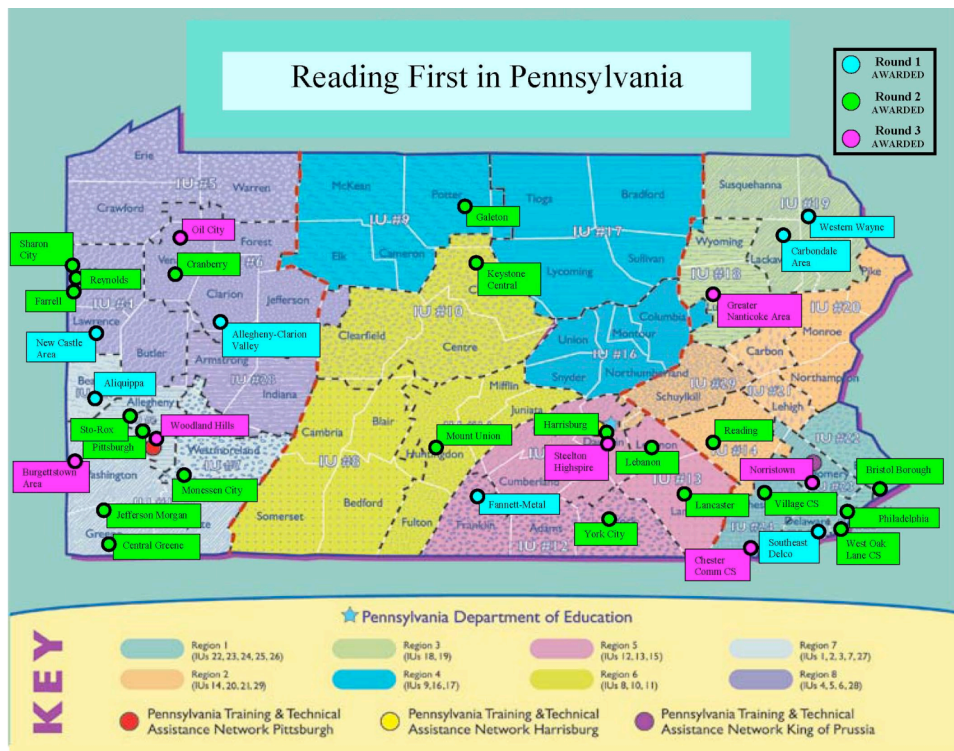# EXTERNAL EVALUATION OF
READING FIRST IN PENNSYLVANIA

Annual Report
Project Year 4: 2006-07

November 2007

Contractor: University of Pittsburgh
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**REPORT ON THE EXTERNAL EVALUATION OF
READING FIRST IN PENNSYLVANIA
Year 3: 2006-07**

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The Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) Reading First Grant (CFDA #84.357) was funded in July 1, 2002. However, funds for sub grants to school districts were not authorized until after January 1, 2003, making the 2002-03 academic year the baseline year for the project. Between July 1, 2002 and July 1, 2003, 28 Local Education Authorities (LEAs) across the state were Reading First (RF) Grant Recipients. These included 151 public schools and 2 Charter Schools. The External Evaluation contract was awarded in October 2003. The first Annual Report submitted in November 2004 summarized baseline data for 2002-03 and data collected during and after the first year of Reading First implementation. This report represents a summary of Reading First for the 2006-07 school year, after a fourth year of implementation when 159 schools participated in Reading First.

Introduction

The purpose of the Reading First External Evaluation is twofold:

1. To document the effectiveness of state and local Reading First initiatives for all students through an analysis of student outcomes, school outcomes and district outcomes, reported for aggregated and disaggregated groups of students.

2. To document processes and procedures used by the state education agency and the local education agencies in implementing their Reading First plans. We will to describe what was done well and what could be done better to make the Reading First initiative successful in Pennsylvania.

Three Components to the Evaluation

The External Evaluation report focuses on two aspects of implementation, as well as student outcomes that can be attributed to Reading First. The External Evaluation addresses the following questions:

1. What are student outcomes in Reading First schools?
2. Are schools implementing the 'elements' of Reading First?
3. What is the Pennsylvania Department of Education doing to facilitate the implementation of Reading First?

The report ends with recommendations for improving the implementation and outcomes of Reading First in Pennsylvania.

External Evaluation of PA Reading First: 2006-2007

Part 1: What are student outcomes that can be attributed to Reading First implementation?

The questions of central interest in Part 1 of this Annual Report focus on the effect on student reading performance of being named a Reading First school and receiving a Reading First grant. Our aim is to establish whether Reading First is making a difference for students in schools that received Reading First grants.

Measures of student progress. The student outcome data in this report were obtained from year-end outcome measures, a fall screening measure, and progress monitoring. The reading vocabulary and reading comprehension subtests from the Terra Nova were used to provide outcome measures at the end of 1st and 2nd grades, and the reading portion of the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) was used as the outcome measure in 3rd grade. Subtests from the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) were used as screening and progress monitoring measures in all Pennsylvania Reading First schools. The DIBELS was administered three times a year. The measures for which data are provided include:

1. *Phoneme Segmentation Fluency* (PSF)– this is a slightly more advanced measure of phonemic awareness. It tests children's ability to pronounce the individual phonemes (sounds) in words that have three and four phonemes (e.g., cat, man, rest). Administered fall of 1st grade

2. *Nonsense Word Fluency* (NWF)– this is a measure of children's knowledge and skill in applying the alphabetic principle. Children can earn points either by giving the individual sounds represented by the letters in simple non-words or by blending the sounds together and pronouncing the nonword as a whole word (i.e. bim, ral, stob). Administered fall of 1st grade

3. *Oral Reading Fluency* (ORF)– this is a measure of children's ability to read grade level text fluently and accurately. Children receive a score based on the number of words in a passage they can read accurately in one minute. Administered fall of 2nd and 3rd grades; spring of 1st, 2nd, and 3rd grades

Schools used in the analyses. During the 2006-07 school year, 159 elementary schools including 3 charter schools and schools from 32 public school districts were funded to implement Reading First. Among those were schools in their fourth year of implementation, schools in their third year of implementation, and re-constituted schools in their first or second year of implementation. For this External Evaluation, we report some data for all 159 schools, and some for subsets of schools by year of implementation.

In 2006-2007 there were a total of 47,240 students in grades K-3 statewide. This is an increase of 1,864 students from the 2005-2006 school year. Overall, there were twelve schools new to Reading First in 2006-2007 and twelve RF schools that closed at the end of the 2005-2006 school year. Of the remaining schools, 60 had an increase in enrollment ranging from +1 to + 921 students and 82 schools had a decrease in enrollment ranging from -1 to -233 students.

Table 1 provides demographic data for students attending the 159 schools that implemented Reading First in 2006-07. Just over one-third of Reading First school districts (37.1%) were classified as Urban Fringes of Mid-size or Large Cities. An additional 34.3% of the districts were classified as Rural or Small Town locales. The remaining districts were classified as Large Towns/Mid-size Central Cities (17.1%) or Large Central Cities (11.4%). The racial/ethnic composition of the districts varied as well. Nearly half (44.5%) of the K-3 students in Pennsylvania's Reading First schools were Black/African American. The next largest demographic group (27.9%) was comprised of Hispanic/Latino students. Nearly 25% of the state's Reading First population was White non-Hispanic/Latino, and 2.2% of the students were Asian.

In 2006-2007 there were a total of 4,978 ELL/LEP students in grades K-3 statewide. This is a decrease of 12 students from the 2005-2006 school year. Forty-four RF schools had an increase in enrollment of ELL/LEP students and 43 schools had a decrease in enrollment of ELL/LEP students. During the 2006-2007 school year 63% (100/159) of schools had ELL/LEP students in attendance. Across all RF schools, 11.8% of students were labeled Limited English Proficiency. There were a total of 5,022 students receiving special education services in grades K-3 in RF schools during the 2006-2007 school year. All schools reported at least one student with an IEP enrolled in their school. The percentage of special education students ranged from <1% to 45% across all RF schools. There were 40/159 schools in which special education students accounted for 15% or more of their total enrollment. There was an increase of 117 students with an IEP from 2005-2006 to 2006-2007. Sixty-five schools had an increase in the percentage of special education students compared to the total population and 58 schools had a decrease in percent special education. Overall, 10.9% of the Reading First student population was classified as Special Education students.

Table 1. Demographic Data for Pennsylvania Reading First Schools By Year of Implementation

	Number of Students				Percent FRL[1]				Percent Minority[2]			
	1st year	2nd year	3rd year	4th year	1st year	2nd year	3rd year	4th year	1st year	2nd year	3rd year	4th year
Grade 1		10,565	11,228	12,423		86.4%	70.2%	66.7%		76.9%	76.8%	75.7%
Grade 2		9,895	10,668	11,764		86.0	70.2	68.7		77.1	76.9	75.6
Grade 3	10,655	10,176	10,252	11,831	84.0	85.2	69.4	68.4	75.2	76.3	76.4	74.9

	Percent LEP[3]				Percent IEP[4]			
	1st year	2nd year	3rd year	4th year	1st year	2nd year	3rd year	4th year
Grade 1		10.9%	11.5%	11.6%		7.6%	8.7%	9.1%
Grade 2		10.7	11.9	11.9		10.7	10.9	11.0
Grade 3	10.0	9.8	11.7	11.8	14.3	14.4	13.5	15.7

Despite considerable student mobility, student demographics were very similar across years of Reading First implementation.

[1] FRL means eligible for free or reduced lunch

[2] Minority is the combination of all categories except White-non-Hispanic/Latino

[3] LEP means classified as limited English proficiency

[4] IEP means student with a disability (not gifted) assigned to special education

End-of-Year Achievement Outcomes

The basic goal of Reading First is to bring all students to grade level reading performance. The question that is most basic is:

> **When all students attending Reading First schools are assessed, is there an increase in performance at each grade level in each successive year in which Reading First is implemented?**

This first question asks whether progress is being made toward the ultimate Reading First goal*.*

End-of-year DIBELS raw scores on oral reading fluency measures were available for grades 1, 2, and 3. Mean Standard Scores on the Terra Nova Reading subtests of vocabulary and comprehension were available for students at the end of grades 1 and 2 and mean scaled score data were available for third graders on the PSSA.

The data show that at all three grade levels, DIBELS oral reading fluency scores have steadily improved over the four years. Also, third grade students in Reading First schools show a steady gain in mean performance on the PSSA Reading subtest. Scores on the Terra Nova Reading Vocabulary and Reading Comprehension at 1st grade and in Reading Vocabulary at 2nd grade show small improvements in student performance from year 1 to year 2, but then virtually no change from Year 2 to Year 3 to Year 4. Mean scores in Reading Comprehension on the Terra Nova second grade showed a slight *decline* over the four-year period.

Table 2. Mean Scores on Reading Outcomes over 3 years of Reading First Implementation

Outcome Measure	School Year								Difference 03-04 to 06-07
	03-04		04-05		05-06		06-07		
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	
First Grade									
DIBELS - ORF	40.3	29.9	43.6	33.1	45.2	31.7	45.6	32.4	5.3
TerraNova - Reading	571.5	41.7	574.8	43.9	574.2	43.8	576.5	43.2	5.0
TerraNova - Vocab	532.1	51.3	538.1	53.4	536.8	54.1	538.6	54.9	6.5
Second Grade									
DIBELS - ORF	74.4	36.3	78.2	37.2	80.3	37.5	80.3	37.8	5.9
TerraNova - Reading	599.2	37.6	599	37.8	597.7	38.5	598.9	37.6	-0.3
TerraNova - Vocab	575.9	43.2	578.2	43.9	577.4	46.5	578.9	44.5	3.0
Third Grade									
DIBELS - ORF	88.8	36.2	93.6	35.8	96.0	36.8	96.6	37.9	7.8
PSSA - Reading	1158.4	187.7	1173.5	213.5	1180.7	231.4	1246.6	142.7	88.2

Summary. The answer to the first question, *when all students attending Reading First schools are assessed, is there an increase in performance at each grade level in each successive year in which Reading First is implemented?* is "Yes," for seven of eight indicators. The improvements in the Oral Reading Fluency measure at each grade level are the most remarkable. However, Reading Comprehension scores (from the second grade Terra Nova) are virtually unchanged.

Another way of asking the question of whether students in Reading First schools fared better after implementation of Reading First would be to ask:

Is there a higher percentage of students meeting grade level standards at the end of each succeeding year in each grade level (1, 2, 3)?

This question is important because average scores are not used in Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) reports; rather, AYP is calculated in terms of the percent of students who are considered Proficient (i.e., meeting grade level standards). Again, data were available from the Oral Reading Fluency (ORF) DIBELS subtest and Terra Nova Reading subtests of vocabulary and comprehension for 1st and 2nd grades. Using the DIBELS benchmark for "low risk" and the 40th percentile as the cut-off for "meeting grade level standards" in 1st and 2nd grade, the percentage of students meeting grade level standards statewide on each of the outcome measures in Reading First schools was calculated. In addition, data were available for these schools for a Baseline year, Year 1, Year 2, Year 3 and Year 4 spring testing on the PSSA. The percentage of 3rd graders meeting proficiency in reading in Reading First schools was calculated for the five time periods. These data are reported in Table 3.

Table 3. Percentage of students "on grade level" on outcome measures

Outcome Measure	Base-line 02-03	03-04		04-05		05-06		06-07		Difference 03-04 to 06-07
		Total Spring	Percent "on grade"	Total Spring	Percent "on grade"	Total Spring	Percent "on grade"	Total Spring	Percent "on grade"	
First Grade										
DIBELS - ORF		10,297	46.6	10,415	55.4	10,292	50.5	12,077	50.6	4.0
TerraNova - Reading		10,491	55.8	10,555	58.5	10,431	59.2	12,392	60.2	4.4
TerraNova - Vocab		10,405	49.5	10,290	53.6	10,295	55.4	12,186	53.8	4.3
Second Grade										
DIBELS - ORF		9,726	36.0	9,815	40.1	9,774	42.7	11,269	43.5	7.5
TerraNova - Reading		9,872	49.4	9,507	48.6	9,849	47.9	11,542	48.7	-0.7
TerraNova - Vocab		9,724	46.5	9,886	48.9	9,563	49.4	11,325	49.4	2.9
Third Grade										
DIBELS - ORF		10,009	30.0	9,612	33.7	9,389	30.0	10,835	39.8	9.8
PSSA - Reading	31.3%	10,648	33.2	9,972	39.6	9,846	41.7	11,360	50.4	17.2

The ORF data for 1st grade show 4% more students meeting benchmark in spring 2007 than in spring 2004; in 2nd grade the increase was 7.5%. In 3rd grade, the improvement in

Year 4 was nearly 10% more RF students meeting benchmark in 3rd grade ORF from 2004 to 2007. Comparisons of 2004 and 2007 Terra Nova data show small increases in the range of 3%-4% in the percentage of students on grade level in reading vocabulary in 1st and 2nd grade, and a small increase (4.4%) in the percentage of 2nd graders who scored on grade level in reading comprehension. The percentage of 2nd graders on grade level in reading comprehension in 2006-07 was lower than the 2004 level.

On the PSSA, percentage on grade level in reading went from 31.3% in spring 2003 to 33.2% in spring 2004 (+ 1.9%) to 39.6% in the spring of 05 (+6.4%), to 41.7% in spring 2006, to 50.4% in the spring of 07. The total change from baseline to end of Year 2 implementation showed an increase of 17.2% in students meeting proficiency on 3rd grade reading. To put the gains in perspective we looked at changes in percent of third grades meeting proficiency statewide over the same period. 2005 was the first year in which Pennsylvania reported publicly the third grade results; on average 68% of third graders across the state scored Proficient on the PSSA. In 2006, the percent scoring proficient had increased by 1% to 69%. In 2007, the percent scoring proficient had increased to 71%, an increase of 3% over the three-year period. In Reading First schools, scores went from 39.6% Proficient in 2005, to 50.4% Proficient in 2007, an increase of 10.6% or 3.5 times more in the same time period.

Summary. The answer to this second question, *Is there a higher percentage of students meeting grade level standards at the end of each succeeding year in each grade level (1, 2, 3)?* is also "Yes". The most dramatic change is seen in the statewide assessment (PSSA) at 3rd grade which showed that, after four years of implementation, there was an increase of more than 17% in the percent of students performing at Proficient/Advanced over the baseline year and the rate of change for third graders in Reading First schools far exceeded the rate of change for third graders in schools across the Commonwealth.

A third question of great importance is:

> *Is there a smaller percentage of students who finish the year below some minimum standard of competence in each successive year that Reading First is implemented?*

The point of this question is to determine whether there are fewer students at serious risk of reading failure once Reading First has been implemented. To answer this question, we identified the percentage of students whose scores on the DIBELS placed them "at serious risk," or whose scores on the Terra Nova reading subtests or the 3rd grade PSSA test fell below the 20th percentile. Those data are reported in Table 4.

