

**New York State Education Department
Reading First Program**

A Report on the Status of Reading First Implementation 2006-2007



MAGI Services

A Measurement Incorporated Company

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Reading First Program***

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of Reading First
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**MAGI Services
A Measurement Incorporated Company
7-11 South Broadway, Suite 402
White Plains, NY 10601**

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Introduction



The Reading First Program, established under the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, is a major federal initiative that puts a strong research focus behind reading instruction in order to increase student reading proficiency rates. Research studies have shown that an early focus in the primary grades on high-quality reading instruction and early identification and intervention with struggling readers improves reading proficiency rates; hence, Reading First charges states and local education agencies (LEA) with the task of implementing rigorous reading programs. Specifically, schools that receive Reading First funds are expected to implement 1) research-based reading curricula that incorporates the five critical building blocks of effective reading instruction: phonemic awareness, phonics, reading fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension; 2) high-quality professional development to K-3 teachers centered on the building blocks; and 3) valid and reliable assessment tools to inform instructional decisions.

New York State's Reading First

The Reading First Program reinforced and expanded the New York State Education Department's (NYSED) reading initiatives. Concordant with Reading First, NYSED required LEAs to implement scientifically-based reading curricula and instruction and to incorporate ongoing assessment as part of the reading program. The core reading program was expected to include systematic and explicit instruction in each of the five reading dimensions at grades kindergarten through third. Assessment requirements included use of the DIBELS, the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test and the Terra Nova. Supplemental and intervention programs were also required for students who were identified through assessment as in need of additional instructional assistance.

In support of reading reform, NYSED provided statewide professional development to all grantees. The statewide professional development was delivered primarily through the Reading Academy, which was developed by NYSED in consultation with national reading experts and Voyager Learning, Inc. The Reading Academy involved an online course for teachers that provided a foundation of scientifically-based reading instruction and content and was also aligned with Reading First legislation and the New York State Learning Standards. The online component included five, interactive modules on each of the essential reading dimensions including phonemic awareness, phonics and word study, fluency, vocabulary, and reading comprehension. The modules were designed for self-study and were completed by teachers individually.

The online coursework was supported by a two-tiered coaching component. At the top of the tiered system were highly experienced Tier I reading specialists who operated as regional coach leaders to a small group of in-school Tier II reading coaches. The Tier II reading coaches, in turn, worked within the schools to provide training and coaching to teachers on effective reading instruction and assessment. This was achieved through frequent teacher study groups centered on each of the online modules.

In addition to the Reading Academy, seven Regional School Support Centers (RSSC) also provided professional development and technical assistance. Originally developed in the year 2000 to aide low-performing schools in improving student achievement, the RSSCs expanded through Reading First funds to focus on early literacy and reading. Each Center was additionally staffed with a Reading First Coordinator and one Tier I Regional Coach for every six funded buildings within the region. The Centers' responsibilities included the following activities listed below.

- Assist the eligible district in the design of Reading First applications.
- Provide consistent and frequent on-site technical assistance through regular consultation with LEAs and school leadership, building-based Tier II coaches, and teachers.
- Assist LEAs, instructional leadership, Tier II building-based coach, and teachers in collecting and analyzing assessment results.
- Provide coaching, modeling, mentoring, and support for the Tier II coach and teachers.
- Coordinate regional supplemental professional development

To date, over 300 schools located across New York State have received Reading First funds. This report presents descriptive data on the state of reading programs in Reading First schools. It represents the first of several reports that will be generated from a statewide evaluation study conducted in 2006-07 by MAGI Services, a Measurement Incorporated Company, located in White Plains and Albany, New York.

The data in this report stem from a principal survey that was distributed to all 309 Reading First-funded schools in the spring of 2007. Of the 309 schools, surveys were returned from 221, resulting in a 71.5% response rate. The survey contained items that asked for principals' perceptions about management of Reading First, reading instruction, assessment, intervention services, professional development and technical assistance, and benefits and obstacles of Reading First. The report is organized around these categories and is followed by a final summary of data.

