Use of High-quality Literacy Instructional and Intervention Materials in Ohio's Elementary Schools

Results from a Statewide Survey

February 2024

Department of Education & Workforce

Table of Contents

Department of Education & Workforce

Executive Summary

Ohio's commitment to raising literacy achievement for all students is stronger than ever. In 2023, Governor Mike DeWine and Lt. Governor Jon Husted, with the support of the General Assembly, signed into law significant investments in literacy for Ohio's students. These investments collectively support a sharpened focus on literacy through the [ReadOhio initiative](#). ReadOhio represents a statewide and comprehensive approach toward improving literacy outcomes for students through the implementation of high-quality instructional materials and bolstering professional development trainings to continue to enhance instructional practices that are aligned to the science of reading.

As a first step, and under Section 265.330(B)(2) of House Bill 33 of the 135th Ohio General Assembly, the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce was required to conduct a survey to understand the current adoption and implementation of instructional materials with respect to core reading instruction, as well as reading intervention in Ohio's public schools. The survey also included questions about the completion of professional development training that was specifically aligned with the district or community school's curricular choices.

The results in this initial report of the survey data provide insight into the current landscape of the use of core literacy curricula and reading intervention materials across the state for prekindergarten through grade 5 students. Key findings include:

- The overwhelming majority of districts and community schools use published materials for both core curriculum (93%) and reading intervention (92%).
- Of those, approximately one-third of districts and community schools are currently using at least one of the initially approved curricula for K-5 core reading instruction.
- Over one-half of responding districts and community schools (60%) reported using more than one published curriculum for K-5 core reading instruction and intervention.
- A very high percentage of districts and community schools using published curricula reported their teachers also received professional development specific to the instructional materials used (94%).
- Although the proportion of districts and community schools that used locally created materials was relatively small (7%), descriptive analyses did not suggest this was strongly correlated with any specific district typology or Early Literacy star rating on the Ohio School Report Cards.

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Introduction

A long-standing body of research has consistently suggested that the provision of systematic and explicit reading instruction is the most effective and efficient method for supporting reading development in young learners. The actual delivery of evidence-based instruction is a complex process that involves the alignment of multiple factors, including teacher knowledge, professional development training and supports and, importantly, educator access to and effective implementation of high-quality instructional materials (Hill et al., 2020; Jackson & Makarin, 2018).

Under Section 265.330(B)(2) of House Bill 33 of the 135th Ohio General Assembly, the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce was required to conduct a survey to understand the current adoption and implementation of instructional materials with respect to core reading instruction, as well as reading intervention in Ohio's public schools. The survey also included questions about the completion of professional development training that was specifically aligned with the school or district's curricular choices, as well as professional development training aligned more generally to the science of reading.

This initial reporting of the survey results presents:
- Information regarding overall response rate;
- Information concerning the type of instructional and intervention materials (published versus locally created) used across district and school typologies;
- Preliminary information regarding the proportion of districts and community schools that are currently using curriculum from the initial approved list; and
- Information about the extent to which professional development supports specific to those curricular materials are provided to Ohio's educators.

Note that all findings in this report are based on self-reported data from districts and community schools. Further, this report does not provide an analysis of which Ohio districts are utilizing core curriculum aligned to the science of reading, as the state-approved list of high-quality instructional materials is under development. As such, this report provides preliminary baseline information regarding the current landscape of how different types of instructional and intervention curricula are used to serve preK-5 students across Ohio.

This report addresses the following questions:
1) Across grade levels and district typologies, to what extent do districts and community schools use published curricula or locally created materials for providing core literacy instruction to students in grades preK-5?
    a. To what extent is use of these materials associated with school and district typology and/or Early Literacy star rating on the Ohio School Report Cards?
2) Across grade levels and district typologies, to what extent do districts and community schools use published intervention curricula or locally created reading intervention materials for students in grades preK-5?

a. To what extent is use of these types of materials associated with school and district typology and/or Early Literacy star rating?
3) Across grade levels and district typologies, to what extent do districts and community schools provide professional development training for implementation of the instructional and intervention materials?
   a. To what extent is the provision of curriculum-aligned professional development associated with school and district typology and/or Early Literacy star rating?

