VANDERBILT
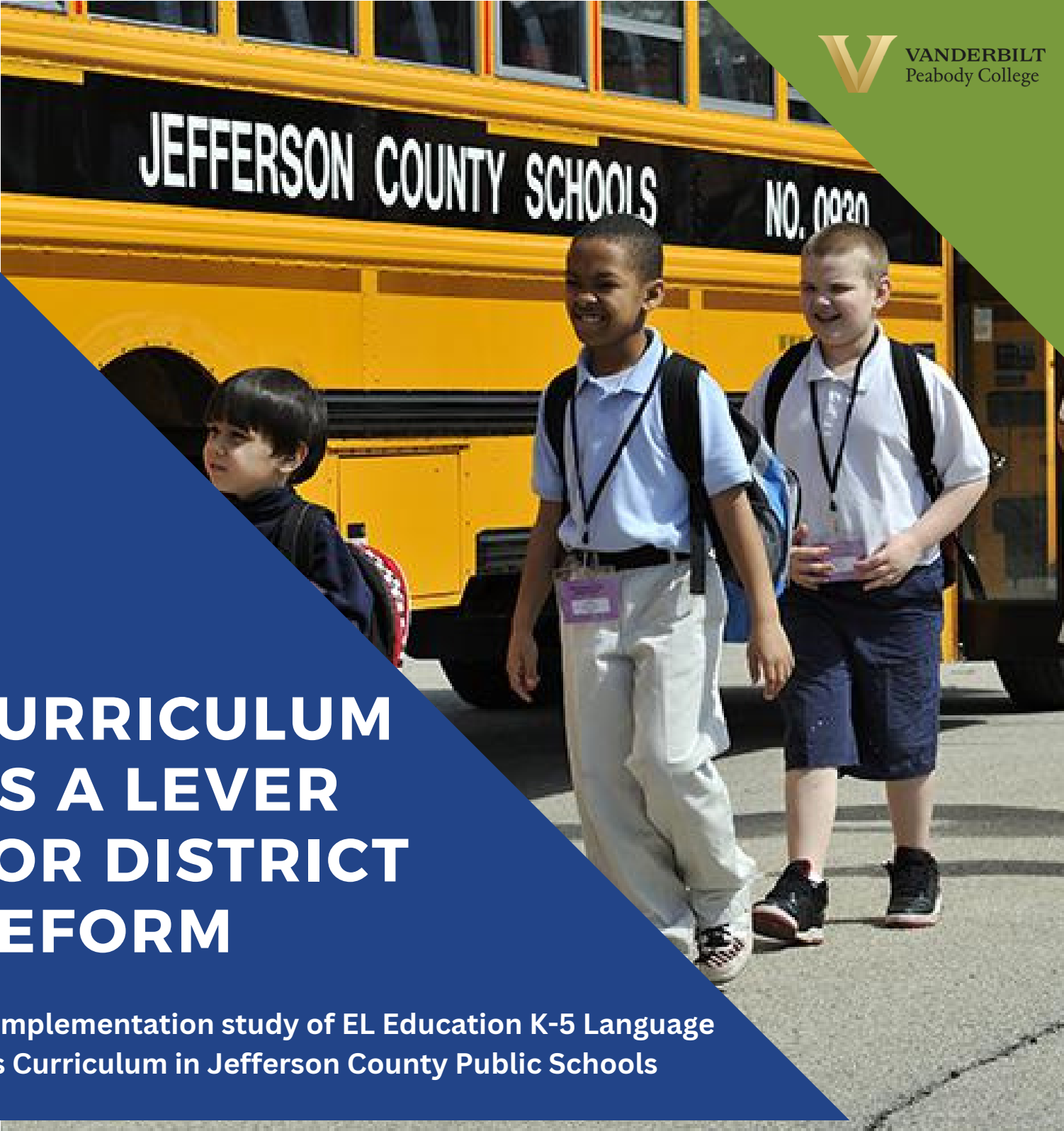Peabody College

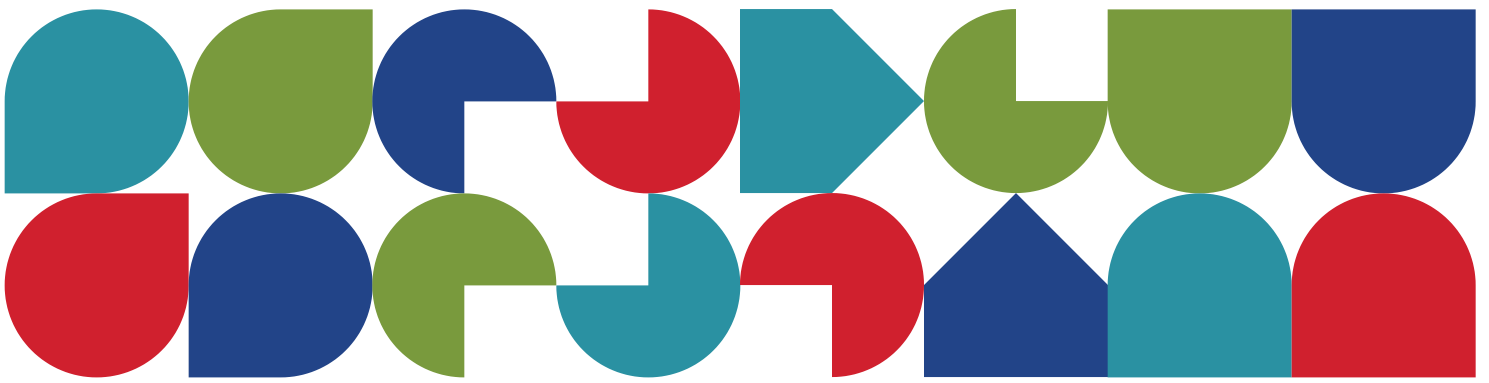# CURRICULUM AS A LEVER FOR DISTRICT REFORM

An implementation study of EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum in Jefferson County Public Schools

PREPARED BY

John Boumgarden
Jamie Zinck
Spring 2023

Acknowledgments

There are so many hands and voices that have shaped this capstone research project. We celebrate their collective contributions with joy and heartfelt appreciation.

We are grateful to the individuals who offered us wise guidance, asked curious questions that pushed our thinking, and shared kind affirmations throughout our doctoral program journey.

We express our sincere gratitude to our faculty advisor Claire Smrekar, Ph.D., who provided sage guidance and mentorship throughout the capstone process. We extend our appreciation to Laura Booker, Ph.D., for introducing us to the world of implementation evaluation and for sharing her expertise in survey design. To all our Vanderbilt faculty and professors, thank you for sharing your expertise and content knowledge over the past three years.

Additionally, we wish to acknowledge the support we received from Jefferson County Public Schools district leadership, including Dena Dossett, Ph.D., Chief Executive Director of the Accountability, Research, and Systems Improvement Division.

We are also grateful to the teachers, academic instructional coaches, and administrators who shared their valuable insights about the EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum. Their contributions were essential in helping us gain a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and opportunities associated with implementing a new, rigorous curriculum to ensure equitable outcomes for all Louisville students. We celebrate and share their voices.

Finally, we would like to express our deepest appreciation to our families, especially our spouses, partners, and children, for their unwavering love, encouragement, and support throughout this journey. We are humbled by their countless sacrifices they made to support us, notably the time they missed with us as we traveled for class weekends. Without their love and support, we could not have finished our program and completed this capstone project.

Table of Contents

Table of Contents

Table of Contents

Table of Figures

FIGURES

Table of Figures

FIGURES

Table of Figures

FIGURES

[Blank Page - Intentional]

Executive Summary

Jefferson County Public Schools (JCPS) is the largest school district in Kentucky, inclusive of the city of Louisville. JCPS serves just over 96,000 PK-12 students and employs 6,735 teachers. The district spans 395 square miles and has 165 schools, 89 of which serve K-5 students. JCPS is well regarded for its purposeful district commitment to desegregation practices and equitable experiences for all students. One of the key district policies designed to ensure integrated schools is JCPS' comprehensive student assignment plan.

In June 2017, the district began to audit its student assignment plan with a specific effort to improve the experiences of West Louisville families, an area of Jefferson County that historically has been under-resourced and marginalized. The completion of the audit resulted in a new student assignment plan undergirded by four guiding principles: Access, Ease of Understanding, Diversity, and Choice. These four guiding principles coalesce to support the district's emphasis on true equity for all JCPS students and families. The JCPS School Board unanimously approved the new strategic plan and set an ambitious goal

of a new student assignment plan for SY 2023-24. A central element of the new student assignment plan called for funding a new zone of schools in West Louisville. This new student assignment zone, called the Choice Zone Schools (CZS), is designed to create high-quality school options for families in West Louisville.

Concurrent to the work of reassessing equity through geographic boundaries and school selection, JCPS interrogated the role that curriculum plays in providing students with rigorous learning experiences. The district completed a curriculum review in 2021 which led to the adoption and purchase of a new research-based curriculum that aligned with district priorities. The new ELA curriculum, *EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum*, was pilot-tested in Accelerated Improvement Schools (AIS) in the newly designated CZS for the 2022 – 23 school year in anticipation of a complete roll-out across all district elementary schools for the 2023 – 24 school year. The combination of these district priorities, a new student assignment plan coupled with the launch of a district wide common

curriculum, led to the district completing an RFA and partner with Vanderbilt University for the 2023 EdD Capstone program.

This one-year early implementation study in collaboration with Jefferson County Public Schools (JCPS) seeks to understand the experiences of early adopters of a new literacy curriculum, identify best practices in professional learning, and examine the role of district and school leadership support as the district looks to implement the curricula at scale. Our evaluation and recommendations are designed to help stakeholders understand the fidelity of implementation among AIS within the Choice Zone; identify resources, supports, and barriers to the fidelity of implementation; and identify best practices that have emerged in the current implementation cycle. This study is designed to support JCPS as the district seeks to broaden *EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum* implementation across the entire district.

To support Jefferson County Public Schools as they seek to improve outcomes of all students, especially those served in Accelerated Improvement Schools within the Choice Zone, as well as extend the research of high-quality instructional material implementation, we unpack the following research questions:

1. To what extent did *EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum* professional development sessions prepare JCPS classroom teachers to implement the *EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum*?
2. To what extent did *EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum* professional development sessions prepare JCPS Academic Instructional Coaches (AIC) to effectively support JCPS teachers to implement the *EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum*?
3. How do district-led initiatives, EL Education training (contract-based), and internal district supports, impact JCPS teachers in the process of adopting a new curriculum with fidelity?
4. How do building leaders support district-recommended curriculum initiatives, specifically the adoption of *EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum*, at their local school sites?

This mixed-method study uses data collected from fall 2022 through winter 2023, including:

- One survey instrument designed for classroom teachers and administered to four AIS school sites from November 2022 - January 2023.
- Interviews with a targeted sample of teachers from four AIS sites in the newly expanded West Louisville Choice Zone.
- Interviews with a targeted sample of Academic Instructional Coaches (AICs) at the four AIS sites.
- Interview with a targeted sample of building leader principals at the new AIS sites.

Key Findings

The district is utilizing a high-quality and rigorous curriculum; however, the initial professional learning by EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum and the continued support administered by the AIS Office for JCPS is not sufficiently robust for teachers to feel competent during the first implementation year.

- The initial professional development session led by EL Education did not adequately equip educators to teach using the curriculum.
- Teachers perceive that *EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum* addresses the Kentucky State Standards and are using the curriculum as their primary instructional resource.
- Teachers believe high-quality instructional materials improve student learning and have a role in alleviating instructional inequities. However, teachers also believe these materials should be supplemented.

District personnel were not provided enough time and were not adequately trained with enough tiered layers of support to provide targeted professional

support for K-5 ELA classroom teachers.

- AICs feel under-resourced in their ability to lead the *EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum* professional learning work.

Half of the teachers surveyed do not feel the support provided by the EL Education trainers and ongoing district opportunities aligns with the curriculum they are required to teach. Teachers also indicate there are a number of initiatives, programs, and curriculum that vie for their professional attention.

- Teachers are split on the helpfulness of their professional learning experiences with the *EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum* as well as its impact on their instruction.
- Teachers perceive that district initiatives are excessive and lack consistency in execution and follow-through.

The district provides a comprehensive range of professional support to principals; however, there is an opportunity to enhance the targeted professional learning support that school leaders provide their staff as they

implement new curriculum initiatives. Schools experience a wide range of complex operational problems that can stifle academic success and unravel curriculum implementation plans.

- Leaders report they have support from the district in their daily professional work, but indicated they lack support to lead the ongoing professional learning of the *EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum*.
- Teachers feel supported by their building leadership in terms of their instructional practice.
- Teachers report that the *EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum* is rigorous, has appropriate progress monitoring tools, and allows students to demonstrate mastery in multiple ways.
- Teachers informally support one another in a myriad of ways in using the *EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum*, and still would like to find more concrete ways to collaborate.
- Complexities, particularly staffing shortages, impact the ability to meaningfully support instruction at the building level.
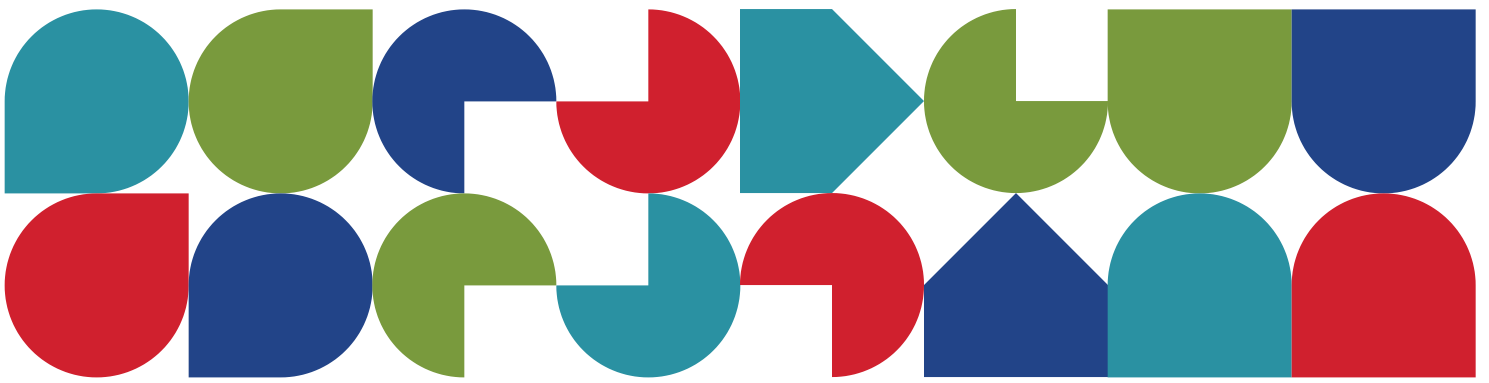
Recommendations

Based on our findings, we made recommendations for JCPS senior leadership to review as they prepare for a district-wide implementation strategy for SY 23-34. These key decision points can positively shape the future implementation experience for all teachers.

Recommendation 1
Extend and lengthen the EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum professional learning services contract.

1.1 Work with EL Education partners to structure and prioritize professional learning before the start of the school year. Ideally, future training sessions take place at the end of SY 22-23, ensuring teachers have time to utilize the summer break to understand the new curriculum and plan for success.

1.2 Purchase an additional day of *EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum* training to create a three-day learning session.

1.3 Purchase additional *EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum* content

expertise to support the instructional lead of AIS sites and related district personnel who are leading internal district implementation efforts and professional learning sessions.

1.4 Structure engaged professional learning sessions to equip instructional leaders, AICs, and teachers with different levels of professional support.

Recommendation 2 - To achieve district scale, stagger & structure future tiers of learning to support all JCPS teachers.

2.1 To meet SY 23-24 district implementation goals, JCPS will need to strategically prioritize groups of teachers and provide cycles of professional learning.

2.2 Complete a Teaching & Learning Team audit to identify district priorities and deprioritize or eliminate other initiatives that may be competing for the school's attention.

2.3 Embed professional learning into the current school day versus offering paid

opportunities after the school day ends.

Recommendation 3 - Triage CZS sites and district staff to allocate additional FTE support and optimize current staff specialty and role clarity.

3.1 West Louisville schools and staff members, in particular AIS and CZS sites, are overwhelmed and not able to execute their professional responsibilities. These sites need additional FTE support to deliver on the promise of a high-quality curriculum.

3.2 Protect and prioritize AIC time and professional responsibilities.

3.3 Protect and prioritize the Principal's time and professional responsibilities.

3.4 Ensure AIS sites are staffed with a mixture of veteran and novice teachers.

3.5 Provide JCPS Teaching and Learning personnel with additional EL Education personnel support and professional learning to support schools that are implementing *EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum*.

Recommendation 4 - Codify best practices and develop protocols to leverage teachers as a trusted partner in the implementation journey.

4.1 Collaborate with teachers to codify best practices and develop protocols/tools that teachers are

empowered to use.

4.2 Utilize and leverage teachers' natural tendencies (informal talk, occasional observations in peer-to-peer settings) with district-endorsed tools and protocols to maximize informal teacher networks.

This report is a stand-alone project in response to an RFA submitted by Jefferson County Public Schools to complement the Vanderbilt University, Peabody College Ed.D. capstone program. Future research projects could include a district-wide implementation study, assessing the academic growth of students after the implementation of *EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum*, and a review of the impact that the newly created Choice Zone has on families in West Louisville.

14

Introduction

Purpose of Study

This one-year early implementation study in collaboration with Jefferson County Public Schools (JCPS) seeks to understand the experiences of early adopters of a new literacy curriculum, identify best practices in professional learning, and examine the role of district and school leadership support to provide a set of recommendations as the district looks to implement the curricula at scale. Our evaluation is designed to help stakeholders understand the fidelity of implementation amongst Accelerated Improvement Schools (AIS) within the Choice Zone; identify resources, supports, and barriers to the fidelity of implementation; and identify best practices that have emerged in the current implementation. This study should support JCPS as they seek to broaden *EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum* implementation across the entire district.

