MONTANA READING FIRST

ANNUAL EVALUATION REPORT
2006–2007

October 2007

101 SW Main Street, Suite 500
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Executive Summary

In the 2006–2007 school year, 13 Montana Reading First schools (cohort 2) were in their second year of grant implementation. In addition to grant funds, they received regular professional development and technical assistance from state project staff members. The 20 schools from cohort 1, who finished their three-year grant cycle last year, moved into a continuation phase and received less support from the state.

The 2006–2007 evaluation of Montana Reading First found evidence of strong program implementation and continued growth in student achievement. State project staff members provided professional development and technical assistance to support schools in their implementation of Reading First. In turn, school and district staff members worked hard to deepen their implementation and improve student outcomes. By the spring, over two-thirds of Montana Reading First students were at benchmark, representing statistically significant increases in every grade from the beginning of the year.

The evaluation focused on data collection from cohort 2 schools. Some data concerning implementation and outcomes were collected from cohort 1 schools. The following findings include key successes and challenges during the 2006–2007 school year, as well as an overview of student outcomes.

Cohort 2 Professional Development and Technical Assistance

Again this year, teachers gave high ratings to the Summer Institute and most teachers felt that their overall professional development in reading was relevant, sustained, and intensive. At the school level, the reading coach provided the majority of professional development to teachers. Coaches continued to be a presence in teachers' classrooms, although the amount varied from school to school. Many teachers found assistance from the coach helpful, although not everyone believed that the coach had helped improve their instruction and some teachers wanted more support from their coach.

Cohort 2 schools continued to hold study groups to review research and materials related to reading instruction. About half of teachers found these meetings useful; a slight increase from last year. However, perceptions of study groups declined among principals and particularly among coaches.

Study groups downloaded materials from Knowledge Box, a digital learning software which was also used for other school-level professional development and lesson planning. Both the frequency of use and perceived utility of Knowledge Box increased from the previous year.

Overall, coaches and principals were pleased with training from the state, although there was a slight decline in satisfaction from last year. Coaches requested additional training in several topic areas related to coaching as well as interventions. About one-fourth of principals wanted more training in instructional leadership; other principal needs were very diverse. Travel to meetings was a frustration for a few principals.

Most principals and coaches were also pleased with the technical assistance they received from state project staff members this year, including state reading specialists. Most principals and coaches, although smaller percentages than last year, found their specialists valuable, responsive, and trustworthy.

Cohort 2 Leadership

The level of support for Reading First from districts was sufficient, according to most principals. Districts themselves were satisfied with state support for Reading First.

Various data suggest that principal leadership was generally strong, but not uniformly so. This year, principals were in classrooms less frequently than the previous year and their attendance at reading meetings varied from school to school, even though most principals felt that these meetings were a good use of their time. Most teachers viewed their principal as a strong advocate for reading and almost all principals had high buy-in to the grant.

Reading coaches continued to work long hours (an average of 49 hours per week) on a variety of Reading First responsibilities. While they spent more time actually coaching this year, a fairly high percentage of coaches were still unclear about their role and there was a large amount of variance in the ways they spent their time.

Support for Reading First remained very high among coaches and principals. The picture was somewhat mixed among teachers; coaches reported that teacher resistance was still an issue in some schools and not all teachers strongly supported the instructional changes occurring under Reading First. At the same time, teacher support for the core program and DIBELS assessment increased from last year, they valued collaborative structures established under the grant, and few teachers said they would return to their old ways of teaching after the grant ended. Of particular note, teachers from schools serving high percentages of Native American students expressed greater buy-in to Reading First than their peers from schools with mostly white students.

All schools had Reading Leadership Teams (RLTs) which met fairly regularly for various purposes such as examining data and sharing information from the state. Many participants rated their RLTs as useful, although grade-level meetings were seen as even more useful. Most teachers met with their grade-level colleagues at least twice a month, described the meeting topics as important, and said their viewpoints were welcomed.

Data use in cohort 2 schools was high in 2006–2007. In addition to benchmark assessments given three times a year, progress monitoring of strategic and intensive students was frequent in most schools. Coaches were confident that administration was consistent and reliable. In addition, teachers' weekly use of data increased noticeably from the previous year, and a higher percentage of teachers felt that DIBELS was a reliable assessment (although many felt it was overused).

Cohort 2 Instruction and Interventions

All cohort 2 schools reported a reading block of at least 90 minutes in grades 1–3 (60 minutes in kindergarten) and high fidelity to a core reading program. Teachers' satisfaction with their core program increased after their second year of using the materials and many believed that expectations to use the core program materials were reasonable.

While teachers indicated that they regularly used many strong instructional practices, these findings have limitations because they stem from self-report survey data (no classroom observations were conducted by evaluators in 2006–2007). Paraprofessionals, small class sizes, and working with groups during the reading block were all reported as helping teachers differentiate their instruction. Some teachers, especially those without those supports, were frustrated by the inability to differentiate during the reading block, although they noted there were other times during the school day when differentiation could occur.

Interventions of at least 12 hours in duration were delivered to approximately 41 percent of all Reading First students. Coaches reported an additional 27 percent of students received interventions of less than 12 hours. These were most often provided by paraprofessionals, coaches, or specialists and were usually delivered in groups of less than six students. Although all schools had intervention systems, a notable proportion of teachers and coaches believed that these systems were not yet sufficient to meet the needs of their struggling students.

Cohort 1 Implementation

As part of their continuation grants, cohort 1 schools were expected to continue implementing most aspects of Reading First, but the level of assistance from the state was scaled back. All but three schools maintained at least a part-time reading coach. Data indicate that the level of implementation remained the same or even increased from the previous year. That is, schools continued to implement 90-minute reading blocks, use their core program with fidelity, and administer benchmark assessments. Furthermore, principals and coaches continued to be a visible presence in classrooms and staff buy-in to Reading First remained the same.

There were a few areas where the level of implementation declined. There was a slight decline in the frequency of reading-related meetings (Reading Leadership Teams and grade-level) and a small decline in the percentage of schools that reported progress monitoring in all classrooms. There were more substantial decreases in three areas:

- Teachers reported declines in both the amount and quality of professional development in reading
- Teachers reported a decline in their weekly use of data and their use of data to look at schoolwide trends
- Fewer students received interventions

Despite these declines, achievement among cohort 1 schools continued on a similar trajectory as compared to past years with minor exceptions.

Student Assessment Results

In spring 2007, the following percentages of students at each grade level were at benchmark on the DIBELS:

	Cohort 1	Cohort 2
Kindergarten	79%	75%
Grade 1	70%	71%
Grade 2	65%	66%
Grade 3	59%	57%

For both cohorts, this represented statistically significant increases from fall 2006 to spring 2007.

Cohort 1. While there was a statistically significant increase in the percentages of students at benchmark from fall to spring in cohort 1, moving students out of the intensive category was somewhat more challenging.

In most grades there has been sustained, continued growth in the percentages of students at benchmark and a decrease in the percentages of students in intensive over four years. In contrast, there was a decrease in the percentage of second graders at benchmark, and movement out of intensive slowed in grades one and two.

A longitudinal examination of students who have been in Reading First for four years showed a 71 percent total effectiveness rate. That is, almost three out of four students progressed out of the strategic or intensive category, or remained at benchmark after four years.

Cohort 2. From fall 2006 to spring 2007, there were statistically significant increases in the percentages of cohort 2 students at benchmark. In three of four grades, the decreases in the percentages of students in intensive were also significant.

Compared to last year, there were increases in the percentages of students at benchmark and decreases in the percentages of students in intensive in all grades. These data were only significant in kindergarten. However, the sample size should be considered when interpreting these findings since similar changes over time in cohort 1 (with more students) were significant. As is true of all statistical analyses, a small sample size gives evaluators less power to detect significant differences.

Variations in Student Achievement. Native American students comprise approximately one-third of all Montana Reading First students. Their progress in kindergarten and grade 1 from fall 2006 to spring 2007 slightly outpaced their peers in terms of the percentages of students at benchmark. However, gaps between Native American students and their white

peers remained in every grade and were particularly wide in grades two and three. For example, 64 percent of white students were at benchmark in grade 3 compared to 46 percent of their Native American peers.

The rate of growth for kindergarten students eligible for Free and Reduced-price lunch (FRL) slightly outpaced their non-eligible counterparts in kindergarten and grade one. However, their growth was slower in grades two and three where the achievement gap also remained the widest.

Recommendations

In addition to noting several data trends for the state to consider in planning the 2007–2008 school year, evaluators made the following recommendations based on report findings:

- Provide additional supports to reading coaches in cohort 2 to help clarify their roles and further improve their coaching skills.

- Further investigate and address issues related to low performance of Native American students.

- Focus on the provision of interventions with cohort 1 schools.

Evaluators also recommended that the state continue to use the evaluation findings for multiple purposes. Details of the recommendations are found in the final chapter of the report.

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A special thanks to all those who aided in this year's evaluation. As in past years, the state project director and state reading specialists were very helpful; they answered questions and shared information throughout the year. Their enthusiasm for the evaluation and willingness to share results with multiple audiences makes this work all the more worthwhile.

A special thanks to all of the principals, reading coaches, teachers, and district staff members who graciously completed lengthy surveys and participated in phone interviews. Again this year, the response rate for surveys was very high which helped ensure that the data in this report reflect project activities and outcomes across the state.

In addition to the contributions of my co-authors, I also extend appreciation to Caitlin Scott for her feedback on chapter drafts and to Ann Davis and Angela Roccograndi for conducting many of the telephone interviews. Finally, Tess Bridgman provided various support throughout the year, including mailing and tracking surveys, editing and formatting the final report, and providing contagious laughter that helped move the work forward. Thank you!

~~ Kari Nelsestuen
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Chapter One:
Introduction

Reading First

Reading First is a federal initiative authorized by Title I, Part B, Subpart 1 of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* as amended by the *No Child Left Behind Act* of 2001. Often characterized as "the means by which the goals of NCLB are to be achieved," Reading First provides an unprecedented amount of funding and focused support for the improvement of K–3 reading instruction, with the ultimate goal of ensuring that all children read at grade level by the end of third grade. In support of this goal, Reading First funds states to support comprehensive programs to improve reading instruction at selected Reading First schools, as well as more broadly in the state.

Most funds states received under Reading First were distributed to selected Reading First districts and schools, which were eligible for the grant based on state-determined criteria (generally a combination of poverty level and history of low reading performance). While states varied in their plans to implement Reading First, most states' plans included many of the following expectations of grantee schools:

- Selection and implementation of core reading program materials from a list of approved research-based materials or evidence that core reading program materials have been selected on the basis of a rigorous evaluation process.

- Selection and implementation of research-based reading interventions from a list of approved research-based materials (or, again, evidence of rigorous review of materials).

- Attendance of all K–3 staff members at research-based professional development offerings such as a summer institute.

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

- Creation of a Reading Leadership Team to guide the design and implementation of the grant.

- Attendance of reading coaches, district-level coordinators, and principals at regular state-provided professional development.

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

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

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

Montana Reading First

The Montana Office of Public Instruction (OPI) was awarded a six-year federal Reading First state grant in July 2003, and, after an initial planning and sub grant application stage, awarded sub grants to 17 schools in January 2004. An additional three schools were added to cohort 1 in June 2004. Cohort 1 schools are listed in Table 1-1.

Spring 2006 marked the end of the three-year grant cycle for cohort 1 schools. For the 2006–2007 school year, all 20 schools were given small continuation grants after submitting continuation proposals to the state in which they agreed to continue implementing key aspects of the grant. Professional development and technical assistance from the state were scaled-back in 2006–2007.

Table 1-1
Montana Cohort 1 Reading First Schools

School, by District	K-3 Enrollment*	School, by District	K-3 Enrollment*
Billings		**Hardin**	
Newman	197	Crow Agency	159
Ponderosa	254	Hardin Intermediate (3)	88
Butte		Hardin Primary (K-2)	240
Kennedy	161	**Hays**	
Whittier	229	Hays Lodge Pole	45
Centerville		**Lame Deer**	
Centerville	48	Lame Deer	191
Charlo		**Libby**	
Charlo	101	Libby	400
Dixon		**Ronan**	
Dixon	35	KW Harvey	239
East Helena		Pablo	174
Eastgate (K-2)	372	**Helena**	
Radley (3)	119	Warren	166
Great Falls			
Longfellow	166		
West	202		

*Enrollment based on data collected from each school in summer and fall 2006.

A second cohort of schools applied for a three-year grant beginning in fall 2005. Thirteen schools from 13 districts were given cohort 2 grants; spring 2007 marked the end of their second year of implementation with two more years of funding expected. These schools are listed in Table 1-2.

Table 1-2
Montana Cohort 2 Reading First Schools

District	School	K-3 Enrollment*
Box Elder	Box Elder	131
Butte	West Butte	236
Dodson	Dodson	14
East Glacier Park	East Glacier Park	15
Evergreen	East Evergreen	314
Frazer	Frazer	25
Great Falls	Morningside	172
Harlem	Harlem	178
Heart Butte	Heart Butte	57
Lodge Grass	Lodge Grass	83
Rocky Boy	Rocky Boy	186
Somers	Lakeside	234
Stevensville	Stevensville	255

*Enrollment based on data collected from each school in summer and fall 2006.

Located in a large western state, Montana Reading First schools were spread out over hundreds of miles, from the reservations of southeastern Montana to the mountains near Glacier Park. Accordingly, schools varied greatly by size and other demographic variables.

- Schools ranged in size from very small rural schools to those serving over 350 students in grades K-3.

- More than one in three Montana Reading First students were Native American. Some schools had 100 percent Native American student populations, while others had none. There were very few students from other ethnic backgrounds such as Hispanic or African American.

Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory
Center for Research, Evaluation, and Assessment

The External Evaluation

The Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NWREL) signed a contract in August 2004 to be the external evaluators for Montana Reading First. The approved evaluation incorporates and integrates both formative and summative evaluation components to examine the following broad areas:

- Effectiveness of the technical assistance provided to grant recipients

- Quality and level of implementation of statewide Reading First activities

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

These issues were addressed using a range of approaches and instruments which are described in Chapter 2: Evaluation Methods.

Organization of the Report

The bulk of this report describes the implementation and outcomes of cohort 2 schools for whom 2006–2007 was their second year of implementation. Chapter 3 describes professional development and technical assistance from the state. Chapter 4 examines leadership roles, collaboration, and use of data in schools around the state. Chapter 5 moves to the school and classroom level, describing instruction and intervention. Chapter 6 examines student assessment outcome data, starting with a picture of project-level results, followed by details from cohort 2.

Implementation and outcome data from cohort 1, who were in a continuation phase of implementation in 2006–2007, are described in Chapter 7. The report concludes with a series of recommendations.

Chapter Two:
Evaluation Methods

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

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

- **Cohort 2 spring surveys**—surveys of all teachers, coaches, and principals from all Montana Reading First cohort 2 schools, as well as of the district coordinators in each district.

- **Cohort 1 spring surveys**—shortened surveys of all teachers, coaches, and principals from all cohort 1 Montana Reading First schools.

- **Phone interviews**—with principals, coaches, and a random selection of teachers from all cohort 2 schools.

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

- **Ongoing review of project documents**

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

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

In addition, three new surveys were created for cohort 1 schools in order to measure the extent to which key Reading First components had changed or stayed the same after the end of their three-year grant cycle.

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

Copies of all instruments are included in the Appendix.

Cohort 2 Spring Surveys

In spring 2007, surveys were administered to school staff members involved in Reading First. The surveys were designed to gather information on school and classroom practices, perceptions of Reading First, and its impact during the 2006–2007 year of implementation. They contained close-ended questions about areas related to grant implementation, including assessments, use of the core program, student grouping, collaboration, professional development, beliefs, and attitudes about Reading First, and sustainability. These surveys included:

- Principal survey (58 items)

- Reading coach survey (116 items)

- Teacher survey for staff members who taught K–3 reading during the past year (not including aides or student teachers) (113 items)

- District survey for district Reading First liaisons/coordinators (30 items)

Coach, principal, and teacher surveys were mailed to the reading coach at each school with explicit instructions for administration. Coaches were encouraged to set aside time for survey completion at a staff meeting or other already reserved time. Survey instructions encouraged respondents to be candid in their answers and assured respondents' anonymity; cover sheets for each survey further explained the purpose of the survey and intended use of the data. To further encourage honest responses, respondents received confidentiality envelopes in which to seal their surveys before turning them in. Completed surveys were collected by the reading coaches, who were asked to mail them back to NWREL.

NWREL received coach, principal, and teacher surveys from 13 of the 13 cohort 2 schools—a 100 percent response rate.

Surveys for district coordinators were administered online. Coordinators received e-mail information about these surveys and passwords for the protected site. Surveys were received from seven districts.

Survey responses in this report are rounded to the nearest whole number. In some tables and figures, totals do not add up to 100 due to rounding.

Cohort 1 Spring Surveys

Cohort 1 schools which received less funding and fewer resources from the state in 2006–2007 participated in shortened surveys for teachers, coaches, and principals. These surveys focused on implementation items that would measure change in key areas of program implementation, such as the reading block, use of assessments, attitudes towards the grant, and leadership. The surveys included:

- Principal survey (18 items)
- Reading coach survey (31 items)
- Teacher survey for staff members who taught K–3 reading during the past year (not including aides or student teachers) (31 items)

Surveys were received from 19 of 20 schools including: 19 principals, 17 coaches (which represents all coaches since three schools did not have school-based coaches), and 192 out of approximately 219 teachers.

Interviews

Interviews were conducted with 13 reading coaches and 12 principals from the 13 cohort 2 Reading First schools. Interviews with the principal and reading coach covered a similar range of topics: the roles of each, the type and perceived effectiveness of professional development, support from the state, perceptions of instructional change at the school, use of assessments, changes in communication and collaboration, as well as challenges and successes of the past year. Interviews generally ran between 30 to 90 minutes, with the coach interview being somewhat longer than the principal interview.

Interviews were conducted by telephone and were not taped; instead, extensive notes were recorded and then summarized for each school. Consequently, the quotes provided in this report are not always verbatim, but do represent as closely as possible the actual wording of the respondents. Interviewees were assured confidentiality, meaning that their individual or school name would not be attached to their responses.

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

Focus Groups

In order to obtain the perspectives of teachers at Reading First schools, focus groups were held with up to four regular classroom teachers, one from each grade K–3. In schools

with multiple teachers per grade, participants were selected randomly based on where their name fell in the alphabet.

Teacher focus groups asked for participant discussion on aspects of classroom instruction such as fidelity and differentiated instruction, their experience working with the reading coach, their school's intervention program, and sustainability. As with interviewees, focus group participants were assured confidentiality.

Focus groups were conducted by telephone with all 13 schools. Each group included four participants, one from each grade level K–3, plus the evaluator. The principal and reading coach were asked not to partake in the focus group to ensure that participants felt comfortable expressing all of their opinions.

Student Assessments

Student progress in reading across the 33 Montana Reading First schools was monitored with the *Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills,* or DIBELS. DIBELS measures the progress of student reading development from kindergarten through third grade in the areas of phonemic awareness, phonics, and fluency.

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

Table 2-1
Scheduled Administration of DIBELS Assessment Measures

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

Collection and analysis of DIBELS data. Administration of the DIBELS assessment took place at the individual Reading First schools three times during fall, winter, and spring assessment windows set by state project staff members. The benchmark assessments were administered by school or district assessment teams.

After results were collected, DIBELS scores were entered into the online AIMSweb database. Data were downloaded by AIMSweb staff members and sent to NWREL in June 2007.

The analyses in this report include only matched students, or those who had both fall and spring results reported and who were continuously enrolled.

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

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

Chapter Three:
Professional Development and
Technical Assistance to Cohort 2 Schools

This chapter reports on the delivery, relevance, and reception of Reading First professional development provided to cohort 2 schools during the 2006–2007 school year. Training activities included a Summer Institute, coach and principals meetings, and a variety of types of professional development for teachers. The chapter also reviews feedback on technical assistance provided by state project staff members.

Summer Institute

The 2006 Montana Reading First Institute, held in Missoula, included sessions for teachers, paraprofessionals, coaches, and principals from all cohort 2 schools. Anita Archer led training about increasing active participation in reading programs. State Reading Specialists (SRS) provided training in vocabulary instruction and, along with Carrie Hancock, facilitated sessions on evaluating instructional effectiveness using DIBELS data from AIMSweb. On the last day, schools met with their own teams to create action plans to implement what they had learned at the Institute.

The majority of surveyed teachers (90%), coaches (92%), and principals (92%) reported attending the entire Institute. Similar to past years, teachers gave the Institute high marks for relevance and quality. Specifically:

- Nearly all the teachers agreed that the Institute was relevant to their work (94%) and provided them with instructional strategies they had used in their classroom (93%).

- The majority of teachers agreed that the Institute included adequate opportunities to reflect and share with colleagues (85%) and consisted of high-quality presentations (84%).

- For most teachers, the Institute provided new information, although a third of teachers reported that the Institute was "mostly review" (31%).

Professional Development for Coaches and Principals

Coaches and principals from Reading First schools were required to attend state meetings which rotated locations around the state every other month. The meetings were used for sharing information and providing professional development on a range of topics. The topics included data analysis, fluency, templates, special education, advanced leadership, and coaching.

Meetings required coaches to attend for two days and principals to usually attend one day. Coaches and principals were expected to return to their schools and provide teachers with the relevant information and/or training from the meetings.

The majority of coaches and principals reported that the bimonthly professional development provided by the state was of high quality, relevant, and provided adequate networking opportunities. However, agreement with these items decreased slightly from last year (see Table 3-1).

Table 3-1
Coach and Principal Perceptions of Training from the State

The professional development that I received from the state this year…	Percentage Agreeing or Strongly Agreeing (percentage point change from 2006)	
	Principals	**Coaches**
Was very relevant to my work.	85 (-15)	85 (-15)
Consisted of high-quality presentations.	85 (-7)	77 (-15)
Included adequate opportunities to reflect and share with my colleagues.	77 (-6)	84 (-16)
Was differentiated to meet the needs of different groups, based on their level of pre-existing expertise.	46 (-4)	46 (+7)
Was mostly review for me.	31 (+6)	31 (+16)

Some interviewed principals and coaches said they welcomed the opportunity to learn about reading and its components (most notably fluency and vocabulary) and the use of data. Some principals also appreciated learning about their role in Reading First and many coaches were pleased with the opportunities to network with other coaches.

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All of the meetings/trainings have been useful. The vocabulary and fluency session was cutting edge information, and it's good to hear what's new and to be able to share that information with others. The data meetings were great because data was broken down by school. I could bring it back, and it helped me direct staff to some eye opening pieces related to growth and needs. (Coach)

The trainings/meetings have been very useful because they usually provide tools to bring back to the teachers. The data meeting conducted by one of the reading specialists was wonderful. It provided us with notes, templates, and other things to get teachers to see the nitty gritty of the data. Also, the meeting conducted by another reading specialist on vocabulary was great. It gave us practical ideas to take back. The presenter was enthusiastic about the topic. Giving participants practical tools to use is what makes the sessions useful. (Principal)

One complaint shared by several principals was that the meetings required too much travel time for "too little meeting." Principals made two suggestions in this regard: offer longer but less frequent training and/or include principals in both training days.

Logistically, attending these meetings has been frustrating. It takes one day to drive, one day to attend, and one day to drive back. Because the coach is required to stay for the second day, we need to take two cars; my time will not be reimbursed for the second day. (Principal)

Reflecting the diversity of cohort 2 schools, some principals and coaches felt that meetings could have been further differentiated to meet their needs; about half of surveyed coaches and principals (46%) felt meetings were adequately differentiated (Table 3–1). The state project director noted that most differentiation occurs through technical assistance (e.g., visits by state reading specialists) rather than at meetings. About one-third of coaches and principals (31%) felt meetings were review; an increase from 15 percent last year. In interviews, some coaches expressed their desire for more differentiation.

Training this year was a review and was for the new coaches. Also, too much time was spent looking at data, especially in a comparative way. It is interesting to compare to other schools, but it is sometimes like comparing apples to oranges. (Coach)

Training in Instructional Leadership

The majority of principals were satisfied with the professional development they received in instructional leadership. Many principals (77%) felt the professional development met their needs as a Reading First principal and also agreed that it was high quality (77%). Principals were especially satisfied with training in observing teachers and providing

feedback (85% agreed it was useful). About one in four principals (23%) felt there should have been more training in instructional leadership.

When asked about additional training needs, principals responded with a plethora of suggestions. While a large number of training requests were made, each of the following topics were requested by one or only a few principals. They included: further training in assessments; invitations to cohort 1 trainings; comprehension and independent reading; instructional leadership; working with Native American students; sustainability; and more networking time.

Training in Coaching Methods

Montana Reading First prepared coaches for coaching primarily through two routes: training at the monthly coach and principal meetings and through their SRS. While coaches were generally pleased with their training, there was evidence that many were still in need of intensive coaching training. While the majority of coaches (70%) agreed that they had been provided with useful training in coaching methods, almost one in three coaches (30%) did not agree. As one coach said:

> *Just because we're teachers doesn't mean we're good about working with adults.*
> *More tips for doing professional development would be good. (Coach)*

Several topics related to coaching were requested for future professional development by about one out of every three coaches. These included:

- Providing constructive feedback
- Meeting facilitation
- Designing professional development
- Working with resistant teachers (only 15% of coaches felt training had given them useful ways to work with resistant staff members)

Recognizing the need for more coaching training, the first cohort 2 meeting of 2007–2008 will include coaching topics. Further training on coaching may help coaches and teachers further understand the role of the coach; this year just over half of coaches (58%) felt their roles were clearly defined (see further discussion in Chapter 4).