Overview of Response Rate

On Sept. 5, 2023, the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce asked superintendents of all public school districts and community schools across Ohio (n = 1007) to complete a survey regarding the use of instructional materials for students in grades preK-12 for literacy and math instruction, as well as the completion of associated professional development trainings by their teachers. This report will focus on results specific to preK-5 core and intervention instructional materials.

As of Dec. 22, 2023, a total of 995 educational entities completed the state-mandated survey (see Table 1 for the breakdown of responding district/school category), yielding a 99% response rate. Throughout the open response period, numerous reminders and follow-up calls were made to ensure a high rate of completion. These efforts were successful and, as detailed in Table 1, there were very few non-respondents overall.

TABLE 1. OVERALL SURVEY RESPONSE RATE BY DISTRICT AND SCHOOL CATEGORY

District/School Category	Total Invites	Submitted
Public District	603	599
Large Urban	8	8
Community School	345	339 (includes 7 of 8 STEM)
Educational Service Center	51	49
Total for All	*1,007*	*995*

The majority of responding schools and districts (n = 789, 79%) indicated that all buildings in the district used the same curriculum for their K-5 core reading instruction. For districts that indicated different curricula were used across buildings (n = 110), the number of buildings per district ranged from two to nine, with only one large urban district reporting information for 66 individual buildings. On average, most districts reported information for three different buildings. A total of 96 community schools and educational service center respondents that do not serve K-5 students did not respond to this question and are not included in these analyses. For ease of reporting aggregated results, the following analyses are limited to the subset of 789 districts and community schools indicating that all their buildings used the same materials for K-5 students.

Preliminary Findings

To what extent do districts and community schools use published core curricula or district/school-created core curricula for students in grades preK-5?

Of the 789 districts and community schools that used the same core instructional materials for grades K-5, the vast majority (*n* = 735, 93%) reported using published curricula, and the remaining 54 (7%) reported using locally created instructional materials for core literacy instruction. A similar discrepancy was noted for the 497 districts and community schools that have licensed preschool programs, such that 37 (7%) use self-created materials for their comprehensive curricula and 58 (12%) use district, school, or teacher-created materials for core instruction.

Type of K-5 Core Instructional Materials Used by Schools and Districts

Locally created materials

Published materials

7%

93%
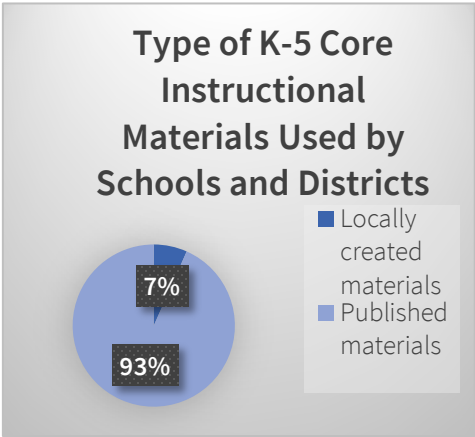
Respondents could select from a list of 31 possible published K-5 curricula and could select more than one, as well as "other." The list of available options included commonly used published instructional materials, including those used on the American Instructional Resources Survey (AIRS) developed by the RAND Corporation. As mentioned earlier, the list of curriculum options for the survey was not the state-approved list from which districts and community schools must select from for the 2024-2025 school year and beyond (Ohio Revised Code (ORC) 3313.6028).

Many districts and community schools reported using a combination of two or more different instructional materials (*n* = 442, 60%), with the remaining 293 (40%) only using one published curriculum from the available list of options. This is not a surprising outcome as the list included curricula that are comprehensive (designed to address all grade-level standards), as well as those that are designed to address specific components, such as phonics, and require a supplemental curriculum to address all standards. A total of 142 (19%) districts and community schools reported using at least one curriculum from the list in addition to others that were not on the provided list. Only 71 (9%) of the districts and community schools from this subset of respondents who reported using the same published curriculum across all elementary buildings chose "other" as their only selection and then named a published curriculum that was not on the available list of options. See Appendix A for a list of the top 10 most frequently reported core curricula, as well as the top 10 most frequently reported curriculum combinations.

