




 KENTUCKY READING  
RESEARCH CENTER

## Reading Diagnostic and Intervention Fund Grant Steering Committee

December 5, 2025


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KENTUCKY READING RESEARCH CENTER


## About the Center

- Established July 1, 2024
- Mandated by KRS 158.791 in Senate Bill 9 (Reads to Succeed Act of 2022) and KRS 164.0207 in Senate Bill 156 (2023) as a stand-alone, independent research center
- Close partnership with Kentucky Department of Education's Office for Teaching & Learning



*Kentucky Reading Research Center announcement at Bourbon Central Elementary School on June 3, 2024.*

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KENTUCKY READING RESEARCH CENTER



## Our Role in Improving Literacy for Kentucky Students

- Develop and implement a clearinghouse of information about programs addressing reading and literacy from early childhood and elementary grades (P-5) through adult education.
- Collaborating with KDE to assist districts with students functioning at low levels of reading skills to assess and address identified literacy needs.
- Study reading programs across Kentucky, looking at their cost, effectiveness, and long-term results.
- Track student progress and how well programs support continued improvement over time.
- Make recommendations about programs and funding to KDE and the Kentucky General Assembly Interim Joint Committee on Education.

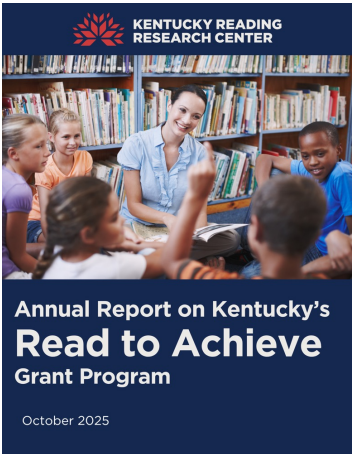
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## Read to Achieve (RTA) Reading and Diagnostic Fund Program Evaluation

- A comprehensive survey was administered to capture the perceptions and experiences of school personnel across 149 FY 2022 RTA schools.
- Direct observations and interviews were conducted in a sample of schools.
- Report summarizes the results of the survey and observations and provides insights into school-level literacy practices and capacity.



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## Questions Addressed in the RTA Survey

- What are the characteristics of the persons responding to the RTA survey?
- What approved programs and HQIRs are in use in RTA schools?
- What are practitioner use and perceptions of the RTA program?
- Are survey responses associated with school-level reading achievement scores?
- In terms of observed practices, are there differences among groups (4 clusters) of schools with different patterns of student achievement?

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## Characteristics of the persons responding to the RTA survey

A total of 2,248 individual surveys were returned from 148 schools

- Average 10.85 responses from each school.
- paraprofessional and those identifying as having other roles in the school were not included in this analysis because of the low response rate

Respondents included

- K-3 teachers (n = 862 – 141 schools)
- RTA interventionists (n = 227 – 145 schools)
- Administrators (n = 151 – 129 schools)

### Number of Schools for Which There Were No Respondents by Role

Role	Number of Schools Represented	Number of Schools Not Represented
Interventionist	145	4
K-3 Teacher	141	8
Administrator	129	20

### Number of Respondents by Role

Role	Total Number of Schools	Total Number of Respondents	% of RTA Schools Represented
Interventionist	145	227	97%
K-3 Teacher	141	862	95%
Administrator	129	151	87%

*Note: RTA school coverage is calculated as the percentage of RTA schools represented by at least one respondent in each role category. Coverage data is not available for paraprofessionals and other roles due to school-role assignment ambiguity.*

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## Respondents' Training

### Interventionist Training

Interventionists were asked to identify professional development activities they've engaged in, from a list of 17 RTA approved providers. Interventionists report engagement with eleven of these professional development possibilities. 76 schools have interventionists who attended other types of training, while 69 schools did not report having participated in training.

### Teacher LETRS Training

- 40.49% of all responding teachers have received LETRS training, while 59.51% have not.
- Among teachers completing LETRS training,
  - 91.69% reported that they believe LETRS aligns with their school's literacy curriculum. In contrast,
  - 8.31% reported that they did not believe LETRS aligns with their school's literacy curriculum.

