Project CLEAR

California Learning Acceleration System Grant

Annual Evaluation Report
Period: July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025

This publication was prepared at the request of the Learning and Leadership Services Division at the San Diego County Office of Education (SDCOE). It was prepared independently by the SDCOE Research and Evaluation team.

san diego county office of EDUCATION

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Report Acronyms

CCEE	California Collaborative for Education Excellence
CDE	California Department of Education
CLEAR	California Literacy Elevation by Accelerating Reading
COE	County Office of Education
DLL	Descubriendo la Lectura
ESL	English as a Second Language
IDEC	International Data Evaluation Center, Ohio State University
LASG	Learning Acceleration Systems Grant
LEA	Local Education Agency
LL	Literacy Lessons
OS	Observation Survey of Early Literacy Achievement
Pt.	Point
Pct.	Percent
RR	Reading Recovery

Project CLEAR Background

The devastating impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on student learning caused years of disrupted instruction and reduced engagement leaving a generation of learners with significant gaps in foundational skills—especially in critical areas such as literacy. This learning crisis decreases the opportunities for success and long-term academic and social prosperity of students.

The escalating urgency of addressing the educational setbacks caused by the pandemic propelled a response for coordinated deployment of effective instructional strategies, comprehensive supports, and sustained professional development for educators.

To address this need, the California Legislature drafted Section 152 of Assembly Bill 130 (AB 130), which was approved by the governor on July 21, 2021. This statute appropriated $50 million to the California Collaborative for Education Excellence (CCEE) to select county offices of education (COEs) to provide educators professional learning for evidence-based learning acceleration strategies for all students, especially in literacy, language development, and mathematics. Of these funds, $45 million was awarded to selected COEs in supporting the development, implementation, and ongoing support for learning acceleration of professional learning throughout the state in the aforementioned areas.

The Project CLEAR program was launched in 2022 to address significant literacy learning disruptions and wide achievement gaps that emerged during extended school closures and shifts to remote instruction.

Theory of Action

Project CLEAR aims to improve early literacy outcomes for students needing intervention, with a commitment to equity for low-income students, English learners, and students with disabilities. The project also advances teacher capacity by cultivating asset-based mindsets,

strong pedagogical knowledge, and the effective use of evidence-based literacy acceleration. Instructional capacity is expanded among educators with direct student instructional contact, as well as site administrators, to enhance intervention, and coaching in early literacy.

The project's priorities emphasize an equity-centered approach that promotes continuous improvement through systematic documentation of reflective practices and the integration of systemic improvement processes. This ongoing, collaborative work is grounded in continuous data collection and direct engagement with participants, ensuring that findings are shaped by both quantitative evidence and qualitative insights, which together support a strengthened understanding of student needs and assets throughout the project's implementation.

Key Priorities

- Delivering high-quality, accessible professional learning for educators and support staff statewide

- Strengthening a statewide infrastructure that ensures equitable access to professional development opportunities

- Demonstrating the impact of accelerated learning strategies for students with the highest needs through quantitative outcomes

- Expanding evidence-based professional development for teachers and leaders, tailored to support English learners, students with disabilities, and low-income students

- Aligning with the CCEE's theory of action, incorporating reflective practice to promote equity and systemic improvement

- Providing professional learning aligned with best practices, including ongoing sessions, consultations, and coaching

Evaluation Framework

Central to the evaluation framework was the balanced integration of qualitative data collected from professional development participants, alongside the analysis of student assessment results. Both data sources are regarded as equally essential to informing continuous program improvement.

The evaluation employed feedback methods, including structured surveys and interviews, to capture nuanced participant insights on which professional development components effectively advanced instructional practice, which warranted expansion, and those that could be streamlined for greater efficiency.

This participant-centered approach recognizes practitioners as critical stakeholders and agents in the co-construction of professional learning, enabling an authentic understanding of both the conditions that foster meaningful change. By elevating educator voices and respecting their experiential expertise further ensured that the strategies and recommendations emerging from the research reflect the lived realities of teaching professionals, yielding a process that is iterative, dynamic, and deeply attuned to practitioner context.
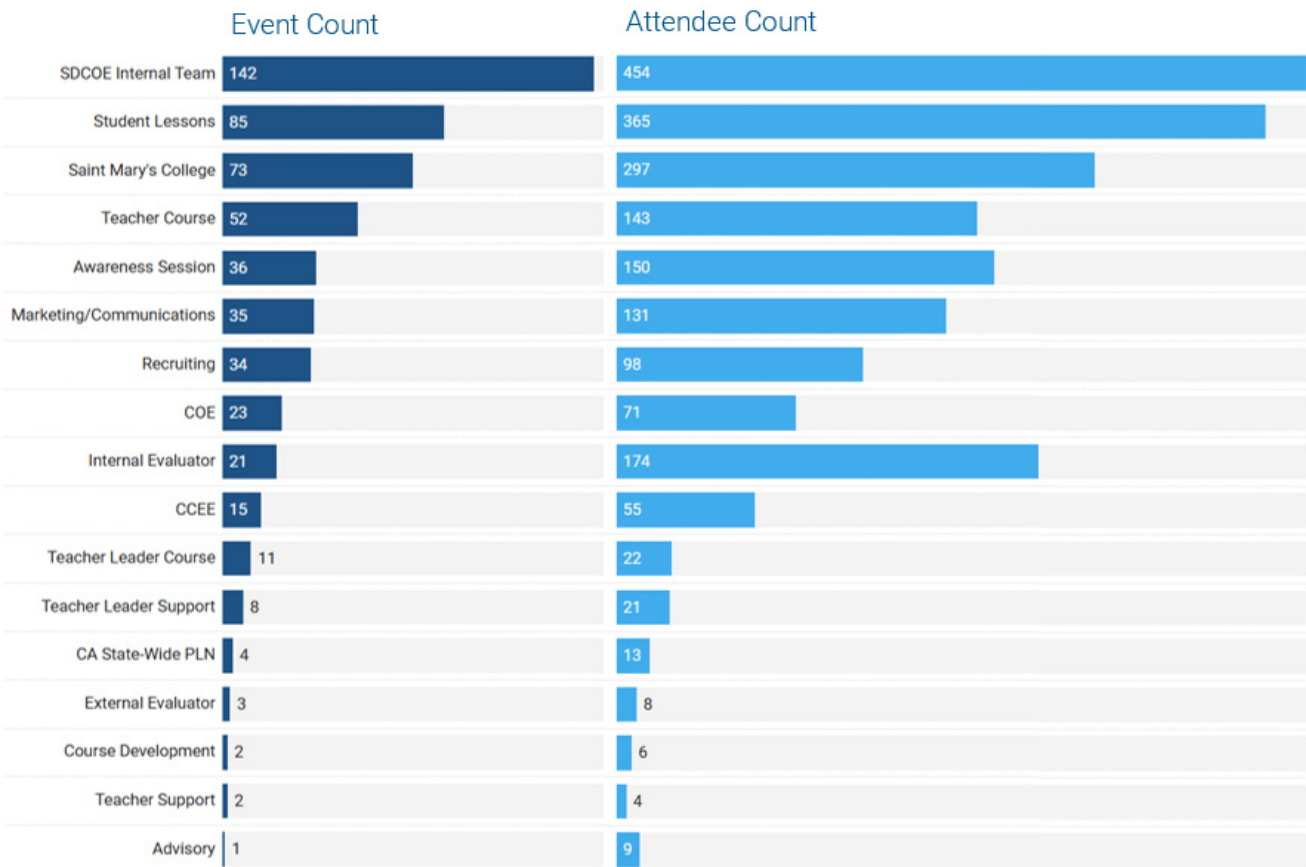
The project's priorities emphasize an equity-centered approach that promotes continuous improvement through reflective practices and the integration of systemic improvement processes.

