

Every child is a National Asset



Early Grade Reading Studies

Moving from research to policy influence
September 2018



basic education
Department:
Basic Education
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



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Read to Lead
A Reading Nation is a Leading Nation

Session plan

- The journey to here:
 - 3 experiments in early grade literacy
- Moving from research to policy influence

Why Early Grade Reading?

- 78% of South African Grade 4 learners could not reach the lowest benchmark in the HL
- The majority of South African children transition to English as language of instruction in Grade 4.
- This means that the majority of learners cannot engage critically with text in later grades
- This no doubt feeds into the **substantial inequalities** in educational achievement that are established early in primary school.

3 Options:

- 1) Intervene at grade 4 in English
- 2) Intervene before grade 4 in English
- 3) Intervene before grade 4 in HL



Background (International Literature):

- Structured learning programmes seem to be successful in improving:
 - Instructional change (Snilstveit *et al*, 2016; Popova, Evans, & Arancibia, 2016).
 - Learning outcomes
- Within structured learning programmes - mode of delivery matters (Popova, et al., 2016).
- On-site teacher coaching seems to be quite successful (Kraft, et al., 2016).

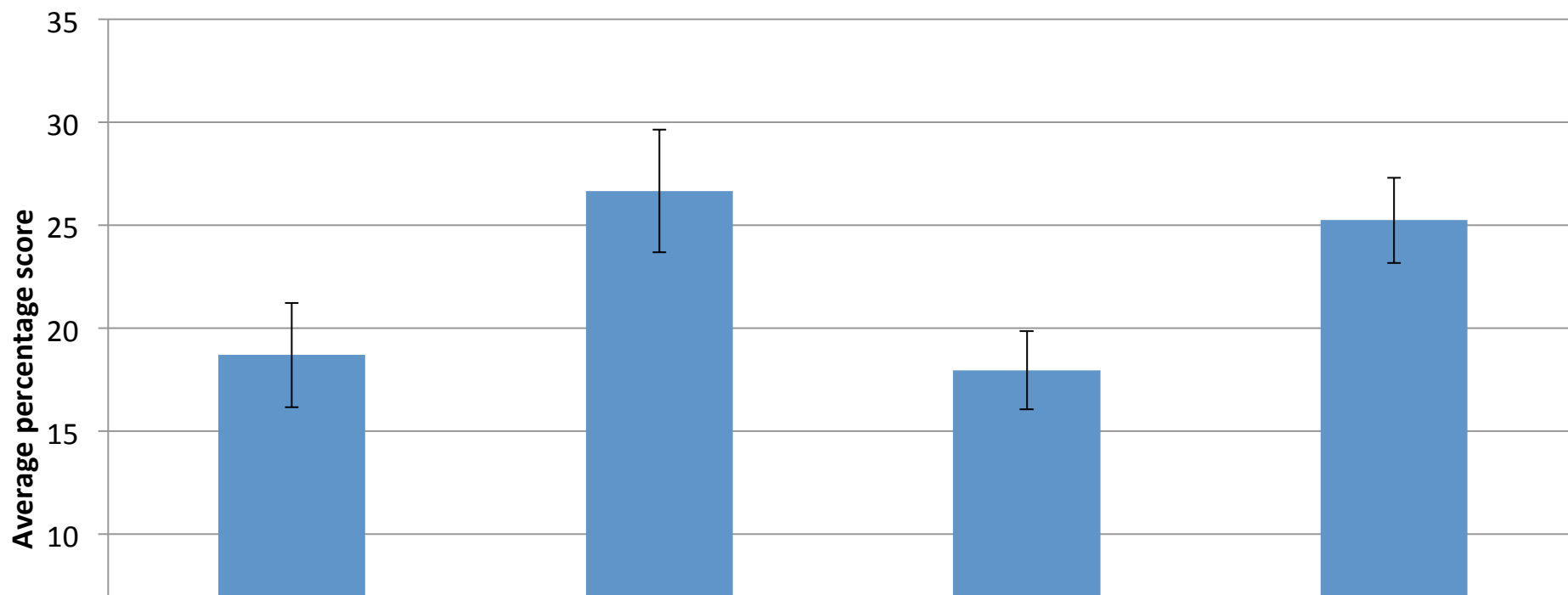
Background (local studies/projects):