Key Findings



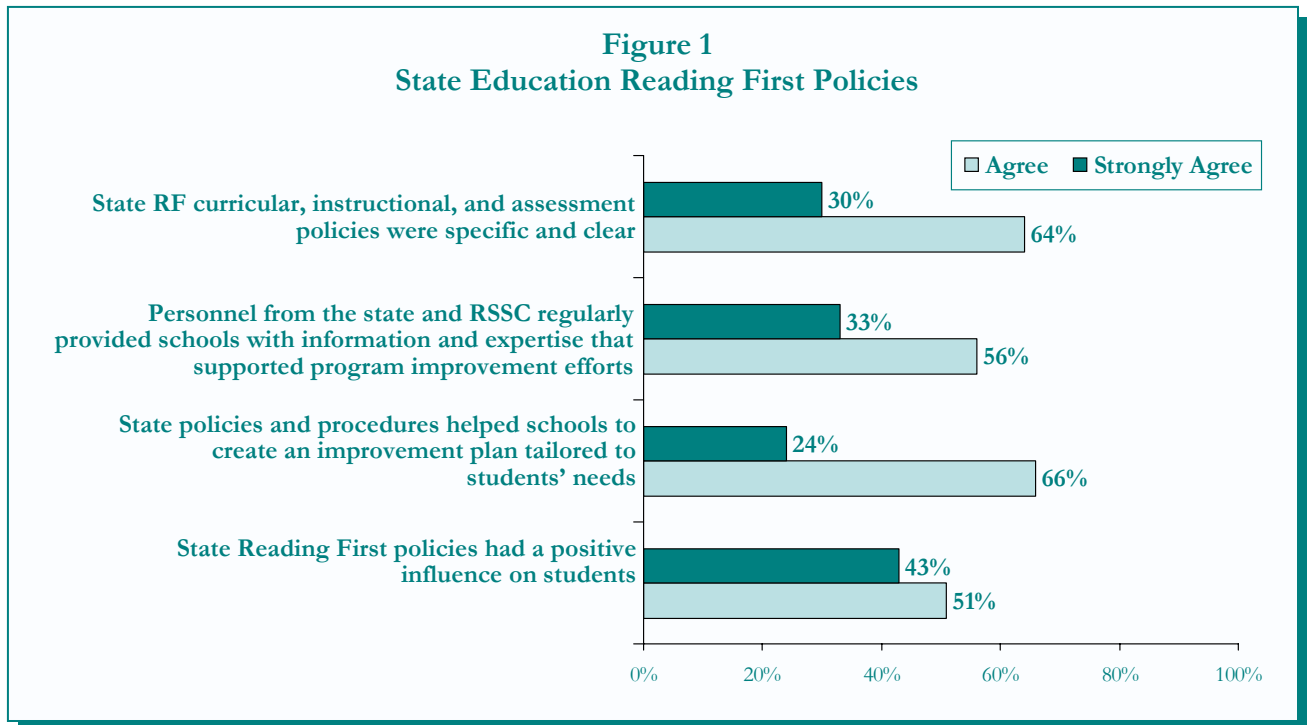
Management of Reading First

- As seen in **Table 1**, districts and schools had a number of management policies, procedures, and written guidelines put into place to direct and manage Reading First. Though most management procedures were at the school level, many districts had overlapping, or perhaps, complimentary procedures in place.

Table 1
Reading First Management Policies, Procedures, and Written Guidelines
By District and Schools

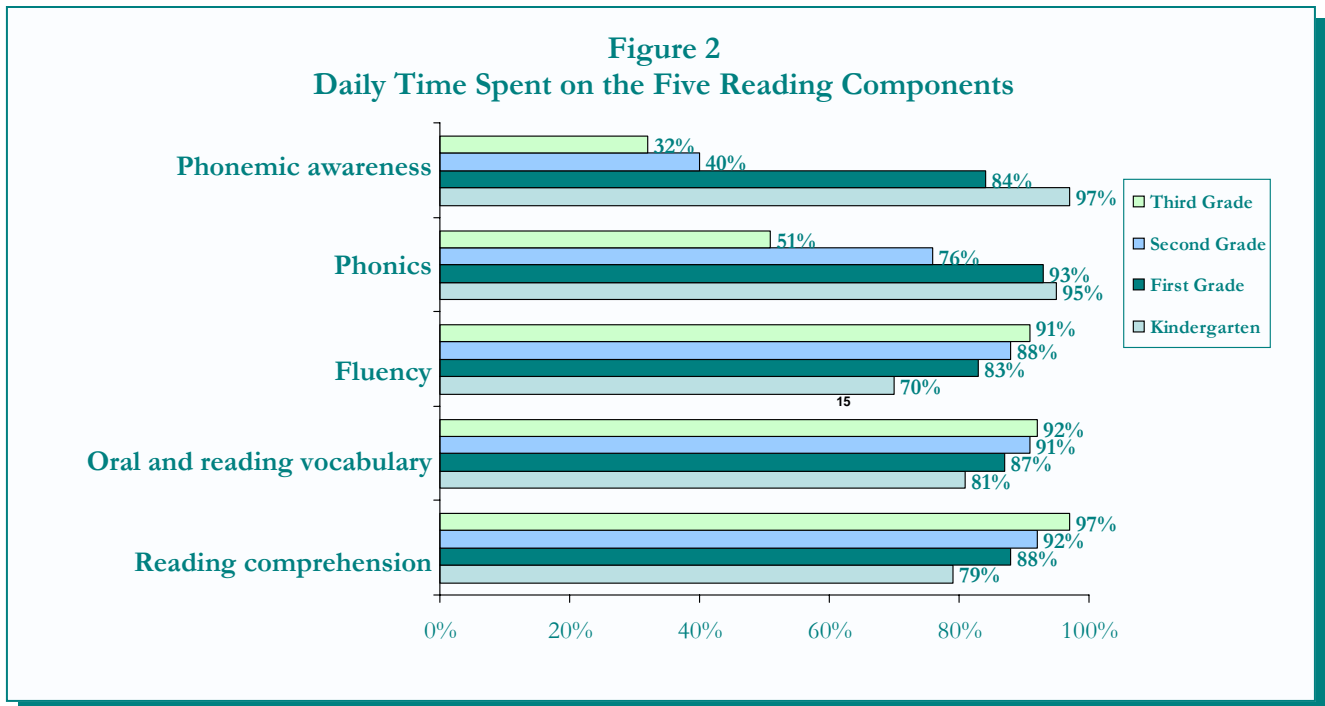
	District	School
Quantifiable/measurable goals and objectives for Reading First	70%	83%
Long-term action plan with milestones, action steps, timelines, roles, etc.	59%	66%
Communication policy for keeping stakeholders informed about Reading First	60%	73%
Technology plan that addresses the acquisition/use of technological resources	58%	58%
Procedures for ensuring ongoing communication with the state including processes for tracking and submitting reports and other required information	72%	73%
Systematic, ongoing needs assessment procedures to determine gaps between what is in place and what must be done to meet program goals	60%	82%
Fiscal management procedures to guide program budgeting (e.g., ordering curriculum and instructional materials and supplies)	72%	63%
Personnel policies and procedures (job descriptions, salary, benefits, hiring procedures, etc.)	71%	55%
Short and long-term professional development plan	68%	85%
Procedures for monitoring Reading First and local assessment administration	68%	85%
System for analyzing, interpreting, and distributing assessment results	68%	90%
Procedures for identifying, placing, and monitoring students in intervention services	58%	90%
Scheduling of time for teachers to meet for grade level meetings, common planning time, Reading Academy participation, etc.	46%	94%
Formal observations of teachers' classroom instruction	48%	89%
Topic specific "walk throughs"	51%	80%

