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INDIANA PUBLIC LAW 109:
An Inside Look

Prepared by:
RMC Research Corporation
Tampa, Florida
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Acknowledgments
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The Gateway to Success

Learning to read by the end of third grade is the gateway to lifelong success. When students are not able to read by the end of third grade, their risk of falling behind grows exponentially. In fact, research shows that nearly nine out of ten high school dropouts were struggling readers in third grade. Students who are not reading proficiently by the end of third grade are four times more likely to drop out of high school, and high school dropouts are not eligible for 90 percent of the jobs in the economy. To address this issue and ensure all students become competent readers by the end of third grade, many states have passed comprehensive K-3 reading policies.

In 2010, former Governor Mitch Daniels and Superintendent of Public Instruction Tony Bennett worked with leaders in the Indiana General Assembly to pass HB 1367, the state’s K-3 reading policy, referred to as P.L. 109 legislation. The Indiana General Assembly crafted the law to ensure all students enter fourth grade with the foundational reading skills they need to learn, graduate and succeed. The law required the Indiana State Board of Education (ISBOE) to develop rules regarding interventions for students with reading deficiencies in grades 1-3. The rules require:

- Early identification of students who have a reading deficiency.
- Schools to prioritize remediation resources toward students in grades 1-3 who are identified as deficient in reading.
- Intervention services for any student identified with a reading deficiency and specific intervention services for retained third-grade students, including a home reading program that parents can implement.
- Retention as a last resort, with good cause exemptions to recognize the needs of some students.
- Administration of Indiana Reading Evaluation And Determination (IREAD-3), the assessment tool used to measure reading proficiency of Indiana third graders. Students have two chances to pass the test and demonstrate readiness for promotion to fourth grade.

The ISBOE rules also require the development of statewide and district reading plans that include scientifically based reading instruction, interventions, a comprehensive assessment system and professional development for teachers.

While it is challenging to draw causal inferences with one assessment, the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) provides data for analyzing trends in student achievement. Since Indiana’s enactment of the K-3 reading policy in 2010, fourth-grade reading steadily improved. In 2009, 34 percent of fourth graders were proficient in reading, and by 2017, 41 percent of fourth graders were reading proficiently: a seven percentage point increase. Indiana also decreased the percentage of fourth graders scoring below basic by three percentage points, going from 30 percent scoring below basic to 27 percent.

The following chart illustrates the progress made in fourth-grade reading achievement since enactment of the policy.
About This Study

ExcelInEd contracted with RMC Research Corporation to conduct a study to better understand Indiana stakeholders’ perceptions of and experiences with Indiana’s K-3 reading policy, referred to as P.L. 109 legislation, including an analysis of the legislation on student reading achievement. In particular, the questions of interest were as follows:

- What support strategies and technical assistance do the Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) and school corporations provide to improve K-3 literacy?
- What are teachers’ perceptions of P.L. 109?
- What recommendations do stakeholders have for improving the implementation process?
- What impact has P.L. 109 had on corporations and schools?

Often when education initiatives such as P.L. 109 are implemented, a flurry of activity occurs in the early years and a waning ensues in subsequent years. Indiana enacted P.L. 109 several years ago; thus, many of the activities and urgency associated with early implementation are now “business as usual.” This study does not attempt to document the early implementation of P.L. 109; rather, it takes an inside look at how the IDOE, corporations and schools are continuing to focus on improving the literacy of K-3 students, while meeting the requirements of P.L. 109.

The Sample

A purposeful sample of various stakeholders was selected for this study. Four persons in the IDOE provided a state-level view of P.L. 109. Included in this group were the Director of School Improvement, the Assistant Director of Literacy, the Elementary English Language Arts and Literacy Specialist and the Early Learning Specialist. Superintendents, literacy leaders and K-3 teachers in two school corporations participated in this study and related their local-level perceptions and experiences in implementing P.L. 109. Additionally, the IDOE disseminated a survey to all K-3 teachers across the state.

To identify the two school corporations to profile in this study, K-3 assessment data from 2010 to 2017 were collected and analyzed. A list of corporations showing continuous overall improvement, including subgroups of English Language Learners, students with special needs and students receiving free/reduced price lunch, was created. The IDOE staff members reviewed the list and selected two corporations using the following criteria:

- Representative of rural and suburban/city
- Enrollment of at least 100 third-grade students in the corporation
- Consistent improvement in literacy achievement.
The Methodology

RMC researchers asked IDOE staff members a series of questions about the structure of state-level support and strategies, state-level communication strategies, recommendations for other states that may enact similar legislation and the impacts of the legislation. Both an interview and a focus group consisted of 90-minute, face-to-face sessions. Appendix A includes the protocol for the key state staff interview; Appendix B contains the protocol for the focus group. One RMC Research team member facilitated the sessions, and another RMC Research team member took notes.

The researchers also conducted interviews of the two corporation-level literacy leaders via conference calls. One RMC Research team member facilitated the sessions, and another RMC Research team member took notes. Interviews were taped and transcribed. Appendix C includes the protocol for the corporation interviews.

