

Maryland Reading First Initiative: 2007 Evaluation Report

Submitted to



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Macro International, a research and evaluation firm headquartered in Calverton, MD, has served as the external evaluator of the Maryland Reading First Initiative since February 2006. Since that time Macro has worked closely with the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) to refine and carry out a comprehensive evaluation plan that includes collection of qualitative and quantitative data through surveys and interviews, as well as rigorous analysis of student assessment data. The goals of our evaluation are to answer important questions about the impact of the grant on teacher knowledge and practice and on student achievement, as well as to provide MSDE with formative data about the effectiveness of all aspects of the program.

The following is a summary of Macro International's activities and findings as of the writing of its annual evaluation report in November 2007:

Student Achievement Findings

- In Reading First schools, the percentage of students that score at proficient levels on the Stanford Achievement Test (SAT-10) and Maryland School Assessment (MSA) increased from 50 percent to 56 percent over the first three years of the program. This increase in “pass rates” was evident in first, second, and third grades.
- Pass rates among students in Reading First schools increased in all eight participating LEAs, an indication that benefits from the program have been spread throughout the state. Three schools that have shown particularly high increases in student achievement have been General Wolfe Elementary and Graceland Park Elementary in Baltimore City, as well as Matthew Henson Elementary in Prince George's County.
- Over the past three years, a comparison set of ten non-Reading First schools had a larger increase in pass rates than their corresponding Reading First schools (11% vs. 7%). However, due to differences in baseline scores between the two groups it is unclear how to interpret this result. Macro will conduct a more rigorous comparison of participating schools with other schools in the state during the next year of the grant.
- Increases in pass rates were evident among White students (an increase of 8% over the first three years), Hispanic students (6%), and African-American students (5%). There was some evidence that at younger grades the program might have a particularly positive impact on Hispanic students; Macro will investigate this potential trend more closely during the upcoming year.
- In Reading First schools, the gap in pass rates between special education and ELL students and their counterparts has decreased by a substantial margin over the past three years (5% and 12%, respectively). There has not been a corresponding decrease in the gap between students that participate in the Free and Reduced Meals program and their peers.

Annual Yearly Progress of Reading First Schools

- There was essentially no change in the percentage of Reading First schools that made Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) in reading (83% in 2006 vs. 82% in 2007). While this

percentage remains at a lower level than at the beginning of the program, Macro believes that this figure is not an accurate reflection of the effectiveness of the initiative.

Key Informant Interviews

- As part of its evaluation effort, Macro conducted 25 interviews with key personnel at the district and school levels, including principals and Reading Coaches. These interviews provided a great deal of qualitative data that, when combined with student achievement results, will help Macro and MSDE determine and disseminate best practices.
- District and school personnel generally view the reading programs they are using as being of very high quality. However, several expressed a desire for MSDE to conduct a new expanded review of reading instruction materials to determine whether there are others that are appropriate for use.
- In most LEAs there appears to be a great deal of consistency in program implementation among participating schools. Where there is variation, it is generally attributed to principal leadership and support; in schools with weaker leadership, the Reading First program is not as well implemented. Over time, some schools are shifting towards a model of “flexible fidelity,” in which teachers are allowed to deviate from lesson plans based on their professional judgment. However, Reading First personnel are aware of the delicate balance between allowing teachers to have flexibility and ensuring consistent implementation of reading programs.
- Participants in the interviews expressed a very high level of satisfaction with the professional development provided through the Reading First program. This included resources and events provided by MSDE, as well as those organized by the LEAs themselves. In particular, they were pleased that this professional development provided teachers with a common baseline of knowledge and a shared vocabulary about reading instruction.
- Participants in the interviews indicated that all students that are identified through assessments as needing “intensive” assistance are receiving it through the program. School and LEA personnel in several districts said that a current challenge is to extend that assistance to students that are identified as needing “strategic” help.
- Personnel at both the district and school levels emphasized that the success of the Reading First program depends to a great extent on the support of principals. While the majority of principals are supportive and invested in the program, in some districts there are some who are less involved and committed. Encouraging and sustaining principal buy-in should continue to be one of the primary goals of the state Reading First office.
- While teachers have improved their instruction in many ways, two areas in which principals and Reading Coaches identified a need for more support are instruction on reading comprehension and the use of small learning centers for differentiation.

Survey of Teacher Knowledge and Attitudes

- In the late fall of 2006, Macro conducted a survey of Reading First teachers’ knowledge and attitudes toward reading instruction. As part of this survey, teachers were asked to rate the professional development they had received on different reading-related topics.

Respondents rated professional development on phonics and phonemic awareness highest; in both cases 88 percent of respondents indicated that training on these topics was “very effective” or “effective.” Professional development on comprehension (72%), differentiation (69%), and student motivation (57%) was rated less positively.

- Macro’s teacher survey included 30 multiple-choice questions that covered the five core components of reading instruction, as well as student motivation, data-driven decision-making, and differentiation. Teacher respondents answered an average of 19.4 of the 30 questions correctly. On average, teachers that answered more questions correctly were those that had more years of experience, higher certification levels, and higher levels of education. On average, Reading Coaches answered a higher number of questions correctly than classroom teachers (24.5 vs. 19.4).
- Nine of the 30 items on the knowledge survey were repeated from a similar instrument administered to Reading First teachers in the summer of 2004. Among teachers that took the survey both years, the percentage that answered correctly increased for 8 of the 9 repeated questions. This represents evidence that the professional development provided through the Reading First program has been successful in increasing teacher knowledge about literacy instruction.
- The teacher survey also included the Teacher Perceptions of Early Reading and Spelling (TPERS) instrument.¹ Teachers’ responses to this portion of the survey indicated that over the first three years of the Reading First initiative their preferences have shifted away from implicit, meaning-based instruction and towards explicit, code-based instruction. This should be interpreted as a success for the program, since the philosophy of Reading First favors the latter strategy.

Survey of School Reading Coaches

- In an effort to learn more about teachers’ current classroom practice and how it has changed over time, in the spring of 2007 Macro conducted a survey of the 41 school Reading Coaches in Maryland. The survey provided coaches with a list of 27 indicators of strong reading instruction and asked them what proportion of the teachers in their schools exhibit the indicators regularly in their teaching. According to coaches’ responses, there have been dramatic improvements in nearly every aspect of reading instruction since the start of the Reading First program.
- In the same survey, coaches indicated that the responsibilities of their position have changed over the three years of the initiative. Most said that their time was initially devoted to managing materials, collecting and analyzing assessment data, and participating in professional development to strengthen their coaching skills. Many now spend more time working directly with teachers to provide support and respond to questions and concerns. However, there are some Reading Coaches that still find their ability to work with teachers compromised by their administrative responsibilities, and are frustrated because of it.

¹ This instrument was adapted from Mather, N., Bos, C., and Babur, N. “Perceptions and Knowledge of Preservice and Inservice Teachers About Early Literacy Instruction.” *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, 34 (5), pp. 472-482.

INTRODUCTION

In its application for funding from the U.S. Department of Education (ED) and its RFP for an external evaluator, MSDE specified what it felt were the three most important evaluation questions for this program. These questions were:

- Are increasing percentages of K-3 students in schools receiving Reading First funds reaching benchmark levels on outcome measures?²
- How well are Maryland’s K-3 Reading First schools meeting AYP and to what extent is performance improving over time?
- How effective are professional development activities in improving classroom instruction?

Since joining the project, Macro has worked with MSDE to develop and refine an evaluation effort that includes collection of qualitative and quantitative data at the state, local, and school levels. This plan was directly aligned with the evaluation questions listed above, in order to ensure that MSDE had the formative and summative data necessary both to report results to ED and to improve the effectiveness of the Maryland Reading First program.

Table 1 provides a summary of how Macro’s evaluation plan addresses each of MSDE’s three evaluation questions, as well as a number of “sub-questions” that we believe will be particularly important to address. Each of the columns refers to a different type of data that the evaluation team has been collecting and analyzing over the course of the project.

The following report represents a summary of Macro International’s evaluation activities, as well as the findings from our work. The report is broken into chapters, each of which addresses one of the columns in Table 1. At the conclusion of the report we provide a summary section that highlights what we consider to be our most important findings and recommendations.

² This question was initially worded to refer specifically to benchmark levels on the DIBELS assessment, rather than on “outcome measures.” However, the evaluation team has since determined that the Stanford Achievement Test and Maryland School Assessment are more appropriate outcome measures than the DIBELS, which is why we have rephrased the research question (see page 3).

Table 1: Evaluation Questions and Sources of Data

	Data from Student Assessments	School AYP Data	Key Informant Interviews	Survey of Teacher Knowledge and Attitudes	Survey of School Reading Coaches	Evaluation of Summer Prof. Develop. Institutes
Research Question #1: Are increasing percentages of K-3 students in schools receiving Reading First funds reaching benchmark levels on outcome measures?						
What schools and LEAs are experiencing the largest gains in student achievement?	X					
Which approved reading programs have the largest impact on student achievement?	X					
Are student achievement gains being realized among all student subgroups, including special education students, minority students, and ELL students?	X					
How do changes in student achievement compare in RF versus non-RF schools?	X					
Research Question #2: How well are Maryland's K-3 Reading First schools meeting AYP and to what extent is performance improving over time?						
Among Maryland Reading First schools, is the percentage meeting annual reading AYP increasing?	X	X				
Among Maryland Reading First schools, is the percentage that meets annual reading AYP for individual disaggregated student subgroups increasing?	X	X				
How does the percentage of Reading First schools that meet annual reading AYP compare with that of the matched non-Reading First schools?	X	X				
Research Question #3: How effective are professional development activities in improving classroom instruction?						
Did participation in Reading First professional development activities have an impact on teacher linguistic knowledge?			X	X		X
Does participation in Reading First professional development activities have an impact on teacher pedagogy?			X		X	X
Has participation in RF activities had an impact on teacher attrition?			X			
Are teachers using Reading First reading programs in their classrooms with fidelity to program guidelines?			X		X	

SECTION I: DATA FROM STUDENT ASSESSMENTS

Introduction

The state Reading First office has chosen two outcome measures to evaluate student achievement:³

- For 1st and 2nd graders: Student scores on the Stanford Achievement Test (SAT-10), which is administered in all Reading First and comparison schools each spring; and
- For 3rd graders: Student scores on the norm-referenced portion of the Maryland School Assessment (MSA) in reading, which is administered to all Maryland public school students in grades 3 to 8.

A student was considered to have reached a proficient level on the SAT-10 (i.e., to have “passed” the test) if he or she scored at the 40th percentile or higher on the total reading measure. A student was considered to have passed the MSA if he or she scored at the 40th percentile or higher on the norm-referenced section of the reading portion of the test.⁴ The analyses below are based on “pass rates”—that is, the percentage of students who reached a proficient level on each measure.

Analysis of Student Pass Rates, Year 1 to Year 3

Overall Analysis of Pass Rates among Reading First Students

An analysis of student assessment scores shows that in Reading First schools, student achievement has increased since the beginning of the program (Table 2). Between Year 1 and Year 3 of the program, the percentage of students who passed their respective outcome assessment increased from 50 percent to 56 percent. This increase in pass rates was evident in all three grades; over the three years, the percentage of students that were proficient increased 5 percent among first graders, 6 percent among second graders, and 6 percent among third graders.

Table 2: Overall Pass Rates in Reading First Schools in Maryland

	Percentage of students scoring at proficient levels		
	Yr 1 (2004-2005)	Yr 2 (2005-2006)	Yr 3 (2006-2007)
Overall	50%	53%	56%
Grade 1	52%	56%	57%
Grade 2	49%	51%	55%
Grade 3	50%	55%	56%

³ MSDE had also been planning to use results from the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) instrument as an outcome measure of student performance. However, after meeting to review the evaluation plan Macro and MSDE agreed that the DIBELS assessment was not intended for this purpose, and that therefore these scores are not an appropriate outcome measure.

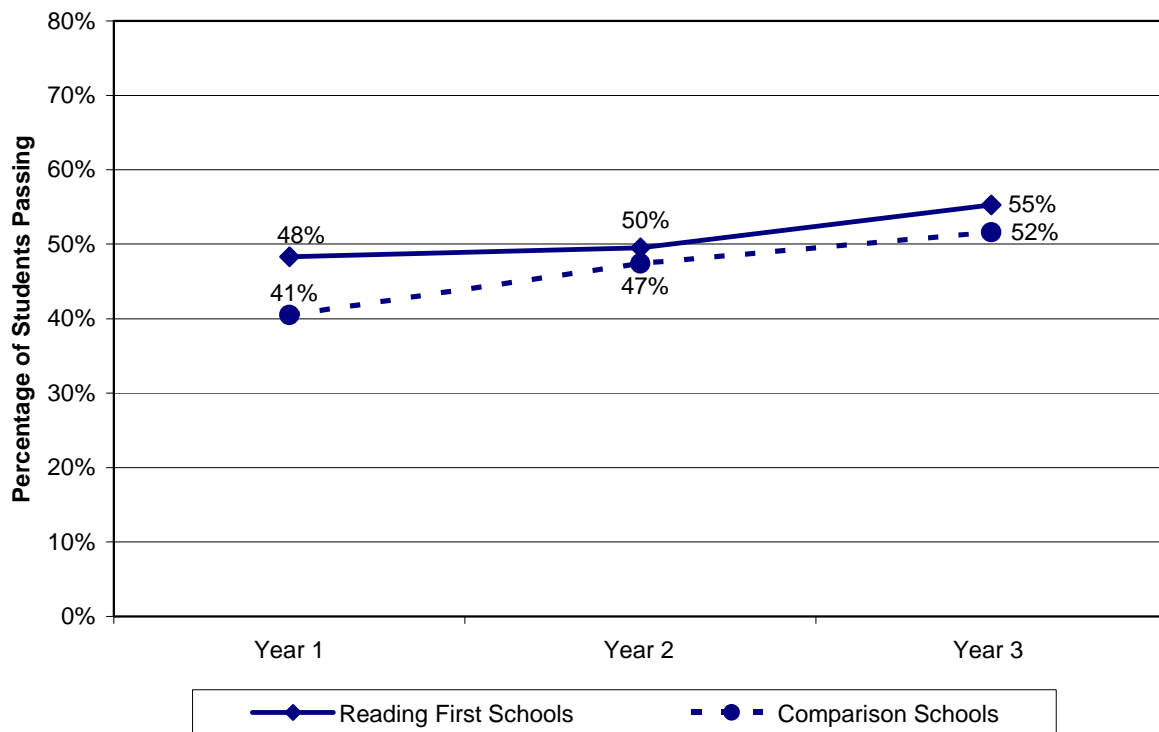
⁴ It should be noted that the Reading First program uses the norm-referenced portion of the MSA to measure student achievement, while most other data released by MSDE is based on the criterion-referenced portion of the test. This explains why some of the figures in this report will not match data from other MSDE documents.

Analysis of Pass Rates at Reading First and Comparison Schools

At the beginning of the Reading First program, MSDE selected ten of the participating schools. For each of these ten schools, the state office selected a “comparison school” that was similar in both demographics and previous achievement. This allows student achievement in these two sets of schools to be compared in a “quasi-experimental” design to determine whether changes in pass rates are due to the Reading First program or can be attributed to other outside trends (such as a general increase in student scores statewide).

Figure 1 presents a comparison of the pass rates of third graders among the ten matched Reading First and comparison schools. Unfortunately, it is difficult to draw any valid conclusions from these data. Despite the best efforts of MSDE to select comparable sets of schools, baseline data on the SAT-10 show that by Year 1 the Reading First schools already scored significantly higher than comparison schools (48% vs. 41%). From that point, the pass rate in comparison schools increased by 11 percent, while the comparable increase in the matched Reading First schools was 7 percent. However, it is difficult to determine whether this is an indication that comparison schools “performed better”—or whether comparison schools were able to improve by a larger amount because their baseline percentage was lower. The analysis is also complicated by the small sample size involved; quasi-experimental designs are most effective when large numbers of schools are included.

Figure 1: Percentage of Students Passing Norm-Referenced Section of Grade 3 MSA in Years 1 through 3



One additional complication involved in this analysis is that because they are also low-achieving schools, many of the comparison schools have adopted other comprehensive reading initiatives. In some cases, in fact, they may have implemented some elements of the Reading First program itself, such as the use of a dedicated school-based reading coach. Therefore, rather than a comparison of Reading First to no program at all, Figure 1 more likely illustrates a comparison of Reading First to a range of other reading initiatives—or to elements of itself.

Analysis of Pass Rates by LEA

The Maryland Reading First Initiative is currently being implemented in eight Maryland LEAs.⁵ Table 3 shows each of the eight LEAs, along with Reading First pass rates in Year 1 and 3 and the change between the two points in time.

In each of the eight LEAs, there was an increase in pass rates in Reading First schools between Year 1 and Year 3. The amount of change varied from 1 percent in Baltimore County to 13 percent in Dorchester County. The fact that test scores increased in Reading First schools in all eight LEAs provides additional evidence that the initiative has had a positive impact on student achievement.

Table 3: Changes in Pass rates at Reading First Schools at LEA Level (All Grades Combined)

	Allegany County	Baltimore City	Baltimore County	Dorchester County	Garrett County	Montgomery County	Prince George's County	Somerset County
Year 1	63%	44%	55%	41%	72%	54%	42%	58%
Year 3	71%	51%	56%	54%	79%	64%	49%	60%
Change	8%	7%	1%	13%	7%	10%	7%	2%

Figures 2, 3, and 4 below provide more detailed information on the changes in pass rates in all the counties over the three years. Among first-graders the largest increase in pass rates was in Dorchester (17%) and Montgomery (13%) counties. Among second-graders the largest improvement was observed in Garrett County (12%). Allegany County third-grade students showed the largest increase in pass rates of any single-grade, single-LEA group (21%).

⁵ Worcester County was originally involved in the program, but no longer participates.

Figure 2: Changes in Pass Rates in First Grade, by LEA

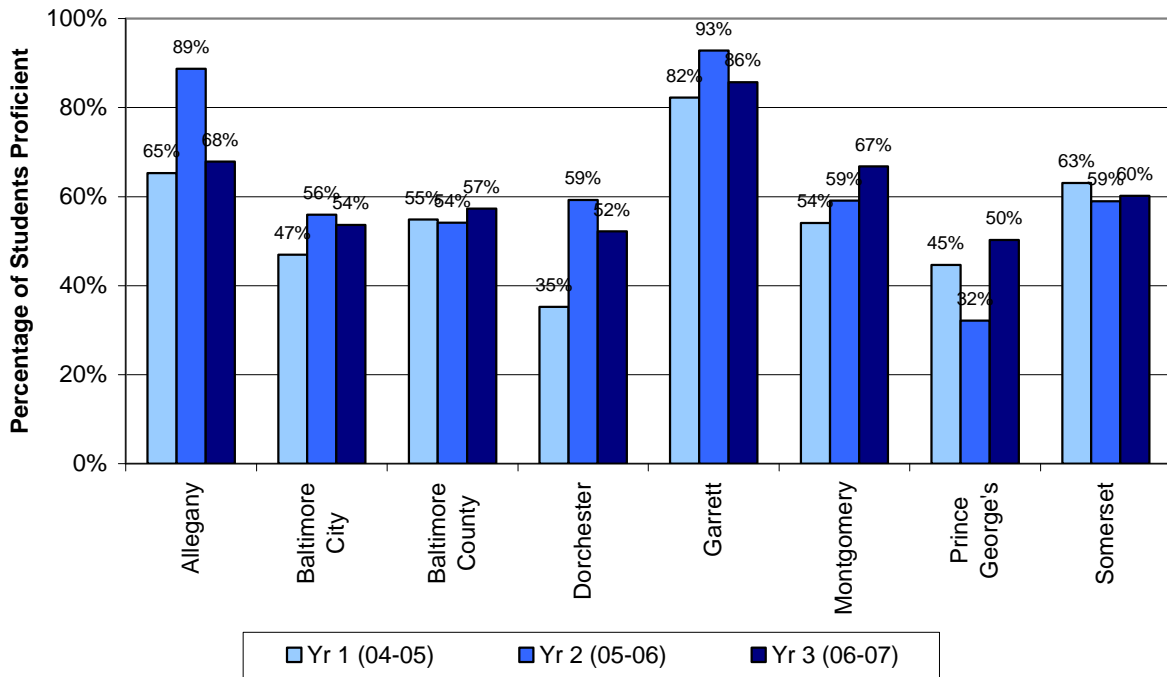


Figure 3: Changes in Pass Rates in Second Grade, by LEA

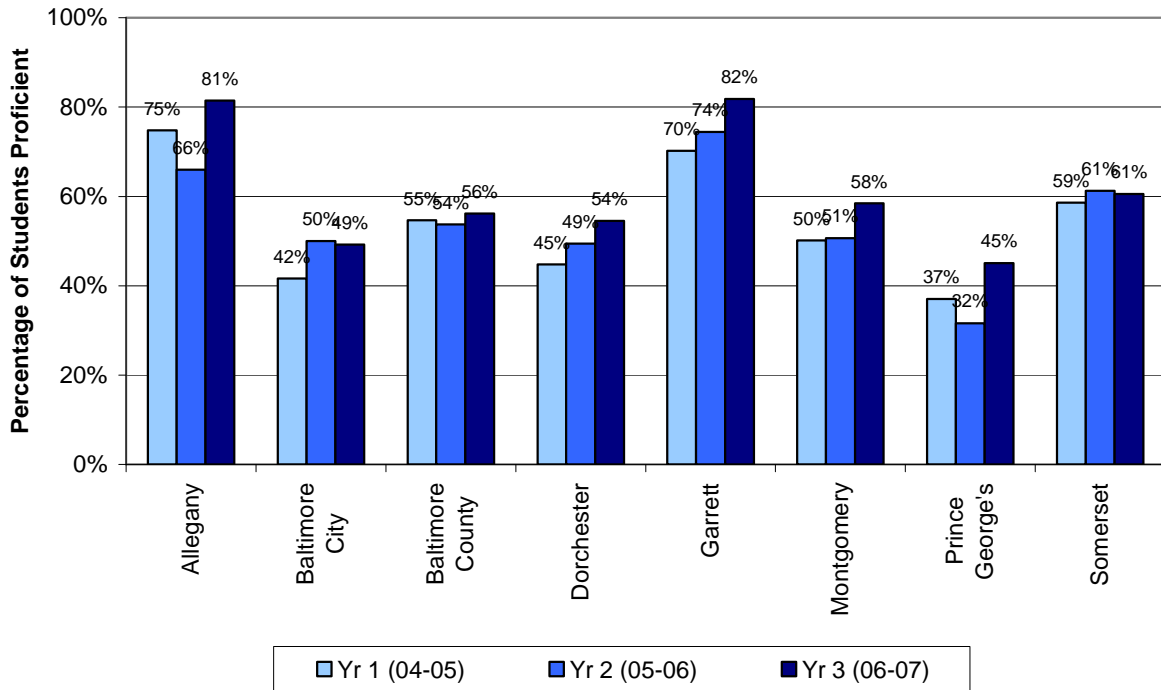
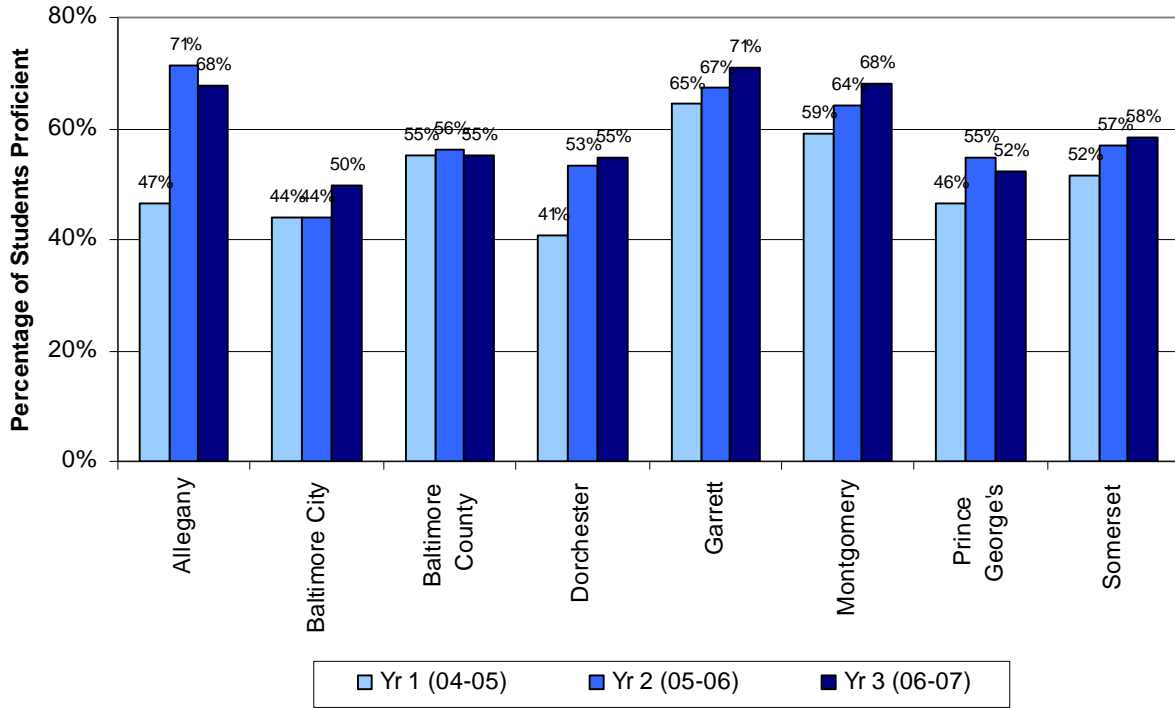


Figure 4: Changes in Pass Rates in Third Grade, by LEA



Analysis of Pass Rates by School

One of the evaluation questions posed by MSDE related to which participating schools showed the greatest improvement in student achievement over the course of the program. This information, combined with more qualitative data about how Reading First is implemented in specific LEAs and schools, will help MSDE and Macro to identify and disseminate best practices. Table 4 shows the 10 schools in which students' pass rates improved the most from Year 1 to Year 3 for each grade. One notable finding is that schools in Baltimore City appear frequently on these lists—for example, in third grade 7 of the 10 most-improved schools are in Baltimore City. It is impossible to determine from these data the exact reason for this trend. One possibility is that the Open Court reading program, which is only used in Baltimore City, is particularly effective. Another is that because many of the schools in Baltimore City started in Year 1 with very low pass rates, it was easier for these schools to improve.

