Montana Comprehensive Literacy Project

Year 3 Evaluation Report

November 2020

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Angela Roccograndi

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**CREATING STRONG
SCHOOLS & COMMUNITIES**

About Education Northwest

Founded as a nonprofit corporation in 1966, Education Northwest builds capacity in schools, families, and communities through applied research and development.

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Executive Summary

In fall 2017, the U.S. Department of Education awarded Montana a Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy (SRCL) grant. This funding enables the Montana Office of Public Instruction (OPI) to implement the Montana Literacy Plan by helping schools build a comprehensive program to advance the literacy skills of all students—particularly disadvantaged students. OPI has been implementing the Montana Comprehensive Literacy Project (MCLP) since January 2018. This report focuses on its third year of implementation, 2019–20.[1]

MCLP Activities in Which OPI Engaged

OPI awarded subgrants to 58 schools across 21 districts. Across awarded schools, according to student assessment data, 60 percent of students were enrolled in grades K–6, and 40 percent were enrolled in grades 7–12. About half of students were economically disadvantaged (52%), just over a quarter were American Indian (28%), and fewer than a fifth were receiving special education services (17%) or classified as English learner students (16%).

In 2019, OPI provided a fall conference to support implementation of subgrantees' local literacy plans. Participants were pleased with the conference, especially the presenters, content, breakout session variety, planning time with team members, and support from OPI and instructional consultants.

Additionally, OPI staff members and instructional consultants regularly provided on-site support to district and school staff members to help them build their capacity to implement their literacy plans. Part of this support included monitoring intervention fidelity by engaging a variety of stakeholders in observations and data analyses. OPI also supported the alignment of services across the birth-through-grade 5 continuum through coordination, professional development, and technical assistance; at the local level, alignment activities were evident across this continuum. OPI further engaged district and school leadership team members in activities to ensure implementation expectations are upheld. OPI supports MCLP sustainability at the state level by using similar processes across departments. OPI staff members and instructional consultants address local sustainability by building capacity and ownership.

District and school staff members were satisfied with the support they received from OPI staff members and instructional consultants. However, variation existed between groups of staff members and support providers—and in some cases, support was viewed less positively this year than last.

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[1] Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, disruptions impacted schools in Montana beginning in March 2020. Most students engaged in distance/online instruction through the end of the school year. Furthermore, most campuses limited the number of visitors onsite, including OPI staff members in instructional consultants. This situation may have impacted survey results collected in May and June.

MCLP Activities in Which Districts and Schools Engaged

Overall, school and district leadership teams supported activities *to improve literacy instruction.* Schools established leadership teams that engaged in work necessary to implement their local literacy plan. They also helped establish systems to support data-based decision-making, and they used these systems to determine needs and improve overall implementation and intervention fidelity. In addition, they facilitated and engaged in two-way communication and engaged in collaboration. However, school leadership team members reported engaging in the continuous improvement cycle and communication activities less frequently than last year. School staff members implemented multiple interventions to support literacy, math, and behavior, and most were implemented with partial or full fidelity. Family engagement—communicating with parents/caregivers and involving them in school events—improved in terms of amount, consistency, quality, and participation. Professional development plans were tied to local needs, addressed data-based decision-making and various literacy topics, and focused on collaboration. MCLP school staff members were satisfied with the professional development they received but wanted more differentiation; inclusion; and time for practice, planning, and collaboration. Finally, districts established leadership teams that engaged in the continuous improvement cycle to identify needs and address gaps in their comprehensive literacy programs.

In addition, school and district leadership teams supported activities *to implement comprehensive literacy instruction.* School staff members used standards throughout the day to guide instruction, interventions, and grading. School staff members improved their knowledge of assessment types, development, and administration, and they were using assessment data to make various educational decisions. Schools also enhanced their multi-tiered systems of support for students. School staff members reported engaging in bell-to-bell instruction, being more efficient with instructional time, and using literacy strategies and differentiated instruction. Implementing improved instructional practices, differentiating instruction, focusing on critical aspects of curriculum, making data-based decisions, motivating students and teachers, and collaborating were all strategies used to support instruction for at-risk students. Professional development and coaching provided school staff members with resources, tools, and strategies to become more effective teachers. School staff members supported learning by engaging students and building relationships with them.

At this point of the grant, collaboration and collecting and using data via the continuous improvement cycle appear sustainable to school leadership team members, but instructional changes and professional development appear less sustainable.

Districts' and Schools' MCLP Needs

At the leadership level, schools need support to prioritize and standardize processes to encourage continued implementation and sustainability. They also need support in finding ways to engage more families—and in a larger variety of activities. In addition, they need to plan professional development focused on data-based decision-making, instruction, reading,

writing, and student engagement. Efforts to improve transition were also requested. At the educator level, school staff members requested additional time and support in understanding, using, and assessing standards. School staff members also requested additional support with assessments, data analysis, and differentiation, and they often said they needed more support and time to practice new strategies and to provide instruction and interventions. To better support at-risk students, staff members requested various components of a multi-tiered system of support, such assessments, Tier 1 strategies and differentiation, and Tier 2 and 3 interventions. Accordingly, school staff members requested to learn more strategies to support behavior, engagement, and differentiated instruction.

Student Assessment Results

The percentage of students at benchmark increased from fall 2019 to winter 2020[2] and from winter 2019 to winter 2020 across all students, elementary-grade students, secondary-grade students, English learner students, students receiving special education services, economically disadvantaged students, and American Indian students.
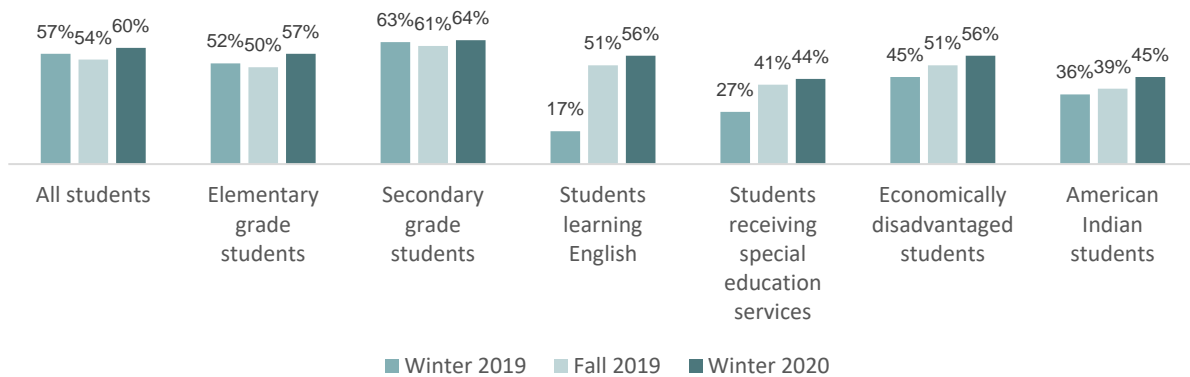
Source: Education Northwest analysis of independent student interim assessment data.

Recommendations

1. Continue to support the needs of disadvantaged students by providing differentiated instruction and appropriate interventions.
2. Ensure OPI staff members and instructional consultants have enough time to work with district and school leadership and teacher teams on-site.
3. Provide continued training and site-based support from OPI staff members, instructional consultants, and instructional coaches. District and school staff members requested professional development and support on assessment and data-based decision-making,

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[2] Due to COVID-19 pandemic, spring assessments were not administered in Montana; we used winter data instead.

evidence-based practices and interventions, instruction, and community and family engagement.

4. Support districts and schools in adjusting their master schedules to support collaboration and instruction time.

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Chapter 1. Introduction

Background

In fall 2017, the U.S. Department of Education awarded Montana a Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy (SRCL) grant. This funding enables the Montana Office of Public Instruction (OPI) to implement the Montana Literacy Plan to help schools build a comprehensive program to advance pre-literacy, reading, and writing skills for students from birth through grade 12—including limited-English-proficient students and students with disabilities (U.S. Department of Education, 2018). After receiving notification of funding, OPI started planning for implementation beginning in January 2018. Montana's SRCL grant funds the Montana Comprehensive Literacy Project (MCLP) through June 2021.

OPI awarded subgrants to 58 schools across 21 districts. OPI requires that each school form a school leadership team and that districts with multiple participating schools form a district leadership team. Each subgrantee school is required to develop a local literacy plan, based on a comprehensive needs assessment and aligned to the Montana Literacy Plan, that improves the quality of its existing literacy program and components.

Per the Montana Literacy Plan, each school addresses five components of comprehensive literacy instruction (standards and curriculum, assessment and data-driven decision-making, amount and quality of instruction, instruction for at-risk students, and motivation for teaching and learning) and three components of improving literacy instruction (academic leadership, community and family engagement, and professional development). The Montana Literacy Plan requires the use of the continuous improvement cycle, which comprises five parts (assessing local needs, selecting evidence-based solutions, creating an implementation plan, implementing and monitoring the plan, and reflecting and revising the plan), and evidence-based strategies, interventions, and practices.

OPI provides subgrantees with information about grant requirements and professional development regarding the Montana Literacy Plan, the continuous improvement cycle, and evidence-based practices. OPI assigned a staff member from its office to support each district and an instructional consultant to support each school. On-site, educators receive professional development from their leadership team and additional technical assistance and support to implement their local literacy plan from their OPI staff member and instructional consultant.

Students complete assessments designed to measure their attainment of the Montana Early Learning Standards, as well as the Montana Common Core Standards, that address literacy, reading, and writing. These include independent interim assessments administered at least three times a year (fall, winter, and spring) and the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) test. Leadership teams use these data to monitor the progress of students, including

disadvantaged students. By monitoring implementation of interventions, MCLP seeks to improve student performance on all assessments. Figure 1-1 displays the MCLP logic model.

Figure 1-1. MCLP Logic Model

Resources and Activities	Outputs	Year 1 Outcomes	Year 2 Outcomes	Year 3 Outcomes
Montana Literacy Plan Comprehensive Needs Assessment (CNA) Continuous Improvement Cycle (CIC) Local literacy plan (LLP) aligned to Montana Literacy Plan Independent Peer Review (IPR) Toolkit OPI provides MCLP grant application modules OPI provides regional grant application workshops Awarded subgrantees provide professional development to all staff OPI and instructional consultants (ICs) follow-up with on-site support	Subgrantees write grants using CNA, aligning their local literacy plan to the Montana Literacy Plan, and selecting interventions with strong or moderate evidence. IPR process used to prioritize subgrantees that propose a high-quality comprehensive literacy instruction program. CIC used by subgrantees to implement LLP and by OPI to monitor. OPI, ICs, and school leadership teams track student progress, including that of student subgroups.	OPI uses an IPR process to prioritize awards to eligible subgrantees who propose a high-quality comprehensive literacy instruction program, supported by moderate or strong evidence and that aligns with the MCLP and local needs. OPI implements a high-quality plan to prioritize and award subgrants that will serve the greatest numbers of disadvantaged children, including children living in poverty, English learners, American Indian children, and children with disabilities. OPI implements a high-quality plan to align, through a progression of approaches appropriate for each age group, early language and literacy projects supported by this grant that serve children from birth–age 5 with programs and systems that serve students in K–5 to improve readiness and transitions for children across this continuum. OPI uses the CIC for continuous program improvement, including the results of monitoring evaluations, and other administrative data, to inform the program's continuous improvement and decision making, to improve program participant outcomes, and to ensure that disadvantaged children are served; and other stakeholders receive the results of the effectiveness of the MCLP in a timely manner. Awarded subgrantees use the CIC to implement an LLP that (1) was informed by a CNA, (2) provided professional development, (3) implemented interventions that are supported by moderate or strong evidence, and (4) implemented a plan to track children's outcomes consistently with all applicable privacy requirements. Walkthrough data demonstrates beginning of implementation of interventions. Initial 5% growth on Montana interim assessments and GPRA performance measures for all disadvantaged subgroups	Additional 10% growth on Montana interim assessments and GPRA performance measures for all disadvantaged subgroups	Additional 10% growth on Montana interim assessments and GPRA performance measures for all disadvantaged subgroups

External Evaluation of MCLP

OPI contracted with Education Northwest to conduct this independent evaluation of MCLP implementation from July 2019 through June 2020. This evaluation is both formative (i.e., measuring OPI's support of and subgrantees' implementation of the Montana Literacy Plan) and summative (i.e., measuring the relationship of school participation in MCLP to student performance on various assessments). Education Northwest implemented a mixed-methods design that includes survey administration, interviews, and analyses of student assessment data. The evaluation addresses five research questions related to implementation and outcomes:

1. To what extent did OPI implement a high-quality plan to align (through a progression of approaches appropriate for each age group) early language and literacy projects supported by this grant that serve children from birth to age 5 with programs and systems that serve students in kindergarten through grade 5 to improve readiness and transitions for children across this continuum?

2. To what extent did the subgrantees submit and use the continuous improvement cycle to implement a local literacy plan that (1) was informed by a comprehensive needs assessment and aligned with the Montana Literacy Plan, (2) provided professional development, (3) included interventions and practices that are supported by moderate or strong evidence, and (4) included and used a plan to track children's outcomes consistent with all applicable privacy requirements?

3. To what extent did the subgrantees and OPI:
   a. Use the continuous improvement cycle for continuous program improvement to inform the program's decision-making, improve participant outcomes, and ensure disadvantaged children are served and that other stakeholders receive the results of the effectiveness of MCLP in a timely fashion?
   b. Advance the literacy skills (including preliteracy, reading, and writing) of all students?
   c. Advance the literacy skills of disadvantaged students (children living in poverty, English learner students, and children with disabilities) in particular?
   d. Determine what percentage of students served by MCLP are disadvantaged?

4. How has OPI addressed sustainability, and to what extent are subgrantees' local literacy plans sustainable beyond the life of the grant?

5. To what extent do subgrantees meet short-, mid-, and long-term outcomes, as defined in the MCLP logic model?

Methods

Surveys
In spring 2020, evaluators administered an online survey to educators working in all subgrantee schools. The survey captured staff members' experiences and opinions about participation in the MCLP fall conference, on-site professional development, district and school leadership teams, sustainability, and success and challenges implementing the Montana Literacy Plan. A

total of 601 surveys were completed or partially completed, representing 14 of 21 participating districts (67%). We analyzed closed-ended survey items by calculating frequencies and means, as appropriate. Open-ended items were content analyzed to determine common themes across respondents. For demographic information of MCLP staff members completing the survey, see Appendix A. Districts, as well as the percentage of staff members in districts, responding to the survey differed considerably between Years 2 and 3, which could contribute to differences in survey frequencies between the two years. In addition, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, disruptions impacted schools in Montana beginning in March 2020. Most students engaged in distance/online instruction through the end of the school year. Furthermore, most campuses limited the number of visitors onsite, including OPI staff members in instructional consultants. This situation may have impacted survey results collected in May and June. Response rates cannot be calculated because evaluators do not know the number of staff members asked to complete the survey in each district.

Interviews

In spring 2020, evaluators interviewed five OPI staff members assigned to MCLP districts. These interviews addressed the MCLP conference, on-site professional development, use of the continuous improvement cycle, and sustainability. Evaluators also asked these five OPI staff members to describe the successes and challenges that they, as well as instructional consultants and school leadership teams, had encountered while supporting and implementing the Montana Literacy Plan on-site. Interview responses were content analyzed to determine common themes across respondents.

Student Assessment Data

Independent interim assessments[3] were used to evaluate MCLP student outcomes. Evaluators established a data-sharing agreement with each district to access its students' assessment data from the corresponding independent interim assessment provider. These included ACT Aspire, aimswebPlus, Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy (DIBELS/DIBELS Next), Expressive/Receptive One Word Picture Vocabulary Test,[4] FastBridge, Istation's Indicators of Progress (ISIP), iReady, NWEA's Measures of Academic Progress (MAP), Renaissance Learning's Star Reading, and SBAC Interim Assessments. All assessments were analyzed to place students into one of four tiers (Tier 1, benchmark; Tier 2, strategic; Tier 3, intensive; and Tier 4, advanced) in fall and winter.[5] We used the first three tiers provided by the independent interim assessment rather than calculating them based on scores and/or percentiles. However, we did calculate the fourth tier, advanced, by assigning scores at or above the 90th percentile to that category. Additional information on analyses is in Chapter 4. Data from students who were tested in both fall and winter were analyzed for the annual report. For demographic

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[3] Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Montana did not administer the statewide assessment (Montana Comprehensive Assessment System reading/English language arts test from SBAC) in spring 2020.

[4] Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Expressive/Receptive One Word Picture Vocabulary Test was administered only in the fall of 2019–20 rather than fall and spring.

5 Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, schools did not administer their interim assessments in spring 2020.

information of students with fall and winter independent interim assessment data, see Appendix A.

Table 1-1 aligns the research questions to the data collection tool and population.

Table 1-1. Alignment of Research Questions to Data Collection Tool and Population

Research Question	School Staff Member Spring Survey	OPI Staff Member Interviews	Independent *Student* Interim *A*ssessment Data
1	X	X	
2	X	X	
3	X	X	
4			X
5	X	X	

Report Layout

The remainder of this report includes summaries of all collected data:

- Chapter 2 focuses on the activities in which OPI engaged to support MCLP implementation—the fall conference, on-site support, aligning services across the birth-through-grade 5 continuum, use of the continuous improvement cycle, and sustainability.

- Chapter 3 focuses on activities in which school staff members engaged to implement MCLP—the work of their district and school leadership teams; use of evidence-based strategies, practices, and interventions; implementing the improving instruction and comprehensive instruction components of the Montana Literacy Plan; and sustainability.

- Chapter 4 focuses on student outcomes and includes analyses of the independent interim assessment data for all students and disadvantaged students.

- Chapter 5 provides a summary and offers recommendations.

Chapter 2. OPI Activities

This evaluation assessed five activities in which OPI engaged to implement MCLP: the MCLP fall conference, on-site support, aligning services across the birth-through-grade 5 continuum, use of the continuous improvement cycle, and sustainability. This chapter relies on data collected via interviews with OPI staff members supporting MCLP, the school staff member survey, and participant survey data collected by OPI following the fall MCLP conference.

MCLP Conference

OPI provided a fall conference that engaged school staff members in assessment and literacy topics.

OPI invited school leadership team and staff members to attend a fall conference. In planning the conference, OPI staff members and instructional consultants provided feedback about school and district progress to date. In addition to meeting individual school needs (e.g., based on the comprehensive needs assessment), OPI aimed to provide content that could benefit all attendees, as well as content differentiated by grade bands (e.g., preschool through grade 2, grades 3–8, and grades 9–12), role (e.g., teachers, administrators, and coaches), and level of experience using the continuous improvement cycle in building comprehensive literacy programs. During the conference, teams had access to their OPI staff member and instructional consultant.

The fall conference included required sessions and breakout workshops provided by OPI staff members and instructional consultants. The required workshops addressed content related to assessment, including developing assessment plans, using SBAC interim assessment blocks and formative assessments, and preparing students to take the ACT; the plan-do-study-act (PDSA) cycle; and restorative practices. Breakout sessions addressed Montana's new dyslexia law, understanding and using the Montana Literacy Plan, engagement, literacy (e.g., writing and spelling), and trauma. The conference also offered a session for district clerks to support their understanding of proper use of funds and e-grant reporting.

Participants were pleased with the conference, especially the presenters, content, breakout session variety, planning time with team members, and support from OPI and instructional consultants.

Survey respondents were satisfied with the conference. Almost all reported that the presenters were knowledgeable and engaging and that the content was tied to their school literacy plan and relevant to their work (table 2-1). Although most agreed the conference provided time for team members to collaborate, fewer agreed they had time to collaborate with other teams' members (however, the percentage of respondents who agreed or strongly agreed with this last statement increased from last year).

Table 2-1. Feedback on Fall MCLP Conference from Spring Survey Respondents

Survey Item	Percent "Agree" and "Strongly agree"	
	Year 2	Year 3
The presenters were knowledgeable about the content.	100%	98%
The content was tied to our school literacy plan.	100%	98%
The presenters were engaging.	98%	96%
The content was relevant to my work.	98%	97%
The conference provided ample time to collaborate with our team.	92%	91%
The conference provided ample time to collaborate across teams.	79%	86%

Source: Education Northwest analysis of School Staff Member Survey data.

OPI staff members administered a survey to conference participants. The survey asked about the extent to which the conference sessions included quality content and the impact the content would have on participants' continuous improvement cycle processes. Both used a scale from "1" (low) to "4" (high). Table 2-2 displays average scores for the sessions; the three required sessions also include averages disaggregated by grade band.

Table 2-2. Feedback on Fall MCLP Conference from OPI Session Quality and Impact Survey Respondents

Session	Overall		PreK–2nd		3rd–8th		9th–12th	
	Quality	Impact	Quality	Impact	Quality	Impact	Quality	Impact
Assessment	3.3	3.1	3.4	3.3	3.2	3.2	3.2	2.9
PDSA	3.0	3.0	3.2	3.1	3.1	3.1	2.7	2.7
Restorative Practices*	3.0	2.8			3.1	2.9	2.9	2.7
Dyslexia	3.5	3.0						
Engagement	3.8	3.5						
Impact cycles	2.9	2.9						
Montana Literacy Plan	3.5	3.1						
Restorative Practices	3.6	3.2						
Spelling	3.5	3.2						
Transitions	3.7	3.7						
Writing (genre)	3.6	3.5						
Writing (syntax and sentences)	3.7	3.3						
Writing Revolution	3.7	3.6						

* This session was offered at two grade bands: elementary and secondary.

