Hellenic Classical Charter School
2016-19 Charter School Dissemination Grant

Year 1 Evaluation Report

Fall 2017

Measurement Incorporated

**Hellenic Classical Charter School
2016-19 Charter School Dissemination Grant**

Year 1 Evaluation Report

prepared for

Hellenic Classical Charter School

prepared by

Measurement Incorporated

White Plains, New York

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Contents

Executive Summary

In the summer of 2016, Hellenic Classical Charter School (Hellenic) was awarded a three-year Charter School Dissemination Grant by the New York State Education Department for its effective implementation of the Reading Rescue early literacy intervention program, which is enhanced by its implementation of data strategies. Hellenic partnered with two other New York City Public schools: PS 123 and PS 516 Sunset Park Avenue Elementary School. The Center for Educational Innovation-Public Education Association (CEI-PEA) was contracted to provide project support, and Measurement Incorporated was contracted to conduct an external evaluation of the grant activities. This report summarizes the Year 1 program activities and findings and makes recommendations for Years 2 and 3.

Description of the Hellenic Charter School Dissemination Grant

The Charter School Dissemination Grant established a collaborative effort between Hellenic, PS 123, PS 516 to achieve three project goals:

Goal 1. *Educators from PS 123 and PS 516 will successfully learn and implement with fidelity the Reading Rescue literacy intervention.*

Goal 2. *The Reading Rescue literacy intervention will make a positive impact on student reading skills at PS 123 and PS 516.*

Goal 3. *Educators from PS 123 and PS 516 will successfully learn and implement with fidelity the Using Data Solutions approach to building a data culture addressed in the charter school dissemination grant professional development, which will lead to a positive impact on each school's data culture.*

To achieve these goals, the grant focused its attention in three areas:

- Provide professional development in Reading Rescue and Using Data Solutions
- Provide technical assistance from CEI-PEA
- Convene regular sessions dedicated to feedback and collaboration among key project stakeholders

Evaluation Activities

Measurement Incorporated, an independent firm, was contracted to provide evaluation services for the grant. Hellenic's Charter School Dissemination Grant evaluation for year one used several data sources to inform its Year 1 evaluation:

- Professional development feedback forms completed online following formal professional development sessions.

- Educator Survey completed by participating staff from all three schools at the end of the first year of grant implementation.

- Evaluator observations of project activities, formal and informal interviews and focus groups, and participation in meetings and communication via phone and email.

- Document and record reviews (e.g., curriculum and content materials, Reading Rescue tutoring activity, Using Data Strategies communications and progress notes, meeting notes and agendas).

- State and local assessment data.

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Findings

Goal 1. Educators from PS 123 and PS 516 will successfully learn and implement with fidelity the Reading Rescue literacy intervention.

PS 123 and PS 516 each selected six staff members to be trained as Reading Rescue tutors. At Hellenic, eight staff members served as tutors, several of whom had already tutored students in the past. Each new tutor participated in five full days of direct training and four follow-up site visits. Trainings were well received with respondents feeling moderately to extremely well-prepared to implement the Reading Rescue components and strategies.

Tutoring for the Reading Rescue program occurred approximately 70% to 80% of the days that school was in session. Most commonly cited factors which interfered with Reading Rescue implementation were conflicting school events, student or tutor absence from school, or scheduling conflicts. The majority of educators who responded to a series of statements about Reading Rescue had positive feelings about the program. It can be concluded that the Reading Rescue program is being implemented well.

Goal 2. The Reading Rescue literacy intervention will make a positive impact on student reading skills at PS 123 and PS 516.

All respondents conveyed positive perceptions of Reading Rescue's impact on students, with most educators responding that the program met the needs of students a great deal. These perceptions were aligned with improvements in students' independent reading levels. Reading Rescue uses the Fountas & Pinnell independent reading levels to evaluate a student's reading skills at three times during the school year. All students, including those who began tutoring during the second half of the school year, improved by at least two reading levels, with all but one first grader reading at or above their grade level by the end of the school year.

Goal 3. Educators from PS 123 and PS 516 will successfully learn and implement with fidelity the Using Data Solutions approach to building a data culture addressed in the charter school dissemination grant professional development, which will lead to a positive impact on each school's data culture.

After participating in direct training with Using Data Solutions, educators reported feeling very well prepared to use the data strategies they learned. At least one-third of respondents participated in 10 of the 13 data-related tasks. More importantly, respondents recognized the strength of using data strategies in their work and demonstrated in survey responses and during evaluator discussions their commitment to using data to solve instructional issues and better meet the needs of their students. Half of respondents from PS 123 and one-fourth from PS 516 indicated that nothing interfered with their ability to implement data strategies.

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Conclusions and Recommendations

From the data available thus far, it is clear that Reading Rescue and the implementation of new data strategies have had a positive effect on the staff, students, and school cultures for the three partner schools. The following recommendations are suggested to maximize the success of this Charter School Dissemination Grant.

1. *Stay the course by implementing the planned Year 2 grant activities.*

2. *Look for additional opportunities to expand the data culture in each school.*

3. *Improve and increase opportunities for professional sharing among partners at all levels.*

4. *Schedule regular grant leadership meetings to provide an opportunity for planning grant activities, sharing successes, and troubleshooting challenges.*

5. *Look for ways to ensure communication between the tutor and classroom teacher.*

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Introduction

Hellenic Classical Charter School (Hellenic), a high performing charter school located in the Park Slope section of Brooklyn, New York, has been in operation since September 2005 and serves pre-kindergarten through grade 8 students. Hellenic has been named a reward school and a high performing school by the New York State Education Department and ranks among the top charter schools in New York City for exceeding targets in student achievement, rigorous instruction, teacher collaboration, supportive environment, trust, and effective leadership. Hellenic received the 2016 Building Brooklyn Award for Community and Culture.

In the summer of 2016, Hellenic was awarded a three-year Charter School Dissemination Grant by the New York State Education Department to share its effective implementation of the Reading Rescue early literacy intervention for low-performing primary grade students as part of a broader data culture initiative. Hellenic has partnered with two New York City public schools: PS 123, located in the South Jamaica section of Queens, New York, and PS 516 Sunset Park Avenues Elementary School, located in the Sunset Park section of Brooklyn.

Hellenic has enjoyed a long-standing relationship with the Center for Educational Innovation-Public Education Association (CEI-PEA) and contracted with them to provide project support, including a Project Director to guide the grant activities. Measurement Incorporated, an independent research, assessment, and evaluation firm, was contracted to conduct an external evaluation of the grant activities. This report summarizes the first year of program activities, provides evaluation data to the extent that it is available, and offers recommendations for the remaining project period.

Program Design & Implementation

Through the grant, Hellenic, PS 123, and PS 516 are collaborating to train school staff to implement Reading Rescue, a highly effective reading intervention for struggling young readers and to create a data culture that will empower staff to use data to identify and verify sources of student learning problems, generate and implement solutions, and monitor results. The grant activities include direct professional development with Reading Rescue staff and Using Data Solutions, ongoing support and technical assistance from CEI-PEA staff, and regular sessions dedicated to feedback and collaboration about grant activities among key project stakeholders (e.g., building administrators, data coach, literacy coach, etc.).

Sites and Participants

As can be seen in Table 1, the student populations of the three schools differ substantially. Hellenic serves students in pre-kindergarten through 8th grade. PS 123 serves students in pre-kindergarten through grade 5. PS 516 is a new school and has been adding a grade each year; ultimately it will serve students through grade 5 but currently serves students in kindergarten through grade 3.

PS 123 has the largest student body (n=649 students) and PS 516 has the smallest (n=224). The majority of students are Black/African-American at PS 123 and Hispanic/Latino at PS 516. At Hellenic, the racial/ethnic groups with the largest representation are Hispanic/Latino (40%), White (28%), and Black/African-American (26%).

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About two-thirds of students at PS 516 – a dual-language school - are English language learners, compared with 5% or less at the other two schools. About 20% of students at PS 123 and PS 516 are students with disabilities. Nearly all students at the two public schools are classified as economically disadvantaged, compared with 56% at Hellenic.

Table 1
2015-16* Student Populations at Dissemination Grant Partner Schools

	PS 123		PS 516		Hellenic	
Grade Configuration (2016-17)	PK-5		K-3		PK-8	
	n	**%**	**n**	**%**	**n**	**%**
Total Student Enrollment*	649		224		477	
Males	334	51%	120	54%	233	49%
Females	315	49%	104	46%	244	51%
Racial/Ethnic Background*						
American Indian/Alaskan Native	39	6%	1	0%	6	1%
Black/African American	404	62%	-	-	123	26%
Hispanic/Latino	121	19%	152	68%	193	40%
Asian/Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	74	11%	69	31%	14	3%
White	10	2%	2	1%	132	28%
Multiracial	1	0%	-	-	9	2%
English Language Learners	30	5%	145	65%	13	3%
Students with Disabilities	142	22%	46	21%	47	10%
Economically Disadvantaged	602	93%	209	93%	268	56%

*Most recently available data.
Source: NYSED Database

Evaluation

Hellenic's Charter School Dissemination Grant evaluation is driven by the project's three goals:

Goal 1: Educators from PS 123 and PS 516 will successfully learn and implement with fidelity the Reading Rescue literacy intervention.

Goal 2: The Reading Rescue literacy intervention will make a positive impact on student reading skills at PS 123 and PS 516.

Goal 3: Educators from PS 123 and PS 516 will successfully learn and implement with fidelity the Using Data Solutions approach to building a data culture addressed in the charter school dissemination grant professional development, which will lead to a positive impact on each school's data culture.

The program evaluation for year one seeks to provide historical and baseline data and evidence of progress toward meeting these goals to the extent that the data are available. Several data sources were used to conduct the program evaluation.

- Professional development feedback forms completed online following formal professional development sessions
- Evaluator observations of project activities, formal and informal interviews and focus groups, and participation in meetings and communication via phone and email
- Document and record reviews (e.g., curriculum and content materials, Reading Rescue tutoring activity, Using Data Strategies communications and progress notes, meeting notes and agendas)
- State and local assessment data
- Educator Survey completed by participating staff from all three schools at the end of the first year of grant implementation

Description of the Year 1 Educator Survey Respondents

The *Educator Survey* was made available to all project participants online at the end of the first year of program activities and yielded the single most specific information from project participants. A total of 41 staff members from all three schools were invited to complete the survey. Of these, 35 responded for an overall response rate of 85% (Table 2). The response rate for each school was in the 80 percent range. Here and throughout this report, percentages of respondents should be interpreted with caution due to the small number of staff members participating in this project.