Another area where almost two-thirds of coaches asked for assistance was intervention programs and/or their core replacement. One coach described how their school had programs like Corrective Reading and Read Naturally, but no training in how to use them effectively. A few coaches wanted more training in differentiating instruction, using templates, and working with paraprofessionals.

Professional Development for Teachers

The major state-sponsored training for teachers was the Summer Institute. In addition, there were some opportunities for teachers, especially special education teachers, to attend other state-sponsored training. However, most Reading First professional development for teachers was provided by the reading coach. Some teachers also received professional development from district staff members, publisher representatives or external consultants.

The majority of teachers (83%) agreed that Reading First professional development had focused on what happened in the classroom. Slightly fewer, but still the majority, felt that it was sustained and intensive (72%).

Professional Development from Sources Other than the Coach

This year, publishers provided direct training at 18 percent of schools, according to coaches. Beyond the coach, school-level training in reading was more likely to come from contracted experts (60%) and/or district reading staff members (60%). Two-thirds of coaches (66%) said they found the training from contracted experts usually or always helpful.

Some teachers also had an opportunity to learn through peer observations. Slightly more teachers observed other teachers' classrooms (43%, an increase from 38% last year) and invited other teachers into theirs (57%, an increase from 47% last year).

Professional Development from Coaches

In the Reading First model, a key aspect of the reading coach role was to provide ongoing, individualized professional development to the teaching staff members. This included relaying and disseminating information learned from state training sessions, modeling lessons, observing in classrooms, and providing teachers with constructive feedback.

Coach observations and feedback. In order to help teachers improve their practice, coaches must understand the instructional strengths and needs of each teacher. Thus, their presence in classrooms for regular observations is important. Similar to last year, almost all teachers (97%) reported being observed by their reading coach; most often this was at least weekly (53%) or monthly (36%). A small percentage of teachers (8%) reported they were observed only once or a few times a year; a drop from 13 percent last year (see Figure 3–1).

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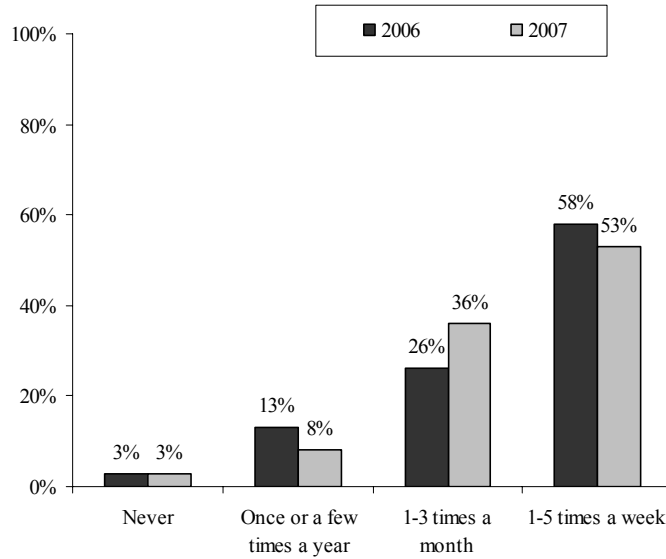
Figure 3-1. Frequency of Coaches' Observations of Teachers

Teachers received feedback from their coach less frequently than they were observed. One in three teachers received "specific and constructive" feedback from their coach only once or a few times a year (21%) or never (9%). The remaining teachers received specific feedback at least monthly (41%) or weekly (29%). There was minimal change in these results from 2006 (see Figure 3-2). About two-thirds of teachers (60%) said feedback from their coach was usually or always helpful (data not shown in figure).
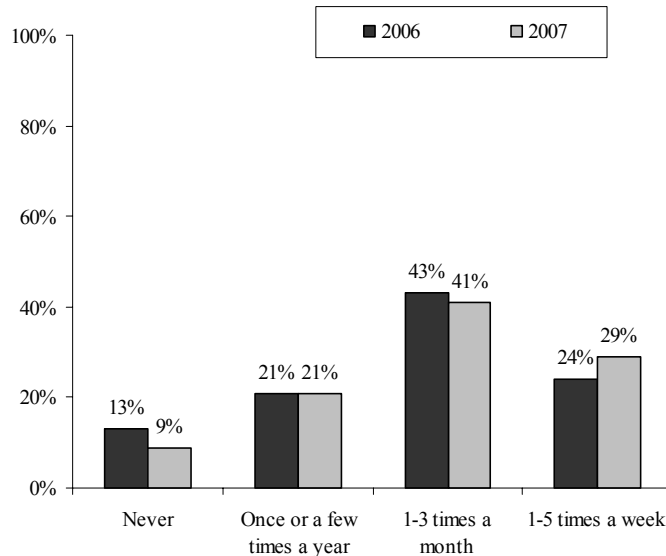
Figure 3-2. Frequency of Coaches' Feedback to Teachers

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Other coaching activities. The frequency with which teachers received coaching assistance in other areas remained high (see Table 3-2). Over 90 percent of teachers indicated that their coach assisted them with various aspects of assessment and interventions and many (81%) had received demonstration lessons. The majority of teachers continued to find these activities helpful.

Table 3-2
Perception of Support from Coach to Teachers

Type of Support	Percentage of Teachers	
	Occurred	Usually or Always Helpful
Assistance from the coach in interpreting assessment results	96	86
Assistance from the coach in providing quality interventions	96	80
Assistance from the coach in monitoring the effectiveness of interventions	93	79
Assistance from the coach in administering and scoring student assessments	91	83
Demonstration lessons provided by the reading coach	81	79

Perceived impact of coaching. When asked about the impact coaching had on their instruction, the majority of interviewed teachers were positive and cited many benefits:

> *After classroom observations, our coach gives feedback about our instruction. We attend study groups on fluency. At meetings, we practice strategies and receive handouts, presentation insights, tips for using consistent Reading First terminology, ideas for getting our kindergarten students moving and incorporating fluency timings into the day. We discuss what works and does not work in the classroom. She has a great way of doing constructive criticism. We're not at all intimidated, because she helps us with ideas and has a nice way of getting her point across.   (Focus Group Teachers)*

However, a fair number of teachers felt their coach had made little to no impact on their instruction. In some of these cases, they explained that the coach had not spent their time coaching as teachers expected.

> *We've never had our coach come in and model for us. She should come in and model and see things in real life. We'd like to see more ideas for classroom small groups from the coach. We haven't gotten any of that from the coach. (Focus Group Teachers)*

In a related finding, 22 percent of teachers wanted more coaching from their coach. While the majority of teachers indicated their reading coach was a knowledgeable resource (80%) and was an ally in helping them to improve their reading instruction

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(78%), fewer felt their reading coach helped them become more reflective (68%) or increased their understanding of how children learn to read (57%).

Study Groups

Another type of required professional development was study groups. Topics assigned by the state for cohort 2 study groups included a fluency module by Gail Adams and the book, <u>Bringing Words to Life,</u> by Isabel Beck. These materials were accompanied by fluency and vocabulary research syntheses from the Pacific Regional Educational Laboratory. For each study group, the state gave schools specific questions to complete in relation to each topic. Coaches were responsible for facilitating and documenting study groups.

According to coaches, two-thirds of schools (69%) held at least three study groups this year; 31 percent held just one or two such groups. Almost all teachers (92%) reported attending at least one study group during the year.

Compared to last year, there was a noticeable drop in the perceived usefulness of study groups among coaches and principals; 69 percent of coaches and 61 percent of principals agreed that they were a good use of their time (compared to 94% and 67% the previous year). However, teachers' views improved slightly from last year; 51 percent of teachers found them useful (compared to 46% last year).

Table 3-3
Perceptions of Study Groups

Regularly attending study groups is a good use of my time.	Percentage Agreeing or Strongly Agreeing		Percentage Point Change
	2006	**2007**	
Coaches	94	69	-25
Principals	67	61	-8
Teachers	46	51	+5

Knowledge Box

A requirement of all Montana Reading First schools was the purchase of Knowledge Box, a digital learning software system that delivers media via the Internet directly to the classroom or computer lab. Knowledge Box was intended to serve as a central vehicle for shared lesson planning and as a digital library of videotaped professional development offerings. Schools were expected to download materials (videos, handouts, etc.) for study groups, professional development, and lesson planning. In 2006, the evaluation found that Knowledge Box was not being used to its full potential and recommended that the state encourage and model its use. In 2006–2007, Knowledge Box went online and the state created additional mini lessons (e.g. Alternatives to Round Robin Reading).

Perhaps a result of these improvements, Knowledge Box was reported as an increasingly important tool in 2006–2007. As shown in Figure 3-3, the frequency of Knowledge Box use increased from last year among coaches, principals, and teachers. The increase was especially notable among coaches, the majority of whom used the tool at least once a month (63%) in 2007, compared to 32 percent in 2006.
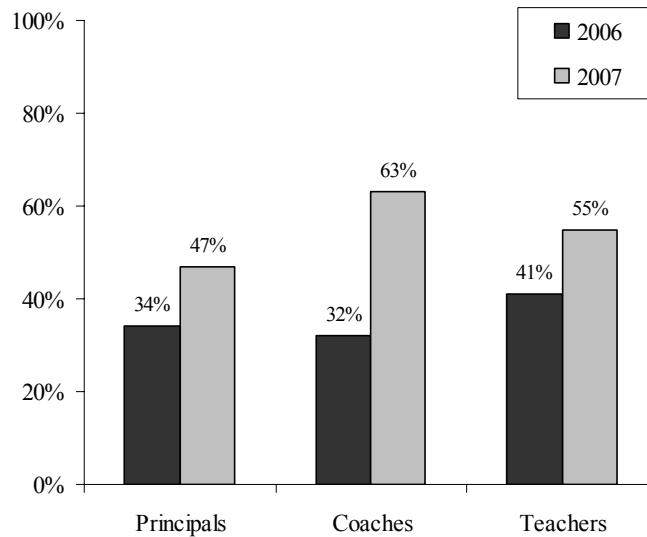
Figure 3-3. Used Knowledge Box At Least Once a Month

In addition, a far larger proportion of coaches and principals agreed that Knowledge Box provided important professional development in their school (see Figure 3-4). Teachers' impressions also improved; 58 percent of teachers who used Knowledge Box found it usually or always helpful—a 14 percentage point increase from last year.

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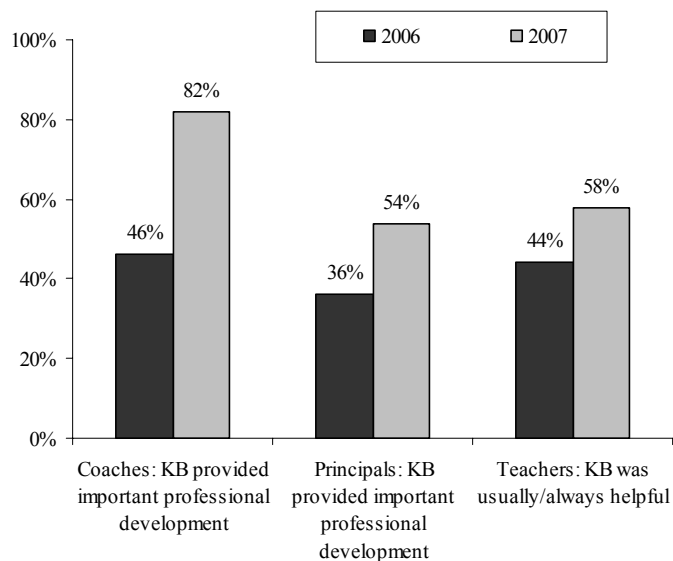
Figure 3-4. Perceptions of Knowledge Box

Teacher-requested Professional Development Topics

The most frequently requested topics for further professional development from surveyed teachers were comprehension (54%), differentiated instruction (52%), and student engagement (46%). More than a third of the teachers requested additional support in using intervention (38%) and supplemental (32%) programs effectively. Roughly a quarter of teachers requested training in working with ELL students (27%), fluency (24%) and using assessment results to drive instruction (24%).

Support and Technical Assistance from the State

State project staff members include a program director, four state reading specialists, and a program assistant. The specialists' spent the majority of their time in the field, visiting schools to provide technical assistance. Their visits were always followed by written reports with feedback to schools. Technical assistance was tailored to each school's individual needs based on their RIP and corresponding action plans as well as assessment data and observations. In 2006–2007, state reading specialists also facilitated many professional development sessions at the Summer Institute and coach and principal meetings.

Principals and coaches were pleased with the support they received from state project staff members; the majority agreed that state project staff members were responsive to their schools' needs, trusted them with information about their program, and felt they

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understood their school and program. However, there was a slight decline in agreement from 2006 (see Table 3-4).

Table 3-4
Coach and Principals' Perceptions of State Reading Specialists

	Percentage Agreeing or Strongly Agreeing 2007 (Percentage point change from 2006)	
	Principals	**Coaches**
State project staff (director and State Reading Specialists) are responsive to my school's needs.	84 (-10)	85 (+0)
The OPI Reading First specialist's support and input has been extremely valuable.	69 (-14)	77 (-15)
I trust our OPI Reading First specialist with any information—good or bad—about our reading program.	77 (-6)	100 (+8)
Our OPI Reading First specialist understands our school, our programs and cultures, and takes that into account when making recommendations.	61 (-12)	77 (-7)

Most interviewed coaches corroborated these findings, stating that their SRS helped them problem solve and taught them techniques for data analysis, organizing their work, finding materials, and refining their classroom walkthroughs. Some saw them as a "second pair of eyes" in classrooms or appreciated when they led a study group or grade-level meting. Furthermore, many coaches reported their SRS was responsive both by telephone and e-mail.

> *She's a wonderful listener, supports us as far as wanting to stand beside us. With difficulties, she supports us in any way she can, although she can't always fix the problem. She returns phone calls, communicates with e-mail/phone—is more than accessible. She shares materials, books for book studies and accommodates requests. She provides good site visits; sometimes we get a different perspective, she sees things the principal and I don't see. (Coach)*

All of the coaches reported receiving visits from their SRS. For 64 percent of schools, this happened about every other month. Although the majority of coaches felt that the number of SRS visits was ample, a few coaches noted concerns about limited or infrequent visits, such as the following:

> *When she comes and is able to visit with me about specific problems or observe with me, that is helpful; but we don't even see her monthly and when she does come, it is often only for a few hours. It would be nice to stay for the grade-level meetings after school or for more of the day. (Coach)*

A final request from a few coaches was for the state to provide more direct onsite professional development to teachers, rather than rely on the reading coach to deliver all of the training. They asked for the state to provide teacher workshops in topics such as student engagement, differentiated instruction, templates, and comprehension strategies. It may be that further training for coaches may give them the tools to provide these trainings themselves.

Sustainability. Cohort 2 schools have two more years of Reading First before their grant ends. However, many schools are already thinking about sustainability topics, such as what to do about the coaches' position once the grant ends. Schools may be ready for more discussion with state project staff members about sustainability. In 2006–2007, there was minimal discussion of sustainability, according to principals and coaches. Specifically, fewer than half of coaches (46%) and a third of principals (31%) agreed that they were pleased with the amount of support they had received to address sustainability.

The state has already planned to make sustainability a topic throughout the 2007–2008 school year. At the first coach and principal meeting, coaches and principals discussed their roles in terms of how the responsibilities of the reading coach can last beyond the life of the grant. Some information about sustainability from the National Reading First Conference was also reviewed.

Chapter Four:
Cohort 2 Leadership and School-level Structures

This chapter examines the development of instructional leadership and the creation of structures that facilitated institutional change in cohort 2 schools during the 2006–2007 school year.

District Support

The 13 Montana Reading First cohort 2 schools were located in 13 districts. The majority of these districts were small, rural locations with only one elementary school; they also ranged in size to cities such as Butte with a larger district infrastructure. According to the Reading Improvement Plan (RIP), districts must provide sufficient funding, guidance, professional development, and staffing to Reading First schools, as well as make the success of students in K–3 reading a major part of elementary principal evaluations.

Nine districts designated a person to serve as the district representative to Reading First, who spent an average of 15 percent of their time on Reading First activities. Involvement of districts in the implementation and monitoring of the grant took many forms. Seven districts said they played a role in:

- Monitoring grant implementation
- Analyzing student reading assessment data
- Providing professional development
- Supporting the core reading program and intervention programs

District representatives were encouraged, but not mandated, to participate in Reading First activities such as state meetings; most (80%) did not.

Perceptions of district support for Reading First were strong. Almost all principals (92%) agreed that their district provided sufficient support for Reading First, although the level of support that they considered "sufficient" varied.

> *My district is very much in favor of Reading First and has supported it from the beginning (even when there was staff mutiny). (Principal)*

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> *Our district is not that involved. They say everything sounds good and trust us to get it done. As far as funding supplements and staffing, the district provides good support. (Principal)*

This was corroborated by district representatives, all of whom (100%) reported that their district strongly supported the instructional changes associated with Reading First.

State Support for Districts

From the perspective of district representatives, state support for districts was strong. All or almost all districts agreed with the following statements:

- State Reading First project staff members are responsive to our district's needs (100%)
- The state's expectations of district involvement in Reading First are reasonable (100%)
- The state's expectations for district involvement in the grant are clear (86%)
- The state has done a good job of communicating necessary information regarding Reading First to district staff members (86%)

Principal Leadership

Montana Reading First principals brought a good deal of experience as leaders to their schools; they averaged eight years principal experience and all 13 had been the administrator in the same school for at least two years. These principals were expected to move beyond their role of building manager to become instructional leaders. In Montana Reading First, this meant being actively involved in discussions and decisions about teaching and learning; being able to recognize effective (and ineffective) instruction; and leading the staff members in data analysis.

In their own words, interviewed principals described the state's expectations. Some provided very detailed lists that mirrored the state's vision, while others provided somewhat vague responses that addressed "results" and "making a difference" but not the reading program specifically.

> *The state expects me to be in classrooms every day, lead the RLT, hold grade-level meetings, attend coach/principal meetings, monitor DIBELS, be part of the team that makes intervention decisions, monitor instruction when in classroom and provide feedback to teachers, be in attendance at study groups....to be a team player in it all. (Principal)*

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> *I am the person who is going to make the difference, the commander in chief who makes things work. I support the teachers, meet regularly with them, motivate them for success. (Principal)*

Feedback from teachers and coaches indicated that principal leadership was generally strong, but not uniformly so. Over three-quarters of respondents (75% of teachers and 84% of coaches) said their principal was a visible advocate for reading.

Perhaps due to the high expectations for their involvement in the grant, interviewed principals were divided on whether they were able to meet all expectations. While many found them manageable, almost half said they had difficulty, most often with being a daily presence in the classroom or attending all grade-level meetings. Similar to last year, over one-third of principals (38%) agreed that Reading First put excessive emphasis on the principal in instructional matters, while over half (54%) did not. (Last year, 33% agreed and 50% disagreed).

Principal Observations and Feedback

Montana Reading First principals were expected to observe reading classrooms and provide feedback to teachers. Specifically, short walk-throughs (a few minutes in each classroom) were expected at least three or four times a week, including once a week together with the reading coach. The state project director described what she expected from these walk-throughs at the end of the second year of implementation:

> *After two years of training, I expect the walk-throughs to be meaningful. Principals should be able to give constructive feedback to teachers and ask good questions. They should be able to look and see if students are engaged and on task. They should be able to recognize what kind of feedback teachers are giving students and how often students have an opportunity to respond. (State project director)*

In theory, most interviewed principals agreed that walk-throughs should be a high priority. They saw many benefits to walk-throughs, including: accountability and monitoring, identification of professional development needs, seeing what teachers and students are doing, supporting teachers, and creating a more open classroom environment in which teachers are comfortable asking for help.

> *I can't dialogue with teachers about students and teaching if I'm not observing. (Principal)*

> *I know what's going on in every classroom, what it feels like in that classroom and I can share that with parents. It also helps me catch teachers when they are doing something they're not supposed to be doing. (Principal)*

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In practice, principals were in classrooms less frequently in 2006–2007 than the previous year. Specifically, 45 percent of teachers reported being observed at least weekly, a drop from 58 percent last year (Figure 4-1). Despite this drop, the majority of teachers (86%) were observed at least monthly by their principal; only a small proportion were never observed (1%) or were observed only once or a few times a year (13%). These teachers were spread over 10 different schools.
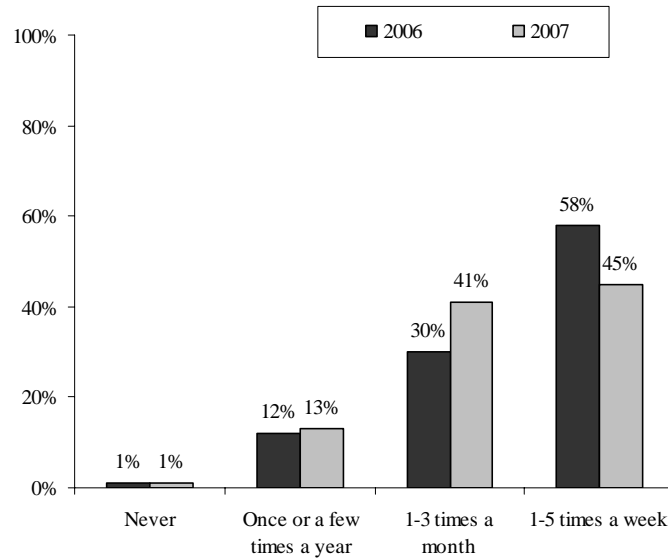
Figure 4-1. Frequency of Principal Observations

Feedback from principals did not occur as frequently as observations; while 45 percent of teachers received feedback from their principal at least monthly, the remaining half of teachers did so once or a few times a year (35%) or, for one in five teachers (20%), never.

Although almost all principals (92%) said they were very comfortable observing teachers and providing constructive feedback, only half of teachers (56%) found principal feedback usually or always helpful.

Principals' Attendance at Meetings

Principals were present at some grade-level meetings, although their presence or absence varied by school. In just under half of schools (46%), most teachers reported that their principal was usually or always at grade-level meetings. In interviews, some principals said attending grade-level meetings was a good use of their time because they "tackle instructional things," "see where everybody is," and "are informed and involved."

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In contrast, in an equal proportion of schools (46%), most teachers reported that their principal was seldom or never at grade-level meetings. Some interviewed principals said their attention was needed elsewhere, that meetings were "too loosely structured" to be useful for them, or that teachers used them to complain and "I hear enough of that already."

In terms of Reading Leadership Team (RLT) meetings, the majority of principals (58%) self-reported that they "always" attended while some attended "often" (25%); the remainder attended "sometimes" or "seldom" (16%). In interviews, all principals said attending RLT meetings was a good use of their time; reasons given included "keeping in touch" with what is going on in reading, building relationships with the teachers, sharing what is positive and listening to feedback from staff members.

Reading Coaches

The vision of a reading coach's role in a Reading First school was first and foremost as a support to teachers. Through modeling and side-by-side coaching, the intention was for coaches to help teachers strengthen their delivery of reading instruction in the classroom. In addition to this teacher- and classroom-centered focus, however, the reading coach position includes a long list of other roles and responsibilities, including: setting up and monitoring interventions, administering or coordinating assessments, managing and using data, facilitating meetings, and serving as resources for school staff members.

(Note that data regarding professional development provided by coaches to teachers are reported in Chapter 3: Professional Development and Technical Assistance.)

All cohort 2 coaches were full time in their buildings and worked long hours, an average of 49 hours per week (similar to 46 hours per week the previous year). One-third (38%) had a masters degree and 30 percent held a reading certification. Although coaches averaged 15 years teaching experience, most had only two years of coaching experience, having just become coaches with the onset of Reading First in 2005–2006.

This might be one reason why only 58 percent of coaches felt that their roles were clearly defined or that teachers at their school understood the role of the reading coach (see Figure 4-2). These proportions actually declined compared to the previous year and are low compared to other states and cohorts at the same point of implementation; for example, agreement on these items for cohort 1 after less than two years of implementation was at least 90 percent (Nelsestuen, Vale, Autio & Deussen 2005).
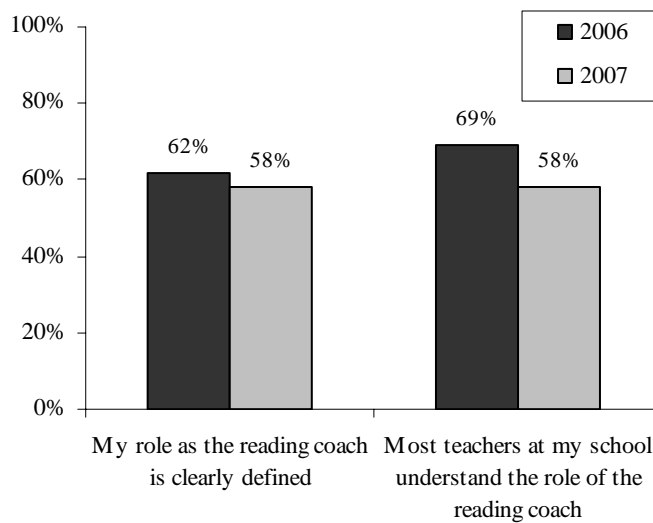
Figure 4-2. Clarity of Coach Role

Despite these ambiguities, on average in 2006–2007, cohort 2 coaches spent a greater proportion of their time actually coaching (31%) than in any other activity area (see Table 4-1). Compared to the previous year, this represents a notable increase in time spent coaching and a corresponding decrease in time spent on paperwork and unrelated tasks (see Table 4-1). This finding ties to the 2005–2006 Evaluation Report's recommendation that the state help coaches identify and, if possible, eliminate excess paperwork so as to maximize time spent with teachers. The average amount of time spent on data and assessment (24%) and interventions (18%) were very similar to the previous year.

