ALASKA READING FIRST

ANNUAL EVALUATION REPORT: 2006-2007

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Reading First is a federal initiative providing an unprecedented level of funding and focused support for the improvement of K-3 reading instruction, with the ultimate goal of ensuring that all children read at grade level by the end of third grade. The 2006–2007 school year represented the fourth year of Alaska Reading First, but was the third year of school-level implementation. Reading First is implemented in 14 schools located in three school districts—Anchorage, Fairbanks, and Lake and Peninsula school districts. The first two districts are urban; the latter is very rural and remote, presenting a different set of contextual factors to implementation. Some schools had multi-grade classrooms, especially in Lake and Peninsula; some principals and coaches were itinerant. Lake and Peninsula had two itinerant coaches, one of whom worked as the district coordinator too.

The Alaska Department of Education and Early Development (EED) contracted the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NWREL) to conduct annual evaluations of its Reading First program. Alaska Reading First achieved some significant successes this school year, namely:

- The Alaska Reading First program provided a comprehensive approach to professional development by providing four major statewide conferences; providing ongoing professional development to coaches, who in turn provided coaching to their teachers; and having district coordinators provide other support to Reading First schools and staff members. The Reading Leadership Team Data Retreat and the Reading First Summit were especially well received.

- Data use was pervasive in decision-making. Schools regularly used assessments for screening, diagnosing, and progress-monitoring their intensive, strategic, and benchmark students. Coaches and teachers used these data for a variety of purposes, but most frequently when making decisions about interventions.

- Teachers continued to teach their core programs with fidelity and were satisfied with their schools' programs.

- The percentage of matched students at benchmark this year increased from fall 2006 to spring 2007 in every grade—significant changes were made in kindergarten and second grade. All grade levels retained *at least* 82 percent of their benchmark students from the beginning to the end of school. Kindergarten retained 93 percent; first grade 82 percent; second grade 89 percent, and third grade 88 percent.

- Results from a comparison study suggested that Reading First students from rural areas, and Reading First students identified as Alaskan Native/American Indian, seemed to perform significantly better on the third-grade state Standards-based Assessment (SBA) in reading than their counterparts in comparison schools. However, there was no overall significant difference in the performance of Reading First students and students in comparison schools.

This summary presents the major findings from the external evaluation.

Professional Development

The Alaska Reading First program provided a comprehensive approach to professional development. It provided four major statewide conferences—the Consortium on Reading Excellence (CORE) Leadership for principals, the CORE Coach Institute, the Reading Leadership Team Data Retreat, and the Reading First Summit. CORE consultants provided ongoing professional development to coaches at the schools; coaches worked with their teachers; and district coordinators helped to coordinate CORE visits, conducted monthly coach and principal meetings, and provided other support to Reading First schools.

Overall, principals, coaches, and teachers found the Reading First Summit in March 2007 to be of high quality and relevant to their work; only about a third of them reported the content as "mostly review." While almost all coaches and principals attended the summit, fewer than half of the teachers (49%) attended the entire summit. Shortages of substitutes were generally responsible.

Principal views. Principals were pleased with the quality and amount of all of their training in instructional leadership that they received this year. For them, the Reading Leadership Team Data Retreat training was especially useful. While the Reading First Summit generally met their needs, only 59 percent believed it provided them with useful training in observing teachers and providing feedback; fewer agreed that it provided them with useful tools for working with resistant teachers. Only about one-third of the principals (36%) agreed that the Reading First Summit did a good job of addressing English language learner (ELL) issues. Principals were less pleased with CORE's Leadership Institute.

Coach perceptions. Coaches were less enthusiastic than principals about their overall coach training this year. Like principals, coaches praised the Reading Leadership Team Data Retreat training. However, coaches wanted more and better quality coaching training, specifically as it related to working with resistant teachers, providing constructive feedback, conducting classroom observations, and supporting differentiated instruction. Less than one-third of the coaches (30%) thought that the summit adequately addressed ELL issues.

Teacher opinions. Coaching was the primary vehicle for school-level professional development for teachers. Coaches appeared to have increased the frequency by which they provided demonstration lessons, and teachers appreciated this. Coaches continued to observe teachers and provide them feedback. They also regularly administered,

scored, and interpreted assessment results, and provided and/or monitored interventions. The majority of teachers usually found the assistance they received from their coach helpful; still, they requested additional training in student engagement, differentiated instruction, comprehension, and the effective use of intervention programs.

On the other hand, infrequent coach observations were the norm, as was reported by more than half of the teachers (55%); these teachers reported being observed a few times a year, *at most*. The frequency of classroom observation varied widely among Reading First schools.

While teachers highly rated the quality of the Reading First Summit, only about 40 percent of the teachers at the Reading First Summit agreed that it did a good job of addressing English language learner (ELL) issues. Finally, while infrequent, school-level training for teachers from contracted experts/trainers and district reading staff members was adequate and tended to be more helpful than not.

State-level Technical Assistance

The Alaska Department of Education and Early Development had a single coordinator who ran the Reading First project, and much of the professional development and technical assistance was provided by contractors. On the one hand, this produced, at times, unevenness in services. On the other hand, the technical assistance system was smaller and it was easier to address specific needs. Interview comments and survey results indicated that principals and coaches were quite positive about the work of the state project staff. They thought the state had been responsive to their school needs, they trusted the state coordinator with information about their reading programs, they thought the state coordinator understood their school contexts, and they found the support and recommendations quite useful. Based on comments, one way for the state to increase its responsiveness to school needs might be to provide Reading First training to new teachers, as they made up, on average, 30 percent of the K-3 teachers this year.

Leadership and School-level Structures

School and district leaders were responsible for developing structures and systems that encouraged collaboration and assisted individuals in implementing change. In Alaska, these leaders included district coordinators, principals, and coaches. The state expected them to participate in professional development. For school leaders, the state expected them to set up and facilitate Reading Leadership Teams (RLTs) and grade-level teams to promote collaboration and to implement change.

Most district coordinators regularly attended Reading First professional development and meetings, and usually found them helpful. All of the district coordinators reported that state expectations were clear and reasonable, and that state Reading First project staff members were responsive to their district's needs. Communications was one area where improvements might be warranted.

Principals highlighted three roles they thought were most important—provide leadership, ensure fidelity, and use data. While the vast majority of principals supported the instructional changes under Reading First, the frequency of their classroom observations and their attendance at RLT and grade-level meetings was limited. Principals continued to report "frequent" use of assessment data for a variety of purposes. However, compared to last year, there were substantial decreases in principals' use of data to match students to interventions, in their meetings with parents, and in looking at schoolwide (K-3) trends.

Coaching and collecting and using data were the most common time allocations reported by coaches. These activities took about half of their time. If coaches felt they were unable to fulfill their coaching responsibilities, it was most often attributed to working directly with students during the reading block.

School-level collaboration appeared to be more fruitful at grade-level meetings rather than RLT meetings. Except for one school, all schools had RLTs in place; but the extent to which they functioned differed. On the other hand, monthly grade-level meetings, usually with the coach present, were likely to occur; in some schools, teachers were leading these meetings. However, teacher collaboration via grade-level meetings was not as high as possible. Only 48 percent of teachers reported frequent attendance at these meetings.

Reading First emphasizes the use of data at all levels of decision-making, and its use was an important aspect of school-level collaborations. Data use was pervasive this year. Schools regularly used assessments for screening, diagnosing, and progress-monitoring students. DIBELS was most commonly used, but core program and CORE assessments were also cited. Teachers and coaches administered progress-monitoring assessments to all students, but more frequently to struggling readers.

Coaches and teachers used these data for a variety of purposes. Most frequently, they used them to make decisions about interventions. Teachers reported high use of assessment data for communicating about reading instruction and student needs and deciding about grouping, and coaches used data with teachers. This year, coaches were less likely to always use data when making decisions about student grouping, but teachers were slightly more likely to do so—this may be a task coaches were transferring to teachers. Teachers and coaches were least likely to use data when making decisions about modifying lessons from the core program.

In 2006–2007, sustainability continued to be addressed. It was addressed at the Reading First Summit in a two-day break-out session and during RLT meetings. While teachers were optimistic about the sustainability of a variety of Reading First components, they were least optimistic that the coach and RLT would remain. Only about one-half of the principals and coaches agreed that Reading First instructional changes would be sustained. In addition, teacher buy-in to Reading First was waning. Teacher support for Reading First has steadily declined since 2005, with *three in five* teachers now expressing

strong support for Reading First, down from *three in four*. Perhaps this is a reflection of the continuous turnover of teachers each year.

Instruction and Intervention

The ultimate goal of Reading First is to improve instruction so that all children are reading at grade level by the end of third grade. All coaches, principals, and the majority of teachers believed that reading instruction in their schools had improved under Reading First; over two-thirds of teachers agreed that Reading First had significantly changed their own reading instruction.

Instruction in Reading First classrooms should be delivered during an uninterrupted 90-minute reading block. In the majority of cases, Alaska met this expectation. All students in second and third grades received at least 90 minutes of uninterrupted reading instruction; however, in about a third of the schools, kindergarten students did not; nor did students in one school's first-grade. Because Fairbanks had one-half day kindergarten classes, the district had a special waiver to provide a 60-minute block for benchmark students. In the Lake and Peninsula district, their reading block looked different because of multi-grade classes. In these schools, students received 30 minutes of one-on-one or two-on-one instruction with their teacher, and then independent learning.

Reading First expects teachers to use a core reading program. Alaska's Reading First teachers taught from the core program and did so with fidelity. A few schools did not use a core reading program exclusively. Less than half of teachers (40%) regularly used templates. Teachers, coaches, and principals were quite satisfied with their core reading program.

Additionally, instruction should be differentiated or, rather, delivered at students' instructional level. Alaska Reading First teachers seemed to deliver some instruction at student's instructional levels, but not as differentiated or targeted as possible. "Walk-to-read," a strategy for delivering instruction at students' instructional level, was not the norm in many schools. It was observed in less than one-half of the schools. Almost a third of the coaches (29%) reported that their schools did not use "walk-to-read," and over a third (36%) reported "walk-to-read" was used in some grades or classes, but not all.

Another strategy for differentiating instruction is small group instruction. While teachers (79%) reported using small group instruction during the reading block, it was unclear how successful they were without some kind of support, as two-thirds of the classes ranged in size from 10 to 21 students. Only 44 percent of teachers worked daily with paraprofessionals during the reading block; 41 percent of the teachers reported that they "never" worked with a paraprofessional during this time. Compared to last year, a smaller percentage of teachers this year had the assistance of paraprofessionals. This lack of paraprofessional support, or some kind of support, would make it difficult to do small group instruction during the block or to do "walk-to-read."

In addition, only 62 percent of teachers reported regularly differentiating instruction in their reading blocks. Almost one-half of teachers (45%) described their groups of students during the reading block as having a wide variety of levels and differing instructional needs. In heterogeneous classes, teachers need to differentiate their instruction or use small groups in order to deliver appropriate instruction. Having paraprofessionals during reading block can help teachers to differentiate instruction. Differentiation was reported to be quite difficult in multi-grade classrooms. Overall, while teachers used small group instruction, not as many seemed to be differentiating their instruction or providing instruction at students' instructional level.

Different pieces of evidence suggested that the needs of struggling readers were not fully met. Teachers, coaches, and principals generally did not agree that Reading First was doing "an excellent job of meeting of meeting English language learners' needs." Schools' dissatisfaction related to two concerns—inadequate ELL materials and lack of teacher knowledge and skills to meet the needs of ELL students. In addition, schools' intervention programs did not address the needs of all intensive or strategic students. All intensive students received intensive interventions in 79 percent of the schools, and all strategic students received supplemental services in 69 percent of the schools. This showed a slightly stronger focus on intensive students than strategic students. Of those schools not serving 100 percent of students eligible to receive interventions, 18 percent of the coaches indicated that insufficient staffing was the primary obstacle.

Based on classroom observations and survey results, teachers generally provided appropriate instruction in the "five essential components" of reading—phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. However, there seemed to be some trouble spots:

- Phonemic awareness instruction was a regular part of instruction across grade levels, and 42 percent of the teachers *at least sometimes* practiced nonsense words. Too much time and attention were given to these activities.

- Only 37 percent of teachers reported regularly doing fluency assessments, an important part of fluency instruction.

- Teachers did not focus much on "tier two" vocabulary words, the use of questioning strategies requiring higher-order thinking skills, or the use of other research-based strategies to promote comprehension.

In observed classrooms, the evaluation team found that many teachers provided ample opportunities for student practice and quick transitions, and had effective classroom management. Scaffolded instruction, through modeling and questioning, was a regular component of many, but not all, classrooms. While teachers monitored student understanding more frequently than they provided direct feedback, neither activity was at a very high level, given their importance. Finally, Round Robin was witnessed during two lessons—a practice discouraged by Reading First.

Student Outcomes

Alaska Reading First assessed students in the fall, winter, and spring using the *Dynamic Indicators of Basic Literacy Skills* (DIBELS) in each Reading First school. Each student was given an *overall* instructional support recommendation (ISR): "intensive," "strategic," or "benchmark." Different analyses were performed to look at change over the school year, change over time, and change in students' ISR grouping.

Changes from the fall 2006 to spring 2007 showed:

- The percentage of matched students at *benchmark* this year increased from fall 2006 to spring 2007 in every grade. Significant changes were made in kindergarten (26% to 76%) and second grade (51% to 57%), but not in first grade (63% to 65%) or third grade (45% to 48%).

- The percentage of matched students in *intensive* this year decreased significantly from fall 2006 to spring 2007 in kindergarten (32% to 12%) and third grade (28% to 20%), but remained relatively constant in first grade (12% to 15%) and second grade (24% to 24%).

- Across grade levels, the percentages of Alaska Native/American Indian, Asian and Latino students; students eligible for free and reduced-price lunch; students eligible for special education; and English language learners at benchmark were all lower than the state benchmark percentage for spring 2007. Likewise, the percentages for these same subpopulations in the intensive group in the spring 2007 were higher than the state percentage of intensive students. The percentage of intensive students from these subpopulations, in spring 2007, was dramatically higher than the state's percentage in second and third grades.

Changes in students' ISR grouping in 2006-2007 included:

- All grades retained from 82 percent (first grade) up to 93 percent (kindergarten) of their students at benchmark from fall 2006 to spring 2007. Almost all students who dropped from benchmark, dropped to strategic from fall 2006 to spring 2007.

- Strategic students in fall 2006 had less difficulty than intensive students in changing their ISR group. In kindergarten, only 16 percent remained in strategic and over three-quarters of them (77%) moved to benchmark; 33 percent and 41 percent of first- and second-grade students, respectively, remained. Third-grade strategic students (65%) were the most likely to remain in strategic over the year.

- Students who were in the intensive group in fall 2006 did not readily move out of this group. While there was success in moving 59 percent of kindergarten students from the intensive group to benchmark, many first-, second-, and third-grade students who began the fall in intensive remained there in the spring (62%, 81%, and 65% respectively). Among grade levels, second-grade intensive students were the least likely to move out of the intensive group over this school year.

Changes over time included:

- Since spring 2004, the percentage of *benchmark* students has increased each year in all grade levels until spring 2007, when the trend flattened from spring 2006 to spring 2007. In other words, the percentage of benchmark students has remained constant in all grade levels for the last two years. A similar but downward trend was found for the percentage of *intensive* students.

- Length of time in Reading First played a significant role in the percentage of students at *benchmark* and in *intensive* in spring 2007. The longer a student was in Reading First, the more likely they would be at benchmark, or, conversely, the least likely they would remain in intensive. For benchmark students, this was especially dramatic in first and third grades; for intensive students, there was a marked decline at each grade level.

Changes in ISR groups over time were:

- Compared to spring 2005, the percentage of matched *second-grade*, *benchmark* students declined significantly (73% to 61%) by spring 2007. The percentage of *third-grade benchmark* students only slightly decreased, from 55 percent to 51 percent.

- Since spring 2005, over 70 percent of students in second and third grades, who were at benchmark, remained at benchmark by spring 2007 (76% and 71%, respectively). However, students who were in intensive two years ago were quite likely to still be in intensive by spring 2007—67 percent for second grade and 74 percent for third grade. Second-grade students who were in strategic in spring 2005 were equally likely to drop to intensive, remain in strategic, or move up to benchmark. Over half of the third-grade strategic students (52%) remained in strategic from spring 2005 to spring 2007.

Finally, the comparison study produced a few noteworthy findings. Results suggested that Reading First students from rural areas, and Reading First students identified as Alaskan Native/American Indian, seemed to perform significantly better on the third-grade state Standards-based Assessment (SBA) in reading than their counterparts in comparison schools. However, there was no overall significant difference in the performance of Reading First students and students in comparison schools

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CHAPTER ONE:
INTRODUCTION

Reading First is a federal initiative providing an unprecedented level of funding and focused support for the improvement of K-3 reading instruction, with the ultimate goal of ensuring that all children read at grade level by the end of third grade. This goal, in turn, supports the larger goals of the *No Child Left Behind* Act, passed in 2001, that all students be able to meet state academic targets. In support of this goal, Reading First provides funds to states to support comprehensive programs to improve reading instruction at selected Reading First schools. Most funds that states receive under Reading First are distributed to selected Reading First districts and schools, which are eligible for the grant based on state-determined criteria (a combination of poverty level and history of low reading performance).

In fall 2003, the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development (EED) was awarded a six-year federal Reading First State Grant. While 2003–2004 was the first year of the state program, 2004–2005 marked the first year of school-level implementation. Grant funds have been used at the local level for:

- Selection and implementation of core reading program materials from a list of approved research-based materials

- Selection and implementation of research-based reading interventions from a list of approved research-based materials

- Hiring of a full-time reading coach to provide mentoring, coaching, training, and demonstration lessons

- Creation of a Reading Leadership Team to guide the design and implementation of a K-3 reading delivery system

- Attendance of school leadership teams and all K-3 staff members at regular state-provided professional development events

- Use of approved assessments that are valid and reliable, analyses of results, and use of results to make reading improvement decisions

- Identification of students in need of intensive reading interventions and provision of appropriate, targeted interventions in a small group setting

- Agreement to visits from independent evaluators, as well as state and federal Reading First administrators, and use of their feedback

The EED established criteria and participation requirements for schools and districts in order to select schools to participate in the grant. Sub-grants were awarded to the following 14 schools in three districts in winter 2004:

Table 1-1
Participating Alaska Reading First Schools

District	School
Anchorage	Airport Heights
	Creekside Park
	Mountain View
	Spring Hill
	Ursa Minor
	Tyson William
Fairbanks North Star Borough	Anderson
	Nordale
	Ticasuk
Lake and Peninsula*	Chignik Lake
	Kokhanok
	Newhalen
	Nondalton
	Perryville

*Note: The Lake and Peninsula school district was funded as a "district-based" rather than a "school-based" program. Two itinerant reading coaches serve several schools each year.

The 14 schools agreed to specific requirements for project staffing, the adoption of a core reading program, and the use of the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills, or DIBELS, to assess student reading. Professional development requirements for grantees included attendance at summit meetings by the school leadership teams and all K-3 staff members. In addition, onsite professional development, coordinated by the school and/or district, would be ongoing.

School principals were required to agree to take a leadership role in the implementation of the grant to provide the support necessary to increase the capacity of the school to institutionalize early reading improvement strategies. They also agreed to attend Reading First professional development workshops as a condition of accepting funding.

The Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NWREL) was contracted to conduct an annual evaluation of the Alaska Reading First program. The evaluation is both formative and summative and focuses on the following areas:

- Effectiveness of the professional development and technical assistance provided to grant recipients

- Quality and level of implementation of statewide Reading First activities

- Impact of Reading First activities on desired student and teacher outcomes

Quantitative and qualitative evaluation methods provide EED with a record of progress in both implementation and outcomes. Also, the evaluation provides feedback to EED and individual schools to inform program development throughout the life of the grant.

The evaluation results reported in this document are for Year 4, the 2006–2007 school year, which was the third year of full implementation of the Alaska Reading First program at the school level.

CHAPTER TWO:
EVALUATION METHODS

The evaluation of Alaska Reading First looked at both the implementation and the impact of the project. As in past years, the evaluation relied on information from a variety of instruments and respondents to capture the experience of a wide range of project participants.

The instruments used in the 2006–2007 evaluation included the following:

- **Spring surveys**—paper surveys of all teachers, coaches, principals from all Alaska Reading First schools, as well as online surveys of the district coordinators in each of the three districts

- **Site visits to six randomly selected** schools, which included:
  - o **Interviews** with principals and coaches
  - o **Focus groups** with randomly selected teachers
  - o **Classroom observations** during site visits, with targeted observations of three reading lessons at every school selected for a site visit

- **Student assessments**—K-3 assessment scores on the DIBELS

- **Interviews with the State Reading First Coordinator** during the November Reading First Leadership Team Data Retreat and the Reading First Summit in early March

- **Ongoing review of project documents,** as well as attendance at the 2006 Reading First Summit held in Anchorage

Every year, evaluation instruments undergo a comprehensive review and revision process. The instruments used this year were similar to those used in the previous year's evaluation; a large proportion of survey and interview items were retained in order to permit an analysis of change over time. They were, however, further refined in order to:

- Identify redundancies and gaps in existing evaluation instruments
- Gather information about new program areas that deserved attention
- Address all topic areas and encompass the viewpoints of multiple stakeholders, while minimizing data collection burdens on school and project staff members

This chapter describes each of the instruments, including major changes made, as well as selection process and/or response rates obtained, and any limitations or cautions about the data collected via one of the instruments.

Spring Surveys

In spring 2007, surveys were administered to school staff members involved in Reading First. The surveys were designed to gather information on school and classroom practices, perceptions of Reading First, and evidence of its impact during the 2006–2007 school year. These surveys included:

- Principal survey (53 items)

- Reading coach survey (115 items)

- Teacher survey for staff members who taught K-3 reading during the past year (not including aides or student teachers) (111 items)

- District survey for district Reading First liaisons/coordinators, administered electronically for the first time this year (30 items)

In fall 2006, the surveys once again underwent a comprehensive review, and evaluators made minor changes to the previous year's surveys based on this review process. The final surveys contained close-ended questions about areas related to grant implementation, including assessments, use of the core program, student grouping, collaboration, professional development, beliefs and attitudes about Reading First, and sustainability. Copies of the survey instruments with the frequencies of responses are located in Appendices A through D. For details of any survey data reported in this document, please refer to these documents.

Coach, principal, and teacher surveys were mailed to the reading coach at each school, with explicit instructions for administration. Coaches were asked to set aside time for survey completion at a staff meeting or other already reserved time. Survey instructions encouraged respondents to be candid in their answers, and assured respondents' anonymity; cover sheets for each survey further explained the purpose of the survey and intended use of the data. To further encourage honest responses, respondents received confidentiality envelopes in which to seal their surveys before returning them. Surveys were sent out March 30, 2007. Completed surveys were collected by the reading coach, who was asked to mail them back to NWREL by April 13, 2007. E-mail and telephone reminders were made to encourage schools to respond, and late surveys were accepted up through June 1.

The response rate for Alaska Reading First was high. NWREL received surveys from 14 of the 14 schools—a 100 percent response rate overall. In all, NWREL received surveys from all coaches, principals, and district coordinators. A total of 128 out of 133 teachers completed their surveys. This represented a 96 percent return rate.

The majority of teacher respondents were regular classroom teachers (83%); additional teacher respondents included speech/language specialists (1%), library specialists (1%), paraprofessionals (3%), language arts/reading specialists (4%), and special education (8%) and ESL/bilingual teachers (4%). Regardless of position, all of these respondents are referred to as "teachers," unless otherwise noted.

This year, for the first time, district surveys were conducted online. District coordinators were sent a request and link by e-mail; the link took them to a secure NWREL Web site where they were able to complete their surveys. NWREL received surveys from three of the three district coordinators, a response rate of 100 percent.

Site Visits

This year, six schools—two schools in each of the three districts—were randomly selected and site visits were conducted. Site visits included interviews with the principal and coach, a focus group with teachers (randomly selected), and observations of three classrooms (also randomly selected). This was very similar to the structure of the visits made over the previous two years, although interview protocols were revised to reflect program changes and data collection priorities. Copies of all site visit instruments can be found in Appendix E.

A team of two evaluators conducted the site visits; each school was visited by a single team member. All evaluators had between two and five years previous experience visiting Reading First schools. In order to refresh understandings of the instruments and to enhance reliability, a two-day training was provided to site visitors in February 2007.

Prior to each site visit, reading coaches and/or principals were contacted to make arrangements for the visit. For each site visit, schools were asked to schedule the interviews, focus groups, and observations. The format and content of each of these data collection activities is described in greater detail below.

Interviews

Interviews with both the principal and reading coach covered a similar range of topics: the roles of each, the type and perceived effectiveness of professional development they had received, their experience with technical assistance from the state, perceptions of instructional change at the school, use of assessments, changes in communication and collaboration, as well as challenges and successes of the past year. The coach interview was somewhat longer than the principal interview.

Interviews were not taped; instead, the interviewer took extensive notes during each interview. Consequently, the quotes provided in this report are not verbatim, but they do represent, to the degree possible, the actual wording of the respondents.

Interview questions were deliberately open-ended. This provided a good balance to the surveys, which pre-defined the issues for respondents and asked them to express what might be complex opinions by checking one of four or five choices. The interviews, in contrast, allowed respondents to answer by talking about the issues or concerns most relevant to them. Qualitative analyses focused on patterns found among respondents, rather than exact counts, because the open-ended nature of the questions permitted respondents to take the conversation in many different directions.

Respondents were encouraged to talk candidly about their experience with Reading First and were promised confidentiality. For this reason, the responses provided are never identified by individual, school, or district.

Focus Groups

In order to obtain the perspectives of teachers at Reading First schools, focus groups were held with four randomly selected classroom teachers. Teacher focus groups asked for participant discussion on aspects of classroom instruction such as fidelity and differentiated instruction, their experience working with the reading coach, and sustainability.

Evaluators asked schools to limit the size of the focus group to four regular classroom teachers, ideally one per grade, in order to better facilitate discussion. Teacher focus groups occurred in all six schools. Principals and reading coaches did not attend the focus groups.

Classroom Observations

In most Reading First schools, reading instruction occurred throughout the primary grades during a single 90-minute block of time during the school day. This meant that in most schools, evaluators only had a total of 90 minutes in which to observe as much reading instruction as possible. For this reason, evaluators visited portions of three classes, at different grade levels, for 20 to 30 minutes each, well aware that this information would provide only a "snapshot" of the instruction that occurred at the school.

Evaluators randomly selected three of the four grades to observe at each school, so approximately the same number of classes at each grade level would be observed across all the schools. Site visitors then randomly selected classrooms at those grades by telling coaches they would like to visit the classes of teachers whose name fell within a certain place in the alphabet. Coaches were informed that teachers had the right to request *not* to

be observed, and that in such circumstances, a different class could be substituted (such substitutions were very rare).

In total, site visitors conducted 16 classroom observations, spread across grades: kindergarten (19%), first grade (19%), second grade (44%), and third grade (38%). Some classrooms contained more than one grade level. The average observation was 22 minutes in length.

During the observations, the evaluators focused on the work of the teacher and the response of the students. For example, if the teacher was working with a group of five students, and other students were working with a paraprofessional or on their own, in groups or individually, the observation focused on the small group work of the teacher. Paraprofessionals and other adults were not explicitly observed, although their presence in the classroom was noted. Evaluators took detailed notes in consecutive five-minute blocks, recording chronologically what the teacher did and how students responded. After the observation, evaluators used their notes to record what was being taught in each five-minute block during the observation (phonics, vocabulary, etc.), and then used a rubric to rate certain characteristics of the lesson, such as its clarity, the provision of opportunities to practice, the level of student engagement, and the level of appropriate monitoring and feedback.

Because of some concerns about inter-rater reliability (described below) in the reporting of results, ratings of observed instruction and ongoing assessment of learning were collapsed into two broad categories. Ratings between "0" and "2" were collapsed into the category "occasionally, or not at all," while ratings of "3" or "4" were put into the category "yes, definitely." These broader categories then provided more reliable, if less nuanced, estimates of lesson clarity, teacher modeling, student engagement, student opportunities for practice, and teacher provision of clear and frequent feedback.

When excerpts from observation notes are included in the text as examples, student names have been changed in order to protect confidentiality.

Validity and reliability of classroom observation. The term "validity" in research is used to describe the degree to which the data being collected are an accurate measurement of the information desired. It is crucial to establish that the observation protocol records information that actually describes elements of instruction and in particular, that it describes elements of instruction that have a real impact on student achievement.

Reliability refers to the degree to which a tool measures the same thing in the same way. When multiple observers are in classrooms using numerical ratings to summarize some of the information about instruction, it is important to ensure that each observer rates the same lesson in the same way.

The creation of the observation protocol was a multi-step process designed to maximize the validity of the tool within the time and budget constraints of the evaluation. The designers began by reviewing recent literature on those elements of reading instruction

that have been shown to be clearly linked to differences in student achievement. This work highlighted a few key areas: subject of the lesson, clarity of the lesson, ongoing monitoring and adjustment to student understanding, providing clear feedback to students, classroom environment, providing opportunities to practice, and student engagement.

Reliability of the observation protocol was assessed when a team of reading evaluators compiled a first draft of an observation tool and used it on a visit to a non-Reading First/ former Reading Excellence Act school in Portland, Oregon in fall 2003. There, two or three evaluators visited the same classroom at the same time and then completed a rating form. After the visit, they carefully compared and discussed ratings, identifying items on which it was harder to achieve agreement. Preliminary inter-rater reliability was 81.3 percent (within one point of agreement). A subsequent test of reliability was conducted at an Arizona Reading First school. Teams of two evaluators conducted observations of eight lessons and rated their observations independently (inter-rater reliability was 91.2 percent within one point of agreement). Problematic items were revised, and rubrics were developed to better clarify the basis for making decisions about the ratings on each items.

After the actual site visits, ratings of different site visitors were compared, and some evaluators appeared to rate consistently lower or higher than others. It is difficult to know whether the differences reflected true differences in the schools or differences in site visitor rating. In order not to place excessive weight on the difference between, for example, a "1" and a "2" rating, low (0-2 point) and high (3-4 point) ratings were collapsed for the analyses presented in this report.

In addition to recording ratings, evaluators also logged what was happening in the classroom, and these notes were used to provide the qualitative examples in the text.

Student Assessments—DIBELS

Student progress in reading across the 14 Alaska Reading First schools was monitored with the *Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills,* or DIBELS. DIBELS measures the progress of student reading development from kindergarten through third grade in the areas of phonemic awareness, phonics, and fluency.

The 'benchmark' assessment is administered three times a year: fall, winter, and spring. It includes five measures—Initial Sound Fluency, Letter Naming Fluency, Nonsense Word Fluency, Phoneme Segmentation Fluency, and Oral Reading Fluency—for which benchmark levels have been established. Two additional measures—Retell Fluency and Word Use Fluency—are available, although there are no benchmarks for these measures. In accordance with DIBELS administration guidelines, not all measures are administered to all students at each testing period; instead, only those measures are administered that apply to skills students should be mastering at a particular period. Table 2-1 indicates which measure is administered to each grade level at each assessment period.

Table 2-1
Scheduled Administration of DIBELS Assessment Measures

Measure	Fall	Winter	Spring
Initial Sound Fluency (ISF)	K	K	--
Letter Naming Fluency (LNF)	K, 1	K	K
Phoneme Segmentation Fluency (PSF)	1	K, 1	K, 1
Nonsense Word Fluency (NWF)	1	K, 1	K, 1
Oral Reading Fluency (ORF)	2, 3	1, 2, 3	1, 2, 3
Retell Fluency (RTF)*	2, 3	1, 2, 3	1, 2, 3
Word Use Fluency (WUF)*	K, 1, 2, 3	K, 1, 2, 3	K, 1, 2, 3

*   No benchmark is available for this measure.

Collection and Analysis of DIBELS Data

Administration of the DIBELS assessment took place at the individual Reading First schools three times during the assessment windows set by the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development.

After results were collected, DIBELS scores were entered into the online DIBELS database maintained by the University of Oregon. Schools were required to complete entry of student assessment results for spring 2007 into the online database by June 1, 2007. Data included in this report were downloaded by NWREL evaluation staff members on June 13, 2007; any information that was added or changed after that point is not included in this report. The analyses in this report include only matched students, or those who had *both* fall and spring results reported *and* who were continuously enrolled. Districts reported which students were not continuously enrolled, and these records were not included in the analyses.

Calculation of DIBELS Instructional Recommendations

A student's raw score from each DIBELS measure places them in one of three categories: "at risk/deficit," "some risk/emerging," or "low risk/established." When multiple measures are administered, these categories are further rolled-up by grade-level and testing window to produce an *overall* instructional support recommendation (ISR) for each student: "intensive," "strategic," or "benchmark." These categories are defined by the assessment developers, based on the analyses of tens of thousands of student assessments. NWREL followed the guidelines of the DIBELS developers in order to combine scores and determine overall instructional recommendations.

Coding of English Language Learner (ELL) Status

Due to the complex way in which ELL data are reported in the DIBELS database, there have been changes in the way that this report presents data disaggregated by this variable. Schools have the option of indicating on the DIBELS Web site whether students are "current LEP" (Limited English Proficient), "former LEP," and/or "home language not English." The definitions of these categories do not appear to be consistent across schools and districts.

Our solution has been to create two ELL categories—a "narrow" and a "broad" one. The narrow category included only those students identified in the DIBELS database as "current LEP" students; this is consistent with federal reporting practices. The broad category included those same students, as well as students who are identified as "former LEP" and/or "home-language not English." It is important to consider the "broad" ELL category, because this includes students who entered school with little or no English but have since developed English-language skills. Excluding them from the ELL analyses would mean that the ELL group would always include only newcomers and would never reflect the success that schools had achieved in teaching them English.

Missing Data

The data presented in this report represent what has been entered at the school level. The spring 2007 data set, for example, contained a total of 2,495 students, of whom 640 (26%) had either no fall or no spring data and were excluded from the study. Also, data sets contained a few records with no student identification numbers and a small number of students with duplicate entries. These records were also excluded from the analysis. These latter two problems improved in the spring data set. While slightly improved since last year, missing data continues to be of some concern.

Calculation of the Statistical Significance of Changes in Student Assessment Scores

The Pearson chi-square test was used to determine whether the change in percentage of students at benchmark changed significantly from last year to this year. McNemar's test (which is based on the chi-square distribution, but accounts for data that are matched from one point in time to the next) was used to determine the statistical significance of changes among matched students from fall to spring of the current school year.

In the comparison study, the Mann-Whitney U test, a relatively powerful nonparametric test for comparing two independent samples, was used to determine if significant differences existed between Reading First and non-Reading First students' performance on the state's third-grade, Standard-Based Assessment (SBA) in reading. The percentage of students who scored at the Not Proficient, Below Proficient, Proficient, and Advanced on the spring 2007 assessment were compared overall, and disaggregated by geographical location, income, and ethnicity.

CHAPTER THREE:
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

HIGHLIGHTS

- The Alaska Reading First program provided a comprehensive approach to professional development. It provided four major statewide conferences—the Consortium on Reading Excellence (CORE) Leadership for principals, the CORE Coach Institute, the Reading Leadership Team Data Retreat Institute, and the Reading First Summit. CORE consultants provided ongoing professional development to coaches at the schools; coaches worked with their teachers; and district coordinators helped to coordinate CORE visits, conducted monthly coach and principal meetings, and provided other support to Reading First schools.

- Coaches, teachers, and principals found the summit to be of high quality and relevant to their work; only about a third of them reported the content as "mostly review." While almost all coaches and principals attended the summit, fewer than half of the teachers (49%) attended the entire summit.

- Principals were pleased with the quality and amount of all of their training in instructional leadership that they received this year.
    - Reading Leadership Team Data Retreat training was especially useful.
    - While the Reading First Summit generally met their needs, only 59 percent believed it provided them with useful training in observing teachers and providing feedback; fewer agreed that it provided them with useful tools for working with resistant teachers. Only about one-third of the principals (36%) agreed that the Reading First Summit did a good job of addressing English language learner (ELL) issues.
    - Principals were less pleased with CORE's Leadership Institute.

- Coaches were less enthusiastic about their overall coach training this year.
    - Like principals, coaches praised the Reading Leadership Team Data Retreat training.
    - Coaches wanted more and better quality coaching training, specifically as it related to working with resistant teachers, providing constructive feedback, conducting classroom observations, and supporting differentiated instruction. Less than one-third of the coaches (30%) thought that the summit adequately addressed ELL issues.

- Coaching was the primary vehicle for school-level professional development for teachers.
  - o Coaches appeared to have increased the frequency by which they provided demonstration lessons, and teachers appreciated this. Coaches continued to observe teachers and provide them feedback. They also regularly administered, scored, and interpreted assessment results and provided and/or monitored interventions
  - o On the other hand, infrequent coach observations were the norm, as was reported by more than half of the teachers (55%)—these teachers reported being observed a few times a year, at most.
  - o Frequency of classroom observation varied widely among Reading First schools.
  - o The majority of teachers usually found the assistance they received from their coach helpful; still, they requested additional training in student engagement, differentiated instruction, comprehension, and the effective use of intervention programs.

- About 40 percent of the teachers at the Reading First Summit agreed that it did a good job of addressing English language learner (ELL) issues.

- While infrequent, school-level training for teachers from contracted experts/trainers and district reading staff members was adequate and tended to be more helpful than not.

- One way for the state to increase its responsiveness to the needs of its Reading First schools might be to provide Reading First training to new teachers.

CHAPTER THREE:
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Under Reading First, schools received professional development and technical assistance in multiple ways. The state provided statewide training through several major conferences:

- Consortium on Reading Excellence (CORE) Leadership Institute. This three-day institute was held in late September 2006, for principals.

- CORE Coach Institute. For coaches, this three-day training was conducted in early October 2006.

- Reading Leadership Team Data Retreat. Schools' Reading Leadership Teams, consisting of principals, coaches, and teachers, attended this retreat in late November. At the two-day retreat, participants delved deeper in their schools' data.

- Alaska Reading First Summit. Open to Reading First and non-Reading First school staff members, this two-day summit was conducted in March 2007.

The majority of schools also received further ongoing professional development from CORE throughout the year. CORE visited all of the schools in Fairbanks, and five of the six schools in Anchorage (one Anchorage school had *Success for All* and received other technical assistance from that program). Most of these schools received more than one visit. CORE consultants provided professional development and technical assistance to coaches on a range of topics, focusing on school needs. A strong focus was working with coaches on modeling, and helping coaches to conduct walk-throughs. However, in Lake and Peninsula, the situation was different. Because of its rurality, CORE made one visit in late September; and found it quite difficult to relate to its context; as a result, it discontinued its contract. The state Reading First coordinator then continued technical assistance to Lake and Peninsula, and made another visit later on in the year. The schedule of CORE site visits can be found in Appendix F**.**

At the district level, district coordinators helped to coordinate the CORE site visits and organized monthly principal and coach meetings. They also worked with their district to provide other kinds of support to Reading First schools, such as analyzing assessment data and supporting core reading and intervention programs. At the school level, teachers received training from their coaches, and other technical assistance from district staff members, publishers' representatives, and external consultants. They also participated in teacher study groups at their schools. In Lake and Peninsula, there were two itinerant coaches. Each coach worked with a separate set of schools in the district, visiting each school about once a month. They would go out for a week then return for a week to their

home site. This was a very different coaching scenario than occurred in the other two districts.

