

Project ARISE Year 4 Interim Analysis Memo

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Introduction

The Reading Instruction and Intervention (RII) grant evaluation is examining the implementation of Project Accelerating Reading Intervention for Systemic Excellence (ARISE). This Interim Analysis Memo provides an update on several data collection activities that occurred in Year 3 of the grant period, with analysis efforts concluding in Year 4. This memo provides a

descriptive summary of the results of the spring 2025 participant survey; an analysis of progress of Project ARISE educators from fall 2024 to spring 2025 in the areas of self-efficacy, knowledge of literacy instruction, and use of evidence-based practices; and an examination of educator characteristics. In addition, the summary describes findings from a set of interviews conducted in spring 2025 with local education agency (LEA) leaders, site-based educators, and key Project ARISE staff. The memo describes next steps for the Year 4 formative and summative evaluation.



SUMMARY HIGHLIGHTS OF THE FALL 2025 INTERIM MEMO

The formative analysis included interviews in spring 2025 with LEA staff (teachers and school leaders) and key Project ARISE staff. The analysis found the following highlights:

- Across sites, participants agreed that Project ARISE aligned well with their schools' literacy priorities and addressed diverse learner needs. Some teachers noted Project ARISE strategies served their multilingual learners and struggling readers well.
- Project ARISE was seen as timely and well aligned to strategic goals from several administrator perspectives.
- Across sites, educators described cross-district collaboration, coaching, and professional learning as highly engaging and impactful.
- Administrators demonstrated varying degrees of readiness during the initial launch phase of Project ARISE.
- School size and campuswide implementation effort mattered for smooth implementation.
- Implementation challenges and barriers included time constraints and convincing veteran staff to adopt new approaches.
- Teachers and principals said Project ARISE fits well with the literacy activities and requirements they are engaged in for the new Reading Difficulties Risk Screener.

The American Institutes for Research® (AIR®) also administered the participant survey in fall 2024 with Year 3 Project ARISE educators as well as a follow-up survey with the same group of participants in spring 2025. The surveys were developed to measure constructs such as knowledge of topics covered in the training, growth mindset, and self-efficacy for literacy instruction. The fall survey had 110 respondents, and the spring survey had 67 respondents. Survey highlights include the following:

- **Educator Profile:** Most respondents were general education teachers (82%), most of whom taught multiple subjects in self-contained classrooms (80%) and worked directly on reading skills with students (95%).
- **Increased Use of Project ARISE in Instructional Practices:** Across all counties, educators reported increased use of evidence-based literacy practices and asset-based approaches from fall to spring. Notably, San Diego showed the greatest growth in frequent use of evidence-based practices with all students (from 75% to 92%).
- **Improved Educator Outcomes:** Educators demonstrated statistically significant gains in self-efficacy ($ES = 0.37$) and knowledge of literacy instruction ($ES = 0.41$) from fall to spring, regardless of experience level or grade taught. Although teachers' reported use of evidence-based practices increased from fall to spring, the change was not statistically significant.
- **Motivations for Participation:** The proportion of educators participating due to requirements dropped significantly in spring, especially in Contra Costa (from 75% to 13%). Motivations shifted toward administrative encouragement and personal interest in improving literacy instruction, particularly in Glenn and San Diego Counties.

Research Design

AIR is conducting a mixed-methods evaluation of Project ARISE, organized into three phases across three cohorts of participants (2023-2024, 2024-2025, 2025-2026): the planning phase, a formative evaluation, and a summative evaluation. The **formative phase**, focused on schools participating in 2023–24, began in April 2023 and will continue through April 2026. This phase focuses on (a) the fidelity with which program components are implemented, (b) facilitators of and barriers to successful implementation, and (c) lessons learned through the experience of implementing the program in real-world contexts. The Year 3 formative evaluation phase focuses on the shift away from the tiers of implementation service delivery model in Year 2 related to Project ARISE activities toward an increased focus on the school–district partnerships. Interviews with LEA staff (teachers and school leaders) and key Project ARISE staff were conducted in spring 2025 to gather information related to (a) through (c) above.

Formative Evaluation

In this memo, we provide an update on the qualitative analysis in Year 3 guided by the five formative evaluation questions in Exhibit 1.

Exhibit 1. Formative Evaluation Questions and Data Sources

Key formative evaluation question (EQ)	Sub-questions	Data sources
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent was each component of the ARISE professional learning program implemented with fidelity? In what ways does ARISE professional learning support participating teachers and leaders in implementing evidence-based practices that address the needs of diverse learners (e.g., students with disabilities, struggling readers, multilingual learners, and long-term English learners)? How well does the content and structure of the professional learning align with the needs of participating LEA leaders? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What were the challenges or barriers to the delivery of each component of the ARISE program? What were the successes or lessons learned that can inform the scale-up of the ARISE program across the state? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of professional learning content and structure Review of available outcome measures Interviews with LEA leaders Program data
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> In what ways are ARISE hubs^a supporting schools and LEAs in the effective use of evidence-based practices, screening tools, strategies, and data, including developing pupils’ executive functioning skills? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How well does the content and structure of each component of professional learning align with the needs of LEA leaders? How would you rate the effectiveness of the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interviews with COE staff Interviews with LEA leaders Survey of site-based educators

5. To what extent are participating LEAs implementing the evidence-based practices featured in the ARISE professional learning?	implementation of these practices?	
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Note. COE = county office of education; LEA = local education agency; PL = professional learning.

^a There are three ARISE hubs, one at each partner COE (Contra Costa County, San Diego County, and Glenn County).

Methods and Data Source

To conduct the formative analysis in Year 3, AIR partnered with the San Diego County Office of Education internal evaluation lead to conduct interviews in spring 2025. The goal for the interviews was to include three types of participants: (a) county office of education (COE) leads from the three participating counties, (2) content leads from Project ARISE, and (3) a sample of LEA staff (teachers and school leaders) from districts participating in Project ARISE. An email was sent to the main point of contact for each partner organization or LEA to schedule individual interviews to discuss the implementation of Project ARISE. The following partner organizations were included in the interview sample:

- Contra Costa County Office of Education
- San Diego County Office of Education
- Glenn County Office of Education
- TNTP
- The Center for Whole Child Education
- University of La Verne
- University of California San Francisco
- National Center on Intensive Intervention

Individual interviews were conducted with COE leads and program partners in February and March 2025. We interviewed a total of 11 individuals from the three COEs and the five partner organizations. The interviews focused on participant perspectives on how well the Literacy Leadership Network responded to the needs of district and school partners as well as successes or challenges with implementing Project ARISE in Year 3. Twenty-one LEA staff (teachers and school leaders) were also interviewed. The conversations with COE members, program partners, and LEA staff lasted approximately 60 minutes each and were audio recorded (with permission).

Upon completion of the interviews, the audio recordings were professionally transcribed using *Azure OpenAI* (Microsoft, 2025). The transcript data were deidentified and stored on a secure platform. The transcripts were then coded qualitatively using a combination of inductive (emergent) and deductive (a priori) codes (Saldana, 2021), leveraging Microsoft 365 Copilot software. Each of the 32 transcripts

were coded independently by two analysts who met weekly to discuss coding definitions, check the reliability of their coding efforts, and identify a priori and emergent themes.

Summative Evaluation

The **summative phase** began in September 2023 and will continue through April 2026. This phase focuses on the impact of the ARISE program on instructional behaviors and learner outcomes. The summative evaluation of Project ARISE on teacher outcomes will use a before-and-after design and will measure outcomes of teachers using survey data at two times (i.e., before joining the program and at the end of each school year). The impact evaluation of project ARISE on student outcomes will use matching techniques to identify schools similar to those participating in the project. We will use publicly available school-level data on Grade 3 English language arts (ELA) proficiency rates in spring 2025.¹ This memo includes a description of the outcome measures and a baseline analysis of those measures.

