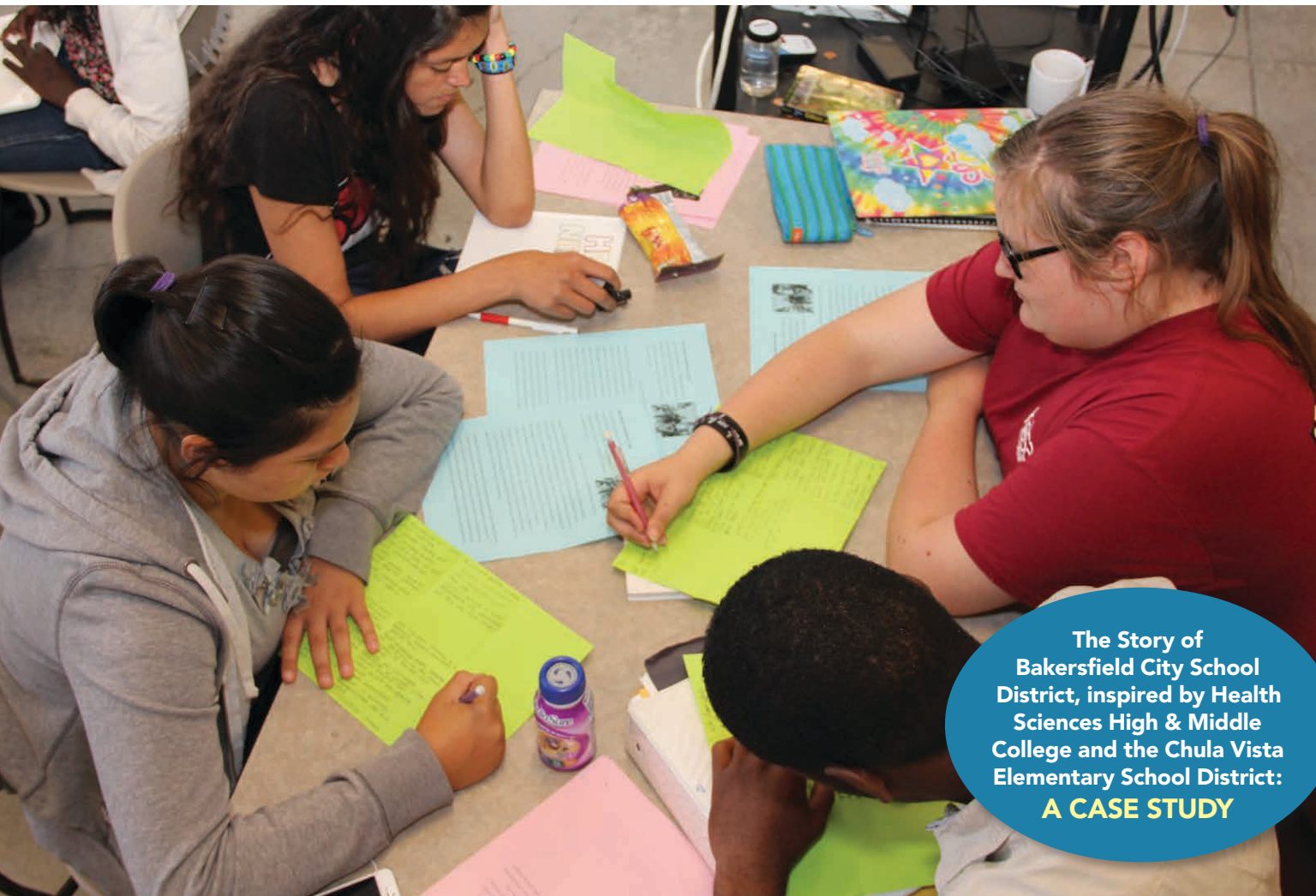


Close & Critical Reading Collaborative

Close & Critical Reading: Developing Proficient Readers

- Gradual Release of Responsibility
- Close Reading and Text-Dependent Questions
- Access to Complex Texts
- Formative Assessments

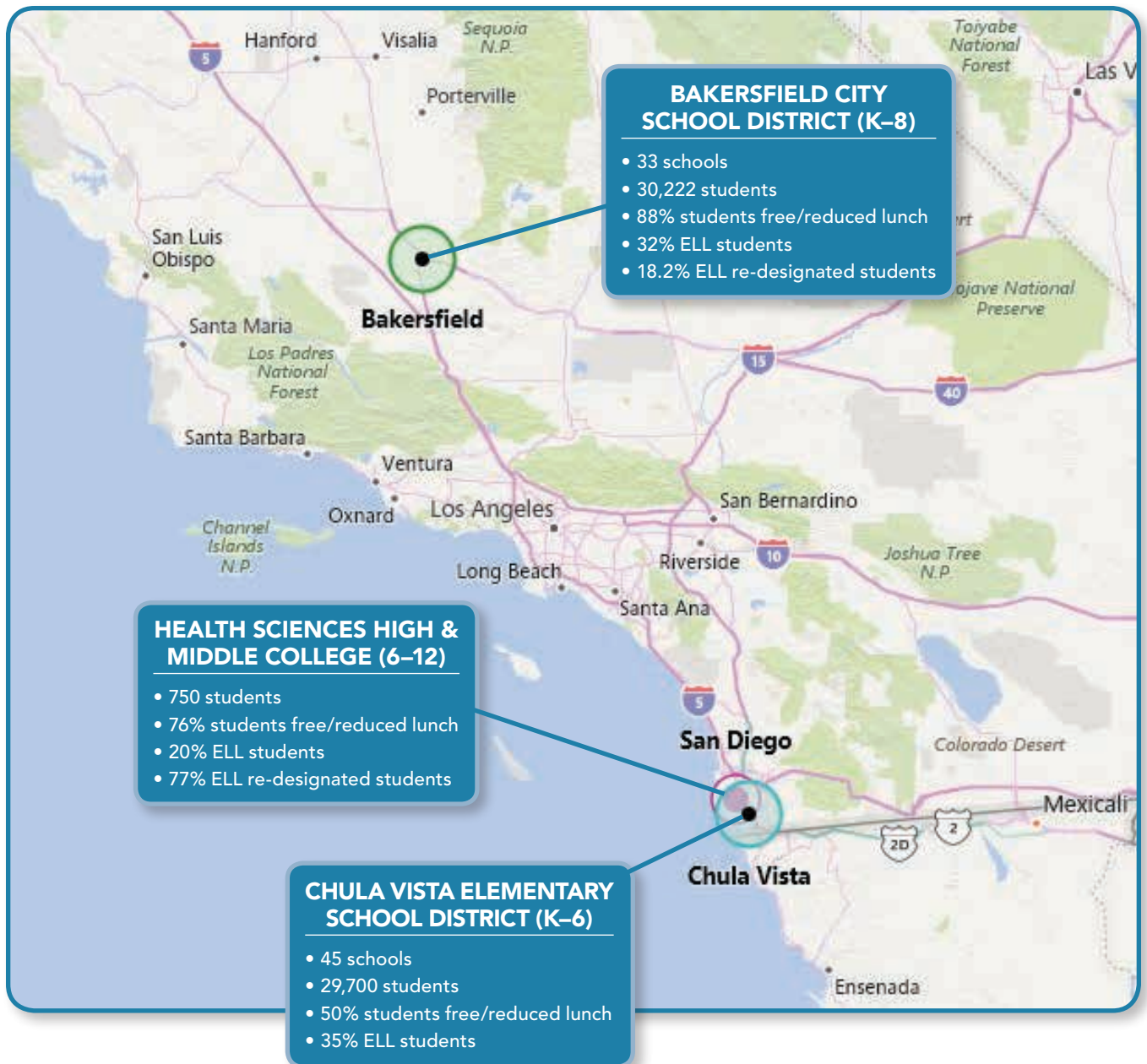


The Story of
Bakersfield City School
District, inspired by Health
Sciences High & Middle
College and the Chula Vista
Elementary School District:
A CASE STUDY

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THE CONTEXT: TWO SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DISTRICTS AND AN INNOVATIVE CHARTER MIDDLE/HIGH SCHOOL



Health Sciences High & Middle College

HHealth Sciences High & Middle College (HSHMC), founded by Doug Fisher, Nancy Frey, and Ian Pumpian, is an open-enrollment charter middle and high school located in one of the most impoverished neighborhoods in East San Diego. Doug and Nancy, who tally more than 41 combined years of K–12 public school and college teaching experience, work full-time at HSHMC as teachers and leaders. With so much accumulated research and knowledge, Doug and Nancy understand firsthand the many struggles facing schools across the country, and they know, too, that **literacy fluency is the key to success, not just in school but in life**. Doug and Nancy have employed their research and knowledge to great effect at HSHMC, where the numbers regarding student success speak for themselves.

