

FEBRUARY 2019

MISSISSIPPI'S LITERACY-BASED PROMOTION ACT: *An Inside Look*

Prepared by:

RMC Research Corporation
Tampa, Florida





About ExcelinEd

Founded by former Florida Governor Jeb Bush, the Foundation for Excellence in Education (ExcelinEd) is igniting a movement of reform, state by state, to transform education for the 21st century economy by working with lawmakers, policymakers, educators and parents to advance education reform across America. Learn more at ExcelinEd.org.



ExcelinEd.org



[@ExcelinEd](https://twitter.com/ExcelinEd)



Facebook.com/ExcelinEd



About RMC Research

With decades of experience in education, arts, humanities and healthcare, RMC Research engages with clients to measure their effectiveness and meet their goals to create opportunities for families, schools and communities. Learn more at RMCResearchCorporation.com.



RMCResearchCorporation.com



[@RMCResearch](https://twitter.com/RMCResearch)



Facebook.com/RMCResearchCorporation

Acknowledgments

The researchers wish to thank Dr. Carey Wright and the staff of the Mississippi Department of Education; the Superintendents and literacy leaders of Jackson Public Schools and Sunflower Consolidated Schools and their K-3 teachers who participated in this study.

RMC Research Corporation Research Team:

Trudy Hensley, Vice President, Emeritus

Sheryl Turner, Director/Senior Research Associate

Joshua A. Melton, Research Associate

This Research was funded by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. We thank the foundation for its support but acknowledge that the findings and conclusions presented in this report are those of the author(s) alone, and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the foundation.

Mississippi - The Gateway to Success

Learning to read by the end of third grade is the gateway to a successful life. When students are unable to read by the end of third grade, their risk of falling behind academically grows exponentially. In fact, research shows that nearly nine out of ten high school dropouts were struggling readers in third grade.¹ Students who are not reading proficiently by the end of third grade are four times more likely to drop out of high school, and high school dropouts are not eligible for 90 percent of jobs in the U.S. economy.² To address this issue and ensure all students become capable readers by the end of third grade, many states have passed comprehensive K-3 reading policies, including Mississippi.

In 2013, Senator Gray Tollison worked with Mississippi leaders to pass SB2347, and Governor Phil Bryant signed the bill into law establishing the Literacy-Based Promotion Act (LBPA). The law was to ensure a comprehensive approach to teaching all children to read starting as early as kindergarten. The true spirit of the law is to identify K-3 students who need additional help in reading as early as possible and to provide effective instruction and intervention to ensure they read on grade level by the end of third grade. In 2016, the law was amended to include individual reading plans for students identified with a reading deficiency, and a higher cut score was established for third-grade promotion. Additionally, SB2572 was enacted, requiring teacher candidates to pass a foundational reading test for certification to ensure they have the knowledge and skill to teach all students to read. The law includes:

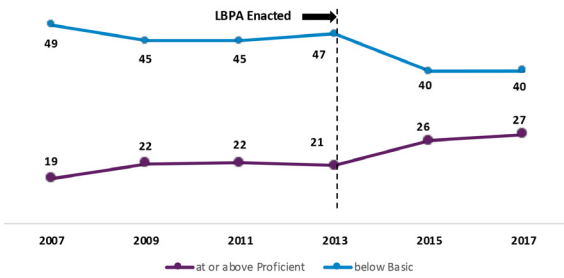
- Statewide training to support teachers with scientifically-based reading instruction and intervention.
- Reading coaches to provide job-embedded training and support for teachers.
- Early identification of K-3 students who have a reading deficiency.
- Parent notification and regular communication with parents of students identified with a reading deficiency.
- Individual reading plans, created in collaboration with the parent, prescribing the immediate specialized instruction and supports that will be provided to the student identified with a reading deficiency.
- Retention for third graders who do not meet the cut score for promotion.
- Good cause exemptions from retention to recognize the needs of some students.
- Specific intervention services for retained third-grade students, including resources to support parents with literacy activities at home.

While it is challenging to draw causal inferences, there are two indicators that provide data for analyzing trends in student achievement since the enactment of the LBPA: 1) the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) and 2) the Mississippi Academic Assessment Program for English Language Arts (MAAP ELA).

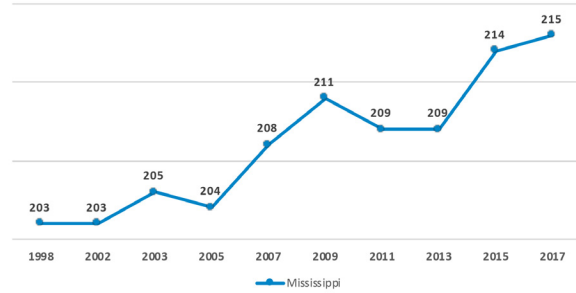
Since Mississippi enacted the LBPA in 2013 the state's fourth-grade NAEP reading scores have substantially improved. In 2013, 21 percent of fourth graders were proficient in reading, and by 2017, 27 percent of fourth graders were reading proficiently: a 6-percentage point increase. Mississippi also decreased the percentage of fourth graders scoring below basic by 7 percentage points, going from 47 percent scoring below basic to 40 percent. Furthermore, Mississippi is second in the nation in learning gains. The following charts illustrate the progress made in fourth-grade NAEP reading achievement since Mississippi enacted the policy.

¹ Annie E. Casey Foundation, [Double Jeopardy: How Third-Grade Reading Skills and Poverty Influence High School Graduation](#), 2011.
² Begin to Read, [Literacy Statistics](#), 2014.

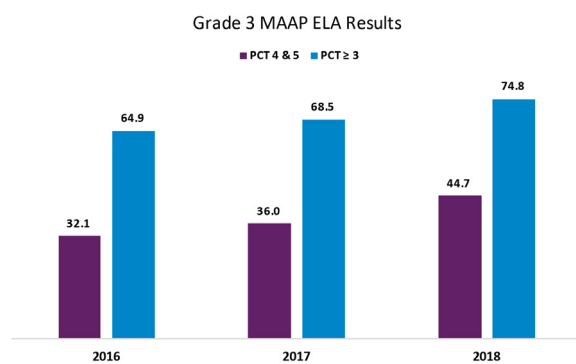
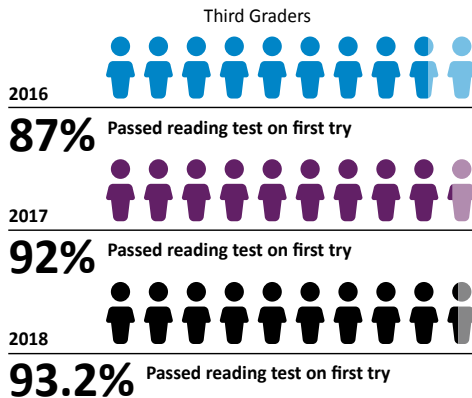
Mississippi 4th Grade Reading Performance on NAEP



Average NAEP 4th Grade Reading Scores Mississippi, 1998-2017



There is evidence also of student improvement on Mississippi’s statewide third-grade MAAP ELA assessment since the enactment of the LBPA. Over the past three years, there has been steady improvement in the pass rate on the reading portion of the third-grade MAAP ELA assessment, going from 87 percent passing to 93 percent—a 6 percentage point increase as illustrated in the following chart. Also, there has been drastic improvement in overall student performance on the third-grade MAAP ELA assessment. There are five performance levels on the assessment, Level 1 being the lowest and Level 5 being the highest. Since 2016, the percentage of students scoring Level 3 and above has increased more than 12 percentage points, with a nearly 10 percentage point increase of students scoring at Level 4 and above.



