Arizona Reading First
Annual External Evaluation Report
Cycle 2, Year 5, 2006-2007

Submitted by:

Arizona Prevention Resource Center
Arizona State University

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

Reading First is a federal initiative authorized by Title I, Part B, Subpart 1 of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* as amended by the *No Child Left Behind Act* of 2001. The Arizona Department of Education (ADE) was awarded a grant beginning in 2002-2003. Its goal is to improve reading instruction and achievement in the early elementary grades, and it particularly targets at-risk schools with a history of lower academic performance.

Beginning for the 2003-2004 year, the Arizona Department of Education (ADE) awarded sub-grants for Cycle 1 to 26 Local Education Agencies (LEAs) with a total of 63 Reading First schools (Cohort 1) beginning implementation during school year. An additional nine schools (Cohort 2), all in LEAs that already had at least one Reading First school, were granted awards the following year and a total of 72 schools were part of Cycle 1 during 2003 to 2006. Sixty-one of these schools are the Continuing group that received reduced amounts of Reading First funds for the 2006-2007 year.

A total of 85 schools from 42 LEAs became part of Reading First under the new round of Cycle 2 funding begun in 2006; it was anticipated that these schools would be funded for three years (fall 2006 until spring 2009). This includes 24 schools in 11 LEAs that already had Reading First schools and were thus Expanding (Cohort 3) and 61 schools in 31 LEAs that were entirely new to Reading First (New-Cohort 4).

Project Outcomes

Cohort 1 Schools' Outcomes
Outcomes on the State Assessment (AIMS)

Students who were continuously enrolled in the Reading First program from kindergarten through third grade were significantly more likely to pass AIMS than were students who were not in the Reading First program for all four years. This finding suggests that continuous enrollment in Reading First is associated with higher achievement. Specifically the four-year subset of students who were continuously enrolled in Reading First passed the third grade AIMS reading test at almost the same percentage (67%) as did all Arizona students (69%), although these schools had been identified as having a large percentage of at-risk students who traditionally tended to see fewer student pass the test.

Further, 59 percent of students from Cohort 1 schools (regardless of the number of years at the school) passed AIMS in 2007, an increase of 5 percentage points from the previous year. Moreover, the continuously enrolled group performed significantly better than did those Reading First students in third grade in Cohort 1 schools who had less than four years of Reading First.

Outcomes on the Project Assessment (DIBELS)
On the *Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills* (DIBELS) assessment, another reading assessment used by all schools in the project, there was an increased percentage of students in the benchmark category (at grade level) over the academic year in kindergarten (+75%), second grade (+12%) and third grade (+15%). However, for first grade, there was a decrease of 7 percentage points in the benchmark category at the end of the year compared to the beginning.

This pattern was similar to last year, with a slightly higher percent of students finishing at benchmark this year than last, showing that these schools generally maintained or increased their levels of achievement. First grade, however, had a larger decrease this year than last (to -7% from -2%), and a larger decrease than did the Cycle 2 group (-3%).

At all grade levels, schools that were in Cohort 1 had better outcomes on DIBELS than did schools just completing their first year (Cycle 2 schools).

The Reading First students who had been in the program for four years were more likely to be at benchmark at the end of third grade than those students not in Reading First all four years (62% compared to 56%).

Cycle 2 Schools' Outcomes

Outcomes on the State Assessment (AIMS)
As a Combined Cycle 2 group, over half of students passed AIMS (54%). The Expanding Cohort 3 group (57%) scored slightly higher than the New Cohort 4 group (52%). Baseline data were available for the Expanding group, and this information revealed that Cohort 3 schools increased their pass rate by 5 percentage points over last year; comparable data were not available for Cohort 4. Students in the Cycle 2 schools passed at a rate below the state average and below the Continuing group that had Reading First experience. This lower level of performance was anticipated, given that the schools were selected for Reading First because of their at-risk categorization.

Outcomes on the Project Assessment (DIBELS)
The overall findings for Cycle 2 paralleled the pattern for Cohort 1 schools; there were (smaller) increases in the percentage of students at benchmark in kindergarten (+55%), second grade (+6%) and third grade (+4%) and a decrease in first grade (-3%). Given that this was this was the first year of implementation for these schools, it was not surprising that the percentage at benchmark was lower than for the Cohort 1 group at all grade levels.

Project Implementation

The Reading First program incorporates specific components into the planning and implementation of reading instruction at the K-3 grades in four areas/pillars: instruction, leadership, professional development and a data/assessment system.

Instruction implementation for Reading First schools is expected to include an uninterrupted 90-minute reading block; use a scientific based core reading program; provide instruction that is differentiated and delivered at student's level; meet the needs of English language learners; cover the five essential components of reading; consist of clear lessons with scaffolded instruction; monitor student understanding to provide meaningful feedback to students; demonstrate strong and consistent classroom management and encourage high student engagement; and provide small group interventions targeted to students' specific needs.

Leadership expectations of Reading First include LEA participation and assistance to schools; principal walk-throughs and observations of classrooms including feedback to teachers; coach assistance to teachers in improving instructional strategies; monthly meetings of the Reading Leadership Team; and grade-level meetings to discuss instruction.

Professional Development is a major means of capacity building to achieve implementation and consists of annual trainings for LEA coordinators, principals, coaches and teachers; monthly meetings for coordinators, principals, and coaches; LEA and school-based trainings for teachers; and technical assistance from the state reading specialists.

Assessment System requirements of Reading First include establishment of the assessment system for administering tests (DIBELS, AIMWeb and AIMS) as well as for progress monitoring; sharing, analyzing and using data by principals, coaches and teachers in meetings to improve classroom instruction and to identify students' needs.

Implementation in Cohort 1 Schools

For the most part, Cohort 1 schools continued or even strengthened the various components of the Reading First model in 2006-2007. Only two components, professional development and interventions for struggling students, reportedly declined somewhat.

Instruction
All major Reading First instructional components were well-integrated into the daily academic life of the Continuing Cohort 1 schools, such as the core reading program, the 90-minute reading block, and efforts to maximize student engagement. Moreover, according to school staff, fidelity to these components remained as high or was higher than in the previous year. Some schools, however, reported serving fewer students with interventions than in the previous year.

Leadership
Nearly all schools maintained the established leadership components of Reading First, including schoolwide Reading Leadership Teams (RLTs). According to teachers, principal observations occurred at the same rate as last year and principals provided specific and constructive feedback on their reading instruction.

Buy-in remained high in Cohort 1 schools with almost all principals and coaches and two-thirds of teachers supporting the instructional changes made under Reading First. Lower buy-in by teachers than principals has been a consistent trend (evident also in Cycle 2 schools this year);

however, this year Cohort 1 teacher buy-in increased to 63 percent from 50 percent last year. Collaboration also remained high this year (86% of RLTs met at least monthly). Almost all teachers (96%) reported attending grade-level meetings at least monthly, with more teachers this year than last reporting that grade-level meetings were useful.

Professional Development
This year, the state turned more responsibility for professional development over to LEAs, who struggled to provide the level of training offered in past years. Despite the added responsibility, LEAs received less grant funding and less direction on how to decide what trainings to offer, which professional development sessions should be attended by whom, and when to pay for substitute teachers. As a result, coaches and principals, in particular, reported having too little professional development. About two-thirds of the teachers reported receiving the same amount of professional development this year as last. However, training is a particular concern for new staff members (partially due to teacher and principal turnover rates). Not all coaches reported that they were full-time, which is another area of concern given the important role of the coach in implementing the instructional components of this program.

Assessment System
All Cohort 1 principals and teachers reported their school had an organized system for administering, sharing, and analyzing the DIBELS and other Reading First assessments and for progress monitoring. Virtually all teachers (96%) said they usually or always used data to identify which students needed interventions, and the majority of teachers (91%) said they usually or always used reading assessments to group students and to communicate with colleagues. The coaches' survey results confirmed that the number of schools in which classrooms used assessment data to monitor student progress on a regular basis increased this year.

Implementation in Cycle 2 Schools

Over the course of the 2006-2007 school year, Cycle 2 schools were able to put most of the components of the Reading First model into place. Some components were firmly established (for example, use of the core program and the 90-minute block), while others will need continued development in the coming year (such as the delivery of interventions to struggling students). Interestingly, in Cycle 2 LEAs, over half-of the *non*-Reading First schools had implemented some Reading First components (such as the 90-minute block and core program).

Instruction
In contrast to the established Cycle 1 schools, the Cycle 2 group began the year working to get the components in place. By the end of the year, these schools were making productive use of the 90-minute reading block and using the core program with good fidelity. Most instruction was delivered at grade level with about two-thirds reporting differentiating instruction to meet students' needs. Although the number of classroom observations was limited, the instruction in the five essential components of reading was seen to be fairly evenly divided among components; however, observers noted little instruction in fluency in first-grade classrooms. Many schools began to provide some interventions, but this was challenging and not part of the

overall first year expectations for implementation, and in fact funding for intervention materials was to be provided during year two of implementation (2007-2008).

Leadership
Cycle 2 principals were, for the most part, fulfilling their expectations in implementing the program components. Although principals were able to consistently perform classroom walk-throughs and were comfortable in doing so, principals were less often able to give constructive feedback to teachers. Most teachers reported experiencing principal walk-throughs, although a third said these occurred only rarely. Coaches, more often than principals, were observing in the classroom and providing feedback, with teachers indicating that this was helpful to them.

Reading First contributed to a more collaborative culture with the Reading Leadership Team in the majority (85%) of schools fulfilling the requirement to meet at least monthly. Further, more than 80 percent of teachers attended grade level meetings more than once per month.

Principal and coach buy-in as measured by support for the instructional changes promoted under Reading First was high (over 95%), but that of teachers was lower and, in fact, declined substantially over the year (from 70% to 45%).

Professional Development
Principals and coaches reported that monthly meetings provided by the state were of high quality and had provided useful coaching and leadership training. Both coaches and teachers indicated that the two top areas for future professional development were development and selection of intervention programs and differentiated instruction. Most teachers received professional development at the building level from their coach and found the coach to be a knowledgeable resource as well as supportive. This assistance came in the form of observations, feedback and/or demonstration lessons, which three-fourths of teachers experienced regularly or at least once per month. The state reading specialists were also viewed as very helpful to the schools' efforts in many areas.

Assessment System
The state of Arizona requirement for instruction reading assessments meant that Cycle 2 schools already had adopted reading assessments (DIBELS or AIMSWeb). What changed this year was that coaches and teachers were much more likely to report that their schools had organized systems not only to administer assessments, but also to manage and analyze data. Progress monitoring of struggling students also happened more regularly, with 80 percent of these students reportedly monitored at least every two weeks. Data were used to identify students in need of interventions, make decisions about grouping, and monitor progress.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Based upon the major findings in this report, the following recommendations are proposed for implementation by Reading First and other appropriate administrators. Chapter XI contains the additional data and rationale for these proposals.

1. Attention needs to be focused on improving achievement by the end of first grade.
Both because declines have been noted in the percentage of first-grade students at benchmark over the course of the school year, and because first-grade performance is a strong predictor of third-grade performance, there should be a focus on identifying the causes and finding solutions for the weaker performance at first grade.

2. Fully implement intervention programs with appropriate materials and differentiated, data-driven instruction and grouping.
Many Cycle 2 schools began implementing some interventions in 2006-2007, but in the coming year all schools need support to establish and maintain highly targeted systems for supporting their struggling students.

3. Strengthen and enhance communication at all levels.
In particular, teachers were frustrated about unclear or inconsistent messages about Reading First components and their implementation as reflected in teachers' moderate level of overall support. Teachers could benefit from having expectations clearly articulated and specific materials from the ADE made more widely available.

4. Provide additional professional development guidance to convey appropriate courses/trainings and sequencing of training.
Many principals, coaches and teachers from Continuing schools (Cohort 1) were ready for more advanced professional development but need guidance on what offerings were available and appropriate. Differentiated professional development was also a need identified by Cycle 2 participants

5. Provide additional professional development opportunities for new teachers, coaches and principals.
In addition to the advanced training some staff need, there is a need for beginning-level professional development for principals, coaches and teachers who come into schools that are already implementing Reading First. Furthermore, as Reading First schools appear to have higher-than-average turnover, this will probably be a continual need.

6. Ensure that schools have longer-term implementation support to improve and sustain scientifically-based model reading program components in Arizona including access to professional development, technical assistance, funding, support for leadership activities, and appropriate instructional materials and strategies to meet students' needs.
Reading First appears to have had a positive impact on students' performance on the Arizona state reading assessment (AIMS). Support for the program components including professional development, leadership and enhanced instructional activities should continue while on-going evaluations are conducted with various replications and adaptations of the Reading First model.

CHAPTER II
INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER II
INTRODUCTION

Background

Reading First is a federal initiative authorized by Title I, Part B, Subpart 1 of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* as amended by the *No Child Left Behind Act* of 2001. The initiative provides an unprecedented amount of funding and focused support to states 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.

In Cycle 1, the Arizona Department of Education (ADE) awarded sub-grants in the spring of 2003 to 26 Local Education Agencies (LEAs) with a total of 63 Reading First schools beginning implementation during the 2003-2004 school year. An additional nine schools, all in LEAs that already had at least one Reading First school, were granted awards the following year; a total of 72 schools were part of Cycle 1 for the three year period from 2003 to 2006. Some of these schools are the Continuing group that has received reduced amounts of Reading First funds for the 2006-2007 year. The other 11 schools did not continue but 10 of those schools provide data as the Discontinued Cohort.

A total of 85 schools from 42 LEAs became part of Reading First under the new round of Cycle 2 funding begun in 2006; it is anticipated that these schools will be funded for three years (fall 2006 until spring 2009). This includes 24 schools in 11 Expanding LEAs (Cohort 3) and 61 schools in 31 New LEAs (Cohort 4). A Comparison group of 11 schools from nine districts provided DIBELS data. Because seven of these districts had other schools participating in Reading First, this is not a 'true' comparison group as elements of the 'Reading First experiment' are known to exist within this cohort of schools.

This external evaluation report presents an integrated analysis of findings by themes. The procedures and instruments used in data collection are described in Chapter III Methodology. The other chapters describe the outcomes and implementation components of the Reading First program: Chapter IV addresses Student Assessment using DIBELS Test Scores, Chapter V Student Assessment using AIMS, Chapter VI Instruction and Interventions, Chapter VII Leadership, Chapter VIII Professional Development, Chapter IX Assessment and Data Systems, Chapter X Sustainability and Chapter XI Conclusions and Recommendations.

The Evaluation

The Arizona Prevention Resource Center (APRC) and the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NWREL) serve as the external evaluators for Arizona Reading First. This report describes and integrates the data collected from summer of 2006 until spring 2007 using many evaluation instruments.

The evaluation includes research efforts for the Cycle 2 schools similar to those conducted during the first three years of Cycle 1. Evaluation efforts continued as well for the Cycle 1 schools, albeit at reduced levels.

The evaluation incorporates both formative and summative evaluation components to examine the following broad areas:

- Professional Development: Knowledge Transfer to Teachers and to Trainers and Support Staff
    o How effective was the professional development approach in helping teachers acquire knowledge and skills about phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary development , and reading comprehension, -- and transfer the knowledge and skills to their classroom instruction?
    o Knowledge Transfer to Trainers and Support Staff

- Transfer of Knowledge in the Classroom: Classroom Instruction and Use of Assessment Data
    o To what extent are teachers incorporating reading assessments into their classrooms and using the results of the assessment to change their instructional approaches and address students' learning needs? How effective was the professional development approach in helping teachers transfer knowledge and skills to their classroom instruction?

- Knowledge Transfer to Students: Student Outcomes as measured by DIBELS and AIMS
    o How effective was Arizona's Reading Fist Initiative in increasing students' knowledge and abilities related to phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary development, and reading comprehension as measured by the DIBELS assessment?

- Knowledge Transfer to Students -- Assessments
    o How well are second and third grade students meeting the standards for performance in reading as measured by AIMS, the State Assessment, and to what extent is performance improving over time?

- Capacity Building: Support System and Leadership Development
    o How effective is the system of support for schools and districts to help key stakeholders to contribute to the improvement of students' reading performance and sustain improved performance over time?
    o How effective is the system's capacity building and support for schools seeking to improve students' reading performance?
    o To what extent did the Reading First Initiative help to develop reading instructional leadership capacity in coaches, specialists, and principals?

CHAPTER III
METHODOLOGY

CHAPTER III
METHODOLOGY

Overview

A multi-method strategy was used to evaluate the Reading First project outcomes and processes. This chapter discusses the many data collection instruments and their administration procedures.

In order to address both the evaluation questions and to document achievements and challenges in Reading First, evaluators utilized a number of different methodologies and instruments to collect a large amount of information. Whenever possible, evaluators gathered data from more than one source (such as from principals as well as teachers) and/or from more than one instrument (interviews as well as surveys), in order to triangulate and integrate the findings to examine activities from more than one point of view.

The DIBELS and AIMS reading scores were used to assess the desired outcome of improvement in student reading achievement. Results from the many other data collection instruments were used to address the implementation, process, throughputs and system improvements. The assessment focused on the "four pillars" of Reading First: instruction, leadership, professional development and assessment system.

The following instruments, discussed in this chapter were used during this year's evaluation:

- Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) test scores.
- Arizona Instrument to Measure Standards (AIMS) reading test scores.
- Surveys (baseline summer 2006 and spring 2007 surveys): These instruments contained questions on attitudes and behaviors related to professional development, leadership, assessment, instructional practices, and experiences with Reading First. Teachers, coaches, principals and LEA coordinators completed these surveys.
- Implementation Checklist: Completed by the state reading specialists, this 56+ item instruments assessed progress of implementation of Reading First in the districts, schools and classrooms.
- Site visits – observations and interviews/focus group: These observations, interviews, and visits followed protocols in order to make judgments across sites as to what was occurring at the school and classroom level with administrators, teachers and students.
- Survey and focus group of State Reading Specialists (SRS): The questions were designed to quantify and qualify the experiences of the SRSs in their work during this year.

The remainder of this chapter describes each of these instruments in detail, as well as the response rates obtained and any limitations or cautions about the data collected via one of the instruments.

DIBELS Test

The Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) are a set of standardized, individually administered measures of early literacy development. They are designed to be short (one minute) measures used to regularly monitor the development of pre-reading and early reading skills (DIBELS Measures).

The results are being used to assess individual student progress as well as grade-level, school-level and project level measures of the overall student outcome of improved reading test scores.

The DIBELS measures individually assess three of the five Big Ideas of early literacy as well as examining risk factors:

- Measure of Risk:
    - Letter Naming Fluency (LNF) Assesses a child's ability to name as many letters as they can to determine if they are at risk for difficulty achieving early literacy benchmark goals
- Measures of Phonological Awareness:
    - Initial Sounds Fluency (ISF): Assesses a child's skill to identify and produce the initial sound of a given word.
    - Phonemic Segmentation Fluency (PSF): Assesses a child's skill to produce the individual sounds within a given word.
- Measure of Alphabetic Principle:
    - Nonsense Word Fluency (NWF): Assesses a child's knowledge of letter-sound correspondences as well their ability to blend letters together to form unfamiliar "nonsense" (e.g., fik, lig, etc.) words.
- Measure of Fluency with Connected Text:
    - Oral Reading Fluency (ORF): Assesses a child's skill of reading connected text in grade-level material word.

Students are assessed with these various measures that are then combined to categorize students based on their scores. Students are either "at risk," "some risk," or "low risk." This categorization becomes the basis for the instructional support recommendation (ISR) that classifies students as either "intensive," strategic" or "benchmark" in terms of their overall performance.

DIBELS as Assessment Tool

This test is viewed as a valid and reliable indicator of early literacy development and predictive of later reading proficiency. It is able to identify students who are not progressing as expected. The result of DIBELS testing can also be used to evaluate individual student development and provide grade-level feedback on instructional objectives.

Cohort and Comparison Groups

Specifically, the data for each group were downloaded to **match** students who had taken the test both the beginning of the year (fall) <u>and</u> at the end of the year (spring). Although only students who were **matched** (had both pre and post test scores) were used in this sample, the number of students per individual test varied from test to test, and from pre to post test. The middle of year test administration was not considered (if a student took the beginning and end of year test but missed the middle of year, the student was included in this database).

In Cycle 1, the Arizona Department of Education (ADE) awarded sub-grants in the spring of 2003 to 26 Local Education Agencies (LEAs) with a total of 63 Reading First schools beginning implementation during the 2003-2004 school year. An additional nine schools, all in LEAs that already had at least one Reading First school, were granted awards the following year; a total of 72 schools were part of Cycle 1 for the three year period from 2003 to 2006. Some of these schools are the Continuing group that has received reduced amounts of Reading First funds for the 2006-2007 year. The other 11 schools did not continue and 10 of those schools provided data as the Discontinued Cohort.

A total of 85 schools from 42 LEAs became part of Reading First under the new round of Cycle 2 funding begun in 2006; it is anticipated that these schools will be funded for three years (Fall 2006 until Spring 2009). Tables 3-1 and 3-2 list the 24 schools in 11 Expanding (Cohort 3) and 61 schools in 31 New (Cohort 4).

Table 3-1
Cohort 3 Schools (Expanding LEAs)

LEA	School	LEA	School
Alhambra	Carol G. Peck Cordova Montebello	**Sunnyside Unified**	Los Amigos Los Ninos Los Ranchitos Ocotillo Santa Clara
Casa Grande	Cholla Cottonwood Palo Verde	**Tempe**	Wood
Crane	Knox Reagan	**Tolleson**	Arizona Desert
		Tucson Unified	Myers-Ganoung Ochoa Oyama
Glendale	Coyote Ridge		
Isaac	Butler Zito	**Washington**	Ocotillo
		Yuma	Desert Mesa Pecan Grove

The LEAs that were funded in the first round of Reading First were heavily concentrated around Phoenix, Tucson, and Yuma. The new districts involved (as part of Cohort 4) in Reading First brought more geographic diversity to Arizona Reading First.

Table 3-2
Cohort 4 (New LEAs)

LEA	School	LEA	School
Aguila	Aguila	**Humboldt**	Lake Valley
Akimel O'Otham	Pee Posh Charter Schools Inc		Mt. View
Avondale	Michael Anderson	**Littlefield**	Beaver Dam
	Lattie Coor	**Mary O'Brien Consort**	Avalon
	Eliseo C Felix		Curiel
Balsz	Brunson-Lee		John F Kennedy
	Crockett		Mary C O'Brien
Bullhead City	Coyote Canyon		Picacho
	Desert Valley		Sacaton
	Mountain View	**Mohave Valley**	Mohave Valley
Cartwright	Palm Lane	**Murphy**	Arthur M Hamilton
	Justine Spitalny	**Naco**	Naco
	Starlight Park	**Phoenix Advantage**	Phoenix Advantage
Cedar	Jeddito	**Phoenix**	Capitol
Chino Valley	Territorial		Marie Bartlett Heard
Creighton	Gateway		Mary McLeod Bethune
	Loma Linda		Thomas A. Edison
Dysart	Dysart	**Pima**	Pima
	Kingswood	**Pinon**	Pinon
	Luke	**Sahuarita**	Sopori
	Surprise	**St. Johns**	Coronado
Fowler	Fowler	**Tombstone**	Huachuca City
	Tuscano		Walter J Meyer
	Western Valley	**Tuba City**	Dzil Libei
Friendly House	Academia del Pueblo		Tsinaabaas Ha'bitiin
Gadsden	Arizona Desert		Tuba City
	Cesar Chavez	**Wellton**	Wellton
	Desert View	**Williams Consort.**	Ash Fork
	Rio Colorodo		Seligman
Harvest Power Community	Harvest Prep Academy		Williams
		Window Rock	Window Rock

A Comparison group of 11 schools from nine districts provided DIBELS data; seven of these districts had other schools participating in Reading First. Because of the crossover impact of AZ Reads and Reading First over the last several years, many of these schools have established upgraded reading programs. Therefore, this is not a 'true' comparison group as elements of the 'Reading First experiment' are known to exist within this cohort of schools.

Table 3-3 lists the Comparison schools that provided data this year, including information about whether these schools were located in LEAs that had Reading First grants at other schools.

Table 3-3
2006-2007 Comparison Group

	LEA	School
1	Alhambra School District	Granada Primary School
2	Canon ESD #50*	Canon School*
3	Dysart Unified School District	El Mirage Elementary
4	Dysart Unified School District	Thompson Ranch Elementary
5	Holbrook Unified *	Indian Wells Elementary*
6	Holbrook Unified*	Park Elementary School*
7	Mesa Public Schools	Longfellow Elementary
8	Murphy Elementary School District	Alfred F. Garcia Elementary
9	Pendergast Elementary Sch District	Desert Horizon
10	Roosevelt School District	M. L. King School
11	Yuma Elementary District	O.C. Johnson Elementary

* Of the 11 schools, only 3 are not in Reading First LEAs

DIBELS Test Administration, Data Collection and Cleaning Methods

DIBELS scores were captured in the DIBELS database maintained by the University of Oregon. The data were farmed/downloaded from the DIBELS website by grade level for each of the groups. The downloaded data included names and IDs for the district, school, student and classroom, as well as demographic information on the student. The individual test scores were also part of the downloaded data-sets. Table 3-4 shows the total number of students in each grade level by group for the 2006-2007 year.

Table 3-4
Number of Students per Group per Grade Level

2006-2007 Groups	Kindergarten	First grade	Second grade	Third grade
Continuing Cohort 1	5709	5810	5559	5441
Expanding Cohort 3	2372	2379	2360	2225
New Cohort 4	3849	4060	3906	3956
Discontinued group	718	730	797	692
Comparison group	1087	1051	984	953

Analysis by Grade Level

DIBELS Measures
The data set, when downloaded, included the raw scores for each of the test measures. Descriptive statistics were reported for all the test measures. These included the number of valid and missing cases, mean, standard deviation, median, quartiles, minimum, and maximum score for each measure.

DIBELS Categories
Once downloaded, the raw score data were then recoded into new variables to reflect the "at risk," "some risk," or "low risk" categories. These categories help to monitor students' progress. The raw scores for each measure have been set into these categories based upon validation and reliability studies performed at the University of Oregon. These categories can help teachers individualize instruction based upon the measure and clustering of students into the categories, basically by setting cut points for grouping the raw scores. These performance scores for each measure change for each testing period (beginning, middle or end of year) as to what scores qualify a student to be in each of the at risk, some risk or low risk categories. For the categories, frequencies and percentages were calculated.

DIBELS Instructional Support Recommendation (ISR)
The ISR is an overall classification of several of the individual measures and shows a student's progress overall in reading achievement. The goal is to be at benchmark, and has become an established reader (which actually means something similar to reading at grade level). Scoring at intensive or strategic defines the amount of work to be achieved, and viewing the individual measures can show the specific skills in which the student needs help.

The ISR for combines category scores (for example, 1 = at risk, 2 = some risk, and 3 = low risk) for each of the appropriate, specified measures for beginning and end of the year. This results in many possible combinations for the beginning and end of the year. Each possible combination is then given a classification rating of intensive, strategic or benchmark.

The ISR classifications are reported along with the numbers of students in each category at the beginning and end of the year, as well as the percent of students. Also shown is the <u>difference</u> between the beginning and end scores.

For the intensive category, it is a positive development that the difference is a negative number meaning that the percentage of students in this category is less at the end of the year than at the beginning of the year; the same would be true for the strategic category. For the benchmark category, large gains are positive, although the hope is always that such a large percent of students would start out in this category (for example, over 90 percent) that the gain to achieve 100 percent at benchmark would actually be small.

DIBELS Adequate Yearly Progress - Effectiveness
Another key concern is the number and percentage of students who continue to gain throughout the year. Adequate yearly progress (AYP) is a measure of the students who were at intensive, strategic or benchmark at the beginning of the year who ended the year in a higher classification (intensive to strategic; or intensive, strategic and benchmark to benchmark).

> *AYP = (percent of intensive students who moved up to strategic) + (percent of intensive students who moved up to benchmark) + (percent of strategic students who moved up to benchmark) + (percent of benchmark students who stayed at benchmark)*

This was calculated in two ways. The first measure was of the percent who moved to benchmark of students from <u>within each</u> ISR category (intensive = 100%, strategic = 100% and benchmark = 100%). It is a measure of the percent of students who were intensive or strategic or benchmark at the beginning of the year that made adequate progress by the end of the year.

The second AYP measure is for the total 100 percent of all the students from across all the ISR categories, what percent achieved AYP (intensive + strategic + benchmark = 100%). It is a measure of the total students (with beginning and end data) who made adequate progress.

Both sets of these data are reported by the categories from which and into which the students moved (e.g. from intensive at beginning to benchmark at end). These percentages were derived by performing a crosstab of the beginning of year ISR variable with the end of year ISR variable and reporting the percentages for the appropriate row or column percent, as well as the total percent.

In addition, for the total group, an Effectiveness Rate was calculated, which was the sum of the percent improvement for each of the four possible improvement groupings.

Limitations

When comparing across groups, a word of caution is advised. These groups were matched based upon school and demographic characteristics. However, there is the possibility of some "spillover" effect of Reading First, especially within those schools in Reading First districts and also from the AZ Reads program. LEAs have been encouraged to share professional development and other activities to improve reading. The 90-minute reading block and use of core curricula have been emphasized for three years now in Arizona.

Further, there is always the test-retest issue that once students take a test, or teachers give a test, there is the possibility of improvement on the post-test just because the student remembers questions/answers, and/or because teachers begin to teach to the test. However, with DIBELS, there might be a little but not much test/retest problem with validity because 1) students do not always take the same measure from one time to the next (for example, ISF drops out, NWF is added in) and 2) the texts for the ORF change over the year. The degree to which teachers teach to the test was a question that was explored in the interviews conducted at the site visit schools and presented in this report. Also, many of these students were now in their second year of Reading First and had developed familiarity with some of the tests as well as with test-taking procedures, factors which have been known to have a positive influence on test scores.

There are also other factors crucial to the examination of differences, which have to do with the size of the sample and population. In this study, both the Reading First schools and the Comparison school groups comprise the entire population (not a sample). Further, with a number over 5,000 for the Reading First populations, there is the greater probability that findings will be significant.

Arizona's Instrument to Measure Standards (AIMS) Test

Overview

For the purpose of this evaluation, the Arizona Instrument to Measure Success (AIMS) assessment was used as an additional measure to examine how well K-3 Arizona students are doing toward meeting the standards for performance in reading.

Changes to the state of Arizona policy by the State Board of Education affected the standardized testing in the state for 2004-2005 and the scoring on the AIMS test was rescaled between 2004 and 2005. The decision was made that there were too many tests, and that standardized testing would be consolidated. Therefore, the AIMS DPA – Dual Purpose Assessment Test – was developed.

For grades 3 - 8, norm-referenced (NRT) scores are taken from the AIMS Dual Purpose Assessment (AIMS DPA). The AIMS DPA provides a norm-referenced test score (NRT) and an AIMS score. The results of the tests are used by classroom teachers to guide instruction and improve student learning. The NRT compares a child's performance on certain test items to the performance of students nationwide by way of a percentile ranking. The AIMS score assesses a child's knowledge of the Arizona State Standards.

The AIMS data were extracted a database provided to APRC by the Office of Research and Evaluation, Arizona Department of Education. All Reading First and state of Arizona analyses were performed using the database provided. The all Arizona students category contains the students in the Reading First and Comparison groups.
Some of the databases provided to APRC contained information on each individual student. APRC signed a confidentiality agreement with ADE to secure these data. Data were extracted for only the reading tests, and then the database was coded to reflect the status of the school according to its cohort or comparison school. For 2007, the 11 new group of comparison schools were used. The data were then analyzed using descriptives and crosstabs to compare the relevant scores across the groups.

The AIMS test is a standards-based test which provides information regarding the progress of Arizona's students toward mastering Arizona's reading, writing, and mathematics standards. It is a criterion-referenced assessment. The AIMS test shows how well students are mastering leaning goals and how they compare with other children statewide.

The test consists of a combination of multiple-choice, short answers, and essay items.
The following content areas are covered in AIMS DPA Reading:

> Excerpts from published literature are the basis for evaluating students' reading skills. As students read fiction and nonfiction passages, interviews, editorials, and articles, they answer questions assessing skills such as reading comprehension, identification of support for main ideas, application of multi-step directions, ability to make and support assertions, and analysis and evaluation of themes. Multiple-choice questions target

specific skills. (*Grades 3-8 Guide to Test Interpretation: Arizona's Instrument to Measure Standards AIMS DPA, spring 2005,* p. 2)

The standards for the third grade AIMS reading test scale scores are given below. They were changed in 2005 when the AIMS test was changed to accommodate the AIMS DPA format. The changes made impact the scale scores by category. For example, the "approaches" category now includes students in the lower 35 percent compared to in 2004 including students in the lower 51 percent. The same is true for students in the "meets" category who can now fall at the 61 percent rank rather than at the 70 percent rank.

Table 3-5
Third Grade AIMS 2003 and 2004 Reading Performance Level Scale Scores

	2003			2004		
	Scale Score	**Raw Score**	**%**	**Scale Score**	**Raw Score**	**%**
Falls Far Behind	300-473	0-23	--	300-473	0-21	--
Approaches	474-499	24-31	56%	474-499	22-29	51%
Meets	500-546	32-39	74%	500-546	30-38	70%
Exceeds	547-700	40-43	93%	547-700	39-43	91%

Table 3-6
Third Grade AIMS 2005 and 2006 Reading Performance Level Scale Scores

	2005			2006		
	Scale Score	**Raw Score**	**%**	**Scale Score**	**Raw Score**	**%**
Falls Far Behind	200-378	0-18	--	300-378	0-19	9%
Approaches	379-430	19-32	35%	379-430	20-33	24%
Meets	431-515	33-48	61%	431-515	34-48	56%
Exceeds	516-640	49-54	91%	516-640	49-54	11%

Table 3-7
Third Grade AIMS 2007 Reading Performance Level Scale Scores

	2007		
	Scale Score	**Raw Score**	**%**
Falls Far Behind	200-378	0-17	7%
Approaches	379-430	18-31	24%
Meets	431-515	32-48	57%
Exceeds	516-640	49-54	12%

When scores are shown for all Arizona schools, the Reading First and Comparison groups were included in the totals. The data were analyzed to look at changes across years in the four categories: "falls far behind," "approaches," "meets standard," and "exceeds standard." Data were further examined to look at differences between years for the same group and differences between groups for the same year.

Table 3-8
Third Grade AIMS Reading Test – Number of Students

3rd Grade	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Cohort 1 Continuing in 2006-07	N=6,430	N=6,476	N=6,469	N=6,449	N=6,063
Added Cohort 2	---	---	N=787	N=652	--
Discontinued from C1 & 2 in 2006-07	---	---	---	---	N=981
Expanding Cohort 3	---	---	---	---	N=2,571
New Cohort 4	---	---	---	---	N=4,273
Comparison Group changed in 2006-07	N=1,486	N=1,367	N=1,362	N=1,192	N=1,071
All Arizona Schools	N=75,540	N=77,014	N=80,181	N=64,925	N=81,895

Implementation Checklists

This section analyzes the data from the fall 2006 implementation checklists. It covers an explanation of the implementation checklist and highlights of the findings. On the implementation checklists, the State Reading Specialists (SRS) provided ratings of each school's level of implementation for 56 items in nine broad categories. Fall 2006 implementation checklists were received for each one of the 85 new Arizona Reading First schools.

Introduction, Development and Methodology of the Checklists

In the 2003-2004 and 2004-2005 school years, the implementation checklist questions and answers were changed several times to more carefully reflect the actual implementation level required by ADE from schools that were part of Reading First. For the 2005-2006 and 2006-2007 school years, the questions and responses remained the same as for the 2004-2005 school year. Data were collected across nine broad categories:

- Leadership
- Assessment
- Intervention strategies
- Instruction

- Communication and collaboration
- Professional development
- Reading coach
- Environment
- District support

In addition to rating each item on a 2 or 4-point scale, the SRS could indicate that one or more items were, "priority recommendation for progress monitoring." In the February 2004 checklist, the rating could be used as often or as seldom as a SRS chose. After the first implementation, however, the checklist directions clarified that no more than five items could be marked as "priority" since more items would be overwhelming for a school to consider.

The implementation checklists were due October 27, 2006 and data were received through the on-line system. Later, the data were downloaded using Excel and finally the tables were created using SPSS. In total, 85 checklists were received from each one of the 85 new Reading First schools. In the spring, 85 checklists were received by the deadline of April 27, 2007.

Surveys of Teachers, Coaches, Principals and District Coordinators

Surveys were administered in the spring of 2007. Complete versions of these survey instruments were used in Cycle 2 schools and a survey of each Cycle 2 school's district coordinator was included. The surveys were designed to gather information on school and classroom practices, perceptions of Reading First, and its impact during the 2006-2007 year of implementation. These surveys included:

- Principal survey (55 items)
- Reading coach survey (114 items)
- District coordinator survey (29 items)
- Teacher survey for staff who taught K-3 reading during the past year (not including aides or student teachers) (100 items)

In Cycle 1 schools which received less funding and fewer resources from the state, teachers, coaches and principals participated in shortened surveys which focused on issues key to sustainability. District coordinators in Cycle 1 schools were not surveyed. Cycle 1 surveys included:

- Principal survey (20 items)
- Reading coach survey (37 items)
- Teacher survey for staff who taught K-3 reading during the past year (not including aides or student teachers) (30 items)

To design the 2007 surveys, evaluators reviewed survey items from the previous year, items from other states evaluated by NWREL, and research related to Reading First. Evaluators made major changes to the previous Arizona surveys based on this review process as well as their 2006 analysis experience and an increased understanding of the Reading First program and vision. The final surveys contained close-ended questions about areas related to grant implementation

such as assessments, use of the core program, student grouping, collaboration, professional development, interventions and beliefs and attitudes about Reading First.

All surveys were mailed to the reading coach at each school with explicit instructions for administration. To improve response rates, coaches were encouraged to set aside time for survey completion at a staff meeting or other already reserved time. Survey instructions encouraged respondents to be candid and honest in their answers and assured respondents' anonymity. To further encourage honest responses, each respondent was given a confidentiality envelope to seal before returning the survey. Completed surveys were collected by the reading coach, who mailed them back to NWREL within a specified timeframe. E-mail and telephone reminders were made to encourage schools to respond and surveys were accepted up until June 1.

In Cycle 1 schools, NWREL received surveys from 59 of the 62 schools; a 95 percent response rate. These included surveys from 1,070 of approximately 1,180 teachers, 59 coaches, and 59 principals. Two schools (Ed and Verna Pastor and Round Rock) did not return any surveys, and one school (Sierra Vista) returned surveys too late after the deadline to be included. In addition, 5 of 11 discontinued schools (45%) returned surveys, including 5 principals, 5 coaches, and 75 teachers.

In Cycle 2 schools, NWREL received surveys from teachers, coaches and principals, in 81 of 85 schools; a 95 percent response rate. Three schools (Avalon, Bethune, and Desert View) did not return principal surveys, and two schools (Desert View and Pinon) did not return coach surveys. In all, 82 principals, 83 coaches, and 1325 of approximately 1,456 teachers from all 85 schools participated. In addition, all 42 district coordinators completed district surveys.