Despite a high rate of poverty and large percentages of ELL and ELL re-designated students, 63% of HSHMC students met or exceeded California standards in 2017 (the state average is 59%), 55% of ELL students met California standards (the state average is 42%), and 74% of HSHMC graduates went directly into 2- to 4-year degree programs. The school has received numerous awards, including

- 2015 California Gold Ribbon School
- U.S. News Best High Schools of 2014
- 2013 California Department of Education Distinguished School
- California Department of Education Title I Academic Achievement
- National Safety Advocacy Council Awards

HEALTH SCIENCES HIGH & MIDDLE COLLEGE DEMOGRAPHICS

- Number of Schools: 1
- Number of Students: 750
- Percentage of students eligible for free and reduced lunch: 76%
- Percentage of English language learners: 20%
- Percentage of ELL re-designated students: 77%

“Despite a high rate of poverty and large percentages of ELL and ELL re-designated students, 63% of Health Sciences High & Middle College students met or exceeded California standards in 2017 (the state average is 59%), 55% of ELL students met California standards (the state average is 42%), and 74% of HSHMC graduates went directly into 2- to 4-year degree programs.”

Chula Vista Elementary School District

Chula Vista Elementary School District (CVESD) in San Diego County is California's largest K–6 elementary school district. It educates 29,700¹ students across 45 school campuses, and spans 103 square miles of the San Diego–Tijuana metropolitan area between San Diego and the U.S.–Mexico border, including the region just north of the world's busiest international border crossing at San Ysidro Port of Entry. CVESD serves the communities of South San Diego, Chula Vista, Bonita, and Sunnyside. Much of the economy in the Chula Vista Elementary School District is fueled by tourism and heavy industry.

The majority of CVESD students—68%—identify as Hispanic; the remaining 32% are White (13%), Filipino (11%), African American (4%), Asian/Pacific Islander (3%), and other (1%). More than 50% of CVESD students qualify for free and reduced lunch, and 35% of CVESD students are English language learners.

CHULA VISTA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DISTRICT DEMOGRAPHICS

- Number of Schools: 45
- Number of Students: 29,700
- Percentage of students eligible for free and reduced lunch: 50%
- Percentage of English language learners: 35%

¹ Source: Chula Vista Elementary School District, www.cvesd.org.



Bakersfield City School District

Bakersfield City School District (BCSD) is a K–8 public school district that serves Bakersfield, California, a city of 375,000 located approximately 100 miles north of Los Angeles, at the southern end of the San Joaquin Valley and the Central Valley region. Nearly 50% of Bakersfield’s diverse population identify as Hispanic, and close to 40% of residents speak a language other than English at home—primarily Spanish. Kern County, where Bakersfield is located, is a hub for agriculture and oil production.

BCSD is California’s largest K–8 elementary school district. It educates more than 30,000 students across 142 square miles in 33 primary and middle/junior high schools. BCSD is a deeply impoverished district: 88% of Bakersfield students qualify for free and reduced lunch, 32% are designated English language learners (ELLs), and among children whose only language is English (EO learners), most have poor language skills. Many students struggle to have their basic needs met, and fear of deportation is a major issue in the community.



BAKERSFIELD CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT DEMOGRAPHICS

- Number of Schools: 33
- Number of Students: 30,222
- Percentage of students eligible for free and reduced lunch: 88%
- Percentage of English language learners: 32%
- Percentage of ELL re-designated students: 18.2%

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

When two large, diverse, impoverished, and heavily Hispanic elementary school districts in Southern California sought professional development strategies to help educators pull language-weak students, including significant populations of English language learners, up to proficiency levels more quickly, they turned to the consulting expertise of Doug Fisher and Nancy Frey, authors, teachers, and Corwin consultants who have had groundbreaking success with ELLs and other struggling students at Health Sciences High & Middle College (HSHMC), the middle and high school they co-founded.



Health Sciences High & Middle College is one of only eight schools across the country, and one of two in California, to receive a national Schools of Opportunity Gold Award!

Doug and Nancy have been leading advocates of teaching through the gradual release of responsibility model for many years. In this optimal learning model, responsibility for task completion shifts gradually over time from the teacher to the student. Their more than 40 professional books have focused on a wide variety of topics, from RTI, to formative assessment, to guided instruction and productive group work, all of which have grown out of their work with students. With the adoption of the Common Core and other state standards earlier this decade, Doug and Nancy turned their attention to reading in particular, and more specifically to close and critical reading with complex texts.

The Fisher/Frey instructional strategies developed by Doug and Nancy include purposeful planning, collaborative conversations, and close and critical reading, with an emphasis on linking English language development to core English language arts content. **The Fisher/Frey instructional strategies work for all learners across the disciplines, as evidenced by the rate of student achievement at HSHMC, where assessment results have been astonishing.** Despite the fact that a high percentage of students who attend HSHMC live in poverty, and nearly all HSHMC students are ELL or ELL re-designated,

- 63% of HSHMC students met or exceeded California standards in 2017 (the state average is 59%)
- 55% of ELL students met California standards (the state average is 42%)
- 74% of HSHMC graduates went directly into 2- to 4-year degree programs.

If the strategies work at HSHMC, they can work for any student in any district. Corwin's Fisher/Frey Close & Critical Reading Collaborative mines the research, expertise, and experience of Doug and Nancy to offer professional development opportunities to educators based on their work at HSHMC.

Closing the achievement gap in the Chula Vista elementary schools

Chula Vista Elementary School District (CVESD) became the first district to study and apply the Fisher/Frey methods and instructional strategies.

By 2006, the district had failed to meet the target score of 800 on the Academic Performance Index (API) set by the California Department of Education (DOE). The API was the state accountability measure used at the time to gauge the academic performance and growth of schools on a variety of measures. (The API was employed from 1999 to 2013.) Districts that fell short of the target score of 800 on the API were assigned a new, proportional target by the state DOE and given a few years to close the gap in achievement. Chula Vista was one of those districts.

In response, the district chose to focus its evidence-based professional development practices on literacy development for language-weak students, and it turned to the work of Doug Fisher and Nancy Frey to guidance. Implementation of the key Fisher/Frey instructional strategies, including gradual release of responsibility, collaborative conversations, close and critical reading, purposeful planning, and formative assessments, became the unifying focus for the district's Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). These PLCs—groups of educators who worked together to investigate, develop, and apply evidence-based practices for improving teaching and learning—were led by school principals at each site. Principals and other district leaders trained directly with Doug and Nancy and their associates, and then returned to their schools to guide teachers in deploying the instructional strategies in the Chula Vista classrooms.

The results were immediate and tangible. In 2008, 2 years before promised, the district topped 800 on the API, and by 2012, all 45 schools in the district had met or exceeded 800. Chula Vista had closed the achievement gap. *(See the next page for more details.)*

“Now that we have our PLCs in place, the biggest difference is the depth of our critical reading planning. The program we had before was not rigorous enough and did not meet the needs of our ELL students. Corwin’s Fisher/Frey Collaborative came in and worked alongside us to show us how to plan. They gave us a structure, they taught us how to plan as a team, and they offered critical feedback on our teaching. The planning we do now gets us deeper and deeper into the core, and as a result, our students are truly learning to read critically.”

—Kathryn Almeda,
Literacy/EL Coach

Measurable achievement at Chula Vista after implementing Fisher/Frey instructional strategies

In the spring of 2006, the Chula Vista district leadership met to develop a district-level intervention aimed at addressing the achievement gap identified by the API. **Literacy fluency is the foundation of achievement in all disciplines**, yet only 37% of Chula Vista students had scored proficient or above in reading on the state assessments. The district needed guidance to address the literacy needs of its diverse student population, and Chula Vista looked north to HSHMC, where the work of Doug Fisher and Nancy Frey had profoundly affected literacy fluency and achievement levels among HSHMC students.



