

State Literacy Coach Survey – Initial Results

Determining the number of literacy coaches and understanding their characteristics is essential for assessing the capacity to support Georgia’s more than 530,930 K–3 students under current literacy mandates.

State Coaches

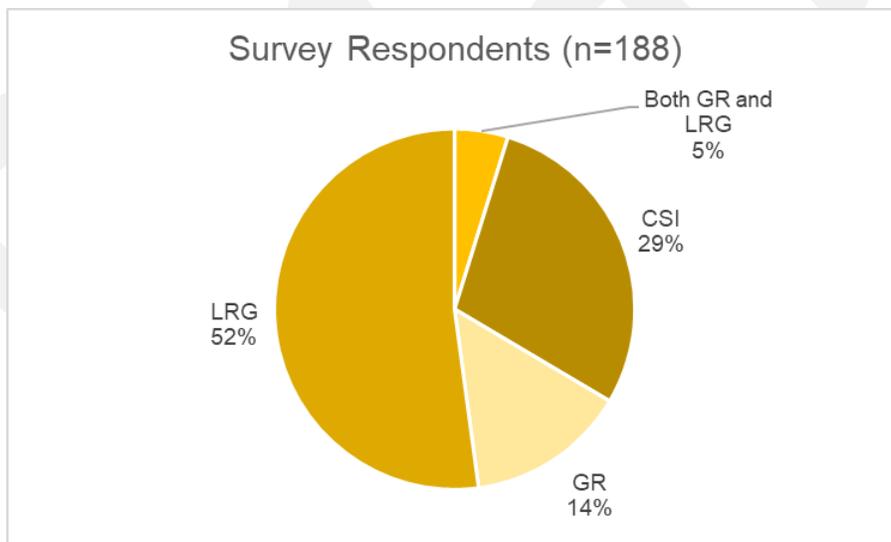
Georgia currently employs approximately 227 literacy coaches statewide. This total includes roughly 167 coaches funded through state programs and operating through the 16 RESAs, and about 60 school-based coaches placed in high-need school sites.

Survey Results

Of the approximately 227 literacy coaches employed statewide through Georgia’s state-supported programs, 188 completed the survey. The majority (52%, or 98 coaches) serve as LRG coaches, while 29% (54 coaches) are CSI Literacy Coaches, 14% (27 coaches) are GR coaches, and a small group of 5% (9 coaches) work across both LRG and GR (Figure 1).

Figure 1.

