions about their experience in teaching reading, their expertise about reading programs, and the training received in those programs. For question 1, I asked, "How long have you been teaching reading?" For question 2, I asked the interviewees to "Describe your experience teaching other reading programs. What types? How long? How much training did you receive? Which program showed the best results and why?" The respondents collectively have over 20 years of experience in teaching reading and using a variety of reading programs: Read Naturally,

iReady, and Corrective Reading. When it comes to a particular program and training received (question 2), one respondent shares that she has received the most training with iReady, which is going on its third year at X Elementary School. "At first, I dreaded the training because it was redundant. Just 90 minutes of someone talking to us." She shared the iReady training evolved after the first year, and they met in grade levels once every quarter for 90 minutes. The sessions "give us a chance to review data and discuss which lessons to repeat or review." She also shared that iReady gave additional six-hour training for their supplemental writing program, and she found "great writing results" with her students. The paraprofessional responded that her best results in student growth came from a program called Read Naturally. She shared that she attended a two-day training with the (Name withheld) Diagnostic and Learning Resources System. When the paraprofessional shares her success story, she lights up, telling me, "I had a 5th grade student reading on a pre-primer level. I used Read Naturally with her and in less than a year, she was reading at a 3rd grade level." Based on the survey results, the interviewees participating in this survey are the two respondents (10%) with over six years of experience teaching a scripted reading.

Wilson Language Fundations® experience. With the respondents being well versed and experienced in other reading programs, my intention of the interview was to discover their experiences with Wilson Language Fundations® program. I inquired about specific areas in the program that support my research questions for the program evaluation of the Wilson Language Fundations® program. For question 7, I asked, "what is working well with Fundations®?" The two respondents had similar responses sharing the "students enjoyed the activities" and "they learned quickly." The paraprofessional

stated, "his teacher says he can't read but when (student) is with me, he can read and he loves showing off to his friends." I can infer that building relationships with students and making reading fun will activate a desire to learn in many students.

For question 8, I inquired "what is not working well with Fundations®," question 9, "what has been your greatest challenge in implementing Fundations®," and question 10, "what has been your greatest challenge of Fundations® overall?" During the interview process, I discovered themes between the two respondents. I found the interview responses had similar issues shared in the short answer responses of the survey. In Table 2 Major Themes Discussed and Interviewees' Responses, I listed the major themes discussed and share the interviewees' actual responses.

Table 2.

Major Themes Discussed and Interviewees' Responses

Question	Themes	Responses*
Q8. Not Working Well	Strategies	"In all of my reading research, I don't understand why they teach silent *e* at the end." "I don't like that each program has some new way to teach students – scooping, tapping out sounds, and connecting sounds. I want to use what is easier and works with students."
Q9. Greatest Challenge with Implementation	No materials	"It would help to have student kits, so I can do this correctly. And I have to share a teacher kit… It's nearly impossible when two groups are going on at the same time." "The cookie sheets and magnet letters work, but there is supposed to be writing boards and cards. I don't know why we can't have kits for every student when we are expected to raise their reading scores with nothing."
Q10. Greatest Challenge Overall	Not enough training	"I was told we had to start Fundations® in the middle of the year and the only training I got was about the contents of a kit."

	"I figured it out but there wasn't enough training provided. I had to help my para understand the program, but other paras did not, and I worried about the type of intervention my students were receiving."

*n=3

Although the interviewees had several years of experience in teaching reading, they still struggled with the implementation of the Wilson Language Fundations® program. They sought out more personalized training that fits their needs. I inferred that no matter the level of experience an educator brings to the table when there is new research and reasons for introducing strategies are a certain way, then provide coaching and training needs promptly and with follow up, preferably in the classroom setting.

For question 11, I asked, "how would you improve Fundations®" and question 12, "what suggestions or solutions would you make to overcome the challenges you have faced with Fundations®?" The teacher response was different than the paraprofessional's response in that these two professionals had very different needs. The teacher sought resources to differentiate the program for her students who are reading at various levels. She stated, "I feel that these companies should figure out a way to have differentiated lessons to include varying levels of readers like my ELL (English Language Learners) kids." The paraprofessional shared that the program was missing student kits, but she has "made everything work using cookie sheets and magnetic letters, and I make copies of the lined paper. But still, the lessons refer to using the student kits, and I think my students will benefit from a complete program." Alpha Public Schools had limited funds, so they purchased teacher kits for every teacher in grades Kindergarten through 3rd grade.

Although the lack of student kits came up in the survey short answer response as well as in the interview, I suggest that instead of purchasing student kits that a budget

should be set aside to invest in ongoing professional development spread throughout the year, and it should be specific to teachers and literacy coaches' needs. Ongoing professional development makes a difference in informing instructional reading practices of teachers, giving them in-classroom opportunities and explanations (Sailors and Price, 2010, p. 317). From an earlier response, the teacher shared personalized quarterly trainings with another program worked out for her once they were past the initial program overview. For the respondents in the survey and the interview who had requested student kits, ongoing professional development would give the trainer or coach the opportunity to address how to handle the lack of materials and alternative approaches.

For question 13, I asked, "do you have to use Fundations®? If yes, to what extent do you maintain teaching the program with fidelity?" For question 14, I inquired, "how would you rate yourself in implementing the Wilson Language Fundations® program with fidelity? Are you explicit and provide direct instruction by the book? Or do you tend to include your own teaching experiences?" For question 16, I asked, "do you adjust the program instruction at all? If yes, when? And how do you decide what to adjust?" Both interviewees responded yes to question 13 and the teacher expanded on her response by stating, "I use it to the best of my ability." For question 14, the interviewees explained, "I think I am doing a good job with it: and "admin hasn't said otherwise." For question 16, the teacher shared, "I feel I have more experience in particular lessons and will use prior training and experience to change up lessons. I know what works with my students and what doesn't work." The Wilson Approach is a study about the Wilson Language Programs and its research states their program is direct, explicit, and systematic that must be followed through the phases and with trained teachers (Wilson and O'Connor, 1995, p.

250). Therefore, whether educators have experience or no experience in reading, they should be adequately trained in the reading process that can be modified if educators are correctly taught how to provide interventions at each level.

Reading skills and strategies knowledge. The next set of questions are grouped to discover more about the interviewees' experience in teaching reading strategies. Programs may tell teachers and paraprofessionals what to say and do, but if they do not have the expertise to adjust lessons accordingly and. in a timely manner, then the students will not grow academically. For question 15, I asked, "How well do you understand decoding strategies?" For question 17, I asked the interviewees to "Describe your instructional routine for comprehension strategies for before, during, and after reading?' For question 18, I asked, "What multisensory approaches do you use when teaching the Wilson Language Fundations® program and/or any other reading program?" Both respondents had some difficulty in answering these questions. I expected the interviewees to be able to share several reading strategies that have worked in their classrooms. Their categorized responses are shared in Table 3. Instead, I inferred that teachers and paraprofessionals could use support in the classroom to increase student achievement levels based on the students' needs but also based on research-proven reading strategies. In this case, I have seen grab and go professional development provided by literacy coaches on lunch and planning periods wherein strategies are shared in less than 15 minutes. It is a way to grow teachers and paraprofessionals by grasping their attention and then following it up with a full-fledged professional development workshop within the week.

Table 3.

Multisensory Approaches Used When Teaching Fundations® and/or Any Other Reading

Program

Question	Themes	Responses*
Q15. Decoding Strategies	Flashcards Sounding out Letter recognition	"Decoding is sometimes referred to as 'the code' and students need to understand 'the code'…letter recognition and sounds before they can read and write." "I use flashcards and posters to teach students letters and sounds."
Q17. Instructional Routine (Before, During, and After Reading)	Build background and check for comprehension	"I try to share what I know about a topic before we start reading. I ask my students to tell me about what they know. And I always check for their understanding of the story by asking questions."
Q18. Multisensory Approaches	Tapping out	"I teach students to tap out the sounds."

*n=3

Professional development in reading strategies. The next set of questions

provided more insight to the Likert scale responses received for survey questions 13 and

16. For survey question 13, 35% of the respondents chose neither effective nor

ineffective for the effectiveness of professional development in reading strategies

received, and 25% of the respondents felt the training received was ineffective to strongly

ineffective. In the interview process, I asked the interviewees to expound on their survey

rating by asking interview question 4, "how would you describe your reading strategies

training? Has it helped you become a better teacher? Has it helped you increase student

achievement?" The teacher explained that most of the training received is "just an

overview of some topic, and it doesn't dive deep into the areas that I need more support

in. It isn't useful unless I can bring something back to the classroom." The paraprofessional shares that she has received "plenty of training," and she "enjoys learning so she can share it with her students." For survey question 16, 70% of the respondents chose no for not receiving enough professional development in reading strategies. In the interview process, I asked the interviewees question 3, "how much professional development have you received in reading strategies this school year (2018)?" The paraprofessional said she received training from the coach at our monthly meetings, a district training held at the neighboring school, and an all-day session at X Elementary School. The teacher did not share an answer.

Professional development in Fundations®. Responses to interview questions 5 and 6 give me the characteristics needed to analyze the quantitative data captured in survey questions 4, did survey participants receive professional development on the Wilson Language Fundations® program and survey question 7, to rate the effectiveness of the professional development of Fundations®. For interview question 5, I asked interviewees to share how much professional development they have received in Fundations® this school year (2018). Since 90% of the survey respondents received Fundations® training, I expected the two interviewees to have received training. They both received training with one interviewee sharing her training was provided by the coach for a total of four hours in the school year, and the other interviewee attended an after school session provided by the district. For interview question 6, I asked interviewees to describe their Fundations® training, did it help them become a better teacher, and did it help increase student achievement. The teacher responded that the initial Fundations® training was an "overview of the program and the literacy coach had

offered voluntary sessions too. But the sessions were held after school, and I couldn't commit to attending. My data shows improvement for some students." The paraprofessional replied, "the Fundations® training was helpful and my students are making gains."

   Administrators and Literacy Coaches' interview. Since X Elementary School is a small school with less than four people on the leadership team, the interview will be referred to as 'Leadership Member A' to maintain anonymity. Leadership Member A is new to the school but not new to education. The educator's educational experience includes five years as a 3rd grade math teacher, one year as a 1st grade teacher, and, most recently, the role in leadership at X Elementary School. Leadership Member A's strengths are in math and science, but has experience teaching 2nd grade reading programs and strategies. Leadership Member A is "comfortable using Pearson's Assessment Developmental Assessment Reading Assessment and Curriculum Associates' iReady print and online program. As an educational member, I feel strongly about choosing the correct intervention to help students become successful readers."

   In the role as a leader, Leadership Member A describes training received, "the district provides training for various reading intervention programs…we meet once a month for six to eight hours to discuss content-specific materials, programs, and strategies." Any information received from the district is brought back to the school and shared in professional development on early release days, collaboration on Tuesdays, or at the leadership meetings. "I find the district trainings most helpful and it (district) builds my bank of knowledge to share with others." Leadership Member A's role in the school is to provide support to teachers and students to increase student achievement, but the

district and leadership team may request different duties. Leadership Member A spends many days creating, planning, and preparing for: collaborations, parent engagement nights, professional development for early release days, SSA Boot Camp, and Literacy Night. In addition, Leadership Member A offers support in the classroom and coaching or training in specific areas when teachers request assistance.

Leadership Member A describes the staff as "veteran teachers and paraprofessionals have not always been welcoming...I get more invitations to help try something new or support the newer teachers." In the Fall of 2017, Alpha Public Schools implemented Fundations® and provided administrators and coaches with training. During this time, Leadership Member A was employed at a different school. Leadership Member A explains that she joined X Elementary School in 2018-2019 and when she arrived, "the teachers did not receive me well nor the new reading program for that matter…I held Fundations® training after school and for my first training six (staff) showed up. I was excited and hoped more would come but the following Fridays, the numbers dwindled." For interview questions 11 and 12, the leadership member's greatest challenge in the Wilson Language Fundations® program was implementing a training with support in the classroom.

For interview question 17, the Leadership Member A observes classrooms when there is an invitation extended. The reason Leadership Member A does not visit classrooms without a request is to adhere to the union contract, stating, "I need to build a good relationship with the teachers before I observe their classrooms." Leadership Member A is one of four people on the leadership team with an observation schedule. She explains, "My assistant principal gave me a list of teachers and paraprofessionals to

observe during reading interventions. I use Fundations Implementation Checklist and check off areas that I see occurring in the reading program." During the observations, Leadership Member A has witnessed students using Echo (the owl puppet and mascot) to point to charts and say letter names and blends and observed students clapping out sounds. Leadership Member A shared, "Teachers kept asking me to model the Wilson Language Fundations® program lessons, so I researched YouTube videos and shared them at some of our after school sessions. I was pleasantly surprised to observe paraprofessionals following some of the same activities in their reading intervention groups."

Leadership Member A's interview, the survey results, and the teachers and paraprofessionals' interview confirmed significant areas of concern about the professional development program. Professional development in reading strategies needs to consist of more than a relay of information. Characteristics of useful training include observation (inspect what you expect), timely feedback, modeling, and continued support (coaching) in the classroom setting. Teachers attributed an increased sense of efficacy in improving student outcomes and demonstrated more significant gains was a result of being provided useful training (Sailors & Price, 2010, p. 304).

Extant data. In Spring 2019, we experienced a global pandemic that continues to change the educational sector. In March 2019, the governor postponed state testing and mandated schools to provide distance learning. For school year 2019-2020, Alpha Public Schools' Elementary Education Department created a list of approved intervention programs, and they chose to remove the Wilson Language Fundations® program from Tier 2 offerings. Their decision was due to the adoption of a new English Language Arts

curriculum and the implementation of a new writing program. The district administrators explained the new programs conflicted with the Wilson Language Fundations® program and made it confusing for teachers and students. Since the state tests were postponed and the Wilson Language Fundations® program removed, there was no current data (2019-2020) to compare against the 2018-2019. Instead for the purpose of this evaluation, the State's Assessment in English Language Arts (SSA ELA) 2017-2018 results will be used and compared to the 2018-2019 results, and the diagnostic assessment periods 1, 2, and 3 from Curriculum Associates' iReady 2017-2018 results will be compared to the 2018-2019 results.

In SY2018-2019, the 3rd grade students receiving Tier 2 reading intervention using the Wilson Language Fundations® program took the 2018 Spring SSA ELA. Due to the school grade, the reading intervention times increased and students received 90 minutes a day for one and one-half years in reading interventions. The Wilson Language Fundations® program was used for students reading one year below grade level. Curriculum Associates' iReady Diagnostic was used to measure student progress throughout the year in three assessment periods (AP1, AP2, and AP3). For the purpose of this evaluation, the SY2017-2018 and 2018-2019 iReady diagnostic (AP1) and progress monitoring (AP2 and AP3) will be used to analyze student achievement and growth.

iReady background. In 2017-2018, Alpha Public Schools purchased the diagnostic portion of Curriculum Associates' iReady and in 2018-2019, the turnaround schools were given the option to purchase iReady reading and writing curriculum as a supplemental resource. In 2018-2019, X Elementary School and other turnaround schools purchased iReady's reading and writing program to use as a Tier 1 intervention. All

elementary schools in Alpha Public Schools use iReady diagnostic assessment (AP1)

student placement in intervention groups and programs. In addition, iReady AP2 and AP3

scores are used to assess students' reading progress throughout the year.

In 2018-2019, the 3rd grade students with an iReady AP1 diagnostic score of 2nd

grade reading level and low 3rd grade reading level received Tier 2 interventions using the

Wilson Language Fundations®. Eighty-seven percent (66) students at X Elementary

School were receiving Tier 2 interventions. The students met with an interventionist

(teacher or paraprofessional) for 90 minutes (two – 45-minute sessions a day). Students

are monitored three times a year using Curriculum Associates iReady. Table 4 shows

SY2018-2019 3rd grade students made gains from AP1 to AP3 by reducing the number of

students reading below grade level. In AP1, 30% of the students were reading on grade

level and in AP3, 67% students were reading on grade level which is an increase of 37%.

Table 4.