- Similar promising projects in SA:
 - “Learning for Living” project
 - Systematic Method for Reading Success (SMRS)
 - Gauteng Primary Literacy and Mathematics Strategy (GPLMS)
- Despite some methodological limitations to the evaluations of these projects, could these promising results have had a greater policy influence?

Experiment #1: Reading Catch-up Study (RCUP):

- On-site teacher coaches over a short period of time (11 weeks)
- **Aim:** to boost the teaching and learning of English Second Language reading amongst Grade 4
- **Evaluated:** RCT design in the Pinetown district of the KwaZulu-Natal province
- Results?

RCUP Results



2 lessons learnt:

#1: Learners lack the foundations, so we need to intervene prior to Grade 4.

#2: The duration of coaching was too short, we need to intervene for at least 2 years



Experiment #2: Early Grade Reading Study

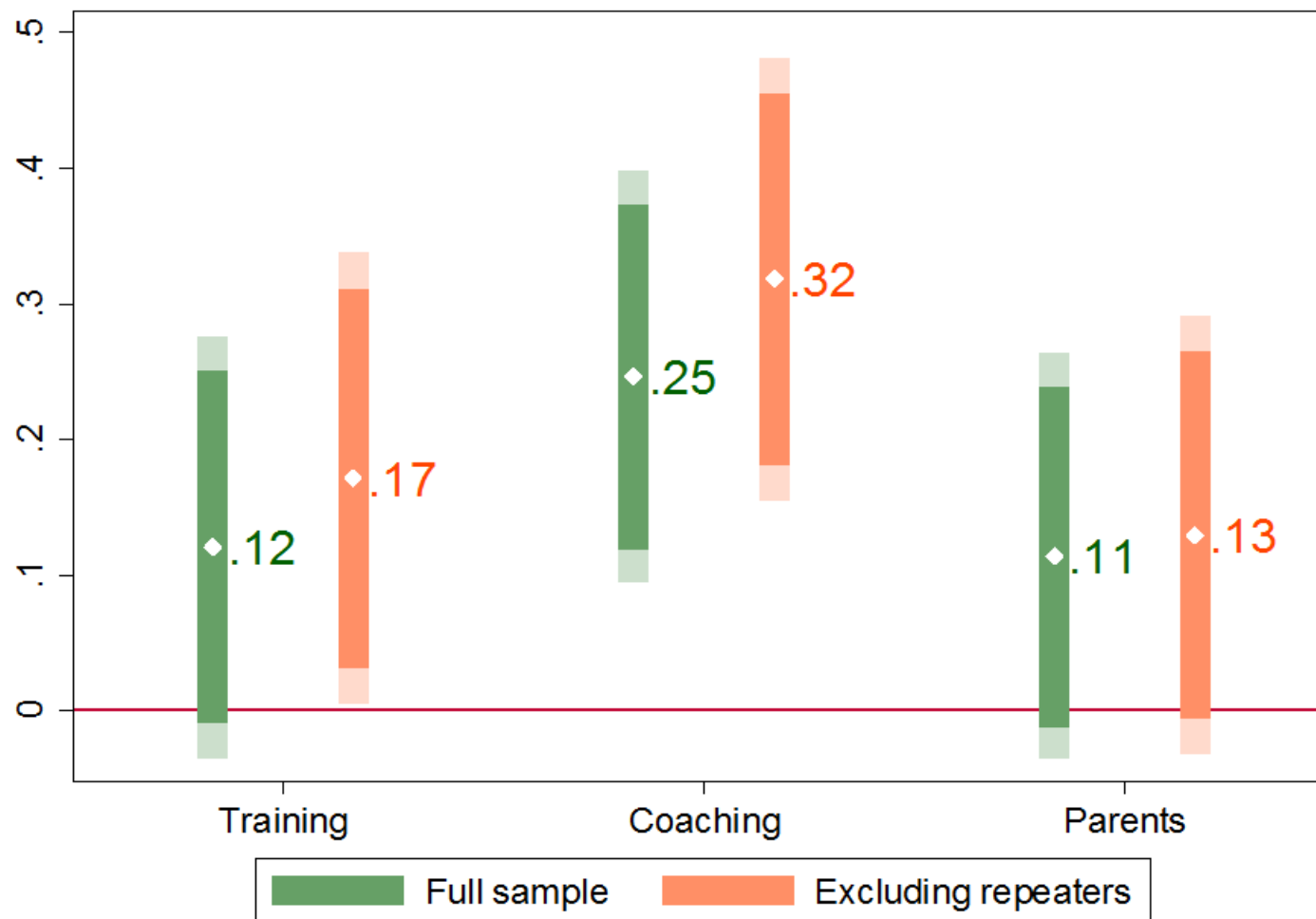
3 Interventions targeting HL literacy (Setswana) in no-