Deeply impressed by the gains at HSHMC, Chula Vista decided to invest in teacher knowledge and skills. CVESD partnered with Doug and Nancy and their associates to provide professional learning experiences for an Instructional Leadership Team (ILT), including instructional coaching, feedback, and facilitated support. As part of the professional learning plan, the ILT team members—many of whom are now consultants for Corwin's Fisher/Frey Close & Critical Reading Collaborative—then trained the teachers at their sites. The training was focused on **the major topics—gradual release of responsibility, access to complex texts, close reading and text-dependent questions, and formative assessments**.

Because roughly 35% of Chula Vista students were English language learners (ELLs), and the remaining students were weak in English language skills, the district chose to focus its instructional efforts on the English Language Development (ELD) block. **The key would be to tie ELD instruction to core ELA content using purposeful planning, close and critical reading, and collaborative conversations**. The results were impressive:

- In 2008, 2 years before promised, the district topped 800 on the API, earning 811 points. By 2012, the district API had reached 869.
- By 2012, all 45 schools in the district scored over 800 on the API, up from just 8 schools in 2004.
- By 2012, 74% of the students were proficient or advanced in reading, up from 38% in 2004 and 37% in 1999.

Since then, the Chula Vista district has transitioned to the Smarter Balanced Assessments, also earning distinctions. On the 2015 administration, 55% of the students in the district met or exceeded the reading standards. This compares with 44% of students statewide—a population less diverse than Chula Vista.

Inspired by the success of Chula Vista, Bakersfield City School District seeks similar results

The results at Chula Vista had been stunning. Student achievement had increased across the disciplines, and the achievement gap that had existed previously within the district was closing. **It was clear this was not just another professional development program: The Fisher/Frey strategies truly work for student success.**

The Bakersfield City School District (BCSD) sought similar results. The district knew it needed to better design instructional strategies to engage its many English language learners (ELLs) and, at the same time, to strengthen professional learning communities to create a learning system in which all students could become more successful.

With more than one-third of the district's students designated as ELLs, and the largely impoverished English only (EO) student population also largely deficient in English language skills, BCSD needed guidance in building administrative support for the EL teaching staff and for new instructional strategies, including purposeful planning, English-language development, and implementation of a sea change in the way teachers engaged students in learning. To foster that culture of success, BCSD needed to create a professional learning environment that was grounded in research and expertise, in which teachers could innovate and feel supported.

In response, the district chose to invest in the work of Doug Fisher and Nancy Frey. Working with Corwin's Fisher/Frey Close & Critical Reading Collaborative, BCSD crafted a multi-year, multi-level professional development plan that would address the needs of district leadership, teachers, and students. As part of that plan, eight pilot schools were identified, and a team of BCSD teachers from each pilot school site began ongoing training in the Fisher/Frey ELD block instructional methods. (See "Implementation at BCSD: Deep and Sustained Professional Development" on page 15 for more details.) Olivia Amador-Valerio and Aida Allen, members of the ILT team from CVESD and now expert members of Corwin's Fisher/Frey Collaborative, served as the chief trainers.

“Our planning is more fulfilling now because we are planning for our students’ learning in a way that is tailored to their needs, rather than planning for a generalized curriculum. We have more control over what we present and how we present it. The pictures we choose open students’ imagination and give way to the vocabulary. All the kids raise their hands now, and every kid has an opportunity to share their learning. ELD time used to be a dread, but now it is rewarding. I can’t wait for the kids to come in and to hear what they have to say.”

—Martha Naranjo,
Kindergarten Teacher

For teachers, principals, and literacy coaches at BCSD, adapting to the gradual release of responsibility methods required a shift in mindset, and the changes proposed by Corwin's Fisher/Frey Close & Critical Reading Collaborative were met with some initial resistance. The trainers knew that establishing a trust relationship with the BCSD team members would have to be the foundational step to building the professional learning community necessary to do this work.

As such, the consulting team allocated time to developing one-on-one relationships with staff members at BCSD; and established common ground by sharing struggles, stories, work samples, and video clips of the Fisher/Frey practices and strategies in action in the Chula Vista classrooms. The pilot schools team also travelled to HSHMC and several schools in the Chula Vista district multiple times to observe teachers at work and to experience the dynamic culture of elementary school classrooms. The buy-in occurred when the pilot schools team visited Chula Vista and witnessed how well children were performing there.

It was profoundly affecting to see the youngest children in Chula Vista so engaged in learning, so able to articulate their needs and, so confident in their abilities. Even kindergartners used sentence frames to voice opinions about complex ideas, and even the Chula Vista students who had arrived at school knowing no English could advocate for their own learning. The Bakersfield team was astonished. If the Chula Vista kids could do it, the Bakersfield kids could learn to do it, too.

Corwin's Fisher/Frey Close & Critical Reading training had transformed the learning environment in HSHMC and the Chula Vista schools, and it would transform schools in Bakersfield, too. This is the story of that transformation.

Although BCSD chose to focus its work on engaging ELL students, and this case study spotlights the progress made in those schools, the work of Corwin's Fisher/Frey Close & Critical Reading Collaborative is transformative for any group of students, in any school. **The strategies work for all students, across all disciplines.**

“We really see the evidence in the ELLs. They are asking questions, they are fully engaged, and they are eager and ready to participate in ELD time and core. But the biggest growth we see is in teachers. Teachers don't feel frustrated anymore. Corwin empowered our teachers by bringing us knowledge and high-level strategies, and we focus on implementing those in the classroom. We know that the benchmarks will come for our students, but getting kids to ELD proficiency is the first step.”

—Holly Hinh, Literacy/
EL Coach

THE CHALLENGE FOR BCSD: STRENGTHENING PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITIES (PLCs) FOR MAXIMUM STUDENT SUCCESS

At the outset, the Bakersfield City School District's objectives were strictly qualitative: **to increase language proficiency for ELLs by achieving deeper levels of engagement with speaking, reading, and writing, and ultimately, by doing so, to improve academic design for all learners across the disciplines.** In addition, the district wanted to reclassify as many ELL students as possible in elementary school, before the defeatist mindset of middle school set in.

With that in mind, the district harnessed its resources to invest in professional development for district leadership and teachers; and chose to focus on the youngest children in the schools most densely populated by ELLs. Initially five, and then eight, high-poverty schools with the highest percentages of ELLs were chosen to become "Corwin schools" where Corwin's Fisher/Frey Close & Critical Reading Collaborative strategies would be piloted.

Principals, teachers, and literacy coaches from the pilot schools would engage in intensive, strategy-based professional learning experiences, and then, with guidance and coaching from Corwin's Fisher/Frey Collaborative, implement their newly acquired Fisher/Frey close and critical reading strategies in pilot school classrooms. As teachers worked together to plan and deploy ELD lessons, Corwin's Fisher/Frey consultants would be on hand to provide guidance, feedback, and deeper professional engagement. Eventually, over time, the principals, teachers, and literacy coaches who had piloted the Corwin Fisher/Frey strategies in BCSD classrooms would themselves, like their mentors, be equipped to train, guide, and support colleagues and other educators in the Fisher/Frey close and critical reading strategies.

“Ultimately, from the perspective of systems, our responsibility is to create a space where students can be successful. To do that, teachers need to be empowered and supported in their work. We want our teachers to innovate, to try things, to take risks. Our teachers feel confident using the Fisher/Frey practices and strategies, and as a result, our students are doing well with language instruction. They are speaking and writing. They know what to expect. They are prepared for testing. Moving forward, we anticipate positive growth for our ELLs, but ultimately for all students.”