- Nearly all of principals in Reading First schools agreed or strongly agreed that state education policies governing Reading First were clear, helpful, and had a positive influence on students (**Figure 1**).



Reading Instruction

- According to principals, teachers spent an average of 95 minutes a day in an uninterrupted reading block.
- **Figure 2** indicates the percent of time that teachers from grades kindergarten through third spent in each of the reading components. At all grade levels, teachers spent daily time in each of the five components of reading, though in varying degrees.
- At the kindergarten level, nearly all teachers spent time daily on phonemic awareness and phonics (97% and 95%, respectively). Most teachers also spent time daily on fluency, oral and reading vocabulary, and reading comprehension (70% to 81%).
- Most first grade teachers (93%) spent time daily on phonics during the reading block. Near equal amounts of time were spent on phonemic awareness, fluency, vocabulary and reading comprehension (83% to 88%).
- By second grade and into third grade, there was an emphasis shift from phonemic awareness and phonics to more focus on vocabulary and reading comprehension. Nearly all second and third grade teachers spent time daily on vocabulary and reading comprehension (91% to 97%). The percent of time spent on fluency remained high, as well.



- As seen in **Figures 3** through **7**, over half of principals indicated that teachers’ use of recommended reading instruction strategies were a normal part of instruction in their schools. Specifically,
 - 59% of principals reported that teachers used explicit and structured teacher routines (**Figure 3**),
 - 65% reported that instruction activities were sequenced and linked within and across the five essential components (**Figure 4**),
 - 54% reported that instruction was delivered in a variety of contexts/formats to meet the full range of students’ needs (**Figure 5**), and
 - 63% reported that teachers implemented SBRR instructional practices in each of the five components (**Figure 6**).
- The only area where less than half of principals reported as a normal part of instruction was in the use of reading centers for purposeful practice with accountability (**Figure 7**).

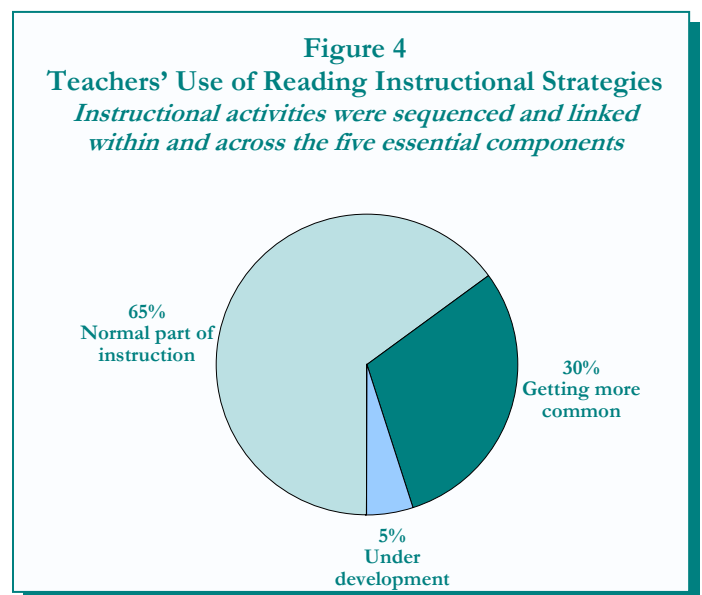
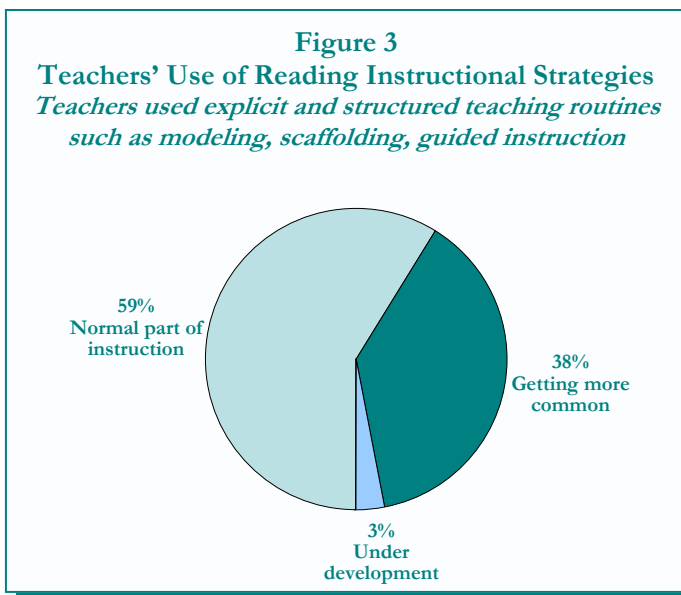