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Table 2
Educator Survey Respondents

	All Staff	PS 123	PS 516	Hellenic
Number invited	41	9	12	20
Number responded	35	8	10	17
Response Rate	85%	89%	83%	85%

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Table 3 shows the characteristics of the *Educator Survey* respondents. With the exception of a special area teacher at Hellenic, all staff roles were represented in the survey respondents. Further, survey respondents worked with all grade levels present in their schools. Regarding experience in education,

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there was diversity among the participating schools. All PS 123 respondents reported having 10 or more years of experience in education and likewise had staff with the longest tenure in their school. Experience was more varied at the other schools. As PS 516 had only operated as a school since September 2013, its staff had the shortest experience in their current building. The large majority of respondents from all three schools had earned a Master's degree or more.

Table 3
Description of Educator Survey Respondents

Grade	All Staff (n=35)		PS 123 (n=8)		PS 516 (n=10)		Hellenic (n=17)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Professional Role*								
Paraprofessional	9	26%	2	25%	3	30%	4	24%
Classroom teacher	8	23%	2	25%	2	20%	4	24%
Special education teacher	5	14%	1	13%	1	10%	3	18%
Special area teacher	4	11%	3	38%	1	10%	0	0%
Other professional staff (e.g., guidance counselor, literacy coach, etc.)	5	14%	1	13%	0	0%	4	24%
Other (describe)	8	23%	3	38%	4	40%	2	12%
			Academic Intervention Support Teacher (2), Testing Coordinator, Academic Intervention Support Teacher		Principal, Assistant Principal, ENL (English as a New Language) Teacher		Principal, AIS - Reading Specialist	
Grade Levels of Responsibility*								
PK	7	20%	3	38%	2	20%	2	12%
K	13	37%	4	50%	4	40%	5	29%
1	21	60%	6	75%	5	50%	10	59%
2	15	43%	3	38%	4	40%	8	47%
3	13	37%	3	38%	3	30%	7	41%
4	11	31%	2	25%	1	10%	8	47%
5	11	31%	3	38%	1	10%	7	41%
6	5	14%	-	-	-	-	5	29%
7	4	11%	-	-	-	-	4	24%
8	5	14%	-	-	-	-	5	29%
Years Experience								
In Education								
1-3 Years	7	21%	0	0%	2	22%	5	31%
4-9 Years	14	42%	0	0%	6	67%	8	50%
10+ Years	12	36%	8	100%	1	11%	3	19%
In Current School								
1-3 Years	13	41%	1	13%	5	56%	7	47%
4-9 Years	12	38%	1	13%	4	44%	7	47%
10+ Years	7	22%	6	75%	0	0%	1	7%
Highest Level of Education Attained								
Some high school/HS diploma/GED	3	9%	1	13%	2	20%	0	0%
Professional certificate	1	3%	0	0%	0	0%	1	6%
Bachelor's Degree	3	9%	1	13%	1	10%	1	6%
Bachelors plus graduate work	2	6%	0	0%	1	10%	1	6%
Masters/Masters plus graduate work	23	66%	6	75%	6	60%	11	65%
Doctoral degree	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Other (describe)	3	9%	0	0%	0	0%	3	18%
							Associate's Degree (2), MFA and two master's, PhD in progress	
*Multiple responses possible								

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Findings

Goal 1: Educators from PS 123 and PS 516 will successfully learn and implement with fidelity the Reading Rescue literacy intervention.

Reading Rescue is a successful tutoring intervention designed to intervene with students who are reading, on average, at least one grade level below their class. Reading Rescue is both a literacy intervention for struggling early elementary school readers and a professional development program for school staff members. Grades served include first, and in some schools, second and/or third grade. However, unlike Reading Recovery, the gold standard for reading interventions, which requires tutors to be certified teachers or reading specialists, any member of a school's staff (paraprofessionals, guidance counselors, special area teachers, etc.) may be trained to deliver the research-based tutoring. Thus, Reading Rescue brings expertise into schools; the students who are tutored excel, and intensive training, ongoing support, and resources prepare staff members to provide one-on-one, skilled intervention. The majority of students who are tutored accelerate to grade level within a semester, allowing most tutors to serve at least two students each year. If schedules permit, tutors may serve more than one student per day. Each school designates a Reading Rescue Coordinator, typically a school's reading specialist, who organizes the tutoring effort for the school, acts as a liaison between tutors and other staff, and supports the tutors.

Reading Rescue tutoring is grounded in sound reading theory and is updated as appropriate with new research. The intervention is diagnostic, and assessment data informs instruction within a sequential framework. Tutoring incorporates visual, auditory, kinesthetic, and tactile teaching methods characteristic of the Orton-Gillingham approach, which is widely recognized by clinicians as effective with the most severely dyslexic students.

Tutoring is typically implemented in three phases: a five-session easing-in phase, regular tutoring sessions, and a five-session easing out phase. Tutors accelerate literacy in fast-paced daily 30-minute sessions. Regular tutoring sessions typically include five parts mapped to each student's demonstrated needs: 1) fluency building, including timed readings and a focus on comprehension; 2) assessment using written records; 3) direct instruction using multisensory techniques to develop phonological awareness, phonics, and phonograms, and reinforcement of new vocabulary; 4) development of phonological awareness, phonics, spelling, and comprehension through writing; and 5) text-based vocabulary, phonics, and comprehension instruction using a new text.[1] Specified procedures for phasing in and phasing out sessions are also well established. Student academic and emotional reactions to Reading Rescue tutoring are overwhelmingly positive.

Selection of students for tutoring typically begins with screening all first graders in a school using Reading Rescue's four step screening procedure: students 1) write all upper case and 2) lower case letters from memory, 3) complete an invented spelling test, and 4) write all the words they can spell correctly. The letter-writing scores (1 and 2) are averaged, as are the two spelling scores (3 and 4). Candidates for Reading Rescue tutoring typically place at the top of the bottom quartile of the screening assessment, but final decisions about student selection are made in consultation with the appropriate school staff. Students who do not yet associate sounds with symbols or have not yet learned enough

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[1] The Benedict A. Silverman Foundation (2015). Reading Rescue's research base: A review of scientific studies supporting assessments and lesson components and research documenting the model's effectiveness in inner city, high poverty schools. New York, NY: O'Leary, R. & Hoover, N.L.

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letter names or sounds will not be considered for Reading Rescue tutoring because they will not benefit from it. However, most of these students will likely become candidates at a later time.

Preparation

PS 123 and PS 516 each selected six staff members to be trained as tutors and Hellenic selected eight (**Table 4**). Of these, a total of 12 were paraprofessionals in their schools. It should be noted that several of the Hellenic tutors had been involved in Reading Rescue before this grant period and were already experienced tutors. Thus, while they were involved with grant activities, they did not attend professional development sessions designed for beginning tutors.

Table 4
Total Number of Tutors and Number of Paraprofessional Tutors

|	**All Staff**	**PS 123**	**PS 516**	**Hellenic**
Number of Tutors	20	6	6	8
Number Paraprofessionals	12	2	5	5

New tutors received five full days of direct training, as well as follow-up support at four site visits, to prepare them to be Reading Rescue tutors. Site coordinators each attended the annual program coordinator conference and were provided additional support by Reading Rescue staff. **Table 5** shows survey respondent reports of the amount of formal and informal professional development activities. As displayed in **Figure 1**, all participants from PS 123 and PS 516 and the large majority from Hellenic said that the amount of time dedicated to training and the difficulty level of training activities were *about right*.

Table 5
Average Formal and Informal Staff Development or Training in Reading Rescue*

School	Formal Training with Reading Rescue Staff			Informal Training and Support		
	n	**Mean**	**Min/Max**	**n**	**Mean**	**Min/Max**
All	13	18.8 hours	0/45	15	9.8 hours	0/36
PS 123	1	36.0 hours	36/36	2	25.5 hours	15/36
PS 516	5	10.8 hours	0/30	4	7.5 hours	0/15
Hellenic	7	22.0 hours	0/45	9	7.3 hours	1/25

*Includes responses from staff in supervisory positions who did not actively implement Reading Rescue

Figure 1
Percentage of Respondents* Rating Amount of Training Time and Difficulty Level as "About Right"
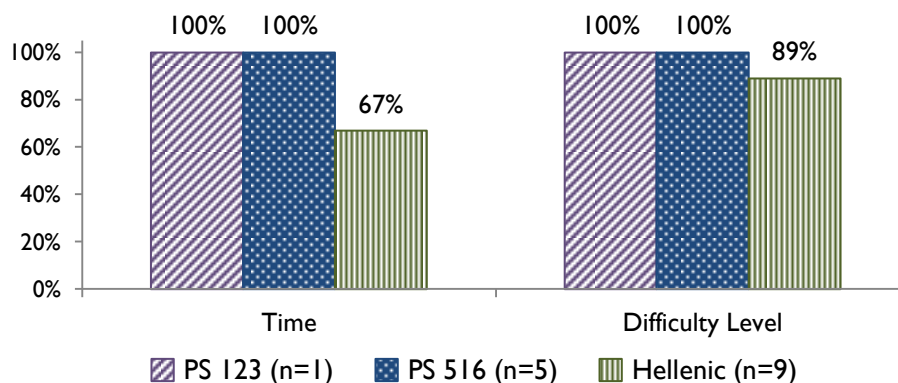
*Includes responses from staff in supervisory positions who did not actively implement Reading Rescue

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Overall, the Reading Rescue training was very well received with average ratings about the comprehensiveness, organization, usefulness of materials, and relevance of training ranging between 3.3 and 4.0 on a four-point scale where 1=poor, 4=excellent (**Figure 2**). These ratings are corroborated by ratings from assessments of individual professional development sessions. As summarized in **Figure 3**, respondents felt moderately to extremely well-prepared to implement Reading Rescue components and strategies, especially *fluency building, assessment using written records, word study with magnetic letters, sentence writing, and assessing student progress*. Discussions with tutors and the Reading Rescue coordinator from each school confirmed these findings.