SY2018-2019 3rd Grade Student Gains from AP1 To AP3 by Reducing the Number of

Students Reading Below Grade Level*

	AP1 – August 2018 76 Students	AP3 – March 2019 89 Students
Reading at Kindergarten Level	8	4
Reading at 1st Grade Level	19	9
Reading at 2nd Grade Level	21	15
Reading at Early 3rd Grade Level	18	
Reading at Mid-3rd Grade Level	1	
Reading at Late 3rd Grade Level	2	19
Reading at 4th Grade Level	0	
No Score	7	4

*Data Source: X Elementary School iReady Data provided by the school site principal

In 2017-2018, the 3rd grade students received a reading intervention based on the teachers' ability and choice of program regardless of the iReady AP1 diagnostic score. In October 2017 through December 2017, the materials and training for Wilson Language Fundations® program was provided to literacy coaches, administrators, teachers, and paraprofessionals. This occurred well after the release of AP1 results. In January 2018, Alpha Public Schools asked all elementary schools to start the implementation of Wilson Language Fundations®. The 3rd grade students with an iReady AP2 score of 2nd grade reading level and low 3rd grade reading ability received Tier 2 interventions using the Wilson Language Fundations® program. The students met with a teacher or paraprofessional for 45 minutes a day. Table 5 shows SY2017-2018 3rd grade students made gains from AP1 to AP2 by reducing the number of students reading below grade level. In AP1, 26% of the students were reading on grade level and in AP2, 48% of the students were reading on grade level which is a 22% increase from AP1 to AP2. By March 2018, 56% of the 3rd grade students were reading on grade level. There was an 8% increase from AP2 to AP3 of students reading on or above grade level.

Table 5.

SY2017-2018 Third grade Students' Reading Gains by Grade Level*

Level	AP1 – August 2017 68 Students	AP2 – December 2017 68 Students	AP3 – March 2018 70 Students
Kindergarten	9	4	5
1st Grade	21	15	9
2nd Grade	15	14	16
Early 3rd Grade	12	15	19
Mid-3rd Grade		8	3
Late 3rd Grade l	2	7	12

Reading at 4th Grade	0	0	4
No Score	7	5	2

*Source: X Elementary School iReady Reports provided by site principal

The iReady data from 2017-2018 to 2018-2019 are the results of two different 3rd grade cohorts. The cohort of the same students from 2nd grade (2017-2018) to 3rd grade (2018-2019) cannot be compared because iReady was not available to 2nd grade students in 2017-2018. When analyzing the iReady AP3 results, 3rd grade students reading on grade level increased by 11% from 2017-2018 to 2018 to 2019.

SSA Data

Due to the global pandemic, Covid 19, and the postponement of state testing for the school year 2019-2020, the data does not follow the same cohort of students. The SSA data used for this program evaluation is the 3rd grade class of 2017-2018 and the 3rd grade class of 2018-2019. Third grade is a pivotal year for students in learning. In addition, these students begin state assessments to measure proficiency in core subject areas (i.e., English Language Arts and Math). The state uses a range referred to a level to score students on proficiency. A student receiving a level 3 or better is considered proficient in the subject area. A student scoring less than a level 3 is considered not proficient and not performing on grade level.

SSA Spring 2018. Third grade students receiving Tier 2 reading interventions used the Wilson Language Fundations® program for five months (SY2017-2018). In Spring 2018, 69 3rd grade students at X Elementary School took the SSA ELA for the first time. Twenty-five students (36%) scored a level 3 or better. Forty-four students (64%) received a level 1 or 2 and are not proficient in reading. X Elementary was given a school grade of D based on the SSA data. A D school is mandated to provide an extra

hour of reading interventions to their school's regular bell schedule. This increased

intervention times from 45 minutes to 90 minutes and in many cases, the students

receiving Tier 2 intervention received a 'double dose' of Fundations®.

SSA Spring 2019. Third grade students receiving Tier 2 reading interventions

used the Wilson Language Fundations® program for one full year (SY2018-2019) and

five months (SY2017-2018). In Spring 2019, eighty-five 3rd grade students took their first

SSA ELA. Thirty-five students (41%) scored a level 3 or better and 50 students (59%)

scored a level 1 or 2 and are not proficient in reading. Table 6 demonstrates students

reading at a proficient level increased 5% from the SSA Spring 2018 ELA to the SSA

Spring 2019 ELA. A new school grade of C was issued to X Elementary, but the increase

was not significant enough to remove the school from extra hour mandated by the state.

Table 6.

Spring 2019, 3rd Grade Students First SSA ELA Assessment Results (n=85)*

	Spring 2018 SY2017-2018 (n=69)	Spring 2019 2018-2019 (n=85)
Level 3, 4, or 5	25 (36%)	35 (41%)
Level 1 or 2	44 (64%)	50 (59%)

*Data Source: State level SSA ELA Assessment Results

In SY2018-2019, Alpha Public Schools required mandatory reading interventions

for all students reading below grade level, and enrichment programs were provided to

students reading on grade level. The Wilson Language Fundations® program was

prescribed to students in grades Kindergarten through 3rd grade who took the iReady

diagnostic and scored one year below grade level. They were considered to need Tier 2

reading interventions. In addition, based on Spring 2017 SSA scores, the school was rated

a D by the state school grade system and was mandated an extra hour of reading

intervention to the school schedule. A literacy coach was hired full-time to support teachers and students.

In SY2017-2018, X Elementary School did not have a reading intervention program in place. X Elementary School had 45-minutes of reading intervention scheduled. Teachers and paraprofessionals chose one of many programs available: Read Naturally, SRA Early Intervention Reading, or purchased lessons from Teachers Pay Teachers that fit their comfort level in teaching. They had access to a literacy coach on Tuesdays and Thursdays only, but according to the interviews and surveys, teachers and paraprofessionals were not always willing to utilize or seek out support.

Teachers focus on various data points from intervention programs, diagnostics, summative, and state assessments. The data is used to help them plan lessons, reteach, and differentiate, and administrators focus on various data points to support teachers and students with providing the knowledge and expertise to raise the bar. Using data teachers and researchers are able to tell a story about the success or failure of a student's performance. While analyzing the data, I took into consideration my staff's experience, well-being, and personal growth. If teachers are not comfortable and willing to receive information, then they will not display an enthusiasm for teaching and love for learning.

Overall, after reviewing the data, I realize the need to build the capacity of educators whom are providing interventions and reading strategies. Although Wilson Language Fundations® program was utilized, there is no direct data to show that the program, alone, helped students to increase SSA ELA scores. Researchers state a boxed program is not enough to meet every students' needs (Schwartz, 2019, para. 60). Teachers and paraprofessionals who are providing reading interventions need to be able

to intervene and address students' reading needs promptly and provide a corrective reading strategy with confidence. They require a professional development that is multi-modal by offering research-based information, classroom support, lesson or strategy modeling, and reflection to prepare for the next course of action.

To transform schools, educators must embrace change with an open mind. As I analyzed the survey results, interview responses, and data to make suggestions for change, I applied the 4 C's model: competency, conditions, culture, and context by Wagner et al. (2006). For the program evaluation of the effectiveness of the Wilson Language Fundations® program and reading strategies in professional development, the 4 C's model was used to describe a change in a systematic approach and begins where we are today as modeled in the As-Is Chart (Appendix F). I used the qualitative and quantitative data collected to make suggestions for change and transformation that I shared a visual in a To Be Chart (Appendix G). I intended to create a plan that supports the educators by lifting their confidence in the classroom, building educators' capacity to provide reading strategies, and preparing meaningful professional development to coaching in the classroom. Educators who get value in their professional growth will lead to a newfound excitement in their content area that will increase student achievement.

Context

For the purpose of this evaluation, I focused on X Elementary School, a Title 1 school, with approximately 470 students. In 2017-2018, forty-four 3rd grade students (64%) and in 2018-2019, fifty 3rd grade students (59%) scored a level 1 or 2 on the SSA ELA. Level 1 and 2 are considered not proficient in the tested area, with students performing one or more years below grade level. Another factor considered is 100% of

the students receive free or reduced lunch. The demographics of the school were changing year after year, including the school grade, which received a C in 2016-2017, D in 2017-18, and a C in 2018-2019. Based on the state scores, there was a sense of urgency to help students learn to read and be successful students regardless of their socioeconomic status and changes in demographics.

The context of the program evaluation research centered around the concern for the number of students unable to read on grade level. The data was based on the State's Assessment in English Language Arts and progress monitoring using Curriculum Associates' iReady assessments. The SSA ELA is a test of the state standards that encompasses vocabulary, comprehension, critical thinking skills, and more. The research suggested 3rd grade students are not reading on grade level with a possibility that they have not transitioned to the reading to learn phase yet. If students are underperforming on the SSA ELA, then we must consider their deficiency in basic foundational reading skills needed in the learning to read phase so they can make a move to reading to learn, the comprehension phase. By the time students exit the 2nd grade, they need to have mastered and possess strong foundational reading skills. Understanding this need, Alpha Public Schools purchased the Wilson Language Fundations® program.

State funding did not release monies at the beginning of the SY 2017-2018. When the funds finally cleared in October 2017, Alpha Public Schools purchased teacher program kits for every teacher in Kindergarten through 2nd grade. As kits started to arrive at schools, Alpha Public Schools created a plan with a quick turnaround time to implement Wilson Language Fundations®. The literacy coach, administrators, and leadership team, at X Elementary School received training in a train-the-trainer model.

Alpha Public Schools requested the leadership team at all elementary schools provide training at their school site between October through December 2017. The district goal was to allow students and teachers to use a research-based program to increase student reading levels before the Spring 2018 SSA ELA and start full implementation for the school year 2018-2019. My research questions asked teachers, paraprofessionals, administrators, and literacy coaches using Fundations® to share the greatest challenges they perceived in implementing the program and how they would improve it. The results suggested a need for student kits and more specific professional development, preferably modeling lessons in the classroom.

Culture

In January 2017, a new administrative team at X Elementary School was announced to the staff. Unfortunately, the staff had seen a new administrative team every year for the last three years, and they were very reluctant to make changes of any kind including planning lessons to include standards, joining collaborative sessions with literacy coaches and assistant principal, and implementing any new reading intervention programs. The pushback from the staff at X Elementary School to increase student achievement was felt at the district office. The district leadership team members reviewed the results from district made quarterly assessments, and noticed the students in X Elementary School had shown very little growth to no growth in student achievement. The administrative team at X Elementary School had to reset the culture and mindset of the staff. Making significant changes mid-year would only backfire, so the team treaded lightly about the implementation of any programs and school wide changes. Fullan discusses the first of six steps for successfully effecting human motivation by revealing

staffs needs, providing fair treatment, and celebrating success no matter the size of the success (2011). The administrative team's first task was to build a relationship with the staff and reassure them that any changes made were for the good of the students and for meeting student needs.

When the school year 2018-2019 opened, X Elementary School had added a full-time literacy coach to the team. The focus for all was to raise the bar with a school theme of "Game On." The administrator opened the school year with "we will not stand for mediocrity because we are not average" (Anonymous, Personal Communication, August 2, 2018). The focus quickly turned to meet the needs of teachers with training on the Wilson Language Fundations® program, incorporating the state's standards into lessons, and providing a reading intervention program. The administrative team had a challenge ahead of them with significant tasks to achieve while rebuilding the culture. In addition, the literacy coaches were tasked with discovering how much professional development the staff had received in reading strategies and the Wilson Language Fundations® program so that they could prepare teachers to provide reading interventions in small groups.

For the purpose of this evaluation, research questions were developed to better understand the climate and culture of X Elementary School. One research question asked the Kindergarten through 3rd grade teachers, paraprofessionals, administrators, and literacy coaches to address what is working well in the Fundations® program.

Discovering successes, no matter the size, was a way to motivate staff toward positive change and to keep the momentum flowing. For survey question 9, the staff shared success stories about students feeling confident about reading and students' being

comfortable with reading as they moved from one grade level to the next. Fullan's presents a second component of successful change as connecting with peers with a purpose (2011). The administrative team reviewed SSA results and iReady data with staff at collaborative planning, and all agreed that teaching students to read successfully outweighed the fact that demographics had changed. An administrator shared, "parents are bringing their very best student to us, and we have to do what is right for them."

Two research questions that inquired into the tone of the current culture and climate at X Elementary School asked teachers to share their perceptions of the quality of professional development received on the topic of reading strategies; and also asked them to share their perceptions of the administration provided professional development received in reading strategies implemented by the school's literacy coaches, district, and/or outside consultant. With a new leadership team, the staff was reluctant to accept coaching or professional development from anyone. This reluctance included expressing a fear of commitment to a program or leadership team that may change again. The staff placed their trust in outside consulting services to provide professional development. Seventy percent of the staff rated the training experience provided by an outside consultant as strongly effective and effective ratings.

Fullan's third component of change is to build the capacity of the staff (2011). The leadership team used the data collected from the literacy coaches about the staff's previous training received on Fundations®. Instead of offering a full day of training in Wilson Language Fundations®, the leadership team opted for after school trainings with the literacy coach. By doing so, the leadership team placed their focus on other areas such as building the capacity of all staff in reading strategies, acquiring resources to move

teachers away from non-district approved resources, and motivating all staff and students to believe, regardless of the changing leadership team, the students will become successful readers because of their teachers.

Conditions

"Conditions is defined as the external architecture surrounding student learning, the tangible arrangements of time, space, and resources" (Wagner et al., 2006, p. 101). The conditions for this program evaluation were the rapid decline of reading scores based on the State Assessment. The low state scores and change in demographics was a concern to the community, district, and teachers. Three areas that affected the conditions of X Elementary School were the state-mandated extra hour to provide interventions, the district's intervention plan to implement Wilson Language Fundations®, and the mid-year rezoning of students with disabilities and onboarding of the teachers joining these new students.

The first concern affected X Elementary school's grade and bell schedule. Many changes occurred between SY2017-2018 and SY2018-2019. One of the most significant changes was a new leadership team, including principal, assistant principal, and literacy coach. The Spring 2018 SSA ELA results uncovered a deficiency in reading for grades 3 through 5. X Elementary School was given a D grade by the state and added to the Bottom 300 list of schools in performance. This condition changed the intervention schedule with an increase from 45 minutes to 90 minutes and added an additional hour of learning to the bell schedule.

The second concern was the implementation of Wilson Language Fundations® and the lack of resources and training needed to build teacher's capacity in providing

interventions. Alpha Public Schools (APS) created a reading intervention plan with prescribed programs based on the results of diagnostic scores. APS had a limited budget from the state reading fund and chose to purchase teacher program kits only for all elementary schools. For the purpose of this evaluation, a primary research question asked Kindergarten through 3rd grade teachers, paraprofessionals, administrators, and literacy coaches to describe what was not working well in the Fundations® program. The responses resulted in a lack of resources and training needed to implement the reading intervention program successfully. Twenty-five percent of the survey respondents stated the lack of student kits hindered them from using Fundations® to its fullest extent, and 45% of the survey respondents felt the training was an overview of the program and it did not address concerns that they had in the classroom from differentiating to time management.

The most significant concern came mid-year when X Elementary School added 75 students with disabilities and varying exceptionalities in all grade levels. At a time when the leadership team felt the culture, climate, and conditions were at its prime for seeing positive changes, a major change disrupted the conditions of classroom settings, including classroom and teacher moves and the dynamics of students working together. The sense of urgency to prepare students for the SSA was now overshadowed by an adjustment to period. All students were affected by the growing class size and the dynamics of new personalities joining an established classroom setting. Teachers and paraprofessionals were tasked with preparing all students and meeting their academic needs. Since the students were new to the school, it was not clear if they had experience with Fundations® or other district intervention programs. Also, an unknown factor was if

the new teachers had received professional development in regard to reading strategies or Fundations®. The leadership team turned their focus back to resetting the climate and culture. Literacy coaches had to turn their attention to the new teachers and offered coaching and modeling in the classroom.

Competencies

A main component to school transformation "is building the repertoire of skills and knowledge that influences student learning" (Wagner et al., 2006, p. 99). For the purpose of this evaluation, I had to determine if the Wilson Language Fundations® program or reading strategies in professional development positively or negatively impacted student achievement levels. An area of focus in competencies was discovering the staff's strengths and weaknesses so as to build their capacity in areas wherein they will feel successful. The staff at X Elementary School had endured significant changes at their school. But no matter the obstacles, the focus remained on increasing student achievement levels in reading.

A strength the staff exhibited was resiliency by showcasing their ability to adapt to changes. The staff was tasked with learning a new reading intervention program and welcoming a new leadership group mid-year. Based on the data, 70% of the survey respondents requested professional development, but it was clear from their interview responses that they needed training that fit their needs. Another area of strength was their willingness to learn from outside consultants. Most people would thrive in the comfort of being taught by someone they know, but this group of educators felt strongly about the training and resources received from consultants based on their interview responses. At

times, they were compliant about changes and the professional development that they received.

The educators at X Elementary School exhibited weaknesses partly due to the fear of constant change and inconsistency between leadership styles. An area of concern was teachers' inability to identify students' issues in reading promptly and intervene with reteaching a skill or providing a strategy. Another area of weakness was the lack of an onboarding program to ensure new educators and new to the school educators were prepared to provide curriculum and meet their students' needs. In addition, the current coaching model did not cater to teachers' needs, as discovered in the interview study. Some staff had requested modeling and support in the classroom, and assistance in areas such as differentiation, small groups, and timing. If given the proper supports, this may have led to an increase in student achievement.

