

All right. Welcome everybody. I am Nora Shabazzi, and I am the founder of EBLI, which is Evidence-Based Literacy Instruction.

And I'm tremendously passionate about effective literacy instruction and really spreading the love of effective literacy instruction.

So many people around the country and around the globe are doing amazing things with really accelerating the progress of their kids' literacy. So I had this thought quite a while back, wasn't sure how it was going to work, to have a panel of people from the classroom level to the state level. Didn't know where I was going to get them from, didn't know who they were, but to bring them together to share what they have done to really dramatically accelerate literacy in their classroom or school or district or state.

And so, thanks to divine intervention, I always say, we have this amazing panel group that kind of just all fell in my lap, that have volunteered their time and are-

What? Oh, I just-

Oops. Yeah, you can mute yourself if you're here.

But they volunteered their time. They've done a lot of stuff to help prepare for this, to be able to share with you guys basically a roadmap of what they did to get these really exceptional

gains in literacy, so that you can kind of follow their path, because it's always a lot easier, right? When somebody's forged a trail, and you get to follow them. So, I thank our panel. We'll be introducing them in just a second.

I'm so excited that they're here. I'm happy to have you guys here.

I know that we are in very

kind of surreal new normal. Every day, every hour, every minute seems to be a new normal that we're all adjusting in our own ways.

So I thank you very much for being here.

And I love, love, love the sense of camaraderie

and unity that is kind of a silver lining that's come out of this whole

COVID thing. And

the unity, of course, in general, but also in literacy.

So that kind of wasn't our plan with this whole thing, but

we're really happy for that silver lining to bring us all together.

And another great silver lining, I always try to look for the silver lining in

things, is that you guys will be able to have a lot of time to dig

into the amazing resources that you'll be getting in the

recording that you get tomorrow.

You'll be able to dig in, and I've been looking at so many things that

these educators have shared with us, our panelists have

shared for you. There's websites and podcasts and articles and

books and so many amazing things that I can't wait to have some time

here at some point to really dig into those.

So a lot of stuff for you guys to learn from. So you have time.

They have resources. So that's exciting, too.

So I'm going to turn this over to Hannah, who is our everything girl.

Besides my daughter, she is our everything.

She does our tech and does our

everything under the sun, really.

And she's going to tell you just a little bit of stuff about tech and some of our kind of housekeeping stuff before we get going.

Yes. So good evening, everybody. I'm Hannah Riopelle, and I will say that if you are having any technical difficulties, if you get kicked out of Zoom, whatever happens, if you're in Zoom having tech difficulties, you can chat in here.

If you get kicked out or need something along those lines, do email info@ebli.com, E-B-L-I.com, and I

will be able to jump on and hopefully help you out there.

And I also just want to share my screen really briefly so that you can see. You'll definitely want to jot down this hashtag,

because we will try to get to some questions for the panelists at the end.

But we know that we won't probably have a ton of time for that.

So throughout the panel, as you have questions

for these ladies, please do type them into the chat, and if you don't mind putting the first name of the person that you have the question for, if it's a specific to one person question.

And what we'll be doing is adding a Facebook post tomorrow

morning with this hashtag, RoadmapToReading, and we will be putting all the questions in there and having the panelists go on and answer them online and be able to interact with you and that kind of a thing. So jot this down.

You

can go into Facebook and just search for it, and that way all the questions are going to come up, and you'll be able to find them really easily.

And if for some reason the hashtag doesn't work, you can just type in EBLI and find our Facebook page. It will be there.

So yeah, we want to be sure that we are collecting all of your questions and answer them, even if it's not live tonight.

And again, if you have any tech issues, chat or email us. I will be happy to help.

Yes. And also, if you have a question for a specific panelist, be sure you put their name with your question so that we know that we're directing that question to the right person. Okay?

So just in the chat or on the Facebook page.

So first of all, I want to thank all of our wonderful panelists that are here, we're getting ready to introduce them, and for the time that they have taken out of their crazy busy life up until the last couple of weeks where we're all kind of stuck at home. But that they have done to prepare for this and to share with you guys, and it really has been fun. I've gotten a lot of time on a one-on-one Zoom with each of them to learn a lot about all of the amazing things that they've done.

And it makes my head spin. It's just so exciting.

So I know all of you will really be in awe, too, and will appreciate

everything that you are about to learn from them.

So we're going to start out with just, I'm going to tell you a little bit about

each of them, and then they're going to expand on

their story and the kind of work that they have done.

So we're going to start first with Julie Van Leer.

She is a kindergarten teacher at Southwood Elementary School in West

Michigan in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Julie is what a lot of times in literacy people call a lone wolf. Okay?

She is the only teacher in her balanced literacy-focused school who has

shifted to evidence-aligned instruction in the five essential areas of

reading, as well as in writing, spelling, and handwriting.

So teaching those foundational skills in all of those areas.

The majority of her students this year, who entered as one of the lowest classes

she's ever had in her 19 years of teaching, were all reading by

mid-year, they mid-year tested in December.

So by December, they were all reading beyond what previous classes had

obtained by the end of the year. And they were writing, and have been

writing, at a level that she didn't even know was possible for kindergartners.

So that's pretty exciting. So as an added bonus, too, and Julie talks about a lot

that When shifting her instructional practices, she's really freed

up tons of instructional time in her classroom, as well as

free time for her personally, which is pretty cool.

So welcome, Julie, and can you tell us a little bit more about yourself and your journey?

Yes.

I taught for 19 years. I felt the queen of balanced literacy.

I had poems in my room, packet charts, predictable books.

We spent every week making class books in the beginning of the year.

We did reading workshop, writing workshop.

We had sight word flashcards, sight word songs, YouTube videos of songs.

Even with doing all that stuff though, I dreaded the testing season and feeling like a failure when I went into our data meetings with our principal.

Because I was doing everything I was supposed to be doing, and still my kids were not making the progress that they should've made for the standards. And I'd also started feeling burnt out.

I'd get to school one and a half hours before I had to.

I would stay after school. My kids would go to bed at a nice early time, and I would still be doing schoolwork. And, I was just thinking that something just wasn't going well for me, and I had a turning point. My students, my kindergarteners, could not blend sounds together in words, and it was always January, February, in the school year, and we started in August, before they could do it, and I just figured it was developmentally how school

went. And, the turning point was I read David Kilpatrick's book, and I realized that kids should be able to blend as soon as they started learning sounds.

And that led me on about a year-and-a-half journey to figure out what I needed to do for my kids.

And,

through things falling into the right place at the right time, the summer, I heard about Edli, and, being sort of a skeptic, I asked for some information. I asked for some references, and everyone I talked with said the same things about their kids were doing well. They were so amazed. Their scores were higher than they'd ever been.

And so, it was an expensive training, and I appealed to my husband, and I said, "I have to do this," and he said, "I don't know."

And I appealed to my parents, who are very pro-education, and

I took that training, and I drove to Owosso, thinking, "Oh, I'll learn a few things that will help me out."

And little did I know that I would realize I was completely wrong with everything I did in reading and writing.

But because of Edli, it's been a game changer for me this year.

My school is high poverty. 90% of the kids are free or reduced lunch.

And out of 27 kids, 10 of them could not write their name or read their

name the first week of school. And I thought, "Oh my gosh, here we go. This is going to be a horrible year with data meetings." And, at the beginning of March, I did my running records, getting ready for conferences, and 56% of my kids were reading above where they needed to be at the end of the year. And, our phonics time, which is 45 to 60 minutes, which is a big shift from what I did before, I have zero behavior issues during that time. And I have a friend from first grade who comes down, spends the morning with me, and he is a buddy that likes to run around the school when he doesn't want to work, or it's too hard. And he will sit for that full 60 minutes, and he works right along with my kids. And, I'm no longer feeling burnt out. I have time for my family. I get more sleep, and one of the nicest things about school is that I can teach science for about 45 minutes every day, which I've never been able to do before. So that is my journey.

I do see somebody had asked a question about which Kilpatrick book was it that you read, Julie.

It is "The Essentials of Assessing, Preventing, and Overcoming Reading Difficulties."

Yes, I usually have it sitting right here. It looks nice and neat behind me.

Don't be fooled because my whole desk is like the explosion now.

But I usually have it right here, but I don't...

Oh, I think Hannah has it, actually.

See, I'll send my daughter downstairs. She'd have to find it.

Okay, good. And also, I wanted to say, too, you saying that you'd done everything wrong, I just would like to shift that a little bit, in that you were doing everything that you'd been taught.

Sure.

Teachers work so hard doing everything that they were taught.

So it's not like you were doing things wrong.

No.

It's just that you hadn't been taught how to be more effective and efficient. But, yeah. Julie,

she's the only one that I knew previously on this panel, and is a tremendous learner and very dedicated, and the only one in her school teaching this way, too, which makes it a whole interesting thing, which she'll talk more about later.

So thank you so much, Julie, for sharing.

Hannah, are there any other questions that she should talk about before we-

Not at the moment, nope.

Okay. Very good. So next up, we have Lani Mendick, and

Lani is a literacy coach in Oakland Unified schools in California, and she was featured on Emily Hanford's "At a Loss for Words" radio documentary. Lani is the co-lead with Margaret Goldberg, who was actually

interviewed also on "At a Loss for Word," and the author of "The Right to Read Project" blog in a grant-funded literacy project.

This project focuses on

supporting and

coaching teachers, literacy coaches, and principals in implementing

evidence-based reading instruction in K2 classrooms in

16 of the 52 schools in the Oakland Unified School District.

Scores in these 16 grant-funded sites using valid predictive measures

are double or triple what they were before joining the cohort.

Oakland Unified Schools recently decided to integrate what has been learned in

the cohort structured literacy framework in all 52 of their schools

district-wide. So that's pretty spectacular and exciting.

So welcome to you, Lani. Can you tell us more about you and your story?

Sure. Thank you. It's an honor to be here and a part of this panel.

I resonate a lot with what Julie was saying in the beginning.

Before I got into the classroom, I was raised by educators.

My dad is the founder of Teachers Without Borders.

So around my kitchen table growing up, I was surrounded with

conversation around international education and equity.

And then in undergrad, I saw the deep inequity here in the US.

So I began studying, and going into teacher prep programs,

got my master's in curriculum instruction, and in all of that,

looking back, realized that I wasn't ever taught how to teach kids to read.

I jumped in my first two years teaching sixth grade math right out of college and noticed the students were lacking access to the content.

And at first I thought that it was just foundational math skills.

So I moved to teaching third grade and then realized there was a gap in all foundational skills, math, reading, and writing.

So I went to kindergarten as a way of moving towards building an equitable foundation, but I didn't have the training or formal support, so I did a lot of independent study like Julie was talking about. I felt like I was reinventing the wheel and going down a rabbit hole of everything that was available on the internet.

But I had no clear guidance and no support from leadership, or my site, or my district. And I noticed that students were growing but felt something was missing. My instruction was opportunistic instead of systematic.

So a few years later, I moved to a new site in TK, in Oakland, California, and I got my first instructional coach.

And it was a coach through SEEDS. I began to get really good support and professional development around evidence-based reading instruction, and I started assessing skills instead of levels.