Note. The OPI survey did not include grade band breakdowns for the non-required sessions (below the dark line).

Source: Education Northwest analysis of data collected by OPI. Only respondents with MCLP district emails were included in the analysis (N=79).

Table 2-2 shows that conference survey respondents found the sessions to be of high quality, with averages ranging from 2.9 (impact cycle) to 3.8 (engagement). Generally, respondents' average scores regarding the impact of the content on their continuous improvement cycle process were slightly lower than their content quality scores (-0.2, on average). Still, with averages ranging from 2.8 (restorative practices) to 3.7 (transitions), respondents indicated the content from the sessions would have an impact on their continuous improvement cycle processes.

When asked what went well with the conference and what content they would like to see at the spring conference, survey respondents were generally very positive. They applauded several individual presenters and presentations, and they appreciated the variety (and in some cases, the relevance and applicability) of the breakout sessions. School leadership team and school staff members appreciated the planning time they had with their teams and access to their OPI staff member and instructional consultant. Some respondents requested more planning time in general (as well as the space to do so) and after each session. Respondents appreciated the grade band breakouts, the repeated sessions, and the district presentations. There was mixed feedback regarding the keynote speaker.

Looking to the spring, respondents requested more time on analyzing and using data (e.g., the PDSA cycle, ACT data, and using classroom data). Other requested content included more on dyslexia and screeners, restorative practices, content area strategies for low-level readers, and writing. Participants also requested a district panel and more sessions geared toward specific roles. In terms of logistics, participants asked for more space, shorter sessions, and an early end.

> *Having multiple sessions to choose from allowed our team to go to what interested them and focused on what our school was working on.* (Fall MCLP conference attendee)
>
> *I enjoyed the variety of exercises that each workshop had to offer. I found the ones with practical use-in-the-classroom-tomorrow activities and advice so much more informative and helpful than workshops that focused on data analysis and the history or creation of different programs. I also did not enjoy the keynote speaker and found his information redundant and un-engaging. I would hope the spring conference has just as many new and varied workshops. I think it would also be interesting to have a panel discussion of superintendents or teachers (of all subjects) discuss how they have incorporated or changed their programs as a result of the opportunities through this grant. What are other schools doing and what can we learn from them?* (Fall MCLP conference attendee)
>
> *I really liked the breakout sessions and the high-quality presentations and ideas each shared. I would like to see more time built in at the end of the conference for SLTs to meet and talk about what they learned and how they can implement what was gained.* (Fall MCLP conference attendee)

I wish I could have spent a whole morning or afternoon with the Teaching, Engaging, and Understanding Behaviors and especially, Syntax and Sentence Writing sessions. After the Syntax and Sentence Writing session, our physical education teacher came away with ideas and that is huge. I think that could have a profound impact on our literacy and I wish all of our teachers could have attended and worked with him longer. (Fall MCLP conference attendee)

Thank you for a wonderful fall conference. My whole school leadership team (SLT) attended the Impact Cycle session with Carrie Kouba. I think that will help with the SLTs approach to professional development with staff. I do feel that having time with our teams for planning is essential, but we needed a quiet spot and that didn't really happen for us. (Fall MCLP conference attendee)

The session on SBAC with Interim's was much better than any past sessions. I got more out of this session concerning the Interim's with Marisa Graybill-thank you Marisa!!! Would like to go with the next step with the results. Didn't have enough time to really get into the data results. (Fall MCLP conference attendee)

Due to logistical issues, OPI did not offer a spring conference. The annual staff member survey asked about the extent to which this affected MCLP implementation. Most respondents (60 percent) indicated it did not have an impact. This was primarily due to having a plan in place and strong leadership to continue to guide implementation and ongoing access to professional development through the school/district, OPI, and instructional consultants.

I feel we are a pretty strong team from a small school, so we are able to quickly and consistently communicate with one another, even during this time. The conference does always provide new insight and refreshes our thinking and practices, but we have a pretty strong foundation now and are pretty consistent in our follow-through. (School staff member)

I follow the lead of my excellent leadership team in my respective building. They always handle things well and give good guidance when moving forward on what to do should the unexpected arise. (School staff member)

I think as a school we are working together to continue to improve and grow in having strong programs to help our students. We are continually looking at up-to-date data to make sure we can meet our students where they are at. (School staff member)

However, 34 percent of school staff members indicated that not having a spring conference "somewhat" affected implementation, and 6 percent indicated it affected implementation "a great deal." For these staff members, the MCLP conference provided time and information critical to planning and implementing their grant. The professional development was considered crucial for staff members, and the support from OPI, instructional consultants, and

team members in and outside of a school/district was valuable. For some staff members who indicated that not having a spring conference "somewhat" affected implementation, the need for professional development was not dire—but it was still appreciated and considered generally useful.

> *I always feel that the fall and spring meetings are very beneficial for our school leadership team. It allows us the opportunity to stay updated on current trends, share success stories, and network with the other schools in the MCLP grant. I feel that these meetings also hold the individual schools/teams accountable for the work that they are doing. I return to my school after every meeting with new ideas and different ways to approach the issues and concerns impacting the education process.* (School staff member)

> *This spring conference would have allowed our leadership team time to meet as a group and evaluate with our consultant in much greater detail how we did this past year and what we could change to make positive impacts before the end of the year and for planning for the fall. There are a lot of issues that will come with the completion of this grant that needed to be addressed and how we would be moving forward with or without the next grant. These conversations in the presence of the OPI staff was critical to continue... too bad this conference didn't happen.* (School staff member)

> *[We] need more direction from OPI.* (School staff member)

On-Site Technical Assistance and Professional Development

OPI staff members and instructional consultants regularly supported district and school staff members in building their capacity to implement their literacy plans.
OPI staff members and instructional consultants engaged in a set of activities monthly. OPI staff members generally provide leadership and system support to district leadership teams and instructional consultants. Instructional consultants generally address instructional issues with school leadership teams, teacher teams, and program coaches. The sidebar on the following page summarizes the activities in which OPI staff members and instructional consultants engaged to support MCLP implementation.

Interviews with OPI staff members revealed that their key supports included attending district/school leadership team meetings; conducting walkthroughs; providing professional development/technical assistance; working with program coaches; supporting data analysis, goal setting, action planning, and monitoring; and supporting instruction by meeting with teacher teams and working with educators on instructional frameworks.

According to OPI staff members who participated in spring interviews, this past year, OPI successfully worked with district and school staff members to develop effective district/school leadership teams, reinforce the use of data, implement instructional frameworks, and strengthen multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS).

[I was] excited to get them to see the importance of the instructional framework; that was a huge win this year; last year they were not ready to work on that. (OPI staff member)

[One school leadership team] has developed ownership of their data and is looking at the data to impact students' needs and educators' work. (OPI staff member)

After noticing Tier 1 instruction was not always working, [we have been] scheduling how they work with MTSS and interventions. Their MTSS is getting stronger and is now a structure and system rather than doing it different with all students. (OPI staff member)

In addition to balancing their district/school assignments, OPI staff members experienced challenges related to developing relationships with team members, facilitating conversations between teams and instructional consultants, keeping teams motivated, and dealing with administrative turnover.

Also, according to OPI staff members who participated in spring interviews, instructional consultants provided professional development across a range of subjects, including bell ringers, entrance/exit tickets, explicit instruction, small-group instruction, student engagement, and student-led conversations. One instructional consultant led book studies on *The Writing Revolution* by Judith Hochman and Natalie Wexler, as well as texts focused on working with American Indian students. They also conducted walkthroughs and gave teachers feedback, provided coaching and modeling, and helped school leadership teams and teachers use data to address the needs of disadvantaged student groups and struggling readers in terms of Tier 1 instruction and Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions.

Some successes that instructional consultants experienced, as reported in OPI staff interviews, included building relationships with school staff members, effecting change in teacher practice, developing school leadership teams and professional learning communities, and supporting data use. OPI staff members described how one instructional consultant supported differentiated instruction and another built relationships with teachers:

Key Onsite Activities of OPI Staff Members and Instructional Consultants

OPI Staff Members
- Develop and use structured agenda
- Provide leadership and system support
- Ensure administration of benchmark and progress monitoring assessments and review results
- Attend district leadership team meeting
- Review budget and drawdown
- Communicate with instructional consultant about coaching plans and school/work needs

Instructional Consultants
- Develop and use structured agenda
- Meet with school leadership team
- Provide instructional support via modeling and professional development
- Support teacher teams with data analysis and data-based decision making
- Support program coach
- Communicate with OPI about coaching plans and school

[The instructional consultant worked at] getting teachers to lead small group instruction and helped establish processes for having students work independently while teachers engaged in one-on-one instruction. (OPI staff member)

[The instructional consultant has] great relationships; it's fun to see teachers are comfortable to pick up the phone or send email to share their classroom experiences after employing suggestions from their instruction consultant. The instructional consultant has become an active part of the school. (OPI staff member)

Instructional consultants' challenges included buy-in and/or resistance to change, coordinating efforts among multiple instructional consultants in a district, and developing relationships because of turnover.

Monitoring intervention fidelity involves various stakeholders engaged in multiple tasks, including observation and data analyses.
An additional responsibility of OPI staff members and/or instructional consultants is monitoring and improving implementation fidelity of interventions adopted in schools' literacy plans. In its application for the grant, OPI indicated it would monitor the fidelity of implementation using a process guided by five principles: adherence, exposure or duration, quality of program delivery, program differentiation, and student responsiveness. In interviews, OPI staff members did not address these areas specifically. Rather, they said monitoring was the responsibility of the instructional consultant or the school's instructional coach—or a joint responsibility among themselves, the instructional coach, and the school leadership team. Monitoring activities included walkthroughs to observe implementation, use of an implementation checklist, and reviewing benchmark and progress-monitoring data to assess student progress.

OPI staff members reported on several successes MCLP schools experienced because of monitoring intervention fidelity. Educators in one school finally reached a point of trust with their colleagues to openly discuss implementation challenges. In another school, students were assigned to targeted interventions to meet their individual needs. OPI staff members also said there was "less drift from fidelity" and that data were reflecting student improvement. Challenges existed, however. These included "watering down" interventions, especially when teachers did not see improvement or when student engagement was limited, as well as low buy-in among school leaders and families for student participation in interventions.

District and school staff members were satisfied with the support they received from OPI staff members and instructional consultants, but variation existed between groups of staff members and support providers—and in some cases, support was reviewed less positively this year than last.

On surveys, district leadership team members provided feedback on the support they received from OPI staff members, school leadership team members provided feedback on the support they received from OPI staff members and their instructional consultant, and teachers provided feedback on the support they received from their instructional consultant. Overall, most district and school staff members agreed the amount of support they received was sufficient and that it met their needs and was of high quality (figure 2-1). Several trends stand out:

- Similar to last year, school leadership team members represented the largest percentage of staff members who strongly agreed with survey items related to support they received (specifically, the support they received from their instructional consultant).

- Similar to last year, larger percentages of teachers agreed with the statements about their instructional consultant than strongly agreed with them.

- As opposed to last year, larger percentages of school leadership team members agreed with the statements about their OPI staff member than strongly agreed with them.

- Across all items, this year, larger percentages of respondents agreed (+8 percentage points on average) with the statements and smaller percentages strongly agreed (-10 percentage points on average).

Further, almost all school leadership team member survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they received data from OPI in a timely manner (98%, +7 percentage points from last year) and that OPI staff members and instructional consultants effectively modeled practices (95%, -1 percentage point from last year) and allow for the transfer of responsibility from OPI staff members and instructional consultants to school leadership team members (94%, -2 percentage points from last year). Finally, almost all school leadership team member survey respondents agreed their MCLP work includes sharing data in appropriate ways (97%, -3 percentage points from last year).

Figure 2-1. District and School Staff Member Spring Survey Respondents' Feedback on OPI Staff Members and Instructional Consultants

Sufficient in amount

		Strongly disagree/Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
DLT on OPI	Year 2		40%	60%
DLT on OPI	Year 3	6%	46%	47%
SLT on OPI	Year 2	5%	46%	49%
SLT on OPI	Year 3	4%	58%	38%
SLT on IC	Year 2	4%	32%	64%
SLT on IC	Year 3	6%	35%	58%
Teacher on IC	Year 2	11%	50%	39%
Teacher on IC	Year 3	11%	51%	38%

Met our needs

		Strongly disagree/Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
DLT on OPI	Year 2		39%	61%
DLT on OPI	Year 3	8%	49%	43%
SLT on OPI	Year 2	4%	47%	49%
SLT on OPI	Year 3	2%	61%	37%
SLT on IC	Year 2	5%	29%	66%
SLT on IC	Year 3	8%	33%	58%
Teacher on IC	Year 2	12%	49%	39%
Teacher on IC	Year 3	13%	51%	37%

Was high quality

		Strongly disagree/Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
DLT on OPI	Year 2		24%	76%
DLT on OPI	Year 3	4%	43%	53%
SLT on OPI	Year 2		41%	59%
SLT on OPI	Year 3	4%	54%	42%
SLT on IC	Year 2	5%	27%	68%
SLT on IC	Year 3	6%	34%	61%
Teacher on IC	Year 2	11%	47%	42%
Teacher on IC	Year 3	10%	51%	39%

■ Strongly disagree/Disagree   ■ Agree   ■ Strongly agree

Note. DLT is district leadership team and SLT is school leadership team. Bars may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

Source: Education Northwest analysis of School Staff Member Survey data.

School staff members were satisfied with the professional development they received, but they wanted more differentiation; inclusion; and time for practice, planning, and collaboration.

Overall, school staff member survey respondents said they were satisfied with the on-site professional development they received. Most reported the professional development to be high quality, the presenters to be knowledgeable and engaging, and the content to be tied to their school literacy plan and relevant to their work (table 2-3). Fewer agreed that their on-site professional development addressed sustainability and that they received sufficient practice and collaboration time.

Table 2-3. School Staff Member Spring Survey Respondents' Feedback on Onsite Professional Development

	Percent "Agree" and "Strongly agree"	
Survey Items	Year 2	Year 3
The presenters were knowledgeable about the content.	98%	96%
The content was tied to our school literacy plan.	98%	95%
Overall, the professional development was high-quality.	95%	92%
The presenters were engaging.	94%	92%
The content was relevant to my work.	94%	92%
The presenters addressed sustainability.	93%	90%
Sufficient practice time was provided.	84%	86%
Sufficient collaboration time was provided.	83%	85%

Source: Education Northwest analysis of School Staff Member Survey data.

In open-ended comments, school staff member survey respondents shared positive examples of professional development experiences three times more often than negative experiences. Many comments specifically included praise for an OPI staff member, an instructional consultant, or other providers. School staff members mentioned participating in training that included walkthroughs, Indian Education for All, Conscious Discipline, and Understanding by Design. Negative comments addressed issues related to condescending presenters, a lack of alignment between content and teacher/student needs, a lack of quality, limited time spent on application, lack of differentiation, and disconnected content from one training to the next. School staff members mentioned three areas for improvement. First, on-site professional development could be better differentiated (e.g., by grade level, role, level of experience). Second, on-site professional development could be more inclusive; they said it should apply to all participants (e.g., specialists) and should take into consideration feedback from staff members. Third, participants would benefit from more time to plan how to apply the content in their classrooms; specifically, they requested increased post-training planning and collaboration times.

> *Our instructional consultant did a great job with aligning professional development with our needs. When professional development was not aligned, it was due to administration creating professional development without consulting our staff or understanding our needs.* (School staff member)

I liked that it was team oriented and gave content area teachers the opportunity to discuss what implementation would look like in their area. (School staff member)

One of the activities that have really helped our students is the learning of the "Think Maps." These have allowed our students to break stories apart and work on their comprehension. Also, the use of technology has helped with student writing and research. (School staff member)

Most professional development seems really sporadic and one doesn't seem to connect well to the next; fragmented, I would say. There seem to be too many "programs" under the umbrella and at times it feels like there are a lot of assumptions made. Inch deep, mile wide. Expectations are put in place without adequate training and support. (School staff member)

The previous year was highly organized, productive, and conducive to our classroom implementation of the MCLP plan. This year agendas were never prepared and content didn't pertain to professional development topics according to MCLP plan. (School staff member)

Align Services Across the Birth-Through-Grade 5 Continuum

OPI supported the alignment of services across the birth-through-grade 5 continuum through coordination, professional development, and technical assistance.
OPI required district leadership teams to coordinate work across multiple schools and grade bands in their districts. This coordination could occur in and across preschool and elementary school, middle school, and high school settings. The focus on instructional frameworks also supported coordination of practices in and across schools. Another way OPI supported alignment of the continuum was through on-site work with district and school leadership teams. Almost all school leadership team member survey respondents agreed that OPI staff members and their instructional consultant helped align their work across the birth-to-grade 5 continuum (96%, +2 percentage points from last year). One school staff member shared how OPI and the instructional consultant have supported their continuum work:

When selecting reading and math programs, often times our district selects the same program across the board to help with transitions from school to school. We also meet yearly as teachers with grade below and grade above us. Reading coaches stay in contact with each other. State consultants help us work to bridge gaps and use best practices for students as they work through the grades. (School staff member)

Another shared how their school and district leadership teams were involved in this work:

> *I have worked on the school and district leadership team to help implement and monitor plans. I have also been able to share strategies and instruction gained at conferences with my coworkers.* (School staff member)

Districts' and schools' work to align services occurs across the birth-to-grade 5 continuum.

School staff member survey respondents reported engaging in various activities to align services across the birth-through-grade 5 continuum. Often, this alignment occurred through grade-level meetings, where teachers worked together and with their instructional coach to plan curricula and interventions. Meetings at the beginning and end of the year were reported to occur vertically. This work ensured students were ready to transition to the next grade level in the school building and across the district.

> *I have collaborated with other teachers, coaches, and administration on providing instruction based on the needs of students and improving readiness and transitions for students at the sixth-grade level.* (School staff member)

> *We have worked on a literacy continuum, a pacing guide for writing in K–6, adopted a K–6 reading program, and are currently developing K–5 pathways for interventions.* (School staff member)

Other alignment occurred between preschools and elementary schools. Some preschools operated within elementary schools. Some were private preschools, and others operated through Head Start. Other work with preschools helped ensure children had access to materials and activities, screenings, and interventions—and that they were familiar with the kindergarten setting before entering in the fall. Districts also supported preschool teachers by involving them in professional development, and they indirectly supported preschool children by providing kindergarten-readiness activities, such as kindergarten camp. Several school staff member survey respondents in one district indicated that their school's instructional coach visited local preschool and day care facilities to engage children in age-appropriate activities and model the same for teachers.

> *Our instructional coach does outreach with area daycare/preschools twice a month, modeling instructional strategies and serving as a liaison between these facilities and the schools. We offer an age-exception kindergarten for 4-year olds. We provide in-kind space for two Head Start classrooms in our primary elementary school; this provides a very easy transition into kindergarten for these students.* (School staff member)

> *We have a preschool affiliated with our school. Students from the preschool who will be starting Kindergarten the following year attend Kindergarten on Thursday afternoons to begin learning and become more comfortable in a school setting.* (School staff member)

School staff members also reported supporting families with children younger than 4. They hosted family literacy nights, opened the school library for families to check out books, and worked in conjunction with community-based organizations (such as Parents as Teachers). Some school staff members engaged with Child Find to support early intervention screenings. Others joined their local Best Beginnings Coalition and/or had meetings with local birth-to-grade 5 or early childhood organizations. One school staff member shared how their school supported alignment across the continuum:

> *We partner with local early childhood provider members of the Early Childhood coalition and held task force meetings to talk about the role of the program in the context of community services for preschool children.* (School staff member)

Continuous Improvement Cycle

OPI engages district and school leadership team members in activities to ensure they meet implementation expectations.
To support implementation, OPI developed a checklist that described the activities in which OPI staff members, instructional consultants, and district and school leadership team members are required to engage monthly. During their monthly site visits, OPI staff members reported using the "Monthly Roles and Responsibilities Checklist" and engaging in activities on the checklist to monitor implementation (e.g., using a structured agenda, supporting use of the continuous improvement cycle to monitor progress on action plans, conducting walkthroughs). Further, after these monthly site visits, aggregated reporting by OPI staff members, instructional consultants, and district and school leadership teams helped OPI staff members understand commonalities and gaps in implementation, and they reported successes and challenges to assess implementation at the school and project level. In fact, one OPI staff member said the range of stakeholder involvement in monitoring implementation was a success of the system:

> *I love the fact that it is not on just one person—the Google reports we created bring autonomy from OPI's, the instructional consultant's, and the school's perspective. We all fill out same report each time and that has helped to bring continuity to [the monitoring process].* (OPI staff member)

Although successes were attributed to using the checklist and reporting process, challenges were reported too. In some districts/schools, leaders did not always have the capacity to engage in required activities. In other districts, OPI staff members struggled to find time to engage with district/school leadership team members to fulfill the checklist responsibilities. Finally, an OPI staff member said some district/school staff members view the activities as a matter of compliance rather than as a way of engaging in regular dialogue to celebrate successes and address challenges.

Monitoring MCLP implementation involves coordination across two OPI departments and includes reviewing data from multiple sources to assess and plan statewide implementation and support site-based work.