Control group (80 schools)	“Training” Lesson plans, reading materials + central teacher training (50 schools)	“Coaching” Lesson plans, reading materials + on-site coaching (50 schools)	“Parent Involvement” (50 schools)
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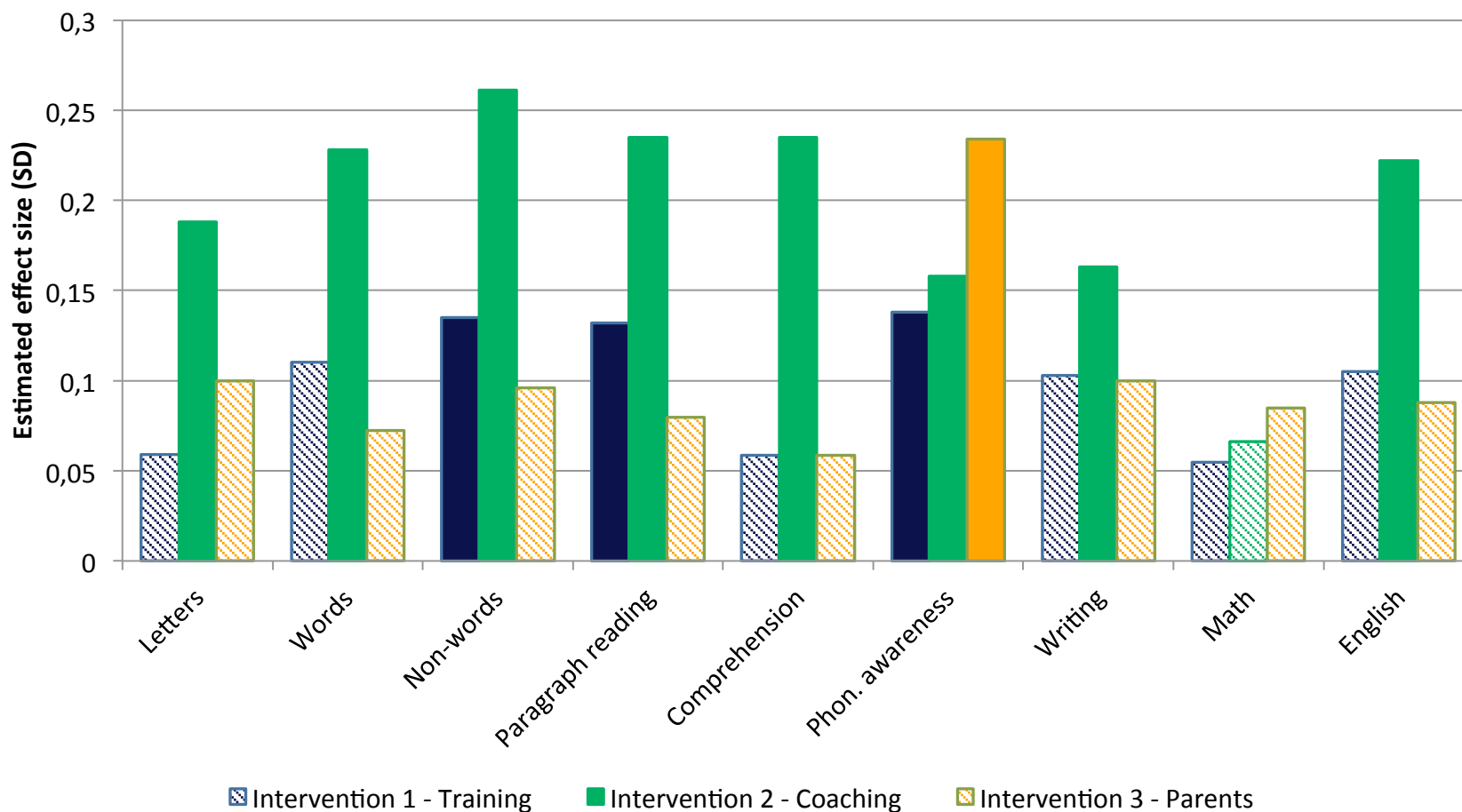
	Training	Coaching	Parents
Total annual cost for 50 schools	\$113,850	\$160,000	\$84 600
Per learner annual cost	\$30.58	\$42.91	\$22.75