Interpretation

The educators at X Elementary School within Alpha Public Schools provided information about what is working well with an intervention reading program and what needs to be improved upon in professional development to grow educators' capacity in reading strategies. Their responses to the survey questions, interview responses, and data collection results were used for the program evaluation of the effectiveness of the Wilson Language Fundations® program and reading strategies professional development. The results also uncovered the challenges with the Fundations® reading intervention program and the need for professional development in more specific areas within the classroom setting. Although the global pandemic postponed the State Standards Assessment English Language Arts test and the adoption of new English Language Arts halted the use of Tier

2 intervention program, Wilson Language Fundations® program, I was able to analyze the surveys, interviews, and data from teachers, paraprofessionals, literacy coaches, and administrators to devise an implementation plan for future rollouts of curriculum and interventions that will support students' learning in increasing foundational reading skills and building teachers' capacity in reading strategies.

Survey respondents and interviewees were asked to identify areas of the Wilson Language Fundations® program that was working well. The respondents indicated that the teachers found ease in delivering the scripted program including results of producing confident readers. The educators shared students enjoyed the short lessons, improved basic reading skills (phonics, phonemic awareness, and sight words), and mastering the formation of letters and creating sentences. Students with Tier 2 interventions were fully engaged with the Wilson Language Fundations® program. The next step was to discover if the implementation of the research-based program was increasing student achievement levels in reading.

Aware that people, not programs, contribute to making a difference in students reading, I sought information to help improve educators' professional development in reading strategies that would increase student achievement. Students who were provided and received interventions with corrective strategies in a timely manner were more apt to read on grade level. The survey results reflect that teachers wanted to learn and grow professionally to help their students succeed. Experienced teachers and paraprofessionals requested professional development beyond an overview of programs. They sought more customized training to relate to their classroom experiences such as providing differentiation, modeling of lessons, and demonstrating new reading research. New

teachers requested training in areas that would help them be successful educators. With this information, I can provide Alpha Public Schools a suggested plan for supporting teachers while implementing new programs.

There are areas of concern that came from the results of the program evaluation. Research questions asked the survey respondents and interviewees to share what was not working well with Fundations® and inquired about the quality of professional development received on the program and on reading strategies. I discovered from the data that experienced teachers were not aware of how to conduct certain Wilson Language Fundations® lessons and they did not feel comfortable seeking support. Educators rated the professional development provided by the Alpha Public Schools' professional development team and X Elementary Schools' leadership team as ineffective. When probed to gain further insight through the survey's short answers and interviews, respondents preferred outside consultants to deliver the most effective training. In addition, they felt that the Wilson Language Fundations® program was not working well due to the lack of student materials, but a well trained teacher in foundational reading skills would overcome a materialistic obstacles by providing evidenced based practices in teaching phonics, letter-sound relationships, cuing strategies, and decoding.

The results of the study indicated a need for support in implementing reading programs, such as Wilson Language Fundations®, and meaningful professional development in reading strategies. Providing additional support and professional development for educators in focused areas of reading will lead to increased student achievement. Blythe Wood, an instructional coach in the special education department

and the vice president of the International Dyslexia Association states, "the knowledge base of the teacher, and being able to identify the needs of the student, are more important than a boxed program (Schwartz, 2019, para. 60). Fads and programs disappear but a good teacher's ability to teach a child to read will give them a lifetime of literacy.

Judgments

The study focused on the importance of creating proficient readers by the 3rd grade and evaluating the integrity of a boxed reading intervention program and the effectiveness of the professional development teachers received to create proficient readers. I focused on research questions that would assist in determining the next steps of the program's implementation and determining if Alpha Public Schools should place more effort on program training, or if it should change course and place more effort in growing teachers in professional development in reading strategies. The primary research questions for the program evaluation of the effectiveness of Fundations® and reading strategies professional development used in grades Kindergarten through 2nd grade aimed to answer: Will the Wilson Language Fundations® program coupled with building the capacity of a teacher in foundational reading skills produce proficient readers?

To discover more about the implementation of the program, I asked three main primary questions: What is working well in the Fundations® program? The survey respondents and interviewees shared one area that is working well in the program is repetition and structure that continues at each level. This indicated an opportunity for less lesson plan development so teachers can focus on prescribing strategies to students with the greater reading needs. Another finding that was working well with the program is teachers recognizing a significant improvement in letter formation and students applying

the skills learned in reading and writing. This opens an opportunity to provide small groups with differentiation by grouping students who are more advanced or needing additional reading support. These findings open a discussion point for the leadership team and the district to provide an advanced professional development in the program.

The next question asked teachers, paraprofessionals, literacy coaches, and administrators to share what is not working well with Fundations®? An area that was not working well is the lack of materials purchased for students. In addition, survey respondents and interviewees shared the lack of training received for new teachers that started mid-year and the program is boring for some students. These findings mean there is a need to build teachers' capacities by focusing on opportunities to provide professional development focused on individual teacher's needs. Administrators can ensure that there is an onboarding process for all new teachers that would include the overview and introduction of curriculum and programs. If literacy coaches are involved in the collaborative planning process, they will be aware of grade level needs and teacher's needs to cater to specific areas.

Since the survey respondents and interviewees were asked what is not working well, I inquired further by asking what are the greatest challenges in the program and how would you improve it? The respondents did not completely answer the question as they only listed their concerns. They shared there was not enough time to teach the lessons, no student kits purchased, and not feeling comfortable teaching certain lessons. One solution came after the first year of implementation. This occurred when X Elementary School was deemed a D school and had to add an extra hour of reading intervention to the school's bell schedule. Although the intervention time was increased, the three areas of

concern could be improved upon by supporting teachers in these specific areas through coaching, modeling lessons, and planning.

The secondary research questions related to the program evaluation of the effectiveness of Fundations® and reading strategies professional development at X Elementary School in the Alpha Public Schools system were to measure the capacity of the educators' knowledge in reading strategies and discover if administrators inspect what they expect by following through on the implementation of programs. Administrators may set goals and expectations, but there is no action unless the administrators have checks and balances in place to ensure tasks are being met. One way to do this is to create a culture of growth mindset so the staff wants to learn instead of being forced.

The secondary question focuses on the administrator's perspective regarding ensuring the Fundations® program operates with fidelity. The intent of this question was to collect data from the Fundations® Implementation Checklist (Appendix E) and discuss the findings in an interview with administrators. Due to a change in staff, the forms were not completed by the leadership team, and therefore, there are no checks and balance to ensure the program was being taught with fidelity. The data collected to verify whether the program helped to increase student achievement was 2018 Spring SSA ELA and 2019 SSA ELA results.

The next secondary question seeks to discover the perspective of the educators regarding the quality of professional development received in reading strategies as provided by the school literacy coach, district, and outside consultant. The respondents rated the training received by outside consultants as strongly effective, administrators

were rated effective, and the district office and literacy coaches was rated ineffective. Educators need to feel comfortable about asking for support but also trusting the information that is provided by confident and well-trained personnel. The survey results were compared to interview responses to discover the reason for low ratings with certain personnel. The interviewee shared a concern about constant change and had not felt comfortable seeking support from people that would not be available in a few months or a year. Therefore, administrators, literacy coaches, and leadership team members need to build relationships and connections with teachers as part of an effort to create a culture of positivity and growth. A suggestion is to create a school climate wherein teachers learn because they want to, not because they need to. Another suggestion is to seek expertise within the school by asking teachers to train teachers. They have a connection with each other, but they also can gain valuable information from vertical and horizontal grade level collaborative planning sessions.

The final secondary question seeks to discover the administrators' perspective regarding the quality of professional development received in reading strategies as provided by the school literacy coach, district, and outside consultant. The administrators' survey results are included in the second secondary question. Unfortunately, due to a change in staff, administrator interviews were not conducted and perspectives regarding professional development could not be collected.

The overall results gathered from twenty participants of X Elementary School, the 2018 Spring SSA ELA scores, and 2019 Spring SSA ELA scores was positive. There was an increase in growth for 3rd grade reading proficiency which raised the school from a D to C. Teachers, paraprofessionals, and literacy coaches shared valuable information to

improve the implementation of future reading programs and plan for future professional

development needs. Although more current data could not be collected due to the global

pandemic postponing SSA tests and some data could not be collected due to the change

in staff, the teachers and paraprofessionals shared classroom data in the interview process

that helped me make suggestions. I appreciated their honesty, feedback, and openness to

share challenges they had faced in implementing the reading intervention program and

their passion for wanting to grow professionally. The results of my findings will benefit

Alpha Public Schools in future implementations of programs.

Recommendations

An organizational change based on the program evaluation of the effectiveness of

Fundations® and reading strategies professional development is to provide a deeper level

of professional development in Fundations® and reading strategies, which will include

building teacher capacity through refresher courses, in classroom support and modeling,

and new teacher training. Blythe Wood, an instructional coach in the special education

department and the vice president of the International Dyslexia Association, states, "the

knowledge base of the teacher, and being able to identify the needs of the student, are

more important than a boxed program" (Schwartz, 2019, para. 60). Since Alpha Public

Schools chose to remove the Wilson Language Fundations® program from the approved

resources for Tier 2 interventions, they should consider the recommendations for creating

a community of professional learning.

Another suggested organizational change is to recommend a personalized

professional development growth plan for all teachers. Each year, new set of students in a

new class presents an opportunity for educators to grow. Since teachers receive new

students each year and use the data from assessment periods to tell a story about the student's learning, then they should be afforded time to analyze the data to create differentiated lessons. This can be achieved with ongoing professional development in reading strategies and differentiation. Teachers and paraprofessionals who are providing reading interventions need to be able to intervene and address students' reading needs promptly with a corrective reading strategy provided with confidence. They require a professional development that is multi-modal by offering research-based information, in classroom support, lesson or strategy modeling, and reflection to prepare for the next course of action.

With the information from this study, implementation of any program needs to be methodical with plans to include training, follow up and reflection, progress monitoring, revisit lessons driven by data, and most importantly, piloted in small groups. I suggest an organizational change in the way programs are implemented and delivered within the district. A process improvement plan such as the Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) cycle created by William Demming is recommended for continuous evaluation of programs and processes (Johnson, 2002, p. 120). Using the PDCA cycle ensures every phase of improvements or implementation is planned so to ensure stakeholders will see results. The PDCA cycle is continuous with no end as process improvement plan is a program that is evaluated for its consistency in benefits to the stakeholders.

I first learned about a process improvement plan, PDCA, as a project manager for an information technology company. When I was introducing a new platform or software, I followed PDCA with a small pilot group (one building) and then implemented to second piloted group (five buildings) ensuring all the issues in the war room were resolved

before moving onto the next phase in the cycle and before implementing software

deployments corporate wide. Once all issues were resolved, I implemented full scale

software and hardware deployments with trust and confidence because the PDCA had

several checkpoints for fidelity. A PDCA has four phases: plan encompasses deciding

what needs to be changed, setting a vision, understanding how it will affect stakeholders,

finding key contacts to give insight and voice for change, detailed plan for

implementation, identify how it will be implemented; do encompasses putting the plan

into action, provide training; check encompasses a checks and balances, evaluate the

program; and act encompasses learn from the program and solicit feedback (Johnson,

2002, p. 120).
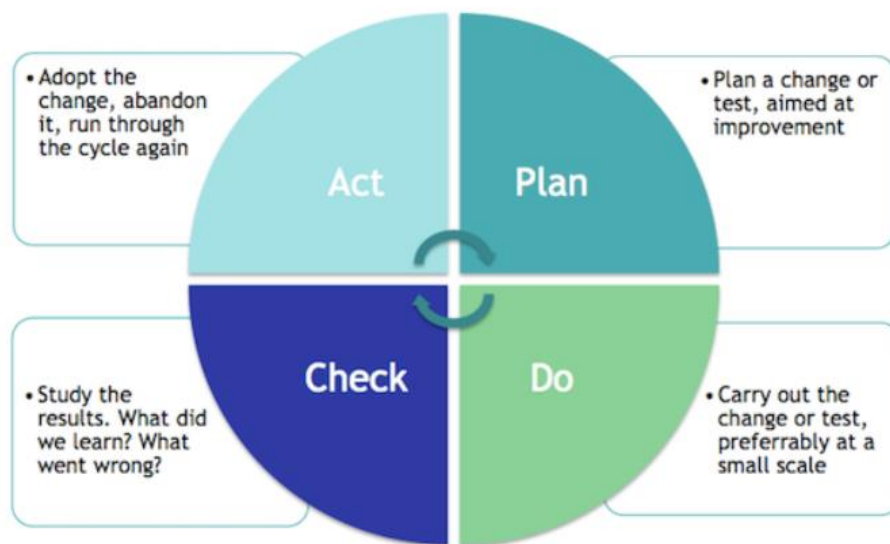
Figure 16. Plan-Do-Check-Act Source: ICT Institute, 2017 *Information security and PDCA (plan-do-check-act)*. Retrieved from https://ictinstitute.nl/pdca-plan-do-check-act/

Each phase of the cycle must be completed, and areas of concern addressed before

moving on to the next phase. I suggest Alpha Public Schools' district leadership team

members consider adopting a similar approach to implementing changes including

programs. If PDCA was considered, the Wilson Fundations® program may still be in use

today as the cycle would have given the opportunity to test programs compatibility (i.e.,

Fundations® and the new ELA curriculum).

Conclusion

"The great majority of students who fail to master reading by 3rd grade either

drop out or finish high school with dismal lifetime earning potentials" (Pimentel, 2018, p.

26). As an assistant principal and a secondary reading teacher, I feel strongly about

ensuring educators receive proper training, needed support, and necessary materials to

provide intervention reading programs and appropriate reading strategies. The suggested

organizational changes build the capacity of our teachers and their confidence in

prescribing reading strategies and reading interventions, especially when programs and

curriculum are continually changing. Our students are our future citizens who require

basic literacy needs to function in society. Literate students become productive citizens.

They can make sound decisions, contribute to society, work in the community, and, most

importantly, read, write, and speak about matters that are important to them.

CHAPTER FIVE

To-Be Framework

Executing a plan takes advanced preparation with a methodical mindset. In this chapter, I will suggest an ideal method for organizational changes with a focus on future implementations of intervention programs and providing effective professional development in reading strategies. The 4 C's To-Be Chart (Appendix G) is a visual representation of the ideal environment and system (Wagner et al. 2006, p. 119). I will revisit the four areas: context, culture, conditions, and competencies with more specific plans for successful organizational changes.

A sense of urgency is a crucial component in establishing a change model. Alpha Public Schools' (pseudonym) decline in reading proficiency was the main factor for urgently creating a fix to a district wide problem in its elementary schools. In Spring 2018, 13 elementary schools in the district remained in the bottom 300 list of low performing schools with 54% of the third grade students not reading proficiently and on grade level. Armed with this information, the district leadership team members sought the use of a research-based program to help teachers while grooming them in the pedagogy of reading strategies. When the Wilson Language Fundations® program was introduced to X Elementary School (pseudonym), there was a sense of urgency to implement the program as quickly as possible due to the late arrival of materials and midyear implementation. Wagner et al. emphasize that leaders set the tone for urgency, yet must not overestimate their ability to force change and to move people from their comfort zones (Wagner et al., 2006, p. 207). The idea that one program would resolve the reading decline was not an overall solution. Still, it was the beginning of an organizational change

that did not see fruition due to administrative changes within the school. The district

leadership team members planned for the professional development of the Wilson

Language Fundations® program through a train the trainer model but underestimated the

level of expertise literacy coaches and administrators possessed. Fifteen percent of the

respondents felt the Fundations® training provided was ineffective. The results of the

survey indicate educators had little trust in the district office, providing training with 50%

rating their experience as ineffective. Through the interview process, I discovered a need

for more in-depth and personalized coaching to handle real-time situations in the

classroom and training that is targeted to the experienced reading teacher. Literacy

coaches and administrators were not prepared to handle real-time and in-class situations.

They carried out directives from the district to implement an intervention program and a

new English Language Arts curriculum simultaneously.

Organizational changes suggested cannot occur without establishing trust with all

stakeholders. Establishing trust and building relationships is imperative to making

progress in organizational changes. Human motivation starts with an established

relationship of trust, as described by Fullan (2011). People are driven to help others or do

for them when there is a relationship of trust established. Wagner et al. (2006) explained,

"these trust-based relationships are essential if schools and districts are to fundamentally

disrupt the extreme isolation of educators and help build a profession of teaching based

on standards of practice" (p. 157). Through the interviews, educators at X Elementary

School (pseudonym)s shared their lack of participation in collaborative planning sessions,

unwillingness to attend voluntary professional development or coaching sessions and

interact with the literacy coaches. Also, the survey and interview data indicate educators

did not use new skills or strategies to its fullest extent upon returning to the classroom.

