

**An Observational Study of Implementation of Selected Practices
of the Monitoring Instructional Reading Levels Strategy
in 2015–2016**

Office of Shared Accountability

April 2017

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Executive Summary

This report is one in a series of four reports from an evaluation of the 2015–2016 school year implementation of the Monitoring Instructional Reading Levels (MIRL) strategy. MIRL is a districtwide strategy being implemented in Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) to improve reading instruction for K–5 students. The premise of MIRL is that through ongoing observation and data collection, emphasis on high quality guided reading, and analyses of formative reading data, teachers can diagnose a student’s immediate needs and then use the information to adjust instruction. All elementary schools were expected to start implementing MIRL in the fall of the 2015–2016 school year.

Purpose and Scope of Study

This evaluation, conducted by the Office of Shared Accountability (OSA), was requested by the Office of the Chief Academic Officer (OCAO). The study is designed to provide insights on the extent to which MIRL was implemented as intended. The purpose of this report is to describe: a) the status of implementation of guided reading instruction and collaborative team planning meetings across a stratified random sample of 30 MCPS elementary schools; and b) the extent of use of an online reading data collection tool by Grades 1–5 teachers. The monthly online data collection tool was created and is managed centrally by the Office of the Chief Technology Officer (OCTO) in MCPS.

Summary of Methodology

A non-experimental design was applied using multiple data collection methods: 1) classroom observation of guided reading lessons, 2) observation of collaborative grade-level team planning of reading instruction, and 3) use of institutional databases to compile student-level MIRL data entered by teachers into the online tool. In collaboration with staff from the Elementary Integrated Curriculum (EIC) team, the project lead developed two separate observation protocols grounded in “Look Fors” provided by Office of Curriculum and Instructional Programs (OCIP). From the 30 study schools, two grade levels (1 class from each grade) were selected for site visits; not all grades could be observed due to limited staff and resources. The site visits occurred from February 20 to March, 20, 2016. Altogether, OSA staff observed 155 guided reading lessons from 52 (of the 59 initially planned) classrooms and 57 grade-level collaborative team meetings. OSA staff compiled and analyzed seven months of MIRL student-level data from the 2015–2016 school year.

Descriptive summary statistics were computed for the items on the guided reading and instructional planning meeting observation protocols and aggregated and reported by grade level. Summary statistics also were computed for students with complete MIRL data at the grade level and student subgroups within each grade.

Summary of Findings

While evidence in this report reflects widespread implementation of guided reading instruction, team planning for reading instruction, and frequent use of the online reading data collection tool, the levels of implementation of some practices varied across grade levels. A summary of findings from the first year of implementation of the MIRL strategy is presented below, organized by evaluation question.

Evaluation Question 1. To what extent did teachers in the study sample implement guided reading instruction as designed? Guided reading instruction was provided in groups of two to seven students in all the classrooms across grade levels observed. The teachers consistently used the before-during-after reading structure of guided reading instruction. Students in each guided reading group used the same instructional text for the guided lesson. The guided lessons lasted an average of 19 minutes.

Before Reading. In most of the guided reading lessons observed, across grade levels teachers implemented the following instructional strategies before reading the texts (Figure1):

- Taught from a lesson plan
- Activated or built background knowledge relevant to lesson

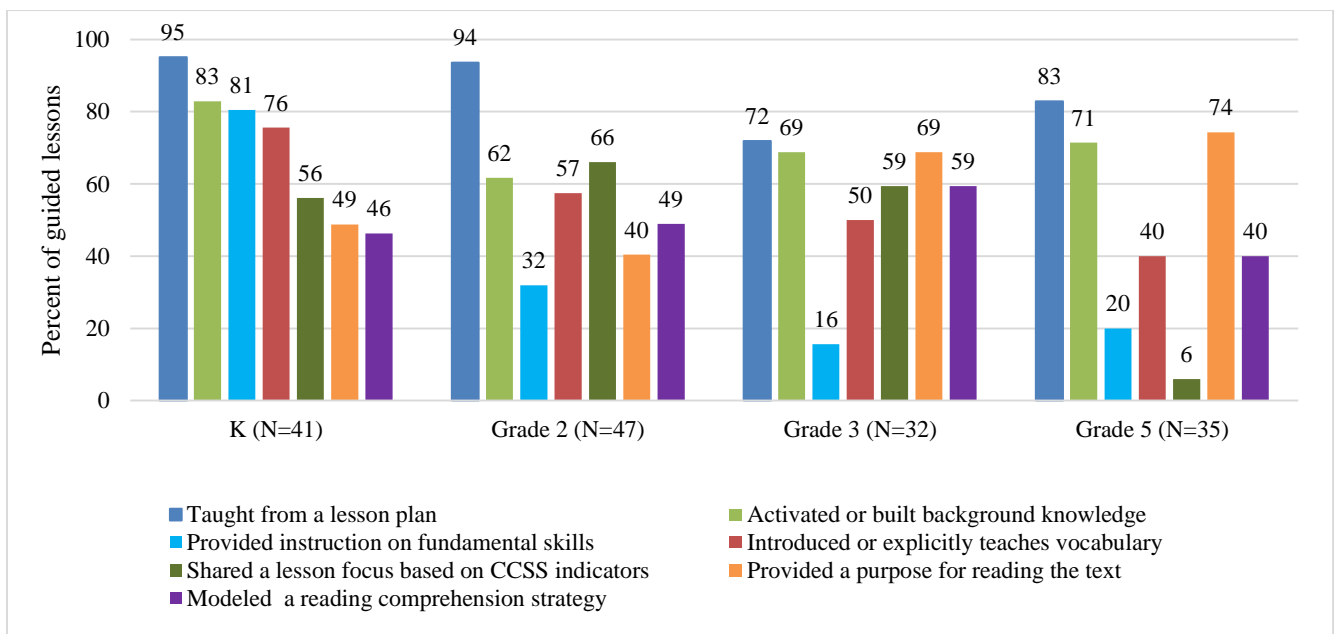


Figure 1. Instructional strategies observed before reading, by grade level.

Before reading, the learning tasks observed in a majority of kindergarten and Grades 3 and 5 lessons were: 1) students engaging in conversation about texts and 2) students having discussions that focused on making connections between new texts and previously read materials. Notably, implementation of some instructional practices varied by grade-level. Only in kindergarten do a majority of lessons include instruction on fundamental skills. The proportion of lessons in which

teachers introduced or explicitly taught vocabulary steadily declined from 70% in kindergarten to 40% in Grade 5 as grade level increases. On the other hand, providing a purpose for reading was observed in a higher proportion of Grades 3 and 5 lessons, relative to kindergarten and Grade 2. Teachers rarely shared a lesson focus based on Common Core State Standard (CCSS) indicators in the Grade 5 lessons observed, compared to lessons in other grade levels.

During reading. Strong evidence of the following specified instructional practices was observed in a majority of kindergarten, Grade 2, and Grade 3 lessons: listening to individual student(s) read aloud the text assigned for instruction; checking the individual student understanding of the lesson focus; and providing student feedback on their reading skills or practice (Figure 2).

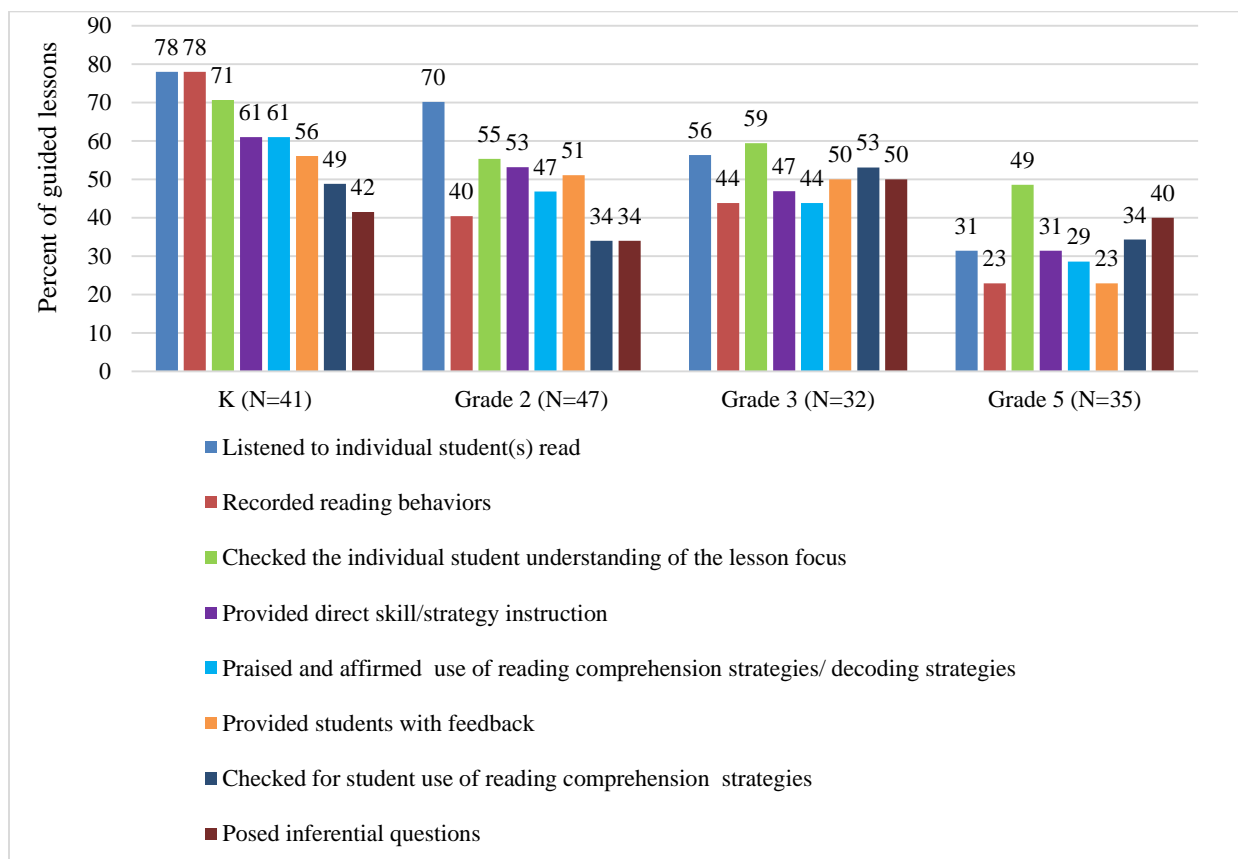


Figure 2. Instructional strategies observed during reading, by grade level.

Across grade levels, the greatest variations in levels of implementation were observed for the practices of: 1) recording reading behaviors (23% in Grade 5 and 78% in kindergarten) and 2) listening to individual students read (31% in Grade 5 and 78% in kindergarten). In general, posing inferential questions was observed in half or fewer lessons across all grades, and checking for use of reading comprehension strategies was observed in less than half of lessons in all grades but 3. These data also drew attention and illustrated some patterns. For example, the frequency of

listening to students read, recording reading behaviors, providing direct skill instruction, and praising use of reading comprehension/decoding strategies declined as grade-level increased. It seemed reasonable that some practices would decrease as students become more capable of reading independently.

During reading, students were observed reading independently (kindergarten, 100%, Grade 2, 79%; Grade 3, 78%, and Grade 5, 51%) in a majority of lessons across the grade levels. In a majority of lessons in kindergarten and Grades 3 and 5, students were observed interacting with text in a variety of ways during reading; students were observed interacting with the text in a variety of ways in just under half of Grade 2 lessons. Looking across the grades, the reading behavior observed with the lowest frequency during reading was student responses going beyond literal level. Students applying teacher feedback as they read to improve accuracy, fluency, and comprehension was observed in just under half the lessons in kindergarten and Grades 2 and 3, and just under a third of the lessons in Grade 5.

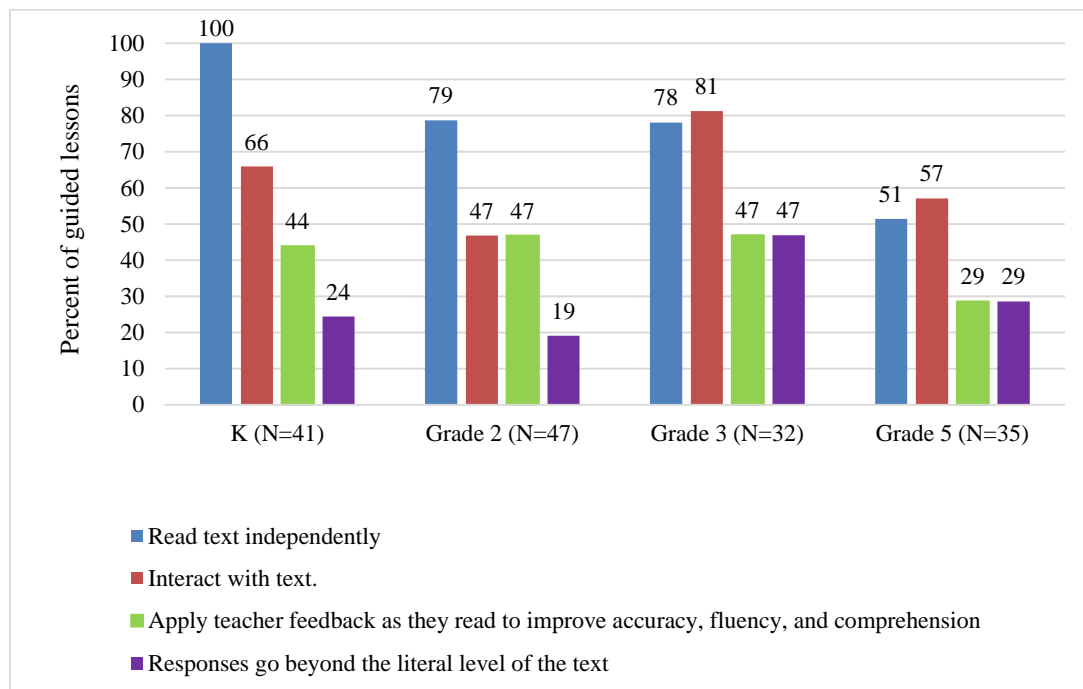


Figure 3. Student behaviors and learning tasks observed during reading, by grade level.

After reading. After reading texts, most of the instructional practices specified for the after-reading segment were commonly observed: posing questions related to lesson focus (kindergarten, 71%, Grade 2, 79%; Grade 3, 81%, and Grade 5, 63%); providing an opportunity for students’ discussions of the text (s) (kindergarten, 51%, Grade 2, 70%; Grade 3, 66%, and Grade 5, 57%); actively listening to student responses (kindergarten, 61%, Grade 2, 77%; Grade 3, 72%, and Grade 5, 63%); and assigning meaningful follow up connected to lesson focus (kindergarten, 66%, Grade 2, 57%; Grade 3, 75%, and Grade 5, 71%) (Figure 4). The instructional practices observed

with the lowest frequency after reading was recording notes or collecting student work in Grades 2 (34%), 3 (47%), and 5 (34%); in kindergarten, the least frequently observed practice after reading the text was reinforcing the lesson focus (24%).