Year-in-Review: Implementation Activities

The project continues to demonstrate significant progress and measurable impact in its latest year. The data reflect a strong year of collaboration and outreach. High-capacity partnerships, such as the Saint Mary's College of California and the SDCOE Internal Team meetings, anchored much of the activity, while awareness sessions supported broad engagement. Marketing, and recruiting meetings ensured continuous improvement and strong visibility, while advisory and support sessions offered targeted assistance. Together, these efforts demonstrate a balanced, collaborative network driving consistent communication, instructional quality, and sustained organizational growth.

Grant Planning and Implementation Meetings

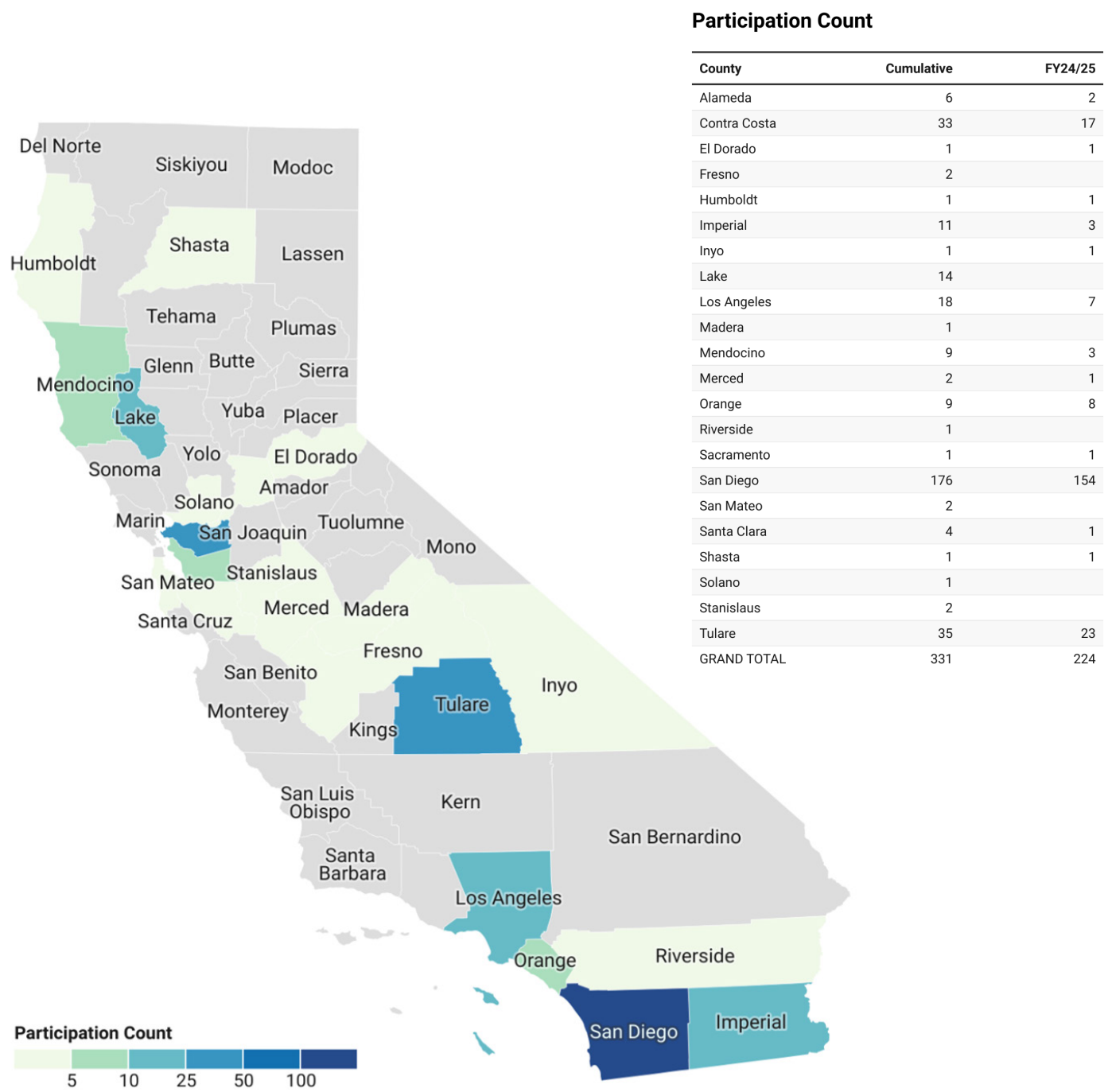|	Event Count	Attendee Count
SDCOE Internal Team	142	454
Student Lessons	85	365
Saint Mary's College	73	297
Teacher Course	52	143
Awareness Session	36	150
Marketing/Communications	35	131
Recruiting	34	98
COE	23	71
Internal Evaluator	21	174
CCEE	15	55
Teacher Leader Course	11	22
Teacher Leader Support	8	21
CA State-Wide PLN	4	13
External Evaluator	3	8
Course Development	2	6
Teacher Support	2	4
Advisory	1	9

Project Participation and Geographic Growth

The project showed strong, sustained growth in literacy-focused educator development across three years. Participation began in seven counties in 2022-2023 (Alameda, Contra Costa, Fresno, Los Angeles, San Diego, Santa Clara, and Stanislaus). In 2023-2024, the program expanded to 18 counties with the addition of Imperial, Lake, Madera, Mendocino, Merced, Orange, Riverside, San Mateo, Solano, and Tulare. By 2024-2025, participation grew further to 23 counties, adding El Dorado, Humboldt, Inyo, Sacramento, and Shasta alongside ongoing involvement from earlier counties. Notably, Lake and Merced COEs were pivotal in driving Project CLEAR's expansion, helping extend its reach and impact across rural and less populated regions, while the dedication of Imperial and Tulare counties played an essential role in building the program's teacher leader network at participating schools.

This rapid geographic expansion underscores the program's growing reputation and responsiveness to local instructional needs statewide. The cumulative participation total of 331, with 224 added in 2024-2025, demonstrates effective scaling, broadening access and impact across California. These quantitative results affirm successful recruitment strategies and increasing program recognition.

