

# A Goal Monitoring Conversation:

## *PPS 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade English Language Arts*

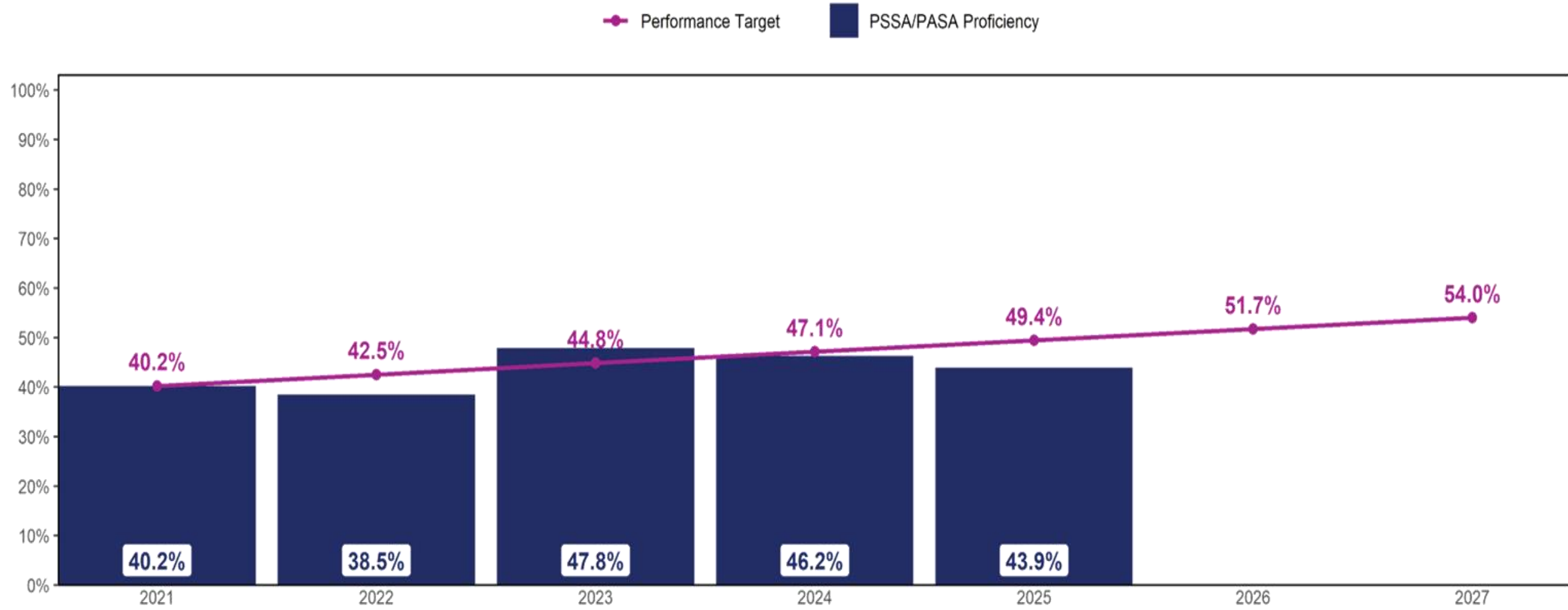
### *Status Update*



**Dr. Wayne N. Walters & Leadership Team**  
**March 3, 2026**



# 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade ELA Proficiency (By Year)



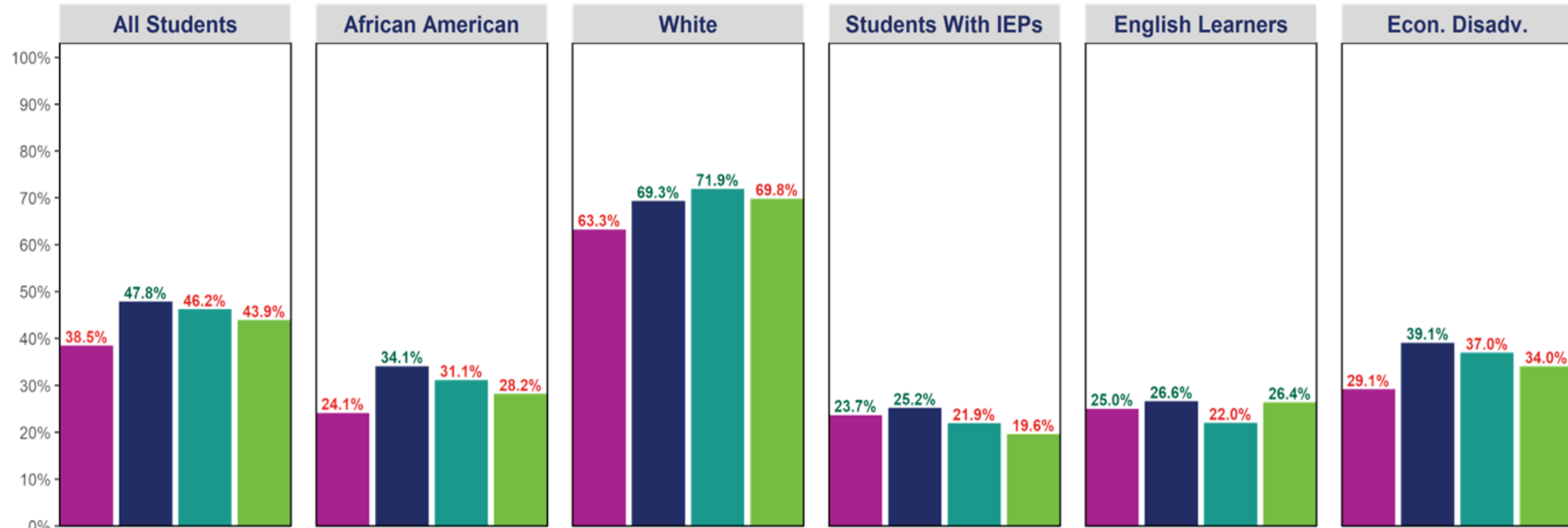
Full Academic Year students, Includes PSSA and PASA  
Data source: PDE Accountability Files