Table 4. Percentage of students at "serious risk" (below the 20th percentile) on spring 07 outcome measures

Outcome Measure	03-04		04-05		05-06		06-07		Difference 03-04 to 05-06
	Total Spring	Percent "at high risk"	Total Spring	Percent "at high risk"	Total Spring	Percent "at high risk"	Total Sping	Percent "at risk"	
First Grade									
DIBELS – ORF	10,297	19.1	10,415	15.3	10,292	22.7	12,077	23.1	4.0
TerraNova – Reading	10,491	24.0	10,555	22.5	10,431	22.0	12,392	21.1	-2.9
TerraNova – Vocab	10,405	28.9	10,290	26.1	10,295	26.4	12,186	27.5	-1.4
Second Grade									
DIBELS – ORF	9,726	42.4	9,815	39.7	9,774	36.3	11,269	34.4	-8.0
TerraNova – Reading	9,872	26.1	9,507	26.6	9,849	26.5	11,542	25.5	-0.6
TerraNova - Vocab	9,724	27.1	9,886	25.2	9,563	25.2	11,325	25.6	-1.5
Third Grade									
DIBELS - ORF	10,009	36.8	9,612	31.4	9,389	38.2	10,835	28.5	-8.3
PSSA - Reading	10,648	43.8	9,972	38	9,846	35.4	11,360	31.3	-12.5

At 3rd grade, data were also available for the baseline year (2002-03). In that year, 44.3% of students were at "high risk" on the PSSA, scoring below the 20th percentile on the 3rd grade statewide test.

On seven of the eight outcome measures, the percentage of students in the serious-risk category dropped from 2003-04 to 2006-07. In reading comprehension at 2nd grade, the percentage of students scoring below the 20th percentile changed very little (26.1% to 25.5%) across the four years; on six other outcome measures, the decline in percent at serious risk ranged from 1.4% (on the Terra Nova Vocabulary subtest in Grade 1) to 12.5% (on the third grade PSSA). In oral reading fluency at the first grade level, the percent of RF students scoring at serious risk (below the 20th percentile) *increased* from Year 1 to Year 4 by 4%.

> **_Summary._** The answer to this third question, *Is there a smaller percentage of students who finish the year below some minimum standard of competence in each successive year that Reading First is implemented?* is also "Yes" for seven of eight indicators, with a decline of more than 10% in PSSA reading at third grade.

Reading Outcomes by Demographic Group

Tables 5 and 6 present the end-of-year reading outcome data for disaggregated groups by minority status, eligibility for free and reduced lunch (FRL), limited English proficiency (LEP), and disability status (IEP). Table 5 provides DIBELS and Terra Nova data from spring 2007 and the discrepancies in achievement for 04-05, 05-06, and 06-07. Table 6 provides PSSA data and achievement gaps for spring 2004, spring 2005, spring 2006, and spring 2007.

Table 5. Mean Scores on Reading Outcomes by Disaggregated Group (Spring 2007

Outcome Measure	Scores in 06-07		Achievement Gap: Mean Difference Between		
	Minority	Not minority	Non-Minority / Minority		
First Grade			04-05	05-06	06-07
DIBELS - ORF	41.4	58.13	12.84	14.00	16.73
TerraNova - Reading	570.25	592.79	22.78	22.54	23.23
TerraNova - Vocab	532.18	559.05	27.65	26.87	27.06
Second Grade					
DIBELS - ORF	75.3	55.56	14.94	17.49	-19.74
TerraNova - Reading	593.74	614.44	19.89	20.70	21.99
TerraNova - Vocab	572.34	597.52	23.31	25.18	24.96
Third Grade					
DIBELS - ORF	40.1	92.67	14.00	16.78	52.57

Outcome Measure	Scores in 06-07		Achievement Gap: Mean Difference Between		
	FRL	Not FRL	No Free Reduced Lunch / FRL		
First Grade			04-05	05-06	06-07
DIBELS - ORF	41.77	53.36	9.15	10.58	11.59
TerraNova - Reading	571.32	599.03	27.30	27.71	26.29
TerraNova - Vocab	533.07	568.56	33.58	35.49	34.31
Second Grade					
DIBELS - ORF	76.87	88.97	9.45	11.13	12.1
TerraNova - Reading	595.13	618.76	24.82	23.63	23.15
TerraNova - Vocab	574.20	601.88	30.48	27.68	28.26
Third Grade					
DIBELS - ORF	93.12	104.29	8.31	12.64	11.17

Outcome Measure	Scores in 06-07		Achievement Gap: Mean Difference Between		
	LEP	Not LEP	Non-LEP / LEP		
First Grade			04-05	05-06	06-07
DIBELS - ORF	32.45	47.49	17.15	16.46	15.04
TerraNova - Reading	554.42	578.24	31.31	23.82	31.41
TerraNova - Vocab	508.12	542.25	37.46	34.13	35.8
Second Grade					
DIBELS - ORF	65.03	82.77	23.54	24.73	17.74
TerraNova - Reading	574.91	601.83	25.82	26.92	27.06
TerraNova - Vocab	545.75	582.70	32.92	36.95	38.42
Third Grade					
DIBELS - ORF	84.69	98.65	22.67	21.54	13.96

Outcome Measure	Scores in 06-07		Achievement Gap: Mean Difference Between		
	IEP	Not IEP	Non-IEP / IEP		
First Grade			04-05	05-06	06-07
DIBELS - ORF	34.80	46.10	14.35	12.30	11.3
TerraNova - Reading	559.25	577.51	24.69	18.26	20.78
TerraNova - Vocab	516.98	541.00	27.43	24.02	24.10
Second Grade					
DIBELS - ORF	61.87	81.45	26.38	28.19	19.58
TerraNova - Reading	573.59	602.16	28.53	28.57	28.37
TerraNova - Vocab	548.55	582.49	30.38	33.94	33.66
Third Grade					
DIBELS - ORF	71.30	98.28	30.98	32.60	26.98

Table 6. Mean Scores on PSSA Reading Outcomes by Disaggregated Group

PSSA - Reading	Mean Standard Scores				Change 03-04 to 06-07
	2003-2004	2004-05	2005-2006	2006-2007	
Minority	1,125.75	1140.99	1,148.08	1225.86	100.11
Non-minority	1,256.72	1278.32	1,289.48	1308.91	52.19
Achievement Gap	130.97	137.33	141.40	83.05	-47.92
Eligible FRL	1,135.69	1,150.11	1,158.35	1231.46	95.77
Not Eligible FRL	1,277.24	1,306.67	1,303.64	1316.83	39.59
Achievement Gap	141.55	156.56	145.29	85.37	-56.18
LEP	1,040.54	1,031.57	1,042.88	1179.93	139.39
Non-LEP	1,171.51	1,188.40	1,196.83	1255.31	83.8
Achievement Gap	130.97	156.83	153.95	75.38	-55.59
Disability	1,030.67	1,019.66	1,003.59	1147.63	116.96
No Disability	1,179.64	1,198.82	1,209.89	1263.68	84.04
Achievement Gap	148.97	179.16	206.30	116.05	-32.92

On all measures, there is still a significant gap between the scores of minority and non-minority students, economically disadvantaged and non-economically disadvantaged students, English language learners and native speakers, and students with and without disabilities. However, as Table 5 illustrates, the gap between the scores of students with IEPs and those without IEP are narrowing slightly on the Terra Nova (except for Reading at 2nd grade) and on the DIBELS ORF measures. This probably reflect the vigorous efforts across the state to increase the academic achievement of students with disabilities, so that they are not the subgroup that keeps schools from meeting Adequate Yearly Progress targets. And, English language learners are catching up to native speakers on the oral reading fluency measure at all three grade levels. Table 6 shows that the achievement gap on the PSSA decreased substantially for all disaggregated groups in 2007 with students from minority groups, students eligible for free/or reduced lunch, English language learners, and students with IEPs making substantially more progress in the four years of RF than "majority" students.

Summary. In general, the disaggregated data show that the achievement gap is narrowing in Reading First schools for IEP and LEP (ELL) subgroups on measures of oral reading fluency in grades 1, 2, and 3, and on selected Terra Nova measures. On the 3rd grade statewide assessment in reading, the achievement gap was reduced for *all* disaggregated groups. Minority students and economically disadvantaged students made at least twice as much average gain in PSSA achievement than did non-minority or non-economically disadvantaged students; English language learners and students with IEPs made 1.5 times the gains in average PSSA reading as did native speakers and students without disabilities. On other measures of achievement, however, the data for students from minority groups and students eligible for free and/or reduced lunch are not as positive. At almost all grade levels, the achievement gap is static or increasing slightly.

Variability Across Reading First Schools

Because Reading First is a school-level initiative, in addition to presenting summary data for the state as a whole, it is important to show the variability across schools in the amount of improvement they made over the four years of Reading First implementation. Improvement, or success, is defined by two variables: (1) increasing the percentage of students performing at grade level and (2) reducing the number of students performing below the 20th percentile. The data used in constructing these variables are averaged across grade levels 1, 2, and 3 by school using scores from the Terra Nova Reading subtest and the PSSA reading. For each school, the percent of students performing "on grade level" and the percent of students performing "at risk" were calculated for each grade, for each of the four years of implementation. Then by grade level and variable, a "slope of improvement" was calculated (using simple regression) representing the rate of change on each of the two improvement variables for each of the three grade levels. For each school, the three slopes representing changes in the percent of students performing at grade level in grades one, two, and three were averaged. The three slopes representing changes in the percent of students scoring at risk in grades one, two and three were also averaged.

In Figure 1, each dot represents a school that has completed three or four years of Reading First implementation and has had students in first grade, second grade and third grade during all RF implementation years. There are 136/159 schools in the analysis[5]. The position of a school on the vertical axis shows slope of change in the percent of students at grade level (performing at or above the 40th percentile) from Year 1 to Year 4. The position of a school on the horizontal axis shows the slope of change in the percentage of students "seriously behind" (below the 20th percentile) from Year 1 to Year 4. The distribution of schools on this graph shows the great variability on these two dimensions for the 136 RF schools.

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[5] Missing from the analysis are a majority of the Pittsburgh Public schools that were reconstituted in 2007 and several RF schools that do not serve first, second, or third graders.
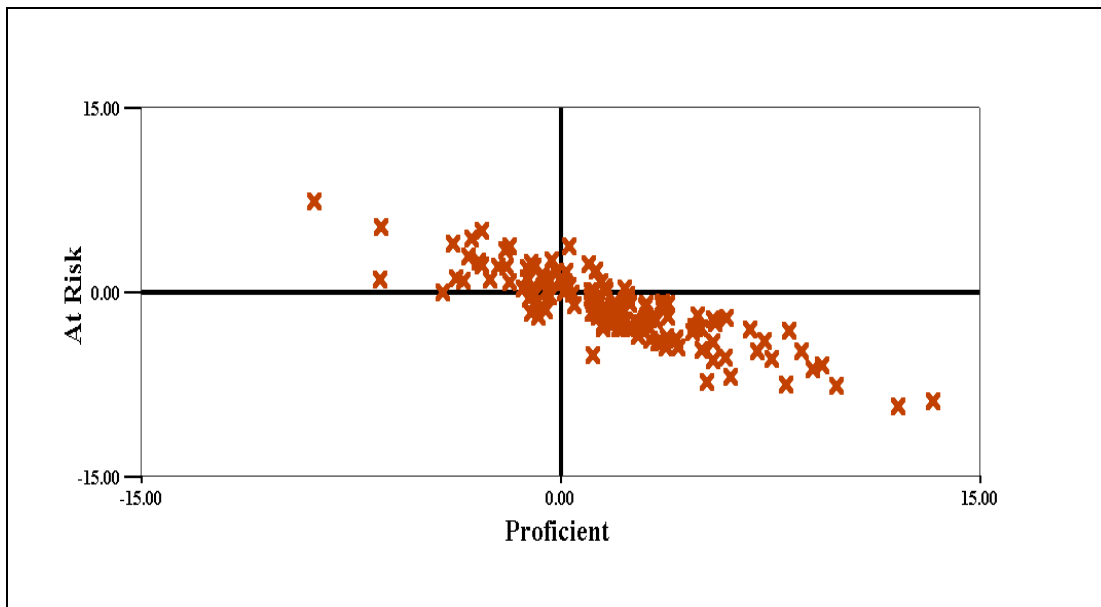
Figure 1. Slopes of changes in the Percentage of Students at Grade Level plotted against slopes of changes in the Percentage of Students at High Risk in Reading by School Averaged Across Grades 1-3, for spring achievement scores in 2004, 2005, 2006, and 2007.

Summary: Many Reading First schools (85/136 or 62.5%) were successful in accomplishing the two goals of Reading First: an increase in the percentage of students at grade level and a reduction in the percentage of their students who were seriously below grade level. These schools are displayed on the bottom right quadrant of Figure 1. Overall, 97/136 schools (71.3%) showed an increasing trend in the percent of students at or above grade level (schools to the right of the vertical zero midline). More than two thirds of the schools (88/136) showed a decreasing trend in the percentage of students at serious risk (schools below the horizontal zero midline). Nevertheless, the 33 schools in the top, left quadrant not only _decreased_ the percentage of students performing at grade level but also _increased_ the percentage of students in the 'at risk' category. On this particular criterion of improvement, these 33 schools are in serious trouble, and a careful exploration of RF implementation in these schools will be required so that an action plan to reverse these trends can be developed.

Part 2: Are schools implementing the 'key elements' of RF?

Early in their first year of implementation, all Reading First schools and districts received an explicit list of seven "non-negotiable requirements" as part of their Reading First implementations. These form the basis for our evaluation of Reading First implementation. Data for this component of the evaluation come from several sources: annual progress reports completed by each school; coaches' logs submitted three times each year; classroom observations completed on a subset of schools; a survey/questionnaire sent to all Reading First teachers; a survey/questionnaire sent to parents of students in Reading First schools; interviews with principals; and logs submitted by TAs. This part of the report reviews compliance with and degree of implementation of the seven non-negotiable implementation features for the 159 schools participating in Reading First during 2006-07.

1. **Core reading program for all students in K-3 and for special education K-12 that meets scientifically based requirements.**

    Although every school implementing Reading First is committed to having a scientifically based core-reading program, there continue to be some schools that have not selected a published basal series to accomplish this element of Reading First implementation. Table 7 below lists those 15 schools and characterizes the reading programs implemented in those schools. These 15 schools are in 3 different school districts and reflect various levels of improvement. Three of the Harrisburg SD schools, the Lebanon SD school, and all of the Norristown SD schools have increased the percent of students scoring at the proficient level and decreased the percent of students at risk over the years of implementing RF. One additional Harrisburg school has increased the percent proficient, but also increased the percent at risk. The six remaining Harrisburg SD schools have shown a *decrease* in the percent of students proficient on spring assessments over time, and an *increase* in the percent of students at risk.

Table 7. Schools That Did Not Adopt a Published Core Reading Program.

School District	School	Reading Program
Harrisburg City School District	Ben Franklin	Uses "Cross-walk" consisting of read-alouds, shared reading, guided reading, independent reading, and word study.
Harrisburg City School District	Camp Curtain School	
Harrisburg City School District	Downey School	
Harrisburg City School District	Foose School	
Harrisburg City School District	Hamilton School	
Harrisburg City School District	Lincoln School	
Harrisburg City School District	Marshall School	
Harrisburg City School District	Melrose School	
Harrisburg City School District	Scott School	
Harrisburg City School District	Steel School	
Norristown School District	Gotwals Elementary School	Uses "NASD" Comprehensive Literacy Framework.
Norristown School District	Hancock Elementary School	
Norristown School District	Marshall Street School	
Norristown School District	Whitehall Elementary School	
Lebanon School District	Harding Elementary School	Zaner Bloser: Voices

2. **Assessment system is in place and includes screening, diagnosis, progress monitoring and outcome assessments. Analyses of assessment data are used to guide instruction.**

Based on the information provided in the 2006-2007 Progress Report, all schools have an assessment system in place. For screening, all schools completed fall DIBELS testing. For diagnosis, each school reported using ERDA or another evaluation instrument for evaluating students' reading problems in more depth. As for progress monitoring, all schools reported monitoring benchmark students' progress at least three rounds of DIBELS per school year. For students who are at-risk for reading failure, progress monitoring occurred more frequently in most schools.

3. Each RF LEA and each RF school has a functioning Leadership Team.

All but two RF schools responded to the Progress Report question about whether School Level Leadership Teams had met at least once during the 2006-07 school year. Eight schools reported "no" School Level Leadership Team Meetings in their Progress Report; one elementary school (Foose Elementary in Harrisburg SD) reported more than 40 leadership meetings during 06-07.

4. Each RF school should have a position designated as a Literacy/Reading Coach. The RF coach should be assigned no more than 25 teachers. Reading coaches should have broad knowledge, skills, and experience in literacy instruction.

Information in this section comes from the following data sources: demographic information submitted by coaches, logs completed by coaches, teacher questionnaires, questionnaires completed by coaches, and the Annual Progress Report submitted by each school. In this section we discuss information about coaches and their responsibilities; we also analyze data from teachers that provide some insight about responses in schools to the coaches and their roles.

Meeting the Requirement. In the 2006-07 school year, there were 186 Reading First Coaches in the 159 RF PA schools. Although every Reading First school in Pennsylvania has at least one person designated as the Literacy Coach, there is variation in the numbers of schools and teachers they serve (see Table 8). Full time coaches (89.6%) may be assigned to several schools or they may work with teachers at levels above third grade in addition to their K-3 RF responsibilities. A part-time coach (10.4%) may have teaching responsibilities for half a day in kindergarten or as a Reading Recovery teacher. There were only 18 new coaches (~10%) in the 2006-07 school year; the remainder were in their second, third, or fourth year of coaching in RF schools. The experience level of the coaches is reflected in their rate of participation in personal professional development during the 2006-07 school year. Coaches spent an average of about 3 hours per week attending PD sessions in 2006-07 (See Figure 2). Only six Reading First coaches enrolled as participants in the PA on-line courses intended for coaches. Three coaches were enrolled in *Coaching, Part I* only. One coach was enrolled in *Coaching, Part I* and *Coaching, Part II*. Two coaches were enrolled in *Coaching, Part I, Coaching, Part II,* and *Problem-Based Approach to K-3 Literacy Coaching.*

Table 8. Who are the RF Coaches?