Exhibit 2. Summative Evaluation and Data Sources

Summative evaluation question	Data source
6. Is ARISE professional learning associated with improved educator outcomes over time, such as self-efficacy for literacy instruction, related knowledge, and classroom practices in reading instruction? Is there variation across different types of educators (e.g., experience, grade level)?	Educator pre-post survey
7. How has the ARISE intervention improved student outcomes, such as English language arts achievement?	State test scores, local standardized assessments (if available)

Methods and Data Source

To respond to these summative questions, we collected data using the following methods:

- Educator outcomes survey items (see Participant Survey in Appendix A)
- Student outcomes based on Grade 3 ELA achievement scores
- Subgroup variation based on survey demographics and state-level demographic data

Outcomes

- Teacher self-efficacy, growth mindset, and use of evidence based instructional practices
- Grade 3 ELA achievement at participating schools
- Grade 3 ELA achievement for students with disabilities, struggling readers, and multilingual learners at participating schools

¹ We focus on Grade 3 because it has the earliest available standardized measure of reading achievement.

The publicly available school-level data provided by the California Department of Education’s California School Dashboard is expected to be released in fall 2025. When the data become available, AIR will use a school-level quasi-experimental research design with a matched comparison sample to estimate the 1-year effect of Project ARISE on Grade 3 student ELA achievement in the 2024–25 school year.

Participant Survey

AIR administered the participant survey in fall 2024 with Year 3 Project ARISE educators who were enrolled in online courses and located at a school or district partnering with one of the three COE leads. A follow-up survey was administered with the same group of participants in spring 2025 with the support of COE leads and principals. The surveys were developed to measure constructs such as knowledge of topics covered in the training, growth mindset, and self-efficacy for literacy instruction. The surveys also collected information about teacher motivation for participating in Project ARISE, satisfaction with course content and pacing, future plans to use the information learned, and demographics. Taking previous research into account, the team chose to include an established measure used in other research, called the Teachers’ Sense of Efficacy for Literacy Instruction (Tschannen-Moran & Johnson, 2011).

A descriptive analysis of the data was conducted including an analysis of means and percentages of the survey items. The survey results were broken down by county (i.e., within Contra Costa County, Glenn County, and San Diego County). AIR also estimated the degree of association between participation in Project ARISE and specific educator outcomes from fall 2024 to spring 2025 using pre-post regression analysis. The analysis accounted for the nested structure of school data (i.e., educators nested within schools) and controls for educator characteristics (e.g., years of teaching experience, grade level taught). To examine the extent to which the association differs across demographics, AIR also used similar regression models that include interaction terms between demographics and the Project ARISE indicator.

AIR programmed the web survey using the Voxco® survey platform. The fall 2024 baseline survey was fielded from July 26, 2024, through December 4, 2024. The final response rate was 59% for the fall baseline survey.² The spring 2025 follow-up survey was conducted from May 15, 2025, through June 2, 2025. The response rate was 47% for the spring follow-up survey.³

² A total of 110 respondents out of a total sample of 203 participants.

³ A total of 67 respondents out of a total sample of 140 participants. In the fall baseline survey, AIR had access to a participant list of 140 individuals. Of these 140, 67 individuals completed both the fall baseline and the spring follow-up survey.

Findings

Findings From Partner and LEA Interviews

Interviews conducted with COE Leads, Project ARISE partners, and LEA staff surfaced important insights into the program’s progress during its third year of implementation. These discussions revealed notable successes and challenges while also generating recommendations to strengthen the program’s design and delivery in Year 4. These findings also align with three formative evaluation questions: (a) evaluation question 2 (In what ways does ARISE professional learning [PL] support participating teachers and leaders in implementing evidence-based practices that address the needs of diverse learners?), (b) evaluation question 3 (How well do the content and structure of the PL align with the needs of participating LEA leaders?), and (c) evaluation question 4 (In what ways are ARISE hubs supporting schools and LEAs in the effective use of evidence-based practices, screening tools, strategies, and data, including developing pupils’ executive functioning skills?).

Findings are organized into the following thematic areas:

- Responsiveness to partner needs
- Engagement in collaboration activities
- Implementation challenges and barriers
- Transitioning the new reading difficulties screener and rolling out Project ARISE

Project ARISE Responsiveness to District/School Needs

Across sites, participants agreed that Project ARISE aligned well with their schools’ literacy priorities and addressed diverse learner needs, especially for multilingual learners and struggling readers.

Teachers highlighted how ARISE strategies supported English learners (ELs) and struggling readers in their classrooms.

“I think Project ARISE is great and I think it fulfills all those needs.” –Participant C

“I really liked the Project ARISE approach to good Tier 1 instruction and strategies for our language learners and English-only students.

We did a lot of work analyzing our new curriculum and applying it to best practice. It really aligned with what we needed.” –Participant S

Evaluation Question 3: How well do the content and structure of the professional learning align with the needs of participating LEA leaders?

Some participants also noted that program lead coaches provided useful instructional strategies or suggestions for improving lesson design for teachers regarding multilingual learners and English Learners (ELs).

“They gave us a lot of ... ideas for our MLLs [multilingual learners]. You know ... through our ELD (English Language Development) program, ... benchmarks and ... vocabulary cards and ... dictation strategies. Also, blending and phonics, ... I think word recognition.” –Participant C

“I really liked the work that we did on analyzing our curriculum and applying it to best practice. So the intersessions we had with [Coach A] and [Coach B], where we got those opportunities, were the most beneficial.” –Participant S

Notably, teachers and administrators often praised Project ARISE for practical classroom techniques that helped their student demographics, whereas administrators emphasized the broader alignment with district initiatives and goals. Teachers could see students using the techniques because teachers had been implementing the strategies with fidelity.

Evaluation Question 2: In what ways does ARISE PL support participating teachers and leaders in implementing evidence-based practices that address the needs of diverse learners?

“So we (teacher and students) watched a little video and as soon as it was done, they (students) all were like ‘I would rather have it.’ ... Like they started talking to each other about it before we even started thinking about going into a graphic organizer. Like that has become so ingrained in my teaching that I didn’t even need to say ‘Now turn and talk to your partner’ anymore. And I was like, that’s [Coach A] and [Coach B] right there. That’s what they’ve done.” –Participant E

“I think that’s what [Coach A] and [Coach B] did. When they did their inspirational walks in September and August, coming through, providing not only the Zooms, but the really amazing volume of professional development within the PowerPoints.” –Participant R

Project ARISE was seen as timely and well aligned to strategic goals from several administrator perspectives. A district literacy director remarked that when the district was approached about Project ARISE modules, they started thinking about the different opportunities this would present to their teachers focusing on literacy for K–3. They felt that Project ARISE directly supported their early literacy mandate.



“We are a small district, and knowing that the county offices can offer a significant support when approach [*sic*] around the Project ARISE modules last fall, so that would have been fall of 2023 ... really started thinking about offering opportunities to our teachers with a focus on literacy for K–3 as one of the goals for the superintendent. So, ... then it’s a goal for everyone if it’s a goal for a superintendent.” –Participant B

Administrators demonstrated varying degrees of readiness during the initial launch phase of Project ARISE. The variation in readiness and implementation experiences was shaped by how the program was introduced, how teacher leaders were selected, and overall structural support. Sites that reported

a successful implementation experience emphasized the clarity of communication with leaders , noting that cross-district collaboration was helpful. Participants also emphasized that training and early orientation helped with understanding Project ARISE and its plan for implementation.

“I thought it would be great to have additional perspectives and learn from people who aren’t our immediate colleagues” –Participant D

School size and campuswide implementation effort mattered for smooth implementation. However, it is important to note that smaller campuses had only a selected number of teachers participating in the project and they would have liked to have additional teachers participate to best represent the overall faculty and manage translating Project ARISE to the rest of the faculty. It was doable but difficult, and this was not the case in larger schools in which they were able to identify multiple teachers.

“We only have one teacher member that’s part of this [ARISE] group. It’s myself and her.”
–Participant R



Educators and administrators across sites affirmed that Project ARISE aligns with literacy priorities and supports diverse learners, with teachers integrating Tier 1 strategies into daily practice and administrators noting its fit with district goals. The program’s success was also credited to be impactful for PL from lead coaches along with strong communication and collaboration across districts. These insights lead us to our next theme, which is collaboration activities.