Figure 5
Teachers' Use of Reading Instructional Strategies
*Instruction was delivered in a variety of contexts/
 formats to meet the full range of student needs*

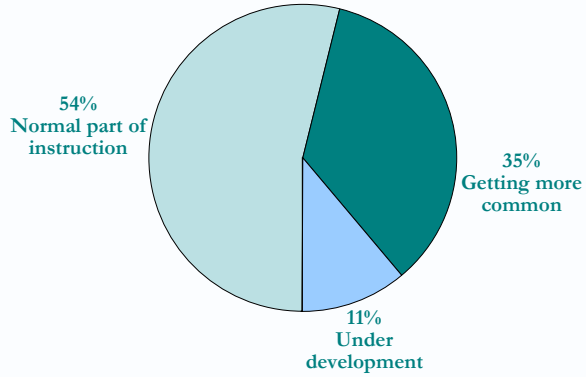


Figure 6
Teachers' Use of Reading Instructional Strategies
*Teachers implemented SBRR instructional practices in
 each of the five reading components*

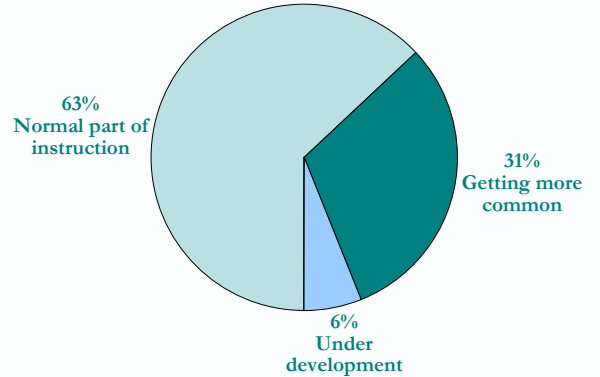
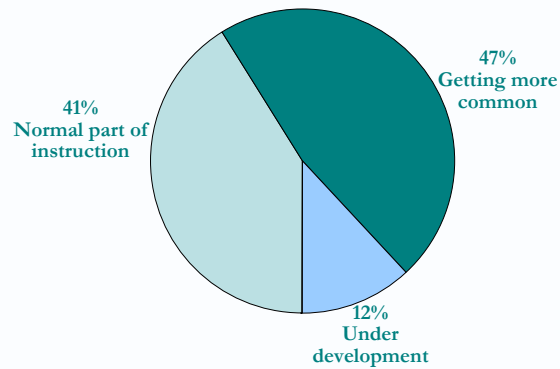


Figure 7
Teachers' Use of Reading Instructional Strategies
*Reading centers were used for purposeful practice with
 accountability*



Assessment

- Most Reading First schools had school-wide assessment procedures in place that were a normal part of work (**Table 2**). Chief among them were screening in the reading components for all students in kindergarten through third grade (94% of schools), guidelines for determining which students are at risk of reading difficulties (86%), and an assessment system and database for documenting student performance and monitoring progress (83%).
- Just over three-quarters of schools routinely analyzed and summarized student data, which was then distributed to grade-level teams. This data was used to set goals for reading in 77% of schools.
- Seven out of 10 schools trained users and provided follow-up on assessment administration, scoring, and data interpretation.
- Just over half of schools used the data to re-assess the core reading curriculum and instructional materials and to evaluate and adjust instruction (by grade level teams).
- According to principals, less than half of teachers (40%) were routinely using the data to pinpoint objectives that need more emphasis/to be taught differently.

Table 2
Schools' Use of Assessment

	Normal part of work at the school
At K-3, all students are screened for phonemic awareness, oral reading fluency, vocabulary and comprehension.	94%
There are clear guidelines for determining which students are at risk of reading difficulties (e.g., cutoff scores on assessments).	86%
A schoolwide assessment system and database is established and maintained for documenting student performance and monitoring progress.	83%
Student performance data are analyzed and summarized in meaningful formats. Data is distributed to grade-level teams.	78%
The school uses data from assessments to set goals for reading.	77%
All users receive training and follow-up on assessment administration, scoring, and data interpretation.	70%
The school uses data from assessments to re-assess the core reading curriculum and instructional material.	56%
Student performance data is routinely used by grade-level teams to evaluate and adjust instruction.	55%
Teachers use assessment data to pinpoint objectives that need more emphasis/to be taught differently.	40%

- As seen in **Table 3**, most schools use a variety of assessments at least three times a year or ongoing, as needed.

Table 3
Use of Assessments

	Don't Use	At least once a year	At least 3 times a year	Ongoing, as needed
Screening	1%	32%	22%	45%
Diagnostic tests	<1%	14%	21%	65%
Core program assessments	<1%	4%	20%	76%
Progress monitoring	<1%	<1%	6%	94%
Outcome assessments	<1%	41%	20%	39%

Intervention Services for Struggling Readers

- **Table 4** lists the types of intervention services that were available in Reading First schools. The top five included,
 - in-class reading instruction modifications and differentiated instruction (94%),
 - a certified reading specialist or trained classroom teacher who provided intensive intervention (89%),
 - push-in/pull-out programs (87%),
 - a certified specialist who worked with individual students and provided recommendations for classroom teachers to accommodate students (83%), and
 - trained aides/volunteers who tutored individuals or small groups within the classroom (70%).