Project CLEAR Participating County Map

Participation Count

County	Cumulative	FY24/25
Alameda	6	2
Contra Costa	33	17
El Dorado	1	1
Fresno	2	
Humboldt	1	1
Imperial	11	3
Inyo	1	1
Lake	14	
Los Angeles	18	7
Madera	1	
Mendocino	9	3
Merced	2	1
Orange	9	8
Riverside	1	
Sacramento	1	1
San Diego	176	154
San Mateo	2	
Santa Clara	4	1
Shasta	1	1
Solano	1	
Stanislaus	2	
Tulare	35	23
GRAND TOTAL	331	224

Program Diversification and Role Expansion

The range of roles and offerings has become more diverse each year, both by type and geographic distribution. The observed shifts demonstrate a clear dedication to adapting educational programs to meet changing needs by introducing new language options, expanding professional development opportunities, and offering a wider variety of literacy pathways.

This trend aligns with broader educational movements emphasizing greater role variety and inclusion to close gaps and engage a more diverse participant pool. As enrollment grows, the expanded varied program offerings lay a strong foundation for sustained growth and deeper impact moving forward. The progressive growth points to a well-executed strategy that strengthens literacy education capacity over time.

Participation Comparison: FY22/23 – FY24/25

Participation Scale
low ———————— high

Program Year ▼	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025
Teacher Leader	7	10	2
Teacher in Training	26	81	179
Administrator in Training		5	5

Program Comparison: FY22/23 – FY24/25

Participation Scale
1 ———————— 100

Program Year	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025
Assessment Course		47	53
Assessment Course (Spanish)			24
Descubriendo La Lectura	1	5	12
Descubriendo La Lectura Bridging	3		4
Literacy Lessons	2	9	77
Ongoing Professional Development		6	
Reading Recovery	27	29	13
Reading Recovery Bridging			3

2022-2023

In Year 1, engagement centered largely around Reading Recovery, and some participation in Literacy Lessons and Descubriendo La Lectura courses, with few specialized or bilingual tracks and limited county involvement.

2023-2024

In Year 2, program expands into Ongoing Professional Development, adds more DLL Bridging participation from new counties, and the introduction of Spanish and Bilingual programs, showing initial diversification.

2024-2025

In Year 3, the portfolio broadens:
  I.) Newer roles such as an assessment course English and Spanish, Descubriendo La Lectura, and Reading Recovery Bridging categories gain momentum.
  II.) Literacy Lessons and Reading Recovery maintain strong interest but now represent a smaller proportion of the total, reflecting diversified participant paths.

Qualitative Findings

The evaluation team at the San Diego County Office of Education led the effort to provide the grant project with feedback on formative questions related to the implementation of professional development learning. The following section presents each guiding question:

EVALUATION QUESTIONS

1. Did the project coursework meet your expectations for content and structure?
2. What aspects of your coursework have you found most valuable or enjoyable?
3. Are there any areas you feel could be improved or better aligned with your needs?
4. How have you integrated the key concepts from the training into your daily classroom practice?
5. Can you provide examples of how your teaching has changed since completing the training?
6. How do you self-assess your progress in implementing the training procedures?
7. What challenges have you faced in implementing the training procedures?
8. Do you receive feedback or communication about learning acceleration from your school or district leaders?
9. Do you receive customized literacy data specific to your students? How do you typically use this data?

Through interviews with 13 project participants representing a range of roles—including teacher leaders, teachers in training, assessment course participants, and educators engaged in ongoing professional development—the evaluation team identified several emergent themes that best characterize participants' experiences. Interviews, lasting between 30 to 45 minutes, followed a structured protocol designed to address multiple evaluation questions aligned with the project's objectives and grant outcomes.

These interviews provided valuable insights into how participants experienced the implementation of professional learning activities, the relevance and applicability of the training content, and the conditions supporting or challenging sustained engagement. The following section outlines the key themes that emerged from these discussions.

Participant Testimonials

"Instruction was in layers and step-by-step, we would regularly fine-tune it with each other; and so, I feel like learning through experience, and then being able to apply it through experience made it a lot easier."
(Teacher–Reading Recovery)

"I felt confident teaching reading in English, but when I moved to a dual language program, I thought I could teach Spanish the same way. Then I realized that's not possible. I became less confident because I didn't grow up in a Spanish-speaking country or have any training in Spanish linguistics. There was no preparation for teaching reading in Spanish, so that's what I was looking for. This program gave me the chance to learn, to understand the data, and to engage with my peers and experts in the field."
(Teacher–Descubriendo La Lectura)

"I feel like Reading Recovery was a more well-rounded approach to teaching reading. I also really appreciated that Reading Recovery specifically targets first graders, because I find that a core problem with education today is that we won't even start stepping in until they're two grade levels behind, but if they're two grade levels behind it's so hard to catch up."
(Teacher–Reading Recovery)

"I started using assessments differently, things that I had missed before. I was feeling a little more confident, I was able to interpret the data better… and what I could do to help my student was more intentional. I was able to analyze it a little more deeply."
(Teacher–Assessment Course)

"We're getting students from the traditional high school setting that are falling through the cracks, that are just a step behind, and this kind of program really brings them a lot of confidence and strength."
(Teacher–Literacy Lessons)

"The assessment course improved my broader understanding of my students and helped me identify their specific needs. It helped me identify specific areas where to assess, which ultimately led to the student qualifying for special education services."
(Teacher–Assessment Course)

"My students see themselves as readers now. The students we support are all at-risk readers, and they often struggle in the general classroom. One of the main purposes of our Reading Recovery lessons is to help kids see themselves as readers and writers. When we give them a leveled reading, they feel successful. Everything we do builds on what they already know through scaffolding."
(Teacher–Reading Recovery)

Qualitative Findings (Continued)

Participant Expectations

The program provided a balanced learning experience that combined theoretical insight, gain through the project's coursework, with hands-on application through ongoing cycles of practice and reflection. Participants recognized the collaborative group work structure as an important element that deepened their understanding, encouraged peer learning, and supported the transfer of strategies into classroom practice. Despite the course workload intensity and limited student-instructor one on one time, participants valued the program's instructional organization were well suited to the needs of working educators.

Successes and Highlights

Participants strongly endorsed the program's collaborative, practice-based approach to professional learning. The layered structure allowed teachers to build skills incrementally and apply new knowledge through authentic classroom experiences and video-based reflection.

> "We were nervous about doing the behind-the-glass videos. It feels scary at first, but everyone does it to learn from each other. We learned from our mistakes and from watching others. I made errors too, but I wouldn't have known what to fix without that feedback. Seeing others' successes and challenges helped us all improve."
>
> *(Teacher−Descubriendo La Lectura)*

Educators highlighted significant gains in interpreting assessment data, selecting targeted interventions, and understanding the rationale behind instructional strategies. Participants also reported increased confidence supporting diverse learners—including older students reading below grade level—and noted positive student engagement and motivation as key outcomes of the program's hands-on, scaffolded design.

Coursework Improvement

The most consistent challenge involved time management and workload intensity, particularly for educators balancing instruction with training expectations. Some recommended pacing adjustments, reduced caseloads, and greater flexibility for working teachers.

Several participants recognized the program's strong mentorship and responsiveness but expressed a need for longer or more frequent teacher leader interactions, ideally including local visits or more in-depth virtual coaching. Although some missed the collaborative energy of in-person instruction, virtual access was valued for expanding participation statewide.