Following the corporation interviews, the corporation literacy leaders disseminated an electronic link to a survey to all K-3 teachers in the corporation. The survey contained Likert-scale statements and one open-ended question. Appendix D contains a copy of the teacher survey.

The IDOE disseminated an electronic link to a statewide K-3 teacher survey, consisting of Likert-scale statements only. Appendix E includes a copy of the K-3 teacher survey. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize responses to the surveys.

After each event, RMC Research immediately reviewed and analyzed the interviews and focus group data. They also reviewed the notes in relation to the recorded transcriptions. Two RMC Research team members identified themes and patterns and reviewed summaries for accuracy.

Research Findings

The IDOE has a small staff who oversee the implementation of literacy initiatives, including P.L. 109. Originally, literacy staff were based in the Curriculum Department. In the past year, a new structure was implemented; consequently, the staff, consisting of an assistant director and three team members, are now housed in the School Improvement and Title Programs division. This change was designed to bridge the gap among programs and helps coordinate funds from the various programs that service lower-performing schools for an intensified focus on literacy. Although the staff who were interviewed for this study are relatively new to the IDOE, they provided insight as to how their efforts support schools and corporations and how they are working to coordinate P.L. 109 with more recent legislation also intended to improve literacy. This new legislation focuses on dyslexia and places more requirements for universal screeners, early identification of students and effective interventions for students who are struggling—all common components with P.L. 109. These requirements must be addressed in the schools’ reading plans, which are required as part of P.L. 109. Additionally, the new legislation requires the IDOE to approve screeners, develop and update a resource guide and ensure teachers receive professional awareness information on dyslexia.
State Support Strategies for K-3 Literacy

The four IDOE staff members charged with improving literacy are working to maximize their effectiveness by leveraging local expertise. The IDOE is developing a statewide literacy framework and is involving “field experts,” who are local corporation and school staff members who are highly regarded for their professional knowledge and practice. The IDOE established a cadre of about 25 teachers and literacy experts to support the framework’s development. The department receives advice from the cadre and maintains regular communication through both virtual and live meetings and through written communications. The members of the cadre may be contacted by other corporations for advice, thus extending the resources of the IDOE.

In addition to the cadre, the IDOE has established a community of practice (COP) to support reading and instructional coaches. The COP provides information on the needs of schools, and the IDOE seeks resources to meet those needs. Professional development is viewed as critical. The IDOE offers free, evidence-based opportunities; many are web-based. Additionally, IDOE collaborates with institutions of higher education to offer courses that are approved by the IDOE.

An important role of the IDOE’s staff is communicating with corporations and schools. The Superintendent of Public Instruction, Dr. Jennifer McCormick, disseminates a weekly update. This update frequently includes timely information about reading plan requirements, assessments and grant opportunities. The corporation leaders interviewed for this study stated that the weekly update is their “go-to” source for the latest literacy information and guidance, and it is concise and easy to understand. Additional modes of communication include video updates, podcasts, focused newsletters and social media. The IDOE provides some information for parents but views the school staff as most effective in communicating with parents. For the first time this summer, the IDOE is sponsoring a statewide book festival to bring together communities and corporations. Children can receive books at the festival and interact with authors who will speak and autograph books.

Another first for the IDOE is the opportunity given to vendors to respond to requests for information and to have their literacy programs and products vetted for showcasing at a statewide marketplace. Corporations and schools are invited to attend plenary sessions and visit vendors to review materials, including intervention programs, that meet evidence-based requirements. This event is not restricted to early literacy educators or early literacy materials; it covers kindergarten through grade 12.

Corporation Support Strategies for K-3 Literacy

The leaders of two corporations that have achieved continuous literacy achievement growth since the passage of P.L. 109 agreed to participate in telephone interviews with the researchers. The profiles that follow attempt to capture the strategies these corporations credit for their growth.
Decatur County Community Schools
“Everyone can grow; every child can learn.”

Decatur County Community Schools, a public school corporation surrounding Greensburg, Indiana, covers about 291 square miles of mainly rural terrain where agriculture prevails as the largest industry in the county. Nearly 2,000 students are enrolled in PK-12 at two elementary schools (one in the north and one in the south) and two junior-senior high schools (one in the north and one in the south). The corporation employs about 135 certified staff and 11 central office administrative staff.

RMC researchers conducted interviews with the Superintendent and the Director of Learning of Decatur County Community Schools. The phrase “consistent expectations” dominated the conversations. After merging several smaller schools, the leadership team set about creating a common vision and changing the mindset about student growth. “If you believe that the lowest as well as the highest student can grow, then we are successful,” stated the Superintendent.

All schools use a common strategic planning model for continuous improvement. The model incorporates shared decision-making and collaborative processes to focus on curriculum, instruction, assessment and student achievement. Schools assess their status against indicators, create goals for improvement, implement specific activities to address their goals, monitor their performance and adjust accordingly. The data-intensive process involves all staff. The schools have embraced the model, and leadership credits it for unifying schools with one mission: Every child matters.

