

Berkeley Unified School District
Literacy Improvement Program Monitoring Report 3
December 2023
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INTRODUCTION

Program Monitoring Report 3 serves as the third in a series of seven semi-annual reports to monitor the ongoing progress on the Literacy Improvement Program (LIP) implemented by the Berkeley Unified School District (BUSD) in accordance with the Class Action Settlement Agreement ([Appendix A](#)) executed on December 11, 2020 in the United States District Court for the Northern District of California (Case No. 3:17-cv-02510). The primary purpose of this document is to monitor and report on BUSD's compliance with the Literacy Improvement Program and review progress toward implementation of the four major goals of the LIP:

- **Goal 1:** Develop Programs to Improve General Education Reading and Language Arts Achievement for all Students, especially those Students with or at risk for Reading Disabilities, including Dyslexia.
- **Goal 2:** Increase the Systematicity and Intensity of Tier 2 and 3 Reading and Language Arts Intervention of the MTSS Framework to Reduce the Achievement Gap for Students at risk for Reading Disabilities.
- **Goal 3:** Ensure Fidelity of Literacy Improvement Program Implementation through District Monitoring of Literacy Improvement Program and Staff Engagement.
- **Goal 4:** Special Education Programs: Increase Reading Achievement by Improving the Quality of IEP Goals and Section 504 Plan Development, Progress Monitoring, and use of appropriately intensive, Research-based Interventions.

This Monitoring Report is based largely on the fourth quarterly report from BUSD for 2022-2023 ([Appendix E](#)) and the first quarterly report from 2023-2024 ([Appendix F](#)), in addition to a thorough review of meeting notes from all Accountability Leads for the 4 LIP Goals, and data analysis from the EduClimber data integration system. As BUSD has entered into Year 2 of the LIP, structured site visits have also proven invaluable for both formal and informal data collection. Additional data for this report have been gathered through attendance at Implementation Team Meetings, individual meetings with Accountability Leads and BUSD's Literacy Consultant, informal interviews with BUSD staff and community members, meetings with BUSD Administration, as well as attendance at the district's Professional Learning series through CORE Learning.

The first section of this report includes the Progress Report component of the monitoring plan. To more easily identify the unique tasks from the original Settlement Agreement, each of the 35 Actions from the BUSD Literacy Improvement Program is listed first with the corresponding LIP Action Number [ex: "6"], followed by the narrative description of the Action taken directly from the LIP [ex: "Evaluate staff perceptions about changes in general and special education

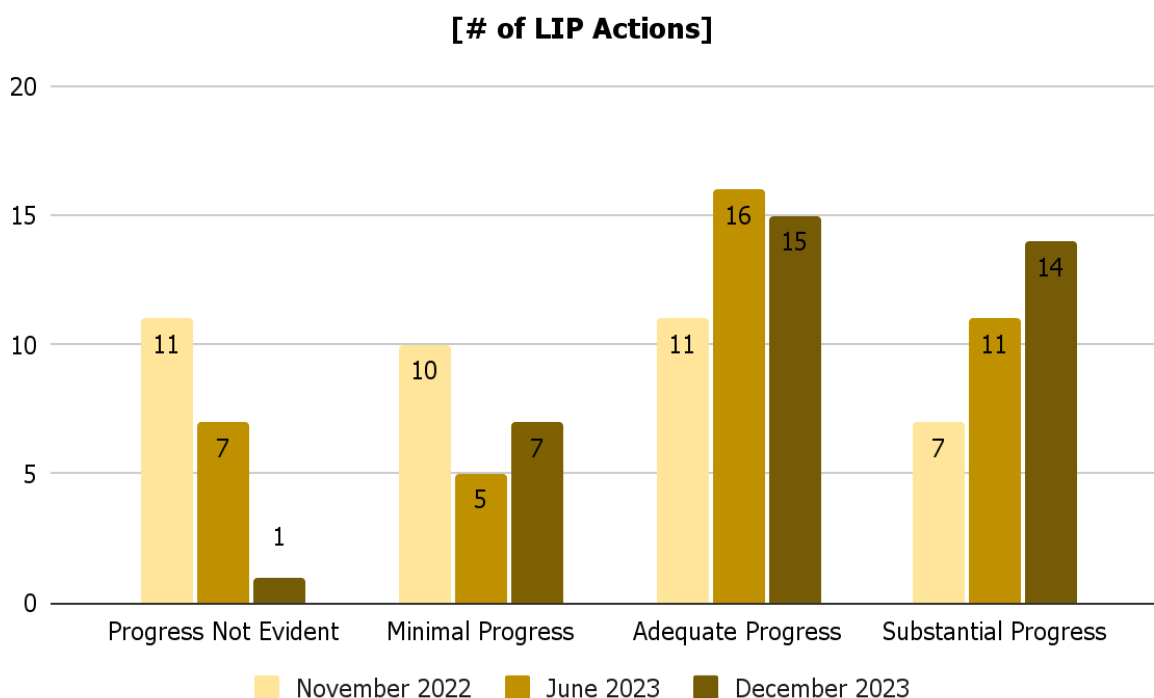
research-based reading practices and MTSS-RDS”], and ending with the exact citation from the Settlement Agreement [ex: “II.B.2.c.i”]. It is important to note that since the last Monitoring Report of June 2023, the Plaintiff and school district have agreed to eliminate two duplicate Actions (Action 11 is a copy of Action 9, and Action 18 is a repeat of Action 10) and divide four of the original Actions into eight separate Actions that more accurately reflect the K-5th and 6th-8th components of each Action (see table below for revision of Actions 9, 12, 13, and 15). This separation will help to distinguish the disparate progress that has occurred at the elementary schools compared to the middle schools, and more accurately reflect progress over time at both levels of the school system. Note that these modifications have increased the total number of LIP Actions from 35 Actions to 37 Actions.