Engagement in Collaboration Activities

Across sites, educators described cross-district collaboration, coaching, and professional learning as highly engaging and impactful. Building on alignment with literacy priorities, another theme that emerged during our interviews was around how participants engaged in Project ARISE’s partnership activities. Teacher leaders and administrators emphasized that these opportunities not only supported instructional growth but also contributed meaningfully to school improvement planning.

“So it was big wins. The development that teachers are starting to really implement, like phonics based lessons in that oral language piece and shifting, which again is like also a huge, it may seem small to some districts or some schools who've already made that movement. But for us, like I said, we went through four years of another grant through the district and made no movement where we made one year in just this one year, we've made more movement. “ – Participant K

“on an individual basis I really liked all the stuff that they gave us some different things to try out different strategies you know and they felt very focused on we want to give you things that you use right away and its not going to be a big burden on you. I thought that was really good and helpful and you know I did bring things back and tried them with my students.” - Participant H

Teachers appreciated the chance to learn from peers and experts across districts, noting that the strategies they gained were immediately applicable. One teacher shared how she and her partner created PL sessions for their staff based on some of the content provided through Project ARISE, and another teacher remarked that the coaching helped her refine classroom routines like dictation and vocabulary chants.

The interviews with educators and administrators highlighted both successes and challenges in partnership engagement.

Successes: Three major themes emerged around successes of Project ARISE related to teacher empowerment, cross-district collaboration, and customization of learning strategies:

- Teachers felt empowered to lead PL (professional learning) and share strategies with colleagues.
- Cross-district collaboration was seen as engaging and informative.
- Coaching and walkthroughs helped tailor strategies to site-specific needs.

“Every single teacher tried the strategy our lead presented. That’s never happened with other PD (professional development). They saw one of their own succeed and said, ‘Okay, I’ll do it.’” –Participant D

Evaluation Question 4: In what ways are ARISE hubs supporting schools and LEAs in the effective use of evidence-based practices, screening tools, strategies, and data, including developing pupils’ executive functioning skills?

Challenges. The challenges that were identified in the interviews related to time constraints, small schools implementing the program, and staff engagement:

- Time constraints limited participation in after-school sessions.
- Smaller schools had fewer teacher leaders, making it harder to spread practices.
- Some staff were harder to engage, especially without dedicated time or incentives.



“Time—just not having enough time—was a challenge. We have to cover all the required curriculum, so we can only sprinkle these strategies in. They’re wonderful and important, but also time-consuming, so we have to limit what we do.” –Participant T

Overall, participants viewed Project ARISE’s partnership activities as great for collaboration and instructional improvement. The program’s structure enabled educators to learn, reflect, and lead together—building momentum and change that can be sustained.

Implementation Challenges and Barriers

Following strong engagement in partnership activities, participants also reflected on the implementation challenges and barriers they encountered while rolling out Project ARISE strategies. These challenges varied by site and role, but several consistent themes emerged across interviews.



Time constraints were a recurring concern as teachers and leaders struggled to balance Project ARISE activities with existing responsibilities.

“There were a lot of moving parts at the beginning. It took time to figure out how the coaching, the modules, and the network meetings all fit together.... Some teachers were excited, but others felt like it was just another thing added to their plate.” –Participant G

Evaluation subquestion: What were the challenges or barriers to the delivery of each component of the ARISE program?

“We had trouble finding time to meet consistently. Everyone’s schedule was packed, and it was hard to get coverage.” –Participant H

“We needed more clarity early on. People weren’t sure what was expected from each part of the program ... and we didn’t always have the time to reflect and plan how to use it.” –Participant J

Another implementation barrier that was noted was that veteran staff members were sometimes hesitant to adopt new approaches. Participants explained that building trust and demonstrating impact were key to overcoming skepticism.



“Our staff *is* very veteran (most have 25+ years). They’ve seen cycles of programs. So getting everyone to try a new approach is hard. We really had to prove that it works to convince them.” –Participant S

“We had some resistance from staff who felt like they’d seen similar initiatives before. It took a while to build trust.” –Participant I

Despite the challenges faced during the rollout of Project ARISE—ranging from time constraints to initial uncertainty and staff hesitation—participants demonstrated resilience, adaptability, and a strong commitment to making the initiative work. Their reflections reveal that, through trust building and collaborative problem solving, many sites were able to foster meaningful engagement and begin integrating ARISE strategies into daily practice. With this foundation in place, we now turn to the specific challenges in screening for four types reading of difficulties and how these intersect with ARISE implementation efforts.

Transitioning to the New Reading Difficulties Risk Screener and Project ARISE

The new Reading Difficulties Risk Screener initiative in California is part of a statewide effort mandated by Senate Bill 114, requiring annual screening of all K–2 students for reading difficulties—including

dyslexia—starting in the 2025–26 school year (San Diego County Office of Education, n.d.). Project ARISE and the new Reading Difficulties Risk Screener requirements are helping schools think of ways to improve reading instruction. **Teachers and principals said Project ARISE fits well with the activities they are engaged in related to the new requirement to administer the Reading Difficulties Risk Screener. Overall, Project ARISE is helping schools stay focused on working together on literacy goals.**

“ARISE wasn’t an extra, but part of our regular PD (professional development).” – Participant D



“It aligned with what we had already started ... a perfect complement.” –Participant R

Teachers and school leaders said Project ARISE helped them learn from each other and work together. Teachers also started asking for more training after seeing how helpful the strategies were. Even in schools with experienced staff, Project ARISE helped build trust and teamwork. ARISE is helping schools grow stronger by encouraging collaboration and shared learning.

“We’ve spent the last year having this really incredible partnership with the county office and the Project ARISE team.” –Participant O

“From the COE view, an achievement was simply seeing these multi-agency teams’ function really well.... It became a true collaborative network.” –Participant Q

As schools began using the new Reading Difficulties Risk Screener, they saw that educators were turning to Project ARISE for help. Teachers were turning to Project ARISE to give them strategies and ideas on how to support students who needed additional support based on the screener. Even though time and training are still needed, educators said they feel positive about Project ARISE.

“The screener mandate came with virtually no extra funding or training or intervention. That put pressure on ARISE to cover those gaps—like, teachers expected ARISE to give them the silver bullet for all those kids flagged by the screener.” –Participant K

Despite the challenges of implementing a new screening mandate and balancing time and training needs, educators consistently viewed Project ARISE as a valuable support system. It helped schools stay focused on literacy goals, strengthened collaboration among teachers and leaders, and offered practical strategies for supporting students flagged by the screener. The program’s ability to align with existing efforts, foster teamwork, and respond to the needs of educators made it a trusted partner in improving reading instruction.

Survey Results

The spring 2025 follow-up survey was fielded from May 15, 2025, to June 2, 2025. Forty-seven percent of the respondents were from Contra Costa County ($n = 32$), 24.35% were from San Diego County ($n = 24$), and 16% were from Glenn County ($n = 11$).

The majority of respondents were general education teachers (82%). The number of respondents who reported other job titles was much smaller. Most respondents reported that they taught multiple subjects in self-contained classes (80%). And most respondents reported that they worked directly with students on reading skills in some capacity (95%). At the same time, the majority reported that they did not have a certification as a reading or literacy specialist (89%). In terms of years of experience in their current role, half of respondents had 5 or fewer years of experience. Across all counties, half of respondents had a bachelor's degree and a third had a master's degree.

