

SOUTH DAKOTA READING FIRST INITIATIVE

YEAR 4 EVALUATION



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INTRODUCTION

The South Dakota Department of Education (SDDOE) was awarded a six-year grant¹ from the U.S. Department of Education to develop and implement a *Reading First* program under Title I, Part B, Subpart 1 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as amended by the No Child Left Behind Act. The overall intent of the program is to bring all children to proficient levels in reading by the end of third grade through participation in reading instruction that reflects scientifically-based reading research (SBRR). The South Dakota Reading First Initiative (SDRFI) provides subgrants to eligible local education agencies (LEAs) to implement core reading programs. With support from the National Reading First Technical Assistance Center, the SDRFI also provides guidance, technical assistance, training and oversight to participating LEAs.

The SDRFI has identified program goals for assessment, instructional strategies and programs, professional development, and technical assistance:

- Teachers will utilize screening, diagnostic and classroom-based assessments as an integral component of their reading program, using the information from assessments to provide instruction that is appropriate for every child;
- Schools will utilize instructional strategies and implement programs that are grounded on SBRR and appropriate for use with the student population in Reading First schools;
- All staff will receive professional development to fully prepare them to successfully implement a reading program grounded on SBRR; and
- Adequate technical support will be provided to district and school-based leaders to provide to empower them to provide the leadership needed to improve student reading performance through implementing reading programs grounded on SBRR.

Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL) is providing external evaluation services to the SDRFI that promote and support high quality local evaluation efforts and assess the extent to which its overall program goals are realized. A comprehensive three-year framework for the evaluation was described in McREL's *Evaluation Plan*.² The purpose of the evaluation is twofold. First, it seeks to provide information on an ongoing basis to program personnel to inform program activities and planning. This *process evaluation* will provide timely feedback to state and local

¹ South Dakota Department of Education (September, 2003). *Application for State Grant CFDA Number 84.357, Revised Edition: South Dakota Reading First*. Submitted to the United States Department of Education.

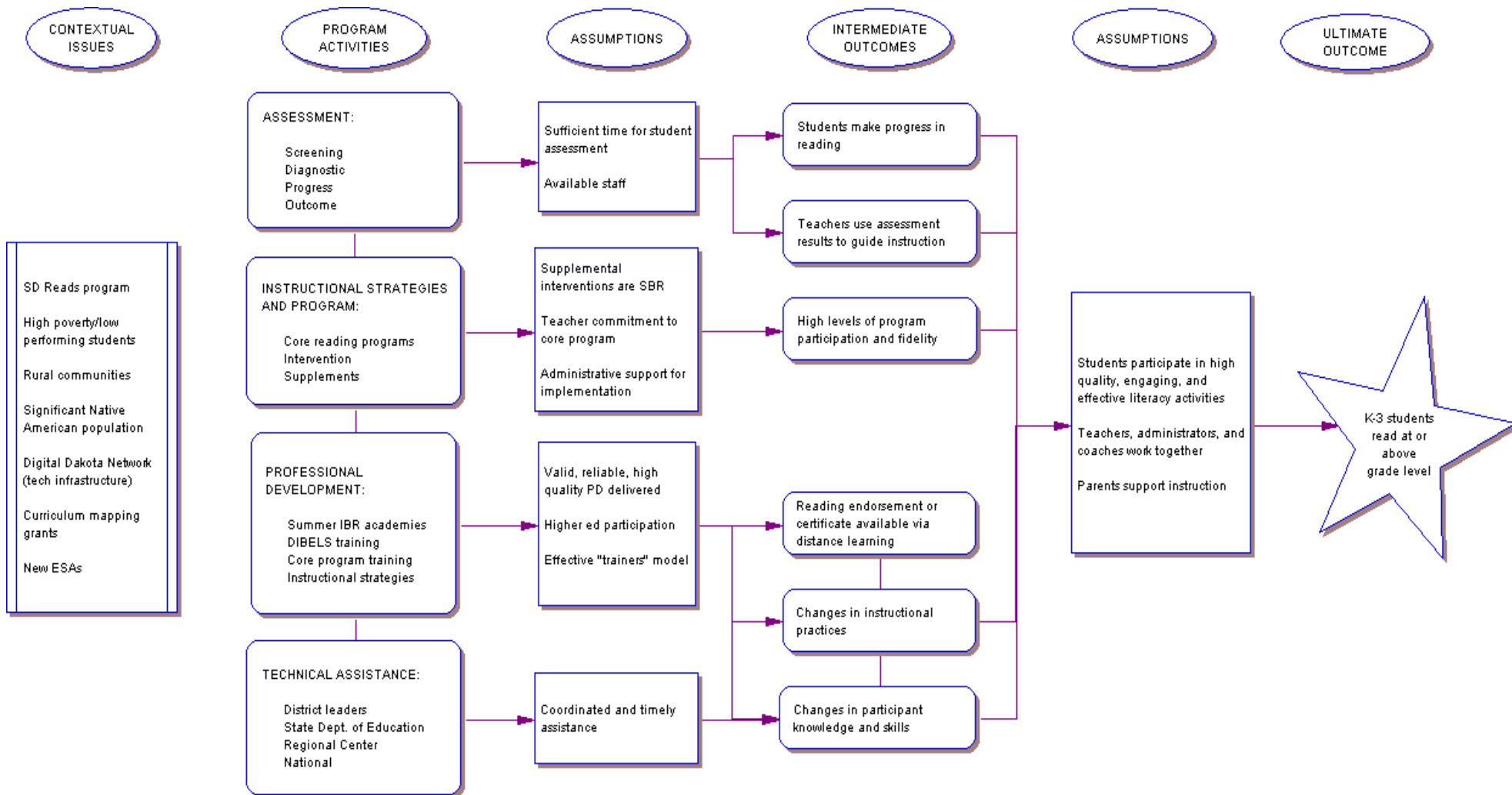
² Keller, R. A. (July 23, 2004). *South Dakota Reading First Initiative: Evaluation Plan*. Aurora, CO. Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning

program staff so that activities being undertaken as part of the SDRFI can be continuously monitored and improved. The *outcome evaluation* makes up the second major purpose of the evaluation. Its focus is on obtaining data on the impact that the SDRFI has on students, teachers, and schools in South Dakota – both in terms of attaining articulated goals and objectives as well as documenting any unanticipated effects.

Figure 1 presents an initial program logic model for the SDRFI. The model visually depicts the program activities, underlying assumptions, and intermediate and long-term outcomes expected as a result of the SDRFI. The model was developed based on the South Dakota Reading First grant application and discussions with program staff. As shown in the left part of the figure, program activities are organized according to the four overall objectives: assessment, core programs and instructional strategies, professional development, and technical assistance. The ultimate outcome, shown on the right, is that all students will read at or above grade level by the end of third grade.

This report describes the evaluation activities undertaken during project Year 4 (November 2006 through September 30, 2007) of the SDRFI.

Figure 1: Logic model for the South Dakota Reading First Initiative



METHODS

McREL employs a collaborative, mixed method approach to evaluation that uses data from a variety of sources. In accordance with the *Evaluation Plan*, data are collected at several levels and rely on a combination of inclusive methods and methods with sampling. These data collection activities are briefly described in the subsections that follow; copies of the data collection instruments are provided in Appendix A.

REVIEW PROGRAM AND PROJECT DOCUMENTS

Program and subgrant applications, progress reports, and other key SDRFI documents are collected and reviewed on an ongoing basis. McREL also subscribes to the project listserv and maintains regular contact with the project director in order to keep informed of project-related issues and solutions.

TRACK PROGRAM SERVICES, ACTIVITIES AND PARTICIPATION

Local grantees are asked to track SDRFI activities and the numbers of participating educators and students participating in each. These data are essential for a number of reasons. First, having the data collected in a timely manner allows for service delivery to be monitored continuously. This process helps identify gaps or issues in service provision in a timely manner. Second, the amount and type of services provided can be related to certain outcome data such as teacher practices, teacher knowledge and skills, and student performance. This makes it possible to make inferences regarding SDRFI programs and services which seem to be particularly effective. Third, student demographic information is needed to meet annual federal reporting requirements.

Two forms were developed to assist coaches in tracking project services. First, a checklist-style *Technical Assistance Log* was designed to document significant training and technical assistance events. Second, an *Event Registration Form* was provided for tracking participants in various events. See Appendix A for copies of these forms.

SUMMARIZE PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK

One of the underlying assumptions of the SDRFI design is that any professional development provided is useful and of high quality (refer to Figure 1). Participant feedback provides an initial measure of the perceived quality and utility of these events. It provides relevant and timely information to SDRFI staff and can be used to identify aspects of the training which appear to be particularly useful or need improvement. The South Dakota DOE's participant feedback form (Appendix A) is being used for this purpose.

SURVEY ADMINISTRATORS, COACHES AND TEACHERS

Annual online surveys (Appendix A) will be used to measure changes in participant knowledge and professional practices that result from the SDRFI. The surveys collect information about participant demographics and background, educator beliefs regarding student learning, current instructional practices, perceived usefulness and expectations of SDRFI, and the context of SDRFI implementation. Parallel forms of the annual survey were developed for administrators, reading coaches, and teachers and were implemented in May, 2007 using email addresses provided by the Reading First coaches.

CONDUCT ON-SITE VISITS

McREL evaluators conduct site visits to a sample of SDRFI schools annually, with the exception of the 2005-06 school year (see p.37). Schools are selected in order to illustrate different core reading models and educational settings. The visits are designed to help McREL better understand and observe the instructional interventions being implemented and document the initial outcomes realized. In this way insights from successful programs can be used to inform other schools state wide. An *Interview Guide* and a *Classroom Observation Guide* were used during the site visits (see Appendix A).

ANALYZE STUDENT ASSESSMENT DATA

Screening, diagnosis, progress, and outcome assessments are critical elements of each local subgrant. While student assessments vary somewhat by district, the SDRFI limits the outcome measures used at each grade level to guarantee their validity and reliability, facilitate technical assistance, and ensure comparability of data across programs. As shown in Table 1, data from three student outcome assessments are collected to examine the extent to which SDRFI has reached its goal: (a) the new *Stanford Reading First* (SRF), (b) the *Dakota State Test of Educational Progress* (STEP), and (c) the *Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills* (DIBELS). The achievement of students in Reading First schools will be compared with grade-level proficiency expectations.