Practice and Implementation

Participants highlighted the program's strengths in providing a multi-layered literacy instruction model that integrates assessment, reading, writing, and word work in structured, individualized lessons. The holistic approach supports fluency development beyond phonics and targets early intervention needs effectively. Teachers valued the diagnostic depth of the assessments, which revealed foundational concepts about print gaps often undetected by other tools.

Educators benefited from the program's emphasis on deliberate lesson planning, continuous observation, and the use of targeted assessments to guide instruction.

Challenges

Teacher reflections highlighted persistent implementation challenges centered on time constraints, student attendance, and limited administrative coordination.

Many lacked consistent protected time to conduct student sessions without interruption. Student absences emerged as a major obstacle to achieving expected literacy growth. Resource availability improved gradually, though some schools continued to experience shortages of leveled and language-appropriate texts. Additionally, inconsistent workspace access delayed early-year instruction in some cases. Overall, teachers valued the professional learning opportunity and materials support but emphasized the need for stronger scheduling protections, administrative integration, and resource reliability to maximize student benefit.

School Site Communication

Responses indicate varied and often limited communication and feedback from school and district leaders regarding learning acceleration efforts. While immediate school administrators and supervisors occasionally provided support and encouragement, larger district engagement was minimal or inconsistent. Teachers often had to advocate individually for program participation due to change in leadership. The program was frequently perceived as personal professional growth rather than a strategic school or district priority.

Competing district priorities, particularly those addressing staffing shortages in special education and compliance with mandated screeners, diverted attention and resources away from the project's learning acceleration efforts. Despite challenges, some schools leveraged internal collaboration and resource support to enhance instructional practices.

Overall Sentiment

Educators overwhelmingly express positive sentiment about the literacy acceleration program, highlighting critical supports such as stipends for materials, effective lesson structures, and specialized professional development, particularly in bilingual contexts.

Teachers report marked increases in student confidence, especially in oral reading, which correlates to their increased classroom participation.

> "When I started working with him, he could read the books but often skipped or guessed unknown words. As I prompted him to go back and fix them, he began trying to decode on his own. With those small successes, he's become more willing to read and try unfamiliar words, which he never used to do."
>
> *(Teacher−Reading Recovery)*

Despite challenges, educators remain committed to the program, highlighting its uniqueness and alignment with their professional aspirations. Many describe it as a rare opportunity that addresses deeply felt instructional gaps, particularly for diverse learners.

Quantitative Findings

Educator Confidence Survey

The analysis of pre- and post-survey results from the Project CLEAR Participant Survey provides measurable insights into a participants' confidence level regarding their knowledge, skills, and attitudes related to evidence-based prevention and intervention strategies. The six-point confidence scale assesses both the depth and breadth of the educator competency development over time. Its multi-level structure enables the identification of specific areas for further development.

The pre-survey total reflects participants' self-rated confidence before starting the course, establishing a baseline for comparison. The post-survey average total measures their confidence after course completion using the same questions. On a six-point scale, each point typically represents a 20% increase in competency, moving from 0% at Level 1 (no knowledge) to 100% at Level 6 (expert).

Project CLEAR Survey Six-Point Confidence Scale

1	2	3	4	5	6
NO KNOWLEDGE	**KNOWLEDGE**	**BASIC APPLICATION**	**ANALYSIS AND APPLICATION**	**HIGHLY EXPERIENCED**	**EXPERT**
"I cannot tell you what this is."	"I can tell you what this is and give you facts about it."	"I can tell you what this is and, given a defined situation, I can apply it with assistance."	"I have knowledge of this, and I can analyze a situation and determine if it is needed and then independently and accurately apply it."	"I have knowledge of this. I have a high degree of experience applying and adapting it in various situations, and I can explain my decisions for doing so."	"I have a knowledge of this. I have a high degree of experience applying and adapting it, and I can teach others the theory behind it and coach them in its use."

Capacity for High-Quality Coaching in Early Literacy

These competencies highlight the multifaceted role educators play in strengthening literacy instruction through direct coaching, and collaborative learning.

Initial average confidence level points ranged from 2.68 (Teacher in Training) to 4.18 (Ongoing Professional Development), illustrating that starting capacity varied across roles. Roles with lower initial confidence levels, such as DLL Teacher in Training and RR and LL Teacher in Training, achieved the largest absolute gains in coaching confidence levels. In contrast, while those starting at a lower baseline can make substantial strides as they develop foundational competencies, individuals already performing at a higher level typically reach a stage of incremental progress as they work to refine and optimize existing skills.

This growth pattern throughout all roles reflects a well-targeted professional development strategy that adapts to participants' varying needs and skill levels. The graph illustrates the increase between these totals, showing how participants' confidence and perceived skills improved through the training.

High-Quality Coaching Confidence Levels Survey Results

Teacher Leaders (n = 6): Overall Increase in Points (1.59) and Percentage (26.54%)

Survey Question	Pre	Post	Difference
I can coach teachers on school site visits and provide feedback.	3.17	5.00	+1.83
I can plan and teach a familiar reading portion of the lesson	3.50	5.33	+1.83
I can accurately record student reading behaviors	3.50	5.33	+1.83
I can plan and conduct training sessions for teachers	3.00	4.67	+1.67
I can lead behind-the-glass discussions with groups of teachers who are observing a lesson	3.17	4.67	+1.50
I can plan and teach a word work portion of the lesson	3.67	5.17	+1.50
I can teach a writing portion of the lesson	3.83	5.33	+1.50
I can plan and teach a new book portion of the lesson	3.83	5.33	+1.50
I can plan and conduct awareness sessions for teachers/administrators and recruit teachers for training	3.50	4.67	+1.17

RR and LL Teacher in Training (n = 42): Overall Increase in Points (2.26) and Percentage (37.70%)

Survey Question	Pre	Post	Difference
I can plan and teach a new book portion of the lesson	2.50	4.95	+2.45
I can plan and teach a familiar reading portion of the lesson	2.60	4.98	+2.38
I can plan and teach a word work portion of the lesson	2.60	4.95	+2.36
I can teach a writing portion of the lesson	2.55	4.86	+2.31
I can accurately record student reading behaviors	3.17	4.98	+1.81

DLL Teacher in Training (n = 9): Overall Increase in Points (2.28) and Percentage (37.96)

Survey Question	Pre	Post	Difference
I can plan and teach a word work portion of the DLL lesson	2.67	5.22	+2.56
I can plan and teach a familiar reading portion of the DLL lesson	2.78	5.22	+2.44
I can plan and teach a new book portion of the DLL lesson	2.89	5.22	+2.33
I can teach a writing portion of the DLL lesson	2.78	5.11	+2.33
I can accurately record student reading behaviors while a student is reading in Spanish	3.33	5.11	+1.78

Administrators in Assessment Course (n = 6): Overall Increase in Points (0.72) and Percentage (12.04%)

Survey Question	Pre	Post	Difference
I can accurately record student reading behaviors	3.50	4.67	+1.17
I can plan and conduct training sessions for teachers	3.67	4.17	+0.50
I can coach teachers on school site visits and provide feedback.	3.83	4.33	+0.50