Forty-five percent of the respondents tried a newly learned reading strategy, and the

interview supports that they are not comfortable using the strategy in the classroom until

they have received more direction and guidance.

To build an environment of trust and respect, another critical component to

successful change is connecting educators to a purpose. The silo effect of teaching greatly

impacted X Elementary School (pseudonym) as the school grade and reading proficiency

scores declined. The new leadership team had to set a collective purpose to attain goals

and support educators to reach their individual goals. The educators of X Elementary

School (pseudonym) had little faith in the professional development received, and less

confidence in the change of administration. Every three years or less, the educators had a

new leadership team, new processes, and new ideas to implement. They did not reap the

benefits of using strategies learned to increase student achievement or focus on ways to

improve processes due to constant leadership changes and a limited vision. An area that

educators have yet to realize is their potential personal growth and commitment starts

with recognizing vulnerabilities and moving beyond what cannot be changed. To reap

successful change, the latest leadership team must reiterate building the capacity of

teachers through personal growth in education and attain a collective agreement to raise

students to be literate and community involved citizens. These are areas that can

withstand changes in the leadership team, yet a legacy worth leaving.

Whether an organizational change is a reading intervention program or a school

wide professional development plan, I propose the use of Fullan's change guidance

(2011) to implement effective and lasting changes that will remain in effect regardless of

the leadership team. The Six Secrets of Change model is a process for leading innovative change in education while leaving a legacy. The Six Secrets are interdependent upon each other and compose an extensive system similar to the balancing act found in dynamic teams wherein one balances the other creating a "synergistic" organization (Fullan, 2011, p. 10). The six secrets are to: love your employees, connect peers with a purpose, capacity building prevails, learning is the work, transparency rules, and systems learn.

Envisioning the Success To-Be

The 4 C's Model To-Be (Appendix G) envisioned for the ideal future of X Elementary School (pseudonym) and Alpha Public Schools (pseudonym) is centered around three themes: in-depth and personalized coaching, building trust and capacity amongst stakeholders, and implementation of programs using a research-based change model process. The suggested ideas for change will lead to the camaraderie of stakeholders willing to improve student achievement while working towards a shared vision and goal. As a result of creating solid reading foundational skills for all students entering the 3rd grade, the school grade, and the reading proficiency rate increase. In turn, we build confident educators in reading pedagogy regardless of the reading intervention program used.

The number of proficient 3rd grade students in the state (removed for confidentiality) taking the State Standards Assessment in English Language Arts has consistently increased by one point each year between SY2016-2017 with 56% proficient, SY2017-2018 with 57% proficient, and SY2018-2019 with 58% proficient readers. There are no current SY2019-2020 scores due to the global pandemic, Covid19, canceling 3rd grade statewide assessments. Unfortunately, Alpha Public Schools'

(pseudonym) 3rd grade students, compared to all the 3rd grade students in the state, experienced a decline in proficiency scores for three years. The number of proficient 3rd grade students trended in decline reporting SY2016-2017 with 50% proficient, SY2017-2018 with 46% proficient, and SY2018-2019 with 44% proficient. X Elementary School's (pseudonym) 3rd grade students have also declined between SY2016-2017 with only producing a 48% proficiency rate and losing 12 points in the following SY2017-2018.

After the release of state test scores in Spring 2017, the sense of urgency to purchase a reading curriculum and intervention program was decided by the elementary education team members at Alpha Public Schools. In January 2018, X Elementary School teachers began the midyear implementation of the Wilson Language Fundations® program with an overview of training and delivery of materials to all classes in grades Kindergarten through 2nd grade. In addition, X Elementary School welcomed a brand new leadership team in the middle of the year. The leadership team members had a cumbersome task to conquer, including building the capacity of teachers and implementing new curriculum and intervention programs, all while nurturing a relationship and connection to teachers who have had a new leadership team every year for the last three years. In SY2018-2019, X Elementary School's 3rd grade students increased their reading proficiency rate by 5 points from 36% to 41%. The positive proficiency growth started the momentum needed for the leadership team to make changes in the right direction.

Table 7.

Reading Proficiency Rate Percentages over a Three Year Period by School

	SY2016-2017	SY2017-2018	SY2018-2019
X Elementary School (pseudonym)	48	36	41
Alpha Public Schools (pseudonym)	50	46	44
State Standards Assessment	58	57	58

Source: State Standards Assessment in English Language Arts results by school

Future Context

The changes are suggestions from the context of the circumstances at X

Elementary School and Alpha Public Schools. The first context to consider in the

proposed organizational changes is the importance of early intervention and utilizing

corrective reading strategies. In most schools, there is the emphasis placed on reading

interventions and placement of more qualified educators to teach students in tested years,

i.e., 3rd grade, 5th, grade, 8th grade, and 10th grade. By creating a change to provide

quality reading strategies and intervention training to all educators, regardless of the

grade level taught, will produce quality teachers and instruction. "Leading indicators that

signal early progress toward academic achievement allow education leaders, especially at

the district central office level, to make decisions about supporting student learning that is

less reactive and more strategic" (Musen, 2010, p. 1). Students receiving quality

instruction will result in more students reading proficiently at their respective grade levels

and finding success in their educational career to fulfill high school graduation.

An additional context to consider in the suggested organizational change is in line

with the state's educational goal of "90% literacy rate for third grade level by 2024"

(Citation withheld to preserve confidentiality). As outlined in the To-Be Chart (Appendix

G), educators receive professional development plans based on their student data from diagnostic results, progress monitoring, formal observations, and experience. The student data and educators' evaluations, all together, offer valuable information towards continuing education. The proposed change is to allow educators to create a personalized professional development plan that supports their growth professionally and caters to their specific areas of needs while meeting with the administrative leaders to support their growth. The administrative leaders and educator can chart a course for success by ensuring school goals are met while building teacher capacity. The current practice provided by the district professional development team is a catalog of professional development courses offered throughout the year wherein the educator can choose without being given direction or seeing benefits from attending. Also, teachers receive a stipend for attending courses and they fill the seats of classes that they may not gain value or knowledge by attending. By providing a customized plan, educators are invested in their growth professionally. A personal professional development plan gives educators a purpose for learning and growing towards achieving a shared goal.

The third context to consider in the organizational change is the community-based school, X Elementary School, with students receiving 100% free or reduced lunch. The students who are economically disadvantaged entering school with little to no reading experience are often labeled and misunderstood. "Children with few experiences with books, stories, and print are described with phrases such as at-risk, unready, limited ability, developmentally delayed, immature, slow, and other terms that confuse limited literacy experience with intellectual limitations (McGill-Franzen, 1992). Therefore, X Elementary School administrative team and staff should prepare for the recovery of

young readers in the community by providing literacy opportunities that engage parents,

guardians, and potential students with tools, books, and work at home plans such as take

home reading kits or offering planned parent engagement nights to work on select

reading skills.

Future Culture

To create the ideal culture for the suggested organizational change is to produce

an environment of positive change and attitude. The leadership team at X Elementary

School has changed three years consecutively. Educators had to adjust to new leadership

styles and changes to the new curriculum and reading programs. In the interview process,

an educator shared they were "unwilling to make a change that would be changed again

when the new leadership team arrived." Therefore, a shift in how educators view change

is needed, and it begins with cultivating hope within the school. The leadership team

needs to create a language of hope and belief with persuasive words. The culture of

growth mindset empowers stakeholders: teachers, leadership, students, and the

community to commit to the idea that everyone can learn. Research indicates a strong

correlation between growth mindset, increased student engagement, and improved

student achievement (Brock and Hundley, 2016, p. 29). When X Elementary School

teachers encounter a setback beyond their control, such as changes to the leadership team,

they will realize they possess the skillset and talents to overcome challenges any

incoming leadership team may request. More importantly, a growth mindset leads to a

dynamic shift in the classroom. The way educators think impacts student learning.

Another cultural shift in the suggested organizational change is creating a culture

of collaboration to improve the quality of student instruction. While there was a district-

wide movement to provide a reading intervention program, in my research, I discovered that there is not one program or reading strategy alone to teach literacy. As the school wide culture is to change a mindset, then the educators will need the time to build knowledge, have fierce conversations about processes, data, and systems, and interact with each other. Jon Hattie's research studied "the relation between collective efficacy and student outcomes and the average correlation 0.60, which translates to an effect size of 1.23—making it among the most powerful influences that we know on student achievement" (Sharratt and Planche, 2016, p. 21). When collaborating with educators, we are in the mode of hypothesizing. Literacy coaches and the leadership team members have a role to teach and coach the educators in the building so they can, in turn, teach and coach the students. Collaborative planning is meaningful and powerful while giving educators a chance to synergize collective knowledge that will increase the educators' capacity and increase student achievement.

Future Conditions

The ideal conditions for the proposed changes at X Elementary School are to create an atmosphere and environment of optimal learning. Although the Wilson Language Fundations® program is no longer in use at the school and district, investing changes in the people, not the program, is the focus for increased student achievement. At X Elementary School, a condition that cannot change is a small community based school with over 400 students receiving Title 1 funding and 100% of the students receiving free or reduced lunch. It is an ideal location for piloting organizational changes in professional development in reading strategies, new teacher training, and onboarding training, and collaborative planning.

Another ideal condition of X Elementary School is the school size. The school consists of approximately 35 teachers, ten paraprofessionals, and two literacy coaches, which is perfect for piloting programs, curriculum, and professional development. As a Title 1 school with a community living just below the poverty line, the school needs are the greatest in personnel support, resources, and materials. Based on interviews, Alpha Public Schools implements new programs district wide instead of piloting programs on a small scale. Another issue that arose from respondents' survey and interview results was the lack of materials, and they felt it hindered providing the Wilson Language Fundations® program to its fullest extent. The district leaders will receive valuable information on how to lead district wide implementations if they test programs on a small scale first. Collecting data from a small school implementation of any curriculum or program provides the district personnel a chance to enhance and make necessary changes before full-scale implementation. More importantly, testing pilot sites for program implementation saves the district money as the personnel attempt to discover what materials are genuinely needed to implement the program to its fullest extent. Also, based on respondents' survey and interview results, the relationship of trust was not established between the district personnel and the school employees. There is a false sense that this school is "neglected and it is a leader's training ground" due to the high turnover in leadership teams. The district leadership team members have a chance to turnaround a school by utilizing a condition of a small community based school while building the relationship and instilling hope.

The third condition of X Elementary School is the extra hour mandated by the state for schools performing in the bottom 300. The commissioner of education

announced that due to Covid19, there are no state test scores to analyze and make changes in bell schedules. Therefore, schools with an extra hour of interventions will continue to receive the extra hour for SY2020-2021. Due to Covid19 and the commissioner's news, this will be third-year X Elementary School remains with an extended bell schedule. An extra hour will allow teachers, literacy coaches, and the leadership team to provide extensive lesson planning, collaborating, and training to prepare students who encountered a reading slide during the last six months away from a traditional school setting. The leadership team members should also consider offering professional development and collaborative planning to reduce the slide, reading intervention strategies, and growth mindset. In an unprecedented time brought upon by a global pandemic, the upcoming year will be mentally stressful for our educators who will need the time, space, and resources to decompress, discuss, and rationalize their emotions too. Therefore, the extra hour added to the bell schedule needs to be useful and purposeful.

Future Competencies

The ideal competencies required to implement the Wilson Language Fundations® program will require the understanding of foundational reading skills by all educators. While educators receive college course work in reading as part of their degree program, it may be outdated and, at times, taught to its bare minimum. The researchers from the National Council of Teacher Quality discovered in a study "only 11 out of 72 institutions (15%) were found to teach all the components of the science of reading (Walsh, Glasser, & Wilcox, 2006, p. 22). The basic foundational reading skills contain five areas of effective reading instruction that are necessary for students to grasp at an early age. These

components are phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension.

An ideal competency and expectation are for all educators to possess the science and

background of reading theory to apply the knowledge in creating lessons that will

increase students' ability to read.

Another ideal competency is building the capacity of literacy coaches and

administrators so that they can support the staff that they serve. Sailros and Price (2010)

indicate literacy coaching has an impact on teacher efficacy (p. 307). Literacy coaches

provide classroom demonstrations and modeling lessons, and often they lead

collaborative planning within the school; but the survey results indicate literacy coaches

lack reading endorsement or reading certification. If they lack the background of

knowledge in reading, then they lose credibility with the staff in which they coach. While

there is an organizational change to build teacher capacity, there also needs to be a focus

on ensuring the leadership team, including literacy coaches, possess cognitive reading

strategies to support the teacher in the classroom. Support comes in various formats

through demonstrations and modeling, and knowledge and confidence to engage in

reflective discourse.

Alpha Public Schools' district personnel created a stair-step intervention to sort

students into these areas of need based on diagnostic scores. Then prescribed reading

intervention programs to each of these areas. While this is an excellent start to an

intervention program, the educators at X Elementary School lack the ability, training, and

confidence to move students up the steps in a timely manner. Based on the survey and

interview results, educators have not received enough training in the Wilson Language

Fundations® program and reading strategies. Moreover, they are requesting support in

the form of classroom modeling and assistance in specific lessons. Unfortunately, Alpha

Public School district decided to remove Wilson Language Fundations® from the

approved reading intervention program list due to implementing a new English Language

Arts curriculum. Regardless of the curriculum or program, educators still feel the quality

of training and support received at the school level needs addressing.

Conclusion

If the organizational changes I propose are considered with the future ideas of the

4 C's To Be Chart of Context, Culture, Conditions, and Competencies coupled with the

research I have provided, then the desired outcome towards literacy proficiency will

increase student achievement. "Learning to read and write opens doors to progress and

prosperity across a lifetime" (National Institute for Literacy, 2009). I aim to bring

awareness to Alpha Public Schools' district personnel and X Elementary School's

leadership team of the importance of recognizing early interventions, personalizing

professional growth plans, building the capacity of educators through growth mindset and

cultural awareness, and synthesizing knowledge will lead to a common vision of literate

and productive citizens in our community based schools.

CHAPTER SIX

Strategies and Actions

My vision is to provide Alpha Public Schools a plan for improving students'

reading proficiency scores by suggesting strategies and actions (Appendix H) that build

the capacity of the educator in four areas of which I discovered in the concepts of the As-

Is (Appendix F) and the To-Be (Appendix G) charts. The bridge between the two charts

led me to four themes: understanding early intervention and early warning signs,

emphasizing the importance of community based involvement, providing a culturally

responsive classroom, and developing a personal growth plan for all educators. As I

describe the strategies and actions for my vision, I will use research and best practices in

organizational theory, professional development, leadership strategies, and

communication strategies as it fits into Michael Fullan's The Six Secrets of Change.

Strategies

Strategy: Recognize early intervention and early warning signs by reviewing

and analyzing progress monitoring in a timely manner. Third grade is a pivotal point

in a child's educational career. As the student exits 2nd grade, the student is moving out of

the learning to read phase. In this phase, they should have mastered the five components

of reading: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension.

Students entering the 3rd grade are mastering the reading to learn phase. In this phase,

they are exploring in-depth comprehension by using critical thinking skills to inquire

more about the topic they are reading. The first time a student encounters a state

proficiency test is in the 3rd grade with an assessment used to measure the students'

reading proficiency levels in English Language Arts and Math. The State Standard

Assessment (SSA) English Language Arts (ELA) focuses on vocabulary, in-depth comprehension, and reading skills. Therefore, students taking the SSA must have mastered all reading components.

Musen, author of a research study wrote, "third grade reading skills are highly predictive of future academics, and high school graduation can be reasonably predicted by knowing third grade reading scores" (Musen, 2010, p. 1). As a former high school reading teacher, I am familiar with struggling readers who have traveled in the same cohort from elementary school through high school without an educator properly intervening and focusing on the students' issues in reading. By the time these students are juniors or seniors in high school, they have lost hope in becoming successful in school and reading. If reading scores predict high school graduation rates, then an aggressive plan to change the mindset of educators at the district level towards preparing educators in providing basic foundational reading skills upon exiting the 2nd grade is imperative. Also, students need the appropriate reading strategy that addresses the deficiency in reading skills. Only skilled and adequately trained educators can provide such interventions.

To implement a change for providing early intervention and early warning signs is to connect peers with a purpose by hosting meaningful data chats; this is Fullan's second secret of The Six Secrets of Change (Fullan, 2011). Well organized data chats allow for educators to review data where students need improvement in specific state standards broken down by grade level. Once educators realize cohorts of students have traveled with each other grade level after grade level without seeing a difference in their reading ability, they will recognize that it is a shared commitment by all. The shared goal is to

commit to creating proficient readers at every grade level by using the data collected. The leadership team should support the efforts to build satisfying relationships between educators, so they realize their importance and value in working together to meet a common goal of proficient readers by the third grade.