The corporation invests in building the knowledge and skills of its teachers. Accordingly, they instituted early release days every Wednesday. These are set aside for teachers to attend trainings, participate in literacy meetings, engage in webinars and join professional learning communities (PLCs). The corporation purchased more than 400 videos on how to teach literacy; these videos are often the topics during PLCs’ meetings. The professional learning opportunities brought teachers together from the southern and northern regions, something that had not been done in the past. The teachers communicate across schools and grades through emails and social media. Finding time for teachers to work together has been critical to consistency both within and across schools. Leaders shared that the K-3 teachers meet outside the PLCs—something they started on their own. Recently, teachers were given the opportunity to attend a two-day literacy summit in a neighboring school corporation. Professional learning is not only for teachers. School administrators attend PLCs and recently attended a literacy summit in Chicago. They returned and modeled literacy practices in their schools.

The Director of Learning indicated that she applies for every available grant. The corporation applies annually for the IDOE early intervention grant and has used the funds to improve their intervention programs and purchase technology that teachers are using to record their instruction for self-reflection and improvement. The Director of Learning encourages and assists teachers to apply for grants. Last year, one teacher received a $23,000 grant to fund a summer literacy camp to prepare her incoming second-grade students. This jumpstart to the school year motivated her students to read more than 12,000 books during the school year. Consequently, the camp received funding again this summer.

P.L. 109 mandates a 90-minute block each day for K-3 reading instruction. During the 90-minute block, all instructional staff collaborate. Specifically, the Title I lead teacher and the Special Education teachers work hand-in-hand in the classroom with the child’s regular teacher. Resources directed to the early grades reduce class size and provide extra instructional support. The Superintendent commented, “We put our funding into people, not programs. Programs help, but people are the ones who have the relationships and can help children learn.”

Decatur County views the 90-minute block as a minimum amount of time for reading instruction. In addition to the 90-minute block, all K-3 students receive 30 minutes of daily intervention. Two years ago, the corporation changed to a growth model. As a result, teachers find it more useful because they are looking at individual growth, not just aggregated classroom results. Decatur County expects that every student can show growth, even those students reading on grade level.

Leaders have structured both time and resources so that literacy is the priority. In the past, literacy was taught in isolation and was inconsistent from school to school and from grade to grade. Now, literacy is being taught with a cross-curricular approach, and there is more intention to look across all disciplines. “Great teachers can integrate literacy into everything they do...It has to be the backbone,” said the Superintendent.

The Superintendent and the Director of Learning related that funding is a constant challenge. Enrollments have declined, and budgets have been cut. With each cut, they seek out new funds and redirect existing funds, when possible, to support early literacy. They are committed to continuing the growth they have seen and attribute their success to consistent expectations and the dedication of good teachers and leaders.
Clarksville, Indiana, located along the Ohio River, is considered a suburb of Louisville, Kentucky. The Clarksville Community Schools consist of four schools: Clarksville Elementary (grades PK-4), Clarksville Middle (grades 5-8), Clarksville High (grades 9-12) and Renaissance Academy (grades 9, 10 and 11). The public school corporation has an enrollment of about 1,400 students. Almost 70 percent of their students reside in low-income homes.

Participating in the group interview with the researchers were the Superintendent, the Principal of the elementary school and a master teacher/coach. One of Clarksville Community Schools’ goals is to prepare students to be successful in literacy. They use a three-prong approach to accomplish this mission: structuring time and resources, preparing teachers and involving families and students.

**Structuring Time and Resources.** The elementary school serves prekindergarten through fourth-grade students and provides all students with a 90-minute block of time each day for literacy. Students in need of intervention are given an additional 30 minutes daily. After all third-grade students are assessed in early spring, students who did not pass the assessment, making them at risk of being retained in third grade, are provided an extra 45 minutes during April and May before being retested. The Clarksville leaders studied surrounding community schools and learned that on a daily basis, their elementary students were receiving about 45 minutes less instructional time than their neighbors. Beginning this year, the school day has been extended and restructured so that students will receive additional classroom time, amounting to 21 days over the year.

The corporation utilizes Title I funds to pay for two certified teachers who provide interventions and instructional coaching. Similarly, the corporation also applies for grants. For the past five years, they obtained a grant from Duke Energy to fund a two-week summer camp for 20 second graders. The Superintendent remarked that she sees her responsibility is “to find funding for what the schools need.”

**Preparing Teachers.** When the corporation received Race to the Top funds several years ago, they implemented TAP™: The System for Teacher and Student Advancement to improve the teaching profession. When the funding ceased, they continued funding because of its value to advancing professional development and teacher leadership. As funds keep decreasing, they try to maintain fidelity to the professional growth element. The corporation uses weekly meetings to discuss data and strategies with teachers. The instructional coach follows up with teachers as well as observes and co-teaches as needed. Teachers are given other opportunities for professional growth, such as attending an annual reading conference.

The corporation experienced a major growth in its English language learner population. To address this change, they provided training for teachers in the Sheltered Instructional Observation Protocol (SIOP) model. Since implementing the components of SIOP, they have seen improvements in the literacy of their English learners.