Table 4
Intervention Services

	Percent of Schools
In-class reading instruction modifications and differentiated instruction provided by teacher.	94%
A certified reading specialist or trained classroom teacher provides intensive intervention.	89%
Push-in/pull-out programs	87%
A certified specialist works with individual students and provides recommendations for classroom teachers on accommodation for these students.	83%
Trained aides/volunteers tutor individuals or small groups within the core classroom program.	70%
Reading programs for students with special needs.	60%
Before- and after-school programs for students needing help with reading.	57%
A separate tutorial program for readers that is part of an intervention.	55%
Reading interventions for ELLs.	52%

- According to principals, intervention services had most of the components listed below.
 - Small group or one-on-one instruction (97%)
 - Direct, systematic instruction in phonemic awareness and phonics (95%)
 - Opportunities for guided, repeated oral reading (93%)
 - Some word study (91%)
 - An array of activities that focused on reading comprehension (90%)
 - Materials and instructional techniques that were aligned with in-class instruction (87%)
 - Direct, systematic instruction in vocabulary development (83%)
 - Carefully planned assessments that monitor student’s progress (83%)
 - Professional development for people who are providing the intervention (83%)

Statewide Professional Development

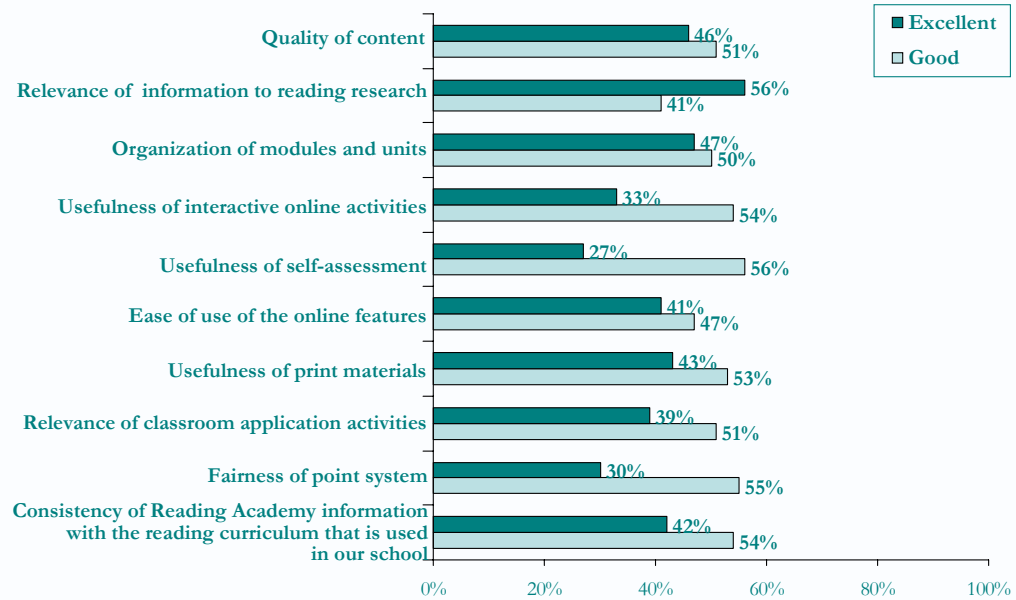
- According to principals, all or nearly all teachers completed modules 1 through 4 of the NYS Reading Academy (**Table 5**), whereas 87% of teachers completed module 5 on reading comprehension.
- The modules consisted of three components; self-paced content and online work, group interactions, and planning classroom activities. According to principals, teachers spent an average of 6 hours on self-paced content and online work and 4 hours each on group interaction and planning classroom activities.

Table 5
Teacher Completion Rate of NYS Reading Academy Modules

	Percent of Teachers
Module 1: Phonemic Awareness	100%
Module 2: Phonics and Word Study	99%
Module 3: Fluency	98%
Module 4: Vocabulary	94%
Module 5: Reading Comprehension	87%

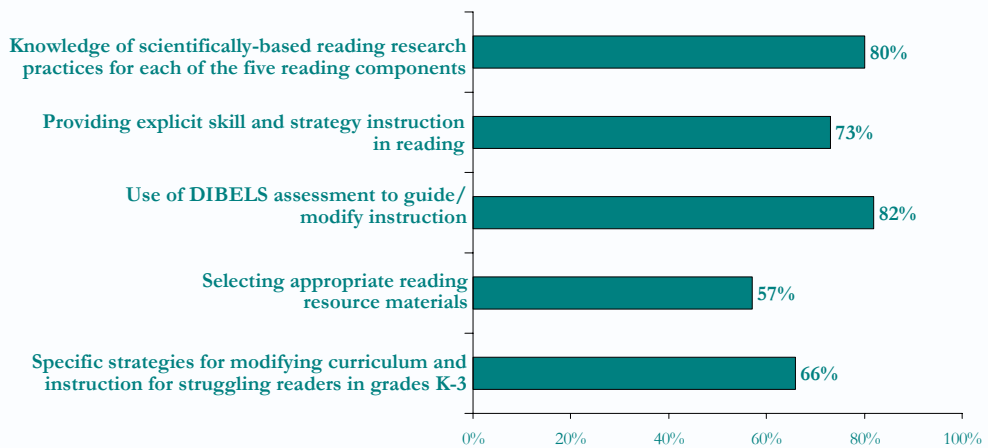
- Most principals gave a “good” or “excellent” rating to the Reading Academy (**Figure 8**, see following page). The highest ratings (97%) went to the quality of the content, relevance of information to reading research, and the organization of the modules and units.

