



Reading Railroad

Comprehensive Evaluation Report:

Year 1, Year 2, & Extension

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Introduction

Determined to improve literacy, the Winston-Salem Forsyth County Schools (WS/FCS) district stated goal is for all third graders to read on or above grade level by the year 2020. As a 2014 recipient of the Innovative Approaches to Literacy (IAL) grant, WS/FCS implemented *Reading Railroad* in an effort to meet this goal. *Reading Railroad* (RR) is a literacy-focused program intended to spark and encourage early interest in reading. Four elementary schools (Diggs-Latham, North Hills, Old Town, and Petree) across the WS/FCS district were enlisted to participate in the program.

The *Reading Railroad* (RR) program is based on an integrated systems approach to impact student and family literacy. Its design is such that the functionality of the school librarian, media coordinator, or more formally titled school library media coordinator (SLMC) is enhanced. The SLMC's traditional role as purveyor of resources has evolved into a facilitator role, supporting both students and teachers in more effectively using electronic and print resources, while also strategically engaging students and families in literacy activities.

As described in the IAL grant application, RR sought to foster a culture of literacy at home and in school to maximize literacy development and reading achievement of young children. Each child enrolled in Pre-Kindergarten (pre-K) classrooms at each RR school received an assortment of books for their home libraries, magazines for themselves and their family members, and an e-reader to share with their families. The e-readers brought a wide variety of engaging and culturally relevant e-books into the home. The grant included professional development opportunities for the media coordinators and teachers, as well as improving student access to literacy resources by improving the quality and quantity of materials in classrooms, homes, and school's media centers.

Reading Railroad's four program goals were as follows:

- 1) Pre-K students will increase their pre-literacy skills and enter kindergarten ready for reading success;
- 2) School librarian staff (& other key staff such as administrators, counselors, pre-K teachers, and parent involvement coordinators) will increase leadership capacity to maximize literacy development and reading achievement of young children, especially pre-K students;
- 3) Students will have increased access to quality print and electronic materials;
- 4) Parents & family will have increased engagement in literacy activities, increased use in personalized learning tools (such as e-readers), and increased ability to support literacy development in the home.

Though the overall program design is much more nuanced, the long-term desired impacts are to increase literacy skills of elementary students through the implementation of a comprehensive

plan to promote literacy development; and to increase functionality of school librarians and the media center as a resource for literacy.

RR was focused on the Absolute Priority of creating a high quality, innovative plan to promote literacy by connecting pre-K – 5 grade students and their families to the school librarian and media center as the hub of the project activities. Emphasis is placed upon early literacy instruction and engaging parents in supporting literacy in the home, especially in the pre-K population.

As described in the grant, three key activities were designed to help students develop literacy skills at all levels, and include:

- The continuous improvement of the schools' **media collection** by the purchase of high-quality print and electronic material for whole-school check out.
- An active **parent/family support curriculum** focused on providing opportunities for exposure and engagement in literacy activities with their children (i.e., author visits, magazine distribution, school-wide book giveaways, e-readers, family literacy book bags).
- A **SLMC leadership development curriculum** consisting of professional development focused on literacy and instruction, quarterly professional learning teams (PLTs) meetings, and financial support in attending professional conferences.

This evaluation document follows three complete years of program implementation (2014 – 15, 2015 – 16, and 2016 – 17, a no-cost extension year) at the four participating elementary schools. To investigate program implementation, a formative evaluation focused on the three key components (School Librarian Leadership Capacity, Print and Electronic Literacy Resources, and Parent/Family Literacy Support) and respective activities of the *RR* initiative. These evaluation activities were designed to provide on-going feedback of program implementation for continuous improvement. Additionally, a summative evaluation was conducted to determine each component's overall impact in achieving their respective goals and the overarching goal of improving student achievement outcomes.

The themes discussed in this comprehensive report are recognized to be most prevalent or significant for a literacy intervention program such as *Reading Railroad*. In addition, many segments include a "Lessons Learned" portion discussing considerations and/or solutions about program implementation, program operation, the evaluation, or logistics.

The evaluation was conducted by the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools (WS/FCS) Department of Research and Evaluation, where the program was followed and documented over its three year span. The information presented in the following report reflects the aggregated data gathered over the three years of the program, and aligns with the evaluation's purpose and program goals.

Program Development & Planning

Research & Literature

This section details the supporting research and literature that informed *Reading Railroad* at the time of development.

The “school library impact studies” is a body of research conducted from 2000 through 2010. The study encompassed twenty-two states and one Canadian province, and confirmed that exemplary library programs are those that allow librarians to maximize teaching time and partake in opportunities to provide educational support and leadership through collaboration, while being able to integrate within and across curricular contexts (Klinger, Lee, Stephenson, & Luu, 2009).

Research supports early intervention to encourage literacy development and the importance of parental involvement to support family literacy (Mullis, Mullis, Cornille, Ritchson, & Sullender, 2004). The evidence supporting parent involvement in early education, including early literacy, is vast. Greater parent involvement in children’s learning positively affects the child’s school performance (Yan & Lin, 2002). Simple interactions such as reading aloud to a child may lead to greater reading knowledge and skills (Snow, Burns & Griffin, 1998). Research shows that reading with a child also emerges as an important facet of parental involvement (Jeynes, 2005). Children with richer home literacy environments demonstrate higher levels of reading skills at kindergarten entry (Nord, Lennon, Liu, & Chandler, 2000). Parents make the greatest difference to achievement through supporting their learning in the home (Harris & Goodall, 2007). Parental involvement with reading activities at home has a significant positive influence on reading achievement (Gest, Freeman, Domitrovich, & Welsh, 2004).

School libraries also make a difference. Studies from a number of states, including the research compiled by Lance in 2004, have affirmed the importance of school libraries to reading achievement as well as the Scholastic Research Foundation Paper: *School Libraries Work!* (2008). Furthermore, Stephen Krashen (2011) has compiled research from four studies suggesting “increasing access to books can not only help students enormously – it can mitigate the effects of poverty on school achievement and literacy development.” Research reveals that early literacy experiences are highly correlated with school achievement and enhanced productivity in adult life (Strickland & Riley-Ayers, 2006). The development of early literacy skills is important for all children, but especially important for children who do not have the advantage of literacy-rich experiences. According to Hart & Risley (1995), “Evidence suggests that children from economically advantaged homes have heard 30 million more words than children from disadvantaged homes, and thus begin school with a significant advantage in vocabulary knowledge. Thus, children who enter school with requisite skills in phonology, decoding, vocabulary, and listening comprehension will continue to thrive, whereas as children without these skills will likely learn to read and write at a slower rate, if at all.”

Program Description

Background

The U.S. Department of Education maintains the Innovative Approaches to Literacy Program, which is a discretionary/competitive grant program, intended to support high-need LEAs with their local high-quality programs that promote student and family literacy. In July 2014, Winston-Salem / Forsyth County Schools (WS/FCS) applied for funds to support the proposed *Reading Railroad* (RR) program. In October 2014, WS/FCS received a total of \$719,205 to support RR activities for two years of program implementation (10/01/2014 - 09/30/2016). Specifically, Year 1 (10/01/2014 - 09/30/2015) of implementation was funded at \$376,797 and Year 2 (10/01/2015 – 09/30/2016) was funded at \$342,408. *Reading Railroad* was projected to serve an estimated 2,928 people (including students, family members, and school staff) at a cost of \$256 per person for two academic years (2014-15, and 2015-16). RR was awarded an extension for an additional 12 months (2016 – 17) to continue implementing the program while maintaining the original budget.

Target Sample

WS/FCS enlisted four high-need, high-minority, low-performing elementary schools to participate in *Reading Railroad*: Diggs-Latham Elementary, North Hills Elementary, Old Town Elementary, and Petree Elementary. All four schools were Title I schools for the duration of the grant. Table 1 below contains relevant school level descriptors and demographic characteristics of various subgroups for each school across all three years of RR implementation.

Table 1. Enrollment Counts for Demographic Variables Across All Three Years By School.

Academic Year	School	Total Enrollment	% Free & Reduced Lunch	% Student Mobility	Student Demographics			
					% Black	% Hispanic	% White	% other
2014 – 15	Diggs-Latham	479	> 95.0	23.4	36.3	52.0	6.9	4.8
	North Hills	474	> 95.0	29.8	55.7	39.5	1.7	3.2
	Old Town	606	> 95.0	19.9	22.3	67.7	4.5	5.6
	Petree	422	> 95.0	40.2	71.6	21.8	4.5	2.1
2015 – 16	Diggs-Latham	484	> 95.0	25.0	37.8	49.6	8.1	4.5
	North Hills	488	> 95.0	34.7	54.5	40.2	2.0	3.3
	Old Town	611	> 95.0	29.0	25.4	68.1	2.8	3.8
	Petree	404	> 95.0	33.6	71.0	24.0	3.0	2.0
2016 - 17	Diggs-Latham	528	> 95.0	18.4	37.1	47.7	8.5	6.6
	North Hills	495	> 95.0	28.5	57.8	39.2	2.2	0.8
	Old Town	624	> 95.0	19.7	26.6	65.1	2.9	5.4
	Petree	404	> 95.0	36.7	66.1	26.7	2.5	4.7

Program Goals

The project name “*Reading Railroad*” was inspired by the 1848 NC Legislature authorizing a railroad to connect key geographic areas of the state. Following this theme, *RR* is conceptualized with the school librarian and media center as the central hub for all literacy activities. The program theory (see diagram in Appendix A2) was designed so that the functionality of school librarians was enhanced. The media center functions as the “Grand Central Station”, and the media coordinator role evolves from the traditional purveyor of resources to a facilitative role, supporting and engaging students, families, and teachers in more effectively using resources.

The four program goals (See Appendix A1) and program activities (Appendix A2) are intended to improve student literacy. The goals and objectives are detailed below:

Goal 1. Increase the literacy skills of elementary students through the implementation of a comprehensive plan to promote literacy development.

Objective 1.1. Carry out the comprehensive plan through the implementation of goals 2 – 4.

Goal 2. Build the leadership capacity of the school librarian staff and other key staff (such as administrators, counselors, Pre-K/K teachers, and parent involvement coordinators) at target schools to maximize literacy development and reading achievement of young children, especially pre-K students.

Objective 2.1. Increase collaboration between school librarians and pre-K teachers (Years 1 & 2) and Grade K teachers (Year 2) through formation of specialized PLTs focused on literacy development.

Objective 2.2. Increase collaboration between librarians and teachers during grade level meetings.

Objective 2.3. Increase the efficacy of librarians and key school staff to support literacy development of young children.

Goal 3. Improve the quantity and quality of literacy resources at target schools’ media centers.

Objective 3.1. Increase media center holdings of current, high-interest print to provide personalized learning.

Objective 3.2. Increase media center holdings of current, high-interest electronic materials (E-Books) to provide personalized learning.

Objective 3.3. Increase circulation of materials in the media center.

Goal 4. Increase parental/family support in literacy activities, including the use of personalized learning technology tool (e-readers), increasing parents’ ability to support literacy in the home.

Objective 4.1. Increase collaboration between school librarians and parent involvement coordinators (PICs) to support family engagement.

Objective 4.2. Increase participation of pre-K parents and K-5 parents in the Family Reading Depot and Book Distribution events.

Objective 4.3. Increase pre-K - 5 parental support for literacy activities in the home.

Program Activities

The RR project design is based upon an integrated, systems approach to literacy rather than depending upon one program to be the panacea to influence change. The RR initiative sought to increase a student's desire to read and improve their reading proficiency by developing the capacity of the school librarian and media center as the central hub for all literacy activities, and involving parents, with a focus on pre-K. Appendix A2 depicts the **six core groups of programming activities** that together create a strategic and holistic approach to catalyze student's desire to read and thus improve reading proficiency.

The six activity groups are as follows: **(1)** "Pack It and Take It", a literacy book bag distributed just before the summer to keep literacy materials in the hands of students; **(2)** "Fast Track: The Classroom Connection", focused on Professional Learning Teams focused on early childhood literacy and Professional Development; **(3)** "Family Reading Depot and Book Distribution", dedicated school wide book giveaways and family literacy events; **(4)** "Just the Ticket: Summer Express", focused on summer literacy programs, story time events, and public library summer programs; **(5)** "E-Read Home Express" consisting of e-reader distribution for pre-K families for at-home literacy support; and **(6)** "Grand Central Station", focused on re-emphasizing the media center as the central hub for all of the hustle and bustle where literacy activities and events take place.

Alignment of Goals and Activities

The program activities served to contribute to the bulk of objectives outlined in Goal 2 and Goal 4. In order to advance objectives specified in Goal 2, the "Fast Track: Classroom Connection" activity group intended to establish a series of professional development opportunities and Professional Learning Teams (PLTs) for Media Coordinators and teachers of the targeted schools. Goal 4 served to meet objectives with four core groups of programming activities designed to establish parent support and literacy engagement: (1) "Pack It and Take It" family literacy book bags; 3) Family Reading Depot and Book Distribution, including family literacy events; (4) Summer Express, with summer literacy programs; and (5) E-Read Home Express, with e-reader distribution for pre-K families for at-home literacy support. Goal 3 objectives were to be met by the continuous efforts to update the print and electronic materials at each of the target schools media centers as encompassed by the "Grand Central Station" group of activities. Lastly, the program's overarching purpose, Goal 1, meant to be the outcome of culminations and contributions across all other programming activities and objectives.

Evaluation Approach

Philosophy

The primary focus of this report is to present the findings from a project-level evaluation (Kellogg Foundation, 2004) examining the *Reading Railroad* project. The purpose of the evaluation has been two-fold. First, the evaluation served to provide on-going suggestions for program improvement and scalability; these recommendations were applied primarily to improve upon program implementation, process, and logistical details. Second, this evaluation served to document longitudinal and summative findings across three years of operation, and to ascertain the degree to which program goals and outcomes were achieved. This evaluation followed an Objectives/Goal-Oriented evaluation approach (Fitzpatrick, Sanders, & Worthen, 2011), and placed a strong emphasis on involving stakeholders and program participants as much as possible throughout the process.

The greatest appeal for the objectives-oriented approach is its clarity and accessibility. This stance is easily understood, explained, and implemented (Fitzpatrick, Sanders, & Worthen, 2011). The objective of a goal-oriented approach is to hold the program accountable for what it was designed to accomplish. Specifically, to determine the extent to which a program has met the objectives it has outlined from its beginning. Thus, this approach usually lines up with the stakeholders' evaluation purpose, to determine if the overall goals have been achieved and to what extent.