2015: Grade 1
2016: Grade 2
2017: Grade 3 (Interventions 1
and 2 only)

EGRS I: Impact after 2 years



EGRS I: Impact after 2 years



Intervention 1 - Training

Intervention 2 - Coaching

Intervention 3 - Parents



Main results:

Impact for those with 2 years of interventions

Control: 2 years of school

Training: About **19%** of a year of learning

Coaching: About **40%** of a year of learning

Parents: About **13%** of a year of learning

EGRS I: Changed instructional practices

- Teachers felt much more supported
- Higher access to print and adherence to teaching routine
- Increase in group-guided reading (individualized reading)
- Curriculum coverage, assessment and opportunities to write
- Pupil use of reading material

EGRS I: Lessons learnt



Structured learning programmes seem to be successful in improving:

- Instructional change
- Learning outcomes



Within structured learning programmes - mode of delivery matters



On-site teacher coaching seems to be quite successful

But expensive + resource intensive

Next generation questions:

- **Are there more cost/ resource effective modes of delivery?**
- **Is this approach replicable in another province or subject?**



Experiment #3: EGRS 2

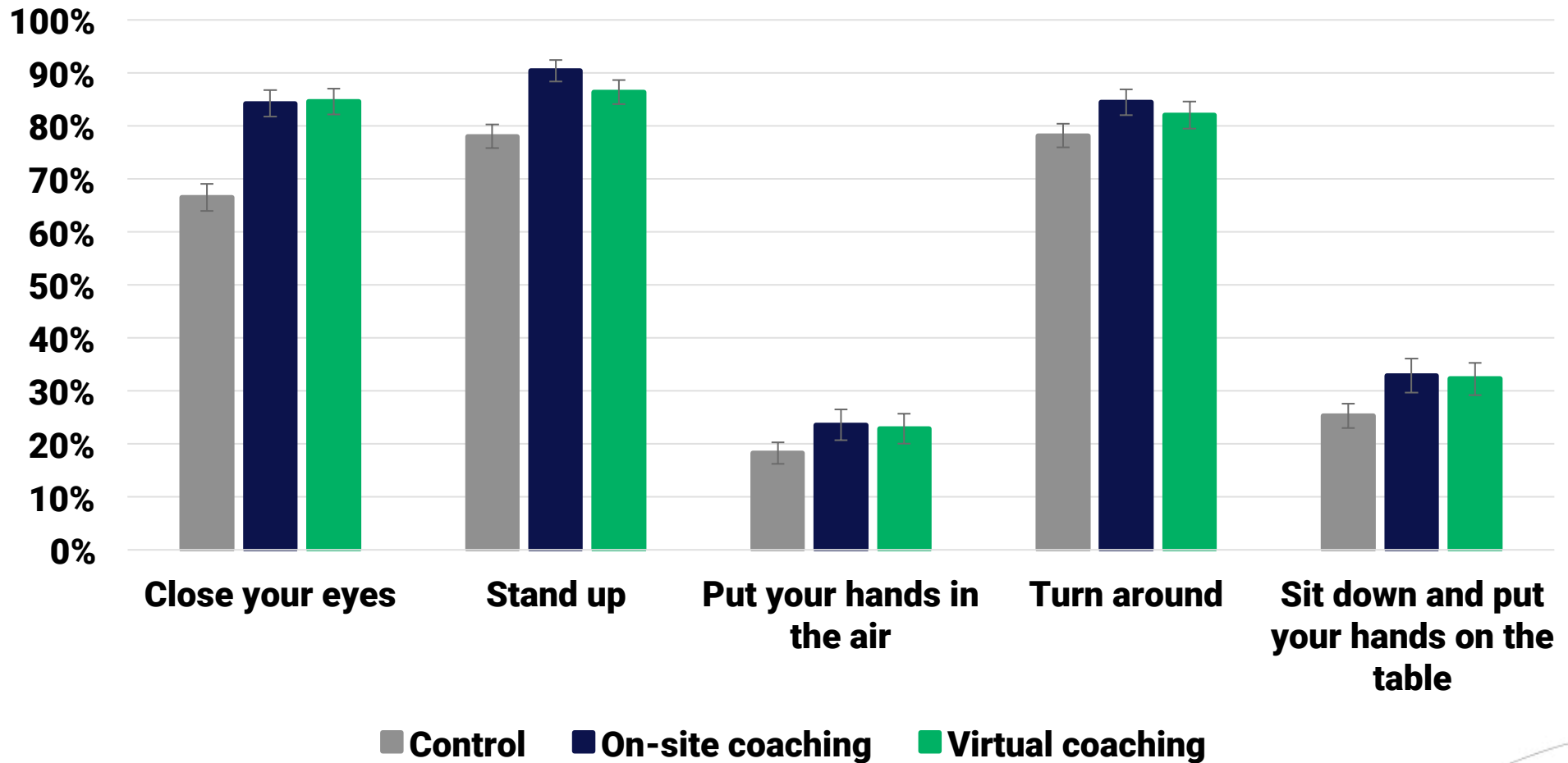
2 Interventions targeting EFAL literacy (English) in no-

