



Montana Comprehensive Literacy Project

Year 1 and Year 2 Evaluation Report

December 2019

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Angela Roccograndi

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About Education Northwest

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

Contact

Education Northwest
101 SW Main Street, Suite 500
Portland, OR 97204
educationnorthwest.org
503.275.9500

Authors

Angela Roccograndi, MSW

Suggested Citation

Roccograndi, A. (2019). *Montana Comprehensive Literacy Project: Year 1 and 2 evaluation report*.
Portland, OR: Education Northwest.

Executive Summary

In fall 2017, the U.S. Department of Education awarded Montana a Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy grant (SRCL). The grant enables the Montana Office of Public Instruction (OPI) to implement the Montana Literacy Plan by supporting schools in building a comprehensive literacy program to advance the literacy skills of all students, and in particular, disadvantaged students. OPI has been implementing the Montana Comprehensive Literacy Project (MCLP) since January 2018.

OPI's Montana Comprehensive Literacy Project (MCLP) Activities

In preparing for the grant and its implementation, OPI revised the Montana Literacy Plan, created an application process, application modules, and a scoring rubric, and provided district applicants regional meetings and follow-up support. Following the application process, OPI engaged in an independent peer review process. OPI awarded subgrants to 58 schools across 21 districts. Across awarded schools, one quarter enrolled preschool children and one half each enrolled students in grades K-6 and grades 7-12. According to student assessment data, about two-thirds of students were economically disadvantaged (62%), one-quarter were American Indian (28%), and fewer were receiving special education services (12%) or learning English (7%).

To support implementation of subgrantees' local literacy plans, OPI provided two conferences that engaged school staff members in a broad array of planning and implementation topics. In addition to conferences, OPI staff members and instructional consultants regularly supported district and school staff members onsite. They helped them use the continuous improvement cycle to guide implementation and align services across the birth through grade 5 continuum.

OPI is engaged in monitoring literacy plan implementation at the state and subgrantee levels. At the state level, OPI staff members are using the continuous improvement cycle to determine some next steps for statewide implementation. At the subgrantee level, OPI set school-level expectations, provided support to OPI staff members and instructional consultants to monitor implementation at the district and school level, and established incentives for schools to meet student outcome goals.

Finally, OPI is supporting MCLP sustainability at the state level through alignment and partnerships, consistent messaging, and sharing resources across agencies; and at the school level by providing technical assistance and support to school staff members in using the continuous improvement cycle to drive implementation of their local literacy plans.

School and District MCLP Activities

Schools and districts established leadership teams that engaged in work necessary to implement their local literacy plan. They collected, analyzed, and used data in the continuous improvement cycle to identify needs, address gaps in their comprehensive literacy programs, monitor implementation, and communicate with stakeholders.

School staff members implemented a variety of interventions to support literacy, math, and behaviors and were, at a minimum, partially implementing them with full fidelity or fully implementing them with partial fidelity.

Schools implemented the Improving Instruction component of the Montana Literacy Plan in the following ways:

- **Academic leadership.** School leadership team members engaged in, and supported, a variety of activities to identify literacy needs and address them such as protecting time, setting priorities, and conducting walkthroughs.
- **Community and family engagement.** Family engagement often included communicating with parents about student progress and involving them in school events.
- **Professional development.** Local literacy plans addressed the provision of professional development aligned to the Montana Literacy Plan and school leadership members were engaged in planning the delivery and content of professional development.

Schools implemented the Comprehensive Instruction component of the Montana Literacy Plan in the following ways:

- **Standards and curriculum.** Understanding and using the standards were significant foci of MCLP implementation. MCLP districts and schools addressed alignment activities regularly through instruction and interventions, meetings, curriculum adoptions, and transition activities.
- **Assessment and data-driven decision making.** School staff members administered assessments and used data to drive instruction and interventions.
- **Amount and quality of instruction.** As a result of their MCLP work, teachers reported being more efficient with their instructional time and using student engagement and literacy strategies and data to improve instruction.
- **Motivation for teaching and learning.** Educators were focused on both external and intrinsic factors to support teaching and learning.

At this early point of the grant, meetings to engage in the continuous improvement cycle appear sustainable to school leadership team members, but those that rely on additional resources appear less sustainable.

Student Outcomes

Analyses of independent interim assessment data show that more students were at benchmark in spring 2019 than in spring 2018 and fall 2018 across all grades—preschool, elementary grades, and secondary grades; and for all disadvantaged student subgroups—economically disadvantaged students, American Indian students, students learning English, and students receiving special education services. The most growth was experienced by students in Tier 3, in preschool and the elementary grades, and who were learning English.

Recommendations

Moving forward OPI might consider the following recommendations:

1. Continue to support schools in the development and implementation of intervention systems.
2. Continue to improve and deliver differentiated professional development.
3. Support parents and K-12 entities in their community engagement efforts to align literacy activities from the birth to kindergarten continuums.
4. Train district and school leadership team members in identifying funding opportunities and writing grant applications.
5. Find some time for the full MCLP team to meet face-to face at OPI to assess MCLP implementation; schedule additional virtual meetings to support collaboration and communication between OPI staff based in Helena and OPI staff based regionally who provide local support.
6. Ensure all MCLP students' demographic data are entered into the system of their independent interim assessment provider.

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Acknowledgements

This report would not have been possible without the participation and support of many people. First and foremost, educators across Montana completed surveys to describe their Montana Comprehensive Literacy Project (MCLP) implementation efforts and worked with us to obtain student assessment data. In addition, MCLP leadership from the Montana Office of Public Instruction (OPI) and instructional consultants participated in interviews and provided further documentation, as necessary, to support the evaluation effort. Several staff members from Education Northwest were also instrumental: Morgan Holmgren assisted with organizing student assessment data, Margaret Gunn provided administrative support, and Fiona Helsel reviewed and provided feedback on the report.

Chapter 1. Introduction

Background

In fall 2017, the U.S. Department of Education awarded Montana a Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy grant (SRCL). The grant enables the Montana Office of Public Instruction (OPI) to implement the Montana Literacy Plan to support schools in building a comprehensive literacy program to advance literacy skills—including pre-literacy skills, reading, and writing—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 each school to form a school leadership team and districts with multiple participating schools to 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 MLP, that improves the quality of their 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 and evidence-based strategies, interventions, and practices.

Through conferences and leadership team meetings, 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 their office to support each district and an instructional consultant to support each school. Onsite, 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 geared to measure the development of the Montana Early Learning Standards (MELS) and Montana Common Core Standards (MCCS) 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 student progress, including that of disadvantaged student subgroups. 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
<p>Montana Literacy Plan</p> <p>Comprehensive Needs Assessment (CNA)</p> <p>Continuous Improvement Cycle (CIC)</p> <p>Local literacy plan (LLP) aligned to Montana Literacy Plan</p> <p>Independent Peer Review (IPR) Toolkit</p> <p>OPI provides MCLP grant application modules</p> <p>OPI provides regional grant application workshops</p> <p>Awarded subgrantees provide professional development to all staff</p> <p>OPI and instructional consultants (ICs) follow-up with on-site support</p>	<p>Subgrantees write grants using CNA, aligning their local literacy plan to the Montana Literacy Plan, and selecting interventions with strong or moderate evidence.</p> <p>IPR process used to prioritize subgrantees that propose a high-quality comprehensive literacy instruction program.</p> <p>CIC used by subgrantees to implement LLP and by OPI to monitor.</p> <p>OPI, ICs, and school leadership teams track student progress, including that of student subgroups.</p>	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>OPI use 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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Walkthrough data demonstrates beginning of implementation of interventions.</p> <p>Initial 5% growth on Montana interim assessments and GPRA performance measures for all disadvantaged subgroups</p>	<p>Additional 10% growth on Montana interim assessments and GPRA performance measures for all disadvantaged subgroups</p>	<p>Additional 10% growth on Montana interim assessments and GPRA performance measures for all disadvantaged subgroups</p>

External Evaluation of the MCLP

In spring 2018, OPI contracted with Education Northwest to conduct an independent evaluation of MCLP implemented from January 2018 through June 2019. This evaluation is both formative (e.g., measuring OPI's support of and subgrantees implementation of the Montana Literacy Plan) and summative (e.g., 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 analysis of student assessment data. The evaluation addresses seven research questions related to implementation and outcomes:

1. To what extent did the OPI use an independent peer review process to prioritize awards to eligible subgrantees?
2. To what extent did the OPI implement a high-quality plan to prioritize and award subgrants that will serve the greatest numbers or percentages of disadvantaged children, including children living in poverty, English learners, and children with disabilities?
3. To what extent did the 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?
4. To what extent did the subgrantees submit and use the CIC to implement a local literacy plan that (1) was informed by a comprehensive needs assessment and that was aligned with the MLP, (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?
5. To what extent did the subgrantees and the OPI:
 - a. Use the CIC for continuous program improvement to inform the program's decision making, to improve program participant outcomes, to ensure that 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 learners, and children with disabilities) in particular?
 - d. Determine what percentage of students served by MCLP are disadvantaged?
6. To what extent do subgrantees' meet short-, mid-, and long-term outcomes as defined in the MCLP Logic Model?
7. How has the OPI addressed sustainability and to what extent are subgrantees' Local Literacy Plans sustainable beyond the life of the grant?

Surveys

In spring 2019, evaluators administered an online survey to educators working in all subgrantee schools. The survey captured staff members' experiences and opinions about participation in the subgrantee application process, MCLP conferences, onsite professional development, district and school leadership teams, sustainability, and success and challenges implementing the MLP. A total of 245 surveys were completed representing 17 of 21 participating districts (81%). Demographic information of MCLP staff members completing the survey can be found in Appendix A.

Interviews

In spring 2019, evaluators interviewed eight OPI staff members assigned to MCLP districts. These interviews addressed the revision of the MLP; the subgrantee application and independent peer review processes; MCLP conferences; onsite professional development; use of the continuous improvement cycle; sustainability; and the success and challenges encountered by themselves, instructional consultants, and school leadership teams supporting and implementing the MLP onsite.

Data Analyses

Two data sources were used to evaluate MCLP student outcomes: independent interim assessments, and the Montana Comprehensive Assessment System (MontCAS) Reading/English Language Arts (ELA) test from the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC).

Evaluators established data sharing agreements with each of the districts to access the students' assessment data from their independent interim assessment. These included the Expressive/Receptive One Word Picture Vocabulary Test, NWEA's Measures of Academic Progress (MAP), aimsweb, ACT Aspire, Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy (DIBELS/DIBELS Next), Istation's Indicators of Progress (ISIP), Renaissance Learning's Star Reading, and iReady. All assessments were analyzed to place students into one of four tiers—Tier 1, benchmark; Tier 2, strategic; Tier 3, intensive, and advanced—in fall, winter, and spring. We used the tiers provided by the independent interim assessment, rather than calculating them based on scores and/or percentiles. The only tier based on percentiles advanced. This tier includes students at or above the 90th percentile. The evaluators analyzed data in fall and winter and shared these data with OPI to inform planning the fall and winter conferences. Data from students who were tested in both fall and spring were analyzed for the annual report. Demographic information of students with fall and spring independent interim assessment data can be found in Appendix A.

In addition to the data from the independent interim assessments, all 3-8 and 11th grade students participate in MontCAS/SBAC testing. Results from the spring administration of the ELA test to grade 5, grade 8, and grade 11 students (required for Government Performance Reporting Act, GPRA) were collected and analyzed by OPI and shared with Education Northwest.

Report Layout

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

- Chapter 2 focuses on the activities OPI engaged in to support MCLP implementation— revision of the MLP, the subgrantee and independent peer review processes, the conferences, onsite support, aligning services across the Birth through Grade 5 Continuums, use of the continuous improvement cycle, and sustainability.
- Chapter 3 focuses on activities school staff members engaged in 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 MLP; and sustainability.
- Chapter 4 focuses on student outcomes and includes analyses of the independent interim assessment data, SBAC, and ACT data, for all students and disadvantaged students.
- Chapter 5 includes a summary and recommendations.

Chapter 2. OPI Activities

The evaluation assessed eight activities OPI engaged in to implement MCLP: revision of the MLP, the subgrantee and independent peer review processes, conferences, onsite support, aligning services across the birth through grade 5 continuums, use of the continuous improvement cycle, and sustainability.

Montana Literacy Plan (MLP) Revision

OPI engaged in a process to update the MLP that included multiple iterations of review and feedback.

Multiple iterations of review and feedback were used in the MLP revision process. First, OPI staff members reviewed the existing document and identified strengths and weaknesses. They then sent it to a group of external literacy experts who did the same. After, they conducted a call for expertise to identify a team of representatives from across the state to engage in the revision work. This included an application process and aimed to include administrators, curriculum directors, and teachers, from preschool through grade 12. Initially, this group met face-to-face for two-days and then less frequently and in smaller groups thereafter. When the group finished the work, the draft document returned to OPI for editing, and, again, to the external experts for feedback. At that point it went through a final editing process and was sent for publication. Educators received copies of the new MLP at various events during winter and spring 2019.

The Subgrantee Application Process

OPI created an MCLP application process that included development of application modules, a scoring rubric, regional meetings, and follow-up support.

OPI involved schools eligible for applying for MCLP funding in an application process. After identifying eligible schools, application teams were invited to attend one of three regional meetings (in Helena, Great Falls, or Billings) where OPI provided an overview of the application, scoring rubric, and assisted with technical issues related to application submission. After each meeting, teams had an opportunity to begin writing their applications with support from OPI team members. After the meetings, schools could continue to reach out to OPI to ask questions and receive technical assistance and support. OPI also recorded the presentation portion of the meetings and made webinars available to schools unable to attend the meetings.

OPI staff members reported that the grant application workshops were successful and, in retrospect, they thought most schools that received awards had attended one of the workshops. The application process allowed OPI staff members to begin building relationships with school staff members, and the follow-up support allowed school team members unfamiliar with applying for OPI grants continued access to OPI's expertise. Challenges included travel and weather, school leadership team members coming unprepared, late planning (e.g., planning in

winter for spring implementation rather than in spring for fall implementation), a short timeframe, and, to some extent, school leadership members requesting too much support from OPI. Finally, while the grant application process was supposed to include schools completing the needs assessment and a local literacy plan, in actuality OPI assisted many schools with the development of their local literacy plan during their first and second years of support.

Applicants appreciated the grant resources, especially the workshops and follow-up support, but wanted more time and customization in the future.

Educators participating in the MCLP subgrantee application process and responding to the survey found the resources provided by OPI helpful. Between 62 and 76 percent of survey respondents reported the four resources—SRCL subgrant application modules, engaging in the required activities prior to attending a workshop, attending a workshop, and receiving follow-up support from OPI—“very much” or “extremely” prepared their school leadership team to submit a MCLP grant application, with the highest percentage attributed to receiving follow-up support. When asked what they found successful about the resources provided by OPI, most responding staff members mentioned the workshop, followed by follow-up support from OPI, having previous experience writing OPI grant applications, and various pieces of the process—such as engaging in the continuous improvement cycle, using the modules, and accessing the application guidelines.