Baseline Surveys of Teachers, Coaches and Principals

In addition to the longer surveys for Cycle 2 and the shorter surveys for Cycle 1, this evaluation draws on data from baseline surveys of Cycle 2 school staff. These surveys focused on determining how school staff was providing reading instruction prior to receiving their Reading First grants and what professional development they might need to successfully implement Reading First successfully. These surveys included:

- Principal survey (64 items)
- Reading coach survey (47 items)
- Teacher survey for staff who taught K-3 reading during the past year (not including aides or student teachers) (57 items)

All surveys were administered by trained evaluators on the first morning of each institute or meeting: the May 3rd LEA coordinator meeting; the June Desert Canyon Institute for principals; and a series of Summer Institutes for teachers and coaches. Principals and LEA coordinators who did not respond at these meetings were contacted and asked to fax back a copy of their survey.

Response rates from the 85 schools in 42 LEAs were as follows:
- 33 LEA surveys representing 29 out of 31 new LEAs and two out of 11 continuing LEAs
- 78 out of 85 principals surveys
- 88 coach surveys from approximately 75 schools (13 schools returned surveys from multiple coaches; it is likely that some of these second coaches were in a coaching position outside of Reading First)
- 1,234 teacher surveys from 85 schools

The baseline surveys are discussed in more detail in the Baseline Report 2006.

Site Visits to Selected Cycle 2 Schools 2007

Twenty-nine Arizona Reading First Cycle 2 schools in 26 LEA's were visited in the spring of 2007. A stratified random sampling was used to select schools within regions, with minor modifications to roughly balance the number of Cohort 3 and Cohort 4 schools. Nine schools were from Cohort 3, and 20 were from Cohort 4. Table 3-9 lists the schools visited.

Table 3-9
Location of Site Visits 2007

School	District
Desert Valley	Bullhead City
Mountain View	Bullhead City
Mary C Obrien	Mary C Obrien
Coyote Ridge	Glendale
Palm Lane	Cartwright
Sopori	Sahuarita
Williams	Williams
Harvest Preparatory Academy	Yuma
Cesar Chavez	Yuma
Territorial	Chino Valley
Gateway	Creighton
Desert Mesa	Yuma
Fowler	Fowler
Knox	Crane
Kingswood	Dysart
Curiel	Mary C. O'Brien Accommodation
Cottonwood	Casa Grande
Huachuca City	Tombstone
Ocotilla	Washington
Jeddito	Cedar
Alta E. Buttler	Issac
Heard	Phoenix
Eliseo Felix	Avondale
Tsinaabaas Habitiin	Tuba City
Oyama	Tucson
Ocotillo	Sunnyside
Bethune	Phoenix
Carol G. Peck	Alhambra
Brunson-Lee	Balsz

The structure of the visits was similar to that used in 2006, although site visit protocols were somewhat revised for 2007 to reflect program changes and data collection needs. A team of evaluators shared in the work of the site visit; each school was usually visited by a single evaluator. In order to ensure common understandings of the instruments and to enhance reliability, a two-day training for all site visitors took place 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 interviews with the principal, reading coach, and a focus group comprised of K-3 teachers, observations of three reading classrooms followed by an observation of an intervention. Each of these activities is described in greater detail below.

Interviews

Interviews with the principal and coach covered a similar range of topics: the role of each, professional development and technical assistance offered by the state and others, collaboration with colleagues, and the year's greatest challenges and successes. Principals were asked additional questions about monitoring and observing teachers and district support. Coaches were asked additional questions about data and assessment, instruction and interventions, and assistance to English language learners.

Interview questions were deliberately open-ended which 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 allowed a range of different responses.

Interviews were not taped; instead, extensive notes were recorded and then summarized for each school. Consequently, the quotes provided in this report are not verbatim, but do represent as closely as possible the actual wording of the respondents. To protect the confidentiality of participants, names of individual participants and individual schools are not included in the report. Only NWREL and APRC staff have access to the raw data.

Focus Groups

In order to obtain the perspectives of teachers at Reading First schools, focus groups were held with K-3 teachers, who were randomly selected to participate. Evaluators facilitated discussions of the impact of the reading first grant on their school, and obtained perspectives on these issues: expectations, working with the coach, fidelity to the program, instruction and interventions, and the year's greatest challenges and successes.

Like the interviews, focus groups were not taped; instead, extensive notes were recorded and then summarized for each focus group. To protect the confidentiality of participants, names of individual teachers and individual schools are not included in the report, and only NWREL and APRC staff have access to the raw data.

Classroom Observations

In most Reading First schools, reading instruction occurred in grades K-3 during a 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 would be observed at each grade 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 in 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). To protect the confidentiality of participants, teachers' names, students' names, and individual school names are not included in the report. Only NWREL and APRC staff have access to the raw data.

In total, site visitors conducted 86 classroom observations, spread fairly evenly across grades: kindergarten (24%), first grade (26%), second grade (24%), and third grade (26%). The average observation was 21 minutes in length.

During the observations, the evaluators focused on the work of the teacher and, to a lesser degree, 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 the 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 level of student engagement, and the level of appropriate monitoring and feedback.

Intervention Observations

Site visitors, who conducted interviews, asked to observe 20 minutes of an intervention during their school visit. If the observation was in a room with more than one adult providing interventions, the site visitor selected one adult to observe for the entire observation. They recorded information about the number of students and adults, time of the observations, and materials used, and took detailed notes documenting what happened. Clarifying questions were addressed to the intervention provider, as were two short questions about how that provider had been trained and whether s/he desired additional training.

In total, intervention observations were conducted in 22 of the 29 schools (76%); in the remaining schools evaluators were told interventions were not yet being implemented. While it is

important to note that this comparatively small sample of intervention observations is too small to claim representativeness, it is useful in its corroboration of other data.

Observed interventions served students in the following grades, some serving students from more than one grade at a time: kindergarten (14%), first grade (18%), second grade (36%), and third grade (32%). Most interventions served intensive students (86%). Some also served only strategic (9%) and/or only benchmark (9%). The average intervention observation was 20 minutes in length.

LEA Interview in Cycle 1 Districts

Ten LEAs in Cycle 1 districts did not also have Cycle 2 schools; all ten of these LEA coordinators were interviewed. Interviews focused on professional development; technical assistance; guidance, funding, and training from the state; collaboration; the core program; DIBELS; and interventions for struggling students.

Interviews were conducted by phone in April and May of 2007. Evaluators took extensive notes, which they then summarized for each interview. To protect the confidentiality of participants, district names are not included in the report, and no individuals other than NWREL and APRC staff have access to raw interview data.

Survey and Focus Group of State Reading Specialists

APRC evaluators conducted a focus group and distributed a survey on March 29, 2007 to the Arizona Reading First State Reading Specialists (SRS). This year the eighteen SRS were divided equally into two groups to foster discussion from all participants. Groups were determined by including approximately half of the continuing and new specialists into each group, and further stratifying the groups as to their rural or urban school setting. One APRC evaluator facilitated each group and a second evaluator took notes for each group. Additionally, four SRS members who were not present filled out surveys via email. Comments were also compiled from these surveys and used where appropriate in the text.

Like the previous years, participants discussed their roles and responsibilities, successes, and challenges. This year's protocol replaced the issue of sustainability with the area of training and preparation and identification of school personnel specialists' work with on campus. Specialists are each assigned to 3-5 schools and for the survey response they were asked to categorize their experiences into an 'average' or 'usual' response for their schools.

CHAPTER IV
STUDENT ASSESSMENTS I: DIBELS TEST SCORES

CHAPTER IV
STUDENT ASSESSMENTS I: DIBELS TEST SCORES

Highlights

Kindergarten

- Overall, all cohorts showed an increase of percentage of students in the benchmark category at the end of the year compared to the beginning of the year. Across all cohorts, approximately two-thirds of kindergarten students ended the year in the benchmark category.
- Overall, all cohorts showed a decrease in students in the intensive and strategic categories at the end of the year compared to the beginning of the year.
- For the Continuing schools, there was a positive gain of 75 percent of student moving to benchmark status at the end of the year. The Continuing schools had the highest percentage with 88 percent of students at benchmark.

First Grade

- Unlike other grade levels, first grade students showed academic losses over the year based on Instructional Support Recommendation (ISR) classifications.
- Overall, at least half of the students across all cohorts were at benchmark at the end of the year.
- The Continuing schools showed the highest percentage of students at benchmark at the end of the year with 66 percent.

Second Grade

- Overall, all cohorts showed an increase of students in the benchmark category at the end of the year.
- At the end of the year, at last half of the students across all cohorts remained at benchmark.
- The Continuing schools had the highest percentage of students at benchmark with 59 percent of students at benchmark at the end of the year.
- Across all cohorts, there was a decrease in the percentage of students in intensive at the end of the year.

Third Grade

- Overall, all cohorts showed an increase of students in the benchmark category at the end of the year.
- The Reading First students who had been in the program for four years had a higher percentage of students in the benchmark category and less students in the strategic and intensive category at both the beginning and the end of the year compared to the overall Continuing students group (and all other groups).

- For students who had been in the Reading First program for four years, 62 percent ended the year in the benchmark category.
- The Continuing schools as an entire group had 56 percent of students at benchmark at the end of the year.
- Across all cohorts, there was a decrease in the percentage of students in the intensive category at the end of the year.

School Groups Background Information

This chapter focuses on an analysis of DIBELS scores that includes comparisons of several groups by grade level. Specifically, it discusses the Instructional Support Recommendation (ISR) categories across kindergarten, first, second and third grades for the following groups:

- New Cohort 4: New LEAs with new schools that are receiving Reading First funds for the first time in 2006-2007.
- Expanding Cohort 3: Expanding LEAs with new schools to Reading First, however, the schools are part of districts in which other schools have been using Reading First in past years.
- Combined: All Cycle 2 new schools in 2006-2007 for both Cohort 3 and Cohort 4.
- Continuing Cohort 1: Cycle 1 schools from either Cohort 1 or Cohort 2 that have received Reading First funding over the past years and are continuing to receive supporting funds.
- Discontinued: Cycle 1 schools from either Cohort 1 or Cohort 2 that were part of past years, however, they no longer receive Reading First monies but provided their data for 2006-2007.
- Comparison: Schools that make use of pre and post test DIBELS, however, they do not use/are not funded by the Reading First program. Note that out of the 11 schools in the Comparison group; only 3 of the schools were not in Reading First districts. Thus, many of these principals and teachers have been exposed to Reading First activities and may also be participating in district-wide AZ Reads trainings.

The End of the Year DIBELS Report discussed the specific data for Adequate Yearly Progress Effectiveness Rates, ISR category differences, school data by ISR category, and rankings by differences and effectiveness. Only some of those data are repeated in this report.

DIBELS Instructional Support Recommendation (ISR)

The ISR for kindergarten combines category scores (for example, 1 = at risk, 2 = some risk, and 3 = low risk) for each of the appropriate measures (ISF and LNF for beginning of year, and LNF, PSF and NWF for end of year). This results in nine possible combinations for the beginning of the year and 27 possible combinations for the end of the year. Each possible combination is then given a classification rating of intensive, strategic or benchmark. To illustrate, one possible end of year combination for an individual student would be the following: LNF = low risk, and PSF = some risk, and NWF = low risk, then the ISR = benchmark.

Kindergarten

The data in Table 4-1 show the ISR classifications and the numbers and percentage of students in each category at the beginning and end of the year. Students' results are shown in six groups: New (Cohort 4), Expanding (Cohort 3), Combined (Cohorts 3 and 4), Continuing (Cohort 1), Discontinued (Cohort 13), and Comparison.

Benchmark
- Across all cohorts, approximately two-thirds of kindergarten students ended the year in the benchmark category.
- The Continuing schools had the highest percentage with 88 percent of students at benchmark.
- The New and Expanding Cohorts' schools showed a positive gain of 55 percent of students moving to benchmark status at the end of the year.

Strategic
- All five cohorts showed a decrease in the percentage of students at strategic, with only 13 to 18 percent of students in the strategic category at the end of the year

Intensive
- There was a decrease in the percentage of students in intensive at the end of the year across all cohorts.
- The Continuing schools showed the smallest percentage of students in intensive with 6 percent, followed by the New schools with 14 percent, the Combined and Expanding groups with 15 percent, Discontinued with 16 percent, and the Comparison group with 17 percent.

Table 4-1
Kindergarten Instructional Support Recommendation
Beginning and End of Year Percentages

Group	Kindergarten Instructional Support Recommendation Beginning of Year			Kindergarten Instructional Support Recommendation End of Year		
	Intensive %	Strategic %	Benchmark %	Intensive %	Strategic %	Benchmark %
Combined New-Exp	52	35	13	15	17	68
New	52	35	13	14	17	68
Expanding	53	36	11	15	18	67
Continuing	52	35	6	6	13	88
Discontinued	50	36	13	16	13	71
Comparison	57	34	9	17	18	65
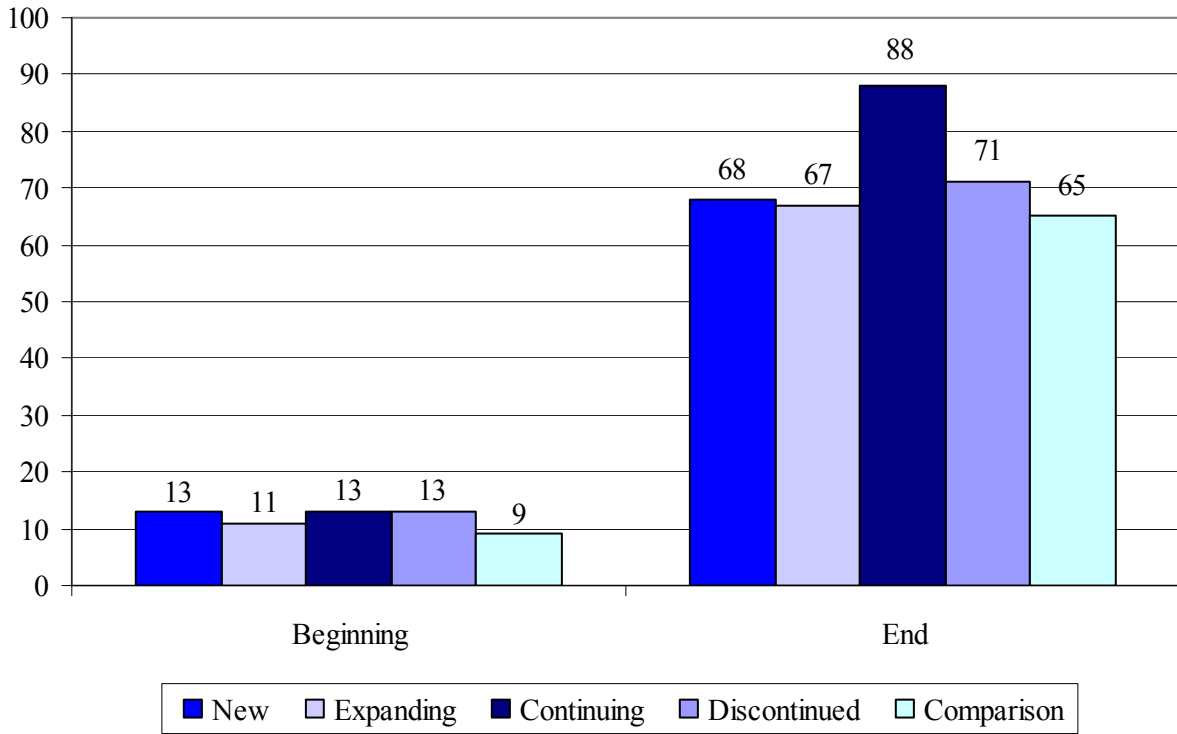
Figure 4-1
Kindergarten Instructional Support Recommendation – Benchmark

First Grade

Table 4-2 shows the ISR classifications and the percentage of first grade students in each category at the beginning and end of the year. Unlike other grade levels, first grade students showed academic losses over the year based on this analysis of ISR classifications. Students in the various groups are shown.

Benchmark
- The New (44%) and Expanding (51%) schools had approximately half of students at benchmark at the end of the year.
- The New and Expanding schools had a difference of -3 percent at benchmark from the beginning to the end of the year, while the Continuing and the Comparison group had a decline of 7 percent of students at benchmark.
- The Discontinued schools had the greatest decline of 23 percentage points to 59 percent from 82 percent of these students having started the year in the benchmark category.

Strategic
- The schools in all groups ended the year with about one-fourth of students in the strategic category, except for the Continuing schools that ended the year with about one-fifth of students in this category.

Intensive
- Across all cohorts there was a slight increase in the percentage of students in intensive from the beginning to the end of the year.
- The New and Expanding schools together ended the year with about one-fourth of students in the intensive category; when separated, the new schools had 30 percent and the Expanding group had 23 percent at intensive.

Table 4-2
First Grade Instructional Support Recommendation
Beginning and End of Year Percentages

Group	First Grade Instructional Support Recommendation Beginning of Year			First Grade Instructional Support Recommendation End of Year		
	Intensive %	Strategic %	Benchmark %	Intensive %	Strategic %	Benchmark %
Combined New-Exp	23	27	50	27	26	47
New	25	27	47	30	26	44
Expanding	20	26	54	23	26	51
Continuing	10	17	73	13	21	66
Discontinued	0	18	82	17	24	59
Comparison	20	25	55	27	25	48
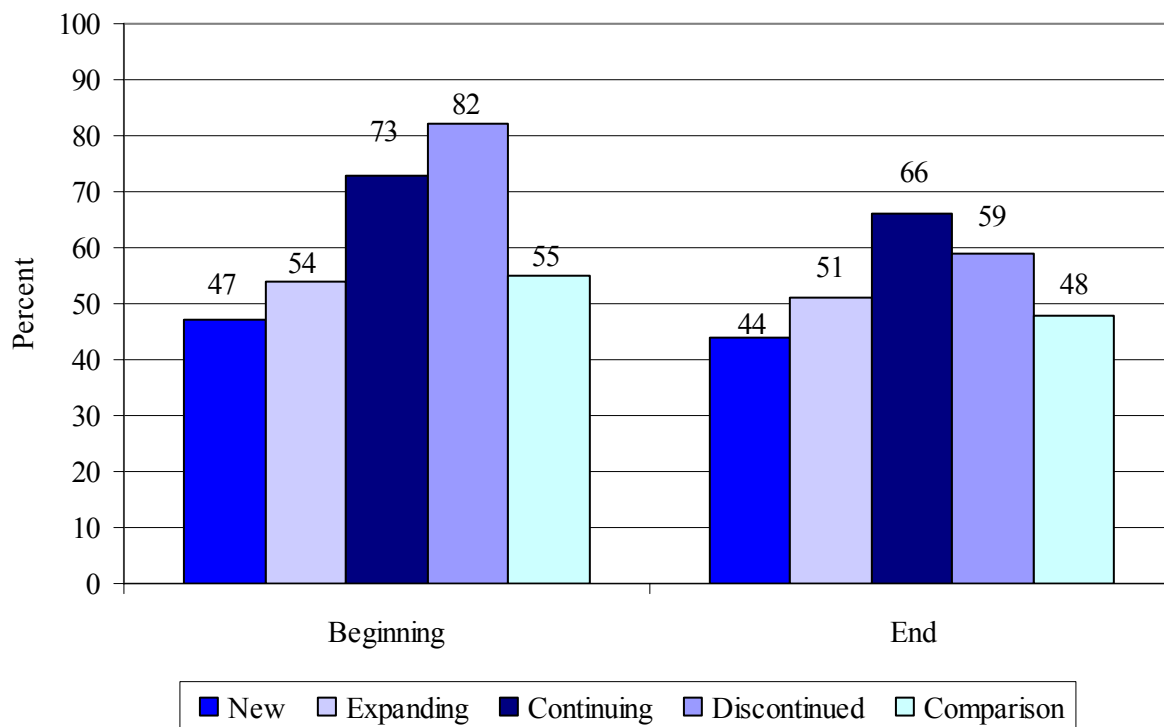
Figure 4-2
First Grade Instructional Support Recommendation - Benchmark

Second Grade

Table 4-4 illustrates the ISR classifications and the percentage of second grade students in each category at the beginning and end of the year. As in all grades except first, all cohorts increased the percentages of second grade students at benchmark; however, not all cohorts decreased the percentages of students in intensive.

Benchmark
- Across all cohorts, there was a positive gain of percentage of students at benchmark at the end of the year.
- The New and Expanding schools, as well as Discontinued and Comparison schools, had less than half of students at benchmark at the end of the year, while Continuing schools had more than half of students at benchmark.

Strategic
- There was a decrease in the percentage of students in the strategic category at the end of the year across all cohorts.
- The Continuing schools showed the largest decrease with 12 percent of students moving out of the strategic category by the end of the year.

Intensive
- The New schools showed a decrease in the percentage of students in intensive at the end of the year with 2 percent of students moving out of the intensive category.
- All other cohorts showed either no change at all or just a few percent (3 to 7) of students moving into the intensive category from the beginning to the end of the year.

Table 4-3
Second Grade Instructional Support Recommendation
Beginning and End of Year Percentages

Group	Second Grade Instructional Support Recommendation Beginning of Year			Second Grade Instructional Support Recommendation End of Year		
	Intensive %	Strategic %	Benchmark %	Intensive %	Strategic %	Benchmark %
Combined New-Exp	38	27	35	38	21	41
New	41	27	33	39	22	40
Expanding	34	28	38	37	19	44
Continuing	26	28	46	26	16	58
Discontinued	28	29	42	35	21	44
Comparison	37	28	35	40	19	41
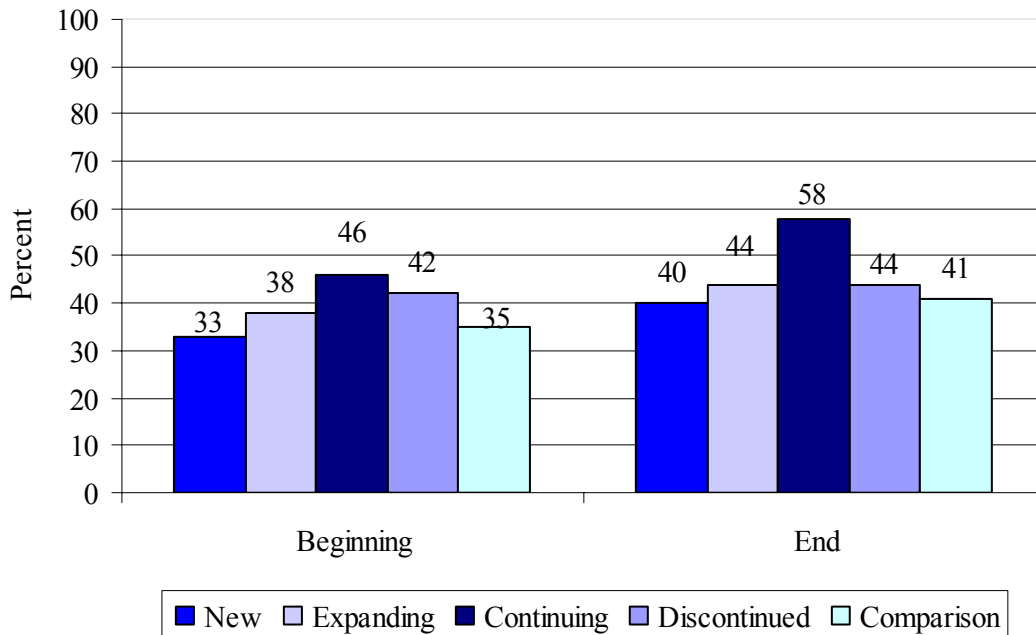
Figure 4-3
Second Grade Instructional Recommendation – Benchmark

Third Grade

Table 4-4 shows the ISR classifications and the percentage of third grade students in each category at the beginning and end of the year. As in kindergarten, all cohorts increased the percentage of third students at benchmark and decreased the percentage of third students in intensive.

Benchmark
- Each cohort showed an increase in the percentage of students in benchmark at the end of the year compared to the beginning of the year; the New group increased by 4 percent and the Expanding group by 8 percent.
- The Continuing schools had 56 percent of students in the benchmark category, an increase of 15 percentage points from the beginning of the year.

Strategic
- The Continuing schools ended the year with the smallest percentage of students in the strategic category (25%).
- All other cohorts increased the percentage of students in the strategic category at the end of the year compared to the beginning.
- Across all cohorts, about one third of students remained in strategic at the end of the year.

Intensive
- Each cohort showed a decrease in the percentage of students in the intensive category at the end of the year compared to the beginning of the year in the range of 10 to 12 percent.
- The Continuing schools had the smallest percentage of students at intensive with only 19 percent of students in intensive at the end of the year.

Table 4-4
Third Grade Instructional Support Recommendation
Beginning and End of Year Percentages

Group	Third Grade Instructional Support Recommendation Beginning of Year			Third Grade Instructional Support Recommendation End of Year		
	Intensive %	Strategic %	Benchmark %	Intensive %	Strategic %	Benchmark %
Combined New-Exp	42	27	31	31	34	35
New	43	28	29	32	35	33
Expanding	40	27	33	28	32	41
Continuing	30	29	41	19	25	56
Discontinued	35	28	37	24	33	43
Comparison	38	26	36	28	35	37

Four-Year Subset: Reading First Students Beginning Kindergarten in 2003-2004 Ending Third Grade in 2006-2007

This group of students had been continuously enrolled in the Reading First program for four years. They began in kindergarten in 2003-2004, attended first grade in 2004-2005, were in second grade in 2005-2006 and completed third grade in 2006-2007. These students were matched from the beginning to the end of each year (continuous enrollment each year) and then across years. The group of schools shown in this analysis includes only the Cohort 1 schools' students who began in 2003-2004; no schools from the Cohort 2 group are included.

- The Reading First students who had been in the program for four years had a higher percentage of students in the benchmark category and fewer students in the strategic and intensive category at both the beginning and the end of the year compared to the overall Continuing students group (and all other groups).
- For students who had been in the Reading First program for four years, 62 percent ended their third grade year in the benchmark category. This compares to 56 percent of students in the benchmark category for the Continuing schools group as a whole.
- Only 14 percent of Four-Year students ended third grade in the intensive category compared to 19 percent for the entire Continuing group.

Table 4-5
Four-Year Students in Reading First
Third Grade Instructional Support Recommendation
Beginning and End of Year Percentages

Group	Third Grade Instructional Support Recommendation Beginning of Year			Third Grade Instructional Support Recommendation End of Year		
	Intensive %	Strategic %	Benchmark %	Intensive %	Strategic %	Benchmark %
Cohort 1 Four-Year Subset N = 2,261	23	28	49	14	24	62
Continuing Cohort 1 – all students N = 5,441	30	29	41	19	25	56
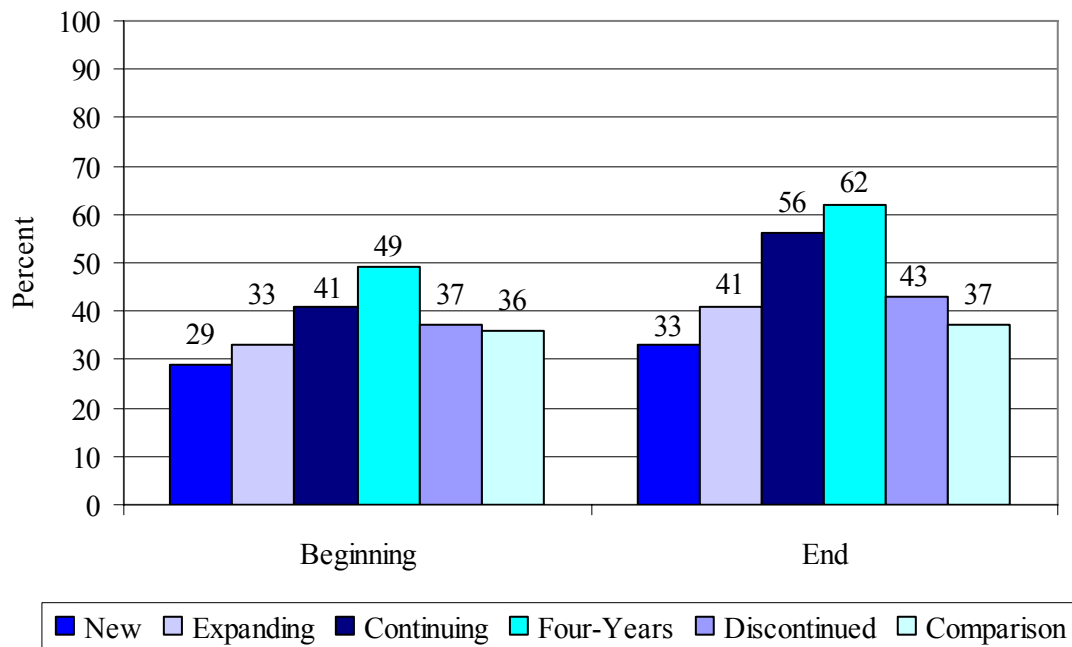
Figure 4-4
Third Grade Instructional Support Recommendation - Benchmark

DIBELS Adequate Yearly Progress - Effectiveness

Adequate yearly progress (AYP) is a measure of the students who were at intensive, strategic or benchmark at the beginning of the year who ended the year in a higher classification (intensive to strategic; or intensive, strategic and benchmark to benchmark).

> *AYP = (percent of intensive students who moved up to strategic) + (percent of intensive students who moved up to benchmark) + (percent of strategic students who moved up to benchmark) + (percent of benchmark students who stayed at benchmark)*

The AYP measure presented here is for the total 100 percent of all the students from across all the ISR categories, what percent achieved AYP (intensive + strategic + benchmark = 100%). It is a measure of the total students (with beginning and end data) who made adequate progress. In addition, for the total group, an Effectiveness Rate was calculated, which was the sum of the percent improvement for each of the four possible improvement groupings.

Kindergarten

Because students make the greatest gains in reading learning at the kindergarten level (they start at very low levels), the effectiveness ratings for the groups were all above 75 percent.
- The overall effectiveness for the New schools was 80 percent, which represents the total percentage of students who moved in a positive direction.
- Of the New school group, 12 percent of students remained at benchmark from the beginning to the end of the year, 26 percent moved from strategic and 30 moved from intensive to benchmark, and 12 percent moved from intensive to strategic.
- The Continuing schools showed the highest overall effectiveness rate which was 93 percent. Of the Continuing schools group, 13 percent of students remained at benchmark from the beginning to the end of the year, 32 percent moved from strategic and 43 moved from intensive to benchmark, and 5 percent moved from intensive to strategic.

Table 4-6
Percentage of Total Kindergarten Students Making Adequate Progress
Of the total students (with beginning and end data),   made adequate progress.

Kindergarten		Intensive Beginning		Strategic Beginning	Benchmark Beginning
Group	Eff. Rate	End Strategic	End Benchmark	End Benchmark	End Benchmark
New	80	12	30	26	12
Expanding	79	12	30	27	10
Continuing	93	5	43	32	13
Discontinued	79	8	31	27	13
Comparison	77	12	32	25	8

First Grade

Effectiveness rates show that low percentages of students actually moved up a category at the first grade level. Further, there was difficulty in keeping the benchmark students at benchmark status.

- The New and Expanding Cohorts had effectiveness rates of 50 and 56 percent respectively.
- At first grade, the Continuing schools had the highest overall effectiveness rate at 70 percent.
- The Discontinued schools had the second highest effectiveness rate at 51 percent.
- For both the Continuing and Discontinued schools groups (the schools with several years of Reading First instruction), 58 percent of benchmark students remained at benchmark from the beginning to the end of the year.

Table 4-7
Percentage of Total First Grade Students Making Adequate Progress
Of the total students (with beginning and end data), ___ made adequate progress.

First Grade		Intensive Beginning		Strategic Beginning	Benchmark Beginning
Group	Eff. Rate	End Strategic	End Benchmark	End Benchmark	End Benchmark
New	50	6	3	9	32
Expanding	56	5	2	9	40
Continuing	70	3	2	7	58
Discontinued	63	0	0	5	58
Comparison	51	3	2	8	38

Second Grade

The pattern established in first grade continued into second grade (and third as well.) Effectiveness rates show that low percentages of students actually moved up a category at the first grade level. Further, there was difficulty in keeping the benchmark students at benchmark status.

- The Continuing schools had the highest overall effectiveness rate at 62 percent; 43 percent of benchmark students remained at benchmark from the beginning to the end of the year.
- The other cohorts showed very similar effectiveness rates – none of which was above 50 percent: the New at 46 percent, Expanding at 48 percent, Discontinued group at 48 percent, and the Comparison group at 45 percent.

Table 4-8
Percentage of Total Second Grade Students Making Adequate Progress
Of the total students (with beginning and end data), ___ made adequate progress.

Second Grade		Intensive Beginning		Strategic Beginning	Benchmark Beginning
Group	**Eff. Rate**	**End Strategic**	**End Benchmark**	**End Benchmark**	**End Benchmark**
New	46	6	2	9	29
Expanding	48	4	1	9	34
Continuing	62	4	2	13	43
Discontinued	48	4	1	9	34
Comparison	45	4	2	9	30

Third Grade

Again, there was the pattern of low percentages of students moving up a category. For all cohorts, effectiveness rates were slightly higher for third grade than for second grade. However, there ratings remained below those for kindergarten and first grade.

- The Continuing schools had the highest overall effectiveness rate at 65 percent; 38 percent of benchmark students remained at benchmark from the beginning to the end of the year.
- The Discontinued schools had the second highest effectiveness rate at 56 percent, with 32 percent of benchmark students remaining at benchmark from the beginning to the end of the year.
- The Expanding Cohort had an effectiveness rate of 53 percent with 30 percent of students remaining at benchmark.
- The New Cohort had an effectiveness rate of 45 percent with 24 percent of students remaining at benchmark.

Table 4-9
Percentage of Total Third Grade Students Making Adequate Progress
Of the total students (with beginning and end data), ___ made adequate progress.

Third Grade		Intensive Beginning		Strategic Beginning	Benchmark Beginning
Group	**Eff. Rate**	**End Strategic**	**End Benchmark**	**End Benchmark**	**End Benchmark**
New	45	12	1	8	24
Expanding	53	12	1	10	30
Continuing	65	9	3	15	38
Discontinued	56	12	1	11	32
Comparison	49	11	1	7	30

CHAPTER V
STUDENT ASSESSMENTS II:
AIMS READING RESULTS

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AIMS READING RESULTS

Highlights

- In 2007, across all Reading First Cohorts, at least half of the total number of students passed AIMS. Cohort 1, the Continuing Cohort, had the highest percentage of students passing AIMS compared to other Reading First cohorts.

- For Cohort 1 and 3, which had more than one year of AIMS data, the percentage of students passing AIMS increased from the beginning of Reading First to the current year, 2007; nine percentage points for Cohort 1 and five for Cohort 3.

- All Reading First cohorts, however, had smaller percentages of students passing the 2007 AIMS compared to Arizona as a whole. Still, it is important to remember that low reading achievement was a specific requirement for a Reading First grant.

- Continuous enrollment in the Reading First K-3 program for four years improves the likelihood of students passing AIMS at a rate similar to all Arizona students. Almost the same percentage of four-year Reading First students (67%) passed the third grade AIMS reading test as did all Arizona students (69%).

- Of all third grade students in Reading First at the end of the year who took the AIMS test, there was a significant difference (p< .01) between those students who had been enrolled in Reading First continuously for four-years (67% pass) compared to students who had not been continuously enrolled (53% pass).

- A larger percentage (67%) of students with four years of Reading First instruction passed the AIMS third grade reading test than the all-inclusive group of third grade students with one to four years of Reading First instruction (59%).

AIMS: Third Grade Reading Assessment Overview

This section presents the results from the third grade reading test of *Arizona's Instrument to Measure Standards* (AIMS). All Reading First and state of Arizona analyses were performed using the databases provided. The "All Arizona students" category contains the students in all of the Reading First Cohort groups and Comparison group (see Chapter III, Methodology for more detail).

AIMS assesses a child's knowledge of the Arizona State Standards. The test focuses on reading comprehension, and is not timed. Each student receives a raw score that is then designated into one of the following categories.

Exceeds the Standard – Students who score in this level illustrate a superior academic performance as evidenced by achievement that is substantially beyond the goal for all students. Students who perform at this level demonstrate the ability to determine the meaning of words and phrases using context clues, use reading comprehension strategies to draw conclusions and analyze literary elements, and evaluate informational text to determine fact from opinion.

Meets the Standard – Students who score in this level demonstrate a solid academic performance on subject matter as reflected by the reading standard. Students who perform at this level are able to identify character traits, setting, and the sequence of events. In addition to noting the topic sentence in a paragraph, they are able to identify the main idea and supporting details in informational text.

Approaches the Standard – Students who score in this level show partial understanding of the knowledge and application of the skills that are fundamental for proficient work. Students who perform at this level show some understanding of decoding skills, using pictures and information from the text to determine the meaning of simple words. They are able to identify images which appeal to the senses and repetition that is utilized in poetry. Some gaps in knowledge and skills are evident and may require additional instruction and remediation in order to achieve a satisfactory level of understanding.

Falls Far Below the Standard – Students who score in this level may have significant gaps and limited knowledge and skills that are necessary to satisfactorily meet the state's reading standard. Students will usually require a considerable amount of additional instruction and remediation in order to achieve a satisfactory level of understanding. (*Overview of Arizona's assessment program*.)

The goal is to have each student "exceed" or "meet" the standards, and thus pass the test. Students who "fall far below" are doing poorly compared to those in all other categories; students who "approach" the standard are just short of meeting the standards. Students in the four categories together total the population for that group.

All Reading First Groups

Students are first required to take the AIMS test at the end of third grade. The third grade AIMS reading score is an important outcome measure for the evaluation of Reading First, as it answers the question of the degree to which all students are reading proficiently by the end of third grade. Students who meet or exceed the standards are considered to have passed the test; those who are approaching the standard or fall far below, failed the test. The category scores for all Arizona students are presented as comparisons; the Arizona data include the scores of all the other groups shown. All of these groups' results are shown, with the data in Table 5.1 representing the four AIMS categories and Table 5.2 showing the collapsed data as to pass or fail. Figure 5.1 shows the percentage of students passing in each of the cohort groups.

- All Reading First cohorts have smaller percentages of students passing AIMS compared to Arizona schools as a whole; however, Reading First schools were specifically given grants due to an identified need to improve reading achievement."

- Across all Reading First cohorts, at least one half of the students meet or exceed the standard and thus passed the AIMS third grade reading test.
- Approximately one-third of the students in each cohort were approaching the standard.
- Of the Reading First groups, the Continuing schools had the highest percentage of students who passed the AIMS test (59%) as well as the highest percentages on the individual categories of meet (53%) and exceed (6%). This Continuing cohort includes schools that started both as Cohort 1 and/or as Cohort 2 schools.