Figure 8
Principals' Ratings of NYS Reading Academy

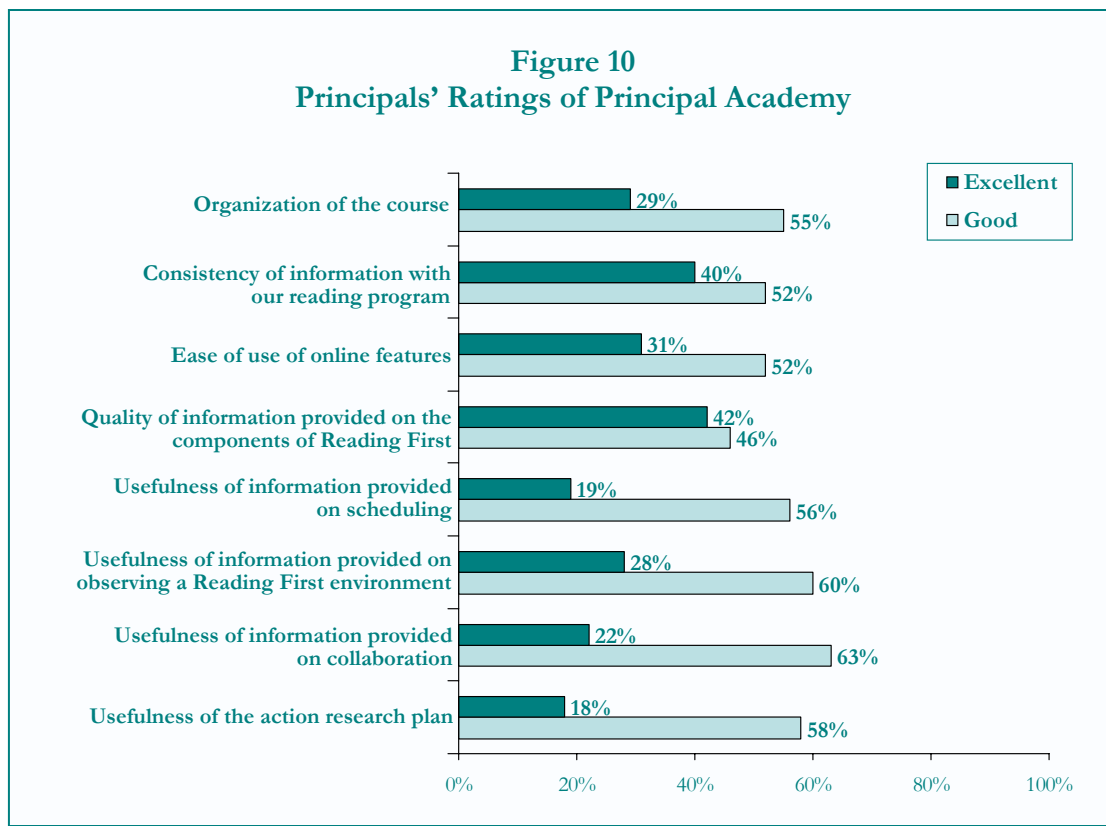


- Principals were asked to rate the collective knowledge of teachers as a result of their participation in the Reading Academy. In all areas, over half of principals noted substantial change in teacher knowledge (see **Figure 9**). The highest areas of substantial change were in the use of DIBELS assessment to guide or modify instruction (82%) and knowledge of scientifically-based reading research practices for each of the five reading components (80%).

Figure 9
Changes in Teachers' Knowledge and Skill of Reading Instruction as Reported by Principals
(Substantial change)



- Principals also participated in the Reading Academy through the Principal Academy. On average, principals participated in 12 hours of the Academy.
- Principals, for the most part, gave “good” ratings to the organization, ease of use, and usefulness of the Academy (**Figure 10**).
- The highest percent of “good” and “excellent” ratings were given to the consistency of information with the school’s reading program (92%), the quality of information provided on the components of Reading First (88%) and the usefulness of information provided on observing a Reading First environment (88%).



Other Types of Professional Development, Coaching and Assistance

- **Table 6**, on the following page, lists other types of professional development that were offered to teachers during the past 12 months. Chief among them were regularly scheduled staff meetings (92%), mentoring, peer observation and coaching (88%), workshops or pull-out training by RSSC RF staff (81%) and direct classroom assistance from RSSC RF staff (80%).

Table 6
Other Types of Professional Development

	Percent of Schools
Regularly scheduled staff meetings	92%
Mentoring/peer observation and coaching	88%
Workshops or pull-out training in reading strategies by RSSC RF staff	81%
Direct classroom assistance from RSSC RF staff	80%
Self-directed learning	69%
Workshops or pull-out training in reading strategies by other outside consultants, not RSSC RF staff	65%
Ongoing series of training activities in a content area	63%
Teacher study groups/circles	60%
Vendor training in core reading curriculum instructional strategies and approaches	60%
Visits to, or observations of, other programs	60%
Internet-based or long distance learning	51%
Enrollment in college or university courses	31%

- As seen in **Table 7**, Reading First schools’ professional development program was ongoing (96%), informed by research (91%), aligned with Reading First (99%), and the district professional development (92%).
- Most principals also agreed that staff participated in planning professional development (78%), which was based on a formal assessment of staff needs (83%). All staff participated in professional development in 89% of schools.
- A little more than half (63%) of principals agreed that there was adequate time for professional development.

