



Read to be Ready Coaching Network Update

Review of Year One | 2016-17 School Year



Read to be Ready Coaching Network

Improving reading instruction in grades K–3 is a valuable investment and prepares students for a future of academic, personal, and professional success. Our goal in Tennessee is to have 75 percent of all third graders reading on grade level by 2025.

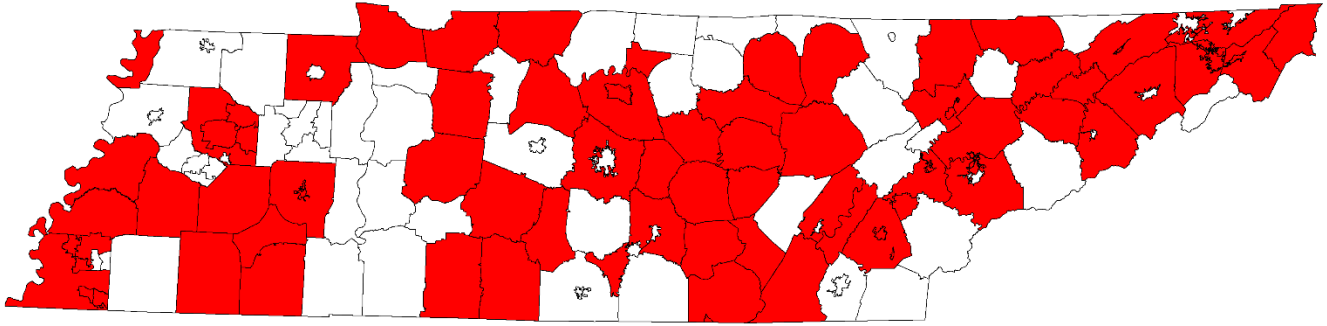
To achieve the dramatic academic growth we’re aiming for, schools and districts need a high-impact, sustainable plan of support that is proven to work. Sit-and-get workshops and one-size-fits-all curriculum sets are not sufficient in supporting the complex work of teaching students to read. Rather, teachers need a differentiated system of over-time support, rooted in our state’s academic standards. Research studies show that a positive and significant correlation exists between teachers who receive reading coaching and their students’ achievement gains. Furthermore, school and district reading coaches are able to provide the kind of ongoing, job-embedded professional support that is needed for continuous learning and sustained application. This type of support is only possible at the school or district level. That is why the department has committed to creating a new type of partnership with districts to support this work through the Read to be Ready coaching network.

In 2016, the first cohort of the Read to be Ready coaching network began the work of improving literacy instruction in K–3 classrooms across the state. Eighty-three districts are currently participating in the Read to be Ready (R2BR) coaching network. This document provides an overview of the progress made during the first year of work in the coaching network.

Structure



Fifteen reading coach consultants (RCCs) are providing training to more than 200 district coaches in 83 districts (see map on the subsequent page). These district coaches work with more than 2,500 K–3 reading teachers. Estimating 18 students per teacher, the network is currently influencing around 45,000 students. An additional 10 districts are also participating in the training but not in the full coaching model.



Participants

Coaches represent a variety of coaching and teaching backgrounds. One-third of coaches are in their first year of coaching, and another third have been on the job for less than five years. Most R2BR coaches have experience teaching grades K–3, and almost 40 percent have more than 15 years of experience in grades K–3. Teachers in the network also represent a variety of teaching backgrounds and years of experience.