About This Study

ExcelinEd contracted with RMC Research Corporation to conduct a study to better understand Mississippi stakeholders’ perceptions of and experiences with the Mississippi Literacy-Based Promotion Act (LBPA). The questions of interest were as follows:

- What support strategies and technical assistance do the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) and school districts provide to improve K-3 literacy?
- What are teachers’ perceptions of the LBPA?
- What recommendations do stakeholders have for improving the implementation process?
- What impact has the LBPA had on districts and schools?

The Sample

A purposeful sample of various stakeholders was selected for this study. RMC researchers interviewed the MDE’s State Superintendent of Schools, the Chief Academic Officer, the State Literacy Director and the Communications Director. Seven MDE staffers, regional coordinators and literacy coaches actively participated in a focus group. Superintendents and literacy leaders in two school districts provided local-level perceptions and experiences in implementing the LBPA. Additionally, the MDE disseminated a survey to all district literacy leaders and K-3 teachers across the state to collect their perceptions.

To identify the two school districts to profile in this study, the researchers examined student achievement data in school districts that had at least one school that exited the intensive literacy support being provided by the MDE. K-3 assessment data from 2015 to 2018 were collected and analyzed. The MDE staff members reviewed the list of districts that had made the most improvement in student achievement and assisted in selecting two districts using the following criteria:

- Representative of rural and suburban/city
- Enrollment of at least 100 third-grade students in the district
- Consistent, district-wide improvement in literacy achievement since 2016

The Methodology

RMC researchers asked MDE staff members a series of questions about the structure of state-level support and strategies, state-level communication strategies, recommendations for other states that may enact similar legislation and the impacts of the legislation. The interview with the State Literacy Director and the focus group consisted of 90-minute, face-to-face sessions. The face-to-face interview with the State Superintendent of Schools lasted 60 minutes.

[Appendix A](#) contains the protocol for the State Superintendent of Schools interview; [Appendix B](#) contains the protocol for the State Literacy Director interview; [Appendix C](#) contains the protocol for the focus group. One RMC Research team member facilitated the sessions, and another RMC Research team member took notes. All sessions were taped and transcribed.

The researchers also conducted interviews of literacy leaders in two districts via conference calls. One RMC Research team member facilitated the sessions, and two RMC Research team members took notes. Phone interviews were taped and transcribed. [Appendix D](#) includes the protocol for the district interviews. Following the interviews, the districts’ literacy leaders disseminated an electronic survey link to all K-3 teachers in their districts. The survey contained Likert-scale statements and one open-ended question. [Appendix E](#) contains a copy of the district teacher survey.



Data Sources

Interview with
MDE State
Superintendent,
Chief Academic
Officer and
Communications
Director

Interview with
MDE State Literacy
Director

Focus group
of seven MDE
staff, regional
coordinators and
literacy coaches

Telephone
interviews with 10
literacy leaders in
two school districts

Online survey of
53 district literacy
leaders

Online survey of
1,833 K-3 teachers

The MDE disseminated electronic links to a statewide district literacy leader survey and a K-3 teacher survey. Both surveys consisted of Likert-scale statements. [Appendix F](#) contains the district literacy leader survey. [Appendix G](#) includes a copy of the statewide K-3 teacher survey, which was identical to the district teacher survey, except for the omission of the one open-ended question. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize responses to the surveys.

After each event, RMC Research staff immediately reviewed and analyzed the interviews and focus group data. They also reviewed the notes in relation to the recorded transcriptions. Two RMC Research team members identified themes and patterns and reviewed summaries for accuracy. Participants at the state- and district-levels reviewed their respective narrative for accuracy.

Research Findings

The research team collected data from stakeholders at the state, district and school levels. The information gleaned from the various sources provide insight into the changes that have occurred since the LBPA was implemented in Mississippi. The findings are organized into the following sections:

- Strategies that the Mississippi Department of Education implemented to support schools
- Profiles of two districts that achieved outstanding student growth
- Perceptions of teachers and literacy leaders across the state
- Suggestions and lessons learned that participants wish to share with others
- Impact that the LBPA has made on education in Mississippi

State Support Strategies for K-3 Literacy

Often reported to have the lowest student outcomes in the United States, Mississippi faced a daunting task of turning things around. With very little funding and many underachieving schools, state leaders pondered how to increase student achievement in Mississippi's schools. In 2013, new legislation focused on early literacy and a new state superintendent spurred the MDE to action. State education leaders began with strategic planning in three key areas: organizing for intensive school support, improving educators' early literacy knowledge and skills and communicating a consistent message to all stakeholders.

A structure of support. When Dr. Carey Wright was appointed State Superintendent of Schools in November 2013, one of her first questions was, "Who is in charge of literacy?" While some staff had been hired, there was no specific office overseeing literacy and the implementation of the LBPA. Dr. Wright seized the opportunity to create an office staffed with experts in reading research and pedagogy. The structure is designed to provide a consistent message and capacity-building support system that reaches from the state department of education to the classroom. A state literacy director oversees state literacy coordinators who serve as regional supports. Regional coordinators function as coaches working with school-based literacy coaches who work directly with teachers, while also serving part-time as literacy coaches. This structure fosters a culture of coaching at every level. As one literacy coach stated, "Coming from a classroom to working with adults is very different. My regional coordinator reaches out to me. Someone is always there for me."



The quality of coaching equals the quality of results.

MDE Superintendent

The MDE adopted an “Educator in Residence” model in which literacy coaches are employed by local school districts or other educational entities and are assigned to work with the MDE program office for a specified period of time. All literacy staff go through a rigorous interview process, including a performance interview. Emphasizing quality over quantity, the MDE only hires coaches who are highly-qualified. Initially, the MDE was criticized for not filling all available coaching positions. The MDE received more than 500 applications for 75 coaching positions in the first year but only hired 24 coaches. The Department justified its position that every coach must be knowledgeable in reading instruction and skilled at working with adult learners. As of 2018, the MDE Division of Literacy has grown to 81 highly-qualified staff members, including school-based coaches, serving 180 schools located in 78 districts.

An investment in people. The MDE Division of Literacy believes that people, not programs, are the solution to improved literacy outcomes. The division recognizes that teachers and school administrators need a deep knowledge of evidence-based literacy teaching strategies. The MDE implemented a statewide professional development training model that gives teachers and administrators the foundation and common language for best practices in reading instruction. This training is offered in two phases and is delivered both online and face-to-face. Coaches follow up with teachers after the training in schools to ensure the transfer of knowledge to practice. The model is achieving results as evidenced by a study examining the change in educators’ knowledge and classroom practices. In a study conducted by the REL Southeast, between spring 2014 and fall 2015, educators’ knowledge increased from the 48th percentile to the 59th percentile on the *Teacher Knowledge of Early Literacy Skills Survey*. Additionally, the quality of instruction increased from the 31st percentile to the 58th percentile as measured by the *Coach’s Classroom Observation Tool*.³ More than 14,000 teachers, principals and higher education staff have completed the literacy foundation training. Recently the MDE offered the training free of charge to preservice teacher candidates and preschool teachers to reach more educators.



We invest our funds in teachers first, not programs.

MDE Staff

In addition to the investment in professional development, the MDE Division of Literacy empowers educators by providing information and resources to districts and schools so they may effectively implement the requirements of the LBPA. They produce FAQs to clarify legislative intents and collaborate with other offices within MDE to ensure consistency across programs. They conduct webinars and make presentations at regional meetings. They update templates such as the Individual Reading Plan template that districts and schools rely on to fulfill the legislative requirements and communicate with parents. They disseminate tools to help districts and schools select high-quality instructional materials and assessments.

A proactive communication blitz. Seeing the need for a common message and resources to inform parents, educators and the media, Dr. Wright approached the legislators for agreement that appropriated funds could be directed to promoting the importance of literacy. Thus, a state-wide campaign entitled *Strong Readers = Strong Leaders* was launched in 2015. Some highlights of the campaign include the following:

3 REL Southeast, *Educator Outcomes Associated with Implementation of Mississippi’s K-3 Early Literacy Professional Development Initiative*, 2017.