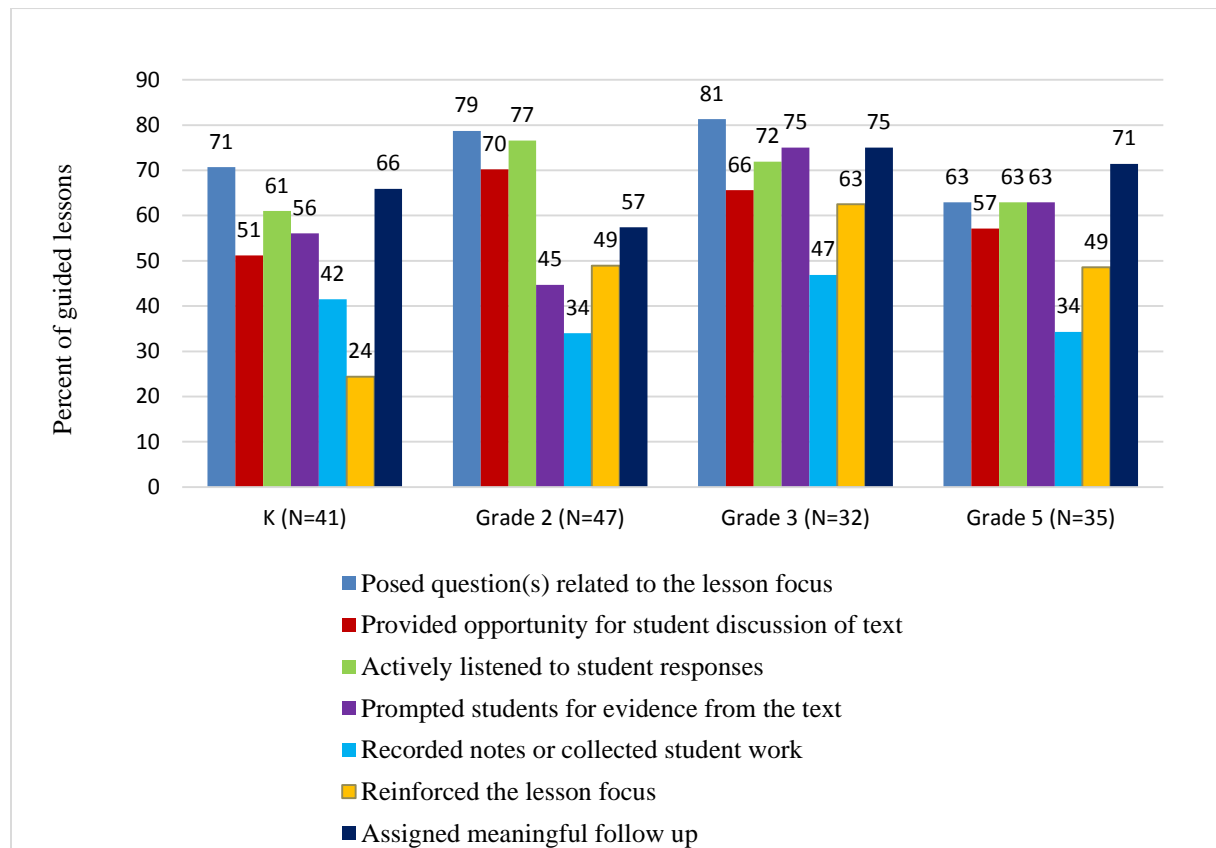


Figure 4. Instructional strategies observed after reading, by grade level.

After reading texts, engaging in meaningful follow up connected to the lesson focus was the only learning task observed in more than half of lessons across grade levels (kindergarten, 66%; Grade 2, 57%; Grade 3, 75%; and Grade 5, 71%). Use of evidence from text and discussing text based on lesson focus tended to be observed more often in Grades 3 and 5 lessons compared to kindergarten and Grade 2 lessons. Across all grade levels, the learning task observed with the lowest frequency was students engaging in word study after reading.

Evaluation Question 2. To what extent did teachers participate in collaborative instructional planning at grade-level team meetings?

Review of documents obtained from the study schools revealed that the instructional planning teams were scheduled either every week, biweekly, or monthly. Depending on the grade level, the planning meetings lasted for an average of 49 to 55 minutes. The number of participants in grade-

level instructional planning meetings ranged from 2 in schools with departmentalized reading instruction to 15 in schools with planning teams that included classroom teachers, specialists, and administrators.

Overall, the teams collaboratively reviewed and discussed a variety of types of data and artifacts of student work from previous week(s). The majority of meetings deliberated anecdotal notes, student work, and running records (65%). Across one third of the team meetings, participants discussed outliers (33%) and trends (over time) and patterns in the student data (32%). Language development data were rarely used or discussed in planning meetings observed (4%). Further, nearly all the instructional planning teams discussed and identified some common instructional needs of their students (kindergarten, 86%, Grade 2, 93%; Grade 3, 92%, and Grade 5, 93%).

As expected, most of the instructional planning teams deliberated the CCSS indicators associated with the lessons they were planning, and discussed a learning goal. More than half of meetings included discussions related to differentiating instruction for students who were not meeting expectations, while less than half included discussion of students exceeding grade-level expectations, meeting proficiency, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) students, and students with disabilities. The frequency of discussions about how to collect formative assessment data or the questions for checking student understanding of an indicator varied greatly by grade-level teams: 70% of Grade 2, one half of Grade 5 (50%), 43% of kindergarten, and approximately one third of Grade 3 meetings (36%).

Evaluation Question 3. To what extent did teachers use the monthly online reading data tool?

In-depth analyses of the MIRL records of Grades 1–5 students in the study sample revealed that nearly all of the students (greater than 95%) had complete records on accuracy, fluency, reading comprehension, and instructional reading levels for the seven months of data examined. These records indicate that nearly all the teachers used the online reading data collection tool at least once a month as directed. When the data were disaggregated by grade level, the same pattern of extensive use (greater than 95%) of the tool was found for students in every subgroup, except for students in the Limited English Proficiency (LEP) subgroup, particularly those students identified as Level 1 or 2 ESOL. While the total number of ESOL level 1 students was small (ranging from 8 (Grade 5) to 22 (kindergarten), only 15% to 25% of these students had complete records of MIRL information. Depending on grade level, about 65% to 85% of ESOL Level 2 students had complete records of MIRL information

Recommendations

The following recommendations are based on the findings from this study. To provide guidance for ongoing improvements in the implementation of the MIRL strategy, the authors recommend:

Guided reading instruction

- Adopt a grade-level specific approach and target professional development to aspects of guided reading instruction that were implemented with the lowest fidelity. Across all grades, provide support to increase students' application of teacher feedback and responses that go beyond the literal level of the text.

Monitoring instructional reading levels

- Continue to use a variety of measures teachers use to monitor a) students' growth at regular intervals, b) status/proficiency in reading, and c) areas of instructional need. Examining growth and student needs on a regular basis will allow teachers and schools to identify student change over time, be it change in accuracy, fluency, comprehension, or proficiency. Monitoring students' proficiency standing (at specified intervals) on CCSS indicators (i.e. what students know and are able to do) is a key goal of the MIRL strategy.
- Explore reasons for students receiving ESOL services not having complete monthly MIRL data on record. The mandatory use of the tool was intended to facilitate consistent and ongoing monitoring of instructional reading levels for all students. If ESOL Level 1 and 2 students are not reading at all or are reading at levels that cannot be accommodated in the online data collection tool for their grade level, then, consider other tools or data for monitoring ESOL students' progress in reading.

Collaborative grade-level instructional planning

- Implement a standardized system for describing (keeping track/recording) how the planning, coordination, and monitoring of reading instruction for students receiving special services is implemented within a grade level and across schools. On the basis of the data available, it is not clear when and how teachers plan for strategies and resources for differentiating reading instruction for ESOL students, students with disabilities, or students receiving reading interventions. Since students who receive special services also attain MCPS reading milestones at lower rates than their grade-level peers, a better understanding of how their reading instruction is coordinated and planned at the school level is critical.

Strengthening the implementation of the comprehensive MIRL strategy

- Strive to increase the fidelity of implementation of MIRL practices across grades and schools. In particular, strengthen structures for a) regular use of a variety of formative assessment data

among administrators and staff for planning instruction and b) assessing fidelity of implementation of MIRL at the school level. Findings from this study showed that there is variation in the levels of implementation of some practices across schools and grades.

- Consider adapting the observation protocols from this study for teachers' use to self-monitor and observe peers in their implementation of guided reading lessons and instructional planning meetings. During the site visits to schools, the observers were frequently requested to share the tools or to provide feedback to the teachers they observed. A revised, updated version of the observation protocols would provide trainers, teachers, and school leaders with additional tools to a) clarify expectations for high quality guided reading and instructional planning teams and b) assess the fidelity of implementation of the MIRL practices at the classroom and school levels.
- As the student assessment data platform is introduced in MCPS schools, develop ways to incorporate the platform to address aspects of MIRL that teachers implemented at lower rates, such as collecting student work, increasing assessment opportunities using common checks for student understanding, and use of a variety of data for instructional planning.

An Observational Study of Implementation of Selected Practices of the Monitoring Instructional Reading Levels Strategy in 2015–2016

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Introduction

The goal of the MCPS Reading/Language Arts program is to help students become literate, thoughtful communicators, capable of controlling language effectively as they negotiate a complex and information rich world (MCPS, 2015a). As such, starting in 2015–2016, MCPS placed stronger emphasis on frequent, ongoing, formative assessment in all areas of literacy instruction across all content areas with the goal of deepening students’ understanding through reading, writing, speaking, listening, and viewing skills (MCPS, 2016). To achieve this, MCPS continued to refine and emphasize a balanced literacy approach to instruction in Grades Pre-K–5. Reading teachers were expected to support student growth in comprehension, vocabulary, and foundational skills through systematic and explicit whole group, small group, and independent application of skills. Further, a key aspect of the MCPS Curriculum 2.0 in reading is the emphasis on the three critical components of high-quality guided reading: Reader, Task, and Text (MCPS, 2015). To support these endeavors, all elementary schools implemented the practice of Monitoring Instructional Reading Levels (MIRL) as a strategy to increase student achievement.

This report is one of four in a series from the study of the implementation of MIRL during the 2015–2016 school year. The purpose of this report is to describe the status of implementation of a) guided reading instruction, b) collaborative team planning meetings and c) the extent of use of the online reading data collection tool.

Components of MIRL in 2015–2016

Starting in fall 2015, all K–5 teachers in all elementary schools were expected to implement a specified set of practices that make up the MIRL strategy (Appendix A1):

1. high quality guided reading;
2. collecting and entering student-level reading data into an online reading data collection tool;
3. ongoing monitoring of instructional reading levels;
4. analysis and use of formative assessment data to adjust instruction; and
5. collaborative instructional planning at the grade level.

MCPS provided a series of training sessions to enhance the implementation of these practices (Appendix A2). These practices are expected to work in concert to improve reading instruction and subsequently increase student achievement in reading. Notably, most of these practices have been in place in MCPS over time; the exception is the Monthly Reading Data Collection Tool, which was introduced in 2015–2016 to make it possible for teachers to use a common monitoring

tool to obtain the data necessary to support instruction and make immediate adjustments to improve reading instruction. Four of these MIRL practices are the focus of this study.

High quality guided reading. The guided reading instructional segment is designed “to build on a student’s ability to process increasingly challenging texts and understanding” (MCPS, 2015a). The 2015–2016 Elementary Literacy Plan specified three components for high quality guided reading:

1. **Reader:** Teachers use student data to understand the reader and what supports the student will need to demonstrate proficiency.
2. **Task:** Teachers determine which reading comprehension strategies will best help each student to access and learn ideas and concepts from the standard or indicator under study.
3. **Text:** Teachers match text characteristics to the needs and strengths of their students and assign the appropriate text(s) for instruction.

Using Common Core State Standards (CCSS) as a basis for instructional planning and to ensure rigor for all students, teachers were expected to provide guided reading for every student by using a clear lesson focus based on a standard or an indicator, as well as use before-during-after structure for a duration of 10–30 minutes. The expectations for guided reading are detailed in Appendix B.

Ongoing monitoring of progress, data collection, and monthly entering of reading data.

Because the goal of guided reading is to continue to advance all students on the reading continuum, teachers are expected to a) regularly collect data on accuracy, fluency, comprehension, and instructional level for each student during guided reading and b) enter the data into the online reading data collection tool at least monthly. Specifically, teachers are expected to:

- take running reading records at regular intervals;
- assess comprehension at regular intervals during small group instruction; and
- document each student’s instructional level during guided reading on a monthly basis by entering the data into the reading data collection tool

The mandatory use of the tool was intended to facilitate consistent and ongoing monitoring of instructional reading levels for all students.

Analysis and use of data for instructional planning. The purpose of collecting students’ reading data during guided reading is to learn about students as readers, analyze the data, and to use these data to plan for guided reading instruction and for small group instruction. The analyses of running reading records, responses to reading (tasks, questions) and other formative assessment data serve to provide the teacher with data for selecting the appropriate texts, teaching appropriate reading content or strategies, and addressing barriers to learning.

Collaborative planning at grade-level team meetings. During grade-level, collaborative planning team meetings, teachers were expected to analyze and discuss all forms of formative assessment reading data and to use a variety of resources to plan differentiated lessons for guided

reading groups (Appendix C). At these meetings, teachers were expected to examine and use data to develop a common understanding of indicators, discuss barriers and needs for enrichment, plan instruction to match needs of students, and determine assessment opportunities.

Literature Highlights

This review focuses on: a) structure of guided reading instruction and its potential to increase reading achievement; b) assessment for learning; c) relationship of formative assessment and instructional planning; and d) best practice for collaborative team planning.

Guided reading instruction. The goal of guided reading is to teach students to apply strategic reading behaviors independently (Founts & Pinnell, 1996; Johnson & Keier, 2010; Schulman & Payne, 2000). Guided reading also accords teachers the opportunity to observe students as they read from texts at their instructional reading levels (International Literacy Association [ILA], 2017). Because guided reading is subject to many interpretations in practice, Burkins & Croft (2010) identified some common elements:

- Working with small groups
- Matching student reading ability to text levels
- Giving everyone in the group the same text
- Introducing the text
- Listening to individuals read
- Prompting students to integrate their reading processes
- Engaging students in conversations about the text

Guided reading sessions are made up of a small group of four to six students with similar reading strengths, who are reading approximately the same level text, and have similar needs (Hall, 2014). The students are not to be arbitrarily assigned to a specific group for an indefinite, lengthy period; indeed, the key element is to build in flexibility in forming groups according to needs of students and reading instructional levels. The practice of guided reading is informed by Pearson and Gallagher's Gradual Release of Responsibility model (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983). The model states that instruction should occur along a continuum, beginning with the teacher modeling the desired behavior, followed by the teacher and students engaging in shared activities as the teacher gradually allows the students to gain increasing responsibility, and culminating in the students independently reading without support. Two commonly observed deviations from this model are when a) guided reading instruction is dominated by excess instruction on isolated skills, which leaves little or no time for students to read connected text, or b) "teachers "automate" sessions by teaching identical skills to successive groups of students rather than differentiating instruction based on observations" (Burkins & Croft, 2010).

Assessment for Learning. Formative assessments—or assessments administered in order to gauge what students can and cannot do, and know and do not know, so that teachers can modify their instruction accordingly—are generally accepted as a viable tool for improving student achievement (Black & Wiliam, 1998). The term formative assessment represents an evolving set of practices commonly described as a planned process in which assessment-elicited evidence is

used by teachers to adjust their ongoing teaching procedures to improve students' achievement of intended instructional outcomes and by students to adjust their current learning tactics (Bennett, 2011; McManus, 2008; Popham, 2008; Wylie & Lyon, 2009). Formative data can be gathered through a variety of means (Griffin, 2007), including day-to-day assessment strategies of questioning, observing, discussing, checking on students' understanding and analyzing student responses as well as engaging children in reviewing progress. Formative assessments include informal methods during the process of teaching and learning that are mostly planned ahead of instruction but can occur spontaneously (e.g., observations of student behavior, written work, representations, teacher-student interactions, and interactions among students).

Relationship of formative assessment and instructional planning. The purpose of formative assessments is to identify steps for improvement. As such, with formative assessments, "students and teachers focus on a learning target, evaluate current student work against the target, act to move the work closer to the target, and repeat the process" (Brookhard & Nitko, 2015). One recommended key practice is to keep systematic records of student formative assessment data. Such records should include the type of feedback given to a student on a particular skill over time and ensure that the teacher is observing all students on the important identified skills. Formative assessment data can help to guide the decisions of what a student or group needs.

