

Berkeley Unified School District
Literacy Improvement Program Monitoring Report 5
January 2025
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INTRODUCTION

Program Monitoring Report 5 represents the fifth in a series of seven semi-annual reports evaluating the ongoing progress on the Literacy Improvement Program (LIP) implemented by the Berkeley Unified School District (BUSD) in accordance with the Class Action Settlement Agreement ([Appendix A](#)) executed on December 11, 2020 in the United States District Court for the Northern District of California (Case No. 3:17-cv-02510). The primary purpose of this document is to monitor and report on BUSD's compliance with the Literacy Improvement Program and review progress toward implementation of the four major goals of the LIP:

- **Goal 1:** Develop Programs to Improve General Education Reading and Language Arts Achievement for all Students, especially those Students with or at risk for Reading Disabilities, including Dyslexia.
- **Goal 2:** Increase the Systematicity and Intensity of Tier 2 and 3 Reading and Language Arts Intervention of the MTSS Framework to Reduce the Achievement Gap for Students at risk for Reading Disabilities.
- **Goal 3:** Ensure Fidelity of Literacy Improvement Program Implementation through District Monitoring of Literacy Improvement Program and Staff Engagement.
- **Goal 4:** Special Education Programs: Increase Reading Achievement by Improving the Quality of IEP Goals and Section 504 Plan Development, Progress Monitoring, and use of appropriately intensive, Research-based Interventions.

This Monitoring Report draws primarily from the fourth quarterly report from BUSD for 2023-2024 ([Appendix I](#)) and the first quarterly report for the 2024-2025 academic year ([Appendix J](#)), along with a detailed analysis of Implementation Team meeting notes for the four LIP Goals detailed above. This document also incorporates evidence gathered through hours of formal and informal data collection during site visits to Berkeley Unified elementary and middle schools, conducted by the Program Monitor.

Additional data for this report have been gathered through the following sources:

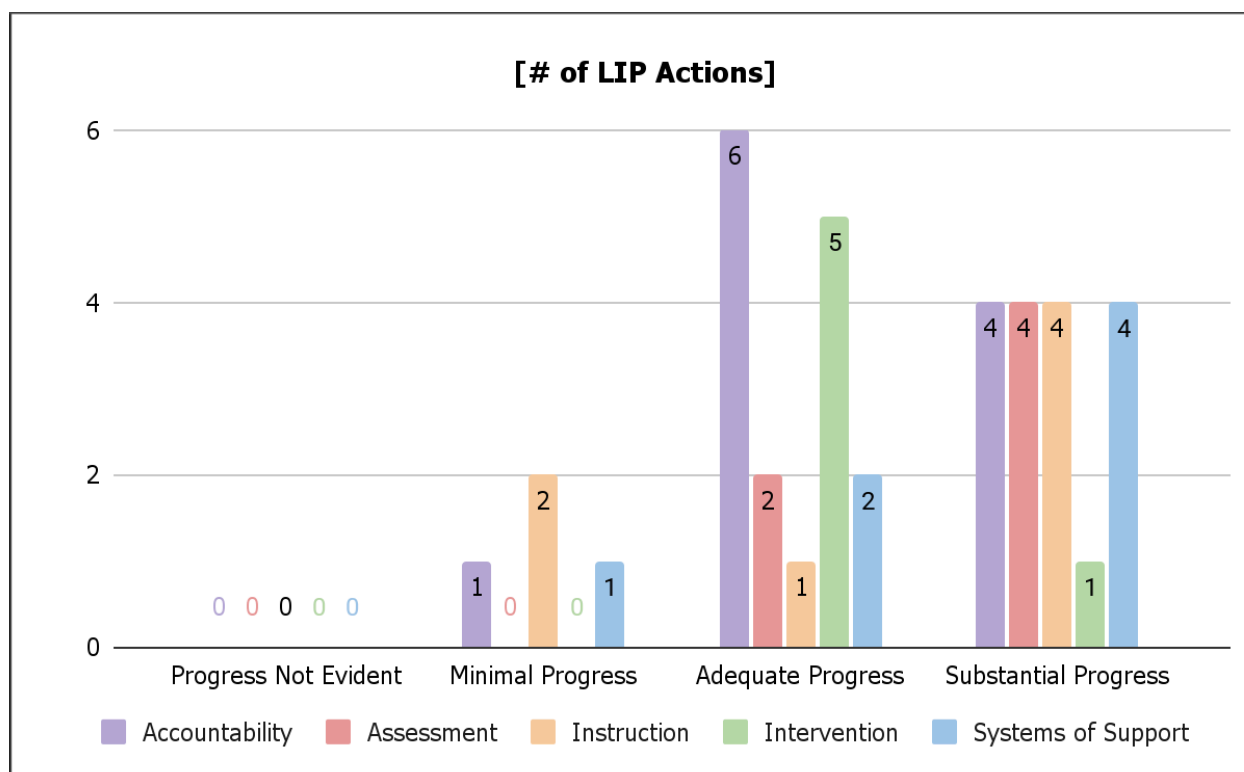
- Individual interviews with BUSD Principals
- Analysis of DIBELS ORF progress monitoring data from EduClimber data integration system
- Analysis of Tier 2 and Tier 3 progress monitoring goals from EduClimber
- Attendance at BUSD Special Education Implementation Team meetings
- Review of IEP Goals from Special Education Information System (SEIS)
- Attendance at Implementation Team meetings
- Individual meetings with BUSD's Literacy Consultant, Dr. Kim Gibbons

- Informal interviews with BUSD staff and community members
- Meetings with BUSD District Administration
- Analysis of school-based Coordination of Services (COS) Team meeting minutes

The following section of this review includes the Progress Report component of the Monitoring Plan. In an effort to make this document more comprehensible to parents, caregivers, and community members, five cross-cutting **Themes** have been identified to create explicit connections between the 37 LIP Actions, and to more clearly connect the dots across the overall Literacy Improvement Program. These cross-cutting themes are: **1) Accountability, 2) Assessment, 3) Instruction, 4, Intervention, and 5) Systems of Support**. Each theme is evaluated in a separate section, using a leveled rubric of progress-to-date, based on expectations for Actions considering the recommendations from the Implementation Science framework detailed in the final section of this report. The rubric consists of four evaluative bands: **substantial progress, adequate progress, minimal progress, and progress not evident**, with the goal of celebrating *substantial* and *adequate* advancements in the implementation, while providing recommendations for next steps related to any LIP Actions where *minimal* or *no progress* has been observed.