- A website with resources and publications for all stakeholders, including students
- Social media channels
- Public service announcements featuring the Governor and Lieutenant Governor
- A former Miss Mississippi as a spokesperson for literacy
- A communications toolkit for districts
- A media toolkit
- A take-home card given to every third-grade student
- Press conferences held at libraries
- Videos of local classrooms used in speeches

A recent change in legislation that increases the third-grade promotion cut score on the MAAP ELA beginning in 2018-19 caused the MDE to relaunch their public relations campaign. They are increasing efforts and updating many of the online tools and resources to ensure that parents, teachers and school administrators understand the impact this will have on students.

Embedded in the LBPA is a requirement to establish a Mississippi Reading Panel for the purpose of recommending assessments and cut scores to determine students' promotion to the fourth grade. The panel is a mix of political appointees and educators. Viewing the panel as an opportunity rather than a requirement, the MDE engages the panel in supporting and promoting literacy across the state. The panel goes beyond its legislative intent by advising the MDE on many aspects of literacy and advocating for Mississippi students. The panel is instrumental in bringing together diverse viewpoints across stakeholders and validating the impact of MDE's literacy efforts.



Media can't be underestimated.

MDE Communications
Director

Return on Investment: A Superintendent's Quest

Dr. Carey Wright, Mississippi's State Superintendent of Education, views every meeting and public appearance as an opportunity to teach and educate. Armed with charts and graphs, she has the data to show the State Board of Education how the funds they allocate produce student academic gains. She states, "When I go to legislators, I tell them what their return on investment is. I use every single piece of data every time I speak." Showing stakeholders their return on their investment has paid off, not only with legislators, but also with the public, foundations, organizations and universities. Dr. Wright is well-versed in national data and research but knows that Mississippi's own data has the greatest impact. For example, when she shared the state's data showing the positive impact of state-funded, high-quality preschool, the Kellogg Foundation partnered with the MDE to place coaches in prekindergarten classrooms. When principals shared concern about teacher preparation, Dr. Wright used data from a study by the Barksdale Reading Institute that examined the literacy courses offered at the state's higher education institutes. Her efforts led to legislation requiring teacher candidates to pass a reading knowledge assessment to receive a teaching certificate. She called upon the REL Southeast to conduct a study examining changes in Mississippi teachers' knowledge and instruction after professional development. This resulted in a partnership with the University of Mississippi that hired professional development coordinators to work directly with districts and schools. Dr. Wright is the face for the Mississippi Literacy-Based Promotion Act and its most vocal advocate. She believes that communication is critical and says, "You can't overcommunicate something of this magnitude."

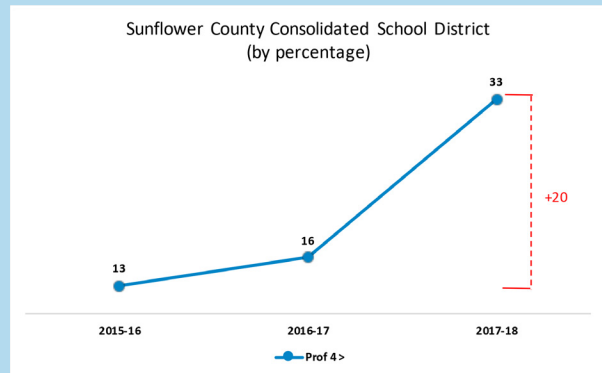
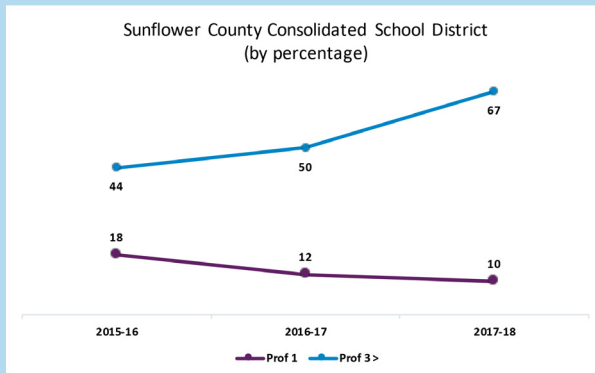
District Support Strategies for K-3 Literacy

Leaders of the two chosen districts—Sunflower County Consolidated School District and Jackson Public Schools—agreed to participate in telephone interviews with the researchers. The profiles that follow capture the strategies these districts credit for growth in all their schools, not just the schools that exited MDE intensive literacy support status. In both districts, there was great improvement across all performance levels of the third-grade MAAP ELA assessment. The districts decreased the percentage of students scoring at the lowest achievement level on the assessment, increased the percentage scoring Proficiency Level 3 and above and increased the percentage scoring Proficiency Level 4 and above.

Sunflower County Consolidated School District

Doubling down on literacy-based promotion

Sunflower County Consolidated School District (SCCSD) is in the Delta region of Mississippi. The district serves approximately 4,200 students. SCCSD was targeted as one of the first districts to receive intensive support from the Mississippi Department of Education under the LBPA. As can be seen from the charts below, the district had less than one-half of their third-grade students scoring at proficiency or above after the legislation was enacted. After three years, they increased the percentage of students scoring at proficiency or above and decreased the percentage of students scoring at the lowest level. They also increased the percentage of students scoring level 4 and above.



Mandatory summer camps and additional time spent on reading skills in the computer lab are two approaches that SCCSD literacy personnel credit with improving outcomes for its early readers. Prior to entering third grade, all SCCSD students attend a mandatory reading summer camp for one week. Students who do not pass the weeklong summer camp return for an intensive four-week camp prior to third grade. During the school year, elementary students have either a 90-minute or 120-minute uninterrupted block for reading instruction every day where all five components of reading are taught. From kindergarten through eighth grade, the district advocates for students to get an additional 45 minutes of reading instruction weekly in the computer lab using commercially available reading software. One elementary school has a 40-minute block of time at the beginning of each school day for reading intervention. All teachers supervise five students during that time, which allows for more individualized attention and holds all teachers accountable for teaching literacy.

State-provided literacy coaches identify resources and provide job-embedded professional learning opportunities. To augment the state literacy coaches, SCCSD uses Title I money to hire academic coaches. SCCSD sent its academic coaches to a national training to help them develop additional skills for the new school year. Then, during the school year, the academic coaches provide on-site professional development for teachers. SCCSD believes improvement can be accomplished from within. Much of the district's in-person professional development in early literacy is led by the district's curriculum specialist, academic coaches and peer teachers.

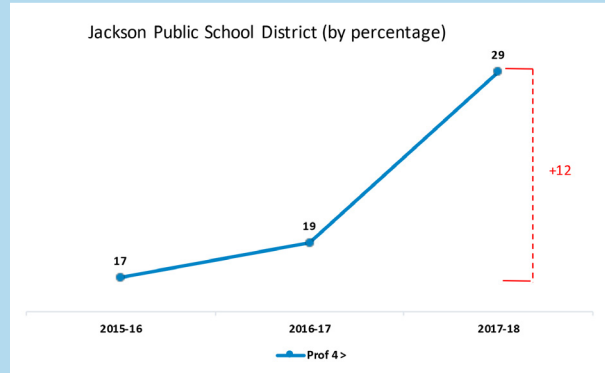
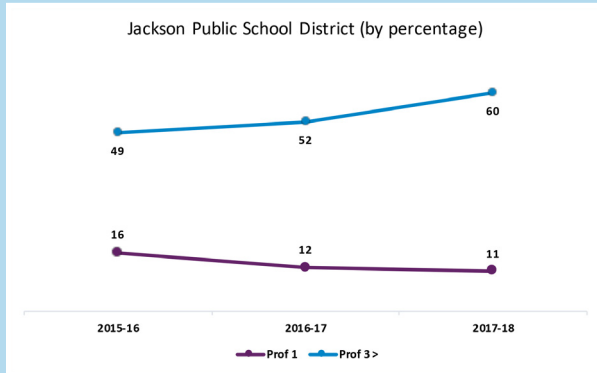
The district hired a full-time data specialist who compiles reports on each student every nine weeks. The specialist disseminates the reports to the appropriate school where they are shared with administrators, teachers and parents. Teachers and school administrators value the work of the data specialist because the reports can be turned into actionable information for each student. Student data also informs professional development and professional learning communities throughout the district.