Teacher in Assessment Course (n = 123): Overall Increase in Points (0.96) and Percentage (15.99%)

Survey Question	Pre	Post	Difference
I can accurately record student reading behaviors	3.53	4.49	+0.96

Ongoing Professional Development (n = 13): Overall Increase in Points (0.76) and Percentage (12.69%)

Survey Question	Pre	Post	Difference
I can plan and teach a familiar reading portion of the lesson	4.23	5.00	+0.77
I can teach a writing portion of the lesson	4.23	5.00	+0.77
I can plan and teach a new book portion of the lesson	4.31	5.00	+0.69
I can accurately record student reading behaviors	4.31	5.00	+0.69
I can plan and teach a word work portion of the lesson	4.08	4.69	+0.62

Evidence-Based Prevention and Intervention Practices: Advancing Knowledge, Skills, and Attitudes

This section evaluates educators' capacity to utilize assessment data, conduct analysis, and implement evidence-based strategies. Survey items reflect their proficiency in summarizing assessments, administering and interpreting Observation Survey subtasks, selecting students using stanine scores, forecasting progress, analyzing running records, and generating actionable site reports using IDEC data. Given California's extensive demographic diversity—including variations in language, and socio-economic status—an array of reliable tools is essential to effectively address the varying needs of diverse student populations and educational settings.

Teacher Leaders (n = 6): Overall Increase in Points (1.89) and Percentage (31.48%)

Survey Question	Pre	Post	Difference
I can write a two-page summary of the assessments in the Observational Survey	3.00	5.33	+2.33
I can administer and analyze the subtasks of the Observation Survey	3.17	5.33	+2.17
I can select students based on the stanine scores of the Observational Survey	3.33	5.50	+2.17
I can write predictions of progress based on the Observational Survey	3.17	5.00	+1.83
I can analyze a running record	3.83	5.50	+1.67
I can create site reports using the data from IDEC	2.83	4.00	+1.17

RR and LL Teacher in Training (n = 42): Overall Increase in Points (2.09) and Percentage (34.76%)

Survey Question	Pre	Post	Difference
I can administer and analyze the subtasks of the Observation Survey	2.50	4.76	+2.26
I can select students based on the stanine scores of the Observational Survey	2.38	4.62	+2.24
I can write a two-page summary of the assessments in the Observational Survey	2.33	4.55	+2.21
I can write predictions of progress based on the Observational Survey	2.43	4.52	+2.10
I can analyze a running record	3.38	5.00	+1.62

DLL Teacher in Training (n = 9): Overall Increase in Points (2.16) and Percentage (35.93%)

Survey Question	Pre	Post	Difference
I can write a two-page summary of the Spanish version of the assessments in the Observational Survey	2.56	5.00	+2.44
I can administer and analyze the subtasks of the Spanish version of the Observation Survey	2.89	5.11	+2.22
I can select students based on the stanine scores of the Spanish version of the Observational Survey	2.78	5.00	+2.22
I can write predictions of progress based on the Spanish version of the Observational Survey	2.56	4.78	+2.22
I can analyze a running record from a student who read in Spanish	3.67	5.33	+1.67

Administrators in Assessment Course (n = 6): Overall Increase in Points (1.04) and Percentage (17.36%)

Survey Question	Pre	Post	Difference
I can administer and analyze the subtasks of the Observation Survey	3.17	4.50	+1.33
I can write a two-page summary of the assessments in the Observational Survey	3.17	4.50	+1.33
I can create site reports using the data from IDEC	2.33	3.33	+1.00
I can analyze a running record	4.17	4.67	+0.50

Teacher in Assessment Course (n = 123): Overall Increase in Points (1.29) and Percentage (21.45%)

Survey Question	Pre	Post	Difference
I can write a two-page summary of the assessments in the Observational Survey	2.67	4.17	+1.50
I can administer and analyze the subtasks of the Observation Survey	2.87	4.32	+1.45
I can analyze a running record	3.67	4.59	+0.91

Ongoing Professional Development (n = 13): Overall Increase in Points (0.78) and Percentage (13.06%)

Survey Question	Pre	Post	Difference
I can write predictions of progress based on the Observational Survey	3.85	4.69	+0.85
I can select students based on the stanine scores of the Observational Survey	4.15	4.92	+0.77
I can administer and analyze the subtasks of the Observation Survey	4.15	4.92	+0.77
I can analyze a running record	4.46	5.08	+0.62
I can write a two-page summary of the assessments in the Observational Survey	4.15	4.77	+0.62

Understanding Student Progress Categories

Reading Recovery and Descubriendo La Lectura

Accelerated Progress ▶ Students in this category have successfully caught up with their classmates after receiving Reading Recovery instruction. They can now keep learning independently in their classrooms without needing extra help.

Progressed ▶ These students made significant improvements but haven't fully caught up with their peers. They are still developing their reading skills and need ongoing support and monitoring to continue their progress.

Moved ▶ Students who started Reading Recovery but left the school before completing the program.

Incomplete ▶ Students who began the program, but the school year ended before they could finish their lessons.

Recommended ▶ Students here did not make enough progress to succeed without specialist help. It is recommended that they receive further evaluation and continued intervention to support their literacy development.

None of the Above ▶ Students who started Reading Recovery but had to leave the intervention for reasons outside of the teacher's control.

Reading Recovery

According to the International Data Evaluation Center (n.d.), Reading Recovery (RR) is a highly effective short-term intervention of one-to-one tutoring for the lowest achieving first graders. National data show that these students represent the hardest-to-teach, typically starting the school year in the 20th percentile or lower. These children are taught by a Reading Recovery teacher who designs daily individual 30-minute lessons that are responsive to each child's strengths and needs. The goal is to accelerate each student's progress to average levels of reading and writing within 12 to 20 weeks. The students who are still having difficulty after a complete intervention are recommended for further evaluation.