The chart in **Figure 1** below summarizes the progress of the 37 Actions across the five Cross-Cutting Themes highlighted in this report as of December 2024. A detailed account of progress on each individual Action is provided in the next section of this document: Progress Report - December 2024.

Figure 1 - Progress on LIP Actions by Cross-Cutting Theme (December 2024)



PROGRESS REPORT - December 2024

Cross-Cutting Theme 1: Accountability

The success of any long-term literacy plan is based in large part by the structures created by the school district to ensure a high level of **Accountability** among the Implementation Team, at individual school sites, and with the outside community. Establishing a clearly articulated and publicly available plan, along with frequent community updates, is necessary for monitoring progress and for an effective implementation of the literacy plan. This theme of **Accountability** surfaces throughout the actions listed in the Literacy Improvement Program and is essential for establishing transparency in the implementation process to ensure trust among all stakeholders.

The table below captures the progress to date on the cross-cutting theme of **Accountability**.

[Actions in bold represent movement across bands of progress since the last Monitoring Report]

Substantial Progress
<p>24. Provide the Monitor with implementation reports. <i>II.C.1.d</i></p> <p>26. Monitor will provide a Monitoring Plan to the School Board, and BUSD Implementation Team. <i>II.C.1.c</i></p> <p>33. Implement policies, procedures, and practices to ensure that all students with IEP reading goals will have their progress monitored appropriately according to the student's stated IEP goals. <i>II.B.2.d.iii</i></p> <p>34. Implement policies, procedures, and practices to ensure that when current students with disabilities' IEPs are subject to review, new goals will be written on a case-by-case basis using the MTSS-RDS. Special education teachers will monitor progress according to the students' stated IEP goals. <i>II.B.2.d.iii</i></p>
Adequate Progress
<p>6. Evaluate staff perceptions about changes in general and special education research-based reading practices and MTSS-RDS. <i>II.B.2.c.i</i></p> <p>7. Consult with the Outside Consultants with regard to development of appropriate and measurable literacy goals. <i>II.A.1.b.iii</i></p> <p>23. Consult with the Outside Consultants regarding proposed changes to District-wide reading intervention and special education policies, procedures and practices as outlined in the Literacy Improvement Program before presentation by the Implementation Team to the School Board for approval. <i>II.A.1.b.i</i> [formerly listed under the theme of Intervention]</p> <p>25. Monitor will issue Monitoring Reports on a semi-annual basis addressing progress on Literacy Improvement Program implementation to the School Board and BUSD Implementation Team. <i>II.C.1.e</i></p> <p>28. Review and assess feedback to refine the Literacy Improvement Program as needed to accomplish stated goals in consultation with the Outside Consultants. <i>II.A.1.b.vi</i></p> <p>29. Provide the Literacy Improvement Program to the Monitor, Outside Consultants, and Plaintiffs' Counsel. <i>II.C.1.b</i></p>
Minimal Progress
<p>27. Develop and implement a monitoring component to the Literacy Improvement Program. <i>II.B.2.c.i</i></p>
Progress Not Evident
-

Summary of Findings - Accountability

Since the launch of the Literacy Improvement Program, Berkeley Unified has demonstrated consistent progress in the cross-cutting theme of **Accountability**. During this fifth semester of the Literacy Improvement Program, highlights of the advancements in **Accountability** have been observed in Berkeley Unified's efforts to overhaul existing Board of Education (BOE) Policies and Administrative Regulations related to literacy achievement, how the district has enhanced and expanded its BUSD Literacy website, and BUSD's continued focus on improving how Special Education Case Managers write IEP reading goals.

Since the Launch of the [Literacy at BUSD](#) in June of 2023, this public-facing website has grown from a simple repository of LIP-related documents and reports to an expansive warehouse that provides regular community updates and resources related to all aspects of the Literacy Improvement Program. In terms of curriculum and instruction, the website contains a detailed Timeline of BUSD's English Language Arts (ELA) Curriculum Adoption, including information around the four Community Engagement sessions, where members of the public receive updates and ask questions regarding progress on the curriculum adoption process. The website also contains a section on Assessments that supplies detailed information for parents/caregivers interested in how BUSD students are screened and progress monitored for reading difficulties using the DIBELS and Star Reading Data System (RDS), as well as the type of targeted intervention students will receive when lacking proficiency in essential areas of reading development. This section also includes digital resources for families to better understand the quarterly "mCLASS Home Connect" and "Star Family Reports" that provide a snapshot of their child's reading development over the course of their K-8 education.

Another significant development in the area of **Accountability** is the drafting of new policies by District Administration to ensure the sustainability of major changes introduced through this Settlement Agreement beyond the three-year plan. Over the past few months, BUSD staff collaborated with its Literacy Consultant, Dr. Gibbons, to update and amend four existing Board Policies (BP) and Administrative Regulations (AR): BP 6141- Curriculum and Development and Evaluation, AR 6141- Curriculum Development and Evaluation, BP 6142.91- Reading/Language Arts Instruction, and BP6162.5- Student Assessment. These draft policies were reviewed by the BOE Policy Committee in November 2024, and are set for Board approval early in 2025. These policies [Action 23] were formerly listed under the cross-cutting theme of **Intervention**, but have been moved to the **Accountability** section to better represent the public-facing nature of BOE policies.

In terms of **Accountability** for students receiving special education services in reading, the BUSD Special Education team of Case Managers and TSAs (Teachers on Special Assignment) continue to prioritize and streamline the process of monitoring and reviewing IEP goals reading goals to ensure that students facing reading challenges receive IEP goals that can be measured by the district's Reading Data System. As of November 2024, 64% of K-8 Special Education students with IEP reading goals contained at least one goal using the DIBELS or Star RDS. By leveraging the expertise of the Berkeley Research, Evaluation & Assessment (BREA) team, the Special Education

Department has created a system and process to ensure that this work of monitoring IEP reading goals can also be sustained beyond the life of the LIP.