Figure 2
Respondent Satisfaction with Aspects of Professional Development:
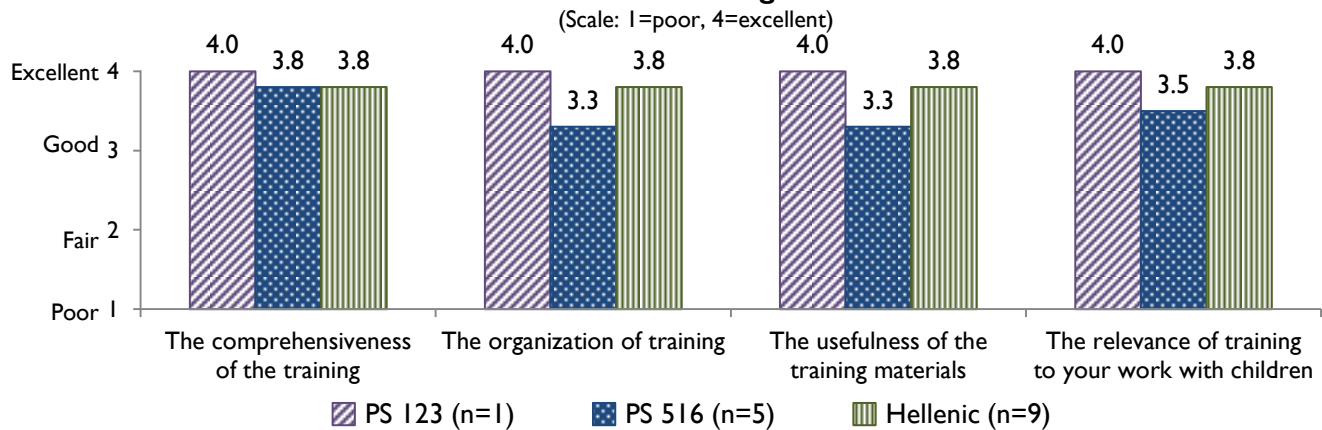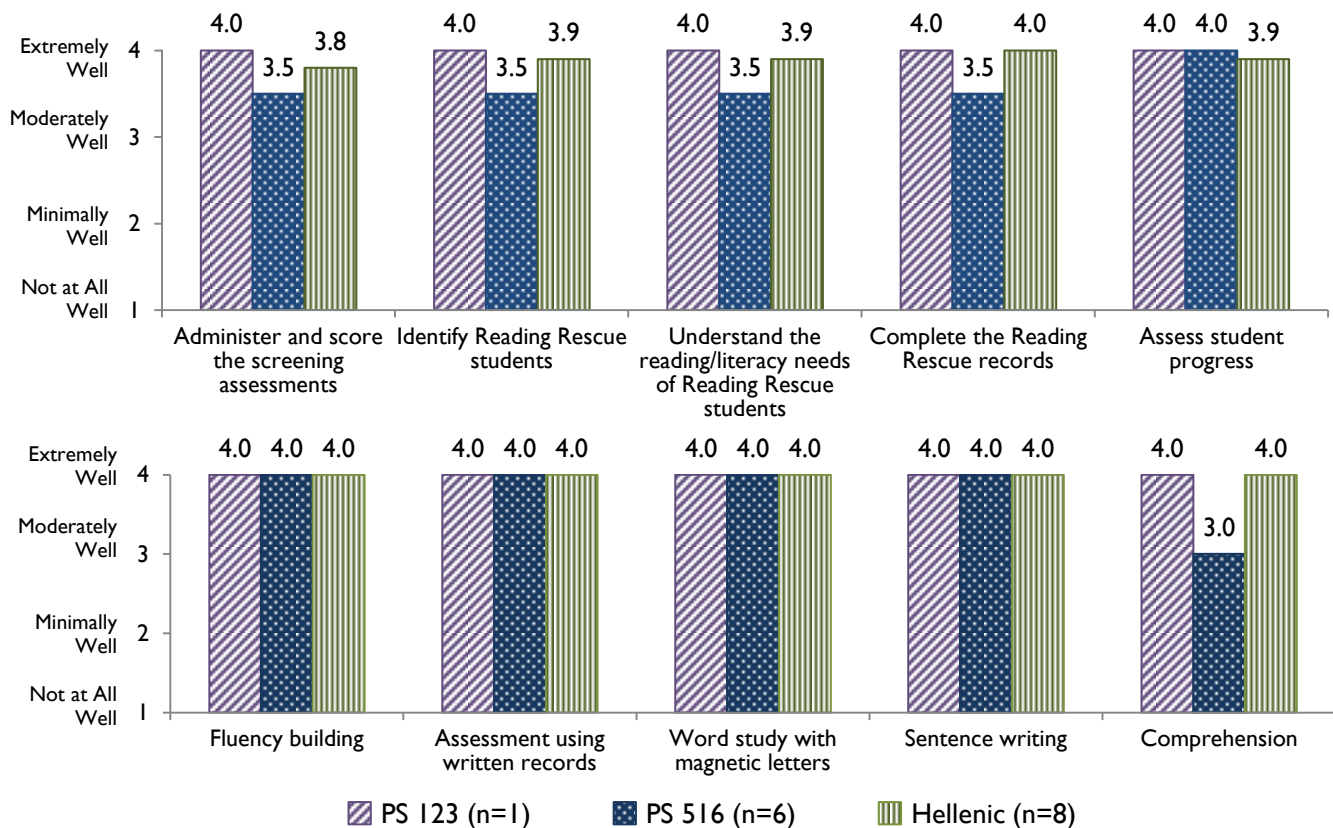**Mean Ratings**
(Scale: 1=poor, 4=excellent)

Figure 3
Respondent Ratings of How Well Training Prepared Them to Implement
Reading Rescue Components and Strategies: Mean Ratings
(Scale: 1=not at all well, 4=extremely well)

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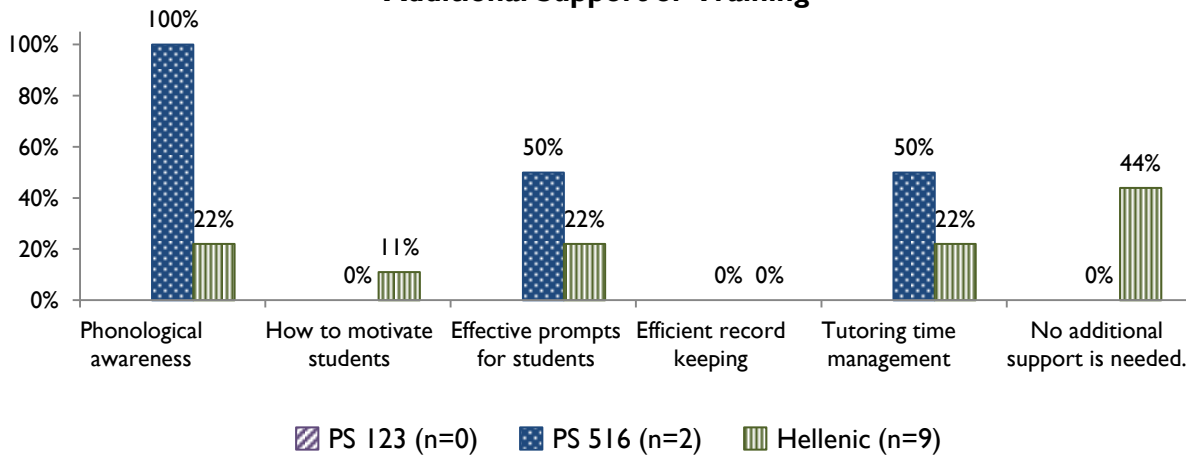
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All respondents from PS 123 and PS 516 and half from Hellenic rated their abilities to be a high quality Reading Rescue tutor as *Advanced*, indicating that they need *minimal* additional support or training. Of the remaining Hellenic staff, one reported being an *expert*, and one indicated a need for *some* additional support or training (**Figure 4**).

Figure 4
Respondents' Ratings* of Their Ability to Be a
High Quality Reading Rescue Tutor: Spring 2017

PS 123 (n=1)   PS 516 (n=2)   Hellenic (n=4)

*Only includes respondents who tutored
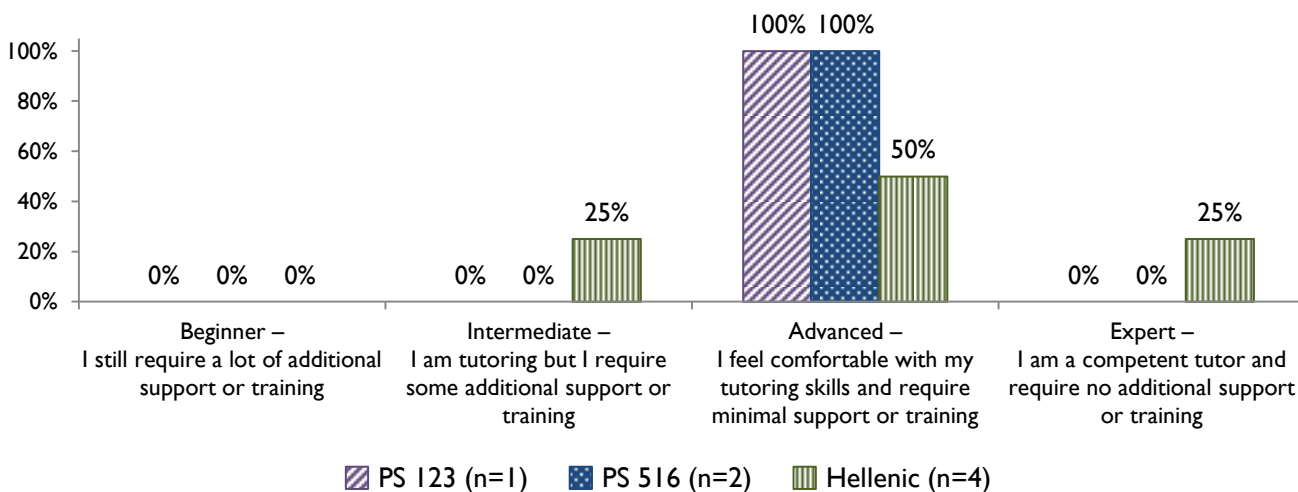
Discussions with tutors revealed that, though they felt competent in their tutoring skills, they recognized that they would benefit from additional support and training to help them be better at serving students. When they were asked about areas to be addressed with additional support or training, the two PS 516 staff members requested assistance with *phonological awareness*, and one wanted assistance with *effective prompts for students* and *tutoring time management*. Hellenic staff indicated all areas except *efficient record keeping* (Figure 5). In follow-up discussions, tutors from PS 123 said that they would like more assistance with comprehension strategies, and tutors at PS 516 indicated a need for more work with word study and questioning techniques. They also discussed the challenges of working with ELL students.

