

Rhode Island Reading First

Summative Evaluation: Reduction in Students Reading Below Grade Level in Cohort 2

by Stephen Brand, Anne M. Seitsinger, and Amy L. Burns



Prepared for the
Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
by the National Center on Public Education and Social Policy
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This report provides a summative evaluation of the impact of the Rhode Island Reading First program on reducing the percentage of students reading below grade level in Cohort 2. Three focal questions will be addressed by this evaluation report: (a) What is the impact of the Rhode Island Reading First program on students' acquisition of key reading skills?; (b) Does the impact of the Reading First program differ by grade level?; and (c) Does the impact of the Reading First program differ according to student characteristics (i.e., race/ethnicity, poverty, IEP, and LEP status)?

Reading Achievement

To address the questions raised above, we examined trends in students' performance on the Stanford-Reading First (SAT-RF) test between Spring 2005 and Spring 2007. The SAT-RF instrument is a standardized test of students' performance in the following key reading skills: Phonemic Awareness, Phonics, Vocabulary Development, Reading Fluency, Reading Comprehension, Speaking Vocabulary, and Oral Reading Fluency. In addition, the test also provides an overall summary of students' performance: the SAT-RF Total. Of particular importance in the following analyses are the percentages of students who attain proficiency in each skill area. The impact of the Reading First program will be assessed in terms of increasing the percentage of students who are proficient in the above skills. Specifically, program impacts will be assessed in terms of the increase of students who are proficient between Spring 2005 and Spring 2007. The sample for this report consists of the only Cohort 2 school that continued in the project between n 2005 and 2007: AS Feinstein Elementary in Central Falls.

Change in Reading Proficiency from 2005 to 2007

Evaluation data, including scores on the Stanford-Reading First test, were collected annually. This report will focus on changes in achievement between the 2004-2005 and the 2006-2007 school years. Sample sizes for specific groups of students by grade level from Spring 2007 are shown below. These percentages are similar for students who participated in Spring 2005 and Spring 2006. Please note that achievement trends for White students, and students with IEPs, should be interpreted cautiously due to the relatively low sample sizes in these groups. Further, no meaningful conclusions can be drawn concerning Asian and Native American students. Finally, please note that this school does not have any Kindergarten students.

Table 1

Number of Students Tested (Spring 2007) in Cohort 2

Grade	Overall	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian	Native American	Low Income	IEP	LEP
1	46	6	6	33	.	.	34	6	14
2	39	6	4	28	1	.	32	5	21
3	44	12	4	27	.	1	39	12	20

Test scores from the SAT-RF achievement test for students in Cohort 2 are presented in Tables 2 through 9. In each of these tables, the numbers in the cells represent the percentage of students who exhibited grade level proficiency on the area tested. If no students attained grade level proficiency, the number 0 appears. If no students were tested, then a period appears in the cell. Data are tabled separately for Spring 2005 and the Spring 2007. At the bottom of each table are rows that show the change between 2005 and 2007 in the percentage of students who meet proficiency standards. Separate columns show the percentage of students attaining grade level proficiency overall, then by race/ethnicity. The percentage of students attaining grade level proficiency is also shown for students from low-income families, as well as for students with an Individualized Education Program (IEP) and Limited English Proficiency (LEP). By breaking the results out by this level of detail, we hope that the information provided may help to guide efforts in specific grade levels within this school.

These tables show change in grade level proficiency for each of the following key skills that are assessed by the SAT-RF: Phonemic Awareness (Table 2), Phonics (Table 3), Vocabulary Development (Table 4), Reading Fluency (Table 5), Reading Comprehension (Table 6), Speaking Vocabulary (Table 7), and Oral Reading Fluency (Table 8). Each of these skill areas represent core elements of scientifically- based reading instruction. These tables are followed by one that provides an overall summary score across these essential skill areas. Table 9 shows the percentage of students with grade level proficiency in the SAT-RF Total. The results of the SAT-RF vary considerably by grade, race/ethnicity, poverty, IEP, and LEP status. We will consider each of these trends in turn.

Overall Trends

Overall, the results of the SAT-RF in both 2005 and the 2007 indicate that this Reading First school is one in which a large proportion of students are in need of additional intervention in order to attain grade level proficiencies in critical reading skills. Illustratively, in 2007, the results for the SAT-RF Total (Table 9) indicate that grade level proficiency was attained by about 59% of the students in First Grade, 33% of the students in Second Grade, and 48% of the students in Third Grade. For some groups of students within this Reading First school, proficiency levels were even lower, depending on the students' grade, race/ethnicity, income, LEP, and IEP status.

While proficiency levels are low in absolute terms, it should also be noted that levels of proficiency increased between 2005 and 2007, particularly in First Grade. The percentage of First Grade students who were proficient increased by 20%, from 39% to 59%. The proportion of students attaining proficiency increased by approximately 5% in the Second Grade and 10% in the Third Grade.

