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Presentation to the State Board of Education:  
Statewide Review of Implementation of Literacy Instruction  
Tuesday, September 24, 2024

# Background and Timeline



- **November 2023:** MSDE and AIB pass a joint resolution to commission a statewide evaluation of literacy instruction across all 24 local education agencies (LEAs).
- **January - March 2024:** MILE reviews and provides feedback on all 24 LEA draft K-5 literacy implementation plans, in partnership with AIM Institute for Learning and Research
- **April - June 2024:** MILE research teams conduct interviews, focus groups, and targeted classroom learning visits to review literacy implementation across all LEAs.
- **July 2024:** MILE reviews revised LEA PreK-12 literacy plans.
- **June - August 2024:** MILE provides individual reports to each LEA on PK-5 literacy planning and implementation. Finalizes 6-12 reviews for LEAs.
- **August 2024:** MILE provides statewide analysis and recommendations.

# Approach and Methodology

*MILE's approach to data collection and analysis:*

- **Collaborative and focused on capacity building** - not a traditional third party evaluation of impact
- Designed to work with LEAs at different stages of implementation: EPIS Framework
- Implementation plan reviews and implementation data collection (focus groups, interviews, observations) were conducted with consistent rubrics and protocols grounded in evidence-based practices in literacy



## Essential Components for Literacy Improvement



# EPIS Framework







## Status of Implementation of Evidence-Based Practices from Comprehensive Literacy Plans and Observation Data

- Exploration: Planning
- Pre-Implementation: Preparation/adoption
- Implementation: Consistent/Scale (beyond piloting)
- Sustainment: Refining routines and practices

# Approach and Methodology

## *Data collected*

-  86 schools visited
-  493 classrooms observed
-  863 district teachers, principals, and staff participated in focus groups or interviews
-  1650 responses to Professional Development Survey



# Effective Implementation (PK5)



## Factors observed in Effective Implementation:

- High-Quality Instructional Materials
  - Foundational Skills
  - Comprehension and Knowledge Building
  - Writing and expression
- Aligned trainings for teachers, administrators, and support staff
- Professional development enhanced with instructional supports, making connections between evidence and practice
- Strong, responsive cultures of literacy leadership
- Consistent communications with families and teachers
- Interventionists, instructional coaches, and specialists are available to provide appropriate supports
- Ample time allocated for literacy instruction and intervention

# Challenges and Opportunities (P5K)



## Barriers to effective implementation:

- Lack of sustained and consistent training for all professionals
- Inadequate or inconsistent training on tiered intervention approaches
- Inadequate capacity for data analysis to drive key instructional decisions
- Lack of training, quality materials, or instructional supports for multilingual learners
- Misperceptions or simplification of structured literacy
- Difficulty aligning culturally-responsive teaching strategies with evidence-based literacy strategies
- Shortened literacy and intervention time blocks
- Inconsistent or inaccessible communication with families and lack of effective and/or inclusive family engagement



# Key Findings



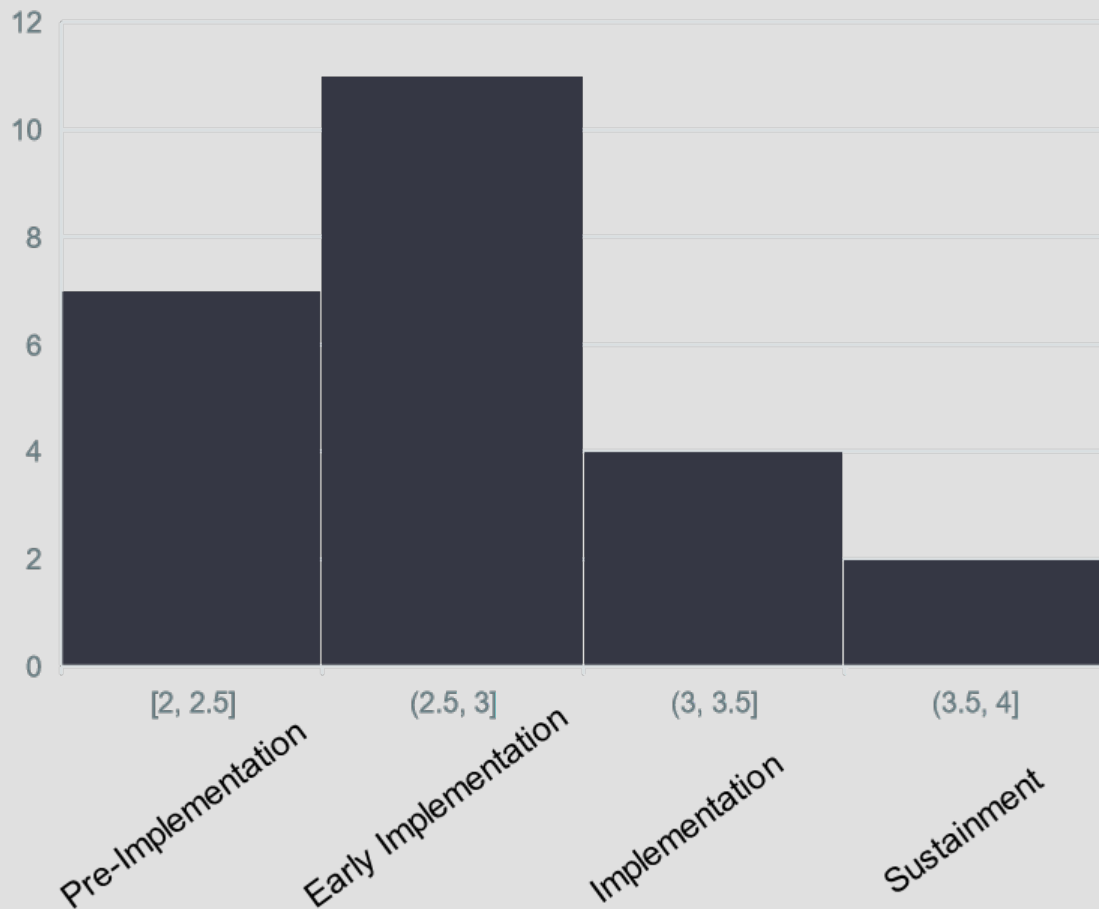
- All LEAs have provided training on SoR and evidence-based practices
  - Inconsistent access to training (grades 3-5, ESOL, support staff)
- All LEAs (plan to) use HQIM in foundational skills/knowledge building
  - Explicit writing and expression varies particularly in 3-5
- Transition issues for effective literacy instruction from grades 3-5
- Districts are implementing MTSS, however challenges in:
  - Flipped Triangles
  - Differentiating core (Tier I) instruction
  - Providing tiered intervention due to personnel and training
  - Supports and scaffolds for MLLs/ELLs
- Strong leadership across the state in literacy
  - Variability in communication and sharing of data and goals
- All districts engaging families and communities
  - School specific often based on Title I/community school funding
  - Need for better communication and outreach to families