Department of Education & Workforce

To what extent is the use of these materials associated with district typology or Early Literacy star rating on the Ohio School Report Cards?

Although these responses are highly skewed toward the use of published curricula, it was of interest to understand more about the subset of districts and community schools using locally created materials and whether there might be specific factors those districts and community schools have in common. The number of districts and community schools using local materials was divided up according to district typology (rural, small town, suburban, urban) and by their Early Literacy star ratings. As seen in Table 2 below, the proportion of districts and community schools using locally created materials was highest among reporting educational service centers, followed by rural districts overall, and suburban districts in very low poverty areas.

TABLE 2. MATERIAL TYPE BY DISTRICT/SCHOOL TYPOLOGY

District/school type	Total N	Number (%) using published materials	Number (%) using locally created materials
Rural - High Poverty	115	112 (97.5%)	3 (2.5%)
Rural - Average Poverty	99	89 (90%)	10 (10%)
Small Town - Low Poverty	93	86 (93%)	7 (7%)
Small Town - High Poverty	76	75 (99%)	1 (1%)
Suburban - Low Poverty	69	68 (99%)	1 (1%)
Suburban - Very Low Poverty	40	34 (87%)	6 (13%)
Urban - High Poverty	43	43 (100%)	0
Urban - Very High Poverty	7	7 (100%)	0
Community School	221	204 (93%)	17 (7%)
ESC	26	17 (74%)	9 (26%)

Overall, there were no clear trends of using locally created materials when examined by Early Literacy star ratings. A slightly higher proportion of districts and community schools categorized as "Not Rated" used these types of materials, though this was still a small percentage. Districts and community schools with no rating include those that do not serve grades K-3, do not serve enough students to accurately calculate all three measures in the Early Literacy component, or are K-2 community schools with more than 90% of their kindergarten students on track.

Department of
Education &
Workforce

TABLE 3. MATERIAL TYPE BY DISTRICT/SCHOOL EARLY LITERACY STAR RATING

Star Rating	Total N	Number (%) using published materials	Number (%) using locally created materials
1	156	145 (93%)	11 (7%)
2	155	149 (96%)	6 (4%)
3	253	245 (97%)	8 (3%)
4	125	112 (90%)	13 (10%)
5	50	46 (92%)	4 (8%)
New	1	1 (100%)	0
Not rated	23	20 (87%)	3 (13%)

Across grade levels and district typologies, to what extent do districts and community schools use published materials or locally created materials when providing reading interventions for students in grades preK-5?

Slightly more districts and community schools reported using the same intervention materials across all buildings compared to that of core materials. Of the 800 districts and community schools that used consistent materials across buildings, again the overwhelming majority (*n* = 738, 92%) reported using published curricula, and the remaining 62 (8%) reported using locally created instructional materials for literacy intervention.

Respondents could select from a list of 54 possible published K-5 intervention materials, and could select more than one, as well as "other." As noted above for the core curricula choices, the list of available options for intervention materials included materials from a combination of sources and is not the list from which schools and districts must select from for the 2024-2025 school year and beyond (ORC 3313.6028). Of note, 235 districts and community schools reported using only one of the published intervention curricula from the available list of options (32%), whereas the remaining districts and community schools used a combination of two or more different intervention materials. A total of 116 districts and community schools reported using at least one of the intervention materials on the list in addition to others that were not on the list. Only 51 of the responding districts and community schools selected "other" as their only selection and then named published intervention materials that were not on the provided list of options. See Appendix B for a list of the top 10 most frequently reported intervention curricula.

To what extent is the use of these materials associated with district typology or Early Literacy star rating?

Because the potential list of published intervention materials was even larger than that of the K-5 core curricula choices, it was again of interest to understand more about the subset of districts and community schools using locally created intervention materials. Specifically, the

Department of Education & Workforce

Department sought to understand whether the patterns evident in use of locally created materials were consistent and similar between core curricula and intervention materials. In fact, as seen in Table 4 below, the Department found again that the proportion of districts and community schools using locally created materials for intervention materials was highest among reporting educational service centers, followed again by rural districts. Again, no notable trends were evident according to Early Literacy star ratings, as depicted in Table 5.