A major strength of this approach is that it is simple and addresses the question of whether or not a program has successfully accomplished what it intended to do. However, a potential flaw with this approach is that the goals of a program are not always meaningful to pursue or possible to meet. Research shows that involvement from stakeholders in the evaluation process increases program ownership and use of its results (Abma & Widdershoven, 2008; Shaw, Greene, & Mark, 2006). In light of this, the evaluation strongly emphasized engagement from various stakeholder groups (i.e., program staff, media coordinators, and teachers) to ensure the most meaningful evaluation process and product. In this instance, stakeholder participation benefited all involved and helped foster a culture of commitment, and yielded significant data used in continuous improvement.

For the purposes of this evaluation, the role of the evaluators was "evaluator as teacher" (Patton, 1997). The evaluators paid careful attention to explain the evaluation process and educate the stakeholders in understanding the evaluation findings. Additionally, value judgments about the findings were done in moderation. For example, any conclusions that required a content expert to understand, the evaluators did not draw conclusions but rather described at length and in great detail any findings. However, any claims of success as it relates to the program goals were judged by the evaluators if the results were not ambiguous.

The guiding practices of the evaluators were based upon the Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation (Yarbrough, Shulha, Hopson, Caruthers, 2011). The standards are used to ensure that the evaluation is geared toward meeting the stakeholders' needs, that the process is accurate and timely, the practices are ethical, that the evaluation is honest and trustworthy, and that the evaluation has proper documentation and accountability.

Methodology

The evaluator attended Reading Railroad programming events to better understand school culture, parent engagement, student engagement and enthusiasm, as well as teacher and media coordinator engagement. Participating in this sense enhanced the evaluator's contextual understanding of program stakeholders and primary beneficiaries, the program itself, and the four implementation sites. In turn, the evaluator was able to serve as a communication link amongst the schools. In more detail, this allowed for the examination of what worked well across sites, as well as challenges and barriers. If a solution proved to resolve issues at one site, it was then communicated to the other sites in aim of improvement overall *RR* implementation.

In order to explore the extent to which the overall program activities were implemented and stated goals and objectives were attained, this evaluation was designed to facilitate the collection of quantifiable, outcome-oriented data as well as qualitative data (e.g., from open-ended survey items, interviews, secondary analysis of document review, etc.) Moreover, the evaluation used **multiple measures** and **multiple data sources** as a means of increasing the validity and accuracy of findings. The evaluation is **goal-oriented** and focused on assessing the extent to which evidence indicates that the programs implemented on each campus are having the desired impact (Fitzpatrick, Sanders, & Worthen, 2004). The design has served both **formative** and **summative purposes**, intended to provide useful information to program staff for future program improvement and for ongoing dissemination. The evaluation plan includes **quantitative** and **qualitative methods** to produce a more complete representation of the complexity of the programs' activities and results.

The evaluation was designed to address the core program components and assess the extent to which the project is achieving its objectives, but also to be responsive to emerging issues that arise during program implementation. The table in Appendix B1 aligns the evaluation questions (and sub-questions) to the relevant data sources to be used to probe program impact. Appendix B2 describes the data sources and function in this project and evaluation, and finally, all instruments and protocols relevant to the evaluation are presented in Appendix C1 – C7. All consents, protocols, and guiding instruments were piloted and revised to ensure that the constructs of interest to the evaluation importance were being addressed and to reduce the burden of the participants.

Data Collection

The surveys were administered in paper format or by online surveys via Google forms. The medium used was dependent on which the evaluator believed would receive the best response rates.

All interviews and focus groups were conducted in person by the evaluator. Though all interviews and focus groups were digitally recorded for transcription purposes, the evaluator also took detailed notes to document contextual elements and to record emerging overarching themes. The transcription software Express Scribe Transcription Software (Version 6.10; NCH Software) was used to transcribe the interviews and focus groups.

All collected data were cleaned accordingly and, when relevant, organized for thematic analysis.

In regard to the qualitative data collected, some themes were pre-determined according to the evaluator's understanding of the program's underlying Theory-of-Change (ToC), while an emergent theory-oriented process allowed for flexible development of hierarchical themes and categories.

Quantitative data (i.e., test scores, surveys) was analyzed using standard statistical procedures (descriptive statistics). Advanced statistical analyses (i.e., Profile Analysis, Regression) were also conducted internally for purposes of examining longitudinal trends and predictive modeling. The advanced statistical procedures are beyond the scope of this evaluation report and are not included in this document.

To ensure the highest degree of validity of the measured constructs, evaluation findings were triangulated across and within sources of evidence to reduce bias in the concluding judgments. Furthermore, evaluation findings were discussed and confirmed with relevant stakeholders (program director, SLMCs, and teachers, etc.).

Evaluation Questions

Four key evaluation questions and sub-questions have been developed in parallel with the program goals and are as follows:

- 1) **EQ1.** What were the **outcomes for students** in regard to literacy development as a result of their participating in the *RR* program?
 - a. Do *RR* students show growth in literacy skills as measured by the LAP-3, TS-GOLD, and DIBELS assessments? (**GPRA outcomes**)
 - b. What other student outcomes are reported from participation in the *RR* program and activities?
- 2) **EQ2.** To what degree was the efficacy of **school librarian leadership** improved as a result of the *Reading Railroad* program?
 - a. Do *RR* media coordinators show improvement in **leadership skills** as measured by the MCPAI assessments?

- b. What other media coordinator outcomes are reported from participation in the *RR* program and activities?
- 3) **EQ3.** To what degree were the target schools' **media centers** improved as results of the *Reading Railroad* program?
 - a. Do *RR* media centers show improvement in media center holdings of current high-quality, high-interest **print books**?
 - b. Do *RR* media centers show improvement in media center holdings of current high-quality, high-interest **electronic** materials?
 - c. Do *RR* media centers show improvement in the **circulation** of media center items?
 - d. Do *RR* media centers show improved **collection ages**?
 - e. What steps did the media coordinators take to improve their media center collection?
- 4) **EQ4.** To what extent did the amount of **parent/family literacy** support increase as a result of the *Reading Railroad* program?
 - a. Do *RR* parents show improvement in **engagement with their children** in regards to literacy activities?
 - b. Do *RR* parents show improvement in the amount of **support received** in regards to literacy matters?
 - c. Do *RR* parents show increased **engagement in community/auxiliary** literacy activities outside their involvement with *RR* activities?
 - d. How valuable were the services and facilities provided by *RR* to parents and families?

Evaluation Instruments: Development, Administration, and Lessons Learned

SLMC and Teacher Interviews/Focus Groups (See Appendix C2)

Interviews and focus groups were conducted to gain deeper insight into the impact RR was having at the schools with the media coordinators, teachers, parents, and students. The interview and focus group questions queried both program implementation and summative outcomes. The interview questions covered how RR was functioning at the schools, which aspects were going well and which were challenging, how RR may be impacting literacy development for students, and how the collaboration between SLMCs and pre-K teachers was evolving.

The interviews and focus groups allowed the evaluator to not only form personal connections with the stakeholders, but facilitated a participatory-process for the stakeholders in that they were able to have their voices heard, make recommendations/improvements, and offer a time of reflection. Furthermore, the information shared during the interviews and focus groups proved to be helpful in process and implementation improvement efforts.

A small-scale pilot of the interview and focus group protocols yielded changes and revisions for the first administration held in Fall 2015 (beginning of Year 2 of program operations), followed by a second administration in Spring 2017 (end of Year 3 of program operations). At each time, all four media coordinators from each of the four Reading Railroad schools were interviewed.

Lessons Learned

In a few instances, scheduling limitations required that SLMCs and teachers attended the same focus groups. However, this proved to be problematic. In many ways, the teachers and SLMCs have juxtaposing roles in the RR program. SLMCs took on a leadership role and teachers had to take direction from the SLMCs. Teachers and SLMCs did not always seem comfortable explaining themselves or voicing concerns. In the future, the evaluator recommends that stakeholder groups should be separated, especially in consideration of their differing roles as it pertains to RR.

SLMC and Teacher Surveys (See Appendix C3)

In addition to the interviews and focus groups mentioned above, to ascertain the degree to which RR contributed to media coordinator and teacher development, a survey was conducted to probe each person's perception of their skills in supporting literacy development (see Appendix C3). The instrument surveyed SLMCs and teachers' level of comfort in leading instructional activities, and in engaging in conversations directed towards extending thinking and language development targeted towards early childhood literacy. RR is also intended to increase interaction and comfort-level between teachers and parents, thus the survey also includes items inquiring about the degree to which SLMCs and teachers developed their leadership skills.

A small-scale pilot of the survey yielded changes and revisions for the first administration held in Fall 2015 (beginning of Year 2 of program operations), followed by a second administration in Spring 2017 (end of Year 3 of program operations). The Fall 2015 administration yielded 13 Pre-

K teacher interviews, and 4 media coordinator interviews across the four RR schools. The Spring 2017 surveys yielded 8 pre-K teacher interviews, 2 kindergarten teacher interviews, and 4 media coordinator interviews.

Lessons Learned

Public school teachers have exhaustive schedules and in many instances, the response rates on the teacher surveys were poor. It is inferred that this is because of when they were administered. Over time, the evaluator has better understood who to contact to arrange for teacher surveys and focus groups, and what times and opportunities are best for the teachers' schedules.

Parent Surveys (see Appendix C5 and Appendix C7)

To observe family engagement in literacy activities, evaluators conducted a series of surveys with *Reading Railroad* parents. In the Fall 2014, a pilot of the survey yielded changes and revisions for the following administrations held in Spring 2015 (Year 1), Fall 2015 (Pre-test data of Year 2), Spring 2016 (Post-test data of Year 2), Fall 2016 (Pre-test data of Year 3), Spring 2017 (Post-test data of Year 3), and Fall 2017 (Year 4).

The parent surveys were conducted in English or Spanish, depending on the *Reading Railroad* parent's preferred language. For our purposes, the form language selected was used as a proxy for identifying the preferred language of communication by the parents/child's guardian.

The parent survey is administered to all parents whose children were participating in the *Reading Railroad* program, which was focused on the Pre-Kindergarten students. In order to attain high response rates, parent surveys were administered at already scheduled school events such as parent literacy nights, e-reader distributions, or at author visits. This enabled the *RR* management team to get the highest response rates, answer questions about the program, and build momentum and energy with the parents.

Since the *Reading Railroad* project was not fully underway until halfway through the 2014-15 academic year, the Spring 2015 surveys were used as the baseline point where evaluators were observing parent sentiments without their children, school, or family being fully immersed in the *Reading Railroad* program. The following table (Table 2) depicts the sample size of English and Spanish parent surveys by each administration point.

Table 2. Number of Collected Parent Surveys by Year of Program Implementation.

	Year 1 (2014-15)		Year 2 (2015-16)				Year 3 (2016-17)				Year 4 (2017-18)	
	Fall 2014 (Pilot)	Spring 2015	Fall 2015 Pre _{Yr2}	Spring 2016 Post _{Yr2}	Fall 2016 (T1): Pre _{Yr3}	Spring 2017 (T2): Post _{Yr3}	Fall 2017 (T3): Pre _{Yr4}					
School		Eng. Spa.	Eng. Spa.	Eng. Spa.	Eng. Spa.	Eng. Spa.	Eng. Spa.	Eng. Spa.	Eng. Spa.	Eng. Spa.	Eng. Spa.	Eng. Spa.
Diggs-Latham		6 9	11 25	8				18 24	9 9			
North Hills		12 7	14 13	8 8	3 3	21 15	18 6					
Petree		6 8	22 2	4 1	7 2	21 2	33 3					
Old Town		6 3	25 24	2	16 17	22 45	24 24					
Total		30 27	72 64	22 9	26 22	82 86	84 42					
Grand Total		57	136	31	48	168	126					

Parent Survey Demographics

In the Spring of 2015, a total of 57 parent surveys were recorded from the four *Reading Railroad* elementary schools (Diggs-Latham, North Hills, Petree, and Old Town). Of those 57, 53% (n=30) were English forms, and 47% (n=27) were Spanish forms. The Fall of 2015 (Pre_{Yr2}) yielded a total of 136 respondents; 52.9% (n=72) of respondents’ native language is English and 47.1% (n=64) of respondent’s native language is Spanish. The Spring of 2016 (Post_{Yr2}) yielded 31 respondents, of which 71% (n =22) were English forms and 29% (n=9) were Spanish forms. The Fall of 2016 (Pre_{Yr3}) yielded 48 respondents, of which 54% (n=26) were English forms and 46% (n=22) were Spanish forms. The Spring 2017 (Post_{Yr3}) administration yielded 168 total respondents, of which 48% (n=82) were English, and 52% (n=86) were Spanish forms. The Fall of 2017 (Pre_{Yr4}) yielded a different demographic breakdown, as of the 126 total respondents, 67% (n=84) were English respondents, and 32% (n=42) were Spanish respondents.

Upon further investigation, the evaluation discovered that engagement was lower with Hispanic families because of the political climate, specifically policy changes regarding immigration laws. Thus, many immigrant families at the *RR* schools seemed hesitant to participate in many community and school events.

Lessons Learned

Role of SLMC and Parent Engagement: Though parent engagement does seem to vary by the child’s grade (i.e., pre-K versus K) and by school, it is also very apparent that the type of leadership role and advocacy assumed by the teacher, media coordinator, and school administrators were influencing factors. It seems that when school officials are enthused and interested in a program, parents are more inclined to be engaged in the program. Parent survey rates may be indicators of this influence, as there seemed be an increase in parent survey rates related to SLMC enthusiasm and administration support.

Administration of Parent Surveys: Typically, the parent surveys were given at either literacy events or specific *RR* events (i.e., e-reader distribution events), and this did not change. However, since the current evaluator took leadership of the *RR* evaluator in 2016, she began to communicate directly with the Media Coordinators. The evaluator delivered copies of the parent surveys to the SLMCs directly on the days of the event and assumed the responsibility of being the primary individual to conduct the parent surveys. Electronic copies were also made available to the SLMCs if other opportunities outside of this occasion arose, or to send home in the students' parent packets. It should be noted that Media Coordinators played a significant role in promoting the importance of the parent surveys, as well as collecting the surveys if they were sent home.