Client Institutional Overview

Understanding Jefferson County Public Schools

Jefferson County Public Schools (JCPS) is the largest school district in Kentucky, inclusive of the city of Louisville. JCPS serves just over 96,000 PK-12 students and employs 6,735 teachers. The district spans 395 square miles and has 165 schools, 89 of which serve K-5 students. Schools are presently located in one of 13 clusters, and K-5 schools are identified as either: Resides, Cluster Magnet, Traditional, Montessori, or Magnet. K-5 student enrollment is 41,688 in the 2022-2023 school year. The demographics of JCPS reflect the diversity of the county; about 36% identify as Black; 36% White; 15% Hispanic; 5% Asian (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity

Jefferson County K-5 Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity

White 36.3%
Hispanic 15.5%
Black 35.8%
Asian 5.3%
Other 7.1%
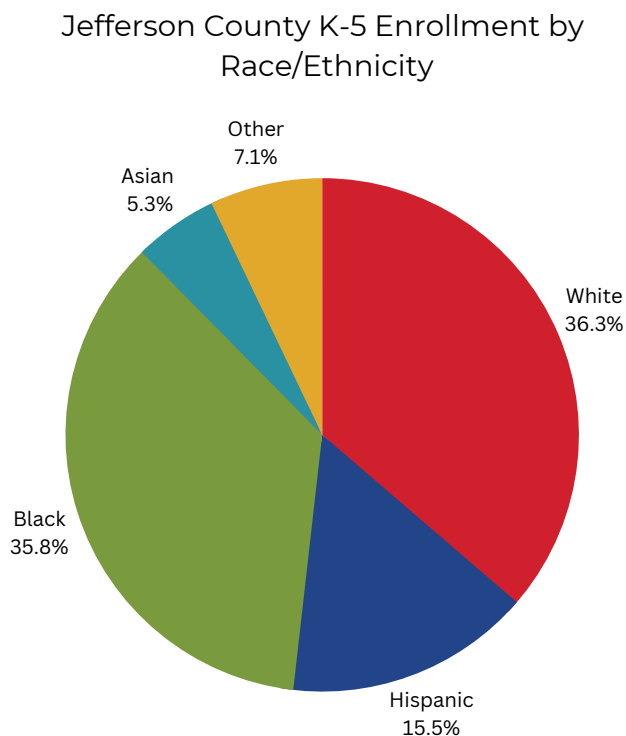
Introduction

Examining the Student Assignment Plan

Historically, determining the simple act of where a child goes to school in Jefferson County, Kentucky is rather intricate. JCPS began court-mandated busing in 1975, in an effort to achieve a 15-50% Black student population at each school. Subsequent assignment plans followed over the next 25 years – with Black children bearing much of the burden of long bus trips to schools farther away from their homes (Eligon, 2019). In the late 1990s, a group of Black families sued JCPS to allow their children to attend the local high school, which was predominantly Black (Hampton v. Jefferson County Board of Education, 2000). A federal judge found in favor of the families and issued an order to lift the previously held desegregation order of 1975. In 2007, the US Supreme Court issued a landmark ruling indicating school districts could no longer use race as a sole factor in making assignments (Parents Involved in Community Schools v. Seattle School District No. 1, 2007). Following this decision Jefferson County adopted a demographic formula designed to achieve racially diverse schools that is based upon neighborhood-level census data; the formula takes into account socioeconomic status, education levels, and race.

In a 2017 audit of the existing student assignment plan, a strong focus was placed on improving the experiences of West Louisville families, an area of Jefferson County that has largely been under-resourced. This sector is largely comprised of Black and Brown students with a median household income of $24,318 (Office of Accountability, Research, and Systems Improvement, 2022).

The district analysis indicated that students in West Louisville are more likely to:

- Attend a Title 1 school
- Attend an under-enrolled school
- Attend a school further from their home
- Attend a non-magnet school
- Experience discord in their transition to middle and high school because they are no longer with their elementary peers
- Feel a lower sense of belonging

Given the adverse effects of these conditions on a child's schooling experience and negative impact on the trajectory of students' future success, a new student assignment plan was developed. The plan is undergirded by four guiding principles: Access, Ease of Understanding, Diversity, and Choice. These four guiding principles coalesce to reinforce the district's emphasis on true

Introduction

equity for all JCPS students and families (Jefferson County Public Schools, 2022). In June 2022, this new school choice plan was approved unanimously by the JCPS School Board, to begin initial implementation at the start of the 2023-2024 academic year.

Undergoing Curricular Adoption and Implementation

Removing undue logistical barriers for marginalized families and providing choice is a substantial piece of the equation in the quest for more equitable student experiences and greater learner outcomes. Prior to the passage of Kentucky Senate Bill 1 in April 2022, local school councils identified the curriculum to be used at their building site. This effectively meant a different literacy curriculum could be used in each elementary school within a school district. Kentucky Senate Bill 1 allowed superintendents to name the core curriculum to be used after consultation with local schools (Kentucky Senate Bill 1, 2022). This would allow a superintendent to name a literacy curriculum to be used district wide.

The subsequent JCPS curriculum review involved teachers from across schools, content leads, principals, representatives from the Diversity, Equity, and Poverty (DEP) programs division, as well as the

Early Childhood Education (ECE) and English as a Second Language (ESL) divisions. This team's primary goal was to ensure a research-based curriculum was selected that aligns with district priorities. The *EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum* was ultimately selected.

Jefferson County Public Schools adopted the *EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum* for all Accelerated Improvement Schools (AIS) within the (then proposed) Choice Zone. In his February 2023 State of the District Address, Superintendent, Dr. Marty Pollio, indicated the *EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum* would be adopted for all elementary schools in the district. He championed this decision, indicating it was the first time in district history that students would have access to the same high-quality curriculum.

Introduction

Research Questions

To support Jefferson County Public Schools as they seek to improve outcomes of all students, especially those served in Accelerated Improvement Schools within the Choice Zone, as well as extend the research of high-quality instructional material implementation, we explored the following research questions:

1. To what extent did *EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum* professional development sessions prepare JCPS classroom teachers to implement the *EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum*?
2. To what extent did *EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum professional* development sessions prepare JCPS Academic Instructional Coaches (AICs) to effectively support JCPS teachers to implement the *EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum*?
3. How do district-led initiatives, EL Education training (contract-based), and internal district supports, impact JCPS teachers in the process of adopting a new curriculum with fidelity?
4. How do building leaders support district-recommended curriculum initiatives, specifically the adoption of

EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum, at their local school sites?

Definition of Terms

The following table serves to provide consistency and clarity for terms used throughout this report (see Table 1).

Introduction

Table 1: Jefferson County Public Schools Implementation Study Terms

Academic Instructional Coach Abbr: AIC	School based employee in Jefferson County Public Schools tasked with leading instructional coherence and professional learning
Accelerated Improvement Schools Abbr: AIS	Schools that are given special emphasis, support, and attention when Jefferson County Public Schools makes decisions and assigns resources to advance student outcomes
Choice Zone Abbr: CZ	Area in and around West Louisville where students will have guaranteed opportunities to stay in the same school with peers during their K-12 experience
EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum	A K-5 research-based literacy curriculum that has been designated as high-quality by EdReports.
Fidelity of Implementation	The degree to which a curriculum is implemented as intended
High-Quality Instructional Materials Abbr: HQIM	Materials that are aligned to and help teachers teach rigorous state standards
Professional Development Abbr: PD	A discrete opportunity for professional growth, typically in the form of a training held for educators
Professional Learning Abbr: PL	The sum of an educator's professional experiences in a given period of time (i.e. the culmination of professional opportunities in a school year)

Conceptual Framework

In collaboration with JCPS, we developed a conceptual framework to ensure that our work and research questions were guided by the extant literature about key conditions for implementation success. Our team worked with JCPS to develop a logic model that we shared with our clients to visually represent the key bins of knowledge that we sought to interrogate during our implementation study. The key components that our implementation study explored centered on the concept of effective professional development, professional learning and support, high-quality instructional materials, instructional leadership, building dynamics, and social networks. The concept matrix can be viewed in Appendix B.

to meet their varied needs and create opportunities for teachers to connect with others who are experiencing similar challenges (Desimone & Garet, 2015). Quality professional learning can take many forms including grade-level department meetings, and 1:1 coaching cycle, and is often times best facilitated by an instructional coach or content expert (Desimone & Pak, 2017).

In framing our work with JCPS, our team chose to focus on educator's professional learning experiences related to EL Education in SY 2022-2023. Namely, our team focused on the instructional coaching provided to teachers, the ways in which teachers were supported by their building leaders, and the ways in which teachers support one another through professional social networks.

Professional Learning

Professional learning serves as the overarching term to represent all the professional growth opportunities an educator engages in throughout the course of a given school year. Professional learning includes ongoing, coherent support that is focused on and linked to student achievement (Killion, 2018). Quality professional learning also includes differentiated professional development that works with teachers

Professional Development

Professional development is a nebulous term that the education field has debated over and only recently started to agree on a common understanding. Central to the idea of professional development is Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) idea of job embedded activities that increase teacher knowledge and improve student learning through new instructional practices. These job embedded activities

include seven key components: content-focused, active learning-based, collaborative, models effective practices, includes coaching, reflective in nature, and of a sustained duration (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). Desimone and Garet (2015) extend that definition by adding the idea of coherence as part of their conceptual framework, ensuring that the learning is driving toward commonly held goals across schools and districts. A cross-comparison of both definitions leads toward the mutually agreed upon components of content focus, active learning, sustained durations, and a collaborative experience with other educators (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Desimone & Garet, 2015).

High-Quality Instructional Materials

The term high-quality instructional materials (HQIM) and curriculum are relatively new terms in the education sphere. Over the past decade after the passage of the 2010 Common Core State Standards (CCSS) initiative, states and districts were forced to wade through a complex and saturated curriculum market that featured a wide continuum of textbooks and learning sequences. Researchers and education-aligned organizations, like EdReports, evaluate

instructional materials against comprehensive and research-based evidence to ensure states and districts can make informed decisions during curricular adoption phases. The field started to align and document that HQIM has a significant positive impact on student achievement (Boser et al., 2015; Kaufman et al., 2016; Steiner, 2017). Champions of HQIM argue that states should encourage, and sometimes even manage, HQIM for states and districts to use as a primary policy lever to drive student achievement (Polikoff, 2021). This policy suggestion aligns with JCPS's decision to move forward with *EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum* for their entire district in SY 23-24.

Instructional Leadership & Building Dynamics

Building leaders and dynamics can vary significantly across a large, complex district. And yet, research continues to highlight the crucial role that instructional leaders and principals play in supporting and encouraging teachers to adopt new instructional practices (Desimone & Garet, 2015). Additional research corroborates the important role that principals and peer teachers can

have by creating strong conditions for trust and clear communication surrounding building initiatives aligned to an agreed mission and vision (Supovitz et al., 2010). Principals are a key lever that positively influences the building level conditions needed to ensure a robust curriculum adoption (Allensworth et al., 2009; Bryk et al., 2009; Hallinger, 2003; Hallinger, 2005; Hallinger & Heck, 1996; Leithwood et al., 2020; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2000; Sebastian et al., 2016, Sebastian & Allensworth 2012).

Social Networks

Schools are complex institutions with different enabling conditions to potentially encourage or discourage collaborative practices. Teachers regularly face challenges where they are forced to make sense of new and unfamiliar situations. Researcher Nienke Moolenaar characterizes social networks in the education space as the patterns of social relationships amongst teachers (Moolenaar, 2012). In examining these social relationships, Moolenaar describes the simplest relationships teachers have as dyadic (one-to-one) but situates these dyadic relationships into larger subgroups (such as grade-level or subject-based departments), and then

into even larger structures (schools and districts). While there is an agreed upon existence of high quality materials as a powerful tool for curriculum and instructional use, teachers still regularly rely on other teachers to make sense of unfamiliar instructional materials (Moolenaar, 2012; Polikoff, 2018). Social networks are a reality in schools, and positive social networks are a crucial part of teacher trust and collaboration.

Research Design and Data Collection

Our team employed a mixed methods approach to data collection that included several distinct elements designed to capture a holistic assessment of JCPS's *EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum* implementation. From a quantitative lens, our team designed an instrument survey that leveraged several distinct components from valid survey instruments used throughout the country. From a qualitative perspective, we designed three independent interview protocols to elicit the distinct voices of three different stakeholder groups that engaged with the *EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum* implementation. These three interview protocols aligned to the larger bins of knowledge and concept map that our team designed in partnership with the JCPS Research and Evaluation team. A final compliment to the mixed-methods design was an extensive document analysis that our team conducted throughout the course of the partnership. The design of this mixed methods study reflects our goal of understanding the overall quality of support and professional learning offered by JCPS during their implementation plan leading up to the launch of the new *EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum* in the fall of 2022 (See Figure 3).

Research Questions

1. To what extent did *EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum* professional development sessions prepare JCPS classroom teachers to implement the EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum?
2. To what extent did *EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum* professional development sessions prepare JCPS Academic Instructional Coaches (AICs) to effectively support JCPS teachers to implement the *EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum*?
3. How do district-led initiatives, *EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum* training (contract-based), and internal district supports, impact

Research Design and Data Collection

JCPS teachers in the process of adopting a new curriculum with fidelity?

4. How do building leaders support district-recommended curriculum initiatives, specifically the adoption of *EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum*, at their local school sites?

Program Theory and Logic Model

The JCPS project team met seven times between July 7, 2022, and November 11, 2022, before IRB submission. During those initial conversations, we proposed several data instruments to our clients and used these working meetings to tighten our project scope and identify the target schools that we would collect data from (see Figure 2).

Our early meetings primarily focused on tightening around an agreed logic model. In partnership with JCPS senior leadership, we shared the following if-then statements then apply:

- **If** the Office of Teaching and Learning engages in a review of professional learning concerning the *EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum*, **then** best practices will be identified.
- **If** best practices are identified, **then** the Office of Teaching and Learning will know how to support schools in full-fledged implementation in the 2023-2024 school year.
- **If** teachers and school leaders are well supported in the use of the *EL*

Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum, **then** they will be equipped to implement the research-based *EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum* with high fidelity.

- **If** the research-based *EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum* is implemented with high fidelity, **then** students will experience high learner outcomes.

The JCPS Chief Executive Director of Accountability, Research, and Systems Improvement, Dr. Dena Dossett, in collaboration with the JCPS Executive Administrator of Accelerated Improvement Schools, Ms. Angela Hosch, helped our team narrow to a target sample population for the early implementation study of the EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum. Dr. Dossett and Ms. Hosch identified four AIS schools in West Louisville that met the sufficient requirements for our target sample population.

This initial stage of landscape analysis was significantly influenced using key informants (Babbie, 2008, p. 206). Key informants are critical persons who provide additional background and provide information that is not registered through official interviews. We engaged with three AICs employed by JCPS before starting our official scope of work with JCPS. The power analysis stakeholder map identifies the different compositions of stakeholders affected by the EL

Research Design and Data Collection

Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum adoption.

In partnership with the JCPS senior leadership team, we developed a logic model to assist in our program plan and implementation reporting structure. We submitted the logic model to our partners as a tool that could assist their future program evaluation efforts (see Figure 3).
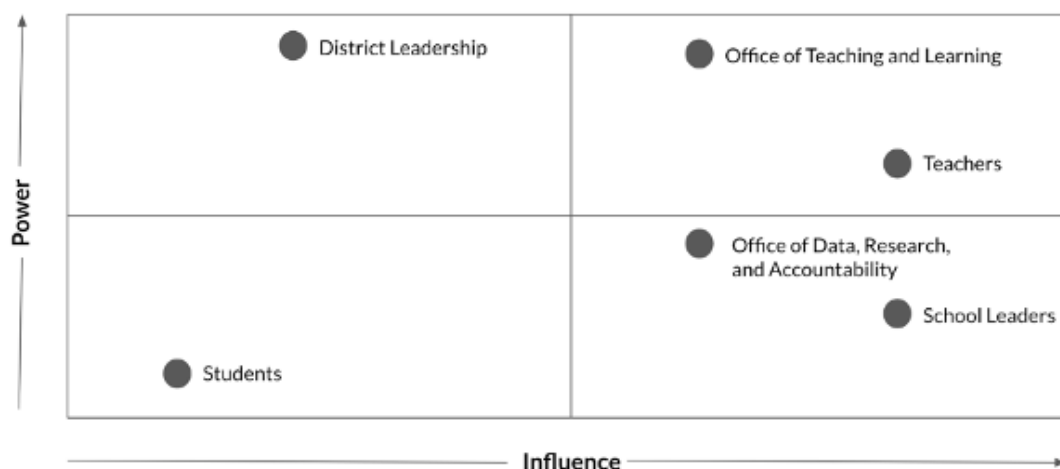
Table 2: Stakeholder Analysis

Figure 3: JCPS Logic Model for EL Education Language Arts K-5 Curriculum

JCPS EL Education Logic Model

Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Short Term Outcomes
Human Resources • District staffed and instructional support for training and peer support • Instructional coaches and lead content experts • Pacing guides developed by JCPS Teaching & Learning Team • Data and Evaluation Team & Vanderbilt University Research Team **Financial Capital** • JCPS purchased curriculum for EL Education • Additional compensation for staff working in CZS • New facilities and structures for CZS • Staff compensation for EL Education Training **Research + High Quality Curriculum Review** • JCPS task force of high quality curriculum review • Teaching & Learning review/inclusive opportunity to shape education curriculum decisions	**District Professional Development** • JCPS planned/structured in service days to improve teaching practice and professional growth • JCPS planned/structured data analysis days to review and adjust curriculum pacing choices **Direct Training Provided by EL Education** • Sessions prepared by EL Education Curriculum team that are administered to JCPS CZS staff • Ongoing support (virtual or in person) to provide assistance with curriculum adoption **Indirect Training Provided by JCPS** • Organic sharing of knowledge/training of EL Education reading curriculum between CZS schools **JCPS Teaching & Learning Support** • Teaching and Learning team prepared/review structured pacing units for EL Education reading curriculum • Instructional coaches and content leads to help provide easy facilitation and adoption of new curriculum	**District Professional Development** • # of inservice professional development days aligned to curriculum training • # of inservice professional development / data review days **Direct Training Provided by EL Education** • # of inservice professional development days • # of training sessions/hours by EL Education Staff • Type of delivery (virtual or in person) **Indirect Training Provided by JCPS** • # of professional sessions designed by JCPS CZS school support staff • # of units created and prepared before JCPS CZS curriculum adoption plan • # of communities of practice and support between CZS schools **JCPS Teaching & Learning Support** • # of JCPS district pacing guide for units of study • # of instructional coaches on loan to schools to support adoption/use of curriculum	**High Quality Implementation and Training for EL Education** • All JCPS CZS adopt EL Education for reading curriculum • All staff feel equipped to deliver EL Education according to curriculum manufacture guidelines • All staff incorporate reading curriculum with significant alignment towards district pacing **Medium Term Outcomes** Consistent Adoption of EL Education for Sustained Period of 2-3 Years • CZS teams stay at placement school and use EL Education with thoughtful fidelity and adapt curriculum to meet needs of community • Students are not mobile and stay at placement school for sustained period of 2-3 years • Students perform academically on standardized tests and show significant growth for sustained periods of time **Long Term Outcomes** Academic & Holistic Student Success for CZS Schools → Equitable Education Opportunity for Students of Color • Students and families choose CZS schools at equal or higher value than other JCPS school choice options • Schools draw families from all over JCPS and function as ideal school of choice for families • Increased student attendance and serve as a model curriculum adoption plan for other JCPS schools • Staff stay at placement schools and develop strong institutional knowledge about how EL Education works as a racial equity drive curriculum choice for students of color

Research Design and Data Collection

Qualitative Methodology

Our primary source of qualitative data for this project consisted of semi-structured interview responses. Semi-structured interviews are guided by pre-selected topic areas, but they permit researchers to be flexible regarding question order and whether to follow up or probe responses to questions (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Precisely because interview response sets are not predefined, they have the potential to generate data that produces a "depth of understanding" (Patton, 1985, as cited in Merriam & Tisdell, 2015, p. 16) about multiple stakeholders' experiences with implementing a new curriculum.

For our qualitative data, we conducted a series of virtual interviews with three categories of JCPS employees: K-5 ELA teachers employed at the AIS locations, AICs at the select AIS locations, and K-5 building instructional leaders (including a mixture of principals and assistant principals). We used several scopes of work revision meetings during the late summer and early fall of 2022 to narrow this group of JCPS employees. Our team initially proposed a fourth JCPS employee group (district-level participants); however, the JCPS internal team declined to pursue an additional category due to limited resources and time constraints.

Qualitative Procedure

To examine the school's implementation success and perceptions around the quality of their professional learning administered by EL Education and extended through JCPS, we conducted in-depth qualitative interviews with three targeted groups of JCPS employees. The interview questions followed our conceptual framework based on the research literature and bins of knowledge that we sought to unpack around the perception and quality of implementation for the AIS sites. The interview questions were designed to gather data around the perception of support and quality of professional learning, both internal (JCPS) and external (*EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum* contract work), to prepare teachers and building leaders for a high-quality implementation adoption.