As Berkeley Unified has entered into the third and final year of this Settlement Agreement, fidelity to the Literacy Improvement program and a consistent implementation across all school sites is anticipated and expected. In keeping with the Implementation Science framework (p. 18), the scope of the LIP has also now expanded from a general district-level tracking of implementation to a more targeted site-level of implementation and **Accountability**. Considering this shift to a focus on fidelity of implementation, it is now expected that BUSD develop and implement a school-level, internal monitoring component to the Literacy Improvement Program [Action 27]. Moving forward, documentation on how individual school sites have implemented key LIP Actions will be expected as evidence of fidelity of implementation for monitoring purposes.

Given the consistent progress under the theme of **Accountability** from a district perspective, the only additional recommendation in this section is that Berkeley Unified re-evaluate staff perceptions about the changes that have resulted from the LIP, in order to gather information about the sustainability of these changes, and which resources or professional learning that teachers, administrators, and support staff may require to continue this work beyond the original scope of the literacy plan.

Recommendations - Accountability

1. Provide Program Monitor with ongoing evidence of **site-level implementation** of priority Actions during the Winter and Spring of 2025.
2. Survey Staff in the Spring of 2025 regarding their perceptions about the changes resulting from the LIP and how to best to sustain these changes.

Cross-Cutting Theme 2: Assessment

The use of **Assessment** data to drive instruction, track student progress, and identify students at risk for reading difficulties is the second cross-cutting theme that arises among the LIP tasks. The Settlement Agreement calls for students' progress in the acquisition of foundational reading skills to be monitored carefully. When used correctly, a valid and reliable Reading Data System (RDS) can identify the correct instructional supports that individual students need in the general education classroom in order to become proficient readers. Screening assessments should occur at least three times a year for all students, and identification of students' existing skills and knowledge should drive instructional planning for teachers.

The RDS can also be used in the universal screening process to identify which students would benefit from supplemental Tier 2 and Tier 3 intervention, both within the general education setting and with support from outside specialists. The data obtained from the assessment system, along with targeted progress monitoring, can also be considered when determining eligibility for special education under the category of Specific Learning Disability (SLD). Reports from the RDS

are also important for providing parents and caregivers with timely information regarding their child's progress in reading, and how the school district is monitoring their child's growth.

The table below captures the progress to date on the cross-cutting theme of **Assessments**.

Substantial Progress
<p>2. Select a reading data system that uses a single, time and cost efficient, and research-based authentic reading testing system (DIBELS and Star) for use in Grades K-8. <i>II.B.2.a.i</i></p> <p>5. Conduct Benchmark Assessments in the fall, winter, and spring to ensure reading growth for all students and support early intervention through universal screening. <i>II.B.2.a.i</i></p> <p>8. Train grade-level teams and Tier 2 and Tier 3 service providers to use their screening and progress monitoring data. <i>II.B.2.b.i</i></p> <p>32. Provide IEP and Section 504 teams training on use of the MTSS-RDS (DIBELS or Star), and other relevant information, including diagnostic surveys of academic skills, and student goal-setting practices. <i>II.B.2.d.iii</i></p>
Adequate Progress
<p>9a. Provide <i>K-5 general education teachers</i> and special education teachers professional development in how to use the Benchmark Assessments system for screening and progress monitoring, and for reports to parents/guardians. <i>II.B.2.a.i</i></p> <p>9b. Provide <i>Grades 6-8 Reading and Language Arts teachers</i>, and 6-8 special education teachers professional development in how to use the Benchmark Assessments system for screening and progress monitoring, and for reports to parents/guardians. <i>II.B.2.a.i</i></p>
Minimal Progress
-
Progress Not Evident
-

Summary of Findings - Assessments

The cross-cutting theme of **Assessments** remains an area where BUSD has consistently demonstrated adequate to substantial progress in the six Actions evaluated above. Building on last year's progress with district-wide implementation of Benchmark Assessments (DIBELS and Star) for universal screening and early intervention, the district has focused on refining the use of these assessments, along with an increased use of diagnostic reading data from the *CORE Teaching Reading Sourcebook*, to identify focal students for targeted reading growth.

Berkeley Unified began the 2024-2025 school year by providing teachers and administrators with a deep dive into the [Diagnostic Reading Plans](#) developed at the end of the 2023-2024 school year. During their first site-based professional development day in August 2024, K-5 classroom teachers, administrators, and site-based specialists (Literacy Coaches, Response to Intervention (RTI) TSAs, Special Education Case Managers ,and ELD TSAs) received a comprehensive BUSD Assessment Binder that includes: data protocols to be used district-wide to analyze screening data

from the DIBELS and STAR RDS, progress monitoring tools and guidelines to be used with students identified for needing additional support, and data-analysis templates and tools to help streamline the data collection process and identify focal students for targeted progress monitoring. This learning series was facilitated by each site's Literacy Coach, and included a refresher on how to administer screening assessments, as well as time and space for teachers to clarify the new assessment guidelines and expectations, including a reiteration of BUSD's formal policy to discontinue the use of the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project (TCRWP) and Fountas and Pinnell (F&P) Leveled Reading Assessments. Additionally, all middle school Reading Support teachers received training in how to administer and use Oral Reading Fluency (ORF) screening data and connected diagnostic assessments to identify focal students and pinpoint specific skills in which support is needed for each of these students.

The BUSD Curriculum and Instruction Team continued to provide guidance around use of **Assessments** during the November 6 professional development collaboration. During this site-based day of learning, K-5 teachers and site-based specialists returned to their Assessment Binder and focused on improving progress monitoring for focal students. This learning session included structured practice administering DIBELS progress monitoring subtests in Amplify, as well as support in how to use these subtests for goal setting and progress monitoring in the general education classroom. Teachers left the session with an accountability task of completing a minimum of one progress monitoring assessment for each focal student. In terms of **Assessments** in Grades 6-8, middle school Humanities teachers also participated in two Communities of Practice in the fall to share tips on administering and analyzing ORF data, including how to use this data in the Tier 1 setting for screening, diagnosing potential areas of reading difficulty, and informing instruction.

