

Case Study

Unlocking Literacy for All:

How Clear Creek ISD Planned and Executed
Instructional Change

District Background

Clear Creek Independent School District located in League City, Texas serves more than 40,000 students across 46 schools spanning preK to 12th grade. The student population is 45% white, 32% Latinx, 9% Asian or Pacific Islander and 7% Black. 28% of families are low income and 11% are English Language Learners.

The Challenge

Despite overwhelming research showing that 95% of students are cognitively capable of reading proficiently, more than 60% of American fourth graders struggle with literacy. The implications are severe, limiting students' opportunities for further learning and achievement. Significant efforts to spur literacy development are underway. As the [Science of Reading movement scales and spreads across the country](#), leaders and teachers are learning more about the best ways to boost literacy and close the opportunity gap.

Recognizing this crisis, Clear Creek Independent School District (ISD) in Texas sought to overhaul its approach to literacy instruction.



The Approach

As part of this overhaul, in 2022, Clear Creek ISD decided to apply for the Texas Education Agency's (TEA) Strong Foundations Planning grant, which provides funds and support for districts to create instructional frameworks aligned with research-based literacy strategies. After being awarded the grant in 2023, the district partnered with Education Elements to facilitate the development and implementation of their new literacy framework.

The project kicked off in August 2023 with the formation of a 15-member Steering Team comprised of elementary staff across the district. This team spent months analyzing current practices, receiving training on the Science of Reading, and drafting a comprehensive literacy framework with a unifying vision, core beliefs, and aligned actions. When asked for feedback, one member of the district steering team described the kickoff of our Strong Foundations work as "purposeful and meaningful" while another said our first session together was "very well done; it all flowed smoothly and [contained] great relevant information."

Extensive feedback from stakeholders across the district informed multiple revisions before the final exemplar framework was approved. As one district leader stated, "The framework provided clarity on how to best align our work with the district's goals and priorities."

We are proud that the TEA recently selected this instructional framework as an exemplar for other districts that participate in the Strong Foundations Planning grant as it contained the types of alignments and refinements it wants to showcase.



Prioritizing Implementation

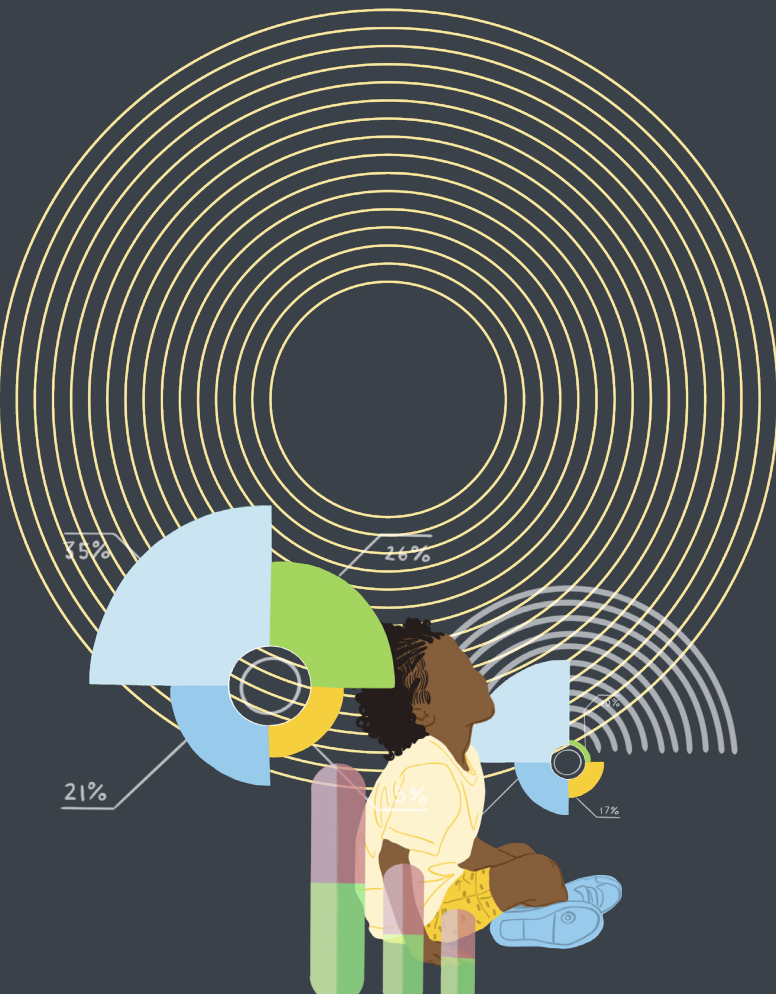
Creating the framework was just the first step. Clear Creek ISD next had to plan how to introduce and operationalize it district-wide. An implementation team of literacy coaches identified priority areas for the 2024-25 school year:

- **Provide Science of Reading training to all elementary teachers**
- **Pilot high-quality instructional materials in select grade levels**
- **Strengthen delivery of the existing foundational skills program**

Over two intensive days in February 2024, the coaches mapped out comprehensive action plans complete with objectives, strategies, and communications to support each priority area's success. As one coach shared, "The structures allowed us to dive in deep while still keeping the work moving productively."

The Road Ahead

Just six months after beginning the Strong Foundations Planning process, Clear Creek ISD has rapidly accelerated its literacy transformation journey. With an exemplar framework and robust implementation plans in place, the district is well-positioned to bridge long-standing literacy gaps by delivering research-aligned instruction that unlocks every student's fullest potential.



"The Education Elements Strong Foundations team works in partnership with our district team to ensure that this work is customized to meet the needs and enhance the strengths of our district. We could not lead this work without our EE technical assistance. The Education Elements team serves as a truly responsive partner in developing our framework for success."

- Holly Hughes
Assistant Superintendent of Elementary Education
Clear Creek Independent School District