State Policy Roadmap for Improving Early Reading Proficiency

Early Learning Fellows
National Conference of State Legislatures
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Two of every 3 do not read proficiently by end of 3rd grade.

We have not been strategic nor ambitious enough.

We have failed to sustain our efforts or establish a sense of urgency.

We have not linked & aligned:
  system components
  systems themselves

We have not fostered continuous improvement.

Where have we gone wrong?
What did ECS do?

Scoured the ECS archives (for state initiatives and history of reading reforms)

- Found: Little impact from state initiatives

Reviewed the literature & the research

- Found: Strong research, particularly on practice -- but used? Not enough.

Pored through state statutes
What you’re doing

- Using policy to improve 3rd-grade reading proficiency
What you’re doing

- Test in at least 1 grade, P-3
- Test annually K-3

31 + DC

17 + DC
What you’re doing

2. Test annually in Pre-K-3
9. Test annually 3rd grade
3. Test annually 1st-3rd
1. Test annually 2nd-3rd
What you’re doing: Intervention

4 + DC
- **Recommend** at least 1 type of intervention P-3

24
- **Require** at least 1 type of intervention P-3

21 + DC
- Parental notification of student’s reading issues
What you’re doing

14 + DC

• Require proficiency to be promoted to 4th grade
What you’re doing

Require “evidence-based” instruction &/or intervention BUT

Little on process evaluation

Little on outcome evaluation
To referee consensus?

Set state goals?

Maximize system influence?

Drive improvements in adult capacity?
GAME PLAN

Offensive and defensive philosophy

Talent assessment

Game-day plan

Advance scouting, post-game films

= State

Game Plan
State Policy Roadmap/Game Plan
Strategies that influence schools & classroom
Not the footwork and stamina necessary
Not HOW each position is played
Not when each shot is taken; but
How the pieces support each other.
State Policy Roadmap/Game Plan

- Good game prep
- Good players but poor play calling

FAIL

- Good play calling
- Good players but poor game strategy

FAIL

- Good game strategy
- Good play calling but poor player/talent recruitment

FAIL

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FAIL
System “Must-haves”

Program design & implementation

- Ambitious goals
- Sustained urgency
- Alignment & linkage
  - Of system components
  - Of systems
- Continuous improvement
System “Must-haves”

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Independent monitoring</th>
<th>Regular, public reports</th>
<th>Focus on “fixes” not compliance</th>
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System “Must-haves”

Effective, immediate intervention

- Data informed
- Strategic
- Evidence Based
- Measured, revamped until effective
System “Must-haves”

Ongoing assessment of children & settings

- Early, accurate, effective diagnosis
- Timely, accurate measurement of progress
- Accessible status reporting
- Inclusion of pre-K settings
- Targeted review
- Review against state goals
System “Must-haves”

Language-rich, rigorous curricula

- Birth-age 9 focus
- Language & vocabulary heavy
- Evidence-based
- Aligned
- World-class base of expectations, knowledge
2011 NAEP vocabulary assessment findings

Stronger vocabulary = stronger reading comprehension

Some progress but not sufficient: Vocabulary scores increased in 20 states (from 2009 to 2011)

However, higher performing students scored lower on vocab. In 2011 than 2009
System “Must-haves”

Partnerships with families

- Birth-9
- Knowledge-building strategies & resources
- Accessible supports, knowledge
- Respectfully, consistently in the loop
Our focus today

Redefine adult capacity-building

- Evidence-based program approval
- Data- and evidence-informed credentialing
- Evidence/standards-based professional development
- Skills & strategies
- Evidence-based interventionist selection, assignment
- Systemic review of adult capacity
• Redefined adult capacity building
“Two children from different districts have a very small chance that the mathematics content coverage they receive in their classrooms will be the same.”

“...differences in the educational system existed not only in what was intended by the state or district but also in terms of what was actually taught in classrooms.”
"What was planned was not delivered."

"...we believe blaming teachers is a mistake."

- "Why? Because teachers prepare themselves according to the standards and guidelines established by the states that certify them and the teacher preparation programs that train them."