The district instituted a district-level policy on promotion and retention for K-2 students using multiple data points to inform promotion and retention decisions. The district's goal is to intervene as early as possible to ensure students have the necessary academic skills so they are set up for success in subsequent grades.

Jackson Public Schools

A focus on district-wide consistency

Jackson Public Schools (JPS) is the second largest and only urban district in the state of Mississippi. The district serves the city of Jackson, the state capital. JPS operates 33 elementary schools serving 12,169 children. All schools in the district qualify as Title I schools. After the legislation was enacted, JPS had less than one-half of their third-grade students scoring at proficiency. During the past three years of implementation, they increased the percentage of students scoring proficient and increased the percentage of students scoring level 4 and above.



The JPS literacy leadership credits consistency within the district for creating success for students. While respecting the expertise within individual schools, the district leadership began to examine how a concerted focus on fiscal resources, human capital and data could make a difference in all schools. JPS made several strategic investments in human capital with expertise in early reading and the district overhauled its data management system by investing in a robust new system, accessible to every district constituent, containing all student data and integrated with their progress monitoring curriculum.

In years past, the district allowed schools to purchase multiple programs and consultants to try to improve student achievement. However, the results were inconsistent. The leadership reallocated funds that allowed the district to be significantly more strategic in their approach to helping schools, especially toward improved outcomes in early literacy. Not only did the district find significant revenue streams from within, but JPS made a strategic commitment to district-wide implementation to support new efforts to impact early readers. For example, JPS hired an interventionist for every elementary school and funded a full-time literacy specialist in the district office. The district re-instituted a department of professional development with a focus on early literacy. Since this change, every school in the district uses professional learning communities as part of its professional development plan. JPS leverages veteran teachers as facilitators of content area professional development and participants in classroom observations. Teachers value the veteran teachers as a source of constructive feedback. JPS provides a positive example of how a little fiscal creativity and institutional consistency can have a profound impact on early readers.

Another change for the district led to regular data use both within schools and across the district. JPS implemented a district-wide data management system so school personnel had more access to the data they needed. In each school, principals receive weekly data reports for their students, including fine-grained data such as time on task for students receiving the reading intervention. At the elementary level, all teachers are involved in regular data meetings, including the K-2 teachers; this creates accountability for all teachers to ensure their students are reading by the end of third grade. JPS created digital data walls to identify patterns within and across schools, grades and feeder patterns. This allows the district to be strategic about professional development support and funds. In addition to sharing data within schools and across the district, teachers and schools are sharing the data with students and parents, thereby increasing engagement and support. Teachers use the data to create roadmaps so students and their parents know their progress towards the goal of literacy. The consistent district-wide use of data has helped JPS make significant gains with its early readers.

District personnel are enthusiastic about the positive outcomes as more students are demonstrating proficiency on their first attempt than in past years. For students who do not pass the screening test the first time, early intervention is proving successful. Students receiving interventions have a plan developed by the interventionist and are pulled out during the school day to receive a blended curriculum that includes computer lab time and face-to-face instruction, in addition to their normal 120-minute reading block. Increasingly, parents are playing a highly valued role in supporting early literacy by being more engaged. One administrator drew the analogy of LBPA to high school exit exams and believes the level of significance given to reading in third grade has motivated parents of younger students to be more involved. The district leaders are seeing early evidence that the sixth-grade students (the first cohort since LBPA) are stronger and better prepared than in years past.

Teachers' Perceptions of the LBPA

RMC researchers asked the MDE to disseminate an electronic survey to K-3 teachers across the state. A total of 1,714 K-3 teachers responded to the survey and provided their perceptions of the LBPA. Additionally, 119 K-3 teachers in the two profile districts responded to a similar survey. The following table displays the teachers' level of agreement with statements about the LBPA.

Percentage of Teachers Agreeing with Statements About the LBPA

	% Agreement All Teachers	% Agreement Profile Teachers
I receive adequate support that helps me analyze student assessment data and make instructional decisions based on the data.	95	95
I receive adequate support from my school administration that assists me in implementing the Mississippi Literacy-Based Promotion Act (LBPA).	94	95
The professional development that I receive improves my knowledge of and skill in research-based reading instruction.	90	96
The professional development that I receive improves my knowledge of and skill with assessments and their use to drive instruction.	90	92
I support the Mississippi Literacy-Based Promotion Act (LBPA) requirement to help ensure struggling readers get the time they need with intensive interventions to be successful in fourth grade and beyond.	90	91
Since the implementation of the Mississippi Literacy-Based Promotion Act (LBPA), my school increased its efforts to engage parents of struggling readers in a timely fashion.	90	90
My reading coach or literacy leader provides support that helps me improve my reading instruction.	89	93
The Mississippi Literacy-Based Promotion Act (LBPA) guidance documents provide information that is useful to me.	89	92
Because of the Mississippi Literacy-Based Promotion Act (LBPA), I changed my instructional practices to teach reading to all students, including students with severe reading difficulties.	88	91
I receive information and guidance documents that increase my knowledge of the requirements of the Mississippi Literacy-Based Promotion Act (LBPA).	87	95
The professional development that I receive improves my knowledge of and skill in providing effective interventions.	87	92
Because of the Mississippi Literacy-Based Promotion Act (LBPA), my school has provided increased learning time for struggling readers.	86	91
The Mississippi Literacy-Based Promotion Act (LBPA) assessments that we use help me improve my instruction to meet the needs of all students.	85	90
The Mississippi Literacy-Based Promotion Act (LBPA) has a positive impact on improving K-3 reading outcomes in my school.	85	85
The Mississippi Literacy-Based Promotion Act (LBPA) has helped me identify and address reading difficulties early.	84	87
The extended learning opportunities, including summer programs and/or before-after school programs, are achieving the purpose of accelerating reading progress for students with a reading deficiency.	82	83
The Mississippi Literacy-Based Promotion Act (LBPA) was communicated to parents in a way that is easy for them to understand.	80	89

Even though there is no statistically significant difference in the agreement rates of the state-wide teachers' responses and the profile district teachers' responses, it is interesting that the profile teachers had higher levels of agreement on every statement. In particular, the profile district teachers had higher agreement regarding their professional development and the information they receive, which may be attributed to the extra support they receive from MDE. Because not all Mississippi schools have a literacy coach and extended learning is not a requirement, it is not surprising that these two items were rated higher by the profile districts that offer such support. The item that generated the least agreement was how the LBPA is communicated to parents.

Almost two-thirds of the teachers in the two profile districts responded to the open-ended survey statement: "The most positive aspect of the LPBA is . . ." Researchers categorized the teachers' comments into five themes: positive student outcomes; early identification; data usage and resources; professional development; and equity for all students. A cross section of the teachers' responses to the question reveal the relevancy of the implementation of the legislation.

The most positive aspect of the LBPA is...

"it ensures our children get the best start at an early age."

"the help provided to teachers, parents and students as a wraparound service."

"the intensive professional development provided for educators."

"how it helps educators to reach all learners in the classroom."

District Literacy Leaders' Perceptions of the LBPA

RMC Research asked MDE to disseminate an electronic survey link to every school district, asking for the person who supervises literacy in the district to respond. Fifty-three literacy leaders responded to the short survey. The following table displays their level of agreement to statements of the LBPA.



