

Appendix A2: Toolkit Evaluation Project Information Sheet for Teachers and Professional Learning Community Facilitators

Practice Guides

The U.S. Department of Education has supported the creation of professional development resources for teachers on a wide range of instructional topics (such as practice guides). Practice guides are developed by teams of content experts and researchers who reviewed the available evidence and research studies, and each practice guide shares evidence-based recommendations related to the topic of that practice guide. The PRISMS Toolkit will focus on the [Providing Reading Interventions for Students in Grades 4–9 Educator's Practice Guide](#).

Regional Educational Laboratory (REL) Southwest

The American Institutes for Research (AIR) was awarded the federal REL Southwest contract to serve educators and policymakers across the Southwest region. REL program staff collaborate with educators and policymakers nationwide in efforts to support decisionmaking about education policies, programs, and practices with a focus on learner outcomes.

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PRISMS Toolkit

REL Southwest is developing a toolkit with resources that supports the implementation of an effective grade 6–8 literacy intervention based on the evidence-based recommendations in the *Providing Reading Interventions for Students in Grades 4–9 Educator's Practice Guide*. The Providing Reading Interventions for Students in Middle School (PRISMS) Toolkit includes resources for teachers, school leaders, and literacy leaders to understand all four recommendations from the practice guide and how to implement those recommendations.

- The toolkit includes resources for school leaders, professional learning community (PLC) facilitators, and literacy leaders, including checklists, walk-through tools, infographics, manuals, and materials to support the implementation of the toolkit at the school or district level.
- The toolkit also includes resources for grade 6–8 reading teachers to support their understanding and implementation of best practices in literacy intervention, including the following:
 - Teacher fidelity of implementation tool
 - Two online professional learning modules
 - Visual scaffolds
 - PLC activities
 - Related resources

Evaluation overview

REL Southwest is conducting an evaluation to rigorously test the efficacy of the toolkit in improving teacher self-efficacy and practices for literacy intervention as well as student learning outcomes in grade 6–8 literacy.

The evaluation will be implemented as a field trial in the 2025/26 school year. Schools that sign up for participation are vetted for eligibility. Eligible schools are randomly selected for participation and randomly assigned to the treatment or comparison group. Schools assigned to the treatment group will receive the toolkit in 2025/26, and schools assigned to the comparison group will receive the toolkit in 2026/27 when it becomes publicly available. Control schools will also receive a stipend of \$2500 for facilitating participation in the data collection. This approach allows us to build rigorous evidence on the impacts of the project while ultimately delivering the toolkit to all participating schools.

- Schools are eligible to participate in the evaluation if they:
 - Serve students in grades 6–8 and are willing to participate in an RCT in which schools assigned to the control condition will not have access to the toolkit during the evaluation period.
 - Leverage a districtwide, valid, and reliable universal screener administered at beginning-, middle-, and end-of-year in reading for students in grades 6–8 to identify students in need of reading intervention and to measure student outcomes for the study (to enable comparisons between the treatment and control schools).
 - Have a districtwide approach (who delivers the intervention, for how long, and with what frequency) to providing reading interventions to students.
 - Are not already providing districtwide professional development or support in grade 6–8 about providing reading interventions that is of the same type and level of intensity as that being provided by the toolkit (training via online modules followed by monthly professional learning communities and school leader walkthroughs).

Data collection for *all* schools

- Student extant data (student demographic and assessment scores from 2025/26 for all grade 6–8 students)
- Teacher extant data (demographic and background for grade 6–8 English language arts [ELA] and reading intervention teachers)
- Teachers pre- and postsurveys (grade 6–8 ELA and reading intervention teachers)
- Teacher instructional logs
- School leader checklists survey (**treatment only**)
- PLC facilitator checklists (**treatment only**)
- Interviews with selected teachers and leaders (**treatment only**)
- **The research team will protect the confidentiality of all data collected for the study and will use it for research purposes only.**

Important notice

Although individual, school, and district project participation and data submission are strictly voluntary, and participants may withdraw from the project at any time, attrition could negatively affect the impact results of the study. Therefore, we strongly encourage district leaders, principals, and grade 6–8 ELA and reading intervention teachers to make an informed decision before submitting an agreement to participate.

More information

Feel free to contact the project's principal investigator, Jill Bowdon, at jbowdon@air.org , with any questions you might have. The project team also is available to set up an online conference with any interested parties to describe the project and answer questions.