# 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade ELA Proficiency (By Subgroups) 22-25

## 3rd Grade Reading: By Subgroups

All Students, African American, White, IEP, ELL, and Econ. Disadv. Students

2022 2023 2024 2025



Full Academic Year students, Includes PSSA and PASA  
Data source: PDE Accountability Files

# Goal – 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade English Language Arts Proficiency

## What?

**By the end of the 25-26 school year, 51.7% of students in grade 3 will be proficient on the state's PSSA and PASA English Language Arts assessment. At the end of the 20-21 school year, 40.20% of third-grade students were proficient, establishing the baseline for our 5-year goal of achieving 54% by 2027.**

## Why?

**3rd grade marks the critical transition from “learning to read” to “reading to learn.” It is also the first year of statewide assessment in English Language Arts. We have implemented a new curriculum infused with the Science of Reading to elevate student outcomes and foster liberated, literate learners. Despite overall proficiency rates having improved from the baseline year, we acknowledge that more improvement is needed across the district and that disparities in outcomes by race, English language learners, economically disadvantaged students and for students with disabilities persist across the District.**

## How?

# 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade ELA Proficiency DIBELS Acadience BOY-MOY

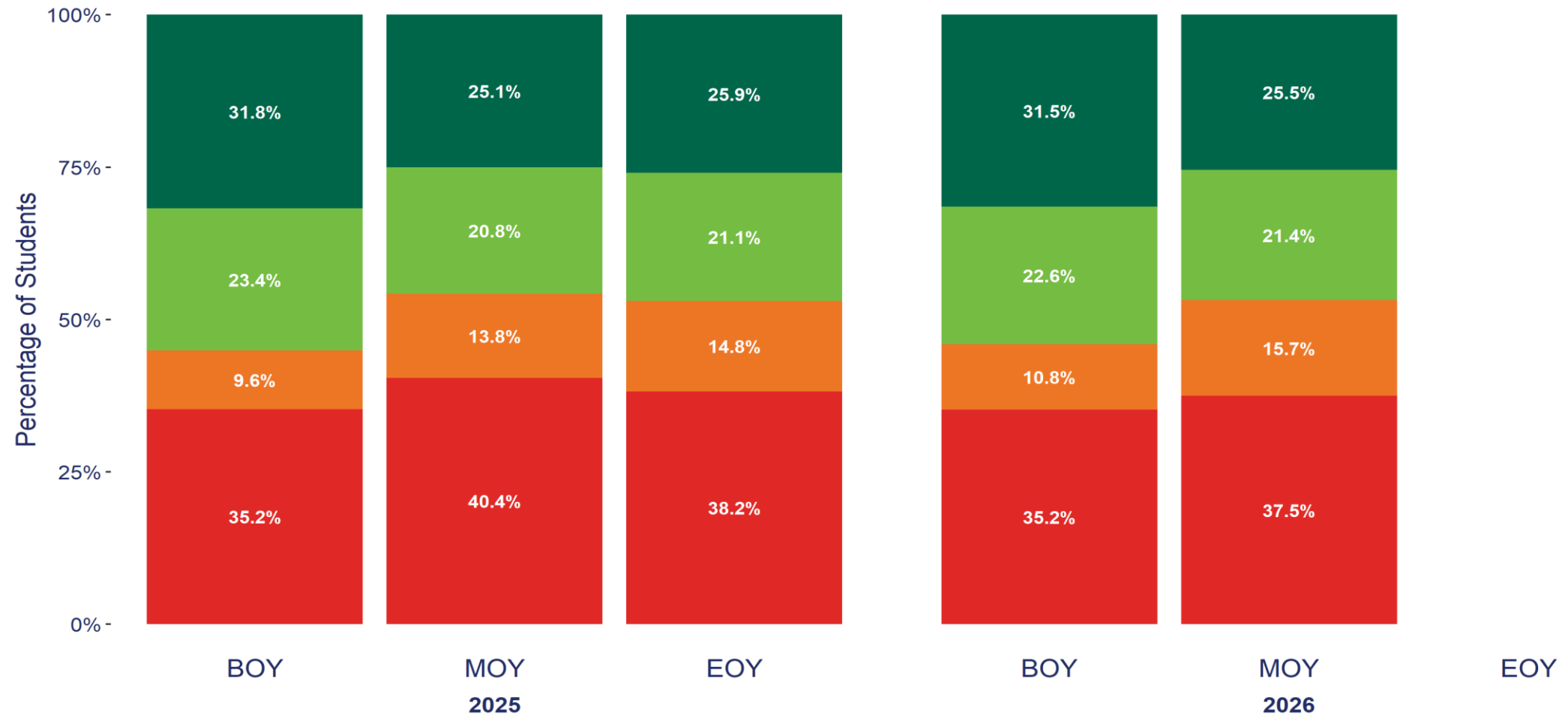
| Student Group | Assessment Window | Tested Students | Well Below Benchmark | Below Benchmark | At Benchmark | Above Benchmark | Core (At or Above Benchmark) |
|---------------|-------------------|-----------------|----------------------|-----------------|--------------|-----------------|------------------------------|
| Grade 03      | Beginning of Year | 1,285           | 35.3%                | 11.0%           | 22.3%        | 31.4%           | 53.7%                        |
|               | Middle of Year    | 1,314           | 37.4%                | 15.7%           | 21.4%        | 25.5%           | 46.9%                        |

| Grade    | Student Group | Assessment Window | Tested Students | Well Below Benchmark | Below Benchmark | At Benchmark | Above Benchmark | Core (At or Above Benchmark) |
|----------|---------------|-------------------|-----------------|----------------------|-----------------|--------------|-----------------|------------------------------|
| Grade 03 | Black         | Beginning of Year | 596             | 40.8%                | 14.4%           | 23.7%        | 21.1%           | 44.8%                        |
|          |               | Middle of Year    | 608             | 44.7%                | 18.1%           | 21.9%        | 15.3%           | 37.2%                        |
|          | White         | Beginning of Year | 378             | 21.7%                | 6.1%            | 21.4%        | 50.8%           | 72.2%                        |
|          |               | Middle of Year    | 379             | 22.2%                | 11.6%           | 23.0%        | 43.3%           | 66.2%                        |
|          | IEP           | Beginning of Year | 283             | 64.3%                | 9.2%            | 11.3%        | 15.2%           | 26.5%                        |
|          |               | Middle of Year    | 291             | 68.7%                | 11.7%           | 8.9%         | 10.7%           | 19.6%                        |
|          | ELL           | Beginning of Year | 160             | 63.8%                | 9.4%            | 15.0%        | 11.9%           | 26.9%                        |
|          |               | Middle of Year    | 176             | 62.5%                | 15.9%           | 13.1%        | 8.5%            | 21.6%                        |
|          | Econ. Disadv. | Beginning of Year | 865             | 42.4%                | 14.1%           | 23.1%        | 20.3%           | 43.5%                        |
|          |               | Middle of Year    | 873             | 44.9%                | 18.9%           | 21.2%        | 15.0%           | 36.2%                        |