Percentage of Literacy Leaders Agreeing with Statements About the LBPA

	% Agreement
The professional development that my district provides improves teachers' knowledge of and skill in using assessments to drive instruction.	100
Since implementation of the Mississippi Literacy-Based Promotion Act (LBPA), my district has increased its efforts to engage parents of struggling readers in a timely fashion.	100
My district provides professional development to ensure all K-3 teachers have the knowledge and skills to teach reading to all students, including students with severe reading difficulties.	96
I receive adequate support from the Mississippi Department of Education that helps me understand the Mississippi Literacy-Based Promotion Act (LBPA).	92
Because of the Mississippi Literacy-Based Promotion Act (LBPA), our teachers have improved their instructional practices to teach reading to all students, including students identified with a reading deficiency.	89
The Mississippi Literacy-Based Promotion Act (LBPA) is having a positive impact on improving K-3 student reading outcomes in my district.	87
The Mississippi Department of Education's communication strategies to inform different stakeholders, including parents, about the Mississippi Literacy-Based Promotion Act (LBPA) and the importance of early literacy are effective.	85
I support the Mississippi Literacy-Based Promotion Act (LBPA) requirement to help ensure struggling readers get the time they need with intensive interventions to be successful in fourth grade and beyond.	85
I receive adequate support from the Mississippi Department of Education that assists me in implementing the Mississippi Literacy-Based Promotion Act (LBPA).	83
The Mississippi Literacy-Based Promotion Act (LBPA) helps our teachers identify and address reading difficulties early.	83
The extended learning opportunities, including summer programs and before/after school programs, are achieving the purpose of accelerating reading progress for students with a reading deficiency.	79
The Mississippi Literacy-Based Promotion Act (LBPA) was communicated to parents in a way that is easy for them to understand.	79
The Mississippi Literacy-Based Promotion Act (LBPA) assessment requirements improve teachers' instruction to meet the needs of all students.	77

There was 100 percent agreement among the literacy leaders on the impact of professional development and engagement of parents of struggling readers. Two items having relatively low agreement (79 percent) are somewhat similar to teachers' perceptions - opportunity for extended learning and communication to parents.

Lessons Learned from Mississippi Educators

Based on Mississippi educators' experiences with the LBPA, literacy leaders at the state and district levels provided constructive advice for legislators, state departments of education and literacy leaders in other states that may be considering similar literacy initiatives.

Considerations for Legislators, State Departments of Education and District Leaders

Communicate the intent of the legislation—to ensure a successful future for every child.

- ✓ Develop a consistent, clear message that is used in every venue.
- ✓ Advocate for students. Ideally the chief state school officer is the key spokesperson and champion for how the initiative will help students.
- ✓ Gather the troops. No one agency can do this in isolation. Build bridges across departments and
- ✓ Create an advisory panel composed of stakeholders to provide a broad perspective on issues impacting their roles.

Use your data.

- ✓ Inform legislators of the payoff on their investment.
- ✓ Support requests for funds to implement new legislative requirements by showing the impact using local data.
- ✓ Invest in data systems so school administrators and teachers have easy access to usable student and school data.
- ✓ Make data transparent for parents and for students.

Organize for success.

- ✓ Create a structure to build capacity and support educators at all levels, including administrators.
- ✓ Know the legislation and prepare stakeholders to be ready to act.
- ✓ Insist on quality, not quantity, of state staff and literacy coaches.
- ✓ Include performance tasks when screening literacy staff.
- ✓ Ensure professional development is delivered consistently and followed up by classroom modeling and coaching.

Fund required components.

- ✓ Ensure that the number of coaches is adequate to support the schools needing the most assistance.
- ✓ Direct funds to focus on quality of teaching.
- ✓ Consider incentives for schools and individual teachers.

During the various interviews with Mississippi educators, two specific funding recommendations were voiced. The first is the need to fund additional literacy coaches. The positive impact of high-quality literacy coaches is being seen in schools across Mississippi, but there are many schools without literacy coaches. Increasing the number of high-quality literacy coaches can improve student achievement statewide. The second recommendation is to continue funding preschool programs that are showing success.

Impact of the LBPA

Mississippi is seeing the impact of its efforts to increase literacy across the state. While Mississippi students score below the national average on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), student achievement has been increasing consistently. State leaders attribute this to higher standards, an intense focus on literacy and greater professional support for teachers.

The success of the MDE’s literacy professional development is impacting other content areas as well. Districts and schools now have access to a menu of free professional development and technical assistance services in areas including math, science, special education and English language arts. Teachers appreciate and accept the assistance of literacy coaches and peers who are helping them improve instruction.

The importance of literacy reaches beyond the LBPA’s focus on early identification with immediate reading interventions and specialized support for those identified with a reading deficiency with the goal of grade-level reading by the end of third grade. Student outcomes in preschool programs are being examined, and interventions are being implemented ensuring students are on the trajectory of grade-level reading by the time they enter kindergarten. After third grade, schools are implementing intervention programs to continue students’ growth. The legislation is encompassing preschool through high school.



It’s not about accountability anymore; it’s about student success.

MDE Staff

Summary

The Mississippi Department of Education strategically planned a system to implement the requirements of the LBPA. The leadership studied what needed to happen and methodically went about making it happen. While some might think they moved too slowly, MDE moved deliberately, insisting on quality over quantity. They opened lines of communication and made the process transparent for parents, students, teachers and schools. The MDE monitored progress consistently and reported it to all stakeholders. They are building on the positive aspects of their work and making adjustments to build a better system. Schools and districts are active partners and are seeing the benefit of their efforts as more children succeed each year.





APPENDICES

Appendix A: State Superintendent Interview

Moderator Introduction

Good [morning/afternoon/evening]. My name is _____ and this is my colleague _____. We are with RMC Research Corporation. As you know, RMC is collecting information on the Mississippi Literacy-Based Promotion Act (LBPA) for a study being conducted by the Foundation for Excellence in Education, headquartered in Tallahassee, Florida.

For our study, we are gathering the perceptions of state education leaders like you about a range of topics related to reading assessment, instruction and intervention in kindergarten through third grade. Also, we will gather the perceptions of SEA staff members whom you have identified and district literacy leaders and teachers. The information that we gather and analyze will be summarized in a report. Your input is extremely valuable for this project and for determining future research projects in this area.

We have 60 minutes for our discussion. [name] will take notes and keep us on track with the suggested times. I will facilitate our discussion. We ask that you make your comments as concise as possible and directly focused on the topic. This will help us make the best use of our limited time.

Because you are the state education agency leader, your comments cannot be considered anonymous. We will audio record this session, but the recording will be used only by RMC Research Corporation staff for this project and will not be shared with any other organization. Do you have any questions before we begin?

Agenda

Topic Area	Time
1. Structure of State-Level Support	10 minutes
2. State-Level Communication Strategies	15 minutes
3. State-Level Support Strategies	15 minutes
4. Recommendations	15 minutes
5. Impacts of the Legislation	5 minutes

Interview Questions

Topic Area 1: Structure of State-Level Support

1.1. After the passage of the Mississippi Literacy-Based Promotion Act (LBPA), describe the organizational structure (or office) that was tasked to support its implementation and why you chose this structure to facilitate implementation of the legislation.

- If this structure existed prior to the legislation: What changes did you make to the structure to facilitate implementation of the legislation?

Topic Area 2: State-Level Communication Strategies

2.1. Describe the effectiveness of the state’s communication strategies to inform the public, especially parents, about the legislation and to increase awareness of the importance of early literacy.

2.2. Describe how you communicate with district and school leaders about the legislation and how you garner their support.

2.3. Describe the communication strategies you use to inform legislators of the importance of early literacy, student outcomes and existing needs in schools.