We interviewed five JCPS employees over the course of two months. Interviewees' backgrounds and experiences came from two of the targeted four schools in our sample population. From a staffing perspective, we interviewed two building leaders (principal and assistant principal), one academic instructional coach, and two teachers (one ESL and one K-5 classroom model teacher).

From the building leader's perspective, we hoped to understand their perception of training and support from the district in addition to the daily challenges of running a school building that might hinder a high-quality implementation.

Research Design and Data Collection

From the academic instructional coach's perspective, we hoped to better understand the quality of the initial training provided by EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum, as well as the continued support provided by the JCPS AIC team and the Teaching and Learning Department. Finally, from the teacher's perspective, we hoped to better understand the perceived quality of EL Education training, in addition to the challenges of planning for and delivering a rigorous high-quality curriculum to a student population that is significantly behind grade level.

Sampling and Rationale

From a sampling lens, we relied on purposive sampling and snowball sampling non-probability sampling methods. Purposive sampling is the non-probability sampling method utilized when researchers aim to study a specific sample of a population sample (Babbie, 2008, p. 204). In our implementation study, we aimed to uncover the perceptions and experiences of a distinct group of JCPS employees. Our team incorporated snowball sampling (Babbie, 2008, p. 205) to encourage our participants to share their experiences with other JCPS employees to increase our total number of interviews. Because we were able to obtain participation from four different JCPS roles at two different school sites, our interviews yielded rich insights from the varied experiences and provided a more holistic insight into implementation efforts at the AIS sites.

School Selection

Our recruitment efforts were constrained by the IRB agreement and the focus of the implementation study for EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum. Because JCPS launched the EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum implementation with the newly redesigned Choice Zone Schools only, our project team was limited in how many schools we could recruit for our implementation study. Additionally, the involvement of JCPS' Accelerated Improvement Schools division further narrowed the number of schools that we could potentially recruit in our implementation study. After compiling the list of possible schools eligible for participation, JCPS senior project leadership distributed our Qualtrics email survey link to four AIS Choice Zone JCPS elementary schools: Byck Elementary, Kennedy Montessori Elementary, King Elementary, and Wheatley Elementary.

Participant Selection

After confirmation of our school sites, we recruited teachers and district employees to participate in our in-depth interviews. Participation was optional for JCPS employees to sign up and the interviews were not allowed to be conducted during contractual school hours due to collective bargaining.

Research Design and Data Collection

One additional JCPS IRB constraint to note is that we were not allowed to recruit teachers or communicate with teachers outside of internally created district email blasts. Participants were only allowed to sign up through the Qualtrics survey link that was distributed by the JCPS Research and Evaluation team.

The final sample included one principal, one assistant principal, one AIC, one K-5 ELA teacher, and one ESL teacher.

Qualitative Data Analysis

All our interviews were conducted via Zoom to accommodate JCPS employee scheduling and flexibility. We used Otter.ai to transcribe the interviews, each lasting approximately 30 minutes. Audio files and interview data were analyzed in a four-step process consisting of "listening tours," analytic memo writing, individual matrix construction, and master matrix construction. Each step and its purpose are described below.

"Listening Tours"
The data analysis plan was predicated on a comprehensive series of listening tours completed by the project team. We completed a series of multiple listens that allowed our team to glean a comprehensive, holistic set of themes.

Analytic Memos
After identifying potential themes and irelevant quotations with the listening tours described above, data analysis continued with the writing of analytic memos. Analytic memos contained three primary components: 1) descriptions of the data collection process 2) initial ideas, and potential insights, and (3) questions about the data. Descriptions of data collection included the number of interviews conducted by the author, when/where the interviews were conducted, and any other relevant or potentially meaningful information about the interviews (e.g., logistical complications or technical problems). Initial insights described the preliminary themes that emerged during data collection.

Individual Matrices
A concept-clustered matrix is a tool for organizing interview data into groups or clusters corresponding to a conceptual framework. The purpose of individual concept-clustered matrices is to distill and succinctly display key data from each interview. Though the process of creating an individual matrix is iterative, the final product is a document containing a list (or column) of conceptual components and themes from the interview that relate to any of the primary components of the conceptual framework (i.e., quality of professional learning, human capital, social networks, or role congruity). Each theme identified on the matrix was

Research Design and Data Collection

supported by one or more direct quotations from the interview. Quotations were included on the matrix in a separate column.

Master Matrix
Individual matrices were synthesized into a master matrix. Like the individual matrices, a master matrix contains a column for conceptual framework components, a column for themes, and a column for supporting evidence (i.e., direct quotations). Unlike the individual matrices, a master matrix includes only the themes that are common and consistent across multiple interviews. These common themes were found by carefully comparing the themes and quotations in the individual matrices. Themes that are common across interviews are suggestive of patterns across the sample. We discuss our matrix and these themes more fully in our findings. The different interview protocols can be seen in Appendix C, while the comprehensive qualitative matrix can be seen in Appendix D.

Quantitative Methodology - Surveys

In conjunction with designing our interview protocols, we developed our final survey instrument and distributed it electronically in November 2022. We used Qualtrics to create three completely confidential links that did not require participants to share email addresses or any identifiable information. This process allowed district participants to complete the survey confidentially and provide honest feedback about the quality of the implementation effort. Our survey window opened on November 14, 2022, and closed on January 31, 2023.

To design a survey that included valid, field-tested items, we relied on several external surveys that included scales and measures aligned with our concept map. This decision was intentionally around trying to secure valid and reliable survey measures against a tight project timeline. By using our conceptual framework to identify our target bins, we conducted a landscape analysis and identified several ready-to-use survey measures that were already deployed in the field (see Table 3). The entire survey can be viewed in Appendix A.

Procedure

The survey instrument was designed in collaboration with JCPS senior leadership during our scope of work conversations. We aligned each of our measures to the bins agreed upon with JCPS and drew inspiration from the field to compile our questions.

From a building dynamics and instructional leadership concept, we sought to better understand the impact that a building leader can have on an individual school's curriculum implementation effort. We also

Research Design and Data Collection

Table 3: Compilation of bins and survey instrument design for the implementation study

Conceptual Bin	Survey Instrument	Individual Measures
Building Dynamics + Instructional Leadership	UChicago 5Essentials Survey	- Collaborative Practices Measure - Instructional Leader Support - Program Coherence
High-Quality Instructional Materials	TN ELA Curriculum Survey	- Curriculum Usage Measure - HQIM Overall Perceptions Measure
	OH Survey	- Teacher Mindset
Professional Support	UChicago 5Essentials Survey	- Social Networks Measure - Quality of Professional Development Measure
	TN Instructional Improvement Survey	- Instructional Improvement
Social Networks	UChicago 5Essentials Survey	- Social Networks Measure - Collaborative Practices

Research Design and Data Collection

incorporated the measure of program coherence to better understand how building leaders thoughtfully weave together different building initiatives and the impact that a leader has on potentially complex and competing priorities.

Regarding the high-quality instructional materials bin, our team wanted to understand how a teacher's perception of whether they viewed a curriculum as high-quality impacted a teacher's willingness to adopt or adapt a curriculum for their students. Knowing that one of the district's goals is the fidelity of implementation, this area seemed especially important to investigate further how the actions of individual teachers might impact how consistent they are towards an implementation model.

The professional support bin was designed to better understand teachers' perceptions of the district's level of support. JCPS made an intentional decision to rely on internal district support rather than engage with EL Education through extended professional learning sessions after the summer training sessions were completed. This strategy places a larger share on district personnel, and we sought to better understand how teachers viewed the perceived level of support they received.

The last area of conceptual knowledge that we sought to better understand was

the extent to which social networks played a role in teachers' ability to share information and improve professionally through informal networks. As previously identified in our conceptual knowledge section, teachers readily rely on each other through social networks and knowledge sharing about what does and does not work in classroom settings. To better understand the overall implementation effort, we sought to understand how readily teachers relied on each other during implementation efforts, and whether these efforts aligned with or against the vision of the district.

One significant participant difference between our qualitative and quantitative approach was the end users whom we created a survey for. From the qualitative lens, we created three separate protocols that were targeted toward three distinct groups of JCPS employees who were interfacing with the curriculum: building leaders, district personnel (AICs), and classroom teachers. For our quantitative survey instrument, we only created a survey instrument that was made available to classroom teachers. The rationale behind this centered on our belief that we could access more teachers who were busy and had less flexible time to schedule an interview. Our questions were intentionally designed to understand the teacher's perception of their experience and support from district personnel.

Research Design and Data Collection

Sampling and Rationale

From a sampling perspective, we followed a similar approach that was previously identified in the qualitative methodology. Our team relied on purposive sampling methods to accurately capture the data from a targeted group of AIS sites. Our partner sought to better understand the unique experiences of teachers located at certain school sites. Because of these constraints, we were limited in our ability to draw from a wider sample population. This is further discussed in our Limitation section below.

School Selection

As previously discussed in our qualitative section, JCPS determined four specific school sites that matched the research constraints outlined during the scope of work and IRB process. The client desired to better understand the experiences of teachers and school sites, primarily those of the newly formed Choice Zone Schools, that implemented the EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum during SY 22-23. This broad group was further narrowed by the district's desire to better understand whether the district's professional learning services were helpful during the initial implementation phase. The CZS that received the most district support were the AIS sites. This constrained the number of school sites down to a final group of four that the district recommended our team sample.

Participant Selection

Like the qualitative process detailed in our methodology, we relied on district personnel to help narrow and refine our possible participants. Because we targeted a specific subset of schools, we were limited to the number of participants that were provided access to the Qualtrics email link.

Quantitative Analysis

Data from our survey was exported from Qualtrics into Excel to be analyzed. Of the 20 surveys received, 16 were completed. Four partially completed surveys were excluded from the results. After consultation with a Vanderbilt Peabody faculty member, it was determined that descriptive statistics would be the most valuable to report given our low n-count.

Each question was organized by tab in the Excel spreadsheet and analyzed first individually. At times, it made sense to compare results by the identified grade level a teacher taught or by the number of years' experience a teacher had. For some questions, the categories of Strongly Agree and Agree were combined, as well as Strongly Disagree and Disagree. This decision was made using the Research Questions as guidance.

Research Design and Data Collection

Tables were created for each question and are found in the Findings of this report.

Limitations

This study was designed to examine the early implementation of the EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum literacy curriculum in Jefferson County's Choice Zone Schools located in West Louisville. The research team was dedicated and compelled to provide the district with a valuable set of findings to further guide the work of scaling up the implementation within the remaining schools. With that said, three main limitations exist.

There is a high degree of sampling error within this study. Our conversations with JCPS district leaders helped focus our attention on AIS sites within the JCPS Choice Zone. Four sites were sampled, for a total of 89 K-5 teachers. Our teacher survey yielded results from 16 teachers, for a total of 17.9% of the total teacher population. This participation rate was monitored closely after the survey window opened on November 14, and several attempts were made to increase the participation rate. The survey window was originally set to close on December 2, 2022, and was extended through January 31, 2023. In a strategy meeting with the district to increase response rates, an incentive offering was approved on December 8, 2022, for all completed

surveys. We attribute our low response rate to a myriad of reasons, including but not limited to, teacher burnout, time of year, and in line with a general lackluster response rate across surveys within the district in the years directly following the school closures brought by the Covid-19 pandemic. However, we recognize the low response rate amongst teachers offers a high probability of drawing non-representative conclusions and were careful to write our findings accordingly.

There is a lack of representation of multiple perspectives throughout the qualitative interviews. Our interview protocols were written to capture the perceptions of building leaders (principals and assistant principals), academic instructional coaches, as well as teachers. Our recruitment efforts were identical in this endeavor as in the teacher survey. In collaboration with the district, emails were sent from a district representative to facilitate the sign-up of interviews. We also extended the window of time to complete these interviews, but only secured five willing participants. The district preferred the interviews be completed via the Zoom platform, and while expedient, there is an inherent limitation in the ability to connect virtually as opposed to in-person. District agreements with the teacher's union may have contributed to a lower rate of participation here as well - as teachers were unable to complete interviews

Research Design and Data Collection

during regularly scheduled school hours.

A low response rate does not allow for deep data analysis and this study relies on descriptive statistics from the quantitative data. Given the low survey response rate, descriptive statistics are the most viable and appropriate form of data to report. However, this data provides a surface view at best and provides limited context for the district to make meaningful decisions to move forward in good faith with the small dataset.

Findings

In this section, we present the results of our early implementation study of the *EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum* within Jefferson County Public School District's Choice Zone schools. As indicated in our research questions, we sought to best understand the degree to which educators felt supported to implement the *EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum*. In the following sections, we will organize our findings by research question and then present our findings in detail, including descriptive statistics, inferential analyses, and visual representations of the data.

Research Question 1:
To what extent did EL Education professional development sessions prepare JCPS classroom teachers to implement the *EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum*?

Finding 1.1
The initial professional development session led by EL Education did not adequately equip educators to teach using the curriculum.

Educators indicated the initial training experience provided by EL Education during Summer 2022 was a curricular overview that did not provide them with the tools to properly plan for instruction. One building leader indicated the training left teachers to "dive into it themselves," rather than offering an opportunity to discuss the architecture and execution of lessons. An AIC shared similar sentiments, indicating that the initial training did not afford teachers the opportunity to experience "how much work it was going to take to put one lesson together." While this style contributes to a high degree of resourcefulness on the part of teachers, it also creates an environment where educators are stressed and lack confidence in their lesson execution.

Findings

Finding 1.2

Teachers perceive that EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum addresses the Kentucky State Standards and are using the curriculum as their primary instructional resource.

Survey data indicates that most teachers do believe *EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum* addresses the Kentucky literacy standards partially or in full. Greater than half (56.3%) indicated the provided *EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum* addressed all of the standards in their grade level (see Figure 4). An additional 37.5% indicated the curriculum addressed a portion of the standards.

Figure 4: Teacher Confidence in Addressing KY State Standards

Confidence in Addressing KY State Standards

Number of Respondents (n=16)
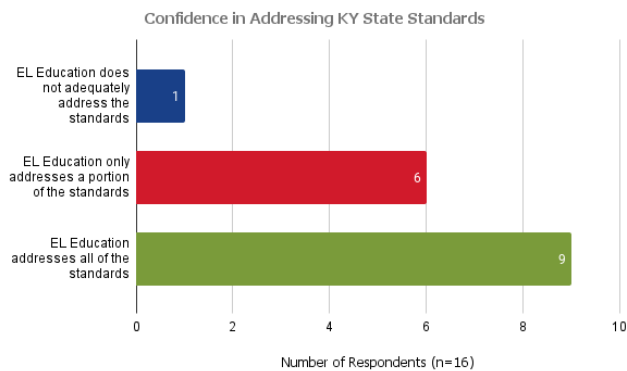
In following a similar trajectory, teachers do believe in using the provided curriculum. Over half of all teachers (56.3%) reported adhering to the *EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum* for their daily lessons (see Figure 5). When matching data to the previous question, we note that 88.9% of teachers who felt *EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum* met all Kentucky literacy standards also indicated they adhered to the curriculum for nearly all lessons. This would lead us to believe that teachers who perceive the curriculum supports the state learning standards are also compelled to use the curriculum to a higher degree of fidelity. In kind, 83% of teachers who felt the curriculum only met some of the standards were more compelled to regularly supplement with outside resources that they either find from other sources or generate themselves.

Figure 5: Teacher Use of *EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum*

Use of EL Education Curriculum

Number of Respondents (n=16)
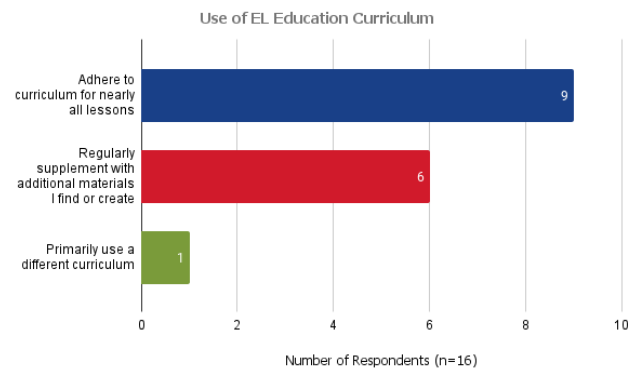
Finding 1.3

Teachers believe high quality instructional materials improve student learning and have a role in alleviating instructional inequities. However, they also believe these materials should be supplemented.

Findings

Teachers overwhelmingly believe in the use of high-quality curricular materials to improve student learning outcomes and believe they have a significant impact on alleviating educational inequities - 87% agreed or strongly agreed with each of these sentiments (see Figure 6). However, in considering their own students, 81.3% of teachers believe that high quality instructional materials need to be supplemented to meet student needs (see Figure 7).

Figure 6: Belief in HQIM and Educational Inequity

HQIM have a Significant Impact on Alleviating Educational Inequity

Agree or Strongly Agree — 14
Disagree or Strongly Disagree — 2

Number of Respondents (n=16)
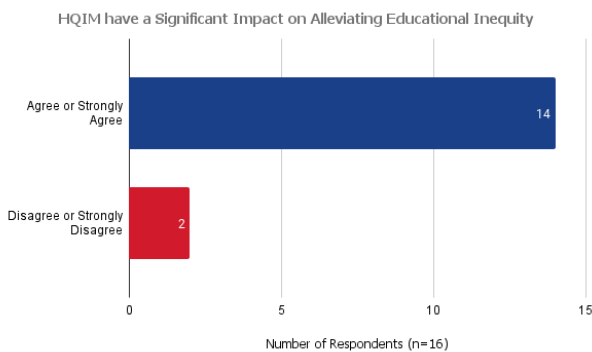
Figure 7: Supplementing HQIM

HQIM Need to Be Supplemented to Meet Student Needs

Agree or Strongly Agree — 13
Disagree or Strongly Disagree — 3

Number of Respondents (n=16)
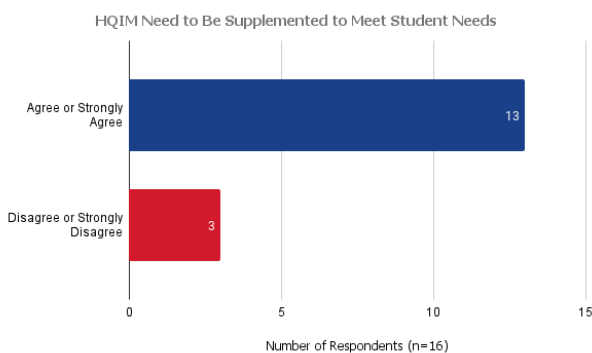
This idea, that high-quality materials need to be supplemented to meet the needs of students, was emphasized by multiple participants we interviewed, and as one building leader noted:

> **You got to remember that 80% of my kids are reading below grade level. So teachers are having to do a lot of scaffolding to bring students up to be able to .... in order to be able to actually do this program. JCPS Principal**

It is important to juxtapose these ideas - that leaders acknowledge that teachers must scaffold, or differentiate, to meet the needs of students, and where teachers believe curricula needs to be supplemented to meet their students' needs. While these are similar concepts - scaffolding and supplementing - careful attention should be paid to whether the scaffolding and supplementing challenge the integrity of the curriculum tasks, and thus diminish the rigor of the lesson. An AIC offered insight into this need for scaffolding to ensure students can engage in grade-level content:

Findings

> **❝**
> **I**t takes a long time for us to get it (the curriculum) to our kids, especially the prerequisites that are needed that some of our students don't have.
> **JCPS AIC**
> **❞**

Teachers identify the use of high-quality instructional materials as a lever to improving student outcomes, and also find that the materials need to be supplemented to meet the needs of their students.