—Marc Luque, Assistant Superintendent of Education Services at BCSD

For district leadership, the aim was to recalibrate its leadership mindset to work *with* teachers, rather than prescribing to teachers. Teachers would shape the work at each school site and be supported in having the time and space to innovate, to take risk, to refine, and, ultimately, to improve. By mastering and implementing the Fisher/Frey close and critical reading strategies and practices, BCSD educators would grow from being teachers who knew the English language to teachers who *knew how to teach the English language*. As a result:

- **ELL students would grow to be confident English speakers, readers, and writers.**
- **The learning environment for all students in the BCSD pilot schools would be structured, predictable, dynamic, and robust.**
- **Teachers would feel valued and supported in their work.**

Response by Corwin's Fisher/Frey Close & Critical Reading Collaborative: Multi-tier professional learning experiences aimed at meeting shifts in the Common Core State Standards

In response, Corwin's Fisher/Frey Close & Critical Reading Collaborative partnered with BCSD to provide a comprehensive professional learning experience that supported the district's efforts to prepare teachers and administrators for the curricular and instructional shifts related to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), with specific focus on ensuring a culturally responsive learning environment that addressed the needs of ELL and language-weak students. BCSD identified the following critical needs for English language/literacy teachers and administrators in the district:

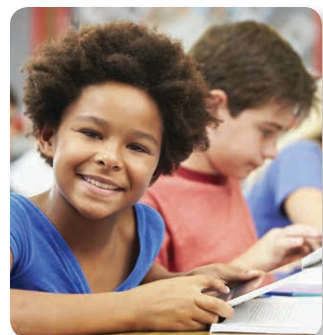
- A deeper understanding of the key instructional shifts embedded in the CCSS
- Support and guidance in designing CCSS-aligned success criteria
- Guidance on developing a data/inquiry cycle for implementation of the CCSS standards
- Support for transitioning from awareness and implementation to rigorous implementation and accountability



Corwin's Fisher/Frey Collaborative proposed a multi-year, comprehensive plan to address these needs and to equip teachers and district leaders with the necessary mindsets, collaborative tools, and instructional materials needed to evolve their classroom practices. Participants would learn step by step to craft their own instructional plans around the 5 Access Points for Comprehending Complex Texts that sit within the ELA portion of CCSS, as well as the CA Next Generation ELD Standards. Those access points are

1. **Purpose and Modeling**—Teachers think aloud to demonstrate critical thinking.
2. **Close and Scaffolded Reading Instruction**—Teachers engage students with text-dependent questions, discussion prompts, and cues to help students consider an author's ideas.
3. **Collaborative Conversations**—Teachers orchestrate collaborative learning to facilitate students' habit of exercising analytical thinking in the presence of their peers.
4. **An Independent Reading Staircase**—Teachers artfully steer students toward increasingly more challenging reading material, with strategic bursts of instruction and peer discussions to foster metacognitive awareness.
5. **Performance**—Teachers offer feedback and assessments that allow students to demonstrate understanding of text in authentic ways, and plan instruction based on student understanding.

These processes and practices would be undergirded by embedding this learning within the **gradual release of responsibility** model of instruction, which includes focus lessons (modeling), guided instruction (scaffolding), collaborative learning (productive group work), and independent learning. As the districts shifted focus from awareness and implementation to rigorous implementation and accountability, Fisher/Frey consultants and books—*Rigorous Reading* and *Text-Dependent Questions, K–5*—would help focus the English language arts/literacy work on both the teacher and leadership levels. **The implementation would position BCSD as a statewide model for effective CCSS implementation.**



IMPLEMENTATION AT BCSD: DEEP AND SUSTAINED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The structure of Corwin's Fisher/Frey Collaborative ELA Support took several forms in Bakersfield, including **on-site workshops** for the Guiding Coalition (district leadership) and **implementation days** for principals, literacy coaches, and teachers from eight pilot schools. These intensive, strategy-based professional learning experiences were designed to give members of the Guiding Coalition the clarity and skills needed to support deep implementation of BCSD's rigorous goals, including capacity building, coaching, and sustainability.

For teachers and literacy coaches, implementation days were used to teach strategies for designing, delivering, and assessing lessons that address CELDT, CCSS, and CELS standards, with focus on strengthening teachers' skills in educating ELLs in both the ELD and general education classrooms. These consulting sessions included professional development, classroom observations, administrative support, and coaching.

In addition, the district purchased 1,295 copies of Doug Fisher's and Nancy Frey's *Rigorous Reading: 5 Access Points for Comprehending Complex Texts* and 300 copies of *Text-Dependent Questions, Grades K–5: Pathways to Close and Critical Reading*, to sustain support and guidance for staff between consulting sessions. The books were distributed to district leaders and to literacy coaches and teachers at the eight pilot schools. New teachers coming into the pilot schools also received copies of these titles.

“This work has totally transformed our schools.”

—Erick Casallas, ELL Supervisor, BCSD

“The work has created a culture of respect in our school. Our PLCs are planning together for close reading, and bouncing ideas around. There is so much more grade-level articulation now, and teachers are talking across grade levels. And the kids have learned to critique each other's sentences in a way that makes them willing to risk mistakes, and willing to keep trying to get it right. The newfound confidence of the kids and their engagement with their work—and also their ability to better articulate their needs—has meant fewer behavior issues in our schools.”

—Kathryn Almeda, Literacy/EL Coach

The key is linking ELD instruction to core reading instruction. How does the cycle work?

1. Through the practice of deep and rigorous planning, teachers work together in grade-level PLCs to read the core passages closely. Each passage is read multiple times for different purposes, with the goal of identifying vocabulary, concepts, and text structures that might trouble language-challenged students, including ELL students.
2. After identifying potential challenges, teachers write scaffolded questions for different learning levels. The questions are designed to take students outside the core passage and into talking about abstract ideas. Each lesson includes three learning objectives: content, language, and social.
3. With these questions in mind, teachers select photographs to use as prompts that will allow students to access the vocabulary, themes, and concepts central to the core reading. Teacher planning is more time-consuming using this model than before, but more fulfilling for teachers and much more effective. Teachers are planning for students' learning, and that planning is tailored to students' needs rather than to a generalized curriculum.
4. During ELD instruction time, teachers give students model sentence frames and lead discussion around the photographs and leveled questions. The picture prompts help jumpstart dialogue, encourage deeper analytic thinking, and draw out vocabulary and sentence patterns. Students deepen learning for each other by introducing new words, explaining their ideas, and asking questions. ELD has a relaxed, casual feel, and the students talk a lot, excited to show what they know. Both ELL and EO students participate in the same ELD instruction.
5. Using collaborative conversations, students practice speaking in pairs using the model sentence frames teachers have given them. Sentence instruction begins with simple sentences and progresses through compound sentences to complex sentences, and then to speaking and writing paragraphs. Collaborative conversations are rigorous in content, but also a time to experiment with language without fear of testing or performance. Students learn to critique each other's sentences and to ask a partner to say more. As time goes on, these conversations become increasingly less staged and more authentic.
6. When core reading instruction time begins immediately after ELD time, the students are ready and eager to learn and to show what they know. They have the vocabulary and functional language knowledge to be able to read closely, speak articulately, and write coherently about the core material: They are already making connections between their ELD work and the core concepts. As a result of these strategies for learning, the speaking, reading, and writing of all students, including ELL and language-weak students, improve measurably, and more ELL students than ever are reclassified each year.



The scope of Corwin's Fisher/Frey Collaborative consulting work done to date at BCSD

Year 1: 2014–15

Highlights: For year 1, BCSD chose to focus on five pilot schools that experienced the highest rates of poverty and English language learners. *Focus on gradual release of responsibility model:* Using the gradual release of responsibility instructional framework, educators built language for all students through the model of ELLs by identifying, targeting, and linking content, language, and social objectives.

CORWIN'S FISHER/FREY COLLABORATIVE SUPPORT	OUTCOMES	CONSULTANT DAYS
Summer Institutes 1 and 2: English Language Arts	Approximately 200 teachers, teacher teams, and administrators worked together with Corwin's Fisher/Frey consultants to review what had already been covered in the district with respect to ELA CCSS, with focus on giving teachers in grades 6–8 a "head start" on the ELA content the district would engage in throughout the 2014–15 school year.	6
Kick-off ELA event	Nancy Frey spoke at the district ELA "kick-off" event to set the vision for BCSD's CCSS ELA implementation.	1
Intensive ELA coaching for the Guiding Coalition in on-site workshops	Corwin's Fisher/Frey consultants worked with the Guiding Coalition on district-wide implementation of vertically aligned instructional strategies relating to CCSS, with emphasis on close and scaffolded reading, collaborative conversations, complex vocabulary, and developing writing for a range of audiences and purposes.	6
Ongoing support of literacy/ELD coaches	Corwin's Fisher/Frey consultants worked with literacy/ELD coaches on supporting implementation of the CCSS, with emphasis on how students acquire language and assess standards, how teachers work with ELLs and implement integration strategies, and strategies for coaching teachers to hone their skills in working with ELL students.	8
Intensive ELA coaching support for teachers in five pilot schools	Corwin's Fisher/Frey consultants worked with teachers to design, deliver, and assess lessons that address both California English Language Development standards (CELD) and core content standards (CCSS and CELS).	25
	Total Consulting Days	46

Year 2: 2015–16

Highlights: BCSD added three additional pilot schools to bring the total number to eight. *Focus on collaborative conversations and picture prompts:* Using data to identify what was known about student achievement and to hone in on areas that needed to be developed, the focus expanded to collaborative conversations and the use of pictures to prompt class discussion.

