READING SUFFICIENCY ACT STUDY

In fulfillment of Section 1210.508G of Title 70 of the Oklahoma Statutes

State Department of Education Staff
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This study provides data on third grade reading achievement by socio-economic status, learning disability status, ELL status and race. It also provides evidence on reading instructional practices and remediation efforts currently being used by districts in Oklahoma and explores the potential efficacy of these practices.

OKLAHOMA STATE DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION
— **CHAMPION EXCELLENCE** —

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Reading Sufficiency Act (RSA) outlines several changes to K-3 reading assessment and instruction. Using evidence from student testing data, a state-developed survey on reading instructional practices and the research literature, this study examines the impact of this legislation. The analysis resulted in the following observations:

- English Language Learners (ELL), students eligible for free or reduced lunches (FRL), students on individualized education program (IEPs), African American students, and Hispanic students, score lower on third grade reading tests relative to their peers, on average.
- FRL, African American, Hispanic and ELL students were retained at higher rates compared to their non-FRL, non-minority, non-ELL peers who also scored unsatisfactory.
- All districts used screening assessments to identify reading deficiencies as required by law and many administered these assessments more frequently than is legally required.
- Most districts also used optional progress assessments to monitor student progress and the efficacy of reading interventions and instructional practices.
- Educators used a wide variety of reading instructional strategies that are in-line with best-practices when applied appropriately based on student needs.
- Educators found many of the reading interventions effective. Notably, the majority of teachers found legislatively mandated daily reading blocks and screening and monitoring assessments effective, which supports their continued use. They questioned the usefulness of before-school and Saturday school program.
- Students in many districts lacked access to reading services and supports outside of the classroom, such as libraries or mentoring programs.

Based on these findings, this research concludes that while districts are making changes to the assessment and instructional practices in compliance with the RSA, there are still several challenges and questions that need to be addressed regarding the implementation and efficacy of these practices. Accordingly, this research proposes the following:

- Given the inequities in achievement among student subgroups, additional research to better understand the root causes of these achievement gaps and how to close them would be beneficial.
- While this research provided some preliminary evidence on the effectiveness of various instructional strategies and reading interventions, additional and more rigorous research on specific programs at the student level is needed in order to more accurately identify which interventions are most effective and for what students. Student-level research would also provide important information on what interventions students are getting and how frequently so that states can better assess whether or not students have equitable access to the appropriate reading interventions and supports.
- Given that many students lacked access to reading resources outside of schools, it would be beneficial to explore opportunities to further develop these resources.

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Section 1210.508G of Title 70 of the Oklahoma Statutes requires the State Department of Education (SDE) to conduct a study on reading instruction and the retention of students in the third grade based on reading assessments administered.

The purpose of the study is to better understand why some students in the state have not been successful in acquiring the appropriate grade-level reading skills, identify the best practices available to help students become successful readers and implement those best practices in schools statewide.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This research addresses the following questions:

1. How do reading proficiency and retention vary by socio-economic status, learning disability status, ELL status and race?
2. What screening instruments and reading support assessments are being used to identify reading deficiencies and monitor reading progress?
3. What types of reading instructional practices, instructional methods, and remediation efforts are currently being used by districts?
4. What types of reading resources do students have access to outside of school?
5. Of the identified instructional practices, instructional methods, and remediation efforts, which ones have been identified as best practices in the research literature for students not reading on grade level?
6. What relationships exist between district reading performance and the identified interventions? Are there certain interventions that are associated with higher performance?

METHODOLOGY

To answer research question 1, descriptive statistics on reading proficiency and retention by socio-economic status, learning disability status, ELL status, and race were calculated using test scores and demographic data. The purpose of this is to better understand the demographic composition of students who are not reading at grade-level and retained. Knowing this will help policy-makers better select best practices that work well for the student populations most in need.

To answer research questions 2 and 3, school and district leaders were surveyed on instructional practices, instructional methods, remediation efforts, and reading resource access. The survey data were aggregated to the district level in order to identify instructional practices, instructional methods, remediation efforts and reading resource access available at each district.

To answer research question 4, SDE staff members with expertise in curriculum development and reading reviewed and summarized peer-reviewed evidence on the instructional practices, instructional methods, remediation efforts, and reading resources teachers in Oklahoma reported using.

To answer research question 5, district-level performance data were compared to the instructional practices identified through the survey. Correlations between certain instructional practices, methods, remediation efforts, and reading resources were examined. Instructional practices, methods, remediation efforts, and reading resources associated with high reading performance or growth were identified. Additionally, educators were also asked to provide their assessments of the efficacy of the identified interventions. These results were compared to the results of the quantitative analysis.

DATA SOURCES

This study used data from the following sources:

- State-developed survey on instructional practices, instructional methods, remediation efforts, and reading resource access
- Student information and testing data
- Literature on instructional practices, instructional methods, remediation efforts, and reading resources

Any student data contained in the report was reported only in the aggregate so that individual students could not be identified.

SURVEY RESULTS

The survey was sent via email to 8,187 educators. The sample included all superintendents, elementary school principals and teachers. In total, **2,150 educators completed the survey for a response rate of 26%**. This response rate was high enough to make meaningful conclusions from the data. Additionally, the respondents represented a diverse cross-section of educators across the state so the results of the survey reflect not just the experiences and opinions of a few, but those of a wide variety of educators throughout the entire state. **The respondents represented every county in Oklahoma as well as a variety of roles and positions.** In total, 1,241 (59%) teachers, 211 (10%) superintendents, 471 (23%) principals, 137 (7%) reading specialists, and 30 (1%) district personnel responded to the survey. An additional 60 (3%) respondents did not report their position.

RESULTS

HOW DO READING PROFICIENCY AND RETENTION VARY BY SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS, LEARNING DISABILITY STATUS, ELL STATUS AND RACE?

READING PROFICIENCY

Table 1 and Table 2 show third grade reading performance by student population subgroup for 2015 and 2016 respectively. Reading performance is disaggregated by free or reduced lunch (FRL), Individualized Education Program (IEP), and English Language Learner (ELL) status as well as race for each performance level. Thick black lines separate the subgroups. The column percentages in parentheses consider all students who scored in a specific performance category as the total[1].

[1]For example, the denominator in all the calculations in the first column of Table 1 is 7,710, the number of students scoring unsatisfactory that year. Therefore, 1,085/7,710 (14%) of students that scored unsatisfactory in 2015 did not qualify for a free or reduced priced lunch while 6,625/8,009 (86%) did. Note that these two percentages add up to 100%.

Calculating the percentages this way addresses questions such as: *Out of all students who scored unsatisfactory, what percent of them qualify for a free or reduced lunch? What percent of them are Hispanic? What percent are on IEPs?*

The data reveal significant gaps in reading performance by poverty status, IEP status, ELL status, and race. Students in poverty score lower than students not in poverty on Oklahoma third grade reading exams. In 2015, while 65% of all Oklahoma students are eligible for a free or reduced lunch, 86% of students scoring unsatisfactory qualified for a free or reduced lunch. In contrast, only 14% of the students scoring unsatisfactory did not qualify for a free or reduced lunch. Students on IEPs also scored lower than their peers not on IEPs. Although students on IEPs represent only 19% of all Oklahoma students, they make up 53% of the students scoring unsatisfactory. African American and Hispanic students also performed disproportionately worse than their white, Native American, Asian, and multi-racial peers. While only 9% of students in Oklahoma are African American, 17% of students scoring unsatisfactory were African American. Likewise, 26% of the students scoring unsatisfactory were Hispanic even though they made up only 18% of the total third grade student population in 2015. In contrast, white students performed disproportionately higher on third grade reading tests. While 48% of all third graders in 2015 were white, only 35% of students scoring unsatisfactory were white. Similar inequities were seen across all subgroups for 2016 as well, suggesting little improvement between those two years.

Given these findings, **in order for the RSA to achieve its goal of all students reading on grade level, regardless of their socioeconomic status or race, consideration needs to be given to the needs of these disproportionately underachieving subgroups.** The Oklahoma Educator Equity plan is one way Oklahoma is exploring root causes of inequities in the distribution of qualified and effective teachers in high-poverty and high-minority schools and developing potential solutions. Further research on the additional barriers to third grade reading proficiency for poor, minority and IEP students should also be conducted in order to more thoroughly understand and address the inequities in third grade reading proficiency and how we can more effectively allocate resources to close achievement gaps.