Table 4: Schools Exhibiting Largest Increases in Pass Rates

School	County	% Proficient		Change	Program
		Year 1	Year 3		
Grade 1					
General Wolfe	Baltimore City	34%	100%	66%	Reading Mastery Plus
Graceland Park	Baltimore City	28%	77%	48%	Open Court
Eutaw-Marshburn	Baltimore City	22%	70%	48%	Open Court
Highland	Montgomery	35%	75%	40%	Houghton-Mifflin 2003
Matthew Henson	Prince George's	38%	65%	27%	Houghton-Mifflin 2003
Winfield	Baltimore County	45%	64%	19%	Houghton-Mifflin 2003
Hurlock	Dorchester	39%	57%	17%	Houghton-Mifflin 2005
Mary Harris "Mother" Jones	Prince George's	48%	64%	16%	Houghton-Mifflin 2003
Belmont	Baltimore City	36%	51%	16%	Open Court
Maple	Dorchester	31%	45%	14%	Houghton-Mifflin 2003
Grade 2					
General Wolfe	Baltimore City	29%	85%	56%	Reading Mastery Plus
Graceland Park	Baltimore City	36%	85%	49%	Open Court
Eutaw-Marshburn	Baltimore City	20%	61%	41%	Open Court
Matthew Henson	Prince George's	24%	58%	34%	Houghton-Mifflin Invitations to Literacy
Deal Island School	Somerset	69%	100%	31%	McMillan McGraw Hill
Arundel	Baltimore City	18%	48%	31%	Open Court
Guilford	Baltimore City	24%	47%	23%	Open Court
Wheaton Woods	Montgomery	52%	73%	21%	Houghton-Mifflin 2005
Mary Harris "Mother" Jones	Prince George's	51%	67%	16%	Houghton-Mifflin Invitations to Literacy
Highlandtown	Baltimore City	38%	54%	16%	Reading Mastery Plus
Grade 3					
General Wolfe	Baltimore City	18%	53%	35%	Reading Mastery Plus
Rognel Heights	Baltimore City	49%	83%	34%	Open Court
Graceland Park	Baltimore City	23%	53%	30%	Open Court
Guilford	Baltimore City	29%	58%	29%	Open Court
Belmont	Baltimore City	22%	51%	29%	Open Court
George's Creek	Allegany	42%	71%	29%	Houghton-Mifflin 2005
Highlandtown	Baltimore City	29%	52%	23%	Reading Mastery Plus
Matthew Henson	Prince George's	28%	50%	22%	Houghton-Mifflin Invitations to Literacy
Summit Hall	Montgomery	49%	71%	21%	Houghton-Mifflin 2005
Tench Tilghman	Baltimore City	25%	43%	18%	Open Court

Analysis of Pass Rates for Disaggregated Student Groups

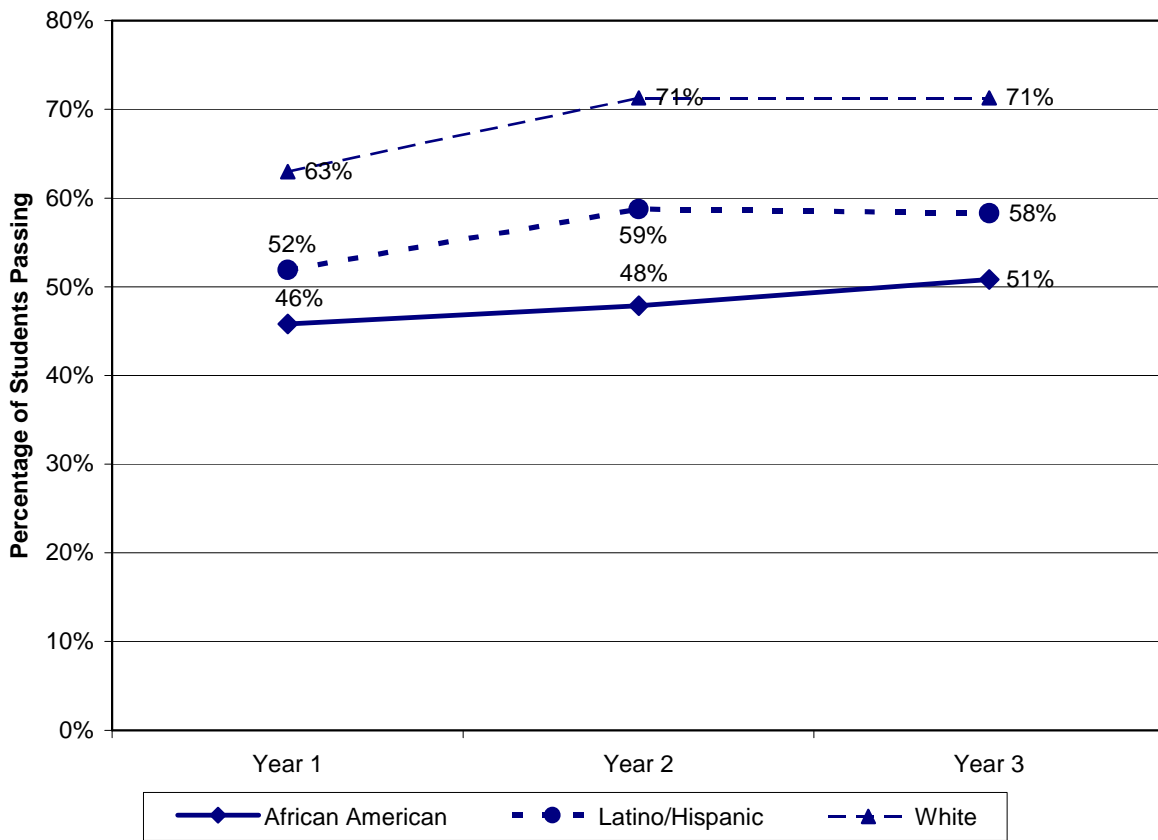
As part of its collection of outcome data MSDE also collected individual student demographic information. These student data allow Macro to study the extent to which Reading First produces student achievement gains among all groups of students, or whether gains are limited to specific subgroups. Unfortunately, a great deal of demographic data was not collected with the SAT-10 in Year 1 of the initiative. Therefore, most of Macro's current analysis of disaggregated groups is limited to students in Grade 3.

The following section of our report provides information on four types of disaggregated student groups: race/ethnicity, special education status, English language learner (ELL) status, and participation in the Free and Reduced Meals (FARMS) program.

Race/Ethnicity

Figure 5 shows the pass rates from Year 1 to Year 3 of African-American, Hispanic, and White students.⁶ In all three years the pass rate was highest among White students, with Hispanic and African-American students following in that order. The percentage of White students passing the norm-referenced portion of the MSA increased by 8 percent over this period (from 63% to 71%). The percentage of Hispanic students passing increased by 6 percent (52% to 58%), while the corresponding increase for African-Americans was 5 percent (46% to 51%).

Figure 5: Percentage of Students Passing Grade 3 MSA in Years 1 through 3, Disaggregated by Race/Ethnicity



As noted above, disaggregated data is not available for the first year of the program from Grades 1 and 2. However, a limited analysis of the past two years shows the beginnings of an interesting trend. From Year 2 to Year 3, the percentage students that passed the SAT-10 increased

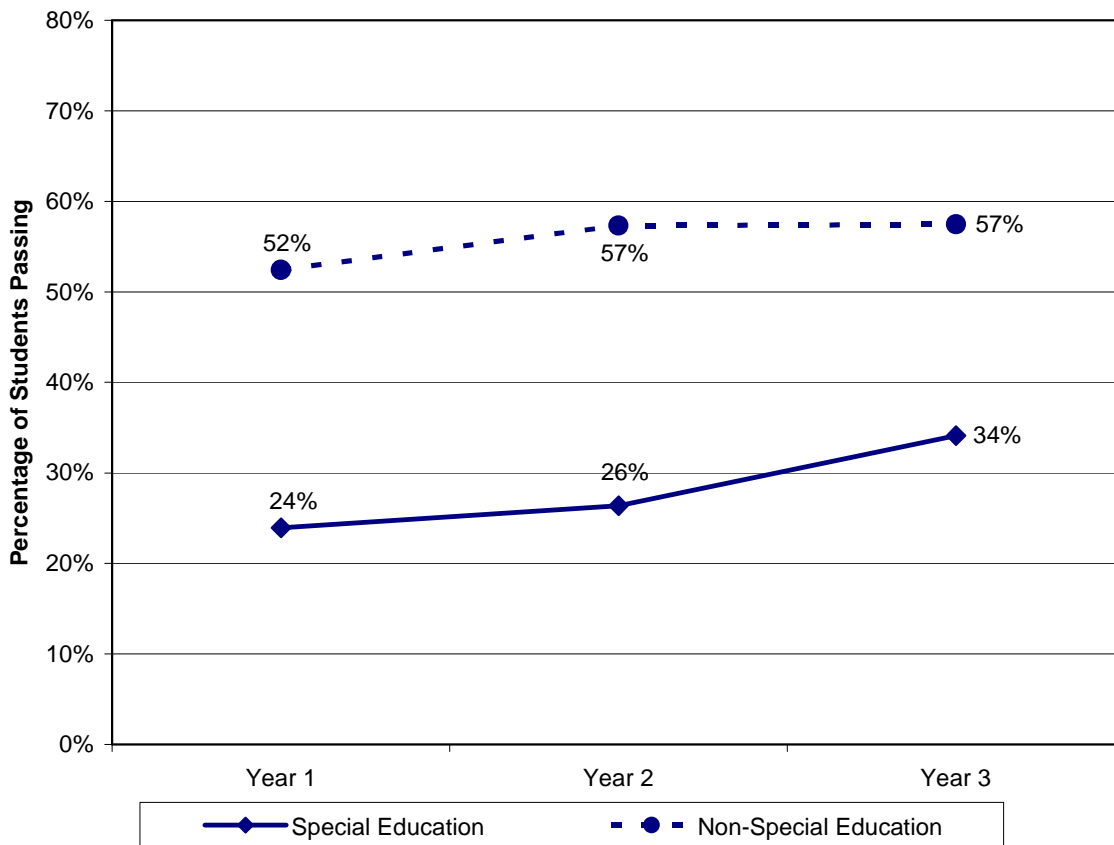
⁶ Data was collected on other ethnicities as well, but the sample sizes were not large enough to conduct meaningful analyses on these groups.

dramatically among Hispanics—by 16 percent in Grade 1 and 20 percent in Grade 2.⁷ Because this is based on only two years of data, it is too early to consider it as evidence that the Reading First program is particularly effective for this student subgroup. However, when Year 4 outcome data is available in the spring of 2008, Macro will be able to study whether the Reading First program does in fact have these kinds of large impacts on the achievement of first and second grade Hispanic students.

Special Education Students vs. Non-Special Education Students

Students who receive special education services were less likely than those who do not receive these services to pass the third grade MSA (Figure 6). However, the pass rate among special education students increased by 10 percent between Year 1 and Year 3 (from 24% to 34%), while the rate among other students increased by only 5 percent (52% to 57%). Therefore, in Reading First schools the gap between the two groups has diminished over the course of the initiative.

Figure 6: Percentage of Students Passing Grade 3 MSA in Years 1 through 3, Disaggregated by Special Education Status

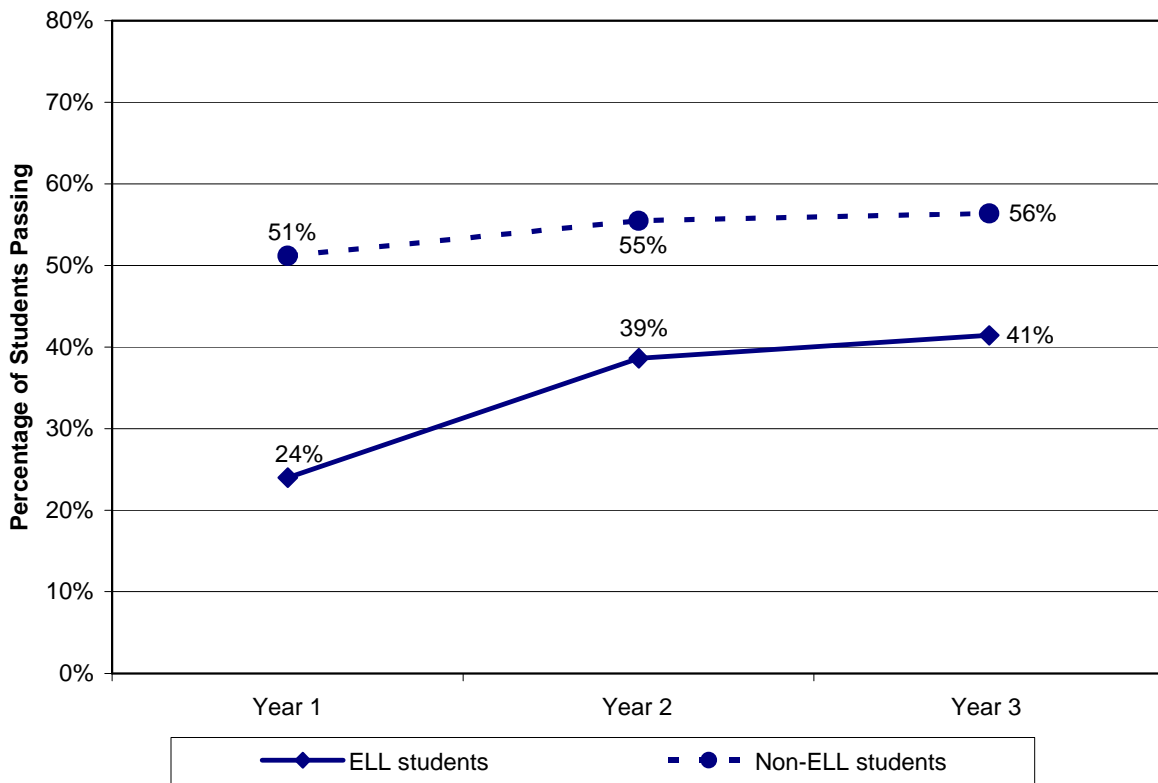


⁷ Over this period of time there was little change in the achievement of African-American (no change in Grade 1 and 2% increase in Grade 2) and White (decrease of 1% in Grade 1; increase of 3% in Grade 2) students.

English Language Learners vs. Non-English Language Learners

In each of Years 1 through 3, English Language Learners (“ELL students”) were less likely than their peers to score at the proficient level on the third grade reading MSA (Figure 7). However, over this time period the pass rate among ELL students increased by 17 percent (from 24% to 41%), as compared to 5 percent among non-ELL students (from 51% to 56%). As with special education, therefore, over the past three years the achievement gap between ELL and non-ELL students in Reading First schools has decreased.

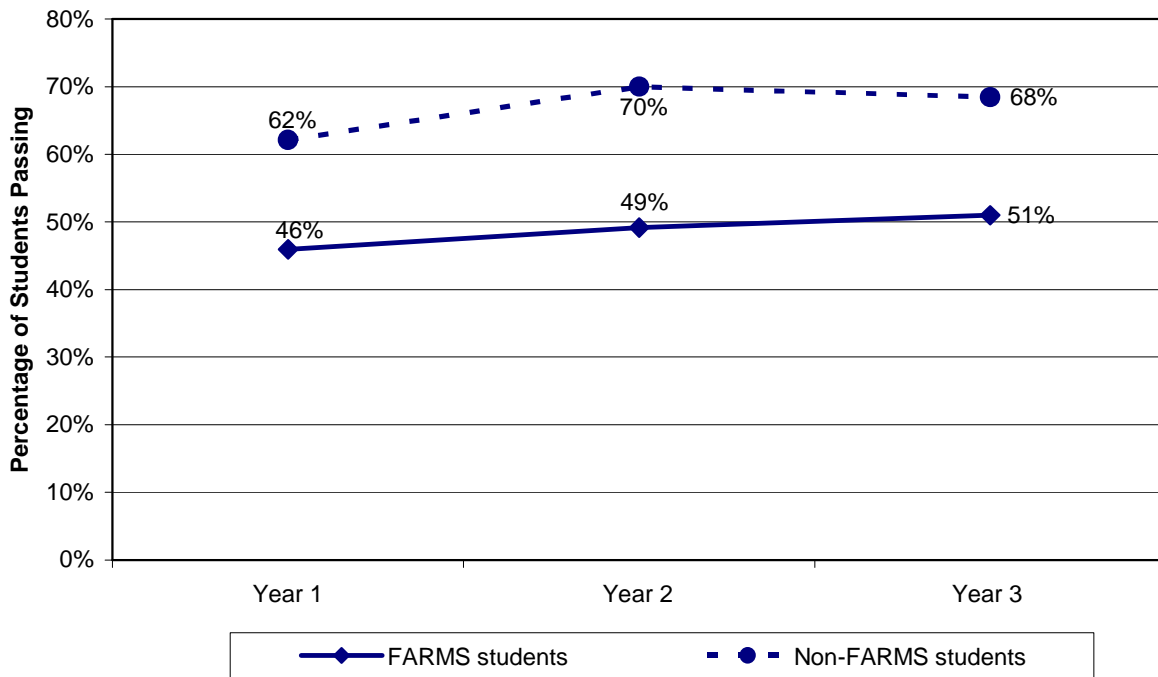
Figure 7: Percentage of Students Passing Grade 3 MSA in Years 1 through 3, Disaggregated by ELL Status



FARMS Students vs. Non-FARMS Students

The pass rate for students who participate in the Free and Reduced Meals (FARMS) program is lower than that for students who do not participate in the program. Unlike with special education and ELL students, however, there is no evidence that over the past three years this gap has decreased. The pass rate for FARMS students has increased 5 percent (from 56 to 61 percent) while the rate for other students has increased 6 percent (from 62 to 68 percent)—so the gap remains essentially the same size as it was in Year 1.

Figure 8: Percentage of Students Passing Grade 3 MSA in Years 1 through 3, Disaggregated by FARMS Status



Analysis of Pass Rates by Reading Program

Table 5 lists the core reading programs implemented in Grades 1, 2, and 3 among participating Reading First schools. For each program the table provides the number of schools and LEAs implementing that program, the Year 1 and Year 3 pass rates in schools using that program, and the change in pass rate over that time. This table has been provided because MSDE and other stakeholders have indicated that they would find this to be useful information.

However, the figures in the right-hand column of Table 5 should not be interpreted as absolute measures of the effectiveness of these programs. The majority of programs are only being used in one LEA and/or a small number of schools. As a result variations in the way that Reading First is being implemented, or even events at a specific school (e.g., a change in principal or Reading Coach) could have a large impact on the figures in this table. Therefore, the fact that a given reading program has a relatively small—or negative—change in pass rate should not be seen as proof that the program is ineffective. Likewise, the fact that schools using a particular program have had a large increase in pass rates should not be interpreted as meaning that the program itself is necessarily the reason for these improvements.

The effectiveness of reading programs is a topic that will be studied more closely by Macro in Year 5 of the program.

Table 5: Percent of Students Scoring at Proficient Levels by Reading Program

	# of schools	LEAs	Year 1	Year 3	Overall change
Grade 1					
Harcourt Brace	1	Garrett	82%	86%	4%
Houghton-Mifflin 2003	17	Allegany, Baltimore County, Dorchester, Montgomery, Prince George's	52%	59%	7%
Houghton-Mifflin 2005	1	Dorchester	39%	57%	18%
McMillan McGraw Hill	4	Somerset	63%	60%	-3%
Open Court	9	Baltimore City	46%	55%	9%
Reading Mastery Plus	6	Baltimore City	51%	51%	0%
Grade 2					
Harcourt Brace	1	Garrett	70%	82%	12%
Houghton-Mifflin 2003	6	Baltimore County	52%	54%	2%
Houghton-Mifflin 2005	7	Allegany, Dorchester, Montgomery	57%	65%	8%
Houghton-Mifflin Invitations to Literacy	5	Prince George's	37%	45%	8%
McMillan McGraw Hill	4	Somerset	59%	61%	2%
Open Court	9	Baltimore City	42%	50%	8%
Reading Mastery Plus	6	Baltimore City	41%	47%	6%
Grade 3					
Harcourt Brace	1	Garrett	65%	71%	6%
Houghton-Mifflin 2003	6	Baltimore County	53%	55%	2%
Houghton-Mifflin 2005	7	Allegany, Dorchester, Montgomery	54%	67%	13%
Houghton-Mifflin Invitations to Literacy	5	Prince George's	46%	52%	6%
McMillan McGraw Hill	4	Somerset	52%	58%	6%
Open Court	9	Baltimore City	44%	54%	10%
Reading Mastery Plus	6	Baltimore City	45%	40%	-5%

Plans for Further Analyses

The data provided in this section answer MSDE's primary evaluation questions—that is, the extent to which student achievement is improving in Reading First schools, how the impact varies between LEAs and schools, and how disaggregated subgroups of students have been affected. However, in the upcoming year Macro plans to conduct deeper and more rigorous analyses of student achievement data. Some planned studies include:

- Matching student records so that their performance can be tracked over time;
- Incorporating DIBELS scores into the outcome databases, so that students can be analyzed in subgroups based on their scores on these formative assessments;
- Improving longitudinal analyses by adding an additional year of outcome assessment data;

- Continuing to compare the performance of Reading First schools to other schools in the state, including matched comparison schools; and
- Combining quantitative data from student assessments and qualitative information from other data sources to provide a complete picture of “what works” in the Maryland Reading First initiative.