Grade Level Trends

Generally higher levels of achievement were found for students in First Grade compared with higher grades in both the 2005 and the 2007 testing. Students in First Grade also exhibited greater gains between years on the SAT-RF Reading First Total, as noted above. However, grade level trends differed across content areas. Students in First Grade had higher scores and greater gains on Vocabulary Development (Table 4) and Reading Fluency (Table 5), as well as the Reading First Total. However, while students in the First Grade generally had higher scores and greater gains, some specific Reading First skills areas show a different pattern. On the SAT-RF Phonemic Awareness test (Table 2), proficiency levels were relatively high and did not change substantially

across years. On the SAT-RF Phonics test (Table 3), initial levels of proficiency were higher in the higher grade levels, and students in Third Grade, as well as those in First Grade, exhibited marked improvement between 2005 and 2007. On Reading Comprehension (Table 6), proficiency levels increased markedly in Second Grade, as well as First Grade, while the percentage of Third Grade students attaining proficiency actually fell between 2005 and 2007. On Speaking Vocabulary (Table 7), students in Second Grade made the largest gains in proficiency.

Race/Ethnicity Trends

Performance on the SAT-RF achievement tests was related with students' race/ethnicity in both years. Please note that trends for White and Black students are difficult to interpret reliability due to the small number of subjects. Across years, the percentage of students who were proficient increased for students in all ethnic groups. Illustratively, on the SAT-RF Total, a larger percentage of Hispanic students in First and Third Grade attained proficiency in 2007, compared with 2005.

Poverty Trends

Between years, the percentage of low-income students who were proficient on the SAT-RF tests increased, particularly in First Grade. As shown in Table 9, the percentage of low-income students who were proficient on the SAT-RF Total test increased by 26.1% in First Grade, 7.4% in Second Grade, and 10.2% in Third Grade.

Trends for Students with an IEP

Trends for students in this group must be treated with caution due to the relatively small sample size. Grade level proficiency was generally much lower for students with an Individualized Education Program, particularly in Second and Third Grades. Across years, First Grade students with an IEP showed higher levels of proficiency. The percentage of students who were proficient on the SAT-RF Total test increased by 16.6% in First Grade. In the Second and Third Grade, the percentage of students who attained barely changed between 2005 and 2007.

Trends for Students with LEP

In 2007, students with LEP exhibited lower levels of proficiency on the SAT-RF tests compared with other students. Illustratively, only 35.7% of students with LEP in First Grade were proficient on the SAT-RF Total. Over time, proficiency levels among Third Grade students with LEP have increased. As shown in Table 9, between 2005 and 2007, the percentage of students with LEP who attained proficiency on the SAT-RF Total test increased by 30% in Third Grade, while proficiency levels barely changed in Second Grade and declined slightly in First Grade.

Table 2

Cohort 2 Stanford-RF Phonemic Awareness Performance Level

	Grade	Overall	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian	Native American	Low Income	IEP	LEP
2005	1	72.3	77.8	75	69	.	.	75	50	73.3
	2	88.1	100	100	87.5	.	.	86.5	57.1	81.8
	3	60.9	72.7	80	55.2	.	0	60	41.2	38.1
2007	1	76.6	83.3	57.1	78.8	.	.	82.9	83.3	53.3
	2	84.6	100	75	82.1	100	.	87.5	80	76.2
	3	68.9	75	100	60.7	.	100	70	8.3	50
Change	1	4.3	5.5	-17.9	9.8			7.9	33.3	-20
	2	-3.5	0	-25.0	-5.4			1.0	22.9	-5.6
	3	8.0	2.3	20.0	5.5		100.0	10.0	-32.9	11.9

Table 3

Cohort 2 Combined Stanford-RF Phonics Performance Level

	Grade	Overall	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian	Native American	Low Income	IEP	LEP
2005	1	6.4	11.1	0	3.4	.	.	6.8	8.3	6.7
	2	23.8	40	0	25	.	.	18.9	0	9.1
	3	45.7	54.5	60	41.4	.	0	45	17.6	19
2007	1	31.9	0	28.6	39.4	.	.	37.1	33.3	26.7
	2	33.3	66.7	50	21.4	100	.	37.5	40	19
	3	68.9	75	100	64.3	.	0	67.5	33.3	55
Change	1	25.5	-11.1	28.6	36.0			30.3	25.0	20.0
	2	9.5	26.7	50.0	-3.6			18.6	40.0	9.9
	3	23.2	20.5	40.0	22.9		0	22.5	15.7	36.0