TABLE 1: 2015 THIRD GRADE READING PERFORMANCE BY STUDENT POPULATION SUBGROUP

	Subgroup	Unsatisfactory	Limited Knowledge	Proficient	Advanced	Total
FRL	Not FRL	1,085 (14%)	1,732 (21%)	14,423 (42%)	928 (70%)	18,168 (35%)
	FRL	6,625 (86%)	6,613 (79%)	20,218 (58%)	394 (30%)	33,850 (65%)
IEP	Not on IEP	3,611 (47%)	6,326 (76%)	31,092 (90%)	1,218 (92%)	42,247 (81%)
	IEP	4,099 (53%)	2,019 (24%)	3,549 (10%)	104 (8%)	9,771 (19%)
ELL	Not ELL	6,002 (78%)	6,760 (81%)	31,950 (92%)	1,301 (98%)	46,013 (88%)
	ELL	1,708 (22%)	1,585 (19%)	2,691 (8%)	21 (2%)	6,005 (12%)
Race/Ethnicity	African American	1,337 (17%)	1,045 (13%)	2,493 (7%)	33 (2%)	4,908 (9%)
	American Indian	966 (13%)	1,267 (15%)	4,937 (14%)	140 (11%)	7,310 (14%)
	Asian or Pacific Islander	131 (2%)	158 (2%)	753 (2%)	47 (3%)	1,089 (2%)
	Caucasian	2,687 (35%)	3,197 (38%)	18,373 (53%)	904 (68%)	25,161 (48%)
	Hispanic	2,006 (26%)	1,994 (24%)	5,057 (15%)	84 (6%)	9,141 (18%)
	Two or More Races	583 (8%)	684 (8%)	3,028 (9%)	114 (9%)	4,409 (8%)
	All Students	7,710 (100%)	8,345 (100%)	34,641 (100%)	1,322 (100%)	52,018 (100%)

TABLE 2: 2016 THIRD GRADE READING PERFORMANCE BY STUDENT POPULATION SUBGROUP

	Subgroup	Unsatisfactory	Limited Knowledge	Proficient	Advanced	Total
FRL	Not FRL	1,013 (13%)	1,397 (19%)	14,051 (39%)	1,318 (66%)	17,779 (34%)
	FRL	6,560 (87%)	5,977 (81%)	21,679 (61%)	669 (34%)	34,885 (66%)
IEP	Not on IEP	3,817 (50%)	5,781 (78%)	32,407 (91%)	1,894 (95%)	43,899 (83%)
	IEP	3,756 (50%)	1,593 (22%)	3,323 (9%)	93 (5%)	8,765 (17%)
ELL	Not ELL	5,717 (75%)	5,972 (81%)	32,884 (92%)	1,958 (99%)	46,531 (88%)
	ELL	1,856 (25%)	1,402 (19%)	2,846 (8%)	29 (1%)	6,133 (12%)
Race/Ethnicity	African American	1,390 (18%)	924 (13%)	2,427 (7%)	70 (4%)	4,811 (9%)
	American Indian	894 (18%)	1,028 (14%)	4,764 (13%)	196 (10%)	6,882 (13%)
	Asian or Pacific Islander	123 (2%)	138 (2%)	767 (2%)	102 (5%)	1130 (2%)
	Caucasian	2,454 (32%)	2,844 (39%)	18,687 (52%)	1,273 (64%)	26,258 (50%)
	Hispanic	2,122 (28%)	1,753 (24%)	5,497 (15%)	162 (8%)	9,534 (18%)
	Two or More	590 (8%)	687 (9%)	3,588 (10%)	184 (9%)	5,049 (10%)
All	All Students	7,573 (100%)	7,374 (100%)	35,730 (100%)	1,987 (100%)	52,664 (100%)

RETENTION

Effective 2014, students who scored unsatisfactory on their Oklahoma reading test were subject to retention under the RSA unless granted one of six good cause exemptions. Table 3 contains data on the outcomes of third graders subject to retention under the RSA. The results are also disaggregated by subgroup.

As Table 3 shows, there were a **total of 7,730 third graders scoring unsatisfactory in 2015.[2]** Of these students, **1,837 (24%) were retained in 3rd grade, 5,392 (70%) were given a good cause exemption or promoted on a probationary basis to 4th grade** and **501 (6%)** were no longer enrolled in the public education system in Oklahoma in 2016.

[2]There are minor differences in the data in Table 1 and Table 3. These differences represent less than .3% of dataset and are likely due to minor differences in how and when the data were retrieved. These small differences do not meaningfully impact the results.

TABLE 3: 2015-2016 RETENTION OF STUDENTS SCORING UNSATISFACTORY BY STUDENT POPULATION SUBGROUP

	Subgroup	Retained in third Grade	Promoted to 4th Grade	No Longer Enrolled	Total
FRL	Not FRL	187 (10%)	825 (15%)	73 (19%)	1,085 (17%)
	FRL	1,650 (90%)	4,567 (85%)	428 (81%)	6,645 (83%)
IEP	Not on IEP	1,184 (64%)	2,170 (40%)	266 (53%)	3,620 (47%)
	IEP	653 (36%)	3,222 (60%)	235 (47%)	4,110 (53%)
ELL	Not ELL	1374 (75%)	4,240 (79%)	400 (80%)	6,014 (78%)
	ELL	463 (25%)	1,152 (21%)	101 (20%)	1,716 (22%)
Race/Ethnicity	African American	390 (21%)	861 (16%)	90 (18%)	1,341 (17%)
	American Indian	206 (11%)	708 (13%)	53 (11%)	967 (13%)
	Asian or Pacific Islander	26 (2%)	90 (2%)	16 (3%)	132 (2%)
	Caucasian	547 (30%)	1,958 (36%)	186 (37%)	2,691 (35%)
	Hispanic	528 (29%)	1,367 (25%)	120 (24%)	2,015 (26%)
	Two or More Races	140 (8%)	408 (8%)	36 (7%)	584 (8%)
	All Students	1,837 (24%)	5,392 (70%)	501 (6%)	7,730 (100%)

As Table 3 demonstrates, students in poverty, on IEPs, ELL students, African American, and Hispanic students were retained at higher rates relative to their share in the population. While 65% of all third graders in Oklahoma qualified for a free or reduced lunch in 2015, 90% of the students retained qualified for a free or reduced lunch. IEP students were also disproportionately retained. While only 19% of Oklahoma third-graders in 2015 were on IEPs, 36% of retained students were on IEPs. The same pattern is evident in the ELL population. While only 12% of the total 2015 third grade population was ELL students, 25% of retained students were ELL students. Minority students were also more likely to be retained. As Tables 1 and 3 show, 29% of students retained were Hispanic, despite being only 18% of the population and 21% of African American students were retained even though they make up only 9% of the population.

While the aforementioned inequities in the retention rates of FRL, IEP, ELL, African American, and Hispanic students are extremely concerning, it is potentially explained by the fact that these groups tend to read on grade level at lower rates as demonstrated in Tables 1 and 2. In other words, since more FRL, IEP, ELL, African American, and Hispanic students score unsatisfactory on the third grade reading exam relative to their share of the total population, we would expect them to be retained at higher rates.

Looking only at students subject to retention (i.e., those students scoring unsatisfactory), however, reveals additional concerns about the fairness of retention decisions. As Table 3 shows, FRL, ELL, African American, and Hispanic students are more likely to be retained compared to their non-FRL, non-ELL, white peers who score in the same proficiency band on the third grade reading exam. While 83% of the students at-risk for retention qualified for a free or reduced priced lunch and 17% did not, 90% of the students retained qualified for a free or reduced lunch and 10% of the students did not, meaning that economically disadvantaged students were retained at higher rates than their peers with the same level of reading proficiency. ELL students were also retained at higher rates than non-ELL students, despite ELL being a potential good cause exemption. While 22% of the students

subject to retention were ELL students, 25% of the retained students were ELL students. In contrast, non-ELL students represented 78% of the population at-risk for retention but only 75% of the retained population. African American and Hispanic students were also disproportionately retained while white students were disproportionately promoted. While African American students were only 17% of all at-risk students, they were 21% of the students retained. Likewise, 26% of the total population at-risk for retention was Hispanic, but was 29% of the retained population. In contrast, while white students represented 35% of the students at-risk for retention, they made up only 30% of the population actually retained.

These data reveal alarming inequities. Not only are FRL, minority, and ELL students more likely to score lower on their third grade reading exams, but they are more likely to be retained relative to their peers who scored the same. These concerning outcomes demonstrate a need for a thorough analysis as to why poor, minority, and ELL students are more likely to be retained than their same-scoring peers.

