

From Phonics to Fluency: Mapping Early Literacy in Mountain View Whisman School District

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CAPSTONE PRESENTATION

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PRESENTATION OUTLINE

1. **Context**
2. **Project Questions**
3. **Design and Methodology**
4. **Findings**
5. **Recommendations**

CONTEXT

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Mountain View Whisman School District (MVWSD)

- Small, K-8 public school district in Mountain View, CA.
- Drop in early literacy scores, particularly among low SES students & students of color.

In the 2023-2024 school year, MVWSD piloted a science of reading-based curriculum in 4 elementary schools.

- Meadowbrook (377 students)
- Willow Creek (270 students)
- Pineview (270 students)
- Lakeside (316 students)

**Note: The schools were selected based upon literacy scores.*

CONTEXT

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MVWSD piloted Orton-Gillingham (OG) curriculum in newly implemented Tier 2 reading intervention classrooms.

The pilot:

- Administer iReady diagnostic screeners to all K-3 students in targeted schools.
- Identify students below reading proficiency.
- Pull out identified students into small, Tier 2 reading intervention classrooms.
- Provide OG instruction in Tier 2 classrooms.
- Monitor for growth in early literacy among students.

**Note: Tier 1 general education teachers were not directed to implement the OG curriculum.*

PROJECT QUESTIONS

1. To what extent is the science of reading (OG) curriculum implemented with fidelity?



1. What is the role of parents in reading instruction?



1. To what extent are literacy practices culturally relevant?



KEY CITATIONS

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Project Question #1: To what extent is the science of reading (OG) curriculum implemented with fidelity?

The Science of Reading

- Rudolph Flesch (1955)
- Jeanne Chall (1967)
- P. Gough & W. Tumer (1986)
- Hollis Scarborough (2001)

Literacy Instruction

- Horace Mann (1835)
- S. Orton & A. Gillingham (1935)
- I. Fountas & G. Pinnell (1996)
- James Kim (2008)

Literacy Landscape

- National Reading Panel (2000)
- James Kim (2008)
- “Mississippi Model” (2019)

KEY CITATIONS

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Project Question #2: What is the role of parents in reading instruction?

Literacy Outcomes

- Guest, Freeman, Domitrovich & Welsh (2004)
- Bus & Van Ijzendoorn (1995)

Family Engagement and Inclusion

- Pellegrini (1995)
- Anne Henderson (2007)

KEY CITATIONS

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Project Question #3: To what extent are literacy practices culturally relevant?

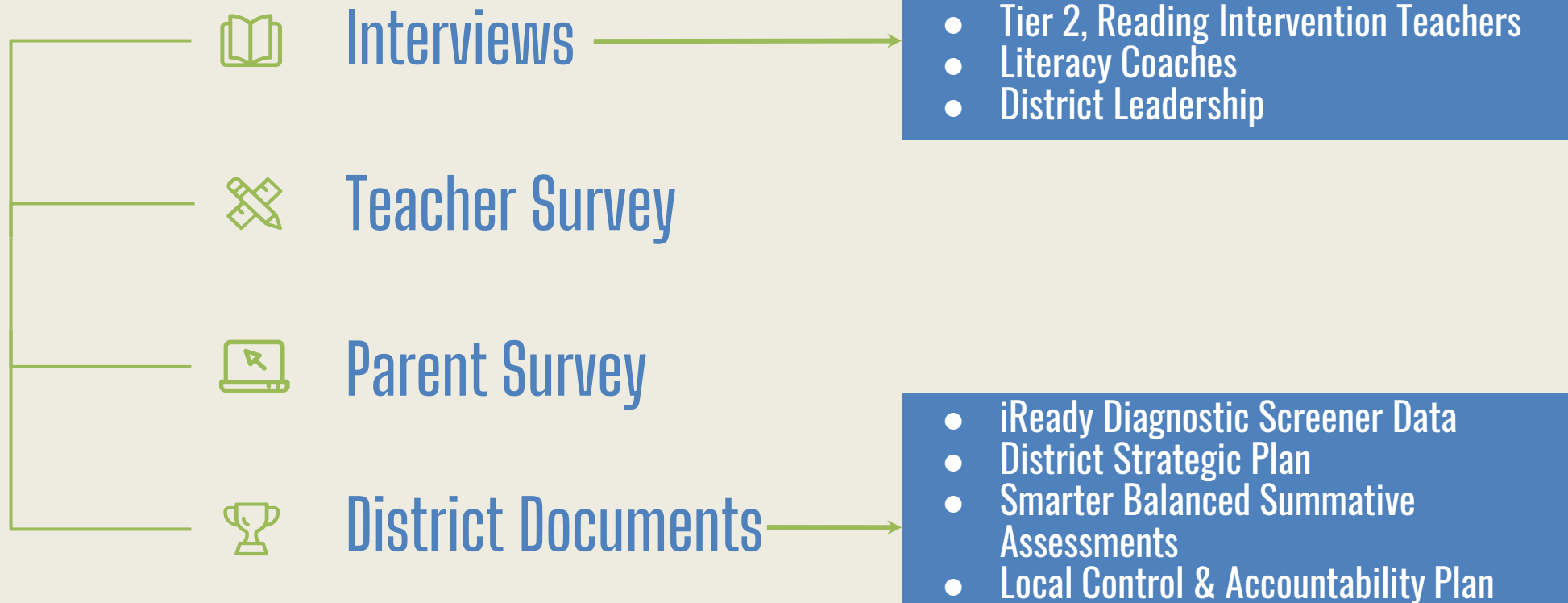
Cultural Relevance & Representation

- Domitrovich & Welsh (2004)
- Tanya Christ (2020)

DESIGN & METHODOLOGY

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To fully examine the three project questions in a rigorous and systematic manner, a mixed-methods research design was utilized.