Collaborative team planning. The important connection among monitoring instructional reading levels, implementation of high quality guided reading, and improvements in reading performance is often understated (ILA, 2017). ILA outlined the critical steps of instructional planning to emphasize that monitoring instructional reading level is a critical and necessary component to achieving high quality guided reading. The building blocks for accomplishing high quality guided reading instruction are:

1. Assessing students to determine Instructional Reading Levels (IRLs)
2. Looking for trends across classroom data
3. Clustering students into groups based on their IRLs, their skills, and how they solve problems when reading
4. Making guided reading groups flexible, based on student growth and change over time
5. Selecting a text that gives students the opportunity to engage in a balanced reading process
6. Planning a schedule for working with small groups, and organizing materials for groups working independently

The six steps outlined above closely mirror the expectations for grade-level team planning for reading instruction (Appendix B).

Scope of the Evaluation

The purpose of this evaluation is to examine the status of implementation of guided reading instruction and collaborative team planning meetings across a stratified random sample of 30 MCPS schools, and examine the use of the reading data collection tool across K–5 teachers.

Evaluation Questions

This evaluation was guided by the following questions:

1. To what extent did K–5 teachers in the study implement guided reading instruction as designed?
2. To what extent did teachers participate in collaborative instructional planning at grade-level team meetings?
3. To what extent did teachers use the reading data collection tool during the 2015–2016 school year?

Methodology

Design

This evaluation involved a formative, mixed-methods approach to provide information on the implementation of guided reading practices, nature of collaborative planning, and use of the online data collection tool. OSA staff conducted numerous observations, including classroom observations of guided reading lessons to document practices and interactions that could characterize a typical guided reading group and observations of grade-level team collaborative instructional planning sessions to document practices and interactions of typical collaborative planning grade-level team meetings for reading instruction. To document teachers' use of the online data collection, attendance, and enrollment records, OSA staff reviewed data from institutional databases and examined student-level monthly MIRL data to assess whether teachers entered data into the online tool as required.

Study Samples

This study included two different samples, corresponding to the evaluation questions being addressed.

A sample of 30 randomly selected schools was used to address evaluation questions 1 and 2. First, a stratified random sampling procedure was used to select a subset of 31 of the 133 elementary schools (23%). School characteristics from Schools at Glance (SAAG) were used as the basis for stratifying schools. The stratifying variables included size/enrollment, percent receiving Free and Reduced-price Meals System services (FARMS), percent receiving ESOL services, racial/ethnic composition of school population, and school type (K–2 or K–5, Grades 3–5). The sample of schools selected was discussed and reviewed with program staff for perceived representativeness. Table D1 in Appendix D displays the characteristics of selected schools. One school later was dropped from the sample because it was a language immersion school; observers had minimal knowledge of the language of instruction.

In 27 of the schools, 1 class representing early elementary grades and another class representing upper elementary were selected for site visits since not all classrooms and grades could be observed due to limited staff and resources. In the three schools serving K–2 or Grades 3–5, 2 grades were selected among the grade-levels represented in the school. Within each classroom, guided reading lessons are taught to a small group of four to six students with similar reading strengths, who are reading approximately the same level text, and have similar needs. The units of observation in each classroom were guided reading lessons. Counting the 2 classrooms selected within each of the 30 schools, the target number of classrooms for observation was 59 classrooms: Kindergarten (N=15), Grade 2 (N=16), Grade 3 (N=14), and Grade 5 (N=14). The target number of instructional meetings was also 59.

For question 3, “To what extent did teachers use the reading data collection tool during the 2015-2016 school year?” the sample included all Grades 1–5 students in all 133 elementary schools. The monthly online reading data collection is an online tool managed centrally by the Office of the Chief Technology Officer (OCTO) in MCPS.

Instrument development. Two separate observation protocols were developed by the project lead in collaboration with staff from the Office of Curriculum and Instructional Programs (OCIP), Elementary Integrated Curriculum (EIC). The *Look Fors* for guided reading instruction and collaborative team planning meetings presented in Appendices A and B were adapted and operationalized into observable, low-inference teacher practices or student behaviors.

Guided reading instruction observation protocol. The background information section of the guided reading protocol elicited information on the class—grade level, number of students in class, size of guided reading groups, and duration of guided reading group session. The items on the protocol specified instructional practices expected before, during, and after guided reading instruction, as well as student behaviors or learning tasks that might be observed during the lesson. Directions prompted observers to record instances of specified instructional strategies and student behaviors. Each instrument contained open-ended items for researchers to provide comments or notes as needed. A separate protocol was completed for each guided reading group lesson observed. Observers also used a checklist to record the artifacts and resources in use during guided reading lesson.

Collaborative planning team meeting observation protocol. The grade-level instructional planning observation protocol included items to document evidence of specified practices in five areas: data analysis, identifying needs, instructional planning, planning for differentiation of instruction, and assessment opportunities.

Observer training and pilot-testing the protocols. OSA researchers conducted all observations of guided reading lessons and planning meetings. Each observer underwent extensive training conducted by the project lead and the supervisor for the EIC—Reading. The training covered an overview of the MIRL study and intensive training on each of the data collection protocols. Overall, the training progressed in four stages. First, the project lead provided background information on the MIRL study, reading instruction, guided reading instruction, and collaborative team planning meetings. Next, trainers explained the observation protocols and scoring procedures. Observers studied each item on the observation protocols. The trainers and observers

discussed categories of each instrument and coding definitions on the observation protocols. Trainers carefully outlined directions for recording observations; these directions were discussed by the trainers and observers, then revised for clarity.

Observers then practiced using the observation protocols using video recordings of guided reading instruction and collaborative team planning meetings provided by OCIP during two training sessions. This stage of training included repeated cycles of practice, discussion, and coding refinement occurred until consensus was reached among researchers and EIC instructional specialists. The discussions covered observed behaviors that the observers found difficult to code and/or hard to interpret, and other important elements of teacher or instructor or student behavior they felt were not being adequately captured. The instruments were field tested in pairs (one observer from OSA and one EIC instructional specialist). The pairs then discussed the ratings to achieve consensus on areas of disagreement.

The project lead undertook ongoing revisions and updating of the protocols, and continued informal training of observers during the site visits as needed. Ongoing training involved constant debriefing and discussions of how to address any unique or unanticipated experiences during the observations.

Data Collection Activities

Site visits

Prearranged site visits involving classroom observations of guided reading instruction and collaborative team planning meetings were completed from February 22 to March 30, 2016. For each site visit, OSA researchers took the following steps, described below.

- i. *Contacting schools.* A memo originating from OSA to selected schools explained the purpose for the site visits and requested that the principals designate a school contact to facilitate the planning and coordination of site visits at each school. Each of the OSA researchers was assigned a specific number of schools. Based on the information provided by the schools, each observer selected the classrooms to visit, developed a schedule for observations, and communicated their selections to the school contacts and teachers involved. Prior to the visits, each observer and the school designee finalized a schedule for the site visits.
- ii. *Observation of guided reading instruction.* The observations of guided reading lessons were made in kindergarten, Grades 2, 3, and 5 classrooms from February 22 to mid-March, 2016. The purpose of the observations was to determine the degree to which specified instructional strategies were being used in the classroom. The researchers did not evaluate teacher quality or effectiveness. Assuming that the duration of guided reading sessions could vary across classrooms, no effort was made to observe equal number of guided reading sessions in each class. The observers were instructed to observe the entire guided reading segment if it was scheduled for less than one hour. If scheduled for longer than an hour, the observers were instructed to observe for 60 minutes or until at least three guided reading group lesson were completed. Altogether, guided reading instruction was observed in 52 of the projected 59 classrooms (88%). Overall, 155 guided reading lessons were observed in the 52 classrooms visited (Table 1).

Table 1. Number of Classrooms, Guided Reading Sessions, and Collaborative Planning Meetings

Grade	Guided Reading				Collaborative Team Planning Meetings (N=57)	
	Classrooms (N=52)		Guided Reading Instruction Group Sessions (N=155)			
	n	%	n	%	n	%
K	13	25	41	27	15	26
2	14	27	47	30	14	25
3	12	23	32	21	14	25
5	13	25	35	23	14	25

- iii. *Observation of collaborative team planning.* In each school, two grade-level instructional planning meetings were observed, corresponding to grades in which guided reading instruction was evaluated. If the teams were planning for more than one content area, the observers were instructed to observe only the section of the meeting concerned with planning for reading instruction. OSA researchers completed nearly all targeted observations of collaborative team planning meetings (57 of the 59) in kindergarten and Grades 2, 3, and 5 classrooms (Table 1).
- iv. *Management of data from site visits.* The data and ratings from individual classroom and collaborative team meetings were kept confidential and used for research purposes only. Only OSA researchers had access to the completed observation protocols. Once the data from all schools were compiled in a file, teacher and school identifiers were deleted from the dataset, leaving only the grade-level descriptors. As communicated through the memo to schools, teacher and school level information were not reported. The data from the observations were reported in summary form or aggregated by grade level.
- v. *Post-classroom observation survey.* The purpose of the brief post-observation survey was for the observers to clarify anything they had observed in the classrooms with the teacher immediately after the observation or through a follow-up email message. Although these data and sentiments were not included in this report, they were systematically analyzed. Those data provided the evaluator with valuable information and were used in the development of some items on the classroom teacher and administrator surveys (Maina & Wolanin, 2016).

Compilation of data from MCPS databases. Student level data were compiled from institutional databases as follows.

- *Monitoring of instructional reading level information.* Teachers were expected to regularly collect student level data on accuracy, fluency, comprehension, and instructional level and enter these data into the online reading data collection tool at least monthly. An extract of these data was downloaded and compiled for OSA by OCTO staff for the months of October, November, December, 2015 and February, March, April, and May, 2016. These data included a student level records of accuracy, fluency, comprehension, instructional reading levels, and instructional notes for all students in Grades 1 to 5. Kindergarten data were not included in the extract. Teachers were not required to enter MIREL data during months when mClass assessment were given; therefore data from September 2015 and January 2016 were not included in the dataset used in the analyses.
- *Enrollment information.* Student level enrollment data and demographic information were compiled from official files; these data were used to disaggregate the data by grade level or student subgroups, as needed.

Document review. A comprehensive set of documents from OCIP and literature related to reading instruction were reviewed to inform the a) development of data collection tools, b) procedures for data analyses, and c) interpretation of findings.

Data Analyses Procedures

The following paragraphs describe the analytical procedures associated with each evaluation question.

Evaluation Questions 1 and 2. Data from site visits to a stratified random sample of 30 schools were used to address questions 1 and 2. The goal of questions 1 and 2 was to describe guided reading lessons and collaborative instructional planning meetings.

Guided reading instruction: The unit of observation for guided reading instruction was an individual guided reading group lesson. Descriptive summary statistics were computed for each item on the observation protocol by grade level.

Grade level team planning meetings: The unit of observation for the collaborative planning meetings was the meeting, and the unit of analysis was the grade level. Descriptive summary statistics were computed for each item on the observation protocol by grade level.

Evaluation Question 3. The goal of evaluation question 3 was to describe the extent to which teachers consistently observed students reading behaviors and entered it/used the online tool during the school year. Descriptive statistics were used to describe the number and percentage of students with complete MIRL records describing: accuracy, fluency, comprehension, instructional reading levels, and instructional notes. The units of analysis were student records by total grade level and disaggregated by student subgroups. Descriptive summary statistics for students with complete information for the seven months were computed for all students by grade and by student subgroups.

Strengths and Limitations

This study demonstrates many strengths. The primary data were collected through direct observations of guided reading lessons and instructional planning meetings as well as monthly entries of seven months of reading data from the online data collection tool. Compared with self-reports, direct observations are a more objective method of measuring instructional practices. The two observation protocols used in this study were developed through collaboration of researchers and experts in reading instruction from OCIP based on the standards of pedagogy or *Look Fors*. These strategies improved both the construct and content validity of study design.

By observing at least three guided reading instruction group lessons within a classroom and several classrooms at the same grade level, the data comprised multiple repeated measures of typical guided reading lessons. These multiple measures maximized the reliability of the data and provided a more comprehensive picture of guided reading instruction. The same strength applied to the observations of team planning meetings. Lastly, the study design also addressed one of the many concerns associated with observational research--the suitable level of data analysis. In the data analysis stage, this study appropriately used guided reading lesson to address evaluation 1, team meeting to address evaluation question 2, and individual students as units of analysis to summarize the data for evaluation question 3.

Certain limitations of this study were noted. In the course of the site visits, some scheduled observations were cancelled due to a variety of reasons. Additionally, grade level team meetings that did not focus on planning for reading instruction were omitted from the analyses, reducing the target number of observations slightly; which could impact the external validity of the findings. Analyses related to the extent to which kindergarten teachers used the online reading data collection tool were not reported. These data were not included in the analytical dataset and therefore not available for analysis.

Results

The results are organized by evaluation questions.

Evaluation Question 1. To what extent did teachers in the stratified random sample implement guided reading instruction as designed?

Background information for classrooms visited. The number of students in the classroom during the observation, number of guided reading groups, as well as number of students in a guided reading group varied slightly by grade level (Table 2). The median class size in the observed 52 classrooms was 18 students; as expected, the median class size was slightly lower for kindergarten and Grade 2 and higher for Grades 3 and 5 classrooms.

Table 2.
Summary Statistics: Number of Students in Class during Observation and Size of Guided Reading Groups

Descriptor		Mean	Standard Deviation	Median
K (N=41)	Students in classroom during observation	17.0	3.7	16
	Guided reading groups per classroom	3.5	1.0	4
	Number of students in guided reading group	3.7	1.5	4
Grade 2 (N=47)	Students in classroom during observation	16.6	3.3	16
	Guided reading groups per classroom	3.6	0.8	4
	Number of students in guided reading group	3.9	1.5	4
Grade 3 (N=32)	Students in classroom during observation	20.8	3.6	22
	Guided reading groups per classroom	3.2	0.8	3
	Number of students in guided reading group	4.6	1.4	5
Grade 5 (N =35)	Students in classroom during observation	23.0	2.9	22
	Guided reading groups per classroom	3.1	0.8	3
	Number of students in guided reading group	5.9	2.4	6

Duration of guided reading instruction. Table 3 presents summary information on the duration of the before, during, and after reading segments of the guided reading lessons. More than one half of the observed 155 guided reading group lessons lasted 19 minutes or longer.

On average, the before reading segment lasted 5 to 6 minutes. The average time during reading ranged from 7 to 10 minutes, and the after reading segment averaged 4 to 5 minutes, depending on grade level.

Table 3. Duration of Guided Reading Lesson Segments: Before, During, and After Reading

Time in Minutes		Mean	Standard Deviation	Median
All (N=155)	Duration of guided lesson	19.3	6.6	19
Kindergarten (N=41)	Duration of guided lesson	19.6	6.8	20
	Time spent before reading	5.8	3.6	5
	Time spent during reading	8.0	3.3	8
	Time spent after reading	4.1	3.8	4
Grade 2 (N=47)	Duration of guided lesson	17.4	5.7	19
	Time spent before reading	4.8	3.5	5
	Time spent during reading	7.4	3.5	7
	Time spent after reading	5.2	4.7	4
Grade 3 (N=32)	Duration of guided lesson	20.3	7.5	20
	Time spent before reading	6.1	5.3	5
	Time spent during reading	9.8	3.3	10
	Time spent after reading	4.6	5.2	3
Grade 5 (N=35)	Duration of guided lesson	20.2	6.3	18
	Time spent before reading	5.5	3.3	5
	Time spent during reading	7.7	6.3	8
	Time spent after reading	4.8	6.1	4

Note: Total duration is not the sum of before, during, and after reading, due to rounding, transition time, and missing data.

