

The Sandra Dunagan Deal Center for Early Language and Literacy

**Leveraging Literacy Coaching in Georgia: Findings and Recommendations to Create a  
Literacy Coaching Ecosystem**

Dr. Lindee Morgan, Dr. Stephanie M. Snidarich, Claire Suggs,  
and Dr. Sharon Koon

2026

## Acknowledgements

We extend our gratitude to the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE), and partners including the Regional Educational Service Agencies (RESAs) for their collaboration in data collection and analysis. Special thanks to the literacy coaches, coaching system leaders, and RESA directors who participated in surveys, interviews, and focus groups, providing invaluable insights into the state's literacy coaching ecosystem. We extend our sincere appreciation to Stacey Lutz, Georgia Literacy Coaching Coordinator, for her invaluable contributions throughout this project—her thoughtful refinement of research questions, guidance in survey development, stakeholder engagement efforts, and steady, insightful counsel were instrumental in bringing this work to fruition. This work was supported by funding from the Governor's Office of Student Achievement on behalf of the Georgia Council on Literacy and supports a key focus area of Georgia's *State Literacy Plan: Vision 2030* - "Building Educator and Leader Capacity through Coordinated Literacy Coaching."

## Executive Summary

The Sandra Dunagan Deal Center for Early Language and Literacy (Deal Center) partnered with the Governor’s Office of Student Achievement (GOSA), the Georgia Council on Literacy, the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE), and Regional Education Service Agencies (RESAs) to conduct a landscape analysis of literacy coaching across Georgia during the 2025/26 school year. This project was initiated to map literacy coaching resources in each of the three state systems, identify areas to unify and strengthen the existing systems, and recommend scalable improvements. The primary inquiry guiding this work was: *What can we learn from the current state-level literacy coaching systems that will support strong implementation of a unified systematic approach to state-level literacy coaching support for school-based coaches?*

We sought to answer two research questions:

- What are the strengths of Georgia’s current literacy coaching systems?
- What are the challenges encountered within Georgia’s current literacy coaching systems?

This analysis focused on Georgia’s three state or federally funded coaching systems: Let’s Read Georgia (LG), Growing Readers (GR), and Structured Literacy Coaches within Comprehensive Support and Improvement schools (CSI). Analysis involved a mixed-methods approach that included quantitative surveys of state-level coaches serving in the three systems, qualitative interviews with five coaching system leaders and five RESA executive directors, focus groups with 57 literacy coaches from among the current coaching systems, and document reviews of coaching guidelines and other materials. The Deal Center team conducting the analysis was comprised of literacy experts, policy experts, methodologists, and literacy coach practitioners, with logistical support from the Deal Center.



## Summary of Main Findings

Collectively, surveyed state-level coaches ( $n = 188$ ) bring substantial classroom and leadership experience to their roles, advanced graduate credentials, and strong engagement in evidence-based professional learning. **Coaches who responded are 100 percent female and a racially diverse group** (64% Caucasian, 34% African American, small percentages from other groups) whose average age is early 50s (mean birth year 1974).

### *What are the strengths of Georgia's current literacy coaching systems?*

#### **Knowledgeable ♦ Experienced ♦ Supported ♦ Trusted ♦ Progressing**

- Most state coaches possess a wealth of training and experience in literacy or coaching, and often both.
- Each state coaching system provides a robust framework of support for coaches, which coaches rely on and value.
- Coaches have forged trust-based relationships with educators in many schools and districts, which facilitate positive collaboration and coaching to improve instruction.
- Coaches report progress in implementing structured literacy instruction.

### *What are the challenges encountered within Georgia's current literacy coaching systems?*

#### **Lack of Role Clarity ♦ Uneven Engagement ♦ Implementation Challenges ♦ Systemic Barriers**

- There is not a statewide definition of a literacy coach or sufficient clarity regarding the role of the literacy coach or coaching processes.
- According to coaches, school administrators are often unengaged in implementing literacy reforms.
- Teachers vary in their receptiveness to coaching, and many struggle to implement structured literacy according to state literacy coaches.
- High poverty/low performing schools face additional challenges in improving literacy instruction.

## Summary of Recommendations

Recommendations are proposed to address strengths and challenges identified through quantitative surveys of state-level coaches serving in the three systems, qualitative interviews with key stakeholders, and document reviews of coaching guidelines and other materials. See page 26 for more detailed information.

### 1 **Develop, share, and ensure adoption of a comprehensive definition of a literacy coach, and clearly delineate each coaching role and associated responsibilities.**

Fostering broad acceptance and use of a common literacy coach definition and clearly defining roles will build support and buy-in for their work and the need for literacy reform, increasing the likelihood of impact.

### 2 **Develop a comprehensive approach to literacy coaching that is aligned across system levels to create an ecosystem of support.**

Building a cohesive, multi-layered comprehensive support network for literacy coaching across all levels of the educational hierarchy ensures sustainable, high-quality instruction.

### 3 **Develop new or adapt existing tools to facilitate processes that support coaches' engagement and collaborative work with districts, schools, and teachers.**

Developing common tools will facilitate the processes that support coaches' engagement and guide their collaborative work with districts, schools, and teachers.

### 4 **Develop guidebooks and training for coaches and educators to support implementation of state-approved high quality instructional materials (HQIMs) to ensure alignment with state standards, structured literacy, and the science of reading.**

Creating guidebooks that map how each state-approved HQIM aligns with Georgia's K-12 English Language Arts standards and provide example lesson plans integrating structured literacy strategies will support literacy instruction for all students.

### 5 **Develop a structured implementation rollout plan that cultivates open communication and engagement across system levels to ensure effective literacy strategies become a natural part of teachers' daily practice.**

Developing a strong implementation rollout plan using strategies that provide multi-level support and sustain full adoption will ensure the state's investment in literacy coaching produces lasting results for Georgia students.

### 6 **Develop a comprehensive approach to reducing teacher turnover in high poverty schools to support improved literacy instruction.**

Developing and implementing a comprehensive plan to improve support for and reduce attrition of teachers in high poverty schools will increase student access to teachers trained in structured literacy and the science of reading.

## Table of Contents

<i>Background and Context for this Report</i> .....	7
<i>Landscape Analysis Findings</i> .....	13
<i>Recommendations</i> .....	26
<i>Conclusion</i> .....	38
<i>Appendices</i> .....	39
Appendix A: Let’s Read Georgia Snapshot .....	39
Appendix B: Growing Readers Snapshot .....	43
Appendix C: CSI Literacy Coaches Snapshot .....	47
Appendix D: Selected Data from Surveys .....	50
Appendix E: Relevant Research Literature .....	59
Appendix F: References .....	61
Appendix G: Deal Center Team .....	64

## Background and Context for this Report

Georgia's literacy initiatives have accelerated since the early 2020s, driven by legislation aimed at improving early reading proficiency and addressing dyslexia. These efforts have emphasized evidence-based practices rooted in the science of reading (SoR), including phonics, phonemic awareness, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. Literacy coaching is essential to the success of these reforms—literacy coaching bridges policy and practice, helping teachers implement structured literacy effectively.

### The Importance of Literacy Coaching

Literacy coaching provides job-embedded professional development through collaboration between coaches and teachers to enhance instruction, analyze data, model lessons, and provide feedback, ultimately improving student outcomes.

### *Statewide Need*

Effective literacy instruction is a high priority for Georgia because of the essential role of literacy across an individual's lifespan. A wealth of research has shown that proficient reading is associated with higher levels of academic achievement, graduation rates, engagement in post-secondary education, employment, and overall health and well-being as well as a reduced likelihood of arrest or incarceration (Claessens et al., 2009; Hernandez, 2011; Lundetrae et al., 2010; Moody et al., 2000). However, low levels of literacy are a concern nationwide, with 70% of fourth and 71% of eighth grade students reading below proficient levels. In Georgia, the rates are similarly concerning (70% and 69%, respectively; National Center for Education Statistics, 2024a; 2024b).

Georgia's commitment to improving literacy statewide is demonstrated through a series of laws passed by the Georgia General Assembly that have shaped literacy policy and shown support for improved literacy instruction.

- Senate Bill 48 (SB 48), Georgia's dyslexia legislation passed in 2019, requires early identification of dyslexia and the provision of training and resources to ensure that educators have the skills and tools to provide support for students with reading difficulties.

- Senate Bill 211 (SB 211), passed in 2023, established the Georgia Council on Literacy to ensure that reading instruction is evidence-based and aligns with the SoR.
- House Bill 538 (HB 538), the Georgia Early Literacy Act of 2023, aims to ensure all K-3 students develop foundational literacy skills necessary for becoming proficient readers. The bill mandates the use of high-quality instructional materials (HQIM), universal reading screeners, intervention plans that target specific student reading needs, and extensive training for educators in SoR.
- House Bill 307 (HB 307), Georgia Early Literacy & Dyslexia Act, passed in 2025, streamlines SB 48 and HB 538 into a unified approach to improve early literacy instruction and ultimately overall literacy.

House Bill 1193, known as the Georgia Early Literacy Act of 2026, was enacted most recently to continue this focus on improving K-3 literacy proficiency and provide for a more collaborative, aligned approach between state agencies and initiatives. For example, the legislation creates a more integrated framework by involving multiple state agencies and establishing new oversight bodies such as the Georgia Literacy Coordinating Committee with representation from multiple state agencies, and the Georgia Literacy Task Force. Other key elements of the legislation extend requirements from previous legislation including making curriculum-based training in the SoR and structured literacy available to K-3 teachers and coaches, triannual universal reading screening review, and a requirement for districts to adopt a unified literacy plan. Most salient to this report, the legislation supports greater alignment and vertical integration of literacy initiatives by providing regional and leadership literacy coaches who will serve as primary points of contact for local districts, as well as school-based literacy coaches who will assist teachers to improve literacy instruction in support of their district's literacy plan. Finally, the legislation also requires the Georgia Professional Standards Commission (GaPSC) to establish a literacy coaching endorsement by December 30, 2026.

## *Literacy Coaching: An Essential Driver of Effective Implementation*

Literacy coaches have emerged as an important mechanism for supporting the implementation of individual reform components (e.g., curriculum, assessment, and instructional practices based on the SoR) and helping educators tie them together into a coherent whole as they strive to accomplish the complex work of meeting students' collective and individual literacy instructional needs. While principals lead implementation of school-level literacy reform, including creating conditions for effective literacy instruction, they have too many other responsibilities to manage daily implementation. Instead, literacy coaches guide daily implementation by providing ongoing, tailored teacher support, tracking data, and monitoring individual and collective progress toward goals. They are vital to the literacy ecosystem, ensuring high quality literacy instruction that aligns with the school's literacy plan and meets the specific needs of students.

Aligning with this premise, the International Literacy Association (ILA) definition of literacy coaching specifies coaches being "primarily responsible for improving classroom instruction by supporting teacher learning and facilitating literacy program efforts." Further, literacy coaches "collaborate with individual and groups of teachers via coaching and professional learning activities to improve classroom, grade-level, departmental, and schoolwide literacy teaching and learning" (International Literacy Association, 2025).

Recognizing the essential role of literacy coaches, Georgia lawmakers provided state funding for literacy coach positions in the state coaching systems and approved funding for a school-based literacy coach in every school with K-3 classrooms starting in the 2026-2027 school year.

“

I don't want us to lose sight of how important coaching is. And I think that there's been a miscommunication about coaching ... it's got a negative connotation; "we only need a coach when we're 'bad' or there's a problem. But the truth is ... everyone deserves a coach.

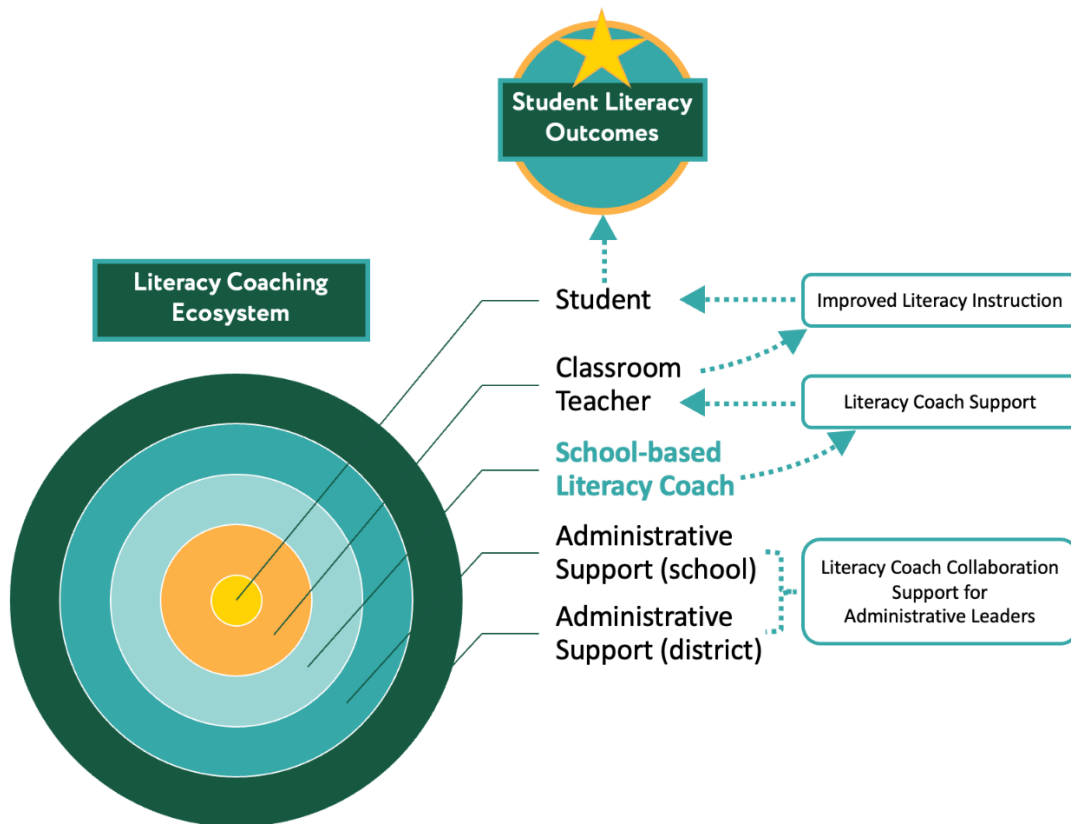
”

## Theoretical Framework

Literacy coaching is traditionally defined by its impact on teacher practice and student outcomes. Common theories of change have been used to model ways that literacy coaches work with teachers to improve literacy instruction and thereby improve students' literacy outcomes. A shortcoming of these models is that they do not account for the many layers of an educational system that impact the effectiveness of literacy instruction.