Table 5-1
AIMS 2007 Third Grade Reading Performance Category

	Number of Students	Falls Far Behind%	Approaches %	Meets %	Exceeds %
New - Cohort 4	4,273	12	36	48	4
Expanding - Cohort 3	2,571	11	32	52	5
Combined – New & Exp	6,844	12	35	49	5
Continuing - Cohort 1*	6,063	9	32	53	6
Discontinued - Cohort 13	981	11	37	48	4
Comparison	1,071	11	31	53	5
All AZ schools	81,895	7	24	57	12

*Continuing includes schools that were both Cohort 1 and Cohort 2

Table 5-2
AIMS 2007 Third Grade Reading Percentage Pass or Fail

	Fail %	Pass %
New - Cohort 4	48	52
Expanding - Cohort 3	43	57
Combined- New & Exp	47	54
Continuing - Cohort 1*	41	59
Discontinued - Cohort 13	48	52
Comparison	42	58
All AZ Schools	31	69

*Continuing includes schools that were both Cohort 1 and Cohort 2
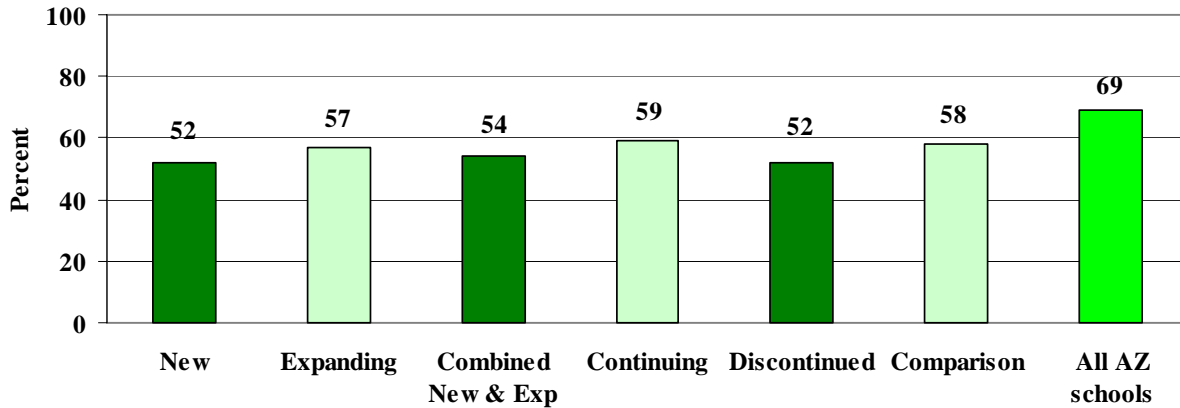
*Continuing includes schools that were both Cohort 1 and Cohort 2

Figure 5-1
AIMS 2007 Third Grade Reading Percentage Passing (Meets or Exceeds)

AIMS Historical Data for Cohort 3 and Cohort 1

Expanding school students (Cohort 3) had one year of Reading First instruction by the end of third grade in 2007. The Reading First AIMS database for 2006 included data for these Expanding schools because they were in the same LEAs as the Continuing (Cohort 1) schools; thus it was possible to analyze the Expanding group scores by matching students from the 2006 year for comparison purposes as baseline data.

- Overall, 5 percent more Expanding school students passed AIMS third grade reading in 2006 than in 2007, as seen by the increase to 52 percent of students meeting the standard from 47 percent the year before.
- Over the last two years, the same percentage of Expanding (Cohort 3) students scored in the approaches (32%) and exceeds (5%) categories.

Table 5-3
AIMS Third Grade Reading Performance Category: Cohort 3 Historical

Expanding Cohort 3	Number of Students	Falls Far Behind%	Approaches %	Meets %	Exceeds %
2006*	2,670	16	32	47	5
2007	2,571	11	32	52	5

*baseline, prior to Reading First

The Cohort 1 schools have participated in Reading First for four years, with every new year having a different group of third grade students each and the possibility that students who continue have more years of exposure to Reading First. The group of schools shown in this analysis includes only the Cohort 1 schools' students who began in 2003-2004; no schools from the Cohort 2 group are included.

As shown by the data in Table 5-4, achievement on the AIMS has increased since the inception of Reading First.

- From 2003 to 2007, approximately half of the Cohort 1 students were passing AIMS by meeting or exceeding the standard each year.
- From 2003 to 2007, the percentage of students passing the AIMS third grade reading test had increased to 59 percent from 50 percent.
- Across all years, approximately one third of the students were approaching the standard.

Table 5-4
AIMS Third Grade Reading Performance Category: Cohort 1 Historical

Cohort 1	Number of Students	Falls Far Behind%	Approaches %	Meets %	Exceeds %
2003[1]	6,430	25	25	42	8
2004	6,476	30	23	37	10
2005[2]	6,469	14	35	46	4
2006	6,449	13	33	49	5
2007[3]	5,573	9	32	53	6

[1] baseline, prior to Reading First
[2] AIMS reading performance level scale scores were rescaled between 2004 and 2005.
[3] Cohort 1 group changed in 2006-2007 when 9 of the schools were discontinued
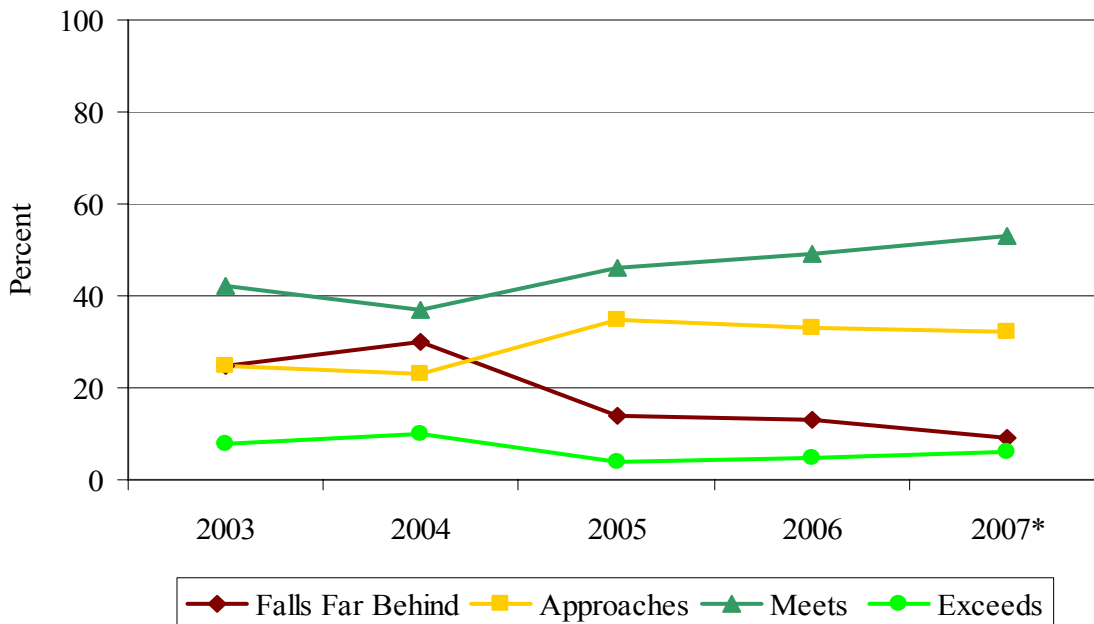
* Cohort 1 group changed in 2006-2007 when 9 of the schools were discontinued

Figure 5-2
AIMS Third Grade Reading Percentage Passing (Meets or Exceeds) Cohort 1 Historical

Third Grade Four-Year Subset: Reading First Students Beginning Kindergarten in 2003-2004 and Ending Third Grade in 2006-2007

This Four-Year group of students had been continuously enrolled in the Arizona Reading First program for four years. The group of schools shown in this analysis includes only the Cohort 1 schools' students who began in 2003-2004; no schools from the Cohort 2 group are included. They began in kindergarten in 2003-2004, attended first grade in 2004-2005, were in second grade in 2005-2006 and completed third grade in 2006-2007. These students were matched from the beginning to the end of each year (continuous enrollment each year) and then across years, as well as between the DIBELS and the AIMS databases.

- Almost the same percentage of Four-Year Reading First students (67%) passed the third grade AIMS reading test as did all Arizona students (69%).
- Continuous enrollment in the Reading First K-3 program versus partial enrollment improves the likelihood of students passing AIMS at a rate similar to all Arizona students.
- A larger percentage (67%) of students with four years of Reading First instruction passed the AIMS third grade reading test than the all-inclusive group of those with one to four years of Reading First instruction (59%).
- Of all third grade students in Reading First at the end of the year who took the AIMS test, there was a significant difference (p< .01) between those students who had been enrolled in Reading First continuously for four-years (67% pass) compared to students who had not been continuously enrolled (53% pass).

Table 5.5
Four-Year Reading First Matched Students
AIMS Third Grade Reading Performance Category 2007

2007	Number of Students	Falls Far Behind%	Approaches %	Meets %	Exceeds %	PASS %
Four-Year RF Matched students continuously enrolled: Cohort 1	2,261	**5**	**28**	**59**	**8**	**67***
RF third grade students not continuously enrolled, Cohort 1	3,312	12	35	49	4	53*
All RF third grade students: Cohort 1	5,573	9	32	53	6	59
All Arizona third grade students	81,895	7	24	57	12	69

*Significant at the p ≤ .01 level
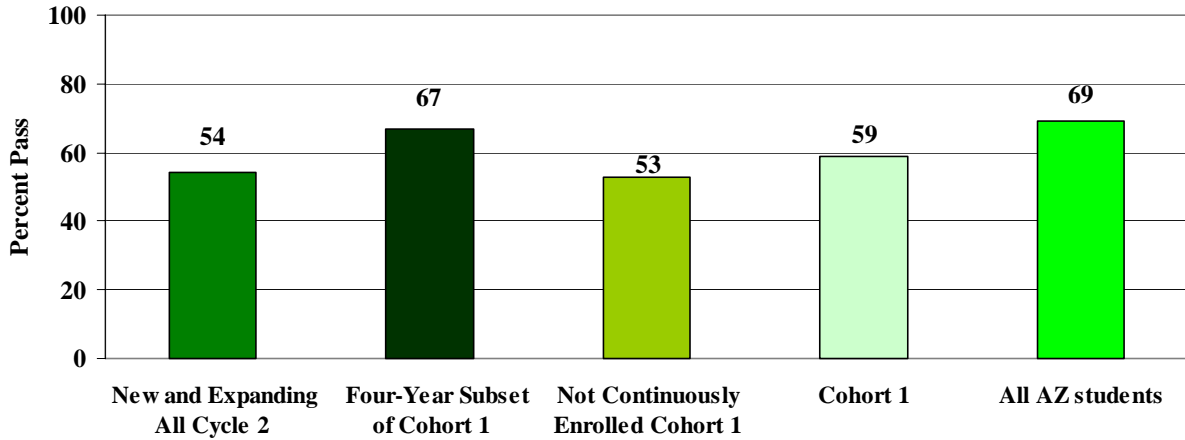
Figure 5-3
AIMS 2007 Third Grade Reading Percentage Passing (Meets or Exceeds)
Four-Year Subset Compared to other Groups

Over the years, the percentage of students passing AIMS has increased. Remembering that the test was rescaled, it is still valid to observe the pattern over several years. The pattern is especially valid over the past three years (2005 to 2007); Cohort 1 students improved 9 percentage points while the state average for all Arizona students rose six percentage points.

Table 5.6
AIMS Third Grade Reading Percentage Passing (Meet and Exceed)
Historical Cohort 1 and All Arizona Students

	[1] 2003	2004	[2] 2005	2006	[3] 2007
All Cohort 1	50	47	50	54	59
All AZ students	64	62	63	75	69

[1] baseline, prior to Reading First
[2] AIMS reading performance level scale scores were rescaled between 2004 and 2005.
[3] Cohort 1 group changed in 2006-2007 when 9 of the schools were discontinued

CHAPTER VI
INSTRUCTION AND INTERVENTIONS

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INSTRUCTION AND INTERVENTIONS

Highlights

- Cohorts 3 and 4 made good use of the 90-minute reading block and were predominately faithful to their core programs. Cohort 3 teachers, however, were less satisfied with their core programs and, perhaps as a result, used templates more than Cohort 4.

- Some but not all teachers differentiated instruction to meet students' needs. Cohort 4 teachers differentiated instruction more frequently than Cohort 3 teachers, but in both cohorts about a third of teachers did not differentiate regularly. In addition, most teachers reported heterogeneous classrooms, but fewer reported grouping students; perhaps as a result most instruction was at grade level rather than differentiated to students' level.

- Instruction in the five essential components of reading was fairly evenly divided among components. More than half of observed classrooms included instruction on comprehension and phonics, and almost half included instruction in fluency and vocabulary. First-grade classrooms, however, had little instruction in fluency. Phonemic awareness was less frequently a focus of observed lessons. Phonemic awareness was less frequently observed in upper grades and, instead, was concentrated at the kindergarten level, which is appropriate to typical students' needs.

- Most observations showed acceptable levels of student engagement. Lessons were clear and provided opportunities for student feedback. Compared to Cohort 4, however, Cohort 3 classrooms had more lessons that were clear and provided more opportunities for student practice.

- While not officially required to begin implementing interventions in the first year of funding, most Cycle 2 schools were providing some level of interventions to students during and/or outside of the reading block. Regardless of the perceptions of staff that schools were not providing appropriate reading interventions to all students in need of them, nearly half of the schools were providing interventions to at least 80 percent of their struggling readers and a third were providing interventions to at least 20 percent of their struggling readers. Only one in five schools was providing interventions to fewer than 20 percent of their struggling readers.

- Interventions were observed to be of high quality in terms of providing opportunities to practice, student engagement, student monitoring, and providing meaningful feedback to students. Interventions were also likely to include the appropriate use of word work, reading, and, to some extent, writing.

- Providing interventions did present challenges to coaches and teachers. Challenges cited most frequently were staffing; scheduling; materials, including matching student needs identified through data to appropriate materials and intervention activities; and training.

Instructional Impact

In the 2006-2007 school year in Cohorts 3 and 4, the perceived impact of Reading First on instruction was mixed. On the positive side, almost all principals said reading instruction improved noticeably at their school, as shown in Figure 6-1. In addition, more than two thirds of coaches and more than half of teachers agreed.

At Cohort 3 schools, however, a significantly ($p \leq .01$) smaller percentage of teachers agreed that reading instruction improved noticeably at their school in the last year. This may be because of a variety of differences between Cohort 3 and 4 schools. Perhaps most importantly, Cohort 3 is made up of schools in districts that have had Reading First grants since the inception of Reading First in Arizona. Interviews with coaches showed Cohort 3 schools had already implemented some aspects of Reading First prior to receiving a Reading First grant; therefore, coaches and teachers in Cohort 3 may perceive less change in instruction within the past year. Throughout this chapter, differences between Cohorts 3 and 4 will be highlighted when applicable.
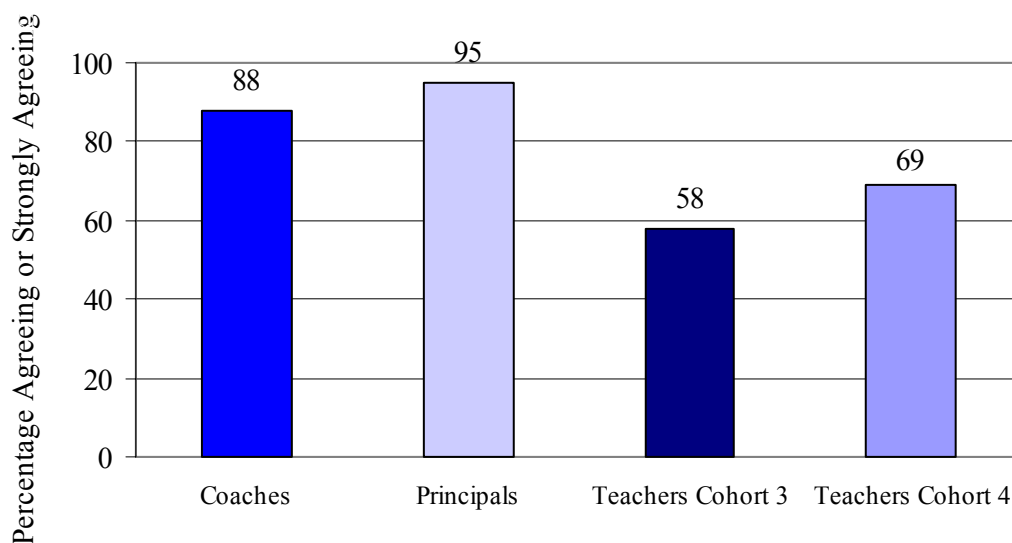
Figure 6-1
Reading Instruction Has Improved Noticeably in the Last Year

Perceptions tell only a part of the story about instruction, however. Instruction in the Arizona Reading First classroom should ideally:
- Be delivered during an uninterrupted **90-minute reading block**
- Use a **core reading program** based on scientific research on reading
- Be **differentiated** and delivered at **student's instructional level**
- Meet the needs of **English language learners**
- Cover the **five essential components of reading**
- Consist of **clear** lessons with **scaffolded instruction**
- **Monitor student understanding** to provide meaningful **feedback to students**
- Demonstrate strong and consistent **classroom management** and encourage **high student engagement**

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

In order to look closely at what happens at the classroom level, this chapter examines multiple sources of evidence to determine the degree to which schools are fulfilling the Reading First expectations for instruction. These sources include surveys, interviews, observations and implementation checklists.

The 90-Minute Reading Block

The uninterrupted 90-minute reading block is a cornerstone of Reading First and appears to be well implemented in Cohort 3 and 4 schools. According to coaches the majority of schools now have an uninterrupted reading block of at least 90 minutes, revealing an increase in the percentage of schools with similar reading blocks prior to the school's receiving a Reading First grant, as shown in Table 6-1. In addition, coaches reported that many schools extend the reading block beyond the 90 required minutes, adding an additional 9 to 60 minutes of daily reading instruction.

Table 6-1
Percentage of Schools Providing 90 Minutes or More of Uninterrupted Reading Instruction

	Percentage Providing 90 or More Minutes of Reading Instruction		Percentage with an Uninterrupted Reading Block	
	Prior to Reading First (2005-06)	During Reading First (2006-07)	Prior to Reading First (2005-06)	During Reading First (2006-07)
Kindergarten	69	97	71	93
First	78	99	78	100
Second	80	99	75	100
Third	78	100	77	99

As shown in Table 6-2, the percentage of schools with uninterrupted reading blocks also increased when Reading First was implemented, and the majority of coaches now report that their school has an uninterrupted reading block. Some teachers did, however, report using the 90-minute reading block for tasks other than reading. These percentages were relatively small; 13 percent interrupted their reading block as frequently as once a month. Most (87%) never interrupted the reading block or only interrupted it once or a few times a year.

Observations and the implementation checklist provided supporting evidence of this pervasive use of the uninterrupted reading block. In just two of the 86 classrooms observed by evaluators did the teacher interrupt reading for another subject such as math, science, or writing. The implementation checklist data also showed that 78 percent of the schools had "really protected" the 90 minutes and 21 percent had only "rare exceptions" to this uninterrupted time.

Core Program

When schools applied to receive Reading First grants, they selected a core reading curricula for grades K-3. Satisfaction with the core program during the 2006-07 school year increased. This could be attributed to the fact that 56 percent of principals reported their schools planned to change core programs with the implementation of Reading First. Overall, satisfaction with the core reading program in 2006-07 was relatively high among principals and coaches. A smaller percentage of teachers reported satisfaction with the core program, although more than half were satisfied as shown in Figure 6-2. Teacher responses differed significantly (p≤.01) by cohort, with 57 percent of teachers in Cohort 3 agreeing they were very satisfied with the core compared to 68 percent of teachers in Cohort 4 agreeing they were very satisfied.
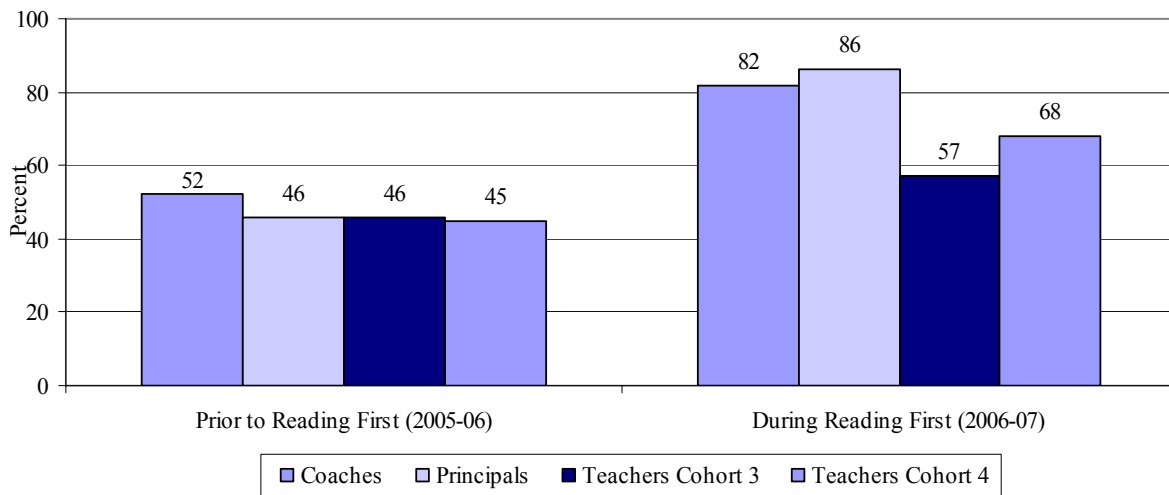
Figure 6-2
Percentage Agreeing they were Satisfied with the Core Reading Program

Teacher satisfaction with the core program varied substantially from school to school. At 25 schools (29%), there were no teachers who expressed dissatisfaction with the core reading program. On the other hand, at 10 schools (11%), more than 30 percent of teachers expressed dissatisfaction. Many other schools had a few dissatisfied teachers.

Fidelity to the Core Reading Program

Despite differing satisfaction with the core program, fidelity to the core was high. The majority of teachers in both Cohorts (96%) reported it was a regular part of their teaching. The majority of coaches (86%) also reported that all teachers in their school used the core program. Observations during school site visits confirmed these reports. Observers saw the core program used during all but one lesson. Finally, data from the implementation checklist showed that virtually all K-3 teachers (99%) were using core reading program materials.

Teacher's manuals describe how to implement instruction with fidelity. Most teachers reported following the precise language of the core program's manual at least some of the time: 50 percent said it was a regular part of their teaching and 34 percent said it was sometimes a part of their teaching. Observations provided similar data. Teacher's manuals were actively used or, at minimum, open and/or out in 77 percent observed classrooms.

Templates for instruction, developed by the Western Regional Reading First Technical Assistance Center, also helped teachers implement instruction with fidelity. Templates appeared to be used significantly (p≤.01) more frequently in Cohort 3 schools than in Cohort 4 schools.

- In Cohort 3 schools, 53 percent of teachers reported using templates as a regular part of their instruction compared to 38 percent of teachers in Cohort 4.

- In Cohort 3 schools, significantly more coaches (62%) said most or all teachers used templates, while in Cohort 4 schools, significantly fewer coaches (29%) said most or all teachers used templates.

As noted previously, Cohort 3 teachers were significantly less likely than Cohort 4 teachers to agree that they were satisfied with their core program. It may also be that Cohort 3 teachers supplement their core with templates. In one focus group of Cohort 3 teachers, teachers said they used templates to "fill in the gaps" in their core program. Differences may also be due to Cohort 3 districts having more experience with all aspects of Reading First.

Interviews with coaches provided more in-depth details about the meaning of fidelity to the core program and confirmed that fidelity to the core was high. For most coaches interviewed (about two thirds), fidelity meant using the core as intended for all reading instruction and not using any other reading materials. As one coach said in a typical description of what fidelity meant:

> *Fidelity means sticking to the core. If the core says you can do it, you can do it. You don't bring in old series or thematic units. You stick to the core and do direct explicit instruction from the core.* (Reading Coach)

About a third of interviewed coaches, however, described fidelity as teaching using primarily the core but "tweaking" materials, methods, and/or pacing based on either students' needs or on teachers' abilities. Several coaches noted that they had come to this more flexible interpretation of fidelity over the course of using their core program for a number of years. For example one said,

> *Well, in the beginning I understood fidelity to mean we should use only the core and use it to the letter. After a while, and after some discussion, it was explained to us that in the first year of Reading First, schools are usually new to the core, and in order for teachers to switch, the core is all you use; you have to be firm, and later it can loosen up some. And with that understanding, we definitely use the core for the 90 minutes, but we don't follow it to the letter.* (Reading Coach)

Given these definitions of fidelity, the majority of coaches said all or almost all teachers in their school implemented the core with fidelity.

Differentiated Instruction

Reading First encourages teachers to differentiate instruction by targeting teaching to each student's reading level. In Arizona, the 90-minute block is intended to be delivered both to students' grade levels and to their instructional levels. To accomplish this, teachers are encouraged to mix whole-group, grade-level instruction with small-group, and differentiated instruction. This helps teachers meet the needs of students at their instructional level while still allowing them access to grade-level instruction. At those schools with an extended reading block, the 90 minutes can be entirely grade-level instruction if the extra time is devoted to differentiated instruction.

Data show that more differentiation may be needed in Cohorts 3 and 4, although some differentiation of instruction is taking place. More than three-fourths of coaches (78%) reported that most instruction during the reading block was on grade level, rather than differentiated to each student's instructional level. Nevertheless, most coaches (89%) did report that at least some teachers they observed did differentiate instruction. However, only 37 percent of coaches said all or most of the teachers at their school differentiated instruction A larger percentage of teachers reported differentiating instruction regularly: 47 percent of teachers in Cohort 3 and 54 percent in Cohort 4.

A greater use of grade-level instruction (as opposed to differentiated instruction) might be reasonable given Arizona' policies requiring a mix of grade- and instructional-level teaching. However, some evidence shows that some teachers in Cohorts 3 and 4 need more guidance on how to deliver instruction matched to students' instructional levels. Prior to the implementation of Reading First, 38 percent of teachers reported they were not adequately prepared or only somewhat prepared to deliver differentiated instruction. In addition, prior to implementing Reading First, 34 percent of teachers said they wanted professional development on differentiated instruction, making this the third most frequently requested type of professional development on the baseline survey. Furthermore, data from the implementation checklist showed that 37 percent of observers saw differentiated instruction in more than half of classrooms.

Other factors which effect teachers' ability to deliver differentiated instruction include student grouping; student-instructor ratios; and, for states like Arizona with high percentages of English language learners (ELLs), the availability and effectiveness of instructional materials for ELLs. These factors are discussed in detail in the sections below.

Grouping

Grouping students by ability level is one strategy that helps teachers differentiate instruction. To group students, some Reading First classrooms differentiate instruction in heterogeneous classrooms by using small group instruction in which a teacher works with one small group while other small groups work independently. Other Reading First schools create homogeneous reading groups through "walk to read" (WTR), an instructional strategy in which students move to another classroom to work with a teacher and group at their own level during the reading block.

Most teachers in Cohorts 3 and 4 (76%) reported their classrooms had heterogeneous groups of students. Similarly, few coaches (36%) reported schools using WTR, and observations confirmed that the majority of classrooms do not use WTR. Given the large number of heterogeneous classrooms, small group instruction would be expected to be a frequently used instructional strategy.

This appears to be the case in at least some Reading First classrooms: 63 percent of teachers who reported heterogeneous classrooms also reported using small groups regularly and 18 percent of these teachers used small groups sometimes as part of their teaching. The remaining 19 percent, however, used small groups occasionally or not at all, as shown in Figure 6-3.
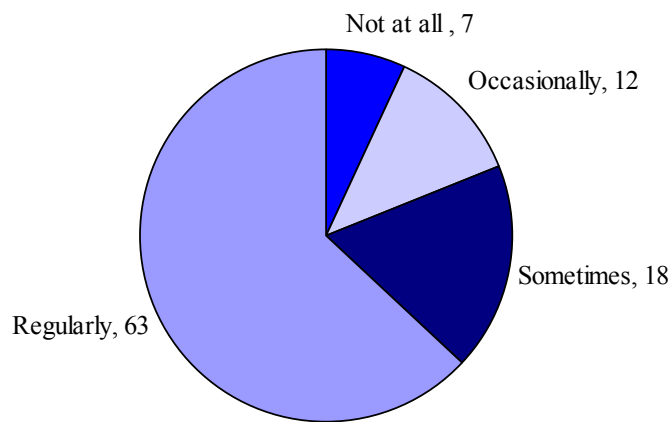
Figure 6-3
Percentage of Teachers in Heterogeneous Classrooms Reporting the
Use of Small Group Instruction as Part of Their Teaching

Observations showed less evidence of small group instruction. In 14 percent of observations, teachers used small group instruction predominately, and an additional 2 percent of observations showed at least one five minute block of time used for small group instruction. Lack of grouping may account for about a third of teachers reporting they do not differentiate instruction regularly. This lack of grouping was further substantiated by the spring implementation checklist finding: State Reading Specialists reported that only 37 percent of schools had K-3 teachers using flexible grouping to deliver differentiated instruction more that half of the time.

One way to support small group instruction is to use paraprofessionals to teach or supervise some groups while the teacher works with others. Some teachers in heterogeneous classrooms (27%) reported using paraprofessionals daily to support instruction during the reading block; however, as Table 6-2 shows 50 percent reported never using paraprofessionals. Percentages in homogeneous classrooms, which might need less assistance to provide students with instructional level teaching, actually were very similar to heterogeneous classrooms.

Table 6-2
Percentage of Teachers Reporting Paraprofessionals Assisted during Reading

	Teachers in Heterogeneous Classrooms	Teachers in Homogeneous Classrooms
Daily	27	23
1-3 times a week	10	13
2-3 times a month	2	3
Once a month	2	3
Once or a few times a year	8	13
Never	50	45

Interviews also suggested that schools lacked staff to support small group instruction. Several coaches said instructional groups were too large and that the school did not have the staff to decrease group size. For example, one coach said,

> *Over 15 percent of students aren't getting their exact needs met. Our core program suggests that you move students ahead when you're in doubt with aggressive placement. Now there is no way that works for us. We can't add the teachers that we would need.* (Reading Coach)

In general, about two thirds of coaches said their school needed to improve how students are grouped for instruction.

Teacher focus groups also revealed some challenges for grouping students. A teacher in one focus group said the greatest Reading First implementation challenge was "not having aides in the classroom, which was promised when we signed on to Reading First and agreed to do all these small groups."

These data indicate that small group instruction could be improved in some schools. There were, however, significant difference (p≤.01) between Cohorts 3 and 4. As stated previously, a smaller percentage of teachers in Cohort 3 than in Cohort 4 reported differentiating instruction regularly. Similarly, among teachers reporting heterogeneous classrooms during the reading block, 58 percent of teachers in Cohort 3 reported using small groups regularly as opposed to 65 percent in Cohort 4.

Student-Instructor Ratios

Another factor affecting a teacher's ability to differentiate instruction is class size. As reported by teachers, average class size was 21 students, and most classes had 20 to 25 students (see Figure 6-4). Class size also varied by school. Large class sizes, in particular, appeared to be concentrated in a small number of schools. In four schools, more than 50 percent of teachers reported class sizes of more than 25 students. Observations showed slightly smaller class sizes than survey findings. Average class size during observations was 19.
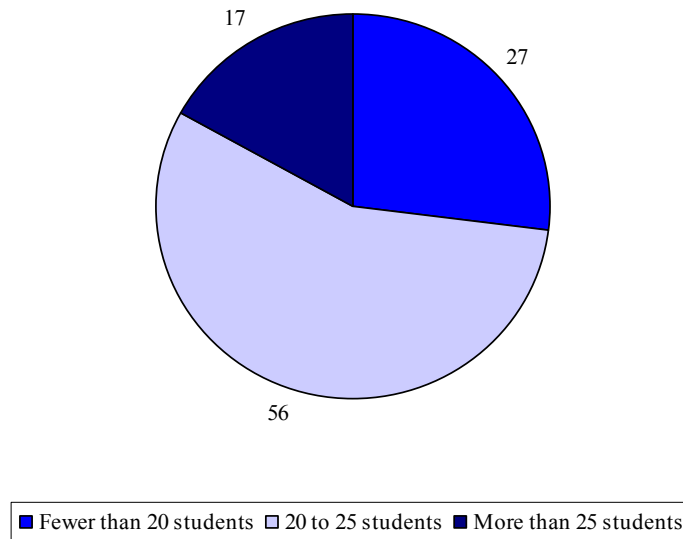
Figure 6-4
Percentages of Teachers Reporting of Various Class Sizes

Class size, however, is only one way to look at the amount of instructional attention students receive. Paraprofessionals and other adults can assist in classrooms, increasing the amount of individual attention students receive. As discussed previously, almost a third of teachers reported paraprofessionals assisted daily during reading, but about half never had paraprofessionals in their classrooms during reading.

Teachers who reported that paraprofessionals assisted in reading daily were slightly more likely to be in classes of more than 25 students than in mid-sized classes of 20 to 25 students. However, the largest percentage of teachers who used paraprofessionals daily were in smaller classes of fewer than 20 students, as shown in Figure 6-5
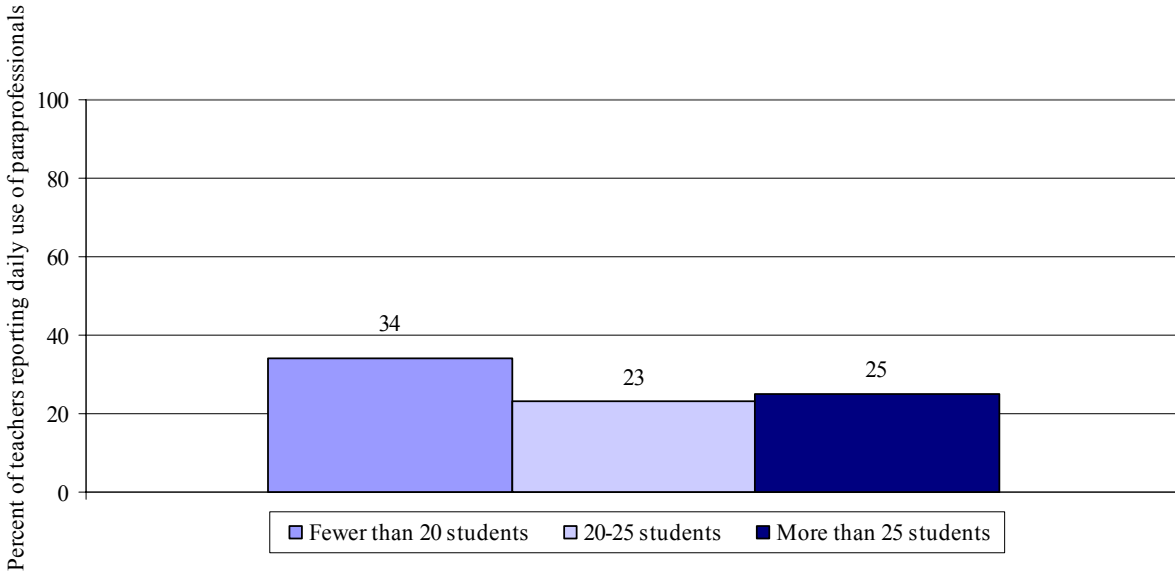
Figure 6-5
Percentage of Teachers Reporting Paraprofessionals Assisted in Classes Daily by Class Size

Observations provided more information about the amount of adult attention students received by noting the total number of adults in the classroom in addition to the teacher. This included paraprofessionals but also other adults such as Title I teachers, special education teachers and other specialists. Observations revealed that the percentage of classrooms with at least one other adult to assist the teacher was just slightly higher than the percentage of classrooms with daily paraprofessional assistance: 41 percent of observed classrooms included other adults who assisted in reading instruction.

These other adults sometimes provided individual assistance to students during whole group instruction, but also lead groups or supervised students who were not working with the teacher, allowing the teacher to work with smaller groups of students. In the 16 percent of observations that found teachers working with small groups for at least five minutes, group sizes ranged from one to six students.

Meeting the Needs of ELL Students

Arizona Proposition 203, English Language Education for Children in Public Schools, requires all public schools to conduct instruction in English. Therefore, teachers address the needs of non-native English speakers through differentiated instruction. Differentiating is particularly important in Arizona Reading First schools because 38 percent of all students in these schools were classified as current English Language Learners (ELLs). Including all students who speak another language at home, even if these students were not currently classified as ELLs, brings the percentage up to 43 percent.

Data showed mixed results for differentiating for ELL students in Reading First schools. In the spring survey, larger percentages of coaches (48%) and principals (58%) believed their school

was now doing an excellent job meeting the needs of ELLs as compared to the fall baseline survey, as shown in Table 6-3. For teachers, however, the spring percentage went down slightly.

Table 6-3
Perceived Impact of Reading First on ELL Instruction

Our reading program is doing an excellent job of meeting the needs of our ELL students	Percentage Strongly Agree/Agree	
	Baseline 2006	Spring 2007
Coach	29	48
Principal	24	58
Teachers	31	28

In addition, some teachers' abilities to differentiate instruction for ELL students may have been hampered by some materials that were not well-matched to ELLs' needs and by some teachers' lack of knowledge and skills in working with ELL students. The percentages of coaches and teachers reporting their school's instructional materials were well-matched to ELL needs were split, although coaches were slightly more positive than teachers, as illustrated in Figure 6-6. Furthermore, on the baseline survey, 27 percent of teachers said they wanted training in working with ELL students.
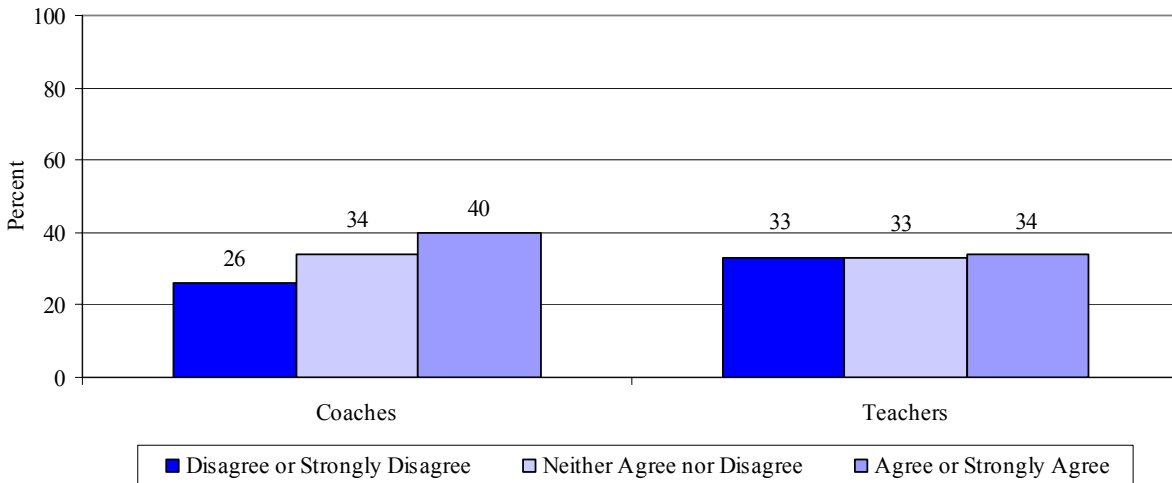
Figure 6-6
Reading Instructional Materials are Well-Matched to ELL Needs,
According to Coaches and Teachers

Interviews supported the surveys' mixed findings. About a fifth of coaches said one of the greatest challenges to differentiating for ELL students was having appropriate materials, and about a fifth said they wanted more support from the state on this issue, making it the second most requested state support area. In a typical comment, one coach said,

> *Our core program comes with certain things for ELL, but it would be great to pull in other resources from the ELL room – to use those materials in the classrooms in addition to the core. Our core does have a lot, but there are only so many leveled readers. Once they are read or worked through, what do you do*? (Reading Coach)

Some teachers also appeared not to have the skills they thought were needed to work with ELLs. On baseline surveys, 30 percent of teachers said they did not have the knowledge and skills necessary to modify and supplement the core program to meet the needs of their ELL students. Among coaches, 39 percent reported teachers did not have these skills.