Figure 5
Areas in Which Respondents Would Like
Additional Support or Training

PS 123 (n=0)   PS 516 (n=2)   Hellenic (n=9)

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Implementation

Because tutors have other job responsibilities, each tutor has a designated capacity for the number of students s/he can work with. Typically, a tutor works with only one student, though some work with more. When a student is graduated from Reading Rescue, the tutor fills the tutoring slot with a new student. Across the three schools, a total of 32 first and second grade students participated in Reading Rescue tutoring. Of these, eight began to be tutored between February and April when a slot became available and thus had limited time for tutoring before the end of the school year. In total, 18 students graduated Reading Rescue during Year 1. Individual student data can be found in **Table 9** on page 14.

Fidelity to the Reading Rescue model requires that tutoring take place as often as possible – ideally, every day that the student is in school. As can be seen in **Table 6** below, on average, tutoring at PS 123 and PS 516 took place roughly 80% of days when school was in session. When tutoring did not take , it was often due to conflicts with school events or student or tutor absence from school. However, at PS 516, more than one-fourth of missed tutoring opportunities were due to scheduling conflicts (**Table 7**).

Table 6
Summary of Reading Rescue Tutoring Activity

School	N Tutors	N Students	Grades	N Students Graduated	% Days Tutoring Took Place
PS 123	6	8	1	2	80%
PS 516	6	6	1 & 2	3	75%
Hellenic	8	18	1 & 2	13	69%

Source: Reading Rescue Documents

Table 7
Reasons Reading Rescue Tutoring Did Not Take Place

	PS 123		PS 516		Hellenic	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
School events (i.e., field trips, assembly, etc.)	38	25%	23	14%	93	20%
Student absent from school	28	19%	43	27%	83	18%
Tutor absent from school	31	21%	16	10%	88	19%
Scheduling conflicts	0	0%	44	28%	69	15%
Professional Development	16	11%	15	9%	3	1%
Reading Rescue Training	10	7%	6	4%	58	13%
Tutor pulled for coverage/subbing	0	0%	0	0%	16	3%
Tutor pulled for testing	8	5%	0	0%	2	0%
Student pulled for testing	0	0%	1	1%	8	2%
The setting was unavailable or not conducive to tutoring	0	0%	0	0%	15	3%
Something else	20	13%	12	8%	28	6%

Source: Reading Rescue Documents

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When asked on the Educator Survey what, if anything, interfered with Reading Rescue tutoring, two-thirds of PS 123 tutors, 19% of Hellenic tutors, and 17% of PS 516 tutors said that *nothing* had interfered. Those factors that were cited (**Table 8**) largely corroborate the Reading Rescue data summarized in **Table 7**.

Table 8
Respondent Reports of Factors Interfering with
Reading Rescue Tutoring More Often Than Occasionally

	All		PS 123		PS 516		Hellenic	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
N Respondents	28		6		6		16	
Nothing interfered	8	29%	4	67%	1	17%	3	19%
Student absence from school (more than occasional absence)	12	43%	1	17%	3	50%	8	50%
School events (e.g., field trips, assemblies, etc.)	12	43%	2	33%	0	0%	10	63%
Scheduling conflicts – tutor and student schedules were incompatible	9	32%	0	0%	3	50%	6	38%
Other professional duties	6	21%	1	17%	2	33%	3	19%
Tutor absence from school (more than occasional absence)	2	7%	0	0%	1	17%	1	6%
The full tutoring session was cut short more often than "occasionally" because (please explain) • *Tutor picking up late and dropping off early*	1	4%	0	0%	0	0%	1	6%
The setting was not conducive to tutoring (e.g., distractions, interruptions, physical space was uncomfortable or inappropriate, etc.)	1	4%	0	0%	0	0%	1	6%
Language barriers	1	4%	0	0%	1	17%	0	0%
Student behaviors/student refused tutoring	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
The student was not released for tutoring	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Insufficient/Inappropriate materials	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
My student and I didn't get along	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%

A few suggestions for improving the implementation of Reading Rescue at their schools were made by the tutoring staff.

PS 123
• *I feel there is no need for improvement. I believe for our first year, the program ran smoothly.*
• *This program ran very smoothly and I cannot think of any improvements.*
• *It ran very smoothly*
• *Service more students. There are a large number of students that would benefit from Reading Rescue.*
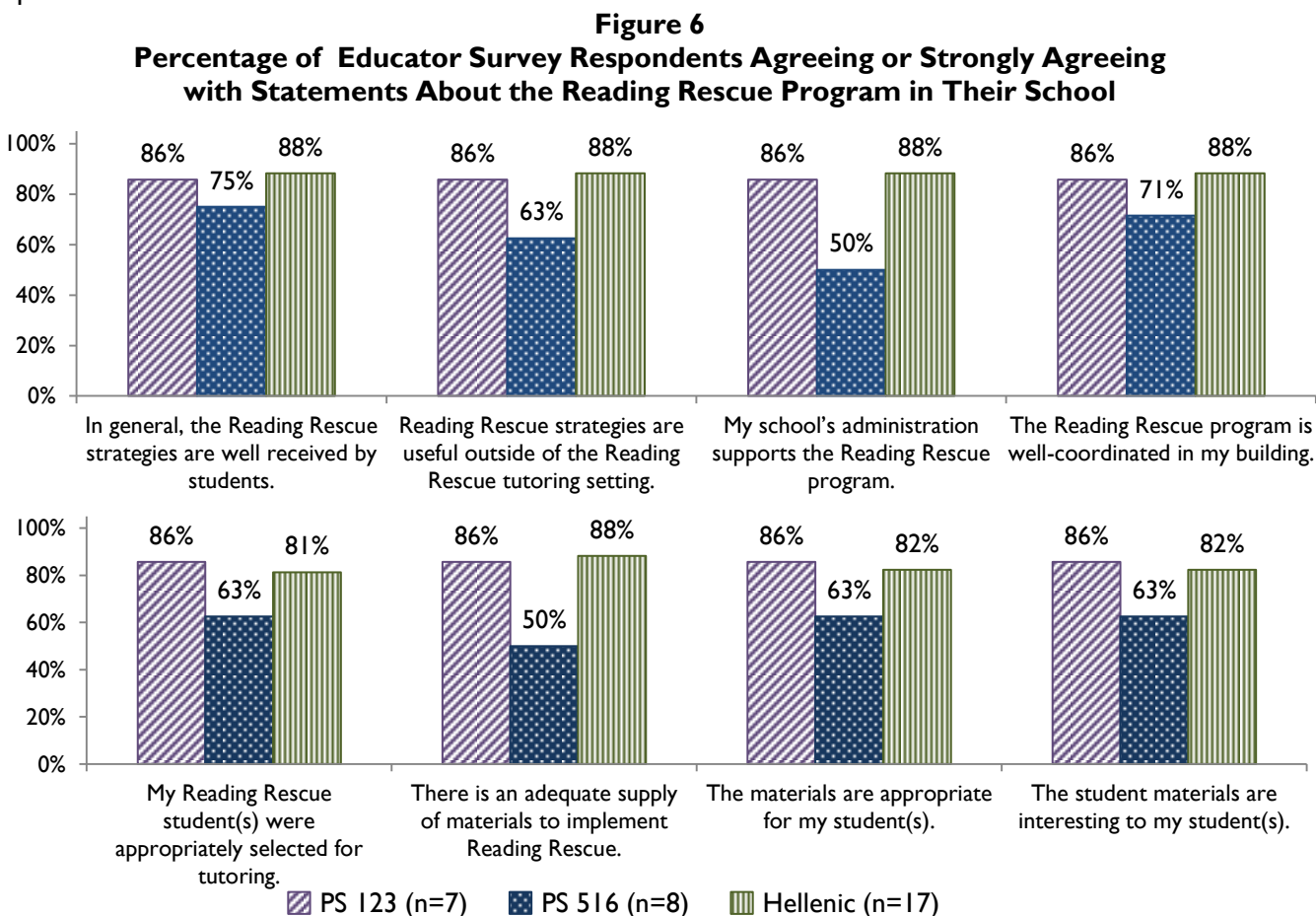• *More students need one on one tutoring. It would be nice to service more*

PS 516
• *It would be helpful for teachers to know how the Reading Rescue texts and levels compare to the leveled texts that we use for classroom assessments.*

Hellenic
• *Training more staff - classroom teachers. ELL teachers*
• *Having a space for students that is a little more private.*
• *More tutors*
• *More consistent tutoring.*

To assess perceptions of the Reading Rescue program and the quality of implementation, educators were asked how much they agreed or disagreed with a series of statements about Reading Rescue. Staff could also respond that they didn't know. The proportion of respondents from each school who *agreed* or *strongly agreed* is shown in **Figure 6**. Of those who did not *agree* or *strongly agree*, all respondents except one said they did not know or were unable to reply. Thus, it can be concluded that Reading Rescue program, strategies, and materials are well received and participants are satisfied with the implementation.

Figure 6
Percentage of Educator Survey Respondents Agreeing or Strongly Agreeing with Statements About the Reading Rescue Program in Their School

Project participants were asked to describe the biggest strengths of the Reading Rescue program. Their responses are duplicated below.

PS 123
- *I believe the biggest strengths of the Reading Rescue program are the routines and consistency.*
- *I believe that the Reading Rescue Program strength is that it offers the 5 components of literacy in 30 minutes.*
- *I have learned a new approach to strategies that are used often in the classroom. I feel that working with the student on creating sentences was a huge help to myself because it was a new approach and to the student because it got them excited about writing!*
- *improving the students' confidence and enthusiasm for reading*
- *It allows you to pinpoint exactly what the student is struggling with allowing you to focus on those areas and not waste time on areas students have already mastered.*
- *The program is individualized to the needs of the student*

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PS 516
- *It is great that it is a one-on-one program that allows the student to receive tutoring every day.*
- *In my opinion, I think the biggest strengths in this program are the tools and the instructions that are given to both tutors and students. Using these tools has helped me to grow and improve significantly in my approach on reading instruction and how beneficial this can be if implemented the right way.*

Hellenic
- *RR helps accelerate struggling readers' literacy skills. RR is a skilled intensive intervention program. Tutors become experts in providing intervention.*
- *Student achievement and self-esteem!*
- *The positive effect that one on one tutoring has on the student. The positive effect that one on one tutoring has on the tutor. The tutor becomes more knowledgeable on skills and strategies needed for reading and builds her confidence and professionalism.*
- *The students become more comfortable reading, and see their growth -- especially on the timed reading.*
- *The training on ways to improve our student's comprehension as well as spoken and written language.*
- *That it's consistent and easy to implement because of training and guides*
- *The biggest strengths of the Reading Rescue program is how the individualized assistance creates a boost of confidence for students. The students are able to create clear goals, are motivated to use strategies clearly stated in front of them during every session, and they get that one-on-one attention that they need to be successful.*
- *Decoding and fluency.*

Overall levels of commitment to Reading Rescue is quite high at each school, with average ratings ranging from 8.8 to 10.0 on a scale of 1 to 10 (1=lowest, 10=highest) (**Figure 7**). Satisfaction with Reading Rescue is similarly high (**Figure 8**), with average ratings of 2.9 or 3.0 (1=not at all satisfied, 2=somewhat satisfied, 3=very satisfied).