This chapter reports on the delivery, relevance, and reception of Reading First professional development and technical assistance provided in Year 4 of the project. Information was collected from surveys of principals, teachers, and coaches; interviews with principals and coaches; focus groups with teachers; and feedback information collected at the Reading Leadership Team Data Retreat and the March 2007 Reading First Summit. The chapter concludes with a review of technical assistance provided by state project staff members.

Reading First Summit

This year, attendance at the Reading First Summit was again extended to other districts and schools that had shown an interest in Reading First but were not funded in the original and only cohort. More than 200 school staff members attended the summit. Through a series of whole group sessions and small group, break-out sessions, different topics were addressed including: increasing student fluency, increasing student engagement, differentiated instruction, comprehension strategies, effective teaching strategies, sustaining Reading First, and using progress monitoring data to inform instruction.

Workshop evaluations were administered to all participants; however, with few exceptions, it was not possible to differentiate between respondents from Reading First schools and non-Reading First schools. A total of 143 participants returned questionnaires at the end of the first day, and 87 returned them at the end of the second day.

Overall, results were quite positive and most sessions were well received. The most highly rated presenter at the summit was Anita Archer who did both large group and small group sessions on topics such as *Refining Our Practice, Increasing Student's Reading Fluency,* and *Student Engagement Strategies.* In responses to an open-ended question about what they liked most about the conference, participants overwhelming identified Anita Archer's style, pace, humor, and expertise. They found the context to be very applicable to their own situations, as exemplified by this comment:

> *Anita Archer was fantastic. Her energy was contagious and she brought a lot to the table for us to think about. Information presented is easily applicable for immediate use in the classroom and is usable for a wide range of grade levels and abilities.*

Some suggestions for improvement included:

- Have more teachers attend

- Have more sessions on what to do with ELL and special education students; more information on Response to Intervention

- Shorten plenary sessions to free up time for more break-out sessions

A copy of the summit agenda and more detailed results from the summit evaluation can be found in Appendix G.

Feedback about the Reading First Summit was also captured on the surveys of principals, teachers, and reading coaches. Additionally, interviews with principals and coaches included discussions about professional development. While most of the coaches (92%) and the majority of principals (79%) attended all of the Reading First Summit, fewer than half of Reading First teachers did so (49%). Last year 31 percent of teachers did not attend the Reading First Summit; this year 44 percent did not.

When asked about their attitudes towards the Reading First Summit, staff members were more positive this year compared to last year, and mostly in agreement. There was unanimous agreement that the Reading First Summit was relevant to their work (100% of principals, 100% of coaches, and 89% of teachers) and consisted of high quality presentations (100% of principals, 92% of coaches, and 93% of teachers). Principals and coaches were very likely to have had time to confer with their colleagues (92%), while a smaller proportion of teachers reported these opportunities (63%). Less than a third of principals (25%), coaches (18%), and teachers (31%) agreed that the Reading First Summit was "mostly review." Figure 3-1 presents these results.
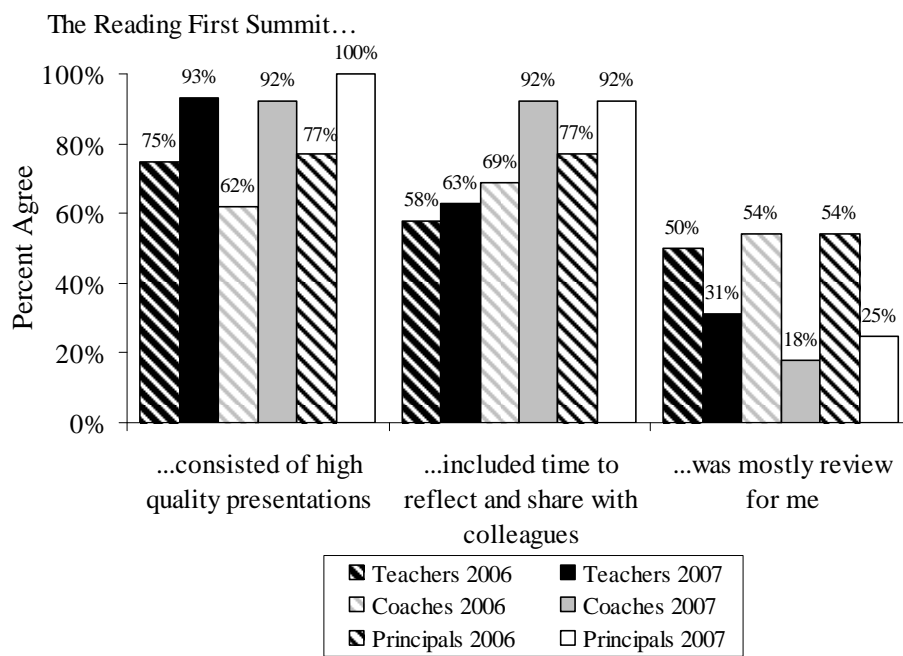
Figure 3-1. Attitudes Regarding the Reading First Summit

Survey data revealed other interesting information about the Reading First Summit:

- The majority of teachers (86%) continued to agree that the Reading First Summit provided them with instructional strategies that they subsequently used in their classrooms.

- Similar to last year, approximately one-third or more of coaches, principals, and teachers agreed that the Reading First Summit did a good job of addressing English language learner (ELL) issues (30%, 36%, and 42%, respectively).

- Principals found the Reading First Summit to be better differentiated to the needs of different groups than did coaches (75% compared to 46%).

Professional Development for Principals and Coaches

In addition to the Reading First Summit, principals and coaches from Reading First schools were given other training. For the 2006–2007 school year, this included the CORE Leadership Institute for principals and the CORE Coach Institute. In addition, both principals and coaches received training at the November Reading Leadership Team Data Retreat along with teachers.

At the November Reading Leadership Team Data Retreat, participants provided feedback at the end of the retreat. Because responses of principals and coaches can not be disaggregated, overall results are presented here. A total of 54 school staff members who represented Reading Leadership Team membership attended the retreat. Over 40 percent of the participants were teachers; 17 percent were coaches; and 9 percent were principals. The remaining 30 percent were special education/resource teachers, bilingual teachers, Title 1 staff members, counselors, and aides. The organization and content of the presentation were very highly rated. In open-ended comments, participants praised the presenters and found the in-depth specifics of DIBELS data and data problem-solving quite useful. Participants reported that they would use the data to better meet student needs, improve instruction, and guide intervention programs. Participants offered suggestions for improvement, such as being paired with another school using the same core curriculum. For more detailed information and a complete listing of participants' comments, please see Appendix H.

Leadership Professional Development for Principals

Overall, the majority of principals were pleased with the quality and amount of all the training in instructional leadership that they received this year. While the Reading Leadership Team Data Retreat training was very well received, just over half of the principals (53%) were pleased with CORE Leadership Institute. The majority of principals agreed that the Reading First Summit met their specific needs as a Reading First principal (67%); but fewer principals in 2007 than in 2006 believed that it provided

them with useful training in observing teachers and providing feedback (59% in 2007 compared to 69% in 2006), and fewer still agreed that it provided useful tools for working with resistant staff members (41% in 2007, compared to 33% in 2006). Principals who were not pleased with the amount of instructional leadership training unanimously agreed there was "too little." Table 3-1 shows these findings.

Table 3-1
Perception of Principals' Instructional Leadership Training, Spring 2007

I am very pleased with…	Percentage Agreeing/ Strongly Agreeing
The November 2006 training for School Leadership Teams (i.e., Reading Leadership Team Data Retreat)	85%
The Leadership Institute training provided by the Consortium of Reading Excellence (CORE) in September 2006	53%
The quality of training in instructional leadership that I received through the state and Reading First this year.	85%
The amount of training in instructional leadership that I received through the state and Reading First this year.	78%

Coaching Training for Coaches

Coaches were not as enthusiastic about their coaching training this year. Half of coaches were pleased with the "quality" of training they received in coaching this year, only a fifth were pleased with the "amount" (Table 3-2). Again, the training at the Reading Leadership Team Data Retreat was extremely well received, but just half of the coaches were pleased with CORE's Coach Institute. While over three-quarters of the coaches (77%) agreed that the Reading First Summit met their specific needs as a Reading First coach, the majority *disagreed* that the Reading First Summit provided them with useful training in coaching methods (54%), and still more *disagreed* that it provided useful tools for working with resistant staff (61%). This was a higher percentage than in 2006— 61 percent compared to 54 percent, respectively. Coaches, who were not pleased with the amount of coaching training, unanimously agreed there was "too little."

Table 3-2
Perception of Coaches' Coaching Training, Spring 2007

I am very pleased with…	Percentage Agree/Strongly Agree
The November 2006 training for School Leadership Teams (i.e., Reading Leadership Team Data Retreat)	100%
The Leadership Institute training provided by the Consortium of Reading Excellence (CORE) in September 2006	50%
The quality of training in coaching that I received through the state and Reading First this year.	50%
The amount of training in coaching that I received through the state and Reading First this year.	21%

Still, when coaches were asked about topics in which they felt the most need for professional development in the 2007–2008 school year, only 21 percent indicated "coaching methods." Instead, coaches were concerned with how to provide constructive feedback (50%), conduct classroom observations (43%), support differentiated instruction (43%) and student engagement (36%), and interpret and work with assessment results (29%).

This last request presents a bit of a conundrum, as the majority of interviewed principals and coaches commented that the Reading Leadership Team Data training was valuable in terms of looking at data. One such coach commented:

> *The training this year was in problem-solving at the school level and data analysis. Training was based upon a whole school view and was useful. We needed to move to the next level of looking at data in depth, and that training was helpful in this regard. (Coach)*

Professional Development for Teachers

The Reading First Summit was the major state-sponsored training for teachers. However, most Reading First professional development for teachers occurred at the school and/or district level, provided mostly by the reading coach, but sometimes by district staff members, publisher representatives, or other external consultants. Teachers continued to report that the professional development they received from Reading First focused on what happened in their classroom (80%) and that it was sustained and intensive (66%). Both of these items witnessed slight increases from last year.

School-level training for teachers, beyond what was received by the coach, was infrequent. Coaches were more likely to report the presence of contracted

experts/trainers (57%) than district reading staff members (46%) or publisher representatives/trainers (36%). Nonetheless these trainings were more likely to be helpful than not, and the majority of coaches reported the frequency of visits from CORE to be "just right" (78%) as opposed to "too much" (22%).

Table 3-3 shows that the frequency with which teachers received coaching assistance in a variety of areas changed little from last year (except that demonstration lessons occurred slightly more frequently). The majority of teachers found all of these activities helpful, with the largest gains in demonstration lessons, feedback provided after a classroom observation, and assistance administering and scoring assessments.

Table 3-3
Teacher Perceptions of Assistance

Over the 2006-2007 school year, how helpful was/were:	Percentage* Usually or Always Helpful (Percentage point change from 2006)	Percentage Did Not Take Place (Percentage point change from 2006)
Observations of classroom during reading block by reading coach	**	4% (-3)
Feedback on your instruction provided by the <u>coach</u> after observation of your classroom?	82% (+19)	17% (-3)
Assistance from the coach in administering and scoring student assessments?	84% (+11)	17% (+2)
Assistance from the coach in interpreting assessment results?	87% (+5)	9% (+6)
Assistance from the coach in providing quality interventions?	79% (+5)	13% (+3)
Assistance from the coach in monitoring the effectiveness of interventions?	82% (+9)	18% (+5)
Demonstration lessons provided by your reading coach?	78% (+26)	25% (-9)

*   Percentage calculated only on the number of teachers who indicated the activity took place.
**   Item not asked in this way.

While the table above suggests that almost all teachers (96%) were observed by their reading coach at least once, the frequency of observations varied a great deal. In 2006–2007, 45 percent of teachers were observed at least monthly by their reading coach—no change from last year. The majority of teachers were observed, *at most*, a few times a year (55%). Feedback after observations was similar—48 percent of teachers received feedback at least monthly and 53 percent received it, *at most*, a few times a year.

While some of the variation in frequency occurred within schools (some teachers were observed more regularly than others), there was also great variation among schools—some coaches observed more than others. For example, in about one in three schools (36%), the coach observed all, or almost all, teachers regularly; in a contrasting group

(43% of schools), few or no teachers were observed regularly. These percentages are displayed in Table 3-4. Regardless of this variation, teachers wanting more frequent classroom observations from their coach were in the minority (22%).

Table 3-4
Proportion of Teachers Regularly Observed

Proportion of Teachers in the School Who Were Regularly* Observed	Percentage of Schools
All or almost all teachers (at least 80%)**	36%
Many teachers (60-79%)	14%
Some teachers (40-69%)	7%
Few or no teachers (less than 40%)	43%

 * Regularly is defined as at least monthly.
** All of Lake and Peninsula teachers reported they were regularly observed.

What might explain the many schools where not all teachers were observed regularly? Survey and interview data revealed four possible explanations:

- Barriers to classroom observations existed.
- Selection of teachers to work with was uneven.
- Coaches focused on other job responsibilities.
- Coaches were uncomfortable observing.

Barriers to classroom observations. Some coaches described barriers, which included the remoteness of the schools in the district, administering assessments, and working with groups of students.

Selection of teachers to work with. While one coach said they worked with all teachers equally, usually they described working with some teachers more than others. Most often, they worked with novice teachers or those new to Reading First. Some coaches used data to identify individual or groups of teachers with whom to work with. Finally, some coaches said they worked most often with teachers who were "willing to work with me," or those who asked for assistance.

Coaches focused on other job responsibilities. According to coaches, other coaching tasks often took them away from classrooms. These included data analysis and testing, interventions, meetings, and paperwork. The ways in which coaches used their time is described in detail in Chapter 4.

Coaches uncomfortable observing. Just over half of the coaches (57%) agreed that they were comfortable observing teachers and providing feedback; the majority of those remaining were either neutral (29%), or disagreed (14%). Two common requests from coaches for more professional development were for providing constructive feedback and conducting classroom observations.

One coach commented:

> *I could use more training centered on classroom observations. I'd like to*
> *know how to approach and assist teachers at different levels of teaching*
> *proficiency. (Coach)*

A related finding was that teachers who were observed more frequently by coaches were more positive about their reading coach. As shown in Table 3-5, regularly observed teachers were more likely to view their coach as knowledgeable and their ally, and were more likely to report that their coach helped them become more reflective and increased their understanding of how children learn to read.

Table 3-5
Teachers' Perceptions of Coaches, by Frequency of Observation

Coach Characteristic	Percentage of Teachers Agreeing/Strongly Agreeing	
	Teachers who were not observed regularly* by coach	**Teachers who were observed regularly* by coach**
Coach is knowledgeable resource about reading research and practice	83%	94%
Coach is ally, even when providing critical feedback	80%	94%
Coach has helped me become more reflective	60%	77%
Coach has increased my understanding of how children learn to read	59%	69%

*Regularly is defined as at least monthly.

In all visited schools, most teachers felt their coach had made a difference. Many teachers pointed to specific assistance they had received: giving demonstrations and modeling; reviewing data and brainstorming solutions; being a "sounding board" or "another set of eyes;" and helping develop strategies for improving engagement, blending, and using templates.

> *The coach position needs to stay; we couldn't do this without her. When I*
> *have specific needs, she helps. For example, she gave me a great deal of*
> *training on the use of the templates. Coming in and being new, I could not*
> *have done it without her. I could ask questions and she would answer*
> *them thoughtfully; she'd come into my classroom and model lessons and*
> *acquire any resource that I need. She has caused me to reflect on my own*
> *teaching. (Teacher)*

Finally, teachers were also surveyed about their staff development needs for the following school year. Like coaches, student engagement and differentiated instruction were frequently cited (40% and 38%, respectively). A high percentage of teachers also requested training in comprehension and the effective use of intervention programs this year (40% and 32%, respectively).

Teacher Collaboration

Teacher collaboration did not increase in 2006–2007. Slightly more than half of the teachers (58%) reported that another teacher observed in their classroom once or a few times a year, and 53 percent reported that they observed in another teacher's classroom once or a few times per year.

Technical Assistance from the State

Oversight of the Alaska Reading First program is the responsibility of the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development. Responsibilities include funding districts, programmatic oversight, technical assistance, and the provision of training. The department is also responsible for ensuring that the program is evaluated. One state Reading First Coordinator oversees the entire program. While there are no regional coordinators, as is the case in other states, there are district coordinators who assist the state Reading First Coordinator.

When principals and coaches were asked if the state was responsive to the needs of their schools, 93 percent of principals agreed (up from 75% last year); a smaller proportion of coaches agreed (75%). While no principals or coaches disagreed that the state was responsive to their needs; about two-thirds of coaches reported the state failed to provide their school with technical assistance this year. Still, all, or nearly all, of the coaches trusted the state coordinator with information about their reading program (100%); felt she understood their school, programs, and culture when making recommendations (93%); and found her support and input extremely valuable (93%). Finally, a common theme expressed, especially by interviewed coaches, but by a principal as well, was the need for training of new Reading First teachers in Alaska. On average, 30 percent of the K-3 teachers in Alaska's Reading First schools were new this year.

CHAPTER FOUR:
LEADERSHIP AND SCHOOL-LEVEL STRUCTURES

HIGHLIGHTS

- Most district coordinators regularly attended Reading First professional development and meetings, and usually found them helpful. All of the district coordinators reported that state expectations were clear and reasonable, and that state Reading First project staff members were responsive to their district's needs. Communications was one area where improvements may be warranted.

- District coordinators and principals reported high levels of district support to Reading First schools; however, coaches were less likely to cite the receipt of technical assistance and reading-related professional development.

- The influence of Reading First in the district's non-Reading First schools was mixed: all of the components were implemented in some of the non-Reading First schools. The use of a core reading program and the provision of professional development in reading were the most commonly implemented components, and the presence of a reading coach and a system for progress monitoring students were the least commonly reported Reading First components in non-Reading First schools.

- Principals highlighted three roles they thought were most important—provide leadership, ensure fidelity, and use data. While the vast majority of principals supported the instructional changes under Reading First, the frequency of their classroom observations and their attendance at RLT and grade-level meetings was limited. Principals continued to report "frequent" use of assessment data for a variety of purposes. However, compared to last year, there were substantial decreases in principals' "very frequent" use of data to match students to interventions, in their meetings with parents, and looking at schoolwide (K-3) trends.

- Coaching, and collecting and using data, were the most common time allocations reported by coaches. These activities took about half of their time. If coaches felt they were unable to fulfill their coaching responsibilities, it was most often attributed to working directly with students during the reading block.

- School-level collaboration appeared to be more fruitful at grade-level rather than RLT meetings. Except for one school, all schools had RLTs in place; but the extent to which they functioned differed. On the other hand, monthly grade-level meetings, usually with the coach present, were likely to occur; in some schools, teachers were leading these meetings.

- Teacher buy-in to Reading First is waning. Teacher support for Reading First has steadily declined since 2005, with *three in five* teachers now expressing strong support for Reading First, down from *three in four*. Teachers continue to question the accuracy and validity of the DIBELS.

- Data use is pervasive. Schools regularly used assessments for screening, diagnosing, and progress monitoring students. DIBELS was most commonly used, but core program and CORE assessments were also cited. Teachers and coaches administered progress-monitoring assessments to intensive students "very regularly," to strategic students "regularly," and to benchmark students "frequently."

- Coaches and teachers used these data for a variety of purposes. Most frequently, they were used when making decisions about interventions. When communicating about students, teachers used data with colleagues and parents, and coaches used data with teachers. This year, coaches were less likely to always use data when making decision about student grouping, but teachers were slightly more likely to do so—this may be a task coaches are transferring to teachers. Teachers and coaches were least likely to use data when making decisions about modifying lessons from the core program.

- In 2006–2007, sustainability was addressed at the Reading First Summit and during RLT meetings. While teachers were optimistic about the sustainability of a variety of Reading First components—most notably, interventions, ongoing professional development in reading, the 90-miunute reading block, grouping, the core program, and the way reading was taught—they were least optimistic that the coach and RLT would remain. Only about one-half of the principals and coaches agreed that Reading First instructional changes would be sustained.

CHAPTER FOUR:
LEADERSHIP AND SCHOOL-LEVEL STRUCTURES

School and district leaders are responsible for developing structures and systems that encourage collaboration and assist individuals in implementing change. In Reading First schools in Alaska, these leaders include district coordinators, principals, and coaches. This chapter examines the roles of these leaders by first looking at what they perceive the state's expectations are for their work and how well they believe they are able to meet these expectations. Second, the chapter discusses the state expectations for teams within Reading First schools, especially the Reading Leadership Team (RLT) and grade-level teams, and how these teams meet these expectations. The chapter includes an examination of evidence of the use of assessment data, and concludes with a discussion on sustainability.

Districts and District Coordinators

Alaska's 14 Reading First schools are located in three districts—Anchorage School District, Fairbanks School District, and Lake and Peninsula School District. The first two districts are urban, and the latter one is rural and remote. Districts range in size from 14 to 60 elementary schools. Some schools are very small, serving only five to 10 students, with multi-grade classrooms; some principals and reading coaches are itinerant. There are three district coordinators—one in each district—working for Reading First. One of the three coordinators also worked as a Reading First coach. She is one of the two coaches in the Lake and Peninsula School District.

The District Coordinator

Each district was required by the grant to designate a district coordinator, who was supposed to participate in Reading First meetings and trainings and work to support the implementation of the grant in their district. All of the Alaska Reading First district coordinators, whose roles included reading coach, DIBELS coordinator, and elementary executive director, spent all of their time devoted to Reading First.

One responsibility that most district coordinators attended to was participation in Reading First professional development and meetings. All of the district coordinators attended the Reading Leadership Team Data Retreat in November 2006 and the Reading First Summit in March 2007. District coordinators usually attended other state meetings (see Table 4-1). While district coordinators were always informed of school visits made by the state Reading First Coordinator, only one district coordinator reported always participating in

these visits; the other two participated more often than not. All of these activities were rated as "usually" or "always" useful to participants.

Table 4-1
District Coordinators' Attendance of Reading First Trainings

Reading First trainings	Percentage of District Coordinators Attending Activities				Percentage Reporting Activities "Usually" or "Always" Useful
	Did not attend	Once	2-3 times	4 + times	
November 2006 School Leadership Team training	--	100%	--	--	100%
March 2007 Reading First Summit	--	100%	--	--	100%
Other statewide coach and principal meetings	33%	67%	--	--	100%
State meetings for district representatives	33%	67%	--	--	100%

All of the district coordinators reported that state expectations were clear and reasonable, and that the state Reading First project was responsive to their district's needs. However, two-thirds of the district coordinators indicated they could neither agree nor disagree that state the Reading First staff did a good job of communicating necessary information regarding Reading First to district staff members. One district coordinator commented:

> *I think our state does an excellent job in supporting our district. Our state director is very responsive to our requests for specific professional development. She has come to do training in DIBELS, and each year has provided quality training via CORE. The professional development offered at our statewide meetings is generally excellent, especially what was offered in March 2007. The only way that communication could be improved is by getting statewide meeting agendas out to us in a more timely fashion. (District Coordinator)*

Sufficiency of Supports Provided by the District

District coordinators felt that district support for Reading First was high, and they reported numerous examples of assistance provided to their schools. All of the district coordinators agreed that their district strongly supported the instructional changes occurring under Reading First. Furthermore, the majority, if not all, of the district coordinators reported supporting the four pillars of Reading First in their Reading First schools—professional development, leadership and use of data, instructional programs, and materials (see Table 4-2). Districts also monitored grant implementation; provided

grant management; assisted with proposal writing; and worked to ensure that major initiatives in the district did not contradict, or were aligned to, Reading First.

Table 4-2
Types of District Supports for Reading First, Reported by District Coordinators

Which of the following best describes your district's level of support for Reading First? (select all that apply)	
100% of Districts Reported	**67% of Districts Reported**
By providing professional development that is aligned with Reading First	By facilitating districtwide Reading First meetings for principals
By providing technical assistance to support school change	By having a district staff member designated as the Reading First "go-to" person
By analyzing student reading assessment data	By modifying district requirements to align with Reading First
By educating and galvanizing the community	By providing overall curriculum guidance
By supporting the core reading program	By providing grant management
By supporting intervention programs	By assisting with proposal writing
By monitoring grant implementation	

However, while principals corroborated this high level of support, coaches were less likely to do so. The vast majority of principals agreed that their district provided sufficient support for Reading First (79%), sent consistent messages (78%), and refrained from implementing major initiatives that contradicted or were not aligned with Reading First (86%).

On the other hand, approximately 50 percent of coaches reported receiving no technical assistance or reading-related professional development from their district reading staff during the 2006–2007 school year. Furthermore, only a third of coaches (36%) agreed their district refrained from implementing major initiatives that contradicted, or were not aligned with, Reading First.

Influence of Reading First in Non-Reading First Schools

Two Reading First districts had elementary schools with and without Reading First grants. District coordinators from these districts were mixed in their reports of the extent to which Reading First influenced and attributed to tension between these schools. While one district coordinator neither agreed nor disagreed that Reading First greatly influenced the reading program in their district's non-Reading First schools, nor acknowledged tensions between the schools, the other strongly agreed that Reading First influenced non-Reading First schools in the district, and disagreed that tensions existed between these schools.

This pattern continued when district coordinators reported the components of their Reading First program that were implemented in their non-Reading First schools. While

none of the non- Reading First schools implemented *all* components of the Reading First program, non-Reading First schools did implement some them. The use of a core reading program and the provision of professional development in reading were the most commonly implemented components. This was followed by the use of DIBELS, a 90-minute reading block, and the provision of systematic interventions. The presence of a reading coach and a system for progress monitoring students were the least commonly reported Reading First components in non-Reading First schools.

> *Because of the success of Reading First schools, it has been possible to use what we have learned from the Reading First model and to modify it with available resources for implementation across the district. The core curriculum and comprehensive assessment model, both build upon prior programs and processes. Reading First schools' successes have provided a motivation and momentum for the rest of our elementary schools for change. Because Reading First schools do have additional resources that non-Reading First schools don't have, we need to guard against comparing results, although we do look forward to seeing continuously increasing achievement as a result of our efforts. (District Coordinator)*

Principals in Reading First

Principals in Reading First schools are expected to serve as instructional leaders by being knowledgeable about reading and school change, observing classrooms frequently and providing teachers with useful feedback, and using data to inform decisions and make sure teachers do the same. They are also expected to model a high level of support for Reading First.

Interviewers asked principals to describe what the state expectations were, in their own words. While these interviews did not produce an exhaustive list of principal duties, they highlighted the roles that principals believed were important. Those most commonly cited were:

- **Provide leadership** to ensure students learn to read
- **Ensure fidelity** of grant implementation
- **Use data** to make decisions

This section is organized around these most frequently cited responsibilities.

Many principals, from whom these data were drawn, were experienced educators. The average number of years of experience as a principal was 11 years. Although the years of experience ranged from one year to 37, 14 percent of principals were new to the profession. Over a third of the principals (36%) were new to their schools this year.

Provide Leadership

There was almost universal support for Reading First among principals. Almost all principals (93%) strongly supported the instructional changes under Reading First, and just 18 percent believed the grant put excessive emphasis on their involvement in instructional matters. Furthermore, most teachers and coaches (at least 85%) saw their principal as a visible advocate for reading.

While interviewed principals reported meeting most expectations, survey data revealed that not all principals were attending school-level and grade-level meetings. While a quarter of principals (23%) "always" attended RLT meetings, the rest did so "sometimes" or "often." One principal reported that their school did not have a RLT. There were also mixed reports from teachers of how often principals attended grade-level meetings. Almost half of the surveyed teachers (42%) reported principals "seldom" or "never" attended these meetings, while just over a quarter (29%) said they did so "usually" or "always." In half of the visited schools, teachers reported that their principals attended grade-level meetings.

Ensure Fidelity

Interviewed principals felt that one of their main duties was to ensure fidelity to the grant and program, making sure there was a 90-minute block and that the materials and assessments were used correctly. While almost all of the interviewed principals felt that their classroom walk-throughs were a helpful way to ensure fidelity, one-half of them admitted that attending grade-level meetings was helpful in this regard, and a third relied on data and their coach for ensuring fidelity. As one principal commented:

> *I am in and out of classrooms frequently. I also look at lesson plans. I check to see if teachers are using the pacing guides. And I go to grade level meetings and participate in discussions about teaching and students. (Principal)*

The majority of surveyed principals (93%) reported they were comfortable observing and providing constructive feedback, and the majority of interviewed principals indicated that walk-throughs should receive priority. However, a smaller proportion of teachers this year than last year reported frequent observations. Teachers were far more likely to be observed less frequently (65%) than more frequently (35%), even though most teachers (90%) reported being observed *at least* once during the school year.

While the frequency of *at least monthly* observations was higher in 2007 than in 2005, but less than in 2006, the frequency of teachers receiving feedback from their principal following an observation was similar to that reported by teachers in 2005 (see Figure 4-1.) Still, the majority of teachers (71%) reported receiving feedback *at least once*, and the vast majority of them (82%) considered it to be "usually" or "always" helpful (82%).
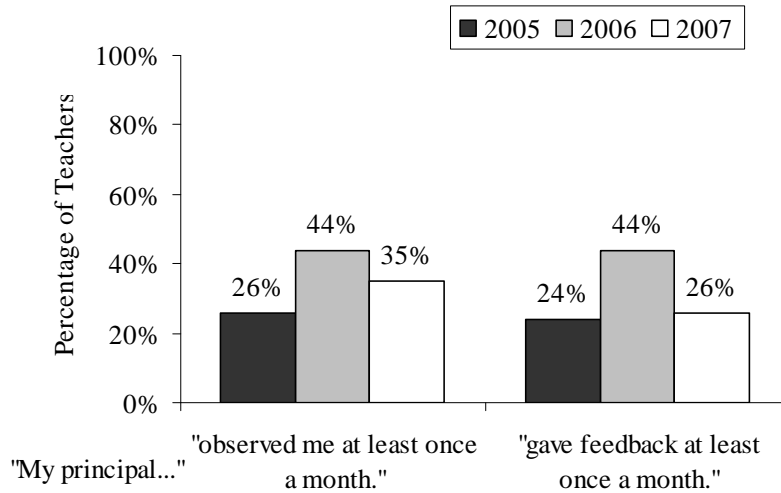
Figure 4-1. Teachers' Report on Frequency of Principal Observation and Feedback

Interviewed teachers were slightly more likely to indicate that their principal and coach followed up on their implementation of Reading First through coaching—classroom observations and modeling—than through principal observations and grade-level meetings. However, in at least half of these focus groups, teachers indicated that their principals did make frequent classroom observations and attended grade level meetings, where, according to these teachers, "a lot of what goes on in the classroom is discussed."

Use Data

Reading First emphasizes the use of data at all levels of decision-making. Principals saw the use of data as one of their primary roles in Reading First, but reported using it slightly less frequently in 2007 than in 2006. Survey data suggested that principals regularly ("usually" or "always") used data to communicate with teachers, to make decisions about grouping and interventions, to study schoolwide trends, and when meeting with parents. This year saw a larger percentage of principals than last year using data when communicating with teachers about their students. However, as shown in Table 4-3, there were decreases in 2007 from 2006 in the percentage of principals who said they "always" used data in several of the other areas.

Table 4-3
Principals' Use of Reading Assessment Data

I use the results of reading assessments (such as the DIBELS) when…	Percentage of Principals			
	Rarely/Never	Sometimes	Usually	Always (Percentage point change from 2006)
Communicating with teachers about their students	0%	7%	43%	50% (+12)
Communicating with teachers about their instruction	0%	14%	36%	50% (-4)
Making decisions about student grouping	0%	0%	23%	77% (+0)
Matching students to the appropriate interventions	0%	0%	29%	71% (-21)
Looking at schoolwide (K-3) trends	0%	7%	29%	64% (-13)
Meeting with parents	0%	14%	57%	29% (-17)

Note: Numbers may not add up to 100 percent due to rounding.

Coaches in Reading First

Like principals, coaches are important instructional leaders in Reading First schools. Coaches support teachers and promote effective instruction by: modeling effective lessons, observing teachers and providing constructive feedback, assisting with professional development, and serving as a resource manager for school staff members. Data regarding how coaches provided professional development are reported in *Chapter 3: Professional Development and Technical Assistance*. This section describes the background and expectations of coaches, as well as how coaches fulfill those expectations.

Most coaches in Reading First schools (86%) were employed full time. One school had two coaches, only one of which worked with K-3 teachers. Overall, coaches were experienced teachers, with an average of 13 years of teaching experience. The majority of coaches (64%) had advanced degrees—usually reading certificates and/or Master's degrees.

Coaches had an average of four years of coaching experience, although this ranged from one to 10 years. The average number of years of experience coaching in the coaches' current schools was slightly lower—three years on average. One coach was new to coaching and their school this year.

Expectations of Coaches and Work Load

When asked in interviews what the state expected of them, most coaches described multiple state expectations and responsibilities. For example, one coach said:

> *The state expects me to have an ongoing staff development program, to facilitate assessments, to get DIBELS data collected and entered into the University of Oregon database, to coach teachers, to do presentations, and to attend training.*

These multiple expectations translated into long working hours for many coaches. This year, the average number of hours worked per week remained about the same as in 2006 (44 hours), as did the percentage of coaches that reported working longer hours. About a third of the coaches continued to report working more than 50 hours a week.

During their working hours, interviewed coaches said their primary roles were to:

- Coach—observe teachers, monitor fidelity, mentor teachers, and provide professional development to staff

- Collect and analyze data and promote its use in the classroom

Coaching—observing, monitoring, mentoring, and providing professional development. The role of the coach in the provision of professional development to teachers is covered more thoroughly in Chapter 3 (Professional Development). Chapter 3 described a great variety in the frequency of coach observations. For example, almost half of coaches (43%) observed teachers fairly infrequently. In addition to the implications for teachers, infrequent observations probably affected coaches' ability to monitor program fidelity.

The variations in the frequency of classroom observations are part of a larger picture of how differently coaches spent their time on various responsibilities. Survey data revealed that, on average, coaches spent half of their time on both coaching and data-related work. Specifically, one-quarter of their time (26%) was spent on coaching, and another quarter (23%) was spent on data and assessment activities. The remaining time went to interventions (15%) and other duties (35%). Compared to 2006, coaches spent slightly less time this year on coaching and "other" activities, and slightly more time on data and assessment, and interventions.[1] (Table 4-4)

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[1] While these general trends help build an overall picture of how coaches in Alaska Reading First work, they also obscure the variation among coaches; some coaches spend most of their time working directly with teachers, while others let "managerial" tasks (paperwork and meetings) take up a substantial portion of their time (Deussen, Coskie, Robinson & Autio, 2007).

Table 4-4
Percentage of Time Spent on Coaching Tasks

Coach Responsibilities	2005–2006	2006–2007
One-on-one coaching (K-3)	22%	18%
Group coaching (K-3)	5%	5%
Coaching out-of-grade	1%	3%
Subtotal: Coaching	**28**%	**26**%
Administering/coordinating assessments	6%	7%
Managing data (entering, charting)	7%	7%
Using/interpreting data	8%	9%
Subtotal: Data & Assessment	**21**%	**23**%
Planning interventions	7%	8%
Providing interventions directly	7%	7%
Subtotal: Interventions	**14**%	**15**%
Planning for/attending meetings	17%	8%
Attending professional development	4%	4%
Paperwork	16%	15%
Unrelated (subbing, bus duty, etc.)	2%	8%
Subtotal: Other	**39**%	**35**%

Note: Numbers may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Even though they reported working long hours, some interviewed coaches said they had difficulty fulfilling all of their responsibilities, especially coaching. The most commonly stated reason for this difficulty was because these coaches were working directly with groups of students during the reading block. Although some coaches described additional responsibilities required by their school or district, such as bus duty or substitute teaching, these duties were rarely mentioned as large obstacles to completing their coaching work.

Despite the experience of these coaches, the clarity of their role, and the extent to which teachers understood their role, has not consistently improved over time, as shown in Figure 4-2. Specifically, 78 percent of coaches said their role as a reading coach was clearly defined. This marked a decline of seven percentage points from last year. Seventy-two percent of coaches said teachers at their schools understood the role of the reading coach—a decline of five percentage points from last year.
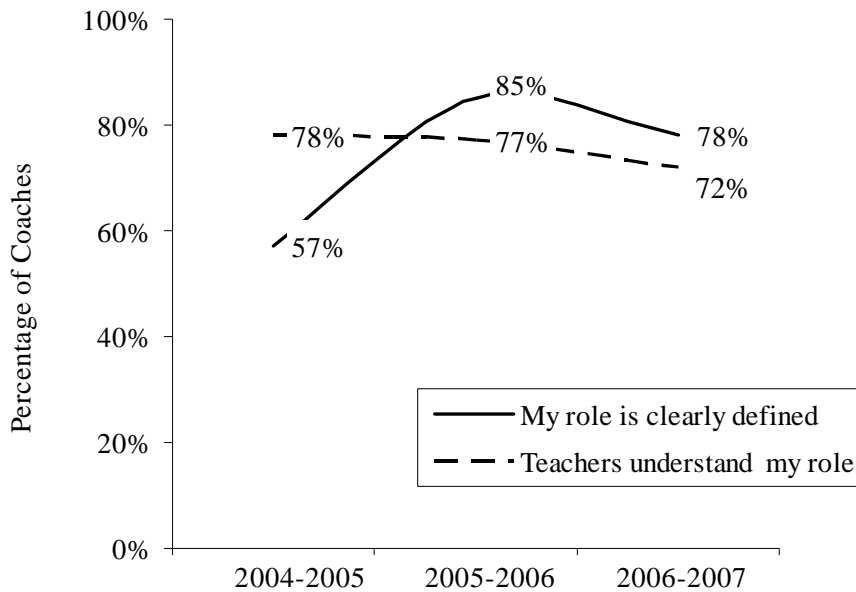
Figure 4-2. Coaches' Perceptions of Their Roles Over Time

Analyze data and promote data use. As was the case in 2005–2006, coach responses to survey questions revealed again this year that across schools, most of them used data for a wide variety of purposes (Table 4-5). There was an increase in the percentage of coaches who reported using data when communicating with teachers about their students and for selecting and measuring progress in interventions. There was a substantial decrease in the percentage of coaches who reported that they "always" used data to make decisions about grouping. Otherwise, the percentages changed little from 2006. When the categories of "usually" and "always" were combined, most coaches reported they used data for most of the activities listed. Compared to other activities, the following data activities were conducted *least* often by coaches:

- Communicating with teachers about their instruction—29 percent did this only "sometimes."

- Meeting with parents—40 percent did this "sometimes" or less often.

- Modifying lessons from the core program—50 percent did this "sometimes" or less often.