2005-2006 Reading Coach Data	Percent (N=190)	2006-2007 Reading Coach Data	Percent (N=186)
Full Time	83.7	Full Time	89.6
Part Time	16.3	Part Time	10.4
Coaches with 2 or More Schools	11.6	Coaches with 2 or More Schools	7.4
Second Year RF Coaches	20.0	Second Year RF Coaches	22.5
Third Year RF Coaches	48.9	Third Year RF Coaches	25.8
Fourth Year RF Coaches	11.6	Fourth Year RF Coaches	31.5
		Fifth Year RF Coaches	10.1
Years of Teaching Experience		**Years of Teaching Experience**	
0-5	4.7	0-5	5.0
6-12	25.3	6-12	26.9
13-20	27.4	13-20	27.7
21+	42.6	21+	40.5
Level of Education		**Level of Education**	
B.A. Only	21.5	B.A. Only	21.2
Masters	75.9	Masters	77.1
Doctoral	2.6	Doctoral	2.1
Other Resources in School Reading Specialist	70.0	**Other Resources in School** Reading Specialist	65.9

Coaches' Responsibilities. Coaches kept extensive logs for three 3-week periods at the beginning, middle and end of the 2006-07 school year. These logs enabled us to track the activities of coaches and their responses to their role. Coaches were expected to complete 45 daily logs over the year. Although there are 186 coaches in the RF schools, we report data from the 179 coaches (94%) from whom we received at least 30 logs; some coaches provided only a few logs or provided no logs at all. Figure 2 provides a summary of coach time logs per week across 9 weeks of the 2006-07 school year.

The four major activities of coaches in an average week were: attending and leading meetings (4.3 hours); planning (3.3 hours); assessing (3.1 hours); and attending professional development (2.9 hours). The one activity among the ones just mentioned which is specifically a "professional development" role was that of attending (and leading) meetings.
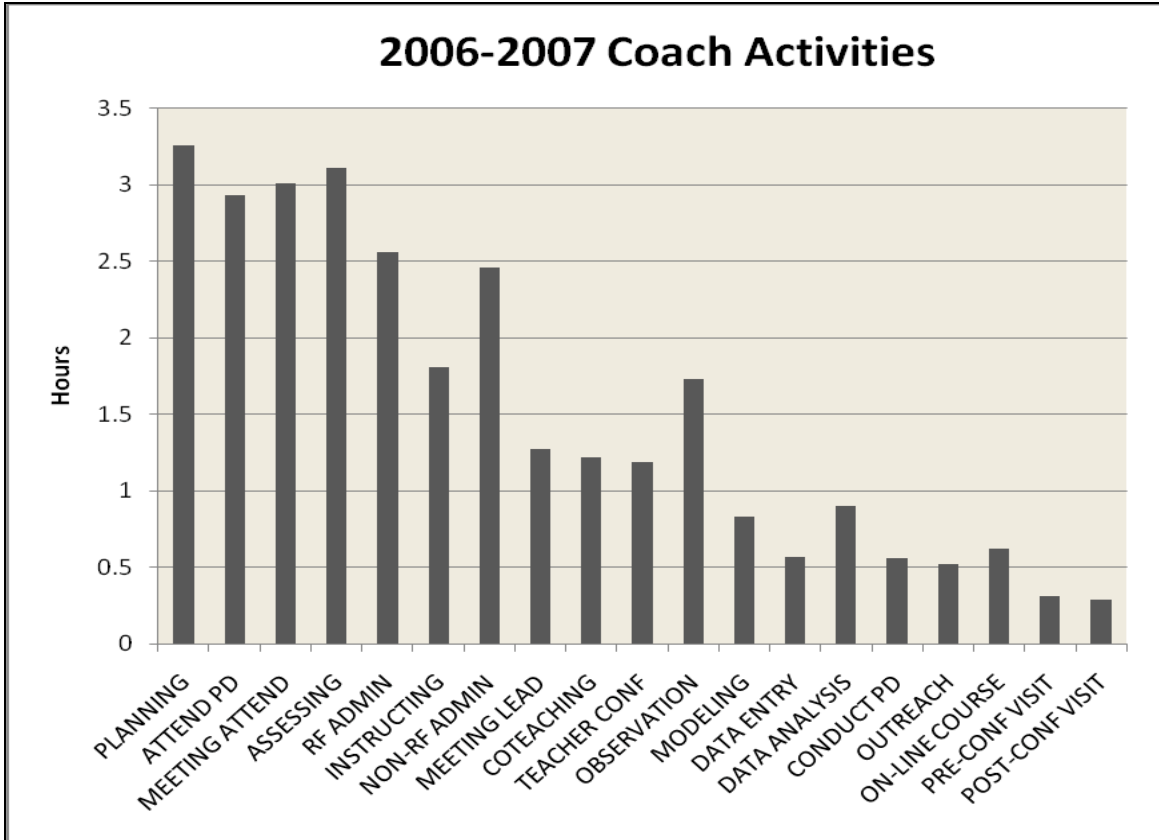
Figure 2. Average Hours Per Week Coaches Spent on Specific Activities in 2006-07

We also analyzed the amount of time coaches devoted to what we designate as *job-embedded professional development*. Included as activities in this analysis were: attending or leading meetings, observing or visiting in classrooms, meeting with individual teachers, modeling, co-teaching, facilitating online courses, or conducting formal professional development sessions (see Table 9).

Table 9. Average Time Coaches Spent Per Week in Job-Embedded Professional Development

Professional Development Activity	Average Hours Per Week 2004-2005	Average Hours Per Week 2005-2006	Average Hours Per Week 2006-2007
Attending or leading meetings	4.2	3.8	4.3
Observing or visiting in classrooms	1.4	1.5	1.7
Conference with teachers	1.4	1.3	1.2
Modeling	0.9	0.8	0.8
Co-teaching	0.6	1.1	1.2
Conducting professional development	0.6	0.6	0.6
Online facilitation	N/A	1.1	0.6
Total Hours	**9.2**	**10.2**	**10.4**

As shown in Table 9, there was a small increase in time spent in job-embedded professional development. Coaches spent on average 10.2 hours a week in 2005-06 on what we designated as job-embedded professional development, significantly more than the average number of hours spent in 2004-05 (9.2 hours per week) (p<. 05). During the 2006-07 school year, coaches spent slightly more, an average of 10.4 hours per week on job-embedded professional development.
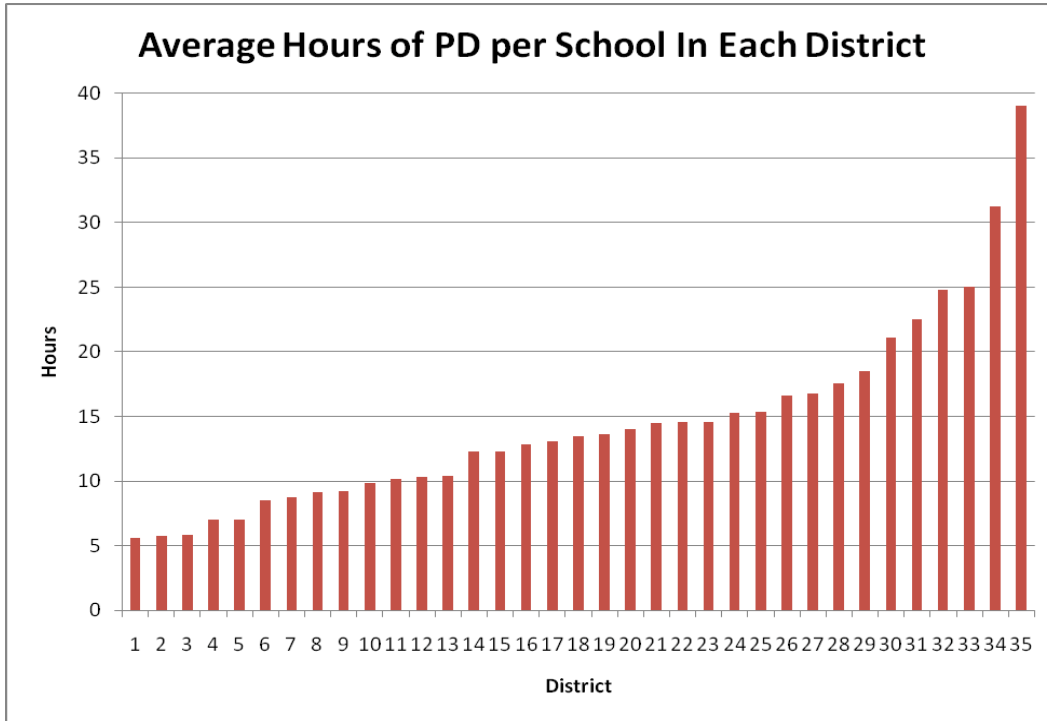

Figure 3. Average Hours per Week Coaches Spend Delivering Professional Development per school in 35 School Districts (including modeling, coach-teacher conferences, meetings, conducting professional development, class visits, and co-teaching, and facilitation of online courses) for the 2006-07 school year.

Because of the small amount of time, on average, spent by coaches in 'formal' PD efforts, we re-analyzed logs using the six categories identified in Table 9 to calculate how much PD (including classroom visits, conversations with coaching, modeling, co-teaching, formal PD, and online facilitation) the schools in a district received from their coaches (see Figure 3). There was clearly a great deal of variability by school ranging from an average of 5.6 hours per week to 39.0 hours per week. In checking the outliers in these figures, we found that district 35 is a single school that has 4 coaches; this could easily explain why that school is receiving so much PD support. Likewise, District 34 has one school with two coaches; hence this school also receives a great deal of PD support. On the other hand, District 1 has one school in which the coach works only half time.

Coach Questionnaire. During 2006-07, we asked coaches to complete a questionnaire to obtain specific information about how coaches made decisions about which teachers with whom to work (see Figure 4) and to obtain current information from coaches about the challenges that kept them from their responsibilities. We received responses from 180 coaches, a return rate of 92%. We found that of the 178 coaches who responded to this question about decision making, 62% indicated that they "worked with teachers whose test data indicate there is a need for support" and "with teachers"

who requested their support or assistance." The second most commonly selected response (17%) was working with every teacher on a regular basis. In responding to a second question about how priority was determined, coaches indicated that they gave top priority to teachers who demonstrated a need for help (36%) followed by working with new or inexperienced teachers (15%). In terms of challenges, coaches were very positive, with more than 80% of them identifying such issues as lack of understanding and inconsistent messages about RF and their roles as "minor challenges or not challenges at all." Almost all of the coaches (96%) defined principals' support of coaching as somewhat or extremely positive. Moreover, only 25% considered teacher resistance to be either a major or overwhelming challenge. These positive findings are consistent with the responses of teachers to coaching identified in the following section of this report.
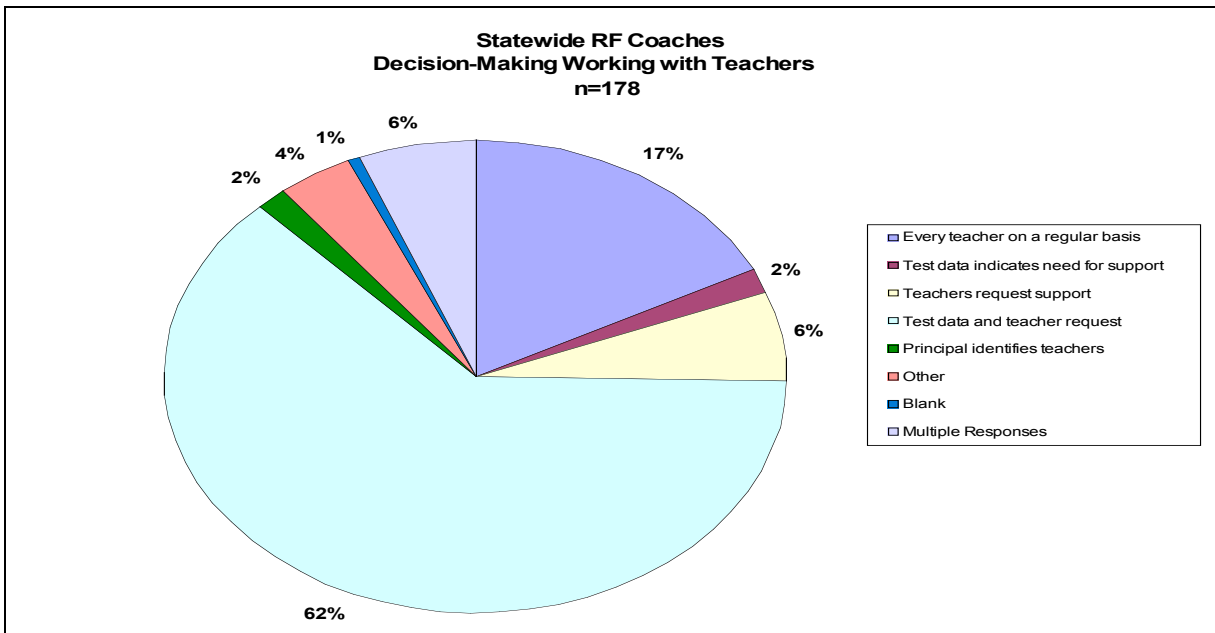

Figure 4. Which Teachers do Reading First Coaches Work With?

Changes in Coach Activity and Relationship of Coaching to School Achievement. Given that we were in the 4th year of Reading First , we took the opportunity to look at coaches and coaching longitudinally. In this analysis, we explored the activities of coaches in Reading First schools over three years, looking especially at data from year 1 and year 3. We were interested in whether coaches, with experience, changed as they spent more time on the job, and whether coaches new to the position in Year 3, behaved in a similar fashion to the novice coaches in Year 1. Specifically we were interested in whether coaches themselves were evolving or whether coaching as an approach to PD was evolving, that is, influenced by the literature and research in this area and by the staff development that coaches received. We found that over the three-year period, experienced coaches did allocate more of their time to activities often associated with "coaching," (e.g., modeling, observing, and co-teaching). At the same time, these coaching duties accounted for only a small proportion of their many activities. We also found that although coaches over time did change in terms of how they allocated time, coaches new to the position in the third year looked very much like experienced coaches. In other words, novice coaches seemed to be influenced by the emerging literature, research on coaching, and the guidance and direction they received from the

state department and their districts. We found no differences in successful schools as compared to struggling schools in amount of time allocated to these coaching activities, how coaches allocated their time, nor in coach workload. We believe that the results of this investigation are important in that they reflect concerns of other researchers who have found that coaches are being asked to perform many activities that often are not specifically "coaching in nature." We also recognize that one the linchpins around which Reading First is built is job-embedded professional development, facilitated by coaching in the schools. We will continue to investigate whether and how coaching is related not only to student achievement, but also to changes in teacher practices. This paper was submitted for publication to Reading Research Quarterly. A copy is provided in the Appendix to this report.

Summary. Coaches are performing many tasks, and too many of those tasks take them away from the primary responsibility of their position, that of supporting teachers in their efforts to improve classroom instructional practices. It seems obvious that as coaches continue in their positions, they are being asked to do many tasks that change the nature of their responsibilities. At the same time, there seems to be growing acceptance of coaching in the schools as perceived by coaches. The fact that coaches tend to work primarily with teachers who request help or "need" help (based on their students' test data), is a finding that we believe needs more investigation. Is there a need for coaches to work with all teachers in a school for the coach to have a significant impact on student achievement and, if so, how can coaches manage their time to work effectively with *all* teachers in their school? Or, given the evidence of improving achievement in RF schools in PA, perhaps the presence of a coach who can keep his or her fingers on the pulse of reading instruction via meetings, informal conversation, etc., may be what is important. In other words, coaches may serve an important role by just helping teachers and others maintain their focus on improving reading achievement in the schools.