While the use of the district's Reading Data System has increased dramatically district-wide, implementation across specific school sites has been inconsistent, particularly across Tier 2 and Tier 3 reading interventions. The following recommendations are intended to more accurately quantify how individual school sites are implementing the changes in Assessments recommended by the school district, in an effort to ensure a more uniform implementation of these new policies and procedures.

Recommendations - Assessments

1. Collect evidence of **site-level implementation** of progress monitoring of Tier 2 reading interventions (every 2-3 weeks) during the Winter and Spring of 2025.
2. Collect evidence of **site-level implementation** of progress monitoring of Tier 3 reading interventions (every 1-2 weeks) during the Winter and Spring of 2025.

Cross-Cutting Theme 3: Instruction

Improving the scope and quality of general education Reading and Language Arts programs (**Tier 1 Instruction**) is key to the success of the Literacy Improvement Program. As per the Settlement Agreement, BUSD aims to provide effective and appropriate core reading programs to all general education students to enable them to become successful readers, at the same time reducing the

district's opportunity and achievement gap in student performance for students with or at risk for reading disabilities, African American students, and Spanish-Speaking English Learners. The goal is that students receive high quality, comprehensive, and standards-aligned instruction that meets the full range of student needs determined by the RDS. This all begins with the implementation of an evidence-based reading curriculum that is in alignment with the California ELA Curriculum Framework and addresses the key components of the Common Core State Standards for ELA: meaning making, language development, effective expression, content knowledge, and foundational reading skills.

The table below captures the progress to date on the cross-cutting theme of **Instruction**.

Substantial Progress
<p>12a. Provide <i>K-5 general education teachers</i> professional development in research and practice of Reading and Language Arts instruction consistent with the curriculum framework. <i>II.B.2.a.ii</i></p> <p>12b. Provide <i>Grades 6-8 Reading and Language Arts teachers</i> professional development in research and practice of Reading and Language Arts instruction consistent with the curriculum framework. <i>II.B.2.a.ii</i></p> <p>16. BUSD will assess and monitor the success of the FastTrack phonics program along with K-3 benchmark data to ensure FastTrack is an appropriately intensive, research-based phonics program, aligned with the needs of BUSD students and reading science. <i>II.B.2.a.iii</i></p> <p>15a. Conduct a review and assessment of <i>BUSD K-5 core reading program</i> in conjunction with school site principals, teachers, school personnel and bargaining units. <i>II.B.2.a.i</i></p>
Adequate Progress
<p>14. Identify supports to Tier 1 curriculum for Grades 4-8 in consultation with the Outside Consultants. <i>II.B.2.a.iii</i></p>
Minimal Progress
<p>13a. Begin implementation of the Targeted PDP to provide <i>Grades K-5 general education teachers</i> professional development in how to use their chosen Reading and Language Arts Tier 1 curriculum through coaching and observations to provide feedback on implementation. <i>II.B.2.a.iii</i></p> <p>13b. Begin implementation of the Targeted PDP to provide <i>Grades 6-8 Reading and Language Arts teachers</i> professional development in how to use their chosen Reading and Language Arts Tier 1 curriculum through coaching and observations to provide feedback on implementation. <i>II.B.2.a.iii</i></p>
Progress Not Evident
-

Summary of Findings - Instruction

A primary objective of this fifth Monitoring Report has been to examine how changes in Tier 1 reading **Instruction** have been implemented across Berkeley's elementary and middle schools, as well as how these instructional shifts have been supported and overseen by site Principals. Much of BUSD' focus with regards to Instruction during this semester has been to support teachers in implementing the comprehensive Professional Development Program (PDP) from the yearlong

CORE Reading Academy' from last year. Progress in this area has been evident in the reallocation of Instructional Minutes at each site, the creation of a clear Scope and Sequence of ELA instruction for K-5 classrooms, and the launch of the pilot phase of the new Language Arts curriculum adoption.

Over the Fall semester, Berkeley Principals supervised an internal audit of instructional minutes for all classrooms across the eleven elementary school sites. In this process, general education teachers were asked to adjust their daily schedules to include a minimum amount of instructional time dedicated to daily English Language Arts instruction (125 daily minutes for 3rd-5th Grade, 120 daily minutes for 1st-2nd Grade, and 110 daily minutes for Kindergarten) of which 30-35 minutes of this daily block is dedicated for Phonological Awareness, Phonics and Fluency Instruction in Kindergarten, 35-40 minutes is the minimum daily allotment for these foundational skills in 1st-2nd Grade, and 15-20 minutes in Grades 3-5. Aligning instructional minutes across classrooms throughout the district can ensure that students receive sufficient Tier 1 Instruction in foundational reading skills, while also laying the groundwork for the amount of instructional minutes needed next year to implement the new ELA curriculum.

To assist classroom teachers in applying the skills and strategies learned at the CORE Reading Academy, and integrating these strategies into their existing Tier 1 Instruction with FastTrack and other ELA materials, the BUSD Curriculum and Instruction Department created a detailed Scope and Sequence of ELA instruction for each grade level. For Grades K-2, these updated Scope and Sequence guides include daily and weekly guidance on Instruction in Phonological Awareness, Phonics, and Sight Words, as well as a detailed Pacing Guide for grade-level Decodable Texts. In Grades 3-5, these curricular-guidance documents include a suggested pacing for Fluency & Comprehension Routines from the CORE Reading Academy. Much of the October 7 full-day professional learning in-service for elementary educators was focused on deepening understanding of the instructional models, routines and strategies listed in these Scope and Sequence documents. This PD day also included time for teachers to review and practice the following choice-based topics: Implementing an Explicit 6-Step Phonics Lesson Sequence, Improving Fluency Routines (ex: Peer-Assisted Learning Strategies

[PALS], Repeated Reading, Stop/Go, Partner Reading, Newscaster Reading, and Reader's Theater), Best Practices for Using Decodable Text, and Shifting Mindsets around Independent Reading. To monitor the implementation of these instructional strategies at the individual classroom level, all elementary principals received training in how to use the new BUSD Explicit Phonics Observation Tool (Figure 2) and the

Figure 2- BUSD Explicit Phonics Observation Tool (Grades K-2)

