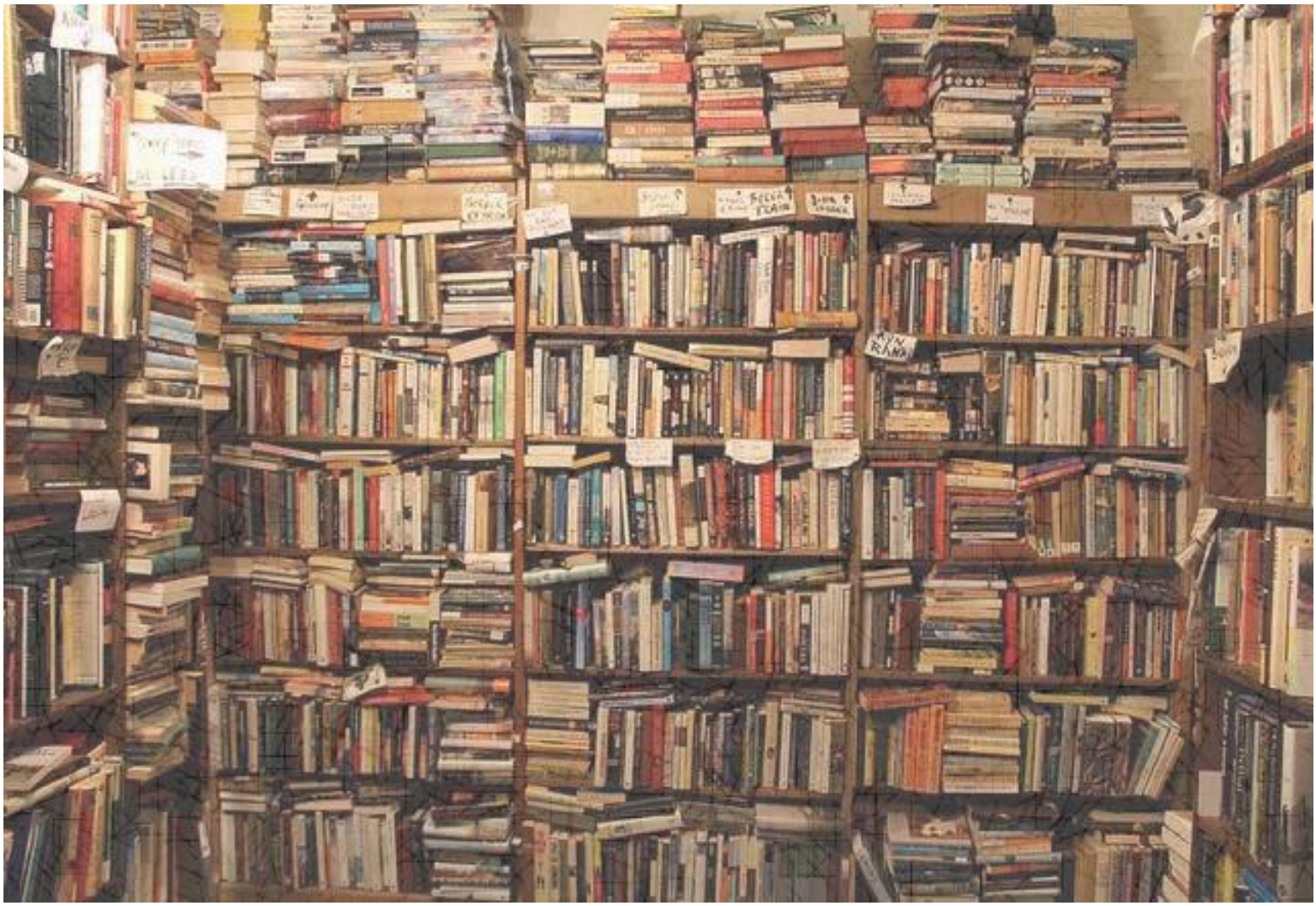
Genesee Community Charter School

Charter School Dissemination Grant

Year 2 Evaluation Report • 2018



Genesee Community Charter School
2016-19 Charter School Dissemination Grant

Year 2 Evaluation Report

prepared for

Genesee Community Charter School

prepared by

Measurement Incorporated

White Plains, New York

Fall 2018

Contents

Introduction

Genesee Community Charter School (GCCS) is a high-performing charter school located in Rochester, New York. Founded as an Expeditionary Learning (EL) School in 2001, GCCS is housed on the grounds of the Rochester Museum and Science Center and is among the most respected Expeditionary Learning schools in the country.

In the summer of 2016, GCCS was awarded a three-year Charter School Dissemination Grant to share the first implementation of the EL Education Reading Foundational Skills Curriculum (EL Skills Curriculum) with Roberto Clemente School Number 8 (School 8), a Rochester City public school which was designated as a Priority School with high needs. School 8 is also an Expeditionary Learning school. Measurement Incorporated, an educational research and evaluation firm, was contracted to conduct an independent assessment of the grant activities.

As can be seen in Table 1, the two schools differ in size and composition of their student bodies. For 2016-17, School 8 had approximately three times the number of students in grades pre-K through 8 than GCCS had in grades K-6. School 8 students were more likely to be Black/African-American or Hispanic/Latino. Nearly all School 8 students (98%) were economically disadvantaged, compared with 31% at GCCS, and 17% were classified as students with disabilities, compared with 9% at GCCS.

Table 1
2016-17 Student Populations at
Dissemination Grant Partner Schools

	School 8		GCCS	
Grade Configuration	PK-8		K-6	
	n	%	n	%
Total Student Enrollment	612		219	
Males	317	52%	105	48%
Females	295	48%	114	52%
Racial/Ethnic Background				
American Indian/Alaskan Native	3	<1%	0	0%
Black/African American	371	61%	34	16%
Hispanic/Latino	192	31%	19	9%
Asian/Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	8	1%	5	2%
White	37	6%	145	66%
Multiracial	1	<1%	16	7%
English Language Learners*	50	8%	-	-
Students with Disabilities*	101	17%	19	9%
Economically Disadvantaged*	598	98%	68	31%

*2015-16 Data - Most recently available.
Source: NYSED Database

During 2017-18, the second grant year, 22 staff members across the two schools participated in the grant activities. Of these, 7 were from GCCS: the building administrator, the Teacher on Special Assignment (TOSA), the Coordinator of Communications and Data, and four teachers (1 from kindergarten, 2 from grade 1, and 1 from grade 2).

Fifteen School 8 staff members participated in the grant activities:

- the building principal
- the Expanded Learning Coordinator
- the EL education coach
- the data coach
- one reading teacher for students in kindergarten through grade 2
- 10 teachers (3 kindergarten, 3 grade 1, and 4 grade 2)

Program Design & Implementation

The TOSA worked with GCCS and School 8 staff to coordinate and implement all aspects of the grant activities. Table 2 summarizes the professional learning activities associated with the grant. Several complementary types of activities provided a blend of direct instruction, observation, mentoring, collaborative learning, and social interaction.

Table 2
Summary of Professional Learning Activities

Activity	Frequency
Teacher On Special Assignment (TOSA) Jean Hurst, the master teacher leading the grant activities, is embedded at School 8 for 1 ½ to 2 days each week for the duration of the grant period. During this time, she observes, teaches/co-teaches, plans, facilitates, and provides assistance to teachers and other key School 8 staff.	**1 ½ – 2 days/week**
Guided Peer Observations and Debriefs (GPOD) Teachers observed lessons taught at their own grade level followed by a protocol-driven debrief. Observations were conducted at both School 8 and GCCS.	**Conducted monthly for each grade level- each teacher participated in 6 GPODs**
Foundational Workshops (FW) Whole group or grade-specific workshops for staff from both schools which focus on specific aspects of the Reading Foundational Skills Curriculum, often conducted in concert with GPODs.	**Teachers from each grade level attended at least one FW during Year 2**
Sensory Integration Teachers examined research about the connection between sensory integration and acquisition of early reading skills and sensory-integration techniques during workshops, at the collegial partnership retreat, and during GPODs and foundational workshops.	**During Retreats, FWs, and each GPOD conducted at GCCS**
Collegial Retreats and Culture-Building Events Concentrated times designated to build the partnership and address aspects of the Reading Foundational Skills Curriculum in depth were provided to teachers and administrators from both schools.	**One overnight retreat conducted in late summer 2017 and two culture-building events throughout the year**

Evaluation

GCCS commissioned Measurement Incorporated to conduct an independent evaluation of its Charter School Dissemination Grant activities. The evaluation seeks to determine the extent to which educators from School 8 successfully learned and implemented with fidelity the essential elements of the Reading Foundational Skills Curriculum and the impact of the curriculum's implementation on student academic achievement at School 8.

The evaluation is driven by the grant's five goals:

Goal 1: To disseminate the research basis of EL Skills Curriculum

Goal 2: To equip teachers to effectively implement the EL Skills Curriculum in order to improve student achievement in reading foundations

Goal 3: To prepare primary teachers to analyze data in order to make curricular and instructional decisions

Goal 4: To build strong and trusting collegial relationships between the charter school and district school in order to facilitate shared learning, critique, reflection, and growth.

Goal 5: To prepare primary teachers to incorporate developmentally appropriate sensory-integration strategies into foundational skills instruction in order to meet the whole-body needs of young learners

During Year 1, the evaluation sought to provide baseline data and document the year's activities. The evaluation for Year 2 seeks to provide meaningful information that will help guide the course of grant activities for Year 3 and help the project plan for the continuation of the project after the grant period.

Several data sources were used to conduct the program evaluation.

- *Professional Development Feedback* forms completed online following FWs –a total of 19 forms were completed online for 4 individual sessions
- Evaluator observations of project activities, formal and informal interviews and focus groups, participation in monthly steering committee meetings, and communication via phone and email
- Document and record reviews (e.g., curriculum and content materials, project records, etc.)
- State and local assessment and demographic data
- Annual *Educator Survey*

Description of the Year 2 *Educator Survey* Respondents

The Educator Survey was made available to all project participants online at the end of the second year of program activities and provided the most specific information from project participants. As shown in Table 3, the overall response rate was 59%, with 77% of School 8 (n=11) and 60% of GCCS staff (n=2) responding. *As the number of staff involved is quite small (total number of respondents is 13), percentages should be interpreted with caution.* Additionally, because only two staff members from GCCS completed the survey, all responses are reported together in the interest of protecting the confidentiality of GCCS staff.

Of the 13 respondents, 8 (62%) were classroom teachers. Respondents from both schools were seasoned educators with a median of 20 (School 8) and 16 (GCCS) years of experience in education and 15 years (School 8) and 9 ½ years (GCCS) in their own school.

Table 3
Description of the Year 2 Educator Survey Respondents

	All Staff		School 8		GCCS	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Invited	22		13		5	
Responded	13	59%	10	77%	3	60%
Professional Role*						
Total number respondents	13		11		2	
Classroom teacher	8	62%	10	55%	2	100%
Special education teacher	1	8%	1	9%	0	0%
Special area teacher (e.g., music, art, physical education, etc.)	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Other professional staff (e.g., literacy specialist, social worker, guidance counselor, etc.)	2	15%	2	18%	0	0%
Administrator	2	15%	2	18%	0	0%
Other (explain)	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Grade Levels of Responsibility*						
Total n	13		11		2	
PK	1	8%	1	9%	0	0%
K	8	62%	7	64%	1	50%
1	8	62%	7	64%	1	50%
2	6	46%	5	45%	1	50%
3	3	23%	3	27%	0	0%
4	2	67%	2	67%	0	0%
5	2	15%	2	18%	0	0%
6	2	15%	2	18%	0	0%
7	2	15%	2	18%	0	0%
8	2	15%	2	18%	0	0%
Years' Experience	n	Median (range)	n	Median (range)	n	Median (range)
Years in education	13	20 (2/33)	11	20 (3/33)	2	16 (9/23)
Years in your current school	13	15 (1/21)	11	15 (1/21)	2	9 ½ (1/18)

*Multiple responses possible

- *Year 2 EL Skills Curriculum Check-in* survey

This survey was administered online during December 2017, several months into the first implementation of the EL Skills Curriculum, to help the project leadership understand where things were working well, where they may need additional support, and what could be done to strengthen the implementation. Table 4 shows the distribution of respondents by school.

Table 4
Description of the Year 2 EL Skills Curriculum Check-in Survey Respondents

School	N Invited	N Responded	Response Rate
All Staff	21	15	71%
School 8	14	11	79%
GCCS	7	2	29%
Unknown*		2	

*School identification for 2 responses was missing due to a technical error.

Findings

The evaluation findings are organized by the goals of the grant. Where available, supporting data is provided.

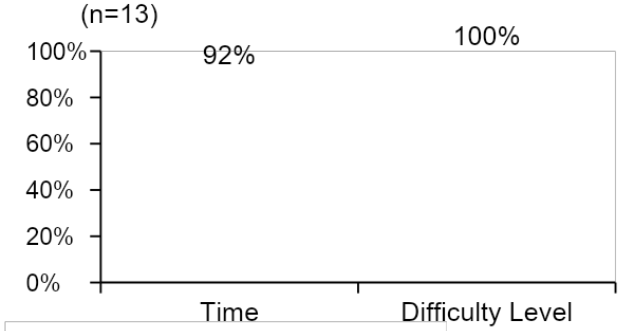
Goal 1: To disseminate the research basis of EL Education's Reading Foundational Skills Curriculum

Key Finding

Staff were extremely satisfied with all aspects of the professional learning activities. The content, form, timing, and resources all met the needs of program participants. Professional learning activities upgraded teacher knowledge about literacy education.

The Teacher on Special Assignment (TOSA) split her time each week between GCCS and School 8 teachers to help them implement the EL Skills Curriculum. Most staff from both schools rated the amount of time for training as *about right*, and *all* survey respondents (100%) reported the difficulty level as *about right* (Figure 1).