An action step for the district leadership team members is to provide adequate training to all educators regardless of their college degree, certifications, or endorsements. Walsh et al. identified "93 courses in a sample of 223 teach the science of reading as a whole language program" that devotes lecture discussion to phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension (2006, p. 26). I propose Alpha Public Schools use the study from NCTQ to select a college that provides a course to meet the qualifications of high-quality reading instruction and ensure every educator receives this information. In addition, I propose this course to be available to all new educators joining the district as part of the onboarding professional development.

Once educators have received this training, they need the opportunity to prepare for the adjustment in their lessons with peer interaction. This removes the silo effect and gives educators a chance to connect with their peers to work towards a common goal. The leadership team's responsibility is to make time, provide $_{space}$, and guide meaningful discussions that lead to plans with specific reading skills and strategies that meet their students' needs. Literacy coaches' expertise in modeling a specific strategy will be useful and ensures time in each classroom to offer hands-on support will create an environment of camaraderie. More importantly, the leadership team needs to ensure that there is adequate feedback provided to educators with an opportunity to regroup and share their results.

Strategy: Involve the community. A condition that cannot be changed is the demographics in which X Elementary School serves. The diversity of the school provides free or reduced lunch to 100% of the student population. While the demographics and socioeconomic status has remained constant over the years, the leadership team members at X Elementary School has changed. Due to the quick turnaround of leadership team members, educators have not had the time to build a relationship and connect to the leaderships' philosophies of education. Fullan's first secret "love your employees" interrelates with the Hawthorne Effect that personnel are social beings and thrive in workplaces, where they have a sense of belonging (Chiesa and Hobbs, 2008). The one constant condition that has not changed is the community based school and its surroundings. A strategy that would be beneficial is focusing on building relationships between educators and community members. Any new leadership team members coming in wants to cultivate a relationship with the constant condition (the community), and therefore they are leaving a legacy of partnerships. Partnering with local businesses and churches is one way to reach the community in a shared literacy campaign to ensure every child can read. The educators, parents, community leaders, and local businesses focus on a common goal to improve student learning while building stronger family support.

In 2018-2019, the leadership team members chose to open the computer lab once a month to all Alpha Public School students who lived in the area by offering support to families who did not have internet or computers at home. They addressed the technology need by providing a service that usually a public library would offer, but the nearest public library is approximately 10 miles from the school. Being the central unit of the

town (name withheld for anonymity), the leadership team members offered an opportunity for all students to access online reading programs or use the computers as they needed. These types of events, coupled with dedicated educators, promote literacy at an early age.

An action step is to continue to build partnerships between educators and the community. Since teacher turnover at X Elementary School is minimal, families have already built a relationship with the educators, which needs to be refined by providing opportunities for them to engage in learning events. "Strong partnerships between school districts and out-of-school-time programs can ensure collaboration in reaching district goals and program development in areas of need" (Musen, 2010, p. 6). The leadership team member role is to foster the relationship between educators and the community. Also, the leadership team should communicate the shared vision of increasing student achievement in reading by providing opportunities to learn together. For example, a community based school is helping to generate support for a more literate citizenry by inviting the members of the community to attend voluntary prekindergarten programs, building lending libraries throughout the neighborhood, and offering weekly literacy events. The more exposure to print materials and reading skills at an early age builds capacity for literacy learning.

Strategy: Create a faculty that is culturally responsive and aware of its students' background. An X Elementary School teacher shared in an interview that over the last few years, the students are coming to school without the background of the basics "lacking identification of letters, colors, shapes" (Elementary school teacher X interview response). As educators are aware of the diversity shift within the community, they have

not made the connection that cultural awareness shapes how content is presented, how to communicate with parents and manage classroom expectations. The downward trend in reading proficiency rates and decline in student achievement may be due to educators teaching lessons lacking culturally responsive content and awareness. Weinstein, Curran, and Tomlinson-Clarke (2003) stated that "teachers must acquire cultural content knowledge by learning more about our students' family backgrounds, their previous educational experiences, cultural norms for building interpersonal relationships, and even knowing parent discipline protocol at home" (p. 270). They demonstrated that a strategy of adding a culturally responsive awareness course to the repertoire of continuous professional development education increases student achievement and helps students have a sense of belonging.

One of the most challenging conversations I have held is addressing an educator who does not identify with the student's culture and uses the stereotypical background to deliver a lesson. As a first-generation American and an educator, I can testify that educators do not do enough to learn about the makeup of their student population. Libraries lack books that have characters that look like their students, and educators often generalize an ethnic group. The fifth secret of The Six Secrets of Change is "transparency rules" (Fullan, 2011). Although discussing diversity and cultures may be difficult to hold, transparency rules. The moment educators are placed in difficult situations regarding race and ethnicity, they face a vulnerability that will propel them to grow. Leaders who are transparent about handling these tough situations will gain respect from their teachers and insight on how to introduce educators on how to handle tough discussions.

One action step is to provide a culturally responsive awareness course to support educators in changing the way they create lessons but also in choosing an appropriate text for their classrooms. To support the continued effort of building teachers' capacity, the leadership team can offer a book study to discuss and reflect upon at collaborative planning sessions. In addition, the leadership team and literacy coaches are an integral part of the collaboration process by supporting teachers to create lesson plans that include diversified text or resources.

A leader can contribute to cultural awareness by ensuring there is a budget to update the text and resources available to educators and the media center. By updating the media center with a diversified selection of books offered to students and teachers contributes to the support of moving the school towards cultural awareness. The media specialist may offer book tastings, which will give educators a chance to discover if a book is a good fit for their lesson or if a student finds interest in a story that they can relate to. Educators who are willing to understand a student's background will change the dynamics of the classroom with inclusivity for all.

The last action step is enlisting the district personnel to provide all communications, verbal and written, in the parents' preferred language. Providing communications in the parents' preferred language connects the community to the school. Communication fosters the relationship between parents and educators, which leads to parental involvement. "Parental involvement in school can improve children's academic performance and positive social outcomes, as well as enable teachers to identify learning problems at an early stage (Child Trends, 2015).

Strategy: Create personalized professional development growth and plans to build teacher capacity. A state's educational leader stated in an interview, their educational goal is "90% literacy rate for third grade level by 2024" (Citation withheld to preserve confidentiality). X Elementary School's 3rd-grade proficiency rate should aim for 85% proficiency on the Spring SSA ELA. While this may be 5 points lower than the state goal, an aggressive plan is needed to increase X Elementary School's student achievement by 11 points each year until SY2024. As outlined in the To-Be Chart (Appendix G), a strategy is to provide educators the opportunity to grow professionally by personalizing a professional development plan that caters to their specific areas of improvement. Results from formal observations and data from progress monitoring will determine the support the teacher needs to provide reading interventions to students.

The first secret in Fullan's The Six Secrets of Change describes "loving your employees" as the first step before moving on to any other. In this secret, the strategy reaches beyond the responsibility of caring for educators. The leader strategizes a plan to bring awareness of impactful strategies while making connections to impressive outcomes. Then the leader demonstrates how educators play an integral role in making this happen. Leaders need to show the link between educators making a personal commitment to grow and improving their skill set leads to increased student achievement.

An action step is to provide educators the time to analyze data with trained literacy coaches or district personnel. Since students complete an iReady progress monitoring every nine weeks, then teachers would be allowed time to analyze quarterly data with trained coaches or district personnel. This gives educators and literacy coaches an opportunity to plan upcoming corrective lessons, targeted reading strategies, and

regroup students if needed in a timely fashion. Timing is of the essence in ensuring students are receiving reading interventions as early as possible.

An additional action step is to place value in professional development by choosing topics that cater to the school wide goals, educators' needs, and the student diversification. In addition, leaders need to consider the credibility of the trainer to ensure their knowledge base fits the school wide goals. Based on survey and interview results, respondents indicated little faith in the trainers providing professional development. This creates an additional action step of ensuring all literacy coaches are reading endorsed or hold a reading certificate and possess the knowledge and experience in reading. A knowledgeable literacy coach participates and contributes to feedback and reflection with the educator. Sailors and Price's study suggest that classroom-based coaching support teachers in the implementation of cognitive reading strategies (Sailors and Price, 2010). They also support the educator in his/her growth process to be confident teachers in the classroom.

The third action step is to create a professional development program with an invested interest in the educator. New educators need a professional development program that covers the essentials of teaching: classroom management, pedagogy, data analysis, and specific programs. New to the school but not education teachers require an onboarding program. Onboarding professional development provides educators an introduction to the school and district culture and training in the curriculum and programs. Both professional development programs help retain educators and gives them a sense of belonging and commitment to a shared goal. The most significant program to establish is a personalized professional development pathway program that caters to each teachers' specific areas of

need based on student data and observations. Every year educators receive new students and new diagnostic results. Given this information, they can grow personally by evaluating the data compared to their skill set. Educators choose professional development courses that will support them in the classroom, such as providing differentiated instruction, creating reading activities in centers, or reviewing a strategy from the program that they are unsure of how to proceed. The professional development growth programs and plan builds the educators' capacity to provide reading instruction to all students.

Conclusion

When I began the program evaluation of Wilson Language Fundations® and reading strategies in professional development, my goal was to discover if programs or people would increase students' reading achievement scores. In my study, I found that the educators' ability to improve student reading achievement scores relies on their experience and knowledge in foundational reading skills, and a program is only a supplement to their ability to provide engaging lessons. Student achievement is bound to improve when educators focus on understanding early intervention and early warning signs, emphasizing the importance of community based involvement, providing a culturally responsive classroom, and developing a personal growth plan for all educators.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Implications and Policy Recommendations

To retain a teaching certification, the teacher must fulfill six semester hours of college credit in the subject area or 120 hours of inservice points in professional development to renew a certificate (Name Withheld, state department of education name withheld for anonymity, 2014). A teaching certificate is valid for five years, which breaks down to 24 hours of inservice professional development training a year to meet the renewal requirements. Generally, teachers acquire these hours by attending yearly mandated district or state trainings such as mental health, data discovery, child abuse, ethics, and safety protocols. In addition, school leaders create professional development to carry out themes and agendas for school improvement. In order for teachers to grow in their content area, they must seek professional development within the certification area. While we are tasking teachers to expand their knowledge, there needs to be an emphasis on the importance of literacy. A lack of literacy skills in any content area hinders student achievement in comprehending content vocabulary, critical thinking skills, textbook layouts, and word problems. These are just a few areas that teachers must provide instructional guidance in the content area while infusing literacy skills to engage learning. Therefore, I recommend a district policy reformation to include annual professional development training in current literacy and reading research skills.

With the new changes to the state legislature, the bill emphasizes literacy by requiring all teachers who provide a reading intervention to possess a reading endorsement, and by doing so, places students in front of qualified teachers. If education is in the industry of learning, then educators are students too. "Teachers need to

continually hone their knowledge, skills, and practices" (Darling-Hammond & Sykes, 1999, p. 13). In the state, teachers must fulfill a specific number of in-service credit hours to renew a teaching credential because subject areas undergo new standards or research-driven changes. More importantly, educators must adjust lessons and learn to accommodate the latest trend in learning styles as it pertains to the age of students. Professional development is a job requirement to retain a valid teaching certificate, and educators need to immerse themselves in content-specific training. But what is the correct professional development? Research identifies ongoing professional development for teachers as a critical component to increasing student achievement (Tournaki, Lyublinkskay, & Carolan, 2011, p. 299). A policy recommendation is to seek a minimum number of hours of job-embedded and focused professional development in reading utilizing a model of continuous professional development frameworks such as a coaching/mentoring model, collaborative planning sessions, or professional growth learning plans. These frameworks are vital in explaining the 'why' for a recommended policy change and 'how' to implement the policy change.

The phase of learning to read spans from pre-Kindergarten to third grade, and it is when children learn the basic foundational skills of reading. If mastered by the end of the third grade, children are more successful in the next phase called reading to learn. This phase consists of comprehension, critical thinking, and discovery, which provides the basic literacy skills needed to become a productive adult. Therefore, there is a time constraint to provide sound reading instruction while also paying careful attention to early warning indicators and understanding data to provide the correct intervention. To do so, we need to equip teachers with a comprehensive understanding of reading

foundational skills including how to utilize the data from diagnostics, identify the

problem, prescribe a strategy, and teach the intervention.

Policy Statement

The policy I am recommending is to require all teachers, regardless of the content

area, to attend 20 hours a year of ongoing, job-embedded professional development

related to literacy and reading instruction. I propose a policy that requires ongoing

professional development to build the capacity of our educators in the growth of basic

foundational reading skills. Training will be conducted by outside consultants or

contracted professors through the local college or university. School leaders will conduct

walkthroughs and observations using a fidelity checklist and student data to ensure

progress is being made. In addition, develop our educators' skills with the latest reading

research by providing job-embedded opportunities to analyze data, prescribe solutions,

and learn current interventions. The purpose of this policy is to provide accurate and

timely interventions to students, which will increase student achievement while creating a

literate citizen capable of contributing to their community. In a research study,

participants took a pre and post assessment of their current reading skills and teachers'

attitude and motivation to participate and engage in learning new instructional methods

increased when allowed to learn in class with support from mentors and coaches (Brady

et al., 2009, p. 425-455). To attain high quality reading instruction, I propose utilizing

college education programs and ensure that every teacher whether new to the district or

veteran teachers receive a basic reading foundation training. A policy that is job-

embedded will ensure teachers are receiving proper reading training that can be used in

all subject areas regardless of their certification. It will also ensure teachers are continuously growing in their craft with the appropriate supports in place.

Analysis of Needs

   Educational analysis. If requiring educators to attend 20 hours annually of professional development in reading strategies, then the educators' time is a barrier to the proposed policy. Often educators feel overtasked with meeting school, district, and state initiatives. They have expectations to teach to the timelines set in curriculum guides. There is also a sense of urgency to prepare students for mandatory state assessments. All of this, coupled with preparing lessons, analyzing data, and communicating to families, leaves very little to no time for professional development. Finding the time to provide professional development training that will fit everyone's schedule is not always possible.

   An additional constraint to time is Alpha Public Schools' collective bargaining agreement which states the administrators plan "no more than 30 minutes per week of collaborative preparation and planning" and must provide "4.75 hours of preparation and planning per week" (Citation withheld, 2020, p. 23-24). To overcome this constraint, educators need to understand the importance of professional development in reading strategies is an investment of time that will aid in the ease of lesson planning and analyzing data. Therefore, I propose a policy change to mandate 20 hours of professional development in reading strategies in a school year, approximately two hours a month. This barrier can be overcome by carefully planning professional development courses once a month on early release days and providing continuous improvement to solve immediate problems or practice newly acquired skills by embedding the training in the classroom.

Based on the collective bargaining agreement, X Elementary School teachers and leaders are limited to meeting for grade level collaborations to twice a month for 30 minutes. This type of time constraint leads to teachers working in silos and limits the administrators' ability to support a culture of learning. Therefore, I propose a review of the collective bargaining agreement in regards to preparation and planning time.

Researchers of the National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality explain, "professional development is largely a product of formal and informal social interactions among the teachers, situated in the context of their school and the classrooms in which they teach, and is distributed across the entire staff" (Kroft et al., 2010, p. 5). Collaborative planning is considered a form of job-embedded training. Educators need to be given an opportunity to collaborate with their peers, provided a purpose for each session, and receive support from the leadership team. Using collaborative planning to provide job-embedded professional development in reading strategies can make an impact on student learning and contribute to the school wide effort of providing a culture of learning. "Evaluating and solving problems of practice to improve a teacher's practice is usually best accomplished through sustained collaboration in identifying and supporting the implementation of evidence-based instructional practices (Croft et al., 2010, p. 9). Educators need the time, space, and resources to collaborate with peers with a meaningful purpose facilitated by a trained literacy coach or administrator with adequate infrastructure.

Economic analysis. There is always a cost associated with the implementation of district-wide action plans to achieve strategic goals. An economic problem encountered with a reading program implementation or developing professional development trainings

are the expenses associated with materials, resources, personnel, and expertise. When

Alpha Public Schools' district leadership team members decided to purchase the Wilson

Language Fundations® program, there was limited funding with just enough money to

acquire a teacher leveled kits for each classroom in Kindergarten through 3rd grade

throughout the district. The program implementation required specific training with a

focus on basic reading foundational skills and provided techniques for using the program

at an additional cost. Also, trainers of the Wilson Language Fundations® program prefer

that all materials, teacher leveled kits and individual student kits, are purchased together.

