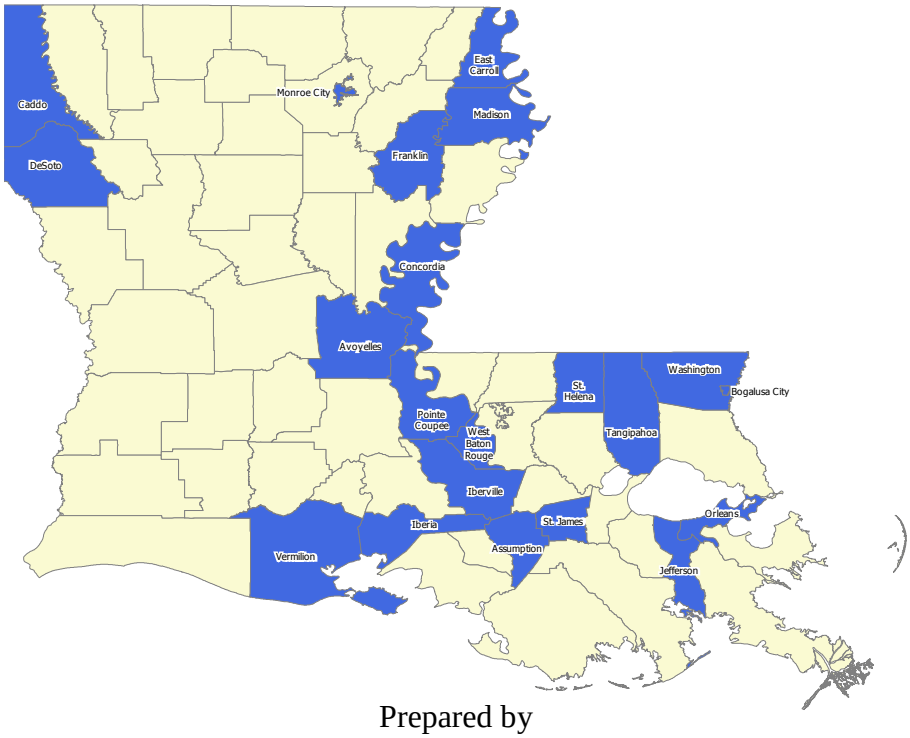
Louisiana's Reading First Program

2007 Annual Evaluation Report



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Executive Summary

Reading First in Louisiana continues in the fourth year of implementation in 25 districts and 111 schools. The first three years showed year-to-year growth in all grades as measured by an increase in the percentage of students on benchmark and a decrease in the percentage of students considered at risk (See Table 1).

Table 1: Change in Percentage of Students "On Benchmark" and "At Risk" on DIBELS Oral Reading Fluency Spring 2006 to Spring 2007 in Cohort 1 Schools - % (number)

	Percentage of Reading First Students "On Benchmark"			Percentage of Reading First Students "At Risk"		
Grade	**Spring 2006**	**Spring 2007**	**Percent Change**	**Spring 2006**	**Spring 2007**	**Percent Change**
First	57% (2771)	60% (3037)	**+3%**	17% (809)	15% (779)	**-2%**
Second	45% (2012)	50% (2402)	**+5%**	32% (1452)	27% (1281)	**-5%**
Third	42% (1795)	47% (2165)	**+5%**	22% (923)	19% (880)	**-3%**

As in previous years, the percentage of students referred to special education for reading difficulties decreased and the performance gaps between historically underperforming subgroups and other students continue to close. The positive interaction with the LA 4 program continues, as well (i.e., students who participate in both Reading First and LA 4 perform substantially better than students who participate in Reading First alone or LA 4 alone). Analyses of the effectiveness of instruction indicate that while schools are generally effective in improving student outcomes from year to year, there are areas where additional support is needed to ensure that students stay on benchmark and that those students who are below benchmark make more substantial progress.

Recommendations

Differentiate Professional Development to Teacher Needs

The Picard Center evaluation of instructional effectiveness clearly indicates that Reading First schools need additional support to provide individualized, differentiated instruction in the classroom, and recommends that Reading First schools redouble their efforts to target professional development in literacy instruction to the specific needs of their faculty members so that teachers can in turn better differentiate instruction to meet student needs. The Reading First program should support schools in making data-driven decisions when planning professional development. The piloting of the Content Knowledge Survey for teachers and coaches is a first step in assessing teacher knowledge in order to target statewide and regional professional development.

Conduct Data Summits Annually

Best practices for literacy instruction indicate that benchmark and progress monitoring assessment results should be used to inform instructional decisions. Data summits conducted in SY 2006-07 provided Reading First personnel with a structured process for analyzing and using data to plan instruction at the school and classroom levels. If held on an ongoing basis, these summits could serve as a centering point for virtually all of the preceding recommendations,

where needs can be reviewed, professional development planned, and standardized meetings can be conducted in the schools, districts, and regions.

Outsource Professional Development

Over the course of Reading First in Louisiana, the LDE has focused its attention on providing professional development for Reading First coaches and administrators, with the expectation that regional coordinators would help coaches extend professional development to their faculties through job-embedded learning. Last year the coordinators expended far more time delivering *DIBELS* assessor training than supporting school-based professional development. The Center recommends the LDE continue to outsource the Training of Trainers model (TOT) with local school systems so that these systems have their own local trainers, knowledgeable about *DIBELS* assessment. This will allow regional coordinators to provide more targeted and substantial support to Reading First schools.

Provide a Consistent Framework for Professional Development

Professional development is crucial to effective Reading First program implementation, and there is compelling research that professional development is most effective when it is *job-embedded.* The Picard Center recommends that the LDE establish an annual, recurring calendar of topics to be covered in regional, district, and school level meetings to help provide a consistent framework for improvement. It is the intent of the Center to provide support to the LDE so that they can provide a guide for the schools to cover topics relevant to schools and districts. These standardized topics will provide a repeatable process within the program and each school to address student performance and the issues that effect instruction. The LDE has begun the process of developing Louisiana Literacy Modules which will be utilized for offering statewide professional development in the essential components of literacy instruction.

Create Opportunities for Regional Staff to Plan Collaboratively

The LDE should consider scheduling time on a regular basis when regional coordinators can meet as a group to collaboratively develop a bank of professional development activities and materials that focus on literacy and program implementation to ensure consistency in Reading First implementation. This will provide more opportunity for regional coordinators to mentor and support each other while developing plans to provide technical assistance to Reading First schools in such areas as scheduling faculty study groups and planning topics to be addressed.

1. Evaluation Report Purpose

The 2006-07 school year was the third full year of Reading First (RF) implementation. The full effect of the RF program cannot yet be measured because RF covers kindergarten through third grade. The next year of the program, 2007-08, will be the first time that there are students who have received RF instruction in all four of the RF grades. Therefore, this evaluation report is intended to address the interim results of Louisiana's RF program.

While this is an interim, summative report on the current status of RF implementation, there will also be a focus on the interim outcomes of the program. Implementation status will be determined by measures of professional development, teacher content knowledge, open-ended surveys of statewide RF staff perceptions, classroom observations, and student achievement. The interim outcomes of the program will mainly focus on student achievement as measured by *Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS)* and the *integrated* Louisiana Educational Assessment Program (*i*LEAP).

2. Louisiana Reading First Background

2.1. Reading First Program Background

The Reading First (RF) program is grounded in scientific research and is part of the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*. The *No Child Left Behind Act*, signed into law in 2002, has expanded the federal role in education and set requirements that affect every public school. At the core of *No Child Left Behind* is RF, a high-quality evidence-based initiative, designed to close the achievement gaps between different groups of students by ensuring that more children receive effective reading instruction in the early grades. Funds are dedicated to help states and local school districts eliminate the reading deficit by establishing high-quality, comprehensive reading instruction in kindergarten through grade 3. Built on a solid foundation of research, the program is designed to select, implement, and provide professional development for teachers to use scientifically-based reading programs. It also ensures accountability through ongoing, valid and reliable screening, diagnostic, and classroom-based assessment.

2.2. Overview of the Reading First Program

Reading First is authorized under Title I, Part B, Subpart 1 of the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* for the purpose of helping state and local educational agencies:

1. Establish reading programs for students in grades K-3 that are founded on scientifically based reading research, thereby ensuring that every student can read at or above grade level by grade 4;
2. Offer professional development and other support so that teachers have the knowledge and tools they need to identify and overcome their students' specific reading barriers;
3. Select and administer screening, diagnostic, and classroom-based instructional reading assessments;
4. Select or develop effective instructional materials to assist teachers in implementing the essential components of reading instruction; and

5. Strengthen coordination among schools, early literacy programs, and family literacy programs to improve reading achievement for all children (NCLB, 2001).

The federal Reading First program was established in 2002 through a $900 million Congressional appropriation (USDE, 2002 http://www.ed.gov/programs/readingfirst/index.html).

The mission of Louisiana's Reading First program is

> "to elevate and sustain teacher and student content knowledge and performance of PK-16+ education, specifically in the area of reading, through standards-based, scientifically based reading research learning supported by quality professional development." (LDE, 2002. p. 66).

In Louisiana RF is administered by the Curriculum Access Section of the Division of Educational Improvement and Assistance which is housed within the LDE Office of Student and School Performance.[1] The same section administers two other reading initiatives:

1. the K-3 Reading and Math Initiative, a legislatively-mandated and state-funded program that has been in place since 1997, and
2. the K-12 Literacy Pilot.

2.2.1. Overall Louisiana Reading First Goals

The Louisiana RF program main goal is to increase academic performance of all students attending RF schools. Reading First is part of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 and the overall goal of the federal program is to have 95% of all third grade students reading on grade-level by 2014.

2.2.2. Outcomes and Performance Measures

The Louisiana RF plan states that *DIBELS* will be used to measure student outcomes as a result of program implementation. *DIBELS* includes multiple components aligned with a variety of literacy skills and these components assessments can be used for screening, progress monitoring, and measuring outcomes.

In addition to *DIBELS*, the evaluators will be using the statewide *i*LEAP results as an additional measure of student reading performance. The iLEAP is administered to all third grade students and can therefore serve as an additional outcome measure for RF. The assessment is not administered to earlier grades, so the *DIBELS* will be the only measure of interim progress of RF students for kindergarten, first, and second grade. This evaluation uses the pre-defined performance benchmarks that are included with *DIBELS* to assess student and program performance. The growth of student scores in comparison to these benchmarks will also be used as a measure of performance. Finally, the effectiveness of RF instruction will also be measured based on the change in student performance on *DIBELS*.

[1] Though the Division of Educational Improvement and Assistance administers the RF program, the eight Regional Educational Service Centers (RESCs) play a crucial role by employing the Regional Reading Coordinators who facilitate program implementation around the state. The RESCs are administered by a division within the Executive Office of the Superintendent.

2.2.2.1. *DIBELS* Terminology

DIBELS uses various labels to categorize student performance on different measures or combinations of measures over time. Generally, *DIBELS* administration will result in the assignment of a label related to the risk of future reading difficulty based on the current score on a specific component. These labels are usually the following:

- Low Risk – means that the student scored in a range indicating that they have a low risk of having reading difficulties in the future. Students scoring in these ranges are considered to be on "benchmark" and will typically receive only core program reading instruction;
- Some Risk – means that the student scored in a range indicating that they have some risk of future reading difficulties. Scores in this range are basically non-predictive in the sense that students have an equal chance of becoming proficient or non-proficient readers. Students in this range are typically identified to receive strategic instruction, in addition to the core reading instruction, which is intended to avoid future reading difficulties;
- At Risk – means that the student scored in a range indicating that they are at risk of future reading difficulties. Scores in this range are highly predictive of future reading difficulties. These students are generally identified to receive an intensive intervention and both the core and strategic instruction of the some risk students

Once one of the literacy or pre-literacy skills assessed by *DIBELS* has reached a final terminating benchmark level, the terminology use to refer to the performance labels changes. Specifically, the three performance labels become:

- Established – indicating that the skill is in place;
- Emerging – indicating that the student is learning, but the level of this skill is not yet established;
- Deficit – indicating that the skill is not established and the student is likely to have reading difficulties.

While these labels are different and have slightly different connotations, they each map to the same tier within the intervention model. These labels are used within this report in their technically correct context, but for the average reader it is reasonable to equate the terms by level in order to facilitate personal understanding.

2.2.3. Louisiana Reading First Activities

While there are many individual activities that are performed as part of the Louisiana's RF program, the main ideas fall into only a few general categories. From the Louisiana Department of Education (LDE) perspective, the main activities involve administration, monitoring and oversight of program implementation. Louisiana does this through a combination of state and regional level oversight. The main activity that should be influenced by the program is classroom instruction. The intent of RF is to modify and improve instruction for public school students in kindergarten through third grade. LDE's main instrument for impacting and improving literacy instruction is via professional development and technical assistance. The district and the school are also major venues of and opportunities for professional development. Student assessment is a major school level activity so that the results of these assessments can be used to guide instruction.

Perhaps the most important school-level activities (aside from professional development) are the interventions provided for students who have some risk of reading difficulties. Interventions are delivered to students in a tiered manner so that students who have the highest risk of future reading difficulties receive the most intervention in the smallest instructional groups.

2.2.4. Louisiana Reading First Staffing

There are several aspects to staffing of Reading First in Louisiana. First, the LDE has several personnel who are responsible for monitoring, planning professional development & technical assistance, and general administration. The State has also been divided into geographic regions for enhanced management of all LDE activities and many of the RF activities are managed regionally as well. Each region has a RF coordinator who is responsible for providing professional development and technical assistance within their region. Districts must also designate a staff member as a district coordinator for the program.

The largest proportion of RF staff in Louisiana is within the schools. In addition to the grade level teachers who deliver instruction, each RF school will also have a literacy coach and, possibly, reading interventionists. The coach is intended to provide support to the teachers in the form of job-embedded professional development, observations, and oversight of instruction within the school to ensure that every teacher is prepared to deliver high-quality reading instruction. The interventionists are additional staff within the school that allow for students who are at risk of reading difficulty to receive additional literacy instruction.

2.3. Louisiana Reading First Program Participation

There are two important aspects of participation in the Louisiana Reading first program; one beyond the control of the LDE and one based on LDE's specific intent. The first is the impact of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita in the fall of 2005. While the extent of the damage and the impact on Louisiana's schools is beyond the scope of this report, it did affect many of the schools that were participating in RF at the time. In many cases the effect was direct in that the schools were damaged and closed. In rest of the state, the impacts were indirect in that many students displaced from the impacted areas subsequently enrolled in other RF schools across the state.

Accounting for the indirect impacts is complex and subtle, but accounting for the directly impacted schools is accomplished in a more straightforward manner. Schools that were closed by the storms were simply removed from the analysis. Even in cases where schools re-opened, these schools tended to have a very different population of both students and teachers. A more detailed investigation of the impacts of the storms on Louisiana schools can be found in a RAND report (http://www.rand.org/pubs/technical_reports/TR430/). Detailed analysis of the specific impact of the storms on RF is beyond the scope of this report. The intent here is to look at those schools that have been actively participating in the program from the start and determine how RF has affected academic outcomes. For the 2005-06 school year, this left 87 schools as active participants in RF from 20 different districts.

The second important aspect of program participation is related to a second cohort of schools being selected to participate in RF in Louisiana. The LDE accepted applications from districts that were already participating in RF to add schools and from qualifying districts that were not already participating. This round of applications resulted in having 111 schools from 25 different

districts. This second cohort is generally treated separately from the original cohort in the analyses contained in this report. Typically, the original schools will be referred to as cohort 1 and the new schools as cohort 2.

3. Overall Evaluation Goals

Louisiana's Reading First program is clearly intended to result in better reading performance of public school students. It is the goal of this evaluation to determine whether that is achieved. The goal is not only to determine whether performance has improved, but also to investigate whether any change is attributable to the RF program. So, the overall goal is two-fold. First, is reading performance improving and, second, is that improvement related to the implementation of Reading First.

3.1. Evaluation Purposes

The purpose of the evaluation is not simply to determine if the reading performance of Louisiana's public school students has improved. It is also to provide an understanding of how reading performance is influenced by the recommended practices and policies that were put in place as a result of the program. Reading First is a large and relatively complicated program with many intertwined and important parts. Understanding how these parts interact and influence students' reading abilities is, perhaps, more important than simply achieving the intended outcome.

3.2. Evaluation Questions

The following subsections provide brief answers to the evaluation questions that are most important to determining the effect of the RF program on student achievement. Each subsection will present summary results that were used to determine an answer to the question. More detailed results related to student achievement are included in subsequent sections; particularly the major findings (see section 5.)

3.2.1. Reduction in "At Risk" Students

To what extent has the number of students considered "at risk" of future reading difficulties been reduced at Reading First schools?

DIBELS Oral Reading Fluency scores are based on the number of correct words per minute read by a student. These scores correspond with benchmark assessment levels of "low risk", "some risk", and "at risk." At risk students are those who are most likely to have future reading difficulties. The intent of the RF program is to reduce this number.

Table 2: Reduction in "At Risk" Students (Cohort 1)

Percentage of Reading First Students "At Risk" - *DIBELS* Oral Reading Fluency (Cohort 1)				
Grade	**Spring 2005**	**Spring 2006**	**Spring 2007**	**Percent Change**
First	22% (1061)	17% (809)	15% (779)	-7%
Second	39% (1734)	32% (1452)	27% (1281)	-12%

Percentage of Reading First Students "At Risk" - *DIBELS* Oral Reading Fluency (Cohort 1)				
Grade	**Spring 2005**	**Spring 2006**	**Spring 2007**	**Percent Change**
Third	30% (1371)	22% (923)	19% (880)	-11%

As shown in Table 2, there was a decrease in the number and percent in each grade from the spring of 2005 to the spring of 2006 to the spring of 2007. This data is limited to only cohort 1 schools, which were in their third year of RF program implementation.

3.2.2. Increase in "Low Risk" Students

To what extent has the number of students considered having "low risk" of future reading difficulties been increase at Reading First schools?

Clearly, this question is at the core of the expected outcomes for the RF program. *DIBELS* scores corresponding to the "low risk" label are indicative that children are reading well enough to be considered to a high probability of reading success in the future.

Table 3: Increase in "Low Risk" Students (Cohort 1)

Percentage of Reading First Students On or Above Benchmark - *DIBELS* Oral Reading Fluency (Cohort 1)				
Grade	**Spring 2005**	**Spring 2006**	**Spring 2007**	**Percent Change**
First	49% (2402)	57% (2771)	60% (3037)	+11%
Second	37% (1658)	45% (2012)	50% (2402)	+13%
Third	34% (1580)	42% (1795)	47% (2165)	+13%

As shown in Table 3, there has been an increase in the number and percentage of students considered to have a low risk of future reading difficulties as measured by the *DIBELS* ORF indicator.

Figure 1: Percentage of Students on DIBELS Oral Reading Fluency Benchmark 2005 - 2007 (Cohort 1)

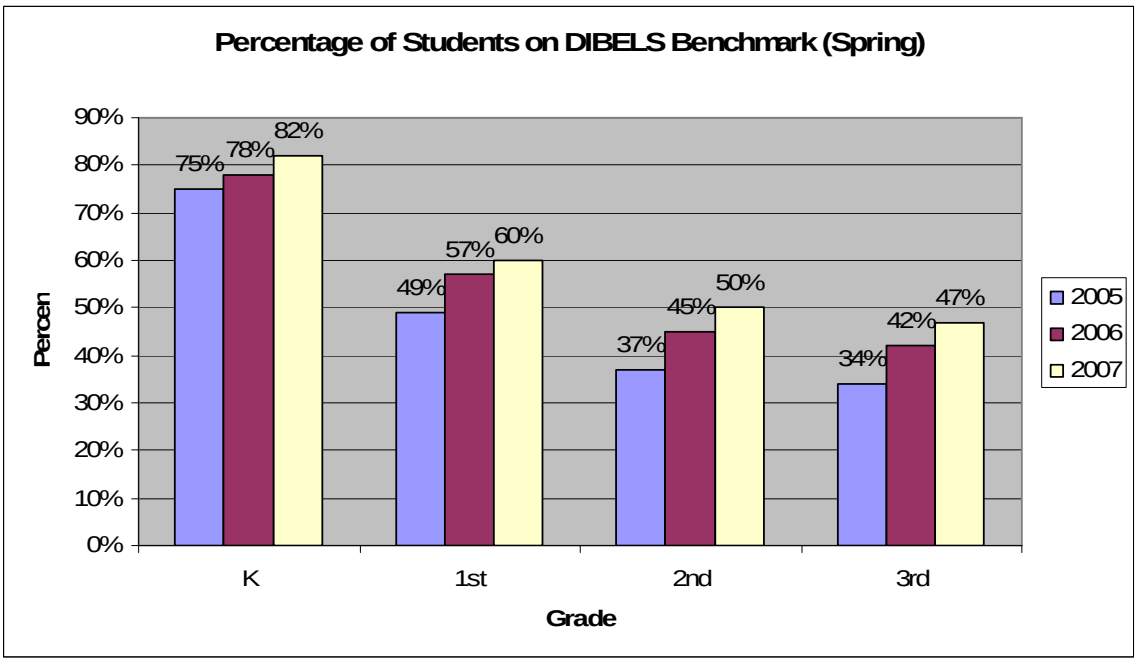


Figure 1 shows the percentage of children on benchmark in each grade over the lifetime of the program. There has been an increase each year in every grade since the inception of RF in Louisiana. This increase ranges from 7% more kindergarten students on benchmark to 13% more second and third grade students when compared to the first year of program implementation.

3.2.3. Subgroup Performance Gaps

To what extent are performance gaps between subgroups (race, poverty, gender, and special education) effected by the Reading First program?

In addition to enhancing reading instruction, and thereby, reading performance of all students, it is also expected that the gaps exhibited by historically underperforming subgroups would narrow and close. Section 5.1 in this document contains a detailed analysis of all of the subgroups, but the majority of the results are summarized in Table 4. Gender differences are not included in this table and the gap is only weakly affected by the RF program. There is substantial research about gender developmental differences in early elementary children with girls more advanced than boys, but these differences seem to disappear as children develop.

Those cells in Table 4 that are labeled as Reading First show differential performance for children that are attending RF schools as compared to those who do not. The other columns for race, free or reduced price lunch program participation, and special education show that generally there is a closure in the performance gap and, particularly in third grade, a strong closure to the point where there is essentially no difference in either performance or growth. The grayed cells indicate that there is no detectable closure in the gap for that subgroup or grade.

Table 4: Summary of Regression Analyses

Grade	Reading First	Race	Free/Reduced Lunch	Special Education
Kindergarten	Reading First			Gap closure
First		Gap closure	Gap closure	Reading First
Second	Reading First	Reading First	Reading First	Gap closure Reading First
Third	Reading First	Strong Gap closure	Gap closure	Gap closure Reading First

3.2.4. Instructional Effectiveness

Instructional effectiveness is a fairly complex idea that can be viewed from a number of different perspectives. For the purposes of this evaluation, three different measures will be used: he instructional effectiveness index, *DIBELS* summary of effectiveness worksheets, and cross-year quadrant charts.

First, the evaluators have a developed a composite measure of effectiveness that measures the relative change in the distribution of *DIBELS* scores from the fall to the spring of a specific school year. The effectiveness index may take any value from -2 to +2 with positive numbers indicating a positive change in the distribution and negative numbers indicating a negative change. The index captures changes that may not be obvious by simply looking at the percentages of children that are scoring on benchmark. It will also detect positive and negative changes in the some risk and at risk categories.

Second, the *DIBELS* summary of effectiveness worksheets which were created by the developers of the *DIBELS* are used to assess the effectiveness of each tier for each semester of a school year; the first semester is defined as the change from the fall to the winter benchmark and the second is the change from winter to spring.

Finally, quadrant charts will be created that plot the change in low risk percentages and the change in at risk percentages across two school years using the spring of each year. In this report, this means we will plot the change in low risk percentages from the spring of 2006 to the spring of 2007 on the x-axis and the change in at risk percentages from the spring of 2006 to 2007 on the y-axis. The three subsequent sections will present the results of these analyses.

3.2.4.1. Instructional Effectiveness Index

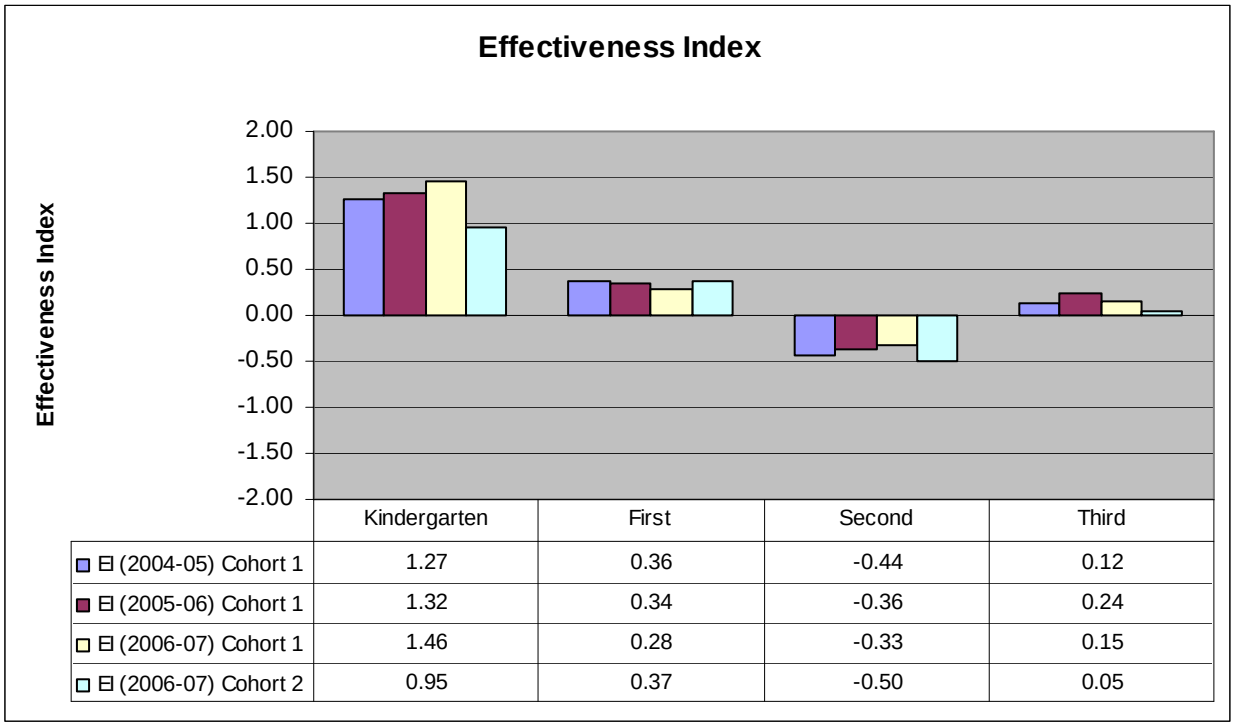
The instructional effectiveness index is a composite measure of the relative change in the performance distribution across a specific grade for a single school year. It measures the effectiveness of the instruction by taking into account performance by tier at the beginning of year and the positive or negative change in performance of students within those tiers by the end of the year. The measure is concerned only with changes in the percentages of students in each

tier. It does not take into account the numbers of students in each tier, only the relative change in numbers.

The effectiveness index has a range from -2 to +2 with negative numbers indicating a negative change in the distribution and positive numbers indicating a positive change. Note that is is possible for the percentage of children considered to be on benchmark to remain unchanged or even decrease and still have a positive index because of an improvement in the lower end of the tier (i.e., at risk children improved to some risk). It is also possible for a decrease in the percentage of kids on benchmark with a negative index due to a high proportion of some risk students becoming at risk. These cases are unlikely and typically happen only when small numbers of students are involved such as when the index is calculated for a single grade at a single school.

Figure 2 displays the effectiveness index by grade over the first three years of program implementation for RF schools. The figure shows the statewide results for the two cohorts of RF schools. The first cohort began implementing the RF program in 2004 and the second implemented for the first time in 2006-07.

Figure 2: Statewide Effectiveness Index of RF schools by Grade (2004-05 through 2006-07)



	Kindergarten	First	Second	Third
(2004-05) Cohort 1	1.27	0.36	-0.44	0.12
(2005-06) Cohort 1	1.32	0.34	-0.36	0.24
(2006-07) Cohort 1	1.46	0.28	-0.33	0.15
(2006-07) Cohort 2	0.95	0.37	-0.50	0.05

The results show that while effectiveness is gradually increasing in kindergarten, the instructional effectiveness is essentially unchanged in first, second and third grade. While it has been shown in the previous section that there are greater percentages of children on benchmark each year, the effectiveness index indicates that there is still room for improvement within the school year. In most grades there is an improvement of the performance from the fall to the spring, but this increase still leaves plenty of room for even greater performance and enhanced growth.

The negative index in second grade is a particular concern. Over the first three years of LA RF implementation, there have been fewer children considered low risk at the end of second grade than there were at the beginning. While there has been nearly universal growth in the reading abilities of second grade students, there has not been enough growth to keep up with the increased expectations embodied in the *DIBELS* benchmarks. Further investigation into this issue is needed to substantively address the causes and remedies of this second grade fall-off. Current hypotheses that are being investigated target either a lack of advanced decoding skills or a lack of vocabulary; that is, either children cannot sound out the word or, if they do, they do not possess the vocabulary to recognize and process that word. It is important to note that these skills and the potential shortcomings identified here are not solely tied to second grade instruction; literacy instruction in earlier years is also relevant. Finally, it should be noted that while the second grade phenomenon is common (both within Louisiana an nationally), it is not universal. There are some districts and schools that have a positive effectiveness index and these schools are excellent subjects for further investigation.

3.2.4.2. Instructional Effectiveness Worksheets

The *DIBELS* Data System (DDS) is used by the LDE for gathering the results of *DIBELS* assessments performed within Louisiana, for both Reading First and non-Reading First schools. The creators of the *DIBELS* and DDS have developed worksheets for determining the effectiveness of instruction based on the *DIBELS* results. The underlying methodology for the worksheets is very similar to that used for calculating the effectiveness index, but provides a more detailed assessment of instructional effectiveness. These worksheets are for each grade and for each semester. It assesses the effectiveness of each tier of instruction in each grade from the beginning of the year to the middle and from the middle to the end. Based on the percentages of students that improve within each tier, the worksheets assign an effectiveness label to that tier for each semester. The possible labels are “needs substantial support”, “needs support”, “relative strength”, and “strength.” The worksheets were targeted for identifying schoolwide strengths and needs, but are also applicable to identifying the same statewide. The primary difference in using these worksheets statewide will be in the types of decisions that would be made. For example, a school may use the results to identify a specific training that would benefit their kindergarten teachers’ core instruction. The state would be less likely to identify a specific training, but may be able to use the results to refocus resources (e.g., funding, professional development, or technical assistance) on areas that show a need for substantial support.

The following three tables display the summary results of the worksheets over the last three years for the first cohort of RF schools. In addition to providing the labels, the tables are also color-coded correspondingly; green = relative strength, yellow = needs support, and red = needs substantial support. None of the tiers were labeled as a “strength”, but the color blue has been identified for use.

Table 5: DIBELS Effectiveness Worksheet Louisiana 2004-05

Grade/Semester	Core	Strategic	Intensive
K – Semester 1	Needs Support	Needs Support	Needs Support
K – Semester 2	Needs Support	Needs Support	Needs Substantial Support
1st – Semester 1	Needs Support	Relative Strength	Needs Support
1st – Semester 2	Needs Substantial Support	Needs Support	Needs Support
2nd – Semester 1	Needs Substantial Support	Needs Substantial Support	Needs Support
2nd – Semester 2	Needs Substantial Support	Needs Support	Needs Support
3rd – Semester 1	Needs Substantial Support	Needs Support	Needs Support
3rd – Semester 2	Needs Substantial Support	Needs Support	Needs Support

Table 6: DIBELS Effectiveness Worksheet Louisiana 2005-06

Grade/Semester	Core	Strategic	Intensive
K – Semester 1	Needs Support	Relative Strength	Needs Support
K – Semester 2	Needs Support	Needs Support	Needs Support
1st – Semester 1	Needs Support	Needs Support	Needs Support
1st – Semester 2	Needs Support	Needs Support	Needs Substantial Support
2nd – Semester 1	Needs Support	Needs Substantial Support	Needs Support
2nd – Semester 2	Needs Substantial Support	Needs Support	Needs Support
3rd – Semester 1	Needs Substantial Support	Needs Support	Needs Support
3rd – Semester 2	Needs Support	Needs Support	Needs Support

Table 7: DIBELS Effectiveness Worksheet Louisiana 2006-07

Grade/Semester	Core	Strategic	Intensive
K – Semester 1	Needs Support	Needs Support	Needs Support
K – Semester 2	Needs Support	Needs Support	Needs Support
1st – Semester 1	Needs Support	Needs Support	Needs Support
1st – Semester 2	Needs Support	Needs Support	Needs Substantial Support
2nd – Semester 1	Needs Substantial Support	Needs Support	Needs Support
2nd – Semester 2	Needs Support	Needs Support	Needs Support
3rd – Semester 1	Needs Substantial Support	Needs Support	Needs Support
3rd – Semester 2	Needs Support	Relative Strength	Needs Support

There are several observations that can be made based on these tables. First, clearly there has been an improvement from the first to the second to the third year; there are fewer cells indicating a need for substantial support; seven needed substantial support in the first year, four in the second year, and three in the third year. Second, there is a relative strength listed every year in the strategic intervention tier, but the location of that strength varies from the first semester of first grade, to the first semester of kindergarten, to the second semester of third grade. This may indicate that a consistent strength has not yet been established within any grade and tier.

Finally, there is clearly a need for support even after three years of implementation. This may be a cause for both concern and promise. While there have been a generally increasing percentage of kids on benchmark in each grade over the first three years, there is still a substantial amount of progress required before 95% of all third grade students are reading on benchmark. That there is still a need for substantial support after three years clearly indicates that there is room for improvement and may be of concern. The promise is that with an appropriate response to these analyses, there may be even greater improvements in instructional effectiveness and, thereby, student performance so that the overall goals of the RF program may be achieved.