Survey Respondent Distribution

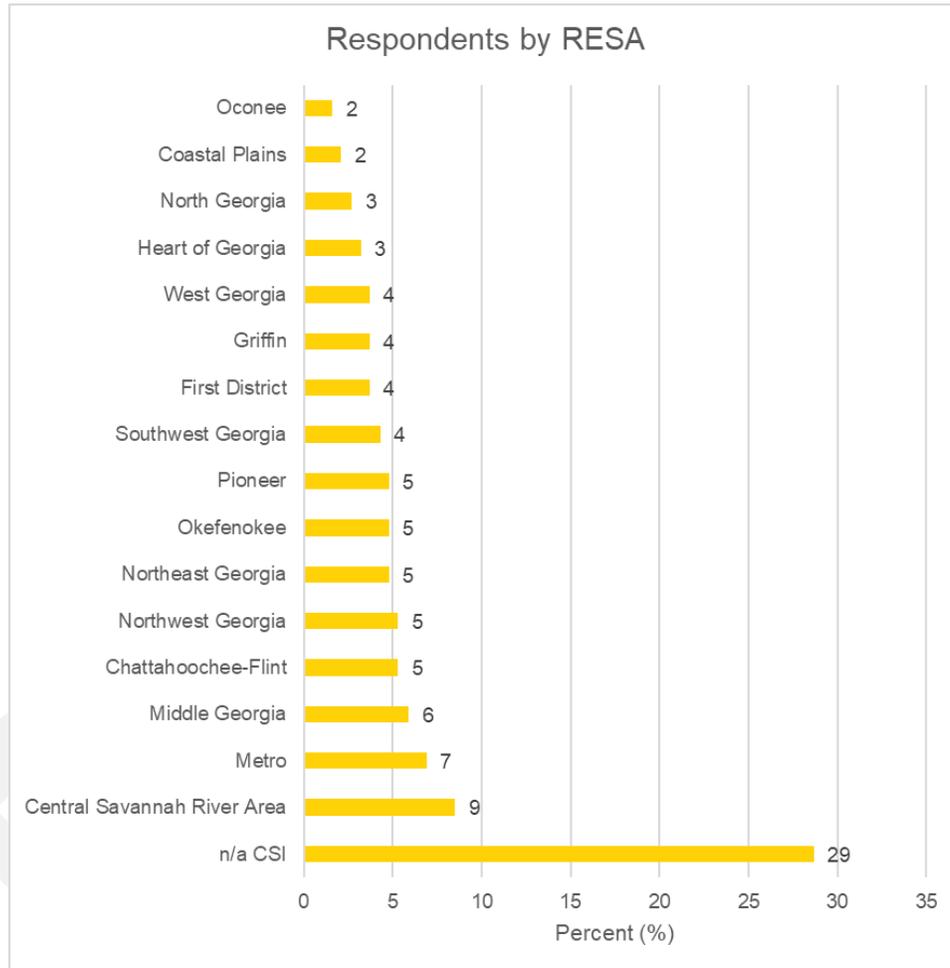


Together, these respondents represent a highly experienced, female-only workforce with strong regional distribution. All respondents are women, and the group is racially diverse yet predominantly Caucasian (about two-thirds) and African American (about one-third), with small numbers from other backgrounds. Most are in their early 50s, reflecting a mature and seasoned cohort well-positioned to mentor teachers.

LRG and GR coaches serve through Georgia's 16 RESAs, with the largest concentrations in Central Savannah River Area, Metro Atlanta, Middle Georgia, Chattahoochee-Flint, and Northwest Georgia regions (Figure 2).

Figure 2.

Respondents by RESA



The quality and relevance of coaches' preparation directly influence their ability to implement evidence-based literacy practices aligned with Georgia's reforms. This survey question examines existing training, resources, and support structures while identifying unmet needs.

Experience levels stand out as a major strength. More than one-third of coaches have 30 or more years in education, another third have 21–30 years, and very few have less than a decade (Figure 3). Nearly half spent 15 or more years as classroom teachers (Figure 4), and most have comparable experience teaching literacy specifically—with over 70% having 11 or more years’ experience in that domain (Figure 5). In their current coaching positions, average tenure is 2–3 years.

Figure 3:
Years Experience.

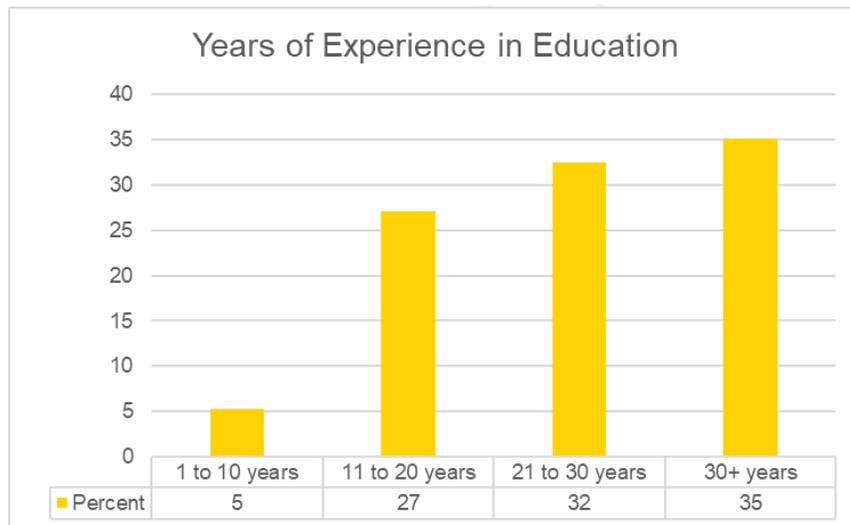


Figure 4:
Classroom Experience.