And so through that process, 90% of my students met end-of-the-year benchmarks, and again, I was shocked that I wasn't exposed to

the science of reading or evidence-based reading instruction in any of my professional

teaching programs. And so it became

clear that teacher access to the science of reading and support and

translating that into practice was this huge

part in the educational inequities.

So,

I applied to become a coach myself in order to give everyone

access to that same great professional development and

improve my practice.

I joined Oakland Unified four years ago as a coach, and after one

year I was asked to co-lead the cohort.

It's now our fourth year, as you were mentioning, supporting these 16 schools

and bringing research to practice.

And, right now we're in a pivotal

point to really learn from the experience of our cohort

and apply that learning to the rest of our district schools.

Very exciting. Lots of good stuff.

I got to meet Lani actually in New Orleans in January at the Plain

Talk conference, and I sat next to her at lunch one day and I'm like, "Oh my gosh."

I was telling her about this, and "What would you ask a panel?" And man, she had a

lot of the great ideas here. Well, all these guys gave me some, but she gave me so

much wonderful food for thought. So we're happy you're here, Lani.

So Angie Hamlin is a principal in New

Madrid County R-I

School District in Missouri. So Angie, her staff, and her administrative team at the district have implemented system structures and strategies using a model from Schools Cubed. I always get that name wrong.

Schools Cubed, including data talks that provide instruction refinement input to teachers. They're currently in their fifth year of implementation, and I saved the best thing for last here with Angie's story, which is pretty spectacular. In just three years, the third grade state reading scores at Angie's school improved from 13% proficient, and three years later, they were 95% proficient.

So don't we all want that, right? Isn't that spectacular?

So very exciting. So welcome to you, Angie.

Can you tell us a little bit more about you and this transformation and all that's happened in your school and your district?

Yes, I'd be happy to. Hello, everyone, and I'd just like to start off by thanking Nora for the opportunity tonight to be on the panel, and to just have the opportunity to speak about the literacy work that we are currently doing in our district.

And like she said, I'm in my fifth year as one of the elementary principals in the New Madrid County R-I School District.

We are a rural district in Southeast Missouri.

Our district takes up over 470 square miles, over

1,400 students, and we have seven different city councils in our district, so as you can see, we're very consolidated. We have high rates of poverty, and currently 100% of our students now are free lunch.

I do want to point out tonight that I know I'm just one person sitting here talking tonight, but I'm representing an entire team.

It's not just me, it's our school board, it's our superintendent, all the way down to every single staff member in our district.

And it's a team of committed educators that have as their number one goal to improve literacy and get it right for our students. Our school board and our superintendent set that as our number one goal for the district, and that still hangs in the superintendent's office. Our journey began, the first few months of my first year as principal at Matthews Elementary. I found out that we were in school turnaround, and we were identified as a focus school.

The school had had three years of declining scores, and our end-of-year assessment scores had been 13%. 13% of the school had been advanced or proficient, and we also, on our end-of-year spring benchmark, less than 20% of the students on AimsWeb were reading at grade level. I went to my first Focus school meeting, and at that meeting, I found out that

most of the schools

in the Southeast region of Missouri had been a Focus school

for seven to nine years. And as an elementary school, we didn't have

seven to nine years, so I knew that there had to be a true sense

of urgency.

So I was very fortunate. I had met a lady

named Patty Montgomery, who owns Schools Cubed, through two

contacts and people that I knew in education that had really

mentored me and taught me about literacy,

Dr. Jan Hasbrouck and Dr. Vicki Gibson.

And from them, I knew two things about Patty Montgomery and Schools Cubed.

One, I knew she knew how to get a sense of urgency, and I

also knew that she had a proven track record of success that if schools and school

leaders worked with her, then their scores improved and their school turned

around. So she immediately came on site, and we got

to work. She now works with every single building in our

district, and we've seen growth in every building in

literacy. But,

even more importantly than that, what we've learned from her is we've learned the

systems, structures, and strategies that schools need to implement

and to achieve success. And by doing that, I'm so proud to say we've been able to

exit Focus school status in three years.

That's as soon as you can come out. And then like Nora said, last

year, our end-of-year state assessment score, our third graders scored, 95% of them were proficient or advanced, with right at 70% being advanced. And our end-of-year benchmark assessment last spring, over 80% of the students were reading at or above the 50th percentile.

Wow.

That is pretty amazing.

Thank you.

And I apologize, I should have asked you how you actually said New Madrid, right?

New Madrid.

Madrid.

Madrid.

I said Ma-- Uh-huh.

Madrid.

Instead of Ma-

It's okay.

There's that syllable.

Everybody says that, but it's-

Emphasis on the wrong syllable, too.

I did that also, I'm like, "Oh my gosh, maybe I should ask that question." So very good. So thank you, dear. Next is Robin McClellan.

Robin is a supervisor of an elementary curriculum and instruction at

Sullivan School District in Tennessee.

She led the 11 schools in her district as they shifted to improve reading instruction practices, and she has written articles about improving reading instruction. Implementation over the past four years, beginning with three schools piloting at the K2 level, and adding on schools and grade levels each year to full implementation.

After four years of implementation, which was messy and organic and grassroots, I love that part because it's very true, I'm sure, for everybody. The district has made significant changes in reading instruction, and their qualitative and quantitative data fully support this transformation in instruction.

They've had 6% average increase in state test scores across the 11 schools. So Robin, thanks so much for being here, and tell us more.

Good evening. Good to be together.

I was born in this area, and my dad moved to Pennsylvania with work, so I'm actually a Penn State grad, and I love my Nittany Lions- ... so hopefully there's... I heard a lot of PA people on here.

So I taught for 10 years, first, second, and third grade. And then I was a principal for 10 years at a very rural elementary school in the hills of Tennessee, and they were 90% poverty. Our district is also a large district.

We're 431 square miles, and it takes

about an hour to drive from the two farthest most schools.

So we're laid out similar to one of my friends

here.

Mm-hmm.

And then for six years, I've been an elementary supervisor.

And, the journey began four years ago because we

have an organization in our state called SCORE, and Sharon Roberts is

here from SCORE to talk next. So it stands for State Collaborative on

Reforming Education. So they take 12 or 15 innovative districts,

bring them together, and they said, "We have a problem with practice around

literacy." So they talked to the districts, and they brought

TNTP, the New Teacher Project, in to start working on us

to build strategies. So the first part that was the hardest bite to chew or to

swallow was the walkthroughs. So for us to get

a sense around what the urgency really would look like in our classrooms,

they came to Sullivan County Schools, and they conducted walkthroughs with the

principals and TNTP.

And so TNTP used the instructional practice guide from Achieve the

Core. So we started going around looking at literacy practices, and our teachers

were working hard, and they were being creative, and they were teaching based on

what they had been taught in college, which is the same way I was taught in

college. And once we got out in the hallway, they were showing us

these children were not in text. They were not providing evidence based on great

text. The text was not even at grade level.

It was not built in cohesive units of study.

So we were really defensive at first, and then we came around to the thought of we're really not teaching literacy the right way. So they brought us back together.

They laid out three different open-source curricula.

They brought in front of us Wit and Wisdom, Core Knowledge Language Arts, and EL. And we're really curriculum agnostic in this conversation. We just want what's best for kids grounded in reading science. So sorry, there's the cat.

Oh, I love it.

That's awesome.

If he gets on my head, I will take him off, but...

But rather than saying, "Here, teachers, I know everything I'm doing, let me impart this great wisdom on you. Here's the curriculum," I brought them together, and we started talking about the practices that we saw, and they realized that we needed to make a shift. And so they picked Core Knowledge, and they picked to go all in into the listening and learning strand, which is the whole knowledge-building piece of Scarborough's Rope, the reading comprehension piece, and skills, which is the explicit phonics instruction piece. So four years later, I'll talk to you more about implementation work, but the state of the union is my children can do immeasurably more than I ever thought they could, and so can our teachers.

So, excited to share the journey.

Yay. What's your cat's name?

Pete the Cat. What else?

Hi, Pete the Cat. He just wants to learn.

There he is.

We're happy you're here, Pete.

All right. Thanks so much, Robin. So Sharon Roberts is the Chief

K12 Impact Officer for SCORE, and like Robin said, SCORE is the

State Collaborative on Reforming Education.

SCORE's mission is to catalyze transformative change in Tennessee so

that all students can achieve success in college, career, and life.

Sharon provides thought leadership and activation of key relationships in the field

to drive impact.

SCORE also provides targeted supports for the LIFT Network.

I had a hard time getting my head around the SCORE and LIFT thing, but Sharon did a

really good job explaining it out here.

So LIFT is comprised of a group of dedicated district leaders

in Tennessee focused on improving literacy in K5

classrooms and has informed and influenced state policy. They have a bill.

Don't you guys have a-- She's going to talk more about that, but there's a bill

coming thanks to their work, which is very exciting.

The five-year LIFT initiative has focused on providing teachers with

high-quality ELA instructional materials aligned to the

standards and job-embedded professional learning for both teachers and leaders. It has led to the emphasis on knowledge building and the science of reading and literacy instruction.

In LIFT districts, students grew at a rate 25 times more than students in Tennessee as a whole. That's pretty impressive there, too.

So Sharon, welcome. And I've got to tell you, my talk with Sharon, Sharon could fill up probably a whole day. So good luck on making a CliffsNotes of your story here.

Thanks, Nora. I appreciate it, and hello, everyone. Happy to be with you.

Both Nora and Robin have kind of teed me up pretty well.

My role is a little bit different. However, I have a lot of

similarities to everybody here. I'm a

career educator from Tennessee. I've worked in three different districts, from

really small and rural to a large, more urban district in the

state. I've been everything from a classroom special education

teacher, principal,

assistant superintendent, and superintendent.

So I've done all the roles

in school districts. And after 30-plus years,

had the opportunity to come to SCORE to work.

And,

I get to work with incredible leaders like Robin and her teachers and her

principals across many districts in our state.

As Nora mentioned, SCORE is a research and advocacy nonprofit organization. There aren't many of us around.

And so we're really kind of hard to describe what we do sometimes, but I'll give it a shot.

Nora already mentioned what our mission is, and that's to catalyze transformative change in Tennessee so that students are ready for their future, basically.

And we want them to have whatever future that they want to have.

We have several goals, and those are related to making sure that all students, no matter their zip code or anything else, or any other challenges they may have, receive an excellent public K12 education so that they can go on to get a credential or post-secondary degree that will prepare them for a career so they can be economically independent. That's a really lofty goal, we know.

We have several strategic priorities.

I'm spending a little bit of time to tell you about our work so you'll understand what we've been doing with the school districts.

We're really focused on excellent teaching, standards for students, aligning K12 with college and career life success. And our theory of action, how we go about doing our work, is we monitor progress across the continuum. So through K12,

all the way to workforce readiness.

And then based on what the data tells us, both quantitative and qualitative, we work with lots of different partners across the state to prioritize an education agenda, put out an annual report every year working on certain priorities that we have. And then with that, we try to influence state policy in a very positive way for students.

Along the work, sometimes in those three big things that we do, we find it important to identify proof points and provide targeted support. And so LIFT is a perfect example of that. As a group of superintendents that came together originally around advocacy, and they decided they wanted to work together more.

