Independent Evaluation of the Colorado READ Act Year 1

August 18, 2021

Introduction and Webinar Purpose

Introductions:

- Joseph McCrary, Associate Director for Research and Evaluation, WestEd
- Anji Gallanos, Director, Preschool through Third Grade Office
- Tammy Yetter, READ Act Implementation Project Manager, Preschool through Third Grade Office

Purpose:

- To provide a high-level overview of the READ Act Implementation Evaluation conducted by WestEd

- Share links to individual reports with the field

Questions:

- As we complete discussion of each topic there will be designated time for participants to **enter questions in the Q & A feature** that are related to that specific topic.

For Questions after the Webinar:

- Please email readact@cde.state.co.us

Today's Recording and PowerPoint:

- Will be posted by end of day tomorrow on the READ Act-Independent Evaluation of Colorado READ webpage

External Evaluator

By October 1, 2019, CDE must issue a request for proposals to contract with an entity to act as an independent evaluator to provide independent evaluations of the use of per-pupil intervention money and money received through the early literacy grant program by local education providers and to conduct a multi-year evaluation to determine whether student outcomes achieved by local education providers in implementing the READ Act meet the goals of the READ Act.

C.R.S. 22-7-1209 (8)(a)

West Ed

Independent Evaluation of the Colorado READ Act:
First-Year Results

Presentation to the Colorado State Board of Education

Joseph McCrary

Linda Friedrich

Evaluation Questions

- To what extent does the material review process result in instructional programs, professional development, and assessments that meet the requirements of the READ Act?

- How are districts and schools implementing READ Act provisions?

- To what extent do students identified with a significant reading deficiency achieve reading proficiency by third grade?

Material Review Process

Develop criteria for instructional programs, professional development programs, and assessments

SB 19-199 requirements

Additional professional standards

Examine evidence supplied by vendors and in EdReports and What Works Clearinghouse

Interviews with CDE staff and contractors

Implementation and Outcomes Process

1

Review finance data for Per Pupil and Early Literacy Grants

2

Conduct statewide inventories of all districts that received Per Pupil Funds and all schools that received Early Literacy Grants

3

Conduct 28 virtual site visits with Early Literacy Grants schools (16) and schools in districts that only received Per Pupil funds (12)

READ Act Strengths

The materials CDE approved for use with READ Act funds in 2020 meet the minimum requirements of SB 19-199