Figure 1
Percentage of Respondents Rating Amount of Training Time and Difficulty Level as "About Right"
(n=13)



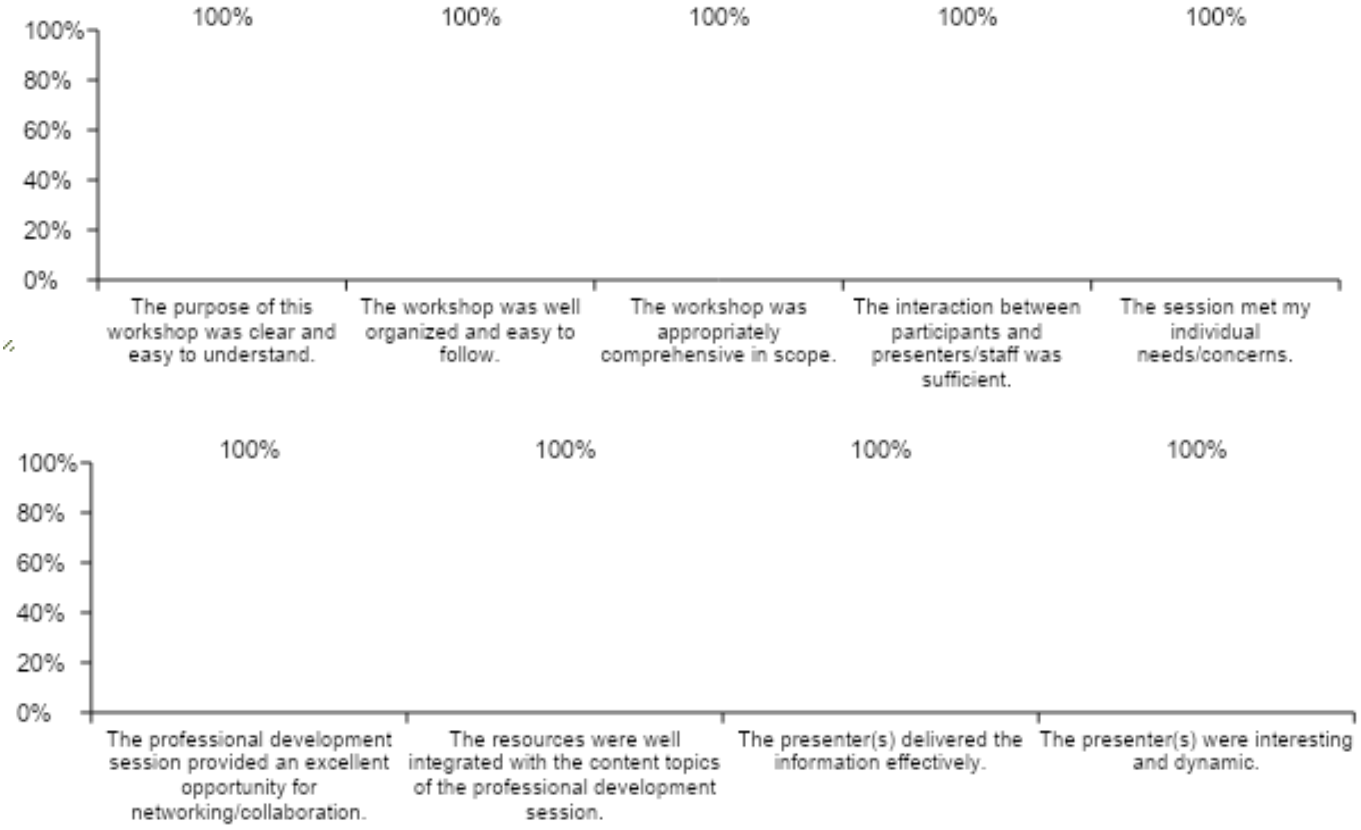
Source: *Educator Survey*

Comments

- *Staff spoke of the positive PL - they came back to RC8 truly energized and confident to implement their new strategies.*
- *I very much benefited from the collaborative learning time we had together with both schools. I felt I would have benefited from additional time working with Jean and other GCCS teachers from week to week.*
- *Staff shared they felt supported with Jean's coaching. She chunked the learning and then worked individually with staff to assure they had necessary confidence to proceed.*

Professional Development Feedback forms, which were distributed online following each foundational workshop, showed that *all participants* from every session across schools agreed or strongly agreed with *every statement* about aspects of the professional learning activities in which they participated indicating strong satisfaction (Figure 2).

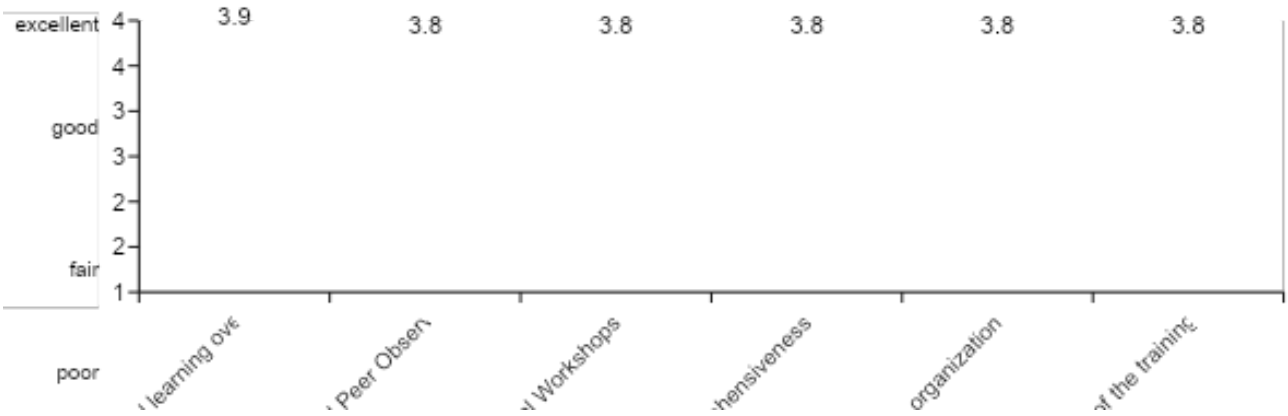
Figure 2
Percentage of Respondents Who *Agreed* or *Strongly Agreed* With Statements about Professional Development Workshops
(n=19)



Source: *Professional Development Feedback* Forms

Figure 3 shows that participants rated both the GPODs and Foundational workshops as *excellent*, and ascribed equally high ratings to the comprehensiveness, organization, and usefulness of the materials. Overall, they rated the professional learning at 3.9 on a 4-point scale where 1=poor and 4=excellent.

Figure 3
Overall Mean Ratings of the Quality of Professional Learning Activities (n=13)



Participants provided examples of specific practices or strategies addressed during professional learning activities that they planned to use right away.

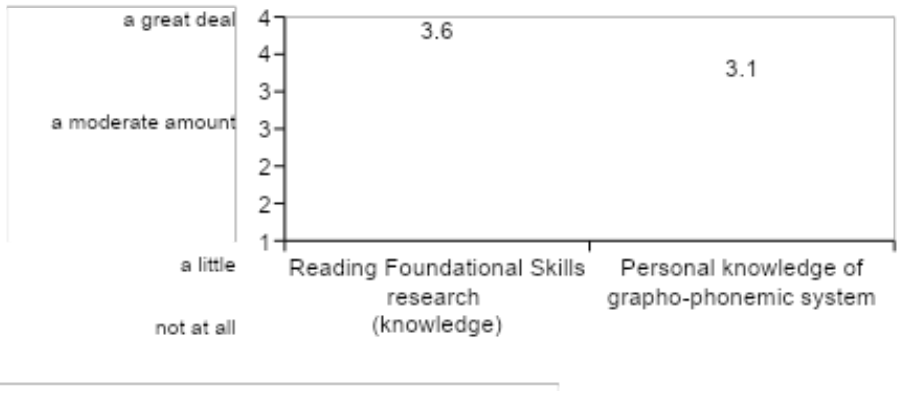
Examples		
	Instructional Practices	***Sensory Integration***
	• *Developing student center activities that allow for practice with letter/sound knowledge as well as decoding of cvc words.*	• *Using sensory integration*
	• *Observing in classrooms and seeing the lessons in action really helps and gives me ideas to use with my students.*	• *Integrating sensory ideas into daily practice.*
	• *Syllable sleuths and reviewing information on sensory integration.*	• *How to use what we are learning about sensory integration to help children be successful in classroom environment.*
	• *I have a list of 10 things. I am most excited to try new ways to differentiate the interactive writing routine.*	• *Sensory integration, continuing to develop a deeper understanding.*
	• *We broke down centers, re-evaluating our groups, differentiating our groups, etc. It is always good stuff we bring back.*	***Planning & Preparation***
	• *The workshop reminded me how important movement is in the classroom. I was able to get materials to make centers.*	• *Looking over the module, gathering materials, and planning for our expedition.*
		• *The time to plan*
		• *having time to research resources*
		• *Looking at Jenny's activities and reviewing how to use them.*
		• *Looking at assessment data, grouping students, planning instruction for those groups*
		• *planning together, looking at the module*
		• *we learned some new songs and were given time to go through our materials and ask questions. We were*

	• *I like the focus on the primary learner. I enjoyed the conversation on how all integrated them into their classrooms. And of course the new opening song!!*	*also given some supplies to share and plan for upcoming lessons.*

During focus groups and interviews, staff provided additional information and insights about the professional learning activities. School 8 staff expressed their appreciation for the TOSA. They explained that she tailors her activities to the teachers' needs. They appreciated being able to see her model lessons and to see lessons at GCCS during GPODs before attempting to implement them in their own classrooms. One teacher explained, *"She's like the mechanic making sure the curriculum is running like it should. She's totally present. She's authentic and she addresses things immediately."* Teachers valued the technology, the resources they received, and the "make and takes" they brought back to their classrooms. *"Having time to sit and plan and work has been good."*

Figure 4 shows that, on average, staff reported that their knowledge of Reading Foundational Skills research had been developed *a great deal* with a mean rating of 3.6 on 4-point scale where 1=not at all and 4=a great deal. On the same scale, staff rated the development of their personal knowledge of the grapho-phonemic system at 3.1. Staff from both schools expressed extremely strong *commitment* to the EL Skills Curriculum.

Figure 4
Development of Knowledge, Understandings, and/or Skills: Mean Rating (n=19)

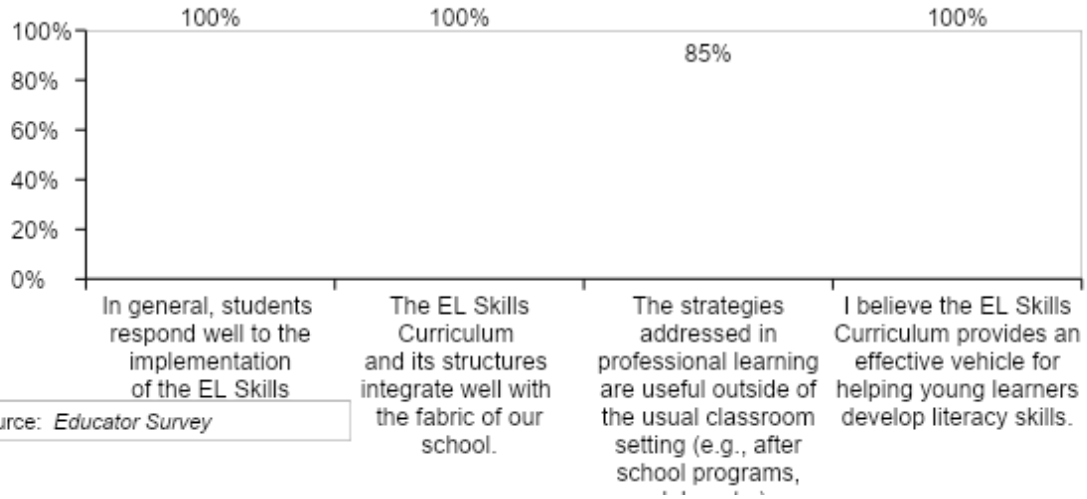


Key Finding

The EL Skills curriculum has earned the respect of school staff, who view it as extremely effective in developing literacy skills for primary grade students.

Educators from both schools were extremely satisfied with the EL Skills Curriculum. All staff *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that students respond well to the curriculum, the curriculum integrates well with their school, and it provides an effective vehicle for helping young learners develop literacy skills. Eighty-five percent of respondents agreed that the strategies addressed in training are useful outside the regular classroom setting (those who did not agree responded that they didn't know). Figure 5 summarizes their agreement with these statements.

Figure 5
Percentage of Respondents Who *Agreed* or *Strongly Agreed*(n=13)



Source: *Educator Survey*

Of the 13 survey respondents from both schools, 12 were able to form an opinion about the extent to which the grant activities meet the needs of their schools' students. Here, 11 (85%) believed that implementing what they had learned during the grant activities was meeting their students' needs (or will meet them when they are fully implemented) *a great deal* and one (8%) said that it meets their needs *somewhat* (Figure 6).

Figure 6
Extent To Which Implementing The Knowledge and Skills Addressed in the Grant Activities Is Meeting (Or Will Meet) Students' Needs At School
(n=13)

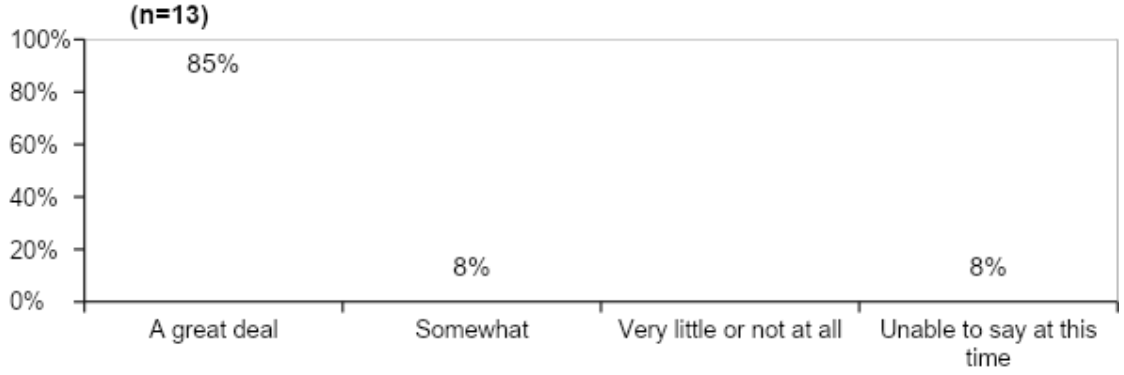
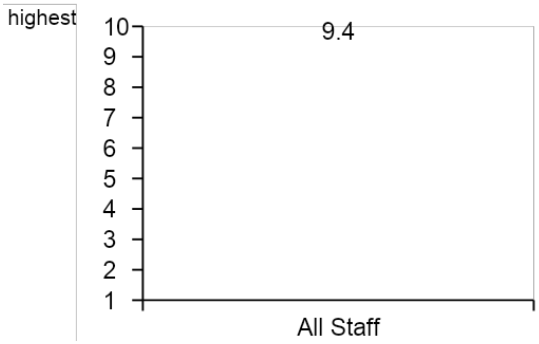


Figure 7
Overall Level of Commitment to the EL Skills Curriculum(n=12)

On a scale of 1 to 10 where 10 was the highest rating, the average was 9.4 (Figure 7). Commitment ratings ranged from a low of 8 to a high of 10.



Source: *Educator Survey*

During focus groups, School 8 teachers explained how the EL Skills Curriculum is completely new and different from what they were used to.

- The pacing is different in that it allows for repetition; ritual and routine are built in so students know what to expect.
- Shortened mini-lessons help students to be more engaged.
- There is a lot of movement, play, and music.
- All skills are vertically aligned across grades

School 8 staff described how the professional development has affected them and what they are doing differently in their classrooms. Some examples are reproduced below.

Comments

- *This is my sixth curriculum. It was challenging to get started, but then I had an a-ha moment.*
- *The curriculum is easier to differentiate. I'm able to manipulate to meet needs. There's better understanding of the curriculum as a whole. I have re-learned the language to teach it.*
- *It took a couple of months to get it, but now that we're in it, it makes sense. [There is] greater understanding of how to differentiate.*
- *They're learning skills while doing guided reading.*
- *A lot of motivation to teach and work*
- *I'm differentiating more with this than ever before!*
- *[from a new teacher] The first GPOD was an eye opener. That was my a-ha moment. Center time started falling into place. It's nice to know where you're heading and where you're at.*
- *I really enjoy teaching the curriculum.*
- *I'm jot* [sic] *afraid to let kids go to make mistakes to learn. It taught them to be problem solvers.*
- *I understand kids better.*
- *I'm seeing more centers and hands-on learning.*
- *Imaginary play provides an opportunity for kids to explore and work together.*

GCCS teachers, who started working with the EL Skills Curriculum just slightly before School 8 did, also appreciated the professional learning provided by the grant. They explained that they feel well supported and have a deeper understanding of the skills students need to learn, how the brain and body work together, and of sensory integration. They appreciated making new friends at School 8 and the collegial support the partnership has provided. The group's Facebook page has been a good resource. One teacher said, "GPOD days when we see other students interacting and using the curriculum in different ways and having a chance to be in each other's rooms is special."