TABLE 4. INTERVENTION MATERIAL TYPE BY DISTRICT/SCHOOL TYPOLOGY

District/school type	Total N	Number (%) using published intervention materials	Number (%) using locally created intervention materials
Rural - High Poverty	119	115 (97%)	4 (3%)
Rural - Average Poverty	104	89 (86%)	15 (14%)
Small Town - Low Poverty	101	96 (95%)	4 (4%)
Small Town - High Poverty	75	69 (92%)	6 (8%)
Suburban - Low Poverty	69	68 (99%)	1 (1%)
Suburban - Very Low Poverty	42	39 (93%)	3 (7%)
Urban - High Poverty	40	40 (100%)	0
Urban – Very High Poverty	8	8 (100%)	0
Community School	220	202 (92%)	18 (8%)
Educational Service Center	24	13 (52%)	11 (48%)

TABLE 5. INTERVENTION MATERIAL TYPE BY DISTRICT/SCHOOL EARLY LITERACY STAR RATING

Star Rating	Total N	Number (%) using published intervention materials	Number (%) using locally created intervention materials
1	157	149 (95%)	8 (5%)
2	156	146 (94%)	10 (6%)
3	258	243 (94%)	15 (6%)
4	128	117 (88%)	11 (9%)
5	53	49 (92%)	4 (8%)
New	1	1	0
Not rated	24	20 (83%)	3 (17%)

Department of Education & Workforce

Across grade levels and district typologies, to what extent did districts and community schools provide professional development training for implementation of the instructional and intervention materials?

Of all responding districts and community schools, 870 (87%) indicated their teachers received professional development on the instructional materials identified in the survey. This is a promising and important factor as the effective implementation of high-quality instructional materials requires training and support.

Further analyses showed that training on the instructional materials came from a variety of sources, as seen in Table 6 below. Note, however, that this question was not specific to instructional materials for grades preK-5. As seen in Table 6 below, most districts and community schools employed a combination of training sources to train teachers on their instructional materials.

TABLE 6. SOURCES OF TRAINING FOR USING INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

Professional Development Source	Number (%) Districts that Provided Curriculum-focused PD
District or school only	120 (14%)
Educational service center only	52 (6%)
Instructional material provider only	277 (32%)
State support team only	7 (<1%)
Other	8 (<1%)
Combinations of the above	406 (47%)

Of the 74 districts and community schools that said they did **not** provide any training associated with their curricula, the breakdown according to district typology and Early Literacy rating is below. As seen in Table 7, more than one-third of those not providing this type of professional development are community schools and/or are not rated according to the Early Literacy star rating.

TABLE 7. DISTRICT TYPOLOGY FOR THOSE NOT PROVIDING CURRICULUM-FOCUSED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

District Typology	Number (%) of Districts Reporting
Rural - High Poverty	7 (9%)
Rural - Average Poverty	10 (14%)
Small Town - Low Poverty	10 (14%)
Small Town - High Poverty	1 (4%)
Suburban - Very Low Poverty	2 (3%)
Urban - High Poverty	1 (3%)
Community School	31 (42%)
Educational Service Center	10 (14%)

Ohio Department of Education & Workforce

TABLE 8. EARLY LITERACY STAR RATINGS FOR THOSE <u>NOT</u> PROVIDING CURRICULUM-FOCUSED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Star Rating	Number (%) of Districts Reporting
1 Star	4 (5%)
2 Stars	5 (7%)
3 Stars	11 (15%)
4 Stars	12 (16%)
5 Stars	5 (7%)
New	2 (3%)
NR	25 (34%)

Summary and Key Findings

Results from the Department's statewide survey indicate that districts and community schools across Ohio primarily use published curricula when providing core literacy instruction and intervention to students in grades preK-5. An extensive list of possible options was provided for districts and community schools to choose from, and results further showed that the majority reportedly used at least one published curriculum from the provided list.

Whereas most districts and community schools used published curricula, over 60% indicated they used more than one set of materials for their students. Although this may be needed when serving students across grade levels, ensuring consistency and alignment between multiple curricula must be considered carefully.