**Involving Families and Students.** The school staff are the primary communicators with parents. They send home literature and other literacy resources, conduct parent-teacher conferences and hold family nights to share fun literacy strategies. The school involved a group of fourth-grade students who served on a panel discussion during one of the family nights. They shared their experiences with parents and third-grade students who were preparing for the annual assessment. These fourth-grade students helped the younger students while exhibiting student leadership and responsibility for being prepared for assessments.

The corporation leaders support legislation that focuses on literacy and believe their teachers have embraced it. They expressed that higher accountability forced them to focus on individual students and growth.
**Teachers’ Perceptions of P.L. 109**

RMC researchers asked the IDOE to disseminate an electronic survey to K-3 teachers across the state. The response rate was very low, which might be attributed to an annual IDOE survey open at the same time. Only 858 teachers responded to the survey, and slightly less than half (445) of those teachers completed the survey. The same survey, with the addition of an open-ended question, was disseminated to K-3 teachers in the two corporations profiled in this study. The response rate in the two corporations was high, with almost all K-3 teachers (40) completing the survey. The following table displays the percentage of teachers agreeing to statements about P.L. 109.

Teachers in the two profile corporations responded more positively to all survey items than the teachers who responded to the statewide survey. As stated earlier, the statewide response rate was very low. Possibly, dissatisfied teachers represented a larger number of respondents. The highest areas of agreement by both the profile teachers and all teachers relate to: 1) the support they receive for analyzing student assessment data for making instructional decisions, and 2) the support they receive from their school administrator. The area with least agreement among both the profile teachers and all teachers relates to communicating the requirements of P.L. 109 to parents. The range of agreement of all teachers is 79 to 36 percent. The range of agreement of teachers in the profile corporations is 100 to 59 percent.
### Percentage of Teachers Agreeing with Statements About Indiana P. L. 109

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>% Agreement All Teachers</th>
<th>% Agreement Profile Teachers</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I receive sufficient support that helps me analyze student assessment data and make instructional decisions based on the data.</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I receive sufficient support from my school administration that assists me in implementing the requirements of the Indiana legislation (P.L. 109).</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The professional development that I receive improves my knowledge of and skill in research-based reading instruction.</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The professional development that I receive improves my knowledge of and skill in providing effective interventions.</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The professional development that I receive improves my knowledge of and skill with assessments and their use to drive instruction.</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Because of the Indiana legislation (P.L. 109), my school increased learning time for struggling readers.</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I support the Indiana legislation’s (P.L. 109) requirement to eliminate social promotion to help ensure struggling readers get the time they need with intensive interventions to be successful in fourth grade and beyond.</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Since implementation of the Indiana legislation (P.L. 109), my school increased its efforts to engage parents of struggling readers in a timely fashion.</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Because of the Indiana legislation (P.L. 109), I improved my instructional practices to teach reading to all students, including students with a reading deficiency.</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The extended learning opportunities, including summer programs and/or before-after school programs, are achieving the purpose of accelerating reading progress for students with a reading deficiency.</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My reading coach or literacy leader provides support that helps me improve my reading instruction.</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I receive information and guidance documents that increase my knowledge of the requirements of the Indiana legislation (P.L. 109).</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Indiana legislation (P.L. 109) has a positive impact on improving K-3 reading outcomes in my school.</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Indiana legislation’s (P.L. 109) requirements help me identify and address reading difficulties early.</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Indiana legislation (P.L. 109) guidance documents provide information that is useful to me.</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Indiana legislation’s (P.L. 109) assessments that we use help me improve my instruction to meet the needs of all students.</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Indiana legislation’s (P.L. 109) requirements are communicated to parents in a way that is easy for them to understand.</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
More than a third of the teachers in the two profile corporations responded to the open-ended survey statement: “The most positive aspect of the Indiana legislation (P.L. 109) is . . .” Researchers categorized the teachers’ comments into five themes: assessment; early identification; interventions and support to students; reading on level by end of third grade; and clear expectations. A cross section of the teachers’ responses to the question reveal the relevancy of the implementation of the legislation.

The most positive aspect of the Indiana legislation (P.L. 109) is...

“that we help struggling students as soon as we see a problem, including getting their parents involved.”

“the support struggling readers are able to get outside of regular instructional time.”

“being able to track growth consistently.”

Lessons Learned from Indiana Educators

Based on Indiana educators’ experiences with P.L. 109, literacy leaders at the state and corporation level provided constructive advice for legislators, state departments of education and literacy leaders in other states that may be considering similar literacy initiatives.
Considerations for Legislators, State Departments of Education and Corporation Leaders

Legislators can support early literacy.

- Embrace and fund early literacy legislation – it can help students become more academically proficient earlier, thus having an impact on graduation rates later.
- Increase expectations for qualifications of prekindergarten teachers. High expectations prevail for children leaving preschool, but low expectations persist for preschool teachers’ qualifications.
- Be an advocate for early childhood literacy so it is foremost in discussions.
- Think about how you can sponsor and support legislation to make it best for children.

Departments of Education can communicate the positive intent of the law—ensuring a successful future for every child.