Control group (80 schools)	“On-site coaching” Paper-based lesson plans Reading materials + On-site coaching (50 schools)	“Virtual coaching” Tablet based lesson plans Reading materials + Virtual coaching (50 schools)
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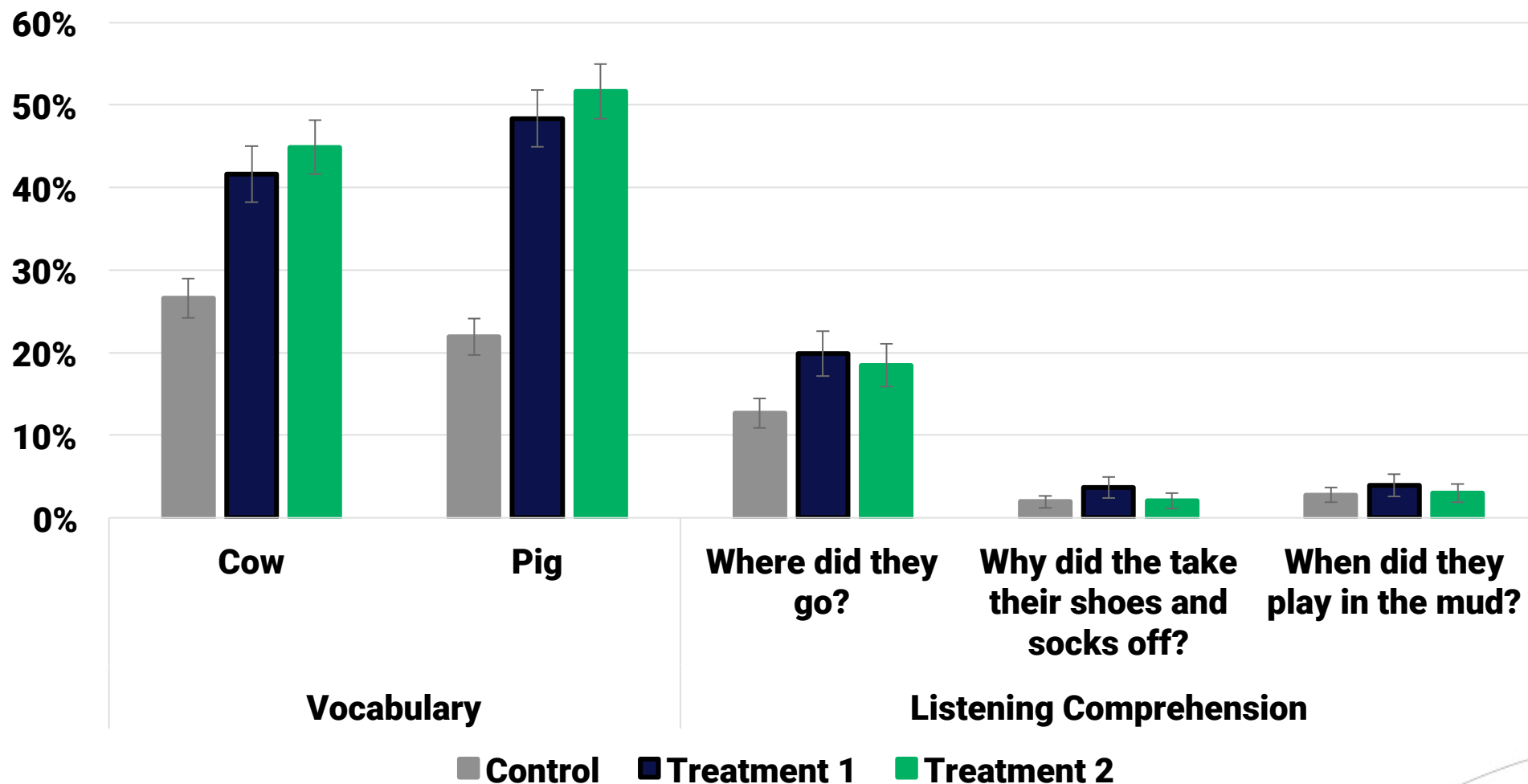
	On-site coaching	Virtual Coaching
Total annual cost for 50 schools	\$182,920	\$164,60
Per learner annual cost	\$47.64	\$42.88

2017: Grade
1
2018: Grade

EGRS II: Preliminary learner outcomes (after 1 year)



EGRS II: Preliminary learner outcomes (after 1 year)



EGRS II: Changed instructional practices

- Teachers and learners are now mainly using English in EFAL lesson
- More opportunities for learners to speak English individually
- Teachers used a much broader variety of instructional practices
- Teachers are more likely to introduce vocabulary in context
- More English print visible (posters/charts/books etc)

Discussion

Very preliminary results:

- On-site coaching can work in another province and language
- Virtual coaching might be a less resource intensive mode of delivery
- Will have to see whether these finding holds after year 2

Next generation research questions:

- **Is the impact sustainable on both a learner and teacher level?**
- **Can the on-site coaching model be delivered on a larger scale?**

Moving from an RCT to policy influence

EGRS is on the National Evaluation Plan (managed by DPME)