Table 7
Characteristics of Professional Development

	Percent of Schools
Professional development was explicitly connected to the goals and objectives of the program.	99%
Professional development was ongoing and job-embedded.	96%
Professional development was incorporated and aligned with the district wide professional development plan.	92%
Professional development was informed by current research and practice in adult education.	91%
All staff members participated in professional development including administrative, instructional, and support staff.	89%
Professional development was based on a formal assessment of staff needs.	83%
Staff members were very active in planning professional development activities.	78%
There was adequate time for professional development.	63%

- According to **Table 8**, Tier II/Building Coaches provided the most assistance to schools, which is not surprising considering that Tier II coaches worked within the schools. The top three areas of support were in assistance in administering assessments (98%), interpreting data (96%), and professional development on reading content and instruction (96%).
- Tier I/Regional Coaches also provided support and assistance. The three main areas of support from the Tier I/Regional Coaches were selecting and using instructional materials (58%), professional development on reading content and instruction (68%), and assistance in interpreting assessment data (73%).
- Similarly, Regional Coordinators/District Personnel provided support and assistance in the same three categories to most schools.
- To a lesser extent, outside vendors, textbook or curriculum vendors and consultants lent their support in most areas of implementation.

Table 8
Types of Supports and Assistance Provided to Schools

	Tier II/ Building Coach	Tier I / Regional Coach	Regional Coordinators/ District Personnel	Outside Vendors	Textbook/ Curriculum Vendors	Consultants/ Reading Experts
Assistance in selecting and using instructional materials	86%	58%	67%	14%	26%	35%
Professional development on reading content and instruction	96%	68%	61%	13%	21%	38%
Classroom demonstrations	94%	37%	18%	3%	8%	31%
Assistance in interpreting assessment data	96%	73%	67%	7%	2%	24%
Assistance in administering assessments	98%	41%	41%	2%	2%	17%
Diagnostic help for specific students	92%	40%	35%	<1%	<1%	32%
Assistance in working with paraprofessionals, volunteers who assist in the classroom	81%	21%	24%	1%	1%	13%
Communicating with parents about their children's progress	79%	9%	31%	0%	1%	14%

- Principals met regularly with Tier II/Building Coaches and teachers to discuss instruction, professional development and/or assessment related to Reading First (**Table 9**). Specifically, 93% of principals met several times a month or more frequently with Tier II/Building Coaches and 85% met with teachers as frequently.
- Approximately 1 in 4 principals met with Tier I/Regional Coaches and District Coordinators or other district personnel several times a month or more frequently.

- Few principals met frequently with RSSC RF Coordinators or RSSC Data Assessment Coordinators.

Table 9
Percent of Principals who Met Regularly with Reading First Constituents
(Several Times a Month or More)

	Percent of Principals
Tier II/Building Coach	93%
Teachers	85%
District Coordinators or district personnel	43%
Tier I/Regional Coach	41%
RSSC RF Coordinator	10%
RSSC Data Assessment Coordinators	8%

Perceived Outcomes and Obstacles

- **Table 10** lists the benefits that principals perceived as a result of Reading First. The top benefits centered on improvements in pedagogy, instruction, and curriculum. Specifically, nearly all principals reported improvements in teachers’ content knowledge (97%), more effective instructional methods (96%), an increased focus in the reading program (95%), and greater awareness of students strengths and weaknesses (95%).
- Furthermore, 95% of principals reported that there were improvements in students’ skills in the five essential reading components.
- Principals also reported benefits to assessment, resources, professional development, and time spent on reading.

Table 10
Perceived Benefits Reported by Principals

	Percent of Principals
Teachers’ content knowledge of reading has improved.	97%
Instructional methods are more effective and consistent with evidenced-based practices.	96%
Our reading program has become more focused and consistent.	95%
Teachers are more aware of learners’ strengths and weaknesses.	95%
Students have improved their skills in the five essential reading components.	95%
Learner assessment is more frequent and systematic.	93%
More learning resources are available/accessible.	92%
Professional development activities are more effective and “professionalized”.	87%
Teachers have increased the amount of time they spend on reading.	87%

- As seen in **Table 11**, less than half of principals reported obstacles to implementation. The biggest obstacle was scheduling difficulties, which was reported by 45% of principals. The following top three including lack of time to conduct necessary work (36%), and staff turnover or new staff (28%).

Table 11
Perceived Obstacles Reported by Principals

	Percent of Principals
Scheduling difficulties	45%
Lack of time to conduct necessary work	36%
Staff turnover or new staff	28%
Changes in policies and procedures	21%
Not getting funding in time	21%
Unrealistic timelines	19%
General teacher discomfort with teaching material	13%
Lack of interest/support from teachers and instructional staff	13%

Plans to Sustain Reading First Activities Beyond Funding

- **Table 12** lists the varying degrees of commitment to Reading First beyond the initial funding period. At least 50% of schools plan to continue some or all aspects of the program regardless of whether or not the school receives additional funding.
- Another 36% of schools will continue some or all aspects of the program only if additional funds can be secured.
- Only 14% of schools said no and don't know to continuation of the program regardless to funding.

Table 12
Percent of Schools that Plan to Continue Reading First

	Percent of Schools
Yes to all aspects of the program regardless of funding	15%
Yes to some aspects of the program regardless of funding	35%
Yes to all aspects of the program if additional funding can be secured	27%
Yes to some aspects of the program if additional funding can be secured.	9%
No, even if additional funding can be secured	1%
Don't know	13%

- When asked through which means will the school plan to continue Reading First activities, most principals (70%) reported that the program would be integrated into the school improvement planning or budget process (**Table 13**).
- Another 46% of principals indicated that they would continue Reading First through district support. Other avenues included tapping into other grant opportunities (39%) or leveraging other local, state, and/or federal funds (33%).
- Some principals (38%) indicated that they would like to continue Reading First, but had not secured funds at this time.