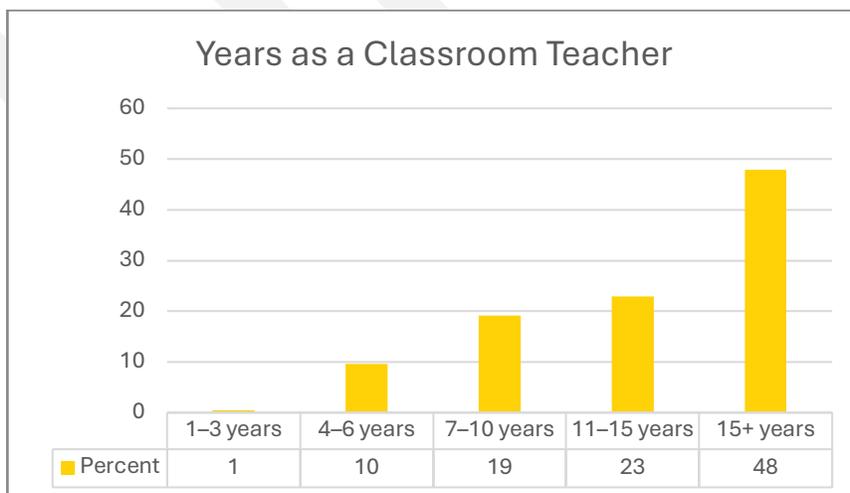
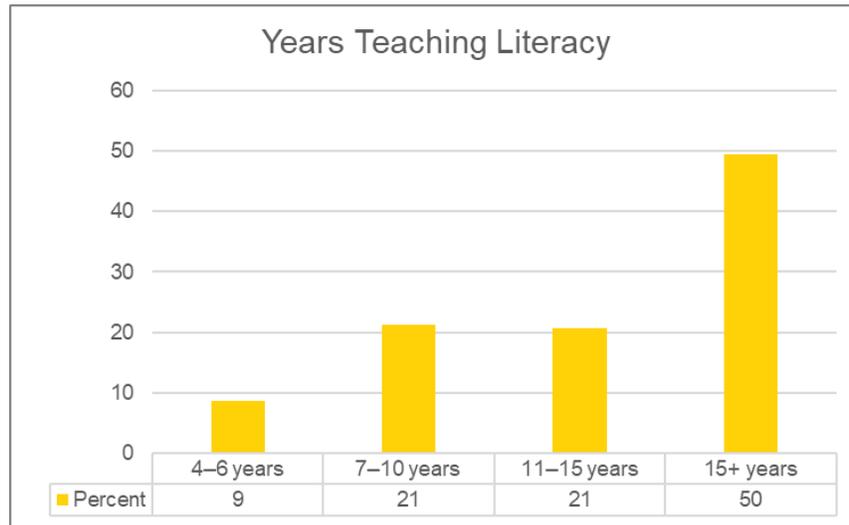
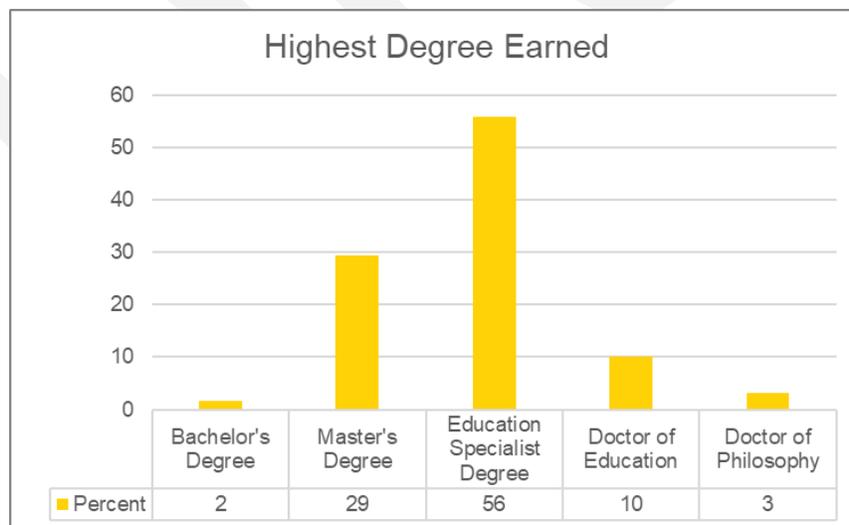