SECTION II: ADEQUATE YEARLY PROGRESS (AYP) OF MARYLAND READING FIRST SCHOOLS

The second evaluation question that was specified in MSDE’s application for federal Reading First funds was the extent to which Reading First schools were making Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in Maryland, as well as how this percentage has changed over time. In Maryland a school achieves reading AYP if the percentage of students who reach “proficient” status on the reading portion of Maryland School Assessment is above the state target level for that year.

Table 6 shows the percentage of Maryland Reading First schools that achieved overall reading AYP each year from 2004 to 2007, as well as the percentage that achieved reading AYP for each student subgroup.⁸ In our evaluation report last year, we reported that the percentage of schools making AYP had not increased over the course of the program, and that in fact there had been a decrease in the percentage of Reading First schools that made AYP from 2004 to 2006. Table 6 shows that this remains true in 2007. While there were small changes among subgroups, the percentage of Reading First schools that made overall reading AYP remained essentially the same (82% in 2007, compared to 83% in 2006).

Table 6: Percentage of Maryland Reading First Schools Making Reading AYP, Overall and Student Subgroups (2004 to 2006) (n=41)

	2004	2005	2006	2007
Overall	95%	83%	83%	82%
Asian	100%	100%	100%	100%
African-American	94%	82%	84%	78%
White	100%	100%	100%	100%
Hispanic	100%	89%	95%	100%
Free and Reduced Meal Program (FARMs)	95%	88%	85%	82%
Special Education	84%	73%	83%	74%
Limited English Proficiency (LEP)	100%	88%	94%	100%

However, Table 7 shows that there was also a similar decrease among the ten non-Reading First comparison schools; the percentage that met AYP decreased from 2004 to 2005 in 6 of 8 categories, and is still lower than 2004 in 3 categories (including overall AYP). The fact that this decrease is evident in both Reading First and non-Reading First schools is evidence that the change may not be attributable to the program.

⁸ In Maryland, a school is issued either a “pass” or “did not pass” AYP rating for each of the student categories shown in Tables 3 and 4. However, if there are only a small number of students from a subgroup in a particular school then the school is not issued any rating because there is not enough evidence to judge progress. The percentages shown here do not include schools that did not receive an AYP rating; i.e., they represent the percentage of schools that passed among those that had a large enough student population to receive a rating. AYP ratings are also provided for the subgroup of American Indian (AI) students, but no Reading First schools had a large enough AI student population to receive a rating.

Table 7: Percentage of Maryland Non-Reading First Comparison Schools Making Reading AYP, Overall and Student Subgroups (2004 to 2006) (n=10)

	2004	2005	2006	2007
Overall	90%	70%	70%	80%
Asian	100%	100%	100%	100%
African-American	90%	80%	80%	70%
White	100%	100%	100%	100%
Hispanic	100%	80%	75%	100%
Free and Reduced Meal Program (FARMS)	90%	60%	70%	70%
Special Education	70%	50%	50%	70%
Limited English Proficiency (LEP)	100%	80%	100%	100%

Because the percentage of Reading First schools that reach AYP was included in MSDE’s application for funding as a potential measure of programmatic effectiveness, Macro will continue tracking these numbers. However, we do not believe that this measure is an accurate reflection of the impact of the program. As Table 6 shows, the percentage of Reading First schools that made AYP was very high at the beginning of the grant in 2004 (100% in 4 of 8 categories). As a result, it would be very difficult for the program to increase these percentages significantly from that baseline. While this AYP measure is included as part of this report and will be a part of future reports as well, we believe that a much better measurement of the effectiveness of the program is the success of individual students on annual reading assessments. Our analysis of student scores on these assessments is provided in the preceding section.

SECTION III: KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS

Introduction

Since the beginning of the Reading First Initiative, its primary purpose has been to increase student reading achievement. As a result, much of Macro’s evaluation work has been focused on the analysis of scores on student outcome assessments. At the same time, however, whether the initiative is effective is only one part of the picture. Equally important factors are why and how the program is effective. This kind of qualitative data obviously cannot be collected from student assessments or other quantitative measures. As a result, Macro integrated into its evaluation plan a series of key informant interviews.

During the spring of 2007, Macro conducted 25 interviews with Reading First personnel at the district and school levels. For every participating LEA, the evaluation team interviewed the person at the district level who was responsible for administering the program (referred to by the general term of “program managers” in this report). Macro also interviewed a purposeful sample of principals and Reading Coaches in Reading First schools. At least two interviews were conducted for each LEA (one with the program manager and at least one with a principal or coach). In two LEAs, Baltimore City and Baltimore County, non-public schools are participating in Reading First; Macro also interviewed principals and/or coaches from these schools. Table 8 shows the distribution of interviews by LEA, school type, and position.

Table 8: Interviews Conducted by LEA, School Type, and Position

LEA	School Type	Number of Participating Schools	Number of Interviews			
			Program Manager	Principal	Reading Coach	Total Number of Interviews for LEA
Allegany County	Public	2	1	0	1	2
Baltimore City	Public	15	1	2	2	7
	Non-public	4		1	1	
Baltimore County	Public	5	1	1	1	3
	Non-public	2		0	0	
Dorchester County	Public	2	1	0	1	2
Garrett County	Public	1	1	1	0	2
Montgomery County	Public	4	1	1	1	3
Prince George’s County	Public	5	1	1	1	3
Somerset County	Public	4	1	1	1	3
TOTAL		44	8	8	9	25

Organization and Staffing of Reading First

Program Manager Responsibilities and Background

In three of the largest participating districts (Baltimore City, Montgomery County, and Prince George's County) the primary manager for Reading First only had responsibilities directly related to the program. In the different LEAs, these individuals had the titles of "Reading First program manager," "project coordinator," and "project specialist." In the other five districts the managers had broader responsibilities that encompassed other areas in addition to Reading First. These managers had titles such as "Reading First and elementary coordinator"; "supervisor of reading for K-8"; "coordinator of elementary and language arts programs"; "supervisor of Title I, Title II, and elementary reading and language arts programs"; and "director of elementary education."

The managers all described their responsibilities related to Reading First similarly. Specifically, they mentioned: ensuring that schools are implementing the program faithfully, overseeing DIBELS testing, meeting with the principals and Reading Coaches, attending meetings and professional development events, arranging and/or providing professional development, procuring materials, overseeing expenditures, and preparing reports.

Nearly all of the Reading First managers had long and broad experience in education. Their years of experience in education ranged from 11 to 36. All had been classroom teachers in the primary grades at some point in their careers. Most had worked as reading specialists, and two had been Reading Coaches. Several had held central administration positions prior to assuming responsibility for managing the Reading First grant. Almost all felt that they had a strong background in reading instruction prior to assuming their current responsibilities for Reading First.

District Level Staffing

In nearly all of the participating districts, the Reading First managers had no professional staff reporting directly to them who were assigned to the Reading First program. The exceptions to this were Baltimore City, in which an instructional support teacher reports to the manager, and Baltimore County, which has two resource teachers who report to the manager and provide support in Reading First schools.

School Level Staffing⁹

- **Reading Coaches.** In all districts, the school Reading Coach is viewed as having primary responsibility for working with teachers to ensure faithful implementation of the program and to build teachers' knowledge and skills. The total number of educators that coaches reported working with ranged from 4 to 32. This seemed to vary with the size of the school and with the presence and involvement of reading intervention teachers and specialists, special educators, ESL teachers, and paraeducators. In general, the non-public schools had fewer of these types of educators involved and hence had fewer staff involved overall.

⁹ Information on the background of Reading Coaches was collected through a survey conducted by Macro International in Spring 2007. This survey is described in more detail in another section of this report.

Coaches' total years of experience in education ranged from 6 to 36; 86 percent had at least 10 years experience. Nearly 90 percent held at least a Master's degree. About three quarters (71%) had been in their current school for at least three years, and three quarters of those had been in the position of Reading Coach since the start of the program three years ago. Previous positions held by coaches included reading intervention teacher (24%), reading specialist (37%), and special education teacher (8%). All coaches had been classroom teachers at some point in their careers.

- **Classroom Teachers and Principals.** In all districts and schools, all K-3 classroom teachers and the building principal are involved in the Reading First program. However, as discussed in a later section the level of principal involvement varies somewhat from school to school.
- **Reading Intervention Teachers.** In nearly all schools, there is at least 1 dedicated reading intervention teacher; many schools have 2 intervention teachers, and a few have 3 or 4. It appears that the intervention teachers are sometimes paid for with Reading First grant funds and in other cases with Title I or other district funds.
- **Reading Specialists.** In addition to grant-funded Reading Coaches, many Reading First schools also have other personnel that serve as reading specialists. These specialists are involved in various ways. Sometimes, they supplement the work of the dedicated intervention teachers and work with K-3 students. In other cases it seems that they focus on working with students in grades 4 and 5, most of whom are not eligible to participate in Reading First.
- **Special Educators.** All districts involve special educators in the Reading First program to some extent. In some cases, special educators in grades K through 5 participate in Reading First professional development and provide instruction to students using the core, supplementary, and intervention programs chosen by the district. Teachers of students in self-contained settings are the primary providers of reading instruction to their students. Special educators who teach mainstreamed students often provide intervention services to small groups that include students with individualized education plans (IEPs).
- **Paraeducators.** Several districts make considerable use of paraeducators in providing reading instruction. Paraeducators may work with children in small group instruction or at centers. In some cases they provide intervention services. However, paraeducators are closely monitored by certified teachers, and they generally do not work with students identified as intensive. They also only provide interventions that can be implemented effectively by someone who is not certified. When paraeducators are involved at this level, they typically receive professional development and ongoing support to build their instructional skills.
- **English as a Second Language Teachers.** In the five districts that have schools with a substantial number of English Language Learner (ELL) students, ESL teachers are also involved in Reading First.

Communication and Interactions among Staff

District-level program managers have frequent communication with school-based staff. Meetings generally occur monthly or bi-monthly and typically include the Coach and intervention teachers. In many schools principals are also involved in these meetings, which focus on reviewing program implementation, planning, and providing program updates.

The program managers also have frequent communication with MSDE Regional Specialists. Often the meetings convened by the program manager with school-based staff include the Regional Specialist. In several districts, the manager and Regional Specialist have offices in the same building, making frequent face-to-face communication easy. It seems that face-to-face contact between the manager and Regional Specialist occurs least often when a single Specialist is assigned to two LEAs; in these cases, the district where the Regional Specialist is based tends to receive greater attention.

The Regional Specialists and program managers visit the schools regularly, often as a team. During the visits they conduct classroom walkthroughs, meet with the coach and intervention teachers, and talk with the principal. Other visits are conducted by the Regional Specialist alone, and these may involve meeting with teams of classroom teachers (usually grade-level teams) as well as the Reading Coach and intervention teachers to review data and to discuss program implementation and challenges. However, the Reading Coach is viewed as having day-to-day responsibility for working with teachers to ensure faithful implementation of the program and build teachers' knowledge and skills.

Most program managers reported that most of their communication with central office MSDE staff occurs during the regularly scheduled statewide Reading First meetings and professional development events. Several indicated that they had contacted MSDE staff with specific questions, and some said that MSDE staff had conducted site visits in their districts. However, it appears that the primary means of communication outside of face-to-face meetings is through email, which ensures that information is disseminated quickly to everyone with a need to know. The program managers were satisfied that communication with MSDE was at an appropriate level to ensure that they have accurate up-to-date information about the program.

Nearly all program managers indicated that they have very little contact with staff involved in Reading First in other districts except during the scheduled statewide meetings and professional development events. No one, however, considered this to be a problem.

Involvement of Principals

Principals are viewed as being key to the success of the Reading First by program managers and by principals themselves. Principals show their commitment to the program in various ways, including conferring regularly with the Reading Coach; visiting classrooms during reading instruction; participating in school meetings that focus on Reading First program planning and data review; attending Reading First training events; and communicating with the Regional Specialist and other Reading First principals in their districts. Several principals commented on the importance of being a "cheerleader" for the program in their larger role as the school's instructional leader.

Most principals are very involved with the program and consider it to be a very high priority in the school. As one principal remarked, *“I have a lot of hands-on involvement. I am involved in every aspect of the program. I go to grade-level and data analysis meetings. I am committed, and the teachers know it. When I go into classrooms, I know what I’m looking for, and the teachers sense how important it is and take it very seriously.”* This principal and several others remarked that as the program has matured they have been able to be somewhat less hands-on due to the increasing expertise of their Reading Coaches and teachers.

While the majority of principals seem quite supportive and invested in the program, there are \ indications that in some districts, there are principals who are less involved and committed to the program. This is viewed by program managers and coaches as having a deleterious effect on program implementation. Specifically, in four districts that have multiple schools involved, program managers indicated that they believe implementation is inconsistent across schools because of varying levels of principal leadership and commitment. As one program manager commented, *“A lot of the variation in quality of program implementation is related to principal involvement and leadership.”*

Having a strong background in reading instruction seems to be associated with higher levels of involvement for principals. One program manager explained, *“The more the principal understands and is involved in data and working with teachers, the more effective the program is.”* Another commented, *“You have to have a principal who is onboard with the program. You also need a principal who is very knowledgeable about reading.”* However, while knowledge about reading instruction is viewed as important there are undoubtedly other personal characteristics, aspects of professional experience, and elements of leadership style that also contribute to the variation in level of involvement with the Reading First program.

Reading Programs in Use

The following core, supplementary, and intervention programs are in use in the Reading First schools at which interviews were conducted.

Table 9: Core, Supplementary, and Intervention Programs in Use in the Schools of Interviewed Staff¹⁰

District	Core Program(s)	Elements of Reading Vocabulary	Early Reading Intervention	Voyageur	Read Naturally	Fundations	Phonemic Awareness in Young Children	Road to the Code	Start Up	Build Up	Benchmark Fluency Kit	Systematic Instruction for Phonemic Awareness, Phonics, and Sight Words	Read Well	Soar to Success	Earobics
Allegany County	K-1: Houghton-Mifflin 2003 2-3: Houghton Mifflin 2005	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓							
Baltimore City	K-3+: Open Court (3 Public + 2 Non-public) K-3: Reading Mastery Plus (1 Public) Scott Foresman (1 Non-public)	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓					
Baltimore County	K-3: Houghton-Mifflin 2003 (2 Public)		✓			✓						✓			
Dorchester County	K-3: Houghton-Mifflin 2003 (1 school) K-3: Houghton-Mifflin 2005 (1 school)	✓	✓				✓					✓			
Garrett County	K-3: Harcourt Brace		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓							
Montgomery County	K-1: Houghton-Mifflin 2003 2-3: Houghton Mifflin 2005	✓	✓	✓	✓							✓	✓	✓	
Prince George's County	K-1: Houghton-Mifflin 2003 2-3: Houghton Mifflin 2005	✓	✓	✓					✓	✓	✓			✓	✓
Somerset County	K-3: McMillan McGraw Hill	✓	✓				✓					✓	✓		

¹⁰ Table 9 reflects the programs that are being used in schools at which at least one staff member was interviewed. In larger districts, there may be other programs that are used in schools that were not sampled for an interview.

All materials listed are programs approved by MSDE for use in Reading First schools. Overall, program managers, principals, and coaches were very positive about the materials they were using. Many respondents indicated that their core program provides consistency for teachers and students and that ancillary materials for the core are effective in shoring up some of the weaknesses inherent in the basic program. Some participants, however, did feel that the programs they were using had some areas of weakness. Areas in which at least one respondent felt a program was weak included the following:

- Houghton-Mifflin: weakness in the areas of vocabulary, phonics, fluency, and comprehension¹¹
- Open Court: weakness in the areas of vocabulary and comprehension
- McMillan McGraw-Hill: weakness in the area of vocabulary.

Vocabulary was the most frequently mentioned weakness. Schools seem to be addressing this through use of supplementary programs, most notably Elements of Reading Vocabulary, which is used in six districts.

Over time, there have been changes in the materials that Reading First schools use. Although there have been no changes in the core program, some supplementary and intervention materials have been added over time, and some have been dropped. Among those added in at least one district after the start of the program in response to a specific identified need are Read Well, Read Naturally, Voyageur, SIPPS, Start up and Build Up, and Early Reading Intervention.

The programs on the approved list are generally viewed as being of high quality and meeting the needs of most students. However, several interviewees expressed a desire for a new expanded review of reading instruction materials to determine whether there are others that are appropriate for use. This seemed to be related to the opinion of a few interviewees that the approved materials do not fully address the needs of some students.

Training and Technical Assistance Received by Staff Involved in Reading First

“The quality of the professional development that has been provided has greatly improved my teachers’ ability to teach reading.” Principal

“It’s a perfect marriage of professional development, ongoing support, and funding. That’s what makes it work.” Principal

“As a result of Reading First, teachers now have a very strong background in reading instruction. They’ll always have that regardless of the core program being used.”
Reading Coach

¹¹ Houghton-Mifflin is the most commonly used core program (used in 5 districts). The fact that more areas of weakness were mentioned is most likely due to the fact that more educators using the program were interviewed. In fact, with the exception of vocabulary, each area of weakness was mentioned by only 1 or 2 interviewees.

“There is no guesswork on how to teach reading. They know exactly what and how to teach reading. Also, there is a lot of staff development in each of the five components and how it fits with our core reading program.” Principal

Virtually all of the educators interviewed praised the professional development provided through Reading First. They valued its high quality as well as the large quantity afforded by the program. Those interviewed remarked that they had seen a great deal of professional growth and a much higher level of performance among teachers who have participated extensively in Reading First professional development. Several commented that the knowledge teachers have gained will help them throughout their careers and will be applicable regardless of the particular core reading program being used.

The Reading First professional development has come primarily in four forms, each of which is thought by interviewees to have an important place in a comprehensive professional development effort:

- **Training provided by MSDE**, which has included the following:
 - Annual Maryland Institute of Beginning Reading, which is held each summer and includes coverage of all 5 components of reading instruction¹²
 - Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling (LETRS) training provided by certified LETRS consultants
 - Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) training
 - Coach training provided by the Consortium on Reading Excellence (CORE)
 - Annual Fall Maryland Reading First Leadership Conference
- **National Conferences**, such as the annual Reading First Conference and the DIBELS Summit. (Attendance at these conferences is supported with Reading First Funds for some attendees.)
- **Training provided within the school district by outside trainers, which is made possible by Reading First funds.** These trainings are provided by:
 - Consultants associated with the selected core reading program
 - Consultants associated with the supplementary and intervention programs being used
 - Consultants with specialized expertise related to a training need identified by the district (e.g., differentiation, coaching, assessment, LETRS, phonics). Among the organizations mentioned as providers of in-district training are Sopris West, the Johns Hopkins University, the Florida Center for Reading Research, the 95 Percent Group, the Consortium for Reading Excellence, Really Great Reading, Longmire Learning Center, and the Eastern Regional Technical Assistance Center.

Some training provided by outside consultants has occurred offsite at district-wide training events for Reading First educators. However, in many cases consultants work onsite in individual schools, providing training and coaching to teachers and Reading Coaches over a

¹² A summary of participant evaluations of the 2007 MIBR is provided in a later section of this report.

period of several days. This approach minimizes out-of-classroom time for teachers and allows opportunities for hands-on practice, observation, coaching, and refinement.

- **Ongoing training and support provided by Reading Coaches, Regional Specialists, and program managers.** This occurs in a variety of ways depending upon Reading First staffing patterns, the number of Reading First schools in the district, and staff preferences. Training may be provided in meetings during the school day or after school, on district professional development days, and through periodic district-wide meetings or training events involving Reading First educators. A primary aim of the coaches is to pass on as much as they can of what they have learned through their own professional development.

Typically, the coaches attend nearly all of the training offered through Reading First, and many have completed the training-of-trainers as well as the basic version of LETRS training. Principals are invited to nearly all events, but their attendance is voluntary and at least one interviewee suspected that principal participation in Reading First professional development has declined over time.

Classroom teachers are required to attend the MIBR. Selected teachers also attend other trainings at the state level such as LETRS training and the leadership conference. More often, however, teachers participate in training provided within the school district either by in-house staff or by outside consultants. All teachers receive district-based training in the core reading program, any supplementary programs in use, the intervention programs in use (for teachers who provide intervention services), differentiation, LETRS, and assessment and data analysis (including DIBELS).

A challenge to the coaches, Regional Specialists, and program managers is ensuring that all teachers are faithfully implementing the core reading program and performing at an overall high level. Some teachers require more support than others, and coaches devote additional time and attention to these teachers. In addition, there is an ongoing need in most districts to bring teachers new to the district or new to a Reading First school up to speed. This is accomplished in a variety of ways, including through standard new teacher training institutes (generally held just prior to the start of the school year), through special training sessions for teachers new to Reading First, and through ongoing onsite coaching and mentoring during the teacher's first year. In addition, new teachers hired prior to the summer MIBR attend that training.

Reading Instruction in Reading First Schools

How Reading Instruction Has Changed

Results from a survey of Reading Coaches conducted as part of this evaluation indicate that there have been dramatic changes in reading instruction during the Reading First program (see Section V). These results were confirmed by the program managers, principals, and Reading Coaches interviewed by the Macro evaluators. In response to open-ended questions about differences in reading instruction that came about through Reading First, the following aspects of the program were remarked upon with great consistency across positions and school districts.