DESIGN & METHODOLOGY

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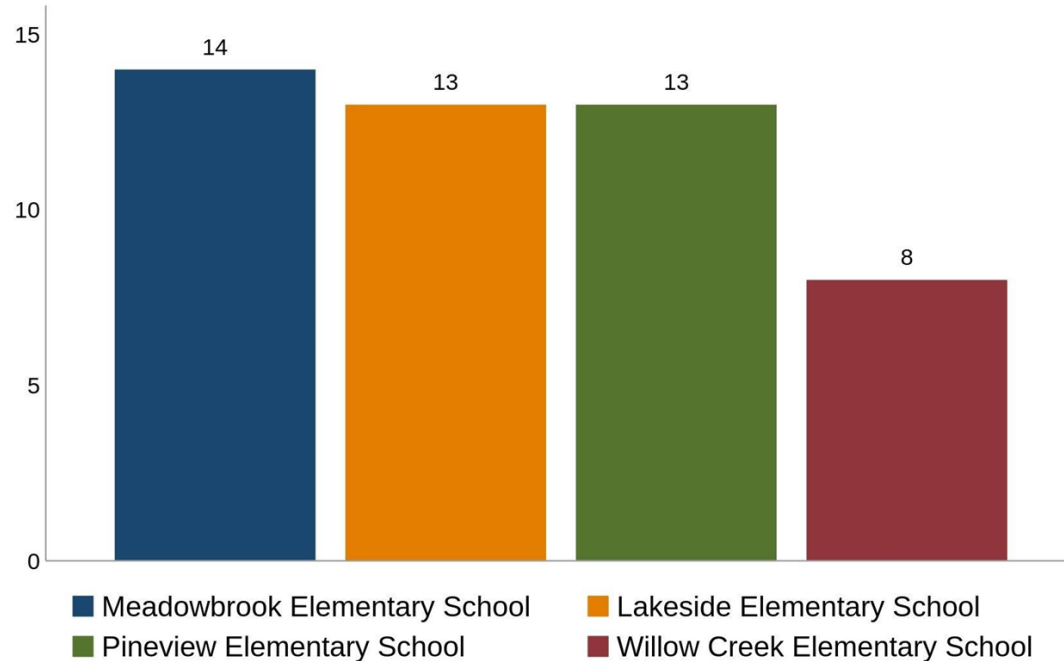
Parent & Teacher Surveys

- Questions constructed from previously developed and scaled surveys, including those developed by:
 - Ohio Curriculum Support (stakeholder feedback survey)
 - RAND Corporation (American Instructional Resources Survey (AIRS) Project)
 - New York University Research Alliance
 - National Center for Improving Literacy
- Surveys fielded for 6 weeks
 - 12 teachers across priority schools responded for a 40% response rate
 - 54 parents responded for a 2% response rate

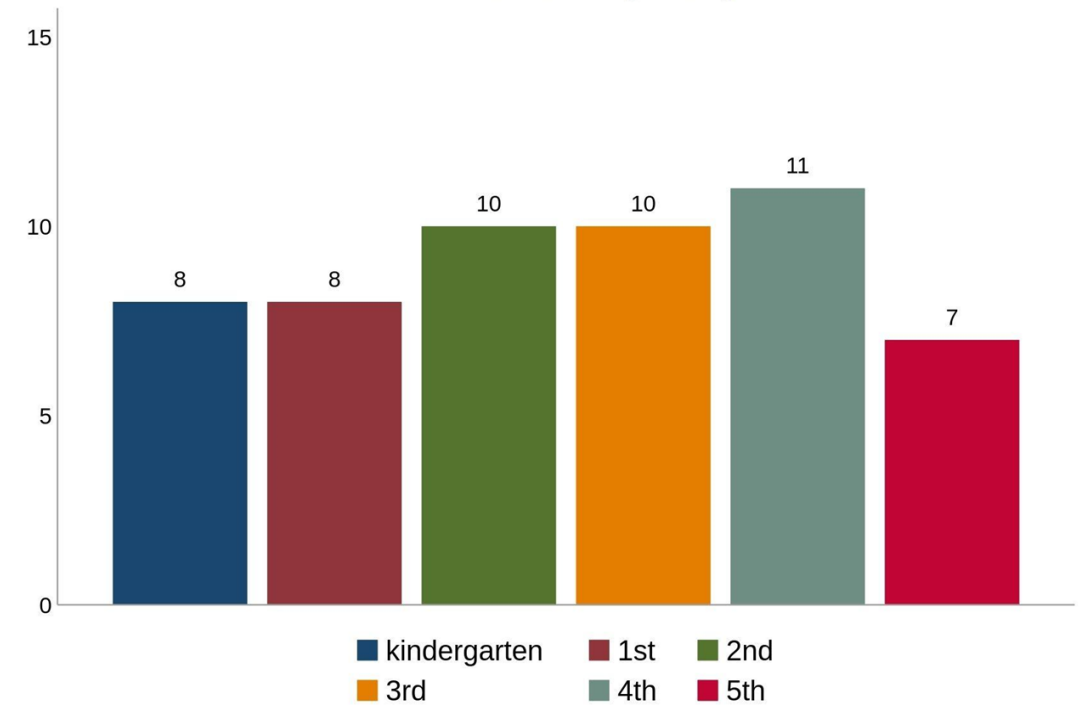
PARENT RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

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Parent Survey Breakdown
School Site (n=48)



Grade Level (n=54)

