

Appendix E: Principal Interview Protocol and Consent Form

Striving Readers Implementation Evaluation

Principal Interview Protocol

Interviewer _____ Interviewee ID# _____

Site _____ Date/Time _____

Introduction

Thank you for your willingness to participate in this interview about the Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy (SRCL) Program. In this study, we're interested in obtaining a sense of the nature of literacy instruction across various grades at your school. We're interested in the resources teachers use for reading and writing instruction, their classroom practices, and the larger building-level approach to literacy. I'd like to ask you some questions to get your perspective about literacy instruction. Is that all right?

Key points to convey to the respondent:

- This is a study conducted by American Institutes for Research (AIR)/Abt Associates/IRG on behalf of the U.S. Department of Education. The purpose of the study is to understand the implementation of the SRCL grant program at the state, district, school, and classroom levels.
- **This is not a compliance study; our purpose is solely to provide policymakers and the general public with insight regarding local experiences with SRCL.**
- We are conducting site visits to SRCL schools in a subset of subgrantees. Also, we are administering surveys of district officials, school principals, and teachers to collect data from a wider range of respondents. In addition to the school visits and surveys, our team is reviewing state and district documents available to guide the implementation of the SRCL program for subgrantees and schools.
- The main purpose of this interview is to enable you to share your perspectives and experiences with policymakers as they continue to refine policy and technical assistance on important issues related to literacy. The study results will be discussed in a final report that will be available to the public.
- We will not include any information in our public reporting that identifies your district or school. However, officials at the U.S. Department of Education will know that districts in your state participated in this study.
- We know that you are very busy, and we appreciate your time. We anticipate that this interview will take approximately 30 minutes.
- We would like to record this conversation so that we can be sure we have an accurate record of our conversation. We will not share this recording with anyone outside the research team, and we will delete the recording after the final report is complete. Is that okay with you?
- You may discontinue your participation in this interview at any time. If we touch on topics that you believe to be sensitive for any reason, please bring that to our attention, and we will not include these comments either in public reporting or in discussions with the U.S. Department of Education.

Role and Previous Education-related Experience

1. How many years have you been a principal at this school? At other schools? What was your experience in education prior to becoming a principal?
2. Can you describe your role as a leader with respect to literacy instruction at your school?

Approach to Program or Strategy and Implementation

3. Can you describe your school's literacy programming and practices? Are there specific areas of literacy that are the focus at different grades/ages?
4. When students enter this school, how prepared are they for on-grade-level instruction in reading and writing? Probe:
 - IF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL: How common is it that students have already experienced early education programs prior to kindergarten? In your opinion, do they enter ready for kindergarten-level literacy instruction? What are the gaps or struggles with acquiring proficiency in literacy that students experience? To what degree does your school participate in literacy activities that promote alignment from early childhood through the early grades?
 - IF MIDDLE SCHOOL: In your opinion, do students enter from elementary schools ready for middle-grade-level literacy or English Language Arts instruction? What are the gaps or struggles with acquiring proficiency in reading and/or literacy as they progress through the grades?
 - IF HIGH SCHOOL: In your opinion, do students enter from middle schools ready for high-school-level literacy demands and English Language Arts instruction? What are the gaps or struggles with acquiring proficiency in reading and/or literacy as they progress through the grades? Will they be adequately prepared to meet literacy demands as they leave secondary school?
5. To what degree do teachers draw upon specific interventions, programs, and curricula for literacy instruction?
 - What are these programs? Are these the same as teachers were using last year, or are they associated with the SRCL grant?
 - Do you feel like these resources are sufficient and age-appropriate?
 - How well do teachers use these resources? Have they received the program development and training needed to use the programs the way that they are intended?

Differentiated Instruction

6. Do teachers in this school use formative assessments to inform their reading instruction?
7. To what degree are assessments used to determine students' needs for different types of reading instruction or remediation?
 - Do you have a sense of how well teachers use the information from the assessments?

SRCL Program in the School

8. To what degree are you familiar with your school's use of SRCL funds?
 - IF ANSWER INDICATES FAMILIARITY: What did that grant pay for in terms of reading programs, interventions, or practices? How did your school choose the SRCL-funded programs, interventions, or practices?
 - How successful have these been in terms of meeting student needs? Were there any problems or challenges with the SRCL-funded programs, interventions, or practices?
9. Does your district have an overarching literacy plan (for the district)?
 - IF ANSWER INDICATES FAMILIARITY: To what degree do principals help develop that plan? Do principals obtain close knowledge of the literacy plan? What does the plan cover and focus on? How often is the plan updated? In what ways are the goals of the district literacy plan different or similar to your school goals?
 - IF RELEVANT: In what ways does that plan play a role with SRCL funding or planning?
10. What is your opinion of the effectiveness of the school's overall approach to literacy in terms of being comprehensive and meeting student needs? What are the gaps or challenges with being comprehensive?

Striving Readers Implementation Evaluation Interview: Informed Consent

Purpose

American Institutes for Research (AIR) is the independent and external evaluator contracted by the U.S. Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences (IES) to conduct the Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy (SRCL) program evaluation. The purpose of this study is to provide information to policymakers, administrators, and educators regarding the following: grant award procedures, technical assistance, continuous improvement procedures, and literacy interventions at the school level.

In an effort to gather insight about SRCL implementation, we are administering surveys, conducting interviews, and observing classrooms. Online surveys will be administered to all SRCL subgrantees, and a sample of principals and teachers in SRCL-funded schools. We will also conduct interviews with state-level grantee administrators and a sample of principals, reading specialists, and teachers. Interviews will focus on the award process, literacy interventions' evidence of effectiveness, strategies for serving the largest number of students, technical assistance from states and districts, professional development plans, and use of assessments to identify student needs, inform instruction, and monitor progress.

Risks and Discomfort

There are no anticipated or known risks in participating in this evaluation. Your responses will have no adverse effect on your position in any way and your participation is voluntary. **This is NOT an evaluation of you personally but an attempt to understand how states, districts, and schools implement the SRCL literacy initiative.** If there is any question that you do not want to answer or you feel uncomfortable about, please let me know and we can skip it.

Benefits

Your participation in the evaluation will contribute to an understanding of the implementation processes associated with a large-scale SRCL initiative. Findings from the interviews will help policymakers and educators to improve the support of federal grant programs and literacy instruction.

Confidentiality

We will keep the information you share during this interview confidential and we will not identify you, your school, or your district in any reports or to anyone outside the research team. Your responses are protected from disclosure by federal statute (P.L. 107-279, Title I, Part E, Sec.183). All responses that relate to or describe identifiable characteristics of individuals may be used only for statistical purposes and may not be disclosed, or used, in identifiable form for any other purposes, unless otherwise compelled by law. All documents or audio recordings from this interview will be kept in secure data files to be accessed only by staff on the research team. Audio recordings will be kept until the end of the project and then permanently deleted. In public reports, we may include quotes from interviews but we will not identify any respondents and will mask any potentially identifying details.

Voluntary participation

Your participation is entirely voluntary. Your invitation to participate in this interview does not represent an obligation to participate. We value your insight and hope you will agree to an interview. However, if you do not want to participate, please let Kerstin Le Floch (klefloch@air.org) know as soon as possible.

More Information

If you would like more information about this evaluation, you may contact the Project Director, Jessica Heppen at AIR at 202-403-5488 or at jheppen@air.org. For questions regarding your rights as a subject participating in this research, please contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at IRBChair@air.org or toll free at 1-800-634-0797.

Informed Consent

I have read the above information. I have asked questions and received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Print Name: _____

Position: _____

State/District/School: _____