

# Shifting Early Literacy Practices:

## The Story of an Early Reading Pilot in San Antonio Independent School District



Reflections, guidance, and tools on how a school district pilot focused on “Early Reading Accelerators” has the potential to shape literacy vision and transform reading practices across the country

This case study was made possible through the efforts, partnership, and contributions of a team of educators, district leaders, subject matter professionals, and technical assistance providers.

**Dr. Crystal Menzies** served as lead researcher, author, and interviewer for the writing of this case study. Crystal thoughtfully and skillfully translated background work, pilot resources, and lived experiences of the pilot team into a synthesis in written form.

This would not have been possible without the school-based teams making the work of the pilot the focus of kindergarten and first-grade classrooms in San Antonio Independent School District:

- *Benjamin Franklin Elementary School*
- *Hillcrest Elementary School*
- *Smith Elementary School*
- *Collins Garden Elementary School*
- *JT Brackenridge Elementary School*
- *Woodrow Wilson Elementary School*
- *Esther Perez Carvajal Elementary School*
- *Mark Twain Dual Language Academy*
- *Washington Irving Dual Language Academy\**
- *Highland Hills Elementary School*
- *Mildred Baskin Elementary School*
- *Highland Park Elementary School*
- *Sarah King Elementary School*

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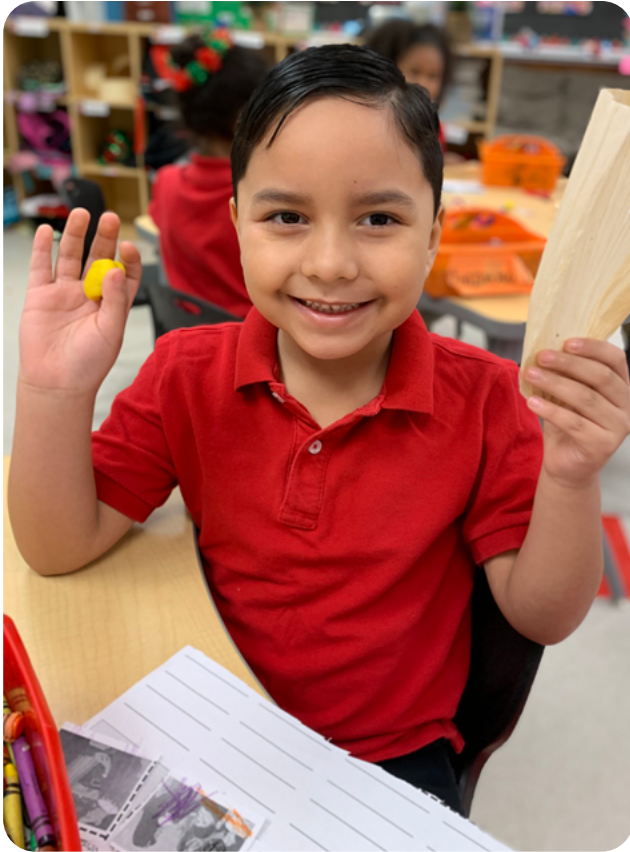
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## Executive Summary



This report highlights the story of the Early Reading Accelerators pilot in San Antonio Independent School District from multiple perspectives and identifies the key levers to successful outcomes. Student Achievement Partners (SAP), San Antonio Independent School District (San Antonio ISD), and Council of the Great City Schools (CGCS) initiated a partnership to adopt Early Reading Accelerators (ERA) within San Antonio ISD through a pilot program. The goal of the pilot was to increase reading proficiency across the district as measured by third-grade reading results. The outcomes of the pilot transcend reading proficiency to facilitate the creation of a more cohesive, culturally sustaining organization and culturally sustaining classroom environments. Successfully adopting Early Reading Accelerators required shifts in mindsets and practices across the district, and the willingness to make those shifts led to an increase in academic rigor and engagement, more collaboration and cohesion on school campuses and within the district, instructional environments that became more culturally sustaining and visually rich, and reignition of the joy of teaching and learning literacy.

Data for this study were collected by interviewing<sup>1</sup> San Antonio ISD personnel, observers from other school districts across the United States, and members of the pilot team from SAP and CGCS. School-based teams where implementation of the pilot was successful were also interviewed. This report:

- Describes Early Reading Accelerators and why they are important;
- Provides background about the initiation of the pilot and a brief snapshot of literacy in San Antonio ISD prior to the ERA pilot;
- Provides an overview of the elements of the ERA pilot;
- Highlights how San Antonio ISD engaged in collaborative partnership and fostered authentic change; and
- Highlights best practices for adopting Early Reading Accelerators in your district.

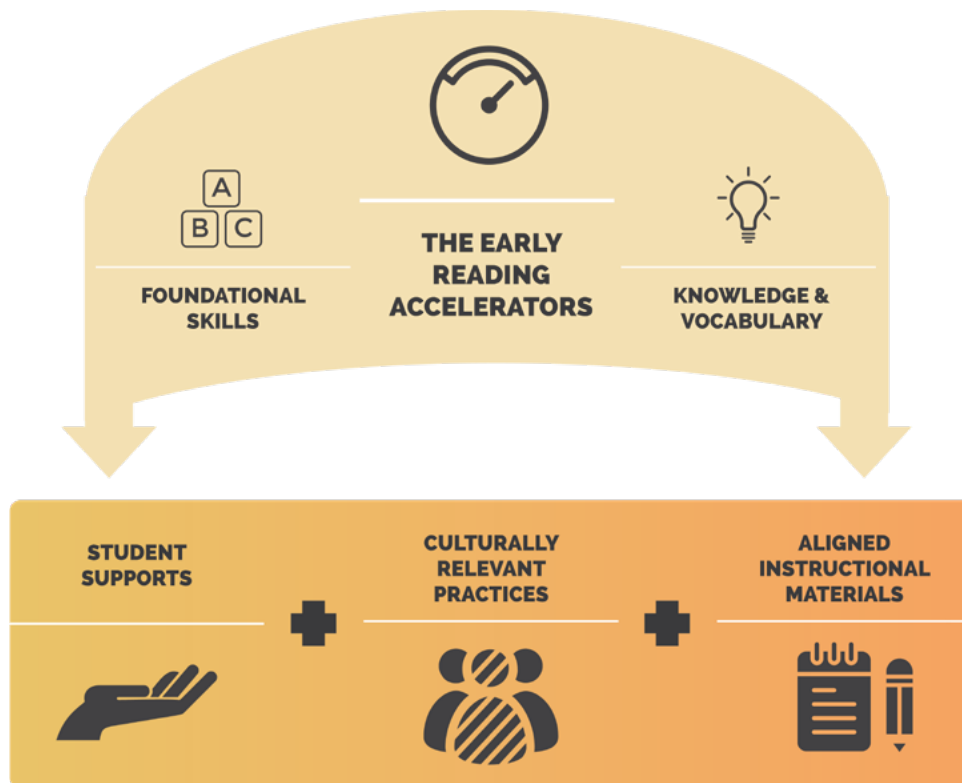
The logic model, references, and appendices at the end of this report provide additional context and resources to deepen understanding of the important elements that led to success on some campuses and within the district. The narratives that emerge in this report can be a useful tool for districts that not only want to increase student reading proficiency, but also desire to cultivate equitable, inclusive environments for staff, teachers, and students.

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix B for interview protocols

## Introduction

### What Are Early Reading Accelerators?



Literacy opens the doors to children to learn about themselves and their world, to become change agents, and to pursue dreams. This act begins with our youngest learners, as they learn how to read and engage in literacy work at school. However, literacy instruction and pedagogy vary greatly from classroom to classroom and school to school, resulting in inconsistent practice and persistent inequities in instruction.

Reading science emphasizes two critical pieces of early reading instruction: 1. systematically securing the foundational skills of learning to read and 2. building knowledge and vocabulary through the reading aloud of complex text. These "[Early Reading Accelerators](#)" are essential content that all readers need access to in order to become proficient readers, and any effective classroom instruction or materials will intentionally amplify these two areas by attending to print concepts, phonological awareness, phonics, and fluency as well as rich interactive read-alouds in the classroom. While each student and their experiences are unique, we can accelerate the development of reading proficiency for all students by implementing these practices strategically.

To [implement](#) Early Reading Accelerators equitably, educators also must consider student supports, culturally relevant content and practices, and aligned instructional materials. This means making use of a deep knowledge of the accelerators (foundational skills and building knowledge & vocabulary), and instructing in ways and with content that value students' backgrounds, languages, cultures, points of view, knowledge, and skills.

## History and Initiation of the ERA Pilot Partnership Between SAP, CGCS, and San Antonio ISD

Student Achievement Partners (SAP) works in partnership with content experts, policy makers, partner organizations, and practitioners to reimagine just, equitable, and excellent instruction supporting all students to access grade-level work. Through a grant from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, SAP partnered with the Council of the Great City Schools (CGCS), a coalition of 76 of the nation's largest urban public school systems, to create a pilot focused on early reading for students in kindergarten and first grade. The goal of this partnership was to support the district in centering instruction around foundational skills instruction and building knowledge and vocabulary through read-aloud. San Antonio ISD's focus on supporting English Learners, prioritizing biliteracy in the Dual Language program, and ensuring that students were supported in culturally relevant and affirming instruction led to a three-way partnership that supported the learning and development of all three organizations. San Antonio ISD allowed for schools to self-select into participating in the ERA pilot, spending the 2019–2020 school year in an interactive cycle of professional development, instruction, and observation cycles.

San Antonio ISD was an ideal partner for this work for many reasons. The district was in the process of rolling out new Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS, the Texas equivalent of standards) and evaluating their literacy program under new leadership. San Antonio ISD was also developing a robust Dual Language program, which was expanding every year, and leadership recognized the need to integrate their approach to literacy instruction across dual language and monolingual programs. Student reading proficiency, as gauged by third-grade reading results, was below district goals, and the district, along with CGCS and SAP, sought to increase reading proficiency across the district.