Even though there were financial constraints in purchasing student kits, Wilson Language

consultants were willing to accommodate the district leadership team members' needs to

provide professional training. When investing in any program, the district leadership

team members should consider the professional development costs of providing the

proper training and consulting to key district personnel such as literacy coaches,

administrators, department chairs or grade level personnel, and the district's professional

development team members. The information learned from Wilson Language consultants

can be transferred by trained staff members to additional individuals at the school level

using the train-the-trainer model.

 The professional development provided by Wilson Language Fundations®

program is a one-time fee that creates expert trainers in basic foundational reading skills.

Providing this training will ensure that the district leadership team members have a group

of trainers ready to offer professional development to any teacher new to using the

Wilson Language Fundations® program and offer refresher courses. Richard Allington

reminds us of the importance of building the capacity of educators and ensuring

experienced teachers are working with students (Allington, 1994, p. 22). My research

studies and data results align with Allington's research of trained and prepared educators

in reading strategies, and basic reading foundational skills possess the ability to teach any

boxed reading intervention program with ease and by use of their experience. Investing in

quality professional development in reading strategies to reform classroom instruction

will show a quicker return on investment than any boxed intervention program.

Alpha Public Schools' overall budget will incur an economic impact by investing

in research-based professional development in reading strategies and the cost of training

key personnel, such as administrators, literacy coaches, district professional development

team, and department heads, at the school level. Depending on the consultant hired, the

district leadership team members can expect to pay approximately $81,000 a year to

provide current research-based professional development in literacy and reading skills

and strategies. Consultants will lead and conduct train-the-trainer sessions to build the

capacity of key personnel. A train-the-trainer model will require educators to attend

training after school, which means paying a stipend after contract hours. Approximately

270 participants will receive 20 hours of training at a current district hourly stipend of

$25.00, totaling $135,000 annually. Conducting a series of trainings on early release days

to all staff will offset the expenses of training key personnel and hiring consultants.

Hosting train-the-trainer sessions and providing job-embedded training eliminates

additional costs passed down to schools. There is no additional expense for paying

teachers beyond contract hours. In addition, the job-embedded training will include

modeling and support provided by literacy coaches during school hours.

An additional economic impact focuses on working with the union and the collective bargaining agreement to increase collaborative planning time from 30 minutes a week to a minimum of 50 minutes a week. Generally, teachers report to school 30 minutes before the first bell, are given 45 to 60 minute planning periods, and depart 15 minutes after the last bell. The contract time would need to be adjusted or shifted to allot for weekly collaborative planning sessions, focusing on understanding data, expectations for classroom support, the discovery of activities to improve learning, discussion of modeling needs, and providing intervention strategies. The collective bargaining agreement protects the teachers' planning time but does not take into consideration how planning is conducted. Teachers may use this time to work alone and without the resources needed to create valuable and meaningful lessons. Collaborative planning would allow teachers to have the necessary resources of a literacy coach to guide planning and strategize incorporating literacy into the content area. In addition, the silo effect of teaching reduces, and teachers support each other.

A cost-saving measure is to change the collective bargaining agreement to allow for more collaborative planning time among peers. The research study conducted by The Center for Teaching Quality states, "68% of teachers turn to peers specifically for help with their classroom practice" (Berry, Daughtrey, & Wieder, 2009, p. 2-3). The survey I conducted within X Elementary School had similar results regarding reliable sources of training received from literacy coaches, administrators, and teachers within their own school. Best practice and research studies share teachers are their own best role models. When given ample time and opportunity with a facilitator, teachers learn from each other

and coordinate learning activities within the grade and subject area to provide the necessary skills to increase student achievement.

  Social analysis. A social problem students may encounter with reading programs is the lack of confidence to succeed. Students placed in an intervention reading program have spent most of their educational career in a reading class and followed the same group of students. These students' self-esteem dwindles, causing low motivation and unsuccessful attempts in passing reading. There is a connection between building confidence and increase student achievement. Cambria and Guthrie, share that "belief in yourself is more closely linked to achievement than any other motivation throughout the school; the reason is that confidence, which refers to belief in your capacity, is tied intimately to success" (2010, p. 17). A reading intervention program tends to isolate students from their peers, which creates a social stigma that there is something wrong with the student. Students could remain with their peers and work in small groups or centers if they had adequately trained teachers to provide reading strategies and interventions in the classroom. This is one factor to help reduce social stigma associated with being pulled out for reading interventions.

  An additional social problem arises with students requiring reading interventions that have reduced elective choices. If the student does not pass the state reading and writing assessment, they are removed from an elective class of choice and placed in a reading intervention class. Students are segregated from peers based on their reading ability. Students who require a reading intervention program do not get the same opportunity to explore vocational and career exploratory electives as their peers. By providing all teachers professional development in reading strategies, every subject area

could deliver reading interventions. This would enable all students to have the opportunity to learn vocational electives that will prepare them for life beyond the classroom.

Political analysis. Literacy extends beyond the classroom and impacts nationwide policies. "We know that literacy is inextricably tied to the strength of our economy, our healthcare system, our families, and our futures," said Barbara Bush Foundation President and CEO British A. Robinson (Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy, 2020). When students leave APS and X Elementary School, we want them to be literate adults who can contribute to society. The state educational leaders are making changes to education that will impact teachers by requiring the attendance of a one time 20 hours of professional development in reading skills and strategies, but it only applies to teachers holding reading endorsements or English certifications and teachers who provide reading interventions. A problem encountered with the new state statute is the limitations set, which only requires specific teachers to grow their knowledge and capacity in reading. Such limitation narrows the field for a small number of students who will receive an opportunity to improve reading and increase student achievement by a trained teacher. Therefore, the superintendent, school board, teacher's union, parents, and teachers are all important stakeholders who will need to agree to make changes that will impact the district and the community. These changes include buy-in from stakeholders to change collective bargaining agreement and creating a district-wide policy for mandatory training.

While the state is only requiring a one-time attendance of 20 hours of professional development in reading, I am proposing 20 hours a year for all teachers. Since the state

department of education leaders mandate that every teacher attend up to date safety

protocol training yearly to keep students and staff safe, they should consider mandating

adequate literacy training annually with research-based strategies and skills for all

teachers. Safety training may save lives, but literacy contributes to a student's success

and quality of life. Creating an annual professional development in reading strategies

policy will impact the district budget initially as well as require funding each year after

that. The cost associated with improving literacy, reading, and student achievement has a

positive return on investment for the future in reducing poverty and unemployment and

increasing high school diplomas and adult literacy levels.

Legal analysis. There is one legal implication for the policy recommendation that

revisits the collective bargaining agreement. The teachers' union, superintendent, and

school board members will have to consider repercussions for teachers who are unwilling

to complete the annual mandatory professional development in reading strategies. After

consulting with an APS supervisor in the professional development department, there is

no consequence or repercussion for not attending a district required course. For example,

if teachers do not attend the annual safety training, then their supervisor is notified of the

failure to take the course. The district leadership team members cannot do anything more

except to communicate the failure to attend. The supervisor may document the inability

to grow and build capacity by checking the "does not participate in professional

development activities" in the teacher's evaluation instrument under "domain 4e.

growing and developing professionally" (Citation withheld to preserve confidentiality).

Unfortunately, untrained teachers will continue to instruct students and lack the

knowledge to enforce school safety and, more importantly, keep students safe.

APS district leaders owe it to the parents and the community to seek teachers who are serious about their role in education. If all stakeholders agree to change the collective bargaining agreement to include a consequence, then APS district would have more qualified and experienced teachers in the classroom. A legal change would ensure teachers are trained in providing literacy and reading instruction for our students. Several studies indicate teachers who take ownership and responsibility for their personal growth in their career field leads to increased student achievement.

Moral and ethical analysis. Educators have the moral and ethical responsibility to ensure every student, regardless of their socioeconomic status or disability, be provided the opportunity to learn to read by qualified and experienced teachers. Literacy has a profound impact on a student's future. First Lady Barbara Bush is quoted by the Foundation as having said, "If you help a person to read, then their opportunities in life will be endless" (Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy, 2020). All of the research studies and literature reviews I have read conclude how literate adults can break the generational cycle of poverty and have more opportunities to provide for their family and contribute to their community.

To uphold moral and ethical responsibility, teachers need to be well prepared to deliver the appropriate reading instruction/interventions for all students. Accepting the policy to enforce 20 hours a year in the professional development of reading strategies will include the most current research with job-embedded training. All students will consist of students in the bottom quartile of the achievement levels, students with disabilities, and students who speak another language. A significant change to the district is difficult, and all stakeholders will be challenged to do things differently. They will be

uncomfortable with the productive struggle as they learn new ways of teaching and delivering reading instruction to diverse populations to close the achievement gap.

Implications for Staff and Community Relationships

Currently, the 2019 State Statute 1012.98 (state name withdrawn to retain anonymity) mandates schools, districts, professional organizations, and the state to collaboratively establish professional development systems that will increase student achievement and enhance classroom instructional strategies. Most recently, the state officials also implemented 1012.585(3)(a), which requires teachers to earn a minimum of 6 college credits or 120 in-service points in specialized reading instruction or reading intervention for teachers currently holding a reading certification, reading endorsement, teach reading, teach students who been retained, or teach interventions in grades Kindergarten through 6th grade. This will be required for teachers seeking to renew their certifications. Many teachers may find this task daunting, and I have personally heard that they would give up their reading certification if held accountable to the new state statute. My recommended policy would require teachers to give approximately two hours a month to ongoing, job-embedded professional development to learn and grow during the work hours. Meanwhile, they would gain knowledge that can be applied immediately in the classroom and have an opportunity to witness real-time results instead of waiting for an assessment score. Teachers and literacy coaches would have a chance to build better relationships and provide a framework for coaching and modeling.

The policy can extend partnerships in the community to demonstrate the importance of creating literate citizens. APS district leaders would benefit from understanding the various programs within the community and partnering with them to

bring awareness of the importance of literacy. The programs to consider a partnership with are:

- Voluntary PreKindergarten programs

- Born to Read Hospital programs

(Citation withheld to preserve confidentiality)

Parents and guardians play an essential role in supporting educational goals. An implication of this relationship is understanding that teaching a child to read is a united effort between home and school. "Training parents to teach their children reading with specific exercises produced greater results than having parents listen to their child read with or without training (Darling & Westburg, 2004, p. 57). In this case, the APS district leadership team members can build a key relationship with parents and guardians on the importance of teaching reading at a young age. APS district leadership team members can provide mini lessons to parents and guardians utilizing their family engagement activities to offer in person monthly meetups that instruct parents and guardians on how to teach reading skills at home, and/or they can also provide a recording of the same lesson uploaded to a social media subscription channel so parents and guardians can access it at their convenience. Currently, an area that APS elementary district team leaders excel in is a website called Community Reads, which gives parents and guardians 30 days of reading activities. The collection of activities found on the Community Reads website can be expanded upon by having a teacher demonstrate the activities in a recording that parents and guardians can access at any time. It will give them the confidence to teach their child at home.

The implications for APS and all stakeholders are to remember that it takes a village to raise a child. The responsibility of creating literate and productive citizens is a task that all should embrace. Accepting the responsibility that each stakeholder has a role in preparing students to be readers takes a conscious effort. We must remain vigilant in upholding the policy and ensuring follow up and follow through of reading activities occurs in and out of the classroom.

Conclusion

Upon the completion of my surveys, interviews, and readings, I feel strongly about the importance of literacy and the effects it has on our community and a student's life in school and beyond. In this section, I have discussed the importance of making policy changes while visiting implications that will affect change in economics, social, legal, politics, morals and ethics, and all stakeholders. If Alpha Public Schools implements a yearly professional development training in reading strategies for all teachers, regardless of experience, they will become a leader and driving force for literacy in the state. The policy changes of annual professional development, job-embedded training, collaborative planning, and community outreach programs will ensure that every student, including students with disabilities, gifted, and mainstreamed will have the opportunity to become literate citizens who can contribute to their community in many ways while closing the achievement gap and even break the generational cycle of poverty.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Conclusion

When I began my dissertation, I worked in the district office to support the district leadership of Alpha Public School and its strategic improvement plan. APS had a history of being an average school district with schools performing below the state requirement. Initially, our goal was to create an A district and increase student achievement in 13 elementary schools documented on the state's bottom 300 school list. At the time, I worked closely with APS district leaders to raise the student achievement scores in the elementary schools by providing reading foundational skills using a research-based program by Wilson Language called Fundations. Kindergarten through third grade became the focus of my dissertation due to these years being a pivotal phase for a student to learn to read. The Annie E. Casey Foundation (2010) researchers conducted a long-term study that discovered third grade students not proficient in reading are four times more likely to drop out of high school (p. 7). Therefore, my purpose for working and studying shifted to the importance of learning how to read and providing educators the most current reading strategies to close the achievement gap and increase student achievement in reading while creating a productive citizen to our community.

As my career shifted to secondary schools, and I continued to pursue research on the impact of literacy on all students. I realized how critical reading skills are to the older student. In school, poor reading skills result in low student achievement and a wider achievement gap, but the impact of nonliterate at-risk students dramatically affects the community. Communities with a high illiterate population have increased dropout rates,

have a tendency to rely on government assistance, live in high poverty areas, and, more importantly, persist in an inability to contribute to society as a literate citizen.

My proposed policy will impact how the district prepares teachers to provide reading skills and strategies to all students while creating a pathway for continuous learning for educators. The enhanced annual professional development in reading strategies training will reach all teachers, whether they are a beginners or experienced teachers, including all subject areas and grade levels. By accepting this proposed policy change, Alpha Public Schools educators will lead the state in recognizing the impacts of literacy and the community. The proposed program will build the capacity and knowledge of educators to provide interventions, remediation, and enrichment reading skills to all students while increasing student achievement in reading and closing the achievement gap. Tournaki (2011) shares the importance of professional development programs with activities sustained over the years, applying reading skills in the content area, providing teachers the opportunity to interact and engage with peers has a positive effect on student achievement (p. 300).

Discussion

The intended purpose of this program evaluation of the implementation of the Wilson Language Fundations® and professional development initiative was to inquire into the efficacy of such a program as a means to improve student achievement. The evaluation focuses on Wilson Language Fundations® as a boxed intervention reading program. In addition, I wanted to determine if teachers were offered sufficient professional development in reading strategies and whether their newly acquired skill set was able to improve student achievement in reading. I hoped to identify the areas that

needed improvement, to consider ways of increasing student achievement in reading, and to identify a professional development plan that would provide teachers with additional opportunities to meet "highly qualified ratings" by receiving job-embedded training and learning cooperatively with the support of peers in carefully planned collaborative sessions.

In Chapter Four, I surveyed and interviewed educators about the program evaluation and effectiveness of Wilson Language Fundations® and inquired about the delivery method and use of professional development in reading strategies. I discovered a willingness from teachers to improve their skillset and improve their student achievement scores. While teachers expressed that they are busy and have little time to invest in creating a better product of themselves, I propose a policy change to review the collective bargaining agreement for more collaboration and planning time using literacy coaches to provide job-embedded training. I suggest reinventing the professional learning community to remove the silo effect created by teachers working alone and allow teachers to choose pathways to meet individual needs. Also, a revamp of leadership led training to include the PDCA model is needed. School based leaders need to provide educators with research-based materials, incorporate and model reading strategies in the classroom, and provide teachers time to reflect and enhance the strategy and intervention until they are successful.

A boxed intervention reading program will not meet the needs of every student. Schwartz (2019) said, "The knowledge base of the teacher and being able to identify the needs of the student are more important than a boxed program" (para. 60). Ultimately, the effectiveness of any boxed reading intervention program is only as successful as the

person teaching it. We need to consider building the capacity and knowledge of teachers, not programs.

Leadership Lessons

When I created a plan for organizational changes and policy reform, I considered the expectations outlined in the State Principal Leadership Standards (name withheld to preserve anonymity) and how my contributions to becoming a bold leader will bring changes that reach beyond the school. Being a school leader extends beyond the school doors and stretches into the community. I have gained the knowledge to share the impact literacy has on student achievement and students' contribution to society. Literacy is the ability to read, write, comprehend, and speak. As an educational leader, I must empower stakeholders: teachers, community leaders, parents, guardians, corporate leaders, district leaders, educators, and students to join a campaign to make literacy and reading skills a priority.

A leadership lesson I learned is always to consider the student and their needs. While conducting the literature review, researching studies, and reviewing my data, I used the State Principal Standards to guide my decision for creating organizational changes and policy reform that will benefit the student and their future. Domain 1 reminds me that a leader needs to consider changes that will affect student achievement, including their performance on the state assessment. But a bold leader needs to convey the importance of literacy, and increasing student achievement is an educational goal that extends beyond the school doors. Students need to know how reading, writing, and speaking can result in job opportunities and life changes. Forming a partnership and shared vision between all stakeholders for the powerful impact literacy has on student

achievement will create a culture for personal growth and shared responsibility to increase student achievement and close the achievement gap between student subgroups.