Explicit Phonics Observation Tool			
Teacher:	Date:	Grade:	
Observer:	Observed	Notes:	
Tier 1: Whole Group	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Targeted Small Group Reteach/Intervention	<input type="checkbox"/>		
General Elements of a Six-Step Phonics Lesson			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Active participation including verbal student responses/accountable response Aligned to Grade level scope and sequence and/or student needs Brk pace: see time stamps for each part, with strong practiced routines Clear signaling for student responses (my turn your turn) Correct pronunciation of sounds with immediate and consistent error correction Preplanned and focused on identified sound/letter patterns 	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Phonemic Awareness (1 - 3 min)			
A variety of phonemic awareness activities help students make sense of the alphabetic principle and develop their phonics skills. The ability to hear, identify, and manipulate individual sounds of spoken words. Phonemic awareness should include oral activities without a link to letters and letter combinations.	<input type="checkbox"/>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Activities should be taught orally and include blending, segmenting, and manipulating sounds Tier II may include manipulatives such as letter tiles and Elkonin boxes 	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Introduce Sound / Spelling (1 - 3 min)			
Phonics elements are explicitly taught in isolation. Sound spelling activities explicitly link the sounds of oral language to letters and letter combinations.	<input type="checkbox"/>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher uses visual aids such as alphabet cards, letter-sound cards, and / or word cards to support the connection between phonemes (sounds) and graphemes (letters) No more than 30 letter/sound combinations are drilled daily. Letter/sound combinations are explicitly taught before they are introduced into daily drills 	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Blend / Segment Words (~6 minutes/12-15 words)			
Blending includes explicit instruction and practice in sounding out and reading words. Routines include sound by sound, continuous, spelling, focused, and / or whole word blending. Explicit modeling of how letters, and letter patterns work together to create words. Strategies for decoding are modeled and practiced. This could include short words, long vowels, blends, digraphs, vowel combinations, inflectional endings, compound words, multisyllable words, root words, prefixes, suffixes and more.	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Build Automatic Word Recognition/High Frequency Words (1 - 3 min)			
Activities to develop automaticity focus on the rapid and effortless decoding and reading of words in isolation. Opportunities for students to practice both decodable and irregular words without pausing or stopping for individual sounds. Words are modeled and practiced without the scaffold or supports of blending routines.	<input type="checkbox"/>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students read previously blended words with correct prosody and intonation without sounding out letters or syllables Teacher introduces and frequently reviews common irregular words based on grade level and determined scope and sequence (Grade K was, No, the (Grade 1: there, because) (Grade 2-3: laugh, beautiful) 	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Apply to Decodable Text (5-10 min)			
Opportunities to practice reading and rereading decodable texts to develop automaticity. Decodable texts contain a high proportion of the words that are made up of previously taught sound/spelling correspondences. Students apply the skills just taught to text. Decodable text should be comprised of previously taught letter-sound relationships. Irregular words found in decodable text should have also been previously taught. Students gradually move to less controlled text as their ability and confidence grows.	<input type="checkbox"/>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students practice taught phonics patterns in controlled text where 80% or more of the words can be decoded through previously taught skills Students have multiple opportunities to read orally including whisper reading, choral reading, partner reading, and individual reading Whole group practice may include 2-3 sentences or more; small group, partner or individual practice may include decodable readers Students should be afforded the opportunity to independently decode and read text with minimal teacher support (engage in productive struggle) 	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Word Work for Decoding and Encoding (5-10 min)			
A range of activities leads students to practice sound/spelling patterns by building, manipulating, and sorting words. Word work activities include word sorting, Elkonin boxes with letters, word building, and dictation. Students practice with and apply the taught sounds / sound patterns in a variety of ways including reading, dictating, writing, word sorts, games, spelling activities, identifying word families, and more.	<input type="checkbox"/>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students apply letter-sound knowledge in reading and writing activities Teacher provides immediate and consistent corrective feedback to support letter formation, word spacing, spelling and paper handling Explicit modeling of letter formation / handwriting takes place outside of the six-step phonics lesson 	<input type="checkbox"/>		

BUSD Fluency Instruction Observation Tool (Figure 3) that was co-developed along with CORE literacy consultants.

In terms of improving Tier 1 Language Arts **Instruction** in Grades 6-8, middle school Humanities teachers have participated in two Communities of Practice focused around implementing strategies from the “CORE Adolescent Literacy Solutions” series. Topics covered in these professional learning communities include: implementing research-based Fluency routines, teaching morphology mini-lessons, and integrating vocabulary learning strategies into literature instruction. These Humanities Communities of Practice will continue with session 3 & 4 in January and April of 2025.

The English Language Arts adoption process for a new Tier 1 curriculum for elementary schools progressed during the first half of this school year with the initial cycle of curriculum piloting. From August to December of 2024, pilot teachers from across Berkeley schools have taught the *Expeditionary Learning (EL) Education* curriculum as the first pilot ELA program up for adoption. The Cycle 2 Language Arts pilot will take place in January through April of 2025 and the curriculum to be piloted consists of a combination of *Fishtank Plus* for knowledge building and comprehension, along with *Functional Phonics and Morphology* as the foundational skills curriculum. More detailed reporting on the ELA Adoption will be included in Monitoring Report 6.

In order to document the implementation of the Tier 1 instructional strategies that are part of the LIP, Berkeley Unified has created the BUSD Explicit Phonics Observation Tool and the BUSD Fluency Instruction Observation Tool referenced above. Additionally, site administrators have participated in a series of Instructional Rounds to practice using these tools as they observe teachers delivering Tier 1 **Instruction** across multiple school sites. Nonetheless, evidence of individual classroom observations taking place across all elementary sites, and has not been observed at this time [Action 13A]. At the middle school level, the development of an Observation Tool and protocol for observations of Grades 6-8 Reading and Language Arts classrooms would be the next recommended steps in order to collect evidence on changes in classroom practices across the three middle school sites [Action 13B].