And, as Robin already mentioned, we have about 12 districts that we've worked with over a number of four to five years now.

They named themselves. We didn't name them.

LIFT stands for Leading Innovation for Tennessee.

And as Robin already mentioned, after deciding they wanted to work on a problem of practice with each other, and because the state was focused on reading at that time and early literacy, we decided that was a perfect way to start.

Robin already kind of described to you how we started the work in each one of the

districts. Districts came on at different times.

But overall, we've been on this almost five-year march now, that has been very organic. We didn't start out with a very well-described plan. We had some goals, and we had a lot of people working really hard. And along the way, we've resulted in some really strong results for students across the districts.

But also, as Nora mentioned, a very strong literacy bill, and an original governor's budget was proposed to do some incredible things on literacy in Tennessee.

Coupled with that, our state's also in the

20- 20

ELL, a-

Oh, you're freezing, Sharon. I don't know, can you hear me?

adoption

and that's

-

Sharon? Okay, so she is frozen, so we are going to...

We will-

And that kind of thing, and-

Oh, there you go

... really influenced a lot of that work.

Sharon, can you hear me?

Nope, I don't think she can hear me.

So,

this is what we're going to do. We are going to improvise.

And we're going to kind of improvise.

Sharon, when you can hear me, you let me know, okay?

Nora, I'll chat her too.

Frozen.

Okay. Yes, you can do that or text her or

whatever. Yes, that would be good. All right.

So, Han, I do want to say though, as I was listening to her, it just blows

my mind, and the links that she's going to share and the resources too,

amazing. Those are some that I really want to... A lot of new things.

If you get our Tuesday Tidbits, I shared their state science of

reading stuff for SCORE, which is phenomenal.

And also, you're very welcome, that I had three actual of our

panelists that have those beautiful Southern accents. So, that's pretty fun too.

So while we wait, we'll get Sharon settled, and Hannah will help her out.

I'm back, and I apologize for that.

Oh.

I don't know what happened.

Okay, you froze. Okay. All right. Go ahead and finish up then, my dear.

Well, I think I was about finished.

I'm not sure where I froze and what I said, but basically we do have a strong bill. We do have a proposed governor's budget. Given the current situation we're all in, we don't know what the results of that are going to be.

But the ball is rolling for really important work to happen in Tennessee around literacy, and the districts we've been working with are the impetus for that.

Yeah, that's so exciting. And I was saying to them, I don't know if you heard, Sharon, that I really appreciate the three of you with your Southern accents, as I said to you before. So, that's fun that you all got to go in a row there.

Which, willy, they're our whole way. So now we're going to move on.

What we decided to do as far as a format is to pick five topics, and each of our panelists is going to be the lead on a topic, and then the other ones can chime in after they have given us their lead part there. So first, we are going to start with Julie, and her topic is shifting classroom practices.

So how she went about shifting classroom practices.

So Julie, can you share that with us?

Yep. My biggest shift was from expecting students to learn to read and write on their own, to explicit instruction and teacher-facilitated reading and writing throughout the school day.

So now I can look back at what I did, and I think I really expected my kids to read and write by osmosis. Like, they just absorbed it naturally when they went off into their partnerships.

So there are a lot of things that I do differently.

I used to do letter of the day. Very isolated, no carryover. Now, the sounds and spellings are taught explicitly, and what is learned is then applied in our reading and writing.

My district does a modified reading workshop. We call it SSR.

But I don't do that anymore. I do small guided reading groups, and students get immediate corrective feedback. I

do decodable books with them, but very much at their frustration level at reading. So that is a big,

big, big difference. I'm not doing their instructional level. It's frustration.

Before, the students would get their pattern books.

Heavy emphasis on patterns and picture support.

I would do a picture walk. I would spend so much time planting the seeds of the words they needed, the things that I thought were tricky.

And I encouraged them to use their Beanie Baby and superhero reading strategies. Now, serve a Nazi about it, but my kids only get decodable texts, and the only strategy they learn is to say the sounds and blend them together.

And the decodable texts have no picture support.

My kids, none of them would even think to look at a picture, which is the

beautiful thing about teaching kindergarten is they have no prior knowledge.

Mm.

And the thing that I love every time I read with them is that some of them start arguing about who gets to read first, and it doesn't matter which kid it

is. If it was one who couldn't even write their name at the beginning of the year,

they all vie to go first. Before, I would create intervention

groups based on the kids' reading levels, and

if you went to our reading room, I probably had the most LLI kits signed out.

But now I administer Kilpatrick's FAST Test, and I form

groups from that. And then,

the big thing with my groups is that we review a skill that they already

know, and we do it until it's overlearned.

I teach them a new skill, and then we go on to reading either a

decodable book or a rhyme unit book.

I never used to do handwriting practice, and I'd gone to

handwriting trainings, and they had said kindergartners, fine motor-wise,

could only write capital letters because of the strokes.

But now I only teach the lowercase letters.

We start writing those letters that very first week of school.

And I also don't waste time that first month teaching the kids how to write their

names because they learn that as we're working on the letters.

Another big part is I no longer do writing workshop.

We do guided writing, and they start writing right away.

So they use the sounds that we have learned, and we do that with the writing. We also focus on how to write, so the mechanics. You start with a capital letter.

You only have lowercase letters in your words. You leave spaces.

You have a punctuation mark.

And the one thing I love is that I always remind them that their ears hear what their mouths say. That's an Evely thing.

And they always say their sounds out loud, and if I'm quick jotting a note to remind us about something, they automatically start saying their sounds out loud. And so, it's just so beautiful what they can do.

I don't do a word wall anymore. I had it up, and I had to take it down. But we do a sound wall and a vowel wall, and- When we introduce new spelling patterns and we're doing the word sorts, I visually see the kids looking over at the sound wall.

Probably one of the biggest shifts for me, besides no more reading and writing workshop, is how we go about memorizing sight words. And we used to do poems and songs and class books and flashcards, and I used to spend all kinds of money on all that fancy stuff. But now I only use the orthographic mapping, and we listen, say, tally, and write the words, and the students learn that a sound can be made out of one, two, three, or

four letters. And whenever we start a new sort, my kids just think it's the craziest thing when they say a word, and there's four letters to spell the sound.

And I know we'll speak to it later on in this, but I've really changed pretty much everything in terms of my reading and writing.

Beautiful. All right. Well, I'm not going to ask for anybody else because we're just going to go right down our line here. And so I'm going to go next to Lani.

So Lani, if you could talk about support.

This is a really important one, too, just like with Julie's, but supporting and championing teachers. So that's Lani's topic.

Yes. So important.

So in order to support teachers in a process

that Julie went on organically, a lot of my

focus has been around how do we support and champion teachers to

shift classroom practices to that explicit,

systematic instruction, to mastery of skills that lead to fluent

reading. And a lot of that comes from building relationships

with and respecting teachers as professionals and giving them the

support they need through really high-quality professional development, giving them

the tools, which is both the curriculum and the valid predictive

measures or data points, and the support, coaching, and

observation, and feedback that's ongoing.

And we know that curriculum and data are super important,

but they're not what's going to teach the teachers, right?

The teachers need to utilize that, and they can't do it on their own necessarily.

Many can, but

as a whole system, we need to make sure that we're supporting our teachers to support our students.

So how we've done that is through community of practice with principals, with coaches. We can learn together, then come together to support and design...

Oopsie.

Wait, you got muted. There you go. Sorry.

I got muted.

I'm sorry.

I'm back.

Yeah.

So, we've designed a lot of cross-site professional development and professional learning community spaces for teachers to learn collaboratively and then get individualized coaching support.

So with the team of early literacy coaches, we need to make sure that we meet each teacher where they are on the learning path.

And our mantra is always, "I did then what I knew how to do.

Now that I know better, I do better," Maya Angelou.

Because there's a lot of grief we feel when we look back and we think, "Oh, man, if I only knew then, I would've done that."

Or like you think about all of the classrooms that you've had in the past,
and what you wish you could've done.

And so we really support the teachers to look forward and to
put best practices in action.

And

so, we've come through a lot of resistance points,
but have really understood that if we acknowledge teachers'
experience and

we understand that when you support them with the knowledge around the
why, give them resources for the what, and the tools for
the how, they will feel successful and
effective. And so they will see major
positive shifts in student outcomes.

So I've had many teachers that when they were first
confronted with the science of reading or the reading research, they tell me that
they felt like their world was upturned, or they felt like they've gone down a
rabbit hole. And then with support and guidance
from leadership and from a coach, they were able to translate
that science to practice and feel empowered because they no
longer had to wonder why their students were struggling.

And they had the knowledge and the practical skills to close those reading gaps.

And the student outcomes and the data really build a sense of
efficacy and a belief that it's possible.

So for me personally, that happened when I first started assessing by skill instead of level.

And for many teachers I work with, it's in a PD or a PLC when they realize, wait, I don't have to make up what my students are supposed to know.

There's a clear scope and sequence that I can follow, and then I can identify where I need to meet each student and support them on that path to learning, and that's been huge.

And another piece in advocating for and championing teachers is advocating for and training early literacy tutors to support with differentiated instruction, so it's not just all on the teacher.

They don't feel alone in this journey.

Awesome. And I'm sure that's great, too, that you followed the same path that they did too, right, Lani?

And so you have that definitely can relate thing.

Yeah, absolutely.

So very good. Well, thank you, my dear.

All right, now Angie-

I'm so sorry. Can I say the quickest thing?

Yeah.

There are people jumping in and answering the questions, saying like, "Oh, sorry to butt in," this kind of thing. Absolutely answer in any of your answers.

I'll share with the questions, too, so that we can all just share because we are all a big team here.

Yeah.

It's not just a one question for one person thing.

So-

Yeah. Yes. There's great value in all of us, that whole-

Yeah

... collaboration, so that's so exciting. I love it.

I can see over there out of the corner of my eye that there's a lot of action happening, which makes me very happy, so...

I do want to say to Ashley's question, where would you start when supporting with teachers is building a relationship and understanding their context and what they've been doing in their classroom so that you could start from

The asset-based thinking and really think through their unique experience.

Very good. Yeah. Again, it could be a two or five or 10-hour discussion around all of that for sure.

And I know some of the resources that you share talk about that too. So Angie is going to talk to us about implementing systems and processes to facilitate change that she did in her school and that they did in their district.

So go ahead, Angie.

Hannah, can you unmute her?

I got it. Oh, sorry about that.

That's okay.

Sorry. Even after teachers are trained in the science of reading, schools need systems and structures in place to do the literacy work effectively. So, all five schools in our district started with a comprehensive audit when Patty Montgomery visited our schools for the first time, and each time she visits. And we are left with a next steps report, which really breaks it down into small steps, doable chunks in the big areas, and the next steps that we need to do before the next visit and the next onsite.

And so it's in big areas such as collaboration, data, instruction. And one important thing is we focused on one thing at a time. We focused on just doing one thing at a time and staying on that and getting it right so that you aren't sending a lot of different messages to teachers and they aren't getting overwhelmed.

For example, a clear learner objective.

We just stayed there till teachers had that right.

We also train teachers in evidence-based practices through system-wide training.

