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PROJECT OVERVIEW

In 2019, the *Alabama Literacy Act* was signed into law with the goal of improving the reading proficiency of Alabama’s kindergarten through third grade students, ensuring that all students are able to read at or above grade level by the end of third grade. With the support of the Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE), the Alabama Reading Initiative (ARI) continues to provide all K-3 public school educators with opportunities to participate in professional learning opportunities in the science of reading. The ARI regional literacy specialists support Alabama elementary schools, with any configuration of kindergarten through grade three, by providing support to local reading specialists as they coach the transfer of knowledge in the science of reading (SoR) to classroom application and changes in instruction.

During the 2021-2022 school year, ARI regional literacy specialists facilitated a series of professional learning opportunities designed for all local reading specialists that wove together the *2021 Alabama Course of Study: English Language Arts* standards and the science of reading. The purpose of these sessions was to not only grow the content knowledge of the local reading specialist but enable the local reading specialist to facilitate that professional learning for K-5 teachers.

Alabama’s Science of Reading Spotlight (SoRS) schools were selected based on their strong commitment to Alabama’s K-3 learners. SoRS schools not only meet the requirements of the Alabama Literacy Act by ensuring K-3 faculty participated in SoR training, such as Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling (LETRS) but showed student **progress** in reading achievement as evidenced by the grade three reading outcome data between 2019 and 2022. These schools PROJECT OVERVIEW

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SoRS SCHOOLS TRENDS

The ARI visited schools across the state who had made significant growth in reading achievement amid our country’s most challenging years for public education. Once visits were complete, the ARI teams met to identify common structures and practices that attributed to these gains.

A group of women in a room

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**I. Synergetic Leadership Builds Collective Efficacy!**

At each of Alabama’s SoRS schools, leadership was critical. The major factors enacted by leadership were positive school culture and climate, providing structures that support the implementation of the SoR, sustaining evidence-based changes in instructional practices, and setting high expectations for all.

Leaders were an integral part of the process: superintendents, directors of curriculum and instruction, building administrators, local reading specialists, teachers, families, and students! Superintendents prioritized training in the science of reading, curriculum and instruction directors organized the space for real conversations about programs and practices. Building administrators designed master schedules that maximized instructional time and prioritized common planning. Additionally, they paved the way for local reading specialists to coach. Local reading specialists engaged in student-centered coaching cycles alongside classroom teachers, putting into practice SoR instructional methods that ultimately led to gains in student reading proficiency. Families were integral to student reading growth as they participated in Student Reading Improvement Plan conferences, attended Literacy Nights, volunteered in classrooms, utilized Read-at-Home plans, and advocated for their children.

A picture containing text, person, indoor, group

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II. Student-Centered Coaching Rooted in the SoR Leads to Sustainable Changes in Instruction!

Because of strong leadership, the local reading specialists working in SoRS schools were able to spend the majority of their time coaching. In fact, most of the SoRS school local reading specialists not only engaged in ongoing coaching cycles, but also led professional learning groups that deepened teachers’ knowledge in the science of reading. The local reading specialists shared a growth mindset and used formative assessment data to determine next steps that drove the data forward. They built teacher capacity through job-embedded, purposeful planning. They listened and valued teacher voices throughout coaching cycles, which set teachers up for a successful transfer to practice.