Original Settlement Agreement (November 2021)	Revised Settlement Agreement (December 2023)
<p>9. BUSD will provide <u>K-5 general education teachers, Grades 6-8 Reading and Language Arts teachers, and K-8 special education teachers</u> professional development in how to use the Benchmark Assessments system for screening and progress monitoring, and for reports to parents/guardians. [II.B.2.a.i]</p>	<p>9a. Provide <u>K-5 general education teachers and K-5 special education teachers</u> professional development in how to use the Benchmark Assessments system for screening and progress monitoring, and for reports to parents/guardians.</p> <p>9b. Provide <u>Grades 6-8 Reading and Language Arts teachers, and 6-8 special education teachers</u> professional development in how to use the Benchmark Assessments system for screening and progress monitoring, and for reports to parents/guardians.</p>
<p>12. BUSD will provide <u>K-5 general education teachers and Grades 6-8 Reading and Language Arts teachers</u> professional development in research and practice of Reading and Language Arts instruction consistent with the curriculum framework. [II.B.2.a.ii]</p>	<p>12a. Provide <u>K-5 general education teachers</u> professional development in research and practice of Reading and Language Arts instruction consistent with the curriculum framework.</p> <p>12b. Provide <u>Grades 6-8 Reading and Language Arts teachers</u> professional development in research and practice of Reading and Language Arts instruction consistent with the curriculum framework.</p>
<p>13. Begin implementation of the Targeted PDP to provide <u>Grades K-5 general education teachers and Grades 6-8 Reading and Language Arts teachers</u> professional development in how to use their chosen Reading and Language Arts Tier 1 curriculum through coaching and observations to provide feedback on implementation. [II.B.2.a.iii]</p>	<p>13a. Begin implementation of the Targeted PDP to provide <u>Grades K-5 general education teachers</u> professional development in how to use their chosen Reading and Language Arts Tier 1 curriculum through coaching and observations to provide feedback on implementation.</p> <p>13b. Begin implementation of the Targeted PDP to provide <u>Grades 6-8 Reading and Language Arts teachers</u> professional development in how to use their chosen Reading and Language Arts Tier 1 curriculum through coaching and observations to provide feedback on implementation.</p>
<p>15. Conduct a review and assessment of <u>BUSD core reading program</u> in conjunction with school site principals, teachers, school personnel and bargaining units. [II.B.2.a.i]</p>	<p>15a. Conduct a review and assessment of <u>BUSD K-5 core reading program</u> in conjunction with school site principals, teachers, school personnel and bargaining units.</p> <p>15b. Conduct a review and assessment of <u>BUSD Grades 6-8 reading intervention programs</u> in conjunction with school site principals, teachers, school personnel and bargaining units.</p>

In an effort to make this report more comprehensive to parents and community members, five Cross-Cutting Themes were identified to create explicit connections between the 35 specific Actions, and to more clearly connect the dots across the overall Literacy Improvement Program. These cross-cutting themes are: **1) Accountability, 2) Assessment, 3) Instruction, 4, Intervention, and 5) Systems of Support.** Each of the five cross-cutting themes is evaluated in a separate section, using a leveled rubric of progress-to-date, based on expectations for actions considering the recommendations from the Implementation Science framework detailed in the second section of this report. The rubric consists of four evaluative bands: **substantial progress, adequate progress, minimal progress, and progress not evident**, with the goal of celebrating *substantial* and *adequate* advancements in the implementation, while providing recommendations for next steps for any LIP Actions where *minimal* or *no progress* has been observed.

BIG PICTURE - 18 MONTH PROGRESS SUMMARY

As the Literacy Improvement Program reaches the midpoint of the larger three-year implementation process, let us briefly pause and reflect on the aggregate progress to date across all 37 Actions. While the majority of this report will focus on individual Actions, it can also be helpful to reflect on the progress that has taken place over the 18 months since this Literacy Improvement Program began. Overall, the number of Actions that have shown Adequate or Substantial progress has increased from 18 to 29 Actions (61% increase), while the number of Actions with Minimal or No progress has decreased from 21 to 8 Actions (62% decrease).



PROGRESS REPORT - DECEMBER 2023

Cross-Cutting Theme 1- Accountability

The success of any long-term literacy plan is based in large part by the structures created by the district to ensure a high level of **Accountability** among the Implementation Team and with the outside community as well. Establishing a clearly articulated and publicly available plan, along with frequent community updates, is necessary for monitoring progress and for an effective implementation of the literacy plan. This theme of Accountability surfaces throughout the specific actions listed in the Literacy Improvement Program and is essential for establishing transparency in the implementation process that leads to trust among all stakeholders.

The table below captures the progress to date on the cross-cutting theme of **Accountability**. **[Actions in bold represent movement across bands of progress]**

Substantial Progress
6. Evaluate staff perceptions about changes in general and special education research-based reading practices and MTSS-RDS. <i>II.B.2.c.i</i> 24. Provide the Monitor with implementation reports. <i>II.C.1.d</i> 26. Monitor will provide a Monitoring Plan to the School Board, and BUSD Implementation Team. <i>II.C.1.c</i> 28. Review and assess feedback to refine the Literacy Improvement Program as needed to accomplish stated goals in consultation with the Outside Consultants. <i>II.A.1.b.vi</i>
Adequate Progress
7. Consult with the Outside Consultants with regard to development of appropriate and measurable literacy goals. <i>II.A.1.b.iii</i> 25. Monitor will issue Monitoring Reports on a semi-annual basis addressing progress on Literacy Improvement Program implementation to the School Board and BUSD Implementation Team. <i>II.C.1.e</i> 27. Develop and implement a monitoring component to the Literacy Improvement Program. <i>II.B.2.c.i</i> 29. Provide the Literacy Improvement Program to the Monitor, Outside Consultants, and Plaintiffs' Counsel. <i>II.C.1.b</i> 33. Implement policies, procedures, and practices to ensure that all students with IEP reading goals will have their progress monitored appropriately according to the student's stated IEP goals. <i>II.B.2.d.iii</i> 34. Implement policies, procedures, and practices to ensure that when current students with disabilities' IEPs are subject to review, new goals will be written on a case-by-case basis using the MTSS-RDS. Special education teachers will monitor progress according to the students' stated IEP goals. <i>II.B.2.d.iii</i>
Minimal Progress
-
Progress Not Evident
-

Summary of Findings - Accountability

The cross-cutting theme of **Accountability** continues to be an area where BUSD demonstrates consistent growth, in addition to maintaining and strengthening its growth from the previous year's implementation. Since June of 2023, BUSD has targeted its efforts in **Accountability** around three primary goals: improving the processes for reviewing and creating IEP reading goals, creating separate LIP Actions for K-5 literacy achievement in contrast to 6-8 literacy achievement, and launching a more robust Communications Plan to publicly highlight literacy work through its #BerkeleyREADS campaign.