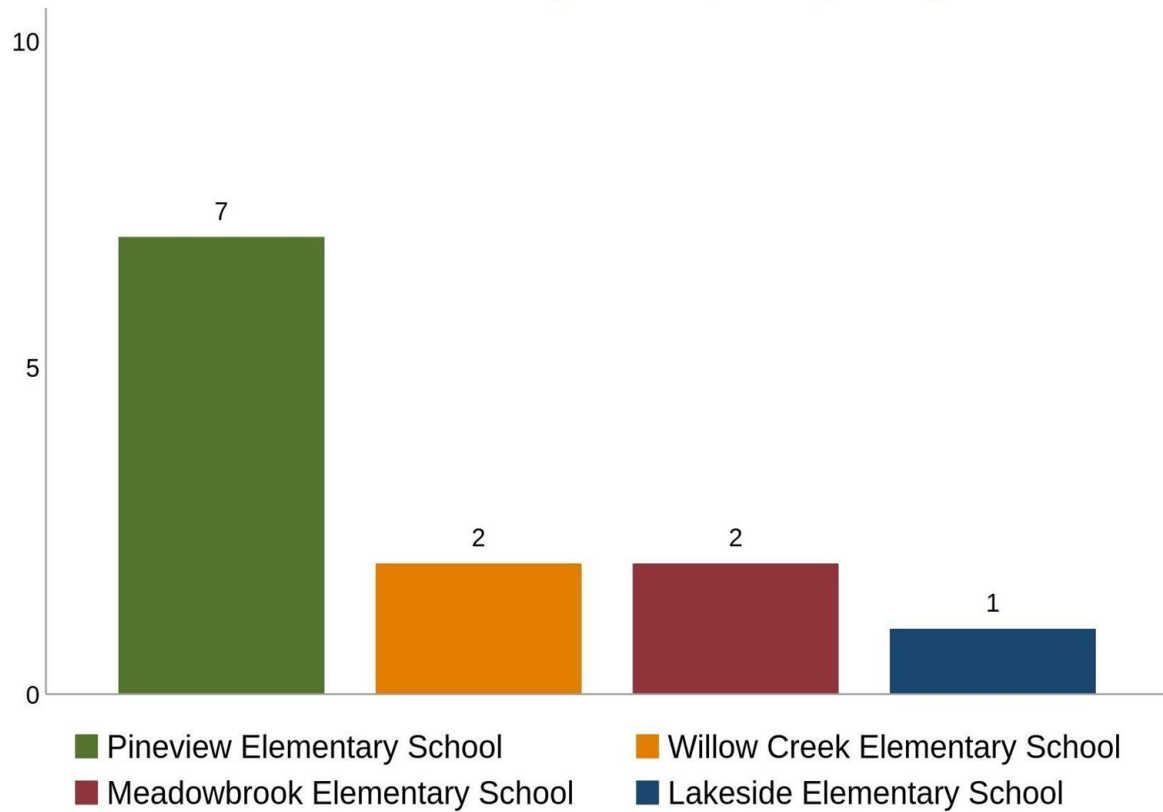


**** Please note that the survey gave the option to select grades 4 and 5 for parents having multiple children, but the study only focused on grades K-3.

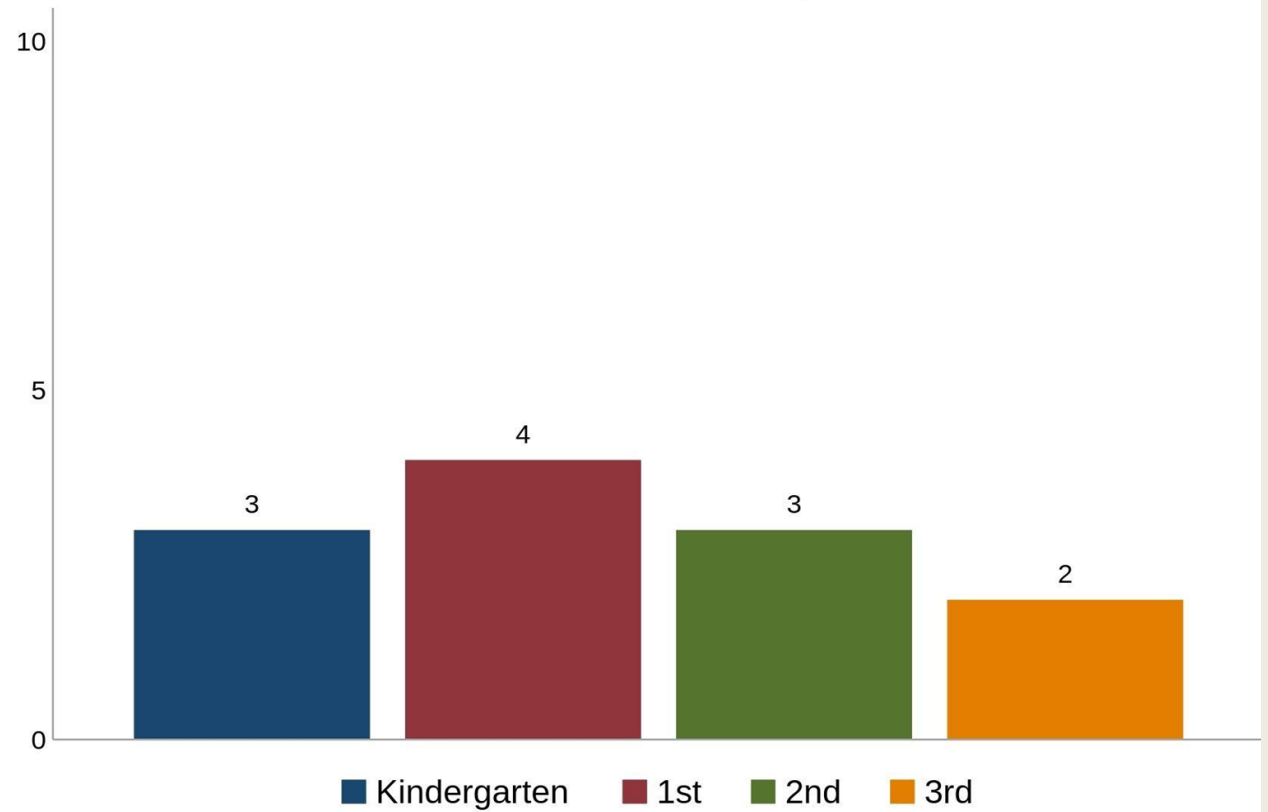
TEACHER RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

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Teacher Survey Breakdown (n=12)



Grade Level Taught (n=12)



DESIGN & METHODOLOGY

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- **Observations**

- Tier 2, Reading Intervention Classrooms
- Tier 1, General Education Classrooms
 - Meadowbrook
 - Willow Creek
 - Pineview
 - Lakeside

- **Interviews**

- Director of Literacy
- Multi-tiered student support coordinator
- Instructional coaches
- Tier 1 General education teachers
- Tier 2 reading intervention teachers
- Literacy intervention teams

PROJECT QUESTION #1

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**TO WHAT EXTENT IS THE SCIENCE OF READING (OG)
CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTED WITH FIDELITY?**

FINDING #1: ORTON-GILLINGHAM CURRICULUM IS IMPLEMENTED WITH FIDELITY IN TIER 2 CLASSROOMS

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Observations

- Tier 2 intervention classrooms exercised fidelity to the Orton-Gillingham curriculum by providing literacy instruction that is explicit, systematic, cumulative, and diagnostic.
 - Provided tailored student learning that utilized tactile and engaging classroom strategies.

