



# READ Act Implementation Update

## March 2026

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Office of Teaching and Learning

# Ten Minnesota Commitments to Equity

1. Prioritize equity.
2. Start from within.
3. Measure what matters.
4. Go local.
5. Follow the money.
6. Start early.
7. Monitor implementation of standards.
8. Value people.
9. Improve conditions for learning.
10. Give students options.



# Three-Year Measurable Goal

**To have every child in Minnesota reading at or above grade level beginning in kindergarten and multilingual learners and students receiving special education services are supported in achieving their individualized reading goals to meet grade level benchmarks.**

**Why this goal?** Reading proficiency, at every grade, enables students to understand and learn from increasingly complex texts and materials during K-12 instruction, thus enabling them for postsecondary career or college success.

# Regional Literacy Network (1)

The Regional Literacy Network (RLN) is composed of nine Literacy Leads and twenty Literacy Coaches who are located across each of the nine Minnesota service cooperatives. The RLN provides support in three key areas:

- **Planning:** Assist districts and charters in creating and implementing their local literacy plan, addressing all requirements included in the Minnesota READ Act.
- **Implementation:** Provide monthly training and coaching to district and charter literacy leads, administrators, teachers and staff on implementing effective, evidence-based literacy practices, specifically structured literacy, within a multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS) framework.
- **Evaluation:** Support districts and charters in tracking the success of their local literacy plan implementation and make recommendations for continuous improvement.

## Regional Literacy Network (2)

In the first full year of operation (July 2024 – July 2025), the Regional Literacy Network leads and coaches provided **over 45,905 hours of professional development, coaching, consultation and implementation support** with **over 90% of districts and charters engaging** with the RLN this past year. These efforts represent a foundational investment in workforce development, instructional capacity, and sustainability of the professional development required by the READ Act.

- COMPASS partnership; MnMTSS supports based in structured literacy through COMPASS Literacy Pathway

# RLN: Building Statewide Capacity

- **Strategic Foundation:** Coherent theory of change was embedded in both legislation and policy which created the "space for change": establishing clear mandates while allowing innovation to emerge and balancing top-down direction with bottom-up creativity and local context.
- **Central Leadership Capacity:** MDE Literacy Unit provides central leadership across the state system, developing evidence-based guidance, fostering continuous learning, and creating conditions for sustainable change rather than attempting to control implementation.
- **Networked Infrastructure:** The Regional Literacy Network serves as a skills and relationship building hub that enables bidirectional knowledge flow. The Network connects state guidance to local contexts while surfacing practitioner wisdom to inform statewide strategy, helping stakeholders "see the larger system" beyond their individual organizational boundaries.
- **Distributed Leadership:** District Literacy Leads function as system leaders who bridge state vision with local reality, cultivating ownership and collective problem-solving capacity among district administration and educators while maintaining accountability for student outcomes through school leadership partnerships.

# The MN READ Act Theory of Change and Progress Indicators

Data Source: Local Literacy Plans, June 2025

## Science of Reading in the Classroom

- High quality Tier 1 instruction, based on the science of reading, results in proficiency for 80% or more of students.
- Teacher training and support through a Regional Literacy Network enables high quality instruction.

### MEASURES

- 89% of Phase 1 educators trained or in progress; Deadline June 30, 2026
- 35% of Phase 2 educators trained or in progress; Deadline June 30, 2027

## Student Screening

- Screeners identify students who need additional instructional support.
- Screeners measure foundational reading skills (unlike the MCAs which test English Language Arts standards)
- Screeners also identify characteristics of dyslexia

### MEASURES

- Districts using FastBridge screening 87% of K-3 students on average
- 99.9% of districts and charters are using an approved screener

## Structured Literacy Curriculum

- District use of curricular resources highly aligned to the science of reading research base supports (1) trained teachers in their design of effective literacy instruction and (2) student learning.

### MEASURES

- 70% of districts using curriculum aligned to science of reading research base.

## Reading Intervention

- District and charter use of evidence-based literacy interventions to support student learning outcomes.