CORE Region	2016-17 District Participants
First	Elizabethton Johnson City Johnson County Carter Cocke Greene Washington Hamblen Hawkins Sullivan Bristol Rogersville
Southeast	Hamilton McMinn Athens Meigs Grundy Rhea Sequatchie Etowah Marion
East	Knox Anderson Campbell Jefferson Grainger Loudon Lenoir City Sweetwater Oneida Claiborne Blount Alcoa Clinton
Upper Cumberland	Van Buren Warren Trousdale Fentress Putnam White Overton Cumberland Cannon

CORE Region	2016-17 District Participants
Mid Cumberland	Davidson Montgomery Wilson Rutherford Robertson Dickson Lebanon Stewart
South Central	Giles Coffee Moore Lawrence Marshall Hickman Maury Fayetteville
Southwest	Shelby Jackson-Madison Henderson Decatur Millington Collierville Germantown McNairy ASD Lauderdale Bartlett Lexington Chester Haywood Tipton Hardeman
Northwest	Milan Bradford Dyersburg Trenton Lake Gibson Special Henry

CORE Region	New Districts Joining the Coaching Network for the 2017-18 School Year
First	Kingsport
Southeast	Polk Dayton City
East	Oak Ridge Scott
Upper Cumberland	Smith Pickett Jackson Macon Clay
Mid Cumberland	Sumner
South Central	Wayne Bedford
Northwest	Benton Alamo Dyer

Focus for Year One

Training and support provided in the first year were focused on deepening both coach and teacher knowledge of interactive read alouds, shared reading practices, and the department's tenets of effective coaching. The guiding principles for effective interactive read aloud, shared reading, and the tenets of effective coaching are listed below.

Interactive Read Aloud:

- All students need regular practice with high-quality, content-rich, and appropriately complex texts that build knowledge and vocabulary. In the early grades, the primary method for engaging students with these kinds of texts is through read alouds.
- The primary focus of reading comprehension instruction is for students to gain a deep understanding of texts, their content and structure, and their vocabulary. Repeated interactive read alouds support this kind of deep thinking through scaffolded questioning and rigorous tasks.
- As a result of focused instruction and attentive engagement with texts, students build their historical, cultural, and disciplinary knowledge. This robust knowledge bank enables them to make connections across topics and settings and enhances their understanding of new ideas. Text sets that include above-grade-level texts as one text type build students' knowledge and vocabulary by focusing study around similar topics, themes, or ideas.

Shared Reading:

- Shared reading is a critical strategy for providing all students with access to grade-level texts and an opportunity to learn and practice grade-level standards in context.
- All students have opportunities to engage with high-quality texts that are on their grade level, regardless of their independent reading abilities.
- Educators thoughtfully sequence and scaffold repeated close readings of the text, providing appropriately differentiated support to all students.
- There is an emphasis on the integration of standards; phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, language, and comprehension standards can and should all be taught through shared reading.
- There should be a strategic gradual release of the thinking responsibility to students, with teachers providing more supports and scaffolding at the beginning and students taking more ownership of thinking, application, and problem solving as their comprehension builds.

Tenets of Effective Coaching:

- Collaboration between the coach and teacher supports the development of a reciprocal relationship.
- Teachers are the final decision makers. The coaching process should surface the best ideas for implementation.
- Reflective practices enhance the ability to identify strengths, opportunities for growth, and next steps of action.
- Being vulnerable, open to modeling, embracing team teaching, and trying new practices allows space for new learning to occur.

Progress Monitoring and Evaluation

To drive continuous improvement in the training and support provided to district coaches and teachers, the department is conducting ongoing progress monitoring and evaluation of the coaching network. We are currently monitoring progress through observations and surveys and plan to analyze change in teachers' instructional practices using TEAM data as well as state assessment data annually.