Table 4-1
Percentage of Time Spent on Coaching Tasks

	Average Percentage of Time	
	2005–2006	2006–2007
One-on-one coaching (K–3)	12	21
Group coaching (K–3)	3	4
Coaching out-of-grade	5	6
Subtotal: Coaching	**20**	**31**
Administering/coordinating assessments	11	8
Managing data (entering, charting)	7	8
Using/interpreting data	7	8
Subtotal: Data & Assessment	**25**	**24**
Planning interventions	6	5
Providing interventions directly	10	13
Subtotal: Interventions	**17**	**18**
Planning for/facilitating meetings	11	8
Attending professional development	4	4
Paperwork	13	8
Unrelated (subbing, bus duty, etc.)	10	7
Subtotal: Other	**38**	**26**

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

While these numbers reflect the average amount of time, they do not describe the wide range with which some coaches reported participating in certain activities. For example, some coaches spent as little as 12 percent of their time on data and assessment, while others spent up to 57 percent. Similarly, some coaches spent only 13 percent of their time coaching, while others spent as much as 59 percent[1]. In interviews, most coaches said that getting into classrooms was "not an issue;" a handful, however, struggled to be in classrooms as often as they felt they should.

Sustainability of Coaches. Teachers were also asked if the coaching position should be continued after the grant ended. Two out of three teachers (69%) believed that a coach definitely or probably should be sustained; one in three teachers did not. Because many coaches had high ratings described in Chapter 3, it may be that coaches were not doing a poor job but that teachers believed coaches would no longer be necessary. In interviews,

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[1] See coach survey frequencies in the Appendix for the range for each item.

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a few principals said their school would not to continue to use coaches after the grant ended.

> *We already know we are not going to sustain the coach position. The coach already has other plans, and the entire staff agrees that the money should be spent to retain tutors. (Principal)*

However, it may also be that coaches will no longer be affordable for many schools after the grant ends. In interviews, several principals expressed concerns about continuing coaches. While about half of principals said their districts would continue coaches using general funds or Title I funds, almost half said they needed help retaining coaches in order to maximize the sustainability of Reading First at their school.

> *We need to either find a coach replacement or train teachers to take over the coaches' responsibilities. (Principal).*

Having a coach or planning for others to assume the coaches' role may be particularly important for sustainability because of staff member turnover. In interviews, all but one principal said their schools had new teachers or anticipated having new teachers in the near future. In the majority of schools, it was the coaches' responsibility to train new teachers on Reading First practices.

Buy-In

Buy-in to Reading First among coaches and principals was nearly unanimous; among teachers it was much more moderate. Support was nearly identical to the previous year as shown in Figure 4-3.
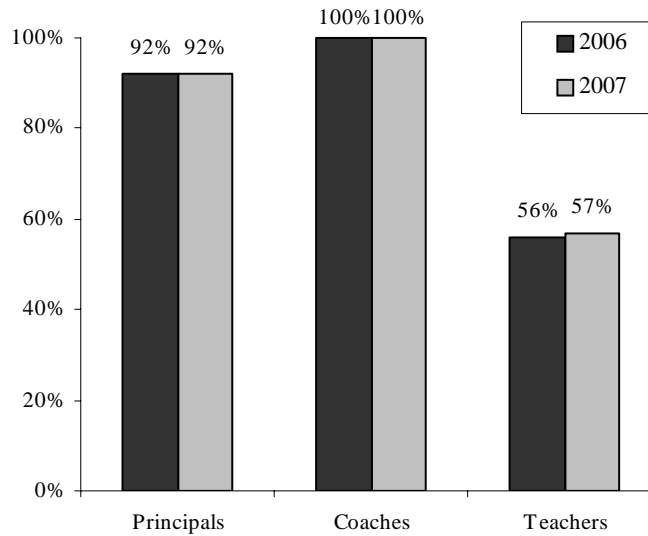
Figure 4-3. Support for Reading First

Although most teachers who did not support the instructional changes were neutral, indicating ambivalence rather than opposition to Reading First, additional data suggests that resistance was a factor among cohort 2 schools. The majority of coaches (77%) said that overcoming resistance was an issue for them this year, and coaches and principals were just as likely to describe buy-in as "mixed" as they were to describe it as "high." High buy-in was most often attributed to seeing results and student success.

> *Students are succeeding and teachers can see it work. (Principal)*

Mixed buy-in was typically attributed to specific teachers or groups of teachers who were resistant, did not want to "change their ways," saw Reading First as a fad, were close to retirement, and/or "did not like to be directed." Survey data indicate that only a small proportion of teachers (16%) actually had significant philosophical or pedagogical objections to the approach of Reading First. A few interviewees drew attention to what is perhaps a more salient driver of resistance, the lack of time and teachers feeling overwhelmed. In a related finding, 83 percent of teachers felt that instruction in other subjects suffered because of the focus on Reading First.

> *Lack of time has hindered buy-in, there are so many expectations for teachers that Reading First is just one more thing for them to do, they're already stressed working with high-poverty students and the issues that surround that. (Coach)*

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Nevertheless, three-quarters of teachers (75%) said they were pleased their school had a Reading First grant and only four percent firmly believed that when their school no longer had Reading First, they would go back to their old way of teaching (an additional 23% neither agreed nor disagreed).

Communication and Collaboration

The Reading First vision recognized the importance of communication and collaboration about reading instruction and student progress in schools. The intention was that each school would build structures and schedules that facilitated communication and collaboration, including regular meetings focused on reading, common teacher planning time, study groups, and celebrations of success. These provided multiple opportunities for staff members to discuss reading research and assessment data, instructional practices, materials, and student achievement.

This year, most coaches (92%) and about two-thirds of teachers (71%) and principals (69%) agreed that Reading First had helped their school develop a more collaborative culture. They gave moderately strong ratings to the usefulness of specific meetings (Figure 4-4), with grade-level meetings rated slightly higher than RLT meetings. These meetings are discussed in greater detail below.
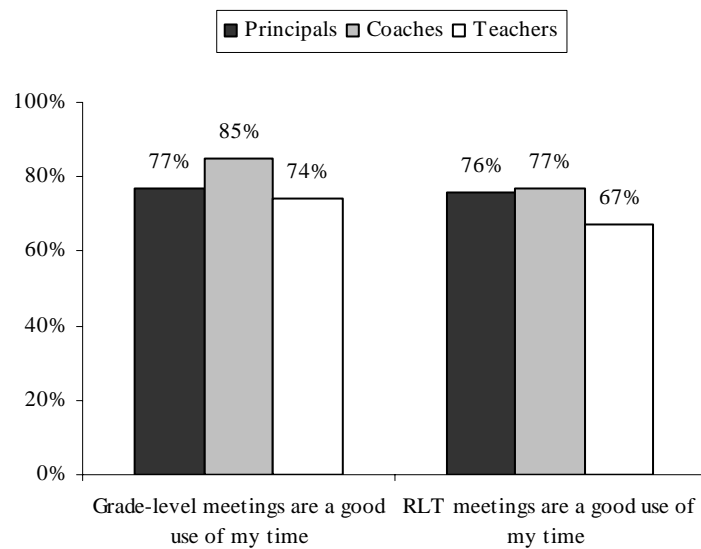
Figure 4-4. Perceived Utility of Meetings

Grade-level Meetings

Grade-level meetings were a time for teachers to meet together and discuss assessment results, instruction, grouping, and other topics. In most schools, the coach played the central role in these meetings; they usually created the agenda, scheduled the meetings, prepared data to discuss, and brought other information to share. Coaches were also the primary meeting facilitator.

> *I am the primary facilitator. I plan the agenda, run them, take notes, do follow-up. My specialist has told me I have to turn over the agenda and some facilitation to teachers but I think the teachers aren't ready for it. They feel overwhelmed by everything and they think it is my job. (Coach)*

Teachers reported attending these meetings fairly frequently: 78 percent attended at least two meetings per month, an additional 13 percent attended once per month. Only a small percentage of teachers never attended (1%) or only attended once or a few times per year (8%). These figures were very similar to the previous year. As previously reported, about half of principals regularly attended grade-level meetings.

Although grade-level meetings were run primarily by the coach, teachers generally agreed that they discussed the issues that they, the participants, identified as important (90%) and that all participant comments and viewpoints were welcomed (85%). As previously reported, however, a few principals characterized the meetings as "too loosely structured" or as "complaint sessions."

Reading Leadership Team Meetings

All Montana Reading First schools were required to have a Reading Leadership Team (RLT) whose members represent the K–3 staff. The team was supposed to meet once a month and be responsible for providing leadership by prioritizing and focusing on program goals, coordinating Reading First activities, implementing the school's intervention programs, and working with the RIP. The data suggests that this vision was met at many, but not all schools:

- While most schools (70% or nine schools) had a functioning RLT, four of the teams did not meet monthly: at two schools the RLT met every other month, while at two schools it met never or rarely, according to coaches.

- Some small schools combined grade-level and RLT meetings, which they found to be a more effective use of time with small teaching staff members.

- All functioning RLTs included K-3 representation. Several schools said that all K-3 teachers attended; this was successful in some settings but a hindrance in others.

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I prefer this model, with everyone being part of the RLT, rather than assuming that it will filter back. (Principal)

The RLT has been the whole staff, which makes it hard to be a decision-making body. (Coach)

- Most RLTs relied on data; 90 percent of teachers on the RLT said they talked about schoolwide data at RLT meetings. However, the quality of these discussions varied across schools. Some said their RLTs were "a system for fine tuning and problem solving" in which all attendees were engaged in analysis, while others noted that using data was not yet their strength.

- RLTs were also commonly used to exchange information about what was going on at the school in reading as well a forum for coaches and principals to share information with the staff members about Reading First at the state level.

Assessment and Data Systems

In the Reading First model, student assessment data should be an integral part of a school's reading program. By the end of the second year of implementation, cohort 2 schools were expected to use data to drive instruction and make school-level decisions. The state provided training on various assessment topics for coaches, principals, and staff members. Knowledge Box also contained modules related to administering and using DIBELS data. Monthly data meetings, facilitated by the principal, were expected at each school.

All schools were required to use the DIBELS assessment as a benchmark measure three times a year (fall, winter, and spring). In addition, schools used multiple other instruments, most popularly Fox in a Box and core reading program assessments. Systems for administering, analyzing, and sharing the results of these assessments were in place at most schools (92%), according to coaches.

Assessment Administration

Benchmark assessments were the responsibility of trained assessment teams; teachers could not administer benchmark assessments to their own students. At all schools, these teams were comprised of the reading coach; some also included paraprofessionals and specialists. Most coaches (85%) said they were confident that all members of their benchmark assessment team thoroughly understood the administration and scoring of the DIBELS. In interviews, concerns expressed by coaches were minor and had been addressed earlier in the year, either by themselves or the state. Coaches described themselves as "sticklers" and "control freaks" about the consistency of data administration and scoring.

By the end of the year, classroom teachers were to assume responsibility for progress-monitoring their own students. At most schools (77%), this was realized and K–3 teachers regularly administered progress-monitoring assessments to students, commonly aided by the coach and specialists. At the other 33 percent of schools in which K–3 teachers did not regularly progress-monitor students, this task was handled largely by the reading coach and paraprofessionals.

At almost all schools (92%) intensive students were progress-monitored at least every two weeks, and strategic students were progress-monitored between every two and every four weeks. Benchmark students were monitored much less closely, some as often as every four weeks (33%) but most less often (58%) and some never (8%).

Use of Data

Montana Reading First emphasizes that principals lead data analysis at their school. Principals reported high levels of data use, including:

- Communicating with teachers about their students (92% of principals usually or always used data to do so)
- Looking at schoolwide trends (85%)
- Looking at individual student data and making decisions about grouping and interventions (85%)

Teachers' use of data showed notable growth from last year. Specifically, 42 percent of teachers said they used assessment data at least weekly, an increase from 30 percent the previous year (Figure 4-5).
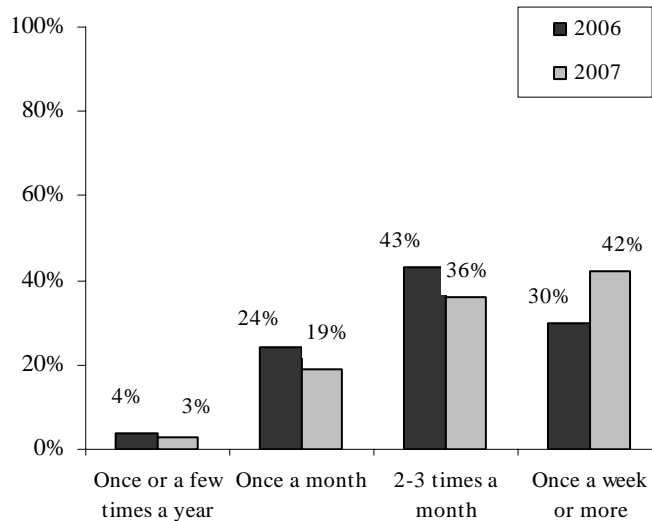
Figure 4-5. Frequency of Teachers' Use of Assessment Data

The most common use of data was in connection to interventions, including:

- Identifying which students need interventions (94% of teachers usually or always used data to do so)
- Matching students to the appropriate intervention (92% of teachers)
- Monitoring the progress of students in interventions (88% of teachers)

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Furthermore, almost all teachers (87%) used data to group students within the reading classroom, an increase of 14 percentage points compared to the prior year (73%).

The greatest increase in data use since the previous year was looking at schoolwide trends. In 2006, only 44 percent of teachers regularly did so, compared to 79 percent in 2007; this represents an increase of 35 percentage points.

While data were used frequently and for multiple purposes, many schools still did not disaggregate data by key demographic variables. Only 28 percent of teachers reported seeing data disaggregated, and only 15 percent of coaches said their school had an organized system for doing so. The state director said that, demographic breakdowns are examined when presented in each year's annual evaluation report, but otherwise data are examined for all students, regardless of their demographics.

Perception of the DIBELS

Principal and coach confidence in the DIBELS remained high in 2006–2007 (Table 4-2). Teachers' confidence improved slightly from last year; 71 percent agreed it was a valid and accurate indicator of student reading ability, an increase of eight percentage points. However, almost one-half of teachers (45%) also felt that Reading First overemphasized the DIBELS.

Table 4-2
Perceptions of the DIBELS

	Percentage Agreeing or Strongly Agreeing (Change from 2006)		
	Principals	**Coaches**	**Teachers**
I think that the DIBELS is a valid, accurate indicator of student reading ability.	92 (-5)	92 (+2)	71 (+8)

Chapter Five:
The Reading First Classroom
Reading Programs, Instruction, and Interventions in Cohort 2

Previous chapters reviewed the work of Montana Reading First in the provision of professional development, the development of instructional leadership and collaborative structures and practices, and support for assessment systems. The purpose of all of this work is ultimately to create the awareness, knowledge, and external conditions necessary to enhance the delivery of instruction in the classroom.

In 2006–2007, staff members almost unanimously agreed that reading instruction improved noticeable at their school (100% of coaches, 92% of principals, and 91% of teachers). Slightly fewer, but still the majority of teachers (83%) further agreed that Reading First significantly changed the way they taught reading (an increase of seven percentage points from last year). This chapter examines further evidence to determine the degree to which schools are fulfilling the Reading First expectations for instruction.

The Reading Block and Core Program

Montana Reading First expected schools to implement a 90-minute reading block in grades one, two, and three (a minimum of 60 minutes in kindergarten) during which they were to use a core program for instruction. The core program was to be the "main material for reading instruction" during the block, although teachers could adjust their classroom instruction based on collaborative discussions with colleagues and examination of assessment data.

Reading Block

In 2006–2007, all schools reported at least 90 minutes of reading in grades one through three and at least 60 minutes of reading in kindergarten. The 90-minute block was uninterrupted in most schools. Like last year, only a small group of teachers (6%) reported using their reading block was interrupted at least once a month for non-reading tasks.

However, the large amount of time spent on reading left most teachers (78%) concerned that other subjects had suffered.

> *We have seen progress in our kids because of fidelity. We don't like that we've given up science, social studies, math, field trips and spontaneity in the classroom—all of these things are good learning tools, too. (Teacher Focus Group)*

Core Program and Fidelity

Staff member satisfaction with the core reading program continued to be high. Like last year, all coaches (100%) and the majority of principals (92%) reported satisfaction. In addition, after having an opportunity to use the core program for a second year, an even higher percentage of teachers expressed satisfaction with the core in 2007 (88% compared to 76% in 2006).
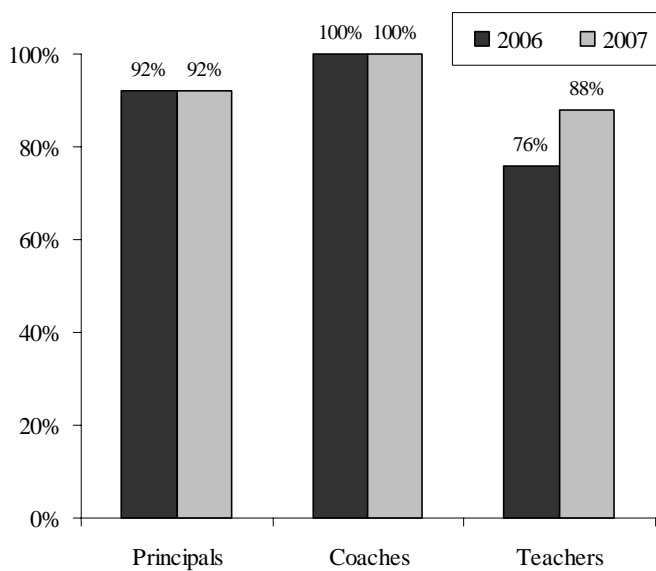
Figure 5-1. Satisfaction with Core Program

Accordingly, data suggest that the core program was used widely and with a high degree of fidelity in Montana Reading First classrooms. The majority of teachers (94%) said the core program was a regular part of their teaching. About three-quarters of teachers (72%) said they regularly followed the precise language in the teacher's manual and used templates (74%); however, a smaller proportion of coaches (62%) agreed that all of their K–3 teachers regularly used templates.

Montana Reading First prioritized fidelity to the core program in the first year of implementation; they wanted teachers to use the program materials to provide systematic and explicit instruction that followed the scope and sequence. This year, discussions and decisions regarding modifications to the core could happen in grade-level team meetings. However, according to interviewed coaches, the definition of fidelity remained fairly strict in 2006–2007. In the strictest sense, coaches said that the core program (including lesson maps and templates) should not be eliminated, added to, or tweaked during the reading block. One coach commented:

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> *It means that we are going by the program, sticking to it, correctly using lesson maps, not using other materials in the 90 minutes. (Coach)*

The majority of teachers held similar ideas of what fidelity meant and most teachers agreed that these expectations were reasonable. A common theme expressed by teachers was that while they were expected to teach from the core program, use the lesson maps and *not* take away, they could add—using supplemental materials and strategies. However, some teachers felt that fidelity expectations were too strict:

> *The expectations are reasonable, to a degree. We've been provided with a lot of materials; but all five components are not fully covered in the core and interest level in the materials is limited. There are ideas and templates to compensate for some holes, but not supplemental materials. (Teacher Focus Group)*

Fidelity to the core program caused other concerns among interviewed teachers who, like last year, continued to feel they were not able to use past "best practices." Some teachers felt their creativity was stifled or time restraints impeded their ability to bring in necessary supplemental material.

Differentiation

In Montana Reading First, whole-group instruction was to be provided at grade level, but small group instruction was to be provided at the students' instructional or independent level, as appropriate. According to coaches, at two-thirds of schools (69%) most instruction during the 90 minutes was at students' grade level; other data support this finding.

Similar to last year, teachers reported that half of their classrooms were homogenous (47%) and half were heterogeneous (53%). Even in homogeneous classrooms, it was very likely that teachers had students at a variety of skill levels; as a result, appropriately grouping students for instruction gained importance. Coaches and teachers who felt they were able to sufficiently differentiate for their students usually cited one or more of the following supports:

- Targeted grouping during the block
- Small class/group sizes
- Sufficient staffing support in the classroom (e.g., paraprofessionals)
- Teacher collaboration
- Regular use of data to determine group placement and instructional focus

Those without the supports above (especially the first three) were more likely to be unsatisfied with their ability to differentiate instruction. However, many teachers felt that, while they could not differentiate sufficiently during the reading block, they could

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do so during other reading times during the day. Because of the importance of these supports, the first three are discussed in greater detail below.

Instruction in targeted groups. Cohort 2 schools use six different core programs; each program has its own guidance for small versus whole-group work. Half of teachers (50%) reported that they regularly provided small group instruction during the reading block. Therefore, this did not occur regularly in the other 50 percent of reading classrooms; some teachers in focus groups expressed a limited ability to use small groups, especially with their at- and above-grade level students.

> *We do large groups at grade level for the entire 90 minutes; the reading core does not allow for differentiated instruction because of how structured and scripted it is. (Teacher Focus Group)*

> *During the 90-minute block, students are grouped according to reading level. The poorer readers are in the smaller groups. Because there are reading tutors, the groups can be even smaller. We also use various strategies to address the needs of students within the group—doing more one-on-one work, using different materials for students, having students take individual turns, pre-teach and re-teach lessons in the strategic and intensive groups; they individualize their instruction. (Teacher Focus Group)*

Walk-to-read (WTR), a grouping technique that creates more homogenous groups, was used in a mixed fashion across Montana Reading First schools. A quarter of schools reported all their K–3 classes used WTR (23%) and a quarter reported no classrooms used WTR (23%); the remaining schools (56%) reported that some classes walked while others remained in their home classroom.

Group size. On average, teachers instructed 14 students during the reading block; the smallest classroom contained one student, the largest contained 24 students. Many Montana Reading First classrooms were small: almost one-half consisted of 15 or fewer students (Figure 5-2). However, 16 percent of classrooms had 21 or more students.
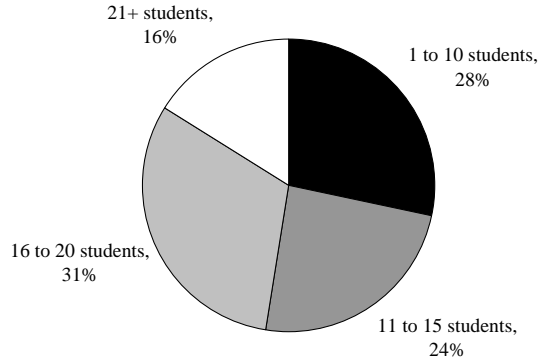
Figure 5-2. Class Size During Reading Block

Again, teachers were divided regarding their views of the efficacy of their classrooms' group size:

> *Because of the small numbers, we feel really good about the grouping and differentiation we are able to do. It's really exciting because I feel like we meet the needs in this school. The minute that we see someone wavering or not getting it, we can confer and change instruction. (Teacher Focus Group)*

> *Benchmark kids are in groups of 20; it's difficult to differentiate with that many students. (Teacher Focus Group)*

Staffing support. About one-third of teachers (33%) reported daily paraprofessional support during the reading block; about one-half (54%) never had support. Availability of paraprofessionals was a concern at many of these schools.

> *We are unable to meet the needs of all kids during the block. The number of classroom helpers was cut in half this year. We want more small-group work during the block. (Teacher Focus Group)*

Meeting the Needs of Native American Students

Over one-third of all Montana's Reading First students were Native American (38%). At schools where at least 20 percent of students were Native American, 75 percent of teachers, 71 percent of coaches and 63 percent of principals felt their Reading First program was doing an excellent job of meeting these students' needs.

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Overall, staff members in schools with at least 20 percent Native American students were enthusiastic about Reading First. In fact, as compared to their peers in schools with few or no Native American students, a substantially higher percentage of these teachers strongly supported instructional changes believed instruction had improved, and were pleased that their school had a Reading First grant, as shown in Table 5-1.

Table 5-1
Attitudes about Reading First in Schools with Native American Students

Type of Support	Percentage of Teachers Agreeing/Strongly Agreeing	
	School has ≥ 20% Native American students (n=59 teachers)	School has < 20% Native American students (n=72 teachers)
I strongly support the instructional changes occurring under Reading First.	69	48
I believe reading instruction at my school has improved noticeably this year.	96	86
I am pleased our school has a Reading First grant.	79	72

Several coaches indicated the support they received through Reading First had been beneficial in working with Native American students. They mentioned several program components that were helpful, including *Language for Learning*, templates, DIBELS, and Knowledge Box strategies. A few others, however said they received no specific support for their Native American students and were challenged by the needs of the population, including lack of parental involvement, lack of early childhood education, and poor attendance at school.

Coach and Teacher Views of the Classroom

In 2005–2006, there was evidence that many teachers used research-based practices in fluency and vocabulary instruction. At the same time, effective comprehension strategies, some effective practices for fluency (such as repeated oral reading), and some effective practices in vocabulary (such as activating background knowledge, developing student-friendly definitions, and using examples and non-examples when checking for understanding) were less commonly observed by coaches.

In 2006–2007, teachers were asked on surveys the extent to which they included certain practices that addressed the five components of reading—phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension—in their teaching. Teachers' responses indicated that they "sometimes" or "regularly" utilized many strong practices that supported vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension including:

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- Asking comprehension questions that ask for literal recall (97%)
- Providing time for students to practice oral reading fluency (95%)
- Asking comprehension questions that require higher-order thinking skills (90%)
- Providing background knowledge to prepare students before they read new text (84%)
- Providing vocabulary practice that includes use of examples and non-examples (78%)
- Focusing on "tier two" vocabulary words (75%)

Teacher responses also indicate that phonemic awareness was regularly addressed—and perhaps even overemphasized—by all teachers. Teachers using kindergarten materials addressed it most regularly (93%), followed by those using first-grade materials (89%), second-grade materials (81%), and third-grade materials (70%).