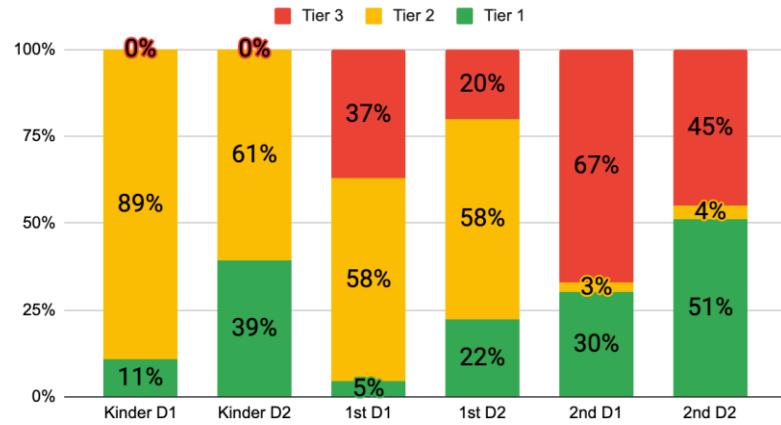
“We observed students learning letter sounds, transcribing the sounds in written form to their corresponding letters, then applying words to a physical symbol of the word’s meaning. Teachers first instructed students to “sound out” the letter “C” before writing the letter “C” in sand, and finally by selecting objects that corresponded to the letter “C.” Students build their knowledge of phonetic awareness before honing phonics and transcribing their knowledge to vocabulary.”

-Research Team

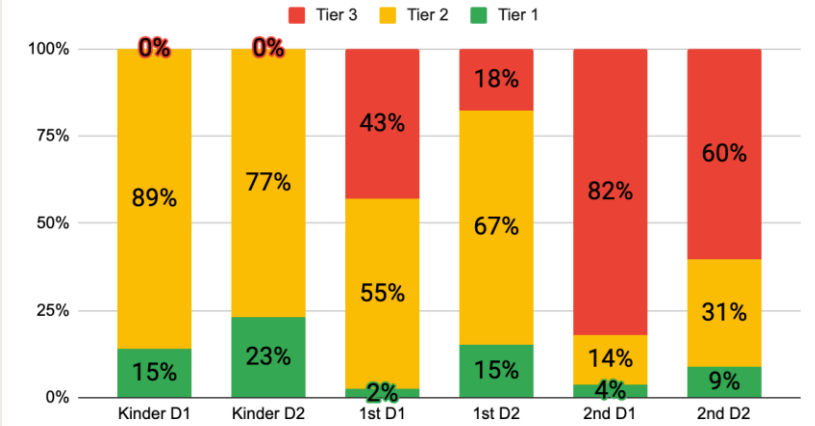
Reading Intervention iReady Data (M,WC,P,L)

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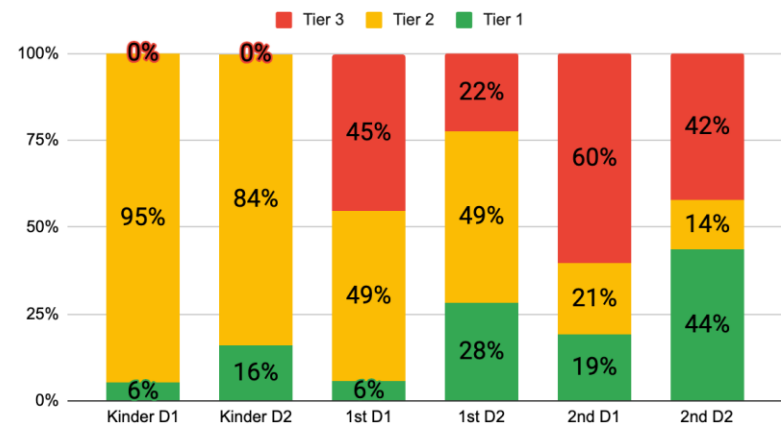
Phonological Awareness



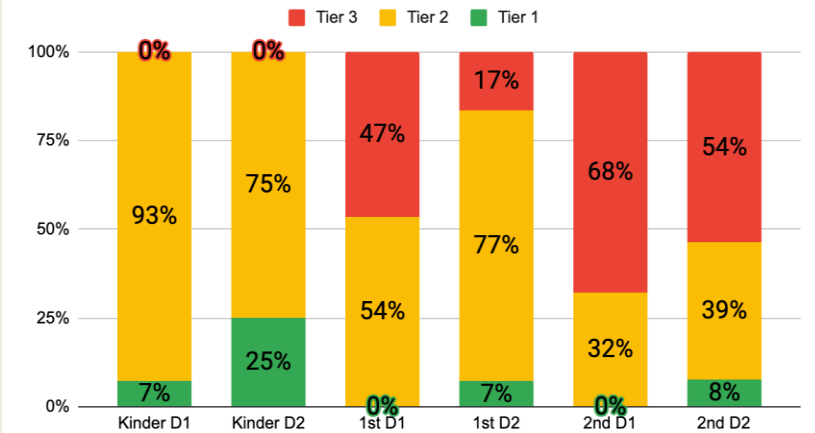
Phonics



High Frequency Words



iReady Overall



FINDING #2: GENERAL EDUCATION CLASSROOMS HAVE LOW IMPLEMENTATION OF OG LITERACY INSTRUCTION

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● Observations

- Misaligned to Tier 2 Reading Intervention Classrooms
 - Reliance on Benchmark Curriculum
 - Whole Language Approach
 - Balanced Literacy Approach
 - Whole group instruction
 - Limited sensory engagement

“There's other classrooms where they're just following the district curriculum, and so what I'm teaching is offset from what they're teaching [in Tier 2 classrooms].”
- Tier 2 Reading Interventionist

FINDING #2: GENERAL EDUCATION CLASSROOMS HAVE LOW IMPLEMENTATION OF OG LITERACY INSTRUCTION

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● Interviews

- Intervention blocks intended for students not to miss instruction
- Students missing core instruction
- However, there are iReady gains for students in Tier 2 classrooms

“Students are missing so much core instruction that I’m just not able to address correctly, because they see them four days a week for 45 minutes after transition time. And it’s still not enough. It’s working well but I think it truly is a whole group instruction type.”