[The] application and rubric for grant questions, followed by technical workshop [were the most successful]. (School staff member)

Common challenges cited by respondents included finding time to complete the application, along with the length of the application, providing evidence, completing surveys (e.g., needs assessment), and developing understanding and buy in.

I think [a challenge was] getting all teachers on board and them understanding they aren't expected to do anymore or hand in anymore. They are expected to be open to more ideas and show their strengths. Also, they are expected to build on others' strengths. (School staff member)

Aspects of the grant application process that respondents suggested OPI retain included maintaining scoring criteria and access to OPI staff members for support. Requested support included providing more time, information on application expectations, and customization for different groups applying for the grant, such as for preschools.

[In the future, we need] more time to write the grant. The period for writing the grant was extremely short. It made it difficult to properly do the research needed for things like evidence-based intervention selection. (School staff member)

The Independent Peer Review Process

OPI engaged in an independent peer review process for applications from districts applying for MCLP and identified preschools and elementary and secondary schools that met federal funding requirements.

OPI relied on its list of approved providers to solicit peer reviewers for the task. After the group was identified, each reviewer received a scoring package that included a rubric and access to a recorded webinar that explained the process and expectations. Each application was reviewed by two different reviewers who would approach their review from a different lens.

Furthermore, approved vendors were not assigned to review applications from schools or districts with which they were working. After the peer reviews were complete, scores were reviewed by a team at OPI to ensure the two sets of scores were similar and to assess that all the requirements were met. If any rubric scores differed by more than one point, OPI facilitated conversations with the two reviewers to obtain agreement. After OPI verified that the selected applications met the requirement that 40 percent of the grant funds be distributed to elementary schools, 40 percent be distributed to secondary schools, and 15 percent be distributed to preschools, they notified districts of their awards.

Overall, OPI thought the peer review process was successful, as it often involved consultants already familiar with OPI's literacy approach and allowed for less bias in making awards. In the future, OPI would prefer to engage in face-to-face training to obtain greater interrater reliability, have a longer scoring period, and not have scoring occur over the winter holidays.

Analysis of subgrantees and their student populations from assessment scores shows that one-third of funded schools enrolled preschool aged children (33%) and about one-half enrolled students in grades K-6 (55%) and grades 7-12 (48%). Appendix B lists the funded districts and schools with their grade bands. While not all subgrantees reported demographic data with their independent interim assessment data, of those that did, about two-thirds of students were economically disadvantaged (62%), one-quarter were American Indian (28%), and fewer were receiving special education services (12%) or learning English (7%).

MCLP Conferences

OPI provided two conferences that engaged school staff members in a broad array of planning and implementation topics.

OPI invited school leadership team and staff members to attend two conferences, one in fall 2018 and a second in winter 2019. In planning the conferences, 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 all attendees could benefit from, as well as content differentiated by grade bands (e.g., preschool through grade 2, grades 3 through 5, 6 through 8, and 9 through 12), role (e.g., teachers, administrators, and coaches), and level of experience using the continuous improvement cycle in building comprehensive literacy programs. Time was provided for teams to debrief and engage in initial planning on how to

incorporate conference materials into their onsite work. Sites had access to OPI staff members and instructional consultants during this time.

The fall conference was geared more towards planning and included time to review grant requirements and expectations and assist schools in developing an instructional framework and walk through tools. These tools were to be designed to measure classroom implementation of the non-negotiables related to core/Tier 1 literacy instruction across classrooms and was driven by work on high-leverage instructional and leadership practices with Timothy and Cynthia Shanahan from the University of Illinois at Chicago. There was little choice in the content participants could receive.

The winter conference was geared more towards implementation, with keynote addresses and choice sessions. Jim Knight, from the University of Kansas Center for Research on Learning and Kansas Coaching Project, addressed his work on unmistakable impact, coaching, and partnerships; and the National P3 Institute addressed issues related to alignment of services for children and families. The conference also included content related to learning about and using the continuous improvement cycle, data collection/assessment, and data-driven decision making. School leadership team members from elementary schools reviewed their core curriculum to identify foundational skills, and gaps; while secondary school leadership team members were engaged in work in disciplinary literacy and developing consistent instructional strategies between middle and high school. Other topics addressed were writing, phonics, fluency, vocabulary interventions, trauma-informed practices, the SBAC, academic language, and math. Finally, the winter conference provided schools an opportunity to showcase and share what they had produced in terms of instructional frameworks.

Conference participants were pleased with the conference content, but logistics, differentiation, and collaboration time were noted as areas for improvement.

Conference participants responding to the survey were satisfied with the conferences. All, or 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 (see Table 2-1). While most agreed the conference provided time for team members to collaborate, fewer agreed they had time to collaborate with other teams' members.

Table 2-1. Feedback on Fall and Winter MCLP Conferences from Attendees Responding to the Spring Survey

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

2-2

School and district staff members attending the fall and winter conferences and responding to the survey reported OPI staff members and instructional consultants provided enough support for them to engage in grant activities. Between 94 and 99 percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the items about support during the conference (Table 2-2). The areas with the most agreement included OPI staff members and instructional consultants ensuring that school leadership team members' work was aligned to the MLP and that their interventions were supported by moderate or strong evidence. The items with the least agreement included OPI staff members and instructional consultants ensuring school leadership team members communicated effectively with stakeholders and modifying the implementation of interventions to ensure fidelity.

Table 2-2. Agreement About Support Provided from OPI and Instructional Consultants at Conferences from Attendees Responding to the Spring Survey

Survey Item	Percent "Agree" and "Strongly agree"
Ensure our work was aligned to the MLP	99%
Ensure our interventions were supported by moderate or strong evidence	99%
Ensure our work addressed identified local needs	98%
Prepare for onsite professional development	98%
Prepare for onsite monitoring using student outcomes	96%
Focus our work on the needs of disadvantaged children/students	95%
Ensure we wrote clear next steps	95%
Improve our use of the continuous improvement cycle	95%
Ensure our work was effectively communicated to stakeholders	94%
Modify implementation of our interventions to ensure fidelity	94%

Open-ended feedback on the survey from conference participants clustered into three areas—logistics, differentiation, and content. In terms of logistics, some participants would have liked the fall conference to be set up like the winter conference, the conferences to be at different locations, the fall conference to have fewer participants, and schedules to include more time for the sessions and team work (e.g., within teams, across teams, and with similar teams). While some more experienced programs wanted more differentiated content—including time with other programs to share successes and challenges—a few were pleased with the individualized support they did receive. Finally, participants praised the sessions, such as the keynote addresses, “How Do I Plan and Teach Reading Groups,” Jim Knight’s presentation, writing, and phonics. Some feedback indicated that presenters were not knowledgeable of the grant or engaging or that the session description did not match the presentation.

Thank you for providing a variety of grade level information. All our team members were able to attend sectionals that were beneficial. (School staff member)

The conference was amazing! Jim Knight was a captivating speaker, the breakout sessions were informative, the time spent with my team was productive, and I came away inspired! (School staff member)

It would be nice if there were opportunities for schools who are on the same learning/grant continuum to be able to get together and share successes. (School staff member)

Differentiating for schools who are further along with the MCLP requirements. (School staff member)

In terms of planning for next year's events, participants, again, requested more differentiation (both by experience and role) and time for teamwork. Some wanted advanced notice and/or reading material, shorter conferences (in terms of days), fewer attendees and/or groups, and/or to be allowed to bring additional staff members. Content areas requested included math, in-class reading strategies, scaffolding versus differentiation, cultural relevance, Montana-specific information, and sustainability.

Different levels of professional development for administrators and coaches. Some are just starting the process of MCLP and some have been involved whole district since MSRP. So, there is a wide range of participants. (School staff member)

We are required to bring our team members to both conferences, however, it would be nice to have some flexibility to bring different staff for the second conference. That might help with teacher buy in. (School staff member)

Please get the list of presenters to the administrators early. It is beneficial so that we can decide if we want to send BLT members or send others that would benefit from the training. (School staff member)

Definitely more time to process and build with our leadership teams after each presentation. (School staff member)

On-site Technical Assistance and Professional Development

OPI staff members and instructional consultants regularly supported district and school staff members in using the continuous improvement cycle to support implementation and monitoring.

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, while instructional consultants address instructional issues with school leadership teams, teacher teams, and program coaches. The sidebar on the following page provides a summary of activities both engaged in to support implementation of MCLP.

In addition to the listed activities, interviews with OPI staff members revealed that they also conducted walkthroughs, worked with program coaches, observed instructional consultants' work with school leadership and teacher teams, and supported master calendar development and curriculum selection.

According to OPI staff members participating in spring interviews, this past year, OPI successfully worked with district and school staff members to develop district and school leadership teams; engage in the continuous improvement cycle to support program implementation, instruction, and interventions; develop and support instructional frameworks; support professional development (e.g., disciplinary literacy); assist with district-school alignment; support coaches with the Montana Coaching Program; and develop a peer coaching model.

[My biggest success this year supporting programs is] data is the biggest thing – regardless of accomplishments, school staff members have changed their discussion and use of data. (OPI staff member)

In addition to time challenges, OPI staff members found communication between themselves, district/school leadership teams, and instructional consultants difficult. This was exasperated when multiple instructional consultants were supporting a district's schools.

Also, according to OPI staff members participating in spring interviews, instructional consultants successfully worked with school staff members to strengthen instructional frameworks by helping develop walkthrough tools and institute bell ringers and exit tickets. They provided professional development covering a variety of topics—foundational skills, vocabulary, small group and differentiated instruction, active engagement, writing, literacy strategies, disciplinary literacy, and preparing students for SBAC testing. They supported development of Response to Intervention (RTI) and Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) systems—including creating assessment calendars and providing training on using interventions and the Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) cycle; the coaching cycle; and teacher teams—including intentional planning and providing data-driven instruction using their core curriculum.

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

[At one school] students are being tested and benchmarked and they are using interventions. Teachers are looking at data, posting it on the walls, for use during meetings and having discussions. They are seeing a lot of change in students doing better with the intervention piece. I give a lot of credit to the instructional consultant for that.
(OPI staff member)

Challenges instructional consultants encountered included not having enough time onsite, completing paperwork, experiencing a personality/expertise mismatch with school staff members, and lack of school staff member follow-through between their visits.

Not all schools are at the stage for monitoring and improving implementation fidelity of interventions in their literacy plan.

An additional responsibility of OPI staff members and/or instructional consultants is monitoring and improving implementation fidelity of interventions adopted in schools' literacy plans. At the end of Year 2, not all schools may have reached the stage of implementation where they are ready to assess and improve fidelity. This year of the grant, progress was made on identifying and implementing interventions. Next year more time will be devoted to assessing implementation fidelity. For schools monitoring fidelity, the processes that have been established differ. For example, one school has an interventions flow chart that shows what students receive based on benchmark and progress-monitoring assessments. This school has a goal and action plans focused on monitoring interventions. During monthly visits from the OPI staff member they can check-in on implementation by attending the school leadership team meeting. Another school is developing an intervention checklist.

Monitoring intervention fidelity appears to be a better fit for instructional consultants than for OPI staff members.

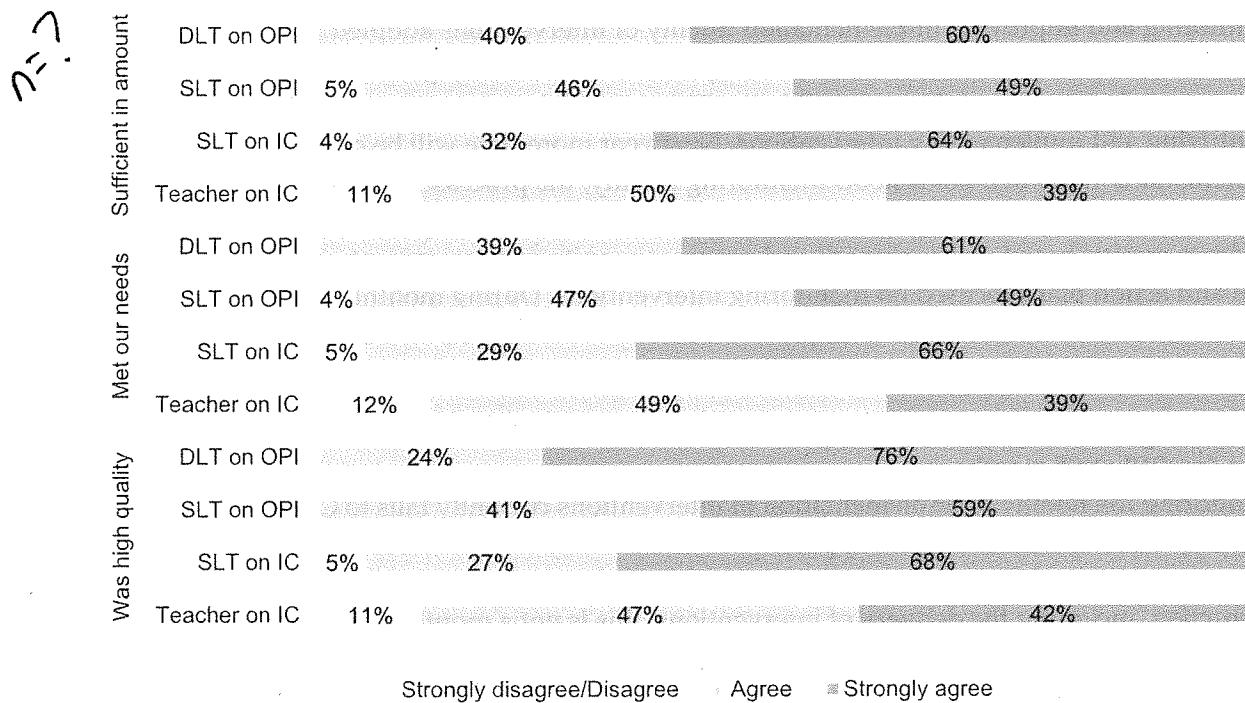
Monitoring the fidelity of implementation of interventions currently falls to OPI staff members and instructional consultants but appears to be more firmly a responsibility of instructional consultants. While OPI staff members and instructional consultants observe classroom instruction, including the delivery of interventions, this is not a monthly task required of OPI staff members. Furthermore, since OPI staff members mostly interact with district leadership teams, instructional consultants have more information about implementation at the school level as they interact with school leadership team members, program coaches, and classroom teachers.

In their application for the Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy Grant, OPI indicated they would monitor the fidelity of implementation by a process guided by five principles: adherence, exposure or duration, quality of program delivery, program differentiation, and student responsiveness. In interviews, OPI staff members and instructional consultants did not address using a process focused on these five principles. This may be an area of focus for the OPI staff members as they move into Year 3.

District and school staff members were satisfied with the support they received from OPI staff members and instructional consultants; variation existed between groups of stakeholder and providers of support.

On the survey, district leadership team member survey respondents 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 provided by their instructional consultant. Across the board most district and school staff members agreed the support they received was sufficient in amount, met their needs, and was of high quality (see Figure 2-1).