Three OPI staff members in the Teaching and Learning Department support MCLP work, as do two who work in the School Innovation and Support Department. Most collaboration and planning occurs among the three Teaching and Learning staff members. Collaboration includes meeting regularly to review data from multiple sources (such as reports submitted after site visits, state report cards, ACT/SBAC scores, and comprehensive needs assessment data from the schools) and paying attention to any trends in student group/disadvantaged student data. OPI staff members assess the support they provided against changes they have seen on site and in the data. They use these analyses to determine the types of support and content to provide schools in conferences and on-site.

Sustainability

OPI supports MCLP sustainability at the state level by using similar processes across departments.

Changes at OPI have affected the activities in which MCLP staff members have engaged to support sustainability. Certain resources, such as videos from MCLP conferences and modules to support implementation, can no longer be posted on OPI's Teacher Learning Hub, and the video recording that had previously captured grant-funded professional development is no longer supported. Although having MCLP support from OPI staff members in two departments contributed to consistency in the approach and resources used on-site, moving forward, MCLP support to schools will come solely from Teaching and Learning. This change may not affect the support provided overall by OPI staff members. Like MCLP schools, Comprehensive Support and Improvement schools and Targeted Support and Improvement schools are still responsible for completing the comprehensive needs assessment, conducting a gap analysis, and developing and implementing a comprehensive school improvement plan that includes evidence-based interventions, as defined by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), and support from instructional consultants (Montana Office of Public Instruction, 2020).

OPI staff members and instructional consultants address local sustainability by building capacity and ownership.

On-site, OPI staff members and instructional consultants support sustainability in various ways. The different documents and plans (such as instructional frameworks and school literacy plans) developed by district and school leadership teams are not developed as static documents. Rather, they are continuously reviewed and revised to support improved implementation. OPI staff members and instructional consultants have been working with district/school leadership teams; reinforcing regular meetings; modeling how to review data; and revising action plans, school literacy plans, and instructional frameworks. This year, their work included solidifying plans by documenting processes and procedures so activities could be regularly attended to, regardless of staff transitions. In some districts/schools, transitioning ownership of these activities to district/school staff members has already occurred. In others, it is just beginning.

This year our focus was to get schools ready to handle the work on their own by making sure team members are taking notes on how they are implementing; next year we will be transferring ownership over to them. (OPI staff member)

Finally, instructional coaches (currently supported by MCLP funding in some schools) and adopted interventions are additional MCLP components some schools will continue to fund themselves when the grant ends. In these schools, the value of instructional coaches and interventions outweighs the cost of employing and purchasing them, respectively.

In the survey, school staff member respondents agreed that presenters addressed sustainability at the fall conference (91%, -2 percentage points from last year) and on-site (90%, -3 percentage points from last year) and that school leadership team members regularly address sustainability of their overall work (89%, +1 percentage point from last year) and interventions (91%, -6 percentage points from last year).

Chapter 3. Subgrantee Activities

This evaluation assessed seven activities in which school staff members engaged to implement MCLP: the work of their district and school leadership teams; use of the continuous improvement cycle and evidence-based strategies, practices, and interventions; implementing the improving instruction and comprehensive instruction components of the Montana Literacy Plan; and sustainability. This chapter relies on data collected via interviews with OPI staff members supporting MCLP and the school staff member survey.

School Leadership Teams

Schools established leadership teams that engaged in work necessary to implement their local literacy plan. MCLP requires each participating school to establish a leadership team. These teams lead the development of their local literacy plan, aligned to the Montana Literacy Plan and based on the results of the comprehensive needs assessment (conducted every fall). The local literacy plan guides on-site MCLP implementation to improve and support comprehensive instruction. School leadership team members are to:

- Engage in the continuous improvement cycle to measure progress and success in meeting the local literacy plan's goals
- Identify evidence-based strategies, practices, and interventions
- Implement the improving instruction component of the Montana Literacy Plan
- Support implementation of the comprehensive instruction component of the Montana Literacy Plan
- Plan for sustainability

> **Key Activities of School Leadership Teams**
>
> - Complete Comprehensive Needs Assessment
> - Ensure administration of benchmark and progress monitoring assessments and review results
> - Conduct walkthroughs and review data
> - Follow and update professional development and assessment calendars
> - Meet with instructional consultant
> - Use continuous improvement cycle and action plan processes

According to survey respondents, all schools formed leadership teams, and members reported meeting monthly (47%), every two weeks (27%), or weekly (25%). Compared with last year, school leadership teams are meeting more frequently; fewer meet monthly, and more meet every two weeks. School staff members confirmed their school had a literacy plan (95%, -1 percentage point from last year) based on a needs assessment (95%, -2 percentage points from last year) that addressed the needs identified in the needs assessment (94%, -2 percentage points from last year) and supported a high-quality comprehensive literacy instruction program (94%, -2 percentage points from last year). Appendix C provides an analysis of comprehensive needs assessment results from the fall 2019 administration across 21 districts.

The Continuous Improvement Cycle

School leadership team members used data to determine needs and improve intervention fidelity. However, overall, they engaged in continuous improvement cycle activities less frequently than last year.

On the survey, school staff members reported that their school leadership team engaged in the continuous improvement cycle to ensure their local literacy plan effectively addressed the needs of students (92%, no change from last year). More than half of school leadership team member survey respondents reported regularly using a variety of data to determine needs, exploring and assessing intervention options, and revising action plans to improve the fidelity of implementation of MCLP interventions by using data (table 3-1). About half indicated regularly assessing interventions to ensure they are relevant and based on moderate or strong evidence, creating implementation/action plans for adopted interventions, planning initial/ongoing professional development for adopted interventions, and tracking outcomes of all students to determine intervention

> **The Continuous Improvement Cycle**
>
> - Assess local needs using a gap analysis
> - Identify and select evidence-based strategies, practices, and interventions to address gaps
> - Create a plan for implementation using an action plan process with clear measurable goals and action steps
> - Implement and monitor the plan
> - Reflect and revise the plan

effectiveness. Compared with last year, all but one activity occurred less frequently (smaller percentages of school leadership team member survey respondents reported that activities occurred "Always," and larger percentages of survey respondents reported that activities occurred "Sometimes"); tracking outcomes of disadvantaged students to determine intervention effectiveness occurred at about the same frequency in both years.

Table 3-1. Frequency with Which School Leadership Team Member Spring Survey Respondents Reported Engaging in Activities

	Year	Percent		
		Sometimes	Regularly	Always
Use a variety of data to determine literacy needs tied to the comprehensive literacy instruction components	2	17%	55%	27%
	3	22%	61%	16%
Explore intervention options that might address identified literacy needs	2	27%	50%	20%
	3	30%	59%	9%
Assess interventions identified to meet literacy needs to ensure they are relevant and based on moderate or strong evidence	2	27%	47%	20%
	3	39%	48%	9%
Create implementation/action plans for adopted interventions	2	29%	41%	20%
	3	37%	48%	9%
Plan initial/ongoing professional development for adopted interventions	2	32%	39%	21%
	3	34%	48%	10%
Track outcomes of all students to determine intervention effectiveness	2	20%	55%	21%
	3	31%	48%	14%
Track outcomes of disadvantaged students to determine intervention effectiveness	2	29%	49%	18%
	3	28%	50%	17%
Revise action plans to improve the fidelity of implementation of MCLP interventions by using data	2	26%	45%	27%
	3	25%	56%	13%
Plan for and assess sustainability of literacy interventions	2	26%	50%	20%
	3	30%	46%	17%

Note. The percentages of district leadership team members reporting "Never" and "Rarely" are not displayed

Source: Education Northwest analysis of School Staff Member Survey data.

In the survey, we asked members of school leadership teams about changes to how they were implementing the continuous improvement cycle this year based on their MCLP work and what additional supports they needed. School leadership team members indicated they were engaged in the continuous improvement cycle with more regularity and in more areas (such as during district and school leadership team meetings and weekly grade-level meetings). School staff members were also creating, monitoring, reflecting, reviewing, and revising action plans. In this sense, "action plans" is a broader term inclusive of curricula and adopted evidence-based practices, programs, and interventions. "Reviewing and revising" applies to action plans, lesson plans, and intervention plans. School leadership team members were using data to make decisions at the district/school level (such as developing professional development plans) and at the classroom/student level (such as identifying gaps in student learning and differentiating instruction). In monitoring progress, school staff members were using data from multiple sources, such as walkthroughs, focus folders, student assessments, and the comprehensive needs assessment. In addition, they were establishing goals against which to measure progress. Decisions were also being made in teams and these decisions were communicated to stakeholders.

One thing I am doing better at in relationship to the continuous improvement cycle is creating, monitoring, reflecting, and revising implementation plans. Because I have been using the reading folders and small group instruction within my class, I have become better at analyzing data and providing my students with interventions. (School staff member)

Creating, implementing, monitoring, reflecting, and revising implementation plans. Reflection on what is happening is important for us to understand the appropriate changes to make. (School staff member)

We are not only creating and implementing, but reflecting and revising as well. I feel more productive this year. We're not just making goals or a "wish list." We're getting things done, learning from our mistakes and improving. (School staff member)

Monitoring and reflecting on our current writing practices. (School staff member)

We used the Continuous Improvement Cycle to help us plan, use interventions, and monitor students throughout the year. This year we used a more manageable number of data points (last year we tested more than we really needed to). (School staff member)

We are continually referring back to our plan to check progress. (School staff member)

The most commonly reported needs included using the continuous improvement cycle with more regularity; receiving support/training in a variety of areas; dedicating time and including more staff members in the process; receiving measurement support in terms of setting goals and/or administering assessments/collecting and recording data; and receiving support in identifying, monitoring, and implementing interventions with fidelity.

Get back to regularly analyzing our action plan and CIC to determine progress and plan for implementation of tasks (we seemed to get away from that this year). (School staff member)

[We need more support] making implementation plans and revising them. (School staff member)

We need continued support on monitoring the implementation of strategies and programs. (School staff member)

More work is needed to support teacher reflection before we jump to the revision of implementation plans. Reflecting on our teaching practices can be incredibly powerful. (School staff member)

More time with our consultants to make decisions based on the feedback from the comprehensive needs assessment and the continuous improvement cycle to develop our plans for the year. (School staff member)

Better ways to conduct frequent formative assessments without disrupting the flow of learning. (School staff member)

Assessing student needs to have targeted interventions that directly affect student outcomes. (School staff member)

How to move children forward with learning; they hit the goals we set, but we don't always move them on as fast as they need. (School staff member)

More time to go over the scores and create common learning goals with similar rigor-driven assessments across all grade levels. (School staff member)

More training on utilizing proper evidence-based strategies as interventions for Tier 2 students. (School staff member)

School leadership teams also engaged in two-way communication. However, overall, slightly smaller percentages of school staff members agreed that it occurred this year than last year.
On the survey, most school leadership team members (at least 84%, -4 percentage points from last year) agreed they had processes in place to ensure transparency and allow for communication with staff members or had involved feeder/receiving schools in their planning. School staff member survey respondents agreed; 88 percent reported their school leadership team communicated progress implementing the literacy plan (no change from last year). Further, most teachers agreed that data they needed to inform their decision-making was delivered in a timely manner (87%, -7 percentage points from last year), communication from the school leadership team to teacher teams provided transparency (83%, -6 percentage points from last year), and that they had opportunities to provide feedback to the school leadership team (86%, -3 percentage points from last year). Finally, most teachers (at least 85%, -5 percentage points from last year) agreed the support they received from their school leadership team was sufficient, met their needs, and was high quality.

Evidence-Based Strategies, Practices, and Interventions

School staff members implemented various interventions to support literacy, math, and behaviors, and most were being implemented with partial or full fidelity.
Almost all teacher survey respondents (at least 90%, -6 percentage points from last year) agreed that the literacy interventions adopted this year were supported by moderate or strong evidence and that they had reviewed and understood the research on which they were based. They also agreed that the approaches were appropriate for the age and population of their students (at least 92%, -4 percentage points from last year).

When we asked members of school leadership teams about changes to how they were implementing the continuous improvement cycle this year based on their MCLP work and what additional supports they needed, a few responded that they were using evidence-based practices. However, more individuals indicated they needed assistance in this area:

> *[We are] selecting evidenced-based strategies.* (School staff member)

> *We still need to get all teachers on board with using evidence-based strategies, practices, and interventions.* (School staff member)

> *[We need help] selecting evidence-based strategies to implement consistently across the classroom.* (School staff member)

Table 3-2 displays the interventions reported by OPI staff members in interviews and by school leadership team members and teachers on the survey. The following list provides the most common intervention/component in each category:

- Istation's ISIP was the most common assessment adopted.
- Response to Intervention (RTI)/MTSS was the most common intervention system component.
- Heggerty, Wonders/Wonderworks, and Ellevation were the most common reading interventions.
- Step Up to Writing/ Restate, Answer, Cite, and Explain (RACE) was the most common writing intervention.
- Connecting Math Concepts was the most common math intervention.
- Positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS) was the most common behavior intervention.

Process to Select Evidence-Based Strategies, Practices, and Interventions

- Research and identify interventions that are supported by strong or moderate evidence
- Determine if interventions are differentiated, appropriate, and relevant to identified needs
- Determine capacity to implement
- Choose whether or not to select the intervention

Table 3-2. Interventions Used in Schools

Assessments/Interventions	
Aimsweb Plus	Istation/ISIP
Assessment	MAP
DIBELS	STAR Math
Fastbridge Screening	STAR Reading
iReady	

Reading Intervention System Components	
Differentiated Instruction/Walk to Read	Staffing support (Title I, interventionist)
Focus groups/PDSA	Tier 1/Enrichment
Intervention (time/groups/workshops)	Tier 2
Progress monitoring	Tier 3
RTI/MTSS	Tutoring

Reading/Intervention Programs	
Accelerated Reader	Phonics for Reading
Accessing Complex Texts (ACT Now!)	PhonicsQ
Amplify ELA Program	***Read 180***
Blow The Lid Off	**Read Naturally/Live**
Comprehensive Literacy Continuum (Fountas & Pinnell)	*Read Well*
CORE	Reading intervention
Core Knowledge Language Arts (CKLA) ELA Program	**Reading Mastery**
Corrective Reading	**Reading Plus**
CRISS	Really Great Reading
Early Interventions in Reading	Red Band Open Court
EDMARK	Renaissance Reading
EdReady	REWARDS
Ellevation	Right Track Reading
Evidence-based reading	SIPPS
Fast ForWord	Six Minute Solutions
Foundations	Sonday System
Heggerty	**Sound Partners**
Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Journeys/Write-in Reader	SRA/SRA Early Intervention
IXL	*Success Maker*
Language For Learning	System 44
Language!	Third Quest
Lexia Reading	Understanding by Design
Membean	Visual Phonics
Newsela	Wonders/Wonderworks
Open Court Foundational Skills/***Interventions***	Xtreme Reading
Pathways	

Reading Strategies	
2 Column/Cornell Notes/Note taking strategies	Evidence-based writing strategies
Academic language/vocabulary	Flocabulary
Annotations	Fluency
Authentic Literacy	Foundational Skills
AVID Strategies	Frayer Model
Basic Skills	Letter Knowledge
Choral reading	Letter name and sound fluency
Chunking	Novel study
Cite evidence	Phonemic Awareness
Comprehension	Phonics
Concept maps	Phonics Tiered levels
Decoding	Reading in curricular areas/across curricular
Evidence-based comprehension strategies	Restate, Answer, Detail (RAD)
Evidence-based fluency strategies	Site Words
Evidence-based listening strategies	Sound sorting with picture cards
Evidence-based phonemic awareness strategies	Story Boards
Evidence-based phonics strategies	Thinking Maps
Evidence-based processes	Time in Text/Connected Text
Evidence-based reading strategies	Vocabulary
Evidence-based strategies	Vocabulary Surge (95% Group)
Evidence-based vocabulary strategies	
Writing Interventions/Strategies	
Claim-Evidence-Analysis-Last Thought/Linking Sentence (CEAL) paragraphs	Writing frames and prompts
Constructed Response Rubric	Writing Revolution
Explicit Writing	Writing strategies
Step Up to Writing/RACE	
Instructional Strategies	
Active/Student engagement	I Do, We Do, You Do
Bell Ringers/Exit Tickets	Instructional Framework
Bell to Bell instruction	Instructional strategies
Evidence-based instructional strategies	SPED inclusion
Explicit Instruction	Teaching strategies
How Do I Plan and Teach Reading Groups	
Math Interventions	
Accelerated Math	Math intervention
Bridges Math	Math Strategies
Connecting Math Concepts	Math: Numeracy
Evidence-based math	Number Sense
Eureka Engage NY Math	Number Talks
Math 180	ZEARN Math online
Math Connections	

Behavioral Interventions	
CHAMPS	Good Medicine Program (Juliana Salois)
Conscious Discipline (Brain Smart Start)	PBIS
Evidence-based behavior strategies	Pyramid Model
Other	
Use of CSIP	Walkthroughs

Note: Interventions in **bold** received a positive or potentially positive rating from the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC); *italicized interventions* received a mixed effects/indiscernible rating from the WWC; Interventions in ***bold and italicized*** meet ESSA Tier 1 or Tier 2 evidence requirements.

Source: Education Northwest analysis of School Staff Member Survey data.

On the survey, school leadership team members and teachers were provided the opportunity to list the intervention(s) they were implementing and assign an implementation score using a seven-point scale:

- 0 = The intervention is adopted but not yet implemented
- 1 = The intervention is in the planning stages
- 2 = The intervention is in the initial implementation stage
- 3 = The intervention is partially implemented with partial fidelity
- 4 = The intervention is partially implemented with full fidelity OR fully implemented with partial fidelity
- 5 = The intervention is fully implemented with full fidelity
- 6 = The intervention is fully implemented with full fidelity and sustainability

School leadership team members and teachers across 16 school districts responded to the survey question. Not all interventions reported by school leadership team members and teachers matched, which could be the result of a lack of knowledge among school leadership team members of all interventions occurring in teachers' classrooms; on average, school leadership team members listed 11 interventions (+5 from last year), and teachers listed 20 (+9 from last year). Two districts had no matching interventions reported by school leadership team members and teachers. On average, six interventions reported by a district's school leadership team members and teachers matched. Some interventions were listed specifically (such as Heggerty), and others were listed generally (such as phonemic awareness).

Table 3-3 lists the interventions cited by at least one school leadership team member and one teacher (within districts). It includes the average implementation score from school leadership team members, from teachers, and from both combined. We used the combined score when assigning interventions to a level of implementation. Table 3-3 suggests that EdReady and ACT Now! are in the planning stages of implementation. Three interventions—Bridges Math, Open Court, and Ellevation—are in the initial stages of implementation. Several interventions (including Fast ForWord, System 44, and instructional frameworks) are being partially implemented with partial fidelity. Several interventions (including CHAMPS, RTI/MTSS, and Heggerty) are being partially implemented with full fidelity or fully implemented with partial

fidelity. Finally, the most interventions—including Reading Mastery, Phonics for Reading, and Lexia Reading—are being fully implemented with full fidelity. At this time, no interventions are being fully implemented with full fidelity and sustainability.

Table 3-3. Average Intervention Implementation Scores, by Stakeholder Group

Intervention	Mean		
	School Leadership Team Members	Teachers	Both
1—The intervention is in the planning stage (4 percent)			
EdReady	2.0	0.0	1.0
Accessing Complex Texts (ACT Now!)	3.0	0.0	1.5
2—The intervention is in initial implementation (6 percent)			
Bridges math	2.0	2.0	2.0
Open Court Interventions	2.0	3.3	2.7
Ellevation	2.8	3.0	2.9
3—The intervention is partially implemented with partial fidelity (19 percent)			
Newsela	3.0	3.3	3.2
Fast ForWord	2.8	3.6	3.2
DIBELS	3.0	3.5	3.3
Evidence-based processes	2.0	4.8	3.4
Math 180	5.0	2.0	3.5
Tier 3	3.0	4.0	3.5
System 44	5.1	2.0	3.5
Read 180	4.6	2.6	3.6
Read Well	5.0	2.5	3.8
Instructional Framework	4.5	3.3	3.9
4—The intervention is partially implemented with full fidelity OR fully implemented with partial fidelity (35 percent)			
CHAMPS	4.0	4.0	4.0
Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Journeys Write-in Reader	4.0	4.0	4.0
Success Maker	4.0	4.0	4.0
Thinking Maps	4.0	4.0	4.0
RTI/MTSS	3.5	4.5	4.0
Differentiated Instruction	5.0	3.4	4.2
CEAL Writing	4.0	4.5	4.3
Connecting Math Concepts	6.0	2.5	4.3
Corrective Reading	4.7	3.8	4.3
Six Minute Solutions	4.0	4.5	4.3
Evidence-based strategies	5.0	3.7	4.3
iReady	5.0	4.0	4.5
Understanding by Design	4.3	4.9	4.6
Read Naturally/Live	4.7	4.8	4.7
Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Journeys	5.0	4.5	4.8
Phonics	3.5	6.0	4.8

Intervention	Mean		
	School Leadership Team Members	Teachers	Both
Heggerty	5.0	4.5	4.8
PBIS	5.2	4.4	4.8
Intervention (time/groups/workshops)	5.0	4.7	4.9
5—The intervention is fully implemented with full fidelity (37 percent)			
Wonders/Wonderworks	4.8	5.2	5.0
Reading Mastery	5.6	4.4	5.0
Early Interventions in Reading	6.0	4.0	5.0
I Do, We Do, You Do	4.0	6.0	5.0
PhonicsQ	6.0	4.0	5.0
SIPPS	4.8	5.3	5.0
CORE	5.0	5.3	5.1
Step Up to Writing/RACE	5.0	5.3	5.2
Accelerated Math	5.5	5.0	5.3
Evidence-based comprehension strategies	6.0	4.5	5.3
Phonics for Reading	5.3	5.3	5.3
Istation/ISIP	5.4	5.1	5.3
Blow The Lid Off	5.7	4.9	5.3
REWARDS	5.3	5.7	5.5
Academic language/vocabulary	5.5	5.5	5.5
Enrichment	5.0	6.0	5.5
Evidence-based instructional strategies	6.0	5.0	5.5
Renaissance Reading	6.0	5.0	5.5
STAR Reading	5.5	5.8	5.6
Lexia Reading	6.0	5.7	5.8

Source: Education Northwest analysis of School Staff Member Survey data.