Table 4-5
Coaches Use of Reading Assessment Data

I use the results of reading assessments (such as the DIBELS) when…	Percentage of Coaches			
	Rarely/Never	**Sometimes**	**Usually**	**Always** (Percentage point change from 2006)
Communicating with teachers about their students	--	7%	43%	50% (+12)
Communicating with teachers about their instruction	--	29%	36%	36% (-5)
Making decisions about student grouping	--	--	43%	57% (-28)
Modifying lessons from the core program	17%	33%	33%	17% (+7)
Identifying which students need interventions	--	--	--	100% (+0)
Matching students to the appropriate interventions	--	14%	--	86% (+9)
Monitoring student progress in interventions	--	--	7%	93% (+16)
Helping teachers tailor instruction to individual student needs (i.e., differentiated instruction)	--	21%	36%	43% (+5)
Looking at school-wide (K-3) trends	--	18%	--	82% (+2)
Meeting with parents	10%	30%	20%	40% (+0)

Note: Numbers may not add up to 100 percent due to rounding.

Collaborative Leadership

While the coach and principal are important leaders in Reading First schools, they are also charged with creating a collaborative culture in which teachers and principals share decision-making. Reading Leadership Team (RLT) meetings and grade-level meetings can facilitate this collaboration. Informal communication throughout the school day can also increase shared ownership of Reading First. This section explores the collaborative culture at Reading First schools and how RLT meetings and grade-level meetings support collaboration.

Collaborative Culture

All coaches, and the majority of principals (69%) and teachers (79%) agreed that participating in Reading First helped their school develop a more collaborative culture. In the third year of Reading First implementation in Alaska, grade-level teams appeared to be more conducive to collaboration than did RLTs.

Reading Leadership Team

Each school is expected to have a RLT, which should include at least the coach, principal, and a teacher representative from each grade, K-3. Teams should meet at least monthly.

Except for one school, all schools had RLTs, and most met the state requirements for team membership. Membership included the coach (100% of schools), principal (93%), and, in at least 85 percent of the schools, a teacher from each grade K-3. The majority of the teams included special education teachers (71%), about a third of teams included teachers from grades 4-6 (29%), and a fifth included ELL teachers and Title I teachers (21%). While a third of the school's RLTs met monthly, 50 percent met less frequently.

In order to function well, RLTs are expected to rely on data, plan specifically and collaboratively, and be integrally involved in the implementation of the grant. Data suggested that this vision was met in some, but not all, schools.

- Most RLTs **relied on data**; 97 percent of teachers participating on RLTs said they talked about schoolwide data at RLT meetings.

- Some RLTs **planned specifically and collaboratively**. Some teachers reported their RLT made decisions about instruction within or across grades (56%), instruction for specific students (47%), and material purchases (50%).

- Some RLTs were **integrally involved in grant implementation,** though not all were described in this way. Some teachers (71%) reported their schools had a visible and effective RLT, and the majority of principals (79%) and some coaches (57%) said their school would not run effectively without the RLT. In addition, while all principals and coaches said attending RLT meetings was a good use of their time, a lower percentage of RLT teacher members (71%) agreed. Overall, half of all teachers (51%) felt they had a voice in their school's decision-making about Reading First.

Interview data corroborated that not all schools implemented RLTs, that membership varied, and that all did not meet monthly. Some of the interviewed coaches indicated that their RLTs relied on data, but none of the coaches described their RLT like the vision. The one coach who came closest indicated that their RLT and grade-level meetings were one in the same:

> *This is a very small school with two K-3 teachers; there is a Leadership Meeting that covers what we would think of as RLT and grade-level meetings. When I am onsite, it's specifically about reading. Sometimes it's about students, sometimes it's about the reading program as a whole, other times it's a professional development piece. For the most part, I try to include data in the meeting. (Coach)*

The majority of those interviewed indicated their RLT was not that functional:

> *The Reading Leadership Team meets quarterly rather than monthly. We haven't really implemented it; it's not as good as our grade-level teams. (Coach)*

Grade-level Meetings

Grade-level meetings promote collaboration by giving teachers who teach the same grade the opportunity to discuss teaching and learning. Most teachers (86%) reported grade-level meetings fulfilled this purpose. Furthermore, as shown in Table 4-6, most teachers found that all participant comments were welcome (85%), and many reported the meetings were a good use of their time (74%). These results were similar to last year.

Table 4-6
Teachers' Perception of Grade-level Meetings

At my school's grade-level reading meetings…	Percentage of Teachers Agreeing/Strongly Agreeing	
	2006	2007
We discuss the issues of teaching and learning that the participants identify as important.	81%	86%
All participant comments and viewpoints are welcomed.	83%	85%
We discuss the reasons for doing things, not just the requirements.	84%	87%
Regularly attending grade-level meeting is a good use of my time.	77%	74%

Reading First does not have a set requirement for the frequency of grade-level meetings, but 87 percent of teachers reported that they met at least monthly. In addition to teachers, most of these meetings included coaches; fewer included principals. Seventy-two percent of teachers said coaches "usually" or "always" attended these meetings, and 29 percent said principals "usually" or "always" attended.

Half of the interviewed coaches viewed themselves as facilitators or guides during grade-level meetings. However, a third of these coaches had passed that responsibility on to teachers.

In addition to coaches' roles as facilitators or guides, many teachers in focus groups said that grade-level meetings provided coaches and principals a place to listen to discussion and evaluate how well teachers were implementing Reading First.

Principals' attendance at grade-level meetings was less common, but most principals (86%) did agree that that attending them was a good use of their time. As one principal explained:

> *Attending grade-level meetings gives me an opportunity to become*
> *familiar with where my students are and to jointly come up with good*
> *ideas for improving student achievement. (Principal)*

Buy-In

Effective leaders within a reform effort can inspire participants to "buy into" the program and believe in what they are doing. All leaders of reforms also typically struggle with resistance to change. This section of the report addresses the degree to which principals, coaches, and teachers buy into Reading First, and the degree to which principals and coaches perceive teachers' resistance to be a challenge.

As in previous years, data indicated that coaches and principals supported Reading First more strongly than teachers (see Figure 4-3). For example, nearly all principals and coaches reported strongly supporting Reading First. Teacher support has steadily declined since 2005, with *three in five* teachers now expressing strong support for Reading First, down from *three in four*.

Principals: 100% (2005), 92% (2006), 93% (2007)
Coaches: 100% (2005), 100% (2006), 100% (2007)
Teachers: 76% (2005), 64% (2006), 61% (2007)
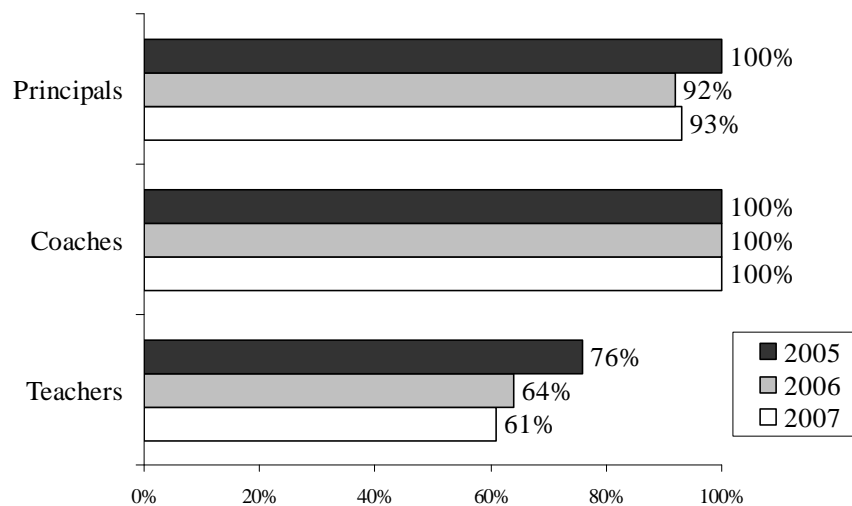
Percentage agreeing that they
"strongly support the instructional changes occurring under Reading First."

Figure 4-3. Perception of Instructional Changes Under Reading First

Similarly, a smaller proportion of teachers than principals and coaches were pleased that their school had a Reading First grant—87 percent of teachers, compared to all of the

principals and coaches. Some teacher reservations about Reading First had to do with philosophical or pedagogical objections to Reading First. Sixteen percent of teachers reported having these objections, while a similar proportion of principals (14%) had objections as well. No coaches indicated any objections.

At times, lack of buy-in caused difficulty within the program. On the survey, 43 percent of principals and 21 percent of coaches said overcoming teacher resistance was a challenge. In addition, 9 percent of coaches said teacher resistance was a reason that all eligible students did not get interventions, as required by Reading First.

Interviews with principals and coaches supported survey findings. While about half of coaches and principals described teachers' buy-in in their school as "high;" the other half described it as "mixed" or "medium." Principals and coaches, who described buy-in as high, typically attributed it to the fact that the staff wanted to apply for the grant. In a typical comment, one principal said:

> *Teachers were unanimous Reading First was the program for them. They wanted a curriculum, and Reading First came along at the right time. (Principal)*

Reasons given by principals and coaches for lack of buy-in varied. Principals were more willing to attribute limited teacher buy-in to a need for more time for the approaches to make a difference. Coaches, on the other hand, were more willing to attribute limited buy-in to personalities and a lack of willingness to try something new or let go of something old.

In their interviews, coaches also noted a variety of ways to effectively deal with resistance. The most commonly-mentioned strategies included opening the discussion with something positive, whether it be from a recent observation or a joke; talking with teachers to understand the root of the problem; and, when necessary, leaning on the support of the principal. Other means of working with resistance included relationship building, persistence, and using student data.

> *I keep plugging away at it—offer what I can do for them, over and over. At times when it gets difficult, then I have to bring the principal in. I try to have honest discussions and see why they are resisting—is it philosophical, or do they just not want to do the work? (Coach)*

School Use of Assessment Data

At the federal level, Reading First emphasizes the use of assessment data, not only to determine the longer-term impact of the program, but also to make key decisions about instruction. In 2006–2007, Alaska Reading First schools not only conducted the required benchmark assessments three times a year, but all schools also conducted very regular progress monitoring, using the *Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS)* and other assessments. The majority of schools reported organized systems for collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data. This section of the report describes the use of assessment data in Alaska Reading First schools in 2006–2007.

Administration of Assessments

Schools used a variety of assessments to screen students for reading difficulties, diagnose the nature of problems, and monitor student progress. The DIBELS was the most widely used measure for all three purposes. Assessments, included in the schools' core programs, were also used by more than half of schools for these purposes. In addition, coaches also reported that their school used Consortium on Reading Excellence (CORE) Multiple Assessments for screening (29%) and diagnosis (43%). Teacher-developed assessments were seldom used, according to coaches.

Benchmark assessments were administered by teams that varied from school to school. K-3 teachers were the most common team members (64%), followed by the coach (50%), paraprofessionals (36%), and specialists (21%). Progress-monitoring assessments were most frequently administered by teachers (86%) and coaches (71%), followed by paraprofessionals (50%) and specialists (29%).

Schools also met Reading First's requirement that student progress be monitored frequently. According to coaches,

- 100 percent of schools monitored intensive students at least every two weeks
- 71 percent of schools monitored strategic students at least every two weeks
- 50 percent of schools monitored benchmark students at least every four weeks

Most schools also had well-organized systems for administering, analyzing, and sharing DIBELS results, according to coaches and teachers. Fewer coaches and teachers reported the availability of data disaggregated by key demographic variables. (See Table 4-7.)

Table 4-7
Organized Data Systems in Reading First Schools

School Data Systems	Percentage	
	Coaches	Teachers*
Our school has an organized system for administering the DIBELS and other Reading First assessments.	93%	93%
Our school has an organized system for analyzing and sharing the results of the DIBELS and other Reading First assessments with teachers.	85%	94%
Our school has an organized system for reviewing reading assessment data that have been disaggregated by key demographic variables.*	42%	42%

  * Teachers item read, "I have seen our school's reading assessment data disaggregated (split up) by key demographic variables."

Accuracy of Assessment Results

Some teachers are skeptical regarding the validity, accuracy, and use of the DIBELS. While the vast majority of principals (100%) and coaches (93%) agreed that DIBELS was valid and accurate, and that Reading First did not overemphasize the importance of its results (72% and 100%, respectively), a third of teachers failed to agree in regard to accuracy and validity (34%) and felt that its use was overemphasized (39%).

Interviewed coaches reported that everyone who administered the DIBELS had been trained. In addition, the majority of surveyed coaches (86%) were confident that before each benchmark testing period, all members of their assessment team thoroughly understood the administration and scoring of the DIBELS. This was ensured by coaches putting systems into place, such as using the DIBELS' "integrity alignment document," offering a pretest review, and retesting a sample of students after testing to validate assessment team scores. Several interviewed coaches did report some concerns with specific test administrators, but at least they were aware of potential problems and were willing to address them.

Teachers' Use of Results

As in previous years, the percentage of teachers reporting they looked at reading assessment data frequently was large, with the majority (97%) saying that they looked at these data at least once a month. The frequency with which teachers looked at data increased slightly from 2006, with most teachers (74%) looking at data weekly (42%) or at least monthly (32%) (Figure 4-4).
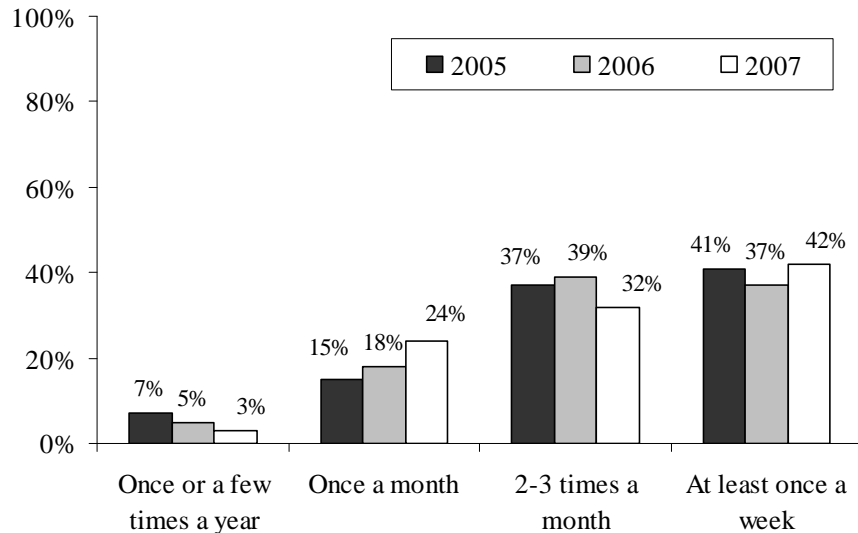
Figure 4-4. Frequency of Reading Assessment Use by Teachers

Teachers used reading assessment data extensively. The percentages of teachers reporting that they used data for specific purposes were similarly as high as last year, and had increased slightly. The most common tasks for using data "usually" or "always" were identifying students for, matching students to, and monitoring interventions. These were followed by communicating with colleagues about reading instruction and student needs. Teachers were least likely to use data when modifying lessons from the core program (64%). (See Table 4-8).

Table 4-8
Teachers' Use of Reading Assessment Data

I use the results of reading assessments (such as the DIBELS) when…	Percentage of Teachers			
	Rarely/ Never	Sometimes	Usually	Always (Percentage point change from 2006)
Grouping students into small instructional groups within my classroom	4%	9%	29%	57% (+3)
Communicating with colleagues about reading instruction and student needs	3%	7%	32%	58% (+2)
Looking at school-wide (K-3) trends	3%	19%	37%	41% (-1)
Meeting with parents	4%	9%	37%	50% (+4)
Modifying lessons from the core program	11%	25%	40%	24% (-1)
Identifying which students need interventions	2%	2%	19%	77% (+1)
Matching students to the appropriate interventions	2%	3%	32%	64% (+12)
Monitoring student progress in interventions	--	8%	28%	64% (-4)

Note: Between 1 and 9 percent of teachers reported "I don't do that" for each item. Those respondents were not included in the analyses for either year.

Sustainability

During the 2006-2007 school year, Alaska Reading First schools were in their third year of school-level implementation. One important feature of most federally funded initiatives is the requirement that grantees (in this case, the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development) take steps to insure the benefit of a program extends beyond the life of the grant. The department has taken initial efforts to insure that LEA sub-grantees provide for the "sustainability" of Reading First practices.

During the March 2007 Reading First Summit, there was a two-day break-out sessions on "Sustaining Reading First Outcomes Beyond Reading First Funding," facilitated by Stan Paine. The session included four parts:

1) Discussion of the concept of sustainability in the context of Reading First elements and what had worked for others

2) Identification of barriers to continuing each of the Reading First elements and how to overcome these barriers

3) Examination of organizational strategies to make change

4) Team work to develop a school plan for sustaining improved results over time using other resources

Almost two-thirds of the 22 participants found the session "good" or "excellent."
In addition, for the next school year (2007–2008), schools will receive their final funding.
However, schools will have the option of spreading these funds over the next 27 months
even though 2007–2008 school year will mark the last year of state-funded professional
development. This option will facilitate sustainability by giving schools additional time
to implement sustainability strategies with at least some financial resources.

Teachers were more optimistic about sustaining Reading First than were coaches and
principals. Teachers were asked which components of Reading First they believed
should continue beyond the grant (Table 4-9). Similar to last year:

- Teachers strongly believed that interventions should continue (80%).

- Ongoing professional development in reading, the 90-minute reading block,
  grouping, and the core program were also frequently cited as valued components
  (71%, 70%, 64%, and 64%, respectively).

- The reading coach and the RLT were rated as the *least* likely to continue beyond
  the grant (49% and 34%, respectively).

Unlike last year, the percentage of teachers believing that ongoing professional
development in reading should continue after their Reading First grant increased from
50 percent to 71 percent. Also, more teachers this cited the continuation of grade-
level meetings after Reading First, an increase from 50 percent to 60 percent.

Table 4-9
Teachers' Views of the Sustainability of Program Components

In your opinion, once your school no longer has the Reading First grant, should the following program components continue?	Percentage			
	Definitely not	Probably not	Probably yes	Definitely yes (Percentage point change from 2006)
Interventions	1%	1%	18%	80% (+2)
Ongoing professional development in reading	1%	1%	27%	71% (+12)
90-minute reading block	3%	4%	23%	70% (+3)
Grouping	--	3%	34%	64% (-1)
Core program	--	4%	32%	64% (+0)
Grade-level meetings	2%	9%	30%	60% (+10)
DIBELS	2%	3%	44%	51% (+0)
Reading coach	5%	16%	30%	49% (+4)
RLT	3%	13%	49%	34% (+2)

Another view of sustainability was provided by principals and coaches who were surveyed about the prospect of Reading First instructional changes continuing beyond the grant (Figure 4-5). Almost three-quarters of teachers (72%) disagreed that when their schools no longer had Reading First grants that they would go back to the way they were teaching reading before Reading First. On the other hand, a smaller proportion of principals (43%) and coaches (50%) agreed that the Reading First instructional changes would be sustained after the grant was over.
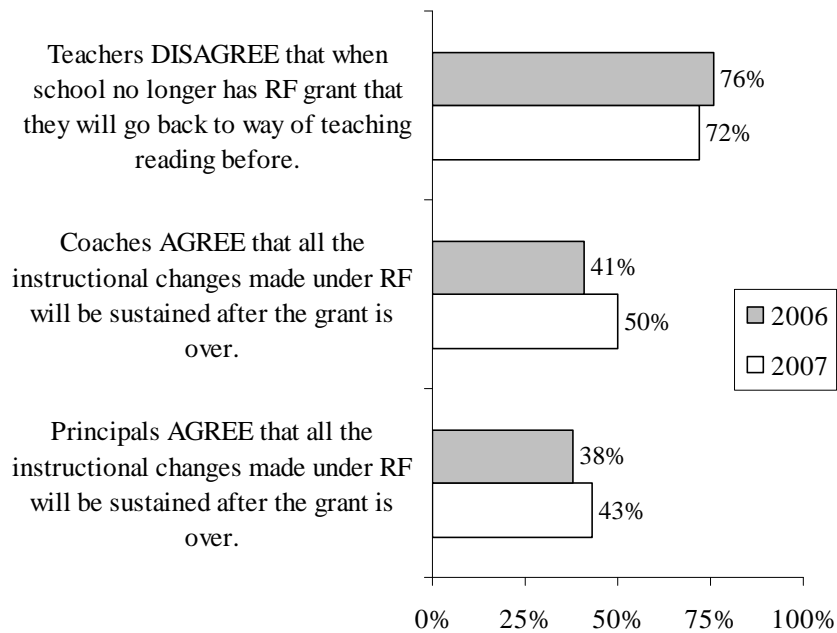
Figure 4-5. Staff Perceptions about Sustainability of Instructional Changes

Furthermore, sustainability was also a hot topic at RLT meetings—68 percent of teachers on RLTs cited discussing planning for sustainability after their Reading First funds disappeared. This represented a significant increase from last year when only 14 percent of the teachers reported such planning during RLT meetings.

Finally, praise for EEDs sustainability support varied. The majority of coaches (100%) and principals (67%) agreed that sustainability was addressed at the Reading First Summit, but apparently it was not enough. Only a quarter of principals (28%) and two-fifths of coaches (42%) were pleased with the amount of support from the state to address sustainability; two thirds of the district coordinators were.

Echoing the sentiment of the principals and coaches, one district coordinator commented:

> *The two-day session on sustainability offered at the Reading First Summit was an excellent way for schools to process a variety of ways and means for sustaining Reading First practices. Using available resources to continue a program that strongly relies on a full-time reading coach and enhanced staff development, however, is not going to be possible at most schools, due to a lack of resources. If the Reading First model is truly effective, the state should lobby for the resources to continue at existing sites and expand to additional schools and districts across the state. I would like to compliment the state on continuing to support Reading First practices with non-Reading First schools through efforts like funding CORE training for coaches and principals, which they did in fall 2006. (District Coordinator)*

CHAPTER FIVE:
INSTRUCTION AND INTERVENTIONS

HIGHLIGHTS

- All coaches, principals, and the majority of teachers believed that reading instruction in their schools had improved under Reading First; over two-thirds of teachers agreed that Reading First had significantly changed their own reading instruction.

- All students in grades 2-3 received at least 90 minutes of uninterrupted reading instruction; however, in about a third of the schools, kindergarten students did not; nor did students in one school's first-grade. Because Fairbanks had one-half day kindergarten classes, the district had a special waiver to provide a 60-minute block for benchmark students. In the Lake and Peninsula district, the reading block looked different because of multi-grade classes. Students did not receive 90 minutes of uninterrupted instruction, but rather received 30 minutes of one-on-one or two-on-one instruction with their teacher, followed by independent learning.

- Teachers taught from the core program and did so with fidelity. A few schools did not use a core reading program exclusively. Less than half of teachers (40%) regularly used templates. Teachers, coaches, and principals were quite satisfied with their core reading program.

- Because Alaska Reading First decided to provide students with exposure to grade-level materials, the 90-minute reading block was usually divided into two parts. Teachers spent the first 45 minutes on grade-level comprehension and vocabulary instruction, and then, for the next 45 minutes, students did "walk-to-read" for skills at their instructional level. This structure varied at Lake and Peninsula schools. No time guidelines for whole group versus small group have been set yet.

- Alaska Reading First teachers generally delivered instruction at student's instructional levels, but not as differentiated or targeted as possible. Teachers used small group instruction, but only 62 percent of teachers reported regularly differentiating instruction in their reading blocks. Differentiation was difficult in multi-grade classrooms.

- On average, teachers instructed slightly more than 15 students during the reading block. Two-thirds of the classrooms ranged in size from about 10 to 21 students

- Only 44 percent of teachers worked daily with paraprofessionals during the reading block; 41 percent of the teachers reported that they "never" worked with a paraprofessional during this time. Compared to last year, a smaller percentage of teachers this year had the assistance of paraprofessionals.

- "Walk-to-read" was not the norm in many schools. It was observed in less than one-half of the schools; almost a third of the coaches (29%) reported that their schools did not use "walk-to-read," and over a third (36%) reported "walk-to-read" was used in some grades or classes, but not all.

- Teacher collaboration via grade-level meetings was not as high as possible. Only 48 percent of teachers reported frequent attendance at these meetings. However, they reported high use of assessment data for communicating about reading instruction and student needs, and deciding about grouping.

- Teachers, coaches, and principals did not generally agree that Reading First was doing "an excellent job of meeting English language learners' needs." Schools' dissatisfaction related to two concerns—inadequate ELL materials, and lack of teacher knowledge and skills to meet the needs of ELL students.

- Based on classroom observations and survey results, teachers generally provided appropriate instruction in the "five essential components" of reading—phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. However, there seemed to be some trouble spots.

  1. Phonemic awareness instruction was a regular part of instruction across grade levels, indicating too much time and attention was devoted to this. Research indicates that most children do not require more than 20 hours of phonemic instruction in kindergarten and/or first grade

  2. Too much time was given to the practice of nonsense words. It was practiced *at least* "sometimes" by 42 percent of teachers; this defeats the purpose of the DIBELS assessment of reading nonsense words.

  3. While oral fluency was a regular part of most teachers' instruction, only 37 percent of teachers reported regularly doing fluency assessments, which is an important part of fluency instruction.

  4. As a regular part of their instruction, teachers did not focus much on "tier two" vocabulary words, the use of questioning strategies that require higher-order thinking skills, or the use of other research-based strategies to promote comprehension, such as look-back citations and identification of main ideas.

- Many teachers provided ample opportunities for student practice and quick transitions, and had effective classroom management. However, two coaches reported disruptive student behavior in their schools. Also, scaffolded instruction through modeling and questioning was a regular component of many, but not all, classrooms. While teachers monitored student understanding more frequently than they provided direct feedback, neither activity was at a very high level, given their importance. Finally, Round Robin was witnessed during two lessons—a practice discouraged by Reading First.

- Over 90 percent of the schools provided interventions to at least 80 percent of their strategic and intensive students. All intensive students received intensive interventions in 79 percent of the schools, and all strategic students received supplemental services in 69 percent of the schools. This shows a slightly stronger focus on intensive students than on strategic students. Of those schools not serving 100 percent of students eligible to receive interventions, 18 percent of the coaches indicated that insufficient staffing was the primary obstacle.

CHAPTER FIVE:
INSTRUCTION AND INTERVENTIONS

The ultimate goal of Reading First is to improve instruction so that all students are reading at grade level by the end of third grade. All coaches, principals, and the majority of teachers (81%) believed that reading instruction in their schools had improved under Reading First. Over two-thirds of the teachers agreed that Reading First had significantly changed their own reading instruction. Instruction in Reading First classrooms should ideally:

- Be delivered during an uninterrupted 90-minute reading block

- Use a core reading program

- Be differentiated and delivered at student's instructional level

- Cover the five essential components of reading

- Consist of high quality lessons and instruction

- Meet the needs of English language learners

Furthermore, for students who need additional support in reading, the school should offer interventions that should be delivered in small groups and targeted to students' specific needs.

In order to look more closely at what happens at the classroom level, this chapter examines the evidence to determine the degree to which schools are fulfilling the Reading First expectations for instruction. Teacher and coach surveys and site visits provided this information. In February, two evaluators conducted six site visits during which they interviewed the coaches and principals, visited 16 classrooms, and conducted six teacher focus groups, one at each school.

The 90-Minute Reading Block

In all Alaska Reading First schools, all students in second and third grade received at least 90 minutes of uninterrupted reading instruction. This was not true, however, for kindergarten students in 29 percent of the schools, and for first-grade students in one school. Because Fairbanks had one-half day kindergarten classes, the district had a special waiver to provide a 60 minute block for benchmark students. Strategic and intensive students received more instruction. In Lake and Peninsula district, the reading block looked different because their classes were multi-grade. While students did not receive 90 minutes of uninterrupted instruction, they did receive 30 minutes of either one-

on-one or two-on-one instruction with their teacher. The rest of the remaining reading time was spent doing the Waterford Reading program and in learning centers.

Most teachers (90%) reported that the reading block was strictly dedicated to reading. On surveys, 61 percent said that they *never* used this time to work on non-reading instruction or other tasks. Only a few (4%) reported that they used the reading block for other tasks "once a month," and 7 percent reported a higher frequency.

The Core Reading Program

Several core reading programs were used in Alaska Reading First schools. Seven schools used Houghton-Mifflin, five used Harcourt, one used Success for All, and one used Reading Mastery. In one school, Success for All was also used as an early intervention program; in a few schools, Reading Mastery was implemented in different classes together with another core program. The Anchorage School District is planning on implementing Houghton-Mifflin districtwide next year.

During site visits, evaluators saw the core reading program being used in all observed classrooms. According to 86 percent of the coaches, their schools used their core program(s) almost exclusively. Almost all teachers (91%) were using the core program regularly, and most teachers (75%) indicated that they closely followed the precise language in the teacher's manual. In the observed classrooms, 56 percent of the teachers were reading directly from the teacher's manual from the core reading program, and 19 percent briefly consulted their manuals. The remaining one-quarter of the teachers had their manuals out and/or open. In none of the classrooms was the teacher's manual not visible. Over 40 percent of the surveyed teachers used templates as a regular part of their teaching. Figure 5-1 shows these results.
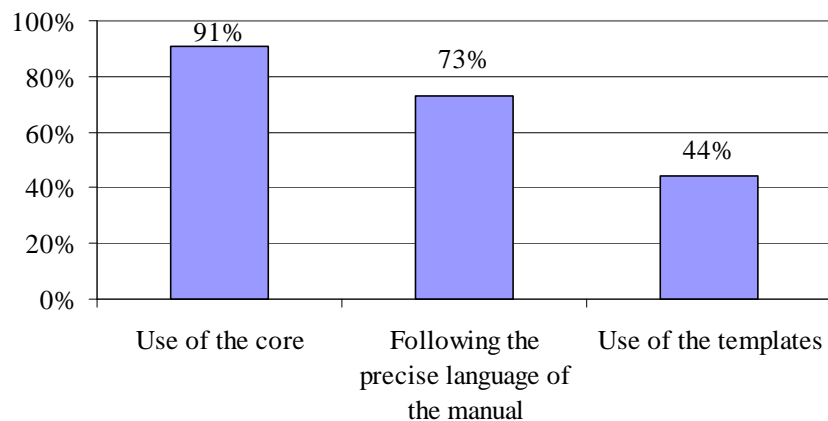
"...is a regular part of my teaching."

Figure 5-1. Teachers' Reported Use of the Core Program

Almost all principals (93%), coaches (93%), and most teachers (80%) agreed that they were satisfied with the core reading program being used at their schools.

Fidelity to the Core Reading Program

Regardless of satisfaction, teachers taught from the core program, and overall they did so with fidelity. In general, using the core program "with fidelity" meant that teachers followed the program as it was designed. This presented challenges, since core programs contained more materials than could be fit into a 90-minute reading block. Also, it was unclear to many teachers and coaches if teachers should be on the same page at the same time or if they were supposed to read a script. In Alaska Reading First schools, the state Reading First Coordinator reported that coaches facilitated discussions with teachers at grade-level meetings to identify the key components, themes, and related vocabulary in the core reading program that each grade level would teach. Together, they made sure they were teaching to these items every day.

While templates represented modifications to the original program, their use still constituted "fidelity." Templates are generic instructional routines designed to make the core program more explicit by standardizing procedures such as responses, signaling, pacing, and corrections. More than two out five teachers reported using templates as a regular part of their teaching. Usually templates were a part of instruction at schools using Houghton-Mifflin, but were not used with all students. Templates were used for strategic and intensive students in small groups. This year, two Harcourt schools started using templates. In classroom observations, evaluators only observed one teacher using templates.

Coaches clearly understood fidelity. Most coaches, when asked how they understood the word, described fidelity as "following the program as intended by the author" and "teaching the five components of reading, . . .and focusing on those pieces of the instructional program." One coach noted that, at first, teachers had a hard time maintaining fidelity; but when they began using templates, fidelity increased. Most coaches commented that expectations for fidelity had not changed, but rather teachers' understanding of fidelity had changed.

Differentiated Instruction (Delivery at Instructional Level)

Differentiated instruction ensures that students receive instruction at their appropriate level. Reading instruction at a student's *instructional* level is not necessarily the same as instruction at a student's grade level. Besides one-on-one instruction, flexible grouping is another strategy used to respond to individual instructional needs of students. Flexible grouping allows for instruction at the student's instructional level, since students can be changed from one group to another based on their changing instructional needs. Flexible

grouping can be accomplished by grouping within the regular classroom. In Reading First, it was aided by the practice of "walk-to-read," in which students leave their regular classroom to attend a reading group that is at their instructional level.

Instruction in Targeted Groups

Alaska Reading First teachers generally delivered instruction at student's instructional levels, but the instruction was not as differentiated or targeted as possible. According to 86 percent of the coaches, schools delivered "most" instruction at students' instructional level. In over one-half of the classroom observations (54%), evaluators saw small group instruction. Also, a majority of teachers (79%) reported regularly using small group instruction during the reading block. According to the majority of coaches (77%), all teachers in their schools differentiated instruction this year. On the teacher survey, a smaller percentage of the teachers (62%) than coaches reported that they differentiated their instruction during the 90-minute reading block as a regular part of their instruction. This was a slightly larger percentage of teachers than last year, when 56 percent reported this. Almost two out of every five teachers wanted additional professional development in differentiated instruction.

Teacher focus groups highlighted the challenges that teachers in multi-grade classrooms had with differentiated instruction, especially when students "have 20 minutes of direct instruction and then 70 minutes of independent work time during the reading block." On the other hand, another teacher of a multi-grade classroom noted that the small class size enabled her to adequately differentiate. Other teachers found that the reading block provided sufficient time to differentiate instruction, either through small group work or because of "walk-to-read."

While teachers were using flexible grouping to address student instructional needs, "walk-to-read" was not the norm in many schools. Site visitors observed "walk-to-read" in 44 percent of the observed classes. Almost a third of the coaches (29%) reported that their schools did not use "walk-to-read," and over a third (36%) reported "walk-to-read" was used in some grades or classes, but not all. In addition, almost one-half of the teachers (45%) described their groups of students in the reading block as having a wide variety of levels and differing instructional needs. In heterogeneous classes, teachers needed to differentiate their instruction or use small groups in order to deliver appropriate instruction.

Small Group Sizes

On average, teachers instructed slightly more than 15 students during the reading block. The smallest classroom contained three students, the largest contained 27 students. Two-thirds of the classrooms ranged in size from about 10 to 21 students.

This is a very small school with multi-grade classrooms. Due to the small size, we are able to adequately differentiate. Within one group, student has decoding down; so that student practices comprehension activities while others do template work. (Teacher Focus Group)

Having paraprofessionals during the reading block can help teachers to differentiate instruction. However, 44 percent of the teachers reported that they either "never" worked (41%), or worked only "a few times a year" (3%), with a paraprofessional during the reading block, while approximately the same proportion of teachers (44%) worked with paraprofessionals on a daily basis. Compared to last year, a smaller percentage of teachers had the assistance of parprofessionals this year (Figure 5-2).

Item: How often did a paraprofessional work with you during the reading block?
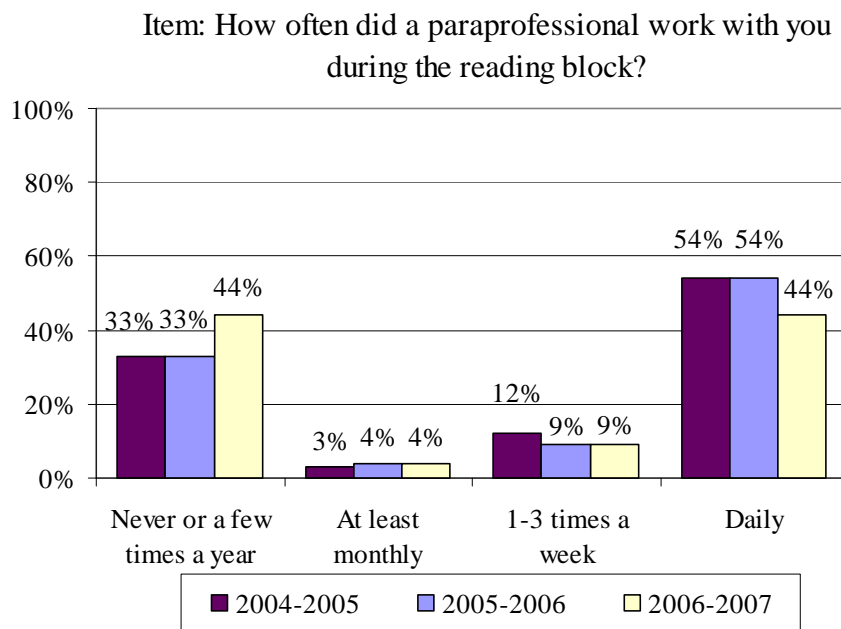
Figure 5-2. Frequency of Paraprofessionals in Classrooms

In the classrooms where lessons were observed, 60 percent, or nine out 16 classrooms, had no other adults. In those classrooms with other adults, the adults were generally working with students in small groups.

Teacher Collaboration and Use of Data

Differentiated instruction can only occur when schools have regular and reliable information from assessments about what students already know and what they need. The majority of teachers reported that their schools had an organized system for administering, analyzing, and sharing DIBELS results; but only 42 percent indicated that they had seen their schools' reading assessment results disaggregated. Also, only 48 percent of the teachers reported frequent attendance at grade-level meetings that were scheduled at least twice a month. It was at these meetings that data was usually most

often shared. On the other hand, almost all teachers indicated that they used assessment results when communicating with colleagues about reading instruction and student needs (89%), and for grouping students into small instructional groups (82%).

Meeting the Needs of English Language Learners

In Alaska, 15 percent of the Reading First students are English language learners. Overall, belief that Reading First was meeting the needs of ELL students was not overwhelmingly high. Over three-quarters of principals (77%), but less than one-half of the coaches (44%) and teachers (42%), agreed their Reading First program was doing an excellent job of meeting these students' needs. Of those remaining coaches and teachers, a third or more could neither agree not disagree (41% and 42%, respectively).

Because about 17 percent of Alaska's Reading First students are Native Alaskan, evaluators also asked coaches, in interviews during their site visits, about the extent that the program was meeting the needs of these students. Generally coaches commented on the low level of vocabulary skills and lack of rich life experiences that Native Alaskan students brought to school. They also stated that the lack of these skills was not isolated only to Native Alaskans, but was found in ELL students from other ethnic groups, such as Spanish-speaking students and Hmong students. Coaches noted that the state had conducted some training on addressing ELL issues in the beginning of the grant, but had not done anything recently. In fact, less than one-half of the teachers (42%) and about a third of the coaches and principals (30% and 36% respectively) thought that the Reading First Summit adequately addressed ELL issues.

Schools' dissatisfaction with the way Reading First served ELL students generally related to two concerns—inadequate ELL materials and lack of teacher knowledge and skills to meet the needs of ELL students. Many schools were concerned about the lack of adequate and appropriate materials for working with ELL students. Two-thirds of coaches and less than one-half of teachers (46%) felt their schools used supplemental and intervention materials that were well-matched to the needs of ELL students. In addition, only about one-half of the teachers (56%) thought that they had the necessary knowledge and skills to modify and supplement the core curriculum to meet the needs of ELL students.