As such, and in accordance with ORC 3313.6028, beginning not later than the 2024-2025 school year, each district and community school will be required to use core curriculum and instructional materials for English language arts and evidence-based reading intervention programs **only** from forthcoming lists established by the Department. Although it is possible that many schools and districts may already be using materials that will be on the approved lists, schools and districts that use multiple materials from different vendors will need to confirm all instructional and intervention materials are aligned.

Descriptive analyses did not suggest the use of locally created materials was strongly correlated with any specific district typology or Early Literacy star rating. Further analyses will be conducted regarding the average size of these districts and community schools to anticipate the level of supports that may be needed as these schools and districts begin making their decisions about the literacy instruction and intervention materials that will be most appropriate for their local contexts.

Department of Education & Workforce

Appendix A. Ten Most Commonly Used K-5 Core Curricula Across All Districts and Community Schools (*N* = 789)

Top 10 Core Curriculum Reported	Number (%) of Schools/Districts Using
Heggerty Phonemic Awareness Curriculum	395 (50%)
Fundations	190 (24%)
Reading Wonders – 2020	77 (10%)
Reading Wonders – 2017	70 (8%)
Journeys	62 (6%)
The Fountas & Pinnell Classroom	59 (7%)
Core Knowledge Language Arts	59 (7%)
Lucy Calkins Units of Study or Teacher's College Reading and Writing Project – 2018	48 (6%)
Ready Reading	47 (6%)
Into Reading – 2020	44 (6%)

Note. Percentages will not total 100% as many reported using more than one curriculum and this is not the complete list. The total N of 789 reflects the number of districts and community schools that reportedly use the same core curriculum across all buildings.

Top 10 Overall Responses, Including Curriculum Combinations	Number (%) of Schools/Districts Using
Other	71 (9%)
Heggerty Phonemic Awareness Curriculum + Other	35 (4%)
Reading Wonders – 2020	27 (3%)
Core Knowledge Language Arts (CKLA)	23 (3%)
Heggerty Phonemic Awareness Curriculum + Fundations	23 (3%)
Into Reading – 2020	22 (3%)
Journeys	21 (3%)
Reading Wonders – 2017	21 (3%)
Heggerty Phonemic Awareness Curriculum + Fundations + Other	14 (2%)
Heggerty Phonemic Awareness Curriculum + Fundations + Ready Reading	14 (2%)
Heggerty Phonemic Awareness Curriculum + Fundations + Reading Street Common Core	14 (2%)

Department of Education & Workforce

Appendix B. Ten Most Commonly Used K-5 Reading Interventions ($N = 800$)

Top 10 Reading Interventions	Number (%) of Schools/Districts Using
Heggerty Phonemic Awareness Curriculum	423 (53%)
Wilson Reading Systems	267 (33%)
Fundations	237 (30%)
i-Ready	158 (20%)
RAZ Plus (Learning A-Z)	154 (19%)
Core 5 Reading	106 (13%)
Leveled Literacy Intervention	101 (13%)
Read Naturally	54 (7%)
95 Percent	46 (6%)
The Sonday System (Winsor Learning)	41 (5%)

Note. Percentages will not total 100% as many schools and districts reported using more than one intervention curriculum and this is not the complete list. The total N of 800 reflects the number of districts and community schools that reportedly use the same intervention materials across all buildings.

Top 10 Overall Responses, Including Curriculum Combinations	Number (%) of Schools/Districts Using
Other	51 (6%)
Heggerty Phonemic Awareness Curriculum	39 (5%)
Core5 Reading	28 (4%)
i-Ready	24 (3%)
Fundations, Heggerty Phonemic Awareness Curriculum	17 (2%)
Fundations	16 (2%)
Heggerty Phonemic Awareness Curriculum, RAZ Plus	16 (2%)
Fundations, Heggerty Phonemic Awareness Curriculum, i-Ready	14 (2%)
Leveled Literacy Intervention	14 (2%)
Fundations, Heggerty Phonemic Awareness Curriculum, Wilson Reading System	11 (1%)
Heggerty Phonemic Awareness Curriculum, Other	11 (1%)

Ohio Department of Education & Workforce

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Department of Education & Workforce