- Tier 2 Reading Interventionist

FINDING #3: CURRENT DISTRICT STRUCTURES DO NOT SUPPORT THE INTEGRATION OF THE ORTON-GILLINGHAM CURRICULUM BETWEEN GENERAL EDUCATION AND TIER 2 INSTRUCTION

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● Observations

- District structures do not specifically encourage general education teachers to interact with reading interventionists in a manner that influences instruction for targeted students.
- Teachers do not have the opportunity to observe one another implementing literacy curriculum.
- Reading interventionists are not expected to interact with general education teachers.
- Reading interventionists do not have consistent opportunities to share data, review strategies, or align approaches.

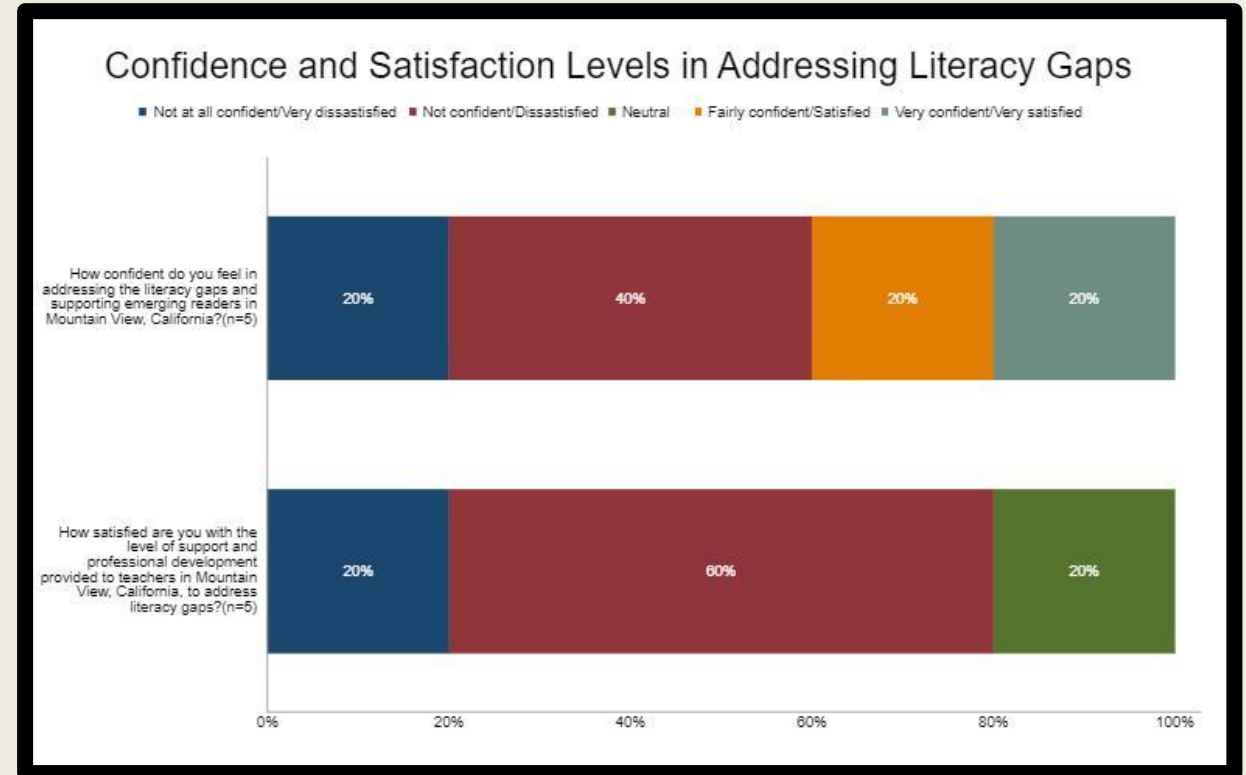
“There are gaps that need to be addressed in the general curriculum for the balanced approach to reading, but moving to a structured literacy approach in general education classrooms will be difficult. General education classes are behind the intervention team, and are not meeting the needs of all learners.”

- District Instructional Coach

FINDING #3: CURRENT DISTRICT STRUCTURES DO NOT SUPPORT THE INTEGRATION OF THE ORTON-GILLINGHAM CURRICULUM BETWEEN GENERAL EDUCATION AND TIER 2 INSTRUCTION

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- There is a consensus (83%) from teachers that they assess student literacy progress on a regular basis and use a variety of instructional strategies to teach literacy skills.
- However...
 - 60% of teachers are not confident in supporting emergent readers.
 - 80% are not satisfied with the level of support they receive to address literacy gaps.



FINDING #4: TEACHERS REQUIRE ADEQUATE TOOLS TO TEACH LITERACY CURRICULUM IN THEIR CLASSROOMS

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● Observations

- Teachers may be reluctant to implement the new OG method.
- Teachers feel challenged as the approach to literacy instruction is shifting to the science of reading.
- Teachers demonstrate a willingness to pivot toward science of reading-based instruction if educators are given the knowledge and training to do so.

“ I believe and say there will probably be continued criticism, but I think at the end of the day, we have a team of people who will show up for kids and so I don't anticipate pushback. And I think the good thing is we regularly get feedback from the principals based on the feedback they get from their staff. And so we modify pieces and adapt pieces, and I think that that helps with buy in. So I definitely don't anticipate pushback, but just constructive feedback and criticism which I'm okay with.”