3.2.4.3. Cross-year Program Effectiveness Quadrant Charts

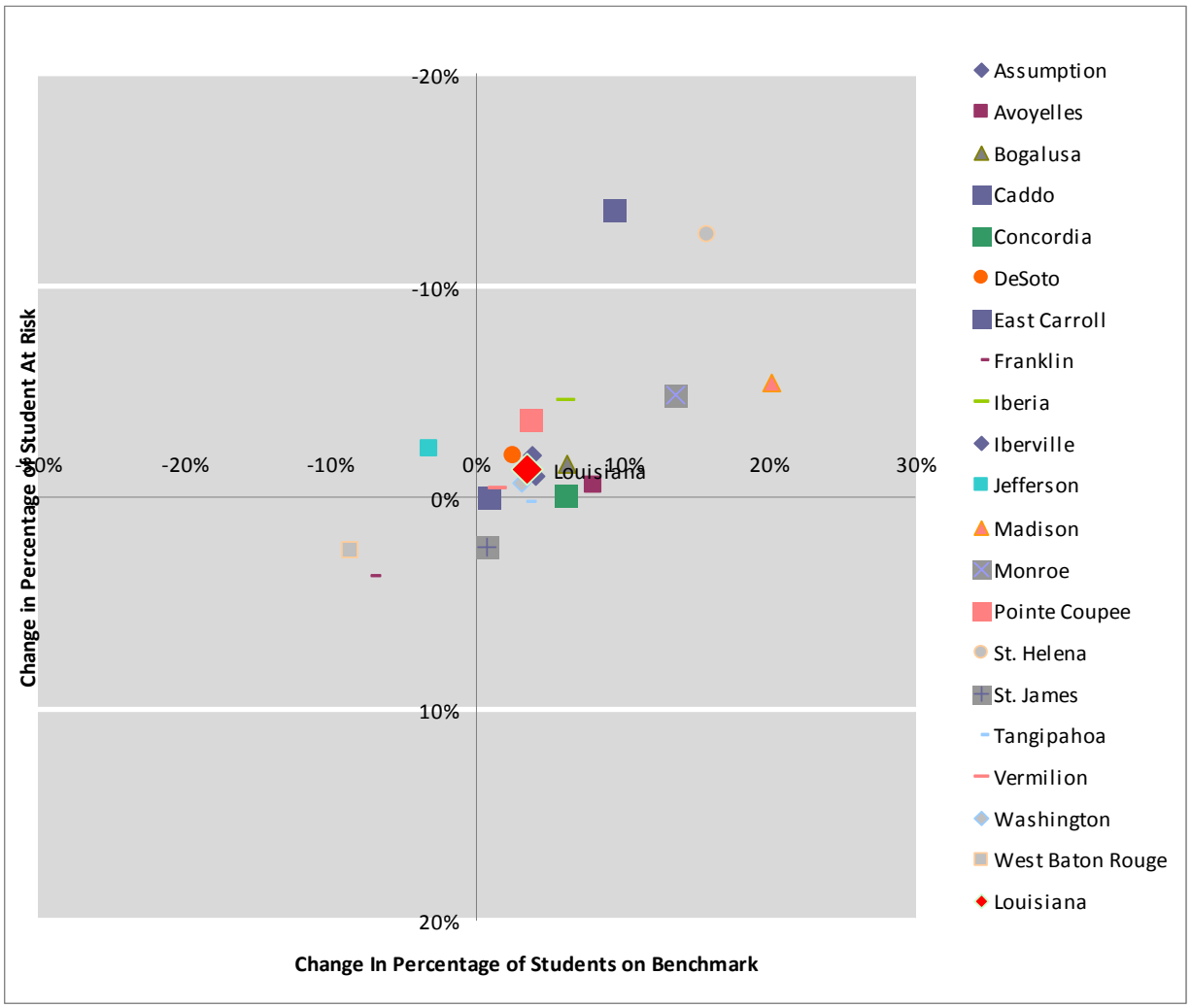
The quadrant charts in this section provide relatively straightforward visual representations of effectiveness across multiple years. While the within year effectiveness index provides some insight into within grade and within year results, the quadrant charts provide some measure of progress from year to year. In each of the charts, the change in the percentage of students considered low risk is plotted along the horizontal or x-axis and the change in the percentage of students considered at risk along the vertical or y-axis. Zero for each axis is plotted in the

middle, which generates a chart that has four quadrants. The results as plotted on these charts are readily interpreted for each entity represented (the charts included here are for school districts).

Each quadrant can be easily interpreted as a type of effectiveness. For example, the upper right quadrant would be considered the "good" quadrant indicating both an increase in low risk student percentages and a decrease in at risk percentages from one year to the next. Similarly, the lower left quadrant would be considered "bad" indicating an increase in at risk percentages and a decrease in low risk percentages. The remaining quadrants indicate mixed results where one measure improved while the other did not.

The first chart (Figure 3) is for kindergarten PSF (the most important indicator of future reading success at the end of the kindergarten year) and shows a general overall improvement from the first year of implementation to the second. Each district is shown along with the overall results for the state, which appears in the upper right or "good" quadrant of the chart. The data that is represented in the chart is also provided in Table 8. Note that entries in the table are color-coded to indicate whether there was improvement in a particular category. Entries which are green indicate that there was an improvement over the previous year; this may be an increase in the percentage of students considered established/low risk or a decrease in the percentage of deficit low risk students. Conversely red indicates deterioration in comparison to the previous year; a decrease in established/low risk students or an increase in the deficit at risk students.

Figure 3: Kindergarten Spring 2006 to Spring 2007 District Effectiveness Quadrant Analysis (DIBELS PSF)



Of the 20 districts with participating in the program both years, 17 have a greater percentage of students on benchmark and 16 have a smaller percentage of students considered at risk. Most of the districts (15 of 20) show an improvement in the percentages of students considered low risk and at risk.

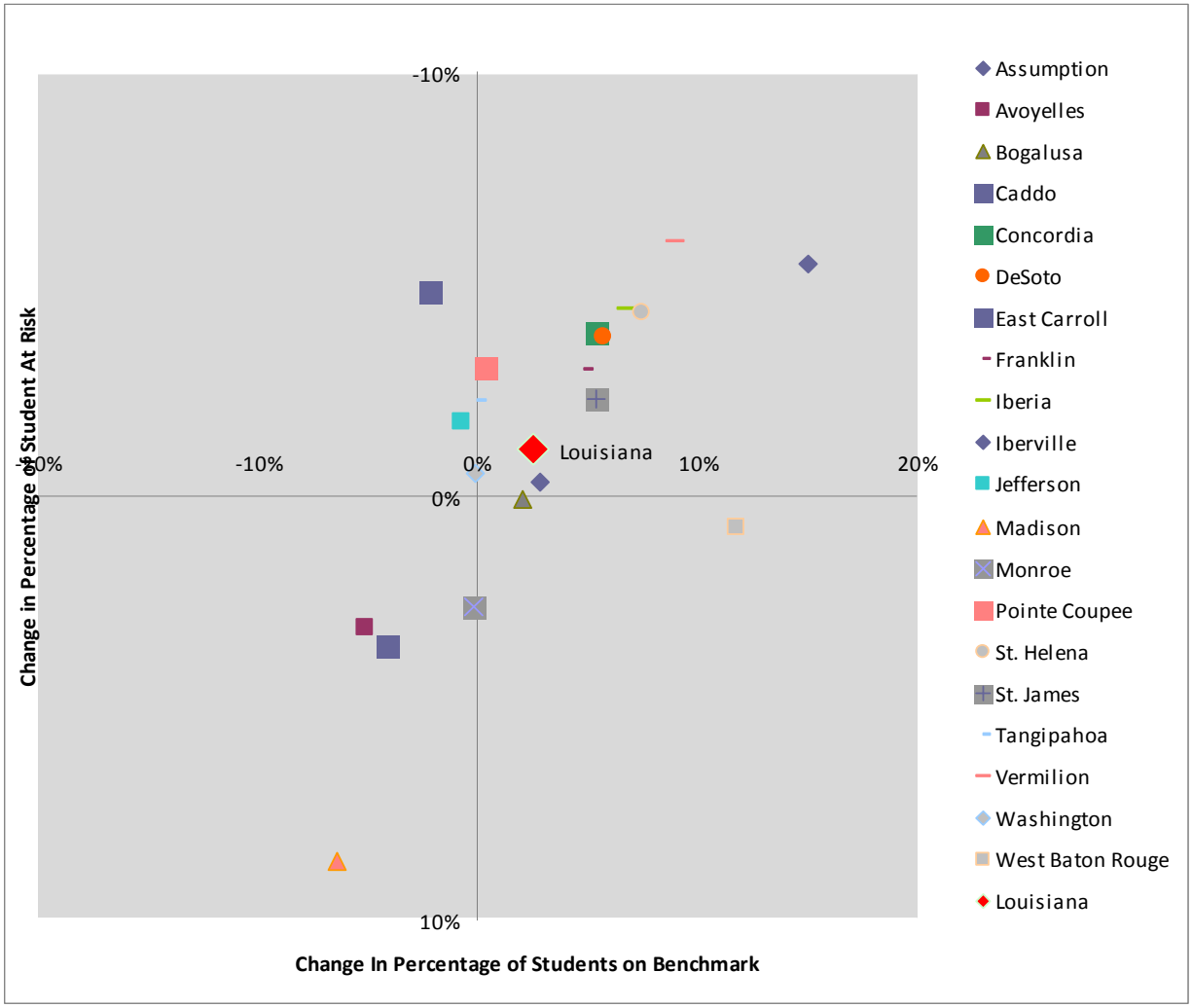
Table 8: Deficit and Established Percentages on Kindergarten DIBELS Phoneme Segmentation Fluency Spring 2006 and Spring 2007

Kindergarten District	2006 Deficit	2007 Deficit	2006 Established	2007 Established
Assumption	2.54%	0.58%	89.85%	93.64%
Avoyelles	5.88%	5.28%	77.73%	85.77%
Bogalusa City	5.58%	4.00%	84.77%	91.00%
Caddo	8.68%	8.64%	71.25%	72.10%
Concordia	5.86%	5.78%	76.23%	82.31%
De Soto	10.00%	8.00%	72.50%	75.00%
East Carroll	28.85%	15.29%	63.46%	72.94%
Franklin	5.42%	9.17%	83.73%	76.61%

Kindergarten District	2006 Deficit	2007 Deficit	2006 Established	2007 Established
Iberia	6.84%	2.30%	82.08%	88.20%
Iberville	2.75%	1.81%	92.05%	96.07%
Jefferson	26.60%	24.32%	47.29%	44.02%
Madison	14.46%	9.09%	59.04%	79.22%
Monroe City	11.93%	7.09%	72.16%	85.82%
Pointe Coupee	11.58%	7.89%	68.95%	72.63%
St. Helena	16.84%	4.41%	76.84%	92.65%
St. James	0.33%	2.66%	94.70%	95.44%
Tangipahoa	5.54%	5.78%	78.20%	81.63%
Vermilion	3.68%	3.31%	83.68%	85.08%
Washington	5.04%	4.39%	87.24%	90.35%
West Baton Rouge	1.14%	3.66%	98.86%	90.24%
Louisiana RF	**7.92%**	**6.60%**	**78.31%**	**81.79%**

Figure 4 shows the change in percentages from the spring of 2006 to the spring of 2007 in first grade *DIBELS* Oral Reading Fluency. The results comparing year to year once again appear generally positive. Again the data used to create the chart is presented in tabular form (see Table 9).

Figure 4: First Grade Spring 2006 to Spring 2007 District Effectiveness Quadrant Analysis (DIBELS ORF)



13 out of 20 districts show an increasing percentage of students in the low risk category and 16 or those 20 districts have a decrease in the percentage of students considered at risk of future reading difficulty. Over half (11 of 20) of the districts improve their low risk and at risk percentages.

Table 9: At Risk and Low Risk Percentages on First Grade DIBELS Oral Reading Fluency Spring 2006 and Spring 2007

First Grade District	2006 At Risk	2007 At Risk	2006 Low Risk	2007 Low Risk
Assumption	15.74%	15.42%	55.33%	58.21%
Avoyelles	10.78%	13.88%	58.19%	53.11%

First Grade District	2006 At Risk	2007 At Risk	2006 Low Risk	2007 Low Risk
Bogalusa City	10.92%	10.99%	64.94%	67.02%
Caddo	19.92%	23.48%	53.64%	49.57%
Concordia	14.57%	10.73%	55.46%	60.88%
De Soto	20.00%	16.26%	55.49%	61.25%
East Carroll	23.08%	18.28%	66.67%	64.52%
Franklin	19.31%	16.34%	55.94%	60.78%
Iberia	18.32%	13.92%	54.04%	60.84%
Iberville	13.88%	8.42%	59.38%	74.46%
Jefferson	34.18%	32.40%	37.97%	37.28%
Madison	7.74%	16.34%	75.00%	68.63%
Monroe City	11.04%	13.66%	61.69%	61.49%
Pointe Coupee	18.33%	15.31%	57.22%	57.65%
St. Helena	25.25%	20.93%	49.49%	56.98%
St. James	8.99%	6.71%	64.03%	69.46%
Tangipahoa	22.26%	20.00%	51.03%	51.04%
Vermilion	12.83%	6.84%	62.57%	71.58%
Washington	14.83%	14.29%	62.79%	62.75%
West Baton Rouge	4.35%	5.06%	66.67%	78.48%
Louisiana RF	**16.73%**	**15.61%**	**57.30%**	**59.83%**

Figure 5 shows the change in percentages from the spring of 2006 to the spring of 2007 in second grade *DIBELS* Oral Reading Fluency. The results comparing year to year once again appear generally positive. Again the data used to create the chart is presented in tabular form (see Table 10).

Figure 5: Second Grade Spring 2006 to Spring 2007 District Effectiveness Quadrant Analysis (DIBELS ORF)

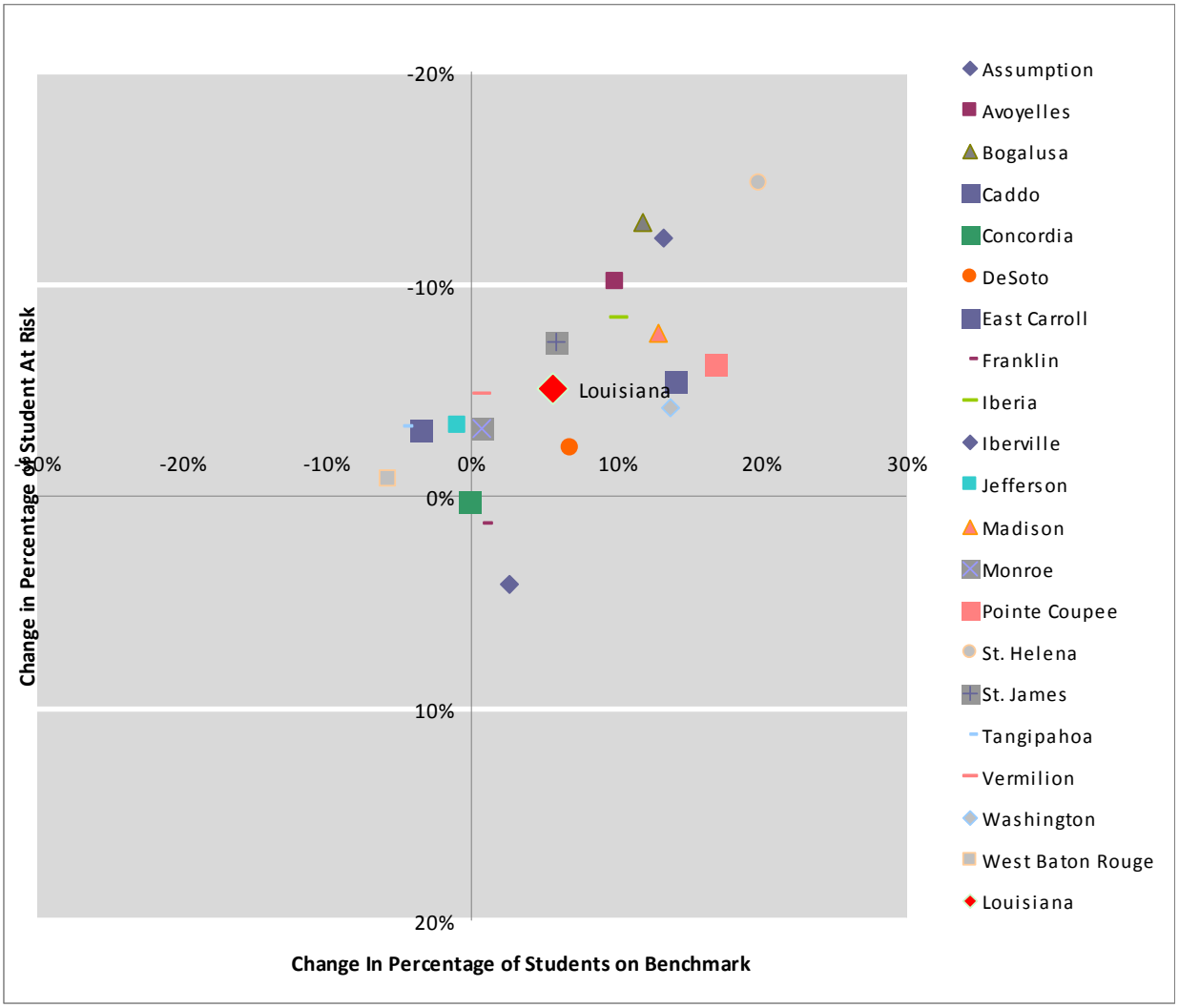


Table 10 shows that 15 of the 20 districts show an increase in the percentage of students considered low risk and 17 of 20 districts have a decrease in the percentage of students considered at risk. 13 of the 20 districts have an improvement at both ends of the distribution.

Table 10: At Risk and Low Risk Percentages on Second Grade DIBELS Oral Reading Fluency Spring 2006 and Spring 2007

Second Grade District	2006 At Risk	2007 At Risk	2006 Low Risk	2007 Low Risk
Assumption	27.98%	32.12%	44.56%	47.15%
Avoyelles	40.38%	30.23%	39.90%	49.77%
Bogalusa City	30.94%	18.06%	43.65%	55.48%

Second Grade District	2006 At Risk	2007 At Risk	2006 Low Risk	2007 Low Risk
Caddo	40.19%	37.07%	37.12%	33.60%
Concordia	28.73%	28.98%	46.91%	46.82%
De Soto	22.26%	19.94%	57.42%	64.22%
East Carroll	45.36%	40.00%	37.11%	51.25%
Franklin	32.02%	33.33%	45.81%	46.67%
Iberia	31.83%	23.41%	44.64%	54.85%
Iberville	31.49%	19.36%	47.73%	60.98%
Jefferson	43.84%	40.45%	34.25%	33.33%
Madison	29.93%	22.29%	50.34%	63.25%
Monroe City	21.30%	18.12%	55.62%	56.38%
Pointe Coupee	34.38%	28.16%	33.13%	50.00%
St. Helena	37.21%	22.47%	43.02%	62.92%
St. James	32.02%	24.73%	45.06%	50.91%
Tangipahoa	29.89%	26.64%	47.51%	42.91%
Vermilion	23.78%	18.95%	52.45%	53.16%
Washington	29.59%	25.41%	45.66%	59.39%
West Baton Rouge	35.63%	34.78%	39.08%	33.33%
Louisiana RF	**32.26%**	**27.20%**	**44.70%**	**50.37%**

Figure 6 shows the change in the distributions from the spring of 2006 to the spring of 2007 in third grade *DIBELS* Oral Reading Fluency. The results again appear fairly positive although they are somewhat more mixed than earlier grades. Table 11 contains that data showing the specific results for each district.

Figure 6: Third Grade Spring 2006 to Spring 2007 District Effectiveness Quadrant Analysis (DIBELS ORF)

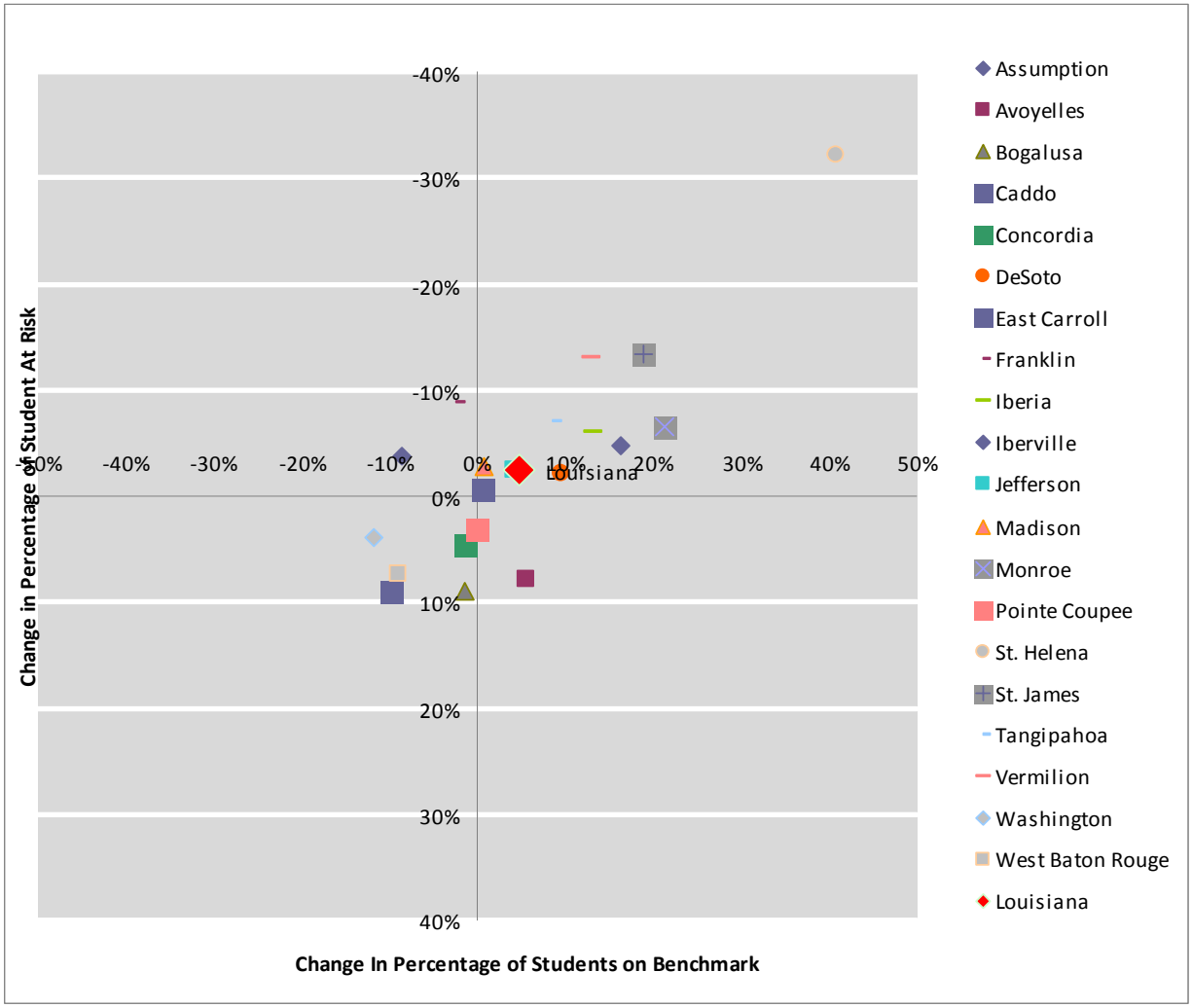


Table 11 shows that 13 of 20 districts had a greater percentage of low risk students in the spring of 2007 than they did in the spring of 2006. 14 or 20 districts showed an overall decrease in the percentage of students considered low risk and 11 of 20 districts had an improvement at both ends of the distribution.

Table 11: At Risk and Low Risk Percentages on Third Grade DIBELS Oral Reading Fluency Spring 2006 and Spring 2007

Third Grade District	2006 At Risk	2007 At Risk	2006 Low Risk	2007 Low Risk
Assumption	22.34%	18.62%	48.40%	39.89%
Avoyelles	18.07%	25.87%	39.16%	44.78%
Bogalusa City	13.50%	22.49%	40.49%	39.05%

Caddo	24.03%	23.44%	38.09%	38.67%
Concordia	12.20%	16.73%	44.25%	42.80%
De Soto	17.53%	15.41%	49.14%	58.61%
East Carroll	19.28%	28.24%	65.06%	55.29%
Franklin	26.26%	17.37%	50.84%	48.42%
Iberia	20.07%	14.00%	41.22%	54.33%
Iberville	18.64%	13.87%	44.07%	60.32%
Jefferson	38.60%	36.22%	25.00%	29.13%
Madison	28.92%	26.17%	42.17%	42.95%
Monroe City	19.85%	13.25%	45.59%	66.89%
Pointe Coupee	17.57%	20.73%	36.49%	36.59%
St. Helena	37.35%	5.26%	30.12%	71.05%
St. James	26.61%	13.22%	32.66%	51.65%
Tangipahoa	24.80%	17.76%	36.99%	45.56%
Vermilion	25.52%	12.42%	38.62%	51.63%
Washington	15.11%	18.98%	53.38%	41.61%
West Baton Rouge	13.16%	20.51%	47.37%	38.46%
Louisiana RF	**21.64%**	**19.22%**	**42.08%**	**46.83%**

Table 12 displays a summary of all the grades for each district. Each district is shown with the count of the number of grades that improved at each end of the distribution. Five districts demonstrated an improvement in all four grades for both the low risk and at risk portion of the distributions. Clearly, an increase in the percentage of students considered low risk and a decrease in the percentage of students considered at risk is the most desirable result. It should be noted that inspecting the actual performance results in each table is important to understanding the nature of effectiveness as displayed by the quadrant charts. For example, the results for West Baton Rouge may cause some concern. Inspecting the percentages for kindergarten in that district show that the low risk percentages decreased from 98% to 90% and the at risk increased from 1% to 3%. While the effectiveness is negative, the overall performance for this district in this grade is higher than most other districts. As performance improves, it is likely to become more difficult to continue that improvement and maintain high percentages; 98% is virtually a theoretical maximum given that the overall goal is 95%.

Table 12: The Number of Grades in each District that have an improved percentage of students from spring 2006 to spring 2007

All Grades		
District	**Number of Grades with an Increase in Percent Established or Low Risk**	**Number of Grades with a Decrease in Percent Deficit or At Risk**
Assumption	3	3
Avoyelles	3	2
Bogalusa City	3	2
Caddo	2	3
Concordia	2	2
De Soto	**4**	**4**
East Carroll	2	3
Franklin	2	2
Iberia	**4**	**4**

All Grades		
District	Number of Grades with an Increase in Percent Established or Low Risk	Number of Grades with a Decrease in Percent Deficit or At Risk
Iberville	**4**	**4**
Jefferson	1	4
Madison	3	3
Monroe City	3	3
Pointe Coupee	4	3
St. Helena	**4**	**4**
St. James	4	3
Tangipahoa	3	3
Vermilion	**4**	**4**
Washington	2	3
West Baton Rouge	1	1
Louisiana RF	**4**	**4**

3.2.5. Reading First Compared to non-Reading First

How does DIBELS performance compare between schools that are participating in the Reading First program to those schools that are not?

DIBELS was used by a majority of schools in the state of Louisiana to assess students reading performance for students in kindergarten, first, second, and third grades – 546 out of 790 schools in 2006-07, increasing to 701 schools for 2007-08. *DIBELS* is used in at least one school in every district by mandate of the Louisiana Board of Elementary and Secondary Education and more schools over time are choosing to use *DIBELS*. A comparison of RF school results to non-RF school results is problematic for a number of reasons. First, the RF schools were eligible for participation in the RF program because they were high poverty and low performing, so it is unlikely that the non-RF schools are comparable in terms of poverty and past performance. Second, the non-RF schools that use *DIBELS* are self-selected. They choose to use *DIBELS* and were in no way selected as a meaningful comparison group for the RF program.

Finally, non-RF schools have been becoming more "Reading First-like" over the past three years, not only in their use of *DIBELS*. Non-RF schools have been adopting the major principles of RF:

- Tiered interventions – schools have been placing children in inclusive intervention groups.
- Reading Coaches – many schools have been identifying and funding literacy/reading coaches.
- Assessment-Driven instruction – schools are attempting to use their assessment data to group and differentiate instruction.

While the level of implementation of these principles is unknown, clearly the non-RF schools are becoming more similar to RF schools in terms of instruction. The implication of the demographic differences and increasingly similar instructional practice is that the reading performance differences or similarities cannot be meaningfully compared. The results will be reported but it is not possible to attribute or infer any performance differences to the

implementation of the RF program. The following four graphs show the spring 2007 performance of all RF schools compared to all non-RF schools which use *DIBELS* by grade.

Figure 7: Reading First vs. Non-Reading First Kindergarten Spring 2007

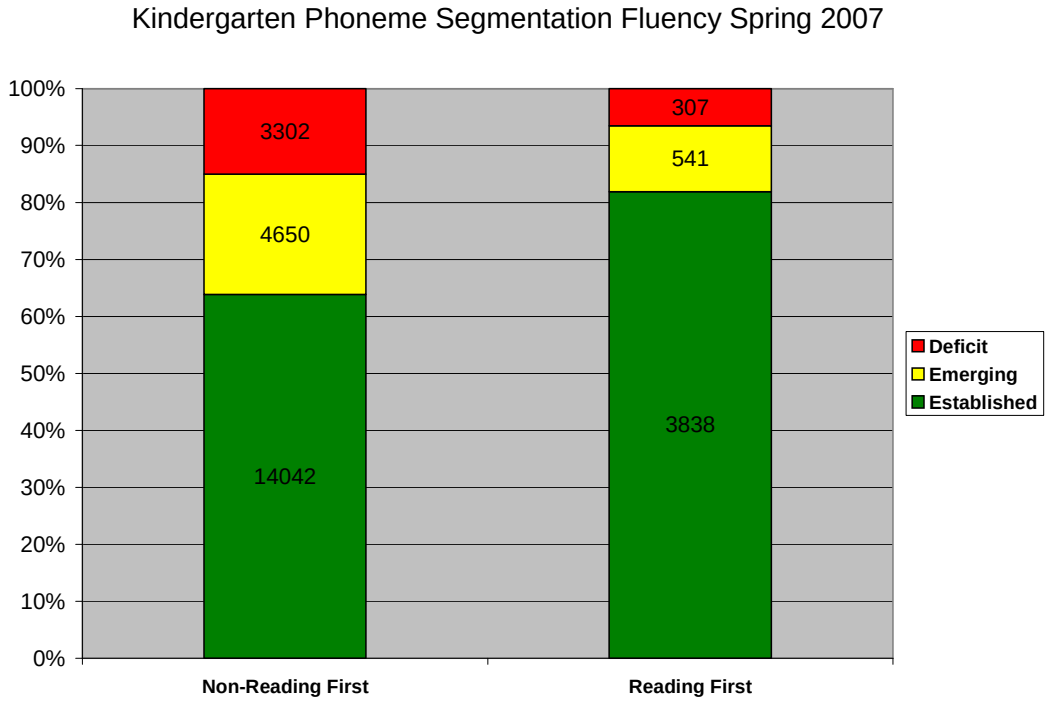


Figure 8: Reading First vs. Non-Reading First 1st Grade Spring 2007

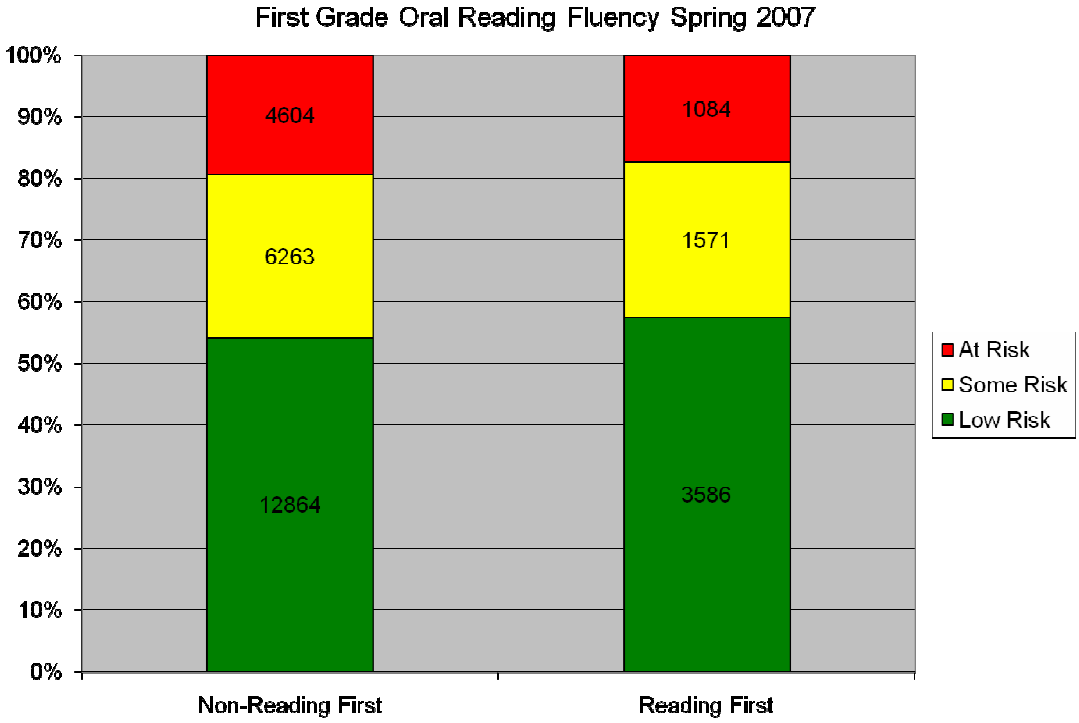


Figure 9: Reading First vs. Non-Reading First 2nd Grade Spring 2007

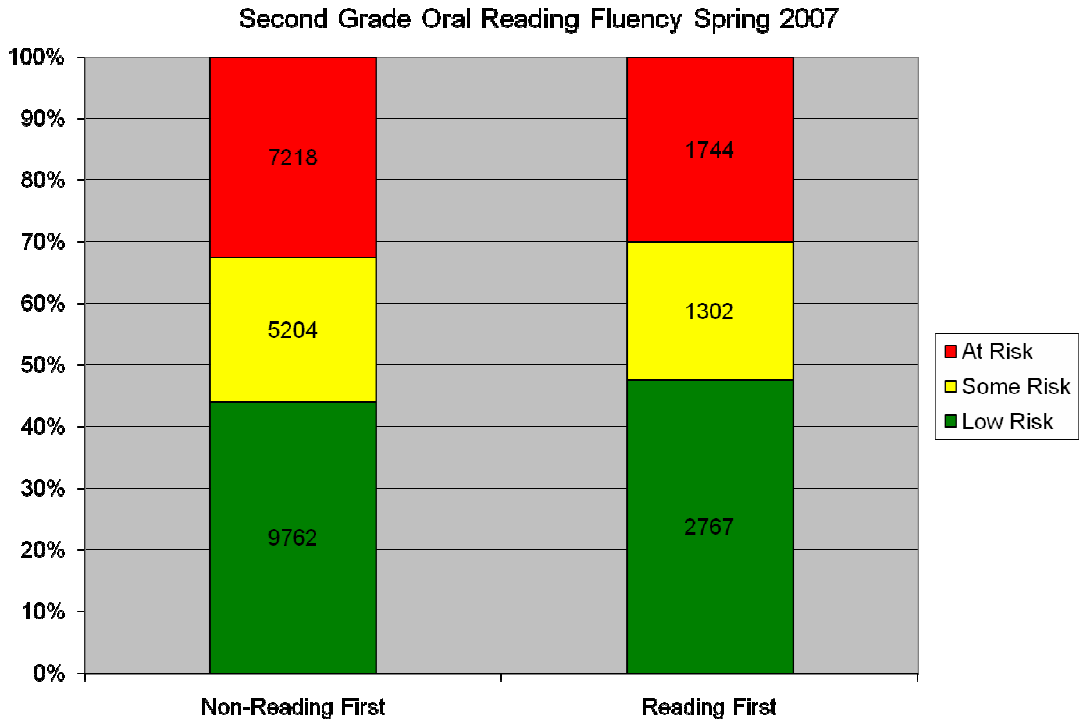
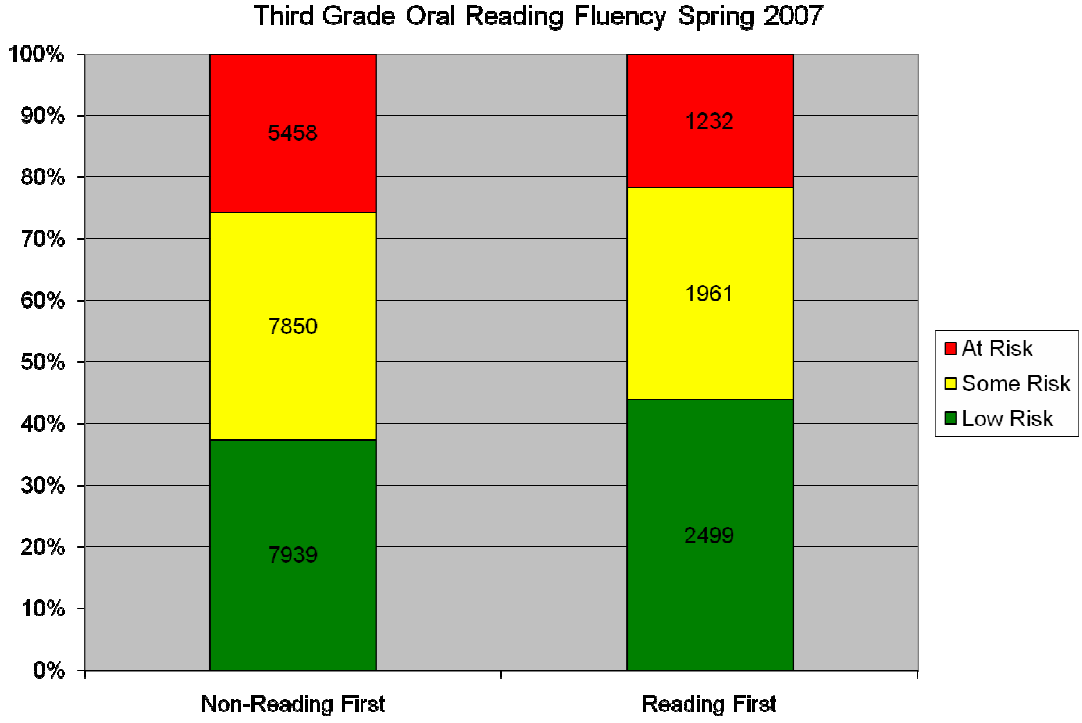


Figure 10: Reading First vs. Non-Reading First 3rd Grade Spring 2007



3.2.6. Effect of Structured Pre-K Programs

To what extent does participation in the high-quality pre-kindergarten LA 4 program impact students' performance within Reading First?