# Broader Issues



- Focus on K-3 in prior initiatives means that 4-12 have been less engaged in “SoR” and shift to evidence-based practices
- Sunsetting of ESSER/CARES Act (MD LEADS)
- Misunderstanding of “science of reading” and “culturally-responsive” practices (limited resources)
- New teachers ill-prepared for teaching literacy whether from traditional TPPs or alternative certification pathways
- Siloed administrative structures impacting implementation
- Differences between LEAs due to size, demographics, and cultures

## Overall Progress on Literacy Implementation



# Recommendations

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# Curriculum & Instruction:



## Enhance Teacher Understanding of Curriculum

- Support deeper understanding of SoR principles and ensure curriculum alignment.
- Consider state-based SoR training for all teachers to unify phonics, lesson integration, and comprehension skills.

## Use Data to Strengthen Differentiated Instruction

- Train teachers to expand access to culturally relevant materials and integrate responsive practices.
- Provide model lessons, resources, and professional development on differentiation strategies.
- Explore student data by subgroups and consider a state-level professional development program on culturally responsive practices.

## Improve Writing Instruction

- Include writing instruction in all SoR and literacy practice training.
- Create statewide professional development for evidence-based writing instruction, focusing on scaffolding, differentiation, and higher-order thinking skills.

# Professional Development



## Expand Access & Ensure Equity

- Develop a state-wide PD agenda for SoR training accessible to all educators.
- Include hands-on modeling and video demonstrations in training.
- Ensure training occurs during contractual hours and supports implementation of evidence-based practices.

## Focus on Intermediate Literacy Skills

- Provide PD opportunities on writing, comprehension, and vocabulary development for intermediate grades.
- Emphasize advanced literacy skills and differentiation strategies.

## Enhance Job-Embedded Coaching

- Develop guiding documents or competency-based rubrics for literacy coaches and administrators.
- Ensure consistency and coherence in coaching across schools.

# Recommendations for Multitiered Systems of Support



**Standardize MTSS Frameworks:** Develop a standardized MTSS framework with clear protocols for data collection, progress monitoring, and intervention delivery.

**Address Staffing Challenges:** Increase staffing for MTSS and provide targeted training to ensure effective intervention and support.

**Enhance Progress Monitoring Practices:** Improve training on using progress monitoring data to create flexible small groups and inform instructional decisions.

**Improve Communication with Families:** Create user-friendly resources and strategies to communicate student progress and intervention strategies to families.

**Foster a Collaborative Culture:** Establish protocols for regular data meetings and collaborative planning sessions to encourage shared responsibility for student success.

# Instructional Leadership



## Enhance Leadership Training

- Provide targeted PD on structured literacy, data-driven decision-making, and effective feedback.
- Offer mentoring, ongoing training, and resources for *new instructional leaders*.

## Enhance Cultural Relevance

- Develop culturally responsive resources, including multilingual materials.
- Provide training for educators on engaging diverse families and communities.

## Foster Consistency in Leadership Practices

- Implement standardized leadership practices and clear protocols for walkthroughs, feedback, and data analysis.

## Improve Communication with Families

- Audit family engagement needs and develop effective communication strategies.
- Provide tools and resources for clear, understandable information on student progress and literacy initiatives.



# Community Culture, and Engagement:



## **Promote Equity in Community Engagement**

- Evaluate and disseminate promising practices for family engagement.
- Utilize school culture and climate surveys to assess impact on literacy efforts.

## **Build Family and Professional Capacity for Engagement**

- Provide tools and guidance for sustained and meaningful family and community engagement.
- Offer guidance and case studies on expanding partnerships with community organizations and businesses.

## **Enhance Cultural Relevance**

- Develop culturally responsive resources, including multilingual materials.
- Provide training for educators on engaging diverse families and communities.

## **Improve Communication with Families**

- Audit family engagement needs and develop effective communication strategies.
- Provide tools and resources for clear, understandable information on student progress and literacy initiatives.

# Key Findings (grades-6-12)



Where implementation of literacy plans has been most effective, several factors were often observed:

- Majority of LEAs are working to align high quality instructional materials in grades 4-8/10
- Majority of LEAs are working to establish MTSS for literacy in intermediate and secondary 6-12 to intervene and remediate reading and writing skills
  - Culture shifts around *access to the curriculum vs. intervention and remediation of skills*
- Beginning professional development around how content area teachers need to understand basics of SoR (ex: vocabulary, morphology, and writing)
  - Culture shift around reading vs. content specialists



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