SAP, CGCS, and San Antonio ISD sought a collaborative relationship from the start of the engagement in order to ensure thoughtful communication and planning. This was not always easy and was a learning process on all sides. The original plan for the pilot did not include biliteracy,<sup>2</sup> but the district felt this was a key pillar and advocated for its inclusion, and SAP and CGCS adjusted the work to ensure it was relevant for the San Antonio ISD context. The partnership was designed to be collaborative, with each entity offering some support and also participating in the work with a learner mindset. The district thought carefully about their initial planning team, identifying staff strategically to ensure leadership and oversight. These staff members represented key senior district leadership including the Assistant Superintendent for Bilingual, ESL & Migrant, Chief Academic Officer, and Principal Supervisors, as well as leadership from the various academic departments with a focus on literacy. They named the importance of a holistic approach that thoughtfully incorporated the voices and perspectives of key stakeholders from the onset of the work. From the start of the project, the team engaged in regular virtual planning to norm around a vision for the work and ensure the right voices were at the table. This kind of intentional collaboration would help generate shared buy-in and support for the pilot and position its implementation for success.

At times, this work took re-evaluation and a willingness to change course. It was clear that, for the work to be successful, all stakeholders had to build relationships and have shared ownership over the pilot. It was

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<sup>2</sup> The definition of biliteracy in use here is "the ability to read and write with high levels of proficiency in two languages through the appropriate and effective use of grammatical, syntactic, graphophonic, semantic, and pragmatic systems of the two languages," as defined in *Biliteracy From the Start* (Escamilla et al. 2013). (See References)

also important to ensure that a smaller team was responsible for implementing the day-to-day elements of the work. This meant designating a district point person or small team to coordinate the logistics and communication with partners, with facilities, and with the pilot schools and teachers. The pilot schools demonstrating the most success appointed pilot leads who then created a professional learning community where participants could discuss successes and challenges, problem solve, share best practices, and use student formative assessment data to inform instruction and calibrate teaching and learning expectations.

Finally, it was important to attend to role definition: clearly positioning staff across all partner organizations within the project team as supporters, lead learners, planners, or communicators. Not enough time was dedicated to this on the front end, but the team adjusted over time to create a structure for ongoing communication and planning. For example, the CGCS team planned and coordinated pilot activities with representatives from other districts observing the pilot, and it facilitated strategic planning conversations with senior district leadership as well as conversations with pilot school principals to support and address their needs to lead and support ERA implementation at their school sites. SAP facilitated, coordinated, and planned professional development cycle content with San Antonio ISD staff and district partners, and San Antonio ISD participated in the pilot while simultaneously attending to the internal development of the work within their district.

## **Literacy in San Antonio ISD Prior to the ERA Pilot**

The approach to early literacy in San Antonio ISD prior to the implementation of Early Reading Accelerators was disjointed across the district. There was high turnover in the literacy department within the district, and there was no clear vision for literacy districtwide. There were also different resources, materials, and approaches to literacy used across classrooms. In an attempt to develop more cohesion in literacy instruction, a previous administration chose to approach monolingual literacy through Balanced Literacy with an emphasis on leveled reading. While definitions of "Balanced Literacy" vary, the emphasis on leveled reading for small-group instruction is a common instructional grouping, yet one that is inconsistent with best practices in reading research. In a leveled reading approach, readers are "matched" to their ability levels and given texts accordingly. What this means is that some early readers are consistently denied access to texts that they need to accelerate their learning; instead, they are restricted to leveled books that don't match their phonics instruction or given a steady diet of lower-level texts that "[reduces their opportunity to learn.](#)"<sup>3</sup> This practice is [especially detrimental](#) to students who are English Learners.<sup>4</sup>

In addition, the monolingual and dual language departments operated as separate entities with little collaboration and engagement. A paradigm shift was needed to move away from these two departments working in isolation. The former approach planned teaching and learning literacy with a monoglossic view, leaving biliteracy as an afterthought. Within the dual language department, literacy practice was informed by the work of Dr. Kathy Escamilla and [Literacy Squared](#). This holistic biliteracy work, which emphasizes oracy, text, and language, had many elements that were well aligned to the text and knowledge-building components of the work of Early Reading Accelerators.

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<sup>3</sup> For more on leveled reading, see "Limiting Children to Books They Can Already Read." [link](#) (See Appendix A)

<sup>4</sup> For more information on the use of leveled reading with English Learners, see "Do Leveled Readers Hurt or Help my ELs?" [link](#) (See Appendix A)

## The ERA Pilot in San Antonio ISD: Key Components

The following section provides a list of the key components of the pilot in San Antonio ISD and an overview of the timeline and description of essential activities.

Table: Components of the ERA Pilot

Materials	Training	Action - Reflection Cycle	Ongoing Office Hours	Human Capital	Logistics
Student facing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Foundational skills workbooks</li> <li>• Read-aloud texts</li> <li>• Book baskets</li> </ul> Teacher facing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lesson plans</li> </ul>	Ongoing professional development	Classroom walkthroughs Walkthrough debrief Feedback to teacher	Collective problem solving Answer questions with ERA expert	School principals School-based ERA lead (instructional coaches or teachers) ERA district lead ERA expert	District planning and support



## Overview of ERA Pilot Activities

The primary activities of the ERA pilot followed an action-reflection cycle. Teachers attended professional development, implemented the learning in classrooms, and then engaged in learning walks to identify strengths and potential opportunities for growth in implementation. The table below describes the activities at a high level.

Timing	Activity/Content Focus
Winter 2019	<i>Learning Walks</i> - Pre-pilot implementation: This provided an opportunity for the pilot team to observe classrooms in order to better understand existing/pre-pilot K–2 literacy practices.
Winter 2019	<i>Professional Development</i> : This engagement consisted of a broad overview of the content of the Early Reading Accelerators, including rationale, research base, and suggested readings for more information. This engagement was designed for principals (and any self-selected teacher representatives) to allow building leaders to opt in to the pilot focus.
Spring 2019	<i>Professional Development</i> : This engagement consisted of a broad overview to the content of the Early Reading Accelerators for K/1 pilot school teachers (similar to the winter PD). It was an opportunity to engage deeply with a model read-aloud, and a chance to dig into the research and review a model lesson focused on systematic foundational skills for learning English and Spanish (based on language of instruction).
Early August 2019	<i>Professional Development</i> : This engagement for pilot participants was a mix of research and practice. Educators looked more closely at sample read-aloud plans designed to build knowledge and vocabulary, and engaged in the intellectual prep needed for teaching the first set of lesson plans for the school year. Educators were given district-selected read-aloud texts and lesson plans. <sup>5</sup> Educators reviewed best practices for foundational skills instruction and explored their instructional materials based on language of instruction. <sup>6</sup>
Mid August 2019 (full day)	<i>Professional Development</i> : This engagement provided time to reflect on taught lessons, review and prepare for new read-aloud texts, dig into considerations for student engagement and participation around doing the work of the lesson, and participate in a model/demo lesson. Educators looked closely at examples of foundational skills lessons based on language of instruction, reviewed materials, decodable readers, and assessment considerations, and they also had planning time.

<sup>5</sup> Some read-aloud texts were selected from existing resources [here](#), while others were selected by the district and adapted for the pilot. Paired text-based lesson plans in English and Spanish were also used, such as the resources [found here](#). (See Appendix A)

<sup>6</sup> There was a range of resources used by classroom teachers, depending on the school as well as the language of instruction. SAP provided supplemental phonics practice pages as needed, available [here](#). (See Appendix A)

September 2019	<i>Learning Walks - Round 1:</i> This provided the opportunity to understand implementation of content in classrooms by educators, debrief as a planning team, and respond to any trends.
October 2019	<i>Professional Development:</i> This session gave time to reflect on strengths and next steps needed after the first round of learning walks in schools. Teachers self-selected into breakout groups to share challenges and best practices from the classroom. Teachers participated in another demo lesson, identifying opportunities to respond to common classroom challenges. Educators had another chance to prepare together for upcoming lessons with colleagues in dual language or monolingual classrooms, and spent time focusing on foundational skills and student writing.
November 2019 (ongoing)	<i>Virtual Office Hours with Pilot Leads:</i> These sessions provided pilot participants a chance to ask questions and obtain clarification on aspects of ERA content.
December 2019	<i>Learning Walks - Round 2:</i> This provided the opportunity to understand implementation of content in classrooms by educators, debrief as a planning team, and respond to any trends.
January 2020	<i>Professional Development:</i> This session provided time once again to respond to strengths and next steps needed after December's learning walks. Focus areas for PD were purposeful instruction and responding to formative data, and intentional student work was set up to allow for differentiation and support within the ERA content areas. Educators also dug deeply into San Antonio ISD's "Dictado" protocol, connecting the work of foundational skills to this dual language dictation exercise.
March 2020	<i>Learning Walks - Round 3:</i> This provided the opportunity to understand implementation of content in classrooms by educators, debrief as a planning team, and respond to any trends.
March 2020 and ahead	Original plans were to continue the work with a professional development series in March, obtain students' work samples in April, and close the pilot/plan for district scaling in May. Due to school closures from COVID, plans were modified to create the flexibility needed to respond to disrupted schooling.
Ongoing	<i>Pilot Team Planning Meetings:</i> During the planning of the pilot, as well as over the course of the pilot, SAP, CGCS, and key district team members met to collaborate on vision, approach, and implementation of the pilot.

## The ERA Pilot in San Antonio ISD: A Story of Collaborative Partnership and Authentic Change

The following section highlights the story of the Early Reading Accelerators pilot in San Antonio ISD and describes essential conditions and activities that allowed San Antonio ISD to leverage the pilot to cultivate culturally sustaining systems and amplify their impact statewide.