In interviews, almost a third of coaches said the biggest challenge to differentiating for ELLs was teacher ability. As one coach said,

> *Even though teachers have had training in strategies, I don't know if they understand how to meet ELLs needs. There is a disconnect between theory and practice.* (Reading Coach)

More professional development was not, however, the solution most recommended by coaches, although about a fifth did say professional development would be helpful. Instead, almost half said they needed additional staff to support ELLs. Both qualified paraprofessionals and teachers were needed, according to coaches. Coaches recognized that there was a shortage of people to fill these positions, and a few said they currently had unfilled ELL positions at their school. One coach suggested the school needed "state support for paraprofessionals to get their degree, come back and teach here. We have some really fine paraprofessionals with great capacity."

Inside the Reading First Classroom

This year, evaluators observed 86 classrooms in 28 schools, fairly evenly divided across the four grades (K-3). Eight schools were from Cohort 3 and 20 were from Cohort 4. These observations, in combination with survey responses from coaches and teachers about instruction as well as the implementation checklist, helped provide a picture of the delivery of reading instruction in the classroom.

During their site visits, evaluators had limited time in classrooms, between 20 and 30 minutes in three randomly selected classrooms. They spent that time taking detailed notes on instruction and student activities and later rated each lesson using a rubric focusing on instruction in the five essential components of reading as well as other important instructional strategies.

Instruction in the Five 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 and instruction 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.

Emphasis on any one or more of the components varies by grade level, and is discussed specifically in the following sections by topic. Although observers saw instruction in all five components, some components received substantially more attention than others. For example, evaluators saw phonics and comprehension instruction in a little more than half of the lessons (see Figure 6-7).
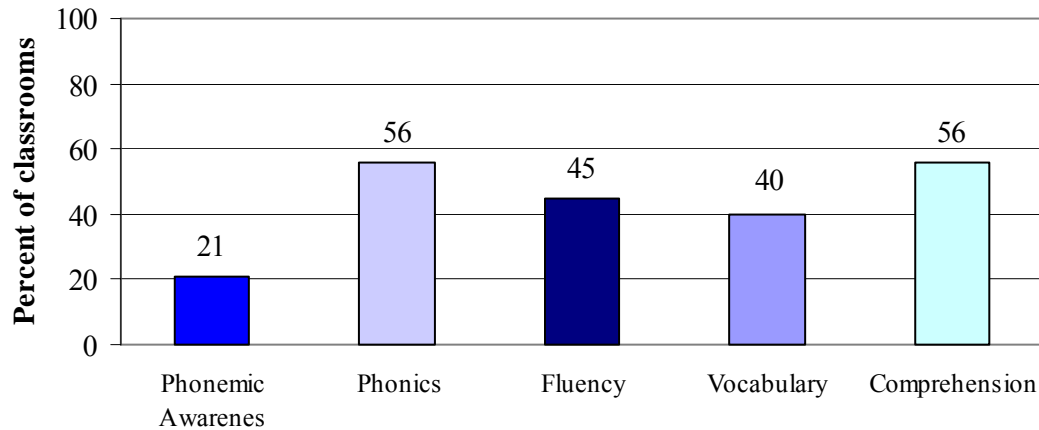
Figure 6-7
Percentages of Observed Classrooms Teaching Each of the Essential Elements of Reading[1]

Phonemic Awareness

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. One concern about instruction in phonemic awareness is the possibility that teachers are directing too much time and attention to this.

Reading First teachers typically said phonemic awareness was a regular part of their teaching; however, teaching phonemic awareness did vary by grade level, as would be expected. Virtually

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[1] 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 each classroom 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.

all kindergarten teachers (92%) said phonemic awareness was a regular part of their teaching while fewer teachers in other grades said this: 86 percent of first grade, 66 percent of second grade, and 42 percent of third grade teachers.

Observations showed that phonemic awareness was covered in fewer classrooms. No third grade classes were observed that focused on phonemic awareness. Four of 21 second grade classes, six first of 22 grade classes, and eight of 21 kindergarten classes had this focus. Second and first grade classes that focused on phonemic awareness typically did so for less than half of the 20 to 30 minute observation period.

Phonics
Of the five essential components, observers saw phonics instruction in more than half the lessons in all grades: 14 of 21 kindergarten lessons, 14 of 22 first grade lessons, 11of 21 second grade lessons, and 9 of 22 third grade lessons. In fact, it was the most frequently seen component in all grades except third, where comprehension instruction was observed more frequently.

Observed phonics lessons sometimes involved students reading words, phrases, or connected text but often were stand-alone lessons. While stand-alone lessons in phonics were often effective, in a few cases these lessons did not relate phonetic principles to decoding. For example, in several observed lessons, the teacher gave students the pronunciation of difficult words and had them practice saying these words but did not provide instruction on how students could independently use phonetic principals to decode similar words.

Perhaps because of the high stakes attached to student outcomes measured by the DIBELS, and because the DIBELS assesses the reading of nonsense words, a fifth of teachers (20%) reported that practicing reading nonsense words was a 'regular part' of their teaching. Another 24 percent said it was 'sometimes' part of their teaching. Teacher's reports of using nonsense words varied by cohort with a larger percentage of Cohort 4 teachers (22%) saying they regularly used nonsense words than did Cohort 3 teachers (16%). Observations, however, did not show teachers using nonsense word practice. 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. It could also lead to students using valuable class time to practice phonics skills that are disconnected from meaning and, therefore, not likely to translate into greater ability to decode actual words.

Fluency
Fluency practice includes activities such as partner reading, repeated and monitored oral reading, and explanations of how/why to read fluently in the classroom. Observations found students working on fluency in close to half the lessons in all grades except first: nine of 21 kindergarten lessons, 12 of 21 second grade lessons, and 12 of 22 third grade lessons. Fluency activities were seen less frequently in first grade: six of 22 lessons.

Less fluency practice might be expected in kindergarten where many students are not yet readers; however, fluency activities would be expected in first grade classrooms. Although fluency practice in first grade was observed less frequently, one first grade exemplary lesson did include practice in fluency along with vocabulary and phonics activities. In this lesson, the teacher

modeled reading a portion of *If I could Fly* by Deborah Allen with good expression. The students then read the same text chorally, mimicking the teacher's inflection and expression. The teacher and students continued to take turns reading fluently with good expression. They also discussed textual elements that influence reading, such as how words written in all capital letters tell readers to emphasize these words. This lesson showed how fluency practice fit well into first grade instruction.

Although observed fluency lessons were less frequent in first grade, self-reports of the use of fluency practice by first grade teachers were not significantly different from those of other grade levels: 71 percent of all teachers reported they regularly had students practice oral reading fluency. These reports did, however, vary by cohort with a larger proportion of Cohort 3 teachers (72%) reporting regularly practicing fluency than Cohort 4 teachers (70%).

Fluency *assessment* appeared to be a relatively small part of work in fluency. For example, 27 percent of teachers reported that timed fluency assessments during the reading block were a regular part of their instruction. Again, a larger proportion of Cohort 3 teachers (28%) reporting regularly assessing fluency during the reading block than Cohort 4 teachers (26%).

Vocabulary
Examples of vocabulary instruction included having students find synonyms for words, give the definitions of words, and use unfamiliar words in sentences. Vocabulary instruction was observed in 34 of 86 lessons. Kindergarten classrooms addressed vocabulary less frequently (in 2 of 21 lessons) than did first grade (10 of 22 lessons), second grade (13 of 21 lessons), or third grade (9 of 22 lessons).

Vocabulary lessons were sometimes embedded in other types of lessons such as comprehension lessons but were also sometimes stand-alone lessons. For example, in one stand-alone lesson students read a sentence and then replaced an underlined vocabulary word with a synonym. In a lesson that embedded vocabulary work in reading, students previewed a list of vocabulary words in a reading selection by finding the bolded vocabulary word in the selection and then discussing the meaning of the word.

Survey data also showed that vocabulary instruction was part of many lessons: 53 percent of teachers said they regularly had students practice vocabulary using examples and non-examples and an additional 25 percent said they sometimes did this. Fewer teachers (37%), however, had students practice "tier two" vocabulary words regularly and 17 percent said they did not know what tier two vocabulary words were.

Comprehension
Comprehension includes both activities promoting literal recall of what is read and activities promoting higher order thinking skills. On the 2006 baseline survey, the largest percentage of teachers (28%) said they would like training on the comprehension component of reading . Despite this perceived need for training, data findings suggested that teachers often provided comprehension lessons during the past school year. In observations, third grade had the largest number of lessons focusing on comprehension: 17 of 22 lessons. Other grade levels focused on

comprehension as well but not so extensively: 13 of 21 kindergarten lessons, ten of 22 first grade lessons, and 8 of 21 second grade lessons.

Surveys showed that comprehension work was fairly evenly split between activities requiring literal understanding and those requiring higher order thinking skills. Most teachers (94%) reported that they regularly or sometimes used comprehension questions that asked for literal recall and provided background knowledge to prepare students to read text. Similarly, most teachers (93%) reported they regularly or sometimes asked comprehension questions that required higher order thinking skills.

Observations also showed that comprehension work was fairly evenly split between literal understanding and higher order thinking skills: 22 of 86 lessons focused on literal recall questions and 21 focused on higher order thinking skills. Literal understanding questions and higher order thinking questions were the two specific comprehension strategies that were observed in the most lessons. Additional comprehension strategies observed were using graphic organizers; looking back to find the answers to questions; identifying main ideas and supporting details; retelling the beginning, middle and end of a story; and summarizing. These strategies were each observed in fewer than ten classes.

Other Classroom Characteristics

In addition to providing instruction in the five essential components of reading, Reading First teachers must deliver effective lessons. On the implementation checklist, the State reading Specialists reported that "K-3 teachers consistently demonstrate appropriate, explicit, systematic teaching of the five components of reading;" more than half of the time in just over half (56%) of the schools. To further evaluate the effectiveness of instruction delivery, observers spent time taking detailed notes on instruction and student activities and then later rated each lesson using a rubric focusing on the following characteristics:

- Lesson clarity and scaffolding
- Monitoring of student understanding and provision of direct feedback to students
- Student engagement and effective use of time

The ratings of all of these characteristics were highly correlated as would be expected. For example, clearly presented lessons tended to have stronger student engagement and better monitoring of student understanding, while the opposite is true for unclear lessons. Each of these findings is discussed in greater detail below, and survey responses provide additional data related to the observations.

Clear Lessons and Scaffolded Instruction

Clear lessons were defined as those in which information was presented accurately with good pacing and apparent student understanding. Most observed lessons (75%) were rated highly for clarity. There were, however, differences between cohorts, as shown in Figure 6-8. Virtually all lessons in Cohort 3 classrooms (92%) were rated highly for clarity, while 67 percent of Cohort 4 lessons were rated highly. These differences were significant at the p≤.05 level.
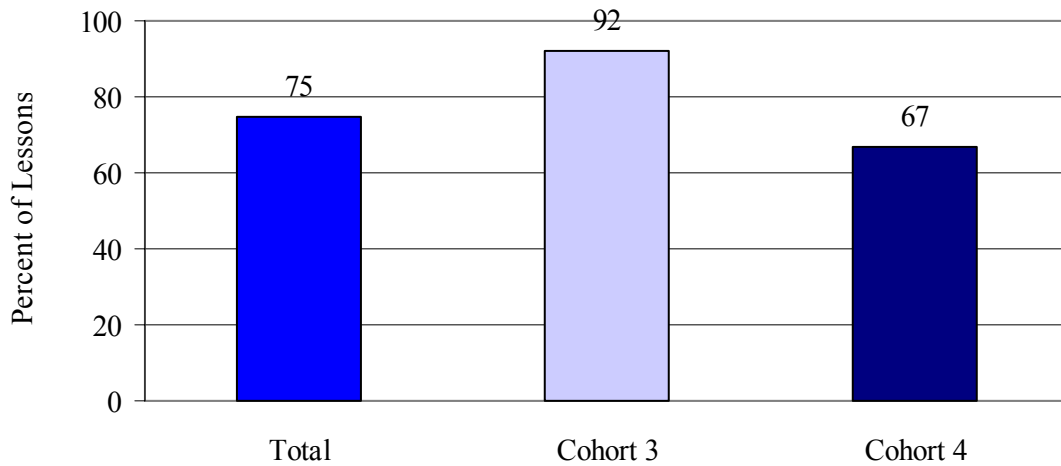
Figure 6-8
Clarity of Observed Lessons by Cohort

When students are learning new material, scaffolding a lesson can increase clarity. Teachers can scaffold student learning by first modeling a task, then doing the task with the students, and gradually withdrawing support so that students learn to do the task independently. Some but not all Reading First teachers appeared to be using effective modeling.

Observers saw effective modeling in 59 percent of observed classrooms. There were no differences between Cohorts 3 and 4. Surveys provided additional evidence: 59 percent of coaches reported that all or most of the teachers in their school modeled tasks and thinking processes for their students. More teachers (77%) said explicit modeling was a regular part of their teaching.

Using guided questioning is another strategy teachers can use instead of, or in addition to, modeling to scaffold students' learning. Like modeling, this practice was observed in a little more than half the classrooms (56%). This practice was in fewer classrooms according to coaches: 41 percent reported all or most of the teachers in their schools used guided questioning.

Monitoring of Student Understanding and Provision of Direct Feedback

Before teachers can monitor student understanding and provide feedback, students must be given the opportunity to practice. More than three-fourths of observed lessons gave students time to practice reading skills. More lessons in Cohort 3 classrooms, however, gave time for this practice than did lessons in Cohort 4 classrooms, as shown in Figure 6-9. These differences were significant at the $p \leq .05$ level.
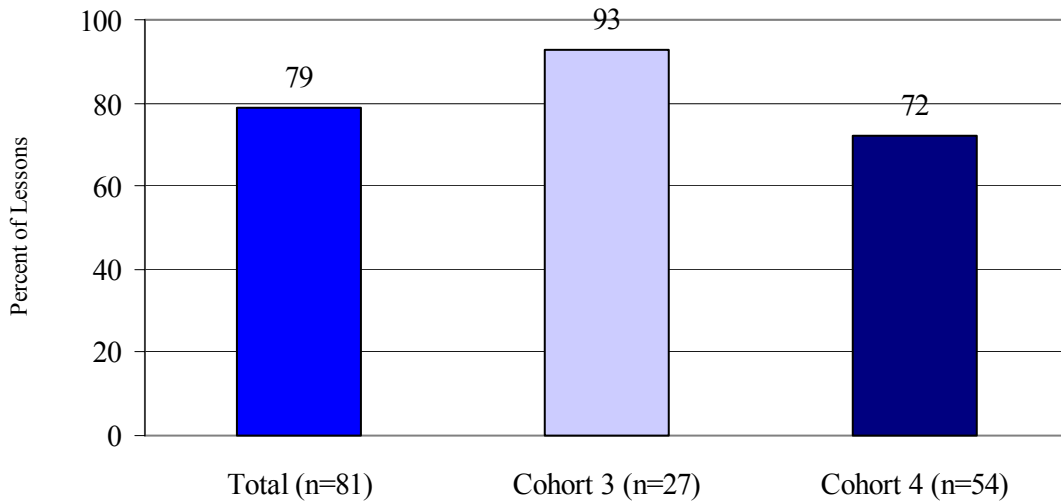
Figure 6-9
Opportunities for Student Practice by Cohort

About half of coaches (54%) said all or most of the teachers in their school provided multiple opportunities for students to practice. More Cohort 3 coaches gave this response but differences were not statistically significant. Similar to this finding, the State Reading Specialists reported that at least half of the time, Reading First teachers provided multiple, varied practice opportunities in the five components of reading in 51 of 85 (60%) of schools.

When giving students opportunities to practice, as well as when giving students directions, teachers need to monitor how well students understand instructional materials. Teachers must then make decisions about whether students need more practice or are ready to move on to something else. Teachers also need to address misunderstandings right away and replace these misunderstandings with correct information.

About three-fourths of observed lessons (74%) included effective monitoring of understanding. Surveys gave more information about monitoring: 49 percent of coaches reported all or most of the teachers in their schools monitored student understanding. Furthermore, the Specialists reported on the checklist that in 56 percent of the schools, K-3 teachers checked for understanding at least half of the time.

Data showed that monitoring did not always result in feedback for students. Observations found that 61 percent of lessons included clear, direct, and frequent feedback to students. In surveys, 40 percent of coaches reported all or most of the teachers in their schools provided this type of feedback, and 79 percent of teachers said that immediately correcting student errors was a regular part of their teaching. About the same percentage of teachers (71%) said they reacted to monitoring by regularly adjusting their activities or practice.

Student Engagement and Effective Use of Time

If Reading First instruction is to be effective, teachers must not only deliver instruction clearly and monitor student understanding, students themselves must be engaged and must make effective use of their time. Most observed lessons (78%) had acceptable levels of student engagement. In addition, most classrooms (67%) had few (less than 6%) students who were off task (see Table 6-4).

Table 6-4
Average Percentage of Students Off-Task During Observations

Percentage Off-Task	Percentage of Classrooms	Number of Classrooms (n=86)
0	37	32
1 to 5	30	26
6 to 10	17	15
11 to 15	6	5
16 to 20	6	5
21 or more	3	3

One way to keep student engagement high is to minimize disruptions and decrease the amount of wasted time. On surveys, coaches were asked about how regularly they observed the effective use of time during reading, i.e. quick starts to lessons, efficient transitions from one activity to another, effective classroom management, and meaningful work for students working independently. In general, between one half and three-fourths of coaches said all or most of the teachers in their school were effective in these areas, as can be seen in Table 6-5.

Table 6-5
Proportion of Coaches Reporting All or Most Teachers Use Specific Techniques

	All Teachers	Most Teachers
Students start work within 5 minutes of entering the classroom.	9	58
Students working independently have meaningful work.	11	51
Students make transitions quickly.	5	68
The teacher provides effective classroom management.	4	72

While many Reading First classrooms used techniques that promoted student engagement, about half of coaches (51%) reported disruptive students in at least some classrooms. In addition, several teacher focus groups mentioned student engagement as one of the significant challenges to implementing Reading First.

Provision of Interventions

Interventions are a critical part of the Reading First design, providing additional, targeted, small-group instruction for those students who need more than the core reading program in order to read at grade level. Research has found that several characteristics are common in successful intervention programs:

- Interventions are based on ongoing results of assessments/screenings that clearly identify student need areas
- Practice occurs daily and includes reading, writing, and working with words
- Student-teacher ratios are low—three to five students to one teacher
- Instructional materials are well-matched to students' needs
- Instruction is sequenced, systematic, explicit, and intensive
- Constant monitoring and feedback from the teacher provides appropriate scaffolding to students
- Training is provided to interventionists

This section will look at the extent that Cycle 2 Arizona Reading First schools are incorporating these aspects into their intervention programs. Coach, teacher and principal respondents from Cohorts 3 and 4 responded similarly on all intervention items and are referred to as Cycle 2 in this section. It will begin with an overview of state expectations about intervention programs which will be followed by descriptions of the intervention programs these schools have established, the students they served during the 2006-2007 school year, staffing of interventions, use of data, intervention materials, and training.

State Expectations

Unlike Cycle 1 Reading First schools, which did not focus on intervention programs until Year 2, ADE originally anticipated introducing Cycle 2 schools to the ideas involved in interventions early on. Progress monitoring and data analysis were targets of early fall training, and ADE had hoped that schools would have intervention plans ready for the second semester. Although many Cycle 2 schools were able to begin interventions in the second semester, ADE did not require all schools to begin interventions.

According to the implementation checklist spring data, about half of the schools at least half of the time were providing intervention instruction in addition to the 90 minute core. Further, at the school level in the spring of 2007, surveyed teachers', coaches', and principals' perceptions of intervention systems indicated that as a school they were not satisfied with their ability to provide appropriate reading interventions to all students in need of them. Fewer than half of the teachers (45%) strongly agreed or agreed they were doing an excellent job of this, and about a third of coaches (32%) and principals (38%) concurred (see Figure 6-10); importantly, these figures were higher than on the baseline surveys in 2006.
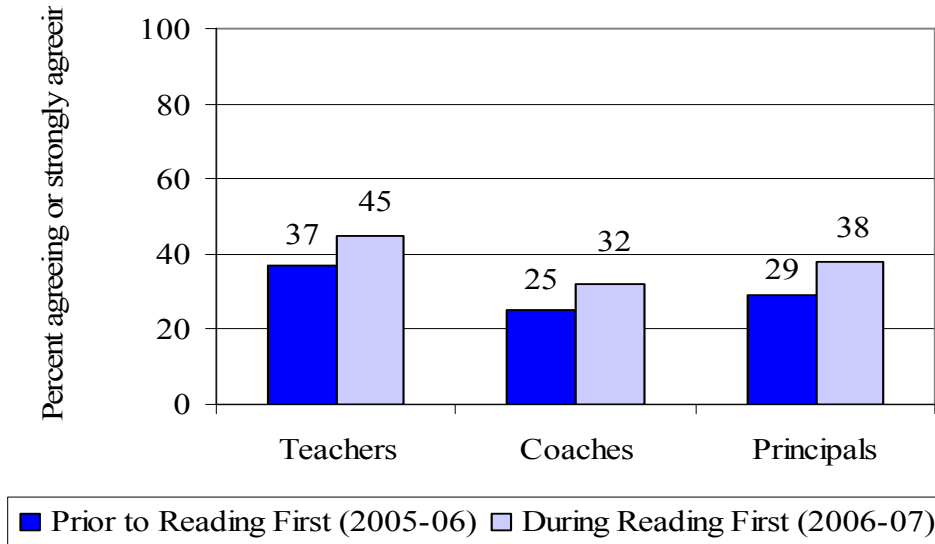
Figure 6-10
As a School, We're Doing an Excellent Job of Providing Appropriate Reading Interventions to All Students who Need Them.

To what can these perceptions be attributed? A school's ability to provide appropriate reading interventions to all students who need them is affected by the extent to which a system is established to serve struggling readers, including scheduling and coordination to ensure intensity; the number of struggling readers in the school and the availability of personnel on staff to deliver interventions; the use of appropriate assessments to identify needs and materials that are aligned to those needs and based on scientifically-based reading research; and the provision of training to appropriately instruct students using those materials.

Intervention Programs

On the baseline 2006 surveys, the majority of principals (71%) reported their school had intervention programs for struggling readers that were outside of, and in addition to, regular reading instruction. In these schools with established intervention programs, the majority of these principals (71%) anticipated their intervention program would change during the 2006-07 school year as Reading First was implemented.

By winter and/or spring of 2007, interventions were provided, in varying degrees, in the majority of Cycle 2 schools. According to implementation checklist data, three-fourths of schools had at least a 30 minute intervention program in at least three of four grade levels; only 11 percent of schools had no intervention program. Moreover, only a fifth of the interviewed coaches and a quarter of interviewed teachers reported that their schools had not yet established interventions programs for their struggling readers. Some of these staff members clarified their responses citing interventions were not a focus for the first year of Reading First funding. Nevertheless, the majority of coaches' and teachers interviewed—over 85 percent—indicated that interventions, inside or outside of the reading block, were being provided, regardless of the state's decision not to require intervention programs until the second year of funding.

Coaches and teachers indicated that struggling readers were being provided additional support in their reading classroom. Students participated in "walk to read," in which students work in flexible groups across classrooms; and teachers administered additional screenings to identify gaps, implemented templates, provided differentiated instruction, and/or used small group instruction in addition to the reading block.

> *What's working well is the way that we have grouped our students in classrooms. We have groups of students with similar needs, and this makes teaching easier than if there were a wide spectrum of learning needs. You can have the same expectations for students, and assessments are easier, and it seems we are more able to move students on with this arrangement. But, we still need improvement. For example, we could use a better guide for teachers; we need more detail. (We don't have a version of the templates). Also, the PALS and Phonics for Reading sometimes seem not too appropriate. Students seem to get stuck at particular levels, and they are very repetitive. There needs to be more variety.* (Teacher)

> *We are more aware of strategies and are using those things during regular classroom time (small group during station time) and have extra staff support with stations.* (Teacher)

Some interviewees indicated that collaborating with Title I, Special Education, counseling staff members, and aides allowed them to provide additional support to struggling readers.

> *Intervention programs haven't been stressed as a "Year 1" activity; so they have not been a real focus. They told us to get into the core, and do interventions as you can in your classrooms. We've used the Title I teacher to identify some kids and pulled them out to get extra help, but she hasn't been provided any materials for support to use with those kids. Instead, she's talked to the teachers and has pulled in some materials from the core and uses readers she has in her room to address gaps in their skills. By next week all of the teachers will be doing small group instruction with their stations for in-class interventions.* (Reading Coach)

Others reported that their school actually established a program outside of the 90-minute block. These consisted of, in varying degrees, many of the components of an effective intervention program: employing existing or newly hired intervention providers; training; using specially designed intervention materials to provide targeted instruction to groups of struggling students; and scheduling before, during, and/or after school for a specified amount of time and days per week.

> *We (K-3 teachers) do not all experience the intervention program the same. But, it does provide consistency in meeting with students (serving primarily intensive in pull-outs with some strategic towards the end of the year) and is scheduled outside of the 90 minutes. We are seeing improvement/growth in the students who attend.* (Teacher)

Scheduling to support this kind of system was frequently mentioned as a challenge by interviewed coaches and teachers. For coaches, finding the time to review the data, select the groups, find an intervention provider, and a time and place to provide the intervention to the student(s) was troublesome. Teachers on the other hand, were concerned about finding a consistent schedule for interventions that provided appropriate intensity but that did not interfere with teaching students other required content.

> *Interventions have been a challenge as to where to start, how to use data from many assessments and phonic screeners, getting an intervention schedule, and working with intensive students more.* (Reading Coach)

Finally, research indicates that effective interventions provide daily practice. The evaluation did not specifically address the extent to which struggling readers were provided daily practice. Although for students to receive intensive interventions defined as at least two hours per week for at least six weeks, it can be assumed that students attend them daily. As noted above, feedback from teachers indicates this may not always be the case.

Struggling Students

Reading First schools began the program with the daunting task of serving large proportions of struggling readers. Coaches reported serving many students needing intensive interventions and a substantial, but smaller, number of those needing less intensive interventions across the state. Variation existed—a few schools provided no interventions, some served fewer students, some served more students, and a sizeable number of schools provided interventions to all of their struggling readers during the 2006-2007 school year.

More than two-thirds of all Cycle 2 K-3 students were classified by the DIBELS as needing interventions in the fall of 2006 (students with matched fall 2006 and spring 2007 DIBELS scores) —39 percent were in need of intensive interventions and 29 percent were in need of strategic interventions. Coaches were interviewed regarding which students were the focus of intervention efforts at their school. Their responses indicated they had not received adequate guidance from ADE. In fact, 10 percent of the interviewed coaches indicated they had received no or conflicting information from the state, district, and/or state reading specialist about what they should do:

> *The teachers have created their own interventions right now, [focusing on] intensive, with some grade levels focusing on those closest to benchmark. There hasn't been any direction from the state; the teachers are trying to figure it out on their own. I'm waiting for the state to tell me. We want to know ahead of time so we can start planning.*
> (Reading Coach)

As a result, in some schools the focus was solely on the intensive students and in other schools the focus was solely on the strategic students. Some coaches reported focusing efforts on both the intensive and strategic students. A few coaches reported their focus was on the "bubble kids"—those most likely to move from intensive to strategic and/or from strategic to benchmark—all students, or students in certain grade levels.

A total of 8,111 students received "intensive" interventions (defined as outside the reading block, at least two hours per week for at least six weeks), as reported by reading coaches. This represents approximately 32 percent of all K-3 students across the funded schools. In addition, 4,449 students, approximately 18 percent of all K-3 students received "less intensive" interventions.

Five Cohort 4 schools provided no interventions to any intensive or strategic students, while 20 schools (a mix of Cohort 3 and Cohort 4 schools) provided interventions to all of their intensive *and* strategic students. Nearly half of the schools (46%) provided interventions to at least 80 percent of their struggling readers. One in eight schools served fewer than 20 percent of their struggling readers in intensive and less intensive interventions. Schools were more likely to serve a greater proportion of their intensive than strategic students in interventions.
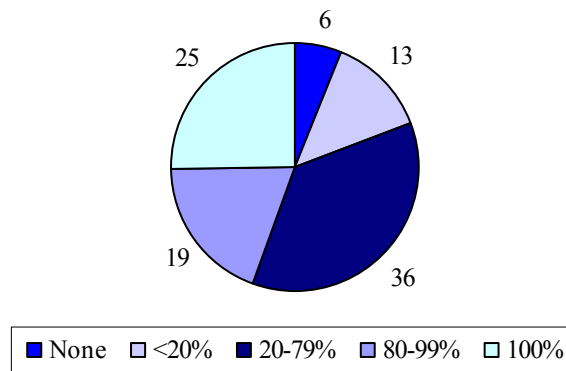
Figure 6-11
The Percentage of Students Receiving Interventions.

Regardless of the proportion of struggling readers served, the most frequently cited success of their school's intervention program, according to interviewed coaches (but cited less frequently by interviewed teachers), was the fact that their struggling readers were being served and/or making gains:

> *We serviced 67 kids, or 100 percent of our failing kids, and 50 percent of our strategic kids. I've seen a handful that has made that jump from failing to on target—making them readers.* (Reading Coach)

Staffing

The staffing of interventions is an area of concern for Cycle 2 schools—both in pull-out and classroom-based interventions. Half of the surveyed principals reported their staffing resources were insufficient to provide interventions to all students who needed them. Likewise, when coaches were surveyed regarding challenges to providing interventions, 60 percent indicated staffing as an issue. Interviewed coaches and teachers corroborated this, frequently commenting

that intervention staffing was a challenge in their schools. A few coaches noted that hiring interventionists would be a task for next year's funding, however. Interventionists were not the only concern; paraprofessionals or aides were also wanted to support small groups in the classrooms.

These two staff members—paraprofessionals and specialists—were the most commonly cited providers of interventions by coaches (64% and 62%, respectively, see Figure 6-12). More than half of the coaches (55%) indicated that kindergarten through third grade teachers also provided interventions. Thirteen percent of coaches reported providing interventions to students. Volunteers were providers in 10 percent of the schools and administrative support staff in seven percent of the schools provided interventions as well. (Numbers in Figure 6-12 sum to over 100% because schools used several different types of staff to provide interventions.)
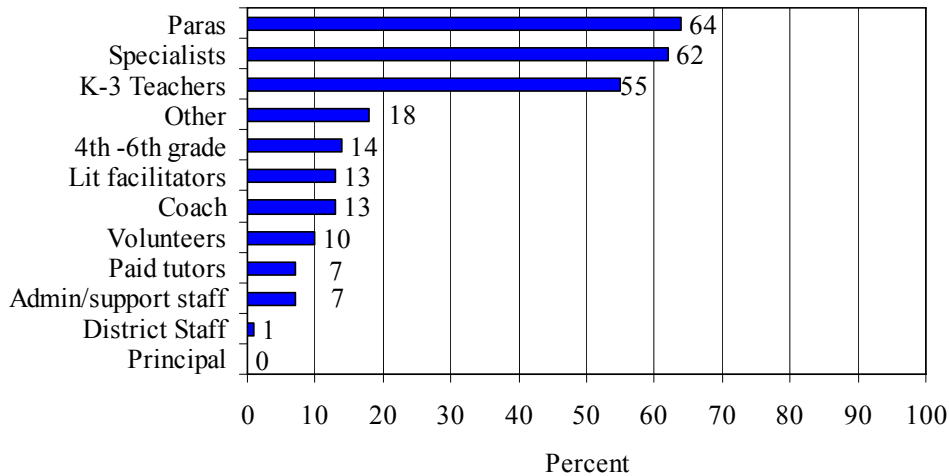
Figure 6-12
Position of Intervention Providers

During site visits, evaluators asked to observe 20 minutes of interventions delivered to intensive students. Intervention observations were conducted in 22 of the 29 schools (76%); in the remaining schools evaluators were told interventions were not yet being implemented. While it is important to note that this comparatively small sample of intervention observations is too small to claim representative ness, it is useful in its corroboration of other data. The staffing distributions reported by coaches were unconfirmed by evaluator's observations of interventions. Instead, teachers were observed administering interventions in 43 percent of the observations; specialists were seen in 29 percent, paraprofessionals in 19 percent, and the reading coach in five percent of the observations.

Small Groups

Research suggests that interventions are most effective when delivered in small groups, and that interventions for the most intensive students should be even smaller (Pikulski 1994; Torgesen 2004). Providing interventions in small groups is obviously dependent on the number of students who need to be served and the number of providers available to do so. Serving all struggling readers is not always possible because of limited resources (staff, materials, space, etc.). If schools choose to provide interventions in smaller groups, they need more intervention providers in order to serve more struggling readers. If increased staffing is not an option, schools can choose to serve fewer students in smaller groups or to serve more students in larger groups.

The evaluation data showed that group sizes were adequate, for the most part. About half of the coaches (48%) reported that intensive students worked with intervention providers in groups of five or fewer students; two-thirds of coaches (71%) reported these students worked in groups of six or fewer students. The remaining third indicated that intensive students participated in interventions in groups of more than six students with the largest group reporting 24 students. The average ratio was seven students with one teacher.
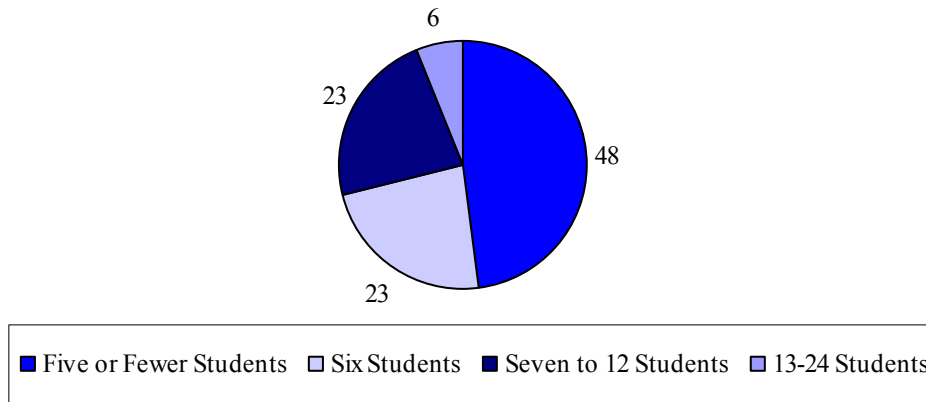
**Figure 6-13
Group Size in Intensive Interventions**

Of the interventions during the 22 observations, 19 were delivered to intensive students (one group served intensive and benchmark students), two were delivered to strategic students, and one was delivered to benchmark students. On average, intensive and strategic interventions were provided to groups of five or fewer students. Of all interventions observed, 68 percent were delivered to students in groups of five or fewer. The largest observed intervention was of 11 intensive kindergarten students, which the evaluator rated consistently strong with no behavior or management problems. Of those interviewed, two coaches and one teacher referred to problems with intervention group sizes being too large:

> *We started at six kids per tutor and now we're up to eight per tutor. We don't have enough staff, but the number of people is the issue.* (Reading Coach*)*

Use of Data

Interventions should be based on ongoing results of assessments/screenings that clearly identify student need areas (see Chapter X for a full discussion of the use of assessment data.) Several interviewed coaches and teachers commented about the role of data in planning and administering interventions. Some voiced concerns about screening assessments and using data from assessment to guide interventions. Others addressed the ability to administer progress monitoring assessments with consistency and enough frequency to efficiently move students in and out of interventions.

Instructional Materials

Other characteristics of effective interventions are the use of instructional materials that are well-matched to students' needs; that are sequenced, systematic, and explicit; and that provide practice in working with words, reading, and writing. Fewer than half of the coaches (46%) and teachers (43%) agreed that the instructional materials used in interventions were well matched to student needs. In fact, when asked about challenges to providing interventions, materials were one of the most frequently cited problems by both interviewed coaches and teachers.

It must also be noted, however, that funding for supplemental and intervention materials was not provided for in this first year; schools and districts had to complete an application for these funds for the second year and justify their selection of research-based materials matched to their student needs. And indeed, of particular concern to teachers in the first year were the classroom intervention materials they had available, which often accompanied the core program:

> *The Houghton Mifflin intervention materials aren't all that great. We need more materials.* (Teacher)

> *The in-class intervention materials are too advanced at all levels. When the lowest of the low in the curricula is too high – we need other additional sources. We should dump advanced readers and begin in lower materials. The curricula needs to flip-flop intervention and core with intervention as core for basic needs. Our supplemental workbooks, core book, and practice book are good, but the intervention materials are too advanced, even the basal reader is difficult. But, we dissect it and get through it."* (Teacher)

Half of the observations of interventions found that intervention providers relied on the core curriculum(s) used in the school. Supplemental materials were used in two-fifths of the observations. A mix of core, supplemental, and teacher-developed materials was less commonly observed. Over three-quarters of the observations found that intervention lessons were clearly presented regardless of the type of materials used.

Evaluators also documented the extent to which the five components of reading were addressed during observations of interventions. Without knowing the specific needs of each student in the groups, but instead knowing their grade levels, it appears that interventions that contained word work and reading, and in some cases writing, were appropriately provided to kindergarten, first-, and second-grade students. The content of the lessons provided to third-grade students was sometimes questionable, as two of the lessons solely focused on word work in phonemic awareness and phonics.

- **Kindergarten students** (three interventions): The majority of the content focused on working with words in the context of phonemic awareness and phonics instruction. One of the three observations included the reading of a simple phonics book. Writing, loosely defined as making simple words with letter tiles, occurred in two of the observations.
- **First-grade students** (four interventions): The majority of the content focused on working with words in the context of phonics and vocabulary. Three observations included reading: one focused on fluency with students reading text; the second focused on comprehension of text that was previously read; and in the third, students wrote sentences about text read to them by their teacher.
- **Second-grade students** (eight interventions): The majority of the content focused on working with words in the context of phonics and vocabulary. They also included students reading text or sight words and answering comprehension question. Two of the observations included students writing sight words.
- **Third-grade students** (six interventions): The majority of the content focused on working with words in the context of phonics and phonemic awareness. Students reading text for fluency occurred in four of the observations; there was also some focus on comprehension. Writing occurred in one observation, only in the sense that students used letter tiles to write words.