- Continue concise, clear communications between the department of education and corporations.
- Build on positive relationships with legislators who are supportive of literacy; collaborate with legislators on bills related to education.
- Discuss with legislators how funds are used to support the legislative mandates.
- Involve corporations in decisions to bridge gaps between the department of education and educators in the field.
- Create materials and seek opportunities to inform parents how the legislation is helping children.
- Provide evidence and guidance about interventions.

Corporations can plan for success.

- Create an environment in which teachers are willing to share and adapt what is working.
- Have a common framework to get everybody moving in the same direction.
- Schedule additional literacy time into the master schedule.
- Build time for weekly professional development.
- Carve out time for weekly grade-level meetings with the principal to examine data.
- Establish routines to maximize instructional time.
- Plan professional development in advance of implementation as well as during implementation.
Impact of P.L. 109

The participants in this study agreed that the legislation has increased the importance of literacy—especially literacy at an early age. There is now an urgency to ensuring that all K-3 students are growing in their literacy skills and are reading on grade level. More robust accountability measures are responsible for early screening and intervention for students, which is echoed in recent legislation that builds upon the tenets of P.L. 109 and focuses on dyslexia. Additionally, the legislation has intensified efforts to reach students before kindergarten. Discussions are occurring across agencies in an effort to impact preschool programs.

The IDOE is reviewing certification requirements for elementary teachers and requirements for a reading endorsement. They are collaborating with institutes of higher education to review course content to meet the new dyslexia requirements.

Summary

After being in effect for several years, Indiana P.L. 109’s practices have become institutionalized. Students receive additional time for instruction and interventions. Schools use data to examine student growth and to identify which students need increased attention. Early literacy continues to receive an urgent and intense focus. As a whole, the state has made progress in ensuring that all students are reading on grade level by the end of grade 3. The IDOE recognizes they have more work to accomplish their goals and are collaborating across agencies, corporations and schools to achieve the purpose of this legislation. The Indiana Director of School Improvement concluded, “Without legislation, I don’t know if the focus would be on literacy. All eyes are on all children reading by the end of third grade.”
Appendix A: State Literacy Leader Interview

Moderator Introduction

Good [morning/afternoon/evening]. My name is __________ and this is my colleague __________. We are with RMC Research Corporation. As you know, RMC is collecting information on the Indiana legislation (P.L. 109) for a study being conducted by the Foundation for Excellence in Education, headquartered in Tallahassee, Florida.

For our study, we are gathering the perceptions of state education leaders like you about a range of topics related to reading assessment, instruction and intervention in kindergarten through third grade. Also, we will gather the perceptions of SEA staff members whom you have identified, and later, corporation literacy leaders and teachers. The information that we gather and analyze will be summarized in a report. Your input is extremely valuable for this project and for determining future research projects in this area.

We have 90 minutes for our discussion. [name] will take notes and keep us on track with the suggested times. I will facilitate our discussion. We ask that you make your comments as concise as possible and directly focused on the topic. This will help us make the best use of our limited time.

While your comments will not be directly linked to your name, because you are the state education agency leader, your comments cannot be considered anonymous. We will audio record this session, but the recording will be used only by RMC Research Corporation staff for this project and will not be shared with any other organization. Do you have any questions before we begin?

Agenda

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Topic Area</th>
<th>Time</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Structure of State-Level Support</td>
<td>10 minutes</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. State-Level Communication Strategies</td>
<td>15 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. State-Level Support Strategies</td>
<td>45 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Recommendations</td>
<td>15 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Impacts of the Legislation</td>
<td>5 minutes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Interview Questions

Topic Area 1: Structure of State-Level Support

1.1. Since the passage of the Indiana legislation (P.L. 109), describe the organizational structure (or office) that is tasked to support its implementation and how this structure facilitates implementation of the legislation.

   • If this structure existed prior to the legislation: What changes were made to the structure to facilitate its implementation?

1.2. What funds are used to support state-level implementation and provide support to corporations? How have existing and/or new funds and other resources been used to support this effort?

Topic Area 2: State-Level Communication Strategies

2.1. What strategies are used to inform different stakeholders, including parents, about the Indiana legislation (P.L. 109)?

2.2. What does the state do to help corporations and schools communicate with parents about the Indiana legislation (P.L. 109), including reading performance of students who are identified with a reading deficiency?

2.3. With the passage of the legislation, what strategies are you using to raise public awareness of the importance of early literacy statewide?

2.4. Describe the overall effectiveness of these communication strategies. Which strategies are most successful and why?

Topic Area 3: State-Level Support Strategies

3.1. Since the passage of the legislation, what guidance documents does the state provide to corporations and schools? Which formats and dissemination methods are most effective?

3.2. Since the dissemination of the guidance documents, what follow-up support for implementation does the state provide to corporations and schools? How effective is this follow-up support?

3.3. What is the state’s role in providing K-3 reading assessments, such as screeners, progress monitoring tools, diagnostic assessments and summative assessments? How common are the assessments across the state? How are the cut scores determined for identifying students with a reading deficiency and for promotion/retention decisions?

3.4. What is the state’s role in providing guidance to corporations and schools in selecting instructional resources (e.g., research-based textbooks, software and other materials)?