### MEASURES

- #/% of districts utilizing evidence based interventions
- Note: *Initial list of reviewed intervention materials was completed in November, 2025. This data will be included in the 2026 LLP submission.*

## Local Literacy Plans

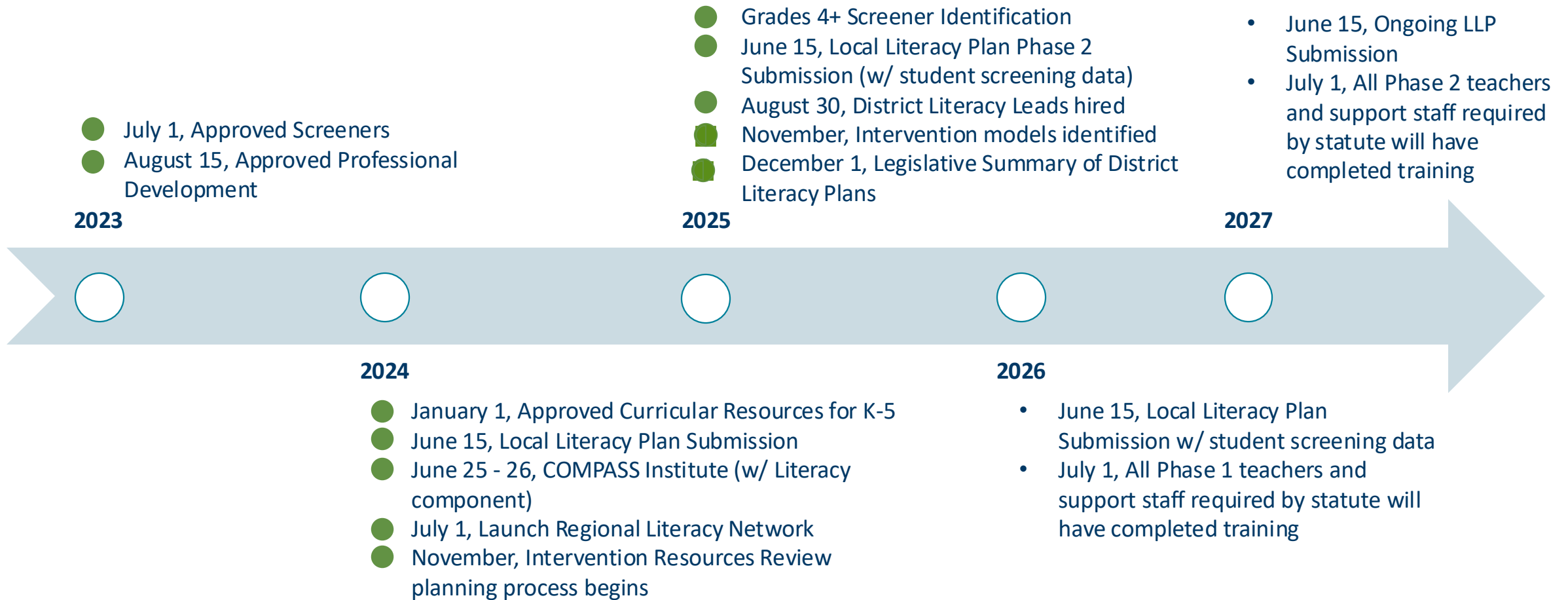
- Developing and implementing a Local Literacy Plan requires districts to review their student performance data and create district plans to improve literacy outcomes to meet the READ Act requirements

### MEASURES

- 99.9% of districts submitting a local literacy plan
- 99.9% of districts having a Literacy Lead
- 44% of districts using the MnMTSS framework.

# Legislatively Mandated Deadlines

Meeting all legislatively mandated deadlines on time.



# Science of Reading in the Classroom

*Data Source: Local Literacy Plans, June 2025*

Teacher training is on track to meet legislative mandate for all Phase 1 teachers to be trained by 7/1/2026.

- More educators are understanding the critical nature of evidence-based structured literacy instruction.
- Teachers are sharing that they feel more competent, greater ability to serve students, and greater job satisfaction.

## Indicators

### Educators registered for training to date:

- Phase 1: 30,000
- Phase 2 2,200

### Educators who have completed training:

- Phase 1 64% (23,972)
- Phase 2 26% (2,257)

### RLN Training SY25-26:

- Para Training – 4808
- Para Structured Literacy Train the Trainer: 624

## SY 23-24

- Launch retraining of all K-3 teachers in science of reading

## SY 24-25

- Support districts in the implementation of the READ Act (Regional Literacy Network)
- Develop paraprofessional training

## SY 25-26

- Provide paraprofessional and volunteer training through the Regional Literacy Network
- Provide training to Higher Ed Institutions; new cohort began January 2026
- Develop school leader training
- Begin Phase 2 teacher training

# Student Screening

2024-2025 screening data is baseline data to truly understand the status of foundational skills proficiency in MN K-3 grade students **beginning** in Kindergarten.