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



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

Several trends stand out:

- The largest percentage of staff members strongly agreeing with the items were from district leadership team members related to their work with OPI staff members and school leadership team members related to their work with their instructional consultant.
- The percentage of school leadership team members agreeing and strongly agreeing with the statements about OPI staff members were similar.
- Larger percentages of teachers “agreed” with the statements about their instructional consultant than “strongly agreed” with them.

Furthermore, most school leadership team member survey respondents reported they received data from OPI in a timely manner (91%) and that OPI staff members and instructional consultants effectively model practices (96%) and allow for the transfer of responsibility (96%). Finally, all agreed their MCLP work includes sharing data in appropriate ways (100%).

School staff members were satisfied with the professional development they received but wanted more practice and collaboration time.

Overall, school staff members responding to the survey reported they were satisfied with the on-site professional development they received. All, or almost all, reported the professional development to be high-quality, the presenters knowledgeable and engaging, and the content tied to their school literacy plan and relevant to their work (see Table 2-3). Fewer agreed that sufficient practice and collaboration time were provided.

The grant has provided great opportunity for quality professional development. The on-site work with our instructional consultant has been extremely valuable to individual teachers and the entire staff. (School staff member)

This year has been a great learning curve for us all. We have learned and gained so much wonderful knowledge to help each student learn and grow to their potential. (School staff member)

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

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

n=?

Align Services Across the Birth through Grade 5 Continuum

OPI supported the alignment of services across the birth through grade 5 continuum through coordination and professional development.

OPI required the development of district leadership teams to coordinate work across multiple schools and grade bands in their districts. This coordination could occur within and across preschool and elementary, middle, and high school settings. The focus on instructional frameworks also supported coordination of practices within and across schools. Second, OPI arranged for the National P3 Institute to participate in the winter MCLP conference. The National P3 Institute addressed the importance of leadership as key stakeholders in and the

alignment of services for children and families. Other ways OPI supported alignment of the continuum through professional development was in their focus on the standards (both the MELS and the MCCS), transitions, and community and family engagement.

Communication – most of our pre-K folks are involved with teams that go through 2nd grade and they see the alignment and the value in that continued process to see that everyone is looking at the data and aligned to what they are doing in their classrooms.
(OPI staff member)

Almost all school leadership team members responding to the survey agree that OPI staff members and their instructional consultant helped to align their work across the birth to grade 5 continuum (94%) and most conference participants who responded to the survey agreed to the same (88%).

Continuous Improvement Cycle

OPI set school-level expectations, provided support to OPI staff members and instructional consultants to monitor implementation at the district and school level, and established incentives for schools to meet student outcome goals.

To support implementation, OPI developed a checklist that described the activities that OPI staff members and instructional consultants, and district and school leadership team members, are expected to engage in monthly (e.g., non-negotiables). They also put together training materials that addressed monitoring expectations for OPI staff members to use when on site with district and school leadership team members. These resources ensured that all OPI staff members and instructional consultants were engaged regularly in monitoring and that their work was consistent.

I love it! [OPI staff members] put together roles and responsibilities that are spelled out so we know what needs to happen each visit and so we are consistent across the board with how often we address topics with teams. We still have room for autonomy, but those non-negotiables help us stay on the same page. (OPI staff member)

Another activity OPI staff members and instructional consultants engaged in was completing an implementation template/rubric. The template includes systems, processes, and outputs expected to be onsite (e.g., instructional framework in place, data collection/analysis, looking at outcomes of subgroup/at-risk populations). As work onsite progresses, the template is updated to see what has been accomplished and where support is still needed.

OPI staff members and instructional consultants also support leadership team and school staff members use of the continuous improvement cycle and action planning processes when working with them onsite. OPI trained instructional consultants in applying the continuous improvement cycle and involves them in planning to get their feedback on implementation ideas. In addition, after instructional consultants' on-site visits, they complete a report and send

it to OPI and the OPI staff member and the instructional consultant assigned to the school debrief either by phone or in person. Information from these interactions provides additional data pieces to understanding schools' progress in implementing their local literacy plans to support OPI's role in monitoring implementation.

Onsite we are implementing and following the continuous improvement cycle and weighing in on where we need to go next, or whether to back up or go forward. (OPI staff member)

Finally, OPI also plans to use innovation awards to provide incentives for schools and districts to adopt evidence-based strategies, practices, and interventions that improve student outcomes. Results of the schools' independent interim assessment data are used for this purpose. ??

OPI staff members are using the continuous improvement cycle to determine some next steps for statewide implementation but are not using all data available to them to ensure the program is working for all students and for disadvantaged children.

Data from the various ways that OPI staff members and instructional consultants monitor implementation at the school level are used at the program level to drive some decision making. This information informs planning conferences and onsite support.

Interviews with OPI staff members were conducted prior to summer 2019, when OPI expected to gather the MCLP staff members to assess progress. In past grants, feedback from OPI staff members and instructional consultants along with assessment data were used to tier schools. The tier level of the school is used to determine the level of support. For example, Tier 1 schools, the schools farthest ahead in the process, may have the number of days visited by OPI staff members reduced, while Tier 3 schools, those newer to the process or making less progress, might have more days assigned to them for OPI staff member support. When necessary, OPI staff members assigned to schools might change as well.

When we get together to look at how we finished out with schools, to monitor and assess where we are, we'll tier the schools with the amount of time to support them (e.g., Do we need to be here every month or could it be every other month)? We might also rearrange where OPI support people are going, while still trying to keep things consistent with schools; what is better consistency with OPI staff members assigned to a school or someone else that leads to a better OPI team? (OPI staff member)

When interviewed, OPI staff members indicated a core group of OPI directors was going to try to get together over the summer to engage in the tier process and establish goals for the third year of implementation. It is unclear if this occurred. Furthermore, one OPI staff member reported that a second group of team leads met weekly to monitor progress, but that these meetings did not involve the complete OPI MCLP team. Other opportunities for communication and collaboration between the Helena- and regionally based OPI/MCLP staff members include phone conferences, pre-conference planning, and opportunities to support onsite work. Currently, OPI staff members are supporting almost 100 schools across MCLP and

Title 1 School Support. OPI staff members are often on the road and the regionally based OPI staff members do not all live in Helena. Finding time for larger all-staff meetings or retreats is difficult. One OPI staff member indicated that finding a way to improve collaboration and include all OPI MCLP staff members in assessing statewide progress and revising statewide plans would be a benefit to the program.

OPI staff did not have a winter retreat, instead we are heavily relying on communication via email. (OPI staff member)

Sustainability

OPI is supporting MCLP sustainability through alignment and partnerships, consistent messaging, sharing resources, and supporting schools in their use of the continuous improvement cycle.

In interviews, OPI staff members referred to four main ways they were supporting MCLP sustainability. First and foremost, OPI's School Support staff members involved in school improvement work use the comprehensive needs assessment, the continuous improvement cycle, the MLP, and/or the Montana Math Plan (a sister document for math) in their work with schools. To varying extents, the use of these tools occurs with schools engaged in the Montana Preschool Development Grant, Title I School Support, Indian Education, English Learners (Title III), and Special Education. In addition, the Consolidated State Plan Under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) also refers to the use of the continuous improvement cycle, the comprehensive needs assessment, and the MLP. Furthermore, all schools writing a comprehensive school improvement plan (CSIP), use the comprehensive needs assessment, which aligns their ESSA work with the MLP. MCLP schools with coaches also participate in the Montana Coaching Network that promotes common coaching strategies across the state. Other partnerships where MCLP processes are, or will be, shared include during the MEA-MFT Educators Conference and at the Montana Behavior Institute.

MCLP and School Support use a parallel process – we have some schools in MCLP that are also in comprehensive, so there is carry over there. (OPI staff member)

A second way OPI has addressed sustainability is through consistent messaging. Within MCLP, OPI staff members and instructional consultants use the same tools and resources to keep their communications consistent. This includes the training materials, the monthly roles and responsibilities chart, the comprehensive needs assessment, and the MLP. All schools also use the same materials and tools and engage in the continuous improvement cycle. Outside of MCLP, the partnerships previously described contribute to common language used across OPI and the schools with which they interact.

Finally, at the state level a third way to support sustainability is through resource sharing. As MCLP conferences continue, OPI will continue to video key presenters and share materials, like videos of school stories, as part of the Learning Hub.

At the school level, MCLP sustainability is addressed as OPI staff members and instructional consultants support schools in developing their local literacy plan aligned to the MLP. With their use of the continuous improvement cycle, data are better understood, and action plans are created that contribute to written processes for maintaining implementation. Capacity is built through onsite professional development and coaching. Ownership is developed while district and school leadership teams are engaged in activities with OPI staff member and instruction consultant support. With the support of district leadership teams, this work is adopted across districts, rather than remaining in just one or two schools.

We have established processes: The district leadership team, they will look at this and this to do this; the school leadership team, they will look at this and this to do that; teacher teams, they will look at this and this to do that. If and when people leave that knowledge does not leave with them. (OPI staff member)

In the schools, we suggest templates and directions for monitoring action plans and engaging in the continuous improvement cycle. But we are letting the schools identify the tools, the meeting times, etc...we give them more autonomy in how they do the processes. That contributes to sustainability. (OPI staff member)

School staff members responding to the survey agreed that the OPI staff members and the instructional consultant supported issues related to sustainability during conferences (95%), as did conference presenters (93%), and during on-site professional development (93%).

Chapter 3: Subgrantee Activities

The evaluation assessed seven activities school staff members engaged in 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 MLP, and sustainability.

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 MLP, based on the results of the Comprehensive Needs Assessment (conducted annually in the fall). The local literacy plan guides MLP implementation on site 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 plan's goals
- Identify evidence-based strategies, practices, and interventions
- Implement the Improving Instruction component of the MLP
- Support implement of the Comprehensive Instruction component of the MLP
- 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 (74%) or weekly (19%). School staff members confirmed their school had a literacy plan (96%), based on a needs assessment (97%), that addressed the needs identified in the needs assessment (96%), and supported a high-quality comprehensive literacy instruction program (96%). Appendix C contains an analysis of comprehensive needs assessment results from the fall 2018 administration across 20 sites.

The Continuous Improvement Cycle

School leadership team members collected, analyzed, and used data to make decisions, created and monitored implementation, and established communication mechanisms.

School staff members responding to the survey reported their school leadership team engaged in the continuous improvement cycle to ensure their local literacy plan effectively addressed the needs of students (92%). At least two thirds of school leadership team members responding to the survey specifically reported regularly using a variety of data to determine needs, exploring and assessing intervention options, tracking outcomes, and revising plans to improve fidelity and plan for sustainability (Table 3-1). Fewer (about three-fifths) regularly created intervention implementation/action plans and professional development plans to train staff on interventions. Finally, most school leadership team members agreed their implementation plans included measurable goals (at least 97%).

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

The data we collect is shared on a regular basis and a protocol is in place to foster discussions and goal setting. (School staff member)

Our Action Plan is more focused and purposeful than years passed. (School staff member)

Staff members voiced the need for developing skills in using the continuous improvement cycle, monitoring implementation, making data-based decisions, and revising actions plans.

We need more support in data collection and conducting school leadership team meetings. (School staff member)

We need more accountability to make sure consistent implementation of the framework is always happening. (School staff member)

Finding a system or procedure to be able to add/modify the continuous improvement cycle document in a timely fashion would be beneficial. (School staff member)

Table 3-1. Frequency with Which School Leadership Team Members Responding to the Spring Survey Reported Engaging in Activities

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

School leadership teams also engaged two-way communication.

Most school leadership team members responding to the survey (at least 88%) agreed they had processes in place to ensure transparency and allow for communication with staff members or involved feeder/receiving schools in their planning. School staff members responding to the survey agreed; eighty-eight percent reported their school leadership team communicated progress implementing the literacy plan. Furthermore, most teachers agreed that data they needed to inform their decision making was delivered in a timely manner (94%), communication from the school leadership team to teacher teams provided transparency (89%), and that they had opportunities to provide feedback to the school leadership team (89%). Finally, most teachers (at least 90%) agreed the support they received from their school leadership team was sufficient, met their needs, and was high quality.

Interview data from OPI staff members confirm survey findings. They reported that during the 2018–2019 school year, school leadership teams successfully worked with staff members on creating vision statements and listened to feedback from teachers and community members to grow buy-in to the grant and the literacy practices. They created structured agendas, established meeting practices, learned how to collaborate, and identified gaps in the system to target next year. They learned how to use data and the continuous improvement cycle to create action plans and determine professional development needs and worked to align school and district goals. Some schools established their teams to build ownership; distribute leadership; and efficiently share information provided, and professional development delivered, during meetings with OPI and instructional consultants, back to teacher teams. In completing the feedback loop, they also served as conduits for providing feedback from teachers to leadership.

One school's focus is on how they are looking at data. They try to determine how they are getting the information in the action plans and professional development to teachers to see the effect of the continuous improvement cycle on students. They monitor it through walkthroughs and soliciting student voice. They look at data from students and teachers and program data to see if it is making an impact, and if not, why not. (OPI staff member)

One school's leadership team has done a good job of having representation from content or grade level teams and having them go back and present what they learn or share out. (OPI staff member)

According to interviewed OPI staff members, some school leadership teams experienced challenges related to time, using structured agendas, membership and representation, transparency, and providing professional development to adults.

Evidence-Based Strategies, Practices, and Interventions

School staff members implemented a variety of interventions to support literacy, math, and behaviors and were, at a minimum, partially implementing them with full fidelity or fully implementing them with partial fidelity.

Almost all teachers responding to the survey (at least 96%) 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 students they instructed. In all but the first item, larger percentages of teachers agreed than strongly agreed (47%, 59%, 52%, and 55%, respectively). When asked about their use of evidence-based interventions and practices, teachers noted implementing intervention groups, using data-driven and differentiated instruction, PDSA cycles, and adopting new curriculum.

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

Our intervention activities are targeted through the use of data analysis (focus folders) and PDSA cycles. (School staff member)

My whole group is engaged in better phonological processing exercises with Heggerty and the whole group is "hit" with it together and then I differentiate support or enrichment with small groups during seatwork. (School staff member)

Our new interventions are evidence-based and are not outdated. They also align with the MCCS, whereas our old interventions did not. These interventions have had a significant, positive impact on our students. (School staff member)

Table 3-2 displays the interventions reported by OPI staff members in interviews and school leadership team members and teachers in the survey. Istation's ISIP was the most common assessment adopted. In addition to collecting assessment data, many schools were engaging in RTI/MTSS practices to support differentiated instruction and interventions. A variety of programs and strategies were adopted, most commonly Heggerty and Reading Mastery and instructional frameworks and PDSA cycles. Step Up to Writing was a popular writing intervention and developing a behavior matrix was a common behavior intervention.