Every building formed a building leadership team so that decisions are now coming from a team of people, and it's not just the building principal.

This is one of my favorite pieces of all the work that we've done because I'm not just one person leading the building.

No principal in our district is like that.

It's a team leading the building. And this gives every single staff member a voice, and it also helps build a real sense of trust, and it creates a sense of partnership and real collaboration.

So everything is then done with the teachers and with the staff members and not to them. This is a great way to not only empower teachers, but to also grow teachers as leaders.

One of the other things that we did is each school created a master schedule that maximized instructional minutes, which ensures optimum literacy and intervention time for every single child that needs it.

I can say we were losing so many minutes of instructional time each day. Then we began to provide rigorous research-based instruction for all students through new core curriculum programs and also research-based intervention programs.

We stopped doing a one size fits all for intervention. We drilled down to targeted specific interventions for each student exactly where they need.

We established a data system through SchoolsCube that allowed us to get to the individual level of each student. So now every student that is below the 50th percentile, they receive a targeted specific intervention. We created data rooms and data walls, and we got that data up on the walls so that you can't run from it. It's right there. We meet on it, and every time we're together, we're reviewing data. We also learned about giving and analyzing assessments, high-quality assessments. So we had to take another look at our benchmark assessments, our diagnostic assessments, and really make sure they were high quality and assessing what we needed to be assessing. And then we abandoned anything that was not a research-based instructional practice. And by doing that, what we found is in the state of Missouri, consequently, our district has seen some of the highest growth in the state by doing those practices. Two of the elementaries have gone to first and second, the top two schools in the state for growth. Wow. And one of our elementaries, New Madrid Elementary, has even received a national award for the growth that they've done.

Wow, that's so exciting. And can you talk just one second about your data a little bit more? I know we talked a lot about that when we talked too, about your data walls and how you go through that a little bit.

Sure. We do three benchmarks a year, beginning, middle, and end of year. And after that, we come together as a team.

And here's the big change. Previously, the way that had been done is we would look at the data. Okay, here's kind of where your data is.

We would go to the point of using it to set up groups, like for small group instruction.

But here's the piece we were missing.

We were not really drilling down one to every single specific individual student. And the other thing was we were allowing teachers to leave those data team meetings without a plan for instruction. So now we never collaborate without looking at data, and teachers never leave a data team meeting without a plan in place, a plan for instruction and also a plan for intervention. And then every six weeks we check in.

We have an RTI meeting where we really review that data, who's making progress, who is not, and what's our plan.

The students that are not making progress, what's our plan?

What are we going to do? What is instruction going to look like?

After looking at this data, what will interventions look like?

After looking at this data. And then progress monitoring, we are

reviewing that all the time. One of the elementaries meets weekly on that. But we have weekly, if not even daily, discussions. And if we go with three data points and students are not making progress, because we are tracking that weekly progress monitoring score, so then if three weeks of that and we're not making progress, we're changing what we're doing. We're changing what we're doing in interventions.

And then we've also learned to take, and again, Patty has taught us how to take the data and target our tier two and tier three kids in whole group instruction so that we're really meeting the needs of every single specific individual student. I hope that answers it.

Yeah, no, I love that because you're not just admiring the problem, which we do a lot. "Oh, look at that number." You're actually taking action, which I love. And also,

Angie's the data wall in her school, she sent a picture of that, and that's going to be in your resources that we send along with this recording tomorrow. So thank you for that, my dear.

You're welcome.

All right. So Robin and I talked a lot about this when we talked cyclical learning for teachers and admins.

How do we go about helping to further educate or

help

our teachers and administrators get the information?

So that's what Robin is going to talk about.

So I always say that one half of the coin is high-quality instructional materials,

because teachers don't have to source and be willy-nilly about instruction.

Angie has just talked to you about really performing surgery on after tier one instruction that's amazing and the right thing, and grounded in reading science. Angie's team is really diving into dissecting the needs of the child. I love both of those pieces.

The other half of this is bringing teachers in continually, building capacity for them to go back out, own it, and then apply it and then come back and refine it. So our spiral professional learning,

actually was TNTP, which whatever the consulting organization is that you may have, helped me devise strategy. But basically, in the beginning, we gave teachers instructional materials, and they just used it within two weeks.

They had to dive into it, use it. But then the beauty of the work was every month we would bring them back in together, and by grade level, we would break them up, and we would talk about problems that they were having that they had already shared on a survey, and then they would have new learning, and then they would have reflections and problem-solving time, and then they'd go back out

and get messy again. And then the next month, we would survey them, bring them back in, let them chart. Elementary people love to chart stuff.

That's me, like give me different colored markers and a chart paper, and I can go all day. But,

so they would chart out their worries and concerns.

They would problem solve, and then they would learn the next thing.

So, the beginning learning was all about

building the end in mind, so finding out when my children walk away is the enduring understanding of this whole unit or domain.

And then we would take them backward and say, "Okay, every day, how do these lessons enduring understanding build to the big takeaways of the whole unit?" We had to teach them again, because I was never taught this way either, how to strategically go through teaching a unit of study that was really comprehensive, but knowing how to own it and not just deliver it.

So then,

equal to the part was the connection with leaders.

So we had, it was me and one instructional coach, 11 elementary schools, about 180 teachers, me and one coach.

Okay, so put your head around that.

Yeah.

So we had to build in the leaders' capacity.

So whatever we were working with with the teachers, we would build, bring the

leaders in right before, coach them up.

We would be learning together, because I certainly didn't know anything about reading science until four years ago.

And then the leaders would go out and not be imparters of beautiful knowledge, but would be on the sidelines cheering on their teachers, learning as they went, but then able to support them with those one next best steps Angie talked about. So spiraling cyclical is like the dream professional learning, grounded in content, focused on kids and teachers, and grounded in that curriculum.

So it has to be focused, and it has to be spiraled, and you have to bring the leaders on every step of the way.

That's pretty awesome. And it seems like, too, even like what Angie was doing with her students, you're kind of doing with the educators and the administrators to help, because we're all lifelong learners, right?

That's right.

And all learning together. That's pretty grand.

Very good. All right.

So last but not least is our strategic planning and networking across schools and districts.

How do we get a whole bunch of people together, kind of on the same wavelength and move them forward?

So Sharon is going to talk to us about that.

Happy to, and being a former superintendent, when you're

somebody's boss, you kind of bring people together, and you start talking about things. There's a little impetus there to do something.

And this was a different environment we were in, and quite honestly, the first work that Score had done in this space about supporting implementation work.

Before that, for the probably six years or so before that, really been focused on just policy and advocacy issues.

And so luckily, there was a group of superintendents, as I already mentioned, and we consider those the willing.

They had been very innovative, very strong leaders who wanted to work together.

They'd been working together on policy advocacy, and wanted to work together on this problem of practice of literacy that we talked about, and they wanted to bring their teams along.

So,

Robin had and still has, but she has a different one now, but she had an amazing superintendent, who wanted her team along doing this work as well as all the other districts we were working with.

So what we wanted to bring to the table, even though there are several of us on the team that are educators and definitely have the most experience in working in school districts on our team,

we still were not qualified to bring to the district what they needed.

So, as Robin's already mentioned several times, we solicit

philanthropy and found funding to help support this work over

time. One of the things, because we're an independent group, we want to

remain independent. We're non-governmental.

We don't take federal funds. We don't take state funds.

So we sought

philanthropy and some funding to do this work

and partnered with TNTP to provide the on-the-ground,

in-the-district support, strategy support with districts

that could be individualized based on what they needed.

And TNTP brought this deep instructional knowledge in early

literacy, and Robin's already told you about the instructional reviews that they

did in each district. And those of you who work in districts or have worked

in multiple districts, you know that superintendents come and go,

issues change. So we've had some districts that started with us, and

then they got a new superintendent.

They decided they wanted to do something different or focus

on something different. So we've had a lot of changes during the year, but we

do have six districts that we started with that are still

in it. We have nine strong districts that have been doing this work.

In their instructional reviews, we had some basic

parts that were the same across all districts.

All districts got the instructional review.

They used the instructional practice guide that Robin's already

mentioned, and later you'll get

access to our organization's

website and the LIFT website that has a lot of these tools we're talking about on

there. They're open source. They're helpful to you. You can use them.

And the district's data, as Robin mentioned, being out in the hallway,

not liking the data, the response and the initial information they

got, those were the district's data.

That was their data. Score never got that. That was not our role.

All we've ever seen and done anything with is the district

data, looking at that across the, excuse me, the network data,

looking at that across the network.

But we do believe in data very strongly, both quantitative and

qualitatively, to guide what we're doing.

We also believe that every district knew their community better

than anybody else, needed to make decisions about how to go about

doing this work themselves, and gave them a

lot of leeway in how to do that, funding to help them do it,

technical assistance to help them do it.

And the main thing that we wanted to keep in mind was that we're

going to implement high-quality instructional materials, and we're going to

provide you strong professional development supports across the

leadership spine. So we all agreed to that.

It had to start at the top with the support that would be given from the

superintendent and their team, and

we had to bring our principals along, and we had to bring our teachers along.

How the districts went about that was very individualized.

And Robin's also mentioned all of us in this work have

been agnostic as far as materials were.

What we've used as a guide is if it's green on Ed

Reports, then it's high quality. Now, that's not the state's guidelines

because we have our own state policy and that kind of thing of

how high quality instructional materials that make the state

list will be there.

We started with pilots in those six districts that I mentioned,

and they all went about it different ways.

If you're interested in how they went about that,

if you go to the LIFT website when you get the link to that later on, we

have an annual report from 2017 that really identifies

how districts went about it. And in some of the districts we worked with,

they picked one or two teachers and invited them to do it in each

grade level. Some of them said, like in Robin's district, they

picked two schools to start with. They were pilots, and then they, over

time, all expanded,

and have at least expanded through K five in all of

their elementary schools by this point in time.

Last year, one of the things that was real important for us being a learning organization that we are, we had enough funding remaining that we thought let's bring on three more districts that we called our LIFT Learning Network.

And

we invited them to join in. We gave them a mentor district to be a guide and support to them.

We gave them some strategy support, but much lesser supports from TNTP. Again, knowing that districts all across Tennessee were going to be adopting high-quality instructional materials, fingers crossed that will happen this year, and would not have as much support as our

LIFT districts had. We wanted to learn and see what worked.

And the interesting thing is we didn't look at their TN Ready or their state assessment third-grade data because that wouldn't have been fair.

They were doing pilots. But what we did look at is their district data as compared to the network data.

And what we found was the strong supports of it in the network that

happened was that the LIFT Learning Networks came along almost as fast as the other districts and were almost catching up to them in their implementation.

Basically,

what I'd say the major successes that we've had through this networking

and strategy work that we've done is that,

Robin's already mentioned this, we wanted to build knowledge with the

high-quality instructional materials.

But we also came, even though that was our initial focus, we found

that we really needed to focus on the science of reading.

We didn't start out with that, but we very much ended with that.

Just been a great influence in our state.

You've already heard about the 25 times the rate of the rest of the

districts in the state. And the LIFT

districts, their work, it's not our work, it's their work,

has had a great impact on our state department of education, a

lot of national groups. And we also know that it's

led to some really strong policy outcomes in the state that I've

already mentioned. Our front reading report is pretty

provocative as far as a report goes.