CORWIN'S FISHER/FREY COLLABORATIVE SUPPORT	OUTCOMES	CONSULTANT DAYS
Summer Teacher Institutes 1, 2, 3, and 4: Literacy	Using the gradual release of responsibility framework, participants planned close reading lessons that use text-dependent questions to drive deeper, more critical understanding of texts. K–2 teachers developed a scope and sequence to ensure that primary students grasp foundational skills, and 3–8 teachers learned how to help students analyze multiple sources and synthesize information into credible written arguments.	32
Administrative Leadership Team (ALT) in on-site workshops	Doug and Nancy worked with school leaders to articulate a rationale for the gradual release of responsibility model. School leaders conducted a needs analysis of their school's capacity to identify strengths and opportunities for growth, and then collaborated with district personnel to prioritize coaching, mentoring, and professional development resources to support their plans.	10
Intensive ELA coaching for the Guiding Coalition in on-site workshops	Corwin's Fisher/Frey consultants provided ongoing guidance on district-wide implementation of vertically aligned instructional strategies for CCSS, with focus a on purposeful learning with connections to appropriate tasks and assessments. The Guiding Coalition developed a plan for providing support and resources to school members, identified qualitative and quantitative measures for monitoring implementation, and analyzed the formative data for progress monitoring to revise the implementation plan as needed.	6
Ongoing support of literacy/ELD coaches	Corwin's Fisher/Frey consultants supported literacy/ELD coaches in implementation of CCSS, with respect to the work done with the ALT and the Guiding Coalition. Literacy/ELD coaches learned the principles of gradual release of responsibility and began to apply those principles in coaching scenarios.	28
Intensive ELA coaching support for teachers in eight pilot schools	Corwin's Fisher/Frey consultants worked with teachers to design, deliver, and assess lessons that address CELD, CCSS, and CELS standards, with a focus on strengthening teachers' skills in educating ELLs in both the ELD and general education classrooms. Sessions included professional development, classroom observations, administrative support, and coaching.	40
	Total Consulting Days	116

Year 3: 2016–17

Highlights: *Focus on specificity of need for ELLs and other language-weak students:* Educators built language development for all students through the lens of ELLs, by scheduling, planning, integrating, and implementing designated support for ELLs throughout the day. Schools redesigned school schedules to be able to implement the four picture prompt strategies.

CORWIN'S FISHER/FREY COLLABORATIVE SUPPORT	OUTCOMES	CONSULTANT DAYS
Summer Teacher Institutes 1, 2, 3, and 4: literacy	Continuation of year 2 work. Using the gradual release of responsibility framework, participants planned close reading lessons that use text-dependent questions to drive deeper, more critical understanding of texts. K–2 teachers developed a scope and sequence to ensure that primary students grasp foundational skills, and 3–8 teachers learned how to help students analyze multiple sources and synthesize information into credible written arguments.	16
Administrative Leadership Team (ALT) in on-site workshops	Continuation of year 2 work. Doug and Nancy worked with school leaders to articulate a rationale for the gradual release of responsibility model. School leaders conducted a needs analysis of their school's capacity to identify strengths and opportunities for growth, and then collaborated with district personnel to prioritize coaching, mentoring, and professional development resources to support their plans.	4
Intensive ELA coaching for the Guiding Coalition in on-site workshops	The focus of work shifted to implementation in year 3.	0
Ongoing support of literacy/ELD coaches.	Continuation of year 2 work. Corwin's Fisher/Frey consultants provided ongoing guidance on district-wide implementation of vertically aligned instructional strategies for CCSS, with a focus on purposeful learning with connections to appropriate tasks and assessments. The Guiding Coalition developed a plan for providing support and resources to school members, identified qualitative and quantitative measures for monitoring implementation, and analyzed the formative data for progress monitoring to revise the implementation plan as needed.	2
Intensive ELA coaching support for teachers in eight pilot schools.	Corwin's Fisher/Frey consultants worked with teachers to design, deliver, and assess lessons that address CELD, CCSS, and CELS standards, with a focus on strengthening teachers' skills in educating ELLs in both the ELD and general education classrooms. Sessions included professional development, classroom observations, administrative support, and coaching.	40
	Total Consulting Days	62

KEY OUTCOMES

Meeting and exceeding standards at BCSD

The qualitative results of Corwin's Fisher/Frey Close & Critical Reading Collaborative involvement at BCSD are deep and wide-ranging. (See "In the classroom: The pilot school experience" on page 22.) The quantitative results—gains in student achievement on the state English Language Proficiency (ELP) assessment, the CELDT—are remarkable.

The CELDT, the California English Language Development Test, is designed to identify students who need to improve their skills in listening, speaking, reading, and writing in English. School districts in California are required to administer the CELDT assessment each year to English Language Learners (ELLs).² BCSD has seen distinct and progressive improvement in the performance of ELLs on the CELDT assessment in each of the 3 years since BCSD partnered with Corwin's Fisher/Frey Close & Critical Reading Collaborative to bring the Fisher/Frey close and critical reading strategies into the BCSD pilot school classrooms. Highlights include

- In 2015–16, year 3 of Corwin's Fisher/Frey Collaborative involvement, **57% of ELLs increased in proficiency level on the CELDT assessment, up from 54% in year 2, and 52% in year 1.**
- Even more satisfying, **32% of ELLs passed the CELDT assessment in year 3, up from 29% in year 2 and 27% in year 1.**

To district leadership, these are substantial improvements.

Furthermore, prior to Corwin's Fisher/Frey Close & Critical Reading consulting, 61% of students were reading below grade level. In 2016, that number had dropped sharply to 50%, a significant gain in proficiency.

² Beginning in 2018, California is transitioning from the CELDT to the English Language Proficiency Assessments for California (ELPAC) as the state ELP assessment. The ELPAC will be aligned with the 2012 California English Language Development Standards, and will consist of two separate ELP assessments: one for the initial identification of students as ELLs, and a second for the annual summative assessment to measure a student's progress in learning English and to identify the student's level of ELP. BCSD will begin using the ELPAC in 2018.

“When we first started, we watched videos of kids at Chula Vista speaking and writing, and we thought, ‘No way!’ But as we got deeper into our professional development, we started changing the way we looked at things, and we began to see the growth in our students. Our school culture has changed. We are the same school, the same dedicated teachers, and the same students, but the way we approach instruction has changed. Our teachers are more open, and our students are reading, conversing, and writing sentences. Our students have a point of view, and now they can state it using words. It is beyond heartwarming. And the growth in student writing is astonishing.”

—Sarita Arredondo,
Principal

The results at individual ELL pilot site schools have been even more rewarding. At Horace Mann Elementary, a K–5 school, 29 ELLs were reclassified in 2015—year 1—as a result of their scores on the CELDT assessment; in years 2 and 3, a total of 148 students were reclassified. At Ramon Garza Elementary, another K–5 school, 39 students were reclassified in year 1; in years 2 and 3, 158 students were reclassified. These are huge gains in the number of reclassified students; they and meet the district’s stated objective of reclassifying as many ELLs as possible before middle school begins.

At the classroom level, pilot school teachers see the direct results on small groups of students and individuals. For example, in the third grade at Bessie Owens Primary, as teachers implemented the strategies of close reading and collaborative conversations in the first year of professional development (PD), the impact on student success was quickly obvious: At the end of Unit 1 of core reading instruction, 0% of ELLs met the reading standard; at the end of Unit 2, 3% met the standard; and the end of Unit 3, an astounding 14% met or exceeded the standard. To the staff at the BCSD pilot schools, these are astonishing gains.

“This work is a new shift in practices. It’s a strategy—a new way of thinking and being—and not a prescriptive program. The work is all about teacher design and environment. As a result, teachers now trust that students will lead.”

—Erick Casallas, ELL Supervisor



In the classroom: The pilot school experience

From resistance to excitement

Building on the intensive research and work of Doug Fisher and Nancy Frey at HSHMC, and following the stunning achievements experienced by the Chula Vista Elementary School District as a direct result of the consulting work of Doug and Nancy for several years prior, the Bakersfield City School District partnered with Corwin's Fisher/Frey Close & Critical Reading Collaborative to craft a multi-year, multi-level professional development plan for the BCSD. As part of that plan, a team of BCSD teachers at each of the eight pilot site schools began ongoing training in the Fisher/Frey instructional methods.