Figure 7
Respondent Ratings of Their Commitment to the Reading Rescue Program: Mean Ratings
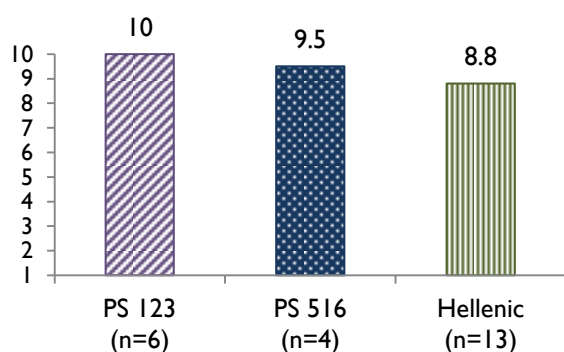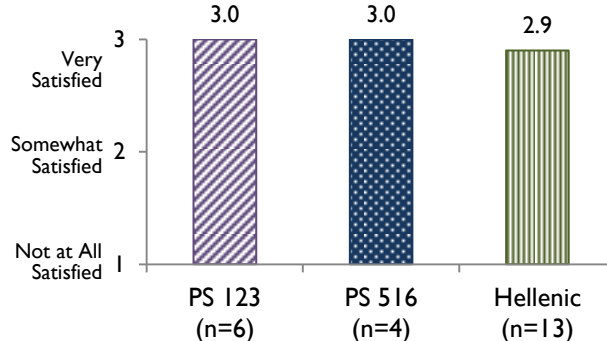(Scale: 1=lowest, 10=highest)

Figure 8
Overall Satisfaction with Reading Rescue:
Mean Ratings
(Scale: 1= not at all satisfied, 2=somewhat satisfied, 3=very satisfied)

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Goal 2: The Reading Rescue literacy intervention will make a positive impact on student reading skills at PS 123 and PS 516.

As summarized in **Figure 9**, respondents from all schools perceive that Reading Rescue is having a positive impact on tutored students. On a scale of 1 to 5 where 1=worse, 3=about the same, and 5=better, staff from all schools average a rating of 4.3 or higher on every area probed: reading skills, enthusiasm for reading, classroom participation, motivation for learning, getting along with other students, academic performance in subjects other than reading, and self-esteem. When asked how well Reading Rescue was meeting the needs of tutored students, all staff who were able to make a judgement replied *a great deal* (**Figure 10**),

Figure 9
Respondent Ratings of How Reading Rescue Affected Tutored Students: Mean Ratings
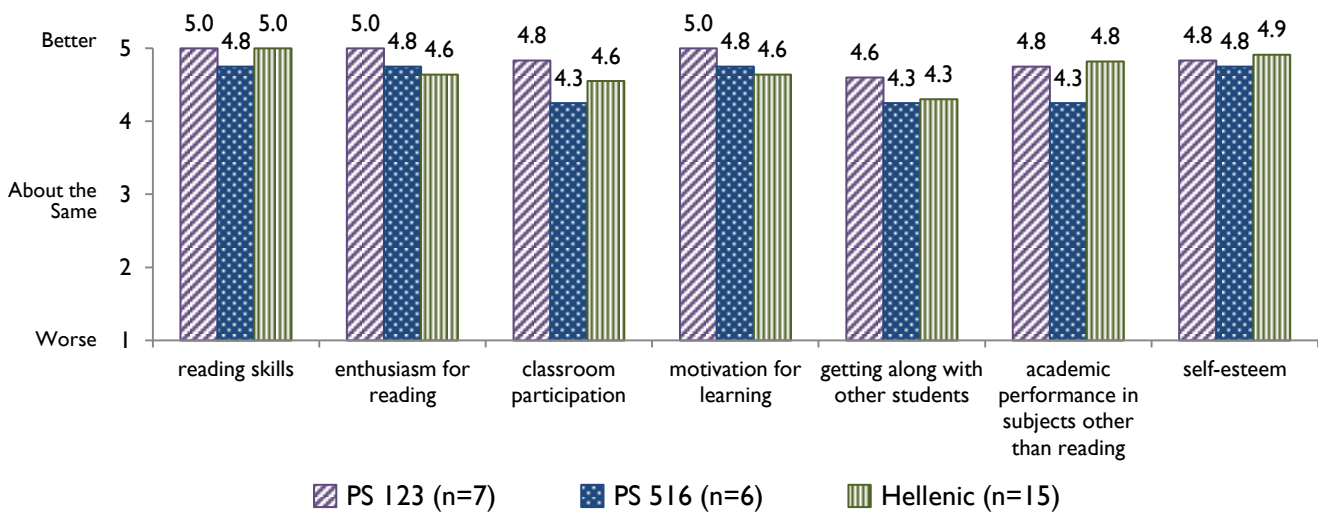(Scale: 1=worse, 3=about the same, 5=better)

Figure 10
Respondent Ratings of How Well Reading Rescue is Meeting the Needs of Tutored Students
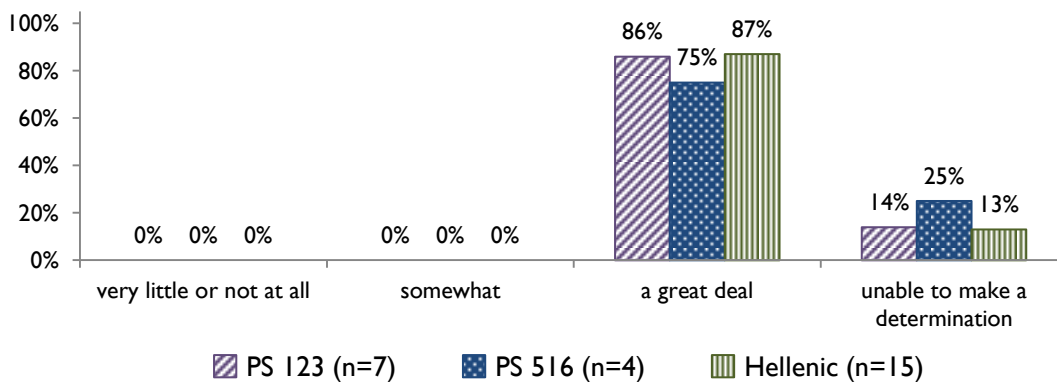
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Table 9 shows the Fountas & Pinnell (F&P) independent reading levels of all tutored students at three points in time during the school year: fall (baseline), mid-year, and spring, as well as the number of levels improved from fall to spring. The number of students tutored at each school is limited by the number of available tutors and tutoring slots. Each tutor can only take on one or two students at a time. When a student graduates, that tutoring slot is filled by the next best tutoring candidate. Some of the students included did not begin tutoring until as late as April.

All students who participated in Reading Rescue tutoring improved their reading skills during the course of the school year. The average gain for first graders was 5.75 F&P levels at PS 123, 6.25 levels at PS 516, and 5.58 levels at Hellenic. Both Hellenic and PS 516 offered tutoring to second graders. Here, the average gain was 5.50 levels at PS 516 and 4.0 levels at Hellenic.

Table 9
2016-17 Fountas & Pinnell Independent Reading Levels of Individual Reading Rescue Students at Baseline, Midyear, and Spring and Net Gain in Independent Reading Level

A. 1st Grade

PS 123 Student	Fall	Mid-Year	Spring	Gain
Student 1	A	C	I	8
Student 2	B	D	G	5
Student 3*	E	G	H	3
Student 4	B	D	G	5
Student 5*	D	F	J	6
Student 6	A	B	D	3
Student 7✓	D	H	L	8
Student 8✓	B	H	J	8
Average Gain				**5.75**

PS 516 Student	Fall	Mid-Year	Spring	Gain
Student 9✓	B	E	H	6
Student 10✓	B	F	H	6
Student 11	C	E	G	4
Student 12✓	C	G	L	9
Average Gain				**6.25**

Hellenic Student	Fall	Mid-Year	Spring	Gain
Student 13✓	B	G	I	7
Student 14✓*	C	F	I	6
Student 15	A	B	C	2
Student 16✓	C	G	J	7
Student 17✓	B	G	I	7
Student 18✓	C	G	J	7
Student 19✓	B	E	I	7
Student 20*	C	D	E	2
Student 21✓*	B	E	I	7
Student 22✓*	D	F	J	6
Student 23✓	D	G	J	6
Student 24✓*	E	F	I	4
Student 25✓	D	E	I	5
Average Gain				**5.61**

✓Graduated
*Tutoring began after January 2017

B. 2nd Grade

PS 123 Student	Fall	Mid-Year	Spring	Gain
No Grade 2 Students from PS 123				

PS 516 Student	Fall	Mid-Year	Spring	Gain
Student 26	D	D	G	3
Student 27	B	G	J	8
Average Gain				**5.50**

Hellenic Student	Fall	Mid-Year	Spring	Gain
Student 28✓	G	I	M	6
Student 29✓	G	I	M	5
Student 30*	H	H	J	2
Student 31	E	E	H	3
Student 32	C	E	G	4
Average Gain				**4.00**

✓Graduated
*Tutoring began after January 2017

Table 10 shows that, with one exception, all first grade tutored students were reading at or above their grade level by the end of the school year. Five second graders had begun to be tutored in the spring of 2017. Of these, two were reading at a second grade level in the spring. Overall, 31 students received Reading Rescue tutoring across the three schools: 24 1st graders and seven 2nd graders. Of these, nine graduated (29%).