<p>Increased Focus on Reading Instruction. Reading First has made reading instruction a higher priority than it was previously. The program has given a clear focus to participating schools, and in some cases that focus has reached beyond the school level and become a district-wide priority. Several program managers indicated that the district is attempting to expand the Reading First model to other schools and/or grade levels (i.e., through grade 5).</p>	<p><i>“It’s given us a real focus. It’s provided a lot of training. It’s brought a lot of money for people and materials. We have a lot of materials. It gives us a focus and helps us solidify our vision in the school. I’m a fan actually and I’m a cynic by nature.”</i> Principal</p> <p><i>“We really like it [Reading First] and every teacher K-3 has seen the benefit. Teachers who have left have really missed it. I’m not sure if it would work for all students, but with the type of students we work with—high poverty, having language needs—it’s been very successful.”</i> Reading Coach</p>
<p>Formation of a Professional Learning Community. The program has contributed greatly to the development of a professional learning community focused on reading instruction. Through conferences and training events, Reading First educators have had opportunities to expand their professional networks. Within their schools, there are more frequent meetings that focus on reading issues. Teachers are collaborating more closely (particularly with teachers in their grade-level teams), and they are engaging in group problem solving. Over time, they have become more thoughtful and reflective about reading instruction and have developed the vocabulary necessary to communicate effectively with one another about students’ reading-related needs.</p>	<p><i>“Instruction has improved so much, and the number of students who need intervention is decreasing. Teachers have become more knowledgeable and more self-reflective and more eager to learn. In essence, a professional learning community has been created. There’s been a change in the culture. Discussions about the need to improve and change are about instruction, not about them personally. Data is driving them to figure out what else they need to do.”</i> Principal</p> <p><i>“There has been a change in the type of language that’s used by teachers. Teachers can have conversations around reading, and the use of the terminology leads to better communication.”</i> Program Manager</p>
<p>Amount of Time Devoted to Reading Instruction. Prior to Reading First, some of the participating schools were devoting at least 90 minutes to reading instruction, though it is unclear if that was always in an uninterrupted time block. However, Reading First has ensured that a</p>	

<p>90-minute uninterrupted block is standard in all schools, and several districts are devoting even more than 90 minutes per day to reading instruction. A few schools have established a universal access time in the schedule to make it easier to provide intervention to those students who need it, while other students participate in an enrichment activity.</p>	
<p>Use of a Core Reading Program and Ancillary Materials. Teachers in Reading First schools are, for the most part, consistently and faithfully implementing the selected core reading program. In some cases, the core was in use prior to Reading First, but teachers are now viewed as using it more effectively. Several interviewees remarked that having all of the ancillary materials that accompany the core program makes faithful implementation much easier, and few of these materials were available prior to Reading First. Having the core as a focus was viewed as being particularly beneficial to new teachers and weaker teachers because there is a lot of structure imposed by most of the core programs.</p>	<p><i>“It’s much more focused. The teachers as a whole see that there is a skill level that the children are supposed to have before they leave them. Even though we had the core program before, the teachers were doing what they liked. Now they’re hitting all of the components. The program has a lot of supplementary materials, and they use them a lot more and more purposefully than before.”</i> Reading Coach</p>
<p>Reading Instruction that Addresses All Five Key Components of Reading. Prior to Reading First, teachers tended to use the core program and other available materials as a resource, rather than a strong guide for reading instruction. As a result, many teachers did not address all five components of reading instruction. Now, virtually all teachers are at least attempting to provide instruction in all five areas. Instruction in phonemic awareness and phonics was viewed by many as particularly improved under Reading First.</p>	<p><i>“Prior to Reading First, people sort of did their own thing. Some people did guided reading, some focused on literature. They just didn’t have the knowledge then. People thought of core programs as a resource that they, as professionals, could choose to use. They just didn’t have the knowledge about things like phonemic awareness and fluency.”</i> Program Manager</p>
<p>Consistent, Systematic, and Explicit Reading Instruction. Reading instruction is now much more consistent, with less variation from class to class and from school to school. Instruction is also much more explicit and sequential than it was prior to Reading First. In addition, in some Reading First schools, pacing guides have been developed to ensure that all teachers at a particular grade level are at the same point in the core program.</p>	<p><i>“Overall, reading instruction is more consistent, more systematic, and more explicit. Before, teachers would try lots of things, especially if they weren’t getting good results. Now they know that they have to use the approved materials according to program guidelines.”</i> Program Manager</p>

<p>A Wealth of New Materials. A major benefit of Reading First is that participating schools have been able to purchase a wide range of materials. In addition to the core program and accompanying ancillary materials, supplementary and intervention program materials have been purchased, and there are many more books in primary grade classrooms. Reading First teachers now have a wealth of materials at their fingertips.</p>	
<p>Regular Assessment of Students. Primary grade students in Reading First schools are being assessed regularly. Their teachers are using a variety of measures, including DIBELS and core program assessments, to monitor progress and plan instruction. There is also more use of informal assessment during instruction. The combination of assessments being used gives teachers a much more precise idea about students' needs and the strategies that will help to improve their reading skills.</p>	<p><i>“The assessments now are a strong piece. Teachers use them to see where the kids are and what they need. That’s a big difference. They’re looking at DIBELS, at the core program assessments, and they’re observing kids.”</i> Reading Coach</p>
<p>Use of Data to Plan Instruction, Form Groups, and Identify Students in Need of Intervention. Teachers in Reading First schools are making extensive use of student data to identify needs, monitor progress, and adjust instruction. Teachers are approaching instruction more diagnostically, and planning for instruction is far more data-driven.</p>	
<p>More and Better Use of Group Instruction. In Reading First schools, there is more and more purposeful use of small group instruction. In addition, the groups are far more fluid and flexible, so that students are not stuck in a generic group for low achieving readers. Rather, teachers form small groups made up of students with a specific instructional need. These needs are identified through assessment, and instruction is tailored to address the need. In some schools, when a need is shared by only a few students, groups are comprised of students from multiple classrooms.</p>	
<p>More Differentiation. Teachers are differentiating reading instruction more than in the past. In addition to the use of small groups, there is more use of reading centers. However, effective differentiation remains the</p>	<p><i>“It is really making my teachers differentiate their instruction. They don’t have any excuses. They have the materials, they have</i></p>

<p>most frequently noted challenge remaining in Reading First classrooms.</p>	<p><i>the data, and they have the coach to help them work through it.”</i> Principal</p>
<p>Students Receiving Targeted Intervention. To a much greater extent than in the past, primary grade struggling readers are being identified and are receiving the early intervention they need. This is due in part to the availability of intervention materials and teachers. However, beyond that, there is an understanding among staff in Reading First schools of the value and importance of early intervention.</p>	<p><i>“I like the fact that children don’t have to be identified [for special education] to get services. We can be proactive, and that’s very positive.”</i> Program Manager</p>

Fidelity and Consistency of Implementation Fidelity

In most districts, virtually all teachers are viewed as attempting to implement the core reading program with fidelity. However, there is a small percentage of teachers in several districts who do so somewhat grudgingly or are not able to do it effectively.

In about half of the participating districts, there appears to be a great deal of consistency in program implementation among the participating schools. Where there is variation, it is generally attributed to principal leadership and support; in schools with weaker leadership, the Reading First program is not as well implemented.

There have been some changes over time in implementation fidelity, particularly in implementation of the core reading program. In the first year, it seems that program managers and coaches demanded rigid adherence to the implementation guidelines for the selected core program. Over time, as teachers have gained knowledge through professional development and become more familiar with the core’s ancillary materials and other supplementary materials, many schools appear to be moving toward “flexible fidelity.” While still adhering very closely to the core program, teachers are using professional judgment to decide when it is essential to deviate from the highly structured lesson plan or script.

How Students Benefit from Reading First

Degree to Which Students in Need of Intervention Services are Receiving Them

It appears that nearly all students in the greatest need of intervention services are receiving them. All districts attempt to provide intervention services to all of the students that are identified on the DIBELS and other assessments as needing “intensive” help. However, program managers and coaches acknowledge that there are probably a few students who slip through the cracks because their performance on assessments is deceptively high.

In about half of the districts, there are some students identified as needing “strategic” help that do not receive intervention. This is usually because of human resource limitations. However,

more strategic-level students are being served now than in the first year of the program. In that first year, in some schools there were so many students in need of intervention that program staff had to prioritize and provide intervention only to those students most in need. Over time, the number of intensive students has declined, so that it has become possible to serve all of them as well as many strategic, and even some borderline benchmark, students.

Beliefs about the Specific Benefits of Reading First to Students

In the interviews, program managers, principals, and coaches described many ways in which they believe students are benefiting from the Reading First program. The following is a summary of their comments:

<p>Learning from More Knowledgeable Teachers. Overall, instruction is better because teachers are much more knowledgeable and more focused on addressing students’ specific needs. As a result, there are fewer struggling readers in 4th and 5th grades.</p>	<p><i>“Now teachers really understand how reading skills develop and are more able to articulate their understanding. They really understand that reading is a highly technical skill.”</i> Principal</p>
<p>More Consistent Instruction. The instruction is more consistent from day to day, class to class, and grade to grade. Students know what to expect and are comfortable with that. They like the routine and find it easier to transition from grade to grade because the overall approach and structure for reading instruction are the same.</p>	<p><i>“Kids really need and like lots of structure—especially struggling students. They see consistency in the building and know the routine.”</i> Reading Coach</p>
<p>Early Intervention for Those in Need. Nearly all of the students most in need are receiving intervention services. In addition, because of improved classroom instruction and early intervention there are fewer intensive level students than in the first year, and many students at the strategic level can now receive targeted intervention services as well.</p>	
<p>Greater Student Engagement. Students in Reading First classrooms are viewed as being more focused and engaged in learning to read. Students participate more, and there are fewer discipline problems than there were in the past.</p>	

<p>Higher Student Achievement. Program managers, principals, and coaches believe that students are achieving at higher levels now. They cited both higher standardized test scores and the fact that schools are now making adequate yearly progress as evidence of increased academic achievement.¹³</p>	<p><i>“For our school, it’s been a very successful program. We’ve seen incredible increases in our test scores. We’ve also seen changes in attitudes toward reading by teachers and students. It’s been a really good thing for us.”</i> Principal</p>
<p>Increased Self-esteem and Confidence among Students. Because students are achieving at higher levels they have increased confidence in their ability to read and learn. In addition, students in Reading First schools are regularly informed about their progress, so they can see how much they have achieved.</p>	

Challenges and Changes in Program Implementation

Challenges

Several interview participants indicated that in the first year there were many challenges, and staff focused primarily on getting the core and intervention programs in place. As mentioned previously, absolute fidelity to the core program was required. In some districts, as teachers have become experts in reading instruction a bit more latitude and teacher discretion is being permitted. This is usually because a weakness in the core program has been identified or because there are particular student needs that the core does not adequately address. However, program staff are keenly aware that it is a delicate balance between appropriate freedom and fidelity to the core program.

Program managers, principals, and Reading Coaches remarked on a number of challenges that still confront them as they implement the Reading First program.

- **Time.** While time for reading instruction has increased in most Reading First schools and in some schools exceeds the mandatory 90 minutes, teachers still struggle to fit in all of the required activities. In particular, teachers have difficulty finding time for interventions, practice, writing, and self-selected reading. The time issue is exacerbated in some schools by district curriculum and pacing guides.
- **Small Group Instruction and Centers.** Despite the professional development that has been provided, some teachers struggle with managing small group instruction and centers. Others still find it difficult to use data to make informed decisions and differentiate instruction.

¹³ A more thorough analysis of changes in student achievement is presented in another section of this report.

- **Instruction in Comprehension.** While phonemic awareness and phonics instruction are reported to be much improved, some teachers are still grappling with teaching reading comprehension skills and strategies.
- **Resistant and Marginal Teachers.** In the first year, many teachers found the process of change difficult. Most teachers—particularly higher-performing teachers—worked through that process and were committed to the program by the start of the second year. However, there remain some resistant teachers who complain that they cannot use their favorite materials or that the program stifles their creativity. In addition to these “resistant” teachers, some of the teachers who are least effective in implementing the program are not fully-certified. There are other schools in which absenteeism and teacher turnover appear to undermine the effectiveness of the program.
- **Principal Buy-in.** As previously noted, program managers in about half of participating districts indicate that they have at least one principal who is not fully committed to Reading First. This is due in part to the fact that some principals are new to Reading First schools and were not part of the early principal training and capacity-building efforts. Others have been with the program since the beginning but do not provide strong leadership for the program. It appears that schools with a greater number of resistant teachers also have weaker principal support for the program.
- **Serving Students Identified as in Need of “Strategic” Help.** While more “strategic” students receive intervention services than in the first year, not all students who could benefit are receiving them. This is primarily due to the fact that there are a limited number of intervention teachers in the public schools and none in the participating non-public schools. Some interviewees also suggested that some students identified as in need of “intensive” reading help actually require special education services. Because these students are not making progress with Reading First despite the consumption of considerable program resources, there is less time to devote to other students who could make rapid progress with targeted reading intervention.
- **Serving Students who Fail to Make Progress.** There is a small number of students who, despite the efforts of Reading First educators, are not making progress in learning to read. As mentioned above, some of these students may actually need special education services. However, a few of those interviewed believe that these students could make better progress if the school had the flexibility to employ some materials not on the approved list. They suggested that it would be appropriate for MSDE to conduct another materials review and, more generally, expedite the approval process.

Planned Changes

In general, the interviewed program managers, principals, and coaches believe that the Reading First program is working well, and they were not planning to make any major changes. Some of the minor changes planned for the 2007-2008 school year were to:

- Put a greater focus on strategic and marginal benchmark students
- Continue to work on improving small group instruction
- Purchase and employ some additional intervention and supplementary materials

- Increase the use of technology in program administration and instruction (e.g., handhelds for DIBELS, Earobics)
- Add intervention teachers
- Modify the school schedule to optimize the availability of human resources during the reading block.

SECTION IV: SURVEY OF TEACHER KNOWLEDGE AND ATTITUDES

The third research question specified by MSDE in its application to ED was, “How effective are professional development activities in improving classroom instruction?” In the long run student achievement gains will be the true measure of teacher effectiveness, and therefore of the success of Reading First professional development. However, it is also important to measure the direct impact of RF professional development on teachers’ knowledge and attitudes. Macro accomplished this through a direct survey of teachers.

Development of the 2006 Teacher Survey

As part of the Maryland Institutes on Beginning Reading (MIBRs) that it held in 2004, MSDE administered a survey of all teachers in RF schools for the purpose of establishing a baseline of teacher knowledge about and attitudes towards early literacy instruction. This survey consisted of two parts:

- The first section of the survey was an instrument called the Teacher Perceptions about Early Reading and Spelling (TPERS) survey, developed by Mather, Box, and Babur in 2001.¹⁴ This survey consists of 25 statements relating to early literacy (for example, one representative statement is, “Ability to rhyme words is a strong predictor of early reading success.”) Respondents are asked to indicate the extent to which they agree or disagree with each statement on a six-point Likert scale. This instrument was specifically designed to measure whether teachers favor an “explicit, code-based” or “implicit, meaning-based” approach to reading instruction.
- The second part of the survey contained 22 multiple-choice items from the Teacher Knowledge Assessment: Structure of Language (TKA), also used by Mather, Bos, and Babur in their same 2001 study. These items directly measured teachers’ knowledge about phonics and phonemic awareness (e.g., “Count the number of syllables in the word ‘unbelievable’” or “Which of the following words contains a short vowel sound?”).

MSDE’s original intent was to use the same instrument again in the fall of 2006 to measure changes in teachers’ attitudes and knowledge.¹⁵ However, as preparations for the 2006 teacher survey began both MSDE and the evaluation team expressed some reservations about the instrument. First, there was concern that the TKA focused exclusively on two of the five components of reading success—phonics and phonemic awareness—to the exclusion of the other three. Reading First professional development in Maryland had obviously focused on all five components, and the evaluation team wanted to be able to measure its effectiveness in all five areas. In addition, the TKA only tested teachers’ basic content knowledge. The Reading First office felt that the focus of their professional development had moved past content instruction, and that their emphasis was now on how teachers could apply their knowledge in the classroom.

¹⁴ Mather, N., Bos, C., and Babur, N. “Perceptions and Knowledge of Preservice and Inservice Teachers About Early Literacy Instruction.” *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, 34 (5), pp. 472-482.

¹⁵ The survey was not administered at the 2005 MIBR, because of time constraints and because the evaluation team had not yet joined the project.

In particular, they said, three new professional development emphases—and the primary topics covered in the 2006 MIBR—were differentiation of instruction, assessment and data-driven decision-making (DDDM), and student motivation. The 2004 instrument did not address any of these areas, and therefore was no longer aligned to the activities of the program.

For this reason, Macro developed an updated instrument for use in the fall of 2006 that accomplished three goals. First, new items were added to the survey that addressed fluency, comprehension, and vocabulary. Second, items were added that were more aligned with new emphases of professional development in Maryland—differentiation, assessment, and student motivation. Some of the items that were added to the instrument came from a survey developed by the Florida Center for Reading Research; others were developed by an outside reading consultant.

Although many of the items were different between 2004 and 2006 versions of the survey, 9 items were retained. This allowed Macro to measure changes in teacher knowledge over this period of time.

Composition of the 2006 Teacher Survey

The instrument that was administered in the fall of 2006 had three sections:

- The first section asked respondents for their names and collected updated information about each respondent, such as their years of experience and certification level. It also asked each respondent to rate the effectiveness of the professional development they had received in each of the eight content areas addressed in the survey.
- The second section consisted of the 30 multiple-choice teacher knowledge items that were developed through the process described above.
- The third section consisted of the full 25-item TPERS that was used in 2004. This instrument was retained in its entirety to preserve its usefulness as a reliable scale measure.

The final survey instrument, with all response frequencies noted, is provided as Appendix A to this report.

Of the 571 respondents to this survey, 510 indicated that they were teachers, while 36 were reading coaches (Table 10). The remaining respondents were administrators, mentors, paraprofessionals, and other specialists. Respondents who were teachers were fairly evenly divided between those that had 3 years or less of teaching experience (27%), 4 to 7 years of experience (24%), 8 to 15 years of experience (21%), and 16 or more years of experience (28%). About half of responding teachers (52%) had an advanced teaching certificate, 39 percent had a standard certificate, and 9 percent had a provisional certificate.

Unless otherwise noted, all subsequent results reported in this section are for teachers only and do not include responses from Reading Coaches or other personnel.

Table 10: Demographic Characteristics of Survey Respondents (n=571)

		Number of Respondents
Position:	Teachers	510 (89%)
	Reading Coaches	36 (6%)
	Other	25 (4%)
Years of Experience: (<i>Teachers Only</i>)	0-3	134 (27%)
	4-7	116 (21%)
	8-15	105 (24%)
	16+	136 (28%)
Certification Level: (<i>Teachers Only</i>)	Provisional	49 (9%)
	Standard	209 (39%)
	Advanced	232 (52%)

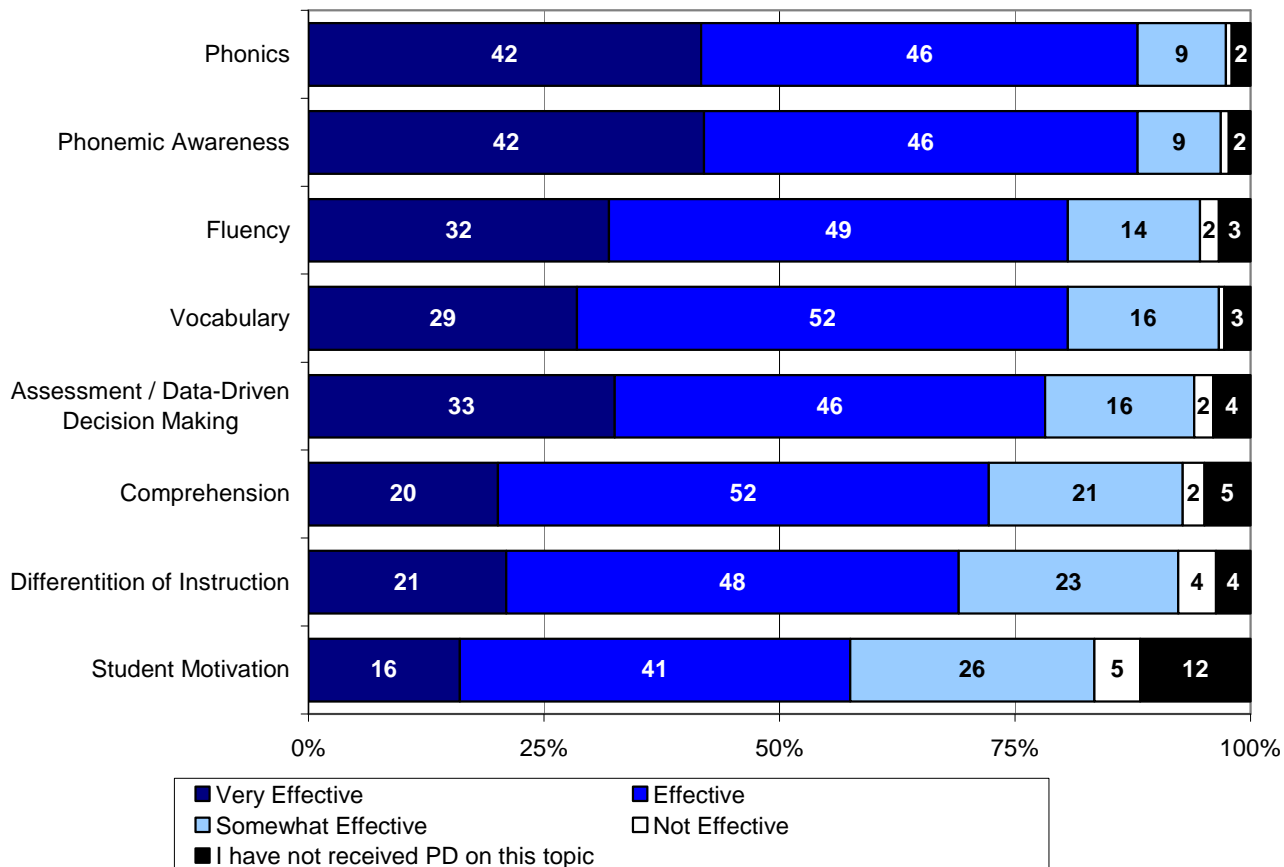
Perceived Effectiveness of Reading First Professional Development

The first section of the teacher survey asked respondents to rate the effectiveness of Reading First professional development that they had received since the summer of 2004. The question specifically asked about professional development in the five core components of reading—phonics, phonemic awareness, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension—plus three other topics that have been a recent focus of Maryland’s Reading First program: differentiation of instruction, assessment/data-driven decision making, and student motivation. Respondents were asked to rate the professional development they received in all eight of these areas; the overall results are presented in Figure 9 below.

Phonics and phonemic awareness got the highest ratings from respondents; in both cases 88 percent found professional development to be either “effective” or “very effective.” Over three quarters of respondents also rated as “effective” or “very effective” the professional development they received on fluency (81%), vocabulary (81%), and comprehension (79%). A smaller percentage of teachers (59%) rated professional development on student motivation as “very effective” or “effective”; this lower rating probably reflects the fact that this topic has become a focus of the program relatively recently.

An analysis of responses to this question by LEA illustrates the differences in how professional development has been provided at the local level. For example, almost a third of the participants from Somerset County (31%) said they had not received professional development on vocabulary—but this was also the only district in which everyone said that they had received training on student motivation. Overall ratings of professional development related to fluency instruction were generally strong; in Baltimore City, for example, 88 percent of respondents indicated that it was “very effective” or “effective.” However, participants from other districts disagreed; about a third (30%) of respondents from Dorchester County and 16 percent of respondents from Montgomery County rated their training on fluency as “Not Effective.”

Figure 9: Respondents' Ratings of Reading First Professional Development on Different Topics



Knowledge of Reading First Teachers about Early Literacy Instruction

Knowledge of Current Reading First Teachers

As noted above, the survey included a 30-item multiple-choice instrument designed to measure teacher knowledge about of the eight topics shown in Figure 9. On average, teachers answered 19.4 of the 30 questions correctly.

There was some variation in scores among teachers based on different factors. For example, teachers with more experience tended to answer more questions correctly, although the differences were fairly small (18.8 items correct for teachers with three or fewer years of experience versus 20.0 for those who had been teaching for 8 to 15 years). Those with provisional certification (16.8 items correct) scored significantly lower than those with standard (19.3) or advanced (19.6) certification. Only 4 respondents indicated that they had a doctorate degree, but these teachers scored significantly higher (24.5) than those with masters (19.5) or bachelors (18.6) degrees. There were no significant differences between teachers in grades K, 1, 2, or 3; all answered similar numbers of items correctly.

As Table 11 shows, on average reading coaches responded correctly to a greater number of items on this survey than did teachers. This is an indication of the validity of this measure, since the reading coaches' role as a mentor dictates that they should have a greater understanding of these topics.

