

Appendix A: Recruitment Materials

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Appendix A1 – Preliminary Letters to District Leaders, School Leaders, and Teachers

Template for Letter from State to District Leaders (to be edited as they see fit)

Dear [District Leader],

Arizona is doing groundbreaking work on improving reading under the Move On When Reading initiative. To support this effort, the Regional Educational Laboratory (REL) West has developed a toolkit: “Supporting Early Reading Comprehension with Teacher Study Groups: A Comprehensive Toolkit for the What Works Clearinghouse Practice Guide Improving Reading Comprehension in Kindergarten through 3rd Grade.” The Arizona Department of Education agreed to be the site for the Institute of Education Sciences’ study on the toolkit impact. Selected schools in Arizona will have advance access to this free toolkit to help teachers with reading instruction. The toolkit is designed to deepen teachers’ knowledge of the evidence-based strategies that work to improve reading comprehension outcomes, use that knowledge to improve teachers’ practice for teaching K–3 reading comprehension, and ultimately improve K–3 student reading comprehension outcomes. I would like to invite your district to participate in this study.

The RAND Corporation, which is conducting the study, will invite staff to complete online surveys, logs, or interviews (depending on staff role) throughout the course of this project, and receive gift cards for participating. Staff will receive additional details about data collection and surveys in a future communication.

Schools in your district randomly assigned to the treatment group will get access to the toolkit prior to public release—and extra supports for implementation. Teachers and school leaders whose schools are assigned to the control group will receive access to the toolkit one year later, and they will also be compensated \$2,500 for their participation in the study.

We hope we have piqued your interest, and you will consider taking this opportunity. Please look for communication in the next day or two from RAND. For more information regarding the study, please contact Dr. Kata Mihaly, Principal Investigator, RAND Corporation, at kmihaly@rand.org or 703-413-1100, x5393.

Sincerely,

[ADE Representative]

Template for Letter from District Leaders to School Leaders (to be edited as they see fit)

Dear [School Leader],

Arizona is doing groundbreaking work on improving reading under the Move On When Reading initiative. To support this effort, the Regional Educational Laboratory (REL) West has developed a toolkit: “Supporting Early Reading Comprehension with Teacher Study Groups: A Comprehensive Toolkit for the What Works Clearinghouse Practice Guide Improving Reading Comprehension in Kindergarten through 3rd Grade.” The Arizona Department of Education agreed to be the site for the Institute of Education Sciences’ study on the toolkit impact.

Selected schools in Arizona will have advance access to a new toolkit to help teachers with reading instruction: “Supporting Early Reading Comprehension with Teacher Study Groups: A Comprehensive Toolkit for the What Works Clearinghouse Practice Guide Improving Reading Comprehension in Kindergarten through 3rd Grade.” The toolkit is designed to deepen teachers’ knowledge of the evidence-based strategies that work to improve reading comprehension outcomes, use that knowledge to improve teachers’ practice for teaching K–3 reading comprehension, and ultimately improve K–3 student reading comprehension outcomes.

Our district has been invited to participate in the study. I have agreed that [District Name] may participate in this study, and hope that your school will be a part of this effort.

If [School Name] participates, our school may be randomly selected to allow your K–3 staff who teach reading to get early access to the toolkit and support for a facilitator to help teachers learn the practices. Teachers will be asked to complete surveys and practice logs describing their experiences and learnings, and school leaders—you and your facilitator—will be asked to complete surveys about implementation. Each activity will take no more than 20 minutes, and staff will receive gift cards for participating in the study. Your school may also be randomly selected to not receive early access to the toolkit, in which case your school will be compensated \$2,500 for participating in the study and receive access to the toolkit one year later. Study participation would involve K–3 reading teachers completing surveys and practice logs and you or another school leader completing surveys about school policies. All staff completing surveys or logs will receive gift cards for participating in the study.

Please look for an email in the next day or so from RAND, in which they will ask to talk with you more about this opportunity. For more information regarding the study, please contact Dr. Kata Mihaly, Principal Investigator, RAND Corporation, at kmihaly@rand.org or 703-413-1100, x5393.