WHAT SCREENING INSTRUMENTS AND READING SUPPORT ASSESSMENTS ARE BEING USED TO IDENTIFY READING DEFICIENCIES AND MONITOR READING PROGRESS?

SCREENING INSTRUMENTS

Screening instruments are assessments that measure students' skills in each of the five components of reading: phonemic awareness, vocabulary, phonics, fluency, and comprehension. These tests help teachers **identify students with reading deficiencies and drive instruction towards the specific needs of those students.** The RSA requires that all K-3 teachers administer one of the State Board of Education approved RSA screening assessments with accuracy and fidelity at the beginning and end of each school year.

All districts reported screening assessments to identify reading deficiencies in K-3 classrooms, as per state law. As shown in Figure 1, districts reported using thirteen different state-approved exams. **STAR, DIBELS NEXT, and the Literacy First Battery of Screening Assessments were the most frequently used exams. Most districts administered the exams more frequently than legally required.** As Figure 2 illustrates, 304 (45%) respondents reported administering these exams at the beginning, middle and end-of-year only, a slight increase from the 42% respondents reported last year. 174 (26%) respondents administered them monthly, 103 (15%) respondents reported administering exams 2-3 times a month and 87 (13%) respondents reported administering exams weekly.

FIGURE 1: NUMBER OF DISTRICTS USING STATE-APPROVED SCREENING ASSESSMENTS

Which of the following state-approved assessments (screening instruments) does your district use to identify reading deficiencies in K-3 classrooms?
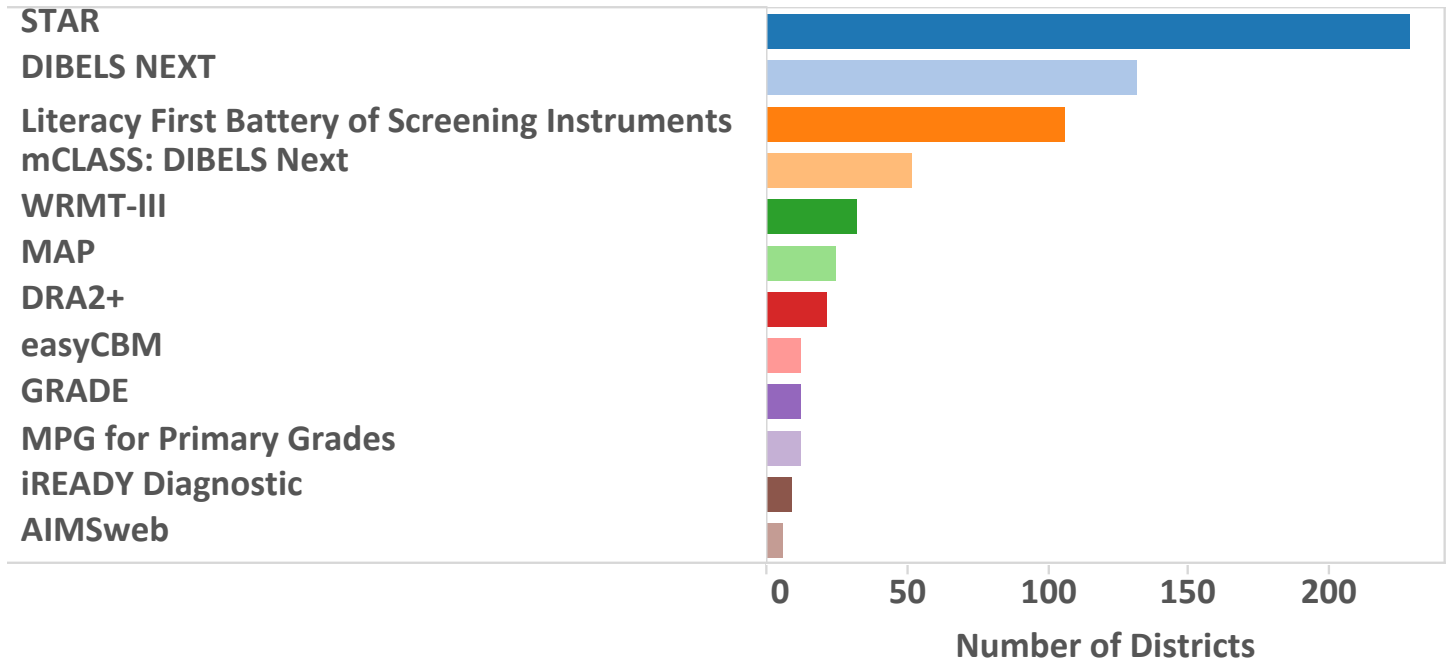
FIGURE 2: FREQUENCY OF USE OF STATE-APPROVED SCREENING ASSESSMENTS

How often do you administer assessments to identify K-3 reading deficiencies?
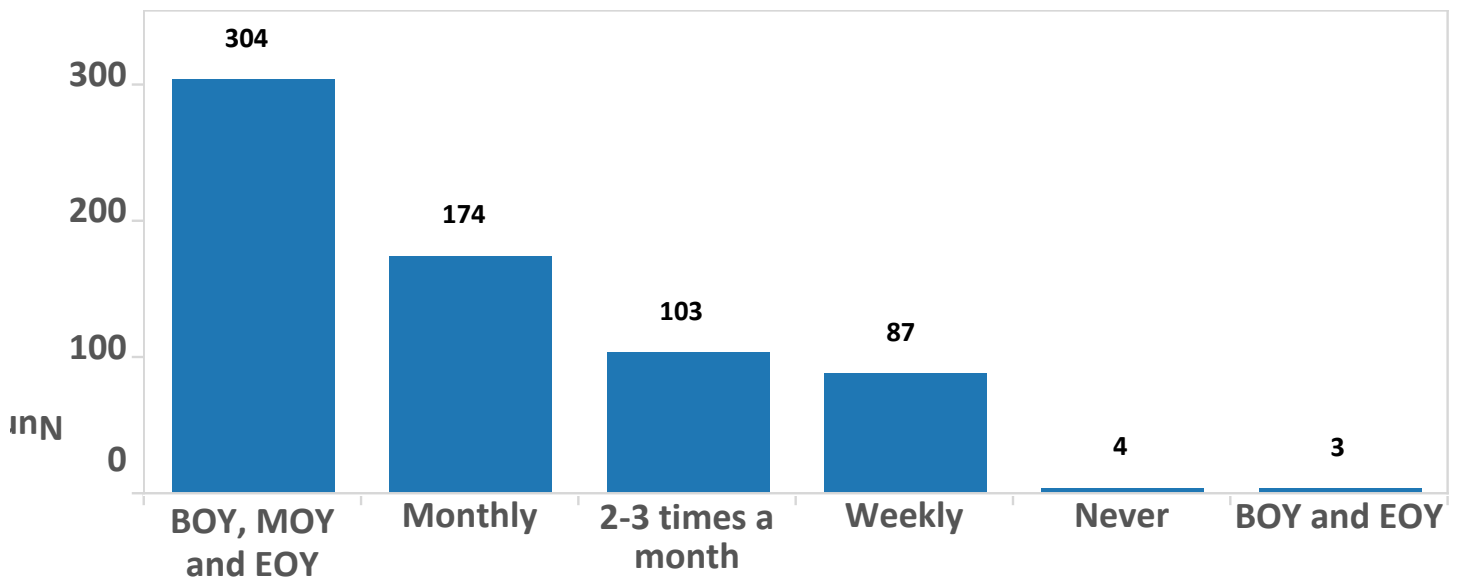
PERIODIC MONITORING

In addition to the required screening assessments, **many districts also administered optional periodic monitoring assessments.** Under the periodic monitoring model, students identified for reading deficiencies by screening assessments are given additional examinations to monitor their academic performance, quantify their rate of improvement or responsiveness to instruction, and evaluate the effectiveness of instruction. Such assessments thus help teachers more accurately identify students' reading deficiencies, select the most appropriate instructional strategies and make mid-course adjustments to their instruction based on their students' needs. Notably, periodic monitoring can be implemented with individual students or an entire class. As demonstrated in Figure 3, **Running Records, Woodcock-Johnson III Diagnostic Reading Battery (WJ-III), and Words Their Way were among the most popular assessments. These were also the most popular assessments for periodic monitoring last year.** Notably, however, Words Their Way gained more popularity this year, moving from the third most used assessment to the second most used assessment.