Table 11: Comparison of Average Knowledge Assessment Scores of Teachers and Reading Coaches (2006)

	Number of Respondents	Average Score
Teachers	500	19.4
Reading Coaches	36	24.5

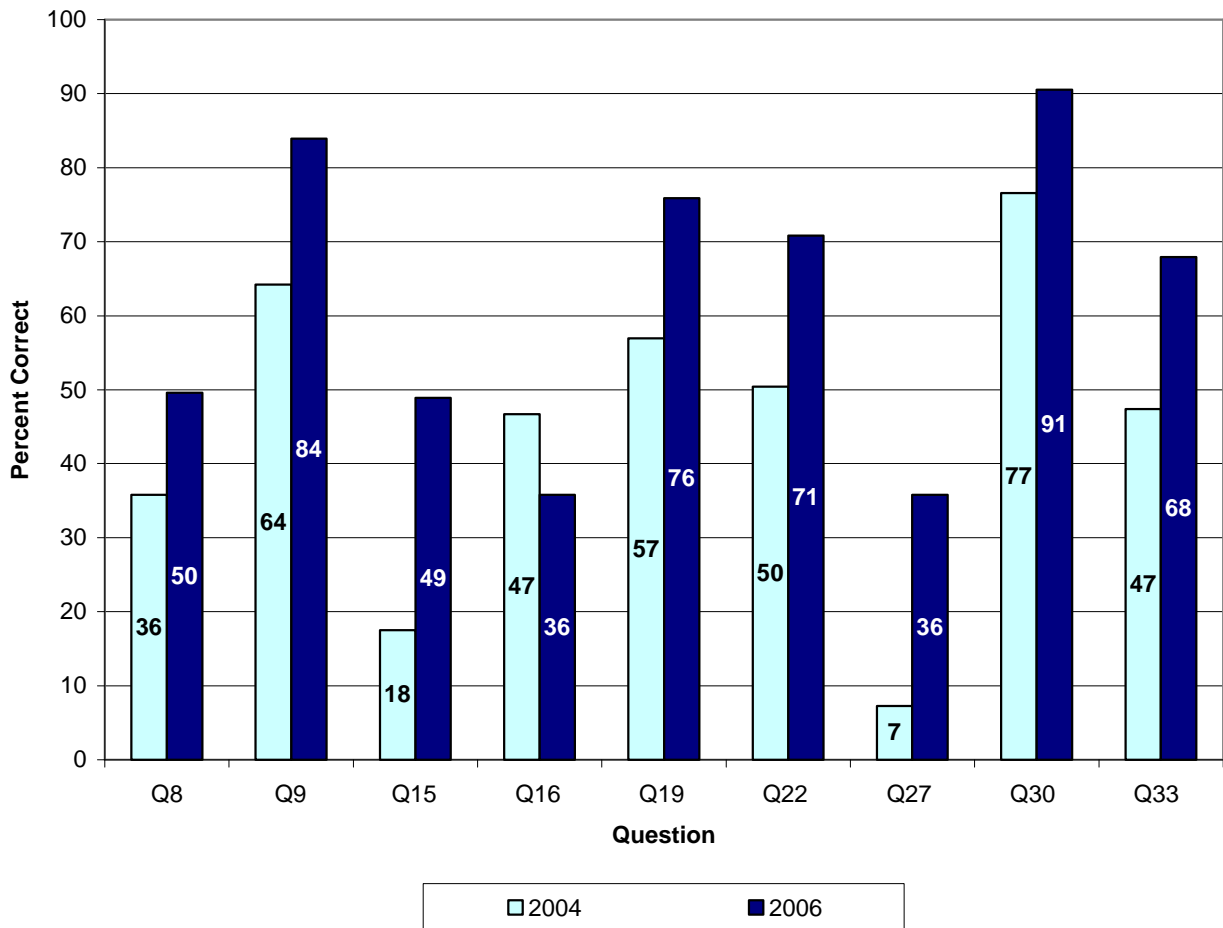
One potential indication that Reading First professional development is effective would be that teachers who had spent several years in a Reading First school responded correctly to more questions than those who had just arrived. In fact, teachers with at least two years of experience at a Reading First school did answer more questions correctly, but only by a very small amount (19.6 vs. 19.4). This could be interpreted to mean that Reading First professional development has only a small impact on teacher knowledge about these topics. However, it is also possible that due to the widespread acceptance of the importance of the five key components of reading, professional development—both in-service and pre-service—focuses more on these topics. If that were true, teachers would arrive at Reading First schools already having more knowledge in these areas.

Comparison of Matched Respondent Scores in 2004 and 2006

As noted above, nine questions appeared on both the 2004 and 2006 surveys of teacher knowledge. By matching responses by name, it was possible to identify 137 teachers who took the survey in both 2004 and 2006. Figure 10 shows that for eight of the nine items, the percentage of respondents that got the item correct increased by at least 13 percent. For some of the most difficult questions (such as Q15 and Q27), the improvement was even greater. This is an indication that for teachers who were at Reading First schools two years ago, the professional development that has been provided has led to a substantial increase in their knowledge about literacy instruction.

Interestingly, there was one item (Q16) for which the percentage of respondents answering correctly actually decreased between 2004 and 2006. The primary difficulty that teachers appeared to have with this item both years was that they confused the meaning of the words “phonics” and “phonetics.”

Figure 10: Comparison of Correct Teacher Responses in 2004 and 2006 (Respondents Who Took the Survey Both Years)



Attitudes of Reading First Teachers towards Early Literacy Instruction

Background of the TPERS Instrument

As noted above, the third section of the survey consisted of the Teacher Perceptions of Early Reading and Spelling (TPERS) instrument. Participants were shown 25 statements and asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed with each statement on a six-point scale ranging from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree.” The survey is designed to measure whether teachers favor an explicit, code based or implicit, meaning-based approach to reading instruction. Seven of the statements on the survey indicated a preference for explicit instruction, and six statements favored implicit instruction.¹⁶ By coding and averaging respondents’ answers to these 13 items, the TPERS instrument produces scores that reflect teachers’ preferences towards explicit vs. implicit instruction.

¹⁶ The other 12 items are neutral statements intended to disguise the purpose of the survey.

Results of the 2006 TPERS Survey in Maryland

Table 12 below presents the average scores for the statements directly related implicit and explicit instruction statements. A high score on the “implicit” statements means that respondents feel positively towards that approach to reading instruction, while a low score indicates that they feel negatively towards that approach. The same is true for the “explicit” statements.

As Table 12 shows, teachers’ attitudes towards implicit instruction became less positive between 2004 and 2006; the mean rating on those six items decreased from 3.93 to 3.06. Teachers’ ratings of the items related to explicit instruction increased, but only a small amount (5.16 to 5.23). However, the small amount of this increase may be in part due to the fact that in 2004 teachers already responded positively to these statements—an average rating of 5.16 corresponds to a response between “agree” and “strongly agree.”

Table 12: Average Ratings for Statements Regarding Implicit and Explicit Instruction

	Year	Number of Respondents	Mean Rating
Implicit Statements (6 items)	2004	384	3.93
	2006	534	3.06
Explicit Statements (7 items)	2004	425	5.16
	2006	557	5.23

The findings illustrated in Table 12 represent a success for the Reading First program in Maryland. One of the foundations of the initiative is a belief that explicit, code-based instruction is more effective, and much of the professional development that has been provided to teachers has supported this strategy. The results of this survey indicate that teachers are receiving this message, and that their attitudes towards instruction are shifting accordingly.

SECTION V: SURVEY OF READING COACHES

Introduction

One of the primary ways in which the Maryland Reading First Initiative hopes to impact student learning is through improved professional development of teachers. As noted in Section III, this professional development is provided through four main channels: training provided directly by MSDE; national conferences; training provided within LEAs by outside trainers; and ongoing support by MSDE and local staff. In large part, the success of the Reading First program in Maryland depends on the extent to which this professional development is effective.

As a result, it was important that Macro's evaluation plan include an analysis of teachers' classroom practice, and the extent to which it has changed over time. Unfortunately, a large-scale series of classroom observations was not possible. As a result, Macro decided to gather information about teacher practice from the people that work most closely with them: school Reading Coaches. In the spring of 2007, Macro asked all Reading Coaches to complete a survey. This survey listed 27 indicators of strong reading instruction that MSDE felt would be impacted by Reading First professional development. Respondents were then asked to indicate the proportion of teachers at their school for which each indicator was true. Coaches who had been at their school since the summer of 2004 were also asked to indicate the proportion of teachers for which each indicator was true at that time. This allowed Macro to measure the extent to which teacher practice had changed over the course of the program. The survey instrument, along with a summary of coaches' responses to each question, is included as Appendix B to this report.

In all, 39 of 41 coaches responded to the survey, a response rate of 95 percent. Of the 39 respondents, 23 had been in the same school since the start of the program and were thus able to provide information about teachers' prior practices.

This section of our report is divided into two pieces. The first reports on current reading instructional practices, as reported by school Reading Coaches. The second part compares current practice to that before the Reading First program began, and thus provides insight into how instruction has changed over that period of time.

Reading Instruction in Participating Schools, Spring 2007

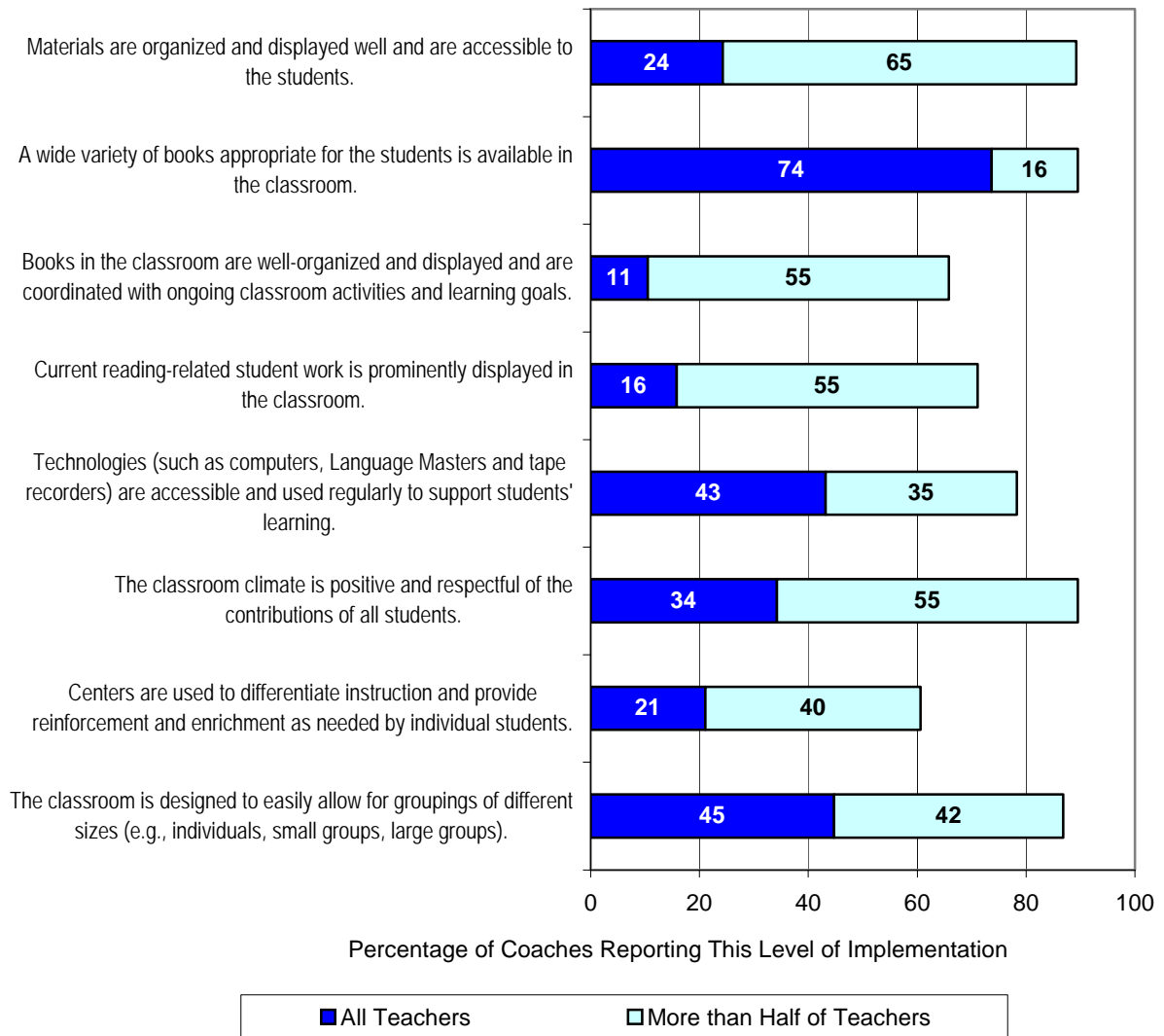
Results of the survey of Reading Coaches in Reading First schools indicate that overall teachers in these schools are performing at a high level and faithfully implementing the program. The instrument specifically asked about coaches' views of the state of practice in three critical areas: classroom setting and climate; reading instructional practices; and reading-related assessment practices.

Classroom Setting and Climate (Figure 11)

At least three quarters of respondents indicated that “more than half” or “all” of the Reading First teachers at their school consistently demonstrate *five of the eight* behaviors on the survey that relate to classroom setting and climate. Of particular note are the following findings:

- Three quarters (74%) of coaches reported that *all* of their Reading First classrooms have a wide variety of appropriate books.
- Two thirds of coaches (69%) of coaches reported that more than half of their Reading First teachers use centers to differentiate instruction and provide support as needed. The remaining 31 percent reported that half or fewer of their teachers do so.

Figure 11: Reading Coach Reports on Classroom Setting and Climate in Reading First Schools



Reading Instructional Practices (Figures 12 and 13)

At least three quarters of respondents indicated that “more than half” or “all” of the Reading First teachers at their school consistently demonstrate *all thirteen* behaviors on the survey that relate to instructional practices. Of particular note are the following findings:

- Over half (58%) of coaches reported that *all* of their Reading First teachers use the core reading program materials as intended. Only one coach indicated that half or fewer of his/her teachers do so; the remainder says that *more than half* of teachers use the materials as intended.
- Seventy-one percent of coaches indicated that *all* of their teachers routinely address all five core areas of instruction in their classrooms; all but one of the remaining coaches indicated that *more than half* do so.

Figure 12: Reading Coach Reports on Instruction in Reading First Schools (Part 1)

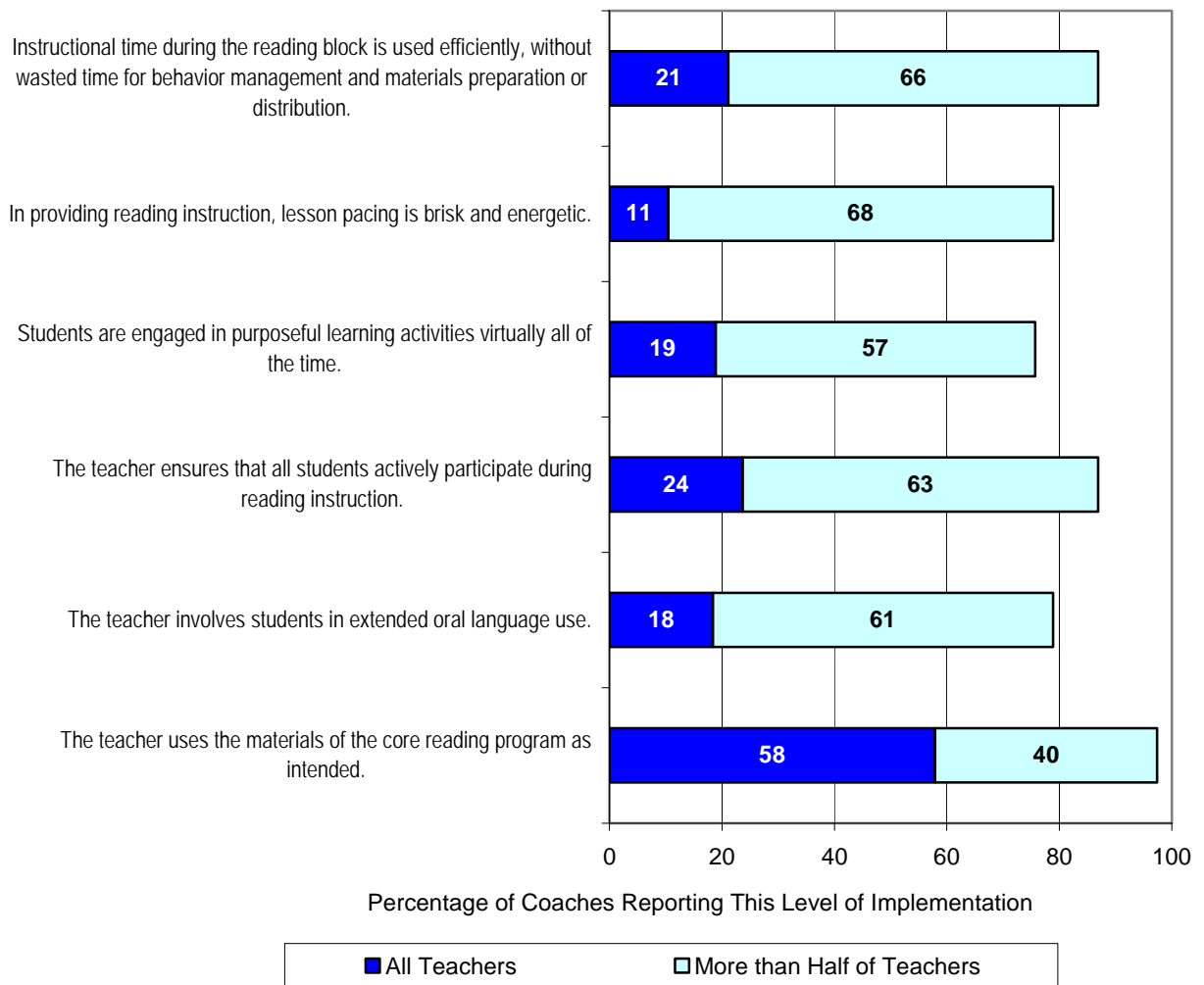
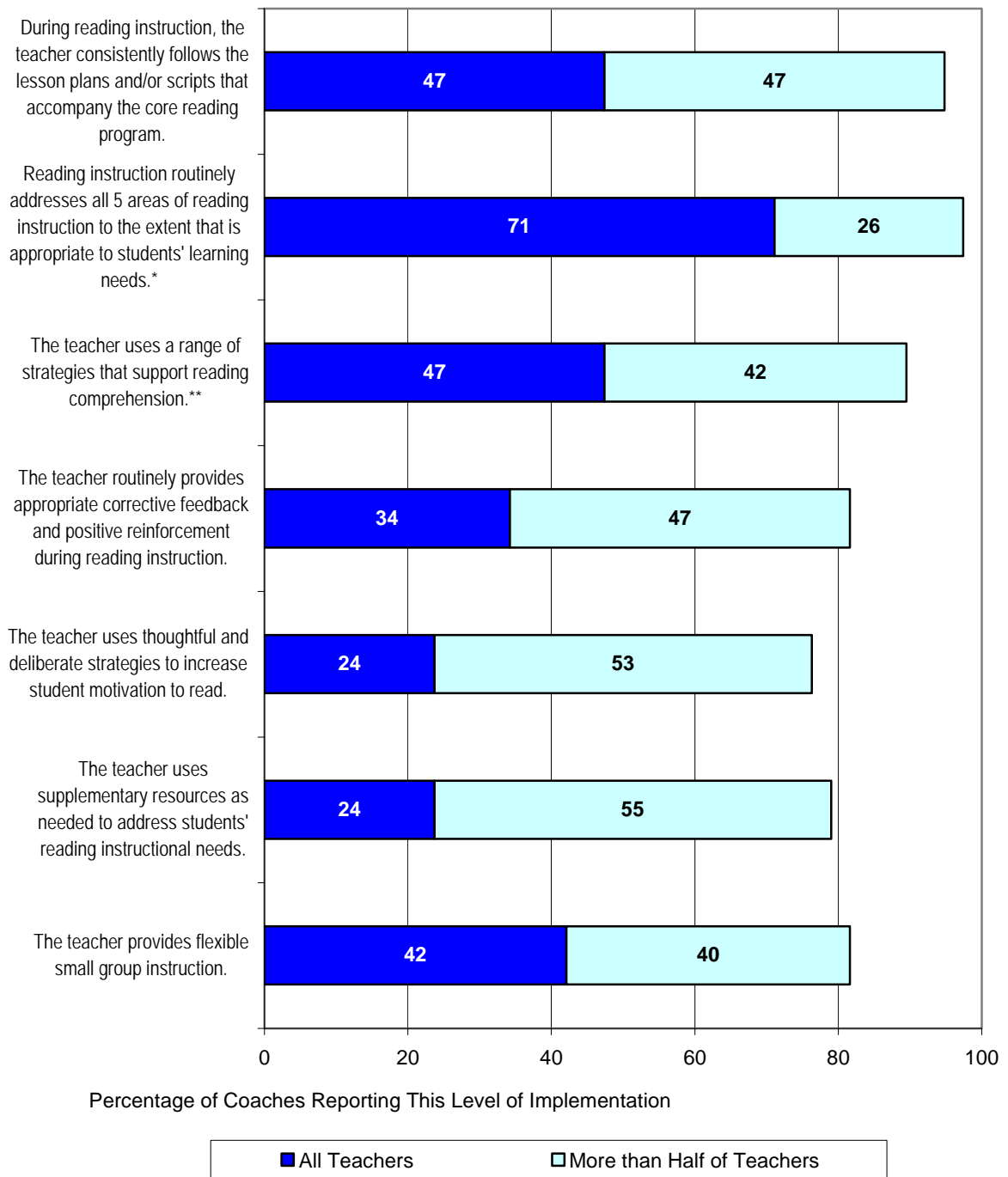


Figure 13: Reading Coach Reports on *Instruction in Reading First Schools (Part 2)*



* The full text of this question is as follows: *Reading instruction routinely addresses all 5 areas of reading instruction (i.e., phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension) to the extent that is appropriate to students' learning needs.*

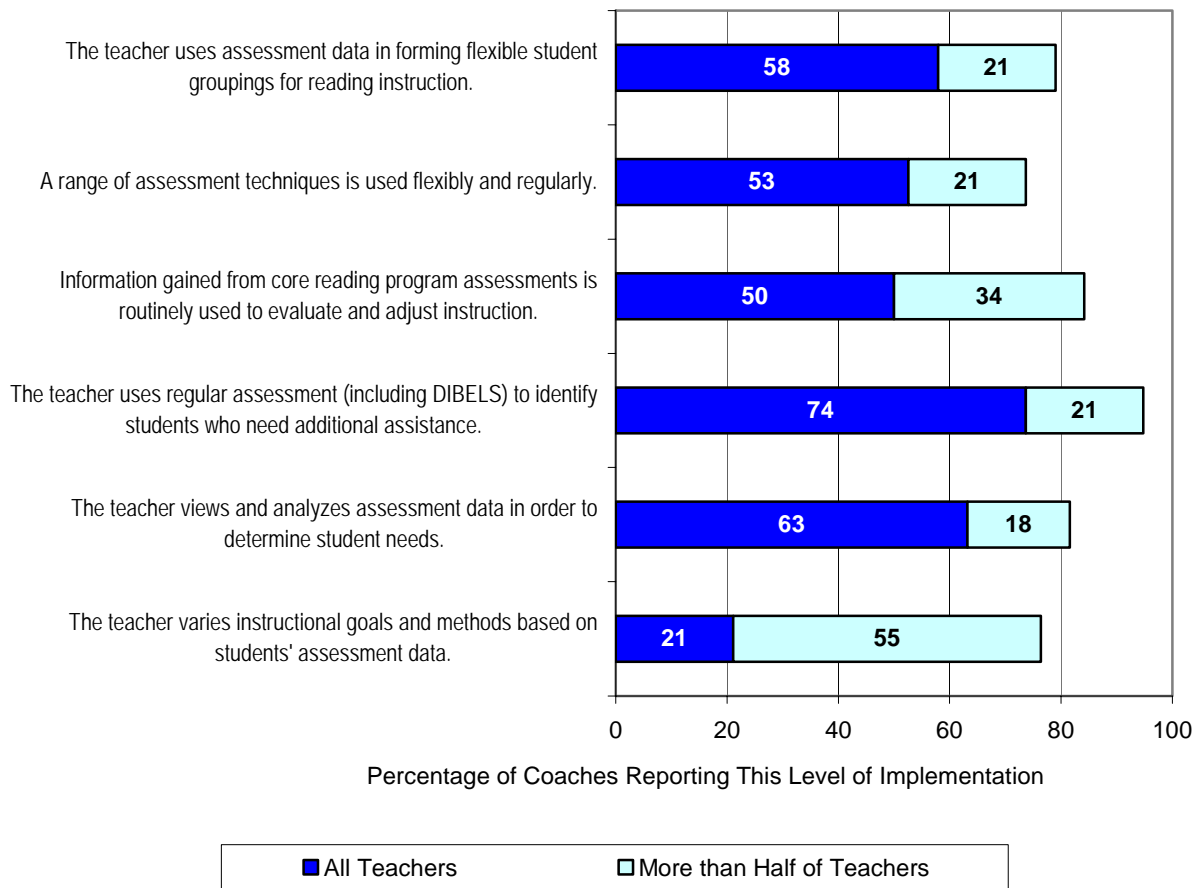
** The full text of this question is as follows: *"The teacher uses a range of strategies that support reading comprehension (e.g., questioning and conversation; scaffolding understanding based on prior experiences; explicit teaching of strategies such as predicting, questioning, rereading, and summarizing)."*

Reading-Related Assessment Practices (Figure 14)

At least three quarters of respondents indicated that “more than half” or “all” of the Reading First teachers at their school consistently demonstrate 5 of the 6 behaviors on the survey that relate to assessment practices. Of particular note are the following findings:

- 74 percent of coaches reported that *all* teachers use regular assessment data (including DIBELS results) to identify students who need additional help.
- 63 percent of coaches report that *all* teachers use assessment data to determine student needs.
- 58 percent of coaches indicated that *all* Reading First teachers are using assessment data to form flexible student reading groups.