Descriptive Data of Fall/Spring Survey Data

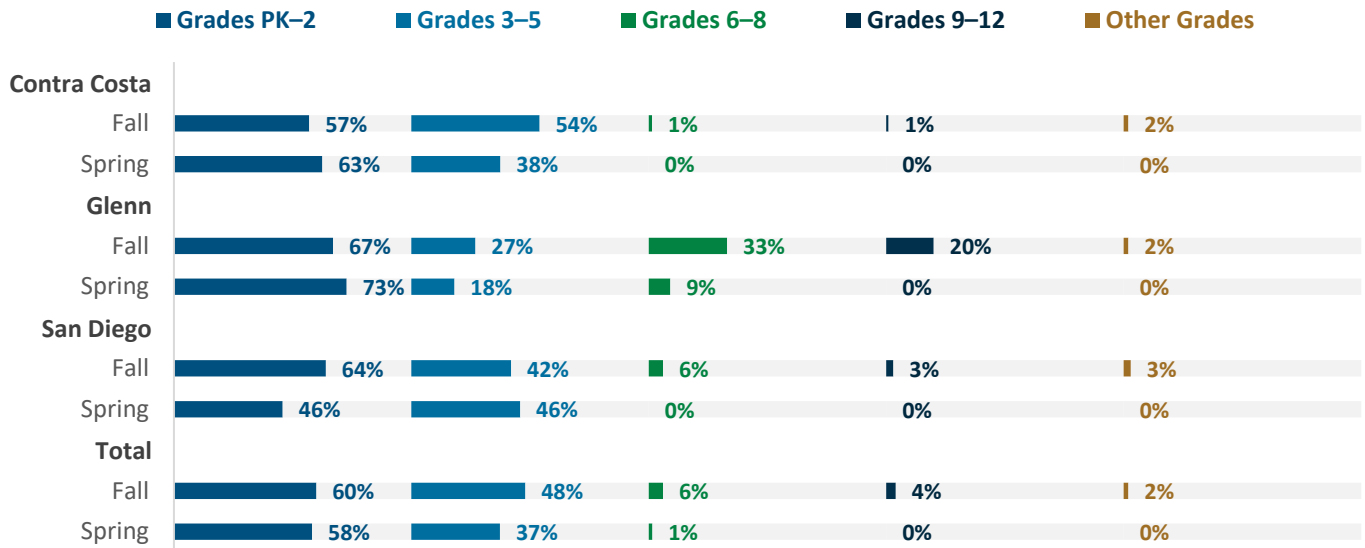
Selected results from both the fall 2024 and spring 2025 surveys are summarized in Exhibits 3–8. All educator responses from each survey were included in the descriptive analysis. Therefore, the results are based on independent samples rather than matched responses (i.e., educators who responded in fall did not necessarily respond in spring).

PK–2 was the most frequently served grade band overall in both the fall and spring surveys.⁴

More educators in the spring in Contra Costa and Glenn Counties indicated they taught in Grades K–2 compared to the fall, whereas fewer educators in San Diego County taught in this grade band in the spring. Compared to other counties, Glenn had the largest share of PK–2 grades (73%) during the spring, whereas San Diego showed a more balanced distribution between PK–2 and Grades 3–5 (both at 46%); total responses across all counties indicate a slight drop in PK–2 (from 60% to 58%) and a larger decline in Grades 3–5 (from 48% to 37%) from fall to spring. Educators who served in Grades 6–8, 9–12, or other grades declined from the fall to the spring by 2% (other grades) or 4%–5% (6–8 and 9–12). However, these declines do not necessarily indicate changes in the grade levels educators served, as the fall and spring responses were not matched. The differences reflect variations in who responded at each time point. A larger share of elementary school teachers participated in the spring follow-up survey compared to secondary-level educators. The reasons why secondary educators participated at a lower rate in the spring survey are not available. See Exhibit 3.

⁴ Although Project ARISE serves transitional kindergarten (TK) through grades 12 students the survey asked respondents if they served prekindergarten or higher and did not ask participants if they served TK students.

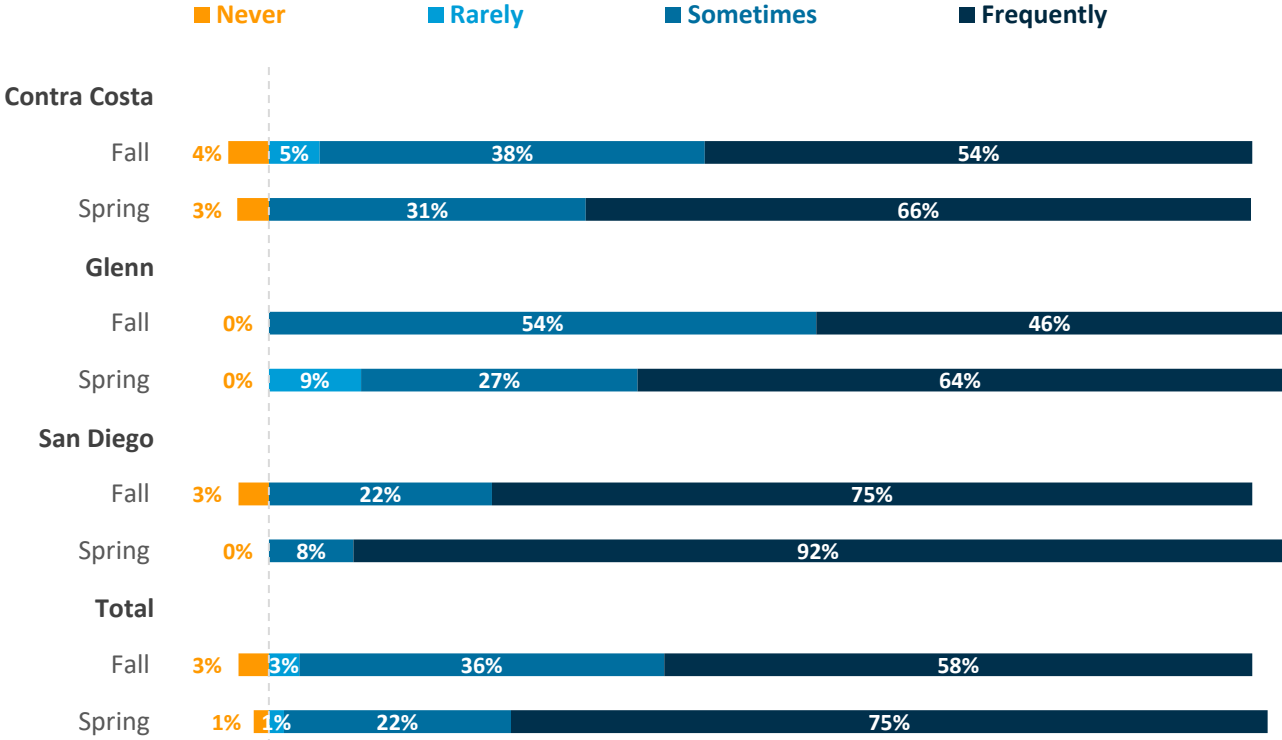
Exhibit 3. Grade Level, by County in Fall and Spring



Note. Number of educators who responded to this question in fall: Contra Costa = 86, Glenn = 13, San Diego = 33, total = 132. Number of educators who responded to this question in spring: Contra Costa = 32, Glenn = 11, San Diego = 24, total = 67.

From fall to spring, the implementation of evidence-based literacy practices with all students increased across all counties, as indicated by a higher proportion of respondents selecting “frequently.” San Diego had the highest agreement, increasing from 75% in fall to 92% in spring, Glenn showed a notable jump from 46% to 64%, and Contra Costa increased from 54% to 66%. Glenn had no “never” or “rarely” responses in fall but saw a 9% “rarely” response in spring. See Exhibit 4.

