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ISD Name: Lapeer ISD

Promising Practice Name: Literacy Cohort Professional Learning Series

Describe the suggested promising practice that is being submitted.
We used a year-long cohort professional learning series to grow teachers' knowledge in research-supported practices around foundational skills, especially decoding and phonics. We embedded a book study of "How to Plan Differentiated Reading Instruction k-3" By Walpole and McKenna. This allowed teachers to learn about the importance of decoding, use assessments to identify student needs, and then use research-supported instructional formats to provide explicit instruction to students. Video link

Provide any background that may help others understand why this practice was needed.
Based on literacy data collected, COVID-19 made a large impact on the achievement of c/o 2032 in Lapeer County. These students were in kindergarten when the shutdown happened, and then in 1st grade when inconsistent remote learning and quarantines happened. They went from being 26% at-risk during the winter of 2019-20 to 44% the next fall, and still 42% by the end of their 1st-grade year. At Lapeer ISD, we committed to supporting these students and the teachers that would have them. We knew students' foundational skills weren't solid, so we used research-supported practices and a book study to target those gaps.

The cohort learning series was well thought out and made to be very intentional. We wanted a different kind of professional development for teachers—not a "one and done", read the book on your own time, or figure out how to implement these strategies on your own. First, we chose the book "How to Plan for Differentiated Reading Instruction" after doing our own book study as a Michigan ISD Early Literacy Coaches group the previous year. We knew this resource was perfect for our teachers, as it is research supported and directly correlates to several Essential Instructional Practices in Early Literacy, especially #3, #5, and #9. It is also user-friendly and easily implemented into the classroom with its scripted and predictable sequence. Next, we wanted to pact our learning sessions over a span of several months and give support in between sessions. This made the learning and implementation more
 manageable for teachers. Additionally, we knew teachers needed to feel valued and have their time-honored. We included time in our learning sessions for teachers to do any of the suggested reading from the book. Teachers must do so much on their own time, we wanted to make this manageable for them. In another attempt to honor time, our ISD was able to provide hourly stipends for all participants that attended sessions. As another incentive for attendance, classroom teachers also walked away with bins of engaging books to add to their classroom libraries for students to enjoy. Finally, in an attempt to eliminate all barriers, we gave support to teachers with administering the Informal Decoding Inventory assessment to their students and provided all copies of materials for the lessons we were covering at the learning sessions.

We invited all 2nd-grade teachers and support staff (resource room, district coaches, interventionists, paras, etc.) to participate in our year-long Lapeer County Literacy Cohort. This 2021-22 Cohort was so successful, we are offering it again to all 1st and 3rd-grade teachers in Lapeer County this year. We had 60+ participants in 2021-22, and currently have 80+ new participants this year.

Describe how the suggested promising practice is implemented.
Participants attended a 3-hour kickoff session in August where they received an overview of the what (pedagogy), how (year-long, supported), and why (data). We conveyed the urgency to focus on early literacy,

essentially with the gaps in foundational skills with the class of 2032. We distributed the professional book "How to Plan Differentiated Instruction" and reviewed chapters 1 and 2, as well as how to administer the Informal Decoding Inventory (IDI) assessment that places students into phonics areas. After this session, we gave every teacher support in giving the IDI to their students. This allowed them to see what decoding needs students had.

In the original planning process for the learning series, we suspected that our learning would need to start with Blends and Digraphs, and then progress on to multisyllabic words in subsequent sessions. After helping teachers administer the IDI assessment and collecting county-wide data, we quickly had to modify our plan. We discovered that every single 2nd-grade classroom had groups of students that were still not proficient in reading basic CVC words. Our data showed 38.4% of 2nd graders in Lapeer County were not proficient in CVC words. The data was alarming, but we immediately adjusted our learning series to start back at teaching students how to use their letter-sound knowledge by segmenting and blending CVC words. Teachers were grateful in learning about instructional formats that would help meet the needs of their most at-risk students.