	Fully Met	Largely Met	Partially Met	Did Not Meet / Not Rated
Assessments	6	7	2	0
Instructional Programs	46	18	3	0 / 1
Professional Development Programs	6	0	0	0
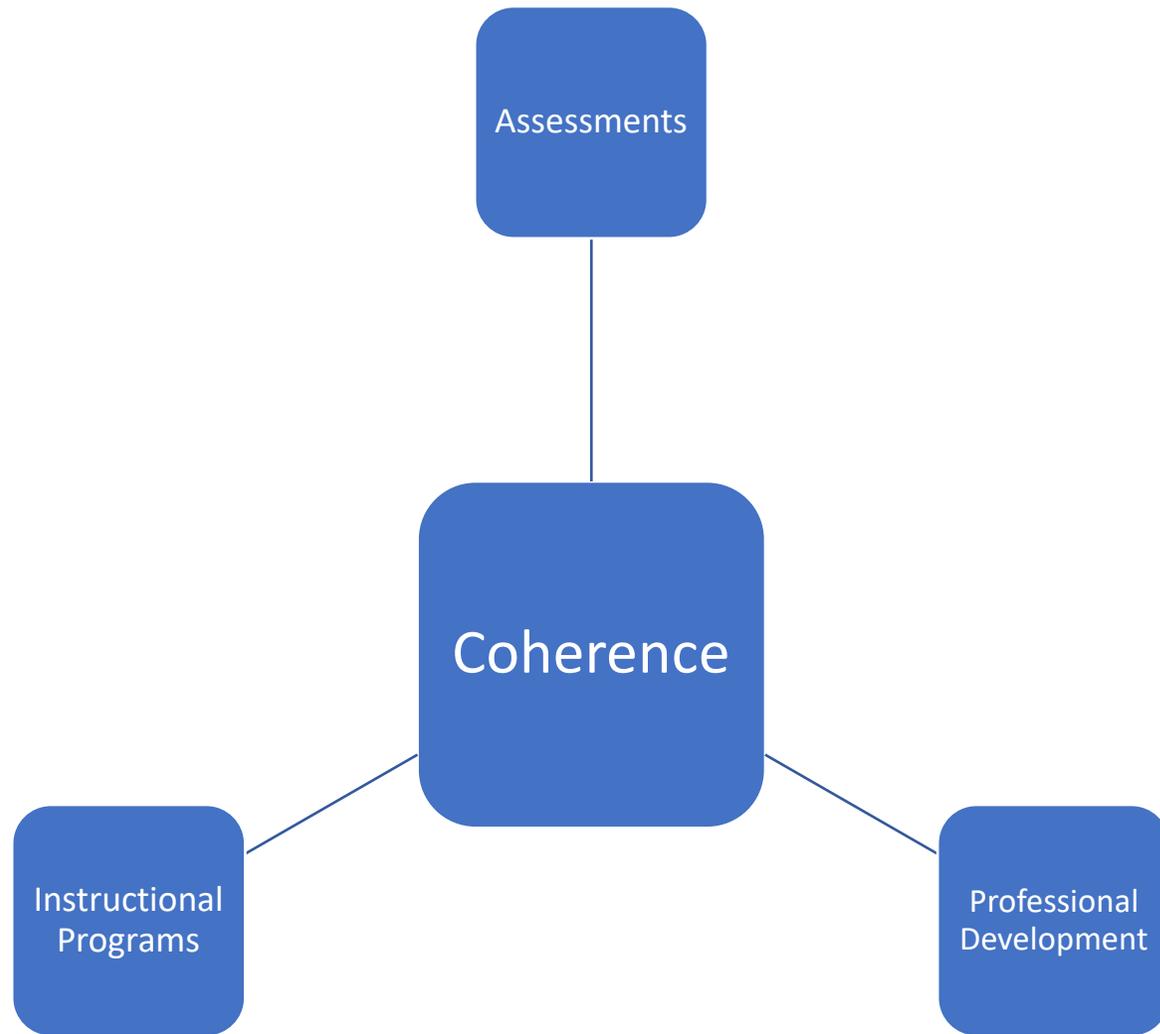
Overall Approaches to Reading

Educators whose tenure predates the READ Act indicate that it led to a significant increase in the amount of classroom time spent on reading.

The READ Act also led to an increase in data-informed, tiered approaches to reading instruction and interventions.

This has led to a "common language" used across Colorado among educators regarding the three tiers as well as common terminology. Common language and terminology are useful for supporting more consistent application of instructional practices.

MTSS Approach to Reading

IEPs

Additional Supports

Core Literacy Block

Early Literacy Grants

Transformational in changing how schools approach K-3 literacy instruction

Approaches are layered and complementary, integrating at least two of:

| external literacy consultants | internal literacy experts | teacher training | updated literacy materials |

Challenges with the READ Act

English Learners

CDE has successfully identified Spanish-language materials

Nearly half of approved assessments are normed for Spanish-speaking students

All but one IP in Spanish includes the required reading components

CDE less successful identifying instructional materials in English that offer differentiated support

Especially true of interventions and supplemental programs

Site visit participants are concerned about improperly diagnosing EL students as having an SRD

Students with Disabilities

Small number of approved assessments, instructional programs, and professional development programs support students with disabilities

Assessments from vendors with large-scale systems more likely to include evidence demonstrating appropriate accommodations

Only 7 supplemental and 3 intervention programs provided evidence that their materials could be differentiated for students with disabilities