With this consideration in mind, Georgia has passed legislation that expands the theory of change to build a "wrap-around" **ecosystem** of support that engages educational leaders at every level with the eventual goal of vertical integration and alignment. Figure 1 illustrates how this more unified approach brings administrative leaders, literacy coaches, and teachers together to foster instructional excellence.

**Figure 1:** *An Expanded Theoretical Framework for Georgia Literacy Coaching Ecosystem*



*Note:* Traditional models of literacy coaching show literacy coaches supporting teachers to improve their literacy instruction and thereby improve student outcomes. Georgia's ecosystem approach adds an additional layer of literacy coaching to support administrative leaders.

## Landscape Analysis Process and Team

This landscape analysis was conducted by the Deal Center Team comprised of literacy experts, policy experts, methodologists, and literacy coach practitioners, with logistical support provided by the Deal Center. The analysis involved a mixed-methods approach that included a survey of state literacy coaches, qualitative interviews with literacy coach leaders, focus groups with state literacy coaches, and a review of documents used to prepare, support, and assess literacy coaches in each of the state literacy coaching systems.

While this landscape analysis was initially designed to evaluate current literacy coaching structures in Georgia, the scope was refined to respond to the introduction and passage of HB 1193, the Georgia Early Literacy Act of 2026. This landscape analysis now emphasizes examination of the strengths and challenges of existing systems, resulting in recommendations for a unified, systematic approach designed to bolster implementation and improve student literacy. The primary inquiry was: *What can we learn from the current state-level literacy coaching systems that will support strong implementation of a unified systematic approach to state-level literacy coaching support for school-based coaches?*

We sought to answer two research questions:

- What are the strengths of Georgia’s current literacy coaching systems?
- What are the challenges encountered within Georgia’s current literacy coaching systems?

### ***State Literacy Coach Survey***

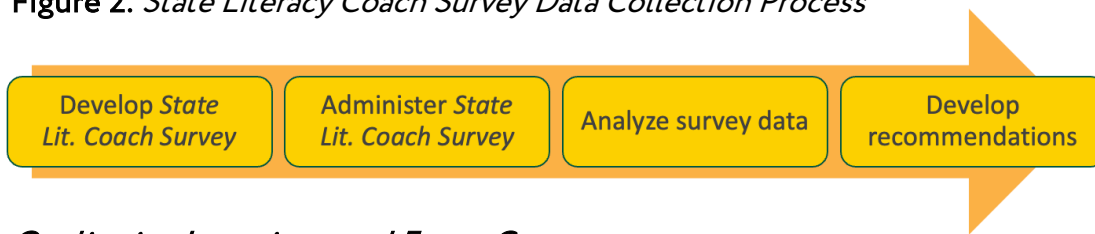
A State Literacy Coach Survey was developed to collect data on the coaches within the state literacy coaching systems. It was distributed in fall 2025, and solicited information from coaches about their:

- **Education and experience**, including years of experience as teachers and literacy coaches, and structured literacy training completed.
- **Literacy coaching role and context**, including number of schools and districts worked in and how many hours worked as a literacy coach on a weekly basis.
- **Coaching work** including time spent engaged in coaching activities such as prep work (analyzing data, preparing professional learning), one-on-one coaching

(modeling strategies, conducting observations), leading group professional learning, conducting learning walks, collaboration (with administrators or other coaches), and participating in professional learning.

State Literacy Coach Survey responses were collected from 188 literacy coaches. The sample comprised 84% of current coaches serving in the three state-level literacy coaching systems: Let’s Read Georgia (LRG), Growing Readers (GR), and Structured Literacy Coaches in Comprehensive Support for Improvement (CSI) schools. Data were analyzed and results were used to inform recommendations (Figure 2).

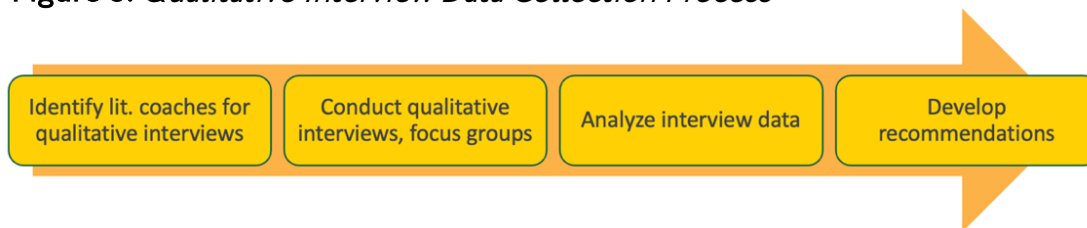
**Figure 2.** *State Literacy Coach Survey Data Collection Process*



### ***Qualitative Interviews and Focus Groups***

Qualitative interviews were conducted with five coaching system leaders and five RESA executive directors, and focus groups were conducted with 57 current literacy coaches from among the current coaching systems. All interviews and focus groups were recorded, transcribed, coded, and analyzed to identify key themes. Identified themes were considered along with survey data to inform recommendations (Figure 3).

**Figure 3.** *Qualitative Interview Data Collection Process*



### ***Standard Document Review***

Documents used to prepare, support, and assess literacy coaches were reviewed for each state coaching system. A comparative analysis method was used to identify key similarities and functional differences. The analysis process helped deepen insight into the strengths and challenges within and among the three systems.

## Landscape Analysis Findings

Our landscape analysis is anchored in a deep exploration of the literacy coaching ecosystem, blending quantitative survey trends with the rich, qualitative narratives of those engaged in literacy coaching work. In-depth interviews and focus groups with a variety of stakeholders provided a multi-dimensional view of the three systems, capturing the nuanced strengths that drive success as well as complex challenges encountered in the field and within the systems themselves. This rich synthesis of data serves to describe the current state of literacy coaching and helped identify potential areas for change that form the basis of subsequent recommendations to strengthen and unify literacy coaching statewide.

### State Literacy Coaching Systems

There are currently three state or federally funded coaching systems in Georgia: Let's Read Georgia (LG), Growing Readers (GR), and Structured Literacy Coaches within Comprehensive Support and Improvement schools (CSI)<sup>1</sup>. An important similarity among all three systems is their alignment with the basic description of literacy coaching described above. Yet each system has also operated in unique ways, with different origin stories and starting points for coaching literacy from kindergarten up to the state level. We also identified challenges the coaching systems have encountered. These strengths and challenges are described in the sections that follow.

---

<sup>1</sup> Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) schools are low-performing Title 1 schools identified every three years for intensive intervention. They comprise the lowest performing 5% of Title I schools based on College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI) scores.

**Table 1. Key Features of State Coaching Systems**



System Features	Let's Read Georgia	Growing Readers	Structured Literacy Coaches in CSI Schools
How many coaches	122*	45*	58
How many districts served	194	43	20+
How many schools per coach	Varies	1-4 schools	1 school
How many students impacted	Varies by district	~13,000	~18,000
Which districts are eligible	Available to all districts and state charter schools	All elementary schools and districts can apply	Required for CSI elementary schools
How long coaching support is provided	Duration determined by district need	2 years	3 years
Who can receive coaching	Teachers and/or school-based coaches	Teachers and/or school-based coaches	Teachers and school-based coaches†
Core program components	Coaches and district leaders develop a plan for the support coaches will provide. Types of support include one-on-one coaching, providing professional learning, conducting walk-throughs, data analysis, and assisting school administrators.	Coaches provide multi-day professional learning 2x per year, one-on-one coaching via 4 coaching cycles per teacher per year, and additional on-site support for teachers as needed.	Full-time, on-site coaches provide one-on-one coaching, professional learning, co-planning, data analysis, and additional support as needed
What training coaches receive	3-day annual in-person institute; monthly virtual; quarterly in-person; self-evaluation	Two 2-day professional learning sessions per year; 8 in-person coaches' meetings per year; lab classrooms & video feedback; mentors for new coaches	Multi-day annual in-person institute; regional in-person quarterly trainings; weekly virtual meetings; weekly/bi-weekly 1:1 virtual check-ins; additional on-site support as needed

\*Includes part-time coaches.

† Teachers in CSI schools receive coaching from their school-based coach; school-based coaches in CSI schools receive coaching support from the CSI Coach Lead.

## Coaching System Strengths

The three state coaching systems demonstrate individual and collective strengths that contribute to a landscape of literacy coaching in Georgia characterized by deep knowledge and experience, support for continuous improvement, and trusting relationships with districts, schools, and teachers.

- 1. Most state coaches possess a wealth of training and experience in literacy or coaching, and often both.**

### *Training*

Coaches participated in and described multiple types of training as valuable preparation for serving as a literacy coach, including:

- Structured literacy training programs
- Coaching and literacy-related endorsements
- Graduate degrees in reading and special education
- Professional development with national experts

#### Structured Literacy Training Programs

- AIM (AIM Institute) Pathways
- Georgia Literacy Academy/COX Campus
- Institute for Multi-Sensory Education (IMSE)
- Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling (LETRS)
- Orton-Gillingham

Many coaches reported pursuing training experiences because they have a deep and sustained interest in literacy, coaching, or both. Their interest is reflected in the number of coaches who completed multiple structured literacy training programs, often combined with one or more coaching endorsements.

- 97% of state coaches have completed at least one of the following structured literacy training programs: AIM Pathways, Georgia Literacy Academy/COX Campus, IMSE, LETRS, and Orton Gillingham

- 45% of state coaches have completed two or more structured literacy training programs
- 48% of coaches have earned at least one coaching endorsement
- 47% of coaches have completed at least one structured literacy training program combined with at least one coaching endorsement
- 28% of coaches have completed two or more structured literacy training programs combined with at least one coaching endorsement
- 15% of coaches have completed the dyslexia endorsement combined with at least one coaching endorsement

“ One of the things that has helped me most in my role as an LRG coach is coming from being a school-based coach for six years prior to doing that, but also in the lens of being in a school that was going through the transition from balanced literacy to the research base of science of reading and seeing the things that teachers struggled with during that time... I've [completed Orton-Gillingham] training as well... And I'm almost done with my second year of LETRS training. ”

In addition, 53% of coaches have a reading endorsement. However, most coaches earned their reading endorsements before the state adopted structured literacy, with some endorsements earned before 2000. As such, these endorsements may not fully align with the most current research on the SoR, which underscores the importance of providing ongoing supplemental professional learning and training.

Nearly all state coaches—98%—have a master’s degree or higher. Of the coaches surveyed, 12% earned master’s degrees in reading while an additional 6% earned master’s degrees in special education—a field many credited as developing the knowledge and skills needed to support struggling readers. As with endorsements, most coaches earned their master’s degrees before the adoption of structured literacy, and their programs may not have included the most up to date information on the SoR.

Coaches cited a variety of professional development programs and training with experts in literacy and coaching as valuable in developing their knowledge and skills. They were able

to participate in these programs and trainings in previous roles and also had access to similar learning opportunities and experts through their coaching systems.

### *Experience Teaching and Coaching*

Most state coaches have elementary teaching experience, with 86% having taught grades K-2. Coaches identified early elementary literacy experience as critical for effective coaching. They noted that coaches must deeply understand structured literacy and be adept at applying these practices in classrooms with students of varying skills levels and backgrounds. Having this experience also fosters coaches' credibility with teachers.

The majority of coaches—70%—previously served as instructional coaches, which they cited as valuable preparation for becoming literacy coaches. Many also bring diverse leadership experience to their role, including:

- Grade level chair: 80%
- Building level administrator: 27%
- District administrator: 17%

#### **Takeaway:**

Ongoing and differentiated training is needed and valued by literacy coaches.

## **2. Each state coaching system provides a robust framework of support for coaches, which coaches rely on and value.**

Leaders of each state coaching system built comprehensive support systems including:

- Ongoing training in structured literacy and coaching
- Accessible support from coaching system leaders
- Hands-on opportunities to practice
- Tools and resources to support coaching practice

**Ongoing training in structured literacy and coaching.** Each system provides frequent in-person and virtual training in structured literacy and coaching. Coaches report this training enables them to continue gaining new knowledge and skills and stay current on

SoR research, which they believe improves their effectiveness. RESAs supplement this training by covering the cost of or providing additional literacy-related training based on the needs of their coaches and member districts.

“ My coaching expertise has really come in through Let’s Read Georgia, and I’m so appreciative to how we have that common knowledge, how we’ve had [experts] come in, how we’ve been doing book studies, working together, having our round table discussions and ... really leaning into this network that we have. ”

**Accessible support from coaching system leaders.** Leaders from each system, all experienced literacy coaches, assist coaches as needed. They deliver individualized support, including helping coaches resolve challenges, demonstrating and providing guidance on different coaching or instructional strategies, and offering feedback on coaches’ actions. There is variation in how leaders across the three coaching systems organize and deliver this assistance, but coaches from all systems describe it as a vital resource.

**Hands-on opportunities to practice.** State coaches and coaching system leaders noted the importance of hands-on opportunities for coaches to practice their craft in authentic coaching contexts and receive feedback from colleagues to refine and master strategies to effectively help teachers. System leaders encourage or provide coaches with opportunities to go through this process, which often creates an opportunity to engage teachers in a shared process of practicing and mastering new skills.

**Tools and resources to support coaching practice.** Each coaching system provides tools and resources on structured literacy and coaching to assist coaches. These resources vary across the systems based on the approach to coaching support each takes and their individual origins and evolution.