And we're

an organization that pushes the envelope, but we usually try not to insult

people. And we realize there probably have been a few people that have been a

little bit insulted by this report, and we feel that it's worth

it, because we have the proof points to show it's worth it.

We also just held, right before everybody started social

distancing, we just held a literacy summit

for district leaders, policy makers,

philanthropists in the state, anybody who's

interested in literacy,

had over 400 people, one of our largest events in

Nashville just recently. And put out our

policy report, which is called An Urgency for

Literacy: How Tennessee Can Deliver Student Reading Success.

We want to be more like Mississippi.

They're leading the states in this work, and we've gone and we've learned from

them, and Tennessee wants to beat Mississippi in

early literacy. So those are my comments-

Well, good for you

... on our networking work.

That's a good goal. I had a question.

Is TNTP,

is that an open source thing, or is that a group that you hired?

It is a nonprofit, and they're a professional development

group.

Okay.

And we hired them, yes.

Okay. All right. I had another question, but I forgot what it was. Oh, I know.

Your science of reading report. My favorite of all everything.

I absolutely am like, oh, my gosh. It's just so concise, but it's all right there, and it's pretty darn wonderful. So thank you.

We have a great research and writing team.

Yeah. I'm telling you, that one was like, wow. I love that one.

Okay, so what we're going to do next is we are going to talk about challenges, because as we all know, anybody who does anything with education, that there's always challenges, right? So I asked each of our panelists to pick two or three of the biggest challenges that they faced and how they addressed them, basically. So Julie, would you like to start with your challenges and your solutions?

Yes.

One of my biggest challenges, because I'm the only one in my school following the science of reading, is that the paras and interventionists that are with me for half an hour to 45 minutes a day are also with the other kindergarten, first, second, third grade teachers, and they are very much immersed in balanced literacy. So I'm extremely careful with what I give my paras and interventionists to do. And I create the lesson plans for them.

I've always done that in the past, just because I feel they're my kids, and I'm very possessive of them. But

I tell them exactly what to do. I tell them how they do it.

Obviously, when they go off, they might do their own thing.

But I've also had them watch different videos from Hannah and Nora, and

I've had them also watch some different videos from other blogs.

But I'm very careful, and I always give them a reason

as to why I want them to do things the way

that we're doing them. And another problem I

have is that I can't turn to the literacy coaches in my district.

I can't turn to my teaching colleagues, because

they're not doing what I am doing.

So my best resource has been Nora in EBLI, and

I feel like she's my personal literacy coach because I'll email her this question,

and I'll think, "Oh, please

respond to me. I need your help." And she emails me, and I keep it in

a folder, and Nora and EBLI have really helped me

to put into words what I'm thinking in my head.

I've also joined, with my own money again, the National

Reading League, and they just sent their first publication out a couple of

months ago. And I'm involved in two virtual book

clubs with counties that are not in my county.

So

my biggest struggles have been just that I'm on my own, and how do I get the

resources that I need so I can keep moving forward in my

learning.

Yeah, that

does make sense. And you're a good solution figure-outer.

Thanks.

I don't think that's an official sentence or anything. Don't use that sentence.

That wasn't very good. All right, Lani, how about you?

What were your-

Yeah, so-

... challenges and solutions?

So one big challenge was teacher and leader resistance based on previous experience. And as I'm sure many of you are aware, a majority of teacher prep programs don't teach teachers how to teach students to read according to the reading research and the science of reading.

Like me, they told a 21-year-old that I know best, and then when I wasn't effective, I felt like it was my fault, or worse, that it was the kids' faults, right?

And we see that often in initial work with teachers, this previous experience getting in the way and resistance to learning about the reading research.

But we found that it can be addressed through transparent acknowledgment and respectful, engaging professional development

That really gives them the tools and helps them see student outcomes, like case studies of how effective practices have come to

fruition. And individualized support, always keeping students at the center. So it's never about, "You need to change this." It's always shoulder to shoulder coaching and support, both looking at the students in the classroom and supporting how to move them on a reading continuum. Right?

One teacher I worked with shared that she thought before that she was meeting the needs of her students when her students were passing reading levels, and then was confused with that later on in their educational career, they had intervention needs.

And then after being trained and supported in implementing the science of reading, she realized that the measures she was using weren't complete.

They didn't include phonological awareness, for example.

And now that she's progress monitoring using DIBELS, which is free,

she knows exactly which gaps she needs to support through that explicit instruction. And she knows she's building the reading foundation that will prevent the need for a reading intervention later on.

That's what sold it for that teacher.

Another teacher told me that, "Now that I know the science of reading, I know what to pay attention to, and my instruction is no longer a stab in the dark." And they see that they're effective.

So that was one big challenge is teacher and leader resistance based on previous experience.

Another, as Julie mentioned, is conflicting messaging from leadership or lack of support from leaders.

And that is a huge challenge that I'm sure many of us have engaged with.

Because a unified vision is really, really important and is in the best interest of students. So, the best way of navigating that is to prove the benefits of your instruction with your student outcomes, and then advocating for leadership to engage in high-quality professional development about evidence-based best practices in order to adequately support their teams.

It needs to be like

many of you have shared, like Angie has supported, the systems level needs to really

be in support of this work. But to navigate along the

way, you could prove it with student outcomes, and you could be a pioneer for this work.

Very good. Well, thank you. All right, Angie, you're

next, my dear. What are some of your challenges and your solutions?

How you overcame them?

One of them was the data. Sometimes you can have so much data, you don't know what to do with it. I had so many data binders, I can't even tell you what that looked like.

And so, it's doing that systematic approach to data that's the same now throughout the whole district.

That was a challenge because we had all been maybe doing our own thing. But data now drives everything.

It must be used to plan instruction and intervention.

It's not just something you collect.

If you collect it without using it to plan instruction, then you just aren't doing that effectively.

So it's really drilling down to the individual needs of each student. Another big challenge that we have, and I'm sure so many others on here tonight have, it's the challenges our students face.

Our kiddos have almost every reason in the book why students should not learn, why they should not succeed.

High rates of poverty, low vocabulary skills.

Come in with such low vocabulary skills in our district.

Students start preschool and kindergarten without those foundational skills.

Free lunch students, drug issues in our communities, students living lives of trauma. But, the message is that these students continuously, they continue to succeed at high levels.

Because they're capable of it. It's really accepting that belief that all students can learn. Another big lesson that we've learned has to do with special education. We've learned that not every

struggling reader and not every struggling student needs an IEP. That a lot of them need high-quality tier one instruction, and they need targeted, specific interventions, and then you can close the gap.

And those students

have maybe needed different types of instruction, but they are not necessarily then special education.

It's something that our district, our special ed director, her team, they've done a tremendous job of really reducing the number of students in special education.

Another thing that the district has worked on is really leveraging the funds. We're a rural district, but really looking at like when we had focused school money, how is that going to be spent?

The regular budget, our special ed funds, our school board superintendent, our financial director, special ed director, have really done an amazing job of really looking at what needs to be purchased and what is our data saying needs to be purchased.

And one of the biggest lessons learned is that a critical piece that the building leader must be the instructional leader of the school.

They've got to hold everyone accountable to the work, and the work's got to be done with fidelity.

And then another big challenge that so many schools face,

and I think it's a critical piece in the work of

literacy, is staying focused On the work.

There's that book, "Focus" by Schmucker.

I'm just staying focused on the work, really working on one

piece at a time, getting it right, being

systematic. And then two,

we've learned we needed systematic approaches to instruction.

So just one example of that, a systematic approach that's research-based on

vocabulary. Instead of every single grade or every single teacher

teaching vocabulary in a different manner, it's when you walk in any

classroom, it's saying the same type of instruction delivered in a

systematic format. That had been a challenge in the past

for our district, and now it's something where our schools ...

I'm sorry I'm smiling, because our schools and our teachers, they're on the same

page. And you see direct systematic

instruction when you go in those classrooms.

And I think, too, it's adopting and then holding

onto and developing a growth mindset

that all students can learn. And

people have mentioned on here, when we know better, we do better.

And after you know better, then holding yourself accountable to it, we must

do better for our students. They deserve it.

And I love, I could jump through this computer and kiss you about that.

Yeah.

All of our kids can learn at a high level. All of them can.

We always say if they can talk, they can learn to read.

But I want you to share what you shared with me, if you could, about if we're going to own the 95% we've got to own the... Can you just share that?

Yes. Okay, so when

our school first became a focus school, and the other schools have gone through

this same thing, when you look at that data of, okay,

where are we? That first question in John Hattie's "Assessment-Capable

Learners," where are we?

What's the data say? It was so hard to take those

numbers. I've seen teachers cry. We've

been in tears at data team meetings, but this was the message that

we had to send, and it's this: we've got to own it.

We've just got to own that data. If 10% of students are reading, then own

it. 10% of students are reading. The 13%, we owned it.

Whatever it is, we own it, and here's why.

We've got to own that because the scores are not, I'm sorry, I'm about to

get real passionate here. But the scores are not going to stay there.

We're not staying there. So we've got to just own where we are because

we're not staying there. We're going higher. The kids can go higher.

We can take them higher. Our instruction and our leadership can take them higher.

And so we've got to own those low scores so that then we can

own the high scores, because it feels really good once those numbers start going up to say, "Oh my gosh, look at that." And two, when you're connecting everything back to instruction and the intervention, you can say, "Oh my gosh, that's gone up because we've done this," or, "because we've done that."

So it's really just an honest conversation and not being scared, not having a low number scare you. But looking at that low number and say, "It's okay. This is where we are, but we aren't staying here." And we're not going to settle for that because we're going for that 95 or higher. Because all students can do it if given the right instruction in the right way, systematic process. So they can all do it.

Amen, sister. Yay, I love that. So thank you for that. Okay.

You're welcome.

Ms. Robin, your challenges and solutions.

Well, we asked our teachers to take on a high-quality curriculum that was radically different than anything they had ever taught before.

So the listening and learning strand was a lot of read-aloud.

We didn't really know about listening comprehension versus oral comprehension.

So, listening versus actually reading. So there were lots of different shifts.

We were learning science of reading as we were implementing high-quality curriculum. So building the why was very important for our teachers.

So we put up the slide that shows 30% of our third graders are on track and mastered.

But you know, the scary thing is it doesn't even change as they even progress through English 30. So it isn't just an anomaly in third grade, but our children are not improving reading as they go all the way to be ready to go into the workforce or college.

So building the why, and I'm a drama queen, so I handed- ... 20 poker chips out to 20 teachers, and I gave 14 of them red ones, and I gave six of them green poker chips. And I said, "All right, you green poker chips, you are so lucky.

You are going to be the lucky ones. You're going to be ready your whole life to be able to read anything you want. And you 14, I'm so sorry to tell you that you're going to be struggling every single year, even to read by the time you get to ninth grade, a CTE manual, because you're not going to be reading on ninth-grade level." So being dramatic and building in the why and connecting to the heart was very important.

And then building investment in change was not easy.

Where the

rubber met the road, these analogies just come out because I love them .

I like it.