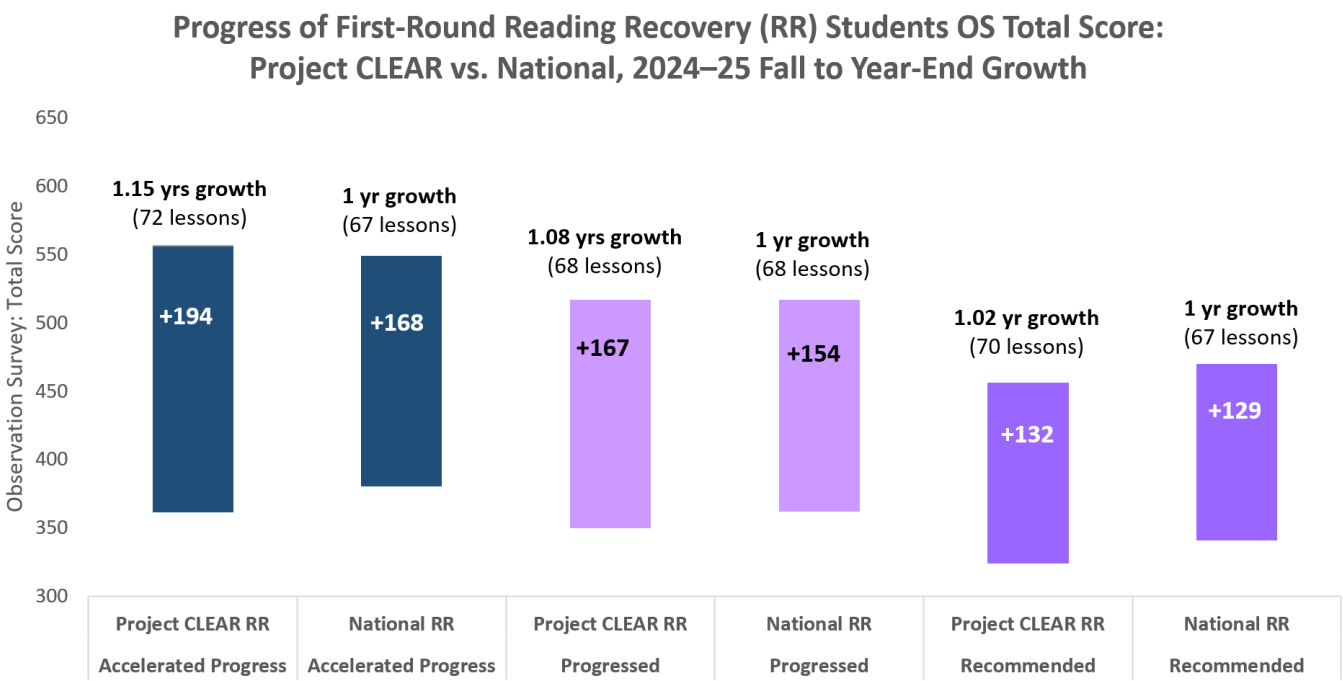## Observation Survey (OS) of Early Literacy Achievement

Reading Recovery utilizes a comprehensive set of literacy assessment tools to broadly evaluate the early reading and writing behaviors of first-grade students. The Reading Recovery Observation Survey tool includes Text Reading, Writing Vocabulary, The Ohio Word Test, Hearing and Recording Sounds in Words, Letter Identification, and Concepts About Print. Each child in the program is assessed using the Observation Survey three times: before entering the intervention, when exiting the intervention, and at the end of the school year. (Reading Recovery Council of North America, 2022).

Reading Recovery: First and Second Round

The Reading Recovery program prioritizes the selection of children with the most significant literacy needs. The first-round students are those who have the greatest difficulties with reading and writing. Consequently, those highest-need students start the intervention earliest. Once first-round students complete the twenty-week program, a new child from the waiting list enters the program and becomes a second-round student (Reading Recovery Council of North America, 2018).
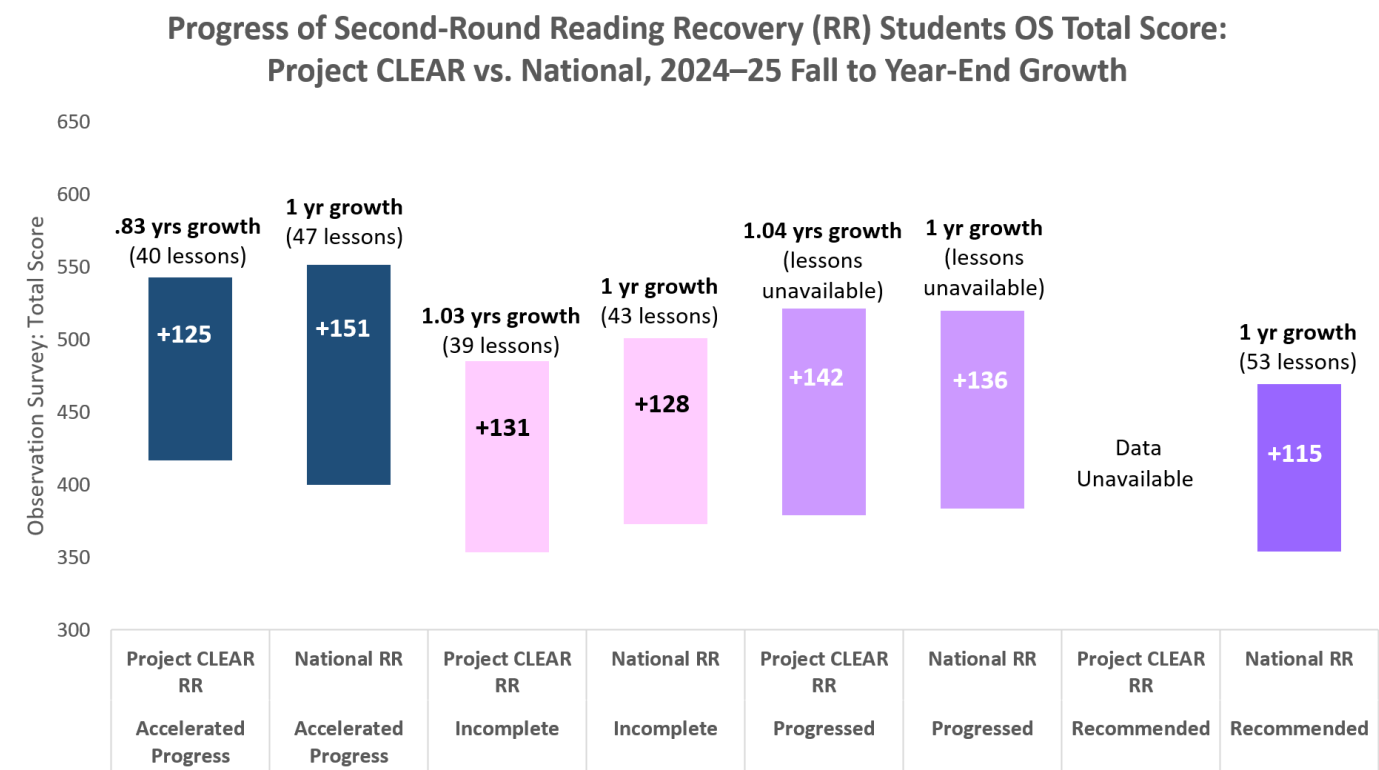
Moving forward in this report, charts will compare average years of reading growth and the intensity of each intervention, shown by the number of lessons.

First-Round Comparison: Project CLEAR RR (n=117) vs. National RR

Progress of First-Round Reading Recovery (RR) Students OS Total Score: Project CLEAR vs. National, 2024–25 Fall to Year-End Growth

	Project CLEAR RR Accelerated Progress	National RR Accelerated Progress	Project CLEAR RR Progressed	National RR Progressed	Project CLEAR RR Recommended	National RR Recommended
Growth	1.15 yrs growth (72 lessons)	1 yr growth (67 lessons)	1.08 yrs growth (68 lessons)	1 yr growth (68 lessons)	1.02 yr growth (70 lessons)	1 yr growth (67 lessons)
Net points	+194	+168	+167	+154	+132	+129

Across all categories, the Project CLEAR RR demonstrates greater gains in reading scores and achieves higher "years growth" than the National RR group, despite starting at lower average score levels. This suggests the Project CLEAR RR group lead to stronger acceleration in literacy skills, particularly among those students starting furthest behind. The pattern is consistent, with the Project CLEAR RR group outperforming the National RR group in net point growth from Fall to Year-end in every category.