Observations

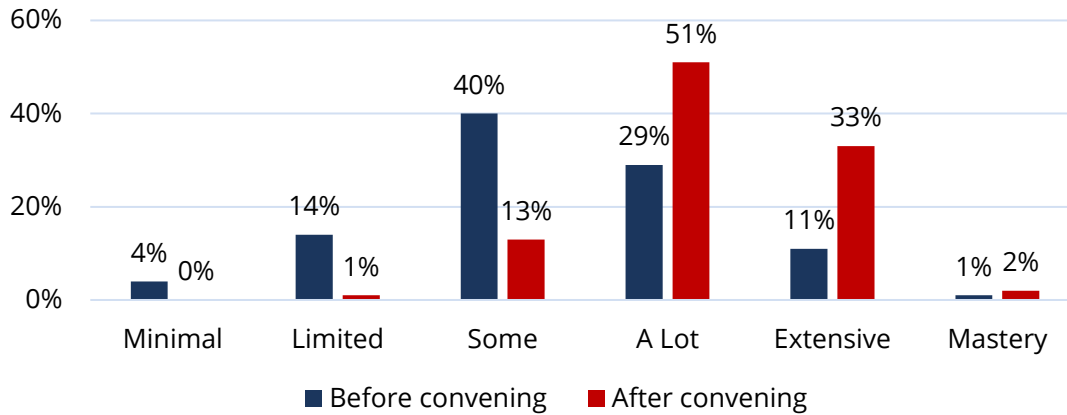
The department is partnering with TNTP, a non-profit consultancy with expertise in literacy instructional practices, to support the progress monitoring of the R2BR coaching network and to build capacity of CORE regional office staff to conduct early literacy observations. A subsample of our R2BR coaching network schools is participating in specific literacy observations four times over three years. After the initial round of baseline observations in the fall of 2016, TNTP noted a 30 percent increase in the frequency of lessons focused on comprehension compared to observations conducted in 2015. They also recommended opportunities for growth, including standards alignment, questioning, and teaching vocabulary in a reading context. More details about the findings from the observations can be found in the [Building the Framework](#) report released in February, 2017. The report also features a specific example of how Coffee County is improving instruction through their involvement in the coaching network.

Surveys

In addition to observations, the department has administered surveys to measure satisfaction with trainings and coach support (RCC coach support for district coaches as well as district coach support for teachers), coaching practices and interactions, literacy, and pedagogical content knowledge. The surveys measure content knowledge of both coaches and teachers through depictions of interactive read aloud and shared reading lessons, followed by questions mapped to key pedagogical concepts such as questioning, vocabulary, and standards alignment. Pre- and post-surveys assess growth of coaches and teachers in the focus areas. Coaches in the network are also asked to submit monthly reflections on the work.

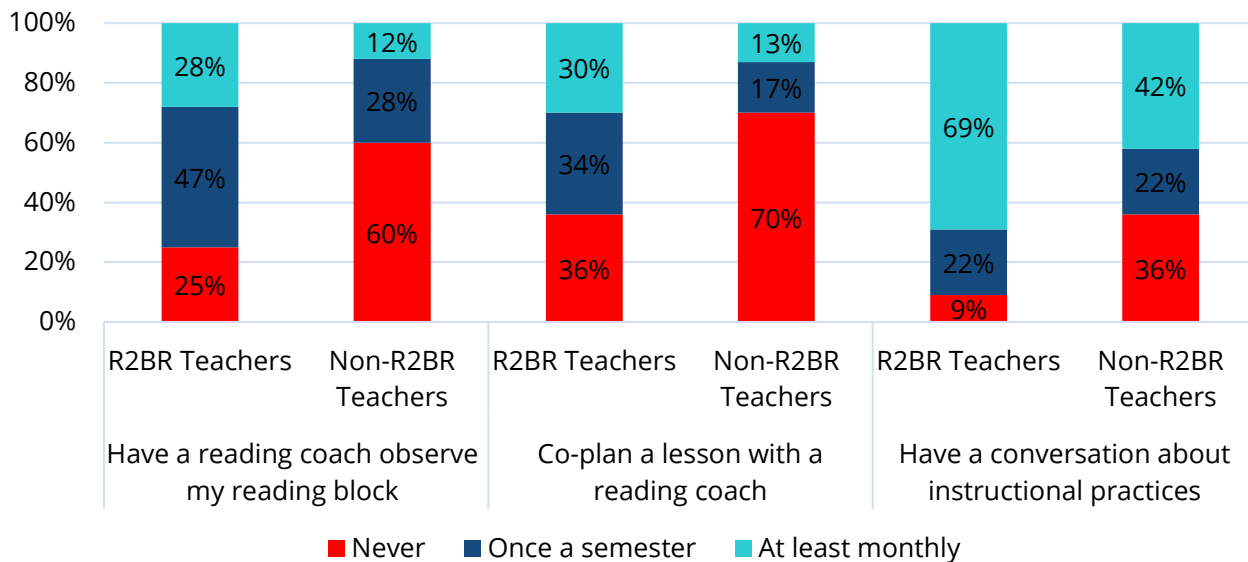
Coaches have been overwhelmingly positive in their feedback on the trainings and ongoing support from their RCCs. On satisfaction surveys following fall and winter convenings, 93 percent of coaches noted that they received information and resources that will be useful for teachers that they are coaching. Coaches also reported that their RCC was a valuable resource in supporting their work. Eighty-six percent of coaches reported that they had extensive or mastery-level knowledge of coaching following the latest convening session.