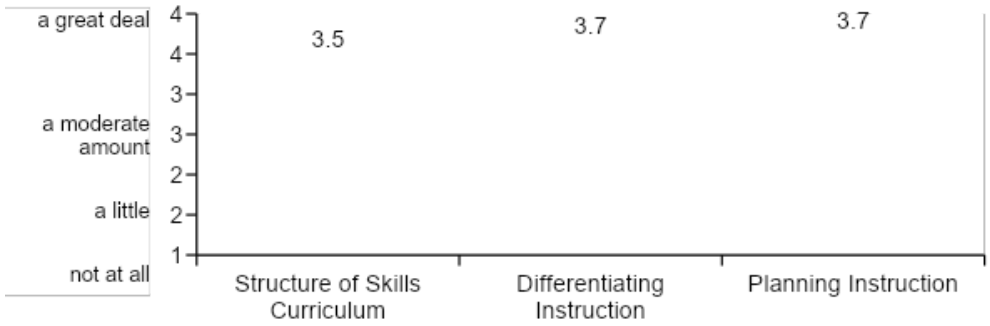
Goal 2: To equip teachers to effectively implement the EL Skills Curriculum in order to improve student achievement in reading foundations

Key Finding

Staff were well-equipped to implement all components of the EL Skills Curriculum. Their pedagogical skills improved, and they became more enthusiastic about teaching.

Responses to both the combined *Professional Development Feedback* forms (Figure 8) provided insight into how well staff believed they had developed the skills, knowledge, and understandings required to implement the EL Skills Curriculum. On average, staff felt their knowledge of differentiating and planning instruction and of the skills curriculum structure was well developed with average ratings of 3.5 and 3.7 on a 4-point scale (1=not at all; 4=a great deal).

Figure 8
Development of Knowledge, Understandings, and/or Skills: Mean Ratings
(n=19)



Source: *Professional Development Feedback Forms*

Figures 9 through 11 summarize the extent to which staff felt they were prepared to implement aspects of the EL Skills Curriculum: understanding and navigating the curriculum (Figure 9), implementing whole-group and small-group instruction (Figure 10), and managing independent work (Figure 11). Overall, staff indicated that they felt least well-prepared in aspects of understanding and navigating the curriculum (Figure 9), with 45% of staff reporting they were *expert* (18%) or *advanced* (27%) in their abilities to find and use additional resources in the curriculum. Further, 60% said they were either *expert* (20%) or *advanced* (40%) in using the phases and micro-phases to implement all aspects of the EL Skills Curriculum. This should be considered a very positive finding for teachers at the end of the first year of implementation of a new curriculum.

In general, staff indicated that they were well-prepared, with the large majority rating themselves as *advanced* or *expert* in all areas of small- and whole-group instruction (Figure 10) and independent work (Figure 11).

Across areas probed, only one staff member rated him/herself as requiring a lot of additional support or training (Not Yet) in one area: engage students in goal setting (Figure 10).

Figure 9
Respondents' Preparedness to Implement the EL Skills Curriculum:
Understanding & Navigating the Curriculum
(n=11)

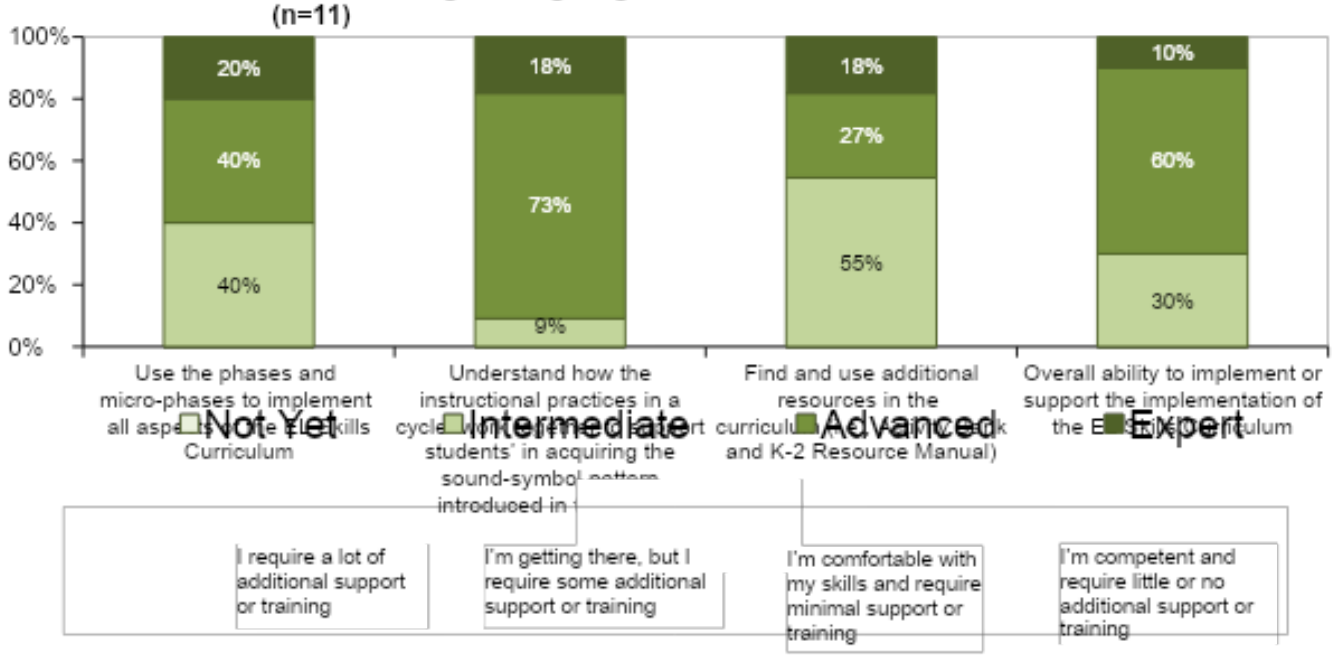


Figure 10
Respondents' Preparedness to Implement the EL Skills Curriculum:
Whole & Small Group Instruction
(n=11)

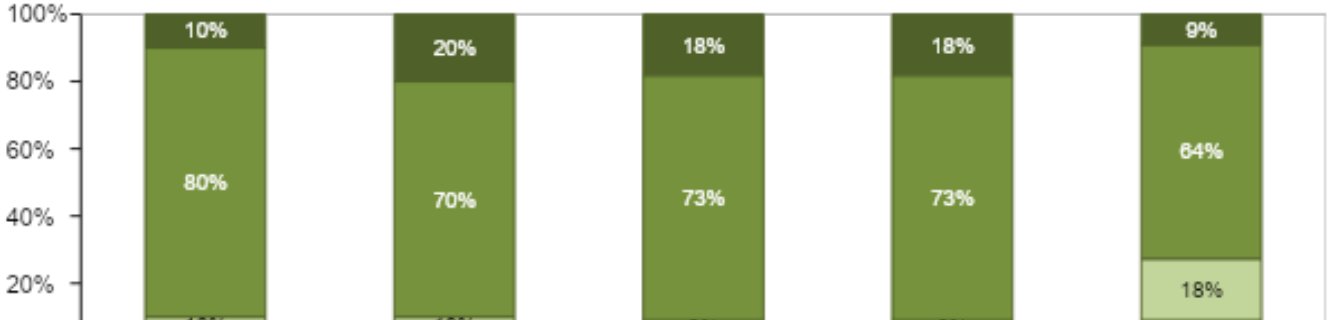
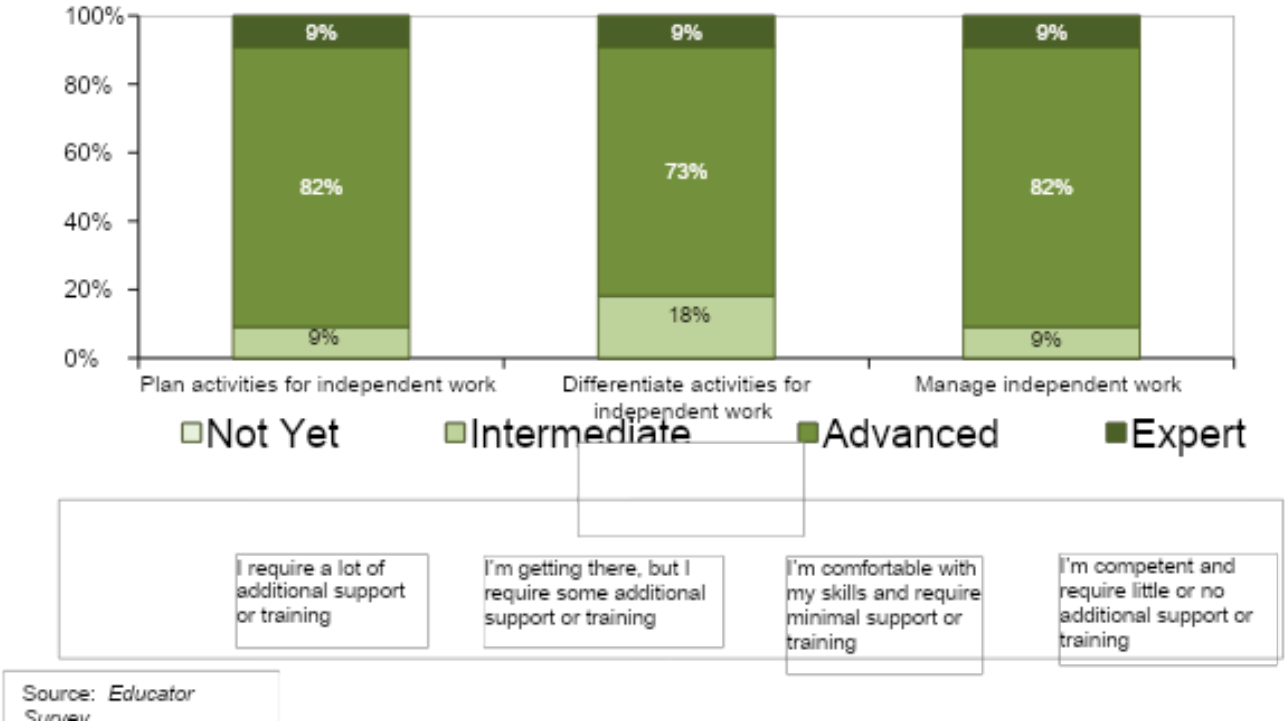


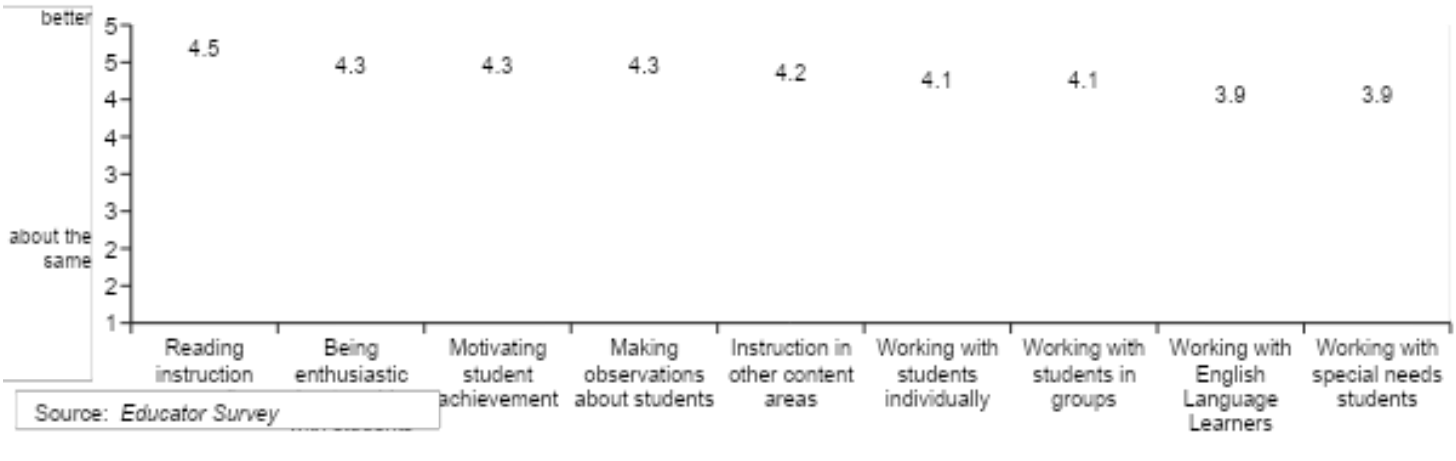
Figure 11
Respondents' Preparedness to Implement the EL Skills Curriculum: *Independent Work*
(n=11)



Source: *Educator Survey*

Staff were asked to rate how their participation in the Charter School Dissemination Grant activities had affected *their skills as educators* on a 5-point scale (1=worse, 3=about the same, 5=better). Their mean ratings for areas related to Goal 2, shown in Figure 12 below, indicate that they recognized strong improvement in every area. Staff indicated the biggest improvement was to *Reading instruction overall* with a mean rating of 4.5. The areas with the lowest ratings – working with special needs students and working with English language learners – each earned mean ratings of 3.9.