Figure 14: Reading Coach Reports on Assessment in Reading First Schools



Changes in Reading Instructional Practice over Time

While the results shown in Figures 15 through 18 are impressive in themselves, it becomes clear how much of a difference the Reading First program has made when the data on coaches' views of the state of practice currently and prior to the start of the program are examined.

According to Reading Coaches, there have been dramatic and statistically significant changes in virtually every aspect of reading instruction since the start of the Reading First program.

The figures on the following pages illustrate how Reading Coaches feel teachers' practice has changed since the summer of 2004 in each of the aspects described above.

As shown in Figure 15, the aspects of *classroom setting and climate* in which coaches observed the greatest change are:

- The variety of books available for students in classrooms;
- The availability and use of technologies such as computers and Language Masters; and
- The arrangement of classrooms to allow for groupings of various sizes.

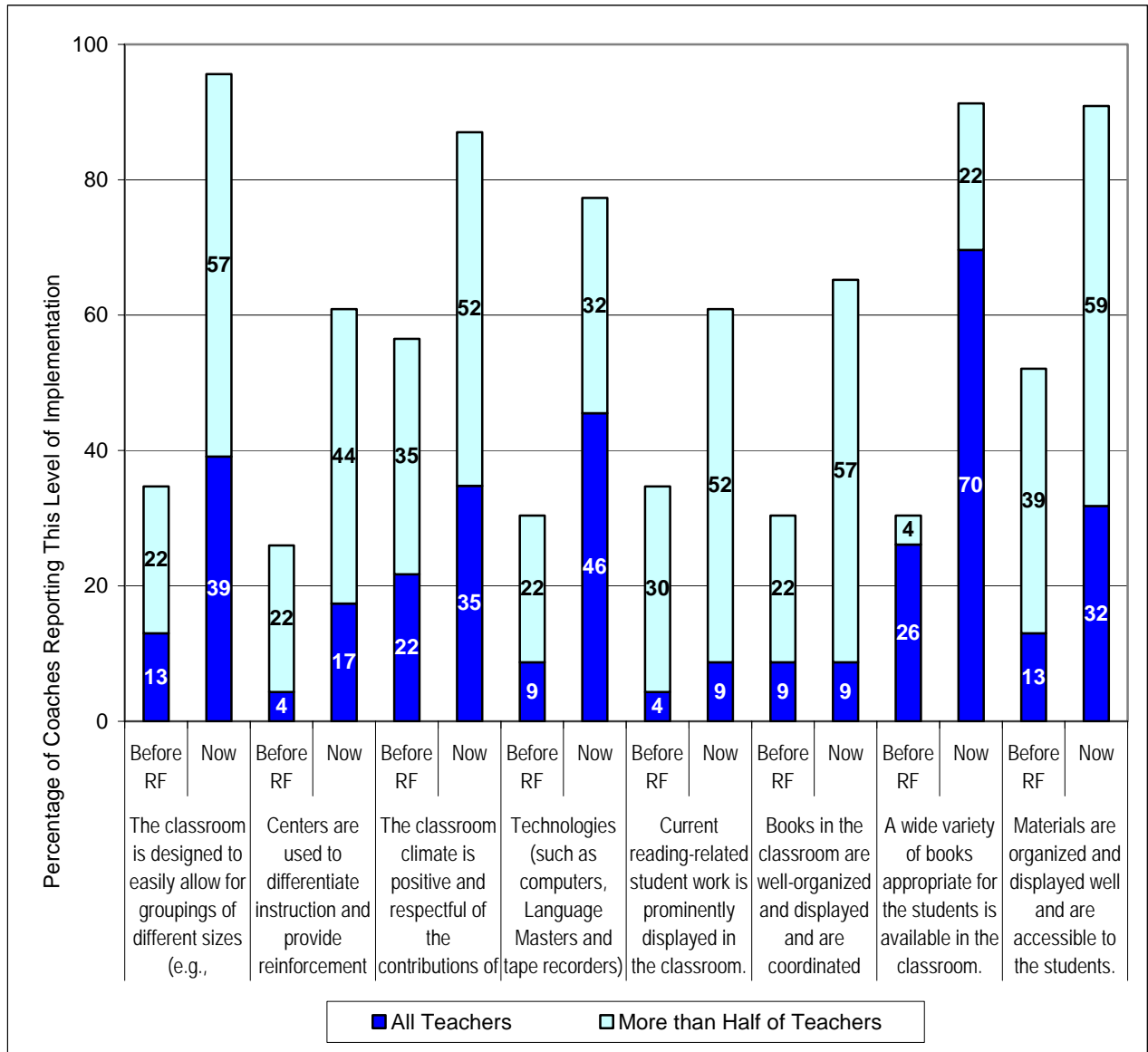
As shown in Figures 16 and 17, the aspects of teachers' *instructional* practices in which coaches observed the greatest changes are:

- Efficiency of the use of instructional time during the reading block;
- Use of core reading program materials as intended by the developers;
- Fidelity to the lessons plans and scripts that accompany the core reading program;
- Routine instruction in all 5 areas of reading (phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension);
- Teachers' use of a range of reading comprehension strategies; and
- Use of supplementary materials to address student's learning needs.

Finally, as shown in Figure 18, the aspects of teachers' *assessment* practices that have changed most dramatically are:

- Use of information gathered from core reading program assessments to evaluate and adjust instruction;
- Regular use of assessment (including DIBELS) to identify students in need of additional assistance; and
- Routine analysis and review of assessment data to determine student needs.

Figure 15: Reading Coach Reports on Changes in *Classroom Setting and Climate* in Reading First Schools¹



¹ Figures XX through XX only include responses from those coaches that have been at their schools since the beginning of the Reading First program.

Figure 16: Reading Coach Reports on Changes in *Instruction* in Reading First Schools (Part 1)

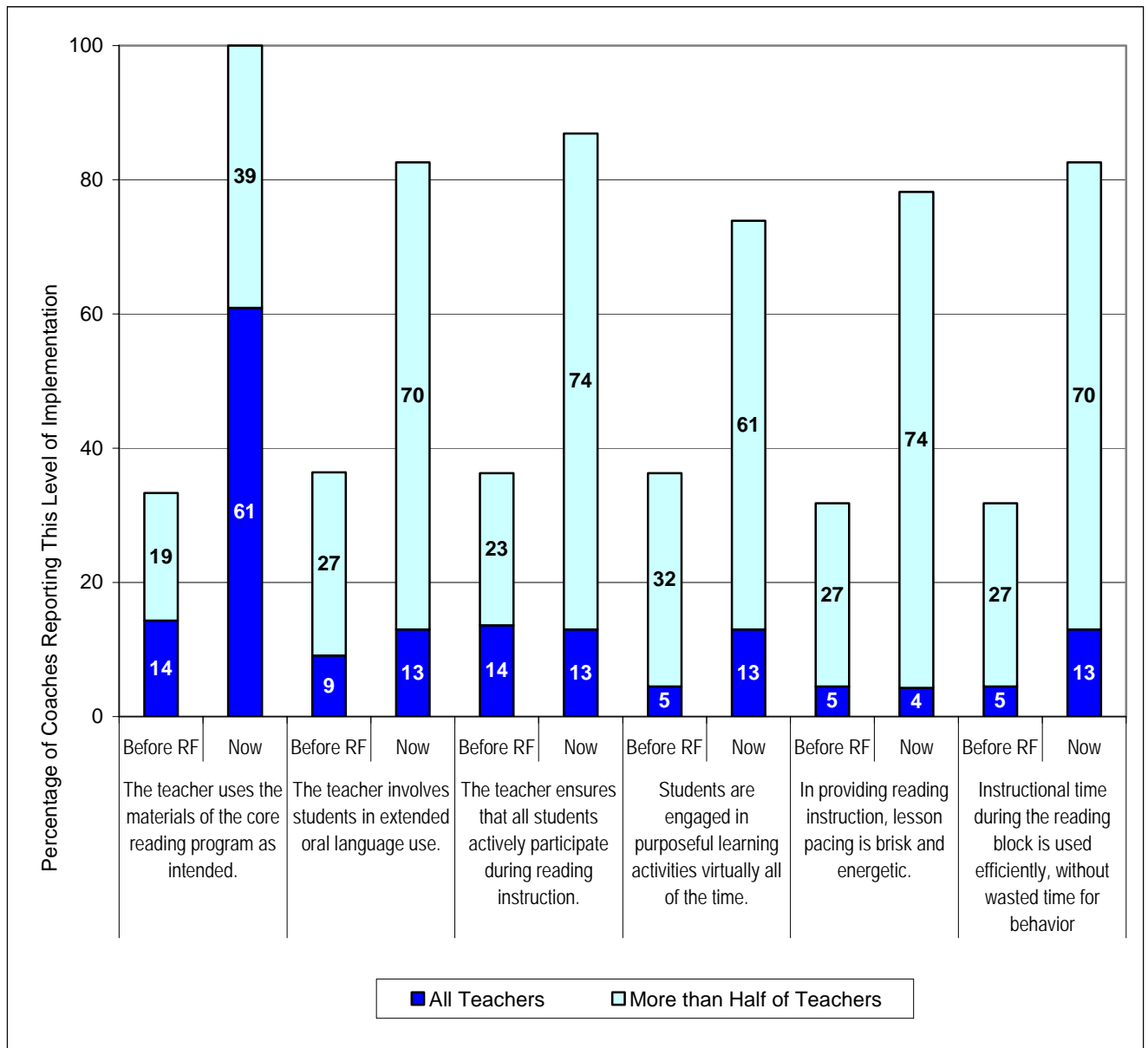


Figure 17: Reading Coach Reports on Changes in *Instruction* in Reading First Schools (Part 2)

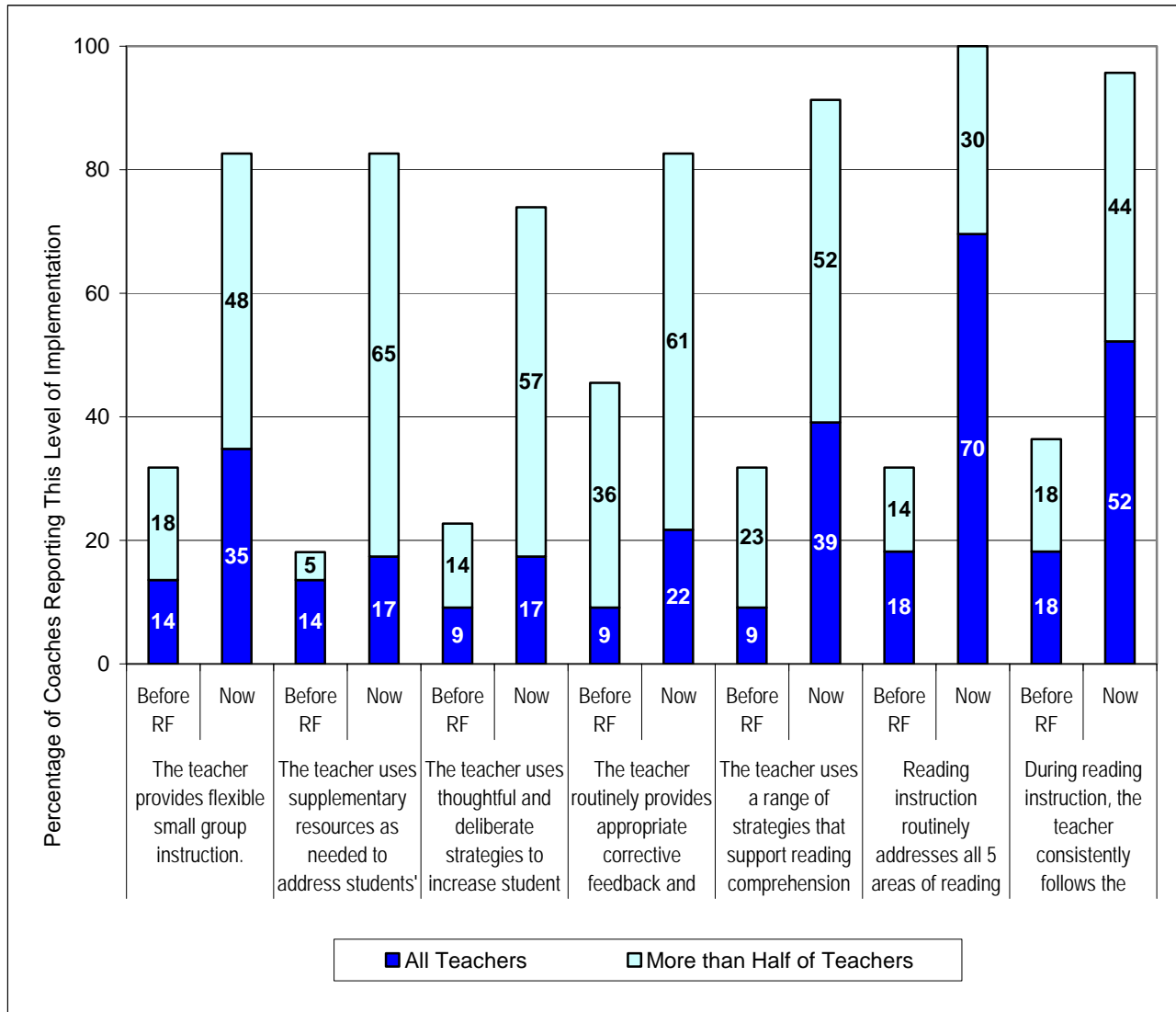
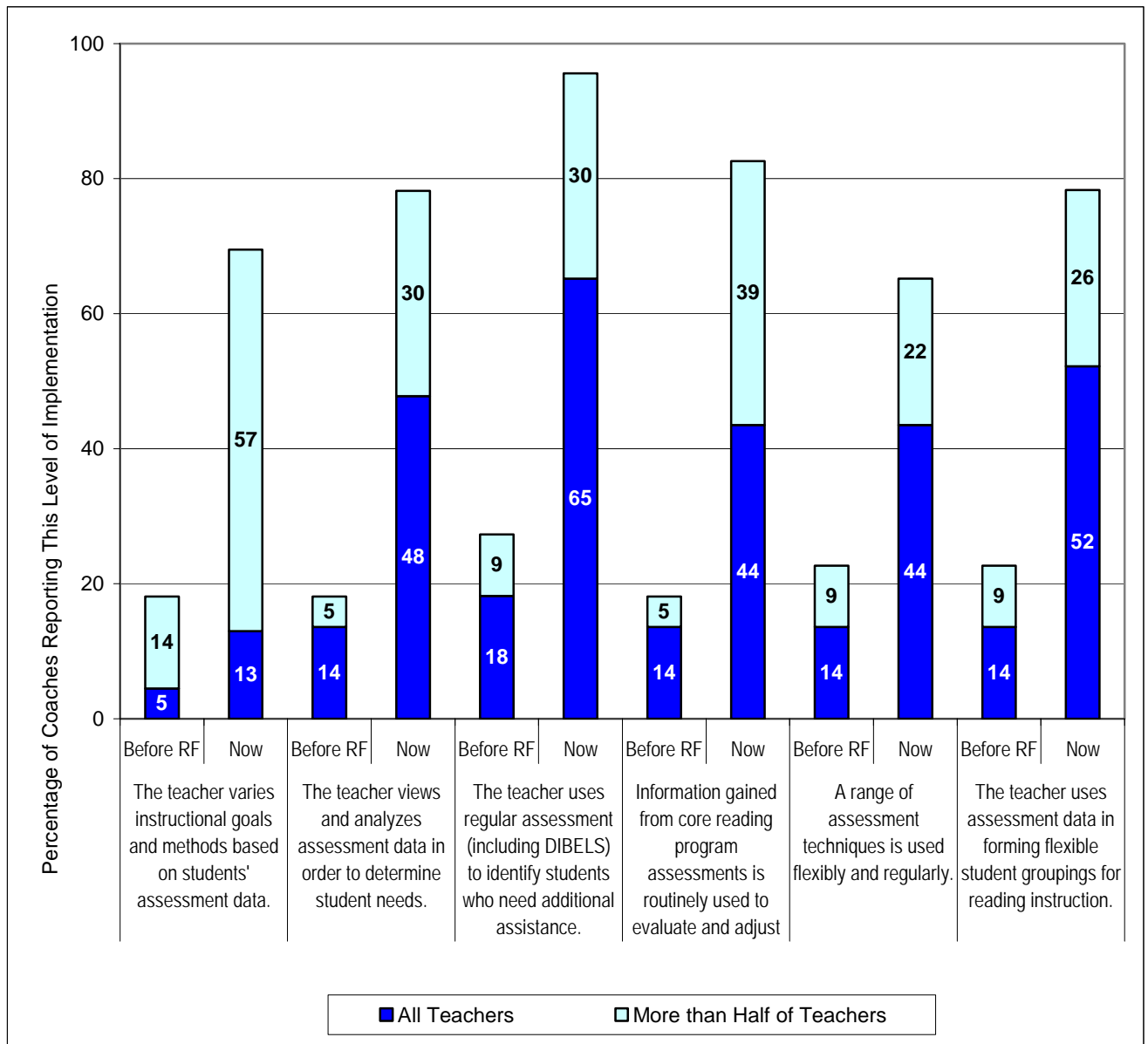


Figure 18: Reading Coach Reports on Changes in Assessment in Reading First Schools



Roles and Responsibilities of Reading Coaches

On the survey, Reading Coaches were asked to describe how their responsibilities had changed over the 3 years of the Reading First grant. In responding to this question, some also provided information about the challenges they face.

In general, it appeared that the way coaches spend their time has changed over the three years of the initiative. Many remarked that in the first year most of their time was devoted to managing materials, collecting and analyzing assessment data, and participating in professional development to strengthen their coaching skills. Over time, many have managed to devote more time to working with teachers to provide professional development, review assessment data, plan instruction, model lessons, and respond to individual teachers' questions and concerns. The comments of two coaches illustrate the sentiments of many.

“My role has changed with respect to how teachers view the way I can be of the most support. At the beginning of Reading First, many teachers viewed me as the person to get them materials. Now, I am a member of each grade-level team, and I am involved with data review and lesson planning. I have also had many more opportunities for modeling and coaching in the classroom.”

“[Originally], most of my work involved providing staff development, modeling segments of the reading/language arts block; interpreting assessment data for teachers; and recommending strategies, techniques, and materials to address students' needs, as indicated by a range of assessments. This year, my interactions with teachers can be characterized as far more collaborative than directive. Teachers' consciousness of the impact of their instruction has led them to initiate conversations about planning, materials selection, student concerns, etc. rather than wait for me to approach them. In addition, across the grades, there has been an increase in invitations for me to observe lessons, participate in instruction, and witness students' responses to instruction. My role has changed to that of a facilitator and resource. As a result, I have been able to differentiate support more specifically for each teacher K-3.”

Despite the successful transitions of many coaches, it seems that some coaches have remained bogged down in the materials and data management aspects of their positions. In some cases, this may be due to variations in the knowledge and skills of individual coaches. However, it appears that many of the struggling coaches are in fact working in more challenging settings. For example, some coaches report having large numbers of teachers and students to serve, having a low level of administrative support, and/or working in schools with a high level of teacher turnover. These coaches feel less successful, stressed, and frustrated that they have been unable to spend their time helping teachers improve their instruction.

Parent Involvement in Reading First Schools

Coaches were also asked to provide information about how parents are involved in the Reading First program at their schools. By far the most common strategy for parent involvement (mentioned by about half of the coaches) was hosting periodic family literacy nights at the school. These events were designed to be fun for parents and children, and they often included parent education along with opportunities for parents to interact with their children around some reading-related activity. In addition to the evening events, about one quarter of coaches mentioned that they had offered parent education sessions during the school day.

Other strategies mentioned by at least three coaches are:

- Sponsoring a school-wide reading incentive program;
- Strongly encouraging parent volunteerism by targeting specific groups (for example, fathers or grandparents);
- Including reading and Reading First news in school newsletters distributed to parents;
- Developing and distributing print materials (such as brochures or fact sheets) that describe the Reading First program to parents;
- Consistently sending reading assessment results to parents;
- Focusing strongly on reading and the child's reading progress during regular parent conferences; and
- Involving parents in some aspect of students' reading homework (for example, fluency practice).

Although some coaches indicated that their schools had experienced success with at least some of these strategies, many indicated that parent involvement is lower than they would like and that school staff are continuing to make efforts to increase it.

SECTION VI: PARTICIPANT EVALUATIONS OF MARYLAND INSTITUTE ON BEGINNING READING

Background

For the past four summers, MSDE’s Office of Reading First has offered Maryland Institutes on Beginning Reading (MIBR) for teachers and other staff in Maryland Reading First schools. The 2007 Institute, a one-day event, was offered four times in two different locations, so that teachers in all participating schools would have an opportunity to attend. The first two MIBRs for the year were held in Hagerstown on June 26 and 27. Two additional MIBRs were held on August 8 and 9 in Linthicum Heights. All participants were asked to complete an evaluation questionnaire that was designed by Macro and asked for feedback on the value and effectiveness of various aspects of the Institute. The following section of this report summarizes the survey responses provided by participants. The survey instrument itself is provided as Appendix C to this report.¹⁷

Description of Participants

Questionnaires were collected from a total of 410 Institute participants; 178 of these attended the June sessions and 232 attended the August sessions. Of these respondents, 235 were classroom teachers and 174 had other positions.¹⁸ Table 13 provides data on these respondents, disaggregated by district and school. Those who are identified as “other staff” in the table include principals, assistant principals, reading coaches, reading intervention teachers, ESOL teachers, special education teachers, and paraeducators.

Table 13: Attendance at Maryland Institutes of Beginning Reading

	June Sessions			August Sessions			Grand Total
	Classroom Teachers	Other Staff	Total	Classroom Teachers	Other Staff	Total	
Allegany	18	8	26	1	-	1	27
George’s Creek	11	5	16	-	-	-	16
West Side	7	1	8	1	-	1	9
No School Specified/Multiple Schools	-	2	2	-	-	-	2
Baltimore City/Public	2	2	4	63	33	96	100
Wolfe Street Academy	1	1	2	-	1	1	3
Tench Tilghman	-	-	-	3	3	6	6
Scotts Branch	-	-	-	-	1	1	1
Rognel Heights	-	1	1	6	-	6	7
Robert Coleman	-	-	-	2	3	5	5
Matthew Henson	-	-	-	1	-	1	1
Highlandtown	-	-	-	2	2	4	4

¹⁷ Two different versions of the instrument were used because speakers were different at the June and August sessions. The version in Appendix C is that used at the June sessions.

¹⁸ One participant did not indicate position.