FIGURE 3: USE OF ASSESSMENTS TO SUPPORT READING INSTRUCTION

Which of the following assessments does your district use to support reading instruction in classrooms?
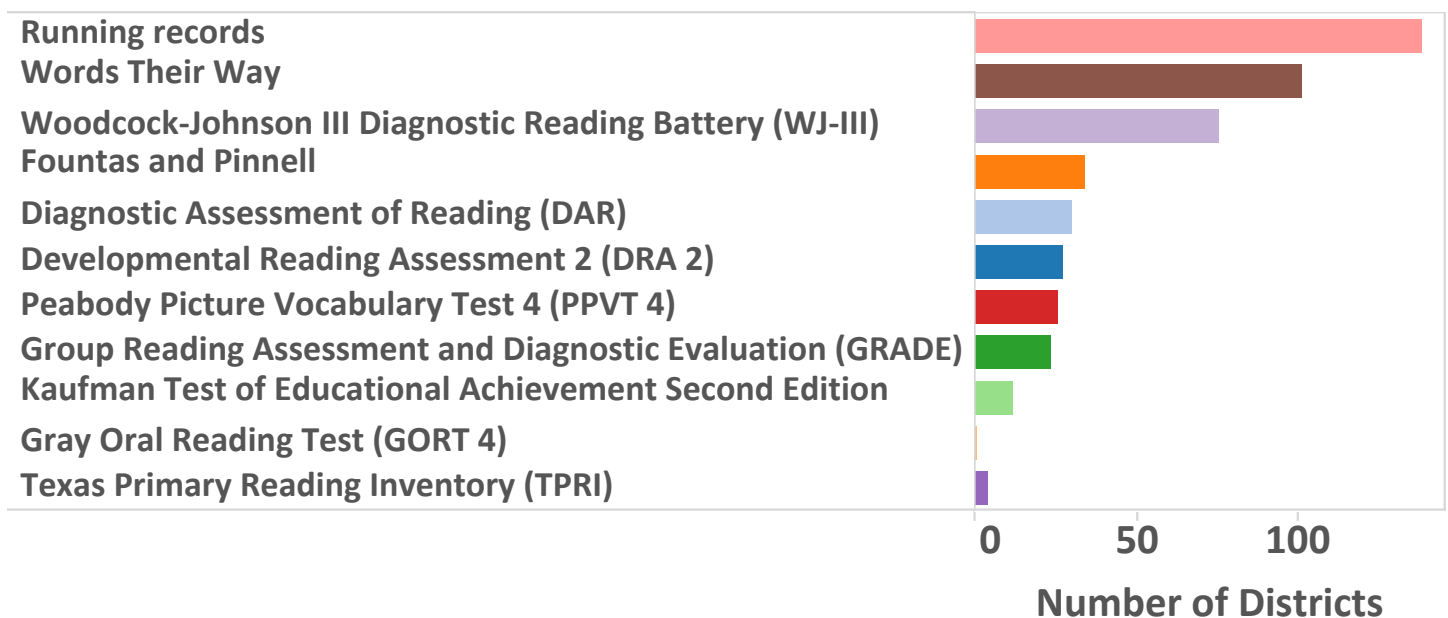
WHAT TYPES OF READING INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES, INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS, AND REMEDIATION EFFORTS ARE CURRENTLY BEING USED BY DISTRICTS?

The survey also provided information on how teachers use their instructional time.[3] As shown in Figure 4, the **top four activities teachers reported spending moderate or considerable time doing were demonstrating or modeling reading processes for their students, leading guided reading or writing practice, having the students work in pairs or small groups, and having the students work individually on assignments.** The majority of teachers also reported their students spent moderate to considerable time listening to the teacher read aloud, practicing test-taking strategies, reading aloud, silently reading books and magazines, taking a quiz or test, and using work

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[3]Only teachers were asked questions about the use of instructional time on the survey.
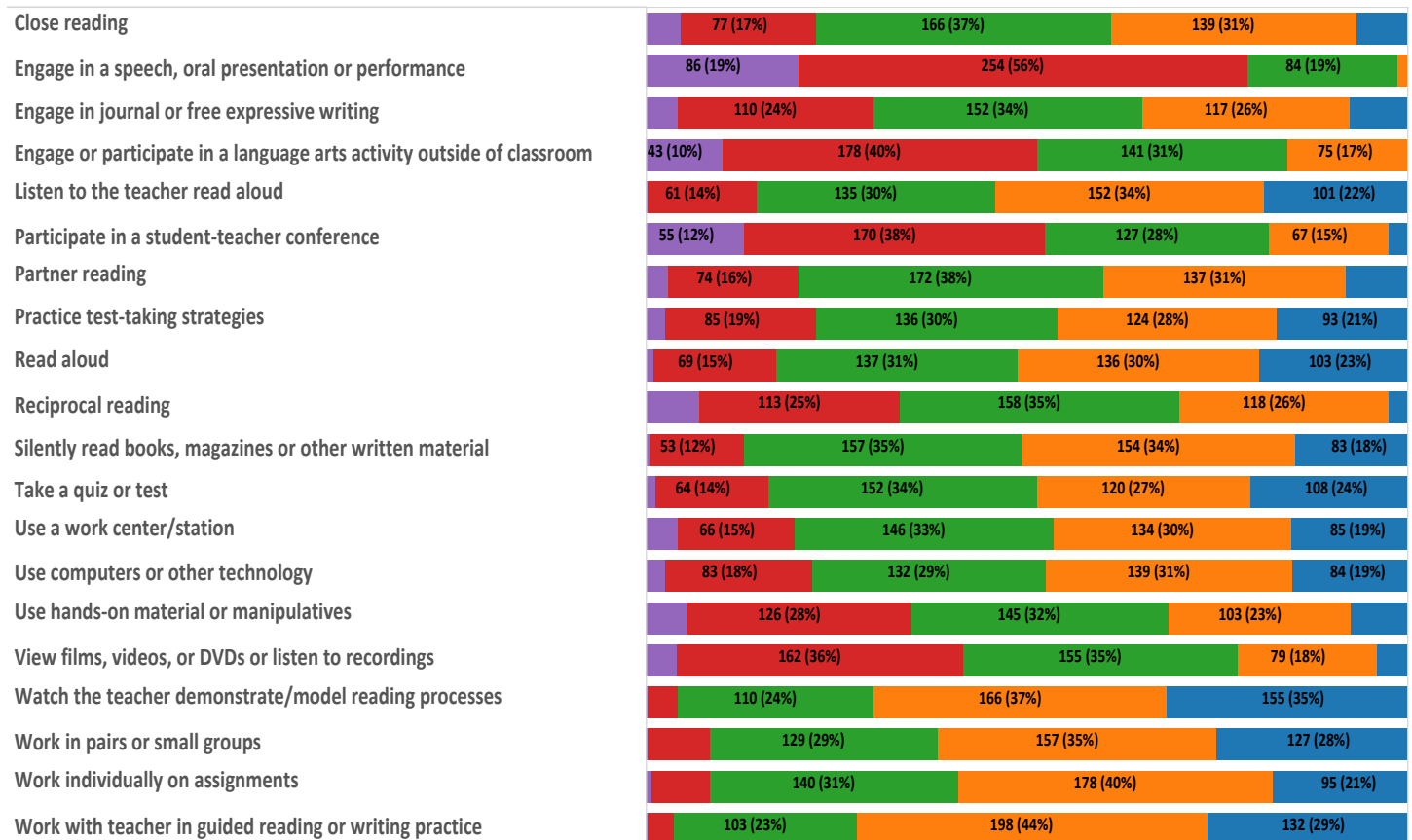
centers or work stations. The activities that teachers spent no or very little time on were engaging in language arts activities outside of the classroom, participating in student-teacher conferences, viewing films, videos, DVDs or listening to recordings, engaging in a speech, oral presentation or performance, and reciprocal reading.

Teachers also reported a strong level of parental engagement. As Figure 5 shows, 242 (43%) teachers reported communicating with at least 5 parents about their student's K-3 reading performance on a monthly basis. 128 (23%) teachers reported communicating with 5 or more parents weekly, and 167 (30%) said they communicated with at least 5 parents each semester. Fewer than 30 (4%) reported communicating only once a year or not at all. Compared to last year, these numbers demonstrate a slight decrease in the frequency of communication with parents regarding reading performance.

Survey respondents also confirmed the offering of several supplemental or remedial services and supports. As Figure 6 highlights, **most frequently districts offered daily reading blocks, additional in-school instructional time, intervention reading programs, weekly on-going progress monitoring, and scientifically-based reading programs,** with over 200 districts reporting offering these services. Saturday and before-school programs were among the most infrequently offered services, with fewer than 100 districts offering these services.