In attempt to ensure survey items reflected their intended constructs in practice, the evaluator helped parents who had questions about specific survey items, and considered how to clarify/simplify items if needed. Many items were modified/revised because of this interaction with *RR* parents. However, the underlying constructs and overall integrity of the items were not changed to capture longitudinal trends.

Evaluation Findings

The following section presents the findings from the four evaluation questions (EQ) and relevant sub-questions, each corresponding to a respective program goal. EQ1 queried outcomes as it relates to students (Goal 1), EQ2 investigated media coordinator leadership and development (Goal 2), EQ3 probed media center collections at the target schools (Goal 3), and EQ4 focused on parent/family support and engagement (Goal 4).

EQ1. What were the outcomes for students in regard to literacy development as a result of their participation in the RR program?

EQ1-A. Student Literacy Skills Per Standardized Assessments (GPRA outcome)

This section reports on student outcomes, specifically literacy gains as measured by the designated standardized assessments for three operation years (2014-15, 2015-16, 2016-17). For the purposes of the *Reading Railroad* program, and as defined by the grant and program activities, the focus was on early literacy development and followed program participants as they progressed through Pre-K, K, and first grade.

Pre-Kindergarten literacy development was measured using the third edition of the Learning Accomplishment Profile (LAP-3) in year 1 and year 2, and Teaching Strategies-GOLD (TS-GOLD) was used in year 3. As students progressed from pre-K and entered kindergarten and first grade, their literacy development was measured using the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) assessment. See Appendix B2 for details about each assessment and administration.

For year 1 (2014-15) and year 2 (2015-16) of the program's operation, the language domain of the LAP-3 assessment was used to observe student growth in pre-K students. The Language domain is comprised of 4 constructs (Receptive Language, Expressive Language, Listening/Understanding, and Speaking/Communicating). **Significant gains were determined by the growth of at least 9.3 points on the Language domain from a student's beginning of year score (BOY) to end of year score (EOY).** LAP-3 and cut-score calculations for the purpose of this grant are explained in more detail in Appendix B2.

In year three (2016-17), there was a state decision to change pre-K assessments, therefore TS-GOLD was implemented instead of LAP-3. Therefore, for year 3 (2016-17) of the program's operation, gains in oral language skills for pre-K students (Cohort III) was measured using the TS-GOLD assessment, specifically in the Literacy domain which is comprised of 4 constructs (book orientation, print awareness, letter naming, and following directions). TS-GOLD is explained in more detail in Appendix B2. Note: there were two different assessments used to measure 4-year old oral language skills, the LAP-3 assessment and the TS-Gold assessment. This change in instrumentation was a state-level decision, thus was not in the purview of the program director's nor evaluation team.

Kindergarten and 1st grade literacy development was measured using the DIBELS assessment for all years of program implementation. The DIBELS Composite Score reflects oral language and literacy growth and provides the best overall estimate of students’ early literacy skills and/or reading proficiency. The DIBELS Composite Score was then used to categorize students as being either below benchmark or meeting/exceeding benchmark. For kindergarteners, the DIBELS Composite Score is a combination of the following sub-scores: Letter Naming Fluency (LNF), Phoneme Segmentation Fluency (PSF), and Nonsense Word Fluency (NWF). Regarding 1st and 2nd grade, the DIBELS Composite Score is a combination of the following sub-scores: Phoneme Segmentation Fluency (PSF), Nonsense Word Fluency (NWF), and the DIBELS Oral Reading Fluency (DORF). **For the DIBELS assessment, student growth was determined by the number of students who were low and high performing at the BOY versus the number of students who were low and high performing at the EOY.**

For all analyses presented in this document, only students with a complete test score profile were included. A complete test score profile is having both the BOY score and the EOY score for the relevant assessment.

For the purposes of this document, the student outcomes are organized by grade level and relevant assessment to simplify discussion of student outcomes. Table 3 depicts the progression of each *Reading Railroad* cohort of students, aligned with their grade level and relevant assessment used to measure literacy development.

Table 3. RR: Longitudinal Cohort Tracker by Grade & Standardized Assessment

Cohort	Year 1: 2014-15	Year 2: 2015-16	Year 3: 2016-17	Year 4: 2017-18
Cohort I	Pre – K (LAP- 3)	*K (DIBELS)	*1 st (DIBELS)	*2 nd (DIBELS)
Cohort II	--	Pre – K (LAP- 3)	*K (DIBELS)	*1 st (DIBELS)
Cohort III	--	--	Pre – K (TS-GOLD)	*K (DIBELS)
Cohort IV	--	--	--	Pre – K (TS-GOLD)

Note. *Denotes students CONTINUING from previous year.

Pre-Kindergarten Student Growth

The following section elaborates on the observed student growth of pre-K students as measured by the LAP-3 assessment for year 1 (Cohort I) and year 2 (Cohort II), and TS-GOLD assessment for year 3 (Cohort III).

Year 1: Cohort I (LAP-3)

In Cohort I, of the 163 participating pre-K students in year 1, 101 had complete test score profiles, with an average beginning score of 34 and end score of 51. Of the 101 students with complete test score profiles, 73 student showed gains of at least 9.3 points. **Therefore, on average, pre-school students saw a gain of 16 points on the Language domain of the LAP-3 assessment. Overall, 72% (n=73/101) of Cohort I pre-K students demonstrated significant growth (gains of at least 9.3 points) in their oral language skills, as observed using the Language construct of the LAP-3 assessment.** Table 4 below clarifies these findings.

Table 4. Year 1 (2014 -15): Cohort I : Pre – K (LAP-3)

Schools	Did Not Meet Expected Growth	Met Expected Growth	Grand Total
North Hills	9	18	27
Old Town	9	17	26
Petree	1	13	14
Diggs-Latham	9	25	34
Grand Total	28	73	101

Year 2: Cohort II (LAP-3)

In Cohort II, of the 138 participating pre-K students in 2015-16, 57 students had complete test score profiles. Of the 57 complete profiles, 27 student showed gains of at least 9.3 points from BOY to EOY. On average, a beginning score was 34 while an ending score was 45.5. Therefore, on average pre-school students saw a gain of 11.5 on the Language domain of the LAP-3 assessment. **Overall, 47% (n=27/57) of Cohort II pre-Kindergarten students demonstrated significant growth (gains of at least 9.3 points) in their oral language skills, as observed using the Language construct of the LAP-3 assessment.** Table 5 below illustrates those findings.

Table 5. Year 2 (2015 -16): Cohort II : Pre – K (LAP-3)

Schools	Did Not Meet Expected Growth	Met Expected Growth	Grand Total
North Hills	9	4	13
Old Town	14	17	31
Petree	7	5	12
Diggs-Latham	NO DATA	NO DATA	
Grand Total	30	26	56

Year 3: Cohort III (TS-GOLD)

In the third year of the program’s operation, Cohort III began as pre-K students. Of 199 participating pre-K students in Cohort III, 47 students had complete test score profiles of the TS-GOLD assessment, specifically the literacy domain. In their first year of participation, 16 students (n=16) were below benchmark and 31 students (n=31) were at or above benchmark at BOY. At EOY, 0 students (n=0) were below benchmark and all 47 students (n=47) were at or above benchmark. Overall, 100% (n=47/47) of the students were at or above benchmark at EOY compared to 66% (n=31/47) at BOY for the 2016-2017 year. **During their first year of participation in the program, Cohort III showed significant growth from BOY to EOY in their Pre-K TS-GOLD literacy scores, as 100% (n=16) of the students who were low performing at the BOY met (or exceeded) the benchmark by EOY.** Table 6 below illustrates these findings.

Table 6. Year 3 (2016 -17): Cohort III : Pre – K (TS-GOLD)

Schools	Fall 2016 (BOY)		Spring 2017 (EOY)	
	Below Benchmark	At or Above Benchmark	Below Benchmark	At or Above Benchmark
North Hills	NO DATA		NO DATA	
Old Town	1	15	0	16
Petree	6	8	0	14
Diggs-	9	8		17
Latham			0	
Grand Total	16	31	0	47

Note. The TS-GOLD assessment is funded by various sources for different schools. TS-Gold at North-Hills elementary was funded by an agency that did not opt to archive the data collected. There was no retrievable data for North Hills for this year. Now that the district is aware of this issue, measures are being taken to ensure all assessment data is collected and saved in a timely manner.

Kindergarten Student Growth

The following section elaborates on the observed student growth of kindergarten students as measured by the DIBELS assessment for Cohort I (year 2) and Cohort II (year 3). **For the DIBELS assessment, student growth was determined by comparing the number of students who were below benchmark versus at or above benchmark between BOY and EOY.**

Year 2: Cohort I (DIBELS)

In the second year of the program (2015-16), of the 163 students who participated as pre-K in the program in Year 1, 98 participated in the program as kindergartens, and of those 57 had complete test score profiles of the DIBELS assessment, specifically the literacy domain. In their second year of participation, 22 students (n=22) were below benchmark and 35 students (n=35) were at or above benchmark at BOY. At the EOY, 23 students (n=23) were below benchmark and 34 students (n=34) were at or above benchmark. **Overall, 59.6% (n=34/57) of the students were at or above benchmark at EOY compared to 61.4% (n=35/57) at BOY 2015-2016. During their**

second year of participation in the program, Cohort I does not show much difference from BOY to EOY in their Kindergarten DIBELS literacy scores. Table 7 below illuminates these findings.

Table 7. Year 2 (2015 -16): Cohort I : K (DIBELS)

Schools	Fall 2015 (BOY)		Spring 2016 (EOY)	
	Below Benchmark	At or Above Benchmark	Below Benchmark	At or Above Benchmark
North Hills	5	11	6	10
Old Town	3	13	3	13
Petree	11	7	12	6
Diggs-Latham	3	4	2	5
Grand Total	22	35	23	34

Year 3: Cohort II (DIBELS)

In the third year of the program’s operation, of the 138 students who participated as pre-Kindergarteners in the program in Year 2, 95 continued as participants in kindergarten. Of those, 46 students had complete test score profiles of the DIBELS assessment, specifically the literacy domain. In their second year of participation, 23 students (n=23) were below benchmark and 23 students (n=23) were at or above benchmark at BOY. At the EOY, 21 students (n=21) were below benchmark and 25 students (n=25) were at or above benchmark. **Overall, 50% (n=23/46) of the students were at or above benchmark at BOY compared to 54.3% (n=25/46) at EOY 2016-2017. During their second year of participation in the program, Cohort II does not show much difference from BOY to EOY in their kindergarten DIBELS literacy scores.** Table 8 below displays these findings.

Table 8. Year 3 (2016 -17): Cohort II : K (DIBELS)

Schools	Fall 2016 (BOY)		Spring 2017 (EOY)	
	Below Benchmark	At or Above Benchmark	Below Benchmark	At or Above Benchmark
North Hills	9	9	10	8
Old Town	5	10	4	11
Petree	NO DATA		NO DATA	
Diggs-Latham	9	4	7	6
Grand Total	23	23	21	25

Note. There was no retrievable data for Petree Elementary for K students for the DIBELS assessment.

1st Grade Student Growth

Year 3: Cohort I (DIBELS)

For Cohort I, of the 163 students who participated as Pre-Kindergarteners in Year 1 (2014-15), 98 went on to participate as kindergarteners in Year 2 (2015-16), and of that sample, 72 of those students participated in the program as first graders in Year 3 (2016-17). Of the 72 participants, 44 first grade students had complete test score profiles of the DIBELS assessment, specifically the literacy domain.

In their third year of participation, as first graders, at BOY 25 students (n=25) of Cohort I were below benchmark and 19 students (n=19) were at or above benchmark. At EOY, 19 students (n=19) were below benchmark and 25 students (n=25) were at or above benchmark. **Overall, 56.8% (n=25/44) of the students were at or above benchmark at EOY compared to 43.2% (n=19/44) at BOY in 2016-2017. During their third year of participation in the program, Cohort I does show a slight increase in literacy achievement at an aggregate level in regards to BOY to EOY in their 1st grade DIBELS literacy scores.** Table 9 below shows these findings.

Table 9. Year 3 (2016 -17): Cohort I : 1st Grade (DIBELS)

Schools	Fall 2016 (BOY)		Spring 2017 (EOY)	
	Below Benchmark	At or Above Benchmark	Below Benchmark	At or Above Benchmark
North Hills	4	7	1	10
Old Town	7	6	7	6
Petree	11	2	8	5
Diggs-Latham	3	4	3	4
Grand Total	25	19	19	25

EQ1-B. Additional Student-Level Outcomes

RR sought to foster a culture of literacy both at home and at school, to maximize literacy development and reading achievement of young children. And as intended, RR project affected students beyond assessment scores.

The following comments reflect how RR helped students develop their literacy skills and promoted interest in reading according to RR **parents**. Note: The “*” denotes a translated quote from a Spanish speaking parent.

RR has improved **literacy skills** in students.

- * *[My child is] reading faster and better.*
- *Yes! My kid got “Curious George dictionary” through the Reading Railroad program. Because of this book he learned a lot of new words and got lots of interest in reading books. We are so happy about it. Thank you!*

RR has improved **student interest** in reading.

- *This program sparked great excitement about reading NEW books and magazines! He likes the e-reader too but has difficulty understanding the spoken words due to his hearing loss.*
- *My child is eager to read everyday! She is more and more interested in reading books.*
- *It helps my child have interest in reading by making it fun.*
- *She interacted more with books, also learned how to read her high frequency words.*
- *RR supplies the tools to expand her knowledge, learning, and do something she loves.*

EQ2. To what degree was the efficacy of school librarian leadership improved as a result of the Reading Railroad program?

The following section addresses the school librarian role and leadership in relation to the *Reading Railroad* program. Due to the small sample size of librarians involved in the *Reading Railroad* program, frequencies to which a theme was observed across participants is purposefully omitted in this report. Rather, rich and in-depth accounts are presented.

Overall, it seemed that the *Reading Railroad* program did support leadership growth in the school media coordinators. SLMC leadership is first examined from an implementation lens, specifically as measured by the MCPAI assessment. Superseding however, are the manifestations of leadership characteristics and skills that emerged by way of engaging in *RR* activities. The latter is reflected more prominently in this report, as many unexpected leadership traits did in fact surface as a result of the media coordinators involvement with *Reading Railroad*.

EQ2-A. Leadership Skills as Measured by MCPAI Assessment

Year 1 – Year 3:

MCPAI scores (See Appendix B2 for more details the MCPAI tool) was used to examine how *RR* contributed to building leadership capacity in media coordinators and other key staff at target schools to maximize literacy development and reading achievement of young children, especially pre-K students.