High quality pre-kindergarten programs have been a priority for the Louisiana Department of Education over the past decade and these programs have been showing a significant impact. The RF program begins in kindergarten and it is logical to ask how participation in the LA 4 pre-kindergarten program would impact performance of students with the RF program. In order to assess this relationship, the analysis was restricted to those districts that have both Reading First and LA 4 programs in place; in particular, the district had to have an LA 4 program in place over the last 4 years so that the students that had participated in these programs could be tracked through the subsequent four years within Reading First. This resulted in including students from the following districts:

- City of Bogalusa School District;
- DeSoto;
- East Baton Rouge;
- Jefferson;
- Tangipahoa;
- Vermilion;
- Washington.

Students from these parishes were grouped by a combination of LA 4 pre-kindergarten and RF participation experience. Their results on the *DIBELS* Oral Reading Fluency assessment were then analyzed based on whether they had achieved the benchmark status of being classified as having a low risk of future reading difficulties. Table 13 displays the results of this analysis.

Table 13: Percentage of Students on Benchmark in Districts with both LA 4 and Reading First

	Neither LA 4 nor Reading First	***Reading First Only***	***LA 4***	***Reading First + LA 4***
First Grade (n=7,400)	49% (5,092)	52% (1,277)	57% (656)	65% (375)
Second Grade (n=7,182)	38% (4,518)	45% (1,542)	48% (663)	57% (459)
Third Grade (n=7,185)	31% (4,604)	37% (1,763)	38% (504)	46% (314)

Section 5.4 contains a detailed statistical analysis of the interaction of LA 4, RF, and poverty as indicated by Free or Reduced Price Lunch enrollment status, but the summary table here clearly indicates that students who participate in both the LA 4 and RF programs outperform students who have participated in either one or neither. When taking into account poverty and race, the results are even more pronounced.

3.2.7. The Effect of RF on *i*LEAP Scores

*To what extent does the RF program impact third grade integrated Louisiana Educational Assessment Program (i*LEAP) *results in English Language Arts?*

The State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education and the Louisiana Department of Education have developed the number one rated accountability system in the United States. The implementation of Reading First in Louisiana, if successful in achieving its goals, should generate an impact which is detectable within that accountability system. The first place within the accountability system that a result would be detectable would be in the third grade *i*LEAP (*integrated* Louisiana Educational Assessment Program) results. While a clear gauge of program impact cannot be assessed until there is a group of students that have participated in all four years of the RF program, preliminary analyses can be conducted to determine whether there is a relationship between *DIBELS* scores and *i*LEAP scores.

The *i*LEAP assesses performance against state standards in Match, Social Studies, Science and English Language Arts (ELA). Obviously, the ELA results are the most relevant to the RF program. For the first time in the spring 2007 *i*LEAP test, a separate reading sub score has been generated from a subset of the *i*LEAP ELA scores. While these results can be reported for the RF schools, there is not longitudinal data with which to compare the current results. Detailed analyses of the *DIBELS* results and their comparison to *i*LEAP results can be found in section 5.2, including a comparison of *i*LEAP results related to both *DIBELS* and the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA).

The comparison of *DIBELS* to *i*LEAP results will focus on the odds of scoring in a particular performance category on one test when having scored in a particular performance category on the other. The *DIBELS* Oral Reading Fluency (ORF) measure will be used for a comparison with the *i*LEAP ELA. Scores from the *DIBELS* RF result at a particular point in time correspond to a label identifying a risk level of future reading difficulties. These labels are:

- **Low Risk**, indicating a low risk of future reading difficulties. This is a minimal reading level for students to score in this range.
- **Some Risk**, indicating that there appears to be some risk of future reading difficulties. This labeling is non-predictive in that students with scores in this range are equally likely to not have difficulties as they are to having difficulty.
- **At Risk**, indicating that students scoring within this range are likely to have future reading difficulties unless specific and powerful interventions are provided for the students.

The *i*LEAP assessments also generate achievement levels that correspond to a student's level of ability within each of the four subject areas. The *i*LEAP achievement level labels are:

- **Advanced**, a student at this level has demonstrated superior performance beyond the level of mastery.
- **Mastery**, a student at this level has demonstrated competency over challenging subject matter and is well prepared for the next level of schooling.
- **Basic**, a student at this level has demonstrated only the fundamental knowledge and skills needed for the next level of schooling.

- **Approaching Basic**, a student at this level has only partially demonstrated the fundamental knowledge and skills needed for the next level of schooling.
- **Unsatisfactory**, a student at this level has not demonstrated the fundamental knowledge and skills needed for the next level of schooling.

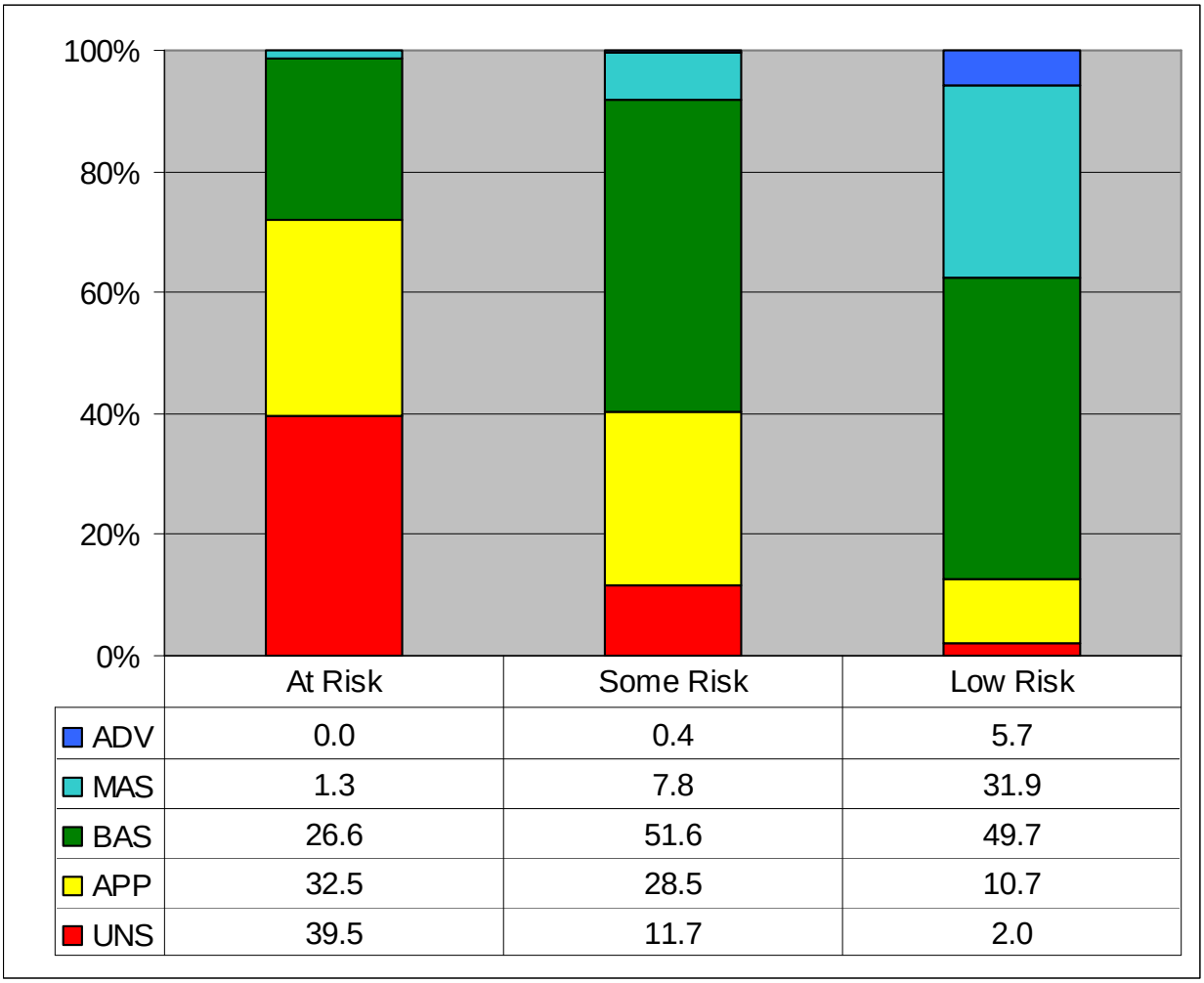
In order for students to be considered proficient within a subject area on the *i*LEAP, they must achieve a score in the basic, mastery, or advanced achievement levels. The low risk category is the goal with in the *DIBELS* assessment, so we would like to see that students that are achieving results within that *DIBELS* category would also be scoring within an *i*LEAP achievement level of basic, mastery or advanced.

The following two figures show the relationship of the probability of scoring in a particular *i*LEAP achievement level based on *DIBELS* ORF (Figure 11) and the probability of scoring within a particular *DIBELS* achievement level based on the *i*LEAP ELA achievement (Figure 12).

Figure 11 shows that there are high probabilities that if a student scores in the low risk range on the *DIBELS* ORF, that the student will score basic or above on the *i*LEAP. The results also show that students who are considered at risk are also likely to score below basic on the *i*LEAP. Namely,

- 87.3% of students that score Low Risk on *DIBELS*, score Basic or above on *i*LEAP ELA.
- 72% of students that score At Risk on *DIBELS*, score below Basic on *i*LEAP ELA.

Figure 11: Probability of Scoring on *i*LEAP based on DIBELS ORF Results

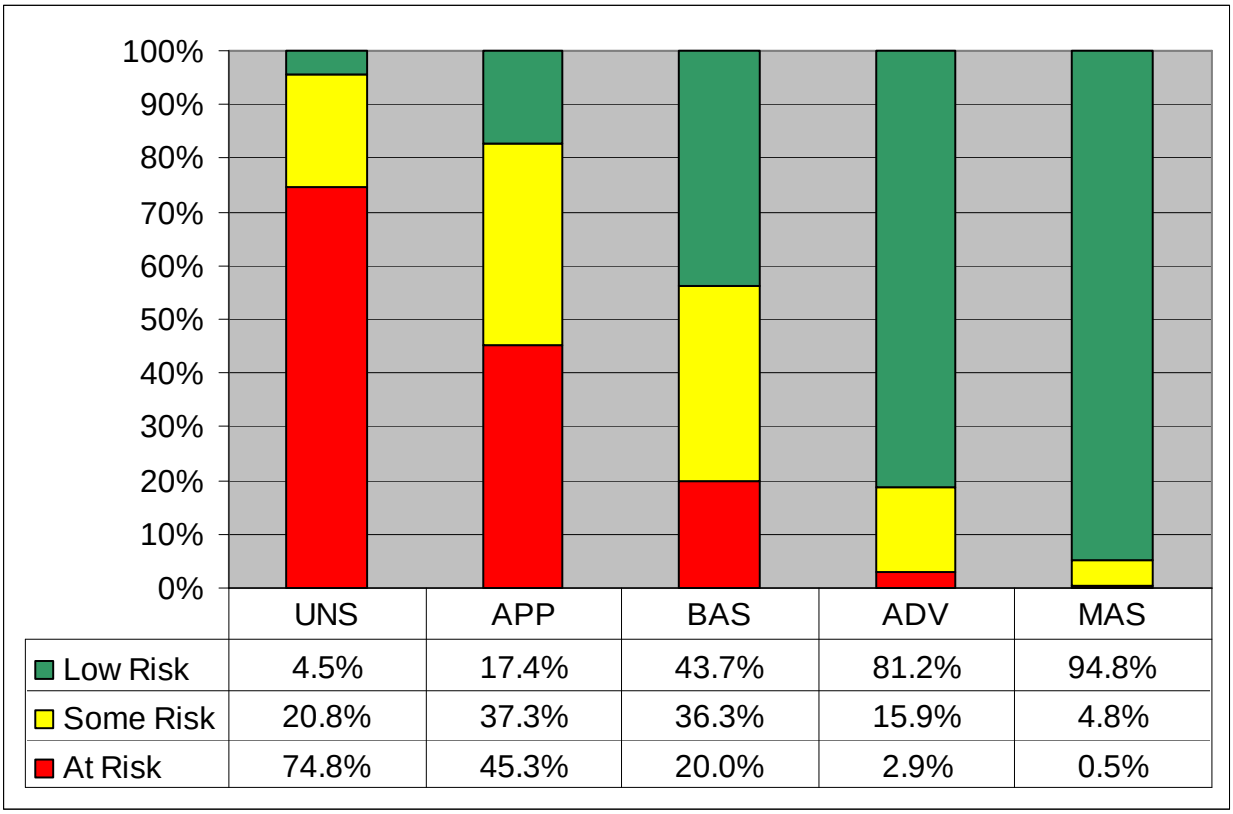


	At Risk	Some Risk	Low Risk
ADV	0.0	0.4	5.7
MAS	1.3	7.8	31.9
BAS	26.6	51.6	49.7
APP	32.5	28.5	10.7
UNS	39.5	11.7	2.0

Figure 12 shows the complementary relationship indicating the probability of scoring on the *DIBELS* ORF assessment based on their achievement level on the *i*LEAP ELA. Specifically,

- 95.6% of students in the Unsatisfactory Achievement Level on *i*LEAP, were either in the Some Risk or At Risk *DIBELS* categories.
- 94.8% of the Mastery Level and 81.2% of the Advanced Level were students that scored in the Low Risk Category on *DIBELS*.

Figure 12: Probability of Scoring on DIBELS ORF based on iLEAP Results



	UNS	APP	BAS	ADV	MAS
Low Risk	4.5%	17.4%	43.7%	81.2%	94.8%
Some Risk	20.8%	37.3%	36.3%	15.9%	4.8%
At Risk	74.8%	45.3%	20.0%	2.9%	0.5%

As students progress through the RF program, it is the intent of the program to improve their reading abilities. *DIBELS* is used within the program to measure outcomes and assess student progress. The results in this section show that if the *DIBELS* assessment is used appropriately and the RF program improves performance as measured by the *DIBELS* indicators, these results should be reflected within the third grade *i*LEAP ELA scores. Subsequent impact on the accountability system via the school and district performance scores is likely to be further delayed simply due to the dilution of the impact when measuring school quality across multiple grades. In particular, SPS scores are only calculated using test results starting at third grade, which is the final grade of the RF program. Therefore, the impact on the SPS will be related, among other factors, to the number of grades each school included after third grade. Some of the RF schools include pre-kindergarten through twelfth, so the impact of third grade scores would represent a very small proportion of the grades used in calculating the SPS.

3.2.8. The Effect of RF on Special Education Referrals

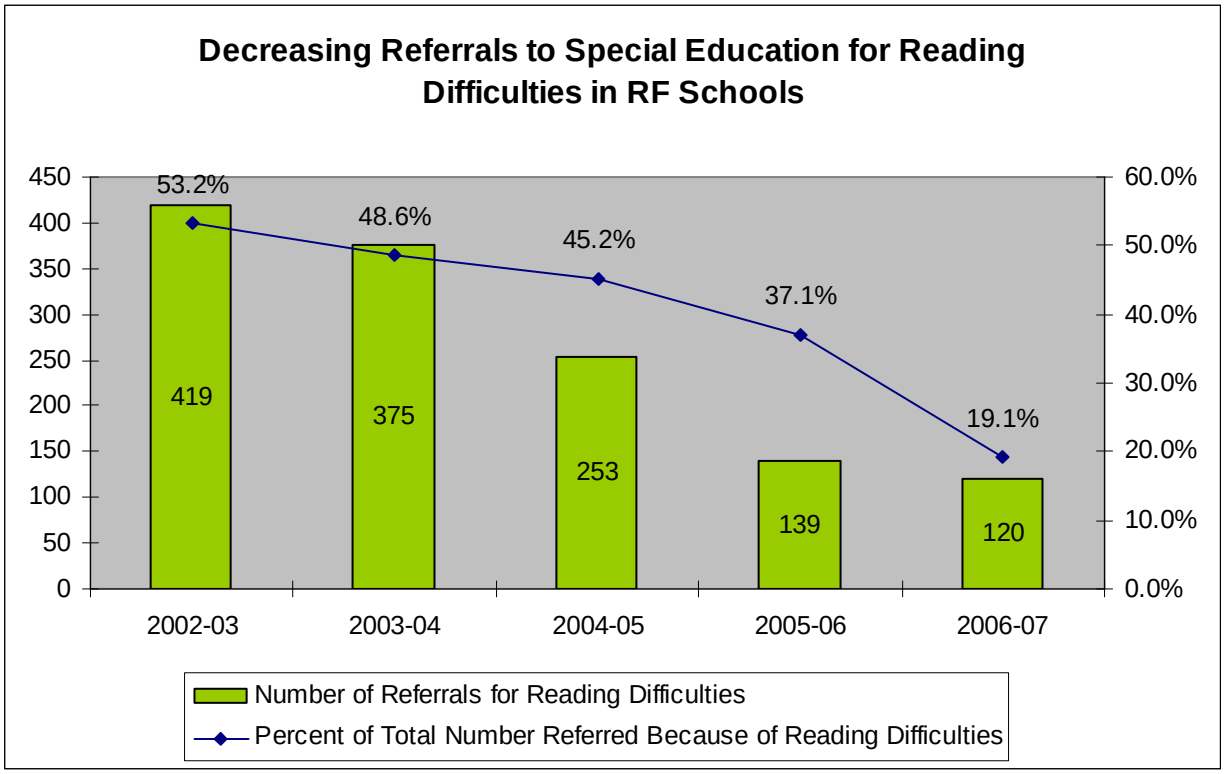
Has the rate of referrals to special education for reading difficulties decreased since the inception of the Louisiana Reading First Program?

One of the performance indicators that the US Department of Education is paying close attention to is the referral rate for special education related to reading difficulties. The expectation is that by instituting a assessment-driven, tiered instructional model to be used by RF schools within the classroom, the rate of referral to special education will be reduced. LDE also expects a reduction

in referrals to special education; their expectation is for referrals to decrease regardless of whether the reason for the referral was reading difficulty.

Figure 13 clearly shows that there has been a steadily decreasing rate of referrals to special education over the life of the RF program. From approximately 50% of referrals being for reading difficulties to 19% since the program began implementation.

Figure 13: Referrals to Special Education in Reading First Schools



There have been other significant initiatives in Louisiana that may also be affecting the referral rate. In particular, there has been an effort to reduce the disproportionate referral of black students to special education. Regardless, the referral rate for reading difficulty has decreased more in RF schools (-34.1%), compared to non-RF schools (-29.9%)**Error! Reference source not found.**.

Table 14 displays the rate of referral to special education for reading difficulties as a percentage of all referrals. Note that the total number of referrals in the table corresponds to a changing number of schools. The number of schools in the program change for three different reasons. First, some schools were re-configured[2] which resulted in several schools appearing to leave the program. Second, the hurricanes in 2005 caused 17 RF schools to close for the whole school year. Finally, in 2006-07 there was a new round of funding for the program and several schools and districts were added to the program.

[2] Re-configured is used here to indicate that the schools changed the grades being served. For example, two schools were covering grades K-2 and grades 3-5, but were subsequently merged into one school covering K-5.

Table 14: Referrals for Reading Difficulties in Reading First Schools 2002-03 through 2006-07

Reading First	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Total Referrals	787	771	559	375	627
Number of Referrals for Reading Difficulties	419	375	253	139	120
Percent of Total Number Referred Because of Reading Difficulties	53.2%	48.6%	45.2%	37.1%	19.1%
Change in Rate		-4.6%	-3.4%	-8.1%	-18.0%
Overall Change from 2002-03					-34.1%

4. Methodology

Following on the recommendations of Guskey (2000) and the National Staff Development Council (NSDC), the Picard Center seeks five levels of evidence that Louisiana's RF is improving the performance of participating schools. Those levels are: participant feedback, impact on teacher knowledge, impact on teacher practice, impact on the organization of participating schools, and impact on student achievement.

A mixed-methods design is employed. Research methods include:

- Quantitative collection and analysis of
  - *DIBELS* data,
  - faculty performance on an early literacy content knowledge assessment developed by the CDC,
  - professional development registration data,
  - principal and coach implementation survey data, and
  - electronic logs maintained by regional coordinators; as well as
- Qualitative collection and analysis of data from
  - focus groups and interviews as well as
  - faculty responses to SWOT (Strength, Weakness, Opportunity, Threat) surveys.

The Picard Center also utilizes findings from structured observations of core instruction and reading interventions gathered via the Center for Research on Education Policy (CREP) Literacy Observation Tool (LOT) and Intervention Observation Tool (IOT).

4.1. Types of Data

The following data are analyzed for evidence of Guskey's five levels of impact.

- Level 1 (Participant Perceptions). Closed and open-ended participant responses are gathered through end-of-training surveys and SWOT surveys completed by all RF faculty members statewide.
- Level 2 (Teacher Content Knowledge). In SY 2005-06, the Picard Center began developing the Professional Development Needs Assessment, a closed-ended assessment of teacher knowledge regarding the five components of early literacy. Inventory trials and validation studies were completed in July 2007, and the instrument has been administered in Fall 2007. (School staff who complete LETRS training conducted by the

LDE will be pre-post-tested, and all RF school staff were assessed in October 2007 for needs assessment purposes).

- Level 3. (Teacher Practice). The LOT and IOT are used in conducting structured observations of instruction.
- Level 4. (School Organization). Implementation surveys are completed by principals and school reading coaches. School site visits were piloted in the spring of 2006 and have been implemented in Fall 2007 in a matched sample of differentially-effective RF schools.
- Level 5. (Student Achievement). *DIBELS* benchmark data for grades K-3 are analyzed both cross-sectionally and longitudinally, and also are correlated with student performance results on state-mandated tests in grade 3.

In addition, CDC researchers analyze electronic logs maintained by regional reading coordinators as well as professional development registration data as evidence that the state RF program is fulfilling its commitment to provide professional development and technical assistance to schools in a manner that is both:

- High quality (i.e., that is in keeping with best practices in professional development as identified by Garett, Porter, Desimone, Birman, & Yoon, 2001); and
- Equitable (i.e., that all schools have the same opportunity to develop capacity).

4.2. Data Collection

Much of the data used in this evaluation for the 2006-07 school year are secondary source information collected under the guidance of the LDE for the purposes of evaluating and administering their implementation of RF. Specifically, *DIBELS* data and LOT/IOT data are collected as part of the normal course of RF implementation as directed by LDE. The LDE has provided training for personnel in the schools and districts to gather valid a reliable *DIBELS* and LOT/IOT data. Primary source data for 2006-07 consists of SWOT surveys that are gathered from the complete population of RF staff in Louisiana. In 2007-08, additional data will be gathered at level 1 (participant perceptions) related to a more detailed implementation survey, the administration of the Professional Development Needs Assessment, and school organization data via the Picard Center's Impact Study. The impact study will provide in-depth primary source data gathering at schools that have been previously identified via student achievement to have differential impacts.

4.3. Data Analysis

4.3.1. Student Achievement Statistical Techniques

The *DIBELS* Data System provides a ratio-level score for each student and grade. As the child learns, the scores should increase (even though some of the testing material increases difficulty). The absolute score is transformed into an ordinal-level including one on-benchmark level and two below-benchmark levels. Evaluations are made three times a year. Oral Reading Fluency (ORF) was used as often as it was available – middle of first grade to the end of the third grade. Before that, pre-literacy skill measures were used. For the ordinal measures, this amounts to the Instructional Recommendation (IR). Prior to ORF as a measure, IR was a combination of pre-literacy skills measures. After, IR was equal to the ORF benchmark levels.

This analysis will use two key techniques for evaluation. The first will be the use of crosstab tables. In traditional sample-based studies, crosstabs are confirmed by the Chi-Square test of significance. Since this evaluation uses a census, tests of significance are inappropriate. The second statistical technique is the regression analysis. Simply put, regression analysis uses the existing data to create an equation which characterizes the relationship between the two variables. It answers the question, "Given this level in variable A, what is the most likely value for variable B?"

There is a growing movement in social science to add tests of importance to tests of significance. With this dataset, it is essential to consider tests of importance as a primary measure of Reading First effectiveness. The question was not *if* there was an effect of the program. The goal of this study is to describe the effect and then test the importance of that effect. These tests of importance were used to measure how much of the variation in the scores were due to Reading First rather than just differences between children.

There are two types of measures and each has specific tests. The first involves proportion of students at benchmarks. Tables of crosstabs allowed us to look at the effect of one benchmark on the next. One of the most popular tests of importance is the Cramer's V. The Cramer's V indicates the importance of the affect and remains unaffected by the large sample size. The second accepted measure of importance is the r-square. Roughly, the r-square predicts the amount of variance explained by the relationship between variables. This assessment uses the adjusted r-square as reported by the statistical package SPSS.

Unlike tests of significance, tests of importance do not produce bright line yes or no answers. The result is more or less important. For the purpose of this study, an r-square over 0.25 was considered a reasonably important effect. For the Cramer's V, several levels are normally useful. If Cramer's V =

- 0.25 or higher Very strong relationship
- 0.15 to 0.25 Strong relationship
- 0.11 to 0.15 Moderate relationship
- 0.06 to 0.10 Weak relationship
- 0.0 to 0.05 No or negligible relationship.
  (http://faculty.quinnipiac.edu/libarts/polsci/Statistics.html)

The goal of this study was to look at key variables to determine measurable effects of the Reading First program. Some measures may be more useful to the teacher than for program evaluation. Ideally, a measure at one time period should produce a reasonable variation at the second time period. If a majority of the students in the second time period are all performing the same, is that an effect of the program just an effect of childhood? This study concentrated on variable relationships where there were effects from one period to the next or between groups within the dataset (e.g., Reading First versus non-Reading First students). It was in these relationships that we were able to see what effect could be found, then test the importance of that effect.

4.4. Limitations of the Evaluation

The main limitation of the evaluation is that it is based solely on three years of implementation and Reading First is a four year program. There are no children in Louisiana who have had four complete years of RF instruction, so it is not yet possible to estimate the full impact of the RF practices on literacy achievement results.

Even with four years of implementation, the outcomes of the RF program cannot be determined by comparison to a similar group of schools. The selection criteria for the participation in RF included all schools that were both low-performing and high-poverty. The initial selection of schools into the Louisiana RF program left essentially, no schools for a comparison group. While comparisons of performance can be made based solely on overall and subgroup, the lack of a scientific control group limits the statistical rigor with which these comparisons can be made.

The current evaluation is also limited in that most of the evaluative data available comes from level one (participant perception) or level five (student achievement). Additional data is being gathered to provide a more complete evaluation in the fourth year of implementation (SY 2007-08), but that data is not available in previous years.

5. Major Findings

5.1. Demographic Subgroup Analyses of Reading First

5.1.1. Introduction

This section of the report will report on the relative difference in performance and growth between Reading First (RF) and non-Reading First (NRF) students. Evaluators considered the percentage of students found in each of the essential benchmark groups across the four program years (Kindergarten, First, Second, Third grades). The key variable was the students change (or lack thereof) within each of three key benchmark levels. The two main questions were:

- *What percentage of students was in each benchmark group?*
- *What changes in benchmark occurred over time?*

5.1.2. The Data

The data used for this evaluation consists of all Louisiana students known to have taken the three *DIBELS* evaluations during the 2006-2007 school year. Evaluators consider this data set a census. As such, inferential statistics are mostly omitted from the evaluation.[3] Unless specifically noted, the data will use the student as the unit of analysis and data will strictly compare students within a school year. Table one indicates the total number of students in each grade by program.

Table 15: Number of Students Evaluated for Each Grade

Grade	Reading First	Non-Reading First
Kindergarten	4,618	22,062

[3] Inferential statistics, or tests of significance, are used to evaluate the likelihood that an effect seen in a sample is also seen in the population. A census is when the entire population is studied.

First Grade	4,927	23,854
Second Grade	4,644	22,306
Third Grade	4.399	20.219

5.1.3. Benchmark Measures

5.1.3.1. Kindergarten

For Kindergarten, instructional recommendation was used to measure benchmark progress. Like other *DIBELS* benchmark groups, it contains three levels – on benchmark, strategic intervention, and intensive intervention. As in all grades, the essential question in this section was, "Given the benchmark classification of a student at the beginning of the year, what were the benchmarks at the end of the year?" For each grade, the first comparison was between all Reading First and non-Reading First students. Then, subgroup performance breakdowns are analyzed.

Figure one summarizes the performance of all students in Reading First versus non-Reading First. The horizontal axis indicates the benchmark groups at the beginning of the year and the bars present the percentage of the students in each classification at the end of the year test.

Figure 14: Reading First (RF) versus Non-Reading First Kindergarten (NRF) Students: Percent in each Instructional Recommendation Benchmark Based at Start of Year

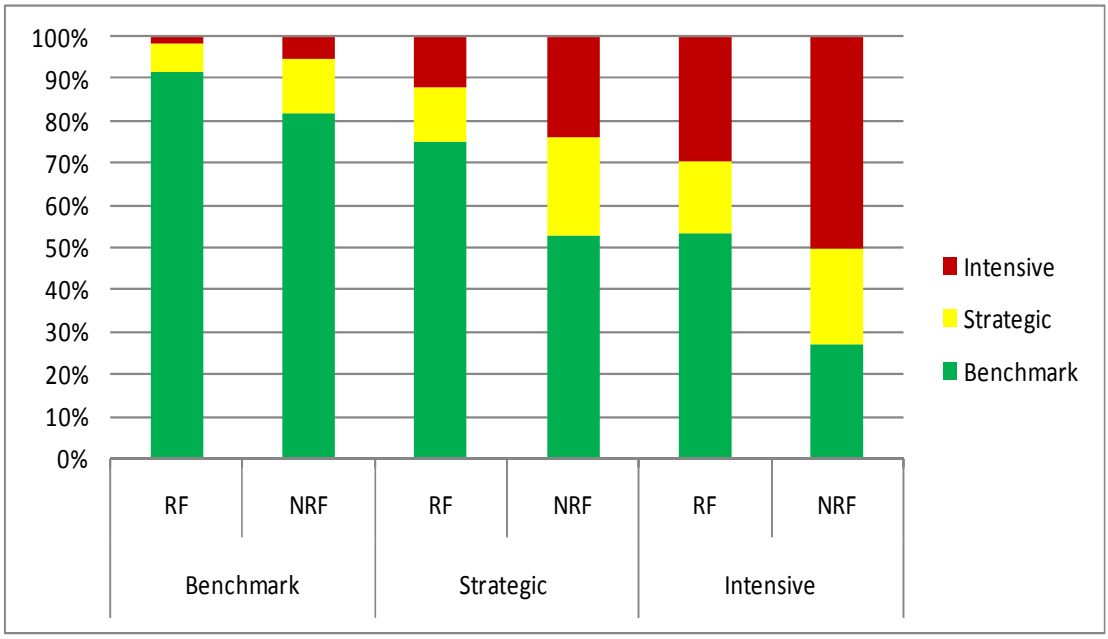


Table 16: Reading First vs. non-Reading First Beginning of Year Performance

Instructional Recommendation		End of year		
Beginning of Year	Program	Benchmark	Strategic	Intensive
Intensive	NRF	26.91%	22.80%	50.29%
V = 0.20	RF	53.11%	16.97%	29.91%
Intensive Total		1635	2488	1156
Strategic	NRF	52.83%	23.39%	23.78%
V = 0.17	RF	75.23%	13.04%	11.73%

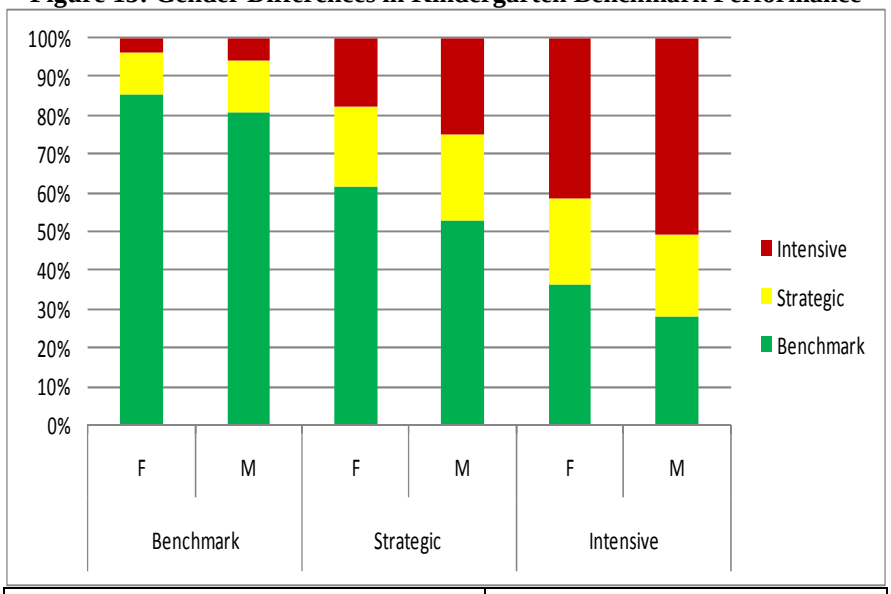
Instructional Recommendation		End of year		
Beginning of Year	Program	Benchmark	Strategic	Intensive
Strategic Total		6144	2347	2358
Benchmark	NRF	81.69%	12.85%	5.46%
V = 0.11	RF	91.78%	6.59%	1.63%
Benchmark Total		8817	1233	501

Figure 14 indicates the degree to which there was an effect of the Reading First program. It is clear from the graph that the Reading First students outpaced the non-Reading First students. The table below (Table 16) the graph indicates that ten percent more of the students who started the year on benchmark also ended the year on benchmark (92 and 82 percent). In addition, the students judged to need an intensive intervention at the beginning of the year were more likely to improve by the end of the year in Reading First. Of the Reading First students assigned to intensive supervision at the start of the year, more than half (53 percent) ended the year on benchmark. This compares to 27 percent of similar non-Reading First students. The Cramer's V tests of importance provide support for what is observed in the changing percentages. While there is a moderate effect for students at the (0.11) of Reading First, the importance of the reading program grows as initial success drops. For those students initially judged to need strategic intervention and intensive intervention, the Cramer's V (0.17 and 0.20) indicated a strong relationship between Reading First and success on the final evaluation.

Gender Differences

For the remainder of the kindergarten analysis, only Reading First students were considered. The test indicated some effect of gender differences within Reading First for students judged as needing strategic and intensive interventions at the beginning of the year. For those students needing Strategic intervention at the beginning of the year, the Cramer's V (0.10) indicated a weak effect of gender on final evaluation benchmark. Those students needing intensive intervention at the beginning of the year, the Cramer's V (0.13) indicated a moderate relationship between gender and end of the success. The students on benchmark at the beginning of the year indicated no relationship between gender and end of the year success (Cramer's V = 0.05). This is not to say that the girls did not continue to perform better than the boys. It is just that the reading program had a limited impact on the *differences* between the groups.