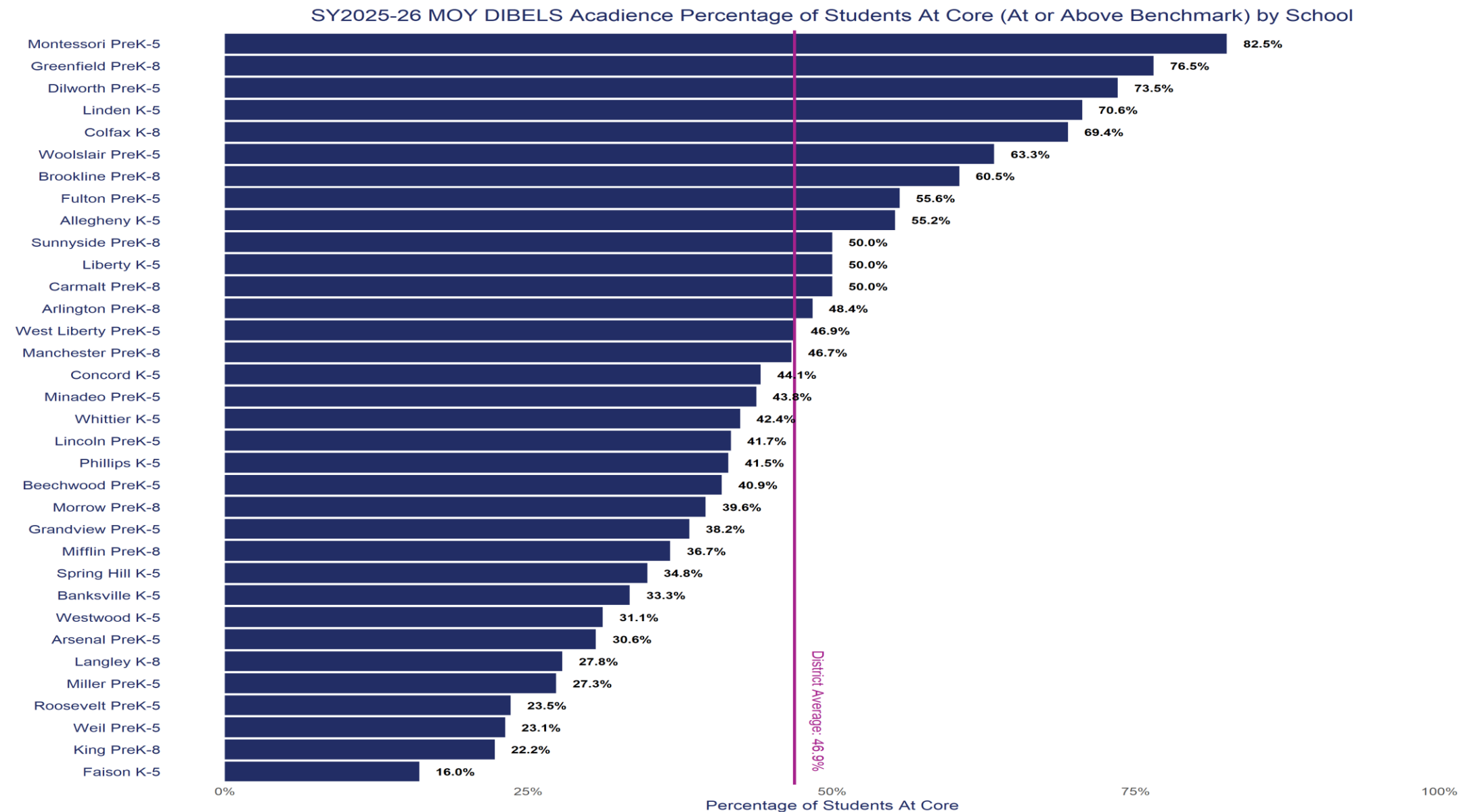
# 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade ELA Proficiency DIBELS Acadience BOY-MOY

3rd Grade Cohort DIBELS Acadience Results

Assessment Status   Above Benchmark   At Benchmark   Below Benchmark   Well Below Benchmark



# 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade MOY DIBELS % of Students At or Above Benchmark (By School)



# 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade DIBELS Acadience Results MOY 25-26

## DIBELS Acadience: Sub-test Results MOY

**Oral Reading Fluency—Words Correct:** 50%

**Oral Reading Fluency—Retell:** 47%

**Oral Reading Fluency—Accuracy:** 64%

**Maze – Basic Comprehension:** 42%

## Subtest Insights

**Oral Reading Fluency – Accuracy** Students still struggle with advanced phonics and multisyllabic decoding, impacting overall fluency.

**Oral Reading Fluency – Words Correct** About half are not yet reading with automaticity, slowing progress toward grade-level proficiency.

**Retell** Students need support with extracting key ideas, organizing information, and summarizing text.

**Maze – Basic Comprehension** Low scores indicate challenges with sentence-level meaning, vocabulary, and selecting words that fit context.