Rate your knowledge and understanding of coaching . . .



Regarding coach interactions, a majority of teachers in the network reported receiving critical supports from their R2BR coach at least once a month, including planning conversations, reflective conversations, and professional development. These same teachers overwhelmingly reported that the support they received has been very useful, and 92 percent report that working with their coach is improving their teaching. Furthermore, using data from the Tennessee Educator Survey administered in the spring of 2017, we see that K-3 reading teachers working with a R2BR coach were much more likely to report receiving support than K-3 reading teachers not participating in the coaching network.

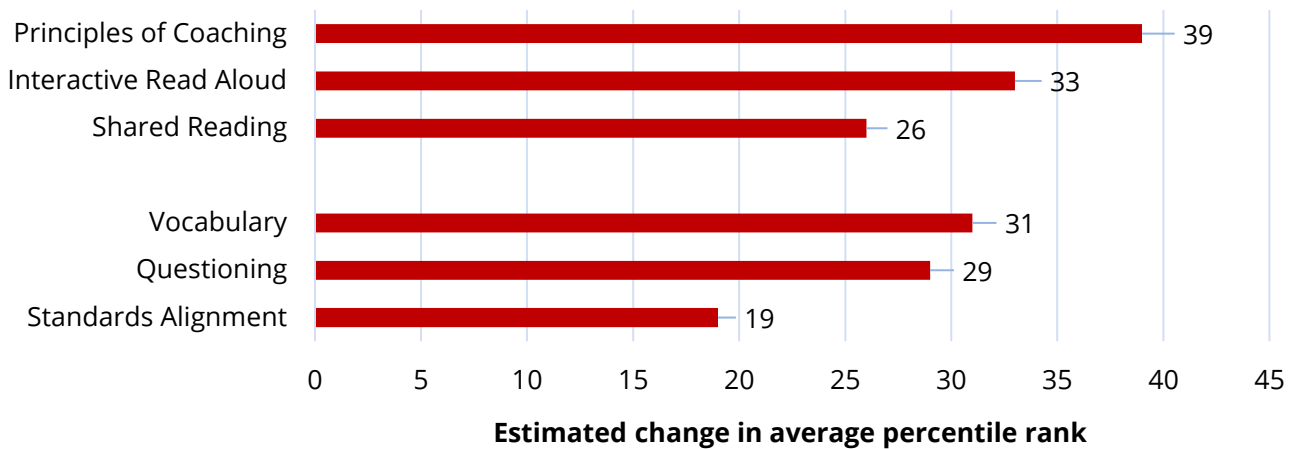
Please indicate the frequency with which you engage in each of the following activities with a reading coach.