Working closely with Corwin's Fisher/Frey consultants, many of them principals in the Chula Vista district, the BCSD team identified objectives and began the work of implementing the gradual release of responsibility instructional framework. The goal for the first year was to build language for all students by identifying, targeting, and linking content, language, and social objectives in the English language development block.

“We hit a home run in bringing this work into our schools. Something extraordinary is happening here. Our teachers have gone from tears to excitement, and our ELL students, who previously did not have a voice, now articulate their ideas with confidence. I look forward to the future on the scale of the Corwin schools, and to expanding these strategies to all the schools in our district.”

—Marc Luque, Assistant Superintendent
of Education Services at BCSD

At first, teachers were resistant to the change. “Our teachers were overwhelmed by the idea of handing over responsibility for learning to the students,” Holly Hingh, a literacy coach on the pilot school team, said. Teachers had learned to teach by executing a program—by delivering content and then assessing student mastery—and many had seen too many other initiatives come and go. Why invest in this one? Was Fisher/Frey just another program that would eventually be cast aside?

“Olivia, our consultant, was great to work with. We went to the Finney School campus to see collaborative conversations, close reading, and the students in action. We observed how the support staff plan together, we walked the classes to see ELD and core instructional time, and then we brought that back to our own schools and got to work. Olivia has taught us how to plan so deeply, and how to allow the kids to struggle so that they are productive.”

—Sarita Arredondo,
Principal

Snapshot of a pilot school: Pauly Elementary

Ninety-eight percent of the 745 students at Pauly Elementary School (K–5) in the BCSD qualify for free and reduced lunch, and most children struggle with having their basic needs met. Sixty-three percent of Pauly students are ELLs (with Spanish and Arabic as their primary languages), and 37% are EO. Thirty-five teachers work at Pauly.



Three years ago, the staff at Pauly began training in Corwin's Fisher/Frey Close & Critical Reading strategies, and "it was like a light shone down on us," said Jennifer Santillan, the school principal. The work has been "so positive, so well-received by the staff" that Pauly teachers want more. "Seeing the success in action has been very powerful," Santillan said.

Corwin's Fisher/Frey Close & Critical Reading training gives teachers tools to teach strategies to students, rather than content. Ultimately, it's learning strategies that kids take with them. Prior to its experience with Corwin, Pauly did not have a designated ELD program, but now the teachers plan so that ELD time is linked to the ELA standards, and kids are talking more—producing language they weren't producing before—and teachers are talking less. Staff, students, and administrators all see the difference.

For teachers, this has made planning easier. ELD is no longer a different block of time, and ELD supports the ELA core. Teachers now feel they are "doing what is right for the kids," Santillan said. Teachers report that their planning sessions are more focused and productive, and they welcome deeper engagement with the Corwin program and more professional development.

"ELD time now has a relaxed, casual feel," Santillan said. "The kids have fun learning from each other, and ELD is a time to let down their guard and not be so worried about testing or performance."

In 2017, Pauly reclassified more students than ever as a result of their performance on the CELDT test. In 2016, 30 students were reclassified, and in 2017 the number was 92. "This is a direct result of teacher training in Corwin's Fisher/Frey strategies," Santillan said.

"There were tears," Hingh acknowledged. "Letting go of control through the gradual release of responsibility model felt very threatening to our teachers, and we had to back off and break the changes down into baby steps."

As teachers worked with Corwin's Fisher/Frey consultants and began to implement the practices, it became clear this was not just another temporary initiative. **The Fisher/Frey strategies were a shift in mindset rather than a program to deploy:** Executing the Fisher/Frey instructional strategies demanded of teachers a whole new way of being in the classroom. And once teachers realized how focused the instructional strategies were—once they experienced the way one training session builds on the next—teachers began to warm up to the ideas.

"We began to change the way we were looking at things," Sarita Arredondo, principal at Bessie Owens Primary, explained. "And, as we changed our thinking, we began to notice the growth in our students."

For Corwin's Fisher/Frey consultants, it was key to build the trust relationships necessary to guide the work of the BCSD team. As such, the consultants allocated time to building relationships with the educators at BCSD and earned their trust by sharing struggles, work samples, stories, and video clips of the Fisher/Frey practices in action, so that the BCSD staff could connect to the trainers and the work on many different levels. At the same time, the BCSD team visited HSHMC and the Chula Vista schools multiple times across a 2-year period to see the practices in action.

The ultimate buy-in happened when a team of teachers, principals, coaches, and district leadership from BCSD visited the elementary classrooms at the Finney School in the Chula Vista Elementary School District, where Olivia Amador-Valerio, a Corwin consultant, was principal. The Fisher/Frey practices and strategies had been fully implemented at Finney, students had broken through thresholds, and the Finney teachers were acutely focused on the major topics: gradual release of responsibility, access to complex texts, close reading and text-dependent questions, and formative assessments.

“At first teachers were afraid to let the kids talk, but our teaching has improved 100% in the 3 years we have learned how to engage students. Our teachers are now facilitators rather than lecturers, and it’s the kids now who go home tired from doing the work all day, rather than vice versa.”

—Danya Gardner,
Principal

The team from BCSD was awestruck: The Finney classrooms were talkative and lively, and even the youngest students appeared to be fully engaged.

"We were floored," Martha Naranjo, a kindergarten teacher at Owens Primary, one of the BCSD pilot schools, said.

Students at the Finney School—kindergartners who had just crossed the U.S.–Mexico border and arrived at the Finney school understanding no English—were involved in real conversations. They spoke English in complete sentences. They used sentence frames to voice complex ideas. They wrote English in fully formed paragraphs. Teachers at the Finney School gave the children ample opportunity to express themselves in English in the classroom, and students filled the space they were given with meaningful exchanges.

"It just seemed so early for EL kindergarten students to be able to do that," Naranjo said. "Our kids weren't doing that. We hadn't believed our EL kids *could* do that. But if the Finney kids could do it, we knew our kids could do it, too."

Shifting the mindset of teachers through the gradual release of responsibility

The results of the Fisher/Frey work at Chula Vista had been stunning. Student achievement had increased across all disciplines, and the achievement gap that had existed previously within the Chula Vista district was closing. **It was clear, the Fisher/Frey instructional methods were not just another professional development program: The strategies truly worked for student success.** However, seeing the young children of Chula Vista so engaged in learning, so able to articulate their needs, so confident in their abilities—that's when the importance of the work clicked for the Bakersfield team: **The Fisher/Frey instructional strategies not only improve student achievement but hardwire students for access to lifelong learning across all the disciplines.**

Shifting the teacher mindset at BCSD would be hard work, but the rewards for students would be tangible and profound. The team went back to Bakersfield and got to work.

“What we had been doing before with teacher modeling was so monotonous. Corwin’s Fisher/Frey Collaborative taught us to flip all that over to give kids the opportunity to learn from peers and based off their own understanding. At first, we resisted handing over responsibility for learning to the kids, but once we got into the practice of doing it every day, we saw how much the kids love it. They are so comfortable now, and so ready to speak. Honestly, this has helped our school so much. It was like somebody opened a brand-new door for us and the sun came shining in. Our ELL students are blossoming.”

—Martha Naranjo,
Kindergarten Teacher

Amador-Valerio and other Corwin consultants trained and coached the BCSD teaching staff, step by step, to access the curriculum through close reading. They introduced teachers and literacy coaches to instructional strategies that support reading passages several times for different purposes, and they showed teachers how to guide students to glean information from close reading in order to answer questions and meet the CELD, CCSS, and CELS standards. The consulting sessions spanned 3 years and included professional development, classroom observations, administrative support, and coaching.

"We became thinking partners and colleagues," Amador-Valerio said. "We created a professional learning network of two districts connected through data, through the gradual release of responsibility model, through the practice of collaborative conversations, and through the advocacy role of principals in bringing this work to our school sites. And as our collaboration expanded, the support system for educators in both districts grew."

As a result, teacher planning in the pilot schools is now team-based and highly structured to allow deeper access into the core. In response, pilot school students are learning to read critically, and to articulate complex ideas both verbally and in writing.

"I love that my team is on board and falling in love with this way of planning and teaching as much as I am," Belen Carrasco, a fifth grade teacher at Pauly Elementary School, said. "It took growing and opening to a new way of thinking, but all the resistance and questioning we did needed to happen to get the clarity we have now."