Through these different supports for coaches, system leaders fostered professional communities of practice for coaches. These communities of practice cultivate a shared vision of structured literacy among coaches and a common language to support its

implementation. They help coaches build connections across district- and RESA boundaries and readily serve as resources to one another.

**Takeaway:**

Literacy coaches at all levels need comprehensive systems of support.

**3. Coaches have forged trust-based relationships with educators in many schools and districts, which facilitate positive collaboration and coaching to improve instruction.**

Trust is the foundation of successful coaching relationships as well as implementing desired instructional changes. Coaches have cultivated trust-based relationships with teachers and school-based coaches in many schools across the state.

Creating these relationships takes

time to know and understand educators and their school communities. It also requires coaches to demonstrate their desire to support rather than evaluate teachers or school-based coaches. Similarly, building trust-based relationships with district leaders takes time as well as persistence from state coaches as they engage leaders managing many competing priorities. Coaches must also demonstrate that their aims and activities support, rather than drive, district-determined literacy improvement plans. Coaches' leadership experience is valuable for fostering relationships with district and school leaders, according to RESA directors. Leadership experience, which can be gained through a variety of roles, provides coaches with a schoolwide perspective and insight into the concerns of school leaders. It also can boost coaches' credibility with school and district leaders. As these relationships have grown, coaches have provided multiple types of support to teachers and school-based coaches, including one-on-one coaching, professional development, co-planning lessons and analyzing data to inform instruction. While each activity is valuable, coaches identify one-on-one coaching as the primary driver of



At first it was like, "oh, she's here to fix me." And that was just their preconceived notion coming in. And then I started building those relationships, just small things working with the principal, ...then going out with the teachers. And as we started building those relationships, then we started saying, "hey, do you mind if I stopped in?"



improved teacher practice. Teachers benefit from opportunities to observe coaches model instructional strategies aligned to student data, practice those strategies, and receive constructive feedback on implementation.

**Takeaway:**

Changing teachers' instructional practices and establishing productive relationships with districts requires trust, which must be earned.

**4. Coaches report progress in improving literacy instruction.**

Implementing and sustaining transformative changes in literacy instruction is a complex, time-intensive process. Yet coaches report positive changes are already unfolding in Georgia's classrooms, which they connect directly to coaching. Coaches describe seeing growth in teachers' instructional knowledge and practice. For example:

- Teachers are increasingly using data to identify student instructional needs and select appropriate instructional strategies/interventions to address them
- Teachers are working to improve their small group instruction, including organizing groups, tailoring instruction to each group, and managing concurrent literacy activities across all groups
- Teachers are developing deeper understanding of structured literacy instruction, particularly phonics and phonemic awareness, as well as HQIMs

“ We see growth happening ... that's just consistent coaching. People can do better if you coach them, and so that's why literacy coaches are needed. Most of the time it's a skill [need], not a [problem of] will. People just don't know. ”

Coaches noted that teachers often need affirmation that their efforts to implement structured literacy have a positive impact on students. These instructional changes are difficult, and teachers do not always recognize their progress. Coaches report teachers' confidence in their ability to deliver structured literacy instruction improves as they see progress. This reinforces teachers' commitment to structured literacy and encourages other teachers to do the same.

### Takeaway:

Investments in literacy coaching and structured literacy training are starting to change teachers' instructional practice.

## Coaching System Challenges

1. **There is no statewide definition of literacy coaching or sufficient clarity regarding the role of the literacy coach or the processes of literacy coaching, which leads to misunderstanding.**

Analysis of coaching system documents combined with analysis of interview and survey data reveals that there is not yet a universal Georgia definition of a literacy

coach. Each system also had varied roles and processes for providing literacy coaching when and if they were provided. Differences in roles include coaches working exclusively with teachers, coaches working with school leaders (e.g., principals) as well as teachers, coaches who supported other coaches, and coaches working with district leaders. Approaches to support ranged from having clearly defined processes complemented by accompanying resources to facilitate implementation to having no formal process for identifying areas for support and coaching.

It was clear from interviews with coaching system leads that having processes and resources clearly defined and in place was due in part to the amount of time the system had been operating as well as some districts' requests for highly individualized support to address specific needs and/or priorities.

Supporting implementation of structured literacy is a broad responsibility. The variability described can contribute to uncertainty among district staff and coaches about how to engage and effectively collaborate to provide coaching support, making it challenging for coaches, particularly new coaches, to focus and organize their work.

“ So, we just started off at the district level to understand our roles and that we were there to support, that we were there to be of service, not evaluators. ”

### Takeaway:

There is a need for a statewide definition of a literacy coach and a common menu of literacy coaching services to provide to districts. A common engagement process and supporting tools to facilitate a clearly defined collaboration plan between district and state literacy coaches is also needed.

## 2. According to coaches, school administrators are often unengaged in implementing literacy reforms.

Many school leaders have embraced literacy reform, deepened their knowledge about structured literacy, and are supportive of coaches in their buildings. However, coaches also report school administrators who are not engaged in implementing changes in literacy instruction outlined in recent legislation. Common reasons cited by coaches for this are:

- Lack of training in structured literacy
- Lack of knowledge about/training in the appropriate roles and responsibilities of literacy coaches
- Competing priorities, particularly in schools identified at the district or state level as low performing
- Limited time

School administrators' minimal engagement in implementing structured literacy can hinder coaches' work in multiple ways, including giving direction to teachers that contradicts guidance provided by coaches, or not encouraging or requiring teachers to follow coaches' instructional guidance. Coaches described administrators who do not understand and recognize appropriate structured literacy instruction, which impedes administrators' ability to evaluate teachers and monitor progress. Inconsistent or limited communication and progress updates can also be a challenge for coaches when administrators are unengaged.

“ I don't know that my leadership team fully understands structured literacy, and I have tried to explain, but they're like, 'Well that's just your domain ...' It has been put off on me. To me, we have a big disconnect. I don't know their vision, but they don't really have mine. ”

### Takeaway:

School administrators need training and support to understand structured literacy, the role and responsibilities of literacy coaches, and administrators' role in guiding and sustaining literacy reform.

### 3. Teachers vary in their receptiveness to coaching, and many struggle to implement structured literacy according to state literacy coaches.

#### *Coaching Receptiveness*

Some teachers welcome coaching support while others are hesitant or resistant. According to coaches, one common cause of teachers' hesitancy or resistance is the perception that only "bad" teachers need coaching, which can be reinforced if coaches are directed to work only with struggling teachers. Teachers at all skill and experience levels benefit from high quality coaching. Meanwhile, coaches report that some veteran teachers perceive coaching as dismissive of their knowledge, experience, and skills, including the approaches to literacy instruction in which they were trained. An unmanageable workload can also result in teachers resisting coaching. In these instances, time with coaches can feel like another demand or directive when teachers are already overextended. Coaches have addressed these issues through deliberate outreach and trust-building with teachers.

“

The veteran teachers are actually a little harder to get buy-in with the new things because they're standing firm on the old way. So that's a lot of push-back with [the] new things that are being thrown at them. They're not buying in. So actually, [with] our non-traditional and newer teachers, the buy-in is there but teacher capacity [is lower].

”

#### *Structured Literacy Implementation Challenges*

Across districts, many teachers struggle to fully implement structured literacy including high quality instructional materials (HQIMs), universal reading screeners, and structured literacy instructional strategies, which are required under the Georgia Early Literacy Act of 2023 (HB 538), and the new state performance standards, Georgia's K-12 English Language

Arts Standards. According to state coaches, common reasons teachers struggle to fully implement structured literacy include:

- Inadequate time to fully understand and master the application of each component of structured literacy implementation
- Lack of understanding how HQIMs, Georgia’s K-12 English Language Arts Standards, screeners, and structured literacy practices learned in SoR training align and should be integrated in implementation
- Lack of capacity in some districts to provide the level of support teachers need particularly regarding the implementation of HQIMs
- Not understanding the alignment between some HQIMs and structured literacy training, which generates confusion
- Lack of understanding of, and difficulty implementing, differentiated small group instruction in structured literacy

Because they have not had time and support to fully understand and integrate all structured literacy components, many teachers do not understand the “why” behind them and instead focus on compliance. They have difficulty adapting instructional resources and strategies to meet the specific needs of individual students.

**Takeaway:**

Additional resources and training are needed to fully implement literacy reform.

**4. High poverty/low performing schools face additional challenges in improving literacy instruction.**

High poverty and/or low performing schools often face additional challenges to improving literacy instruction, according to coaches who support these schools. These challenges include:

- New teachers on provisional certificates
- High teacher turnover
- Significant student behavioral needs

- Student attendance rates
- Inadequate resources to support literacy such as classroom libraries and materials to support professional learning

Coaches flagged the additional needs of teachers with provisional certificates including lacking foundational knowledge about how children learn, recommended instructional practices, and classroom management. These teachers need help developing core instructional practices across subjects and addressing student behavior, which are needs beyond the assistance literacy coaches should provide.

“ The new [teachers] that are coming in, some of them worked at FedEx last week. And so now we’re trying to teach them not just content but we’re also trying to teach them pedagogy. And so our kids are really at a loss, and we are not going to be able to see traction until we can find some balance with all of these mandated programs.

High teacher turnover can disrupt coaching and slow literacy reform. Some coaches have had to assume reading instruction in classes where teachers left mid-year or teaching positions were unfilled. Coaches also described working closely with new teachers and seeing significant growth in their literacy knowledge and skills, only to watch them move to schools with fewer poverty-related challenges, triggering a new cycle of teacher recruitment and training.

In schools identified for state or district intervention due to performance, the role of additional staff or consultants brought in to support improvement, including those from RESAs and the Georgia Department of Education, can be unclear. This causes uncertainty among teachers and coaches.

These issues do not exist in every high poverty/low performing school, but they raise barriers to improving teaching and learning in some schools.

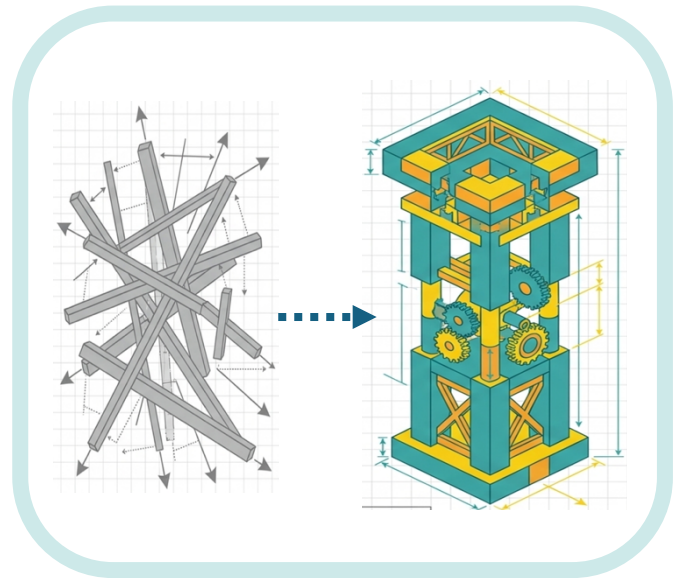
**Takeaway:**

Additional supports are needed for high poverty schools to reduce teacher turnover and address non-academic needs of the students, which can impede literacy reform.

## Recommendations

Historically, literacy coaching systems in Georgia have operated independently—often utilizing very different methods, expectations, and processes. House Bill 1193 presents an opportunity for restructuring these systems to unite the work of literacy coaching statewide.

This landscape analysis is the result of an extensive review of rich data sources that illuminate the current realities of literacy coaching. The recommendations that follow are grounded in the findings and represent the potential for leveraging the strengths of existing literacy coaching systems. These recommendations can help mitigate challenges and transform the work into an integrated network that provides consistent support for effective literacy coaching and instruction across all layers of Georgia’s literacy coaching ecosystem.



---

### 1. **Develop, share, and ensure adoption of a comprehensive definition of a literacy coach, and clearly delineate each coaching role and associated responsibilities.**

A clear and universal definition of a literacy coach will reduce uncertainty about their role and functions among teachers, school and district leaders, and even among coaches themselves. Extending the definition to include the specific roles and responsibilities of school-based coaches, regional literacy coaches, and literacy leadership coaches will set clear expectations for coaches, teachers and leaders at every level and facilitate

collaborative relationships among them. It will also curtail the frequency with which literacy coaches are assigned tasks that are not appropriate for their role, which consume their time and undermine their effectiveness.

### **Implications for Implementation**

To ensure the definition of a literacy coach informs coaches' practice as well as actions taken by school and district leaders to support coaches, it must be widely understood. This requires the definition to be embedded in training, resources, and other components of the literacy coaching system. It also requires systematic outreach and engagement to facilitate its adoption by stakeholders across the education sector, including those who are not directly engaged in the coaching system. Fostering broad acceptance and use of the literacy coach definition and support for coaches' work will also encourage widespread awareness of the need for and buy-in for literacy reform.