This data is directly impacted through implementation of the READ Act and enables MDE to identify areas of concern and to support educators and districts to more effectively align resources to student needs.

Note: MCA data provides information on the status of student proficiency in grades 3-8 and 10 on ELA standards **beginning** in Grade 3.

## Indicators

Summary results will be available early 2026

- SY24-25 K-3 students screened statewide: Districts using FastBridge – 87% on average



## SY 23-24

- K-3 Universal screeners chosen by MDE

## SY 24-25

- K-3 students complete reading screening in fall, winter and spring; schools report disaggregated results to MDE.
- Screening tools for grades 4-12 identified

## SY 25-26

- Analyze K-3 student data to assess outcomes and to identify where improvement and support are needed.
- Implement grades 4-12 screening for students who are not meeting grade level benchmarks in reading.
- Implement the oral language screener in early adopter schools

# Structured Literacy Curriculum

*Data Source: Local Literacy Plans, June 2025*

When teachers have resources that align to their professional learning, they are better able to implement in the classroom what they are learning.

As a result, teachers can more easily focus on individual students and their needs instead of finding or developing material.

This consistency improves the overall system.

## Indicators

At least one curricula resource aligned to science of reading

- 49% of districts using highly aligned
- 51% of districts using partially aligned

Layered Implementation: Many districts report combining highly aligned phonics programs with broader partially aligned literacy programs to strengthen Tier 1 instruction.



## SY 23-24

- Identified curriculums aligned to evidence-based literacy.

## SY 24-25

- Helped districts review and adopt high-quality curriculum resources.
- Aligned structured literacy with new ELA standards and MCA-IV assessment.

## SY 25-26

- Support districts to refine and supplement curriculum for students' contexts to improve outcomes.
- Support new ELA standards and deepen structured literacy expertise in districts (via Regional Literacy Network).
- Integrate curriculum and ELA standards into the COMPASS MnMTSS framework
- Pilot curriculum review process

# Reading Intervention

CAREI Intervention material review was completed in November 2025.

Districts will have a wide choice of resources that they can use. Because this is the case, it is highly likely that educators already have access to evidence-based reading intervention materials.

## Indicators

Data to be available 7/15/2026 :

- #/% of districts with interventions are partially aligned with science of reading.
- #/% of districts whose interventions are fully aligned with science of reading.
- Growth in foundational reading skills by the lowest performing students (screening data)



## SY 23-24

- No planned actions

## SY 24-25

- Conduct review of reading interventions to identify resources based on evidenced-based practices

## SY 25-26

- Provide targeted training and coaching so districts can confidently implement evidence-based literacy interventions.
- Update and distribute state guidance and resources to design, implement, and evaluate intensive literacy supports.
- Help districts select, implement, and monitor Tier 2 and Tier 3 evidence-based reading interventions by partnering with COMPASS utilizing the MnMTSS Framework.

# Local Literacy Plans (LLP)

Publishing LLPs on the MDE website has led to accountability and transparency and was welcomed by district and community stakeholders.

The data submissions have shown some gaps in knowledge and future iterations are closing these information gaps.

LLP content is guiding Regional Literacy Network discussions and decision making for districts.

## Indicators

99% of districts submitting local literacy plans

- 518 of 533 on time
- 526 of 533 total

78% of districts adopting an MTSS framework.

99% of districts have a Literacy Lead



## SY 23-24

- Launched initial online tool to collect Local Literacy Plans from districts.
- Analysis of data clarified districts' implementation progress and supports needed.