But the rubber met the road, and the teachers, their hearts started transforming

when they were able to see not just the number, because I'm always like, kids are so much more than a number, but what they could produce in student work.

So now I can go into a first-grade classroom and look at children who have written a play about Ruby Bridges, and then who are directing her peers to act out that play because she's learned all these great things about Ruby Bridges. But she's also learned to code by explicitly teaching phonics, that her teachers have explicitly taught phonics that she can figure out how to write it as well. So we know writing is like the ultimate-

Mm-hmm

... showcase of what kids can do. And then building trust.

So from the beginning, I know this weird cat.

I get it.

From the beginning, building trust and being transparent and letting teachers talk real about their struggles and me saying, "There are kids I taught that I cheated." We just had to get beyond shame and get beyond what we used to do and come upon We're going to trust each other. We're going to talk real. We're going to love each other.

We're going to grapple and get messy because grassroots work, that's what it is.

And so building trust was a very key to all of this work. So we have our own struggles that we're going to even in year four, but those are some foundational challenges that when we overcame them, the family grew stronger and deeper.

And now I have a tribe of 180 teachers, and we would walk across hot coals

for each other.

That's pretty amazing that even community and all too.

But yes, very, very important. Thank you, my dear.

All very good and useful too. I just love listening to you guys.

All right, Sharon, how about your challenges in-

So, this work is really hard, and it

takes a long time. You don't see results right away,

and especially from the level that we were working at,

and the support and that kind of thing, and working on policy.

So we've heard many people say here, "When you know better, you have to do better," that mantra. We took that on ourselves too.

We all know that it's difficult to measure
success in K through three.

So it can be hard to keep districts engaged over a long
time. It's really hard to keep funders engaged
over a long time because in education, we know we all get really
enamored by that new bright, shiny ball-

Yeah

... and how we can move from thing to thing.

And so being in this work for almost five years now is pretty
incredible. And let me say that it's taken a lot of
work, even on our team, for the couple of us who've been
really focused on this. We were talking about literacy before other

people on our team, and other people in our network of advocates really wanted to jump on that bandwagon.

But what we did to try to offset that was using those IPGs to collect data over time and share that data every opportunity we got with not only funders, with other people who care about policy, with people at the state level, until you can get to that hard data at third grade, and you have some success that you can share.

We also felt like starting with those who were really committed was really important. And when you build advocates that are doing the work on a daily basis, like Robin here, she's got her peers, Jared Markle, Millicent Smith, Jill Ramsey. There are lots of others. There's one or two in every district that have arisen, and that makes our work so much easier because then all we have to do is tell their stories and find opportunities for them and put them out front. We're not telling about them.

We're giving them the opportunity to do that.

And then I'd say the second real huge challenge that we've had, I've already mentioned, and that's the reading war that those of us who've been around a while have been a part of in some

kind of way.

As I've already

mentioned, there have

been lots of times in my career where I've shied away from that conversation,

but I feel like at this point in my career, it is time to take that on head-on.

Kids can't wait any longer for that kind of thing.

And when we've taken a strong stand as an

organization, all the districts we're working with taking a

strong stand on this. It's important to listen to others.

We don't want to make enemies of people, but find other

advocates to be really strong so that we can build a web

of support. And then when children are doing different

things, and you can elevate children's faces, the

data that's happening from districts, then that speaks louder

than anything else we can do. And that brings people along

who have wanted to argue the theoretical or the

philosophical points of the reading wars.

So that's how you address that? Because of course it still comes up and you-

We use the data. We use the people that we're working with.

We use the stories that we hear. We share that.

We connect them with other people. We take them for visits.

Before our legislative session, we took

our chair of the house ed committee to Robin's

district, and she did the work. She let the teachers and the kids talk to him. And he left, and he said, "Bring me a bill that you want me to carry."

Wow.

Wow.

That's pretty cool. Well, yay, because what I know what I'm hearing too, this common thread, and most of you guys actually have been three and four and five years long, that it's have a plan, stick to the plan, and realize that there's going to be sticking points along the way.

It's not going to be just all tiptoe through the tulips type of thing.

And I think that's important for every-- Nothing really, I don't think, in education really is tiptoe through the tulips all the time anyway.

But to realize that if you stick with this plan, I would imagine that every year it gets easier. Yes or no?

Kind of. Some years are better than others.

I wouldn't say it's easy.

Easier. I didn't say easy, but easier. But yeah.

And also another key that I've heard a thread through really all of you and even Julie kind of by default, doing a pilot.

So don't just go all in and do like the whole kit and caboodle, but do a pilot and start smaller

and then grow it out. So that was something I noticed talking with all of

you, too, as a common thread through all of that. So very good. Thank you.

All right, so our next question before I get your final thoughts are just give me a

list, if you would, and I'm going to start with Julie, of non-negotiables.

Three or four things that you absolutely could not have done

what you've done without these three or four things.

So Julie, will you start us off?

Yep. The three or four things that I could not have done.

That you could not have done without.

Yes. I cannot do without decodable readers.

When our school was first shut down, I went in on the weekend, three days, and

threw out all my balanced literacy stuff, including my LLI books.

Well, I repurposed them. So I only do decodable

books. The only strategy my kids learn is to

say the sounds.

We do explicit, systematic phonics every day, even on fun days.

So, like the days where it's like the day before a break or Valentine's Day

or Conference Day, 100s Day, down in little people

world, we always start with our phonics.

There's no negotiating that. And I do explicit and

facilitated instruction with error

correction during phonics, reading, and writing.

My kids are never left alone to learn how to read and to

write.

And so by doing the decodables, that instruction,
my kids are all feeling that they're brilliant at reading and
writing.

Right.

And we don't have any issues.

Well, that's good. And so I guess having your school year end in March was kind of
okay then. Not really, but-

I think because my kids are above where they need to be in June.

Okay.

But yeah. Definitely the decodable books
were a big thing, in getting those. I bought a ton of them on my own.

Shh, my husband's in the other room.

But also, I found some free websites, and I also printed
off a ton of them.

And I'm going to say too, Flyleaf, at this point in time-

Yes

... the Flyleaf decodables are all free.

Yeah.

So, woo-hoo.

Yeah.

Those books are beautiful.

I give them to all my kiddos.

Yeah. So that's kind of cool.

All right, Lani, what about you? Three or four non-negotiables.

First and foremost, like Angie said, a belief that all students can learn to read.

Ooh.

Then solid professional development for teachers and leaders, both curriculum-agnostic around reading in the brain and specific to program to build the how and why.

Valid predictive measures and that evidence-based curriculum with ongoing teacher support.

Ooh, and that was very concise. I like that. I can get a visual on it, too.

Very good. Thank you. Angie, what about you, my dear?

Okay. These are just quick bullets. One, research-based instructional practices.

The research is there, we simply have to implement it. We've got great...

I'm so glad that it's getting out. You've got organizations

like The Reading League. Their national director, Lars Church, doing a magnificent job of actually getting that out and letting people know it.

Ensuring that every single child who needs an intervention gets one on a regular basis every day. Core instruction must be delivered in high quality, direct, explicit instruction, and it can and should be rigorous. A laser-like focus on data.

You just can't get there without doing that.

Again, a belief that all students can learn.

And when we say all, we have to mean all.

We can't even let one student slip through the crack.

And right on the tails of that, getting special ed right.

Problem-solving as a team and believing that we,

as educators, that we're all in this together.

I think one of the things that we've learned is that we don't have to have

all the answers. And yes, we've come into this at different points, and we haven't

known all the answers. I know I sure haven't.

I can't tell you how many times I reach out constantly for

help and advice. But that we can do this work.

This is so doable,

and that's why we have teams that just problem-solve on

a regular, daily, weekly basis.

Very good. I love the word rigorous.

There's a book that I love, "Make It Stick," about how the learning

happens when it's really challenging enough and how important that is.

And that's one of the things that we see a lot of pushback, like, "Oh, that's too

hard for the kids." But if it's rigorous enough and the kids have to

struggle a little bit and then are successful on the other side of

that struggle, though, that's where the most learning comes in.

So rigorous is huge, I think, and challenging enough.

I think that's a big one. So very good. Thank you.

Robin, what are your three or four non-negotiables?

I would agree with the team that we can't place a ceiling on

children. So if you would have read "The Opportunity Myth" yet, you would know that children will rise to the level that we set for them.

Mm-hmm.

And we're cheating kids because we're putting out children who are not ready to even be in the workforce nor college.

So "The Opportunity Myth" talks about children want more, and they deserve more, but they aren't given more. So the belief that children will rise.

I had a teacher who messaged me a picture of one of her children on spring break. Her mother has been reading aloud about exploration of the New World. And the child, even though she probably will eventually be placed in a classroom that's self-contained, because it's been years of this work, and apparently, that's just her journey.

But this child is drawing all about pictures all over the sidewalk with colored chalk about the New World.

So that child is rising and learning and growing, even though it might not be a traditional path of what everyone else would think is the norm, which it really doesn't exist.

Mm-hmm.

So then additionally, school and district leaders and teachers have to believe that teachers will rise.

Mm. I like that.

So when I sat my teachers before me, 180 of them, I said,

"You will be setting a high bar for children, and don't you dare tell me children can't break that ceiling. Equally so, I believe you can meet that high bar, and I believe that you will rise and that you will break those ceilings." And I have chill bumps thinking about it.

I cry in classrooms all the time because teachers also want to do immeasurably more for children, and they absolutely have risen to break anything I could ever have dreamed and actually made the curriculum harder because they see what children can do now that we don't put limits on them.

And I think that's in a nutshell. That's my sermon. I always preach.

I know. I'm feeling a little bit emotional about all that too-

I know. Bye

... because actually, if you could just raise that bar-

Yes

... and let us rise, I have... Gosh, another amen, sister. For sure.

And teachers too.

I'm going to say a quick thing here too. I've taught a lot of variety people.

I've taught lawyers. Just last year, I taught a cardiovascular surgeon who's 50 years old, reading at 90 words a minute.

He is renowned and invented a procedure to prevent amputations and world-renowned in teaching people.

He lost his hospital privileges because he couldn't get through his boards again.

So a lot of times we think, too, that, "Oh, it's these

lower kids or the disadvantaged kids," and we all have the different perceptions, but every single person, just about every person actually, can even reach a higher potential, if we keep raising that bar. So yeah, I am like kumbayan with you all the way on that one, my dear. So thank you. That one, my whole body is like, "Phew," this volcano going to go now. But I appreciate that.

Sharon, how about you? Your non-negotiables.

So, you all just saw what I was talking about a few minutes ago. You have zealots like Robin, and you just give them a platform to talk. Because they are doing the work and doing amazing things for kids.

And so,

I talked about the Lift Network bringing the willing together and district leaders who wanted to do this work. They weren't all, they were actually none of them, in affluent districts and that kind of thing.

So I agree completely with Robin. We want all kids, and we believe all kids can learn and given the opportunity, and we want to take obstacles away from them so that they can have the future that they want. So that's definitely a non-negotiable that kids can learn.

And,

we can't tolerate any less than that.

I will say that also through this work is that

we've also learned that high-quality instructional materials is not the answer to cure cancer or everything in the world.