Instructional Activities Observed Before, During, and After Guided Reading Lessons

Teacher and student activities observed before reading. The observers were asked to indicate whether specified before-reading instructional strategies and student behaviors occurred at all by recording **0 for Not observed** or **1 for Observed**. The analyses revealed some variations in the use of specified instructional strategies by grade level (Table 4).

Before reading, teaching from a lesson plan was observed in nearly all kindergarten and Grade 2 lessons and in most Grade 3 and 5 lessons. Activating and building background knowledge relevant to the lesson were observed in most kindergarten and Grades 2, 3, and 5 lessons. Sharing a lesson focus based on CCSS indicators was observed in most of kindergarten and Grades 2, 3, and 5 lessons. Researchers observed explicitly or verbally explaining a purpose for reading the text in most Grades 3 and 5 lessons, but less than half of kindergarten and Grade 2 lessons. Instruction on fundamental skills occurred in 81% of K lessons, but less than a third of Grades 2, 3, and 5 lessons. Similarly, explicitly teaching of vocabulary occurred in about three-quarters of kindergarten lessons; these practices steadily declined as grade level increased. Modeling a reading

comprehension strategy was observed in most Grade 3 lessons and close to half of kindergarten and Grade 2 lessons, but only 40% of Grade 5 lessons.

Among the observed learning tasks or student behaviors before reading, students were observed engaging in conversations about the text in most kindergarten and Grades 2, 3, and 5 lessons. Student discussions focused on making connections between the new text, previously read materials, and background knowledge was observed in most kindergarten and Grades 3 and 5 lessons, but occurred in less than half of Grade 2 lessons (Table 4). The proportions of lessons where students were observed raising questions about the text before reading was relatively low, ranging from 28% for Grade 3 to 37% for Grade 5 lessons.

Table 4.
Percent of Guided Reading Lessons Where Specified Instructional Strategies and Student Behaviors Were Observed: Before Reading

	Kindergarten (N=41)		Grade 2 (N=47)		Grade 3 (N=32)		Grade 5 (N=35)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Instructional strategies								
Teaches from a lesson plan	39	95.1	44	93.6	23	71.9	29	82.9
Activates or builds background knowledge relevant to today’s reading session	34	82.9	29	61.7	22	68.8	25	71.4
Provides instruction on fundamental skills	33	80.5	15	31.9	5	15.6	7	20.0
Introduces or explicitly teaches vocabulary	31	75.6	27	57.4	16	50.0	14	40.0
Shares a lesson focus based on CCSS indicators	23	56.1	31	66.0	19	59.4	24	68.6
Verbally/provides a purpose for reading the text or a section of the text	20	48.8	19	40.4	22	68.8	26	74.3
Models a reading comprehension strategy (e.g. visualizing, inferring, etc.)	19	46.3	23	48.9	19	59.4	14	40.0
Students behaviors								
Engage in a conversation about the text	34	82.9	31	66.0	20	62.5	29	82.9
Raise questions about the text	17	41.5	17	36.2	9	28.1	13	37.1
Discussion is focused on making connections between new text, previously read materials and background knowledge	23	56.1	22	46.8	21	65.6	24	68.6

Instructional practices and learning tasks observed during guided reading lessons. During the guided reading lesson, the observers indicated the presence of specified instructional strategies and student behaviors. The observers responded on a scale: **0=Not Observed**, **1= Some evidence** (fewer than half of students in a group), **2 = Strong evidence** (half or more of the students in the guided reading group).

Figure 5 presents the proportion of guided reading sessions where strong, some, or no evidence of specified practices was observed during reading. During reading, strong evidence of the following instructional practices was observed in one half or more of the lessons (Figure 5):

- Listening to individual student(s) read aloud the text assigned for instruction in kindergarten (78%), Grade 2 (70%), and Grade 3 (56%),
- Recording student behaviors in kindergarten (78%),
- Checking the individual student's understanding of the lesson focus in kindergarten (71%), Grade 2 (55%), and Grade 3,
- Providing direct skill or strategy instruction in kindergarten (61%) and Grade 2 (53%),
- Praising and affirming student use of reading or decoding strategies in kindergarten (61%),
- Providing student feedback on their reading in kindergarten (56%), Grade 2 (51%), and Grade 3 (50%),
- Checking for individual student use of reading strategies in Grade 3 (53%), and
- Posing inferential questions in Grade 3 (50%).

These data also drew attention and illustrated some patterns (Figure 5). For example, the frequency of listening to students read, recording reading behaviors, providing direct skill instruction, and praising use of reading comp/decoding strategies declined as grade-level increased. It seemed reasonable that some practices would decrease as students become more capable of reading independently. Strong evidence of teachers' checking the individual student understanding of the lesson focus (49%) and posing inferential questions (40%) was observed in close to half of the Grade 5 guided reading lessons during reading.

Strong evidence of two student behaviors or learning tasks was observed in the majority of lessons (Figure 6):

1. Students reading texts independently in all kindergarten lessons (100%) and most Grade 2 (79%) 3 (78%), and 5 (51%) lessons and
2. Students interacting with texts in kindergarten (66%), Grades 3 (81%), and Grade 5 (57%) lessons.

The learning task of applying teacher feedback as students read to improve accuracy, fluency, and comprehension was observed in under half of lessons across all grade levels, and was particularly infrequent in Grade 5 lessons. Student responses going beyond the literal level of text was observed in less than a third of kindergarten, Grade 2, and Grade 5 lessons, and just under half of Grade 3 lessons.

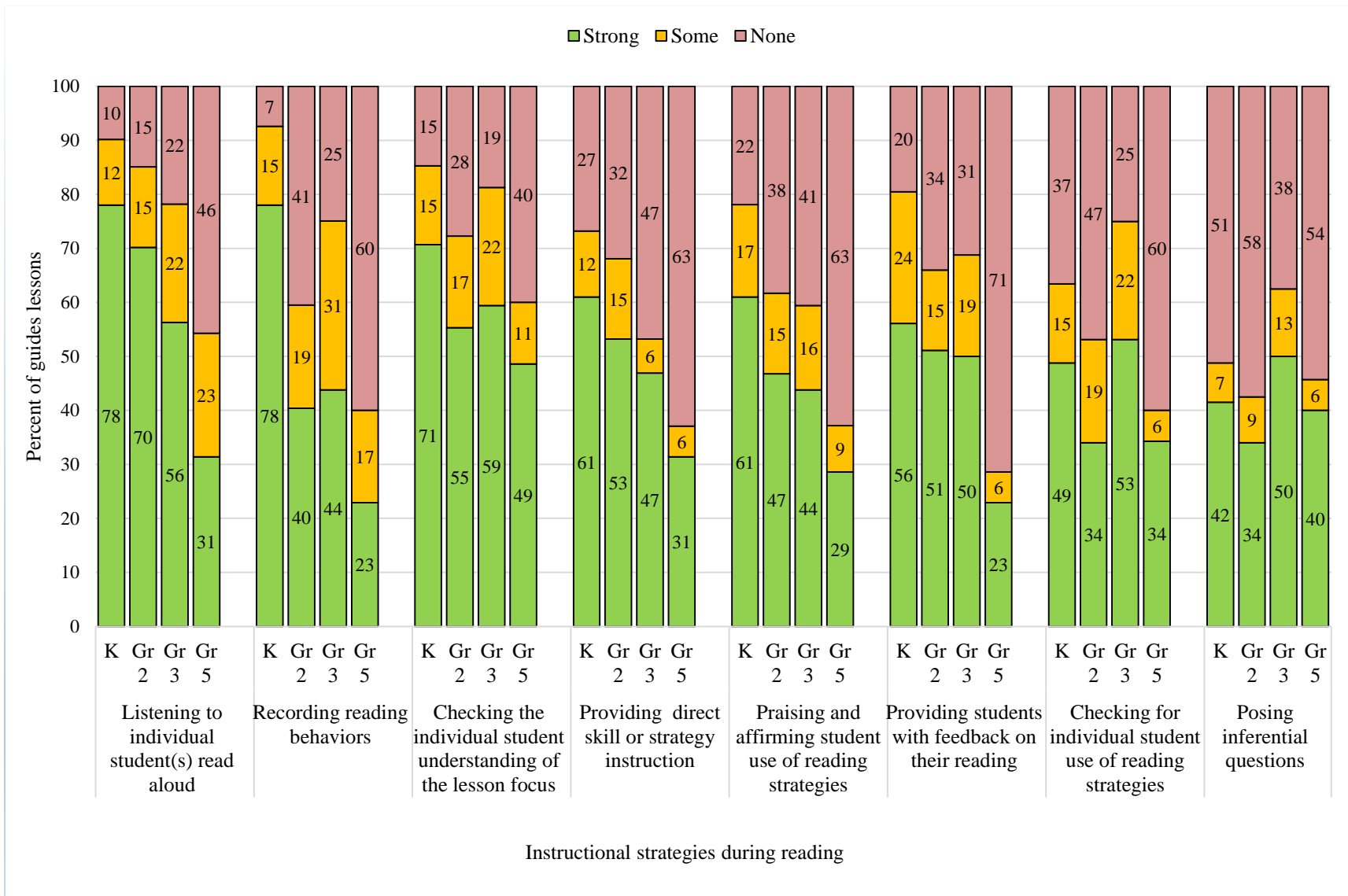


Figure 5. Strong, some, or no evidence of specified instructional practices observed during reading.

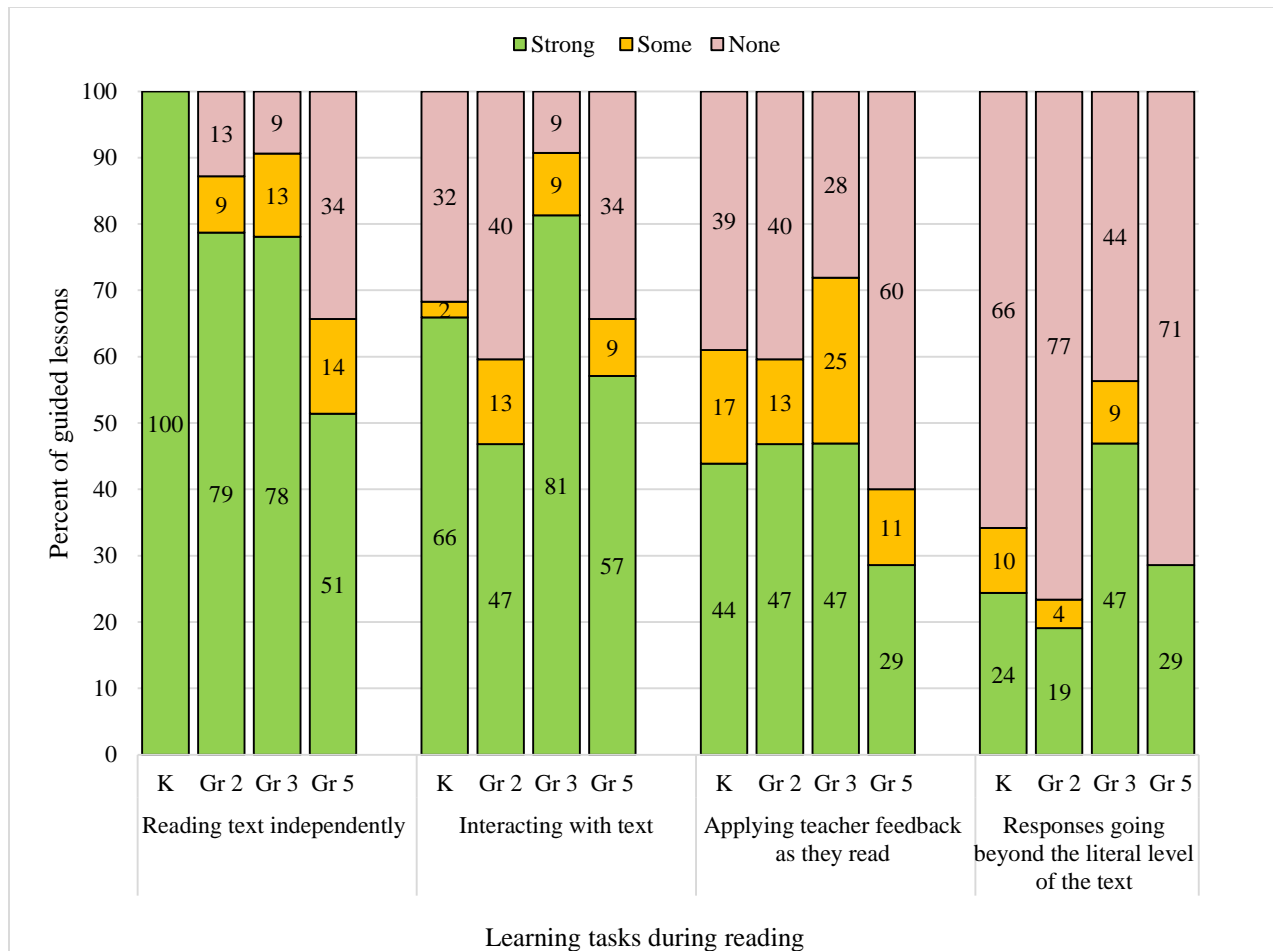


Figure 6. Strong, some, or no evidence of students engaging in specified learning tasks observed during reading.

Instructional Practices and Student Activities: After Reading

Instructional practices and reading behavior observed after reading. The observers were asked to indicate whether the specified reading instructional strategies occurred at all after reading by recording **0 for Not observed or 1 for Observed.**

The extent of use of the specified instructional strategies after the guided reading lessons varied by grade level (Table 5). While the use of specific strategies varied by grade level, some practices were observed in a relatively high proportion of lessons across grades. In 60% or more of lessons across grade levels, researchers observed teachers posing questions related to lesson focus and actively listening to student responses. In half or more of lessons observed, teachers provided opportunities for student discussions of the text based on student focus.

Teachers were observed prompting students for evidence from the text that elaborates or supports their answers in most kindergarten, Grade 3, and Grade 5 lessons but in less than half of Grade 2 lessons. The practices implemented in the lowest percentage of lessons after reading were

recording notes or collecting student work across all grade levels, and reinforcing the lesson focus in kindergarten (Table 5).

Table 5. Percent of Guided Reading Lessons During Which Specified Teacher Behaviors Were Observed: After Reading

Teacher/Instructional strategy	Kindergarten (N=41)		Grade 2 (N=47)		Grade 3 (N=32)		Grade 5 (N=35)	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Poses question(s) related to the lesson focus	29	70.7	37	78.7	26	81.3	22	62.9
Provides opportunity for student discussion of text based on lesson focus	21	51.2	33	70.2	21	65.6	20	57.1
Actively listens to student responses	25	61.0	36	76.6	23	71.9	22	62.9
Prompt students for evidence from the text that elaborates or supports their answers	23	56.1	21	44.7	24	75.0	22	62.9
Records notes or collects student work	17	41.5	16	34.0	15	46.9	12	34.3
Reinforces the lesson focus (e.g. think aloud)	10	24.4	23	48.9	20	62.5	17	48.6
Assigns meaningful follow up (written or oral) connected to the lesson focus	27	65.9	27	57.4	24	75.0	25	71.4

Student behaviors and activities observed after the guided reading lesson. *For this segment, the observers responded on a scale: 0=Not Observed, 1= Some evidence* (fewer than half of students in a group, **2 = Strong evidence** (half or more of the students in the guided reading group)).

Figure 7 illustrates the proportion of lessons where strong, some, or no evidence of learning tasks was observed. Engaging in meaningful follow up connected to the lesson focus was the only practice observed in over half of lessons across grade levels. Use of evidence from text and discussing text based on lesson focus tended to be observed more often in Grades 3 and 5 lessons compared to kindergarten and Grade 2 lessons. Across all grade levels, the learning task observed with the lowest frequency was students engaging in word study after reading.