The story of the Early Reading Accelerators pilot in San Antonio ISD transcends the shifting of literacy practices. It is a story about how a district utilized experiences and learnings from the adaptation of Early Reading Accelerators to cultivate culturally relevant, culturally sustaining<sup>7</sup> communities through literacy. Under the thought-leadership of high-ranking district officials, an inclusive literacy approach took shape, and a shared vision for literacy was developed that was grounded in the asset-based theoretical framework known as "Funds of Knowledge." Funds of Knowledge are the knowledge and skills that are developed to enable a person to function within a particular culture.<sup>8</sup> Scholars assert that infusing Funds of Knowledge in the classroom experience creates a deeply rich environment for learning. Every member of San Antonio ISD interviewed for this study—district leaders, district support, school principals, instructional coaches, and teachers—referenced Funds of Knowledge as their operating belief system in their

<sup>7</sup> Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy describes educational experiences and ethos that "support young people in sustaining the cultural and linguistic competence of their communities while simultaneously offering access to dominant cultural competence" (D. Paris, 2012). (See References)

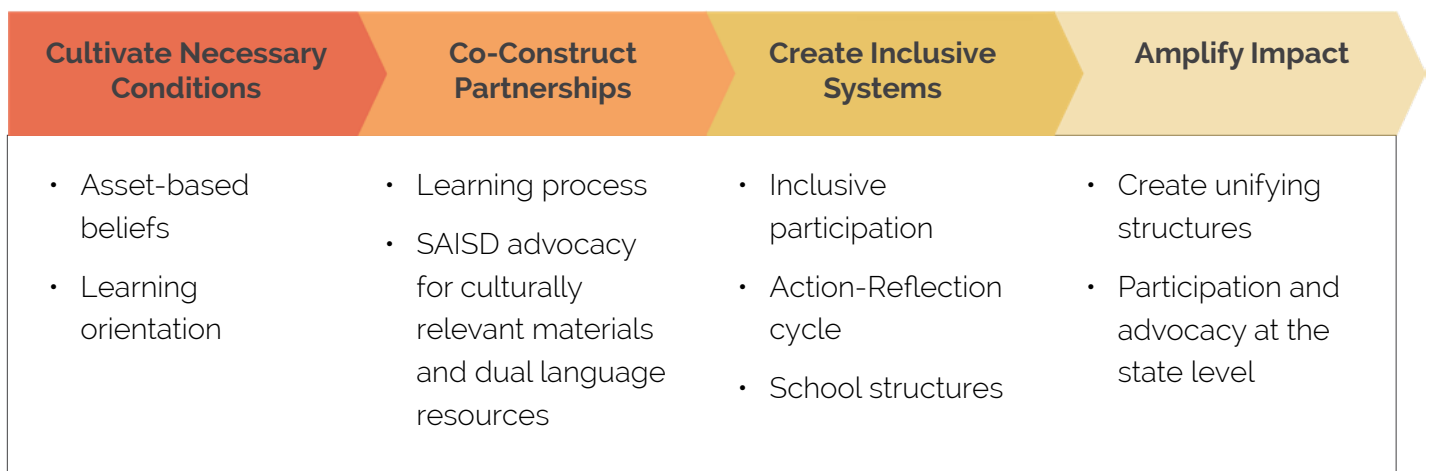
<sup>8</sup> Moll et al (1992) and González et al (2006). (See References)



conversations, which demonstrates a clear, aligned vision for the foundational mindsets that are important in excavating the strengths of diverse students. This example of thought-leadership underscores the critical role that high-ranking district officials play in adapting Early Reading Accelerators as an impactful approach to literacy.

Through the visionary, asset-based orientation of high-ranking leaders within San Antonio ISD, the necessary conditions existed to co-construct an effective partnership, implement inclusive, reflection-oriented systems, and amplify impact across the district

and the entire state of Texas. Most importantly, district leadership and school teams where the pilot was successful demonstrated a willingness to try something new and chose to invest deeply in Early Reading Accelerators. The Early Reading Accelerators served as a catalyst for 1. positive academic and instructional outcomes, 2. more collaborative and cohesive district teams and school teams, 3. culturally sustaining, visually rich instructional environments, and 4. joy for teaching and learning literacy.





**“We saw some teachers really bring back some joy into the classroom, and we see the beauty of a thematic lesson with multiple complex texts...the use of really rich language and deep questions that teachers could engage students in, and then seeing the students make connections from text to text.**

**Students were performing high-level tasks in kindergarten, tasks that maybe the teachers didn't think students could do. So teachers began having their own student expectations, outmatched, or above what the teachers thought kids were capable of doing. That's really important in an urban setting to always be pushing that deficit thinking away, because even the best of us can begin to engage in that type of thinking when we are presented with the realities that our students face. Sometimes we allow it to become a barrier for students, and this helps mitigate some of that.”**

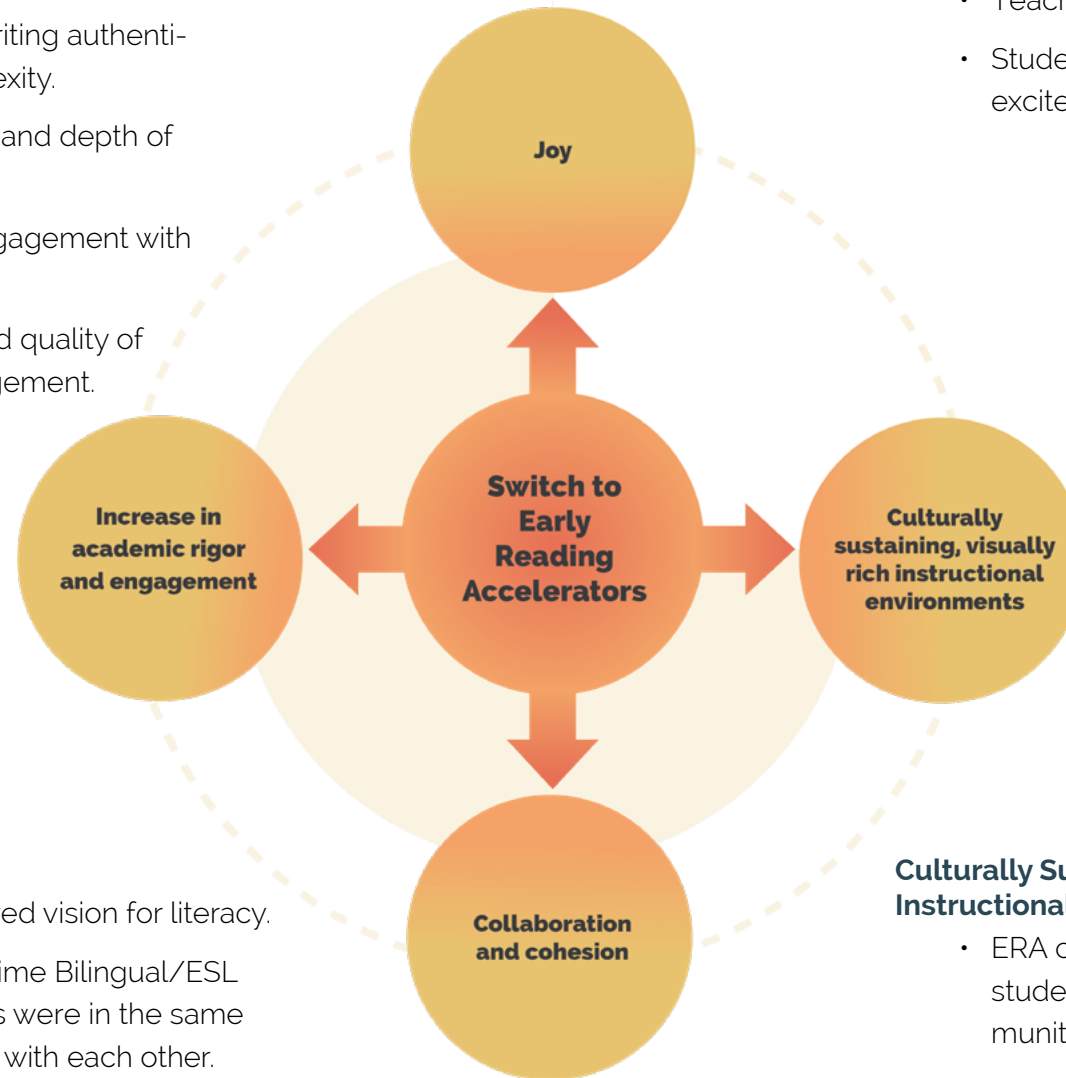
*- District Personnel*

**“The energy during the pilot was just untouchable. And then, of course, that transferred to the teachers because we saw our kids were excited.”**

*- Teacher*

## Increase in Academic Rigor and Engagement

- Increase in teacher expectations of student ability.
- Increase in students writing authentically with more complexity.
- Increase in complexity and depth of student conversations.
- Increase in student engagement with each other.
- Increase in quantity and quality of teacher-student engagement.



## Joy

- A love of reading returned to classrooms.
- Teachers became more creative.
- Students and teachers expressed excitement around literacy.

## Collaboration and Cohesion

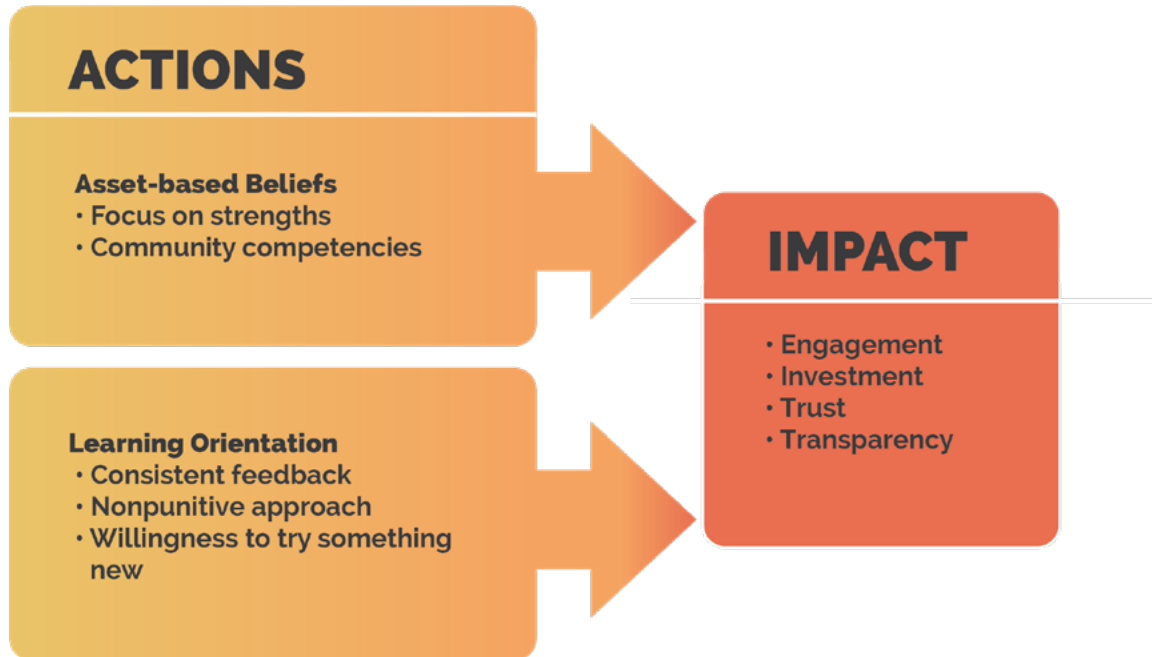
- District developed shared vision for literacy.
- ERA Pilot was the first time Bilingual/ESL and Monolingual teams were in the same trainings and engaging with each other.
- K and first-grade teams increased collaboration and felt like a cohesive unit for the first time.