Figure 5:
Years Teaching Literacy.



The surveyed coaches demonstrate strong academic and professional preparation. Educationally, the group is exceptionally well-credentialed. The majority hold advanced graduate degrees: more than half list an Education Specialist degree as their highest level, about 29% hold a Master’s as highest, and roughly 13% have earned a doctorate (Ed.D. or Ph.D.) (Figure 6). It is common for coaches to hold multiple degrees, with two-thirds possessing a Master’s and 61% an Education Specialist credential.

Figure 6:
Highest Degree Earned.



Endorsements further demonstrate specialization. The Reading Endorsement is the most prevalent, held by about half of respondents, followed closely by Gifted, Coaching,

Dyslexia, Teacher Support and Coaching, Leadership Add-on (L-5), and ESOL endorsements—indicating broad preparation to address diverse learner needs (Figure 7). Endorsement completion year varies by the endorsement. For example, individuals with a Dyslexia endorsement reported completion between 2015 to 2024, while those completing the Reading endorsement did so between 1995 and 2024 (Figure 8).

Figure 7:
Endorsements.

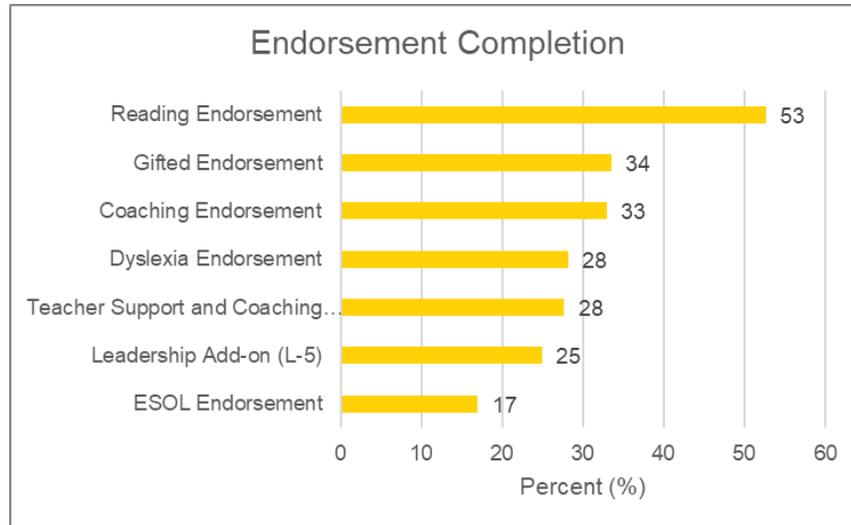
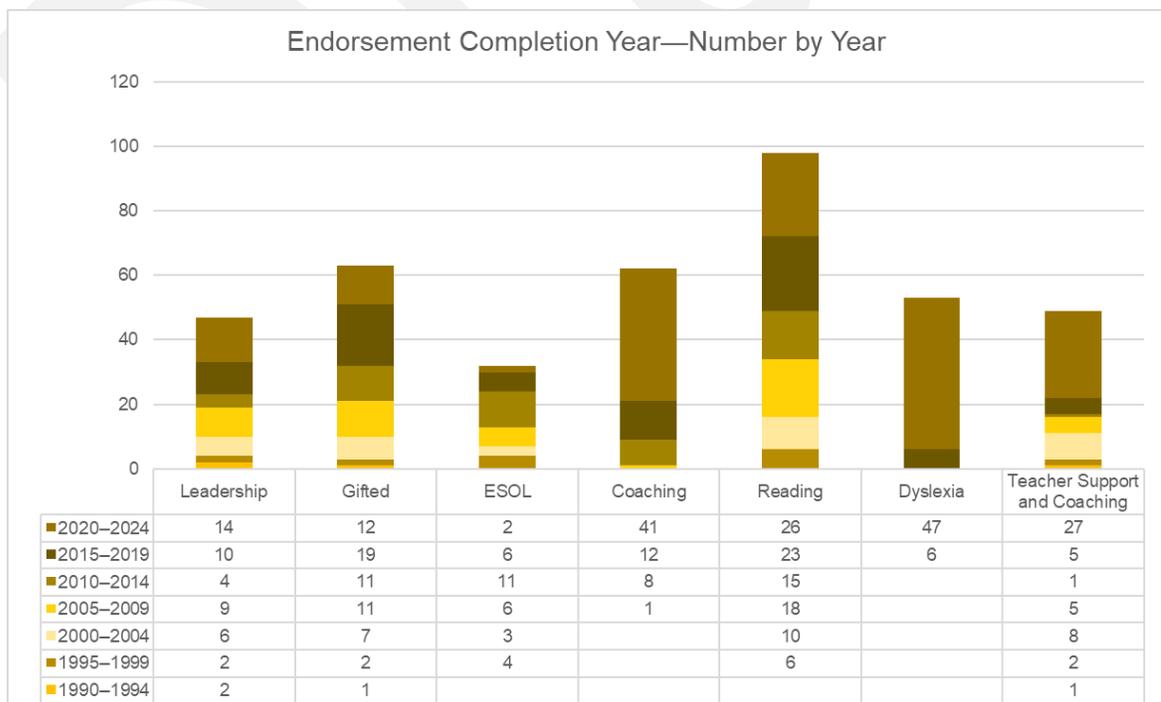


Figure 8:
Endorsement completion year.



Professional development participation is strong and aligned with the science of reading. Coaches most frequently report completing the Cox Campus Early Literacy Certification Course, LETRS, Georgia Literacy Academy, and Orton-Gillingham training (Figure 9). Notably, nearly 80% of all completers have successfully passed the LETRS Certification Assessment, reflecting significant statewide investment in structured literacy knowledge (Figure 10).

Figure 9:
Professional Development Programs Completed.