Over the past six months, BUSD has dramatically improved its systems and structures for using valid and reliable assessment data to review and craft IEP Goals. Beginning in August of this year, Dr. Kim Gibbons (Outside Literacy Consultant from the University of Minnesota) led the district Special Education (SpEd) Team of TSAs (Teachers on Special Assignment) along with the Berkeley Research, Evaluation & Assessment (BREA) Team in an intensive 45-Day Problem Solving Cycle to improve the quality of IEP reading goals. This cycle followed the Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) process and provided a clear and actionable structure for the two teams to review all K-8 IEP Goals, determine goals that were relating to reading, and guide SpEd case managers in re-writing these goals to include *DIBELS* and/or *Star* progress monitoring data. With 450+ IEP Goals to review and analyze, this presented a daunting feat to pursue in such a short time period. Given the cyclical nature of IEP Goals, the team began by focusing on annual IEPs up for review in September, followed by October, then November, and was able to chunk this larger Action into more attainable monthly tasks. This work will continue throughout the year as annual IEPs come up for review, and initial IEPs are launched. Another important factor to note is that almost all of this work around restructuring IEP Goals took place in the absence of the SpEd Executive Director. This work was a collaborative effort implemented by SpEd TSAs Lena Sweeney, Rosie Hopkins, and Karen Sukenic, and can serve as an exemplary collaboration for implementing and sustaining other structural changes within BUSD. It is recommended that this Expanded SpEd Team remain a part of the larger Expanded Implementation Team moving forward into the second half of the LIP.

As the work of the Literacy Improvement Program has grown, BUSD continues to communicate progress through its #BerkeleyREADS campaign and [Literacy at Berkeley](#) website. In addition to housing publicly accessible versions of the Dyslexia Settlement Agreement, all BUSD Quarterly Reports, and these semi-annual Monitoring Reports, parent and community members can find updated information on the latest professional learning for teachers, parent guides for understanding *DIBELS* and *Star* assessment data, and additional reading/videos around the process of early literacy development. BUSD has also begun to increase communication around the LIP through Staff Bulletins, and this work should continue to grow with intensity as larger components of the literacy plan are implemented across school sites.

In an effort to increase communication with families around changes implemented from this plan, it is recommended that the district proactively communicate with the public regarding larger policy shifts from the other four cross-cutting areas of the LIP (ex: updates to the MTSS Universal Screening process), utilizing the communication tools mentioned earlier- the Literacy at Berkeley website, Staff Bulletins, and Social Media platforms. In addition to these public-facing means of

communication, increasing staff awareness around the LIP is a continuing recommendation in the area of **Accountability**. The level of awareness of BUSD staff (administrators, coaches, teachers, instructional aides, etc.) around the Literacy Plan remains inconsistent: some staff are fully aware of the specific efforts to improve literacy, while other staff members are unaware of these shifts in policy and practice. It is recommended that BUSD also create a plan to increase the internal communication around the LIP to highlight key policy changes and motivate staff around the overall goals of the Literacy Plan.

Recommendations - Accountability

1. Create and share a parent-friendly version (ex: Infographic, Flowchart) of the MTSS Universal Screening process for identifying students at risk for reading difficulties for Grades K-5 by Spring 2024.
2. Create a plan to communicate the negotiables and non-negotiables of the Settlement Agreement to K-5 general education teachers and Grades 6-8 Reading and Language Arts teachers by Spring 2024.

Cross-Cutting Theme 2- Assessment

The use of **Assessment** data to drive instruction, track student progress, and identify students at risk for reading difficulties is the second cross-cutting theme that arises among the LIP tasks. The Settlement Agreement calls for students' progress in the acquisition of foundational reading skills to be monitored carefully. When used correctly, a valid and reliable Reading Data System (RDS) can identify the correct instructional supports individual students need in the general education classroom in order to become proficient readers. Screening assessments should occur at least three times a year, and identification of students' existing skills and knowledge should drive instructional planning.

The RDS can also be used in the universal screening process to identify which students would benefit from supplemental Tier 2 and Tier 3 early intervention, both within the general education setting and with support from outside specialists. The data obtained from the assessment system, along with targeted progress monitoring, can also be considered when determining eligibility for special education under the category of specific learning disability. Reports from the RDS are also important for providing parents with timely information regarding their child's progress in reading, and how the school district is monitoring their child's growth.

The table below captures the progress to date on the cross-cutting theme of **Assessments**.

Substantial Progress
<p>2. Select a reading data system that uses a single, time and cost efficient, and research-based authentic reading testing system (DIBELS and Star) for use in Grades K-8. <i>II.B.2.a.i</i></p> <p>5. Conduct Benchmark Assessments in the fall, winter, and spring to ensure reading growth for all students and support early intervention through universal screening. <i>II.B.2.a.i</i></p>

<p>8. Train grade-level teams and Tier 2 and Tier 3 service providers to use their screening and progress monitoring data. <i>II.B.2.b.i</i></p> <p>32. Provide IEP and Section 504 teams training on use of the MTSS-RDS (DIBELS or Star), and other relevant information, including diagnostic surveys of academic skills, and student goal-setting practices. <i>II.B.2.d.iii</i></p>
Adequate Progress
<p>9a. Provide K-5 general education teachers and special education teachers professional development in how to use the Benchmark Assessments system for screening and progress monitoring, and for reports to parents/guardians. <i>II.B.2.a.i</i></p>
Minimal Progress
<p>9b. Provide Grades 6-8 Reading and Language Arts teachers, and 6-8 special education teachers professional development in how to use the Benchmark Assessments system for screening and progress monitoring, and for reports to parents/guardians. <i>II.B.2.a.i</i></p>
Progress Not Evident
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Summary of Findings - Assessments

The success of the Literacy Improvement Program is predicated on Berkeley Unified’s ability to use **Assessments** for universal screening, to monitor student progress, and ultimately to determine appropriate instruction and intervention. Since the last Monitoring Report in June of 2023, BUSD has demonstrated growth in the area of **Assessments** through two primary means: providing professional development to site literacy teams on using *DIBELS* and *Star* for universal screening and progress monitoring purposes, and documenting the effect of intervention programs on student learning outcomes.