## Culturally Sustaining, Visually Rich Instructional Environments

- ERA components became inclusive of student communities and broader community history.
- Students began making connections between ERA texts, other content areas, and their lived experiences.

## Cultivating the Necessary Conditions

San Antonio ISD engaged in collaborative partnership and fostered authentic change by cultivating the necessary conditions to adopt Early Reading Accelerators.



### Asset-based Beliefs

All district personnel expressed beliefs that were rooted in asset-based mindsets about their professional and local communities. Asset-based mindsets focus on positive personal/community strengths as opposed to viewing social groups as “a problem” or barrier to certain goals.<sup>9</sup> District leaders, school principals, and teachers all referenced Funds of Knowledge as their operating framework for viewing the competencies and potential of teachers, students, students’ families, and their local community.

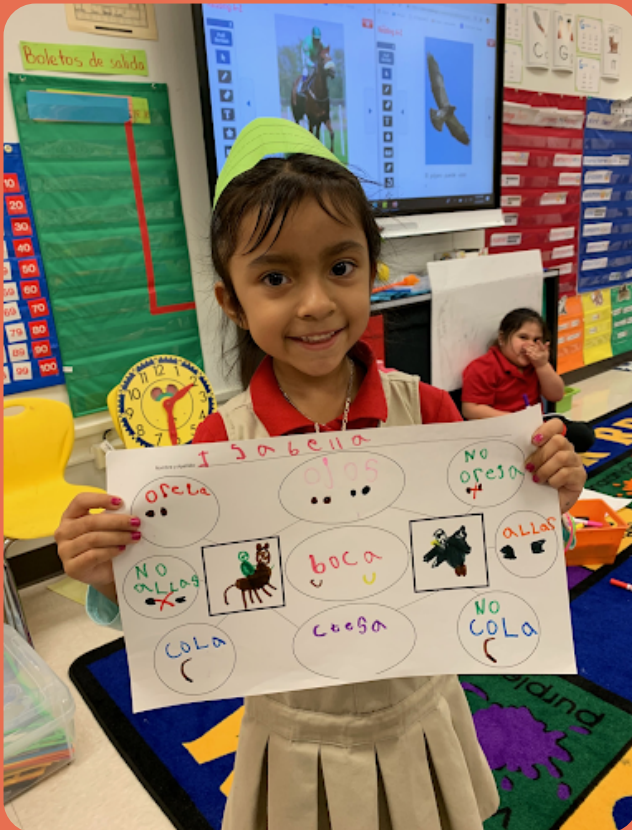
### Learning Orientation

San Antonio ISD stakeholders approached this shift as learners. They asked for consistent feedback from each other and from external partners. District leadership took a non-punitive, non-judgemental approach to the implementation of Early Reading Accelerators in pilot schools, and in schools where the pilot was successful, school leaders approached literacy evaluation of teachers as a learning and growth opportunity as opposed to a tool for compliance and punishment. Although school teams were previously invested in divergent literacy practices, they were willing to shift their mindsets about what was most important in teaching reading, and teachers demonstrated a willingness to step out of their comfort zone to embrace ERA, finding support from pilot leads, principals, and district staff.

<sup>9</sup> Bernal, D. D. (2002). (See References)

## Cultivating the Necessary Conditions → Impact

As a result of the mindsets and beliefs evidenced throughout literacy teams across the district, San Antonio ISD stakeholders were engaged and invested, and they ultimately fostered a culture of trust and transparency with internal and external partners. The dual language and monolingual departments engaged collaboratively, creating a vision for literacy instruction that was unifying. This foundation provided the fertile soil for an inclusive, rigorous, culturally relevant literacy approach to thrive.



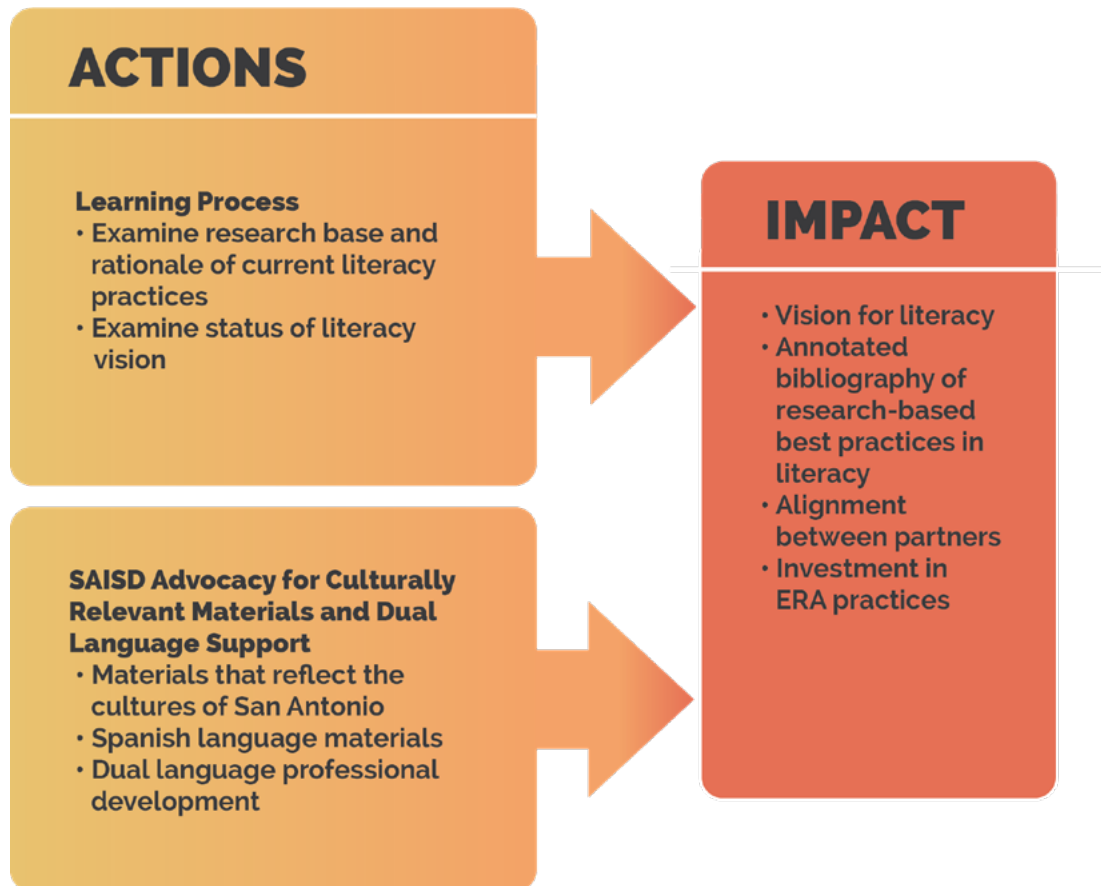
**“We really rely heavily on the Funds of Knowledge from Luis Moll and of course, Gloria Ladson-Billings’ work. All of those pieces are really, really critical for us. Jim Cummins does a lot of work around multiple literacies and it’s just that thinking like there’s more than one way of knowing. And just because we say literacy and we try to define it by books and writing, we know there are other ways of knowing, and those are just as valuable and those should be highlighted and honored so that we can see a multidimensional view of our students”**

*- District Personnel*



## Co-Constructing a Partnership

San Antonio ISD engaged in collaborative partnership and fostered authentic change by co-constructing their partnerships.



### Learning Process

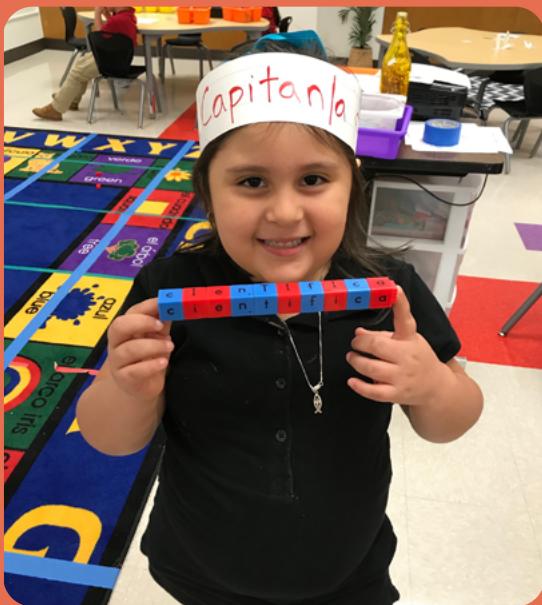
Through their engagement with Student Achievement Partners, district leadership in San Antonio ISD engaged in a learning process to examine the research base and rationale behind their current literacy practices and programs. This learning process was initiated when the pilot team asked San Antonio ISD to provide a list of references/resources that were the foundation of their current literacy approach. District leaders realized that there was work to do to solidify their approach across departments and to codify the foundations of their culturally responsive, rigorous approach to biliteracy, while simultaneously engaging as learners in the ERA professional development series.