The MCPAI assessment measures SLMC growth and development during their service as a *RR* participant. The rating scale reflects four incremental levels of ability beginning with Developing, on to Proficient, then to Accomplished, and ultimately ending with Distinguished. The SLMCs were required to produce evidence for the MCPAI evaluation instrument demonstrating knowledge of child development, instructional strategies to address learning needs and differentiation, media program activities to support school improvement plan goals, and to document leadership roles/activities performed by the SLMC. The Reading Railroad Grant offered professional development and many activities to make their instructional and leadership roles more visible to teachers and parents.

The media coordinators who participated in the three years of Reading Railroad grant were very diverse. For example, SLMC experience ranged from a first-year school librarian coming from a classroom teaching background to an experienced media coordinator approaching retirement.

The most experienced media coordinator, who retired after Year 2 of the grant, led separate sessions in Spanish and English for pre-K parents. This was a new area of service for this individual and the pre-K teachers were able to view the SLMC in an expanded role from what they normally saw during the school day.

Another SLMC who entered a program site school in Year 3 demonstrated significant growth in her MCPAI. She added Accomplished and Distinguished elements to her tool and because of the

professional development opportunities providing by the RR funding, and was able to serve as the NCLSMA chair for the 2016-17 year.

A SLMC who participated all three years in the grant also grew to become Accomplished in most MCPAI elements as she became more comfortable in leadership and collaborative roles at her school.

SLMCs developed skills at creating parent engagement activities as a result of the Parent Literacy events sponsored through Reading Railroad. Overall, the Reading Railroad grant created opportunities for all participating SLMC's to plan, collaborate, and connect with pre-K and kindergarten teachers and parents in expanded ways. **All participating media coordinators demonstrated growth in various areas of the MCPAI.**

Lessons Learned:

MCPAI assessments are conducted by a principal or assistant principal. Since protocol does not require multiple raters, the ratings attributed to a SLMC may be biased. Additionally, if a SLMC and rater (i.e., principal) do not have a healthy relationship, this may affect a SLMC's score on the MCPAI. Furthermore, it is important to note that principals, who are often faced with numerous responsibilities, may not have ample time to truly understand the standards outlined on the MCPAI and may not have always spent enough time observing the SLMC to have a representative view of skills or growth.

EQ2-B. Other Media Coordinator Outcomes

The following section describes other SLMC related outcomes that were not identified by the outcome evidence (MCPAI assessment) identified in RR's program design, but are representative process and outcome motifs supporting the leadership construct.

Program Activities:

1. Professional Development and Conference Attendance

The Reading Railroad grant funded valuable professional learning experiences for the participating SLMCs.

The Hill Institute sessions took place in 2015, and it engaged 16 teachers and 4 media coordinators, as well as 2 RR staff members. This workshop highlighted the use of the Hill alphabet in teaching early literacy concepts and sounds and included iPad apps and websites for teachers and SLMCs to use with pre-K students. Media coordinators were able to share their knowledge of picture books and children's literature with the pre-K teachers. All participants came away with a classroom library of 20 books for preschoolers and related instructional activities to use with the books. The participating teachers and SLMC's truly seemed to value this workshop and all came away energized and excited about the sharing and learning that took place.

Below are quotes demonstrating the impact of the Hill Institute training on pre-K teachers:

- *The Hill Literacy training that we did a few years was helpful. I learned a lot. They gave us a lot of resources too, I still refer to them now.*
- *The Hill Center training material is something I am still using today with the kids. It has been a great resource to have on hand.*

In addition, the grant enabled all the media coordinators to attend the North Carolina School Library Media Association (NCSLMA) and the North Carolina Technology in Education Society (NCTIES) annual conferences each year of the grant. The annual conferences allow for SLMCs to partake in activities sponsored by professional organizations, expose them to ideas relevant to their roles as literacy advocates, provides networking opportunities, and opportunities for leadership roles. For instance, one RR SLMC was the 2016-2017 chair for the NCSLMA organization.

2. Professional Achievements

The Reading Railroad grant helped support the development of leadership skills as well as provide opportunities of the SLMC's to learn from other librarians across the state.

One Reading Railroad SLMC has gone on to become trained as a state digital teaching and learning coach and was elected as Vice-President of NCSLMA. In this role, she will be planning the 2018 annual NCSLMA conference and then take on the President's responsibilities of leading the state organization.

All six RR SLMCs are involved with their schools' SIT (school improvement team) committees with classroom teachers, and help analyze student data as it related to the school improvement goals and Reading Railroad grant goals. One of the SLMC leads the kindergarten PLT (professional learning team) meetings and another part of her job responsibilities is to oversee pre-K teachers, and thus

3. Collaboration between SLMCs and pre-K & K teachers (through PLTs)

Each of the elementary schools in the WS/FCS district conducts weekly PLT. RR intended to build on this infrastructure by engaging SLMCs in the monthly PLTs with the aim of participating in the analysis of student data and movement towards school improvement goals. In addition, to further integrate with the school's literacy objectives, RR intended for SLMCs to attend grade level meetings at least once a quarter to collaborate with classroom teachers on the integration of content standards, children's literature objectives, and ITES (Information and Technology Essential Standards).

Lessons Learned:

Unfortunately, increasing collaboration between SLMCs and pre-K and K teachers through PLTs proved to be more challenging than initially assumed by the program design. From a program design standpoint, it is important to acknowledge which components are feasible under the

current conditions, and to acknowledge those moments and be flexible and adapt when necessary. The following section reflects adaptations and updates that were learning experiences for the program.

To achieve effective interaction between SLMCs and grade-level teachers, it is important to consider resources available to schools. Budgets in the schools currently allow for only one full-time position, the SLMC, to lead a media center, instead of the ideal duo of an SLMC and a full-time assistant. Because of this, SLMCs have other auxiliary obligations within a school that limit additional responsibilities. Furthermore, constant communication is required as teachers and SLMCs both need to plan and organize their time carefully, especially when it pertains to something outside of their normal duties. Although all librarians agreed that the *RR* program presented much unanticipated complications to their day-to-day routine, the majority of media coordinators did conclude that the opportunities and benefits provided by *RR* outweighed the logistical and operational complications.

The grant and program design included formal PLT sessions involving teachers and SLMCs, but in this case that was unrealistic due to various constraints on time and resources. Since the formal PLTs did not occur as intended, *RR* program staff made attempts to construct informal interaction between SLMCs and teachers. In some cases, these informal PLTs proved to be more effective in creating collaborative relationships than the formal/scheduled PLTs. Though most of these informal moments were productive, effective, and meaningful in *RR*, it is important to note that this success is due largely in part due to SLMC and teacher interest/motivation to participate and engage with each other. **Therefore, if intense collaborative partnerships are desired between stakeholder groups such as teachers and SLMCs, it is advised that future program designs consider the infrastructure necessary to support such activity, and to incorporate adequate facilitative/supporting elements such as pre-determined meeting schedules, allotment of substitutes, school-level coordinator, etc.**

Ultimately, a well-developed program has a specified results chain of activities intended to produce the program goals and objectives, but it is important to understand that when the activities are compromised, that many times there are multiple ways to meet program goals these even if it means flexing original plans.

4. Leadership among SLMCs

RR is a complex programming requiring additional learning for any new SLMCs place in school sites. For example, one incoming SLMC was beginning her career as a media coordinator, and had no prior experience in her current post. However, *RR* created situations where the younger, less experienced media coordinators sought out the experienced SLMCs. This created a mentor-mentee relationship as more experienced media coordinators mentored and coached the novice SLMCs.

Additionally, a *RR* SLMC Google group discussion thread was created by one of the media coordinators to share ideas, resources, questions, and concerns they were having in organizing

and implementing the program activities. This RR SLMC recognized the need for a shared platform across SLMCs and took the initiative to make it happen. Ultimately, this simple but meaningful communication channel enabled the SLMCs to exchange valuable resources such as author visit marketing templates, lesson plan ideas to integrate into classes leading up to author visits, problem solving low parent engagement, or share solutions for similar challenges.

5. Leadership/Role Within School

RR created a scenario where the SLMC became the main channel of communication in promoting and marketing RR events and resources, thus raising their visibility as the “leader” or “point of contact” for literacy activities. This reinforced the grant’s goal of raising the visibility of the role of the school librarian as a leader in the school.

6. Autonomy/Independence

RR presented SLMCs an autonomy that they would not have otherwise experienced. Title I schools have specific media collection purchase criteria and requirements. SLMCs do not have the freedom to purchase books outside of these demands as Title I funds cannot be used for any other purposes.

RR provided SLMCs the freedom, support, and monetary means to purchase books that they found to be of relevance and interest to their student population. Prior to funds provided by RR, a student could denote interest in a specific book or subject matter, but if it did not meet Title I criteria it was never an option for the library. RR provided opportunity for students while allowing SLMCs the autonomy to make decisions that they found to be the best fit for their student population.

Additionally, SLMCs indicated that RR enabled them to connections with their students by facilitating conversations focused on topics/books of interest, and honoring student requests by providing these materials of interest to their students. The following quotes from SMLCs demonstrate these themes:

- *Reading Railroad has enabled me to ask "What is it that you like?", and then being able to give them a book related to that.*
- *When Hidden Figures came out, I had a group of girls who came to me looking for books with women scientist. And I did not have a single book on women scientist of color. And when we went to make purchases for the book giveaways, the book itself was there so I was able to purchase that for my collection.*
- *Reading Railroad has changed (or enhanced) my role in the motivation piece. I was able to “hook” more kids with tons of reading materials. The huge choice of titles, whether giveaways or in the media center, plus e-readers and author visits, but many more kids do want to read.*

7. Pre-K Service

RR intended for SLMCs to engage with pre-K students. Current NC public schools protocol dictate that pre-K students remain separated from the K-5 grade students. In turn, pre-K students and teachers have few opportunities to interact or partake in school-wide events. RR helped to breakdown this barrier in various ways.

First, RR provided SLMCs with the knowledge to target early literacy development. One SLMC describes how the professional development hosted by Hill Center provided SLMCs with the knowledge to develop early literacy lessons plans for pre-K students.

- *The professional development by the Hill Center helped me develop weekly lesson plans for the pre-K class, which began because of RR Grant. It would not have occurred to me to teach pre-K every week if not for this grant.*
- *I think this is the major difference that RR made for our school – the intentional focus on Pre-K, which opened up relationships with those kids that have followed through to the current 2nd graders. It also established a wonderful collaborative relationship with those pre-K teachers and the families/parents of those students.*

Next, RR raised SLMCs' awareness of pre-K needs, and encouraged SLMCs to invoke creative strategies to interact with pre-K students, parents, and teachers. Since the pre-K students cannot access common areas such as the cafeteria and library without their parent/guardian or classroom teachers, RR has brought attention to this separation and supported SLMCs in employing innovative strategies to engage pre-K students. For instance, one SLMC started going to the pre-K classrooms twice monthly to either read stories, execute literacy activities for upcoming author visits, or participate in e-Reader circles.

Lastly, RR events created opportunities for SLMCs to interact and communicate directly with parents as opposed to going through the teacher. This positioned SLMCs as teachers with an expertise in reading, and as a resource on this topic. Furthermore, when pre-K parents received e-Readers they were distributed in the media center, and positioned the SLMC as the provider for the materials provided by the program. From the outset, a pre-K parent became attuned to the enhanced role of the SLMC and the resources available through the media center. The RR events, specifically the author visits were scheduled for pre-K in tandem with student drop-off or pick-up. This was intentional in that parents would be able to attend the author visits with their child, while simultaneously to literacy discussions by the authors and media coordinators.

EQ3. To what degree were the target schools’ media centers improved as results of the Reading Railroad program?

EQ3-A. Print Materials

The number of print materials added by *RR* was used to examine the degree to which the program contributed to improvement of current high-interest print materials at the school media centers.

In making print material purchases, SLMCs selected new titles based on student recommendations, and were selected from professional lists such as School Library Journal Starred Book Reviews and “Top Science Books for children” from AASL. Additionally, the WS/FCS district selection policy mandates that only books that are current, multi-culturally inclusive, age appropriate, high quality, and have favorable reviews can be considered. Thus, in compliance with the district-wide policy all new books purchased met the district policy. The titles and topics were wide and ranging to accommodate a variety of reader interests such as: picture books, award winning books, popular fiction for elementary level students, and nonfiction books (focusing on animals, the environment, geography, STEM topics, jokes, folktales, sports, and biographies). The aim was to include books that addressed curriculum standard as well as popular titles that encourage reading for fun. Overall, the four schools have each invested approximately \$37,000 into new book purchases through the *Reading Railroad* program.

Table 10. Number of high-interest print materials purchased in by School by Year

Schools	Year 1: 2014-15	Year 2: 2015-16	Year 3: 2016-17	Total <i>RR</i> Contribution per School
Diggs-Latham	877	823	341	2,041
North Hills	501	520	430	1,451
Old Town	912	1,168	168	2,248
Petree	700	706	325	1,731
Total <i>RR</i> Contribution by Year	2,990	3,217	1,264	7,471

As can be seen from Table 10 above, Year 1 of *RR* achieved a total of 2,990 new print books placed across the four elementary schools. North-Hills purchased the fewest books (n=501), Petree purchased 700 new print books, while Diggs-Latham and Old Town added the most new print material to their collection, 877 and 912 new books, respectively.

Year 2 of the program saw a slight increase in the total number of high-interest print materials placed at each of the libraries, with a total count of 3,217 new print books purchased for the 2015-16 academic year. Though most schools purchased similar amounts from Year 1 to Year 2, Old Town elementary witnessed an increase of 256 new print book purchases in Year 2.

In Year 3 of the program's operation, there was a significant decrease in the number of print books purchased (n=1,264). Old Town elementary, which had previously been the highest volume purchaser across both Year 1 and Year 2, reduced its new print book order to 168 items. Diggs-Latham and Petree both cut their purchase volume by approximately 50% of their previous years to 341 and 325, respectively. North Hills elementary historically purchased the least amount of new print books across Year 1 and year 2, added the most new print books to its collection (n=430).