Figure 12
Staff Reports of How Participating in the Grant Activities Affected Their Skills as Educators: Mean Ratings
(n=13)



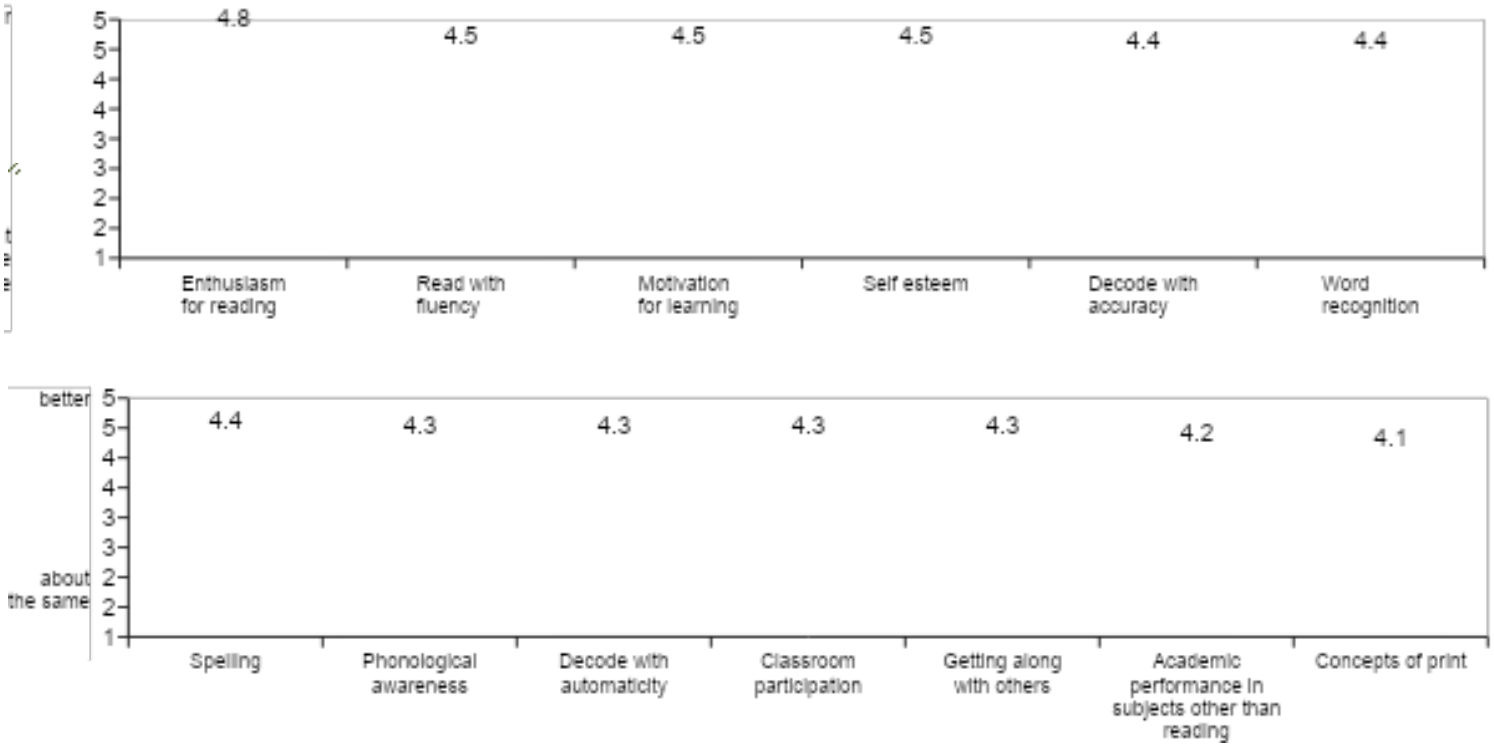
Source: *Educator Survey*

Key Finding

Both student academic success and non-cognitive indicators of academic success improved as a result of staff participation in grant activities.

Staff were also asked how implementing the EL Skills Curriculum and sensory integration strategies had affected their *students* by rating several areas on a 5-point scale where 1=worse, 3=about the same, and 5=better. Respondents could also respond that they didn't know. Their average ratings are shown in Figure 13 below. On average, staff saw improvement in each area, and comparatively small differences across the areas probed. *Enthusiasm for reading* had the highest average rating at 4.8, and *concepts of print* had the lowest at 4.1.

Figure 13
How Applying What They've Learned Has Affected Their Students: Mean Ratings (1=worse, 3=about the same, 5=better)
(n=13)



School staff wrote about their first experiences using the EL Skills Curriculum.

First Experiences Implementing the ELS

About Students . . .

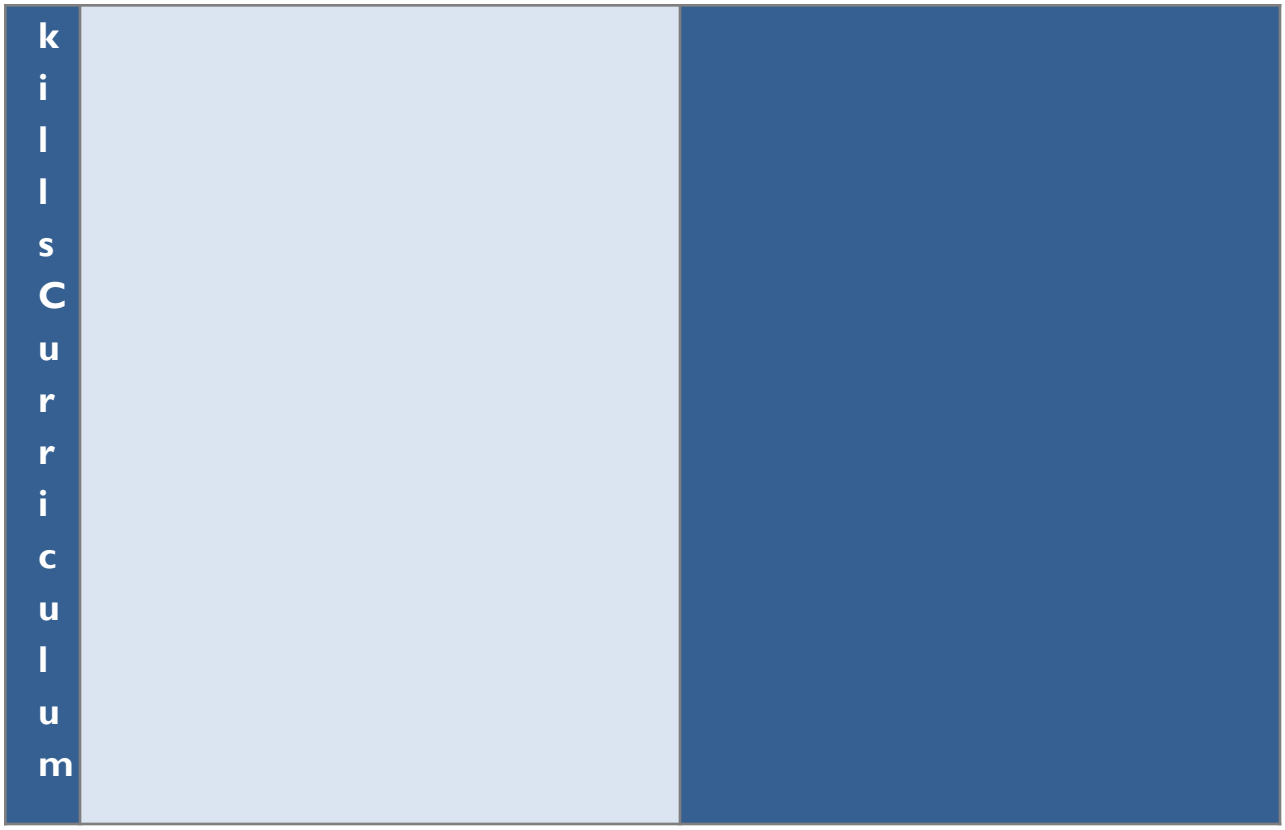
- *I have noticed an increase in children's ability to read because of the segmenting and blending being stronger*
- *As a support for classroom teachers and new this year, my understanding based on grade level meetings is that the EL skills curriculum has had a positive impact on improving student achievement. Students this year are much further ahead than they have been in previous years, due to the new modules and skills, coupled with the support from the grant.*
- *As the school principal, I am seeing fabulous growth for my K-2 readers/writers. The comparison of the work from fall to now is powerful. JOYFUL!*
- *The EL Skills is working well with my students so far. The reason is this curriculum focuses on each student's level.*
- *I have readers! I have more than 2 readers! I have kindergarteners going to first grade reading what they wrote. I can read what they wrote. The number of students doing this has increased since last year.*
- *I have noticed more growth in the skill level of the class and less kids struggling at the end of the year then previous years.*
- *I am noticing that my students enjoy learning with this curriculum and I am enjoying teaching it. It is set up for my students in mind. It has been challenging to make enough work for small groups.*
- *My students were reading and being very successful as decoders. The skills curriculum fits them well.*

About Teachers . . .

- *I am thankful for the ability to see the skills along a continuum. I also appreciate the focus on helping students become both accurate and automatic before moving on to the next phase.*
- *There is a lot of material to read through and cover in daily lessons*
- *Being able to slowly learn and implement the curriculum has been successful.*

About Both Teachers & Students . . .

- *Very positive. Kids really enjoy sensory integration activities and singing songs we've learned. Kids were successful with the program and all made good progress. I really appreciate the pacing and the ability to spend more time on developing fluency with short vowel words,*
- *From the outside, it appears to have had an extremely positive impact on the student and teacher attitudes towards reading instruction. Teachers are excited to teach and kids are excited to get better at reading.*



Staff discussed differences in their classroom practices and how their students have been affected during focus groups and interviews. They explained that students are making connections naturally across areas. Several staff discussed the different pacing of the EL Skills curriculum, which allows for repetition. Because they have more time to practice and process, their learning is deeper. Students are more excited about learning and want to read "all the time." Students are using their skills outside of lessons and have been overheard discussing books with other students on their own time. Staff also explained that students are benefitting in areas other than literacy. Some teachers are adapting the EL Skills Curriculum routines for math instruction and are trying to integrate reading in other areas. One staff member commented that improved reading skills helps students with math word problems.

One staff member said, *"This by far is the most work to get to know, but the most successful."*

The EL Skills Curriculum design is based on Dr. Linnea Ehri's Phase Theory of Word Acquisition,[1] which describes the alphabetic connections students use as they learn to read and write words. Ehri and her colleagues identify four Phases of Word Acquisition: PreAlphabetic, Partial Alphabetic, Full Alphabetic, and Consolidated Alphabetic. The EL Skills Curriculum further breaks each of these phases into three *microphases* – early, middle, and late – and identifies the specific sound spelling patterns associated with each microphase. As students process more complex sound-symbol spelling patterns, they improve their proficiency in Foundational Skills and advance through the microphases and phases. Each microphase consists of a unique set of skills and competencies, and the microphases are not necessary of equal relative "size."

When the EL Skills Curriculum has been fully implemented and students have the benefit of participating in it each year from the time they enter kindergarten, it is hoped that all students will arrive at the *Middle Consolidated* microphase by the end of second grade. Teachers are provided with a general range of microphases appropriate for students at different points at each grade level, which are summarized in

[1] See https://curriculum.eleducation.org/ for more information about the research base and design of the curriculum.

Table 5. However, teachers understand that these ranges are general; the pace at which students master the concepts and skills in each microphase and progress to the next microphase varies by child.

Table 5
EL Skills Curriculum Word Decoding Microphase Expectations

Grade Level	Benchmark	Foundational Micro-Phase**
K	Fall/October	PreAlphabetic
	Winter/January	Early Partial
	Spring/June	Mid/Late Partial Alphabetic
1	Fall	Late Partial/Early Full Alphabetic
	Winter	Early/Middle Full Alphabetic
	Spring	Middle/Late Full Alphabetic
2	Fall	Middle/Late Full Alphabetic
	Winter	Early Consolidated
	Spring	Early/Middle Consolidated

**Foundational Micro-Phases are meant to describe the types of alphabetic connections students make when processing the printed word (i.e., decoding), not leveled benchmarks. Therefore, this measurement should be considered when deciding on student reading level.

The EL Education K-2 Reading Foundations Skills Curriculum explicitly teaches and formally assesses the Reading Foundations (RF) state standards, as well as the Language (L) state standards associated with letter formation and spelling (L.1, L.2). To assess student proficiency in these early literacy standards, both School 8 and GCCS use the EL Skills Curriculum benchmark assessments which are administered formally three times each year (fall, winter, and spring). Table 6 identifies the Benchmark Assessments administered during the 2017-18 academic year and to whom and when they were administered.

The Benchmark Assessments *measure* how well each student has mastered each type of alphabetic connection and *are used to determine* his/her microphase placement in each skill area. During professional learning activities conducted as part of this grant, teachers learned to analyze the results of the benchmark assessments to understand how each student processes alphabetic information in reading and writing and to determine the appropriate targeted differentiated instruction.

Table 6
Overview of EL Skills Curriculum 2017-18 Benchmark Assessment Administration

Benchmark Assessment	To Whom	When
Phonological Awareness	• All Kindergarteners • Any students in grades 1 or 2 for whom these skills may need to be assessed (i.e. students at these grades working significantly below grade level)	• Fall, Winter, Spring
Letter Name and Sound Identification (both upper and lowercase)	• All Kindergarteners • Any students in grades 1 or 2 for whom this knowledge may need to be assessed (i.e., students at these grades working significantly below grade level)	• Fall, Winter, Spring (if needed)
Decoding (words in isolation)	• First and Second Graders • Kindergarten	• Fall, Winter, Spring • Spring
Spelling	• First and Second Graders • Kindergarten	• Fall, Winter, Spring • Spring

The data summarized in Figures 14 through 19 and Tables 7 through 12 illustrate School 8 and GCCS student movement through the microphases over the course of Year 2, the first year of the implementation of the EL Skills Curriculum, as measured by the Benchmark Assessments.

Kindergarten decoding results are based on assessment of letter name and sound identification while students are in the *PreAlphabetic* microphases and then on the Decoding Benchmark assessments as they enter the Partial Alphabetic microphases. Ideally, individual students move two or three microphases each year in decoding. It is typical and expected that most students' microphases will be different in decoding and spelling as they are acquiring more complex sound symbol spelling patterns. Student decoding microphases are typically more advanced than their spelling microphases as they are able to read increasingly complex words due to the nature of spelling vs. decoding. For example, when decoding a word spelled with the cvce[2] pattern (e.g., "late"), if a student has mastered the relationship between that pattern and the resultant vowel sound, the student will decode it accurately as the pattern must produce the long a sound. However, when encoding a vowel sound in a given word, students often must choose from a variety of spelling patterns that can conceivably show that sound. In the above example, that could be cvce, or the vowel teams "ay" or "ai". It takes longer to be able to correctly call up the right vowel spelling pattern for a given word when writing than it does to recognize it and decode properly.

The data are organized by school and grade level. Figures 14 through 16 and Tables 7 through 9 show the progress of School 8 students.

[2] cvce=consonant-vowel-consonant-final *e*

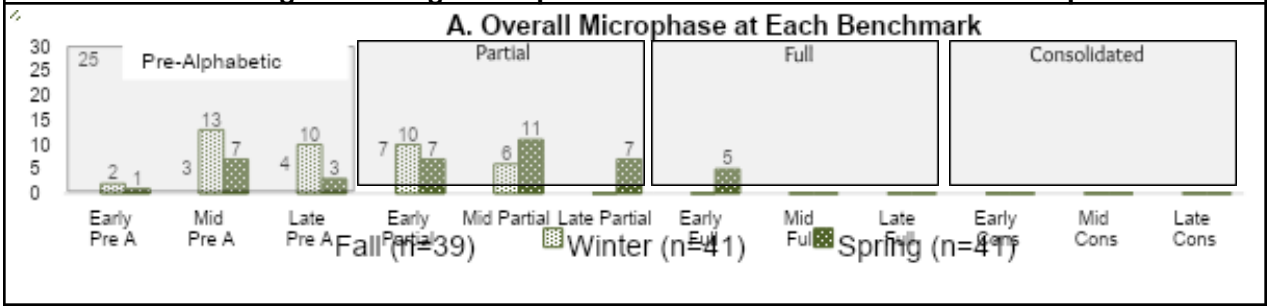
Key Finding

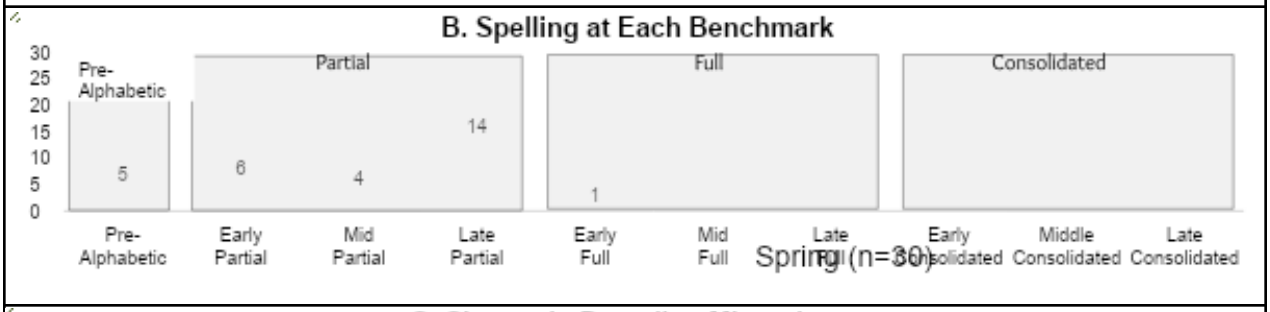
School 8 students have progressed as expected through the microphases (between 2.3 and 2.7 microphases across all grades). Student overall decoding abilities are approaching the expected levels of proficiency for their grade levels; 56% of kindergarteners, 51% of first graders, and 43% of second graders were decoding at the expected level by spring.

