



The Literacy Acceleration Specialist (LAS) program was designed to support students reading below grade level by providing targeted, small-group interventions at high-priority campuses. Specialists identified eligible students using *i-Ready* diagnostic assessments, focusing on those in Tier 3 (15th percentile and below) who were not receiving Special Education services. Throughout the 2024-25 school year, 34 specialists delivered intensive reading support to students in grades one through five across 19 campuses. The overarching mission of the LAS program was to accelerate literacy growth for all students, fostering academic achievement and lifelong learning.

Key Findings

Implementation

- Students were prioritized to receive reading interventions if they scored in the 15th percentile or lower on the *i-Ready* assessment for reading at BOY, and if they were not receiving other special education services.
- Most students identified for interventions were African American, economically disadvantaged and at-risk.

Stakeholder Feedback

Staff Members Feedback Surveys

- Most specialists, teachers, and principals were satisfied with the program and observed improvements in student engagement, motivation, and literacy skills.
- Teachers and principals reported that targeted, individualized instruction led to gains in foundational reading skills, fluency, comprehension, and student confidence.
- Implementation challenges such as scheduling, attendance, and limited bilingual support prompted calls for better coordination, expanded training, and more resources.

Student Survey

- Students showed an overall positive perception of reading, with increases in feelings of happiness, confidence, relaxation, and excitement, from BOY to EOY.

Student Outcomes

i-Ready

- Both LAS and comparison groups improved in reading placement, with LAS students showing slightly stronger gains, including more students reaching on-grade level and fewer remaining far below.
- LAS students made greater reading level gains than comparison group students, particularly among those who began the year one grade level below. Among students who started further behind, both groups demonstrated similarly strong gains.
- LAS students outperformed the comparison group on typical growth, and while both groups were equally likely to meet their full stretch growth goal, LAS students had slightly more students reaching just below the target.

Recommendations

- **Improve Coordination and Early Intervention Process.**

While stakeholders expressed overall satisfaction with the program, ongoing implementation challenges, including scheduling conflicts, inconsistent student attendance, and limited support for emergent bilingual students, continue to impact program effectiveness. Consider strengthening early intervention systems (e.g., SST) to improve referral timeliness and alignment with classroom instruction. Also, implementing more structured coordination between specialists, teachers, and campus administrators can help ensure protected intervention time and reduce scheduling disruptions.

- **Expand Targeted Professional Development.**

Stakeholders highlighted the need for expanded professional learning, especially around early intervention, grouping criteria, and instructional adjustments based on assessment data. To sustain gains in reading skills and student confidence, consider offering ongoing, differentiated professional development focused on small-group instruction, data-driven decision-making, and support for diverse learners. Supporting continuous learning will build staff capacity and improve instructional consistency.