Instruction in the "Five Essential Components"

In its influential report, the National Reading Panel (2000) identified five essential components of reading instruction—phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. While these five components did not represent everything students needed to know, they were both essential and had sufficient research behind them to inform professional development for teachers. The five components have since become a

central focus of Reading First, providing a way for schools to think about the different types of knowledge and skills that students need in order to read successfully.

Although observers saw instruction in all five components, some components received substantially more attention than others did. For example, evaluators saw phonics instruction in one-half of the lessons they observed, and comprehension instruction in three-quarters of the lessons (see Figure 5-3).
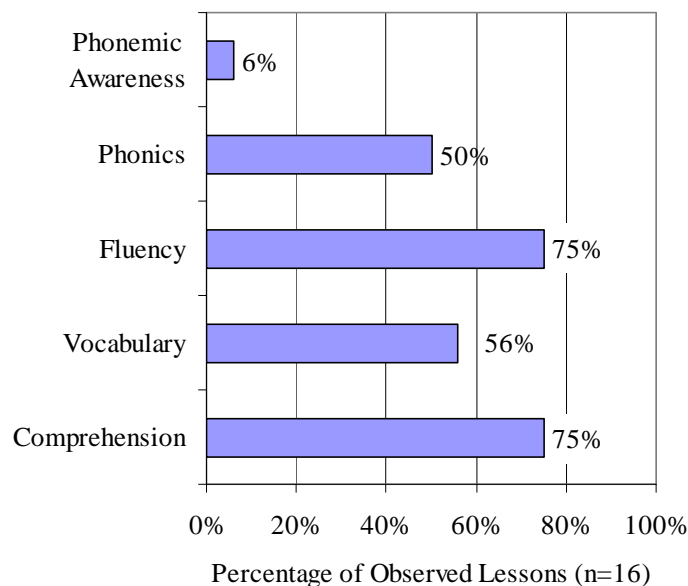
Figure 5-3. The Five Components in Observed Lessons[2]

Phonemic Awareness

In February 2007, site visitors observed instruction in phonemic awareness in only one of the three observed kindergarten lessons—only six percent of all observed lessons. Not surprising, site visitors did not observe it at any other grade level. On the teacher survey, however, 76 percent of all teachers reported that phonemic awareness activities were a regular part of their teaching. When this information was broken down by grade level, it was found that phonemic awareness activities were a regular part instruction for 92 percent of kindergarten teachers, 93 percent of first-grade teachers, 76 percent of second-grade teachers, and 47 percent of third-grade teachers.

Even when multi-grade classrooms were taken into consideration, these percentages seemed quite high. One concern about the instruction of phonemic awareness is the

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[2] The percentage of lessons including the five components totals over 100 percent because observers could record more than one area of focus during each time period they observed. It is important to note that observers were in classrooms for just over 20 minutes and did not observe the entire reading block; therefore these percentages do not necessarily represent the total amount of time devoted to each of the five components over the entire lesson.

possibility that teachers are directing too much time and attention to it. According to the National Reading Panel, most students require no more than 20 hours of phonemic awareness instruction, usually in kindergarten or the beginning of first grade. Devoting large amounts of time and energy to this area, particularly for students who are already readers, is probably not a good use of classroom time. On the other hand, observers, who visited schools in the middle of the school year, did not see an overemphasis on phonemic awareness.

Phonics

Observers saw phonics instruction in the classroom less often than any other of the five components, except for phonemic awareness. This year (2006–2007), phonics instruction represented 50 percent of observed lessons. In these classes, it was evenly distributed across all grade levels. At the higher grade levels, it was more common for lessons to address more advanced topics, including multisyllabic words and complex spelling patterns.

Most phonics lessons involved students reading words, phrases, or connected text. Although the DIBELS assesses the reading of nonsense words, only a small percentage of teachers (18%) reported that practicing reading nonsense words was a 'regular part' of their teaching. However, a higher percentage of teachers (24%) said it was 'sometimes' part of their teaching. Overall, 42 percent of the teachers were generally practicing nonsense words. If the assessment is supposed to represent students' first encounters with unknown words, the regular practice of nonsense word reading could reduce the efficacy of DIBELS as a tool to identify students who struggle to decode. On the other hand, few coaches reported that they regularly saw nonsense word practice in classrooms.

Fluency

Reading fluency refers to the ability to process text smoothly, without having to struggle to decode each word encountered. Fluency includes considerations of speed, accuracy, and phrasing or prosody. The major instructional approach to fluency that has proven effectiveness is repeated and monitored oral reading, in which students read passages aloud several times and receive feedback and guidance from a teacher or other adult.

On surveys, most teachers (86%) reported that oral reading fluency practice was a regular part of their teaching in the 90-minute block. Almost all teachers provided time for oral fluency practice at least "sometimes." During observations, site visitors saw fluency practice—especially choral reading—in 75 percent of the lessons, but seldom did teachers discuss or model expressive reading.

While fluency *assessment* is a significant piece of the work in fluency, only 37 percent of teachers reported that timed fluency assessments during the reading block were a "regular

part" of their instruction; an additional 23 percent said it was "sometimes" part of their instruction.

Vocabulary

The National Reading Panel (2000) noted that knowledge of vocabulary, and sufficient background information to comprehend, were essential to successful reading. The direct instruction of particular vocabulary words is one way to help students increase their vocabularies. Also important is providing students with the skills to identify and interpret word parts, to build an ability to ascertain meaning from context, and to create a heightened awareness to the use of words around them. Some effective strategies for developing vocabulary include activating background knowledge to introduce new vocabulary, developing student-friendly definitions, and using examples and non-examples when checking for understanding.

In general, over the course of Reading First, teachers have become more informed about research-based practices in vocabulary instruction, especially this year at the Reading First Summit. In 2007, evaluators witnessed vocabulary instruction in 56 percent of observed lessons. Teachers also reported regularly using research-based strategies for vocabulary instruction:

- Focus on "tier two" vocabulary words (45%)

- Vocabulary practice that includes use of examples and non-examples (60%)

However, a subset of teachers (15%) reported that they did not know what "tier two" vocabulary words were.

Comprehension

Research has identified a range of practices employed by good readers to understand text, especially to make meaning out of challenging text. In comprehension lessons, a range of strategies might be employed to promote comprehension, such as the use of graphic organizers, look-back citation, identification of main ideas, story retell, recall questions, and use of response journals. Comprehension is further enhanced through effective questioning, in which the teacher poses questions that ask for higher-order thinking skills, such as summarizing, analyzing, predicting, and evaluating.

The use of effective comprehension strategies as a regular part of teaching was generally high among Alaska Reading First teachers, and included:

- Provision of background knowledge to prepare students before they read a new text (85%)

- Comprehension questions that asked for literal recall (85%)

- Comprehension questions that asked for higher-order thinking skills (60%)

Findings from site visits reflected survey results. Site visitors observed comprehension strategies in 75 percent of the lessons. Teachers incorporated questions requiring higher-order thinking skills in 44 percent of comprehension lessons and recall questions in about one-third of the lessons. The use of the other strategies, however, remained relatively low. Observers saw the use of both look-back citations and identification of the main idea in only 12 percent of the comprehension lessons.

Other Classroom Characteristics

During the 20 to 30 minute classroom observations, evaluators also had opportunity to view the quality of the lesson delivered to students. After the observation, observers rated each lesson on different characteristics in three major areas of high quality instruction, namely:

- Lesson clarity and scaffolded instruction

- Monitoring student understanding and provision of direct feedback

- Strong classroom management and student engagement

The site visitors observed 16 classrooms in six different schools, two in each of the three districts. In addition, coaches and teachers reported on related practices in these areas on the spring 2007 surveys.

Clear Lessons and Scaffolded Instruction

Many core reading programs build in a high level of direct instruction from the teacher, including scripted modeling. For some of the other core programs, the Reading First templates increase the explicitness of instruction and provide structures for teacher modeling. By first modeling a task for students, then doing it with them, and then gradually withdrawing so that students take on the task themselves, teachers scaffold student learning. Alternatively, they can use guided questions to help direct students toward a correct answer, and, over time, reduce the degree of guidance. Site visitors did not expect to witness explicit modeling in every classroom, since students often practice already familiar routines and do not require modeling of every activity every day.

In the 2007 site visits, observers rated 62 percent of the lessons as clear, but only witnessed modeling in 25 percent of the lessons. Much of this modeling revolved around the use of templates. In contrast, nearly two-thirds of coaches (64%) reported that "most" or "all" teachers in their school regularly modeled; all coaches said that at least some of the teachers in their schools modeled work or thinking processes. On the survey, the majority of teachers (78%) reported modeling as a regular part of their teaching. Perhaps the reason for these discrepancies is a lack of teacher understanding of what modeling constitutes.

The use of effective questioning to help students figure out answers was observed in over one-half of observed lessons (56%). Coaches reported that this was a practice they tended to see slightly more regularly than observers did. More than half of coaches (64%) saw "most" or "all" teachers regularly doing this. Thus, overall it appeared that scaffolded instruction through modeling and questioning was a regular component of many, but certainly not all, Alaska Reading First classrooms.

Monitoring Understanding and Provision of Direct Feedback

In the Reading First classroom, teachers are expected to monitor how well students understand the material they are working with and make on-the-spot judgments about whether students need more practice or are ready to move to something else. They also need to address misunderstandings right away and replace them with correct information.

Overall, observers rated 50 percent of lessons as clearly demonstrating teacher monitoring of student understanding. Although measured quite differently, coaches' perceptions of how closely teachers monitored student understanding during instruction meshed with site visitors' observations. One-half of coaches reported that they saw "all" teachers in their schools monitoring student understanding, though many more (43%) said "most" teachers did this. This left only very few coaches (7%) who felt that "some" teachers regularly monitored their students' understanding. In addition, the vast majority of teachers (80%) indicated that adjusting activities or practices, based on how students answered previous questions, was a regular part of their teaching.

Closely linked to monitoring is the provision of clear, direct, and frequent feedback, so that students know when they made an error and get that error corrected, so they do not repeat it. Observers witnessed this in only 37 percent of the lessons. On surveys, about one-fifth of the coaches (21%) reported that "all" teachers regularly provided this type of feedback. Again, many more coaches (50%) reported that "most" teachers in their school did this, and almost a third (29%) said "some" did this regularly. Most teachers (76%) felt that immediate correction of student errors was a regular part of their teaching.

Overall, Reading First teachers seemed to monitor student understanding more frequently than they provided direct feedback; but both activities were mostly at moderate levels, given their importance. To better promote reading and quality instruction, all teachers should be doing these activities everyday in their classrooms. In order to truly provide at-level instruction to students, rather than simply to move students through the curriculum, monitoring and feedback are topics deserving additional attention, either through group professional development to teachers, or by ensuring that coaches know how to help teachers make appropriate in-class adjustments.

Strong Classroom Management and Student Engagement

Overall, coaches and site visitors agreed that most teachers used effective classroom management to help keep students on-task and engaged during their reading instruction, and that they provided ample opportunities for student practice. Overall in 2007, observers saw strong student engagement in one-half of classrooms. There were classroom management problems in a subset of approximately 19 percent of observed lessons, but generally the percentage of students who were off-task in classrooms was low, averaging about 6 percent. Also, about 14 percent of the coaches reported that they regularly saw disruptive student behavior in "most" or "all" classrooms in their schools— this was reported in two schools.

Observers also saw adequate opportunities for student practice in slightly more than one-half of the classrooms (56%). These opportunities included ample occasions to practice the lesson in a meaningful manner, involving two or three different types of practice (individual, partner, and group). However, site visitors observed opportunities for student practice less often in lessons than the amount coaches reported—79 percent of coaches reported that most teachers provided opportunities.

Even when behavior does not interfere with student engagement, classroom routines can either promote or hinder full engagement. For example, the practice of "Round Robin" reading (in which students take turns reading aloud according to the order in which they are seated) makes it easy for students to disengage until it is their turn to read. While this practice is discouraged under Reading First and for the most part is not used, observers witnessed it in 12 percent of observed lessons—in two lessons.

An organized classroom, with routines for efficient and orderly transitions, contributes both to enhanced student engagement and increased time to focus on reading. Almost all coaches (93%) reported that "most" or "all" of the teachers in their schools provided quick transitions. Site visitors, who obtained only a quick snapshot of classroom routines, saw inefficient transitions that took time away from lessons in only 12 percent of the lessons (two lessons) they observed this year.

Interventions

Interventions are a critical part of Reading First, providing additional, targeted, small group instruction for those students who need more than the core reading program in order to read at grade level. Alaska Reading First uses the terms "supplemental programs" and "intensive interventions" to define additional services needed for "strategic" and "intensive" students. Supplemental programs and intensive interventions are the add-ons that ensure that teachers have a full range of instructional options available as they implement the core program. The base of the core program is the 90-minute reading block. Supplemental programs and intensive interventions are provided

to students based on their needs and assessment results. In supplemental programs, teachers might pre-teach or re-teach the core curriculum and/or use supplemental materials that extend the critical elements of the core program. Intensive interventions are at least two hours a week for six weeks. Individual goals are usually set, and student progress is continuously monitored.

Survey results indicated that at the school level, in spring 2007, the perceptions of teachers, coaches, and principals about their school's intervention system were moderately positive. Teachers, coaches, and principals held consistent views on their schools' ability to provide appropriate reading interventions to all students who needed them. About two-thirds of them agreed that their schools were doing an excellent job providing appropriate interventions.

Students Served

In Alaska Reading First schools, over 90 percent of the schools provided interventions to at least 80 percent of their strategic and intensive students. All intensive students received intensive interventions in 79 percent of the schools, and all strategic students received supplemental services in 69 percent of the schools. This shows a slightly stronger focus on intensive students than on strategic students. A total of 551 students across grade levels received intensive intervention this year. However, there were also an additional 492 students who received *less* intensive instruction—less than two hours a week and/or less than six weeks—during the year.

Of those schools not serving 100 percent of students eligible to receive interventions, 18 percent of the coaches indicated that insufficient staffing was the primary obstacle. This is a lower percentage than last year's 38 percent. Other obstacles reported by about 10 percent of the schools included lack of trained staff, available space, and teacher resistance.

Intervention Programs

A school's ability to provide effective, targeted interventions is directly linked to the availability of an adequate number of well-trained intervention providers. In Alaska Reading First schools, the kindergarten teachers (79%) were most likely to be the persons to regularly provide interventions at their schools, followed by other grade-level teachers (64% to 71%) and paraprofessionals (71%). Thirty-six percent of the coaches reported that they also regularly provided interventions. Both coaches (71%) and teachers (72%) agreed that their intervention providers were well-trained to meet the needs of struggling readers. However, only 50 percent of surveyed principals indicated that their staffing resources were sufficient to provide interventions to all students who needed them.

Also important is the quality of the materials used during interventions. Overall, materials were of high quality. A slightly greater percentage of coaches than teachers

(86% vs. 75%, respectively) considered intervention materials to be well-matched to student needs.

Students in intervention programs need to be frequently monitored to ensure that they are making progress. According to coaches, all schools monitored intensive students, and 71 percent of schools monitored their strategic students *at least* every two weeks.

Research suggests that interventions are most effective when delivered in small groups, and that group size for interventions for the most intensive students should be even smaller (Pikulski 1994; Torgesen 2004). The 2006-2007 evaluation found that interventions in Alaska Reading First schools were delivered to groups of about five students. This represented the average for the *largest* number of intensive students who worked at one time with an intervention provider. The size of this group ranged from one student to 17 students. About one-third of the schools had one or two students as the largest number of intensive students in a group; about one-third had three or four students. Overall, almost 70 percent of the schools had five or fewer intensive students in a group. One school did not have any intensive students.

During site visits, most teachers in focus groups stated that their schools had intervention programs; one very small school reported they did not have any students who needed interventions. Teachers agreed that their interventions were helping students and that students were improving.

> *Our intervention program works well this year. We are moving many intensive and strategic students up. Students are getting into interventions sooner this year than last year and our scores show it. (Teacher)*

> *What is working well is that we have smaller numbers of students in our intervention groups. Read Naturally seems to be helpful, and students are becoming fluent and better at comprehension. (Teacher)*

Coaches also commented that one of the biggest achievements in their schools' reading interventions was the progress of the students.

> *The biggest achievement in our reading intervention program this year has been at the kindergarten level where they moved most kids from intensive to the next level. (Coach)*

For two schools, another achievement was actually scheduling the time blocks for the interventions. While coaches identified few challenges, one challenge was the scheduling and another was a mid-year influx of a large number of new intensive students. When asked how schools decided on which students to focus their energies, some coaches reported that because of their small size, they were able to serve all students who needed help; other coaches said that their schools focused on moving students out of the intensive group.

CHAPTER SIX:
ASSESSMENT RESULTS

HIGHLIGHTS

- This year, the percentage of matched students at benchmark increased from fall 2006 to spring 2007 in every grade. Significant changes were made in kindergarten and second grade, but not in first or third grades. Since spring 2004, the percentage of benchmark students has increased each year at all grade levels, until spring 2007, when the percentage of benchmark students remained constant at all grade levels for the last two years.

- Length of time in Reading First played a significant role in percentage of students at benchmark in spring 2007—the longer a student was in Reading First, the more likely they would be at benchmark. This was especially dramatic in first and third grades, but not as much in second grade.

- This year, the percentage of students in intensive decreased significantly from fall 2006 to spring 2007 in kindergarten and third grade, but it remained constant in first and second grades. Since spring 2004, the trend has been downward, until spring 2007, when the percentage of intensive students remained constant in all grade levels for the last two years.

- Length of time in Reading First was an important factor for intensive students. At each grade level, there was a marked decline in the percentage of intensive students the longer they were in Reading First.

- Across grade levels, the percentages of Alaska Native/American Indian, Asian, and Latino students; students on free and reduced-price lunch; students eligible for special education; and English language learners at benchmark were all lower than the state benchmark percentage for spring 2007. Likewise, the percentages for these same subpopulations in the intensive group in spring 2007 were higher than the state percentage of intensive students. In spring 2007, in second and third grades, the percentage of intensive students from these subpopulations was dramatically higher than the state's percentage

Compared to spring 2005, the percentage of *second-grade,* benchmark students declined significantly (73% to 61%) in spring 2007. The percentage of *third-grade* benchmark students changed slightly over time (55% to 51%).

- Students who were in the intensive group in fall 2006 did not readily move out of this group. While there was success in moving 59 percent of kindergarten students from the intensive group to benchmark, many first-, second-, and third-grade students who began the fall in intensive remained there in the spring (62%, 81%, and 65%, respectively). Among grade levels, second-grade intensive students were the least likely to move out of the intensive group over the school year.

- Strategic students, in fall 2006, had less difficulty than intensive students in changing their ISR category. In kindergarten, only 16 percent remained in strategic, and over three-quarters of them (77%) moved to benchmark; 33 percent and 41 percent of first- and second-grade students, respectively, remained. Third-grade strategic students (65%) were the most likely to remain in strategic over the year.

- All grades retained at least 82 percent of their students at benchmark from fall 2006 to spring 2007. Almost all students who dropped from benchmark, dropped to strategic from fall 2006 to spring 2007.

- Since spring 2005, over 70 percent of students in second and third grades, who were at benchmark, remained at benchmark by spring 2007. However, students who were in intensive two years ago were quite likely to still be in intensive in spring 2007— 67 percent for second grade and 74 percent for third grade. Second-grade students who were in strategic in spring 2005 were equally likely to drop to intensive, remain in strategic, or move up to benchmark. Over half of the third-grade strategic students (52%) remained in strategic from spring 2005 to spring 2007.

- In the comparison study, no significant difference was found between the Reading First schools and comparison schools in the performance of students on the third-grade SBA in reading in spring 2007. However, when data was disaggregated, significant differences were found in the performance of Reading First students and comparison students from rural locations, and of Alaskan Native/American Indian students. Reading First students in these subpopulations performed better.

CHAPTER SIX
ASSESSMENT RESULTS

Alaska Reading First students were assessed in the fall, winter, and spring using the *Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills* (DIBELS) in each of the Alaska Reading First schools. DIBELS results provide information that guides decisions about grouping, instructing, and intervening with individual students. Additionally, DIBELS scores are a useful way to track student progress toward the ultimate goal of having all students reading at grade level by the end of third grade.

This chapter summarizes assessment data from the 2006–2007 school year. While this is the third year of school-level implementation in Alaska, it is the fourth year of Reading First in the state. In the spring 2005, students in Reading First schools took the DIBELS for the first time. These results are used for baseline information. This chapter also includes comparisons of spring 2007 data to spring 2006 and spring 2005 data from the end of the first and second years of school-level implementation.

The chapter's focus is on the Instructional Support Recommendations (ISR) for students at each grade level. ISR scores used in this analysis are those calculated by the University of Oregon DIBELS database. Analyses were conducted only with students who had data from both the fall and spring testing periods. The data set consisted of students whose fall DIBELS results were matched or linked with their spring results.

The results of the spring 2007 DIBELS assessment are presented as follows:

- **Overall project-level results.** Overall project-level results provides a graphic overview of grade-level benchmark and intensive results from the spring 2007, changes from fall 2006 to spring 2007, and across time since spring 2004. Also, the section presents the percentage of benchmark and intensive students in the spring 2007 by the length of time they have been in Reading First.

- **Overall progress in attaining benchmark.** This section includes the percentage of benchmark students in the fall, winter, and spring, by grade level and key demographic characteristics and school.

- **Spring 2007 Instructional Support Recommendations**. This section reports the spring 2007 percentage of students in each of the three ISR categories, by grade level and key demographic characteristics and school, in addition to trends in ISR status of matched students in spring 2005 to spring 2007, by grade level.

Movement of students between Instructional Support Recommendations. The section provides statewide information on the movement of students who were in the "intensive," "strategic," and "benchmark" groups in fall 2006, over the course of the school year, and the movement of students within each ISR group from spring 2005 to spring 2007.

- **Comparison Study Results:** The section examines the performance of third-grade students attending Reading First schools and comparable non- Reading First schools, on the state's standards-based exam in reading

Key demographic characteristics include ethnicity, eligibility for free and reduced-price lunch (FRL), and eligibility for special education.

Overall Project-Level Results

This section presents a graphic overview of grade-level benchmark results from the spring 2007, and changes from fall 2006 to spring 2007. It also contains information on longitudinal trends in each grade level since spring 2004.

Changes in Percentage of Students at Benchmark in 2006–2007

The percentage of matched students at the benchmark level increased from fall 2006 to spring 2007 in every grade. The greatest percentage point change was in kindergarten, which increased 50 percentage points, from 26 percent to 76 percent. This is not surprising for kindergarten. The large amount is typical for kindergarten, and is attributed to the test properties. Grade 2 had the second highest gains, with an increase of six percentage points (i.e., 51% to 57%). Results for kindergarten and second grade were statistically significant (McNemar's test, $p<0.01$). The percentage of first- and third-grade students at the benchmark level increased slightly from fall to spring. However, these changes were not statistically significant. Results are shown in Figure 6-1.
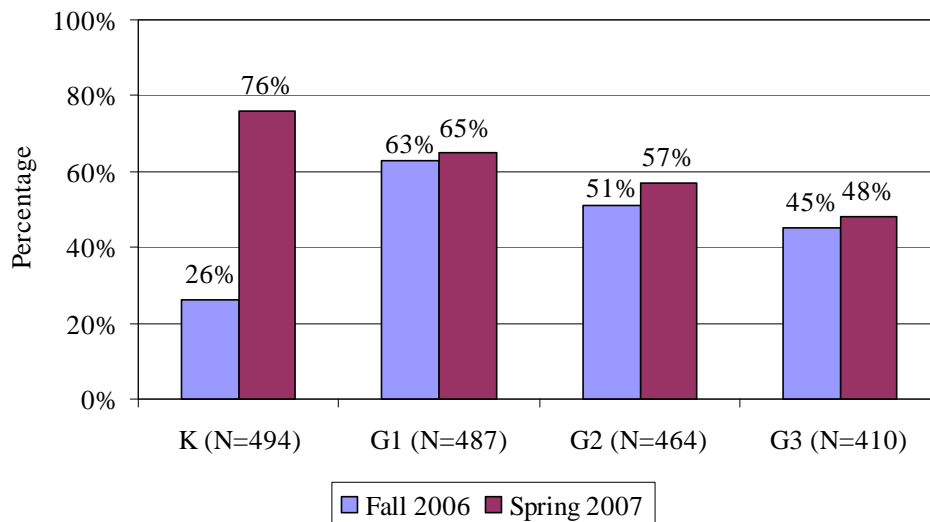
Figure 6-1. State Percentage of Matched Students at Benchmark in Fall 2006 and Spring 2007, by Grade Level

Longitudinal Trends in Benchmark Since Spring 2004

When looking at statewide longitudinal trends in the percentage of benchmark students each spring, only students with both fall and spring scores in each school year are selected to be looked at. The percentage of students at benchmark increased steadily from spring 2004 to spring 2006 in all grade levels. In the spring 2004, none of the Reading First schools had yet implemented Reading First. The gains from spring 2005 to spring 2006 for first through third grades were significant (Pearson Chi-square, $p < 0.01$, <0.001, and $p<0.01$ respectively). From spring 2006 to spring 2007, the percentage of benchmark students remained relatively constant at all grade levels, except in kindergarten and third grade, where the percentage slightly increased. None of the changes from spring 2006 to spring 2007 were statistically significant. Figure 6-2 displays these results.
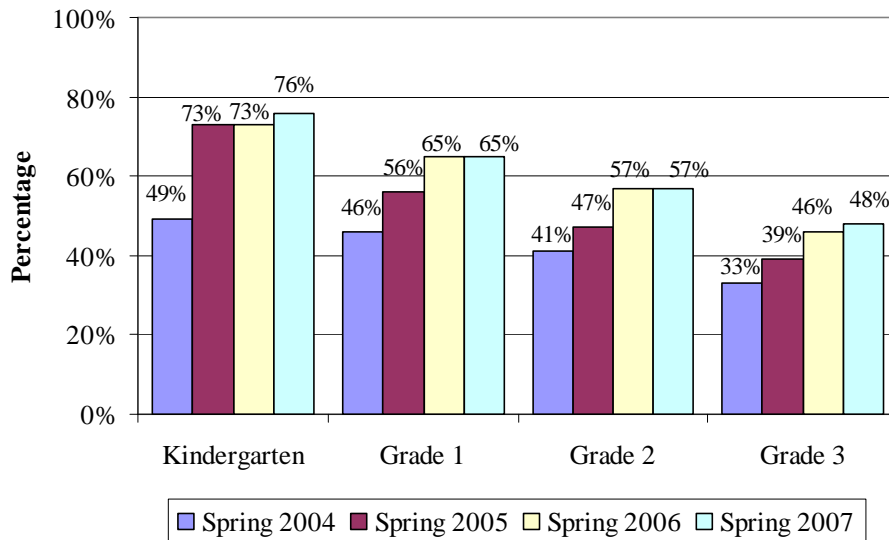
**Figure 6-2. Percentage of Students at Benchmark,
Spring 2004 to Spring 2007, by Grade Level**

The bar graph in Appendix I shows the state percentage of <u>all</u> students at benchmark across years, by grade level.

From another perspective, the evaluation investigated the percentage of students at benchmark in spring 2007 after they had been in Reading First for one year only (2006–2007), two years, or three years. For example, of the 487 students in first grade this year, 137 students had been in Reading First only for the 2006–2007 school year. Of those students, over one half (57%) had met benchmark. The remaining 350 students had been in Reading First for two years—as kindergarteners and then as first-grade students. Of those students, a greater percentage of students (68%) had met benchmark than had students with only one year.

In addition, please note that *only* students with matched fall to spring DIBELS results for each year were included. In order for a student to be considered as receiving Reading First for two years, they would need to have, for example, fall 2006 and spring 2007 DIBELS results as well as fall 2005 and spring 2006 DIBELS results.

In second and third grades, it was possible for students to have been in Reading First for one, two, or three years. In second grade, over one-half of the students with one year or two years of Reading First had reached benchmark, while over 60 percent of students enrolled in Reading First for three years had attained benchmark. In third grade, there was a dramatic percentage increase from students with only one year of Reading First to students with two or three years of Reading First—36 percent, compared to 55 percent and 52 percent, respectively Table 6-1 shows these findings.

Table 6-1
Percentage (N) of Matched Students at Benchmark in Spring 2007, by Grade Level and Length of Time in Reading First

Current Grade Level	Total N during 2006-2007	Percentage of Benchmark Students, by Time in Reading First (N)		
		1 Year ONLY 2006–2007	2 Years in RF 2005–2007	3 Years in RF 2004–2007
Kindergarten	494	76% (494)	--	--
Grade 1	487	57% (137)	68% (350)	--
Grade 2	464	55% (169)	54% (139)	61% (156)
Grade 3	410	36% (122)	55%(115)	52% (173)

Changes in Percentage of Intensive Students in 2006-2007

Progress in Reading First is also measured by the decrease in the percentage of students in the intensive grouping. The percentage of students in the intensive group from fall 2006 to spring 2007 decreased for kindergarten by 20 percentage points, and for third grade by eight percentage points. Statistically significant changes were obtained at kindergarten and third grade (McNemar's test, $p<0.01$). In first grade, the percentage of intensive students increased by three percentage points and in second grade, it remained constant at 24 percent. These changes were not statistically significant. Figure 6-3 shows these findings.
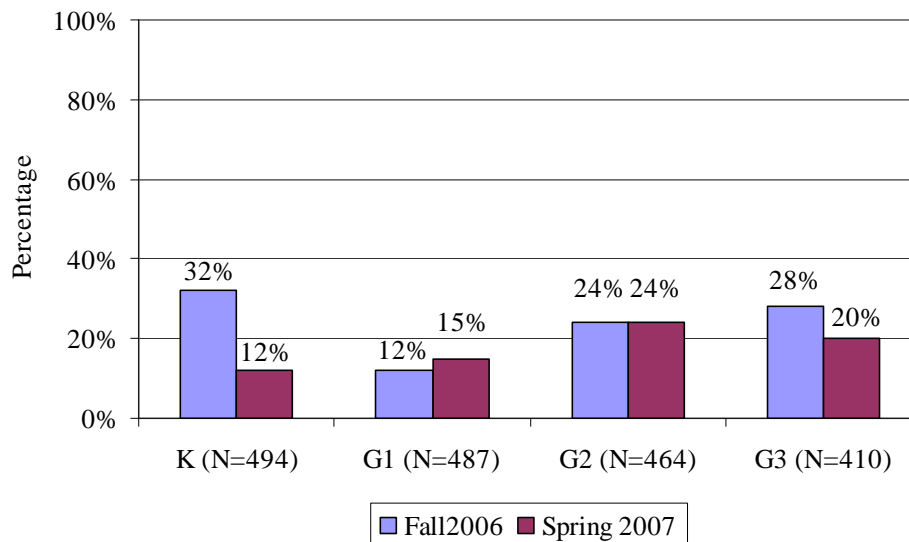
Figure 6-3. State Percentage of Matched Students in Intensive in Fall 2006 and Spring 2007, by Grade Level

Longitudinal Trends in Intensive Since Spring 2004

When looking at statewide longitudinal trends in the percentage of intensive students each spring, only students with both fall and spring scores in each school year were selected to look at. Overall the percentage of students in the intensive group decreased from spring 2004 to spring 2006 for all four grades.

From spring 2005 to spring 2006, the most significant decreases were made by third-grade students with a 10 percentage point drop (28% to 18%), second grade with an eight percentage point drop (32% to 24%), and first grade with a four percentage point drop (19% to 15%). These declines were statistically significant in first grade (Pearson chi-square, $p<0.05$), second grade (Pearson chi-square, $p<0.01$), and third grade (Pearson chi-square <0.001). There was no statistically significant change for kindergarten.

From spring 2006 to spring 2007, the percentage of children in intensive remained relatively constant when compared to the previous declines. The percentage of intensive kindergarten students dropped by two percentage points, while the percentage of intensive students in third grade increased by two percentage points. However, none of these changes were statistically significant, indicating no change across grade levels in the percentage of intensive students from spring 2006 to spring 2007. These findings are displayed in Figure 6-4.
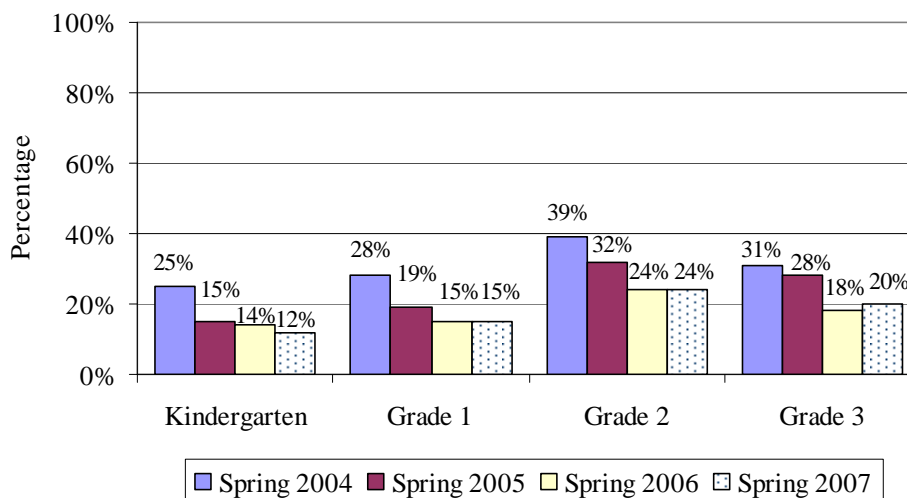
**Figure 6-4. Percentage of Students in Intensive,
Spring 2004 to Spring 2007, by Grade Level**

As was the case in its analysis of benchmark students, the evaluation investigated the percentage of students in the intensive level after they were in Reading First for one year only (2006-2007), two years, or three years. Again, please note that only students with matched fall to spring DIBELS results for each year were included. In order for a student to be considered as receiving Reading First for two years, they would need to have, for example, fall 2006 and spring 2007 DIBELS results as well as fall 2005 and spring 2006 DIBELS results.

At each grade level, there was a marked decline in the percentage of intensive students as students remain in Reading First longer and longer. For example, in second grade, 30 percent of the students in Reading First for the current year only were in the intensive level in the spring 2007. In contrast, the percentage dropped to 24 percent for second-grade students in Reading First for two years, and then to 17 percent for second-grade students in Reading First for three years. Table 6-2 displays these findings.

Table 6-2
Percentage (N) of Matched Students in Intensive in Spring 2007, by Grade Level and Length of Time in Reading First

Current Grade Level	Total N during 2006-2007	Percentage of Intensive Students, by Time in Reading First (N)		
		1 Year ONLY 2006–2007	2 Years in RF 2005–2007	3 Years in RF 2004–2007
Kindergarten	494	12% (494)	--	--
Grade 1	487	24% (137)	12% (350)	--
Grade 2	464	30% (169)	24% (139)	17% (173)
Grade 3	410	26% (122)	19% (115)	16% (173)

Overall Progress in Attaining Benchmark in 2006-2007

The following tables (Table 6-3 through Table 6-6) show the progress of students during this school year—from fall 2006, to winter 2007, to spring 2007—in meeting benchmark. Students were matched on their fall and spring DIBELS results. The tables summarize the percentage of students at benchmark in each grade, broken down by key demographic characteristics and by school. Percentages for Hawaiian/Pacific Islanders should be interpreted with caution, given the small number of these students. Sometimes there are so few students in this category that interpretation is unadvisable.

Kindergarten

Across all Alaska Reading First schools, the percentage of kindergarten students at benchmark increased from fall 2006 to spring 2007 (Table 6-3). Even though there was some individual variation in the percentage increases gained by individual schools across the year, schools from every district increased in the percentage of kindergarten students reaching benchmark from fall to spring. Across the school year, the percentage of benchmark students increased from fall to winter, and then from winter to spring. This increase from the beginning to the end of the school year was true for all race/ethnicities and special categories, including a surprising 70 percent improvement among students of "other" ethnicity, which mostly represents multi-ethnic/racial students.

Table 6-3
Percentage of Kindergarten Students at Benchmark in 2006-2007

Kindergarten		N*	Percentage			Percent Change Fall 2006 to Spring 2007
			Fall 2006	Winter 2007	Spring 2007	
All AK Reading First Kindergarten		494	26%	63%	76%	50
Race/Ethnicity						
Alaska Native/American Indian		81	23%	59%	72%	49
Asian		63	16%	43%	67%	51
Black/African American		0	.	.	.	--
Hispanic/Latino		31	23%	61%	65%	42
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander		7	43%	71%	71%	28
Other		41	15%	80%	85%	70
White		224	32%	68%	79%	47
Free and Reduced-price Lunch						
Eligible for Free/Reduced-Price Lunch		301	24%	59%	73%	49
Not Eligible for Free/Reduced-Price Lunch		188	30%	70%	79%	49
Special Education						
Eligible for Special Education		35	29%	49%	54%	25
Not Eligible for Special Education		454	26%	64%	77%	51
English Language Learners						
ELL Broad		80	26%	64%	77%	51
Not ELL Broad		414	28%	66%	77%	49
ELL Narrow		74	16%	49%	65%	49
Not ELL Narrow		420	28%	65%	77%	49
School, by District						
Anchorage	Airport Heights	41	15%	75%	98%	83
	Creekside Park	51	12%	57%	92%	80
	Mountain View	43	35%	21%	65%	30
	Spring Hill	43	33%	41%	88%	55
	Ursa Minor	47	30%	49%	68%	38
	William Tyson	64	11%	23%	56%	45
Fairbanks	Anderson	93	28%	30%	82%	54
	Nordale	44	43%	38%	82%	39
	Ticasuk Brown	58	33%	17%	59%	26
Lake and Peninsula	Lake and Peninsula	10	30%	20%	60%	30

* Students matched fall and spring

First Grade

The percentage of first-grade Alaska Reading First students who reached benchmark increased by 2 percent statewide from fall 2006 to spring 2007 (Table 6-4). Many ethnic/racial groups and one special category showed negative growth, most notably Alaska Native/American Indian (-6%), Asians (-8%), and "Other" (-4%), and both ELL groups (-3%). Except for two schools, all schools showed either no change or a decline in the percentage of students at benchmark from fall to spring. The most growth was shown by Anderson with an increase of 24 percent.

Second Grade

The overall percentage of second-grade Alaska Reading First students who reached benchmark increased by six percent from fall 2006 to spring 2007 (Table 6-5), slightly greater than the improvement of 2 percent in first grade. Improvement varied across race/ethnicities. No improvement was found for Alaska Native/American Indian and Asian students. Both Hispanic/Latino and white students improved by 16 percent and 10 percent, respectively. Improvement was also seen in all of the special categories, except for ELL students—"narrow" experienced a slight decline of 2 percent and "broad" experienced no change. All but one school saw increases from the beginning to the end of the 2006–2007 school year. Increases ranged from 3 percent to 20 percent. Spring Hill showed the most growth from fall to spring—a 20 percent increase.