Table 1: Student Outcome Measures

MEASURE	GRADE LEVEL(S)	ADMINISTRATION	COMPARISON
<i>Stanford Reading First</i>	K-3	Annually beginning in spring 2004	Proficiency criteria
<i>Dakota STEP</i>	3-8, 11	Annually beginning in spring 2004	Proficiency criteria
DIBELS	K-3	Three times annually in fall, winter and spring	Benchmarks

FINDINGS

Twenty-seven LEAs were eligible to apply for SDRFI subgrants. During Year 1, SDRFI awarded Reading First subgrants to 15 schools in nine districts; Year 2 was their first year of program implementation. During 2006, SDRFI awarded a second round of Reading First subgrants to an additional six schools in two districts. Key characteristics of the schools participating in the SDRFI are summarized in Table 2 and Table 3. As shown in the tables, the schools are typically small, serving an average of about 150 students in grades K-3, and all are located in rural areas or small towns. In six schools the majority of students are Native American and in one school students speak German as their primary language.

The remainder of this section is organized according to the four program activities identified in the project logic model: instructional strategies and programs, professional development, technical assistance, and student assessment.

INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES AND PROGRAMS

Recognizing that South Dakota is a local control state, each participating subgrant LEA is allowed to select from among approved core reading programs or to develop a program of its own design. Each program must address the five essential components of reading instruction – phonemic awareness, phonics, comprehension, vocabulary, and fluency – and include supplemental materials and intervention strategies.

Table 4 provides an overview of the core reading models selected for implementation and the supplementary and intervention materials that will be available to assist students who lag behind. As shown in the table, four different core reading programs are being implemented by the SDRFI subgrantees; one program – *The Nations Choice* – is being used by three districts and three other programs are being used by two districts each. Supplemental and intervention materials include *Read Naturally*, *Earobics*, and others. Table 5 summarizes the strategies that each of the four core programs uses to address each of the five components of reading instruction.

Table 2: Summary of Characteristics for SDRFI Subgrantees Round One (Based on 2005-06 Reported Data)

DISTRICT	SCHOOL			STUDENTS			
	Name	Grade Span	Locale	Grades K-3 (N)	Reading at Basic or Below	Highest Percent Ethnicity	Free/Reduced Lunch Eligible
Bennett County Schools 3-1	Martin Elementary	PK-6	Rural	125	52%	70% Native American	71%
Bon Homme 4-2	Tyndall Elementary	PK-5	Rural	101	-	97% White	30%
	Bon Homme Colony School	PK-8	Rural	16	80%	100% German	91%
McLaughlin School District 15-2	McLaughlin Elementary	PK-5	Rural	160	50%	89% Native American	82%
Mitchell School District	Longfellow Elementary	PK-5	Small Town	159	-	88% White	36%
	L.B. Williams Elementary	K-5	Small Town	276	-	92% White	38%
Pierre School District	Buchanan Elementary	K-6	Small Town	210	35%	25% Native American	38%
	McKinley Elementary	K-5	Small Town	63	43%	24% Native American	41%
Smee School District 15-3	Wakpala Elementary	PK-6	Rural	47	57%	99% Native American	83%
Wagner Community School	Wagner Elementary	PK-6	Rural	290	54%	54% Native American	62%
Watertown School District 14-4	Mellette Elementary	K-6	Small Town	179	25%	94% White	23%
	Jefferson Elementary	PK-6	Small Town	204	-	99% White	12%
	Lincoln Elementary	K-6	Small Town	261	-	96% White	13%
White River School District 47-1	White River Elementary	PK-5	Rural	99	64%	73% Native American	84%
	Norris Elementary	K-6	Rural	28		100% Native American	93%

Sources: School and student data are from the National Center for Educational Statistics (2005) Common Core of Data; reading rates are from subgrant applications at various grades for Dakota STEP.

Table 3: Summary of Characteristics for SDRFI Subgrantees Round Two (Based on 2005-06 Reported Data)

DISTRICT	SCHOOL			STUDENTS			
	Name	Grade Span	Locale	Grades K-3	Reading at Basic or Below	Ethnicity	FRL Eligible
Kadoka School District 35-1	Kadoka Elementary	PK-8	Rural	72	-	59% Native American	55%
	Longvalley Elementary	K-8	Rural	5	-	57% Native American	0%
	Interior Elementary	K-8	Rural	28	-	65% Native American	67%
Tripp-Delmont School District 33-5	Tripp Elementary	K-5	Rural	0	-	86% White	86%
	Clearfield Colony	K-8	Rural	10	-	100% White	90%
	Greenwood Colony	K-8	Rural	9	-	100% White	89%

Sources: School and student data are from the National Center for Educational Statistics (2005) Common Core of Data; reading rates are from subgrant applications at various grades for Dakota STEP.