But what we found is when you have high-quality instructional materials, ethical knowledge, and allow for and encourage and make sure that the science of reading is there for kids, then that's the floor.

That's the absolute thing that we should be providing teachers, and leaders in their school.

And anything less than that, then we're not doing what we should be doing.

And

that coupled with high-quality instructional materials, then you've got to have the professional development.

And I don't say that lightly,

because that's teachers who've been teaching for a very long time. And for our new teachers who are just

going through training now, we need that leadership spine

where as we talked about at all levels, that we're providing that.

And then I would also say that literacy can't be a fly by night, as I mentioned a few minutes ago. It's not a shiny ball.

It has to be our focus. It's taken us years as a country to get to where we are of having the challenges we have with literacy.

It's generational, the problems that we have.

It's going to take us a long time to fix it, and we have to stay focused on that.

And, we have to figure out right now also, this new normal we're in. This is not helping us- ... what we're doing for children. And, we're all struggling with how do we keep kids growing and learning, not just where they are the last day they attended school when we're all in this part of social distancing.

So it is a huge challenge in front of all of us.

Yeah. It's such a fluid, ever-changing, every minute thing that I think that... I don't know, I just have a sense that in the end, it's going to be even better than what it was before somehow.

But it's just that going through it is, I don't know, it's a little bit rougher or a lot rougher, depending on the moment or the day type of thing, so thank you very much. I'm feeling pretty darn proud because I'm exactly on the time I'm supposed to be on. I think Hannah's probably fainted somewhere, wherever she's at, being like, "There's no way she's going to keep on time." So we are doing a great job, ladies. So our last thing going around, so those final thoughts, the thing you think, "Oh, I wish I would've said that," or, "I wish I would've shared that," or something that's just even a little bit off topic, but I really want to share about this or share this. So Julie, what about you?

What are your final thoughts?

All right.

This fall, I had a lot of conflict in my head.

I felt like going to my training this summer was the culmination of a year and a half of searching. But I trusted the process, and even though I was like, "My kids can't do this, my kids can't do this. They can't write, they can't blend, they can't read," I didn't stray from my scope and sequence.

And, I'm absolutely astonished with what my kids can do.

And every time I read with them or I do an intervention group with them, I get goosebumps. And I'm sure my principal is sick of me because I text him and I'm like, "What are you doing? Come down and look at us. What are you doing? Come look at this." And I'm

utterly shocked and amazed, and I've gone from being burnt out after 19 years of teaching to thinking like, "Wow, I can't leave kindergarten.

I got to get all these kids reading in the next 12, 15 years."

So just trusting the process, and I don't have all the answers, but there are people who do, and I can finally take a curriculum and not have to redo it. So I think my biggest takeaway is just trusting and being okay with thinking it's too hard because it's not too hard.

The kids rise to my lowest expectations, so.

And your highest, too.

And my highest, yes.

Definitely.

I don't know what grade's going to do next year, but that's not my

cup of tea, so.

Very good. And Julie, this is another fun thing that she shared with me too.

She's like, "I can't wait for assessments. I can't wait to do assessments.

I've never felt that way before, but I'm so excited to do assessments." And that's

what we find a lot. And you know that that's a pretty good thing when you're-

And now we're all shut down, and I wanted to cry because I'm like, "Wait, my good scores, nobody's going to see them but me."

But next year

Next year. Yeah. It's all divine right order somehow.

That's right.

We don't know how, but somehow.

Exactly.

All right. Lattie, what about you, my dear?

What are your final thoughts before questions and answers?

I would suggest using this time at home to continue

learning. Reach out,

watch webinars, read articles, continue building your own

expertise to share with others, and build a coalition of the

willing, like Sharon said. Build a coalition with other

teachers, leaders, parents, to learn together, ask questions,

and don't let anyone stop you. You're doing the right thing,

and you're advocating for kids that can't necessarily advocate

for themselves and their educational journey.

So keep up the great work. If you're here, it's probably because you want to do this, and continue with it.

That's pretty awesome. And also, I'm going to tell you, the resource document that you're going to be getting, and I went through, and these guys linked a lot of things, and I went through and linked every book and every single thing that I could find a link for. That will keep you busy for a good three or four months. And you already know they've paved that path for you, so you know that it results in great stuff.

So start there with your learning, because there's a lot.

And there's a few things that repeat, but some of them are leaving stuff off when it was repeating, so there's just so much great stuff in that.

So I agree, this is a perfect time to continue to learn and grow and do your teacher rising, for sure.

Okay, Angie, what about you? Final thoughts from you, my dear.

One of them is just involving everyone in the process.

The building leadership and district leadership team helps with that.

And

we've had

just the beautiful gift that our school board and

superintendent are as involved in this process as every single teacher, every single staff member in the district.

I don't think I've mentioned setting goals and the importance of setting goals and setting high goals. I was scared to death to put some of those

numbers on the board, but it feels great when you reach them because the kids hit them almost every single solitary time.

Mm-hmm.

And I just can't stress the importance of having a building leader that can be the instructional leader of the school.

Because when you do that, and when you've got a building leader that gets into the classrooms and offers the support and the coaching,

and is in those rooms modeling, then you are

empowering teachers. I've never known a teacher that's gotten up

in the morning and said, "I'm going to go to school today,

make a difference in the life of a child, and I hope and pray I'm ineffective."

That just doesn't happen. They want to be effective.

They want to be told what to do. They want coaching.

They want support, and it's our job, our responsibility as district leaders, as building leaders, to give it to them.

Because

teachers go from defeated to empowered quickly.

And also, I think it's just the data meetings, and

not just meeting on that data, but really

using it to guide and plan every step of the work that

you're doing. And then, too,

a beautiful thing that we've got here in our district, we didn't

just try to do the work ourselves. We knew we needed help, and we reached

out, and we got it.

I'm so thankful for Patty Montgomery and School's Cubed because they came on site, and then it is a doable plan. But I guess just my final thought is we can do this. As educators, we can do this. This is our moral obligation to get this right, and we can do it. We just have to join together, band together, and not give up, and do it for the kiddos. They deserve it.

And I noticed on your list, too, of resources, that you included a book that Patty wrote, right?

Yes. It's "The Principal's Primer on Increasing Literacy..." I just messed that title up. But it is on the list of resources. I can't believe it.

That's all right. It's getting late.

I can tell you specific pages that certain paragraphs- ... are on, and I just messed up the title, but yes.

You have most of the words from what I can recall.

Yeah.

So that's good.

It's by Patty Montgomery, Melody Ilk, and Louisa Moats. Can't go wrong with that one.

Beautiful. And deflated to empowered quickly.

Who doesn't want that? That right there is a big old ray of hope and sunshine, that phrase, so thank you for that. All right, Robin in Petaluma Cat,

what about your final thoughts?

Just so you know, Angie, we all are invested in what you are saying, and we believe you, that you know exactly what that book title is, but we're all fried.

We've had a little bit going on for two weeks.

So, my final two would be strike while the iron's hot.

So if we know that kids are growing and that this is the right way to teach children, I don't understand why we don't have more people like

Julie who's willing to be brave and be courageous and start seeking that. And I think we've got a panel of people here.

Lonnie, I know you're one of these revolutionists too.

We know what kids need to learn how to read.

It's clear there's not even studies that are being conducted on it anymore because we know exactly how children learn how to read.

Let's go. We can't be apathetic anymore.

Angie said moral imperative. To me, I've got to get in heaven one day and the Lord's going to say, "You did good work on Earth." Moral imperative, I'm going to try to fulfill that calling. So let's do it.

I love somebody just wrote, "Let's do it." Lonnie did.

The second thing is

be willing to get messy. So Angie's talked a lot about Focus by Mike Schmoker, and we've all talked about goals and direction, absolutely strategy. I think School's Cubed probably, Angie helped you build strategy.

That's what TNTP does. That's what Student Achievement

Part--

There's all kinds of different organizations that help you do that work.

But you have to be willing to get messy, and you have to be willing to make errors,
and you have to be able to admit you've made errors-

Mm-hmm

... and be better. So it's all a process of admitting that we don't
know, but we're going to be better now that we do know.

And then the last thing I would say is we've got to get rid of the shame zone.

So I joke that when I go get my prescriptions filled, and there are many, because
I've been in counseling for seven years, there are many.

But one of my past first graders is actually filling my
medication. So while I worry that I cheated her, thank
goodness she overcame that.

Right.

So I'm past the shame, and now I'm in the trenches with the teachers and the
leaders, and I'm going to make sure to impact literacy through those people, so
we can do it.

Well, bless your heart. And I think that you said that song popped into my head we
sang, that, "Blossom of hope, may we learn and grow."

See, I'm not a singer, but that song popped into my head.

So yes, we will remember that and keep
going forward. In the shame zone and the let's stop already.

This is what I love about the coronavirus, I'm going to tell you, is

it's more all of the uniting that's happening instead of all that damn dividing.

Enough of the dividing. Nobody is benefiting from that.

Let's just unite and move forward and help everybody.

Why don't we just do that? So that, for me, I think is going to be one of the big blessings that come out of that. So that is pretty grand.

Okay, Sharon, how about you?

Your final thoughts.

Final thoughts. As Robin talked about, the shame zone.

I wrote a blog a few months back, two, three months back, that was pretty much that. It was my unfinished learning, and basically said, "For the last 38 years, I've done this wrong." I didn't know what I know now.

And now that I know different, even though I'm not in a classroom, I'm not in a school, in a district now, I'm going to do everything I can to make sure that people like you all who are here at 7:30, 8:30, whatever time zone- ... you're in, is learning together in this kind of venue.

So,

I think definitely we should just move on and do the right thing for kids.

And then,

last parting thought for you, I already told you about the literacy summit

that our organization hosted a few weeks ago before the pandemic was declared.

And, we had several things

that happened during that summit, but we had a panel, and we had both of the chairs of our Senate and House

Education Committees. We had a teacher leader who

brought her son with her, who is a student in one of the school districts we work with, and his name is

Charlie. And he's eight years old, and he's in second grade, and he's precocious, and he's articulate, and he's wonderful.

What Charlie said

when he was talking with the audience of 100 plus people there,

is he said, "Reading is a life skill just like swimming, and we have to do this. And it's also fun."

And at the very end, he helped me push everybody on that panel of, "What are you going to do to make sure that I and other kids like me learn to read well?" And so that's what I say to you all.

What are you going to do to make sure kids learn well that maybe haven't had the opportunity to do that?

So, my final thought.

That is the best final thought in the world, for sure.

And we are going to go to questions, but I do want to say that I read that blog a

couple of months ago that Sharon wrote, and then I cold emailed her.

I didn't know her from the man in the moon, but I'm like, "This is a woman, she needs to be on this panel." And lo and behold, she emails back, and she's like, "Yeah, I'll do that." So is that blog linked?

Is that one of the things?

It is not. I forgot to link it. So I can find it and send it to you.

Yeah.

I'll do that tonight.

We can get that. We'll be sure that we won't send that out without that, because that

one was just like, she is my spirit animal, and

yeah, we're going to do this. So okay, Hannah, I'm going to go to you and see.

We have a little bit of time left. I'm feeling proud of all of us.

Good job, ladies. For maybe a question for each panelist.