Summary of Key Findings

The district is utilizing a high-quality and rigorous curriculum; however, the initial professional learning by EL Education and the continued support administered by the AIS Office for JCPS is not robust enough for teachers to feel adequately supported to deliver instruction during the first implementation year.

Research Question 2:

To what extent did *EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum* professional development sessions prepare JCPS Academic Instructional Coaches (AIC) to effectively support JCPS teachers to implement the *EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum*?

Note: This question would have been best answered in the quantitative survey by seeking teachers' perceptions of support received from their JCPS AIC. Findings are limited.

Finding 2.1
AICs feel under-resourced in their ability to lead the EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum professional learning work.

During our interviews, leaders emphasized the academic needs of the JCPS Choice Zone schools they support. As indicated previously, the schools located within the Choice Zone are characterized by low academic performance, as measured by Kentucky State Assessment results. These needs coupled with their personal experiences during the 2022-2023 SY offered insight into a strong desire for further support. Instructional leaders commented:

> **❝**
> **I think the district should have given us more time to connect with EL because most of the schools using EL are low-performing schools.**
> **JCPS AP**

> **❝**
> **We meet as a district and talk about being prepared. But we're all new to it. So there's no one saying, "I've done this and it works." We're all fairly new. It's 30 schools and we don't have a representative from EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum who supports us. So I don't know if we are doing it effectively and correctly, because we've never really had that feedback.**
> **JCPS AIC**

Findings

Building and AIS leaders were collectively consistent in approaching the curriculum with a degree of tentativeness. This is unsurprising, as the district is in its first year of a rigorous curriculum adoption and still feeling the learning loss as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. However, it is also critical to note their needs. These leaders feel confident in their ability to perform the functions of their job but less confident in using the *EL Education K-5 Languages Arts Curriculum* to support instruction at their sites. Their ask for additional EL Education professional support is noted and an area for further district action.

Summary of Key Findings

District personnel were not provided enough time and were not adequately trained with enough tiered layers of support to provide targeted professional support for K-5 ELA classroom teachers.

Research Question 3:

How do district-led initiatives, *EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum* training (contract-based), and internal district supports, impact JCPS teachers in the process of adopting a new curriculum with fidelity?

Finding 3.1

Teachers are split on the helpfulness of their professional learning experiences with the EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum as well as its impact on their instruction.

When asked if their professional learning had been closely aligned to district adopted instructional materials, 37.5% of teachers indicated sometimes, while 12.5% indicated frequently. The remaining 50% selected never or rarely (see Figure 8).

Similar findings were reported related to professional learning and its alignment to instructional improvements (see Figure 9). Here, 50% of teachers indicate their professional learning opportunities sometimes lead to improvements in their teaching, while 50% of educators indicate it rarely or never does.

Figure 8: Professional Learning Linked to Instructional Materials

Professional Learning Linked to Instructional Materials
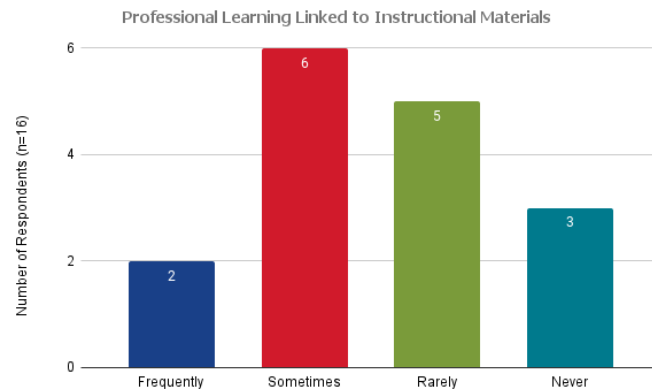
Figure 9: Professional Learning Changes Instructional Practice

Professional Learning Changes Instructional Practice
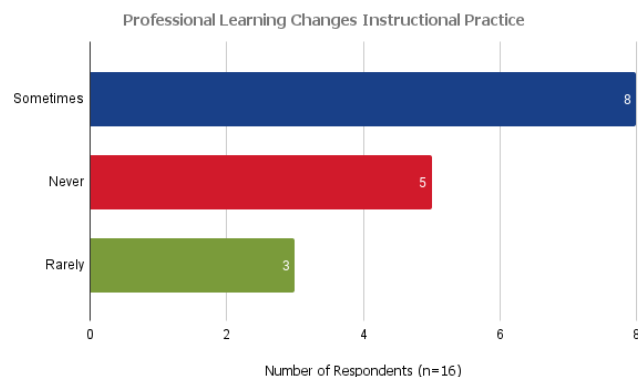
Findings

Professional learning is an investment financially and in terms of time. Half of JCPS teachers report that professional learning rarely or never influences their daily instruction in their classroom. We explored the reasons teachers believe their professional learning experiences are incongruous with their daily work in the classroom.

We note that when asked if professional learning is tailored to their personal professional goals, 68.8% of educators indicate never or rarely (see Figure 10). This would indicate that teachers fail to find a relevancy with the professional learning offered to them.

Figure 10: Professional Learning Tailored to Professional Goals

Professional Learning Tailored to Professional Goals

Interviews with building leadership as well as AIS coaches further expounded upon the relevancy of professional learning with the implementation of the *EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum*.

> " It's a lot to unpack and to decide what to teach. I think teachers get overwhelmed, especially new teachers.
> **JCPS AP**
>
> It's more effective to ... look at the next unit and help our teachers to prepare during that time. Let's give them time to plan this unit together.
> **JCPS AIC** "

Teachers spend valuable time in professional learning experiences, and half indicate this time does not lead to changeable practice within their classroom. Building level leadership expressed the need to make training opportunities more manageable, and less overwhelming. District level coaches emphasized the need for practical planning components.

Finding 3.2
Teachers perceive that district initiatives are excessive and lack consistency in execution and follow-through.

Nearly all teachers (88%) indicate that programs are invested in and then are inconsistently utilized. Similar findings were reported relating to the evaluation

Findings

of new initiatives (see Figure 11). Over half of all teachers do not believe initiatives are evaluated for their effectiveness in leading to higher student outcomes (see Figure 12).

Figure 11: Multiple Special Programs

Many special programs come and go at this school

Agree or Strongly Agree: 14
Disagree or Strongly Disagree: 2

Number of Respondents (n=16)
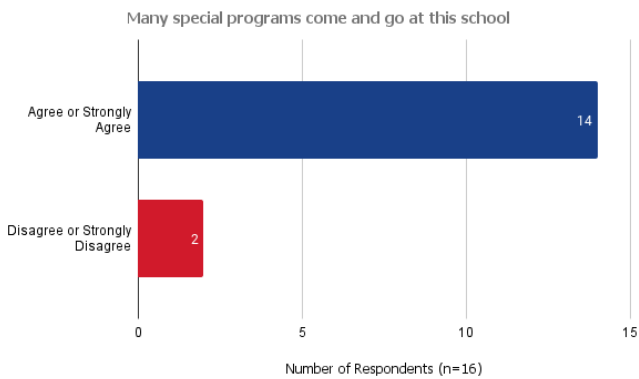
Figure 12: Efficacy of Program Implementation

New programs are followed up on to ensure they are working

Agree or Strongly Agree: 7
Disagree or Strongly Disagree: 9

Number of Respondents (n=16)
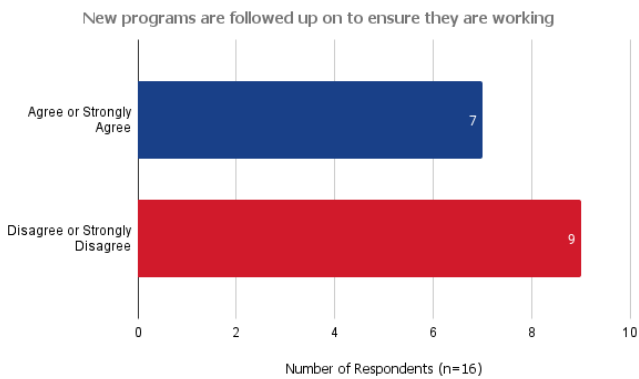
At their individual sites, 62.50% of teachers report that curriculum, instruction, and learning materials are not aligned across the different grade levels in a school building (see Figure 13). However, when asked to consider if curriculum, instruction and learning materials were aligned amongst the grade level, 68.75% of teachers felt there

was a consistency with their colleagues (see Figure 14).

These data points lead us to believe that grade level cohorts support one another and have developed a sense of professional trust amongst colleagues. There is strong horizontal alignment amongst colleagues who teach the same grade. This does not appear to extend across all grade levels within a building, indicating a weakness in vertical alignment of instruction across the school site.

Figure 13: Consistency in Curriculum, Instruction, and Materials Across Grade Levels

Consistency in curriculum, instruction, and materials across different grade levels

Agree or Strongly Agree: 6
Disagree or Strongly Disagree: 10

Number of Respondents (n=16)
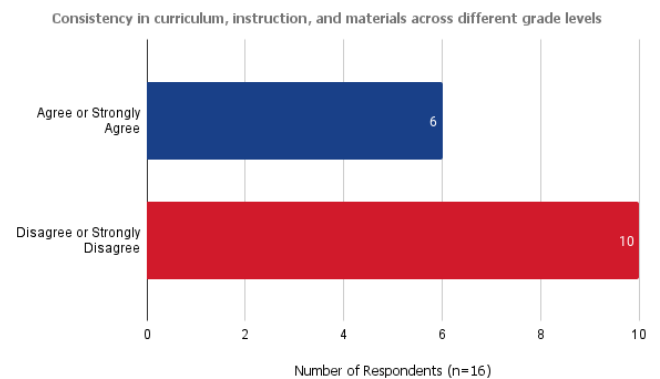
Figure 14: Consistency in Curriculum, Instruction, and Materials Within Grade Levels

Consistency in curriculum, instruction, and materials within grade level

Agree or Strongly Agree: 10
Disagree or Strongly Disagree: 6

Number of Respondents (n=16)
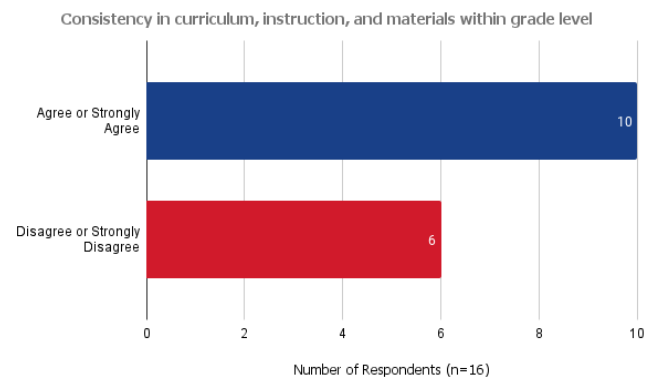
Findings

Summary of Key Findings

Half of the teachers surveyed do not feel the support provided by EL Education trainers and ongoing district opportunities aligns with the curriculum they are required to teach. Teachers also indicate there are several initiatives, programs, and curriculum that vie for their professional attention.

Research Question 4:

How do building leaders support district recommended curriculum initiatives, specifically the adoption of EL Education, at their local school sites?

Finding 4.1

Leaders report they have support from the district in their daily professional work, but indicated they lack support to lead the ongoing professional learning of the EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum.

Leaders are aware of the support available to them, and the district has established structures to support building leaders through mentorship programs and team meetings.

> **One of the things that I can truly say is that I feel like I have been supported as a new principal.**
> **JCPS Principal**

However, in meetings intended to prepare AICs to deliver pinging support, instructional leadership shared that they are still trying to make sense of the curriculum.

> **You know, I think right now, we're just trying to get our feet wet. We're trying to figure out, you know, what does it look like? And how effective is this program?**
> **JCPS AIC**

This leads us to believe that JCPS has created an environment where building and AIS leaders are comfortable seeking support from their district. However, they also have identified a gap in their ability to use the newly adopted *EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum*. They seek specific content-based support to further their work in supporting their teachers.

Finding 4.2

Teachers feel supported by their building leadership in terms of their instructional practice.

Findings

Over 80% of teachers indicated that their school's leader routinely gives feedback on their instruction and 75% of teachers indicated their leader knew their personal instructional strengths and areas of growth (see Figures 15 and 16).

Figure 15: School Leader Provides Feedback

My school leader regularly gives feedback on my instruction

Agree or Strongly Agree — 13
Disagree or Strongly Disagree — 3

Number of Respondents (n=16)
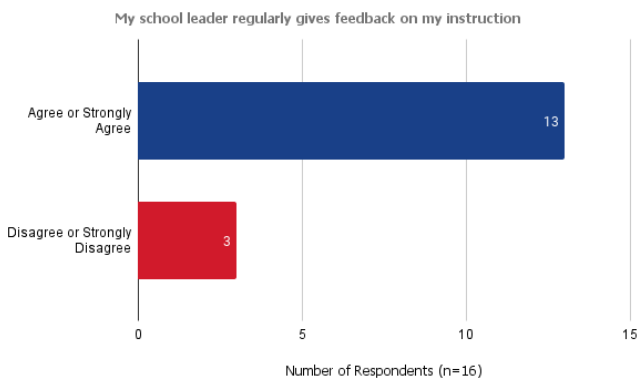
Figure 16: School Leader Identifies Teachers' Strengths and Areas of Growth

My school leader knows my strengths and areas of growth

Agree or Strongly Agree — 12
Disagree or Strongly Disagree — 4

Number of Respondents (n=16)
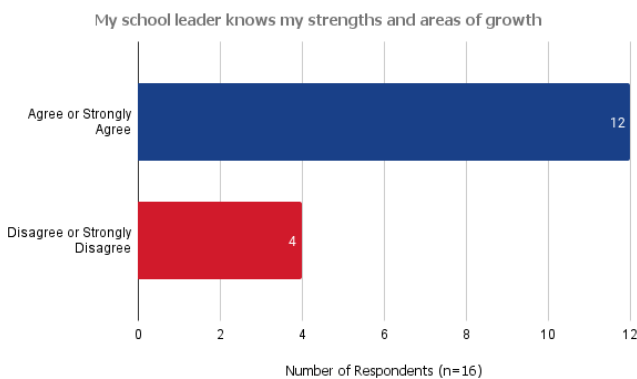
When considering their students, 87.50% of teachers felt that their school leader was knowledgeable about their non-academic needs (i.e. mental health, physical, safety, etc. needs) (see Figure 17).

Figure 17: School Leader Knowledgeable of Student Non-Academic Needs

My school leader is knowledgeable about the non-academic needs of my students

Agree or Strongly Agree — 14
Disagree or Strongly Disagree — 2

Number of Respondents (n=16)
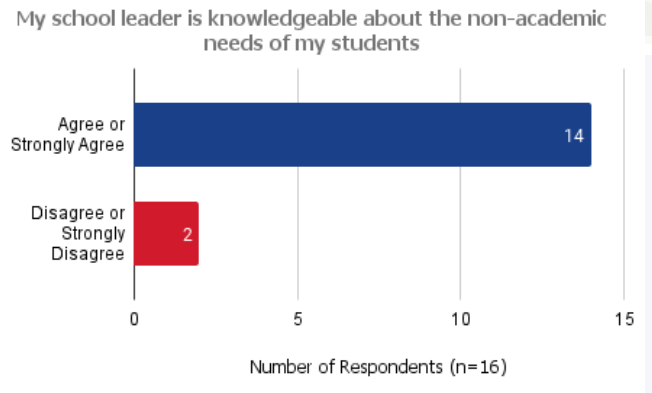
While teachers felt supported and also perceived leaders to understand whole child needs, only half felt their school leader was knowledgeable about the curriculum they were using. This was corroborated in our interviews of building leadership. This building leader indicated the need for more explicit training on the curriculum.

> 66
>
> **I would like some principal professional development around how to help our teachers do EL Education.**
> **JCPS Principal**

Others cited the sheer overwhelming amount of other duties required of them:

> 66
>
> **I'm gonna be transparent. I don't know how much support I really have been with EL (Education), because I've been spending a lot of time in classrooms teaching and subbing.**
> **JCPS AIC**

Findings

Teachers find their building leaders and Academic Instructional Coaches to be supportive of them in their professional work and feel they also understand student needs. Teachers do not necessarily believe their building leadership understands the complexities of the curriculum. Further, building leaders and Academic Instructional Coaches are conflicted about the type of support they have been able to offer specific to the literacy curriculum.

Finding 4.3

Teachers believe that the EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum is rigorous, has appropriate progress monitoring tools, and allows students to demonstrate mastery in multiple ways.

Nearly 65% of teachers believe the *EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum* provides them the information they need through formative tasks and assessments to appropriately monitor their students' progress (see Figure 18). Three-fourths of the teachers surveyed believe the curriculum provides culminating tasks and assessments that offer students different ways to demonstrate their mastery. Educators believe the curriculum to be rigorous, as cited in qualitative interviews and also feel the curriculum brings in culturally responsive texts and passages. One principal emphasized the degree of rigor in both the texts and writing:

> **We truly needed the rigor...that's what our teachers needed.**
> **JCPS Principal**

It feels prudent to note that while the curriculum is hallmarked by its emphasis on deep textual analysis and robust writing components, this does not turn educators off but rather seems to be aligned to the belief in what their students should have access to.

Figure 18: EL Education Formative Assessments Provide Information

EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum formative assessments provide teacher information

Agree or Strongly Agree: 10
Disagree or Strongly Disagree: 6

Number of Respondents (n=16)
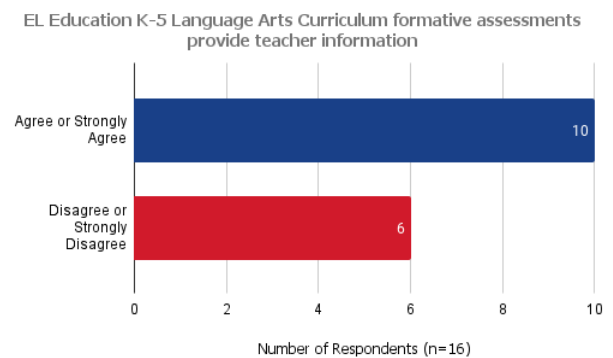
Finding 4.4

Teachers informally support one another in a myriad of ways in using the EL Education curriculum, and still would like to find more concrete ways to collaborate.

Nearly 90% of teachers acknowledge informal sharing and discussing of student work with other teachers (see Figure 19), and 75% of teachers talk about their instructional practice in the teachers' lounge and in faculty meetings (see Figure 20). However, when it comes to more formalized ways of engaging in instructional observation and change, the opportunities are less frequent.

Findings

Greater than 90% of teachers indicated they had never visited another teacher's classroom to see their lesson delivery and offer feedback (see Figure 21). Similarly, over 80% of teachers had not observed another teacher's classroom to get ideas for their own instruction, with 12.5% of teachers indicating they had done so 1-2 times (see Figure 22).

Figure 19: Teachers Share with Other Teachers

Teachers share and discuss student work with other teachers

Number of Respondents (n=16)
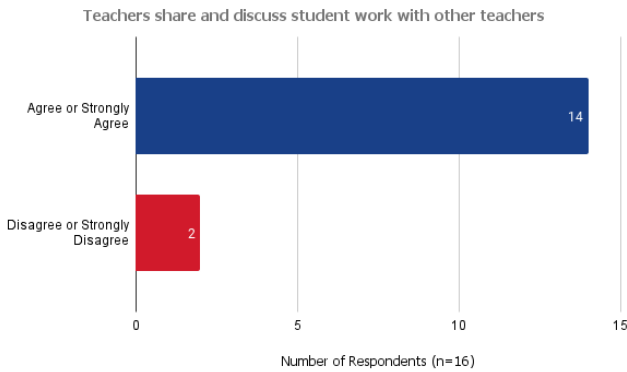
Figure 20: Informal Teacher Sharing

Teachers talk about instruction in the teachers' lounge, faculty meetings, etc.