## Implications for Teaching and Learning:

- Strengthen Fidelity to Structured Literacy
- Model and Co-Teach High-Leverage Routines

- Student Data to Drive Instruction
- Increase Consistency Across Classrooms
- Plan for Daily Connected Text Practice

# 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade ELA Proficiency CDT--BOY-MOY

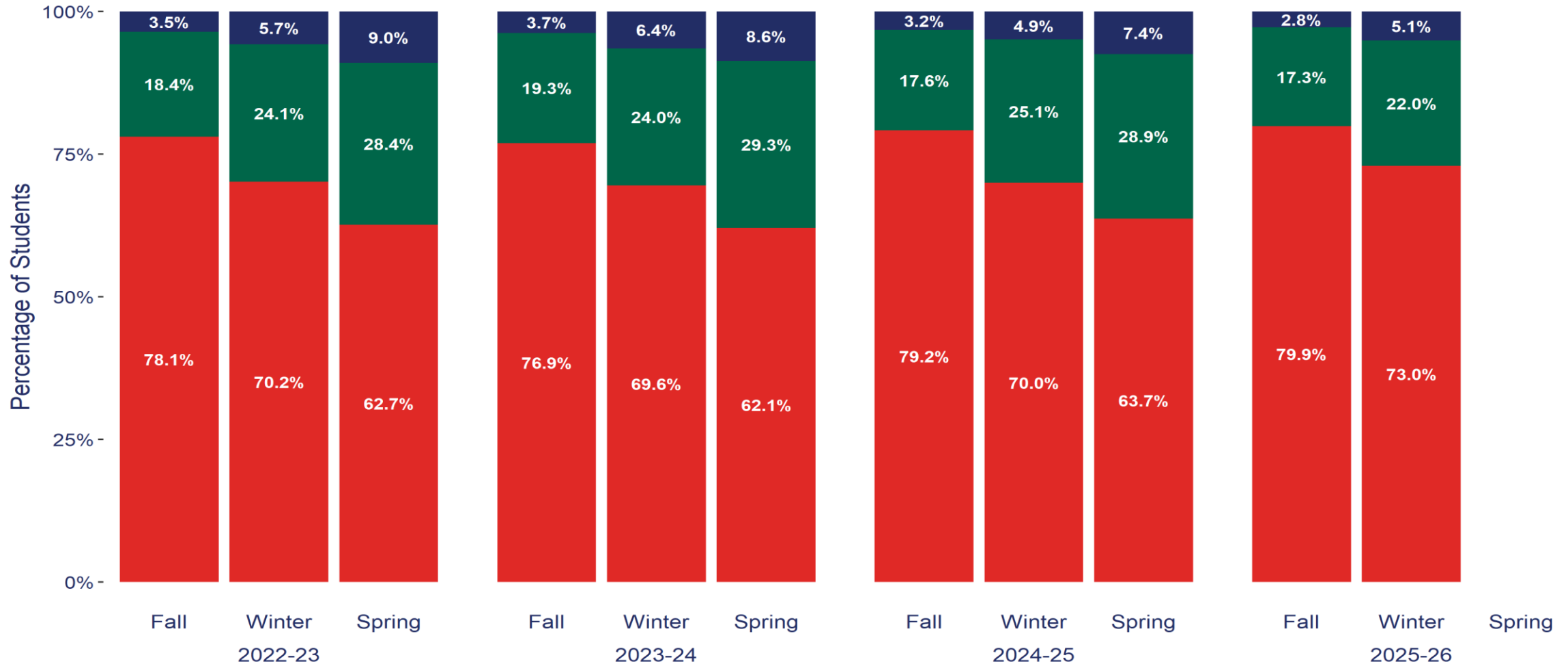
| Assessment    | Assessment Window | Assessment Completion |          |       | Red Range | Green (Below Midpoint) | Green (Above Midpoint) | Blue Range | Likely Proficient or Advanced | Increase in Percentage of Students Performing At or Above Grade Level |
|---------------|-------------------|-----------------------|----------|-------|-----------|------------------------|------------------------|------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|
|               |                   | Completed             | Required | Rate  |           |                        |                        |            |                               |                                                                       |
| 3rd Grade ELA | Fall              | 1,343                 | 1,392    | 96.5% | 79.7%     | 11.4%                  | 6.1%                   | 2.8%       | 8.9%                          |                                                                       |
|               | Winter            | 1,330                 | 1,369    | 97.2% | 72.7%     | 15.3%                  | 6.9%                   | 5.1%       | 12.0%                         | 7.0%                                                                  |

| Assessment    | Student Group | Assessment Window | Assessment Completion |          |       | Red Range | Green (Below Midpoint) | Green (Above Midpoint) | Blue Range | Likely Proficient or Advanced | Increase in Percentage of Students Performing At or Above Grade Level |
|---------------|---------------|-------------------|-----------------------|----------|-------|-----------|------------------------|------------------------|------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|
|               |               |                   | Completed             | Required | Rate  |           |                        |                        |            |                               |                                                                       |
| 3rd Grade ELA | Black         | Fall              | 628                   | 659      | 95.3% | 91.6%     | 5.9%                   | 2.1%                   | 0.5%       | 2.5%                          |                                                                       |
|               |               | Winter            | 631                   | 654      | 96.5% | 84.9%     | 10.8%                  | 3.8%                   | 0.5%       | 4.3%                          | 6.6%                                                                  |
|               | White         | Fall              | 387                   | 395      | 98.0% | 59.2%     | 20.4%                  | 13.2%                  | 7.2%       | 20.4%                         |                                                                       |
|               |               | Winter            | 379                   | 392      | 96.7% | 49.9%     | 23.5%                  | 12.9%                  | 13.7%      | 26.6%                         | 9.3%                                                                  |
|               | IEP           | Fall              | 306                   | 330      | 92.7% | 92.5%     | 4.2%                   | 2.6%                   | 0.7%       | 3.3%                          |                                                                       |
|               |               | Winter            | 302                   | 325      | 92.9% | 90.1%     | 7.3%                   | 1.0%                   | 1.7%       | 2.6%                          | 2.4%                                                                  |
|               | ELL           | Fall              | 166                   | 174      | 95.4% | 96.4%     | 3.6%                   | 0.0%                   | 0.0%       | 0.0%                          |                                                                       |
|               |               | Winter            | 161                   | 164      | 98.2% | 95.7%     | 4.3%                   | 0.0%                   | 0.0%       | 0.0%                          | 0.7%                                                                  |
|               | Econ. Disadv. | Fall              | 885                   | 920      | 96.2% | 90.2%     | 6.7%                   | 3.1%                   | 0.1%       | 3.2%                          |                                                                       |
|               |               | Winter            | 878                   | 905      | 97.0% | 84.6%     | 11.4%                  | 3.1%                   | 0.9%       | 4.0%                          | 5.5%                                                                  |