Responses of Teachers to Coaching Role. Questionnaires were sent to 2,459 teachers in RF schools in 2006-07. Responses were received from 1,894 teachers, a return rate of 89%. Data over the past four years indicate little change in teachers' opinions about the coach as an important source of professional development. In 2006-2007 analysis of responses showed that 84% of teachers agreed or strongly agreed that the coach was an important source of professional development. In 2003-04, we recorded 80% agreement; in 2004-2005 we recorded 85% agreement. The dip to 72% agreement in 2005-06 is attributable to the addition of the neutral category of "neither agree nor disagree" that year (see Figure 5).
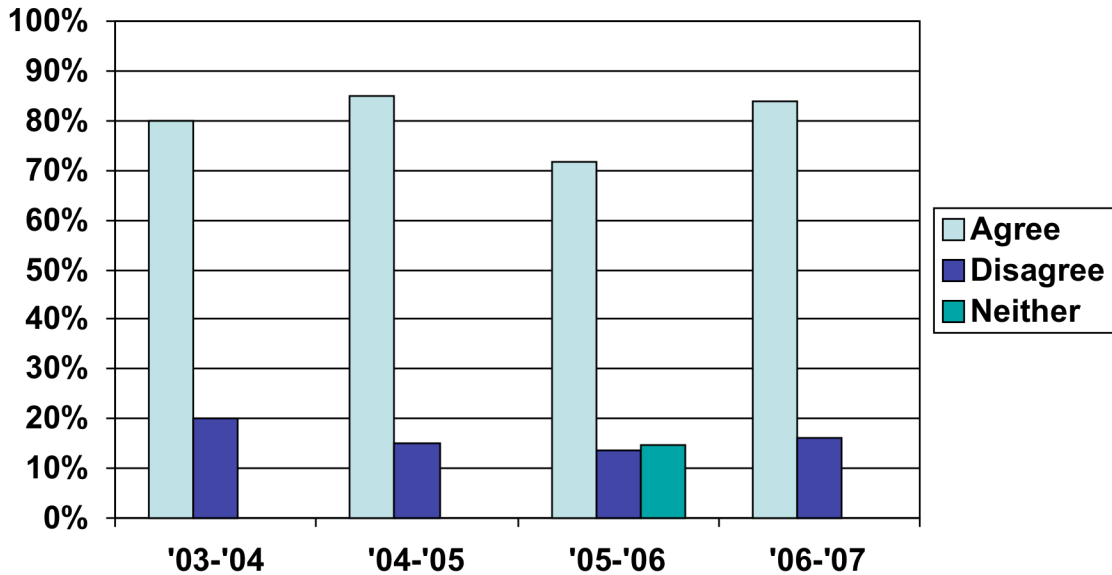
Figure 5. Teacher rating of coach as important source of professional development

Questionnaire results also revealed a slight drop in the number of the teachers reporting regular visits from the coach in 2006-2007 data when compared with the 2005-2006 results. Likewise, there was an increase in the number of teachers reporting that the coach *never* visited the classroom 18% in 2005-2006 to 23% in 2006-2007) (see Figure 6). The drop may be a direct result of a workshop for coaches in the fall of 2006 in which the presenter told coaches to begin their work with one "cooperating" teacher at each grade level, instead of than trying to win over resistant teachers.

The frequency of coaches modeling instructional techniques appeared to rise slightly from 29% in 2005-2006 to 32% in 2006-2007 according to the teachers. Those who reported that coach modeling *never* occurred dropped from 36% to 29% over the two-year period. Finally, reports of regular co-teaching rose slightly from 17% to 19% in the past two years. However, even though the reports that co-teaching *never* occurred dropped slightly from 59% to 54%, more than half of the teachers are still not experiencing co-teaching with their coaches.
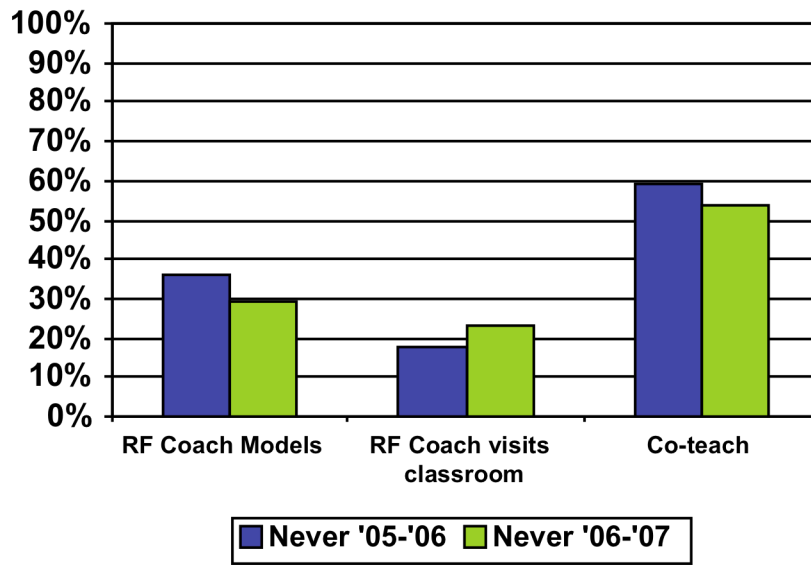
Figure 6. Coach's collaborative role with teachers- response to questionnaire items
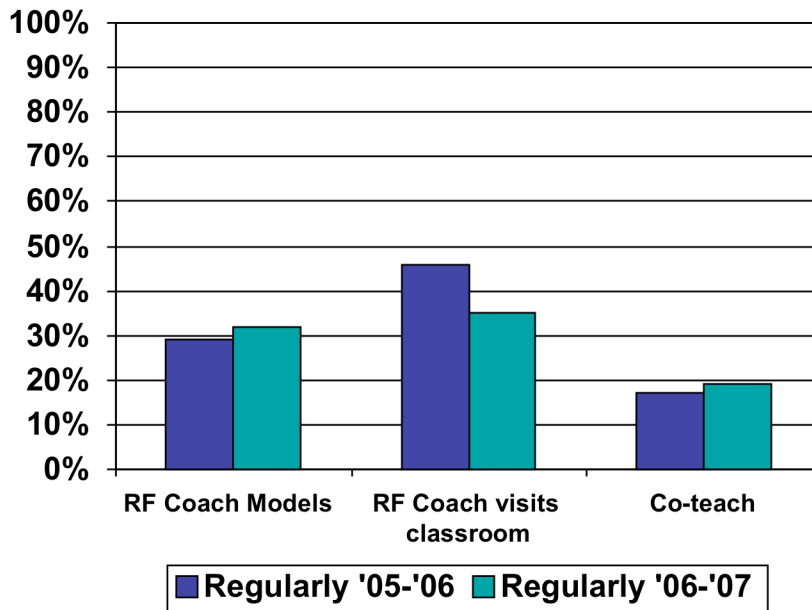

Figure 6. Coach's collaborative role with teachers- response to questionnaire items (continued)

Summary. Results from teacher questionnaires regarding the presence of RF coaches in schools this past year (06-07) are similar to what teachers were indicating in the previous year. Overall, teachers see the value of coaches in their schools. The information provided by teachers reinforces what was indicated in coaches' logs and in coaches' responses to a questionnaire. Coaches are providing support, but such support is more likely to be in informal meetings with groups of teachers than in activities in which the coach is working in the classroom with a specific teacher. Moreover, consistent with what was stated above, coaches are "focusing" their work on some of the teachers rather than all the teachers in the schools.

   5. **Schools have instituted a 90-minute uninterrupted reading block.**

When asked whether the 90-minute reading block provided enough time for students to learn to read, 72% of teachers agreed in 2006-2007 compared with 71% in 2004-2005.

   6. **Literacy instruction in each classroom is explicit, systematic, and research-based.**
   7. **Differentiated instruction is in place and is exemplified in grouping strategies in the classroom. Grouping is data driven; members are assigned to an instructional group based on assessed needs and groupings are flexible, not static.**

We combine Non-Negotiables 6 and 7 because results from the observations in Reading First classrooms are used to address both. Additional data come from teacher questionnaires and progress reports.

Observation System. A total of 132 classroom observations (K-3) were conducted by the External Evaluation Team in Reading First classrooms across the state of Pennsylvania during the 2006-07 school year. The team visited 7 school districts and 12 individual school sites to yield data from 8% of the total number of Reading First elementary schools in the Commonwealth. Over the course of four years of evaluation, the Observation Team has made 808 classroom visits across the state (see Figure 7).

In the section below, we discuss the findings from the 2006-07 observations and compare schools across years and number of times observed. Group 1 schools refer to those schools that were observed for the first time over the first two RF evaluation years (2003-2005); Group 2 schools refer to those schools that were observed for the second time during the evaluation years 2004-2006; and Group 3 schools refer to those schools that were observed for the third time during evaluation years 2005-2007. Analyses were accomplished by examining 3 years of data for each of the 3 groups of school sites (see Figure 7).

Reading First External Evaluation
Classroom Observations: Implementation Groups

Evaluation Year	# Districts	# School Sites	% RF Schools	Total # Yearly Observations
1 (2003 -04)	8	12	9.4%	139
2 (2004 -05)	14	24	15%	264
3 (2005 -06)	14	24	15%	273
4 (2006 -07)	7	12	8%	132

Total number RF Classroom Visits = 808

Group 1 = Schools observed for the first time (n=24) 2003   -2005
Group 2 = Schools observed for the second time (n=24) 2004   -2006
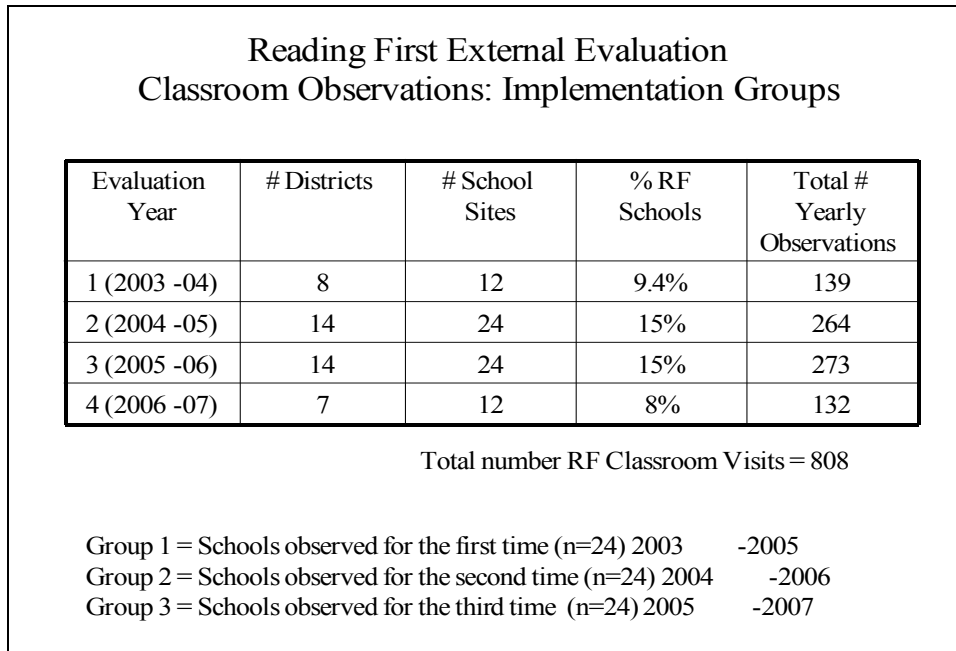Group 3 = Schools observed for the third time (n=24) 2005   -2007

Figure 7. Total Number of Classroom Observations by Implementation Group

The CIERA School Change Classroom Observation Scheme (Taylor & Pearson, 2002) was the protocol used to document classroom practices during reading instruction in K-3 classrooms. Observers participated in training sessions that included videos, classroom observations, and systematic discussion and feedback about their performance. They achieved the reliability criterion of a minimum of 80% agreement before collecting data. Grouping practices, literacy events, teacher interactions, student responses, materials, and pupil engagement are the dimensions that comprised the observation framework. Given the large amount of information from the observations, we highlight those dimensions we believe are most important for this report.

Grouping Practices. In the schools visited, we saw students working in small group, whole class, and independent grouping arrangements. Small group instruction was spotted frequently in 59% segments observed at the K-1 grade levels for Group 3 implementation sites. In addition, results indicate an increase in small group and independent student groupings in grades 2-3 (see Figure 8). These practices suggest that PA teachers in Reading First schools are addressing the need to differentiate instruction among students. For example, field notes reveal that as some students were working at literacy centers or in partner reading activities, small groups of students in need of more concentrated reading instruction convened with the teacher to engage in word study, fluency practice, and comprehension activities. Students also were working on complementary instructional computer programs and independent practice activities that emphasized phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension skills.

Grouping Arrangements
Results by Implementation Group - Mean % Segments Observed

Grades K -1   Grades 2 -3

Group 1 = Schools observed for the first time (n=24) 2003   -2005
Group 2 = Schools observed for the second time (n=24) 2004   -2006
Group 3 = Schools observed for the third time (n=24) 2005   -2007
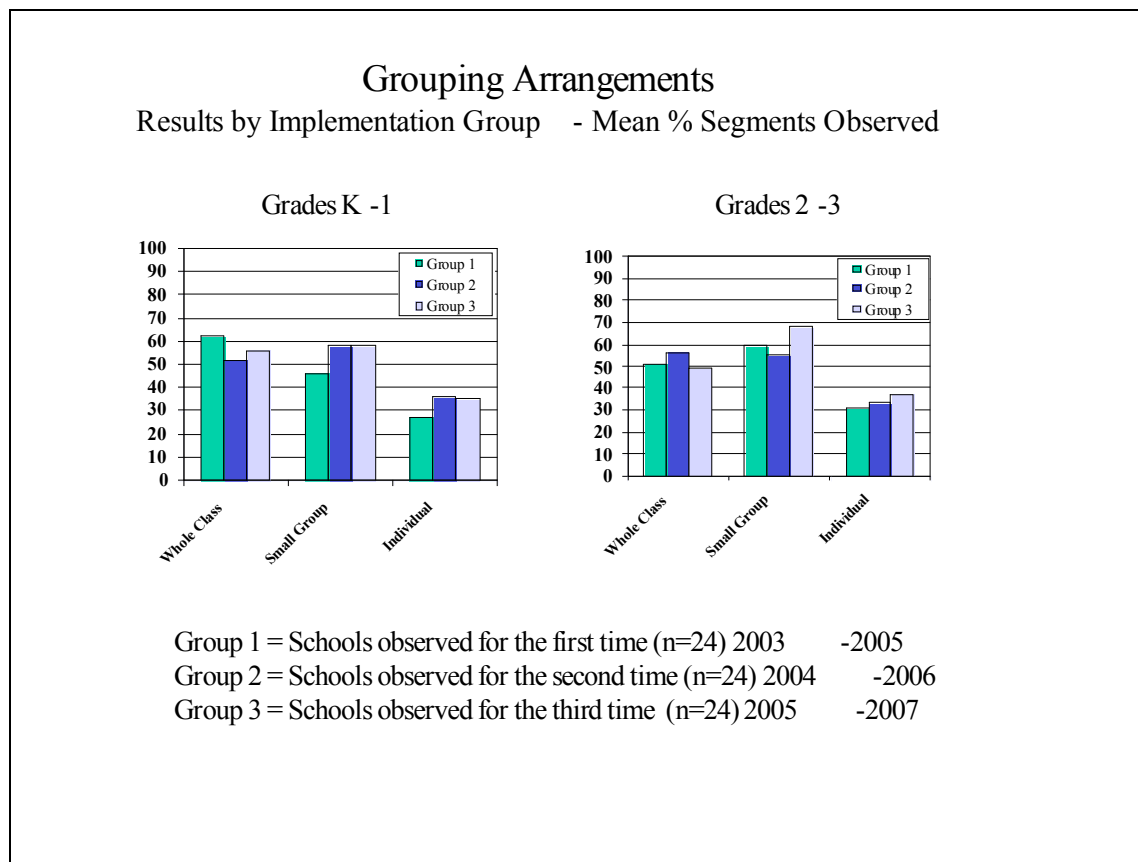
Figure 8. Grouping Arrangements

Five Essential Elements in Literacy Instruction. The National Reading Panel report concluded that effective reading programs should include direct instruction in phonemic awareness, systematic phonics instruction, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension.

Phonemic Awareness and Phonics. Field notes and grade level analyses reveal that phonemic awareness was observed in the literacy events category more frequently in K-1 than in grades 2-3, as expected (see Figure 9). However, in Group 3 implementation sites, phonics instruction has risen to higher levels in grades 2-3 than in previous years. One explanation for this finding is that observation data were gathered at 2 school sites with large ELL populations with new phonics programs for Strategic and Intensive learners in the upper grades. Field notes also reveal that students were often observed in the early grades (K-1) working on sound symbol correspondence activities along with letter-by-letter decoding, and decoding by onset and rime activities. In the upper grades (2-3), students were observed decoding multisyllabic words and decoding words while reading. The current results reveal that phonics type activities remained high in K-1 at over 60% segments observed. In the upper grades, phonics was coded less frequently than in the lower grades at 41% of segments observed (see Figure 9).