Number of Respondents (n=16)
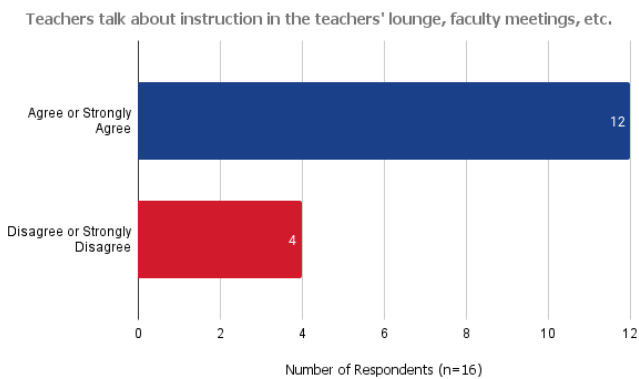
Figure 21: Observation of Other Teachers' Classrooms for Personal Instruction

Amount of times I have observed another teacher's classroom to get ideas for my own

Number of Respondents (n=16)
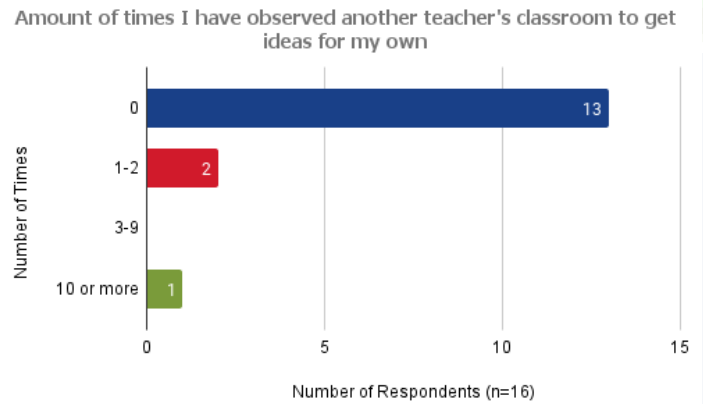
Figure 22: Observation of Other Teachers' Classrooms for Feedback

Amount of times I have visited another teacher's classroom to offer feedback

Number of Respondents (n=16)
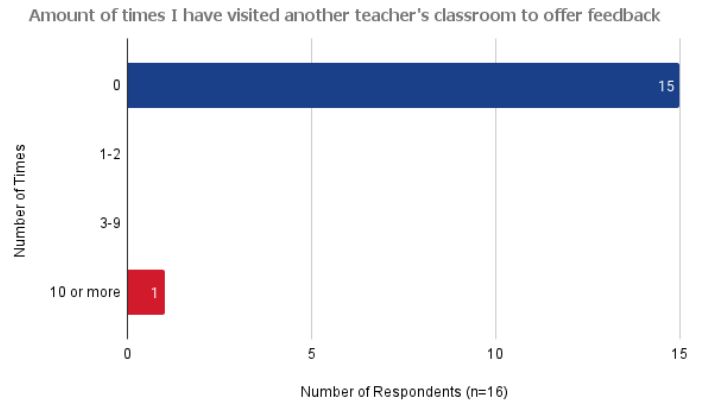
Teachers utilize their colleagues as a resource to brainstorm instructional strategies and explore student outcomes through the formative data. Most teacher collaboration appears to be through informal and self-driven social networks. Opportunities for formal collaboration in the form of lesson studies do not exist.

Findings

Finding 4.5

Complexities, particularly staffing shortages, impact the ability to meaningfully support instruction at the building level.

In the context of our research, building complexities can be thought of as the number of initiatives a school has in place, as well as in the human capital and logistical challenges endured by several schools that serve urban children in the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic. More than two-thirds of teachers felt their school site had so many different programs that they were unable to keep track (see Figure 23). Building leaders discussed the difficulty in their staff being a large number of teachers with little teaching experience. This displays a variety of struggles, but one principal described the difficulty in maintaining any degree of traction.

> **I'm having to introduce them to the way that we do our PLC process. That can be kind of frustrating for me - I feel like I'm always having to reintroduce (processes and procedures). You don't get that traction of being able to just start the year off where everybody already knows what the expectation is.**
> **JCPS Principal**

Figure 23: Multitude of Programs

We have so many different programs in this school, I cannot keep track of them all

	Number of Respondents (n=16)
Agree or Strongly Agree	10
Disagree or Strongly Disagree	6
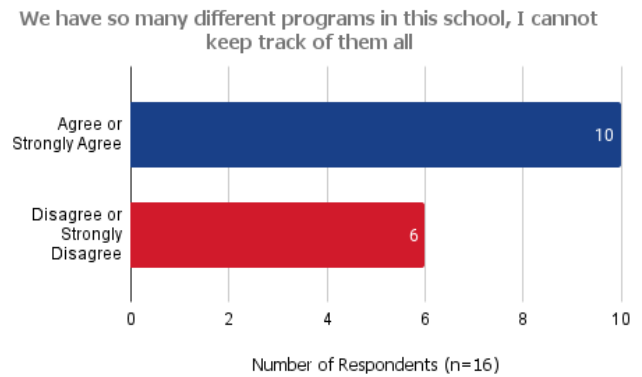
The issue of human capital and staffing needs were identified as key areas of concern and consternation in several interviews with leaders. Academic Instructional Coaches described the amount of time they are required to substitute in classrooms, and building leadership indicated an insufficient number of full-time teachers needed to fill classrooms. Combined, these comments provide a picture of an under-resourced segment of the JCPS population in West Louisville.

Summary of Key Findings

The district provides a comprehensive range of professional support to principals; however, there is an opportunity to enhance the targeted professional learning support that school leaders provide their staff as they implement new curriculum initiatives. Schools experience a wide range of complex operational problems that can stifle academic success and unravel curriculum implementation plans.

Discussion

As districts wrapped up the 2021-2022 school year, several consistent themes emerged across the country. The first reality is that students and educators alike had endured a disjointed educational experience with virtual, hybrid, and masked in-person learning as the Covid-19 virus continued to evolve. Second, public education received a historic windfall of funding through the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER I and II) as well as American Rescue Plan (ARP) ESSER. As a result of increased funding, many districts sought to adopt core curriculums to create a more equitable learning experience for students.

Jefferson County Public Schools was no exception to these truths. During the SY 20-21, a curricular committee determined *EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum* was a strong fit for their student populations' needs as well as in alignment with their instructional vision and the Kentucky State standards. These schools adopted the *EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum* for SY 22-23 in anticipation of the curricula being adopted district-wide in the following academic school year.

Discussion

Our research questions were developed to examine the implementation process from various perspectives: district leadership through the lens of Academic Instructional Coaches, building leadership via Principals and Assistant Principals, and classroom leadership in the form of teachers. This discussion situates our qualitative and quantitative findings with extant literature in the field.

Research Questions 1 and 3 will be examined first, as they seek to address what can be done with all teachers at the district level. We will then look at the research that supports Research Questions 2 and 4, questions that both relate to what can be done at the school building level.

Examining Extant Research in Alignment with Research Questions

Research Question 1
To what extent did *EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum* professional development sessions prepare JCPS classroom teachers to implement the *EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum*?

From an economic lens, an estimated $18 billion is spent annually on professional development for teachers (Horn & Goldstein, 2018). In Jefferson County, $33.7 million was allocated in the 2022-2023 school year for district-wide professional development, representing just under 2.5% of the overall budget (Jefferson County Public Schools Budget, 2022). This investment is significant in both its economic value as well as in the educator's time.

Yet, evidence points to the multiple failure points of professional development and learning opportunities in making a significant change in teachers' instruction as well as in student outcomes. In the 2015 report, *The Mirage: Confronting the Hard Truth About Our Quest for Teacher Development*, researchers Andy Jacob and Kate McGovern conclude that the industry "bombards teachers with help, but most of it is not helpful—to teachers as professionals or schools seeking better instruction" (Jacob & McGovern, 2015, p. 6). Our qualitative findings corroborate this sentiment, with leadership indicating the initial *EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum* training left teachers to "dive into it themselves." Another leader indicated the initial PD did not provide a realistic approach to effectively plan for daily instruction, noting teachers did not recognize "how much work it was going to take to put one lesson together". While initial training cannot be expected to produce master teachers in a given curriculum, one would expect teachers would leave an initial PD training session equipped to effectively lesson plan using the curricular resource.

Discussion

However, a larger question remains: What is the theory of action around the training and learning of a new curriculum held by JCPS? We attempted to better understand how professional development and learning experiences provided by the district were perceived by teachers with Research Question 3.

Research Question 3

How do district-led initiatives, EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum training (contract-based), and internal district supports, impact JCPS teachers in the process of adopting a new curriculum with fidelity?

Our research does not show as if teachers feel their professional learning experiences deeply align with the instructional materials adopted, with 50% reporting "Never or Rarely" and 37.50% reporting "Sometimes" to the survey question. When we juxtapose this sentiment with the notion that HQIM can translate to more than half a year of additional learning for students (Kane et al., 2016), there is an obvious area for growth and opportunity for the training of the *EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum* materials within the district. In the context of this work, we will use the term professional learning to describe the broad umbrella of professional experiences that includes a narrower

section of different professional development opportunities. Alternatively, discrete professional development opportunities coupled with the practice of teaching (planning, execution of daily instruction, and refining of the process) culminate to create the entirety of a teacher's professional learning in a given period. Darling-Hammond et al. categorize professional learning as "a product of both externally provided and job-embedded activities that increase teachers' knowledge and help them change their instructional practice in ways that support student learning" (2017, p. 2). When designed with rigor and high quality, professional development training sessions are one type of support that enhances a teacher's professional learning. The 2017 meta-analysis conducted by Darling-Hammond et al. identifies seven characteristics of effective professional development:

- Is content focused
- Incorporates active learning utilizing adult learning theory
- Supports collaboration, typically in job-embedded contexts
- Uses models and modeling of effective practice
- Provides coaching and expert support
- Offers opportunities for feedback and reflection
- Is of sustained duration

Discussion

Many of these characteristics may occur in a single professional development opportunity; however, research specifies that not every component needs to be present for the opportunity to be effective (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017, p. 4). The data uncovered in JCPS help us to acknowledge areas of growth within these characteristics that would further support the *EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum* curricular implementation.

In considering the second component of effective professional learning, "incorporates active learning utilizing adult learning theory," the teacher survey points to several key results. When educators identified the extent, they agreed with the following statement: I have received specific professional learning suggestions that are tailored to my needs, more than two-thirds (68.75%) of educators indicated they never (43.75%) or rarely (25%) found this to be accurate. We acknowledge this as significant - if teachers do not feel their needs are met in professional learning suggestions and opportunities, their time is misused and their propensity for further professional learning is diluted. We see the latter evidenced in our findings with the decreased desire to attend after-school EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum Academies provided by the district.

The third component of our research focused on effective professional learning, which raises another growth opportunity. Nearly half of the teachers (43.75%) indicated they were not given structured opportunities to work productively with colleagues in their building, and just over half (56.25%) indicated they were not offered opportunities to work with teachers in other schools. Nearly all teachers (93.75%) indicated they had zero opportunities to observe another teacher's classroom to offer feedback on *EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum* implementation, and 81.25% have had no opportunities to observe a colleague get ideas for their instruction while using *EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum*. However, our research does positively indicate teachers rely on one another for support. Three-fourths of the teachers surveyed report informal, non-structured conversations about instruction in the teacher's lounge, faculty meetings, etc. A larger percentage (87.5%) indicates informal sharing of student work happens at their school. With this data in mind, JCPS is well positioned to provide structure to professional learning opportunities and should be encouraged by how teachers already interact with one another around their instructional practice. In crafting more structured opportunities, the district should be empowered to survey teachers to

Discussion

determine what would be most helpful in their continued professional learning.

Researcher Joellen Killion (2008) notes that an effective professional learning cycle is "ongoing, coherent, and linked to student achievement" (p. 11). Similarly, University of Connecticut researcher Suzanne Wilson asserts districts and schools engage in a "veritable carnival of options" as it relates to professional development - content can vary from technology options in the classroom to content specific (e.g. using the Writer's Workshop method), to instructional strategies, to a new curriculum, to new policies, to school/district expectations (Wilson et al., 2011, p. 383). Despite the reality that each component is a critical element of effective professional development, teachers can very quickly become overwhelmed when trying to elevate and balance competing priorities. Evidence of this is noted with 87.50% of JCPS teachers agreeing that special programs are likely to "come and go" at their site. Over half (56.25%) of teachers also indicate that there is no follow-up done after starting a new program to determine if it is working with them as well as their student population. We note that if teachers perceive there is no follow-through done on a curricular and resource investment, it sets a precedent for their instructional follow-through and does not support a conducive environment for Darling-Hammond's sixth characteristic of offering opportunities for feedback and reflection.

Figure 23: Instructional Partners Curriculum Implementation Framework

CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK

INSTRUCTIONAL VISION

PHASE 1 SELECT GREAT MATERIALS
- BUILD KNOWLEDGE OF STANDARDS
- DETERMINE WHAT YOU NEED IN A CURRICULUM
- MANAGE THE SELECTION PROCESS
- PROCURE MATERIALS

PHASE 2 PREPARE TO LAUNCH
- SET GOALS
- DETERMINE KEY ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES
- MAKE A PLAN FOR SCHEDULING, PACING, AND USE
- MAKE A PLAN FOR ASSESSMENT AND GRADING
- ESTABLISH SYSTEMS FOR SUPPORTING LEADERS
- ESTABLISH SYSTEMS FOR SUPPORTING TEACHERS

PHASE 3 TEACH AND LEARN
SUPPORT USE OF THE CURRICULUM
- TRAIN
- COACH
- PLAN
- GATHER AND ANALYZE DATA
- CELEBRATE AND REFINE

Discussion

While the district has engaged in Phase 1 of the framework, Phase 2 may be a starting point for reconsideration as JCPS places *EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum* in the hands of all K-5 educators and students in the 2023-2024 academic year. The district must seek to balance and then communicate the outcomes of this work with the time sensitivity of educators as they begin implementation in August 2023. These ideas are further elaborated on in the Recommendations and Findings.

Leveraging the power of instructional coaches and building principals to serve as the multipliers of this work is paramount. Research Questions 2 and 4 sought to evaluate the support each of these roles provides in further enhancing instructional practice.

Research Question 2
To what extent did EL Education professional development sessions prepare JCPS Academic Instructional Coaches (AIC) to effectively support JCPS teachers to implement the EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum?

Research Question 4
How do building leaders support district-recommended curriculum initiatives, specifically the adoption of EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum, at their local school sites?

We first examine the role of the AICs and consider how their work aligns with high-quality instruction within classrooms leading to increased engagement of students, parlaying to greater student achievement. While building leaders aim for the same outcome, their direct influence on the daily workings within a classroom is more often a step removed from that of an instructional coach.

We look to researchers Lynsey Gibbons of the University of Delaware and Paul Cobb of Vanderbilt University and their analysis of potentially productive coaching activities amongst content-focused instructional coaches. They identified a coaching activity as potentially productive if it satisfied a five-pronged analysis. The activity must be:

- Ongoing and intensive,
- Focus on the problems that teachers encounter in their daily work,
- Orient teachers to focus on student thinking,
- Foster the development of teacher communities and professional discourse, Involving either a pedagogy of investigation or enactment (Gibbons and Cobb, 2017, p. 413-414)

These characteristics of activities translated to ten identified practices, with their work emphasizing and unpacking more deeply five of the coaching activities. Gibbons and Cobb discuss the practices of engaging in the disciplinary content,

Discussion

examining student work with educators, engaging in lesson studies, co-teaching, and observing/modeling instruction (p. 416). As we consider the reflections of AICs within JCPS, we do not question their ability to coach and complete these types of activities effectively, but rather the circumstances in which they are expected to act upon their coaching duties. Coaches expressed the activities that remove their ability to coach, namely serving as classroom teachers throughout the normal school day. One coach indicated,

"

I'm going to say about 50% of my time this entire school year has been subbing. We support during PLC time, collaboration time, or job-embedded PD time, but that's if I'm not subbing. JCPS AIC

Coaches also discussed the challenge of attending the same training and learning the curriculum alongside their teachers. It is important to distinguish coaches do feel attending training with teachers is beneficial, but rather, they felt at a disadvantage not receiving their opportunity to delve into *EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum* and become comfortable with the instructional approach and corresponding materials before those they were expected to coach.

Shifting our attention towards building leaders, we first note that JCPS teachers feel supported by their school leaders. Over 80% of teachers (81.25%) acknowledged their building leader regularly gave them feedback on their instruction, and 75% of teachers felt their building leader knew their strengths and areas of growth. Teachers also had a strong belief that their school leaders knew the non-academic needs of their students, with 87.50% acknowledging that as true. However, when we begin to look more closely at the school leader and *EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum*, we notice there is a bit less confidence. Only about 50% of teachers (54.33%) believed their school leader was knowledgeable about the curriculum being utilized. This was evident in the interviews conducted with school leaders as well, with leaders expressing a desire to receive support to help their teachers with *EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum* instruction. As previously mentioned in the findings, one leader indicated, "I would like some principal professional development around how to help our teachers do EL Education." Leaders also expressed an understanding of the district leader in charge of developing the curricular learning for *EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum* and indicated a greater need at the district level for added support. This feels especially true in consideration of the

Discussion

expansion of curricular usage for all schools in 2023-2024.

The extant research supports the benefits of greater building leader involvement and knowledge of the instructional core. Jonathan Supovitz et al. (2010) research examines the role leadership assumes in both leading and sustaining school improvement efforts as it relates to curriculum and professional learning. They found that "principals who focus on instruction, foster community and trust, and communicate school mission and goals are associated with teachers who report making a greater degree of changes to their instructional practice" (Supovitz et al., 2010, p. 43-44). When we consider the earlier referenced need for greater structure, we see the principal as central to that within JCPS. Intentionally using the collaborative time to focus on instructional topics yields teachers making instructional changes to benefit student learning. JCPS is positioned well to use its district-level resources to equip building leaders and then foster greater self-efficacy in their ability to support their building-level staff and teachers to best utilize the *EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum.*

The research summarized proves helpful in addressing the research questions as Jefferson County Public Schools begins full implementation of the *EL Education K-5 Language Arts*

Curriculum for SY 23-24. Our exploratory study provides opportunities for growth within the professional learning space as well as in the utilization of Academic Instructional Coaches and building leaders as support.

Recommendations for Policy and Practice

Our analysis of the interviews, quantitative survey data, and external documents has led us to prioritize the following four recommendations for JCPS' future district-wide *EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum* implementation strategy. Overall, our findings suggest that the district completed its due diligence in selecting and purchasing a high-quality curriculum that will eventually improve student academic outcomes, they did not allocate enough resources (inclusive of teacher time, professionally contracted EL Education services, and protected district personnel resources) to ensure a robust implementation effort for SY 22-23. To fully utilize the powerful lever of a high-quality curriculum, the district will need a new strategy to ensure teachers feel supported and are given the protected time to implement a rigorous curriculum.

Recommendation 1
Extend and lengthen the EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum professional learning contract.