Table 10
2016-17 Fountas & Pinnell Independent Reading Levels of All Reading Rescue Students

A. 1st Grade

Grade Level Equivalent	Reading Level	Baseline (Fall 2016) PS 123 (n=8)	PS 516 (n=4)	Hellenic (n=12)	Grade Level Equivalent	Reading Level	Mid-Year PS 123 (n=8)	PS 516 (n=4)	Hellenic (n=12)	Grade Level Equivalent	Reading Level	Spring 2017 PS 123 (n=8)	PS 516 (n=4)	Hellenic (n=12)
K	Pre-A	0	0	0	K	Pre-A	0	0	0	K	Pre-A	0	0	0
	A	2	0	1		A	0	0	0		A	0	0	0
	B	3	2	4		B	1	0	1		B	0	0	0
	C	0	2	4		C	1	0	0		C	0	0	1
	Total	5	4	9		Total	2	0	1		Total	0	0	1
Grade 1	D	2	0	3	Grade 1	D	2	0	1	Grade 1	D	1	0	0
	E	1	0	1		E	0	2	3		E	0	0	1
	F	0	0	0		F	1	1	3		F	0	0	0
	G	0	0	0		G	1	1	5		G	2	1	0
	H	0	0	0		H	2	0	0		H	1	2	0
	I	0	0	0		I	0	0	0		I	1	0	7
	J	0	0	0		J	0	0	0		J	2	0	4
	Total	3	0	4		Total	6	4	12		Total	7	3	12
Grade 2	K	0	0	0	Grade 2	K	0	0	0	Grade 2	K	0	0	0
	L	0	0	0		L	0	0	0		L	1	1	0
	M	0	0	0		M	0	0	0		M	0	0	0
	Total	0	0	0		Total	0	0	0		Total	1	1	0

B. 2nd Grade

Grade Level Equivalent	Reading Level	Baseline (Fall 2016) PS 516 (n=2)	Hellenic (n=5)	Grade Level Equivalent	Reading Level	Mid-Year PS 516 (n=2)	Hellenic (n=5)	Grade Level Equivalent	Reading Level	Spring 2017 PS 516 (n=2)	Hellenic (n=5)
K	Pre-A	0	0	K	Pre-A	0	0	K	Pre-A	0	0
	A	0	0		A	0	0		A	0	0
	B	1	0		B	0	0		B	0	0
	C	0	1		C	0	0		C	0	0
	Total	1	1		Total	0	0		Total	0	0
Grade 1	D	1	0	Grade 1	D	1	0	Grade 1	D	0	0
	E	0	1		E	0	2		E	0	0
	F	0	0		F	0	0		F	0	0
	G	0	2		G	1	0		G	1	1
	H	0	1		H	0	1		H	0	1
	I	0	0		I	0	2		I	0	0
	J	0	0		J	0	0		J	1	1
	Total	1	4		Total	2	5		Total	2	3
Grade 2	K	0	0	Grade 2	K	0	0	Grade 2	K	0	0
	L	0	0		L	0	0		L	0	0
	M	0	0		M	0	0		M	0	2
	Total	0	0		Total	0	0		Total	0	2

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Goal 3: Educators from PS 123 and PS 516 will successfully learn and implement with fidelity the Using Data Solutions approach to building a data culture addressed in the charter school dissemination grant professional development, which will lead to a positive impact on each school's data culture.

Hellenic's commitment to implementing data strategies to build a data culture has permeated the school philosophy and contributes to the success of its Reading Rescue program. The Using Data Solutions approach teaches educators a four-step process to look at data in professional learning communities. Educators engage deeply with the data and, using reflective dialogue, aim to identify student learning problems, verify causes for these problems, generate and implement solutions, and monitor results. The Using Data Solutions methods and strategies have been shown to help close achievement gaps and contribute to meaningful systemic change.

Each school selected a focus area for their participating staff to investigate during their staff development sessions in data strategies.

- PS 123 selected middle of year assessments in both ELA and Math.
- PS 516 looked at student writing conventions and structure.
- Hellenic staff looked at NYSED student assessment data. It should be noted that some Hellenic staff had already participated in similar training in data strategies during previous years.

Preparation

Staff participated in seven days of direct training with Diana Nunnaley, the specialist from Using Data Solutions, and had additional follow-up training and support with Erika Smith, the project data coach. In addition, both the data specialist and project data coach provided support and technical assistance via follow-up conference calls with each school's data coordinator.

As shown in **Table 11** below, on average, staff from PS 123 and PS 516 participated in approximately 25 hours of formal professional development in data strategies and an additional 11 to 14 hours of informal or additional data training and activities during the year. Hellenic staff participated in a reduced amount of professional development.

Table 11
Average Formal and Informal Staff Development or Training in Data Strategies

	Hours of FORMAL professional learning in Using Data Solutions (i.e., with Diana Nunnaley or Erika Smith)			Hours of additional formal or informal professional learning in using data to improve instruction		
	n	Mean	Min/Max	n	Mean	Min/Max
All	13	15.1	0/36	13	9.1	0/30
PS 123	3	25.3	15/36	3	11.0	3/20
PS 516	3	25.0	20/35	3	14.0	2/30
Hellenic	7	6.4	0/16	7	6.1	0/16

All staff from all three schools rated the amount of difficulty level of training in data strategies to be *about right* (**Figure 11**).

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Figure 11
Percentage of Respondents Rating Amount of
Training Time and Difficulty Level in Data
Strategies as "About Right"

Legend: PS 123 (n=3) — PS 516 (n=4) — Hellenic (n=8)
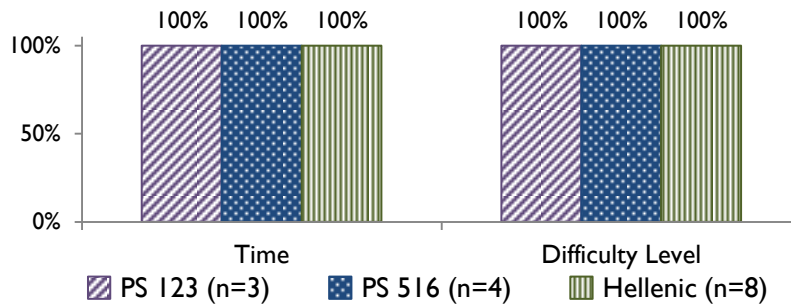
Respondents were asked to rate four aspects of the professional development in data strategies: the comprehensiveness and organization of training, the usefulness of the training materials, and the relevance of the training to their work with children. Their average ratings, shown in **Figure 12**, for each aspect ranged from 3.3 to 4.0 on a four-point scale where 1=poor and 4=excellent. PS 123 staff ascribed the highest rating in each area. Their overall satisfaction with data strategies was also quite high, with average ratings of 5.0 for PS 123 and 4.0 for PS 516 and Hellenic on a five-point scale where 1=poor and 5=excellent (**Figure 13**).

Figure 12
Respondent Satisfaction with Aspects of
Professional Development in Data Strategies: Mean Ratings
(Scale: 1=poor, 4=excellent)

Legend: PS 123 (n=3) — PS 516 (n=4) — Hellenic (n=9)
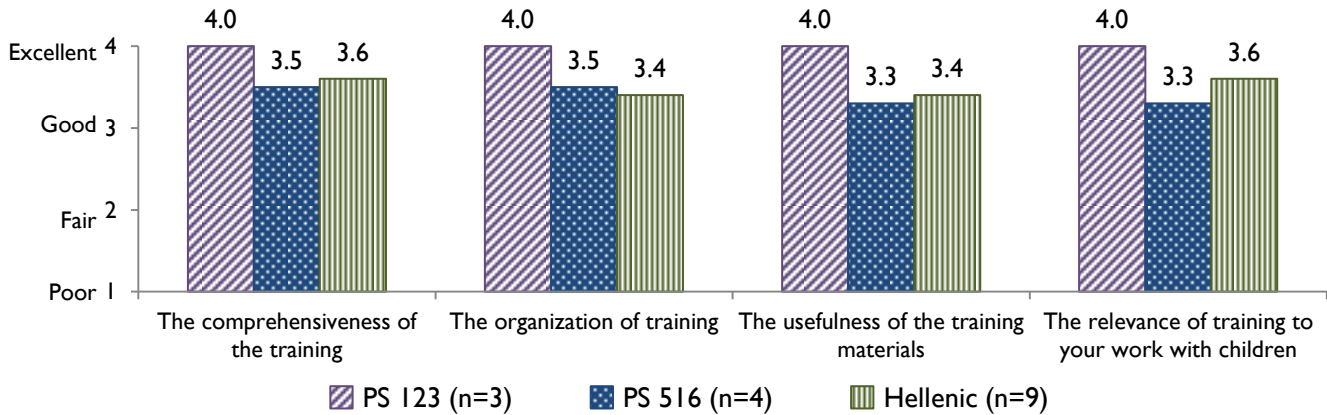
Figure 13
Overall Satisfaction with Data Strategies
Professional Learning Activities:
Mean Ratings
(Scale: 1= poor, 5=excellent)

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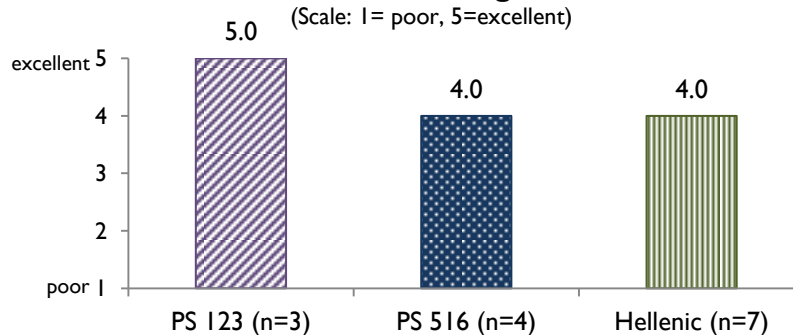
Respondents reported being very well prepared to use the data strategies they learned. As shown in **Figure 14**, average ratings from each school were 3.3 or higher on a four-point scale where 1=not at all well and 4=extremely well. PS 123 staff's average rating was 4.0 in every area probed. Average ratings for PS 516 staff were 3.3 in all areas except *look at student data on my own*, which had an average rating of 3.5. Hellenic staff averaged ratings of 3.7 to 4.0 in all areas.