School 8 Kindergarten (Figures 14A-C and Table 7)

- In decoding (Figure 14A and Table 7), most kindergarten students (82%) were assessed at the *pre-alphabetic* microphases in the fall, with a few students (n=7 or 18%) functioning at the *partial-alphabetic* microphases.
- By spring, the proportion of pre-alphabetic kindergartners had declined to 27%, and the majority of (61%) were assessed as functioning in the *partial alphabetic* microphases. Five students (12%) had progressed to the *early full alphabetic* microphase. Twenty-three kindergarten students (56%) were decoding at the *mid-partial* microphase or higher, the expected level for the end of kindergarten.
- In spelling, which is assessed only in the spring for kindergarten students, 80% of all students were assessed as functioning in the *partial* microphases (Figure 14B and Table 7).
- On average, kindergarten students progressed 2.7 microphases from fall to spring. Their overall movement, summarized in Figure 14C shows that 21 students (57%) progressed three or four microphases during the school year.

Figure 14
School 8 Kindergarten
Student Progress Through Microphases: Number of Students at Each Microphase





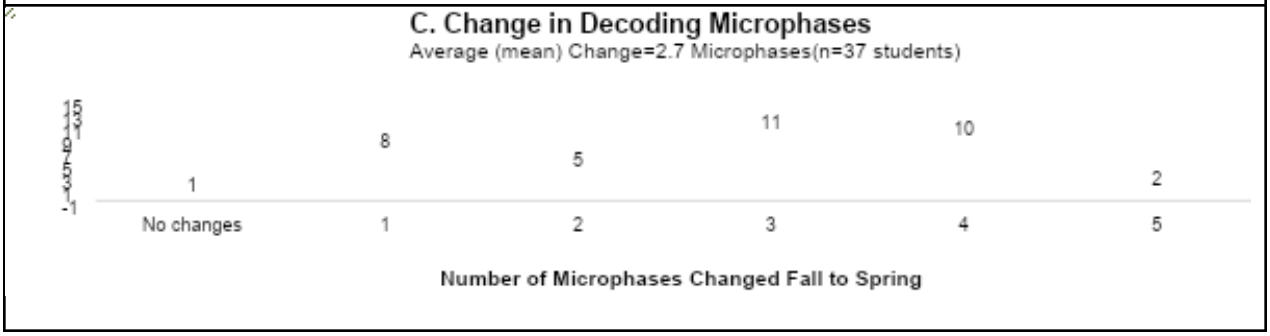


Table 7
School 8 Kindergarten
Student Progress Through Microphases:
Number of Students at Each Decoding & Spelling Microphase

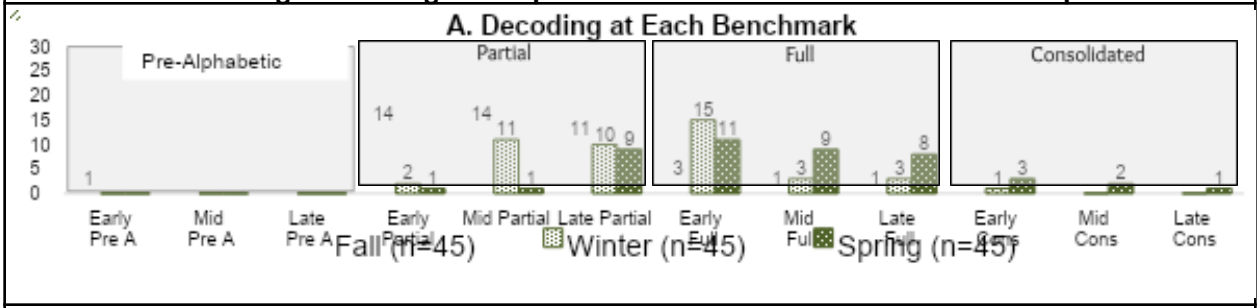
Overall Microphases (Average Improvement = 2.7 Microphases)	Fall (n=39)		Winter (n=41)		Spring (n=41)	
Microphase	**n**	**%**	**n**	**%**	**n**	**%**
Early Pre-Alphabetic	**25**	**64%**	**2**	**5%**	**1**	**2%**
Mid Pre-Alphabetic	**3**	**8%**	**13**	**32%**	**7**	**17%**
Late Pre-Alphabetic	**4**	**10%**	**10**	**24%**	**3**	**7%**
Total Pre-Alphabetic	**32**	**82%**	**25**	**61%**	**11**	**27%**
Early Partial Alphabetic	**7**	**18%**	**10**	**24%**	**7**	**17%**
Mid Partial Alphabetic	**0**	**0%**	**6**	**15%**	**11**	**27%**
Late Partial Alphabetic	**0**	**0%**	**0**	**0%**	**7**	**17%**
Total Partial Alphabetic	**7**	**18%**	**16**	**39%**	**25**	**61%**
Early Full Alphabetic	**0**	**0%**	**0**	**0%**	**5**	**12%**
Mid Full Alphabetic	**0**	**0%**	**0**	**0%**	**0**	**0%**
Late Full Alphabetic	**0**	**0%**	**0**	**0%**	**0**	**0%**
Total Full Alphabetic	**0**	**0%**	**0**	**0%**	**5**	**12%**
Early Consolidated	**0**	**0%**	**0**	**0%**	**0**	**0%**
Mid Consolidated	**0**	**0%**	**0**	**0%**	**0**	**0%**
Late Consolidated	**0**	**0%**	**0**	**0%**	**0**	**0%**
Total Consolidated	**0**	**0%**	**0**	**0%**	**0**	**0%**

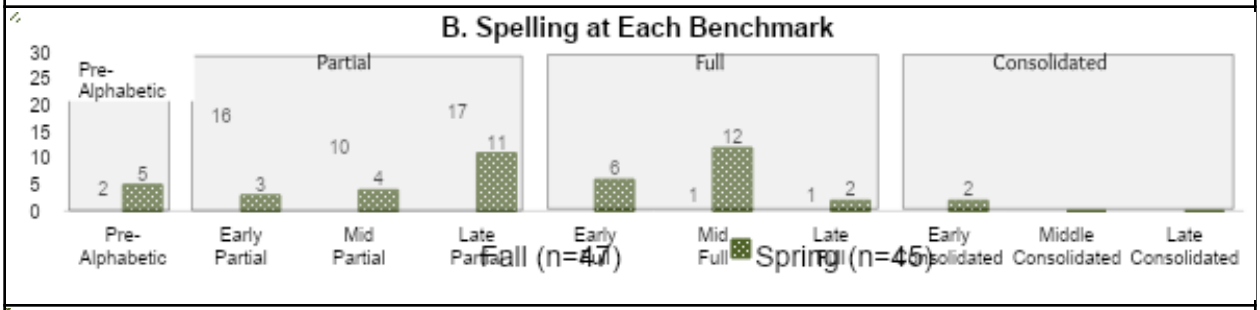
Spelling Microphases (Spring Only)	Spring (n=30)	
Microphase	**n**	**%**
Pre-Alphabetic	**5**	**17%**
Early Partial Alphabetic	**6**	**20%**
Mid Partial Alphabetic	**4**	**13%**
Late Partial Alphabetic	**14**	**47%**
Total Partial Alphabetic	**24**	**80%**
Early Full Alphabetic	**1**	**3%**
Mid-Full Alphabetic	**0**	**0%**
Late Full Alphabetic	**0**	**0%**
Total Full Alphabetic	**1**	**3%**
Early Consolidated	**0**	**0%**
Middle Consolidated	**0**	**0%**
Late Consolidated	**0**	**0%**
Total Consolidated	**0**	**0%**

School 8 Grade 1 (Figures 15A-D and Table 8)

- Nearly all first graders (39 out of 45) were assessed at the *partial alphabetic* microphases in the fall. Of the remaining six students, one was operating on a *pre-alphabetic* level and five were in the *full alphabetic* microphases (Figure 15A and Table 8).
- By spring, most School 8 1st graders (62%) were assessed at the *full alphabetic* microphases, and 24% were decoding at the *partial alphabetic* microphases. Six students (13%) had advanced to the *consolidated* microphases (Figure 15A and Table 8). Overall, 23 first grade students (51%) were decoding at the expected level for spring – the *middle full alphabetic* microphase or higher.
- In spelling, most School 8 first graders students (91%) were assessed as *partial alphabetic* in the fall. By spring, 40% were *partial alphabetic* and 44% were *full alphabetic* (Figure 15B and Table 8).
- On average, School 8 first graders progressed 2.6 microphases in decoding and 1.3 microphases in spelling from fall to spring. As shown in Figure 15 C, in decoding, the large majority of students advanced two (n=13 students), three (n=16), or four (n=10) microphases from fall to spring. In Spelling (Figure 15D), the numbers of microphases students progressed was more variable (spread out), but most students progressed one (n=12) or two (n=14) microphases.

Figure 15
School 8 Grade 1
Student Progress Through Microphases: Number of Students at Each Microphase





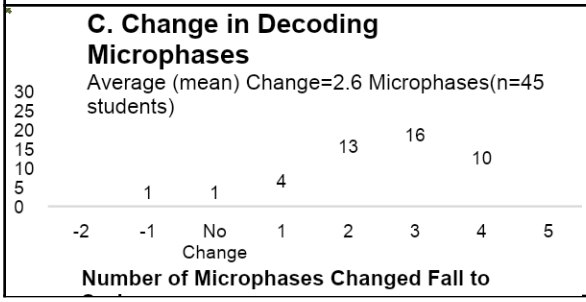


Table 8
School 8 Grade 1
Student Progress Through Microphases:
Number of Students at Each Decoding & Spelling Microphase

Decoding Microphases
(Average Improvement = 2.6 Microphases)

Microphase	Fall (n=45) n	Fall (n=45) %	Winter (n=45) n	Winter (n=45) %	Spring (n=45) n	Spring (n=45) %
Early Pre-Alphabetic	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%
Mid Pre-Alphabetic	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Late Pre-Alphabetic	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Total Pre-Alphabetic	1	2%	0	0%	0	0%
Early Partial Alphabetic	14	31%	2	4%	1	2%
Mid Partial Alphabetic	14	31%	11	24%	1	2%
Late Partial Alphabetic	11	24%	10	22%	9	20%
Total Partial Alphabetic	39	87%	23	51%	11	24%
Early Full Alphabetic	3	7%	15	33%	11	24%
Mid Full Alphabetic	1	2%	3	7%	9	20%
Late Full Alphabetic	1	2%	3	7%	8	18%
Total Full Alphabetic	5	11%	21	47%	28	62%
Early Consolidated	0	0%	1	2%	3	7%
Mid Consolidated	0	0%	0	0%	2	4%
Late Consolidated	0	0%	0	0%	1	2%
Total Consolidated	0	0%	0	0%	6	13%

Spelling Microphases
(Average Improvement = 1.3 Microphases)

Microphase	Fall (n=47) n	Fall (n=47) %	Spring (n=45) n	Spring (n=45) %
Pre-Alphabetic	2	4%	5	11%
Early Partial Alphabetic	16	34%	3	7%
Mid Partial Alphabetic	10	21%	4	9%
Late Partial Alphabetic	17	36%	11	24%
Total Partial Alphabetic	43	91%	18	40%
Early Full Alphabetic	0	0%	6	13%
Mid-Full Alphabetic	1	2%	12	27%
Late Full Alphabetic	1	2%	2	4%
Total Full Alphabetic	2	4%	20	44%
Early Consolidated	0	0%	2	4%
Middle Consolidated	0	0%	0	0%
Late Consolidated	0	0%	0	0%
Total Consolidated	0	0%	2	4%

School 8 Grade 2 (Figures 16A-D and Table 9)

- In the fall, all but two second graders were decoding at either the *partial alphabetic* (19 students or 53%) or *full alphabetic* (15 students or 42%) microphases. Of the remaining students, one was at the *pre-alphabetic* microphase and one was in the *early consolidated* microphase (Figure 16A and Table 9).
- By spring, the proportion of students at the *partial alphabetic* microphases decreased to 20% (n=7 students), 37% (n=13 students) were assessed at the *full alphabetic* microphases, and 43% (n=15) were in the *consolidated* microphases (Figure 16A and Table 9). Fifteen students (43%) were decoding at the expected level for the end of second grade – the *early consolidated* microphase or higher.
- In spelling, fall assessments determined that 62% of students (n=23) were functioning at the *partial alphabetic* microphases and 24% (n=9) were at *full alphabetic* microphases. In the spring, approximately one-third of students (34% or 12 students) were assessed as being in the *partial alphabetic* microphases, 46% (n=16) were spelling at the *full alphabetic* microphases, and 17% (n=6) were spelling at the *consolidated* microphases (Figure 16B and Table 9).
- The average School 8 second grader improved by 2.3 microphases in decoding and 1.8 microphases in spelling. Figure 16C illustrates that, in decoding, most students improved by two or three microphases from fall to spring. In spelling (Figure 16D), 14 students advanced by two microphases.