Topic Area 3: State-Level Support Strategies

3.1. Describe the support you provide to the MDE office that is tasked with implementing this legislation.

3.2. Which of the state-provided supports—including guidance, professional development, instructional resources, assessment systems and interventions support—do you believe have been the most helpful to districts and schools in implementing the requirements in the legislation to improve student reading achievement? Why do you think that?

3.3. Teacher candidates are required to pass a reading knowledge assessment to receive a teaching certificate. What was your role in getting this legislation passed? What impact do you see this legislation having, both short-term and long-term? Are there preliminary data on the percent of teaching candidates passing on their first try?

Topic Area 4: Recommendations

4.1. What advice would you want to share with other state superintendents of education if they are charged with supporting similar legislation?

4.2. How can lawmakers continue to support you in reaching the goals of this legislation?

Topic Area 5: Impacts of the Legislation

5.1. What impact has legislation had on other areas in your state, such as Pre-K and preservice education??

5.2. Is there anything else you want to tell us about how this legislation is impacting your state?

Closing

This concludes our questions for this interview. As we noted earlier, our purpose for this interview was to gather your perceptions about a range of policies related to reading instruction in kindergarten through third grade.

Do you have any final questions for us?

Thank you again for your participation.

Appendix B: State Literacy Leader Interview

Moderator Introduction

Good [morning/afternoon/evening]. My name is _____ and this is my colleague _____. We are with RMC Research Corporation. As you know, RMC is collecting information on the Mississippi Literacy-Based Promotion Act (LBPA) for a study being conducted by the Foundation for Excellence in Education, headquartered in Tallahassee, Florida.

For our study, we are gathering the perceptions of state education leaders like you about a range of topics related to reading assessment, instruction and intervention in kindergarten through third grade. Also, we will gather the perceptions of SEA staff members whom you have identified and district literacy leaders and teachers. The information that we gather and analyze will be summarized in a report. Your input is extremely valuable for this project and for determining future research projects in this area.

We have 90 minutes for our discussion. [name] will take notes and keep us on track with the suggested times. I will facilitate our discussion. We ask that you make your comments as concise as possible and directly focused on the topic. This will help us make the best use of our limited time.

While your comments will not be directly linked to your name, because you are the state literacy leader, your comments cannot be considered anonymous. We will audio record this session, but the recording will be used only by RMC Research Corporation staff for this project and will not be shared with any other organization. Do you have any questions before we begin?

Agenda

Topic Area	Time
1. Structure of State-Level Support	10 minutes
2. State-Level Communication Strategies	15 minutes
3. State-Level Support Strategies	45 minutes
4. Recommendations	15 minutes
5. Impacts of the Legislation	5 minutes

Interview Questions

Topic Area 1: Structure of State-Level Support

1.1. After the passage of the Mississippi Literacy-Based Promotion Act (LBPA), describe the organizational structure (or office) that was tasked to support the implementation of the legislation and how this structure facilitated implementation of the legislation.

- If this structure existed prior to the legislation: What changes were made to the structure to facilitate implementation of the legislation?

1.2. What funds are used to support state-level implementation and provide support to districts? How have existing and/or new funds and other resources been used to support this effort?

Topic Area 2: State-Level Communication Strategies

2.1. What strategies are used to inform different stakeholders, including parents, about the legislation?

2.2. What did the state do to help districts and schools communicate with parents about the reading performance of K-3 students having reading difficulties?

2.3. After the passage of the legislation, what strategies have been used to raise public awareness of the importance of literacy statewide?

2.4. How would you describe the effectiveness of all of these communication strategies? Which strategies are most successful and why?

Topic Area 3: State-Level Support Strategies

3.1. After passage of the legislation, what guidance did the state provide to districts and schools to help all K-3 students read at grade level? Which formats and dissemination methods did you use? Were some formats and methods more effective than others?

3.2. In addition to guidance documents, what follow-up support for implementation does the state provide to districts and schools? How effective is this follow-up support?

3.3. What is the state's role in providing K-3 reading assessments, such as screeners, progress monitoring tools, diagnostic assessments and summative assessments? How common are the assessments across the state? How are the cut scores determined for identifying students with a reading deficiency and for promotion/retention decisions?

3.4. What guidance did the state provide to districts and schools in selecting instructional resources (e.g., research-based textbooks, software and other materials)?

3.5. Describe the professional development model used to provide K-3 teachers and reading coaches with knowledge of and skill in reading instruction. How effective has this professional development been in increasing knowledge and skills in reading instruction?

3.6. How do you support and provide guidance to help schools intensify interventions for K-3 students identified with a reading deficiency? Students retained in third grade? Students in English language programs? What are the challenges you encountered and how did you address them?

3.7. What guidance or requirements does the state provide to districts and schools for extended learning opportunities for students identified with a reading deficiency, including summer programs and before/after school programs? Which funds are being used to support extended learning opportunities?

3.8. Which of the state-provided supports—including guidance, professional development, instructional resources, assessment systems and interventions support—do you believe have been the most helpful to districts and schools in implementing the requirements in the legislation to improve student reading achievement? Why do you think that?

Topic Area 4: Recommendations

4.1. What advice would you want to share with other state departments if they are charged with implementing similar legislation?

4.2. How can lawmakers continue to support you in reaching the goals of this legislation?

Topic Area 5: Impacts of the Legislation

5.1. What impact has the legislation had on other areas in your state, such as Pre-K and preservice education?

5.2. Describe the state-supported requirements for teacher certification for pre-service K-3 teachers and recertification for current teachers (e.g. reading endorsements, reading credentialing and professional learning requirements).

5.3. Is there anything else you want to tell us about how this legislation is impacting your state?

Closing

This concludes our questions for this interview. As we noted earlier, our purpose for this interview was to gather your perceptions about a range of policies related to reading instruction in kindergarten through third grade.

Do you have any final questions for us?

Thank you again for your participation.

Appendix C: Key SEA Staff Members Focus Group

Moderator Introduction

Good [morning/afternoon/evening]. My name is _____ and this is my colleague _____. We are with RMC Research Corporation. RMC is collecting information on the Mississippi Literacy-Based Promotion Act (LBPA) for a study requested by the Foundation for Excellence in Education, headquartered in Tallahassee, Florida.

Before we start, I want to thank you for participating in this focus group and sharing your perceptions.

For our study, we are gathering the perceptions of key SEA staff members about a range of topics related to reading assessment, instruction and intervention in kindergarten through third grade. Also, we will gather the perceptions of your state literacy leader, district literacy leaders and teachers. The information that we gather and analyze will be summarized in a report. Your input is extremely valuable for this project and for determining future research projects in this area.

We have 90 minutes for our discussion. [name] will take notes, track our time and ensure that everyone has a chance to share his or her comments. I will facilitate our discussion. We ask that you make your comments as concise as possible and directly focused on the topic. This will help us make the best use of our limited time.

Your comments will be confidential, and no names will be used. Your responses will be summarized and reported anonymously. We will audio record this session, but the recording will be used only by RMC Research Corporation staff for this project and will not be shared with any other organization. Do you have any questions before we begin?

Let's begin by sharing your names and your roles at the agency. Would you [point to person] like to start for us?

Agenda

Topic Area	Time
1. Structure of State-Level Support	10 minutes
2. State-Level Communication Strategies	15 minutes
3. State-Level Support Strategies	45 minutes
4. Recommendations	15 minutes
5. Impacts of the Legislation	5 minutes

Interview Questions

Topic Area 1: State-Level Support Strategies

1.1. What are your perceptions about the organizational structure (or office) that was tasked to support the implementation of the legislation? How has this structure facilitated implementation of the legislation and promoted student reading achievement?

Topic Area 2: State-Level Communication Strategies

2.1. How would you describe the effectiveness of the state’s communication strategies to inform different stakeholders, including parents, about the legislation and awareness of literacy?