- Multi-tiered Support Coordinator

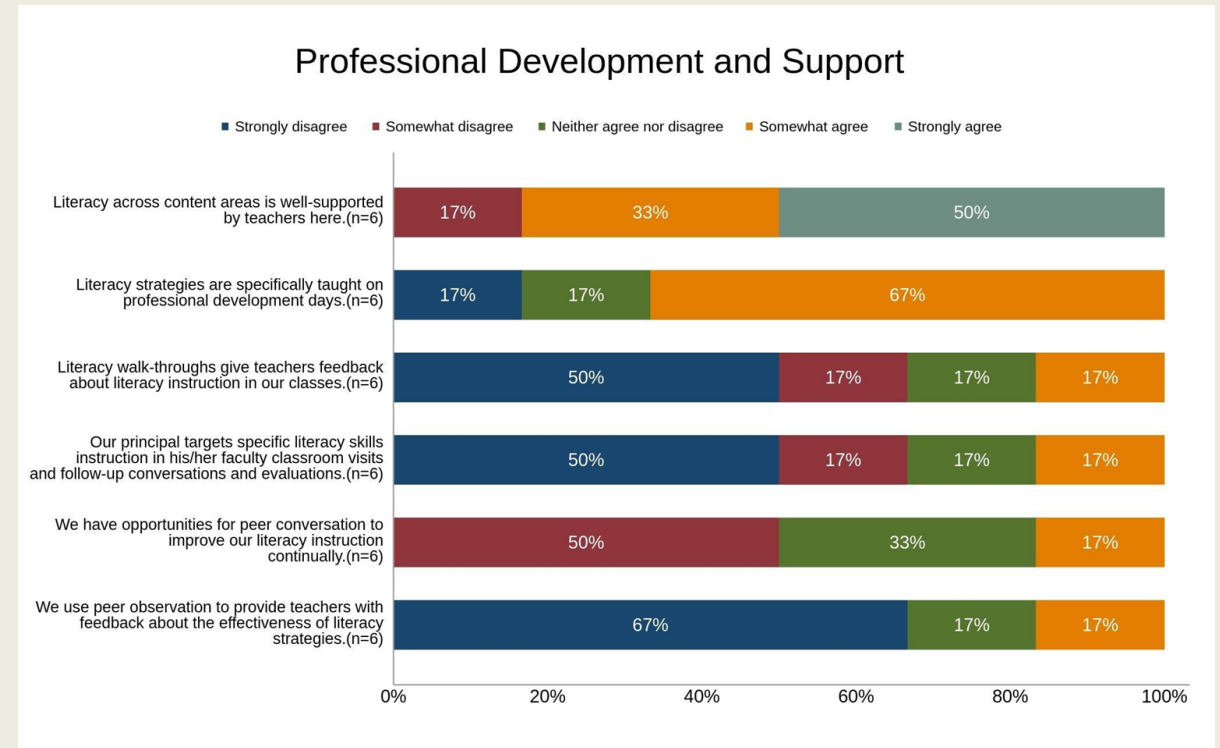
“I am trained in both [Balanced Literacy and OG curriculum], and the school principal gave the autonomy to choose which method, and I chose Orton-Gillingham.”

- Tier 1 Educator

FINDING #4: TEACHERS REQUIRE ADEQUATE TOOLS TO TEACH LITERACY CURRICULUM IN THEIR CLASSROOMS

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- 67% percent of teachers strongly disagree on the level of support from admin, such as targeted specific literacy skill instruction in classroom visits and follow-up conversations and evaluations.
- 50% of teachers strongly disagree that they “have opportunities for peer conversations to improve literacy instruction continually.”
- 67% of teachers strongly disagree with the statement, “We use peer observation to provide teachers with feedback about effectiveness of literacy strategies.”



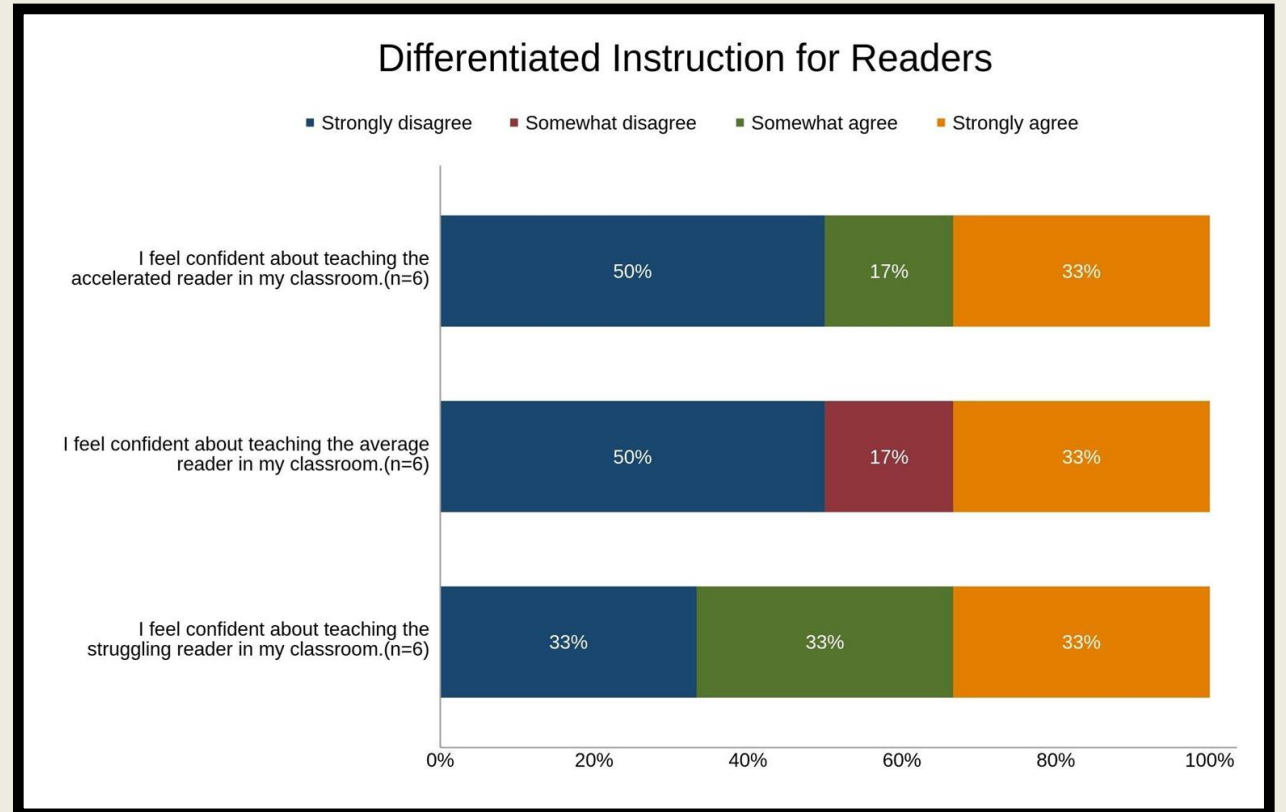
FINDING #4: TEACHERS REQUIRE ADEQUATE TOOLS TO TEACH LITERACY CURRICULUM IN THEIR CLASSROOMS