Figure 15: Gender Differences in Kindergarten Benchmark Performance

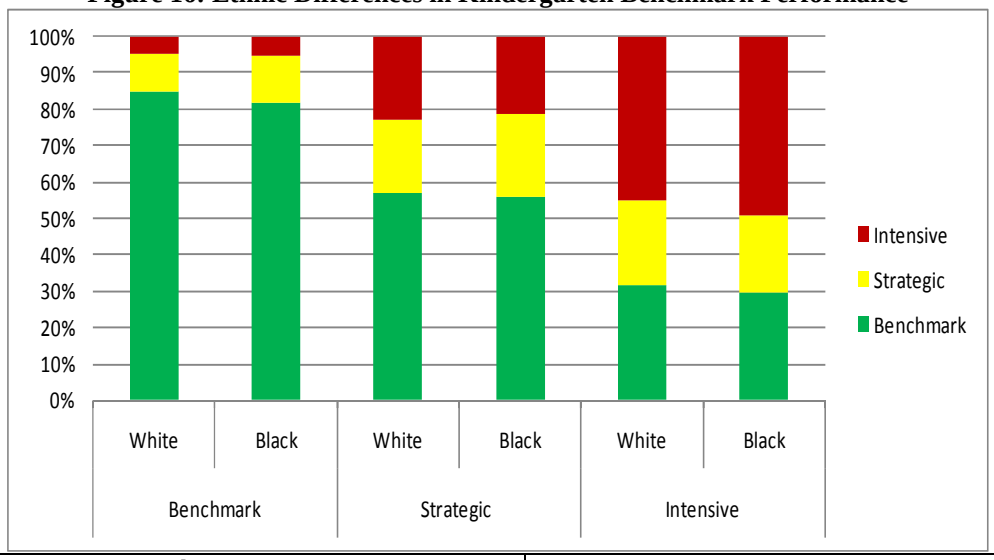


Instructional Recommendation		Spring		
Fall	SEX	Benchmark	Strategic	Intensive
Intensive	M	27.68%	21.45%	50.88%
V = 0.13	F	36.02%	22.59%	41.39%
Intensive Total		435	245	139
Strategic	M	52.60%	22.40%	25.00%
V = 0.10	F	61.57%	20.69%	17.74%
Strategic Total		1385	216	240
Benchmark	M	80.99%	13.25%	5.76%
V = 0.05	F	85.74%	10.37%	3.89%
Benchmark Total		1797	32	129

Ethnic Differences

Out of the 26,680 Kindergarteners studied, all but 1,363 were either Caucasian or African American. The differences between these other minority groups are such that it was difficult to cluster them together for this part of the study. As such, this section will only consider the two largest ethnic groups. The Cramer's V indicated no important relationship between these two ethic groups and their performance on the final evaluation in Reading First (V is Benchmark = 0.04, Strategic = 0.03, and Intensive = 0.04). In effect, there is no support for the idea that Black and White Kindergarten students performed differently in Reading First.

Figure 16: Ethnic Differences in Kindergarten Benchmark Performance

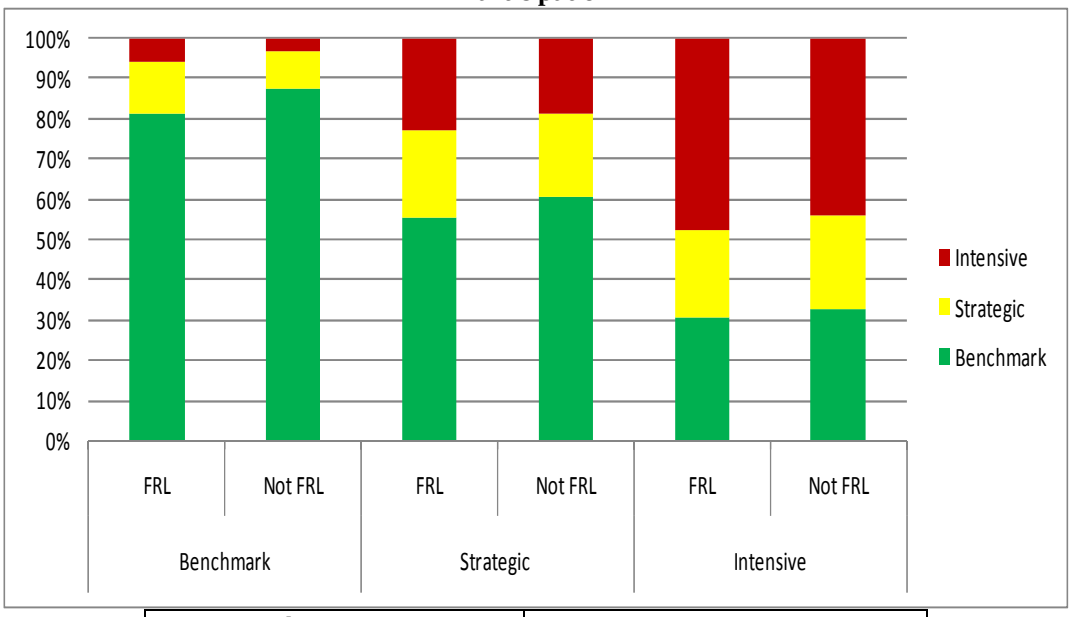


Instructional Recommendation		Spring		
Fall		Benchmark	Strategic	Intensive
Intensive V = 0.04	Black White	29.72% 31.56%	20.93% 23.08%	49.35% 45.35%
Intensive Total		416	131	241
Strategic V = 0.03	Black White	55.81% 56.76%	22.92% 20.54%	21.26% 22.71%
Strategic Total		1352	235	212
Benchmark V = 0.04	Black White	81.60% 84.97%	13.21% 10.51%	5.19% 4.51%
Benchmark Total		1771	128	32

Free/Reduced Lunch Students

The evaluation of the relationship between FRL and the final spring benchmark status indicated nearly no relationship. Students initially judged at benchmark (V=0.04) and in need of Strategic intervention (V=0.05) supported no relationship. Students initially judged in need of intensive intervention indicated a weak relationship between FRL status and final evaluation benchmark. These results support the idea that impact of RF on students is independent of whether the students are FRL program participants.

Figure 17: Differences in Kindergarten Benchmark Performance Based on Free or Reduced Lunch (FRL) Participation

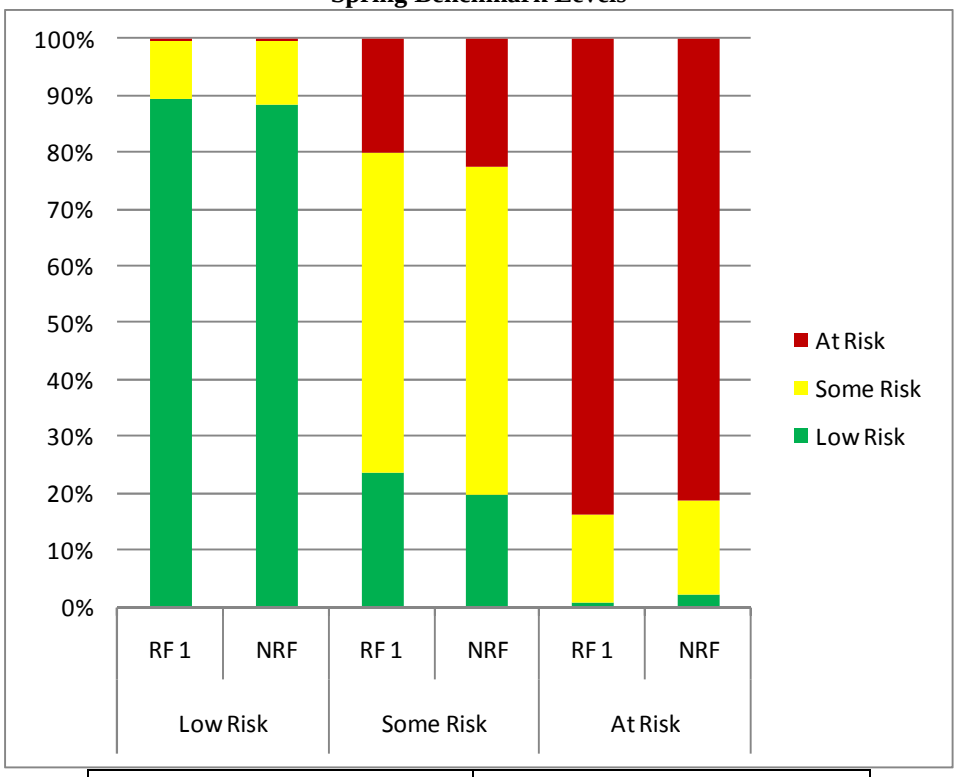


Instructional Recommendation		Spring		
Fall	Free Reduced Lunch	Benchmark	Strategic	Intensive
Intensive	Not FRL	32.50%	23.39%	44.11%
V = 0.07	FRL	30.57%	21.51%	47.91%
Intensive Total		416	241	131
Strategic	Not FRL	60.62%	20.77%	18.61%
V = 0.05	FRL	55.26%	21.93%	22.81%
Strategic Total		1352	235	212
Benchmark	Not FRL	87.30%	9.55%	3.15%
V = 0.04	FRL	81.32%	12.97%	5.71%
Benchmark Total		1771	128	32

5.1.3.2. First Grade

Progress advancement in the first grade was measured by the change in the percent on benchmark in Oral Reading Fluency (ORF). Since ORF is not tested until the middle of the First grade, this is the only grade when winter to spring tests were used to measure growth. The abbreviated treatment (learning) time should naturally produce smaller effects. However, the goal was to use a consistent and reliable measure of reading ability. Overall, this test failed to produce evidence of an important effect on the Spring ORF. Slight differences in scores were outweighed by an inconsistent pattern of differences.

Figure 18: Reading First (RF) versus Non-Reading First (NRF) Winter Oral Reading Fluency (ORF) on Spring Benchmark Levels

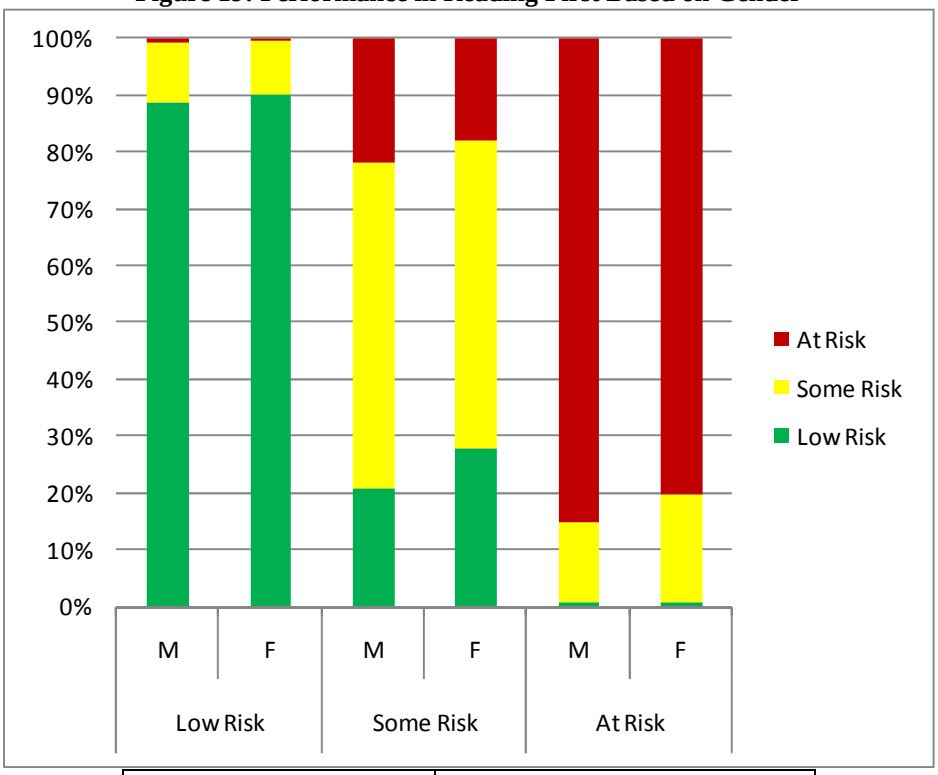


ORF Benchmark		Fall		
Winter	RF-Cohort	Low Risk	Some Risk	At Risk
At Risk	NRF	1.99%	16.62%	81.39%
V = 0.03	RF	0.72%	15.55%	83.73%
At Risk Total		1.82%	16.48%	81.70%
Some Risk	NRF	19.65%	57.85%	22.50%
V = 0.04	RF	23.63%	56.26%	20.11%
Some Risk Total		20.32%	57.58%	22.10%
Low Risk	NRF	88.39%	11.18%	0.43%
V = 0.02	RF	89.58%	10.11%	0.31%
Low Risk Total		88.61%	10.98%	0.41%

Gender Differences

From this point on, only Reading First students were used in the remainder of the first grade analysis. Females tended to perform better on the spring ORF based on the Winter ORF test. Overall, the differences between male and female were not very important. This is in part to the very low number of subjects in a couple of groups. Students who were assessed at low risk in the winter indicated no important differences in male versus female performance in Spring ORF tests (V=0.05). When a student was judged some risk (V=0.08) or at risk (V=0.07) in the winter, there was a weak relationship between student's gender and students in Spring ORF tests. Overall, there is little evidence indicating that genders respond differentially to participation in the RF program.

Figure 19: Performance in Reading First Based on Gender

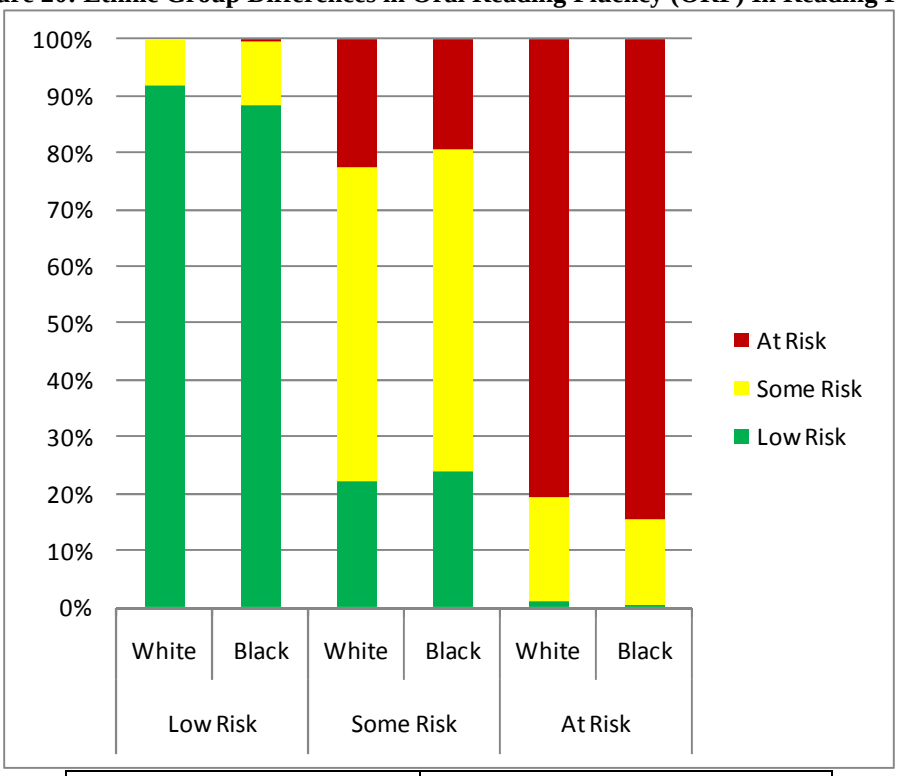


		Benchmark Status ORF 1st End		
Benchmark Status ORF 1st Middle		Low Risk	Some Risk	At Risk
At Risk	F	0.56%	19.21%	80.23%
V = 0.07	M	0.80%	13.83%	85.37%
At Risk Total		4	86	463
Some Risk	F	27.69%	54.40%	17.92%
V = 0.08	M	20.74%	57.59%	21.67%
Some Risk Total		349	831	297
Low Risk	F	90.28%	9.65%	0.07%
V = 0.05	M	88.82%	10.61%	0.57%
Low Risk Total		2595	293	9

Ethnic Differences

There were no demonstrated differences between black and white students. The Cramer's V indicated no relationship between the change in benchmark and race. This was due in part to the low N in some cells. While the majority of the students were on benchmark, the data show real entrenchment. Students at risk tended to stay at risk and students on benchmark stayed on benchmark.

Figure 20: Ethnic Group Differences in Oral Reading Fluency (ORF) In Reading First



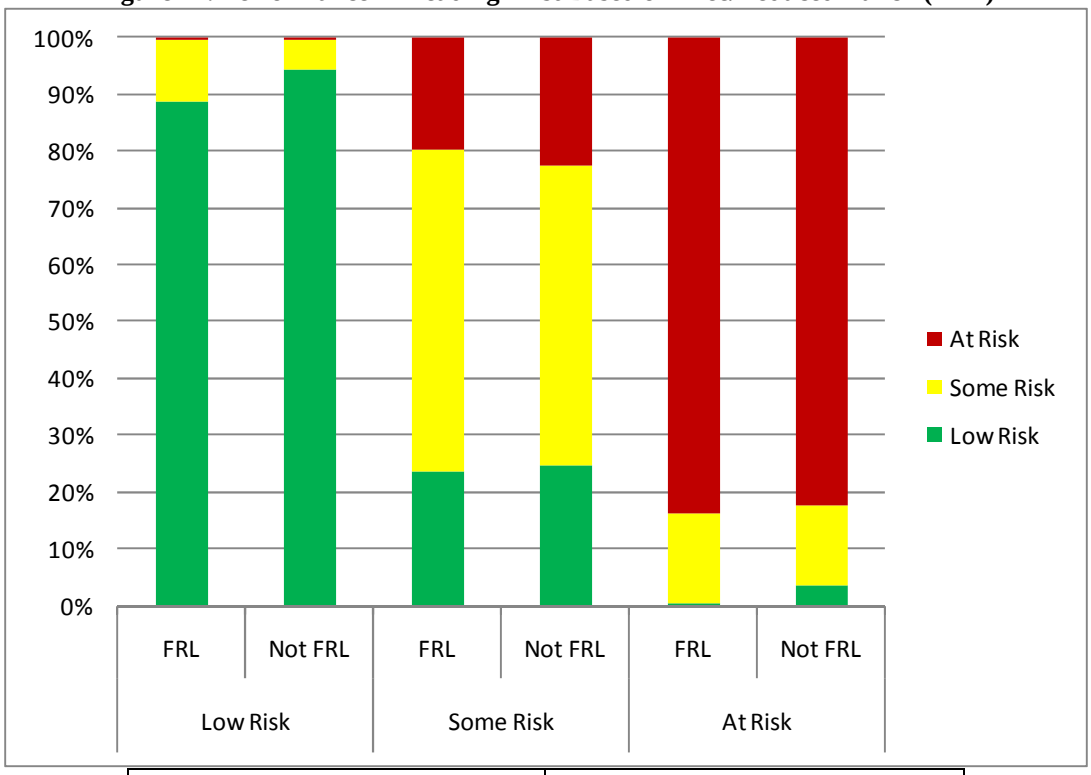
		Benchmark Status ORF 1st End		
Benchmark Status ORF 1st Middle	Race	Low Risk	Some Risk	At Risk
At Risk	Black	0.44%	15.10%	84.46%
V = 0.3	White	1.14%	18.18%	80.68%
At Risk Total		3	85	457
Some Risk	Black	23.89%	56.65%	19.46%
V = 0.3	White	22.26%	55.19%	22.55%
Some Risk Total		339	812	291
Low Risk	Black	88.47%	11.13%	0.40%
V = 0.02	White	91.94%	8.06%	0.00%
Low Risk Total		2525	289	8

FRL Differences

The relationship between Free/Reduced Lunch (FRL) Program students and change in benchmark was usually weak. Students who were initially judged at some risk and low risk produced no demonstrated relationship between FRL status and benchmark performance. The

one indication of difference was produced by students initially at risk indicating a moderate relationship between FRL status and the spring benchmark performance (V=0.11). However, the interpretation of this relationship must be considered taking into account that there were only four students who moved from at risk to low risk status.

Figure 21: Performance in Reading First Based on Free/Reduced Lunch (FRL)



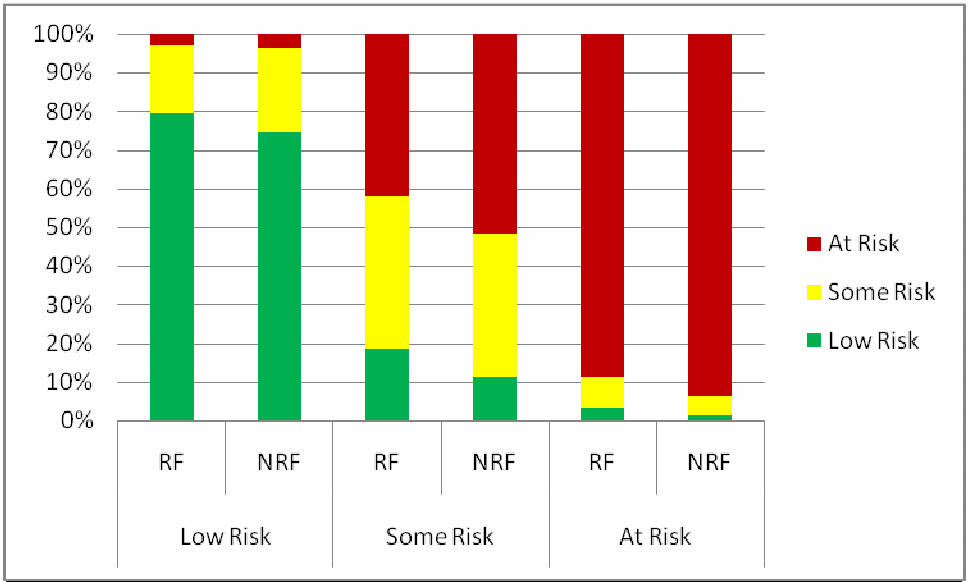
		Benchmark Status ORF 1st End		
Benchmark Status ORF 1st Middle	Free/Reduced Lunch	Low Risk	Some Risk	At Risk
At Risk V = 0.11	Not FRL FRL	3.51% 0.40%	14.04% 15.73%	82.46% 83.87%
At Risk Total		4	86	463
Some Risk V = 0.07	Not FRL FRL	24.66% 23.52%	52.74% 56.65%	22.60% 19.83%
Some Risk Total		349	831	297
Low Risk V = 0.07	Not FRL FRL	94.44% 88.64%	5.13% 11.07%	0.43% 0.29%
Low Risk Total		2595	293	9

5.1.3.3. Second Grade

First Reading First versus non reading First

In second grade, there appears to be an effect of Reading First for students considered at risk and some risk (V = 0.08 and 0.09). The effect is weak but present for students scoring low risk in the fall (V = 0.05). For the some risk students, there was an 11 percent reduction in students considered at risk and a seven percent increase in students considered low risk in the spring evaluation.

Figure 22: Reading First (RF) versus Non-Reading First (NRF) Spring Oral Reading Fluency (ORF) on Benchmark Levels



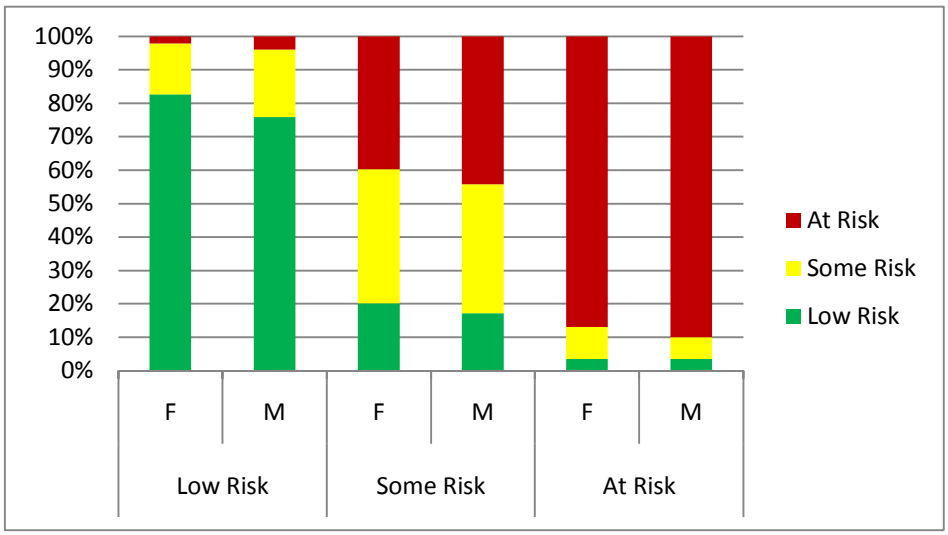
		Benchmark Status ORF 2nd End		
Benchmark Status ORF_2nd Beginning	RF-Cohort	Low Risk	Some Risk	At Risk
At Risk	NRF	1.28%	5.11%	93.62%
V = 0.08	RF	3.47%	7.66%	88.87%
At Risk Total		72	245	4134
Some Risk	NRF	11.21%	37.18%	51.61%
V = 0.09	RF	18.44%	39.38%	42.18%
Some Risk Total		963	2898	3854
Low Risk	NRF	74.37%	22.06%	3.57%
V = 0.05	RF	79.55%	17.53%	2.93%
Low Risk Total		11,129	3144	511

Gender Differences

Again, only RF students were considered in the remainder of this grade's evaluation. There were weak effects found as a result of gender differences. For students initially judged at risk, there was a weak effect of gender on spring assessment with females performing slightly better than males (V = 0.06). At the other end of the spectrum, students initially judged at low risk also

displayed a weak effect of gender (V = 0.09). Here, female students were more likely to stay at low risk.

Figure 23: Performance in Reading First based on Gender

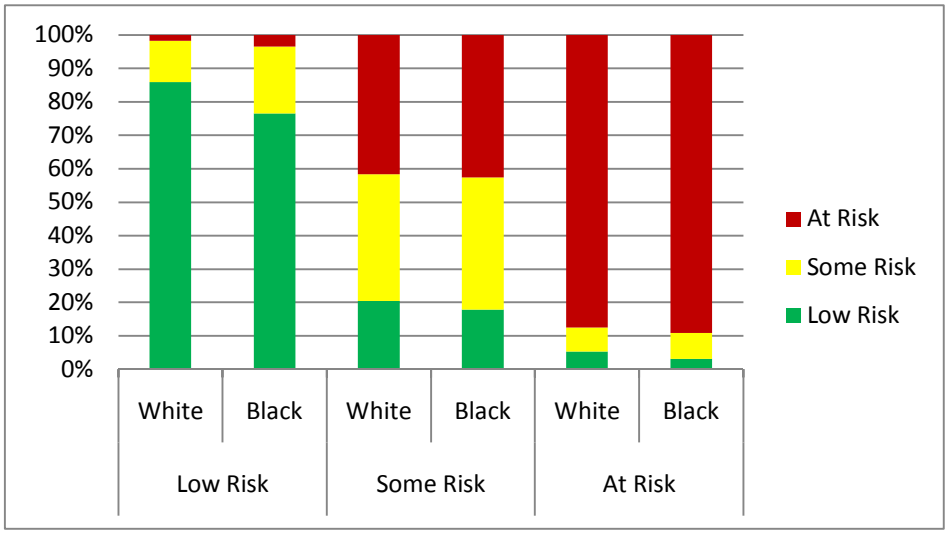


		Benchmark Status ORF 2nd End		
Benchmark Status ORF 2nd Beginning		Low Risk	Some Risk	At Risk
At Risk	M	3.48%	6.50%	90.02%
V = 0.06	F	3.45%	9.58%	86.97%
At Risk Total		24	53	615
Some Risk	M	17.09%	38.72%	44.19%
V = 0.05	F	20.10%	40.20%	39.70%
Some Risk Total		250	534	572
Low Risk	M	75.89%	20.22%	3.89%
V = 0.09	F	82.72%	15.19%	2.09%
Low Risk Total		2065	455	76

Ethnic Differences

Those initially found at risk or some risk provided no evidence of an important relationship between ethnic groups and spring test performance (V= 0.05 and 0.03). However, those students initially found at low risk supported a weak relationship between ethnic group and final performance. Specifically, nine percent more white students (86%) remained low risk when compared to black student remaining low risk (77%).

Figure 24: Ethnic Group Differences in Oral Reading Fluency (ORF) In Reading First

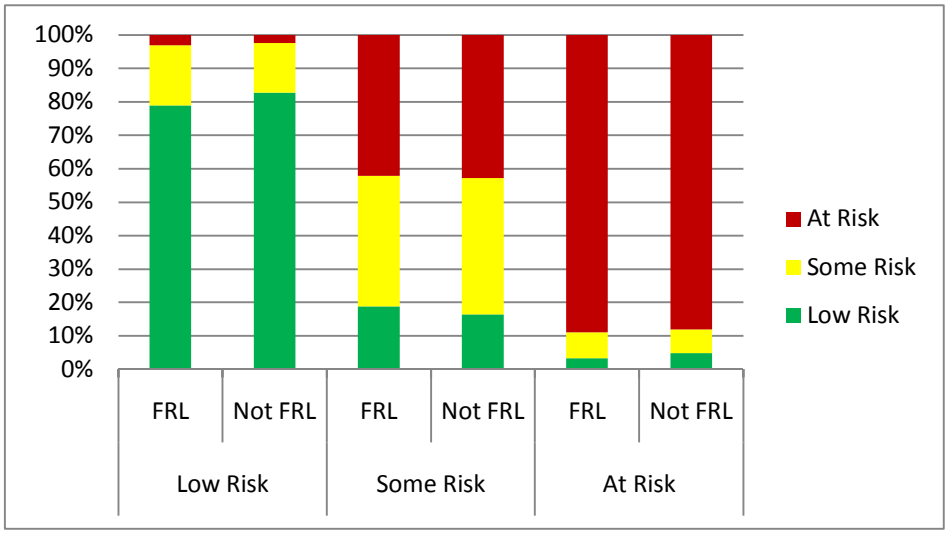


Count of Benchmark_Status_ORF_2nd_End		Benchmark_Status_ORF_2nd_End		
Benchmark_Status_ORF_2nd_Beginning		Low Risk	Some Risk	At Risk
At Risk	Black	3.03%	7.77%	89.20%
V = 0.05	White	5.23%	7.19%	87.58%
At Risk Total		24	52	605
Some Risk	Black	17.84%	39.62%	42.54%
V = 0.03	White	20.35%	38.05%	41.59%
Some Risk Total		246	522	563
Low Risk	Black	76.55%	19.97%	3.49%
V = 0.09	White	85.89%	12.38%	1.73%
Low Risk Total		2006	448	75

FRL Differences

At all three initial benchmark levels, there was no evidence of an important effect of the FRL program on spring measurement performance. In effect, the Reading First program allowed FRL students to learn as well as non-FRL students.

Figure 25: Performance in Reading First Based on Free/Reduced Lunch (FRL)

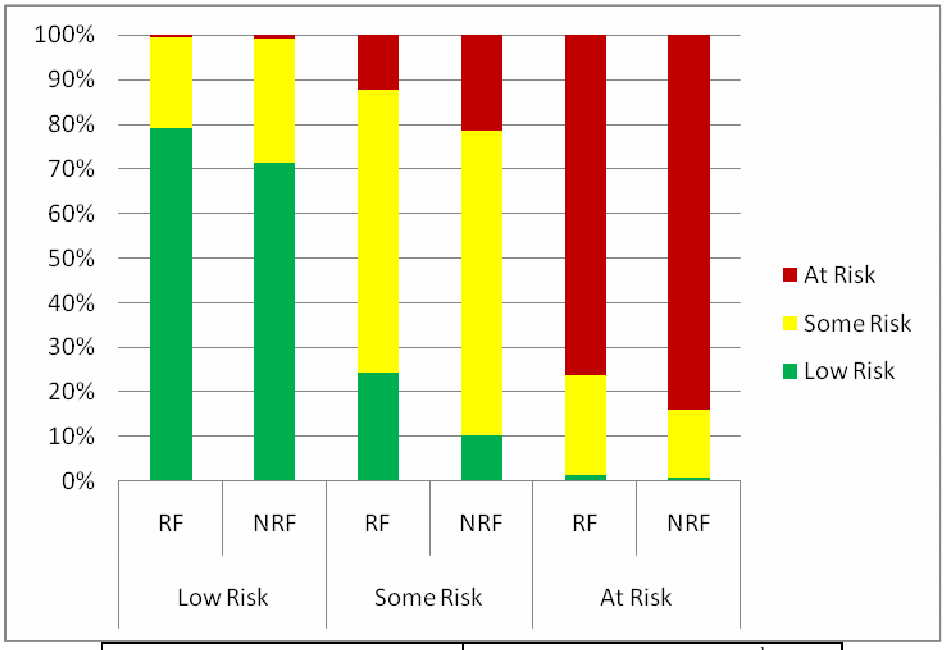


		Spring		
Fall	FREE/RED LUNCH	Low Risk	Some Risk	At Risk
At Risk	Not FRL	4.76%	7.14%	88.10%
V = 0.03	FRL	3.29%	7.73%	88.98%
At Risk Total		24	53	615
Some Risk	Not FRL	16.35%	40.88%	42.77%
V = 0.02	FRL	18.71%	39.18%	42.11%
Some Risk Total		250	534	572
Low Risk	Not FRL	82.78%	14.83%	2.39%
V = 0.04	FRL	78.93%	18.04%	3.03%
Low Risk Total		2065	455	76

5.1.3.4. Third Grade

The overall third grade dataset was characterized by entrenchment. An extremely small percent of the students studied moved from low risk to at risk or vise versa. Still, a weak relationship existed between Reading First/non-Reading First students and final assessment for students initially assessed at risk (V = 0.07) and low risk (V = 0.07). In contrast, students initially judged at some risk displayed the real power of the program. For these students, a strong relationship (V = 0.16) existed between reading program and the final assessment benchmark. Students were nearly 2.5 times more likely to move into the low risk benchmark (RF 24.2% to NRF 10.4%) if they were in Reading First. In addition, nearly the opposite condition existed for students moving into at risk (RF = 12.2% and NRF 21.4%)

Figure 26: Reading First (RF) versus Non-Reading First (NRF) Spring Oral Reading Fluency (ORF) on Benchmark Levels

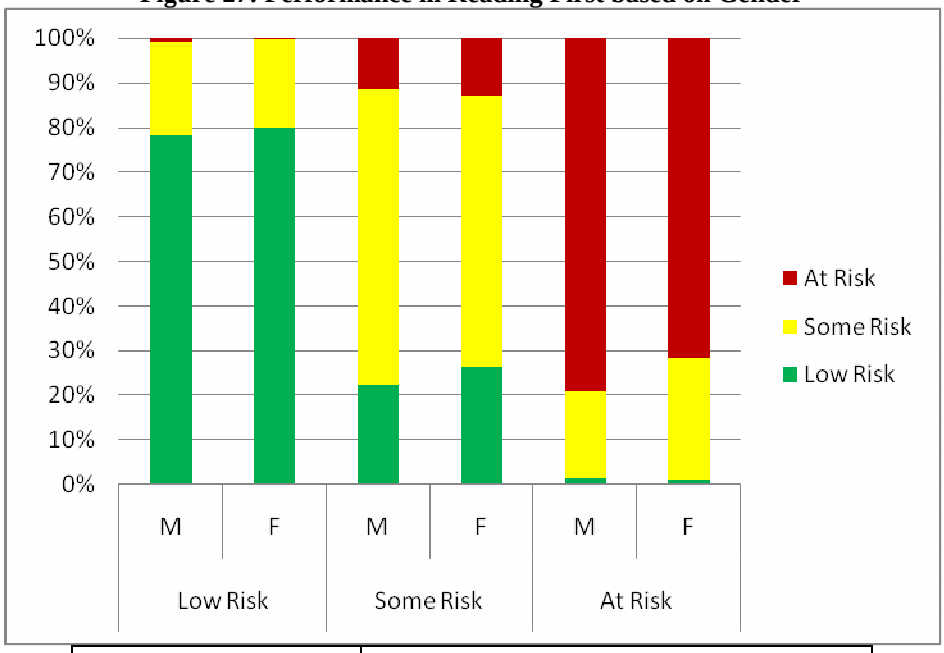


		Benchmark Status ORF 3rd End		
Benchmark Status ORF 3rd Beginning		Low Risk	Some Risk	At Risk
At Risk	NRF	0.72%	15.39%	83.89%
V = 0.07	RF	1.35%	22.31%	76.35%
At Risk Total		47	943	4737
Some Risk	NRF	10.45%	68.20%	21.35%
V = 0.07	RF	24.22%	63.60%	12.18%
Some Risk Total		989	5159	1509
Low Risk	NRF	71.22%	28.01%	0.77%
V = 0.16	RF	79.12%	20.30%	0.59%
Low Risk Total		9068	3327	92

Gender Differences

From this point on, the analysis considers only Reading First students. When evaluating students based on gender, female students performed better overall. A weak differential effect was supported for students initially judged at risk (0.09) or some risk (V = 0.06). However, an inconsistent effect was found. When a student was initially judged at risk, male students were more likely to stay at risk. While the differential effect was less than six percent, it was enough to support the weak effect. Students initially judged at some risk performed slightly different. A slightly greater percentage of the male students (5 percent) stayed at some risk. Female students were more likely to become low risk (plus 4 percent) *and* at risk (plus 1.4 percent).