Table 3-2. Interventions Used in Schools

Assessments/Interventions	
Accelerated Reader Reading Tests	ISIP
DIBELS	MAP
Individual Growth and Development Indicators (IGDIs)	Star Reading
iReady	
Intervention System	
Enrichment	Review/analyze data/focus folders
Differentiated instruction/skill groups/small groups	RTI/MTSS
Intervention (time/groups/workshops)	Tier 3 Reading and Math
Progress monitoring	Tier 2
Intervention Programs	
Accelerated Math 2.0	Project CRISS
6-Minute Solution	Read 180
Blow the Lid Off	Read Naturally/Live
Connecting Math Concepts	Reading Mastery
CORE Skills/Source Routines/Survey/Phonics	<i>Read Well</i>
Corrective Reading	Reading Plus
Ellevation	Really Great Reading (Phonics)
Enhanced Core Reading Instruction (ECRI)	REWARDS
Equipped for Reading Success	Strategic Instruction Model (SIM)
Fast ForWord	Systematic Instruction in Phonological Awareness, Phonics, and Site Words (SIPPS)
Foundations	Smart Kids
Heggerty Phonemic Awareness	Sonday System
Phonics for Reading	Sound Partners

Table 3-2 (continued). Interventions Used in Schools

Intervention Programs	
I am Math	Science Research Associates (SRA)
Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Journeys Write-in Reader	SRA Early Interventions in Reading
<i>Language! Live</i>	<i>SuccessMaker</i>
Let's Read	System 44
Lexia Reading	Understanding by Design
Membean	Visual Phonics
Open Court Interventions	Wonders/Wonder Works
Strategies	
2 column notes	High Frequency Words
95% Group	I do, we do, you do
Academic time	Inclusion (SPED)
Academic vocabulary	Instructional Framework
Annotation	Literacy strategies
Authentic literacy	Mastery of the alphabetic principle
Bell ringer	MCCS
Bell to bell teaching	Morphology
Choral Reading	Note-taking
Closed Reading	Numeracy
Comprehension strategies	One-on-one discussion
Concept maps	Opportunities to respond
Cornell Notes	PDSA
Consonant-Vowel-Consonant (CVC) word building	Phonemic awareness strategies
Decoding	Phonics strategies
<i>Direct Instruction Phonics</i>	Plot diagrams
Direct/Explicit Instruction	Preteach/Reteach
Exit tickets	Seat work
Fluency strategies	Speaking strategies
Fluency-Rapid Automatic Naming (RAN) charts	Storyboards
Focus walls	Student engagement strategies
Foundation skills	Syntax instruction
Focus folders	Time in text
Frayer Model Vocabulary	Tutoring
Growth Mindset	Vocabulary strategies

Table 3-2 (continued). Interventions Used in Schools

Behavior Interventions	
4:1 positive/ negative	Conversation, Help, Activity, Movement, Participation and Success (CHAMPS)
Be/Behavior matrix	Check In Check Out
Brain smart start	Pyramid Model Training
Writing Interventions	
2 column notes	The Writing Revolution (book study)
Awesome paragraph	Writing Across the Curriculum
Connected Text in writing	Writing checklists
Claim-Evidence-Analysis-Last Thought/Linking Sentence (CEAL) paragraphs	Writing Labs
Restate, Answer, Cite Evidence, Explain (RACE) / explicit writing instruction	Writing strategies
Step Up to Writing	Writing with thinking charts
Staffing	
Interventionist	Title support
Other	
Monthly cultural days	Walkthrough tools

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.

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 initial implementation
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

Across the 17 school staff members responding to the survey question, only 13 schools had both school leadership team members and teachers list interventions and assign implementation scores. On average, school leadership team members listed 6 interventions, while teachers listed 11. Some interventions were listed specifically, like Heggerty, while others were listed generally, like phonemic awareness.

Table 3-3 lists the interventions cited by at least one school leadership team member and one teacher (across schools). It includes the average implementation score of school leadership team

members and teachers, and a mean of both combined. Table 3-3 suggests that Fast ForWord is in the initial stages of implementation and several interventions, including Read Naturally and Reading Mastery, are being partially implemented with partial fidelity. Most interventions are either being partially implemented with full fidelity or fully implemented with partial fidelity. These included phonemic awareness interventions, such as Heggerty, and intervention systems/components such as RTI, MTSS, and PDSAs. Some interventions, like targeted, small group instruction and iReady, are being fully implemented with full fidelity. A few interventions are considered being implemented with fidelity and sustainably (e.g., Behavior Matrix and Mastery of the Alphabetic Principle).

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

Intervention	Mean		
	School Leadership Team Members	Teachers	Both
The intervention is in initial implementation			
Fast ForWord	3.0	2.0	2.6
The intervention is partially implemented with partial fidelity			
Title Support	4.7	0.0	3.5
Read Naturally	3.3	5.0	3.6
Corrective Reading	5.6	1.8	3.7
Reading Mastery	6.0	3.5	3.8
The intervention is partially implemented with full fidelity OR fully implemented with partial fidelity			
Data collection and use, including progress monitoring	3.0	4.3	4.0
Cornell Notes/2-column notes	4.0	4.2	4.1
Writing	3.2	4.7	4.1
Step Up to Writing	5.0	4.0	4.2
Phonemic awareness, including Heggerty	4.3	4.3	4.3
Foundations	5.0	4.0	4.3
Instructional Framework	3.9	5.0	4.4
Student engagement	3.4	5.1	4.5
SIPPS	5.0	3.7	4.5
Phonics	4.0	5.2	4.5
Comprehension	3.5	4.9	4.6
2 column notes	5.0	4.5	4.6
Wonder Works	5.0	4.6	4.7
Istation	4.5	4.9	4.8
Rewards	4.6	5.5	4.8
RTI/MTSS/Interventions	5.0	4.6	4.8

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

The intervention is fully implemented with full fidelity			
Targeted instruction/small groups	5.0	5.1	5.1
Blow the Lid Off	5.0	5.3	5.2
Fluency	6.0	5.0	5.2
iReady	5.0	5.5	5.3
Storyboards/plot diagrams	5.0	6.0	5.5
Early Interventions in Reading	6.0	5.0	5.5
PreTeach/ReTeach	6.0	5.5	5.7
The intervention is fully implemented with full fidelity and sustainability			
Behavior Matrix	6.0	6.0	6.0
Mastery of the Alphabetic Principle	6.0	6.0	6.0
Membean	6.0	6.0	6.0
Small group word building using CVC word lists	6.0	6.0	6.0

Across all interventions included in Table 3-3, half (50%) received a score of “4,” one-fifth (22%) received a score of “5,” 13 percent each received scores of “6” or “3,” and 3 percent received a score of “2.”

Continued support in selecting interventions, including ones that meet the needs of disadvantaged students, professional development to implement interventions, and practice time are needed.

Since beginning implementation in January 2018, MCLP schools appeared to have begun working to fill the gaps in their curriculum and students’ skill bases. However, it was just a beginning. Teachers responding to the survey reported needing more interventions—including formal curriculum, and high-quality and sustainable interventions. They requested additional support specifically in the areas of writing, reading (fluency, phonics, motivation), and math. In addition, they needed interventions for particular populations including high school students, English language learners, students receiving special education services, students with severe behavioral disabilities, and students not making gains or who are multiple grade levels behind. Teachers also wanted more professional development on how to implement a new curriculum and to implement programs with fidelity, including the intervention sections of existing curriculum. Training and support could come from publishers, coaches, observations with feedback, and modeling. Teachers requested more time, particularly to build familiarity and to practice, but also to incorporate everything into the school day. Support using data to identify students and diagnose need and to plan and implement interventions (including additional classroom support) rounded out the list of needs.

Improving Instruction Component of the MLP

The Improving Instruction component of the MLP includes Academic Leadership, Community and Family Engagement, and Professional Development.

Academic Leadership

School leadership team members engaged in, and supported, a variety of activities to identify literacy needs and address them such as protecting time, setting priorities, and conducting walkthroughs.

According to school leadership team member survey respondents, administrators provided time for meetings at various levels—grade, staff, and leadership—allowing team members to collaborate, communicate, and be transparent.

In addition to supporting meeting time, school leadership team members regularly engaged in walkthroughs using tools aligned to their local literacy plan. According to survey respondents, some school leadership team members engaged in classroom walkthroughs (46% percent of school leadership members across 14 districts indicated they were involved in them). Overall, school leadership team members who reported engaging in walkthroughs indicated doing so at least weekly (60%) or at least monthly (31%). When conducting walkthroughs, school leadership team members regularly (35%) or always (47%) used a walkthrough tool that was aligned to their literacy plan/action plans (89%). In most cases, school leadership team members reported teachers were aware of what was on the tool and how implementation was monitored (89%). Teachers responding to the survey concurred; most (90%) 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.

Schools set priorities and areas of focus, that included adopting instructional frameworks, identifying at-risk students, and developing multi-tiered systems of support. Some schools adopted practices to support literacy such as building academic language and writing across the curriculum.

Walk throughs were not conducted before the grant. The data are used to improve instruction and set up professional development for our staff. (School staff member)

We have a leadership team this year. Last year we didn't have one. (School staff member)

We have strengthened our feedback loop from principal, coach, grade level, entire staff, and school leadership team. We have worked hard at being more transparent. (School staff member)

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

Having the components of the framework for all teachers to follow is wonderful for consistent, effective practices. (School staff member)

Meeting with our instructional consultant and as a grade level to implement higher quality academic language instruction and helping our students know how to better tap into their metacognition skills as readers, writers, and learners. (School staff member)

Focal areas for next year include items at the system, leadership, and classroom levels.

School leadership team members responding to the survey cited establishing multi-tiered systems of support, improving communication, and addressing sustainability as system level needs. At the leadership level, leadership team members hoped for support in leadership development and succession planning. At the classroom level, teachers needed to address fidelity of implementation and receive professional development in collaboration, phonics, reading, and writing. Finally, developing buy-in—for both staff and administrators in terms of the overall process and specific practices—was a cited need.

Looking for ways to include more members of the staff so we have a comprehensive buy-in and participation in collaboration. (School staff member)

Finding more effective ways to communicate information about our action plan to my fellow teachers without overwhelming them. (School staff member)

We want to continue to emphasize the Understanding by Design process for all courses (core and electives). We need continued support to maintain a sustainable process. (School staff member)

Setting up a system for students to keep getting intervention help when they are out of the intervention room. (School staff member)

Making a plan that would allow instructional coaching positions to have seamless transitions when and if someone leaves/retires, etc. (School staff member)

Continued support in writing. We are improving each year but have not reached the peak. (School staff member)

Community and Family Engagement

Family engagement often included communicating with parents about student progress and involving them in school events.

School leadership team members responding to the survey reported staff members communicated with parents about general happenings, such as through newsletters, and about student progress, via conferences, open houses, and one-on-one conversations. In terms of school events, most commonly this included inviting parents to family literacy nights, cultural events, craft events, or award assemblies. In some cases, school staff members were focused on involving as many school staff members in these activities as possible. Other activities schools engaged in included data gathering, such as via focus groups. Finally, parents were involved in activities to support their child's transition to the next grade level.

Monthly newsletter tips to parents and sharing data with families. (School staff member)

Daily and weekly contact with families to support their goals for students. (School staff member)

We are being more purposeful in planning and organizing the events; including all staff members in the process for attending our after-school parent monthly activities. (School staff member)

We are gaining more insight into the needs of our families. (School staff member)

Transition activities between Pre-K and K and 6th and middle school. (School staff member)

School staff members need support in finding ways to engage parents in activities they deem important to student success.

A need expressed by many school leadership team members responding to the survey was identifying new ways to engage parents, both beyond the typical activities and with parents who are less engaged. Schools also wanted to focus on educating parents on what steps the school was taking with the grant, standards-based grading, the value of reading and education, and attendance. Some comments addressed the need for resources to support family engagement including a family engagement coordinator. One school wanted to recruit a parent for the school leadership team.

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

We would like ideas of how to get parents involved more. We get great turnout for conferences and open house but not so much when we have academic nights. (School staff member)

Continuing to educate parents about the value of reading and how to motivate students to use digital tools to improve literacy. (School staff member)

Funding for the future. (School staff member).

Professional Development

Local literacy plans addressed the provision of professional development aligned to the MLP and school leadership members were engaged in planning the delivery and content of professional development.

Almost all school staff members responding to the survey reported their school has a professional development plan that addresses comprehensive literacy instruction (94%) and agreed it provides for ongoing professional development and support to implement adopted programs with fidelity (92%). Furthermore, almost all staff members agreed the content of professional development was tied to their local literacy plan (98%). Leadership team members reported that they were using data to identify professional development topics and that training was more focused, such as based on district/school goals or classroom practice.

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

School staff member survey responses indicated they participated in whole staff, small group, and one-on-one professional development (82%, 63%, and 27%, respectively). Professional development also occurred via the PDSA cycle, during professional learning communities (PLCs), book studies, coaching, formal and informal opportunities, and with their instructional consultant. Some schools linked professional development time with planning/collaboration time or focused on holding teachers accountable for implementing what they had learned.

Assessing and reviewing data and then using the data to implement professional development and helping with our teaching. (School staff member)

Our professional development is more specific to our school goals. (School staff member)

We used the How to Teach Reading Groups book along with focus folders for PDSA groups. Boy did that jump start our teaching! (School staff member)

*We schedule half day professional development followed by time to plan and prepare.
(School staff member)*

I love how we have a professional development event and then have teachers implementing what they learned. To follow up, teachers share how they have implemented activities at the next staff meeting. (School staff member)

Professional development content varied but was connected to the MLP. In written survey comments from district leadership team members they reported addressing writing, vocabulary, phonics, standards, instruction (including instructional frameworks and pacing), using data (for decision making, instruction, and in focus folders), Understanding by Design, and using academic language.

Understanding the writing process with organizers. I am really focusing on writing and making sure my students know the three types of writing and have a strategy to help them organize their thoughts for on-demand writing. (School staff member)

Embedded activities, specifically for vocabulary. I am doing more explicit teaching of vocabulary than I ever have before. (School staff member)

Focusing on state standards and how we can correlate them better within our reading program, with a continued focus on embedding academic language into our students' everyday vocabulary. (School staff member)

I am more informed on how to make data-based decisions in a productive and useful way. I am overall a better teacher because of our professional development in all areas of literacy instruction. (School staff member)

In the survey, most school staff members reported receiving onsite professional development as part of MCLP (87%). Of these, many school staff members (about two-thirds or more) reported receiving professional development related to:

- Montana Common Core Standards (74%)
- Student engagement (65%)
- Bell-to-bell teaching (63%)
- Data-based decision-making (63%)
- Progress monitoring (63%)

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

- Using the MCLP modules (59%)
- Instructional frameworks (55%)
- Differentiating instruction to Tier 2/Tier 3 students (52%)

- Continuous improvement cycle (51%)
- School or district specific assessments (50%)
- Core/disciplinary writing (45%)
- Multi-tiered systems of support (43%)
- Providing explicit and systematic instruction (43%)

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 participation.