FIGURE 4: INSTRUCTIONAL TIME USE

How much K-3 instructional time is spent on the following tasks?

Task	None	Little	Some	Moderate	Considerable
Close reading		77 (17%)	166 (37%)	139 (31%)	
Engage in a speech, oral presentation or performance	86 (19%)	254 (56%)	84 (19%)		
Engage in journal or free expressive writing		110 (24%)	152 (34%)	117 (26%)	
Engage or participate in a language arts activity outside of classroom	43 (10%)	178 (40%)	141 (31%)	75 (17%)	
Listen to the teacher read aloud		61 (14%)	135 (30%)	152 (34%)	101 (22%)
Participate in a student-teacher conference	55 (12%)	170 (38%)	127 (28%)	67 (15%)	
Partner reading		74 (16%)	172 (38%)	137 (31%)	
Practice test-taking strategies		85 (19%)	136 (30%)	124 (28%)	93 (21%)
Read aloud		69 (15%)	137 (31%)	136 (30%)	103 (23%)
Reciprocal reading		113 (25%)	158 (35%)	118 (26%)	
Silently read books, magazines or other written material	53 (12%)		157 (35%)	154 (34%)	83 (18%)
Take a quiz or test		64 (14%)	152 (34%)	120 (27%)	108 (24%)
Use a work center/station		66 (15%)	146 (33%)	134 (30%)	85 (19%)
Use computers or other technology		83 (18%)	132 (29%)	139 (31%)	84 (19%)
Use hands-on material or manipulatives		126 (28%)	145 (32%)	103 (23%)	
View films, videos, or DVDs or listen to recordings		162 (36%)	155 (35%)	79 (18%)	
Watch the teacher demonstrate/model reading processes		110 (24%)	166 (37%)		155 (35%)
Work in pairs or small groups		129 (29%)	157 (35%)		127 (28%)
Work individually on assignments		140 (31%)	178 (40%)		95 (21%)
Work with teacher in guided reading or writing practice		103 (23%)	198 (44%)		132 (29%)

Legend:
- Considerable
- Moderate
- Some
- Little
- None

FIGURE 5: PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT

How often do you typically interact (talk in person, talk on the phone, communicate via email, etc.) with five or more of your K-3 students' parents about their child's reading performance?
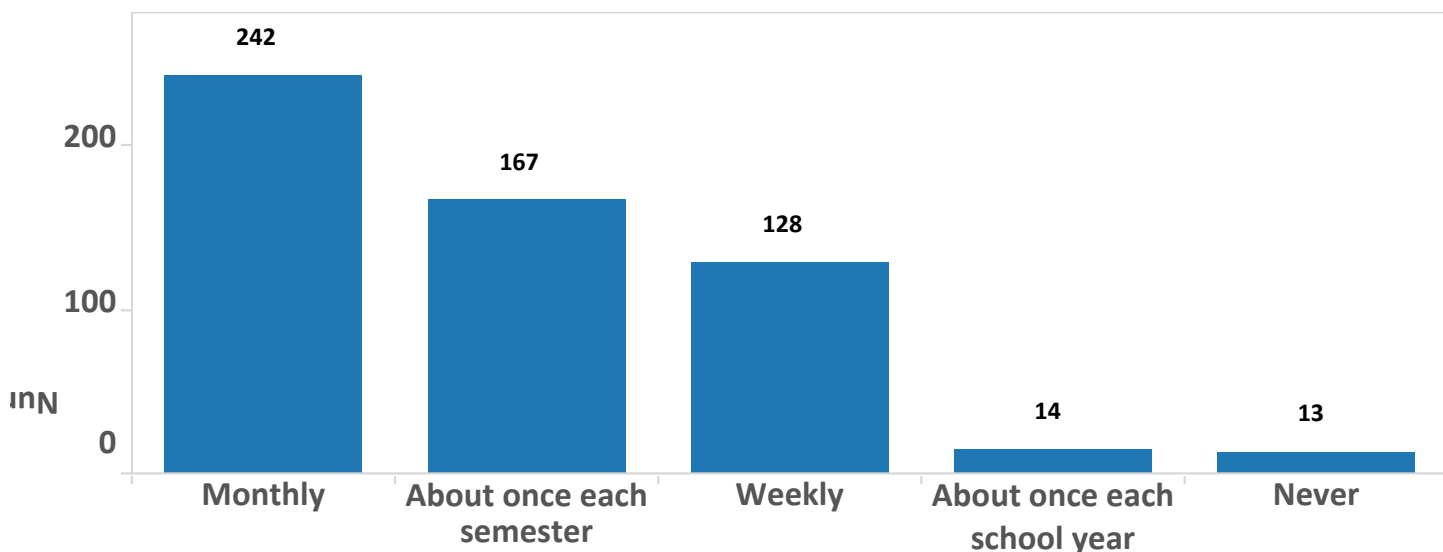
FIGURE 6: SUPPLEMENTAL AND REMEDIAL SERVICES

Which of the following supplemental/remedial services and supports does your district use in K-3 classrooms?
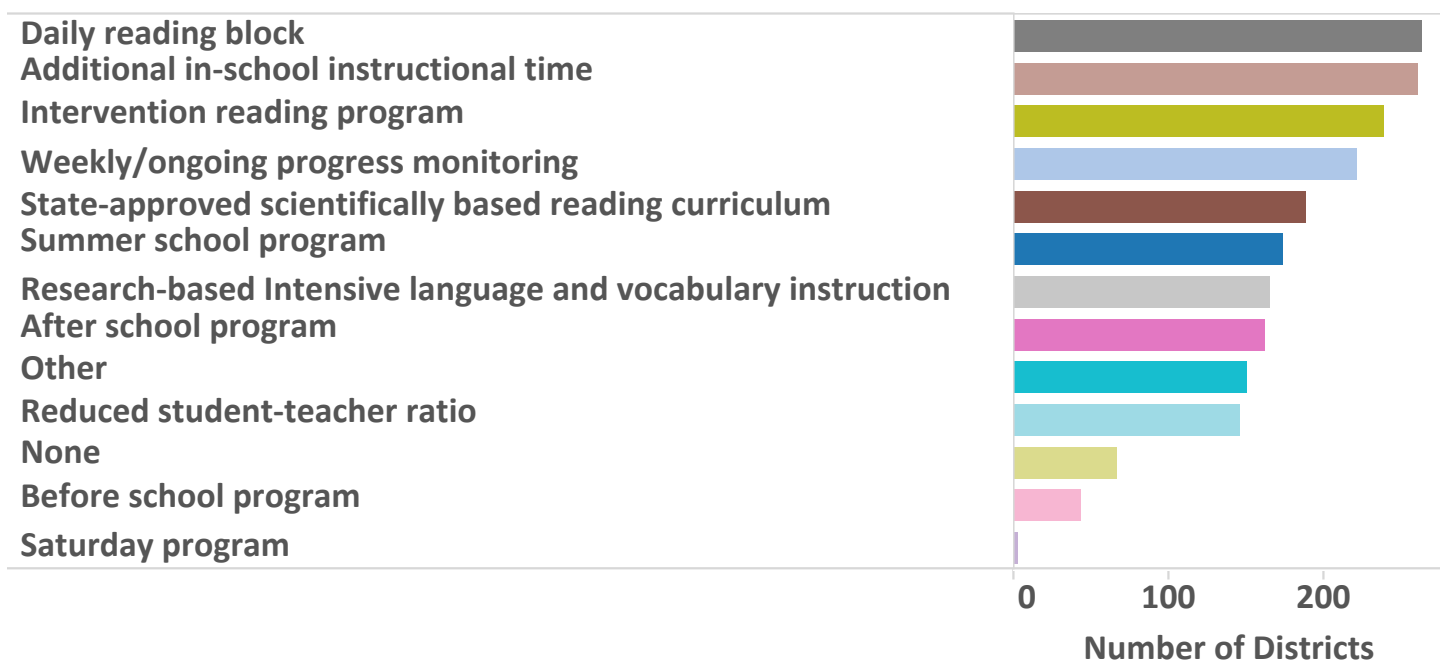
WHAT TYPES OF READING RESOURCES DO STUDENTS HAVE ACCESS TO OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL?

Survey results reveal that many students in Oklahoma do not have access to a wide variety of resources to improve their reading skills outside of schools. As Figure 7 shows, the most common reading resources educators reported that their students have access to were public libraries and electronic and online reading, with respondents from over 200 and 150 districts respectively reporting the availability of these services.[4] Educators in 100 districts reported that some of their students utilize private tutoring services and educators in 78 districts reported that some of their students have home libraries. Mobile libraries, faith-based tutoring and community mentoring were among the least accessible resources. Educators in only 23 districts reported having mobile libraries. Educators in under 50 districts reported having faith-based tutoring or community mentoring.