---

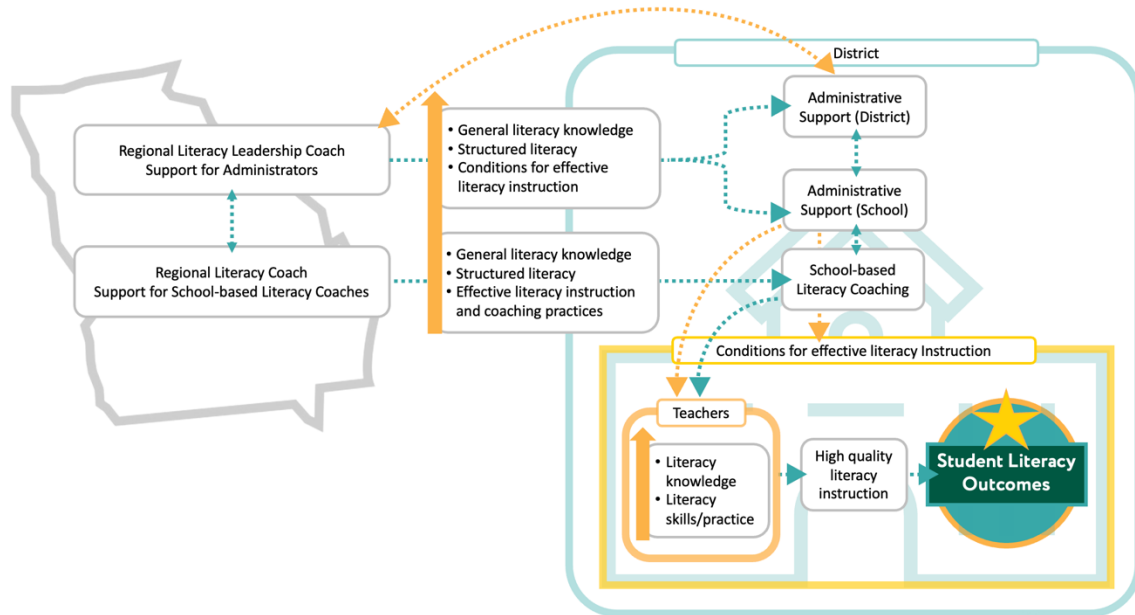
## **2. Develop a comprehensive approach to literacy coaching that is aligned across system levels to create an ecosystem of support.**

Building a cohesive, multi-layered comprehensive support network for literacy coaching ensures sustainable, high-quality instruction across all layers of the educational hierarchy. As illustrated in Figure 4, Regional Literacy Leadership Coaches will support administrative leaders at the district and school levels as they strive to create the conditions for effective literacy instruction. Regional Literacy Coaches will support newly established School-based Literacy Coaches to effectively support classroom teachers.

Outlining role-specific responsibilities and procedures will foster clarity and consistency for those working within the system. Literacy coaches across delivery levels must hold a common vision of structured literacy and student reading success, use common language to foster collective understanding of structured literacy, and have shared knowledge of and ability to apply effective literacy instruction and coaching strategies. These qualities enable literacy coaches to provide consistent and effective support to teachers and leaders across district and RESA boundaries. These must be cultivated through a comprehensive approach to literacy coaching that builds coaches' capacity and creates common processes

for them to engage with and strengthen educators at each level to improve literacy instruction.

**Figure 4.** *Comprehensive Support Network for Literacy Coaching*



### Implications for Implementation

We recommend a multi-stakeholder team with diverse experience and deep expertise in literacy instruction and coaching develop clear processes and resources to support effective implementation of all literacy coaching roles.

Regional Literacy Leadership Coaches and Regional Literacy Coaches will benefit from systematized supports and processes that define a clear path for engaging their respective administrative leadership and teacher partners. School-based literacy coaches will likewise benefit from clarity surrounding the coaching processes and skills necessary to effectively support teachers. Coaches will benefit from menus of support services aligned to their specific roles supplemented with guidelines, processes, and resources for providing those services. For example, if a menu of support services for a school-based coach includes supporting teachers to analyze student data to inform instruction, there should be guidelines for conducting the conversation and supporting teachers through the process, including necessary templates for gathering the data and documenting the analysis and decisions made.

Rubrics, observation protocols, and assessment tools can also play an essential role by clearly outlining the qualities and actions of effective literacy coaches who implement these services. These tools should be developed so they can distinguish between varied levels of knowledge, experience, and implementation and benefit coaches of all abilities. The resulting formative data could then be used in multiple ways: to support reflective practices for continuous improvement, to guide professional learning, to provide differentiated support, and to provide data for use in impact evaluations.

These recommendations are supported by research on literacy coaching. In one example, a study of the *Mississippi Building Blocks* program developed clear guidelines for coaching and effective classroom implementation of the model. Coaches were monitored for fidelity to coaching aspects of the model three times per year. Teacher fidelity to instructional aspects of the model was also monitored. As a result, adherence to procedures, duration, and quality of delivery were found to improve with each observation, producing medium-large effects on student outcomes (Arteaga et al., 2019).

---

### 3. Develop new or adapt existing tools to facilitate processes that support coaches' engagement and collaborative work with districts, schools, and teachers.

It is necessary to develop common tools to facilitate the processes that will support coaches' engagement and guide their collaborative work with districts, schools, and teachers. Common tools support consistency across varied contexts and make literacy coaching easier and more efficient. Some tools will need to be developed; some tools used by existing state literacy coaching systems could be used as-is or adapted. Some notable tools include the following:

- Let's Read Georgia coaching system developed a Coaching Guide that provides essential information on models of reading such as Scarborough's Rope and the Active View of Reading. The guide establishes definitions for each component of the Scarborough's Rope model, their importance to the reading process, and how teachers can support development. **Adaptation:** Expand the guide to include comprehensive guidance for School-based Literacy Coaches.

- The Growing Readers coaching system developed guidelines to support effective coaching “rounds.” Rounds are a series of contacts with teachers that focus on current implementation expectations and indicators. The guide clearly delineates the critical components for each round. **Adaptation:** Establish clear protocols and implementation indicators for literacy coaching rounds to support consistent literacy coaching practices and targeted teacher support across settings.
- The CSI structured literacy coaching system developed a Structured Reading Block Screening Tool and associated training that helps to gauge the presence of essential elements within a comprehensive literacy instruction block. **Adaptation:** Expand the screening tool to include a measure of student engagement.

### **Implications for Implementation**

Qualitative interviews were valuable for highlighting tools that could help coaches conduct their work more consistently, effectively, and efficiently. Table 2 provides a working list of tools that could be developed to address identified challenges.

---

**Table 2. Implementation Challenges and Suggested Tools**

Challenge	Tool
Installing new School-based Literacy Coaches and regional coaching supports requires an intentional rollout plan.	<p><b>Implementation Plan</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure clarity, encourage buy-in and feedback during the implementation process.</li> </ul>
Different coaching roles require different skills and coaching components.	<p><b>Rubrics</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide guidance for each coaching role and formative data for continuous improvement:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Regional Leadership Literacy Coaches’ work with administrative leaders</li> <li>○ Regional Coaches’ work with School-based Literacy Coaches</li> <li>○ School-based Literacy Coaches’ work with teachers</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Different coaching roles require different approaches.	<p><b>Consultation Protocols</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that coaches use appropriate guiding questions.</li> <li>• Provide clarity to districts and schools regarding literacy coaching processes.</li> <li>• Provide guidance for how to identify and provide more individualized services.</li> </ul>
Administrative leaders and teachers don’t always know the services available to them.	<p><b>Menu of Services</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide an array of services differentiated by coaching role and help districts, schools, and teachers understand how coaches can assist them.</li> </ul>
Planning tools differ across current systems, making it hard to evaluate coaching statewide.	<p><b>Common Coaching Support Plan Templates</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide a common tool to capture annual coaching support goals and activities and monitor progress towards goals.</li> </ul>
Perceived expectations between schools, districts, and coaches can differ or are unclear.	<p><b>Coach/District and Coach/School Agreement Templates</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outline the annual commitments coaches, districts, and schools make to collaboratively implement the Coaching Support Plan.</li> <li>• Include quarterly meetings (or other routine communication mechanisms) to monitor progress and adjust agreement as needed.</li> </ul>

<p>Coaches need guidance to help prioritize their work and plan their time.</p>	<p><b>Coaching Frameworks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop tools to guide coaching work. For example, the CSI coaching system has developed the following tools that could be used or adapted: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ CSI Structured Literacy Block Action Step</li> <li>○ Observation Screening Tool</li> <li>○ Sample Weekly Schedule</li> <li>○ Coaching Menu</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p>A standardized, universally implemented log of literacy coaching services (e.g., hours spent working directly with teachers) is needed to support high quality implementation of literacy coaching. *</p>	<p><b>Coaching Activity Log</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Log how literacy coaches spend their time to understand what literacy coaching activities are being conducted; use the data to understand what activities have the most impact on improved literacy instruction and students' literacy outcomes.</li> </ul>

\*CSI coaches completed a log to document their time and results showed that more time spent coaching teachers supported better student outcomes. This aligns with research that the number of literacy coaching hours received by a teacher predicted students' reading achievement (Elish-Piper & l'Allier, 2007).

#### **4. Develop guidebooks and training for coaches and educators to support implementation of state-approved high quality instructional materials (HQIMs) to ensure alignment with state standards, structured literacy, and the science of reading.**

Creating guidebooks that map how each state-approved HQIM aligns with Georgia’s K-12 English Language Arts Standards and provide examples of lesson plans that integrate structured literacy instructional strategies will provide a valuable resource for literacy coaches as well as teachers, curriculum directors, and other educators who support literacy instruction. Guidebooks reduce the need for each literacy coach to do this work on their own, building efficiency into the system and enabling them to focus on tailoring information to the specific context and needs of the teachers in their districts.

Supplemental training on using the guidebooks and aligning HQIMs with performance standards and structured literacy practices would provide an additional layer of support, help identify challenges, and facilitate consistent statewide implementation.

#### **Implications for Implementation**

The guidebooks and supplemental training can be developed through a collaborative process, which brings together literacy coaches, curriculum experts, and teachers. This approach leverages their collective expertise, extending the contribution of individual coaches or other educators. Where applicable, existing high-quality resources can also be leveraged. For example, GaDOE’s ELA Playbook is an existing resource that could be used as-is or modified to fit the current purpose.

Fulton County Schools developed a similar resource, the English Language Arts (ELA) spiral, to assist their literacy coaches and teachers after they struggled implementing the district’s new HQIM (Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education, 2024). The district’s ELA team supplemented the information in the ELA spiral by hosting virtual sessions with teachers on the HQIM, encouraging teachers to ask questions about content and implementation. The Fulton ELA team also provided additional professional development to literacy coaches, who were in every elementary school, to help them integrate all

elements and support teachers. Fulton’s ELA spiral and other supporting activities could serve as a model for regional literacy coaches.

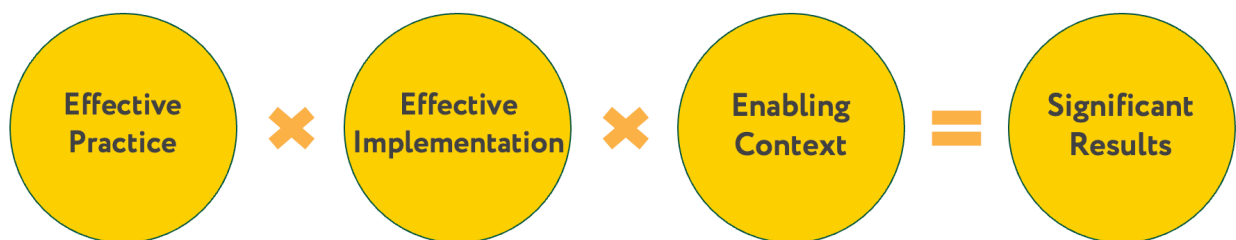
---

**5. Develop a structured implementation rollout that cultivates open communication and engagement across system levels to ensure effective literacy strategies become a natural part of teachers’ daily practice.**

Based on the research by Greenhalgh and colleagues, less successful or unsuccessful implementation efforts are limited to distributing information and materials to practitioners, which *Lets Implementation Happen*. More focused efforts share information and materials with targeted groups, which *Helps Implementation Happen*. In contrast, highly intentional implementation uses strategies that support full adoption and integration to *Make Implementation Happen* (Greenhalgh et al., 2004).

Successful implementation of Georgia’s statewide school-based literacy coaching will benefit from additional supports beyond the initial steps of hiring and assigning literacy coaches. An intentional rollout provides the blueprint for the school-based literacy coach to be wholeheartedly adopted and seamlessly integrated into a school’s daily workflow. This foundation of wrap-around support fosters a shared vision that bridges the gap between district goals and school-level realities. The Active Implementation Framework shows how these efforts work together (Figure 5; State Implementation and Scaling-up of Evidence-based Practices, n.d.). The impact of effective practice (literacy coaching that supports effective literacy instruction) is multiplied when it is supplemented by efforts to ensure effective implementation in enabling contexts.

**Figure 5.** *Active Implementation Framework*



Literacy coaches will flourish when they are robustly supported with ongoing professional learning and provided with resources to guide and streamline their work. These conditions will drive high levels of authentic engagement and deliver transformative changes in literacy instruction that substantially improve literacy proficiency for Georgia students.

### **Implications for Implementation**

All elementary schools serving K-3 students will now have the opportunity to hire a school-based literacy coach, constituting a “full-scale rollout” of school-based literacy coaching. According to the research on implementation science, such full-scale implementation carries some level of risk that careful planning can help mitigate. However, research supports the investment that Georgia has made to provide greater support in the form of statewide literacy coaching. Developing a strong rollout plan will support the success of the initiative.

In this initial implementation stage, school-based literacy coaching is likely to be new in many contexts and to many individuals. Even for experienced literacy coaches already working in the system, implementing the processes and procedures of the recommended comprehensive approach will involve a learning curve. Administrative leaders also have varied levels of experience and involvement with effectively utilizing literacy coaches. The National Implementation Research Network (NIRN) advises that, ...”Establishing and sustaining changes to the point of integration into daily work is not likely unless there is external support for change at the practice level (Joyce & Showers, 2002), organization level (Aladjem & Borman, 2006; Nord & Tucker, 1987), and system level (Schofield, 2004).” (2015a, p. 16). In the proposed comprehensive support network for literacy coaching (Figure 4, page 28), Regional Literacy Coaches support change at the practice level through their work with School-based Literacy Coaches while Regional Leadership Literacy Coaches support change at the organization (school) and system (district) levels. An Implementation Team should also be convened to provide overarching implementation support and guide continuous improvement cycles that build and strengthen the entire literacy coaching ecosystem.

It is essential to ensure that the processes and procedures of the comprehensive support network are producing measured improvements to literacy coaching, literacy instruction,

and students' literacy outcomes, and that necessary changes are made to boost results when necessary (NIRN, 2015a). The Implementation Stages Planning Tool (NIRN, 2020) and Implementation Planning Teams Overview (NIRN, 2015b) and associated resources are examples of existing tools that can help support the work of such a team.