Recommendation 1.1: Work with EL Education partners to structure and prioritize professional learning before the start of the school year. Ideally, future training sessions take place at the end of SY 22-23, ensuring teachers have time to utilize the summer break to understand the new curriculum and plan for success.

JCPS teachers faced a difficult barrier when they were only provided two professional learning days facilitated by EL Education. Teachers were asked to learn, unpack, and implement a new curriculum for the upcoming school year without significant time to understand and make sense of the new learning materials. Our interviews reinforced this understanding by naming how challenging and rigorous the professional learning materials are. This high-quality curriculum is not a pull-off-the-shelf and deliver with little preparation; rather, this curriculum takes time to understand and unpack to ensure that all students are being met with differentiated materials and access points to the standards. By shifting the start of the professional learning sequence to the end of SY 22-23, teachers will be given more time to plan future lessons and make sense of the rigorous materials they deliver to students.

In practice, JCPS should review its contract with EL Education to see if earlier timelines can be met. If the partner is not amenable to suggestions, JCPS should

Recommendations for Policy and Practice

seek additional contract help who can work to meet the training timetable as requested. This should help mitigate the time constraint experienced by teachers who are trying to implement the curriculum as designed.

Recommendation 1.2: Purchase an additional day of EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum to create a three-day learning session.

Our study identified a theme that educators felt two days of professional learning with *EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum* was too short. Therefore, the district should request a third day of technical assistance training with EL Education that is focused on data disaggregation and a day of professional planning assistance. This type of training structure is common practice with several professional curriculum companies and would be a valuable day of professional learning.

Recommendation 1.3: Purchase additional EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum context expertise to support district personnel who are leading internal district implementation efforts and professional learning sessions.

While JCPS has allocated district personnel to lead the *EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum* implementation effort and plan professional learning support sessions, the district needs to augment the internal district efforts with additional *EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum* content experts. For this critical knowledge-building phase, JCPS should rely on professional vendors to provide additional coaching and curriculum support throughout the first year of implementation. Because the curriculum is so new and there has not been a sustained period of implementation efforts, the district is relying on an internal role, with limited *EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum* knowledge, to structure professional development sessions instead of the vendor who is the curriculum expert. This places enormous stress and responsibility on the district contact instead of the vendor who has trained staff across the country to lead additional professional learning sessions throughout the school year.

Additionally, EL Education should align its professional services with district-made tools like instructional walkthrough forms to ensure coherence between district and curriculum components. By completing a

Recommendations for Policy and Practice

crosswalk analysis, JCPS and EL Education could identify the critical components that educators should be leveraging daily and ensure administrators are trained to provide formative feedback aligned with the standard curriculum.

Recommendation 1.4: Structure engaged professional learning sessions to equip instructional leaders, AICs, and teachers with different levels of professional support.

One of the initial findings that our study uncovered was the fact that all JCPS employees were trained over the course of two days in August. While the EL Education team did provide different types of specialty training, staff personnel were essentially learning the new curriculum all at the same time. To leverage district and building leaders more effectively at future training sessions, we recommend the district work with EL Education to stagger their delivery of training sessions to better optimize the role that staff members can play at future training engagements. Empowering building leaders and AICs with curriculum knowledge and professional training before district-wide

training days creates the conditions for value-add conversations on the district in-service days. If the building leaders and AICs are trained before the teachers receive training, they can leverage their knowledge and support to make a finite two days of training more impactful.

Recommendation 2 - To achieve district scale, it's necessary to stagger & structure future tiers of learning to support all JCPS teachers.

Recommendation 2.1: To meet SY 23-24 district implementation goals, JCPS will need to strategically prioritize groups of teachers and provide cycles of professional learning.

Our study was able to conclude that the SY 22-23 professional learning support offered by JCPS and EL Education was not robust enough to meet teachers' needs to deliver a high-quality curriculum like *EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum*. Adding to that conclusion is the impending reality that the district plans to have all JCPS schools adopt this robust curriculum for SY 23-24. In practice and aligned with continuous improvement efforts, this means that the district has to reassess how they will train new *EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum*

Recommendations for Policy and Practice

teachers and simultaneously support the original SY 22-23 cohort of teachers who were not provided adequate support during this past year.

In the same capacity that teachers provide cycles of support and learning opportunities for students, the district will need to strategically think about differentiated professional learning opportunities for JCPS teachers next year. Providing tiers of differentiated support will ensure that teachers have different access points for their professional growth and do not receive repetitive support that does not meet teachers where they are at.

Recommendation 2.2: Complete a Teacher & Learning Team audit to identify district priorities and deprioritize or eliminate other initiatives that may be competing for the school's attention.

To improve future implementation efforts, it is crucial to use data to inform decision-making and allocation of resources. Our study identified several district initiatives that are currently competing for teacher and staff attention. Knowing that employees have limited bandwidth to take on new initiatives, the district needs to reassess all of the current priorities at stake and make clear recommendations internally around what is most pressing for SY 23-24.

As previously noted in the discussion, the district adopted two new rigorous curriculum programs [*Illustrative Math* and *EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum*] for SY 22-23 while simultaneously completing a school choice and student zoning overhaul plan. All of these changes require significant attention and resources from elementary school personnel. Knowing that these three strategic decisions have already occurred and were publicly committed to by Superintendent Pollio, the district must identify other areas of district focus that can be scaled back to provide more resources to address the curriculum implementation challenges. Staff consistently identified the need for more district and professional learning support to meet their needs and ensure they can deliver high-quality, engaging lessons to students daily.

Deprioritizing or eliminating competing school priorities will allow building leaders and district support staff like AICs to allocate more targeted support to overwhelmed teachers. Clear messaging from the district will reinforce the central idea that schools are expected, and professionally supported, to deliver high-quality ELA instruction every day for all students. An increased focus on literacy initiatives will drive strong academic

Recommendations for Policy and Practice

outcomes for all content areas and in kind lay the framework for future academic success for JCPS students.

Recommendation 2.3: Embed professional learning into the current school day versus offering paid opportunities after the school day ends.

From an equity standpoint, JCPS must rethink its current approach to providing professional learning opportunities after the school day ends as compared to embedded within its contracted work hours. By offering additional professional learning sessions that not every staff member can attend, the district is unintentionally creating a disparity of teaching capacity at different school sites. Teachers and staff also reported the challenge of trying to attend professional learning sessions after the school day ends.

JCPS should find ways to leverage professional learning opportunities into the currently contracted workday to ensure an equitable solution for professional learning. Additionally, the literature supports the need for these sustained professional opportunities (Darling-Hammond et. al., 2017) for teachers to make meaning of and advance their daily instruction.

Bellwether (2023) released a thoughtful compendium that illustrates various ways district and school leaders are creatively addressing teacher shortages and staffing challenges. Their findings on collaborative planning practices and different ways districts can unlock time are important starting points for the district to pursue (Allen et al., 2023).

Recommendation 3 - Provide timely triage for CZS schools and district staff to allocate additional FTE support and optimize current staff specialty and role clarity.

Recommendation 3.1: West Louisville schools and staff members, in particular AIS and CZS sites, are overwhelmed and not able to execute their professional responsibilities. These sites need additional FTE support to deliver on the promise of a high-quality curriculum.

Our study concluded that JCPS West Louisville school sites are understaffed and overwhelmed. Building leaders are not able to find substitutes and certified teachers to fill hard-to-staff schools daily, which means that building leader staff regularly must be in classrooms acting as a substitute or spend resources and energy trying to fill empty classrooms with innovative solutions. If JCPS is committed to ensuring a successful

Recommendations for Policy and Practice

implementation, district leadership needs to prioritize FTE support and flexibility to appropriately staff and resource schools that are implementing *EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum*. The implementation will not be successful if local school sites do not have the consistency of high-quality, trained teachers to plan and deliver engaging lessons every day.

Recommendation 3.2: Protect and prioritize AIC time and professional responsibilities.

Our study found early indicators that AICs are not being utilized according to their strength and specialty as the site-specific coordinator tasked with leading professional development and completing observations. Due to staff shortages, AICs are used as substitutes and cannot attend to their daily professional responsibilities as content and instruction leaders.

The role of the AIC is a high-quality lever the district needs to leverage in its strategy to support teacher implementation efforts. In theory, the district has prioritized this role as the primary point of contact between district support efforts and direct school staff efforts. Central to this theory of action is the belief that AICs will support staff

members through professional learning, classroom observations, and direct planning support. Our study concludes that this is not currently happening, which significantly hampers the quality of implementation efforts.

Protecting AIC time and sharpening role clarity, coupled with increased FTE support at local school sites, will lead to increased opportunities for specially trained AICs to support teachers directly. This protection of time is a necessary guardrail that will prevent building leaders from pulling these crucial staff members toward other building-level challenges.

Recommendation 3.3: Protect and prioritize the principal's time and professional responsibilities.

In a similar finding referenced above, our study found that principals are having to substitute as classroom teachers more frequently due to staff shortages. This FTE shortage and loss of protected job-related time negatively influences the principal to complete her or his assigned duties. According to the JCPS elementary job description, the principal "serves as the instructional leader and guides, facilitates, and supports the curriculum, instruction, and assessment" efforts at the local school site. The principal cannot attend to this

60

Recommendations for Policy and Practice

crucial role without the protection of time and additional FTE capacity.

Recommendation 3.4: Ensure AIS sites are staffed with a mixture of veteran and novice teachers.

AIS schools are staffed with a higher percentage of novice teachers who have less professional experience to draw from in this curriculum implementation effort. District leaders need to create additional incentive structures to bring and retain more veteran teachers who are better poised to implement a rigorous curriculum. Being staffed with a majority of novice teachers limits the effectiveness of a building leader to roll out a new curriculum effort.

Recommendation 3.5: Provide JCPS Teaching and Learning personnel with additional EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum support and professional learning to support schools that are implementing EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum.

From a district perspective, the ELA Instructional Lead for AIS Schools is currently tasked with leading *EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum* professional learning sessions and district initiatives to support implementation.

Despite her excellent reputation and professional capacity, she has not received significant additional training and support beyond what the teachers, AICs, and building leaders provided in August 2023. In other words, the person leading the district implementation efforts and professional training has a similar level of training as the teachers.

To provide a range of tiered professional support services and professional learning design, the ELA Instructional Lead should be provided with additional EL Education training and professional support services. The current district strategy relies heavily on a singular individual who has not previously executed EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum as a classroom teacher or managed a district-wide implementation strategy. As such, the ELA Instructional Lead should be provided with additional professional expertise and aligned support services to ensure that she elevates proven strategies and best planning practices for this large-scale implementation effort.

Once JCPS has several years of *EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum* success under its belt, the district could scale down the level of professional support and content expertise provided by EL Education.

Recommendations for Policy and Practice

However, at this current juncture, Dr. Hogue should have the additional support of district and contract resources to prepare teachers and support their continuous *EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum* professional learning.

Recommendation 4 - Codify best practices and develop protocols to leverage teachers as trusted partners in the implementation journey.

Recommendation 4.1: Collaborate with teachers to codify best practices and develop protocols/tools that teachers are empowered to use.

Structures and instructional protocols are efficient practices to align instructional efforts across complex systems like a district. In support of improving *EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum* implementation, the district should work to create common, coherent protocols and tools that guide teachers towards district and teacher-held best practices. The district should work with teachers to develop external-facing protocols that teachers feel empowered to use in their daily lessons and interactions with one another. Building leaders can champion the adoption of these protocols at different school sites by

creating a culture and climate that embraces professional growth and feedback rounds.

Recommendation 4.2: Utilize and leverage teachers' natural tendencies (informal talk, occasional observations in peer-to-peer settings) with district-endorsed tools and protocols to maximize informal teacher networks.

Our study confirmed the extant literature that teachers predominantly trust other teachers. This often proves problematic in professional training sessions because teachers may not trust the content experts if their experience does not include actual classroom experience connected to the curriculum. Indeed, our study uncovered an inability of some teachers to trust the EL Education professional staff because of their lived experiences.

While more formal structures could be put in place, and doing so would deepen the professional context of teachers' learning, allowing for more rigorous conversation, JCPS should be empowered in the social networks in place at school sites. Teachers exist in environments where a degree of safety has been developed to discuss their instructional practice. Leveraging this asset and

Recommendations for Policy and Practice

parlaying it to more complex activities should increase the trajectory of teacher growth with the *EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum*.

Knowing this reality, JCPS should augment teachers' natural professional trust towards one another by providing them with district-endorsed tools to assist with informal rounds of feedback between building peers. Teachers are more likely, and have time, to be in their colleagues' classrooms than district staff who are balancing several classrooms and school sites. By providing teachers with informal walkthrough observational tools, teachers can receive several rounds of informal feedback from peers that help move them towards a future desired state of instructional practice.

Conclusion

The findings in this report indicate the complex challenges a district faces when adopting a high-quality, rigorous curriculum like *EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum*. Implementation efforts are long-term, multi-stage campaigns that require coordination across various school sites and alignment between district and school personnel. In the specific case of Jefferson County Public Schools, this curriculum implementation effort intensified because of the district's complicated history with West Louisville schools and the district's public commitment to ensure that students and families in these neighborhoods are provided with high-quality, locally zoned schools. This complex reality, historically marginalized schools with high teacher turnover serving student populations that were disproportionately impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic, sets the stage for a challenging district implementation strategy.

Our study highlighted JCPS teachers' perceptions that they were not adequately prepared to deliver the *EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum* for SY 22-23. JCPS educators reported that they did not have enough time and professional bandwidth to prepare for the adoption and implementation of a high-quality instructional curriculum like *EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum*. Additionally, JCPS's choice for school site adoption sites, predominantly West Louisville schools currently designated as the lowest five percent performance across the state of Kentucky, significantly compounded the challenge of differentiation necessary for teachers to ensure all students had access points to a rigorous curriculum.

District personnel and building instructional leadership staff noted the challenges incurred by administrators who are currently besieged with competing district priorities and paperwork obligations. AICs commented on the inability to execute their professional contracted roles because of unprotected time and teacher shortages. Overall, trained leaders and specialty staff are not able to provide targeted support for teachers who are implementing the

Conclusion

new curriculum. The challenging reality of public schools and limited credentialed staff willing to serve in West Louisville public schools significantly hampered the district's implementation effort.

The questions shaping this report were intended to address teachers' and AIC's perceptions of the quality of district-level support during year one of JCPS' district-wide adoption and implementation of *EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum*. However, these findings can significantly influence the future implementation efforts and professional support that JCPS provides as they tentatively roll out this curriculum across the entire district. For example, what lessons learned at the CZS sites will apply to more affluent and less resource-stressed school sites in suburban Jefferson County? How will the district continue to continuously improve and use data to refine implementation efforts and learn from challenges during year one? What implementation challenges are universal for all JCPS sites as compared to local site challenges of West Louisville CZS and AIS sites? These are the type of short

terms questions that JCPS will address as they begin to unpack the lessons learned from this curriculum overhaul.

On a larger scale, the ideas learned in this implementation study overlap with other JCPS priorities. While there are unique lessons to be learned around curricular implementation opportunities, the district would be well-served to answer questions more globally as an opportunity to transfer the learning to other key priorities. Questions worth consideration:

- What can district and community stakeholders do to ensure the levels of professional support are enabled to successfully implement a large-scale curriculum adoption?
- How will the district adopt a continuous improvement lens to ensure that the challenges experienced in year one do not repeat across future school sites?
- Where can the district be flexible with the teacher and FTE capacity to prioritize those highly qualified teachers as the standard bearers for

Conclusion

challenging curricula adoption?

Overall, we conclude that JCPS educators did not feel adequately prepared and trained to launch the *EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum* in SY 22-23. The opportunity ahead of JCPS is to determine how they move forward with the future launch and implementation of *EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum* across the entire district for SY 23-24. By making a bold decision to choose a high-quality curriculum for a complex district, JCPS leadership needs to foster supportive conditions for teachers and students to take risks and learn together. Learning from this implementation study is a positive step in the right direction towards meeting their ambitious district-wide equity goals as well as achieving their mission of challenging and engaging each learner to grow.

References

Allen, N., Appleman, S., Jackson, A., & Vivalo Rouse, K. (2023). Creativity from Necessity: A practical toolkit for leaders to address teacher shortages. *Bellwether*.

Allensworth, E., Ponisciak, S., & Mazzeo, C. (2009). The schools teachers leave: Teacher mobility in Chicago Public Schools. In *Consortium on Chicago School Research*. Consortium on Chicago School Research. https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED505882

Allensworth, E.M., & Hart, H. (2018). How do principals influence student achievement? Chicago, IL: *University of Chicago Consortium on School Research*.

Boser, U., Chingos, M., & Straus, C. (2015). The Hidden Value of Curriculum Reform. Washington, D.C.: *Center for American Progress*. Retrieved from https://cdn.americanprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/06111518/CurriculumMatters-report.pdf.

Babbie, E. (2014). *The practice of social research* (14th ed.). CENGAGE Learning Custom Publishing.

Bryk, Anthony S., Penny B. Sebring, Elaine M. Allensworth, Stuart Luppescu, and John Q. Easton. 2010. *Organizing schools for improvement: Lessons from Chicago*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Darling-Hammond, L., Hyler, M., & Gardner, M. (2017). Effective teacher professional development. *Learning Policy Institute*. https://doi.org/10.54300/122.311

Desimone, L. M., & Garet, M. S. (2015). Best Practices in Teachers' Professional Development in the United States. *Psychology, Society & Education*, 7(3), 252–263. https://doi.org/10.25115/psye.v7i3.515

Desimone, L. M., & Pak, K. (2017). Instructional Coaching as High-Quality Professional Development. *Theory Into Practice*, *56*(1), 3–12. https://doi.org/10.1080/00405841.2016.1241947

Eligon, J. (2019). Busing worked in Louisville. So why are its schools becoming more segregated. *The New York Times*.

Gibbons, L. K., & Cobb, P. (2017). Focusing on teacher learning opportunities to identify potentially productive coaching activities. *Journal of teacher education*, *68*(4), 411-425.

References

Hallinger, P. (2003). Leading Educational Change: Reflections on the practice of instructional and transformational leadership. *Cambridge Journal of Education*, *33*(3), 329–352. https://doi.org/10.1080/0305764032000122005

Hallinger, P. (2005). Instructional leadership and the school principal: A passing fancy that refuses to fade away. *Leadership and Policy in Schools*, *4*(3), 221–239. https://doi.org/10.1080/15700760500244793

Hallinger, Philip, and R. H. Heck. (2010) Collaborative leadership and school improvement: Understanding the impact on school capacity and student learning. *School Leadership and Management 30*(2): 95–110.

Hampton v. Jefferson County Board of Education, 102 F. Supp. 2d 358 (2000).

Horn, M.B., and Goldstein, M. (2018). Putting school budgets in teachers' hands: What if end-users in the classroom made purchasing decisions? *Education Next*, 18(4), 82-83.

Instruction Partners (2018). *What does it take to implement a strong curriculum effectively?* Instruction Partners. Retrieved from: https://www.eride.ri.gov/workshopreg/attachments/201892610532821.pdf

Jefferson County Public Schools, 2022. JCPS School Choice Proposal. Retrieved from: https://www.jefferson.kyschools.us/sites/default/files/JCPS%20School%20Choice%20proposal.pdf

Jefferson County Public Schools Budget, 2022. Retrieved from: https://portal.ksba.org/public/Meeting/Attachments/DisplayAttachment.aspxAttachmentID=650757.