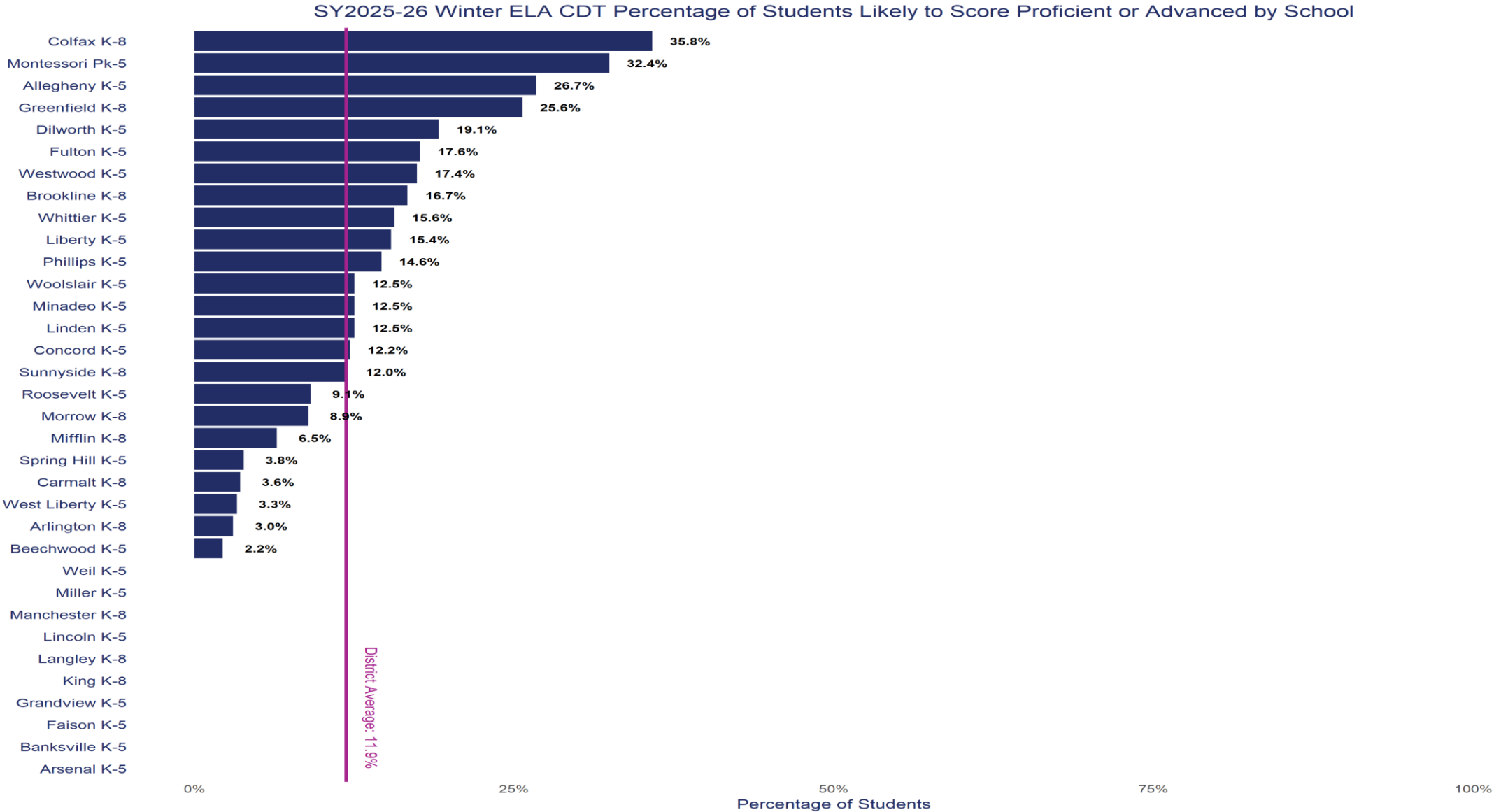
# 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade ELA Proficiency CDT--BOY-MOY

## 3rd Grade ELA CDT

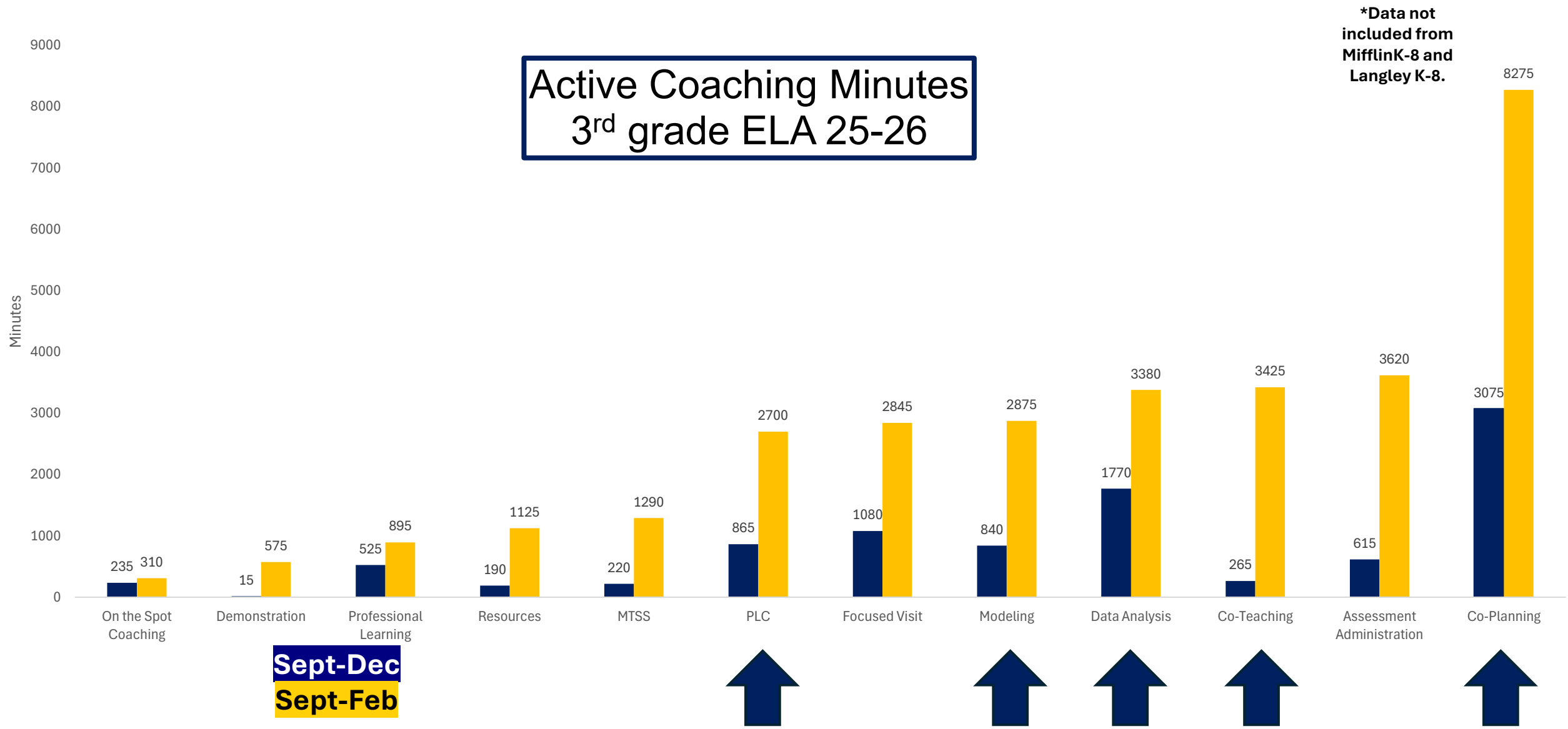
Percentage of 3rd grade students by scale score color range