At the start of this academic year, the BUSD Expanded Implementation Team met regularly to determine and document best practices for using the Reading Data System (*Star* and *DIBELS*) to identify students in need of additional support in reading acquisition. This process, coordinated by the new PK-12 Literacy Coordinator Rose James and District Literacy TSA Erica Carter, was then converted into a series of Professional learning sessions for site literacy leaders (Literacy Coaches, SpEd Teachers, RTI TSAs, ELD Teachers, and Administrators) to ensure the use of a common protocol to triage K-5 students into appropriate Tier 2 reading interventions across all elementary schools. At the middle school level, English Language Arts Reading teachers have received training in how to interpret the *Star* results, and a system is in development to provide access to *DIBELS* for 6-8 special education teachers to more accurately inform the types of intervention programs to best for student needs, and also to monitor growth in reading.

Another key success originating from these training sessions was a new protocol that established the writing of specific reading goals for each Tier 2 intervention group that is, in turn, progress monitored at the end of each (Response to Intervention) Rtl Cycle. By the end of the first Rtl Cycle,

roughly 75% of intervention groups district-wide contained a progress monitoring goal in Educlimber (BUSD's data integration platform). 90% is the target set for progress monitoring goals by the end of RtI Cycle 2. This is a significant amount of growth considering that this new group data collection protocol (and accompanying technology) were just introduced this Fall. This new protocol will also help to more efficiently monitor student progress in Tier 2 intervention groups, increase the intensity of intervention for students not responding to the initial intervention, and document the effectiveness of current intervention routines. This is an important first step in being able to achieve one of the larger goals of the LIP, to increase the use of MTSS as part of a comprehensive evaluation to identify students with specific learning disability (SLD) eligibility, including dyslexia (Goal 30).

While much progress has been made with respect to the cross-cutting theme of **Assessments**, particularly around staff training, this is also an area in which much growth (and a major cultural shift) is required. At BUSD, there exists a discrepancy between the *official* data the district is requiring, and the *actual* data being used across most school sites to drive universal screening and progress monitoring. The Settlement Agreement clearly calls for use of the MTSS-Reading Data System (*DIBELS* or *Star*) as the metric for determining if and when students should receive Tier 2 or Tier 3 reading intervention, however there is minimal evidence that this is happening at individual school sites. In fact, most Berkeley elementary schools are still using the Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System (F&P BAS) and Teachers College Reading and Writing Project (TCRWP) running records as the primary data point for both universal screening and monitoring of student progress, and referencing *DIBELS* or *Star* data as a secondary data point. This inconsistency runs completely counter to the Actions listed in the Literacy Improvement Program and the overall spirit of the Settlement Agreement, and should be rectified as soon as possible.

In closing out the theme of **Assessments**, it is also recommended that BUSD create a formal structure and provide protected time for teachers to analyze *DIBELS* and *Star* data at the classroom level. Currently, there is no meeting time embedded in the Berkeley Unified Assessment Calendar for teachers to review progress monitoring data for reading, yet a similar structure exists for monitoring student progress in writing. The recommendation is to provide protected time and a clear structure for teachers to review reading progress at the individual student level, including the setting of SMART Goals, and time to explore the new assessments and tools that have emerged from this literacy work (ex: *DIBELS*, *Star*, Educlimber, CORE, etc.) to inform Tier 1 instruction and intervention in the classroom.

Recommendations - Assessments

1. Discontinue the use of Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System (F&P BAS) for screening and progress monitoring by the end of Trimester 2 of 2024.
2. Discontinue the use of Teachers College Reading and Writing Project (TCRWP) running records for screening and progress monitoring by the end of Trimester 2 of 2024.
3. Provide clear guidance for BUSD teachers on how to use the district-adopted MTSS-Reading Data System for Universal Screening and progress monitoring for Grades K-5 and 6-8 by the end of Trimester 2 of 2024.

Cross-Cutting Theme 3 - Instruction

Improving the scope and quality of general education Reading and Language Arts programs (**Tier 1 Instruction**) is key to the success of the Literacy Improvement Program. As per the Settlement Agreement, BUSD aims to provide effective and appropriate core reading programs to all general education students to enable them to become successful readers, at the same time reducing the district’s opportunity gap in student performance for students with or at risk for reading disabilities. The goal is that students receive high quality, comprehensive, and standards-aligned instruction that meets the full range of student needs determined by the RDS. This all begins with the implementation of evidence-based reading curricula that are in alignment with the California ELA Curriculum Framework and address the key components of the Common Core State Standards for ELA: meaning making, language development, effective expression, content knowledge, and foundational reading skills.

The table below captures the progress to date on the cross-cutting theme of **Instruction**.