From September-December, we hosted 4 after-school learning sessions where participants would learn about the different "stair steps" of decoding and how to implement the specific instructional formats from the book, in order to meet the wide range of learners they have—CVC, Blends, and Digraphs, R- Controlled Vowels, VCe, Long Vowel Teams, and Multisyllabic Words. In between learning sessions, LCISD coaches gave support such as modeling, observing, and check-ins.

In May, our cohort came back together for a celebration session. We recapped all the new learning and shared successes and growth data. Participants took a cohort evaluation to help us plan for a new cohort in the 2022-23 year, as well as gage the impact we had on their learning and teaching. (See evaluation results here.) Additionally, participants set individual goals for themselves as to how they would like to see foundational skill instruction and Walpole instruction go next year.

If available, provide resources that may help others implement the suggested promising practice.
The professional book "How to Plan Differentiated Instruction k-3" was an excellent tool for teachers. They liked how practical and easy to implement it was. Currently, there is a lack of subs, so we offered our introductory session in the summer, right before school started and throughout the year after school. Teachers came because they knew the content was exactly what their students needed, and we offered stipends and free books. This was a huge draw! We honored their time by giving them time to do any reading during the session, as well as giving them assessment support. We also made all the student copies for them. We wanted this PL to be different! No more "one stop shops" or "on your own time". It was a year-long series with embedded support. Teachers appreciated this.

Describe the assessment tool used and provide data (include graphs, tables, charts, etc.) that indicates improved learner outcomes for the suggested promising practice. (See FERPA guidelines below)
Initially, we collected IRIP data from each district to show the percentage of K-3 students that were at risk of a reading deficiency. Spring of 2020-21 showed the class of 2032 had 42% with IRIPs. The jump from 26% (pre-COVID) to 42% just one year later, contributed to the decision to focus our efforts on the teachers and support staff that would be impacting class of 2032. In our county, assessments that contribute to IRIP identification mainly include NWEA, DRA, High Frequency Words, and teacher observation.

Lapeer County IRIP Cohort Comparison (Student % At-Risk: Pre-Covid to Current)
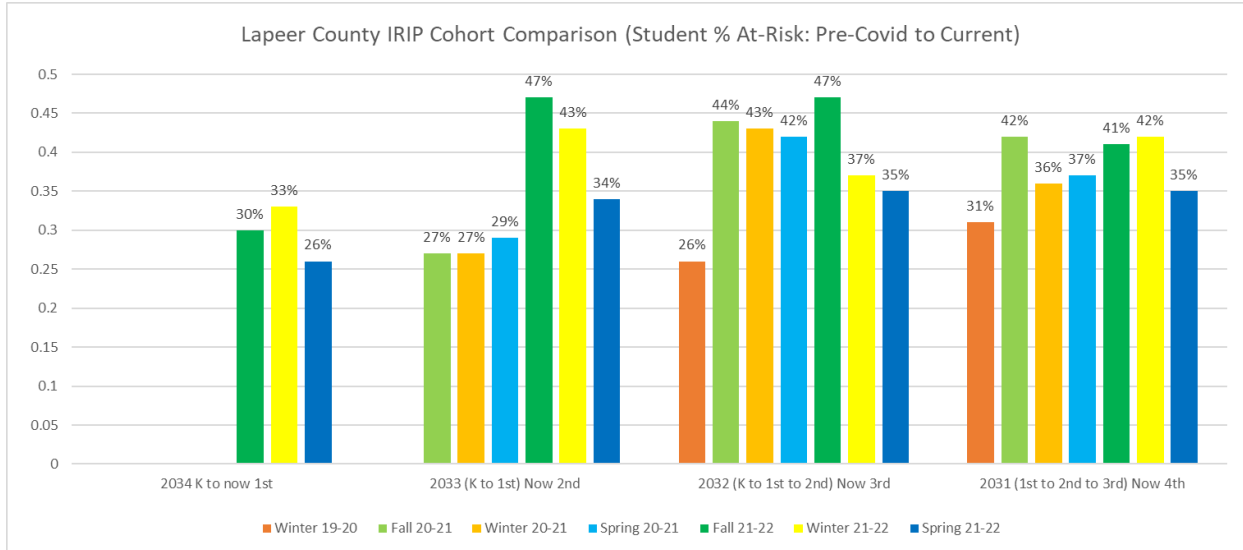
After the cohort intro session, we used the Informal Decoding Inventory to assess where students still needed decoding instruction at. This tool ranges from short vowels, all the way to multisyllabic words. At the beginning of 2021-22, data showed that 38.4% of Lapeer County 2nd graders still weren't proficient in reading short vowel words. This is essentially an end of kindergarten expectation. Only 16.8% of students were proficient in reading through long vowel teams, an end of 1st grade expectation. After cohort attendees gave targeted instruction using lessons from our learning sessions, end of the year data showed just 8.5% of students still working on short vowels, and 51.1% proficient in reading through long vowel teams or multisyllabic words. We also saw a 12% overall decrease in Lapeer County 2nd graders with Individual Reading Improvement Plans throughout the 2021-22 year (47% fall to 35% spring), with some individual district decreases being -25% and -22% depending on the fidelity of implementation.