Figure 3- BUSD Fluency Instruction Observation Tool (Grades 3-5)

Berkeley

Fluency Instruction Observation Tool

Teacher:	Date:	Grade:
Observer:	Observed	Notes:
Tier 1- Whole Group	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Targeted Small Group Intervention	<input type="checkbox"/>	
General Elements of Fluency Instruction		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Active participation; including all students reading aloud Aligned: provides practice in target skill with an appropriately challenging and engaging text Brief instruction using a short passage (200 words or less) with opportunities for repeated student practice Clear signaling for student reading and teacher modeling (my turn your turn) Correction of errors is immediate and consistent Preplanned and focused on student needs based on data 	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Fluency Instruction Focus		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The lesson focuses on one or more of the elements of fluent reading: accuracy, fluency (rate), prosody Fluency practice might include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assisted reading (teacher, peer- and audio-) Repeated reading of grade-level or choice text Repeated reading of decodable or control text Echo and choral reading Partner reading *For other strategies see Teaching Reading Sourcebook, page 365 	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Accuracy		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The text students are given for fluency practice can be read with, at least, approximately 95% accuracy For students who are reading below the level of the passage; the difficult words have been practiced correctly/taught so they can read it with at least 95% accuracy OR they have been given a modified text they CAN read with 95% accuracy 	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Fluency		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emphasis on reasonably accurate reading at an appropriate rate with suitable expression (Hasbrouck & Glaser 2019)—NOT speed reading Teachers and/or peer models are monitoring appropriate rate, attending to punctuation, and providing feedback 	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Prosody		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emphasis on reasonably accurate reading at an appropriate rate with suitable expression (Hasbrouck & Glaser 2019)—NOT speed reading Teachers and/or peer models are monitoring appropriate rate, attending to punctuation, and providing feedback 	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Recommendations - Instruction

1. Collect evidence of classroom observations of Tier 1 Explicit Phonics Instruction by site for Grades K-2 during the Winter of 2025.
2. Collect evidence of classroom observations of Tier 1 Fluency Instruction by site for Grades 3-5 during the Winter of 2025.
3. Develop an Observation Tool and protocol for documenting implementation of targeted instructional strategies for Grades 6-8 Reading and Language Arts teachers by February 2025.

Cross-Cutting Theme 4: Intervention

The fourth theme that is integrated across the actions of the Literacy Improvement Program is how **Interventions** are provided for students within the larger Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) model. As BUSD is simultaneously strengthening its use of assessment data to strengthen Tier 1 Instruction, it is important to consider how this process can also lead to improvements in supplemental services for Tier 2 and Tier 3 Interventions. In the original Settlement Agreement, BUSD agreed to provide appropriately intensive and early research-based reading intervention services, related services, supplementary aids and services, accommodations, and modifications to students with reading disabilities, including dyslexia.

The table below captures the progress to date on the cross-cutting theme of **Intervention**.

Substantial Progress
15b. Conduct a review and assessment of BUSD's Grades 6-8 reading intervention programs in conjunction with school site principals, teachers, school personnel and bargaining units. II.B.2.a.i
Adequate Progress
<p>10. Provide professional development to school-based teams to use of Benchmark Assessment data the MTSS-Reading Data System ("MTSS-RDS") to triage students into appropriately intensive Tier 2 or Tier 3 reading interventions, write reading goals that meaningfully reduce the reading achievement gap, and monitor progress and report progress to parents/guardians to ensure growth and development. II.B.2.b.i</p> <p>19. Develop and implement an MTSS staffing plan that supports Tier 2 service delivery model by coordinating available remedial programs such as Title 1, English Learner, and reading specialists with input from the Outside Consultants. II.B.2.b.iii</p> <p>20. Consult with the Outside Consultants with regard to development and implementation of progress monitoring guidelines for Tier 2 and Tier 3 students. II.A.1.b.v</p> <p>21. Implement the Wilson Reading System. II.B.2.d.ii</p> <p>35. Develop and implement an MTSS staffing plan that supports Tier 3 service delivery by special education personnel with input from the Outside Consultants. II.B.2.b.iii</p>
Minimal Progress
-
Progress Not Evident
-

Summary of Findings - Intervention

During the first half of this 2024-2025 academic year, the Implementation Team shifted much of its efforts in the cross-cutting theme of **Intervention** to focus on middle school interventions, while continuing to support the substantial progress in **Interventions** for its elementary sites that were the focus of Year 2. Through a cross-departmental collaboration between the Curriculum and Instruction Department and Special Education Services, BUSD has enacted substantial changes to the district's reading intervention and support for middle school students.

The first major development in middle school reading was the restructuring of the reading **Intervention** programs offered to students in Grades 6-8. BUSD collaborated with its middle school literacy teams to develop a general Course Description of its Tier 2 and Tier 3 classes ([Appendix M](#)), detailing the instructional focus of these classes- including curriculum, reading components taught (ex: fluency, polysyllabic decoding), and the time and structure of these course offerings. This course description also provides instructional guidance for teachers of students with intensive decoding needs versus those students with more strategic decoding needs.

As part of this process of restructuring middle school **Intervention** programs, the decision was made to discontinue the *Read180* program due to its limited effectiveness and to pursue a more comprehensive, evidence-based intervention. The *REWARDS (Reading Excellence: Word Attack and Rate Development Strategies)* curriculum was officially incorporated into the middle school reading support course, complementing other evidence-based approaches such as *IMSE Orton-Gillingham*, *IMSE Morphology*, and *Wilson* structured literacy interventions. Together, these programs create a complimentary continuum of reading supports for students requiring additional assistance in reading development. Classroom observations to ensure fidelity of these reading programs are ongoing, and are also helping to guide coaching efforts and provide targeted support for reading teachers. Additionally, these Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventionists are using DIBELS ORF data to frequently monitor student progress and inform instruction.

Recommendations - Intervention

1. Provide additional coaching for Tier 2 and Tier 3 Interventionists (ex: model lessons, lesson study, peer observations) to improve the delivery of their structured literacy programs during the Winter and Spring of 2025. [continued from Monitoring Report 4]

Cross-Cutting Theme 5: Systems of Support

Similar to the first cross-cutting theme of Accountability introduced in this report, **Systems of Support** is a critical piece of the Literacy Improvement Program to ensure that Berkeley Unified is able to *sustain* changes in literacy instruction, intervention, and assessment well beyond the scope of this plan. The CA ELA/ELD Framework identifies three critical components of an effective implementation model that are also relevant to the success of the LIP: “professional learning , leadership, and program supports”. Effective program supports create a learning community in which teachers, administrators, and support staff are engaged in an ongoing cycle of learning, reflecting on, and improving their own practice, thus encouraging innovation of new ideas to lead to sustainable change.