Table 3-4. Percentage of School Staff Members Responding to the Spring Survey Reporting Participating in On-site Professional Development, by Topic

Topic	Percent
Assessment	
Data-based decision making	63%
Progress monitoring students receiving instruction and/or interventions	63%
Continuous Improvement Cycle (CIC), action plans, and/or monitoring	51%
School-or district-specific assessments	50%
State-or grant-related assessments	39%
SBAC Interim Assessment Blocks or Comprehensive Assessments	27%
Privacy requirements	10%
Family engagement	
	30%
Instruction	
Student engagement	65%
Bell-to-bell teaching	63%
Instruction framework	55%
Differentiating literacy instruction for Tier2/Tier 3 students	52%
Core/disciplinary reading/writing	45%
Multi-tiered system of support (MTSS), for academics or behavior	43%
Providing explicit and systematic instruction	43%
Classroom transitions	37%
Implementation fidelity	35%
Pacing	35%
Lesson planning	34%
Using standards (MELS or MCCS) to plan and deliver high-quality instruction	34%
Differentiating literacy instruction for disadvantaged students	32%
Using technology and digital media	22%
Indian Education for All	22%
Universal Design for Learning (UDL)	15%

Table 3-4 (continued). Percentage of School Staff Members Participating in On-site Professional Development, by Topic

Topic	Percent
Motivation for Teaching and Learning	
Motivation for teaching	39%
Motivation for learning	38%
Research and evidence-based topics	40%
SRCL/MCLP grant implementation modules	59%
Standards	
Montana Common Core Standards (MCCS)	74%
State assessments/SBAC	32%
Transition activities	18%
Montana Early Learning Standards (MELS)	13%
Birth through Grade 12 Continuum	10%
SRCL/MCLP grant implementation modules	59%

School staff members need more professional development and collaboration time.

Moving forward, school staff members responding to the survey requested more time—for instruction, for professional development, and for collaboration. They also requested differentiating training, developing accountability, using modeling, and addressing sustainability, for example by establishing systems for continued training for new and veteran teachers.

More time for teachers to collaborate. (School staff member)

We need to have follow up meetings on professional development to see if we are implementing those strategies school wide. (School staff member)

Continued observation of the modeling of teaching techniques to include more literacy activities that can be implemented across curriculum. (School staff member)

They also requested professional development in specific content areas, such as interventions, Understanding by Design, and on job-embedded/classroom focused activities.

How to tie in all intervention programs used within building. Time vs. quality (School staff member)

Continued support with Understanding by Design for new staff and "review" for old staff. (School staff member)

Implement Comprehensive Instruction Component of Montana Literacy Plan

The Implement Comprehensive Instruction component of the MLP includes 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

Understanding and using the standards were significant foci of MCLP implementation.

One of the biggest changes that occurred in the area of standards and curriculum was a focus on standards. On the survey, school staff members reported that professional development on the standards increased teachers' awareness of the standards and their ability to break them down and include them in lesson planning. Teachers indicated they were identifying priority standards and providing standards-driven instruction. One teacher commented on posting the standards in their classroom, so students were aware of what they were working towards.

Breaking apart the standard has allowed me to understand what my objective is. (School staff member)

I used comprehension strategies and skills from the [curriculum] program that specifically align with the standards. (School staff member)

We fine-tuned our reading and writing process. Some of the things listed in our reading curriculum weren't 1st grade standards so we cut them out and that gave us more time to focus on what the 1st graders really needed to learn. (School staff member)

We are taking the curriculum standards and aligning them with weekly comprehension questions within our reading program. We are narrowing the questions down, choosing more in-depth, higher-quality questions that the students can analyze and answer using metacognition. (School staff member)

MCLP districts and schools addressed alignment activities regularly through instruction and interventions, meetings, curriculum adoptions, and transition activities.

Most school staff members responding to the survey agreed that their school worked to assure the alignment of community activities/programs for children aged birth through 5 with those of the K-5 schools to improve their readiness and transitions (88%). Furthermore, district and school leadership teams regularly addressed instructional frameworks, aligning curriculum and

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 through grade 12 continuum
- Promote access and learning for all students
- Identify evidence-based practices and resources

interventions, transitions, at-risk student groups, and family and community engagement (a range of 31% to 53% of district leadership team members reported regularly engaging in conversations related to these topics). Finally, most school leadership team members agreed that feeder and receiver schools in their district were included in planning (91%).

Alignment activities were school-focused and started at the preschool/kindergarten level rather than earlier. In the classroom, teachers provided students differentiated instruction to ensure students were ready to transition to the next grade level. Teachers participated in same grade-level meetings to ensure students received a guaranteed viable curriculum and were engaged in age-appropriate activities. They also participated in cross-grade level meetings to ensure vertical alignment and age-appropriate progressions. Cross-grade level meetings sometimes occurred across buildings and in some places were occurring at the district level. In addition, schools adopted new curricula, used a vertically aligned curriculum, or aligned their curriculum for this purpose. Finally, several teachers indicated focusing on transition activities, some of which included engaging with families to help ready their children for kindergarten.

As a kindergarten teacher, I have collaborated with our preschool on our MCLP goals. We have had several discussions about disadvantaged students who will enter kindergarten next fall and how we can prepare them for kindergarten and meet their needs once in kindergarten. (School staff member)

We have reached out to area daycares and given them resources to do informal preschool in their facilities. Further, we do a Pre-K skills and summer camp to help our students prepare for kindergarten. (School staff member)

We are continuing to attend professional development opportunities to differentiate our teaching and assessments for age-appropriate learning/teaching. We are continuing to build on their knowledge using our new reading curriculum materials that will continue to transition the students into the next content areas and grade levels. (School staff member)

I have collaborated with K teachers and other 1st grade teachers to ensure that there is an age-appropriate progression in literacy instruction. (School staff member)

We implemented the updated reading program in K-12 and we added it to our Pre-k program. We implemented a phonics program in K-2. There has been ongoing communication between teachers at all grade levels. Looking at meeting the standards before the students move on. Professional development has focused on what is expected at each grade level. (School staff member)

District support of alignment work was also K-12 focused. As reported by district leadership team members responding to the survey, alignment work occurred most frequently in the instructional realm. This included adopting instructional frameworks and supporting data-

driven instruction. Alignment was also addressed between curriculum and instruction. This specifically occurred through the adoption of new curriculum, potentially better aligned to standards. Finally, the district supported alignment activities by aligning reading and writing curriculums, holding alignment meetings, and building staff buy-in to alignment work.

[We used] Understanding by Design as the template/framework for identifying standards and the progression in which students are expected to learn mastery of content and skills.
(School staff member)

We have worked very hard at looking at student data and using it to drive instruction.
(School staff member)

Implementation and alignment of Read Well. (School staff member)

Everyone has met a step down and a step up to make sure that we are all understanding what each other are doing. (School staff member)

Teachers reported improving curriculum through various means, including adopting a standards-based curriculum, teaching programs with fidelity, using better pacing, and providing small group or more differentiated instruction.

Alignment support and job embedded standards-based professional development should continue to be focal points for next year.

While teachers responding to the survey indicated their use of the standards increased during the school year, they also requested more professional development and support in using them. This included support aligning standards to lesson plans and district benchmarks and identifying priority standards. Teachers also requested specific support with the science and writing standards. A few teachers requested additional support implementing their curriculum and in literacy best practices. Finally, they requested modeling and coaching to support both curriculum and standards implementation.

Continued focus on the standards so I practice using them in my daily instruction.
(School staff member)

I would like to have more time to delve into the standards and make sure my lessons are effectively designed. (School staff member)

I need additional support in how to reach each standard in the time we have each year.
(School staff member)

District leadership team members also requested support from their instructional consultant in their alignment work. They wanted assistance aligning curriculum and interventions across schools as well as additional time to engage in this work. Finally, they wanted to support

teachers by getting them assistance to use the standards and better collaborate with teachers at their same level, and to provide them additional feedback on their instruction.

Administer Assessment and Engage in Data-Driven Decision Making

School staff members administered assessments and used data to drive instruction and interventions.

Teachers were engaged in a variety of activities related to assessment and data-driven decision making. Not all teachers responding to the survey indicated specific assessment data they were using in their school; however, this information was provided by some teachers. These commonly included iReady, ISIP, Star Reading, and MAP; the SBAC, curriculum-based measures (CBM), CORE, aimsweb, and the DIBELS were also mentioned. Almost all teachers (at least 97%) agreed that they used assessments to regularly monitor student progress in instruction/interventions and that these assessments were appropriate.

Teachers reported using data to both drive instruction (whole group/Tier 1) and form small groups, differentiate instruction, and provide interventions (Tier 2 and Tier 3). Teachers were also using data for monitoring student progress, identifying skills and gaps, and goal setting with students. Some teachers indicated improving their data analysis skills, using the PDSA cycle, and collaborating with colleagues when making data-driven decisions.

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

I make better decisions about whether a reading program is meeting the needs of my students. If the data shows that a program is not working, I supplement materials to better meet the needs of the students. (School staff member)

Really looking at each student's individual needs based on data to drive my instruction. (School staff member)

I am routinely assessing student progress and modifying/changing interventions based upon that data. I have done that better this year than in years past. (School staff member)

I definitely understand MAP testing and using MAP data in a deeper way now. I am learning more about each testing cycle. (School staff member)

Looking at it more rapidly to make changes and corrections more timely. I have also brought in my para and the intervention staff to make sure we are all on the same page

and using our instruction time to the greatest benefit of the students. (School staff member)

Setting goals for each individual student to meet, according to their needs. (School staff member)

School staff members received technical assistance in monitoring implementation and were beginning to use student assessment data to do so. Most school staff members attending MCLP conferences and responding to the spring survey agreed the conferences helped them prepare for on-site monitoring using student outcome data (96%) and all school leadership team members responding to the survey agreed that the support they received from their OPI staff member and instructional consultant included sharing student assessment data in ways consistent with privacy policies. Finally, many school leadership team members reported regularly using assessment data to track outcomes of all students (78%) and disadvantaged students (67%) to determine intervention effectiveness.

Professional development could delve deeper into assessment and collaborative data use.

Moving into the next year of implementation, teachers responding to the survey requested additional support in administering assessments and understanding how to analyze and use those data to form groups, differentiate instruction, or determine interventions. They also requested more time—to analyze data, collaborate with colleagues, and implement new processes.

The assessments used don't always match the level of the students. Also, the two assessments used for data don't always match up, meaning students could do well on one and poorly on the other. Finally, one of the assessments is given by teachers (not computer based) so the results vary from teacher to teacher. (School staff member)

Using the iReady features more appropriately. This does not need to be from a consultant from the company but can be done in house as we learn the features better as a staff. (School staff member)

I still struggle defining what the individual students' needs are. Are they having difficulty blending or segmenting because they struggle identifying the ending sound? What is the area I need to focus on to help them improve? Those questions come when looking at the data. (School staff member)

Which interventions to implement for different students, based on assessment and data. (School staff member)

Managing many small groups needing different strategies and levels of assistance. (School staff member)

A monthly half-day reflection as a grade level would be beneficial to allow teachers to collaborate ideas and really take the time to look at the data objectively. (School staff member)

I need to be able to read the data correctly and need more time looking at the data. (School staff member)

Amount and Quality of Instruction

As a result of their MCLP work, teachers reported being more efficient with their instructional time and using student engagement and literacy strategies and data to improve instruction.

Teacher survey respondents commented on their use of bell to bell teaching and bell ringers, improved pacing, and student engagement strategies. Teachers also implemented strategies to improve instruction in reading—phonemic awareness, phonics, comprehension and vocabulary, writing, and their use of academic language. Finally, teachers employed a variety of strategies to collect and use data in the form of exit tickets, focus folders, data analysis, and using the PDSA cycle.

Consistent opening and closings (bell ringers, exit tickets), explicit teaching of writing and vocabulary (School staff member)

I have continued to focus on bell-to-bell instruction with specific learning objectives stated and have planned instruction that provides multiple opportunities for students to engage and respond in order to cement learning. (School staff member)

I am using more academic language with the students. They are speaking more with complete sentences. (School staff member)

Support in differentiating instruction and delivering interventions for Tier 2 and Tier 3 students is a need moving into next year.

Teachers responding to the survey also wanted additional support in pacing, student engagement strategies, and writing.

I think finding a schedule for pullout times that does not interfere with any part of literacy or math instruction would be best. At times, these pullouts happen during part of language arts/writing times and affects the strategic/intensive students. (School staff member)

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

I need to work in little "brain breaks" or chunk up my classes. (School staff member)

Working on different teaching techniques to keep students engaged. (School staff member)

Would like more focused professional development on Step Up to Writing and how to use it with cross-curriculum projects, etc. (School staff member)

Instruction for At-Risk Students

Teachers used specific strategies to support at-risk students, but need additional resources and support for at-risk students, both in school and at home.

Some strategies teachers mentioned in survey responses included focusing on foundational skills, repetition, explicit writing, and data use. Data were used to identify skill deficits and monitor progress. A couple of teachers indicated that their entire population was at-risk students and what they did for one, they did for all.

We are actually looking at specific groups of individual students. The data have been disaggregated. We have never done this before. We have also set measurable goals for this group of students. (School staff member)

Having the materials available in a timely manner. (School staff member)

More academic supports for students that have severe behavior disabilities that affect their academic tasks. (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

Educators received support in working with at-risk students, but additional professional development and intervention materials are needed.

OPI supported educators' work with at-risk and disadvantaged students off and on site. Most educators who attended the conferences and responded to the survey indicated the conferences focused their work on the needs of disadvantaged students (95%); for example, a trauma-informed practices workshop was offered at the winter conference. Onsite, OPI staff members and instructional consultants supported educators in building and using RTI and MTSS systems and differentiating their instruction to meet the specific needs of students. In addition, almost 70 percent of school leadership team members indicated they regularly track outcomes of their disadvantaged students to determine the effectiveness of interventions. In their requests for additional professional development, educators asked for support in cultural relevance and Montana-specific information, including working with American Indian students. Likewise, in

their requests for additional intervention materials they asked for materials that could meet the needs of at-risk and disadvantaged student populations. Only a third of school staff members indicating specifically receiving professional development to support differentiating literacy instruction for disadvantaged students. This may be an area to focus on next year.

Motivation for Teaching and Learning

Educators were focused on both external and intrinsic factors to support teaching and learning.

According to survey responses, externally, teachers were contributing to creating positive environments in their schools by being supportive with their peers and, in their classrooms, by being supportive and engaging with their students. They were also reminding themselves of why they went into teaching and the importance of improving their skills as well as helping students value learning.

Getting teachers to understand the process of MCLP and where it comes from, and how it ties into the big picture. Then supporting teachers and students when it comes to learning. (School staff member)

We celebrate little gains as well as big gains. So, it makes it more rewarding when a student makes gains. (School staff member)

I have focused my attention on why I teach. (School staff member)

I plan my questions. I want to ask more thought provoking, open-ended questions that engage and motivate students' thinking. (School staff member)

I'm connecting with my students in order to push them intrinsically versus extrinsically. (School staff member)

Teachers want more strategies to support behavior and engagement to improve student motivation.

Teacher respondents indicated needing additional support in classroom/behavior management and student engagement, including finding motivating texts for struggling readers. A few teachers indicated they needed to work to keep up momentum that has been built around MCLP changes both for themselves and in their school community.