Some teachers indicated they regularly utilized strategies directed at improving DIBELS scores, such as timed fluency assessments (19%) and nonsense word practice (47%).

The evaluation also asked survey questions about other teaching practices. The majority of coaches reported that "many" or "all" of their teachers used the following practices:

- Used quick transitions from activity to activity (85%)
- Provided students multiple practice opportunities (77%)
- Guided students with effective questioning (75%)

Although the above results are fairly positive, the findings have serious limitations because they stem from self-report survey data; no classroom observations were conducted by evaluators in 2006–2007. Past evaluation reports have found some discrepancies between what teachers and coaches say is happening in classrooms and what instruction actually looks like when observed by an outsider. Classroom observations, planned for all schools in the 2007–2008 evaluation, will help to further develop this picture.

Provision of Interventions

Interventions were designed to provide additional, targeted, small-group instruction for those students who need more instruction in order to read at grade level. Montana Reading First used the terms "schoolwide targeted services" and "intensive interventions" to define additional services for strategic and intensive students. According to the RIP, targeted services should be delivered to homogenous groups of five or fewer students for an extra 30 minutes (outside the 90-minute reading block). Re-teach/pre-teach of the core program and/or supplemental materials that extend the critical elements of the core program could be used during this time; regular progress-monitoring was required.

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An extra 45 minutes of reading instruction should be delivered daily to students with marked difficulties in reading or reading disabilities (those who did not respond to core and targeted services). Individualized goals and continuous progress monitoring (at least twice a month) were required for these students.

Perceptions of intervention systems were somewhat mixed. Although the majority of principals (85%) felt that their school was doing an excellent job of providing reading interventions to all students who needed them, only two-thirds of teachers (64%) and half of coaches (54%) agreed (Figure 5-3). Nevertheless, teachers and principals felt interventions had improved since the previous year; there was no change among coaches.

"As a school, we are doing an excellent job of providing appropriate reading interventions to all students who need them."
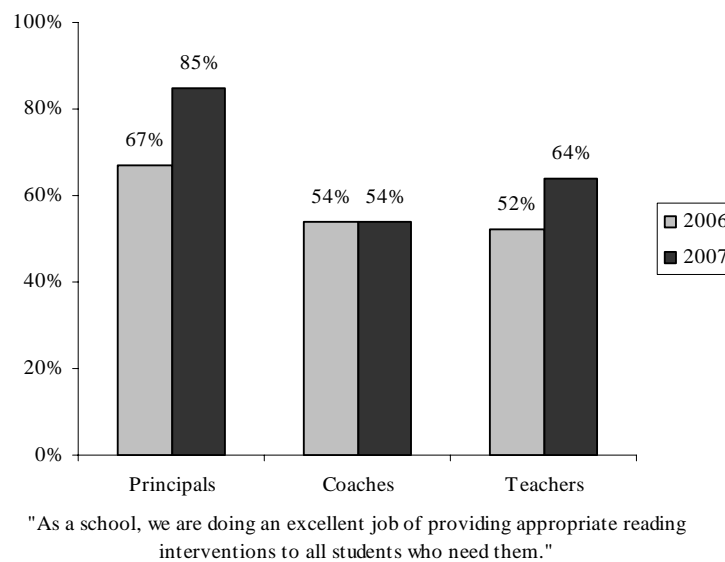
Figure 5-3. Perceptions of Intervention Program

To what can these perceptions be attributed? The remainder of this chapter explores the details of intervention programs and how they influenced successes and challenges at cohort 2 schools.

Intervention Programs

According to coaches, intervention programs were established in all but one school during 2006–2007. Interviewed coaches and teachers referenced interventions happening both during and outside of the reading block. Not all of those interviewed described their program, but those who did included details such as the following:

> *The intervention program is structured so that for kindergarten students it happens during the 90-minute block and for first- through third-grade students it*

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is an additional 30 minutes following the 90 minute block (after a recess between the two). (Teacher Focus Group)

We now have a walk-to-read intervention program; all students (benchmark, strategic, and intensive) go. There is no pull out. All students receive 30 minutes in addition to the 90 minute block. All benchmark students go to one room. The intensive and strategic students are placed in very small groups. (Coach)

Table 5-2 shows the number of students served in interventions, as reported by the coach. It shows that in 2006–2007, 41 percent of students[1] received "intensive" interventions (defined as outside the reading block, at least two hours per week for at least six weeks). Another 27 percent of students received "less intensive" interventions. These figures represent an increase in intensive interventions compared to the previous year; the proportion of students receiving less intensive interventions remained about the same.

Table 5-2
Number of Students Receiving Interventions

	2005–2006	2006–2007
Intensive interventions	568 (34% of students)	705 (41%)
Less intensive interventions	420 (25% of students)	472 (27%)

Coaches indicated that nearly all schools (82%) provided interventions to at least 80 percent of their struggling readers; almost half of the schools (46%) were able to meet the needs of all of their intensive *and* strategic students.

When asked where their school focused attention, the majority of coaches said their school concentrated first on their intensive students (the state's priority). This finding was corroborated by survey data: seven schools concentrated first on intensive interventions, three were evenly divided between intensive and less intensive, and two concentrated on less intensive students.

Regardless of the proportion of struggling readers served, the most frequently cited success of their school's intervention program was the fact that their struggling readers were being served and/or making gains:

We've seen a lot of movement of strategic kids to benchmark and reduction in kids who need interventions at all. In addition, teachers comment that kids are more prepared in every grade. (Coach)

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[1] Percentages calculated using the total number of Montana Reading First students with valid year-long DIBELS scores as the denominator.

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Staffing and Training for Interventions

Montana Reading First preferred that certified teachers provide interventions; however, it also realized that goal was not always realistic. Optimally, intervention providers should be trained by the coach or another qualified individual. However, the state project director said especially in the case of the use of overly scripted materials, limited training with subsequent coach supervision was acceptable. Coaches were also provided support in this area from the state, and in some cases through their SRS.

The most common intervention providers were

- Paraprofessionals (in 92% of schools, up by 23 percentage points from last year)
- Coaches (in 67% of schools, up by 13 percentage points)
- Specialists (in 58% of schools, up by 4 percentage points)

Fewer schools (46%) used K–3 teachers to provided interventions this year, and less than 20 percent of schools used literacy facilitators, paid tutors, volunteers, or administrative support staff members.

Data indicate that at many schools, staffing and training were not significant areas of concern for schools.

> *The intervention providers are doing an excellent job, and we have seen progress; the number of kids decreased, so the program is effective. (Coach)*

However, in about one of every three schools, there were concerns about staffing resources and/or training of providers. Specifically, one-third of principals (31%) did not think their staffing resources were sufficient to provide interventions to all students who needed them; one-third of coaches (30%) said staffing was a challenge to providing interventions. Furthermore, one-third of coaches (34%) and teachers (33%) did not think their school's intervention providers were well trained to meet the needs of struggling readers.

Small Groups

Research suggests that interventions are most effective when delivered in small groups and that interventions for the most intensive students should be even smaller (Pikulski 1994; Torgesen 2004). In 2006–2007, many (but not all) Montana Reading First schools were able to provide interventions to groups of appropriately small sizes. Data indicate that intensive intervention group sizes were smaller than the previous year:

- Last year, 46 percent of coaches reported that interventions were provided to intensive students in groups of five or fewer students; this year 58 percent of coaches reported the same.

- Last year's average group size was six students; this years' average was five.

- Last year, the largest group was 13 students; this year the largest group was nine students.

Very few interviewed coaches or teachers cited problems with large group sizes. In fact, teachers in particular said small group sizes for interventions was a successful feature of their school's intervention program.

> *Students are pulled from math, afternoon specials, recess, social studies, spelling, or grammar by a reading specialist or certified teacher who have been trained in the program and work with small groups of four or five intensive or strategic students. (Coach)*

Use of Data in Interventions

The vision in Montana Reading First was that interventions were based on ongoing results of assessments and screenings that clearly identify student need areas. As described in Chapter 4, teachers reported commonly using data when identifying which students needed interventions, matching students to the appropriate intervention, and monitoring the progress of students in interventions.

Several interviewed coaches and teachers also commented about the role of data in planning and administering interventions. Generally, these comments were positive; a few staff members voiced concerns about limited differentiation to students in interventions.

Instructional Materials

Another characteristic of effective interventions is the use of instructional materials that are well matched to students' needs. In 2006–2007, 61 percent of coaches and 59 percent of teachers agreed that intervention materials were well matched to the needs of struggling readers; this represents a sizable increase in the percentage of teachers (20 percentage points) compared to the previous year. When interviewed about interventions, coaches occasionally cited materials as successful; teachers were more likely to do so but were also slightly more likely to complain about them.

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Chapter Six:
Student Assessment Results

To monitor student progress in reading, all Montana Reading First schools use the *Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills* (DIBELS), which is administered three times per year: fall, winter, and spring.

For a detailed description of procedures for coding and analyzing scores, please refer to Chapter 2: Methods.

Analysis of DIBELS assessment results are presented as follows:

> <u>Project-level results:</u> This section combines results from cohorts 1 and 2 to present a picture of achievement across all 33 Montana Reading First schools in 2006–2007. It also explores the achievement patterns of Native American students, students eligible for free or reduced price lunch, and students eligible for special education from all Montana Reading First schools.

> <u>Cohort 2 results:</u> This section gives graphic overview of 2006–2007 results, as well as a spring-to-spring comparison. School-level results are included in tables at the end of this section.

Cohort 1 results are described in Chapter 8: Cohort 1 Implementation and Outcomes. Please note that all data are matched, meaning they include only students with valid fall and spring scores.

2006–2007 Project-Level DIBELS Results

Table 6-1 shows the percentage of all Montana Reading First students in intensive, strategic, and benchmark categories in spring 2007. Kindergarten had the most students at benchmark (78%), followed by first grade (70%), second grade (65%), and third grade (58%). Grade 1 had the lowest percentage of students at intensive (9%) while grade two had the highest percentage (18%).

Table 6-1
Spring 2007 Instructional Support Recommendations, Cohorts 1 and 2

All Montana Reading First Schools	N	Spring 2007 Instruction Support Recommendation		
		Intensive	Strategic	Benchmark
Kindergarten	1316	11%	11%	78%
Grade 1	1219	9%	20%	70%
Grade 2	1243	18%	16%	65%
Grade 3	1205	15%	27%	58%

The percentage of students at benchmark in spring 2007 represented a statistically significant increase from fall 2006 in every grade (for each grade, McNemar chi-square p <.001). Table 6-2 shows gains in the percentage of students at benchmark from fall to spring in every grade; the kindergarten gain was by far the largest.

Table 6-2
Percentage of K-3 Students at Benchmark Over Time, Cohorts 1 and 2

All Montana Reading First Schools	N	Fall 2006 Benchmark	Winter 2007 Benchmark	Spring 2007 Benchmark	Percentage Point Change (Fall to Spring)
Kindergarten	1316	26%	63%	78%	+52
Grade 1	1219	62%	61%	70%	+8
Grade 2	1243	50%	71%	65%	+15
Grade 3	1205	51%	58%	58%	+7

Native American Students

Approximately one-third of all Montana Reading First students were Native American. Figure 6-1 shows the percentage of Native American students at benchmark in spring 2007 compared to their white peers[1]. In each grade, there was a higher percentage of white students at benchmark than their Native American peers. The gap was smallest in kindergarten (seven points) and then grew increasingly larger; by third grade, Native American students were 18 points below their white peers in terms of the percentage at benchmark.
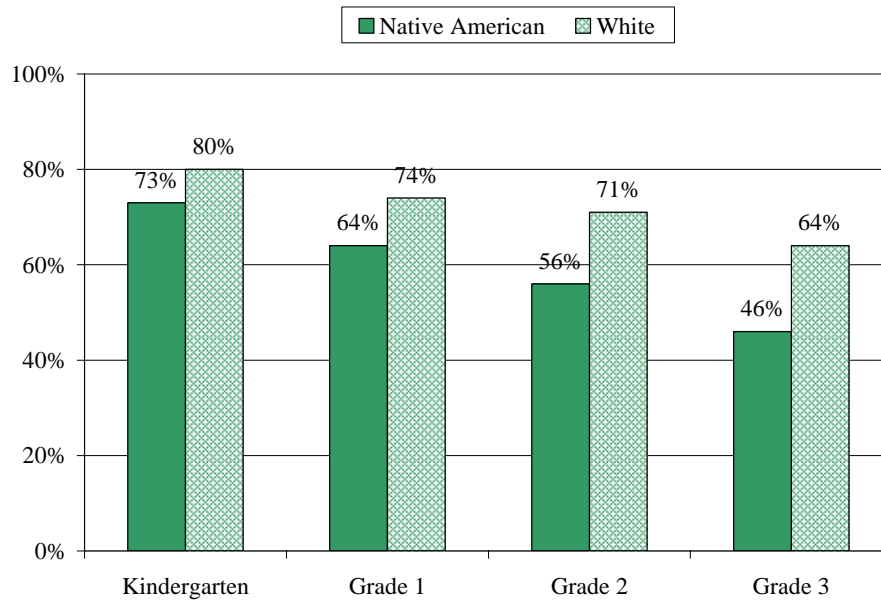
Figure 6-1. Percentage of Native American and White Students at Benchmark, Spring 2007

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[1] Analysis of other ethnicities were not included due to the small sample size.

In order to close the achievement gap, the performance gains of Native American students during the year needed to outpace their peers. Table 6-3 shows that, in kindergarten and first grade, Native American students slightly outpaced their peers, narrowing the achievement gap by five percentage points in kindergarten and three percentage points in first grade. However, gains in grade two and three were almost identical, and, in all grades the gains were not enough to close the achievement gap.

Table 6-3
Gains in the Percentage of Students at Benchmark from Fall to Spring, Native American and White

	Gains in Percentage at Benchmark from Fall 2006 to Spring 2007		Narrowing or Widening of the Achievement Gap
	White (N=3052)	Native American (N=1643)	
Kindergarten	+50	+55	-5
Grade 1	+7	+10	-3
Grade 2	+16	+17	-1
Grade 3	+7	+6	+1

Students Eligible for Free and Reduced-price Lunch

Approximately 60 percent of all K-3 Montana Reading First students were eligible for Free and Reduced-price Lunch (FRL), an indicator of lower socioeconomic status. Figure 6-2 shows a small gap between those eligible for FRL and their ineligible peers in kindergarten (four percentage points). The gap increased, however, in each grade: nine percentage points in first grade, 17 points in second grade and 18 points in third grade.
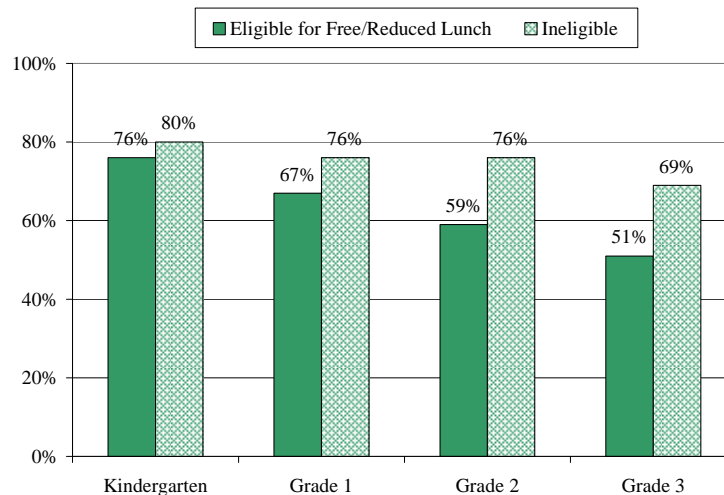
Figure 6-2. Percentage of Students Eligible and Ineligible for Free and Reduced-price Lunch at Benchmark, Spring 2007

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In order to close the achievement gap, the performance gains of students eligible for FRL during the year needed to outpace their peers. Table 6-4 shows that, in kindergarten and grade one, eligible students outpaced their peers, narrowing the achievement gap in kindergarten by eight percentage points and in first grade by five percentage points. However, this trend did not continue in grades two and three and the gains were not enough to close the achievement gap in any grade, although kindergarten came close.

Table 6-4
Gains in Percentage of K-3 Students at Benchmark from Fall to Spring, Eligible, and Ineligible for Free and Reduced-price Lunch

	Gains in Percentage at Benchmark from Fall 2006 to Spring 2007		Narrowing or Widening of the Achievement Gap
	Ineligible N=2066	Eligible for FRL N=2917	
Kindergarten	+48	+56	-8
Grade 1	+5	+10	-5
Grade 2	+17	+15	+2
Grade 3	+8	+6	+2

Students Eligible for Special Education

Approximately nine percent of all Reading First students were eligible for special education. Table 6-5 depicts the percentage of special education students at benchmark in fall 2006 and spring 2007. Kindergarten students showed the greatest gains and had the highest percentage at benchmark by spring (43%). Grade three, in contrast, had virtually no change in the percentage at benchmark; 21 percent of third-grade special education students were at benchmark in the spring, an increase of only one percentage point from fall.

Table 6-5
Change in Percentage of K-3 Students at Benchmark from Fall to Spring, Special Education Students

Students Eligible for Special Education	N	Percentage of Students at Benchmark		
		Fall 2006	Spring 2007	Difference
Kindergarten	79	11	54	+43
Grade 1	112	38	46	+8
Grade 2	108	23	31	+8
Grade 3	127	20	21	+1

Table 6-6 depicts the change in the percentage of special education students in intensive from fall 2006 to spring 2007. Again, kindergarten showed the greatest improvement from fall to spring and had the lowest percentage of students in intensive by spring (29%). In contrast, there was a modest increase (four points) in the percentage of second-grade special education students in intensive; one-half of those students (50%) were intensive in the spring.

Table 6-6
Change in Percentage of K-3 Students in Intensive from Fall to Spring,
Special Education Students

Students Eligible for Special Education	N	Percentage of Students in Intensive		
		Fall 2006	Spring 2007	Difference
Kindergarten	79	53	29	-24
Grade 1	112	33	32	-1
Grade 2	108	46	50	+4
Grade 3	127	59	50	-9

Achievement among students eligible for special education was far below their ineligible peers in all grades, although comparisons are not shown in these tables.

Cohort 2 DIBELS Results

By spring 2007, three out of every four cohort 2 kindergarten students (75%) were at benchmark and almost as many first-grade students (71%) reached benchmark as well. The percentages were lower in grades two and three: 66 percent and 57 percent respectively. In first grade, only seven percent of students were classified as intensive in the spring; second grade had the highest percentage of students in intensive (16%).

Table 6-7
Spring 2007 Instructional Support Recommendations, Cohort 2

	N	Intensive	Strategic	Benchmark
Kindergarten	444	13%	12%	75%
Grade 1	430	7%	21%	71%
Grade 2	425	16%	18%	66%
Grade 3	431	15%	28%	57%

Figure 6-3 depicts the change in the percentage of students at or above benchmark as measured by the DIBELS between fall 2006 and spring 2007. There were statistically significant increases in the percentage of students at benchmark in kindergarten and grades one and two (McNemar chi-square $p<.001$). The more modest increase in grade three was also significant (McNemar chi-square $p<.05$).
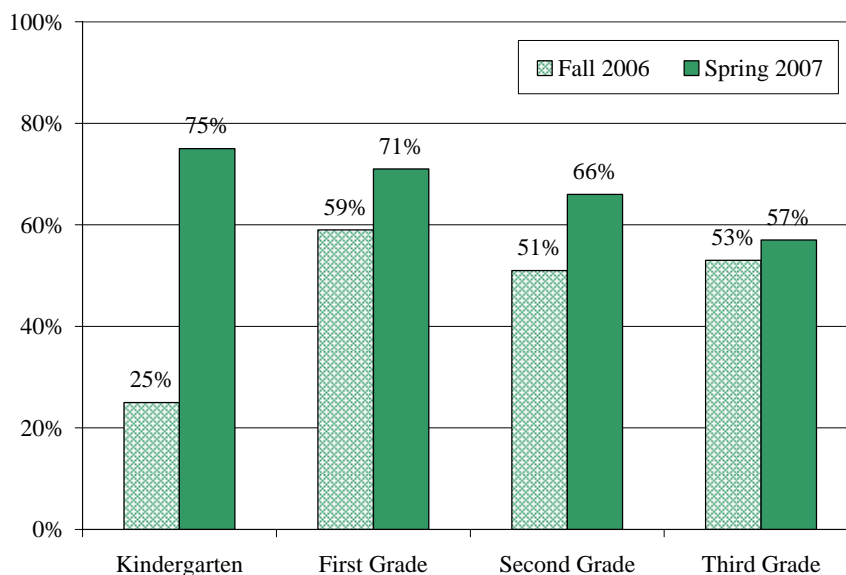
Figure 6-3. Percentage of Students at Benchmark, Fall 2006 to Spring 2007
Cohort 2

Decreases in the percentage of students in intensive between fall 2006 and spring 2007 were statistically significant in kindergarten and grade 3 (McNemar chi-square $p<.001$). The more modest decrease in grade one was also significant (McNemar chi-square $p<.05$). However, grade 2 experienced only a two point drop in the percentage of students in intensive; this was not statistically significant.
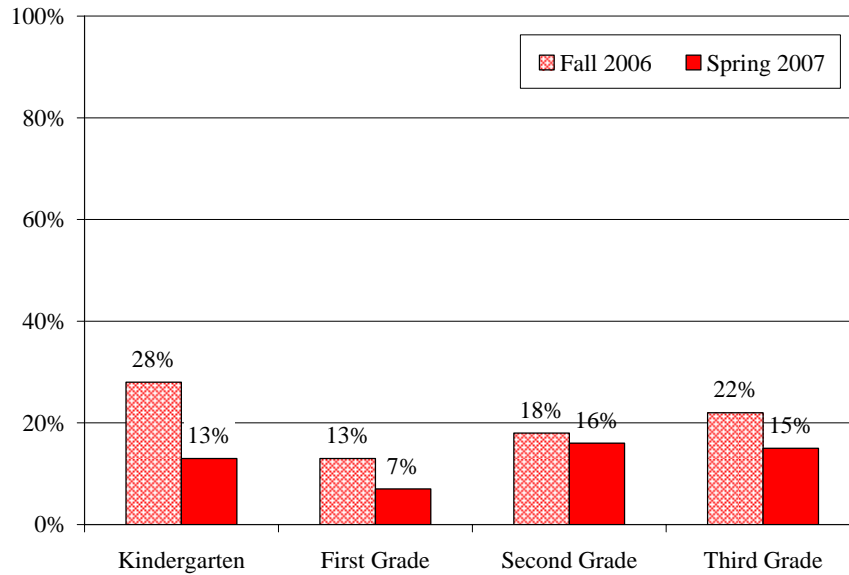
**Figure 6-4. Percentage of Students in Intensive, Fall 2006 to Spring 2007
Cohort 2**

Cohort 2 schools had completed two full years of Reading First in spring 2007 As shown in Figure 6-5, there were more students at benchmark in every grade at the end of the second year of implementation (spring 2007) as compared to the end of the first year (spring 2006). Although only the kindergarten increase was significant (Pearson chi-square *p*<.001), this could be due in part to a relatively small sample size in each grade.[2]
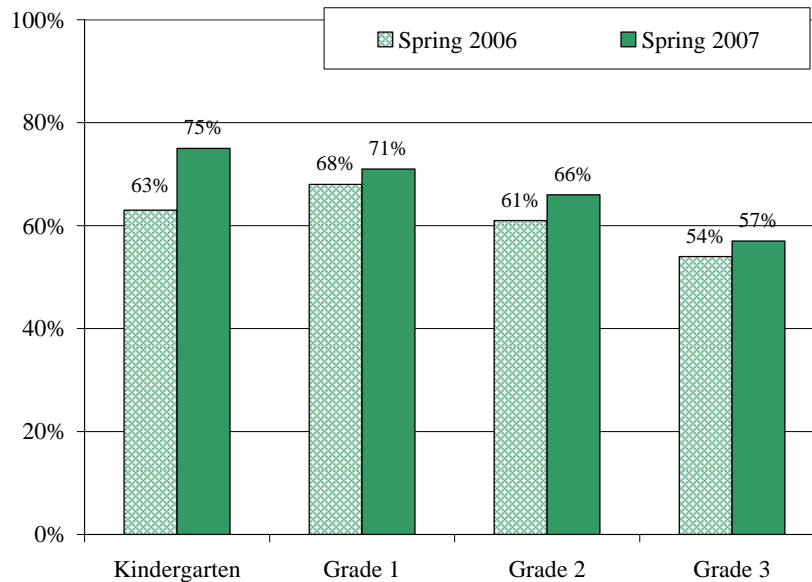
Figure 6-5. Percentage of Students at Benchmark, Spring 2006 to Spring 2007 Cohort 2

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[2] Testing of statistical significance simply examines the probability of obtaining these results by chance. Thus the statistics indicate that the change in the percentage of students at benchmark were very unlikely to have occurred by chance. However, with small sample sizes it is more difficult to obtain significance. In the case of third grade, for example, there was a seven-point drop in the percentage of students in intensive from fall to spring. Although this was not significant, it should not be dismissed as trivial. The sample size in grade three was 431 students meaning that 30 of the 94 students moved out of intensive.