# 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade MOY CDT % of Students Likely Proficient or Advanced



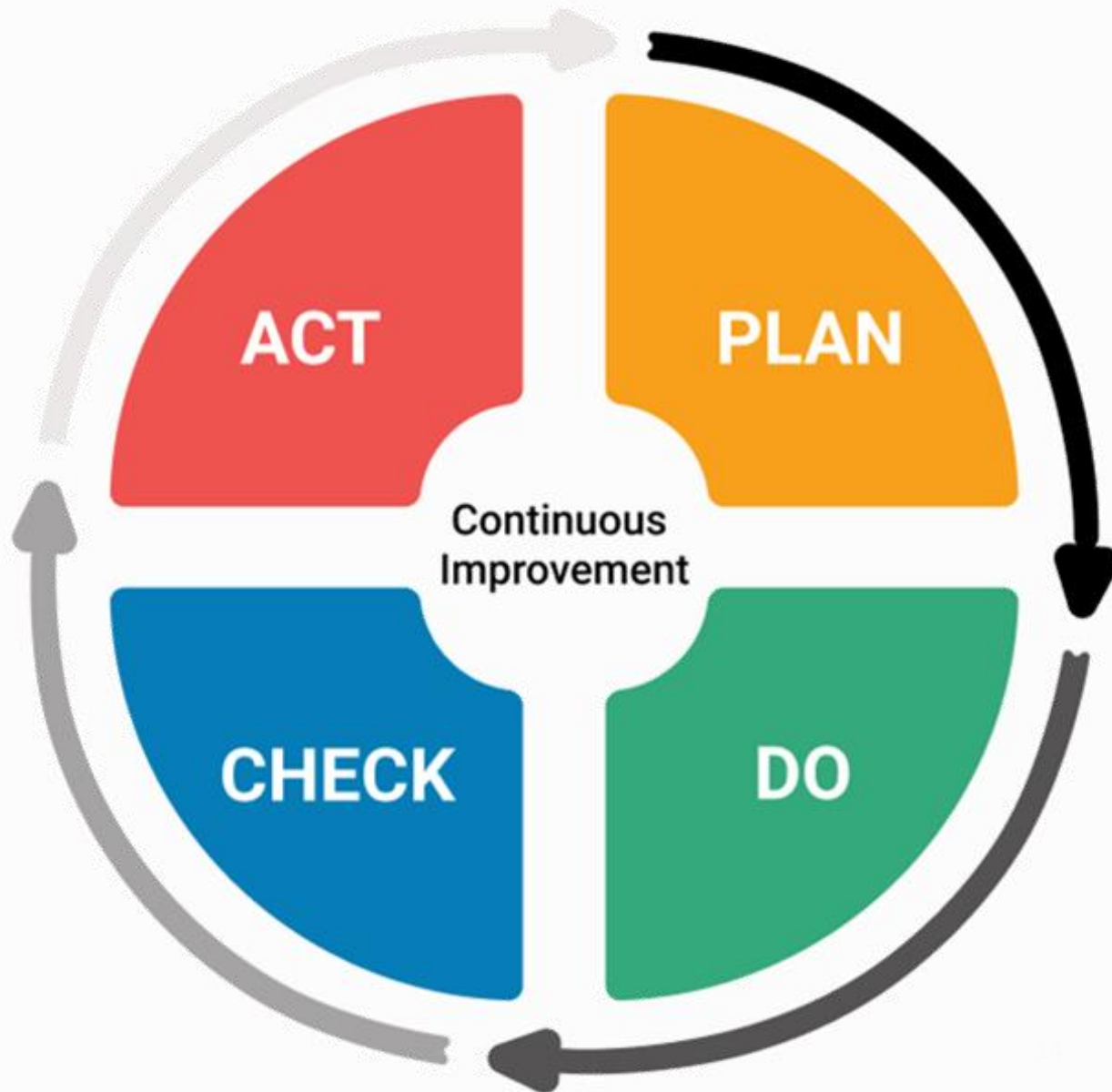
# Teacher Job-Embedded Professional Learning (Academic Coaching)



# Bright Spots In our Data

- 
- **MOY DIBELS Acadience Scores above 70%--** Colfax K-8, Dilworth K-5, Greenfield K-8, Linden K-5, Montessori K-5
  - **MOY CDT:** % Most Likely Proficient or Advanced highest at—Montessori K-5, Colfax K-8 (**30%+**)
  - **Coaching** increases in impactful practices: co-planning, modeling, co-teaching.
  - **Weil K-5:** Engaging in Enhanced Core Reading Instruction with promising results.