Kane, T. J., Owens, A. M., Marinell, W. H., Thal, D. R., & Staiger, D. O. (2016). Teaching research. Retrieved from: http://cepr. harvard.edu/files/cepr/files/teaching-higherreport. pdf.

Kaufman, J., Thompson, L. & Opfer. V. (2016) Creating a coherent system to support instruction Aligned with State Standards: Promising Practices of the Louisiana Department of Education. *RAND Corporation*.

Killion, J. (2018). *Assessing impact: Evaluating professional learning* (Third Edition). https://doi.org/10.4135/9781506395999

Merriam, S. B., & Tisdell, E. J. (2015). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation*. John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

References

Moolenaar, N. M. (2012). A social network perspective on teacher collaboration in schools: Theory, methodology, and applications. *American Journal of Education*. https://doi.org/10.1086/667715

Office of Accountability, Research, and Systems Improvement, 2022. Jefferson County Public Schools Elementary Schools Data Book. Retrieved from: https://assessment.jefferson.kyschools.us/publicdatasets/pdf/2023/Elementary _Data_Book_2022-2023.pdf.

Parents Involved in Community Schools v. Seattle School District No. 1, 551 U.S. 701 (2007).

Sebastian, J., Huang, H., & Allensworth, E. (2016) The role of teacher leadership in how principals influence classroom instruction and student learning. *American Journal of Education, 123*(1), 69-108.

Steiner, D. (2017). Curriculum research: What we know and where we need to go. *Standards Work*.

Polikoff, M. (2021). *Beyond standards: The fragmentation of education governance and the promise of curriculum reform*. Harvard Education Press.

Tennessee Department of Education. (2022 Survey). TDOE Educator Survey. Nashville, TN. Vanderbilt University, TN Education Research Alliance.

University of Chicago. 2022 SURVEY0. 5Essentials® Survey. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Consortium on School Research

Wilson, S. M., Rozelle, J. J., & Mikeska, J. N. (2011). Cacophony or embarrassment of riches: Building a system of support for quality teaching. *Journal of Teacher Education, 62*(4), 383–394. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022487111409416

Appendix A: Teacher Survey

Informed Consent

Welcome to the research study!

INTRODUCTION

We invite you to take part in a research study, ***Jefferson County Public Schools EL Education Implementation Evaluation***, at Jefferson County Public Schools and Vanderbilt University which seeks to understand the quality of a recent ELA curriculum implementation for SY 22-23.

Taking part in this study is entirely voluntary. That means that you are not obligated to participate in this research. We urge you to discuss any questions you may have about this study with our staff members before agreeing to participate. Take your time to make your decision. If you decide to participate, you must sign this form to show that you want to take part.

The information in this form is provided to help you decide whether to participate. If you choose you do not want to partake, there will be no penalty for you, and you will not lose any benefits you normally would have.

PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH

Why is this study being done? We have three main objectives in carrying out this study and to better understand:

(1) The extent to which professional development and other district-led initiatives support the adoption and use of EL Education curriculum;
(2) The extent to which building level instructional leadership impacted the adoption and use of EL Education curriculum; and
(3) What teacher practices are associated with a K-5 teacher's implementation of a new curriculum.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION

Taking part in this research study is voluntary. If you choose to take part in this research, your major responsibilities will include an online survey completed in Qualtrics AND the **option of participating in an additional interview** held at your convenience. The online survey and focus group are separate events. You may elect to sign up for an interview after completing the survey but are not required.

You do not have to participate in this research. If you choose to take part, you have the right to stop at any time. If you decide not to participate, or if you decide to stop taking part in the research at a later date, there will be no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

Due to collective bargaining agreements for JCPS-certified staff, any request for participation in research-related activities outside of the scope of their regular job responsibilities must be voluntary whether during or outside of contracted hours. If the study is being conducted to fulfill a degree requirement for the researcher (Capstone project), the JCPS staff must participate outside of contracted hours.

PROCEDURES

Time Duration of the Procedures and Study

If you agree to take part in this study, your involvement will last approximately the length of the survey (15 - 20 minutes) and **may include participation in the optional interview** (45 minutes) for one standalone session. You will receive correspondence to review and debrief to ensure accuracy. All interviews will be recorded.

RISKS OR DISCOMFORTS

Are there any risks to me?

The things that you will be doing are no more risks than you would come across in daily life. Although researchers have tried to avoid risks, you may feel that some questions that are asked of you will be stressful or upsetting. You do not have to answer anything you do not want to. You have the right to withdraw your participation at any time without penalty. Participants are encouraged to avoid sharing personally identifying

Appendix A: Teacher Survey

information during the discussion, such as the name of their school/district and colleagues.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS

Possible Benefits to the Participant

While there are no direct benefits to you for participation, we hope you will find value impacting your school site and district at large. Many thanks for your consideration and all your work with our country's children and youth.

Possible Benefits to Others

The results of this research may guide future implementation for all JCPS schools who adopt and use EL Education curriculum. A successful adoption can lead to increased benefits and student success for current and future JCPS elementary students.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND SECURITY

1. Privacy and Confidentiality Measures

All efforts, within reason, will be made to keep your personal information in our research record confidential, but total confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. Diligent efforts will be made to ensure that your participation in this study and your responses remain confidential. Your name will not appear in our research and recommendations. Results will be presented so that no person is individually identifiable. Researchers will remove any personally identifying information, assigning a numeric code to identify participants and schools. Only key study personnel will have access to the coding system. Artifacts and research records, including audio recordings, will be stored securely, and only researchers will have access to these records, for up to 5 years, at which time they will be destroyed.

In the event of any publication or presentation resulting from the research, no personally identifiable information will be shared.

We will keep your participation in this research study confidential to the extent permitted by law. However, it is possible that other people may become aware of your participation in this study. For example, the following people or groups may inspect and copy records pertaining to this research to ensure compliance with human subjects research requirements:
- The JCPS Institutional Review Board
- The Vanderbilt Institutional Review Board
- The Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services

Your information may be shared with institutional and/or governmental authorities, such as the Vanderbilt University Institutional Review Board, if you or someone else is in danger or if we are required to do so by law. Some of these records could contain information that personally identifies you. All reasonable efforts will be made to keep the personal information in your research record private and confidential, but absolute confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. If during the course of the study, you disclose allegations of abuse or neglect, the researchers are legally obligated by Kentucky law to report those allegations to the Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services.

2. Rights of Research Subjects

Your participation in this research study is voluntary. You are also free to withdraw from this study at any time. In the event new information becomes available that may affect the risks or benefits associated with this research study or your willingness to participate, you will be notified so that you can make an informed decision on whether or not to continue your participation in this study.

COSTS FOR PARTICIPATION

Expected Costs

There are no costs.

COMPENSATION FOR PARTICIPATION

Compensation For Participation

Appendix A: Teacher Survey

You may be eligible to receive a $5 Starbucks gift card if you are one of the first 40 respondents to complete the survey. In order to receive the gift card, you will need to provide your email in a separate anonymous form after successfully completing the evaluation survey.

CONTACT INFORMATION FOR QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS

Identification of Investigators

You have the right to ask any questions you may have about this research. If you have questions, complaints, or concerns or believe you may have developed an issue related to this research, contact John Boumgarden at (630) 334-9158 or john.h.boumgarden@vanderbilt.edu.

If you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant or you have concerns or general questions about the research, contact the the Vanderbilt University Institutional Review Board Office at (615) 322-2918 or toll-free at (666) 224-8273. You may also call the JCPS IRB Chairperson at (502) 485-3036 if you have cannot reach the research team or wish to talk to someone else.

This study and all methods were reviewed and approved by the JCPS Institutional Review Board. For more information about participation in a research study and about an institutional review board (IRB), which is a group of people who review the research to protect your rights, please visit the JCPS IRB's website. You can access more information about your rights as a participant and the protection of human research participants at the federal Health and Humans Services site here. If you do not have access to the Internet, copies of these Federal regulations are available by calling JPCS at (502) 485-3036.

SIGNATURE AND CONSENT/PERMISSION TO BE IN THE RESEARCH

Before making the decision regarding the enrollment in this research, you should have:
- Discussed the study with an investigator
- Reviewed the information in this form
- Had the opportunity to ask any questions you may have.

Your signature below means that you have received this information, have asked the questions you currently have about the research, and have received answers to those questions. If you would like a copy of the consent form, please contact John Boumgarden at (630) 334-9158 or john.h.boumgarden@vanderbilt.edu for a PDF.

○ I consent, begin the study

○ I do not consent, I do not wish to participate

Signature

Participant: By signing this consent form, you indicate that you are voluntarily choosing to take part in the research.

Background Questions

I presently teach at the following school...

Appendix A: Teacher Survey

[⌄]

For the 2022-23 academic school year, I primarily interact with EL Education as a...
- ○ Classroom Teacher
- ○ Reading Specialist
- ○ Exceptional Children's Education (ECE) Teacher
- ○ English as a Second Language (ESL) Teacher
- ○ Other

What grade(s) do you teach at your building school site for this current academic year (2022-23)?
- ☐ K
- ☐ 1st
- ☐ 2nd
- ☐ 3rd
- ☐ 4th
- ☐ 5th

How many years have you taught (including this current academic year)?
- ○ 1 - 2
- ○ 3 - 5
- ○ 6 - 10
- ○ 10 +

Have you previously used EL Education prior to this current academic school year (2022-23)?
- ○ Yes
- ○ No

Have you previously received training (formal or informal) on EL Education before the required training that was completed by EL Education curriculum partners for the 2022-23 school year?
- ○ Yes
- ○ No

Curriculum Usage

Which of the following best describes the EL Education curriculum provided to you by your school or district? (Select one option)
- ○ My school or district does not provide me with any EL Education curriculum.
- ○ EL Education does not adequately address the standards.

Appendix A: Teacher Survey

○ EL Education only addresses a portion of the standards.

○ EL Education provided addresses all of the standards.

Which of the following best describes the way you implement the EL Education Curriculum provided by your school or district? (Select one option)

○ I adhere to the curriculum provided for nearly all lessons.

○ I regularly supplement the curriculum with additional materials that I find or create.

○ I primarily use different curriculum that I find or adapt from other sources instead of the provided curriculum.

○ I primarily create my own curriculum instead of using the provided curriculum.

Overall Curriculum Perceptions - High Quality Instructional Materials

Think about the EL Education curriculum that is provided by your school or district

To what extent do you disagree or agree with the following:

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
EL Education curriculum is easy to use.	○	○	○	○
EL Education curriculum includes formative tasks and assessments that provide the information I need to monitor students' progress toward mastery.	○	○	○	○
EL Education curriculum includes culminating tasks and assessments that allow students to demonstrate mastery in multiple ways.	○	○	○	○
EL Education curriculum is engaging to my students.	○	○	○	○
EL Education curriculum provides scaffolds to support all learners in my classroom.	○	○	○	○
EL Education curriculum includes coherently sequenced texts and concepts.	○	○	○	○
I have received adequate training to use EL Education curriculum effectively.	○	○	○	○

Collaborative Practices for EL Education

This school year, how often have you…

	0 times	1 - 2 times	3 - 9 times	10 or more times
Observed another teacher's classroom to offer feedback around EL Education?	○	○	○	○
Observed another teacher's classroom to get ideas for your own instruction for EL Education curriculum?	○	○	○	○

Appendix A: Teacher Survey

	0 times	1 - 2 times	3 - 9 times	10 or more times
Gone over student assessment data with other teachers to make instructional decisions pertaining to EL Education?	○	○	○	○
Worked with other teachers to develop materials or activities for particular ELA class?	○	○	○	○
Worked on instructional strategies with other teachers to support EL Education?	○	○	○	○

Social Networks

Teachers talk about instruction in the teachers' lounge, faculty meetings, etc.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
○	○	○	○

Teachers in this school share and discuss student work with other teachers.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
○	○	○	○

Quality Professional Development

Please indicate the extent to which you disagree or agree with each of the following:

Overall, my professional development experiences for EL Education curriculum this year have…

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Been sustained and coherently focused, rather than short-term and unrelated.	○	○	○	○
Included enough time to think carefully about, try, and evaluate new ideas.	○	○	○	○
Included opportunities to work productively with colleagues in my school.	○	○	○	○
Included opportunities to work productively with teachers from other schools.	○	○	○	○

Instructional Improvement

Please indicate the frequency with which the following instructional improvement statements have applied to you during this school year.

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently
My professional learning has been closely aligned to the instructional materials that have been adopted by my district.	○	○	○	○
The professional learning I have received has led to	○	○	○	○

Appendix A: Teacher Survey

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently
improvements in my teaching.				
I have received specific professional learning suggestions that are tailored to my needs.	○	○	○	○

Instructional Leadership // Support

For these items, consider the leader (your principal or an assistant principal) who you consider most responsible for engaging with you around instruction.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
My school's leader regularly gives feedback on my instruction.	○	○	○	○
My school's leader regularly models effective instruction.	○	○	○	○
My school's leader knows my instructional strengths and areas of growth.	○	○	○	○
My school's leader is knowledgeable about the curricula being used.	○	○	○	○
My school's leader is knowledgeable about the non-academic needs of my students.	○	○	○	○

Program Coherence

To what extent do you disagree or agree with the following:

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Once we start a new program in this school, we follow up to make sure that it's working.	○	○	○	○
We have so many different programs in this school that I can't keep track of them all.	○	○	○	○
Many special programs come and go at this school.	○	○	○	○
Curriculum, instruction, and learning materials are well coordinated across the different grade levels at this school.	○	○	○	○
There is consistency in curriculum, instruction, and learning materials among teachers in the same grade level at this school.	○	○	○	○

Teacher Mindset

To what extent do you disagree or agree with the following:

Appendix A: Teacher Survey

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
I believe that high quality curriculum materials improve student learning	○	○	○	○
I believe that high quality curriculum materials have a significant impact on alleviating educational inequity	○	○	○	○
I believe that high quality curriculum materials are overly scripted in ways that can be problematic for teachers and students	○	○	○	○
I believe that high quality curriculum materials need to be supplemented to meet standards	○	○	○	○
I believe that high quality curriculum materials need to be supplemented to meet students needs	○	○	○	○

Interview Participation

Are you interested in participating in an interview to discuss your professional experiences with implementing EL Education during the 2022-23 academic school year?

○ Yes

○ No

Starbucks Form Participation

I would like to provide my contact information to be eligible for the Starbucks gift card.

○ Yes

○ No
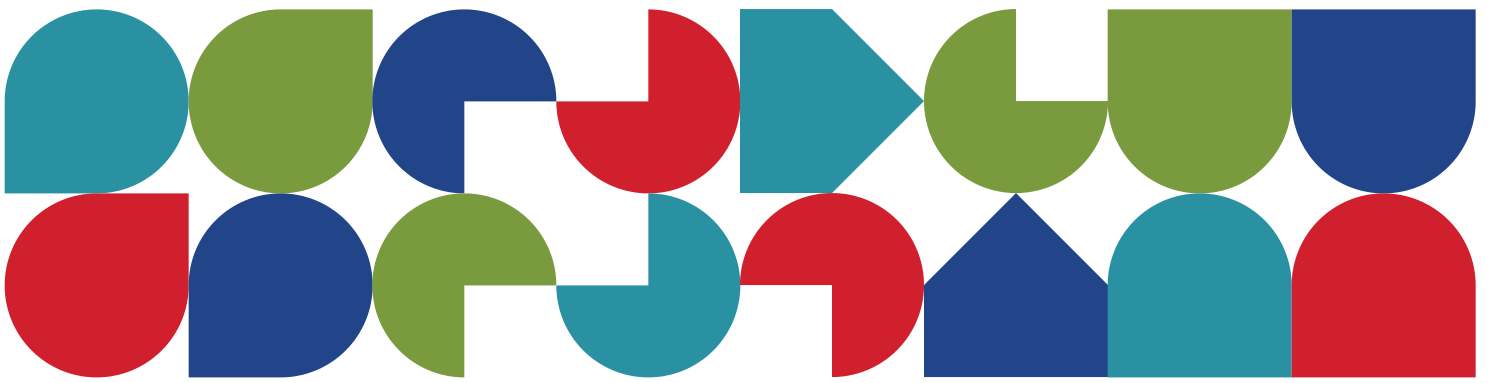
Appendix B: Concept Matrix

A hierarchical concept matrix diagram. The root node on the left reads "JCPS Implementation Study - EL Education," which branches into five middle nodes, each connecting to blue survey reference boxes on the right:

EL Education Training Quality
- Curriculum Usage [TN ELA Survey] Questions 8 - 9
- Curriculum Perceptions [TN ELA Survey] Questions 10 - 16
- Teacher Mindset [OH Survey] Questions 42 - 46

High Quality Instructional Materials
- Quality Professional Development [UChicago 5Essentials Survey] Questions 24 - 27

JCPS Professional Learning
- Instructional Improvement [TN Instructional Improvement] Questions 28 - 30
- Collaborative Practices [UChicago 5Essentials Survey] Questions 17 - 21

Building Dynamics
- Instructional Leader Support [UChicago 5Essentials Survey] Questions 31 - 35
- Program Coherence [UChicago 5Essentials Survey] Questions 36 - 41

Social Networks
- Social Networks [UChicago 5Essentials Survey] Questions 22 - 23

Appendix C: Comprehensive Interview Protocols

JCPS Principal Interview Protocol

Professional Background
- What is your present role with Jefferson County Public Schools?
- How long have you worked with Jefferson County Public Schools? What other schools or districts have you worked in previously?
- What are your primary responsibilities with the *EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum*?
- How many years have you been implementing *EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum* in your classroom?

Training Quality
- What went well with the summer *EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum* training?
- What would have been helpful to change or add to the training?
- How well did the training prepare you to implement *EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum* in your classroom?

High-Quality Instructional Materials
- What is your opinion/perception of the new reading curriculum *EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum?*
- How were you involved in the adoption or selection of the *EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum*?
- Can you tell me more about your perceptions of *EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum* before you started using the curriculum this year?
- How has your perception of the curriculum changed during the first few months of using *EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum*?

Accelerated Improvement Schools: Professional Support
- What are the AIS Office's expectations for your school about *EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum*?
- How does the AIS team communicate these expectations to you?

Appendix C: Comprehensive Interview Protocols

JCPS Principal Interview Protocol

Accelerated Improvement Schools: Professional Support
- How does the AIS team support you in reaching these expectations?
    Probe - Is the support adequate?
- Do you agree with these expectations? Are they realistic? Do they fit your school's needs?

Building Dynamics + Professional Learning
- Do you have a structure in the school to foster a professional learning community?
    What does it look like?
    How does it work?
    What is its purpose?
- What is the AIS Office's vision of good instruction? How does the district communicate this vision to you?
- What are the major distractions for you as you try to be an instructional leader in the district?
    Probe - Distractions for implementing the new *EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum*
- What would you like to be doing more of?
- What would you like to be doing less of?

Social Networks
- Can you tell me a little bit more about the type of support principals provide each other across the AIS campuses?
- Who supports you as a building leader? Is the type of support you receive targeted and helpful?

Closing
- Would you like to add anything that I have not probed or asked you?

Appendix C: Comprehensive Interview Protocols

JCPS Academic Coach (AIC) Interview Protocol

Professional Background
- What is your present role with Jefferson County Public Schools?
- How long have you worked with Jefferson County Public Schools? What other schools or districts have you worked in previously?
- How many years has your school, or individual teachers in your school, been using *EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum*?
- What are your primary responsibilities with the *EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum*?

Coaching Vision
- What are your primary responsibilities with the *EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum*?
- What does your support look like?
- How many teachers do you support?