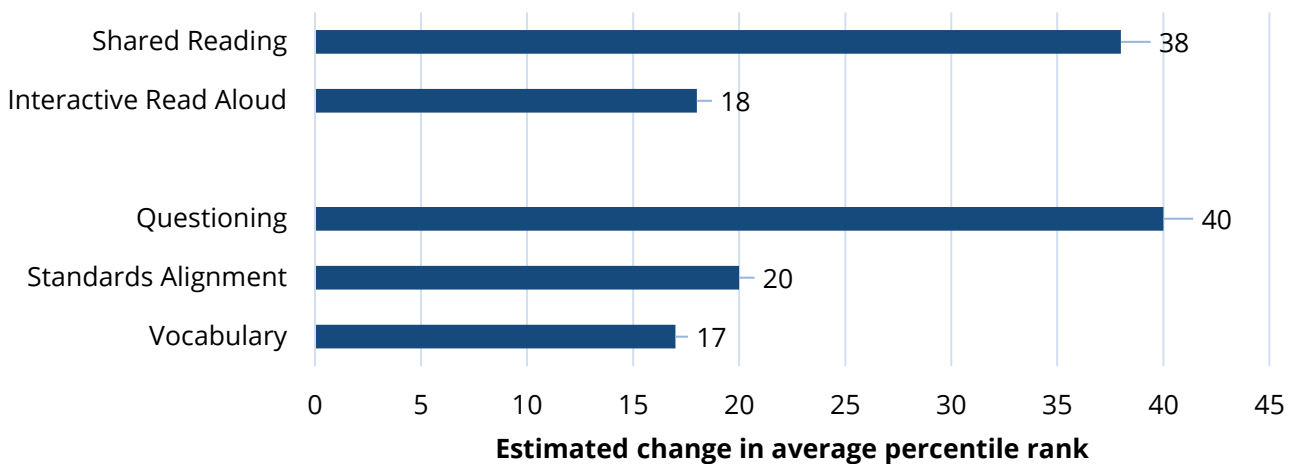
Pre-and post-surveys regarding coach and teacher content knowledge show substantive growth in both coaches and teachers in the inaugural year of the network. Coaches and teachers increased their

overall content knowledge of planning and implementation of interactive read aloud and shared reading lessons. The growth coaches saw in their knowledge of standards alignment, questioning, and vocabulary equated to an average of 17, 29, and 31 percentiles respectively. Growth in understanding of shared reading grew by an average of 26 percent. Interactive read aloud content knowledge grew by 33 percentiles. Coaches also increased their understanding of coaching principles, such as facilitating professional learning, reflective conversations, and the coaching framework by an average of 39 percent. On the post-assessment, teacher content knowledge scores were also higher on average than on the pre-assessment, with the largest difference (40 percent) occurring in the concept of questioning.