Figure 16
School 8 Grade 2
Student Progress Through Microphases: Number of Students at Each Microphase

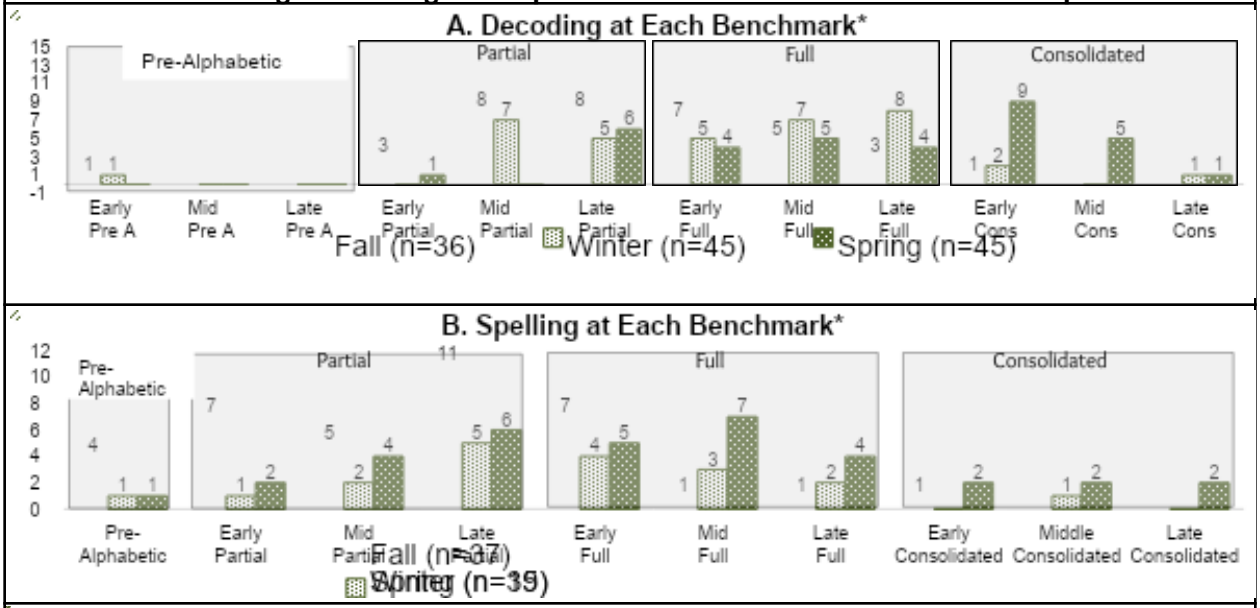


Table 9
School 8 Grade 2
Student Progress Through Microphases:
Number of Students at Each Decoding & Spelling Microphase

Decoding Microphases
(Average Improvement = 2.3 Microphases)

Microphase	Fall (n=36) n	Fall (n=36) %	Winter (n=45) n	Winter (n=45) %	Spring (n=45) n	Spring (n=45) %
Early Pre-Alphabetic	1	1%	1	3%	0	0%
Mid Pre-Alphabetic	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Late Pre-Alphabetic	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Total Pre-Alphabetic	1	3%	1	3%	0	0%
Early Partial Alphabetic	3	8%	0	0%	1	3%
Mid Partial Alphabetic	8	22%	7	19%	0	0%
Late Partial Alphabetic	8	22%	5	14%	6	17%
Total Partial Alphabetic	19	53%	12	33%	7	20%
Early Full Alphabetic	7	19%	5	14%	4	11%
Mid Full Alphabetic	5	14%	7	19%	5	14%
Late Full Alphabetic	3	8%	8	22%	4	11%
Total Full Alphabetic	15	42%	20	56%	13	37%
Early Consolidated	1	3%	2	6%	9	26%
Mid Consolidated	0	0%	0	0%	5	14%
Late Consolidated	0	0%	1	3%	1	3%
Total Consolidated	1	3%	3	8%	15	43%

Spelling Microphases
(Average Improvement = 1.8 Microphases)

Microphase	Fall (n=37) n	Fall (n=37) %	Winter (n=19) n	Winter (n=19) %	Spring (n=35) n	Spring (n=35) %
Pre-Alphabetic	4	11%	1	5%	1	3%
Early Partial Alphabetic	7	19%	1	5%	2	6%
Mid Partial Alphabetic	5	14%	2	11%	4	11%
Late Partial Alphabetic	11	30%	5	26%	6	17%
Total Partial Alphabetic	23	62%	8	42%	12	34%
Early Full Alphabetic	7	19%	4	21%	5	14%
Mid-Full Alphabetic	1	3%	3	16%	7	20%
Late Full Alphabetic	1	3%	2	11%	4	11%
Total Full Alphabetic	9	24%	9	47%	16	46%
Early Consolidated	1	3%	0	0%	2	6%
Middle Consolidated	0	0%	1	5%	2	6%
Late Consolidated	0	0%	0	0%	2	6%
Total Consolidated	1	3%	1	5%	6	17%

*12 School 8 second grade students were removed from the analysis because they were not included in the cohort: seven were placed in self-contained special education classes and five because their teacher did not implement the EL Skills Curriculum during 2017-18.

GCCS - Figures 17 through 19 and Tables 10 through 12 show the progress of GCCS students.

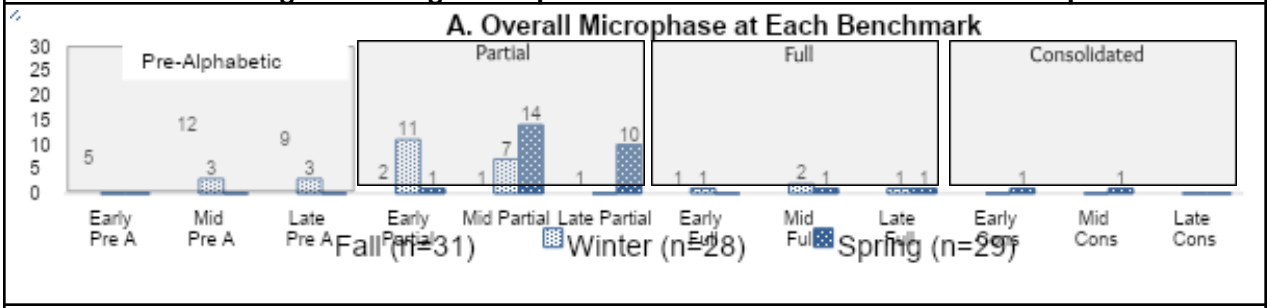
Key Finding

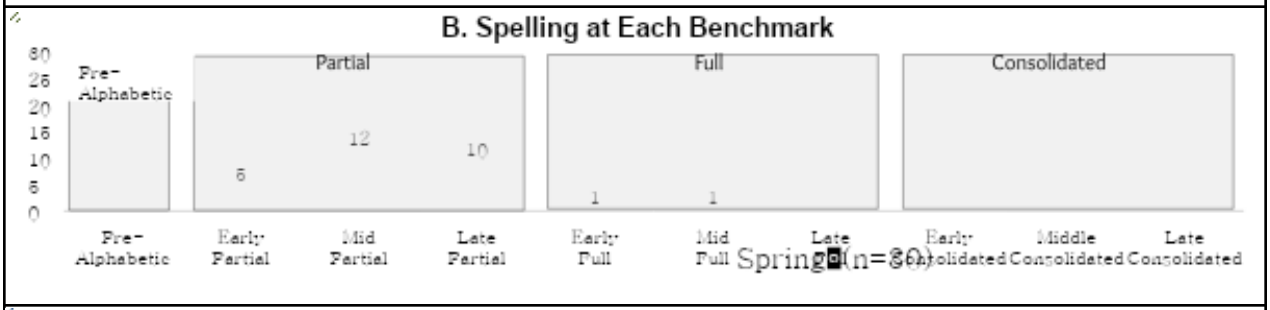
GCCS students have progressed at the upper limit of the expected annual progress through the microphases averaging between 2.8 and 3.2 microphases per year across all grades. By spring, the proportion of students decoding at the expected levels for their grade was 97% for kindergarten, 75% for grade 1, and 80% for grade 2.

GCCS Kindergarten (Figures 17A-C and Table 10)

- Nearly all kindergartners (n=26 or 84%) were assessed at the *pre-alphabetic* microphases in the fall. Of the five remaining students, four were at the *partial alphabetic* microphases and one was placed at the *early full alphabetic* microphase (Figure 17A and Table 10).
- By spring, all students had advanced from the *pre-alphabetic* phase; 86% (n=25) had progressed to the *partial alphabetic* microphases and four had entered the *full alphabetic* or *consolidated* microphases. Twenty-eight kindergarten students (97%) were decoding at the *mid-partial* microphase or higher, the expected level for the end of kindergarten (Figure 17A and Table 10).
- In spelling, 27 of 29 students (93%) were assessed at the *partial alphabetic* microphases. The remaining two students were in the full alphabetic microphases (Figure 17B and Table 10).
- The average GCCS kindergarten student progressed 3.2 microphases from fall to spring. Overall movement for kindergarteners, summarized in Figure 17C, shows that 15 students progressed three microphases and 10 students progress four microphases during the school year.

Figure 17
GCCS Kindergarten
Student Progress Through Microphases: Number of Students at Each Microphase





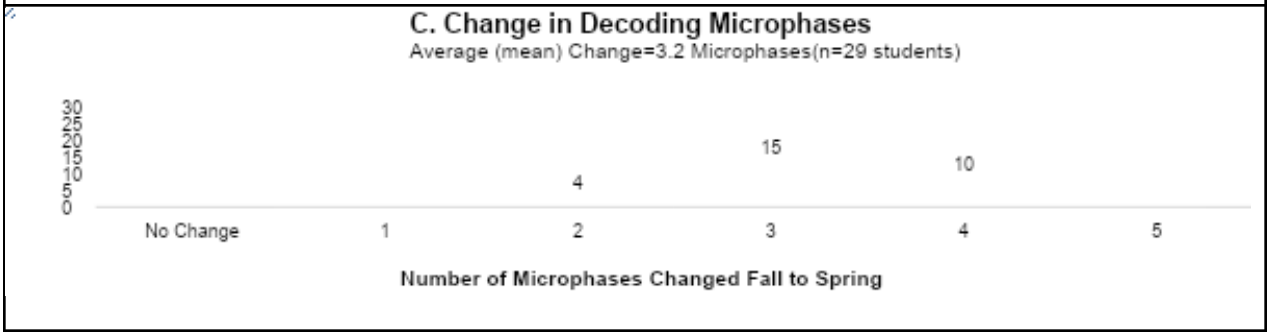


Table 10
GCCS Kindergarten
Student Progress Through Microphases:
Number of Students at Each Decoding & Spelling Microphase

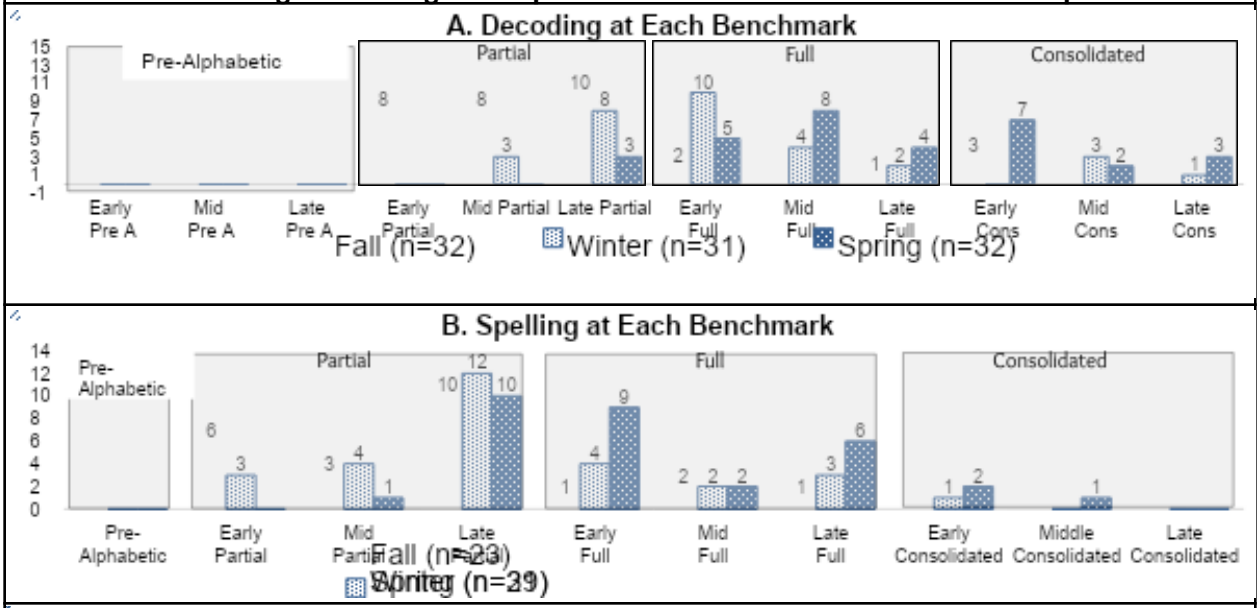
Overall Microphases (Average Improvement = 3.2 Microphases)						
	Fall (n=31)		Winter (n=28)		Spring (n=29)	
Microphase	n	%	n	%	n	%
Early Pre-Alphabetic	5	16%	0	0%	0	0%
Mid Pre-Alphabetic	12	39%	3	11%	0	0%
Late Pre-Alphabetic	9	29%	3	11%	0	0%
Total Pre-Alphabetic	26	84%	6	21%	0	0%
Early Partial Alphabetic	2	6%	11	39%	1	3%
Mid Partial Alphabetic	1	3%	7	25%	14	48%
Late Partial Alphabetic	1	3%	0	0%	10	34%
Total Partial Alphabetic	4	13%	18	64%	25	86%
Early Full Alphabetic	1	3%	1	4%	0	0%
Mid Full Alphabetic	0	0%	2	7%	1	3%
Late Full Alphabetic	0	0%	1	4%	1	3%
Total Full Alphabetic	1	3%	4	14%	2	7%
Early Consolidated	0	0%	0	0%	1	3%
Mid Consolidated	0	0%	0	0%	1	3%
Late Consolidated	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Total Consolidated	0	0%	0	0%	2	7%

Spelling Microphases (Spring Only)		
	Spring (n=29)	
Microphase	n	%
Pre-Alphabetic	0	0%
Early Partial Alphabetic	5	17%
Mid Partial Alphabetic	12	41%
Late Partial Alphabetic	10	34%
Total Partial Alphabetic	27	93%
Early Full Alphabetic	1	3%
Mid-Full Alphabetic	1	3%
Late Full Alphabetic	0	0%
Total Full Alphabetic	2	7%
Early Consolidated	0	0%
Middle Consolidated	0	0%
Late Consolidated	0	0%
Total Consolidated	0	0%

GCCS Grade 1 (Figures 18A-D and Table 11)

- As shown in Figure 18A and Table 11, at the beginning of first grade, nearly all students (81%) were decoding at the partial alphabetic microphases with the remaining six students split between the full alphabetic and consolidated microphases.
- By spring, only three students (9%) were assessed at the partial alphabetic microphases. The largest number of students (n=17 or 53%) had progressed to the full alphabetic microphases, followed closely by 12 students (38%) who were assessed at the consolidated levels. Overall, 24 first grade students (75%) were decoding at the expected level for spring – the *mid full alphabetic* microphase or higher (Figure 18A and Table 11).
- In spelling, 19 first graders (83%) were assessed at the partial alphabetic levels in fall with the remaining 4 at the full alphabetic microphases. By spring, most students (n=17, 55%) were spelling at a full alphabetic level. Of the remaining 14 students, 11 (35%) were spelling at the partial alphabetic level and 3 had progressed to the consolidated microphases (Figure 18B and Table 11).
- In decoding, the average first grader progressed 3 microphases in decoding and 2.5 microphases in spelling. As shown in Figure 18C, 11 students advanced 3 microphases, 10 advanced 4 microphases, 8 advanced two microphases. The remaining students advanced 1 or 5 microphases. In spelling, student progress was more varied with students advancing between one and six microphases.