Second-Round Comparison: Project CLEAR RR (n=112) vs. National RR

Progress of Second-Round Reading Recovery (RR) Students OS Total Score: Project CLEAR vs. National, 2024–25 Fall to Year-End Growth

	Project CLEAR RR	National RR	Project CLEAR RR	National RR	Project CLEAR RR	National RR	Project CLEAR RR	National RR
	Accelerated Progress	Accelerated Progress	Incomplete	Incomplete	Progressed	Progressed	Recommended	Recommended

The data shows that, across all measured second round categories, the Project CLEAR RR group achieved comparable or even greater reading growth using fewer intervention lessons compared to the National RR group. This pattern is especially pronounced among students starting with lower reading scores. Achieving greater gains with fewer interventions demonstrates that instructional time was used especially effectively, enabling students to make significant progress in less time.
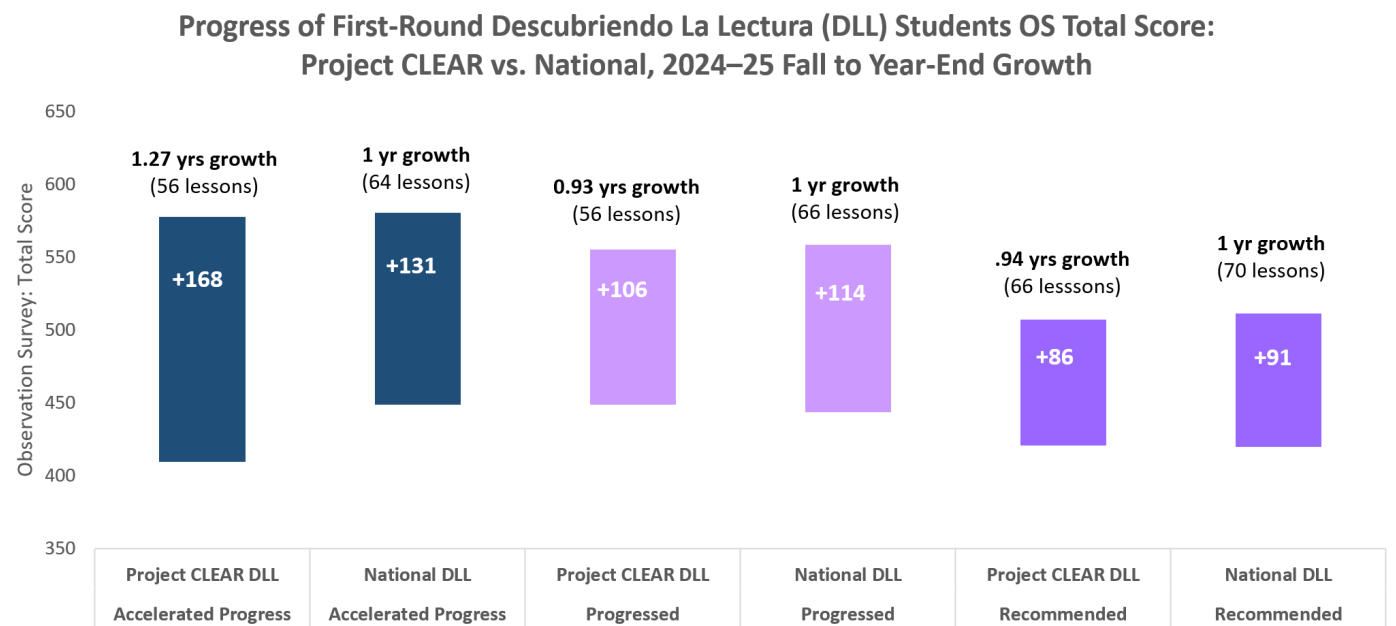

Descrubiendo la Lectura (DLL)

Descubriendo la Lectura is an early literacy intervention program designed to support Spanish-speaking first graders who receive their primary literacy instruction in Spanish. The program equips bilingual teachers to deliver targeted reading and writing instruction, helping students overcome challenges in learning to read and write in Spanish. It aims to reduce the number of bilingual students struggling with literacy by providing individualized, research-based support tailored to their language needs (Descubriendo la Lectura, 2025).

Culturally responsive teaching practices for multi-lingual learners promote a positive sense of identity and belonging, which carries academic and social-emotional advantages (NCELA, 2022).

First-Round Comparison: Project CLEAR DLL (n=12) vs. National DLL

Progress of First-Round Descubriendo La Lectura (DLL) Students OS Total Score: Project CLEAR vs. National, 2024–25 Fall to Year-End Growth

	Project CLEAR DLL	National DLL	Project CLEAR DLL	National DLL	Project CLEAR DLL	National DLL
	Accelerated Progress	Accelerated Progress	Progressed	Progressed	Recommended	Recommended

The data indicate that students in the Project CLEAR DLL group, though smaller in sample size when compared to the Reading Recovery category, showed equal or greater reading growth compared to the National DLL group across all categories, often with fewer intervention lessons. Most notably, the Accelerated Progress test group demonstrated the highest gains in reading achievement per session.

Second-Round Comparison: Project CLEAR DLL vs. National DLL

Due to the small sample size of fewer than 10 students in this subset of the study, a detailed analysis cannot be reported yet. This approach aligns with standard research practices, which prioritize maintaining confidentiality and ensuring statistical reliability when dealing with small populations.

Literacy Lessons

Literacy Lessons is an intervention specifically designed to support young children, typically ranging from Grades 1 through 12, who are struggling with foundational reading and writing skills, particularly those receiving special education services or who are multilingual learners. This intervention builds upon the instructional principles of Reading Recovery but is adapted to serve children who may not be eligible for that program (The Literacy Council of North America, 2025).

National norms cannot be established for Literacy Lessons because its students bring too wide of a range of backgrounds and literacy needs, making comparison to standardized benchmarks unsuitable. Rather than adopting exit categories used in other programs, Literacy Lessons uses tailored assessments and recommendations that respond to each student's unique circumstances, ensuring more relevant and equitable support for their literacy growth.

The following charts present the exiting intervention status for students in Literacy Lessons from multilingual learners and students who are receiving special education services. The analysis includes five categories of outcomes highlighting the differences in the percentage distribution between the two groups. The subsequent tables provide a comparison of students who exited the Literacy Lessons (LL) program, categorizing their post-intervention recommendations based on their literacy needs.