Table 4: Summary of Reading Programs and Materials

DISTRICT	CORE MODEL	SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS	INTERVENTION MATERIALS
Bennett	<i>Open Court Reading</i> SRA	<i>Read Naturally</i> <i>Saxon Phonics</i>	<i>Voyager Passport</i> <i>Reading Mastery</i> <i>Corrective Reading</i>
Bon Homme	<i>The Nation's Choice</i> Houghton Mifflin	<i>Read Naturally</i> <i>Saxon Phonics</i>	<i>Read Naturally</i> <i>Road to the Code</i> <i>Lesson Map pre & re- teach</i>
Kadoka	<i>Reading 2006</i> Houghton Mifflin	<i>Phonics for Reading</i>	<i>HM Early Success 1+2</i> <i>Lexia Phonics</i>
McLaughlin	<i>Scott Foresman Reading</i> Pearson Education	<i>Read Naturally</i> <i>Earobics</i>	<i>Early Reading Intervention</i> <i>Phonics for Reading</i> <i>SIPPS</i>
Mitchell	<i>The Nation's Choice</i> Houghton Mifflin	<i>Read Naturally</i> <i>Earobics</i> <i>Read, Write & Type</i> <i>Elements of Reading-Vocabulary</i> <i>Rewards</i>	<i>Earobics</i> <i>Read Well</i> <i>Voyager</i> <i>Road to the Code</i> <i>Read Naturally</i>
Pierre	<i>Reading 2003</i> Macmillan/McGraw-Hill	<i>Success Maker</i> <i>Read/Write/Type</i> <i>Road to the Code</i> <i>Phonemic Awareness in Young Children</i> <i>Read Naturally</i> <i>Language for Learning</i> <i>MMH Core Intervention</i> <i>Elements of Reading - Vocabulary</i>	<i>Voyager</i> <i>Lindamood-Bell</i> <i>Road to the Code</i> <i>Phonemic Awareness in Young Children</i> <i>Read Naturally</i> <i>MMH Core Intervention</i> <i>K PALS</i> <i>First Grade PALS</i>
Smee	<i>The Nation's Choice</i> Houghton Mifflin	<i>Read Naturally</i> <i>Read Well</i> <i>Language for Learning</i> <i>Time for Kids</i> <i>Readers Theatre</i>	<i>Read Naturally- tutor</i> <i>Language for Learning 2-3</i> <i>Read Well 2-3</i>
Tripp-Delmont	<i>Reading2006</i> Houghton Mifflin	<i>Reading Mastery</i>	<i>Phonics for Reading</i>
Wagner	<i>Scott Foresman Reading</i> Pearson Education	Scott Foresman	<i>SRA Corrective Reading</i> <i>SRA Spelling Mastery</i> <i>Phonics for Reading</i> <i>Early Reading</i> <i>SIPPS</i>
Watertown	<i>Reading 2003</i> Macmillan/McGraw-Hill	<i>Success Maker</i>	<i>Lindamood-Bell</i> <i>Read Naturally</i> <i>Early Success</i> <i>Earobics</i> <i>Fast Forward</i>
White River	<i>Open Court Reading</i> SRA	<i>Reading Mastery</i> <i>Accelerated Reader</i> <i>Language for Learning</i>	<i>SIPPS</i> <i>Road to the Code</i> <i>Language for Learning</i> <i>Earobics</i> <i>Early Reading Intervention</i> <i>Read Naturally</i>

Table 5: Summary of Core Reading Program Strategies

CORE MODEL	INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES				
	Phonemic Awareness	Phonics	Vocabulary Development	Reading Fluency	Reading Comprehension
<p><i>The Nation's Choice</i> Houghton Mifflin</p>	<p>Identifying and producing rhyming words and beginning sounds</p> <p>Identifying syllables in spoken words</p> <p>Identifying and blending onsets and rimes</p> <p>Blending and segmenting phonemes</p>	<p>Connecting letters to sounds</p> <p>Blending</p> <p>Connecting sounds to spelling and writing</p> <p>Learning high frequency words</p> <p>Applying skills to real text and writing</p> <p>Systematic decoding strategies</p>	<p>Teaches relevant vocabulary before, during, and after reading</p> <p>Teacher read-aloud and independent reading</p> <p>Writing lessons and reading-writing workshops</p> <p>Vocabulary speed drills, spiral reviews, word pattern board activities</p> <p>Context and graphic support</p>	<p>Independent, partner, and teacher-supported reading</p> <p>Audiotapes of big books and anthology selections</p> <p>Reading familiar text</p> <p>Support for reading at home</p>	<p>Teacher, student/teacher, and student modeling</p> <p>Addresses monitoring, cooperative learning, use of graphic organizers, question answering, question generating, story structure, and summarization</p>
<p><i>Reading 2003</i> Macmillan/McGraw-Hill</p>	<p>Direct instruction on phonemic awareness including listening, rhyming, blending, segmenting</p> <p>Articulation</p> <p>Game-like activities</p>	<p>Sound-letter correspondence</p> <p>Word-building</p> <p>Reading decodable stories</p> <p>Re-teach, practice, and extended phonics activities</p> <p>Daily writing activities</p>	<p>Specific word instruction with meaningful practice activities</p> <p>Repeated exposures</p> <p>Word learning strategies that utilize reference aids, word parts, and context clues</p> <p>Re-teach, practice, and extended activities</p>	<p>Repeated reading</p> <p>Reading with intonation, expression and clarity</p> <p>Reading dialogue</p> <p>Group reading</p> <p>Partner reading</p>	<p>Explicit comprehension strategies taught and applied</p> <p>Teacher modeling</p> <p>Graphic organizers</p> <p>Questioning</p> <p>Comprehension monitoring</p>