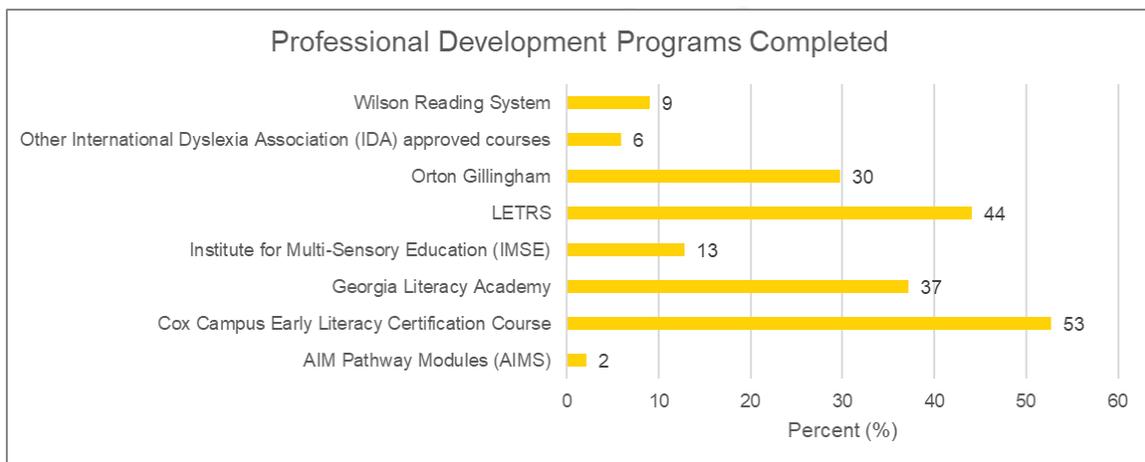
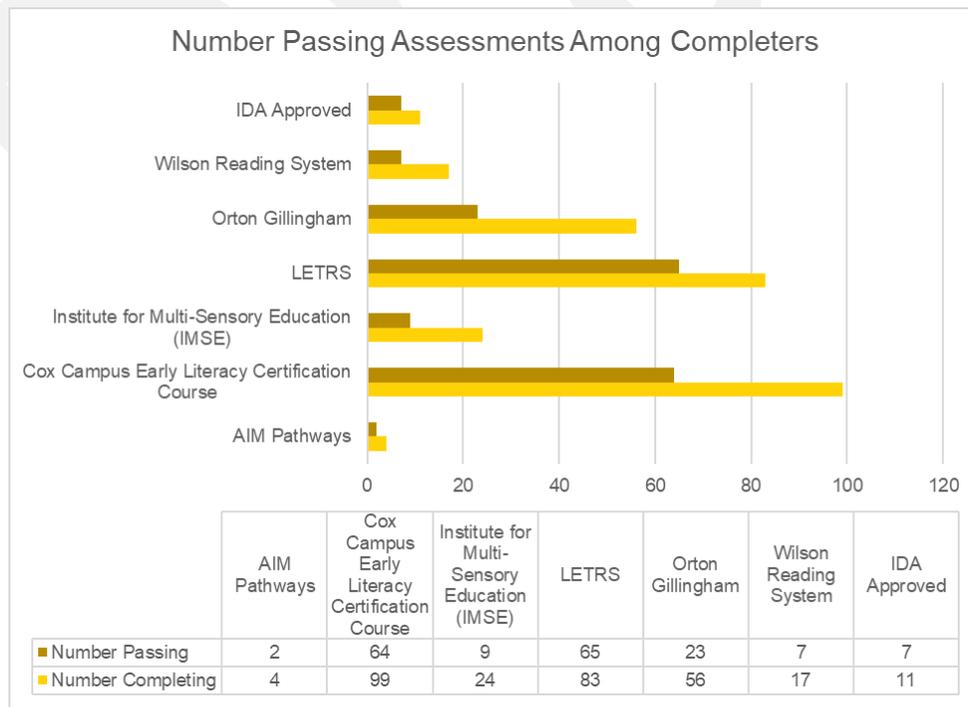