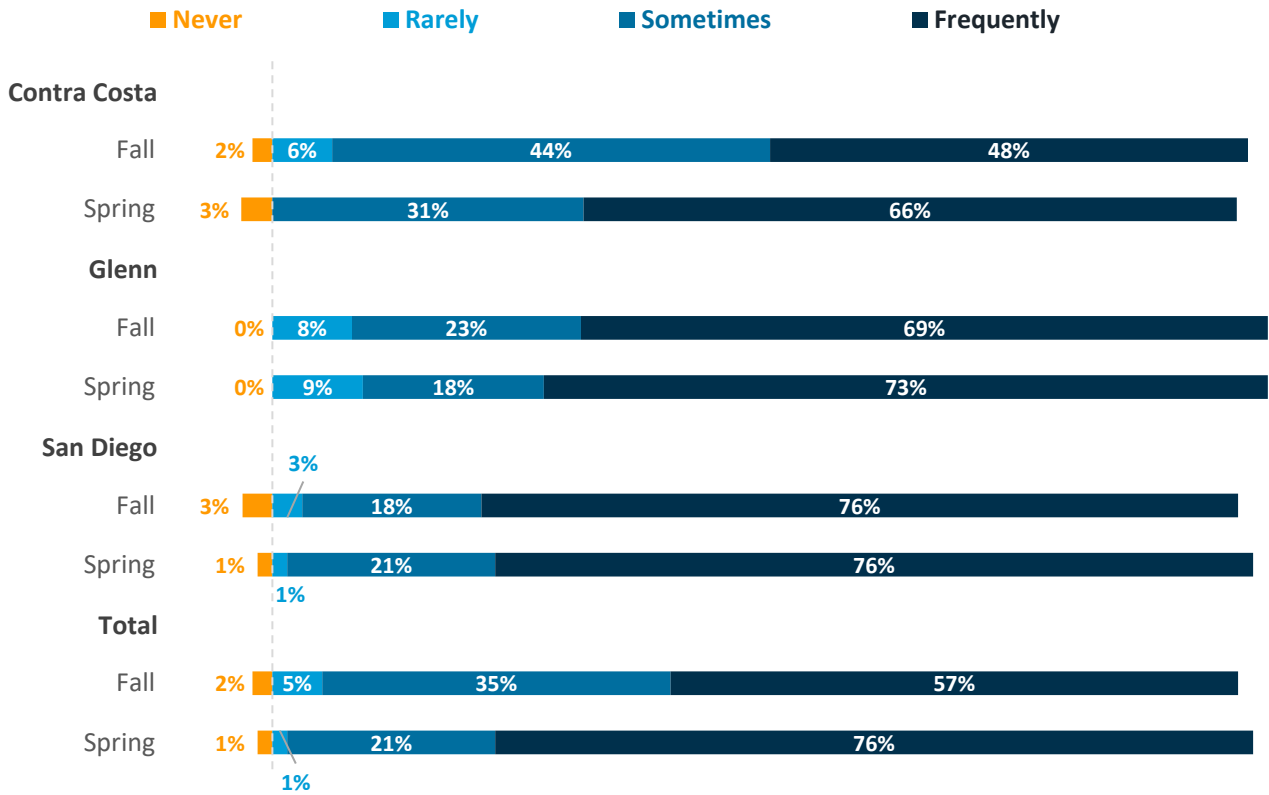
Exhibit 4. Evidence-Based Practices and Techniques with All Students, by County in Fall and Spring



Note. Number of educators who responded to this question in fall: Contra Costa = 86, Glenn = 13, San Diego = 32, total = 131. Number of educators who responded to this question in spring: Contra Costa = 32, Glenn = 11, San Diego = 24, total = 67.

Across the three counties, the percentage of respondents who “frequently” used evidence-based practices with specific students (e.g., students with disabilities, struggling readers, multilingual learners, and long-term English learners) increased from fall to spring. Glenn had the highest spring agreement at 73%, up from 69% in fall. Contra Costa also saw a significant shift, with “rarely” responses jumping from 6% to 31% and “frequently” rising from 48% to 66%. San Diego maintained a strong lead in “frequently” responses at 76% in both seasons, with a slight drop in “never” responses from 3% to 1%. See Exhibit 5.

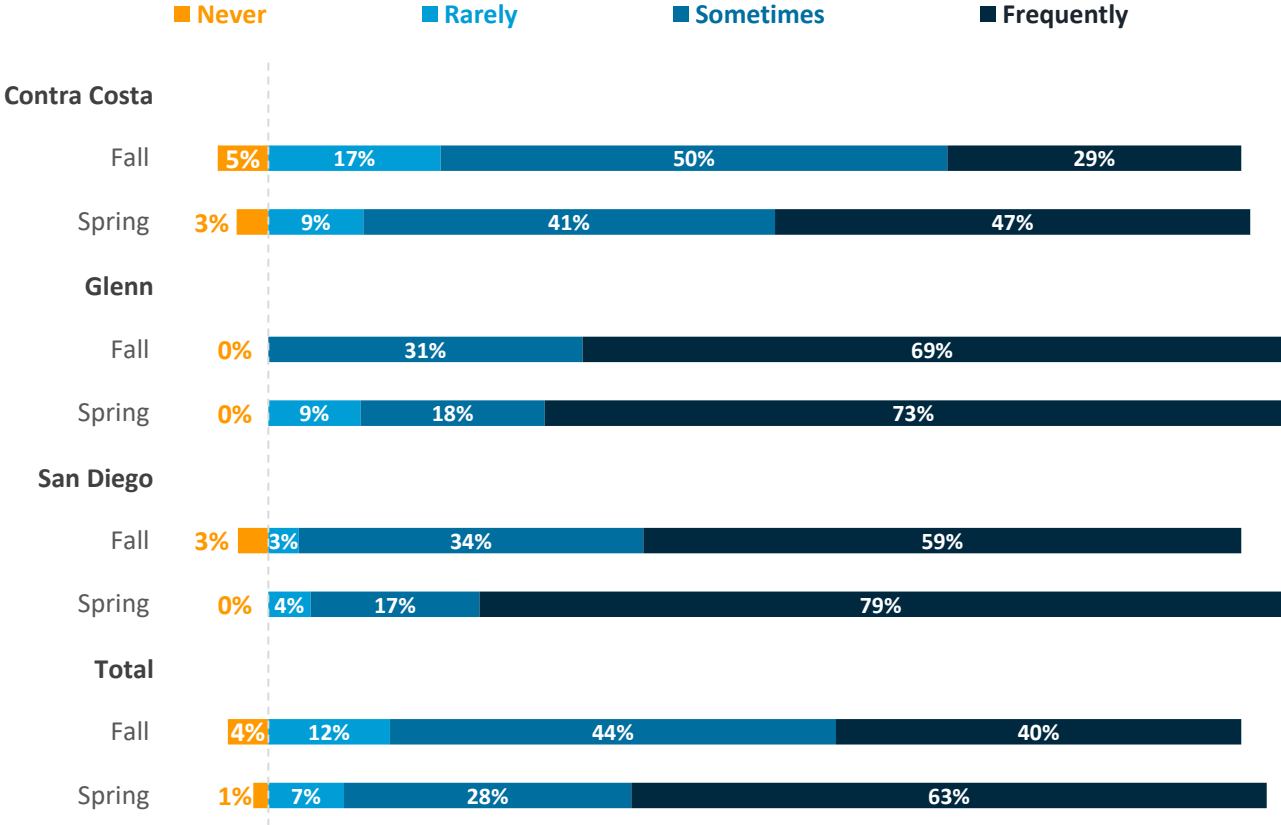
Exhibit 5. Evidence-Based Practices and Techniques with Specific Students, by County in Fall and Spring



Note. Specific students include students with disabilities, struggling readers, multilingual learners, and long-term English learners. Number of educators who responded to this question in fall: Contra Costa = 85, Glenn = 13, San Diego = 33, total = 131. Number of educators who responded to this question in spring: Contra Costa = 32, Glenn = 11, San Diego = 24, total = 67.

Educators indicated they frequently or sometimes used an asset-based lens when designing lessons, with notable growth from fall to spring across the three counties. San Diego led in agreement, rising from 59% in fall to 79% in spring, and Contra Costa showed a significant jump in frequent usage, from 29% to 47%. Glenn stood out for its consistently high agreement, maintaining levels above 69% in both fall and spring. See Exhibit 6.