The key is linking the ELD program to core reading instruction, and doing it in a way that spreads across the entire curriculum and into the culture of a school as a whole. To accomplish this, teachers begin by practicing "backward mapping" for ELD instruction and by using picture prompts to develop language and get kids talking about the vocabulary and ideas they will encounter in the core reading instruction. (See "The key is linking ELD instruction to core reading instruction. How does the cycle work?" on page 16.)

During collaborative conversations, students sit eye to eye and knee to knee. They use hand gestures for *agree*, *disagree*, and *tell me more* to keep their partner talking. Rather than the teacher drilling the class with new material, the kids help each other access the content through dialogue and questioning.

"We see more student-led conversations, and they are building on each other's needs. Shy kids are raising their hands, confident now speaking to peers, and classrooms are no longer quiet. We have become a talkative school in a way that is not just talk for talk. Students are authentically engaged in learning, and the talk is productive and on task."

—Danya Gardner,
Principal

Collaborative conversations hold students accountable for talking, and the ELD strategies practiced by the pilot school teachers at BCSD, with the support of Corwin's Fisher/Frey consultants, teach kids how to articulate, how to write, how to analyze and take apart text, and how to gain and use high-level vocabulary.

"This way of thinking and learning really keeps kids challenged," Carrasco said. When core reading instruction begins 45 minutes later, immediately following ELD time: "Students are ready to learn."

The students have fun learning from each other, too, and ELD classrooms in the pilot schools are now energetic and animated with student voices. As time goes on, Carrasco and other teachers report that these conversations between students become less staged and increasingly more authentic.

Both ELLs and EO students are deepening language acquisition and benefiting from the strategies. "Now that we see it, we are thrilled," Carrasco said.

Transforming the learning environment for all students

Students are more articulate and have become better critical readers and writers in the Bakersfield pilot schools as a result of the Fisher/Frey strategies, and, importantly, school culture is changing as well. Many children begin kindergarten in Bakersfield never having experienced a structured environment, and the strategies offered by Corwin's Fisher/Frey Collaborative provide a much-needed routine for every student.

Teachers notice that students are now eating breakfast regularly, holding pencils, trying to write, and exhibiting a range of positive behaviors that render children more available for learning. Students talk with each other more frequently, are more motivated to learn, are more prepared for conversations, and are more willing to share what they have learned with others.

Importantly, discipline problems have vanished as students have become more adept at articulating their needs, and the shift has caused teachers to rethink what makes for a productive classroom environment. Classrooms are no longer quiet as students experiment with language through collaborative conversations, and teachers now find that they need to police students less often.

“Much of what we see in the kids relates to their speaking and their ability to read and take apart complex text, but kids’ writing—the end goal—has been a huge measure of success for us. Students are using longer, more complex sentences in their writing, and they know how to go back to the text and look for evidence. This is the best writing we have ever seen from our students.”

—Kathryn Almeda,
Literacy/EL Coach

"I don't have to be on them as much as I used to," Naranjo said of her kindergarten students. Students use hand gestures for *agree*, *disagree*, and *tell me more* to draw each other out in collaborative conversations and hold their peers accountable for participation. "Students listen better when they are held liable for their learning, and with a heavy focus on close reading, students pay attention," she said.

Teachers find that all students are now raising their hands to participate, and each child in every classroom has an opportunity to share their learning. Importantly, these same strategies can be used across the disciplines, so that students are held accountable for their learning not only in reading and language development, but in science, math, and other areas as well.

"It's all embedded in the strategies," Naranjo said: "Classroom management, instructional techniques, and procedures that can be used across all the disciplines."

Achievement for all students across all disciplines

The Fisher/Frey practice of collaborative conversations and the instructional strategies embedded in the gradual release of responsibility model streamline student engagement and achievement for all students across all content areas. BCSD students now are shattering thresholds on state achievement tests as a result of this work, and the evidence of student excitement and engagement with learning is palpable in BCSD classrooms.

"This work has been transformational for our schools," Erick Casalles, ELL supervisor at BCSD, who worked closely with Corwin's Fisher/Frey trainers in bringing this work to the Bakersfield City School District, said. "We see not only our ELL students benefiting from the Fisher/Frey instructional strategies, but our non-ELL students are benefiting in a diversity of ways as well."

The number of students reclassified from ELL to ELL re-designated has doubled in the 3 years since Corwin's Fisher/Frey trainers began working with Bakersfield educators, and BCSD has met its goals of increasing the proficiency of ELLs in the neediest schools and reclassifying more ELLs than ever before. Nearly 2,000 students were reclassified in 2016, according to Casalles.

“Our kids are speaking and doing things other kids from similar backgrounds can’t do. We are engaging students in language development, and giving them an opportunity to be part of the learning process. This is the routine.”

—Belen Carrasco,
Fifth-Grade Teacher

Spotlight on student success

Samuel, a 9-year old English language learner, had for years lacked motivation. Spanish was the only language spoken at home, and his mother, who had admitted to teachers that she babied him, couldn't provide the structure or kinds of routines Samuel needed to achieve. His teachers had tried different approaches, but year after year, it remained a struggle to get Samuel to produce work. Through the structured practice of collaborative conversations, and with support, Samuel began to speak English more frequently with his friends and his teachers. His confidence grew with his ability to articulate himself, and, as it did, Samuel's motivation deepened across all academic areas. "It's as if a light bulb went off," Samuel's teacher said. "Suddenly, he knew what to do, and he went ahead and did it." Over the course of a year, Samuel jumped three bands in the CELDT test, and ended the first year of Corwin's Fisher/Frey Collaborative involvement as an EL re-designated student. "Now he is a superstar," his teacher said, "happy and productive at school."



Farouk, a fifth grader newly arrived from Yemen, began school in Bakersfield with absolutely no English and seemingly little experience with structured schooling. He spoke only Arabic and, due to a health issue, suffered severe seizures each day that his teachers could not anticipate. Farouk could not communicate his needs, and he spoke to no one in school. Gradually, through the skilled ELD instructional work of his teachers, Farouk began to articulate his ideas and experiences in English. A year later, he is on the road to becoming a proficient English speaker. "To see him interact with peers during core reading time, to hear him manipulate vocabulary words, and to watch him express his ideas in sentences—to see that growth as we witness him on this journey is amazing," his teacher said. "He's even sassy with us now," she added, "and we love it."

Isabella and **Lucia**, kindergartners, arrived at school knowing only Spanish and, like many students in the district, lacking foundational skills for academic learning. Through the work of close reading and collaborative conversations in their kindergarten ELD and core instructional time, the girls are learning to express their thoughts and observations in English. Now they apply sentence frames to their playground conversations, too: "She has long hair, and I have long hair," the girls gleefully ran up to their teacher to report. "My hair is in braids," Isabella said, and then Lucia's eyes lit up. "Isabella has two braids, and I have no braids," Lucia said. Isabella and Lucia, like all students, are excited about what they are learning, and excited to share it with their teachers and peers. "It is just so cute," their teacher said, "and so gratifying to see a kid pick up a vocabulary word from another student and then immediately use it in a sentence."

Equally exciting, the proficiency of language-weak English only students has skyrocketed as well. EOs and ELLs work together in collaborative conversations to learn from each other, Casalles explained. EO students often introduce vocabulary that ELLs absorb and begin to use, and EO students, many of whom are lacking in grammar, academic vocabulary, and other fundamental English language skills, are growing their language skills, too.

"All kids are developing their speaking and writing skills as a result of this work," Casalles said. "Our students are performing better on language tests. They are speaking in complete sentences and using more academic vocabulary. We are breeding confident speakers who are working at an independent level to improve their speaking, reading, and writing across all the content areas."

Casalles' observation is key: **As a result of implementing the Fisher/Frey practices, non-ELLs in economically disadvantaged areas are benefiting from the same instructional strategies as ELLs, so that all students are strengthening vocabulary and growing their speaking, reading, and writing skills through collaborative conversations, close and critical reading, and the gradual release of responsibility.**

"We are laying a foundation for learning, and doing it in a way that is based on student need and allows for student voices," Kathryn Alameda, a literacy coach at Bessie Owen Primary, said.

The results have been so impressive that several educators in the district have moved their own children out of the "good schools" they were attending in wealthier districts, and into the Corwin pilot schools at BCSD. Alameda is one. Alameda enrolled her son, a kindergartner, at Bessie Owens Primary, where she sees the Fisher/Frey strategies build confidence in kids.

"We teach strategies here, not content, and that's what we want kids to know. It's the strategies they take with them," Alameda said.

Others agree. "We are doing what's right for kids," Jennifer Santillan, principal at Pauly Elementary, said. Santillan's daughter, now 10, has been attending Pauly since first grade.