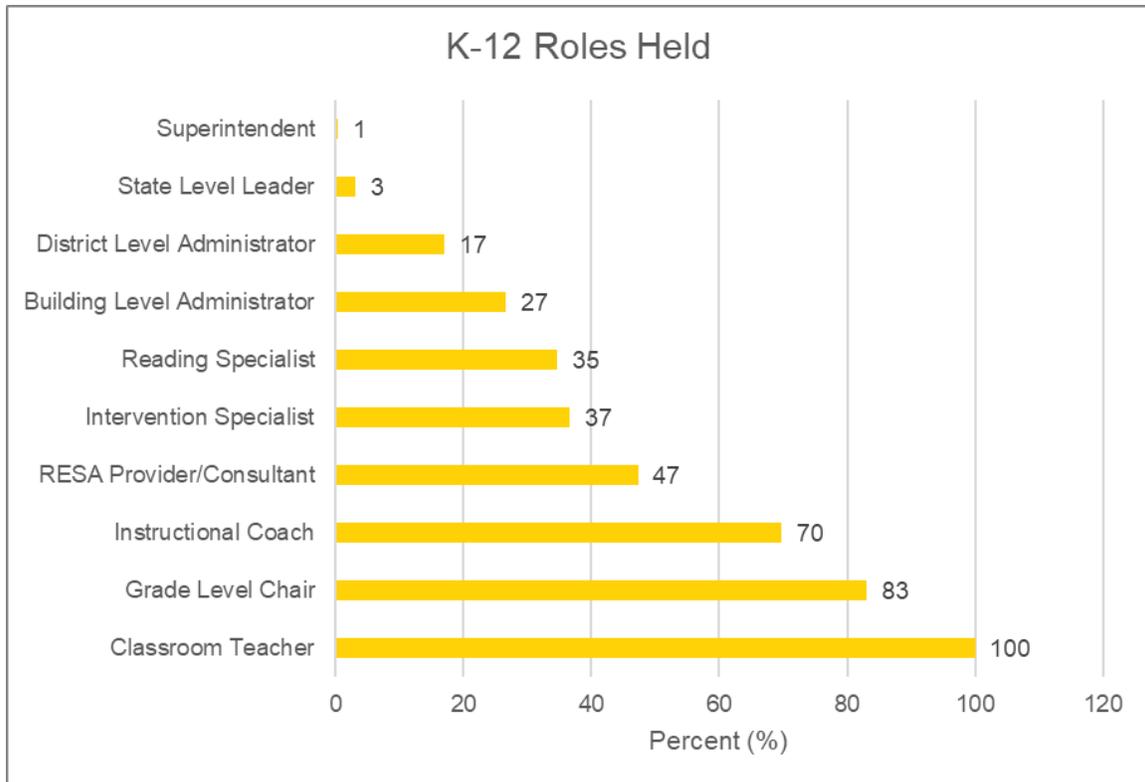