Variation in Evidence during Materials Review

- Alignment and Effectiveness
- Assessments varied from well-run alignment studies to highlighted copies of the state standards
- Instructional Programs reflected minimum standards for K-3 reading
  - Did not fully reflect drawing inferences and making connections beyond text
- Few Instructional Programs and Professional Development Programs submitted high quality RCTs and QEDs
  - Most relied on logic models

Human Capital

Site visit participants consistently indicated the critical importance of providing adequate training to address:

- Lack of adequate training in the five core elements of literacy instruction
- Lack of qualified teaching candidates

Teachers require training to ensure:

- Understanding the research behind effective K-3 literacy instruction
- Understanding the mechanisms by which children acquire and retain reading skills
- Consistently use terminology across classrooms, grades, and schools
- Grounding in the most up-to-date research
- Capacity to administer assessments and use data to design appropriate reading interventions

Impact of Materials Review Process on Districts

Site visit schools indicated that they appreciate the guidance offered by CDE's advisory lists

However, site visit schools indicated challenges when **previously approved** instructional programs no longer appear on the advisory lists

They found high financial, time, and human capital costs of switching from previously approved programs to new programs

READ Plan Development and Implementation

READ Plan development perceived to be compliance-oriented, duplicative, and/or burdensome

Overlap/ conflict with other student support plans

Schools with consistent staff support (such as a reading interventionist or coach) tend to indicate there is higher consistency and fidelity

Third Grade Proficiency of SRDs

Proficiency rates of third-grade students who had at any time been identified with a significant reading deficiency increased gradually but remained very low

Year	CMAS ELA Proficiency Rate
2014-15	0.71%
2015-16	1.30%
2016-17	2.62%
2017-18	3.56%
2018-19	4.41%

Students' SRD Designations by Year

	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Remained Yes SRD	16,205	16,945	17,896	18,264
No SRD to Yes SRD	12,204	12,893	12,015	12,515
Yes SRD to No SRD	7,626	7,728	8,353	7,263
Remained No SRD	140,865	137,632	141,984	139,482

SRD Status of 2015-16 Kindergarten Cohort (starting n = 14,186)