It looks like there's been a lot happening over there.

Quite the challenge-

... to narrow it down because there are a ton of really great questions.

But let me see.

I think that this one is probably pretty...

Let's see.

Oh,

I'll start at the end because that's easier.

Sorry, I was not prepared for this because I didn't think that we would have time.

I know. We were just like, "This is not going to really happen." But I've been paying attention. And these guys have just been right on with their time.

I don't know if they practiced or not, but they nailed it.

Janice was wondering if Julie is able to do a sound in a vowel wall as opposed to a word wall. Julie, could you speak to that for just a minute?

Yep.

Nobody has told me that I can't do a sound wall and a vowel wall, and so I feel that I'm going to ask for forgiveness after if I get called out on it.

So I feel like my kids didn't really use my word wall, and I literally every day see my kids looking over there and making some comment about it.

So until I'm told otherwise, I'm keeping it up.

Can you talk about what's on your sound wall?

Yep. I think the website is Tools for Reading.

Instead of having A, B, C, D all the way through, the sound wall has the sounds, the consonants.

And I'm not an expert on this but it has the consonants arranged more like how

the fricatives together, the nasal sounds are together. And it has all the different spellings.

So like for K, it'll have the K, it'll have the C, it'll have a spot for a vowel, and the C-K

together. And actually, as we've gone through this year, my kids have noticed that some of the spellings are missing.

And so we have to put them up with sticky notes.

But,

so it's just I think a helpful way for the kids to see when they're saying that sound, what are the different spellings that it could be.

I've just gotten into the tip of it now, so

I really use the Tools for Reading a lot to go back and read it

But, and then the vowel one, it has all the different ways to make the vowel and how your mouth is positioned.

And I noticed that has really helped my kids when they're pronouncing the words wrong, is that we go back and we look at that, and we practice making the right formation with our mouths.

Beautiful.

Thanks.

And then this question can be for anyone.

Nora, I'll let you choose who you want to direct it to.

Yeah.

But this is a question from Ashley.

And this is a big one, "How do you address leaders or districts who use data that shows a different picture with their data?"

So for example, if they're using DRA or F&P that show higher numbers, or districts that think 40% proficiency is

good and don't see that change is needed." So how would you address something like that?

Let's have Robin answer that.

Yeah.

I knew you were going to do that, for sure. Because that's a hard one.

I guess

the way that I'll talk about that is the number that were measured, and we need to prepare children to be able to show mastery on T and readiness, because that's the way that they're measured in third through 12.

But if you took work from children who are in

F&P classrooms,

or reading workshop classrooms, and then you took

work from children who have been through strong science of

reading curriculum, like Nora's curriculum also,

you won't be able to compare the work.

So we're preparing children to be able to converse in high school in US history class. I bet my second graders can knock the socks off of you guys, talking about the War of 1812 and the Civil Rights Movement.

And

so building background knowledge and what kids are able to know and do, that's all connected, and strategic, and linear.

So yeah, the numbers may be showing that they're improving, or that in more affluent areas the numbers fall

easier,

but if you look at what kids can do and talk to you about, and apply that at home and in life, it'll be a totally different picture.

You know another thing that we have found too, that we always ask our teachers that we train to do a writing sample. Do a writing sample at the beginning.

Do one every couple of months if you want to, but definitely beginning, middle, end, around parent-teacher conference. You can't argue with that.

And this is in some of our really resistant districts, where you have a classroom, they do a writing sample, and one that is not teaching that way, and doing balanced literacy in their writing sample.

You can't read these in these kids.

We have parents say, "My first grader's writing better than my fifth grader." Like by far, when they're in a classroom that's actually teaching them how to write and how to read, and using that explicit, systematic instruction on those foundational skills.

So I think that those physical papers of showing, this is them in August, and this is them in October.

You wouldn't think they were the same child.

Now, let's look at this classroom that's not doing that.

And that's kind of the beauty that Julie could do, but then how do you deal with that? Because that's a very sensitive situation.

I don't know the answer to that. Do you,

Robin?

I just want to add that using another measure is really helpful. So we had a class that left kindergarten where about 85% of the class was proficient on the F&P, and that same class going into first grade, when given the DIBELS, were about 35% proficient. So comparing more subjective measures to valid predictive measures is really helpful in showing where students are at, and if they have the skills they need for foundational reading.

And what we hear from that too, Lani, sometimes, and I wonder how you deal with this, is that, "Well, we don't like that test," or, "That test is not what we use to measure." How do you address that?

That's tricky.

I think people have to get used to the measures and understand the importance before. If they don't like a test, it's probably because they don't understand what it's showing yet, and they need the professional development around what's beneficial about the different measures.

Thank you.

Okay. I've highlighted some good ones now that I've had a minute, so...

Thank you.

This one is a quick one for you, Angie, and I have a feeling I know what you're going to say, but when you were talking about how not all struggling

students necessarily need IEPs-

Mm-hmm

... that sort of thing, somebody asked, "Can we quote what Angie just said?" And I was like, "I'm pretty sure I know what she's going to say to that," but I'm going to let you answer the question there.

What was the question again?

Can they quote you on that?

Oh, yeah, absolutely. Yes. They sure can.

Yes.

It's been a huge lesson that we've learned, that students were well below grade level, unfortunately, because our instruction had led them there.

So,

every struggling reader, yeah, I'll say it again, I'll say it all the time.

Every struggling reader is not a student with a learning disability.

They need high-quality instruction, delivered in a systematic format. Rigorous instruction and targeted specific interventions delivered in a systematic way will close the gap, and when students start responding to interventions, then that means they are not

learning disabled. They're responding to instruction.

And I tell you the other thing,

Patty taught us how to target the tier three

students in your whole group instruction.

And so then, just one quick example, when you've

had students,

everyone reads something, you go back, "Lily, what was that again?

What were those four words?" Stuff like that, and it's just really

drilling down and getting, what am I going to say in small group?

What am I going to say in whole group? But yes, they can quote me on that.

And then I do want to address, because several people asked a very similar

question, which is like, "I want to see a video of this," or, "Julie, can you tell

us what your day looks like? Exactly how is it broken down?" And I know, Lonnie,

that you have a lot to add, and we probably have other teachers that could chime in

on that. So I just want to let everybody know that we will be getting you some

schedules of what it looks like. When we coach teachers with Edly,

everybody's situation is always different.

So there has to be a lot of flexibility there, but we will for sure get you

some examples.

Now, I wonder too, Sharon and

Robyn, I know that you guys have a lot of open-source stuff.

Are there videos on there of your teachers teaching,

too, that's open source, or no, probably not.

Go ahead, Sharon.

Go ahead, Robyn.

I have two teachers.

Teachers do allow us to video, and then we go back and learn from things that they've done. But I have two great exemplar videos, of a second-grade teacher and a first-grade teacher right now that I would have access to. Sharon probably has a better store of them.

No, actually,

I was going to say Robyn's got them because we've gone there to visit, and do some of that.

And we also have on

both of the websites that you're going to have access to, we've got videos of some of Robyn's kids talking about what they're learning, too.

Another thing that we have, we actually, in October, went into Julie's classroom, and we did some videotaping of Julie teaching. Right, Hannah?

Don't we have four or five of those videos?

Yep. Cricket can help us find those. Yeah, for sure.

Yeah. So we will share those with you so you can see the very beginning.

Are you okay with that, Julie?

I'm okay with it. But

yes.

She was brand new, and-

I was brand new, and it was hot

... at the beginning, she was trying to do Edly and Balance

Literacy, together kind of thing.

And-

And it did not work very well. So, yeah, I don't care.

It was real.

But actually, you were phenomenal.

It was real.

Yep, it was very real. She had one of her naughty boys, who now gets really

frustrated when instruction ends and doesn't like that anymore,

but he was-

No

... very distractible. But yeah, it was very real, which is what we like all of

our... We have over 2,000 videos, actually, of instruction from K12,

one-on-one, small group, whole class, and they're all very real, with butt

cracks and nose picking and all those kinds of things.

And I don't think we had any of that in your class, Julie, but

that's very good. So we'll share that with you guys, too.

And the last one, Robyn, if you could speak to this,

from Dana. Can you tell more about what you looked for in your

walkthroughs?

Yes.

I didn't know anything about great literacy instruction, apparently, through all

these years of college, even a doctoral program.

So,

we used Achieve the Core, has an instructional practice guide that is free. It's right there on their website.

I think they have them for reading, math, and I'm not sure about others, but we just downloaded the instructional practice guide, and it makes you look at the quality of the text, and is it at or above grade level, or it takes you through skills instruction.

And then the bottom pieces of it, core action two, three, and four, are all about who's doing the lift. Do the questions lead to enduring understanding? Are tasks on or above grade level? I didn't know anything about any of this four years ago, and we are still such a work in progress. So even though I'm saying I have exemplar videos, we're messy, we're organic, we're getting there, but we're all moving forward. I think everybody on the panel would probably tell you that.

But I had to think about what is the end in mind for excellent literacy instruction. That was our go-to, and I think anybody in the country could use that, and we could all agree that that's-

Isn't that in the LIFT? I think that's one of the LIFT links, isn't it?

Or am I wrong? I know in one of the links I put on that thing, that's there.

It is.

Okay.

It's on our LIFT website.

Yeah, I thought I saw it.

It's a version that we have taken and done for our work.

So they'll have it.

Okay. Beautiful.

Okay, and I think that that's probably, we're going to have to end up.

Hannah, do you have anything else to share besides our hashtag?

Remember, Roadmap to Reading. There you go. There it is.

Put that in on Facebook. Where is it going to be?

On our Edly Facebook page, too. But-

Yeah

... I don't really know how technology works, so I should quit talking.

Go ahead, Hannah, and talk about that.

Yeah, if you don't already follow our Edly Facebook page, if

tomorrow... I don't know. Give me until at least noon.

It's a little crazy these days. But tomorrow, at some point, once you

put this into the search bar in Facebook, it'll bring you to a thread

that's going to have all of these phenomenal questions, and then the panelists

will be able to get on and answer your questions.

So I have grabbed every single one of your questions, I promise, and we

will make sure that they are able to access them and keep this conversation

going on social media.

I also want to say, though, Lonnie is not on Facebook, so her

questions, we're going to get to her, and we'll be answering those.

So it's not like our answer, it's her answer that we're putting on to answer the questions that were directed to her. Okay?

And then you guys will get the resources and the videos and whatever else.

I know Hannah is phenomenal at taking all kinds of notes of everything that everybody's ever asked for, which is grand.

And what I would really like to do is totally thank these beautiful women for sharing everything.

Could everybody unmute themselves and please give them a big hand?

Could we do that,
please?

Thank you so much.

Thanks.

I think Zoom worked fine.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you, thank you.

Thank you. No, I thank you for this opportunity.

Well, we so appreciate you guys-

And the last little thing, that they won't say it-

... sharing it all. So thank you all for coming, too.

We appreciate everybody. And good luck, and Godspeed to all of us in our new unprecedented, whatever word, day-to-day stuff that we're doing. We'll all get through this, especially together.

So let's just stay together and grow bigger and bigger.

So thanks everybody. We appreciate you being here.

Thanks, ladies.