Figure 10:
Number Passing Assessments Among Completers.



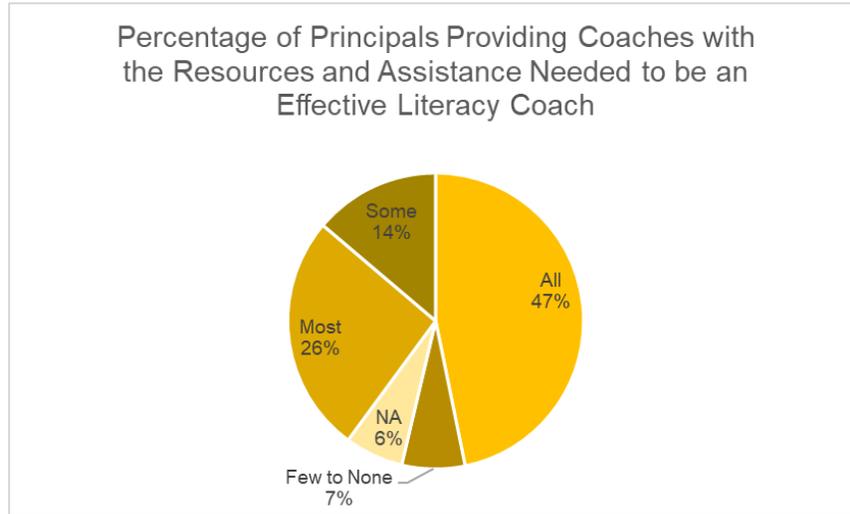
Past professional roles reinforce their depth of expertise. All have classroom teaching experience; large numbers have served as grade-level chairs, instructional coaches, intervention specialists, or reading specialists. Many have also worked as RESA providers or consultants, while smaller but important percentages have held building-level or district-level administrative positions (Figure 11).

Figure 11:
K-12 Roles.