Another leadership lesson I learned is to model what I expect of my students and teachers. I had the opportunity to share much of my research in professional development trainings over the last two years with my teachers, including modeling reading and writing strategies. My joy comes from observing my teachers demonstrating their newly acquired skills in the classroom and sharing with me how they have customized it to make it their own and work for their students. Domain 2 reminds leaders that we will always be instructional leaders first. I understand the importance of developing my faculty so that they can grow in their field. I have learned the importance of protecting their time and utilizing their time wisely by facilitating collaborative peer planning sessions with a focus on increasing student achievement in reading and writing.

Conclusion

There is no quick fix or program for increasing student achievement in reading or closing the achievement gap in subgroups. Boxed reading intervention programs are tools, but the power of knowledge comes from fully trained educators who can prescribe and execute reading interventions in a timely manner. Educators who invest time to grow professionally, build their knowledge base, and reflect on best practices create engaging lessons that are capable of reaching all students, including those that need the intervention, remediation, or enrichment. The literature review, surveys, and interview process helped me evaluate the program evaluation and effectiveness of Fundations® and reading strategies in professional development. The data and studies support my stance for emphasizing literacy skills in all subject areas, ensuring educators receive current

research-based reading skills and strategies annually, and supporting educators through job-embedded training, and meaningful collaborative planning sessions. Helping our educators to discern interventions, recognize early warning indicators, provide quality reading and writing lessons, and use the data collected to decide on the student's next steps for improving reading will increase student achievement. Annie E. Casey Foundation guidance stresses that the "continuing challenge is for all of us to become more explicit, consistent, and insistent about the importance of achieving measurable results, in the form of improved student outcomes and educator effectiveness (p. 32).

REFERENCES

Allington, Richard. (1994). The schools we have, the schools we need. *The Reading*

Teacher, 48(1), 22. Retrieved from

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/267703068_The_Schools_We_Have_T

he_Schools_We_Need

Allington, R. L. (2002). What I've learned about effective reading instruction: From a

decade of studying exemplary elementary classroom teachers. *Phi Delta*

Kappan, *83*(10), 740-747.

Anderson, P. (2018, March 5). Five viewpoints on creating readers of tomorrow:

Literacy, digital, and children's books. Retrieved from

https://publishingperspectives.com/2018/03/five-viewpoints-on-creating-readers-

of-the-future-ipa-congress/

Annie E. Casey Foundation. (2010). *Early warning! Why reading by the end of third*

grade matters. Retrieved from https://www.aecf.org/resources/early-warning-

why-reading-by-the-end-of-third-grade-matters/

Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy. (2020, September 3). *Barbara Bush*

Foundation releases critical data on literacy and equity to inform state and city

leaders nationwide. Retrieved from https://www.prnewswire.com/news-

releases/barbara-bush-foundation-releases-critical-data-on-literacy-and-equity-to-

inform-state-and-city-leaders-nationwide-301123688.html

Berry, B., Daughtrey, A., & Wieder, A. (2009). Collaboration: Closing the effective

teaching gap. *Center for Teaching Quality*, 2-3. Retrieved from

https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED509717.pdf

Bhat, J. (2017, August 14). Attention spans in the age of technology. *NAMI: National Alliance on Mental Illness* [Web log post]. Retrieved from https://www.nami.org/Blogs/NAMI-Blog/August-2017/Attention-Spans-in-the-Age-of-Technology

Brady, S., Gillis, M., Smith, T., Lavalette, M., Liss-Bronstein, L., Lowe, E., & Wilder, T. D. (2009). First grade teachers' knowledge of phonological awareness and code concepts: Examining gains from an intensive form of professional development and corresponding teacher attitudes. *Reading and Writing*, *22*(4), 425-455.

Brock, A., & Hundley, H. (2016). *The growth mindset coach: A teacher's month-by-month handbook for empowering students to achieve*. New York, NY: Simon and Schuster.

Cambria, J., & Guthrie, J. T. (2010). Motivating and engaging students in reading. *New England Reading Association Journal*, *46*(1), 16-29.

Chiesa, M., & Hobbs, S. (2008). Making sense of social research: How useful is the Hawthorne Effect?. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, *38*(1), 67-74.

Child Trends. (2015, October 28). *Archived indicator: School communication in parents' native language*. Retrieved from https://www.childtrends.org/indicators/school-communication-in-parents-native-language

Clay, M. (1985). *The early detection of reading difficulties* (3rd ed.). London, United Kingdom: Heinemann.

Cooter, Jr., R. B. (2003). Teacher "capacity-building" helps urban children succeed in

reading. *The Reading Teacher*, *57*(2), 198. Retrieved from

https://www.bellarmine.edu/docs/default-source/education-

docs/Cooter_teacher_capacity.pdf?sfvrsn=0

Darling-Hammond, L., & Sykes, G. (1999). *Teaching as the learning profession:*

Handbook of policy and practice. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Inc.

Darling, S., & Westberg, L. (2004). Parent involvement in children's acquisition of

reading. *The Reading Teacher*, *57*(8), 774.

DeFord, D., Morgan, D. N., Saylor-Crowder, K., Pae, T., Johnson, R., Stephens, D.,

Donnelly, A., & Hamel, E. (2003). *Changes in children's cue and strategy use*

during reading: Findings from the first year of professional development in the

South Carolina Reading Initiative. (Report #SCRI-TR-002). Washington, D.C.:

Office of Educational Research and Improvement.

[State Name Redacted] Department of Education. (2014, November 6). [State Name

Redacted] *educator certification renewal requirements*. Retrieved September 19,

2020, from https://www.fldoe.org/teaching/certification/fl-educator-certification-

renewal-requ.stml

[State Name Redacted] Department of Education. (2018). *Continuous improvement*

management system: Marion County. Retrieved September 22, 2018, from

https://www. [State Name Redacted] cims.org/districts/marion/schools/0071#

[State Name Redacted] Department of Education. (2017, November 9). [State Name

Redacted] *school accountability reports*. Retrieved from http://www.[State Name

Redacted]doe.org/accountability/accountability-reporting/school-grades/

[State Name Redacted] Department of Education. (2020). [State Name Redacted]
principal leadership standards. Retrieved September 26, 2020, from
https://www.[State Name
Redacted]schoolleaders.org/fslPortal/wcgProgram/fpls.aspx?rID=6

Fisher, J. Y. (2012). The observation of a reading intervention program for at-risk
students at a Title 1 school. *Review of Higher Education & Self-Learning*, *5*(16).

Francois, C. (2013). Reading in the crawl space: A study of an urban school's literacy-
focused community of practice. *Teachers College Record*, *115*(5), 1-35.

Fullan, M. (2011). *The six secrets of change: What the best leaders do to help their
organizations survive and thrive*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.

Geske, A., & Ozola, A. (2008). Factors influencing reading literacy at the primary school
level. *Problems of Education in the 21st Century*, *6*, 71-77

Goss, C. L., & Brown-Chiddy, R. (2012). Tier 2 reading interventions: Comparison of
reading mastery and Fundations® double dose. *Preventing School Failure:
Alternative Education for Children and Youth*, *56*(1), 65-74.

Gorman, N. (2015, September 2). Why collecting student data is important to student
achievement. *Education World*. Retrieved from
http://www.educationworld.com/a_news/why-collecting-student-data-important-
student-achievement-1284123462

Greenwald, R., Hedges, L. V., & Laine, R. (1996). Interpreting research on school
resources and student achievement: A rejoinder to Hanushek. *Review of
Educational Research*, *66*, 411-416.

ICT Institute. (2017, February 10). *Information security and PDCA (plan-do-check-act).* Retrieved October 25, 2020, from https://ictinstitute.nl/pdca-plan-do-check-act/

Johnson, C. N. (2002). The benefits of PDCA. *Quality Progress*, *35*(5), 120.

Kel-Artinian, A., & Parisi, D. (2018). *Why third grade is a pivotal year for reading.* Amplify [Web log post]. Retrieved from https://www.amplify.com/viewpoints/why-third-grade-is-a-pivotal-year-for-reading

Lemons, C. J., Al Otaiba, S., Conway, S. J., Mellado De La Cruz, V. (2016). Improving professional development to enhance reading outcomes for students in special education. In B. Foorman (Ed.), Challenges to Implementing Effective Reading Intervention in Schools. *New Directions for Child and Adolescent Development*, *154*, 87-104.

Mangan, D. (2016, November 30). *Is literacy a constitutional right? The battle over Detroit schools* [Web log post]. Retrieved from https://www.literacyworldwide.org/blog/literacy-daily/2016/11/30/is-literacy-a-constitutional-right-the-battle-over-detroit-schools

McGill-Franzen, A. (1992). Early literacy: What does "developmentally appropriate" mean? *Reading Teacher, 46*, 56-58.

National Institute for Literacy. (2009). *National reading achievement goals inform early literacy instruction. Press release*. Washington, DC: National Institute for Literacy. Retrieved from www.nifl.gov/news/nelp01-08-09.html

Mizell, H. (2010). *Why professional development matters*. Oxford, OH: Learning Forward.

Musen, L. (2010). *Early reading proficiency*. Providence, RI: Annenberg Institute for

    School Reform at Brown University.

National Center on Intensive Intervention. (2013). *Data based individualization: A*

    framework for intensive intervention. Washington, DC: Office of Special

    Education, U.S. Department of Education.

Official Online Site of the [State Name Redacted] Legislature. (2017, October). *Statutes*

    & Constitution: View statutes. Retrieved February 18, 2018, from

    http://www.leg.state.fl.us/Statutes/index.cfm?App_mode=Display_Statute&URL

    =1000-1099/1008/Chapters/1008.25.html

Patton, M. Q. (2008). *Utilization-focused evaluation*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage

    Publications.

Pimentel, S. (2018). Why doesn't every teacher know the research on reading

    instruction. *Education Week*. Retrieved from

    https://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2018/10/29/why-doesnt-every-teacher-know-

    the-research.html

Read Educational Trust. (2017). *Literacy as a human right*. Retrieved from

    http://www.read.org.za/useful-info/literacy-as-a-human-right/

Robb, L. (2002). The myth of learn to read/read to learn. *Instructor*, *111*(8), 23-25.

Sailors, M., & Price, L. R. (2010). Professional development that supports the teaching of

    cognitive reading strategy instruction. *The Elementary School Journal*, *110*(3),

    301-322.

Schwartz, S. (2019). The most popular reading programs aren't backed by

science. *Education Week.* Retrieved from https://www. edweek.

org/ew/articles/2019/12/04/the-mostpopular-reading-programs-arent-backed.html

Sharratt, L., & Planche, B. (2016). *Leading collaborative learning: Empowering*

excellence. Newbury Park, CA: Corwin Press.

Tournaki, E., Lyublinskaya, I., & Carolan, B. (2011). An ongoing professional

development program and its impact on teacher effectiveness. *The Teacher*

Educator, *46*(4), 299-315.

Tovli, E. (2014). The joy of reading: An intervention program to increase reading

motivation for pupils with learning disabilities. *Journal of Education and*

Training Studies, *2*(4), 69-84.

Walsh, K., Glaser, D., & Wilcox, D. D. (2006). What education schools aren't teaching

about reading and what elementary teachers aren't learning. *National Council on*

Teacher Quality. Retrieved from https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED506642.pdf

Wang, H. (2017, January 16). *Explainer: What is phonics and why is it important?*

Retrieved from http://theconversation.com/explainer-what-is-phonics-and-why-is-

it-important-70522

Weinstein, C., Curran, M., & Tomlinson-Clarke, S. (2003). Culturally responsive

classroom management: Awareness into action. *Theory into Practice*, *42*(4), 269-

276.

Wilson, B. A., & O'Connor, J. R. (1995). Effectiveness of the Wilson Reading System used in public school training. In C. McIntyre & J. Pickering (Eds.), *Clinical studies of multisensory structured language education*, 247-254. Salem, OR: International Multisensory Structured Language Education Council.

Wilson Language Training Corporation. (2018). Fundations® Wilson language training. Retrieved from https://www.wilsonlanguage.com/programs/ Fundations®/

Wilson Language Training Corporation. (2015). *From islands of excellence to a sea of change: School district of Indian River County*. Oxford, MA: Author.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Invitation to Participate
Appendix B: Survey Questions
Appendix C: Interview Questions
Appendix D: Interview Questions: Administrators and Literacy Coaches
Appendix E: Fundations® Implementation Checklist
Appendix F: As Is Model
Appendix G: To Be Model
Appendix H: Strategies and Action Chart

Appendix A

Invitation to Participate

Dear Educator:

You are invited to participate in a study about the Program Evaluation of the Effectiveness of Fundations® and Reading Strategies in Professional Development. The purpose of the study is to evaluate a boxed reading program called Fundations® and the professional development surrounding effective reading strategies. The study will also examine the importance of building a strong reading foundation at an early age so children move effectively into the read to learn phase by the 3rd grade in preparation for the students' first state assessment.

I invite you to participate in my National Louis University doctoral research study. I am seeking individuals who have used Fundations® and/or are currently using Fundations® in grades Kindergarten through 3rd grade. You may be a teacher, paraprofessional, administrator, or literacy coach with Fundations® experience. Your participation in this research project is completely voluntary and anonymous. You may decline altogether or leave blank any questions you do not wish to answer. You will not be identified by name when information is analyzed or in any findings that come from the study. You may choose not to participate at all or withdraw your participation. There are no known risks to participation beyond those encountered in everyday life. Your responses will remain confidential and anonymous. Data from this research will be kept under lock and key and reported only as collective combined total. While the results of this study may be published or otherwise reported to scientific bodies, your identity will in no way be revealed. You may request a copy of this completed study by contacting me at cfarino@my.nl.edu

If you agree to participate in this project, you will receive an Informed Consent for a Survey and Interview. The survey will take approximately 20 minutes to complete. There will be one interview session that will take approximately 45 minutes and up to five email exchanges. The online survey can be completed at your convenience and the interviews will be scheduled on non-contract hours (before or after school or early release days). It should not interfere with instructional time.

If you would like to participate, please sign and return one Informed Consent form in the envelope marked Consent to Mrs. Farino's mailbox.

Thank you for your assistance in this important endeavor. I appreciate your time and feedback.

Sincerely,

C. Amy Farino

Appendix B

Survey Questions
All Participants

This survey is to gather data for the Program Evaluation of the Effectiveness of
Fundations® and Reading Strategies Professional Development and the perceptions of all
participants: teachers, paraprofessionals, and administrators. These survey questions will
be provided online via Google Survey link and the data collected will remain anonymous.