Fluency Our findings reveal that across grade levels, students were consistently engaged in reading connected text. Fluency was observed in with 50% of segments at K-1 and 52% at grades 2-3 for Group 3 implementation sites (see Figure 9). These findings suggest that students are actively engaged in reading text during reading instruction. Reading connected text was observed during guided reading, reading

silently, reading aloud, and partner or paired reading. Field notes also reveal that students were frequently observed in reading practices like partner reading in which they read out loud to a student partner who corrected their mistakes and provided them with other feedback like attention to expression and prosody. The National Reading Panel (2000) maintains that guided oral reading helps students across a wide range of grade levels to read with efficiency and ease and it helps them to comprehend what they read. Our field notes uncovered fluency practice programs like *Read Naturally* in which students participate in repeated timed readings and teachers monitor their progress. Students are aware of grade level norms for the average number of words read correctly for one minute at their specific grade level and are encouraged to meet and exceed those norms.
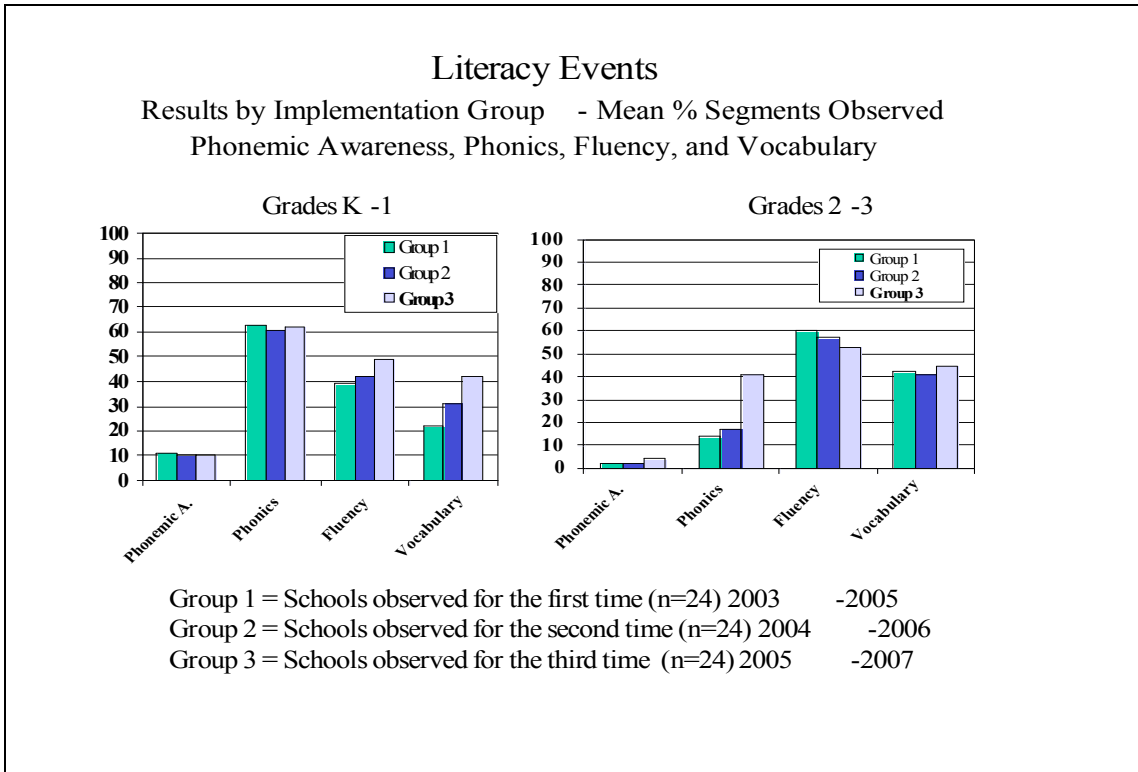

Figure 9. Literacy Events: Phonemic Awareness, Phonics, Fluency, and Vocabulary

Vocabulary*.* The External Evaluation Team observed vocabulary instruction in 132 elementary level classrooms (K-3) in urban, suburban, and rural school sites across the state of Pennsylvania during the 2006-07 school year. Recently, Pennsylvania teachers in Reading First schools were provided extensive professional development on vocabulary instruction in elementary level classrooms. The focus of the staff development was on providing RF teachers the tools to encourage a lively and robust vocabulary for students at the primary grade levels. Our findings reveal an increase in the category of vocabulary development in Group 3 implementation sites at both K-1 and 2-3 grade levels (see Figure 9). Field notes uncovered that some school sites incorporated oral vocabulary instruction programs like *Elements of Reading: Vocabulary* designed for K-3 students to help increase students' oral vocabulary.

In 2005-06, observers recorded vocabulary instruction in 79% of classroom observations (217/273); in 2006-07, vocabulary instruction was recorded in 80% of classroom observations (105/132). The evaluation team was also interested in documenting the

instructional contexts in which teachers delivered vocabulary instruction. Each time vocabulary occurred as a literacy event, observers recorded the instructional context as definitional, contextual, organizational, structural, and integration of background knowledge. In definitional contexts, vocabulary instruction is highlighted by word definitions that are provided by teacher, student, or emphasized in dictionary, glossary, and thesaurus use. In contexts that reflect a contextual format, students utilize general clues to provide meaning from the context surrounding new words. In organizational contexts of vocabulary instruction, students are engaged in highlighting the relationship among words and their meanings to include the use of synonyms, antonyms, examples, non-examples as well as semantic mapping. In structural contexts, vocabulary development is highlighted by understanding the relationship among word parts like root words, affixes, compound words, and word origins to develop new meanings (Watts, 1995).

The definitional context was the most frequently recorded instructional context observed. When vocabulary words were addressed during reading instruction, teachers most frequently did so by asking their students to provide the definitions to words or teachers simply provided the definitions themselves. Moreover, along with the definitional context, teachers frequently asked students to use the context surrounding the vocabulary word to determine meaning. The research team determined that instructional contexts do not occur individually, by themselves; rather they occur along with one another. Figures 10 and 11 illustrate the manner in which categories are related and provide respective rates of occurrence in 2005-06 and 2006-07.
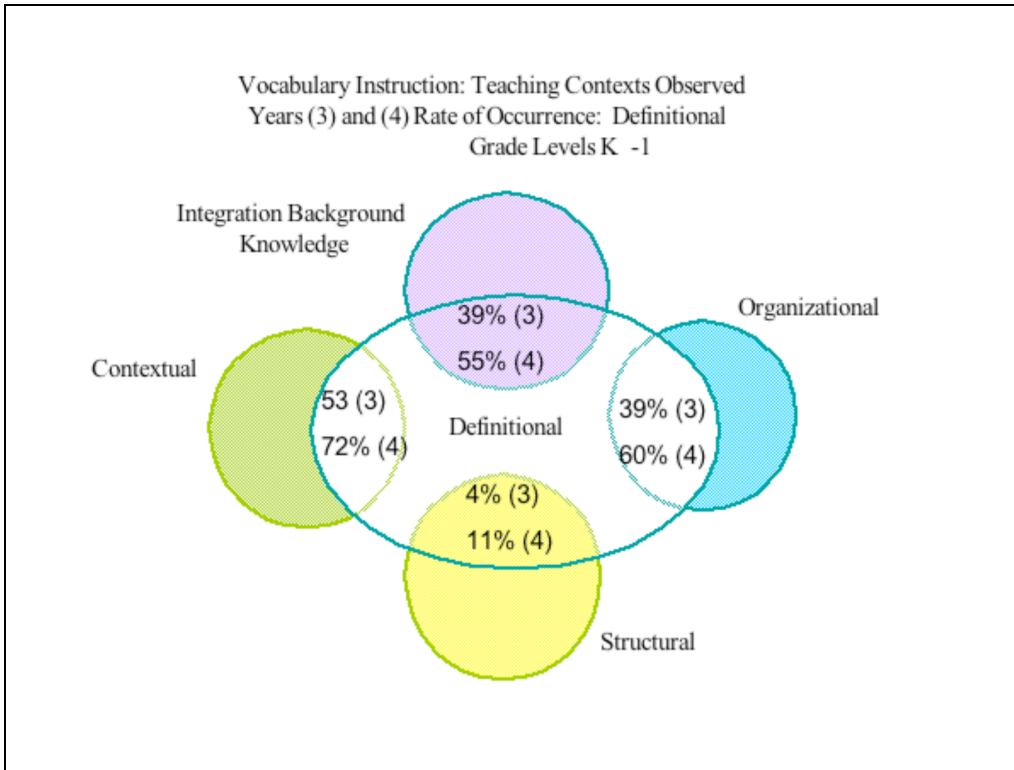

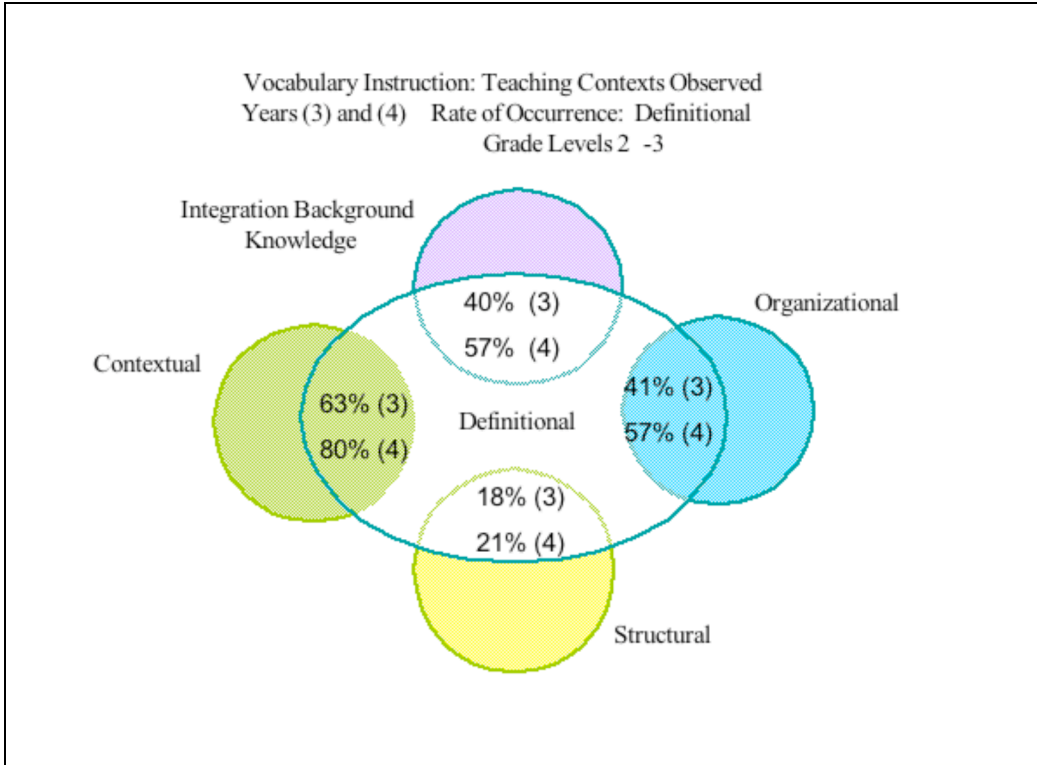Figure 10. Vocabulary Contexts in Grades K and 1

Figure 11.Vocabulary Contexts (2-3)

Results reveal all approaches to vocabulary instruction have increased from year 3 to year 4. Further, the definitional and contextual instructional contexts (together) are used most frequently across grade levels K-1 and 2-3 in both years. The combination of definitional and structural contexts had the lowest rate of occurrence across grade levels (Figures 10 and 11). On a daily basis, classroom teachers must decide the best ways to incorporate vocabulary development into their lessons. They must decide what words to teach, how much time should be spent, and what methods work most effectively in enhancing the overall vocabulary of their students. Our observation data reflect only the rate of occurrence of newly introduced vocabulary words in instructional contexts and not the necessary repeated applications of vocabulary word study that researchers recommend as essential to vocabulary acquisition. Effective vocabulary instruction goes beyond the introduction of new words; it is facilitated by multiple exposures and applications within and across the curriculum. This was not captured in the current data set.

Comprehension. The National Reading Panel Report (2000) maintains that reading comprehension of text is best facilitated by teaching students a variety of techniques and systematic strategies to assist in recalling information, generating questions, and summarizing of information. Results for Group 3 implementation sites in the category of comprehension skills and strategies indicate an increase as compared to previous years. In addition, findings reveal a relatively small amount of high-level talk in both K-1 and 2-3 grade levels for all implementation groups (see Figure 12). In a recent study, teachers rated as accomplished asked more higher level questions than did teachers who were rated moderately accomplished or least accomplished. Pressley (2001) maintains that a major characteristic of an effective classroom is one that encourages students to engage in higher level thinking activities. Our students were observed in routines like identifying the main idea, distinguishing fact from opinion, making predictions, summarizing,

retelling, organizing information using graphic organizers, and think-pair-share activities, all of which are designed to improve comprehension of text.

Active and Passive Engagement. Student responses were characterized as active responding and passive responding in the observation scheme (see Figures13 and 14). Active responses by students included those instances when students were engaged in reading independently or in guided reading, reading silently, writing in response to reading, or manipulating. Passive responses included instances when students were engaged in reading turn taking, oral turn taking, and listening. Our findings reveal an increase in active engagement of students across implementation groups and across grade levels K-1 and 2-3. Students were observed in guided reading activities, independent reading, partner reading, and writing in response to reading. However, listening behaviors among students, a passive response, also increased yearly across implementation groups (see Figure 14). This finding may be the result of students working more frequently and independently in learning centers as well as participating in interactive read aloud activities that are actually quite passive involving listening and sharing responses in a turn-taking mode.
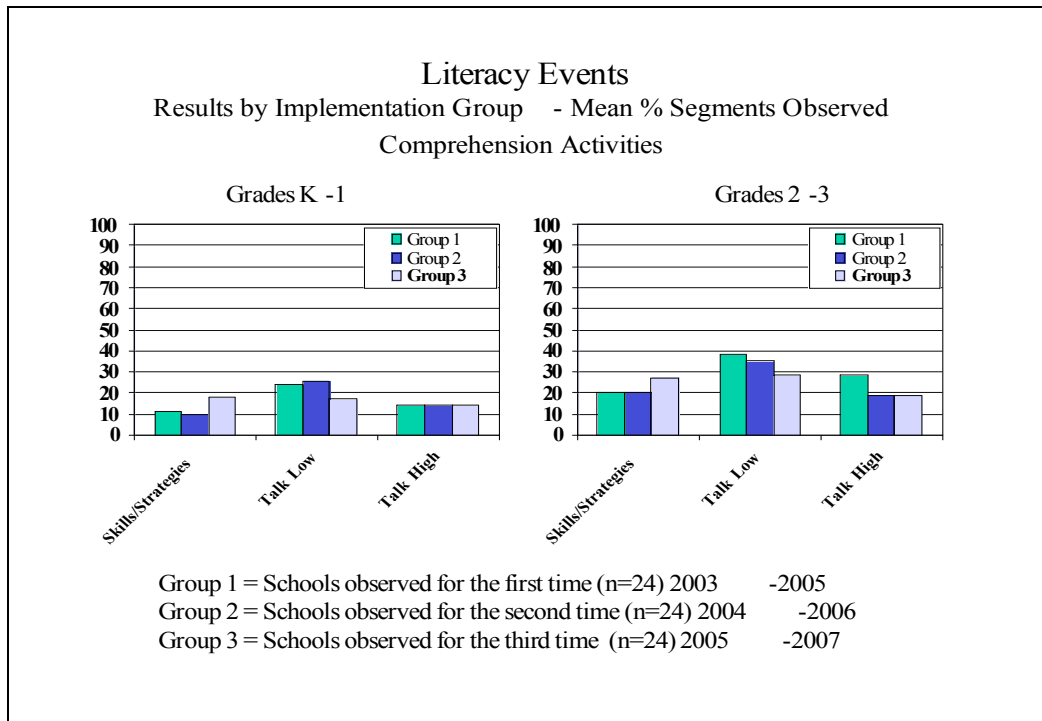

Figure 12. Literacy Events: Comprehension Activities

Student Response: Active
Results by Implementation Group - Mean % Segments Observed

Grades K -1   Grades 2 -3

Group 1 = Schools observed for the first time (n=24) 2003   -2005
Group 2 = Schools observed for the second time (n=24) 2004   -2006
Group 3 = Schools observed for the third time (n=24) 2005   -2007

Figure 13. Active Student Response

Student Response: Passive
Results by Implementation Group - Mean % Segments Observed