## Advocacy for Culturally Relevant Materials and Dual Language Support

Another important aspect of co-constructing the partnership was district leadership's advocacy for culturally relevant resources and materials for their students as well as professional development to support the instruction of foundational skills in Spanish for teachers in dual language classrooms. District leadership deeply believes that literacy resources should reflect the cultures of communities they serve, and they initiated candid conversations with Student Achievement Partners about adding read-aloud texts and topics, and creating more materials that reflected the rich cultures that San Antonio ISD serves. In addition, the dual language teachers advocated for the importance of materials written in Spanish—not just texts but also plans and student-facing resources. School and district representatives also recognized the need for dual language teachers to continuously develop their instructional practices in teaching foundational skills for Spanish literacy. New resources and professional development opportunities were developed by SAP as well as by the San Antonio ISD team for the pilot classrooms to support this need.

### Co-Constructing a Partnership → Impact

As a result of advocating for culturally responsive materials, co-planning professional development for dual language teachers, and engaging in a learning process to identify the rationale behind various literacy approaches, district leadership was deeply invested in the work and was aligned with the pilot team in the critical need to implement these practices in San Antonio ISD schools. Additionally, San Antonio ISD codified the research behind their clarified literacy approach and created an annotated bibliography of research that served as a tool to invest the broader San Antonio ISD community—and the state of Texas—in ERA-aligned practices. Through their candid discussions and learning activities, San Antonio ISD now had a nascent vision for research-based, culturally relevant literacy in the district.

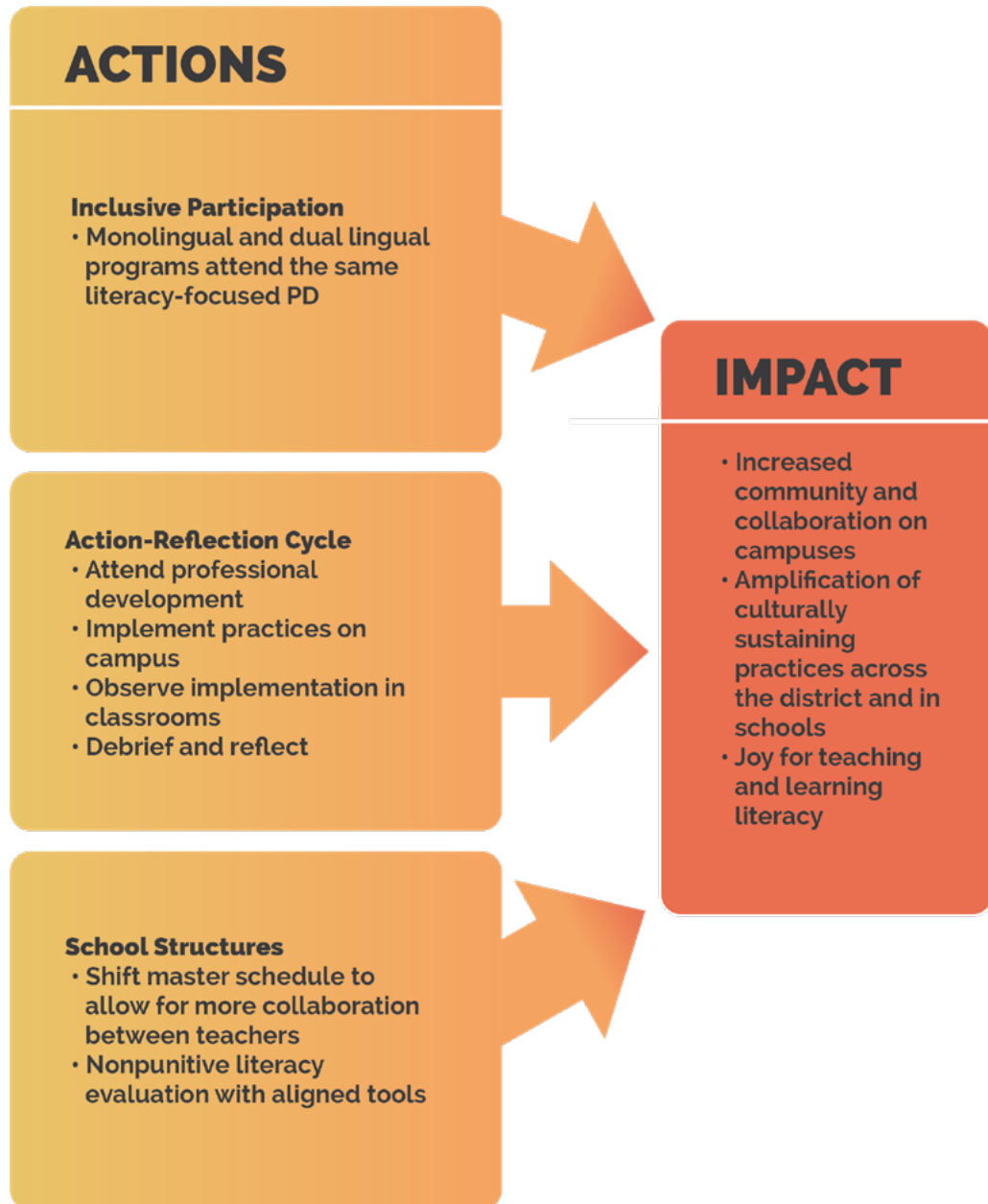


**“It was a trust-building project. We had to work together, to plan together. So it’s really multilayered. Our department [biliteracy]--we weren’t initially even a part of this pilot at all. Our district context is always focused on what’s best for English language learners that our district serves a large percentage of. In particular, SAP’s willingness to listen and be learners as well, with the bilingual context, really developed our partnership.”**

*- District Personnel*

## Creating Inclusive Systems

San Antonio ISD engaged in collaborative partnership and fostered authentic change by creating inclusive systems.



### Inclusive Participation

San Antonio ISD modified and/or created new systems to be inclusive of both the monolingual and dual language literacy programs in the district. Prior to implementing the components of the ERA pilot, the monolingual and dual language programs operated as separate entities within the district and within schools. In order to adopt Early Reading Accelerators districtwide, both departments attended

professional development for the ERA pilot, which was the first time in the district that both programs attended the same literacy-focused professional development. This ensured that the professional development for the ELA pilot was inclusively designed with ALL students in mind.

### Action-Reflection Cycle

ERA pilot participants engaged in an action-reflection cycle that represented an inclusive, effective system for learning and growth. This action-reflection cycle works as follows:



## School Structures

In schools that saw positive outcomes from the ERA pilot, school leaders, in collaboration with teachers and instructional coaches, shifted the master schedule to allow more time for collaboration among literacy teachers across grade level and across monolingual and dual language classrooms. These campuses also took a non-punitive, formative approach to evaluating literacy instruction and used metrics and tools that were aligned to Early Reading Accelerators for evaluating literacy instruction.

### Creating Inclusive Systems → Impact

Creating space for changing or modifying systems led to increased community and collaboration among school staff, the implementation and amplification of culturally sustaining practices across the district and in schools, and the return of the joy of teaching and learning literacy. Inclusive professional development and increased time and capacity for cross-team collaboration led to more cohesive and collaborative campus communities. Teachers not only shared materials and resources, but they also shared ideas that transformed the complex texts, foundational to Early Reading Accelerators, into multi-sensory experiences that transcended the text itself. Using the ERA texts as inspiration, school teams collaborated to decorate their shared physical spaces, took their students on field trips based on text topics, created a bridge from students' worlds to the schoolhouse by bringing artifacts from students' cultures into the classroom, and resurrected school and community legacies through explorations of their local school history.

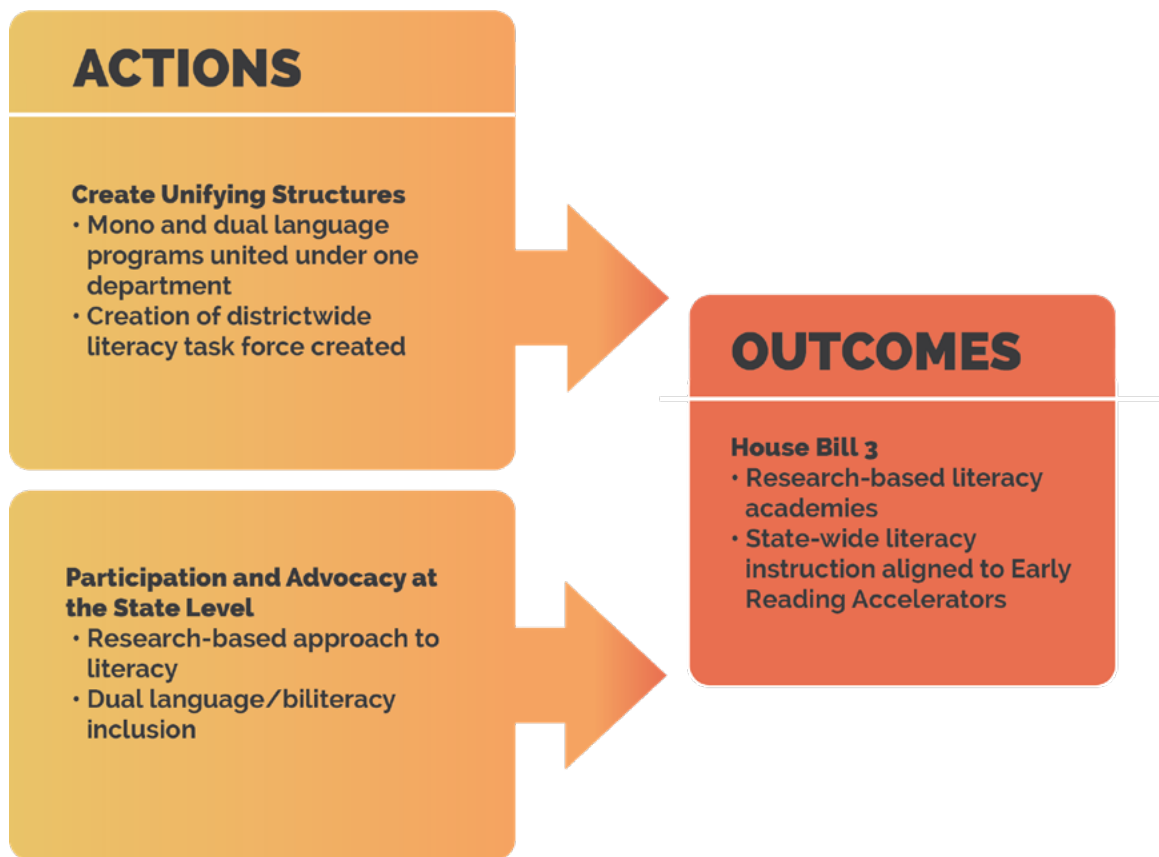


**“I think the time for planning and then collaborating with the other teachers on ideas really helped us succeed because we would look at the lesson plans and get ideas from each other, and then being able to actually plan it out together really helped us out.”**

*- Teacher*

## Amplifying Impact

*San Antonio ISD made the pilot their own by amplifying their impact statewide..*



### Create Unifying Structures

The cohesion and collaboration that was happening at the school level through the implementation of Early Reading Accelerators in San Antonio ISD led to the restructuring of the literacy departments within the district towards more cohesion and collaboration. The monolingual and dual language programs were united under the same umbrella. A Literacy Task Force was also created in the district to refine vision for the literacy approach and sustain cohesion of literacy practices aligned to Early Reading Accelerators.