Third Grade

Almost one-half of the third-grade students reached benchmark by spring 2007—the smallest percentage of students at benchmark across grade levels (Table 6-6). This represented an improvement of 3 percent since fall 2006. Three race/ethnic groups showed no growth, or a decrease in the percentage of students at benchmark, from the beginning to the end of the school year. All of the special categories improved by a few percentage points. Except for three schools, schools showed improvement. Again, the most growth was shown by Spring Hill—a 15 percent increase.

Table 6-4
Percentage of First-Grade Students at Benchmark in 2006-2007

First Grade		N*	Percentage			Percent Change Fall 2006 to Spring 2007
			Fall 2006	Winter 2007	Spring 2007	
All AK Reading First Grade 1		487	63%	59%	65%	2
Race/Ethnicity						
Alaska Native/American Indian		80	56%	53%	50%	-6
Asian		58	67%	60%	59%	-8
Black/African American		0	.	.	.	--
Hispanic/Latino		30	63%	53%	70%	7
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander		9	67%	67%	67%	0
Other		28	75%	82%	71%	-4
White		233	64%	60%	71%	7
Free and Reduced-price Lunch						
Eligible for Free/Reduced-Price Lunch		283	59%	57%	60%	1
Not Eligible for Free/Reduced-Price Lunch		204	70%	61%	72%	2
Special Education						
Eligible for Special Education		48	33%	38%	33%	0%
Not Eligible for Special Education		439	67%	61%	68%	1%
English Language Learners						
ELL Broad		81	62%	58%	59%	-3
Not ELL Broad		406	64%	59%	66%	2
ELL Narrow		79	62%	58%	59%	-3
Not ELL Narrow		408	64%	59%	66%	-2
School, by District						
Anchorage	Airport Heights	28	68%	57%	64%	-4
	Creekside Park	44	70%	80%	77%	7
	Mountain View	51	67%	65%	63%	-4
	Spring Hill	39	74%	67%	62%	-12
	Tyson William	45	51%	49%	49%	-2
	Ursa Minor	34	74%	71%	74%	0
Fairbanks	Anderson	99	62%	67%	86%	24
	Nordale	52	65%	44%	54%	-11
	Ticasuk Brown	84	54%	39%	49%	-5
Lake and Peninsula	Lake and Peninsula	11	73%	78%	64%	-9

* Students matched fall and spring

Table 6-5
Percentage of Second-Grade Students at Benchmark in 2006-2007

Second Grade		N*	Percentage			Percent Change Fall 2006 to Spring 2007
			Fall 2006	Winter 2007	Spring 2007	
All AK Reading First Grade 2		464	51%	68%	57%	6
Race/Ethnicity						
Alaska Native/American Indian		81	40%	53%	40%	0
Asian		43	42%	49%	42%	0
Black/African American		0	.	.	.	--
Hispanic/Latino		37	35%	69%	51%	16
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander		1	100%	100%	100%	0
Other		32	56%	72%	53%	-3
White		224	56%	76%	66%	10
Free or reduced-Price Lunch						
Eligible for Free/Reduced-Price Lunch		296	45%	63%	49%	4
Not Eligible for Free/Reduced-Price Lunch		167	61%	78%	71%	10
Special Education						
Eligible for Special Education		59	20%	32%	25%	5
Not Eligible for Special Education		401	56%	73%	62%	6
English Language Learners						
ELL Broad		67	34%	52%	34%	0
Not ELL Broad		397	53%	71%	60%	7
ELL Narrow		60	35%	53%	33%	-2
Not ELL Narrow		404	53%	70%	60%	7
School, by District						
Anchorage	Airport Heights	34	41%	50%	47%	6
	Creekside Park	43	37%	47%	40%	3
	Mountain View	37	46%	57%	35%	-11
	Spring Hill	41	63%	88%	83%	20
	Tyson William	54	39%	50%	37%	2
	Ursa Minor	43	60%	83%	77%	17
Fairbanks	Anderson	88	55%	77%	67%	12
	Nordale	54	59%	74%	63%	4
	Ticasuk Brown	59	51%	73%	54%	3
Lake and Peninsula	Lake and Peninsula	11	45%	73%	45%	0

* Students matched fall and spring

Table 6-6
Percentage of Third-Grade Students at Benchmark in 2006-2007

Third Grade		N*	Percentage			Percent Change Fall 2006 to Spring 2007
			Fall 2006	Winter 2007	Spring 2007	
All AK Reading First Grade 3		410	45%	52%	48%	3
Race/Ethnicity						
Alaska Native/American Indian		91	31%	36%	33%	2
Asian		62	35%	41%	35%	0
Black/African American		0	.	.	.	--
Hispanic/Latino		26	35%	46%	42%	7
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander		2	50%	50%	50%	0
Other		29	52%	48%	48%	-4
White		167	58%	68%	64%	6
Free or Reduced-Price Lunch						
Eligible for Free/Reduced-Price Lunch		248	36%	44%	39%	3
Not Eligible for Free/Reduced-Price Lunch		162	58%	65%	62%	4
Special Education						
Eligible for Special Education		54	28%	33%	31%	3
Not Eligible for Special Education		335	49%	55%	51%	2
English Language Learners						
ELL Broad		75	32%	35%	36%	4
Not ELL Broad		335	48%	56%	51%	3
ELL Narrow		70	31%	35%	36%	5
Not ELL Narrow		340	48%	56%	51%	3
School, by District						
Anchorage	Airport Heights	49	35%	39%	39%	4
	Creekside Park	48	50%	60%	58%	8
	Mountain View	45	27%	38%	27%	0
	Spring Hill	41	41%	54%	56%	15
	Tyson William	42	31%	32%	26%	-5
	Ursa Minor	32	66%	72%	59%	-7
Fairbanks	Anderson	21	81%	95%	86%	5
	Nordale	44	57%	61%	61%	4
	Ticasuk Brown	68	47%	57%	53%	6
Lake and Peninsula	Lake and Peninsula	20	30%	22%	20%	-10

* Students matched fall and spring

Spring 2007
Instructional Support Recommendations

Tables 6-7 through 6-10 present the results from the spring 2007 DIBELS. For each grade, the table presents the percentage of students in each of the Instructional Support Recommendation categories—"intensive," "strategic," and "benchmark." Again, the analysis used only data from students with both fall 2006 and spring 2007 DIBELS results. Data are presented for all Alaska Reading First schools, as well as disaggregated by race/ethnicity, free and reduced-price lunch, special education, and ELL, and by district and school. Across grade levels, the percentage of benchmark students declines starting at 76 percent in kindergarten and falling to 48 percent in third grade.

Kindergarten

In spring 2006, over three-quarters of the kindergarten students (76%) in Alaska Reading First schools scored at benchmark, while 13 percent were in the strategic group, and 12 percent were in the intensive group (Table 6-7). Except for white students and students from "other" racial/ethnic groups, the percentages of students at benchmark in all other racial/ethnic groups were lower than the state benchmark percentage. Students eligible for free and reduced-price lunch, special education, and ELL students were also less likely to score at benchmark than their peers. All of the individual schools had over one-half of their students at benchmark by the end of the year. The percentage of benchmark students at individual schools ranged from 56 percent at Tyson William to 98 percent at Airport Heights. Overall, at five of the 10 schools, the percentage of benchmark students was lower than the state percentage.

First Grade

In first grade, about two-thirds (65%) of students reached benchmark statewide (Table 6-8). Twenty percent were identified as strategic students, and 15 percent were intensive. These percentages were the same as the previous year. The state percentage of first-grade students who reached benchmark was 11 percentage points lower than the percentage who reached this level in kindergarten (76% and 65%, respectively). American Indian/Alaskan Native, Asian, those eligible for free and reduced-price lunch, those eligible for special education, and ELL students had benchmark percentages lower than the state percentage. The benchmark percentages among individual schools ranged from 49 percent at Ticasuk Brown to 86 percent at Anderson.

Table 6-7
Kindergarten Spring 2007 Instructional Support Recommendations

Kindergarten		N*	Percentage		
			Intensive	Strategic	Benchmark
All AK Reading First Kindergarten		494	12%	13%	76%
Race/Ethnicity					
Alaska Native/American Indian		81	19%	10%	72%
Asian		63	13%	21%	67%
Black/African American		0	0%	0%	0%
Hispanic/Latino		31	29%	6%	65%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander		7	0%	29%	71%
Other		41	5%	10%	85%
White		224	8%	13%	79%
Free or Reduced-Price Lunch					
Eligible for Free/Reduced-Price Lunch		301	14%	13%	73%
Not Eligible for Free/Reduced-Price Lunch		188	8%	13%	79%
Special Education					
Eligible for Special Education		35	17%	29%	54%
Not Eligible for Special Education		454	11%	12%	77%
English Language Learners					
ELL Broad		80	15%	18%	68%
Not ELL Broad		414	11%	12%	77%
ELL Narrow		74	16%	19%	65%
Not ELL Narrow		420	11%	12%	77%
School, by District					
Anchorage	Airport Heights	41	0%	2%	98%
	Creekside Park	51	4%	4%	92%
	Mountain View	43	21%	14%	65%
	Spring Hill	43	7%	5%	88%
	Ursa Minor	47	11%	21%	68%
	William Tyson	64	22%	22%	56%
Fairbanks	Anderson	93	8%	11%	82%
	Nordale	44	14%	5%	82%
	Ticasuk Brown	58	16%	26%	59%
Lake and Peninsula	Lake and Peninsula	10	30%	10%	60%

* Spring ISRs are from students with matched fall and spring scores.

Table 6-8
First-Grade Spring 2007 Instructional Support Recommendations

First Grade		N*	Percentage		
			Intensive	Strategic	Benchmark
All AK Reading First Grade 1		487	15%	20%	65%
Race/Ethnicity					
Alaska Native/American Indian		80	19%	31%	50%
Asian		58	22%	19%	59%
Black/African American		0	0%	0%	0%
Hispanic/Latino		30	13%	17%	70%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander		9	11%	22%	67%
Other		28	11%	18%	71%
White		233	13%	16%	71%
Free or Reduced-Price Lunch					
Eligible for Free/Reduced Lunch		283	19%	21%	60%
Not Eligible for Free/Reduced Lunch		204	10%	18%	72%
Special Education					
Eligible for Special Education		48	38%	29%	33%
Not Eligible for Special Education		439	13%	19%	68%
English Language Learners					
ELL Broad		81	21%	20%	59%
Not ELL Broad		406	14%	20%	66%
ELL Narrow		79	22%	19%	59%
Not ELL Narrow		408	14%	20%	66%
School, by District					
Anchorage	Airport Heights	28	14%	21%	64%
	Creekside Park	44	7%	16%	77%
	Mountain View	51	20%	18%	63%
	Spring Hill	39	18%	21%	62%
	Tyson William	45	27%	24%	49%
	Ursa Minor	34	15%	12%	74%
Fairbanks	Anderson	99	4%	10%	86%
	Nordale	52	25%	21%	54%
	Ticasuk Brown	84	15%	36%	49%
Lake and Peninsula	Lake and Peninsula	11	27%	9%	64%

* Spring ISRs are from students with matched fall and spring scores.

Second Grade

More than half (57%) of the second-grade students from Alaska Reading First schools reached benchmark by spring 2006, 19 percent reached the strategic level, and 24 percent were categorized as intensive (Table 6-9). Except for white students, the benchmark percentages of student in the other racial/ethnic groups fell below the state benchmark percentage. Forty-nine percent of students eligible for free and reduced-price lunch made benchmark, while only 25 percent of students who qualified for special education, and a third of ELL students, reached benchmark. These percentages are substantially lower than those for students who do not fall into these special categories. The percentage of benchmark students at individual schools ranged from 35 percent at Mountain View to 83 percent at Spring Hill.

Third Grade

Almost one-half of third-grade students (48%) reached the benchmark level (Table 6-10). Nineteen percent scored in the strategic level and 24 percent in the intensive level. Across all grades, third-grade students had the lowest percentage of students reaching benchmark. The percentages of American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian, and Hispanic/Latino students meeting benchmark were less than the state benchmark percentage. As in the second grade, the percentages of students eligible for free and reduced-price lunch, for special education, and ELL students who met benchmark were substantially lower than the statewide benchmark percentage. Only about one-third of students in special categories met benchmark by the spring 2007. The benchmark percentages among individual schools ranged from 20 percent at Lake and Peninsula to 86 percent at Anderson.

Table 6-9
Second-Grade Spring 2007 Instructional Support Recommendations

Second Grade		N*	Percentage		
			Intensive	**Strategic**	**Benchmark**
All AK Reading First Grade 2		464	24%	19%	57%
Race/Ethnicity					
Alaska Native/American Indian		81	37%	23%	40%
Asian		43	47%	12%	42%
Black/African American		0	0%	0%	0%
Hispanic/Latino		37	16%	32%	51%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander		1	0%	0%	100%
Other		32	22%	25%	53%
White		224	17%	17%	66%
Free or Reduced-Price Lunch					
Eligible for Free/Reduced Lunch		296	29%	22%	49%
Not Eligible for Free/Reduced Lunch		167	14%	15%	71%
Special Education					
Eligible for Special Education		59	61%	14%	25%
Not Eligible for Special Education		401	18%	20%	62%
English Language Learners					
ELL Broad		67	40%	25%	34%
Not ELL Broad		397	21%	18%	60%
ELL Narrow		60	38%	28%	33%
Not ELL Narrow		404	22%	18%	60%
School, by District					
Anchorage	Airport Heights	34	35%	18%	47%
	Creekside Park	43	47%	14%	40%
	Mountain View	37	38%	27%	35%
	Spring Hill	41	10%	7%	83%
	Tyson William	54	44%	19%	37%
	Ursa Minor	43	2%	21%	77%
Fairbanks	Anderson	88	17%	16%	67%
	Nordale	54	17%	20%	63%
	Ticasuk Brown	59	15%	31%	54%
Lake and Peninsula	Lake and Peninsula	11	27%	27%	45%

* Spring ISRs are from students with matched fall and spring scores.

Table 6-10
Third-Grade Spring 2007 Instructional Support Recommendations

Third Grade		N*	Percentage		
			Intensive	**Strategic**	**Benchmark**
All AK Reading First Grade 3		410	20%	32%	48%
Race/Ethnicity					
Alaska Native/American Indian		91	25%	42%	33%
Asian		62	35%	29%	35%
Black/African American		0	0%	0%	0%
Hispanic/Latino		26	19%	38%	42%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander		2	50%	0%	50%
Other		29	17%	34%	48%
White		167	10%	26%	64%
Free or Reduced-Price Lunch					
Eligible for Free/Reduced Lunch		248	28%	33%	39%
Not Eligible for Free/Reduced Lunch		162	7%	31%	62%
Special Education					
Eligible for Special Education		54	46%	22%	31%
Not Eligible for Special Education		335	15%	33%	51%
English Language Learners					
ELL Broad		75	35%	29%	36%
Not ELL Broad		335	16%	33%	51%
ELL Narrow		70	36%	29%	36%
Not ELL Narrow		340	16%	33%	51%
School, by District					
Anchorage	Airport Heights	49	33%	29%	39%
	Creekside Park	48	13%	29%	58%
	Mountain View	45	31%	42%	27%
	Spring Hill	41	20%	24%	56%
	Tyson William	42	33%	40%	26%
	Ursa Minor	32	9%	31%	59%
Fairbanks	Anderson	21	0%	14%	86%
	Nordale	44	9%	30%	61%
	Ticasuk Brown	68	12%	35%	53%
Lake and Peninsula	Lake and Peninsula	20	40%	40%	20%

* Spring ISRs are from students with matched fall and spring scores.

Trends in ISR Status of Students Across Years

The spring 2007 ISR scores of students currently in the second grade and third grade were matched to their ISR scores two years ago, when they were in kindergarten and first grade, respectively. In the current second grade, the percentage of benchmark students declined substantially, by 12 percent (from 73% to 61%), since the spring of 2005. This decline was statistically significant (McNemar's test, $p<0.01$) and indicates that instruction might not be intensive enough to keep benchmark students at benchmark once they are at that level. The percentage of intensive students slightly increased from 15 percent to 17 percent while the percentage of strategic students was much greater in the spring of 2007 than in spring 2005 (22% compared to 12%). However, neither of these changes was statistically significant. Figure 6-5 shows these findings.
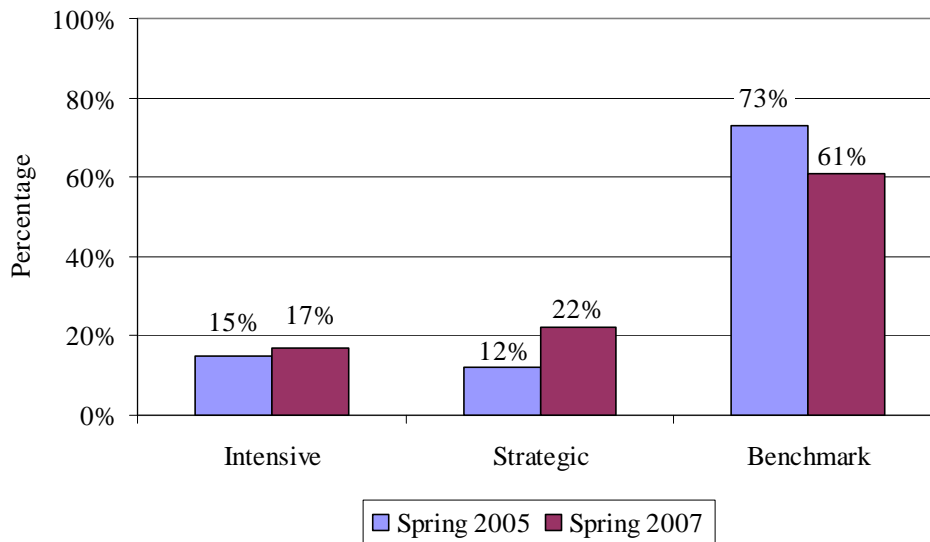
Figure 6-5. Current Grade 2—Percentage of Matched Students at Each ISR Status in Spring 2005 and Spring 2007 (N=163)

As shown in Figure 6-6, the trend in the third grade was somewhat different. While the percentage of benchmark and intensive students dropped slightly by 2 percent, to 4 percent, the percentage of strategic students increased by 7 percent, from 26 percent to 33 percent. None of these changes were statistically significant, indicating no change in ISR status from spring 2005 to spring 2007. While not significant, the drop in the percentage of benchmark students might indicate a need for more focus on benchmark students, to keep them at grade level over time.
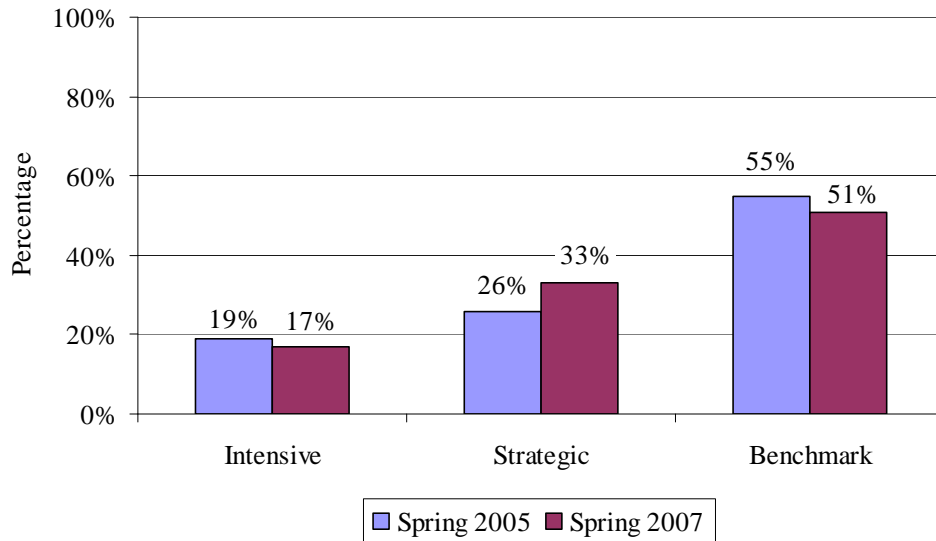
Figure 6-6. Current Grade 3—Percentage of Matched Students at Each ISR Level in Spring 2005 and Spring 2007 (N=178)

Movement Between Instructional Support Recommendations

In addition to summarizing the current status of students in Reading First schools, it is also helpful to look at students' movements from one ISR to another (for example, from the intensive group up to strategic). In this section, this is accomplished by looking at overall trends across Alaska Reading First schools in the movement of students across the intensive, strategic, and benchmark groups during the 2006–2007 academic year.

Each table below presents a separate ISR group of students—those who were in the overall intensive group (Table 6-11), strategic group (Table 6-12), or benchmark group (Table 6-13)—based on their fall 2006 DIBELS results. Within each table, the different cells report the percentage of students in that group who dropped to a lower group, remained the same, or moved up to a higher group on the spring 2007 DIBELS assessment. The analyses on these pages include only students who had both fall and spring results reported.

Movement of Students Who Were Intensive in Fall 2006

Table 6-11 presents the movement of students in the intensive group from fall 2006 to spring 2007. In many ways, this is a measure of the effectiveness of the most intensive interventions in helping to move the lowest performing students towards reading at level. The data show that:

- There were some successes in moving 59 percent of kindergarten students from the intensive group to benchmark.

- On the other hand, many first-, second-, and third-grade students who began the fall in intensive remained there in the spring (62%, 81%, and 65%, respectively).

- Among grade levels, second-grade intensive students were the least likely to move out of the intensive group over the school year.

- The results for the current reporting period (2006–2007) closely mirrored those found for the previous school year (2005–2006).

Table 6-11
Fall 2006 <u>Intensive</u> Students
Changes in Matched ISR Scores from Fall 2006 to Spring 2007, by Grade Level

Grade Level	N	Percentage (2005-2006 Percentage)		
		Remained in Intensive	Moved to Strategic	Moved to Benchmark
Kindergarten	160	26% (26%)	14% (21%)	59% (53%)
Grade 1	58	62% (61%)	21% (23%)	17% (16%)
Grade 2	112	81% (82%)	16% (15%)	3% (3%)
Grade 3	117	65% (63%)	32% (37%)	3% (0%)

Movement of Students Who Were Strategic in Fall 2006

Table 6-12 presents the movement, across all four grades, of students who began the 2006–2007 school year in the strategic group. This is a measure of the state's double-dosing/strategic interventions in helping move students who were somewhat below level up to benchmark this year. The data show that:

- In kindergarten, over three-quarters of students (77%) who were in the strategic group in the fall moved to benchmark in the spring.

- Third-grade students were the most likely to remain in the strategic group among the grade levels. Almost two-thirds of these students (65%) stayed in this ISR level from fall to spring.

- At all grade levels, students dropped from strategic to intensive. The greatest decline was in first grade. Almost a quarter of the students (24%) dropped to intensive from fall to spring. On the other hand, only 5 percent of third-grade strategic students fell to intensive.

- Results generally reflected those for the 2005–2006 school year with a few exceptions—compared to last year, a *smaller* percentages of strategic kindergarten students moved to intensive; a *larger* percentage of students in first grade moved to intensive and a *smaller* percentage moved to benchmark; and in third grade, a *smaller* percentage remained in the strategic group while a *larger* percentage moved to benchmark.

Table 6-12
Fall 2006 <u>Strategic</u> Students
Changes in Matched ISR Scores from Fall 2006 to Spring 2007, by Grade Level

Grade Level	N	Percentage (2005-2006 Percentage)		
		Moved to Intensive	Remained in Strategic	Moved to Benchmark
Kindergarten	205	7% (15%)	16% (13%)	77% (72%)
Grade 1	120	24% (17%)	33% (32%)	42% (51%)
Grade 2	117	16% (17%)	41% (42%)	43% (42%)
Grade 3	109	5% (7%)	65% (72%)	30% (21%)

Movement of Students Who Were at Benchmark in Fall 2006

Table 6-13 presents the movement of students that began the 2006–2007 school year at benchmark. This is a measure of the ability of instruction, using the core program, to keep students who started at benchmark progressing at level over the year. Ideally, this figure should be 100 percent. The data show that:

- All grades retained at least 82 percent of students at benchmark.

- Kindergarten retained the highest percentage of benchmark students (93%), followed by second grade (89%). Lowest retention was in the first grade, at (82%).

- Most students who dropped from benchmark dropped to strategic, not intensive. Third grade had no students falling from benchmark to intensive from the beginning to the end of the school year. These results are almost identical to those from the 2005–2006 school year.

Compared to last year, these results mirrored those found in 2005–2006.

Table 6-13
Fall 2006 <u>Benchmark</u> Students
Changes in Matched ISR Scores from Fall 2006 to Spring 2007, by Grade Level

Grade Level	N	Percentage (2005-2006 Percentage)		
		Moved to Intensive	**Moved to Strategic**	**Remained in Benchmark**
Kindergarten	129	2% (1%)	5% (5%)	93% (95%)
Grade 1	309	3% (3%)	15% (14%)	82% (83%)
Grade 2	235	<1% (0%)	10% (8%)	89% (92%)
Grade 3	184	(0%) (0%)	12% (11%)	88% (89%)

Movement of Matched Students Across Years

DIBELS results from the spring 2005, two years ago, were matched to DIBELS results of students in second and third grades in the spring 2007. This section looks at the overall trends across Alaska Reading First schools in the movement of students who were in each of the ISR levels—intensive, strategic, and benchmark—in the spring 2005, and where they were two years later, in spring 2007. Within Table 6-14, the different cells report the percentage of students in that group who dropped to a lower group, remained the same, or moved up to a higher group on the spring 2007 DIBELS assessment. Major findings include:

- Over 70 percent of students in second and third grades, who were at benchmark in spring 2005, remained at benchmark in spring 2007 (76% and 71%, respectively).

- Both second- and third-grade students who were in intensive two years ago were quite likely to be in intensive in spring 2007. A higher percentage of third-grade students than second-grade students remained in intensive (74% compared to 67%).

- In both grade levels, about one-fifth to one-quarter of benchmark students in spring 2005 dropped to strategic by the spring 2007.

- In second-grade, about one-third of the strategic students in spring 2005 either dropped to intensive, remained in strategic, or improved to benchmark by spring 2007. On the other hand, over one-half of the current third-grade students (52%), who were in the strategic group in spring 2005, remained in the strategic group after two years.

Table 6-14
Statewide Changes in Matched ISR Scores from
Spring 2005 to Spring 2007, by Grade Level

Movement within each ISR Group from Spring 2005 to Spring 2007	n	Percentage
Grade 2		
Intensive (N=24)		
to Intensive	16	67%
to Strategic	5	21%
to Benchmark	3	12%
Strategic (N=20)		
to Intensive	7	35%
to Strategic	7	35%
to Benchmark	6	30%
Benchmark (N=119)		
to Intensive	4	3%
to Strategic	24	20%
to Benchmark	91	76%
Grade 3		
Intensive (N=34)		
to Intensive	25	74%
to Strategic	8	24%
to Benchmark	1	3%
Strategic (N=46)		
to Intensive	3	6%
to Strategic	24	52%
to Benchmark	19	41%
Benchmark (N=98)		
to Intensive	2	2%
to Strategic	26	26%
to Benchmark	70	71%

Comparison School Study

To look at the impact of Reading First on student performance, a comparison school study was conducted by comparing the performance of students in Reading First schools to students in comparison schools on the state's third-grade Standards-based Assessment (SBA) in reading in spring 2007. The percentage of students who scored at the Not Proficient, Below Proficient, Proficient, and Advanced levels on the SBA, in Reading First schools and in comparison schools, were compared overall, and were then disaggregated by geographical location, income, and ethnicity for additional analyses.

Comparison schools were matched to the Reading First schools on location (rural/urban), socioeconomic status, and ethnicity. The Anchorage and Fairbanks schools were combined for the urban analysis. Because of the number of small village schools in the Lake and Peninsula district, these schools were combined and counted as one school and used for the rural analysis. Based on income and minority percentages, comparison schools seemed well-matched to their respective Reading First schools. Table 6-15 shows school profiles for Reading First schools and comparison schools.

Table 6-15
School Profiles for Reading First and Comparison Schools

| | Percentage | | | Percentage | |
Reading First School	Low Income	Minority	Comparison School	Low Income	Minority
Anchorage			**Anchorage**		
Airport Heights	45%	76%	Government Hill	44%	73%
Creekside Park	60%	67%	Willow Crest	65%	65%
Tyson William	100%	94%	Fairview	100%	93%
Mountain View	100%	87%	Williwaw	100%	88%
Ursa Minor	46%	42%	Ursa Major	51%	46%
Spring Hill	49%	56%	Klatt	51%	61%
Fairbanks	Not available		**Fairbanks**		
Anderson		19%	Badger	30%	17%
Nordale	43%	37%	Joy	36%	40%
Ticasuk Brown	30%	25%	Crawford	36%	25%
Lake & Peninsula			**Lake & Peninsula**		
9schools combined	100%	100%	Hooper Bay	100%	100%

Results

Overall, no significant difference was found in between Reading First students and comparison students in their performance on the third-grade SBA in reading. However, when the data were disaggregated, a few differences emerged. In the analysis of geographic location, there was a significant difference in the performance of Reading First students and comparison students in rural locations—Reading First students performed better. Also, Alaskan Native/American Indian students performed better in Reading First schools than did their counterparts in comparison schools.

In another analysis that looked at differences in Reading First schools *only* and differences in comparison schools *only*, statistically significant differences were found between urban and rural students, and between students from low income families and students not from low income families. In Reading First schools, urban students performed better than rural students, and students *not* from low income families performed better than students from low income families. The same results were found for students at comparison schools.

These results are displayed in Tables 6-16 through 6-19.

Table 6-16
Percentage of Third-Grade Students Scoring at Each Level on Reading SBA,
by Geographic Location

School/Location	Reading Level—Percentage of Students				N
	Not Proficient	Below Proficient	Proficient	Advanced	
*Reading First Schools					
Urban	7%	10%	44%	39%	442
**Rural	19%	19%	50%	12%	32
TOTAL	7%	11%	44%	37%	474
*Comparison Schools					
Urban	7%	12%	40%	41%	505
Rural	30%	39%	30%	--	33
TOTAL	8%	13%	40%	38%	538

*   In Reading First schools, a significant difference was found between urban and rural students; in comparison schools the same result was found.

**   Significant difference found between Reading First and comparison schools for rural students at p<= 0.05.

Table 6-17
Percentage of Third-Grade Students Scoring at Each Level on Reading SBA,
by Income Level

School/Income	Reading Level—Percentage of Students				N
	Not Proficient	Below Proficient	Proficient	Advanced	
*Reading First Schools					
Low Income	10%	14%	48%	27%	305
Not Low Income	2%	5%	37%	56%	169
TOTAL	7%	11%	44%	37%	474
*Comparison Schools					
Low Income	10%	19%	41%	30%	323
Not Low Income	5%	6%	39%	51%	215
TOTAL	8%	13%	40%	38%	538

*   In Reading First schools, a significant difference was found between low income and not low income students; in comparison schools the same result was found.

Table 6-18
Percentage of Third-Grade Students Scoring at Each Level on Reading SBA,
by Ethnic Group

School/Ethnic Group	Reading Level—Percentage of Students				N
	Not Proficient	Below Proficient	Proficient	Advanced	
Reading First Schools					
White	3%	6%	28%	63%	187
Black	8%	14%	47%	31%	36
Hispanic	3%	21%	66%	10%	36
Asian	20%	16%	46%	18%	71
*Am Indian/Alaskan Nat	11%	10%	59%	19%	106
Multi	--	16%	58%	27%	45
TOTAL	7%	11%	44%	37%	474
Comparison Schools					
White	3%	6%	38%	52%	236
Black	--	22%	54%	24%	37
Hispanic	8%	16%	40%	36%	63
Asian	23%	16%	43%	18%	44
Am Indian/Alaskan Nat	19%	25%	36%	20%	100
Multi	7%	12%	41%	40%	58
TOTAL	8%	13%	40%	38%	538

* Significant difference found between Reading First and comparison schools for Alaskan Native/American Indian students at $p <= 0.05$.

Table 6-19
Percentage of Third-Grade Students Scoring at Each Level on Reading SBA,
by General Ethnic Group

School/Ethnic Group	Reading Level—Percentage of Students				N
	Not Proficient	Below Proficient	Proficient	Advanced	
Reading First Schools					
White	3%	6%	28%	63%	187
Non-white	11%	14%	55%	21%	287
TOTAL	7%	11%	44%	37%	474
Comparison Schools					
White	3%	6%	38%	52%	236
Non-white	13%	19%	41%	28%	302
TOTAL	8%	13%	40%	38%	538

CHAPTER SEVEN:
RECOMMENDATIONS

Now in its third year of school-level implementation, Alaska Reading First has achieved some significant successes, namely:

- The Alaska Reading First program provided a comprehensive approach to professional development by providing four major statewide conferences; providing ongoing professional development to coaches, who in turn provided coaching to their teachers; and having district coordinators provide other support to Reading First schools and staff members. The Reading Leadership Team Data Retreat and the Reading First Summit were especially well received.

- Data use was pervasive in decision-making. Schools regularly used assessments for screening, diagnosing, and regularly progress-monitoring their intensive, strategic, and benchmark students. Coaches and teachers used these data for a variety of purposes, but most frequently when making decisions about interventions.

- Teachers continued to teach their core programs with fidelity and were satisfied with their schools' programs.

- The percentage of matched students at benchmark this year increased from fall 2006 to spring 2007 in every grade—significant changes were made in kindergarten and second grade. All grade levels retained *at least* 82 percent of their benchmark students from the beginning to the end of school. Kindergarten retained 93 percent; first grade 82 percent; second grade 89 percent, and third grade 88 percent.

- Results from a comparison study suggested that Reading First students from rural areas, and Reading First students identified as Alaskan Native/American Indian, performed significantly better on the third-grade state Standards-based Assessment (SBA) in reading than their counterparts in comparison schools. However, there was no overall significant difference in the performance of Reading First students and students in comparison schools

A summary of key findings from this report can be found in the Executive Summary.

Alaska Reading First has made significant progress over the past school year but still faces significant challenges. The 2007–2008 school year marks the final year of state-provided professional development and technical assistance, although schools have two more years to spend this year's funding. Because of this, the evaluation offers many of

the following recommendations for reflection and consideration in the event that the state is awarded another round of Reading First funding. The state also might consider a few of the recommendations for consideration for the 2007–2008 school year.

1. Modify the timing, format and content of professional development events.

While both coaches and principals received their own specific training early in the school year, teacher training was quite delayed. The Reading First Summit occurred in March 2007, when only a few months of school remained. With the end of school quickly approaching, it is doubtful that teachers had many opportunities to practice the new skills that they learned at the Reading First Summit. Because of this, schools and students never really benefited from improved instruction over the course of the school year. Also, with late training, the benefits were lost on those teachers who left at the end of the year. In some schools, teacher turnover was significant.

The evaluation strongly suggests that the state try to overcome challenges and provide teacher training as early as possible in the school year. If a fall Reading First Summit is not feasible, the state might consider offering simultaneously conducted, districtwide professional development at an inservice conducted before school starts. Another approach might be to conduct the statewide conference in August and pay teachers stipends to attend. With an earlier scheduled teacher training, it would be possible for the state to train new teachers and coaches and get them "on-board" quickly with Reading First. To have an effective school program, training of new teachers and coaches is essential. Either approach would eliminate the problem of finding enough substitutes.

Teachers highlighted several topics in which they wanted professional development. These were the same areas that received high priority in the previous year, namely:
- Student engagement
- Differentiated instruction
- Comprehension
- Effective use of intervention programs

Other topics that surfaced from the evaluation data included:
- ELL students and their instructional needs
- Reading First sustainability, which needs continued attention and focus at the Reading First Summit and other trainings

Coaches indicated that they were not particularly satisfied with their overall training on coaching. Adopting a more ongoing approach to coach training might better meet their needs. This new approach might be a combination of face-to-face and teleconferencing. Coaches pointed out that they wanted more training in the areas of working with resistant teachers, providing constructive feedback, conducting classroom observations, and supporting differentiated instruction. Training in these areas would help to promote stronger coaching practices, such as demonstrations and

modeling, in addition to more frequent classroom observations and feedback to teachers, which were limited this year.

2. Address more strongly the instructional needs of all readers during the reading block.

Student outcome data show that the percentage of benchmark students did not increase over the past two years, nor did the percentage of intensive students decline. Over two years, the percentage of students who started at benchmark dropped by 25 to 30 percent in second and third grades, respectively. This is an indication that school programs might not be strong enough to retain their benchmark students. Perhaps the Reading First schools encountered challenges that interfered with retaining benchmark students; or perhaps once a student was at benchmark, programs switched their attention to other non-benchmark students and did not monitor their benchmark students as closely as they should have. Regardless, "weak" benchmark students need continued support to prevent them from falling behind.

The needs of struggling readers were not fully met. Multiple sources of data all pointed to the urgent need to provide additional support to schools to help them better meet the needs of their ELL students, minority populations, poor students, and special education students. ELL students made up almost 20 percent of Reading First students this year. Non-native speakers of English have language and literacy development needs that are not necessarily identical to those of their native-English-speaking classmates. Teachers, coaches, and principals did not think that Reading First was doing "an excellent job of meeting English language learners' needs." Schools' dissatisfaction related to two concerns—inadequate ELL materials, and lack of teacher knowledge and skills to meet the needs of ELL students.

Across grade levels, the benchmark percentages of Alaska Native/American Indian, Asian and Latino students, students on free and reduced-price lunch, students eligible for special education, and English Language Learners were all lower than the state benchmark percentage for spring 2007. Likewise, the percentages for these same subpopulations in the intensive group in the spring 2007 were higher than the state percentage of intensive students. The percentage of intensive students from these subpopulations in spring 2007 was dramatically higher than the state's percentage in second and third grades.

These findings suggest a need for:
- More in-depth teacher and coach training on ELL issues and instructional strategies to work with ELL students, such as the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) on a large scale
- More comprehensive training and coaching on differentiated instructional practices and effective small group instruction
- Increased understanding by all district coordinators about the needs of ELL students and struggling readers

- Increased focus on teaching students at their instructional level through more comprehensive differentiated instruction, effective small group instruction, and "walk-to-read." While "walk-to-read" was not the norm in many Reading First schools, it should be revisited or specific technical assistance be provided to help school work out "walk-to-read" schedules. It is an effective strategy to teach students at their instructional levels.

3. Strengthen interventions for struggling readers.

Student movement out of intensive and strategic is indicative of the effectiveness of intervention programs to move students toward students reading at grade level. Overall it does not seem thin intensive and strategic students are improving quickly enough. Students who were in intensive two years ago were quite likely to still be in intensive by spring 2007 (67 percent for second grade and 75 percent for third grade). Second-grade students who were in strategic in spring 2005 were equally likely to drop to intensive, remain in strategic, or move up to benchmark. Over half of the third-grade strategic students (52%) remained in strategic from spring 2005 to spring 2007. Based on this information, it seems that there should be a focus on the intensive students in second grade and the strategic students in third grade.

Additionally, all intensive students this year received intensive interventions in 79 percent of the schools and all strategic students received supplemental services in 69 percent of the schools. This showed a slightly stronger focus on intensive students than strategic students. Obstacles cited for not providing intervention and supplemental services included insufficient staffing, lack of trained staff, available space, and teacher resistance.