# Strategy and Plan 25-26 (December Presentation)



1. **Science of Reading  
Teacher Knowledge &  
Practice**
2. **Strengthen return on  
investment and partnerships**
3. **Establish explicit  
accountability and support  
structures**

# 1. Science of Reading Teacher Knowledge & Practice (Plan)

**Original Commitment:** The district will implement a unified, evidence-based approach to educate K-5 teachers on the body of research regarding how to teach reading known as the Science of Reading to accelerate literacy outcomes. This strategy centers on building deep teacher knowledge, strengthening instructional practice, and ensuring strong alignment to assessment expectations.

## **Key Components of the Strategy:**

**Professional Learning and Support**

**Curriculum and Instruction**

**State Assessment Expectations**

**Rationale:** Recent district data show a decline in ELA performance, highlighting the need for coherent, consistent instruction. This strategy clarifies expectations, strengthens teacher expertise, and uses data to guide instruction. Through targeted professional learning, coaching, and clear instructional tools, we will build teacher capacity, foster consistency, and accelerate literacy growth for all students.

# 1. Science of Reading Teacher Knowledge & Practice (Do)

## **Professional Learning & Support → Alignment to Structured Literacy**

- Structured Literacy Course launched (Jan). 195 teachers completed as of Feb 9; end-of-course assessment verifies understanding of core SoR principles. **Impact:** Establishes a shared baseline so co-planning, modeling, and coaching reinforce the same evidence-based routines—reducing classroom-to-classroom variation.

## **Curriculum & Instruction → Consistency in What We Teach and Look-Fors**

- SoR Handbook in development (Feb–Mar). Provides best practices and look-fors for daily routines and lesson design. Observation tools created, reviewed, distributed + co-observations (Jan–March). Common tools and joint walkthroughs align feedback across schools. **Impact:** Shared tools and calibrated observations narrow variability and accelerate adoption of effective practices.

## **State Assessment Expectations → Clear Targets and Aligned Materials**

- Data analysis + professional learning on eligible content and new test format (Nov, Jan). Aligned classroom materials distributed (Aug) + admin session on online expectations (Jan). **Impact:** When goals and materials are aligned, instruction becomes more coherent and students practice the right skills consistently.

## **Coaching Across Schools**

- Increased co-planning, modeling, co-teaching, data analysis, and PLCs since December. **Impact:** Transfers structured literacy knowledge into predictable routines and common lesson structures districtwide.

# 1. Science of Reading Teacher Knowledge & Practice (Check)

## Check (Challenges)

**Teacher Readiness:** Varying experience and foundational knowledge slows districtwide consistency; changing long-standing practices requires time, coaching, and repeated practice.

**Curriculum & Instruction:** Developing new tools (SoR Handbook, observation instruments) needs ongoing calibration, but team capacity is stretched, and principals vary in providing actionable feedback.

**Assessment Alignment:** Differences in school interpretation or use of state-aligned resources create uneven implementation.

**Coordination:** Sustaining progress requires careful alignment across professional learning, coaching, curriculum, and assessment teams—a core challenge for accelerating literacy growth.

# 1. Science of Reading Teacher Knowledge & Practice (Act)

## Act (Next Steps)

- Moving forward, the district will continue strengthening implementation by completing the Science of Reading Handbook, deepening calibration with principals and instructional coaches, and expanding the use of structured literacy observation tools to ensure consistent feedback across all schools.
- We will prioritize increasing teacher participation in the Structured Literacy course and support schools in applying this knowledge through ongoing coaching, co-planning, and modeling.
- We will support principals with co-observations using the observation tool and providing feedback, modeling the process and coaching principals through feedback sessions.
- Coaches will conduct implementation observations with a walkthrough tool in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade classrooms.
- Continuing professional learning on eligible content, and preparing schools for the upcoming state assessment window to maintain coherence between daily instruction and year-end expectations.
- As we monitor data, we will adjust supports, provide targeted intervention where needed, and ensure that all components of the strategy—professional learning, curriculum, coaching, and assessment—move together to accelerate literacy growth for all students.

## 2. Strengthen Return on Investment and Partnerships (Plan)

**Original Commitment:** The district will implement a coordinated strategy that ensures our core resources, partnerships, and professional learning systems are fully aligned to the Science of Reading to strengthen the quality and impact of our literacy instruction.

### **Key Components of the Strategy:**

**Core Resource Evaluation and Response**

**Publisher Partnerships**

**Set Mutual Accountability Expectations**

**Leverage Local and Research Backed Partnerships**

**Rationale:** District investments in literacy resources provide a key opportunity to accelerate learning and strengthen instruction. However, inconsistent implementation limits their impact. By evaluating resources, leveraging expertise, and fostering accountability, the district ensures materials are used strategically to support high-quality instruction, measurable student outcomes, and sustainable teacher capacity—creating equitable learning opportunities for all students.

## 2. Strengthen Return on Investment and Partnerships (Do)

### Core Resource Evaluation

- Reinforced use of DIBELS Acadience, foundational skills PL with The Reading League, 6-Step Lesson Design, fluency routines, and writing components (Writing Portfolio, Writing Rope). **Impact:** Strengthens fidelity to structured literacy and reduces instructional variability.

### Publisher Partnerships

- Held monthly support meetings with Imagine Learning (MyPath) and Reading Horizons; aligned expectations with McGraw Hill (Open Court). **Impact:** Ensures publishers provide responsive, aligned support that improves implementation quality.

### Accountability Structures

- Set clear expectations for publisher support and monitored deliverables; reviewed MyPath progress reports with coordinators and literacy coaches. **Impact:** Shifts PPS from purchasing resources to actively evaluating and improving their effectiveness.

### Leveraging Partnerships

- Expanded collaboration with Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh, The Reading League, Imagine Learning, SAS, and internal PPS departments (Equity, Student Services, PSE, C&I); strengthened districtwide literacy initiatives. **Impact:** Adds expertise and community support, increasing instructional coherence and student engagement.