While evaluators did not note any specific problems with the materials used during intervention observations, a handful of interviewed teachers expressed concern that the intervention materials were not explicitly addressing the needs of individual students.

Training

Training in providing interventions was varied and confidence in the level of training and preparation among intervention providers was mixed. About half of the coaches (53%) and teachers (49%) agreed that their school's intervention providers were well-trained to meet the needs of struggling readers; a quarter of both coaches (25%) and teachers (24%) disagreed. Furthermore, a third of coaches (33%) indicated that a lack of trained staff was a contributing factor in not being able to provide interventions to all struggling readers.

Observed intervention providers were a highly educated group of individuals—many were specialists and teachers, some with advanced degrees. However, coaches also reported that paraprofessionals, volunteers, and administrative support staff provided support to struggling readers as well.

The overall quality of the interventions observed by evaluators was high:

- In almost three-quarters of the observations, intervention providers offered a variety of meaningful and adequate practice opportunities.
- In about three-fifths of the observations at least 85 percent of the students were engaged in the lesson at least 85 percent of the time with little or no off-task behaviors.
- In almost three-quarters of the observations, intervention providers were seen regularly monitoring and adjusting the content of the lesson for individual and/or groups of students, as necessary.
- In about three-fifths of the observations, intervention providers provided regular, clear, and neutral or positive feedback to most of the students during the lesson.

However, from interviews with intervention providers, evaluators gleaned that training was received in a variety of programs and from a variety of sources. Individually, providers reported they received training in interventions from one or two of the following programs: CLICK, SONDAY, Reading Recovery, Project READ, Language for Learning, Rewards, the core program, SRA, and/or in working with English Language Learners. Furthermore, training was provided by a plethora of sources including Reading First conferences, reading coaches, district staff, state reading specialists, CORE, and even ADE—some of these sources may or may not have been providing training specifically geared to implementing Reading First interventions in year one of funding for Cycle 2 schools in Arizona.

When interviewed regarding what additional training intervention providers would like to have, nothing was consistently cited. The varied list included additional training in the core program; computer programs; Reading First-approved materials; materials matched to needs identified by assessments; working with small groups, ELL or Special Education students; from the publisher of the intervention program; and opportunities to network with other intervention providers in other Reading First schools. Interviewed teachers, also requested additional training to better provide interventions in their classrooms:

> *The flex groups need to be improved. We don't have enough information and understanding of what to do in flex groups. We want more specific guidance and information on what we should do in flex time.* (Teacher)

CHAPTER VII
LEADERSHIP AND COLLABORATION

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Highlights

- Overall support from the LEA was viewed by LEA coordinators, state reading specialists and principals as generally high (70-90%) in a variety of areas: supported school-level activities with adequate resources; provided technical assistance; participated in meetings (RLT) and trainings; supported the core and assessment efforts; implemented Reading First strategies at their non-Reading First schools; and provided grant management activities.

- The grant has influenced non-Reading First schools in the LEA. Of the non-Reading First schools, close to 60 percent of them all have a 90-minute reading block in K-3 and almost 50 percent use the same core reading program as the Reading First schools. Significantly more Expanding-Cohort 3 LEA non-Reading First schools have reading coaches, the 90 minute reading block, and interventions than do New-Cohort 4 LEA non-Reading First schools.

- For the most part, principals were fulfilling their expectations. Principals provided for 90 uninterrupted minutes for reading instruction and collection of DIBELS data; they observed in classrooms and attended Reading Leadership Team meetings; they worked effectively with the coach; and they were viewed by coaches and teachers as visible advocates for reading in their school buildings.

- Although 80 percent of SRS reported that principals were able to consistently, perform classroom walk-throughs, principals were less often (60%) able to give constructive feedback to teachers. In interviews, principals also identified these areas as challenges.

- The majority (over 70%) of coaches understood their role, and about the same percentage were successfully fulfilling their role per the Implementation Checklist measures pertaining to the coach. Further, 71 percent of the coaches agreed/strongly agreed that they work effectively on Reading First with the principal.

- Eighty-six percent of teachers noted they were observed by coaches at least once a month and 76 percent said they were provided feedback after observations at least once a month. The majority of coaches agreed they felt comfortable observing teachers and providing constructive feedback after an observation.

- From summer 2006 to spring 2007, the proportion of those strongly supporting instructional changes under Reading First has remained relatively constant for principals and coaches with over 95 percent indicating support. The proportion of teachers who support instructional change has declined from 70 percent at baseline to 45 percent at the end of the school year.

- Teachers had the highest proportion of philosophical differences with the Reading First program which rose from 13 percent to 26 percent for 2006-07.

- Slightly more than half (55%) of teachers were pleased that their school had the Reading First program.   This contrasted sharply with the very positive responses of principals and coaches which relatively unchanged at 97 percent and 90 percent, respectively.

- While 84 percent of principals felt that Reading First contributed to a more collaborative culture, this declined to 75 percent of coaches and 59 percent of teachers.

- A positive change over the last year was the increasing frequency of at least weekly attendance at grade-level meetings.   At the end of the year, 54 percent of teachers attended grade-level meetings 1-3 times a week compared to 18 percent at the beginning of the year.

Roles of Reading First Leaders

Role of the District

The 85 Cycle 2 Reading First schools in Cohorts 3 and 4 are located in 42 Local Education Agencies (LEA) across Arizona. The LEAs ranged from having as few as one school to as many as six Cycle 2 Reading First schools compared to the total number of schools each one of the LEAs have to serve. This number ranges from as few as one school to as many as seventy-five with eight schools being the average. The ADE envisioned the LEA as a source of support for Reading First schools and principals in their implementation of the grant. According to the ADE, the LEA should provide clear support to the schools' Reading First goals and plans. In addition to assisting with financial elements of the grant, LEAs were encouraged to provide support through cooperation and flexibility, such as extending the window for purchasing intervention materials to allow for thoughtful decision making.

Each LEA was required to appoint a Coordinator for Reading First activities. The representatives themselves had a wide ranging role in the LEA outside of the grant with eight percent being superintendents and over sixty percent being made up of assistant superintendents, curriculum specialists, instruction specialists, and literacy specialists. The average allocated time spent on the project was 28 percent and the average actual FTE percentage was only about 5 percent higher than their officially allocated time.

Survey results indicated that the LEAs supported Reading First in a variety of ways. The most commonly reported LEA roles were supporting the core reading program, providing grant management, having a LEA staff member designated as the Reading First "go-to" person (district-level coordinator, representative), assisting with proposal writing, and monitoring grant implementation (Table 7-1).

Table 7-1
Reading First Support

Ways Districts Supported Reading First	Percentage
By supporting the core reading program	100
By providing grant management	98
By having a district staff member designated as the Reading First "go-to" persons (district-level coordinator, representative)	98
By assisting with proposal writing	95
By monitoring grant implementation	93
By analyzing student reading assessment data	90
By providing professional development that is aligned with Reading First	90
By providing overall curriculum guidance	90
By training teachers in the core curriculum.	86
By providing technical assistance to support school change	86
By supporting intervention programs	83
By modifying district requirements to align with Reading First	81
By facilitating district-wide Reading First meetings for <u>coaches</u>	69
By facilitating district-wide Reading First meetings for <u>principals</u>	60
By educating and galvanizing the community	52

The State Reading Specialists (SRSs) reported that LEAs varied in providing support to schools, as measured by the five items in the implementation checklist (Table 7-2). Specifically, over four-fifths of the SRSs reported that the LEA supported school-level Reading First activities with adequate resources (94%); provided technical assistance, as needed based on information gathered at monthly Reading First coordination meetings (82%); and monitored monthly Reading First activities and intervened when necessary (85%). These items showed a 6 to 11 percent improvement from the fall 2006 to the spring 2007 semester. Furthermore, 64 percent of the SRSs reported that the LEAs coordinated district-wide Reading First activities that included AZ READS schools and assured their participation, and only 47 percent saw evidence that the LEAs facilitated a monthly meeting with Reading First schools/principals to analyze assessment data. These last two items showed no improvement.

Table 7-2
Implementation Checklist-Local Education Agency

		Yes		No	
		Count	**Percentage**	**Count**	**Percentage**
Does your LEA leadership facilitate a monthly meeting with RF schools/principals to analyze assessment data?	Spr. '07	40	47	45	53
	Fall '06	41	48	44	52
	Diff.	-1	-1	+1	+1
Does your LEA leadership coordinate district-wide RF activities that include AZ READS schools and assures their participation?	Spr. '07	54	64	31	37
	Fall '06	54	64	31	37
	Diff.	0	0	0	0
Does your LEA support school-level RF activities with adequate resources?	Spr. '07	80	94	5	6
	Fall '06	75	88	10	12
	Diff.	+5	+6	-5	-6
Does your LEA provide technical assistance, as needed based on information gathered at monthly RF coordination meetings?	Spr. '07	70	82	15	18
	Fall '06	61	72	24	28
	Diff.	+9	+10	-9	-10
Does your LEA monitor monthly RF activities and intervenes when necessary?	Spr. '07	72	85	13	15
	Fall '06	63	74	22	26
	Diff.	+9	+11	-9	-11

According to the spring surveys, buy-in to Reading First from the LEAs was over 90 percent; communication from the state was rated as positive by over four-fifths of the respondents; and state's expectations were viewed as being clear, reasonable and appropriate by almost 80 percent of the respondents. Furthermore, almost 70 percent of the representatives expressed that the grant had greatly influenced the non-Reading First Schools. Along the same lines, only 8 percent of the respondents felt that there were tensions between Reading First and non-Reading First schools in their LEAs (Table 7-3).

Table 7-3
District Support and Understanding

	Percentage Agreeing/ Strongly Agreeing
Our district strongly supports the instructional changes occurring under Reading First.	91
The state has done a good job of communicating necessary information regarding Reading First to district staff.	84
The state's expectations for district involvement in Reading First are clear.	78
The state's expectations of district involvement in Reading First are reasonable and appropriate.	77
Reading First has greatly influenced the reading program in our district's non-Reading First schools.	69
There are tensions between Reading First and non-Reading First schools in our district.	8

In the spring surveys, the principals were asked to report the degree to which they agreed with the following statement, "Our district provides sufficient support for Reading First." The results of the surveys showed that almost 70 percent of the principals agreed or strongly agreed that the LEA provided sufficient support for Reading First. Furthermore, during the spring site visits to the schools the principals were also asked whether or not they agreed with the above statement. Similarly, the results of the interviews showed that 65 percent of the principals agreed/strongly agreed with that statement.

During the interviews, the principals detailed the many ways they felt their LEA had provided sufficient support for Reading First. Some of their comments included LEA representative attending all meetings (RLT) and trainings, doing walk-throughs and T4S, discussing data, implementing Reading First strategies at their non-Reading First schools, as well as providing needed personnel, materials, and professional development.

Some comments from the principals included:
> *Our district has been supportive in the implementation of Reading First. Anytime that we have questions the district is able to answer our questions or will find someone to answer*

> *the questions. They have also provided professional development trainings that I believe have been very effective.* (Principal)

> *There has been a District representative at all monthly meetings and RLT meetings. Also, the two RF schools in the District were asked to share what they are doing and the impact it is having on their schools. Also the Reading First schools meet separately with the Assistant Superintendent every two weeks to talk about data and progression; he has offered different levels of support.* (Principal)

While the considerable majority of those interviewed felt the LEA had played a positive role in Reading First, a few principals indicated some dissatisfaction with the assistance they had received. For example, one principal felt that there were too many resisters, too much criticism, continuous fault finding, and not enough support from the district. Another principal stated,

> *I will disagree because they are too hands-off in the implementation and the resources are not there. We have to request a meeting ourselves. I feel the state and the district don't come together which puts the schools in the middle. It impedes our movement. It has been an issue.* (Principal)

Looking at the question of whether or not there were major initiatives that contradicted or were not aligned with Reading First, less than one-fifth of principals and coaches and none of the LEA coordinators agreed or strongly agreed with the question. This can be viewed as positive in that the LEA coordinators and most of the principals and coaches did not view the Reading First program as contradictory but rather may be complementary to overall to other initiatives.

When looking at the LEAs' participation in Reading First activities, over three-fifths of the respondents reported to have attended the 2006 Summer Desert Canyon Institute and the 2006 Summer Conference. The State has been persistent that LEAs' representatives attend coaches and principals meetings. As noted in Table 7-4 in most cases the LEA representative was able to attend these meetings; 90 percent reported to have attended at least three statewide coach and principal meetings. In contrast, only 59 percent reported to have attended at least three statewide meetings for LEA representatives. Furthermore, more than 80 percent reported to have attended meetings with principals and coaches in new Reading First schools.

Table 7-4
LEA Participation in Reading First Activities

In 2005-2007, how frequently did you attend the following activities?	Percentage				
	Did not attend	**Once**	**Twice**	**3 times**	**4 + times**
2006 Summer Desert Canyon Institute	23	77			
2006 Summer Conference	37	63			
Statewide coach and principal meetings	2	5	2	7	83
Statewide meetings for district representatives	14	17	10	2	57
Meetings with the principals of new Reading First schools in our district	10	2	7	5	76
Meetings with the coaches in new Reading First schools in our district	10	--	7	2	80

As seen in Table 7-5, a large majority (over 80%) of the respondents found their meetings with principals and coaches of new Reading First schools usually or always useful. Furthermore, over three-fifths reported to finding the 2006 Summer Desert Canyon Institute and the statewide coach, principal and LEA meetings usually or always useful. In addition, less than 50 percent of them reported finding the 2006 summer conference usually or always useful.

Table 7-5
Helpfulness of Attendance at Professional Development and Meetings

How useful, to you as Reading First district coordinator, was your attendance at the following:	Percentage					
	Never Useful	**Rarely Useful**	**Sometimes Useful**	**Usually Useful**	**Always Useful**	**Did not Attend**
2006 Summer Desert Canyon Institute	--	--	10	18	50	21
2006 Summer Conference	--	--	18	13	36	33
Statewide coach and principal meetings	--	5	19	21	52	2
Statewide meetings for district representatives	--	5	17	22	44	12
Meetings with the principals of new Reading First schools in our district	--	2	5	20	63	10
Meetings with the coaches in new Reading First schools in our district	--	2	2	15	70	10

When asked in the spring surveys how the state could further support the LEAs in the implementation of Reading First, LEAs reported a variety of answers. Some typical responses were providing additional information and tutorials on budget, sharing the Annual Progress Reports early in the school year, providing additional interventions for ELL and low SES students, continuing funding for coaching and intervention, providing trainings at the school site, and providing training for paraprofessionals (provide an academy for them just like the teachers).

> *ADE needs to conduct trainings such as the 2007 Reading First Summer Academy at the school site. We don't have the funds to send 60 teachers to Phoenix or Tucson for training. We need more budget management training or technical assistance if we have any questions about budgetary matters.* (LEA Representative)

In addition, other principals stated the need for allowing participation of non-Reading First school personnel in Reading First training opportunities for a cost, providing consistent communication, extending funding for schools in year five of Reading First, helping the schools better understand the correlation between DIBELS and AIMS Web, as well as providing clear guidelines and information on how to take students as they go beyond third grade.

> *Allow for flexibility regarding the involvement of District personnel. For example, allowing more than the Reading First Coordinator to participate in principal and coaches meetings. Allow participation of non Reading First school personnel (principals and coaches) to participate in Reading First training opportunities for a cost.* (LEA Representative)

Furthermore, other principals expressed the need for the state to provide LEAs with a calendar well in advance of LEA planning times that gives a written overview of what is covered each month and what LEAs are expected to do during the year.

> *Districts should be provided with clear goals and expectations from the beginning of each year; benchmark goals, professional development expectations, budget and funding deadlines, agendas for meetings prior to meetings, etc.* (LEA Representative)

The data in Table 7-6 show in greater detail the specific influence the grant has had in LEAs that included non-Reading First schools. Of the non-Reading First schools, almost three-fourths of them all use DIBELS for assessment. In addition, close to 60 percent of them all have a 90-minute reading block in K-3 and almost 50 percent of those schools all use the same core reading program as the Reading First schools.

Table 7-6
Reading First Influence with Non-Reading First Schools in RF LEAs

Reading First Characteristics	Percent Non-Reading First schools within the RF LEA		
	No non-RF schools	Some non-RF schools	All non-RF schools
Have a K-3 reading coach	54	16	30
Use DIBELS for benchmark assessments three times a year	27	--	73
Systematically progress monitor students	27	43	30
Use the same core reading program as Reading First schools	38	16	46
Have a 90-minute reading block in K-3	25	17	58
Provide systematic interventions for struggling students outside the 90-minute reading block	24	35	40
Provide or attend ongoing, high-quality professional development in reading	34	29	37

In response to the specific influence the grant has had in LEAs that included non-Reading First schools, there was a statistically significant difference ($p \leq .01$) between Cohorts 3 and 4 in some areas as seen in Table 7-7. Of the non- Reading First schools in Cohort 4 LEAs, almost 70 percent of them do not have a K-3 reading coach as compared to about 30 percent of the non-Reading First schools in Cohort 3 LEAs. In contrast, of the non-Reading First schools in Cohort 3 LEAs, over 90 percent of them have a 90-minute reading block as compared to only 39 percent of the non-Reading First schools in Cohort 4 LEAs. Furthermore, of the non-Reading First schools in Cohort 3 LEAs, almost 80 percent of them provide systematic interventions for struggling readers outside the 90-minute reading block as compared to only 21 percent of the non-Reading First schools in Cohort 4 LEAs.

Table 7-7
Reading First Influence with Non-Reading First Schools in RF LEAs by Cohort

Reading First Characteristics	Percent Non-Reading First schools in RF LEAs					
	No non-RF schools		Some non-RF schools		All non-RF schools	
	Cohort 3	Cohort 4	Cohort 3	Cohort 4	Cohort 3	Cohort 4
Have a K-3 reading coach	31	67	39	4	31	29
Have a 90-minute reading block in K-3	8	35	0	26	92	39
Provide systematic interventions for struggling students outside the 90-minute reading block	8	33	15	46	77	21

*Significant at the p≤.01 level

Almost 70 percent of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that Reading First has greatly influenced the reading program in the LEAs' non-Reading First schools. Furthermore, when asked if there were tensions between Reading First and non-Reading First schools, only 8 percent strongly agreed with almost three-fifths disagreeing or strongly disagreeing (Table 7-8).

Table 7-8
Reading First Influence in LEA's with Non-Reading First Schools

This year…	Percentage				
	Strongly Disagree	**Disagree**	**Neither Agree nor Disagree**	**Agree**	**Strongly Agree**
Reading First has greatly influenced the reading program in our district's non-Reading First schools.	--	3	28	36	33
There are tensions between Reading First and non-Reading First schools in our district.	21	37	34	--	8

Role of the Principal

Principals had a crucial role to play in the implementation of Reading First at the school level. They had the authority and position to designate Reading First as a top priority in each school and to set the tone for a successful grant implementation. According to the state project director, the principal should be involved in the day-to-day work of the grant. Furthermore, as an instructional leader, the principal should be visible in the classrooms, observing instruction and providing feedback; this entails being able to recognize appropriate instruction. In addition, the principal should provide a consistent message that supports the program, work closely with the reading coach, and be able to lead a collaborative team in implementing school wide reading goals and objectives. Information about the particular responsibilities, implementation, and leadership abilities of principals was gathered with the implementation checklist, surveys and site visit interviews.

Listed here are some of the demographics taken from the spring survey data. As can be seen, only 7 percent were new principals and about one-fifth were new to their school. The breakouts on the continuing and new principals and their years of experience follow: (Number = 82)
- Principals who were new to school in 2006-2007: 7 percent (6 principals)
- Principals at same school in 2006-2007: 93 percent (76 principals)

Total years of principal experience (including this year)
- Range: 1-34 years
- Average: 8
- 7 percent had just one year of experience

Number of years principals were at this school (including this year)
- Range: 1-20 years
- Average: 4
- 22 percent had just one year of experience at this school

When interviewed, the principals were asked to explain what the state expected from them that was different or in addition to their regular duties as principals. They described a wide range of responsibilities relating to Reading First. The principals believed that they were expected to support the program in all aspects, including doing classroom observations and walk-throughs, providing feedback, reviewing, sharing and monitoring data, working closely with the coach, attending meetings and trainings, providing professional development for teachers, and ensuring that there was a 90-minute reading block. Additional responsibilities mentioned by some principals included having consistent implementation, becoming a knowledgeable instructional leader, knowing the core reading materials and the big five components of reading, having intervention programs, ordering research based materials, and having documentation and higher accountability.

> *I think it forces me to do more observations and provide feedback. I think it is something you should be doing as a principal, but Reading First just forces you more to do it.*
> (Principal)

As the expectations for principals' responsibility has increased with additional time being required, more principals were struggling to meet that expectation. According to the site visit interviews, some principals found that fulfilling all the varied aspects of the state's expectations was a difficult challenge. Among the things principals found challenging to do were conducting classroom observations, providing specific feedback, and attending grade level meetings. In fact, some of those who stated they were meeting all of the state's expectations felt they had neglected their other principal duties. The most common grievance was trying to get into the classrooms to do classroom observations and walk-throughs. They found it difficult to give the attention desired to every classroom because there is so much to do. Several principals commented on this aspect:

> *I am able to fulfill all of my expectations, although I do disagree with how much principals are required to do classroom walk-throughs. There is a lot to do from meetings to trainings and these sometimes get in the way of my principal duties.*
> (Principal)

> *No, because I've dedicated myself to K-3 and Reading First. But, that's what I'm saying, because I'm fulfilling their expectations, I'm neglecting others.* (Principal)

> *I'm not able to fulfill regular duties outside of Reading First. For example, I don't know what else is going on in the rest of school (grades 4-8 and special areas), I'm more focused on K-3.* (Principal)

SRSs viewed the principals as performing their job in some areas of the implementation checklist. As seen in Table 7-9, over three-fourths of the SRSs rated the principals as providing a

master schedule that protected a minimum of 90 uninterrupted minutes for reading instruction. Furthermore, all but one of the SRSs reported that the principals ensured that DIBELS data were collected and entered into the data management system. In contrast, only 24 percent of the SRS reported that the principals lead the grade-levels in analyzing assessment data to design and monitor instruction.

Table 7-9
Implementation Checklist - Leadership

		Yes			No		
		Count		**Percentage**	**Count**		**Percentage**
The principal ensures the DIBELS data are collected and entered into the data management system in a timely manner.	Spr. '07	84		99	1		1
	Fall '06	84		99	1		1
	Diff.	0		0	0		0

		0 components		**1 component**		**2 components**		**All 3 components- leads, designs & monitors**	
		Count	**%**	**Count**	**%**	**Count**	**%**	**Count**	**%**
The principal **leads** the grade-levels in analyzing assessment data to **design** and **monitor** instruction.	Spr. '07	12	14	29	34	24	28	20	24
	Fall '06	38	45	31	37	9	11	7	8
	Diff.	-26	-31	-2	-3	+15	+17	+13	+16

		Time not protected		**Quite a few interruptions or exceptions**		**Rare exceptions**		**Really protected**	
		Count	**%**	**Count**	**%**	**Count**	**%**	**Count**	**%**
The principal provides a master schedule that protects a minimum of 90 uninterrupted minutes for reading instruction.	Spr. '07	1	1	0	0	18	21	66	78
	Fall '06	0	0	6	7	30	35	49	58
	Diff.	+1	+1	-6	-7	-12	-14	+17	+20

The survey respondents clearly viewed principals as visible advocates for reading in their school buildings; 84 percent of teachers and 79 percent of coaches felt this way in the spring 2007. This demonstrates a gain of more than 10 percent from the summer 2006. In addition, there was some perception among respondents that Reading First put excessive emphasis on the involvement of principals in instructional matters; 28 percent of teachers and 38 percent of principals felt this way (Table 7-10).

Table 7-10
View of Principal in Reading First

	Percentage Strongly Agree /Agree					
	Teachers		Coaches		Principals	
	Summer '06	Spring '07	Summer '06	Spring '07	Summer '06	Spring '07
Our principal is a visible advocate for reading.	60	84	69	79	--	--
I feel that Reading First is putting excessive emphasis on the involvement of the principal in instructional matters.	--	28	--	--	--	38

As far as the principal and coach relationship, according to the spring surveys, 96 percent of the principals agreed/strongly agreed that they work effectively on Reading First with the coach. In addition, 71 percent of the coaches agreed/strongly agreed that they work effectively on Reading First with the principal.

When asked during the site visit interviews how principals and coaches shared responsibilities, some principals stated that they were primarily the overseer of the bigger picture and motivators of teaches, others stated that their responsibility was to make sure teachers knew they were behind Reading First 100 percent and that they held teachers accountable. Still others said that their job was to collaborate with the reading coach to make sure the grant was being implemented. Some principals also stated that they made the major decisions (formal evaluations, deal with parent issues related to Reading First, chair RLT meetings), but they usually consulted with the coach.

> *If I see something that isn't happening in the class, I let the reading coach follow-up with the teacher. I ask the coach to work with certain people and I also make it a requirement for certain teachers to reach out to the coach for help.* (Principal)

Similarly, some coaches said the principal was the one who was really behind Reading First, was very supportive and very visual on campus and observed in classrooms everyday. Still other

coaches added that the principal provided the direction, and made the final decisions. But, they felt principals relied a lot on them because of their reading experience. They said that the principal talked to them when ever something of concern occurred and they discussed it.

> *The principal uses data to drive instruction and keeps our core time sacred, protecting the 90 minutes!* (Reading Coach)

> *Principal is very connected with the program, she's in her 4th year, she lives in those classrooms and is connected with the curriculum, knows the kids and their data. We do work collaboratively; I go to her and ask what she thinks. She is willing to try a lot of things, we have frequent dialogue. We have an outstanding relationship of almost equals.* (Reading Coach)

According to other principals, the coach is the hands-on person who deals with the day to day issues; goes to the classroom and observes, coaches, models, gives advice and recommendations. They added that the coach walks alongside the teachers and supports them, meets with them, and helps them with data, testing and materials.

> *The reading coach and I work closely to monitor our students' progress and make changes in the school if needed. The reading coach does more of the hands on modeling and observing and I kind of stay out of the teaching role. I let the reading coach handle most of the Reading First responsibilities and she meets with me whenever she needs feedback.* (Principal)

Still, some other principals felt that they shared a dual responsibility with the coach. They said that they met everyday and talked about different teachers, the T4S form, professional development, and data.

> *We talk every day about what to do and how to do it (i.e. meetings); individually we administer the T4S, then we compare notes, and come up with suggestions and refinements for teachers; we meet daily, attend grade-level planning meetings and data meetings, we go to Phoenix together for meetings; we mentor new teacher in reading.* (Principal)

> *It's a partnership and coach is there as a resource for teachers. Sometimes we do walk-throughs together, but it is mainly individual and then we discuss it at our meetings and we say, oh yea I observed that too. And we plan accordingly.* (Principal)

Likewise, some coaches stated that they have a good working relationship with the principals, have an open communication, talk whenever they need to; they collaborate, do observations and make decisions together. One coach also said that he is on the same page with the principal and the teachers know that anything is backed up by both the principal and the coach regardless of from whom they hear it.

> *It really feels like a partnership, we meet formally an hour a week and talk informally 5 times a day. We do walk-throughs once a month and see what the needs are. Reading*

> *First has been a team between us. He has supported me with any issues I have with teachers and has backed me up a 100%.* (Reading Coach)

Several principals reported being frustrated and feeling that the coach was not doing her job.

> *I make decisions, but they don't get carried out. I ask for a schedule of her classroom observations, so I won't observe in the same classroom the same day, and if I insist, she gives me one. But then the teachers tell me that the coach doesn't really do it. Her plans for the day don't get followed thru. Our teachers love Reading First, but they are not getting the support they need, and I provide some, but I can't do all of it.* (Principal)

Conversely, for some other coaches the principals' lack of involvement in Reading First has been a trouble spot. They felt that the principal had not been doing enough classroom observations, attending many of the Reading Leadership Team meetings, or the grade level meetings.

> *It would help if he did his part, going into the classroom, doing some in-and-out coaching, saying something about it, so they know he's a presence. He doesn't go visit the classrooms. The teachers haven't had their evaluations yet. The SRS asks for notes about his walk-throughs, but he never has them, we get low scores every time on the implementation checklist.* (Reading Coach)

Classroom Observations by Principals

One of the activities the State emphasized was getting the principals in the classroom to do observations. The principals were supposed to provide constructive feedback to teachers based on observations and walk-throughs by using a standardized form developed by WestED (T4S). The goal was to provide evidence of teachers' use of effective instructional strategies. Another big piece of the Reading First principal role is to understand what reading instruction should look like and to observe in the classroom to ensure that this is the kind of instruction being provided. The method in which the principals selected teachers for walk-throughs varied. A few principals indicated that they did focus on those teachers who were having the most problems and based their selections on recommendations from the reading coach. The majority of principals' visits ranged from daily to three times a month, with the vast majority doing it once a week or once a month.

The tools used when principals observed teachers differed greatly among the principals as well. Most used the T4S form, others said they have designed their own forms or use a checklist adapted from the state trainings. Still others were far more informal where they were merely dropping in on a whim without the intension of taking formal notes.

During the site visit interviews principals were also asked to share how they knew if teachers were using the practices that they learned in professional development. In general, the principals reported checking by doing walk-throughs, using the T4S form, sitting in on grade level meetings, talking about it at RLT meetings, reviewing coach/LEA coordinator T4S, doing formal evaluations, or doing lessons plan reviews. One principal added that if one teacher is not doing it, she "*sticks out like a sore thumb.*"

Some principals reported that the accountability is that teachers are given some directives as far as to what is supposed to happen. As an example one principal said that they had done some professional development on literacy stations and then they gave teachers some time to implement what they had learned. Then, they (principal and coach) went in to observe it being done. "*It is all done thru communication. We give them comments on their T4S or in an out coaching. We have a lot of opportunities to meet with teachers.*" Another principal said that they (coach and principal) look for it. "*I have a checklist and send the teachers a list of what I'm looking for and tell them we are going to monitor it. Those things should be evident. So the coach and I collaborate to make sure we are getting what we ask for. I am more of the enforcer.*"

When asked, during the site visit interviews, how much priority should be placed on principal walk-throughs, the majority of the principals expressed that it should be high because teachers know they are being held accountable. In addition, principals felt that walk-throughs helped them have a really good sense of what is happening in the classroom and see that the professional development and training were being implemented.

> *It's crucial. My main job is to be an instructional leader. I'm not a manager any more. That's the big difference; I have to be in the rooms if that's our focus.* (Principal)

> *I think principal walk-throughs are a big priority. They reinforce the teachers' perception that I'm concerned with what's going on in the classroom. Principal walk-throughs also help maintain fidelity.* (Principal)

> *What's going on in the classroom, it's the most important thing. As the instruction leader I have to be there. We can celebrate what's going on and what is successful. I need to know what's happening and be there to help by providing the resources instead of waiting later and reading the autopsy.* (Principal)

A few principals expressed that although walk-throughs should be a high priority, they felt there is also a lot of time when they are away for meetings and doing paperwork and sometimes it is hard for them to get into the classrooms. One principal expressed that it is not feasible for principals to perform as many walk-throughs as was expected. This principal felt that the state should look at the schedules of the principals and should be sensitive to their needs and the amount of responsibilities that they have. Still another said that walk-throughs are important but they have to be balanced with all the other principals' responsibilities.

According to the site visit interviews, principals thought the walk-throughs helped them as instructional leaders by allowing them to identify the teachers who were struggling and by providing on-going support to teachers. Also, it allowed them to celebrate with teachers and see how the grant is being implemented. In addition, one principal said that walk-throughs have helped him see "*how difficult it is to change from how comfortable you are to something new.*" Still another principal said that at the end of the three years she will know about teaching reading.

> *It helps me make connections between teachers for sharing. I can say, I saw this in such and such classroom and do you want to try that? It also helps me see the strengths and*

weaknesses of each staff member and think about what kinds of things we need.
(Principal)

It gives me a snap shot of what the teachers are doing. The observations help me provide the professional development and materials my teachers need because they help me see what areas teachers are lacking. I can see the interaction between teachers and students.
(Principal)

In contrast according to the SRS, only 44 percent of principals were able to identify teachers in need of assistance; and plan, support, and ensure that the assistance/interventions occur (Table 7-11).

Table 7-11
Implementation Checklist-Leadership

		No support		Identifies at-risk teachers based on data		Identifies & has plans for support of teachers		Identifies, plans, & ensures that plan/follow through occurs	
		Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
The principal identifies teacher(s) in need of assistance; plans, supports and ensures that assistance/ intervention is provided (coach forms, classroom observation forms).	Spr. '07	1	1	11	13	36	42	37	44
	Fall '06	7	8	34	40	28	33	16	19
	Diff.	-6	-7	-23	-27	+8	+9	+21	+25

According to the interviews, principals felt that from their walk-throughs teachers learned that they were in this together and gave teachers a sense of "*because you're here, you know what's going on.*" They signify the principals' buy-in to Reading First. Principals stated that their visits make teachers think more about their instruction and keep them more focused on what they are supposed to be doing because they (principals) are always around. Teachers know that they have to plan and use the data to make better decisions. It also communicates that the principal is learning about reading and improving her own skills.

Results of the spring surveys showed that over 90 percent of the principals agreed or strongly agreed that they were comfortable observing teachers and providing constructive feedback to teachers after an observation (Table 7-12).

Table 7-12
Principals Comfort with Classroom Observation and Providing Feedback

	Percentage				
	Strongly Disagree	**Disagree**	**Neither Agree nor Disagree**	**Agree**	**Strongly Agree**
I am very comfortable observing teachers.	--	--	1	33	66
I feel very comfortable providing constructive feedback to teachers after observing them.	--	4	5	43	49

Similarly, looking at the implementation checklist data in Table 7-13, almost 80 percent of SRS reported that principals were able to consistently observe in classrooms. Furthermore, slightly more than 60 percent of SRSs reported that principals were able to consistently give constructive feedback.

Table 7-13
Implementation Checklist-Leadership

		0-10%		11-50%		51-90%		91-100%		Total >50%
		Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	%
The principal observes reading instruction in each K-3 classroom to ensure research-based instruction is sustained.	Spr. '07	3	4	17	20	33	39	32	38	77
	Fall '06	17	20	22	26	12	14	34	40	54
	Diff.	-14	-16	-5	-6	+21	+25	-2	-2	+23
The principal provides constructive feedback to all teachers at least once a month based on LEA observation requirements, and/or walk-throughs and assessment data.	Spr. '07	7	8	25	29	34	40	19	22	62
	Fall '06	22	26	23	27	18	21	22	26	47
	Diff	-15%	-18	+2	+2	+16	+19	-3	-4	+15

The survey data shown in Table 7-14 indicated that the majority of teachers (60%) noted that the principal was in their classroom once a month or less. Furthermore, although a little more than sixty percent of the SRSs reported that the principals provided constructive feedback 51 percent of the time or more, just forty-one percent of teachers surveyed indicated that constructive feedback was only given once or not at all. Moreover, 14 percent indicated that they never received feedback.

Table 7-14
Frequency of Principal Observations and Feedback

This year, how often did…	Percentage					
	Never	Once or a few times a year	Once a month	2-3 times a month	1-3 times a week	Daily
The principal observe your classroom during the reading block?	2	33	25	24	14	2
The principal provide you with specific and constructive feedback on your instruction?	14	41	22	17	6	<1

As seen in Table 7-15, there was a statistically significant difference ($p \leq .01$) between Cohorts 3 and 4 on the teachers' response to how often the principal had observed them and provided constructive feedback. According to 18 percent of teachers in Cohort 4, principals observed them between 1-3 times per week to daily; whereas, teachers in Cohort 3 reported principals doing so only 10 percent of the time. Furthermore, 16 percent of the teachers in Cohort 4 reported that principals never provided specific constructive feedback on their instruction, as compared to only 8 percent in Cohort 3.

Table 7-15
Frequency of Principal Observations and Feedback by Cohort

This year, how often did…	Percentage											
	Never		Once or a few times a year		Once a month		2-3 times a month		1-3 times a week		Daily	
Cohort	3	4	3	4	3	4	3	4	3	4	3	4
The principal observe your classroom during the reading block?*	3	2	36	32	28	25	25	24	9	15	1	3
The principal provide you with specific and constructive feedback on your instruction? *	8	16	45	39	23	23	20	16	5	6	1	0

*Significant at the p≤.01 level

As seen in Table 7-16, there was a statistically significant difference (p ≤ .01) between Cohorts 3 and 4 on the teachers' response to how helpful was the principal's feedback on their instruction. While 17 percent of teachers in Cohort 4 reported that the feedback never took place, only 8 percent of the teachers in Cohort 3 reported that.

Table 7-16
Teachers' Perceptions of Helpfulness of Principal Feedback by Cohort

Over the 2006-2007 school year, how helpful was:	Percentage											
	Never Helpful		Rarely Helpful		Sometimes Helpful		Usually Helpful		Always Helpful		Did Not Take Place	
Cohort	3	4	3	4	3	4	3	4	3	4	3	4
Feedback on your instruction provided by the principal after observation of your classroom?*	2	3	8	9	16	18	30	27	35	26	8	17

*Significant at the p≤.01 level

While there were differences between the cohorts, in total two-thirds of teachers reported that the feedback their received from the principal was usually or always helpful (Table 7-17).

Table 7-17
Teachers' Perceptions of Helpfulness of Principal Feedback

Over the 2006-2007 school year, how helpful was:	Never Helpful	Rarely Helpful	Someti mes Helpful	Usually Helpful	Always Helpful
Feedback on your instruction provided by the <u>principal</u> after observation of your classroom?	3	10	20	33	34

Role of State Reading Specialist

According to the ADE, the role of the Sate Reading Specialist is to provide content expertise in reading instruction as needed to assist schools in implementing the program and monitoring their progress. The responsibilities of the reading specialists are to: (a) serve as the local representative of ADE, (b) engage in professional development sponsored by ADE, (c) provide technical assistance to the districts and schools in his/her region, (d) provide expertise in SBRR and its implications for classroom instructional practice, (e) and provide ongoing support and assistance to schools in addressing reading achievement in his/her region.

This year the SRS agreed that their main purpose/helpfulness with the schools at the beginning of the year was creating the Reading First structure such as the ensuring the proper implementation 90-minute reading block or seeing to it that schools had an active RLT. They also agreed that creating the Reading First structure had been a universal success as all of their schools had the meetings and system organization in place. SRS felt they helped nudge along key personnel through reflection and had taken them to the next step of refinement.

Although the SRS work with everyone in the schools, the coach and principal are where they spend more time than with the teachers according to SRS responses during the focus groups. The SRS were asked how effective they believed they were in contributing to the specific gains made by the schools in leadership under their tutelage, as shown in Table 7-18. All the SRS indicated they either "very much" or at least "somewhat contributed" to the gains made by the schools. Many of the SRS noted the principals' increased knowledge in reading was key to those schools' success.