Effective, sustained implementation takes time and sustained attention to ensure the achievement of desired outcomes.

---

## **6. Develop a comprehensive approach to reducing teacher turnover in high poverty schools to support improved literacy instruction.**

State leaders should develop and implement a comprehensive plan to improve support for and reduce attrition among teachers in high poverty schools. Coaches report a growing number of teachers who are teaching with provisional certificates. Often these teachers lack foundational knowledge about how children learn, basic instructional strategies, and classroom management strategies. New teachers who have earned certification can also benefit from additional support to learn how to respond to the additional issues that schools serving high percentages of economically disadvantaged students often experience. Coaches' descriptions are affirmed by data from the Governor's Office of Student Achievement, which indicates that high poverty schools have higher percentages of new teachers and lower percentage of teachers with advanced degrees (Governor's Office of Student Achievement, 2025).

### **Implications for Implementation**

Improving teacher retention requires multiple integrated strategies, which may include:

- **Providing technical support and funding to assist districts implement robust, multi-year induction support for new teachers in high poverty schools.** High-quality induction programs improve teacher retention (Ingersoll, 2012). The Georgia Department of Education developed research-based [guidance](#) to support districts in developing and implementing high quality induction programs, which include support from trained mentors, organizational structures that support mentors and new teachers, ongoing performance evaluation, and professional learning. However,

dedicated funding for teacher induction is not provided, and districts vary in their capacity to implement and sustain high quality teacher induction.

- **Tracking and reporting data on teacher retention in high poverty schools and districts.** Georgia's education agencies collect and report valuable data on the state's educator workforce. However, regularly reported data does not include information on teacher retention in high poverty schools and districts. This constrains the ability of state and district leaders to identify schools in need of support, develop targeted solutions, and monitor progress,
- **Enhancing compensation packages for teachers in high poverty schools.** Providing financial incentives for teachers in hard-to-staff schools improve retention (Feng & Sass, 2017). These incentives may include retention supplements and loan forgiveness programs.



## Conclusion

Georgia stands at a crossroads in literacy reform. Lawmakers crafted and passed legislation that laid out the urgent and necessary goal of ensuring all students in Georgia become proficient readers. Resources committed to help attain this goal included three cadres of state-level literacy coaches, teacher training, high quality instructional materials, universal reading screeners, and tiered reading support plans.

This landscape analysis was initiated to map literacy coaching resources in each of the three state systems, identify areas to unify and strengthen the existing systems, and recommend scalable improvements. A key finding was that each of the three state-level literacy coaching systems have supported educators' understanding and use of resources in distinct ways—often utilizing very different methods, expectations, and processes. House Bill 1193, the Georgia Early Literacy Act of 2026, presents an opportunity to unify the work of literacy coaching statewide. Specifically, the new legislation brings greater cohesion and collaboration to existing efforts and establishes literacy coaches as the glue that binds these components to provide a foundation that makes improving literacy instruction in every K-3 classroom more achievable. Layers of literacy coaching support—school-based literacy coaches, regional literacy coaches, and regional leadership literacy coaches—constitute a strong literacy coaching ecosystem that provides necessary support to each tier of coaches and engages the leaders and teachers who collaborate with them.

The recommendations in this report complement the new legislation by outlining a foundational blueprint for change supported by intentional, continuous improvement, and evaluation. Each layer of the ecosystem should include necessary mechanisms for establishing that key drivers are implemented as intended. Each layer should also include assessment tools and reflective processes that can be used for making data-informed refinements as needed.

Georgia is on the cusp of transforming literacy instruction and is positioned to become a national model. Grounded in the findings of this landscape analysis, the unified systematic literacy coaching ecosystem envisioned in this report can propel this transformation forward, ensuring effective literacy instruction and thriving student readers statewide.

## Appendices

### Appendix A: Let's Read Georgia Snapshot

Regional Education Service Agencies (RESAs) launched Let's Read Georgia (LRG) in the summer of 2024 at the request of state lawmakers, who recognized that teachers need ongoing support and guidance to implement structured literacy as required by the Georgia Early Literacy Act of 2023. Legislators asked the RESA executive directors to design a literacy coaching program with the aim of making coaching support available to all school districts and state charter schools, and they provided \$6 million to do so.



The RESA Executive Directors convened a design team led by two of their members to develop LRG and joined by RESA staff with expertise in literacy and coaching. The group worked quickly to roll out the LRG coaching program two months later. In its first year, LRG was staffed with 64 full- and part-time literacy coaches, who were distributed across RESAs based on the number of elementary schools in each region. In spring 2025, legislators boosted funding to \$13.3 million to double the number of literacy coaches in LRG's second year. LRG continues to evolve through both the design team's process of deliberate reflection and continuous improvement as well as staffing increases.

#### Program Structure

LRG has a flexible approach that enables LRG coaches to address specific needs of individual districts. LRG coaches engage district leaders to determine if their assistance is needed. Some districts have designed and implemented systems of coaching support for teachers and concluded they do not need help from LRG coaches. For districts that want assistance, LRG coaches follow a protocol with district leaders to collaboratively develop a support plan.

LRG coaches work primarily with two groups: instructional coaches who serve one or more schools in their district and, in districts that do not have instructional coaches, with

teachers. How LRG coaches work with these groups varies based on districts' individual plans. Activities LRG coaches undertake include:

- Deliver professional learning in structured literacy
- Facilitate collaborative planning to effectively implement structured literacy
- Conduct walkthroughs to assist instructional coaches, administrators, and teachers to identify effective instructional practices
- Model and/or co-teach lessons in structured literacy
- Observe and provide feedback on coaching and instructional practices
- Provide additional resources and materials

District needs guide how LRG coaches undertake these activities. In some districts, for example, LRG coaches design and deliver professional learning to all instructional coaches in elementary schools. In others, they provide one-on-one support to coaches in schools identified by district leaders as needing additional support. Similarly, LRG coaches may work with individual teachers or groups of teachers depending on the specific needs of schools and districts. If an LRG coach is asked to support individual schools, they typically work with principals to design a work plan that aligns with the schools' literacy goals and needs.

The frequency and amount of time LRG coaches spend in their assigned districts and schools is based on district and school needs and coaches' availability. In districts with robust internal support for implementation of structured literacy, LRG coaches may visit several times a month, but in districts without instructional coaches and many high-need students, LRG coaches may be in schools one or more days per week.

A core activity undertaken by all LRG coaches is organizing and leading interactive read-aloud sessions in schools. The sessions serve multiple purposes. They provide an opportunity for LRG coaches to demonstrate effective read aloud techniques for teachers. They can serve as the centerpiece for broader efforts to engage families and community members in reading. Read-alouds can also be the non-threatening nudge that spurs a hesitant teacher or administrator to engage with an LRG coach to support the development of a positive relationship between the coach and the educator.

## Administrator Role

School and district administrators do not have a prescribed role in LRG, nor is there a consistent process within LRG to communicate with administrators. However, LRG coaches seek to communicate regularly with school and district leaders on progress implementing the work plan.

## Recruiting & Hiring LRG Coaches

LRG coaches are hired by RESA directors, often in collaboration with staff members with expertise in literacy and instruction.

## Training & Support for LRG Coaches

LRG incorporates ongoing and frequent professional learning for coaches led by the design team and at times incorporating external experts in the field. The design team regularly solicits feedback from coaches on the training sessions and adjusts content and format to ensure the sessions align with coaches' needs.

1. *Summer institute.* LRG coaches meet for a multi-day session to examine issues related to coaching and structured literacy. In year two of the program, new coaches met for a one-day training session prior to the institute.
2. *Quarterly meetings.* LRG coaches meet for quarterly two-day trainings during the year with a continued focus on coaching and structured literacy. The meetings provide training for all coaches in key topics as well as small group sessions that enable coaches to focus on specific areas of interest or need.
3. *Monthly virtual meetings.* LRG coaches meet monthly for a virtual professional learning session.

LRG coaches are also required to earn a micro-credential in literacy coaching. As part of the credentialing process, new coaches film a professional development session they lead as well as a pre- and post-coaching conference with an individual teacher. The new coaches analyze these sessions and share their analysis and videos with the LRG lead coach, who also reviews them and provides feedback to new coaches. The lead coach also meets with each LRG coach three times a year to review data, track progress and provide

support the coaches need. The lead coach is also available to support individual coaches if challenges arise, which can include in-person visits in the field to observe and provide feedback and support.

## Appendix B: Growing Readers Snapshot

Growing Readers (GR) was launched by Regional Education Service Agencies (RESAs) in collaboration with the Governor's Office of Student Achievement (GOSA) in the 2015-2016 school year at the request of then-Governor Nathan Deal. He sought an intervention to improve literacy instruction that could be implemented consistently across



Georgia's 180 school districts. The program's aim is to provide high quality and replicable professional learning and coaching support to elementary school teachers to increase the number of third grade students reading on grade level.

GR is guided by a design team comprised of RESA-based educators with expertise in literacy and coaching. It has evolved since its launch based on the design team's monitoring of and aligning the program with research on effective literacy instruction and ongoing review to improve program design and implementation. This includes a shift to structured literacy during the 2021-2023 program cycle. In its early years, GR targeted low performing elementary schools, but with the development of the CSI coaching system for Title I schools in the lowest performing five percent, it is now available to any school or district. Teacher participation was initially limited to grades K-3 but has been expanded to K-5.

### Program Structure

GR is a two-year program that provides intensive professional learning and one-on-one coaching to teachers. School and district leaders apply to have a cohort of teachers participate in the program. Typically, two teachers per grade level participate from each school, but the program accommodates small schools with fewer teachers.

The program is implemented over four semesters, which follow the same structural format. Each begins with a two-day professional learning session for participating teachers, which is led by GR coaches, called specialists. Sessions are held within each RESA, bringing together the participating teachers from that region, and have four content areas:

1. Reading process, which includes structured literacy, active reading, bridging processes, self-regulation and other key components
2. Learning environment, which addresses how teachers organize instruction, including whole group, small group, and one-on-one instruction and independent application of reading skills, as well as issues affecting students' physical and emotional well-being
3. Instructional planning and differentiation for individual and small groups, which examines what the characteristics of effective instruction in each setting
4. Assessment, which explores how to use formal and informal assessments to make decisions about teaching and learning

Content areas are consistent across the four semesters, with teachers deepening examination of content areas at each successive session. Specialists and teachers also set expectations for specific practices from the content areas as the focus of the coaching cycles following the professional learning sessions.

Each specialist supports 24 teachers in up to four schools. Throughout each of the four annual coaching cycles, the specialist conducts a minimum of two coaching rounds with every teacher, which take place over several days and professional contacts. During these rounds, the specialist reviews professional learning content and models or co-teaches identified practices to provide educators with actionable feedback. In addition to these standard rounds, the specialist provides differentiated contacts based on data to provide targeted support to teachers.

Specialists also support instructional coaches in participating schools that employ them. They provide professional learning to the coaches and include them in the coaching cycles, modeling coaching strategies, and helping coaches create a framework for coaching. Engaging instructional coaches strengthens their ability to serve as a resource for teachers and help sustain and support the replication of GR instructional strategies.

Over the program's two years, specialists lead six data meetings with teachers and, if available, coaches in each school. The objective of these meetings is to enable teachers and coaches to set goals, develop action steps, and monitor progress.

## **Administrator Role**

School and district leaders must agree to support the implementation of GR. School administrators attend a half day leadership session each year and participate in annual learning walks in which the GR specialist guides leaders through an observation of participating teachers. Administrators can observe changes in teachers' practice, build their knowledge of the practices they should see, and gather information to help them develop next steps for their schools. District administrators are also invited to the learning walks. Specialists communicate regularly with school administrators on progress and upcoming work.

## **Recruiting & Hiring GR Specialists**

GR specialists are hired by RESA directors, often in collaboration with staff members with expertise in literacy and instruction. New GR specialists are often teachers or instructional coaches who previously participated in GR.

## **Training & Support for Specialists**

GR incorporates ongoing and frequent professional learning for specialists. Outside the GR structure, specialists are often provided additional training opportunities through their RESAs. Design team members also visit each specialist to observe their coaching practice, provide feedback for improvement, and offer coaching and other support as needed. In addition, each specialist has a growth plan to guide their continued development.

1. *Professional learning sessions.* GR specialists meet nearly every month of the school year for professional learning sessions. Two sessions *include* content that specialists subsequently deliver to teachers in training sessions at the start of each semester. While the sessions' focus areas are consistent, the GR design team reviews the content for each and revises it based on new research and feedback from specialists and participating teachers and coaches. Working through the content of the professional learning for teachers refreshes and deepens specialists' knowledge. It also helps specialists and the design team test and revise the strategies the specialists use to deliver content to teachers.

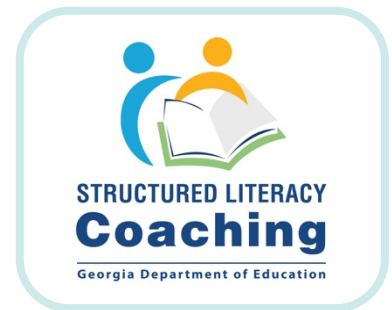
The design team develops additional professional learning sessions based on feedback from specialists, emerging needs and changing contexts, and new research. Sessions are led by the design team as well as external experts.

2. *Applying New Practices.* Specialists are expected to continue developing their skills and be able to effectively apply the instructional strategies they coach teachers to implement. This expectation includes practicing new instructional strategies with students and new coaching strategies with teachers. To facilitate this process, the design team has developed a system for specialists to record themselves trying new strategies and share videos with colleagues for feedback.
3. *Mentors.* New specialists are matched with an experienced colleague who serves as a mentor who is available to be observed and to observe and provide feedback to the new specialist. New specialists are also encouraged to partner with their mentors or another colleague to lead professional learning sessions for teachers.