Table 5 (Cont.) : Summary of Core Reading Program Strategies

CORE MODEL	INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES				
	Phonemic Awareness	Phonics	Vocabulary Development	Reading Fluency	Reading Comprehension
<p><i>Scott Foresman Reading</i> Pearson Education</p>	<p>Uses environmental print</p> <p>Moves through blending and segmenting words</p> <p>Connects sound to letter</p> <p>Teaches one phoneme per lesson</p>	<p>Relates letters and sounds</p> <p>Breaks spoken words into sounds</p> <p>Blends sounds to read words</p> <p>Applies letter-sound knowledge to spelling</p>	<p>Introduces vocabulary words before reading text</p> <p>Uses thematically or topically related words</p> <p>High frequency words</p> <p>Introduces vocabulary in context</p> <p>Uses prior knowledge to predict meaning</p> <p>Practices vocabulary in oral language activities</p>	<p>Develops full range of decoding skills that lead to automatic word recognition</p> <p>Lessons in fluent reading, reading with expression, phrasing, and attending to punctuation</p> <p>Teaches high frequency words</p> <p>Reinforces oral reading; tape-assisted reading; choral reading; partner reading, echo reading</p>	<p>Various comprehension strategies taught and applied, including: predict, summarize, identify text structure, classify and categorize, recognize cause and effect, draw conclusions, identify main idea and supporting details, compare and contrast, sequence, fact vs. opinion, judgments, skim and scan, use mental imagery, write notes, make outlines, connect with prior knowledge</p>
<p><i>Open Court Reading</i> SRA</p>	<p>Direct instruction in phonemic awareness, alphabetic principle, and how print works</p> <p>Letter-sound correspondence activities</p> <p>Blending, segmentation, discrimination, phonemic play, pre-decodable and decodable text</p>	<p>Logical sequence of letter-sound relationships</p> <p>Students read words, sentences, and stories</p> <p>Blending instruction, Reinforcement and review of phonics skills</p> <p>Whole-class, flexible small group, and one-to-one formats</p>	<p>Explicit instruction in word meanings</p> <p>Explicit instruction in word learning strategies of word analysis, context, and apposition</p> <p>Word building and dictation, writers journals for recording new words, Opportunities to read in and out of school</p>	<p>Modeling of fluent reading, guided oral reading</p> <p>Feedback/support from teachers, peers, and parents, Partner reading</p> <p>Practice stories with decodable text</p> <p>Assessment to monitor progress in rate and accuracy</p>	<p>Monitoring understanding</p> <p>Model strategies such as classifying, sequencing, inferring, and drawing conclusions</p> <p>Use graphic organizers, prompting questions, summarizing</p> <p>Generate questions and answers, understand story structure</p>

Table 5 (Cont.) : Summary of Core Reading Program Strategies

CORE MODEL	INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES				
	Phonemic Awareness	Phonics	Vocabulary Development	Reading Fluency	Reading Comprehension
<p>Reading 2006 Houghton Mifflin</p>	<p>Identifying and producing rhyming words</p> <p>Listening for same beginning sound and segmenting beginning sounds</p> <p>Kindergarten - Identifying syllables in spoken word., Identifying and blending onsets and rhymes, blending and segmenting phonemes.</p>	<p>Phonemic awareness</p> <p>Connecting letters to sounds</p> <p>Blending</p> <p>Connect sounds to spelling and writing</p> <p>Learning high-frequency words</p> <p>Applying high-frequency words in real text and through writing</p>	<p>Regular teacher read alouds and daily independent reading</p> <p>Writing lessons and reading-writing workshops</p> <p>Vocabulary speed drills</p> <p>Spiral reviews</p> <p>Word pattern board activities</p> <p>Instructional transparencies</p>	<p>Repeated oral reading</p> <p>Daily independent reading</p> <p>Audiotapes of big books and anthology selections</p> <p>Rereading familiar text</p> <p>Support for reading at home</p> <p>Partner reading and teacher supported reading</p>	<p>Teacher Read-Aloud, teacher modeling of the comprehension skill/strategy, focus question, and purpose setting</p> <p>Graphic organizers, instructional transparencies</p> <p>Practice book application</p> <p>Monitoring, cooperative learning, question answering, question generating, story structure and summarization.</p>

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Table 6 summarizes the various state-initiated professional development events provided during Year 4 for which participant feedback data were available. The events ranged from one-day to four-day workshops. As shown in the table, the events provided in-depth information about a variety of reading and assessment topics. Participants in these events included SDRFI coaches, teachers, and administrators as well as educators from schools involved with the South Dakota Reads program and others.