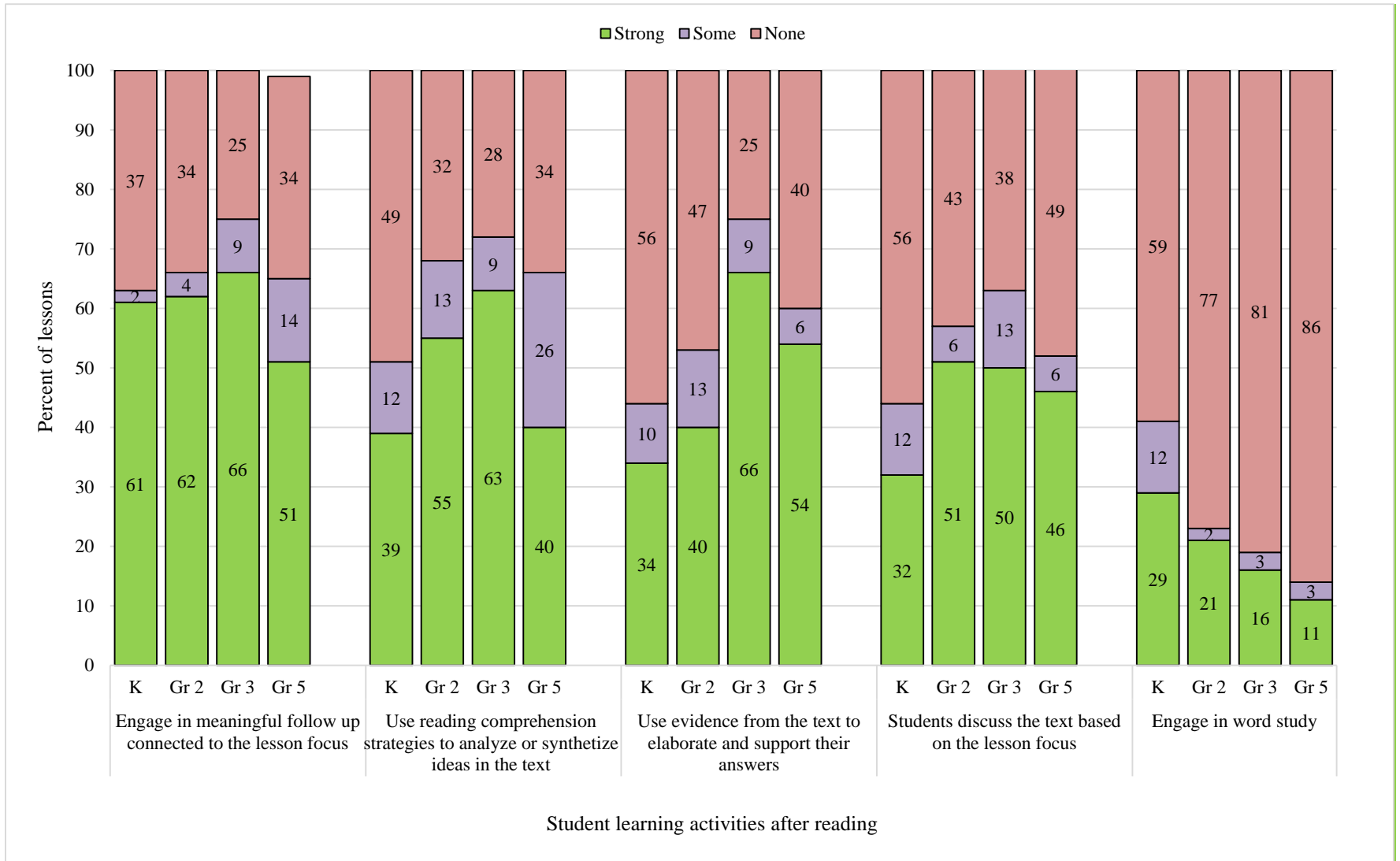


Figure 7. Strong, some, or no evidence of students engaging in specified learning tasks observed after reading.

Summary of findings of observation of guided reading lessons

Guided reading instruction was provided in groups of two to seven students. The teachers consistently used the before, during, and after structure of guided reading instruction, and each student in the same group used the same instructional text. The average guided reading lessons lasted about 19 minutes.

Before reading. In most lessons in all grades, teachers were observed teaching from a lesson plan, activating background knowledge, and sharing lesson focus. Frequency of explicit vocabulary instruction tended to decline as grade increased from kindergarten to Grade 5. Skill instruction occurred most frequently in kindergarten lessons, whereas explicit sharing of the purpose for reading lesson occurred more frequently in Grades 3 and 5.

During reading. Listening to individual students read aloud was observed in all of kindergarten, and a majority of Grades 2 and 3 lessons. Across grade levels, the instructional practices observed less frequently were checking for student use of reading strategies (ranging from 34% in Grade 2 and 5 to 53% in Grade 3) and posing inferential questions, ranging from 34% in Grade 2 to 50% in Grade 5 lessons. While a majority of students were observed reading independently and interacting with text in a variety of ways, students were observed applying teacher feedback or providing responses going beyond the literal level in less than one half of the lessons observed.

After reading. Overall, in most kindergarten and Grades 2, 3, and 5 lessons, teachers posed questions related to lesson focus, provided opportunity for students discuss text based on lesson focus, actively listened to student responses, and assigned meaningful follow up connected to lesson focus. Prompting students for evidence from the text that elaborates or supports their answers was observed in half or more of kindergarten and Grades 3 and Grade 5 lessons, but in less than half of Grade 2 lessons. After reading, across grade levels, teachers were observed recording notes or collecting student work in less than half the lessons. The use of reading comprehension strategies to analyze or synthesize ideas in the texts was observed in majority of Grades 2 and 3 lessons, but in less than one half of kindergarten and Grade 5 lessons.

Evaluation Question 2. To what extent did teachers participate in collaborative instructional planning at grade-level team meetings?

To respond to question 2, the data gathered from the observations of grade-level team meeting were analyzed. The findings are organized and presented based on the following categories: review and discussion of student information from previous weeks preceding the team meeting; clarifying instructional needs of students based on data analyses; and instructional planning—including understanding the indicators and identifying comprehension strategies; differentiation, and assessment opportunities.

Background information on collaborative grade-level team planning meetings. Overall, OSA staff observed 57 collaborative grade level meetings, equally distributed among kindergarten (N=15) and Grades 2 (N=14), 3 (N=14), and 5 (N=14) teams (Table 6). These planning meetings took

place on a weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly basis, varying across schools and grades. The number of staff at each meeting ranged from 2 to 15 (Table 6).

Table 6. Summary Statistics: Participants at the Collaborative Instructional Planning Meetings

Grade level Team	Minimum	Maximum	Median
K (N=15)	2	15	6.0
2 (N=14)	2	14	8.0
3 (N=14)	4	14	6.0
5 (N=14)	2	9	5.5

At most sites, the meeting participants included classroom teachers, administrators, Student teacher interns, and specialists, such as reading specialists, ESOL teachers, and staff development teachers. Classroom teachers led or facilitated most meetings. The teachers also took on various roles, including facilitators, note takers, and timekeepers. Depending on the grade-level, the majority (median) of the meetings lasted about 45 to 60 minutes (Table 7).

Table 7. Duration of Instructional Planning Meetings in Minutes

Grade	Number of Meetings	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum	Median
K	15	60.7	45.0	17	210	45
2	14	48.4	15.8	30	80	45
3	14	62.1	44.0	32	210	60
5	14	49.3	12.9	30	78	47

Review and discussion of student data from previous week(s). Figure 8 reports the proportion of meetings during which specific student data from previous week(s) were discussed and analyzed to determine what teachers know about students' accuracy, fluency, and comprehension. Anecdotal notes, student work, and students' running reading records were discussed in 65% of the 57 team-planning meetings observed. About one-third of the team meetings discussed outliers or students whose performance was outside the expected grade level range (33%) and trends (over time) and patterns in the student data (32%). Language development data were rarely used or discussed (4%).

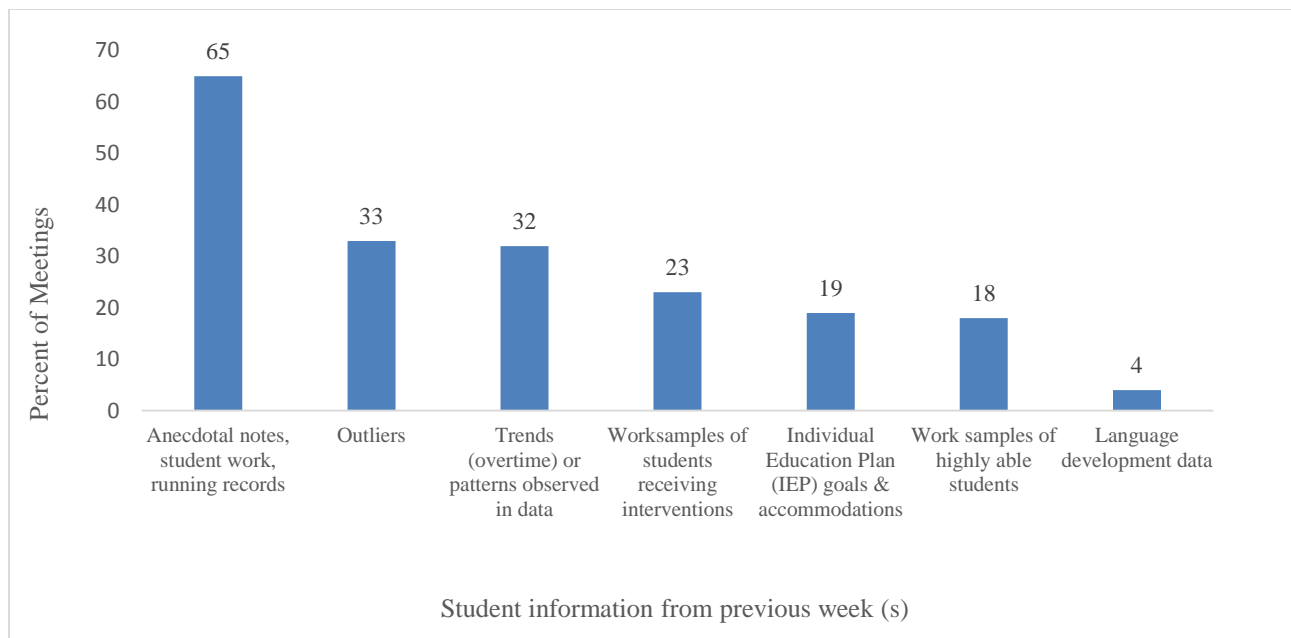


Figure 8. Percent of meetings in which each type of student data from previous week(s) was discussed during instructional planning (N=57).

Across the grade levels, the data from previous week(s) the majority of planning teams discussed anecdotal notes, student work, and running records (Table 8). Two-thirds of the kindergarten team meetings discussed outliers or students whose performance was outside the expected grade-level range; discussions related to outliers were less frequent in Grades 2, 3, and 5 team meetings.

Table 8. Percent of Instructional Planning Meetings Including Discussion of Student Data, by Data Type and Grade Level

Student data from previous weeks	Kindergarten (N=15)		Grade 2 (N=14)		Grade 3 (N=14)		Grade 5 (N=14)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
One or more of specified data from previous weeks	14	93.3	10	71.4	8	57.1	9	64.3
Anecdotal notes, student work, running records	13	86.7	8	57.1	8	57.1	8	57.1
Outliers	10	66.7	4	28.6	2	14.3	3	21.4
Individual Education Plan (IEP) goals and accommodations.	5	33.3	3	21.4	1	7.1	2	14.3
Work samples of students receiving interventions	5	33.3	0	0.0	4	28.6	4	28.6
Trends (overtime) or patterns observed in data	3	20.0	3	21.4	7	50.0	5	35.7
Work samples of highly able students	3	20.0	2	14.3	3	21.4	2	14.3
Language development data	1	6.7	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	7.1

Clarifying instructional needs of students based on data analyses. Figure 9 illustrates that all together, the most frequently discussed instructional need based on data from previous week(s) was reading comprehension based on oral and written comprehension questions and tasks.

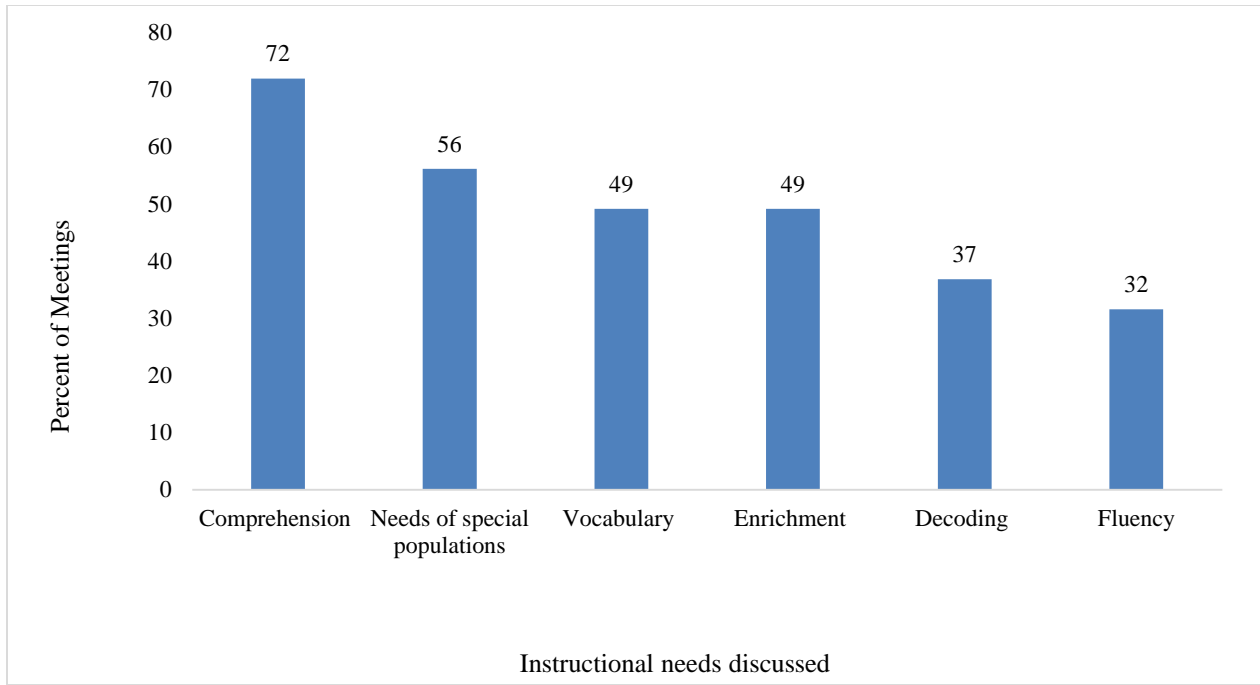


Figure 9. Percent of meetings in which specified instructional need was discussed (N=57).

Grade-level specific data revealed that nearly all of teams across grade levels discussed one or more of the specified instructional needs (Table 9). Reflecting the needs of early learners, discussions on word study focused on decoding varied widely by grade-level. Decoding was discussed by majority of kindergarten team meetings and about one third or less of Grade 2, Grade 3, and Grade 5 team meetings. Word study related to vocabulary centered on written comprehension questions and tasks was identified a need in two thirds or more of kindergarten and Grade compared to about one third or less in Grade 3 and Grade 5 teams. Most Grade 2 and one half of Grade 5 teams discussed types of enrichment their students needed; less than half of Grade 3 and kindergarten teams had discussions related to enrichment. Instructional needs in the area of comprehension based on oral and written comprehension questions and tasks was discussed by majority of teams across all grade levels. At least one half of kindergarten, Grade 2, and Grade 5 teams discussions made reference to instructional needs of special populations, but only about one-third of Grade 3 teams did so (Table 9). Regardless of grade level, in-depth analyses revealed that the observers reported limited instances of discussions that explicitly specified needs of English Language Learners (ELLs), students with disabilities, or highly able students.