## Appendix C: CSI Literacy Coaches Snapshot

### *Structured Literacy Coaching in Comprehensive Support and Improvement Schools*

The Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) created the Structured Literacy Coaching initiative in spring 2024 to provide targeted literacy support to the lowest performing five percent of Title I elementary schools, which are known as Comprehensive Support and Improvement Schools or CSI schools. Under the initiative, CSI elementary schools receive funding and support for a full-time literacy coach for three years. The full-time literacy coach delivers intensive coaching assistance to teachers in kindergarten through third grade to support the implementation of structured literacy and help more students become proficient readers.



The State Literacy Coaching Coordinator at GaDOE led the initiative. This individual previously helped design and implement a comprehensive system of support for literacy coaches in Marietta City Schools, an essential component of the district's broader effort to improve literacy instruction and student reading outcomes. With assistance from GaDOE's Office of School and District Improvement (SDI), the Division of Teaching and Learning, and GaDOE's director of literacy, a structure for the CSI literacy coaching initiative was quickly created and rolled out in July 2024.

In its first year, literacy coaches served 60 CSI elementary schools across Georgia. The coaches are funded with federal funds allocated to GaDOE.

### **Program Structure**

The CSI literacy coaching initiative is embedded within GaDOE's school improvement framework, which aims to help school and district leaders strengthen the systems that support teaching and learning. The coaching initiative has a consistent focus, processes, and tools for coaches' work across all CSI schools, which aligns with the overall approach the SDI team uses to assist CSI schools. The common focus—called an action step—for CSI coaches is the implementation of essential elements of the structured literacy

instructional block. The action step chart was created to help coaches and school leaders organize and set goals for the implementation of the literacy instructional block. An observation screening tool was also created for coaches to track teachers' progress in delivering instructional components of the literacy block and to identify specific areas where teachers need support from coaches.

Coaches' activities fall into six broad categories:

- Prep work, which includes analyzing data, planning professional learning, and reviewing instructional materials to help plan for and support instruction
- One-on-one coaching during which coaches provide individualized support to teachers such as modeling lessons, observing and providing feedback, and co-planning instruction
- Group professional learning, which includes leading training on structured literacy and facilitating collaborative data review
- Learning walks, which can be undertaken to gather data on multiple aspects of instruction and classroom needs
- "Coach collabs" during which coaches communicate with administrators on literacy-related issues including development and implementation of the school's literacy plan, support for teachers, and professional learning needs
- Coach professional learning, which includes professional learning, research and other activities coaches undertake to continue building their knowledge of and skills in structured literacy and coaching

Activities that coaches should not do were also defined, including delivering interventions to students with poor reading skills (unless to demonstrate the intervention or learn how to effectively apply it), providing literacy instruction, administering literacy screeners or other assessments, and evaluating teachers.

### **Administrator Role**

Principals are included in annual multi-day training with literacy coaches each summer, which provides opportunities to deepen their understanding of literacy coaching and structured literacy as well as to meet with other CSI principals around literacy. In addition,

principals and literacy coaches complete an annual Coach-Principal Partnership Agreement, which outlines expectations for each in supporting the implementation of structured literacy and coaching.

### **Recruiting & Hiring CSI Coaches**

CSI coaches are hired and supervised by principals of CSI schools and are employees of the districts in which they work. GaDOE developed the CSI coach job description, which principals used to recruit and hire the literacy coaches. Unless requested by CSI principals, GaDOE staff do not have a role in hiring literacy coaches.

### **Training & Support for Coaches**

Ongoing training and support is incorporated into the CSI literacy coaching initiative including:

- Annual statewide meeting, which brings together CSI literacy coaches, CSI principals, and GaDOE's SDI team for professional learning and planning
- Quarterly regional professional learning communities, which brings CSI coaches and their principals together within each of the CSI's four geographic regions for professional learning (these sessions include walkthroughs in individual CSI coaches' school and collaborative feedback and discussion)
- Weekly virtual professional learning communities, which include professional learning in structured literacy and coaching and open discussions on issues coaches raise
- One-on-one check-ins, which entail individualized support for each coach from Philmon (Initially the check-ins were weekly, but their frequency now vary based on the needs of each coach)

In addition, the State Literacy Coaching Coordinator visits most CSI schools and is on call to provide additional support as needed.

## Appendix D: Selected Data from Surveys

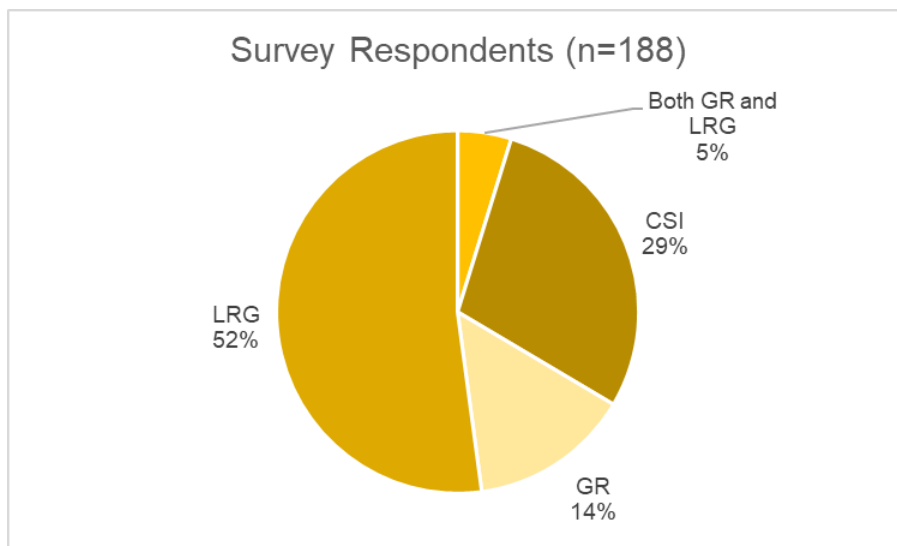
### State Coaches

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 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 State Literacy Coach 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).

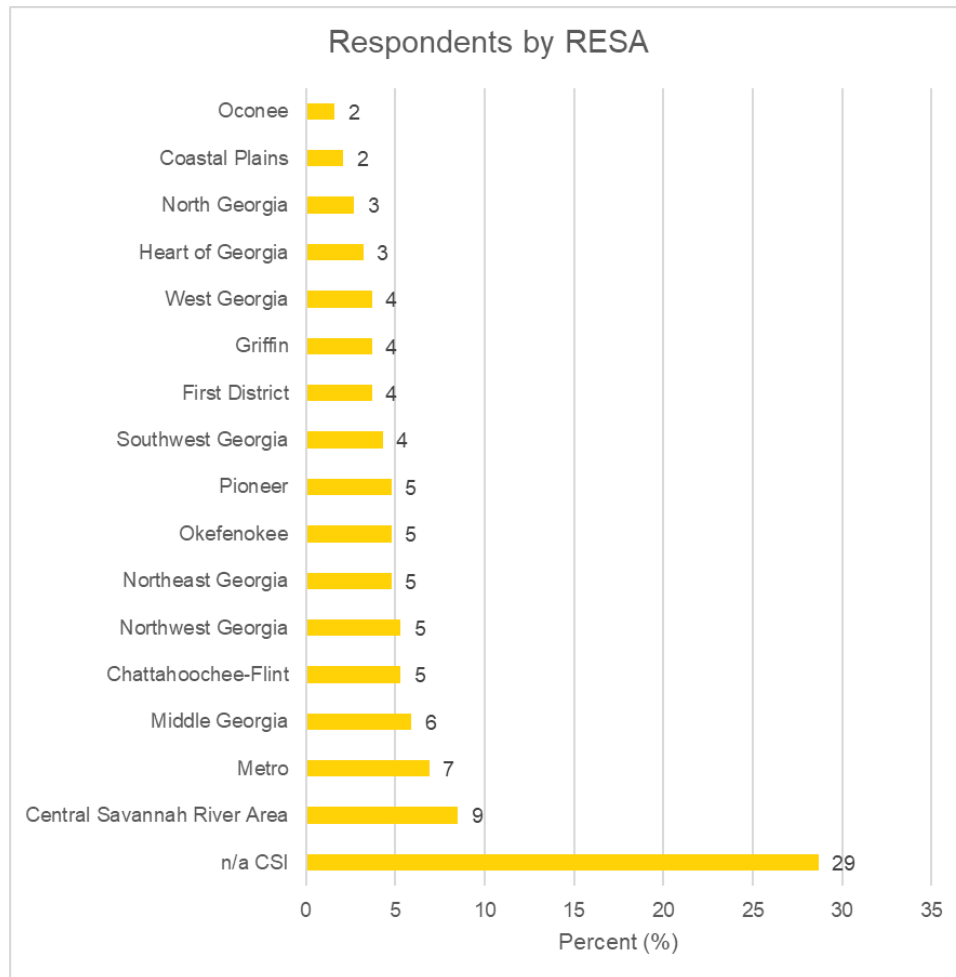
**Figure 1.** *Survey Respondent Distribution*



Together, respondents represent a highly experienced workforce with strong regional distribution. All coaches who responded to the survey 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).

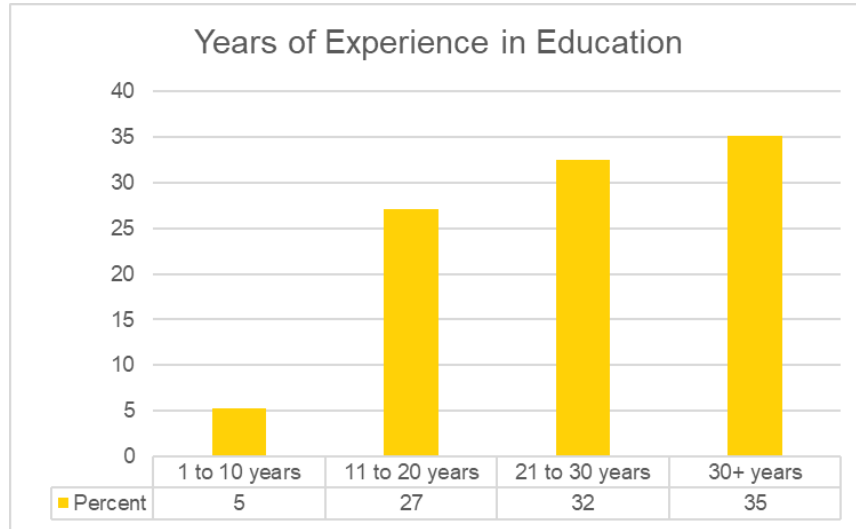
**Figure 2.** *Respondents by RESA*



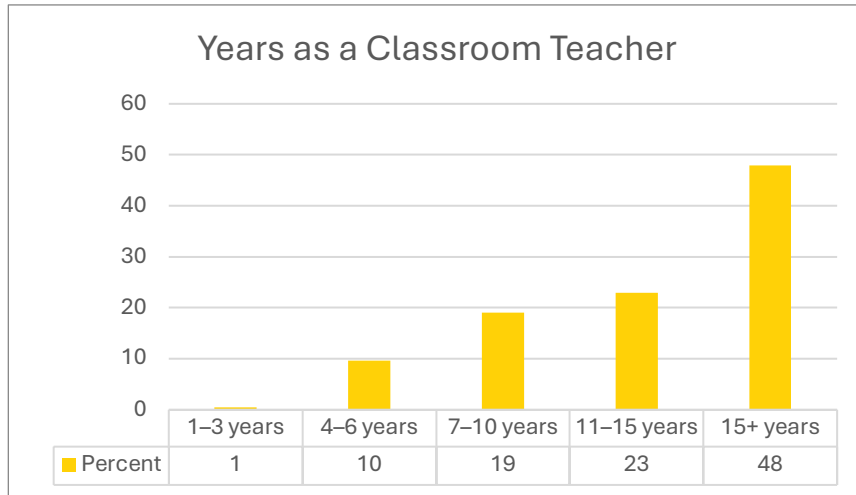
The quality and relevance of coaches’ preparation directly influences their ability to implement evidence-based literacy practices aligned with Georgia’s reforms.

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.

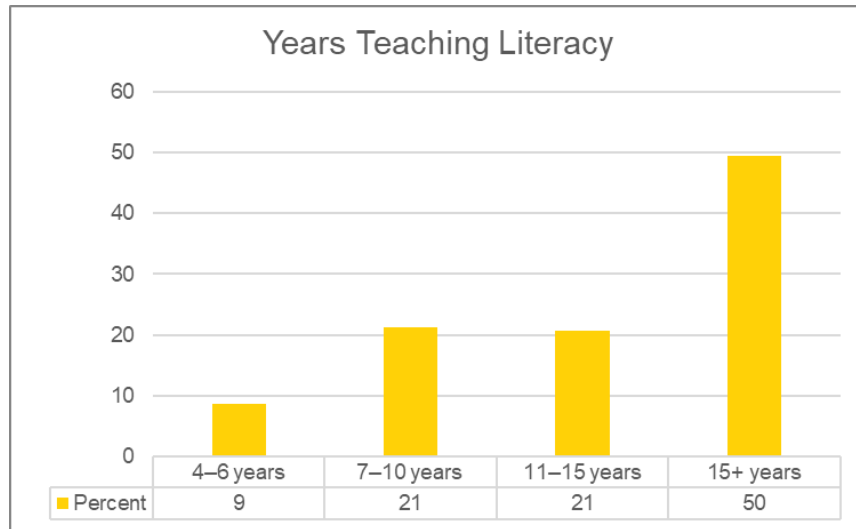
**Figure 3: Years of Experience.**



**Figure 4: Classroom Experience.**

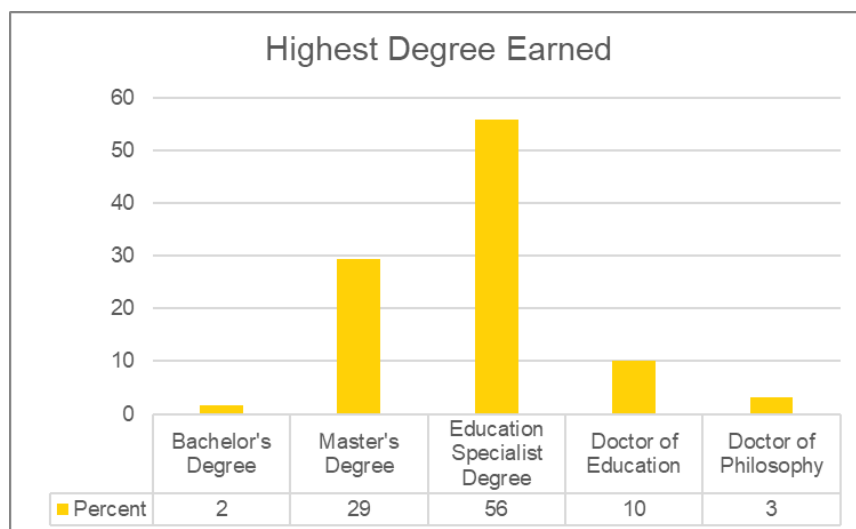


**Figure 5: Years Teaching Literacy.**



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).