Substantial Progress
<p>12a. Provide K-5 general education teachers professional development in research and practice of Reading and Language Arts instruction consistent with the curriculum framework. II.B.2.a.ii</p> <p>16. BUSD will assess and monitor the success of the FastTrack phonics program along with K-3 benchmark data to ensure FastTrack is an appropriately intensive, research-based phonics program, aligned with the needs of BUSD students and reading science. II.B.2.a.iii</p>
Adequate Progress
<p>12b. Provide Grades 6-8 Reading and Language Arts teachers professional development in research and practice of Reading and Language Arts instruction consistent with the curriculum framework. II.B.2.a.ii</p> <p>13a. Begin implementation of the Targeted PDP to provide Grades K-5 general education teachers professional development in how to use their chosen Reading and Language Arts Tier 1 curriculum through coaching and observations to provide feedback on implementation. II.B.2.a.iii</p> <p>14. Identify supports to Tier 1 curriculum for Grades 4-8 in consultation with the Outside Consultants. II.B.2.a.iii</p>
Minimal Progress
<p>13b. Begin implementation of the Targeted PDP to provide Grades 6-8 Reading and Language Arts teachers professional development in how to use their chosen Reading and Language Arts Tier 1 curriculum through coaching and observations to provide feedback on implementation. II.B.2.a.iii</p> <p>15a. Conduct a review and assessment of BUSD K-5 core reading program in conjunction with school site principals, teachers, school personnel and bargaining units. II.B.2.a.i</p>
Progress Not Evident
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Summary of Findings - Instruction

The start of the 2023 academic year at BUSD has seen a substantial focus on improving the area of Tier 1 **Instruction**. Through its partnership with the Consortium on Reading Excellence (CORE), Berkeley Unified has developed, and is in the process of implementing, a comprehensive Professional Development Program (PDP) for both K-5 general education teachers and 6-8 Reading and Language Arts teachers.

The yearlong "CORE Reading Academy" for teachers in Grades K-5 was launched in August and will continue until April, encompassing 2 ½ days of in-person learning combined with 3 virtual, two-hour follow up sessions focused on the research base of literacy acquisition and the essential components of reading instruction ([Appendix H](#)). The topics covered in this yearlong learning series thus far have included: *Reading Research, Structure of English, Phonics, Phonemic Awareness, Multisyllabic Word Reading, and Fluency*, and will resume in January of 2024 with the study of these remaining concepts: *Vocabulary, Comprehension Strategies, Narrative and Informational Text, Assessments, and Intervention*. In addition to the primary focus on classroom teachers in the CORE Reading Academy, the collaboration has also included dual immersion (Spanish-English) modules for teachers at Sylvia Mendez, and separate Administrator modules for site Principals and district Administrators. Middle School teachers have received training through the "CORE Adolescent Literacy Solutions" for Reading and Language Arts teachers in Grades 6-8, and have also participated in a professional learning series in "Constructing Meaning", a systematic approach to building academic language throughout the content areas. The next step in the implementation process is to support teachers in using new practices learned from these training sessions, both through follow up coaching and classroom visits from Administrators.

Another important shift in the area of **Instruction** since June was the creation of the newly formed Curriculum & Instruction department. In addition to creating a new role for a Director of Curriculum & Instruction (led by former middle school Principal Chris Albeck), BUSD also created a PK-12 Literacy Coordinator position to help support the implementation of the Literacy Improvement Program. This staffing reconfiguration has created additional capacity to support the district's literacy work and to begin to more effectively address program improvement at the middle school level as intensely as has taken place at the elementary level thus far.

The final key piece of movement in the area of **Instruction** took place in August of 2023, with Berkeley Unified's publishing of the official Curriculum Review of its core ELA curriculum: *Teachers College Units of Study in Reading and Writing* and the supplementary *FastTrack* phonics program. Between April and June of 2023, Berkeley Unified assembled a team of administrators, teachers, and coaches from all elementary school sites to conduct a comprehensive, evidence-based review and assessment of its core reading program, using an evaluation tool created by the Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement (CAREI) at the University of Minnesota. This evaluation tool guided the BUSD team in exploring and evaluating both curricula in nine key areas: 1) Phonemic Awareness, 2) Phonics/ Morphology, 3) Cultural Responsiveness, 4) Fluency, 5) Vocabulary, 6) Comprehension, 7) Writing, 8) Assessment, and 9) Accessibility/Usability. The final step in the Curriculum Review process was for BUSD educators to determine if the current

curriculum *met expectations*, *partially met expectations*, or *did not meet expectations* in each area. Below are the results of the Curriculum Review by grade level for the district's core ELA curriculum: *Teachers College Units of Study in Reading and Writing*. The complete findings from this Review can be found as an Appendix in BUSD's Quarter 4 Report from 2022-2023, attached here as [Appendix E](#).

BUSD Review of Teachers College Units of Study in Reading and Writing - Kindergarten

Literacy Components Reviewed	Meets Expectations	Partially Meets Expectations	Does Not Meet Expectations
Phonemic Awareness	0/7	0/7	7/7
Phonics & Morphology	0/21	0/21	21/21
Fluency	1/7	0/7	6/7
Vocabulary	0/6	1/6	5/6
Comprehension	3/13	7/13	3/13
Writing & Spelling	6/22	4/22	12/22
Assessment	1/7	2/7	4/7
Cultural Responsiveness	4/14	3/14	7/14
Accessibility & Usability	0/6	2/6	4/6
Total Kindergarten	15% (15/103)	18% (19/103)	67% (69/103)

BUSD Review of Teachers College Units of Study in Reading and Writing - 1st Grade

Literacy Components Reviewed	Meets Expectations	Partially Meets Expectations	Does Not Meet Expectations
Phonemic Awareness	0/7	1/7	6/7
Phonics & Morphology	0/18	2/18	16/18
Fluency	3/7	4/7	0/7
Vocabulary	0/6	1/6	5/6
Comprehension	6/13	4/13	3/13
Writing & Spelling	10/20	6/20	4/20
Assessment	1/8	3/8	4/8
Cultural Responsiveness	2/14	3/14	9/14
Accessibility & Usability	0/6	1/6	5/6
Total 1st Grade	22% (22/99)	25% (25/99)	53% (52/99)

BUSD Review of Teachers College Units of Study in Reading and Writing - 2nd Grade

Literacy Components Reviewed	Meets Expectations	Partially Meets Expectations	Does Not Meet Expectations
Phonics & Morphology	0/16	3/16	13/16
Fluency	2/7	0/7	5/7
Vocabulary	1/9	2/9	6/9
Comprehension	3/15	8/15	4/15
Writing & Spelling	12/21	2/21	7/21
Assessment	1/8	2/8	5/8
Cultural Responsiveness	2/14	2/14	10/14
Accessibility & Usability	0/6	2/6	4/6
Total 2nd Grade	22% (21/96)	22% (21/96)	56% (54/96)