With the funds made available to the *Reading Railroad* project from the IAL grant, a total of 7,471 new high-interest print books were added across the four elementary schools over the course of three years: North Hills elementary added 1,451 new print books, Petree elementary added 1,731 new items, Diggs-Latham added 2,041, and finally Old Town elementary added 2,248 new print books to its media collection. *Note:* The differing trends of print books purchased by schools over the years reflect how each school chose to spend their allotted funds (i.e., focusing more on updating their print books instead of electronic books), the fact that some books cost more than others, and a reflection of the media coordinators dedication to finding books of value/worth.

EQ3-B. Electronic Materials

The number of new e-books added by *RR* was used to examine the degree to which the program contributed to improvement of current high-interest electronic materials at the school media centers.

Before the IAL grant, each school had fewer than 50 titles. Diggs-Latham had 35 electronic items, North Hills had 5 items, and both Old Town and Petree had zero e-books.

During the first year of operation, *RR* enabled Diggs-Latham to add 162 electronic titles to their library; no items were added to North Hills, Old Town, nor Petree elementary. Diggs-Latham was the only school equipped with electronic devices capable to hosting e-books, while the remaining three schools did not yet have tablets or similar devices to purchase e-books.

In Year 2 of the program, all media centers were able to purchase a significant number of electronic items to host in their media centers, largely because of the electronic devices made available by the Reading Railroad funds. Diggs-Latham saw an increase of 229 items, North Hills added 80 electronic items, and Old Town and Petree both added 71 items to their media center. The disparities between number of items purchased by Diggs-Latham compared to the other three schools is largely because of the number of available devices at the school, they had more tablets, and thus were able to purchase more books.

Year 3 displays a different trend as all four schools received a comparable number of electronic items (Diggs-Latham received 88, North Hills, Old Town, and Petree all received 89 items).

Across all three *RR* operation years, Diggs-Latham purchased 479 electronic items, North-Hills purchased 169 items, and Old Town and Petree both purchased 160 electronic items. In all,

Reading Railroad made the purchase of 968 e-books possible across all four schools. Table 11 below depicts the e-book purchases across the three years of *RR*.

Table 11. Number of new e-books added to school media centers by School by Year

Schools	Baseline	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Total <i>RR</i> Contribution per School
Diggs-Latham	35	162	229	88	479
North Hills	5	0	80	89	169
Old Town	0	0	71	89	160
Petree	0	0	71	89	160
Total <i>RR</i> Contribution by Year	n/a	162	451	355	968

Lessons Learned:

RR made a conscious effort to expose students to e-books and technology. As is evident from the data presented above, all media centers were equipped with devices loaded with e-books, and these e-books were also accessible through the school's library webpage. The students from the participating grades (pre-K, K and some first graders) also received e-readers that were pre-loaded with 100-140 eBooks that could be accessed anywhere and did not require internet connections.

However, since all four schools are Title 1 schools, the lack of personal electronic devices and internet access at home did pose some challenges. For instance, there seemed to be low use of the Tales2Go program (audio books) at the homes and this could be because the program requires internet access. Tales2Go requires internet access, thus students would have to have internet access at home and a device on which to use the software to use this resource. An important lesson learned is to consider the target participants and their available resources. Even though RR sought to make e-books accessible to students at home, not all students may have had the means to use these resources especially if they are dependent on internet access.

Furthermore, the evaluation found that some SLMCs did not use Tales2Go in their instruction as behavior issues seemed to spike during this time. There are many reasons why this could have occurred, one reason could be because of the lack of interaction/engagement or visual stimulation (as it would be with a video), or that students may not have used audio books before. In all, one of four SLMCs indicated that she chose not to use the Tales2Go resource in her instruction.

EQ3-C. Media Center Circulation

It was expected that circulation would increase but this was not the case at most of the schools. These circulation figures were obtained from Destiny, the library management system, and include only materials that students and teachers would check out from the media center and items that were scanned as in-library use. It does not include any equipment, supplemental instructional resources, or classroom libraries. As displayed in table 12 below, Diggs-Latham did increase circulation in Years 1 and 2, but decreased slightly in Year 3. North Hills decreased in Years 1 and 2 and showed a slight increase in Year 3. Old Town showed a decrease all three years. Petree showed an increased in Year 1 but a decrease in Years 2 and 3.

Table 12. Circulation of materials in the media centers by School by Year

Schools	Oct. 2014 (Baseline)	Sept 2015	Sept 2016	Sept 2017
Diggs-Latham	11,864	17,506	25,835	23,769
North Hills	14,771	12,480	11,648	12,323
Old Town	30,796	28,348	27,594	20,194
Petree	9,517	13,942	10,524	8,906

Possible Influencing Factors:

Though the program aimed to improve book circulation, RR activities themselves could have adversely influenced circulation statistics. More specifically, RR aimed to increase access to books in the home through school-wide book distributions, book giveaways, and e-readers pre-loaded with 100-140 eBooks. Increased access in the homes could affect parents and students’ need to utilize media center resources. Other than RR activities, there are many other factors such as overall student population, media center hours, etc. that may have negatively affected circulation statistics. However, these points are merely speculative and beyond the scope of this evaluation.

It was also discovered that some schools have their own initiatives to make reading material more accessible in the classroom. For example, Petree has equipped each classroom with 30 books per reading level, totaling to 300 books available in each classroom. Circulation statistics do not reflect activity in classroom libraries.

EQ3-D. Media Collection Age

The media collection age from Annual Media and Technology Report (AMTR) was used to examine improvement of the media center at target schools. Over the 3 years of RR contributions to improve media center collections, Petree updated its collection by 2 years, Old-Town updated its collection by 3 years, Diggs-Latham improved by 4 years, and North Hill updated its collection by 6 years. As can be seen in Table 13 below, **all four RR schools did improve their media collection age**. It should be noted that Diggs-Latham had the least relevant collection of the four schools, which was outdated by 21 years at the grant’s onset in June 2014.

Table 13. Media Collection Age By School By Year

Schools	Baseline (June 2014)	Year 1 (June 2015)	Year 2 (June 2016)	Year 3 (June 2017)
Diggs-Latham	1996	1999	1999	2000
North Hills	1993	1994	1999	1999
Old Town	1998	1999	2000	2001
Petree	2000	2001	2002	2002

According to the NC Department of Public Instruction’s IMPACT Collection Guidelines, an “outstanding” collection is no older than 10 years from the current calendar date, a “developing” collection is no older than 12 years, a “minimum” collection is no older than 16 years, and finally, a “below minimum” collection has an average copyright exceeding 16 years from the current calendar date (Bradburn, 2005). By these guidelines, to be considered as an “outstanding” collection, RR schools should have a collection age of 2007 by the end of grant in 2017. At the onset of the grant in 2014, two schools (Diggs-Latham and North-Hills) were classified as “Below Minimum,” and two schools (Old Town and Petree) were classified as “Minimum.” At the end of the grant in 2017, though all schools did improve their collection ages, all four schools retained the same classification.

This suggests that a school’s media collection requires large investments to maintain and bring up-to-date once it is out of date.

EQ3-E. What steps did the media coordinators take to improve their media center collection?

The media coordinators weeded their collection on a regular basis. Weeding refers to discarding titles that are: uncirculated, misleading (factually inaccurate), worn beyond mending or rebinding, superseded by a newer edition or better book on the subject, trivial (of no discernible literary or scientific merit), irrelevant to the needs and interests of the community, or if the material can be obtained elsewhere (Segal, 1995). It may seem counterintuitive to discard books, but weeding emphasizes quality over quantity.

Furthermore, each school has a collection management plan. This is a 3-year planning document for the librarian. It helps to identify areas for weeding, help plan future purchases, and address unfilled curriculum needs. The librarians used this plan to help identify RR purchases to update their media collection.

EQ4. To what extent did the amount of parent/family literacy support increase as a result of the Reading Railroad program?

A key component of the *Reading Railroad* program was to extend the degree to which parents were engaged in literacy activities around and with their children. This engagement has many and varied forms, and includes promoting literacy by reading in front of their children, encouraging their child to spend more time reading, engaging directly in literacy activities with their children, and attending literacy oriented events at school and in the community.

Program staff sought to discover how much participation in *RR* and exposure to the various auxiliary activities (i.e., school-wide book giveaways, author visits, magazine distributions) could influence constructs of interest. The **three constructs of interest include:** how often parents engage with their children in regard to literacy activities, the degree to which *RR* has helped provide parents support in literacy matters, and how much parents are engaging in external literacy activities (i.e., community events).

Parent survey data from the 2015-16 and 2016-17 academic years were analyzed for the purposes of the investigating impact of *Reading Railroad* on the parents. Pre-test data was collected in the fall, and the post-test data was collected in the spring.

For the purposes of this evaluation, the parent survey served as the primary source of data informing these key constructs. Data collected through the media coordinator focus groups and teacher focus group also informed parent involvement from the teacher's perspective, and thus are included in the analysis when pertinent to the construct of interest. The data sources used to inform impact of the program on parents are as follows:

1. Parent Survey
2. Media Coordinator Focus Groups (Supplementary)
3. Teacher Focus Groups (Supplementary)

EQ4-A. Parent Engagement

Year 1: 2014-15

As the relevant *RR* component did not officially launch until the second year of the grant, there was no data collected in regard to *RR* parents during year 1.

Year 2: 2015 - 16

In the 2015-16 program operation year, the pre-test data was collected in the Fall of 2015 (n=136), and the post-test data was collected in the Spring of 2016 (n=31). In regards to parent surveys administered in the 2nd year of the *RR* program operations (2015-16), the amount of time-spent reading weekly (or daily) at the pre-test point was 61.4% and increased to 74.2% percent. At the pre-test point, 87% of the parents would discuss a book with their children at least weekly, and increased to 93.5% by the end of their first year of participation. At the pre-test point, 91.7% parents engaged in discussing specific contents, such as illustrations with their

children, which increased to 96.8% by the end of the year. In regard to how often did children read to their parents, at the pre-test point, 70.8% of parents had their child read to them at least weekly (or daily), and this remained similar at the end of the year (67.7%).

In regards to the 2015-16 operating year, overall, it seems that there was a positive impact observed on the degree to which parents engage with their children in consideration of literacy activities, most apparent in the frequency of which they read with their children.

Year 3: 2016-17

In the 2016-17 program operation year, the pre-test data was collected in the Fall of 2016 (n=48), and the post-test data was collected in the Spring of 2017 (n=168). In regard to the first construct of interest, the amount of time-spent reading weekly at the pre-test point was 62.5% and increased to 68.7% percent. In year 3, 87% of parents discussed a book with their children at least weekly at the pre-test point, and 86.3% at the end of the 2016-17 academic year. At the pre-test point, 71.7% parents engaged in discussing specific contents, such as illustrations with their children, and 70.2% at the end of the year. In regard to how often did children read to their parents, at the pre-test point, 73.9% of parents had their child read to them at least weekly (or daily), and this increased to 82.8% by the end of the 2016-17 academic year.

In regards to the 2016-17 operating year, specifically parent engagement, overall it seems that there was a positive impact on the degree to which parents engage with their children in consideration of literacy activities, most apparent in the frequency of which children read to their parents.

EQ4-B. Parent Support

Year 1: 2014-15

The relevant *RR* component did not officially launch until the second year of the grant, there was no data collected in regards to *RR* parents during year 1.

Year 2: 2015-16

In the 2015-16 program operation year, the pre-test data was collected in the Fall of 2015 (n=136), and the post-test data was collected in the Spring of 2016 (n=31). At the pre-test point, 31.5% of parents were using an e-reader on a weekly (or daily) basis, and by the end of the 2015-16 academic year, this increased to 51.6% of parents actively using an e-reader with their child for reading and/or writing. Additionally, the relationship between parents and their child's teacher was used as an indicator of parent engagement and interest in their child's literacy development. At the pre-test point, 80.2% of parents communicated with their child's teacher on at least a weekly basis, and this increased to 93.1% by the end of the academic year.

For the 2015-16 operating year, overall, it seems that there was a positive impact observed on parent support. This is most apparent in the change in the increased use of e-reader for

purposes of reading/writing, and increased confidence in parents to address their child's development with teachers.

Below are quotes from RR parents illustrating how the e-readers influenced literacy activities for students and parents.

- *The interactive aspect of the [e-reader] produces a common ground to engage in reading.*
- *The [e-Reader] makes it more fun for us to read together.*

In regard to whether RR provided the parents with adequate support in pursuing literacy interest, it seemed that most parents were comfortable in their ability to help their child in reading at the beginning of the year (94.5%), which remained so at the post-test data point (93.5%). Furthermore, it seems that parents believe their involvement in their child's reading and writing activities at home is essential in developing their child's literacy skills, as 94.6% of parents strongly agreed at the pre-test point, and 96.8% of parents agreeing at the post-test period.

Year 3: 2016-17

In the 2016-17 program operation year, the pre-test data was collected in the Fall of 2016 (n=48), and the post-test data was collected in the Spring of 2017 (n=168). At the pre-test point, 20.8% of parents were using an e-reader with their child for reading and/or writing on a weekly (or daily) basis, and by the end of the 2015-16 academic year, this increased to 49.7%. The relationship between parents and their child's teacher was used as an indicator of parent engagement and interest in their child's literacy development, and at the pre-test point, 47.9% of parents communicated with their child's teacher on at least a weekly basis, and this increased to 57.7% by the end of the academic year.

In regard to whether RR provided parents with adequate support in pursuing literacy interest, it seemed that most parents were comfortable in their ability to help their child in reading at the beginning of the year (79.2%), which remained similar at the post-test data point (81.5%). Furthermore, it seems parents do believe their involvement in their child's reading and writing activities at home is essential in developing their child's literacy skills, as 85.4% of parents strongly agreed at the pre-test point, and 91.4% of parents agreeing at the post-test period.

EQ4-C. Parents Engagement with External Activities

Year 1: 2014-15

As the relevant RR component did not officially launch until the second year of the grant, there was no data collected about RR parents during year 1.