For the students requiring the most intensive interventions, research strongly suggests that intervention groups serve six students or fewer. Schools need to be aware of this research about the impact of group size. In Alaska, however, group size seemed sufficiently small, with interventions delivered to groups of about five students or fewer. On the other hand, a substantial number of students received *less* intensive instruction—less than two hours a week and/or less than six weeks during the year. The constraints to providing more time for intensive intervention need to be investigated and problem-solved. In addition, teachers and coaches seemed to need additional assistance in designing appropriate interventions for special populations, such as ELL students; identifying and selecting appropriate materials; and scheduling intervention and supplemental services. Individualized technical assistance may be needed to help schools develop appropriate strategies, targeted for the specific school, to increase the time provided for intensive instruction and to address these other issues around setting up interventions.

4. **Provide specific and focused support on sustainability.**

There is no single "magic bullet" to sustain the changes made under Reading First. In and of themselves, continuing to strengthen implementation and addressing the previous recommendations are steps toward sustainability. Sustainability needs to be specifically addressed and supported by the state Reading First program.

In 2006–2007, sustainability was addressed at the Reading First Summit and during RLT meetings. While teachers were optimistic about the sustainability of a variety of Reading First components—most notably interventions, ongoing professional development in reading, the 90-miunute reading block, grouping, the core program, and the way reading was taught—they were least optimistic that the coach and RLT would remain. Only about one-half of the principals and coaches agreed that Reading First instructional changes would be sustained. In addition, teacher buy-in to Reading First was waning. Teacher support for Reading First has steadily declined since 2005, with *three in five* teachers now expressing strong support for Reading First, down from *three in four*.

The influence of Reading First in the district's non-Reading First schools was mixed; components were implemented to varying levels in some of the non-Reading First schools. The use of a core reading program and the provision of professional development in reading were the most commonly implemented components, and the presence of a reading coach and a system for progress monitoring students were the least commonly reported Reading First components in non-Reading First schools.

Given this data, the state Reading First program might examine a few key areas to help promote sustainability, such as addressing staff member turnover, strategizing to ensure that the vital work done by coaches does not disappear, and building enduring structures to support shared leadership. All of these areas are important to sustainability.

- **Addressing staff member turnover**. The impact of staff turnover can be addressed in a number of ways, including: 1) providing training opportunities for new teaches, principals, and coaches, 2) intensifying district coordinator visits to schools with new principals or coaches, 3) encouraging districts to hire new teachers or principals who support the Reading First model, and/or 4) creating Reading First "induction" materials that can be shared with staff members new to Reading First schools.

- **Strategizing to keep the coaches' contributions.** The evaluation has repeatedly documented that coaches carry many responsibilities beyond working with teachers on their instruction. In order to maintain the high use of assessment data, either the coaching position itself must be retained, or alternative ways of providing the same functions need to be found. The state Reading First office might support schools and districts by: 1) helping them find or redirect funding streams to maintain the coaching position and/or

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2) creating very specific models and guides for how to distribute the coaching workload in schools unlikely to keep a coach. What could teachers take on and how could their other responsibilities shift to accommodate these extra tasks? How could the Reading Leadership Team become a stronger entity with specifically defined responsibilities? What could principals be responsible for? Who at the school (e.g., administrative assistants) could be trained to enter data? How might districts help?

- **Building enduring shared leadership structures.** Creating strong, shared leadership in schools may help to maintain a vision and direction, even in the face of principal and/or teacher turnover. While nearly all schools had Reading Leadership Teams already, their level of functioning varied tremendously. Shared leadership could be promoted by: 1) providing training about effective school leadership teams and/or direct technical assistance to schools where Reading Leadership Teams meet rarely or are not decision-making bodies, and/or 2) identifying and formally training teacher leaders in Reading First schools to take on specific responsibilities (e.g., grade-level facilitators, data managers). The state could either provide "teacher leader" training directly, or train coaches (or districts) to do so at their own site.

The points identified here may not be equally appropriate to all schools. To focus technical assistance in sustainability, the state might consider administering a short "sustainability needs assessment" survey of districts and principals, in order to identify the most pressing issues at individual schools. While the state addressed sustainability at its last Reading First Summit, a continued focus needs to be maintained this year.

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APPENDIX A

Alaska Reading First—Coach Survey 2007

11 OUT OF **11** COACHES **(100%)** COMPLETED THE SURVEY ON **14** SCHOOLS. ONE COACH COMPLETED INFORMATION ON **4** SCHOOLS IN THE LAKE AND PENINSULA DISTRICT, SO THERE IS A SURVEY FORM FOR EACH OF THESE FOUR SCHOOLS. UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED, ALL OR ALMOST ALL ANSWERED EACH QUESTION.

ALASKA READING FIRST
COACH SURVEY 2007

This survey is part of the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory's (NWREL) external evaluation of Alaska Reading First. **Your input is critically important; this survey is the only opportunity we have to hear from every coach involved in Alaska Reading First.** Please be candid in your answers. There are no right or wrong responses. **The information you provide will be kept confidential and reported only in combination with responses from other Reading First coaches.**

When answering the questions, please answer according to how your school functioned **this year (2006-2007)**. If you do not know the answer to a question or it does not apply to you, please skip that question.

The survey will take about 30 minutes to complete. Please return it, along with the other materials from your school, to: Tess Bridgman, NWREL Evaluation Program, 101 SW Main Street, Suite 500, Portland, OR 97204.

SECTION A: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

1. Did you attend the March 2007 Reading First Summit?		
-- No	8% Yes – some of it	92% Yes – all of it

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.

The professional development that I received at the March 2007 Reading First Summit…	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
2. was very relevant to my work.	--	--	--	23%	77%
3. was mostly review for me.	--	55%	27%	18%	--
4. consisted of high-quality presentations.	--	--	8%	23%	69%
5. provided me with useful training in coaching methods.	31%	23%	--	15%	31%
6. provided me with useful tools for working with resistant staff.	38%	23%	15%	--	23%
7. included adequate opportunities to reflect and share with my colleagues.	--	--	8%	77%	15%
8. met my specific needs as a Reading First coach.	--	8%	15%	54%	23%

The professional development that I received at the March 2007 Reading First Summit…	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
9. was differentiated (tailored) to meet the needs of different groups, based on their level of pre-existing expertise.	--	31%	23%	31%	15%
10. did a good job of addressing English Language Learner (ELL) issues.	--	20%	50%	30%	--
11. did a good job of addressing sustainability.	--	--	--	73%	27%

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.

I am very pleased with…	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
12. the November 2006 School Leadership Team training	--	--	--	57%	43%
13. Coach Institute provided by the Consortium on Reading Excellence (CORE) in Sept./Oct. 2006.	--	--	50%	38%	13%
14. the quality of coaching training that I received through the state and Reading First this year.	--	--	50%	50%	--
15. the amount of coaching training that I received through the state and Reading First this year.	--	64%	14%	21%	--
16. If you were not pleased, was there too much or too little?	-- Too much			100% Too little	

17. Looking ahead to next year (2007-08), in which area(s) would **you as coach** most like additional training: *(select all that apply)*

21%	Coaching methods	21%	Selection and use of supplemental programs
14%	Developing rapport and buy-in with staff	14%	Selection and use of intervention programs
21%	Working with resistance or conflict resolution	21%	Working with ELL students
21%	Lesson modeling	36%	Student engagement
43%	Classroom observations	21%	Strategies to teach the 5 components
50%	Providing constructive feedback	43%	Differentiated instruction
21%	Meeting facilitation	--	Administering and scoring assessments
--	Budgeting	29%	Interpreting & working with assessment results
--	Using the core program effectively	36%	Other: _____

	Did not take place	Once	Twice	3 times	4 times	5 or more times
How frequently this year has your school received Reading First technical assistance from the following sources?						
18. EED	64%	7%	--	7%	14%	7%
19. District reading staff	50%	--	17%	17%	--	17%
How frequently this year have the following external trainers provided building-level reading-related professional development to teachers at your school?						
20. Publisher representatives/trainers	64%	--	29%	--	--	7%
21. District reading staff	54%	23%	8%	--	--	15%
22. Other contracted experts/trainers	43%	14%	14%	--	21%	7%

Over the 2006-07 school year, how helpful were visits from:	Never Helpful	Rarely Helpful	Sometimes Helpful	Usually Helpful	Always Helpful	Did Not Take Place
23. EED staff	--	--	14%	--	21%	64%
24. Publisher representatives/trainers	--	--	15%	15%	15%	54%
25. Other contracted experts/trainers	8%	--	8%	8%	38%	38%

26. The frequency of visits from our Consortium for Reading Excellence (CORE) consultant this year was:

22% Too much   0% Too little   78% Just right

SECTION B: STUDENT ASSESSMENTS

27. Which assessment(s) are used in your K-3 reading program for the following purposes: *(check as many as apply)*

	DIBELS	Tejas LEE	CORE* Multiple Assessments	Core Reading Program Assessments	Teacher-developed Assessments	Other	None
Screening	93%	--	29%	64%	7%	21%	--
Diagnosis	57%	--	43%	50%	7%	14%	--
Progress Monitoring	100%	--	7%	64$	7%	14%	--

*CORE = Consortium on Reading Excellence

28. Who <u>regularly</u> administers the K-3 DIBELS <u>benchmark</u> assessments to students at your school? *(select all that apply)*

50% I do (coach)	64% K teacher(s)	
-- Principal	57% 1st grade teacher(s)	7% Literacy facilitators
36% Paraprofessionals	57% 2nd grade teacher(s)	7% District staff
7% Administrative/ support staff	57% 3rd grade teacher(s)	14% Other: _____
21% Specialists (Title I, ELL, Special Ed, etc.)	7% 4th -6th grade teachers	

29. Who <u>regularly</u> administers the K-3 DIBELS <u>progress-monitoring</u> assessments to students at your school? *(check all that apply)*

71% I do (coach)	86% K teacher(s)	
7% Principal	79% 1st grade teacher(s)	7% Literacy facilitators
50% Paraprofessionals	79% 2nd grade teacher(s)	-- District staff
7% Administrative/ support staff	79% 3rd grade teacher(s)	-- Other: _____
29% Specialists (Title I, ELL, Special Ed, etc.)	7% 4th -6th grade teachers	

On average, how often are students in each of the following groups progress-monitored at your school?	Weekly	Every 2 weeks	Every 3 weeks	Every 4 weeks	Every 6 weeks	Every 7 weeks or less often	Never
30. Benchmark	--	--	14%	36%	--	43%	7%
31. Strategic	7%	64%	7%	21%	--	--	--
32. Intensive	77%	23%	--	--	--	--	--

The section below asks about how frequently you use reading assessment data when performing specific aspects of your job. If a question asks about an activity that you do not perform, please select the last option, "I don't do that."

I use the results of reading assessments (such as the DIBELS) when…	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Always	I don't do that
33. communicating with teachers about their students.	--	--	7%	43%	50%	--
34. communicating with teachers about their instruction.	--	--	29%	36%	36%	--
35. making decisions about student grouping.	--	--	--	43%	57%	--
36. modifying lessons from the core program.	--	15%	31%	31%	15%	8%
37. identifying which students need interventions.	--	--	--	--	100%	--
38. matching struggling students to the correct intervention for their needs.	--	--	14%	--	86%	--
39. monitoring student progress in interventions.	--	--	--	7%	93%	--
40. helping teachers tailor instruction to individual student needs (i.e. differentiated instruction).	--	--	21%	36%	43%	--
41. looking at school-wide (K-3) trends.	--	--	14%	--	64%	21%
42. meeting with parents.	--	7%	21%	14%	29%	29%

SECTION C: COMMUNICATION AND COLLABORATION

43. Who is on the Reading Leadership Team (RLT)? *(select all that apply)*

100% I am (coach)	86% 51st grade teacher(s)
93% Principal	86% 2nd grade teacher(s)
21% ELL teacher(s)	86% 3rd grade 3 teacher(s)
71% Special ed teacher(s)	29% 4th-6th grade teacher(s)
21% Title I teacher(s)	-- District representative(s)
7% Parent(s)	29% Other: _____
14% Paraprofessional(s)	-- We don't have a RLT
93% K teacher(s)	

44. This year, how often does your school have RLT meetings on average? *(select one)*

    -- Never
    36% Once or a few times a year
    14% Every other month
    36% Once a month
    7% Every other week
    7% Once a week
    -- More than once a week

SECTION D: ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

In previous years, the evaluation has found that coaches work long hours and carry a range of responsibilities. We ask in more detail about the amount of time you spend on different activities, in order to track overall patterns about task allocations. No individual responses are reported; only overall summaries are provided in the report.

45. As a reading coach, how many <u>hours a week</u> do you work at this job, on average?
    Average= 43.5 hrs; SD=12.5 hrs; Range = 10-60 hrs

46. On average, how many hours per week do you spend on the following tasks? Please write in the number of hours next to each task and add up to make sure the TOTAL equals the number in Question 45 above. Then bubble in your hours for each task in the section just below.

    NOTE: Instead of calculating the average number of hours, the percentage of time was calculated by dividing the number of hours by the sum of all hours across tasks.

7%	Coordinating or administering reading assessments
7%	Managing data (entering data, creating charts, etc.)
9%	Reviewing and using reading assessment data
4%	Attending professional development or state-level meetings
8%	Planning for and attending RLT and grade-level meetings
5%	Training groups of teachers in grades K-3
18%	Observing, demonstrating or providing feedback to individual teachers in grades K-3
2%	Observing, demonstrating or providing feedback to individual teachers in grades 4-6
1%	Training groups of teachers in grades 4-6
8%	Planning interventions
7%	Providing interventions directly to students
1%	Covering or subbing for teachers
15%	Paperwork (not including assessment/data management)
1%	Bus/recess duty
6%	Other: _____

SECTION E: THE READING FIRST CLASSROOM

Please indicate the <u>number of minutes (do not round).</u>

NOTE: The number of minutes for each grade-level reading block was categorized as less than 90 minutes or 90 or more minutes

	How many minutes long is the reading block?		
Grade	**<90 minutes**	**>= 90 minutes**	**Are at least 90 minutes uninterrupted?**
47. Kindergarten	29%	71%	79% Yes 21% No
48. First	7%	93%	100% Yes -- No
49. Second	--	100%	100% Yes -- No
50. Third	--	100%	100% Yes -- No

51. Does your school use walk-to-read (students walk to another teacher for reading instruction) during the 90-minute block?
    36% Yes, in all or nearly all classes
    36% Yes, in some grades or classes but not all
    29% No, not at all

52. During the reading block, <u>most</u> instruction is at students':
    14% Grade level
    86% Instructional level

As the reading coach, you have a privileged view of what is going on across K-3 reading classrooms in your school. In the following section, your expertise is called upon to report how often you see certain practices when you are in classrooms during the reading block. Your school will not be graded on how you respond; the objective is to document overall trends. Please skip any questions that do not apply.

When you observe K-3 classrooms during reading, with what proportion of teachers do you regularly see:	No or very few teachers	Some teachers	Most teachers	All teachers
53. Use of the core program	--	7%	7%	86%
54. Use of the templates	9%	36%	9%	45%
55. Differentiated instruction	--	--	23%	77%
56. Nonsense word practice	79%	14%	--	7%
57. Quick transitions from activity to activity	--	7%	43%	50%
58. Modeling of the work or thinking process	--	36%	14%	50%
59. Guiding students with effective questioning	--	36%	50%	14%
60. Providing multiple practice opportunities for students	--	21%	43%	36%
61. Effective classroom management	--	21%	57%	21%
62. Disruptive student behavior	36%	50%	7%	7%
63. Monitoring of student understanding	--	7%	43%	50%
64. Provision of clear, direct and frequent feedback	--	29%	50%	21%

The following series of questions refer to the interventions your school provides to students outside of the reading block.

65. How many students will have received **intensive interventions** this year (from August or September 2006 to June 2007?   551 students
   "Intensive interventions" occur outside the reading block, <u>at least 2 hours per week for at least 6 weeks</u>. Count any individual student only once, even if he/she has received interventions for more than one session or term. If you do not have exact numbers, please provide the best estimate that you can.

66. How many other students (not counted in the previous question) will have received **less intensive interventions** (outside the reading block, less than two hours per week and/or less than six weeks)? 492 students

For what percentage of students in each DIBELS grouping is your school able to provide interventions?

	<20%	20-39%	40-59%	60-79%	80-99%	100%
67. Intensive	--	--	--	7%	14%	79%
68. Strategic	--	8%	--	0%	23%	69%

69. If fewer than 100 percent of eligible students receive interventions, what are the primary obstacles your school faces? (select all that apply):

    18% Insufficient staffing

    9% Lack of trained staff

    -- Student transportation/bussing (limits before/after school options)

    9% Available space in the building

    9% Teacher resistance

    -- Lack of parental support

    9% Other

    64% of eligible students receive interventions

70. Who regularly provides interventions at your school? *(check all that apply)*

36% I do (coach)	79% K teacher(s)	7% Literacy facilitators
7% Principal	64% 1st grade teacher(s)	-- District staff
71% Paraprofessionals	71% 2nd grade teacher(s)	-- Volunteers
-- Administrative/ support staff	71% 3rd grade teacher(s)	14% Paid tutors
64% Specialists (Title I, ELL, Special Ed, etc.)	7% 4th -6th grade teachers	7% Other: _____

71. What is the largest number of **intensive** students that work at one time with an intervention provider? Average: 5.2; SD=4.7; Range= 1-17 students. One school did not have any intensive students.

SECTION F: YOUR VIEWS ON READING FIRST

Please indicate your level of agreement with each statement below. If a question is not applicable, please leave it blank.

This year…	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
72. My role as the reading coach is clearly defined.	--	--	21%	57%	21%
73. Most teachers at my school understand the role of the reading coach.	--	7%	21%	43%	29%
74. Our principal is a visible advocate for reading.	--	--	14%	36%	50%
75. I am very comfortable observing teachers and providing constructive feedback.	--	14%	29%	57%	0%
76. Reading First would not run smoothly without the RLT.	--	14%	29%	21%	36%
77. Major initiatives (programs or grants) in our district contradict or are not aligned with Reading First.	7%	29%	57%	--	7%
78. I strongly support the instructional changes that are occurring under Reading First.	--	--	--	36%	64%
79. Overcoming teacher resistance to Reading First has been a challenge for me.	36%	35%	7%	14%	7%
80. I have significant philosophical or pedagogical objections to the approach of Reading First.	79%	14%	7%	--	--
81. In my view, Reading First overemphasizes the importance of using DIBELS results.	57%	35%	--	7%	--
82. I think that the DIBELS is a valid, accurate indicator of student reading ability.	--	--	7%	43%	50%
83. I am fully confident that before each benchmark testing period, all members of our assessment team thoroughly understand the administration and scoring of the DIBELS.	--	--	14%	50%	36%
84. Our school has an organized system for administering the DIBELS and other Reading First assessments.	--	--	7%	29%	64%
85. Our school has an organized system for analyzing and sharing the results of the DIBELS and other Reading First assessments with teachers.	--	7%	7%	35%	50%
86. Our school has an organized system for reviewing reading assessment data that have been disaggregated (split up) by key demographic variables (i.e. race/ethnicity or ELL status).	8%	25%	25%	17%	25%
87. I am pleased that our school has a Reading First grant.	--	--	--	14%	86%
88. Participating in Reading First has helped my school develop a more collaborative culture.	--	--	--	29%	71%

This year…	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
89. Attending grade-level reading meetings is a good use of my time.	--	8%	--	23%	69%
90. Attending RLT meetings is a good use of my time.	--	--	--	50%	50%
91. I am very satisfied with the core reading program we are using at our school.	--	--	7%	43%	50%
92. I believe that reading instruction at my school has improved noticeably.	--	--	--	50%	50%
93. Our school uses supplemental and intervention materials that are well-matched to the needs of our ELL students.	--	11%	22%	44%	22%
94. Teachers at my school have the knowledge and skills necessary to modify and supplement the core program to meet the needs of all ELL students.	--	11%	22%	44%	22%
95. The philosophy or pedagogy of our ELL program or services sometimes clashes with Reading First.	11%	33%	22%	33%	--
96. Our Reading First program is doing an excellent job meeting the needs of our ELL students.	--	22%	33%	33%	11%
97. The intervention materials we use are well-matched to the needs of our struggling readers.	--	--	14%	50%	36%
98. Our school's intervention providers are well-trained to meet the needs of struggling readers.	--	--	29%	50%	21%
99. As a school, we're doing an excellent job of providing appropriate reading interventions to all students who need them.	--	7%	29%	50%	14%
100. Instruction in other subjects has suffered because of all of the focus on Reading First.	7%	21%	36%	36%	--
101. State project staff are responsive to my school's needs.	--	--	25%	50%	25%
102. The state coordinator's support and input has been extremely valuable.	--	--	7%	64%	29%
103. I trust our state coordinator with any information – good or bad – about our reading program.	--	--	--	50%	50%
104. Our state coordinator understands our school, our programs and culture, and takes that into account when making recommendations.	--	--	7%	43%	50%
105. I believe that all of the instructional changes we made under Reading First will be sustained after the grant is over.	--	14%	36%	50%	--
106. I am pleased with the amount of support we have received from the state to address sustainability.	--	7%	50%	21%	21%

107. What is your current position?

       14% - time reading coach

       86% -time reading coach

108. Is there another reading coach at your school?

       7% Yes   93% No

109. If yes, does this reading coach also work with K-3 reading teachers?

       -- Yes   100% No

110. How many total years of coaching experience do you have (including this year)?

    Average=4.1; SD=2.2; range=1-10 years

111. How many years have you been the reading coach at this school (including this year)?

    Average:=3.3; SD=1.1; Range=1-6 years

112. How many years have you worked at this school (in any capacity, including this year)?

    Average=7.6; SD=5.6; Range=3-25 years

113. How many years of teaching experience do you have (prior to becoming a coach)?

    Average=13.1; SD=7.2; Range 5-26 years

114. What are your educational credentials? (select as many as apply)

       71% Bachelor's degree

       29% Reading certification

       14% Master's degree - In reading

       36% Master's degree - In area of education other than reading

       -- Master's degree - In discipline other than education

       -- Doctorate (Ph.D. or Ed.D.)

115. At which school do you work? *Your school name is used *only* to make sure we hear from each school. Your responses are confidential and no school names will be used in reporting.*

District	School	Number
Anchorage	Airport Heights	1
Anchorage	Creekside Park	1
Anchorage	Mt. View	1
Anchorage	Spring Hill	1
Anchorage	Ursa Minor	1
Anchorage	Tyson William	1
Fairbanks	Anderson	1
Fairbanks	Nordale	1
Fairbanks	Ticasuk Brown	1
Lake & Peninsula	Chignik Lake	1
Lake & Peninsula	Kokhanok	1
Lake & Peninsula	Newhalen	1
Lake & Peninsula	Nondalton	1
Lake & Peninsula	Perryville	1

Thank you for your support of the evaluation!

APPENDIX B

Alaska Reading First—Principal Survey 2007

14 OUT OF **14** PRINCIPALS **(100%)** COMPLETED THE SURVEY. UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED, ALL OR ALMOST ALL ANSWERED EACH QUESTION.

ALASKA READING FIRST
PRINCIPAL SURVEY 2007

This survey is part of the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory's (NWREL) external evaluation of Alaska Reading First. **Your input is critically important; this survey is the only opportunity we have to hear from every principal involved in Alaska Reading First.** There are no right or wrong responses. Please be candid in your answers. **The information you provide will be kept confidential and reported only in combination with responses from the other Reading First schools.**

When answering the questions, please answer according to how your school functioned **this year (2006-2007)**. If you do not know the answer to a question or it does not apply to you, please skip that question.

The survey will take about 20 minutes to complete. Please return it to your reading coach, sealed in the envelope provided. Thank you for your assistance.

SECTION A: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

1. Did you attend the March 2007 Reading First Summit?		
14% No	7% Yes – some of it	79% Yes – all of it

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.

The professional development that I received at the March 2007 Reading First Summit…	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
2. was very relevant to my work.	--	--	--	58%	42%
3. was mostly review for me.	--	42%	33%	25%	--
4. consisted of high-quality presentations.	--	--	--	58%	42%
5. provided me with useful training in observing teachers and providing feedback.	--	8%	33%	42%	17%
6. provided me with useful tools for working with resistant staff.	--	8%	50%	33%	8%
7. met my specific needs as a Reading First principal.	--	8%	25%	50%	17%
8. included adequate opportunities to reflect and share with my colleagues.	--	8%	0%	75%	17%
9. was differentiated (tailored) to meet the needs of different groups, based on their level of pre-existing expertise.	--	9%	18%	64%	9%

The professional development that I received at the March 2007 Reading First Summit…	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
10. did a good job of addressing English Language Learner (ELL) issues.	--	9%	55%	18%	18%
11. did a good job of addressing sustainability.	--	17%	17%	42%	25%

I am very pleased with…	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
12. the November 2006 training for School Leadership Teams	--	7%	7%	71%	14%
13. the Leadership Institute training provided by the Consortium on Reading Excellence (CORE) in Sept. 2006.	--	8%	38%	38%	15%
14. the quality of training in instructional leadership that I received through the state and Reading First this year.	--	7%	7%	64%	21%
15. the amount of training in instructional leadership that I received through the state and Reading First this year.	--	--	21%	57%	21%
16. If you were not pleased with the amount, was there too much or too little?	-- Too much		100% Too little		

SECTION B: USE OF ASSESSMENTS

The section below asks how frequently you use reading assessment data when performing specific aspects of your job. If a question asks about an activity that you do not perform, please select the last option, "I don't do that."

I use the results of reading assessments (such as the DIBELS) when…	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Always	I don't do that
17. communicating with teachers about their students.	--	--	7%	43%	50%	--
18. communicating with teachers about their instruction.	--	--	14%	36%	50%	--
19. making decisions about student grouping.	--	--	--	21%	71%	7%
20. making decisions about matching students to the appropriate interventions.	--	--	--	29%	71%	--
21. looking at school-wide (K-3) trends.	--	--	7%	29%	64%	--
22. meeting with parents.	--	--	14%	57%	29%	--

SECTION C: MEETINGS AND COLLABORATION

23. Are you a member of the Reading Leadership Team (RLT) at your school?

93% Yes	-- No	7% There is no RLT at my school

24. This year, how often did you attend RLT meetings?

    -- Never
    -- Seldom
    23% Sometimes
    54% Often
    23% Always

SECTION D: YOUR VIEWS ON READING FIRST

Please indicate your level of agreement with each statement below. If a question is not applicable, please leave it blank.

This year...	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
25. I am very comfortable observing teachers and providing constructive feedback.	--	7%	--	36%	57%
26. I feel that Reading First is putting excessive emphasis on the involvement of the principal in instructional matters.	21%	29%	21%	14%	14%
27. Reading First would not run smoothly without the RLT.	--	14%	7%	43%	36%
28. Major initiatives in our district contradict or are not aligned with Reading First.	50%	36%	7%	7%	--
29. I strongly support the instructional changes that are occurring under Reading First.	--	--	7%	29%	64%
30. Our district provides sufficient support for Reading First.	--	7%	14%	50%	29%
31. Overcoming teacher resistance to Reading First has been a challenge for me.	14%	43%	--	29%	14%
32. I have significant philosophical or pedagogical objections to the approach of Reading First.	57%	21%	7%	14%	0%
33. I am pleased that our school has a Reading First grant.	--	--	--	21%	79%
34. In my view, Reading First overemphasizes the importance of using DIBELS results.	29%	43%	14%	14%	--
35. I think that the DIBELS is a valid, accurate indicator of student reading ability.	--	--	--	71%	29%
36. Participating in Reading First has helped my school develop a more collaborative culture.	--	15%	15%	23%	46%

This year…	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
37. Attending grade-level reading meetings is a good use of my time.	--	--	14%	43%	43%
38. Attending RLT meetings is a good use of my time.	--	--	--	57%	43%
39. I am very satisfied with the core reading program we are using at our school.	--	--	7%	57%	36%
40. Our Reading First program is doing an excellent job meeting the needs of our ELL students.	--	--	23%	54%	23%
41. I believe that reading instruction at my school has improved noticeably.	--	--	--	50%	50%
42. Our staffing resources are sufficient to provide interventions to all students who need them.	7%	29%	14%	29%	21%
43. As a school, we're doing an excellent job of providing appropriate reading interventions to all students who need them.	--	--	36%	29%	36%
44. Instruction in other subjects has suffered because of all of the focus on Reading First.	--	29%	14%	50%	7%
45. State project staff are responsive to my school's needs.	--	--	7%	64%	29%
46. We receive conflicting messages about reading from our district.	21%	57%	7%	14%	0%
47. I believe that all of the instructional changes we made under Reading First will be sustained after the grant is over.	14%	7%	36%	36%	7%
48. I am pleased with the amount of support we have received from the state to address sustainability.	7%	36%	29%	21%	7%

SECTION F: PRINCIPAL & SCHOOL DEMOGRAPHICS

49. How many K-3 classroom teachers do you have in your building?
    Average 8; range 1-18

50. This year, how many of those teachers were new to your building?
    Average:2; range 0-5

51. How many total years of principal experience do you have (including this year?
    Average 11: range 1-37

52. How many years have you been the principal at this school (including this year)?
    Average: 6; range 1-20

53. At which school do you work? *Your school name is used *only* to make sure we hear from each school. Your responses are confidential and no school names will be used in reporting.*

District	School	Number
Anchorage	Airport Heights	1
Anchorage	Creekside Park	1
Anchorage	Mt. View	1
Anchorage	Spring Hill	1
Anchorage	Ursa Minor	1
Anchorage	Tyson William	1
Fairbanks	Anderson	1
Fairbanks	Nordale	1
Fairbanks	Ticasuk Brown	1
Lake & Peninsula	Chignik Lake	1
Lake & Peninsula	Kokhanok	1
Lake & Peninsula	Newhalen	1
Lake & Peninsula	Nondalton	1
Lake & Peninsula	Perryville	1

Thank you for your support of the evaluation!

APPENDIX C

Alaska Reading First—Teacher Survey 2007

ALASKA READING FIRST
TEACHER SURVEY 2007

This survey is part of the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory's (NWREL) external evaluation of Alaska Reading First. **Your input is critically important; this survey is the only opportunity we have to hear from every teacher involved in Alaska Reading First.** Please be candid in your answers. There are no right or wrong responses. **The information you provide will be kept confidential and reported only in combination with responses from other Reading First teachers.**

When answering the questions, please answer according to how your school functioned **this year (2006-2007)**.

If you do not know the answer to a question or it does not apply to you, please skip that question.

The survey will take about 20 minutes to complete. **Please return it to your reading coach sealed in the envelope provided.** Thank you for your assistance.

SECTION A: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

1. Did you attend the March 2007 Reading First Summit?		
44% No	8% Yes – some of it	49% Yes – all of it

If you attended some or all of the 2006 Reading First Summer Institute, please indicate below your agreement or disagreement with each of the following statements. Otherwise, please skip to question 8 below.

The March 2007 Reading First Summit …	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
2. was very relevant to my work.	6%	2%	3%	44%	45%
3. was mostly review for me.	3%	25%	42%	25%	6%
4. consisted of high-quality presentations.	2%	2%	5%	48%	45%
5. provided me with instructional strategies I have used in my classroom.	2%	8%	5%	49%	37%
6. included adequate opportunities to reflect and share with my colleagues.	6%	18%	12%	45%	18%
7. did a good job of addressing English Language Learner (ELL) issues.	3%	10%	45%	34%	8%

Thinking back over this school year, please indicate how helpful you feel that the various forms of Reading First professional development were for you, personally.

Over the 2006-2007 school year, how helpful was/were:	Never Helpful	Rarely Helpful	Sometimes Helpful	Usually Helpful	Always Helpful	Did Not Take Place
8. training in the core program from the publisher?	--	7%	16%	25%	11%	41%
9. demonstration lessons provided by your reading coach?	1%	--	15%	21%	37%	25%
10. feedback on your instruction provided by the <u>coach</u> after observation of your classroom?	1%	2%	13%	29%	39%	17%
11. feedback on your instruction provided by the <u>principal</u> after observation of your classroom?	1%	3%	8%	24%	30%	35%
12. assistance from the coach in administering and scoring student assessments?	--	3%	11%	19%	51%	17%
13. assistance from the coach in interpreting assessment results?	1%	1%	10%	25%	54%	9%
14. assistance from the coach in providing quality interventions?	1%	3%	15%	21%	48%	13%
15. assistance from the coach in monitoring the effectiveness of interventions?	1%	1%	13%	23%	44%	18%

16. Looking ahead to next year (2007-08), in which area(s) would you most like additional training: *(select all that apply)*

12% Phonemic awareness
12% Phonics
20% Fluency
17% Vocabulary
40% Comprehension
40% Student engagement
22% Working with ELL students
38% Differentiated instruction

10% Using the core program effectively
19% Using supplemental programs effectively
32% Using intervention programs effectively
6% Administering & scoring assessments
7% Interpreting assessment results
20% Using assessment results to drive instruction
6% Other: _____

SECTION B: STUDENT ASSESSMENTS

The section below asks how frequently you use reading assessment data when performing specific aspects of your job. If a question asks about an activity that you do not perform, please select the last option, "I don't do that."

I use the results of reading assessments (such as the DIBELS) when…	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Always	I don't do that
17. grouping students into small instructional groups within my classroom.	1%	3%	8%	28%	54%	6%
18. communicating with colleagues about reading instruction and student needs.	--	3%	7%	32%	57%	1%
19. looking at school-wide (K-3) trends.	--	3%	18%	34%	39%	7%
20. meeting with parents.	3%	2%	8%	36%	47%	4%
21. modifying lessons from the core program.	4%	6%	23%	36%	22%	9%
22. identifying which students need interventions.	--	2%	2%	19%	76%	1%
23. matching struggling students to the correct intervention for their needs.	1%	1%	3%	31%	62%	3%
24. monitoring student progress in interventions.	--	--	8%	28%	62%	3%

SECTION C: THE READING FIRST CLASSROOM

25. Which best describes the group of students you usually have in your classroom during the reading block:

55% Homogeneous – students are mostly at about the same level and have similar instructional needs.
45% Heterogeneous – students are at a wide variety of levels and have differing instructional needs.

26. On a typical day, how many students are in your classroom during the reading block?
Average: 15.4; SD=5.9; Range=3-27 students

Please indicate the frequency with which the following activities took place during this school year (2006-2007).

This year, how often did…	Never	Once or a few times a year	Once a month	2-3 times a month	1-3 times a week	Daily
27. the principal observe your classroom during the reading block?	10%	55%	12%	10%	13%	--
28. the principal provide you with specific and constructive feedback on your instruction?	29%	45%	11%	13%	2%	--
29. the reading coach observe your classroom during the reading block?	4%	51%	28%	14%	3%	--
30. the reading coach provide you with specific and constructive feedback on your instruction?	14%	39%	26%	21%	1%	--
31. another teacher observe your classroom during the reading block?	28%	58%	6%	5%	1%	2%
32. you observe another teacher's reading lesson?	41%	53%	4%	--	2%	--
33. paraprofessionals work with you during the reading block?	41%	3%	2%	2%	9%	44%
34. you look at reading assessment data?	--	3%	24%	32%	39%	3%
35. you attend a grade-level meeting?	5%	8%	39%	26%	21%	1%
36. you need to use the 90-minute reading block to work on non-reading instruction or tasks? (i.e. writing, science, math, field trips, administrative tasks)	61%	29%	4%	1%	--	6%

	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Usually	Always
37. This year, how often did the principal attend your grade-level meetings?	18%	24%	29%	22%	7%
38. This year, how often did the coach attend your grade-level meetings?	4%	8%	17%	17%	55%

In your reading classroom under Reading First, are the following items things that are not at all part of your teaching, occasionally part of your teaching, sometimes a part of your teaching, or regularly a part of your teaching? If you do not know what the item refers to, check the first column ("I don't know what this is").

	I don't know what this is.	Not at all part of my teaching	Occasionally part of my teaching	Sometimes a part of my teaching	Regular part of my teaching
39. Use of my school's core reading program	--	6%	2%	2%	91%
40. Following the precise language in the teachers' manual.	--	1%	6%	20%	73%
41. Use of the templates	12%	8%	15%	21%	44%
42. Differentiated instruction during the 90-minute reading block	3%	6%	11%	18%	62%
43. Small group instruction during the reading block	1%	5%	6%	9%	79%
44. Phonemic awareness activities	1%	4%	8%	11%	76%
45. Nonsense word practice	2%	32%	24%	24%	18%
46. Time during the reading block for students to practice oral reading fluency	--	--	3%	12%	86%
47. Timed fluency assessments during the reading block.	--	16%	24%	23%	37%
48. A focus on "tier two" vocabulary words	15%	9%	15%	16%	45%
49. Vocabulary practice that includes use of examples and non-examples	2%	6%	15%	17%	60%
50. Provision of background knowledge to prepare students before they read a new text	--	1%	4%	17%	78%
51. Comprehension questions that ask for literal recall	--	--	5%	10%	85%
52. Comprehension questions that ask for higher-order thinking skills	--	--	6%	34%	60%
53. Explicit modeling of the work or thinking process before students try something new	--	--	5%	17%	78%
54. Adjustment of activities or practice, based on how students answered previous questions	--	2%	4%	14%	80%
55. Immediate correction of students when they make an error	--	--	3%	20%	76%

SECTION D: MEETINGS AND COLLABORATION

Please indicate your level of agreement with each statement. If these meetings do not occur at your school or you did not attend, leave the items blank.

At my school's **grade-level reading** meetings…	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
56. we discuss the issues of teaching and learning that we, the participants, identify as important.	2%	4%	8%	38%	48%
57. all participant comments and viewpoints are welcomed.	6%	3%	6%	26%	59%
58. we discuss the reasons for doing things, not just the requirements.	5%	4%	4%	39%	48%

59. Are you a member of the Reading Leadership Team (RLT) at your school?

31% Yes	67% No	3% There is no RLT at my school

60. Which of the following topics do you typically discuss at RLT meetings? *(select as many as apply)*
97% Talk about school-wide reading assessment data
80% Talk about student-level reading assessment data
44% Share about reading research (articles, ideas, etc.)
79% Exchange information about what is going on at the school in reading
53% Receive information from the coach and principal about what is going on with Reading First at the state level (i.e. from their "monthly meetings")
50% Make decisions about what reading materials to use/purchase
47% Make decisions about instruction for specific students
56% Make decisions about instruction within or across grades
24% Plan special reading events, family literacy activities
68% Plan for sustainability, or what will happen when the school no longer has Reading First funds
12% Other

Please indicate your level of agreement with each statement.

At my school's **Reading Leadership Team** meetings…	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
61. all participant comments and viewpoints are welcomed.	9%	3%	3%	40%	46%
62. we discuss the reasons for doing things, not just the requirements.	6%	6%	9%	37%	43%

SECTION E: YOUR VIEWS ON READING FIRST

The following statements present a range of opinions about different components of Reading First. Please indicate your level of agreement with each statement. If a question is not applicable, please leave it blank.