BUSD Review of Teachers College Units of Study in Reading and Writing - 3rd-5th Grade

Literacy Components Reviewed	Meets Expectations	Partially Meets Expectations	Does Not Meet Expectations
Phonics & Morphology	0/9	0/9	9/9
Fluency	1/6	2/6	3/6
Vocabulary	1/9	1/9	7/9
Comprehension	6/17	6/17	5/17
Writing & Spelling	9/18	3/18	6/18
Assessment	4/8	2/8	2/8
Cultural Responsiveness	1/14	3/14	10/14
Accessibility & Usability	1/6	1/6	4/6
Total 3rd-5th Grade	26% (23/87)	21% (18/87)	53% (46/87)

As the results of this internal Curriculum Review overwhelmingly reveal that the current core K-5 ELA program does not meet expectations across all grade levels, it is strongly recommended that BUSD begin to pilot new English Language Arts curricula. Since the completion and publication of this Review in June and August of 2023, there has been little progress around the next step in the curricular review process detailed in the Settlement Agreement- "BUSD will consider alternative core reading programs" [II.B.2.a.i]. It is nearly impossible to implement an effective literacy program with coordinated Tier 2 and Tier 2 supports when the Tier 1 instructional program is so clearly lacking in its ability to provide comprehensive literacy instruction for students. To help expedite this pilot process (and save time, money, and resources), it is recommended that the Curriculum Department gather lessons learned from local school districts (ex: San Francisco, Oakland, Palo Alto) who have recently made a similar shift to adopt new ELA curricular materials.

Recommendations - Instruction

1. Begin classroom visits and related coaching regarding implementation of best practices from CORE professional learning series for K-5 and 6-8 grade teachers by Spring 2024.
2. Begin pilot process for new K-5 ELA curriculum by January 2024.

Cross-Cutting Theme 4- Intervention

The fourth theme that is integrated across the actions of the Literacy Improvement Program is how **Interventions** are provided for students within the larger Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) model. As BUSD is simultaneously strengthening its use of assessment data to strengthen Tier 1 Instruction, it is important to consider how this process can also lead to improvements in supplemental services for Tier 2 and Tier 3 Interventions. In the original Settlement Agreement, BUSD agreed to provide appropriately intensive and early research-based reading intervention services, related services, supplementary aids and services, accommodations, and modifications to students with reading disabilities, including dyslexia.

The table below captures the progress to date on the cross-cutting theme of **Intervention**.

Substantial Progress
20. Consult with the Outside Consultants with regard to development and implementation of progress monitoring guidelines for Tier 2 and Tier 3 students. <i>II.A.1.b.v</i>
Adequate Progress
10. Provide professional development to school-based teams to use of Benchmark Assessment data the MTSS-Reading Data System (“MTSS-RDS”) to triage students into appropriately intensive Tier 2 or Tier 3 reading interventions, write reading goals that meaningfully reduce the reading achievement gap, and monitor progress and report progress to parents/guardians to ensure growth and development. <i>II.B.2.b.i</i>
21. Implement the Wilson Reading System. <i>II.B.2.d.ii</i>
35. Develop and implement an MTSS staffing plan that supports Tier 3 service delivery by special education personnel with input from the Outside Consultants. <i>II.B.2.b.iii</i>
Minimal Progress
15b. Conduct a review and assessment of BUSD’s Grades 6-8 reading intervention programs in conjunction with school site principals, teachers, school personnel and bargaining units. <i>II.B.2.a.i</i>
19. Develop and implement an MTSS staffing plan that supports Tier 2 service delivery model by coordinating available remedial programs such as Title 1, English Learner, and reading specialists with input from the Outside Consultants. <i>II.B.2.b.iii</i>
23. Consult with the Outside Consultants regarding proposed changes to District-wide reading intervention and special education policies, procedures and practices as outlined in the Literacy Improvement Program before presentation by the Implementation Team to the School Board for approval. <i>II.A.1.b.i</i>
Progress Not Evident
-

Summary of Findings - Intervention

Significant progress has been made in the area of **Intervention** over the past six months, particularly in regards to the shift around the types of reading interventions used to support students in need of Tier 2 and Tier 3 reading supports.

After participating in last Spring's intensive structured literacy training through the Institute for Multisensory Education (IMSE), the majority of Literacy Coaches and Response to Intervention Teachers are now providing Tier 2 interventions based on the Orton Gillingham (OG) method. This represents a significant shift for the district, which had previously been using the Fountas and Pinnell Leveled Literacy Intervention (LLI) and Reading Recovery curricula as its primary means of delivery for Tier 2 interventions. Nonetheless, this shift from LLI and Reading Recovery to an OG approach in alignment with the International Dyslexia Association's Knowledge and Practice Standards will not be complete until all teachers providing Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions are both trained and implementing either IMSE Orton Gillingham or Wilson Reading to deliver these supplemental supports. This will require a second round of Orton-Gillingham training for Tier 2 and Tier 3 intervention teachers who either did not receive the training in 2022-23 or have recently been onboarded as new Literacy Coaches and RTI TSAs.

As mentioned earlier in the section on Accountability, BUSD has also created consistent and regular data monitor routines to keep track of the intensity and effectiveness of its Tier 2 **Interventions** for Grades K-5. BUSD's Expanded Implementation Team has reviewed *Star* and *DIBELS* assessment data through the Educlimber system to determine whether students receiving interventions are making progress, and tracking this progress relative to grade level benchmarks. As this new data monitoring routine becomes more familiar for Literacy Coaches and RTI Teachers, it is recommended that progress monitoring data for students receiving reading intervention services be increased in frequency, from every 8 weeks to a minimum of every 3 weeks, to more closely monitor growth and improve alignment between intervention goals and student needs. It is also recommended that Principals and site literacy leaders receive training in this progress monitoring protocol in Educlimber to replicate this process at the site level through each school's Coordination of Services (COS) Team meetings.