The Improving Instruction Component of the Montana Literacy Plan

The improving instruction component of the Montana Literacy Plan comprises academic leadership, community and family engagement, and professional development.

Academic Leadership

School leadership team members supported and engaged in collaboration, facilitated communication, observed implementation, and helped establish systems to support data-based decision-making.
When asked about changes they made this past year in terms of academic leadership, school leadership team members most frequently mentioned issues related to collaboration, communication, and team meetings (e.g., leadership, literacy, data, grade level); aspects of the continuous improvement cycle, including setting goals, collecting data (such as from walkthroughs, students, and staff members); analyzing data; and using the PDSA cycle and data-based decision-making. Decisions were being made regarding professional development, interventions/MTSS, and classroom instruction usually to ensure the needs of students were being met or to ensure the instructional framework was being implemented. In some cases, processes became more standardized, and shared responsibility and accountability increased.

> **Academic Leadership**
>
> *Goal: Identify and support a school's vision and goals*
>
> - Develop an understanding of the components of effective instruction
> - Facilitate a leadership team
> - Promote shared responsibility and collaboration
> - Identify evidence-based practices and resources

[What is new or improved this year is] effective literacy team, sharing and collaborating among teams to ensure student success, monthly data meetings, and biweekly leadership team meetings. (School staff member)

Gathering data from multiple sources and collaborating with all staff to have continuous improvement. (School staff member)

I do feel the administrative team is using our school leadership team to make more decisions about our school's direction, leading to more collaboration between the administration and staff! (School staff member)

Transparency: More consistent sharing of BLT minutes and actions and providing opportunities for feedback. (School staff member)

I am more consistent collecting data during observations and using that teacher data to inform professional development. (School staff member)

I think our team understands how to help teachers use best teaching practices and engagement strategies better. Also, the use of interventions and data has become a best practice. (School staff member)

Implementing flexible groupings for intervention block that engages all staff has been productive. (School staff member)

Making sure our framework is followed, assessed, and communicated clearly to all staff members. Using student data to make decisions. We have a lot more teacher buy-in and support this year. (School staff member)

Conducting walkthroughs was addressed in both school leadership team members' and teachers' survey items. This appears to be one area in which MCLP schools increased the frequency of implementation this year. Survey data indicate that school leadership team members regularly engaged in walkthroughs using tools aligned to their local literacy plan. According to survey results, many school leadership team members engaged in classroom walkthroughs. Overall, school leadership team members who reported engaging in walkthroughs indicated doing so more frequently, specifically, at least weekly (75%, +15 percentage points from last year) as opposed to at least monthly (12%, -19 percentage points from last year). When conducting walkthroughs, school leadership team members regularly (36%, + 1 percentage point from last year) or always (38%, -9 percentage points from last year) used a walkthrough tool that was aligned to their literacy plan/action plans (84%, -5 percentage points from last year). In most cases, school leadership team members reported that teachers were aware of what was on the tool and how implementation was monitored (78%, -11 percentage points from last year). Teachers responding to the survey concurred; most (82%, -8 percentage points from last year) agreed that school leadership team members walked through their classroom to monitor literacy instruction and that they were aware of the content of the data collection tool and how it monitored implementation (85%, -5 percentage points from last year).

Schools need support to prioritize and standardize processes to encourage continued implementation and sustainability.
Prioritizing and standardizing processes were suggested as ways to improve the administration of assessments and data collection, the implementation of instructional frameworks, the selection and scheduling of interventions, the implementation of meetings, the identification of goals, and the development of strategic plans.

We need to institutionalize the processes we are using in our leadership team meetings, so the process will continue after the grant is complete. (School staff member)

We need continued support on developing a continuous improvement cycle and gap analysis. I'd like to see the template become consistent and not change year to year. (School staff member)

Aligning our benchmarking and progress monitoring tool so we are not over assessing students and teachers are getting useful data. (School staff member)

A clear direction/goal that everyone can support that does not require doing so many things that teachers burn out. We need to focus on a goal, develop exactly how we will reach that goal (eliminate all the extra things that are not needed) so that teachers are not

overwhelmed to the point of burn out. Teachers are burned out from trying to do too many things at once to satisfy different components of grants. Also, our teachers face a lot of secondary trauma which also lessens the level of sustainable implementation. (School staff member)

School staff members said they wanted more communication, collaboration, and meetings in schools and across the schools in a district, as well as more time for doing so, more shared responsibility, and more consistency. There was an expressed need for more staff voice in decision-making, especially in planning professional development. School leadership team members indicated a need for more frequent and/or regular use of the continuous improvement cycle to better identify and respond to student needs, both in the classroom (Tier 1) and through interventions (Tier 2 and Tier 3).

Improving walk through data collection tool, administrative consistency, and providing teacher feedback. (School staff member)

As most of our school is on board with the literacy grant, I would like to see more shared responsibility across our staff instead of just the leadership team. More collaboration across the board to support student learning. (School staff member)

Having staff more involved with professional development needs. (School staff member)

Support to meet the unique needs of our MTSS and high-needs student populations; we need targeted support for our school and system. (School staff member)

High school data that can be collected and analyzed for effective decision making more often than 3 times a year. (School staff member)

More information and resources on transitions between pre-kindergarten to kindergarten, and definitely from grade 5 to the middle school. (School staff member)

School leadership team members also indicated a desire to better support transitions and align curricula and standards across grades.

Community and Family Engagement

Family engagement (i.e., communicating with parents/caregivers and involving them in school events) improved in terms of amount, consistency, quality, and participation.
On the survey, school leadership team members reported that their engagement with families, both in terms of communication about their child (such as progress, needs, supports, successes, and challenges) and at school events (such as family/literacy nights, parent-teacher conferences, and academic meetings) improved this past year. Communication and events were more frequent, provided better information (particularly about assessments), and involved more families. In addition, family and community engagement was more consistent across districts and in schools.

> *As a district, communicating about the testing and providing information about the numbers has increased. I feel like I better explain that information to parents.* (School staff member)

> *We are incorporating more district and family nights. We also have had successful districtwide family nights.* (School staff member)

> *Finding ways to engage with families outside the regular school building and making sure parents understand and have support with transitions. We have had a lot of success with setting up parent meetings to discuss academics and interventions.* (School staff member)

> *The way they are getting better is that we are providing family literacy nights once a month and letters are provided to the family one week in advance so that they are able to attend.* (School staff member)

> *Intentional data sharing with the community and families is much better.* (School staff member)

> *Sharing our data with parents and explaining what it means. Getting parents to discuss student learning at conferences but other times during the year as well, based on fall, winter, and spring assessments.* (School staff member)

Community and Family Engagement

Goal: Engage and collaborate with stakeholders to support students and teachers

- Convey the value of the partnership
- Define roles and responsibilities of the relationship
- Consider families of at-risk students
- Identify evidence-based practices and resources

School staff members need support in finding ways to engage more families and engage in a larger variety of activities.

School leadership team member survey respondents reported that they wanted more engagement—more families, opportunities, and ideas. Certain populations of families were noted, including those less active in the school community and families of disadvantaged students, students receiving academic supports, and preschool students. Supporting transitions and additional content areas beyond literacy were additional needs.

> *Engaging families that are hard to reach, or not supportive, and helping them understand the importance of attendance.* (School staff member)

> *We are always in need of ideas for increasing community and family communication and involvement!* (School staff member)

> *We do a great Family Literacy Night with a fair amount of parents coming in. I would like to see this happen more than once a year. Further, we should give resources in literacy across content areas, not just English language arts.* (School staff member)

> *We need to meet with parents and let them know how their student is doing. NOT only talk to the parents who ask or show up for Parent/Teacher Conferences.* (School staff member)

> *We want to implement more events, hopefully coordinating with our PTSA event calendar.* (School staff member)

Professional Development

Professional development plans were tied to local needs, addressed data-based decision-making and various literacy topics, and focused on collaboration.

On the survey, almost all school staff members said their school has a professional development plan that addresses comprehensive literacy instruction (93%, -1 percentage point from last year) and agreed that it provides ongoing professional development and support to implement adopted programs with fidelity (91%, -1 percentage point from last year). Further, almost all staff members agreed the content of professional development was tied to their local literacy plan (95%, -3 percentage points from last year). School staff member survey respondents also indicated that they participated in whole-staff, small-group, and one-on-one professional development (79%, 50%, and 22%, respectively). Staff members in some schools reported that professional development offerings were informed by data, focused on the needs of struggling and disadvantaged students, and included staff buy-in and/or accountability.

Schools are focusing more on data-driven professional development. There is also a greater focus on asking teachers to reflect on how the professional development strategies are working in the classroom. (School staff member)

I am constantly working with Response to Intervention (RTI) and special education teachers to help students who are struggling. (School staff member)

We are monitoring and working with teachers to implement the new skills they learn from professional development. Teachers are being held accountable for the information learned during professional development. (School staff member)

> **Professional Development**
>
> *Goal: Support teachers to improve student learning*
>
> - Develop an understanding of how to offer high quality options for all content areas
> - Address all four categories to impact teaching and learning
> - Increase teacher capacity
> - Identify evidence-based practices and resources

Professional development content varied. In written survey comments, district leadership team members commonly reported addressing data-driven decision-making, writing, reading, curriculum, and instruction. Collaboration and classroom-based support were also commonly reported but at a lower frequency.

We are planning and implementing more mini-professional development sessions and grade-level discussions around instructional practices. (School staff member)

Our staff has been creating curriculum using the Understanding by Design method. This has led to increased knowledge and application of standards, assessment, and lesson planning. (School staff member)

Offering more professional development to staff with our instructional coach and consultant. (School staff member)

Our focus on standards, mastery/proficiency, and collaboration among staff to be able to create common assessments and pacing guide has greatly improved. (School staff member)

Our professional development has included both small-group and whole-group sessions this year, but we've also had the opportunity to see literacy lessons modeled in our own classrooms. This has been a powerful learning tool for teachers. (School staff member)

Collaborating with colleagues using data and focus folders to make instructional decisions. (School staff member)

On the survey, most school staff members reported receiving on-site professional development as part of MCLP (83%, -4 percentage points from last year). Of these survey respondents, more than 60 percent reported receiving professional development related to:

- Analyzing student assessment data (69%)
- Bell-to-bell teaching (64%)
- Data-based decision-making (64%)
- Analyzing data from at-risk students to monitor progress (62%)
- Motivation for learning (62%)
- Student engagement (62%)
- Conducting walkthroughs (61%)

About half of school staff members reported receiving professional development related to:

- Montana Common Core Standards (58%)
- Collaborating to support at-risk students in the classroom (56%)
- Developing and maintaining high expectations for all students (55%)
- Instructional framework (55%)
- Motivation for teaching (55%)
- Progress monitoring students receiving instruction and/or interventions (55%)
- Instructional coaching (54%)
- Implementing, monitoring, reflecting on, and revising implementation plans (52%)
- Differentiating literacy instruction for Tier 2 and Tier 3 students (51%)
- Monitoring students' skill development (e.g., basic reading skills, course grades) (51%)
- Classroom transitions (49%)
- Lesson planning (49%)
- Core/disciplinary reading/writing (48%)
- Engaging families (47%)
- Trauma-informed practices (47%)
- Analyzing MCLP comprehensive needs assessment (CNA) data (45%)
- Assessing local need (45%)
- Continuous improvement cycle (CIC), action plans, and/or monitoring (45%)
- Developing and implementing systems for conducting classroom walkthroughs (45%)
- School- or district-specific assessments (45%)

Table 3-4 displays topics on which school staff members received professional development. The table is sorted, within category by topics, from the most to least staff members reporting participation.

Table 3-4. Percentage of School Staff Member Spring Survey Respondents Reporting Participating in On-site Professional Development, by Topic

Topic	Year 2	Year 3
Continuous Improvement Cycle		
Analyzing student assessment data		69%
Conducting walkthroughs		61%
Selecting evidence-based strategies, practices, and interventions	40%	58%
Implementing, monitoring, reflecting on, and revising implementation plans		52%
Analyzing MCLP Comprehensive Needs Assessment (CNA) data		45%
Assessing local need		45%
Creating implementation/action plans with SMARTER goals		38%
Leadership team development activities		36%
Assessing capacity to implement plans		33%
Conducting a gap analysis		28%
Using Institute of Education Sciences (IES) practice guides		8%
Using the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC)		8%
Standards and Curriculum		
Montana Common Core Standards (MCCS)	74%	58%
State assessments/SBAC	32%	43%
Transition activities	18%	25%
Montana Early Learning Standards (MELS)	13%	10%
Birth through Grade 12 Continuum	10%	14%
Birth through Grade 5 Continuum		18%
Implementing adopted curricula with fidelity		37%
Assessment and Data-Driven Decision Making		
Data-based decision making	63%	64%
Analyzing data from at-risk students to monitor progress		62%
Progress monitoring students receiving instruction and/or interventions	63%	55%
Continuous Improvement Cycle (CIC), action plans, and/or monitoring	51%	45%
School-or district-specific assessments	50%	45%
SBAC Interim Assessment Blocks or Comprehensive Assessments	27%	41%
Types of assessment (screening, outcome, formative, diagnostic, progress monitoring)		39%
State-or grant-related assessments	39%	28%
Privacy requirements	10%	19%
Amount and Quality of Instruction		
Bell-to-bell teaching	63%	64%
Student engagement	65%	62%
Instruction framework	55%	55%
Instructional coaching		54%

Topic	Year 2	Year 3
Differentiating literacy instruction for Tier 2/Tier 3 students	52%	51%
Classroom transitions	37%	49%
Lesson planning	34%	49%
Core/disciplinary reading/writing	45%	48%
Using evidence-based practices and resources		42%
Using standards (MELS or MCCS) to plan and deliver high-quality instruction	34%	42%
Pacing	35%	40%
Differentiating literacy instruction for disadvantaged students	32%	40%
Establishing and/or implementing a Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS)		37%
Providing explicit and systematic instruction	43%	37%
Using technology and digital media	22%	36%
Flexible grouping		35%
Implementation fidelity	35%	31%
Establishing and/or implementing Response to Intervention (RTI)		29%
Critical Friends, Lesson Study, PLCs, Study Group opportunities		14%
Universal Design for Learning (UDL)	15%	13%
Multi-tiered system of support (MTSS), for academics or behavior	43%	
Instruction for At-Risk Students		
Collaborating to support at-risk students in the classroom		56%
Developing and maintaining high expectation for all students		55%
Monitoring students' skill development (e.g., basic reading skills, course grades)		51%
Developing a Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) for behavior		43%
Understanding what students are at-risk		40%
Indian Education for All	22%	34%
Developing systems to increase attendance		33%
Early Warning Systems or On-Track Indicators		23%
Developing systems to prevent dropout		20%
Partnering with parents to support at-risk students at home		20%
Helping students navigate their path to college		13%
Motivation for Teaching and Learning		
Motivation for learning	38%	62%
Motivation for teaching	39%	55%
Academic Leadership		
Developing and implementing systems for conducting classroom walkthroughs		45%
Developing and maintaining an effective leadership team		34%
Promoting shared responsibility		36%

Topic	Year 2	Year 3
Protecting time		19%
Supporting collaboration (e.g., PLCs)		42%
Understanding the key components of effective instruction		51%
Community and Family Engagement	30%	
Engaging parents and families		47%
Trauma-informed practices		47%
Supporting at-risk students		43%
Understanding the importance of community and family engagement		36%
Indian Education for All		33%
Communication in culturally and linguistically sensitive ways		28%
Engaging and communicating with community partners		27%
Transition activities		26%
Other		
SRCL/MCLP grant implementation modules	59%	48%

Note. Professional development topic options differed on the Year 2 and Year 3 survey.

Source: Education Northwest analysis of School Staff Member Survey data.

School staff members wanted more professional development focused on data-based decision-making, instruction, reading, writing, and student engagement.
School leadership team members generally wanted to continue what they were currently engaged with in terms of professional development: data-based decision-making, instruction, reading, writing, and student engagement. In addition, they said they needed more instructional time (or fewer interruptions), a focus on accountability, continued collaboration and classroom-based support, and professional development focused on the needs of disadvantaged students.

> *We need to do better at using data to drive instruction and support for our students.* (School staff member)

> *Improved teacher engagement to change instructional practices and engage students in reading and writing and moving away from stand and deliver instruction.* (School staff member)

> *Continue refining instruction using focus folders and data in collaboration with colleagues.* (School staff member)

> *We need to really work on our Tier 1 instruction for reading.* (School staff member)

> *Further assistance in fully developing our professional development plan to including ongoing professional development for critical/necessary elements to review with entire staff (standards, lesson planning, Danielson framework, instructional framework,*

engagement, etc.), as well as include professional development specific for our at-risk students English learners, SPED, and social-emotional/behavior supports. (School staff member)

The Implement Comprehensive Instruction Component of the Montana Literacy Plan

The implement comprehensive instruction component of the Montana Literacy Plan comprises standards and curriculum, assessment and data-driven decision-making, amount and quality of instruction, instruction for at-risk students, and motivation for teaching and learning.

Standards and Curriculum

School staff members use standards throughout the day to guide instruction, interventions, and grading. One of the biggest changes that occurred in this area was a focus on standards. Survey respondents reported several ways their use of standards changed. For example, standards were used to guide lesson planning, instruction, interventions, assessment, and grading. They were also used for setting goals, objectives, and priorities and in team meetings to ensure consistency across teachers. Further, staff members indicated they were better at communicating standards to students and families. Teachers used various assessments to monitor student progress in mastering the standards and used data to identify standards not yet mastered or that needed to be reinforced. Some schools adopted standards-based curricula. In addition to standards, school staff members reported using authentic or balanced literacy approaches and better addressed vocabulary, writing, and literacy across the curriculum. Teachers also used Understanding by Design, thinking maps, and differentiated instruction.

> **Standards and Curriculum**
>
> *Goal: Impacting teaching and learning*
>
> - Develop a clear definition and understanding of standards and curriculum
> - Combine standards, claims, and practices to impact curriculum
> - Develop an understanding of the birth though grade 12 continuum
> - Promote access and learning for all students
> - Identify evidence-based practices and resources

> *All of the concepts we taught in our grade level were connected and graded according to the state's and Common Core State Standards.* (School staff member)

> *Aligning all units and daily lessons to our standards. Breaking the standards down into clear and reasonable objectives.* (School staff member)

> *I am carefully checking to see if the assignment is teaching the standard.* (School staff member)

I am using the data to target specific objectives that meet the standards my students most need help in achieving. (School staff member)

I am able to look at the standards and simplify the wording to better understand what I need to achieve with my students and what my targeted focus needs to be during lessons. (School staff member)

Spending time as a department to make sure all standards are covered across the curriculum. (School staff member)

Planning instruction within the Understanding by Design framework. (School staff member)

School staff members requested additional time and support in understanding, using, and assessing standards. Additional requests from school staff members included ensuring standards work occurred collaboratively, ensuring standards-based instruction was engaging to students, differentiating instruction while providing consistent instruction across the three tiers, and learning to better implement adopted curricula with fidelity.

Just more time to look at the standards and working with the entire building to do cross-curricular projects that overlap multiple disciplines. (School staff member)

Applying the deconstructed standards to daily plans. (School staff member)

Choosing the most important standards for my grade level and organizing the lessons into meaningful, engaging learning activities and being confident to do what's right for my students. (School staff member)

Making sure that I am not just teaching to the standard but making it an authentic experience. (School staff member)

Creating a formal assessment for each standard. (School staff member)

I think PDSA cycles so I can find more efficient ways to teach the standard for a struggling student. Again, I feel like I need to work on my time and resources here. (School staff member)

How can I use our newly adopted reading curriculum best? (School staff member)

Administer Assessments and Engage in Data-Driven Decision-Making

School staff members improved their knowledge of assessments, including types, development, and administration.
School staff members reported learning more about assessments, such as SBAC interim testing, and learning about different ways to assess learning. They said they were either developing new assessments (such as common formative assessments or assessments based on standards) or writing better assessment items to align vocabulary (to standards or academic language), better determine student learning, and increase rigor. They also engaged students in activities to better prepare for and take assessments.

School staff members indicated using various kinds of assessments, including summative, benchmark, progress monitoring, and informal (such as observations, bell ringers, and exit tickets). They also mentioned using data from specific assessments, including SBAC, FastBridge, ACT, ISIP, MAP, STAR, iready, and state and local assessments (including curriculum-based assessments). Further, school staff members said they were adopting assessments that were "more appropriate for the age level" and collecting data to support decisions about future assessment adoptions.

