Learning Ovations
YOU WILL KNOW US BY YOUR OUTCOMES

The benefit of working with Learning Ovations is that we work with schools to get students to proven outcomes by way of putting research and the Science of Reading into practice for a full-scale systems delivery model. So many state-level policies only respond to the 'current state of affairs' for early literacy implementation, taking a piecemeal approach to address solutions rather than addressing the system-change that will bring about these outcomes. Learning Ovations' research and results over the last two decades started with the end in mind; all children reading at grade level. To bring the transformative outcomes Tennessee is striving for, as evidenced by Learning Ovations, practice and implementation needs to follow suit not just in schools but also in the community.

Research from Learning Ovations tells us that, in order to achieve the improvements in K-3 literacy that Tennessee is seeking as part of their state goals, actions must be based on a foundation of effective instructional practice. Our research, including 7 randomized control trials, indicates that children benefit most from differentiated instruction that is guided by the four types of reading instruction. These studies proved the importance of child by instruction interactions (child x instruction), which can be translated into actionable recommendations for teachers through the A2i software platform. **When teachers have access to the A2i Professional Support System (which includes the A2i technology and professional development) in K-3 classrooms for three consecutive years 94% were reading at grade-level**.
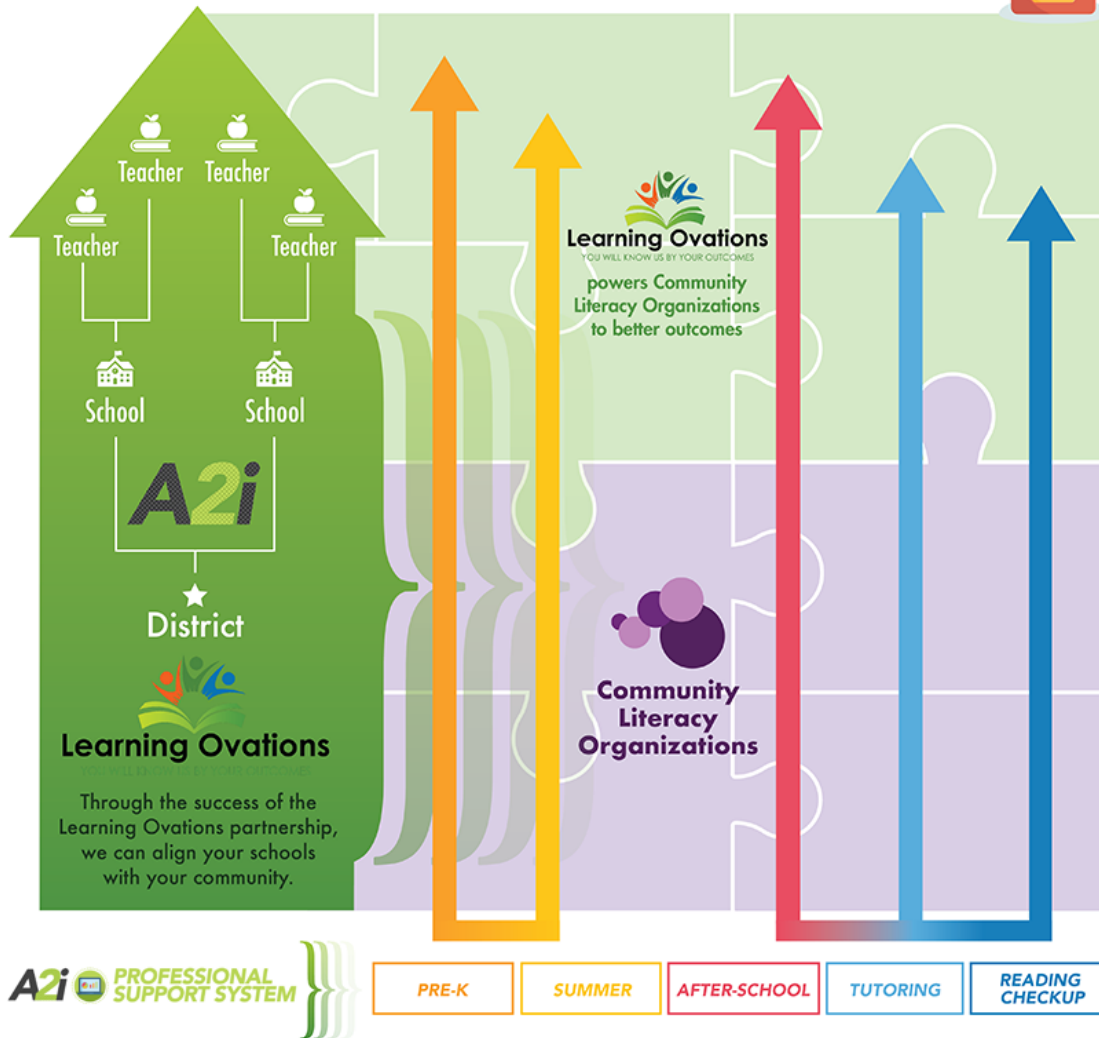
This research, described in detail here, has been used to inform the following recommendations.