### Participation and Advocacy at the State Level

Due to the intellectual, structural, and cultural work done throughout the district, San Antonio ISD played a pivotal role in shaping the Texas Education Administration's (the state department of education) vision for literacy statewide. San Antonio ISD leaders were powerful advocates for a research-based approach and inclusion of Dual Language/biliteracy connections to early reading evidenced in Early Reading Accelerators.

## Amplifying Impact → Outcomes

As a result of the restructuring of the literacy department within the district as well as statewide advocacy, San Antonio ISD was instrumental in the development of House Bill 3's research-based literacy academies, and lays the groundwork for more rigorous literacy instruction across the state that is aligned to Early Reading Accelerators.



**“We needed something state-wide that would help shift teacher practice, and we just happened to get another policy piece, which is House Bill 3; they require K through third-grade teachers and principals to attend reading academies state-wide. With our recognition for a need for professional development, House Bill 3 aligned beautifully. We launched the reading academies to meet the state requirements, and we were able to participate in the creation of the state content because our district had representatives on the advisory board, so we could take the knowledge that we learned from ERA - our newfound understanding - along with our deep and strong biliteracy framing that we had learned to help build the framework because we were pushed with the ERA work.”**

*- District Personnel*

## Best Practices for School Districts to Shift Literacy Practices to Early Reading Accelerators

*This section presents best practices to foster positive academic and cultural outcomes by creating conditions successful for shifting literacy practices and implementing the Early Reading Accelerators. Using the ERA pilot in San Antonio ISD as a guide, it highlights the work of campuses that successfully made the shift to Early Reading Accelerators and includes the perspectives of officials in SAISD, observing districts, and district partners.*

### Best Practices for Creating the Conditions to Shift Literacy Practices

#### Engage and Invest Senior District Leadership First

**Learning Process** Engage senior leaders in the district in a process to identify the rationale behind current literacy practices and to explore the research behind Early Reading Accelerators.

**Thought-Leadership** Initiate a shared vision for literacy by the most senior leaders in the district.

#### Cultivate Learning Orientation

**Autonomy** Allow teachers and instructional coaches to lead the work by creating time and space for collaboration and experimentation.

**Formative Evaluation** Focus on learning and developing over time and ensure any evaluation metrics are tied to Early Reading Accelerators and not to a conflicting literacy approach.

#### Invest Through Clarity

**Transparency** Engage district and school teams in the rationale behind literacy shifts using a variety of methods and engagement experiences.

**Managed Expectations** Ensure all stakeholders know what to expect when learning and implementing Early Reading Accelerators. This includes sharing the plan for scaling the project (see next section on implementation).



## Best Practices for Implementing Early Reading Accelerators<sup>10</sup>

### Align

**Inventory** Take stock of literacy practices across the district and of competing/conflicting literacy priorities. This includes analyzing other professional development sessions that are applicable across subject areas.

**Priorities** Prioritize the planning and implementation of Early Reading Accelerators and de-prioritize or eliminate competing/conflicting priorities.

**Curriculum and Resources** Select an ERA-aligned curriculum and resources before pilot implementation, including resources that support biliteracy instruction.

### Plan

**Ownership** Identify and align on what ownership of the work looks like for all stakeholders. Implementation, collaboration, and communication should be the priority of the district member(s) who lead implementation.

**District Capacity and Scale** Evaluate the district's capacity for implementing ERA in schools and create a plan for ensuring district capacity aligns with rollout of implementation.

### Engage

**School & Instructional Leaders** Encourage principal supervisors, principals, and instructional coaches to attend all PD sessions with teachers and instructional coaches.

**Frequent Touchpoints** Develop communication and support structures (such as email and weekly virtual meetings where teams can collectively problem-solve), ask questions, and keep ERA top of mind. Principals should observe literacy instruction often.

**Follow Up and Follow Through** Communicate clear expectations about milestones and follow up about progress towards milestones.

### Act and Reflect

**Professional Development** Establish ongoing PD that is actionable and based on learnings from classrooms and reflections from teachers and instructional coaches. Concrete examples from classrooms—especially best practices— should be highlighted. Level of care/hospitality is also important in making team members feel valued and invested.

**Classroom Walkthroughs** Give teachers time to plan and implement their learnings after PD, and then conduct classroom walkthroughs to observe progress of PD content.

<sup>10</sup> It is important to note that there was some overlap in ERA instructional practices that aligned to previous professional development in the district, so school teams had some familiarity with the type of questioning that fosters deep reflection and engagement with students. See Appendix A for resources about professional development that supported ERA work due to their focus on student thinking/engaging with questions.

**Debriefs** Dedicate an immediate debrief period after classroom walkthroughs and use data from the walkthroughs and frequent touchpoints to plan the next professional development.

## **Celebrate**

**Acknowledgement** Create cycles of recognition for big and small wins, and acknowledge what individuals are doing well. This practice is especially impactful for teachers.

**Reflection** Design spaces intentionally where district and school teams can reflect on their progress and shifts they have made over time.

## Sequence of High-Leverage Steps For Adapting Early Reading Accelerators

### STEP 1:

Hold conversation about ownership and role clarity

### STEP 2:

Engage in a process to build collective knowledge with district leadership, and then codify

### STEP 3:

Consider alignment process

- *Audit current district practices and materials*
- *Select aligned curriculum*

### STEP 4:

Identify district-level capacity and point person/people

### STEP 5:

Co-create plan for rollout and implementation

- *Planning should be inclusive of school teams and district personnel*

### STEP 6:

Invest in district and school teams

- *Invest in the research on ERA*
- *Align on a formative literacy evaluation plan*

### STEP 7:

Roll out at school level

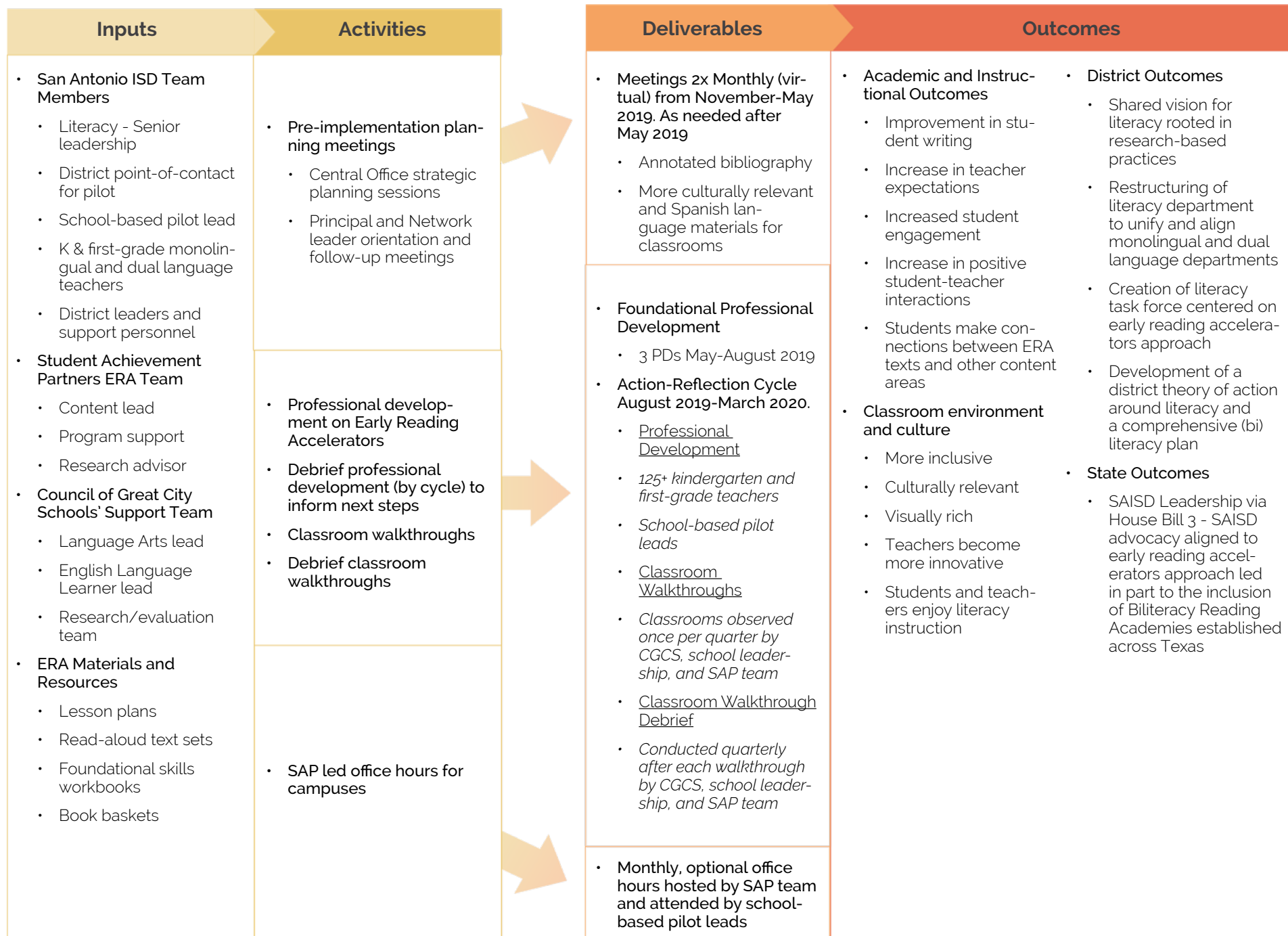
- *Adapt master schedules to allow for more collaboration amongst teachers across grade levels and language focus*
- *Have an engagement plan to keep ERA top of mind for teachers*

### STEP 8:

Implement action/reflection cycle

- *Encourage principal participation in professional development*

# ERA Logic Model



## References

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- Escamilla, E., Hopewell, S., & Butvilofsky, S. (2013). *Biliteracy from the start: Literacy Squared in action*. Caslon, Inc.
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- Paris, D. (2012). Culturally sustaining pedagogy: A needed change in stance, terminology, and practice. *Educational Researcher*, 41(3), 93–97.