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There were also decreases in the percentage of students in intensive at the end of the second year of implementation as compared to the first year. These decreases were greatest in kindergarten (seven points) and second grade (five points), although only the kindergarten decrease was statistically significant (Pearson chi-square $p<.05$). First and third grade showed moved fewer students out of intensive.
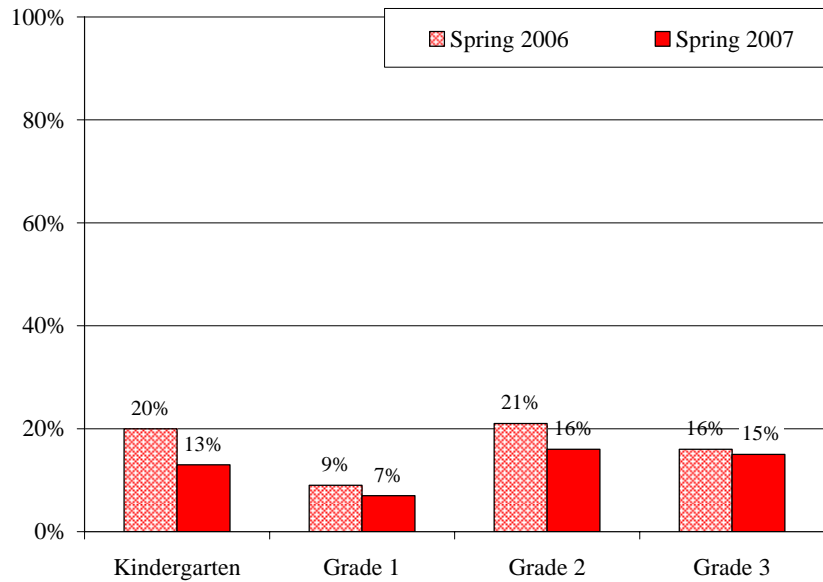
Figure 6-6. Percentage of Students at Intensive, Spring 2006 to Spring 2007 Cohort 2

Cohort 2 School-level Results

This section includes tables of data with individual school results among cohort 2 schools. Tables 6-8 to 6-11 show the percentage of students in intensive, strategic, and benchmark in spring 2007 in each grade. Tables 6-12 to 6-15 show the change in the percentage of students at benchmark from fall to spring in each school by grade. School-level results varied although these variations should be interpreted with caution due to different school characteristics, including school size and student demographics.

Table 6-8
Kindergarten Spring 2007 Instructional Support Recommendations, Cohort 2 by School

Cohort 2 Kindergarten		N	Spring 2007 Instruction Support Recommendation		
District	School		Intensive	Strategic	Benchmark
Box Elder	Box Elder	26	0%	4%	96%
Butte	West	78	8%	9%	83%
Dodson	Dodson	3	67%	0%	33%
East Glacier Park	East Glacier Park	2	0%	0%	100%
Evergreen	East Evergreen	86	27%	14%	59%
Frazer	Frazer	4	25%	0%	75%
Great Falls	Morningside	35	9%	0%	91%
Harlem	Harlem	39	5%	28%	67%
Heart Butte	Heart Butte	9	22%	11%	67%
Lodge Grass	Lodge Grass	20	20%	15%	65%
Rocky Boy	Rocky Boy	36	0%	8%	92%
Somers	Lakeside	61	15%	20%	66%
Stevensville	Stevensville	45	13%	7%	80%

Table 6-9
First Grade Spring 2007 Instructional Support Recommendations, Cohort 2 by School

Cohort 2 Grade 1		N	Spring 2007 Instruction Support Recommendation		
District	School		Intensive	Strategic	Benchmark
Box Elder	Box Elder	32	6%	28%	66%
Butte	West	53	9%	4%	87%
Dodson	Dodson	3	0%	33%	67%
East Glacier Park	East Glacier Park	2	50%	0%	50%
Evergreen	East Evergreen	74	7%	16%	77%
Frazer	Frazer	5	20%	40%	40%
Great Falls	Morningside	39	3%	18%	79%
Harlem	Harlem	42	0%	21%	79%
Heart Butte	Heart Butte	9	11%	33%	56%
Lodge Grass	Lodge Grass	16	19%	38%	44%
Rocky Boy	Rocky Boy	46	2%	13%	85%
Somers	Lakeside	49	12%	39%	49%
Stevensville	Stevensville	60	10%	25%	65%

Table 6-10
Second Grade Spring 2007 Instructional Support Recommendations, Cohort 2 by School

Cohort 2 Grade 2		N	Spring 2007 Instruction Support Recommendation		
School	District		Intensive	Strategic	Benchmark
Box Elder	Box Elder	28	7%	14%	79%
Butte	West	47	17%	19%	64%
Dodson	Dodson	4	0%	50%	50%
East Glacier Park	East Glacier Park	2	50%	0%	50%
Evergreen	East Evergreen	67	24%	18%	58%
Frazer	Frazer	8	13%	13%	75%
Great Falls	Morningside	40	5%	23%	73%
Harlem	Harlem	34	21%	35%	44%
Heart Butte	Heart Butte	13	23%	23%	54%
Lodge Grass	Lodge Grass	18	39%	22%	39%
Rocky Boy	Rocky Boy	44	11%	18%	70%
Somers	Lakeside	71	6%	8%	86%
Stevensville	Stevensville	49	29%	12%	59%

Table 6-11
Third Grade Spring 2007 Instructional Support Recommendations, Cohort 2 by School

Cohort 2 Grade 3		N	Spring 2007 Instruction Support Recommendation		
School	District		Intensive	Strategic	Benchmark
Box Elder	Box Elder	31	10%	23%	68%
Butte	West	43	14%	21%	65%
East Glacier Park	East Glacier Park	5	20%	60%	20%
Evergreen	East Evergreen	88	17%	24%	59%
Frazer	Frazer	2	0%	100%	0%
Great Falls	Morningside	35	6%	17%	77%
Harlem	Harlem	38	8%	32%	61%
Heart Butte	Heart Butte	8	13%	50%	38%
Lodge Grass	Lodge Grass	24	42%	25%	33%
Rocky Boy	Rocky Boy	28	14%	50%	36%
Somers	Lakeside	58	16%	29%	55%
Stevensville	Stevensville	71	14%	27%	59%

Table 6-12
Percentage of Kindergarten Students at Benchmark Over Time, Cohort 2 by School

Cohort 2 Kindergarten		N	Fall 2006 Benchmark	Winter 2007 Benchmark	Spring 2007 Benchmark
District	School				
Box Elder	Box Elder	26	23%	69%	96%
Butte	West	78	29%	59%	83%
Dodson	Dodson	3	0%	50%	33%
East Glacier Park	East Glacier Park	2	50%	100%	100%
Evergreen	East Evergreen	86	17%	56%	59%
Frazer	Frazer	4	25%	50%	75%
Great Falls	Morningside	35	43%	83%	91%
Harlem	Harlem	39	10%	50%	67%
Heart Butte	Heart Butte	9	22%	22%	67%
Lodge Grass	Lodge Grass	20	10%	58%	65%
Rocky Boy	Rocky Boy	36	31%	86%	92%
Somers	Lakeside	61	30%	59%	66%
Stevensville	Stevensville	45	31%	60%	80%

Table 6-13
Percentage of First-Grade Students at Benchmark Over Time, Cohort 2 by School

Cohort 2 Grade 1		N	Fall 2006 Benchmark	Winter 2007 Benchmark	Spring 2007 Benchmark
District	School				
Box Elder	Box Elder	32	44%	44%	66%
Butte	West	53	75%	70%	87%
Dodson	Dodson	3	33%	33%	67%
East Glacier Park	East Glacier Park	2	50%	50%	50%
Evergreen	East Evergreen	74	62%	62%	77%
Frazer	Frazer	5	20%	20%	40%
Great Falls	Morningside	39	69%	77%	79%
Harlem	Harlem	42	60%	62%	79%
Heart Butte	Heart Butte	9	11%	44%	56%
Lodge Grass	Lodge Grass	16	75%	53%	44%
Rocky Boy	Rocky Boy	46	63%	65%	85%
Somers	Lakeside	49	49%	50%	49%
Stevensville	Stevensville	60	57%	53%	65%

Table 6-14
Percentage of Second-Grade Students at Benchmark Over Time, Cohort 2 by School

Cohort 2 Grade 2		N	Fall 2006 Benchmark	Winter 2007 Benchmark	Spring 2007 Benchmark
District	School				
Box Elder	Box Elder	28	68%	71%	79%
Butte	West	47	60%	70%	64%
Dodson	Dodson	4	75%	100%	50%
East Glacier Park	East Glacier Park	2	50%	50%	50%
Evergreen	East Evergreen	67	45%	69%	58%
Frazer	Frazer	8	88%	75%	75%
Great Falls	Morningside	40	68%	88%	73%
Harlem	Harlem	34	26%	53%	44%
Heart Butte	Heart Butte	13	31%	54%	54%
Lodge Grass	Lodge Grass	18	33%	65%	39%
Rocky Boy	Rocky Boy	44	39%	66%	70%
Somers	Lakeside	71	58%	86%	86%
Stevensville	Stevensville	49	49%	61%	59%

Table 6-15
Percentage of Third-Grade Students at Benchmark Over Time, Cohort 2 by School

Cohort 2 Grade 3		N	Fall 2006 Benchmark	Winter 2007 Benchmark	Spring 2007 Benchmark
District	School				
Box Elder	Box Elder	31	71%	52%	68%
Butte	West	43	60%	63%	65%
East Glacier Park	East Glacier Park	5	20%	20%	20%
Evergreen	East Evergreen	88	58%	59%	59%
Frazer	Frazer	2	0%	0%	0%
Great Falls	Morningside	35	69%	74%	77%
Harlem	Harlem	38	47%	62%	61%
Heart Butte	Heart Butte	8	25%	38%	38%
Lodge Grass	Lodge Grass	24	38%	41%	33%
Rocky Boy	Rocky Boy	28	39%	43%	36%
Somers	Lakeside	58	45%	54%	55%
Stevensville	Stevensville	71	54%	54%	59%

Chapter Seven:
Cohort 1 Implementation and Outcomes

While their Reading First grants officially ended in 2006, all 20 cohort 1 schools chose to continue implementation of Reading First into a fourth year. Schools were given a small amount of additional funding from the state to support their work. In addition, they were allowed to carry over grant funds from the previous year if they had not been fully spent. Schools were expected to find additional funding sources, especially from their districts.

As part of their continuation grants, schools were expected to continue implementing most aspects of their Reading First grant, including the 90-minute reading block, core program, interventions, benchmark and progress monitoring assessments, and grade-level meetings. Maintaining a reading coach was optional. Of the 20 schools:

- Three schools did not have a school-based reading coach, although two of those schools were supported by a district-level reading coach

- Five schools had a part-time coach

- Twelve schools maintained a full-time coach

Given the context of continuation, what actually happened to implementation in the 20 cohort 1 schools and what were the outcomes? This chapter addresses those questions in two sections. The first section summarizes the results of coach, principal, and teacher surveys meant to measure changes in implementation from the prior year. (This section describes general trends from the data; specific frequencies can be found in the Appendix.) The second section reviews cohort 1 DIBELS outcome data from 2006–2007 as well as trends over the four years of implementation. The lessons learned from this chapter may have implications for the type and level of support the state provides cohort 2 schools as well as the continuing support for cohort 1 schools.

State Support to Cohort 1 Schools

The state continued to provide some professional development to cohort 1 schools in 2006–2007, but the amount was scaled back from previous years. During the three years of full grant funding, most principals and coaches attended meetings at least every other month. In 2006–2007, the frequency decreased; the majority of principals (68%) and coaches (58%) reported attending two meetings during the year (others were fairly evenly divided among those who attended more or less often).

By design, the amount of technical assistance to cohort 1 schools was also scaled back in 2006–2007. According to the state project director, most cohort 1 schools were to receive one visit from a state reading specialist (SRS) during the year. The five cohort 1

schools that did not show adequate growth in student outcomes[1] were to receive more intensive technical assistance, including more frequent visits. Over the course of the year, most cohort 1 schools actually received more than one technical assistance visit by the state. Nevertheless, visits were less frequent than in previous years.

Reactions from principals and coaches to the scaled-back state support were mixed. Many principals believed the amount of training in instructional leadership was still sufficient; although one in five (21%) wanted more training. Coaches were more likely to want more meetings; over half (59%) wished there had been more training in coaching methods during the year. Furthermore, while almost all principals (95%) remained pleased with the overall quality of their training, fewer coaches (65%) agreed.

Implementation

As part of their small continuation grants, cohort 1 schools were expected to continue implementing many key aspects of Reading First. Schools completed surveys in 2007 that included key items from the 2006 surveys in order to measure change in areas of implementation. While this section reports on the status of implementation in spring 2007, readers should be cautioned that these measures have limitations; in most cases, they determined the presence or frequency of certain activities, rather than the depth or quality.

Compared to the previous year, implementation in cohort 1 schools **<u>remained the same or increased</u>** in the following areas:

> *90-minute reading block.* All schools maintained uninterrupted reading blocks (90 minutes in grades one through three and at least 60 minutes in kindergarten).
>
> *Core program.* Use of the core program and templates remained the same or increased according to teacher and coach self-report.
>
> *Principal leadership.* There was no turnover among the 20 cohort 1 principals. Most, but not all, principals remained a solid presence in classrooms and the frequency of their feedback to teachers actually increased. They also continued to report high levels of data use; including an increase in the percentage of principals who used data to communicate with teachers about their students.
>
> *Coaching.* In schools that had a reading coach, teachers reported that their coach observed their classrooms and provided feedback with about the same frequency as the previous year. According to coaches, they spent slightly more time

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[1] The state expected 60 percent "total effectiveness" in each cohort 1 school during 2005-2006. Total effectiveness is defined as the percentage of students remaining in benchmark, moving from strategic to benchmark, or moving from intensive to either strategic or intensive from fall to spring. The five schools that did not meet the 60 percent growth mark were granted continuation grants after agreeing to additional monitoring by the state.

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coaching K-3 teachers and working with teachers in grade 4–6 and less time planning and attending school meetings. About the same amount of their time was dedicated to assessment-related activities this year compared to last year.

Benchmark assessments. All schools continued to administer the DIBELS three times a year and almost all teachers and principals agreed that their administration systems were present and organized. Coaches remained confident that DIBELS administration teams understood the administration and scoring of the assessment.

Staff member buy-in to Reading First. Teachers' support for the instructional changes made under Reading First remained the same.

District support. Most principals agreed that their district supported the continuation of Reading First and, like last year, most said that no district program clashed with Reading First.

There were a few areas of implementation that showed **slight decreases** from the previous year. These include:

RLT meetings. Although all schools maintained Reading Leadership Teams, the frequency of these meetings declined slightly; 65 percent met monthly compared to 80 percent last year. Teachers' perceptions that their RLT was visible and effective remained about the same.

Grade-level meetings. Although almost all teachers continued to report that they attended grade-level meetings, the frequency of their attendance declined slightly. Specifically, there was an 11 percentage point decrease in the frequency of teachers attending grade-level team meetings weekly (from 31% in 2006 to 20% in 2007). However, the majority of teachers continued to attend at least monthly and believed these meetings were useful.

Progress monitoring. According to coaches, fewer schools had regularly progress-monitored students in all or nearly all classrooms; this year, 80 percent of coaches said their school did so, compared to 95 percent the previous year.

Finally, there were a few areas of implementation that showed **more substantial decreases** from last year.

Professional development for teachers. Teachers reported declines in both the amount and quality of professional development in reading. Three-fourths of teachers (66%) reported a decrease in the amount of professional development they received in reading in 2006–2007. Additionally, far fewer teachers believed professional development was sustained and intensive or focused on what happened in the classroom.

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Teachers' use of data. There was a drop in the percentage of teachers who examined data at least weekly; from 54 percent in 2006 to 40 percent in 2007. There was also a decrease (from 72% to 62%) in the percentage of teachers who said they usually or always used data to look at schoolwide trends. Other kinds of data use, however, remained high.

Interventions. Coaches reported fewer total students served in interventions this year; 657 students received at least 12 hours of interventions compared to 884 last year[2]. In addition, 525 students received interventions of less duration; the number was reported as 750 last year. At the same time, teachers remained positive about their intervention programs and training of intervention providers and coaches' opinions in these areas actually improved from last year. However, there were no other measures of the *quality* of interventions.

Despite these areas of decline in implementation, achievement among Reading First schools continued on a similar trajectory as compared to past years. The next section shows continued increases in the percentage of students at benchmark and increased movement of students into the benchmark category from fall to spring of a single year. Movement of students out of the intensive category was more challenging, however, and the implementation finding that interventions did not serve as many students may warrant further investigation.

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[2] Number of students served is for the 15 schools who answered these questions both years.

Cohort 1 DIBELS Results

To monitor student progress in reading, all Montana Reading First schools use the *Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills* (DIBELS), which is administered three times per year: fall, winter, and spring. All data in this chapter matched, meaning they include only students with valid fall and spring scores.

Spring 2007 Results

By spring 2007, over three-fourths of cohort 1 kindergarten students (79%) were at benchmark. First grade showed the next highest percentage (70%), followed by second grade (65%) and third grade (59%). The percentage of students remaining in intensive ranged from 10 percent in kindergarten to 19 percent in second grade. (Table 7-1.)

Table 7-1
Spring 2007 Instructional Support Recommendations, Cohort 1

Cohort 1	N	Intensive	Strategic	Benchmark
Kindergarten	872	10%	11%	79%
Grade 1	789	11%	20%	70%
Grade 2	818	19%	16%	65%
Grade 3	774	15%	27%	59%

Fall 2006 to Spring 2007 Results

Figure 7-1 depicts the change in the percentage of students at or above benchmark as measured by the DIBELS between fall 2006 and spring 2007. There were statistically significant increases in the percentage of students at benchmark in all four grades (McNemar chi-square $p<.001$). These increases were greatest in kindergarten and grade two and more modest in grades one and three. In all grades except first, the fall to spring gains were greater than those made the previous year (data not shown in table).
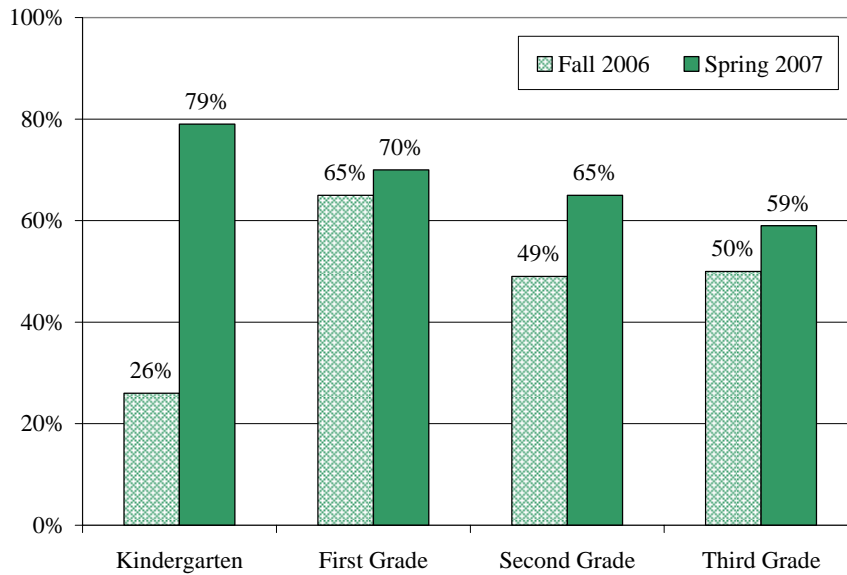
Figure 7-1. Percentage of Students at Benchmark, Fall 2006 to Spring 2007, Cohort 1

Decreases in the percentage of students in intensive between fall 2006 and spring 2007 were statistically significant in kindergarten and grade three (McNemar chi-square $p<0.001$). In grades one and two, however, there was no significant change in the percentage of students in intensive. First grade, which started the year with only 10 percent of students in intensive, saw a one point increase in the percentage of students at benchmark. Although this increase was not significant, it suggests that reaching the smallest groups of the neediest students may be increasingly difficult.
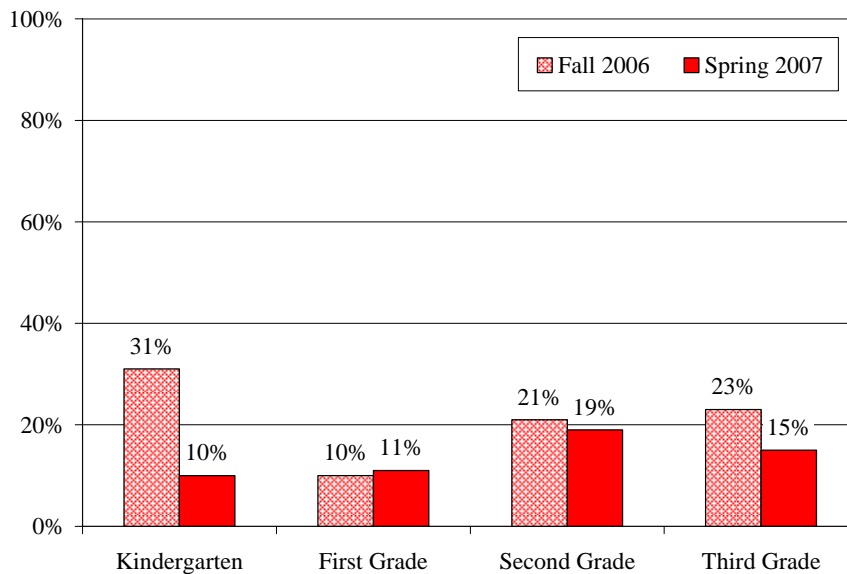
Figure 7-2. Percentage of Students in Intensive, Fall 2006 to Spring 2007, Cohort 1

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Spring 2004 to Spring 2007 Results

Figure 7-3 presents the changes in the percentage of cohort 1 students at or above benchmark as measured by the DIBELS every spring from 2004 through 2007. The figure shows the following:

- There has been sustained, continued growth in kindergarten. Since 2004, there has been 19-point increase in the percentage of students at benchmark. The five-point increase from 2006 to 2007 was statistically significant (Pearson chi-square $p<.01$).

- There has also been sustained, continued growth in grade one. Over four years, there has been a 15-point increase in the percentage of first-grade students at benchmark. However, the four-point increase from 2006 to 2007 was not significant.

- After continued growth the first three years, there was a statistically significant decrease in the percentage of second-grade students at benchmark from 2006 to 2007 (Pearson chi-square $p<.01$).

- Although the third-grade increase of five percentage points from 2006 to 2007 was not statistically significant, it helped the third grade resume a trend of growth over four years, after a decline in 2006. Since spring 2004, there has been a 17 percentage point increase in the percentage of students at benchmark.
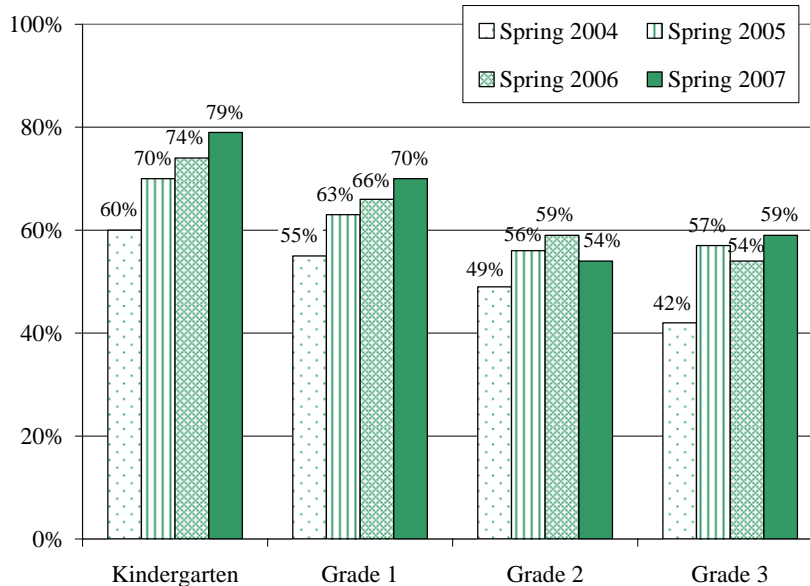
Figure 7-3. Percentage of Students at Benchmark, Spring 2004 to Spring 2007, Cohort 1

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Figure 7-4 presents the changes in the percentage of cohort 1 students in intensive as measured by the DIBELS every spring from 2004 through 2007. The decreases in the percentage of students in intensive have become smaller over time, but have been continuous in all cases except one (third grade in 2006). Over the past year (from spring 2006 to spring 2007) there were decreases in all grades; however, the decrease was only significant in kindergarten (p<.01).
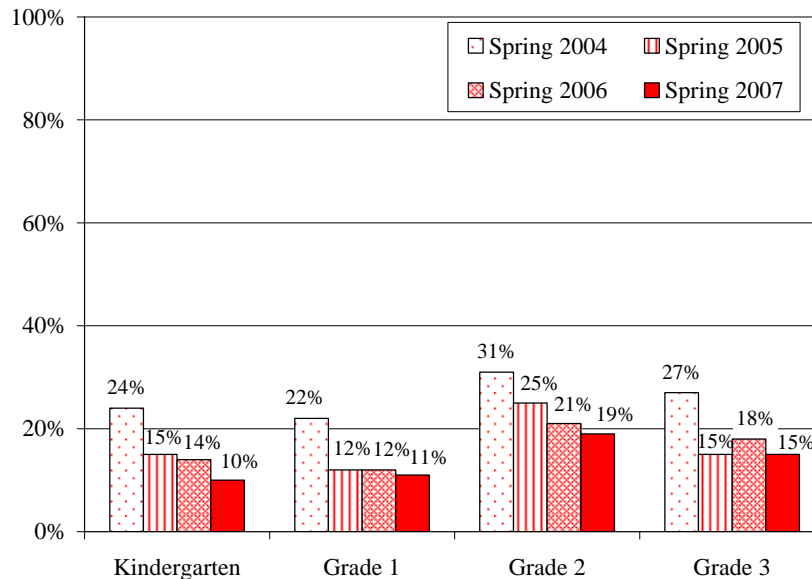
Figure 7-4. Percentage of Students at Intensive, Spring 2004 to Spring 2007, Cohort 1

Achievement of Students in Reading First Since Kindergarten

This section examines changes in DIBELS results for intact groups of students over time; specifically, it looks at the progress of students from cohort 1 schools who began kindergarten in fall 2003 at a Reading First school and completed third grade in spring 2007. To ensure that these analyses captured students who received a full four years of the program, it only included students for whom four years of intact data were available (N=320).