This year…	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
63. Participating in Reading First has helped my school develop a more collaborative culture.	1%	6%	14%	46%	33%
64. Our school has a visible and effective Reading Leadership Team.	3%	6%	20%	42%	29%
65. Attending grade-level reading meetings is a good use of my time.	3%	5%	19%	37%	37%
66. Attending Reading Leadership Team (RLT) meetings is a good use of my time.	1%	8%	42%	28%	21%
67. Overall, the professional development I received through Reading First was sustained and intensive.	4%	11%	19%	38%	28%
68. Overall, the professional development I received through Reading First this year focused on what happens in the classroom.	4%	5%	12%	47%	33%
69. I am very satisfied with the core reading program we are using at our school.	6%	4%	11%	43%	37%
70. I believe that reading instruction at my school has improved noticeably.	--	5%	14%	43%	38%
71. I think the DIBELS is a valid, accurate indicator of student reading ability.	3%	5%	26%	47%	19%
72. Our school has an organized system for <u>administering</u> the DIBELS and other Reading First assessments.	1%	3%	4%	29%	64%
73. Our school has an organized system for <u>analyzing and sharing</u> the results of the DIBELS and other Reading First assessments with teachers.	2%	--	4%	40%	54%
74. I have seen our school's reading assessment data <u>disaggregated</u> (split up) by key demographic variables (i.e. race/ethnicity or ELL status).	6%	25%	26%	27%	15%
75. Reading First has significantly changed the way I teach reading.	3%	5%	23%	41%	28%
76. The intervention materials we use are well-matched to the needs of our struggling readers.	2%	8%	16%	55%	20%
77. Our school's intervention providers are well-trained to meet the needs of struggling readers.	3%	13%	13%	45%	27%
78. As a school, we're doing an excellent job of providing appropriate reading interventions to all students who need them.	5%	12%	12%	40%	31%

This year…	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
79. I have significant philosophical or pedagogical objections to the approach of Reading First.	26%	39%	18%	13%	3%
80. Our principal is a visible advocate for reading.	2%	--	11%	29%	58%
81. In my view, Reading First overemphasizes the importance of using DIBELS results.	5%	24%	32%	29%	10%
82. Our reading coach is a knowledgeable resource about reading research and practices.	3%	3%	6%	37%	52%
83. Even when providing critical feedback, I feel our reading coach is an ally in helping me to improve my instruction.	4%	2%	8%	40%	46%
84. Our reading coach has helped me become more reflective about my teaching practice.	5%	6%	22%	36%	31%
85. Our reading coach has increased my understanding of how children learn to read.	5%	8%	24%	38%	25%
86. I would like our reading coach to come in my classroom and work with me more often than s/he does.	9%	30%	39%	16%	6%
87. I am pleased that our school has a Reading First grant.	--	3%	11%	29%	58%
88. I feel that I have a voice in our school's decision-making about Reading First.	11%	12%	27%	29%	22%
89. Instruction in other subjects has suffered because of all of the focus on Reading First.	3%	14%	20%	40%	23%
90. I strongly support the instructional changes that are occurring under Reading First.	2%	5%	32%	37%	24%
91. I feel that Reading First puts excessive emphasis on the involvement of the principal in instructional matters.	11%	31%	41%	10%	7%
92. Our Reading First program is doing an excellent job meeting the needs of our ELL students.	4%	13%	41%	35%	7%
93. Our school uses supplemental and intervention materials that are well-matched to the needs of our ELL students.	5%	7%	41%	39%	7%
94. I have the knowledge and skills necessary to modify and supplement the core program to meet the needs of my ELL students.	2%	11%	31%	42%	14%
95. The philosophy or pedagogy of our ELL program/services sometimes clash with Reading First.	3%	17%	59%	17%	4%
96. When our school no longer has Reading First funding, I think that I will to go back to more or less the way I was teaching reading before.	28%	44%	20%	5%	3%

SECTION F: SUSTAINABILITY

In your opinion, once your school no longer has the Reading First grant, should the following program components continue?	Definitely not	Probably not	Probably yes	Definitely yes
97. Core program	--	4%	32%	64%
98. 90-minute reading block	3%	4%	23%	70%
99. DIBELS	2%	3%	44%	51%
100. Reading coach	5%	16%	30%	49%
101. Ongoing professional development in reading	1%	1%	27%	71%
102. Grouping	--	3%	34%	64%
103. Interventions	1%	1%	18%	80%
104. Grade-level meetings	2%	9%	30%	60%
105. RLT	3%	13%	49%	34%

SECTION H: DEMOGRAPHICS

106. What is your primary teaching role this year? *(select one)*
- 83% Regular classroom teacher
- 1% Specialist - Speech/language
- 4% Specialist - Language arts/reading (e.g., Title I, reading specialist)
- 1% Specialist - Library
- 8% Specialist - Special education
- -- Specialist - ESL/bilingual
- 3% Paraprofessional
- -- I do not work directly with students

107. This year, which grade(s) do you teach <u>during the reading block</u>? For example, you might teach first and second grade students. **(select all that apply)**

	32% Grade K	36% Grade 1	40% Grade 2	34% Grade 3	6% Other
	1% I do not provide direct classroom instruction during the reading block.				

108. This year, what is the grade level of the material you teach from <u>during the reading block</u>? For example, you might teach using the second grade Open Court materials. **(select all that apply)**

	31% Grade K	44% Grade 1	36% Grade 2	29% Grade 3	6% Other
	1% I do not provide direct classroom instruction during the reading block.				

109. How many years teaching experience do you have? Average=12.3; SD=8.2; Range= 0-35 years

110. How many years have you worked at this school? Average=6.4; SD=5.0; Range= 0 to 23 years

111. At which school do you work? *Your school name is used *only* to make sure we hear from each school. Your responses are confidential and no school names will be used in reporting.*

District	School	Number
Anchorage	Airport Heights	9
Anchorage	Creekside Park	17
Anchorage	Mt. View	1
Anchorage	Spring Hill	14
Anchorage	Ursa Minor	1
Anchorage	Tyson William	11
Fairbanks	Anderson	2
Fairbanks	Nordale	2
Fairbanks	Ticasuk Brown	12
Lake & Peninsula	Chignik Lake	1
Lake & Peninsula	Kokhanok	10
Lake & Peninsula	Newhalen	16
Lake & Peninsula	Nondalton	13
Lake & Peninsula	Perryville	12

Thank you for your support of the evaluation!

APPENDIX D

Alaska Reading First—District Coordinator On-line Survey 2007

3 OUT OF **3** DISTRICT COORDINATORS **(100%)** COMPLETED THIS SURVEY. UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED, ALL OR ALMOST ALL ANSWERED EACH QUESTION.

ALASKA READING FIRST
DISTRICT SURVEY 2007

This survey is part of the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory's (NWREL) external evaluation of Alaska Reading First. This survey should be completed by the person in your district who is the designated Reading First coordinator; if there is more than one such person, please have the person who spends the most time on Reading First complete this survey.

Your input is critically important; this survey is the only opportunity we have to hear from every district involved in Alaska Reading First. There are no right or wrong responses. Please be candid in your answers. **The information you provide will be kept confidential and reported only in combination with responses from other district coordinators.**

When answering the questions, please answer according to how your district functioned **this year (2006-2007)**.

If you do not know the answer to a question or it does not apply to you, please skip that question.

The survey will take about 10 minutes to complete. Please return it to Tess Oliver, NWREL Evaluation Program, 101 SW Main Street, Suite 500, Portland, OR 97204.

---

1. How many elementary schools are in your district?
   Average: 31 schools; range 14-60

   _____

2. How many elementary schools have a Reading First grant?
   Average: 8 schools; range 3-14

   _____

3. Beyond Reading First, what is your role in the district?
   - -- Superintendent
   - -- Assistant Superintendent
   - -- Curriculum director/specialist
   - -- Instruction director/specialist
   - -- Literacy director/specialist
   - -- Budget/finance officer
   - 100% Other _____

4. What percentage of time are you *officially allocated* to spend on Reading First?
   2 out of 3 =100% ; 1 out of 3=no response

5. In past years, some district coordinators have reported spending more time than anticipated on Reading First activities. In order to report any continuing discrepancies, please report the *actual* percentage of your time spent on Reading First.

    2 out of 3 =100% ; 1 out of 3=no response

6. In which of the following ways has your district supported Reading First? *(select all that apply)*

    67% By assisting with proposal writing
    67% By providing grant management
    100% By monitoring grant implementation
    67% By having a district staff member designated as the Reading First "go-to" person (district-level coordinator, representative)
    67% By facilitating district-wide Reading First meetings for principals
    --   By facilitating district-wide Reading First meetings for coaches
    67% By modifying district requirements to align with Reading First
    100% By analyzing student reading assessment data
    100% By providing professional development that is aligned with Reading First
    100% By providing technical assistance to support school change
    100% By supporting the core reading program
    100% By supporting intervention programs
    67% By providing overall curriculum guidance
    100% By educating and galvanizing the community

7. In 2006-2007, how frequently did you attend the following activities?

	Did not attend	Once	Twice	3 times	4 + times
November 2006 School Leadership Team training	--	100%	-	-	-
March 2007 Reading First Summit	--	100%	-	-	-
Other statewide coach and principal meetings	33%	67%	--	--	--
State meetings for district representatives	33%	67%	--	--	--

8.	How useful, to you as Reading First coordinator, was your attendance at the following:

	Never Useful	Rarely Useful	Sometimes Useful	Usually Useful	Always Useful	Did not Attend
November 2006 School Leadership Team training	--	--	--	33%	67%	--
2007 Reading First Summit	--	--	--	33%	67%	--
Other statewide coach and principal meetings	--	--	--	67%	--	33%
State meetings for district representatives	--	--	--	33%	--	67%

When the state coordinator visits schools in your district, are you informed ahead of
	time
	Seldom
	--	Sometimes
	--	Often
100%	Always

9.	When the state coordinator visits schools in your district, how often do you participate?
	--	Never
	--	Seldom
	33%	Sometimes
	33%	Often
	33%	Always

10.	Who made hiring decisions about coaches at Reading First schools in your district?
	33%	District
	33%	School
	33%	Both

11.	How easy/difficult was it to find qualified applicants for the coaching position(s)?
	50%	Very easy
	50%	Somewhat easy
	--	Somewhat difficult
	--	Very difficult

12.   In what ways was it difficult to find qualified applicants for the coaching position(s)? Please be as specific as possible.

Please indicate your level of agreement with each statement below.

This year...	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
13. The state's expectations for district involvement in Reading First are clear.	--	--	--	33%	67%
14. State Reading First project staff are responsive to our district's needs.	--	--	--	67%	33%
15. The state has done a good job of communicating necessary information regarding Reading First to district staff.	--	--	67%	--	33%
16. Our district strongly supports the instructional changes occurring under Reading First.	--	--	--	33%	67%
17. Major initiatives (programs or grants) in our district contradict or are not aligned with Reading First.	67%	33%	--	--	--
18. I am pleased with the amount of support we have received from the state to address sustainability.	--	--	33%	67%	0%
19. Reading First has greatly influenced the reading program in our district's non-Reading First schools.	--	--	50%	--	50%
20. There are tensions between Reading First and non-Reading First schools in our district.	--	50%	50%	--	--
21. The state's expectations of district involvement in Reading First are reasonable.	--	--	--	67%	33%

22. In what ways could the state further support districts in the implementation of Reading First? Please be as specific as possible.

- Help us deal with getting all of our new staff trained year after year. We have a high turnover and after the first year the state has not had training for new teachers to the model. I think our state does an excellent job in supporting our district. Our state director is very responsive to our requests for specific professional development. She has come to Fairbanks to do training in DIBELS and each year has provided quality training via CORE. She also hosted a CORE Coach Institute in Fairbanks this year. The professional development offered at our statewide meetings is generally excellent, especially what was offered in March, 2007.

- The only way that communication could be improved is by getting statewide meeting agendas out to us in a more timely fashion. The 2 day session on sustainability offered at the Reading First summit was an excellent way for schools to process a variety of ways and means for sustaining Reading First practices. Using available resources to continue a program that strongly relies on a full time reading coach and enhanced staff development however, is not going to be possible at most schools, due to a lack of resources. If the Reading First model is truly effective, the state should lobby for the resources to continue at existing sites and expand to additional schools and districts across the state.

- I would like to compliment the state on continuing to support Reading First practices with non-Reading First schools through efforts like funding CORE training for coaches and principals which they did in Fall, 2006.

Please indicate if all, some, or none of the non-Reading First schools in your district have the following reading program components.

		Non-Reading First schools		
		No non-RF schools	Some non-RF schools	All non-RF schools
23.	Have a K-3 reading coach	50%	50%	--
24.	Use DIBELS for benchmark assessments three times a year	--	100%	--
25.	Systematically progress monitor students	50%	50%	--
26.	Use the same core reading program as Reading First schools	--	50%	50%
27.	Have a 90-minute reading block in K-3	--	100%	--
28.	Provide systematic interventions for struggling students outside the 90-minute reading block	--	100%	--
29.	Provide or attend ongoing, high-quality professional development in reading	--	50%	50%

30.   In which district do you work?   *Your district name is used *only* to make sure we hear from each school. Your responses are confidential and no district names will be used in reporting.*

Anchorage
Fairbanks
Lake & Peninsula

Thank you for your support of the evaluation!

APPENDIX E

Alaska Reading First--Site Visit Instruments for 2007

State Staff Interview
Coach Interview
Principal Interview
Teacher Focus Group
Classroom Observation Protocol

Alaska Reading First
State Staff Interview 2006-07

The purpose of this interview to update our understanding of your vision of Reading First in Alaska. This helps us make sure we ask the right questions in our instruments and to interpret the results for next year's evaluation report.

Vision of WA Reading First in the Schools

1. I have a few questions about what the reading block in a RF classroom should look like:
    *   What is the minimum amount of time a student can receive per day?
    *   Is this the same for grade K?
    *   Ss taught at grade level or instructional level?
    *   How much whole versus small group work?
    *   Are spelling and writing permitted within the 90-minute block?
    *   Is use of supplemental materials during the block permitted? Under what circumstances?
    *   What are the expectations, in terms of time especially, for reading instruction outside the block?

2. Tell me what "fidelity" means to you. How are schools supposed to balance fidelity to the core program with providing targeted instruction to students? [Interviewers: you may want to ask about lesson maps or templates here, optional.]

3. What would you expect a well-functioning intervention program in a RF school to look like, at this point? [if possible, find out about prioritizing strategic vs. intensive students, amount of time per week, training of intervention providers, any other concrete info that helps us know what to measure]

4. At this point in RF, what would constitute a good use of assessment data in a school? To what degree do you feel schools are fulfilling these expectations? [

5. When you encourage RF principals to be instructional leaders, what concrete behaviors are you envisioning this to include? To what degree do you feel your principals are fulfilling these expectations?

6. Can you describe to me what you think a well-functioning Reading Leadership Team should be doing this year?

7. What would constitute good support from a district for its RF schools?

8. Tell me about what you believe RF schools should be doing in their work with ELL students. New arrivals with almost no English? Students who have been here several years but lack a wide vocabulary?

Provision of Professional Development

9. What are the focus areas for professional development from the state this year? How were these determined? Are they the same for all schools?

10. Please talk about the role of the coach in WA RF schools. What do you expect coaches to be spending their time on in schools? [to what degree are they providing the PD content identified in previous question] How much variation do you expect across schools and districts?

11. How do you prepare coaches to fulfill those expectations – in other words, what does their professional development look like?

12. Can you talk a little about professional development for RF principals? What is the main content you wish to convey (especially this year)? How did you choose this over other possibilities? Please talk about the format of professional development of principals – how it is delivered.

13. For coaches, teachers, and principals, how are you dealing with turnover? [how much is there?]

Delivery of Technical Assistance

14. Tell me about technical assistance to RF schools in 2006-07. Who is providing it? How is the focus of assistance determined? What kind of accountability is there for schools and for providers? [that is, if a school is not showing progress, what happens in terms of technical assistance, funding, etc.?]

15. To what degree can schools modify and adapt the vision you have outlined above? How might TA providers be involved in decisions to modify?

| **Alaska Reading First** |
| **Coach Interview 2007** |

Professional Development & Technical Assistance

Here is a list of the primary trainings to date *(show list)* that you have received from the state this year.

    (a) What stands out as especially useful? Why?

    (b) What stands out as especially not useful? Why?

    (c) Overall, as a professional development package, how well did these offerings meet your needs as coach? (Please explain.)

What other services or training could the state provide to **you as a Reading First coach**?

Regional coordinators:

    (a) To what degree have the services provided by regional coordinator(s) been helpful? (Please explain.)

    (b) What is the relationship (tone, feeling) between the regional coordinators and your school? (Please explain.)

Coaching Role

What does the state expect from you as a Reading First coach?

(a) Do you end up taking on tasks beyond these expectations?

    (b) Are there some expectations you are not able to fulfill?

    (c) Some coaches say that they are not able to get into classrooms as much as they would like to or feel they should. To what degree has this been an issue for you?

    (d) If it is an issue, what prevents you from spending more time in classrooms?

How do you select which teachers you work with?
How do you work with resistance?

Buy-In

How would you describe teachers' buy-in to Reading First? *(select one)*
- High
- Medium/Mixed
- Low

To what do you attribute the [high level/low level] of buy-in?

Communication and Collaboration

The ideal vision of the Reading Leadership Team is a body that meets at least monthly, plans specifically and collaboratively, relies on data, and is integrally involved in the implementation of the grant. To what extent is this true of the RLT in your school? Why?

a) Out of all K-3 grade-level meetings, do you attend: *(select one)*

- ☐ All
- ☐ Most
- ☐ Some
- ☐ Few
- ☐ None

b) What is your role at those meetings?

Note: The focus of this question is on "b". Are they facilitating? Planning? Providing professional development? Interpreting data? Not sure?

Data and Assessment

(a) Would you say you do all, most, some, little, or none of K-3 reading data collection (administration and/or coordinating administration) at your school? *(select one)*
- ☐ All
- ☐ Most
- ☐ Some
- ☐ Little
- ☐ None

(b) Would you say you do all, most, some, little, or none of K-3 reading data management (data entry, making charts) at your school? *(select one)*

- ☐ All
- ☐ Most
- ☐ Some
- ☐ Little
- ☐ None

b) What support do you have for data collection and management?

Administration and scoring of the DIBELS:

(a) How have the staff who administer the DIBELS been trained?

(b) Do you think they administer and score the DIBELS correctly and consistently? Any concerns?

Instruction and Interventions

(a) What does fidelity mean to you?

(b) Have the expectations regarding fidelity changed since you began Reading First?

(c) If so, how?

(a) What have been the biggest achievements in your school's K-3 reading intervention program this year?

(b) What have been the biggest challenges?

Understanding that there are often limited resources to provide interventions, which students to focus your energy on? Why?

(For example, strategic or intensive, those closest to benchmark or furthest behind, specific grades?)

To what degree do you think that your school is successful at grouping students to meet their different needs? Do you have any concerns about grouping?

(This could be about the 90-minute block or interventions, note which one they are addressing.)

English Language Learners
(Only at schools that serve ELL students. If you are unsure, ask.)

(a) What are the challenges to meeting the needs of ELL students in your school?

(b) What has the state done to help with those challenges?

(c) What additional support do you need?

Overall

Is there anything else about Reading First in your school you think I should know?

| **Alaska Reading First** |
| **Principal Interview 2007** |

Professional Development & Technical Assistance

1.   Here is a list of the primary trainings to date *(show list)* that you have received from the state this year.

a) What stands out as especially useful? Why?

b) What stands out as especially not useful? Why?

c) Overall, as a professional development package, how well did these offerings meet your needs as principal? (Please explain.)

2.   What other services or training could the state provide to **you as a Reading First principal**?

3.   To what degree have state project staff (Stacy, Paul Prussing, and people in their office) been responsive to your needs?

Leadership

4.   What does the state expect from you as a Reading First principal?

5.   Are there some expectations you are not able to fulfill?

6.   How do you know (or how do you check) if teachers are using the practices that they learned in professional development?

Example if necessary: After training on pacing, how do you know they are pacing correctly?

7.   Tell me about principal walk-throughs at your school.

(a) On average, how often do you observe a given teacher? (___ per ___)

(b) What checklists or tools, if any, do you use during walk-throughs?

(c) How much priority do you think should be placed on principal walk-throughs?

(d) How does conducting walk-throughs help you as an instructional leader?

(e) What do teachers learn from your walk-throughs? How do you think it affects their instruction?

8.   On the survey you will receive this spring, you'll be asked whether or not you agree with the following statement, "Our district provides sufficient support for Reading First."

(a) Would you strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree? *(select one)*
   □   Strongly agree
   □   Agree
   □   Disagree
   □   Strongly disagree

(b) Why?

9.   Has your district provided other training in reading – either concurrent with Reading First or in the recent past – that philosophically or pedagogically is a mismatch with the Reading First approach?   If yes, please explain.

(Note: Encourage them to be specific and follow up with name/type of initiative that clashed.)

Buy-In

10.   How would you describe teachers' buy-in to Reading First?
   □   High
   □   Medium/Mixed
   □   Low

11.   To what do you attribute the [high level/low level] of buy-in?

Communication & Collaboration

12.   Do you think that attending RLT meetings is a good use of your time? Why or why not?

13.   What about grade-level meetings; is it a good use of your time to attend them? Why or why not?

Sustainability

14.   FOR ALL SCHOOLS :

(a) What is the typical level of turnover of K-3 teachers in your building? (percentage)

(b) How do you bring new teachers up to speed on Reading First?

15.   (a) What has the state done this year to help you address sustainability beyond the life of the RF grant?

(b) Have they helped you develop a plan?

16.   What is your school doing to address sustainability?

17.   What else is or will be necessary for your school to maximize sustainability?

Overall

18.   Is there anything else about Reading First in your school you think I should know?

Alaska Reading First
Teacher Focus Group 2007
This protocol is for use with up to four teachers, ideally one from each grade level.

Opening

Thank you so much for taking time out of your busy day to meet with me. I have a few "big picture" questions for you about Reading First, what it has been like at your school, and what is has meant to you, personally, to have this grant. While we talk, I will be taking (hand or computer) notes to capture your responses to these questions. My notes from today are completely confidential: I will not share anything you say with your colleagues, coach, or principal. The data from our meeting here go into a big pool of data from all the schools we are visiting so we can understand, across the state, what some of the overall trends are. Nothing you say will be attached to your name or your school's name. Moreover, I hope that among yourselves, nothing you say leaves this room. Before I begin, do you have any questions for me?

Next, could you go around the table and introduce yourselves and tell me the grade that you teach?

1. There is a lot of talk in Reading First about this word "fidelity." At your school, to what degree are you expected to maintain fidelity to the core program? In your opinion, are these expectations reasonable?

2. How do your principal and/or reading coach know if you are really using the instructional strategies and materials you have been trained in through Reading First?

3. I assume that students in your classrooms have different needs; even those whose assessment results put them at about the same instructional level. To what extent does your teaching situation permit you to provide sufficient differentiated instruction to students during the reading block?

By "differentiated instruction" I mean varied approaches to teaching in which you anticipate and respond to student differences in readiness, interests and learning needs by varying content, delivery, style, level, etc.

We are most interested if <u>in general</u> they perceive that the structures around them – the amount of time, the size of groups, the number of aides, the expectations about use of the core program – all permit them to differentiate enough to meet the needs of their students. Steer away from details about what they did for a specific student.

4. Establishing effective intervention systems has been a challenge for some Reading First schools.

(a)   Does your school have an intervention program for struggling readers?

    If not, why not? (If yes, go to (b).)

(b)   In your school's intervention program, what is working well and what is not working?

5. There are many different ways that Reading First coaches work in schools.

    Some of the things that coaches do include: administering assessments, working with data, working with teachers in their classrooms on their instruction by observing and giving feedback, setting up and monitoring interventions, providing interventions directly to students, training groups of teachers, giving demonstration lessons, or conducting grade-level and other meetings.

    Has your coach helped you change your instruction? If so, how?

6. Imagine that next year your school no longer has a reading coach. What happens to…

    a) The core program?

    b) Assessment and data use?

    c) Grade-level meetings?

    d) Interventions?

    e) RLT?

Alaska Reading First 2007 **Classroom Observation Protocol**	
Date:	School & District:
Teacher:	Evaluator:

Grades of students (circle main grade level or more than one if there are many Ss from different grades): K   1   2   3   Other _____
Instructional Level: ABOVE   AT   BELOW   MIXED

Observation start time:
Observation end time:
TOTAL Observation Minutes (minimum 20):

Number of students <u>at start of observation</u>:
Number of adults besides the teacher (present for part *or* all of the observation):
What are other adults doing? (check all that apply) Teaching small group(s)   Providing ELL assistance to students Working 1:1 with students   Not working with students (e.g., grading) Circulating around the room   Other _____ Assessment
Is this a walk-to-read class or a self-contained classroom? WTR Self-contained
What core reading program materials do you see the teacher <u>using</u> during your observation? (check all you see) Harcourt   Reading Mastery Houghton Mifflin   Success for All

Is the teacher using the teacher's manual from the core reading program during your observation?			
Yes – reading directly from it	Yes – consults briefly	No – but it's open and/or out	No

Check if instruction is clearly *not* using the core reading program.   Explain:

Use the following space to record what happens during each 5-minute observation block, a separate sheet for each block. Include both what the teacher is doing and what students are doing. Also describe transitions. At the end of the five minutes, look around and count up the number of students off-task and total number of students.

OBSERVATION BLOCK # 1	
Size of group (number of students) working with teacher _____	

Time	Notes of what happens	Labels/Notes
time	*Please include a sentence or two to provide the context or big picture of what is going on.* Context:	

BREAK. Number of students off-task: _____ Total Students in the room: _____

Time	Activities	Labels/Notes
OBSERVATION BLOCK # 2		
Size of group working with teacher _____		
time		

Number of Students off-task: _____ Total Students in the room: _____

Time	Activities	Labels/Notes
OBSERVATION BLOCK # 3		
Size of group working with teacher _____		
time		

Number of Students off-task: _____   Total Students in the room: _____

Time	Activities	Labels/Notes
OBSERVATION BLOCK # 4		
Size of group working with teacher _____		

Number of Students off-task: _____ Total Students in the room: _____

Observation Ratings

Try to complete the ratings on the same day as the observation but <u>after</u> the observation is complete.

A. TIME IN SMALL GROUP

Total <u>Minutes</u> of Small Group Instruction (6 or fewer): _____

B. FOCUS OF INSTRUCTION

What was the **main focus** of the teachers' instruction for each 5-minute block you observed? (Choose up to 2 per block.)	Phonemic Awareness	Phonics & Decoding (+ sight words)	Fluency	Vocabulary	Comprehension	Directions/ Transitions	Other Subject	Assmt	No Instruction	Size of Group with T	SS Off-Task (Fraction)
Block1											
Block2											
Block3											
Block4											
Check if you saw the use of WRFTAC templates.											

C. COMPREHENSION

In a comprehension lesson, did you see any of the following? Check here if there was no comprehension lesson.	Use of Graphic Organizers	Look-back citation	ID of Main Idea/Details	Questions to generate HOT	Recall questions	Retell (beginning, mid, end)	Summarizing	Response Journals	Other (note below)
Block1									
Block2									
Block3									
Block4									

Other comprehension:

D. INSTRUCTION FROM TEACHER & ON-GOING ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING

Always rate the instruction overall (across the blocks).   Provide block numbers where there is evidence of 0, 1, or 4 scores.

Remember to refer back to the rubric!

1. Lesson is clearly presented.	0	1	2	3	4
See block(s) #_____					
2. The teacher models the work or thinking processes.	0	1	2	3	4
See block(s) #_____					
3. The teacher guides students through thinking with effective questioning.	0	1	2	3	4
See block(s) #_____					
4. All students are engaged in the lesson.	0	1	2	3	4
See block(s) #_____					
5. Students have opportunities to practice the content of the lesson.	0	1	2	3	4
See block(s) #_____					
6. The teacher monitors student understanding.	0	1	2	3	4
See block(s) #_____					
7. The teacher provides clear, direct, and frequent feedback.	0	1	2	3	4
See block(s) #_____					

E. IDENTIFICATION OF PROBLEM AREAS

Did you see any of the following "problematic" issues?

Time is lost due to lengthy transitions or directions	*In general >4 minutes transition is a problem – use your judgment for exceptions – explain if necessary.*
Students were confused and teacher did not adjust the lesson	*Should be evident in your notes (at least some students answer incorrectly or inconsistently).*
Material seemed too easy and/or was presented too slowly (students were bored)	*Should be evident in your notes (students fidget, yawn, fall asleep).*
Interruptions to the 90-minute block	*Ss arriving late is not an interruption unless their arrival actually disrupts the lesson. Announcements over the loudspeaker, fire drill, nurse coming to check for lice - these are examples of interruptions.*
Round-robin reading	*Any time the T moves in a predictable pattern to call on the next S to read, small or large group.*
Other: _____	

F. GUIDE TO QUALITATIVE NOTES

In your qualitative notes, are there (choose all that apply):
Especially positive examples of
- o   Phonemic awareness
- o   Phonics/decoding
- o   Fluency
- o   Vocabulary
- o   Comprehension
- o   Classroom management or student engagement
- o   Other _____

Do not check "positive example of fluency" if you rated the lesson below a 3 in clarity or engagement.

Especially problematic examples of
- o   Phonemic awareness
- o   Phonics/decoding
- o   Fluency
- o   Vocabulary
- o   Comprehension
- o   Classroom management or student engagement
- o   Other _____

Why?

G. OTHER COMMENTS (optional – including comments to explain your ratings)

APPENDIX F

Alaska Reading First—CORE Site Visit Schedule 2006-2007

CORE Site Visit Schedule 2006-2007

Anchorage School District
Airport Heights – October 18-10; March 16; April 11
Creekside Park – September 28-29; October 24-25; February 14-15; March 13-14;
                  May 1-2
Mountain View – October 16-17; February 21-22; April 12
Spring Hill – September 26-27; December 7-8
Ursa Minor – September 27; October 23; February 12-13

Fairbanks
Anderson – April 17
Nordale – September 27; November 1; January 31; April 19
Ticasuk Brown – September 28-29; November 2; January 30; April 18

Lake and Peninsula
South Schools – September 18-22; Contract discontinued after that visit

APPENDIX G

Reading First Summit Agenda

Evaluation Results from the Reading First Summit—March 5-6, 2007

Alaska Department of Education & Early Development

Alaska Reading First Summit
March 5-6, 2007
Anchorage Hilton Hotel

DAY ONE AGENDA
Monday, March 5

8:30 a.m. – 8:45 a.m.	*Welcome* • Stacy McKeown, Department of Education & Early Development	*Alaska/Denali Room*
8:45 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.	*Keynote Address, "Refining our Teaching, from Good to Great"* • Anita Archer, consultant	*Alaska/Denali Room*
10:00 – 10:15 a.m.	**BREAK**	
10:15 a.m. – 11:45 a.m.	**Keynote Address: "A Matter of Degrees: Getting Underneath the Reading Research and Going Beyond 'The Big Five'"** • Jill Jackson, Jackson Consulting	*Alaska/Denali Room*
11:45 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.	**LUNCH**	
1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.	**From Research to Practice: Understanding the Sequence of Phonics and Multisyllabic Word Instruction and Planning for Powerful Instruction for ALL Students** • Jill Jackson *see back of sheet for description	*Lupine Room*
1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.	*Student Engagement Strategies* • Anita Archer, Consultant *see back of sheet for description	*King Salmon/Iliamna Room*
1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.	*Sustaining Reading First Outcomes Beyond Reading First Funding* • Stan Paine, WRRFTAC *see back of sheet for description	*Katmai Room*
1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.	**Accelerating the Growth: A Review of Reading First ELL Data Plus Strategies for Vocabulary & Oral Language Development"** • Erin Chapparro, WRFFTAC *see back of sheet for description	*Dillingham Room*
1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.	*Comprehension Strategies for Primary Teachers* • Nancy McGivney, CORE Consultant *see back of sheet for description	*Fireweed Room*

BREAKOUT DESCRIPTIONS

Title: From Research to Practice: Understanding the Sequence of Phonics and Multisyllabic Word Instruction and Planning for Powerful Instruction for ALL Students

> **Description:** This interactive session will focus on the scientifically based research timeline of phonics and decoding milestones and support the leader, coach, support staff and classroom teacher in planning meaningful instruction for students at all stages of the phonics timeline.

Title: Getting Them All Engaged – Inclusive Active Participation

> **Description:** Do you have students who are not attending or participating during your lessons? In this session, Dr. Archer will present procedures for actively involving ALL students in instruction with an emphasis placed on the use of group responses, partner responses, and written responses. In addition procedures for involving all students in the reading of classroom materials will be presented. Procedures will be explained, demonstrated, and practiced. Examples will represent a variety of courses and age levels. Participants will also analyze the best practices demonstrated in videos.

Title: Sustaining Reading First Outcomes Beyond Reading First Funding

> **Description:** What will happen to our Reading First results when Reading First funding expires? In this session we will identify issues and strategies related to continuing the improved outcomes achieved in Reading First—even after Reading First funding has ended. This workshop will include four parts: 1) We will learn about the concept of sustainability in the context of Reading First elements and examine what has worked for others;   2) We will identify barriers to continuing each RF element, and how these can be overcome; 3) We will explore a series of organizational strategies that have the power to make change last; and 4) Most importantly, we will have time to work in teams, and in consultation with the trainer, to develop a specific plan for our own schools for sustaining our improved results over time using other resources.
>
> ******** This session is designed for Reading First Schools only. ********

Title: Accelerating the Growth: A Review of Reading First ELL Data Plus Strategies for Vocabulary and Oral Language Development

> **Description:** This session will reveal the results of data analysis that examined two years of longitudinal data from the Western Region Reading First data base. Conclusions regarding the education of the ELL students in the Reading First model will be shared and discussed. Additional research regarding ELL students, vocabulary, and oral language development will be reviewed. The application of these studies to the classroom will be shared. Time will be made available for questions and for group discussions.

Title: Comprehension Strategies for Primary Teachers

> **Description:** This session focuses on the different ways to assist students to access both narrative and expository texts. Specific reading skills and strategies will be presented using explicit instruction, with hands-on lesson models and practice. Critical strategies include but are not limited to activating background knowledge, questioning, summarizing, making inferences, predicting, and recognizing text structure, all particularly important for English learners.
>
> Learn to apply these techniques with understanding and facility to your current reading program or to grade-level-appropriate literature or content materials.
>
> *******Participants attending this session will need to bring a teacher's edition from the current reading/language arts adoption.
> **Note:** This session is designed to be a full day workshop, therefore teachers who attend this must attend the sessions both days.

Alaska Department of Education & Early Development

Alaska Reading First Conference
March 5-6, 2007
Anchorage Hilton Hotel

DAY TWO AGENDA
Tuesday, March 6

8:30 – 11:45	***Research-validated Procedures for Increasing Student's Reading Fluency*** • Anita Archer, Consultant *see back of sheet for description	***King Salmon/Iliamna Room***
8:30 – 11:45	**Formative evaluation: Using DIBELS/CBM progress monitoring data to inform instruction.** • Jennifer Knutson, Anchorage School District *see back of sheet for description	***Lupine Room***
8:30 – 11:45	**Using Effective Teaching Strategies to Increase Intensity of Instruction** • Erin Chapparro, WRFFTAC *see back of sheet for description	***Dillingham Room***
8:30 – 11:45	***Sustaining Reading First Outcomes Beyond Reading First Funding*** • Stan Paine, WRFFTAC *see back of sheet for description	***Katmai Room***
8:30 – 11:45	***Comprehension Strategies for Primary Teachers*** • Nancy McGivney, CORE Consultant *see back of sheet for description	***Fireweed Room***
11:45 – 1:00	LUNCH	
1:00-1:30	***Key Findings from Reading First, Years 1 and 2*** • Stacy McKeown, Alaska Reading First Coordinator	***Alaska/Denali Room***
1:30-2:30	***Keynote Address - "Dynamic Vocabulary Instruction in the Elementary School*** • Anita Archer, Consultant	***Alaska/Denali Room***
2:30 – 2:45	BREAK	
2:45 – 4:00	***Keynote Address,*** *continued*	***Alaska/Denali Room***

BREAKOUT DESCRIPTIONS

Title: Research-Validated Procedures for Increasing Student's Reading Fluency

> **Description**: All of us recognize fluent and non-fluent readers in our classrooms. Fluency is critical for a number of reasons. First, if decoding is laborious and slow, vital cognitive resources are put on decoding rather than on comprehension. Second, students with very low fluency are less likely to read books and as a result don't gain all of the gifts of voracious reading: increased decoding, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, and writing skills. Finally, lack of fluency interferes with assignment completion and test performance Thus, it is important that students are not only accurate but fluent readers. In this session, Dr. Archer will review the research on fluency and procedures for increasing fluency including independent reading, effective reading practice in all classes, and use of repeated reading procedures. Research-validated procedures and programs will be introduced.

Title: Formative evaluation: Using DIBELS/CBM progress monitoring data to inform instruction

> **Description:** Formative evaluation is a critical factor in improving student outcomes. Participants will
> learn how formative evaluation fits into the Reading First model, how to conduct progress monitoring using DIBELS/CBM, and how to make decisions using progress monitoring data. This break-out session is for participants who have administered DIBELS/CBM and want to learn how to use the data more effectively to inform instruction.

Title: Using Effective Teaching Strategies to Increase Intensity of Instruction

> **Description:** In this workshop participants will deepen their knowledge of intensity of instruction. We will discuss the underlying components of how to increase the intensity of instruction in order to accelerate student learning. Examples will be provided and opportunities to practice will be offered.

Title: Sustaining Reading First Outcomes Beyond Reading First Funding

> **Description:** What will happen to our Reading First results when Reading First funding expires? In this session we will identify issues and strategies related to continuing the improved outcomes achieved in Reading First—even after Reading First funding has ended. This workshop will include four parts: 1) We will learn about the concept of sustainability in the context of Reading First elements and examine what has worked for others;   2) We will identify barriers to continuing each RF element, and how these can be overcome; 3) We will explore a series of organizational strategies that have the power to make change last; and 4) Most importantly, we will have time to work in teams, and in consultation with the trainer, to develop a specific plan for our own schools for sustaining our improved results over time using other resources.
>
> **Audience:** This session is designed for Reading First Schools only.

Title: Comprehension Strategies for Primary Teachers

Description: This session focuses on the different ways to assist students to access both narrative and expository texts. Specific reading skills and strategies will be presented using explicit instruction, with hands-on lesson models and practice. Critical strategies include but are not limited to activating background knowledge, questioning, summarizing, making inferences, predicting, and recognizing text structure, all particularly important for English learners. Learn to apply these techniques with understanding and facility to your current reading program or to grade-level-appropriate literature or content materials.

Participants attending this session will need to bring a teacher's edition from the current reading/language arts adoption.

***Note: This session is designed to be a full day workshop, therefore teachers who attend this must attend the sessions both days.