This chart illustrates the pathways of any student who was identified as having a significant reading deficiency
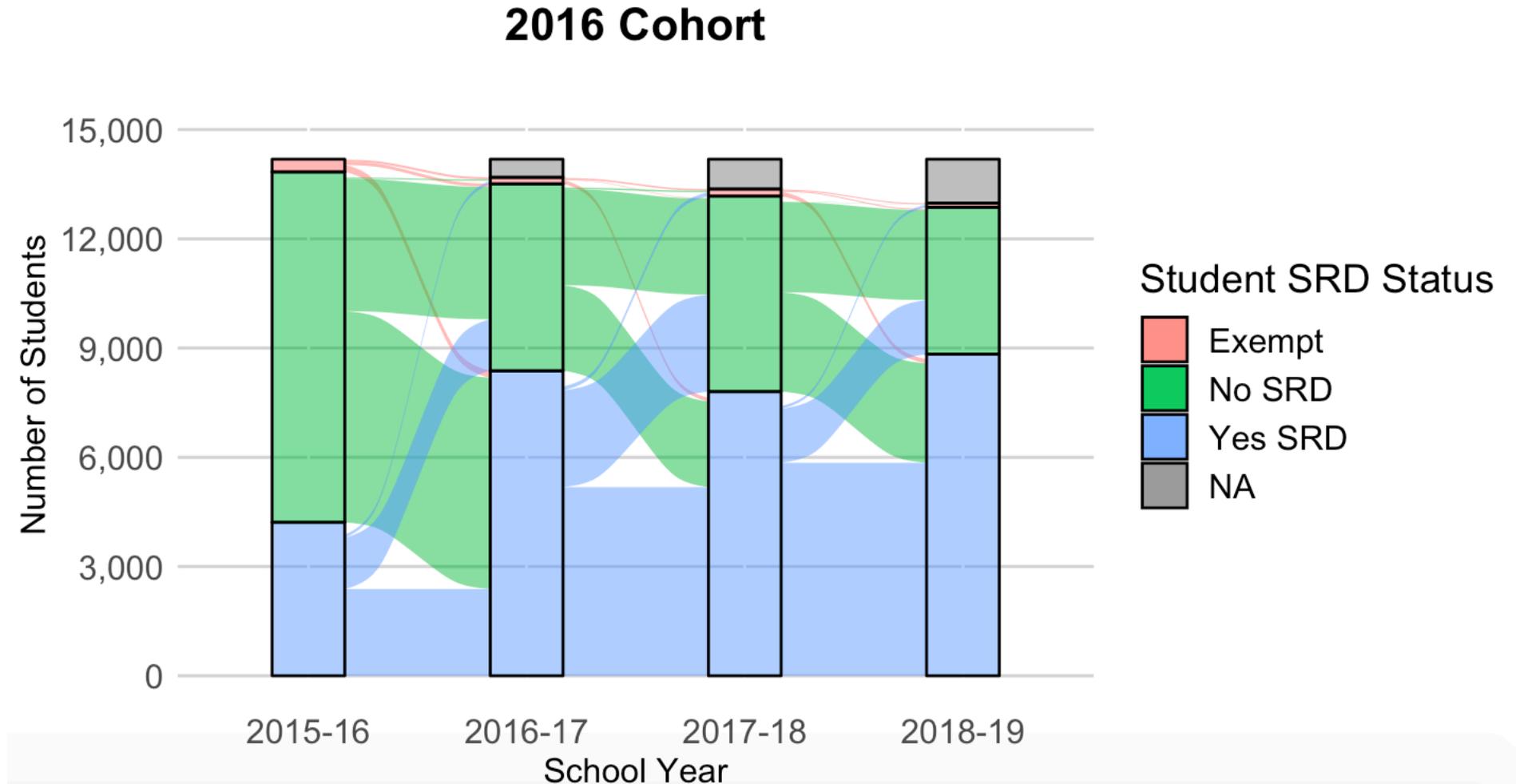
K-3 Assessments and Growth to Standard

- Current assessment system characterized by many assessments in use

- Leads to questions about correct identification of SRD

- Challenging to develop growth to standard measures

Recommendations

Programmatic Recommendations

Examine	Examine processes to either extend the approval of materials or support schools and districts who need to make instructional and/or assessment changes **due to changes in approvals**
Develop and disseminate	Develop and disseminate information about SRD identification procedures for English learners
Establish	Establish appropriate baselines for appropriate research and alignment evidence bases
Provide	Provide guidance to vendors about supporting comprehension and inference beyond the text as well as diverse authorship and representation
Consider	Consider processes to designate instructional programs that offer full differentiation for English learners and professional development programs that focus on supports for English learners

Recommendations for the Evaluation

Examine policy & program alignment across CDE divisions and programs that impact K-3 reading education

Convene a psychometric panel to address questions around growth to standard

Study effective practices in addressing the literacy needs of English learners

Identify and document best practices for human resources challenges

Questions

Accessing the READ Act Implementation Evaluation

Full Report and Materials Review

READ Act – Independent Evaluation of Colorado READ

- READ Act – [Independent Evaluation of Colorado READ webpage](#)

- Two Main Folders:

  - READ Act Instructional Program, Professional Development and Assessment Review Materials

  - Review of Per-Pupil Expenditures

- Notes
  - **Materials Reviews**
    - CDE and West Ed used two different rubrics to review materials.
    - West Ed only reviewed program materials that were either already on the CDE Advisory List, or that required review because of COVID delays.
    - Some vendors on the CDE Advisory List did not submit materials for a West Ed review.
  - **Per Pupil Expenditures**
    - The 3rd Party Evaluation did not include a requirement to review detailed fiscal forensic analysis of READ Act expenditures.

Website

- Web Walk

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