

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

of the study by Regional Educational Laboratory of the Southeast and Mississippi Department of Education:

Educator Outcomes Associated with Implementation of Mississippi's K–3 Early Literacy Professional Development Initiative

The study examined changes in teacher knowledge of early literacy skills and in ratings of quality of early literacy skills instruction, student engagement during early literacy skills instruction, and teaching competencies in Mississippi between Winter 2014 and Fall 2015.

Developing strong early literacy skills is closely linked to reading achievement in primary grades and beyond.

INTRODUCTION

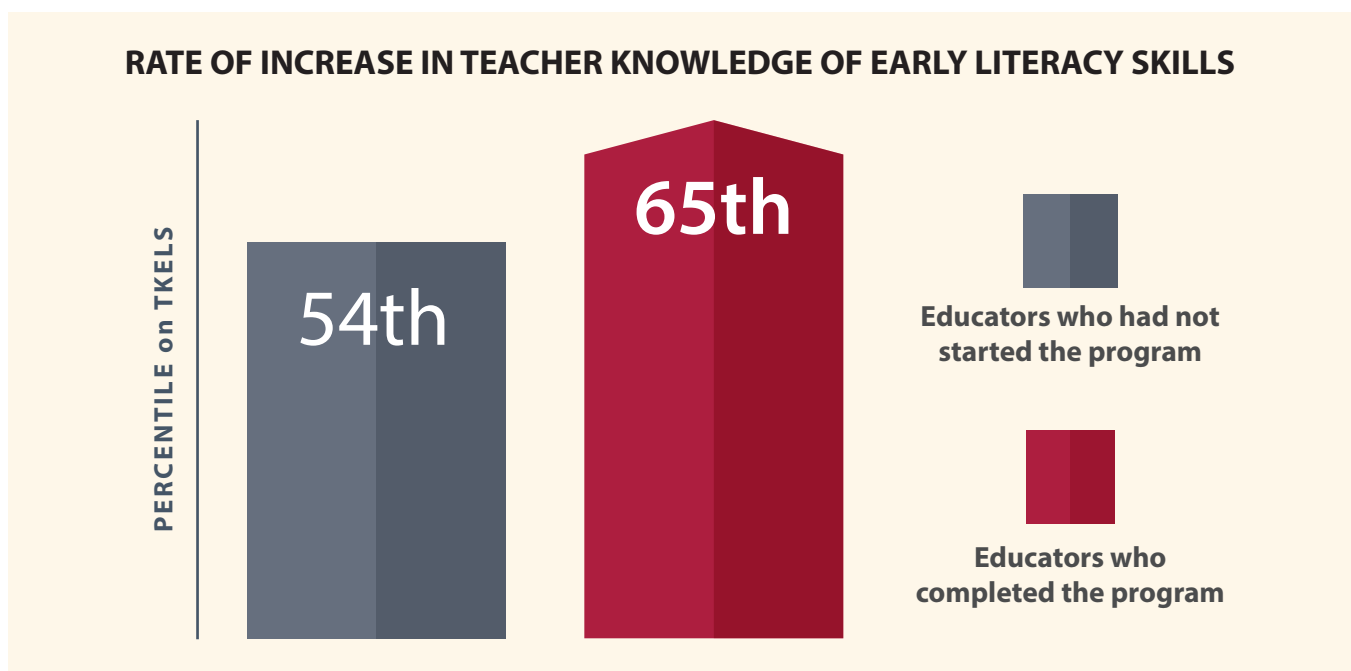
To address the goal of having every student reading at or above grade level by the end of third grade, the Mississippi Department of Education incorporated the use of professional development, using the *Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling* (LETRS®) program, and literacy coaching for K-3 educators across the state. *Educator Outcomes Associated with Implementation of Mississippi's K-3 Early Literacy Professional Development Initiative* (Folsom, Smith, Burk, & Oakley, 2017) reports results of the systematic investigation of change in educators' knowledge and classroom practices.

While the Folsom et al. study investigated the change in educators' knowledge and classroom practices, it was not intended to directly evaluate the impact of the professional development program. However, the study's findings suggest **“teacher knowledge of early literacy skills, the quality of early literacy skills instruction, student engagement during early literacy skills instruction, and teaching competencies improved among educators who participated in the program over and above any increases found among educators generally”** (p. 15).