3.5. Describe the professional development model used to provide K-3 teachers and reading coaches with knowledge of and skill in reading instruction. How effective is this professional development in increasing knowledge of and skill in reading instruction?

3.6. How do you support and provide guidance to help schools intensify interventions for K-3 students identified with a reading deficiency? Students retained in third grade? Students in English language programs? What challenges are you encountering and how are you addressing them? What funds are being used to support interventions?

3.7. What guidance or requirements does the state provide to corporations and schools for extended learning opportunities for students identified with a reading deficiency, including summer programs and before/after school programs? Which funds are being used to support extended learning opportunities?
3.8. Which of the state-provided supports—including guidance, professional development, instructional resources, assessment systems and interventions support—are the most helpful to corporations and schools in implementing the requirements in the legislation to improve reading achievement? Why do you think that?

**Topic Area 4: Recommendations**

4.1. What advice would you want to share with other state departments if they are charged with implementing similar legislation?

4.2. How can lawmakers continue to support you in reaching the goals of this legislation?

**Topic Area 5: Impacts of the Legislation**

5.1. How does the legislation impact other areas in your state, such as Pre-K?

5.2. Describe the state-supported requirements for teacher certification for pre-service K-3 teachers and recertification for current teachers (e.g., reading endorsements, reading credentialing and professional learning requirements).

5.3. Is there anything else you want to tell us about how this legislation is impacting your state?
Appendix B: Key SEA Staff Members Focus Group

Moderator Introduction

Good [morning/afternoon/evening]. My name is _____________ and this is my colleague ____________________. We are with RMC Research Corporation. RMC is collecting information on the Indiana legislation (P.L. 109) for a study requested by the Foundation for Excellence in Education, headquartered in Tallahassee, Florida.

Before we start, I want to thank you for participating in this focus group and sharing your perceptions.

For our study, we are gathering the perceptions of key SEA staff members about a range of topics related to reading assessment, instruction and intervention in kindergarten through third grade. Also, we will gather the perceptions of your state literacy leader, corporation literacy leaders and teachers. The information that we gather and analyze will be summarized in a report. Your input is extremely valuable for this project and for determining future research projects in this area.

We have 90 minutes for our discussion. [name] will take notes, track our time and ensure that everyone has a chance to share his or her comments. I will facilitate our discussion. We ask that you make your comments as concise as possible and directly focused on the topic. This will help us make the best use of our limited time.

Your comments will be confidential and no names will be used. Your responses will be summarized and reported anonymously. We will audio record this session, but the recording will be used only by RMC Research Corporation staff for this project and will not be shared with any other organization. Do you have any questions before we begin?

Let’s begin by sharing your names and your roles at the agency. Would you [point to person] like to start for us?

Agenda

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic Area</th>
<th>Time</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Structure of State-Level Support</td>
<td>10 minutes</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. State-Level Communication Strategies</td>
<td>10 minutes</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. State-Level Support Strategies</td>
<td>45 minutes</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Recommendations</td>
<td>15 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Impacts of the Legislation</td>
<td>10 minutes</td>
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Focus Group Questions

Topic Area 1: Structure of State-Level Support

1.1. What are your perceptions about the organizational structure (or office) that is tasked to support the legislation’s implementation? How does this structure facilitate implementation of the legislation and promote reading achievement?

Topic Area 2: State-Level Communication Strategies

2.1. Describe the effectiveness of the state’s communication strategies to inform different stakeholders, including parents, about the legislation and to increase awareness of the importance of early literacy.

Topic Area 3: State-Level Support Strategies

3.1. How effective are the SEA guidance documents in helping schools and corporations understand the legislation?

3.2. Describe your challenges and successes in providing support for corporations’ and schools’ implementation of the legislation.

3.3. How are the K-3 reading assessments (e.g., screeners, progress monitoring tools, diagnostics and summative assessments) making a difference?

3.4. Describe the professional development that you provide to corporations and schools. How effective is the professional development in ensuring all K-3 teachers have the knowledge of and skill in teaching reading to all students?

3.5. Describe your successes and challenges in providing support to reading coaches.

3.6. Describe your successes and challenges in supporting schools’ implementation of K-3 interventions and in intensifying those interventions for students retained in third grade.

3.7. Describe the state-supported extended learning opportunities for students identified with a reading deficiency (i.e., summer programs and before/after school programs).

3.8. Which of your state-provided supports—including guidance, implementation supports, professional development, assessment systems, instructional resources and interventions support—have been the most helpful to corporations and schools in implementing the legislation requirements? Why do you think that?

Topic Area 4: Recommendations

4.1. What advice would you want to share with your same-role colleagues in other state departments if they are charged with implementing similar legislation?

4.2. How can lawmakers continue to support your work in reaching the goals of this legislation?

Topic Area 5: Impacts of the Legislation

5.1. What do you think has been the greatest impact of this legislation in schools and corporations?

5.2. Is there anything else you want to tell us about how this legislation has impacted schools and corporations in your state?
Closing

This concludes our questions for this focus group. As we noted earlier, our purpose is to gather the perceptions of state education staff like you about a range of topics related to reading instruction in kindergarten through third grade.