> *I have altered the different types of assessment questions to get better data.* (School staff member)

> *We are rewriting the comprehension questions in language arts to align with the standards and academic language.* (School staff member)

I'm helping my students to be more motivated to do well when participating in progress monitoring or regular district assessments. (School staff member)

I have a better understanding of different ways to assess. (School staff member)

Assessment and Data Driven Decision Making

Goal: Impact instruction

- Develop an understanding of the different types and impact of each assessment
- Use data to inform and monitor progress
- Identify and support at-risk students
- Use and understand Smarter Balanced Interim assessments
- Identify evidence-based practices and resources

Schools enhanced their MTSS for students.
Due to the adoption of new assessments, programs, and resources, schools strengthened their MTSS and other systems to support students.

> *We've adopted a better online benchmark assessment program that makes communication with parents more detailed. These detailed assessment reports also help in placing students for interventions. There is a lot less time wasted when getting students the interventions they need this year. (School staff member)*

I was part of making a clearly defined Pathway of Intervention materials and programs that all teachers can access and utilize. (School staff member)

School staff members were using assessment data to make many educational decisions.
School staff members indicated they were collecting and analyzing data (including from multiple assessments) to determine student needs; establish goals (at the student, grade, and school levels); make placement decisions (e.g., tiers, groups); and inform lesson planning (including assignments and materials), whole- and small-group instruction, and interventions. They were also monitoring students to determine when instruction and interventions were working and when to modify student groups and materials. School staff members reported using the PDSA cycle, having more ownership of their data and decisions, and having more efficacy in their data use. Schools were using data to identify holes in the curriculum, and teachers were using data to assess their teaching efficacy. Schools were administering assessments and analyzing assessment data more frequently.

I am better at keeping track of my data and differentiating based on each student's individual needs. (School staff member)

I am really looking at the data and creating student groups based on their needs. (School staff member)

I'm using assessments to drive my lesson plans even more. I use them to individualize some lesson plans. (School staff member)

I'm addressing a wide range of needs. From students who need more support to students who need more of a challenge. This is being done through PDSA cycles. (School staff member)

We are analyzing data from many different platforms and using that to find gaps in instruction and/or learning. (School staff member)

I am following the assessment data more closely than in past years to make better educational decisions. (School staff member)

I am now using the daily data from the exit tickets to group my students daily. (School staff member)

I have had huge success in my intervention groups. I feel as though they are more specific, and students are progressing through them. (School staff member)

I am taking a more active look at analyzing the information during grade-level and subject-level meetings to make decisions regarding student placements and needs. (School staff member)

School staff members requested additional time for and support with assessments, data analysis, and differentiation.

School staff members wanted access to more data and to have a better understanding of the data to which they had access, such as how their specific platforms worked. School staff members were also concerned about the accuracy of assessment, and they wanted to ensure they were using the correct assessments and asking the right questions to get accurate results. School staff members knew they needed to improve their efficacy with data use; not only did they need support in specific aspects of data-based decision-making (such as analyzing data to determine needs, forming groups, and differentiating instruction to support individual student needs), they needed staff support in collecting data and supporting small groups, and they needed colleague support in planning and making decisions. School staff members also acknowledged they needed time to use data and plan for differentiation and to become more proficient in their practice to support sustainability.

> *I need more time learning (training) how the MAPS website and resources work and what is available and what we should be using.* (School staff member)

> *We need to continue to assess our assessments and make sure they are producing accurate data for each student.* (School staff member)

> *I need help getting more familiar with looking up test data on my own.* (School staff member)

> *I need support in reading and understanding testing results.* (School staff member)

> *I would like to learn how to be more time-efficient in analyzing the data.* (School staff member)

> *I need support in modifying curriculum to meet each student's individual needs.* (School staff member)

> *I need additional support in the classroom during small-group time.* (School staff member)

> *I need more time to work on this area and more time to collaborate with other teachers for ideas and helpful tools.* (School staff member)

> *We need more time with teams to collaborate and discuss intervention strategies to implement based on data.* (School staff member)

> *We need a planning hour provided for one thing to prepare specific instruction for each student. Also, a collaborative-minded paraprofessional staff provided for the classroom to help meet the needs of the diverse learners so implementation of the curriculum-based*

assessment can include materials that match the monthly assessments on Istation and Smarter Balanced Tests for each learner's instructional level. (School staff member)

We need to continue to build on the past three years of our plan. (School staff member)

Amount and Quality of Instruction

As a result of their MCLP work, teachers reported engaging in bell-to-bell instruction, being more efficient with their instructional time, and using literacy strategies and differentiated instruction. Teacher survey respondents commented most on their use of bell-to-bell teaching, bell ringers, and exit tickets. In addition to working on pacing, transitions, routines, and schedules, using these strategies helped increase instructional time in their classrooms. Literacy, instruction, and engagement strategies teachers reported incorporating into their day included RACE, using open-ended questioning, gradual release of instruction, literacy across the curriculum, story and thinking maps, academic language, chunking instruction, close reading, citing evidence, scaffolding, facilitating academic discussions, time in text, pair/share, and focus walls.

> **Amount and Quality of Instruction**
>
> *Goal: Improve instruction*
>
> - Develop an understanding of Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS)
> - Provide bell-to-bell instruction
> - Embed Universal Design for Learning (UDL)
> - Be explicit and systematic
> - Identify evidence-based practices and resources

Teachers were also strengthening their Tier 1 instruction by using standards and learning goals/targets, focusing on "the most important material," and being intentional. Instruction and interventions for Tier 2 and Tier 3 students were differentiated, provided in small groups, and driven by data. Teachers said their efficacy increased, their delivery improved, and they were using programs with fidelity.

> *I am paying more attention to providing bell-to-bell instruction with a clear opening prompt and posted lesson objective and ending the class with an exit ticket.* (School staff member)

> *I am implementing Heggerty with fidelity. I also have started using word walls. I am trying to put a higher importance on phonics using skills I have learned from our coaches. I have implemented more writing and followed our writing continuum.* (School staff member)

> *I am more conscious of the amount of academic language that I am exposing and having my students use in the classroom. I am approaching my lessons with more thought toward the standards and what the main goal for learning is. I have implemented thinking maps into all subject areas.* (School staff member)

I am immersing students more fully in text across disciplines, working somewhat thematically to secure continuity with text topics. (School staff member)

I am more aware of giving Tier 2 and 3 students more time to master what they are learning. I continually review until I connect with them. (School staff member)

We are established thinking maps to our reading program and have extended the time for each lesson, thus creating a more elaborate and meaningful discussion to comprehension. Therefore, increasing the level 1 and 2 tiers and getting students out of Tier 3. (School staff member)

School staff members said they need support in differentiating instruction, as well as increasing instructional time and engagement.
School staff members requested support in differentiating instruction for all students. Specifically, they wanted support with transitions, routines, and pacing. They also wanted support in student engagement strategies, including motivation for reluctant learners. In addition, they wanted time to engage in research, work with students, collaborate with colleagues, and practice implementing the strategies they had introduced in their classrooms.

More help with differentiating instruction to meet the needs of all learners. (School staff member)

I would like to better understand the time management piece with our new reading curriculum to serve my students better quality information during the short amount of time. (School staff member)

Time to go over data and how strategies are working. (School staff member)

We just need to continue to learn more and keep improving. (School staff member)

Instruction for At-Risk Students

Implementing improved instructional practices, differentiating instruction, focusing on critical aspects of the curriculum, making data-based decisions, motivating students and teachers, and collaborating are all strategies used to support instruction for at-risk students.
School staff members most commonly supported instruction for at-risk students by providing differentiated instruction in small/flexible groups, one-on-one, or through interventions.

> *A lot of one-on-one work and small groups with similar skill sets to help those students fill in their gaps.* (School staff member)

> *Small group instruction based upon the Tiers (1, 2, and 3), one-to-one daily tutorial sessions with a teacher assistant, instruction in building foundational skills for literacy (based on a combination of assessments).* (School staff member)

> *I've been more effective with at-risk students. Being able to work with them one on one, having quality time to spend with them, truly getting to know each student and their needs.* (School staff member)

> **At-Risk Students**
>
> *Goal: Identify, understand, and educationally impact every student*
>
> - Develop an understanding of students who could be at risk
> - Identify roles of academic leaders and staff
> - Identify and support students with the use of the Montana Early Warning System (EWS)
> - Identify evidence-based practices and resources

Instructional changes to support at-risk students include aligning instruction to the standards; improving pacing; extending teaching time; implementing programs with fidelity; incorporating more discussion time; reading for enjoyment; and using direct instruction, customized instruction, diverse reading and writing materials, note-taking, evidence-based practices, guided practice, modeling, real-world activities, scaffolding, sentence starters, and thinking maps.

> *Keeping instruction the same: what is taught at whole group I pick the most important and reteach it during small groups and for intervention (go a little more in-depth)* (School staff member)

> *This year we will be organizing packets for each unit that will include multiple genres of text, grammar, vocabulary, outlines, and goals for the unit and Indian Education for All. We hope to include more projects.* (School staff member)

> *I'm using the standards to drive the focal point of important and necessary concepts to teach from the curriculum book.* (School staff member)

I have provided more scaffolding activities to help guide student's instruction. (School staff member)

Teachers have also focused on bolstering their instruction in certain aspects of the curriculum, such as reading, writing, speaking, and vocabulary.

We compared sample writings across grade levels and discussed different performance levels and ways to reach struggling students. (School staff member)

I'm using literacy-rich activities. (School staff member)

Focused more on RARE format in math for explaining solutions. (School staff member)

Focusing more on vocabulary. (School staff member)

I am more focused on including literacy into my science curriculum. (School staff member)

Using the RACE rubric to instruct students on responses. (School staff member)

To better identify needs, school staff members reported administering assessments, analyzing data, and making data-based instructional decisions.

Connecting instruction with the data results and adapting to students needs in reading and math content areas. (School staff member)

I have utilized the ISIP data to help my students with vocabulary, spelling, and comprehension strategies. (School staff member)

Our students have greatly improved on their Istation and MAP scores through our literacy efforts! Data are being collected and shared. (School staff member)

School staff members focused on engagement.

One thing that I am doing different this year with the literacy instruction and support for at-risk students is implementing different styles of choral reading to keep students engaged. Also, this helps them to follow along as we read as a group. I am also targeting their areas of need in small group. (School staff member)

I am trying to build my content teaching to something that they can relate to. I am also working to make my lessons engaging to motivate my at-risk students. (School staff member)

I am working on using sentence starters and increasing student discourse. Increase the guided practice or the "we do." (School staff member)

I have been keeping documentation for active engagement. (School staff member)

Finally, school staff members are collaborating and communicating more to support the needs of at-risk students, including involving families in their efforts.

We have a shared document among staff with our at-risk students. This is very helpful so we know who those students are and what their needs are. Each staff member takes a student or students to mentor from the at-risk list. (School staff member)

Support, encourage, and organize and facilitate team-solutions meetings with staff involved with a student. (School staff member)

Working together with the Title I instructor greatly improves collaboration and consistency of interventions. (School staff member)

I am communicating more frequently with our Title Instructor, Interventionist, Speech Therapist, and Special Education teacher. (School staff member)

I am doing better at communicating with parents on ways that I can support or help them for tools and resources they might need in their home. (School staff member)

Additional supports requested for at-risk students include various components of an MTSS.
On surveys, school staff members indicated that they needed more assessments to better identify at-risk students and their needs. In addition, they needed more Tier 1 strategies and differentiation, Tier 2 and 3 interventions, and staffing. They also needed help prioritizing content.

Additional interventions that will support at-risk students with the Montana Literacy Plan. (School staff member)

Additional support for the very low at-risk students such as an intervention specialist classroom. (School staff member)

I don't think enough is being done to help Tier 3 students make the gains they need to make to catch up with their peers. (School staff member)

I need support in helping our lowest students who are way below grade level. I need help in modifying their assignments to meet their needs. (School staff member)

Continuous progress monitoring and changing of intervention groups based on assessments. Changing out students from pull-out groups when they are proficient. (School staff member)

Any teacher tools that I can add to my "toolbox" to help support my students would be great additional support. (School staff member)

I would like a systematic program for those at-risk students. If they are Tier 2, I want to know to use a certain intervention; or if they are Tier 3, I need to use this intervention. I want to know exactly what to do so I don't have to come up with things. (School staff member)

Deciding what grammar needs are necessary to teach and reteach during the school year for our grade level. (School staff member)

Motivation for Teaching and Learning

Participating in professional development and coaching provided school staff members with resources, tools, and strategies to become more effective teachers.

MCLP professional development and coaching support helped school staff members improve their teaching. These teaching improvements included adopting an instructional framework; using bell-to-bell instruction (including bell ringers and exit tickets); using graphic organizers; focusing on pacing; using small groups, providing differentiated instruction, and adopting interventions to address student needs; better communicating goals, expectations, and content to students; increasing efficacy in implementing the

> **Motivation for Teaching and Learning**
>
> *Goal: Energize, direct, and sustain teaching and learning*
>
> - Develop a clear definition and understanding of individual components
> - Identify these elements as important pieces for success
> - Identify evidence-based practices and resources

curriculum; and adopting and implementing more engaging programs (such as Newslea, CHAMPS, PAX, and Istation). Improving collaboration and communication, addressing work-life balance, and showing appreciation for colleagues were additional ways to enhance teaching and motivate teachers.

I learned new activities to hold my students' attention with the help from my instructional coach. (School staff member)

I am using more visuals and anchor charts to assist my students in retelling stories, answering essential questions, and in their writing process. (School staff member)

I am better about setting my goals in a more reasonable manner when presenting new material to students and communicating that goal or expectation to students. (School staff member)

[I am] beginning to collaborate with other staff and our instructional coach to develop practices that best engage and develop students' learning. (School staff member)

I am using the Elevation program for lessons for the Tier 2 and Tier 3 students. (School staff member)

My instructional strategies I am more confident and teaching with fidelity. (School staff member)

Remembering to walk away from all the classroom work and just relax. It will all get done in due time. (School staff member)

School staff members supported learning by engaging students and building relationships with them.

According to survey responses, teachers supported student learning by implementing various engagement strategies (such as motivational practices; increased note-taking; more opportunities to respond; real-world, hands-on activities and games; and establishing and monitoring learning goals). School staff members also stressed the importance of relationship building to better understand students' interests and motivations. Focusing on creating a positive environment, growth mindset, and trauma were additional strategies school staff members mentioned.

I am really focused on continuous learning when my students enter my classroom for that day. Trying to utilize each moment as a teaching moment with quick check in's for skills we are learning in the classroom. Bell ringers, transition times, and end-of-the-day exit tickets have all been a huge help for me this year. I have also been able to have multiple avenues for students to show active participation/learning i.e., post it notes, white boards, partner pair and share, using actions to check for understanding. (School staff member)

I have worked hard to develop consistent instructional teaching routines that involve a lot of call and response. Students read text chorally, in pairs, or echo/CLOZE read so that all students remain engaged. (School staff member)

Getting to know the students is so very important. Build relationships! (School staff member)

Teachers want to learn more strategies to support behavior, engagement, and differentiated instruction.

School staff member survey respondents indicated needing additional support in dealing with student behavior, trauma, and social and emotional learning; engagement strategies; and supporting the individual needs of students, such as through flexible grouping. A few staff members indicated the need for additional support for elective teachers.

> *I need support for my special education students with classroom behaviors that interrupt their learning process.* (School staff member)

> *We could use more social emotional wellness.* (School staff member)

> *Continued feedback and support will allow me to continue to improve the ratio of positive to negative interactions as well as to maintain and increase active engagement.* (School staff member)

> *I need more help within the classroom to create smaller groups to target individual needs.* (School staff member)

District Leadership Teams

Districts established leadership teams that engaged in the continuous improvement cycle to identify needs and address gaps in their comprehensive literacy programs.

MCLP requires at least two schools in a district to participate in the grant and that one school feeds into the other (e.g., a preschool and an elementary school, an elementary school and a middle school, or a middle school and a high school). To support alignment of grant activities across the schools and district, MCLP requires grantees to form district leadership teams. In some smaller K–8 districts, the school leadership team and district leadership team are the same. Most district leadership team member survey respondents indicated that their teams met monthly (56%) or more frequently (33%).

In survey responses, district leadership team members reported engaging in various activities. Most frequently, they analyzed and used school- and district-level data and planned professional development. Compared with last year, district leadership teams more regularly aligned professional development to identified needs, addressed at-risk students, used comprehensive needs assessment

Key Activities of District Leadership Teams

- Ensure administration of benchmark and progress monitoring assessments and review results
- Conduct walkthroughs and review data
- Follow and update professional development and assessment calendars
- Meet with OPI
- Use continuous improvement cycle and action plan processes
- Review budget and drawdown
- Communicate with school leadership and educator teams

and state assessment data, aligned interventions, and addressed family engagement and trauma-informed practices. Table 3-5 displays the activities in which district leadership team members engaged, and it is sorted from most to least frequently used activities.

Table 3-5. Frequency with Which District Leadership Team Member Spring Survey Respondents Reported Engaging in Activities

District Leadership Team Activities	Year	Percent		
		Never/ Rarely	Sometimes	Regularly/ Always
Analyze and use school-level data	2	4%	12%	84%
	3	4%	20%	76%
Engage in continuous improvement cycle	2	4%	24%	72%
	3	4%	29%	67%
Analyze and use district-level data	2	8%	22%	70%
	3	6%	28%	65%
Align professional development to identified needs	2	16%	33%	51%
	3	10%	28%	62%
Address at-risk student groups	2	14%	33%	53%
	3	10%	30%	59%
Analyze and use MLP comprehensive needs assessment data	2	14%	39%	47%
	3	9%	32%	59%
Align interventions	2	16%	41%	43%
	3	15%	30%	54%
Align Pre-K-12 instructional frameworks	2	14%	35%	51%
	3	18%	34%	48%
Align Pre-K-12 assessment systems	2	12%	37%	51%
	3	14%	38%	47%
Address academic leadership development	2	14%	37%	49%
	3	17%	36%	47%
Address district policy procedures related to literacy	2	18%	41%	41%
	3	21%	36%	44%
Align curricula	2	18%	36%	46%
	3	18%	39%	43%
Analyze and use state-level data	2	18%	51%	31%
	3	18%	38%	43%
Align standards (horizontally and vertically)	2	14%	44%	42%
	3	24%	33%	42%
Align academic RTI/MTSS system	2	24%	32%	44%
	3	25%	35%	40%
Address parent/family engagement	2	29%	37%	33%
	3	13%	48%	39%

District Leadership Team Activities	Year	Never/ Rarely	Sometimes	Regularly/ Always
Align behavioral RTI/MTSS systems	2	32%	36%	32%
		Percent		
	3	33%	29%	37%
Address transitions	2	28%	41%	31%
	3	16%	49%	35%
Address trauma-informed practices	2	35%	35%	29%
	3	18%	47%	35%
Align Pre-K-12 school discipline approaches	2	39%	29%	31%
	3	29%	35%	35%
Align Pre-K-12 SEL frameworks	2	36%	32%	32%
	3	31%	38%	31%
Address community engagement	2	35%	33%	31%
	3	16%	53%	30%
Address business community engagement	2	51%	31%	18%
	3	44%	34%	22%
Address hiring/staffing issues	2	34%	42%	24%
	3	42%	38%	20%

Note. Rows may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

Source: Education Northwest analysis of School Staff Member Survey data.

In open-ended survey comments, district leadership team members verified these findings. Most commonly, they indicated working on collecting, analyzing, and using data to engage in the continuous improvement cycle, find "holes in the program," support English learner students, determine professional development needs, and monitor student learning. District leadership team members reported a focus on instructional frameworks, including direct instruction, Understanding by Design, and alignment work. Efforts were dedicated to increasing family and community engagement, aligning and establishing common assessments, and establishing MTSS/Tier 2 and 3 interventions. Additional work was reported in the areas of literacy and writing instruction, curriculum, and standards.

> *We continually referred to our Instructional Framework and the key components contained therein. We discussed evidence in our formative data that reflected both the need for improvement and the growth we had achieved.* (District leadership team member)

> *Utilized teacher and student data to outline professional development priorities for the remainder of the year.* (District leadership team member)

The leadership team this year addressed how we can make it more of a continuum across all of the curriculum. We also discussed how we can make our instruction more fluent across all grade levels. (District leadership team member)

District Family nights centered around literacy. (District leadership team member)

We have developed our own MTSS model to support our Tier 2 students as well as our Tier 3 students. We have developed a system working as a team to support student growth or interventions that need to take place if there isn't growth. (District leadership team member)

The creation of a writing plan. (District leadership team member)

A curriculum committee met and went over various curriculum options before implementing them to ensure they aligned to standards and our school. (District leadership team member)

Districts need continued support in strengthening transitions and family engagement.
District leadership team member survey respondents mentioned the need for support in multiple areas, but they most commonly wanted support in strengthening transitions and family engagement. Additional areas of need included assessment, interventions, and trauma-informed instruction. Several district leadership team members wanted continued support from OPI and their instructional consultants regarding transitions and family engagement.

Building on literacy teaching. Where one grade ends the next grade begins. No gap. (District leadership team member)

Transition activities and family literacy. (District leadership team member)

Trauma-informed practices and social-emotional learning. I think we need to work on our transition activities more. (District leadership team member)

Incoming 4th graders would benefit from taking the same ISIP assessment in the spring as 3rd graders. (District leadership team member)

We would like for OPI to help us find another assessment that will be beneficial for our students from PreK to grade 12. (District leadership team member)

More alignment with interventions and support for those Tier 2/Tier 3 students. (District leadership team member)

Plan for Sustainability

Collaboration and collecting and using data via the continuous improvement cycle appear sustainable to school leadership team members, but instructional changes and professional development appear less sustainable.