Through Learning Ovations' scaling up partnership with The US Department of Education, we have released the COMMUNITY LITERACY SUPPORT SYSTEM in response to the Learning Losses experienced during Covid and in response to the goals of the American Rescue Plan, Learning Ovations has, using evidence and an outcome focus, created alignment across school districts, charter networks, and community organizations by providing all stakeholders with a series of new tools connected to the proven ESSA Strong A2i algorithms being used successfully in schools across the country. All stakeholders have common strategies, measures and progress and outcome monitoring capabilities.

This Community Literacy Support System is described in detail here.

HOW IS OUR A2i COMMUNITY LITERACY SUPPORT SYSTEM USED ACROSS SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES?

90% OF STUDENTS AT OR ABOVE GRADE LEVEL BY THE END OF 3RD GRADE

Teacher Teacher Teacher Teacher

School School

A2i

★ **District**

Learning Ovations
Through the success of the Learning Ovations partnership, we can align your schools with your community.

Learning Ovations
powers Community Literacy Organizations to better outcomes

Community Literacy Organizations

A2i **PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT SYSTEM**

| PRE-K | SUMMER | AFTER-SCHOOL | TUTORING | READING CHECKUP |

Federal American Rescue Plan Funding is available for every element of this Community Literacy Support System. Tennessee could use these resources to recover learning loss AND achieve profound results and social equity for communities within your state by having over 90% of children reading at grade-level by the end of 3rd grade!

These funding options are described in detail here.

THIS SUITE OF SUPPORT PRODUCTS ALIGNS COMMUNITIES' EFFORTS FOR THE ULTIMATE GOAL OF ALL KIDS READING BY 3RD GRADE.

Long-term Goals:
- <u>Tennessee DoE</u> - State leaders in Tennessee have made recent investments and policy changes to ensure more children are reading proficiently by the end of 3rd grade. Reading 360, the Tennessee Literacy Success Act, and the Tennessee Learning Loss and Student Acceleration Act are strong indicators of the Tennessee Department of Education's commitment to improving literacy outcomes for students.
- <u>Learning Ovations</u> - Our mission is to ensure all students are reading at, or above, grade level by the end of third grade using a support system proven to improve reading skills in K-3 students.

The following information should be used to inform policy, guide funding decisions, and help identify key components that should be included in school and district literacy plans.

Recommendations for Creating Transformational Change in Literacy:

- **Align assessment to your ultimate objective: all children reading at grade-level.**
  - The intended use and purpose of assessment information can be divided into two categories: assessments *OF* learning, and assessment *FOR* learning. While both operate to meet different goals, our understanding of the priorities set by the Tennessee State Dept. of Education would be best met by assessments <u>for</u> learning, as these types of assessments inform instruction, impact outcomes, and operate as a progress monitoring tool. Assessments of learning may also be a beneficial data point to collect in order to ensure reliability and coherence across the system, but is unlikely to directly impact student learning. For more information about this conceptualization of assessment please review the [following](#).
  - Screeners typically function as assessments specifically designed to separate students who are struggling or most 'at-risk based on specific criteria. While the ability to identify which students are struggling most or determine which students would benefit most from additional supports/services can be a critical component of a district or school's ELA system, it is often the case that screening data is collected BUT without additional guidelines for use.
  - In a similar vein, diagnostics produce specific breakdowns of individual skills that serve to inform teachers of student deficiencies in specific areas but often lead to ineffective instructional responses, like drilling students on a single letter-sound, instead of addressing these gaps in the larger context of reading and language development using systematic instruction and authentic exposure to text.