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- Teachers are not fully confident in teaching the struggling reader.

Right now, the principals are really responsible for the rollout, the communication, which then ultimately affects the perception of these things at the site level. So we've been working with the principals heavily on trying to get some alignment and give them the support that they need. And we do see some differences at the site level.

- Director of Literacy



PROJECT QUESTION #2

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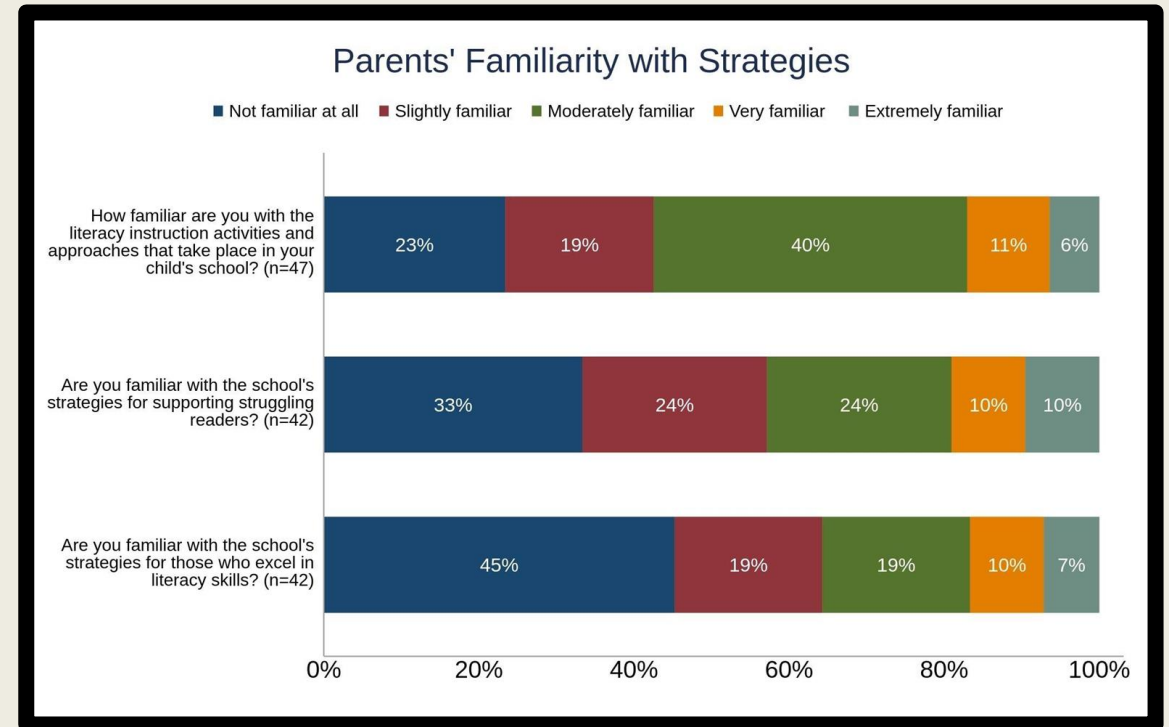
WHAT IS THE ROLE OF PARENTS IN READING INSTRUCTION?

FINDING #5: PARENTS ARE FAMILIAR WITH LITERACY STRATEGIES BUT WOULD LIKE TO PARTICIPATE IN MORE SCHOOL-LED LITERACY ACTIVITIES AND WORKSHOPS

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● Parent Surveys

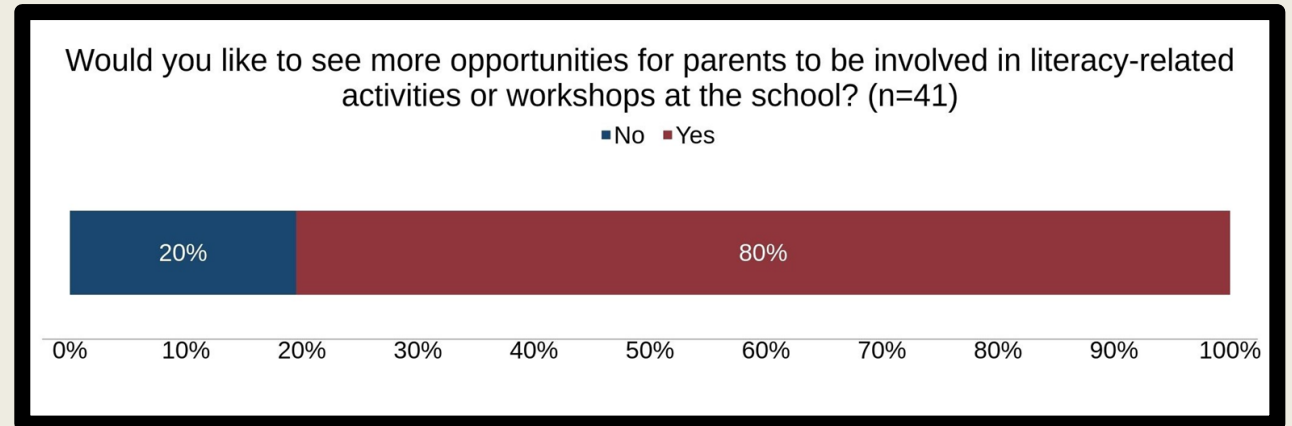
- 57% of parents are familiar with their child's literacy instruction.
- Parents would like to learn more about the school strategies for struggling and excelling readers.