Year 2: 2015-16

In regards to the 2015-16 operation year, specifically how often parents visiting a library with their children, at the pre-test point, 36.7% of parents never visit the library, 48.4% of parents visited on a monthly basis, and 14.8% visited on a weekly (or daily) basis. The pattern observed

looked very similar at the post-test point, where 35.5% of parents never visited the library, 48.4% visited monthly, and 16.1% visited the library weekly (or daily). **In consideration of engagement in *Reading Railroad* events, at the pre-test point, 40% of parents attended literacy events, and this increased to 60% of parents by the end of the academic year.**

Year 3: 2016-17

In regards to the 2016-17 operation year, specifically how often parents visit a library with their children, at the pre-test point, 41.7% of parents never visited the library, 39.6% of parents visited on a monthly basis, and 18.8% visited on a weekly (or daily) basis. The pattern observed at the pre-test period did improve in that fewer parents were in the “never” category (34.4%), 44.4% visited monthly, and 21.3% visited the library weekly (or daily). **In consideration of engagement in *Reading Railroad* events, at the pre-test point, 16.67% of parents attended literacy events, and this increased to 78% of parents that attended *Reading Railroad* events by the end of the academic year.**

Lessons Learned:

Parent engagement is indeed a priority in these circumstances; however, *RR* acknowledges that many of these families may have low levels of engagement of literacy activities because they may not have access to literacy resources. Thus, one objective of *RR* has been to provide more access to literacy materials, such as the home libraries, magazines for parents, and e-books.

Below are a few quotes from *Reading Railroad* parents reflecting how increase in **access** to reading materials has impacted their families. Note: “*” represents quotes from Spanish-speaking parents that have been translated into English.

- **I help her to want to read and love reading because wherever she goes and find a book she wants to know what it says.*
- *Reading Railroad provides my family with books to read along with a tablet that has books that read and interact with my children.*
- *Helps provide developmentally appropriate stories to add to home library to encourage reading and allow frequent access to my children's favorite stories.*
- *[Reading Railroad] helps keep our at-home library fresh with new stories and encourages my children to want to read and to be read to.*
- **Providing the books and magazines to read. Thank you very much.*

Conclusions and Recommendations

This evaluation collected information and evidence to state that the *Reading Railroad* program was implemented with fidelity. This report displays the substantial progress that was made in achieving the four program goals. The prevalent themes are discussed below.

Evaluation Findings Summary on Student Outcomes (Goal 1)

As detailed in the Evaluation Findings section, EQ1-A., the district used a variety of assessments to monitor student growth (i.e., LAP-3, TS-GOLD, & DIBELS). Though each assessment measures early childhood literacy, the psychometric properties of each assessment differ and affect the interpretation of the scores. Furthermore, there are no current validity studies examining the degree of congruence among each assessment's general factor. Consequently, it is emphasized that findings for each assessment and cohort are considered independently of all others and the examination of longitudinal trends was not possible.

Though findings are illustrated as scale scores (i.e., LAP-3), all of the assessments used by WS/FSC are criterion-referenced assessments, in that a predetermined set of standards are defined at each stage of development. For the purposes of this evaluation the score interpretations were simplified and dichotomized into categories of proficient or not proficient, or that a student had or had not achieved a certain degree of progress.

GPRA Student Outcomes: The GPRA (Government Performance Results Act) requirements denote that 70% of students achieve target scores. Although there is considerable room for improvement student outcomes by the GPRA criteria, it is important to consider the context of the target RR schools Title I schools. These high need schools were specifically chosen because of the disproportion of income and resources.

The percent of students by grade level that achieved the target scores on the literacy assessments are as follows:

Pre-K Students:

- 72% of Cohort I demonstrated significant growth from BOY to EOY (LAP-3)
- 47% of Cohort II demonstrated significant growth from BOY to EOY (LAP-3)
- 100% of Cohort III met (or exceeded) the benchmark by EOY versus 65% at BOY (TS-GOLD)

Kindergarten Students:

- 61.4% of Cohort I met (or exceeded) the benchmark by EOY versus 59.6% at BOY (DIBELS)
- 54.3% of Cohort II met (or exceeded) the benchmark by EOY versus 50% at BOY (DIBELS)

1st Grade Students:

- 56.8% of Cohort I met (or exceeded) the benchmark by EOY versus 43.2% at BOY (DIBELS)

Evaluation Findings Summary on Leadership Capacity of SLMCs (Goal 2)

As detailed in the Evaluation Findings section EQ2 the following items describe highlights observed of school librarian leadership development.

Professional Development: The professional development opportunities enabled SLMCs to partake in state-level professional organizations conferences and activities, and to assume leadership roles within those organizations as well as at the district level.

Leadership Opportunities: The RR activities created situations that placed SLMCs at the center of literacy activities within their schools, and positioned them as literacy advocates amongst teachers and parents. The increased responsibility and heightened activity levels at the media centers directly impacted the librarians, thus implicitly developing their leadership capacities.

Pre-K Awareness: A major shift observed amongst SLMCs pertained to interaction with pre-K students. Pre-K students are required by protocol to remain separated from general school population and common areas unless accompanied by a guardian. RR programing included Exposure to early literacy strategies, such as PD from the Hill Center, and provided SLMCs with the knowledge, confidence, and opportunity to engage with pre-K students.

Evaluation Findings Summary on Media Center Improvements (Goal 3)

As described in the Evaluation Findings section EQ3, the following section outlines findings regarding media center improvements.

Print Books: A total of 7,471 new high-interest print books were added across the four elementary schools in RR over the course of three years.

Electronic Books: Diggs-Latham purchased 479 electronic items, North-Hills purchased 169 items, and Old Town and Petree both purchased 160 electronic items. In all, Reading Railroad made the purchase of 968 e-books possible across all four schools.

Media Circulation: Though the program aimed to improve book circulation by updating and improving the media center collection, circulation statistics do not support an increase in circulation. It should be noted that circulation statistics do not include activities in the classroom libraries (i.e., Petree has classroom libraries of 300 books). Diggs-Latham increase circulation in Years 1 and 2, but decreased slightly in Year 3. North Hills decreased in Years 1 and 2 and showed a slight increase in Year 3. Old Town showed a decrease all three years. Petree showed an increased in Year 1 but a decrease in Years 2 and 3.

Media Collection Age: At the onset of the grant in 2014, two schools (Diggs-Latham and North-Hills) were classified as "Below Minimum," and two schools (Old Town and Petree) were classified as "Minimum." Though all four RR schools did improve their media collection age, at the end of the grant in 2017, all four schools retained the same classification. It should be noted that media

collections require continuous investments to remain up-to-date. Though the IMPACT classifications do not reflect categorical improvements of the RR schools, the degree of improvements observed in the media collections reflects momentous progress from their baseline collection age.

Evaluation Findings Summary on Parent Engagement (Goal 4)

As reported in the Evaluation Findings section EQ4 the following items describe highlights observed on parent engagement and support.

Parent-Child Engagement: Overall, a positive impact was observed on parents' engagement with their children in literacy activities. Across both 2015-16 and 2016-17 operating years, the frequency of which parents and children engage in literacy activities together increased.

Parent Support: This is most apparent in the change in the increased use of e-reader for purposes of reading/writing, and increased confidence in parents to address their child's development with teachers.

Parent Engagement with External Activities: RR seemed to positively impact parent engagement on external literacy activities as attendance of auxiliary activities for both 2015-16 and 2016-17 operating years. For the 2016-17 operating year, a drastic increase in engagement was observed as 16.67% of parents were attending literacy events at BOY versus 78% at EOY.

Recommendations:

For this evaluation, recommendations are most appropriate in consideration of context of implementation. For this reason, most of the recommendations are presented as "Lessons Learned" throughout the Evaluation Findings section of this report. Other findings related to program design and implementation are presented below:

Program Design

Reading Railroad is a school-wide intervention; however, various levels of the intervention occurred simultaneously across and within pre-K – 5 grades. There were three levels of participation: **school-level** participation, **grade-level** participation, **full participation** (student-centered participation), and each involving increased in participation levels.

School-level participants received only school-level services such as school-wide book giveaways, author visits, and family literacy events. Grade-level participants were those receiving school-level services in addition to services dedicated to certain grades such literacy kits. Finally full participants were defined as students receiving all programming services at the school-level, grade-level, and student-centered benefits (i.e., e-reader, magazines for family members).

Furthermore, though all pre-K students received e-readers, the program intended to track student development as impacted by RR services. Thus, only students who began the program as pre-K students were enrolled as full-participants as they progressed through Kindergarten, 1st, and 2nd grade. This required immense cooperation between schools, programs staff, and SLMCs

to determine whether the right students were receiving the right services according to the program design. SLMCs were sometimes unsure of which students and grades were participating in which components of the program.

Thus, it is recommended that interventions seeking to replicate Reading Railroad consider the challenges in such a complex design, and aim to simplify certain aspects. This in turn will lessen the load on all stakeholders involved.

Staffing and Personnel

In consideration of the program's complex design and dynamic system of activities, adequate personnel capacity is recommended to conduct program activities.

SLMC Assistants: The increased responsibilities of the librarians did pose a problem at some points. As *RR* continued, it was found that increased assistance was needed to help librarians fulfill their responsibilities (i.e., purchasing for school-wide giveaways, event planning and marketing).

Dedicated Project Assistant or Coordinator: The complexity of *RR*'s design requires full time attention. The current design allocates project direction responsibilities to the district's Director of Media Services. The evaluation findings suggest the responsibilities of such a complex project should be supported by additional personnel.

Annual Project Training/Debriefing for SLMCs, Teachers and Program staff: As a program incurs new participants, it is important to ensure all participants have all the necessary information to fully assume their role. In this particular program, this is especially important for SLMCs and teachers. It is suggested that a training session be at the onset of each academic year to properly explain *RR*, its components, activities, and changes incurred as well as upcoming. Furthermore, this opportunity should be used to inform participants of timelines and responsibilities.

Professional Development

Professional Learning Teams:

Since the schools were responsible for developing PLT schedules to facilitate the collaboration between teachers and SLMCs, it is important that someone be assigned the responsibility for these activities. Furthermore, constant communication is dire as teachers and SLMCs need to plan and organize their time, especially when it pertains to something outside of their normal responsibilities.

Therefore, if intense collaborative partnerships are desired between stakeholder groups such as teachers and SLMCs, it is advised that future program designs consider the infrastructure necessary to support such activity, and to incorporate adequate facilitative/supporting elements such as pre-determined meeting schedules, allotment of substitutes, school-level coordinator, etc.

Hill Center Training

Though the professional development hosted by the Hill Center took place only once at the onset of the grant, the immediate and long-term value of this training is evident by the numerous references by SLMCs and teachers years after their participation. As incoming SLMCs and Pre-K/K teachers enter a RR school, it would be beneficial to also provide them with the Hill Center professional development.

Alignment with School Goals and Student Needs

Both Diggs-Latham and Old Town have a K-5 “Developmental Bilingual” program, aimed at developing bilingualism and biliteracy. The students at both those schools have limited or no English abilities, are mostly Spanish speaking, and are from a variety of cultural and geographic backgrounds. This further emphasizes the demographic differences between schools within the RR program. In consideration of books being purchased, it is important to consider that there is no general list of books that would accommodate all schools equally. As the majority of students at these two schools are Spanish speaking, both these schools are in need of more Spanish literacy materials than English magazines and books. Thus, it is important to consider the availability of relevant materials from retailers and vendors, and whether it is suitable for the school’s needs.

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Appendix A1

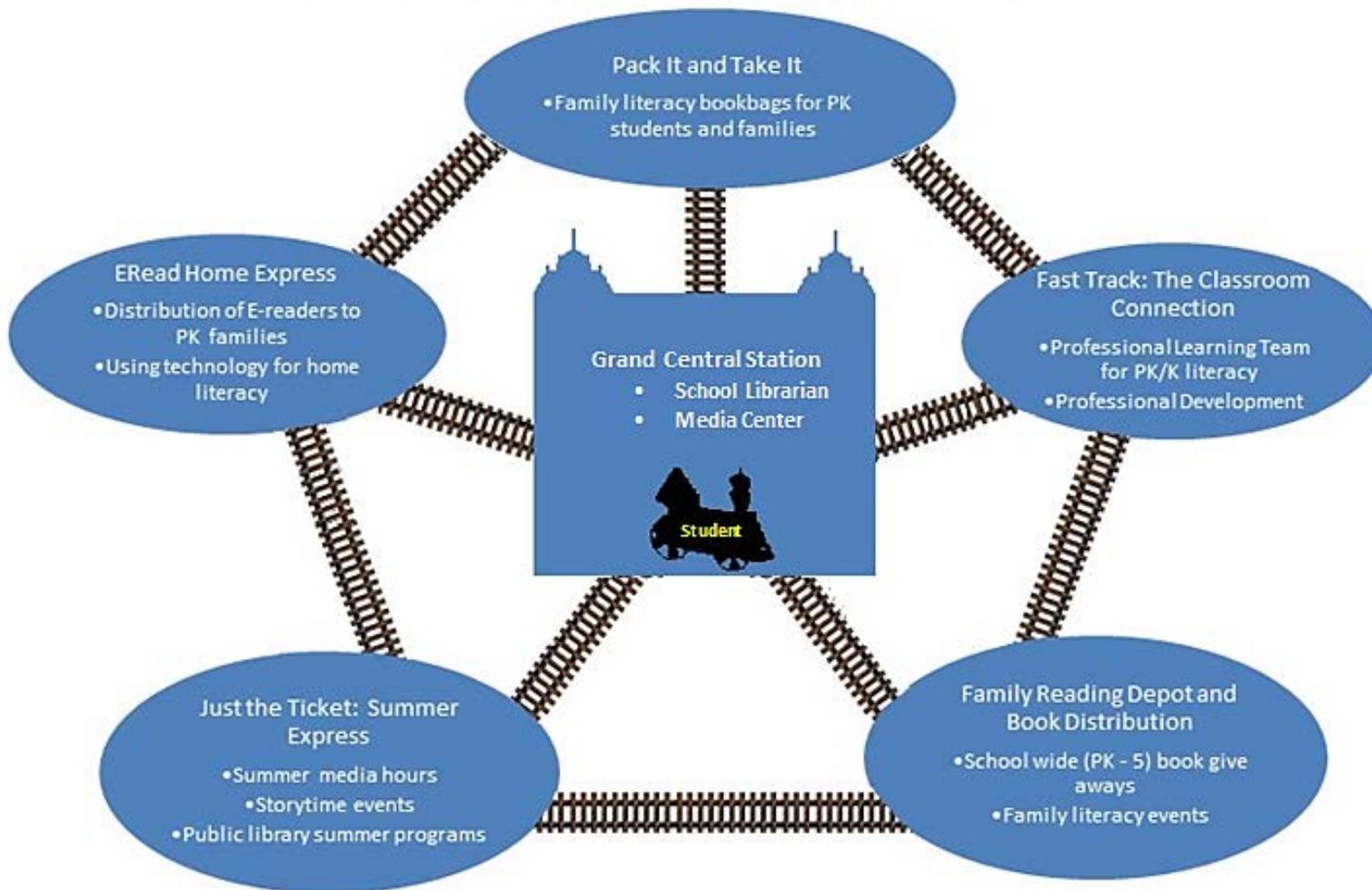
Program logic model of the *Reading Railroad* program in the WS/FCS district