High-Quality Instructional Materials
- What is your opinion/perception of the new literacy curriculum - *EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum*?
- How were you involved in the adoption or selection of the *EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum*?
- Has your perception of the *EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum* changed during the first few months of implementation?
    How so?
    Are there any key takeaways you've observed thus far?

Initial Curriculum Training (Professional Development / Technical Assistance)
- Tell me about the professional learning strategy for literacy in (this building).

Appendix C: Comprehensive Interview Protocols

JCPS Academic Coach (AIC) Interview Protocol

Initial Curriculum Training (Professional Development / Technical Assistance)
- Did you attend a training led by *EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum*?
- What were your overall impressions of the *EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum* professional training series?
    If favorable, what made the training effective?
    If not, can you say more?
- How prepared do you feel to support *EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum* initiatives in (this building)?

Professional Learning/Support
- What are the major distractions for you as an instructional coach in the district?
    Probe - Distractions for implementing the new *EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum*

Social Networks
- What types of collaborative work do you see across this building as educators use the new *EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum*?
- What types of informal collaboration opportunities do you see amongst staff concerning *EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum*?

Closing
- Would you like to add anything that I have not probed or asked you?

Appendix C: Comprehensive Interview Protocols

JCPS Teacher Interview Protocol Interview Protocol

Professional Background
- What is your present role with Jefferson County Public Schools?
- How long have you worked with Jefferson County Public Schools? What other schools or districts have you worked in previously?
- How many years has your school, or individual teachers in your school, been using *EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum*?
- What are your primary responsibilities with the *EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum*?

Training Quality
- Did you observe the summer *EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum* training that your teachers participated in?
  If yes, how well do you think the training prepared teachers to implement *EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum* in your school?
- What do you think went well about that training?
- What would have been helpful to change or add to the training?

High-Quality Instructional Materials
- What is your opinion/perception of the new reading curriculum *EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum?*
- How were you involved in the adoption or selection of the *EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum*?
- Can you tell me more about your perceptions of *EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum* before you started using the curriculum this year?
- How has your perception of the curriculum changed during the first few months of using *EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum*?

Appendix C: Comprehensive Interview Protocols

JCPS Teacher Interview Protocol Interview Protocol

Initial Curriculum Training (Professional Development / Technical Assistance)
- What type of training support did you receive before implementing *EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum*?
- Can you describe the type of support and training you received?
- What were your overall impressions of the *EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum* professional training series?
    If favorable, what made the training effective?
    If not, can you say more?
- Looking back, is there anything you wish you would have had in terms of support or training from *EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum* that you didn't have?
     If yes, can you tell me more about that?
     Why do you think that would have been helpful?

Professional Learning (Ongoing Learning & District Support)
- What type of support (use previous definition/categories) do you receive from your building leader / instructional leader with the implementation of the *EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum*?
     How often do you receive specific support?
     How would you describe/characterize the type of support you receive?
     What type of support would be most important to you from your instructional leader?
- What type of support (use previous definition/categories) do you receive while implementing *EL Education K-5 Language Arts Curriculum*?
     How often do you receive support? Describing what support looks like.
     How would you describe/characterize the type of support you receive?

Appendix C: Comprehensive Interview Protocols

JCPS Teacher Interview Protocol Interview Protocol

Social Networks
- Can you tell me a little bit more about the type of support principals provide each other across the AIS
- Who supports you as a building leader? Is the type of support you receive targeted and helpful?

Closing
- Would you like to add anything that I have not probed or asked you?

Appendix D: Comprehensive Interview Matrix

Bin/Concept	Theme	Quote
EL Professional Development Quality	1. Theme TQ 1: Perception of limited training and not enough time	Theme TQ 1: • The implementation of the training was not too good to give them a really good understanding of ELA the way that they were expecting that is so it was one of those things where they just kind of had to dive into it themselves. And try to kind of decipher from there and ask questions from there. - JCPS Principal • I wish we had been able to see what it was like from start to finish because we have really struggled with the pacing of each lesson. - JCPS Principal • I would say the training helped a lot and we also need more time. - JCPS AP • But it was a lot of preparation that when we did our PD, they didn't get that. The PD didn't tell us how deep and how much work it was going to take to put one lesson together. - JCPS AIC

Appendix D: Comprehensive Interview Matrix

Bin/Concept	Theme	Quote
EL Professional Development Quality	1. Theme TQ 1: Perception of limited training and not enough time	Theme TQ 1: • It didn't really go deep enough to tell us what we were really gonna have to do the to do the expectations of it. I think it was just like an overview. It didn't really dig deep that we need for a program that we're oging to start day one with fidelity. - JCPS AIC • S0 the PD I think needs to be more a little more hands on, the whole planning process of it because that's the meat of it. It's that planning process that we really needed that additional support with how to plan it and even watch which lessons were based on our KY academic standards. - JCPS AIC • Because we had all our teams together, it'd be nice if they could support our planning process, especially that first unit, or a couple of weeks, so that teachers could get the feedback from the specialist. - JCPS AIC

Appendix D: Comprehensive Interview Matrix

Bin/Concept	Theme	Quote
EL Professional Development Quality	1. Theme TQ 1: Perception of limited training and not enough time	Theme TQ 1: • But I feel like we needed more support from El to truly implement this program effectively. We don't really have that we just need as a cohort of as schools who are low performing, and say, You know what we did? But is it right? Nobody knows. Because we've never had that feedback from EL without having paid additional money to get someone to say that. - JCPS AIC • We have that person...and she's never taught it. So she can't give us any feedback, because she said she never got it. So it's not about not us not being prepared to plan. It's a lot to plan. - JCPS AIC

Appendix D: Comprehensive Interview Matrix

Bin/Concept	Theme	Quote
EL Professional Development Quality	2. Theme TQ 2: Perception of limited training and not enough time	Theme TQ 2: • I actually loved the training…They can relate to our population and have the date to backup what they did. It wasn't just like, here spend money on this, like they had actually experienced it. It was teachers that taught it. So we were more trusting of what they were saying. - JCPS AP • I think we have the coaching session with someone from EF. But when we asked her questions, and she's never taught it, so it's kind of hard for her to give us feedback. If you've never taught that content… - JCPS AIC • We're paying for someone and she can't really answer these questions because she doesn't have the experience or even the capacity to share what it will look like because she hasn't done the program. - JCPS AIC

Appendix D: Comprehensive Interview Matrix

Bin/Concept	Theme	Quote
EL Professional Development Quality	2. Theme TQ 2: Perception of limited training and not enough time	Theme TQ 2: • The training became productive at the end when they gave us resources. It was more of other teachers and coaches finding resources like the ILC. Once we started and talking and finding resources, it was we felt like it wasn't a waste of our time. • We have that person…and she's never taught it. So she can't give us any feedback, because she said she never got it. So it's not about not us not being prepared to plan. It's a lot to plan. - JCPS AIC
EL Professional Development Quality	3.Theme TQ 3: Materials need to be provided in advance (not during the training)	Theme TQ 3: • And so I think that if we had materials beforehand to like, study some of the actual pieces that we're going to be reading, then that would have been more helpful especially to teachers… and it was kind of given to us at the last minute. So if that could have been present. Maybe during the training that would have also been helpful. - JCPS AP

Appendix D: Comprehensive Interview Matrix

Bin/Concept	Theme	Quote
EL Professional Development Quality	3.Theme TQ 3: Materials need to be provided in advance (not during the training)	Theme TQ 3: • And then you have a trickling of resources. We were sharing books. But if you don't have those resources to look at, its kind of hard to picture what it is going to look like in our school and the implementation portion. - JCPS AIC
High Quality Instructional Materials	1.Theme HQIM 1: Rigor and scaffolds are real. HQIM truly means rigorous work.	Theme HQIM 1 • And so you have to also remember that it's based off of students going on grade level. And so you got to remember that 80% of my kids are reading below grade level. So teachers are having to do a lot of scaffolding to bring students up to be able to have differentiation in order to be able to actually do this program. And so that is something that they are struggling with as well. - JCPS Principal

Appendix D: Comprehensive Interview Matrix

Bin/Concept	Theme	Quote
High Quality Instructional Materials	1.Theme HQIM 1: Rigor and scaffolds are real. HQIM truly means rigorous work.	Theme HQIM 1 • I think the way the format of the program means it takes the teachers a lot of time to kind of figure out what the lesson in. And then it takes a long time for us to get it to our kids, especially the prerequisites that are needed that some of our students don't have. - JCPS AIC • I just worry more about how the program is presented to teachers. How it is presented to teachers is a little difficult. That book is huge and we have 1,000 other subjects to prepare for also. It takes a lot to get one EL Education lesson together. It's a lot in those lessons. - JCPS AIC • You know, I think right now, we're just trying to get our feet wet. We're trying to figure out, you know, what does it look like? And how effective is this program, if you compare this for the fidelity of our demographic, you know, just seeing how, because a lot of times what we're teaching, our students have no clue about, they don't have that capacity to talk about those things, because they're not exposed. So sometimes I don't know how culturally responsive the texts are. - JCPS AIC

Appendix D: Comprehensive Interview Matrix

Bin/Concept	Theme	Quote
High Quality Instructional Materials	2.Theme HQIM 2: EL Education is HQ and	Theme HQIM 2 • What I do like about the program is how to embed social studies and findings and they're very heavily originally and if you think about you know, with our type of population, it gets kind of rough to get to science and social studies...I also love the fact that it embeds quite a bit of writing - writing is back. - JCPS Principal • We truly needed the rigor...that's what our teachers need. - JCPS Principal • I like it [EL Education]. It brings in culturally responsive stuff, and that's what our kids need. - JCPS AP
AIS Support – Professional Learning	1.Theme AIS 1: District provides framework and pacing support	Theme AIS 1: • They have also created a framework around utilizing the district resources to follow EL Education. - JCPS Principal • The district gave us a pacing curriculum framework. It just wasn't as connected as we wish it would have been. - JCPS AP • I have a principal mentor and a district mentor. I feel very well supported. - JCPS Principal

Appendix D: Comprehensive Interview Matrix

Bin/Concept	Theme	Quote
AIS Support - Professional Learnings	2.Theme AIS 2: Limited support for numerous high needs school	Theme AIS 2: • I feel like it needs to more [more than one district staff] to be able to help with these schools. Because its just one of her and you know, there are 30 schools And every school has different needs. - JCPS Principal • I would like some principal professional development around how to help our teachers do EL Education. - JCPS Principal • I think the district should have given us more time to connect with EL because most of the schools using EL are low performing schools. And so that skill mastery is what's so important. - JCPS AP • And then it was like the pacing guide changed from JCPS to match. And we already had a pacing guide. And it was just kind of a one step forward, two steps back type of deal. - JCPS AP • There might be things that you don't necessarily do and I think people are afraid to do that [take risks and take things off in terms of pacing and teaching]. And so being able to sit down with someone and say, "Hey, let's condense this down, so that you don't feel overwhelmed and the kids don't feel overwhelmed." - JCPS AP

Appendix D: Comprehensive Interview Matrix

Bin/Concept	Theme	Quote
AIS Support - Professional Learnings	2.Theme AIS 2: Limited support for numerous high needs school	Theme AIS 2: • We meet as a district and talk about being prepared. But we're all new to it. So there's no one saying, "I've done this and it works." We're all fairly new. It's like 30 schools and we don't have a representative from EL Education who supports us. So I don't know if we are doing it effectively and correctly, because we've never really had that feedback on what it looks like. - JCPS AIC • So she's {Dr. Hogue} the one that kind of initiated us take the program, but no one from El is at these meetings. It's just her. And like I said she's never taught it. So we all just kind of talking about what we've done. Not saying it's right or wrong, or whether we be on the right path, rather than assumption of this is what it's supposed to look like. - JCPS AIC • Dr. Hogue has put together an opportunity, I think it may be like once a month for them to kind of have that opportunity to kind of discuss that. But I don't know what the attendance of the attendance looks like. Because like I said, you know, we're at a low performing school, high poverty that goes with behavior issues and you know, putting systems in place and then we have all fairly new teachers. You know, you if they're already tired, it's kind of hard to make those meetings. - JCPS AIC

Appendix D: Comprehensive Interview Matrix

Bin/Concept	Theme	Quote
AIS Support - Professional Learnings	3.Theme AIS 3: EL Education Academies are ill Timed and Reactive	Theme AIS 3: • It's just after a long day, like you're so tired. It's hard to absorb anything. - JCPS AP • It's just a lot to unpack and to decide what to teach. And I think teachers get really overwhelmed, especially new teachers. -JCPS AP • The problem is, is that it's after school, and a lot of us if…if I have taught all day, and I have to go home to my actual job, if I've subbed all day, so going to these meetings afterwards. And then you know, you have family and responsibilities. We don't always make it to those meetings. Because… life. - JCPS AIC • I think it's more effective if we are going to meet once a month is that we're looking at the next unit and kind of helping our teachers to prepare during that time they're preparing for that next unit, instead of it being, let's share out what we've done. - JCPS AIC

Appendix D: Comprehensive Interview Matrix

Bin/Concept	Theme	Quote
AIS Support - Professional Learnings	3.Theme AIS 3: EL Education Academies are ill Timed and Reactive	Theme AIS 3: • I think it's more effective if we are going to meet once a month is that we're looking at the next unit and kind of helping our teachers to prepare during that time they're preparing for that next unit, instead of it being, let's share out what we've done. Well, let's prepare them to share it. Let's give them that time for planning this unit together. Because collective teacher efficacy, you know, is was high on Hattie's effect size. If we could have all teachers work together to plan, it can only be great, because we all are having the same conversations and having those myths or misconceptions addressed amongst grade level teachers. - JCPS AIC • I think now we've kind of put the cart in front of the horse, to make sure that we're giving them support before and not afterwards, just getting feedback on what you thought, because how do we know we did it effectively? How do we know across the board that we're all teaching the same thing, the correct the right way? Because no one really knows it's all trial and error. Because we don't really get support from El, we're just getting it from District support the surface level, we don't have it from the experts. - JCPS AIC

Appendix D: Comprehensive Interview Matrix

Bin/Concept	Theme	Quote
Building Dynamics + Professional Learning	1.Theme BD + PL 1: Turnover and lack of HQT makes for challenging spots for implementation	Theme BD + PL 1: • It's like now I'm having to introduce them to the way that we do our PLC process. And so that's what can be kind of frustrating for me is it's like I feel like I'm always having to reintroduce you get that traction of being able to just start the year off where everybody already knows what the expectation is. So that's what we run into. - JCPS Principal • The biggest issue is that people assume teachers know exactly how to teach the standards and assess the standards, and that's just not accurate. There are brand new teachers who are doing what they're supposed to be doing in the context of fidelity, but at the same time, we're low performing school and we have to focus on mastering content standards. - JCPS AP
Building Dynamics + Professional Learning	2.Theme BD + PL 2: Overworked and under-resourced schools in W. Louisville	Theme BD + PL 2: • There's always something that we're being required to do from a district standpoint. - JCPS Principal • Behavior and paperwork take up most of my time. - JCPS Principal • We don't have enough teachers. We don't have enough bodies. - JCPS AP

Appendix D: Comprehensive Interview Matrix

Bin/Concept	Theme	Quote
Building Dynamics + Professional Learning	2.Theme BD + PL 2: Overworked and under-resourced schools in W. Louisville	Theme BD + PL 2: • We have a lack of consistency around instructional leadership. JCPS AP • There's a lack of systems that are strong… and a lack of consistency. - JCPS AP • But we need we need more coaches actually because they help teachers with instruction as well. And so at that time, a lot of new teachers my coaches are overwhelmed because they cannot get to every teacher and help them and give them the feedback that they need. And so we have our admin staff, that helps as well. But some of our teachers need need more. Like they need someone in their modeling for them on a regular basis. Somebody that can stay with them for longer periods of time, not just for one subject. So it's been hard it's been really hard for them. - JCPS Principal • But when there's being a shortage of teachers, where I'm sitting right now, and so it's my other teacher, our resource teacher, so I'm gonna say about 50% of our time, this entire school year has been subbing. So it's kind of really hard we support when we have our PLC time, or collaboration time or embedded PD time. But that's if we're not subbing. - JCPS AIC

Appendix D: Comprehensive Interview Matrix

Bin/Concept	Theme	Quote
Building Dynamics + Professional Learning	2.Theme BD + PL 2: Overworked and under-resourced schools in W. Louisville	Theme BD + PL 2: • The problem is, is that it's after school, and a lot of us if…if I have taught all day, and I have to go home to my actual job, if I've subbed all day, so going to these meetings afterwards. And then you know, you have family and responsibilities. We don't always make it to those meetings. Because… life. - JCPS AIC • But at this point, we are all overwhelmed and tired. But when you're a low performing school, they just give you expectations and things you have to do. And a lot of times, our teachers are just tired. - JCPS AIC
Building Dynamics + Professional Learning	3.Theme BD + PL 3: Implementation with Fidelity	Theme BD + PL 3: • I have paid this money for this program, we are going to follow it with fidelity. - JCPS Principal • The AIS Office expects us to teach it with fidelity and we have to follow all the lessons and modules that the AIS literacy person has emailed out. - JCPS AP

Appendix D: Comprehensive Interview Matrix

Bin/Concept	Theme	Quote
Building Dynamics + Professional Learning	3.Theme BD + PL 3: Implementation with Fidelity	Theme BD + PL 3: • All of the administration are learning and just following you know, whatever they [EL] gave us so basically, they are also not knowing where they are. They just keep saying you got to use it with fidelity, you got to use it with fidelity, you got to use this student activity book because we spend $25,000. But it is hard. - JCPS Teacher
Building Dynamics + Professional Learning	4.Theme BD + PL 4: Misaligned professional learning at the building level	Theme BD + PL 4: • We have PLCS like once a week, but I don't know what they do there. I don't know what's going on with that. - JCPS AP • Support is misaligned because admin are new and they don't know what they are doing. - JCPS Teacher
Building Dynamics + Professional Learning	5.Theme BD + PL 5: Unprotected time means people cannot get their work done	Theme BD + PL 5: • We probably sub 70% of the time. And so it's really hard to do your job here. - JCPS AIC

Appendix D: Comprehensive Interview Matrix

Bin/Concept	Theme	Quote
Building Dynamics + Professional Learning	5.Theme BD + PL 5: Unprotected time means people cannot get their work done	Theme BD + PL 5: • Subbing is the biggest hurdle right now and getting bodies in to have a sub to cover a classroom. We don't just have we don't have I mean, a lot of teachers, a lot of people that are subbing don't really want to come in the west end of Louisville, because it is a tough demographic, you know, it's not the easiest place to teach. -JCPS AIC • So subbing is a huge hurdle that we're having even planning to put together job embedded PD. I have to do that while I'm either while I'm subbing or at home, you know, between class and going to class. So it's a lot of pieces. - JCPS AIC • But I don't know how, and I'm gonna be transparent. I don't know how much support I really have been with EI, because I've been spending a lot of time in classroom teaching and subbing. - JCPS AIC
Social Networks	1.Theme SN 1: Personal Values, Leadership, Growth	Theme SN 1: • One of the things that I can truly say is that I feel like I have been supported as a new principal. - JCPS Principal

Appendix D: Comprehensive Interview Matrix

Bin/Concept	Theme	Quote
Other	1.Theme O 1: District complexities are real	Theme O 1: • I'm a part of zone two but because I'm AIS I am a part of the AIS process. That has been kind of confusing is to make sure they are aligned. For the most part, they have been aligned as far as what JCPS expects and what they expect. But it does get overwhelming. Yeah. Especially being as you're always playing catch up. - JCPS Principal