Table 9. Percent of Meetings Including Discussion of Instructional Needs, by Grade Level

Instructional needs	Grade Level							
	Kindergarten (N=15)		Grade 2 (N=14)		Grade 3 (N=14)		Grade 5 (N=14)	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
One or more of specified instructional needs	14	93.3	14	100.0	13	92.9	14	100.0
Word study: decoding	12	80.0	4	28.6	3	21.4	2	14.3
Word-study: vocabulary	10	66.7	10	71.4	3	21.4	5	35.7
Types of enrichment needed	5	33.3	10	71.4	6	42.9	7	50.0
Fluency	9	60.0	4	28.6	2	14.3	3	21.4
Comprehension-based on oral and written comprehension questions	12	80.0	10	71.4	11	78.6	8	57.1
Need specific to special populations	12	80.0	7	50.0	5	35.7	8	57.1
ELLs	5	33.3	5	35.7	2	14.3	4	28.6
Students with disabilities	5	41.7	2	16.7	1	12.5	3	27.3
Highly able students	4	26.7	1	7.1	2	14.3	3	21.4

Instructional planning. Instructional planning was grouped into 3 categories: 1) developing a common understanding of the indicator, 2) identify comprehension strategies to teach the chosen indicators, and 3) plan differentiation and assessment opportunities.

Development of a common understanding of the indicator and instructional planning using CCSS. To develop a common understanding of the indicator, nearly all the 57 planning teams observed discussed what an indicator was asking students to do and be able to do (88%) and the associated learning goals (79%) (Figure 10).

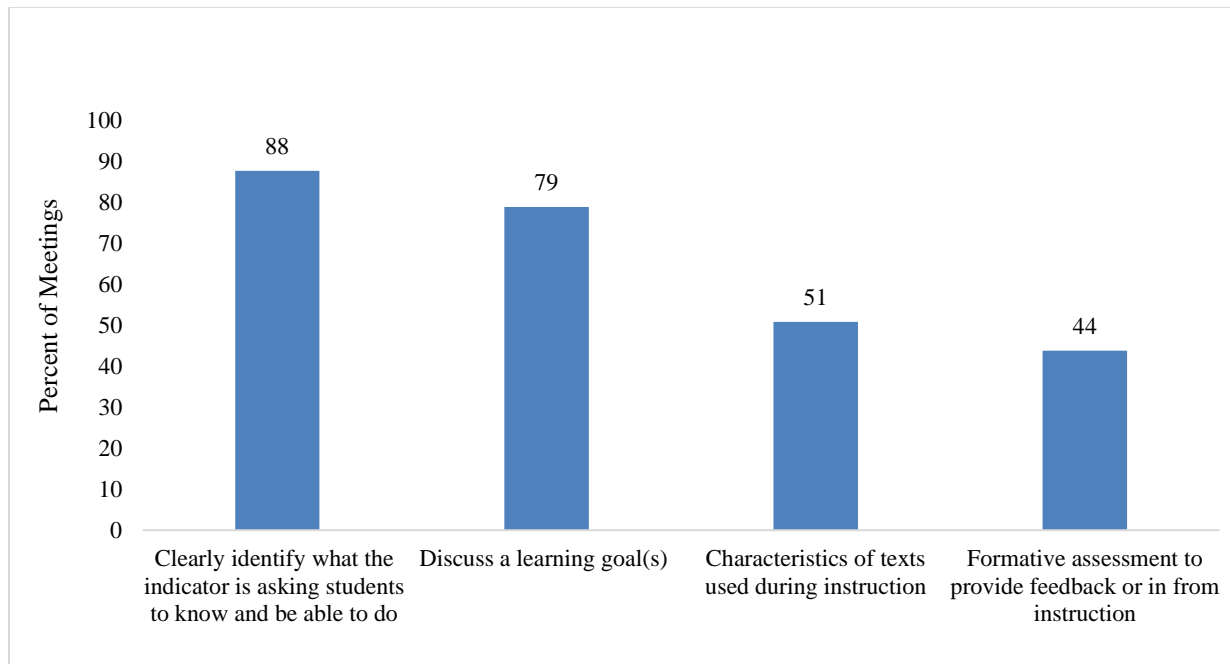


Figure 10. Percentage of instructional planning team that discussed how the chosen CCSS indicator should be taught (N=57)

When the data were disaggregated by grade level, the analyses showed that nearly all kindergarten (87%), Grades 2 (93%), and 3 (71%) and all Grade 5 (100%) grade-level teams discussed what a specific CCSS indicator was asking students to know and be able to do (Table 10). Even with the slight variations by grade level, more than 70% of the planning teams discussed how the indicator should be taught, including discussing learning goal(s) (i.e., mastery objective, language objective, sample learning task, header, reading indicator). Two-thirds or more of kindergarten and Grade 2 team meetings had conversations related to explicit instruction of reading comprehension strategies to students; half or fewer of Grades 3 and 5 team meetings did so.

The practice of identifying the characteristics of the text(s) to be used for instruction varied greatly across the team meetings, from a high of 71% in Grade 2 team meetings to a low of 36% of Grade 3 team meetings.

Table 10. Percentage of Grade-level Instructional Planning Teams that Discussed the Teaching of the Chosen CCSS Indicator

Focus of discussion	Grade level							
	Kindergarten (N=15)		Grade 2 (N=14)		Grade 3 (N=14)		Grade 5 (N=14)	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
One or more of specified activities	14	93.3	13	92.9	13	92.9	14	100.0
Clearly identify what the indicator is asking students to know and be able to do	13	86.7	13	92.9	10	71.4	14	100.0
Discuss a learning goal(s)	12	80.0	11	78.6	12	85.7	10	71.4
Discuss an explicit instruction of reading comprehension strategies to students	10	66.7	10	71.4	6	42.9	7	50.0
Identify the characteristics of the text used during instruction	7	46.7	10	71.4	5	35.7	7	50.0
Formative assessment to provide feedback on mastery of chosen indicators	5	33.3	8	57.1	7	50.0	5	35.7

Reading comprehension strategies chosen to teach the selected indicators. Across the 57 instructional planning teams, the most frequently discussed strategies to teach the chosen CCSS indicators were questioning (72%), synthesizing (61%), and determining the importance of the text (51%). Self-monitoring (28%) was less frequently discussed as one of the strategies the teams would use to teach the indicators chosen for instruction. Figure 11 presents the relative proportion of all team meetings in which participants discussed a specified comprehension strategy to teach the identified indicators.

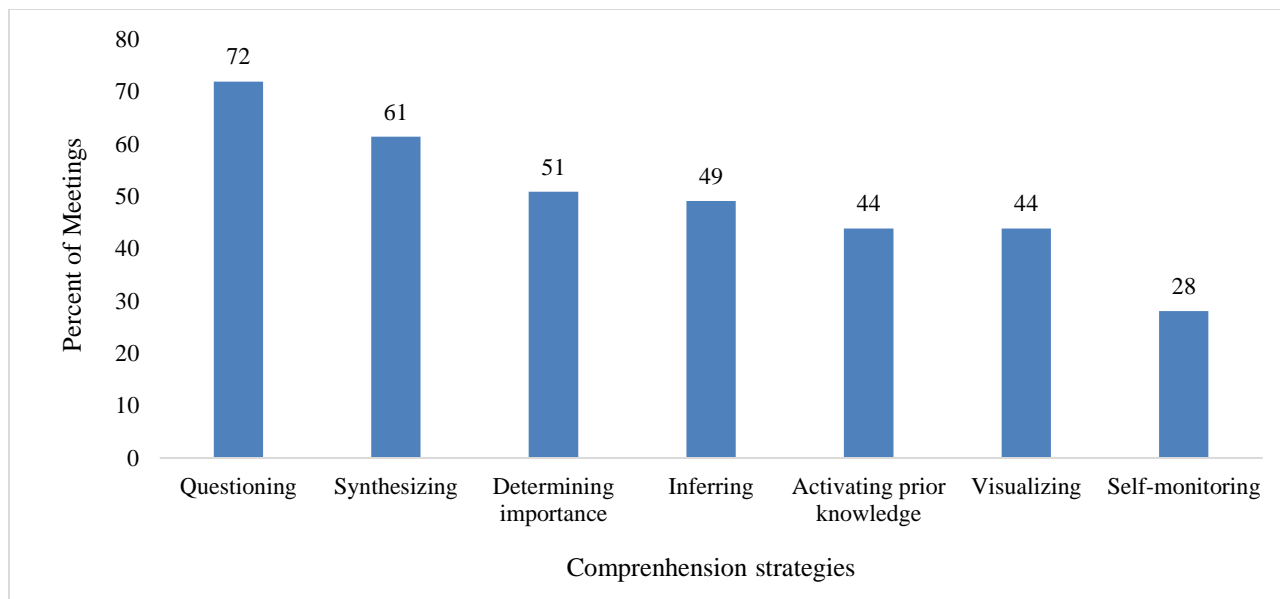


Figure 11. Percent of team meetings where specified reading comprehension strategies were discussed (N=57).

When the data were disaggregated by grade level teams, several patterns emerged (Table 11). The majority of planning teams chose and discussed the use of several comprehension strategies in their lessons. The strategy of questioning was discussed by a majority of the planning teams across grade levels. Self-monitoring and visualization were discussed in half or fewer meetings across grade levels. Activating priority knowledge was discussed in more than half of kindergarten meetings, but less than half of meetings for other grade levels. Discussion of inferring ranged from a low of 13% among meetings to a high of 86% in Grade 3 meetings.

Table 11. Reading Comprehension Strategies Discussed to Teach the Chosen Indicator

Reading comprehension strategies	Kindergarten (N=15)		Grade 2 (N=14)		Grade 3 (N=14)		Grade 5 (N=14)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
One or more strategies	11	73.3	12	85.7	12	85.7	12	85.7
Self-monitoring	5	33.3	6	42.9	3	21.4	2	14.3
Questioning	12	80.0	10	71.4	11	78.6	8	57.1
Activating prior knowledge	8	53.3	5	35.7	6	42.9	6	42.9
Inferring	2	13.3	8	57.1	12	85.7	6	42.9
Determining importance	5	33.3	6	42.9	9	64.3	9	64.3
Visualizing	6	40.0	6	42.9	7	50.0	6	42.9
Synthesizing	6	40.0	10	71.4	9	64.3	10	71.4

Determining Assessment Opportunities. Teachers were expected to discuss and plan assessment opportunities aligned with the chosen indicator and reading comprehension strategy. Close to one half of all the 57 teams observed discussed generating comprehension questions (47%) and use of organizers (46%) (Figure 12).

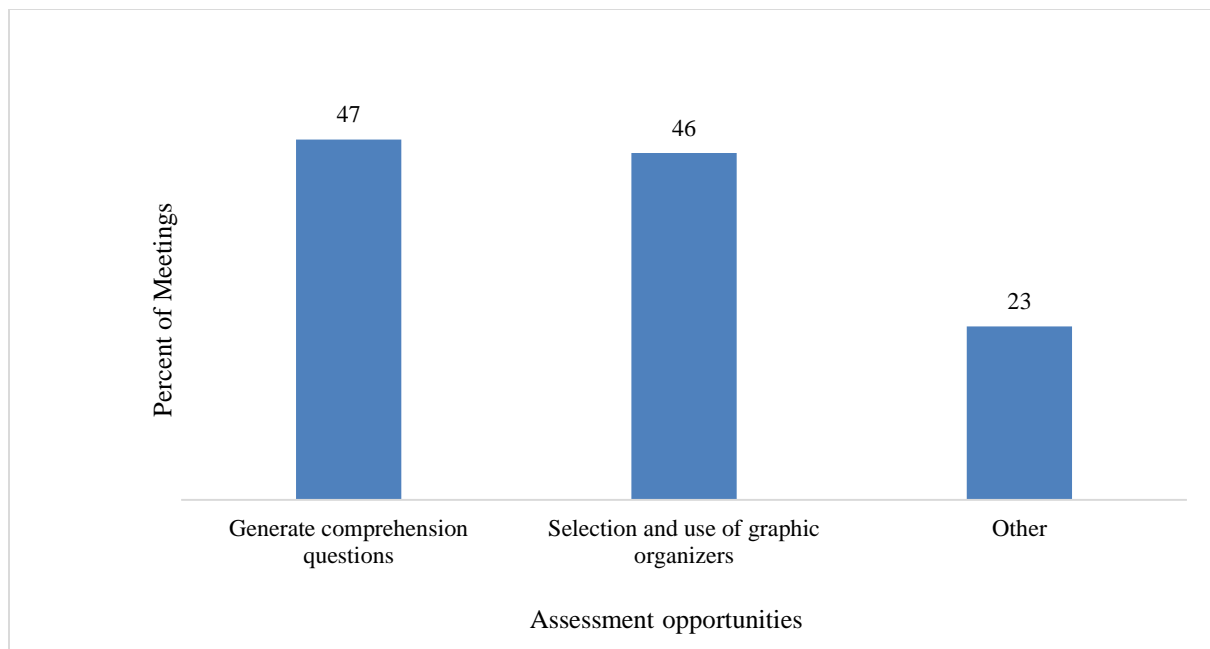


Figure 12. Percent of team meetings where specified assessment opportunities were discussed (N=57)

Most teams discussed at least one assessment opportunity (Table 12). The grade-level analyses revealed that most of Grade 3 teams discussed or generated comprehension questions they would use to check for student understanding of the chosen indicator (71%); this practice was observed in less than one half of kindergarten, Grade 2, and Grade 5 team meetings. While fifty percent of Grades 2 and 5 teams deliberated on the selection and use of graphic organizers, less than one half of kindergarten and Grade 3 teams did. Further, discussions related to formative assessments that would provide feedback on mastery of the chosen indicators were observed in 50% of the Grades 2 and Grade 5 teams and one third of kindergarten and Grade 5 teams.

Table 12. Percent of Meetings Where Opportunities for Assessment of Learning were Discussed

Assessment opportunities	Kindergarten (N=15)		Grade 2 (N=14)		Grade 3 (N=14)		Grade 5 (N=14)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
One or more assessment opportunities	10	66.7	13	92.9	7	50.0	8	57.1
Generate comprehension questions	6	40.0	10	71.4	6	42.9	5	35.7
Selection and use of graphic organizers	7	46.7	7	50.0	5	35.7	7	50.0
Formative assessment to provide feedback on mastery of chosen indicators	5	33.3	8	57.1	7	50.0	5	35.7

Planning for opportunities for differentiation for a variety of learners. With regard to differentiation, the teams were expected to discuss how they would use instructional strategies and resources to differentiate instruction and meet the needs of a variety of learners (Figure 13). The majority of planning teams discussed differentiation for students approaching proficiency (58%). Nearly half of the teams also discussed how they would differentiate instruction for students exceeding proficiency (47%). Discussions that made reference to differentiating instruction for students meeting proficiency, students receiving ESOL services were observed in about one third of the 57 meetings (Figure 13). Notably, very limited instances of discussions specific to strategies or resources for differentiating instruction for students with disabilities were observed (18%).