Topic Area 3: State-Level Support Strategies

3.1. How effective was the SEA guidance in helping schools and districts understand the new legislation?

3.2. What are some of the challenges and successes you experienced in providing technical assistance to districts, schools and reading coaches to support implementation of the legislation?

3.3. How have the K-3 reading assessments (e.g., screeners, progress monitoring tools, diagnostics and summative assessments) implemented in schools made a difference?

3.4. What professional development do you provide? How is it delivered? How effective do you believe the professional development has been in ensuring all K-3 teachers have the knowledge and skills to teach reading to all students, including students with severe reading difficulties?

3.5. What are the successes and challenges you have experienced in providing support to reading coaches?

3.6. What are the successes and challenges you have experienced in supporting schools to implement K-3 interventions and to intensify those interventions for students retained in third grade?

3.7. Describe the state-supported extended learning opportunities for students identified with a reading deficiency (i.e., summer programs and before/after school programs).

3.8. Which of your state-provided supports—including guidance, implementation supports, professional development, assessment systems, instructional resources and interventions support—have been the most helpful to districts and schools in implementing the requirements of the legislation? Why do you think that?

Topic Area 4: Recommendations

4.1. What advice would you want to share with your same-role peers in other state departments if they are charged with implementing similar legislation?

4.2. How can lawmakers continue to support your work in reaching the goals of this legislation?

Topic Area 5: Impacts of the Legislation

5.1. What do you think has been the greatest impact of this legislation in schools and districts?

5.2. Is there anything else you want to tell us about how this legislation has impacted schools and districts in your state?

Closing

This concludes our questions for this focus group. As we noted earlier, our purpose is to gather the perceptions of state education staff like you about a range of topics related to reading instruction in kindergarten through third grade.

Does anyone have any final questions for us?

Thank you again for your participation in this focus group.

Appendix D: District Literacy Leader Interview (via telephone)

Moderator Introduction

Good [morning/afternoon/evening]. My name is _____ and on the phone with me is my colleague _____. We are with RMC Research Corporation. RMC, in partnership with the Foundation for Excellence in Education, is conducting a study on the Mississippi Literacy-Based Promotion Act (LBPA). The Mississippi Department of Education agreed to participate in the study and recommended your district for this interview.

Before we start, I want to thank you for participating in this telephone interview and sharing your perceptions.

For our study, we are gathering the perceptions of district literacy leaders and teachers about a range of practices related to reading assessment, instruction and intervention in kindergarten through third grade since the enactment of the Mississippi Literacy-Based Promotion Act (LBPA). The information that we gather and analyze will be summarized in a report. Your input is extremely valuable for this project and for determining future research projects in this area.

We have 90 minutes for our discussion. [name] will take notes, track our time and ensure that we cover all the questions. I will facilitate our discussion. We ask that you make your comments as concise as possible and directly focused on the topic. This will help us make the best use of our limited time.

Your comments will be confidential, and no names will be used. We will audio record this session, but the recording will be used only by RMC Research Corporation staff for this project and will not be shared with any other organization. Do you have any questions before we begin?

Agenda

Topic Area	Time
1. Structure of State-Level Support	10 minutes
2. State-Level Communication Strategies	10 minutes
3. State-Level Support Strategies	45 minutes
4. Recommendations	15 minutes
5. Impacts of the Legislation	10 minutes

Interview Questions

Topic Area 1: State-Level Support Strategies

- 1.1. How effective was the SEA guidance in helping schools and districts understand the new legislation?
- 1.2. What types of supports, such as professional development and resources, did the state provide to districts and schools, and how effective was it in helping teachers implement the legislation?

Topic Area 2: State-Level Communication Strategies

- 2.1. What communication strategies did your district employ to inform different stakeholders, including parents, about the legislation and awareness of literacy? Which strategies do you think were most effective and why?
- 2.2. How would you describe the effectiveness of the state's communication strategies to inform different stakeholders, including parents, about the legislation and awareness of literacy?

Topic Area 3: State-Level Support Strategies

- 3.1. Did your district provide guidelines or guidance documents in addition to the state-issued guidance documents? If so, what were the particular areas of the legislation that the district needed to clarify further?
- 3.2. What are some of the challenges and successes that your district experienced in providing technical assistance to schools to support implementation of the legislation?
- 3.3. Describe how your district has used existing funds and/or new funds to ensure students are reading by the end of third grade.
- 3.4. In addition to state-provided professional development for K-3 teachers and school-based literacy leaders, what professional development do you provide? How is it delivered? How effective do you believe the professional development has been in ensuring all K-3 teachers have the knowledge and skills to teach reading to all students, including students with severe reading difficulties?
- 3.5. How does your district support school-based literacy leaders, such as administrators and reading coaches?
- 3.6. What successes and challenges have you experienced in providing support to school-based literacy leaders?
- 3.7. How is support provided to teachers and which strategies are most successful?
- 3.8. What key resources, in addition to those provided by the state, has your district provided to schools that have been most valuable and why?
- 3.9. How does the district collect and use data from assessments?
- 3.10. How have the K-3 reading assessments (e.g., screeners, progress monitoring tools, diagnostics and summative assessments) implemented in schools made a difference?
- 3.11. What is the instructional plan for K-3 reading in your schools (e.g. time, resources and groupings)?
- 3.12. Describe your strategies to provide interventions to students most in need. How do you ensure schools are implementing

K-3 interventions and to intensifying those interventions for students retained in third grade?

3.13. Describe your district’s guidance to schools regarding extended time for students identified with a reading deficiency, including summer programs and/or before/after school programs. What grades are being served?

3.14. Which of your district-provided supports—including guidance, technical assistance, professional development, assessment systems, instructional resources and interventions support—are the most helpful to schools in implementing the legislation? Why do you think that?

Topic Area 4: Recommendations

4.1. How can the state department of education continue to support your work in reaching the goals of this legislation?

4.2. How can lawmakers continue to support your work in reaching the goals of this legislation?

4.3. What advice would you want to share with literacy leaders in other districts and states if they are charged with implementing similar legislation?

Topic Area 5: Impacts of the Legislation

5.1. What changes in your district and schools can be attributed to the implementation of this legislation?

5.2. Is there anything else you want to tell us about how this legislation has impacted schools and your district?

Closing

This concludes our questions for this interview. As we noted earlier, our purpose is to gather the perceptions of district literacy leaders like you about a range of topics related to reading instruction in kindergarten through third grade.

Do you have any final questions for us? Thank you again for your participation in this interview.

Appendix E: Select District Teacher Survey

This survey is part of a study of the impact of legislation enacted to improve early literacy. The Mississippi Literacy-Based Promotion Act (LBPA), passed in 2013, puts a strong focus on grade-level reading skills, particularly through the third grade. Beginning in the 2014-2015 school year, a student scoring at the lowest achievement level in reading on the state-wide assessment for third grade will not be promoted to fourth grade unless the student qualifies for a good cause exemption. In 2016, an Individual Reading Plan (IRP) requirement was added to LBPA. There are increased expectations for third grade students beginning in 2018-2019.

The following statements are designed to collect your perceptions of this legislation. Please respond to the statements in relation to the Mississippi Literacy-Based Promotion Act (LBPA). Your responses are voluntary and will be reported only in combination with responses of other teachers from across the state.

This survey will take approximately 10 minutes to complete. Thank you - we value your input.

Scale: Strongly Agree - Somewhat Agree - Somewhat Disagree - Strongly Disagree - N/A.