Figure 27: Performance in Reading First based on Gender



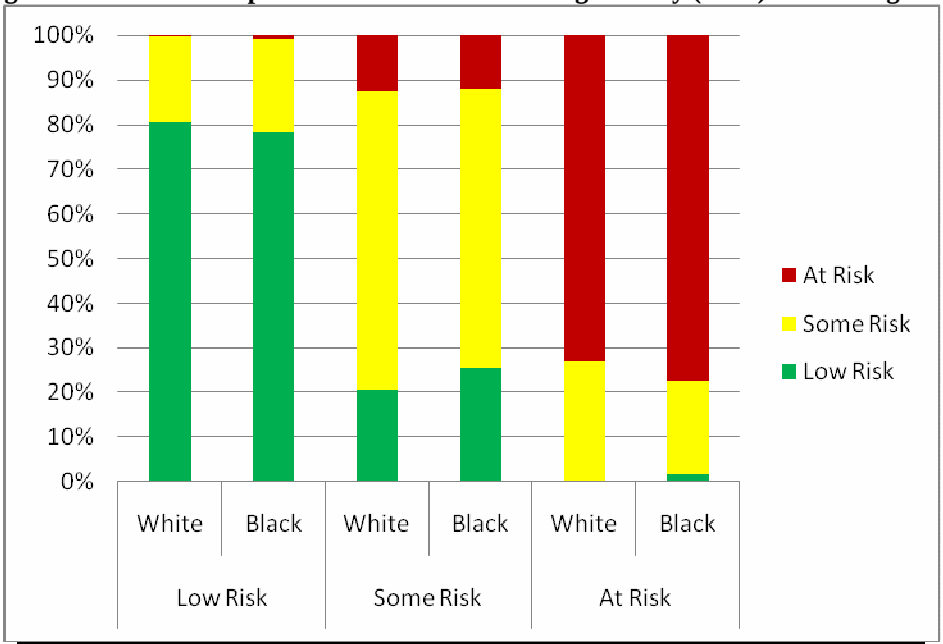
		Benchmark Status ORF 3rd End		
Benchmark Status ORF 3rd Beginning		Low Risk	Some Risk	At Risk
At Risk	F	1.25%	27.10%	71.65%
V = 0.09	M	1.40%	19.61%	78.98%
At Risk Total		12	199	681
Some Risk	F	26.32%	60.75%	12.93%
V = 0.06	M	22.36%	66.12%	11.52%
Some Risk Total		332	872	167
Low Risk	F	79.90%	19.76%	0.34%
V = 0.04	M	78.21%	20.91%	0.88%
Low Risk Total		1754	450	13

Ethnic Differences

When looking at the differential effect on ethnic groups, some interesting differences developed. Among students who were initially judged "low risk," white students held a slight advantage of remaining at low risk. However, when a student was judged "some risk" in the fall, black students were more likely to be categorized at "low risk" by the spring. However, the Cramer V (0.05) did not support an important effect of Reading First.

The story changed for those students initially judged at risk. The Cramer V (0.08) did support a weak effect of the reading program. However, the results were mixed. A small percent (1.7) of the black students rose from at risk to low risk in the third grade while no white student did as well. At the same time, four percent more black students stayed at risk. This mixed result may be due to the atypical behavior of less than about 50 students. Still, the result supported a weak differential effect on at risk students based on race.

Figure 28: Ethnic Group Differences in Oral Reading Fluency (ORF) In Reading First

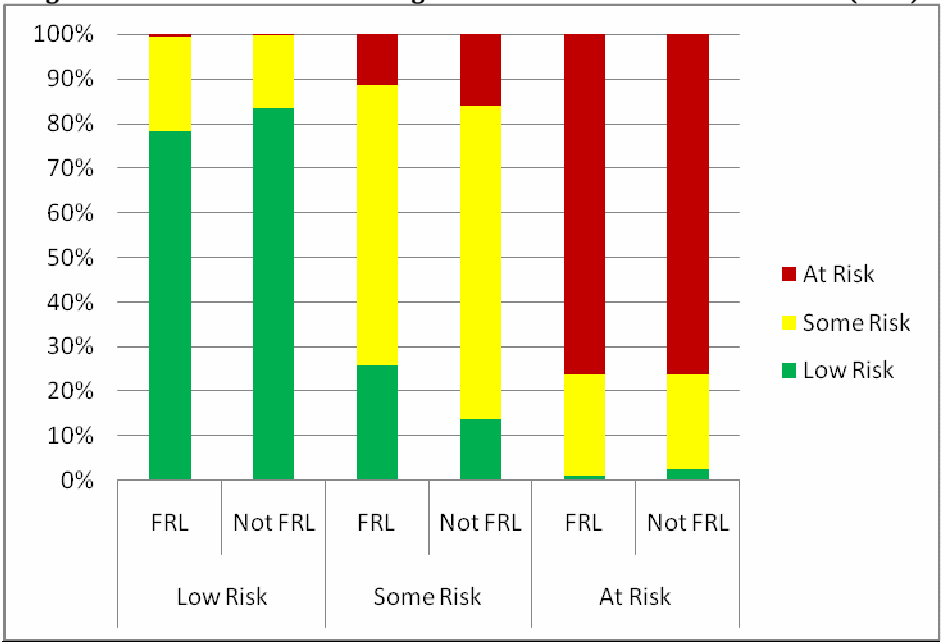


Count of SITE CD		Benchmark Status ORF 3rd End		
Benchmark Status ORF 3rd Beginning		Low Risk	Some Risk	At Risk
At Risk V = 0.08	Black White	1.74% 0.00%	20.98% 26.80%	77.28% 73.20%
At Risk Total		12	197	676
Some Risk V = 0.05	Black White	25.40% 20.75%	62.55% 66.57%	12.05% 12.68%
Some Risk Total		327	859	165
Low Risk V = 0.05	Black White	78.20% 80.65%	20.99% 19.20%	0.80% 0.15%
Low Risk Total		1708	442	13

FRL Differences

Students initially judged at risk or low risk failed to support a relationship between FRL and final benchmark success. However, students initially judged at some risk did show a weak relationship between FRL and spring assessment success. The effect was opposite what was expected. Specifically, students receiving FRL services were nearly twice as likely to move from some risk to low risk and less likely to be at risk in the spring assessment. While there were only 173 non-FRL students who were some risk, the difference is still rather striking.

Figure 29: Performance in Reading First Based on Free/Reduced Lunch (FRL)



Count of SITE CD		Benchmark Status ORF 3rd End			
Benchmark Status ORF 3rd Beginning	Free or Reduced Luch	Low Risk	Some Risk	At Risk	Total
At Risk V = 0.03	Not FRL FRL	2.50% 1.23%	21.25% 22.41%	76.25% 76.35%	80 812
At Risk Total		12	199	681	
Some Risk V = 0.10	Not FRL FRL	13.87% 25.71%	69.94% 62.69%	16.18% 11.60%	173 1198
Some Risk Total		332	872	167	
Low Risk V = 0.05	Not FRL FRL	83.33% 78.22%	16.41% 21.13%	0.26% 0.66%	390 1827
Low Risk Total		1754	450	13	

5.1.3.5. Summary of Crosstabs

What is the result of the analysis? Reasonably, there are different questions based on the test. If the RF program is successful, there should be a demonstrated effect between RF and other students. At the same time, there should be little to no difference based on gender, race, and free/reduced lunch.

In the overall evaluation of RF, there was evidence of a positive effect across the board. Students did benefit from the RF program. That effect was strongest in the pre-literacy skills of kindergarten. The demonstrated effect lagged in the second and third grade but some effect was found. The effect became somewhat stronger in the third grade.

Table 17: Summary of Findings and Group Effected

Grade	Reading First	Gender	Race	Free/Reduced Lunch
Kindergarten	Strong Effect At risk	Some Effect At Risk	No Effect	Weak Effect At risk
First	Weak Effect All Students	Weak Effect At Risk	No Effect	No Effect
Second	Weak Effect At Risk	Weak Effect On Benchmark	Weak effect On Benchmark	No Effect
Third	Weak at Risk Stronger on BM	Weak Effect At Risk	No Effect	Weak Effect Some Risk

The interaction between the RF program and demographic groups, is an equally important consideration in the success of the program. Overall, two demographic groups displayed a growing homogenization. Race and poverty (as measured by the free/reduced lunch program) demonstrated surprisingly little effect. Historically, these demographic measures would yield a differential effect. In these data, the result was weak and inconsistent. The result naturally leads one to believe that there the differences are closing. Gender continues to produce some effects. Boys lag somewhat behind girls on reading success. The effect, however weak, indicates that there may still be work to be done.

5.1.4. Reading First versus Non-Reading First

Growth in literacy skills in the Louisiana RF program is measured by tracking the mean score of the most important indicator over time and by performing comparative regressions of subgroups of students in RF. In each of the following sections, there is a graph showing the mean of RF students compared to the benchmark for each benchmark assessment period. Following each of these grade level graphs are graphs showing the subgroups means compared to the benchmarks. Following the subgroup means are graphs showing the regressions that were performed which illustrate the relative growth rates as defined by the resultant regression equation as described below.

Technical details: This analysis was originally performed in the SPSS statistical analysis program using a linear regression analysis. The slope is very important because it indicates how much the group is helped. The steeper the slope, the more a group has been helped by the program. Acceptable R-squares (above 0.25 were required to report the data – indicating sufficient explanatory effect. The regression analysis reports numbers that can be translated into the following equation:

Spring Score = Y-intercept + (Slope * Early Score)

Data

The data in this study includes all students who took the complete battery of the *DIBELS* evaluation system in school year 2006 – 2007 except those schools newly starting the Reading First program. This second cohort of Reading First schools performed inconsistently with either cohort one Reading First (RF) schools (entering the program three years earlier), or non-Reading First (NRF) schools. The unit of analysis is still the student. The evaluators treated the data as a census and so the evaluation does not include tests of significance.

Kindergarten

Oral Reading Fluency (ORF) is not evaluated in Kindergarten. The evaluation used pre-literacy skills including: Letter Naming Fluency, Nonsense Word Fluency, Word Use Fluency, and Phoneme Segmentation Fluency. Previous tests determined that Letter Naming Fluency (LNF) was an important predictor of long term reading success. For this evaluation, Nonsense Word Fluency (NWF) was most highly correlated with LNF. Therefore, it was used in this stage of growth evaluation.

Table 18: Descriptive Measures in Kindergarten Evaluation

Program Code		N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis	Max Score
NRF	LNF Fall	22062	15.82	14.71	0.83	0.12	93
	NWF Spring	22062	28.91	19.18	1.13	3.46	145
RF	LNF Fall	4618	16.40	14.89	0.68	-0.37	80
	NWF Spring	4618	36.79	18.97	0.70	2.47	189
Program Code		N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis	Max Score
NRF	LNF Fall	22062	15.82	14.71	0.83	0.12	93
	NWF Spring	22062	28.91	19.18	1.13	3.46	145
RF	LNF Fall	4618	16.40	14.89	0.68	-0.37	80
	NWF Spring	4618	36.79	18.97	0.70	2.47	189

In all, more than 22,000 NRF and 4,600 RF students were included in the evaluation of the Kindergarten portion. Students started at pretty much the same level in with both groups starting at a mean score of about 16. The fairly large standard deviation and skew indicated a larger than normal distribution of scores with a minority of students scoring much higher than others. On the other hand, the spring score in NWF, indicated an overall change. RF students scored, on average, eight points higher than NRF students. The high kurtosis measures indicated a narrow spread of scores with more students scoring at or near average. The difference between RF and NRF is the level of skewness in the spring NWF scores. NRF's much larger positive skew. A larger positive skew indicated a few students scoring very high.

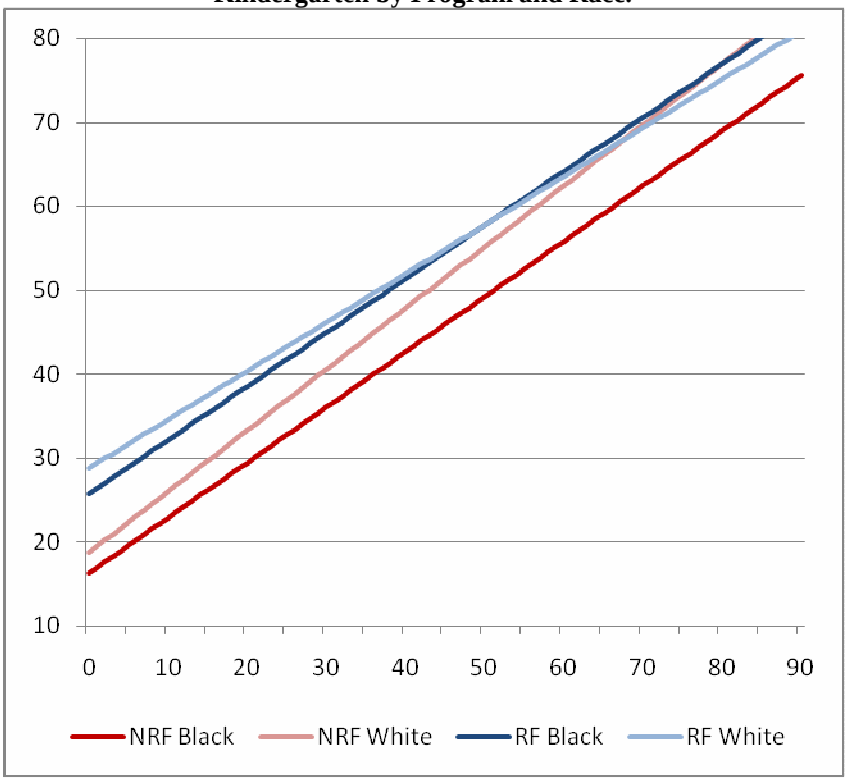
Table 19: Kindergarten Fall Letter Naming Fluency to Spring Nonsense Word Fluency

Subgroup	Y-Intercept	Slope	Adj. R-Square
All NRF	17.80	0.70	0.29
All RF	26.50	0.63	0.24
Black NRF	16.23	0.66	0.27
White NRF	18.79	0.73	0.32
Black RF	25.80	0.64	0.24
White RF	28.72	0.58	0.23
Paid Lunch NRF	18.98	0.75	0.33
Free/Reduced Lunch NRF	17.61	0.64	0.24
Paid Lunch RF	28.10	0.62	0.26
Free/Reduced Lunch RF	26.30	0.63	0.24

Subgroup	Y-Intercept	Slope	Adj. R-Square
NRF General Education	18.56	0.69	0.28
NRF Special Education	13.30	0.72	0.27
RF General Education	27.56	0.61	0.24
RF Special Education	20.95	0.70	0.25

Table 19 summaries the regression analysis. Overall, the adjusted R-square was not exceptionally high but was high enough to support a moderate importance of the relationship. Across all subgroups, the slopes were similar – indicating that the students scored one point higher on the fall LNF tended to score between 0.61 to 0.75 higher on the spring NWF. The noticeable difference between NRF and RF students was the intercept. Overall, the indication is that just by being in the RF program, the students get about an eight point boost in the spring NWF score. However, there is an important difference in slope. Careful comparison of slope indicates a stronger gap closure between historically underperforming groups and their comparison groups in RF. For example, Figure 30 indicates the relationship found between reading program and race. While black and white RF students performed nearly identically, white NRF student dramatically increased their gap with black students.

Figure 30: Relationship of Letter Naming Fluency (LNF) and Nonsense Word Fluency (NWF) In Kindergarten by Program and Race.



First Grade

Oral reading fluency (ORF) was introduced in the middle for first grade. Since this is such an important overall measure of reading ability, the winter ORF was compared to the spring ORF for the first grade analysis in Table 20.

Table 20: Descriptive Statistics of Winter and Spring Oral Reading Fluency (ORF)

Cohort		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis	Maximum
NRF	ORF Winter	23,854	29.11	25.98	1.59	2.84	198
	ORF Spring	23,856	47.94	30.81	0.75	0.31	209
RF 1	ORF Winter	4,927	29.07	22.78	1.47	2.84	187
	ORF Spring	4,927	48.79	28.26	0.54	0.05	192

There were nearly 24,000 NRF and nearly 5,000 RF first grade students included in the analysis. The winter ORF test indicated a very similar level of ability in both RF and NRF students with similar mean, and kurtosis. Standard deviation was a little greater for NRF students (winter ORF). The larger skewness for NRF students supported the idea that the increased standard deviation was produced by a relatively small number of high scoring students in NRF school. By spring ORF, the relationship was had changed in a few important ways. First, RF student moved from slightly behind NRF students to earning nearly one point higher. In addition, curve abnormalities (skewness and kurtosis) were reduced in RF students. Again, a larger skewness and standard deviation in NRF student continued to support the contention that relatively few high scoring students increased the mean score overall. On the other hand, RF scores produced a more even distribution from low to high.

Table 21: Analysis of First Grade Winter Oral Reading Fluency to Spring Oral Reading Fluency

Subgroup	Y-Intercept	Slope	Adj. R-Square
All NRF	17.13	1.06	0.80
All RF	16.97	1.10	0.78
Black NRF	15.04	1.08	0.79
White NRF	19.21	1.04	0.80
Black RF	16.19	1.11	0.77
White RF	18.99	1.05	0.80
Paid Lunch NRF	21.69	0.99	0.81
Free/Reduced Lunch NRF	15.38	1.09	0.78
Paid Lunch RF	21.01	1.02	0.79
Free/Reduced Lunch RF	16.33	1.11	0.77
NRF General Education	18.21	1.04	0.79
NRF Special Education	11.79	1.14	0.79
RF General Education	17.90	1.08	0.78
RF Special Education	12.52	1.16	0.77

The adjusted R-squares (see Table 21) were both consistent and very high indicating a strong relationship between winter and spring ORF for first grade. First grade regression analysis indicated that both RF and NRF students preformed at a similar level of success but that advantaged groups tended to produce better scores in NRF than in RF. For example, while white students in RF and NRF performed at similar level, black students in RF performed overall about one point higher than NRF black students and benefited from an increased slope. This indicated that black student in RF earn a slightly higher score across the board and gained score faster than black students in NRF. While the difference was not dramatic, it was consistent across all historically underperforming groups. There was gap closure between these groups; however, the gap closure was seen in both RF and NRF.

Second Grade

There were more than 22,000 NRF and 4,600 RF students included in the analysis of second grade. Again, RF started at a slightly lower level than NRF students yet performed better overall. Mean ORF scores for NRF students rose from 51.3 to 84.5 compared to 50.5 and 86.5 for RF students. In addition, what had been a strongly skewed distribution in other grades dropped to near nothing in the second grade. The normal distribution of scores indicates a lessening effect of a smaller percentage of higher performing students abnormally affecting overall averages.

Table 22: Descriptive Statistics of Fall Oral Reading Fluency and Spring Oral Reading Fluency

Cohort		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis	Maximum
NRF	ORF Fall	22,306	51.26	28.64	0.75	0.76	235
	ORF Spring	22,306	84.45	34.46	0.10	0.16	235
RF 1	ORF Fall	4,644	50.51	25.94	0.68	0.99	193
	ORF Spring	4,644	86.50	31.80	-0.04	0.39	234

The regression analysis indicated a strong relationship between fall and spring ORF scores with the adjusted R-squares in the 0.7 range. In addition, RF students consistently score better than NRF students by a couple points and slope of the line indicated that the gap between historically underperforming and their comparison groups was closing. However, the gap is closing in both RF and NRF. The clear difference was in intercept scores. Again, RF students enjoyed an across the board advantage over NRF students. Overall, the RF advantage was about two points. However, as indicated by the regression equation, the RF advantage was as high as five points for historically underperforming groups (black students).

Table 23: Analysis of Second Grade Fall Oral Reading Fluency to Spring Oral Reading Fluency

Subgroup	Y-Intercept	Slope	Adj. R-Square
All NRF	30.34	1.06	0.77
All RF	33.63	1.05	0.73
Black NRF	27.65	1.08	0.75
White NRF	32.90	1.03	0.77
Black RF	32.37	1.06	0.72
White RF	38.84	1.01	0.75

Subgroup	Y-Intercept	Slope	Adj. R-Square
Paid Lunch NRF	36.98	0.98	0.76
Free/Reduced Lunch NRF	28.02	1.09	0.76
Paid Lunch RF	38.01	0.98	0.75
Free/Reduced Lunch RF	32.83	1.06	0.72
NRF General Education	33.19	1.02	0.75
NRF Special Education	19.30	1.22	0.79
RF General Education	36.99	1.00	0.71
RF Special Education	22.05	1.24	0.77

Third Grade

The 20,000 NRF students and 4,400 RF students produced some of the most dramatic differences in growth. Although the two cohorts started with nearly identical scores, RF student averaged, overall, four points higher. In third grade, the heavily skewed curves are gone. There are even consistent but small negative skews to the curves at the end of grade three – indicating overall averages are forced a little lower due to a small percentage of students with very low scores.

Table 24: Descriptive Statistics of Fall Oral Reading Fluency and Spring Oral Reading Fluency

Cohort		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis	Maximum
NRF	ORF Fall	20,216	76.31	31.03	0.22	0.18	217
	ORF Spring	20,216	98.56	33.61	-0.23	0.41	223
RF 1	ORF Fall	4,399	76.10	28.58	0.14	0.38	215
	ORF Spring	4,399	102.71	31.87	-0.37	0.92	241

The regression analysis indicated something very important. The slope of the line was very similar across the data set. The essential difference between RF and NRF were found in the y-intercept for the historically underperforming groups. While there was very little difference between black and white students in RF and white students in NRF, black NRF fell dramatically behind. In effect, black NRF students scored six points below white NRF students across the board. The same could be said for students in the free or reduced lunch program (FRL). RF students (both in and out of the FRL program) had intercept of just below 28 – a virtually identical starting point with a similar slope. NRF students in the FRL program lagged seven points behind paid lunch students across the board.

Table 25: Regression Analysis of Third Grade Fall Oral Reading Fluency to Spring Oral Reading Fluency

Subgroup	Y-Intercept	Slope	Adj. R-Square
All NRF	24.10	0.98	0.81
All RF	27.71	0.99	0.78
Black NRF	21.09	1.01	0.80
White NRF	27.04	0.95	0.81
Black RF	27.37	0.95	0.77
White RF	28.22	0.97	0.80

Paid Lunch NRF	29.11	0.92	0.80
Free/Reduced Lunch NRF	22.10	1.00	0.80
Paid Lunch RF	27.85	0.98	0.82
Free/Reduced Lunch RF	27.60	0.99	0.77
NRF General Education	28.95	0.93	0.77
NRF Special Education	12.86	1.10	0.86
RF General Education	33.16	0.93	0.74
RF Special Education	14.15	1.15	0.72

5.1.5. Conclusion

The regression analysis involved the study of a moving target. As children learn, their test scores increased and patterns in the data changed dramatically. Kindergarten scores tended to be highly variable. The distribution of the data tended to less normal. In particular, most students tended to earn scores within a fairly narrow range except for a smaller percentage of relatively high scores. Second and third grade students started to move to a more normal distribution of scores. The change is important because the accuracy of the regression equation is affected by the normality of the distribution.

The regression equations produce two descriptions of the relationship of the data. The first, the y-intercept, is not the mean but can indicate the overall difference in the scores of one group versus another. The other is the slope of the line. The slope indicates the degree of progress.

When looking at the difference between RF and NRF, the differences were more affected by the intercept. The reader may think of this as a "Reading First Bonus." In kindergarten, there was an absolute difference of about eight points in the spring score. The second and third grades indicated an absolute difference of about three points.

The slope determined the amount of growth that occurred between one *DIBELS* assessment to another. For every one point difference in the early score, how much does the second score grow? A difference in slope can indicate a gap closing between groups. When the slope of one group is larger than the slope of another group, the scores are changing relative to each other. If, for example, when the slope of FRL students is greater than other students, the gap between the two groups was closing.

For much of the data, the gap closed in and out of RF proportionally. For example, special education students tended to be closing the gap on general education students. As with much of first grade measures, the gap closed equally. Therefore, first grade was an area of concern with this data. The growth in and out of RF was nearly identical and not as dramatic as other grades. This was in part due to the winter to spring evaluation period.

An area where the slope of the line indicated a dramatic effect was in third grade. In RF, black and white students, as well as free/reduced lunch and paid lunch students, produced nearly identical regression lines. The reader can combine this finding with that of the crosstabs above – which indicated little to no difference between these students attaining benchmark goals. In effect, in RF the gap between these demographic groups has disappeared. On the other hand, the

slopes produced by the students in NRF programs indicate the gap is widening between the same students. RF has eliminated the gap in this evaluation period while other programs see the gap increasing.

Table 26: Summary of Regression Analysis

Grade	Reading First	Race	Free/Reduced Lunch	Special Education
Kindergarten	Reading First			Gap closure
First		Gap closure	Gap closure	Reading First
Second	Reading First	Reading First	Reading First	Gap closure Reading First
Third	Reading First	Strong Gap closure	Gap closure	Gap closure Reading First

5.2. The Relationship between Reading First and the Louisiana Accountability System

Previously, in section 3.2.7, the relationship of the *DIBELS* assessment results to *i*LEAP results were reported. To a certain extent, those results will be repeated here along with additional analyses that relate the RF results explicitly to the Louisiana accountability system. Specifically, the relative performance of students based on whether they are in RF schools and whether they are using the *DIBELS* assessments will be analyzed to provide some indication of the interaction between school quality, early elementary reading assessments, and *i*LEAP results.

5.2.1. The Relationship Between DIBELS and *i*LEAP

The State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education and the Louisiana Department of Education have developed the number one rated accountability system in the United States. The implementation of Reading First in Louisiana, if successful in achieving its goals, should generate an impact which is detectable within that accountability system. The first place within the accountability system that a result would be detectable would be in the third grade *i*LEAP (*integrated* Louisiana Educational Assessment Program) results. While a clear gauge of program impact cannot be assessed until there is a group of students that have participated in all four years of the RF program, preliminary analyses can be conducted to determine whether there is a relationship between *DIBELS* scores and *i*LEAP scores.

The *i*LEAP assesses performance against state standards in Math, Social Studies, Science and English Language Arts (ELA). Obviously, the ELA results are the most relevant to the RF program. For the first time in the spring 2007 *i*LEAP test, separate reading sub-scores have been generated from a subset of the *i*LEAP ELA scores. While these results can be reported for the RF schools, there is no longitudinal data with which to compare the current results. Detailed analyses of the *DIBELS* results and their comparison to *i*LEAP results can be found in section

5.2, including a comparison of *i*LEAP results related to both *DIBELS* and the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA).

The comparison of *DIBELS* to *i*LEAP results will focus on the odds of scoring in a particular performance category on one test when having scored in a particular performance category on the other. The *DIBELS* Oral Reading Fluency (ORF) measure will be used for a comparison with the *i*LEAP ELA. Scores from the *DIBELS* RF result at a particular point in time correspond to a label identifying a risk level of future reading difficulties. These labels are:

- **Low Risk**, indicating a low risk of future reading difficulties. This is a minimal reading level for students to score in this range.
- **Some Risk**, indicating that there appears to be some risk of future reading difficulties. This labeling is non-predictive in that students with scores in this range are equally likely to not have difficulties as they are to having difficulty.
- **At Risk**, indicating that students scoring within this range are likely to have future reading difficulties unless specific and powerful interventions are provided for the students.

The *i*LEAP assessments also generate achievement levels that correspond to a student's level of ability within each of the four subject areas. The *i*LEAP achievement level labels are:

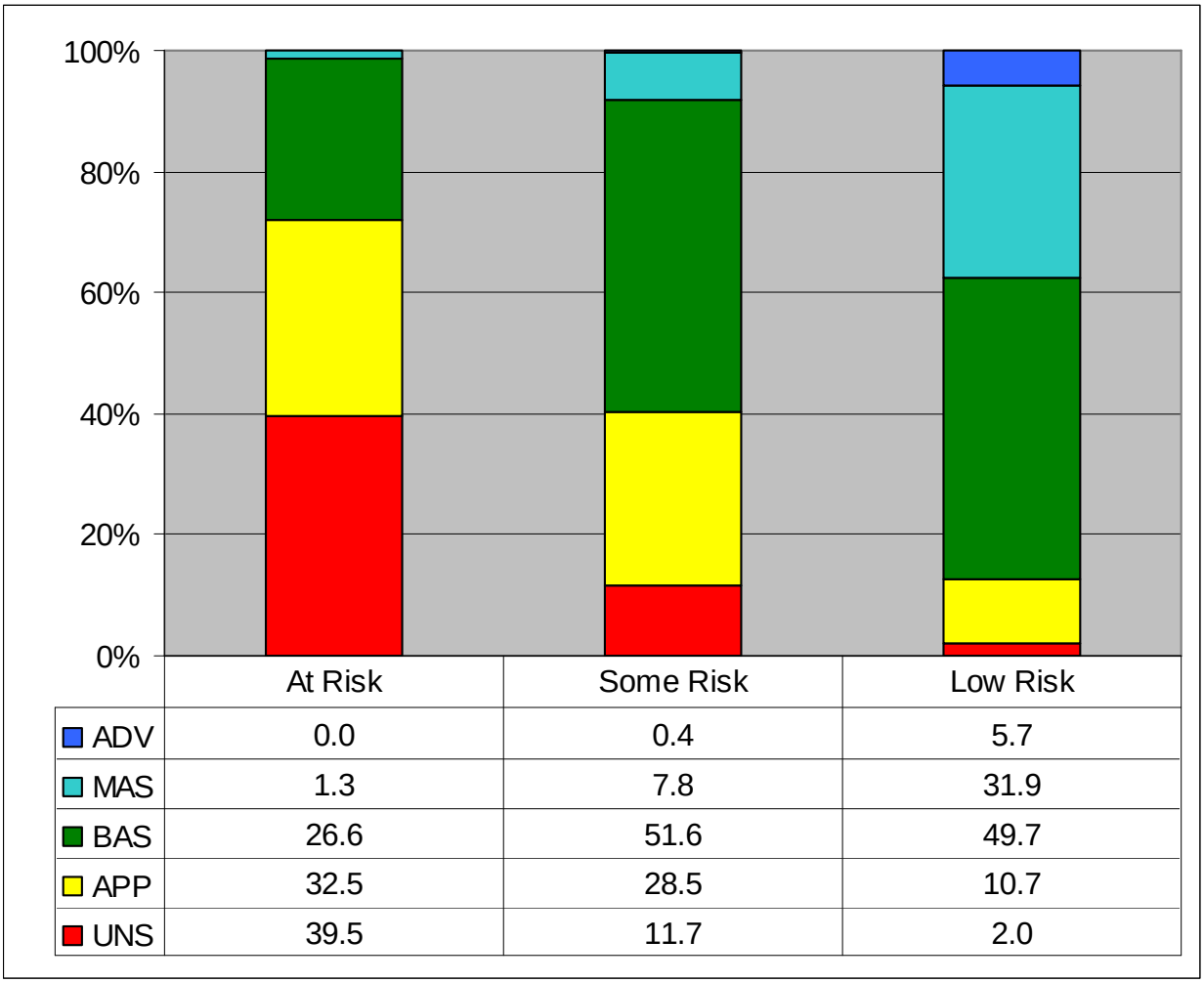
- **Advanced**, a student at this level has demonstrated superior performance beyond the level of mastery.
- **Mastery**, a student at this level has demonstrated competency over challenging subject matter and is well prepared for the next level of schooling.
- **Basic**, a student at this level has demonstrated only the fundamental knowledge and skills needed for the next level of schooling.
- **Approaching Basic**, a student at this level has only partially demonstrated the fundamental knowledge and skills needed for the next level of schooling.
- **Unsatisfactory**, a student at this level has not demonstrated the fundamental knowledge and skills needed for the next level of schooling.

In order for students to be considered proficient within a subject area on the *i*LEAP, they must achieve a score in the basic, mastery, or advanced achievement levels. The low risk category is the goal with in the *DIBELS* assessment, so we would like to see that students that are achieving results within that *DIBELS* category would also be scoring within an *i*LEAP achievement level of basis, mastery or advanced. The following two figures show the relationship of the probability of scoring in a particular *i*LEAP achievement level based on *DIBELS* ORF (Figure 11) and the probability of scoring within a particular *DIBELS* achievement level based on the *i*LEAP ELA achievement (Figure 12).

Figure 11 shows that there are high probabilities that if a student scores in the low risk range on the *DIBELS* ORF, that the student will score basic or above on the *i*LEAP. The results also show that students who are considered at risk are also likely to score below basic on the *i*LEAP. Namely,

- 87.3% of students that score Low Risk on *DIBELS*, score Basic or above on *i*LEAP ELA.
- 72% of students that score At Risk on *DIBELS*, score below Basic on *i*LEAP ELA.

Figure 31: Probability of Scoring on *i*LEAP based on DIBELS ORF Results

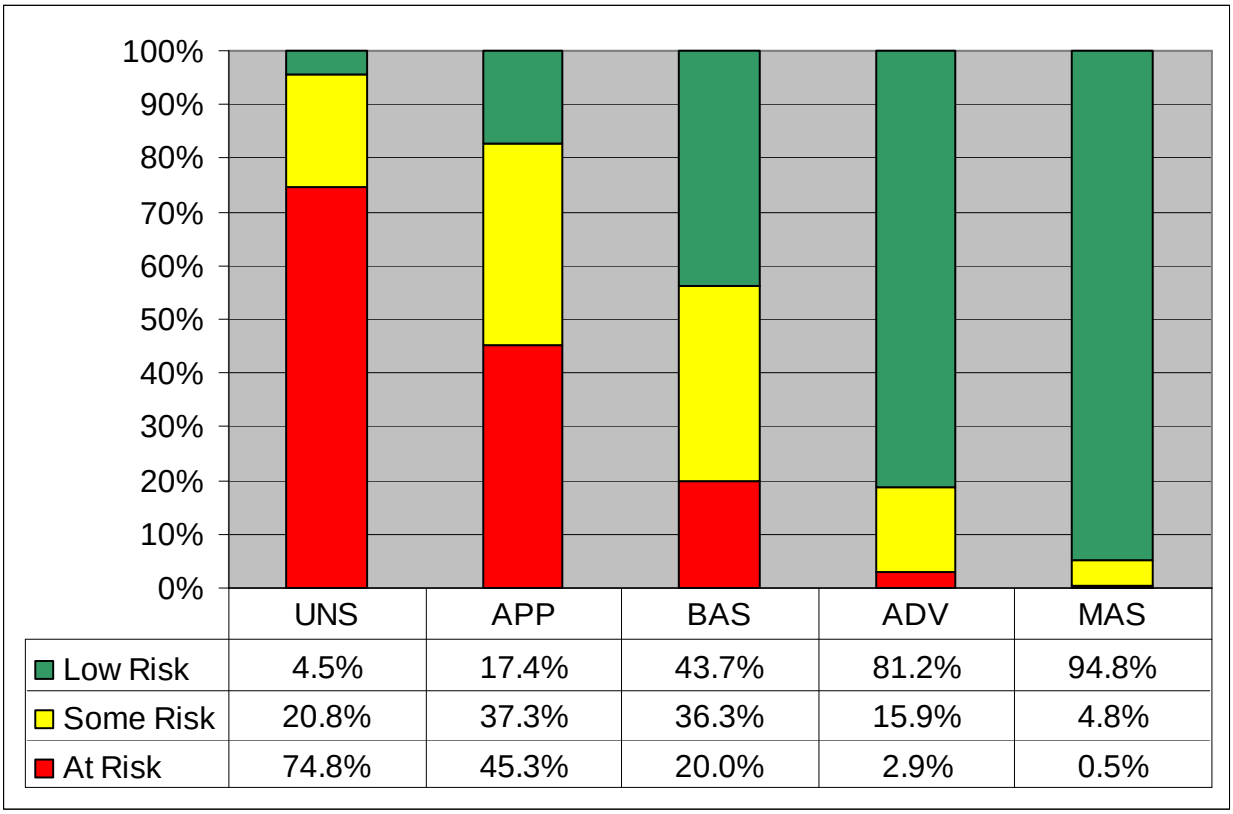


	At Risk	Some Risk	Low Risk
ADV	0.0	0.4	5.7
MAS	1.3	7.8	31.9
BAS	26.6	51.6	49.7
APP	32.5	28.5	10.7
UNS	39.5	11.7	2.0

Figure 12 shows the complementary relationship indicating the probability of scoring on the *DIBELS* ORF assessment based on their achievement level on the *i*LEAP ELA. Specifically,

- 95.6% of students in the Unsatisfactory Achievement Level on *i*LEAP, were either in the Some Risk or At Risk *DIBELS* categories.
- 94.8% of the Mastery Level and 81.2% of the Advanced Level were students that scored in the Low Risk Category on *DIBELS*.