In regards to **Interventions** at Grades 6-8, earlier this Fall Berkeley Unified launched its review and assessment of middle school reading **Intervention** programs by first taking inventory of all curricular materials being used for Tier 2 and Tier 3 intervention across these three schools. This initial inventory began in September, and has continued into November and December of this school year. One of the key findings from this curricular audit is that the Wilson Reading System is the common curriculum being implemented for Tier 3 intervention with Special Education students, however there are almost a dozen curricular programs being used for Tier 2 intervention across the three middle schools, each program with varying degrees of effectiveness. The next step in this review process is to ensure that all 6-8 teachers working with Special Education students are trained and implementing the Wilson Reading System for Tier 3 reading intervention, in addition to collaborating with BUSD Literacy Consultant, Dr. Kim Gibbons, on determining the most effective Tier 2 interventions for use across all Berkeley middle schools.

Another significant advancement in the area of **Intervention** has been the level of access provided to the Program Monitor into the IEP Process at BUSD. Since the start of the 2023-2024 academic year, the Program Monitor has had access to all IEP Goals related to literacy achievement for K-8 students, and this level of transparency has made it much easier to more accurately determine progress in IEP-related Action in the LIP.

Recommendations - Intervention

1. Modify current RtI Cycles to include more frequent progress monitoring (minimum every 3 weeks) of Tier 2 reading interventions by Spring of 2024.
2. Train all new teachers providing Tier 2 support (RtI TOSAs, Literacy Coaches, and EL TOSAs) in IMSE Orton Gillingham structured literacy by Spring of 2024.

Cross-Cutting Theme 5- Systems of Support

Similar to the first cross-cutting theme of Accountability introduced in this report, **Systems of Support** is a critical piece of the Literacy Improvement Program to ensure that Berkeley Unified is able to sustain changes in literacy instruction, intervention, and assessment well beyond the scope of this plan. The CA ELA/ELD Framework identifies three critical components of an effective implementation model that are also relevant to the success of the LIP: “professional learning, leadership, and program supports”. Effective program supports create a learning community in which teachers, administrators, and support staff are engaged in an ongoing cycle of learning, reflecting on, and improving their own practice, thus encouraging innovation of new ideas to lead to sustainable change.

Clear and consistent communication is another principal tenet of effective program supports. Implementing new assessment systems, high-quality instructional materials, and evidence-based instructional practices and intervention are not enough for sustaining these changes long-term. It is also important that the school district successfully integrate program components across complementary initiatives, in order to sustain these program shifts to ensure high-quality teaching and learning experiences for all students. Explicitly connecting the dots between multiple district initiatives can help lead to greater implementation efficiency and also encourage cross-departmental collaboration. The final key component of effective **Systems of Support** is the school district’s ability to demonstrate flexibility. By allowing space for the LIP to evolve and by capturing these innovations back into the larger LIP, the district will be more responsive to unforeseen areas of concern that may emerge at a later stage of the implementation process.

The table below captures the progress to date on the cross-cutting theme of **Systems of Support**.

Substantial Progress
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Form a District Implementation Team <i>II.A.1.a</i> 3. Consult with the Outside Consultants with regard to development of the Targeted Professional Development Plan (PDP). <i>II.A.1.b.ii</i> 22. Identify and secure the services of an impartial outside Monitor to monitor and report on BUSD’s

compliance with the Literacy Improvement Program. <i>II.C.1.a</i>
Adequate Progress
<p>17. BUSD will consult with the Outside Consultant with regard to development of guidelines and criteria used to place at-risk students into Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions. <i>II.A.1.b.iv</i></p> <p>31. Develop corollary Section 504 goal development and progress monitoring standards. <i>II.B.2.d.iii</i></p>
Minimal Progress
<p>4. Review and implement reforms to District policies, procedures and practices as needed to fulfill the goals of the Literacy Improvement Program, including RTI. <i>II.B.1.a</i></p>
Progress Not Evident
<p>30. Develop a plan with the Outside Consultants to increase use of the MTSS as part of the comprehensive evaluation to identify students with SLD, including dyslexia. <i>II.B.2.d.i</i></p>

Summary of Findings - Systems of Support

Although initially an area of marked growth, progress in the cross-cutting theme of **Systems of Support** has by and large remained stagnant since the last Monitoring Report. Much of the initial progress in this area took place around the initial development of the MTSS Process Guide at the district level, however there is minimal evidence that these changes in systems and protocols have gone into effect consistently across Berkeley schools.

Over the past several months, the BUSD Expanded Implementation Team has collaborated with Dr. Gibbons on prototyping a set of guidelines for placing at-risk students into Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions. These guidelines have been introduced to all site Literacy Coaches and Response to Intervention Teachers, nonetheless the use of this protocol varies across school sites. This is expected considering that these guidelines have gone through an iterative process of development and refinement throughout the first and second RtI Cycle of this school year. It is recommended that the BUSD Curriculum Team continue to work with site literacy leaders to gather feedback from this initial implementation to produce a final set of guidelines for a Data-Based Decision Making Process to be fully implemented at all school sites by the start of the third trimester in Spring.

Another key finding in the area of **Systems of Support** is that each BUSD elementary school site relies on a structure called the Coordination of Services (COS) Team for both the Universal Screening Process and the Progress Monitoring Process. These COS Teams are a crucial piece of the BUSD “triage” system, and should be leveraged for their expertise as BUSD looks to create more clear and consistent protocols across the district. It is recommended that members of the Curriculum and Instruction Team visit site COS Teams to become familiar with similarities and differences among processes and procedures used across school sites, and then utilize this data to help refine the final set of guidelines to be created for the Data-Based Decision Making Process.

Once this process is finalized, it is also recommended that additional training be provided for site literacy leaders and Administrators who facilitate COS meetings around managing the shifts into these new protocols. By working with school-based COS Teams to operationalize this new triage process, many of the Actions listed in the Literacy Improvement Program (Actions 10, 17, 19, 20, 23, and 30) will be accomplished in a more streamlined and sustainable manner.