## 2. Strengthen Return on Investment and Partnerships (Check)

### Check (Challenges)

- Implementing a coordinated strategy that fully aligns core resources, partnerships, and professional learning to the Science of Reading presents several challenges. One major challenge is the variation in how core resources are currently used across schools. Without consistent routines and expectations, it can be difficult to ensure that every teacher is implementing materials in ways that reflect structured literacy every day.
- Strengthening publisher partnerships is also complex, as vendors vary in their responsiveness and in how well their supports match classroom needs, requiring ongoing monitoring and clearer expectations. Establishing mutual accountability adds another layer of difficulty because both publishers and internal teams need clear roles, deliverables, and follow-through systems that have not previously been in place.
- Working across Early Childhood, Special Education, and ELD remains a challenge. To make a meaningful impact for all students, we need regular opportunities to plan and align together; however, finding time to meet as a full group is difficult, as each team is stretched thin supporting multiple priorities across the district.
- These challenges underscore the need for sustained alignment, strong systems for accountability, and thoughtful coordination to ensure the strategy leads to high-quality instruction and equitable literacy outcomes for all students.

## 2. Strengthen Return on Investment and Partnerships (Act)

### Act (Next Steps)

- Looking ahead, the district will focus on deepening coherence and strengthening implementation across all schools. A key next step is to continue refining expectations for the use of core resources.
- Provide targeted professional learning and coaching that supports consistent, high-fidelity structured literacy instruction in every school, across role groups (principals, teachers, coaches). (March, April)
- We will strengthen our publisher partnerships by finalizing clear deliverables, monitoring their follow-through, and ensuring training and support are aligned to classroom needs. To reinforce accountability, the district will build out systems for tracking implementation, analyzing progress-monitoring data, and responding quickly when schools need additional support. (March, April)
- PPS will continue to leverage local and research-backed partners, expanding their role in teacher learning, family engagement, and districtwide literacy initiatives.
- Establish a standing cross-department working session—brief but recurring—to align instructional expectations, share updates, and coordinate supports across Early Childhood, Special Education, and ELD, ensuring coherence even within limited capacity.
- Finally, we will improve cross-department collaboration so schools receive unified messaging, aligned tools, and coordinated support.

# 3. Explicit Accountability and Support Structures (Plan)

**Original Commitment:** The district will establish explicit accountability and support structures for both instructional coaches and school leaders to ensure high-quality literacy instruction. By defining clear expectations, measurable metrics, instructional leader supports, and non-negotiable practices, we create a system that strengthens teacher growth, promotes effective use of instructional materials, and drives meaningful student outcomes.

## Key Components of the Strategy:

**Accountability Metrics**

**Instructional Leader Supports**

**Establish Non-negotiables**

**Rationale:** District data show variability in instruction and outcomes, highlighting the need for clear accountability and structured support for coaches and school leaders. By setting explicit metrics, principal supports, and non-negotiable practices, this strategy links leadership and coaching directly to teacher growth and student achievement, promoting consistent, high-quality literacy instruction and equitable access for all students.

# 3. Explicit Accountability and Support Structures (Do)

## Accountability Metrics

- Shifted coaching logs to Microsoft Forms for streamlined, accurate data. Added Active Coaching Minutes to go beyond Title I/II reporting. Began capturing 3rd-grade coaching cycles, goals, and next steps more meaningfully. **Impact:** Provides clearer, actionable coaching data that strengthens alignment to 3rd-grade literacy outcomes, improves monitoring, and ensures coaching directly supports high-quality instruction.

## Instructional Leader Support

- Delivered Leading & Learning Content Track PL with co-presentations alongside school-based instructional leaders. Provided principals with a Structured Literacy-aligned observation tool and trained them on its use. Conducted co-observations with the K–5 Literacy Coordinator and established feedback loops for teachers. **Impact:** These actions strengthen leader capacity, create consistent structured-literacy look-fors across schools, and ensure aligned, timely feedback for teachers—reducing variability in instructional monitoring and improving coherence in literacy practice districtwide.

## Establishing Non-Negotiables

- Established clear expectations for materials implementation, communicated by the CAO. Created SMART and KASAB goals across multiple role groups (principals, APs, C&I, coaches, etc.). **Impact:** These non-negotiables strengthen fidelity to core resources, align all role groups to the same instructional priorities, and create clear, measurable expectations that promote consistent, high-quality literacy instruction across the district.

# 3. Explicit Accountability and Support Structures (Check)

## Check (Challenges)

- Strengthening accountability metrics requires shifting long-established practices, and not all coaches or leaders are yet comfortable with new data systems or the increased visibility into coaching activities. Gathering meaningful metrics—such as active coaching minutes, full coaching cycles, and 3rd-grade-specific support—also depends on timely, accurate entry across many staff, which can vary by school.
- A districtwide instructional walkthrough tool for coaches is not currently in place. Establishing and implementing one will allow us to collect consistent data across schools and use that information to guide coaching priorities and professional learning.
- Supporting instructional leaders brings its own challenges, as principals and assistant principals have differing levels of experience with structured literacy and may need ongoing calibration to use the observation tool consistently.
- Co-observations help with alignment, but scaling that level of support across all buildings requires significant time and coordination. Establishing non-negotiables also introduces systemwide change; while clear expectations improve coherence, schools may initially struggle to shift routines, align to fidelity expectations, or set high-quality SMART and KASAB goals without sustained guidance.

# 3. Explicit Accountability and Support Structures (Act)

## Act (Next Steps)

Our next steps focus on deepening coherence, strengthening implementation, and ensuring these accountability and support structures directly influence classroom instruction.

- We will continue refining our coaching metrics by improving data quality, expanding the use of Active Coaching Minutes, and enhancing how we track 3rd-grade coaching cycles so that supports are tightly aligned to literacy outcomes. We will implement a survey for teachers to complete at the close of a formal coaching cycle to inform next steps and impact.
- Develop and pilot a structured instructional walkthrough tool to begin collecting consistent implementation data across schools and to guide targeted coaching and professional learning.
- For instructional leaders, we will provide ongoing calibration on the Structured Literacy observation tool, increase co-observations with the K–5 Literacy Coordinator, and integrate structured literacy look-fors more systematically into school walkthroughs and feedback routines.
- We will regularly share data from digital programming with CAO and principals to ensure appropriate usage per C&Is recommendations.