"...lack of knowledge influences not only the quality of the coverage...but also the bigger picture as to how the teacher makes choices about which topics to cover, for how long (to what depth), and in what sequence."
BUT...
Dilemma of state versus local control
Evidence-based program approval

- Preparation programs approved BUT
  - Not based on evidence that effectively address reading instruction or develop teachers’ skills in oral language & vocabulary or
  - Not based on evidence of producing effective teachers
  - FAIL

- Preparation programs approved BUT
  - No intervention with or redirection of candidates who don’t meet expectations for reading
  - FAIL

- Evidence-based program approval BUT
  - Not tied to pre-service candidates in time to redirect or
  - Pre-service not necessarily with mentor teachers documented as highly effective
  - FAIL

- Majority of states (32) have no requirements for assessing teacher proficiency in effective reading instruction (NCTQ, 2012)
Evidence-based program approval

- Approval includes entrance and exit requirements **BUT**
- Requirements NOT internationally benchmarked

**FAIL**

- Preparation programs approved **BUT**
- No teacher-student data link that meets DQC standards

**FAIL**

- Program approval based on analysis of teacher-student data **BUT**
- If not on evidence teacher candidates are trained in use & interpretation of data

**FAIL**

**FAIL**
State Example: Florida

Does not approve prep programs without proof of required competencies

Requires development & monitoring of those reading competencies
Evaluates preparation programs based on effectiveness of teachers in the field

By end of 2014, requires each program to report annually the number and % of program graduates who were rated at each of the performance levels in the teacher evaluation system for the previous school year.
Credentialing requires content knowledge assessment **BUT**

- Requirements NOT calibrated to internationally benchmarked standards
- Fails to assess knowledge of teaching reading for early grades candidates

FAIL

**FAIL**

- Certification based on completion of approved preparation program **BUT**
- Programs not approved contingent on evidence of effectiveness

FAIL

**FAIL**

- Credentialing requires assessment of skills **BUT**
- Not based on demonstration that world-class benchmark of knowledge, skills & dispositions has been met

**FAIL**
State Examples: Wisconsin & Maryland

Require passage of Foundations of Reading test

Policies establish cut score
State Examples: Mass. & Conn.

MA: State program approval regs list topics to be addressed on the Foundations of Reading Test

CT: Posts annual pass rates, by institution
Established Early Literacy Expert Panel to advise on:

- Pre-service & in-service professional development in early education and care programs and P-3

State Examples: Massachusetts
Evidence/standards based professional development

FAIL

• Professional development standards BUT
• No assurance that can apply necessary skills & strategies

FAIL

• Sequential pathways of knowledge & skills BUT
• No consistent system for delivering to Ts & Ps

FAIL

• Prof. development required BUT
• No consistent strategy for funding or
• For evaluation
If 20%+ at school or district level do not meet standards

- School board required to review reading program
- Review includes curriculum & professional dev.
Principals

Data- and evidence-informed credentialing

- Prepared and credentialed
  BUT
- No high level practices that include evaluation & coaching of adults

FAIL

Skills & strategies

- Mastery of skills
  BUT
- Not in use of data for early identification & intervention strategies

FAIL

- Mastery of skills
- Not related to foundations of quality P-3 or
- To engaging families

FAIL
Requires training that *MAY* include professional development in the use of data to improve instruction and student learning, and in understanding teacher value-added reports and how they can be used as a component in measuring teacher and administrator effectiveness.
Evidence-Based Selection of Interventionists

- System of intervention
  **BUT**
- No continuous review of adult and program effectiveness

FAIL

- System of intervention
  **BUT**
- No intentional assignment of struggling students to teachers with strongest reading results

FAIL

- System of intervention
  **BUT**
- No ongoing assessment of growth to quickly inform recalibration of intervention

FAIL
1. SYSTEM OF EVALUATION
2. REVIEW OF

Systemic review of adult capacity
Examined 28 districts in state where evaluation is required but districts develop own models

- Almost 20% used check-list style w/no opp. for rich feedback
- Almost half allowed or did not explicitly prevent tenured or exp. teachers to go unobserved for entire year
- Only 18% used state tests to measure impact on learning
- None used growth or value-added model
- 61% didn’t provide clear guidance to evaluators
- No model created a master/mentor teacher status or training to empower highly effective teachers to observe
Systemic review of adult capacity

- Credentialed teachers **BUT**
- Not necessarily prepared to teach reading OR
- Reading achievement not significant factor in performance evaluation

**FAIL**

- Credentialed teachers **BUT**
- Evaluations not used in assigning teachers to students, especially struggling students

**FAIL**

- Teachers evaluated **BUT**
- No state-level review of district-level review (i.e., # not renewed, low-performing, etc.)
- No district-level review of school-level data
- No trigger for additional review when X% of students do not meet reading standards

**FAIL**
Don’t let this be you.

Be strategic and ambitious.

Sustain efforts; establish a sense of urgency.

Link & align:
- system components
- systems themselves

Foster continuous improvement.