Table 6: Year 4 Professional Development Events

TOPIC	DATE
Templates 1-3	8-16-06
Basic DIBELS Training	9-27-06
Annual Reading First Conference	10-18-06
Para Reading	10-20-06
LETRS: Phonics	11-29-06
LETRS: Phonemic Awareness	12-14-06
DIBELS Training Institute	1-8-07 through 1-11-07
Reading Master I	1-23-07
Read Master II	1-27-07
Reading Master III	1-25-07
Language for Learning	1-26-07
LETRS	1-31-07
Overcoming Dyslexia	1-07 & 2-07
DIBELS Data Training	2-08-07
Para Professional Training	3-07-07
Reading Mastery	3-30-07
DIBELS Data Training	4-19-07
Basic DIBELS Training	4-19-07
CORE 3 – K-3 Reading Academy	4-25-07

Feedback from Events

Feedback was collected from a total of 314 participants at nineteen SDRFI professional development events in Year 4. Four-point scales were used to rate the participants' agreement with various statements concerning the quality and likely outcomes of each professional development event (strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree). Figures 2 and 3 summarize the percent of participants who either strongly agreed or agreed with each statement.

As shown in the figures, the perceived quality and expected outcomes of the events were consistently favorable, with at least 90 percent of participants overall agreeing with all items. All participants reported that the presenter was knowledgeable and effective and that the level of difficulty was appropriate. Almost all participants (99%) agreed that they would continue to learn about the topic and that they had gained knowledge that they would be able to implement in their job.

Figure 2: Agreement with statements about event quality

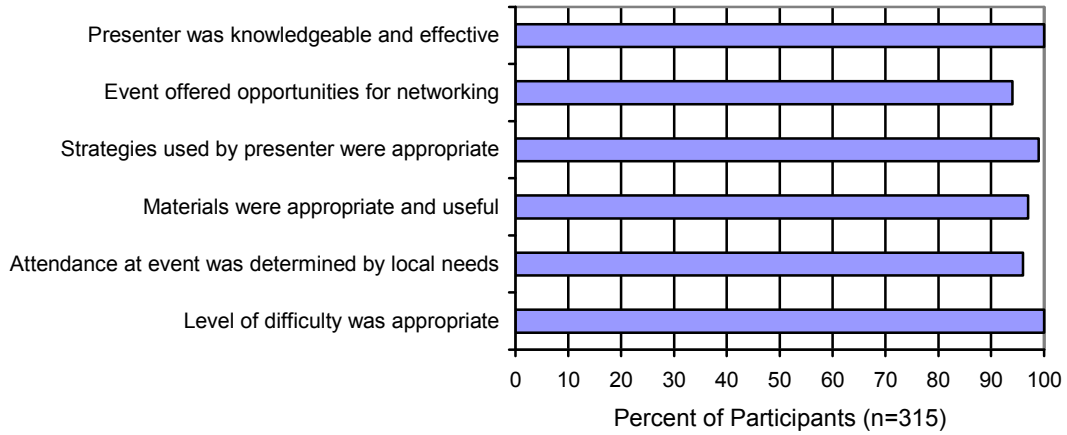
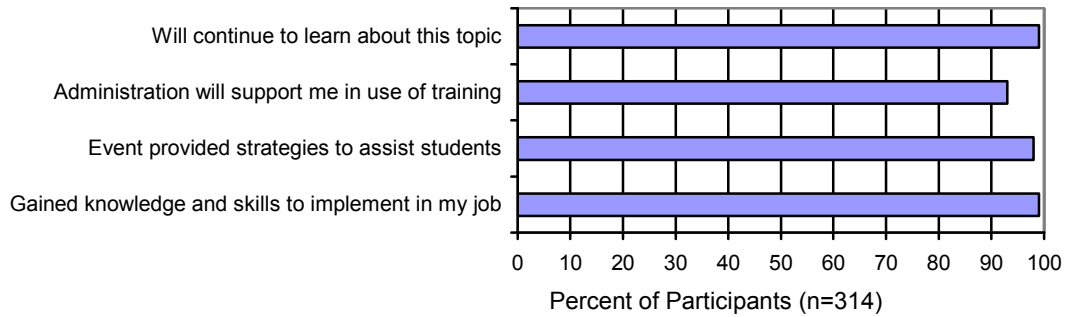


Figure 3: Agreement with statements about expected impact



Participants rated several additional items using a 4-point Likert type scale to indicate their knowledge of the topic prior to and after each training event. The mean ratings for these items from each event are shown in Figures 4 through 16. The figures show an increase in participants' knowledge for all topics rated; the perceived change was greatest for the Reading Master and the Language for Learning training.

Figure 4: Mean ratings of participants' knowledge before and after training for Basic DIBELS