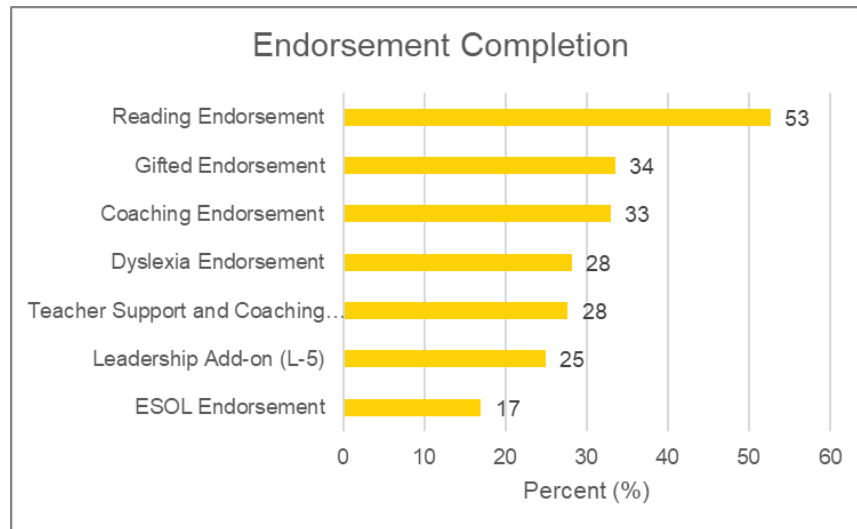
**Figure 6: Highest Degree Earned.**



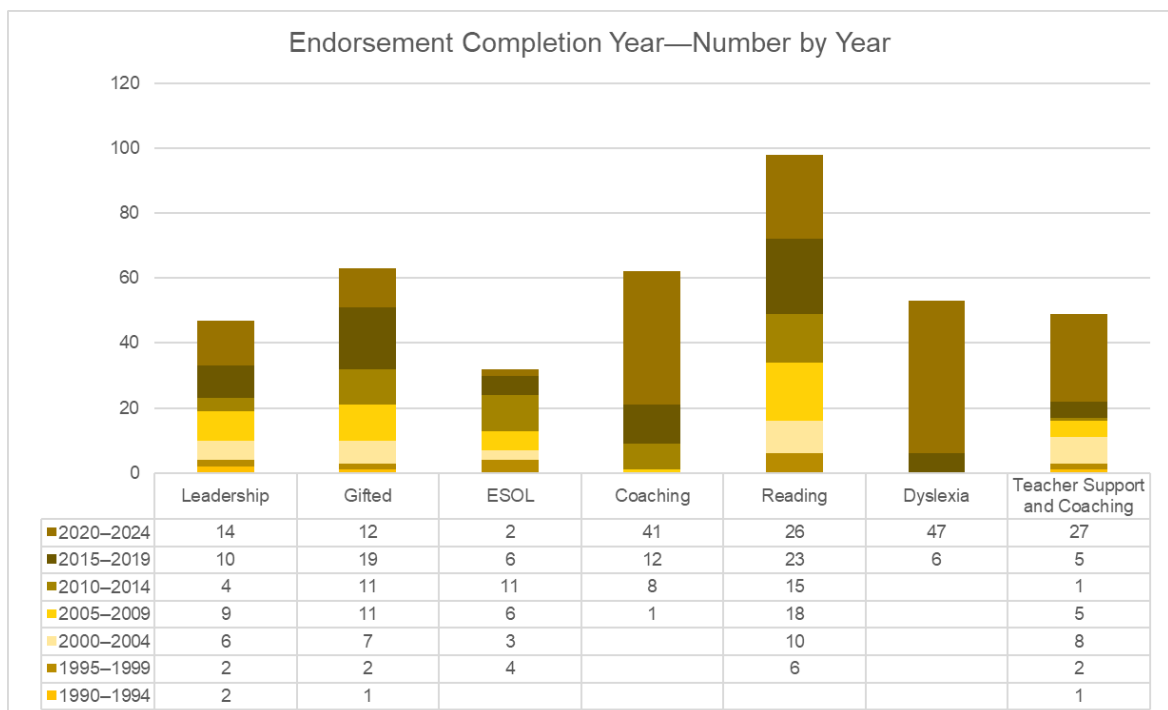
Endorsements further demonstrate specialization. The Reading Endorsement is the most prevalent, held by about half of respondents, followed closely by Gifted, Coaching, Dyslexia, Teacher Support and Coaching, Leadership Add-on (L-5), and ESOL

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 Completed.**

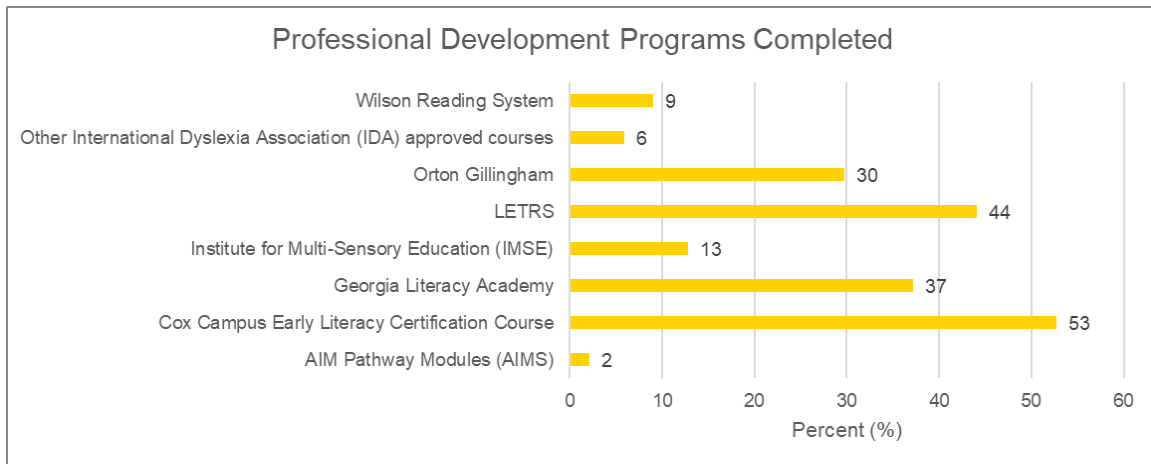


**Figure 8: Endorsement Completion Year.**

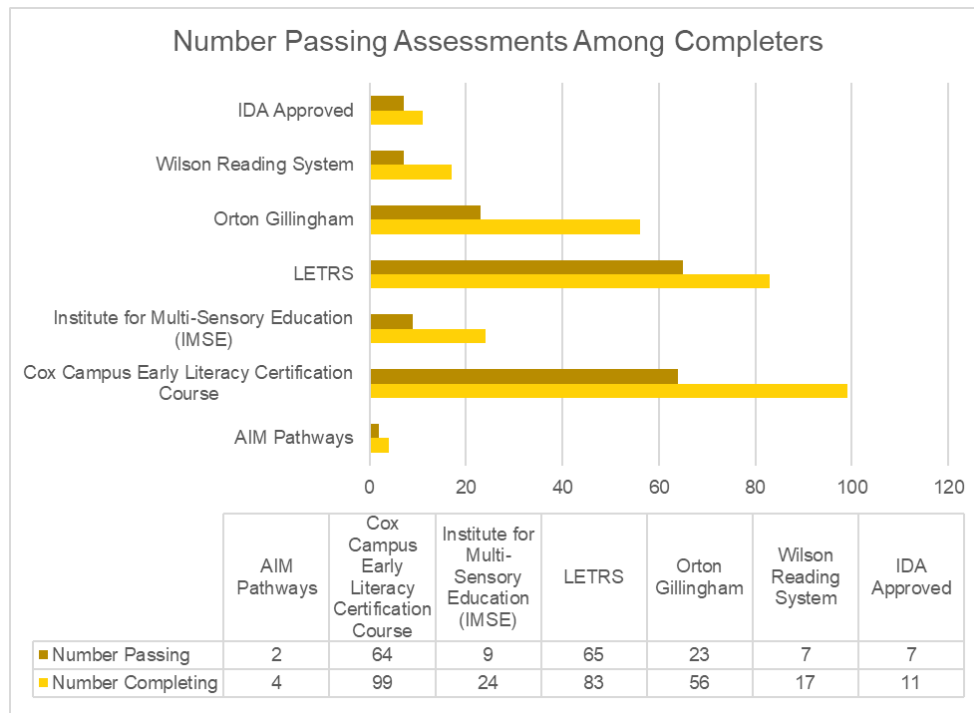


Professional development participation is strong and aligned with the science of reading. Coaches most frequently report completing the Cox Campus Early Literacy Certification Course, LETRS, Georgia Literacy Academy, and Orton-Gillingham training (Figure 9). Notably, nearly 80% of all completers have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

**Figure 9: Professional Development Programs Completed.**

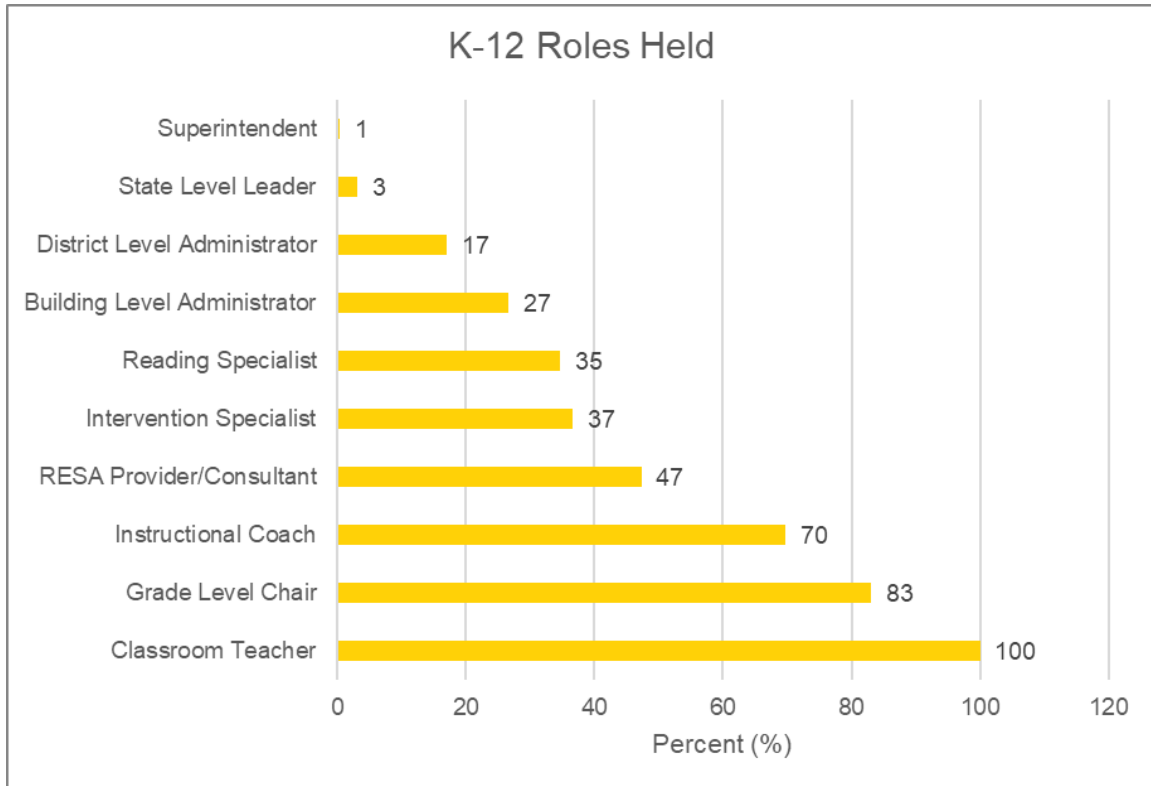


**Figure 10: Number Passing Assessments Among Completers.**



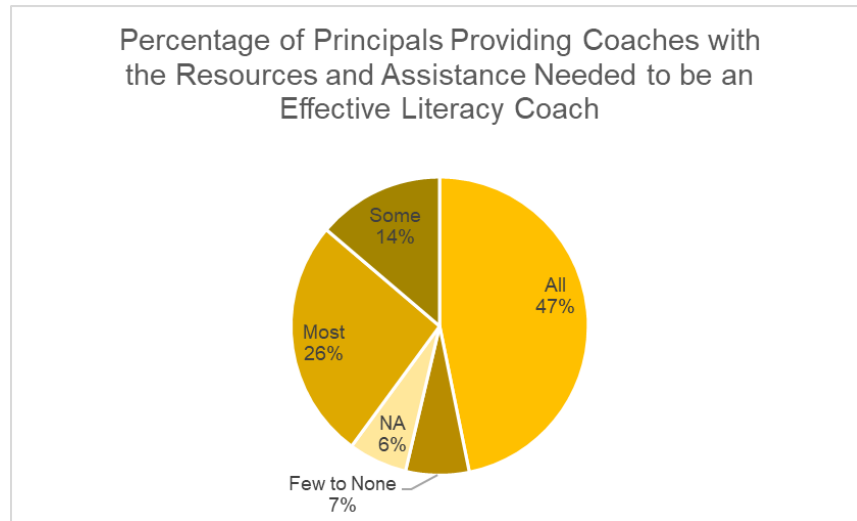
Past professional roles reinforce their depth of expertise. All have classroom teaching experience; large numbers have served as grade-level chairs, instructional coaches, intervention specialists, or reading specialists. Many have also worked as RESA providers or consultants, while smaller but important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