Most school staff member survey respondents (89%, +1 percentage point from last year) agreed their school leadership team addressed the sustainability of their MCLP activities. They also indicated that data collection and use (followed by collaboration, communication, and meetings; using the continuous improvement cycle; and engaging in activities related to the continuous improvement cycle—setting goals, developing action plans, and facilitating change) were most sustainable activities in which the school leadership team engaged.

Consistent meetings and on-going feedback loops from grade-level teams (School staff member)

Honest, engaging discussion of topics related to goals for staff and students. (School staff member)

I believe continuing to work as a team for what is best for our students will continue. We will meet regularly, break down data, discuss the continuous improvement cycle, share professional development, and other topics for what is best for our students. (School staff member)

Following continuous improvement cycle for creating action plan and analyzing student data. (School staff member)

Using data agendas to guide discussions and changes. (School staff member)

Components of MCLP implementation that were considered less sustainable included professional development and instructional components, including interventions. Often, these were considered less sustainable due to the costs involved.

Cost of instructional coach [is least sustainable] (School staff member)

Once the grant is over, our ability to access high-quality training will be less sustainable. (School staff member)
Cost of certain intervention programs [is least sustainable]. (School staff member)

Writing standards being implemented into instruction across content areas [is least sustainable]. (School staff member)

Further, many school leadership team members and most teachers agreed they assessed the sustainability of literacy interventions (62%, -8 percentage points from last year and 91%, -6 percentage points from last year, respectively).

Chapter 4. Student Outcomes

This evaluation assessed outcomes related to the literacy skills of all students and disadvantaged students created an improvement index to assist OPI in identifying high-implementation schools. This chapter relies on student outcome data collected by downloading results from independent interim student assessment providers contracted by MCLP schools and the school staff member survey.

Independent Interim Assessment Data

This section includes analyses of independent interim assessment data for all students and for disadvantaged students. Three analyses are presented:

- In the current school year, we compare the percentage of students at benchmark (Tier 1 and advanced) in fall and winter (students are included only if they have data from both assessment periods).
- In the current school year, we compare the percentage of students at each tier in fall and winter (students are included only if they have data from both assessment periods).
- Across school years, we compare the percentage of students at benchmark from winter of the previous school year to winter of the current school year (all students assessed in winter of each year are included).

For all students, analyses are provided across all grades (MCLP program) and at different grade bands: preschool,[6] elementary grades (K–6), and secondary grades (7–12). For disadvantaged students, analyses were conducted for economically disadvantaged students, American Indian students, English learner students, and students receiving special education services across all grades (MCLP program). When the number of disadvantaged students was high enough to not breach confidentiality and Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) rules, results are also presented across all grades and by grade band.

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[6] In 2019–20, only fall preschool assessment data were available. The assessment for preschool students is normally administered twice a year, in the fall and spring, but it was not administered in spring 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Literacy Skills of All Students

More students were at benchmark in winter 2020 than winter 2019 and fall 2019 across all students, elementary grades, and secondary grades. Elementary students experienced larger increases between fall 2019 and winter 2020 and larger gains from winter 2019 and winter 2020 compared with secondary students.

In 2019–20, the percentage of students at benchmark (Tier 1 and advanced) from fall to spring increased for both elementary and secondary grade bands, and all increases were statistically significant (figure 4-1). The change in the percentage of students at benchmark by winter 2020 was largest for elementary students (+7 percentage points) and smallest for secondary students (+3 percentage points). Across all grades, the increase was 6 percentage points.

Figure 4-1. Percent of Students at Benchmark in Fall 2019 and Winter 2020, All Grades and by Grade Bands
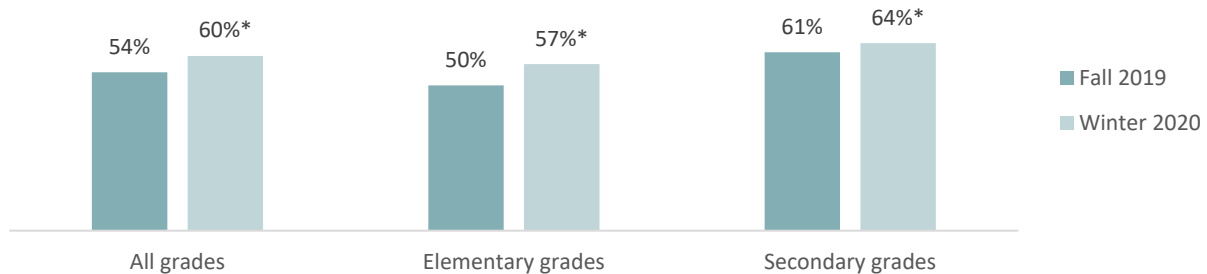
* Indicates change from previous administration is statistically significant (Pearson Chi-Square ≤ 0.05).

Source: Education Northwest analysis of independent student interim assessment data.

Figure 4-2 shows the percentage of students across the four tiers in fall 2019 and winter 2020 for the same grade bands identified above. In all cases, the percentage of students in Tier 3 and Tier 2 decreased, and the percentage of students in Tier 1 and advanced students increased or stayed the same.

Figure 4-2. Percent of Students Across Four Tiers, Fall 2019 and Winter 2020, All Grades and by Grade Bands

All grades

Elementary grades

Secondary grades

Note. Bars may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

Source: Education Northwest analysis of independent student interim assessment data.

Across all grades—and in the elementary and secondary grades—the percentage of students at benchmark was larger in winter 2020 than winter 2019 (figure 4-3). Increases were statistically significant in all cases, except the secondary grades. The increase was highest for the elementary grades (+5 percentage points), followed by all grades (+3 percentage points), and secondary grades (+1 percentage point).

Figure 4-3. Percent of Students at Benchmark in Winter 2019 and Winter 2020, All Grades and by Grade Bands
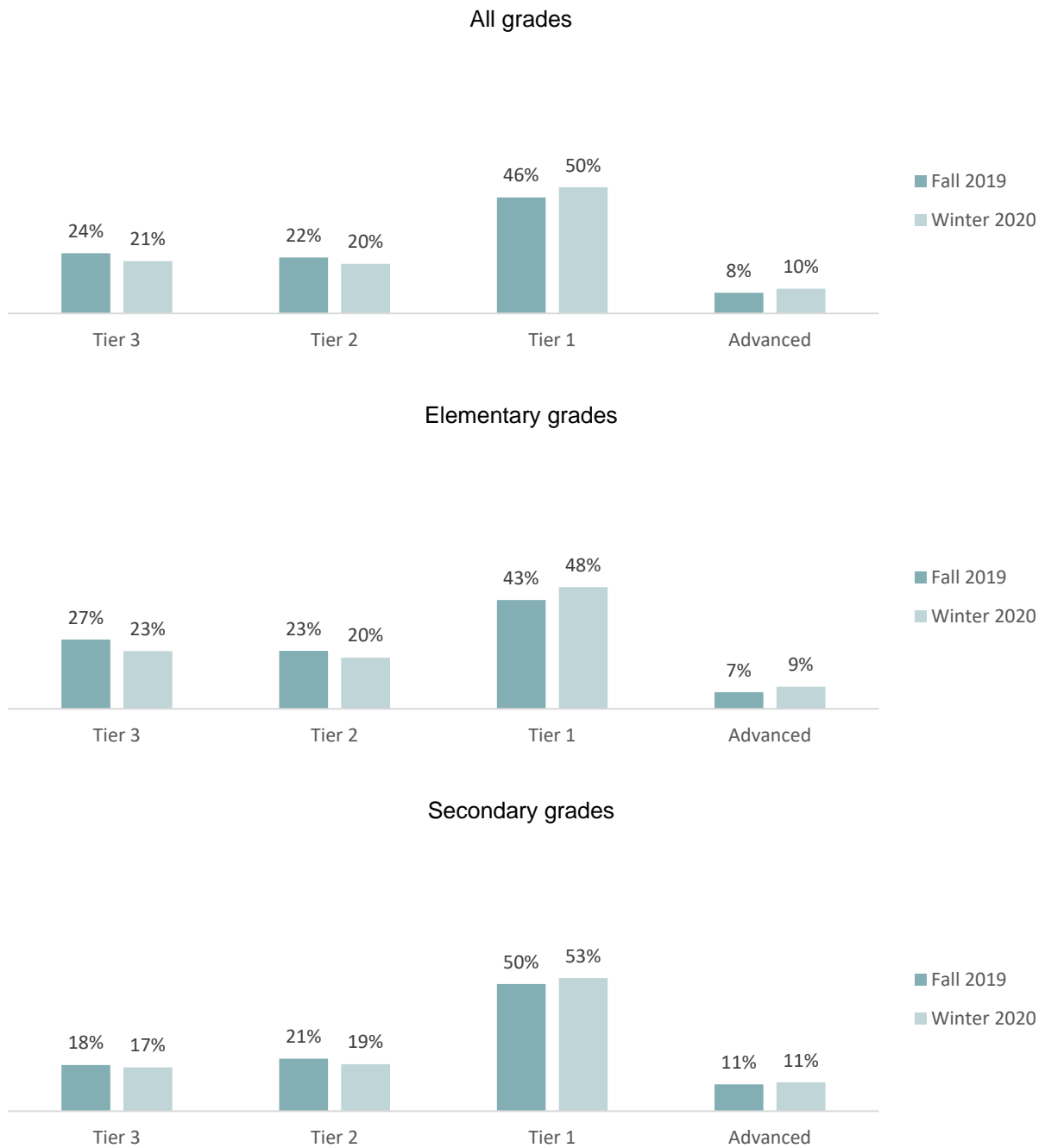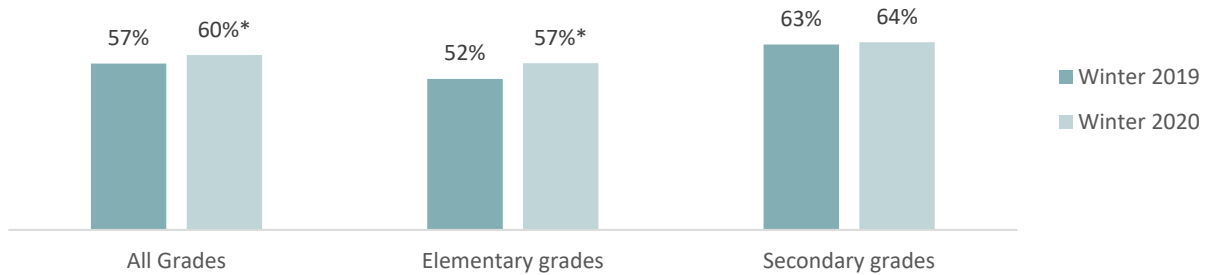

* Indicates change from previous administration is statistically significant (Pearson Chi-Square ≤ 0.05).

Source: Education Northwest analysis of independent student interim assessment data.

Literacy Skills of Disadvantaged Students

More economically disadvantaged students were at benchmark in winter 2020 than fall 2019 across all grades and in elementary and secondary grades.
In 2019–20, the percentage of economically disadvantaged students at benchmark (Tier 1 and advanced) increased from fall to winter for all grade bands, and all increases were statistically significant (figure 4-4). The change in the percentage of students at benchmark by winter 2020 was largest for elementary students (+5 percentage points) and smallest for secondary students (+4 percentage points). Across all grades, the increase in the percentage of economically disadvantaged students at benchmark was 5 percentage points.

Figure 4-4. Percent of Economically Disadvantaged Students at Benchmark in Fall 2019 and Winter 2020, All Grades and by Grade Bands

* Indicates change from previous administration is statistically significant (Pearson Chi-Square ≤ 0.05).
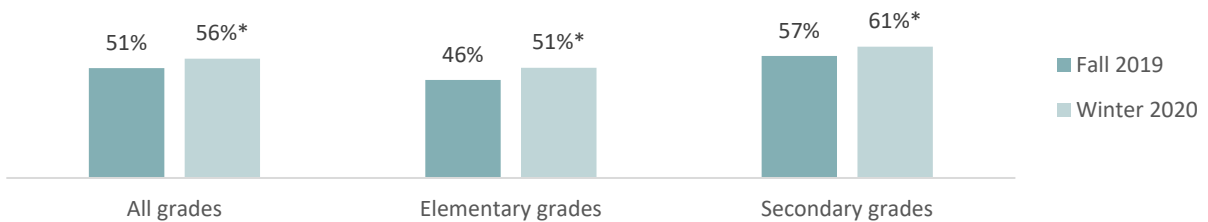
Source: Education Northwest analysis of independent student interim assessment data.

Figure 4-5 shows the percentage of economically disadvantaged students across the four tiers in fall 2019 and winter 2020 for the same grade bands identified above. In all cases, the percentage of students in Tier 2 and Tier 3 decreased, and the percentage of students in Tier 1 and advanced students increased. No changes were statistically significant.

Figure 4-5. Percent of Economically Disadvantaged Students Across Four Tiers, Fall 2019 and Winter 2020, All Grades and by Grade Bands

All grades

	Tier 3	Tier 2	Tier 1	Advanced
Fall 2019	26%	22%	45%	7%
Winter 2020	23%	20%	49%	8%

Elementary grades

	Tier 3	Tier 2	Tier 1	Advanced
Fall 2019	30%	24%	41%	5%
Winter 2020	26%	22%	45%	6%

Secondary grades

	Tier 3	Tier 2	Tier 1	Advanced
Fall 2019	21%	20%	51%	8%
Winter 2020	19%	18%	53%	9%

Note. Bars may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

Source: Education Northwest analysis of independent student interim assessment data.

More American Indian students were at benchmark in winter 2020 than fall 2019 across all grades, elementary grades, and secondary grades.

In 2019–20, the percentage of American Indian students at benchmark (Tier 1 and advanced) increased from fall to winter for all grade bands, and all increases were statistically significant (figure 4-6). The change in the percentage of American Indian students at benchmark by winter 2020 was the similar for all grade bands, with an increase of 6 percentage points for students in all grades and secondary grades and an increase of 7 percentage points for students in elementary grades.

Figure 4-6. Percent of American Indian Students at Benchmark in Fall 2019 and Winter 2020, All Grades and by Grade Bands
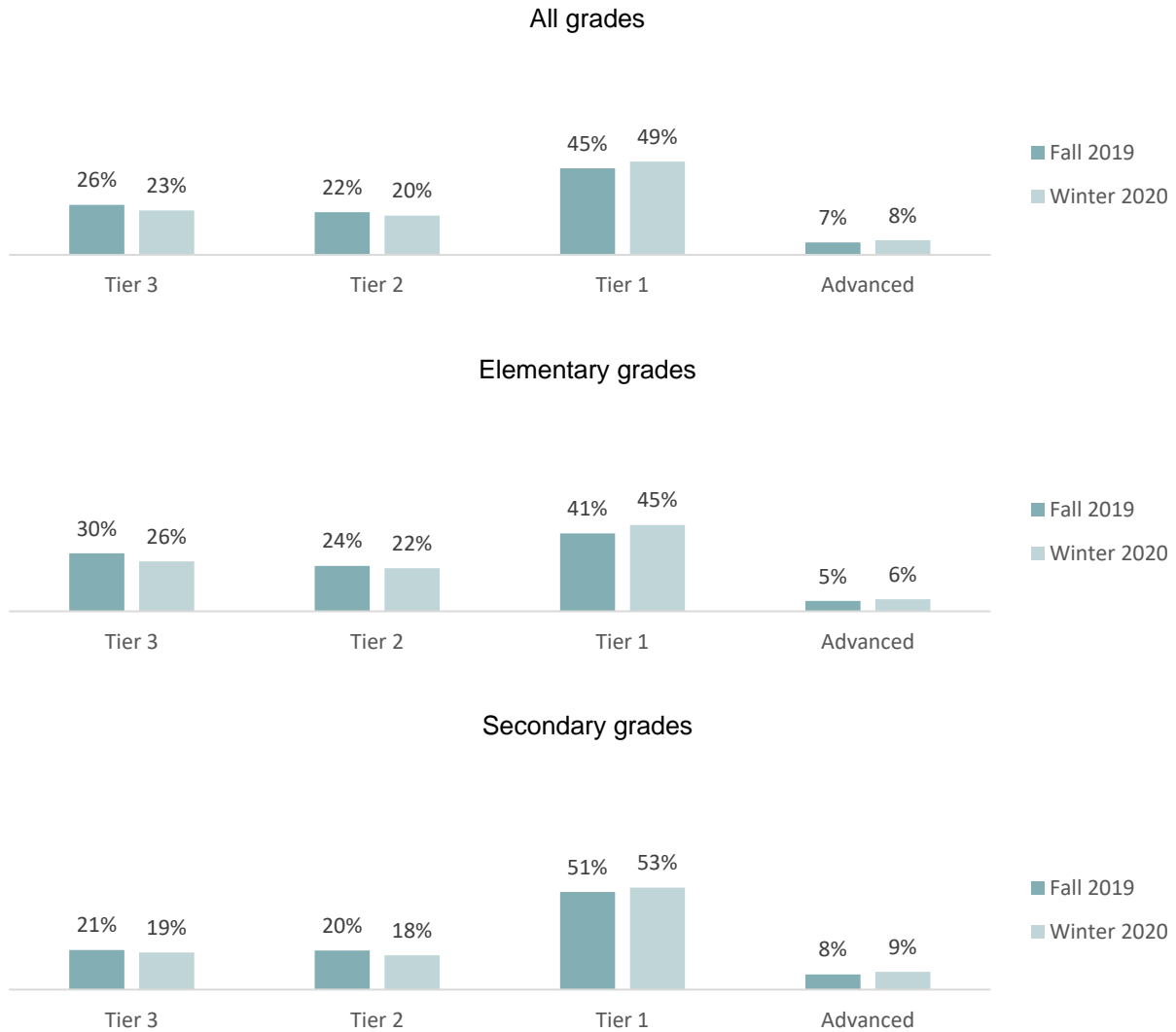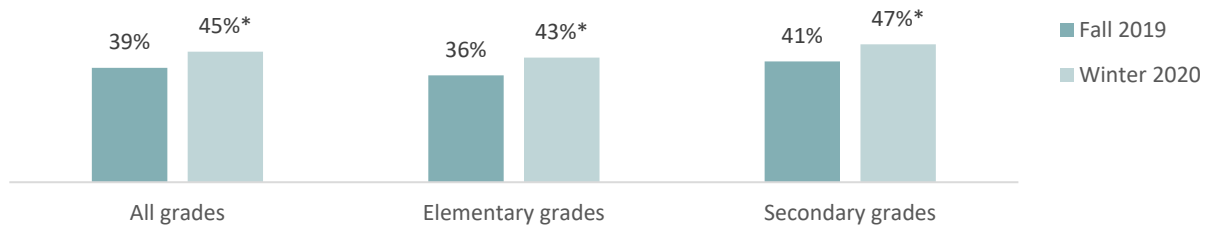

* Indicates change from previous administration is statistically significant (Pearson Chi-Square ≤ 0.05).

Source: Education Northwest analysis of independent student interim assessment data.

Further, the percentage of American Indian students in Tier 2 and Tier 3 decreased or stayed the same, and the percentage in Tier 1 and the percentage of advanced students increased or stayed the same from fall 2019 to winter 2020 (figure 4-7). The increase in the percentage of American Indian students who were advanced was only 1 percentage point for all grades and less than 1 percentage point for both the elementary grades and secondary grades. The largest change was a decrease in the percentage of American Indian students in Tier 3, which decreased by 6 percentage points between fall and winter. The decrease in the percentage of American Indian students in Tier 3 was larger in elementary grades (-6 percentage points) than secondary grades (-3 percentage points).

Figure 4-7. Percent of American Indian Students Across Four Tiers, Fall 2019 and Winter 2020, All Grades and by Grade Bands

All grades

Elementary Grades

Secondary Grades

Note. Bars may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

Source: Education Northwest analysis of independent student interim assessment data.

More English leaner students were at benchmark in winter 2020 than fall 2019 across all grades.

The percentage of English learner students at benchmark (Tier 1 and advanced) increased from fall 2019 to winter 2020 for all grades, elementary grades, and secondary grades. The increase was statistically significant for all three groups (+5 percentage points for all grades, +3 percentage points for elementary grades, and +6 percentage points for secondary grades) (figure 4-8).