Does anyone have any final questions for us?

Thank you again for your participation in this focus group.
Appendix C: Corporation Literacy Leader Interview (via telephone)

Moderator Introduction

Good [morning/afternoon/evening]. My name is __________, and on the phone with me is my colleague __________. We are with RMC Research Corporation. RMC, in partnership with the Foundation for Excellence in Education, is conducting a study on the Indiana legislation (P.L. 109). The Indiana Department of Education agreed to participate in the study and recommended your corporation for this interview.

Before we start, I want to thank you for participating in this telephone interview and sharing your perceptions.

For our study, we are gathering the perceptions of corporation literacy leaders and teachers and key SEA staff members about a range of practices related to reading assessment, instruction and intervention in kindergarten through third grade since the enactment of the Indiana legislation (P.L. 109). The information that we gather and analyze will be summarized in a report. Your input is extremely valuable for this project and for determining future research projects in this area.

We have 90 minutes for our discussion. [name] will take notes, track our time and ensure that we cover all the questions. I will facilitate our discussion. We ask that you make your comments as concise as possible and directly focused on the topic. This will help us make the best use of our limited time.

Your comments will be confidential, and no names will be used. Your responses will be summarized and reported anonymously. We will audio record this session, but the recording will be used only by RMC Research Corporation staff for this project and will not be shared with any other organization. Do you have any questions before we begin?

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<td>15 minutes</td>
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<td>5. Impacts of the Legislation</td>
<td>10 minutes</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Interview Questions

Topic Area 1: State-Level Support Strategies

1.1. How effective is the SEA guidance in helping schools and corporations understand the legislation?

1.2 What types of supports, such as professional development and resources, does the state provide to corporations and schools and how effective are they in helping teachers implement the legislation?

Topic Area 2: Communication Strategies

2.1 What communication strategies does your corporation employ to inform different stakeholders, including parents, about the legislation and importance of early literacy? Which strategies are most effective and why?

2.2. Describe the effectiveness of the state’s communication strategies to inform different stakeholders, including parents, about the legislation and the importance of early literacy.

Topic Area 3: District-Level Support Strategies

3.1. What additional guidelines or guidance does your corporation provide? Why? For whom?

3.2. Describe your corporation’s challenges and successes in providing support to your schools’ implementation of the legislation.

3.3 Describe how your corporation has used existing funds and/or new funds to ensure students are reading by the end of third grade.

3.4. What professional development do you provide for K-3 teachers and school-based literacy leaders? How is it delivered? How effective is the professional development in ensuring all K-3 teachers have the knowledge of and skill in teaching reading to all students, including students with severe reading difficulties?

3.5. How does your corporation support school-based literacy leaders, such as administrators and reading coaches?

3.6. Describe your successes and challenges in providing this support to school-based literacy leaders.

3.7. How is support provided to teachers and what strategies are most successful?

3.8. Which key resources, including personnel, that you provide to schools are the most valuable and why?

3.9. How does the corporation collect and use data from assessments?

3.10. How are the K-3 reading assessments (e.g., screeners, progress monitoring tools, diagnostics and summative assessments) making a difference?

3.11. What is the instructional plan for K-3 reading in your schools (e.g., time, resources and groupings)?

3.12. Describe your strategies to provide interventions to students most in need. How do you ensure schools are implementing K-3 interventions and to intensifying those interventions for students retained in third grade?

3.13. Describe your corporation’s guidance to schools regarding extended time for students identified with a reading deficiency, including summer programs and/or before/after school programs. What grades are being served?
3.14. Which of your corporation-provided supports—including guidance, technical assistance, professional development, assessment systems, instructional resources and interventions support—are the most helpful to schools in implementing the legislation? Why do you think that?

**Topic Area 4: Recommendations**

4.1. How can the state department of education continue to support your work in reaching the goals of this legislation?

4.2. How can lawmakers continue to support your work in reaching the goals of this legislation?

4.3. What advice would you want to share with literacy leaders in other corporations and states if they are charged with implementing similar legislation?

**Topic Area 5: Impacts of the Legislation**

5.1. What changes in your corporation and schools can be attributed to the implementation of this legislation?

5.2. Is there anything else you want to tell us about how this legislation has impacted schools and your corporation?

**Closing**

This concludes our questions for this interview. As we noted earlier, our purpose is to gather the perceptions of corporation literacy leaders like you about a range of topics related to reading instruction in kindergarten through third grade.

Do you have any final questions for us? Thank you again for your participation in this interview.
Appendix D: Select Corporation Teacher Survey

This survey is part of a study of the impact of legislation enacted to improve early literacy. Indiana legislation (P.L. 109), passed in 2010, puts a strong focus on early reading development and requires third grade students to demonstrate grade level proficiency by receiving a passing score on the IREAD-3, providing two attempts to do so. The law also requires school corporations to develop reading plans that include scientifically-based reading instruction, interventions, a comprehensive assessment system and professional development for teachers. The law requires intervention services for any student identified with a reading deficiency and specific intervention services for retained third grade students, including a parent home reading program.