**Figure 11:** *K-12 Roles.*



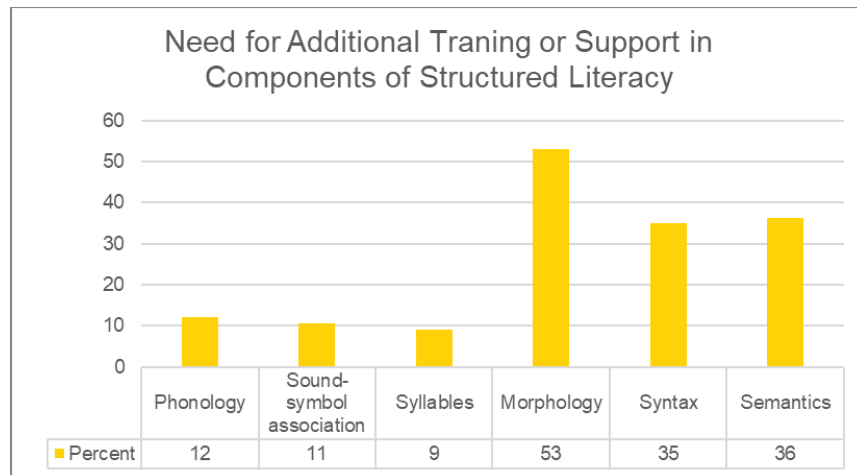
Support structures are generally positive, though not uniform. Three-quarters of coaches report access to a lead mentor or literacy expert who provides regular guidance. Just over half have constructed formal administrator-coach agreements in all their schools, while another quarter have them in some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

**Figure 12: Principal Support.**



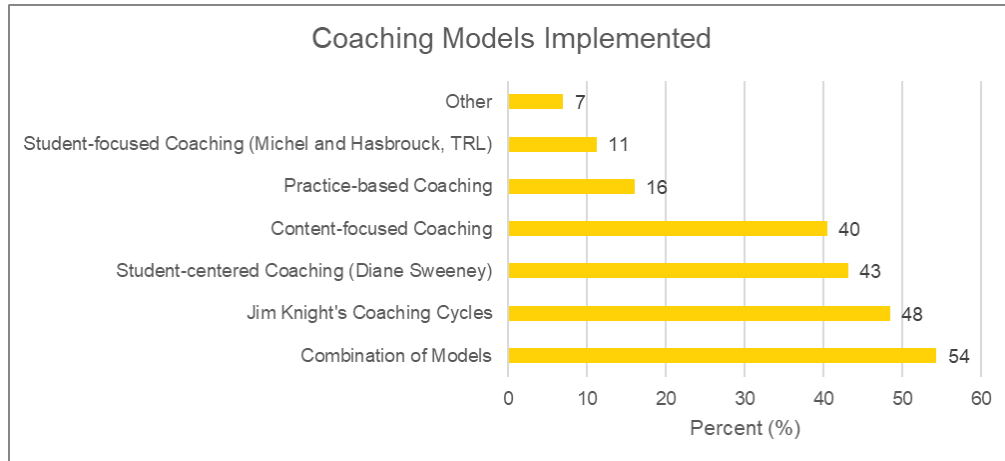
Coaches also identified specific areas within structured literacy components where they would welcome additional training. The most frequently requested topics were morphology, semantics, and syntax, followed at lower levels by phonology, sound-symbol association, and syllables—suggesting targeted opportunities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

**Figure 13: Training Needs.**



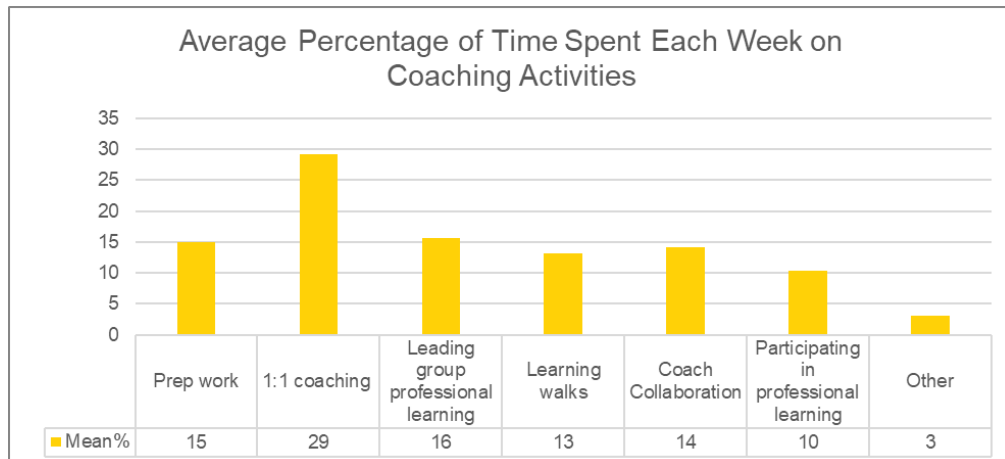
Coaches report using a mix of established models, with many drawing from multiple frameworks (Figure 14). The most common approach is a combination of models, followed closely by Jim Knight’s partnership-oriented coaching, student-centered coaching, and content-focused coaching. Smaller numbers emphasize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



## Appendix E: Relevant Research Literature

A narrative review was conducted to understand coaching practices supported by research evidence. This review methodology was used because the process is effective for providing an overview of a topic or area. In addition, a narrative review is flexible, allowing for extraction of a variety of content and information to provide a broad perspective, present theory and context, and provoke research-informed consideration of the literature. Scale for the Assessment of Narrative Review Articles (SANRA) expectations were considered throughout the conduct of the review (Baethge et al., 2019).

The narrative review was not time limited. The literature search was conducted in Academic Search Premier to extract articles using the search term “Literacy Coaching” and limiting results to peer reviewed work, excluding dissertations. The search returned 515 articles that were screened to determine whether they met at least one of the initial inclusion criteria:

- Presented an experimental study that included literacy coaching as an element and outcomes on teacher practices and/or student literacy outcomes
- Presented a qualitative study aligned with a theory of change and/or a defined coaching model
- Presented a review of literacy coaching effects
- Examined literacy coaching related to student outcomes
- Focused aspects of literacy coaching implementation
- Focused on literacy coaching policy

After initial screening of all 515 articles, a full text review of the 79 remaining were given to make a final determination that inclusion criteria were met. Articles were then categorized, and important findings extracted. Articles that included literacy coaching but did not mention impact on teacher or student outcomes were removed from the review, resulting in a final collection of 75 articles. Select findings from high quality research studies include:

- **Coaching supported implementation of programs with fidelity. Fidelity improved with each observation** (Amendum, 2014; Arteaga et al., 2019).

- **High and medium fidelity of implementation was associated with the highest student gains (compared to low fidelity of implementation (Helmer et al., 2011).**
- **Improved instruction supported by coaching improved student outcomes (Arteaga et al., 2019).**
- **Time was necessary for literacy coaching programs to take effect, with years of carefully monitored implementation resulting in better implementation and student outcomes (Atteberry & Brick, 2011; Biancarosa et al., 2010).**
- **Incorporating medial teaching practices (modeling, high amounts of practice to develop fluent practices) increased student outcomes (Brieske-Ulenski & Kelley, 2022).**
- **More coaching “dosage” was associated with better student outcomes (D’ Agostino et al., 2024).**
- **Conferencing, modeling lessons, discussing assessment results, and observing teachers predicted student outcomes (Elish-Piper & L’Allier, 2011).**
- **Keeping track of time held coaches accountable for working directly with teachers (Elish-Piper & L’Allier, 2011).**
- **Teachers previously categorized as “strong” moved to “average” when they didn’t receive coaching, highlighting how all teachers benefit from coaching (Hanno, 2022).**

## Appendix F: References

- Amendum, S. J. (2014). Embedded professional development and classroom-based early reading intervention: Early diagnostic reading intervention through coaching. *Reading & Writing Quarterly, 30*(4), 348–377.
- Arteaga, I., Thornburg, K., Darolia, R., & Hawks, J. (2019). Improving teacher practices with children under five: Experimental evidence from the Mississippi Buildings Blocks. *Evaluation Review, 43*(1/2), 41–76.
- Atteberry, A., & Bryk, A. S. (2011). Analyzing teacher participation in literacy coaching activities. *Elementary School Journal, 112*(2), 356–382.
- Baethge, C., Goldbeck-Wood, S., & Mertens, S. (2019). SANRA-a scale for the quality assessment of narrative review articles. *Research Integrity and Peer Review, 4*, 5.  
<https://doi.org/10.1186/s41073-019-0064-8>
- Biancarosa, G., Bryk, A. S., & Dexter, E. R. (2010). Assessing the value-added effects of literacy collaborative professional development on student learning. *Elementary School Journal, 111*(1), 7–34.
- Brieske-Ulenski, A., & Kelley, M. J. (2022). A fresh look at literacy coaching: Employing a clinical literacy coaching framework to improve literacy instruction and student achievement. *Reading Teacher, 76*(2), 235–241.
- Claessens, A., Duncan, G., & Engel, M. (2009). Kindergarten skills and fifth-grade achievement: Evidence from the ECLS-K. *Economics of Education Review, 28*(4), 415–427.
- D’Agostino, T., Guzmán, D. B., Perrin, P., Liberiste-Osirus, A., & Schuenke-Lucien, K. (2024). Explaining variation in treatment effects: An impact evaluation and mixed-methods study of variation in early grade reading program effects. *Comparative Education Review, 68*(1), 85–112.
- Elish-Piper, L., & L’Allier, S. K. (2011). Examining the relationship between literacy coaching and student reading gains in grades K-3. *Elementary School Journal, 112*(1), 83–106.

- Feng, L., & Sass, T.R. (2017). The impact of incentives to recruit and retain teachers in "hard-to-staff" subjects. *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, 37(1), 112-135.
- Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education. (2024). *CARES district case study: Rewriting how reading is taught*. [https://gpee.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/CARES-Impact-Case-Study-Literacy\\_Final\\_v3.pdf](https://gpee.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/CARES-Impact-Case-Study-Literacy_Final_v3.pdf)
- Governor's Office of Student Achievement. (2025). *2023 Georgia K-12 teacher & leader workforce report*.
- Greenhalgh, T., Robert, G., Macfarlane, F., Bate, P., & Kyriakidou, O. (2004). Diffusion of innovations in service organizations: systematic review and recommendations. *The Milbank Quarterly*, 82(4), 581-629.
- Hanno, E. C. (2022). Patterns of preschool educators' beliefs and practices over the course of a coaching intervention. *Journal of School Psychology*, 92, 96–120.
- Helmer, J., Bartlett, C., Wolgemuth, J. R., & Lea, T. (2011). Coaching (and) commitment: Linking ongoing professional development, quality teaching and student outcomes. *Professional Development in Education*, 37(2), 197–211.
- Hernandez, D. J. (2011). *Double jeopardy: How third-grade reading skills and poverty influence high school graduation*. Annie E. Casey Foundation.
- Ingersoll, R. (2012). Beginning teacher induction: What the data tell us. *Kappan*, 93(8), 47-51.
- International Literacy Association (2025) *Literacy glossary*. <https://www.literacyworldwide.org/get-resources/literacy-glossary>
- Lundetræ, K., Gabrielsen, E., & Mykletun, R. (2010). Do basic skills predict youth unemployment (16-to 24-year-olds) also when controlled for accomplished upper-secondary school? A cross-country comparison. *Journal of Education and Work*, 23(3), 233-254.
- Moody, K. C., Holzer 3rd, C. E., Roman, M. J., Paulsen, K. A., Freeman, D. H., Haynes, M., & James, T. N. (2000). Prevalence of dyslexia among Texas prison inmates. *Texas Medicine*, 96(6), 69-75.

National Center for Education Statistics (2024). *The nation's report card: 2024 reading snapshot report for Georgia grade 4.*

<https://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/subject/publications/stt2024/pdf/2024220GA4.pdf>

National Center for Education Statistics (2024). *The nation's report card: 2024 reading snapshot report for Georgia grade 8.*

<https://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/subject/publications/stt2024/pdf/2024220GA8.pdf>

National Implementation Research Network (2015a). *Implementation Stages Overview.*

<https://implementation.fpg.unc.edu/wp-content/uploads/Implementation-Stages-Overview.pdf>

National Implementation Research Network (2015b). *Implementation Teams Overview.*

<https://implementation.fpg.unc.edu/wp-content/uploads/Implementation-Teams-Overview-M3.pdf>

National Implementation Research Network (2020). *Implementation Stages Planning Tool.*

<https://implementation.fpg.unc.edu/wp-content/uploads/Implementation-Stages-Planning-Tool.v8-NIRN-only-Fillable.pdf>

State Implementation and Scaling-up of Evidence-based Practices (n.d.). *Active Implementation Hub.* <https://implementation.fpg.unc.edu/>

## Appendix G: Deal Center Team

**Kelly Chester**  
Georgia Literacy Coach

**Dr. Sharon Koon**  
Research Scientist

**Dr. Lindee Morgan**  
Executive Director

**Amy Reddick**  
Georgia Literacy Coach

**Lymaris Santana, Ed.D.**  
Data Collector

**Julie Sirmans**  
Program Manger

**Dr. Stephanie Snidarich**  
Implementation Scientist

**Claire Suggs**  
Qualitative & Policy Consultant

**Kimberly Youmans**  
Project Manager