“Students are becoming more analytical and critical in their sentence use through collaborative conversations. The feedback from the middle school, where students go next, is that students from the Corwin pilot schools stand out.”

—Kathryn Alameda,
Literacy/EL Coach

As evidence of the success of the work brought to BSCD by Corwin's Fisher/Frey Close & Critical Reading Collaborative, Alameda related the story of Diego, a kindergartener and a "just over the border" kid who never spoke in school. Diego had arrived in Bakersfield with no skills for learning, and his teachers were unsure if he understood them.

Then, one day while sitting in a circle with other students during the picture prompt part of ELD time, Diego delivered a full sentence: "Firefighters are my heroes," he said. The other children clapped and cheered. Santillan, who was observing, teared up.

"It's a rewarding way to do professional development," she said.

Rewarding, yes—for administrators, teachers, and students alike. And, best of all, Corwin's Fisher/Frey Close & Critical Reading Collaborative consulting work is professional development that works.

Looking to the future

The road ahead for the leadership and teaching staff in the Bakersfield City School District is to continue to sustain the journey and to improve on the strategies. Teacher teams in the pilot schools are training now to use "thinking maps" as an additional strategy, and they are excited to witness the results.

The next step for district leadership is to leverage the Fisher/Frey strategies for other BCSD schools by communicating the success of the Corwin pilot schools to the principal leadership teams. BCSD has found that the attitude of leadership in each school matters tremendously to the results. When principals and other administrative leadership fully embrace the Fisher/Frey strategies without restrictions, students see the biggest gains.

Moving forward, all schools in the district will implement the gradual release of responsibility and collaborative conversations models to grow their ELD. The question now is "How do we lead this work?" with the goal of growing internal capacity to lead and to measure impact and outcomes.



ABOUT DOUG FISHER AND NANCY FREY

Doug Fisher and Nancy Frey have been leading advocates of teaching through the gradual release of responsibility model for many years. (In this optimal learning model, responsibility for task completion shifts gradually over time from the teacher to the student.) Their more than 40 professional books have focused on a wide variety of topics, from RTI, to formative assessment, to guided instruction and productive group work, all of which have grown out of their work with students. With the adoption of the Common Core and other state standards earlier this decade, Doug and Nancy turned their attention in particular to reading, and more specifically to close and critical reading with complex texts.

The result has been a series of books published by Corwin Literacy that guide teachers, step by step, through the process of teaching K–12 students to comprehend complex text—*Text Complexity (Second Edition)*; *Rigorous Reading*; and *Text-Dependent Questions, K–5*, and *Text-Dependent Questions, 6–12*.

These books arose directly from their work and success with students at Health Sciences High & Middle College (HSHMC), and from an outpouring of standards-related questions from the education community across the country:

- What is complex text?
- What does it mean to add “rigor”?
- What exactly is close reading, and how do you teach it?
- What are text-dependent questions, and how can they help students learn?



DOUG FISHER



NANCY FREY

As consultants, Doug, Nancy, and Corwin's Fisher/Frey Collaborative associates take teachers through a process of understanding, practicing, and implementing the elements of successful close and critical reading instruction, the very same process Doug and Nancy use across their curriculum at HSHMC, the charter high school they founded, with outstanding results. This process includes how to

- Select appropriate complex text for your students
- Focus instruction
- Scaffold reading instruction
- Implement close reading
- Practice collaborative conversations
- Formulate and use text-dependent questions, which include
 - Literal-level questions
 - Structural-level questions
 - Inferential-level questions
 - Action-oriented tasks
- Use formative assessment to make sound instructional decisions

As an administrator charged with the learning of hundreds of students, you want to invest in a program that assures results. The Close and Critical Reading workshop, books, video, and PD Resource Center created by Doug and Nancy will provide you with the results you've been looking for.

“As the kids get better at communicating with each other and with the staff, we see fewer and fewer behavior problems, to the point where we have almost no behavior issues in our school.”

—Danya Gardner,
Principal

DOUG FISHER, PhD

Doug Fisher, PhD, is Professor of Educational Leadership at San Diego State University and a teacher leader at Health Sciences High & Middle College. He is a member of the California Reading Hall of Fame and is the recipient of an International Reading Association Celebrate Literacy Award, the Farmer Award for excellence in writing from the National Council of Teachers of English, and the Christa McAuliffe Award for excellence in teacher education. Dr. Fisher has published numerous articles on improving student achievement, and he is the author, together with Nancy Frey, of the Corwin books detailed on the following page. He is also president of the International Literacy Association, a board member of the International Reading Association, and a past board member of the Literacy Research Association.

NANCY FREY, PhD

Nancy Frey, PhD, is Professor of Educational Leadership at San Diego State University and a teacher leader at Health Sciences High & Middle College, where she is also Dean of Academic Affairs. She is a recipient of the Christa McAuliffe Award for excellence in teacher education from the American Association of State Colleges and Universities, as well as the Farmer Award for excellence in writing from the National Council of Teachers of English and the Early Career Achievement Award from the Literacy Research Association. Dr. Frey has published widely on literacy, and she is the author, together with Doug Fisher, of the Corwin books detailed on the following page. She teaches a variety of courses on school improvement and literacy leadership.

“The work has given us so much clarity. We didn’t have a designated ELD program in place before our work with Corwin’s Fisher/Frey Collaborative began. It’s like light a light shone down on us about the purpose of ELD standards. We now see how they connect to core ELA standards, and we know how to lead our students to be successful.”

—Jennifer Santillan,
Principal

Corwin literacy books by Doug Fisher & Nancy Frey

Engagement by Design: Creating Learning Environments Where Students Thrive

Doug Fisher, Nancy Frey, Russell J. Quaglia, Dominique Smith, & Lisa L. Lande (September 2017)

Rigorous Reading: 5 Access Points for Comprehending Complex Texts

Nancy Frey & Doug Fisher (August 2013)

Teaching Literacy in the Visible Learning Classroom, Grades K–5

Doug Fisher, Nancy Frey, & John Hattie (February 2017)

Teaching Literacy in the Visible Learning Classroom, Grades 6–12

Doug Fisher, Nancy Frey, John Hattie, & Marisol Thayre (May 2017)

Text Complexity: Stretching Readers With Texts and Tasks (Second Edition)

Doug Fisher, Nancy Frey, & Diane Lapp (February 2016)

Text-Dependent Questions Grades K–5: Pathways to Close and Critical Reading

Doug Fisher, Nancy Frey, Heather Anderson, & Marisol Thayre (January 2015)

Text-Dependent Questions Grades 6–12: Pathways to Close and Critical Reading

Doug Fisher, Nancy Frey, Heather Anderson, & Marisol Thayre (January 2015)

Visible Learning for Literacy, Grades K–12

Doug Fisher, Nancy Frey, & John Hattie (April 2016)

Developing Assessment-Capable Visible Learners, Grades K–12

Nancy Frey, Doug Fisher, & John Hattie (January 2018)

“It’s more rigorous, but the kids can do it and, the teachers believe the kids can do it. And the team as a professional learning community is having fun.”

—Kathryn Almeda,
Literacy/EL Coach

Forthcoming Titles

Becoming a Visible Learner, Grades K–2: Learner’s Notebook

Doug Fisher & Nancy Frey (July 2018)

Becoming a Visible Learner, Grades 3–5: Learner’s Notebook

Doug Fisher & Nancy Frey (July 2018)

Becoming a Visible Learner, Grades 6–8: Learner’s Notebook

Doug Fisher & Nancy Frey (July 2018)

Becoming a Visible Learner, Grades 9–12: Learner’s Notebook

Doug Fisher & Nancy Frey (July 2018)

Becoming a Visible Learner, Grades K–2: Teacher’s Guide

Doug Fisher & Nancy Frey (July 2018)

Becoming a Visible Learner, Grades 3–5: Teacher’s Guide

Doug Fisher & Nancy Frey (July 2018)

Becoming a Visible Learner, Grades 6–8: Teacher’s Guide

Doug Fisher & Nancy Frey (July 2018)

Becoming a Visible Learner, Grades 9–12: Teacher’s Guide

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“This is really the best way to do professional development. We learn, we apply the strategies with the guidance of consultants, we walk to each other’s classrooms to observe the planning and instructional methods in action, we reflect on our observations and the feedback we receive from our colleagues and mentors, and then we refine.”

—Sarita Arredondo,
Principal