Figure 4-8. Percent of Students Learning English At Benchmark in Fall 2019 and Winter 2020, All Grades and by Grade Bands
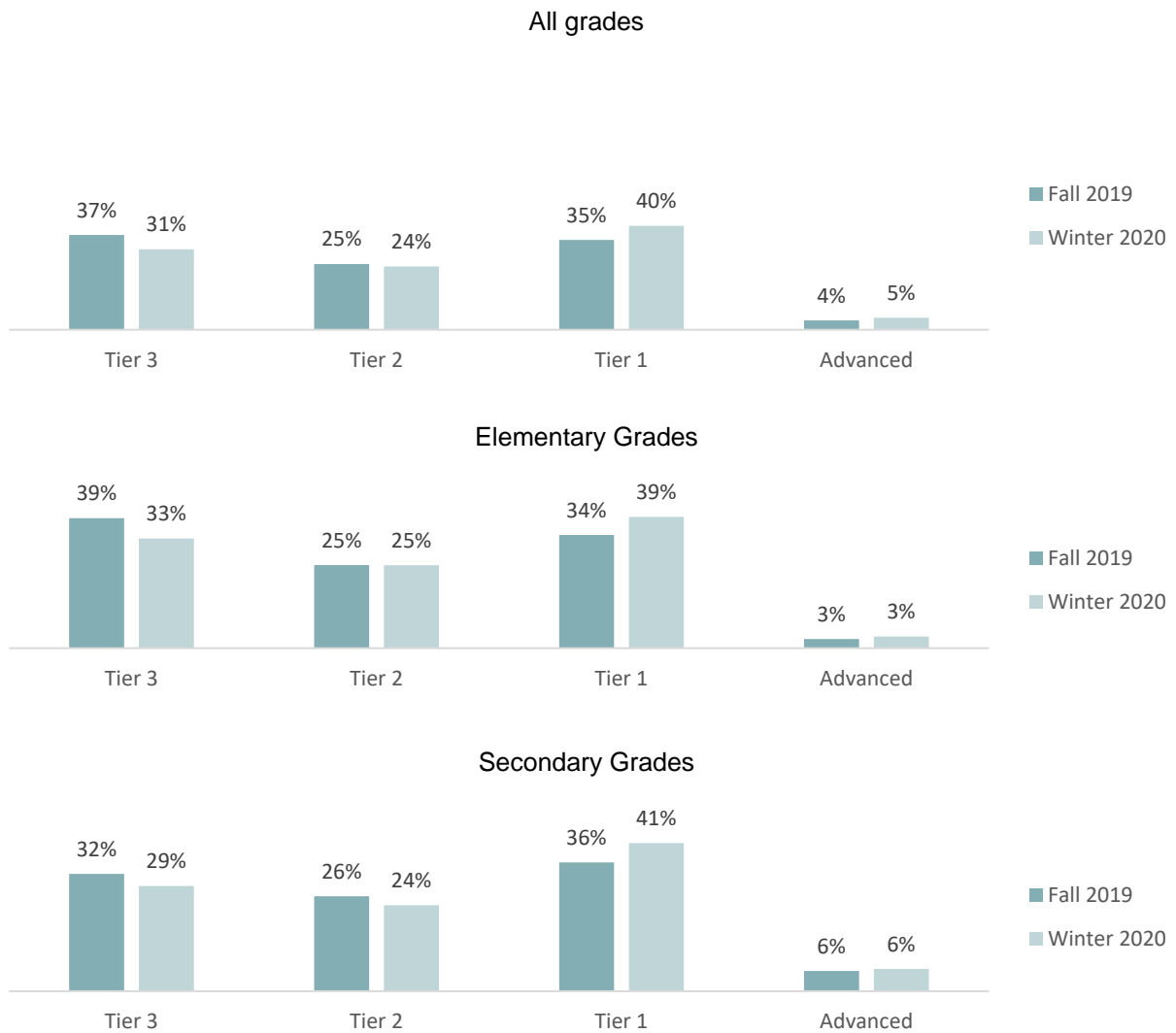

* Indicates change from previous administration is statistically significant (Pearson Chi-Square ≤ 0.05).

Source: Education Northwest analysis of independent student interim assessment data.

Figure 4-9 shows that the percentage of English learner students in Tier 2 and Tier 3 decreased or stayed the same for students in all grades, elementary grades, and secondary grades. Elementary students had the largest decrease in Tier 3 students (-5 percentage points).

Figure 4-9. Percent of Students Learning English Across Four Tiers, Fall 2019 and Winter 2020, All Grades and by Grade Bands

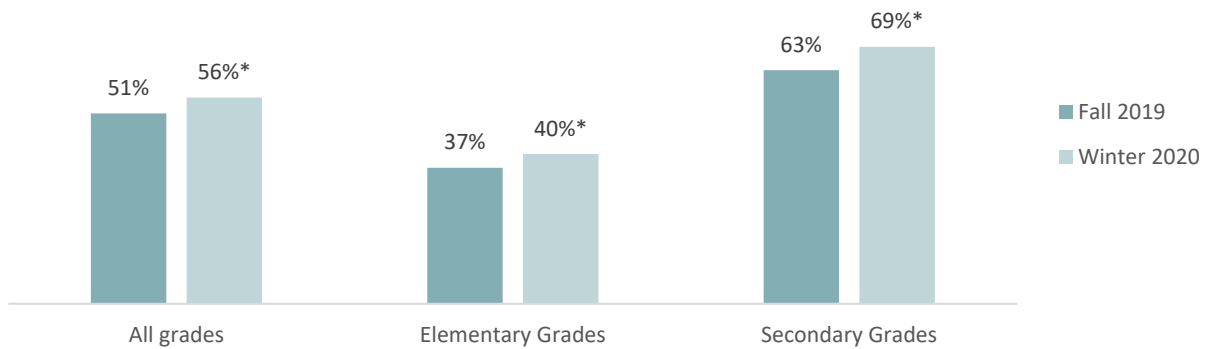**All Grades**

Elementary Grades

Secondary Grades

Note. Bars may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

Source: Education Northwest analysis of independent student interim assessment data.

More students receiving special education services were at benchmark in winter 2020 than fall 2019 across all grades.

The percentage of students receiving special education services at benchmark (Tier 1 and advanced) increased from fall 2019 to winter 2020 for all grades (+2 percentage points), elementary grades (+2 percentage points), and secondary grades (+3 percentage points). The increases were statistically significant for all grades and secondary grades (figure 4-10).

Figure 4-10. Percent of Students Receiving Special Education Services at Benchmark in Fall 2019 and Winter 2020, All Grades and by Grade Bands
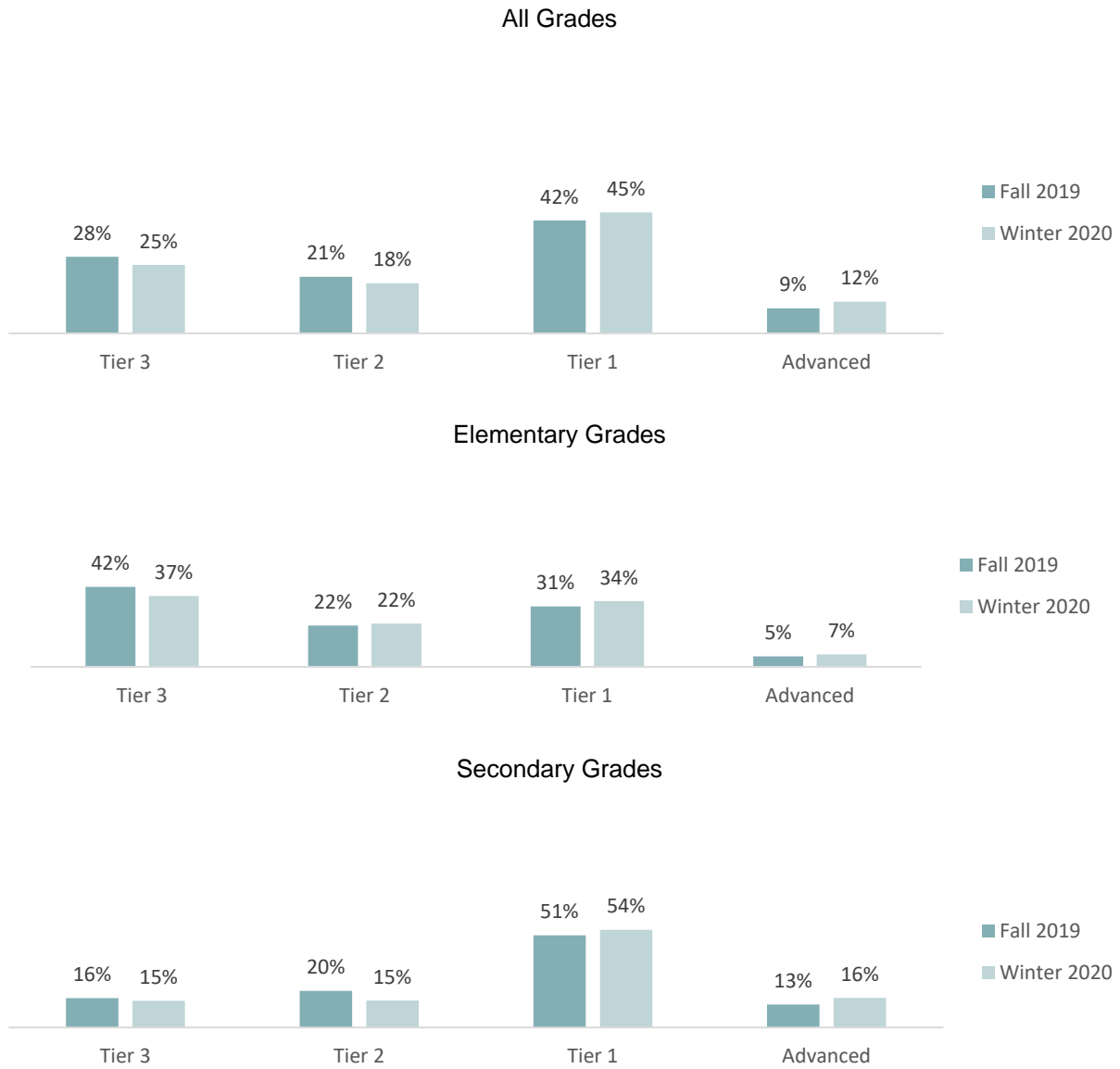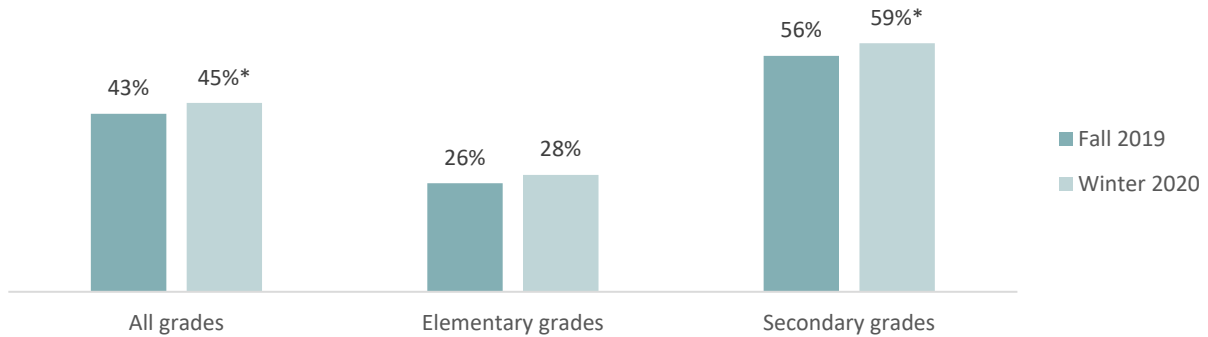

* Indicates change from previous administration is statistically significant (Pearson Chi-Square ≤ 0.05).

Source: Education Northwest analysis of independent student interim assessment data.

Figure 4-11 shows that the percentage of students receiving special education services in Tier 2 and Tier 3 decreased for all grades (-1 percentage point for Tier 2 and -2 percentage points for Tier 3). The percentage of elementary students receiving special education services in Tier 2 increased (+2 percentage points), and the percentage of students in Tier 3 decreased (-4 percentage points). Between fall 2019 and winter 2020, the percentage of secondary students receiving special education services in Tier 2 decreased (-2 percentage points), and the percentage of students in Tier 3 changed less than 1 percentage point.

Figure 4-11. Percent of Students Receiving Special Education Services Across Four Tiers, Fall 2019 and Winter 2020, All Grades and by Grade Bands


All Grades

Elementary Grades

Secondary Grades

Note. Bars may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

Source: Education Northwest analysis of independent student interim assessment data.

More disadvantaged students in all categories were at benchmark in winter 2020 than winter 2019, with English learner students and students receiving special education services seeing the largest increases.

Across all disadvantaged student groups, the percentage of students at benchmark (Tier 1 and advanced) was statistically significantly larger in winter 2020 than winter 2019 (figure 4-12). The largest increase was for English learner students (+39 percentage points), followed by students receiving special education services (+17 percentage points), all disadvantaged students and economically disadvantaged students (+11 percentage points each), and American Indian students (+9 percentage points).

Figure 4-12. Percent of Disadvantaged Students at Benchmark in Winter 2019 and Winter 2020, All Disadvantaged Students and by Population
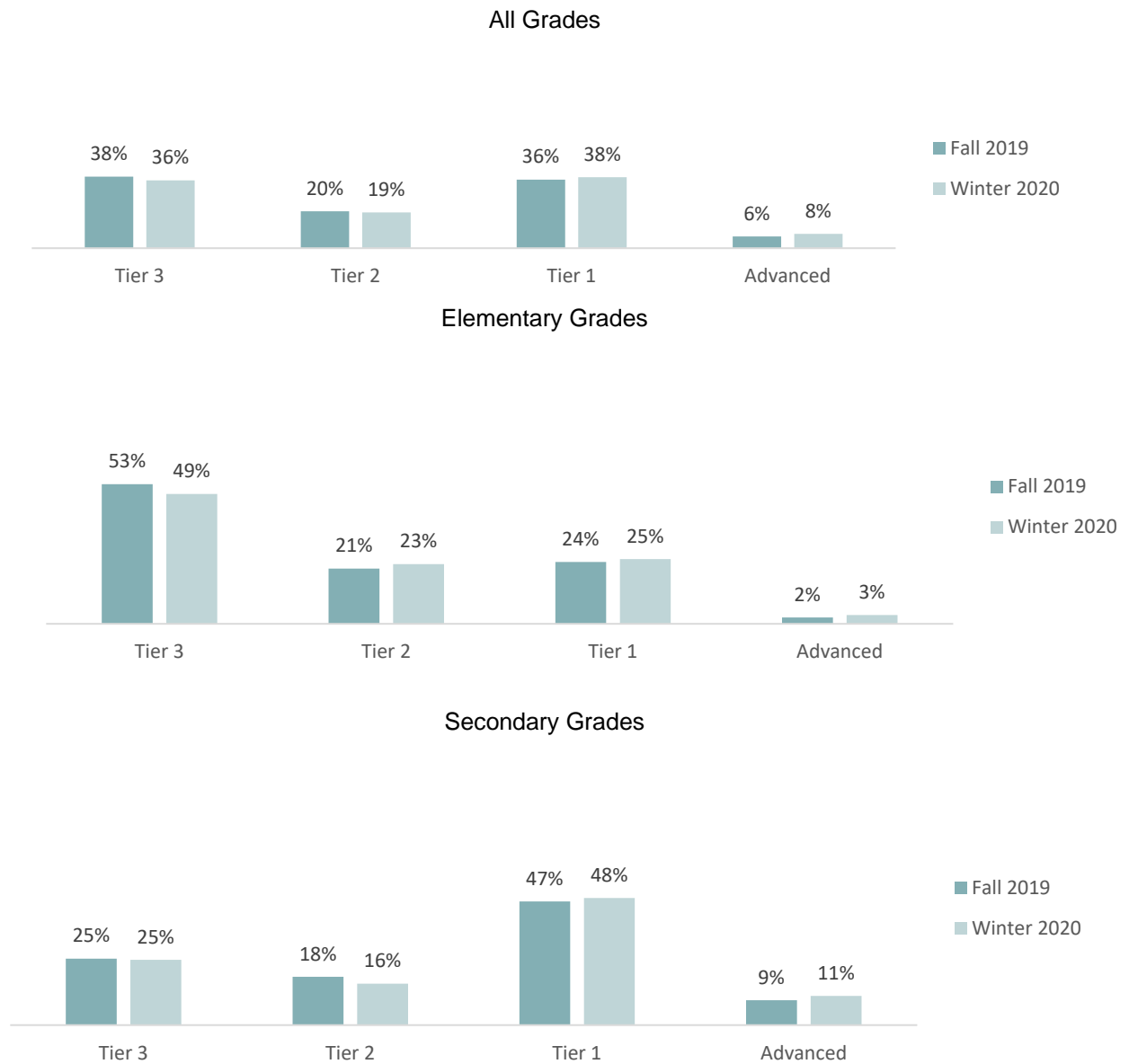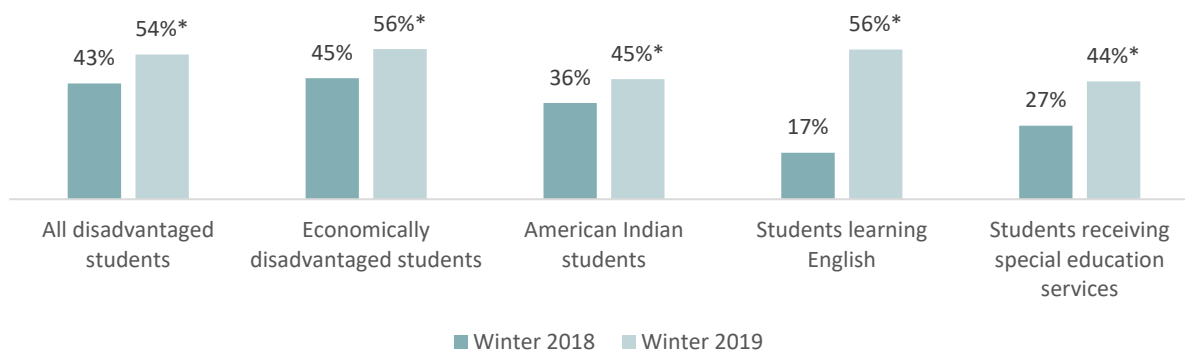

* Indicates change from previous administration is statistically significant (Pearson Chi-Square ≤ 0.05).

Source: Education Northwest analysis of independent student interim assessment data.

MCLP outcomes include increasing the growth of disadvantaged student groups on independent interim assessments by 10 percentage points from Year 2 to Year 3. These outcomes were met for economically disadvantaged students, English learner students, and students receiving special education services.

Improvement Index

Students in Tier 3, preschool students, and English learner students experienced the most positive movement across tiers.

OPI requested that the evaluation team calculate an improvement index based on each student's change in tier from fall to winter, winter to spring, and fall to spring. Schools with the highest improvement index scores would receive innovation grants from OPI. The improvement index is the percentage of students who improved their tier rating (moved from Tier 3 to Tier 2, Tier 1, or advanced; moved from Tier 2 to Tier 1 or advanced; or moved from Tier 1 to advanced) minus the percentage of students who decreased their tier rating (moved from advanced to Tier 1, Tier 2, or Tier 3; moved from Tier 1 to Tier 2 or Tier 3; or moved from Tier 2 to Tier 3).

Table 4-1 shows the percentage of all students and student groups who moved to a higher tier (worse), stayed in the same tier, or moved to a lower tier (better) from fall 2019 to winter 2020. Across all students participating in MCLP, 15 percent moved from a higher tier to a lower tier, and 10 percent moved into higher tiers; the improvement index is 5 percent. The only students with negative improvement index scores are those who were advanced or in Tier 1 in the fall; their scores were -1 percent and -13 percent, respectively. A larger percentage of elementary students improved than secondary students (18% and 11%, respectively). Among disadvantaged students, the largest improvement index was for English learner students (6%), followed by economically disadvantaged students, students receiving special education services, and American Indian students. Students who were in one or more of the disadvantaged student categories had an improvement index score of 5 percent.

Table 4-1. Improvement Index

| Population | Winter Tier Compared to Fall Tier | | | |
	Higher tier (worse) in winter	Same tier in winter	Lower tier (better) in winter	Improvement Index
All students	10%	75%	15%	5%
Advanced students	1%	99%	0%	-1%
Tier 1 students	13%	87%	0%	-13%
Tier 2 students	14%	44%	42%	27%
Tier 3 students	0%	66%	34%	34%
Elementary grades	9%	73%	18%	9%
Secondary grades	10%	78%	11%	1%
All disadvantaged students	11%	73%	16%	5%
Economically disadvantaged students	11%	73%	16%	5%
American Indian students	13%	71%	16%	3%
Students learning English	6%	81%	12%	6%
Students receiving special education services	10%	76%	14%	4%

Note. Highlighted rows indicate the population with the highest score in the Improvement Index within each category. Rows may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

Source: Education Northwest analysis of independent student interim assessment data.

Survey Data

Different stakeholders viewed the impact of participation in MCLP on student outcomes differently, with teachers' assessment of students who would benefit differing from improvement index scores.

Most staff member survey respondents agreed MCLP would help improve the literacy outcomes of all students (91%, -6 percentage points from last year) and disadvantaged students (91%, -5 percentage points from last year). However, in response to another survey question, teachers were slightly less optimistic (figure 4-13). Teachers thought MCLP would most help Tier 1 and Tier 2 students, followed by students living in poverty, American Indian students,

Tier 3 students, and English learner students. Teachers thought students with disabilities and gifted and talented students would be helped the least. Between Year 2 and Year 3, teachers thought MCLP would help English learner students to a lesser extent.