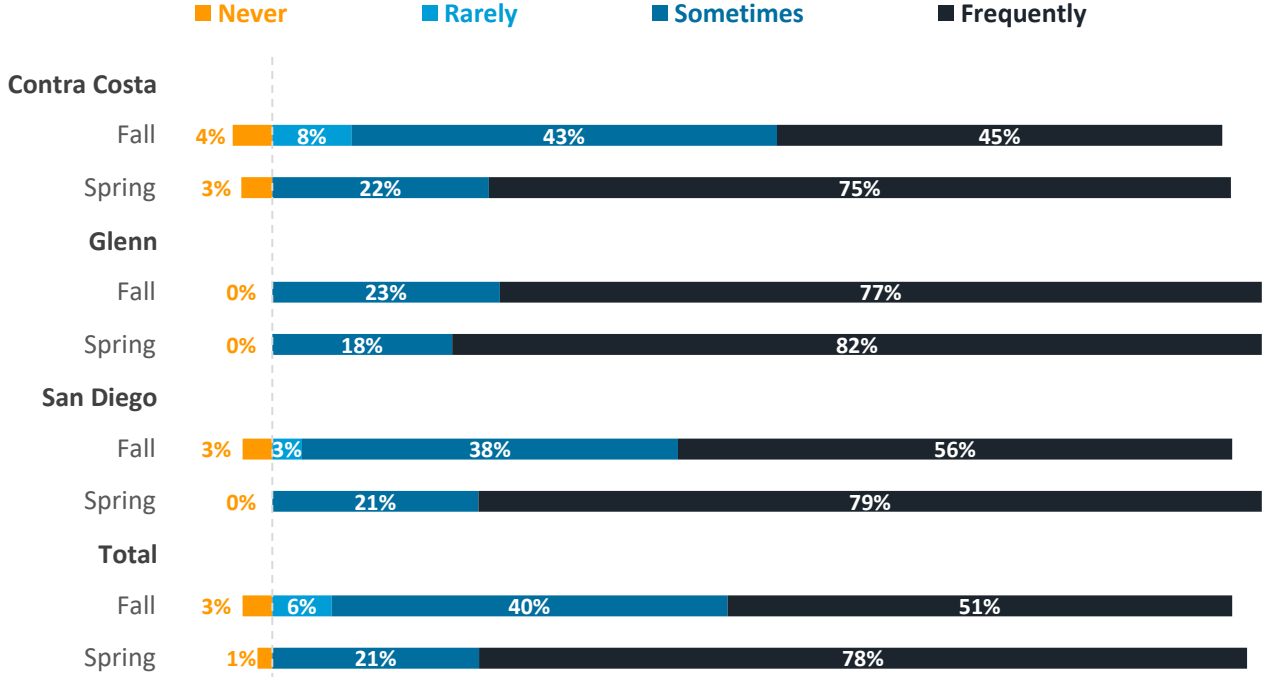
Exhibit 6. Use of Asset-Based Lens and Considering Students’ Individual Strengths, by County in Fall and Spring



Note. Number of educators who responded to this question in fall: Contra Costa = 84, Glenn = 13, San Diego = 32, total = 129. Number of educators who responded to this question in spring: Contra Costa = 32, Glenn = 11, San Diego = 24, total = 67.

Educators also indicated growth from fall to spring regarding thinking holistically about skills and experiences students need to become successful readers. There was an upward trend in agreement with the statement across the three counties from fall to spring, especially in the “frequently” response category, which rose from 51% to 78% overall. Glenn and San Diego showed notably high agreement in spring (82% and 79%, respectively), and Contra Costa demonstrated the most dramatic improvement, jumping from 43% in fall to 75% in spring. See Exhibit 7.

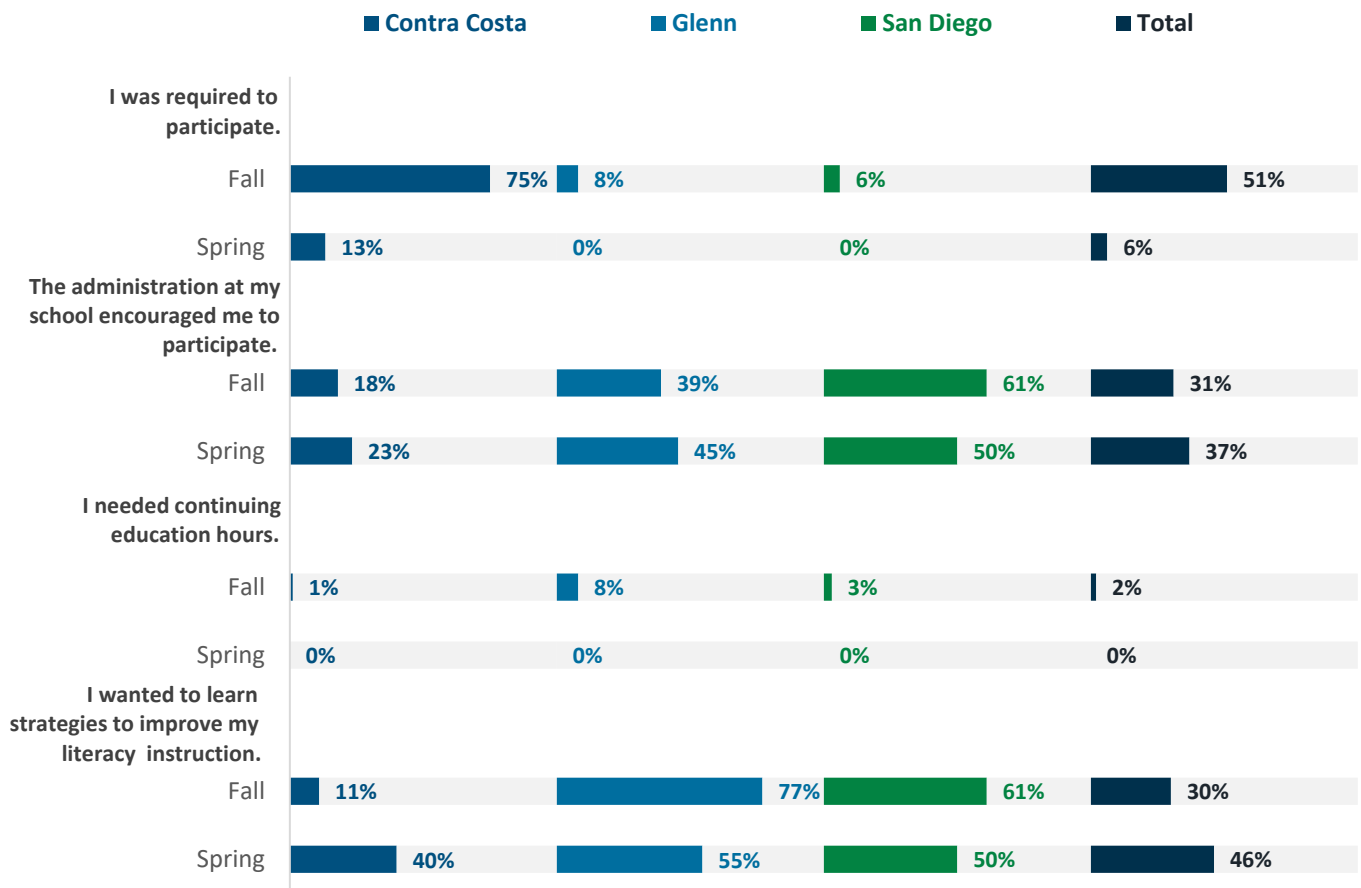
Exhibit 7. Thinking Holistically About Skills and Experiences Students Need to Become Successful Readers, by County in Fall and Spring



Note. Number of educators who responded to this question in fall: Contra Costa = 83, Glenn = 13, San Diego = 32, total = 128. Number of educators who responded to this question in spring: Contra Costa = 32, Glenn = 11, San Diego = 24, total = 67.

In the fall, 75% of respondents from Contra Costa indicated they participated because it was required, compared to just 8% in Glenn and 6% in San Diego. By the spring, those who said it was a requirement dropped to 13% in Contra Costa and 0% in both Glenn and San Diego. Participation driven by school administration encouragement rose in spring across all counties—Contra Costa (23%), Glenn (45%), and San Diego (50%)—with Glenn and San Diego also showing strong interest in improving literacy instruction (55% and 50%, respectively). **An important insight from the survey is Glenn County educators’ consistently high motivation to learn literacy strategies (77% in fall, 55% in spring) which is a critical indicator of strong professional engagement and readiness for instructional improvement.** See Exhibit 8.