Sincerely,

[District Leader]

Template for Letter from School Leaders to Staff (to be edited as they see fit)

Dear [Teacher],

Arizona is doing groundbreaking work on improving reading under the Move On When Reading initiative. To support this effort, the Regional Educational Laboratory (REL) West has developed a toolkit: "Supporting Early Reading Comprehension with Teacher Study Groups: A Comprehensive Toolkit for the What Works Clearinghouse Practice Guide Improving Reading Comprehension in Kindergarten through 3rd Grade." The Arizona Department of Education agreed to be the site for the Institute of Education Sciences' study on the toolkit impact, pending participation by Arizona districts and schools.

I have agreed that [our school] may participate in a study of the toolkit. The toolkit is designed to deepen teachers' knowledge of the evidence-based strategies that work to improve reading comprehension outcomes, use that knowledge to improve teachers' practice for teaching K-3 reading comprehension, and ultimately improve K-3 student reading comprehension outcomes. I hope that you will be a part of this effort.

School staff will be invited to complete online surveys throughout the course of this evaluation and receive gift cards for participating. If our school is randomly selected to implement the toolkit, then K-3 reading teachers will be asked to participate in professional development activities. Staff will receive additional details about data collection and surveys in a future communication. Staff will, of course, be compensated for their engagement as an added benefit to receiving the supports from the toolkit team.

Please look for an email in the next day or so from RAND, in which they will ask to talk with you more about this opportunity. For more information regarding the study, please contact Dr. Kata Mihaly, Principal Investigator, RAND Corporation, at kmihaly@rand.org or 703-413-1100, x5393.

Sincerely,

[School Leader]

Appendix A2 – District Recruitment Emails and Phone Call Talking Points

District Recruitment Email

Subject: Invitation to participate in REL West toolkit evaluation study

Dear [District Leader],

The U.S. Department of Education's [Regional Educational Laboratory \(REL\) West](#) is developing a toolkit to help teachers understand and use evidence-based instructional practices for teaching reading comprehension in grades K–3, “Supporting Early Reading Comprehension with Teacher Study Groups: A Comprehensive Toolkit for the What Works Clearinghouse Practice Guide Improving Reading Comprehension in Kindergarten through 3rd Grade.”

A select group of districts in Arizona will have the opportunity to try the toolkit in advance of public release. The RAND Corporation research team will work with those districts to study the impact of this toolkit. Specifically, the study will examine whether the use of the toolkit improves students' reading comprehension in grades K–3 for all students and for Hispanic/Latinx students specifically, whether the toolkit improves teachers' knowledge and use of evidence-based practices for improving reading comprehension, how the toolkit is implemented in schools, and what is the cost effectiveness of using the toolkit. **Will you consider being part of this important work?**

We are inviting [District Name] to participate in this important work because of your district's commitment to strong reading instruction. ADE has identified [District Name] as a district that would appreciate the opportunity to use this new tool and would be a good fit for the study. If you choose to take part, we hope that you would help us invite a sample of your schools to participate. Overall, 70 elementary schools in six Arizona districts will participate in the study. Schools will be randomly assigned to receive the toolkit supports in the first wave (treatment schools) or the second wave (control schools). Both groups of schools will be asked to participate in study data collection, including teacher instructional logs, teacher surveys, school leader and facilitator surveys, and district leader interviews. Teachers and school leaders participating in data collection will receive gift cards.

We have attached a list of Frequently Asked Questions to help answer your immediate questions. Could we set up a time to discuss the toolkit further and answer any other questions you may have? If we don't hear from you by [date], we'll give you a call to follow up.

Kata Mihaly
Study Principal Investigator

District Recruitment Follow-Up Email

Subject: Reminder: Invitation to participate in REL West toolkit evaluation study

Dear [District Leader],

Recently, you received an email asking you to be a part of a study under the Regional Educational Laboratory West (REL West) on the efficacy of their upcoming toolkit, “Supporting Early Reading Comprehension with Teacher Study Groups: A Comprehensive Toolkit for the What Works Clearinghouse Practice Guide Improving Reading Comprehension in Kindergarten through 3rd Grade,” which will be evaluated by the RAND Corporation.