Grades K -1   Grades 2 -3

Group 1 = Schools observed for the first time (n=24) 2003   -2005
Group 2 = Schools observed for the second time (n=24) 2004   -2006
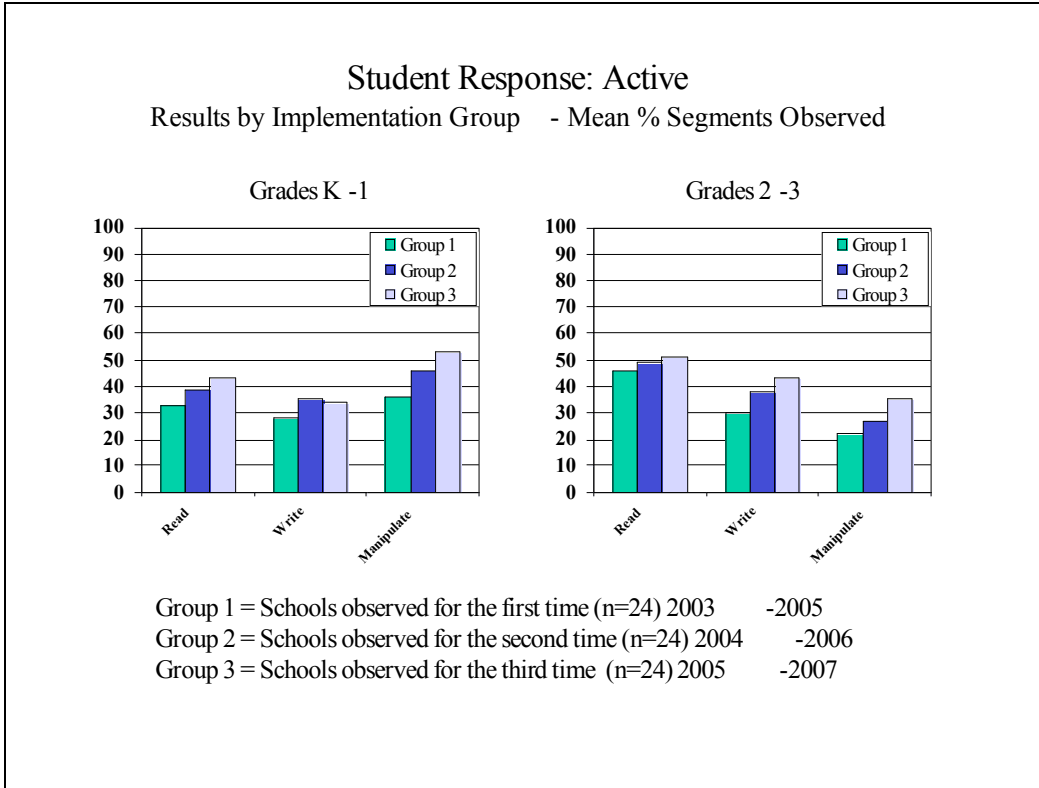Group 3 = Schools observed for the third time (n=24) 2005   -2007
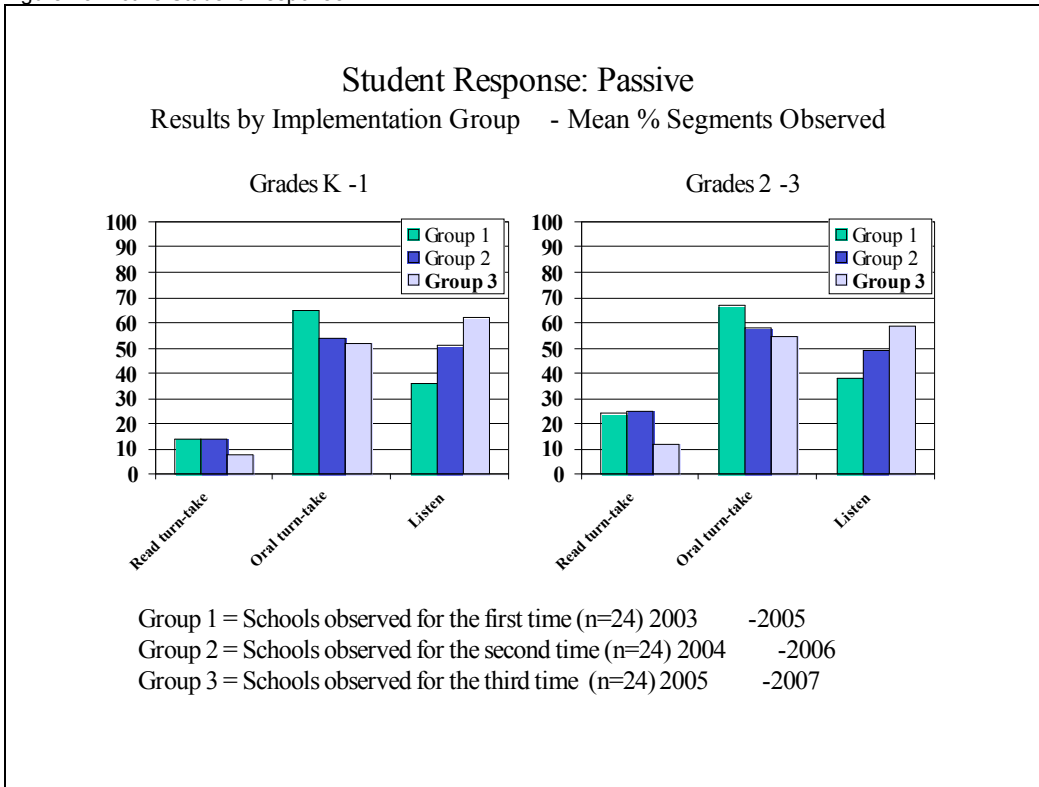
Figure 14. Passive Student Response

Teacher Interaction. The teacher's chosen instructional delivery style is recorded and is comprised of the following behaviors: telling, modeling, recitation, coaching and

scaffolding, and listening. Our findings reveal that teachers most frequently used recitation and telling, followed by coaching, listening, and modeling as instructional styles across implementation groups and across grade levels (see Figure 15). It should be noted that these interactions do not occur alone but rather along with other instructional delivery styles. For example, the type of core reading program observed may influence the rate of teacher telling. A heavily scripted core reading program, like Success for All and or Reading Mastery, would produce a lot of telling behaviors among teachers during reading instruction. We are encouraged by the steady increase of coaching behaviors exhibited by teachers across implementation groups and grade levels (see Figure 15). Pressley (2001) found that highly effective teachers engage in frequent coaching behaviors and encourage students to arrive at the correct answer independently by means of scaffolding instruction.
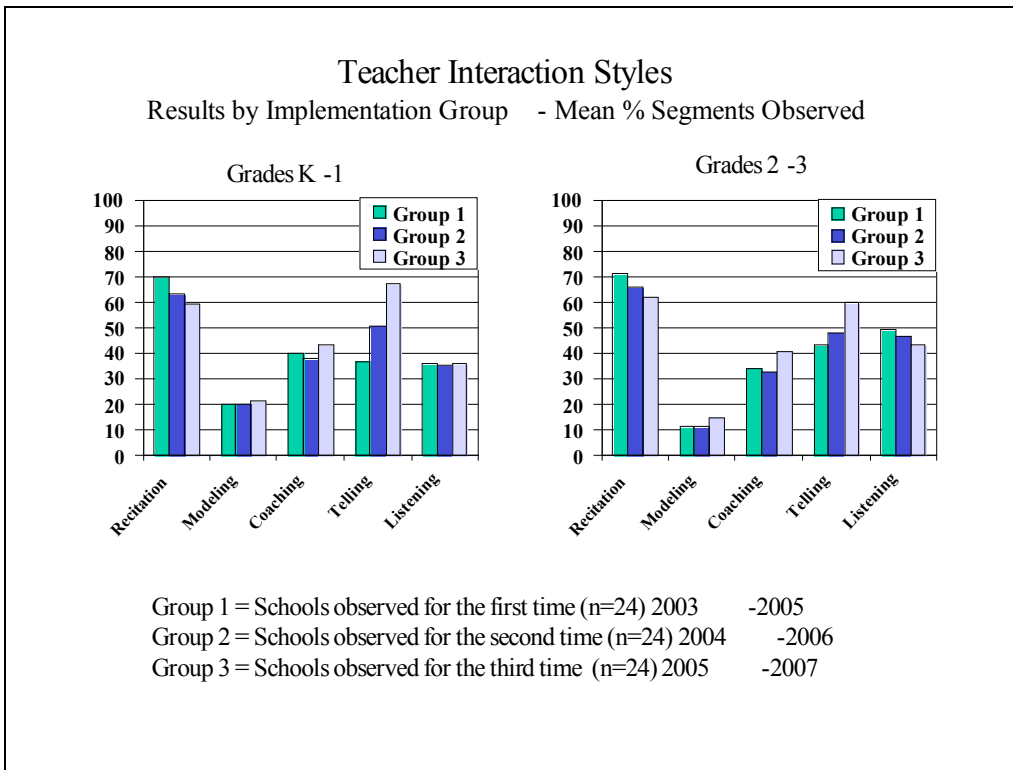

Figure 15. Teacher Interaction Styles

Instructional Materials. Our findings reveal that narrative text is the most frequently recorded instructional material observed across grades and implementation groups (see Figure16). An interesting finding in Group 3 is an increase in the use of informational text across grade levels. There has been increased emphasis on the importance of using informational text in the primary grades and we see this reflected in the observational data. Field notes reveal that leveled books or "*Just Right Books*" were frequently utilized in an effort to offer students the right level of support and challenge in reading narrative and informational formats. Finally, students used other types of materials during reading instruction including computers, pocket charts, letter and word tiles, trade books, flash cards, white boards, games, tape recorders, big books, reference materials, classroom libraries, and word walls.
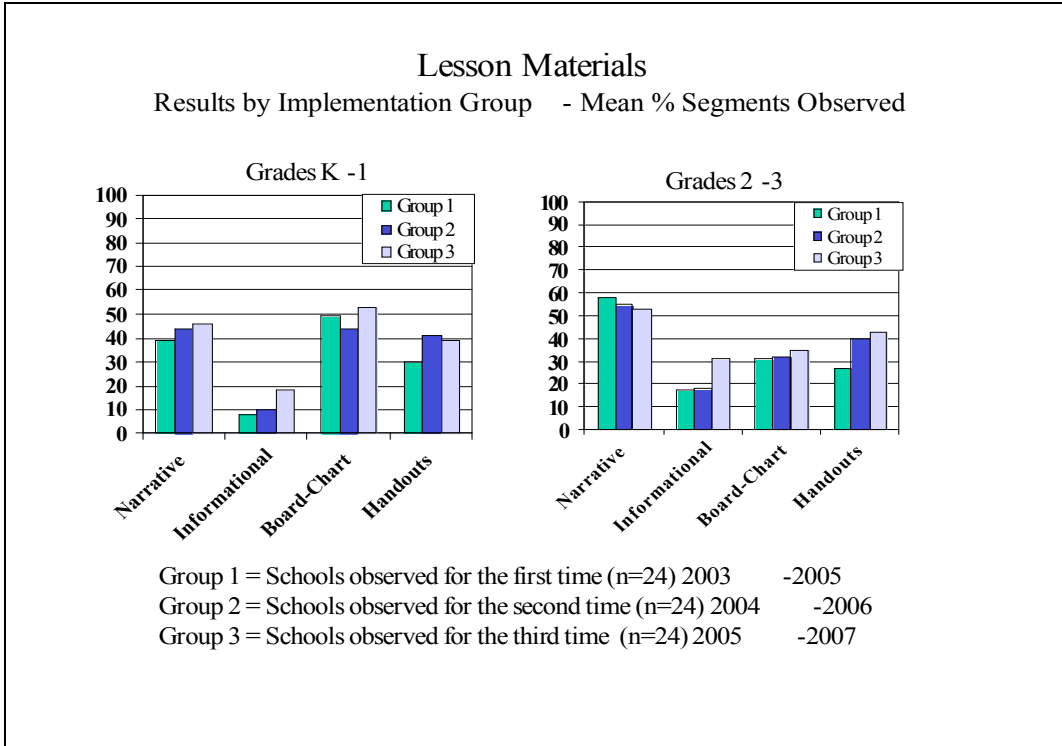
Figure 16. Instructional Materials

Pupil Engagement. During each 40-minute observation, observers keep a record of student on-task behaviors by noting every 5 minutes the total number of students displaying on-task behaviors and dividing that number by the total number of students present. This calculation yields the percentage of students meeting behavioral and academic expectations. More importantly, for Group 3 implementation sites, our findings reveal that Pennsylvania teachers in Reading First schools fall in the moderately accomplished range overall with 94% engagement at K-1 grade levels and 93% engagement at 2-3 grade levels (see Figure 17). The good news is that they are steadily approaching the most accomplished teacher range of 96%-100% student on-task behaviors.

Percent On -Task Pupil Engagement
Results by Implementation Group   - Mean % Segments Observed

	K-1	2-3
Group 1 - 1st Year Implementation Sites (n=24)	92%	92%
Group 2 - 2nd Year Implementation Sites (n=24)	93%	92%
Group 3 - 3rd Year Implementation Sites (n=24)	94%	93%

Figure 17. On-Task Pupil Engagement

Summary*.* The evaluation team observed PA teachers in Reading First classrooms implementing appropriate and scientifically based reading instruction for their students. Clearly an emphasis was placed on small group instruction in an effort to differentiate instruction for individual students to ensure that students were actively engaged in their learning. Students were seen working in pairs and sharing responsibilities for various activities in small group arrangements. In addition, students were frequently engaged in reading instruction that emphasized word study. Our findings reveal that phonics was the most frequently observed literacy event for Group 3 sites at grade levels K-1. [In the National Reading Panel Report (2000), word work at the kindergarten level emerged as a significant predictor of growth for students as they climb to the upper grade levels.] In the upper primary grades (2-3) we saw a surprising increase in word level work for Group 3 Implementation sites (we expected a decrease at the upper primary grades); field notes indicate that a large portion of the observation data were gathered at 2 school sites with large ELL populations with new phonics programs for Strategic and Intensive learners in the upper primary grades.

We are encouraged by our findings of a slight increase in vocabulary development as a literacy focus for Group 3 implementation sites at both K-1 and 2-3 grade levels. However, for the most part, we did not observe extensive vocabulary instruction. This may be the result of how we scheduled observations and the number of target classrooms observed. We may need to remain longer in classrooms to capture how teachers help students acquire a dense vocabulary. Nonetheless, we recognize that building an extensive vocabulary is the link between the word level processes of phonics and the cognitive processes of comprehension. Recent research maintains that the explicit teaching of specific words and word-learning strategies can improve vocabulary development and reading comprehension. In some classrooms we did observe teachers using specific programs like *Text Talk* and *Elements of Reading: Vocabulary* that encourage direct and interactive instruction; however, for the most part, vocabulary development occurred at the surface level with much emphasis on words being learned from the context or with definitions provided by the teacher or another student. There were few instances where we saw lengthy lessons of explicit vocabulary instruction facilitated by discussion and elaboration about word meanings and the multiple exposures needed for acquisition.

We are somewhat encouraged by the observation data on comprehension skills and strategies and coaching as a teacher interaction, since both categories indicate an increase as compared to previous years. In addition, our findings show a reduction of low-level talk among students. However, results across implementation groups reveal that instruction involving effective strategies designed to enhance reading comprehension were observed infrequently in classrooms. In a recent study of accomplished teachers and effective schools, teachers rated as accomplished asked more higher level questions than did teachers who were rated moderately accomplished or least accomplished (Taylor et al., 2000). When teachers scaffold instruction, they coach and question students in a manner that requires more critical thinking or a higher level of talk or elaborative response.

We are also optimistic regarding the high percentage of student on-task behavior across grade levels for implementation groups. According to field notes, classroom teachers had strong established routines to motivate their students and facilitate active engagement among students. Overall, classrooms were described as print-rich and positive learning environments. Finally, we are encouraged by reports from classroom

teachers that they are systematically using student performance data (DIBELS) to guide their decision-making when planning reading instruction.

Additional Data Collection and Data Analysis

How Schools Involved Parents

There were total of 970 sessions offered statewide for parents in RF schools during the 2006-2007 school year. This represents a 23% decrease from the total number of parent sessions held during the 2005-2006 school year (n= 1,262). Of the 159 RF schools, 140 held at least one session for parents. The range of reported sessions was 0 to 48. Fifty schools held fewer than 3 sessions and ten schools held more than 20 sessions. The most frequent topic presented at these sessions related to Reading at Home.

Summary Nearly 90% of the RF schools were reaching out to parents by holding parent meetings during the school year. The decrease in total number of parent sessions in the 2006-07 school year was unexpected.

In 2007, a manuscript describing the study of parental attitudes towards Reading First was submitted for publication. A copy of the manuscript is provided in the Appendix.

The School Librarian in Reading First Schools

A questionnaire was distributed to each RF school in the spring of 2007 resulting in a 67% return rate (106 returned of 159 sent). From these 106 respondents, 90% indicated that their school had a library, and 79% said that their school had a librarian. Of the schools that had librarians, 64% were full-time and 36% were part-time employees.

School officials were directed to have the school librarian complete the rest of the questionnaire. It focused on (a) library activities, (b) the adequacy of the library's collection, (c) the importance of librarians' work with K-3 students, (d) the frequency of K-3 library visits, (e) the importance of library use for K-3 students, (f) librarians' professional development, (g) librarians' collaboration with teachers, and (h) librarians' participation in Reading First. A summary of the findings is provided below; tables summarizing the findings are provided in the Appendix.

When respondents were asked whether specific activities involving the library had occurred, those most frequently cited included providing assistance to teachers (94%) and purchasing new books or materials (85%). A total of 50% of respondents indicated that they provided reading instruction to K-3 students. A majority of respondents indicated that their school library collection was either *sufficiently* or *very well equipped*. Based on respondents' *barely adequate* ratings, libraries may benefit from more books with informational text and those that supplement the school's reading curriculum. A small percentage of respondents (2%-4%) believed that their collections were inadequate for each material type listed.

Promoting the love of reading and motivating students to read were reported as the most important objectives of librarians, followed closely by offering support to classroom teachers. Supporting the reading curriculum was rated as being *very important* for three-

quarters of respondents; whereas, serving on the school's literacy team was viewed as *very important* for only 67% of respondents.

A large majority of respondents indicated that students in Grades 1-3 visit the library *regularly* or on a *weekly* basis. Kindergarten students were reported to visit less often with 15% of respondents reporting that these students never visited the library. Nearly all respondents rated using the library to become excited about books as very important. This finding agreed with respondents' belief that promoting the love of reading and motivating students to read was a very important aspect of their work. Learning how to use the library was viewed as *very important* by 69% of respondents. Attending special programs was viewed as the least important reason for using the library.

When librarians were asked whether they attended any professional development programs this year that were pertinent to Reading First, the majority of respondents indicated that they had attended at least one training session. However, it is notable that 28% said that they had not attended any professional development programs.

A large majority of respondents indicated that they collaborated with K-3 teachers during the school year at least to some degree. A total of 49% said that they occasionally collaborated with teachers; 30% indicated they did so regularly, and 8% said it occurred weekly. Only 13% of respondents said they had not collaborated with teachers at all this year.

Librarians' participation in the Reading First program appears to be minimal for 70% of respondents. A total of 46% respondents indicated that they had only occasional involvement in Reading First, and 24% said that they had no involvement at all. That resulted in only 30% of librarians who reported having regular or weekly involvement.

Summary. Of the 106 respondents who answered the Library questionnaire, 90% indicated that their schools have libraries, and that 79% of schools employ librarians. Approximately two-thirds of librarians are employed full-time. These results show that some Reading First schools have not developed libraries for their students. Furthermore, there are schools that have libraries that are not staffed by librarians or are staffed on a part-time basis only. Consequently, students in these schools are disadvantaged compared to those in other Reading First schools in that they do not have the support and access to library resources that may stimulate students' interest in books and reading. It is recommended that all Reading First schools develop libraries and staff them with full-time librarians so that all students have the same opportunities for enhanced literacy development.