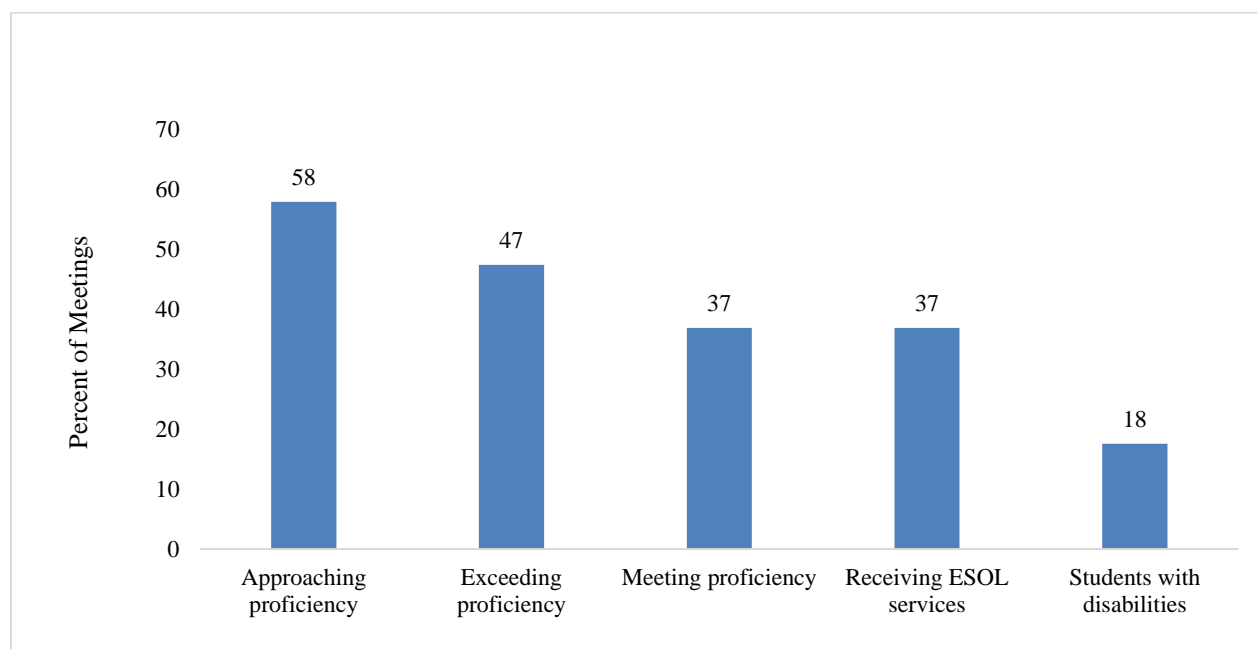


Figure 13. Percent of team meetings where differentiating instruction for specified groups of students were discussed (N=57).

Grade-level analyses showed that half or more of kindergarten, Grade 2, and Grade 5 teams discussed strategies or resources and differentiation for students approaching or exceeding proficiency, but only 43% of Grade 3 team meetings discussed differentiation for students approaching proficiency and even fewer (29%) discussed differentiation for students exceeding proficiency (Table 13). About one third of kindergarten teams (33%) discussed differentiating instruction to address the needs of students with disabilities; otherwise, discussion specific to planning for needs of students with disabilities were rare in Grade 2, 3, or Grade 5 teams. While differentiating instruction for students receiving ESOL services was discussed in 47% of kindergarten, 50% of Grade 2, and 43% of Grade 5 teams meetings, such discussions were observed in only 7% of the Grade 3 team meetings visited.

Table 13. Percent of Meeting Where Differentiating Instruction was Discussed

Differentiating instruction for:	Kindergarten (N=15)		Grade 2 (N=14)		Grade 3 (N=14)		Grade 5 (N=14)	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
	One or more groups	11	73.3	11	78.6	6	42.9	8
Approaching proficiency	10	66.7	9	64.3	6	42.9	8	57.1
Meeting proficiency	5	33.3	6	42.9	4	28.6	6	42.9
Exceeding proficiency	8	53.3	7	50.0	4	28.6	8	57.1
Receiving ESOL services	7	46.7	7	50.0	1	7.1	6	42.9
Students with disabilities	5	33.3	3	21.4	0	0.0	2	14.3

Summary of Findings Related to Observations of Collaborative Instructional Team Meetings

The number of participants in grade-level collaborative instructional planning teams ranged from 2 in schools with departmentalized reading instruction to 15 in planning teams that included classroom teachers, specialists and administrators. Based on review of the documentation used for scheduling team observations, the frequency of instructional planning meetings varied from school to school: weekly, every two weeks, or monthly. Overall, the average length of the instructional planning meetings was 55 minutes.

As expected, it was observed that a variety of reading performance data and artifacts were discussed during the collaborative instructional planning meetings. The most frequently discussed were anecdotal notes, student work, and running records. In one third or more of the meetings, teachers discussed trends and patterns in classroom data of their students. Nearly all of the teams identified a learning goal, and what a chosen CCSS indicator to be taught was asking the students to know and be able to do. In majority of the meetings, the teams also discussed and chose several reading comprehension strategies and instructional strategies to teach the chosen reading indicators. Further, a majority of the teams discussed some strategies they could use to differentiate instruction and questions they would ask to assess the learning of the chosen indicator. Notably, the use of language development data during the instructional planning was rarely observed among the 57 teams visited. A related observation was that only a third of the instructional planning teams discussed opportunities for differentiating instruction for students receiving ESOL services. Similarly, 1) data related to Individualized Education Program (IEP) goals and 2) discussions about strategies and resources for differentiating instruction for students with disabilities were rarely observed.

Evaluation Question 3. To what extent did teachers use the Monthly Reading Data Collection Tool during the 2016–2017 school year?

All elementary school reading teachers were expected to make observations of student reading behaviors regularly and to enter data into the data collection tool at least once a month. Examination of student level data confirmed the extensive use of the data collection tool by Grades 1 to Grade 5 teachers. Nearly all of Grades 1 to Grade 5 students had complete records of

MIRL data—accuracy, fluency, and comprehension, and instructional reading levels, and instructional notes for all the 7 months of data examined (Table 14).

Table 14. Number and Percent of Students with Complete MIRL Data for 7 Months

Grade Level	Complete Data for 7 Months	
	Students	%
Grade 1 (N=12,196)	11,671	95.7
Grade 2 (N=12,634)	12,175	96.4
Grade 3 (N=12,345)	11,928	96.6
Grade 4 (N=12,241)	11,822	96.6
Grade 5 (N=11,941)	11,589	97.1

When the monthly MIRL data were examined at the grade level, nearly all (95%) of students in the database had complete information on accuracy, fluency, and comprehension, and instructional reading levels for each of the seven months. Relative to all students, students identified as LEP (Limited English Proficient) were somewhat less like to have complete MIRL data, ranging from—86% of LEP students in Grade 5 to 94% in Grade 2 (Table 15). In particular, the proportions of ESOL Level 1 students who had complete MIRL data were very low, ranging from about 16% in Grades 2 and 4 to 25% for kindergarten students. The proportions of students in the ESOL level 2 with complete records of MIRL information varied by grade level and ranged from 65% for Grade 4 students to 81% for kindergarten students.

Table 15. Proportions of Students with Complete MIRL Information for 7 Months, by Student Subgroups

Category		Grade 1		Grade 2		Grade 3		Grade 4		Grade 5	
		n	% *	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Race/ethnicity	Black or African American	2,405	93.9	2,507	94.8	2,471	95.4	2,430	95.7	2,441	95.7
	American Indian	22	100.0	30	93.8	23	100.0	30	100.0	24	92.3
	Asian	1,535	94.5	1,790	95.5	1,655	97.1	1,669	96.1	1,751	96.9
	Hispanic/Latino	3,699	95.2	3,765	96.5	3,655	96.1	3,561	96.3	3,227	96.6
	Two or more	650	97.3	650	96.4	613	97.1	612	96.5	522	97.8
	Pacific Islander	4	100.0	7	100.0	9	100.0	8	100.0	2	100.0
	White	3,356	97.7	3,426	97.9	3,502	97.7	3,512	97.7	3,622	98.4
Gender	Female	5,702	95.7	5,862	96.1	5,739	96.6	5,714	96.3	5,677	97.1
	Male	5,969	95.7	6,313	96.6	6,189	96.6	6,108	96.8	5,912	97.0
ESOL Instructional Code	1	22	25.0	10	15.9	14	21.9	10	16.4	8	16.7
	10	172	96.6	147	98.7	86	96.6	41	97.6	68	97.1
	2	329	80.8	99	72.3	115	76.2	51	64.6	39	70.9
	3	1,353	97.3	702	94.9	217	90.0	131	85.1	119	86.2
	4	847	95.2	1,123	96.8	635	94.2	393	96.3	283	92.5
	5	361	96.5	520	97.9	416	97.2	271	95.4	188	94.5
	Reclassified English	1,134	98.6	1,434	98.3	2,119	98.9	2,399	98.2	2,033	98.5
	Language Learner (RELL)										
Special Services Receipt											
FARMS	Yes	4,751	94.2	4,847	95.5	4,639	95.4	4,536	95.8	4,215	96.0
LEP Status	Exited	1,134	98.6	1,434	98.3	2,119	98.9	2,399	98.2	2,033	98.5
	Yes	3,084	92.7	2,601	93.6	1,483	90.0	897	87.3	705	86.4
IEP	Yes	1,096	95.7	1,200	97.2	1,320	97.1	1,448	97.4	1,319	97.5

*This presents % within subgroup (See Appendix E, Table E1).

Discussion

Evidence in this report reflects widespread implementation of guided reading instruction, team planning for reading instruction, and frequent use of the online reading data collection tool, yet there is variation in the levels of implementation of some practices. For example, teachers' use of the instructional strategies of checking for individual student use of reading comprehension and/or decoding strategies and posing inferential questions varied within grades and across schools. During and after the reading lesson, great variability was observed across the grades and schools in the extent to which students respond beyond the literal level of the text, use reading comprehension strategies to analyze or synthesize ideas in the text, use evidence from the text to elaborate and support their answers, discuss the text based on the lesson focus, or engage in word study.

Notably, the findings from this component of the MIRL study substantiated and corroborated the findings from surveys of classroom teachers regarding their experiences with implementing MIRL in 2015–2016 (Maina & Wolanin, 2016). On the survey, the classroom teachers identified several practices that were challenging to implement and identified a need for ongoing training on instructional strategies and formative assessment skills—particularly assessing comprehension and differentiating instruction to meet the needs of their students. Accordingly, the practices observed with low frequency in the current study corresponded to the areas reported as challenging to implement and where need for ongoing professional development was mentioned on the survey, such as posing inferential questions, use of reading comprehension strategies, and differentiating instruction to meet the needs of a variety of students.

Less than one third of the survey respondents reported coordinating instruction for their students with disabilities with special education staff in a typical instructional planning meeting or using the module pathways to address instructional needs of English language learners, students with disabilities or highly able students. In the current study, limited instances of discussions of strategies and resources for differentiating instruction for students receiving special services were observed during team meetings.

On the other hand, the findings in this report revealed that nearly all the teachers used the online reading data collection tool as required. Despite the reported challenges that collecting data during guided reading and entering data into the online tool was time consuming and disrupted guided lessons, the teachers had entered the required reading monitoring data for more than 95% of their students for all the 7 months of data examined.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are based on the findings from this study. To provide guidance for ongoing improvements in the implementation of the MIRL strategy, the authors recommend:

Guided reading instruction

- Adopt a grade-level specific approach and target professional development to aspects of guided reading instruction that were implemented with the lowest fidelity. Across all grades, provide support to increase students' application of teacher feedback and responses that go beyond the literal level of the text.

Monitoring instructional reading levels

- Continue to use a variety of measures teachers use to monitor a) students' growth at regular intervals, b) status/proficiency in reading, and c) areas of instructional need. Examining growth and student needs on a regular basis will allow teachers and schools to identify student change over time, be it change in accuracy, fluency, comprehension, or proficiency. Monitoring students' proficiency standing (at specified intervals) on CCSS indicators—what they know and are able to do is also extremely important and is a key goal of the MIRL strategy.
- Explore reasons for students receiving ESOL services not having complete monthly MIRL data on record. The mandatory use of the tool was intended to facilitate consistent and ongoing monitoring of instructional reading levels for all students. If ESOL Level 1 and 2 students are not reading at all or are reading at levels that cannot be accommodated in the online data collection tool for their grade level, then, consider other tools or data for monitoring ESOL students' progress in reading.

Collaborative grade-level instructional planning

- Implement a standardized system for describing (keeping track/recording) how the planning, coordination, and monitoring of reading instruction for students receiving special services is implemented within a grade level and across schools. On the basis of the data available, it is not clear when and how teachers plan for strategies and resources for differentiating reading instruction for ESOL students, students with disabilities, or students receiving reading interventions. Since students who receive special services also attain MCPS reading milestones at lower rates than their grade-level peers, a better understanding of how their reading instruction is coordinated and planned at the school level is critical.

Strengthening the implementation of the comprehensive MIRL strategy

- Strive to increase the fidelity of implementation of MIRL practices across grades and schools. In particular, strengthen structures for a) regular use of a variety of formative assessment data among administrators and staff for planning instruction and b) assessing fidelity of

implementation of MIRL at the school level. Findings from this study showed that there is variation in the levels of implementation of some practices across schools and grades.

- Consider adapting the observation protocols from this study for teachers' use to self-monitor and observe peers in their implementation of guided reading lessons and instructional planning meetings. During the site visits to schools, the observers were frequently requested to share the tools or to provide feedback to the teachers they observed. A revised, updated version of the observation protocols would provide trainers, teachers, and school leaders with additional tools to a) clarify expectations for high quality guided reading and instructional planning teams and b) assess the fidelity of implementation of the MIRL practices at the classroom and school levels.
- As the student assessment data platform is introduced in MCPS schools, develop ways to incorporate the platform to address aspects of MIRL that teachers implemented at lower rates, such as collecting student work, increasing assessment opportunities using common checks for student understanding, and use of a variety of data for instructional planning.

Acknowledgements

The authors appreciate the valuable feedback from Dr. Shahpar Modarresi and Ms. Julie Wade of the Program Evaluation (PE) Unit. The appreciation is extended to Ms. Laura Evans, supervisor, Elementary Integrated Curriculum (EIC) Reading and her team of instructional specialists for their valuable input in developing and revising the observation protocols, training observers, and coordinating with Meadow Hall Elementary School for field testing the instruments. The following OSA researchers conducted school visits: Ms. Rachel Hickson (Testing Unit), Dr. Helen Wang (Applied Research Unit), Ms. Natalie Wolanin (PE Unit), and Dr. Huafang Zhao and Mr. Jeong Sang (formerly of the PE Unit). Mr. Cabell Lloyd, principal and Ms. Tiata Atkins, reading specialist at Meadow Hall Elementary School, who facilitated the field testing of the observation protocols. Many thanks to elementary school principals, reading specialists, staff development teachers, and teachers of reading in the stratified random sample of 30 schools visited, to Mr. Khalid Rosenbaum, Applied Research Unit, for assistance with generating a random stratified sample of schools; to Ms. Darshini Shah, supervisor, OCTO for providing the MIRL data; and to Ms. Maria Allendes, PE Unit for extensive logistic support with scheduling site visits and tabulating the information in this report.