Alaska Reading First Summit--March 5-6, 2007
Evaluation Results

Table
Summit Participants' Opinions of the Summit
Percentage Distribution and Averages, by Item

Item	Poor 1	So-so 2	Good 3	Excellent 4	Average (SD)	N
DAY 1						
LARGE GROUP 1. Keynote Address-Anita Archer "Refining Our Practice	--	--	4%	96%	4.0 (0.2)	143
2. Keynote Address—Jill Jackson "A Matter of Degrees"	4%	28%	39%	30%	3.0 (0.8)	142
BREAK OUT SESSIONS 3. Understanding the Sequence—Jill Jackson	3%	9%	28%	59%	3.4 (0.8)	32
4. Student Engagement Strategies—Anita Archer	--	--	7%	93%	3.9 (0.3)	72
5. Sustaining Reading First Outcome Beyond Reading First Funding—Stain Paine	--	27%	42%	31%	3.0 (0.8)	26
6. Student Engagement Strategies—Margo Healy & Katherine Lovan	--	--	100%	--	4.0 (0.0)	1
7. Accelerating the Growth—Erin Chapparo	--	--	86%	14%	3.1 (0.4)	7
8. Comprehension Strategies for Primary Teachers—Nancy McGivney	--	25%	42%	33%	3.1 (0.8)	12
DAY 2						
BREAK OUT SESSIONS 1. Research-validated Procedures for Increasing Student's Reading Fluency—Anita Archer	--	--	3%	97%	4.0 (0.2)	87
2. Formative Evaluation: Using DIBELS/CBM Progress Monitoring Data to Inform Instruction—Jennifer Knutson	--	14%	29%	57%	3.4 (0.8)	14
3. Using Effective Teaching Strategies to Increase Intensity of Instruction—Erin Chapparro	--	17%	33%	50%	3.3 (0.8)	12
4. Sustaining RF Outcomes Beyond RF Funding—Stan Paine	4%	32%	36%	27%	2.9 (0.9)	22
5. Comprehension Strategies for Primary Teachers—Nancy McGivney	--	--	56%	44%	3.4 (0.5)	9
LARGE GROUP Key Findings from RF, Years 1 and 2—Stacy McKeown	--	3%	56%	41%	3.4 (0.6)	108
Keynote Address—Anita Archer	--	--	4%	96%	4.0 (0.2)	125

Alaska Reading First Summit—March 5-6, 2007
Responses to Open-ended Questions

Day 1—What did you like MOST about the conference?

- Anita.
- It was great. Short engaging sessions.
- Dr. Archer's presentation was outstanding. Very engaging, and because she modeled and we practiced, the new knowledge will stick.
- Dr. Archer is a shot in the arm - shows you what to do and makes you feel you can do it.
- Humor. The best conference I've been to for Reading First.
- Wow. The simplicity and the encouragement of "can do" and above all, Anita Archer.
- Without a doubt, Anita Archer, is the best presenter I have seen. Every teacher should be privileged to attend a presentation/performance by her. Also, Nancy McGivney (CORE) was excellent, as always.
- Anita Archer reminds me of why I love teaching. So innovative and positive, and her presentation is informative, interactive, and humorous. Archer's presentation and keynote address allowed me to make many applications and strategies to implement within my classroom. Well done.
- Great choices. Dr. Archer was incredible!
- The information was useful and provided ready-to-use ideas. Presenter Anita Archer was awesome.
- Upbeat presenters with valuable content.
- Presentation of relevant information I can take with me and use immediately.
- Enthusiasm, ideas shared, and a feeling of being empowered again. A refreshing boost at this time of year.
- The variety of concepts the presenters are sharing. It's nice to have a choice of workshops to attend.
- Anita Archer was excellent. Great speaker with amazing ideas. I will be able to apply many skills/ideas she talked about.
- Great speakers and presentations. Practical ideas to take back.
- Jill Jackson gave excellent activities and how to find student gaps in their reading.
- Engaging speakers.
- Anita's vivaciousness.
- Great keynotes - Anita Archer.
- Second-year, Reading First-eligible schools participate; sessions scaffolded nicely from previous Reading First Summit.
- Anita Archer. Also, conference on Monday and Tuesday. Good days to be out of the building.
- The knowledge and ability to present of the speakers.
- Anita Archer is fabulous. Her suggestions and research are fabulous and user-friendly.
- Research-based; specific details.
- You can take everything back and immediately use.
- Long sessions are wonderful.
- Very productive days. Anita Archer - excellent. Jill was also very good, but I wish she could have provided more examples of modeling explicit instruction in comprehension - there were examples in her packet, but it would have been better to have her model. All teachers benefit from the modeling (i.e., Anita's excellent vocabulary, modeling of instruction for the word "merger").
- Dr. Anita Archer's opening.
- Anita Archer was great. Informative, funny, great ideas.
- Anita Archer's perky pace and involvement.
- Anita and Jill.

- Anita Archer was a wonderful keynote speaker. I enjoyed her session on student engagement strategies.
- Humor and engagement of presenters
- Our afternoon class was small, so we were able to do the activates and share with others.
- Definitely much better pacing today. Topics were more on target of classroom practices.
- The keynote speakers were engaging and very informative
- Primary focus. Anita's energy was great.
- I really enjoyed Anita Archer's expertise. I also felt the Reading First data was uplifting and encouraging.
- Anita Archer was an exceptional presenter and kept everyone engaged and interested.
- The great strategies and suggestions.
- Anita Archer - great modeling.
- Anita Archer's talk - very engaging. Comprehension talk - I was able to see in my curriculum where I can use these strategies.
- Research-based practices shared professionally and effectively. Humor kept us engaged.
- Anita Archer.
- Anita Archer was fantastic. Her energy was contagious and she brought a lot to the table for us to think about. Information presented is easily applicable for immediate use in the classroom and is usable for a wide range of grade levels and abilities.
- Networking.
- Anita's keynote was excellent! Very understanding of reality. In session, listening to how other schools are working towards the funding issue.
- Collaboration opportunity.
- Anita Archer - digging deep -deep knowledge - more than just surface into.
- The modeling of good instructional technique during a presentation (Archer).
- The information, seeing other educators, sharing ideas.
- Fun and interesting - very engaging; lots of good ideas.
- Anita Archer.
- A lot of great ideas were presented; ideas that were modeled and that I can use right away.
- I love Reading First. I wish I could have participated in some of the "teacher" sessions
- Anita's practical strategies, coupled with her research knowledge, presentation style, were excellent. The handouts were really nice to have. Thank you.
- The focus of the conference was specific! I liked that it provided a layering application and not a "shotgun effect."
- The presenters and the topics presented.
- Anita Archer - fantastic knowledgeable presenter.
- Anita Archer's keynote was a great overview and motivational too!
- Item 1: Very engaging and meaningful. Item 3: Appreciated the time to practice what was presented. Alternating keynotes with workshop break out session. Also having high quality presenters like Anita Archer and Jill Jackson.
- Limited number of speakers so that we could focus on what applied.
- Anita. I liked having the whole-group addresses first and last, with breakouts in-between.
- Anita was a wonderful presenter with lots of useful information.
- Anita Archer's real take on literacy (very easy to relate to).
- Anita was awesome.
- Anita Archer was excellent, "perky," and informative. She was a great speaker with a lot of substance and useful strategies to share. Great book-end for the conference.
- Jill was too global. I would have liked her to focus on specifics - last part of presentation.
- Anita Archer.
- Keynote speakers.
- Great speakers and presentations. Practical ideas to take back.

- The resources given and application processes taught.
- Excellent - dynamic presenters.
- Anita Archer - great speaker.
- Good keynote by Anita.
- I thought that both keynote speakers were good and engaging.
- Learning new strategies to engage students and increase fluency.
- Anita Archer - a very good speaker. She shared many good strategies to engage students and to get them fluent.
- I liked the keynote at the beginning of first and then coming back together at the end of Day Two.
- I needed a review of what to look for in a primary reading classroom as a principal.
- Anita's pace, humor, and thorough knowledge of reading instruction left me enjoying the experience and learning a few valuable tricks of the trade.
- Enthusiastic presenters/speakers. Picked up a lot of ideas! Great offering of sessions.
- Anita Archer.
- Anita's first keynote. Her energy was fun and her pacing was "perky" enough to keep people focused.
- Anita Archer.
- Anita Archer - she is wonderful!
- I learned a lot of information I can take back to my classroom.
- Anita Archer was a very motivating, engaging speaker. Audience participation kept me involved in her sessions.
  Item 4 - Super.
- Very useful information that can be used immediately in the classroom. Anita Archer was fantastic.
- All of Anita's ideas - and she uses what she teaches!
- Anita Archer.
- Useful meaningful information and practices.
- Dr. Anita Archer.
- Anita was full of humor and practical experience.
- Anita.
- The strategies. The enthusiasm for teaching readers from the presenters was empowering.
- Very applicable information.
- Organization, credit, keynote speaker, snacks (woo! Thanks), Anita Archer.
- Anita Archer.
- The speakers; earning credit.
- Just being here with other educators is an encouragement. The professionalism of the team has been inspiring.
- Perky pace - presenters used good teaching practices with us.
- Keynote speaker, Anita Archer, was outstanding. Large room was comfortable.
- The feature speakers were motivated and set the tone for this year's conference.
- Anita Archer was amazingly engaging and did a wonderful job modeling. Stan Paine did a fantastic job presenting a very difficult subject. He was very encouraging. The conference organization was excellent. Great topics from which to choose. Thanks for offering the summit for credit. I know that is added work, time, energy, and effort for you. I am extremely appreciative.
- Anita, of course, was absolutely wonderful!! Stan had excellent information and is beginning to bring us all to a place where we can make those hard decisions about sustaining this grant. Stacy, this is one of the best summits we've had. Thanks for your hard work on this meeting.
- Anita Archer was very engaging. Stan Paine helped us face reality without money. It is never easy to contemplate loss of funding. There was a nice balance.

- I thoroughly enjoyed the session on "Sustaining Reading First Outcomes Beyond Reading First Funding" by Stan Paine. Excellent presentation - good information. Principal and teacher input was very valuable too.
- Anita Archer - she was wonderful. Item 5 [Sustaining Reading First.. Beyond Funding]: made us really think about what we don't want or think about.
- Dr. Archer's presentation was very motivating and interesting.

Day 1—What would you like to see added or improved?
- While we are educators, it would be nicer to use more common wording or less wording. It would be easier to remember that way.
- Make it available again soon (with Dr. Archer and other presenters with talent for presenting).
- More of this quality; every bit as good as IRA. Would have much rather have more attend this than few to IRA. Helps to get us on the same page. Thank you.
- More CORE. More strategies with practical, "hands-on" materials. More modeling by master teachers (video, etc.).
- Making the choice between breakout sessions was difficult. To attend one, it was necessary to miss another with important information. Thank you for bringing such great presenters.
- Nothing. Anita - fabulous as Keynote and break-out session.
- Add: vendors from teacher stores, book stores, Alaskan crafts.
- More teacher training at school district level. Would love to come back to your conference next year.
- More training in how to find student gaps in their reading.
- Separate day for principal/coach session on sustainability so coaches can attend other sessions.
- Don't put two keynotes back-to-back. It is too much sitting and listening.
- Great breakouts - but some of the best were scheduled on the same day and time.
- N/A
- It was perfect.
- Everyone at my building able to attend.
- There were many teachers talking during the presentations. I can see every now and then, but they talked 90 percent of the time. Don't know what can be done.
- It was great.
- I'd like to see biographies of the presenters; their education, experience, etc.
- Jill Jackson keynote - too many words, not enough information. Student engagement: great way to engage but mostly requires "recall" from kids. What about the higher-level questioning strategies?
- The breakout sessions were basically a review of previous Reading First summits.
- Ice water available.
- Ms. Jackson needs to move around the room just like Ms. Archer modeled.
- N/A
- Let us know which sessions are for Reading First fourth year. Some sessions were once again what we have learned, and no new learning.
- More Anita Archer.
- I was a bit disappointed in the second keynote speaker. She had strong speaking skills; however, I was a bit lost about what the purpose of her presentation was. This may be due to the short notice of her being asked to present.
- Practical activities and ideas that will contribute to the concept of sustaining outcomes.
- Item 1: I would have liked the option of an advanced session for those of us further down this path. Item 2: Really didn't do Reading First justice. Item 3: What was the message? Don't get someone from the "B" list to fill in when the star drops out.

- Examination of intervention programs (venders). More teachers attending.
- Differentiated instruction for different backgrounds.
- Opportunities for more teachers to attend.
- Good format, great speakers. It's not broke - don't fix it.
- More breaks.
- Jill's presentation was not really relevant for those of us who have been in Reading First for awhile.
- Seating first-come, first-serve; no saving of all seats beforehand.
- More application and less theory.
- Item 2: Talks too fast.
- Would have liked more new material from Anita in the afternoon. Jill Jackson said what we've already heard many times.
- Have sessions that are just for member schools that focus on teaching strategies and ideas. Then mark and open sessions that are for introducing and hook people to Reading First.
- More sessions on what to do with SPED/ELL students.
- A chance to get a little of each session - shorter sessions to get in two a day, perhaps.
- Great conference.
- Jill's "Matter of Degrees" presentation was too basic for the audience she was addressing. I know there's a desire to bring in non-Reading First schools to the training, but we need to differentiate the keynotes if you're going to have presenters rehash material covered at every training we've had. This might have been okay for new people, but the pacing was too slow and too repetitive for the Reading First veterans. I know it was difficult when Jennifer cancelled, but having another breakout would have been better use of time and would have been more beneficial as well.
- More teachers from our school able to attend.
- Parking could be improved.
- This was a great conference! Great speakers.
- Item 2: She spoke very fast; not enough time to discuss in group.
- Time to talk with teachers at my grade level.
- Evening opportunities.
- Warmer weather.
- Item 2: felt talked down to as an educator. I heard good things about the Jill Jackson sectional and am disappointed that it was not offered more than once. More teachers in state to have opportunity to listen to Anita Archer - especially first/second year teachers.
- More time; better parking.
- We would like to hear more about Response to Intervention funding or any other funding sources such as what might be coming with No Child Left Behind reauthorization.
- We need more of Anita. I learned so much.
- Dr. Archer's breakout session was the same as her morning presentation. It was slightly disappointing.

Day 2—What did you like MOST about the conference?
- Great ideas, great attitude.
- I appreciated all of the information Dr. Archer presented in a teacher-friendly format with a great sense of humor.
- Excellent presenters - the time flew by; lots of practical information and excellent modeling and opportunities to practice, to talk, and share with other participants; treats were good, too.
- Perky pace. Wealth of information. Great job
- Information; handouts; Anita Archer; clarity for application

- The best thing about the conference was Anita Archer. The second best thing was the fluency block on Tuesday morning. It was well-presented and valuable. Focusing on "the big five" is a great idea.
- Dr. Archer's "real" examples of research to practice were outstanding.
- Anita, Anita, Anita.
- Key areas. Great speakers.
- Anita Archer - very engaging and energetic.
- The speaker and information given was excellent. Anita was fabulous; keynote fabulous.
- Knowing my school is using Harcourt, and students are doling well. Seeing my co-workers from other districts. It's nice to hear how my old students are doing.
- Learned a lot of skills that can be applied in my classroom.
- Anita Archer, excellent; Jill Jackson, great.
- Reaffirmation.
- Jennifer Knutson did an awesome presentation. We will use her information to modify/build upon the reading skills block we have started - along with writing goals
- Valuable practical information.
- Anita Archer's presentations.
- Anita's energy.
- I truly enjoyed Anita Archer. She was totally knowledgeable and refreshing.
- Anita Archer - Instructional tools and ideas.
- A breakout in the morning. Anita was a great speaker - hands on, wonderful ideas for us to use. Thank you.
- The keynote was excellent. Very real. Very informative. Very useful
- All presentations dove-tailed and supported each other with focus on specific details.
- Anita Archer made the conference very enjoyable.
- I really liked having the long sessions. I really liked Tuesday's schedule with the keynote in the afternoon.
- Excellent content and speakers - all in all, very good session! Good, practical applications.
- Dr. Anita Archer's lecture.
- Anita Archer provided enough research to validate our instructional change.
- Practical application we can integrate into H.M.
- Everything.
- Anita Archer is a wonderful presenter.
- Topics seemed more relevant; didn't focus so much on first-year teacher needs. Thanks for all of the reminders
- Dr. Archer was excellent.
- The accommodations at the Hilton are very nice and comfortable. The atmosphere was very positive.
- Keynote speaker was excellent!
- The information was extremely relevant and could be applied in the classroom.
- Stan Paine - sharing of ideas.
- Professional, research-based; humor kept us engaged.
- Anita Archer
- Anita Archer was fantastic.
- Staff able to network and listen to experts - Anita Archer.
- Hearing other ideas. Spending time to plan, share. Great vocabulary keynote section - great ideas, very helpful.
- Research-based practice (validated).
- Information tied closely to the research in Anita Archer's sessions.
- Keynote by Archer was excellent; the modeling of effective strategies [was] timely.
- The presentation; the information.
- Anita.

- Anita Archer's energy made the session go quickly and gave useful ideas I can use tomorrow!
- Anita Archer is a good speaker.
- I went back to Anita after an incredible day and it was a good choice.
- Again, the application and focus.
- Fantastic speakers and breakouts.
- Many interesting and exciting choices.
- Anita again.
- Anita Archer.
- Dynamic speakers. Allowing non-Reading First teachers to attend.
- Anita was a very engaging speaker but I also learned a lot. Thank you.
- Anita Archer.
- The variety of sessions offered and the great ideas shared.
- Lecture, location.
- Anita. Great.
- Item 5: Enjoyed the time to work with my team on sustaining our practice.
- Stan Paine gave useful time for developing our own School Sustainability Plan.
- Anita Archer was both knowledgeable and engaging. She practices what she preaches.
- Very positive; very relevant.
- Anita Archer.
- Very engaging speakers. Many examples I can take into my classroom.
- Same as yesterday [Day 1].
- I totally appreciated the humor.
- Anita Archer is a great presenter.
- Great.
- Good speakers - got some great ideas/suggestions to take back to the classroom.
- Good keynote on vocabulary!
- Keynote speakers had good energy.
- Strategies to increase fluency.
- I appreciated being able to attend different sessions during each day. Again, Anita Archer was very engaging.
- Anita was great. What a wonderful model.
- The quality of the presentations
- I enjoyed Dr. Archer's sessions! Most beneficial were the clips from her sessions that modeled the practice or strategy.
- Anita Archer.
- The enthusiasm and new instruction techniques in reading. I hope to try some.
- Meaningful. Current. Many immediately useful applications to take back to my school.
- All of Anita Archer's presentations.
- Anita.
- Anita Archer was awesome!
- Item 7: Exciting data - academic growth! Anita Archer sessions.
- Anita Archer.
- Dr. Anita Archer. All of Anita's presentations were incredible. This was great!
- Again, for a second day, the enthusiasm for teaching reading from the presenters. The presenters had thoughtful research-based strategies to offer that I can put into my strategies toolbox.
- Anita was great - what an inspiration!
- Anita! Awesome.
- Item 1: Wonderful - more like A/O
- Information distributed in sessions; hands-on activities.
- Anita Archer was very informative and a great presenter.
- Anita Archer.

- The perky-paced speaker with the myriad of ideas for increasing vocabulary and fluency.
- Every session I attended were productive, informative, and encouraging. I'm doing some things right! Neat to hear results.
- Working and learning with my co-workers; good presenters. Validated what we are doing in our school, but still got refinement.
- Keynote speaker; useful, easy-to-adapt skills to teach fluency; and the professional development opportunities.
- Jennifer gave "practice time" to determine progress monitoring. This was helpful.
- Stan Paine was very accessible and seemed to care about what was happening in our school. He encouraged people to share ideas as a group and gave us time to work on our plans. I enjoyed his "wrap-up" slide show with music, and the end of his presentation.
- Anita; sustainability discussion; collaborating with colleagues.
- There was a nice balance between training and encouragement.
- Once again, I enjoyed Part II with Stan Paine, Great presenter with lots of informative material. He got me "thinking" and in the right direction
- Item 4: Great to see the data.
  Bringing up a national speaker who is really up on current research and showing how it looks in the classroom was excellent.
- It was great to hear what goes on at other schools. Dr. Archer had a wonderful keynote on vocabulary.

Day 2—What would you like to see added or improved?
- Videos of Dr. Archer's modeling made available to principals/Reading Specialists/ coaches
- Keep at it with great presentations
- Bring Anita Archer back. Also, recognized experts demonstrating various techniques/practices, etc., like Anita showed in her vocabulary presentation.
- More opportunities to attend break-out sessions.
- More depth/time for Jill.
- More time to coach teachers more.
- More professional development like this.
- I would like for our motivational speaker, Ms. Archer, to schedule future speeches for a larger audience
- To bring more teachers.
- The slides for each available on-line. I want the information from the classes I didn't attend also, as well as sharing with teachers at school.
- Anita Archer was wonderful.
- More real-world classroom implementation on how to employ Reading First techniques.
- Another day to get to more things.
- Vocabulary instruction this afternoon is similar to Linda Diamond's keynote last year.
- Regarding the session: Using Effective Teaching Strategies…: Erin - there were a lot of side conversations going on throughout the session (participants who talked on and on throughout much of the session with each other.) It was very distracting. A suggestion would be to ask folks at the very beginning to attend to one conversation - then pre-treat the issue so that it is not an issue. I would have appreciated you speaking quietly to offenders once they started this behavior. You have a very appealing presentation style and it sounds like some good information. It was hard to focus because of the distractions. If you moved around the room it might help folks maintain focus better.
- NA
- Everything was fine and well-planned.
- Proved sustainability.

- Presentation at district level for all K-5 teachers (Mat Su) and administration.
- Reinforcement of effective instructional techniques that are effective.
- More Anita!
- Extra day so we could attend all sessions!
- Get Anita Archer to teachers.
- Spread the knowledge, enthusiasm, and "perkiness" of Dr. Archer to all teachers.
- More movement.
- ESL - teaching strategies.
- Item 5: Needed to provide some activities, mix up presentation style. Good information, slow pace.
- New information for people who have been in the Reading First program since its beginning.
- I would have liked to be able to go to more sessions. Maybe three days would allow a couple more choices.
- Jennifer Knutson said most of the same things she did at leadership conference.
- Different strands that are more focused toward members.
- Nothing. The number of sessions and the content were perfect and addressed the needs/concerns schools have regarding student academic progress.
- Perhaps this little sample of information is not enough to use - do I jump in with both feet, read up some more, and go for it?
- Web site and bibliography in packet. Data should have a control group.
- Item 4: Session could use more hands-on techniques.
- Receipts for parking. Cell phones were an interruption.
- Sectionals offered twice or video tape sectionals to be distributed to teachers in schools to improve their delivery of reading instruction. ARFS participants could facilitate the viewing of the videos
- I would appreciate a dynamic speaker, similar to Anita, who could provide strategies to increase comprehension. Additionally, it would be helpful to have time to work with grade-level teachers - exchanging ideas, tips, suggestions, tricks - the things that are working at their schools.
- Item 5: Presenter: F!
- More time.
- Nothing - this was a good one.
- We would like to hear more information on Response to Intervention Funding and any additional funding sources that might be available.
- More Anita.
- I think the sustainability break-out could have been one day. It would have been nice to go to another session during this conference.
- Dr. Knutson's workshop was very informative; it would have been very beneficial at the beginning of the year for me, as a first-year teacher.

Day 2—Other Comments/Suggestions:
- Enjoyed all two days listening to Anita. Finally some information I can use! I was relieved we didn't have another boring conference. Anita was impressive. I feel educated.
- It was a lot of information to digest at one sitting and it came at you fast.
- Thank you for allowing MAT for District to come to this very helpful conference.
- Thanks for a wonderful conference. I felt fortunate to be here.
- Nice job. Thanks for having 'others' participate.
- It's great you invited non-Reading First schools as, for the most part, they are most in need. Also, the program was well-organized and the focus was clear and practical. Publicize the Web site (EEDs) and the various conferences pertaining to reading and instruction. Also, DIBELS training. How can other schools find out about it?

- This was the best conference I've been to.
- Thank you
- Less all-day (both breakout) commitment - I'd like to go for more breadth, variety.
- Great conferences. The best in years.
- More teachers need to be able to attend this question.
- Would have preferred that the 1/2 day Sustainability sessions for coaches and principals be at a different time (a Day 3) like we've done in the past so coaches could attend other sessions (like Anita Archer's Fluency).
- The two-day conference was outstanding.
- Awesome conference.
- Wonderful.
- Very well organized throughout the conference.
- Absolutely great!
- Hilton is a nice facility but they need to turn up the heat in the large rooms.
- I would like to know more about the academic and professional background of our presenters.
- Anita is tremendous.
- Very well planned, good timing between sessions, lunch, and breaks.
- Anita Archer is a great presenter. I really enjoyed listening to her.
- Water bottles available.
- Add a luncheon to the program.
- Very nice!
- Anita should speak to more teachers in Alaska.
- More teachers attending! Thanks.
- Nicely organized. Good timing for sessions and breaks. Thanks for bringing Anita and Jill. They were terrific.
- Put cookies out in the afternoon, not morning.
- If a person has heard the presentation before, maybe they should be told to choose a different session.
- I appreciated the findings and results of our work the past couple of years. It is nice to see positive results from what we are doing.
- Having a presenter that is engaging and has a sense of humor, especially at the end, was great.
- I would encourage more ice water be made available throughout the day. Also, cookies are a rough way to bring a start to the day, nutritionally-speaking. Great conference, otherwise.
- Thanks, well done.
- Very enthusiastic.
- Would love to have more training with Dr. Archer.
- This even was not listed on the Anchorage School District My Learning Plan. It should have been. Future events should be listed.
- Great conference.
- Great conference.
- It was nice that there were less people in attendance this year. Last year was too crowded.
- I would be better to hold the conference at the end of the week rather than at the beginning. Also, the week before spring break is difficult. This means two weeks with no instruction for my students just two weeks before testing (plus it is the end of quarter). Yikes.
- It is good to have summit meetings.
- Thanks Stacy.
- This was the most productive and best summit I have every been to. A lot of great information.

APPENDIX H

Alaska Reading First
Evaluation Results From the Reading First Leadership Team Data
Retreat—November 30-Decemer 1, 2006

Alaska Reading First Leadership Team
Data Retreat, Nov 30-Dec 1, 2006
Evaluation Results

Table 1
Roles of Data Retreat Participants
(N=54)

Role	Percentage (n)
Teacher	44% (24)
Coach	17% (9)
Principal	9% (5)
Special ed/resource teacher	7% (4)
Other	7% (4)
Bilingual resource teacher	6% (3)
Title1 staff	6% (3)
Counselor	2% (1)
Aide	2% (1)

Table 2
Organization and Content of Presentations
Participants' Ratings

Presentation	Percentage Distribution					Average (SD)	N
	1 Low	2	3	4	5		
Alaska RF Update (McKeown)	--	--	--	44%	56%	4.6 (0.5)	52
Problem Solving (Knutson)	--	--	--	27%	73%	4.7 (0.4)	52
Evaluation Your Wide Reading Program (Chapparro)	--	--	2%	26%	72%	4.7 (0.5)	53
Overall	--	--	--	30%	70%	4.7 (0.5)	43

Alaska Reading First Leadership Team
Data Retreat, Nov 30-Dec 1, 2006
Evaluation Results—Responses to Open-ended Questions

What were the highlights of the meeting?

- The knowledge of how to refine interventions and instruction that we are doing in the classroom.
- Seeing success! Meeting with team/opportunity to plan and evaluate.
- How to deal with sustainability. Time to discuss our needs as a school, based on data, and then how to address them.
- I thought the presenters were excellent and very knowledgeable about reading.
- Case histories and being able to ask Jenny specific questions about why we emphasize NWF at the second level versus reading level.
- I especially liked the hands-on compiling of data and going over individual case studies. It was very informative and helpful.
- Erin and group data; Jenny and individual case studies.
- Being able to see case studies and brainstorm together.
- Hearing other schools and their Reading First concerns and successes.
- Being able to share real data; sharing ideas and thoughts.
- Working with Erin; Looking at data for groups; Jenny - Qualitative analyzing of the DIBELS data
- Analyzing data and applying to our own students.
- Opportunity to work as a team with Erin.
- Opportunities to brainstorm with colleagues.
- The sharing of different schools was so helpful!
- Time for discussion.
- Seeing how other schools/kids are doing. Having peers provide suggestions.
- The case studies.
- Case studies.
- The training was very useful and assisted in moving to next steps to refine our program delivery.
- Graphing group data and determining how many words per week were needed for group/student to meet goals.
- I really enjoyed Erin's presentation. That was new information-- to see if what you are doing in an intervention group is working.
- Erin's information was presented well and will be useful at the schoolwide level.
- Action plans; evaluating intervention effectiveness; brainstorming on "problem" kids; celebrations.
- Case study; evaluation of our own data.
- This is my first year with Reading First and everything is a highlight for me. I am a reading teacher but I never get the chance to progress monitor because that is the homeroom teacher's job in our building. So I learned about "Dibeling" --what to do with the data. Now I know where I'm standing.
- Hearing that we are making a difference!
- Statewide Reading First graph information; hearing from other buildings.
- Taking time out to specifically "focus" on reading.
- I enjoyed having time to process with my district team; reflect on effectiveness at the building level.
- Information sharing.
- Collaborating.
- Jennifer's work with DIBELS; the numerous hands-on activities at both sessions.
- Focus on the intervention process in Erin's session
- Time and guidance for dialogue

- Collaboration time with other Reading First schools.
- Problem-solving individual students; district and school goal setting; how to determine adequate progress
- Time with our staff.
- Jennie's was fantastic. Everything was very useful; it gave us some ideas for inservice, along with reading information. She is always so helpful and gives us practical information.
- Discussion time with my group about what we are learning; case studies, getting ideas from other schools.
- Looking closer at data and how to best utilize it. Listening to how other sites are using data.
- Working through all our students' data
- Understanding the DIBELS data and how to use it.
- Group discussions; action plans (examples); case studies; evaluation of our data.
- Looking at the intervention group's progress and making a plan for the next interventions, starting in January.
- Time to talk with our team under the support of knowledgeable trainers who could guide us.
- Brainstorming and learning how to analyze data.
- Tools: Alterable Instruction Variables; Process of Decoding Evaluation
- Getting ideas from other teachers/presenters.
- In-depth and specifics on using data.
- Problem-solving of other school data.
- Hearing form other schools; looking at DIBELS error analysis
- Problem-solving with each other and other schools.
- The overview and evaluation of an effective reading program. The feeling of success in my classroom, grade level, and schoolwide progress
- Listening to what is working at other schools
- Erin's presentation was very helpful as we were not sure if we were going in the right direction schoolwide. Stacy and Jennifer are always excellent.

What could be improved?

- The meeting rooms were too small and very hot.
- Fresh fruit platters!
- A different location to stay; other than that, everyone was awesome!
- All presenters were focused and prepared, and presented very well.
- You did an excellent job! Temperature of room unstable!
- We missed the cookies!
- The training was awesome!
- Environment; one room too hot, one too cold. Also, it would be great to have copies of the PowerPoints for sharing with other staff members.
- More time to work in our teams.
- Room temperature.
- Planning for the presentation. It was not relayed that we were to present without working as a group first.
- The heat in the room
- Move the content pace a little faster; be more specific on what to bring to the training.
- More time spent on own school planning and not so much on other schools' problems.
- Jenny's day was good reminders, but we really already have been trained in error analysis and a little quicker review could have been better; more time problem solving.
- Warmer rooms. It's cold in here! More time to plan with your school and/or other schools.
- More group talk.
- Pair with schools that have the same core reading program.
- Pairing like core programs with like from different districts, i.e., Harcourt with Harcourt, etc.

- Principals share in responsibility of coaches.
- More breaks.
- Start and stop times need to be adhered to; side conversations.
- Additional case study reviews.
- I think many more staff are ready to learn more about data! Wish they could have been here to see speakers outside the school.
- Some of the information was glossed over rather quickly. Consider minimizing the presented information to increase learning.
- Let us know more specific data we needed to bring.
- Warmer rooms away from exit doors; Internet access.
- Hilton - sitting next to door - very drafty.
- A warmer room; snacks.
- Room temperature.
- More movement during learning --sitting too long.
- Working on sustainability plans.
- More time to work as a team; getting together is such a rare commodity.
- Nothing; these meetings were effective.
- The rooms were too crowded; not enough water. The federal Reading First situation was glossed over.
- One thing that would be helpful would be to have a "look see" at some of the SRB supplemental materials available. We would like to know more about Fast Forward.

How will you use the information at your school?

- I will use the information to help with student goal setting and self-evaluation instruction.
- We will begin to more closely analyze the data and tailor to students' needs.
- I will track the average growth in my reading groups.
- Will share more individual goals at grade-level meetings.
- Share with staff and start collecting data; try more variations on tests and more interventions.
- To share at grade level/ Reading First staff inservice to see what further work we can do for small groups or individuals that aren't moving.
- To change or improve instruction
- Share with grade level partner.
- Better meet my students' needs; being able to analyze my class.
- In grade-level data meetings, looking deeper at data.
- Data analyzing provides specific information, so reassessing to instruction can be done.
- Refine/change procedures for assessing/analyzing needs of intensive students.
- We'll be re-evaluating our top priorities and what our action plans will be.
- We were able to spend some time as a team to make some changes in what is not working and we're going to try some of the ideas.
- For evaluating students, program and presentation.
- Will share with other teachers and it gives us a lot more options to help move kids forwards.
- The leadership team will meet soon to discuss target goals developed during this training.
- Look more closely at DIBELS data group and individual.
- It made me think "again" about getting teachers into their p.m. booklet to analyze the errors.
- The average reading growth information will be used.
- To help guide the reading intervention times - suggest what resources to use.
- Use as discussion points for next grade-level meetings.
- To help keep the focus! Stay on task and keep our eyes on the goal!
- Share handouts and ideas for refining and intensifying delivery.
- More meetings with teacher; more focused.

- Follow-up intervention process.
- Restructure our plan for all our new leadership as well as for future new staff.
- Evaluation of individual students in intervention and also their groups to determine effectiveness.
- Writing interventions with goals that reflect adequate progress.
- In many ways--running data meetings, looking at specific kids in a different way, focusing on whether the instruction is effective.
- Use data more to drive instruction
- Taking data farther; what other interventions could be used?
- I plan to use a lot of the information. I will share most at the grade-level meetings. We will also work through some of this in our Reading Leadership Team meetings.
- To drive instruction and interventions.
- Discuss with team.
- Share with staff at data meetings, grade-level meeting.
- To move forward, to be more intentional in our interventions.
- Supporting at-risk readers (strategic/intensive)
- Use ideas to attempt to have better/more effective student lessons.
- Can't wait to meet with team partner to fine tune instructions for intensive learners.
- Data review.
- Share at grade-level meetings.
- Data, data, and more data. Try to implement a Walk to Intervention program for first grade
- Continue to use the tools that are ingrained and have been district wide implemented. Use the data to drive my instruction
- I am new to Reading First, so all of this was informative and helped me make better sense of the whole intervention process.
- We will be better informed to do a better job with students, digging deeper and making better decisions schoolwide.

What would you like to have training on in the future?

- The "other" things you can do - screenings - the DIBELS book - "now what do we do?" Kind of stuff.
- Help with sustainability and more activities that engage kinders.
- How to sustain the program after money runs out.
- Some of the additional intervention programs, i.e., Fast Forward, Rode to Code, etc.
- More sharing what has worked well among schools.
- DIBELS for new teachers.
- Continued dialogue with other teachers, and sharing ideas
- Don't forget to keep us posted on training for new staff.
- Not sure.
- Sustainability of program after funding runs out.
- Techniques to assist slow learners, SPED kids.
- Techniques I can use for my special ed students and slow learners.
- Parental involvement.
- Linda M--- Bell
- What do we do with most intensive students.
- We would like Stacy to come and train us on observing D.I. and opportunities to respond; also more LMB training.
- How to help children who are failing.
- Types of interventions to try.
- The program-specific templates.
- More hands-on with data and group problem-solving.

- Systemic integration of Reading First with all other subjects.
- More ESL strategies.
- Keep pushing us to do more with data.
- Other reading interventions.
- More exchange with other schools.
- Overall DIBEL training: assessing, analyzing, evaluating, etc.
- More time to work as a team.
- Creating systematic pyramid of interventions with staff.
- Sharing of in-depth interventions.
- More error analysis; more information about Fast Forward, GATE.
- More sharing and discussion!
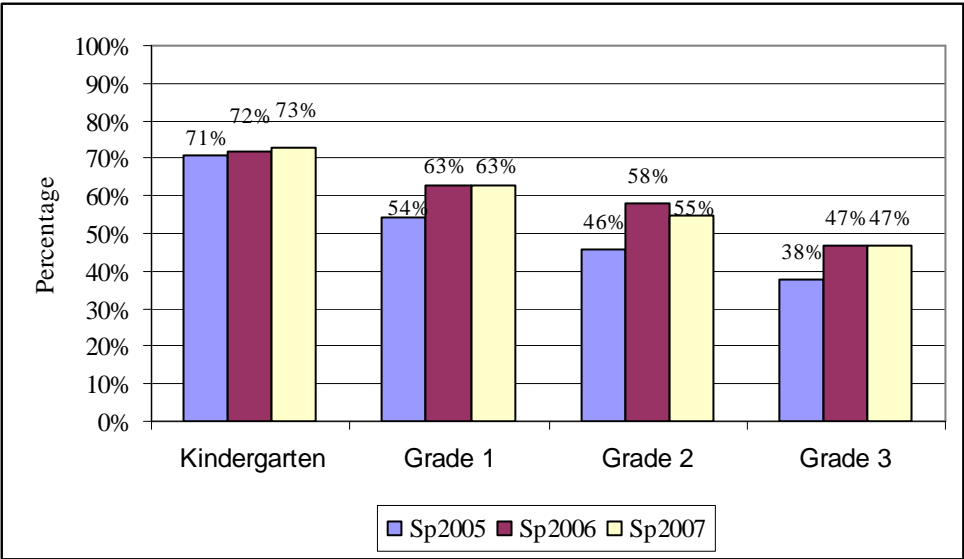- How to effectively increase time on interventions.

Other Comments:

- Well done! Good pacing.
- I think it would be great if some of the books mentioned were available for purchase.
- I felt this was useful to "where I'm at" in my Reading First journey, rather than being handed "top down" preaching about…
- A great job, team!
- The hotel could have done a better job; temperature, hot/cold water. It was okay.
- Thanks!
- What do we do with lack of funding?
- Thanks for the candy!
- Great job coordinating the two days.
- Snacks.
- Thanks much.
- Very organized - great information.
- Thanks!
- Thank you. Good to hear from other schools - great ideas.
- Thanks for everything!
- Thanks.
- Jenny's presentation, question and answer, was much better than one she did in Anchorage for a huge group a year or two ago. I enjoyed her honesty and expertise shared in a more down-to-earth way. Thank you

APPENDIX I

Alaska Reading First
State Percentage of All Students at Benchmark Across Years,
by Grade Level

State Percentage of All Students at Benchmark Across Years, by Grade Level