Clear and consistent communication is another principal tenet of effective program supports. Implementing new assessment systems, high-quality instructional materials, and evidence-based instructional practices and intervention are not enough for sustaining these changes long-term. It is also imperative that the school district successfully integrate program components across complementary initiatives, in order to sustain these program shifts to ensure high-quality teaching and learning experiences for all students. Explicitly connecting the dots between multiple district

initiatives can help lead to greater implementation efficiency and also encourage cross-departmental collaboration. The final key component of effective **Systems of Support** is the school district's ability to demonstrate flexibility. By allowing space for the LIP to evolve and by capturing these innovations back into the larger LIP, the district will be more responsive to unforeseen areas of concern that may emerge at a later stage of the implementation process.

The table below captures the progress to date on the cross-cutting theme of **Systems of Support**.

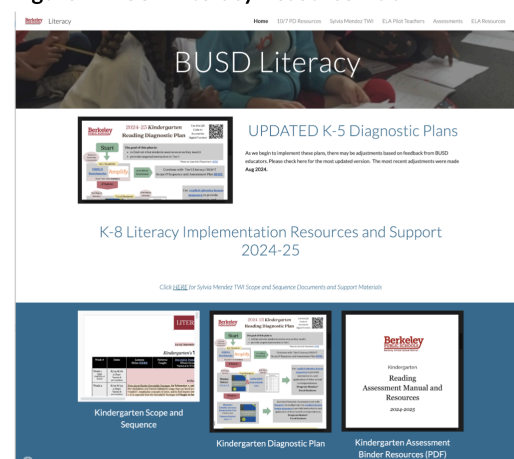
Substantial Progress
<p>1. Form a District Implementation Team <i>II.A.1.a</i></p> <p>3. Consult with the Outside Consultants with regard to development of the Targeted Professional Development Plan (PDP). <i>II.A.1.b.ii</i></p> <p>17. BUSD will consult with the Outside Consultant with regard to development of guidelines and criteria used to place at-risk students into Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions. <i>II.A.1.b.iv</i></p> <p>22. Identify and secure the services of an impartial outside Monitor to monitor and report on BUSD's compliance with the Literacy Improvement Program. <i>II.C.1.a</i></p>
Adequate Progress
<p>4. Review and implement reforms to District policies, procedures and practices as needed to fulfill the goals of the Literacy Improvement Program, including RTI. <i>II.B.1.a</i></p> <p>31. Develop corollary Section 504 goal development and progress monitoring standards. <i>II.B.2.d.iii</i></p>
Minimal Progress
<p>30. Develop a plan with the Outside Consultants to increase use of the MTSS as part of the comprehensive evaluation to identify students with SLD, including dyslexia. <i>II.B.2.d.i</i></p>
Progress Not Evident
-

Summary of Findings - Systems of Support

Under the final cross-cutting theme of **Systems Support**, BUSD continues the work needed to reinforce its foundational protocols and policies in order to sustain the long-term changes brought about by the Literacy Improvement Program. The major developments in this area are reflected in the creation of a new Literacy Resource Hub for BUSD teachers and the Implementation Team's efforts to draft a plan for use of MTSS as part of the comprehensive evaluation to identify students with Specific Learning Disability (SLD).

To help classroom teachers navigate the many changes that have resulted from the Literacy Improvement program, BUSD has created a Literacy Resource Hub (Figure 4) where all documents necessary for

Figure 4- BUSD Literacy Resource Hub



implementing the LIP at the classroom level can be found. This internal **Systems of Support** includes the Diagnostic Plans and Scope and Sequence guidance for each grade-level, in addition to more specific Teacher Tips for navigating this “Bridge Year” before the adoption of a new evidence-based Language Arts curriculum. Now that this one-stop repository exists, it can also be used to house additional resources teachers will need to implement the new reading program for next year. This resource also allows for sustainability of practices for new teachers entering BUSD, as it provides more streamlined access to documents related to expectations for new classroom teachers regarding literacy instruction in Berkeley.

Regarding Special Education reforms and **Systems of Support**, one area in which the BUSD Special Education Team continues to focus is to investigate how to use “MTSS as part of the comprehensive evaluation to identify students with SLD, including dyslexia” [Action 30], perhaps the most ambitious goal of the settlement agreement. As mentioned in Monitoring Report 4, the creation of a MTSS Specific Learning Disability Eligibility Model can only be fully implemented once the remaining 36 Actions of the LIP have been accomplished. Over the Fall of 2025, a team of Special Education TSAs have worked along with Dr. Gibbons to create a draft of this new policy, which currently stands at 24 pages. Although this Action is still under the “Minimal Progress” evaluative band as of December, 2024, this should not discount the many hours that have gone into the creation and revision of this new policy.

The recommendation in the area of **Systems of Support** relates to the instructional leadership component of the Literacy Improvement Program. At its core, the LIP is a change initiative, and in order to ensure that these changes have been implemented across all BUSD classes, the role of Principal as leader and manager is essential. Site leaders in Berkeley Unified have received hours of professional learning regarding the specific Actions of the Settlement Agreement, and many are experiencing high levels of implementation at their sites. However, this is not consistent across all school sites. Providing BUSD Principals with additional learning opportunities on the essential elements of Change Management and Change Leadership could serve as an important catalyst for ensuring that the Actions in the Literacy Improvement Program are implemented with fidelity in every classroom across all Berkeley schools.