Approved PD Providers	Number of Interventionists Involved	Percent of Schools
LETRS for K-3 Teachers (two- year commitment)	110	55.9%
Foundational Skills Mini-Course	55	31.7%
Orton-Gillingham Academy	48	30.6%
The Writing Revolution	41	24.1%
The Big Dippers Science of Reading Short Course	44	22.9%
Institute for Multi-Sensory Education	36	20%
Keys to Literacy	17	10.3%

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## Respondents' Use and Perceptions of the RTA Program

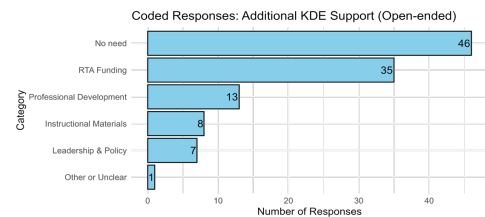
### Respondents' Perceived Impediments to Effective Literacy Instruction

Interventionist respondents were asked to identify impediments to implementation of a literacy intervention. Time was the most common impediment identified (26.43% report often or always), with student behavior second (8.81% report often or always).

Impediments	Never	Occasionally	Often	Always
Time	41 (18.06%)	126 (55.51%)	46 (20.26%)	14 (6.17%)
Student Behavior	75 (33.04%)	132 (58.15%)	18 (7.93%)	2 (0.88%)
Admin Support	193 (82.03%)	28 (12.33%)	5 (2.20%)	1 (0.44%)
Availability of needed instructional materials	157 (69.16%)	60 (26.43%)	8 (3.52%)	2 (0.88%)
Lack of professional learning for implementation of the resources	160 (70.48%)	59 (25.99%)	6 (2.64%)	2 (0.88%)

### Interventionists' Reported Needs

Interventionist respondents were asked an open-ended question about what they saw as their greatest need in terms of improving their capacity and outcomes. Most respondents did not identify any needs. But among those that did, funding was the most frequent response, followed by professional development, instructional materials, and leadership and policy.



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## Approved Programs and HQIRs in Use in RTA Schools

### Respondents' Reporting of High Quality Instructional Resources and HQIRs

	Teachers	Paras			
Amplify, <i>Core Knowledge Language Arts</i> (CKLA), 2015	224	41			
Savvas Learning Company, <i>myView Literacy</i> , 2020	185	4	Length of HQIR Access	Count (n)	Percent (%)
Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, <i>Into Reading</i> , 2020	162	39	1year	489	56.73
Benchmark Education Company, <i>Benchmark Advance</i> , 2022	137	11	2 years	150	17.40
			3 years	80	9.28
			> 3 years	143	16.59
McGraw-Hill Education, <i>Wonders</i> , 2020/2023	110	31			
					Count
UFLI Foundations for Reading					101
Heggerty Reading					51
iReady Reading/Barton Reading					42
Other					31
Lexia Core 5 Reading/Orton Gillingham					30
Supplemental to the core comprehensive HQIR					21

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## Associations Between Survey and Reading Performance

This section is focused on potential associations between school-level reading proficiency and key RTA survey responses across three academic years, from 2021/2022 through 2023/2024. While the survey itself does not establish causality, observed correlations between these practices and school-level reading outcomes may suggest potential associations.

Several survey items related to collaborative literacy team practices and school capacity demonstrated modest but consistent positive correlations with school-level reading proficiency. The strongest associations were observed in 2023/2024, the year closest to the time of survey administration (spring 2025), suggesting alignment between reported school practices and students' reading outcomes.

## Summary of Findings

These findings point to specific areas of practice that may serve as levers for improving schools' early reading outcomes.

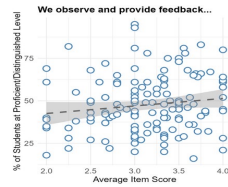
- **Reinforce Collaborative Team Practices:** Literacy teams that regularly engage in structured observation, peer feedback, and team-based progress monitoring were associated with stronger school-level reading outcomes. KDE may consider providing training, coaching, or protocols to support these practices within literacy teams.
- **Improve Data Access and Use:** The strongest associations emerged in schools that reported having timely access to actionable school and district data. KDE can support and promote data literacy efforts that help school staff use this data effectively in their decision-making.