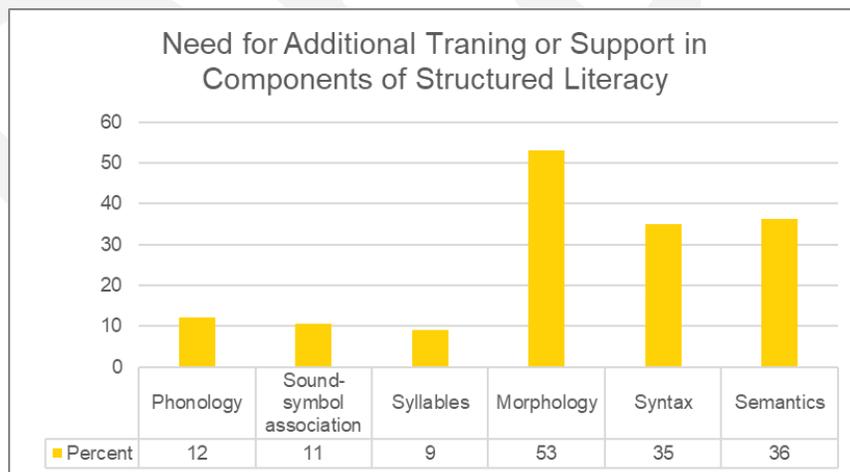
Support structures are generally positive, though not uniform. Three-quarters of coaches report access to a lead mentor or literacy expert who provides regular guidance. Just over half have constructed formal administrator-coach agreements in all of their schools, while another quarter have them in some schools. Nearly half indicate that all of their principals provide the necessary resources and assistance, though a meaningful minority report partial or limited principal support (Figure 12).

Figure 12:
Principal Support.



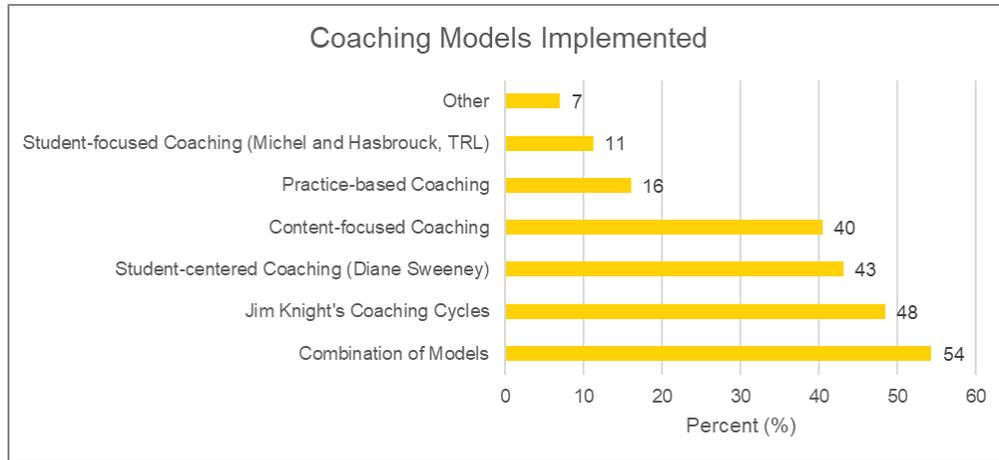
Coaches also identified specific areas within structured literacy components where they would welcome additional training. The most frequently requested topics were morphology, semantics, and syntax, followed at lower levels by phonology, sound-symbol association, and syllables—suggesting targeted opportunities to deepen already strong foundational knowledge (Figure 13).

Figure 13:
Training Needs.



Coaches report using a mix of established models, with many drawing from multiple frameworks (Figure 14). The most common approach is a combination of models, followed closely by Jim Knight’s partnership-oriented coaching, student-centered coaching, and content-focused coaching. Smaller numbers emphasize practice-based or purely student-focused approaches.

Figure 14:
Coaching Models.



On a typical week, coaches allocate the largest share of time—nearly 30%—to 1:1 coaching activities, such as modeling lessons, conducting observations, and debriefing with teachers (Figure 15). They spend roughly 15–16% each on leading group professional learning sessions and preparation/data analysis, about 14% on collaboration with other coaches or administrators, 13% on learning walks, and 10% on their own ongoing professional learning.

Figure 15:
Average Week Coaching.