Figure 32: Probability of Scoring on DIBELS ORF based on iLEAP Results



	UNS	APP	BAS	ADV	MAS
Low Risk	4.5%	17.4%	43.7%	81.2%	94.8%
Some Risk	20.8%	37.3%	36.3%	15.9%	4.8%
At Risk	74.8%	45.3%	20.0%	2.9%	0.5%

As students progress through the RF program, it is the intent of the program to improve their reading abilities. *DIBELS* is used within the program to measure outcomes and assess student progress. The results in this section show that if the *DIBELS* assessment is used appropriately and the RF program improves performance as measured by the *DIBELS* indicators, these results should be reflected within the third grade *i*LEAP ELA scores. Subsequent impact on the accountability system via the school and district performance scores is likely to be further delayed due to the simply dilution of the impact when measuring school quality across multiple grades. Particularly in schools where later grades are included in the school performance score and these later grades would not yet include students who had participated in the RF program.

5.2.2. The Relationship of School Quality, Reading First, and *i*LEAP Results

The Louisiana State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) had asked the LDE to determine the relationship of *i*LEAP student performance to whether students were being assessed in the early elementary years with the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) or the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (*DIBELS*). LDE asked that the Picard Center perform this analysis in conjunction with the overall evaluation of the RF program. That analysis is presented here.

In order to perform this analysis, the student demographics of the schools which used DRA and *DIBELS* were inspected. In particular, the relative percentages of students enrolled in Free or Reduced price Lunch programs (FRL), the percent minority enrollment, and the School

Performance Score were calculated. The school performance score is the quality measure that was developed by the LDE which is then used to assign star labels indicating the overall quality of the schools. The SPS is a composite measure that takes into account statewide assessments from third through twelfth grade, student attendance, and dropout rates. The numerical result is then mapped to ranges which have associated labels assigning stars to each school. Schools can have a label indicating 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 stars. If schools are particularly low performing, they may also be labeled academically unacceptable. In addition, the *DIBELS* schools were further subdivided into RF and non-RF schools. Table 27 presents the results of that analysis.

Clearly, the poverty and minority enrollments are substantially different from the other two groups. Also, the proportion of schools earning a specific performance label varies greatly and over 60% of the RF schools are labeled academically unacceptable. This result is not particularly surprising because schools were chosen for the program based on being low performing and high poverty. The demographics serve to highlight the distinct differences that exist in these schools independently of whether they use DRA or *DIBELS* or participate in RF. For the purposes of this evaluation it is also useful to note that the demographic profile for RF schools has the highest percentages of FRL, minority and academically unacceptable schools. Clearly, it is reasonable to expect, that given the preponderance of historically underperforming subgroups, that RF schools would also have the lowest *i*LEAP performance.

Table 27: School Demographic Comparison for DRA and DIBELS schools

	DRA	Other DIBELS	RF DIBELS
FRL	58%	67%	85%
Minority	40%	48%	73%
1 Star and AU	17%	28%	61%

Table 28 displays the percentages of students in each of the three groups that score basic or above on the 3rd grade *i*LEAP English Language Arts assessment. The results show that there is very little difference in performance based on whether students are assessed with DRA or *DIBELS*. While performance is roughly equivalent within each performance label, it is interesting to note the distinctive difference when comparing RF to other *DIBELS* schools in the academically unacceptable category.

Table 28: Relative *i*LEAP ELA Performance (Basic, Mastery, or Advanced) based on RF participation and DIBELS Usage by School Performance Label

SPS Rating	DRA	Other DIBELS	RF DIBELS
2 Star	69%	68%	67%
1 Star	49%	53%	53%
Academically Unacceptable	42%	25%	40%

5.2.3. Reading First Accountability Summary

The analyses in this section suggest that there may be a detectable impact within the Louisiana accountability system due to the implementation of RF. The first section demonstrated that the probability of scoring basic and above on *i*LEAP when a student scores within the low risk category of *DIBELS* was very high, over 87%. This may indicate that if the RF program is leading to better performance on *DIBELS* assessments, that these results should be detectable within the 3rd grade *i*LEAP results. Once these *i*LEAP results are factored into the SPS accountability system, it is reasonable to expect that the SPS scores, and thereby performance labels, will improve. In particular, if the gains that appear in third grade are robust and continue into later grades, the test scores from these later grades may also be improved leading to even greater results within the accountability system.

One reason that we may not see an impact on the SPS may simply be due to the proportion of overall students in a school that have been participating in the RF program. To date, there is not even one group of children that have participated in the four full years of the RF program, so there are no students that have received the full dosage. It follows that there are obviously no students in later grades with a full dosage, although there are many students that have received a partial dosage.

5.3. Professional Development and Technical Assistance

Louisiana's Reading First State Plan calls for the RF State Program to deliver a variety of events to build school and district capacity to deliver effective, scientifically-based reading instruction. Following is a list of planned activities, with summary descriptions of their implementation in SY 2006-07.

5.3.1. Reading First Professional Development Opportunities

- Quarterly events for school and district leaders as well as school-based coaches for the purpose of providing on-going professional development and program coordination
    - Two Quarterly Leadership Meetings attended by RF district coordinators, principals, and school-based coaches were conducted, the first in New Orleans in September (September 19 and 21, 2006) and the second in north Louisiana (Natchitoches) in November (November 28 and 30, 2006). To minimize group size and promote participant learning, the conferences were held for half of all RF districts on one day, then repeated for the remaining districts. Each event featured presentations by nationally-recognized literacy specialists, included updates on Louisiana RF developments, and offered participants opportunities to network.
    - Two Quarterly Coaches Meetings attended by RF school-based coaches were conducted, the first in New Orleans on September 20, 2006 and the second on November 29, 2006 in Natchitoches.
    - The First Annual Louisiana Literacy Conference substituted for one of the planned set of Quarterly Leadership/Coaches meetings to limit the number of school days that local educators were required to leave their schools and districts for professional development. The conference was conducted in June, after the close of school.

- Monthly meetings for school-based coaches to further their on-going professional development and build local capacity to deliver job-embedded professional development at the school site
    - In previous years, school-based coaches were required to attend a statewide coaches meeting each month. Regional coaches meetings led by regional reading coordinators were substituted for statewide meetings in SY 2006-07 to minimize travel and reduce the amount of time that coaches were required to leave their schools. Coaches in Region 4 met seven times during SY 2006-07, while their counterparts in Region 6 met six times. Because several regional coordinator positions were vacant during much of the year, some coaches met in regional coaches meetings only once or twice during SY 2006-07.
- Statewide conferences attended by local RF teachers, reading coaches. and administrators at the school and district levels to build teacher knowledge and skills in the areas of scientifically-based early literacy instruction and assessment.
    - A Mini-Conference was conducted in Baton Rouge on October 24-27, 2006 for more than 100 school and district staff representing schools admitted to the RF Program in SY 2006-07.
    - The First Annual Louisiana Literacy Conference was conducted June 25-27, 2007 in Baton Rouge and was attended by 1,165 educators from around the state. A total of 33 sessions were offered.
- Professional development in early literacy instruction.
    - In addition to the Mini-Conference and Louisiana Literacy Conference described previously, the RF Program built local capacity in early literacy instruction through an intensive professional development series designed to prepare school and district staff as well as university faculty to redeliver LETRS (Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling). Approximately 35 participants completed the nine-day Train the Trainer (TOT) series, which was delivered by certified LETRS trainers.
    - Approximately 270 RF educators attended a three-part series of Interventionist Workshops conducted by regional reading coordinators at several locations around the state. The workshops focused on the principal components of early literacy instruction: Phonological Awareness (Day 1), Phonics and Fluency (Day 2), and Vocabulary and Comprehension (Day 3).
- Professional development in early literacy assessment.
    - Regional reading coordinators offered a three-day series of *DIBELS* workshops in their respective regions throughout the year to prepare school and district staff to utilize *DIBELS* to assess student performance in reading. Participants learned the basics of *DIBELS* Scoring and Administration on Day 1, then honed their assessment skills by administering *DIBELS* alongside experienced assessors (*DIBELS* Shadow-Scoring). The series concluded with *DIBELS* Intervention Training.

A total of 210 workshops were conducted by regional reading coordinators in SY 2006-07: 78 in *DIBELS* Scoring and Administration, 55 in *DIBELS* Shadow-Scoring, and 77 in *DIBELS* Intervention. Total registrations for the three workshops were as follows: *DIBELS* Scoring and Administration, 2,545; *DIBELS* Shadow Scoring, 1,081; and *DIBELS* Intervention, 2,057.

Note: Louisiana students are generally assessed by school- or district-based teams of DIBELS assessors for benchmarking purposes. Generally speaking, only assessment team members attended the Shadow-Scoring workshops, which explains the substantially smaller number of Shadow-Scoring participants.

- To further build local capacity in *DIBELS* assessment, the RF Program contracted with faculty members at Nicholls State University to conduct *DIBELS* Trainer of Trainer (TOT) trainings for school- and district-based staff. Approximately 170 educators participated.

5.3.2. Technical Assistance Opportunities

Technical assistance to RF and non-RF schools.

- Louisiana's State Plan also calls for regional reading coordinators to provide both professional development and technical assistance to the schools and districts in their respective service areas to support program implementation and diffusion at the local level. Approximately 3,800 contact hours of professional support were provided to RF and non-RF educators, according to electronic logs maintained by regional reading coordinators.
- The RF Program and the Center for Child Development at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette collaboratively developed an intensive, two-day Data Summit designed to build local capacity to interpret *DIBELS* data to plan targeted interventions for students and monitor student progress. The Data Summits were piloted with RF staff from St. Helena and Madison Parishes in spring 2007, and will be conducted with representatives of Louisiana's 23 other RF districts during SY 2007-08.

5.3.3. Participation in Reading First Professional Development

A.2. Estimate the percentage of K-3 teachers in the state (including teachers from both Reading First and non-Reading First schools) who participated in any Reading First professional development activities.

All RF K-3 teachers (100%) participate in job-embedded professional development activities conducted by school-based reading coaches.

In addition, Louisiana's RF program funds a variety of professional learning opportunities for both RF and non-RF school staff in a traditional setting (i.e., via conferences, workshops, and in-services). Those "traditional" professional development opportunities are summarized in Exhibit 1.

Exhibit 1 provides summary information on the number of K-3 teachers employed in Louisiana

EXHIBIT 1
K-3 Teachers Who Attended RF-Funded Professional Development:
SY 2006-07

	Total	RF	Non-RF	RF Teachers as a Pct of Total	Non-RF Teachers as a Pct of Total
Total K-3 Teachers in Louisiana	14618	1504	13114	10.29%	89.71%
Total School-Based K-3 Teachers Trained	4486	605	3881	13.49%	86.51%
Percentage of K-3 Teachers Trained	30.69%	40.23%	29.59%		

as well as the number of K-3 teachers who attended at least one day of professional development provided in a traditional setting (i.e., workshop or conference away from their schools) during SY 2006-07.

As noted in Exhibit 1, Louisiana public schools employed 14,618 K-3 teachers in SY 2006-07, roughly 10 percent of whom were assigned by to Reading First schools.

The great majority of professional development provided by the RF Program in SY 2006-07 was intended to build the capacity of Louisiana schools to conduct scientifically-based early literacy assessments. Because capacity was built in RF schools during the first several years of the RF program's implementation, training in SY 2006-07 was primarily devoted to building capacity within non-RF schools.

An estimated 4,486 Louisiana K-3 teachers attended at least one day of professional development funded by the RF program in SY 2006-07. These teachers represent approximately 31% of the state's total population of K-3 teachers. Roughly 13.5% of the total K-3 teachers trained were assigned to RF schools; hence the remaining 87.5% were assigned to non-RF schools.

Overall, approximately 31% of Louisiana K-3 teachers were trained. Roughly 41% of RF K-3 teachers attended RF-funded professional development outside their schools as compared to approximately 30% of non-RF K-3 teachers.

5.3.3.1. Methodology Used In Calculating Percentage of K-3 Faculty Members Served

The percentage of K-3 teachers who participated in at least one RF professional development initiative was calculated by dividing the total number of public school educators who taught reading to K-3 students enrolled in an RF and or non-RF.

The percentage of K-3 teachers trained was calculated by dividing the total number of K-3 teachers who attended at least one day of RF-funded professional development in a traditional setting (i.e., a workshop or conference, away from the school site) by the total number of K-3 teachers.

Counts of K-3 teachers were derived from the state database of school and district personnel, the Profile of Education Personnel (PEP).

Counts of Louisiana K-3 teachers who participated in RF professional development in SY 2006-07 were derived from three sources:

1. Data downloaded from Coursewhere, an on-line professional development registration service administered by Solutionwhere, Inc. and used by the Louisiana Department of Education (LDE) to manage registrations for courses, workshops, and conferences sponsored by LDE staff. Registration data were downloaded for the period July 1, 2006 through June 30, 2007 and consisted primarily of registrations for workshops conducted by regional reading coordinators as well as the June 2007 state Literacy Conference.
2. Data acquired from MIKO, the registration service utilized by the U.S. Department of Education (USDE) to manage registrations for all RF-funded professional development. The LDE utilized MIKO for professional development events conducted by the RF state staff during the period July through November 2006. MIKO was primarily used to manage registrations for state Quarterly Leadership and Coaches meetings.
3. Sign-in sheets from *DIBELS* Trainer of Trainer sessions conducted by Nicholls State University under contract to the LDE.

5.3.4. Professional Development and Technical Assistance Summary

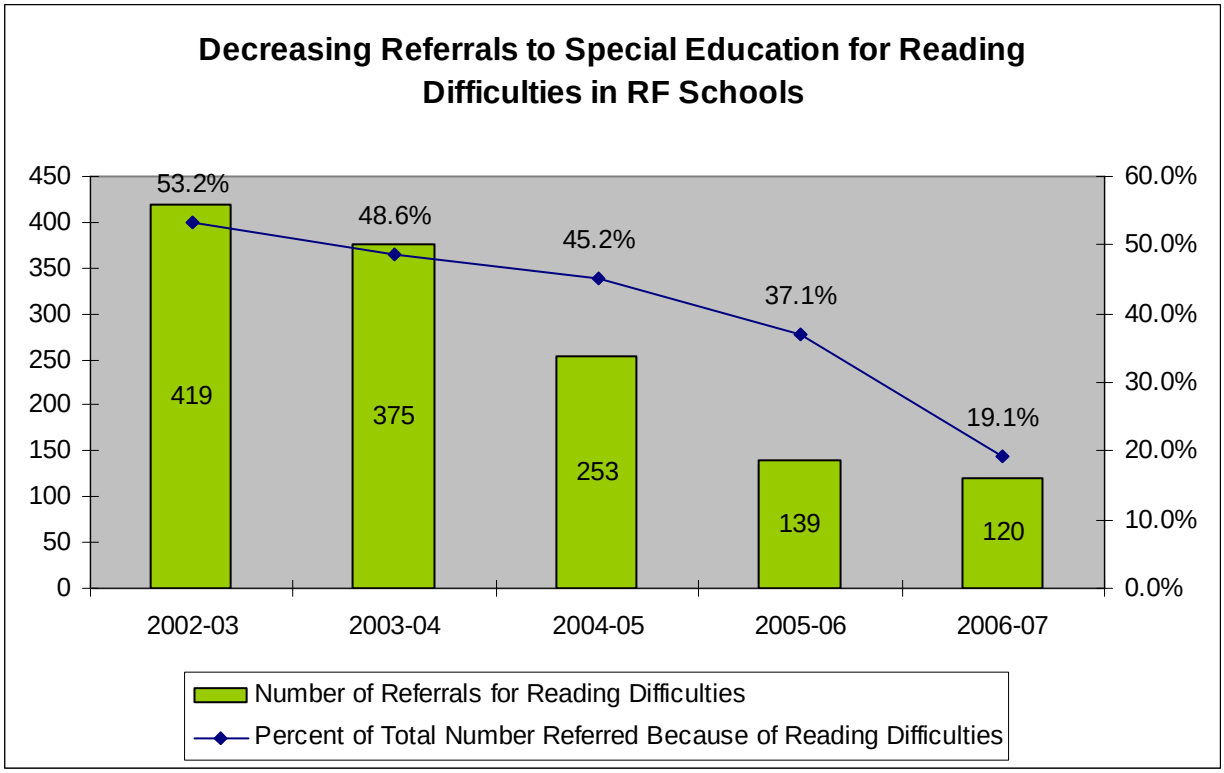
The majority of professional development and technical assistance that was provided to RF personnel clearly happened within the RF schools. While this is a generally desired form of job-embedded professional development, the evaluation lacks information and details of the quantity and quality of this support. The majority of state-level support was provided on the administration of *DIBELS* and the vast majority of *DIBELS* training was provided to non-RF schools and staff. Several opportunities were provided by the LDE through several conferences and mini-seminars.

5.4. The Impact of RF on Special Education Referrals

One of the performance indicators that the US Department of Education is paying close attention to is the referral rate for special education related to reading difficulties. The expectation is that by instituting assessment-driven, tiered instructional model used by RF schools within the classroom, the rate of referral to special education will be reduced. LDE also expects a reduction in referrals to special education to decrease, but have not stated that specific goal in direct relation to the reason being identified as having reading difficulties. The more general goal of LDE is for an overall reduction in referrals, regardless of the reason for the referral.

Figure 33 clearly shows that there has been a steadily decreasing rate of referrals to special education over the life of the RF program. From approximately 50% of referrals being for reading difficulties to 19% since the program began implementation.

Figure 33: Referrals to Special Education in Reading First Schools



There have been other significant initiatives in Louisiana that may also be affecting the referral rate. In particular, there has been an effort to reduce the disproportionate referral of black students to special education. Regardless, the referral rate for reading difficulty has decreased more in RF schools (-34.1%), compared to non-RF schools (-29.9%) [see Table 29 and Table 30].

Table 29 displays the rate of referral to special education for reading difficulties as a percentage of all referrals. Note that the total number of referrals in the table correspond to a changing number of schools. The number of schools in the program change for three different reasons. First, some schools were re-configured which resulted in several schools appearing to leave the program. Second, the hurricanes in 2005 caused 17 RF schools to close for the whole school year. Finally, in 2006-07 there was a new round of funding for the program and several schools and districts were added to the program.

Table 29: Referrals for Reading Difficulties in Reading First Schools 2002-03 through 2006-07

Reading First	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Total Referrals	787	771	559	375	627
Number of Referrals for Reading Difficulties	419	375	253	139	120
Percent of Total Number Referred Because of Reading Difficulties	53.2%	48.6%	45.2%	37.1%	19.1%
Change in Rate		-4.6%	-3.4%	-8.1%	-18.0%
Overall Change from 2002-03					-34.1%

Table 30 displays the referral rate to special education in non-Reading First schools. Again the number of schools underlying the number of referrals changes from year to year for the same reasons these numbers changed for the RF schools.

Table 30: Referrals for Reading Difficulties in non-Reading First Schools 2002-03 through 2006-07

Non-Reading First	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Total Referrals	5310	5225	4198	3968	5621
Number of Referrals for Reading Difficulties	2421	2272	1765	1146	882
Percent of Total Number Referred Because of Reading Difficulties	45.6%	43.5%	42.0%	28.9%	15.7%
Change in Rate		-2.1%	-1.4%	-13.2%	-13.2%
Overall Change from 2002-03					-29.9%

The relative rates are still comparable from year to year because it is based on the relative percentage of referrals to special education based on the total number of referrals.

5.5. The Impact of LA 4 within the Reading First Program

The goal of structured prekindergarten programs is to have all children who participate be ready to start school. The state of Louisiana has implemented one such program that is known as LA 4. The initial pilot year for the LA 4 program was the second half of the 2001-02 school year, and the first full year of implementation was 2002-03. Because of the limited numbers of participants in the pilot year, it is not possible to compare that cohort within the RF program. The LA 4 and RF programs only overlap in some parishes, and only some of the schools in those parishes are also implementing RF. Neither LA 4 nor RF districts were selected in order to facilitate a match between programs, so matching students is limited to those who happen to participate in both.

Table 31: Percent of students on Benchmark for DIBELS Oral Reading Fluency Spring 2007

	Neither LA 4 nor Reading First	*Reading First Only*	*LA 4*	*Reading First + LA 4*
First Grade (n=7,400)	49% (5,092)	52% (1,277)	57% (656)	65% (375)
Second Grade (n=7,182)	38% (4,518)	45% (1,542)	48% (663)	57% (459)
Third Grade (n=7,185)	31% (4,604)	37% (1,763)	38% (504)	46% (314)

5.5.1. Free and Reduced Price Lunch

It has been reported in the evaluation of the LA 4 program that a child's socioeconomic status (SES) is an important factor when looking at the academic impact that the program has on the student. Enrollment in Free or Reduced price Lunch (FRL) programs is used as an indicator of SES. More detailed analyses were conducted on the combined impact of RF and LA 4 by investigating how FRL participation impacts the previous results that were reported in aggregate above. The following three tables present these results for first, second, and third grade students that attended a Reading First (RF) school where there were sufficient numbers of students that participated in one or both of these programs.

Table 32 displays the results for children that were enrolled in first grade during the 2006-07 school year. The results indicate that while RF students appear to benefit regardless of whether they are enrolled in FRL, the differences are statistically significant only for the FRL group.

Table 32: Impact of LA 4 and RF Participation for Free and Reduced Price Lunch in First Grade as Measured by *DIBELS* Oral Reading Fluency - Spring 2007

FRL Code	Pre-K Participation			Benchmark Status ORF 1st End			
				Low Risk	Some Risk	At Risk	Total
FRL	Pre-K	LA 4	Count	213	73	36	322
			% within Pre-K	66.1%	22.7%	11.2%	100.0%
		non-LA 4	Count	562	280	196	1038
			% within Pre-K	54.1%	27.0%	18.9%	100.0%
	Total		Count	775	353	232	1360
			% within Pre-K	57.0%	26.0%	17.1%	100.0%
non-FRL	Pre-K	LA 4	Count	40	7	6	53
			% within Pre-K	75.5%	13.2%	11.3%	100.0%
		non-LA 4	Count	150	40	49	239
			% within Pre-K	62.8%	16.7%	20.5%	100.0%
	Total		Count	190	47	55	292
			% within Pre-K	65.1%	16.1%	18.8%	100.0%

Chi-Square Tests

FRLCode FRL Code		Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
FRL	Pearson Chi-Square	16.518(a)	2	.000
	Likelihood Ratio	17.207	2	.000
	N of Valid Cases	1360		
non-FRL	Pearson Chi-Square	3.354(b)	2	.187
	Likelihood Ratio	3.588	2	.166
	N of Valid Cases	292		

a 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 54.93.
b 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 8.53.

Table 33 displays the results for children that were enrolled in second grade during the 2006-07 school year. The results indicate that while RF students appear to benefit regardless of whether they are enrolled in FRL, the differences are statistically significant only for the FRL group.

Table 33: Impact of LA 4 and RF Participation for Free and Reduced Price Lunch in Second Grade as Measured by *DIBELS* Oral Reading Fluency - Spring 2007

FRL Code	Pre-K Participation			Benchmark Status ORF 2nd End			
				Low Risk	Some Risk	At Risk	Total
FRL	Pre-K	LA 4	Count	229	88	82	399
			% within Pre-K	57.4%	22.1%	20.6%	100.0%
		non-LA 4	Count	562	299	431	1292
			% within Pre-K	43.5%	23.1%	33.4%	100.0%
	Total		Count	791	387	513	1691

FRL Code	Pre-K Participation			Benchmark Status ORF 2nd End			
				Low Risk	Some Risk	At Risk	Total
			% within Pre-K	46.8%	22.9%	30.3%	100.0%
non-FRL	Pre-K	LA 4	Count	32	11	17	60
			% within Pre-K	53.3%	18.3%	28.3%	100.0%
		non-LA 4	Count	136	49	65	250
			% within Pre-K	54.4%	19.6%	26.0%	100.0%
	Total		Count	168	60	82	310
			% within Pre-K	54.2%	19.4%	26.5%	100.0%

Chi-Square Tests

FRL Code		Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
FRL	Pearson Chi-Square	29.224(a)	2	.000
	Likelihood Ratio	30.147	2	.000
	N of Valid Cases	1691		
non-FRL	Pearson Chi-Square	.150(b)	2	.928
	Likelihood Ratio	.149	2	.928
	N of Valid Cases	310		

a 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 91.31.
b 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 11.61.

Table 34 displays the results for children that were enrolled in third grade during the 2006-07 school year. The results indicate that while RF students appear to benefit regardless of whether they are enrolled in FRL, the differences are statistically significant only for the FRL group.

Table 34: Impact of LA 4 and RF Participation for Free and Reduced Price Lunch in Third Grade as Measured by *DIBELS* Oral Reading Fluency - Spring 2007

FRL Code	Pre-K Participation			Benchmark Status ORF 3rd End			
				Low Risk	Some Risk	At Risk	Total
FRL	Pre-K	LA 4	Count	123	109	39	271
			% within Pre-K	45.4%	40.2%	14.4%	100.0%
		non-LA 4	Count	515	553	406	1474
			% within Pre-K	34.9%	37.5%	27.5%	100.0%
	Total		Count	638	662	445	1745
			% within Pre-K	36.6%	37.9%	25.5%	100.0%
non-FRL	Pre-K	LA 4	Count	22	15	6	43
			% within Pre-K	51.2%	34.9%	14.0%	100.0%
		non-LA 4	Count	145	77	67	289
			% within Pre-K	50.2%	26.6%	23.2%	100.0%
	Total		Count	167	92	73	332
			% within Pre-K	50.3%	27.7%	22.0%	100.0%

Chi-Square Tests

FRL Code	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)

FRL Code		Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
FRL	Pearson Chi-Square	22.806(a)	2	.000
	Likelihood Ratio	24.812	2	.000
	N of Valid Cases	1745		
non-FRL	Pearson Chi-Square	2.375(b)	2	.305
	Likelihood Ratio	2.502	2	.286
	N of Valid Cases	332		

a 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 69.11.
b 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 9.45.

5.5.2. LA 4 and RF Summary

The results of the analysis of the combined impacts along with the previous results presented in this report have a number of interesting implications. First, each of the programs has previously been shown to have an important and significant impact on participants' academics outcomes. The analyses presented in this section indicate that there is a substantial impact for students that participate in both programs. Controlling for the SES of students indicates that there is a significantly positive effect for low SES students. While there appears to be a positive impact for higher SES students, the results of that analysis indicate the differences are not statistically significant. More analysis after the fourth year (SY 2007-08) of RF implementation is recommended in order to further investigate the potentially substantial benefits of participation in both high-quality pre-kindergarten programs like LA 4 and in Reading First.

6. Interpretations and Conclusions

The preceding sections of this evaluation report contain many different analyses, results, and outcomes of the RF program in Louisiana. Within this section, we attempt to consolidate, interpret, and reach what conclusions are possible. We begin by summarizing the major findings with particular attention to how these findings relate to the answers to the evaluation questions. We then proceed to reach several conclusions about the program and follow this section with a final section including several recommendations.

6.6. Summary of Major Findings

Major findings in this report relate to student achievement (including subgroups), professional development activities, the relationship of RF to the Louisiana accountability system, perceptions of participating staff regarding the efficacy of the RF program, the impact of RF on special education, and the relationship of pre-kindergarten programs to student performance within the RF program.

Student achievement results show that there is a consistent trend toward improved reading performance as measured by *DIBELS* in all grades across the years. Based on the results from schools that have participated in the program for all three years that it has been implemented; results improved from 75% to 82% in kindergarten, from 49% to 60% in first grade, from 37% to 50% in second grade, and from 34% to 47% in third grade. In many instances historically underachieving subgroups narrowed performance gaps as was the case related to black students compared to white students and students of poverty as indicated by their enrollment status in free or reduced price lunch programs.

While the analysis of performance showed steady growth, the evaluation of the effectiveness of the RF program indicated that there is still room for improvement. Specifically in the "reading grades" (1st, 2nd, and 3rd), the effectiveness of instruction was shown to be relatively weak both by the effectiveness index and by the summary results of the *DIBELS* effectiveness worksheets. Second grade results are particularly interesting as the effectiveness has been negative across the schools year (i.e., from fall to spring), but positive across years in that there are more second grade students on benchmark at the end of the year than there were second grade students in the previous year. Also, the negative effectiveness was very common, but it was not universal; there were 13 schools that had non-negative effectiveness indices in second grade. Other grades show generally positive results as measured by the effectiveness index and show a need for additional support as measured by the effectiveness worksheets, but, once again, there are exceptions to these general trends. There are several schools in each grade which appear to have substantially more positive results than others. Clearly, this indicates two things: 1) the program appears to be positively affecting reading assessment scores, and 2) there is still room for improvement.

DIBELS results of students in Louisiana yield high probability relationships with the Louisiana accountability system, specifically related to third grade *i*LEAP ELA results. Over 87% of students who scored in the low risk range of *DIBELS* Oral Reading Fluency, score basic and above on the third grade *i*LEAP. The complementary analysis shows that 95% of the students who score in the mastery range on *i*LEAP and 81% of the students that score in the advanced range, also score in the low risk range on *DIBELS* ORF. These results imply that improvements that appear in the RF schools as measured by *DIBELS*, should also have an effect on the third grade *i*LEAP ELA results.

The majority of professional development and technical assistance that was provided to RF personnel clearly happened within the RF schools. While this is a generally desired form of job-embedded professional development, the evaluation lacks information and details of the quantity and quality of this support. The majority of state-level support was provided on the administration of *DIBELS* and the vast majority of *DIBELS* training was provided to non-RF schools and staff. Several opportunities were provided by the LDE through several conferences and mini-seminars.

The SWOT results from 2006-07 in conjunction with previous years' results lead to several observations. First, the program and materials acquired for the program are widely seen as strengths and are valued by RF personnel at all levels. While there is some concern that the program is too restrictive, this view is only mentioned in a small percentage of respondents. The professional development and technical assistance has also been valued by RF personnel, but there is a desire for more. The most important weakness that is identified is a lack of individualized and differentiated instruction. While not specifically linked in the SWOT responses, this weakness is clearly tied to professional development and technical assistance necessary for teachers to understand their programs, the assessment data, their core program, and the interventions that are available which provide the framework within which RF teachers must operate. Clearly, the most common threat to the program was perceived to be continued funding and the greatest opportunities were related to professional development that allow staff to grow their skill sets for application in their current and future positions.

An analysis of the referrals to special education in RF schools over the life of the program demonstrates a distinct decrease in referrals to special education for reading difficulties. Prior to implementation of RF in Louisiana, 53% of the referrals in grades kindergarten through third were for reading difficulty. In the 2006-7 school year, only 19% of the referrals in special education were for that reason. While there has been a decrease in reading difficulty referrals in non-RF schools in Louisiana, the decrease in RF schools was greater – 34% decrease in RF compared to a 29% decrease in non-RF.

Finally, there appears to be an important relationship between participation in Reading First and LA 4. In an analysis of districts that have both programs, it appears that three years of reading first participation (in first through third grade) have roughly the same impact of one year of participation in the LA 4 program. It is interesting to note that LA 4 consists of one year of six hours of class, while RF is roughly three years of two hours of instruction; this yields a roughly equivalent dose of instruction. Most compelling is the comparison of children that participated in both LA 4 and RF. These children substantially outperformed other children that had only one or neither of these programs, having about 8% more students on benchmark.

6.7. Conclusions

Clearly, the RF program continues to show a growth in the reading abilities of the students in participating schools when results are viewed from year to year; each year shows that a greater percentage of students are achieving benchmark as measured by *DIBELS*. RF personnel find the program to be useful and the materials valuable. Growth over the last three years of implementation show that while the overall goal of 95% of third grade students achieving grade level reading skills may not be achieved by the NCLB goal year of 2014, substantial progress toward that goal will be achieved if current growth trends continue.

While continued growth is in no way guaranteed, the evaluation also demonstrates that there are clearly some areas where additional improvement is possible. In particular, there appears to be an opportunity for improvement as it relates to individualized and differentiated instruction. The tiered approach to reading provides an organizational structure in which differentiated instruction can occur; there is also a need for differentiated instruction *within* each of the tiers. This within-tier differentiation is key to continued growth within the program.

7. Recommendations

This section will present the recommendations based on the major findings, conclusions, and interpretations of the evaluation of the Louisiana Reading First program for 2006-07. At the time of this report, the LDE is currently working toward implementing many of these recommendations. The Picard Center regularly meets with the LDE on the ongoing status of the evaluation and the RF program itself so that the LDE can respond to the evaluative information in a timely manner.

7.1. Differentiate Professional Development to Teacher Needs

The Picard Center evaluation of instructional effectiveness clearly indicates that Reading First schools need additional support to provide individualized, differentiated instruction in the classroom, and recommends that Reading First schools redouble their efforts to target professional development in literacy instruction to the specific needs of their faculty members so

that teachers can in turn better differentiate instruction to meet student needs. The Reading First program should support schools in making data-driven decisions when planning professional development. The piloting of the Content Knowledge Survey for teachers and coaches is a first step in assessing teacher knowledge in order to target statewide and regional professional development.

7.2. Conduct Data Summits Annually

Best practices for literacy instruction indicate that benchmark and progress monitoring assessment results should be used to inform instructional decisions. Data summits conducted in SY 2006-07 provided Reading First personnel with a structured process for analyzing and using data to plan instruction at the school and classroom levels. If held on an ongoing basis, these summits could serve as a centering point for virtually all of the preceding recommendations, where needs can be reviewed, professional development planned, and standardized meetings can be conducted in the schools, districts, and regions.

7.3. Outsource Professional Development

Over the course of Reading First in Louisiana, the LDE has focused its attention on providing professional development for Reading First coaches and administrators, with the expectation that regional coordinators would help coaches extend professional development to their faculties through job-embedded learning. Last year the coordinators expended far more time delivering *DIBELS* assessor training than supporting school-based professional development. The Center recommends the LDE continue to outsource the Training of Trainers model (TOT) with local school systems so that these systems have their own local trainers, knowledgeable about *DIBELS* assessment. This will allow regional coordinators to provide more targeted and substantial support to Reading First schools.