All staff indicated that they still need additional support or training to be meaningful participants in a school data culture. Two respondents from PS 516 said they were *beginners;* two PS 123 staff and four Hellenic staff members rated themselves as *intermediate;* and one staff member from PS 123, two from PS 516, and four from Hellenic said their abilities were *advanced* (**Figure 15**). Additional areas of support indicated by participants were

- How to use the four phases in light of time constraints
- Additional data analysis techniques and how to use data to drive instruction
- More practice using the skills learned during Year 1
- Selecting data for analysis.

Figure 14
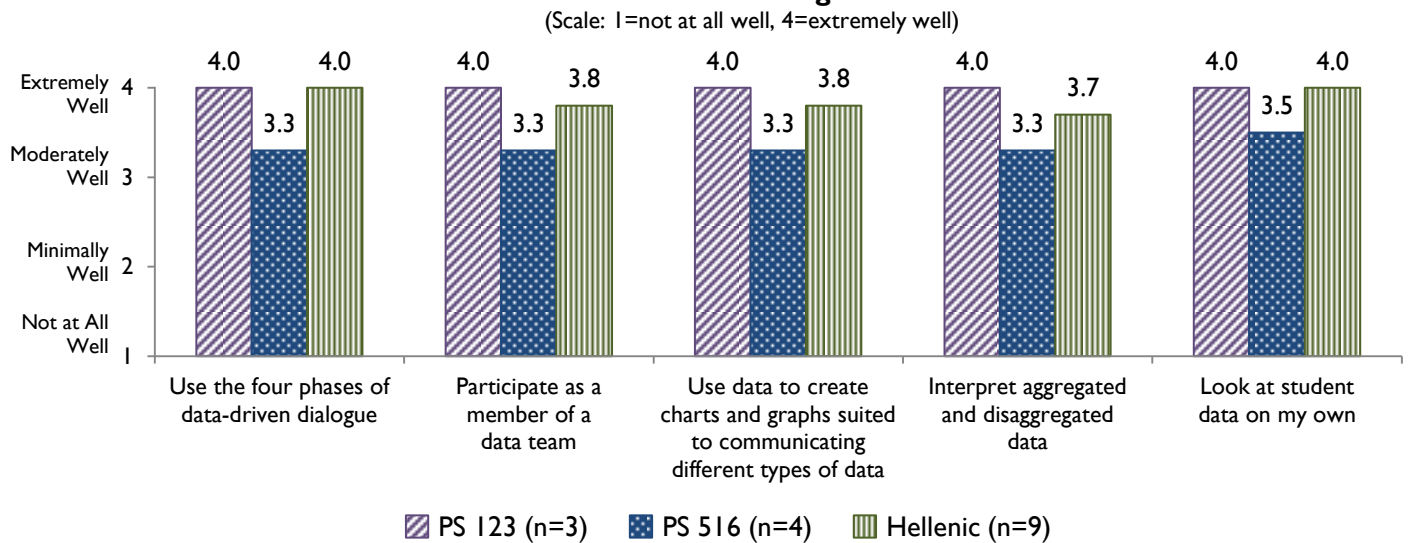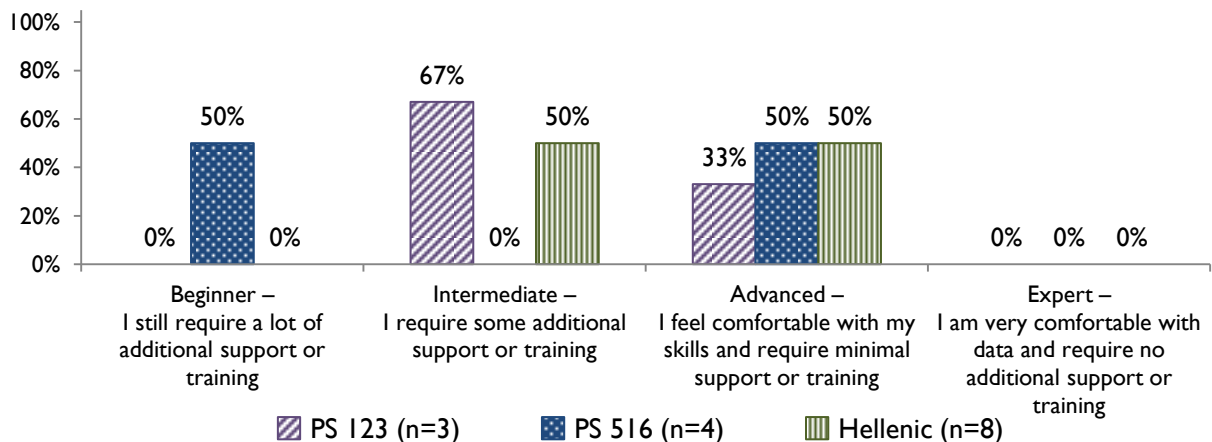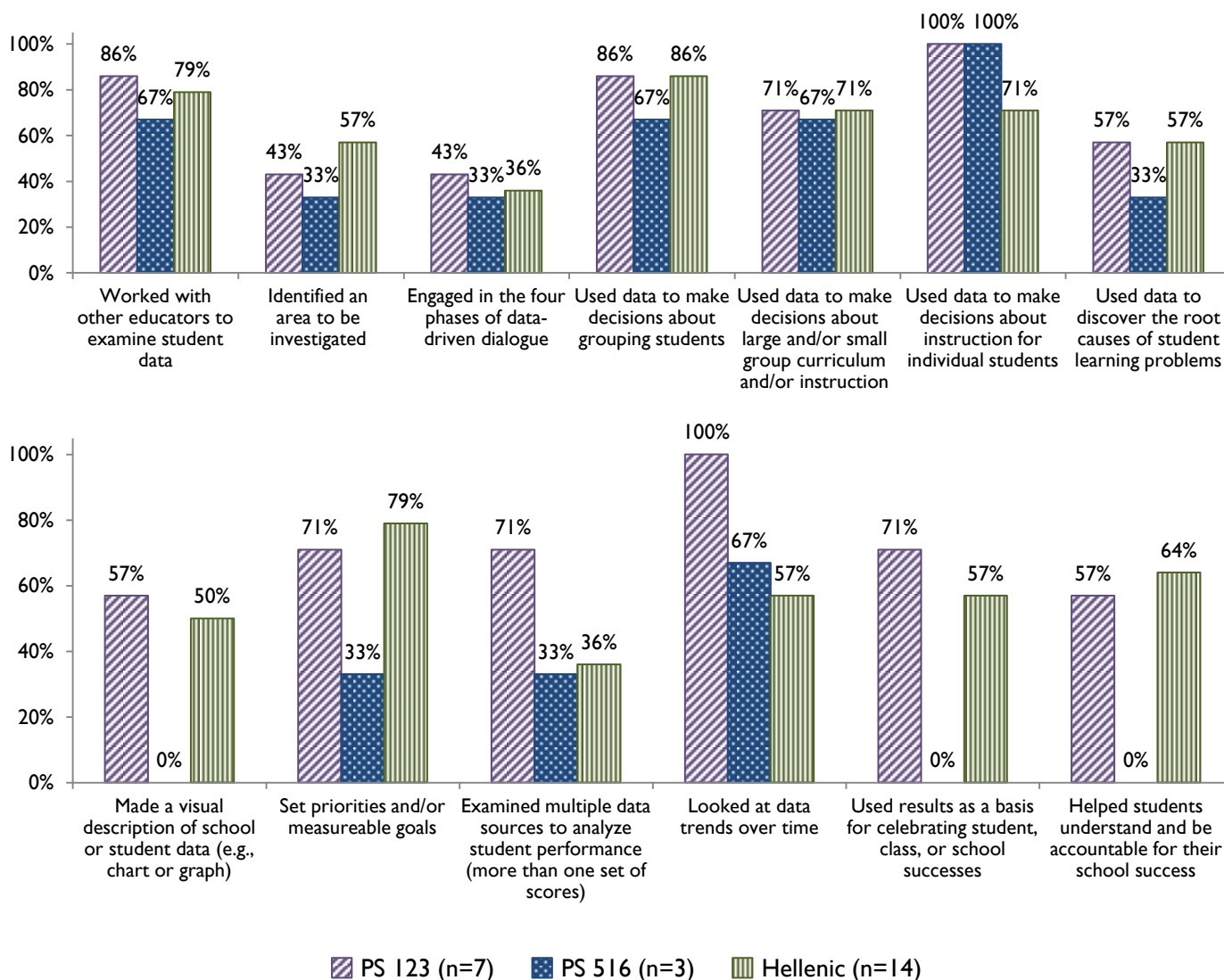**Respondent Ratings of How Well Training Prepared Them with Data Strategies:**
Mean Ratings
(Scale: 1=not at all well, 4=extremely well)

Figure 15
Respondents' Ratings of Their Ability to Be a Meaningful Participant in
a School Data Culture

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Implementation

To gauge the extent to which staff had engaged in data-driven activities outside of professional development sessions, participants were presented with a list of 13 data-related tasks and were asked to indicate which, if any, they had participated in (**Figure 16**). All but three data-driven activities were selected by at least one-third of respondents from every school, indicating that educators were actively using data strategies. All staff from PS 123 and PS 516 and 71% from Hellenic said they had *used data to make decisions about instruction for individual students.* The other activities and strategies indicated by two-thirds or more of all survey respondents were *worked with other educators to examine student data, used data to make decisions about grouping students,* and *used data to make decisions about large and/or small group curriculum and/or instruction.*

Figure 16
Percentage of Respondents Participating in Data-driven Activities

PS 123 (n=7)   PS 516 (n=3)   Hellenic (n=14)

Hellenic Classical Charter School – PS 123 – PS 516
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Some staff provided examples of how they had used their training in data strategies in their school during the year. These are reproduced below.

PS 123
- *We used the 4 phases to analyze benchmarks and find the strengths and weakness trends across the grades Kindergarten through fifth.*
- *We looked at fourth grade students state exam grades and compared them with third grade state exam grades. We focused on the types of questions students had difficulty answering and discussed sills and strategies we need to focus on so that students can perform better.*
- *I examined the data I obtained during reading rescue with the data from his classroom instruction to offer further assistance*

PS 516
- *We looked at math data as a grade during a grade team meeting to see if data was similar across classes and to see if we noticed any trends or patterns.*

Hellenic
- *I used my training to set measurable goals that the data presented as an area of concern for the individual students.*
- *When students were able to reach a certain reading level, we would celebrate that accomplishment with them and their classroom teacher. I also helped group students based on their needs to work with them on either writing or reading.*
- *Make groups based on data*
- *It helped with grouping.*

When asked to name the strengths of the Using Data Solutions approach, survey respondents replied as follows.