Figure 4-13. Assessment of Student Groups That Would Have the Most Improved Literacy Outcomes as a Result of Participating in MCLP from Teachers Responding to the Spring Survey

		Not at all/A little	Somewhat	A lot	Completely
Tier 1 (core classroom instruction students)	Year 2	3%	18%	38%	41%
	Year 3	8%	20%	46%	27%
Tier 2 (strategic instruction students)	Year 2	6%	20%	54%	20%
	Year 3	6%	25%	47%	22%
Students living in poverty	Year 2	12%	20%	44%	24%
	Year 3	10%	25%	47%	19%
American Indian students	Year 2	13%	19%	37%	30%
	Year 3	12%	26%	41%	22%
Tier 3 (intensive instruction students)	Year 2	10%	24%	47%	20%
	Year 3	10%	29%	42%	19%
Students with disabilities	Year 2	13%	28%	34%	24%
	Year 3	15%	27%	39%	19%
English language learners	Year 2	11%	23%	33%	34%
	Year 3	23%	26%	34%	17%
Gifted and talented education instruction students	Year 2	39%	29%	25%	6%
	Year 3	40%	31%	21%	8%

■ Not at all/A little ■ Somewhat ■ A lot ■ Completely

Note. Bars may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

Source: Education Northwest analysis of School Staff Member Survey data.

To better serve students, teachers requested supports for gifted and talented students, more time to continue implementing their plans, continued professional development, and resources aligned to needs.

Teacher survey respondents indicated that their districts and schools needed to develop and implement programs and plans for gifted and talented students. They also indicated that extensions were necessary for Tier 1 students. Teachers requested professional development focused on strategies for teaching gifted and talented students, as well as training to support results from ongoing data analyses, content teachers, students in poverty, students experiencing trauma, American Indian students, English learner students, Tier 3 students, and students

receiving special education services. Resources for these student groups were also noted as needs.

> *The needs of our students living in poverty as well as our Native American students are not clearly understood by all building staff. Implementing methods to enhance rigor for our Tier 1 and gifted and talented students is often mentioned by teachers. Also, designing units with Indian Education for All intentions rather than looking for ways the lesson fits Indian Education for All after the fact.* (School staff member)

> *Books in subject areas that support students with disabilities in a way that they can study chemistry, physics, etc. right along with other students, but the level of reading is adapted to them.* (School staff member)

> *To improve the needs of these students, I think we (as a district), need to find curriculum that meets the needs of our students. Right now, I think the curriculum doesn't fully meet the grade-level standards students need to move onto the next grade. I feel teachers don't feel motivated to teach this curriculum and want a curriculum that is relevant to the needs of our diverse students.* (School staff member)

> *By using culturally relevant instruction and materials. Addressing students' individual needs at appropriate levels and not spoon feeding them all the same reading program. Students need more choices and opportunities in their reading and writing, not what the teacher feeds them.* (School staff member)

Teachers also mentioned other issues, including staffing (specifically, more staff members are needed to support the needs of students with more intensive needs and to reduce group sizes), more differentiated instruction, more instructional and intervention time with students, better collaboration between teachers and specialists, and more communication and family support.

Several teachers said they did not need anything in addition to time and practice with the current strategies they had adopted under MCLP.

> *I feel like follow through and continued professional development will support these students. We have implemented a large amount of new things in the last year. Time will allow the teachers to be more proficient and hopefully allow us to completely meet the needs of all our students. At this time, we do a great job but we are still on a learning curve that needs to continue in its development to continue to increase its effectiveness.* (School staff member)

Teachers thought Tier 1 and Tier 2 students would be helped the most. However, results from the improvement index indicated that Tier 2 and Tier 3 students improved the most. Teachers also thought economically disadvantaged students would benefit more than English learner students, students with disabilities, and American Indian students—but according to the improvement index, English learner students had the third-most improvement, followed by economically disadvantaged students, students receiving special education services, and American Indian students (table 4-2). Although teachers thought gifted and talented students and students receiving special education services would improve the least, the latter student group had the fifth-most improvement. Tier 1 and advanced students improved the least (partially because only Tier 1 students could move into the advanced category, and advanced students could only remain the same or move into a higher tier).

Table 4-2. Improvement Index, Sorted by Student Population with the Highest Score

Student Population	Improvement Index
Tier 3	34%
Tier 2	27%
English learners	6%
Economically disadvantaged	5%
SPED	4%
American Indian	3%
Advanced	-1%
Tier 1	-13%

Source: Education Northwest analysis of independent student interim assessment data.

Chapter 5. Summary and Recommendations

Summary

OPI was largely successful in achieving MCLP outcomes during the third year of grant implementation, as shown by the following intended accomplishments.

Align Early Language and Literacy Approaches to Support Children from Birth to Grade 5
OPI supported the alignment of services across the birth-through-grade 5 continuum through coordination, professional development, and technical assistance. Reports from school staff members indicate their staff aligned services across the continuum; they invited community members to family events, worked with community-based organizations and preschools, and aligned activities across preschool and elementary settings.

Ensure Subgrantees Implement Local Literacy Plans Based on the Montana Literacy Plan
Schools and districts established leadership teams that engaged in work necessary to create and implement their local literacy plan. Their members engaged in collaboration, facilitated communication, observed implementation, and helped establish systems to support data-based decision-making. School leadership team members worked to improve the amount, consistency, and quality of—as well as participation—in family engagement activities. They also tied professional development plans to local needs while addressing data-based decision-making and literacy.

Use the Continuous Improvement Cycle
OPI staff members engaged district and school leadership team members in activities to ensure implementation expectations were upheld and that teams used the continuous improvement cycle. Specifically, they reviewed data from multiple sources to assess implementation and needs and to plan supports for statewide and site-based work. School leadership team members collected, analyzed, and used data in the continuous improvement cycle more regularly; they created action plans and monitored, reflected, reviewed, and revised them; and they made decisions at the school and classroom level to address student needs and improve implementation fidelity

Advance Literacy Skills
School staff members used standards to guide instruction, interventions, and grading. They also reported engaging in bell-to-bell instruction, being more efficient with their instructional time, and using literacy strategies and differentiated instruction. To support the needs of at-risk students, they differentiated instruction but also focused on critical aspects of the curriculum, made data-based decisions, offered motivation, and collaborated with colleagues. Analyses of independent interim student assessment data show that more students were at benchmark in winter 2020 than fall 2019 and winter 2019 across all grades, elementary grades, and secondary grades among all students and among all disadvantaged student groups (economically disadvantaged students, American Indian students, English learner students, and students

receiving special education services). Students in Tier 3, students in the elementary grades, and English learner students experienced the most growth. Finally, economically disadvantaged students, English learner students, and students receiving special education services increased their growth on independent interim assessments by 10 percentage points from winter Year 2 to winter Year 3.

Monitor Intervention Implementation Fidelity

School staff members adopted multiple interventions to address student needs in literacy, math, and behavior, and they reported implementing most of these interventions with partial or full fidelity. OPI staff members, instructional consultants, and school staff members conducted walkthroughs to observe implementation, used implementation checklists, and reviewed benchmark and progress-monitoring data to assess fidelity and student progress.

Address Sustainability

OPI supports MCLP sustainability at the state level by using similar processes across departments and at the local level by building capacity in using (and the ownership of) the continuous improvement process. School leadership team members indicate that collaborating, as well as collecting and using data, via the continuous improvement cycle appear sustainable, but instructional changes and professional development appear less sustainable. School staff members said ways to strengthen implementation and sustainability include consistently engaging in adopted practices, as well as prioritizing and standardizing processes.

Recommendations

1. **Continue to support the needs of disadvantaged students by providing differentiated instruction and appropriate interventions.** Although larger percentages of all groups of disadvantaged students were at benchmark in winter 2020 than fall 2019 and winter 2019, none have attained 60 percent at benchmark. Among disadvantaged student groups, students receiving special education services and American Indian students have the smallest percentages of students at benchmark.

2. **Ensure OPI staff members and instructional consultants have enough time to work with district and school leadership and teacher teams.** Next year is the last year of the grant; in 2020–21, district and school staff members need to consistently engage in continuous improvement cycle activities, identify priorities, and standardize processes to support sustainability. OPI staff members and instructional consultants are key to ensuring this occurs.

3. **Provide continued training and site-based support from OPI staff members, instructional consultants, and instructional coaches.** In terms of professional development, educators requested more differentiation; inclusion; and time for practice, planning, and collaboration. Across all areas addressed in this report, common areas for additional support include:

   - *Assessment and data-based decision-making:* On the survey, school staff members indicated that they needed more assessments (including dyslexia screeners) to better identify at-

risk students and their needs. They also needed support in analyzing data, using data to make decisions, and assessing standards.

- *Evidence-based practices and interventions:* School staff members requested support in identifying and using evidence-based practices. This included training in implementing adopted curricula (Tier 1), as well as identifying interventions (Tier 2 and Tier 3) and implementing them with fidelity. There were specific requests for identifying strategies to support behavior, including restorative practices.

- *Instruction:* School staff members requested additional time and support to understand and use standards and prioritize content, as well as identify and learn teaching strategies to support Tier 1 instruction and differentiate instruction for students in Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3. They specifically requested professional development in reading, content area strategies for low-level readers, and writing. They also requested strategies to increase student engagement.

- *Community and family engagement:* Staff members at both the district and school levels indicated that they need support in developing new ways to engage families—and to increase families' participation in school activities and their child's education—including strengthening activities and involvement during transitional periods.

4. **Support districts and schools in adjusting their master schedules to support collaboration and instruction time.** School staff members indicated that they needed additional dedicated time to use the continuous improvement cycle and collaborate with colleagues to make data-based decisions regarding implementation, instruction, and interventions. They also needed additional time to provide instruction, interventions, and classroom support to differentiate based on students' needs. Additional staffing support was requested to increase shared responsibility for the continuous improvement cycle, including administering assessments and collecting data.

References

Montana Office of Public Instruction (2020, July). *Monthly summary of OPI division activities.*
http://opi.mt.gov/Leadership/OPI-Communication/Monthly-Summary-of-OPI-Division-Activities

U.S. Department of Education. (2018). *Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy program* [Program webpage]. Retrieved from https://www2.ed.gov/programs/strivingreaders-literacy/index.html

Appendix A: School Staff Member and Student Demographics

Table A-1. School District of Staff Members Responding to the Spring Survey

School District	Percent (n)	
	Year 2	Year 3
Anaconda	2% (7)	12% (70)
Boulder	14% (45)	0% (0)
Browning	0% (1)	32% (190)
Charlo	5% (17)	4% (24)
Clinton	1% (2)	5% (28)
East Helena	3% (9)	4% (24)
Fromberg	4% (14)	3% (17)
Frontier	17% (54)	0% (1)
Great Falls	10% (31)	0% (1)
Hardin	4% (13)	18% (107)
Helena	6% (18)	0% (0)
Libby	1% (2)	0% (0)
Lincoln	1% (4)	0% (2)
Livingston	2% (5)	0% (0)
Lockwood	0% (1)	2% (11)
Potomac	2% (5)	1% (5)
Roberts	5% (17)	2% (15)
Rocky Boy	2% (7)	6% (37)
St. Regis	14% (45)	2% (11)
Sun River	0% (1)	6% (35)
Troy	5% (17)	4% (23)

Table A-2. Student Age Group Served of School Staff Members Responding to the Spring Survey

Student Age Group	Percent (n)	
	Year 2	Year 3
Birth to age 3/4	0% (0)	0% (2)
Age eligible to attend preschool (age 3 and/or 4)	4% (11)	4% (24)
Age eligible to attend elementary school (i.e., grades K-5/6)	64% (157)	44% (262)
Age eligible to attend middle school (i.e., grades 5/6–8/9)	11% (26)	21% (124)
Age eligible to attend high school (i.e., grades 9/10–12)	13% (32)	23% (135)
Pre-K/K-12	8% (19)	9% (53)

Table A-3. Role of School Staff Members Responding to the Spring Survey

Role	Percent (n)	
	Year 2	Year 3
District administrator (superintendent, assistant superintendent)	1% (3)	1% (8)
Building administrator (principal/vice-principal/director)	9% (22)	6% (34)
Other administrative	1% (3)	3% (15)
Literacy instructional support (coach/specialist/facilitator)	5% (13)	0% (0)
Pre-K–12 teacher, including special education, ESL/ELL, art, music, health/PE, gifted, educational technology, library	67% (165)	73% (414)
Specialist (e.g., mental health, speech language pathologist)	4% (9)	7% (41)
Interventionist	4% (9)	3% (16)
Classroom aide/paraprofessional	9% (21)	8% (43)

Table A-4. Subjects Taught by Teachers Responding to the Spring Survey

Subject	Percent (n)	
	Year 2	Year 3
General education (Pre-K-5/6)	55% (89)	39% (161)
English Language Arts (Reading/Writing/Literature/Speaking)	11% (18)	18% (73)
Sciences (e.g., Biology/Chemistry/Physics)	2% (4)	13% (55)
Technical subjects	1% (1)	5% (23)
History/Social studies/Government/Civics	5% (8)	12% (48)
Mathematics (e.g., Algebra/Geometry/Calculus/Statistics)	5% (8)	15% (61)
Specials (e.g., Art/Music, Library, Health/Physical education)	7% (12)	15% (64)
I primarily provide literacy/math interventions	4% (6)	5% (21)
Other	9% (15)	39% (161)

Table A-5. School District of Students with Fall 2019 and Winter 2020 Independent Interim Assessment Data

School District	Percent (n)
Anaconda	6% (741)
Boulder	1% (113)
Browning	11% (1,386)
Charlo	2% (251)
Clinton	1% (89)
East Helena	10% (1,306)
Fromberg	1% (102)
Frontier	1% (117)
Great Falls	15% (1,853)
Hardin	10% (1,288)
Helena	8% (1,073)
Libby	6% (778)
Lincoln	1% (102)
Livingston	10% (1,213)
Lockwood	9% (1,144)
Potomac	1% (81)
Roberts	1% (95)
Rocky Boy	4% (482)
St Regis	0% (53)
Sun River Valley	1% (167)
Troy	2% (228)

Table A-6. Grade of Students with Fall 2019 and Winter 2020 Independent Interim Assessment Data

Grade	Percent (n)
Preschool	0% (0)*
Kindergarten	9% (1,087)
1	8% (1,028)
2	8% (1,034)
3	8% (1,091)
4	8% (1,072)
5	9% (1,151)
6	10% (1,256)
Elementary Grades (K-6)	60% (7,719)
7	12% (1,541)
8	12% (1,471)
9	8% (984)
10	5% (683)
11	2% (209)
12	0.5% (55)
Secondary Grades (7-12)	40% (5,043)

* Preschool students did not complete winter independent interim assessments and are not included in this report.

Table A-7. Disadvantaged Population of Students with Matched Independent Interim Assessment Data

Disadvantaged Population	Year	Percent (n)		
		Yes	**No**	**Missing**
American Indian/Alaskan Native	2	20% (2,619)	56% (7,224)	24% (3,031)
	3	28% (3,514)	65% (8,266)	7% (882)
English Language Learner	2	2% (239)	25% (3,168)	74% (9,467)
	3	16% (1,981)	69% (8,727)	15% (1,954)
Receives Special Education Services	2	5% (684)	40% (5,083)	55% (7,107)
	3	17% (2,175)	74% (9,426)	8% (1,061)
Free or Reduced Lunch	2	23% (2,895)	15% (1,899)	63% (8,080)
	3	52% (6,622)	41% (5,141)	7% (899)

Table A-8. Assessment of Students with Fall 2019 and Winter 2020 Independent Interim Assessment Data

Assessment	Percent (n)
aimsweb, Early Literacy	2% (271)
aimsweb, Reading	9% (1,079)
ACT Aspire Reading	3% (405)
DIBELS Next	10% (1,305)
Expressive One Word Picture Vocabulary Test	N/A
iReady	8% (1,006)
ISIP	28% (3,513)
MAP	30% (3,835)
Star Reading	6% (797)
Star Early Literacy	1% (169)
FastBridge Early Learning	0% (17)
FastBridge Reading	2% (234)
SBAC	0% (31)

Note. Schools administer the Expressive One Word Picture Vocabulary Test to preschool students. Since preschool students did not complete winter independent interim assessments, they are not included in this report.

Appendix B: Funded Districts and Schools

Table B-1. Funded Districts and Schools, with Grade Bands

District	School	Preschool	Elementary Grades	Secondary Grades
Anaconda	Lincoln Elementary	X	X	
Anaconda	Fred Moodry Intermediate		X	
Anaconda	Anaconda Jr./Sr. High School			X
Boulder	Boulder Elementary		X	X
Browning	KW Bergan/Vina Chattin	X	X	
Browning	Browning Elementary		X	
Browning	Napi School		X	
Browning	Browning Middle School			X
Browning	Buffalo Hide Academy			X
Browning	Browning High School			X
Charlo	Dixon School	X		
Charlo	Charlo School		X	X
Clinton	Clinton School		X	X
East Helena	Eastgate School	X	X	
East Helena	Prickly Pear Elementary School		X	
East Helena	Radley Elementary School		X	
East Helena	East Valley Middle School			X
Fromberg	Fromberg School	X	X	X
Frontier	Frontier School		X	X
Great Falls	Great Falls Preschool	X		
Great Falls	Longfellow School		X	
Great Falls	Whittier School		X	
Great Falls	East Middle School			X
Great Falls	Great Falls High School			X
Hardin	Hardin Kindergarten Readiness Center	X		
Hardin	Crow Agency School		X	
Hardin	Hardin Primary		X	
Hardin	Hardin Intermediate School		X	
Hardin	Hardin Middle School			X
Hardin	Hardin High School			X
Helena	Ray Bjork Learning Center	X		
Helena	Bryant School		X	
Helena	Central School		X	
Helena	Helena Middle School			X
Helena	Helena High School			X

District	School	Preschool	Elementary Grades	Secondary Grades
Libby	Kootenai Valley Head Start	X		
Libby	Plummer Preschool	X		
Libby	Libby Elementary School		X	
Libby	Libby Middle School			X
Libby	Libby High School			X
Lincoln	Lincoln School	X	X	X
Livingston	Washington Early Learning Center	X		
Livingston	B.A. Winans Primary		X	
Livingston	Eastside School		X	
Livingston	Sleeping Giant Middle School			X
Livingston	Park High School			X
Lockwood	Lockwood Primary	X	X	
Lockwood	Lockwood Intermediate		X	
Lockwood	Eileen Johnson Middle School			X
Potomac	Potomac School	X	X	X
Roberts	Roberts School	X	X	X
Rocky Boy	Rocky Boy School	X	X	
Rocky Boy	Rocky Boy Jr./Sr. High School			X
St Regis	St Regis School	X	X	X
Sun River	Fort Shaw Elementary School	X	X	
Sun River	Simms High School			X
Troy	WF Morrison Elementary School (PK-6)	X	X	
Troy	Troy Jr./Sr. High School			X
Total				
21 Districts		19	32	28

Appendix C: Comprehensive Needs Assessment Analysis

In fall 2019, all 21 subgrantees completed the annual comprehensive needs assessment and submitted data to OPI. The needs assessment consists of 10 scales:

1. School quality
2. Program and/or content standards and curriculum
3. Assessment and data-driven decision-making
4. Amount and quality of instruction
5. Instruction and support for at-risk students
6. Motivation in teaching and learning
7. Academic/program leadership to improve instruction
8. Professional development to improve instruction and outcomes
9. Community and family engagement
10. Operational components

Some, but not all, scales (blue rows in table C-1) have subscales (white rows in table C-1). In total, the needs assessment comprises 136 items. The needs assessment uses a scale of "1" to "4," where "1" is "Not being implemented" and "4" is "Sustained practice."

Table C-1 shows that programs, on average, made implementation improvements across the board; the overall score increased from 3.1 to 3.3. The highest area was program and/or content standards and curriculum (average of 4.0) under program and/or content standards and curriculum, and the lowest area was tribal engagement (average of 2.8) under operational components. The largest gains were in the subscale of program and/or content standards and curriculum (+0.8), the subscale of improve and increase teachers' understanding and knowledge (+0.3), and scale of community and family engagement (+0.3).

Table C-1. Summary of Comprehensive Needs Assessment Data

Scales and Subscales	Mean		
	Year 2	Year 3	Change
Comprehensive Needs Assessment, Overall	3.1	3.3	+0.2
School Quality	3.2	3.3	+0.1
Climate	3.2	3.3	+0.1
Communication	3.2	3.3	+0.1
Program and/or Content Standards and Curriculum	3.2	3.3	+0.1
Program and/or Content Standards and Curriculum	3.2	4.0	+0.8
Evidence-Based Strategies, Practices, and Interventions	3.2	3.3	+0.1
Assessment and Data-driven Decision Making to Inform Instruction	3.1	3.3	+0.2
Amount and Quality of Instruction	3.2	3.3	+0.1
Amount of Instruction	3.2	3.3	+0.1
Quality of Instruction	3.1	3.3	+0.2
Quality of Materials	3.1	3.3	+0.2
Instruction and Supports for At-risk Students	3.0	3.2	+0.2
Motivation in Teaching and Learning	3.2	3.3	+0.1
Academic/Program Leadership to Improve Instruction	3.2	3.3	+0.1
Professional Development to Improve Instruction and Outcomes	3.1	3.3	+0.2
Improve and Increase Teachers' Understanding and Knowledge	3.1	3.4	+0.3
Job-Embedded and Classroom Focused Professional Development	3.1	3.3	+0.2
Data-Driven Decision-Making	3.1	3.3	+0.2
Community and Family Engagement	3.0	3.1	+0.1
Operational Components	3.1	3.3	+0.2
Functional School Board	3.1	3.3	+0.2
Resource Allocations	3.2	3.3	+0.1
Functional Structures	3.3	3.4	+0.1
Personnel Retention	3.0	3.1	+0.1
Tribal Engagement	2.6	2.8	+0.2