	June Sessions			August Sessions			Grand Total
	Classroom Teachers	Other Staff	Total	Classroom Teachers	Other Staff	Total	
Guilford	-	-	-	-	1	1	1
Graceland Park/O'Donnell Heights	-	-	-	3	2	5	5
Eutaw Marshburn	-	-	-	8	3	11	11
Edgecombe Circle	-	-	-	9	1	10	10
Dr. Rayner Browne	-	-	-	5	3	8	8
Brehms Lane	-	-	-	13	6	19	19
Belmont	-	-	-	1	2	3	3
Arundel	-	-	-	2	1	3	3
No School Specified/Multiple Schools	1	-	1	8	4	12	13
Baltimore City/Non-public	-	-	-	5	2	7	7
Our Lady of Hope/St. Luke	-	-	-	2	-	2	2
Our Lady of Fatima	-	-	-	2	1	3	3
Archbishop Borders	-	-	-	1	1	2	2
Baltimore County/Public	-	3	4	25	14	39	43
Winfield	-	-	-	5	2	7	7
Scotts Branch	-	-	-	6	2	8	8
Sandy Plains	-	-	-	6	5	11	11
Sandalwood	-	1	1	3	2	5	6
Edmondson Heights	-	1	1	5	1	6	7
No School Specified/Multiple Schools ¹⁹	-	1	2	-	2	2	4
Baltimore County/Non-public	-	-	-	4	1	5	5
Our Lady of Mount Carmel	-	-	-	4	1	5	5
Dorchester	20	7	27	14	12	26	53
Maple	1	-	1	9	6	15	16
Hurlock	6	-	6	5	6	11	17
Sandy Hill	13	7	20	-	-	-	20
Garrett	7	7	14	-	-	-	14
Grantsville	2	3	5	-	-	-	5
Yough Glades	5	3	8	-	-	-	8
No School Specified/Multiple Schools	-	1	1	-	-	-	1
Montgomery	38	40	78	1	2	3	81
Highland	4	4	8	-	-	-	8
Rosemont	19	7	26	-	-	-	26
Summit Hall	7	19	26	-	-	-	26
Wheaton Woods	8	7	15	-	-	-	15
No School Specified/Multiple Schools	-	3	3	1	2	3	6
Prince George's	10	14	24	14	7	21	45
Beltsville	1	-	1	-	-	-	1
Concord	2	1	3	-	-	-	3
Matthew Henson	-	2	2	2	-	2	4
Mary Harris "Mother" Jones	-	3	3	9	4	13	16
Flintstone	-	3	3	2	-	2	5

¹⁹ One participant in Baltimore County did not indicate school or position.

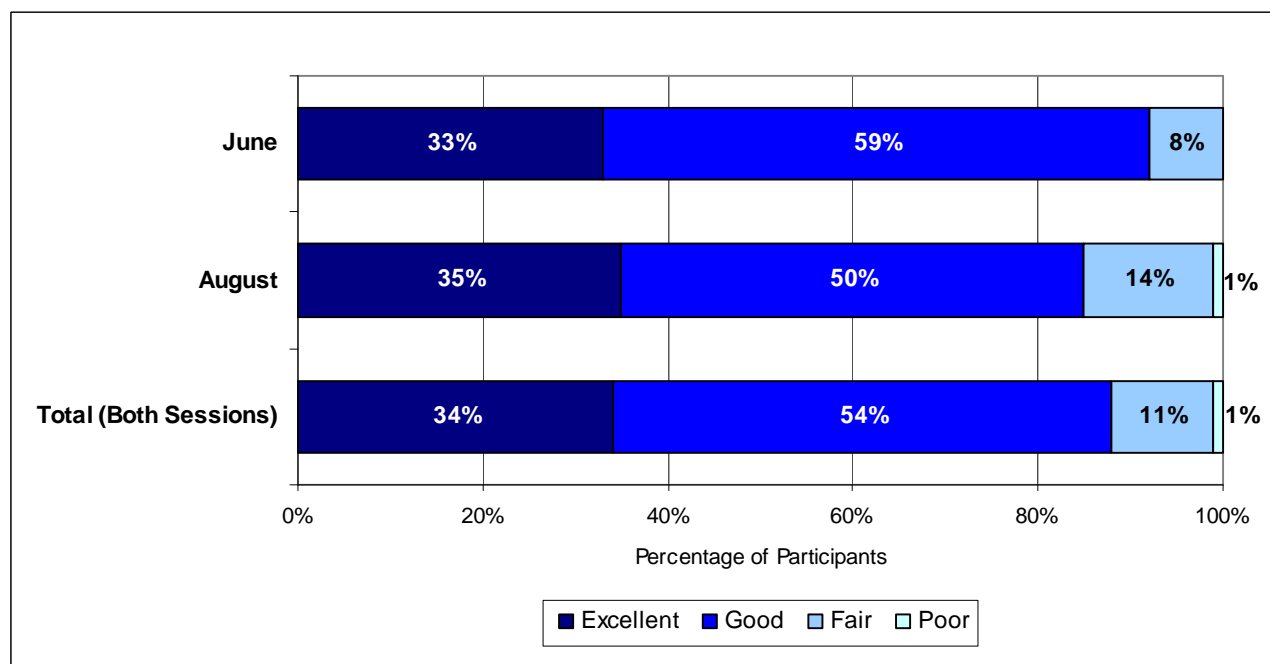
	June Sessions			August Sessions			Grand Total
	Classroom Teachers	Other Staff	Total	Classroom Teachers	Other Staff	Total	
Arrowhead	6	3	9	-	2	2	11
No School Specified/Multiple Schools	1	2	3	1	1	2	5
Somerset	-	-	-	12	16	28	28
Woodson	-	-	-	5	6	11	11
Princess Anne	-	-	-	4	6	10	10
Greenwood	-	-	-	2	1	3	3
Deal Island	-	-	-	1	1	2	2
No School Specified/Multiple Schools	-	-	-	-	2	2	2
No District Specified/Statewide	-	1	1	2	4	6	7

Total Participants	95	82	178	140	92	232	410
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Overall Evaluations of Institute

As shown in Figure 19, the 2007 MIBR was very well-received by the participating educators. When asked to rate the overall quality of the Institute, 34 percent of participants rated it as “excellent” and 54 percent rated it as “good.” Responses were very similar for the June and August sessions.

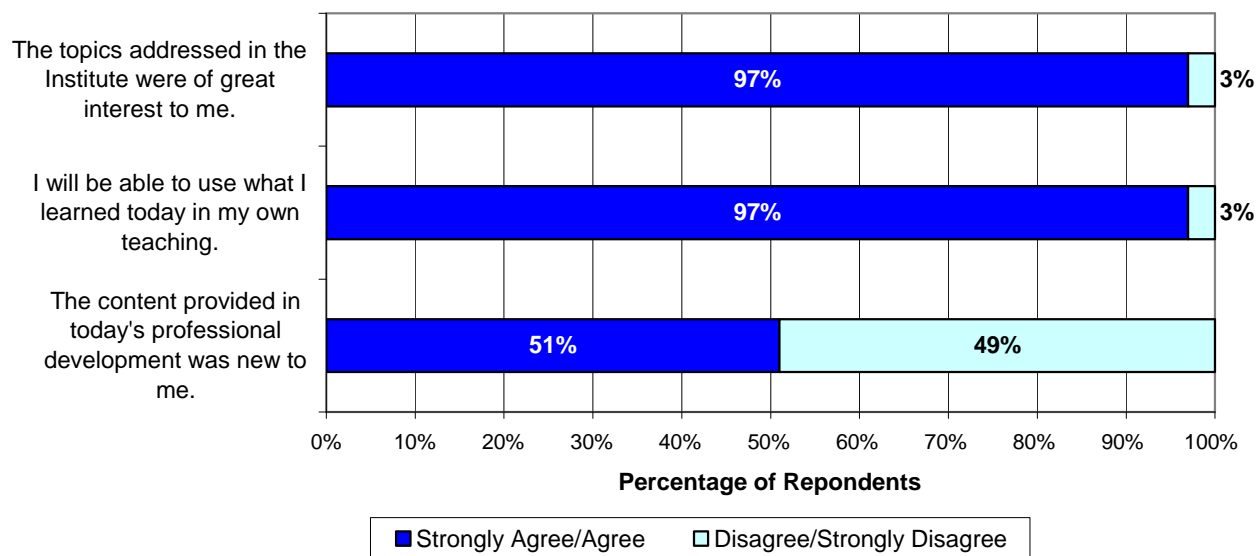
Figure 19: Participant Ratings of MIBRs



Participants' Attitudes toward the 2007 MIBR

As shown in Figure 20, nearly all MIBR participants “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that the topics addressed in the Institute were of great interest to them and that they would be able to use what they learned in their teaching. Just half (51%) “strongly agreed” or “agreed” that the professional development offered content that was new to them. However, this is not necessarily an indictment of the Institute, since one of the goals of the MIBRs is to cover much of the same basic material in increasing depth each year.

Figure 20: Participant Attitudes toward the MIBR



Most participants felt that the pacing and length of the MIBR were “just right.” Most of those dissatisfied with the pacing felt that it moved too slowly; about 12 percent thought the pacing was slow. Most of those dissatisfied with the length of the MIBR thought that it was too long; about 11 percent would have preferred a shorter Institute.

Participants who attended both the 2006 and 2007 Institutes were asked to compare the value of the 2007 Institute with that of the 2006 Institute. Of these respondents, 38 percent of participants thought the 2007 Institute was “more useful” than the 2006 Institute. Only 10 percent of participants thought that the 2007 Institute was “less useful” than the 2006 Institute. The remaining 52 percent of participants who had attended both thought that the 2006 and 2007 MIBRs were equally useful.

Participant Evaluations of Individual MIBR Modules

The 2007 Institute included two keynote speakers, one in the morning and one in the afternoon. There were also two breakout sessions, during which participants split up to attend sessions on different topics. One of the items on the evaluation form asked respondents to rate the

usefulness of each of these components on a 4-point scale: “very useful,” “useful,” “somewhat useful,” or “not useful.” As shown in Table 14, ratings for the speakers was generally quite high, and overall satisfaction with speakers was very similar in the June and August Institutes. However, Dr. Graves’ keynote address received considerably higher ratings in August, perhaps reflecting changes in the content or delivery of the speech.

Table 14: Perceived Usefulness of MIBR Components

Component	Percentage of Participants Responding "Very Useful" or "Useful"	
	June	August
AM Keynote Speaker: Greenberg	81%	
AM Keynote Speaker: Torgesen		72%
PM Keynote Speaker: Graves	67%	78%
Breakout Session: Torgesen		86%
Breakout Session: Graves	95%	94%
Breakout Session: Dr. Dahlgren	92%	95%
Breakout Session: Dr. Greenberg	87%	91%
Breakout Session: Davis/Turner	80%	86%

In addition to providing a rating of each session, participants were encouraged to also provide more detailed comments. In all cases, the majority of teachers wrote that they enjoyed the sessions and found the content valuable. The following is a summary of other comments about each session.

AM Keynote with Dr. Greenberg (June only)

The most frequent comment about Dr. Greenberg’s keynote address was about the usefulness of the “read alouds” and “text talk” strategies. Several noted that they were impressed at how well Dr. Greenberg was able to fill in for Dr. McKeown at the last minute.

Not all participants felt as positively about the talk; a few, for example, indicated that they had heard the content before (one, for example, wrote that it was “nothing new.”)

AM Keynote with Dr. Torgesen (August only)

Participants had widely varying views of this keynote. Many thought that the presentation was thought-provoking and informative. They liked hearing about the research that has taken place in other states and felt that the presentation gave them a broader understanding of important issues in reading instruction.

There were, however, numerous negative comments. Many thought that the presentation was too theoretical and/or addressed aspects of reading instruction that are not within their control (e.g., changing the school schedule to increase time for reading instruction). Some of these participants suggested that the presentation was more appropriate for administrators than teachers. A few participants had heard this presentation at a national conference within the past

year and felt that it was not a good use of their time to hear it again. There were also some negative comments about the delivery of the presentation, including too much reading from the slides and too much information on the slides.

PM Keynote with Dr. Graves

June: Participants praised Dr. Graves for his engaging speaking style and his sense of humor. Many noted that they found the information, ideas and strategies that Dr. Graves described to be very helpful; specifically, teachers mentioned the “word wall” and “gallery walk” as valuable ideas for the classroom.

While most comments were positive, some participants found Dr. Graves’ presentation hard to follow or understand. Others suggested that more examples and practical techniques would be nice, and indicated that the slides were too “dry” and “technical.”

August: Participants found Dr. Graves to be both enlightening and entertaining. They appreciated his sense of humor and thought the presentation was paced well. For some, Dr. Graves’ talk primarily validated and enhanced prior knowledge. However, many also found the research information that he presented to be new and interesting. Most felt that Dr. Graves presented many new ideas for vocabulary instruction, ideas that they could easily apply in the classroom. In particular, there were numerous mentions of the word wall and the Frayer Method for vocabulary instruction.

There were a few participants, however, who felt that the presentation was too fast and attempted to cover too much, with the result that the information provided was not specific enough to be used easily. Also, a few felt that he was using the presentation to sell his new product and were uncomfortable with that.

Breakout Session with Dr. Torgesen (August only)

Participants generally commented that the session provided opportunities for good questioning and discussion on the important topic of teaching reading comprehension. They liked the focus on comprehension strategies, but most seemed to feel that the session primarily reinforced what they already knew rather than providing new ideas.

Although some found the research very interesting, others said that they would prefer less theory and research and more practical suggestions for classroom application. Several participants commented that technical difficulties related to the presentation were distracting and resulted in less time for content.

Breakout Session with Dr. Graves

June: Overall, feedback on Dr. Graves’ session in the June session was very positive. Teachers praised both the quality and depth of the information and the ideas that Dr. Graves provided. Several participants specifically described his session as “entertaining.” Some respondents specifically liked Dr. Graves’ discussion of “vocabulary field trips” and “robust instruction,” while others found the questions for identifying words to teach especially helpful.

A small number of participants criticized the session, either because they found the material hard to follow, wanted more “in-depth” information, or felt the session was not applicable to kindergarten.

August: Participants in the August session viewed this session very positively. Many commented that the vocabulary instruction methods that he shared seemed realistic. A few remarked that this session extended the keynote and gave them some hand-on practice with what they heard in that presentation. Participants appreciated Dr. Graves’ enthusiasm and humor, as well as the interactive format of the session.

Breakout Sessions with Dr. Dahlgren

June: The most frequent comment from participants in the June MIBR was praise for the practical and concrete strategies offered in this session. Several said that they would be able to immediately implement what they learned from Dr. Dahlgren in the classroom. Some teachers also noted that they enjoyed learning about the history of words and morphology.

August: Overall, the August session was very well received. Participants liked the practical strategies for providing students with multiple exposures to vocabulary and the information on word origins. Most felt that the presentation was full of ideas that they could easily implement in the classroom. They also liked the interactivity of the session and the fact that Dr. Dahlgren was very organized.

A few participants commented that the content was very similar to LETRS training, and perhaps redundant for some who had recently completed that training. A few also commented that the session should be longer, as there is so much valuable information in it.

Breakout Sessions with Dr. Greenberg

June: Many participants in Dr. Greenberg’s June session indicated that the strategies he described would be directly applicable in their classrooms. A large number of participants mentioned topics that they found particularly useful, including question generation, “paragraph thinking,” “summary statements,” and “readable placemats.”

A few participants found the session hard to follow. Two noted that the information covered in the session was not new to them, while another commented that the content of this session was redundant with content from the keynote.

August: Participants in the August MIBR were very enthusiastic about Dr. Greenberg’s breakout session. They thought that he was knowledgeable and provided good research-backed information that they could apply with students. Overall, they felt that the comprehension strategies he suggested were very practical and could be used in the classroom on a daily basis. Several particularly commented on the way that he linked reading comprehension with thinking skills. Participants also appreciated Dr. Greenberg’s enthusiasm for the subject and the interactive discussion format of the session.

Breakout Sessions with Drs. Davis and Turner

June: Respondents from the June MIBR found this session particularly useful because of the concrete ideas for learning center activities that were provided. Many also mentioned that the Florida Center for Reading Research (FCRR) website that was referenced would be useful for them. Several respondents, however, indicated that they already knew the information presented in this session. Others noted that because they could get the content from the website, there was no need to attend the breakout session. Four participants mentioned that it would have been nice to have time to create materials for their own classrooms, while two felt the information provided was not appropriate for kindergarten and 1st grade.

August: Most August participants were very enthusiastic about this presentation. In particular, they liked the very specific ideas about how to implement centers and how to differentiate instruction through the use of centers. They liked the handouts and the opportunity to become familiar with the center resources on the FCRR website.

As in June, however, some felt that the session was not hands-on enough and would have preferred a make-and-take session. Again, there were also a few participants who felt that the content was already well-known or was covered elsewhere during the Institute.

Other Feedback from Participants

Reactions to the 2007 Institute

Participants were very enthusiastic about the overall high quality of the presenters, the links of presentation content to research, and the cohesiveness of the overall program. When asked to identify the most valuable aspect of the Institute, participants most frequently mentioned ideas and information about vocabulary (105 respondents), comprehension (76), learning centers (66), and the resources provided to participants in the form of handouts and books (29). Many also praised individual presenters, or indicated that they liked the breakout session format and the ability to choose which breakout sessions to attend.

Several participants offered suggestions for improving the MIBR. The most frequent suggestion, made by 48 participants, was that presenters should provide more specific information on how to implement the ideas discussed at the Institute in their classrooms; many expressed a desire for more hands-on activities and less emphasis on research. Forty-two participants commented that the sessions should be shorter so that they would have the opportunity to attend more breakout sessions, and some of those suggested having only a morning keynote to make more time for breakouts. Thirty-one participants wanted the event to be more interactive, with time allotted for attendees to share ideas with one another.

Other recommendations were made by smaller numbers of attendees. Some felt that most breakouts were more applicable to 2nd and 3rd grade teachers, and they asked for sessions with strategies and techniques suitable for kindergarten and 1st grade. Others suggested that the MIBR differentiate between new teachers and more experienced teachers, so that the material would not be repetitive for teachers who had already received previous professional development

on these topics. As one teacher wrote, “We teach that teachers should differentiate, but our trainings never are.”

Participant Preferences for Future Professional Development

When respondents were asked to identify professional development topics on which they would like to receive more professional development, they most frequently indicated that they wanted to learn more about instruction in vocabulary and comprehension. A third core component of reading, fluency, was close behind—as were strategies for differentiation, learning more about center activities, and concrete ideas for how to put reading theory into practice in the classroom. Other suggestions that were offered by more than five teachers were that they wanted to learn more about working with special populations (i.e., ESOL, special education, and very low-achieving students) and managing small-group instruction (including behavior management). A few teachers also said that they would like more professional development focused on phonemic awareness and/or phonics.

Summary of MIBR Evaluations

As it has in past years, the 2007 Maryland Institute on Beginning Reading was very well-received among participants. Most felt the structure of the event worked well, and that the length and pacing were appropriate. Each individual breakout session and keynote also got very high ratings at both the June and August sessions. A large number of participants indicated that the content of the Institute was not necessarily new to them. Some felt that this detracted from the usefulness of the event, but others appreciated the opportunity to learn about these topics in greater depth.

Criticisms of the Institute seemed to focus on two themes. First, teachers made it clear that they are most interested in receiving very concrete, “real-world” ideas about how to implement the ideas addressed by the speakers in their classrooms. While most appreciated the importance of the research behind these topics, the pieces of the Institute that participants appreciated most were those that they could immediately implement with their students. Second, a large number of participants would have liked the event to be more “individualized.” These participants provided suggestions such as: providing more time in breakout sessions, rather than at keynote speeches; differentiating instruction both between teachers of different grades and those with different levels of experience; and allowing for more interaction between speakers and participants (or between participants themselves). While it might be difficult to implement some of these ideas at such a large event, these comments may be a sign that teachers are moving past the basics of reading instruction and are interested in discussing how to best implement these theories in their own classrooms.

SUMMARY

Our evaluation work this year has produced a number of very encouraging findings related to the effectiveness of the Maryland Reading First Initiative. Student achievement is improving in Reading First schools, in all grades and all LEAs. There is evidence that the achievement gap is closing for special education and ELL students, as well as preliminary data that suggests it may be closing for Hispanic students as well. Interviews with personnel at the district and school level have revealed a very high level of satisfaction with the program, particularly in regard to the resources and professional development that it provides for classroom teachers. According to Reading Coaches, nearly all aspects of classroom climate, instruction, and assessment have improved dramatically since the beginning of the program. Finally, Macro's survey of teachers shows that their knowledge about literacy instruction is improving and their attitudes towards explicit, code-based instruction are becoming more and more positive.

At the same time, there are some areas in which MSDE must continue to focus if it is to sustain the success of this initiative. Principals, who play a vital role in the implementation of Reading First in their schools, must continue to be engaged and provided with ongoing professional development. Although the number has decreased over time, there continue to be some teachers that are unwilling or unable to implement their schools' chosen reading programs with fidelity. As the needs of the lowest-achieving students are met, schools are trying to find ways to provide similar services to higher-achieving students as well. At the same time, districts are trying to identify the aspects of the program that are most effective and extend those services to non-Reading First schools as well. While MSDE's role will continue to evolve as it meets these changing demands, it will also be important to stay true to the basic tenets of the Reading First program—the selection and rigorous implementation of scientifically-based reading programs.

In the upcoming year, Macro will continue to collect and analyze achievement data on the school and student level. Our evaluation team will continue to conduct key informant interviews with district administrators, principals, and Reading Coaches to identify and document any shifts in how the program is being implemented at the local level. We will continue to collect data from teachers and other school personnel about teacher knowledge, attitudes, and classroom practice. All of these activities will be focused on answering MSDE's primary evaluation questions, as well as providing them with formative information that helps them improve the services they provide to schools and teachers.

Appendix A:

Survey of Reading First Teacher Knowledge and Attitudes

2006 Survey of Instructional Staff in Reading First Schools

On behalf of ORC Macro, the external evaluators of the Maryland Reading First program, thank you for completing this survey. The purpose of this survey is to help us measure the effectiveness of Reading First professional development. The survey will not be used to compare or assess specific teachers or schools.

We are asking that you provide your name on this form so that we can track your responses to similar surveys from year to year. However, **your responses will never be reported to anyone in your school, in your district, or at the state level.**

- 1) What is your name? _____
- a. Has your name changed since the summer of 2004? If so, what was your name then? [*Note: We are asking this question because we will be trying to match survey responses with those given in 2004.*]
- _____
- 2) What is your position in your school? (*check all that apply*)
- | | |
|-------------------------|---|
| 69% Classroom teacher | 5% Special education teacher (inclusion) |
| 9% Intervention teacher | 4% Special education teacher (self-contained) |
| 6% Reading coach | 3% Paraprofessional |
| 2% ESOL teacher | 6% Other: _____ |
- 3) With what grade students do you work? (*check all that apply*)
- K (39%) 1 (39%) 2 (40%) 3 (38%) 4 (10%) 5 (9%) 6 (2%)
- 4) What is your current certification level? 9% Provisional 39% Standard 52% Advanced
- 5) What is the highest level of education you have completed?
- 2% High school 45% Bachelors 34% Masters 13% Master's+30 5% Master's+60 1% Doctorate
- 6) How would you rate the professional development that you have received on the following topics **since the summer of 2004** (from your school or LEA, from MSDE, or from any other source)? Please rate the professional development **in terms of its effectiveness in improving your classroom teaching.**

	Very Effective	Effective	Somewhat Effective	Not Effective	I have not received PD on this topic
Phonics	35%	46%	11%	1%	8%
Phonemic Awareness	36%	45%	11%	1%	7%
Vocabulary	24%	49%	18%	1%	8%
Fluency	27%	46%	17%	2%	8%
Comprehension	19%	48%	21%	3%	9%
Differentiation of Instruction	21%	44%	24%	4%	8%
Assessment/Data-Driven Decision-Making	29%	45%	17%	3%	6%
Student Motivation	15%	39%	25%	6%	15%

If you are a certified teacher, please answer question 7. If not, please SKIP question 7 and continue with Part A of the survey below.

- 7) Not including this school year... (i.e., if this is your first year, write "0")
- How many years of experience do you have as a teacher? *Mean response: 6.0 years*
 - For how many years have you been at your current school? *Mean response: 5.1 years*
 - In the past 3 years, have you taught at a different Reading First school? 14% Yes 86% No

Part A: For each question, circle the letter corresponding to the best answer.

(Note: The correct answer for each question is in **bold**.)