The most frequently reported library activities included providing assistance to teachers, purchasing new books, and providing library use instructions to K-3 students. Nearly one-quarter indicated that they had hired library staff during the past year or had added volunteers. About 43% of respondents indicated that they offered special programs for families to promote literacy, and 23% opened their library to parents. Very few referred parents to family literacy programs, sponsored family trips to local libraries, or offered library hours during the summer. Based on these findings, it would appear that family outreach is not a routine occurrence in all Reading First schools. This would be another area for improvement for Pennsylvania schools.

Based on the majority of respondents, library collections were rated as sufficiently adequate or very well equipped. However, some libraries were rated as *barely adequate* for books with informational text and those that supplemented the reading curriculum. Also, there were a few schools with collections that were rated *inadequate.* In the case of *barely adequate* and *inadequate* ratings, it is recommended that schools find resources to boost the breadth and depth of their collections.

Students in Grades 1-3 appear to visit their school libraries on a regular basis, but Kindergartners visited less often. Inviting Kindergartners into the library more often may be one possible strategy for advancing these students' literacy skills.

The majority of librarians reported participating in professional development programs that were pertinent to Reading First; however, more than one-quarter indicated that they attended no such sessions. Given that 87% of librarians reported that they worked with K-3 teachers, it is recommended that professional development be made a priority for all librarians.

Although librarians reported that they were collaborating with K-3 teachers, the majority indicated that they had only occasional involvement with Reading First or none at all. Many leadership teams were not including librarians as a part of their Reading First programs. Given that librarians are well equipped with knowledge and resources for assisting teachers and students in their literacy pursuits, it is recommended that they be integrated into *all* Reading First leadership teams.

Part 3: What is the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) doing to facilitate the implementation of Reading First?

The data to answer this question come from meeting notes, personal communications, document reports, and logs kept by the Technical Assistants who serve as the key providers of professional development for RF in Pennsylvania.

PDE Leadership for the Reading First Initiative

During the first eight months of 2006-07, RF implementation, the Reading First initiative in the Pennsylvania Department of Education continued to be led by Dr. Jane Daschbach in the Division of Federal Programs, with Wendy Steensland coordinating the activities of the cadre of Technical Assistants responsible for helping school and school districts implement PA RF policies and procedures. Then, in February 2007, Dr. Daschbach was reassigned to a different state initiative and RF management was given to Susan Popielski, also from the Division of Federal Programs. Ms. Steensland continued to coordinate the activities of the Technical Assistants. Then, in July 2007, there was another change in state leadership. While Ms. Popielski continued as fiscal manager of RF, implementation leadership was assigned as a half-time commitment to Ms. Deborah Fulton, a consultant with the Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Network (PaTTAN) working out of the PaTTAN Harrisburg offices. Each change in leadership brought with it changes in the vision and definition of the roles and responsibilities of the Technical Assistants and uncertainty about requirements and "non-negotiables" among Reading First school personnel.

***Providing Technical Assistance to Reading First Schools*: A Train-the-Trainers Model Utilizing a Cadre of Technical Assistants**

The PA Reading First Initiative uses a unique structure to provide professional development and technical assistance to districts and schools implementing their Reading First sub grants. A cadre of Technical Assistants (TAs) has been trained to help particular local districts and schools. The TAs provide on-site support and professional development to their school sites. In 2006-07, the number of TAs increased by four; however five TAs were reassigned to different schools during the school year. One LEA did not receive any TA on-site support and one district received support for 3 of its 12 schools.

Backgrounds: The seventeen TAs brought a variety of educational experiences and background to the Reading First initiative. TAs have spent an average of 29 years of their careers in the field of education (range: 8-39 years). All have taught in the classroom setting. Three TAs completed doctorate degrees while four others indicated they are in the process of attaining this degree. With regard to certification, TAs reported the following: 12 held elementary certifications; 13 were certified Reading Specialists; 7 held Reading Supervisor certifications; 4 held an administration certification; 3 were certified in Special Education; and 3 were certified in Early Childhood Education.

Contracted assignments: TA contracts with PDE were based on the 7.5 day provided for full-time, year round employment. The total number of contracted days ranged from 4 to 200. Five TAs had contractual affiliations with another educational entity (Intermediate Unit or LEA). Twelve TAs received contracts through Berks County Intermediate Unit (BCIU). The number of LEAs assigned to each TA ranged from one to five. The number of schools in the LEAs assigned to each TA ranged from 1 to 30; the number of coaches assigned to TAs ranged from 1 to 30 (Table 10).

Table 10. Assignments of PA Technical Assistants in 2006-07

TA	# of RF Coaches	# of LEAs	# of RF Schools	Total # of Contracted Days
1	9	4	7	130
3	9	4	6	153
4*	10/9	2	10/6	195
5	21	1	21	150
6**	14/15	5	8/9	191
8**	5/4	2	5/4	175
10	7	3	6	161
13	16	5	8	175
14***	9/1	2	6/1	119
16	6	1	6	168
19****	30/29	1	30/29	200
20	7	4	5	120
21	14	1	14	192
22	11	1	11	192
23*****	3	1	3	52
24	1	1	1	4

25	10	1	10	36

* Contracted for Harrisburg S.D. 7/1/06; reassigned to S.D. of City of York 3/9/07-6/30/07.
** TA 6 was reassigned a school originally assigned to TA 8
*** Contracted for S.D. of City of York and Steelton-Highspire S.D. 7/1/06; contracted for Steelton Highspire S.D. 1/3/07-6/30/07
**** One school was reassigned to TA 24 2/1/07
***** TA was assigned to 3 of the 12 RF schools in this district.

Job Responsibilities of the TAs: The main requirements for TAs include:
- Attendance at all required RF state training sessions
- Monthly visits to funded districts to insure effective RF implementation
- Assist school districts and schools in identifying ongoing needs for professional development and provide assistance to LEAs in arranging professional development.
- Provide support in selection of core, supplemental and intervention programs.
- Consultation with Reading First Coaches in the application of scientifically based reading research within a comprehensive core reading program.
- Assist schools and districts with data collection and analysis and completion of all information required by PDE.
- Plan the 2007 RF Coaches' Institute and Summer Academy.

Under the leadership of Wendy Steensland, TAs were organized into Cadre Work Groups that met throughout the year to plan and complete work in the following areas: Monitoring, Early Literacy Online Course, RF Coaches' Institute, Summer Academy, Response to Intervention (ESL), Statewide Professional Development, Design and Development of Materials (including a newsletter and Action Plan); Website Coordination, and the Core or Advisory Team.
The number of TAs working together as a Cadre ranged from 1 to 10.

During TA meetings, Cadres met and/or reported on progress regarding their respective goals. The Core or Advisory Team consisted of the Director of Field Services and three TAs representing the eastern, central, and western regions of the state. The Core or Advisory Team met in August and then monthly from October 2006 through June 2007.

TAs also assisted during site visits as members of the PA Department of Education team monitoring Reading First schools in Pennsylvania.

Training for TAs: PDE provided training for TAs in the training-of-trainers model. TAs attended 8 state level professional development meetings, a total of 15 working days.

Table 11: Training Provided To TAs in 2006-2007

Month	No. of Sessions	Agenda
August	2	PDE Updates The Three C's of Coaching: Dr. Rita Bean Online Course Coaches' Network Regional Meetings PA Progress Monitor Newsletter RF in PA Website Implementation Checklist and Action Plan
October	2	TA Cadre Reports Professional Development Updates ERRFTAC Updates Action Plan Draft
November	2	TA Cadre Reports PDE Updates: monitoring, focus schools, assurances RtI Getting Results in Reading
December	1	Planning P.D. with Susan Hall/95 Percent Group
January	2	Online Course Updates Coaches' Network Regional Meetings Improving Schools Conference PDE Updates: Monitoring Report
March	2	TA Cadre Reports Online Course Getting Results in Reading PDE Announcements: PDE, Public Welfare and Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL) Update
May	2	PDE Updates Online Course Cadre Reports Getting Results in Reading Professional Development in 2007-08
June	2	Online Course PDE Updates Getting Results in Reading Updates Regional Coaches' Network Cadre Reports Professional Development: Summer 2007 Intervention Block Implementation Planning for Next Year

Documenting the Work of the TAs: TAs reported their activities by completing two monthly logs:
- *School Visitation Log*: This log provided information regarding on-school-site activities including attendance at team leadership meetings; coach consultation, classroom visits, professional development, assessment and the 90-minute uninterrupted literacy block.

- *Time/Activities Log*: This log documented the amount of time spent in 10 categories of job responsibilities. Completed logs were received from 15 TAs.

All logs were submitted to Berks County Intermediate Unit (BCIU) and the University of Pittsburgh External Evaluation Team.

A summary of the time logs for 2006-07 indicates clearly that the TAs do many things. Table 11 summarizes their distribution of time. Three activities occupy, on average, 50% of the time of the TAs: attending workshops (18%), consulting with Reading First coaches (16%), and Reading First administration (15%).

Professional Development Provided by Reading First Technical Assistants
Technical Assistants provided professional development at both Reading First and non-Reading First school sites. Nine TAs reported conducting a total of 32 professional development sessions at 11 Reading First school districts. Fifteen TAs reported providing 24 sessions at non-RF school sites including the three PaTTAN regional training centers, two state conferences, and one national conference: Keystone State Reading Association Conference, Title I Improving Schools conference, and the Reading First National Conference. The majority of sessions focused on assessment, effective instruction, vocabulary, intervention, and the online course. (see Table 13).

Table 12. Distribution of TA activities: Percent of time on each activity type

ID	consult admin	consult coach	meetings	visits	guidelines	plan state	plan regional	plan district	admin	travel
1	3.02	7.75	2.62	3.73	0.40	8.76	1.11	0.00	20.64	18.03
3	3.96	13.76	4.96	6.66	4.21	6.91	1.79	3.49	15.40	6.93
4	4.58	19.31	13.85	10.35	10.59	0.00	2.04	3.57	11.21	6.21
5	4.78	28.73	4.46	3.98	1.81	2.71	1.30	0.14	22.65	2.99
6	5.71	7.06	1.65	2.29	7.68	12.97	5.09	3.56	24.77	0.32
8	6.11	7.53	7.74	1.96	1.08	5.46	2.45	4.43	11.44	0.09
10	7.08	18.39	7.19	4.59	1.11	7.32	1.27	6.13	17.09	0.56
14	5.42	5.56	3.64	2.97	4.41	0.24	3.26	0.58	31.15	0.03
16	3.91	6.26	4.68	0.69	29.87	0.92	2.40	2.94	14.85	1.78
20	1.68	9.47	9.92	3.13	37.11	0.16	1.55	0.26	12.11	0.48
21	6.83	17.04	9.11	11.40	3.64	0.14	4.24	6.42	8.28	5.48
22	2.89	31.96	8.59	4.01	1.60	1.16	0.85	6.90	5.43	1.42
23	6.46	9.75	9.29	6.12	8.54	0.63	6.23	11.19	18.58	0.35
24	13.61	34.62	0.00	7.90	6.05	0.00	0.00	0.00	8.07	25.21
25	11.19	22.78	12.69	3.90	0.00	1.90	0.00	2.10	8.99	12.49
Average	5.82	16.00	6.69	4.91	7.87	3.29	2.24	3.45	15.38	5.49

Table 12. Distribution of TA activities: Percent of time on each activity type (continued)

ID	conduct state	conduct regional	conduct district	workshops	online	other	Total
1	5.24	0.40	0.00	18.43	0.40	9.47	100.00
3	2.25	1.50	0.91	20.68	1.28	5.30	100.00
4	0.39	0.81	0.78	9.81	2.87	3.65	100.00
5	0.37	0.65	0.74	16.49	0.00	8.20	100.00
6	3.44	1.79	0.35	7.88	2.29	13.12	100.00
8	0.88	6.67	1.36	24.48	14.41	3.91	100.00
10	0.00	2.92	1.72	18.71	1.30	4.62	100.00
14	0.00	3.26	1.25	35.85	0.48	1.92	100.00
16	0.25	1.19	1.29	22.37	1.16	5.44	100.00
20	0.00	0.64	0.00	18.69	4.16	0.64	100.00
21	0.32	1.38	2.55	23.04	0.00	0.14	100.00
22	0.00	0.00	7.12	28.08	0.00	0.00	100.00
23	0.92	3.58	1.90	5.54	3.29	7.62	100.00
24	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	4.54	0.00	100.00
25	0.00	0.00	1.00	21.58	0.00	1.40	100.00
Average	0.94	1.65	1.40	18.11	2.41	4.36	100.00

Table 13. Professional Development Provided by Technical Assistants at RF School Sites, August 2006 – June 2007

Site	Technical Assistant	Date	Audience/Title of Professional Development
Carbondale Area Elementary	Georgette Siedlecki	Oct. 16, '06	K-1/Implementing the FCRR Literacy Center Activities
Carbondale Area Elementary	Georgette Siedlecki	Dec. 15, '06	K-3/Forming Intervention Groups Based on DIBELS Data
Chester Community	Karen Davis	Jan. 4, '07	RF Coaches/Regional Coaches Training for SE Delco, Bristol Borough, Chester Charter, Village Charter, & Norristown
Greater Nanticoke Elementary Center	Georgette Siedlecki	Mar. 25, '07	2nd/Setting Clear Purpose and Rationale
Greater Nanticoke Elementary Center	Georgette Siedlecki	Apr. 19, '07	3rd/Setting Clear Purpose and Rationale
Greater Nanticoke Elementary Center	Georgette Siedlecki	June 11, '07	2nd & 3rd/Data Review/Next Steps
Greater Nanticoke S.D./ KM Smith School	Georgette Siedlecki	Apr. 19, '07	K/Setting Clear Purpose and Rationale
Greater Nanticoke S.D./	Georgette Siedlecki	Apr. 25	1st/Setting Clear Purpose and Rationale

KM Smith School			
Lancaster S.D. Washington Elem	Nancy Mast	Mar. 2, '079	Grade Level Teachers/Administering DIBELS for Classroom Teachers & Analyzing Data
Lancaster S.D. Ross Elem.	Nancy Mast	Apr. 17, '07	
Pittsburgh S.D.	Lisa Yonek		Emergent Literacy: Teaching Phonemic Awareness *
Pittsburgh S.D.	Lisa Yonek		Robust Vocabulary Instruction: An Approach to Teaching Word Meanings *
Pittsburgh S.D.	Lisa Yonek		Teaching Phonics
Philadelphia S.D. Smedley School	Regina Katz	Dec. 5, 06	Data Analysis
Philadelphia S.D. Sharswood School	Regina Katz	Jan. 12, '07	Intervention Strategies
Philadelphia S.D.	Regina Katz	Sept. 22, 07	Philadelphia RF Coaches Training/ Coaching Module I: Working in Groups (Rita Bean) *
Philadelphia S.D.	Regina Katz Gladys Valcourt	Feb. 9, 07	Philadelphia RF Coaches Training/ Coaching Module 2: Working in Groups (Rita Bean) *
Reading S.D.	Beth Kirchgessner	May 7, '07	Teachers/Teaching from the Known Using Analogies and a Reader's Notebook Approach*; Syllasearch; Phonics for the Reading Intervention Block
Reading S.D. Glenside Elem.	Beth Kirchgessner	May 14, '07	Teachers/Leveled Readers in the Classroom Library: Matching Readers to Books
Reading S.D.	Beth Kirchgessner	Mar. 19, '07	Coaches and Reading Specialists/Differentiated Instruction
S.E. Delco S.D. Harris Elem.	Karen Davis	May 2, '07	Teachers/Setting Priorities in RF
S.E. Delco S.D. Education Services Center	Karen Davis	May 24, '07	Principals and RF Coaches/ Wrapping Up and Planning Ahead
Village Charter	Karen Davis Jane Johnston	Aug. 29, 06	K-2 teachers/DIBELS Training
Western Wayne S.D./ Hamlin Elem.	Georgette Siedlecki	Nov. 15, '06	K-2/Robust Vocabulary: Unlocking the Mearning of Text
Western Wayne S.D./ Hamlin Elem.	Georgette Siedlecki	Dec. 7, '06	1st & 2nd/Robust Vocabulary: Unlocking the Meaning Part II
Western Wayne S.D./ Hamlin Elem.	Georgette Siedlecki	Dec. 13, '06	K/Robust Vocabulary: Unlocking the Meaning of Text Part II
Western Wayne S.D./ Hamlin Elem.	Georgette Siedlecki	Mar. 12, '07	K-2/ Setting Clear Purpose and Rationale
Western Wayne S.D./ Lake Ariel El.	Georgette Siedlecki	Oct. 13, '06	3rd – 5th/Robust Vocabulary: Unlocking the Mearning of Text Part I
Western Wayne	Georgette	Oct. 23,	3rd – 5th/Robust Vocabulary: Unlocking the

S.D./ Lake Ariel El.	Siedlecki	'06	Meaning of Text Part II
Western Wayne S.D./ Lake Ariel El.	Georgette Siedlecki	Jan. 23, '07	3rd/ Setting Purpose and Rationale
Western Wayne S.D./ RD Wilson El	Georgette Siedlecki	May 30m '07	PreK – 5th/Setting Clear Purpose and Rationale
York S.D.	Marilyn Carter	Nov. 20, 06	Principals/ What Should I See in the First Grade Classroom? *

Consistent with the RF mandate to serve the professional development needs of schools beyond those funded through the Reading First sub grant initiative, TAs also provided professional development to non-Reading First schools (Table 14)

Table 14. **Professional Development Provided by Technical Assistants at Non-RF School Sites: August 2006 – July 2007**