DBE Evaluations	Status
1. Early Childhood Development	Improvement Plan
2. Grade R	Improvement Plan
3. Funza Lushaka	Improvement Plan
4. National School Nutrition	Improvement Plan
5. CAPS	Improvement Plan
6. Early Grade Reading	Going to Cabinet
7. Scholar Transport	Underway



We are following the NES processes

- **Final Report:**
 - Approved by Steering Committee on 10 April 2018
- **Management Response and Improvement Plan:**
 - Stakeholder workshops held on 13 and 14 March 2018
 - Finalised and approved by Steering Committee on 10 April 2018
 - DG approved on 26 June 2018
- **Cabinet Processes:**
 - Served at the Social Cluster Working Group on 26 June 2018
 - Served at the SPCHD Cluster on 15 August 2018
 - Will hopefully be at Cabinet before the end of October
- **Internal Processes:**
 - We are reporting to SMM; BMM; TDCM; CEM and other government forums
 - Useful in reflecting on CAPS

Overview of Improvement Plan

1. Establish a **Steering Committee** to manage and facilitate the implementation of the EGRS Improvement Plan. *Established for shared approach.*
2. Adopt a **structured learning programme** using daily lesson plans which incorporates key reading materials, as a way of implementing CAPS. *NW intervention.*
3. Develop guidelines for **on-site coaching** by specialised coaches, and institutional support. *Formal trainings standards, content, expectations and roles.*
 1. Develop guidelines for on-site specialised coaches.
 2. Develop guidelines for DBE institutional support of teachers and coaches.
4. Provinces **ring-fence finances** for the implementation of the HL and EFAL curriculum programme. *Expenditure and cost analysis plans.*
5. The DBE and Provincial Departments of Education should **adopt an effective programme.**
6. **Further research** needs to be conducted to further strengthen the programme.



Plans for scaling up in NW 2019-2020

- Full scale coverage in the 2 districts we've been working in (Ngaka Modiri Molema & Dr Kenneth Kaunda)
- All non-fee (Q1-Q3) paying schools using Setswana as home language in Foundation Phase (nearly 300 schools) to receive:
 - Up front subject adviser and cluster-based teacher training, lesson plans, integrated reading materials
- Treatment covers both HL and EFAL simultaneously (**two languages**) plus multi-grade (Gr 1, 2 and 3) in the same schools.
 - Half of schools in the two districts (including all of the original 80 control schools) to receive **on-site coaching** in addition
 - A sub-set of 82 schools to receive **an overlay of an existing school management training programme** for Principals and HODs
- Assignment of schools still allows for analysis of causal impact of each component going forward



NW 2019/20 Design

All Quintile 1 – 3 schools in Kenneth Kaunda and Ngaka Modiri Molema

New Treatment			New Control	<div>“Other Q1-3 Schools” (133 schools)</div>
Control group (80 schools)	“Training” Lesson plans, reading materials	“Coaching” Lesson plans, reading materials	“Parent Involvement” (50 schools)	
	+ central teacher training FPD HOD & Principal Training (82 schools overlay) (50 schools)	+ on-site coaching (50 schools)		
Lesson Plans				
Train Subject Advisors				
Cluster based training for teachers on Lesson Plans				
Coaching				



Issues as we move to policy influence

- Role of research in policy support
- Financing a new programme
 - Budget pressures throughout government
 - Low appetite for new expenditures
 - Basic educ under pressure from health and higher ed allocations
 - Non-personnel spending under pressure from wage bill
- Working with NECT
 - Opportunity for NECT to highlight numeracy and literacy priorities at district and provincial level
 - Implementing arm for EGRS interventions - with clear roles and specification of treatment protocols
 - Implementation plan

Concluding thoughts

- New cycle of government planning, with policy influence opportunities at provincial level
- Policy influence is broader than implementing the successfully piloted programme
 - Promoting evaluative thinking and programme impact
 - Documenting expectations for institutional, classroom level, and curriculum support within departments
 - Partnerships use effective models which are costed
 - Other spinoffs such as use of EGRS data to develop reading norms and benchmarks
 - Expansion to numeracy



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Thank you!

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