Figure 18
GCCS Grade 1
Student Progress Through Microphases: Number of Students at Each Microphase



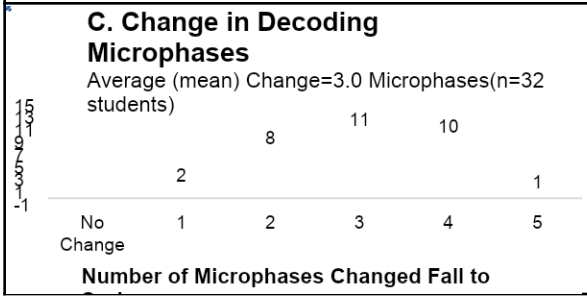


Table 11
GCCS Grade 1
Student Progress Through Microphases:
Number of Students at Each Decoding & Spelling Microphase

Decoding Microphases (Average Improvement = 3.0 Microphases)						
	Fall (n=32)		Winter (n=31)		Spring (n=32)	
Microphase	n	%	n	%	n	%
Early Pre-Alphabetic	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Mid Pre-Alphabetic	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Late Pre-Alphabetic	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Total Pre-Alphabetic	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Early Partial Alphabetic	8	25%	0	0%	0	0%
Mid Partial Alphabetic	8	25%	3	10%	0	0%
Late Partial Alphabetic	10	31%	8	26%	3	9%
Total Partial Alphabetic	26	81%	11	35%	3	9%
Early Full Alphabetic	2	6%	10	32%	5	16%
Mid Full Alphabetic	0	0%	4	13%	8	25%
Late Full Alphabetic	1	3%	2	6%	4	13%
Total Full Alphabetic	3	9%	16	52%	17	53%
Early Consolidated	3	9%	0	0%	7	22%
Mid Consolidated	0	0%	3	10%	2	6%
Late Consolidated	0	0%	1	3%	3	9%

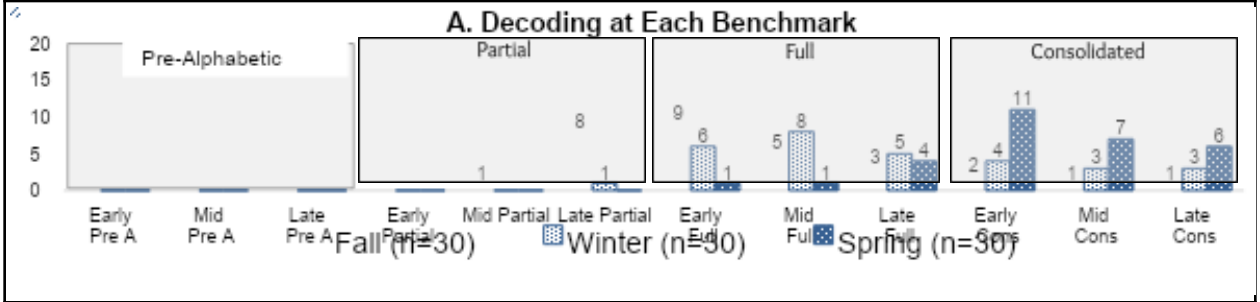
Spelling Microphases (Average Improvement = 2.5 Microphases)						
	Fall (n=23)		Winter (n=29)		Spring (n=31)	
Microphase	n	%	n	%	n	%
Pre-Alphabetic	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Early Partial Alphabetic	6	26%	3	10%	0	0%
Mid Partial Alphabetic	3	13%	4	14%	1	3%
Late Partial Alphabetic	10	43%	12	41%	10	32%
Total Partial Alphabetic	19	83%	19	66%	11	35%
Early Full Alphabetic	1	4%	4	14%	9	29%
Mid-Full Alphabetic	2	9%	2	7%	2	6%
Late Full Alphabetic	1	4%	3	10%	6	19%
Total Full Alphabetic	4	17%	9	31%	17	55%
Early Consolidated	0	0%	1	3%	2	6%
Middle Consolidated	0	0%	0	0%	1	3%
Late Consolidated	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Total Consolidated	0	0%	1	3%	3	10%

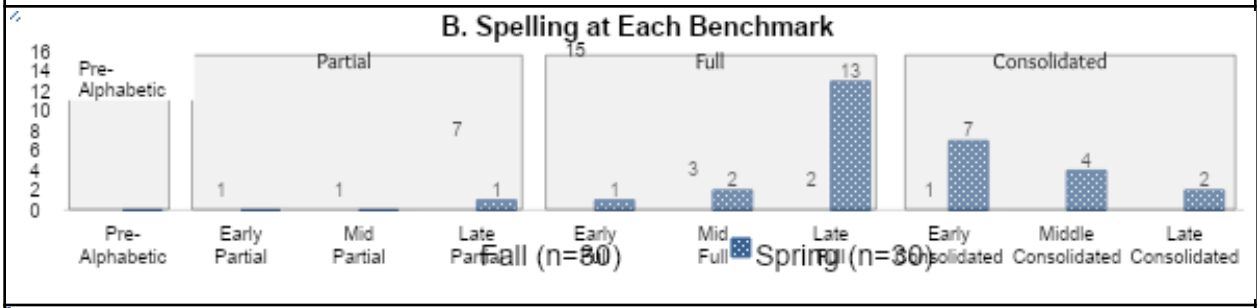
Total Consolidated	**3**	**9%**	**4**	**13%**	**12**	**38%**

GCCS Grade 2 (Figures 19A-D and Table 12)

- In the fall, most second graders at GCCS were decoding at either the *partial alphabetic* (n=9 students, 30%) or *full alphabetic* (n=17 students, 57%) microphases. The remaining four had advanced to the *consolidated* microphases (Figure 19A and Table 12).
- By spring, all students had advanced to the *full alphabetic* (n=6, 20%) or *consolidated* (n=24, 80%) microphases. Twenty-four students (80%) were decoding at the expected level for the end of second grade – the *early consolidated* microphase or higher (Figure 19A and Table 12).
- Figure 19B illustrates that, in the fall, two-thirds of second graders (n=20) were spelling at the *full alphabetic* microphases and just under one-third (n=9) were at the *partial alphabetic* microphases. One student was spelling at the *consolidated* level. By spring, all students except one were spelling at the *full alphabetic* (53%) or *consolidated* (43%) microphases.
- On average, GCCS second graders progressed 2.8 microphases in decoding and 2.5 microphases in spelling (Figures 19C and D), and all students except two progressed two or more levels from fall to spring in both decoding and spelling. It is noteworthy that several students advanced more than three microphases during second grade (i.e., 8 students advanced 4 or 5 microphases in decoding and 5 students advanced 4 microphases in spelling).

Figure 19
GCCS Grade 2
Student Progress Through Microphases: Number of Students at Each Microphase





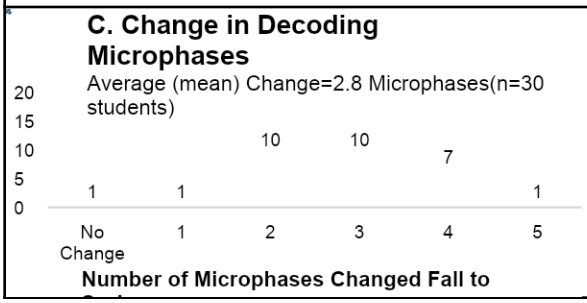


Table 12
GCCS Grade 2
Student Progress Through Microphases:
Number of Students at Each Decoding & Spelling Microphase

Decoding Microphases (Average Improvement = 2.8 Microphases)						
	Fall (n=30)		Winter (n=30)		Spring (n=30)	
Microphase	n	%	n	%	n	%
Early Pre-Alphabetic	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Mid Pre-Alphabetic	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Late Pre-Alphabetic	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Total Pre-Alphabetic	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Early Partial Alphabetic	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Mid Partial Alphabetic	1	3%	0	0%	0	0%
Late Partial Alphabetic	8	27%	1	3%	0	0%
Total Partial Alphabetic	9	30%	1	3%	0	0%
Early Full Alphabetic	9	30%	6	20%	1	3%
Mid Full Alphabetic	5	17%	8	27%	1	3%
Late Full Alphabetic	3	10%	5	17%	4	13%
Total Full Alphabetic	17	57%	19	63%	6	20%
Early Consolidated	2	7%	4	13%	11	37%
Mid Consolidated	1	3%	3	10%	7	23%
Late Consolidated	1	3%	3	10%	6	20%
Total Consolidated	4	13%	10	33%	24	80%

Spelling Microphases (Average Improvement = 2.5 Microphases)				
	Fall (n=30)		Spring (n=30)	
Microphase	n	%	n	%
Pre-Alphabetic	0	0%	0	0%
Early Partial Alphabetic	1	3%	0	0%
Mid Partial Alphabetic	1	3%	0	0%
Late Partial Alphabetic	7	23%	1	3%
Total Partial Alphabetic	9	30%	1	3%
Early Full Alphabetic	15	50%	1	3%
Mid-Full Alphabetic	3	10%	2	7%
Late Full Alphabetic	2	7%	13	43%
Total Full Alphabetic	20	67%	16	53%
Early Consolidated	1	3%	7	23%
Middle Consolidated	0	0%	4	13%
Late Consolidated	0	0%	2	7%
Total Consolidated	1	3%	13	43%

Goal 3: To prepare primary teachers to analyze data in order to make curricular and instructional decisions

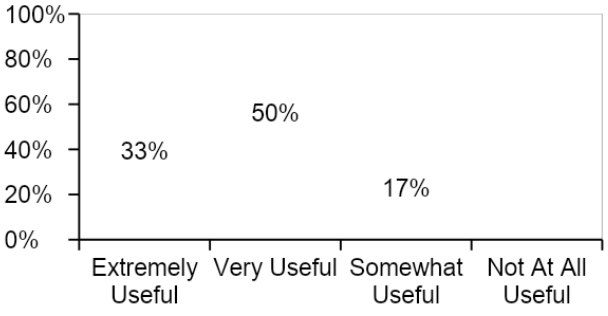
Teachers must be comfortable and competent in analyzing and interpreting data to help them make appropriate curricular and instructional decisions. All teachers learned to look at and evaluate benchmark assessments for their own students and other students at their grade level. During these professional development sessions, the data were connected with the EL Skills Curriculum, and implications for curriculum and instruction, including student grouping and differentiated instruction, were discussed.

Key Finding

Teachers value the data strategies they learned and feel comfortable and competent to use them to assess students and make instructional and curricular decisions.

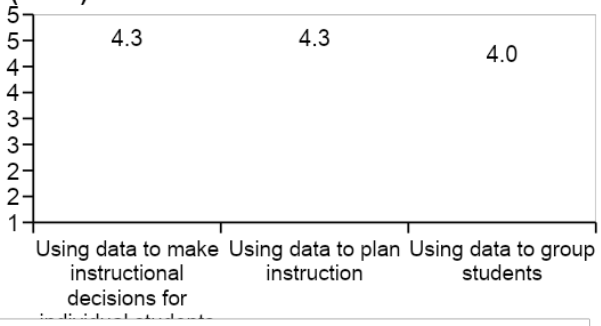
Staff from both schools reported that the professional learning in data strategies was useful – one-third said it was *extremely useful*, and half said it was *very useful* (Figure 20). Staff were also asked to rate how the grant activities impacted their skills in data strategies. Their mean ratings, shown in Figure 21, show that they believe they have improved in each area explored. Survey respondents rated their abilities in the area of assessment and data strategies. The summary of their responses (Figure 22) shows that most staff felt well-prepared (i.e., *advanced* or *expert*) to administer and score the benchmark and end-of cycle assessments and interpret benchmark assessment results to determine students' strengths/needs and determine their instructional phase. Fewer staff felt well-prepared to use the daily snapshot assessments to inform instruction.

Figure 20
Usefulness of Professional Learning in Data Strategies
(n=18)



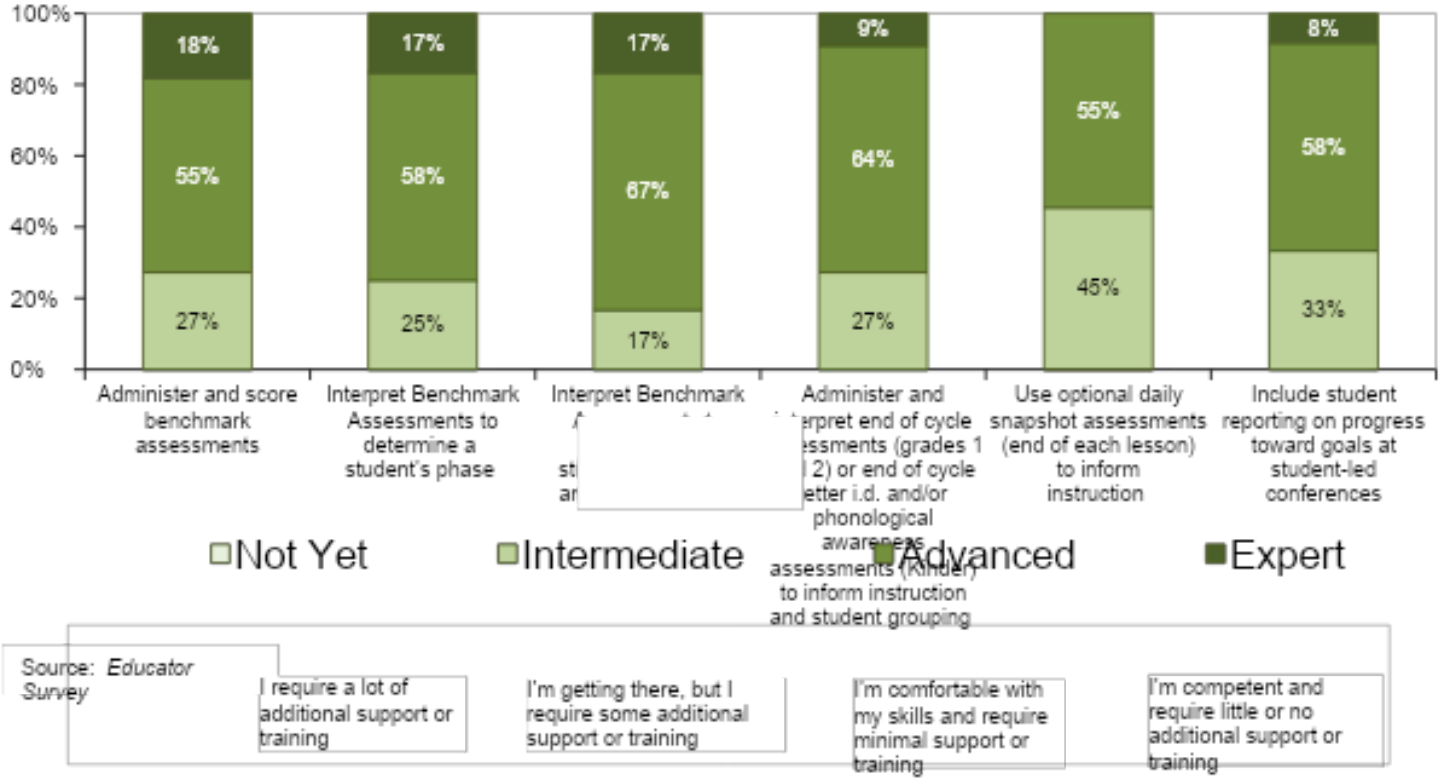
Source: *Professional Development Feedback Forms*

Figure 21
Staff Reports of How Participating in the Grant Activities Affected Their Skills as Educators: Mean Ratings for Data Strategies
(n=13)



Source: *Educator Survey*

Figure 22
Respondents' Preparedness to Implement the EL Skills Curriculum:
Assessment and Data Strategies
(n=13)



During focus groups, staff discussed that the data is meaningful and explained how the professional development has been helpful and useful to them. For example, the end of module skill assessments and the benchmark assessment data are so precise that they reveal student strengths and weaknesses so they can fix problems right away. They are also useful in helping teachers form groups. Data analysis work has helped them connect reading with writing.