Furthermore, **while educators in a district may report that some of their students have access to certain resources outside of school, that does not mean that all students have access to these resources.** Additional research at the student level is necessary in order to understand what resources individual students actually have access to outside of school. Such research would also help us understand what outside reading resources are associated with improved learning outcomes.

While discouraging, these findings suggest **opportunities to improve the accessibility of reading resources to students when they are not at school.** In particular, there is a lot of room for improvement in the offerings of book packs, mobile libraries, faith-based tutoring and community mentoring since those were some of the least commonly available resources.

FIGURE 7: SUPPLEMENTAL AND REMEDIAL SERVICES

To the best of your knowledge, which of the following reading resources do K-3 students reading below grade level in your district have access to outside of school?

Number of Districts
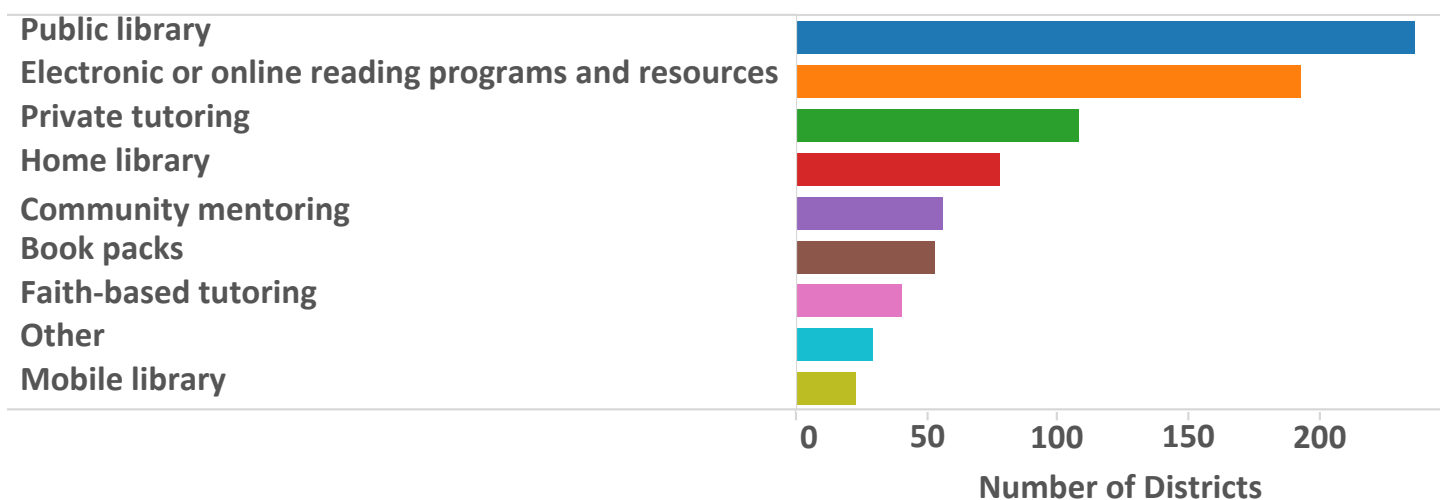
[4]Note that actual figures may be higher as these figures are based on self-reported data from responding districts. Some districts might not have answered the survey or respondents may have been unaware of some services.

OF THE IDENTIFIED INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES, INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND REMEDIATION EFFORTS, WHICH ONES HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED AS BEST PRACTICES IN THE RESEARCH LITERATURE FOR STUDENTS NOT READING ON GRADE LEVEL?

The question of what reading practices are best practices for students not reading on grade level is complex and does not have a simple, straightforward answer. There is support in the literature for the use of all the practices, methods, and strategies discussed in this report, but whether or not it is a best practice depends on the context. Instructional practices, methods, and remediation efforts are best applied in certain contexts, to certain groups of students, and to address specific reading deficiencies. **A teacher using best practices does not uniformly apply a specific set of strategies but rather applies strategies based on the unique needs and learning styles of his or her students** (Goudvis & Harvey, 2000; Brabham & Villaume, 2002). For this reason, rather than merely labeling strategies as being best practices or not, this section defines each strategy, identifies when and for which students they are most effective.

Test taking strategies include reviewing and defining words (both assessment vocabulary and academic vocabulary of a certain subject-area), using comprehension strategies, and modeling multiple choice elimination strategies. These practices can be effective for students at all grade levels, particularly those that focus on building academic vocabulary (Marzano) and testing-specific vocabulary (Bell). Test taking strategies are effective when they are ongoing, purposeful, and used to enhance students' familiarity with directions prior to taking a standardized test (Beidel, Turner & Morris, 1999; Priestly, 2000; Chaleff & Toranzo, 2000; VanHorn, 1997). Other test taking strategies include the use of practice tests which have been shown to be helpful to students (McClaskey, 2001; Simmons, 1998; McCown & Runnebaum, 2001). However, classrooms in which students feel test anxiety or feel the need to compete against fellow students have adverse effects on academic achievement (Beidel et al., 1999; Hancock, 2001). Holloway (2001) reported that while assessment is an important tool in education, teachers need to use tests carefully; he cautions assessment outcomes should only be used to interpret the results of what the assessment was designed to measure.

Quizzes and tests are two techniques for measuring student performance. Formative and summative assessments are used to provide feedback to teachers and students. Formative assessments are in-process evaluations of student comprehension, learning needs, and academic progress during a lesson. Quizzes are one form of formative assessments used by teachers to provide students with effective and accurate feedback. Teachers should assess frequently and routinely where students are in relation to the unit of study's learning goals or end product (summative assessment). Hattie (2015) and Heritage (2010) recommend that teachers increase their emphasis on formative assessment. In other words, teachers should be checking the progress of students as they move toward taking a summative assessment. By checking the progress of students, teachers can make adjustments to learning or to teaching as necessary (Black, Harrison, Lee, Marshall, & William, 2003; Bennett, 2011, Coffrey, Hammer, Levin, & Grant, 2011; Sheppard, 2008; Shavelson, 2008; Wylie & Lyon, 2012).

Watching the teacher demonstrate and/or model reading is an instructional reading framework for all students based on the gradual release of responsibility model (Fisher & Frey, 2013). The teacher demonstration model is the first in four phases of the gradual release model: I DO, WE DO, YOU DO TOGETHER, and YOU DO ALONE. Teacher demonstration is in the I DO phase of the lesson. This focused instruction is used to demonstrate thinking aloud strategies, model what fluent reading sounds like, model summarizing and note taking, and identifying similarities and differences (Allington, 1984; Pressley, 2000; Pearson & Fielding, 1991; Keene & Zimmerman, 1997; Fountas & Pinnell, 2006; Burkins & Croft, 2010; Clay, 1991). This is used in whole group instruction with all students.

Working with the teacher in guided reading or writing practice is a strategy used in the second phase of the gradual release of responsibility model and is referred to as the WE DO phase. This phase allows for student active participation, student engagement, and collaboration, which can result in high levels of student achievement. This second phase is grounded in explicit guided instruction which is a research proven best practice and is appropriate for all grade levels and across content areas (Whitin, 2002; Daniels, 2002; Roser & Keehn, 2002; Baker, Dube, & Wilhelm, 2001;).

Working in pairs or small groups (i.e. collaborative learning) helps to ensure active participation of reluctant students and increases motivation for students and teachers (Amendum, Li & Creamer, 2009; Williams, Phillips-Birdsong, Hufnagel, Hungler, & Lundstrom, 2009; Kiley, 2007). Group cohesion is greater in small groups because the teacher and students are working together toward positive learning goals (Rogoff, 1991). Teachers use this phase of YOU DO TOGETHER to target small groups of students who have the same educational need (Wilhelm, Baker & Dube-Hackett, 2001; Kosanovich, Ladinsky, Nelson, & Torgesen, 2007; Tyner, 2003). Small group reading time enables students to have high quality interactions with their teacher (Wasik, 2008).

Partner reading is sometimes referred to as peer tutoring. Students take turns acting as the tutor, coaching and correcting each other. Vanderbilt University folded this strategy into the Peer Assisted Learning Strategy (PALS) in which students are paired and perform a structured set of activities in reading. The What Works Clearinghouse recognizes PALS as an effective strategy for building fluency.