Respondent's Information – **All Participants**					
1. How long have you been teaching Fundations®?	I do not teach Fundations®	Less than 1 year	2-3 years	4-5 years	6 or more years
2. Are you reading endorsed or certified?	Yes			No	
3. How long have you been in education?	Less than 1 year	2-3 years		4-5 years	6 or more years
4. Did you receive Fundations® training?	Yes or No If yes, please check all that apply. Training provided by: ☐ District ☐ Literacy Coach ☐ Peer/Colleague ☐ Consultant ☐ Wilson Language Other _____				
5. How many hour(s) of Fundations® training have you received? (Total, including follow up for the current school year)	0-1 hours	2-3 hours	4-5 hours	6-7 hours	8 or more hours
6. How many hour(s) of professional development in reading strategies have you received in the last year? (Total, including any follow up)	0-1 hours	2-3 hours	4-5 hours	6-7 hours	8 or more hours
Program Information					

(Scale 1-5: 1. Strongly ineffective, 2. Ineffective, 3. Neither effective or ineffective, 4. Effective, 5. Strongly Effective)					
7. How would you rate your overall training experience with Fundations®?	1	2	3	4	5
8. How would you rate the effectiveness of Fundations® in increasing student achievement in your classroom?	1	2	3	4	5
Please type your response.					
9. What is working well in the Fundations® program?					
10. What is **NOT** working well in the Fundations® program?					
11. What are the greatest challenges in using the program?					
12. How can you resolve the challenges of Fundations® (if any), or improve Fundations®?					
Professional Development Information (Scale 1-5: 1. Strongly ineffective, 2. Ineffective, 3. Neither effective or ineffective, 4. Effective, 5. Strongly Effective)					
13. How would you rate the effectiveness of using reading strategies learned in professional development in increasing student achievement?	1	2	3	4	5
14. How often do you use newly learned reading strategies in your classroom?	☐ Immediately upon returning to the classroom ☐ I dabble with new strategies here and there ☐ I do not generally use the information until I receive more guidance ☐ I stick to my own reading strategies				
(Scale 1-5: 1. Strongly ineffective, 2. Ineffective, 3. Neither effective or ineffective, 4. Effective, 5. Strongly Effective)					
15. How would you rate the overall training experience of professional development in reading strategies provided by the:	1	2	3	4	5

• School literacy coach					
• School administrator	1	2	3	4	5
• District office	1	2	3	4	5
• Outside Consultant	1	2	3	4	5
16. Do you feel you have been provided with enough reading strategies training?	Yes			No	
Please type your response.					
17. What is your perceptions regarding the quality of professional development received in reading strategies?					
Grade Level Specific Questions					
Please respond to the questions #18-#24 below if you are a **3rd Grade Teacher or Paraprofessional Only**					
18. Is there an emphasis on fluency practice for each phonics component (e.g., sound identification, CVC blending, word recognition, multisyllabic words, and text reading?)	Yes		No	Unsure	
19. Does the program provide teacher modeling of a think aloud strategy to aid in multisyllabic word analysis?	Yes		No	Unsure	
20. Is instruction explicit in the use of syllable types (e.g., open, closed, vowel-consonant –e, vowel combinations, r-controlled, and consonant –le)?	Yes		No	Unsure	
21. Does the program encourage teacher to model speed,	Yes		No	Unsure	

accuracy, and prosody?			
22. Are the processes involved in using a strategy taught over time to ensure understanding and correct application?	Yes	No	Unsure
23. Does the program instruction enable students to establish and adjust purposes for reading (e.g., reading to understand, to interpret, to inform, to enjoy, and to solve problems)?	Yes	No	Unsure
24. Does the program provide instruction for students to become self-directed in comprehension strategies (e.g., rereading, paraphrasing, making explicit connections from text to prior knowledge, underlining and note taking, and visualizing relationships and events in the text?	Yes	No	Unsure

Grade Level Specific Questions			
Please respond to the questions #25-#36 below if you are a **2nd Grade Teacher or Paraprofessional Only**			
25. Does instruction progress from simple to more complex concepts (e.g., CVC	Yes	No	Unsure

words before CCCVCC words and single syllable words before multisyllabic words)?			
26. Does the program include explicit instruction in irregular words and decoding strategies for decodable parts of words (clarifying that the letters represent their most common sounds as well as the irregularities of certain letters)?	Yes	No	Unsure
27. Are there frequent and cumulative reviews of previously taught concepts and words?	Yes	No	Unsure
28. Is there sufficient practice with individual letter-sounds before larger orthographic multisyllabic words?	Yes	No	Unsure
29. Are the processes involved in using a strategy taught over time to ensure understanding and correct application?	Yes	No	Unsure
30. Is instruction explicit in the use of syllable types (e.g., open, closed, vowel-consonant –e, vowel combinations, r-controlled, and consonant –le)?	Yes	No	Unsure
31. Once advanced phonics strategies	Yes	No	Unsure

have been mastered, are they immediately applied to reading and interpreting familiar and unfamiliar connected texts?			
32. Does the program provide teacher modeling of a think aloud strategy to aid in multisyllabic word analysis?	Yes	No	Unsure
33. Is the decoding strategy taught so that it becomes automatic?	Yes	No	Unsure
34. Does the program instruction enable students to establish and adjust purposes for reading (e.g., reading to understand, to interpret, to inform, to enjoy, and to solve problems)?	Yes	No	Unsure
35. Does the program provide instruction for students to become self-directed in comprehension strategies (e.g., rereading, paraphrasing, making explicit connections from text to prior knowledge, underlining and note taking, and visualizing relationships and events in the text)?	Yes	No	Unsure

Grade Level Specific Questions
Please respond to the questions #37-#44 below if you are a **1st Grade Teacher or Paraprofessional Only**

36. Does instruction include physical representation (e.g., clapping, boxes with markers, counters, tiles, fingers, or auditory clues) to help students make the connection between sounds and print (the alphabetic principle?)	Yes	No	Unsure
37. When phonemic awareness activities are at the phoneme level, do students' activities target the sound in words and then move to the last sound in words, and finally focus on the middle sounds in words?	Yes	No	Unsure
38. Does instruction progress from simple to more complex concepts (e.g., CVC words before CCCVCC words and single syllable words before multisyllabic words)?	Yes	No	Unsure
39. Does instruction follow the continuum of word types (beginning of CV and CVC words), incorporating continuous and stop sounds and blends in an appropriate sequence?	Yes	No	Unsure
40. Does the program provide teacher	Yes	No	Unsure

modeling of a think aloud strategy to aid in multisyllabic word analysis?			
41. Is the decoding strategy taught so that it becomes automatic?	Yes	No	Unsure
42. Does the program instruction enable students to establish and adjust purposes for reading (e.g., reading to understand, to interpret, to inform, to enjoy, and to solve problems)?	Yes	No	Unsure
43. Are there instructional routines for comprehension strategies for before, during, and after reading (e.g., setting a purpose, prediction, story grammar, main idea, summarization, graphic organizers, and answering and generating questions?	Yes	No	Unsure

Grade Level Specific Questions			
Please respond to the questions #45-#51 below if you are a **Kindergarten Teacher or Paraprofessional Only**			
44. Does phonemic awareness start with larger units (words and syllables) and progress to smaller units (phonemes)?	Yes	No	Unsure
45. Does phonemic awareness start with rhyming and progress to phoneme isolation,	Yes	No	Unsure

blending, segmenting, and manipulation?			
46. Do activities follow the continuum of word types (beginning with short words that contain 2 or 3 phonemes)?	Yes	No	Unsure
47. Does the program include explicit instruction in irregular words and decoding strategies for the decodable parts of words (clarifying that the letters represent their most common sounds as well as the irregularities of certain letters)?	Yes	No	Unsure
48. Is decoding strategy taught so that it becomes automatic?	Yes	No	Unsure
49. Does the program instruction enable students to establish and adjust purposes for reading (e.g., reading to understand, to interpret, to inform, to enjoy, and to solve problems)?	Yes	No	Unsure
50. Are there instructional routines for comprehension strategies for before, during, and after reading (e.g., setting a purpose, prediction, story grammar, main idea, summarization, graphic organizers,	Yes	No	Unsure

and answering and generating questions?			

Please respond to the question #52-#53 below if you are an **Administrator or Literacy Coach**
51. What is your perception, as a school leader, regarding ensuring the Fundations® program is operating with fidelity?
52. What is your perception, as a school leader, regarding the quality of professional development received in reading strategies by school literacy coach, district, self, and/or outside consultant?

Appendix C

Interview Questions
Teacher and Paraprofessional Participants

1. How long have you been teaching reading?
2. Describe your experience teaching other reading programs. What types? How long? How much training did you receive? Which program showed the best results and why?
3. How much professional development have you received in reading strategies this school year?
4. How would you describe your reading strategies training? Has it helped you become a better teacher? Has it helped you increase student achievement?
5. How much professional development have you received in in Fundations® this school year?
6. How would you describe your Fundations® training? Has it helped you become a better teacher? Has it helped you increase student achievement?
7. What is working well with Fundations®?
8. What is not working well with Fundations®?
9. What has been your greatest challenge in implementing Fundations®?
10. What has been your greatest challenge of Fundations® overall?
11. How would you improve Fundations®?
12. What suggestions or solutions would you make to overcome the challenges you have faced with Fundations®?
13. Do you have to use Fundations®? If yes, to what extent to you maintain teaching the program with fidelity?
14. How would you rate yourself in implementing Fundations® program with fidelity? Are you explicit and provide direct instruction by the book? Or do you tend to include your own teaching experiences?
15. How well do you understand decoding strategies?
16. Do you adjust the program instruction at all? If yes, when? And how do you decide what to adjust?
17. Describe your instructional routine for comprehension strategies for before, during, and after reading?
18. What multisensory approaches do you use when teaching Fundations® and/or any other reading program?

Appendix D

Interview Questions
Administrators and Literacy Coaches

1. Do you have experience teaching reading? What grade levels?
2. If so, describe your experience teaching other reading programs. What types? How long? How much training did you receive? Which program showed the best results and why?
3. How much professional development have you received in reading strategies this school year as an administrator?
4. How would you describe your reading strategies training? Has it helped you become a better leader? Has it helped you increase student achievement?
5. How do you relay the professional development you receive back to your teachers?
6. How much professional development have you received in in Fundations® this school year?
7. How would you describe your Fundations® training? Has it helped you become a better leader? Has it helped you increase student achievement?
8. How do you relay the Fundations® training you receive back to your teachers?
9. What do you think is working well with Fundations®?
10. What is not working well with Fundations®?
11. What has been your greatest challenge in implementing Fundations®?
12. What has been your greatest challenge of Fundations® overall?
13. How would you improve Fundations®?
14. What suggestions or solutions would you make to overcome the challenges you have faced with Fundations®?
15. Do you have to use Fundations®? If yes, to what extent do you enforce teaching the program with fidelity?
16. Describe the instructional routine for comprehension strategies for before, during, and after reading that you have observed in implementing Fundations® in the classroom.
17. What multisensory approaches do you observe in the classrooms?

Appendix E

Fundations® Implementation Checklist

FUNDATIONS LEVEL 1 - IMPLEMENTATION CHECKLIST

This checklist can be used by reading coaches or other support personnel to identify needs, support instruction, and provide oversight so that Wilson Fundations Level 1 instruction is implemented according to prescribed best practices.

Teacher: _____ Observer: _____

Date: _____ Time: _____

Implementation (check one)

_____ General education whole class (Tier 1)
_____ Intervention (Fundations Standard Lesson plus Double Dose) (Tier 2)

_____ Number of students in class/group
_____ Length of Lesson (minutes)   comment if different then prescribed duration
_____

Fundations Level 1 Lesson: Unit _____   Week _____   Day _____

Indicate the Level 1 Activities in the lesson being observed. Number the activities in the order that they are implemented.

		Activities in Unit 1 *only* (see end of document for procedure checklist.
_____ Dictation/Composition Book	_____ Letter-Keyword-Sound	
	_____ Make It Fun	
_____ Dictation/Dry Erase	_____ Storytime	_____ Alphabetical Order
_____ Drill Sounds	_____ Trick Words	_____ Echo/Letter Formation
_____ Echo/Find Letters	_____ Word of the Day	_____ Sky Write/Letter Formation
_____ Echo/Find Sounds & Words	_____ Word Talk	
_____ Introduce New Concepts		_____ Vowel Extension

Does this correspond to the prescribed Lesson Activities for the lesson?   ☐ Yes   ☐ No
If not, comment: _____

General Lesson Procedures

	Observed	Not Observed	Comments
Teacher prepares a written lesson plan for every session.	☐	☐	
Lesson Activities are presented in the order prescribed for the unit/week/day.	☐	☐	
Lesson Activity pacing is appropriate.	☐	☐	
Teacher is able to manage materials to transition from one activity to the next.	☐	☐	
Questioning techniques are used throughout the lesson (check understanding, review, and correct errors).	☐	☐	
Teacher circulates the room to check students' work.	☐	☐	
Lessons focus on trouble spots and review previously taught concepts.	☐	☐	
Lessons include discussion of vocabulary.	☐	☐	

Appendix F

"As Is" 4 C's Analysis for the Program Evaluation of Fundations

Context
- Students need reading foundational skills (learn to read phase) by the time they leave 2nd grade, so they can move into 3rd grade with reading to learn phase
- Provide schools with Wilson Language's Fundations
- Minimal training and no student kits
- X Elementary School, 470 students, 100% free & reduced lunch
- 18-19 C school, 17-18 D school, 16-17 C school
- Change in demographics over the years

Conditions
- Bottom 300 school
- Students leaving 2nd grade without reading foundations
- Lack of reading training; assumed they had reading in college coursework
- Not enough program materials for all classes
- Did not order student materials
- Scores based on SSA ELA scores
- Will a reading program or professional development in reading strategies affect student achievement?

Culture
- Teachers hate change; it occurs every 3 years with new district personnel changing
- Teachers use Teachers Pay Teachers but do not include the state standards
- If it's not broke, don't fix it – mediocre is OK
- How can we change the culture and get buy in?

Does Fundations© provide the reading foundational skills needed to achieve academic success (reading to learn by the 3rd grade)?

Competencies
- Weaknesses –
  - Not trained properly on new program or reading strategies
  - No onboarding program for new teachers
  - One day training given to coaches and after school training to teachers
- Strengths –
  - Teachers want more PD
- What type of professional development did teachers/paras receive in reading strategies?

Appendix G

"To Be" 4 C's Analysis for the Program Evaluation of Fundations

Context
- Students have solid/proficient reading foundational skills upon exiting the 2nd grade
- Professional development in reading strategies
- Coaching and in class support program
- New Teacher Program, Content and Data training
- X Elementary School, 470 students, 100% free or reduced lunch
- B School
- Staff is culturally responsive and aware

Culture
- Teachers growth mindset
- State standards and data as a base for creating unique lessons
- Shared vision to grow
- Understanding of student achievement and ownership of student learning
- Culture of learning together and collaborative planning

Reading program and professional development support to increase student achievement levels in reading

Conditions
- Pilot school for programs
- Increased number of students in SSA ELA level 3, 4, and 5
- Decrease number of students receiving Tier 2 and 3 reading interventions
- Personalized and specific professional development
- Onboard training for all new staff in intervention and curriculum programs
- Ongoing support in reading development

Competencies
- School culture for learning from students to teachers – growth mindset instilled in all
- Programs in place to meet the needs of new teachers and new to grade or curriculum programs
- Annual reading strategies professional development required
- Leadership team experts in core subject areas to provide coaching and in classroom support

Appendix H

Strategies and Action Chart

STRATEGIES	ACTIONS
Recognize early intervention and early warning signs.	- Conduct progress monitoring regularly and review results. - Host data chats and review progress monitoring results as a team to decide on interventions. - Ensure teacher or paraprofessional is trained in the intervention. - Provide ample time to hold collaboration to discuss results of intervention and next steps. - Ensure there is time for feedback and review of intervention results. - Investigate cohort similarities to consider creation of lessons to be taught in all classes. - Communicate deficiencies with all stakeholders. - Provide parent engagement night to instruct parents/guardians on how to provide targeted support. - Prepare take home packets. - Partner with local college or university to provide professional development on research-based reading strategies and skills. - Provide training for all educators in basic reading foundational skills. - Provide training on specific area needed to improve the deficiency. - Create a common goal board and publish progress towards the success. - Communicate the results of intervention with all stakeholders, celebrate small victories, and use the data to drive next steps towards ensuring all students are reading to learn by 3rd grade.
Build relationship, develop connection, and involve the community with school wide vision.	- Host business network social to meet the local businesses and religious groups in the community. - Share the school vision, long term and short term goals, and importance of partnering together.

	• Create a plan together on how to accomplish goals. • Include community in parent engagement nights and activities. • Continue hosting computer lab days with business partnerships sponsoring events and informational sessions. • Communicate shared vision of plans to increase student achievement and opportunities to support the vision. • Invite local businesses and community members to support literacy in voluntary prekindergarten programs and grades Kindergarten through 3rd grade with books or supplies. • Ask local businesses to help provide lending libraries throughout the rural community (building materials, construction of libraries, and books). • Host weekly literacy events in their businesses (i.e., restaurants with story tellers).
Create a culturally responsive and culturally aware faculty.	• Purchase reading materials that represent all students' culture. • Provide all educators with a professional development course on culturally responsive awareness. • Work with educators to ensure classroom lessons are culturally sensitive and/or provide an opportunity to learn about cultural awareness and diversity. • Conduct data chats that include the make up of the student population to understand the students' needs better. • Provide classroom libraries that represent student population. • Consider professional development training in understanding the needs of low socioeconomic students and their needs. • Ensure a budget for updating media center and classroom libraries. • Provide all school communications in preferred language and ensure a translator is

	available for all parent engagement events and meetings.
Create a personalized professional development growth plan to build teacher capacity.	• Communicate shared vision with all educators and create a professional development growth plan that includes course selections towards achieving the goal and vision. • Review formal observations data results to discuss areas for improvement and provide the educator with professional development course offerings in these areas. • Review students' progress monitoring results and provide the educator with professional development course offerings in these areas. • Provide feedback often to educators. • Meet with educators on a continuous basis to provide support and encouragement. • Provide educators with time to collaborate and plan with peers including time to review data. • Offer a variety of professional development courses with respected personnel or fully trained providers. • Ensure course offerings meet educators' development growth plan including self care needs and personal growth. • Ensure literacy coaches are reading endorsed and knowledgeable in the expertise of reading. • Provide professional development trainings in the boxed interventions or curriculum to all new teachers including follow up.