2nd Grade Informal Decoding Inventory 2021-2022
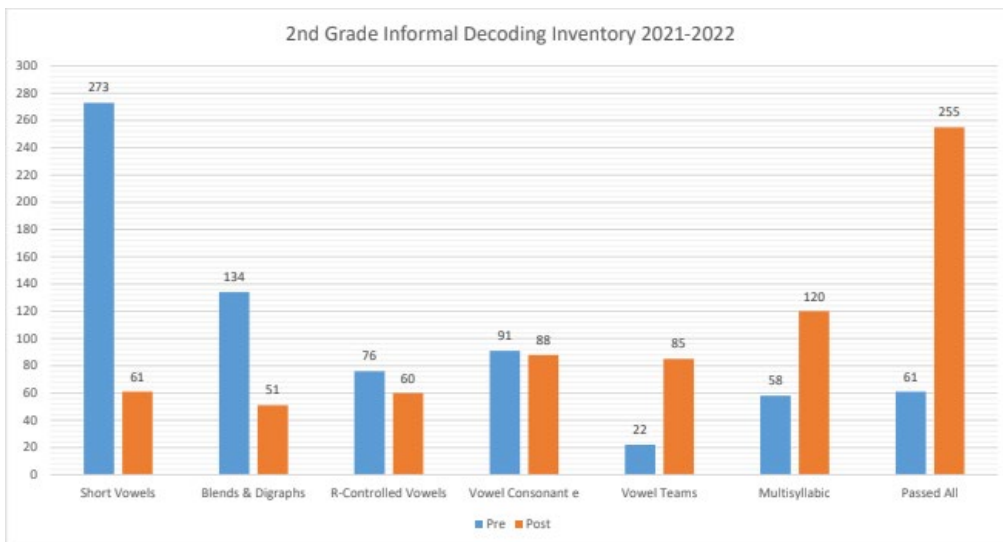
Lapeer County

Lapeer County Students with IRIP's

2021-2022 Reading Data- District Breakdown

	Fall	Winter	Spring
	2nd		
Almont	40%	32%	18%
Chatfield	35%	33%	17%
Dryden	63%	40%	38%
Imlay City	49%	38%	47%*
Lapeer	54%	40%	36%
North Branch	36%	33%	37%
County-wide	47%	37%	35%

Imlay City Schools has a high migrant and EL population. The increase of at-risk students from winter to spring is suspected from migrant students missing large chunks of school and then returning in the spring.

In two or three sentences, provide a testimonial on the promising practice in action
Our Lapeer County Literacy Cohort not only values and supports teacher participants, but also is a clear example of using assessments to provide targeted instruction. This year-long professional learning experience is realistic to implement in the classroom and can have a positive impact on students' decoding skills in an attempt to increase reading achievement.

* The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA) was designed to protect the privacy of student's educational records and to establish the rights of parents and eligible students to inspect and review their educational records. In accordance with FERPA, do not disclose individual student's educational records in submitted evidence. Please provide information in aggregate or in another form that is not personally identifiable.