Figure 7-5 presents the percentage of intact cohort of students at benchmark as they moved through the full four years of Reading First. It compares their trajectory over four years to the best available measure for comparison—the spring 2004 DIBELS results for students in kindergarten, grades one, two, and three. (The lack of a comparison or control group makes it difficult to know exactly what the alternative outcomes might have been.)

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While these data show that for cohort 1 schools, the goal of every child reading at grade level by the end of third grade was not met, they do show positive outcomes that might otherwise not have occurred in the absence of Reading First. With Reading First, the percentage of students at benchmark has been sustained over four years of K–3 instruction; without the changes brought about by Reading First, it is quite possible that the percentage of students at benchmark would have dropped substantially (Stanovich, 1986; Juel, 1988).
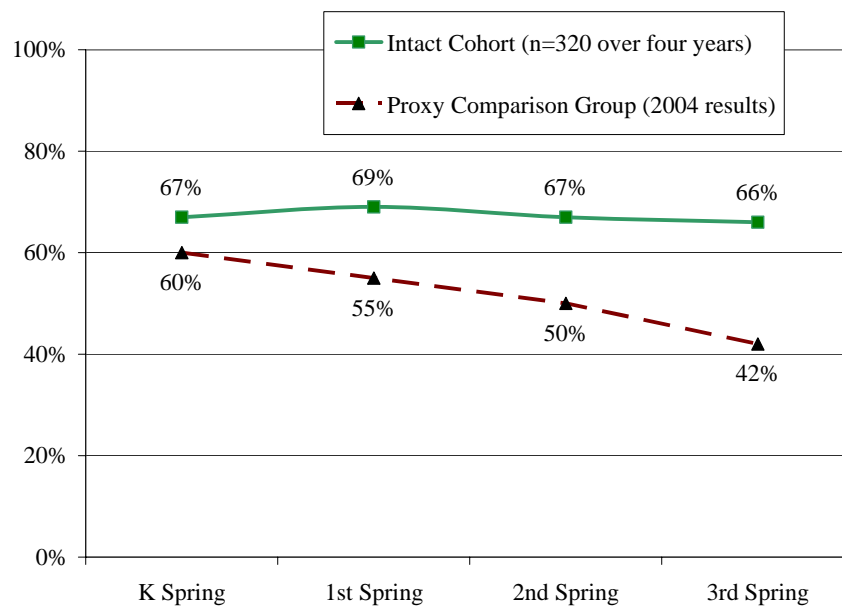
Figure 7-5. Percentage at Benchmark, Intact Cohort of Reading First Students Versus a Proxy Comparison Group

Montana Reading First uses the term "total effectiveness" to describe positive growth. The "total effectiveness" percentage includes students who, over time, remain at benchmark, move from strategic to benchmark, or move from intensive to either strategic of intensive.

In the longitudinal sample of 320 students, total effectiveness over their four years in Reading First was 71 percent. More specifically:

- Most students who were at benchmark in the middle of their kindergarten year remained there at the end of third grade (84% effectiveness)

- Over half of students who were in strategic in mid-kindergarten moved to benchmark (59% effectiveness)

- Almost two-thirds of kindergarten intensive students moved to strategic (34%) or benchmark (30%) by the end of third grade (64% effectiveness)

Table 7-2
Movement of Students Among ISRs (Total Effectiveness), Fall 2003 to Spring 2007

Winter 2004 ISR (Middle of Kindergarten)	n	Spring 2007 ISR (End of Third Grade)			
		Intensive	Strategic	Benchmark	"Effectiveness"
Intensive	50	36%	34%	30%	64%
Strategic	128	9%	32%	59%	59%
Benchmark	142	1%	15%	84%	84%
Total Effectiveness					*71%*

In other words, there was real movement upward of many students who had low early reading skills in kindergarten and good retention of students who began at benchmark. However, there is more work to be done as more than one in four students remain in the same category (or in some cases, moved to a lower category) they started in after four years of the program.

Cohort 1 School-level DIBELS Results

This section includes tables of data with individual school results among cohort 1 schools. Tables 7-3 to 7-6 show the percentage of students in intensive, strategic, and benchmark in spring 2007 in each grade. Tables 7-7, 7-8, 7-9, and 7-10 show the change in the percentage of students at benchmark from fall to spring in each school by grade.

In regard to the first four tables, and echoing earlier results, kindergarten students were more likely to be at benchmark than students in other grades. Two-thirds of the cohort 1 schools had at least 75 percent of their kindergarten students at benchmark by spring 2007. Similar to the overall results, reaching benchmark was more of a struggle in the other grades. There was a great deal of variation in the school-level results.

Table 7-3
Kindergarten Spring 2007 Instructional Support Recommendations,
Cohort 1 by School

Cohort 1 Kindergarten		N	Spring 2007 Instruction Support Recommendation		
District	School		Intensive	Strategic	Benchmark
Billings	Newman	53	19%	11%	70%
	Ponderosa	62	11%	15%	74%
Butte	Kennedy	34	12%	6%	82%
	Whittier	47	0%	9%	91%
Centerville	Centerville	12	8%	17%	75%
Charlo	Charlo	17	0%	0%	100%
Dixon	Dixon	12	17%	0%	83%
East Helena	Eastgate	119	0%	5%	95%
Great Falls	Longfellow	40	20%	5%	75%
	West	67	15%	13%	72%
Hardin	Crow Agency	39	15%	18%	67%
	Hardin Primary	85	13%	6%	81%
Hays/Lodge Pole	Lodge Pole	12	8%	8%	83%
Helena	Warren	39	8%	8%	85%
Lame Deer	Lame Deer	54	17%	31%	52%
Libby	Libby	85	6%	11%	84%
Ronan-Pablo	K William Harvey	52	12%	15%	73%
	Pablo	43	2%	12%	86%

Table 7-4
First Grade Spring 2007 Instructional Support Recommendations,
Cohort 1 by School

Cohort 1 Grade 1		N	Spring 2007 Instruction Support Recommendation		
District	School		Intensive	Strategic	Benchmark
Billings	Newman	44	25%	16%	59%
	Ponderosa	49	20%	24%	55%
Butte	Kennedy	36	0%	8%	92%
	Whittier	56	2%	7%	91%
Centerville	Centerville	7	0%	0%	100%
Charlo	Charlo	27	4%	19%	78%
Dixon	Dixon	6	0%	17%	83%
East Helena	Eastgate	100	0%	23%	77%
Great Falls	Longfellow	29	10%	24%	66%
	West	61	2%	18%	80%
Hardin	Crow Agency	36	19%	22%	58%
	Hardin Primary	78	6%	24%	69%
Hays/Lodge Pole	Lodge Pole	13	23%	8%	69%
Helena	Warren	36	19%	33%	47%
Lame Deer	Lame Deer	37	38%	19%	43%
Libby	Libby	79	11%	23%	66%
Ronan-Pablo	K William Harvey	50	12%	18%	70%
	Pablo	45	11%	20%	69%

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Table 7-5
Second Grade Spring 2007 Instructional Support Recommendations,
Cohort 1 by School

Cohort 1 Grade 2		N	Spring 2007 Instruction Support Recommendation		
District	School		Intensive	Strategic	Benchmark
Billings	Newman	43	28%	19%	53%
	Ponderosa	54	20%	20%	59%
Butte	Kennedy	37	0%	14%	86%
	Whittier	59	12%	22%	66%
Centerville	Centerville	17	12%	0%	88%
Charlo	Charlo	24	8%	21%	71%
Dixon	Dixon	7	14%	43%	43%
East Helena	Eastgate	120	9%	8%	83%
Great Falls	Longfellow	33	24%	21%	55%
	West	56	11%	9%	80%
Hardin	Crow Agency	29	24%	24%	52%
	Hardin Primary	80	28%	19%	54%
Hays/Lodge Pole	Lodge Pole	10	40%	10%	50%
Helena	Warren	38	18%	16%	66%
Lame Deer	Lame Deer	36	33%	22%	44%
Libby	Libby	78	26%	17%	58%
Ronan-Pablo	K William Harvey	56	27%	11%	63%
	Pablo	41	20%	17%	63%

Table 7-6
Third Grade Spring 2007 Instructional Support Recommendations,
Cohort 1 by School

Cohort 1 Grade 3		N	Spring 2007 Instruction Support Recommendation		
District	School		Intensive	Strategic	Benchmark
Billings	Newman	32	28%	22%	50%
	Ponderosa	49	24%	37%	39%
Butte	Kennedy	40	10%	20%	70%
	Whittier	60	5%	23%	72%
Centerville	Centerville	6	17%	17%	67%
Charlo	Charlo	28	0%	21%	79%
Dixon	Dixon	4	25%	50%	25%
East Helena	Radley	126	6%	21%	73%
Great Falls	Longfellow	32	16%	44%	41%
	West	60	15%	32%	53%
Hardin	Crow Agency	23	13%	22%	65%
	Hardin Intermediate	83	8%	25%	66%
Hays/Lodge Pole	Lodge Pole	7	29%	14%	57%
Helena	Warren	39	21%	33%	46%
Lame Deer	Lame Deer	43	37%	40%	23%
Libby	Libby	60	15%	23%	62%
Ronan-Pablo	K William Harvey	52	25%	23%	52%
	Pablo	30	10%	33%	57%

In terms of changes from fall 2006 to spring 2007(Tables 7-7 to 7-10), results also varied by school and by grade. All schools increased the percentage of students at benchmark from fall to spring in kindergarten and second grade. A handful of schools did not increase the percentage of students at benchmark in first and third grade from fall to spring.

Table 7-7
Percentage of Kindergarten Students at Benchmark Over Time, Cohort 1 by School

Cohort 1 Kindergarten		N	Fall 2006 Benchmark	Winter 2007 Benchmark	Spring 2007 Benchmark
District	School				
Billings	Newman	53	17%	58%	70%
	Ponderosa	62	26%	55%	74%
Butte	Kennedy	34	21%	71%	82%
	Whittier	47	26%	66%	91%
Centerville	Centerville	12	58%	58%	75%
Charlo	Charlo	17	53%	82%	100%
Dixon	Dixon	12	33%	83%	83%
East Helena	Eastgate	119	31%	90%	95%
Great Falls	Longfellow	40	15%	65%	75%
	West	67	36%	58%	72%
Hardin	Crow Agency	39	18%	44%	67%
	Hardin Primary	85	27%	65%	81%
Hays/Lodge Pole	Lodge Pole	12	25%	58%	83%
Helena	Warren	39	31%	85%	85%
Lame Deer	Lame Deer	54	7%	24%	52%
Libby	Libby	85	35%	65%	84%
Ronan-Pablo	K William Harvey	52	23%	62%	73%
	Pablo	43	14%	46%	86%

Table 7-8
Percentage of First-Grade Students at Benchmark Over Time, Cohort 1 by School

Cohort 1 Grade 1		N	Fall 2006 Benchmark	Winter 2007 Benchmark	Spring 2007 Benchmark
District	School				
Billings	Newman	44	57%	50%	59%
	Ponderosa	49	41%	37%	55%
Butte	Kennedy	36	92%	92%	92%
	Whittier	56	86%	88%	91%
Centerville	Centerville	7	100%	57%	100%
Charlo	Charlo	27	85%	81%	78%
Dixon	Dixon	6	83%	83%	83%
East Helena	Eastgate	100	67%	78%	77%
Great Falls	Longfellow	29	55%	62%	66%
	West	61	74%	74%	80%
Hardin	Crow Agency	36	56%	44%	58%
	Hardin Primary	78	59%	55%	69%
Hays/Lodge Pole	Lodge Pole	13	46%	62%	69%
Helena	Warren	36	44%	42%	47%
Lame Deer	Lame Deer	37	41%	44%	43%
Libby	Libby	79	58%	43%	66%
Ronan-Pablo	K William Harvey	50	70%	68%	70%
	Pablo	45	64%	67%	69%

Table 7-9
Percentage of Second-Grade Students at Benchmark Over Time, Cohort 1 by School

Cohort 1 Grade 2		N	Fall 2006 Benchmark	Winter 2007 Benchmark	Spring 2007 Benchmark
District	School				
Billings	Newman	43	42%	51%	53%
	Ponderosa	54	54%	70%	59%
Butte	Kennedy	37	62%	92%	86%
	Whittier	59	59%	86%	66%
Centerville	Centerville	17	71%	82%	88%
Charlo	Charlo	24	50%	75%	71%
Dixon	Dixon	7	29%	43%	43%
East Helena	Eastgate	120	58%	88%	83%
Great Falls	Longfellow	33	36%	53%	55%
	West	56	54%	82%	80%
Hardin	Crow Agency	29	17%	45%	52%
	Hardin Primary	80	44%	65%	54%
Hays/Lodge Pole	Lodge Pole	10	40%	60%	50%
Helena	Warren	38	58%	74%	66%
Lame Deer	Lame Deer	36	39%	50%	44%
Libby	Libby	78	51%	67%	58%
Ronan-Pablo	K William Harvey	56	38%	59%	63%
	Pablo	41	39%	70%	63%

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Table 7-10

Percentage of Third-Grade Students at Benchmark Over Time, Cohort 1 by School

Cohort 1 Grade 3		N	Fall 2006 Benchmark	Winter 2007 Benchmark	Spring 2007 Benchmark
District	School				
Billings	Newman	32	38%	41%	50%
	Ponderosa	49	49%	47%	39%
Butte	Kennedy	40	53%	68%	70%
	Whittier	60	68%	73%	72%
Centerville	Centerville	6	50%	83%	67%
Charlo	Charlo	28	75%	79%	79%
Dixon	Dixon	4	25%	50%	25%
East Helena	Radley	126	62%	73%	73%
Great Falls	Longfellow	32	44%	50%	41%
	West	60	55%	58%	53%
Hardin	Crow Agency	23	48%	52%	65%
	Hardin Intermediate	83	40%	59%	66%
Hays/Lodge Pole	Lodge Pole	7	43%	29%	57%
Helena	Warren	39	49%	56%	46%
Lame Deer	Lame Deer	43	16%	24%	23%
Libby	Libby	60	57%	65%	62%
Ronan-Pablo	K William Harvey	52	40%	44%	52%
	Pablo	30	40%	53%	57%

Chapter Eight:
Recommendations

A summary of key findings from this report can be found in the Executive Summary. Recommendations stemming from those findings are detailed below.

Coaching

A proportion of coaches and teachers still seek clarity about the role of the reading coach. This clarity might be delivered to all cohort schools through a document or presentation that outlines their specific responsibilities and expectations. As an alternative, state reading specialists (SRS) might work individually with those coaches and schools that are struggling the most with this issue.

Coaches also requested additional professional development and technical assistance in areas related to coaching; other data confirm this need. Training on topics such as presenting to groups of teachers or dealing with teacher resistance could be offered during the 2007–2008 school year (e.g., a training similar to the teacher resistance workshop previously provided to cohort 1). Some cohort 1 coaches might also benefit from attending.

Since individual trainings can be hard to differentiate for the specific needs of each coach, state reading specialists should continue to provide assistance to coaches during their school visits. In order to be a "coach of coaches," SRSs themselves must be comfortable and skilled at the coaching role and be willing and able to model instruction, feedback to teachers, and the delivery of professional development to small groups of teachers. This may require additional training for the SRSs during the year and school visits that are focused on coaching coaches. According to the data, SRS coaching assistance will be more necessary at some schools than others.

Achievement among Native American students

While kindergarten and first-grade data show a modest closing of the achievement gap between Native American students and their white peers, the gap persists in second and third grade and overall achievement is much lower among Native American students. These data need to be closely examined by state project staff members and schools with Native American students.

At the state level, the data could be shared with colleagues from OPI and the Bureau of Indian Affairs who might offer insights into the data trends (e.g., comparisons with other achievement trends, suggestions of what might be happening between first and second grade). Furthermore, data from Native American students could be examined in many other ways (e.g., across time, at the school level, total effectiveness rates); state staff

members should conduct further data analyses, or ask the evaluator for further data breakdowns.

The findings should also be shared with schools. With the help of state staff members, schools need to examine even more closely what instruction and interventions are being provided for Native American students, especially in the second and third grades. "Drilling down" into the data at the school level is important as well.

Sustainability of Interventions

There are many possible explanations for why interventions were not as prevalent in cohort 1 last year: lack of funding, lack of training, less accountability, fewer coaches, etc. Further investigation is needed into the decline in the numbers of students receiving interventions. The state could ask cohort 1 schools to answer a brief e-mail questionnaire, or phone interview, about the status of their interventions. Or, a cohort 1 coach and principal meeting might be used for this purpose.

Once the state has further information, training and supports should be immediately delivered to cohort 1 schools. (Any training on interventions would likely benefit cohort 2 as well.) As the Montana Response to Interventions (RtI) programs gear up, Reading First trainers could also consider joining forces with RtI trainers to offer professional development across the programs.

In addition to the recommendation above, evaluators note that the following findings deserve consideration in the 2007–2008 school year.

- Principal leadership in cohort 2 schools was somewhat uneven; principal walk-throughs decreased in the second year of implementation

- A small number of schools reported less satisfaction with assistance from their state reading specialist; there may be uneven support for schools

- Cohort 1 experienced slight declines in a few areas of implementation such as the use of data and frequency of grade-level meetings which has implications for sustainability in both cohorts

Finally, evaluators commend state project staff members for their sophisticated use of data and their commitment to use this report to both celebrate success and address challenges. As in past years, evaluators recommend that the report be shared with all schools, as well as OPI colleagues, external consultants who provide technical assistance, and other colleagues.

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Appendix A

Survey Instruments & Frequencies

Cohort 2 Frequency Reports:

Cohort 2 District Survey
Cohort 2 Principal Survey
Cohort 2 Coach Survey
Cohort 2 Teacher

Cohort 1 Frequency Reports:

Cohort 1 Principal Survey
Cohort 1 Coach Survey
Cohort 1 Teacher Survey

MONTANA READING FIRST
DISTRICT SURVEY 2007

Seven districts returned surveys; two of those surveys were completed by principals who were also the district coordinator (in very small districts). Some analyses, where noted, excluded the principals.

---

1.   How many elementary schools are in your district?
                1 school=71%
                6 schools =14%
                15 schools =14%

2.   How many elementary schools have a Reading First grant?
                1 school=71%
                3 schools=29%

3.   Beyond Reading First, what is your role in the district?
                Superintendent 43%
                Assistant Superintendent 0%
                Curriculum director/specialist 14%
                Instruction director/specialist 0%
                Literacy director/specialist 0%
                Budget/finance officer 0%
                Other: Principal 29%
                Other: Literacy and federal programs director 14%

4.   What percentage of time are you *officially allocated* to spend on Reading First?
                Includes only non-principal respondents (n=5)
                Average 15%, Range 0-50

5.   In past years, some district coordinators have reported spending more time than anticipated on Reading First activities. In order to report any continuing discrepancies, please report the *actual* percentage of your time spent on Reading First.
                Includes only non-principal respondents (n=5)
                Average 14%, Range 1-50

6.   In which of the following ways has your district supported Reading First? *(select all that apply)*
        ☐   By assisting with proposal writing   86
        ☐   By providing grant management   71
        ☐   By monitoring grant implementation   100
        ☐   By having a district staff member designated as the Reading First "go-to" person (district-level coordinator, representative)   100

- □ By facilitating districtwide Reading First meetings for principals   71
- □ By facilitating districtwide Reading First meetings for coaches   71
- □ By modifying district requirements to align with Reading First   57
- □ By analyzing student reading assessment data   100
- □ By providing professional development that is aligned with Reading First   100
- □ By providing technical assistance to support school change   86
- □ By supporting the core reading program   100
- □ By supporting intervention programs   100
- □ By providing overall curriculum guidance   71
- □ By educating and galvanizing the community   86
- □ Other: _____
- □ Other: _____

7.   In 2006–2007, how frequently did you attend the following activities?
Includes only non-principal respondents (n=5)

	Did not attend	Once	Twice	3 times	4 + times
2006 Summer Institute	80	20	-	-	-
Statewide coach and principal meetings	80	--	--	20	--
State meetings for district representatives	80	--	--	20	--
Meetings with the Reading First State Reading Specialist for our district	20	20	40	20	--

8.   How useful, to you as Reading First coordinator, was your attendance at the following:
Includes only non-principal respondents (n=5)

	Never Useful	Rarely Useful	Sometimes Useful	Usually Useful	Always Useful	Did not Attend
2006 Summer Institute	--	--	--	--	20	80
Statewide coach and principal meetings	--	--	--	--	20	80
State meetings for district representatives	20	--	--	--	20	80
Meetings with the Reading First State Reading Specialist for your district	25	--	--	--	75	--

9.	When the State Reading Specialist visits schools in your district, are you informed ahead of time?

- ☐	Never		--
- ☐	Seldom		--
- ☐	Sometimes	14
- ☐	Often		--
- ☐	Always		86

10.	When the State Reading Specialist visits schools in your district, how often do you participate?

- ☐	Never		14
- ☐	Seldom		29
- ☐	Sometimes	14
- ☐	Often		14
- ☐	Always		29

11.	Who made hiring decisions about coaches at Reading First schools in your district?

- ☐	District [Go to 12]	29
- ☐	School [Go to 14]	14
- ☐	Both [Go to 12]		57

12.	How easy/difficult was it to find qualified applicants for the coaching position(s)?

- ☐	Very easy [Go to 14]	33
- ☐	Somewhat easy [Go to 14]	67
- ☐	Somewhat difficult [Go to 13]	--
- ☐	Very difficult [Go to 13]	--

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

Please indicate your level of agreement with each statement below.

This year…	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
14. The state's expectations for district involvement in Reading First are clear.	--	--	14	57	29
15. State Reading First project staff (director, State Reading Specialists) are responsive to our district's needs.	--	--	--	57	43
16. The state has done a good job of communicating necessary information regarding Reading First to district staff.	--	--	14	57	29

This year…	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
17. Our district strongly supports the instructional changes occurring under Reading First.	--	--	--	57	43
18. Major initiatives (programs or grants) in our district contradict or are not aligned with Reading First.	43	29	14	14	--
19. I am pleased with the amount of support we have received from the state to address sustainability.	--	--	14	43	43
20. Reading First has greatly influenced the reading program in our district's non-Reading First schools.	--	--	17	50	33
21. There are tensions between Reading First and non-Reading First schools in our district.	67	17	17	--	--
22. The state's expectations of district involvement in Reading First are reasonable.	--	--	--	71	29

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

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

Note: Only two districts (n=2) who replied had non-Reading First schools in their district.

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

Thank you for your support of the evaluation!

MONTANA READING FIRST
PRINCIPAL SURVEY 2007

13 of 13 principals returned surveys. Unless otherwise noted, all or almost all respondents answered each item.

SECTION A: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

1. Did you attend the 2006 Reading First Summer Institute?
    ☐   No --   ☐   Yes – some of it 8   ☐   Yes – all of it 92

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.

The professional development that I received at the coach and principal meetings this year…	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
2. was very relevant to my work.	--	8	8	54	31
3. was mostly review for me.	8	38	23	23	8
4. consisted of high-quality presentations.	--	--	15	62	23
5. provided me with useful training in observing teachers and providing feedback.	--	15	--	54	31
6. provided me with useful tools for working with resistant staff.	8	8	23	46	15
7. met my specific needs as a Reading First principal.	--	15	8	46	31
8. included adequate opportunities to reflect and share with my colleagues.	--	23	--	62	15
9. was differentiated (tailored) to meet the needs of different groups, based on their level of pre-existing expertise.	8	8	38	38	8
10. did a good job of addressing English Language Learner (ELL) issues.	8	23	38	23	8
11. did a good job of addressing sustainability.	8	23	31	31	8

I am very pleased with…	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
12. the quality of training in instructional leadership that I received through the state and Reading First this year.	--	15	8	46	31
13. the amount of training in instructional leadership that I received through the state and Reading First this year.	--	8	15	54	23

14. If you were not pleased with the amount, was there too much or too little? (n=3)	Too much --	Too little 100

15. This year, how often did you watch or use training material from Knowledge Box?

- ☐ Never   15
- ☐ Once or a few times a year   38
- ☐ Once a month   31
- ☐ 2-3 times a month   8
- ☐ 1-3 times a week   8
- ☐ Daily   --

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
16. Knowledge Box has provided important professional development to our school this year.	--	15	31	46	8
17. Knowledge Box is an effective vehicle for the delivery of Reading First training and materials.	--	8	38	46	8

SECTION B: USE OF ASSESSMENTS

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

I use the results of reading assessments (such as the DIBELS) when…*	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Always	I don't do that
18. communicating with teachers about their students.	--	--	8	46	46	--
19. communicating with teachers about their instruction.	--	--	31	31	38	--
20. making decisions about student grouping.	--	--	15	--	85	--
21. making decisions about matching students to the appropriate interventions.	--	--	15	--	85	--
22. looking at school-wide (K-3) trends.	--	--	15	15	69	--
23. meeting with parents.	--	8	15	69	8	--

Note that frequency percentages are for those respondents indicating they engage in the activity.