FINDING #5: PARENTS ARE FAMILIAR WITH LITERACY STRATEGIES BUT WOULD LIKE TO PARTICIPATE IN MORE SCHOOL-LED LITERACY ACTIVITIES AND WORKSHOPS

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- 80% of parents would like to have more opportunities to participate in literacy-related activities or workshops at their child's school.



“I haven't gotten much parent involvement in school...But with the rollout this year, we're piloting at one of the schools not my school, a parent night, once a month. They come, they get books not necessarily OG books... having some food, and then strategies for parents to use at home..”

- Tier 1 Teacher

PROJECT QUESTION #3

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TO WHAT EXTENT ARE LITERACY PRACTICES CULTURALLY RELEVANT?

FINDING #6: PARENTS AND TEACHERS AGREE THAT CULTURALLY RELEVANT PRACTICES ARE INCORPORATED INTO LITERACY INSTRUCTION IN THE EARLY GRADES

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Observations

- Cultural relevance is acknowledged and included in daily lessons.
- Classroom libraries and book corners have books of various topics, characters, and reading levels.
- Use of English and Spanish to teach literacy skills.

“One observed reading interventionist took time to discuss alternative names to literacy manipulative objects in order to help student recognition of the object. In this particular classroom, the teacher showed a measuring cup as the sound “cu” was the focus of the activity, and one student identified the item as a scoop. The teacher took the time to understand the reason behind the alternative identification by the student, affirmed his word usage, and presented “measuring cup” as another word for the object.”

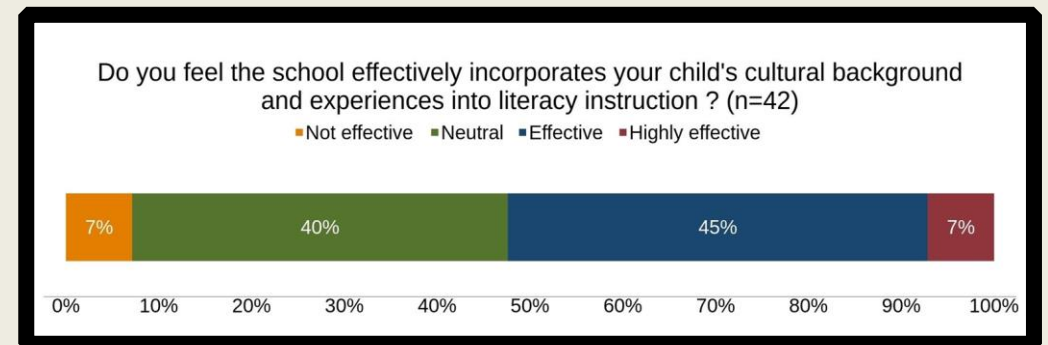
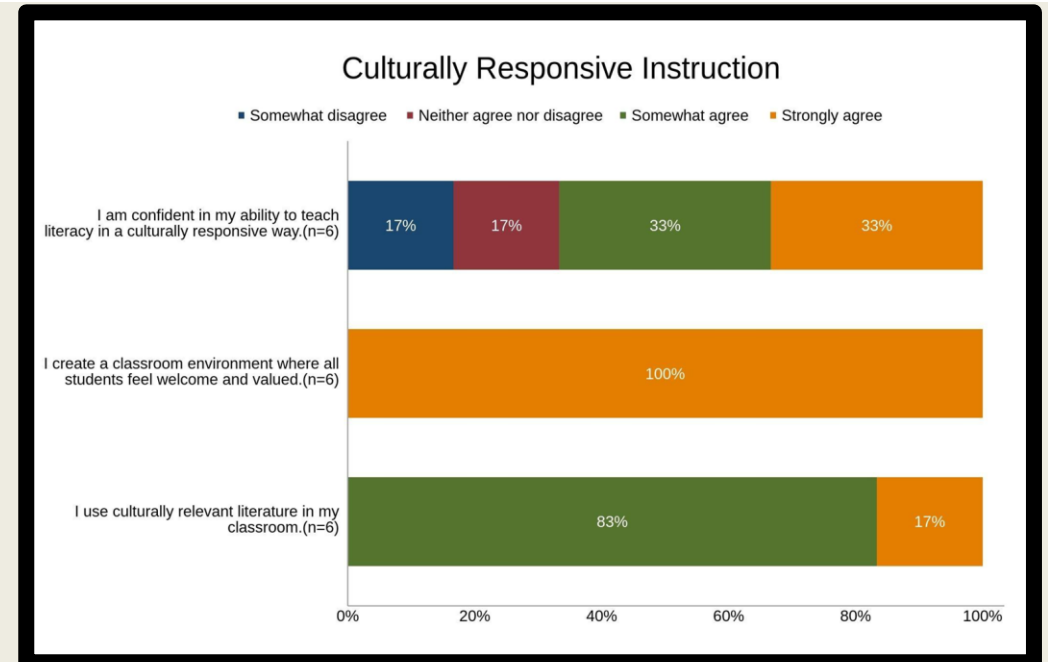
- Research Team

FINDING #6: PARENTS AND TEACHERS AGREE THAT CULTURALLY RELEVANT PRACTICES ARE INCORPORATED INTO LITERACY INSTRUCTION IN THE EARLY GRADES

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Surveys

- All teachers believe that they create a classroom where all students feel welcomed and valued.
- Most teachers are likely to provide culturally responsive instruction in their classrooms.
- Most parents feel that their child's cultural background and experiences are brought into literacy instruction.



RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1. Embrace the Science of Reading**
- 2. Cultivate culturally relevant instruction**
- 3. Empower parents as partners**
- 4. Equip educators with professional development in Orton-Gillingham curriculum**
- 5. Revise the school schedule**
- 6. Establish Professional Learning Communities**
- 7. Ensure sustainability and long-term impact**

QUESTIONS

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