Need more support from teachers to use strategies in the classroom to help with behavior support. (School staff member)

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

I need to continue to have book studies and professional development on the latest research for motivating our students to learn and teaching in a way that promotes success and quality education. (School staff member)

As a building, I think we need to inspire teachers again and let them see the benefits to this. (School staff member)

District Leadership Teams

Districts established district 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 within a district to participate in the grant, and that one school feeds into the other (e.g., preschool and elementary, elementary and middle, or middle and high). 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 members responding to the survey indicated that their teams met monthly (71%) or every two weeks (14%).

In survey responses, district leadership team members reported engaging in a variety of activities. Most frequently they analyzed and used school and district level data and comprehensive needs assessment data in the continuous improvement cycle. They also frequently addressed issues related to at-risk students, assessment, instructional frameworks, curriculum, RTI/MTSS, and interventions. Almost half regularly engaged in professional development related to academic leadership. District leadership teams least frequently addressed business and community engagement and aligning school discipline and SEL frameworks. Table 3-5 displays the activities district leadership team members engaged in and is sorted from most to least frequently used activities.

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

Table 3-5 Frequency with Which District Leadership Team Members Responding to the Spring Survey Reported Engaging in Activities

District Leadership Team Activities	Percent		
	Never/ Rarely	Sometimes	Regularly/ Always
Analyze and use school-level data	4%	12%	84%
Engage in continuous improvement cycle	4%	24%	72%
Analyze and use district-level data	8%	22%	70%
Address at-risk student groups	14%	33%	53%
Align Pre-K-12 assessment systems	12%	37%	51%
Align Pre-K-12 instructional frameworks	14%	35%	51%
Align professional development to identified needs	16%	33%	51%
Address academic leadership development	14%	37%	49%
Analyze and use MLP comprehensive needs assessment data	14%	39%	47%
Align curricula	18%	36%	46%
Align academic RTI/MTSS system	24%	32%	44%
Align interventions	16%	41%	43%
Address district policy procedures related to literacy	18%	41%	41%
Analyze and use state-level data	18%	51%	31%
Align standards (horizontally and vertically)	14%	44%	42%
Address hiring/staffing issues	34%	42%	24%
Address transitions	28%	41%	31%
Address parent/family engagement	29%	37%	33%
Align behavioral RTI/MTSS systems	32%	36%	32%
Address trauma-informed practices	35%	35%	29%
Address community engagement	35%	33%	31%
Align Pre-K-12 SEL frameworks	36%	32%	32%
Align Pre-K-12 school discipline approaches	39%	29%	31%
Address business community engagement	51%	31%	18%

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

In open-ended survey comments, district leadership team members verified these findings. Most commonly they indicated working on instructional frameworks and engaging in components of the continuous improvement cycle. Addressing writing, aligning standards, and adopting curriculum and supports for Tier 2 and Tier 3 students were other common practices.

A continuous feedback loop for data collection, concerns, and program development.
(School staff member)

Tier 1, Tier 2 and Tier 3 instruction expectations. Instructional Framework development.
(School staff member)

Understanding by Design as the template/framework for identifying standards and the progression in which students are expected to learn mastery of content and skills. (School staff member)

We are creating a document that will align writing Pre-K-12. (School staff member)

Districts need continued support in developing intervention systems.

District leadership team member survey respondents mentioned the need for support in a variety of areas, but most commonly wanted support in developing RTI/MTSS systems, including progress monitoring, and standards alignment.

Support for transitioning to a MTSS. (School staff member)

To have the OPI standards department be a part of our meeting to help us ensure we are aligning curriculum correctly. (School staff member)

A day where elementary can create a plan of aligned literacy activities and the secondary can create a plan of aligned literacy activities. Then provide time for the whole staff to ensure a clear smooth transition from elementary to secondary. (School staff member)

Plan for Sustainability

At this early point of the grant, meetings to engage in the continuous improvement cycle appear sustainable to school leadership team members, but those that rely on additional resources appear less sustainable.

Most school staff members responding to the survey (88%) agreed their school leadership team addressed the sustainability of their MCLP activities. School leadership team practices that members reported were most sustainable included participating in meetings, data analysis and discussion, and action planning. Continuing to support and implement instructional frameworks, communication structures, use of the continuous improvement cycle, and walk throughs were also commonly mentioned.

Maintaining a regular meeting schedule and discussing needs and creating action plans would be the most sustainable. (School staff member)

Our weekly meetings and bringing back to the grade level meeting. (School staff member)

Data alignment, working on strategies for our framework and student engagement, and working on Understanding by Design. (School staff member)

Furthermore, many school leadership team members and most teachers agreed they assessed the sustainability of literacy interventions (70% and 97%, respectively).

The least sustainable work school leadership teams have engaged in is offering professional development and community and family engagement activities.

Chapter 4: Student Outcomes

We collected data on student outcomes via independent interim assessments the MontCAS/SBAC, 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:

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

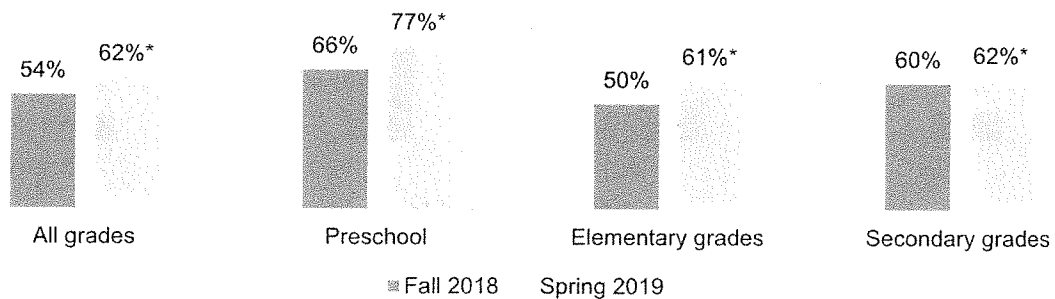
For all students, analyses are provided across all grades (MCLP program), and at different grade bands: preschool, elementary grades (K-6), and secondary grades (7-12). For disadvantaged students, analyses were conducted for economically disadvantaged students, American Indian students, students learning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

Literacy Skills of All Children

More students were at benchmark in spring 2019 than in spring 2018 and fall 2018 across all grades, preschool, elementary grades, and secondary grades; preschool students experienced larger increases than students in the elementary and secondary grades.

Within the 2018–2019 school year, the percentage of students at benchmark (Tier 1 and advanced) from fall to spring increased for all grade bands, and all increases were statistically significant (see Figure 4-1). The change in the percentage of students at benchmark by spring 2019 was largest for preschool and elementary grade students (+11 percentage points each); it was the smallest for secondary grade students (+2 percentage points). Across all grades, the increase was eight percentage points.

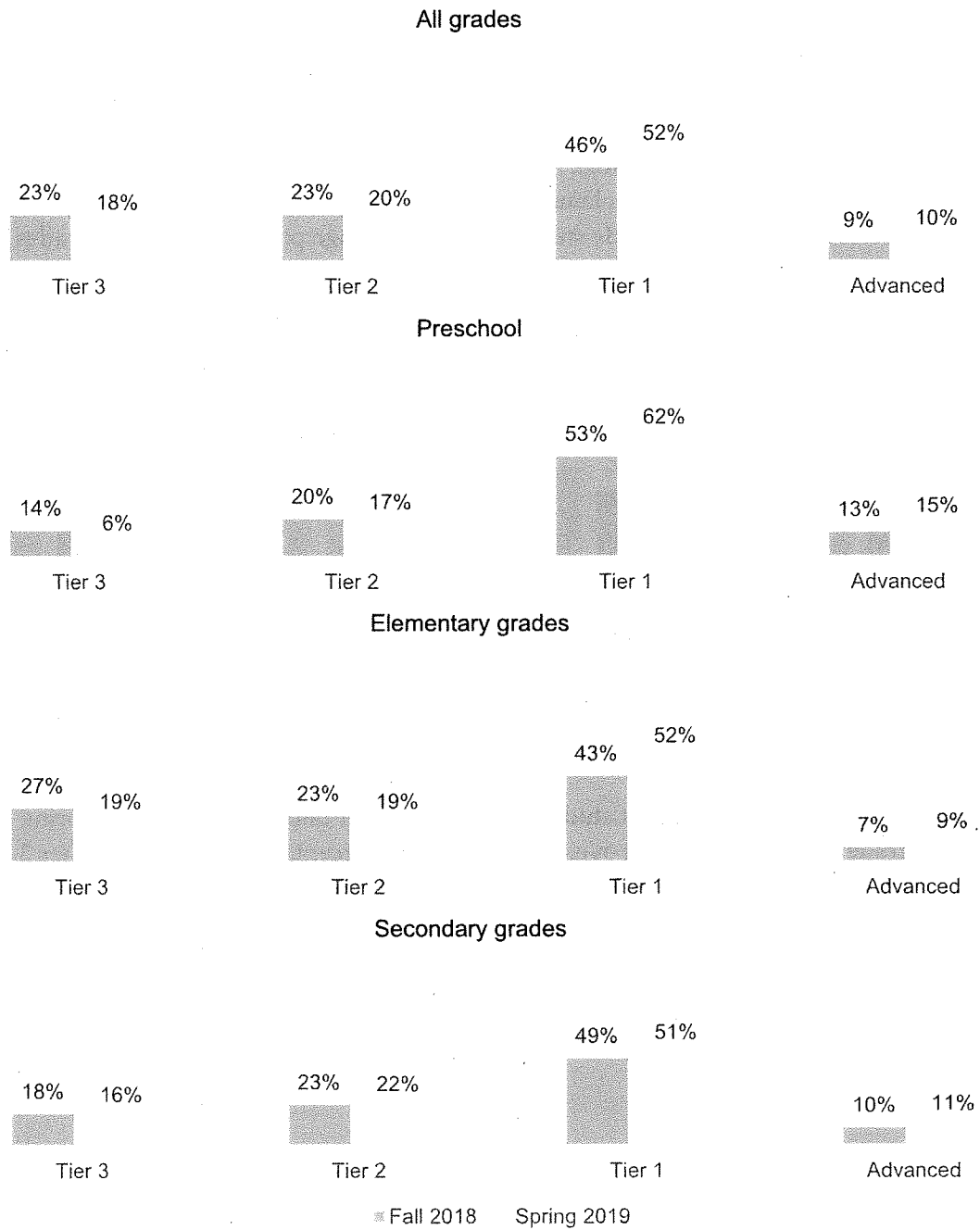
Figure 4-1. Percent of Students at Benchmark in Fall 2018 and Spring 2019, All Grades and by Grade Bands



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

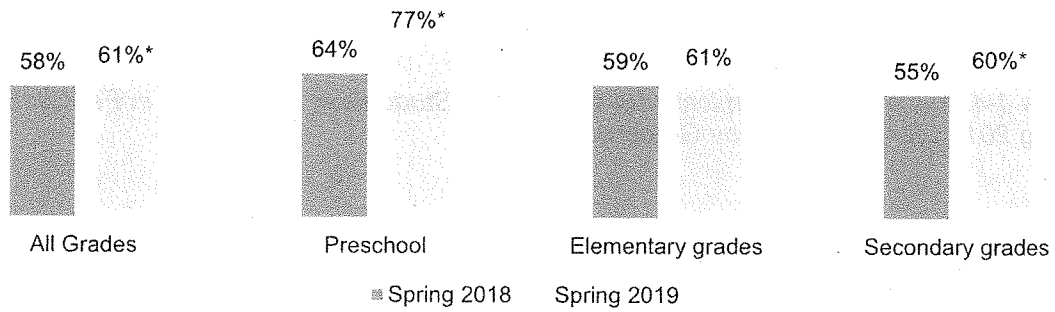
Figure 4-2 shows the percentage of students across the four tiers in fall 2018 and spring 2019 for the same grade bands identified above. In all cases, the percentage of students in Tier 3 and Tier 2 decreased, while the percentage of students in Tier 1 and advanced increased.

Figure 4-2. Percent of Students Across Four Tiers, Fall 2018 and Spring 2019, All Grades and by Grade Bands



Across all grades, and in preschool, the elementary grades, and the secondary grades, the percentage of students at benchmark was larger in spring 2019 than spring 2018 (see Figure 4-3). Increases were statistically significant in all cases, except the elementary grades. The increase was highest in preschool (+13 percentage points), followed by secondary grades (+5 percentage points), all grades (+3 percentage points), and elementary grades (+2 percentage points).

Figure 4-3. Percent of Students at Benchmark in Spring 2018 and Spring 2019, All Grades and by Grade Bands



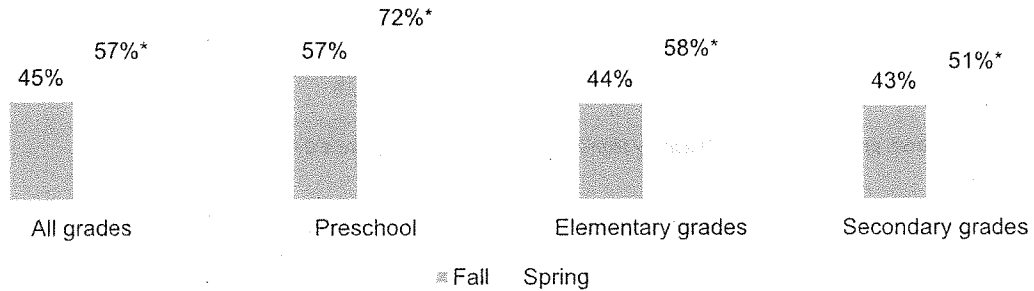
* Indicates change from previous year is statistically significant (Pearson Chi-Square ≤ 0.05).

Literacy Skills of Disadvantage Children

More economically disadvantaged students were at benchmark in spring 2019 than in fall 2018 across all grades, preschool, elementary grades, and secondary grades; preschool students and students in the elementary grades experienced larger increases than students in the secondary grades.

Within the 2018–2019 school year, the percentage of economically disadvantaged students at benchmark (Tier 1 and advanced) from fall to spring increased for all grade bands, and all increases were statistically significant (see Figure 4-4). The change in the percentage of students at benchmark by spring 2019 was largest for preschool and elementary grade students (+15 and +14 percentage points, respectively); it was the smallest for secondary grade students (+8 percentage points). Across all grades, the increase was 12 percentage points.