8) Mark the statement that is false.

- Phonological awareness is a precursor to phonics. (15%)
- Phonological awareness is an oral language activity. (14%)
- Phonological awareness is a method of reading instruction that begins with individual letters and sounds. (49%)**
- Many children acquire phonological awareness from language activities and reading. (19%)

9) A combination of two or three consonants pronounced so that each letter keeps its own identity is called a:

- silent consonant. (1%)
- consonant digraph. (11%)
- diphthong. (5%)
- consonant blend. (81%)**

10) Which sentence describes helpful classroom strategies for struggling readers?

- During small-group reading instruction, the teacher always reads the story first to ensure comprehension. (11%)
- During small-group reading instruction, place struggling readers with higher performing readers to increase their motivation. (6%)
- During small-group reading instruction, provide instructional level decodable texts so that students have the chance to apply the alphabetic principle. (77%)**
- During small-group reading instruction, provide frustration level decodable texts so that the teacher has many opportunities to scaffold instruction. (4%)

11) Which of the following is true of instruction on reading comprehension?

- Teachers need to model strategies before readers can use them. (89%)**
- Discussion should be limited to answering questions. (1%)
- Struggling readers should work on individual word lists. (0%)
- Teachers should consistently model a single reading comprehension strategy to students, rather than offering them a choice of multiple strategies. (6%)

12) Which of the following is NOT a dimension of reading fluency?

- Phonetics (70%)**
- Expression (16%)
- Automaticity (18%)
- Accuracy (1%)

13) The understanding that the sequence of letters in written words represents the sequence of phonemes in spoken words relates to:

- a. phonological awareness. (25%)
- b. phonemic awareness. (42%)
- c. the alphabetic principle. (29%)**
- d. letter combinations. (1%)

14) If a 1st grade student is not achieving in oral reading fluency and you determine that he/she is having a problem related to the alphabetic principle, what measure is best for monitoring?

- a. Oral fluency (3%)
- b. Nonsense word fluency (58%)**
- c. Word use fluency (3%)
- d. Letter recognition (33%)

15) A voiced consonant digraph is in the word:

- a. think. (16%)
- b. ship. (8%)
- c. whip.(11%)
- d. the. (47%)**
- e. photo. (13%)

16) A reading method that focuses on teaching the application of speech sounds to letters is called:

- a. phonics. (35%)**
- b. phonemics. (5%)
- c. orthography. (5%)
- d. phonetics. (5%)
- e. either (a) or (d) (49%)

17) Which of the following is true about reading fluency?

- a. Fluency relates to reading comprehension. (37%)**
- b. Guided oral reading has little effect on fluency. (1%)
- c. The phrase “reading fluency” refers to a student’s accuracy in word recognition. (21%)
- d. All of the above (39%)

18) After you model how to use cues to answer inferential questions, you notice that some of your students do not understand how to answer these questions. You should:

- a. let them practice more questions on their own. (1%))
- b. model again how to answer the question. (88%)**
- c. give them literal questions instead of inferential questions. (3%)
- d. explain the important vocabulary terms to students. (4%)

19) A pronounceable group of letters containing a vowel sound is a:

- a. phoneme. (10%)
- b. grapheme. (7%)
- c. syllable. (74%)**
- d. morpheme.(6%)

20) Of the following, which is the best strategy for teachers to use to help build their students' vocabulary?

- a. Sound isolation (7%)
- b. Concept mapping (75%)**
- c. Using KWL charts (9%)
- d. Summarizing (6%)

21) What kind of texts should you initially use to build reading fluency?

- a. Above level texts (38%)
- b. Instructional level texts (2%)
- c. Non-patterned books (59%)
- d. Independent level texts (2%)**

22) Two combined letters that represent one single speech sound are a:

- a. schwa. (4%)
- b. consonant blend. (12%)
- c. phonetic. (1%)
- d. digraph. (70%)**
- e. diphthong. (10%)

23) If students can identify a few sounds, recognize their names, and respond to stories, they are ready for:

- a. multiple meaning words. (1%)
- b. word study with initial consonants. (57%)**
- c. regular spelling patterns. (12%)
- d. high frequency words. (28%)

24) The majority of children who struggle when learning to read:

- a. will profit the most from reading instruction that provides them with meaningful experiences reading and writing and lets them discover most skills on their own. (2%)
- b. need systematic and explicit instruction in vocabulary and comprehension strategies, but should be able to acquire basic word reading skills as they practice reading meaningful stories. (8%)
- c. need systematic instruction in phonemic awareness and phonics to become accurate readers, and then will learn the vocabulary they need from extensive reading. (26%)
- d. need systematic instruction in both word reading skills and in vocabulary and comprehension strategies in order to become good readers by third grade. (60%)**

25) Which of the following principles about vocabulary instruction is NOT research-based?

- a. Words are best learned when students write word lists with definitions. (90%)**
- b. Words are best learned when students engage actively with words. (2%)
- c. Words are best learned in meaningful contexts. (2%)
- d. Words are best learned when they are connected to what students know. (4%)

- 26) Which of the following scenarios would best help students build reading fluency?**
- a. During whole group instruction, the teacher calls on one student at a time to read a section of the text. (8%)
 - b. Each student chooses a book to read independently and silently. (10%)
 - c. In pairs, students orally read text assigned by the teacher. (72%)**
 - d. The teacher reads aloud from a book as the students sit and listen attentively. (8%)

27) How many speech sounds are in the word *box*?

- a. One (3%)
- b. Two (5%)
- c. Three (50%)
- d. Four (40%)**

28) Which word has the same phoneme as the first phoneme in *top*?

- a. Those (15%)
- b. Listen (8%)
- c. Mixed (66%)**
- d. Although (5%)

29) An effective approach to increase students' reading speed is:

- a. round robin reading. (1%)
- b. chunking. (7%)
- c. choral reading. (13%)
- d. repeated reading. (78%)**

30) Why may students confuse the sounds /b/ and /p/ or /f/ and /v/?

- a. Students are visually scanning the letters in a way that letters are misperceived. (3%)
- b. The students can't remember the letter sounds so they are randomly guessing. (2%)
- c. The speech sounds with in each pair are produced in the same place and in the same way but one is voiced and the other is not. (87%)**
- d. The speech sounds within each pair are both voiced and produced n the back of the mouth. (6%)

31) While listening to student retellings, a teacher found that some students misread words from the story (e.g, bugs for bags). Other students' retellings were good summaries of the passages. What is an appropriate way for the teacher to differentiate instruction?

- a. Have successful readers pair with less able readers to teach them the CVC phonic rules. (8%)
- b. Group students according to those who have decoding problems that affect comprehension. (87%)**
- c. Teach the whole class the skill and call on the less able readers to respond. (3%)
- d. Have students who need practice copy the word "bags" on a paper. (1%)

32) Vocabulary knowledge is a significant predictor of:

- a. ability to exhibit on-task behavior. (1%)
- b. ability to understand whole-part relationships. (5%)
- c. reading success. (59%)**
- d. all of the above. (34%)

33) How many speech sounds are in the word grass?

- a. Two (4%)
- b. Three (25%)
- c. Four (70%)**
- d. Five (0%)

34) Which of the following is true of Tier III vocabulary words?

- a. They can often be learned through context clues. (19%)
- b. Teachers should teach these words explicitly to students. (29%)
- c. K-3 students will encounter these words most often when reading content area texts. (38%)**
- d. They most often appear in advanced works of fiction. (8%)

35) Effective teachers differentiate their teaching of different students by varying all of the following EXCEPT:

- a. their expectations of students' learning. (72%)**
- b. the products through which they ask students to show their learning. (5%)
- c. the ways in which they interact with students. (19%)
- d. the materials that they use to teach students. (2%)

36) Which measures would be most helpful in planning for primary struggling readers?

- a. Writing samples, motivation surveys, and spelling tests (2%)
- b. Oral reading fluency, retellings, and phonological awareness assessments (90%)**
- c. Anecdotal records, lists of books read independently, and language usage records (4%)
- d. Observations of students on standardized tests and formal measures (2%)

37) Why is the Letter-Naming Fluency measure of DIBELS a poor predictor of success in first grade?

- a. Nonsense word fluency includes letter naming. (4%)
- b. It is not benchmarked past the fall of first grade. (32%)**
- c. Students need lower case alphabet recognition in later grades. (2%)
- d. It does not predict success in reading. (57%)

Part B: For each of the statements below, indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree by checking the appropriate box.

	1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Mildly Disagree	4 Mildly Agree	5 Agree	6 Strongly Agree
38. Ability to rhyme words is a strong predictor of early reading success.	2%	4%	5%	24%	44%	20%
39. Letter recognition is a strong predictor of early reading success.	4%	13%	7%	22%	36%	18%
40. Poor phonemic awareness (awareness of the individual sounds in words) inhibits learning to read.	2%	2%	2%	8%	38%	49%
41. Encouraging the use of invented spelling can help children develop phonemic awareness.	3%	10%	6%	17%	46%	18%
42. K-2 teachers should know how to teach phonological awareness, i.e., know that spoken language can be broken down into smaller units (words, syllables, phonemes).	1%	0%	0%	2%	30%	66%
43. Individual differences in phonological awareness in children help explain reading growth during primary grades.	0%	1%	3%	21%	55%	21%
44. A teacher should not be concerned when early readers' miscues do not change meaning.	8%	26%	18%	22%	21%	4%
45. When early readers do not know how to pronounce a word, the most beneficial strategy to suggest is to use the context.	9%	40%	15%	17%	18%	1%
46. When early readers do not know how to pronounce a word, a good strategy is to prompt them to sound it out.	1%	3%	3%	15%	54%	25%
47. Learning to use context clues (syntax and semantics) is more important than learning to use grapho-phonics cues (letters and sounds) when learning to read.	14%	45%	19%	13%	8%	1%
48. A significant increase in oral reading miscues is usually related to decrease in comprehension.	1%	6%	6%	13%	48%	27%

	1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Mildly Disagree	4 Mildly Agree	5 Agree	6 Strongly Agree
49. Beginning readers need to encounter a new word a number of times to ensure it will become a part of their sight vocabulary.	0%	1%	0%	5%	43%	50%
50. Poor memory for the visual features of words affects development in word identification.	1%	5%	6%	23%	51%	14%
51. Visual memory for the features of words is essential for accurate spelling.	2%	13%	13%	31%	33%	9%
52. Transpositions (e.g., <i>saw</i> for <i>was</i>) remain a persistent problem for a few children when reading.	0%	5%	10%	28%	49%	9%
53. Materials for early reading should be written in early language without regard for the difficulty of vocabulary.	11%	42%	22%	14%	11%	1%
54. Basic skills should never be taught in isolation.	7%	33%	21%	12%	20%	6%
55. The development of word identification and spelling are closely related.	2%	7%	9%	31%	44%	7%
56. For fluent reading, rapid identification of whole words is necessary.	0%	2%	2%	11%	53%	31%
57. Reading comprehension is related to fluent word identification.	1%	8%	5%	17%	47%	23%
58. Controlling text through consistent spelling patterns (e.g., <i>the fat cat sat on a hat</i>) is a method by which some children can most easily learn to read.	0%	2%	6%	24%	50%	18%
59. K-2 teachers should know how to teach phonics.	0%	0%	0%	2%	24%	73%
60. Phonic rules and generalizations should be taught to early readers.	0%	5%	3%	11%	43%	39%
61. Phonics instruction can help a child improve spelling abilities.	0%	0%	1%	8%	48%	43%
62. Children who make repeated spelling errors are likely to benefit from systematic instruction.	0%	2%	3%	17%	48%	30%

Appendix B:

Survey of School Reading Coaches

Name: _____

School: _____

Survey on Reading Instruction Provided by Classroom Teachers in Reading First Schools

This survey is to be completed by school-based Reading Coaches in Reading First schools.

- 1. How many educators are involved in the Reading First program in your school(s)?** (Please include only people who have received Reading First-specific training and are involved in reading instruction.)

	Classroom teachers	Reading Specialists	Intervention Teachers	Special Education Teachers	ESL Teachers	Paraeducators	Other
Number of People <i>(Mean Response)</i>	10.5	1.0	1.3	1.8	0.6	1.6	0.7

- 2. What core reading program is being used in your school?**

	Core Reading Program							
	Houghton Mifflin 2003	Houghton Mifflin 2005	Nation's Choice 2003	Harcourt	Open Court	Reading Mastery Plus	Scott Foresman	Macmillan-McGraw-Hill
Grades in Which the Core Program is Used								

- 3. Including this year, for how many years have you worked in education?**

Mean Response = 19.8 years

- 4. Including this year, for how many years have you worked in your current school?**

Mean Response = 5.7 years

- 5. Including this year, for how many years have you been the Reading Coach for your school?**

Mean Response = 2.8 years

- 6. What other positions have you held in your career?** (check all that apply)

100% Classroom teacher	3% Special education teacher (inclusion)
24% Reading intervention teacher	8% Special education teacher (self-contained)
37% Reading specialist	3% Paraeducator
0% ESL teacher	34% Other

- 7. What is the highest level of education you have completed?**

11% Bachelor's 40% Master's 32% Master's+30 16% Master's+60 0% Doctorate 3% Other

8. **AT THE PRESENT TIME**, how many of the teachers with whom you work are demonstrating the following behaviors in providing reading instruction? *(Please consider only teachers in grades K to 3 in your responses.)*

	All Teachers	More than Half	About Half	Less than Half	None
Classroom Setting and Climate					
Materials are organized and displayed well and are accessible to the students.	24%	65%	3%	8%	0%
A wide variety of books appropriate for the students is available in the classroom.	74%	16%	5%	5%	0%
Books in the classroom are well-organized and displayed and are coordinated with ongoing classroom activities and learning goals.	11%	55%	16%	13%	5%
Current reading-related student work is prominently displayed in the classroom.	16%	55%	16%	13%	0%
Technologies (such as computers, Language Masters and tape recorders) are accessible and used regularly to support students' learning.	43%	35%	11%	8%	3%
The classroom climate is positive and respectful of the contributions of all students.	34%	55%	8%	3%	0%
Centers are used to differentiate instruction and provide reinforcement and enrichment as needed by individual students.	21%	40%	18%	21%	0%
The classroom is designed to easily allow for groupings of different sizes (e.g., individuals, small groups, large groups).	45%	42%	5%	8%	0%
Reading Instruction					
Instructional time during the reading block is used efficiently, without wasted time for behavior management and materials preparation or distribution.	21%	66%	11%	3%	0%
In providing reading instruction, lesson pacing is brisk and energetic.	11%	68%	16%	3%	3%
Students are engaged in purposeful learning activities virtually all of the time.	19%	57%	19%	5%	0%
The teacher ensures that all students actively participate during reading instruction.	24%	63%	8%	5%	0%
The teacher involves students in extended oral language use.	18%	61%	21%	0%	0%
The teacher uses the materials of the core reading program as intended.	58%	40%	3%	0%	0%
During reading instruction, the teacher consistently follows the lesson plans and/or scripts that accompany the core reading program. ¹	47%	47%	5	0%	0%

¹ In programs where the lesson plan provides many options, any activity included in the list of options should be considered part of the lesson plan.

	All Teachers	More than Half	About Half	Less than Half	None
Reading instruction routinely addresses all 5 areas of reading instruction (i.e., phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension) to the extent that is appropriate to students' learning needs.	71%	26%	3%	0%	0%
The teacher uses a range of strategies that support reading comprehension (e.g., questioning and conversation; scaffolding understanding based on prior experiences; explicit teaching of strategies such as predicting, questioning, rereading, and summarizing).	47%	42%	5%	5%	0%
The teacher routinely provides appropriate corrective feedback and positive reinforcement during reading instruction.	34%	47%	13%	5%	0%
The teacher uses thoughtful and deliberate strategies to increase student motivation to read.	24%	53%	13%	11%	0%
The teacher uses supplementary resources as needed to address students' reading instructional needs.	24%	55%	16%	5%	0%
The teacher provides flexible small group instruction.	42%	40%	13%	5%	0%
Assessment					
The teacher uses assessment data in forming flexible student groupings for reading instruction.	58%	21%	13%	8%	0%
A range of assessment techniques is used flexibly and regularly.	53%	21%	24%	3%	0%
Information gained from core reading program assessments is routinely used to evaluate and adjust instruction.	50%	34%	8%	5%	3%
The teacher uses regular assessment (including DIBELS) to identify students who need additional assistance.	74%	21%	5%	0%	0%
The teacher views and analyzes assessment data in order to determine student needs.	63%	18%	16%	3%	0%
The teacher varies instructional goals and methods based on students' assessment data.	21%	55%	18%	5%	0%

9. Now please think about the reading instruction that was taking place in your school WHEN READING FIRST BEGAN in the fall of 2004. At that time, how many of the K-3 classroom teachers you worked with were demonstrating the following behaviors in providing reading instruction? (If you were not at your school in the fall of 2004, please leave this question blank.)

	All Teachers	More than Half	About Half	Less than Half	None
Classroom Setting and Climate					
Materials are organized and displayed well and are accessible to the students.	13%	39%	17%	26%	4%
A wide variety of books appropriate for the students is available in the classroom.	26%	4%	26%	39%	4%
Books in the classroom are well-organized and displayed and are coordinated with ongoing classroom activities and learning goals.	9%	22%	13%	48%	9%
Current reading-related student work is prominently displayed in the classroom.	4%	30%	22%	30%	13%
Technologies (such as computers, Language Masters and tape recorders) are accessible and used regularly to support students' learning.	13%	21%	8%	42%	17%
The classroom climate is positive and respectful of the contributions of all students.	22%	35%	26%	13%	4%
Centers are used to differentiate instruction and provide reinforcement and enrichment as needed by individual students.	4%	22%	13%	44%	17%
The classroom is designed to easily allow for groupings of different sizes (e.g., individuals, small groups, large groups).	13%	22%	30%	35%	0%
Reading Instruction					
Instructional time during the reading block is used efficiently, without wasted time for behavior management and materials preparation or distribution.	5%	27%	23%	46%	0%
In providing reading instruction, lesson pacing is brisk and energetic.	5%	27%	14%	55%	0%
Students are engaged in purposeful learning activities virtually all of the time.	5%	32%	9%	50%	5%
The teacher ensures that all students actively participate during reading instruction.	14%	23%	23%	41%	0%
The teacher involves students in extended oral language use.	9%	27%	9%	50%	5%
The teacher uses the materials of the core reading program as intended.	14%	19%	14%	48%	5%
During reading instruction, the teacher consistently follows the lesson plans and/or scripts that accompany the core reading program.	18%	18%	18%	36%	9%

	All Teachers	More than Half	About Half	Less than Half	None
Reading instruction routinely addresses all 5 areas of reading instruction (i.e., phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension) to the extent that is appropriate to students' learning needs.	18%	14%	23%	41%	5%
The teacher uses a range of strategies that support reading comprehension (e.g., questioning and conversation; scaffolding understanding based on prior experiences; explicit teaching of strategies such as predicting, questioning, rereading, and summarizing).	9%	23%	27%	32%	9%
The teacher routinely provides appropriate corrective feedback and positive reinforcement during reading instruction.	9%	36%	18%	36%	0%
The teacher uses thoughtful and deliberate strategies to increase student motivation to read.	9%	14%	41%	32%	5%
The teacher uses supplementary resources as needed to address students' reading instructional needs.	14%	5%	14%	55%	14%
The teacher provides flexible small group instruction.	14%	18%	14%	36%	18%
Assessment					
The teacher uses assessment data in forming flexible student groupings for reading instruction.	14%	9%	9%	41%	27%
A range of assessment techniques is used flexibly and regularly.	14%	9%	14%	23%	41%
Information gained from core reading program assessments is routinely used to evaluate and adjust instruction.	14%	5%	14%	46%	23%
The teacher uses regular assessment (including DIBELS) to identify students who need additional assistance.	18%	9%	5%	32%	36%
The teacher views and analyzes assessment data in order to determine student needs.	14%	5%	9%	36%	36%
The teacher varies instructional goals and methods based on students' assessment data.	5%	14%	18%	27%	36%

10. What changes have you seen in the reading instruction in your school(s) since the Reading First initiative began?

(Among other things, consider changes in instructional quality and consistency, teamwork and collaboration, assessment practices, data review, student motivation and achievement, and the amount and quality of professional development.)

11. In what areas are teachers still finding it difficult to improve or change?

12. How has the role of reading coach changed over time?

(Among other things, consider changes in your overall responsibilities, your perceptions about how you can best support teachers, the amount of time you have available for coaching, and the number and positions of staff with whom you work.)

13. How are families involved in the Reading First program in your school?

(Among the things you may want to include are parent education programs, the ways in which your school communicates with parents about reading instruction, and volunteer programs that involve parents in reading instruction.)

Thank you for completing this questionnaire.

Please return your completed questionnaire in the envelope provided to you by **Wednesday, May 9, 2007.**

The envelope should be returned to:

Anthony Rodell, Macro International Inc., 11785 Beltsville Drive, Suite 300, Calverton, MD 20705

If you have any questions about how to respond to any of the survey items, please contact Elaine Pierrel by phone at 301-260-1116 or by email at eepierrel@aol.com.

Appendix C:

Participant Evaluation Form for 2007 Maryland Institute on Beginning Reading

Maryland Institute of Beginning Reading 2007 Participant Evaluation Form

Please take a few minutes to reflect on your experiences during today's professional development event and provide us with your feedback. *Your responses will only be seen by an independent consultant who is evaluating this professional development; the forms will not be read by anyone from your district or from MSDE.*

1. In what school district will you be working next year? _____

2. In what school will you be working next year? _____

3. Next year, will you be working as a classroom teacher?

Yes → What grade(s) will you be teaching next year? _____

No → Describe your position: _____

4. If you will be a classroom teacher next year, how many years of experience do you have teaching in elementary school? (If this will be your first year, write "0".)

_____ years

5. To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
a) The topics addressed in the Institute were of great interest to me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) The content provided in today's professional development was new to me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) I will be able to use what I learned today in my own teaching.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

6. On what topics related to beginning reading instruction would you like to receive professional development in the future?

7. The pacing of this year's Institute was:

Just right Too fast Too slow

8. The length of this year's Institute was:

Just right Too short Too long

9. How did the usefulness of this year's Institute compare to last year's?

This year's Institute was more useful than last year's. This year's Institute was less useful than last year's. This year's Institute was equally useful as last year's. I did not attend last year's Institute.

Please Turn Over ➤

10. Please rate the usefulness of each portion of today's professional development:

		In the space below, please explain what you liked or didn't like about each: ↓
(a) AM Keynote Speaker (Dr. McKeown)	<input type="checkbox"/> Very useful <input type="checkbox"/> Useful <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat useful <input type="checkbox"/> Not useful	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
(b) AM Breakout Sessions	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: fit-content;"> Whose breakout session did you attend? <input type="checkbox"/> Dr. Dahlgren <input type="checkbox"/> Dr. Greenberg <input type="checkbox"/> Dr. McKeown <input type="checkbox"/> Dr. Turner </div> <input type="checkbox"/> Very useful <input type="checkbox"/> Useful <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat useful <input type="checkbox"/> Not useful	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
(c) PM Keynote Speaker (Dr. Graves)	<input type="checkbox"/> Very useful <input type="checkbox"/> Useful <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat useful <input type="checkbox"/> Not useful	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
(d) PM Breakout Sessions	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: fit-content;"> Whose breakout session did you attend? <input type="checkbox"/> Dr. Dahlgren <input type="checkbox"/> Dr. Graves <input type="checkbox"/> Dr. Greenberg <input type="checkbox"/> Dr. Turner </div> <input type="checkbox"/> Very useful <input type="checkbox"/> Useful <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat useful <input type="checkbox"/> Not useful	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

11. What did you find most valuable about today's Institute?

12. In what ways could today's professional development event have been better?

13. Overall, the quality of today's Institute was:

- Excellent
 Good
 Fair
 Poor

THANK YOU FOR COMPLETING THIS QUESTIONNAIRE!