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## School Capacity and Reading Outcomes

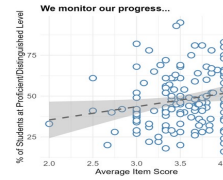
### Relationships Between Perceived Literacy Team Capacity and Reading Proficiency (2023/2024)



$$(r \approx .20, p < .05)$$

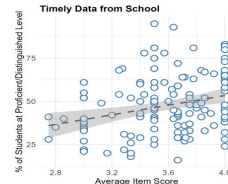


$$(r = .19, p = .03)$$

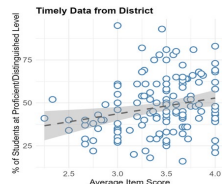


$$(r = .16, p = .05)$$

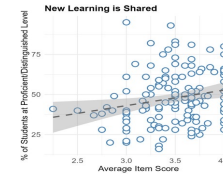
### Relationships Between Perceived School Capacity and Reading Proficiency (2023/2024)



$$(r = .28, p = .001)$$



$$(r = .22, p = .008)$$



$$(r = .21, p = .012)$$

Schools where data are available in a timely manner for evaluation purposes and where staff consistently share and apply new learning tended to have significantly higher reading outcomes. These results highlight the importance of school systems and environments that support effective data use in decision-making and encourage collaborative learning.

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## Differences Across Schools by Performance Cluster

### School Grouping Based on Reading Outcomes

The 149 RTA-funded schools were analyzed to create specific clusters by outcome types. Using publicly available data on RTA school reading achievement over the past three years, we created a stratified sample that identified 26 schools fitting into one of four clusters. The following criteria were used to identify schools statewide:

Group 1: Continuous Improvement

Growth > 7% both years

Group 2: Stable High

Stable growth (<3.5%) top 40% in 202-/2024

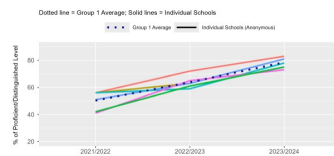
Group 3: Continuous Decline

Decline >5% both years

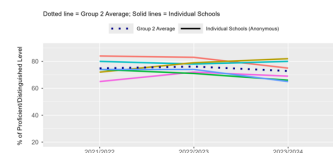
Group 4: Stable Low

Stable growth (<5%), bottom 40% in 2023/2024

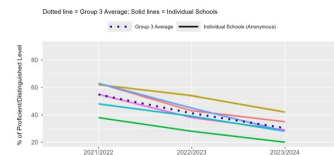
GROUP 1 N=6



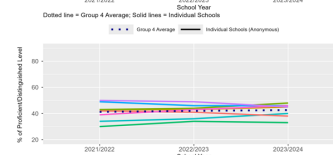
GROUP 2 N=6



GROUP 3 N=7



GROUP 4 N=7



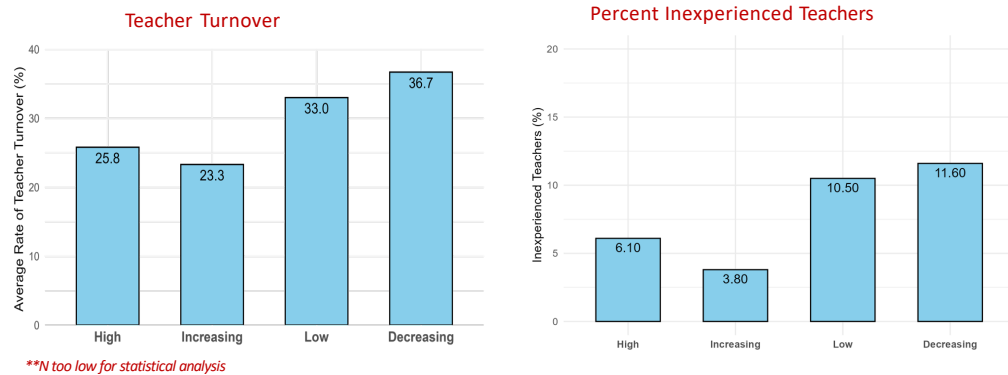
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## By Cluster: Faculty and Staff Demographics

Demographic data on schools in each identified cluster was pulled from publicly available data on the Kentucky School Report Card website. Overall, high achieving and increasing trend schools tended to have less teacher turnover and fewer inexperienced teachers. All other demographic variables were mixed, with no patterns apparent.