We are inviting [District Name] to participate in this important work because, based on conversations with ADE, this project seems a good fit for your district's priorities. If you choose to take part, we hope that you would help us invite a sample of your schools to participate—the choice would be theirs. Overall, the study will include 70 elementary schools in six districts in Arizona to participate in the study. Schools will be randomly assigned to receive the toolkit supports in the first wave (treatment schools) or the second wave (control schools). Both groups of schools will be asked to participate in study data collection, including teacher instructional logs, teacher implementation surveys, teacher knowledge tests, school leader and facilitator surveys, and district leader interviews. Teachers and school leaders participating in data collection will receive gift cards.

We have attached a list of Frequently Asked Questions. Could we set up a time to discuss the toolkit further and answer any other questions you may have? If we don't hear from you by [date], we'll give you a call to follow up.

Kata Mihaly
Study Principal Investigator

Talking Points for District Recruitment Call

- Introduction
 - Detailed description of toolkit
 - Clarify RAND's role in toolkit evaluation
- Discuss district's current approach to beginning reading comprehension instruction
 - School or district selects curriculum
 - Curriculum/a in place
 - Anticipated changes to curriculum/a
- Discuss district's current and recent initiatives to improve beginning reading comprehension
 - Initiatives that are currently in place or planned for the next two years
 - Past experiences and potential staff predispositions to using the toolkit
 - Anticipated relationship between the toolkit and current or planned initiatives
- Review intervention and study
 - Length of study
 - Breakdown of benefits for school, teachers, and students
- Questions?
- Request to participate
 - Fit between district direction and toolkit, as perceived by district and study leaders
 - Overview of district leader interviews
 - Incentives
- Next steps
 - Follow-up calls if needed to complete the above points and to address next steps
 - Ask for help in reaching out to principals—send letter to principals and convene information session at which we'll speak
 - District research application if necessary
 - Memo of understanding if necessary (e.g., stipend for facilitators, agreement to share district data)
 - Data management plan
 - Other

Appendix A3 – School Leader Recruitment Emails, Phone Call Talking Points, and Agendas for Information Session and Webinar
School Leader Recruitment Email

Subject: Invitation to participate in REL West toolkit evaluation study

Dear [School Leader],

The U.S. Department of Education’s Regional Educational Laboratory West (REL West) is developing a toolkit to help teachers understand and use evidence-based instructional practices for teaching reading comprehension in grades K–3, “Supporting Early Reading Comprehension with Teacher Study Groups: A Comprehensive Toolkit for the What Works Clearinghouse Practice Guide Improving Reading Comprehension in Kindergarten through 3rd Grade.”

A select group of schools in Arizona will have the opportunity to try the toolkit in advance of public release. The RAND Corporation research team will work with those schools to study the impact of this toolkit. Specifically, the study will examine whether the use of the toolkit improves students’ reading comprehension in grades K–3 for all students and, for Hispanic/Latinx students specifically, whether the toolkit improves teachers’ knowledge and use of evidence-based practices for improving reading comprehension, how the toolkit is implemented in schools, and what is the cost effectiveness of using the toolkit. **Will you consider being part of this important work?**

We are inviting [School Name] to participate in this important work because the toolkit appears to fit your school’s priorities. The choice to participate in this study is yours to make, but we do hope that you will accept. Overall, the study will include 70 elementary schools in six districts in Arizona to participate in the study. Schools will be randomly assigned to receive the toolkit supports in the first wave (treatment schools) or the second wave (control schools). Both groups of schools will be asked to participate in study data collection, including teacher instructional logs, teacher implementation surveys, teacher knowledge tests, school leader and facilitator surveys, and district leader interviews. Teachers and school leaders participating in data collection will receive gift cards.

We have attached a list of Frequently Asked Questions, but could we set up a time to discuss the toolkit further and answer any other questions you may have? If we don’t hear from you by [date], we’ll give you a call to follow up.