> *Some principals take our ideas even when they're not quite sure about them but willing to try new things and many have found our suggestions helpful.* (State Reading Specialist)

Table 7-18
Degree SRS Felt that Their Work Had Contributed to the Specific Gains with the
Reading Coach and Principal (Leadership, Professional Development, Instruction, etc.)
in Reading First Schools

	2007 Percentage
Very Much Contributed	50
Contributed	50

The challenges faced by the SRS exist in three categories: leadership, budgeting, and instruction. In many schools, principals are not used to occupying the role of instructional leader and often have their attention diverted by more than one school. The SRS noted both their own and the principals' frustration over budgeting issues that seemed to arise as they were not familiar with what schools could spend Reading First money on and what they could not.

Role of the Coach

Reading coaches played an important role in creating the kind of school and classroom-level change envisioned by Reading First. While their position involved some leadership and collaboration with the principal, their primary responsibility was to support and mentor teachers as they adopted research-based instructional practices and materials in their reading classrooms. Coaches were informed by the ADE that about eighty percent of their time should be spent in the classroom and/or working directly with teachers.

In addition, coaches were to play a leadership role on the RLT, help to plan the logistics to establish a school wide intervention system, and support the implementation of the school's reading plan. In collaboration with the principal and assessment team, coaches were also expected to assist with assessment and analysis of data and help teachers make instructional and grouping decisions using data.

Information about the tasks that coaches participated in, their prior training, confidence in the coaching role, and challenges faced by them was gathered through the implementation checklist, surveys, and interviews conducted during the site visits.

Background on this group of reading coaches included seventy-seven (92%) who were full-time and seven (8%) who were part-time. In addition, the survey data showed that 76 percent of the respondents said that there was another reading coach at their school. Furthermore, 74 percent said that the additional reading coach also worked with K-3 reading teachers.

A breakdown of the demographics of the reading coaches follows:

Total years of coaching experience you have (including this year):
- Range: 0– 21 years
- Average: 2

Years as a reading coach at this school (including this year)?
- Range: 0 – 12 years
- Average: 1 years

Years have you worked at this school (in any capacity, including this year)
- Range: 1– 30 years
- Average: 8 years

Years of teaching experience prior to becoming a coach
- Range: 2– 31 years
- Average: 15 years

As a reading coach, hours per week you work at this job on average
- Range: 35-76 hours/week
- Average: 49 hours/week

According to the survey data, the majority of the time (60%) coaches were hired by the schools and LEAs working together. Furthermore, LEA coordinators thought that it was very/somewhat easy to find qualified applicants for the coaching position. Some of the reasons given by LEA coordinators for having difficulty finding qualified applicants for the coaching position were the location of the school (rural areas) and finding applicants who had a reading background.

According to the implementation checklist data shown in Table 7-19, for the most part reading coaches were performing up to the standards set by the state. Of the eight items that dealt with the coach, five of them showed that over seventy-percent of the SRSs reported the schools were successfully completing these functions by the spring 2007.

Table 7-19
Implementation Checklist on Coaches' Functions

	Percentage Implemented	
	Fall 06	**Spring 07**
The coach creates and maintains a schedule/log for coaching teachers.	74	91
The reading coach documents the assistance he/she is providing to all K-3 teachers.	62	87
The coach assists the assessment teams in administering, scoring, sharing, analyzing and using data for instructional decisions.	25	66
The coach assists in the identification and implementation of K-3 interventions for each grade level.	35	58
The coach assists all K-3 teachers with adjustments to instruction based on data.	25	72
The coach assists in the ongoing implementation of the core reading program for all K-3 teachers.	69	88
For all K-3 teachers, the coach assists the principal in monitoring the ongoing use of research-based practices with approved materials.	62	81
The coach spends time coaching K-3 teachers in reading instruction (according to West Ed's coaching formula).	22	59

When asked during the site visit interviews what the state expected from them as a Reading First coach, coaches said that the state expected them to be in classrooms 80 percent of their time and to be working directly with teachers; helping them fine tune their instruction with student engagement and direct explicit instruction; modeling, and providing feedback and strategies. In addition, coaches discussed attending professional development, assisting with data and assessment, and helping teachers make informed decisions on their instruction and grouping of their students. Some coaches added that they were expected to be implementing grade-level meetings and establishing strong RLTs. Still others said that that state expected them to do paper work and documentation and to also bring up reading scores and help teachers' buy-in and implement Reading First effectively.

> *The state expects me to observe in the classrooms, provide feedback to teachers from the protocol, to model instruction, to provide professional development, to communicate with principals and teachers, and to be a support for the teachers.* (Reading Coach)

> *The State expects me to be in the classroom 80% of the time, helping teachers directly. This entails giving feedback, scripting teachers, etc. I'm also expected to go over data, address any related reading problems, ensure that the teachers have what they need, perform excellent professional development, and attend lots of meetings.* (Reading Coach)

Overall, the majority (71%) of the reading coaches stated in survey responses (Table 7-20) that they felt their role was clearly defined by the state. Furthermore, 65 percent of coaches reported that they agreed/strongly agreed that the teachers at their school understood the role of the reading coach.

Table 7-20
Reading Coach Role

This year…	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree/ Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
My role as the reading coach is clearly defined.	2	12	15	51	20
Most teachers at my school understand the role of the reading coach.	2	20	12	56	9

According to the site visit interviews, for the most part coaches felt they were meeting the state's expectations, but sometimes they felt that they ended up taking tasks beyond those expectations. For instance, coaches ended up helping with DIBELS testing, participating on several school committees, helping the principal with a variety of tasks, supervising instructional assistants, observing grade levels 4-6 once a month, substituting, doing after school tutoring, helping with data, doing coaching outside of the school day, and working and providing interventions to students.

> *I am a master mentor teacher and I'm also a teacher on assignment to the principal, so I do have to attend some other meetings.* (Reading Coach)

Furthermore, when asked during the site visit interviews if there were some expectations they were not able to fulfill, among the statements the coaches said were not being able to observe inside the classrooms as much, not being able to monitor, provide feedback, or do modeling as much as they would like, not doing as much professional development, not being able to use the T4S form, not being able to do the daily log and paper work or hold grade-level meetings consistently, not doing as much team teaching as it is expected, and not being able to have 80 percent of the students at benchmark.

> *Since my schedule is really jammed packed, I don't have time to plan for professional development, or intervention strategies. I don't have enough time to do the other stuff besides observations.* (Reading Coach)

As for the reasons given by the coaches for not being able to get into classrooms as much as they wanted, they said that they had to attend a variety of professional development sessions, do progress monitoring, use the T4S, administer DIBELS, help with data management, do paper

work, conduct and attend meetings, substitute for teachers when they are absent, and conduct trainings for instructional assistants.

Between trainings and other duties I haven't been able to get into the classrooms as much as I wanted to. We're thinking about moving toward Peer observation, it would be nice to see other formats for this. (Reading Coach)

According to the spring surveys, the majority of coaches feel comfortable observing teachers and providing constructive feedback after an observation (Table 7-21).

Table 7-21
Coaches Comfort with Classroom Observation and Providing Feedback

This year…	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I am very comfortable observing teachers.	0	0	5	56	40
I am very comfortable providing constructing feedback to teachers after observing them.	0	14	10	57	20

The survey data presented in Table 7-22 indicated the teachers' response on the frequency of coach observation and feedback. Eighty-six percent of the respondents noted they were observed at least once a month and 76 percent said they were provided feedback after observations at least once a month.

Table 7-22
Frequency of Coach Observation

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
the reading coach observe your classroom during the reading block?	1	13	22	35	26	3
the reading coach provide you with specific and constructive feedback on your instruction?	6	18	21	33	20	2

As seen in Table 7-23, there was a statistically significant difference (p ≤ .01) between Cohorts 3 and 4 on the teachers' response to how often the coach had observed them and provided constructive feedback. According to 30 percent of teachers in Cohort 4, coaches observed them between 1-3 times per week; whereas, teachers in Cohort 3 reported coaches doing so only 17 percent of the time. Furthermore, 23 percent of the teachers in Cohort 4 reported that coaches provided specific constructive feedback 1-3 times a week on their instruction, as compared to 16 percent in Cohort 3.

Table 7-23
Frequency of Coach Observations and Feedback by Cohort

This year, how often did…	Percentage											
	Never		Once or a few times a year		Once a month		2-3 times a month		1-3 times a week		Daily	
Cohort	3	4	3	4	3	4	3	4	3	4	3	4
The principal observe your classroom during the reading block?*	7	9	17	12	28	19	37	35	17	30	0	4
The principal provide you with specific and constructive feedback on your instruction? *	5	6	20	16	26	19	32	35	16	23	1	2

*Significant at the p≤.01 level

Furthermore, almost 40 percent of teachers reported hat they would like the coach to go into their classroom and work with them more often that they do (Table 7-24). In addition, as seen in Table 7.24, there was a statistically significant difference (p ≤ .01) between Cohorts 3 and 4 on the teachers' response to whether they wanted the coach to go into their classrooms and work with them more often. In Cohort 4, a higher percentage of teachers (30%) agreed that they wanted coaches in their classrooms than did Cohort 3 teachers (22%). Overall, forty-three percent of teachers in Cohort 4 agreed/strongly agreed that they would like the coach to go into their classroom and work with them more often; in contrast, teachers in Cohort 3 reported agreeing/strongly agreeing 32 percent of the time.

Table 7-24
Teachers Wanting Coach to Be in Their Classrooms More Often

This year…		Percentage									
		Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neither Agree nor Disagree		Agree		Strongly Agree	
I would like our reading coach to come in my classroom and work with me more often than s/he does.		6		22		33		27		12	
	Cohort	**3**	**4**	**3**	**4**	**3**	**4**	**3**	**4**	**3**	**4**
		9	5	26	21	34	32	22	30	10	13

*Significant at the p≤.01 level

As shown by the data in Table 7-25, teachers indicated that for the most part the coaches were helpful. Over 65 percent of teaches believed the coaches' ability to provide feedback after an observation, their assistance in providing quality interventions, and their ability to demonstrate lessons were usually/always helpful to them.

Table 7v25
Teacher's Perception of the Helpfulness of the Coach

Over the 2006-2007 school year, how helpful was/were:	Never Helpful	Rarely Helpful	Sometimes Helpful	Usually Helpful	Always Helpful
Demonstration lessons provided by your reading coach?	3	8	19	31	36
Feedback on your instruction provided by the <u>coach</u> after observation of your classroom?	2	8	19	27	42
Assistance from the coach in providing quality interventions?	3	10	21	31	34

Reading coaches were responsible for many aspects of grant implementation and management. On average, coaches spent 49 hours a week doing their job, ranging from 35 to 76 hours a week. From a list of 14 responsibilities shown in Table 7-26, coaches were asked to report how many hours they spent per week per task. Based on the average forty-nine hour work week outlined by them in surveys, the percentage of time on each task was computed. On average, coaches spent 37 percent of their time working directly with teachers observing, training, demonstrating and providing feedback, and training teachers. Furthermore, they spent 37 percent of their time providing support to teachers by managing data, reviewing and using the data, planning and

attending RLT and grade-level meetings, coordinating or administering assessments, and planning and providing interventions. Coaches spent an average of 16 percent of their time doing paperwork, covering or subbing for teachers, or doing bus or recess duty; nine percent of time was spent in state trainings.

Specifically, ADE recommends that the coach spends 80 percent of his/her time for classroom observations and in-class support; however that is based on days not counting those to be spent on professional development activities. If all the coach's time is considered (as per the question asked in this survey), the in-class percent drops to 70 percent of time, and is reflected in the total of 74 percent the time reports as observing and supporting teachers.

Table 7-26
Reading Coach Tasks by Percent of Average Total Hours Worked

Average Percentage	Range (Percentage)	
30	4-65	Observing, demonstrating or providing feedback to individual teachers in grades K-3
11	0-31	Paperwork (not including assessment/data management)
9	0-29	Attending professional development or state-level meetings
8	0-30	Managing data (entering data, creating charts, etc.)
8	0-25	Reviewing and using reading assessment data
8	1-65	Planning for and attending RLT and grade-level meetings
7	0-26	Coordinating or administering reading assessments
5	0-18	Training groups of teachers in grades K-3
4	0-21	Planning interventions
2	0-33	Bus/recess duty
2	0-23	Providing interventions directly to students
2	0-20	O. Other: _____
1	0-18	Covering or subbing for teachers
1	0-17	Observing, demonstrating or providing feedback to individual teachers in grades 4-6
1	0-10	Training groups of teachers in grades 4-6

When asked during the site visit interviews how they dealt with resistance, coaches said that they tried to be very positive and dwell on the good things. One coach said that she goes through the backdoor and gains the teachers' trust and tries not to dwell on want needs to be fixed. For example she said she tells them, "*maybe you should try it like this or can I come in and model for you.*" Other coaches said that they reiterate, keep making suggestions or have the principal step in if teachers do not change. In addition, they said that they try to be persistent and positive and never try to push a teacher and instead they always provide them with motivation and enthusiasm so that the feedback to them is never taken as negative. Still other coaches said that they try to be the least threatening as possible. Instead, they use honest feedback that is more positive to make them feel more comfortable. They also use dialogue or professional development and sometimes they let them vent about what is wrong and they let them know that they are listening to them. They try to find a common ground and not be confrontational.

According to the site visit interviews, the most common response from coaches' regarding the best aspect of their job was working with teachers, training, having principal support, seeing the change that was taking place at their schools, knowing exactly where the students were because of data, and having coaching knowledge. Below are some typical statements from the coaches.

> *Knowledge gained has been phenomenal, when I can really help a teacher that is really great, it's not just impacting that one teacher but all the students they are working with.* (Reading Coach)

> *Expanding in my professional development and collaborating with teachers on a different level.* (Reading Coach)

> *Seeing the change in the staff; going from resisters to yes, I get it now, I can look at data, and I know my kids. I see a higher level and more consistent level of academics.* (Reading Coach)

> *Working with teachers that are doing their best, are using strategies and student engagement. Seeing that we have our protected time and nothing disturbs that time unless it's an emergency.* (Reading Coach)

As far as the worst aspects of their job, coaches responded during the site visit interviews that it had been working with resistant teachers, being out of the school so much in order to attend trainings, not having enough time to do everything required for Reading First, gaining acceptance from teachers and having teachers trust they are knowledgeable in teaching reading, not being very sure of what their job entails both from lack of clarity from the state and having additional responsibilities thrown on them from the principal, trying to organize everything they had learned and not being able to teach it to teachers, having students with high mobility rate, doing lots of paperwork and documentation, and being stretched too thin. The following represent some of the responses from the coaches.

> *Coming into the data room and seeing that the students we work so hard with have moved away – high mobility rate and new students come in at 0.* (Reading Coach)

> *Working with resisters, there aren't that many but a few and just trying to spend more time modeling and providing support to them. Dealing with the personalities is difficult. You can't make everyone happy, as much as I'd like to. That's one of my problems as a people pleaser, but you can't do that.* (Reading Coach)

> *Being stretched too thin; I feel like I should be in the classroom more but DIBELS needs to be inputted and done. I'm barely keeping my nose above the water sometimes.* (Reading Coach)

Communication and Collaboration

Buy-In

Principals, coaches and teachers from new schools in Cohorts 3 and 4 were surveyed in summer 2006 and again in spring 2007 about their view of Reading First and its program components. The proportion of those strongly supporting instructional changes under Reading First has remained relatively constant for principals and coaches with over 95 percent indicating support. The proportion of teachers who support instructional change has declined from 70 percent at baseline to 45 percent at the end of the school year (see Table 7-27). As previously referenced, Cohort 3 refers to Expanding LEAs with new schools and Cohort 4 new LEAs with New schools. In this case, there was a statistically significant difference (p≤.01) between Cohort 3 and 4 for degree of instructional support with more of Cohort 4 (49%) supporting changes than Cohort 3 (38%).

Some additional analyses were performed to investigate the issue of teacher buy-in. The decline in percentage of teachers who agree/strong agree was present throughout all schools (80 of the 85 schools had responses from at least five teachers). This pattern was consistent; for every school with at least two teachers surveyed, at least one of them agreed with the statement.

Two other considerations pose possible explanations for the decrease of percentage points of teachers who agree/strongly agree. First, change also occurred in the proportion of teachers who neither agree nor disagree, with nine percent more selecting that as their response in the spring; further, the percent who actually disagree/strongly disagree increased by just 16 percent.

Second, there is the issue of the question itself: "I strongly support the instructional changes under the Reading First Program." The use of the word *strongly* may be an influence in the degree to which people agree with the question, and knowing more about the program in the spring than they did last summer, teachers were uncertain in how they felt about the changes that were occurring under Reading First.

Table 7.27
Support for Reading First

I strongly support the instructional changes that are occurring under Reading First	Percentage Agreeing/Strongly Agreeing		
	Principals	**Coaches**	**Teachers**
Summer 2006	99	95	70
Spring 2007	96	95	45

The percentage of principals reporting that overcoming teacher resistance was a challenge increased from 31 percent to 35 percent during 2006-07. At the end of the year, 58 percent of coaches responded that overcoming teacher resistance was a challenge (question not asked at baseline).

Teachers had the highest proportion of philosophical differences with the Reading First program which rose from 13 percent to 26 percent for 2006-2007. There was a statistically significant difference (p≤.05) between Cohort 3 and 4 with more Cohort 3 teachers (28%) reporting philosophical differences than Cohort 4 (24%) teachers. Only 10 percent of principals and 4 percent of coaches reported such differences.

Slightly more than half (55%) of teachers were pleased that their school had the Reading First program. This contrasted sharply with the very positive responses of principals and coaches which were relatively unchanged at 97 percent and 90 percent, respectively. In response to whether teachers were pleased to have Reading First at their schools there was a statistically significant difference (p≤.01) between Cohort 3 and 4 with more of Cohort 4 (60%) pleased to have the program compared to 45% of Cohort 3 teachers.

Nearly half (46%) of coaches and 38 percent of principals felt that other subjects had suffered as a result of the focus on Reading First. However, seven in ten responding teachers perceived a negative impact on other subjects.

One principal attributed the high buy-in at his school to the participatory approach he took in implementing a major new program for the school and district. This principal involved teachers even before the school wrote its grant. The teachers knew they would get additional support and benefits (coach, assessment coordinator) and agreed to accept extra scrutiny and classroom observations. Along similar lines, another principal attended workshops with the teachers before making their decision (which was unanimous) to implement Reading First. Many principals cited the data results and improvement in student performance On the negative side, the termination of initial stipends had a negative impact on buy-in. The degree of buy-in was affected by schools with large staff turnover due in part to the implementation of Reading First. A few principals felt that teachers who did not adapt well to the program should leave their schools.

Overall, coaches were more positive in their descriptions of buy-in than negative with more than 60 percent giving positive characterizations of buy-in. One respondent noted:

> *The teachers here are realistic and we are an underperforming school (AYP). The principal did a good job of pumping up interest in Reading First with the faculty before we became a Reading First school.* (Reading Coach)

Another coach with a mix of levels of buy-in commented:

> *I think the resistance is based on a misunderstanding of what Reading First expects and maybe the controversy over Reading First at the national level. What helps them buy-in is the fact that we can work with kids to get them reading at grade level, the idea that there is a solution. One of our teachers has been very successful and that makes them think, 'She did, so maybe I can too.'* (Reading Coach)

Coaches described buy-in as an ongoing process and progress was achieved (scores improved) as students and schools improved. One of the obstacles or barriers was the classroom observation component. Some teachers felt they were being evaluated and not that the process could improve their teaching method. Of those coaches encountering more negative opinions, a

consistent response was the attitude of teachers, often veteran teachers, who felt they knew best and were resistant to change their teaching method and viewed new programs as transitory.

There were only 12 principals who said teachers' buy-in was medium or low, and these principals were asked what they were doing to increase the buy-in. The actions included visiting other school sites, using data to show results, modeling for teachers, writing positive feedback comments for teachers, providing materials and support, providing an option for teachers to transfer out and more training.

Principals encountered many challenges associated with Reading First. These included time, resistant teachers, Reading First and state school improvement documentation, establishing reading centers, implementing intervention strategies and the high proportion of students at the intensive level. Another principal noted that staff are skeptical of any new program and that schools/district do not stay with them.

The most prevalent example of success due to Reading First was how teachers have increased their professional development and adapted their instruction to become strong reading teachers. Others noted that they maintained fidelity with the core program and used the assessment data to demonstrate progress. The coach mentioned numerous challenges: unclear expectations associated with a new program, getting materials/books in time, getting to know the core program, being accountable to the fidelity to the core and determining interventions. The most common successful aspect of Reading First was the increase in student engagement as a result of changes in instructional strategies. One coach, whose responses echoed many respondents, cited the following examples:

> *The 'Celebrate Our Successes' chart paper on the wall done by the Reading Leadership Team, the use of the core with fidelity, implementing best practices, collaboration and sharing ideas among classrooms and learning how to use data.* (Reading Coach)

Meetings and Collaboration

While 84 percent of principals felt that Reading First contributed to a more collaborative culture, this feeling of collaboration declined to 75 percent of coaches and 59 percent of teachers. There was a statistically significant difference ($p \leq .01$) between Cohort 3 and 4 for teachers with more of Cohort 4 agreeing that Reading First contributed to the development of a more collaborative culture (61% compared to 53%).

In response to whether teachers had a voice in decision-making, there was a statistically significant difference ($p \leq .01$) between Cohort 3 and 4. More than half of Cohort 3 (55%) disagreed they were part of the decision-making process compared to 45 percent of Cohort 4. The percentage of teachers who felt they had a voice in decision making about Reading First declined from 38 percent to 26 percent during 2006-07.

Teachers were asked whether messages about expectations have been clear and consistent and if they have had to deal with conflicting messages from different sources. Nearly half described conflicting messages regarding expectations. Those with problems also mentioned inconsistent messages from the principal, state reading specialist, coach, and the district. Teachers also

reported inconsistency from one visit to the next from the same person. Obstacles included receiving core materials late which impacted the training effectiveness of the Summer Academy for one school. Those with mixed experience responses (17%) generally described an inconsistent message at the beginning of the year that improved as the year progressed. One third reported consistent and clear expectations

Reading Leadership Team

Generally, the Reading Leadership Team (RLT) at each school is comprised of the principal, coach, assessment coordinator and teachers to manage the implementation of Reading First. This team determines the reading needs of the school and students. They periodically review and analyze test data and discuss the most effective way to communicate findings with the school staff.

At this time, nearly all teams were comprised of the coach and principal with at least 90 percent having teachers from that target grades (K-3). Special education teachers were part of 83 percent of the teams, Title I teachers 44 percent, 4-6th grade teachers 43 percent and LEA representatives 31 percent. Coaches reported that the vast majority of schools were continuing to meet the Reading First requirement of having the RLT meet at least once a month. Most teams meet once a month (70%), 15 percent meet more frequently and 15 percent less frequently.

All responding principals reported they were on their school's RLT in contrast with two thirds of teachers who were not on their Team. There was a statistically significant difference ($p \leq .01$) between Cohort 3 and 4 for teacher membership on the RLT. There were fewer teachers on the RLT in Cohort 3 than 4. Fifty-nine percent of teachers felt that their school had a visible and effective RLT.

The ideal model for an effective RLT is a body that meets at least monthly, plans explicitedly and collaboratively and is integrally involved in the implementation of the grant. Coaches were asked to what extent this model accurately described their Team. Only 34 percent replied high, 38 percent moderate, 28 percent as low with six of those needing improvement. Coaches described teams at various stages of the model. Some teams were working on content and process and not examining data yet, others were further along and examined data and specific grade level benchmarks. Collaboration was an issue for some teams. An example of a team exemplifying the ideal:

> *Very true. Meet monthly and analyze data and grades 4-6 are there because we want a continuation of what we've been doing in K-3 grade. Teachers bring things to the table for discussion and it gives the principal and coach a pulse of how ideas would be accepted a5t the grade levels. It is an open forum for discussion.* (Reading Coach)

An example of a Team at the moderate level from the coach's perspective:

> *It does meet monthly and right now is very data driven (student specific not grade-level trends). It does not necessarily go out to grade levels from those meetings so not quite an*

integral part of everything. But we use those meetings to target kids we want to move and it helps to keep everyone on the same page. Our meetings are very productive. Next year, they will be better but definitely we are headed in the right direction. We might have a broader view next year. Right now it is student focused. (Reading Coach)

The State Reading Specialists completed the implementation checklist for New schools in Cohorts 3 and 4. When asked if the RLT designed, monitored progress of the K-3 intervention plan, and made appropriate adjustments for each grade level, only 12 percent fulfilled all three criteria in the spring compared to 2 percent in the fall; indeed by spring only 39 percent of the schools were fulfilling even two of the components.

The teachers who are members of their RLT reported that the most frequent functions of the RLT were discussions of school-wide assessment data (91%), the exchange of information about what was going on at the school in reading (87%), discussion of student-level assessment data (78%) and receiving information from the coach and principal about what was going on with Reading First at the state level (72%).

Table 7-28
Functions of Reading Leadership Team

	Percent of Teachers*
Talk about school-wide reading assessment	91
Exchange information about what is going on at the school in reading	87
Talk about student-level reading assessment data	78
Receive information from the coach and principal about what is going on with Reading First at the state level	72
Make decisions about instruction within or across grades	59
Share information about reading research	42
Make decisions about what reading materials to use/purchase	41
Make decisions about instruction for specific students	38
Plan special reading events, family literacy activities	26
Plan for sustainability, or what will happen when the school no longer has Reading First funds	6
Other	11

*Includes only teachers who reported they were members of the RLT.

Coaches and principals had differing perspectives on the how Reading First program would function without the role of the RLT. While 61 percent of principals felt that Reading First would not run smoothly without the Team, only 36 percent of coaches had this opinion. Interestingly, 38 percent of coaches and 29 percent of principals were neutral about the Team's contribution to the overall program.

Attendance at Team meetings by the principal is part of model of an effective RLT. In addition, the principal's participation lets the other members know that this program's successful implementation is important and they want to be informed of the issues to make informed decisions. Eighty five percent of principals reported always attending meetings followed by 12 percent often and 3 percent sometimes. Principals had the highest rate (94%) of finding the meetings useful followed by 72 percent of coaches and 37 percent of teachers. These responses may reflect a number of reasons including: principals were aware that the meetings are a requirement of ADE and therefore they were voicing their support and compliance; coaches, who were not convinced that the program would not run smoothly without the Team itself, were frustrated by the multiple claims on their time, number of schools they serve, and the progress of the implementation; and teachers who have so many demands on their time with increasing responsibilities without additional compensation.

When asked during the interview process if the Team meetings were a good use of their time, 82 percent of principals felt they were. Principals with a positive perspective cited them as an opportunity to show commitment to the program and support for the teachers, to understand the curriculum specifications, keep them informed, review latest results, discuss what was going well and what changes needed to be made and provided a forum for open discussion.

An important component of a functioning team with effective meetings is the degree to which members feel free to express their opinions particularly opinions not shared by the rest of the group. Nearly nine in ten teachers (87%) felt that comments made at team meetings were welcomed. More than three-fourths (77%) of teachers reported that the reasons for doing Reading First program components were discussed. Less than half (43%) of the teachers felt that the primary purpose was to announce information from the state.

Grade-Level Meetings

Reading First requirements include grade-level meetings and other opportunities for staff collaboration and communication related to reading. Grade level meetings served many different purposes across schools. As might be expected, the most common themes were reviewing data (DIBELS and progress monitoring) and cooperative curriculum/core lesson planning at the grade level. Other topics included training and professional development sessions and creating student action plans. The State Reading Specialists reported that 57 percent of their observed schools K-3 teachers compared to 27 percent in 2006 discussed assessment data twice a week at their grade –level meetings to monitor progress toward benchmark goals.

A positive change over the last year was the increasing frequency of at least weekly attendance at grade-level meetings. At the end of the year, 54 percent of teachers attended grade-level meetings 1-3 times a week compared to 18 percent at the beginning of the year. Less than 30 percent attended 2-3 times a month, 11 percent once a month, 4 percent 1-3 times a year, and 1 percent never attended. There was a statistically significant difference ($p \leq .01$) between attendance by Cohort 3 and 4 with Cohort 3 reporting more frequent attendance.

More than half (57%) the responding teachers agreed that attendance at grade-level meetings was a good use of their time, 16 percent disagreed and 27 percent were neutral. There was a

statistically significant difference (p≤.05) between Cohort 3 and 4 with Cohort 3 reporting more disagreement that the meetings were a good use of time.

Teachers reported that 10 percent of principals always attended grade-level meetings, 16 percent usually did, 38 percent sometimes did, 26 percent seldom attended and 10 percent never did. This was in sharp contrast with the 85 percent of principals attending RLT meetings. There was a statistically significant difference (p≤.01) between attendance at grade-level meetings by Cohort 3 and Cohort 4 principals. Cohort 3 principals reported more frequent attendance.

Coaches' attendance at grade level meetings was more frequent than principals with 28 percent always attending, 26 percent usually did, 31 percent sometimes, 12 percent seldom and 3 percent never attended. There was a statistically significant difference (p≤.01) between attendance at grade-level meetings by Cohort 3 and 4 coaches. Cohort 3 attended grade-level meetings more frequently. However, the rather infrequent attendance of principals and coaches contrasts with their view that attending grade-level meeting was a good use of their time. Eighty six percent of principals and coaches strongly agreed/agreed that attending grade-level meetings was a good e of their time, 14 percent of coaches and 12 percent of principals were neutral and 2 percent of principals disagreed.

Interestingly, both principals with positive and negative opinions of the usefulness of attending grade-level meetings did not actually attend all the meetings because of time constraints. In analyzing the interview responses, 37 percent of principals would be categorized as attending sometimes. This mirrors the most frequent teachers' response (38%) of their perception of the principals' attendance rate. Specifically, principals reported the following:

> *If the principals and assistant principal go, it shows that this is important to the teachers.* (Principal)

> *Every week they discuss goals, data and what needs to be done in a small group. It is critical.* (Principal)

At some schools both planning and data meetings are held. Some coaches attended both. Coaches played a variety of roles including running the meeting, facilitating the meeting and observing and answering questions. Almost all coaches mentioned the role that data played at their meetings. Coaches cited the following: provided teachers with information from DIBELS and teachers then decided on leveled reading groups, needs of specific students and where to place teachers aides for support; and reviewed and interpreted data and changed instruction and provided general instructional support. In addition, coaches often set the agenda, brought materials, reviewed the core curriculum and provided professional development

At their school's grade-level meetings, 79 percent of responding teachers reported that they discussed the issues of teaching and learning that they identified as important. There was a statistically significant difference (p≤.01) between Cohort 3 and Cohort 4 with more of Cohort 4 agreeing that teacher identified issues were addressed. The same percentage of teachers felt that all participants' comments were welcomed. There was a statistically significant difference (p≤.05) between Cohort 3 and Cohort 4 with more of Cohort 4 agreeing that all viewpoints were

welcome. Nearly three quarters of teachers (73%) reported that they discussed the reasons for doing things, not just the requirements. There was a statistically significant difference (p≤.01) between Cohort 3 and Cohort 4 with more of Cohort 3 agreeing that reasons for actions were discussed.

CHAPTER VIII
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

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PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Highlights

- There was high agreement (about 90%) among both school principals and coaches that state-provided professional development at monthly meetings quality had provided coaches with useful training in coaching methods and provided principals with high quality leadership training.

- Both coaches and principals were less pleased (about 60%) with the degree of differentiated professional development they received at the monthly meetings.

- The monthly meeting topic that was specifically praised the most by the coaches and principals was the "Teach for Success" as it gave both stakeholder groups a necessary overview of expectations.

- Over 60 percent of reading coaches indicated they could use additional professional development on the selection and use of intervention programs and differentiated instruction. These were also the top two future professional development areas listed by teachers.

- Three-fourths of the coaches and 20 percent of teachers reported that they did receive training from the core program publisher in 2006-2007; teacher responses about the helpfulness were mixed. Only about half the schools seemed to have used study groups or to have had outside experts perform an in-house training.

- Most teachers received the bulk of their professional development at the building level through their reading coach. This came in the form of observations, feedback and/or demonstration lessons. Three-quarters of the teachers experienced this on a regular basis or at least once a month.

- Teachers found their coach a knowledgeable resource and their feedback could improve teacher instruction. Still, there was room for improvement as only 60 percent of teachers believed the coach had helped them become more reflective and less than half indicated the coach increased their understanding of how children learn.

- The state reading specialists believed the lower approval of professional development by teachers was at least partially an indication of teachers' overall ability to implement the pillars of Reading First in their classrooms. In their focus groups, the SRS discussed that teachers have not had all the proper professional development to develop the knowledge and skills to teach reading and that recent college graduates were not ready for the classroom.

- Principals, coaches and teachers felt very positive about their relationship with their SRS and the amount of knowledge the specialist contributed to the school.

State Provided Trainings

A major component of Arizona Reading First is the provision of professional development to principals, reading coaches, assessment coordinators, state reading specialists and staff. This is one means to achieve Arizona's Reading First objective of implementing a research-based comprehensive instructional program through capacity building. Therefore, the ultimate purpose of professional development is to influence the content and quality of reading instruction at the classroom level.

This section of the report summarizes professional development activities in the first year of the second cycle of Arizona Reading First and reviews feedback from participants about the quality, relevance, and utility of professional development.

Many professional development trainings were provided by the ADE and other entities to help schools use effective instructional practices to improve reading. These trainings were provided at multiple levels and by a variety of trainers, mentors, and specialists.

A centerpiece of the training efforts in the first year of the second cycle of the grant was the 2007 K-3 Reading Instruction Workshop. During the months of June to August 2007, the ADE sponsored many of these reading workshops held at various sites in Arizona. The objective of the K-3 Reading Instruction Workshop was to increase instructional effectiveness in order to promote early reading success. Since this was the first year for the Reading Academy for Cycle 2, the focus was on implementation of scientifically based reading instruction. The specific topics included delivery of reading instruction, interventions, use of data, use of vocabulary, and managing the reading program.

ADE also held specialized trainings known as "Monthly Meetings" that included both coaches and principals instead of having separate meetings. It was ADE's belief that giving a unified message to both groups at once and allowing them to collaborate at the meetings would be more beneficial for the overall success of the grant. These meetings were designed to give principals and coaches the knowledge and tools they needed to solve problems at their schools. Training sessions were often facilitated by the WestEd staff but sometimes state personnel as well.

The implementation checklist, which is an instrument completed by ADE reading specialists, included six questions about the content and audience for professional development. These items described the existence of or participation in professional development but did not measure the quality of professional development offerings.

The following items represent professional development findings from the implementation checklist:

- 80 percent of the SRS reported that ongoing professional development included the principal, coach, special education and other specialists, and K-3 classroom teachers. This is a 20 percent gain from last semester.

- 82 percent of the SRS indicated that ongoing professional development targeted the identified needs of staff and students at each grade level. This is a 37 percent gain from last semester.

Professional Development for Principals and Coaches

Most principals (82%) and nearly all coaches (92%) reported that the professional development they received from the state and through Reading First in general was high quality. About three fourths of principals and coaches also agreed they were pleased with the amount of training they received. Principals who reported they were not pleased were evenly split on whether they wanted more or less professional development, while 92 percent of displeased coaches wanted more professional development.

Monthly Meetings

The results from the spring surveys (see Table 8-1) showed that there was high agreement (over 89%) among principals and coaches that state-provided professional development at monthly meetings had:
- Consisted of high-quality presentations;
- Provided principals with useful training in observing teachers and providing; feedback and in instructional leadership;
- Provided coaches with useful training in coaching methods;
- Was differentiated to meet the needs of different groups.

One area that both coaches and principals noted was lacking somewhat was the amount of differentiated professional development they received at the monthly meetings; only about three-fifths believed that professional development was differentiated. This might be attributed to the individuals' skill levels prior to the training. In interviews, some more experienced principals and coaches tended to feel the material contained too much review.

> *Our School had been doing Teach for Success and our core prior so a lot of the material was good review but some of it was just boring.* (Reading Coach)

Table 8-1
Perceptions of Professional Development Received from ADE

The professional development that I received at the coach and principal meetings this year…	Percentage Strongly Agree /Agree	
	Principal	Coach
Consisted of high-quality presentations.	93	91
Provided me with useful training in observing teachers and providing feedback.	93	--
Provided me with useful training in coaching methods	--	89
Was differentiated (tailored) to meet the needs of different groups, based on their level of pre-existing expertise.	61	58

In these interviews, however, most respondents had strong positive feedback about state-provided training. The vast majority of the principals and coaches were very complementary and appreciative of the professional development they received from ADE. A fifth of the respondents could not mention any one specific training that they thought was not especially useful to their position.

> *Overall the professional development met my needs. I felt that they helped me to complete the big picture of RF expectations to get a finite understanding of the program. It provided me an opportunity to ask questions and receive answers.* (Principal)

> *I wish I could have had this ten years ago. I can now share with teachers to make them better by narrowing the focus. It's powerful; we can have a dialog about it and not play the "gotcha" game.* (Principal)

Principal and Coach Meetings Monthly Meetings
The monthly meeting topic that was specifically praised the most by both the coaches and principals was the "Teach for Success" from September 2006. In fact, a third or more of both groups mentioned the "Teach for Success" portion of the monthly meetings. This session concentrated on how to do classroom observation and an overview of the coach's role. What was stated frequently by the coaches in the interviews was how practical and hands-on the this training was and how applicable it was to the their responsibilities. One principal said it was the one piece of professional development that stuck with him.

> *The "Teach Success" for was especially useful because it gave an overview of what was expected of a reading coach and of being able to meet with other coaches.*
> *Overall it put things into perspective and gave the framework of the program.* (Reading Coach)

> *The Teach for Success is the one piece that is essential for being a good instructional leader so it was beneficial to use it and use it effectively.* (Principal)

Another state-provided training that coaches frequently mentioned as useful was the "Eight Ways to Provide Specific Feedback." This was especially true for those brand new to coaching who were thankful to get a handle on where to start. Several of the coaches (and a few principals) even went as far to praise John Paul Lapid who presented this topic.

> *Eight Ways to Provide Specific Feedback was especially useful. Jon Paul had the reading coaches make a booklet that helped us with review.* (Reading Coach)

> *John Paul: is an outstanding presenter, he went over coaching set-up and different teachers you're working with and styles. You want to be reflective – use different styles based on need and where they are.* (Reading Coach)

Finally, the third training coaches cited as useful was the small group instruction. Here the coaches noted that they were given samples on small group instruction, the allotment of time for

instruction, and use of data to form the groups. Other frequently mentioned helpful topics included Literacy Stations, Implementation Checklist, and Data to Make Instructional Decisions.

Principals were even more enthusiastic towards the overall monthly meetings than the reading coaches. Many of them expressed that they enjoyed the time to collaborate and bounce ideas off of each other. Several principals could not point to one example but just spoke to the overall high quality of the professional development

> *I thought that everything had been very useful as we were so needy. Let me say it this way, it was like pouring water on a thirsty plan.* (Principal)

> *It's all been useful. By and large, it was all eye opening and very good. I am a sucker for any kind of Professional Development especially those with trainers who are excellent and very professional. (Principal)*

> *It was all really useful. The professional development was very cognizant of district/school where it wasn't a one-size fits all to implementation.* (Principal)

As noted above, the "Teach for Success" meeting was the most highly rated by principals. Rated slightly below that, a third of the principals noted that the trainings on data were the beneficial to their role as instructional leader. The timing of the training was praised as it was just after the mid-year DIBELS scores so they had the data and could use the information right away which made the session very hands-on. Principals appreciated the discussions around disaggregating and manipulating data for the diagnosis of children and remediation of teacher work, disseminating data, and looking at trends for each child.