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Recommendations - Systems of Support

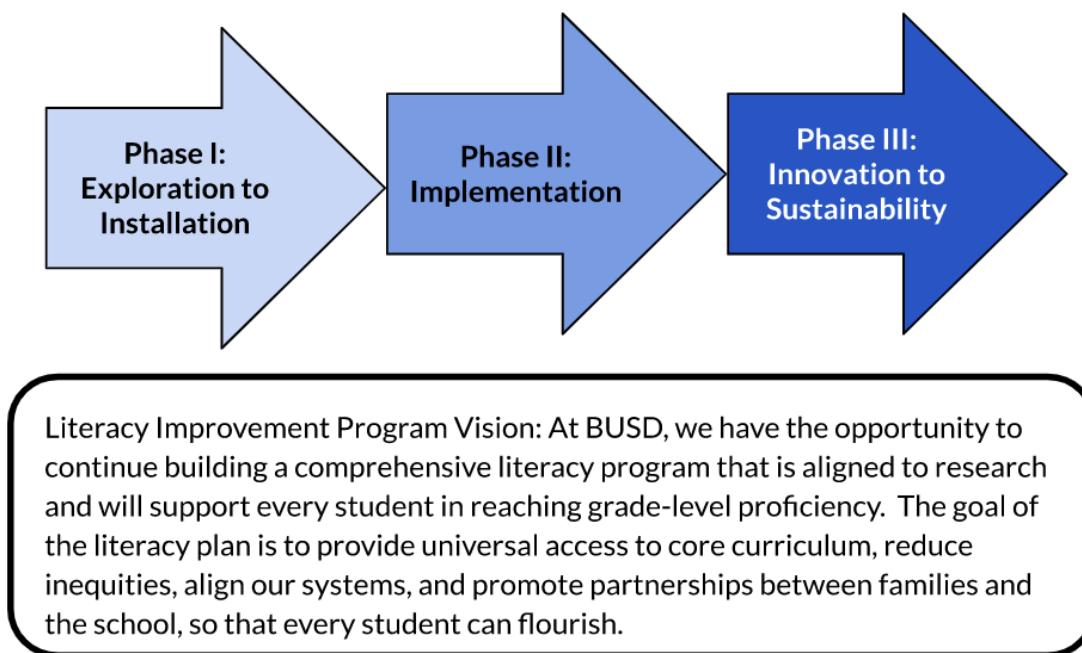
1. Complete the MTSS Specific Learning Disability Eligibility Plan by May 2025.
2. Provide professional learning in Change Management & Change Leadership for site Principals in Spring of 2025.

METHODOLOGY - IMPLEMENTATION SCIENCE

The logic model on which this report has been created is taken from the *California English Language Arts/ English Language Development Framework* (CDE, 2014). Chapter 11 of this framework details the phases of Implementation Science, comprising distinct stages that an organization will experience when attempting to fully implement a new set of strategies or innovations across multiple schools and departments. These stages are identified as “exploration, installation, initial implementation, full implementation, innovation, and sustainability”. In the context of the BUSD Literacy Improvement Program, these phases can be useful for evaluating the amount of progress expected over the life of the long-term change initiative set into effect by the Settlement Agreement. While the Science of Reading figured prominently in the creation of the 37 Actions in the LIP (defining “what” changes should be implemented and “why”), it is helpful to use Implementation Science and Change Theory (“how” and “when” we can expect these changes to take place) to best determine what full implementation will entail, and to set realistic expectations for the appropriate rate of change for a successful translation of these evidence-based theories and models into practice.

The image in **Figure 5** below illustrating the effective Phases of Implementation can help approximate where Berkeley Unified currently falls in its implementation of the Literacy Improvement Program, and is useful for determining if sufficient progress has been made to date.

Figure 5 - Effective Phases of Implementation (Fixsen and Blase, 2009)



Based on the earlier December 2024 Progress Report section of this report, it is evident that Berkeley Unified continues in **Phase III: Innovation and Sustainability**. At this stage of implementing a large-scale literacy plan, the focus shifts toward evaluating the fidelity of the

Literacy Improvement Program's implementation at each school site and exploring strategies to ensure its long-term sustainability. Creating policies and procedures to ensure that all new employees are onboarded in these new systems is also key to the enduring success of the broader Literacy Improvement Program.

CONCLUSION

The primary purpose of this fifth Monitoring Report is to evaluate progress on the BUSD Literacy Improvement Program from July-December 2024 in an effort to: a) hold the district accountable to the terms it has accepted from the Dyslexia Settlement Agreement, b) provide concrete next steps for the Implementation Team, and c) serve as an update for original Settlement Plaintiffs and current BUSD parents, caregivers, and members of the larger Berkeley community.

A major theme of this fifth report is that there is inconsistency in implementation of the Literacy Improvement program across all school sites. At the district-level, BUSD has demonstrated adequate progress on the LIP in all five of the cross-cutting themes of **Accountability, Assessments, Instruction, Intervention, and Systems of Support**. Additionally, after multiple visits to each school site, and individual interviews with Principals, it is clear that a handful of Berkeley schools have fully embraced the spirit of the Settlement Agreement, and have worked tirelessly to implement the majority of the 37 Actions listed in this three-year plan. Nevertheless, it is also clear that there are school sites that have not yet implemented many of the changes detailed in the LIP. Additionally, it is unclear if the district is evaluating how individual school sites have implemented the LIP Actions. Some questions to address for this final semester of the literacy plan are: "What evidence has BUSD collected of site-level implementation?" and "Who is supervising the collection and analysis of this site-level implementation data?" Ensuring fidelity of implementation at each school is essential to achieving the primary goal of this work: to create and maintain a high-quality, evidence-based reading program for future generations of Berkeley students.

The next Monitoring Report, evaluating progress during the final half of the 2024-2025 academic year, will include more specific reporting on the implementation of the Literacy Improvement Program at individual school sites. This sixth Monitoring Report in the series will be based on the findings from BUSD's internal 2024-2025 Quarter 2 and Quarter 3 Reports, and will be shared in May of 2025.

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Appendices

- A) [Full Class Action Settlement Agreement](#)
- B) [2022 Q1 Report on Status of Required Actions](#)
- C) [2022 Q2 Report on Status of Required Actions](#)
- D) [2022 Q3 Report on Status of Required Actions](#)
- E) [2022 Q4 Report on Status of Required Actions](#)
- F) [2023 Q1 Report on Status of Required Actions](#)
- G) [2023 Q2 Report on Status of Required Actions](#)
- H) [2023 Q3 Report on Status of Required Actions](#)

- I) [2023 Q4 Report on Status of Required Actions](#)
- J) [2024 Q1 Report on Status of Required Actions](#)
- K) [Literacy at BUSD Website](#)
- L) [CORE Reading Academy Scope and Sequence](#)
- M) [Course Description: Middle School Reading Support in Grades 6-8](#)

References

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