Working individually on assignments is the fourth phase of the gradual release of responsibility model I DO and is used for all students to have enough practice to increase their knowledge (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983; Fisher & Frey, 2007; Lloyd, 2004). The amount of practice begins with frequent and intense, or massed, practice; then, practice is spread apart, or distributed, practice. Working individually on assignments may be facilitated through silently reading books, work centers/stations, and computers or other technology assisted instruction. Homework is another avenue of independent work, but it is of little value unless the student receives feedback from the teacher (Cooper, 2001).

Reading aloud is a framework teachers use to model comprehension strategies and a tool to increase the vocabularies of all students. It is used during the first phase of the gradual release model. The purpose is to model what good reading sounds and looks like. Using read aloud provides opportunities for the teacher to model "fluency" and allows students to develop an understanding of story structure while actively listening to the story (Wilhelm, et al., 2001; Trelease, 2001; Barrentine, 1996; Sipe, 2000: Klesius & Griffith, 1996; Morrison & Wlodarczyk, 2009). Reading aloud allows students to hear fluent, confident, and expert reading. Children can listen on a higher language level than they can read.

Reciprocal Reading is an instructional activity in which students become the teacher in small group reading sessions with the teacher (Palincsar & Brown, 1986; Pearson & Doyle, 1987; Pressley, 2000; Burer, 1993; Biggs & Moore, 1993; Carter, & Norwood 1997; Hart & Speece, 1998; Hattie, 2009; Moore, 1988). The four specific strategies used to support comprehension are: Questioning, Clarifying, Summarizing, and Predicting. Reciprocal Reading uses explicit teaching of cognitive strategies and deliberate practices with content for students to gain meaning from text. This teaching strategy includes encouraging students to think about their own thought processes during reading, monitoring their comprehension as they read, and teaching students to ask questions while reading.

Silently reading books is intended to develop a fluent reader by providing time during the day to read silently. Teachers are charged with directing students to read appropriate texts and making sure that the independent reading time is used for productive reading practice. The efficacy of silent reading, however, has been criticized for its lack of teacher interaction, guidance in choosing appropriately challenging books, monitoring, and accountability (Armbruster, 2010; Cunningham, 2001). These shortcomings have been addressed in newer approaches such as the Scaffolded Silent Reading strategy (ScSR), in which the teacher plays a much larger role in guiding the students' transition from oral to silent reading. Evidence that the efficacy of ScSR and similar strategies are improving fluency and reading performance, however, is inconclusive and suggests that there may be more impactful ways to spend reading instructional time (Reutzel, 2008).

Work Centers/Stations are physical areas designated for specific learning purposes (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996, 2006; Morrow, 1997, 2003; Stone 1996; Daniels & Bizar, 1998). Work centers can be used during the YOU DO TOGETHER and YOU DO ALONE phases of the gradual release of responsibility model. The work centers allow for student choice with explicit and ongoing learning purposes. This strategy facilitates student motivation, collaboration, and targeted practice.

Computers or other technology assisted instruction refers to instruction or remediation presented on a computer through interactive programs that allow students to progress at their own pace. Used to enhance teacher instruction, computer assisted instruction (CAI) provides a resource for both collaboration and individual practice (Armbruster, Lehr & Osborn, 2001; Koskinen, Blum, Bisson, Phillips, Creamer & Baker, 1999; McEnery & Wilson, 2011; Liu & Chen, 2007; Thorne & Payne, 2005; Walker, Davies & Hewer, 2011). Usually set up in classrooms as a work center/station, CAI works well in the YOU DO TOGETHER and YOU DO ALONE phases and are not used during the teacher directed phase of the lessons.

Using hands-on materials or manipulatives may be one of the oldest teaching strategies and is simply what it says: using physical objects to engage students and help them learn new concepts and/or solve problems (Barbe & Milone, 1980; Hartshorn & Boren, 1990; Zahorik, 1996; Ross & Kurtz, 1993; Pullen, Lane, Lloyd, Nowak, & Ryals, 2005). An example of using hands-on manipulatives in reading instruction includes teachers modeling the sound/symbol relationship by using Elkonin boxes.[5] Students, then, manipulate the boxes either in a group or for independent practice at a work center. Other hands-on manipulative activities may include classifying through sorting word cards or pictures. These activities are especially powerful for ELL students because it lowers the linguistic demands.

Viewing films, videos or DVDs or listening to recordings visual/audio methods are used to enhance instruction and are not as effective as instructional strategies. The use of these methods is in conjunction with other high yield instructional strategies including identifying similarities and differences, summarizing, and note taking while viewing and/or listening.

Close reading is a thorough, methodical. critical analysis of a text that focuses on significant details or patterns in order to develop a deep, complex understanding of the text's form, craft, meanings, etc. It directs the reader's attention to the text itself. Close reading is a strategy for whole and small groups and is used to uncover layers of meaning that lead to deep comprehension (Beers & Probst, 2013; Cummins, 2013; Paul & Elder, 2008; Fisher & Frey, 2012).

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[5]Elkonin boxes build phonological awareness skills by segmenting words into individual sounds or phonemes. To use Elkonin boxes, a child listens to a word and moves a token into a box for each sound or phoneme.

Engaging in speech, oral presentation or performance is recognizing that speaking and listening are as essential to students' success as reading and writing (Sobol, 1999; Alna, 1999; Colon-Vila, 1997; Hamilton & Weiss, 1993; Mallan, 1997; Roney, 1996; Ellis, 1997). It is most crucial for students before third grade, especially for children who come from less literate homes. Also, non-readers and young readers learn most of their vocabulary through oral context and conversations with peers and adults.

Engaging in journal or free expressive writing is an instructional practice that allows students to express themselves in a journal without concern for written language conventions (Brotherton & Williams, 2002; Kasten & Clarke, 1989; Williams & Lundstrom, 2007). If this practice is used in the classroom, it should not be used as time filler, without any teacher guidance or expectations. "Furthermore, students should realize that journal writing is only one type of writing they are expected to do, and they should maintain high standards for legibility and neatness." (Adapted from Routman, 2000, p. 235).

Engaging in language arts activities outside of classroom may include private tutoring, reading (with parents, family members or individually) from a personal library of books, attending public library reading programs and/or checking out books from the public library, interacting with online reading games, etc. These activities supplement language arts activities inside the classroom and their impact on student performance cannot be quantified or assessed (Krashen, Lee & McQuillan, 2012; Evans, Kelley, Sikora & Treiman, 2010; Schubert & Becker 2010; Allington & McGill-Franzen, 2010; Worthy & Roser, 2010).

Participating in a student-teacher conference is used as an instructional component so that students take ownership of their education by running the meeting of their teacher and parents (Hattie & Timperley, 2007; Hawe, Dixon & Watson, 2008; Black & Wiliam, 1998; Sadler, 1989). The students inform their parent about how they are doing, what their goals are going forward, and what kind of learners they are. For students to be informed enough to run such a meeting, they must prepare by learning more about themselves, articulating their own learning goals, and reflecting upon their current performance.

WHAT RELATIONSHIPS EXIST BETWEEN DISTRICT READING PERFORMANCE AND THE IDENTIFIED INTERVENTIONS? ARE THERE CERTAIN INTERVENTIONS THAT ARE ASSOCIATED WITH HIGHER PERFORMANCE?

Unfortunately, **since no student-level data linking individual students to specific interventions exists, it is impossible to accurately determine the impact of specific interventions using student testing data.** For this reason, this study uses survey data on teacher opinions of the efficacy of the reading interventions identified in this report in order to provide some information on the potential effectiveness of some interventions.