Kata Mihaly
Study Principal Investigator

School Leader Recruitment Follow-Up Email

Subject: Reminder: Invitation to participate in REL West toolkit evaluation study

Dear [School Leader],

Recently you received an email asking you to be a part of a study under The Regional Educational Laboratory West (REL West) on the efficacy of their toolkit, "Supporting Early Reading Comprehension with Teacher Study Groups: A Comprehensive Toolkit for the What Works Clearinghouse Practice Guide Improving Reading Comprehension in Kindergarten through 3rd Grade," as evaluated by the RAND Corporation. **Will you consider being a part of this important work?**

We are inviting [School Name] to participate in this important work because the toolkit appears to fit your school's priorities. The choice to participate in this study is yours to make, but we do hope you will accept. Overall, the study will include 70 elementary schools in six districts in Arizona to participate in the study. Schools will be randomly assigned to receive the toolkit supports in the first wave (treatment schools) or the second wave (control schools). Both groups of schools will be asked to participate in study data collection, including teacher instructional logs, teacher implementation surveys, teacher knowledge tests, school leader and facilitator surveys, and district leader interviews. Teachers and school leaders participating in data collection will receive gift cards.

We have attached a list of Frequently Asked Questions. Could we set up a time to discuss the toolkit further and answer any other questions you may have? If we don't hear from you by [date], we'll give you a call to follow up.

Kata Mihaly
Study Principal Investigator

School Leader Recruitment Information Session Agenda

- Introduction by district leadership
- Toolkit demonstration
- Q&A about toolkit
- Overview of study
- Q&A about study
- Next steps: individual follow-up calls

Talking Points for School Leader Recruitment Call

- Introduction
 - o Detailed description of toolkit
 - o Clarify RAND's role in toolkit evaluation
- Review intervention and study
 - o Length of study
 - o Breakdown of benefits for school, teachers, and students
- Questions?
- Request to participate
 - o Overview of three survey rounds
 - o Incentives
- Next steps
 - o Follow-up calls if needed
 - o Ask for help in reaching out to teachers—send letter to teachers and convene information session at which we'll speak
 - o District research application if necessary
 - o Other

Cross-School Informational Webinar Agenda

- Introduction by district leader
- Toolkit demonstration
- Overview of study
- Next steps: school-level meetings

School Staff Q&A Meeting Agenda

- Introduction by school principal
- Overview of toolkit
- Overview of study
- Benefits of and responsibilities of participation
- Timeline
- Q&A
- Next steps

Appendix A4 – Teacher Recruitment Emails
Teacher Recruitment Email

Subject: Invitation to participate in REL West toolkit evaluation study

Dear [Teacher],

The U.S. Department of Education’s Regional Educational Laboratory West (REL West) is developing a toolkit to help teachers understand and use evidence-based instructional practices for teaching reading comprehension in grades K–3, “Supporting Early Reading Comprehension with Teacher Study Groups: A Comprehensive Toolkit for the What Works Clearinghouse Practice Guide Improving Reading Comprehension in Kindergarten through 3rd Grade.”

A select group of schools in Arizona will have the opportunity to try the toolkit in advance of public release. The RAND Corporation research team will work with those schools to study the impact of this toolkit. Specifically, the study will examine whether the use of the toolkit improves students’ reading comprehension in grades K–3 for all students and, for Hispanic/Latinx students specifically, whether the toolkit improves teachers’ knowledge and use of evidence-based practices for improving reading comprehension, how the toolkit is implemented in schools, and what is the cost effectiveness of using the toolkit. [School Leader Name] has agreed to allow your school to be part of this study and we need teachers to participate. **Would you consider being part of this important work?**

[School Name] was invited to participate in this important work because the toolkit appears to fit your school’s priorities. The choice to participate in this study is yours to make, but we do hope you will accept. Overall, the study will include 70 elementary schools in six districts in Arizona to participate in the study. Schools will be randomly assigned to receive the toolkit supports in the first wave (treatment schools) or the second wave (control schools). Both groups of schools will be asked to participate in study data collection, including teacher instructional logs, teacher implementation surveys, teacher knowledge tests, school leader and facilitator surveys, and district leader interviews. Teachers and school leaders participating in data collection will receive gift cards.