Exhibit 8. Reason for Participating in ARISE Professional Learning Courses, by County in Fall and Spring



Note. Number of educators who responded to this question in fall: Contra Costa = 86, Glenn = 13, San Diego = 33, total = 132. Number of educators who responded to this question in spring: Contra Costa = 32, Glenn = 11, San Diego = 24, total = 67.

Progress of Participation in Project ARISE on Educator Outcomes

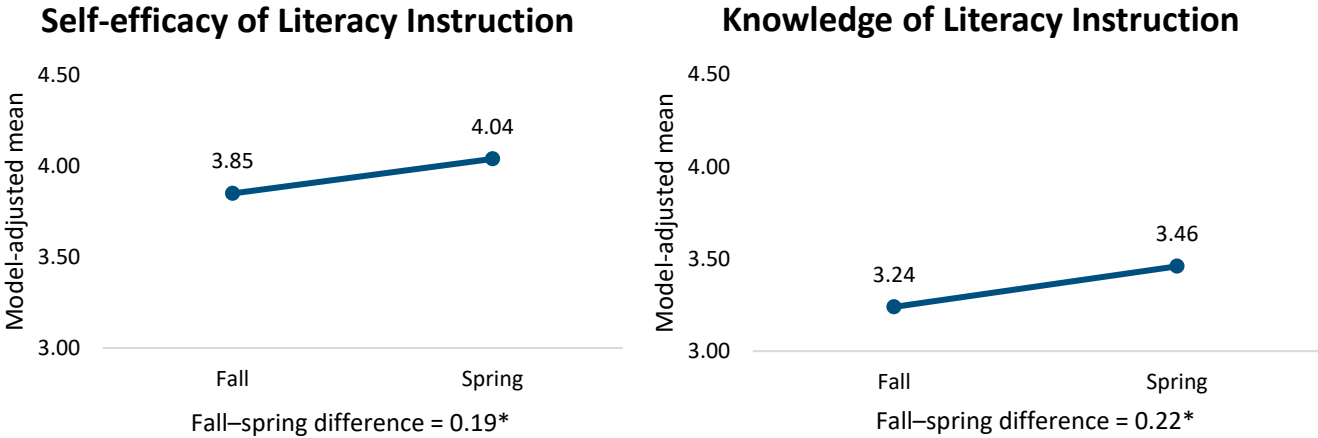
We examined the progress of Project ARISE educators from fall 2024 to spring 2025 in self-efficacy and knowledge of literacy instruction and use of evidence-based practices, as well as potential variation across educator characteristics (e.g., years of experience, grade level taught). Due to missingness of educator survey data, the analysis was limited to educators who completed both fall and spring surveys in the 2024–25 school year.

Results indicated significant improvements from fall to spring in educators’ self-efficacy and knowledge of literacy instruction. On average, educators who participated in Project ARISE demonstrated improvement of 0.19 points ($p < .05$, $ES = 0.37^5$) on self-efficacy of literacy instruction and 0.22 points

⁵ Effect sizes are calculated using Hedges’ g , dividing each effect by the pooled standard deviation with small sample size correction.

($p < .05$, $ES = 0.41$) on knowledge of literacy instruction. While the descriptive data reported that teachers incorporated evidence-based practices into their instruction more frequently, the regression analysis indicates the changes in the use of evidence-based practices from fall 2024 to spring 2025 were not statistically significant. Additionally, all educators showed improvement in self-efficacy and knowledge of literacy instruction regardless of their years of experience and grade level taught. Exhibit 9 shows the scores in teachers' self-efficacy of literacy instruction between fall and spring (left panel) and knowledge of literacy instruction between fall and spring (right panel). Appendix B presents more details on the methodology and results of this analysis.

Exhibit 9. Changes in Educator Survey Outcomes from Fall to Spring



Note. Means are based on model-adjusted means for fall and spring teachers. Number of teachers in fall and spring = 61.
 * $p < .05$.

Summary

This memo presents analyses of data collected during Year 3 (2024–25 school year) of Project ARISE. Year 3 is when the logic model was revised to reflect the shift away from the tiers of implementation related to Project ARISE activities toward an increased focus on the district–school partnerships. Project activities in Year 3 included attending the Literacy Leadership Network, engaging in customized activities such as strategic planning or professional learning, and providing support for literacy initiatives. Based on the findings from the LEA educators and Project ARISE staff interviewed, Project ARISE is making good strides toward meeting the needs of districts and schools by aligning with their literacy priorities and addressing the needs of their diverse learners, in particular multilingual learners and struggling readers. Project ARISE has also integrated well with the transition to the new Reading Difficulties Screener, and participants indicated that the program helps keep them focused on their literacy priorities. Challenges and barriers for the program relate to finding time to integrate into the teachers' busy schedules, gaining trust among teachers (particularly veteran teachers) to adopt new

strategies, and implementing with fidelity, especially at smaller schools when there are not multiple teachers adopting the program.

The survey results indicate that educators showed improvements from fall 2024 to spring 2025 in the use of instructional practices with all students and with specific students, which is promising. Teachers also reported an increase in using an asset-based lens and thinking holistically about the skills and experiences students need to become successful between fall and spring. Also interesting was a change in responses by educators who reported in the fall that they had participated due to requirements, but by spring reported other reasons such as administrative encouragement and personal interest in improving literacy instruction, particularly in Glenn and San Diego Counties. Finally, in terms of growth in the areas of educators' self-efficacy and knowledge of literacy instruction between fall and spring, results indicated that educators demonstrated statistically significant gains in self-efficacy and knowledge of literacy instruction. Although the analysis indicates the differences were not statistically significant, it is still a positive that the descriptive data indicated teachers more frequently using evidence-based practices with all students and specific students (e.g., students with disabilities, struggling readers, multilingual learners, and long-term English learners).

Next Steps

The final Year 4 formative analysis will include a survey of site leaders/principals to understand lessons learned, best practices related to the delivery and support of Project ARISE in their schools with staff, challenges with implementation, and considerations for the future should a similar grant be authorized. AIR will also conduct several focus groups with LEA staff (teachers and school leaders) and Project ARISE staff to understand lessons learned at the end of the grant with more in-depth qualitative data. AIR will also conclude the summative analysis using a school-level quasi-experimental research design with a matched comparison to examine how Project ARISE has improved student outcomes for all schools within the school–district partnerships. More details of the Year 4 analysis can be found in the Year 4 Evaluation Plan.

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Appendix A: Participant Survey

Survey FINAL ARISE Evaluation

INTRO PAGE (CONSENT)

[American Institutes for Research \(AIR\)](#) has partnered with the [California Collaborative for Excellence in Education \(CCEE\)](#) to conduct an independent evaluation of [Project ARISE](#). As part of this effort, you are invited to complete a survey.

- Purpose: This survey will be conducted to gather details, perceptions and feedback. The survey will take less than 10 minutes. The information you provide will help us assess the effectiveness of Project ARISE in improving literacy instruction.
- Confidentiality: We will keep the information you share with us confidential. We will only report findings in aggregate and will not identify you by name. The survey data will be securely stored and accessed only by AIR staff.
- Risks or Benefits: There are no anticipated risks or benefits to participating in this survey. Your responses will help improve Project ARISE to the benefit of future participants like you.
- Participation is Voluntary: We encourage you to participate. However, your participation in this survey is voluntary, and you may choose not to participate without penalty.
- Funding: Funding for this study is provided by the California Department of Education.
- Contact Information:
 - For technical support or other problems with the survey, please contact David Kamm, projectarise@air.org.
 - If you have questions about this study, please contact the project director, Dr. Brenda Arellano, barellano@air.org.
 - If you have concerns or questions about your rights as a research participant, contact AIR's Institutional Review Board (IRB)—which is responsible for the protection of project participants—at IRB@air.org, or toll-free at 1-800-634-0797.

Thank you for participating!

If you opened the survey from a mobile device, please close the survey and open from a desktop or laptop. The survey requires the larger screen for complete functionality.