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## By Cluster: Foundational Instructional Practices

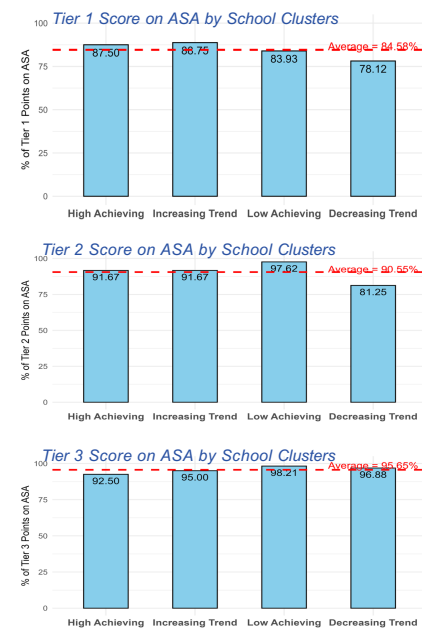
### Literacy Team Interviews

Interviews with School Literacy Teams were conducted virtually and scored using the ABRI School Assessment (ASA, Scott, Lingo, & Hirn, 2013). The ASA provides an index of the fidelity with which a school is implementing effective systems for literacy instruction at each of three tiers.

Schools demonstrating high and increasing achievement tended to have higher ASA Tier 1 fidelity scores, indicating that these schools had more Tier 1 systems in place. In comparison, low achieving and decreasing trend schools tended to have slightly higher levels of Tier 3 fidelity. This may be a result of necessity as schools that do not have Tier 1 systems in place will have more need for Tier 3 to serve students who are not adequately progressing.

- High achieving = 5 schools
- Increasing achievement trend = 5 schools
- Low achieving = 7 schools
- Decreasing achievement trend = 4 schools

*\*\*N too low for statistical analysis*



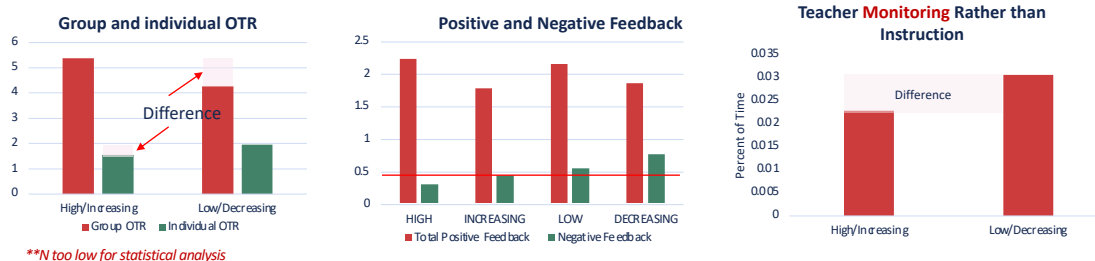
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## By Cluster: Foundational Instructional Practices

Observations were conducted in classrooms in the sample school clusters – during reading instruction.

- High/Increasing = more overall OTRs and fewer individual OTRs
- Low/Decreasing = more negative feedback
- Low/Decreasing = less allocated instructional time used for instruction



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## Next Steps:

- Revise RTA survey for administration in spring of 2026
  - Randomized sample receives deeper observational study/evaluation
- Engage in more robust research with larger number of schools
  - Interviews with school literacy teams
  - Observe both small and large-group literacy instruction
    - By similar clusters across the entire state
    - Use audio recordings of lessons
    - Use foundational and literacy instruction assessments across ~400 teachers
- Study the nature of teacher responses to student misbehavior
  - Physiological and instructional responses
  - Study mediator interventions for teachers

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