> *I felt I was looking closely at my own data and deciding how many students we have in each category and making key decisions from that data. I was able to bring that information back to my school and make decisions with the RLT.* (Principal)

Other frequently mentioned topics by the principals that were useful included Literacy Stations, Lessons Learned from Cycle 1 and the Coaching Process.

The interview data from both the reading coach and principal suggested that the February monthly meeting was the least effective. A third of principals and slightly fewer coaches mentioned this piece of professional development overall. Most mentioned the specific topic of Instructional Observation Protocol Cross Walk (for ELL students) and to a lesser extent Lessons Learned and used terms such as "waste of time," "slowly paced," "repetitive," and "poor delivery by presenter."

> *I just don't know what they were trying to accomplish with the Cross Walk session. It just wasn't useful and didn't correlate well.* (Principal)

> *I actually just left the February training during the beginning "Lessons Learned". I am a cycle 1 coach and it seems they could have used my experience for this particular training.* (Reading Coach)

Despite being generally well reviewed by the many principals, the data training was not as well received by about one-fifth of the reading coaches. This was also the case for about the same number of principals. During the interviews several coaches and principals noted that it was a bit overwhelming and somewhat dull.

> *It was all good information, but we went through it so fast I could have used the time to digest and look at our specific school where we could talk as a team. It was just too much for one meeting.* (Reading Coach)

> *The data work could have been done at my school with the SRS. Our time would have been better spent at a meeting on another topic that is harder to develop solo.* (Reading Coach)

One complaint voiced by many principals and coaches alike regarded the timing and order of the professional development. Several coaches wished the professional development would have occurred earlier. It seemed some of the coaches did not feel prepared.

> *We touched on some of the coaching process here and there. However, we were already in school a full month without knowing what direction to be going in before we got training on the coaching process.* (Reading Coach)

> *ADE needs to do more than three days of training in September. How are we to go help the teachers when we have no idea what's in Reading First?* (Reading Coach)

Some principals also had issues with how the professional development topics were ordered. One principal mentioned that the trainings seemed to be about a month behind where they should be during the first year's implementation phase of Reading First. Another did not think they were warned about what was coming so they could plan for the implementation.

> *The overall pacing wasn't given to us to know when to implement certain things, when to identify successes and then move on to something else. Other times we still needed to finish something from the previous month but then started something new. (Principal)*

Coaches' Future Professional Development Needs
From a list of 16 topic areas on the survey, reading coaches were most interested in the following future professional development:
- Selection and use of intervention programs (68%);
- Differentiated instruction (62%);
- Selection and use of supplemental programs (54%);
- Lesson Modeling (52%);
- Interpreting and working with assessment results (44%);
- Providing constructive feedback (38%).

When reading coaches were asked in interviews what services or training they wanted to have, no clear picture emerged. The two main topics were developing an intervention program and

creating more hands-on classroom coaching techniques. On intervention systems, coaches wanted specifics on how to set-up a system. Coaches' spoke of a lack of confidence to implement something that will work in their school.

> *They gave us a lot of information, but we want to come into the new year with a very good foundation.* (Reading Coach)

> *We need to know how to set up the intervention system. How are schools working; what has been most effective? How about having us observe another school that has been doing interventions successfully?* (Reading Coach)

Coaches cited the need to observe effective coaches in action or the ability to view a model teacher's display of what a reading first classroom can look like. A few coaches went as far as to request an in-house expert come and model in classrooms.

> *We need the SRS or someone else trained as a coach to come in and help me do in and out coaching. I want to be able to actually do it with someone.* (Reading Coach)

Professional Development for Teachers

Teachers received professional development throughout the 2006-2007 school year. This included the summer workshop plus the possibility for additional trainings including DIBELS, publisher core curricula briefings, LTRS, and an assortment of in-house trainings hosted by district representatives, SRS, or the reading coach. Over half of teachers (57%) believed the professional development received through Reading First was sustained and intensive.

Most of the teachers who responded to the spring survey said they had participated in the 2006 Reading First Effective K-3 Reading Instruction Workshop the Summer Reading Academy II (88%). As shown in Table 8-2, approximately seven of ten teachers surveyed believed the workshop to both consist of high quality presentations and provided them instructional strategies that they were able to use in their classroom.

Table 8-2
Teachers Perceptions of the Usefulness of the
2006 Effective K-3 Reading Instruction Workshop

The Reading First Effective K-3 Reading Instruction Workshop**…**	**Percentage Strongly Agree /Agree**
Consisted of high-quality presentations.	70
Provided me with instructional strategies I have used in my classroom.	69
Included adequate opportunities o reflect and share with my colleagues.	64

Note: Only respondents who attended all or some of the workshop responded to these questions.

A quarter of the coaches and 20 percent of teachers reported that they did not receive training from the core program publisher in 2006-2007. Coaches reported that external training from their publisher most commonly occurred 1-3 times a year (59%) and training from other experts did not happen for half the coaches (Table 8-3). Of those teachers who received training, there were mixed responses about the helpfulness; over a third found the training rarely or never useful while almost half found it usually or always useful. .

Table 8-3
Coaches' Reporting External Forms of Professional Development

How frequently this year have the following external trainers provided building-level reading-related professional development to teachers at your school?						
	Did not take place	Once	Twice	3 times	4 times	5 or more
Publisher representatives/trainers	25	29	23	7	10	7
Other contracted experts/trainers	51	19	10	6	6	8

On a positive note, data from the implementation checklist showed that almost 75 percent of reading specialists reported that by the spring 2007 all K-3 teachers received training in use of the DIBELS assessment data. This is a 28% gain from last semester.

Study groups, although often helpful, were also used only about half of the time. Of those who did participate, only 29 percent found them usually/always helpful.

The reading specialists believed the lower approval of professional development by teachers was at least partially an indication of teachers' overall ability to implement the pillars of Reading First in their classrooms. In their focus group, the SRS discussed that teachers have not had all the proper professional development and that recent college graduates are not ready for the classroom. Many of the teachers also do not have the proper knowledge and skills to teach reading.

Most teachers received the bulk of their professional development at the building level through their reading coach. This came in the form of observations, feedback and/or demonstration lessons. Three-quarters of the teachers experienced this on a regular basis or at least once a month.

Table 8-4 data indicate that 86 percent of teachers found their coach a knowledgeable resource and to a lesser extent that the coaches' feedback able to improve teacher instruction (75%). Still, the teachers did indicate there was room for improvement. Only 60 percent of teachers believed the coach had helped them become more reflective and less than half indicated the coach increased their understanding of how children learn.

Table 8-4
Teachers View of their Reading Coach

This year…	Percentage Strongly Agree/ Agree
Our reading coach is a knowledge resource about reading research and practices.	86
Even when providing feedback, I feel our reading coach is an ally in helping me to improve my instruction.	75
Our reading coach has helped me become more reflective about my teaching practice.	60
Our reading coach has increased my understanding of how children learn.	46

Teachers' Future Professional Development Needs
From a list of 14 topic areas, teachers were most interested in the following future professional development:

- Using intervention programs effectively (54%);
- Differentiated instruction (48%);
- Working with ELL students (36%);
- Using supplemental programs effectively (34%),;
- Student engagement (33%);
- Comprehension (30%).

Technical Assistance

In addition to professional development described in the previous section, ADE supported schools through ongoing communication and technical assistance. This was done through the state reading specialists (SRS). Specialists are each assigned to 3-5 schools and for the survey response they were asked to categorize their experiences into an 'average' or 'usual' response for their schools.

The role of the state reading specialist (SRS) is to provide content expertise in reading instruction as needed to assist schools in implementing the program and monitoring its progress. The responsibilities of the reading specialists are to: serve as the local representative of ADE; engage in professional development sponsored by ADE; provide technical assistance to the districts and schools in his/her region; provide expertise in SBRR and its implications for classroom instructional practice; and provide ongoing support and assistance to schools in addressing reading achievement in their regions.

Tables 8-5 shows how many days on average the specialists reported they were able to spend at their schools, while Table 8-6 shows coaches' perception of the number of visits. According to the specialists, half of them were able to spend over two days a month at their schools while the

other half were only able to spend 1-2 days. While three-fourths of the coaches did report that their specialist visited five or times, the rest saw their specialist four or less times during the entire school year. In fact, 11 percent of coaches claimed to never have seen a specialist visit their school.

> *The visits have just been too infrequent. Our SRS has only been three times so far this year and has canceled on us.* (Reading Coach)

> *She hasn't been around a lot. I was expecting her once a week to once a month. I feel other schools are getting more of her time than ours.* (Reading Coach)

Table 8-5
Average Days Spent at Each School Served According to the State Reading Specialists

	2007 Percentage
1-2 days	50
3-4 days	36
5-6 days	14

Table 8-6
Coaches Indication of Number of State Reading Specialists Visits

How frequently this year has your school received Reading First technical assistance from the following sources?						
	Did not take place	Once	Twice	3 times	4 times	5 or more times
State Reading Specialists	11	2	4	2	4	76

Eight in ten SRS indicated that they were very much/mostly able to spend time doing what was needed. Much like in past years, traveling and meetings/training was appeared to take time away from the school visits.

Table 8-7
SRS Time Spent Doing What is Needed

	2007 Percentage
Very Much	9
Mostly	73
Somewhat	18

> *Because of all the demand of my schedule (trainings, travel time) I feel I am not able to help the schools as much as they need.* (State Reading Specialist)

> *I've been out of town three times a month with meetings and trainings averaging 2-3 days each. So much traveling is hard, plus it's difficult getting to my schools very often.* (State Reading Specialist)

SRS almost unanimously agreed that the majority of their time is spent either visiting in the classroom, traveling, filing reports, or establishing a foundation for Reading First in the schools. The SRS also assist in other activities listed in Table 8-8.

Table 8-8
Activities SRS have Worked on or Helped Implement the Most at Schools

	2007 Percentage
Classroom observations	82
School Leadership of Reading First efforts (by principal, coach, RLT)	50
Using data to improve/guide individual and group Instruction	46
Professional Development or Coaching for teachers on reading Instruction	41
Improvement of teachers' reading instruction	32
Professional Development or Coaching for coaches on reading Instruction	27
Clarifying messages and communication regarding aspects of the program	19
Interpreting, working with assessment results	6

In addition to their time spent in observation, instruction, professional development and sharing their "pearls of wisdom," SRS found that developing a level of trust with their schools was prerequisite to implementation. They also believed that establishing this foundation was crucial before they moved on to their initial role expectations.

> *At first I was perceived as an outsider coming in and now I'm more a part of the team. The school took the information from me, but now I'm part of their team. They're waiting for me with questions, and we're a resource for answers*. (State Reading Specialist)

There's been a change from the "State" coming to a school to seeing me as an individual where I feel part of their team. The teachers become upset if I don't come into their room. (State Reading Specialist)

As for the SRS job itself, setting calendars and communication expectations remained an issue.

> *The school I have given the most support is also the school that presents the most significant challenges where I spend the bulk of my time there but it remains the school*

that has showed the least progress therefore making me feel that the gains I have contributed to are limited. (State Reading Specialist)

Results from the spring surveys showed that among most schools, coaches and principals viewed state project staff as responsive to their needs (see Table 8-9). State reading specialists were trusted and valued by most school project leaders.   Most principals and coaches also believed that their SRS understood the culture and programs of their school. The most often term to describe the specialist work by the coaches was "extremely helpful"

Table 8-9
Principal and Coach Perceptions of Specialists

	Percentage Agree/Strongly Agreed	
	Principal	**Coach**
The state reading specialist's support and input has been extremely valuable.	80	73
I trust our state reading specialist with any information – good or bad – about our reading program.	77	74
Our state reading specialist understands our school, our programs and culture, and takes that into account when making recommendations.	72	65

Interviews confirmed these findings. Most coaches had positive things to say about Reading Specialists.

Our Reading Specialist is an extraordinary person. She is only required to give us 1 day per month but gives us 1.5 or 2 days. She even helped out a bit with grades 4 thru 5. (Reading Coach)

She has been awesome; she is the person who links us with Reading First. She has helped us set goals, use the implementation checklist, and gave us DIBELS training. She has taught me how to do in and out coaching and give feedback. (reading Coach)

As is shown in Table 8-10, principals were relatively positive about the assistance they received from the state; 79 percent agreed that the assistance from the state reading specialist provided them a leader in implementing the first year of Reading First.   Seven of ten principals also noted that their specialist had in fact provided professional development during the school year.

Table 8-10
Principals' View of the State Reading Specialist

I am very pleased with…	Percentage Agree / Strongly Agree
The communication with the state reading specialist assigned to our school.	79
The assistance the state reading specialist provided me as a leader in the implementation of Reading First at our school.	79
The help the state reading specialist provided in setting up and/or delivering professional development opportunities at our school.	70

Information collected from the interviews supported the principals' survey data, with three-fourth of the coaches' comments also positive about the services provided by the State Reading Specialist(s).   In fact, over half of those who were positive made comments that could be described as "euphoric" toward the support they received from their SRS.

> *Our Reading Specialist has been extremely helpful. She always gets back to me immediately. The SRS observations have greatly helped the teachers with her non-threatening feedback.* (Reading Coach)

> *Our Reading Specialist was extremely helpful. She was the most knowledgeable person I have ever met.* (Reading Coach)

In addition, when asked to describe the relationship (tone, feeling) between the state reading specialist(s) and the school, more than half of the coaches' comments reflected a very positive relationship. They described the relationship as supportive and warm, a real motivator. They also believed that staff were comfortable with the state reading specialists and used their visits well. These are some examples of typical coach comments:

> *Our specialist here is complimentary and wonderful. Teachers really like her and react to her well. She knows everyone on a first name basis. They want her to come back.* (Reading Coach)

> *It is very positive working relationship and very open. I can ask the reading specialist anything I want and she gives me the answers and the teachers all welcome her.* (Reading Coach)

Despite the overwhelming majority of coaches identifying the state reading specialist as an asset in the first year of implementation of Reading First in Cycle 2 schools, there were some who indicated it was a less than positive experience for the school and specifically for the teachers. Some of the reasons for the lack of support from the teachers can be attributed to overall buy-in for Reading First.

Some coaches believed that either the state reading specialist had not been helpful or the training was not good. The reasons ranged from not being available and not providing services, to being overly critical and not very productive. Furthermore, some coaches felt the state reading specialists were only there to check-up on the school rather than supporting it. Therefore, their presence created a sense of heightened concern. These are some examples of their comments:

> *The tone and feeling is like walking on an egg shell. She made us feel bad, and I don't think it should be like that. Being that she was a learner herself, I don't think she came in here with the right attitude and she kept comparing us to others and that's wrong.* (Reading Coach).

> *The relationship is OK, the teachers don't hate her. Teachers tend to like me in their classroom as opposed to the reading specialist. The reading specialist said that no matter what she sees in a classroom she will tell you something that you are doing wrong. She enters the room looking for something bad "because everyone can improve," she spends very minimal time in classrooms and she'll come up with an "off the wall" criticism.* (Reading Coach)

As reported in Table 8-11, SRS felt their work contributed less to teachers' gains than to the gains of principals and coaches. Still over two-thirds of respondents indicated that they had at the very least "contributed" to the teacher gains this school year.

Table 8-11
Degree SRS Felt that Their Work Has Contributed to the Specific Gains with the Teachers (Professional Development, Instruction, etc.) in Reading First Schools

	2007 Percentage
Very Much Contributed	32
Contributed	41
Somewhat Contributed	27

When asked more about this in the focus group. the SRS agreed that the teachers were learning to be explicit, using the core effectively, enhancing their student engagement and realizing to a lesser degree how to differentiate. As a result, improved instruction has showed up in the test scores of students.

> *At one school I was able to slowly build a constructive relationship with the teachers where they at first looked at me as just another person coming into their classroom. Now, they see me as someone who is genuinely trying to help them become better teachers.* (State Reading Specialist)

CHAPTER IX
USE OF ASSESSMENT DATA

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USE OF ASSESSMENT DATA

Highlights

- The establishment of the DIBELS assessment system for administering and sharing data was in place in most schools. By the end of the year, the percentage of schools with an organized system increased from 44 percent to 90 percent. Progress in classrooms is monitored on a fairly regular basis. However, work remains to increase the number of schools with systems in place to help them disaggregate and analyze data.

- Most coaches were confident that all members of their assessment teams thoroughly understood the administration and scoring of the DIBELS with only minor concerns, if any.

- Although the DIBELS was widely used, principals and coaches were in far more agreement regarding its validity and accuracy than were teachers.

- The majority of principals and coaches used the results of reading assessments when:
    - Identifying which students need interventions;
    - Making decisions about student groupings;
    - Communicating with teachers about their students.

- The majority of teachers used the results of reading assessments when:
    - Identifying which student need intervention and matching them to the correct intervention;
    - Monitoring student progress in interventions;
    - Grouping students into small instructional groups within the classroom.

- While many schools saw growth in their use of data, several schools acknowledged the need to continue to focus and refine. In fact, one-fourth of all schools indicated that improving the use of the DIBELS data system is a top priority for the future.

Reading First schools were expected to review, discuss, and use data from the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) and other student assessments in various ways. This section examines whether schools have a system to collect and analyze assessment data and how data are used to drive instruction and improve reading.

Data and Assessment Systems

With the implementation three years ago of the State Board Policy regarding A.R.S. § 15-704, all schools were required to "select and administer screening, ongoing diagnostic and classroom based instructional reading assessments…to monitor students progress." As Table 9-1 shows, most schools have an organized system for *administering* the DIBELS and other assessments according to survey results from coaches and teachers. Interestingly, there was a significant

difference at the p ≤ .05 level between the Cohort 3 and Cohort 4 groups for both the coaches and for the teachers which a larger percentage of those in Cohort 3 reporting the school having an organized system for *administering* the DIBELS and other Reading First assessments.

The data in Table 9-1 also showed that only three-fourths of coaches and teachers reported they had a system in place for *analyzing and sharing* data with teachers. However, this represents an increase from 44 percent of coaches and 51 percent of teachers reporting such a system in fall of 2006. In addition, survey results revealed that many schools do not yet have systems for sharing data that has been disaggregated by key demographic variables. Only 26 percent of the coaches and 28 percent of teachers reported disaggregating and sharing data on key demographic variables. This is a sharp decrease from the baseline survey results of 44 percent of coaches and 36 percent of teachers.

Table 9-1
School Has an Organized Data System

	Percentage Agreeing/ Strongly Agreeing			
	Coaches		Teachers	
Our school has an organized system for administering the DIBELS and other Reading First assessments. *	90		80	
	C 3	C 4	C 3	C 4
	96	88	86	78
Our school has an organized system for reviewing reading assessment data that have been disaggregated by key demographic variables (i.e. race/ethnicity).	26		--	
This year I have seen our school's reading assessment data disaggregated by key demographic variables.	--		28	
Our school has an organized system for analyzing and sharing the results of the DIBELS and other Reading First assessments with teachers.	72		75	

*Significant at the p ≤ .05 level

These findings were similar to what the state reading specialists reported on the checklists in the spring of 2007. They indicated that 95 percent of all schools had a DIBELS assessment system in place to a*dminister /score, report and share* but that only 58 percent had a system to *analyze* data. On the positive side, this does represent an increase from 20 percent of schools that had all the elements in place in the fall of 2006.

Coaches were also asked to identify which assessment(s) were used in their K-3 reading program. They indicated that most schools used DIBELS as the assessment for *screening* (88%) and *progress monitoring* (96%), and that two-thirds were using it for *diagnosis* (64%). In addition, schools used data from other reading assessments for screening, diagnosis and progress monitoring. For example, over half the schools reported using the core reading program

assessments in addition to the DIBELS. Additionally, one-quarter or fewer of the schools reporting using AIMS, Core multiple assessments and teacher-developed assessments.

Administration and Progress Monitoring

Site visitors discovered that most schools have given significant attention to the collection and management of data. Three-quarters of the schools have assessment teams made up of a variety of staff including coaches, assessment coordinators, interventionists, academic advisors, ELL coordinators, teachers, and data entry individuals. Those schools without teams have several other individuals who assist the coaches with data management. Only two of the coaches indicated that they do all the data management work by themselves.

> *We have a team that does all of the data work. I am trained in all of the data work, however, I tend to focus more on the actual teaching and working with teachers.*
> (Reading Coach)

> *The LEA coordinator provides oversight and is training coaches and teachers in DIBELS; all teachers share in data administration.* (Reaching Coach)

An important task for Reading First schools is to perform regular monitoring of progress in the classroom. As Figure 9-1 shows, over 80 percent of schools surveyed reported regular monitoring in all or nearly all the classrooms. Less than 10 percent of the schools reported regular monitoring in only one-fourth of the classrooms or fewer.
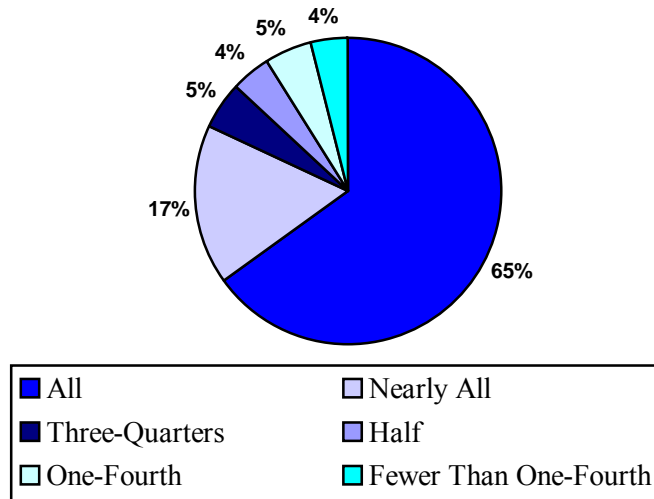
Figure 9-1
Percentage of Classrooms Monitored Regularly

Table 9-2 shows how often students were monitored in their respective groupings. Students in the intensive group were monitored for progress more frequently than students in the benchmark

and strategic groups. Eighty percent of coaches surveyed indicated that intensive students were monitored every 1-2 weeks   Eighty-eight percent reported monitoring strategic students every 4 weeks, and 58 percent report monitoring benchmark students every 6 weeks.

Table 9-2
Average Progress Monitoring By Group

On average, how often are students in each of the following groups progress-monitored at your school?	Every 1-2 weeks	Every 3-4 weeks	Every 6 weeks	Every 7 weeks or less often	Never
Benchmark	7	37	14	31	11
Strategic	42	46	5	5	1
Intensive	80	14	4	2	--

Validity of Results

Three-quarters of coaches surveyed indicated they were fully confident that all members of their assessment team thoroughly understood the administration and scoring of the DIBELS. Site visit results also revealed that over half of the coaches felt they administered and scored DIBELS correctly and consistently with absolutely no concerns. Those who did express some concerns had minor concerns for the most part. Concerns centered generally on not having the time to check for consistency or on the lack of training and practice in administering DIBELS. Some coaches also had reservations about certain teachers who were not taking DIBELS seriously and may not have been consistent. Those coaches were working with these teachers to make improvements.

> *Staff meet together where we review all of the important items and do some practice to ensure reliability.* (Reading Coach)

> *We had some minor areas of concern but we went back to those books and then had a refresher course to address those issues. Progress monitoring also helps in seeing if there is consistency.* (Reaching Coach)

> *We have one or two concerns on occasion, but nothing drastic. This is why we meet and work out the kinks. I have confidence that we are scoring accurately.* (Reaching Coach)

Site visitors reported that the staff at all schools receive some level of training in DIBELS (one school on AIMS web). Most take advantage of training offered by the state. Many districts are also providing training by DIBELS certified trainers. On the implementation checklist, about half of the state reading specialists reported that they have helped their schools with using data to improve/guide individual and group instruction.

Although the DIBELS was widely used, fewer than half of teachers were convinced of its validity and accuracy. As the results in Table 9-3 indicate, principals and coaches were in far

more agreement regarding the validity and accuracy of DIBELS as an indicator of student reading ability than were teachers (85%, 80%, and 46%, respectively). Comparing this to the baseline data collected before Reading First started, opinions of coaches and teachers remained the same, while principals' opinions of its validity increased slightly from 79 percent. Opinions on whether Reading First overemphasizes the importance of using DIBELS were low for principals and coaches, 17 and 15 percent respectively, while 57 percent of teachers felt Reading First did overemphasize DIBELS.

Table 9-3
Perceptions of the DIBELS

	Percentage Agree/ Strongly Agree		
	Principals	**Coaches**	**Teachers**
I think that the DIBELS is a valid, accurate indicator of student reading ability.	85	80	46
In my view, Reading First overemphasizes the importance of using DIBELS results.	17	15	57

Use of Results

Table 9-4 provides an overview of how principals, coaches and teachers surveyed were using the results of reading assessments in their schools. The majority of coaches reported they used the results of reading assessments when:

- Identifying which students need interventions;
- Making decisions about student groupings;
- Communicating with teachers about their students.

The majority of principals appeared to use the results the same way as coaches. However principals used the data more than coaches when communicating with teachers and parents. Approximately half of principals and teachers said they used the results when communicating with parents, while only 23 percent of coaches did so.

The majority of teachers reported they used the results when:

- Identifying which students need intervention and matching them to the correct intervention;
- Monitoring student progress in interventions;
- Grouping students into small instructional groups within the classroom.

Table 9-4
Use of the Results of Reading Assessments

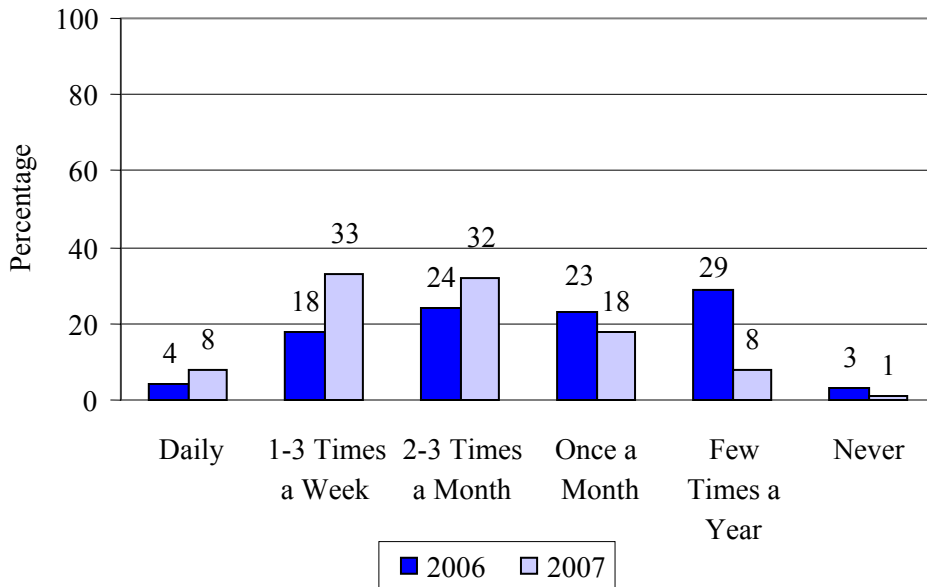| I use the results of reading assessments (such as the DIBELS) when…	Percentage Usually/ Always Using Results		
	Principals	**Coaches**	**Teachers**
communicating with teachers about their students	84	83	--
communicating with teachers about their instruction	75	57	--
communicating with colleagues about reading instruction and student needs	--	--	75
making decisions about student grouping	85	87	--
grouping students into small instructional groups within my classroom	--	--	82
modifying lessons from the core program	--	36	51
identifying which students need interventions	--	95	90
matching struggling students to the correct intervention for their needs	82	76	82
monitoring student progress in interventions	--	81	82
helping teachers tailor instruction to individual student needs (i.e. differentiated instruction	--	60	--
looking at school-wide (K-3) trends	89	81	50
meeting with parents	49	23	58

When comparing these results to baseline information collected last year, there was a significant increase in the number of principals who were using data. The data in Figure 9-2 highlight the increase from summer 2006 to spring 2007. The majority of principals were now using data to monitor school trends, make decisions about student grouping and match students to the correct interventions.

…"I Use Reading Assessment Data…"
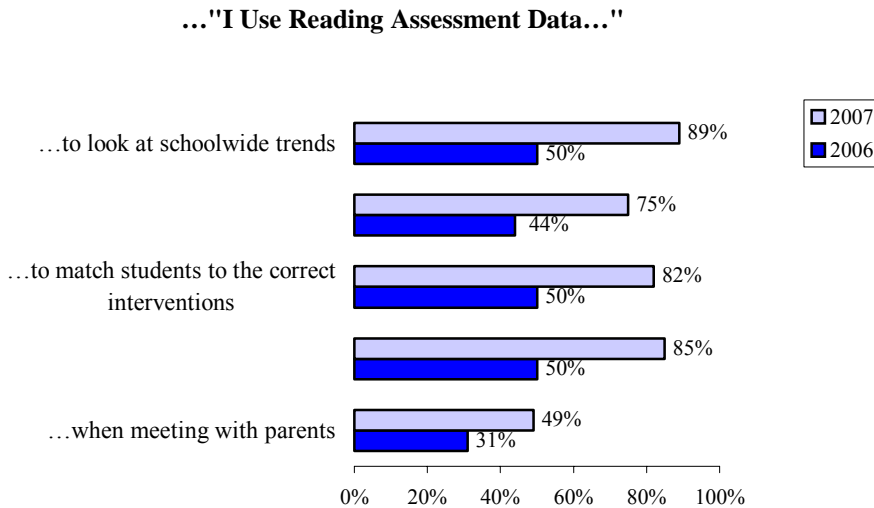
Figure 9-2. Principals' Reported Use of Data

The frequency with which teachers looked at data increased since the start of Reading First. To illustrate, one-third of teachers in 2007 were looking at the assessment data 1-3 times a week compared to only 18 percent in 2006 (see Figure 9-3). The majority of schools in 2007 were looking at assessment data at least one or more times a month - over 90 percent. According to the 2007 implementation checklists, teachers at 88 percent of schools discussed reading assessment data at least twice a month at grade level meetings.

Figure 9-3
How Often Teachers Look At Assessment Data

The 2007 SRS checklists revealed that many schools have come a long way in making improvements in their use of the results of their reading assessments. Notable improvements included:

- Having a coach who is very familiar with assessments to drive instruction;
- Requiring each teacher to be responsible for calculating a summary of effectiveness for his/her class;
- Documenting core assessment use by coaches during discussions and meetings;
- Creating a DIBELS monitoring schedule and training teachers in progress monitoring;
- Providing additional staff support for classroom teachers with progress monitoring.

Several schools have also shared specific ways they are displaying data to increase its use:

- Data are displayed for discussion, e.g. posters and "data walls' have been established at several schools to monitor student progress.
- Teachers bring folders with data to each grade level meeting, and the discussion is now centering on, "Now that we know where students need help, what kind of help do we provide?"
- Color-coded spreadsheets were developed to inform teachers of the names of students who are at benchmark and students going "the wrong way."

While many schools saw growth in their use of data, several schools acknowledged the need to continue to focus and refine. In fact, one-fourth of all schools indicated that improving the use of the DIBELS data system is a top priority for the future. Specific ways schools intended to make data use more important included the following:

- Developing an action plan for improving their data;
- Establishing a progress monitoring schedule and having the principal hold teachers accountable to progress monitor;
- Delving into the DIBELS progress monitoring booklets with teachers more deeply and analyzing what the students are doing;
- Helping all grade levels learn to match materials to skills based on data assessments;
- Allowing teachers to alter their schedules for data sharing and analysis in order to preserve instructional time;
- Working with teachers to plan more intensive interventions in the classroom;
- Continuing grade-level team meetings with coach to analyze data, plan for small groups and examine materials/resources to meet the instructional needs;
- Continuing teacher DIBELS training.

CHAPTER X
CONTINUING SCHOOLS' IMPLEMENTATION AND SUSTAINABILITY

CHAPTER X
CONTINUING SCHOOLS' IMPLEMENTATION AND SUSTAINABILITY

Highlights

- Research on school reform initiatives has identified a series of key characteristics of reforms that are sustained over extended periods. Overall, Arizona Reading First schools were very well positioned on many of these characteristics, especially perceived positive student outcomes, integration of Reading First into daily practice, and political support. A few common challenges, however, stood out across schools. Many were deeply concerned about sustaining on-going professional development, coaches, and interventions.

- Across most Continuing schools, Reading Firs is perceived to have resulted in positive student outcomes. This success has led to buy-in by key stakeholders especially principals and coaches and, to a lesser, extent teachers.

- All major Reading First components were firmly part of the daily life of continuing schools, including components such as the core reading program, the 90-minute reading block, progress monitoring, and Reading Leadership Teams. Moreover, fidelity to these components remained as high or was higher than in the previous year.

- The alignment of Reading First to the larger, statewide AZ READS program provided a supportive political climate for Reading First LEAs. Through this alignment, the state also clearly communicated its intention to institutionalize and sustain Reading First as Arizona's reading instruction model for grades K-3.

- This year, the state turned more responsibility for professional development over to LEAs, yet they received less grant funding. Coaches and principals, in particular, reported having too little professional development. Training is a particular concern for new staff members. Teacher turnover rates were notably higher than national averages for elementary schools, and principal turnover was moderately high.

- Maintaining full-time coaches may prove difficult with continued reductions in grant funding. Fewer schools had full-time coaches this year compared to last.

- Interventions were provided to struggling students at all schools; however, some schools reported serving fewer students than they did in the previous year. In addition, SRS reported a decrease in the percentage of schools with trained intervention providers.

At the end of the 2005-2006 school year, 73 Cycle 1 schools, which includes all Cohort 1 and 2 schools, completed their three-year Reading First implementation grant and 71 schools were eligible to apply for continuation subgrants to support institutionalization and sustainability of Reading First practices in their schools. The grant application process required schools to provide formal assurances that they would continue quality implementation of key Reading First components as well as participation in the state evaluation. In addition, schools submitted comprehensive plans detailing their strategies to continue, extend, and support growth of Reading First practices in their schools. Specifically, each school's continuation plan identified strengths in their current Reading First program, interventions to overcome barriers for quality implementation, and strategies to sustain critical Reading First components. Overall, 61 of the 73 Cycle 1 schools received continuation funding for this school year. The continuation awards provided schools with less funding than the initial implementation grants to assist their transition to the elimination of Reading First grant funding and resources.

As Arizona Reading First schools reach the end of their federal grant funding, it becomes essential that they strategically plan to continue the leadership and resources required to sustain the reading instruction strategies developed during their Reading First grants. Evaluation reports from previous years indicated that many of these schools achieved quality implementation of Reading First and, in turn, higher student reading scores. Despite this success, Cycle 1 schools are still early in the process of achieving long-term sustainability of Reading First. Research suggests that large-scale school reform efforts, such as Reading First, often require three to five years <u>beyond</u> full implementation to become "institutionalized" or accepted as standard school practice (Adelman & Taylor, 2003,;Fixsen, Naoom, Blasé, Friedman, & Wallace, 2005;Taylor, 2005). Successful school reform initiatives are supported by administrative leadership structures that can adapt and evolve in response to the changing needs of the school while remaining faithful to the core values underlying the intervention's success. As such, Continuing schools must adopt the core beliefs and values of the Reading First program as their own and incorporate the framework of Reading First strategies into the fabric of "everyday life" within their schools.

This chapter examines the sustainability efforts of Arizona Reading First Continuing schools by looking at the degree to which they have the necessary characteristics to sustain a school reform. In a review of the literature on sustainability, Taylor (2005) identified key characteristics associated with sustainability:

- Supportive political context
- Active leadership and collaboration
- Staff commitment and "buy-in"
- Practical components structured into daily life
- Positive student outcomes
- Sufficient funding and resources
- Leadership stability, staff retention and sustained professional development.

In the following sections, each key characteristic is discussed and, to the degree possible, data from the evaluation are drawn upon to determine how well Arizona Reading First schools embody those characteristics.

Note that while much research has identified key characteristics of sustained reform initiatives, it has not yet established links between them or the relative importance of the different characteristics (nor how this might vary in different contexts). It seems likely that a complex combination of key characteristics together determine a school's success in sustaining reform efforts.

Supportive Political Context

The political context for Reading First appears supportive in Arizona. The state began laying the foundation for sustainability during the early stages of planning their reading reform initiative. In 2000, ADE established a shared vision that all children would read proficiently by the end of third grade and, in so doing, would achieve continued academic success in later grades. Next, state leaders enacted legislation, policies, and academic standards that aligned with the goals, methodology, and accountability standards outlined in NCLB legislation. These actions by ADE resulted in a shared methodology and language that intentionally aligned with Reading First legislation and became the framework for AZ READS - Arizona's comprehensive plan for reading reform.

At that time, AZ READS established a leadership team of ADE Directors responsible for a range of federally funded programs (Title I, Special Education, English Language Learner, Early Childhood, and Adult and Family Literacy) involved in statewide efforts to improve reading achievement for young children in Arizona. The purpose for organizing AZ READS leadership in this manner was to encourage collaboration, avoid duplication of efforts, and maximize resources targeted for reading instruction. Consequently, a pivotal role of the AZ READS leadership team was, and continues to be, coordination of professional development, curriculum adoption, resource allocation, and monitoring statewide implementation of AZ READS and Reading First reading reforms.

The policy and organizational changes ADE initiated during the beginning of Arizona's reading reform efforts created a political climate that promoted active leadership at the district and principal level for implementation of Reading First. Moreover, the alignment of Reading First as a component of the larger, statewide AZ READS program communicated the state's intention to institutionalize and sustain Reading First as Arizona's standard reading instruction model for grades K-3. The state's intention to sustain Reading First received additional momentum from ADE's success in rallying early support from educators, legislators, community and business leaders, parents, and public and private organizations for reading reform. Taken together, ADE's advocacy, policy alignment, and reorganization of state resources to support the Reading First early reading instruction model embody essential features associated with sustained school reform.

In addition, in the spring of 2006 when schools and LEAs were preparing for reduced funding in 2006-07, schools and LEAs were moderately pleased with the way the state addressed issues of sustainability. Many principals (60%) and LEA coordinators (62%) agreed that they were pleased with the amount of support they received from the state to address sustainability. Almost half of coaches (49%) agreed.

Active Leadership and Collaboration

The Reading First model relies on active leadership and collaboration at the district, school, and classroom levels. To promote leadership and collaboration in Arizona's Reading First initiative, the state set up a structure of state reading specialists to support districts and schools as they implemented Reading First. This leadership support structure included the addition of district coordinators to facilitate collaboration, implementation, and sustainability in Reading First schools. The state strongly encouraged district coordinators to attend coach and principal meetings and other professional development with their school teams. In addition, schools form leadership and grade-level teams that are required by state statute to use a reading assessment (usually DIBELS) to make data-driven decisions that would improve Reading First instruction. The following paragraphs describe the status and concerns related to sustainability of these Reading First leadership components.