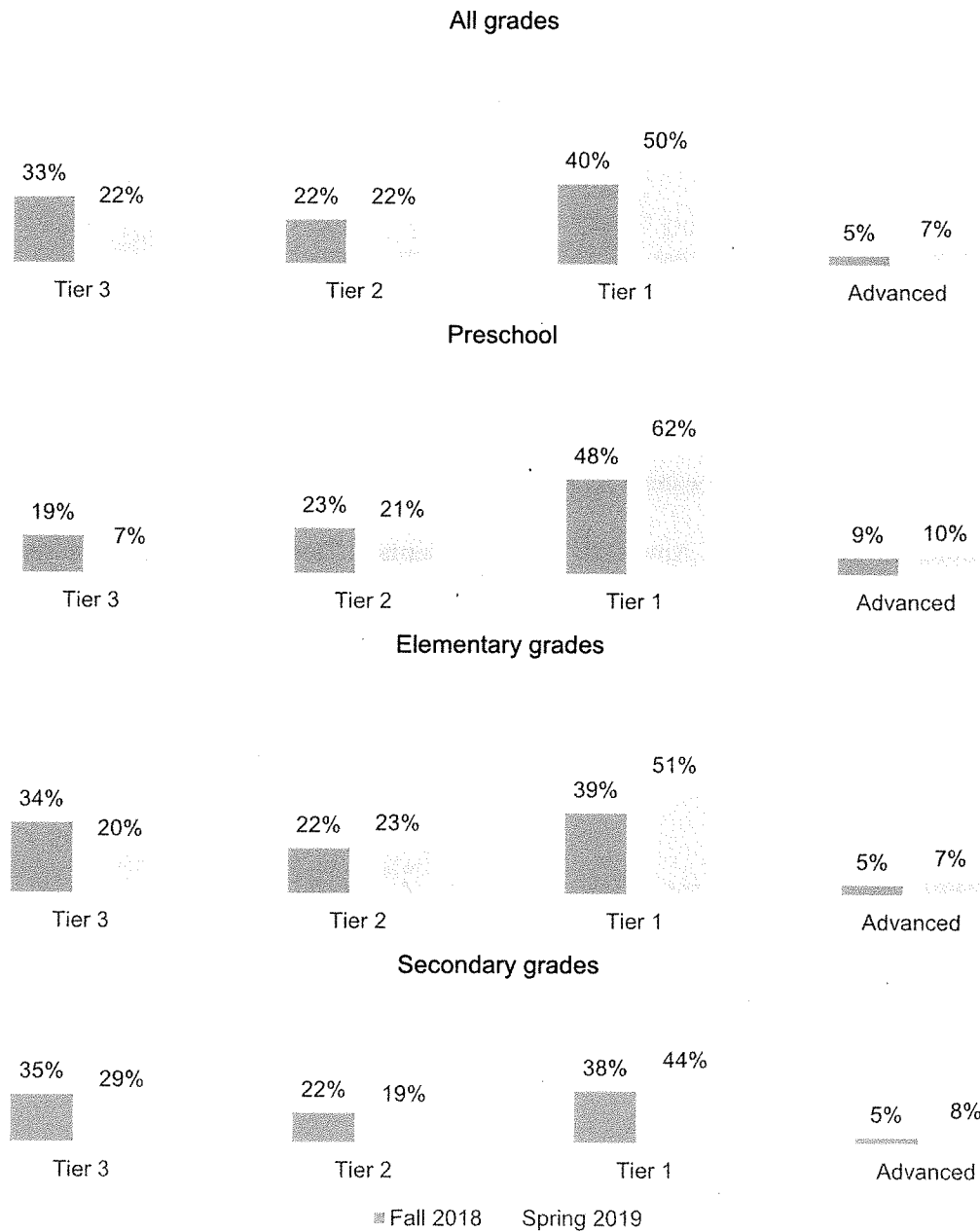
Figure 4-4. Percent of Economically Disadvantaged Students at Benchmark in Fall 2018 and Spring 2019, All Grades and by Grade Bands



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

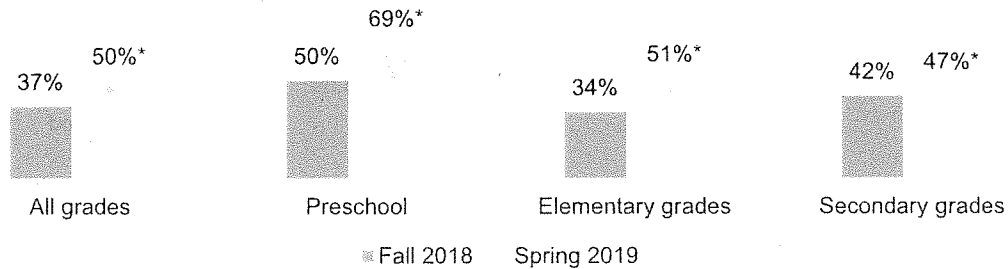
Figure 4-5 shows the percentage of economically disadvantaged students across the four tiers in fall 2018 and spring 2019 for the same grade bands identified above. In all cases the percentage of students in Tier 3 decreased and the percentage of students in Tier 1 and advanced increased. For Tier 2, in preschool and in the secondary grades the percent decreased; across all grades the percent remained the same; and in the elementary grades the percent increased.

Figure 4-5. Percent of Economically Disadvantaged Students in All Grades Across Four Tiers, Fall 2018 and Spring 2019



More American Indian students were at benchmark in spring 2019 than in fall 2018 across all grades, preschool, elementary grades, and secondary grades; preschool students and students in the elementary grades experienced larger increases than students in the secondary grades. Within the 2018-2019 school year, the percentage of American Indian students at benchmark (Tier 1 and advanced) from fall to spring increased for all grade bands, and all increases were statistically significant (see Figure 4-6). The change in the percentage of students at benchmark by spring 2019 was largest for preschool and elementary grade students (+19 and +17 percentage points, respectively); it was the smallest for secondary grade students (+6 percentage points). Across all grades, the increase was 13 percentage points.

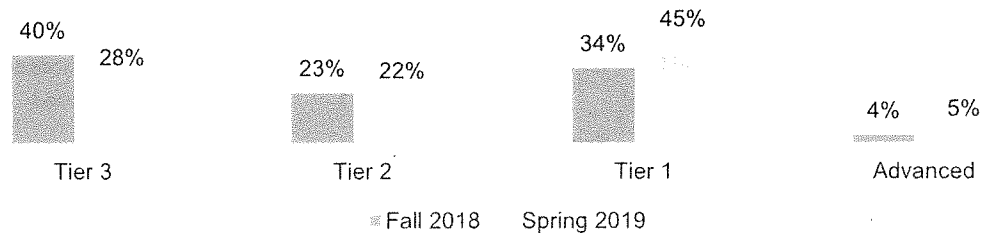
Figure 4-6. Percent of American Indian Students at Benchmark in Fall 2018 and Spring 2019, All Grades and by Grade Bands



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

Furthermore, the percentage of American Indian students in Tier 3 and Tier 2 decreased and the percentage in Tier 1 and advanced increased from 2018 to 2019 (see Figure 4-7).

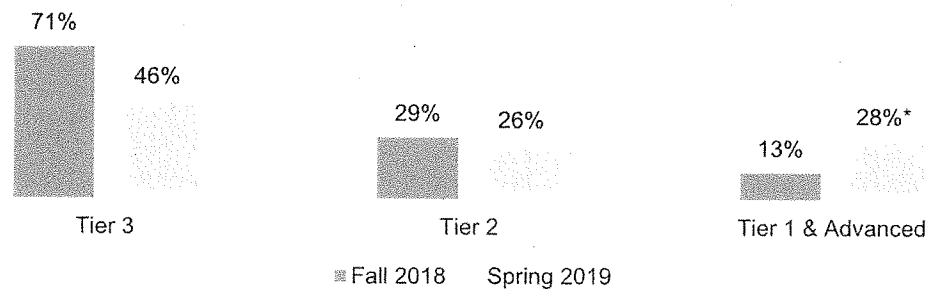
Figure 4-7. Percent of American Indian Students in All Grades Across Four Tiers, Fall 2018 and Spring 2019



More students learning English¹ were at benchmark in spring 2019 than in fall 2018 across all grades.

The percentage of students learning English at benchmark (Tier 1 and advanced) increased from fall 2018 to spring 2019 for all grades; the increase was statistically significant (+15 percentage points) (see Figure 4-8). Figure 4-8 also shows that the percentage of students in Tier 3 and Tier 2 decreased.

Figure 4-8. Percent of K-12 Students Learning English in All Grades Across Four Tiers, Fall 2018 and Spring 2019

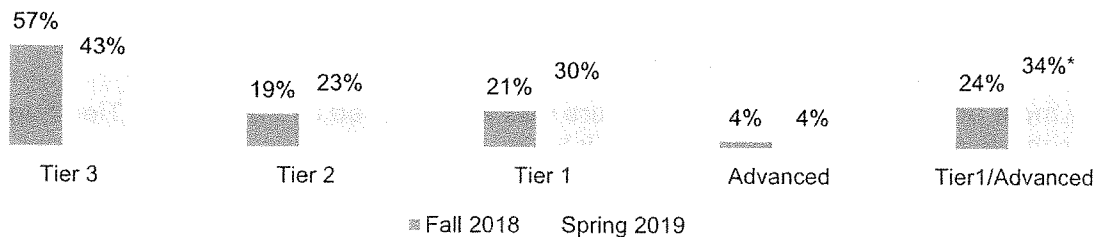


* Indicates change from previous year is statistically significant (Pearson Chi-Square ≤ 0.05).

More students receiving special education services were at benchmark in spring 2019 than in fall 2018 across all grades.

The percentage of students receiving special education services at benchmark (Tier 1 and advanced) increased from fall 2018 to spring 2019 for all grades; the increase was statistically significant (+10 percentage points) (see Figure 4-9). Figure 4-9 also shows that the percentage of students in Tier 3 decreased, the percentage in Tier 2 and Tier 1 increased, and the percentage in advanced remained the same.

Figure 4-9. Percent of Students Receiving Special Education Services in All Grades Across Four Tiers, Fall 2018 and Spring 2019



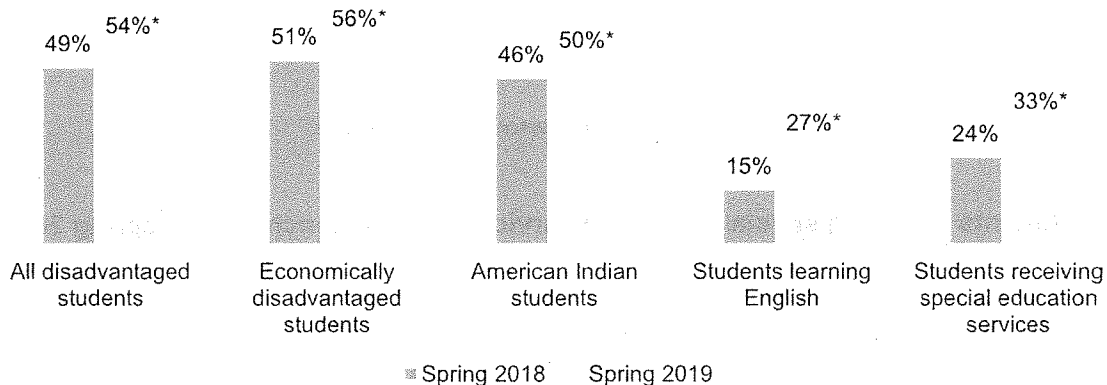
* Indicates change from previous year is statistically significant (Pearson Chi-Square ≤ 0.05).

¹ This section excludes preschool students, as they are not typically identified as ELLs at that age.

More disadvantaged students learning English and receiving special education services were at benchmark in spring 2019 than in spring 2018, compared to economically disadvantaged and American Indian students.

Across all disadvantaged students and populations, the percentage of students at benchmark (Tier 1 and advanced) was statistically significantly larger in spring 2019 than spring 2018 (see Figure 4-10). The largest increase was for students learning English (+12 percentage points), followed by students receiving special education services (+9 percentage points), all disadvantaged students and economically disadvantaged students (+5 percentage points each), and American Indian students (+4 percentage points).

Figure 4-10. Percent of Disadvantaged Students at Benchmark in Spring 2018 and Spring 2019, All Disadvantaged Students and by Population



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

MCLP outcomes include increasing the initial growth of disadvantaged subgroups on independent interim assessments by five percent from Year 1 to Year 2. These outcomes were met for economically disadvantaged students, students learning English, and student receiving special education services.

Improvement Index

The most positive movement across tiers was experienced by students in Tier 3, in preschool, and who were learning English.

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. The improvement index is the percent 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 percent 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 different populations of students who moved to a higher tier (worse), stayed in the same tier, or moved to a lower tier (better) from fall 2018 to spring 2019. Across all students participating in MCLP, 10 percent improved, moving from a higher tier to a lower tier over time. The only students with negative improvement index scores are students who were advanced or in Tier 1 in the fall; their scores were -1 percent and -14 percent, respectively. A larger percentage of preschool students improved compared to students in elementary and secondary grades (20%, 15%, and 3%, respectively). Among disadvantaged students, the largest improvement was for students learning English (29%), followed by American Indian students and students receiving special education services (20% each), and all disadvantaged students and economically disadvantaged students (18% each).

Table 4-1. Improvement Index

Population	Spring Tier Compared to Fall Tier			Improvement Index
	Higher tier (worse) in spring	Same tier in spring	Lower tier (better) in spring	
All students	10%	70%	20%	10%
Advanced students	1%	99%	0%	-1%
Tier 1 students	14%	86%	0%	-14%
Tier 2 students	14%	39%	47%	33%
Tier 3 students	0%	59%	41%	41%
Preschool	7%	67%	27%	20%
Elementary grades	9%	67%	24%	15%
Secondary grades	11%	75%	14%	3%
All disadvantaged students	8%	66%	26%	18%
Economically disadvantaged students	8%	66%	26%	18%
American Indian students	8%	64%	28%	20%
Students learning English	7%	58%	36%	29%
Students receiving special education services	7%	66%	27%	20%

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.

MontCAS/SBAC Data

Results from the spring administration of the MontCAS/SBAC ELA test to grade 5, grade 8, and grade 11 students (required for Government Performance Reporting Act, GPRA) were collected and analyzed by OPI and shared with Education Northwest. Their analyses, displayed in Table 4-2 show that around a third of grade 5, grade 8 and grade 11 students scored at or above proficient on the assessment (37%, 36%, and 35% respectively). Fewer students in the project's disadvantaged student subcategories did. While a quarter of economically disadvantaged students scored at or above proficient (28%), only 14 percent of American Indian students did,

11 percent of students receiving special education services did, and 3 percent of students learning English did.

