

Performance Improvement Efforts Show Real Results

We have a lot to celebrate this quarter!

State and USAID get to green!

The Department of State achieved green status on the Performance Improvement scorecard. State and USAID improved integration of performance information into their FY 2009 Congressional Justifications. Both agencies were able to provide a more direct link between their funding requests and expected performance.

Preliminary Study Results in on Department of Education Reading Program

A recent report on the Reading First program is good news for the Performance Improvement community. The [Institute of Education Sciences](#) (IES) at ED has released an interim report—with more data and several surveys yet to be analyzed before the results are finalized this fall. However, any study of this scope and rigor is an achievement worth touting. This study will tell us a lot about what's going on in schools and how schools help kids learn to read.

This is what the report says:

The evaluation found that Reading First did have positive, statistically significant impacts on the total class time spent on the five essential components of reading instruction promoted by the program. The study also found that, on average across the 18 study sites, Reading First did not have statistically significant impacts on student reading comprehension test scores in grades 1-3. A final report on the impacts from 2004-2007 (three school years with Reading First funding) and on the relationships between changes in instructional practice and student reading comprehension is expected in late 2008.

The media have largely oversimplified these results, and as I said more results are due later this year. But the Department of Education deserves recognition for carrying out such rigorous evaluation and sharing the results so candidly.

What caused them to do that? A department-wide commitment to evaluation. At the forefront of ED's evaluation efforts is [IES](#), headed by Russ Whitehurst. IES was established by the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 with the mission to

provide rigorous evidence on which to ground education practice and policy. This office has produced and has in the pipeline research that will tell us more than we have ever known about what helps kids learn. Sometimes, the research will tell us what we're doing doesn't work. That's not yet the case with Reading First—we'll have to wait for the final report for the whole story. But either way, this evaluation is worth celebrating, because **understanding what doesn't work is almost as valuable as knowing what works.**