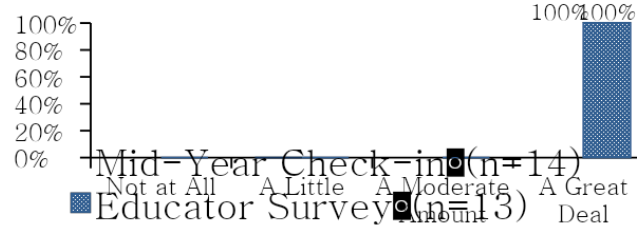
Goal 4: *To build strong and trusting collegial relationships between the charter school and district school in order to facilitate shared learning, critique, reflection, and growth*

Key Finding

A strong, trusting, safe, and collegial partnership has been formed between School 8 and GCCS.

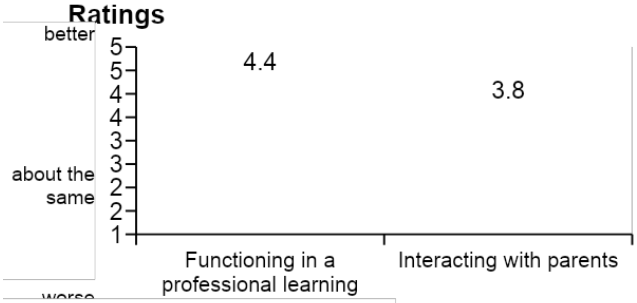
Creating an environment of respect and collaboration has been a primary objective since the inception of this endeavor. The success of the project in this area is evident in Figure 23, which shows that all staff (100%) from both schools expressed a great deal of satisfaction with the partnership at the mid- and end-of-year surveys. On average, respondents reported that participating in the grant activities has positively impacted their abilities to function in a professional learning community and to interact with parents (Figure 24). Further, all staff from both schools agreed that their school administration supported the professional learning addressed in the grant (not shown in a figure).

Figure 23
Overall Satisfaction with the Partnership Between GCCS and School 8: Mean Ratings



Source: *Educator Survey*

Figure 24
How Participation in Grant Activities Has Impacted Participants' Professional Relationships: Mean Ratings



Source: *Educator Survey*

Participants affirmed these ratings in comments on Professional Development Feedback forms, the annual staff survey, and during focus groups and informal discussions. Representative comments are reproduced below.

About the Collaboration

From Professional Development Feedback forms

- *I always enjoy working with GCCS teachers. I continue to learn so much from our work together and feel that it is really improving my teaching practices as a primary teacher.*
- *I can't tell you how much my teaching improves in one day after being able to share ideas. debrief lessons and unpack curriculum with Jean and the teachers at school 8. The resources Jean is able to highlight for us matches just where we are and we are all able to share ideas for strategies or routine changes we can try the v*
- *ANOTHER awesome experience. I can take what I have learned and use it the next day. I love the spark that is lit each time I visit.*
- *The time to observe each other and then collaborate again during workshops has been so encouraging this year. Jean has been kind and supportive throughout the entire process.*
- *Observing teachers and students at GCCS is ALWAYS beneficial and an amazing learning experience.*
- *I am sad this is our last time this year visiting GCCS. I always look forward to it and bring back so much back. What a great group!*
- *I was able to attend the first part of the workshop but then needed to leave. However, the part that I was in attendance for was useful and very helpful.*
- *Jean is amazing and so helpful!*
- *I am still learning the curriculum for EL. I have seen great benefits of it in my classroom. I must let you know if it weren't for Jean, i would not be where i am. I know that she is not permanently in her current role but she has so much to offer outside a classroom. She is the reason why our partnership works.*
- *I always learn a lot from Jean's workshops. She is very helpful and always tries to get resources for us, as well as support us with planning and introducing new strategies to help with skills that we see our students struggling with. She really goes above and beyond for all of us!! I really appreciate all the hard work.*

In response to the question, ***what are the biggest strengths of this partnership?***

- *non-judgmental, supportive, innovative, safe*
- *The relationships between RC8 and GCCS - and JEAN HURST!*
- *GPODS; Time allotted for collaboration; relationship building among staff from both buildings; having a shared coach; Time*
- *When all the teachers share ideas for the classroom.*
- *the strong relationships we've developed*
- *The trust and friendship between teachers, the expertise of Jean, the willingness to learn new things.*
- *Collaboration. I always come away with something new from working with my colleagues.*
- *Having a shared curriculum and shared vocabulary to talk about student needs. Being able to share ideas and resources with each other. Having someone to talk to when questions and concerns arise. Thank you Jean!*
- *Teacher collaboration and reflection. Having colleagues observe your practices is a great way to reflect and adjust.*
- *Collaborating with other teachers and sharing ideas and strategies with the new curriculum.*
- *Collaboration with teachers from GCCS and within our own school. To be able to talk the same language and problem solve together.*

Goal 5: *To prepare primary teachers to incorporate developmentally appropriate sensory integration strategies into foundational skills instruction in order to meet the whole-body needs of young learners*

Key Finding

Educators value using sensory integration strategies to support student development. Although teachers' abilities to incorporate sensory integration strategies into foundational skills instruction has greatly improved, teachers continue to want additional training in this area to better meet their students' needs.

Sensory integration theory and instructional methods were integrated as an important component of the program design. This component was extremely well-received by all grant participants as evidenced by their survey responses from both Year 1 and Year 2, as well as during discussions and focus groups. Respondents to the annual *Educator Survey* reported that their skills at using sensory integration strategies had improved (Figure 25), and all respondents agreed that the sensory integration strategies and activities both support student academic achievement and student social-emotional development (Figure 26).

Figure 25
Participant Ratings of How Grant Activities Have Impacted Their Skills in Using Sensory Integration Strategies: Mean Rating

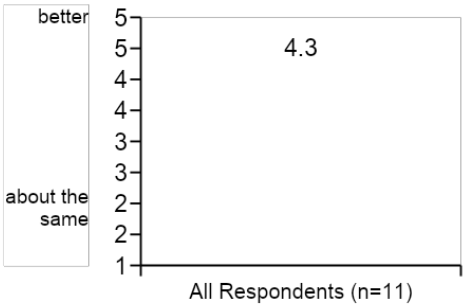
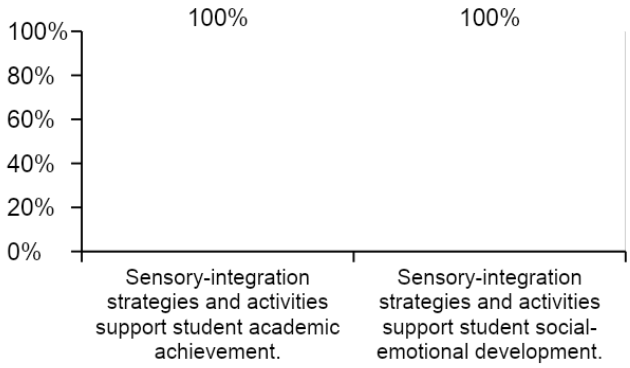
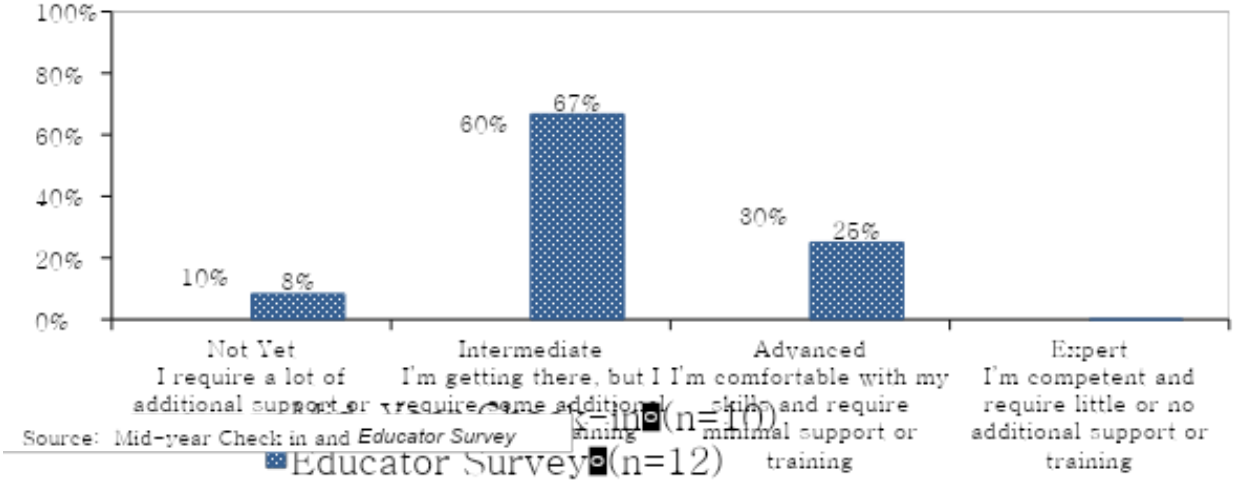


Figure 26
Staff Agreeing with Statements about Sensory Integration



Staff were asked to rate how well they were prepared to use sensory-integrated strategies with students to introduce and practice foundational skills at two points in time during Year 2: at the mid-year point in December and again at the end of the school year on the *Educator Survey*. Their ratings are summarized in Figure 27. Their ratings were similar at both points with approximately two-thirds of staff saying that they were *getting there* but they need additional support or training in this area.

Figure 27
Respondents' Preparedness to Use Sensory-integrated Strategies with Students to Introduce and Practice Foundational Skills Next Year

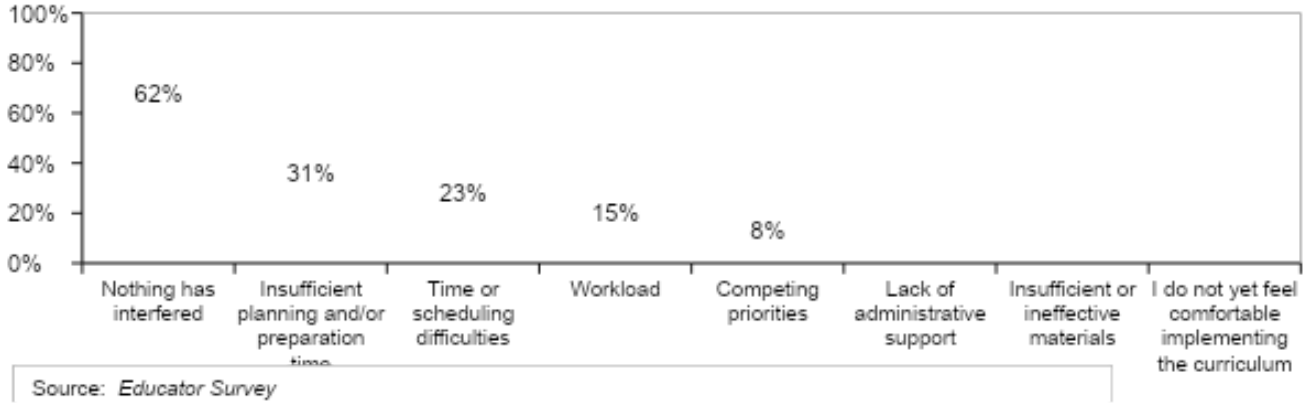


Source: Mid-year Check-in and *Educator Survey*

Conclusions & Recommendations

All indicators examined thus far reflect that staff members from both schools appreciate the training and professional learning that prepared them to implement the components of the new EL Skills Curriculum and the sensory integration strategies. Further, staff satisfaction with the partnership is extremely high. On the Educator Survey, staff members were asked what, if anything interfered with their implementation of the EL Skills Curriculum. Their responses show that, for 62%, *nothing interfered* with their implementation (Figure 28). The obstacles selected by the largest proportions of respondents were *insufficient planning and/or preparation time*, selected by 31% of respondents (n=4) and *time or scheduling difficulties*, selected by 23% of respondents (n=3). Two respondents indicated *workload* as a barrier, and one cited *competing priorities*.

Figure 28
Obstacles to EL Skills Curriculum Implementation
(n=13)



Source: *Educator Survey*

As would be the case with any new endeavor, staff will continue to need training and support to help them in their work with children. Figures throughout this report show respondents' ratings of their preparedness to implement the various components of the EL Skills Curriculum and sensory integration strategies. Staff were also asked to articulate any additional support, resources, or follow-up assistance that would help them in their work. Their responses are reproduced here.

Data

- *I would like us to study the data more.*
- *Continue to look at data and assessments for planning.*

Curriculum-specific areas

- *to continue to use grade level time to trouble shoot, discuss, address, etc. all aspects of skills and modules*
- *At GPODs it would be great to focus on developing independent work for student who struggle with independence.*

- *It would be helpful to work with Jean to design a few independent rotations. At GPOD, it would be great to be able to visit classrooms within our own schools more often. During professional learning, it would be great to practice sensory integration strategies together.*

Sensory Integration

- *Would love more workshops on sensory integration and how to engage students in goal setting.*
- *At meetings I would like to focus on how to implement more sensory activities in to the learning center rotations.*

General Continuation

- *Love that this work continues. I hope energy is being spent to assure grant continuation.*
- *Since I am a new K-2 administrator coming from teaching high school, I have been learning much about curriculum and instruction at the lower grades. The trainings and support I have received as a result of our partnership this year has been outstanding. I would not recommend any changes to the program necessarily; only ask that it continue, as I still am still learning. The support and trainings have been a tremendous help and have been thoroughly informative.*
- *I really like having time to meet with Jean for our grade level meetings. She is always flexible, so we are able to discuss whatever we may need to at the time. I hope we will be able to meet with her weekly next year.*
- *I love that we are flexible in the trainings. What we cover is really what we need. Jean makes observations in our classrooms and then turns it right back into the trainings. We have a voice of what we need and what we would like to cover at both grade levels and GPOD.*

As Year 3 gets underway, the project will require an adjustment to changes in staffing in both schools, particularly the new School Leader at GCCS who took the helm upon the retirement of the school's original leader. In addition, there are new staff and staff in new positions. The evaluator is encouraged that the TOSA has continued to focus on helping GCCS and RC8 staff to implement the EL Skills Curriculum and sensory integration strategies to improve outcomes for students and has begun to focus on developing School 8's capacity so that it can continue the good work once the grant period ends.

With all this in mind, the following recommendations are respectfully submitted.

1. **Continue to implement the planned Year 3 grant activities.**
   Keep doing what's working well! During Year 3, continue to work with the School 8 and GCCS teaching staff to help them with their implementation of the grant activities, and solicit feedback for where staff need additional support or resources.

2. **Help school leaders support the EL Skills Curriculum implementation.**
   Use the structures already in place, including steering committee meetings and regular communication with the administrators and data staff from both schools, to help them continue to improve their support. Consider if there are any additional structures or resources that might be put in place for next year when the grant period has ended and the TOSA is no longer embedded at School 8. ☹

3. **Continue to communicate and celebrate successes!**
   The article published in the "Democrat and Chronicle" about the dissemination grant touched on the many successes of this partnership.

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