Recommendations - Systems of Support

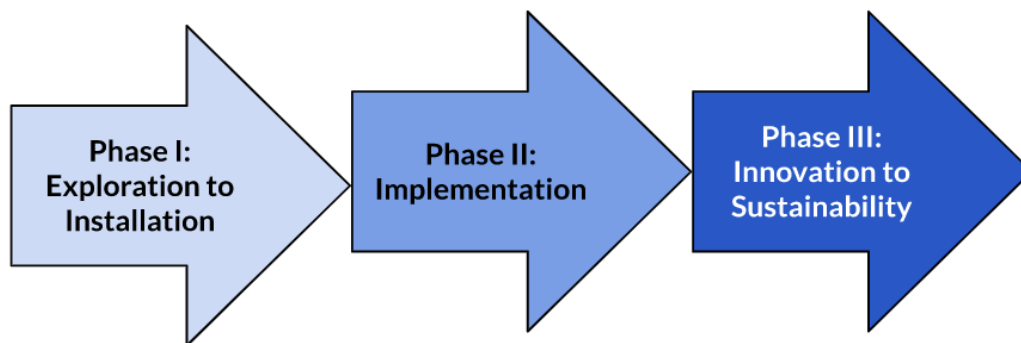
1. Gather data on the current processes and procedures used by COS Teams across BUSD in Winter 2024.
2. Create guidelines for COS Teams to follow a Data-Based Problem Solving Process for triaging students into appropriately intensive Tier 2 or Tier 3 reading interventions by Spring 2024.
3. Provide COS Team Leads with professional learning on the Literacy Improvement Program, the BUSD shared data protocol, and the Data-Based Problem Solving Process for triaging students into appropriately intensive Tier 2 or Tier 3 reading interventions by Spring 2024.

METHODOLOGY - IMPLEMENTATION SCIENCE

The logic model on which this report is based is taken from the *California English Language Arts/English Language Development Framework* (CDE, 2014). Chapter 11 of this framework details the phases of Implementation Science, comprising distinct stages that an organization will experience when attempting to fully implement a new set of strategies or innovations across multiple schools and departments. These stages are identified as “exploration, installation, initial implementation, full implementation, innovation, and sustainability”. In the context of the BUSD Literacy Improvement Program, these phases can be useful for evaluating the amount of progress expected over the life of the long-term change initiative. While the Science of Reading figured prominently in the creation of the 35 Actions in the LIP (defining “what” changes should be implemented and “why”), it is helpful to use Implementation Science and Change Theory (“how” and “when” we can expect these changes to take place) to best determine what full implementation will entail, and set realistic expectations for the appropriate rate of change for a successful translation of these evidence-based theories and models into practice.

The image below illustrating the effective Phases of Implementation (Fixsen and Blase, 2009) can help approximate where Berkeley Unified currently falls in its implementation of the Literacy Improvement Program, and is useful for ascertaining if sufficient progress has been made to date.

Effective Phases of Implementation



Literacy Improvement Program Vision: At BUSD, we have the opportunity to continue building a comprehensive literacy program that is aligned to research and will support every student in reaching grade-level proficiency. The goal of the literacy plan is to provide universal access to core curriculum, reduce inequities, align our systems, and promote partnerships between families and the school, so that every student can flourish.

Based on analysis of the work of the Implementation Team as of Quarter 4 of the 2022-2023 academic year and Quarter 1 of 2023-2024, Berkeley Unified has now clearly entered into the tail end of Phase II: Implementation, known as “full implementation.” This is an important juncture in a large-scale literacy plan where the focus of the work begins to shift from policies and procedures at the district level to how this work is being implemented at each individual school site. Given this transfer of focus from the district to individual school sites, it will be imperative that the Implementation Team participate more fully in site-level implementation and expand its presence at school sites, and in individual classrooms. This will also entail increased site visits from the Program Monitor to determine how each site is adopting these new practices and integrating them into the individual structures and protocols that exist at each school.

CONCLUSION

As stated in the Introduction, the primary purpose of this third Monitoring Report (in a series of seven) is to evaluate recent progress on the BUSD Literacy Improvement Plan to: a) hold the district accountable to the terms it has accepted from the Dyslexia Settlement Agreement, b) provide concrete next steps for the Implementation Team, and c) serve as an update for parents, caregivers, and members of the larger Berkeley community.

As of December 2023, adequate progress on the LIP has been identified in the four cross-cutting areas of **Accountability**, **Assessments**, **Instruction**, and **Intervention**, while the area of **Systems of Support** requires greater attention from the district to ensure successful implementation of the

literacy plan in the second half of this school year. In the area of **Systems of Support**, it is recommended that the district work closely with individual school sites to explore ways to most efficiently integrate structural changes from the new district policies listed in this report with the existing problem solving structures that are currently functioning at each school, in order to ensure that these larger program shifts are able to flourish beyond the life of this Literacy Improvement Plan and the larger Dyslexia Settlement Agreement.

The next Monitoring Report, evaluating progress during the second half of the 2023-2024 academic year, will include more specific reporting on site-level implementation of the Literacy Improvement Plan, starting with Berkeley elementary schools. This fourth Monitoring Report in this series will be based on the findings from BUSD's internal 2023-2024 Quarter 2 and Quarter 3 Reports, and will be shared in June of 2024.

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Appendices

- A) [Full Class Action Settlement Agreement](#)
- B) [2022 Q1 Report on Status of Required Actions](#)
- C) [2022 Q2 Report on Status of Required Actions](#)
- D) [2022 Q3 Report on Status of Required Actions](#)
- E) [2022 Q4 Report on Status of Required Actions](#)
- F) [2023 Q1 Report on Status of Required Actions](#)
- G) [Literacy at BUSD Website](#)
- H) [CORE Reading Academy Scope and Sequence](#)

References

California Department of Education (2014). *English language arts/English language development framework for California public schools: kindergarten through grade twelve*. Sacramento, CA: California Department of Education Press

Fixsen, D. L., Blase, K. (2009). *Implementation: The Missing Link Between Research and Practice*. NIRN Implementation Brief #1. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina, FPG, NIRN.

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