LEA Leadership

During this past year, LEAs were supposed to assume increased responsibility for the training and support that ADE had provided as part of the initial three-year Reading First grant award. For nearly all LEAs, their support for school-level Reading First activities remained consistent with previous SRS reports on the implementation checklist. For example, the implementation checklist data show that in 2006-07, the majority of LEAs coordinated district-wide Reading First activities (90%), supported Reading First activities with adequate resources (98%) and provided technical assistance as needed (90%). There was, however, one important exception. Last year, 68 percent of the Continuing schools reported monthly meetings between the LEA coordinator and school principal to analyze assessment data and monitor Reading First implementation. This year, the number of schools that held monthly meetings with their LEA coordinator decreased to 63 percent.

Information gathered from individual interviews also showed a decrease in LEA support. About half of the LEA coordinators interviewed said the district did not provide technical assistance to schools this year.

> *The district coordinator is not currently providing technical assistance but provided much in the past. The district coordinator does provide technical assistance to staff on an as-needed basis.* (LEA Coordinator)

About half of the LEA coordinators stated schools received technical assistance from a variety of resources including the Reading First LEA coordinator, state reading specialist, WestED, curriculum company representatives, Reading First coaches, and other LEA specialists. Overall, LEA coordinators stated technical assistance meetings were not regularly scheduled or available on a monthly basis.

In addition, none of the interviewed LEA coordinators said they devoted more than 66 percent of their time to district coordination of Reading First and all four of the coordinators who held the same position last year said their time spent on Reading First had decreased. Despite this

apparent decrease in LEA technical assistance support, 92 percent of the principals agreed that their LEA supported continuation of the Reading First model.

As seen in Table 10-1, a large majority (almost 90%) of LEA coordinators found their meetings with principals and coaches of new Reading First schools usually or always useful. Furthermore, over three-fourths reported finding the 2006 Summer Desert Canyon Institute and the statewide coach, principal and LEA meetings usually or always useful. In addition, 65 percent of them reported finding the 2006 summer conference usually or always useful.

Table 10-1
Helpfulness of Attendance at Professional Development and Meetings

How useful, to you as Reading First district coordinator, was your attendance at the following:	Percentage of LEA Coordinators				
	Never Useful	Rarely Useful	Sometimes Useful	Usually Useful	Always Useful
2006 Summer Desert Canyon Institute	0	0	12	21	56
2006 Summer Conference	0	0	24	17	48
Statewide coach and principal meetings	0	5	20	22	54
Statewide meetings for district representatives	0	5	19	24	49
Meetings with the principals of new Reading First schools in our district	0	3	5	21	68
Meetings with the coaches in new Reading First schools in our district	0	3	3	16	74

Principal Leadership

As in previous years, principals continued to demonstrate active leadership to maintain quality implementation and long-term sustainability of the Reading First model. Nearly all principals established school priorities and Reading Leadership Teams (RLTs) that supported sustainability of the Reading First model components. In Table 10-2, data from the implementation checklist show the percentage of principals providing particular types of leadership within their schools.

Table 10-2
Indicators of Active Principal Leadership for Reading First

According to the State Reading Specialists… **The Principal**	Percentage of Principals	
	2005-06	**2006-07**
Chairs, provides direction, and holds monthly RLT meetings	71	84
Attends or monitors at least 1 grade-level meeting per grade per month	74	74
Provides a master schedule that includes a minimum of 90 minutes uninterrupted minutes for reading instruction with no or rare interruptions	99	100
Ensures the DIBELS data are collected and entered into the data management system in a timely manner	99	100
Leads the grade-levels in analyzing assessment data	78	79

Additional indicators of principal leadership within the Reading First model include regular discussion of Reading First sustainability at team meetings, effective working relationships with reading coaches, and, of course, visible advocacy for the Reading First model. Principals, coaches, and teachers provided the following information that suggests active leadership in the majority of Continuing schools.

- 90 percent of the principals and 88 percent of the reading coaches agreed that sustaining and deepening the changes made under Reading First is a regular topic at staff or leadership meetings in our school.

- 92 percent of the coaches stated they work effectively with the principal on Reading First.

- According to teachers, principal observations occurred at the same rate as last year. Nearly all teachers (98%) stated their principals observed their classrooms at least once a year, and 59 percent stated this occurred at least once per month.

- Consistent with last year, nearly all teachers stated principals provided specific and constructive feedback on their reading instruction. This year, a higher percentage of teachers (51%) stated this occurred at least monthly compared to last year (42%).

Reading Leadership Teams

Under the Arizona Reading First grant, schools were required to form RLT's comprised of representative teachers from grades K-3, specialists (special education, ELL, Title I), reading interventionists, and the reading coach. The purpose of this team was to prioritize, plan, and communicate the Reading First plan to all staff. Additionally, the RLT developed the K-3 reading instruction plan, ensured this plan aligns with the Arizona School Improvement Plan,

and monitored progress to maintain quality Reading First implementation. Data indicate RLTs were well maintained in the majority of Reading First schools.

This year all schools had RLTs, and 86 percent of the RLTs met at least monthly, while 18 percent of coaches stated they met at least weekly. Moreover, RLTs teacher and coach agreement with positive statements about RLTs increased from last year. Table 10-3 provides implementation checklist data and survey data regarding RLT functioning.

Table 10-3
Reading Leadership Functioning and Effectiveness

According to State Reading Specialists…	Percentage of Schools	
Principal has established a Reading Leadership Team that	**2005-06**	**2006-07**
Prioritizes, communicates, and maintains reading goals as well as staff focus on the goals	88	82
Designs, monitors, progress of the K-3 intervention plan and makes appropriate adjustments for each grade level	85	82
Revises/updates the ASIP to align with the Reading First plan	77	94
Surveys	Percentage Respondents	
	2005-06	**2006-07**
Teachers agree/strongly agree that RLT is visible and effective	71	84
Coaches agree/strongly agree that attending RLT meetings is a good use of their time	72	83

Grade-Level Teams

Like RLT meetings, grade-level reading meetings continued to occur in all schools. Similar to last year on the implementation checklist, SRS reported that 93 percent of principals attended at least some grade-level meetings, and most teachers (96%) reported attending meetings one or more times each month. As compared to last year, more teachers reported that grade-level meetings were useful. Table 10-4 provides information related to teacher perception and attendance at grade-level team meetings.

Table 10-4
Teacher Attendance At and Perception of Grade-Level Team Meetings

	Percentage of Teachers	
School has established a grade-level team that . . .	**2005-06**	**2006-07**
Teachers attend monthly meetings	97	97
Teachers agree/strongly agree that attending grade-level team meetings is a good use of time	68	75

Additional Reading First Collaboration Strategies

In addition to RLT and grade-level teams, Reading First LEAs promoted collaboration in a number of formal and informal ways. For example, several districts organized opportunities for

Reading First teachers and/or coaches to network and share their Reading First experiences. Some districts also encouraged Reading First staff from different schools to observe, visit, and network about reading instruction and interventions. Still other districts stated they scheduled regular meetings and site visits to encourage collaboration within and among Reading First schools. A common foundation for all these strategies was the strong use of assessment data to guide the conversation and collaborative decision-making to improve student reading at the individual and school level.

> *We provide regular times and venues for sharing to take place on data, results, and lessons learned. As a group, the principals and coaches review, discuss, and interpret data results with the assistance of the district coordinators. In addition to interpretations, as a group, the principals and coaches discuss how to or what strategies to use to improve the results.* (LEA Coordinator)

Staff Commitment and "Buy-In"

Another important contributor to the sustainability of any reform is the individual and collective commitment of the LEA staff, principal, teachers, and other key stakeholders in the reform (Datnow, 2005). If Arizona Reading First is to continue beyond its grant funding, it will be in large part due to the commitment of LEA coordinators, principals, coaches, and teachers.

LEA Coordinators

This year, Cycle 1 LEA coordinators continued to voice support for Reading First in interviews. District staff credited Reading First for bringing uniformity in early reading instruction to their schools, training teachers to focus upon the five key components of reading, and positive improvement in student reading achievement.

LEA coordinators also endorsed Reading First's use of DIBELS assessments to monitor student progress. In interviews, several LEA coordinators noted the importance of using DIBELS and other standardized assessments to increase teacher collaboration and use of data to plan interventions for struggling readers. DIBELS helped teachers "focus on areas of impact to increase student achievement." The success of Reading First with all students in grades K-3 has prompted some districts to expand Reading First to non-Reading First schools as well as to students in upper elementary and middle schools.

Principals, Coaches, and Teachers

Principals and coaches have reported positive support for the instructional changes made under Reading First since the beginning of the project. Nearly all the principals and coaches stated they strongly agreed or agreed with the instructional changes made under Reading First at the end of their official grant in 2006 and again this year. Although the level of teacher support improved from last year, teachers still reported significantly less positive attitudes about Reading First instructional changes than coaches and principals with many choosing a neutral position regarding their support for the Reading First school reform, as shown in Table 10-5.

Table 10-5
Percentage of School Staff who Support Reading First Instructional Changes

I strongly support the instructional changes made under Reading First	2005-06			2006-07		
	Agree/ Strongly Agree	Neither	Disagree/ Strongly Disagree	Agree/ Strongly Agree	Neither	Disagree/ Strongly Disagree
Principal	95	3	2	96	2	3
Coach	92	6	2	97	3	--
Teacher	50	38	13	63	26	10

Teacher agreement with the statement was much lower than it was for principals and coaches. Comparatively few teachers (10-13%), however, indicated their outright disagreements, and most teachers who did not agree said they could neither disagree nor agree with the statement.

Information from principals and coaches also seemed to suggest that teacher support was improving and becoming less of a barrier to Reading First implementation. For example, only 7 percent of principals said teacher resistance to Reading First was a challenge in 2006-07 compared to 16 percent in 2005-06. Likewise, 30 percent of coaches agreed teacher resistance was a challenge in 2006-07 compared to 37 percent in 2005-06.

Reading First Components Structured into Daily Life

This year's survey indicated high endorsement for Reading First components across all school staff members. In addition, Continuing schools were implementing critical Reading First components at the same or higher levels of fidelity as previous years. The following paragraphs provide a brief description of the implementation status of the core reading curriculum, DIBELS and monitoring student progress, and the provision of interventions.

Core Reading Curriculum

All continuation schools maintained the same evidence-based reading curriculum their school used last year. In addition, 87 percent of SRS reported that personnel were trained in Scientifically Based Reading Research and explicit, systematic instruction as documented by professional development attendance.

During this school year, both teachers (77%) and coaches (91%) said their satisfaction with their school's core reading curriculum increased compared to last year. Nearly all the teachers reported use of the core curriculum; 70 percent agreed their use of the core reading program remained about the same, and another 27 percent reported their use increased during this school year. About half of the teachers stated their use of Western Regional Reading First Technical Assistance Center templates during the reading block was more than last year and 37 percent stated their use was about the same.

In addition, all principals scheduled a 90-minute reading block on their school's master schedule. Most teachers (90%) reported no or only rare interruptions during reading instruction this year.

DIBELS and Monitoring Student Progress

All principals and teachers stated their school had an organized system for administering, analyzing, and sharing the DIBELS and other Reading First assessments. In keeping with the Reading First model, the specific use of assessment data corresponded with each staff's Reading First role and responsibilities. Principals reported using assessment data to communicate with teachers regarding their students and instruction almost all of the time. Principals reported they always or usually used these data to review K-3 reading trends in their schools (Figure 10-1).
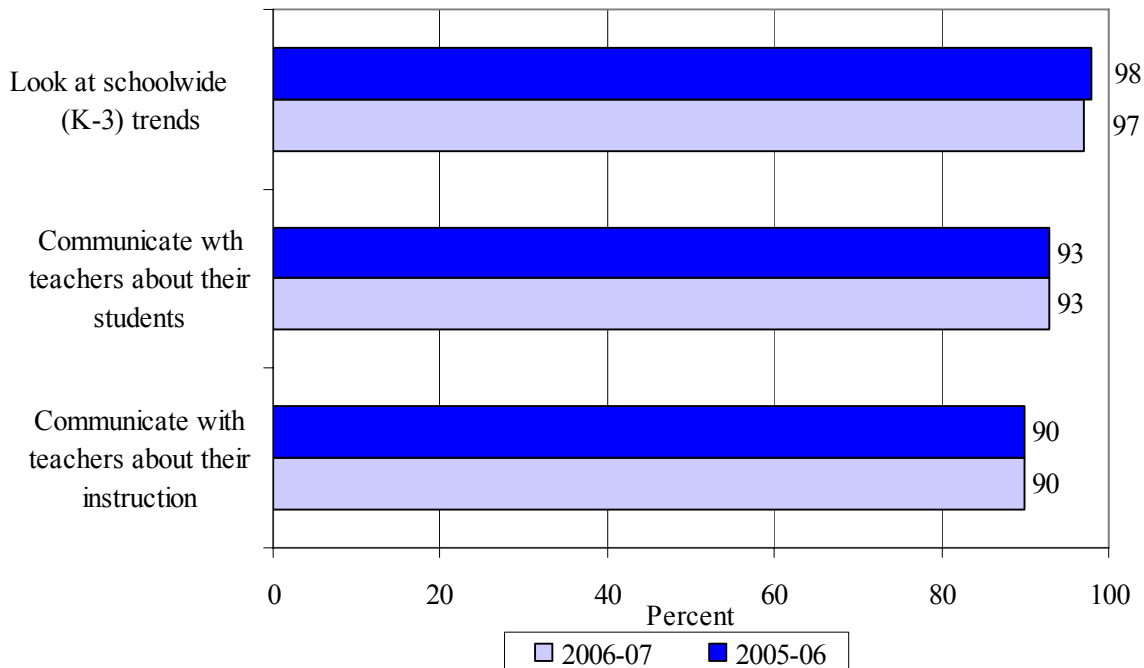
Figure 10-1
Principal Use of Assessment Data Always or Usually by Task and Year

Teachers also continued to report using data frequently. For example, virtually all teachers (96%) said they usually or always used data to identify which students needed interventions, and the majority of teachers (91%) said they usually or always used reading assessments to group students and to communicate with colleagues. The coaches' survey results confirmed that the number of schools in which classrooms used assessment data to monitor student progress on a regular basis increased this year (Table 10-6).

Table 10-6
Percentage of Coaches By Proportion of K-3 Classrooms Using Reading Assessment Data for Progress Monitoring By Year

According to coaches…	Percentage of Schools	
In about what proportions of K-3 classrooms at your school would you say that regular progress-monitoring is implemented	**2005-06**	**2006-07**
All classrooms	82	88
Nearly all classrooms	16	9
About three-quarters of the classrooms		2
About half of classrooms	2	-

Over half of the LEA coordinators stated that they had little to no involvement with monitoring student progress. The reported involvement of the remaining districts ranged from broad oversight of each school's intervention data to monitoring the reading progress of specific students. About half of the LEA coordinators stated they helped schools identify students for intervention groups and identifying intervention strategies that might be effective.

> *The coaches monitor student progress in the interventions. I look broadly at the progress monitoring data to see how well kids are doing at an overall level but don't do in-depth monitoring as the coaches do.* (LEA Coordinator)

> *The district has found using the data to be extremely powerful in getting teacher ownership of all students. The district helps in identifying students and works with teachers on interventions.* (LEA Coordinator)

Interventions

Evidence concerning the continuation of interventions was mixed. Nearly all schools continued to provide interventions for struggling students, and many teachers and coaches felt their schools were doing a good job serving the students who needed support. Some schools, however, served fewer students, and SRS reported decreases in the percentage of schools with trained intervention providers and the percentage of schools using materials regularly and appropriately.

For example, almost all schools (95%) continued to allocate time for Tier 2 interventions, and 66 percent provided time for Tier 3 interventions. Overall, 11,436 students from 56 schools received intensive interventions and an additional 5,732 students received less intensive interventions. If the numbers reported on last year's survey are compared to this year's, however, about a third of coaches reported their school served fewer students overall in 2006-07 than in 2005-06.

Despite decreases in the number of students served in some schools, 94 percent of the coaches indicated that their school was doing an excellent job providing appropriate interventions to all students who needed them. In addition, the percentage of teachers (78%) who stated their school was doing an excellent job providing appropriate reading interventions was slightly increased

from last year (70%). The majority of coaches (96%) and many teachers (79%) also agreed intervention providers were well-trained to meet the needs of struggling readers.

Evidence from the implementation checklist was somewhat contradictory. SRS reported that in 87 percent of schools, all interventionists were trained in SBRR and explicit, systematic instruction—a decrease from 93 percent last year. Similarly, SRS reported that in 82 percent of schools purchased intervention materials were regularly and appropriately used—a decrease from 93 percent last year

Positive Student Outcomes

Positive student reading outcomes are critical to sustaining Reading First reform efforts. Without them, there is no rationale for continuing these efforts. During their initial implementation years, Cohort 1 and Cohort 2 schools increased the percentage of students reading at grade level and, in turn, reduced the percentage of students struggling in reading. The increase in student achievement builds credibility for, and buy-in to, the Reading First approach among school and LEA staff members.

Nearly all stakeholders credited Reading First for improvements in student reading and voiced commitment to sustaining Reading First reading instruction in their school. For example, the majority of principals (81%) and coaches (83%) reported reading instruction had noticeably improved at their school this year.

In addition, LEA coordinators comments suggest that the momentum to institutionalize Reading First was as strong as ever.

> *Before Reading First, the school and teachers did what they wanted to do to teach reading. After four years, teachers, school and district see the benefits of Reading First. Now they see how effective Reading First has been. Children are reading and being successful readers.* (LEA Coordinator)

For a complete discussion of DIBELS results for Cycle 1 schools, see Chapter IV. For state test results, see Chapter V.

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Sufficient Funding and Resources

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Federal Reading First grants have a built-in reduction of funding and resources to schools. In Arizona in 2006, all Cycle 1 school principals stated they planned to sustain all or nearly all of the critical Reading First components in their schools. As of spring 2006, most of the principals stated that funding and/or resources were available to sustain the Reading Leadership Team, grade-level meetings, study groups, 90-minute core reading instructional periods, and DIBELS to monitor student progress; however, about a third of the principals stated they had no available funding to sustain reading coaches, on-going training in reading, and interventions.

To address this financial need, ADE did provide funding in the 2006-07 school year for Continuing schools to purchase some professional development and to hire full-time coaches and

part-time interventionists. Still, a few schools appeared to have found funds insufficient. For example, in 2005-06 all schools had coaches and 92 percent were full-time. In 2006-07, only 82 percent of the coaches assigned to continuation schools were fulltime and one school did not have a site-based reading coach.

In interviews several LEA Coordinators also expressed concerns about on-going funding for these elements of Reading First. While most district coordinators said funds were adequate for the current year, several raised concerns about the future.

> *This year, the district had enough funding to do most of what was expected, but adequate new teacher and coach training was difficult.* (LEA Coordinator)

> *This year the district started to build capacity among its staff because it knew that funding would be reduced even more. It started the process of incorporating the coach and intervention provider into Title 1 funds.* (LEA Coordinator)

In addition, half of LEA coordinators stated their district provided no technical assistance for schools this year due to funding or time limitations.

> *Because of limited funds, the district relied on the state reading specialist for technical assistance.* (LEA Coordinator)

Leadership Stability, Staff Retention, and Professional Development

The Reading First model relies upon a collaborative system of leadership and communication that, like most effective interventions, is dependent upon staff who are highly trained in their Reading First role. For example, LEA coordinators assure that professional development is provided for principals and coaches. In turn, principals and coaches provide training and technical assistance for teachers as well as leadership within the RLT and grade-level teams. Two factors that could combine to threaten the sustainability of this collaborative leadership are staff attrition and the decrease in funding that is built into the Reading First grant. Staff attrition was a concern raised by Arizona's needs assessment for their original Reading First implementation plan and appears to be a continuing threat to sustainability of Reading First in Arizona schools. During this year, Continuing schools experienced turnover among all levels of Reading First implementation staff - LEA coordinators, reading coaches, principals, and teachers. Staff attrition and training will be discussed more specifically by Reading First role in the following sections.

Professional Development

Some data indicate that professional development was maintained over the last year. According to the state reading specialists, on-going professional development continued to be available for principals, coaches, teachers, special education, and other specialists during this year. Furthermore, state staff reported that the professional development targeted the identified needs of staff and students at each grade, and nearly all new and continuing K-3 teachers received local training and support in the core reading program and DIBELS assessment data at rates similar to

last year. In addition, K-3 teachers attended school and district sponsored training tailored to the needs of their school and students this year.

However, as is consistent with Reading First federal guidelines, in 2006-07 there was a reduction in the amount of state-provided professional development specifically required of LEA coordinators, principals, and coaches. Survey results from Reading First stakeholders suggest a general reduction in satisfaction with both quality and frequency of the training provided this year. Several LEA coordinator interview responses also suggested that staff who had received Reading First training and experience in previous years reported training provided this year was insufficient.

> *While the state generally has provided the district with enough guidance . . . pieces of sustainability were left half way, such as training of new teachers and coaches. The training of new staff has been frustrating this year* (LEA Coordinator)

In addition, state staff did note that 77 percent of the continuing K-3 teachers participated in the training provided by the publisher of their core-reading program compared to 95 percent last year.

Training for New and Continuing LEA Coordinators

The LEA coordinators reported mixed reviews of ADE's guidance, funding, and training to take on the professional development and technical assistance responsibilities for continuation schools this year. Most LEA coordinators stated funding for training had been adequate this year. However, LEA coordinators varied widely in their assessment of their preparation for increased training responsibility during the transition from Reading First funding. For many districts, the determining factor was the current LEA coordinator's level of Reading First training and experience.

> *I attended one meeting conducted by the state at the beginning of the year. However, I was a state reading specialist so received a lot of training prior to this year.* (LEA Coordinator)

> *I feel they have dropped the ball this year. The support and engagement was great the first three years. I'm concerned that Cycle One schools have been forgotten.* (LEA Coordinator)

> *I miss ADE's guidance, would like more. I feel district coordinators need help working with coaches.* (LEA Coordinator)

Of the ten LEA coordinators interviewed this year, six reported they were new to this position. Although many of the newly hired LEA coordinators had previous experience as a coach, principal, or Title 1 administrator, it appears these Reading First administrators received little to no training this year. Moreover, the majority of LEA coordinators indicated their positions had reduced Reading First hours and they had received additional administrative responsibility for Title 1, curriculum, federal projects, and/or Reading First coaching.

Training for New and Continuing Principals

The LEA training for principals varied in content and frequency across the Continuing schools. Some LEA coordinators stated they did not provide professional development to principals this year. A few districts reported structured training agendas but the majority stated professional development occurred through informal, individual consultation.

> *The district has not provided professional development to Reading First principals this year.* (LEA Coordinator)

> *Professional development has covered three topics this year – differentiated instruction, how to incorporate special education into Reading First, and collaborating across grade levels.* (LEA Coordinator)

> *Professional development occurred during walk throughs and using data.* (LEA Coordinator)

Nearly all the principals (88%) attended one or more Reading First professional development or state meetings this year. About half the principals attended only one training, 24 percent attended two trainings, and 18 percent attended three or more this year. Overall, principals reported less satisfaction with both the content and frequency of the professional development provided by the state this year as compared to previous years. The percentage of principals who were very pleased with state professional development decreased from 75 percent to 67 percent this year. Of the principals who reported dissatisfaction with state training, the principals who reported there was too little training increased from about 8 percent last year to 32 percent this year.

This year, 17 percent of Continuing schools had new principals assigned to their building who were also first year building administrators. Consequently, these principals reported no prior experience as principal of a Reading First school. As a group, Continuing school principals had an average of five years experience as a principal. Among the LEA coordinators who participated in interviews, six had new principals. Half of these said the new principal's received no special training and half said the principals received individual consultation as needed.

Training for New and Continuing Coaches

Nearly all the coaches (97%) attended one or more Reading First professional development or state meeting this year. Half the coaches attended only one training, 18 percent attended two trainings, and 25 percent attended three or more this year. Similar to school principals, coaches reported less satisfaction with both the content and frequency of the professional development

provided by the state this year as compared to previous years. The percentage of coaches who were very pleased with state professional development decreased from 77 percent to 54 percent this year, often because coaches thought there was too little training.

Like principals and LEA coordinators, many coaches were new to Reading First this year. In the Continuing schools, 20 percent of coaches were in their first year at the school and most of these were first-year Reading First coaches. Overall, 20 percent of this year's coaches had no prior experience as a Reading First coach.

The LEA coordinator provided technical assistance to coaches in most districts. However, some districts said the technical assistance was limited or not provided due to limited resources and funding.

> *The district has not provided professional development to Reading First coaches this year.* (LEA Coordinator)

> *Nothing new was provided to the new Reading First coach. Although she was new to her part-time coaching position, she was not new to Reading First, so she knew a lot coming into the job.* (LEA Coordinator)

Training for New and Continuing Teachers

LEA coordinators said in interviews that LEA professional development for new and returning teachers varied widely in presenters, topics, format, and length. In general, most presentations occurred during partial day professional development given by presenters from the district or school. This professional development provided during teacher trainings included a variety of topics that related to classroom management, special student groups, and Reading First reading instruction.

According to coaches, 90 percent of the LEAs provided some professional development to teachers. About 20 percent of the LEAs provided one or two trainings, 36 percent provided three or four trainings, and 34 percent provided five or more trainings this year. In addition, data from the implementation checklist show that in 97 percent of schools, all K-3 teachers were trained in DIBELS, and in 100 percent of schools all K-3 teachers participated in state, LEA, or school sponsored ongoing training based on staff and students' needs. The percentage of schools in which all K-3 teachers participated in training provided by publishers, however, decreased from 90 percent in 2005-06 to 77 percent in 2006-07.

Unlike principals and coaches, about two-thirds of the teachers reported this amount of professional development was the same or more than last year. Moreover, 70 percent of the coaches stated district trainings were helpful for their school, and the same percentage of teachers agreed the training focused on what happens in the classroom.

New teachers may need more training than continuing teachers. The teacher turnover rate for Arizona Reading First schools was 23 percent with some schools experiencing turnover of over

half their K-3 teaching staff – a turnover rate considerably higher than the national average of 17 percent for elementary schools. Although the K-3 teachers reported an average of 10 years teaching experience, 11 percent of teachers reported they were in their first year of teaching. This teacher turnover and differences in teacher experience suggests an ongoing need for training for teachers who have little to no experience with Reading First practices as well as on-going professional development for teachers with varying years of teaching experience.

New teacher orientation to the Reading First instructional model generally included a variety of training supports, e.g., formal in-service training sessions, individualized mentoring from coaches or other Reading First teachers, and information gained through grade-level meetings. About half the LEA coordinators interviewed reported structured training sessions for new teachers for DIBELS certification, but satisfaction with these training sessions varied.

> *New teacher Reading First training has been frustrating. . . Each Reading First school has a common grade-level planning time four times each week which helped new teachers get on board. The coach also worked with new teachers and showed them how to use templates. The district did pay for a 2-day DIBELS training. However, there was no explicit/formal core curriculum training for new teachers.* (LEA Coordinator)

CHAPTER XI
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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The Arizona Reading First program completed its fourth year of implementation in Continuing Cohort 1 schools in 2006-2007. For the 85 Cycle 2 schools (Expanding Cohort 3 and New Cohort 4), this was their first year of implementation. Cohort 3 schools were located in districts that already had Reading First in other schools and were thus "expanding" to new schools. Cohort 4 schools were located in districts that were "new" to Reading First.

Both groups demonstrated positive gains in student achievement. Cycle 2 schools showed growth in the implementation of program components and Continuing schools sustained the components of Reading First they had put in place over the previous years.

This section of the report draws from findings across all of the previous chapters. The conclusions and recommendations are a compilation of the major themes in the areas of student achievement, teacher preparation and resulting instruction, and the building of leadership capacity at the school and district level.

1. Attention needs to be focused on improving achievement by the end of first grade.

A similar recommendation was proposed last year, when fewer first-grade students were at benchmark at the end of the year than at the beginning. The trend continued this year, and indeed the Continuing schools saw more of a decrease in percentage of students at benchmark this year (-7%) at first grade than last year (-2%). This pattern was also apparent for the Cycle 2 schools (-3%). Overall, two-thirds of Cohort 1 and fewer than half of Cycle 2 first grade students ended this year in the benchmark category.

First-grade achievement matters because it so often sets the future course of students' progress. Of the four-year subset of students who completed four-years of Reading First, 80 percent of those at benchmark on DIBELS at the end of first grade were still at benchmark at the end of third grade, with comparatively few students moving up from the strategic or intensive categories. For this group, not quite two-thirds of students were at benchmark at the end first grade year, and about the same percentage were at benchmark at the end of third grade.

The findings suggest several areas that might affect first-grade achievement. Although the number of classroom observations was limited, the instruction in the five essential components of reading was seen to be fairly evenly divided among components; however, observers noted little instruction in fluency in first-grade classrooms. Since low fluency (ORF) scores prevented many students from remaining at benchmark at the end of the year, it may be that additional fluency instruction would be helpful.

Another possible explanation for the declines at first grade may be low levels of differentiated instruction. Some, but not all, teachers differentiated instruction to meet students' needs; in Cycle 2 about a third of teachers did not differentiate regularly. There was also room for instructional improvement in the areas of scaffolding, modeling, opportunities for practice, and monitoring for understanding.

Finally, it could be that providing appropriate interventions is another area that should be targeted to help students' instructional improvement; this topic is more fully discussed in the next recommendation.

2. Fully implement intervention programs with appropriate materials and differentiated, data-driven instruction and grouping.

Providing interventions is a key component in improving reading for students who score in the intensive or strategic categories on DIBELS. While not officially required to begin implementing interventions in the first year of funding, most Cycle 2 schools were providing some level of interventions to students during and/or outside of the reading block. Nearly half of the schools reported providing interventions to at least 80 percent of their struggling readers and a third reported providing interventions to at least 20 percent of their struggling readers.

Providing interventions did present challenges to Cycle 2 coaches and teachers. Challenges cited most frequently were staffing; scheduling; materials, including matching student needs identified through data to appropriate materials and intervention activities; and training. Both coaches and teachers indicated that the two top areas for future professional development were intervention programs and differentiated instruction.

In the second year of implementation, Cycle 2 schools need to provide appropriate interventions for identified students. The schools should have applied for and received funds to purchase supplemental and intervention materials. These materials must be provided along with the professional development on their use; time should be scheduled for interventions; data must be used to group students; and appropriate strategies undertaken to improve reading. State reading specialists could devote a portion of their time with schools to focusing on the establishment and implementation of solid, well-designed intervention programs.

At the same time, Cohort 1 schools must not only sustain but also improve their intervention programs; too few of their strategic and especially their intensive students moved up to the benchmark category. Although these schools have 'established' interventions in place, there is a need to assure that these interventions are well-designed and maximize limited resources. This might be an area in which LEA coordinators could help their Continuing Reading First schools to model, refine and focus their existing intervention programs.

Among students who completed four years of Reading First, over 80 percent of those who were at benchmark at the end of first grade were still at benchmark at the end of third grade. However, only 62 percent of four-year third graders were at benchmark overall. What this means is that very few students moved up from either the intensive or strategic categories to benchmark during the second- and third-grade years. Thus during this two-year period, interventions could be strengthened and result in additional students meeting benchmark goals, in addition to focusing attention to improvement at first grade.

This external evaluation of Reading First has not been able to look specifically at the match of students with intervention strategies. Making sure that interventions match student needs based

on data, not just for grouping but for individual targeted practice, should be a key component of an overall intervention program; again this is an area in which state reading specialists and LEA coordinators might be able to provide additional assistance.

3. Strengthen and enhance communication at all levels.

Principal and coach buy-in to Reading First has remained relatively high (over 95%) in both the Cohort 1 and Cycle 2 groups. An area for concern was the decline in the proportion of Cycle 2 teachers who supported the instructional changes promoted by Reading First (from 70 percent at baseline to 45 percent at the end of the 2006-2007 school year, with more teachers' "neutral" about this issue.) The pattern of teacher buy-in lower than principals and coaches has been evident for years in Cohort 1, although this year Cohort 1 teacher buy-in increased to 63 percent from 50 percent last year.

Insight into this lower teacher support might be gained from teachers' response to other survey items. More than half of teachers reported that they believed other subjects suffered because of the focus on Reading First, they did not have a voice in decision-making, and a collaborative culture was not apparent overall. This lower-buy-in might be further evidenced in that only slightly more than half of teachers were pleased that their school had a Reading First program and one-third did not understand the role of the reading coach. In interviews, some teachers said they felt burdened by the expectations of the program without shared understanding from principals. Principals and coaches voiced that overcoming teacher resistance was one of their biggest challenges.

Another area teachers cited was that messages about what they were supposed to do (and not supposed to do) were not always clear and consistent. While LEAs and principals reported that they had clear messages from the ADE, teachers were further away from those at the state providing the message. Further, teachers do not always have ample opportunities to interact with LEA administrators and may often have received messages third-hand, from their principals, coaches, or others, who may have added their own interpretations.

It could be helpful to take steps to ensure that there is a consistent message and clear information shared in a way that it reaches all the way to teachers in its intended form. An online web-based community was started for Reading First administrators; perhaps it should in some form be extended to teachers. Much material is presented at monthly meetings and other on-going trainings that could be made more widely accessible to LEA and school administrators for their use at school- or grade-level meetings and trainings. Additional communications could take many forms such as newsletters, emails, PowerPoint slides, announcements or educational materials. While additional communication does not guarantee additional buy-in and collaboration, enhancing these strategies could go a long way toward ensuring less resistance and more support for instructional changes—at the very least, it can reduce teacher frustration with inconsistent messages.

4. Provide additional professional development guidance to convey appropriate courses/trainings and sequencing of training.

The Reading First model is heavily focused on continued professional development as a major means of capacity building. The ADE has provided a wide range of professional development offerings, but beyond the beginning stages, many schools and LEAs need additional guidance in order to be able to sequence and select appropriate offerings.

For the Continuing Cohort 1 schools this year, the state turned more responsibility for professional development over to LEAs, yet they received less grant funding. Coaches and principals, in particular, reported having too little professional development. It appears that in some cases, schools were confused about what offerings would be appropriate for more advanced staff with Reading First experience. State staff noted that Cohort 1 schools did not always take full advantage of what funding they could have used to select among state offerings.

In the Cycle 2 group, the majority of principals and coaches reported that the professional development they did receive from the state was high quality. One area that both coaches and principals noted was lacking somewhat was the amount of differentiated professional development they received at the monthly meetings. Both coaches and teachers indicated that the two top areas for future professional development were development and selection of intervention programs and differentiated instruction.

Over the years, Reading First implementers have been encouraged to attend the 'official' Reading First trainings (summer workshops, monthly meetings, DIBELS and LETRS trainings, as well as other related professional development opportunities (Teach For Success, Leading Change). The ADE has a catalog of training sessions available to all LEA/school personnel, but many of these sessions have direct (registration, hotel) and indirect (substitutes, leave time) costs involved for those wanting to participate. Further, there has been no sequencing of these offerings. The state has also been working on updating specific guidelines in some certification areas (Structured English Immersion, special education, early childhood education).

For professional development to continue as a hallmark of the Reading First program, workshops, trainings and meetings will need to be broadly available to many people on a rotating widely-available schedule. The courses/trainings will also need to be sequenced and positioned to earn teachers and others the certifications, continuing education units or professional development credits/hours they need to enhance their professional skills. Professional development handbooks and guidelines specifically highlighting these types of opportunities as well as similar online information would be particularly helpful. In addition, grants need to be sufficient to cover the direct and indirect costs of participation.

5. Provide additional professional development opportunities for new teachers, coaches and principals.

The Reading First program has begun each year with a series of summer workshops to provide leadership and instructional information to LEA coordinators, principals, coaches and teachers.

Most who will be working with the Reading First program in their LEAs and schools attend these sessions, but not everyone. New principals, coaches and teachers are especially likely to miss out on these summer opportunities, and attend a make-up session that is later in the year, after they begin the semester already behind their peers as to knowledge and expectations.

Unfortunately, this situation only worsens as the years go on, with established staff continuing to gain knowledge and new staff further behind (another reason for recommendation #4 above). Make-up sessions that provide access to training in the instructional strategies, the core program, the use of assessment and the training introducing Reading First principles should be more immediately available at the start of the new schools year to those who missed the summer workshops. At these trainings, ADE could combine staff from multiple cohorts as all staff members would be new to the program.

The ongoing staff turnover presents some major challenges to professional development. High-risk schools tend to have higher-than-average turnover, and this appears to be the case for Arizona Reading First schools as well. Teacher turnover was 23 percent with some schools experiencing turnover of over half their K-3 teaching staff – a turnover rate considerably higher than the national average of 17 percent for elementary schools, and 11 percent were brand-new teachers. Continuing Reading First schools had new principals in 17 percent of schools and new coaches in 20 percent of schools. Even six of the LEA coordinators interviewed were new. This turnover means there is a continuous need for beginning-level Reading First training, even as other teachers, coaches, and principals become increasingly experienced and need more advanced training.

This turnover of administrators and teachers, as well as the differences in years of teacher experience, suggest an ongoing need for training teachers who have little to no experience with Reading First practices in addition to ongoing professional development for teachers with varying years of experience. Providing the professional development opportunities as an effective and sequentially meaningful package for new teachers and administrators as well as for those who are continuing to develop their skills is a challenge to be faced in continuing and expanding the Reading First program.

6. Ensure that schools have longer-term implementation support to improve and sustain scientifically-based model reading program components in Arizona including access to professional development, technical assistance, funding, support for leadership activities, and appropriate instructional materials and strategies to meet students' needs.

Reading First appears to have had a positive impact on students' performance on the Arizona state reading assessment (AIMS). In particular, students who were continuously enrolled in Reading First schools for four-years from kindergarten through third grade were significantly more likely to pass the AIMS than were students who were not in the program all four years (67% compared to 53%). Furthermore, the continuously enrolled students passed the AIMS at almost the same rate (67%) as did all Arizona students (69%), despite the general tendency of students in high-risk schools to score well below the state average.

The Reading First students who had been in the program for four years also showed that they were more likely to be at benchmark on the DIBELS assessment at the end of third grade than those students not in Reading First all four years (62% compared to 56%).

The state of Arizona has taken specific actions to enhance reading through encouraging adoption of scientifically-based reading program components. Arizona A.R.S. §15-704 requires all schools to administer a reading assessment to all kindergarten through third grade students to measure outcomes. The ADE AZ READS program encourages adoption of scientifically-based strategies with the goal that "every Arizona child will learn to read proficiently by third grade." Further indication of widespread adoption was evidenced in Cycle 2 LEAs where over half-of the *non*-Reading First schools had implemented some Reading First components.

Until now Arizona Reading First has only been 'tested' in high-risk schools. This year, the Arizona legislature allocated funds this year to expand Reading First to non-Title I schools. These results will address issues of fidelity and replicability in different settings in Arizona.

Next year, all of these results may help to provide an in-depth understanding of scientifically-based reading program components and how they need to be implemented to ensure students' success in reading proficiently by the end of third grade. It seems reasonable to suggest that, in the meantime, these program components should be supported and strengthened while additional research continues.

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