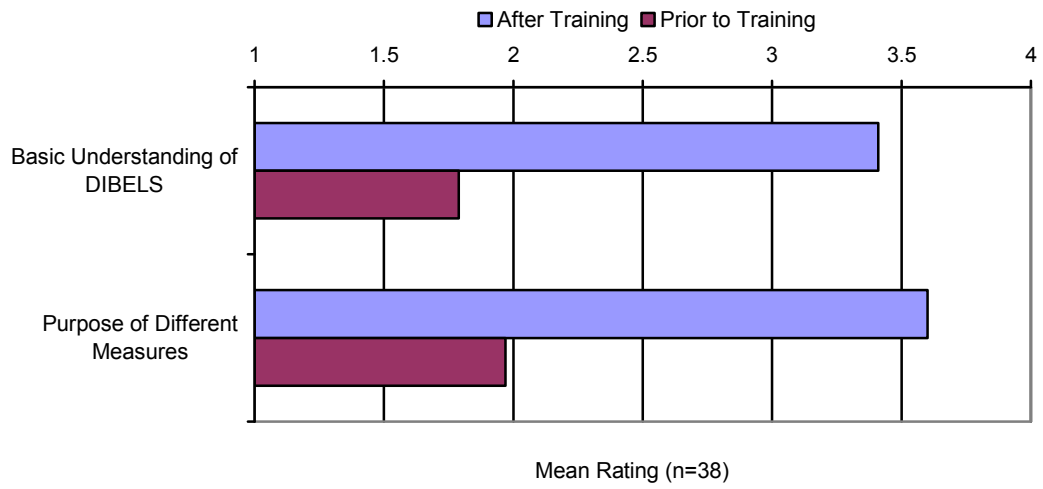


Figure 5: Mean ratings of participants' knowledge before and after Annual Reading First Conference

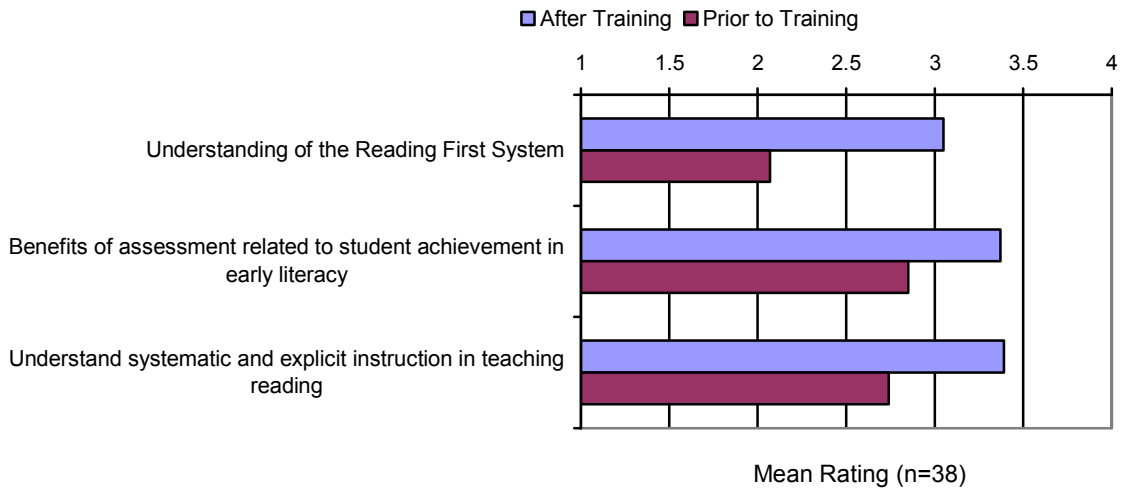


Figure 6: Mean ratings of participants' knowledge before and after training for Para Reading

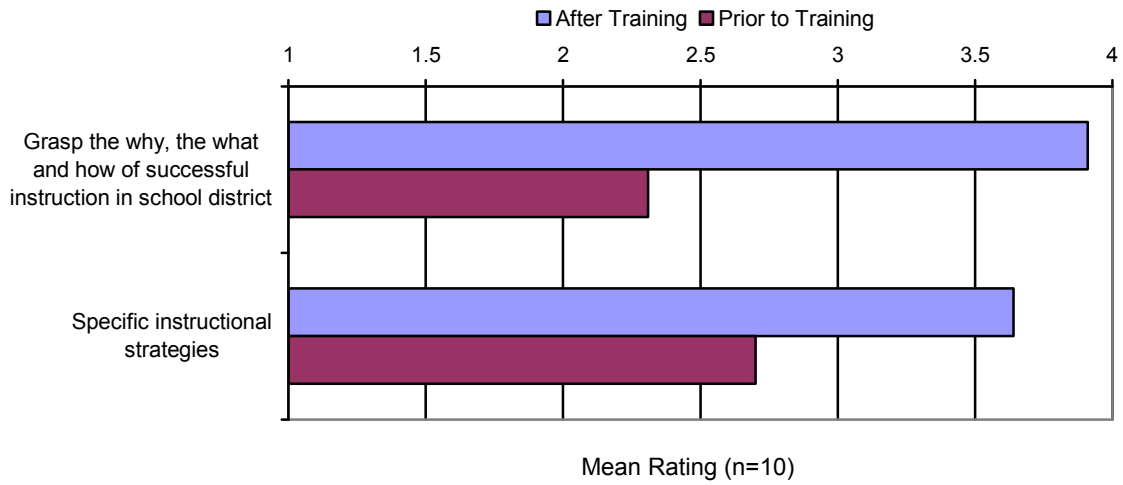


Figure 7: Mean ratings of participants' knowledge before and after training for LETRS Phonics