## SY 24-25

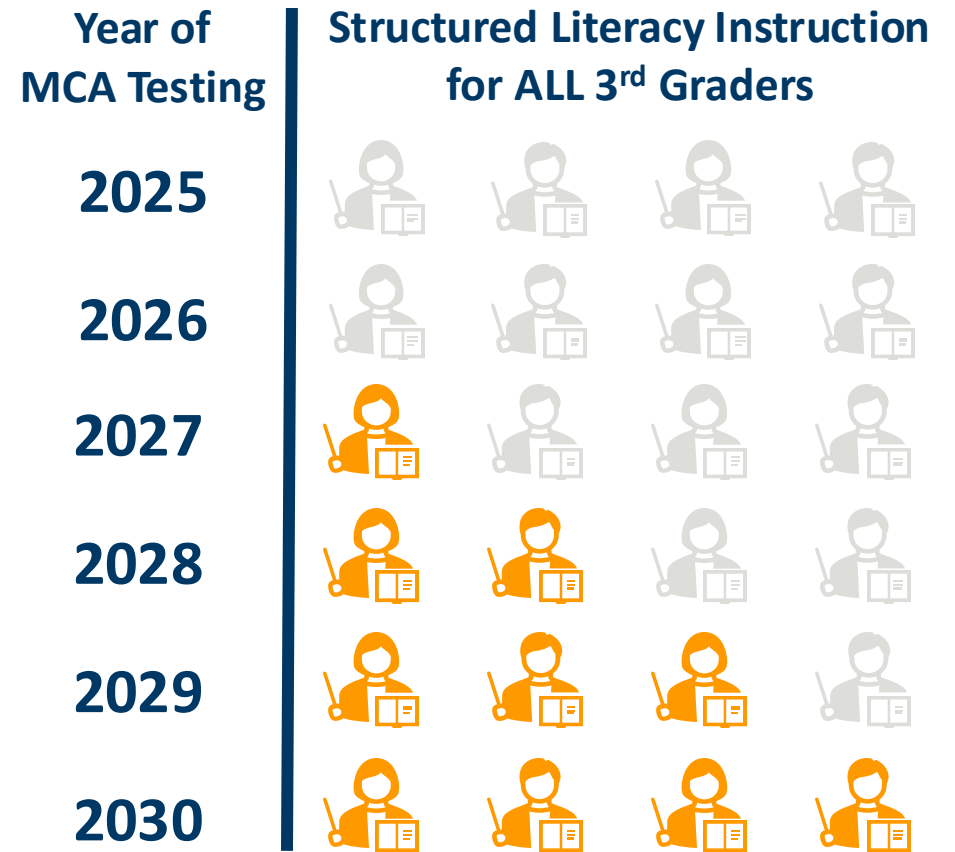
- Developed system for student assessment data submission.
- Enhanced LLP collection tool; published plans online.
- Completed second LLP submission and first student data collection.


## SY 25-26


- Upgrade technology for increased accessibility and use.
- Include ReadBasix and oral language screening data.
- Identify district support needs and evaluate student growth.

# Expectations of READ Act Impact on MCA Scores

- MCAs test for reading comprehension and proficiency in English Language Arts state standards; foundational reading skills proficiency is needed to read test materials and to answer questions, but MCAs do not assess these specific skills.
- By the 2026-2027 school year, all K-3 teachers should be trained and teaching with structured literacy instructional practices.
  - Widespread implementation will enable us to see the impact on the three-year goal measure at a statewide level.
  - Prior to this, we will see scattered improvement as districts and schools make the transition, however we do not control the timing of these changes.
- **Full** impacts of the READ Act are expected to be measurable in Spring 2030 MCAs and beyond.
  - Teachers will need time to become proficient in new teaching methods for students to fully gain the benefits of this methodology change.
- Leading indicator: Screening assessment provides data on foundational reading skills to understand if we are on track to reach desired, long term student reading comprehension proficiency outcomes (e.g. MCA scores)



 1 year of structured literacy instruction

 1 year of unknown literacy instruction

# Observations from Early Adopters

- **Windom, MN and Watertown-Mayer, MN:** Similarly sized early adopters in greater MN
  - Dyslexia indicators have declined following structured literacy instruction.
  - Windom's kindergarten characteristics of dyslexia rate is about double Watertown-Mayer's, while its English learner percentage is nine times higher.
- **Northfield Public School District:** According to the district, after adopting a phonics-based curriculum, 63% of third graders met or exceeded reading level, surpassing the state average of 46%.
  - Kindergarten proficiency dropped last year when the staff decided to use less aligned curriculum for structured literacy but is returning to a highly aligned approach.

# Positive Indicators from Early Adopters

Structured literacy instruction is **decreasing the number of students identified** as demonstrating characteristics of dyslexia **to normal ranges**. This data indicates positive outcomes for reading proficiency when these students will reach third grade, which we believe will support improved MCA scores.