Site	Technical Assistant	Date	Audience/Title of Professional Development
Harrisburg PaTTAN	Georgette Siedlecki	Sept. 6, '06	New Coaches/ Administering DIBELS *
Harrisburg PaTTAN	Beth Puschak Laura Wengerd	Sept. 8, '06	Coaches/ Online Course: Foundation for Facilitation *
(local site)	Beth Puschak Georgette Siedlecki	Fall, 06	Regional Coaches Training "Planting the Seeds of Change" *
BCIU	Beth Puschak	Sept. 11, 06	Coaches/ Online Course: A Deeper Understanding of Facilitation *
Harrisburg PaTTAN	Beth Puschak	Sept. 12, 06	
Pittsburgh PaTTAN	Laura Wengerd	Sept. 14, '06	
S.E. Delco Education Services Center	Karen Davis	Oct. 12, '06	RF Coaches/Regional Coaches Training for Bristol Borough, S.E. Delco, Chester Charter, & Village Charter
KSRA @Seven Springs	Karen Davis	Oct. 23, '06	All/ DIBELS and Beyond
Ephrata (dinner mtg)	Nancy Mast Wendy Steensland	Nov. 13, '06	Regional Coaches Training for Reading & Lancaster coaches
Midwestern IU IV Grove City	Deb Bowser Barb Warden Laura Wengerd	Nov. 17, '06	Regional Coaches Training for New Castle, Farrell, Reynolds, Sharon City, Oil City, Cranberry, AC Valley, Monessen, Aliquippa
PA/Title I Improving School Performance @ Pittsburgh	Karen Davis Regina Katz Beth Puschak	Jan. 21-24	Leading the Climb to Higher Achievement: Three years of Growth Through PA RF Getting Results with RF: Shining the Light on Every Child * That Was Then, This Is Now: Making Positive Changes at Northwest Elementary School in Lebanon *

	Laura Wengerd Lisa Yonek Karen Davis		A Demonstration of Response to Intervention: Improving Reading Achievement Through Implementation of a Three-Tiered Instruction/Intervention Model in RF *
BCIU	Beth Puschak Laura Wengerd	Feb. 12	Coaches/Online Course *
Harrisburg PaTTAN	Marilyn Carter Beth Kirchgessner Jane Johnston	Feb. 28	Coaches/Online Course *
KoP PaTTAN	Beth Puschak	Feb. 15	Coaches/Online Course *
Pittsburgh PaTTAN	Laura Wengerd	Feb. 15	Coaches/Online Course *

KoP PaTTAN	Karen Davis Regina Katz	March 5	Coaches/Analyzing the Data: Connecting the Dots *
Harrisburg PaTTAN	Marilyn Carter Jane Johnston Beth Kirchgessner	March 7	
KoP PaTTAN	Karen Davis Regina Katz Beth Puschak Gladys Valcourt	April 10	Regional Coaches Training/Collegiality, Celebration & Learning
Harrisburg PaTTAN	Sandy Davis Jane Johnston Beth Kirchgessner Nancy Mast Georgette Siedlecki	April 11	
Pittsburgh PaTTAN	Deb Bowser Ruthie Rea Barb Warden Laura Wengerd Lisa Yonek	April 12	Regional Coaches Training/Collegiality, Celebration & Learning
RF National Conference @ St. Louis	Regina Katz	July 19	Philadelphia RF Coaches Are Making a Difference

Professional Development Provided by Pennsylvania Department of Education to Facilitate Implementation of Reading First 2006-2007. In its leadership role, the Pennsylvania Department of Education also organized and facilitated professional development activities throughout 2006-07. A large number of RF staff attended these sessions. Sessions were held at BCIU and regional PaTTAN locations across the state. RF administrators and coaches were invited to attend these sessions that presented information about Assessment and Instruction, Providing Leadership for Change, Coach Guidelines, and the Online Course. All information presented was drawn from scientifically based reading research (SBRR).

Assessment and RF Guidelines: In September, Technical Assistants provided sessions for new coaches regarding DIBELS administration, RF guidelines, and facilitation of the online course. Rita Bean, University of Pittsburgh, presented a session on the "Role of

the Reading Coach." Susan Hall and Michelle Colwart of the 95 Percent Group, Inc, conducted all other sessions regarding assessment.

Instruction: Four sessions of the Reading First Academy were held in August, 2006 across the state. Margaret McKeown and Cheryl Sandora, University of Pittsburgh, presented "Research-based Approaches to Comprehension Instruction" which focused on Text Talk as an approach to read-alouds. Attendance included 13 coaches and 252 non-Reading First staff. In October, Jennifer B. Wick, Texas RF Initiative, University of Texas presented a session on "Decodable Text Instruction". In May, the 95 Percent Group, Inc. provided information about developing phonics lesson plans.

Leadership and Learning: Eddie Frasca-Stuart, RF Principals' Technical Assistant and Bernard Badiali, Pennsylvania State University conducted ten sessions regarding the development of professional learning communities. In September, a two-day session conducted by Eddie Frasca-Stuart, provided an overview of Reading First guidelines for new principals.

Online Course: Technical Assistants Beth Puschak and Laura Wengerd delivered two presentations designed to provide a deeper understanding of the facilitation of the online course across the state. A total of 65 coaches attended each presentation.

The Reading First Coaches' Institute was held as it has been for the last three years at Villanova University, June 25-28. There were 96 participants, 54 were coaches; ten Technical Assistants were also in attendance. Sessions provided information regarding data-driven instruction and comprehension strategies.

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These professional development activities are summarized in Table 15.

Table 15: Professional Development Provided by PDE

CATEGORY	DATE	NO. OF SESSIONS	TOPIC	COACH ATTEND.	*OTHER ATTEND
ASSESSMENT	SEPT.	1	ADMINISTERING DIBELS	12	5
	NOV.	2	LAUNCHING INTERVENTION GROUPS	78	51
	DEC.	3	DETERMINING INSTRUCTIONAL FOCUS: GRADES 2 & 3	162	52
	JAN.	3	ANALYZING PROGRESS	136	60
	MAR.	2	ANALYZING THE DATA: CONNECTING THE DOTS	84	32
INSTRUCTION	AUG.	4	A RESEARCH-BASED APPROACH TO COMPREHENSION INSTRUCTION	13	252
	OCT.	1	THE READING FIRST CLASSROOM	28	19
	OCT.	3	DECODABLE TEXT INSTRUCTION	116	47
	MAY	3	ADDITIONAL EXPERIENCES WITH THE PHONICS LESSON PLAN	143	49
RF GUIDELINES	SEPT.	2	RF OVERVIEW	0	27
	OCT.	1	STATE LEADERSHIP MEETING	31	65

LEADERSHIP & LEARNING	AUG.	2	PROVIDING LEADERSHIP FOR CHANGE & PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITIES	29	102
	OCT.	3	LEADERSHIP, LITERACY & LEARNING COMMUNITIES	0	44
	FEB.	3	PROVIDING LEADERSHIP FOR CHANGE	2	50
	MAY	2	PROVIDING LEADERSHIP FOR CHANGE	0	19
COACH GUIDELINES	SEPT.	1	ROLE OF THE READING COACH	22	9
	JUNE	3	COACHES' INSTITUTE: DATA-DRIVEN INSTRUCTION/COMPREHENSION	54	52**
	APR.	3	COLLEGIALITY, CELEBRATION, AND LEARNING	146	42
ONLINE COURSE	SEPT.	1	FOUNDATIONS FOR FACILITATION	15	6
	SEPT.	3	A DEEPER UNDERSTANDING OF FACILITATION: YEAR TWO OF EMBEDDED LEARNING	65	21
	FEB.	4	FACILITATING A PROFESSIONAL COMMUNITY OF LEARNERS	65	25

*   OTHER INCLUDES SCHOOL STAFF, TECHNICAL ASSISTANTS, RF STAFF, ETC.
** 10 TECHNICAL ASSISTANTS ATTENDED

Part 4. Recommendations from the External Evaluation Team

The achievement data presented in Part 1 of this report show very positive outcomes for Reading First in Pennsylvania. After four years of implementation, changes in achievement are demonstrable and substantial. On seven of eight indicators, there is an increase in mean scores at each grade level in each successive year in which Reading First was implemented. The improvements on the Oral Reading Fluency measure at each grade level are the most remarkable. However, Reading Comprehension scores (from the second grade Terra Nova) are virtually unchanged.
Reading First schools also showed an increase in the percentage of students meeting grade level standards at the end of each succeeding year in each grade level (1, 2, 3). The most dramatic change is seen in the statewide assessment (PSSA) at 3rd grade which showed that, after four years of implementation, 17% more students performed at Proficient/Advanced compared to the baseline year and the rate of change for third graders in Reading First schools far exceeded the rate of change for third graders in Pennsylvania schools across the Commonwealth. The data also document a decline in the percentage of students who finished the year at serious risk (below the 20th percentile on the Terra Nova in first and second grade, and Below Basic on the PSSA in third grade). In general, the disaggregated data show that the achievement gap is narrowing in Reading First schools for IEP and LEP subgroups on measures of oral reading fluency in grades 1, 2, and 3, and on selected Terra Nova measures. On the 3rd grade statewide assessment in reading, the achievement gap was reduced for *all* disaggregated groups. Minority students and economically disadvantaged students made at least twice as much average gain in PSSA achievement than did non-minority

or non-economically disadvantaged students; English language learners and students with IEPs made 1.5 times the gains in average PSSA reading as did native speakers and students without disabilities.

Many Reading First schools (85/136 or 62.5%) were successful in accomplishing the two goals of Reading First: an increase in the percentage of students at grade level and a reduction in the percentage of their students seriously below grade level. Overall, 71% of schools showed an increasing trend in the percent of students at or above grade level. More than two thirds of the schools showed a decreasing trend in the percentage of students at serious risk. Nevertheless, there were 33 schools that not only *decreased* the percentage of students performing at grade level but also *increased* the percentage of students in the 'at risk' category. On this particular criterion of improvement, these 33 schools are in serious trouble.

Commendations for Reading First Schools and the Pennsylvania Department of Education's Leadership of Reading First

The majority of schools, after 4 years of Reading First funding and support, have implemented the seven non-negotiables and they should be commended for their efforts to implement the various aspects of Reading First in their school. Indeed, the achievement outcomes in the majority of schools reflect this commitment to improving reading achievement.

Observations showed that some schools have made very positive changes in classroom reading instruction. We have documented increases in small group instruction, on-task behavior, and participation of students in the five reading elements, all evidence of the influence of Reading First and the focus on scientifically based reading instruction. Moreover, we saw a continuing emphasis on vocabulary instruction.

Recommendations to the State Leadership of Reading First in Pennsylvania

1. **Take a stand on the absence of a core reading program in some Reading First schools.** There are 15 Reading First schools that have refused to adopt a published core reading program as part of their Reading First implementation. When questioned, the schools/school districts have provided what they consider to be sufficient evidence that the reading program being implemented is "scientifically based" and should produce the same reading gains as in schools using a published program. Indeed, in 9 of the 15 schools, there was progress in reading achievement. In 6 of the 15 schools, however, there has been a *decline* over the four years of implementation in the percent of students identified as proficient and an i*ncrease* in the percent of students at serious risk. These six schools are all in a single school district. While the absence of a published core reading program is, no doubt, not the only reason for the lack of achievement progress in these six schools, it is time the state leadership of Reading First made adoption of a published core reading series a contingency for further funding of Reading First in those schools.

2. **Disseminate and support implementation of the newly developed "non-negotiables" about coaching.** Although there has been a significant

increase in the average number of hours per week spent by coaches with teachers in job-embedded professional development (up from 9.2 hrs/week in 2004-05 to 10.4 hrs/week in 2006-07), the actual change is only 1.2 hours. In other words, in 2006-07, coaches spent only about 25% of their time in job-embedded professional development. Some coaches appear to be "spreading themselves too thin"; many are being asked to handle responsibilities that take them away from their coaching responsibilities. This is not surprising, since there has never been a uniform job description for coaches in Reading First schools. Until now, that is. Recently the Collaborative Coaching Board, an initiative of the Pennsylvania Department of Education, has developed and approved for dissemination a list of non-negotiables about coaching. This list should be made available to administrators and coaches of all Reading First schools, but particularly those in which the coach appears to be spending a lot of time on tasks other than coaching. Furthermore, every effort should be made to reduce unnecessary paperwork and administrative responsibilities of coaches so they can spend more time on 'real' coaching responsibilities.

3. **Continue to support/sponsor professional development for coaches**.
   PDE should continue to take the lead in defining the role of the coach and providing professional development to new and veteran coaches. One of the next workshops for coaches should be focused on the information in this report. The goal of the workshop would be to (a) share information; (b) solicit ideas from coaches about how they might change conditions in their school so that more focus could be placed on coaching; (c) ask coaches to develop procedures for obtaining "evidence" as to how they have influenced teacher practices in their schools; and (d) provide instruction on the *process* of coaching, with specific ideas about how to co-teach, model, or observe. Professional development for Reading First coaches has provided excellent information about the *content* of coaching (e.g., the 5 elements of SBR), however, not as much attention has been given to the *process* of coaching (except in specific districts or during the series of workshops in Year 1 when coaches were introduced to Cognitive Coaching). Moreover, we have had a turnover in coaches, and those who have become coaches since Year 1 have not had the opportunity to participate in workshops that focused on the *process of coaching*.

4. **Continue to support district efforts to improve vocabulary instruction.**
   Although there was a slight increase in vocabulary instruction, the observation team reported that it did not observe in-depth, robust instruction with opportunities for multiple exposures to new vocabulary. This is especially important in those schools in which there are large numbers of ELL or high-poverty students whose vocabulary development may be limited.

5. **Provide professional development necessary to continue to strengthen reading instruction at the "text" level.** There is a continuing need to include in primary reading instruction a focus on the "text" level. Specifically, teachers would benefit from learning explicit strategies to enhance reading instruction that encourages high-level thinking of students in the discussions of text. The emphasis on working with informational text has produced some positive effects; we would encourage state and district leadership to continue this emphasis.

6. **Help schools improve library resources.** Our study of librarians indicates that in some schools, there is a need to improve the library resources and include the librarian in the implementation of RF in the schools. The librarian can be an important resource to teachers in locating the books and other print and non-print materials that can enrich reading instruction. Moreover, librarians are an important resource in building motivation and willingness to read, a key element in improving student performance in reading

7. **Help schools increase parent involvement**.. There were fewer parent meetings this past year than in past RF years. PDE through its Technical Assistants should encourage schools to investigate approaches to involving parents more extensively in schools, from learning more about how they can work with their children to learning more about the school reading program itself.

8. **Stabilize leadership of state initiatives**. Although changes in leadership appear to be inevitable, each change has brought with it a change in the definitions of roles and responsibilities of key Reading First personnel. This has been especially true for the Technical Assistants responsible for delivering a coherent state message to RF school administrators, coaches, and teachers,

9. **Improve communication with "the field".** PDE leadership must work more closely with all constituents to keep them apprised of the various initiatives and activities that are being planned. This is true for the External Evaluation team, as well as for the technical assistants and district personnel.

10. **Make use of the evaluation data so that RF is, itself, data-driven.** We encourage the State Leadership to work closely with the External Evaluation Team to address each of the recommendations identified in this report. The information gained from this extensive, long-term evaluation can be invaluable to the State in its efforts to improve student performance in its RF schools. We would be pleased to talk in-depth about our recommendations and to collaborate in developing the specific steps that would enable implementation of these various recommendations.

Directions for Future Work of the External Evaluation Team

1. **Refocus evaluation activities.** The External Evaluation Team has collected important data useful in tracking the changes in specific RF schools at all grade levels; these data have helped us make recommendations to the State and to the schools. It is now time to focus our work on schools that have not made progress. We are especially interested in looking closely at these schools not only to observe the "extent" to which they are implementing scientifically based instruction, but also the "quality" of what they are presenting to students. We recognize the importance of the classroom work; in the past years, we have "sampled" teachers in the schools. Our goal for future study is to visit the classrooms of all teachers in our focus schools.

2. **Design a comparative study of RF and non-RF schools**. The External Evaluation Team, with State Leadership, should at this time, collaborate on a study that would give us more information about the differences between Reading First and Non-Reading First schools without coaches. Although the

External Evaluation Team has collected important data about how coaches distribute their time and the positive responses of teachers and principals to coaching, it is difficult to determine the effects of coaching without a comparison group. Coaching, as an approach to school improvement, may lose support if coaching is not found to be an effective and cost-efficient approach to improving instruction and achievement. A good idea, poorly implemented, may lose support with policy makers and school leadership personnel.

Conclusions

At this time, five years into the implementation of RF, the schools and the State can be pleased with the positive improvements in student performance overall and the evidence that scientifically-based reading instruction is occurring in the schools. Reading First has certainly given us rich information about how a sustained, coherent state-level initiative can make a difference. At the same time, there is much more work to be done. The achievement gaps that exist between rich and poor, minority and non-minority, ELL and non-ELL, students with special needs and those without, indicate that we must not only sustain our efforts but also redouble them. We need in-depth discussions at the leadership levels (key personnel from the State, the External Evaluation Team, and School Districts) to explore how specific "aspects" of RF (e.g., scientifically based reading instruction, coaches, 90 minute reading instruction block) can be sustained once RF funding has terminated. Such discussions should generate specific recommendations to school districts for how they might sustain their on-going progress in students' reading achievement. "Sustainability" should be the central focus of the final year of RF implementation for those working with PA schools