Program Planning		Evaluation		
Goals/Objectives	Activities	Monitoring		Results/Outcome Evidence
<p>Goal 1. Increase the literacy skills of elementary students through a comprehensive plan to promote literacy development.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Objective 1.1. Carry out the comprehensive plan through the implementation of Goals 2 –4 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (See Goals 2 - 4) Administer LAP-3 Language assessment to pre-K students (BOY, MOY, EOY) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (See Goals 2 - 4) LAP-3 scores 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pre-K students in target schools will show significant gains compared to students in comparable schools on the LAP3 Language domain. Increased kindergarten Readiness for students at target schools as compared to prior years and at comparable schools as measured by the DIBELS/TRC assessments
<p>Goal 2. Build the leadership capacity of the School Librarian and other key staff at target schools to maximize literacy development and reading achievement of young children, especially pre-K students.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Objective 2.1. Increase collaboration between School Librarians & pre-K teachers (Years 1& 2) & Grade K teachers (Year 2) through formation of PLTs focused on literacy development Objective 2.2. Increase collaboration between School Librarians & Grades K-5 teachers during grade level meetings Objective 2.3. Increase the efficacy of librarians and key school staff to support literacy development of young children. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School Librarians, pre-K teachers (Years 1 & 2), and Primary Reading Teachers (Year 2) attend Hill Center Staff Development Schools develop schedules for School Librarians and teachers to attend PLTs and grade level meetings focused on literacy School Librarians attend PLTs four times yearly and provide literacy focus for pre-K teachers (Years 1 & 2) and Grade K (Year 2) School Librarians attend grade level meetings and provide literacy focus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agendas Training materials School librarian implementation plans (how to use training in schools) School master schedules Agendas, meeting materials 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased efficacy of School Librarians (pre-test – posttest)

<p>Goal 3. Improve the quantity and quality of print and electronic literacy resources at target schools’ media centers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objective 3.1. Increase school media center holdings of current high-interest print materials • Objective 3.2. Increase school media center holdings of current high-interest electronic materials (E-Books) • Objective 3.3. Increase the circulation of materials in the media centers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purchase high-quality high- interest print resources for whole school check-out • Purchase high-quality, high interest e-books for whole school check-out 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • POs, receipts, inventory records 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Increased school book to student ratios at target schools ➤ Decreased school collection ages at target schools ➤ Increased book circulation at target schools
<p>Goal 4. Increase parental/family support/engagement in literacy activities, including the use of technology, thereby increasing parents’ ability to support literacy in the home.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objective 4.1. Increase collaboration and between School Librarians & Parent Involvement Coordinators • Objective 4.2. Increase participation of pre-K parents and K-5 parents in the Family Reading Depot and Book Distribution events. • Objective 4.3. Increase pre-K – fifth grade parental support for literacy activities in the home. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop curriculum for family events • Develop marketing materials & process for e-reader distribution • Purchase a variety of high-interest, culturally appropriate books, supplies & project kits for whole school literacy events • Purchase a variety of E- Books and print materials suitable for multiple ages (including adults) for distribution to pre-K families • Carry out Family Literacy whole school distribution events • Distribute pre-loaded e-readers to Pre-K • Provide summer access to media centers • Plan/Coordinate with public library for literacy programs, including summer programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting agendas • Training materials • Marketing materials • POs, receipts • Attendance rosters • Schedule 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Increased family engagement in literacy ➤ Use of literacy tools and materials. ➤ Amount of support provided to children at home.

Appendix A2

Diagram depicting organization of program activities for *Reading Railroad*



Appendix B1

Alignment of Program Goals, Evaluation Questions, Constructs of Interest, and Data Sources.

EQ1. What were the outcomes for students in regards to literacy development as a result of their participating in the RR program?			
Program Goal	Evaluation Sub-Questions	Constructs of interest	Data Sources
Goal 1. Student Outcomes	EQ1-a. Do RR students show improvement in literacy skills as measured by the LAP-3, TS-GOLD, and DIBELS assessments?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Literacy gains - GPRA Indicator 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Standardized Assessments (LAP-3, TS-GOLD, and DIBELS)
	EQ1-b. What other student outcomes are reported from participation in the RR program and activities?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Student interest in literacy - Student interest in technology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Parents (Surveys, communication with teachers) - Teachers (Surveys, focus groups, informal communication) - Media Coordinators (Surveys, focus groups, informal communication)
EQ2. To what degree was the efficacy of school librarian leadership improved as a result of the Reading Railroad program?			
Program Goal	Evaluation Sub-Questions	Constructs of interest	Data Sources
Goal 2. Leadership Development	EQ2-a. Do RR media coordinators show improvement in leadership skills as measured by the MCPAI assessments?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Leadership skills as measured by MCPAI 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - MCPAI scores
	EQ2-b. What other media coordinator outcomes are reported from participation in the RR program and activities?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Leadership activities - PDs/Conferences engagement - Leadership in school - Leadership outside of school - Resourcefulness in role as MC - Resourcefulness in role as RR MC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Media Coordinator Self-Report - Program Documentation/Records - Program Director Records

EQ3. To what degree were the target schools' media centers improved as results of the <i>Reading Railroad</i> program?			
Program Goal	Evaluation Sub-Questions	Constructs of interest	Data Sources
Goal 3. Media Center Improvement	EQ3-A. Do <i>RR</i> media centers show improvement in media center holdings of current high-quality, high-interest print books ?	- Number of new print books	- Destiny
	EQ3-B. Do <i>RR</i> media centers show improvement in media center holdings of current high-quality, high-interest electronic materials ?	- Number of electronic materials	- Destiny
	EQ3-C. Do <i>RR</i> media centers show improvement in the circulation of media center items?	- Circulation figures	- Destiny
	EQ3-D. Do <i>RR</i> media centers show improved collection ages ?	- Media collection age	- Destiny
	EQ3-E. What steps did the media coordinators take to improve their media center collection?	-	- Media Coordinator (Interviews/Focus groups, self-report)
EQ4. To what extent did the amount of parent/family literacy support increase as a result of the <i>Reading Railroad</i> program?			
Program Goal	Evaluation Sub-Questions	Constructs of interest	Data Sources
Goal 4. Parent Support and Engagement	EQ4-a. Do <i>RR</i> parents show improvement in engagement with their children in regards to literacy activities?	- Engagement with children - Engagement in literacy activities	- Parents (surveys, informal communication) - Teachers (surveys, focus groups, informal communication) - MCs (surveys, focus groups, informal communication)
	EQ4-b. Do <i>RR</i> parents show improvement in the amount of support received in regards literacy matters?	- Increase in support - Increase in comfort - Increase in literacy knowledge & awareness	
	EQ4-c. Do <i>RR</i> parents show increased engagement in community/auxiliary literacy activities outside their involvement with <i>RR</i> activities?	- Engagement in literacy activities	

Appendix B2

Descriptions of Data Sources, Instruments and Protocols

1. Learning Accomplishment Profile (LAP-3)

In-depth details for exam administration are covered in the Learning Accomplishment Profile (LAP-3) Examiner's Manual and Technical Report (Hardin & Peisner-Feinberg, 2004), but a brief summary is provided here. The third edition of the (LAP-3) is a criterion-referenced, systematic, skills assessment specifically for children ages 36-72 months (i.e., 3-6 years old). The assessment is designed to provide information for educators and families to use in assessing a given child's development. The skills are assessed in chronological sequence according to when a development skill is expected to be observed. Seven domains of development, which encompass 383 developmental skills/items, are assessed: gross motor (54 items), fine motor (40 items), pre-writing (38 items), cognitive (87 items), **language (69 items)**, self-help (50 items), and personal/social (45 items).

For year 1 and year 2 of *Reading Railroad's* operation, the Language domain of the LAP-3 assessment was used to measure gains in oral language skills for Pre-Kindergarten students. The Language domain is comprised of 4 constructs (Receptive Language, Expressive Language, Listening/Understanding, Speaking/Communicating). Teachers assessed students three times over the course of the academic year BOY, MOY, and EOY. **Note:** Since pre-K is on a rolling admission basis as students cannot enroll until they are 4 years old, the sample reflected in this evaluation report is not the complete in the sense that it does not include every student that was enrolled in pre-K at the end of the year. More specifically, students included in the analysis are those who were 4 years old at the time of the BOY time point (thus were enrolled in Pre-K). The pre-K enrollment number grew as more students enrolled when they turned 4 years old.

The expected growth is the difference in expected score between two time points. Significant growth (or gains) is defined as an increase in score that is larger than the expected growth for that given domain and child's age. Apropos the 69 items comprised of the language domain, a 54-month-old child has an expected raw score of 48 (BOY measurement point), while a 62-month-old child has an expected raw score of 57.3 (EOY measurement point). In other words, a 4-year old is expected to increase 9.3 raw points of over an 8-month period, spanning the beginning-of-year measurement point to the end-of-year measurement point. Significant gains were defined as growth of at least 9.3 points for pre-K students on the Language domain. It should be noted that regardless of a child's raw score at BOY, an expected increase of at least 9.3 raw points remained the criteria for identifying significant gains. If a student did not have all three data points, they were not included in the assessment.

2. TS-GOLD (Teaching Strategies-GOLD)

Teaching Strategies-GOLD is a pre-K assessment consisting of 10 domains: Socio-emotional, physical, language, cognitive, Literacy, Mathematics, Science and Technology, social studies, the arts, and English language acquisition. For the purposes of *Reading Railroad*, gains in oral language skills for pre-K students was measured using the Teaching Strategies-Gold (TS-Gold) assessment tool. For year 3 of the program's operation (Cohort III) oral language skills were measured by the TS-Gold assessment, specifically in the *Language Development & Communication* domain comprised of 4 constructs (Book orientation, print awareness, and letter naming, and following directions).

Gains were examined by observing the number of differences between the number of students who were low and high performing at BOY versus the number of students who were low and high performing at EOY.

3. DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills)

The Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) assess the building blocks of early literacy skills from Kindergarten to 6th Grade. DIBELS was used to monitor growth in kindergarten and 1st grade students in year 2 and 3 of the program's operation. In-depth details for DIBELS assessment is covered by Good & Kaminski (2011), but a brief summary is provided here.

DIBELS was conducted three times a year at BOY, MOY, and EOY. Composite scores on the DIBELS assessment was used to classify students in one of four benchmarks (above benchmark, benchmark, below benchmark, and well below benchmark) levels reflecting proficiency for a given time point and grade level.

The DIBELS Composite Score reflects oral language and literacy growth and provides the best overall estimate of a student's early literacy skills and/or reading proficiency. For kindergarteners, the composite score was the sub-score aggregation across the following domains: Letter Naming Fluency (LNF), Phoneme Segmentation Fluency (PSF), and Nonsense Word Fluency (NWF). For first and second graders, the DIBELS Composite Score was the sub-score aggregation of Phoneme Segmentation Fluency (PSF), Nonsense Word Fluency (NWF), and the DIBELS Oral Reading Fluency (DORF). For the purposes of this evaluation, **student growth was determined by the number of students who were low and high performing at BOY versus the number of students who were low and high performing at EOY.**

DIBELS assessment data was collected through Amplify. Student rosters were collected from program staff and merged with student level DIBELS data. Students who left the program school, the district or without DIBELS data were excluded from this analysis.

4. SLMC and Teacher Focus Groups/Interviews (see Appendix C2)

Focus group and interview items for SLMCs and teachers queried how RR was functioning at the schools, which aspects were going well and which were challenging, how RR may be impacting literacy development for students, and how the collaboration between SLMCs and pre-K teachers was evolving.

5. SLMC & Teachers Surveys (see Appendix C3)

In addition to the interviews and focus groups mentioned above, to ascertain the degree to which RR contributed to media coordinator and teacher development, a survey was developed to probe each person's perception of their skills in supporting literacy development. The instrument surveyed SLMCs and teachers' level of comfort in leading instructional activities, and in engaging in conversations directed towards extending thinking and language development targeted towards early childhood literacy. RR is also intended to increase interaction and comfort-level between teachers and parents, thus the survey also includes items inquiring about the degree to which SLMCs and teachers developed their leadership skills.

6. Parent Surveys (see Appendix C5 and Appendix C7)

To explore the impact of RR on parent outcomes, a survey was administered to RR parents and focused on three constructs: how much parents engage with their children in regards to literacy activities, the degree to which RR has helped provide parents support in literacy matters, and how often parents are engaging in external literacy activities (i.e., community events).

Surveys were administered in English and Spanish.

7. MCPAI (Media Coordinator Performance Assessment Instrument)

The MCPAI (Media Coordinator Performance Assessment Instrument) is the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction's approved evaluation instrument for school library media coordinators. It is a growth model instrument designed in a similar fashion to the North Carolina Teacher Evaluation Instrument. The MCPAI instrument is a tool used to rate media coordinators abilities on the following five dimensions: 1) demonstrating leadership; 2) building a learning environment that meets the instructional needs of a diverse population of students; 3) implementing a comprehensive 21st Century library media program; 4) demonstrating knowledge of learners and learning and promote effective instructional practices; and 5) reflecting on their practice. The rating scale reflects four incremental levels of ability from *Developing*, *Proficient*, *Accomplished*, and ultimately ending with *Distinguished*.

A school administrator (typically the principal or assistant principal) conducts the MCPAI assessment after multiple observations of the SLMC while engaged in relevant duties. Beginning or first year school librarians are assumed to be *Developing* in elements of five different

standards. See [MCPAI Rubric](#). As SLMCs gain experience in daily school library work, they are expected to demonstrate knowledge of their field corresponding to higher rated abilities identified within the MCPAI. It is expected that school librarians become proficient in all elements in all standards by the end of the second year of employment as a school library media coordinator.

8. Media Collection Age

The media collection Age is a data point in from the North Carolina AMTR (Annual Media and Technology Report) representing how current the collection (print and e-books) is at a given school. The desired collection age at a school should not be older than 10 years old, thus the four RR schools should have a collection age of 2007 at this point of the grant.