Table 13
Means for Continuing Reading First

	Percent of Schools
Integration of Reading First into school improvement planning or budget process	70%
Receipt of district support	46%
Pursuit of other grant opportunities	39%
Leverage of other local, state, and/or federal funds	33%
Would like to continue Reading First, but no plans for securing funds	38%

- **Table 14** lists the Reading First components that schools planned to continue beyond Reading First funding. Chief among them were the instructional approach or strategies, the core reading program, and use of the Reading First assessments.
- On the lower end are plans to continue the professional development.

Table 14
Plans to Continue Reading First Components

The school plans to continue...	Percent of Schools
Use the same instructional approach/strategies	86%
Use the same core reading program	82%
To analyze, interpret, and incorporate RF assessments into building-level decision-making and to inform instruction	82%
To administer RF assessments	77%
Formal observations of teachers' reading instruction	77%
Use the collaborative planning model	64%
Regularly scheduled meetings on RF implementation and monitoring	62%
The building coach position	48%
Professional development with the Reading Academy	23%

Summary



The findings in this report paint a picture of schools in New York State that on track with Reading First requirements. Noteworthy findings are highlighted below.

Management

- Reading First was well planned and managed as indicated by the list of policies, procedures, and written guidelines reported by most schools and to a lesser extent, districts. Furthermore, NYSED Reading First policies were clear, helpful, and contributed to student achievement, as reported by principals.

Instruction, Assessment, and Intervention

- Teachers spent a little more than the recommended 90 minutes a day in an uninterrupted reading block. During this time, all teachers spent time on the five components of reading, though the amount of time in each component varied by grade. At the lower grades, e.g., kindergarten and first, teachers spent more time on phonemic awareness and phonics. At the higher grades, e.g., second and third, there was an emphasis shift toward vocabulary and reading comprehension. At all grades, time spent on fluency remained high.
- Most schools' assessment procedures were aligned with Reading First assessment requirements. They included screening for all students K-3, guidelines for determining students who are at risk of reading difficulties, and a schoolwide assessment system and database to track students.
- Intervention programs were also aligned with Reading First. Most schools also had a variety of intervention services for struggling readers including in-class instructional modifications, certified specialists who provided intensive instruction to individual students and trained volunteers and aides who tutored students. The intervention programs involved direct, systematic instruction in the core reading dimensions that was aligned with in-class instruction to small groups or individual students.

Professional Development and Support

- Most teachers completed the Reading Academy modules and spent an average of 14 hours on each module. Principals gave high ratings to the quality of the Reading Academy and most agreed that teachers' knowledge of scientifically-based research and use of explicit skill instruction had substantially improved.

- Principals participated in 12 hours, on average, of the Principal Academy. They were also pleased with the quality of the Academy, though to a lesser extent than the Reading Academy.
- In addition to the statewide professional development program, Reading First schools had other types of professional development through staff meetings, coaches, and the RSSC staff.
- Technical assistance and support in all aspects of Reading First implementation was provided by Tier I and II coaches, Regional Coordinators or district personnel, and to a lesser extent, outside vendors, curriculum vendors, and consultants.

The student outcome data on the DIBELS, TerraNova, and Grade 4 statewide assessments were not available at the time of this report, but will be reported when the data is available. Nonetheless, principals' reported benefits are a credible source for assessing impact and will suffice at this time. The highest reported improvements were in the areas of teachers' knowledge of reading and quality of instruction (reported in **Table 10**). Open ended comments from principals elaborated and described these improvements. For instance, one principal reported that, "Teacher have become more effective reading instructors and have learned to implement positive reading strategies. Best practices are now evidenced in the school." Another principal commented that there was "a general rejuvenation of reading instruction." In addition, "teachers are wasting much less instructional time. Students were actively engaged in learning and teachers' are explicitly teaching. Reading and literacy skills are a focus of instruction across the disciplines."

Similarly, many principals agreed that there was improved consistency in the reading program across grades and instructional practices. For instance, "all K-3 teachers are using the same language with the same understanding of how to teach reading." Put differently, "everyone is speaking a common language. There is focused time on reading instruction with appropriate activities, increased explicit instruction, and parents are speaking the same language too." As a result of the consistency, there is more teamwork in schools. For instance one principal wrote, "Everyone works hard to make our school a regional Reading First model of excellence."

In addition to improvements in pedagogy and instruction, principals also reported improvements in students' reading skills and testing scores. To summarize, one principal wrote, "The success of our children speaks volumes about the benefits of the program." Some principals reported that students' comprehension skills improved as a result of their "strong decoding and fluency foundation." Other principals reported that state ELA tests scores and DIBELS scores improved, and in some cases, the improvements were "dramatic."

Finally, the data on sustaining Reading First beyond funding points to the credibility of the program and certainly validates the reported benefits. At least half of the principals are committed to continuing Reading First regardless of funding and another third of principals are committed if they can secure some funding. Most will integrate the program into the school improvement and/or budgeting processing to make it a standard component of school improvement. According to principals, many of the components of Reading First will stay intake, in particular the instructional strategies, the core reading program and assessment procedures.

The next report on New York State's Reading First program will investigate the student outcome data, namely the DIBELS, TerraNova, and Grade 4 statewide assessment data. In addition, the report will examine implementation factors that may explain changes in student outcomes, including a descriptive analysis of classroom observation data.

New York State Education Department
Reading First Program



A Measurement Incorporated Company