PS 123
- *Going through the four phases*
- *It gave the teachers a new approach to looking at data. Making Predictions was something that we did not do previously and I feel it opened up more conversations amongst the grades.*
- *We are able effectively analyze the data we collect throughout the school year and revise our curriculum and various assessments to meet the needs of all students.*

PS 516
- *It provided us with time to consider how to look at and use data. It helped us think about ways that we will improve our data collection for next year.*

Hellenic
- *Data Solutions teaches tutors to use data to improve their instruction; identify student strengths and weaknesses and formulate action plans*
- *Looking closely at the data and creating action plans. The collaboration that occurs within grade levels and vertically.*
- *Seeing growth and using the data to group students, so they get the best intervention possible.*

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Half of the respondents from PS 123 and Hellenic and one-fourth from PS 516 indicated that *nothing* interfered with their ability to implement data strategies. However, two-thirds of PS 516 staff reported that time and scheduling difficulties were barriers for them, as did one-third of staff from PS 123 and Hellenic. Workload was an issue for half of PS 516 staff and one-third of PS 123 and Hellenic staff. Lack of technology was an obstacle to data use for 17% of Hellenic staff. **Figure 17** summarizes their responses.

Figure 17
Respondents' Reports of Factors Interfering with Implementing Data Strategies
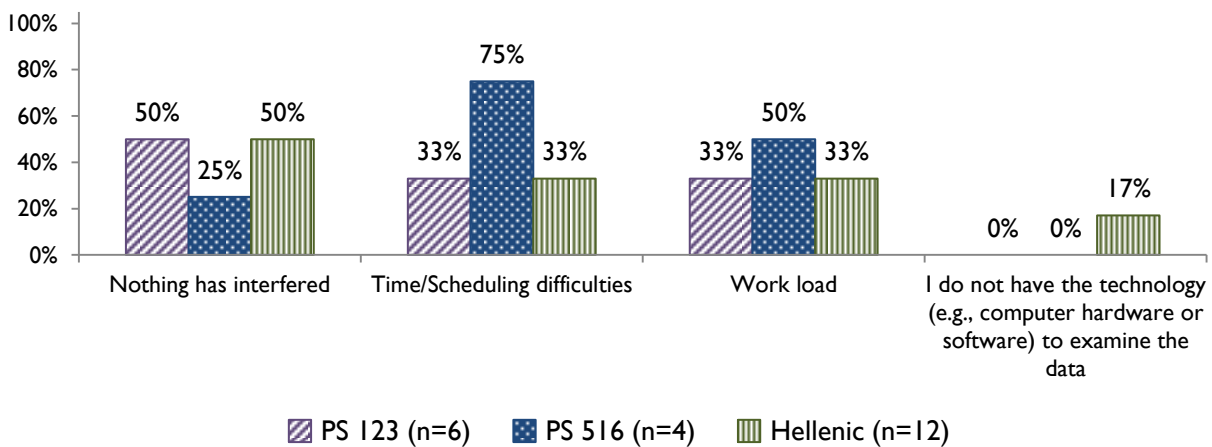
Staff suggestions for improving the implementation of using data strategies in their schools are shown below.

PS 123
- *Having more time to meet with the teachers to talk about the data.*
- *We have always been collecting data and sometimes too much but now using the data solution approach we can narrow down on quality data collection and analyze them and to identify areas of student strengths and weaknesses. As a result we can better identify skill and strategies that needs to be put in place to help students reach higher success.*

PS 516
- *We can improve the approach by tailoring it to the population at our school.*
- *It would be helpful to see how the four phases can be implemented during an hour long meeting, rather than a full day*

Hellenic
- *Training more staff*
- *Grouping students in classrooms for classroom teachers.*
- *One day training*
- *Arrive with goals that are determined well in advance.*

Conclusions and Recommendations

The grant leadership recognizes that student success is not limited by discrete activities. Rather, it is affected by the learning environment and school culture. Thus, the Charter School Dissemination Grant seeks to impact student outcomes through improved teacher practices that permeate the larger school culture.

Grant participants were presented with a list of educator skills and asked to rate the extent to which their skills had been impacted by the grant activities. Their mean ratings are shown in **Figure 18**. Across all schools, every staff member indicated a rating of 3 (about the same) or higher on a four-point scale (1=worse, 3=about the same, 5=better). Those areas which educators indicated the greatest improvement reach into every area of the school:

- *Working with students individually*
- *Using data to plan instruction for my student(s)*
- *Motivating student achievement*
- *Making observations about students*
- *Functioning in a professional learning community*

Figure 18
Respondent Ratings the Impact of Grant Activities on Their Skills as Educators: Mean Ratings
(Scale 1=worse, 3=about the same, 5=better)

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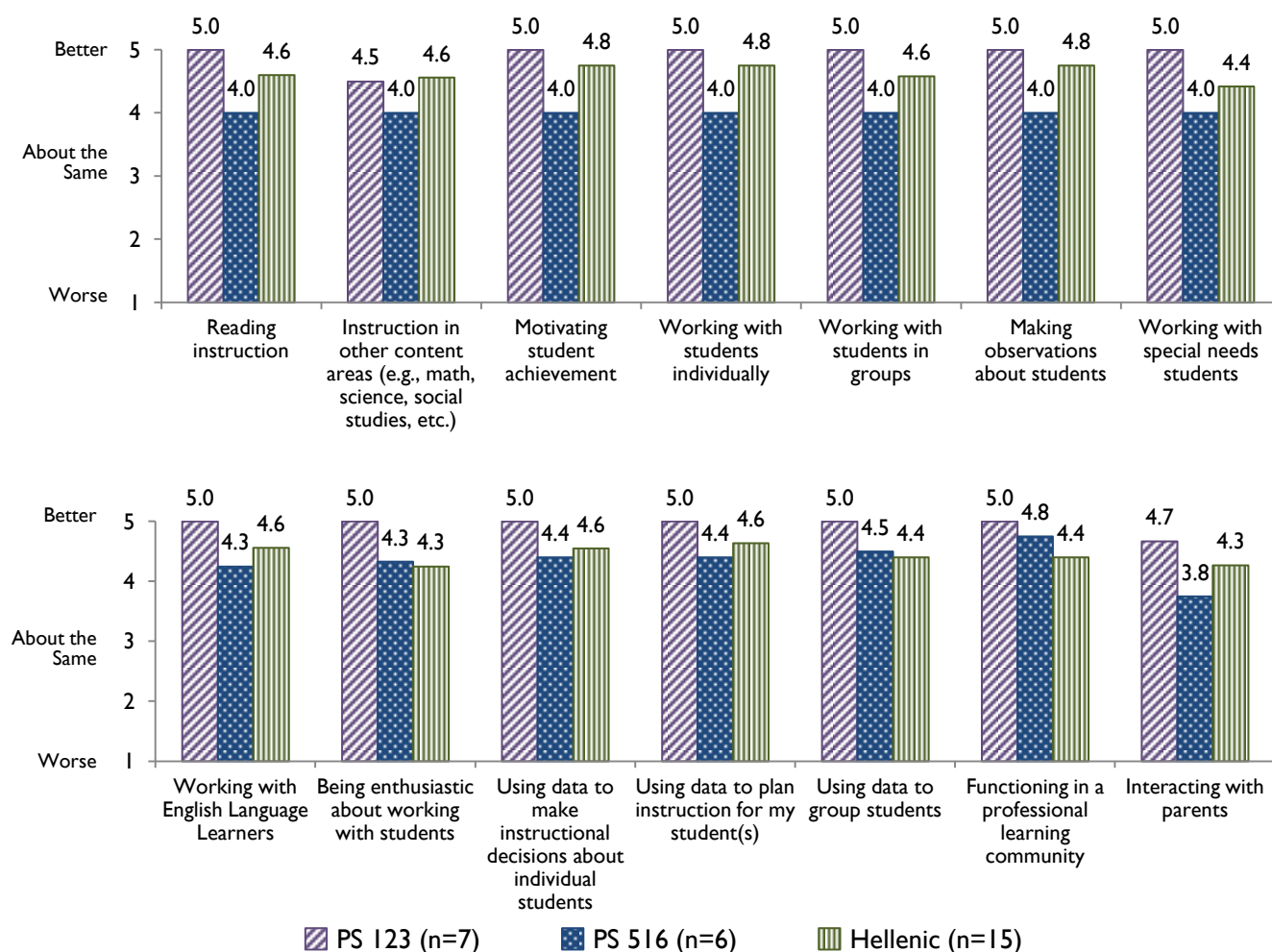
The staff members of Hellenic Classical Charter School, PS 123, PS 516 Sunset Park Avenue Elementary School, Reading Rescue, and Using Data Solutions deserve commendation for their successful efforts in planning and implementing a successful first year of their grant program. Clearly the Reading Rescue and data strategies are having a positive effect on participating staff, students, and the wider school cultures. With that in mind, the following recommendations are respectfully submitted.

1. **Stay the course by implementing the planned Year 2 grant activities.**
   It is anticipated that program activities for Year 2 will include more advanced tutor training and additional in-depth work with data strategies. It is encouraging that the grant partners have been considering the efficacy of training primary grade teachers in Reading Rescue.

2. **Look for additional opportunities to expand the data culture in each school.**
   As staff members become more adept at using data strategies, they will recognize the many ways they can be helpful in solving complex problems.

3. **Improve and increase opportunities for professional sharing among partners at all levels.**
   Partners expressed that they would like more opportunities to work collaboratively and develop professional relationships with their colleagues at partner schools. The challenges posed by time constraints, taking teachers out of their classrooms during the school day, and the distance between the schools are quite real. Key stakeholders are encouraged to continue to seek opportunities for continued collaboration and communication.

4. **Schedule regular grant leadership meetings to provide an opportunity for planning grant activities, sharing successes, and troubleshooting challenges.**
   Regular check-ins may take place in person or via conference call.

5. **Look for ways to ensure communication between the tutor and classroom teacher.**
   Students are best served when their educational team members are "on the same page." Look for ways to ensure that teachers and tutors communicate about student needs. When teachers understand the strategies and techniques tutors are using, they are better able to support students when they attempt to use them in their classrooms.

6. **Celebrate successes!**
   Success breeds success, and the Hellenic Classical Charter School – PS 123 – PS 516 partnership has made good headway during its first year of program activities. Look for opportunities to celebrate accomplishments and publicize them to the wider community!

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