## Appendix A - Additional Context and Resources

### ERA Resources:

- For paired read-aloud sample lessons in English and Spanish:
  - Direct [link](#)
  - [https://achievethecore.org/category/411/ela-literacy-lessons?filter\\_cat=1245&sort=name](https://achievethecore.org/category/411/ela-literacy-lessons?filter_cat=1245&sort=name)
- For the full read-aloud lesson plan library, see Read Aloud Project lessons.
  - Direct [link](#)
  - [https://achievethecore.org/category/411/ela-literacy-lessons?filter\\_cat=788&sort=name](https://achievethecore.org/category/411/ela-literacy-lessons?filter_cat=788&sort=name)
- For sample phonics resources:
  - Direct [link](#)
  - <https://achievethecore.org/page/3290/early-reading-acceleration-practice-phonics-activities>

### Critiques of Leveled Reading

- For more on leveled reading, see "Limiting Children to Books They Can Already Read."
  - Direct [link](#)
  - <https://www.aft.org/ae/summer2020/shanahan>
- For more information on the use of leveled reading with English Learners, see "Do Leveled Readers Hurt or Help my ELs?"
  - Direct [link](#)
  - [https://assets-global.website-files.com/5b43fc97fcf4773f14ee92f3/5f2c2f6be5db-dga2c1abbe21\\_Do%20Leveled%20Readers%20Hurt%20or%20Help%20my%20ELs%3F.pdf](https://assets-global.website-files.com/5b43fc97fcf4773f14ee92f3/5f2c2f6be5db-dga2c1abbe21_Do%20Leveled%20Readers%20Hurt%20or%20Help%20my%20ELs%3F.pdf)

### Professional Development that Supported ERA Programming

- Depth of Knowledge
  - Direct [link](#)
  - Webb, N. L. (2002). Depth-of-knowledge levels for four content areas. *Language Arts*, 28(March).
- *7 Steps to a Language-Rich Interactive Classroom*
  - Direct [link](#)
  - Book: <https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/18187151-7-steps-to-a-language-rich-interactive-classroom>
  - Blog: <https://seidlitzblog.org/2020/05/20/supporting-literacy-at-home-7-steps-for-parents/>

## Appendix B - Interview Protocols

### INTERVIEW PROTOCOL - SAN ANTONIO ISD SCHOOL TEAMS

#### Opening Script

- Introduction to interviewer and Student Achievement Partners' representative
- Purpose of the case study
- Access to data
- Structure of interview
- Do you have any questions so far?
- Consent to record

#### Roles and Responsibilities

1. What is your current role, and what was your role during the ERA pilot?
2. For principals and instructional coaches/pilot lead - What were your responsibilities in relation to the ERA pilot?

#### ERA and District Literacy Insights

3. How would you describe literacy practices in your school/classrooms before the ERA pilot?
4. Imagine I am a new teacher on campus, how would you describe the core components of Early Reading Accelerators to me? (foundational skills, read aloud of complex texts, etc.)
  - a. What shifts in your practice were essential to successful implementation of the ERA pilot? (Literacy practices and systems for implementation)
5. What were the different activities that you engaged in as pilot participants? (such as professional development, walkthroughs with school teams, etc.)
  - a. What shifts have you seen in your classrooms as a result of the ERA pilot? (Teacher practices and student experience)
    - i. Please describe specific examples of the impact ERA had on your students
6. When you think of the components of the pilot (ongoing professional development, materials: read aloud project texts, foundational skills workbooks, lesson plans, school based leadership - principals & pilot leads, district planning and support)
  - a. Which of these components had the most positive impact? (yes can name multiple)
    - i. Why do you believe these components were the most impactful?
  - b. Which of these components were not as impactful?
    - i. Why do you believe these components were not as impactful?
  - c. Are there any ERA pilot components that you add to this list?
7. How did your campus navigate the newly adopted instructional materials from the district?
8. What are your long-term goals for ERA?

- a. What do you believe is necessary to sustain this work?
- b. What is the current plan to sustain this work for the long-term?

Successes and Challenges

9. What went well with the ERA pilot?
  - a. What are the factors that contributed to those successes?
10. What challenges existed with the ERA pilot?
  - a. What are the factors that contributed to those challenges?

Lessons Learned/Advice

11. What advice would you share for other schools who aspire to shift their early reading practices and positively impact student outcomes?
  - a. What are your lessons learned based on SAISD's experience with the ERA pilot?



## INTERVIEW PROTOCOL - SAN ANTONIO ISD DISTRICT TEAM

### Opening Script

- Introduction to interviewer and Student Achievement Partners' representative
- Purpose of the case study
- Access to data
- Structure of interview
- Do you have any questions so far?
- Consent to record

### Roles and Responsibilities

1. What is your role within SAISD?
2. What were your responsibilities in relation to the ERA pilot?
  - i. In what ways did you engage with Student Achievement Partners?
  - ii. In what ways did you engage with the Council of Great City Schools?

### ERA and District Literacy Insights

3. How would you describe the ERA Pilot?
  - a. How would you describe the core components (or principles) of Early Reading Accelerators from your perspective?
    - i. What were the different activities that took place? (such as professional development, walkthroughs with school teams, etc.)
4. How would you describe early literacy practices in the district prior to the ERA pilot?
  - a. What were the shifts in teacher practice that were essential to the ERA pilot?
  - b. In addition to teacher practice, were there any other shifts that were essential to implement the ERA pilot?

### Goals and Expectations

5. What were the district's learning goals for this project?
  - a. Learning goals =
    - i. Student outcomes
    - ii. Student achievement
    - iii. Shifts in teacher practices and mindsets
  - b. To what extent were these goals met?
  - c. What were your expectations for the district as a result of participation in the pilot?
  - d. Were your expectations for the pilot met? (why or why not?)

### Successes and Challenges

6. What went well with the ERA pilot?
  - a. What are the factors that contributed to those successes?
  - b. Has the district been positively impacted as a result of the ERA pilot?
    - i. If so, what are those positive areas of impact?
7. When you think of the schools where implementation was strongest:
  - a. What are the factors that led to strong implementation in those school sites?
8. What challenges existed with the ERA pilot?
  - a. What are the factors that contributed to those challenges?
9. When you think of schools who may have struggled a bit more with implementation:
  - a. What factors contributed to those challenges?
10. When you think of the components of the pilot (ongoing professional development, materials: read aloud project texts, foundational skills workbooks, lesson plans, school based leadership - principals & pilot leads, district planning and support)
  - a. Which of these components had the most positive impact? (yes can name multiple)
    - i. Why do you believe these components were the most impactful?
  - b. Which of these components were not as impactful?
    - i. Why do you believe these components were not as impactful?
  - c. Are there any ERA pilot components that you add to this list?
11. New curriculum - were teachers able to apply their new learning to the new curriculum materials?

Lessons Learned/Advice

12. What advice would you share for other districts who aspire to shift their early reading practices and positively impact student outcomes?
  - a. What are your lessons learned based on SAISD's experience with the ERA pilot?
  - b. How can districts apply SAISD's experience with Early Reading Accelerators to their own context?
13. In what ways has the ERA pilot impacted the approach to literacy in the district?
14. In what ways has the pilot impacted the literacy vision for this school year and beyond?
  - a. What are your long-term goals for ERA?
    - i. What do you believe is necessary to sustain this work?
    - ii. What is the current plan to sustain this work for the long-term?

## INTERVIEW PROTOCOL - DISTRICT OBSERVERS

### Opening Script

- Introduction to interviewer and Student Achievement Partners' representative
- Purpose of the case study
- Access to data
- Structure of interview
- Do you have any questions so far?
- Consent to record

### Roles and Responsibilities

1. What is your current role?
2. What were your responsibilities in relation to the ERA pilot in SAISD? (if any)
  - i. In what ways did you engage with Student Achievement Partners?
  - ii. In what ways did you engage with the Council of Great City Schools?
  - iii. In what ways did you engage with SAISD?

### ERA and District Literacy Insights

3. How would you describe the ERA Pilot?
  - a. How would you describe the core components (or principles) of Early Reading Accelerators from your perspective?
  - b. What were the different activities that took place? (such as professional development, walk-throughs with school teams, etc.)

### Successes and Challenges

4. What went well with the ERA pilot in SAISD?
  - a. What are the factors that contributed to those successes?
  - b. Has the district been positively impacted as a result of the ERA pilot?
    - i. If so, what are those positive areas of impact?
5. When you think of the schools where implementation was strongest:
  - a. What are the factors that led to strong implementation in those school sites?
6. What challenges existed with the ERA pilot?
  - a. What are the factors that contributed to those challenges?
7. When you think of schools who may have struggled a bit more with implementation:
  - a. What factors contributed to those challenges?
8. When you think of the components of the pilot (ongoing professional development, materials: read aloud project texts, foundational skills workbooks, lesson plans, school based leadership - principals

& pilot leads, district planning and support)

- a. Which of these components had the most positive impact? (yes can name multiple)
    - i. Why do you believe these components were the most impactful?
  - b. Which of these components were not as impactful?
    - i. Why do you believe these components were not as impactful?
  - c. Are there any ERA pilot components that you add to this list?
- g. What shifts did you observe over time in SAISD as a result of the pilot?