## Watertown-Mayer Screening Data

Self-Reported in Local Literacy Plans, June 2025

Grade	Given structured literacy instruction	% of students demonstrating characteristics of dyslexia	# of students screened	# of students demonstrating characteristics of dyslexia
Kindergarten	✓	14%	88	12
Grade 1	✓	17%	90	15
Grade 2		32%	44	14
Grade 3		28%	32	9

Students who do not have strong foundational literacy skills often demonstrate characteristics of dyslexia in screening assessments, leading to overidentification of special education. 17% is the national average for characteristics of dyslexia.

# Landscape and Attitudes are Shifting

## Training & Implementation Fidelity

- As educators finish the required training, the Literacy Unit and the Regional Literacy Network are now focused on helping schools put evidence-based reading practices into action.
- Ongoing professional learning is being developed for districts and charters to support implementation and sustainability.
- Coaching and technical support are provided through the Regional Literacy Network.
- Tools to collect data on the implementation of the 2020 ELA Standards, structured literacy, and culturally responsive practices are also in development.

# Higher Ed Alignment to READ Act Requirements

- **89% (118 out of 133) of these programs have demonstrated PELSB's reading standards and passed the reading audit.**
  - Of those, four programs are based in non-higher ed programs and 114 are based on institutions of higher education.
- There are 15 programs that have not yet passed the reading audit. Some of these programs are currently being reviewed or submitted and awaiting review.
- **Educators who successfully complete one of these programs will receive a waiver to the professional development requirement.**
- Several higher ed programs have begun literacy lab practicums to give teacher prep candidates authentic experiences delivering evidence-based interventions to students who exhibit reading difficulties or characteristics of dyslexia.
- Currently 35 higher ed instructors are participating in a LETRS Training Cohort

# Ongoing Work

- **Multilingual Literacy Specialist** position had to be reposted; interviews currently taking place
- **Deaf and Hard of Hearing Working Group**
  - Screening: Workgroup advised to use a Body of Evidence approach (Colorado as a model); body of evidence protocol is in development
  - Curricular Resources: Adding criteria for nonsound-based approaches to the READ Act rubric; will use this rubric to review the available resources
  - Professional Development: Workgroup recommended a course created specifically for deaf educators and those who support deaf and hard of hearing students; this course is in development
  - *Resources and guidance are being added to the MDE READ Act page as they become available*
- **Dual Language Immersion Advisory Committee**
  - Kickoff – 1/30; included a strong representation of educators and families
  - Screening is the prioritized topic so that guidance will be completed and posted before SY26-27
  - Resources and professional learning guidance will also be focus of future meetings

# Addressing Concerns

Key groups that had concerns about the READ Act are seeing success and momentum in the system change and want to be part of the positive change.

This work has strong bipartisan support in the legislature, which continues to advance the work and send a clear message that structured literacy is here to stay.

## School Boards, Administrators, and Educators

School and district leaders had significant concerns about effort required to implement the READ Act, and many were skeptical of the science-of-reading approach

Early stories and examples of positive impact shared through the Regional Literacy Network have created curiosity about the instructional shift based on the science of reading research.

The stories and pockets of positive data are translating into widespread belief and lasting change: educators will not be going back to their old practices.

## Institutions of Higher Learning and Teacher Preparation

Institutions of higher learning and leaders in the teacher preparation community questioned the science-of-reading methodology and changing their programs

In Oct 2025, PELSB is publishing a list of schools and coursework that meet the professional development requirements for the science of reading.

Teacher prep programs are updating their reading instruction curriculum, fundamentally altering literacy instruction across the state for the long term.

In addition to day-to-day READ Act program implementation and improvement, the team will be working on the following:

- Continue to develop **support for the Evidence-based Structured Literacy Practices** with a focus on implementation of the practices and aligned coaching support.
- **Transition the approved Phase 1 Professional Development** to the Regional Literacy Network to administer
- **Phase 2 Professional Development** with a focus on secondary support
- Respond to the **identified needs voiced through the District Literacy Leads** and the Local Certified Facilitators Communities of Practice.
- Develop a **learning module for school principals**; through the RLN convene a regional Community of Practice for school principals and leaders
- Promote the **self-guided early literacy course directly to parents** and through school district and ECFE channels.
- Continue to explore and deepen **partnership opportunities with community partners**.
- Deepen **partnership with institutions of higher education** to support coursework focused on science-based reading instruction
- Support schools in using the screening data to target instruction; getting more **widespread use of data** by all teachers is needed.

# Questions?