7.4. Provide a Consistent Framework for Professional Development

Professional development is crucial to effective Reading First program implementation, and there is compelling research that professional development is most effective when it is *job-embedded.* The Picard Center recommends that the LDE establish an annual, recurring calendar of topics to be covered in regional, district, and school level meetings to help provide a consistent framework for improvement. It is the intent of the Center to provide support to the LDE so that they can provide a guide for the schools to cover topics relevant to schools and districts. These standardized topics will provide a repeatable process within the program and each school to address student performance and the issues that effect instruction. The LDE has begun the process of developing Louisiana Literacy Modules which will be utilized for offering statewide professional development in the essential components of literacy instruction.

7.5. Create Opportunities for Regional Staff to Plan Collaboratively

The LDE should consider scheduling time on a regular basis when regional coordinators can meet as a group to collaboratively develop a bank of professional development activities and materials that focus on literacy and program implementation to ensure consistency in Reading First implementation. This will provide more opportunity for regional coordinators to mentor and

support each other while developing plans to provide technical assistance to Reading First schools in such areas as scheduling faculty study groups and planning topics to be addressed.

Appendix: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats

A. Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats

A.1. Overview

The SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) tool was chosen for its historical significance (basic straightforward model) as a decision-making aid as new programs are being planned and implemented. This subjective data gathering technique helps in planning, developing strategies, and in supporting programs.

In January of 2007, each administrator, reading coach, interventionist, and K-3rd grade and special education teacher involved in the 88 schools in the 21 districts in Cohort I, and 23 schools in the 4 districts in Cohort II, (within the RF program) was asked to complete a SWOT analysis survey to assess the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of the RF program from their own perspective. The evaluation activities assess the strengths of the program and identify the areas in need of additional development. This process serves as a feedback mechanism for program planning and the provision of technical assistance to ensure continuous quality improvement.

Beneath the four categorical variables which define SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats), ninety-three response factors were identified and classified under the sub-categorical variables of instruction, assessment, professional development, and funding. SWOT is characterized by the strengths (positive attributes currently present in RF); weaknesses (local issues or characteristics that limit the progress of RF and need improvement); opportunities (areas that could be developed by eliminating the weakness); and threats (trends, both local and universal, that threaten Reading First's future).

A.2. Purpose

In March of 2003 Louisiana was awarded roughly $19.2 million, and is expected to receive approximately $124.7 million over the six-year period for its Reading First grant. In the fall of 2004, the Louisiana Department of Education implemented the model, which is known as its "pilot year". During this period of time, numerous planning and implementing activities took place to establish the infrastructure of people, processes, and resources necessary to support the RF program. This process is ongoing and the SWOT tool provides the LDE with administrators, reading coaches, interventionists, K-3rd and special education teachers' perceptions of the yearly progress, as well as a decision-making aid, as the Reading First program is planned and implemented in order to establish sustainability by the end of the six year period.

A.3. Key Findings

The quantitative results of this three year study (which was founded based on the SWOT survey responses of 1,976 administrators, reading coaches, interventionists, and K-3rd and special education teachers) provided evidence that the RF program is continuing to be implemented as well as the administration of professional components of RF. The responses from the staff in the 111 schools validated their 2005-06 reports, identifying

increased program knowledge and practice responding that consistency of the core program with its spiraling curriculum (forming a foundation through the repetition of skills from each level to the next for successful learning) throughout the grade levels, taught with fidelity, as one of the greatest strengths of the RF program.

In 2005-06, respondents also identified that interventions taught faithfully in small groups of 3 to 5 students is one of the greatest strengths. A common strength from 2004-05 results was the materials and resources provided for the core program. Respondents in both 2005-06 and 2006-07 perceived strengths as opportunities, such as state-level professional development. Clarification of opportunities was communicated to data summit participants. The extent to which the professional development components of RF have been continuously implemented (specifically at the school level) and the extent of implementation of technical support from the state, regional, and the district level, could have been factors in identifying the following weaknesses. Weaknesses in 2004-05 were program pacing (loss of instruction time as teachers strived to gain more knowledge of the core program) and the lack of materials and/or inadequate/quality of materials (based on student needs). In 2005-06 and 2006-07, common weaknesses were as follows: the core program not being individualized for each child, the materials were either too challenging for at-risk students or not challenging enough for benchmark students, and a lack of interventionists to assist in small groups within the classroom and/or tier interventions, either due to large numbers of intervention students or absenteeism of interventionists (no substitutes hired). Discontinuation of funding for the hiring/retention of reading coaches, content leaders and interventionists, and the replenishing of materials continue to be noted threats since the inception of the program.

Based on three years of SWOT results, areas in need of improvement (which are vital to the Reading First program) within the state are as follows: the core program and intervention instruction, scheduling (interventions, collaborative planning, and progress monitoring), funding, sharing of available resources, and continuous professional development. Core programs (tier I instruction) need to be standardized by supplementing component areas of weakness with scientifically based reading research strategies, and materials appropriate at the individual students' level of difficulty. Within tier II and tier III, successful scheduling, ideas and resources for interventions, and collaborative planning (interventionists and teachers), utilize systematic and explicit data-based instruction with appropriate supplemental materials based on *DIBELS* progress monitoring and other assessment tools. Attention should be focused on the quality of the materials used, which should complement, improve upon, and/or extend the classroom reading lessons. Progress monitoring should occur more frequently and include benchmark students. Continuous professional development should be provided from the state, regional, and district level on SBRR strategies (based on the assessed needs of the RF instructional staff), as well as joint funding and the sharing of available resources within districts, in order to build sustainability.

Table 1: 2005-06 SWOT Analysis Results (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) - Cohort I

Strengths	Weaknesses
Adequate materials (enough materials for core instruction)	Inappropriate and/or lack of materials
Core program (scientifically based reading research strategies)	Not meeting student needs
Tier III interventions (small groups; more one-to-one instruction based on student needs)	Inadequate quantity/quality of staff
Resourceful (reading coaches, content leaders, interventionists)	Tier model (restrictive)
Small group instruction	*DIBELS* screener
Opportunities	**Threats**
Respondents perceived strengths as opportunities, such as state-level professional development	Discontinuation funding (loss of reading coaches and interventionists)

Table 2: 2005-06 SWOT Analysis Results (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) – Cohort II

Strengths	Weaknesses
Core program (scientifically based research strategies)	Inappropriate and/or lack of materials
Resourceful (reading coaches, content leaders, and interventionists)	Lack of professional development
Tier III interventions (small groups; more one-to-one instruction based on student needs)	Inadequate quantity/quality of staff
Adequate materials	Not meeting student needs
Small group instruction	Tier model (restrictive)
Opportunities	**Threats**
Respondents perceived strengths as opportunities, such as state-level professional development	Discontinuation of funding (loss of reading coaches and interventionists)

A.4. SWOT Factors

Strengths - Cohort I

A review of the overall findings of respondents revealed the following information concerning the strengths of the RF program from Cohort I participants. Thirty percent of the 1,632 total respondents mentioned the adequacy of materials (having enough materials for core instruction) as the greatest strength. Another strength noted is the core program that is structured, scripted, user friendly, and contains the five components

taught consistently with its spiraling curriculums (forming a foundation through the repetition of skills from each level to the next, providing successful learning at 25% response rate with 405 responses. Tier III interventions in small groups; more one to one instruction with students working on the areas of weakness using scientifically based reading research strategies delivered by an interventionist motivates student learning was third with 399 responses at the response rate of 24%. Resourceful reading coach/content leader/interventionist to monitor, teach, gather data and use data to re-teach or to find another approach was fourth with 317 responses at the response rate of 19%. Small group differentiated instruction within the classroom using scientifically based reading research strategies followed at a 12% response rate with 196 responses.

Strengths - Cohort II

A review of the overall findings of 344 respondents revealed the following information concerning the strengths of the RF program from Cohort II respondents. Fifty-two percent of the 178 total respondents mentioned the core program that is structured, scripted, user friendly, containing the five components taught consistently with its spiraling curriculums forming a foundation through the repetition of skills from each level to the next, providing successful learning as the greatest strength. This was followed by resourceful reading coach/content leader/interventionist to monitor, teach, gather data and use data to re-teach or to find another approach at 23% response rate with 80 responses. Tier III interventions in small groups; more one to one instruction with students working on the areas of weakness using scientifically based reading research strategies delivered by an interventionist motivates student learning was third with 53 responses at the response rate of 15%. Adequacy of materials having enough materials for core instruction was fourth with 51 responses at the response rate of 15%. Small group differentiated instruction within the classroom using scientifically based reading research strategies followed at a 10% response rate with 33 responses.

Weaknesses – Cohort I

The following information was concluded from 1632 Cohort I respondents concerning the weaknesses of the RF program after a review of the overall findings. Twenty-six percent of the 1632 total respondents identified the lack of and/or inadequacy of core and intervention materials to meet the needs of every student as the greatest weakness. This was followed by not meeting student needs (large number of students needing intervention and continued support into fourth grade) with 163 responses at a 10% response rate. Inadequate quantity/quality of staff (a lack of trained interventionists needed to assist in small groups within the classroom and/or tier interventions and knowledgeable coaching staff at the local and regional levels) was third with 144 responses or 9% response rate. Also, noted was the amount of time benchmark students were expected to work independently due to program emphasis on student remediation. The tier model being restrictive; no teachable moments or the use of different materials was fourth with 136 responses or 8% response rate. *DIBELS* screener with emphasis being placed on fluency speed rather than comprehension followed with 64 responses at a 4% response rate.

Weaknesses – Cohort II

The following information was concluded from 344 Cohort II respondents concerning the weaknesses of the RF program after a review of the overall findings. Forty-three percent of the 344 total respondents identified the lack of and/or inadequacy of core and intervention materials to meet the needs of every student as the greatest weakness. This was followed by professional development; holding core training prior to the start of the school year and continuous job–embedded with 57 responses or 17% response rate. Inadequate quantity/quality of staff (a lack of trained interventionists needed to assist in small groups within the classroom and/or tier interventions and knowledgeable coaching staff at the local and regional levels) was third with 46 responses or 13% response rate. Not meeting student needs (large number of students needing intervention and continued support into fourth grade) was fourth with 26 responses at 8% response rate. Also, noted was the amount of time benchmark students were expected to work independently due to program emphasis on student remediation. The tier model being restrictive; no teachable moments or the use of different materials followed with 18 responses or 5% response rate.

Opportunities

A review of the findings revealed the following information concerning future opportunities of the RF program. Respondents perceived strengths as opportunities; such as state level professional development. Clarification of opportunities was communicated to data summit participants, such as a joint effort between the school and public library.

Threats

A review of the findings revealed the following information concerning future threats of the RF program. Discontinuation of funding (loss of interventionists and reading coaches) was pointed out as a threat. As in other school scenarios, respondents perceived weaknesses as threats, such as inadequate quantity/quality of staff to implement the program effectively.

A.5. Conclusions

Both the RF program and the administration of professional components of RF have been implemented, as evidenced by the quantitative results of this third year study founded on the SWOT survey responses of 1,976 administrators, reading coaches, interventionist, and K-3rd and special education teachers. Statewide, 30% or 583 respondents responded that the core five component program (spiraling curriculums forming a foundation through the repetition of skills) as well as 20% or 397 respondents reported that having resourceful reading coaches/content leaders and interventionists to monitor, teach, to gather data and use data to re-teach or to find another approach were the greatest strengths. In applying the SWOT analysis it is necessary to minimize or avoid both weaknesses and threats. Weaknesses should be looked at in order to convert them into strengths. Likewise, threats should be converted into opportunities. The major weakness seen by 29% or 573 respondents was the inappropriate and /or lack of instructional materials (not individualized; either too challenging for at-risk or not challenging enough for benchmark students within the core and more suitable materials for interventions). Discontinuation of program funding was the only recognizable threat reported by 19% or

372 respondents. The extent to which the professional development components of RF have been implemented specifically at the school level and the extent of implementation; technical support from the state, regional, and district level could be factors in the identifying the documented weaknesses or threats of the RF program.

A.6. Recommendations

Leadership

- LDE continue to designate a RF Office with ample contact staff available for answering and resolving questions and/or concerns.
- LDE provide regular and consistent guidance in administering RF by conducting regular updates via the internet, video conferences, and meetings with specific groups such as district coaches, principals, and schools using the same core programs.
- Agenda for meetings reflect the needs of school personnel. Exemplary practices at the school and classroom levels in Louisiana should be shared.

Role of RF Regional Coordinators

- A network of support among coordinators continues to be created and easy access to LDE administrators be provided.
- LDE continue to consider how to support and assist regional coordinators with several districts and schools to avoid burnout/turnover
-

Role of Superintendents, Title I, and Special Educator Coordinators

- LDE continue to provide support for joint funding and sharing of available resources within the districts to build sustainability for the program

Role of District Coach

- LDE continue to address communication issues that arise for an intermediary trying to serve two levels of RF (LDE and school).
- LDE consider how to support and assist district coaches with several RF schools (as compared to support for a district with one RF school).

Role of School Coaches/Content Leaders//Interventionists

- LDE continue to offer training in providing guidance and feedback to peers.
- Networks of support continue across the districts and the state.
- School coaches/content leaders/interventionists continue to attend the National RF Conference to widen the level of support and hear what other states are doing regarding implementation.

Role of Principal

- A network of support among principals continues to be created with other RF principals addressing areas of difficulty, such as scheduling.
- Principals continue to receive assistance with observing and monitoring classroom implementation of RF and core reading programs.

- Principals meet and share information with other Louisiana principals who are successful in leading a RF school.
- Principals use shared-decision-making with staff to determine effective intervention and celebration/acknowledgement of students' work.

Role of Teacher

- Continuation of professional development including instruction on designing and managing literacy centers, aligning the core program with the five SBRR components and structuring the 90 minute block in order avoid teacher burnout/turnover.
- An instructional planning tool (lesson plan template) created for use to identify the RF components covered during instruction to clarify teacher expectations.
- Teachers be supported in their professional judgment when it comes to meeting the expectations of RF
- Teachers identify effective instruction that engages students in literacy learning.

Overview of Survey Findings

In applying the SWOT analysis it necessary to minimize or avoid both weaknesses and threats. Weaknesses should be looked at in order to convert them into strengths. Likewise, threats should be converted into opportunity. The two charts report the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats findings for 2006-07 from the respondents' prospectus.

Participants

In January of 2007 a SWOT analysis was conducted with administrators, reading coaches, interventionists, K-3rd teachers and special education teachers involved in the 88 schools in the 21 districts in Cohort I and 23 schools in the 4 districts in Cohort II within the RF program which yielded 1976 or approximately 80% return rate. The following chart depicts the most significant strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats by respondent types.

Table 3: SWOT RF Role Responses

STRENGTHS	Admin.	Reading Coach	Intervent.	K	1st	2nd	3rd	Sp. Ed.	Unident.
N=1976	N=121	N=126	N=316	302	333	259	282	N= 138	99
Tier III interventions	✓	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	
Adequate materials	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Core program	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Resourceful reading coach and/or school content leader	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Differentiated Instruction (small group)		√	√	√		√	√	√	√

STRENGTHS	Admin.	Reading Coach	Intervent.	K	1st	2nd	3rd	Sp. Ed.	Unident.
N=1976	N=121	N=126	N=316	302	333	259	282	N= 138	99
On-going professional development	√	√							
Continuous student growth				√		√			
Phonemic awareness and phonics knowledge				√	√				
Continuous progress monitoring								√	√
WEAKNESSES	**Administrator**	**Reading Coach**	**Interventionists**	**K**	**1st**	**2nd**	**3rd**	**Sp. Ed.**	**Unident.**
N=2006	**N=121**	**N=126**	**N=316**	**302**	**333**	**259**	**282**	**N= 138**	**99**
DIBELS screener			√	√	√			√	
Inappropriate and/or lack of materials	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Tiered model (restrictive)				√	√	√	√		
Tiered model (time consuming)	√			√			√	√	
Teacher/Interventionist absences/turnovers		√							
Tier model (pacing)	√		√		√				√
Fidelity to model	√	√							
Time (planning and collaboration)			√			√			
Professional development	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	
Inadequate quantity/quality of staff	√	√	√		√	√	√		
Scheduling of interventions									√
Time (planning and preparation)			√		√				
Student management									√
Not meeting student needs			√	√	√	√	√		√
Tier model (lack of grammar, writing, comprehension				√	√				
Progress monitoring (too much)		√					√		
OPPORTUNITES	**Administrator**	**Reading Coach**	**Interventionists**	**K**	**1st**	**2nd**	**3rd**	**Sp. Ed.**	**Unident.**
N=2006	**N=121**	**N=126**	**N=316**	**302**	**333**	**259**	**282**	**N= 138**	**N=99**
Strengths perceived as opportunities	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	

STRENGTHS	Admin.	Reading Coach	Intervent.	K	1st	2nd	3rd	Sp. Ed.	Unident.
N=1976	N=121	N=126	N=316	302	333	259	282	N= 138	99
THREATS	Administrator	Reading Coach	Interventionists	K	1st	2nd	3rd	Sp. Ed.	Unident.
N=2006	N=121	N=126	N=316	302	333	259	282	N= 138	N=99
Funding (loss of reading coach & interventionists)	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√

A.7. Findings by Reading First Role

The SWOT state level reported results from administrators, reading coaches, interventionists, K-3rd grade teachers, and other or unidentified personnel prospectus were varied, honest, and encouraging, and can be useful for continued program implementation and development. These results not only can be used internally within a school district, but they also are helpful comments for the State Department of Education as plans for continued program years are developed. A summary of these results is presented in the following tables by roles and in overall categorical graphs.

Table 4: -07 SWOT Analysis Results from 25 Administrators in Cohort 1 School

Strengths	Weaknesses
Resourceful (reading coaches, content leaders, interventionists)	Lack of professional development
Adequate materials	Inadequate quantity/quality of staff
Core program (SBRR)	Inappropriate and/or lack of materials
Professional development (job-embedded)	Tier model (time consuming)
Tier III interventions (small groups)	Program infidelity (teachers losing instructional time)
Opportunities	**Threats**
Respondents perceived strengths as opportunities, such as state-level professional development	Discontinuation of program funding

A.7.1. Administrators – Cohort I

Strengths

Administrators indicated that having resourceful reading coaches, school content leaders, and trained interventionists to monitor, gather and use data to re-teach or to find another approach is the most frequently occurring strength. Also identified as a strength is the adequacy of instructional materials for teachers and interventionists. The core program that is structured, scripted, user friendly, and contains the five components taught consistently with its spiraling curriculums (forming a foundation through the repetition of skills from each level to the next) was reported as an added strength. Additionally, job-embedded professional development provided by reading coaches, content leaders, and

interventionists, and tier III pull-out interventions in small groups (more individualized) were noted strengths.

Opportunities

A review of the findings revealed the following information concerning future opportunities of the RF program. Respondents perceived strengths as opportunities; such as state level professional development. Clarification of opportunities was communicated to data summit participants; such as a joint effort between the school and the public library.

Weaknesses

The most frequently occurring weakness is the lack of professional development (the need for training new teachers, interventionists and substitutes, and ongoing job-related education of existing staff). Other weaknesses are inadequate quantity/quality of staff to implement the program effectively, the need for more interventionists (due to the large number of tier II and tier III students), and the concern for challenging benchmark students (due to program emphasis on lower achieving students). Also, identified as a weakness by administrators is the lack and/or inadequacy of core and intervention materials necessary to meet the needs of every student; the material is too challenging for at-risk students or not challenging enough for benchmark students, there are too many or too few skill tests, and lesson plans within the manual are too lengthy or too short in some of the five components such as writing and grammar. The tiered model being time consuming and insufficient time for teachers to instruct and/or get students interested in the other content areas (i.e. science and social studies) are added weaknesses. Finally, program infidelity (teachers losing instructional time and not working toward a common goal, due to a lack of RF knowledge/understanding, training, or "buy-in" attitude) is also a noted weakness.

Table 5: 2006-07 SWOT Analysis Results from 25 Administrators in Cohort 2 Schools

Strengths	**Weaknesses**
Core program (SBRR)	Inappropriate and/or lack of materials
Resourceful (reading coaches, content leaders, interventionists)	Lack of professional development
Adequate materials	Program infidelity
Professional development	Program pacing
Tier III interventions (small groups)	Inadequate quantity/quality of staff
Opportunities	**Threats**
Respondents perceived strengths as opportunities, such as state-level professional development	Discontinuation of program funding

Threats

A review of the findings revealed the following information concerning future threats of the RF program. Discontinuation of funding, and a loss of interventionists and reading coaches were pointed out as threats. As in other school scenarios, respondents perceived

weaknesses as threats, such as inadequate quantity/quality of staff to implement the program effectively.

A.7.2. Administrators – Cohort II

Strengths

Cohort II administrators indicated that the core program that is structured, scripted, user friendly, and contains the five components taught consistently with its spiraling curriculums (forming a foundation through the repetition of skills from each level to the next) is the most frequently occurring strength. Like cohort I administrators and reading coaches, cohort II administrators reported that 1) the adequacy of instructional materials for teachers and interventionists, 2) resourceful reading coaches, school content leaders, and trained interventionists to monitor, gather and use data to re-teach or to find another approach providing successful learning; 3) job-embedded professional development provided by reading coaches, content leaders, and interventionists; and 4) tier III pull-out interventions in small groups (more individualized) are strengths.

Opportunities

A review of the findings revealed the following information concerning future opportunities of the RF program. Respondents perceived strengths as opportunities; such as state level professional development. Clarification of opportunities was communicated to data summit participants; such as a joint effort between the school and public library.

Weaknesses

Agreeing with cohort I personnel (interventionists, kindergarten, second, third grade, and special education teachers as well as unidentified individuals), cohort II administrators indicated that the most frequently occurring weakness is the lack and/or inadequacy of core and intervention materials that are unable to meet the needs of every student; the material is too challenging for at-risk students or not challenging enough for benchmark students, there are too many or too few skill tests, and lesson plans within the manual are too lengthy or too short in some of the five components. Like cohort I administrators, reading coaches, kindergarten teachers and unidentified individuals, cohort II administrators reported that the lack of professional development (the training of new teachers, interventionists, and substitutes, and ongoing job-related education of existing staff) is an additional weakness. Program infidelity (teachers losing instructional time and not working toward a common goal, due to a lack of RF knowledge/understanding, training, or "buy-in" attitude) was cited as a weakness by cohort I administrators and reading coaches, as well as cohort II administrators. Core program pacing (taking too much time one day and not enough time on another day to complete instruction) is a weakness noted by cohort I second grade teachers and cohort II administrators. Cohort II administrators agree with cohort I personnel (administrators, reading coaches, interventionists, kindergarten, first, second, third grade, and special education teachers as well as unidentified individuals), indicating that the inadequate quantity/quality of staff to implement the program effectively, the need for more interventionists (due to the large

number of tier II and tier III students), and the concern for challenging benchmark students (due to program emphasis on lower achieving students) are added weaknesses.

Threats

A review of the findings revealed the following information concerning future threats of the RF program. Discontinuation of funding (loss of Interventionists and Reading Coaches) was pointed out as a threat. As in other school scenarios, respondents perceived weaknesses as threats; such as inadequate quantity/quality of staff to implement the program effectively.

A.7.3. Reading Coaches Cohort I

Table 6: 2006-2007 SWOT Analysis Results from 105 Reading Coaches in Cohort I Schools

Strengths	**Weaknesses**
Professional development (job-embedded)	Lack of professional development
Resourceful (reading coaches, content leaders, interventionists)	Inadequate quantity/quality of staff
Tier III interventions (small groups)	Program infidelity
Adequate materials	Inappropriate and/or lack of materials
Core program (SBRR)	Funding
Opportunities	**Threats**
Respondents perceived strengths as opportunities, such as state-level professional development	Discontinuation of program funding

Strengths

Reading coaches identified job-embedded professional development, provided by reading coaches, content leaders, and interventionists, as the most frequently occurring strength. Agreeing with administrators, reading coaches asserted that having 1) resourceful reading coaches, school content leaders, and trained interventionists to monitor, gather and use data to re-teach or to find another approach; 2) tier III pull out interventions in small groups (more individualized), 3) adequate instructional materials for teachers and interventionists, and 4) the core program that is structured, scripted, user friendly, and contains the five components taught consistently with its spiraling curriculum (forming a foundation through the repetition of skills from each level to the next) are strengths.

Opportunities

A review of the findings revealed the following information concerning future opportunities of the RF program. Respondents perceived strengths as opportunities, such as state-level professional development. Clarification of opportunities was communicated to data summit participants, such as a joint effort between the school and the public library.

Weaknesses

Reading coaches echoed administrators, reporting that the most frequently occurring weakness is the lack of professional development (the training of new teachers, interventionists and substitutes, and ongoing job-related education of existing staff). Also included as weaknesses are inadequate quantity/quality of staff to implement the program effectively, the need for more interventionists (due to the large number of tier II and tier III students), and the concern for challenging benchmark students (due to program emphasis on lower achieving students). Program infidelity (teachers losing instructional time and not working toward a common goal, due to a lack of RF knowledge and understanding, training, or "buy-in" attitude) is a weakness. Reading coaches also responded that a significant weakness is the inappropriate and/or lack of materials that are unable to meet the needs of every student; the material is not individualized for each child, the material is too challenging for at-risk students or not challenging enough for benchmark students, there are too many or too few skill tests, and lesson plans within the manual are too lengthy or too short in some of the five components, such as fluency. Funding (the hiring and retention of personnel and materials) is an additional weakness. Finally, the inability to hire substitutes when an interventionist is absent (to assist in small group instruction within the classroom and during intervention) was cited as a weakness.

Threats

A review of the findings revealed the following information concerning future threats of the RF program. Discontinuation of funding (loss of interventionists and reading coaches) was pointed out as a threat. As in other school scenarios, respondents perceived weaknesses as threats, such as inadequate quantity/quality of staff to implement the program effectively.

A.7.4. Reading Coaches – Cohort II

Table 7: 2006-2007 SWOT Analysis Results from 21 Reading Coaches in Cohort II Schools

Strengths	**Weaknesses**
Core program (SBRR)	Inadequate quantity/quality of staff
Resourceful (reading coaches, content leaders, interventionists)	Inappropriate and/or lack of materials
Adequate materials	Lack of professional development
Tier III interventions (small groups)	Teacher/interventionists (absenteeism/turnover)
Small group instruction	Progress monitoring (too much)
Opportunities	**Threats**
Respondents perceived strengths as opportunities, such as state-level professional development	Discontinuation of program funding

Strengths

Agreeing with cohort II administrators, reading coaches asserted that the core program that is structured, scripted, user friendly, and contains the five components taught consistently with its spiraling curriculums (forming a foundation through the repetition of skills from each level to the next) is the most frequently occurring strength. Like cohort

II administrators, reading coaches asserted that having 1) resourceful reading coaches, content leaders, and trained interventionists to monitor, gather and use data to re-teach or to find another approach; 2) tier III pull-out interventions in small groups (more individualized), and 3) adequate instructional materials for teachers and interventionists are strengths. Cohort II reading coaches agree with cohort I personnel (interventionists, kindergarten, third grade, and special education teachers, as well as other unidentified individuals) indicating that differentiated small group instruction within the classroom, using scientifically based reading research strategies, is a strength.

Opportunities

A review of the findings revealed the following information concerning future opportunities of the RF program. Respondents perceived strengths as opportunities, such as state-level professional development. Clarification of opportunities was communicated to data summit participants, including a joint effort between the school and the public library.

Weaknesses

Cohort II reading coaches reported that the inadequate quantity/quality of staff to implement the program effectively, the need for more interventionists (due to the large number of tier II and tier III students), and the need for challenging benchmark students (due to program emphasis on lower achieving students) prove to be the greatest weaknesses. Agreeing with cohort I personnel (administrators, reading coaches, interventionists, kindergarten, second, third grade, and special education teachers, as well as unidentified individuals) and cohort II administrators, cohort II reading coaches indicated that a weakness is the lack and/or inadequacy of core and intervention materials that are unable to meet the needs of every student; the material is either too challenging for at-risk students or not challenging enough for benchmark students, there are too many or too few skill tests, and lesson plans within the manual are too lengthy or too short in some of the five components. Like cohort I personnel (administrators, reading coaches, kindergarten teachers, and unidentified individuals) and cohort II administrators, cohort II reading coaches reported that the lack of professional development (the training of new teachers, interventionists and substitutes, and ongoing job-related education of existing staff) is an additional weakness. Finally, progress monitoring (causing a loss of instructional time) and teacher and interventionist absenteeism and turnover are identified as additional weaknesses.

Threats

A review of the findings revealed the following information concerning future threats of the RF program. Discontinuation of funding (loss of interventionists and reading coaches) was pointed out as a threat. As in other school scenarios, respondents perceived weaknesses as threats, such as inadequate quantity/quality of staff to implement the program effectively.

A.7.5. Interventionists – Cohort I

Table 8: 2006-2007 SWOT Analysis Results from 278 Interventionists in Cohort I Schools

Strengths	Weaknesses
Adequate materials	Inappropriate and/or lack of materials
Small group instruction	Not meeting student needs
Tier III interventions (small groups)	Time (planning and collaboration)
Resourceful (reading coaches, content leaders, interventionists)	*DIBELS* screener
Core program (SBRR)	Inadequate quantity/quality of staff
Opportunities	**Threats**
Respondents perceived strengths as opportunities, such as state-level professional development	Discontinuation of program funding

Strengths

The greatest strength, as stated by interventionists, is the adequacy of instructional materials for teachers and interventionists. Differentiated small group instruction within the classroom, using scientifically based reading research strategies, was identified as an additional strength by interventionists. Like administrators and reading coaches, interventionists indicated that having 1) tier III interventions in small groups (more individualized), 2) resourceful reading coaches, content leaders, and trained interventionists to monitor, teach, and gather and use data to re-teach or to find another approach; and 3) the core program that is structured, scripted, user friendly, and contains the five components taught consistently with its spiraling curriculum (forming a foundation through the repetition of skills from each level to the next) are strengths.

Opportunities

A review of the findings revealed the following information concerning future opportunities of the RF program. Respondents perceived strengths as opportunities, such as state-level professional development. Clarification of opportunities was communicated to data summit participants, including a joint effort between the school and the public library.

Weaknesses

Interventionists agree with administrators and reading coaches, reporting that the most frequently occurring weakness is the inappropriate and/or lack of materials that are unable to meet the needs of every student; the material is not individualized for each child, the material is either too challenging for at-risk students or not challenging enough for benchmark students, there are too many or too few skill tests, and lesson plans within the manual are too lengthy or too short in some of the five components, such as grammar and writing. Another weakness cited is that of not meeting tier II and tier III student needs (due to the large number of students needing intervention as well as continued support into fourth grade). Time to plan, prepare, and collaborate with other staff is an additional weakness. Also, the *DIBELS* screener (which needs different means of assessing tier III students) was noted as a weakness. Interventionists, reading coaches,

and administrators identified inadequate quantity/quality of staff to implement the program effectively as a weakness as well. There is a need for more trained interventionists to assist in small groups within the classroom and intervention, specifically during interventionists' absences.

Threats

A review of the findings revealed the following information concerning future threats of the RF program. Discontinuation of funding (loss of interventionists and reading coaches) was pointed out as a threat. As in other school scenarios, respondents perceived weaknesses as threats, such as inadequate quantity/quality of staff to implement the program effectively.

A.7.6. Interventionists – Cohort II

Table 9: 2006-2007 SWOT Analysis Results from 38 Interventionists in Cohort II Schools

Strengths	**Weaknesses**
Resourceful (reading coaches, content leaders, interventionists)	Inappropriate and/or lack of materials
Adequate materials	Lack of professional development
Small group instruction	Inadequate quantity/quality of staff
Core program (SBRR)	Not meeting student needs
Tier III interventions (small groups)	Program pacing
Opportunities	**Threats**
Respondents perceived strengths as opportunities, such as state-level professional development	Discontinuation of program funding

Strengths

Agreeing with cohort I administrators, reading coaches indicated that having resourceful reading coaches, content leaders, and trained interventionists to monitor, teach, gather and use data to re-teach or to find another approach, is the greatest strength of the program. Like cohort I and cohort II administrators and reading coaches, interventionists asserted to having 1) tier III interventions in small groups (more individualized); 2) adequate instructional materials for teachers and interventionists, and 3) the core program that is structured, scripted, user friendly, and contains the five components taught consistently with its spiraling curriculum (forming a foundation through the repetition of skills from each level to the next) as strengths. Differentiated small group instruction within the classroom, using scientifically based reading research strategies, was identified as an additional strength by cohort I and cohort II interventionists, cohort II reading coaches, cohort I kindergarten, third grade, and special education teachers as well as other unidentified individuals.

Opportunities

A review of the findings revealed the following information concerning future opportunities of the RF program. Respondents perceived strengths as opportunities; such as state level professional development. Clarification of opportunities was

communicated to data summit participants, such as a joint effort between the school and the public library.

Weaknesses

Agreeing with cohort I (administrators, reading coaches, interventionists, kindergarten, second, third grade, and special education teachers, as well as unidentified individuals) and cohort II personnel (administrators and reading coaches), cohort II interventionists indicated that the greatest weakness is the lack and/or inadequacy of core and intervention materials that are unable to meet the needs of every student; the material is either too challenging for at-risk students or not challenging enough for benchmark students, there are too many or too few skill tests, and lesson plans within the manual are too lengthy or too short in some of the five components. Like cohort I (administrators, reading coaches, kindergarten teachers, and unidentified individuals) and cohort II personnel (administrators and reading coaches), cohort II interventionists reported that the lack of professional development (the training of new teachers, interventionists and substitutes, and ongoing job-related education of existing staff) is an additional weakness. Inadequate quantity/quality of staff to implement the program effectively, the need for more interventionists (due to the large number of tier II and tier III students), and the concern for challenging benchmark students (due to program emphasis on lower achieving students) are other weaknesses indicated by cohort I (administrators, reading coaches, interventionists, first, third grade, and special education teachers, as well as unidentified individuals) and cohort II personnel (administrators, reading coaches, and interventionists). Cohort II interventionists agree with cohort I personnel (interventionists, kindergarten, first, second grade, and special education teachers as well as unidentified individuals), noting that the RF program is not meeting tier II and tier III student needs (due to the large number of students requiring intervention as well as continued support into fourth grade). Finally, core program pacing (taking too much time one day and not enough time on another day to complete instruction) was reported by cohort I second grade teachers and cohort II interventionists as a weakness.

Threats

A review of the findings revealed the following information concerning future threats of the RF program. Discontinuation of funding (loss of interventionists and reading coaches) was pointed out as a threat. As in other school scenarios, respondents perceived weaknesses as threats, such as inadequate quantity/quality of staff to implement the program effectively.

A.7.7. Kindergarten Teachers- Cohort I

Table 10: -2007 SWOT Analysis Results from 252 Kindergarten Teachers in Cohort I Schools

Strengths	Weaknesses
Adequate materials	Inappropriate and/or lack of materials
Core program (SBRR)	Tier model (restrictive)
Small group instruction	*DIBELS* screener
Tier III interventions (small groups)	Not meeting student needs

Continuous student growth	Lack of professional development
Opportunities	**Threats**
Respondents perceived strengths as opportunities, such as state-level professional development	Discontinuation of program funding

Strengths

The greatest strength stated by kindergarten teachers and interventionists is the adequacy of instructional materials for teachers and interventionists. Like administrators, reading coaches, and interventionists, kindergarten teachers indicated that having 1) the core program that is structured, scripted, user friendly, and contains the five components taught consistently with its spiraling curriculum (forming a foundation through the repetition of skills from each level to the next); 2) resourceful reading coaches, content leaders, and trained interventionists to monitor, teach, gather and use data to re-teach or to find another approach; 3) and tier III interventions in small groups (more individualized) are strengths. Agreeing with reading coaches, kindergarten teachers identified differentiated small group instruction within the classroom, using scientifically based reading research strategies, as an added strength. Finally, kindergarten teachers asserted that student growth is a strength.