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| **Russellville Elementary, Russellville City**  Regional Inservice Center 1, UNA  State Board of Education District 7  Grades 3-5  Economically Disadvantaged 63%  Students with Limited English Proficiency 36%  Spotlighting: Solution-focused expectations and support from the district and school level that ensure the transfer of the science reading to application for all learners. |
| **Hackleburg Elementary, Marion County**  Regional Inservice Center 2, Athens  State Board of Education District 7  Grades PreK-6  Economically Disadvantaged 61%  Spotlighting: A firmly established culture of coaching, developed and supported by leadership, which continues to lead to the application of the science of reading in all classrooms. |
| **Cullman City Schools**  Regional Inservice Center 2, Athens  State Board of Education District 6  Economically Disadvantaged 39%  Spotlighting: School leaders who sustain instructional improvements in the science of reading through capacity building and collective teacher efficacy.  2020-2021 Louisa Moats Awards for Excellence Implementing the Science of Reading |
| **Center Point Elementary, Jefferson County**  Regional Inservice Center 5, UAB  State Board of Education District 4  Grades PreK-2  Economically Disadvantaged 86%  Spotlighting: Collaborative coaching and ongoing professional learning that builds capacity in teachers to apply the science of reading to instructional practices. |
| **Fyffe High School, DeKalb County**  Regional Inservice Center 3, AAMU/UAH  State Board of Education District 8  Grades PreK-12  Economically Disadvantaged 49%  Spotlighting: Collaborative coaching partnerships within structures that support the implementation of strong foundational literacy instruction based in the science of reading. |
| **Central Elementary, Tuscaloosa City**  Regional Inservice Center 4, UA  State Board of Education District 4  Grades PreK-5  Economically Disadvantaged 77%  Spotlighting: School administrators who cultivate a growth mindset in staff and students by modeling instructional decisions grounded in the science of reading. |
| **University Charter**  Regional Inservice Center 4, UA  State Board of Education District 5  Grades PreK-6  Economically Disadvantaged 56%  Spotlighting: Leaders who ensure the transfer of science of reading to application through effective structures that support continuous improvement cycles. |
| **Dadeville Elementary, Tallapoosa County**  Regional Inservice Center 9, AU  State Board of Education District 2  Grades PreK-6  Economically Disadvantaged 72%  Spotlighting: A principal-coach partnership and a school-level investment in teachers’ learning in science of reading is the base for the variety of instructional practices that are impacting the forward movement of student learning gains. |
| **Glencoe Elementary, Etowah County**  Regional Inservice Center 6, JSU  State Board of Education District 6  Grades PreK-4  Economically Disadvantaged 45%  Spotlighting: Collaborative leadership which bridges the connection between LETRS® and IMSE© Orton-Gillingham Training to equip teachers with multisensory tools and strategies that support structured literacy in classrooms. |
| **Shelby County Schools**  Regional Inservice Center 7, UM  State Board of Education District 3  Economically Disadvantaged 30%  Spotlighting: District leaders who have created structures which prioritize professional learning in the science of reading and foster the principal-coach partnership. |
| **Sophia P. Kingston Elementary, Selma City**  Regional Inservice Center 8, ASU  State Board of Education District 5  Grades PreK-5  Economically Disadvantaged 94%  Spotlighting: Collective coaching partnerships that foster a commitment to deepening the knowledge in the science of reading and empower teachers to make student-centered instructional decisions. |
| **Wetumpka Elementary, Elmore County**  Regional Inservice Center 9, AU  State Board of Education District 3  Grades PreK-4  Economically Disadvantaged 61%  Alabama Department of Early Childhood Education P-3 Partnership  Spotlighting: Leaders who foster an inclusive culture that meets the unique needs of all learners through structures embedded in the science of reading, such as flexible instructional grouping, to maximize instructional opportunities. |
| **Elsanor School, Baldwin County**  Regional Inservice Center 10, USA  State Board of Education District 1  Grades PreK-6  Economically Disadvantaged 68%  Spotlighting: Collaborative partnerships at the district and school level that actively connect the science of reading to daily application of instructional practices to promote teacher efficacy and student literacy growth. |
| **Ariton School, Dale County**  Regional Inservice Center 11, Troy  State Board of Education District 2  Grades PreK-12  Economically Disadvantaged 48%  Spotlighting: School leadership and coaching partners who support the implementation of science of reading, collaborative coaching, and visible, high expectations for teaching and learning. |

**Every child.**

**Every chance.**

**Every day.**

A group of children posing for a photo

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Region 1, Board District 7: Russellville Elementary (Russellville City)

Region 1, Board District 7: Hackleburg Elementary (Marion County)

Region 2, Board District 6: Cullman City Schools

Region 3, Board District 8: Fyffe High School (Dekalb County)

Region 4, Board District 4: Central Elementary School (Tuscaloosa City)

Region 4, Board District 5: University Charter (University Charter)

Region 5, Board District 4: Center Point Elementary School (Jefferson County)

Region 6, Board District 6: Glencoe Elementary School (Etowah County)

Region 7, Board District 3: Shelby County Schools

Region 8, Board District 5: Sophia P. Kingston (Selma City)

Region 9, Board District 2: Dadeville Elementary (Tallapoosa County)

Region 9, Board District 3: Wetumpka Elementary (Elmore County)

Region 10, Board District 1: Elsanor School (Baldwin County)

Region 11, Board District 2: Ariton School (Dale County)