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Appendix A1. Logic Model for MIRL: Activities, Expected Results, and Anticipated Outcomes for 2015–2016

Logic Model for MIRL: Activities, Expected Results, and Anticipated Outcomes for 2015–2016					
Needs and Issues (Rationale for MIRL)	Inputs (Resources and Structures Instituted)	Outputs/Results		Outcomes	
		Activities	Participation Metrics	Expected Short Term Changes	Expected Lasting Changes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decreasing performance in reading (K–5) as measured by MCPS AP-PR 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional development (PD) sessions • 2015–2016 MCPS Elementary Literacy Plan • Online Monthly reading data collection tool (OCTO) • School level common team planning structures • Monthly principal curriculum updates • Elementary Literacy Instructional Core Team (ICT) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarify and articulate Elementary Literacy Plan and vision for reading instruction at school level • Facilitate ongoing PD to school staff reflecting on results and best practices • Regularly assess and document reading levels during guided reading • Introduction of monthly reading data collection tool • Discuss reading data at regular intervals (monthly collaborative teams and principal curriculum updates) • Ongoing strategic use of formative reading data to adjust instruction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PD sessions and Modules/ Topics covered during PD for teachers • Number and frequency of PD sessions for school leaders • % Teachers attending PD • % Administrators attending PD • Types of structures and processes in place at school level and who is involved • Extent of use of monthly reading data collection tool/ periodic online reports • Frequency and structure of school level team meetings related to use of formative reading data to plan instruction • Frequency and attendance at principal’s curriculum update meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased familiarity of teachers and school leaders with literacy plan, data collection tools, and monitoring of reading performance • Initiating and formalizing processes and structures for collecting, entering, and using reading data • Increased monitoring (observation and documentation) of instructional levels during guided reading • Consistent use of monthly reading data collection tool to document instructional reading levels • Ongoing coordinated analyses and use of reading data to inform instructional practices and support student learning • Increased use of monitoring data to adjust instruction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Established use of monitoring of instructional levels during guided reading levels for all K–5 students • Improved reading performance for all K–5 students • Progress toward reducing achievement gaps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited observation, documentation, analysis, and use of formative data monitoring) of reading performance/of reading levels at specified intervals throughout the year 					

Figure A1. Logic Model for MIRL 2015–2016

Appendix A2: Professional Learning for Teachers: Implementing, Assessing, and Monitoring Guided Reading

Monitoring Instructional Reading Level, Grades K–5 2015–2016 is a series of professional learning opportunities to engage participants in professional development to support the implementation, assessment, and monitoring of instructional reading level during guided reading. This professional learning is for all teachers of reading for students in Grades K–5. In addition, all teacher leader groups including principals, assistant principals, staff development teachers, reading specialists, ESOL teachers, and pre-kindergarten teachers will receive professional learning aligned to the MCPS Elementary Literacy Plan.

Table A2a. Description of Professional Learning Sessions for Teachers.

Topic	Time Frame	Audience	Facilitation	Materials	Coverage Compensation
Monitoring Instructional Reading Level Reading Module 1 K–5	August – October 1 – 1.5 hours Dates: TBD scheduled by school	Classroom teachers ESOL, Special Education, Staff Development, Reading Initiative, Reading Focus, Principals, Assistant Principals	Principal Assistant Principal Reading Specialist Staff Development Teacher Team Leaders	District-developed multimedia presentation, training plan, and digital copies of handouts, consultation	None
Analyzing Data and Instructional Practices Reading Module 2 3–5	September – November 3 – 3.5 hours Dates: TBD scheduled by school	Classroom teachers, ESOL, Special Education, Staff Development, Reading Initiative, Reading Focus, Principals, Assistant Principals	Principal Assistant Principal Reading Specialist Staff Development Teacher Team Leaders	District-developed multimedia presentation, training plan, and digital copies of handouts, consultation	Half-day substitute coverage provided through OCIP funds
Analyzing Data and Instructional Practices Reading Module 2 K–2	November – February 3 – 3.5 hours Dates: TBD scheduled by school	Classroom teachers, ESOL, Special Education, Staff Development, Reading Initiative, Reading Focus, Principals, Assistant Principals	Principal Assistant Principal Reading Specialist Staff Development Teacher Team Leaders	District-developed multimedia presentation, training plan, and digital copies of handouts, consultation	Half-day substitute coverage provided through OCIP funds
Reflecting on Results and Next Steps Reading Module 3 K–5	April – May 1–1.5 hours Dates: TBD scheduled by school	Classroom Teachers, ESOL, Special Education, Staff Development, Reading Initiative, Reading Focus, Principals, Assistant Principals	Principal Assistant Principal Reading Specialist Staff Development Teacher Team Leaders	District-developed multimedia presentation, training plan, and digital copies of handouts, consultation	None

Source. MCPS (2015c). *2015–2016 MCPS Early Literacy Plan*. Rockville, MD. Montgomery County Public Schools.

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING FOR SCHOOL LEADERS


Professional learning for school leaders (except those around mathematics) will be aligned and focus on building content knowledge and leadership capacity to support teachers in planning, teaching, and assessing students in literacy.

Table A2b. Description of Professional Learning Sessions for School Leaders.

Group	Aug/Sept Topics	October Topics	November Topics	December Topics	January Topics	February Topics	March/April Topics	May/June Topics
Elementary Principals' Curriculum Update Meeting	No meeting	2014–15 Data – KRA, MCPSAP-PR, & MAP MIRL – Getting started; training Grades 3–5; reports	Math	Using Data to plan/support literacy development in special populations; ELLs and students with disabilities	No meeting	Using data to plan/support literacy development in special populations; highly able students	Math/No meeting	Math
Reading Specialists Meeting	Cluster meetings; 2015–16 Priorities Support for Module 1 & 2A; mClass, coaching conversations; developing trust	Support for Module 2B; Supporting implementation of monitoring, coaching conversations, facilitating collaboration	No meeting	Cluster Meetings (continue into January), Supporting analyses of monthly instructional reading level data, supporting special populations	Cluster Meetings (from Dec)	Coaching conversations; Diagnosis and Instructional Practice; supporting special populations, Questioning	Coaching; supporting special populations Questioning	Planning for Year 2 of Implementation of MIRL, literacy plan
ESOL Teacher Meetings	No meeting	Collaborative Approach to MIRL/DIRL	No meeting	Collaborative Approach to MIRL/DIRL	No meeting	No meeting		No meeting
Early Childhood Teacher Meetings	Balanced Literacy Schedule Rigorous ways to build Letter Knowledge	Balanced Literacy	Balanced Literacy and cultural proficiency	Balanced Literacy and cultural proficiency	Balanced Literacy and cultural proficiency		Balanced Literacy and cultural proficiency	
Staff Development Teacher Meetings		Supporting implementation of monitoring, facilitating collaboration	SDT Meeting	Supporting Monitoring Instructional Reading Levels with Reading Specialists	SDT Meeting	Attend PCU	SDT Meeting Attend PCU on Math	Attend PCU on Math
Special Education		Literacy overview-collaboration with EIC Team		Curriculum and Instruction		Curriculum and Instruction	Curriculum and Instruction	

Source. MCPS (2015c). 2015–2016 MCPS Early Literacy Plan. Rockville, MD. Montgomery County Public Schools.

Appendix B: Expectations for Guided Reading



The graphic features a circular logo on the left with the number '2.0' and the text 'Elementary Integrated Curriculum'. To the right of the logo is a green banner with the text 'Small Group: Guided Reading Instruction' in white.

Expectations:

- Every student
- Clear lesson focus using the indicator/header
- Before, During, After structure
- Instructional level text
- Reading comprehension strategies
- Sample Learning Tasks may be used or modified based on student need
- 10 – 30 minutes

Figure B. Expectations for guided reading.

Source. Elementary Integrated Curriculum, Office of Curriculum and Instructional Programs. Rockville, MD. Montgomery County Public Schools.

Appendix C: Expectations for Collaborative Team Planning Meetings

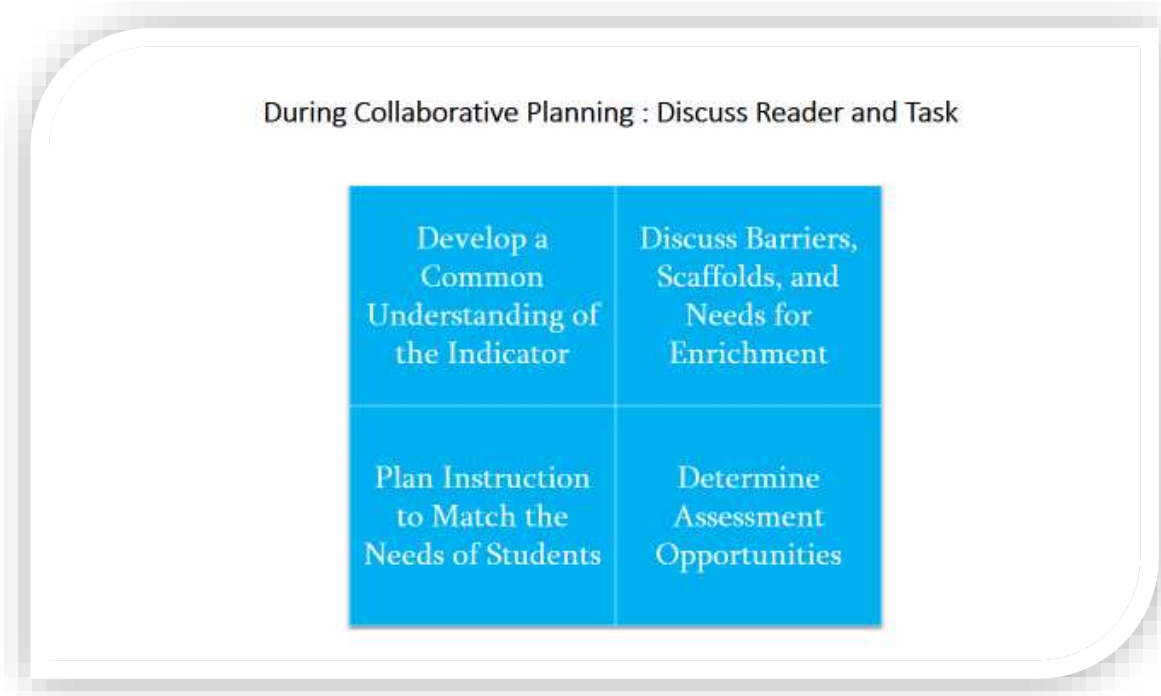


Figure C. Guidance for collaborative planning.

Develop a Common Understanding of the Indicator

- What do students need to know and be able to do in order to be proficient?
- Should the entire indicator be taught or just a portion?

Discuss Barriers, Scaffolds, and Needs for Enrichment

- What do you know about your students' accuracy, fluency, comprehension, and language development?
- What patterns do you notice?
- What insights or strengths do students possess?
- What miscues or confusions did students exhibit while learning the concept or skill identified in the indicator?
- What enrichment will be provided?

Plan Instruction to Match the Needs of Students

- How has this indicator been successfully taught in the past?
- How might whole and small group complement each other?
- How should student confusions be addressed?
- What instructional strategies or resources can be used to differentiate instruction and meet the needs of particular student groups?

Determine Assessment Opportunities

- How will I collect oral or written formative assessment data?
- What questions will be asked to check for student understanding of the indicator?

Source. Elementary Integrated Curriculum, Office of Curriculum and Instructional Programs. Rockville, MD. Montgomery County Public Schools.

Appendix D: Characteristics of Schools Randomly Selected for Site Visits

Table D1. Characteristics of Schools Randomly Selected for Site Visits.

School	Enrollment	Percent Hispanic/Latino and Black/African American	Percent ESOL	Percent FARMS	Title I	K-2	Grades 3-5	K-5	FARMS >50%
Arcola	725	87.31	43.59	74.9	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
Ashburton	899	27.7	10.9	12.57	No	No	No	Yes	No
Bel Pre	545	83.3	45.69	70.28	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
Bethesda	519	16.57	12.72	6.74	No	No	No	Yes	No
Burnt Mills	533	86.87	25.89	68.48	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
Burtonsville	660	75.15	13.64	52.27	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Candlewood	331	32.63	16.31	21.75	No	No	No	Yes	No
Darnestown	309	12.94	2.59	4.85	No	No	No	Yes	No
Farmland	654	15.6	24.46	9.02	No	No	No	Yes	No
Flower Valley	476	33.19	8.61	24.58	No	No	No	Yes	No
Forest Knolls	733	57.16	25.51	40.65	No	No	No	Yes	No
Germantown	313	54.63	13.1	31.63	No	No	No	Yes	No
Glenallan	650	78.77	25.38	65.23	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Greencastle	809	87.02	15.08	64.65	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Kensington Parkwood	659	16.24	5.92	6.37	No	No	No	Yes	No
Little Bennett	692	27.46	9.25	16.47	No	No	No	Yes	No
Lucy V. Barnsley	686	40.82	13.99	29.59	No	No	No	Yes	No
Montgomery Knolls	510	73.53	46.08	64.71	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
New Hampshire Estates	517	95.16	67.89	91.3	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes
Oakland Terrace	490	44.29	15.92	31.63	No	No	No	Yes	No
Rachel Carson	1,007	25.52	12.61	20.56	No	No	No	Yes	No
Rock Creek Valley	443	50.11	23.93	37.7	No	No	No	Yes	No
Ronald McNair	848	38.21	17.81	26.3	No	No	No	Yes	No
S. Christa McAuliffe	630	67.46	19.37	50.79	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Sargent Shriver	755	87.28	49.14	81.59	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
Sligo Creek	637	32.5	9.11	13.34	No	No	No	Yes	No
Stedwick	575	71.13	32.17	56.17	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Stonegate	489	52.35	8.59	22.09	No	No	No	Yes	No
Strathmore	454	83.04	19.6	62.78	No	No	Yes	No	Yes
Twinbrook	531	68.55	48.21	67.04	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Whetstone	748	76.87	37.43	66.18	No	No	No	Yes	Yes

Data source—Schools at a Glance Data (SAAG) 2015.

Appendix E: Characteristics of K–5 Students with MIRL Data

Table E1. Demographic Characteristics of K–5 Students with MIRL Data in the Database

Characteristic		Grade 1 (12,196)		Grade 2 (12,634)		Grade 3 (12,345)		Grade 4 (12,241)		Grade 5 (11,941)	
		<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Race/ ethnicity	Black or African American	2,560	21.0	2,645	20.9	2,590	21.0	2,539	20.7	2,551	21.4
	American Indian	22	.2	32	.3	23	.2	30	.2	26	.2
	Asian	1,624	13.3	1,874	14.8	1,704	13.8	1,736	14.2	1,807	15.1
	Hispanic/Latino	3,884	31.8	3,902	30.9	3,805	30.8	3,698	30.2	3,340	28.0
	Two or more races	668	5.5	674	5.3	631	5.1	634	5.2	534	4.5
	Pacific Islander	4	--	7	.1	9	.1	8	.1	2	--
	White	3,434	28.2	3,500	27.7	3,583	29.0	3,596	29.4	3,681	30.8
Gender	Female	5,957	48.8	6,102	48.3	5,941	48.1	5,933	48.5	5,846	49.0
	Male	6,239	51.2	6,532	51.7	6,404	51.9	6,308	51.5	6,095	51.0
ESOL Instructional Code	1	88	.7	63	.5	64	.5	61	.5	48	.4
	10	178	1.5	149	1.2	89	.7	42	.3	70	.6
	2	407	3.3	137	1.1	151	1.2	79	.6	55	.5
	3	1,390	11.4	740	5.9	241	2.0	154	1.3	138	1.2
	4	890	7.3	1,160	9.2	674	5.5	408	3.3	306	2.6
	5	374	3.1	531	4.2	428	3.5	284	2.3	199	1.7
	N	7,719	63.3	8,395	66.4	8,556	69.3	8,769	71.6	9,060	75.9
RELL	1,150	9.4	1,459	11.5	2,142	17.4	2,444	20.0	2,065	17.3	
FARMS	Yes	5,043	41.3	5,075	40.2	4,863	39.4	4,735	38.7	4,390	36.8
LEP	Exited	1,150	9.4	1,459	11.5	2,142	17.4	2,444	20.0	2,065	17.3
	Yes	3,327	27.3	2,780	22.0	1,647	13.3	1,028	8.4	816	6.8
IEP	No	11,051	90.6	11,399	90.2	10,986	89.0	10,754	87.9	10,588	88.7
	Yes	1,145	9.4	1,235	9.8	1,359	11.0	1,487	12.1	1,353	11.3