Opportunities

A review of the findings revealed the following information concerning future opportunities of the RF program. Respondents perceived strengths as opportunities, such as state level professional development. Clarification of opportunities was communicated to data summit participants; such as a joint effort between the school and the public library.

Weaknesses

Kindergarten teachers agree with administrators, reading coaches, and interventionists, reporting that the most frequently occurring weakness is the inappropriate and/or lack of materials that are unable to meet the needs of every student; the material is not individualized for each child, the material is either too challenging for at-risk students or not challenging enough for benchmark students, there are too many or too few skill tests, and lesson plans within the manual are too lengthy or too short in some of the five components such as grammar and writing. Also, kindergarten teachers cited the core program as restrictive, lacking teacher creativity. Kindergarten teachers and interventionists also cited the *DIBELS* screener (which needs to assess tier III students in different ways) as a weakness. Kindergarten teachers agree with interventionists in reference to the program weakness of not meeting tier II and tier III student needs (due to the large number of students needing intervention and continued support into fourth grade). Another weakness identified by administrators, reading coaches, and kindergarten teachers, is the lack of professional development (the training of new teachers, interventionists and substitutes, and ongoing job-related education of existing staff).

Threats

A review of the findings revealed the following information concerning future threats of the RF program. Discontinuation of funding (loss of interventionists and reading coaches) was pointed out as a threat. As in other school scenarios, respondents perceived weaknesses as threats, such as inadequate quantity/quality of staff to implement the program effectively.

A.7.8. Kindergarten Teachers – Cohort II

Table 11: 2006-2007 SWOT Analysis Results from 50 Kindergarten Teachers in Cohort II Schools

Strengths	**Weaknesses**
Core reading (SBRR)	Inappropriate and/or lack of materials
Resourceful (reading coaches, content leaders, interventionists)	Tier model (time consuming)
Tier III interventions (small groups)	Inadequate quantity/quality of staff
Phonemic awareness knowledge	Tier model (restrictive)
Exposure to various genres	Lack of professional development
Opportunities	**Threats**
Respondents perceived strengths as opportunities, such as state-level professional development	Discontinuation of program funding

Strengths

Agreeing with cohort II administrators and reading coaches, kindergarten teachers indicated that the core program that is structured, scripted, user friendly, and contains the five components taught consistently with its spiraling curriculums (forming a foundation through the repetition of skills from each level to the next) is the most frequently occurring strength. Like cohort I and II administrators, reading coaches, and interventionists, kindergarten teaches indicated that having tier III interventions in small groups (more individualized) and adequate instructional materials for teachers and interventionists are strengths. Exposure to various genres and phonemic awareness knowledge received through the core program are additional strengths.

Opportunities

A review of the findings revealed the following information concerning future opportunities of the RF program. Respondents perceived strengths as opportunities; such as state level professional development. Clarification of opportunities was communicated to data summit participants, such as a joint effort between the school and the public library.

Weaknesses

Agreeing with cohort I (interventionists, kindergarten, first, second, third grade, and special education teachers as well as unidentified individuals) and cohort II personnel (administrators, reading coaches, and interventionists), kindergarten teachers indicated that the greatest weakness is the lack and/or inadequacy of core and intervention materials that are unable to meet the needs of every student; the material is either too

challenging for at-risk students or not challenging enough for benchmark students, there are too many or too few skill tests, and lesson plans within the manual are too lengthy or too short in some of the five components. The tiered model being time consuming (not enough time for teachers to instruct and/or get students interested in the other content areas such as science and social studies) is a noted weakness by cohort I administrators and third grade teachers, and cohort I kindergarten teachers. Inadequate quantity/quality of staff to implement the program effectively, the need for more interventionists (due to the large number of tier II and tier III students), and the concern for challenging benchmark students (due to program emphasis on lower achieving students) are other weaknesses identified by cohort I (administrators, reading coaches, interventionists, kindergarten, second, third grade, and special education teachers, as well as unidentified individuals) and cohort II personnel (administrators, reading coaches, interventionists and kindergarten teachers). Like cohort II personnel (kindergarten, first, second, and third grade teachers), cohort II kindergarten teachers cited the core program as restrictive, and lacking teacher creativity. Kindergarten teachers agree with cohort I (administrators, reading coaches, kindergarten teachers, and unidentified individuals) and cohort II personnel (administrators, reading coaches, and interventionists) reporting that the lack of professional development (the training of new teachers, interventionists and substitutes, and ongoing job-related education of existing staff) as an additional weakness.

Threats

A review of the findings revealed the following information concerning future threats of the RF program. Discontinuation of funding (loss of interventionists and reading coaches) was pointed out as a threat. As in other school scenarios, respondents perceived weaknesses as threats, such as inadequate quantity/quality of staff to implement the program effectively.

A.7.9. First Grade Teachers – Cohort I

Table 12: - 2007 SWOT Analysis Results from 279 First Grade Teachers in Cohort I Schools

Strengths	**Weaknesses**
Core program (SBRR-explicit & systematic)	Inappropriate and/or lack of materials
Adequate materials	Not meeting student needs
Tier III interventions (small group)	Inadequate quantity/quality of staff
Phonics knowledge	Tiered model (restrictive)
Resourceful (reading coaches, content leaders, interventionists)	*DIBELS* screener
Opportunities	**Threats**
Respondents perceived strengths as opportunities; such as state level professional development	Discontinuation of program funding

Strengths

The greatest strength, as identified by first grade teachers, is the core program that is structured, scripted, user friendly, and contains the five components taught explicitly and systematically with its spiraling curriculum (forming a foundation through the repetition

of skills from each level to the next). Like administrators, reading coaches, interventionists, and kindergarten teachers, first grade teachers indicated that having 1) adequate instructional materials for teachers and interventionists, 2) tier III interventions in small groups (more individualized), and 3) resourceful reading coaches, content leaders, and trained interventionists to monitor, teach, gather and use data to re-teach or to find another approach as strengths. Finally, an additional strength reported by first grade teachers is phonics knowledge received from the core program.

Opportunities

A review of the findings revealed the following information concerning future opportunities of the RF program. Respondents perceived strengths as opportunities; such as state level professional development. Clarification of opportunities was communicated to data summit participants, such as a joint effort between the school and the public library.

Weaknesses

First grade teachers agree with interventionists and kindergarten teachers, reporting that the most frequently occurring weakness is the inappropriate and/or lack of materials that are unable to meet the needs of every student; the material is not individualized for each child, the material is either too challenging for at-risk students or not challenging enough for benchmark students, there are too many or too few skill tests, and lesson plans within the manual are too lengthy or too short in some of the five components, such as grammar and writing. Again, first grade teachers agree with interventionists and kindergarten teachers, that not meeting tier II and tier III student needs (due to the large number of students needing intervention) is a program weakness. Like administrators, reading coaches, interventionists, and kindergarten teachers, first grade teachers cited the inadequate quantity/quality of staff to implement the program effectively, the need for more interventionists (due to the large number of tier II and tier III students), and the concern for challenging benchmark students (due to program emphasis on lower achieving students) as weaknesses. Also, first grade teachers agree with kindergarten teachers, identifying the core program as restrictive, and lacking flexibility. Finally, interventionists, kindergarten, and first grade teachers indicated that the *DIBELS* screener (needing different means of assessing tier III students) is a weakness.

Threats

A review of the findings revealed the following information concerning future threats of the RF program. Discontinuation of funding (loss of interventionists and reading coaches) was pointed out as a threat. As in other school scenarios, respondents perceived weaknesses as threats, such as inadequate quantity/quality of staff to implement the program effectively.

A.7.10. First Grade Teachers – Cohort II

Table 13: 2006-2007 SWOT Analysis Results from 54 First Grade Teachers in Cohort II Schools

Strengths	Weaknesses
Core reading (SBRR)	Inappropriate and/or lack of materials
Resourceful (reading coaches, content leaders, interventionists)	Tier model (pacing)
Adequate materials	Inadequate quantity/quality of staff
Tier III interventions (small groups)	Lack of professional development
Phonics knowledge	Not meeting student needs
Opportunities	**Threats**
Respondents perceived strengths as opportunities, such as state-level professional development	Discontinuation of program funding

Strengths

Agreeing with cohort II administrators, reading coaches, and kindergarten teachers, first grade teachers indicated that the core program that is structured, scripted, user friendly, and contains the five components taught consistently with its spiraling curriculums (forming a foundation through the repetition of skills from each level to the next) is the most frequently occurring strength. Like cohort II administrators, reading coaches, interventionists, and kindergarten teachers, first grade teachers indicated that having 1) adequate instructional materials for teachers and interventionists, 2) tier III interventions in small groups (more individualized), and 3) resourceful reading coaches, content leaders, and trained interventionists to monitor, teach, gather and use data to re-teach or to find another approach are strengths. An additional strength noted by first grade teachers in cohorts I and II, is the phonics knowledge received from the core program.

Opportunities

A review of the findings revealed the following information concerning future opportunities of the RF program. Respondents perceived strengths as opportunities, such as state-level professional development. Clarification of opportunities was communicated to data summit participants, including a joint effort between the school and the public library.

Weaknesses

Agreeing with cohort I (interventionists, kindergarten, first, second, third grade, and special education teachers, as well as unidentified individuals) and cohort II personnel (administrators, reading coaches, interventionists, and kindergarten teachers), first grade teachers indicated that the greatest weakness is the lack and/or inadequacy of core and intervention materials that are unable to meet the needs of every student; the material is either too challenging for at-risk students or not challenging enough for benchmark students, there are too many or too few skill tests, and lesson plans within the manual are too lengthy or too short in some of the five components. Core program pacing (taking too much time one day and not enough time on another day to complete instruction) is a weakness noted by cohort I second grade teachers and cohort one first grade teachers.

Inadequate quantity/quality of staff to implement the program effectively, the need for more interventionists (due to the large number of tier II and tier III students), and the concern for challenging benchmark students (due to program emphasis on lower achieving students) are other weaknesses identified by cohort I (administrators, reading coaches, interventionists, kindergarten, second, third grade, and special education teachers, as well as unidentified individuals) and cohort II personnel (administrators, reading coaches, interventionists, kindergarten, and first grade teachers). Like cohort I (administrators, reading coaches, kindergarten teachers and unidentified individuals) and cohort II personnel (administrators, reading coaches, interventionists, and kindergarten teachers), first grade teachers reported that the lack of professional development (the training of new teachers, interventionists and substitutes, and ongoing job-related education of existing staff) is an additional weakness. Cohort II first grade teachers agree with cohort I personnel (interventionists, kindergarten, first, second grade, and special education teachers as well as unidentified individuals) and cohort II interventionists, noting that the RF program not meeting tier II and tier III student needs (due to the large number of students needing intervention as well as continued support into fourth grade) is a weakness.

Threats

A review of the findings revealed the following information concerning future threats of the RF program. Discontinuation of funding (loss of interventionists and reading coaches) was pointed out as a threat. As in other school scenarios, respondents perceived weaknesses as threats, including inadequate quantity/quality of staff to implement the program effectively.

A.7.11. Second Grade Teachers – Cohort I

Table 14: 2006-2007 SWOT Analysis Results from 213 Second Grade Teachers in Cohort I Schools

Strengths	**Weaknesses**
Adequate materials	Inappropriate and/or lack of materials
Core program (SBRR-explicit & systematic)	Tiered model (restrictive)
Resourceful (reading coaches, content leaders, interventionists)	Tiered model (lack of grammar and writing skills)
Tier III interventions (small groups)	Not meeting student needs
Continuous student growth	Tier model (pacing)
Opportunities	**Threats**
Respondents perceived strengths as opportunities, such as state-level professional development	Discontinuation of program funding

Strengths

Like interventionists, and kindergarten teachers, second grade teachers identified the adequacy of instructional materials for teachers and interventionists as the greatest strength. Also, agreeing with administrators, reading coaches, interventionists, and kindergarten teachers, second grade teachers indicated that having 1) the core program

that is structured, scripted, user friendly, and contains the five components taught consistently with its spiraling curriculum (forming a foundation through the repetition of skills from each level to the next); 2) resourceful reading coaches, content leaders, and interventionist; and 3) tier III interventions (more individualized) are strengths. Continuous student growth (building accuracy and fluency) was cited by second grade teachers as a strength.

Opportunities

A review of the findings revealed the following information concerning future opportunities of the RF program. Respondents perceived strengths as opportunities; such as state level professional development. Clarification of opportunities was communicated to data summit participants, such as a joint effort between the school and the public library.

Weaknesses

Like interventionists, kindergarten and first grade teachers, second grade teachers identified the most frequently occurring weakness as the inappropriate and/or lack of materials that are unable to meet the needs of every student; the material is not individualized for each child, the material is either too challenging for at-risk students or not challenging enough for benchmark students, there are too many or too few skill tests, and lesson plans within the manual are too lengthy or too short in some of the five components such as comprehension. Second grade teachers agree with kindergarten and first grade teachers, identifying the core program as restrictive, having too many limitations. Like interventionists, kindergarten, and first grade teachers, second grade teachers noted that the program not meeting tier II and tier III student needs (due to the large number of students needing intervention as well as continued support into fourth grade) is an additional weakness. Finally, second grade teachers reported that core program pacing (taking too much time one day and not enough time on another day to complete instruction) and the lack of grammar skill instruction are weaknesses.

Threats

A review of the findings revealed the following information concerning future threats of the RF program. Discontinuation of funding (loss of interventionists and reading coaches) was pointed out as a threat. As in other school scenarios, respondents perceived weaknesses as threats, such as inadequate quantity/quality of staff to implement the program effectively.

A.7.12. Second Grade Teachers – Cohort II

Table 15: 2006-2007 SWOT Analysis Results from 46 Second Grade Teachers in Cohort II Schools

Strengths	Weaknesses
Core reading program (SBRR)	Inappropriate and/or lack of materials
Tier III interventions (small groups)	Not meeting student needs
Adequate materials	Lack of professional development

Resourceful (reading coaches, content leaders, interventionists)	Teacher planning and preparation time
Small group instruction	Tier model (restrictive)
Opportunities	**Threats**
Respondents perceived strengths as opportunities, such as state-level professional development	Discontinuation of program funding

Strengths

Agreeing with cohort II administrators, reading coaches, kindergarten, and first grade teachers, second grade teachers indicated that having a core program that is structured, scripted, user friendly, and contains the five components taught consistently with its spiraling curriculums (forming a foundation through the repetition of skills from each level to the next) is the most frequently occurring strength. Like cohort II administrators, reading coaches, interventionists, kindergarten, and first grade teachers, second grade teachers identified that having 1) adequate instructional materials for teachers and interventionists, 2) tier III interventions in small groups (more individualized), and 3) resourceful reading coaches, content leaders and trained interventionists to monitor, teach, gather and use data to re-teach or to find another approach are strengths. An additional strength noted by cohort II (reading coaches, interventionists, kindergarten and second grade teachers) and cohort I personnel (interventionists, kindergarten, third grade, and special education teachers, as well as unidentified individuals) is differentiated small group instruction within the classroom using scientifically based reading research strategies.

Opportunities

A review of the findings revealed the following information concerning future opportunities of the RF program. Respondents perceived strengths as opportunities, such as state-level professional development. Clarification of opportunities was communicated to data summit participants, including a joint effort between the school and the public library.

Weaknesses

Agreeing with cohort I (interventionists, kindergarten, first, second, third grade, and special education teachers, as well as unidentified individuals) and cohort II personnel (administrators, reading coaches, interventionists, kindergarten, and first grade teachers), cohort II second grade teachers indicated that the greatest weakness is the lack and/or inadequacy of core and intervention materials that are unable to meet the needs of every student; the material is either too challenging for at-risk students or not challenging enough for benchmark students, there are too many or too few skill tests, and lesson plans within the manual are too lengthy or too short in some of the five components. Like cohort I (interventionists, kindergarten, first, second grade, and special education teachers, as well as unidentified individuals) and cohort II personnel (interventionists and first grade teachers), second grade teachers noted that the program not meeting tier II and tier III student needs (due to the large number of students needing intervention as well as continued support into fourth grade) is a weakness. Cohort II second grade teachers agree

with cohort I (administrators, reading coaches, kindergarten teachers, and unidentified individuals) and cohort II personnel (administrators, reading coaches, interventionists, kindergarten, and first grade teachers), reporting that the lack of professional development (the training of new teachers, interventionists and substitutes, and ongoing job-related education of existing staff) is an additional weakness. Insufficient time to plan, prepare, and collaborate with other staff is an additional weakness identified by cohort I interventionists and cohort II second grade teachers. Finally included as a weakness is the restrictiveness of the core program (lacking teacher creativity) cited by cohort II (kindergarten and second grade teachers) and cohort I personnel (kindergarten, first, second, and third grade teachers).

Threats

A review of the findings revealed the following information concerning future threats of the RF program. Discontinuation of funding (loss of interventionists and reading coaches) was pointed out as a threat. As in other school scenarios, respondents perceived weaknesses as threats, such as inadequate quantity/quality of staff to implement the program effectively.

A.7.13. Third Grade Teachers – Cohort I

Table 16: 2006-2007 SWOT Analysis Results from 229 Third Grade Teachers in Cohort I Schools

Strengths	**Weaknesses**
Tier III interventions (small groups)	Inappropriate and/or lack of materials
Adequate materials	Tier model (time consuming)
Core program (SBRR)	Tier model (restrictive)
Resourceful (reading coaches, content leaders, interventionists)	Inadequate quantity/quality of staff
Small group instruction	Tiered model (lack of comprehension, grammar & writing skills)
Opportunities	**Threats**
Respondents perceived strengths as opportunities, such as state-level professional development	Discontinuation of program funding

Strengths

Third grade teachers identified tier III interventions, which are more individualized, as the greatest strength. Like administrators, reading coaches, interventionists, and first and second grade teachers, third grade teachers indicated that having 1) adequate instructional materials for teachers and interventionists, 2) the core program that is structured, scripted, user friendly, and contains the five components taught consistently with its spiraling curriculum (forming a foundation through the repetition of skills from each level to the next); and 3) resourceful reading coaches, content leaders, and trained interventionists to monitor, teach, gather and use data to re-teach or to find another approach as strengths. Differentiated small group instruction within the classroom, using scientifically based reading research strategies, is a strength cited by interventionists, kindergarten, and third grade teachers.

Opportunities

A review of the findings revealed the following information concerning future opportunities of the RF program. Respondents perceived strengths as opportunities, such as state-level professional development. Clarification of opportunities was communicated to data summit participants, such as a joint effort between the school and the public library.

Weaknesses

Like interventionists, kindergarten, first, and second grade teachers, third grade teachers identified the greatest weakness as the inappropriate and/or lack of materials that are unable to meet the needs of every student; the material is not individualized for each child, the material is either too challenging for at-risk students or not challenging enough for benchmark students, there are too many or too few skill tests, and lesson plans within the manual are too lengthy or too short in some of the five components such as comprehension, grammar, and writing. The tiered model being time consuming (not enough time for teachers to instruct and/or get students interested in the other content areas such as science and social studies) is an added weakness indicated by both administrators and third grade teachers. Also included as a weakness is the restrictive core program (lacking flexibility) cited by kindergarten, first and third grade teachers. In addition, third grade teachers agree with administrators, reading coaches, interventionists, kindergarten, and first grade teachers, reporting the inadequate quantity/quality of staff to implement the program effectively, the need for more interventionists (due to the large number of tier II and tier III students), and the concern for challenging benchmark students (due to program emphasis on lower achieving students) are weaknesses. Third grade teachers noted the lack of comprehension skill instruction within the core program as an additional weakness.

Threats

A review of the findings revealed the following information concerning future threats of the RF program. Discontinuation of funding (loss of interventionists and reading coaches) was pointed out as a threat. As in other school scenarios, respondents perceived weaknesses as threats, such as inadequate quantity/quality of staff to implement the program effectively.

A.7.14. Third Grade Teachers – Cohort II

Table 17: -2007 SWOT Analysis Results from 53 Third Grade Teachers in Cohort II Schools

Strengths	**Weaknesses**
Core program (SBRR)	Inappropriate and/or lack of materials
Adequate materials	Tier model (restrictive)
Tier III interventions (small groups)	Inadequate quantity/quality of staff
Resources (reading coaches, content leaders, interventionists)	Lack of professional development
Small group instruction	Lack of communication from state/district to local level
Opportunities	**Threats**

Respondents perceived strengths as opportunities, such as state-level professional development	Discontinuation of program funding

Strengths

Agreeing with cohort II administrators, reading coaches, and kindergarten, first, and second grade teachers, third grade teachers indicated that the core program that is structured, scripted, user friendly, and contains the five components taught consistently with its spiraling curriculums (forming a foundation through the repetition of skills from each level to the next) is the most frequently occurring strength. Like cohort II administrators, reading coaches, interventionists, and kindergarten, first, and second grade teachers, third grade teachers indicated that having 1) adequate instructional materials for teachers and interventionists, 2) tier III interventions in small groups (more individualized), and 3) resourceful reading coaches, content leaders, and trained interventionists to monitor, teach, gather and use data to re-teach or to find another approach are strengths. An additional strength noted by cohort II (reading coaches, interventionists, kindergarten, second, and third grade teachers) and cohort I personnel (interventionists, kindergarten, third grade, and special education teachers, as well as unidentified individuals) is differentiated small group instruction within the classroom, using scientifically based reading research strategies.

Opportunities

A review of the findings revealed the following information concerning future opportunities of the RF program. Respondents perceived strengths as opportunities, such as state-level professional development. Clarification of opportunities was communicated to data summit participants, such as a joint effort between the school and the public library.

Weaknesses

Agreeing with cohort I (interventionists, kindergarten, first, second, third grade, and special education teachers, as well as unidentified individuals) and cohort II personnel (administrators, reading coaches, interventionists, kindergarten, first, and second grade teachers), cohort II third grade teachers indicated that the greatest weakness is the lack and/or inadequacy of core and intervention materials that are unable to meet the needs of every student; the materials are either too challenging for at-risk students or not challenging enough for benchmark students, there are too many or too few skill tests, and there are lesson plans within manual that are lengthy or too short in some of the five components. Also included as a weakness is the restrictiveness of the core program (lacking teacher creativity) cited by cohort II (kindergarten, second, and third grade teachers) and cohort I personnel (kindergarten, first, second, and third grade teachers). Inadequate quantity/quality of staff to implement the program effectively, the need for more interventionists (due to the large number of tier II and tier III students), and the concern for challenging benchmark students (due to program emphasis on lower achieving students) are other weaknesses identified by cohort I (administrators, reading coaches, interventionists, kindergarten, second, third grade, and special education teachers, as well as unidentified individuals) and cohort II personnel (administrators,

reading coaches, interventionists, kindergarten, first and third grade teachers). Like cohort I (administrators, reading coaches, kindergarten teachers and unidentified individuals) and cohort II administrators, reading coaches, interventionists, kindergarten, first and second grade teachers, cohort II third grade teachers reported that the lack of professional development (the training of new teachers, interventionists and substitutes, and ongoing job-related education of existing staff) is an added weakness. A final weakness noted is the lack of communication from the state/district to the school.

Threats

A review of the findings revealed the following information concerning future threats of the RF program. Discontinuation of funding (loss of Interventionists and Reading Coaches) was pointed out as a threat. As in other school scenarios, respondents perceived weaknesses as threats; such as inadequate quantity/quality of staff to implement the program effectively.

A.7.15. Special Education Grade Teachers- Cohort I

Table 18: 2006-2007 SWOT Analysis Results from 107 Special Education Teachers in Cohort I Schools

Strengths	**Weaknesses**
Small group instruction	Inappropriate and/or lack of materials
Tier III interventions (small groups)	Not meeting student needs
Continuous progress monitoring	Tier model (time consuming)
Adequate materials	*DIBELS* screener
Resourceful (reading coaches, content leaders, interventionists)	Inadequate quantity/quality of staff
Opportunities	**Threats**
Respondents perceived strengths as opportunities, such as state-level professional development	Discontinuation of program funding

Strengths

The greatest strength, as stated by special education teachers, is differentiated small group instruction within the classroom, using scientifically based reading research strategies. Like administrators, reading coaches, interventionists, first, second, and third grade teachers, special education teachers reported that having 1) tier III interventions (which are more individualized), 2) adequate instructional materials for teachers and interventionists, and 3) resourceful reading coaches, content leaders, and trained interventionists to monitor, teach, gather and use data to re-teach or to find another approach are strengths. Continuous progress monitoring of all students is also a strength noted by special education teachers.

Opportunities

A review of the findings revealed the following information concerning future opportunities of the RF program. Respondents perceived strengths as opportunities, such as state-level professional development. Clarification of opportunities was

communicated to data summit participants, such as a joint effort between the school and the public library.

Weaknesses

Like interventionists, kindergarten, first, second, and third grade teachers, special education teachers identified the greatest weakness as the inappropriate and/or lack of materials that are unable to meet the needs of every student; the materials are not individualized for each child, the materials are either too challenging for at-risk students or not challenging enough for benchmark students, there are too many or too few skill tests, and lesson plans within the manual are too lengthy or too short in some of the five components such as comprehension, grammar, and writing. Agreeing with interventionists, kindergarten, first, and second grade teachers, special education teachers referred to the program weakness of not meeting tier II and tier III student needs (due to the large number of students needing intervention as well as continued support into fourth grade) as a weakness. The tiered model being time consuming (not enough time for teachers to instruct and/or get students interested in the other content areas such as science and social studies) was cited as a weakness by administrators, third grade, and special education teachers. Interventionists, kindergarten, first grade, and special education teachers noted the *DIBELS* screener (which needs different ways of assessing tier III students) as an added weakness. Again, special education teachers agree with administrators, reading coaches, interventionists, kindergarten, first, and third grade teachers, reporting that the inadequate quantity/quality of staff to implement the program effectively, the need for more interventionists (due to the large number of tier II and tier III students), and the concern for challenging benchmark students (due to program emphasis on lower achieving students) are weaknesses.

Threats

A review of the findings revealed the following information concerning future threats of the RF program. Discontinuation of funding (loss of interventionists and reading coaches) was pointed out as a threat. As in other school scenarios, respondents perceived weaknesses as threats, such as inadequate quantity/quality of staff to implement the program effectively.

A.7.16. Special Education Grade Teachers- Cohort II

Table 19: -2007 SWOT Analysis Results from 31 Special Education Teachers in Cohort II Schools

Strengths	**Weaknesses**
Core program (SBRR)	Inappropriate and/or lack of materials
Resourceful (reading coaches, content leaders, interventionists)	Lack of professional development
Tier III interventions (small groups)	Inadequate quantity/quality of staff
DIBELS screener	Not meeting student needs
Small group instruction	Inconsistent communication from state/district level to local level
Opportunities	**Threats**

Respondents perceived strengths as opportunities, such as state-level professional development	Discontinuation of program funding

Strengths

Agreeing with cohort II administrators, reading coaches, and kindergarten, first, second, and third grade teaches, special education teachers reported the core program that is structured, scripted, user friendly, and contains the five components taught consistently with its spiraling curriculums (forming a foundation through the repetition of skills from each level to the next) is the most frequently occurring strength. Like cohort II administrators, reading coaches, interventionists, kindergarten, first, second, and third grade teachers, special education teachers indicated that having tier III interventions in small groups (more individualized) and resourceful reading coaches, content leaders, and trained interventionists to monitor, teach, gather and use data to re-teach or to find another approach are strengths. An additional strength noted by cohort II (reading coaches, interventionists, kindergarten, second, third grade, and special education teachers) and cohort I personnel (interventionists, kindergarten, third grade, and special education teachers, as well as unidentified individuals) is differentiated small group instruction within the classroom, using scientifically based reading research strategies. The *DIBELS* screener, which identifies problems earlier and addresses those problems through small group instruction within the classroom, and interventions (reducing special education referrals and enabling students to read on grade level) is an added strength.

Opportunities

A review of the findings revealed the following information concerning future opportunities of the RF program. Respondents perceived strengths as opportunities, such as state-level professional development. Clarification of opportunities was communicated to data summit participants, such as a joint effort between the school and the public library.

Weaknesses

Agreeing with cohort I (interventionists, kindergarten, first, second, third grade, and special education teachers, as well as unidentified individuals) and cohort II personnel (administrators, reading coaches, interventionists, kindergarten, first, second, and third grade teachers), cohort II special education teachers indicated that the greatest weakness is the lack and/or inadequacy of core and intervention materials that are unable to meet the needs of every student; the materials are either too challenging for at-risk students or not challenging enough for benchmark students, there are too many or too few skill tests, and lesson plans within the manual are too lengthy or too short in some of the five components. Like cohort I (administrators, reading coaches, kindergarten teachers and unidentified individuals) and cohort II personnel (administrators, reading coaches, interventionists, kindergarten, first, second, and third grade teachers), cohort II special education teachers reported that the lack of professional development (the training of new teachers, interventionists and substitutes, and ongoing job-related education of existing staff) is an added weakness. Inadequate quantity/quality of staff to implement the program effectively, the need for more interventionists (due to the large number of tier II

and tier III students), and the concern for challenging benchmark students (due to program emphasis on lower achieving students), are other weaknesses identified by cohort I (administrators, reading coaches, interventionists, kindergarten, second, third grade, and special education teachers, as well as unidentified individuals) and cohort II personnel (administrators, reading coaches, interventionists, kindergarten, first, and third grade teachers, as well as special education teachers). Another weakness noted by cohort II (interventionists, first, second grade and special education teachers) and cohort I personnel (interventionists, kindergarten, first, second grade, and special education teachers, as well as unidentified individuals), is not meeting tier II and tier III student needs (due to the large number of students needing intervention as well as continued support into fourth grade). A final weakness noted by cohort II third grade and special education teachers is the lack of communication from the state/district to the school.

Threats

A review of the findings revealed the following information concerning future threats of the RF program. Discontinuation of funding (loss of interventionists and reading coaches) was pointed out as a threat. As in other school scenarios, respondents perceived weaknesses as threats, such as inadequate quantity/quality of staff to implement the program effectively.

A.7.17. Unidentified Individuals – Cohort I

Table 20: 2006-2007 SWOT Analysis Results from 99 Unidentified Individuals in Cohort I Schools

Strengths	**Weaknesses**
Core program (SBRR)	Inappropriate and/or lack of materials
Adequate materials	Lack of professional development
Small group instruction	Inadequate quantity/quality of staff
Resourceful (reading coaches, content leaders, interventionists)	Comprehension component
Continuous progress monitoring	Not meeting student needs
Opportunities	**Threats**
Respondents perceived strengths as opportunities, such as state-level professional development	Discontinuation of program funding

Strengths

The greatest strength reported by unidentified individuals and first grade teachers is the core program that is structured, scripted, user friendly, and contains the five components taught explicitly and systematically with its spiraling curriculum (forming a foundation through the repetition of skills from each level to the next). Like administrators, reading coaches, interventionists, kindergarten, first, second, third grade, and special education teachers, unidentified individuals indicated that having adequate instructional materials for teachers and interventionists, and resourceful reading coaches, content leaders, and interventionists to monitor, teach, gather and use data to re-teach or to find another approach are strengths. An additional strength cited by interventionists, kindergarten, third grade, and special education teachers as well as unidentified individuals, is differentiated small group instruction within the classroom, using scientifically based

reading research strategies. Continuous progress monitoring of all students is a reported strength also noted by special education teachers and unidentified individuals.

Opportunities

A review of the findings revealed the following information concerning future opportunities of the RF program. Respondents perceived strengths as opportunities, such as state-level professional development. Clarification of opportunities was communicated to data summit participants, including a joint effort between the school and the public library.

Weaknesses

Like interventionists, kindergarten, first, second, third grade, and special education teachers, unidentified individuals reported that the greatest weakness is the inappropriate and/or lack of materials that are unable to meet the needs of every student; the material is not individualized for each child, the material is either too challenging for at-risk students or not challenging enough for benchmark students, there are too many or too few skill tests, and lesson plans within the manual are too lengthy or too short in some of the five components such as comprehension, grammar, and writing. Also indicated as a weakness by administrators, reading coaches, kindergarten teachers and unidentified individuals, is the lack of professional development (the training of new teachers, interventionists, and substitutes, and ongoing job-related education of existing staff). Also noted as a weakness by unidentified individuals, administrators, reading coaches, interventionists, kindergarten, first, and third grade teachers, as well as special education teachers is the inadequate quantity/quality of staff to implement the program effectively, the need for more interventionists (due to the large number of tier II and tier III students), and the concern for challenging benchmark students (due to program emphasis on lower achieving students). In addition, unidentified individuals agree with third grade teachers, reporting the lack of comprehension skill instruction within the core program as a weakness. Additionally, unidentified individuals agree with interventionists, kindergarten, first grade and special education teachers, noting that not meeting tier II and tier III student needs (due to the large number of students needing intervention as well as continued support into fourth grade) is also a weakness.

Threats

A review of the findings revealed the following information concerning future threats of the RF program. Discontinuation of funding (loss of interventionists and reading coaches) was pointed out as a threat. As in other school scenarios, respondents perceived weaknesses as threats, such as inadequate quantity/quality of staff to implement the program effectively.

A.7.18. Unidentified Individuals – Cohort II

Table 21: -2007 SWOT Analysis Results from 26 Unidentified Individuals in Cohort II Schools

Strengths	Weaknesses
Core program (SBRR)	Inappropriate and/or lack of materials
Adequate materials	Tier model (pacing)
Small group instruction	Lack of professional development

Resourceful (reading coaches, content leaders, interventionists)	Intervention scheduling
Continuous progress monitoring	Student management
Opportunities	**Threats**
Respondents perceived strengths as opportunities, such as state-level professional development	Discontinuation of program funding

Strengths

Agreeing with cohort II administrators, reading coaches, kindergarten, first, second, third grade and special education teachers, unidentified individuals indicated that the core program that is structured, scripted, user friendly, and contains the five components taught consistently with its spiraling curriculums (forming a foundation through the repetition of skills from each level to the next) is the most frequently occurring strength. Like cohort II administrators, reading coaches, interventionists, kindergarten, first, second, third grade, and special education teachers, unidentified individuals reported that having 1) tier III interventions in small groups (more individualized), 2) adequate instructional materials for teachers and interventionists, and 3) resourceful reading coaches, content leaders, and interventionists to monitor, teach, gather and use data to re-teach or to find another approach are strengths. Continuous progress monitoring, which checks student progress and advises instructional strategies, was cited as a strength by cohort I and II unidentified individuals as well as cohort I special education teachers.

Opportunities

A review of the findings revealed the following information concerning future opportunities of the RF program. Respondents perceived strengths as opportunities; such as state-level professional development. Clarification of opportunities was communicated to data summit participants, such as a joint effort between the school and the public library.

Weaknesses

Agreeing with cohort I (interventionists, kindergarten, first, second, third grade, and special education teachers, as well as unidentified individuals) and cohort II personnel (administrators, reading coaches, interventionists, kindergarten, first, second, third grade, and special education teachers), cohort II unidentified individuals indicated that the greatest weakness is the lack and/or inadequacy of core and intervention materials that are unable to meet the needs of every student; the materials are either too challenging for at-risk students or not challenging enough for benchmark students, there are too many or too few skill tests, and lesson plans within the manual are too lengthy or too short in some of the five components. Core program pacing (taking too much time one day and not enough time on another day to complete instruction) is an added weakness noted by cohort I second grade teachers and cohort II first grade teachers and unidentified individuals. Like cohort I (administrators, reading coaches, kindergarten teachers and unidentified individuals) and cohort II personnel (administrators, reading coaches, interventionists, kindergarten, first, second, third grade, and special education teachers), cohort II unidentified individuals reported that the lack of professional development (the

training of new teachers, interventionists, and substitutes, and ongoing job-related education of existing staff) is an added weakness. Finally, intervention scheduling (the loss of instructional time within interventions and core subjects) and student management (during small group instruction within the classroom and interventions) were identified as weaknesses by cohort II unidentified individuals.

Threats

A review of the findings revealed the following information concerning future threats of the RF program. Discontinuation of funding (loss of interventionists and reading coaches) was pointed out as a threat. As in other school scenarios, respondents perceived weaknesses as threats, such as inadequate quantity/quality of staff to implement the program effectively.