As Figure 8 demonstrates, the majority of survey respondents found **reduced student-teacher ratios, daily reading blocks, additional in-school instructional time, intervention reading programs, research-based intensive language and vocabulary instruction, weekly on-going progress monitoring, state-approved scientifically-based researched reading curriculum, parental involvement strategies, and after school programs very effective or effective for improving reading outcomes in K-3 students.** In contrast, the majority of respondents reported **before-school, summer school, and Saturday programs only somewhat effective or ineffective.**
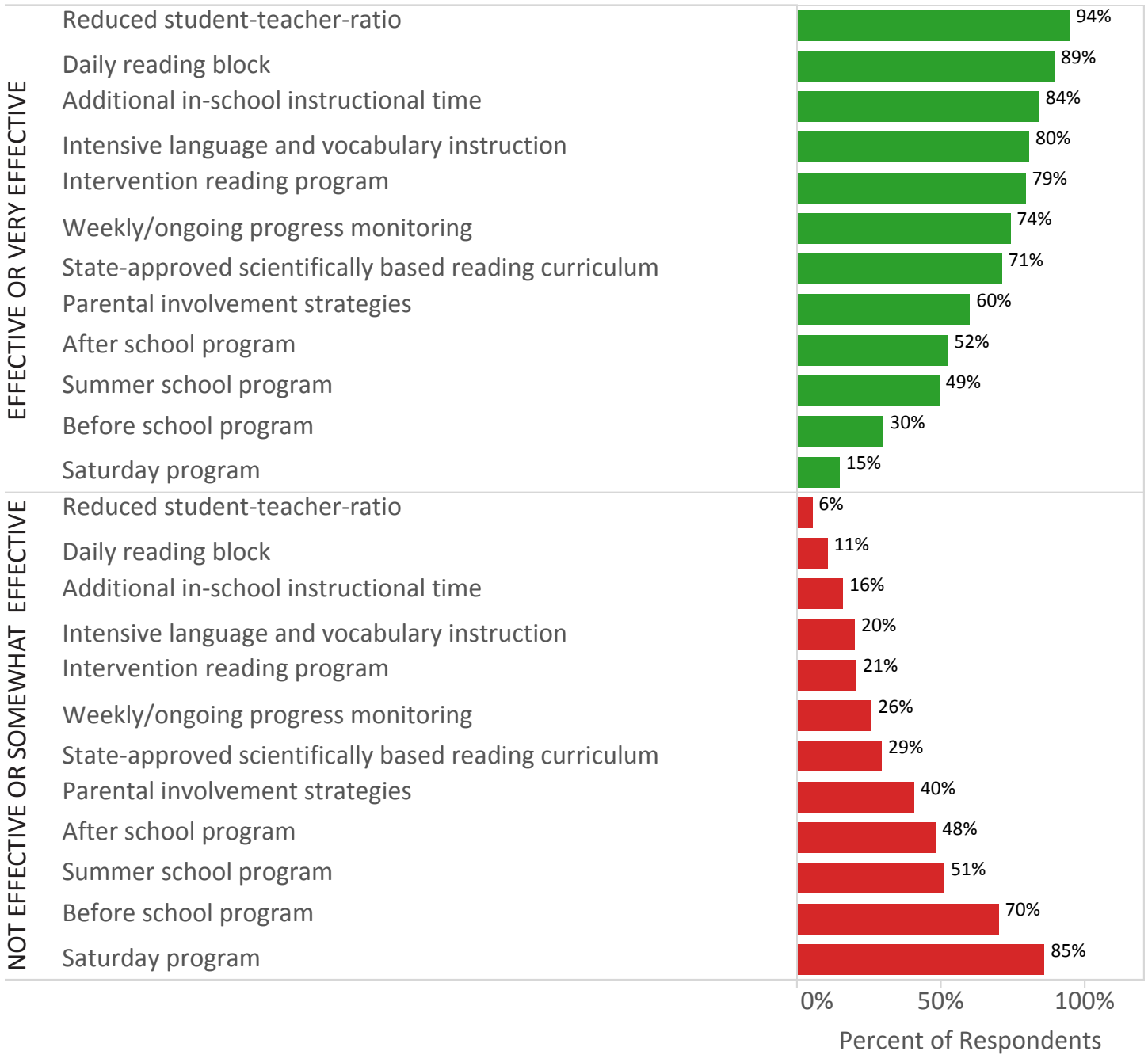
The overwhelming positive impressions of these interventions among teachers are promising. **It is especially encouraging, moreover, that teachers overwhelmingly found the use of daily reading blocks and weekly, on-going progress monitoring to be effective or very effective**, as the state legislation requires the use of both these activities. The findings of this study therefore support the continued use of these practices.

These results, furthermore, suggest that **additional and more robust research on interventions such as reading intervention programs and reduced student-teacher ratios would be beneficial.** Such research could determine if these interventions are actually leading to higher reading achievement. If positive results were found, this research could help us understand the characteristics of successful interventions as well as the populations they work best for.

Finally, **additional evidence on specific interventions elements and implementation strategies that are most effective in improving reading outcomes is necessary.** The design, implementation and efficacy of interventions such as after-school programs, for example, vary greatly. Thus, in order to more effectively share knowledge of best practices among educators in Oklahoma, it is necessary to have more detail regarding the interventions as well as the factors that support or hinder their successful implementation.

FIGURE 8: EFFECTIVENESS OF SUPPLEMENTAL/REMEDIAL SERVICES AND SUPPORTS

To what extent do you think the following supplemental/remedial services and supports are effective for the success of your K-3 students?

EFFECTIVE OR VERY EFFECTIVE

Service	Percent
Reduced student-teacher-ratio	94%
Daily reading block	89%
Additional in-school instructional time	84%
Intensive language and vocabulary instruction	80%
Intervention reading program	79%
Weekly/ongoing progress monitoring	74%
State-approved scientifically based reading curriculum	71%
Parental involvement strategies	60%
After school program	52%
Summer school program	49%
Before school program	30%
Saturday program	15%

NOT EFFECTIVE OR SOMEWHAT EFFECTIVE

Service	Percent
Reduced student-teacher-ratio	6%
Daily reading block	11%
Additional in-school instructional time	16%
Intensive language and vocabulary instruction	20%
Intervention reading program	21%
Weekly/ongoing progress monitoring	26%
State-approved scientifically based reading curriculum	29%
Parental involvement strategies	40%
After school program	48%
Summer school program	51%
Before school program	70%
Saturday program	85%

Percent of Respondents

LIMITATIONS

Data on the instructional practices, instructional methods, remediation efforts, and reading resource access were available only at the district level, not the student level, so linking specific interventions to specific students was not possible. Also, it was not possible to accurately identify the time students spent with the intervention. Finally, data on reading resource access outside of school were reported by educators, not parents, so it is likely that not all reading resources outside of school were identified.

DISSEMINATION

Per subsection C of Section 1210.508G of Title 70, this report, including recommendations for best practices, was shared with districts. The report was sent to districts through the superintendent's listserv and principal's listserv and posted on SDE webpage. Policy briefs highlighting the main findings of this report will also be prepared and disseminated in 2017.

CONCLUSION

This report provides information concerning three major questions. First, how does reading proficiency and retention vary by socio-economic status, learning disability status, ELL status, and race? Second, what interventions do districts use to improve reading outcomes? Third, what are some of the best instructional practices available that help students become successful readers for statewide implementation?

The study found that FRL, IEP, African American, Hispanic, and ELL students score lower on reading third grade reading tests relative to their peers, on average. Since the RSA targets students who are not reading at proficiency, the policy therefore disproportionately impacts these groups. It is important to better understand the root causes of inequity among these groups and develop interventions that best address their needs.

Additionally, among students identified for retention, FRL, African American, Hispanic and ELL students were disproportionately retained relative to their non-FRL, non-minority, non-ELL peers. This means that not only are these groups more likely to score unsatisfactory on the third grade reading exams, they are also more likely to be retained if they do. Further research should explore these higher retention rates of FRL, minority, and ELL students as compared to their peers with the same third grade reading performance.

The study found that screening assessments and periodic monitoring are being used by all districts. **STAR, DIBELS NEXT, and the Literacy First Battery of Screening Assessments were the most frequently used screening assessments. Running Records, Woodcock-Johnson III Diagnostic Reading Battery (WJ-III), and Words Their Way were among the most popular assessments for periodic monitoring. Educators reported using these assessments more frequently than is actually required by law.** The overwhelming majority of teachers also reported that they found these assessments effective or very effective at improving reading outcomes for K-3 students, which supports the continued use of screening assessments and periodic monitoring.

This report also highlighted the **use of a wide variety of reading instructional strategies.** The top four activities teachers reported spending moderate or considerable time doing were demonstrating or modeling reading processes for their students, leading guided reading or writing practice, having the students work in pairs or small groups, and having the students work individually on assignments. The literature supports the effectiveness of these practices when applied appropriately based on student needs.

Teachers also identified **several effective reading strategies including daily reading blocks, reduced student-teacher ratios, intervention reading programs, weekly on-going progress monitoring, research-based intensive language and vocabulary instruction, state-approved scientifically-based researched reading curriculum, parental involvement strategies, and summer school programs.** They **questioned the usefulness of before-school and Saturday school program.** Due to shortcomings in the data collection, however, additional research needs to be done before drawing firm conclusions about programs.

Finally, the study also found that **students in many districts lacked access to reading services and supports outside of the classroom.** While some districts had public libraries, few reported the existence of community-based tutoring and mentoring programs. It would be beneficial to explore opportunities to further develop some of these resources.

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