Table 4-2. Percent of Students Scoring At or Above Proficient on the SBAC, by Grade and Population

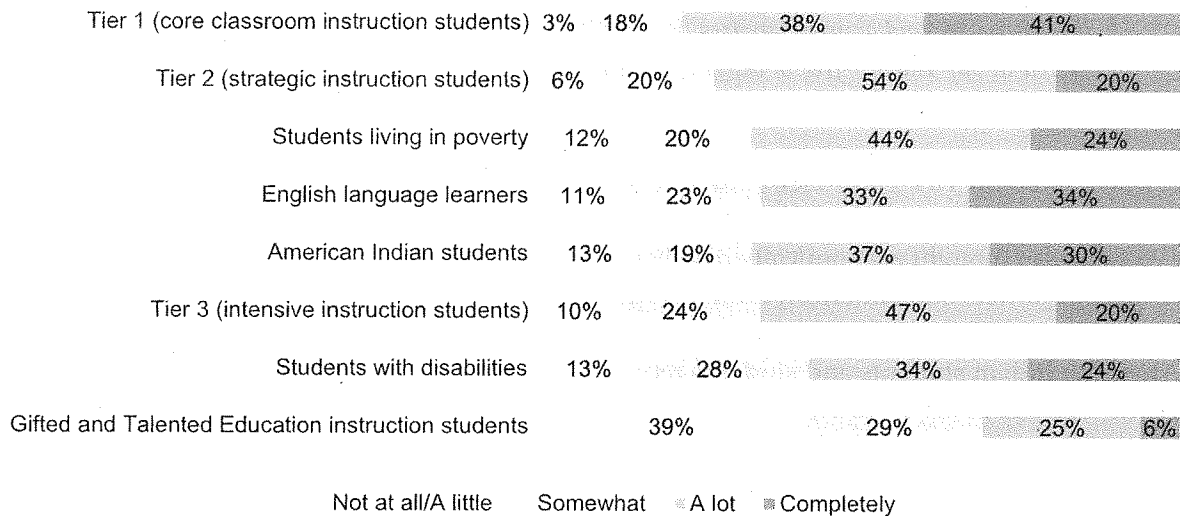
Grade and Population	2018-2019
Grade 5	37%
Grade 8	36%
Grade 11	35%
Economically disadvantaged students	28%
American Indian students	14%
Students learning English	3%
Students receiving special education services	11%

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 members responding to the survey agreed MCLP would help improve the literacy outcomes of all students (97%) and disadvantaged students (96%). However, in another survey question, responding teachers were slightly less optimistic (see Figure 4-11). Instead, teachers thought MCLP would most help Tier 1 and Tier 2 students. These students were followed by students living in poverty, English language learners, American Indian students, and Tier 3 students. Teachers thought that students with disabilities and gifted and talented students would be helped the least.

Figure 4-11. 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



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

Teachers responding to the survey indicated that their districts and schools needed to develop and implement programs and plans for their gifted and talented education students, and that extensions were necessary for their Tier 1 students. Teachers were also concerned about the lack of support and interventions for Tier 2 and Tier 3 students and students receiving special education services; they wondered if some of the Tier 2 and Tier 3 students not making progress might need to be assessed for special education services. Teachers noted the need for collaboration among staff members (such as establishing leveled groups) and consistency in implementing programs with fidelity. They also commented on the need for progress monitoring students and continuing to use the continuous improvement cycle to ensure all students' needs were met. Staffing appears to be an issue in some places, making delivering interventions difficult.

I think we need to pay attention to our gifted and talented students. I feel like they, and some of our Tier 1 students, may get overlooked. (School staff member)

We need Tier 2 interventions that are aligned with students' needs and driven by data. (School staff member)

More work is needed on identifying and isolating students in need of Tier 3 instruction. (School staff member)

We need someone who can help with IEPs and knows how to work with these students. (School staff member)

We need to be more consistent about monitoring the needs of these students and the results of our interventions (analyze and evaluate data more effectively and regularly). We also need to be more strategic about the intervention frequency, regularity, intensiveness, and appropriateness. We need to make literacy (reading and writing) sacred in our school—free of interruptions and schedule changes. (School staff member)

Teachers thought Tier 1 and Tier 2 students would be helped the most; however, results from the improvement index indicated that the Tier 3 and Tier 2 students improved the most. Teachers also thought economically disadvantaged students would benefit more than English language learners and American Indian students. According to the improvement index, the students with the third most improvement were English language learners, followed by American Indian students and students receiving special education services (see Table 4-3). While teachers thought students receiving special education services and gifted and talented students would improve the least, the students with the fifth most improvement were students receiving special education services. Tier 1 and advanced students improved the least (partially because only Tier 1 students could move into the advanced category).

Table 4-3. Improvement Index, Sorted by Student Population with the Highest Score

Student Population	Improvement Index
Tier 3 students	41%
Tier 2 students	33%
ELL students	29%
American Indian students	20%
Students receiving special education services	20%
Economically disadvantaged students	18%
Advanced students	-1%
Tier 1 students	-14%

Chapter 5: Summary and Recommendations

Summary

OPI was largely successful in accomplishing MCLP outcomes during the first two years implementing its grant., as shown by it accomplishing the goals it set out to achieve:

Engage in Independent Peer Review Process

In preparing for the grant and implementation, OPI revised the MLP, created an application process, application modules, and a scoring rubric and provided district applicants regional meetings and follow-up support. Following the application process, OPI engaged in an independent peer review process that was largely unbiased.

Prioritize and Award Subgrants to Serve Disadvantaged Students

OPI awarded subgrants to 58 schools across 21 districts. Across awarded schools, one third enrolled preschool children and about one half each enrolled students in grades K-6 and 7-12. About one third of students were disadvantaged. Across all of MCLP and of students with reported demographic data, many students were economically disadvantaged (62%), one-quarter were American Indian (28%), and fewer were receiving special education services (12%) or learning English (7%).

Align Early Language and Literacy Approaches to Support Children from Birth to Grade 5

OPI supported the alignment of approaches to support children from birth to grade 5 by supporting district leadership teams in coordination, assisting with the development of instructional frameworks, and providing professional development at conferences that addressed the MELS and the MCCS, transitions, and community and family engagement.

Subgrantees Create Local Literacy Plans based on the MLP

Schools and districts established leadership teams that engaged in work necessary to create and implement their local literacy plan. School staff members completed the comprehensive needs assessment, addressed the provision of professional development aligned to the MLP by planning the delivery and content of professional development, implemented a variety of interventions to support literacy, math, and behaviors, and administered assessments and used data to drive instruction and interventions.

Use the Continuous Improvement Cycle

OPI staff members used the continuous improvement cycle to determine some next steps for statewide implementation but are not using all data available to them to ensure the program is working for all students and for disadvantaged children. At the subgrantee level, OPI set school-level expectations, provided support to OPI staff members and instructional consultants to monitor implementation at the district and school level, and established incentives for schools to meet student outcome goals. School leadership team members collected, analyzed,

and used data in the continuous improvement cycle to identify needs, address gaps in their comprehensive literacy programs, monitor implementation, and communicate with stakeholders.

Advance Literacy Skills

As a result of their MCLP work, teachers reported being more efficient with their instructional time and using data and student engagement and literacy strategies to support all students and disadvantaged students to improve instruction. Analyses of independent interim assessment data show that more students were at benchmark in spring 2019 than in spring 2018 and fall 2018 across all grades, preschool, elementary grades, and secondary grades and for all disadvantaged student subgroups—economically disadvantaged students, American Indian students, students learning English, and students receiving special education services. The most growth was experienced by students in Tier 3, in preschool and the elementary grades, and who were learning English. Finally, economically disadvantaged students, students learning English, and student receiving special education services increased the initial growth on independent interim assessments by five percent from Year 1 to Year 2.

Monitor Intervention Implementation Fidelity

School leadership team members engaged in, and supported, activities (such as conducting walk throughs) to monitor implementation. While not all schools are at the stage for monitoring and improving implementation fidelity of interventions in their literacy plan, supporting school staff members in that task appears to be a better fit for instructional consultants than for OPI staff members. Still, school staff members reported implementing a variety of interventions and were, at a minimum, partially implementing them with full fidelity or fully implementing them with partial fidelity.

Address Sustainability

OPI supports MCLP sustainability at the state level through alignment and partnerships, consistent messaging, and sharing resources across agencies, and at the school level by providing technical assistance and support to school staff members in using the continuous improvement cycle to drive implementation of their local literacy plans. At this early point of the grant, school leadership team members believe meetings to engage in the continuous improvement cycle are more sustainable than activities that rely on additional resources.

Recommendations

1. Continue to support schools in the development and implementation of intervention systems. This was a cited need of district leadership teams and teachers, who specifically requested support in selecting interventions, including ones that meet the needs of disadvantaged and at-risk students, implementing interventions with fidelity, and engaging in progress monitoring. OPI may consider developing a system for instructional consultants to monitor intervention fidelity and training for administrators, program coaches, and other school staff members who will be responsible for these efforts when the grant ends.
2. Continue to improve and deliver differentiated professional development. Stakeholders cited a need for more differentiated professional development, to engage in it for longer periods of time, and to have collaboration and practice time following these events (both at conferences and onsite). Delivering job-embedded professional development is one way to address these needs. Specific topics that might be addressed include:
 - Assessment
 - Communication
 - Developing buy-in
 - Differentiating instruction
 - Reading and writing
 - Standards and alignment
 - Student behavior
 - Student engagement and motivation
 - Supporting at-risk students
 - Sustainability
 - Teacher collaboration, including data use
3. Support parents and K-12 entities in their community engagement efforts to align literacy activities from the birth to kindergarten continuums. Encouraging family engagement coordinators/liasons in elementary schools to participate in their local Best Beginnings Coalition could be one way to bridge the divide. In addition, school staff members need support in finding ways to engage parents in activities they deem important to student success and involving parents in the delivery of interventions at home.
4. Train district and school leadership team members in identifying funding opportunities and writing grant applications to help them sustain components of their comprehensive literacy programs that will need continued funding after the grant.
5. Find some time for the full MCLP team to meet face-to-face at OPI and additional time to meet virtually so Helena- and regionally based staff can better communicate and collaborate in assessing MCLP implementation using formative data from site visits and instructional consultants, comprehensive needs assessment data, and student outcomes. Face-to-face and virtual meeting time should also be used to plan for continued subgrantee support at conferences and onsite that address both systemwide and site level needs.
6. Ensure all MCLP students' demographic data are entered into the system of their independent interim assessment provider. While most students have some demographic data reported (88%) many fewer have demographic data reported across the four disadvantaged student categories (16%).

References

Montana Office of Public Instruction. (n.d.). *Montana Literacy Plan (MLP)*. Helena, MT: Author.

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 School Staff Responding to the Spring Survey

School District	Percent (n)
Anaconda	2% (7)
Boulder	14% (45)
Browning	0% (1)
Charlo	5% (17)
Clinton	1% (2)
East Helena	3% (9)
Fromberg	4% (14)
Frontier	17% (54)
Great Falls	10% (31)
Hardin	4% (13)
Helena	6% (18)
Libby	1% (2)
Lincoln	1% (4)
Livingston	2% (5)
Lockwood	0% (1)
Potomac	2% (5)
Roberts	5% (17)
Rocky Boy	2% (7)
St. Regis	14% (45)
Sun River	0% (1)
Troy	5% (17)

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

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

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

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

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

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

Table A-5. School District of Students with Fall 2018 and Spring 2019 Independent Interim Assessment Data

School District	Percent (n)
Anaconda	6% (751)
Boulder	1% (98)
Browning	11% (1,467)
Charlo	2% (197)
Clinton	1% (176)
East Helena	7% (951)
Fromberg	1% (108)
Frontier	1% (140)
Great Falls	13% (1,730)
Hardin	10% (1,329)
Helena	12% (1,594)
Libby	6% (806)
Lincoln	1% (120)
Livingston	8% (1,029)
Lockwood	8% (1,050)
Potomac	1% (80)
Roberts	1% (94)
Rocky Boy	4% (445)
St Regis	1% (128)
Sun River Valley	2% (248)
Troy	3% (333)

Table A-6. Grade of Students with Fall 2018 and Spring 2019 Independent Interim Assessment Data

Grade	Percent (n)
Preschool	3% (357)
Kindergarten	5% (700)
1	8% (1,002)
2	7% (918)
3	8% (1,068)
4	8% (1,087)
5	8% (1,083)
Elementary Grades (K-5)	55% (7,042)
6	9% (1,184)
7	11% (1,471)
8	11% (1,393)
9	9% (1,181)
10	8% (1,052)
11	2% (292)
12	1% (86)
Secondary Grades (7-12)	43% (5,475)

Table A-7. Disadvantaged Population of Students with Fall 2018 and Spring 2019 Independent Interim Assessment Data

Disadvantaged Population	Percent (n)		
	Yes	No	Missing
American Indian/Native Alaskan	20% (2,619)	56% (7,224)	24% (3,031)
English Language Learner	2% (239)	25% (3,168)	74% (9,467)
Receives Special Education Services	5% (684)	40% (5,083)	55% (7,107)
Free or Reduced Lunch	23% (2,895)	15% (1,899)	63% (8,080)

Table A-8. Assessment of Students with Fall 2018 and Spring 2019 Independent Interim Assessment Data

Assessment	Percent (n)
aimswab, Early Literacy	2% (285)
aimswab, Reading	8% (1,046)
ACT Aspire Reading	8% (1,020)
DIBELS Next	1% (145)
Expressive One Word Picture Vocabulary Test	3% (383)
iReady	8% (1,078)
ISIP	26% (3,313)
MAP	39% (4,952)
Star Reading	4% (540)
Star Early Literacy	1% (112)

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 2018, 20 grantees completed the annual Comprehensive Needs Assessment and submitted data to OPI. Table C-1 displays a summary of mean ratings from these grantees, and includes data from: Anaconda, Boulder, Browning, Charlo, Clinton, East Helena, Fromberg, Frontier, Great Falls, Hardin, Helena, Lincoln, Livingston, Lockwood, Potomac, Roberts, Rocky Boy, St. Regis, Sun River, and Troy. One subgrantee, Libby, did not submit data.

The needs assessment includes 10 scales—School Quality, Program and/or Content Standards and Curriculum, Assessment and Data-driven Decision Making, Amount and Quality of Instruction, Instruction and Support for At-risk Students, Motivation in Teaching and Learning, Academic/Program Leadership to Improve Instruction, Professional Development to Improve Instruction and Outcomes, Community and Family Engagement, and Operational Components (in bold below). Some, but not all, scales have subscales (not bolded below). In total, the needs assessment includes 136 items. The needs assessment uses a scale of “1” to “4” where “1” is “Not Being Implemented” and “4” is “Sustained Practice.”

These data show that programs, on average, are implementing practices, but not necessarily to a sustainable degree (average of 3.1). The highest area is Functional Structures (average of 3.3) under Operational Components and the lowest area is Tribal Engagement (average of 2.6), also under Operational Components.

Table C-1. Summary of Comprehensive Needs Assessment Data

Scales and Subscales	Mean
Comprehensive Needs Assessment, Overall	3.1
School Quality	3.2
Climate	3.2
Communication	3.2
Program and/or Content Standards and Curriculum	3.2
Program and/or Content Standards and Curriculum	3.2
Evidence-Based Strategies, Practices, and Interventions	3.2
Assessment and Data-driven Decision Making to Inform Instruction	3.1
Amount and Quality of Instruction	3.2
Amount of Instruction	3.2
Quality of Instruction	3.1
Quality of Materials	3.1
Instruction and Supports for At-risk Students	3.0
Motivation in Teaching and Learning	3.2
Academic/Program Leadership to Improve Instruction	3.2
Professional Development to Improve Instruction and Outcomes	3.1
Improve and increase teachers' understanding and knowledge	3.1
Job-Embedded and Classroom Focused Professional Development	3.1
Data-Driven Decision-Making	3.1
Community and Family Engagement	3.0
Operational Components	3.1
Functional School Board	3.1
Resource Allocations	3.2
Functional Structures	3.3
Personnel Retention	3.0
Tribal Engagement	2.6