Appendix C1

Consent Form – Focus Group

Reading Railroad [Express]

Teachers (Pre-K & K) & Media Coordinator
Focus Group & Survey

Informed Consent and Statement of Confidentiality

I understand that the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools is conducting focus groups and surveys with *Reading Railroad* Teachers and Media Coordinators. The intent of these focus groups and surveys is to obtain information to improve and support the *Reading Railroad* program.

I further understand that all focus groups will be conducted by WSFCS Research and Evaluation Department staff and will be audio recorded. Any information that I share with the will be held in strictest confidence. All data used for any reports will be grouped data; no individuals nor individual schools will be identified.

I consent to participate in the focus group and survey (if applicable) for this purpose

(*Reading Railroad* Staff Member -- print name)

(*Reading Railroad* Staff Member -- signature)

(Research and Evaluation Staff Member -- print name)

(Research and Evaluation Staff Member -- signature)

(Date)

Appendix C2

SLMC & Teacher Focus Group Protocol

Original Recording Title: _____
 Uploaded Recording Title: _____

Date: ____ / ____ / 20____
 Recording Length: ____ : ____

Reading Railroad [Express] Individual Interview / Focus Group Protocol

Script:

Welcome and thank you for your participation. My name is _____ [and this is _____]. We are part of the Research and Evaluation department here at WS/FCS. This [interview/focus group] is being administered to the Reading Railroad [Express] teachers and media coordinators as part of the Reading Railroad [Express] grant evaluation. This information is anonymous and the data aggregated in reported, so that it is devoid of any identifying information.

Section A. Introductions

We'll begin with brief introductions, and details regarding your previous work experience as relevant to your current role (# of years), (years teaching, years of experience with the Reading Railroad grant, grades teaching, etc.).

Participant ID	Pre – RRX			RRX	
	Previous Work XP	Total Years of XP	Years of XP with RR[X]	Role in RR[X]	Describe Job/Role Duties & Other Notes:

Section B. Interview Questions

- We want to hear the story of Reading Railroad Express (RRE). What would you like to tell us about how RRE went?***

2. ***What other things went well with RRE?***

--	--

3. ***What were the challenges?***

--	--

4. ***Do you think RRE impact literacy development for children?***

--	--

5. [*note: Only if applicable/relevant to interviewee's role] ***RRE is designed for the collaboration of media coordinators with pre-K and kindergarten teachers. Is this collaboration helpful?***

--	--

6. ***What could be done to improve RRE?***

--	--

General Comments/Suggestions:

--	--

Appendix C3

SLMC & Teacher Survey Instrument

Date: ___ / ___ / 20___

School: Cook Diggs-Latham Kimberley Park North Hills Old Town Petree
 Administration: T1 (Baseline of Yr1) T2 (EOY of Yr2 – Sp '17) T3 (EOY of Yr3 – Sp '18)

Media Center Coordinator & Teacher Survey

This survey is being administered as part of the evaluation of the Reading Railroad Express grant. The survey is anonymous and the data aggregated in reported, so that it is devoid of any identifying information.

(Please only fill in one response per question.)

Section A.

Role: What is your role within WS/FCS?

Pre-K Kindergarten 1st grade Media Coordinator

Section B. For the items below, please rate your skill level on using the listed early literacy strategies.

	Not at All Skilled	Somewhat Skilled	Normally Skilled	Highly Skilled
1. Providing supportive activities before, during, and after storybook reading.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. Engaging children in conversation that extends their thinking and language development.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. Promoting phonological awareness through activities that involve rhyme, alliteration and sound matching.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. Engaging children in instruction that promotes letter identification using materials such as ABC books and alphabet blocks.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. Encouraging reading through exposure to books, repeated readings, and functional and play related text (print and digital).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. Involving parents/guardians in effective ways to teach pre-reading skills at home.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. Teaching parents to model reading for pleasure.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	Not at All Important	Somewhat Important	Important	Very Important
8. How would you rate the importance of collaboration between pre-K teachers and media coordinators for delivery of effective pre-K reading instruction?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9. How would you rate the importance of the leadership that the media coordinator provides in promoting reading within the school community?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND PARTICIPATION!

WS/FCS: Reading Railroad Express
 Media Coordinator & Teacher Survey

Appendix C4

Parent Survey Cover Letter (English)



[DATE]

Dear Parent(s)/Guardian(s):

Included in this week's packet is a survey regarding the Reading Railroad program in WS/FCS. The information from this survey will be used to help make decisions about the program for the next school year. Your responses will be kept completely anonymous, and your participation is strongly encouraged. If you have already completed this survey within the past two weeks, we thank you for your participation. If not, please return a completed copy of the survey to your child's teacher prior to the end of the school year.

Thank you,

Research and Evaluation Department
Winston-Salem / Forsyth County Schools
Phone: (336) 703-6719

Appendix C5

Parent Surveys (English)

Date: ___ / ___ / 20___

School: Cook Diggs-Latham Kimberley Park North Hills Old Town Petree

Parent Survey (T3)

Dear Parents,

Please answer the following questions to the best of your ability. This survey will be used to help the staff of the Reading Railroad Express program in WS/FCS. Your responses to this survey are completely anonymous. You can stop the survey at any time or skip questions that you feel uncomfortable answering. Skipping a question or not participating in the survey will not result in penalty.

(Please only fill in one response per question)

Section A.

	Never	Monthly	Weekly	Daily
a) How often do you read stories (true or made-up) to your child?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b) How often do you visit a library with your child?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c) How often do you discuss pictures in books with your child?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d) How often do you talk about a book with your child after it's been read?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e) How often do you use an E-Reader (or nook) with your child for reading &/or writing?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f) How often does your child read to you?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
g) How often do you and your child's teacher communicate about his/her reading &/or writing development?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

How much do you agree with each of the following statements?

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
h) I am comfortable in my ability to help my child improve their reading skills.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
i) My involvement in my child's reading and writing activities at home is essential to them becoming a successful reader.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

PLEASE TURN OVER

Section B.

1. What grade is your child in this year (2017-2018)?

- Pre-K Kindergarten 1st grade

2. What is your native language?

- English Spanish Other: _____

3. How many hours do you spend each week reading with your child on average?

- None 1 hour (or less) 1 – 3 hours 4 – 7 hours 8 hours (or more)

4. Was your child involved in the Reading Railroad program last year (and/or the year before)?

- Yes No Not Sure



If answered "No" to Question 4, you have reached the end of the survey. Thank you for your participation.



If answered "Yes" to Question 4 above, move on to Question 5.

5. Did you feel that Reading Railroad gave you the support you needed to help your child with reading?

- Yes No

If yes, how did Reading Railroad help?

6. Did you attend a Reading Railroad literacy event (such as the E-Reader/ nook and print-book distributions, author visits, etc.)?

Please select all that apply:

- E-reader/nook distribution
- Print-book distributions
- Author visits
- Storytime events
- Summer media hours
- other: _____
- Reading Railroad Express Bus

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND PARTICIPATION!

Appendix C6

Parent Survey Cover Letter (Spanish)



[DATE]

Estimados Padres de Familia / Tutor (s) Legal(es):

Incluido en el paquete de esta semana es una encuesta sobre el programa *Reading Railroad* en WS / FCS. La información de esta encuesta será utilizada para ayudar a tomar decisiones sobre el programa para el próximo año escolar. Sus respuestas se mantendrán completamente anónimas, y se les recomienda su participación. Si usted ya ha completado esta encuesta dentro de las últimas dos semanas, le damos las gracias por su participación. Si no es así, por favor devuelva una copia completa de la encuesta a la maestra de su hijo antes del final del año escolar.

Gracias,

Research and Evaluation Department
Winston-Salem / Forsyth County Schools
Phone: (336) 703-6719

Appendix C7 Parent Surveys (Spanish)

La fecha: El ____ de ____ del 20__
(fecha) (mes)

Escuela: Cook Diggs-Latham Kimberley Park North Hills Old Town Petree

Encuesta Para Los Padres (T3)

Estimados padres,

Por favor, responda las siguientes preguntas de la mejor manera posible. Esta encuesta se utilizará para ayudar al personal del programa Reading Railroad Express en WS/FCS. Sus respuestas a esta encuesta son completamente anónimas. Puede detener la encuesta en cualquier momento u omitir las preguntas con las que no se sienta cómodo/a respondiendo. Omitir una pregunta o no participar en la encuesta NO va a resultar en una penalidad/sanción.

(Direcciones: Por favor seleccione una respuesta por pregunta)

Sección A.

	Nunca	Mensualmente	Semanalmente	Diariamente
a) ¿Con qué frecuencia lees (historias inventadas y verdaderas) a tu hijo?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b) ¿Con qué frecuencia visita una biblioteca con su hijo?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c) ¿Con qué frecuencia discute las imágenes en los libros con su hijo?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d) ¿Con qué frecuencia habla de un libro con su hijo después de haberlo leído?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e) ¿Con qué frecuencia usa un "E-Reader"/tableta electrónica con su hijo para escribir/leer?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f) ¿Con qué frecuencia le lee su hijo?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
g) ¿Con qué frecuencia usted y el maestro de su hijo (a) se comunican sobre el desarrollo de lectura / escritura de su hijo?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Direcciones: ¿Hasta qué punto está de acuerdo con cada una de las siguientes afirmaciones?

	Totalmente en desacuerdo	En desacuerdo	De Acuerdo	Totalmente de Acuerdo
h) Me siento cómodo con mi capacidad para ayudar a mi hijo a mejorar sus habilidades de lectura.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
i) Mi participación en las actividades de lectura y escritura de mi hijo en el hogar es esencial para que se conviertan en un lector exitoso.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

POR FAVOR VOLTEE LA PÁGINA

Sección B.

1. ¿En qué grado esta su niño/a en este año escolar (2017-2018)?

- Pre-K Kindergarten 1^{er} grad

2. ¿Cuál es su primer idioma?

- Inglés Español Otros: _____

3. ¿En promedio cuántas horas a la semana dedica usted leyendo con su hijo/a?

- Ninguna 1 hora (o menos) 1 – 3 horas 4 – 7 horas 8 horas(o mas)

4. ¿Participó su hijo/a en el programa de lectura llamado "Reading Railroad" el año pasado (y/o el año anterior)?

- Sí No No lo sé



Si respondió "NO" a la pregunta 4, usted ha llegado al final de esta encuesta. Gracias por su participación.



Si respondió "Sí" a las preguntas 4 en la parte de arriba, continúe con la pregunta 5.

5. ¿Siente usted que el programa de lectura "Reading Railroad" le brindó el apoyo que usted necesitaba para ayudar a su hijo/a con la lectura?

- Sí No

Si su respuesta es "sí", ¿cómo le ayudo el programa de lectura "Reading Railroad"?

6. ¿Asistió usted a algún evento de alfabetización de "Reading Railroad" (como el "E-Reader" / tableta electrónica y distribuciones de libros, eventos en los que el autor de un libro visitó la escuela, etc.)?

Por favor seleccione todas las respuestas que apliquen:

- Distribución de lector electrónico / tableta electrónica
- Distribuciones de libros impresos
- Eventos en los que el autor de un libro visitó la escuela
- Eventos de lectura de cuentos
- Horario de biblioteca durante el verano
- Otros: _____
- Reading Railroad Express Bus

¡GRACIAS POR SU PARTICIPACIÓN Y POR SU TIEMPO!

Appendix D1

Acronym List

Term	Definition
AASL	American Association of School Librarians
AMTR	Annual Media and Technology Report (NC State Report)
DIBELS	Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (assessment system)
EQ	Evaluation Question
GPRA	Government Performance Results Act
LAP-3	Learning Accomplishment Profile Third Edition (assessment system)
MC	Media Coordinator or School librarian
MCPAI	Media Coordinator Performance Appraisal Instrument
PLT	Professional Learning Team
SLMC	School Library Media Coordinator
RR	<i>Reading Railroad</i>
RRX	<i>Reading Railroad Express</i>
SIT	School Improvement Team
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
TS-GOLD	Teaching Strategies GOLD (assessment system)

Appendix D2

Glossary of relevant statistical, evaluation, and program terminology.

Term	Definition
Artifact	A tangible piece of evidence
Client	The group who requests the evaluation.
Construct	An underlying theme, idea, or subject matter that is intended to be measured.
Descriptive Statistics	Numbers which summarize the central tendency and spread of data. Typically, this includes the mean (i.e., the average data point), the standard deviation (i.e., the average amount the values are spread out), minimum, and maximum, among others.
Evaluand	The program which is being evaluated (e.g., the <i>Reading Railroad</i> program in this report).
Evaluation	Evaluation is typically defined as judging the merit or worth of a program, policy, or system (Scriven, 1991).
Evaluation Approach	The philosophy and purpose which undergirds the methods of data collection and reporting of evaluation findings.
Evaluation Question	Guiding questions, much like research questions, which focus the evaluation to answer specific inquiries.
Evaluator	An individual or group conducting the evaluation.
Focus Group	A type of qualitative data collection which is essentially a group interview, wherein several individuals are asked multiple questions surrounding some phenomenon. The advantage is that participants in the focus group can build on each other's responses.
Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation	Objective guidelines for how to conduct a fair evaluation. They include numerous standards for the following aspects of the evaluation and its findings: utility, propriety, feasibility, accuracy, and accountability.
Likert Item	A type of survey question which typically asks respondents to select a number of a scale (usually ranging from 1-4 or 1-5) that describes their amount of agreement to a given statement or opinion.
Open-Ended Question	A type of survey question which allows the participant to type in a response ranging from a single word to a full paragraph of an opinion or description.
Piloting	A preliminary administration of an instrument (e.g., survey or test) which allows evaluators/researchers to assess the quality of an instrument before full-scale implementation.
Program Theory	A program theory (also illustrated in logic model graphics) articulates how the intervention is expected to produce intended results from the inputs and activities.

Stakeholder	Any individuals or groups of people who are involved within a program, and may be impacted by the reporting of evaluation results.
Thematic Analysis	A type of qualitative analysis which groups open-ended responses by categories or themes. This is particularly helpful for understanding majority opinions of a group.
Theory of Change	A Theory of Change (ToC) expands on the program theory with the additional inclusion of the underlying mechanisms necessary to produce the results chain. It explains <i>how</i> one element produces the next. It can be regarded as explicating the arrows between each connection articulated in the program theory
Validity	An argument based on multiple sources of convergent evidence which can be used to support the use and interpretation of data and findings.