Intervention Status of English Language Learner Students Who Exited from Literacy Lessons at Year-End: California, 2024-25

Intervention Status	Project CLEAR		National	Difference
	n	col %	col %	col %
LL or other literacy intervention no longer needed	11	15.70%	17.90%	-2.20%
Continue in Literacy Lessons in the Fall	7	10.00%	14.10%	-4.10%
Moved	1	1.40%		n/a
Additional literacy support recommended	35	50.00%	56.40%	-6.40%
Recommended for intervention other than LL in the fall	16	22.90%	11.50%	11.40%
TOTAL	70	100.00%	100.00%	

Referencing the data in the table above, the differences between the two groups imply that the Project CLEAR and the National LL groups paths for English Learner interventions were driven by the particular needs of each student: with the National LL group moving towards more on continuing literacy intervention in the following fall term, and the Project CLEAR group showing greater movement toward specialized or alternative supports. As evidenced by the comparative analysis, effective literacy interventions rely on the ability to adjust and adapt instructional strategies based on each student's unique literacy profile and evolving needs.

Intervention Status of Students in Special Education Who Exited from Literacy Lessons at Year-End: California, 2024-25

Intervention Status	Project CLEAR		National	Difference
	n	col %	col %	col %
LL or other literacy intervention no longer needed	2	7.40%	5.70%	1.70%
Continue in Literacy Lessons in the Fall	5	18.50%	21.90%	-3.40%
Moved	1	3.70%	1.00%	2.70%
Additional literacy support recommended	17	63.00%	58.10%	4.90%
Recommended for intervention other than LL in the fall	2	7.40%	10.50%	-3.10%
TOTAL	27	100.00%	100.00%	

In contrast to the Literacy Lessons intervention approach for English learners, the interventions for students in special education followed an almost diametrically opposed pattern. Importantly, both approaches are inherently similarly supportive; rather, these differences highlight the strength of the Literacy Lessons program's overall flexibility. By offering multiple pathways for support, the program can effectively address the diverse needs of children and respond to individual circumstances that fall outside standard assessment norms.

Although the approaches differ, the distinctions are not substantial, as all intervention categories fell within 5 percentage points of each other. This small range of variation suggests that while the strategies vary, the overall distributions are quite similar, reinforcing that both pathways effectively support student literacy within the flexible framework of the program.

Evaluation Report Conclusion

Over the past three years, project leads from the San Diego County Office of Education and Saint Mary's College of California have fostered a strong collaborative partnership. By progressively expanding program offerings and geographic reach, the model embraces adaptability and inclusivity; two essential factors for sustained impact.

Together, these efforts have significantly strengthened educator capacity to implement evidence-based reading practices effectively. To achieve the long-term academic goals of this initiative, it is critical to maintain a consistent and focused effort.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are grounded in best practices and research on effective literacy programming and implementation strategies.

Investing in Books to Boost Literacy Increase funding for book stipends. Participants indicated that current stipends are helpful but sometimes insufficient, leading to sharing of books or rotating books among students, which limited the amount of time each student had with them.

Protecting Instructional Time for Impact Strengthen participation agreements with local education agencies (LEAs) to prioritize uninterrupted student-teacher instruction time. Teachers are often pulled into meetings and other obligations, which disrupts instructional consistency. Consistent, protected instructional time is proven to improve literacy outcomes.

Widening the Net: Broadening Access for All Grades Expand outreach of the project to educators who serve students in grades K–12. Educator preparedness in foundational literacy skills in all levels is essential, as educators across grades need the capacity to support reading development effectively with newly immigrated students who may have little or no prior schooling.

On-site and 1:1 Coaching Increase funding to support lead teachers' travel so they can provide in-person coaching and mentoring directly with classroom teachers. Participants expressed a strong desire for more one-on-one coaching time to address the specific challenges and nuances they experience.

Celebrating Success in Style Provide funds for schools to create visible signage such as banners recognizing participation in the Project CLEAR. Public recognition fosters school pride and raises awareness. Public acknowledgment is a powerful recruitment motivator and engagement tool.

Spreading the Word Through Strategic Outreach Increase investment to expand marketing and communication efforts. Many teachers reported learning about the program only through word of mouth, underscoring the need for proactive outreach via school and district channels to increase awareness and participation.

Fostering School Site Collective Commitment to Literacy Encourage LEAs to adopt the program as a collective site initiative rather than as an individual teacher's pursuit. Site leadership sometimes views teacher participation as a personal goal rather than a shared school objective.

Data Efficiency from Day One Collaborate with IDEC system administrators to ensure teachers have timely login access and can begin entering data from the start of the school year. Accurate and early data entry is critical for monitoring progress and adapting instruction.

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Contact Us

Project CLEAR is a grant-funded initiative aimed at equipping educators across California with evidence-based literacy strategies. Through specialized training and coaching, Project CLEAR empowers teachers and leaders to deliver effective literacy interventions that drive rapid student progress and build sustainable capacity within schools.

To learn more about this work, please contact any of our Project CLEAR team members.

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Lake–Kelseyville USD
Mendocino–Laytonville USD
Mendocino–Legget Valley USD
Mendocino–Ukiah USD
Mendocino–Willits USD

Region 2
Shasta–Shasta UHSD

Region 3
El Dorado–Pioneer USD
Sacramento–Robla SD

Region 4
Alameda–Berkeley USD
Alameda–Fremont USD
Contra Costa–Antioch USD
Contra Costa–Saint Mary's College of California
Contra Costa–West Contra Costa USD
San Mateo–Las Lomitas ESD
San Mateo–Independent School
Solano–Vallejo City USD

Region 5
Santa Clara–Santa Clara USD

Region 6
Stanislaus–Riverbank USD

Region 7
Fresno–Selma Unified SD
Madera–Bass Lake Joint UESD
Merced–Merced COE
Tulare–Alta Vista ESD
Tulare–Ducor ESD
Tulare–Farmersville USD
Tulare–Monson-Sultana Joint UESD
Tulare–Sequoia UESD
Tulare–Stone Corral ESD
Tulare–Tulare COE
Tulare–Valley Life Charter Schools
Tulare–Visalia Unified SD
Tulare–Waukena Joint USD
Tulare–Woodlake UESD

Region 9
Imperial–Imperial COE
Imperial–Meadows USD
Orange–Anaheim ESD
Orange–Centralia ESD
Orange–La Habra City ESD
Orange–Saddleback Valley USD
San Diego–Alpine USD
San Diego–Borrego Springs USD
San Diego–Cajon Valley USD
San Diego–Children's Paradise
San Diego–Chula Vista ESD
San Diego–Educational Enrichment Systems
San Diego–EJE Academies Charter Schools
San Diego–Encinitas ESD
San Diego–Escondido USD
San Diego–Fallbrook UESD
San Diego–Grossmont USD
San Diego–Howard Gardner Comm School
San Diego–Julian UHSD
San Diego–La Mesa-Spring Valley ESD
San Diego–Lacaze Tutoring Center
San Diego–Lakeside USD
San Diego–Mountain Empire USD
San Diego–National ESD
San Diego–Oceanside USD
San Diego–Poway USD
San Diego–Ramona USD
San Diego–San Diego COE
San Diego–San Diego USD
San Diego–San Ysidro ESD
San Diego–Santee SD
San Diego–Scholarship Prep Public Schools
San Diego–South Bay USD
San Diego–Sunshine's Preschool Academy
San Diego–Valley Center-Pauma USD
San Diego–Vista USD

Region 10
Inyo–Owens Valley USD
Riverside–Jurupa USD

Region 11
Los Angeles–Adelanto ESD
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