SECTION C: MEETINGS AND COLLABORATION

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

☐ Yes 100	☐ No --	☐ There is no RLT at my school ---

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

- ☐ Never   --
- ☐ Seldom   8
- ☐ Sometimes   8
- ☐ Often   25
- ☐ Always   58

SECTION D: YOUR VIEWS ON READING FIRST

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

This year…	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
26. I am very comfortable observing teachers and providing constructive feedback.	--	--	8	46	46
27. I feel that Reading First is putting excessive emphasis on the involvement of the principal in instructional matters.	23	31	8	23	15
28. Reading First would not run smoothly without the RLT.	--	8	46	38	8
29. Major initiatives in our district contradict or are not aligned with Reading First.	38	31	8	23	--
30. I strongly support the instructional changes that are occurring under Reading First.	--	--	8	46	46
31. Our district provides sufficient support for Reading First.	--	--	8	77	15
32. Overcoming teacher resistance to Reading First has been a challenge for me.	8	31	15	23	23
33. I have significant philosophical or pedagogical objections to the approach of Reading First.	38	38	15	8	--
34. I am pleased that our school has a Reading First grant.	--	--	8	23	69
35. In my view, Reading First overemphasizes the importance of using DIBELS results.	31	54	15	--	--
36. I think that the DIBELS is a valid, accurate indicator of student reading ability.	--	--	8	46	46
37. Participating in Reading First has helped my school develop a more collaborative culture.	--	--	31	31	38
38. Attending grade-level reading meetings is a good use of my time.	--	8	15	46	31
39. Attending RLT meetings is a good use of my time.	--	--	23	38	38
40. Attending reading study groups is a good use of my time.	--	15	23	46	15
41. I am very satisfied with the core reading program we are using at our school.	--	--	8	69	23
42. Our Reading First program is doing an excellent job meeting the needs of our Native American students.	8	--	31	31	31
43. I believe that reading instruction at my school has improved noticeably.	--	--	8	46	46
44. Our staffing resources are sufficient to provide interventions to all students who need them.	8	8	15	54	15
45. As a school, we're doing an excellent job of providing appropriate reading interventions to all students who need them.	--	8	8	62	23
46. Instruction in other subjects has suffered because of all of the focus on Reading First.	8	15	15	54	8
47. State project staff (director and State Reading Specialists) are responsive to my school's needs.	--	8	8	38	46

This year…	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
48. The State Reading Specialist's support and input has been extremely valuable.	--	--	31	38	31
49. I trust our State Reading Specialist with any information – good or bad – about our reading program.	--	--	23	23	54
50. Our State Reading Specialist understands our school, our programs and culture, and takes that into account when making recommendations.	8	8	23	23	38
51. We receive conflicting messages about reading from our district and our State Reading Specialist.	31	38	15	15	--
52. I believe that all of the instructional changes we made under Reading First will be sustained after the grant is over.	--	--	31	54	15
53. I am pleased with the amount of support we have received from the state to address sustainability.	--	31	38	8	23

SECTION E: PRINCIPAL & SCHOOL DEMOGRAPHICS

54. How many K-3 classroom teachers do you have in your building?
    Range 1-16; Mean=9

55. This year, how many of those teachers were new to your building? (Bubble #)
    Range 1-3; Mean =1

Teacher turnover averaged 14 percent, with a range of zero to 50%. Four schools had no teacher turnover.

56. How many total years of principal experience do you have (including this year)? (Bubble #)
    Range 2-15; Mean=8
    No principals were new to their position this year

57. How many years have you been the principal at this school (including this year)? (Bubble #)
    Range 2-12; Mean=5
    No principals were new to their building this year.

Thank you for your support of the evaluation!

MONTANA READING FIRST
COACH SURVEY 2007

13 of 13 coaches returned surveys. Unless otherwise noted, all or almost all respondents answered each item.

SECTION A: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

1. Did you attend the 2006 Reading First Summer Institute?
   ☐ No   8   ☐ Yes – some of it   --   ☐ Yes – all of it   92

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.

The professional development that I received at the coach and principal meetings this year…	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
2. was very relevant to my work.	--	--	15	62	23
3. was mostly review for me.	--	54	15	23	8
4. consisted of high-quality presentations.	--	8	15	69	8
5. provided me with useful training in coaching methods.	--	8	23	62	8
6. provided me with useful tools for working with resistant staff.	--	31	54	15	--
7. included adequate opportunities to reflect and share with my colleagues.	--	8	8	46	38
8. met my specific needs as a Reading First coach.	--	--	23	69	8
9. was differentiated (tailored) to meet the needs of different groups, based on their level of pre-existing expertise.	--	23	31	38	8
10. did a good job of addressing English Language Learner (ELL) issues.	--	50	50	--	--
11. did a good job of addressing sustainability.	--	15	31	38	15

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.

I am very pleased with…	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
12. the <u>quality</u> of coaching training that I received through the state and Reading First this year.	--	--	9	73	18
13. the <u>amount</u> of coaching training that I received through the state and Reading First this year.	--	9	--	82	9

14. If you were not pleased, was there too much or too little? (n=2)	□ Too much --	Too little 100

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

- ☐ Coaching methods   10
- ☐ Developing rapport and buy-in with staff   30
- ☐ Working with resistance or conflict resolution   40
- ☐ Lesson modeling 10
- ☐ Classroom observations   20
- ☐ Providing constructive feedback   40
- ☐ Meeting facilitation   30

- ☐ Budgeting   10
- ☐ Using the core program effectively   20
- ☐ Selection and use of supplemental programs   40

- ☐ Selection and use of intervention programs 60
- ☐ Working with ELL students   20
- ☐ Student engagement   20
- ☐ Strategies to teach the 5 Components   10
- ☐ Differentiated instruction   40
- ☐ Administering and scoring assessments   --
- ☐ Interpreting and working with assessment results   20
- ☐ Other: 20

	Did not take place	Once	Twice	3 times	4 times	5 or more times
How <u>frequently</u> this year has your school received Reading First <u>technical assistance</u> from the following sources?						
16. State Reading Specialist	18	9	9	--	9	55
17. District reading staff	73	--	--	--	--	27
How frequently this year have the following external trainers provided <u>building-level reading-related professional development</u> to teachers at your school?						
18. Publisher representatives/trainers	82	9	--	--	--	9
19. District reading staff	40	10	10	20	--	20
20. Other contracted experts/trainers	40	40	10	10	--	--

Over the 2006-07 school year, how helpful were visits from: *	Never Helpful	Rarely Helpful	Sometimes Helpful	Usually Helpful	Always Helpful	Did Not Take Place
21. State Reading Specialists	--	--	--	55	45	--
22. Publisher representatives/trainers	--	--	33	67	--	73
23. Other contracted experts/trainers	--	--	33	33	33	45

Note that helpfulness ratings are for those respondents indicating the activity did take place.

24. The frequency of visits from our State Reading Specialist this year was:
□ Too much -- □ Too little 9   □ Just right 91

25. This year, how often did you watch or use training material from Knowledge Box?
- □ Never --
- □ Once or a few times a year   36
- □ Once a month   27
- □ 2-3 times a month   36
- □ 1-3 times a week   --
- □ Daily --

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
26. Knowledge Box has provided important professional development to our school this year.	--	18	--	55	27
27. Knowledge Box is an effective vehicle for the delivery of Reading First training and materials.	9	9	9	55	18

SECTION B: STUDENT ASSESSMENTS

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

	DIBELS	Fox in a Box	CORE* Multiple Assessments	Core Reading Program Assessments	Teacher-developed Assessments	Other	None
Screening	--	--	--	33	8	50	8
Diagnosis	--	46	8	46	--	--	--
Progress Monitoring	8	85	8	--	--	--	--

* CORE = Consortium on Reading Excellence

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

   □ I do (coach) 100   □ K teacher(s) --   □ Literacy facilitators 23

   □ Principal --   □ 1st grade teacher(s) --   □ District staff   15

   □ Paraprofessionals 54   □ 2nd grade teacher(s) --   □ Other: 8

   □ Administrative/ support staff   8   □ 3rd grade teacher(s) --

   □ Specialists (Title I, ELL, Special Ed, etc.) 23   □ 4th -6th grade teachers --

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

   □ I do (coach) 54   □ K teacher(s) 62   □ Literacy facilitators --

   □ Principal --   □ 1st grade teacher(s) 69   □ District staff   --

   □ Paraprofessionals 31   □ 2nd grade teacher(s) 69   □ Other: --

   □ Administrative/ support staff   --   □ 3rd grade teacher(s) 77

   □ Specialists (Title I, ELL, Special Ed, etc.) 38   □ 4th -6th grade teachers 38

On average, how often are students in each of the following groups progress-monitored at your school?	Weekly	Every 2 weeks	Every 3 weeks	Every 4 weeks	Every 6 weeks	Every 7 weeks or less often	Never
31. Benchmark	--	--	--	33	8	50	8
32. Strategic	--	46	8	46	--	--	--
33. Intensive	8	85	8	--	--	--	--

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

I use the results of reading assessments (such as the DIBELS) when… *	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Always	I don't do that
34. communicating with teachers about their students.	--	--	--	62	38	--
35. communicating with teachers about their instruction.	--	--	25	58	17	8
36. making decisions about student grouping.	--	--	--	33	67	8
37. modifying lessons from the core program.	--	30	60	--	10	23
38. identifying which students need interventions.	--	--	--	15	85	--
39. matching struggling students to the correct intervention for their needs.	--	--	23	31	46	--
40. monitoring student progress in interventions.	--	--	8	31	62	--
41. helping teachers tailor instruction to individual student needs (i.e. differentiated instruction).	--	--	33	42	25	8
42. looking at schoolwide (K-3) trends.	--	--	--	58	42	8
43. meeting with parents.	--	25	33	25	17	8

Note that frequency percentages are for those respondents indicating they engage in the activity.

SECTION C: COMMUNICATION AND COLLABORATION

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

- ☐ I am (coach)   100
- ☐ Principal   100
- ☐ ELL teacher(s)   --
- ☐ Special ed teacher(s)   69
- ☐ Title I teacher(s)   46
- ☐ Parent(s)   15
- ☐ Paraprofessional(s)   15

- ☐ K teacher(s)   100
- ☐ Grade 1 teacher(s)   100
- ☐ Grade 2 teacher(s)   100
- ☐ Grade 3 teacher(s)   100
- ☐ Grade 4-6 teacher(s)   62
- ☐ District representative(s)   --
- ☐ Other: 8
- ☐ We don't have a RLT   --

45. This year, how often does your school have RLT meetings, on average? **(select one)**
- ☐ Never   8
- ☐ Once or a few times a year   8
- ☐ Every other month   15
- ☐ Once a month   46
- ☐ Every other week   15
- ☐ Once a week   8
- ☐ More than once a week   --

46. How many reading study groups has your school held this year?
- ☐ None   --
- ☐ 1-2   31
- ☐ 3-4   31
- ☐ 5-6   23
- ☐ 7 or more   15

SECTION D: ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

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

47. As a reading coach, how many hours a week do you work at this job, on average?
> Average = 49

48. On average, how many hours per week do you spend on the following tasks? Please write in the number of hours next to each task and add up to make sure the TOTAL equals the number in Question 21 above. Then bubble in your hours for each task in the section just below.

On average, how many hours per week do you spend on the following 15 tasks? Please write the number in the box and bubble in the number just below it. A single number such as "9" should go in the right-hand column.

Includes all coaches

Average Hours	Range (Hours)	
8	2-17	A. Coordinating or administering reading assessments
8	2-22	B. Managing data (entering data, creating charts, etc.)
8	3-22	C. Reviewing and using reading assessment data
4	0-10	D. Attending professional development or state-level meetings
8	2-14	E. Planning for and attending RLT and grade-level meetings
4	2-8	F. Training groups of teachers in grades K-3
21	7-39	G. Observing, demonstrating or providing feedback to

		individual teachers in grades K-3
4	0-13	H. Observing, demonstrating or providing feedback to individual teachers in grades 4-6
2	0-6	I. Training groups of teachers in grades 4-6
5	1-10	J. Planning interventions
13	1-30	K. Providing interventions directly to students
3	0-13	L. Covering or subbing for teachers
8	0-12	M. Paperwork (not including assessment/data management)
1	0-2	N. Bus/recess duty
3	2-17	O. Other: _____

This translates into the following percentages of their work week:

Average Percent	Range (Percent)	
8	2-17	A. Coordinating or administering reading assessments
8	2-22	B. Managing data (entering data, creating charts, etc.)
8	3-22	C. Reviewing and using reading assessment data
4	0-10	D. Attending professional development or state-level meetings
8	2-14	E. Planning for and attending RLT and grade-level meetings
4	2-8	F. Training groups of teachers in grades K-3
21	7-39	G. Observing, demonstrating or providing feedback to individual teachers in grades K-3
4	0-13	H. Observing, demonstrating or providing feedback to individual teachers in grades 4-6
2	0-6	I. Training groups of teachers in grades 4-6
5	1-10	J. Planning interventions
13	1-30	K. Providing interventions directly to students
3	0-13	L. Covering or subbing for teachers
8	0-12	M. Paperwork (not including assessment/data management)
1	0-2	N. Bus/recess duty
3	0-17	O. Other: _____

SECTION E: THE READING FIRST CLASSROOM

Please indicate the number of minutes (do not round).

Grade	How many minutes long is the reading block?	Are at least 90 minutes uninterrupted?
49.Kindergarten	<90 minutes: 36 =90 minutes: 46 >90minutes: 18	□ Yes 58 □ No 42
50. First	<90 minutes: -- =90 minutes: 67 >90minutes: 33	□ Yes 83 □ No 17
51. Second	<90 minutes: -- =90 minutes: 67 >90minutes: 33	□ Yes 92 □ No 8
52. Third	<90 minutes: -- =90 minutes: 64 >90minutes: 36	□ Yes 100 □ No --

53. Does your school use walk-to-read (students walk to another teacher for reading instruction) during the 90-minute block?

- □ Yes, in all or nearly all classes 23
- □ Yes, in some grades or classes but not all 54
- □ No, not at all 23

54. During the reading block, <u>most</u> instruction is at students':

- □ Grade level 69
- □ Instructional level 31

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

When you observe K-3 classrooms during reading, with what proportion of teachers do you regularly see:	No or very few teachers	Some teachers	Most teachers	All teachers
55. Use of the core program	--	8	15	77
56. Use of the templates	15	8	15	62
57. Differentiated instruction	15	46	31	8
58. Nonsense word practice	54	31	8	8
59. Quick transitions from activity to activity	--	15	85	--

60. Modeling of the work or thinking process	--	46	54	--
61. Guiding students with effective questioning	--	25	67	8
62. Providing multiple practice opportunities for students	--	23	62	15
63. Effective classroom management	--	8	92	--
64. Disruptive student behavior	38	46	8	8
65. Monitoring of student understanding	--	23	69	8
66. Provision of clear, direct and frequent feedback	--	23	69	8

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

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

Total = 705

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

Total = 472

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

	<20	20-39	40-59	60-79	80-99	100
69. Intensive	--	--	--	--	27	73
70. Strategic	--	8	--	8	17	67

71. If fewer than 100 percent of eligible students receive interventions, what are the primary obstacles your school faces? **(select all that apply)**
   - □ Insufficient staffing   30
   - □ Lack of trained staff   30
   - □ Student transportation/bussing (limits before/after school options)   10
   - □ Available space in the building   10
   - □ Teacher resistance   --
   - □ Lack of parental support   --

☐ Other   10
☐ 100 of eligible students receive interventions   40

72. Who <u>regularly</u> provides interventions at your school? **(select all that apply)**

☐ I do (coach) 67	☐ K teacher(s) 42	☐ Literacy facilitators 17
☐ Principal --	☐ 1st grade teacher(s) 33	☐ District staff --
☐ Paraprofessionals 92	☐ 2nd grade teacher(s) 33	☐ Volunteers 8
☐ Administrative/ support staff 8	☐ 3rd grade teacher(s) 33	☐ Paid tutors 17
☐ Specialists (Title I, ELL, Special Ed, etc.) 58	☐ 4th -6th grade teachers 25	☐ Other: --

73. What is the largest number of **intensive** students that work at one time with an intervention provider? *(bubble in number)*

SECTION F: YOUR VIEWS ON READING FIRST

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

This year…	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
74. My role as the reading coach is clearly defined.	--	25	17	50	8
75. Most teachers at my school understand the role of the reading coach.	--	17	25	50	8
76. Our principal is a visible advocate for reading.	--	17	--	42	42
77. I am very comfortable observing teachers and providing constructive feedback.	--	--	--	92	8
78. Reading First would not run smoothly without the RLT.	--	25	50	25	--
79. Major initiatives (programs or grants) in our district contradict or are not aligned with Reading First.	17	42	17	25	--
80. I strongly support the instructional changes that are occurring under Reading First.	--	--	--	42	58
81. Overcoming teacher resistance to Reading First has been a challenge for me.	8	8	8	69	8

This year…	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
82. I have significant philosophical or pedagogical objections to the approach of Reading First.	23	69	8	--	--
83. In my view, Reading First overemphasizes the importance of using DIBELS results.	15	46	31	8	--
84. I think that the DIBELS is a valid, accurate indicator of student reading ability.	--	--	8	77	15
85. I am fully confident that before each benchmark testing period, all members of our assessment team thoroughly understand the administration and scoring of the DIBELS.	--	--	15	69	15
86. Our school has an organized system for administering the DIBELS and other Reading First assessments.	--	--	8	54	38
87. Our school has an organized system for analyzing and sharing the results of the DIBELS and other Reading First assessments with teachers.	--	--	8	92	--
88. Our school has an organized system for reviewing reading assessment data that have been disaggregated (split up) by key demographic variables (i.e. race/ethnicity or ELL status).	--	15	69	15	--
89. I am pleased that our school has a Reading First grant.	--	--	--	54	46
90. Participating in Reading First has helped my school develop a more collaborative culture.	--	--	8	67	25
91. Attending grade-level reading meetings is a good use of my time.	--	8	8	62	23
92. Attending RLT meetings is a good use of my time.	--	8	15	54	23
93. Attending study groups is a good use of my time.	--	15	15	46	23
94. I am very satisfied with the core reading program we are using at our school.	--	--	--	62	38
95. I believe that reading instruction at my school has improved noticeably.	--	--	--	54	46
96. Teachers at my school have the knowledge and skills necessary to modify and supplement the core program to meet the needs of all ELL students.	--	17	50	33	--
97. Our Reading First program is doing an excellent job meeting the needs of our Native American students.	--	--	45	27	27
98. The intervention materials we use are well-matched to the needs of our struggling readers.	8	--	31	46	15
99. Our school's intervention providers are well-trained to meet the needs of struggling readers.	--	31	8	54	8

This year…	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
100. As a school, we're doing an excellent job of providing appropriate reading interventions to all students who need them.	--	23	23	46	8
101. Instruction in other subjects has suffered because of all of the focus on Reading First.	--	23	23	46	8
102. State project staff (director, State Reading Specialists) are responsive to my school's needs.	--	--	15	69	15
103. The State Reading Specialist's support and input has been extremely valuable.	--	--	23	54	23
104. I trust our State Reading Specialist with any information – good or bad – about our reading program.	--	--	--	62	38
105. Our State Reading Specialist understands our school, our programs and culture, and takes that into account when making recommendations.	--	--	23	38	38
106. I believe that all of the instructional changes we made under Reading First will be sustained after the grant is over.	--	--	38	54	8
107. I am pleased with the amount of support we have received from the state to address sustainability.	--	15	38	31	15

SECTION G: DEMOGRAPHICS

108. What is your current position?
- □ Part-time reading coach --
- □ Full-time reading coach   100

109. Is there another reading coach at your school?
□ Yes 8 □ No 92

110. If yes, does this reading coach also work with K-3 reading teachers?
□ Yes -- □ No 100

111. How many total years of coaching experience do you have (including this year)?
Average 3   Range 1-5

112. How many years have you been the reading coach at this school (including this year)?
Average 2   Range 1-5

113. How many years have you worked at this school (in any capacity, including this year)?
    Average   8   Range   2-29

114. How many years of teaching experience do you have (prior to becoming a coach)?
    Average   15   Range   2-34

115. What are your educational credentials? (select as many as apply)
    □   Bachelor's degree   100
    □   Reading certification   58
    □   Master's Degree - in reading   33
    □   Master's degree - in area of education other than reading   17
    □   Master's degree - n discipline other than education   --
    □   Doctorate (Ph.D. or Ed.D.)   --

Thank you for your support of the evaluation!

MONTANA READING FIRST
TEACHER SURVEY 2007

131 of approximately 128[1] teachers from 13 out of 13 schools responded to the survey. Unless otherwise noted, all or almost all respondents answered each item.

SECTION A: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

1. Did you attend the 2006 Reading First Summer Institute?
   ☐ No 8   ☐ Yes – some of it 2   ☐ Yes – all of it 90

If you attended some or all of the 2006 Reading First Summer Institute, please indicate below your agreement or disagreement with each of the following statements. Otherwise, please skip to question 7 below.

The Reading First Summer Institute…	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
2. was very relevant to my work.	--	1	5	58	36
3. was mostly review for me.	3	41	25	25	6
4. consisted of high-quality presentations.	--	5	10	55	29
5. provided me with instructional strategies I have used in my classroom.	--	3	5	61	32
6. included adequate opportunities to reflect and share with my colleagues.	--	4	11	62	23

---

[1] Number of K-3 teachers as reported by principals. Some teachers who taught grades 4-6 but provided instruction during the reading block to grades K-3 may have been included.

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

Over the 2006-2007 school year, how helpful was/were: *	Never Helpful	Rarely Helpful	Sometimes Helpful	Usually Helpful	Always Helpful	Did Not Take Place
7. training in the core program from the publisher?	2	13	22	37	26	63
8. demonstration lessons provided by your reading coach?	2	4	15	29	50	19
9. feedback on your instruction provided by the <u>coach</u> after observation of your classroom?	2	4	15	32	47	10
10. feedback on your instruction provided by the <u>principal</u> after observation of your classroom?	5	10	29	23	33	22
11. assistance from the coach in administering and scoring student assessments?	2	3	12	20	63	9
12. assistance from the coach in interpreting assessment results?	--	5	9	29	58	4
13. assistance from the coach in providing quality interventions?	3	2	16	29	51	4
14. assistance from the coach in monitoring the effectiveness of interventions?	3	5	15	28	40	7
15. attending study groups about reading?	2	13	27	31	28	8
16. training segments that you watched on Knowledge Box?	3	12	30	34	21	5

*Note that helpfulness ratings are for those respondents indicating the activity took place.

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

☐ Phonemic awareness 6
☐ Phonics 8
☐ Fluency 24
☐ Vocabulary 15
☐ Comprehension 54
☐ Student engagement 46

☐ Working with ELL students 27
☐ Differentiated instruction 52

☐ Using the core program effectively 9
☐ Using supplemental programs effectively 32
☐ Using intervention programs effectively 38
☐ Administering and scoring assessments 10
☐ Interpreting assessment results 15
☐ Using assessment results to drive instruction 24

☐ Other: 2

SECTION B: STUDENT ASSESSMENTS

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

I use the results of reading assessments (such as the DIBELS) when... *	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Always	I don't do that
18. grouping students into small instructional groups within my classroom.	1	3	8	44	43	6
19. communicating with colleagues about reading instruction and student needs.	--	1	16	38	45	--
20. looking at school-wide (K-3) trends.	1	5	16	45	34	6
21. meeting with parents.	3	9	29	32	27	2
22. modifying lessons from the core program.	6	16	25	30	23	11
23. identifying which students need interventions.	--	1	5	27	67	3
24. matching struggling students to the correct intervention for their needs.	--	1	7	39	53	5
25. monitoring student progress in interventions.	--	--	12	25	64	5

Note that frequency percentages are for those respondents indicating they engaged in the activity.