RAND researchers will not share any individual-level data. The study will not be used to evaluate you or your school. Your school leader has already agreed to allow your school to participate.

We have attached a list of Frequently Asked Questions. Please reach out to [School Recruitment Leader] if you have additional questions. If you agree to participate, please complete the memo of understanding and [directions to submit to Kiteworks site].

Kata Mihaly
Study Principal Investigator

Teacher Recruitment Follow-Up Email

Subject: Reminder: Invitation to participate in REL West toolkit evaluation study

Dear [Teacher],

Recently you received an email asking you to be a part of a study under The Regional Educational Laboratory West (REL West) on the efficacy of their toolkit, "Supporting Early Reading Comprehension with Teacher Study Groups: A Comprehensive Toolkit for the What Works Clearinghouse Practice Guide Improving Reading Comprehension in Kindergarten through 3rd Grade." As a reminder, RAND researchers will not share any individual-level data. The study will not be used to evaluate you or your school. Your school leader has already agreed to allow your school to participate.

We hope that you will join your colleagues in using the toolkit and sharing your experiences in the study. Again, if you have any questions, please reach out to [School Recruitment Leader]. Otherwise, we hope you complete the memo of understanding and [directions to submit to Kiteworks site].

Kata Mihaly
Study Principal Investigator

Appendix A5 – Frequently Asked Questions

How was my district selected for this study? The study team selected the state of Arizona because the Arizona Department of Education (ADE) and schools and districts across the state are focused on improving students’ early reading skills. ADE recommended your district as a good fit for this study because of your commitment to early reading instruction.

Does the Arizona Department of Education know about the study? Yes. The ADE recommended that we reach out to you about this work, and we hope that you have already heard from them about this study. You can view and learn more about the study at the letter at [REL West website].

What information is being collected from participants as part of this study? Teachers, school leaders (principals and facilitators), and district leaders will participate in the study in the following ways:

Participants	Activity	Duration	Timing
Teachers	Survey	20 minutes	May 2024, May 2025
	Practice Log	5 minutes x 10 days	May 2024, May 2025
School Leaders (principals and facilitators)	Survey	20 minutes	May 2024, September 2024, May 2025
District Leaders	Interview	50 minutes	May 2025

In addition, test scores and other administrative data will be collected from existing sources, such as ADE or the district.

How will RAND express appreciation for my participation in the study? Teachers, school leaders, and districts leaders will each receive a \$30 gift card for completing a survey or interview. Teachers also will receive a \$75 gift card for completing each round of practice logs. Schools randomly selected for early implementation will also have the benefit of access to the toolkit and experienced facilitators to support implementation.

What is the purpose of the study and how will the results be used? As you may appreciate, there is often a gap between knowing an education practice works for students and being able to use that practice in the complex, demanding world of schools. This toolkit is designed to make it easier for teachers to internalize evidence-based practices, and the study is designed to determine how well the toolkit works to change instruction and learning. We will use study findings to help other districts and schools—including but not limited to study districts and schools—use these resources effectively.

Who is conducting the study? REL West, a federally funded research and technical assistance organization comprised of multiple education organizations, is developing and studying the toolkit. To ensure the integrity of the study, one organization (WestEd) will develop the toolkit and another organization (the RAND Corporation) will study implementation and impact; there is a firewall between the two organizations.

Who will get the study results? The study results will be summarized across all study participants (more

than 700 teachers and 70 schools), and REL West will present summaries of results to participating districts, the state of Arizona, and to the federal Department of Education. We adhere to strict codes of confidentiality and will NEVER release individual responses in any way that could identify respondents.

Who can I contact if I have more questions or concerns? If you have general questions, you can contact Kata Mihaly. She is available by email kmihaly@rand.org or by phone (703-412-1100, x5393). If you have concerns or questions about your rights as a participant, contact RAND's Human Subjects Protection Committee at (which is responsible for the protection of project participants): hspcinfo@rand.org or toll free at (866) 697-5620.