1. I receive adequate support from my school administration that assists me in implementing the Mississippi Literacy-Based Promotion Act (LBPA).
2. I receive adequate support that helps me analyze student assessment data and make instructional decisions based on the data.
3. My reading coach or literacy leader provides support that helps me improve my reading instruction.
4. I receive information and guidance documents that increase my knowledge of the requirements of the Mississippi Literacy-Based Promotion Act (LBPA).
5. The Mississippi Literacy-Based Promotion Act (LBPA) guidance documents provide information that is useful to me.
6. The professional development that I receive improves my knowledge of and skill in research-based reading instruction.
7. The professional development that I receive improves my knowledge of and skill in providing effective interventions.
8. The professional development that I receive improves my knowledge of and skill with assessments and their use to drive instruction.
9. The Mississippi Literacy-Based Promotion Act (LBPA) assessments that we use help me improve my instruction to meet the needs of all students.
10. Because of the Mississippi Literacy-Based Promotion Act (LBPA), my school has provided increased learning time for struggling readers.
11. The extended learning opportunities, including summer programs and/or before-after school programs, are achieving the purpose of accelerating reading progress for students with a reading deficiency.
12. Because of the Mississippi Literacy-Based Promotion Act (LBPA), I changed my instructional practices to teach reading to all students, including students with severe reading difficulties.

13. The Mississippi Literacy-Based Promotion Act (LBPA) has a positive impact on improving K-3 reading outcomes in my school.
14. The Mississippi Literacy-Based Promotion Act (LBPA) has helped me identify and address reading difficulties early.
15. The Mississippi Literacy-Based Promotion Act (LBPA) was communicated to parents in a way that is easy for them to understand.
16. Since the implementation of the Mississippi Literacy-Based Promotion Act (LBPA), my school increased its efforts to engage parents of struggling readers in a timely fashion.
17. I support the Mississippi Literacy-Based Promotion Act (LBPA) requirement to help ensure struggling readers get the time they need with intensive interventions to be successful in fourth grade and beyond.

Open Ended:

18. The most positive aspect of the Mississippi Literacy-Based Promotion Act (LBPA) is _____

Please indicate the district in which you teach. (list of two district)

Thank you for your participation.

Appendix F: Statewide District Literacy Leader Survey

This survey is part of a study of the impact of legislation enacted to improve early literacy. The Mississippi Literacy-Based Promotion Act (LBPA), passed in 2013, puts a strong focus on grade-level reading skills, particularly through the third grade. Beginning in the 2014-2015 school year, a student scoring at the lowest achievement level in reading on the state-wide assessment for third grade will not be promoted to fourth grade unless the student qualifies for a good cause exemption. In 2016, an Individual Reading Plan (IRP) requirement was added to LBPA. There are increased expectations for third grade students beginning in 2018-2019.

The following statements are designed to collect your perceptions of this legislation. Please respond to the statements in relation to Mississippi Literacy-Based Promotion Act (LBPA). Your responses are voluntary and will be reported only in combination with responses of other district literacy leaders from across the state.

This survey will take approximately 10 minutes to complete. Thank you - we value your input.

Scale: Strongly Agree - Somewhat Agree - Somewhat Disagree - Strongly Disagree - N/A.

1. I receive adequate support from the Mississippi Department of Education that helps me understand the Mississippi Literacy-Based Promotion Act (LBPA).
2. I receive adequate support from the Mississippi Department of Education that assists me in implementing the Mississippi Literacy-Based Promotion Act (LBPA).
3. The Mississippi Department of Education's communication strategies to inform different stakeholders, including parents, about the Mississippi Literacy-Based Promotion Act (LBPA) and the importance of early literacy are effective.
4. My district provides professional development to ensure all K-3 teachers have the knowledge and skills to teach reading to all students, including students with severe reading difficulties.
5. The professional development that my district provides improves teachers' knowledge of and skill in using assessments to drive instruction.
6. The Mississippi Literacy-Based Promotion Act (LBPA) assessment requirements improve teachers' instruction to meet the needs of all students.
7. The extended learning opportunities, including summer programs and before/after school programs, are achieving the purpose of accelerating reading progress for students with a reading deficiency.
8. Because of the Mississippi Literacy-Based Promotion Act (LBPA), our teachers have improved their instructional practices to teach reading to all students, including students identified with a reading deficiency.
9. The Mississippi Literacy-Based Promotion Act (LBPA) is having a positive impact on improving K-3 student reading outcomes in my district.
10. The Mississippi Literacy-Based Promotion Act (LBPA) helps our teachers identify and address reading difficulties early.
11. The Mississippi Literacy-Based Promotion Act (LBPA) was communicated to parents in a way that is easy for them to understand.

12. Since implementation of the Mississippi Literacy-Based Promotion Act (LBPA), my district has increased its efforts to engage parents of struggling readers in a timely fashion.
13. I support the Mississippi Literacy-Based Promotion Act (LBPA) requirement to help ensure struggling readers get the time they need with intensive interventions to be successful in fourth grade and beyond.

Thank you for your participation.

Appendix G: Statewide Teacher Survey

This survey is part of a study of the impact of legislation enacted to improve early literacy. The Mississippi Literacy-Based Promotion Act (LBPA), passed in 2013, puts a strong focus on grade-level reading skills, particularly through the third grade. Beginning in the 2014-2015 school year, a student scoring at the lowest achievement level in reading on the state-wide assessment for 3rd grade will not be promoted to 4th grade unless the student qualifies for a good cause exemption. In 2016, an Individual Reading Plan (IRP) requirement was added to LBPA. There are increased expectations for third grade students beginning in 2018-2019.

The following statements are designed to collect your perceptions of this legislation. Please respond to the statements in relation to Mississippi Literacy-Based Promotion Act (LBPA). Your responses are voluntary and will be reported only in combination with responses of other teachers from across the state.

This survey will take approximately 10 minutes to complete. Thank you - we value your input.

Please indicate the grade span that best describes your teaching position.

K - 3

4 - 6

7 - 12

Scale: Strongly Agree - Somewhat Agree - Somewhat Disagree - Strongly Disagree - N/A.

1. I receive adequate support from my school administration that assists me in implementing the Mississippi Literacy-Based Promotion Act (LBPA).
2. I receive adequate support that helps me analyze student assessment data and make instructional decisions based on the data.
3. My reading coach or literacy leader provides support that helps me improve my reading instruction.
4. I receive information and guidance documents that increase my knowledge of the requirements of the Mississippi Literacy-Based Promotion Act (LBPA).
5. The Mississippi Literacy-Based Promotion Act (LBPA) guidance documents provide information that is useful to me.
6. The professional development that I receive improves my knowledge of and skill in research-based reading instruction.
7. The professional development that I receive improves my knowledge of and skill in providing effective interventions.
8. The professional development that I receive improves my knowledge of and skill with assessments and their use to drive instruction.
9. The Mississippi Literacy-Based Promotion Act (LBPA) assessments that we use help me improve my instruction to meet the needs of all students.
10. Because of the Mississippi Literacy-Based Promotion Act (LBPA), my school has provided increased learning time for struggling readers.

11. The extended learning opportunities, including summer programs and/or before-after school programs, are achieving the purpose of accelerating reading progress for students with a reading deficiency.
12. Because of the Mississippi Literacy-Based Promotion Act (LBPA), I changed my instructional practices to teach reading to all students, including students with severe reading difficulties.
13. The Mississippi Literacy-Based Promotion Act (LBPA) has a positive impact on improving K-3 student reading outcomes in my school.
14. The Mississippi Literacy-Based Promotion Act (LBPA) has helped me identify and address reading difficulties early.
15. The Mississippi Literacy-Based Promotion Act (LBPA) was communicated to parents in a way that is easy for them to understand.
16. Since the implementation of the Mississippi Literacy-Based Promotion Act (LBPA), my school increased its efforts to engage parents of struggling readers in a timely fashion.
17. I support the Mississippi Literacy-Based Promotion Act (LBPA) requirement to help ensure struggling readers get the time they need with intensive interventions to be successful in fourth grade and beyond.

Thank you for your participation.