SECTION C: THE READING FIRST CLASSROOM

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

__ Homogeneous – students are mostly at about the same level and have similar instructional needs.   47

__ Heterogeneous – students are at a wide variety of levels and have differing instructional needs.   53

27. On a typical day, how many students are in your classroom during the reading block?
Range 1-24   Mean=14

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

This year, how often did...	Never	Once or a few times a year	Once a month	2-3 times a month	1-3 times a week	Daily
28. the principal observe your classroom during the reading block?	1	13	20	21	38	7
29. the principal provide you with specific and constructive feedback on your instruction?	20	35	18	14	11	2

This year, how often did…	Never	Once or a few times a year	Once a month	2-3 times a month	1-3 times a week	Daily
30. the reading coach observe your classroom during the reading block?	3	8	13	23	38	15
31. the reading coach provide you with specific and constructive feedback on your instruction?	9	21	18	23	23	6
32. another teacher observe your classroom during the reading block?	43	50	3	1	1	2
33. you observe another teacher's reading lesson?	57	40	2	--	1	1
34. paraprofessionals work with you during the reading block?	54	6	--	2	6	33
35. you look at reading assessment data?	--	3	19	36	33	9
36. you attend a grade-level meeting?	1	8	13	42	35	1
37. you need to use the 90-minute reading block to work on non-reading instruction or tasks? (i.e. writing, science, math, field trips, administrative tasks)	71	23	3	--	2	1
38. you attend a reading study group?	8	49	30	10	2	--
39. you watch or use materials from Knowledge Box?	8	37	20	17	11	7

40. This year, how often did the principal attend your grade-level meetings?
- ☐ Never 16
- ☐ Seldom 22
- ☐ Sometimes 13
- ☐ Usually 24
- ☐ Always 25

41. This year, how often did the coach attend your grade-level meetings?
- ☐ Never 1
- ☐ Seldom 2
- ☐ Sometimes 12
- ☐ Usually 11
- ☐ Always 74

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

	I don't know what this is.	Not at all part of my teaching	Occasionally part of my teaching	Sometimes a part of my teaching	Regular part of my teaching
42. Use of my school's core reading program	--	1	1	4	94
43. Following the precise language in the teachers' manual.	--	2	6	20	72
44. Use of the templates	2	3	7	16	74
45. Differentiated instruction during the 90-minute reading block	1	16	19	24	40
46. Small group instruction during the reading block	--	18	11	21	50
47. Phonemic awareness activities	1	3	7	7	83
48. Nonsense word practice	1	33	23	25	19
49. Time during the reading block for students to practice oral reading fluency	--	--	5	15	80
50. Timed fluency assessments during the reading block.	2	21	13	19	47
51. A focus on "tier two" vocabulary words	2	2	21	30	45
52. Vocabulary practice that includes use of examples and non-examples	--	4	18	27	51
53. Provision of background knowledge to prepare students before they read a new text	2	2	14	24	60
54. Comprehension questions that ask for literal recall	1	--	3	26	71
55. Comprehension questions that ask for higher-order thinking skills	1	2	9	33	57
56. Explicit modeling of the work or thinking process before students try something new	1	1	4	29	67
57. Adjustment of activities or practice, based on how students answered previous questions	--	1	6	26	68
58. Immediate correction of students when they make an error	--	--	2	13	86

*Note that frequency percentages are for those respondents indicating they know what the item refers to.

SECTION D: MEETINGS AND COLLABORATION

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

At my school's **grade-level reading** meetings…	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
59. we discuss the issues of teaching and learning that we, the participants, identify as important.	1	3	6	42	48
60. all participant comments and viewpoints are welcomed.	1	5	10	35	50
61. we discuss the reasons for doing things, not just the requirements.	2	6	10	39	43

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

☐ Yes (please continue). 56	☐ No (please skip to Section E). 41	☐ There is no RLT at my school (please skip to Section E). 2

63. Which of the following topics do you typically discuss at RLT meetings? *(select as many as apply)*

- ☐ Talk about <u>schoolwide</u> reading assessment data   90
- ☐ Talk about <u>student-level</u> reading assessment data   83
- ☐ Share about reading research (articles, ideas, etc.)   55
- ☐ Exchange information about what is going on at the school in reading   81
- ☐ Receive information from the coach and principal about what is going on with Reading First at the state level (i.e. from their "monthly meetings")   84
- ☐ Make decisions about what reading materials to use/purchase   46
- ☐ Make decisions about instruction for specific students   41
- ☐ Make decisions about instruction within or across grades   49
- ☐ Plan special reading events, family literacy activities   46
- ☐ Plan for sustainability, or what will happen when the school no longer has Reading First funds   32
- ☐ Other   19

Please indicate your level of agreement.

At my school's **Reading Leadership Team** meetings…	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
64. all participant comments and viewpoints are welcomed.	--	10	10	39	41
65. we discuss the reasons for doing things, not just the requirements.	1	7	15	42	34

SECTION E: YOUR VIEWS ON READING FIRST

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

This year…	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
66. Participating in Reading First has helped my school develop a more collaborative culture.	1	8	20	43	28
67. Our school has a visible and effective Reading Leadership Team.	6	7	23	44	21
68. Attending grade-level reading meetings is a good use of my time.	1	9	17	51	23
69. Attending Reading Leadership Team (RLT) meetings is a good use of my time.	2	6	40	41	12
70. Attending reading study groups is a good use of my time. *Includes only RLT members in responses	1	4	27	14	53
71. Overall, the professional development I received through Reading First was sustained and intensive.	2	10	17	53	19
72. Overall, the professional development I received through Reading First this year focused on what happens in the classroom.	2	5	10	64	19
73. I am very satisfied with the core reading program we are using at our school.	1	3	8	58	30
74. I believe that reading instruction at my school has improved noticeably.	--	1	8	50	41
75. I think the DIBELS is a valid, accurate indicator of student reading ability.	2	12	15	58	13
76. Our school has an organized system for <u>administering</u> the DIBELS and other Reading First assessments.	--	2	9	52	37

This year…	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
77. Our school has an organized system for <u>analyzing and sharing</u> the results of the DIBELS and other Reading First assessments with teachers.	1	2	10	55	33
78. This year I have seen our school's reading assessment data <u>disaggregated</u> (split up) by key demographic variables (i.e. race/ethnicity or ELL status).	8	29	36	21	7
79. Reading First has significantly changed the way I teach reading.	1	4	12	43	40
80. The intervention materials we use are well-matched to the needs of our struggling readers.	1	8	33	47	12
81. Our school's intervention providers are well-trained to meet the needs of struggling readers.	2	8	23	41	26
82. As a school, we're doing an excellent job of providing appropriate reading interventions to all students who need them.	4	10	22	44	20
83. I have significant philosophical or pedagogical objections to the approach of Reading First.	13	43	29	10	6
84. Our principal is a visible advocate for reading.	5	4	16	44	31
85. In my view, Reading First overemphasizes the importance of using DIBELS results.	4	22	29	32	13
86. Our reading coach is a knowledgeable resource about reading research and practices.	2	5	12	40	40
87. Even when providing critical feedback, I feel our reading coach is an ally in helping me to improve my instruction.	2	7	13	36	42
88. Our reading coach has helped me become more reflective about my teaching practice.	3	11	17	41	27
89. Our reading coach has increased my understanding of how children learn to read.	4	9	31	37	20
90. I would like our reading coach to come in my classroom and work with me more often than s/he does.	6	24	49	13	9
91. I am pleased that our school has a Reading First grant.	2	7	16	43	32
92. I feel that I have a voice in our school's decision-making about Reading First.	9	18	28	30	15
93. Instruction in other subjects has suffered because of all of the focus on Reading First.	2	2	17	49	29
94. I strongly support the instructional changes that are occurring under Reading First.	1	6	35	41	16

This year…	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
95. I feel that Reading First puts excessive emphasis on the involvement of the principal in instructional matters.	6	25	42	20	7
96. Our Reading First program is doing an excellent job meeting the needs of our Native American students.	2	5	42	37	14
97. I have the knowledge and skills necessary to modify and supplement the core program to meet the needs of my ELL students.	--	11	48	33	8
98. When our school no longer has Reading First funding, I think that I will to go back to more or less the way I was teaching reading before.	26	48	23	3	1

SECTION F: SUSTAINABILITY

	In your opinion, once your school no longer has the Reading First grant, should the following program components continue?			
	Definitely not	Probably not	Probably yes	Definitely yes
99. Core program	1	1	33	66
100. 90-minute reading block	2	10	33	56
101. DIBELS	2	10	45	44
102. Reading coach	12	19	31	38
103. Ongoing professional development in reading	0	6	43	51
104. Grouping	0	2	29	70
105. Interventions	2	5	19	74
106. Grade-level meetings	0	8	43	50
107. RLT	2	14	52	31

SECTION H: DEMOGRAPHICS

108. What is your primary teaching role this year? *(select one)*
    ___ Regular classroom teacher   85
    ___ Specialist (select one)
        ___ Speech/language   --
        ___ Language arts/reading (e.g., Title I, reading specialist)   8
        ___ Library   --
        ___ Special education   5
        ___ ESL/bilingual   --
    ___ Paraprofessional   2
    ___ I do not work directly with students   --

109. This year, which grade(s) do you teach <u>during the reading block</u>? For example, you
    might teach first and second grade students. (select all that apply).
    ☐   Grade K   ☐   Grade 1   ☐   Grade 2   ☐   Grade 3   ☐   Other
           24   29   30   29   8
    ☐   I do not provide direct classroom instruction during the reading block.   2

110. This year, what is the grade level of the material you teach from <u>during the reading
    block</u>? (select all that apply.) For example, you might teach using the second grade
    Open Court materials.
    ☐   Grade K   ☐   Grade 1   ☐   Grade 2   ☐   Grade 3   ☐   Other
           24   35   32   27   15
    ☐   I do not provide direct classroom instruction during the reading block.   2

111. How many years teaching experience do you have?   Range 1-44, Mean=14
    Five percent were first year teachers.

112. How many years have you worked at this school?   Range 1-44, Mean=10
    Eleven percent were in their first year in the school.

Thank you for your support of the evaluation!

MONTANA READING FIRST
COHORT I PRINCIPAL SURVEY 2007

19 of 20 principals returned surveys. Unless otherwise noted, all or almost all coaches responded to each item.

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1. How frequently did you attend Reading First professional development or state meetings this year?
   - o did not attend *(skip to Q5)*
   - o once   16
   - o twice   68
   - o 3 time   11
   - o 4 times   --
   - o 5 or more times 5

If you attended any Reading First training, please answer the following questions.

I am very pleased with…	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
2. the <u>quality</u> of training in instructional leadership that I received through the state and Reading First this year.	--	--	5	90	5
3. the <u>amount</u> of training in instructional leadership that I received through the state and Reading First this year.	--	5	16	79	--

4. If you were not pleased, was there too much or too little? (n=2)	□ Too much	□ Too little
	--	100

Please indicate the frequency with which you use reading assessment results.

I use the results of reading assessments (such as the DIBELS) when…*	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Always	I don't do that
5. communicating with teachers about their students.	--	--	6	44	50	5
6. communicating with teachers about their instruction.	--	5	21	32	42	--
7. looking at school-wide (K-3) trends.	--	--	6	6	89	5

Note that frequency percentages are for those respondents indicating they engage in the activity.

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

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
8. Major initiatives (programs or grants) in our district contradict or are not aligned with the reading program in our school.	42	42	5	10	--
9. Overcoming teacher resistance to continuing the Reading First program has been a challenge for me.	10	58	--	26	5
10. I strongly support the instructional changes made under Reading First.	--	--	--	26	74
11. Our district supports the continuation of Reading First practices in our school.	5	--	10	37	47
12. Our school has an organized system for <u>administering</u> the DIBELS and other Reading First assessments.	--	--	--	16	84
13. Our school has an organized system for <u>analyzing and sharing</u> the results of the DIBELS and other Reading First assessments with teachers.	--	--	--	47	53

14. How many K-3 teachers are on your staff this year? Mean= 10, Range 4-20

15. Of those teachers, how many were new to the school this year? Mean=1, Range=0-4

Teacher turnover averaged 9 percent, with a range of 0-36 percent. Eight of 19 schools had no teacher turnover last year.

16. How many years have you been principal at this school? Mean= 5, Range 2-13

17. How many years were you principal at any school with a RF grant (including your current school)? Mean=5, Range=0-13

Thank you for your support of the evaluation!

MONTANA READING FIRST
COHORT I COACH SURVEY 2007

17 of 17[1] coaches returned surveys. Unless otherwise noted, all or almost all coaches responded to each item.

1. How frequently did you attend Reading First professional development or state meetings this year?
    - o   did not attend *(skip to Q5)*   --
    - o   once   12
    - o   twice   59
    - o   3 times   12
    - o   4 times   12
    - o   5 or more times   6

If you attended any Reading First training, please answer the following questions.

I am very pleased with…	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor	Agree	Strongly Agree
2. the <u>quality</u> of training in coaching methods that I received through Reading First this year.	6	18	12	41	24
3. the <u>amount</u> of training in coaching methods that I received through Reading First this year.	12	18	29	35	6
4. If you were not pleased, was there too much or too little? (n=7)	□ Too much --		□ Too little 100		

5. How <u>frequently</u> this year has your school received Reading First <u>technical assistance</u> from state project staff (e.g., state reading specialists)?
    - o   did not take place *(skip to Q7)*   12
    - o   once   6
    - o   twice   35
    - o   3 times   12
    - o   4 times   6
    - o   5 or more times   29

---

[1] While there are 20 cohort 1 schools, three of those schools did not have a school-based reading coach in 2006–2007.

6. How helpful was technical assistance from state project staff (e.g., state reading specialists)
    o never helpful   --
    o rarely helpful   7
    o sometimes helpful   13
    o usually helpful   33
    o always helpful   47
    o did not take place   --

Please indicate the number of minutes (do not round).

Grade	How many minutes long is the reading block?	Are at least 90 minutes uninterrupted?
7. Kindergarten	60=33, 90=53, >90=13	□ Yes □ No
8. First	90=93, >90=7	□ Yes □ No
9. Second	90=93 > 90=7	□ Yes □ No
10. Third	90=93 >90=7	□ Yes □ No

11. Our K-3 teachers continue to teach from the same core reading program(s) we used last year.
    ☐ Yes   100
    ☐ No   --

12. Fidelity to the core program is ____ than last year.
    ☐ Higher than   25
    ☐ About the same   69
    ☐ Less strict   6

13. Does your school have a Reading Leadership Team?
    ☐ Yes   100
    ☐ No   --

14. How often did your RLT meet, on average? *(select one)*
    ☐ Never   6
    ☐ Once or a few times a year   6
    ☐ Every other month   24
    ☐ Once a month   59
    ☐ Every other week   6
    ☐ Once a week   --
    ☐ More than once a week --

15. Did your school administer the DIBELS assessment in the fall, winter, and spring?
    ☐ Yes, to all K-3 students   100
    ☐ Yes, to some K-3 students   --
    ☐ No   --

16. In about what proportion of K-3 classrooms at your school would you say that regular progress-monitoring is implemented?

- ☐ All classrooms   65
- ☐ Nearly all classrooms   18
- ☐ About three-quarters of classrooms   12
- ☐ About half of classrooms   --
- ☐ About a quarter of classrooms   --
- ☐ Fewer than a quarter of classrooms   --
- ☐ No classrooms   6

17. How many students will have received **intensive interventions** this year (from September 2006 to June 2007)?
"Intensive interventions" occur outside the reading block, <u>at least 2 hours per week for at least 6 weeks</u>. Count any individual student only once, even if he/she has received interventions for more than one session or term. If you do not have exact numbers, please provide the best estimate that you can.   Total = 810

18. How many other students *(not counted in the previous question)* will have received **less intensive interventions** (outside the reading block, less than two hours per week and/or less than six weeks)?   Total = 560

19.   This year we have provided interventions to

- ☐ Substantially more students than last year   6
- ☐ Slightly more students than last year   29
- ☐ About the same number of students as last year 47
- ☐ Slightly fewer students than last year   18
- ☐ Substantially fewer students than last year --

20. As a reading coach, how many hours a week do you work at this job, on average?
Responses from full-time coaches only (n=12)
Average 45, Range 40-52

21. On average, how many hours per week do you spend on the following tasks?
Responses for full-time coaches only (n=12). Hours converted to percent of time.

Mean 12%, Range 4-26	Coordinating or administering reading assessments
Mean 10%, Range 3-20	Managing data (entering data, creating charts, etc.)
Mean 9%, Range 3-17	Reviewing and using reading assessment data
Mean 2%, Range 0-5	Attending professional development
Mean 6%, Range 2-12	Planning for and attending RLT and grade-level meetings
Mean 4%, Range 2-10	Training groups of teachers in grades K-3
Mean 17%, Range 8-30	Observing, demonstrating or providing feedback to individual teachers in grades K-3
Mean 9%, Range 0-30	Observing, demonstrating or providing feedback to individual teachers in grades 4-6
Mean 2%, Range 0-4	Training groups of teachers in grades 4-6

Mean 8%, Range 2-19   Planning interventions
Mean 7%, Range 0-45   Providing interventions directly to students
Mean 2%, Range 0-4   Covering or subbing for teachers
Mean 7%, Range 2-20   Paperwork
Mean 2%, Range 0-9   Bus/recess duty
Mean 2%, Range 0-10   Other:

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

This year…	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
22. I am very satisfied with the core reading program we are using at our school.	--	18	6	29	47
23. I strongly support the instructional changes made under Reading First.	--	--	--	29	71
24. I am fully confident that before each benchmark testing period, all members of our assessment team thoroughly understand the administration and scoring of the DIBELS.	--	--	--	18	82
25. Our school's intervention providers are well-trained to meet the needs of struggling readers.	--	6	--	59	35
26. As a school, we're doing an excellent job of providing appropriate reading interventions to all students who need them.	--	--	6	88	6

27. What is your position at this school?
- [ ] Full time coach   71
- [ ] Part time coach   29
- [ ] Principal *(skip to Q31)*   --
- [ ] Assistant principal *(skip to Q31)* --

28. How many years have you been coach at this school? [fill in #]
Average 4, Range 1-8

29. How many years have you been a Reading First coach at any school? [fill in #]
Average 4, Range 1-9

30. What grades do you regularly work with? *(choose all that apply)*

  ☐   K   88
  ☐   1   88
  ☐   2   88
  ☐   3   94
  ☐   4   59
  ☐   5   53
  ☐   6   24
  ☐   7 and above]   --

Thank you for your support of the evaluation!

MONTANA READING FIRST
COHORT I TEACHER SURVEY 2007

192 out of approximately 219 teachers from 19 of 20 schools returned surveys. Unless otherwise noted, all or almost all respondents answered each question.

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

This year, how often did…	Never	Once or a few times a year	Once a month	2-3 times a month	1-3 times a week	Daily
1. the principal observe your classroom during the reading block?	1	14	13	18	36	18
2. the principal provide you with specific and constructive feedback on your instruction?	12	29	22	21	14	3
3. the reading coach observe your classroom during the reading block?	8	25	19	22	19	8
4. the reading coach provide you with specific and constructive feedback on your instruction?	12	24	18	27	14	5
the reading coach observe your classroom during the reading block? (for teachers in schools with coaches, n=	4	26	20	22	19	8
the reading coach provide you with specific and constructive feedback on your instruction? (for teachers in schools with coaches, n=	8	25	19	28	15	5
5. attend a grade-level reading meeting?	2	10	30	39	18	2
6. you look at reading assessment data?	1	6	23	30	32	8
7. This year, how often did you need to use the 90-minute reading block to work on non-reading instruction or tasks? (i.e. writing, science, math, field trips, administrative tasks)	62	26	5	1	1	6

8. This year, the **amount** of professional development I received in reading was…
   - □ much more than last year   5
   - □ slightly more than last year   5
   - □ about the same as last year   23
   - □ slightly less than last year   37
   - □ much less than last year   29

9. This item removed from analysis due to a printing error in the response categories.

I use the results of reading assessments (such as the DIBELS) when…*	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Always	I don't do that
10. grouping students into small instructional groups within my classroom.	2	3	16	32	48	7
11. communicating with colleagues about reading instruction and student needs.	--	3	14	40	44	1
12. looking at schoolwide (K-3) trends.	2	5	30	27	35	4
13. identifying which students need interventions.	--	1	4	18	78	2

Note that frequency percentages are for those respondents indicating they engage in the activity.

14. This year, I used the core reading program during the reading block:
- ☐ More than last year   19
- ☐ About the same as last year   81
- ☐ Less than last year   1

15. This year, I used the templates during the reading block:
- ☐ More than last year   36
- ☐ About the same amount as last year   38
- ☐ Less than last year   2
- ☐ I don't use the templates   25

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

This year…	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
16. Overall, the professional development I received in reading this year was sustained and intensive.	6	21	30	40	3
17. Overall, the professional development I received in reading this year focused on what happens in the classroom.	4	8	23	56	8
18. Our principal is a visible advocate for reading.	1	3	7	35	54
19. Our school has a visible and effective Reading Leadership Team.	2	8	20	40	29
20. Attending grade-level reading meetings is a good use of my time.	3	9	16	52	21
21. I strongly support the instructional changes made under Reading First.	3	6	22	46	22

22. Our school has an organized system for <u>administering</u> the DIBELS and other Reading First assessments.	1	2	2	29	66
23. Our school has an organized system for <u>analyzing and sharing</u> the results of the DIBELS and other Reading First assessments with teachers.	2	3	4	38	54
24. I am very satisfied with the core reading program we are using at our school.	4	7	16	38	35
25. Our school's intervention providers are well-trained to meet the needs of struggling readers.	3	8	11	39	39
26. As a school, we're doing an excellent job of providing appropriate reading interventions to all students who need them.	2	11	9	41	37

27. What is your primary teaching role this year? *(select one)*
        ___ Regular classroom teacher   92
        ___ Specialist (select one)
            ___ Speech/language   --
            ___ Language arts/reading (e.g., Title I, reading specialist)   5
            ___ Library   1
            ___ Special education   3
            ___ ESL/bilingual   --
        ___ Paraprofessional   --
        ___ I do not work directly with students --

28. This year, which grade(s) do you teach <u>during the reading block</u>? For example, you might teach first and second grade students. (select all that apply).
    ☐   Grade K   ☐ Grade 1   ☐ Grade 2   ☐ Grade 3   ☐ Other
        24   29   28   25   4
    ☐   I do not provide direct classroom instruction during the reading block. 2

29. How many years teaching experience do you have? Average =16, Range=1-39
    Four percent of teachers were in their first year of teaching.

30. How many years have you worked at this school? Average = 11, Range= 1-36
    Seven percent of teachers were new to their school.

Thank you for your support of the evaluation!

Appendix B

Interview Instruments

Coach Interview
Principal Interview
Teacher Focus Group Interview

| **Montana Reading First** |
| **Coach Interview 2007** |

Professional Development & Technical Assistance

1.   Of the Reading First coach and principal meetings held by the state that you have attended this year:

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

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

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

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

3.   State Reading Specialists:

(a) To what degree have the services provided by your State Reading Specialist(s) been helpful? (Please explain.)

(b) What is the relationship (tone, feeling) between the State Reading Specialists and your school? (Please explain.)

Coaching Role

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

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

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

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

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

6. How do you select which teachers you work with?

7. How do you work with resistance?

Buy-In

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

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

Communication and Collaboration

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

11. a) Out of all K-3 grade-level meetings, do you attend: All, most, some, few, or none? *(select one)*
    □ All
    □ Most
    □ Some
    □ Few
    □ None

    b) What is your role at those meetings?

Data and Assessment

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

       □   None

(b) Would you say you do all, most, some, little, or none of K-3 reading data management (entering data, making charts) at your school? *(select one)*
- □ All
- □ Most
- □ Some
- □ Little
- □ None

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

13. Administration and scoring of the DIBELS:

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

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

Instruction and Interventions

14. <u>Fidelity:</u>

(a) What does fidelity mean to you?

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

(c) If so, how?

15. (a) What have been the biggest achievements in your school's intervention program this year?

(b) What have been the biggest challenges?

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

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

Native American Learners

18.   a) What are the challenges to meeting the needs of Native American students in your school?

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

         b) What additional support do you need?

Overall

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

Montana Reading First
Principal Interview 2007

Professional Development & Technical Assistance

1.   Of the Reading First coach and principal meetings held by the state that you have attended this year:

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

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

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

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

3.   To what degree have state project staff (Debbie and people in her office) been responsive to your needs?

Leadership

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

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

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

   Example if necessary: After a training on templates, how do you know they are using templates and doing so correctly?

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

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

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

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

   (d) How does conducting walk-thrus help you as an instructional leader?

   (e) What do teachers learn from your walk-thrus? How do you think it affects their instruction?

8.   On the survey you will receive this spring, you'll be asked whether or not you agree with the following statement, "Our district provides sufficient support for Reading First."

    (a) Would you strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree? *(select one)*
- □   Strongly agree
- □   Agree
- □   Disagree
- □   Strongly disagree

    (b) Why?

9.   Has your district provided other training in reading – either concurrent with Reading First or in the recent past – that philosophically or pedagogically is a mismatch with the Reading First approach?   If yes, please explain.

Buy-In

10.   How would you describe teachers' buy-in to Reading First?
- □   High
- □   Medium/Mixed
- □   Low

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

Communication & Collaboration

12.   Do you think that attending RLT meetings is a good use of your time? Why or why not?

13.   What about grade-level meetings; is it a good use of your time to attend them? Why or why not?

Sustainability

14.   FOR CONTINUING SCHOOLS ONLY:

        (a) What is the typical level of turnover of K-3 teachers in your building? (percentage)

        (b) How do you bring new teachers up to speed on Reading First?

15.   (a) What has the state done this year to help you address sustainability beyond the life of the RF grant?

        (b) Have they helped you develop a plan?

16.   What is your school doing to address sustainability?

17.   What else is or will be necessary for your school to maximize sustainability?

Overall

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

1. There is a lot of talk in Reading First about this word "fidelity." At your school, to what degree are you expected to maintain fidelity to the core program? In your opinion, are these expectations reasonable?

2. How do your principal and/or reading coach know if you are really using the instructional strategies and materials you have been trained in through Reading First?

3. I assume that students in your classrooms have different needs; even those whose assessment results put them at about the same instructional level. To what extent does your teaching situation permit you to provide sufficient differentiated instruction to students during the reading block?

4. Establishing effective intervention systems has been a challenge for some Reading First schools.

   In your school's intervention program, what is working well and what is not working?

5. There are many different ways that Reading First coaches work in schools.

   Some of the things that coaches do include: administering assessments, working with data, working with teachers in their classrooms on their instruction by observing and giving feedback, setting up and monitoring interventions, providing interventions directly to students, training groups of teachers, giving demonstration lessons, or conducting grade-level and other meetings.

   Has your coach helped you change your instruction? If so, how?

6. FOR SCHOOLS IN YEARS 2-4 OF IMPLEMENTATION (NOT NEW SCHOOLS)

Imagine that next year your school no longer has a reading coach. What happens to…

      a) The core program?

      b) Assessment and data use?

      c) Grade-level meetings?

      d) Interventions?

      e) RLT?