Table 4

Cohort 2 Stanford-RF Vocabulary Development Performance Level

	Grade	Overall	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian	Native American	Low Income	IEP	LEP
2005	1	19.1	22.2	25	13.8	.	.	20.5	16.7	20
	2	31	40	0	31.3	.	.	27	0	18.2
	3	26.1	45.5	40	17.2	.	0	27.5	11.8	4.8
2007	1	46.8	66.7	42.9	42.4	.	.	48.6	16.7	6.7
	2	33.3	83.3	25	25	0	.	31.3	20	9.5
	3	22.2	41.7	25	14.3	.	0	25	0	5
Change	1	27.7	44.5	17.9	28.6			28.1	0	-13.3
	2	2.3	43.3	25.0	-6.3			4.3	20.0	-8.7
	3	-3.9	-3.8	-15.0	-2.9		0	-2.5	-11.8	0.2

Table 5

Cohort 2 Stanford-RF Reading Fluency Performance Level

	Grade	Overall	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian	Native American	Low Income	IEP	LEP
2005	1	40.4	33.3	50	37.9	.	.	40.9	16.7	42.2
	2	26.2	20	0	28.1	.	.	24.3	14.3	18.2
	3	26.1	36.4	40	20.7	.	0	27.5	5.9	0
2007	1	70.2	100	57.1	69.7	.	.	74.3	66.7	60
	2	33.3	50	25	28.6	100	.	37.5	20	23.8
	3	28.9	41.7	50	21.4	.	0	30	0	5
Change	1	29.8	66.7	7.1	31.8			33.4	50.0	17.8
	2	7.1	30.0	25.0	0.5			13.2	5.7	5.6
	3	2.8	5.3	10.0	0.7		0	2.5	-5.9	5.0

Table 6

Cohort 2 Stanford-RF Reading Comprehension Performance Level

	Grade	Overall	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian	Native American	Low Income	IEP	LEP
2005	1	59.6	55.6	50	62.1	.	.	59.1	41.7	62.2
	2	11.9	20	0	9.4	.	.	8.1	0	4.5
	3	43.5	54.5	60	37.9	.	0	42.5	17.6	14.3
2007	1	78.7	100	42.9	81.8	.	.	82.9	83.3	60
	2	28.2	66.7	0	21.4	100	.	31.3	20	14.3
	3	31.1	50	25	25	.	0	32.5	8.3	10
Change	1	19.1	44.4	-7.1	19.7			23.8	41.6	-2.2
	2	16.3	46.7	0	12.0			23.2	20.0	9.8
	3	-12.4	-4.5	-35.0	-12.9		0	-10.0	-9.3	-4.3

Table 7

Cohort 2 Stanford-RF Speaking Vocabulary Performance Level

	Grade	Overall	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian	Native American	Low Income	IEP	LEP
2005	1	57.4	55.6	75	55.2	.	.	61.4	33.3	60
	2	38.1	20	0	46.9	.	.	37.8	28.6	36.4
	3	52.2	63.6	80	44.8	.	0	57.5	23.5	14.3
2007	1	66	100	57.1	60.6	.	.	71.4	66.7	26.7
	2	66.7	66.7	100	60.7	100	.	71.9	60	57.1
	3	68.2	66.7	100	66.7	.	0	66.7	41.7	70
Change	1	8.6	44.4	-17.9	5.4			10.0	33.4	-33.3
	2	28.6	46.7	100.0	13.8			34.1	31.4	20.7
	3	16.0	3.1	20.0	21.9		0	9.2	18.2	55.7

Table 8

Cohort 2 Stanford-RF Oral Reading Fluency Performance Level

	Grade	Overall	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian	Native American	Low Income	IEP	LEP
205										
	1	52.2	66.7	50	46.4	.	.	52.3	16.7	54.5
	2	31	40	50	31.3	.	.	32.4	0	31.8
	3	33.3	45.5	60	25	.	0	33.3	5.9	0
2007										
	1	60.9	83.3	50	57.6	.	.	64.7	33.3	57.1
	2	25.6	50	25	17.9	100	.	25	0	14.3
	3	35.6	33.3	50	35.7	.	0	37.5	16.7	40
Change										
	1	8.7	16.6	0	11.2			12.4	16.6	2.6
	2	-5.4	10.0	-25.0	-13.4			-7.4	0.0	-17.5
	3	2.3	-12.2	-10.0	10.7		0	4.2	10.8	40.0

Table 9

Cohort 2 Stanford-RF Total Performance Level

	Grade	Overall	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian	Native American	Low Income	IEP	LEP
2005										
	1	39.1	44.4	50	32.1	.	.	38.6	16.7	40.9
	2	28.6	20	0	31.3	.	.	27	0	22.7
	3	37.8	54.5	60	28.6	.	0	38.5	5.9	0
2007										
	1	58.7	83.3	50	54.5	.	.	64.7	33.3	35.7
	2	33.3	50	25	28.6	100	.	34.4	0	23.8
	3	47.7	50	75	44.4	.	0	48.7	8.3	30
Change										
	1	19.6	38.9	0	22.4			26.1	16.6	-5.2
	2	4.7	30.0	25.0	-2.7			7.4	0	1.1
	3	9.9	-4.5	15.0	15.8		0	10.2	2.4	30.0