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Submitted by

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Service

Leadership for Literacy

Letter of Reference

Thanks for reaching out-happy to share our experience with CORE Learning's Professional Learning for School and District Leaders (Leadership for Literacy, 2-Day) and respond to your questions.

Context & Participation

In summer 2023, we coordinated the 2-day workshop for all elementary principals and assistant principals. This PD was a key lever in our district's call-to-action to improve literacy practices and outcomes. At that point, we had already launched several cohorts of CORE Reading Academies for teachers with very positive feedback, and we knew strong leadership alignment would be essential to translate teacher learning into sustained practice.

Our leadership audience ranged from highly trained literacy experts to administrators whose experience was primarily secondary or upper-grade focused. Not everyone arrived eager—but the design, facilitation, and practical tools quickly won people over. By the end, administrators left energized to lead, with a shared understanding of the Science of Reading (SoR) and concrete next steps.

What Stood Out

- **Strong differentiation:** Early segments efficiently established SoR essentials (valuable review for some; foundational for others), then moved into **system-level leadership actions**.
- **Highly effective facilitation:** The presenter embedded strategies leaders could immediately use with their teams.
- **Day 2 team time:** Purposeful planning and **literacy change-management tools** produced actionable site plans and a common leadership playbook.
- **Transfer to practice:** Leaders gained clarity on roles, routines, timelines, and monitoring—how to **move an entire system** toward SoR, not just individual classrooms.

Implementation After the Workshop

- **Teacher Academies:** We continued the Reading Academies and will have trained **all** elementary teachers and specialists by the end of this school year. To navigate substitute shortages, we blended online modules during the year with in-person academies in the summer. Even previously hesitant participants reported very positive feedback.
- **Coaching & Capacity:** We scheduled 5 days of site-based coaching last year and 5 more days this year with CORE. This supported each site in building internal capacity, sharpening action plans, and aligning on lesson design using the explicit phonics lesson sequence introduced in both administrator and teacher trainings.
- **Internal Follow-Through:** Our TOSAs and coordinators now facilitate follow-up workshops and planning sessions, reinforcing consistency and accelerating implementation.

Direct Responses to Your Questions

1) Was the professional development worthwhile?

Yes, unequivocally. It was pivotal to our improvement strategy. The workshop bridges SoR knowledge with the leadership structures and moves needed for system-wide change. Leaders left with a shared language, a clear roadmap, and practical tools to guide implementation.

2) Have you observed noticeable differences in leadership or instructional practices?

Yes. We've seen:

- **Common leadership routines** for literacy (clear roles, meeting structures, monitoring cycles).
- **Consistent planning practices** anchored in the explicit phonics lesson sequence.
- **Better cross-role alignment** (principals, APs, TOSAs, coordinators) on what "good looks like" and how to support it.
- **Higher leader confidence** facilitating SoR-aligned conversations, feedback, and school-level planning.

3) Would you recommend it for principals/leaders who are already highly skilled?

Absolutely. Even experienced leaders rarely receive explicit training on orchestrating system-level SoR implementation. The advanced segments, change-management tools, and Day 2 planning make it highly valuable, not a repackaging of classroom strategies, but a leadership playbook for sustained change.