Lessons Learned/Advice

10. What were your main takeaways from this pilot in SAISD
11. What advice would you share with districts who want to adopt an ERA pilot?
  - a. Advice for what to do:
  - b. Advice for what not to do:
  - c. What did SAISD do to make it their own?
  - d. What are the enabling conditions for districts to make this possible?
  - e. What should an external partner, like SAP or CGCS, do to get district officials, school leaders, and teachers invested?
    - i. What types of activities and/or conversations should be had?
    - ii. What types of tools should they provide?

## CGCS - INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

### Opening Script

- Introduction to interviewer
- Purpose of the case study
- Access to data
- Structure of interview
- Do you have any questions so far?
- Consent to record

### Roles and Responsibilities

1. How would you describe your role in the Early Readers Accelerators Pilot
  - a. In what ways did you interact with SAISD stakeholders?
  - b. In what ways did you interact with SAP stakeholders?
  - c. What type of activities did you lead or engage in throughout the project?

### Partnership with SAISD

1. What went well in your partnership with SAISD
  - a. What conditions existed that led to these positive aspects of the partnership?
2. What were some challenges in your organization's partnership with SAISD?
  - a. What conditions existed that led to those challenges?

### ERA and District Literacy Insights

1. How would you describe the ERA Pilot?
  - a. How would you describe the core components (or principles) of Early Reading Accelerators from your perspective?
  - b. What does "success" look like for this pilot?
2. How would you describe early literacy practices in the district prior to the ERA pilot?

### Goals and Expectations

3. What were your goals for this pilot in SAISD?
  - a. Learning goals =
    - i. Student outcomes
    - ii. Student achievement
    - iii. Shifts in teacher practices and mindsets
  - b. To what extent were these goals met?

### Successes and Challenges

4. What went well with the ERA pilot?
  - a. What are the factors that contributed to those successes?
  - b. When you think of the schools where implementation was strongest:
    - i. What are the factors that led to strong implementation in those school sites?
      1. What teacher, principal, characteristics led to strong implementation?
        - a. Principal
        - b. Teachers
        - c. Other stakeholders
      - ii. What shifts in teacher mindsets did you observe?
      - iii. What shifts in teacher practices did you observe?
5. What challenges existed with the ERA pilot?
  - a. What are the factors that contributed to those challenges?
6. When you think of schools who may have struggled a bit more with implementation:
  - a. What factors contributed to those challenges?
7. When you think of the components of the pilot (ongoing professional development, materials: read aloud project texts, foundational skills workbooks, lesson plans, school based leadership - principals & pilot leads, district planning and support)
  - a. Which of these components had the most positive impact? (yes can name multiple)
    - i. Why do you believe these components were the most impactful?
  - b. Which of these components were not as impactful?
    - i. Why do you believe these components were not as impactful?
      1. What would have made these components more impactful

#### Lessons Learned/Advice

8. What advice would you share for stakeholders who aspire to shift their early reading practices in a district setting?
  - a. What are some best practices you would share with districts implementing Early Reading Accelerators?
  - b. What else should districts keep in mind when implementing ERA?
  - c. Would you do anything differently?
9. In what ways do you believe the ERA pilot impacted the approach to literacy in the district?
  - a. When reflecting on ELL in SAISD, what was unique about this context in comparison to ERA pilots in other districts?
  - b. What did SAISD do to make this pilot their own?

Partnership with SAP

1. How would you describe your partnership with SAP
  - a. What went well in your partnership with SAP
    - i. What conditions existed that led to these positive aspects of the partnership?
      1. If necessary - can you share an example?
  - b. What were some opportunities for growth in your partnership?
    - i. What conditions existed that led to these growth areas in the partnership?
      1. If necessary Can you share an example?
  - c. What would you say are overall best practices when engaging with another non-district partner?

Is there anything else you would like to share about ERA, the pilot with SAISD, or your partnerships?

## INTERVIEW PROTOCOL - CGCS EVALUATION TEAM

### Opening Script

- Introduction to interviewer
- Purpose of the case study
- Access to data
- Structure of interview
- Do you have any questions so far?
- Consent to record

### Roles and Responsibilities

1. How would you describe your role in the Early Readers Accelerators Pilot
  - a. In what ways did you interact with SAISD stakeholders?
  - b. In what ways did you interact with SAP team members?
  - c. What type of activities did you lead or engage in throughout the project? Such as data collection, data analysis etc.

### ERA and District Literacy Insights

### Early Reading Accelerators Pilot - Data Collection and Perceptions

#### Data Collection:

- a. What type of data was collected throughout the pilot?
- b. For the teacher baseline survey:
  - i. What were the findings from the baseline survey?
  - ii. Other than the preliminary report and the baseline survey, are there any other findings about shifts/lack of shifts in teacher perceptions and practices over time?
  - iii. Are there any findings or insight from throughout the study that stood out to you that you believe are important to share for this case study narrative?
- c. Is there anything else you would like me to know about data collection and findings.

#### How would you describe the key components of the ERA Pilot from your perspective

- d. From your vantage point, which of these components had the most positive impacts? (you can name multiple)
  - i. What do you believe made these components impactful?
- e. Are there any areas that were not as impactful
  - i. What do you believe made these components less impactful?

### Partnership with SAISD

1. How would you describe your organization's partnership with San Antonio ISD?



- a. What went well in your organization's partnership with SAISD
    - i. What conditions existed that led to these positive aspects of the partnership?
  - b. What were some opportunities for growth in your organization's partnership with SAISD?
    - i. What conditions existed that led to these positive aspects of the partnership?
  - c. What suggestions do you have for an external organization partnering with a school district?
2. Individually, how would you describe your partnership with SAISD
    - a. What went well in your partnership with SAISD
      - i. What conditions existed that led to these positive aspects of the partnership?
    - b. What were some opportunities for growth in your partnership with SAISD?
      - i. What conditions existed that led to these growth areas in the partnership?
    - c. Do you have any lessons learned from your engagement with SAISD?

Partnership with SAP

3. How would you describe your partnership with Student Achievement Partners
  - a. What went well in your partnership with Student Achievement Partners
    - i. What conditions existed that led to these positive aspects of the partnership?
  - b. What were some opportunities for growth in your partnership?
    - i. What conditions existed that led to these growth areas in the partnership?
    - ii. Can you share an example?
  - c. What would you say are overall best practices when engaging with another non-district partner?

Overarching themes from the pilot

1. When you think about the school sites where the pilot was more successful, what were the enabling conditions in those contexts?
  - a. What did those teachers and/or administrators do well in implementing the pilot?
2. Are there any other insights you would like to share about the pilot?

## INTERVIEW PROTOCOL - SAP

### Opening Script

- Introduction to interviewer
- Purpose of the case study
- Access to data
- Structure of interview
- Do you have any questions so far?
- Consent to record

### Your role

First we will start with some role-specific questions:

1. How would you describe your role in the Early Readers Accelerators Pilot
  - a. In what ways did you interact with SAISD stakeholders?
  - b. In what ways did you interact with CGCS team members?
  - c. What type of activities did you lead or engage in throughout the project?

### Partnership with SAISD

1. How would you describe your organization's partnership with San Antonio ISD?
  - a. What went well in your organization's partnership with SAISD?
    - i. What conditions existed that led to these positive aspects of the partnership?
  - b. What were some challenges in your organization's partnership with SAISD?
    - i. What conditions existed that led to those challenges?
  - c. What suggestions do you have for an external organization partnering with a school district?

### ERA and District Literacy Insights

1. How would you describe the ERA Pilot?
  - a. How would you describe the core components (or principles) of Early Reading Accelerators from your perspective?
  - b. What does "success" look like for this pilot?
2. How would you describe early literacy practices in the district prior to the ERA pilot?
  - a. In general...
    - i. What teacher practices are essential to successful ERA implementation?
    - ii. In addition to teacher practice, what other conditions are essential to successful implement the ERA pilot?

### Perceptions

### Goals and Expectations

3. What were your goals for this pilot in SAISD?
  - a. Learning goals =
    - i. Student outcomes
    - ii. Student achievement
    - iii. Shifts in teacher practices and mindsets
  - b. To what extent were these goals met?

#### Successes and Challenges

4. What went well with the ERA pilot?
  - a. What are the factors that contributed to those successes?
  - b. When you think of the schools where implementation was strongest:
    - i. What are the factors that led to strong implementation in those school sites?
      1. What teacher, principal, characteristics led to strong implementation?
        - a. Principal
        - b. Teachers
        - c. Other stakeholders
      - ii. What shifts in teacher mindsets did you observe?
      - iii. What shifts in teacher practices did you observe?
5. What challenges existed with the ERA pilot?
  - a. What are the factors that contributed to those challenges?
6. When you think of schools who may have struggled a bit more with implementation:
  - a. What factors contributed to those challenges?
7. When you think of the components of the pilot (ongoing professional development, materials: read aloud project texts, foundational skills workbooks, lesson plans, school based leadership - principals & pilot leads, district planning and support)
  - a. Which of these components had the most positive impact? (yes can name multiple)
    - i. Why do you believe these components were the most impactful?
  - b. Which of these components were not as impactful?
    - i. Why do you believe these components were not as impactful?
      1. What would have made these components more impactful

#### Lessons Learned/Advice

8. What advice would you share for stakeholders who aspire to shift their early reading practices and positively impact student outcomes?
  - a. What are some best practices you would share with districts implementing Early Reading

Accelerators?

- b. What else should districts keep in mind when implementing ERA?
  - c. Is there anything you wish SAP had done differently?
9. In what ways do you believe the ERA pilot impacted the approach to literacy in the district?
- a. When reflecting on ELL in SAISD, what was unique about this context in comparison to ERA pilots in other districts?
  - b. What did SAISD do to make this pilot their own?

Partnership with CGCS

1. How would you describe your partnership with CGCS?
- a. What went well in your partnership with CGCS?
    - i. What conditions existed that led to these positive aspects of the partnership?
  - b. What were some opportunities for growth in your partnership?
    - i. What conditions existed that led to these growth areas in the partnership?
    - ii. *If necessary* Can you share an example?
  - c. What would you say are overall best practices when engaging with another non-district partner?

Is there anything else you would like to share about ERA, the pilot with SAISD, or your partnershi

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