

# Science of Reading Solution: Foundational Literacy Professional Development for Educators



## The Need

Research has proven that teaching foundational reading skills using evidence-based scientific findings leads to significantly positive outcomes for students. As a result, states are implementing legislation to support the science of reading across the nation—for students in kindergarten through 12th grade.

Jennifer Buckingham (2020) shared the six benefits of utilizing the science of reading in the Reading League Journal:<sup>1</sup>

1. Earlier and more accurate word reading ...
2. Better reading fluency ...
3. Vocabulary growth ...
4. Adept reading comprehension ...
5. More independent reading and enjoyment of reading ...
6. Fewer children needing intervention ...

Buckingham continued,

It is estimated that 80-85 percent of children will learn to read well if provided with evidence-based classroom reading instruction from a highly knowledgeable teacher. Approximately 20 percent will [...] require at least some extra support in the form of reading intervention that is developed using the scientific research literature on reading difficulties. Around 5 percent of children have a more severe reading difficulty ... [requiring] specialized and ongoing individual intervention (Fuchs and Fuchs, 2006). (Buckingham, 2020, as cited in MultiLit Pty Ltd, 2023)

As states work to enact legislation based on the science of reading, they need a trusted partner with vast experience to provide educators with essential professional development—to support districts' foundational literacy initiatives.

<sup>1</sup> Buckingham, Jennifer, "Six Reasons to Use the Science of Reading in Schools," *The Reading League Journal*, 1 (2020): 13-17, quoted in MultiLit Pty Ltd, "Six Reasons to Use the Science of Reading in Schools," accessed July 24, 2023, <https://multilit-ecomm-media.s3.ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/13163958/Buckingham-2020-AM-Six-reasons-to-use-the-Science-of-Reading-in-schools.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> "Colorado READ Act," *Colorado Department of Education*. April 18, 2023. <https://www.cde.state.co.us/coloradoliteracy>.



## The Opportunity

The Colorado Reading to Ensure Academic Development Act (READ Act) focuses on early literacy development for students in kindergarten through third grade (K-3)—especially for students at risk of not reading at grade level by the end of third grade.<sup>2</sup>

The READ Act provides proactive early-literacy guidance and funding for school districts — to choose approved professional learning, assessments, core reading programs, interventions, and progress monitoring.

With Colorado's READ Act in place since 2012—and recent significant evidence that the science of reading supports increased positive outcomes—the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) partnered with Public Consulting Group (PCG). The state wanted to provide its educators with professional development in foundational reading skills.



## The Strategy

In collaboration with the CDE, PCG's experts partnered with national literacy leaders to create customized **foundational literacy professional development content**—based on science of reading research—and designed for immediate use by K-3 teachers.

Starting in 2020, to align with Colorado's READ Act, K-3 classroom teachers across state districts began participating in a professional development module series—focused on developing successful readers.

Benefits of the module series included:

- **Cost:** PCG provided flexible and affordable literacy professional development support that aligned with the CDE's operating budget
- **Content:** The program's content was teacher-friendly and provided the knowledge and skills necessary for immediate and direct classroom use
- **Implementation:** PCG offered the CDE comprehensive asynchronous modules, which have been accessed by more than 26,000 teachers

Key components of the professional development content included:

- Modules emphasizing the most current collection of science of reading evidence
- Immediate classroom applications for teachers working with a diverse student population
- Tools for teachers to design, differentiate, and deliver reading instruction
- Methods for educators to gain essential knowledge needed to increase student achievement
- End-of-course assessment that aligns with the READ Act and state licensure requirements

With a deep understanding of foundational literacy and extensive expertise in professional learning, PCG supported the CDE with implementation of a high-quality, large-scale online system of professional development to advance districts' literacy goals.



## Outcome

At the end of each foundational literacy professional development module, participants were given a survey to complete.

By January 2023, PCG received more than 114,000 survey responses from educators across all modules.

**A rating of 95 percent or greater** was given for the following criteria:

1. Organization of the module was clear and sensible
2. The instructional materials (the content read, watched, or accessed in any way) supported the participant's learning
3. The activities the participant performed (responding, matching, reflecting, discussing, etc.) supported their learning
4. The module activities or assessments helped the participant to monitor their own learning and/or gauge their progress in the module

In addition, sample survey results concluded that, during each respective module, educators learned **new concepts** they could use in the classroom immediately:

**Over 6,400 participants** indicated that they learned new concepts related to:

- Working with second language learners
- Understanding the conceptual models of the science of reading

**Over 4,500 participants** indicated that they learned new concepts related to:

- How the brain processes reading

**Over 5,200 participants** indicated that they learned new concepts related to:

- Speech sounds of English, phonology, and phonemes

**Over 4,300 participants** indicated that they learned new concepts related to:

- The connection between neuroscience and orthographic conventions, such as the syllable types
- Students' reading rates

*Our customized solution directly aligns with the International Dyslexia Association's knowledge and practice standards while giving educators the tools they need to develop stronger literacy for all students.*

Join states across the U.S. who partner with PCG to provide the most up-to-date science of reading professional development to their educators.

## PCG. Let's solve it together.