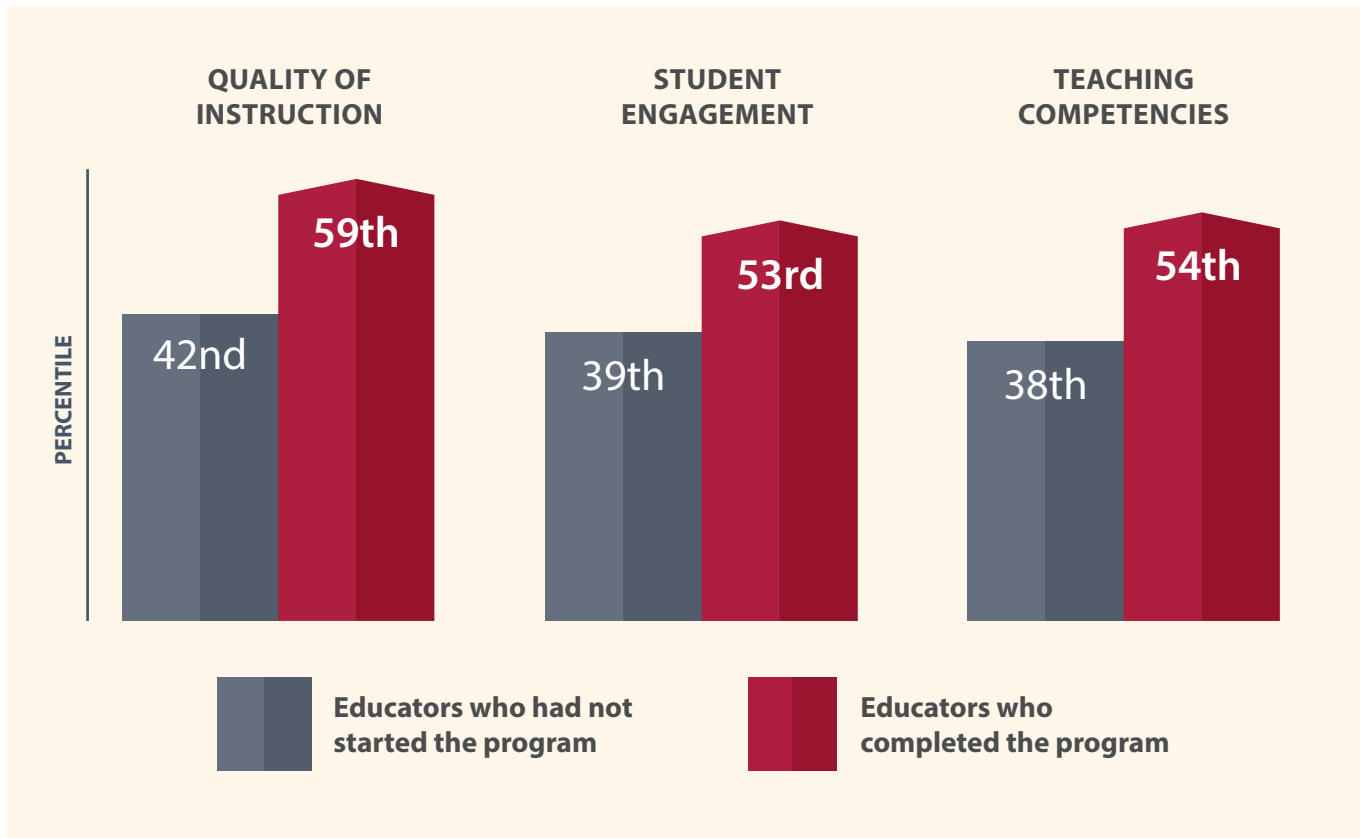
FINDINGS

The increase in teacher knowledge of early literacy skills was found to be associated with the progress educators made in the professional development program using **LETRS**. At the end of the study, educators who had not started the professional development program were in the 54th percentile on the Teacher Knowledge of Early Literacy Skills (TKELS) compared to educators who completed the program and who were in the 65th percentile.

The main findings related to the professional development program include:



Increases in average ratings of quality of instruction, student engagement, and teaching competencies were found to be associated with progress in the professional development program. At the end of the study, teachers who had not started the program were rated in the 42nd percentile for quality of instruction, the 39th percentile for student engagement, and the 38th percentile for teaching competencies. Teachers who completed the program were rated in the 59th percentile for quality of instruction, the 53rd percentile for student engagement, and the 54th percentile for teaching competencies, as illustrated here:



Learn how to improve teacher knowledge and performance in literacy instruction:
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