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Fairfax School District Earns R.E.A.D. Award Honor
*Zephyr Lane Elementary Partners with 95 Percent Group to Improve
Teacher Preparedness and K-3 Reading Achievement*

Bakersfield, CA - Susan Hall, Ed. D., Co-Founder and CEO, 95 Percent Group recently presented Zephyr Lane Elementary School with the company's annual R.E.A.D. Award recognizing the school's commitment to achieving reading excellence. This distinction is given to schools or districts that *demonstrate instructional excellence and dedication*, through the use of 95 Percent Group's processes and products, to support struggling readers. Dr. Hall acknowledged Zephyr Lane's commitment at every level to implement a comprehensive intervention program that prepared teachers to effectively identify and address skill deficits and significantly improve student reading achievement.

The award was accepted by Fairfax School District Superintendent Michael Coleman and former Zephyr Lane Principal Charley Clark, who now serves as the district's Director of Programs. 95 Percent Group Client Manager and Consultant Kim Dale, who worked most closely with Zephyr Lane during their initial implementation, shared the school's success story.

"Three years ago, a small group Zephyr Lane administrators and teachers attended a 95 Percent Group workshop. At this training, they heard about a program that could show them how to teach kids to read in an explicit, systematic way. This group of educators went back to their school with a renewed passion and were dedicated to making it happen on their campus. In just a few months, they secured funding, brought 95 Percent Group to their school, and started preparing teachers to effectively impact reading achievement," remarked Dale.

95 Percent Group consultants initially worked with the Zephyr Lane administrators and K-3 staff members to roll out the intervention program. "Kim's approach with the staff was so incredible that we had 100% buy in with her. I also asked her to conduct PD with the upper-grade level staff members because they needed to understand what the primary grades were doing. 95 Percent Group completely shifted the mindset for all teacher to help us get a better understanding of how the brain works and why students make the mistakes they make when learning to read. We continue to learn and grow with 95 Percent Group as our reading partner," Clark added.

Zephyr Lane Elementary School opened in the 2014-15 school year and implemented the 95 Percent Group program during the second half of 2015-16 under Clark's direction. The gains in K-3 student DIBELS Composite and Critical Skill Measure Scores at Zephyr Lane Elementary, in the first year and a half, were so impressive that the 95 Percent Group intervention program was written into the Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP) bringing job-embedded professional development, diagnostic screeners, and instructional materials to all three of the district's K-6 elementary schools. As a result, the district aligned their phonics and spelling curriculum with the 95 Percent Group continuum improving their Tier 1, 2 and 3 MTSS structures and program fidelity.

"It's great to see common academic language and teaching strategies being used across the district by all staff members. The consistent and explicit instruction of teaching reading with 95 Percent Group has better prepared our teacher to take our students to new levels. We have been very encouraged and motivated by the impact that the 95 Percent Group program has had on improving our teacher preparedness and student reading data," said Clark.

About the Fairfax Elementary School District

Fairfax School District is a small but growing community located on the south east side of Bakersfield. We are very proud of our students, our community, and dedicated professionals that work together every day. With an enrollment of 2,705 students, we strive to find ways to reach all students. We serve a population that is 91% Socio-Economic Disadvantage and 38% English Learners. There are three K-6 elementary schools which feed into one junior high school. Fairfax is a learning community that strives to provide a safe, welcoming environment where students are encouraged to ask questions and to find answers. The district motto is, "Empowering Students to Succeed." As a community we are dedicated to this task by providing a strong and relevant education to our students. Learn more at www.fairfax.k12.ca.us.

About 95 Percent Group Inc.

95 Percent Group Inc. is an education company focused on helping teachers identify and effectively address the needs of struggling readers. For over 14 years, the firm has provided job-embedded professional development, diagnostic assessments, cumulative skill continua, and explicit instructional materials to implement MTSS/RTI frameworks. The company's work is focused on ensuring that students receive targeted, research-based reading interventions that address specific skill deficits in more than 1,800 school districts and 3,200 schools. Learn more at www.95percentgroup.com.

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