- A primary purpose of assessment should be to identify the individual instructional needs required for each student to reach their full potential. Our Assessment 2 Instruction (A2i) Professional Support System (and [A2i Online Assessments](#)) does this by providing a set of instructional recommendations customized to each student. This can be done using assessments that identify a student's ability level related to decoding, comprehension, and vocabulary as well as details like their grade-level and the number of months left in the school year. This reframing transforms assessment scores from a piece of accountability data or a purely informational tool into a support system proven to actually *improve* student outcomes, not just track them.
- **Pair accountability with support to create positive change for all students.**
  - While there is no question that accurate performance data and a shared sense of accountability can support instructional improvements, accountability must also be connected to a coaching or support system that guides teachers and administrators on how to improve practice. In fact, even access to data *and* coaching does not guarantee an impact on student performance ([IES, 2019](#)).
  - Professional development (PD), stand-alone training, or a focus on the "Science of Reading" content presents a similar risk, but in the other direction. While teachers may report personal growth from well-delivered PD, many sessions result in few actionable takeaways for teachers and rarely, if ever, include a component tied to accountability or fidelity that can be both measured and connected to actual student learning.
  - Putting the Science of Reading into Practice: A systemic approach, like that provided by Learning Ovations, combines the components critical for accountability (data and coaching) with professional development content (including Science of Reading), supports (via coaching), and a fully-developed [framework](#) (backed by proven research and practice, see [McLean, et al., 2016](#)) to actually shift teacher pedagogy and improve student reading outcomes. This results in measurable growth in classroom quality, and student outcomes, providing accountability AND a system to follow to ensure improvement.
- **Think at a systems-level when planning implementation.**
  - Creating an environment that allows for, systems-level implementation is critical to the success of any process focused on transformative change. Early and consistent involvement by district- and school-level administrators, along with key members of their leadership team, is critical in achieving improved reading outcomes for ALL students.
  - Without this aligned support, aspirational outcomes remain impossible. Literacy goals can only be reached if the teachers responsible for the critical day-to-day work have access to the resources and supports they need to be most effective. Administrators and district leaders must be engaged to ensure there is a clear path to get the available resources where they need to be.

When change is instituted without this systematized structure, both teachers and administrators are often left feeling under-supported and isolated.

- When the full system is engaged, individual fragments can be aligned. The current educational landscape can easily be described as fragmented. Implementing a system that aims to centralize these multiple components improves overall effectiveness, creates a uniform goal or focus, and (most importantly) makes it easier to identify gaps within the system that would have been otherwise left undetected. Coordinating at the systems-level provides the structure necessary to create this alignment.

- **Consolidate resources and expand impact by using common measures and aligned community efforts.**
  - While a majority of instruction still occurs through teachers, education now stretches well beyond the traditional institutions for education. Aspects of student learning and key academic opportunities can also operate within the home, after-school programs, tutoring, summer programs, and with parents through nonprofit and for-profit programs. Promoting alignment across a community system creates an even greater leverage point for improving students' outcomes, as well as increases the longevity of that impact.
  - By coordinating efforts across an organization and leveraging collaborators, efforts to improve early literacy instruction and outcomes are more likely to succeed. Diffusion of information is more consistent, and knowledge mobilization is more coordinated. As coordinated efforts proceed, there is increased potential to build capacity across multiple organizations to identify and support the implementation of evidence-based practices. Practitioners can become more critical consumers of evidence. They ask tough questions and are better able to identify good evidence and rigorous research.
  - Another potential benefit is the advantage common measures provide. Using a set of common measures and tools, information flowing around best practices between invested stakeholders can increase greatly. The resulting network allows more adults to receive information on the instructional needs children in their schools and communities have in literacy over time. This structure also provides a centralized common measure for determining success. While schools and districts are often overburdened by the data available, community literacy organizations, funders, and even parents are left without access to this information and as a result, are often forced to make uninformed choices related to the community and student-level literacy supports they ultimately pursue.
  - With concerns about learning loss brought on by COVID, a state is best served when it aligns and leverages the resources of its communities.

- **Don't be overly focused on curriculum, provided that it's already evidence-based.**
  - The importance of having high-quality resources that meet the needs of all students has been highlighted in various publications These sources also share the commonality of supporting research-based best practices, but **_not_** necessarily calling out specific publishers or individual core or supplemental resources. This is because there is no single curriculum or resource that can meet the needs of all students.

- In addition, providing access to high-quality materials is not equivalent to effective utilization of these tools and thus, a single product alone does not predict, produce, or change student outcomes. Instead, effective strategies are far more impactful when compared to single resources (essentially, it is what you **do**, not "who" you use). This can be clearly seen in how the What Works Clearinghouse practice guides present best practices for [Foundations Skills](#) and [Reading Comprehension](#).

We are very excited to learn more about Tennessee's commitment to improving literacy for early elementary students and look forward to supporting in any way we can, wherever that impact can be felt most strongly for students!

We have seen the greatest improvement in student outcomes occur when there is systems-level alignment and coherence across teachers, schools, districts, and state stakeholders and we believe the points outlined will support policies and funding opportunities that will generate improvements for both teachers and students.

Learning Ovations is an outcome delivery partnership with district, charter and private school networks. Through shared collaboration and responsibility, we achieve over 90+% of children reading at grade level by the end of third grade. We primarily do this by providing a Professional Support System for district leaders, school administrators, and teachers. Whereby we align technology, data, existing resource investments, and coaching to support all students in achieving these transformative outcomes.

Please click [here](#) if you'd like more details about how the A2i Professional Support System is currently working in other states to improve K-3 literacy rates.

For details about our Community Literacy Support System, and the work we are doing to combat unfinished learning due to COVID-19 and fully funded under the American Rescue Plan, click [here](#).