Average Content Knowledge Growth for Coaches



Average Content Knowledge Growth for Teachers

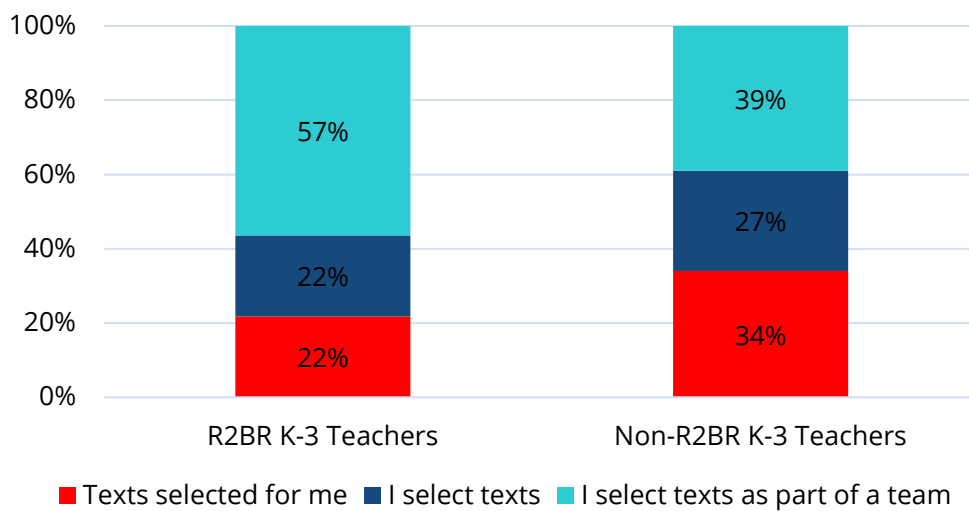


As part of our efforts to continuously improve the coaching network, we also solicited feedback from district leaders and principals and looked at the alignment of coach and teacher reports. Coaches reported that a significant barrier to their work was too many duties in addition to their coaching work. In fact, 83 percent of coaches reported that this was either a barrier or a significant barrier to success,

while only 21 percent of principals noted this as a barrier. Several teachers also noted this as a barrier in their survey comments. For example, one teacher noted, “My Read to be Ready coach is stretched thin with all that she has to do: RTI² data, instructional coach, and Read to be Ready coach. I wish she could concentrate more on Read to be Ready.”

The largest barrier identified by principals was teachers not having enough time to plan, which coaches also overwhelmingly noted as a concern. Teachers also shared this frustration in their comments. However, a few teachers noted that opportunities to plan collaboratively were beneficial. One teacher commented, “I really liked the planning with grade-level teachers in our cohort. The collaboration and discussion about effective teaching activities were very helpful.” Data from the Tennessee Educator Survey also indicated that a primary benefit of participating in the coaching network for teachers has been around collaboration. Teachers receiving R2BR coaching were more likely to note selecting texts as part of a team. They were also more likely to note developing daily tasks in collaboration with other teachers.

Do you select the texts that your students will read as part of an instructional unit/text set?



Feedback provided on these surveys also indicated that coaches want additional opportunities to collaborate with one another and for the department to consider ways to break learning into smaller segments or provide more time to engage in the material before they redeliver to teachers. The R2BR coaching network team is planning to use this feedback to inform the overall plan for the next two years of the network. Through the survey work, we also identified areas in which coach and teacher content knowledge did not grow substantially, including comprehension strategies and building appropriately complex text sets.

Final Thoughts

In year one of the R2BR coaching network, educators across the state have made tremendous growth in their content knowledge, instructional practices, and coaching skills. The R2BR coaching network is a critical piece of the department's broader efforts to achieve at least 75 percent reading proficiency among third graders by 2025. Each district's participation is vital to making the instructional shifts needed to reach this goal.

"My goal is to help teachers make their literacy block full of purposeful learning opportunities for all of their students."

—R2BR District Coach

"I want to continue to add to my coaching 'toolbox.' I hope to be a resource to my teachers for ideas and be a good thinking partner in my school. I would like to increase the rigor of reading in my district."

—R2BR District Coach

"As a R2BR coach, I am working FOR my teachers. I want to be their go-to source for support as they transition to the read aloud techniques. I hope that they see me as a partner, not a supervisor. I hope that they know they can confide in me when they are feeling full of doubts. I love when they share their successes."

—R2BR District Coach

"I am nearing retirement (within the next five years). I feel that in my career I have made a positive difference in the lives of children. My goal is to make more difference in the last five years than I was able to make in the first 30. R2BR is a tool to achieve that goal."

—R2BR District Coach

"The most helpful part of the R2BR network is my [reading coach consultant]. She has been an invaluable resource, and my success as part of this network has been in large part due to her. [My RCC's] expertise and ability to articulate goals and ideas has advanced my understanding of quality reading instruction. Through our conversations, she has helped me narrow my focus and provide meaningful job-embedded support...Maybe most importantly, she has been an ever-constant, positive guide through a year of newness...I know [Read to be Ready] success at my school is a direct result of [my RCC's] support. It would not have happened without her."

—R2BR District Coach