The following statements are designed to collect your perceptions of this legislation. Please respond to the statements in relation to Indiana legislation (P.L. 109). Your responses are voluntary and will be reported only in combination with responses of other teachers from across the state.

This survey will take approximately 10 minutes to complete. Thank you - we value your input.

Scale: Strongly Agree - Somewhat Agree - Somewhat Disagree - Strongly Disagree - N/A.

1. I receive sufficient support from my school administration that assists me in implementing the requirements of the Indiana legislation (P.L. 109).

2. I receive sufficient support that helps me analyze student assessment data and make instructional decisions based on the data.

3. My reading coach or literacy leader provides support that helps me improve my reading instruction.

4. I receive information and guidance documents that increase my knowledge of the requirements of the Indiana legislation (P.L. 109).

5. The Indiana legislation (P.L. 109) guidance documents provide information that is useful to me.

6. The professional development that I receive improves my knowledge of and skill in research-based reading instruction.

7. The professional development that I receive improves my knowledge of and skill in providing effective interventions.

8. The professional development that I receive improves my knowledge of and skill with assessments and their use to drive instruction.

9. The Indiana legislation’s (P.L. 109) assessments that we use help me improve my instruction to meet the needs of all students.


11. The extended learning opportunities, including summer programs and/or before-after school programs, are achieving the purpose of accelerating reading progress for students with a reading deficiency.

12. Because of the Indiana legislation (P.L. 109), I improved my instructional practices to teach reading to all students, including students with a reading deficiency.
13. The Indiana legislation (P.L. 109) has a positive impact on improving K-3 reading outcomes in my school.

14. The Indiana legislation’s (P.L. 109) requirements help me identify and address reading difficulties early.

15. The Indiana legislation’s (P.L. 109) requirements are communicated to parents in a way that is easy for them to understand.

16. Since implementation of the Indiana legislation (P.L. 109), my school increased its efforts to engage parents of struggling readers in a timely fashion.

17. I support the Indiana legislation’s (P.L. 109) requirement to eliminate social promotion to help ensure struggling readers get the time they need with intensive interventions to be successful in fourth grade and beyond.

**Open Ended:**

18. The most positive aspect of the Indiana legislation (P.L. 109) is _______

Please indicate the corporation in which you teach. (list of two corporations)

Thank you for your participation.
Appendix E: Statewide Teacher Survey

This survey is part of a study of the impact of legislation enacted to improve early literacy. Indiana legislation (P.L. 109), passed in 2010, puts a strong focus on early reading development and requires third grade students to demonstrate grade level proficiency by receiving a passing score on the IREAD-3, providing two attempts to do so. The law also requires school corporations to develop reading plans that include scientifically-based reading instruction, interventions, a comprehensive assessment system and professional development for teachers. The law requires intervention services for any student identified with a reading deficiency and specific intervention services for retained third grade students, including a parent home reading program.

The following statements are designed to collect your perceptions of this legislation. Please respond to the statements in relation to Indiana legislation (P.L. 109). Your responses are voluntary and will be reported only in combination with responses of other teachers from across the state.

This survey will take approximately 10 minutes to complete. Thank you - we value your input.

Please indicate the grade span that best describes your teaching position.

K - 3
4 - 6
7 - 12

Scale: Strongly Agree - Somewhat Agree - Somewhat Disagree - Strongly Disagree - N/A.

1. I receive sufficient support from my school administration that assists me in implementing the requirements of the Indiana legislation (P.L. 109).

2. I receive sufficient support that helps me analyze student assessment data and make instructional decisions based on the data.

3. My reading coach or literacy leader provides support that helps me improve my reading instruction.

4. I receive information and guidance documents that increase my knowledge of the requirements of the Indiana legislation (P.L. 109).

5. The Indiana legislation (P.L. 109) guidance documents provide information that is useful to me.

6. The professional development that I receive improves my knowledge of and skill in research-based reading instruction.

7. The professional development that I receive improves my knowledge of and skill in providing effective interventions.

8. The professional development that I receive improves my knowledge of and skill with assessments and their use to drive instruction.

9. The Indiana legislation’s (P.L. 109) assessments that we use help me improve my instruction to meet the needs of all students.

11. The extended learning opportunities, including summer programs and/or before-after school programs, are achieving the purpose of accelerating reading progress for students with a reading deficiency.

12. Because of the Indiana legislation (P.L. 109), I improved my instructional practices to teach reading to all students, including students with a reading deficiency.

13. The Indiana legislation (P.L. 109) has a positive impact on improving K-3 reading outcomes in my school.

14. The Indiana legislation’s (P.L. 109) requirements help me identify and address reading difficulties early.

15. The Indiana legislation’s (P.L. 109) requirements are communicated to parents in a way that is easy for them to understand.

16. Since implementation of the Indiana legislation (P.L. 109), my school increased its efforts to engage parents of struggling readers in a timely fashion.

17. I support the Indiana legislation’s (P.L. 109) requirement to eliminate social promotion to help ensure struggling readers get the time they need with intensive interventions to be successful in fourth grade and beyond.

Thank you for your participation.