Click "Next" below if you agree to participate in the survey.

[ELIG_Q1] Which of the following best describes your current role?*

Select all that apply.

1. General Education Teacher
2. Special Education Teacher
3. ELD/Dual Language Teacher
4. Paraprofessional
5. Teacher on Special Assignment/Resource Teacher
6. Site Administrator → *if at least 1 of 1-5 are not also selected, Ineligible (skip to end)*
7. District Administrator → *if at least 1 of 1-5 are not also selected, Ineligible (skip to end)*
8. County Administrator → *if at least 1 of 1-5 are not also selected, Ineligible (skip to end)*
9. Other Non-Instructional Role → *if at least 1 of 1-5 are not also selected, Ineligible (skip to end)*

Skip pattern:

[Only teachers will be allowed to complete the survey; exit here if one or more of the roles from 1-5 is not among the selected responses.]

DEMOGRAPHICS & TEACHING BACKGROUND

First, tell us more about yourself:

[FIRSTNAME] First Name:

[LASTNAME] Last Name:

[EMAIL] School Email:

[DEMOG_Q6-8] Where did you primarily work during the 2024–25 school year?*

Please type your school name in the search bar and choose the one that accurately identifies your district and school

- For example, for Washington Elementary School in West Contra Costa Unified School District, type in "Washington" and select the 5th result below.
- Search only by school name. Do not type the words "school", "county", or "district" in the search bar.

District: [lookup]

School: [lookup]

[DEMOG_Q1] How many years have you been in your current role (at least half time)?

Count this year as 1.

[Numeric response]

[DEMOG_Q2] What grade level did you primarily work with during the 2024-25 school year?

Please select all that apply.

1. PK – 2
2. 3 – 5
3. 6 – 8
4. 9 – 12
5. Other [please specify]

[DEMOG_Q3] What core academic subject(s) did you teach during the 2024-25 school year?

Please select all that apply.

1. Self-contained/Multiple subjects
2. English Language Arts
3. English Language Development
4. Academic Content in a Language other than English (Dual Language)
5. Mathematics
6. Sciences
7. Social Sciences
8. Other: _____

[DEMOG_Q4] Did you work directly with students on reading skills in any capacity?*

- Yes
- No

[Note, this is just background Q, not for eligibility]

[DEMOG_Q5] Do you have a certification as a reading or literacy specialist?

1. Yes
2. No

[DEMOG_Q9] What is the highest level of education you have completed?

Please choose one of the following:

1. High School or GED
2. Some college (without a degree or certification)
3. Associate's degree
4. Bachelor's degree
5. Master's degree

- 6. Educational specialist or professional diploma
- 7. Doctorate
- 8. Other: _____

[SE_Q] SELF-EFFICACY OF LITERACY INSTRUCTION

Please consider your current ability, resources, and opportunity to do each of the following in your current role.

To what extent can you...?	Not at All	Very Little	Somewhat	To a great Extent
SE_Q1				
1. use a student’s oral reading mistakes as an opportunity to teach effective reading strategies?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. use a variety of informal and formal reading assessment strategies?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. adjust reading strategies based on ongoing informal assessments of your students?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. adjust writing strategies based on ongoing informal assessments of your students?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. meet the needs of struggling readers?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. help your students monitor their own use of reading strategies?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
SE_Q2				
1. provide your students with opportunities to apply their prior knowledge to reading tasks?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. model effective reading strategies?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. implement effective reading strategies in your classroom?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. help your students figure out unknown words when they are reading?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. implement word study strategies to teach spelling?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. use students’ writing to teach grammar and spelling strategies?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
SE_Q3				
1. use flexible grouping to meet individual student needs for reading instruction?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. get students to talk with each other in class about books they are reading?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. recommend a variety of quality literature to your students?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. provide students with writing opportunities in response to reading?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. adjust your reading materials to the proper level for individual students?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. motivate students who show low interest in reading?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Note: The above section on Self Efficacy of Literacy is the TSELI (a validated measure of teacher self-efficacy for literacy instruction). Because of the methods used to validate the entire measure, we do not want to remove any questions, even if they are not specifically relevant to the ARISE PD.

[KNOW_Q] KNOWLEDGE

How well can you do each of the following?

	Not at All	Slightly	Moderately Well	Very Well
KNOW_Q1				
1. I understand why it is important to provide students with texts that reflect their social identities and experiences. <i>(Equity)</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. I can describe what text-centered instruction looks like in action and how to scaffold text to support all students in accessing them. <i>(Comprehension & Knowledge Building)</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. I can apply the research on executive function to help students effectively build and use their skills. <i>(Executive Fx & Lit)</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. I understand that all my students come to the classroom with language assets regardless of their home language(s), dialect, or culture. <i>(Equity)</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. I can explain the five steps of the DBI process. <i>(Intensive Intervention)</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
KNOW_Q2				
6. I can define the four components of reading foundational skills (i.e., print concepts, phonological awareness, phonics and word recognition, and fluency). <i>(Foundational Skills)</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. I understand the research on how students’ internal and external contexts affect their executive functions and therefore literacy. <i>(Executive Fx & Lit)</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. I can define the concepts of building knowledge, schema, vocabulary, and the relationship between the concepts. <i>(Comprehension & Knowledge Building)</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9. I can define the four elements of effective foundational skills instruction (i.e., systematic, explicit, practice, and assessment). <i>(Foundational Skills)</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10. I can explain what the Taxonomy of Intervention Intensity is. <i>(Intensive Intervention)</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

[PRACQ] CLASSROOM PRACTICE (items suitable for teachers of all grades)

How often do you do the following in your core academic classes?

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently
I use evidence-based literacy practices and techniques <u>with all students</u> in my classroom.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I use evidence-based literacy practices and techniques <u>with specific students</u> (e.g., students with disabilities, struggling readers, multilingual learners, and long-term English learners).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When designing my lessons, I use an asset-based lens and considering my students' individual strengths.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I think holistically about the skills and experiences my students need to become successful readers.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

[PD_Q2] MOTIVATION TO COMPLETE THE COURSES

Why did you decide to participate in the ARISE professional learning course(s)?

Please select all that apply.

1. I was required to participate. *[PROGRAMMING-choosing this restricts all other options.]*
2. The administration at my school encouraged me to participate.
3. I needed continuing education hours.
4. I wanted to learn strategies to improve my literacy instruction.
5. Other _____

Appendix B: Teacher Survey Pre-Post Regression Analysis

To estimate the progress of Project ARISE educators from fall 2024 to spring 2025 on educators’ self-efficacy for literacy instruction, knowledge, and use of evidence-based practices, we used pre-post regression, accounting for the nested structure of school data (i.e., educators nested within schools) and controlling for educator characteristics (e.g., years of teaching experience, grade level). Due to missingness of educator survey data, the analysis was limited to educators who completed both fall and spring surveys in the 2024–25 school year. A total of 61 teachers were included in this analysis. Exhibit B-1. shows the regression results on target outcomes from fall to spring. Results indicated significant improvements from fall to spring in teachers’ self-efficacy for literacy instruction and knowledge. No significant change was observed in the use of evidence-based practices from fall to spring.

Exhibit B-1. Pre-Post Regression Analysis Results

Outcome	Fall (N = 61)		Spring (N = 61)		Fall–spring difference	p value	Standardized difference
	Adj. mean	SD	Adj. mean	SD			
Self-efficacy for literacy instruction	3.85	0.51	5.04	0.50	0.19	0.026	0.37
Knowledge	3.24	0.52	3.46	0.55	0.22	0.012	0.41
Use of evidence-based practices	4.07	0.60	4.22	0.53	0.15	0.121	0.26

Note. Adj. mean= Means are based on model-adjusted means for fall and spring teachers. Standardized differences are calculated using Hedges’ g, dividing each effect by the pooled standard deviation with small sample size correction.

The three constructs measured in the spring survey showed good reliability with a Cronbach’s alpha greater than 0.88 for all three (self-efficacy for literacy instruction, knowledge, and use of evidence-based practices).