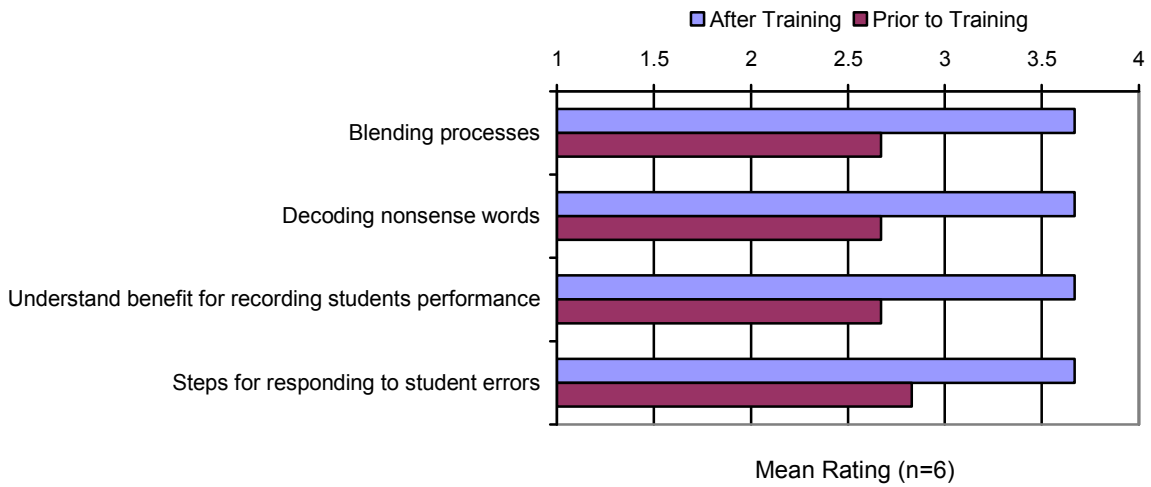


Figure 8: Mean ratings of participants' knowledge before and after DIBELS training institute

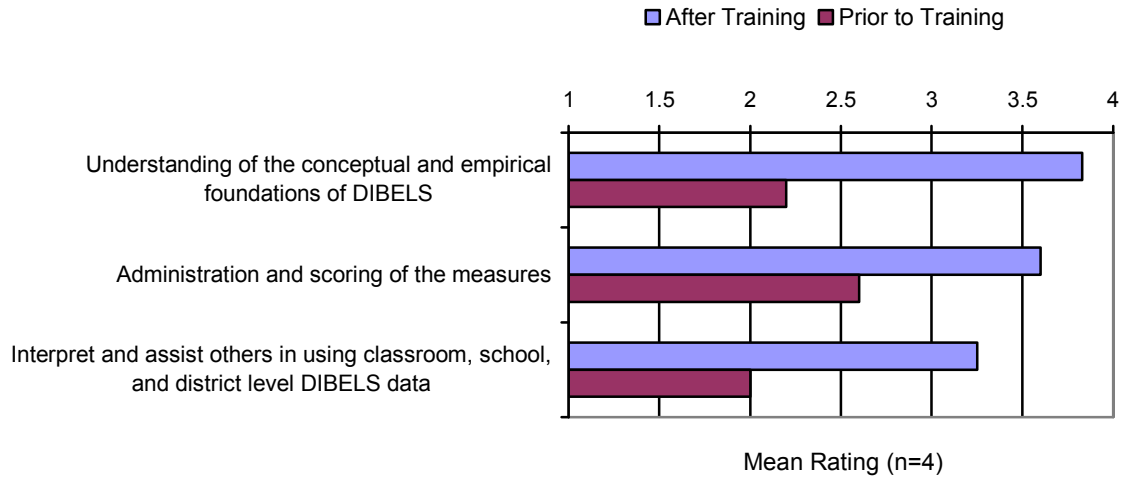


Figure 9: Mean ratings of participants' knowledge before and after training for Reading Master I

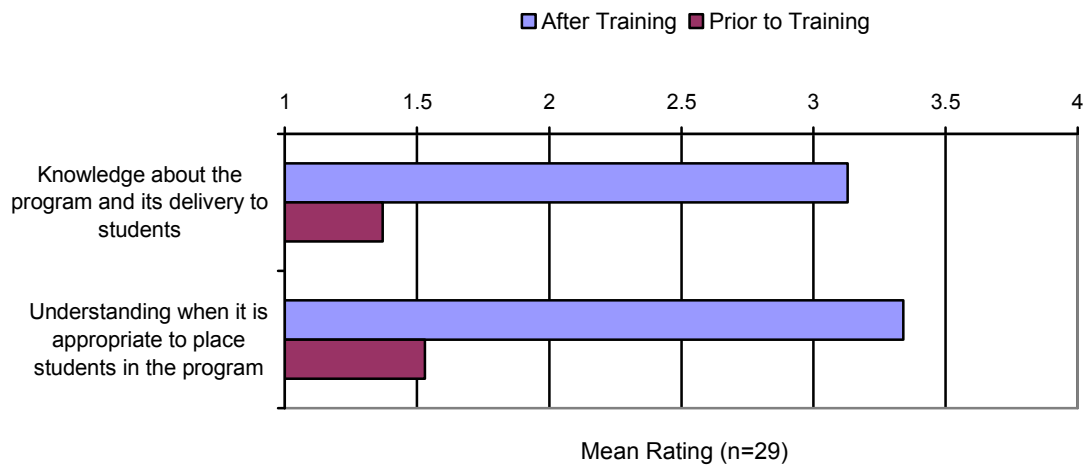


Figure 10: Mean ratings of participants' knowledge before and after training for Reading Master II

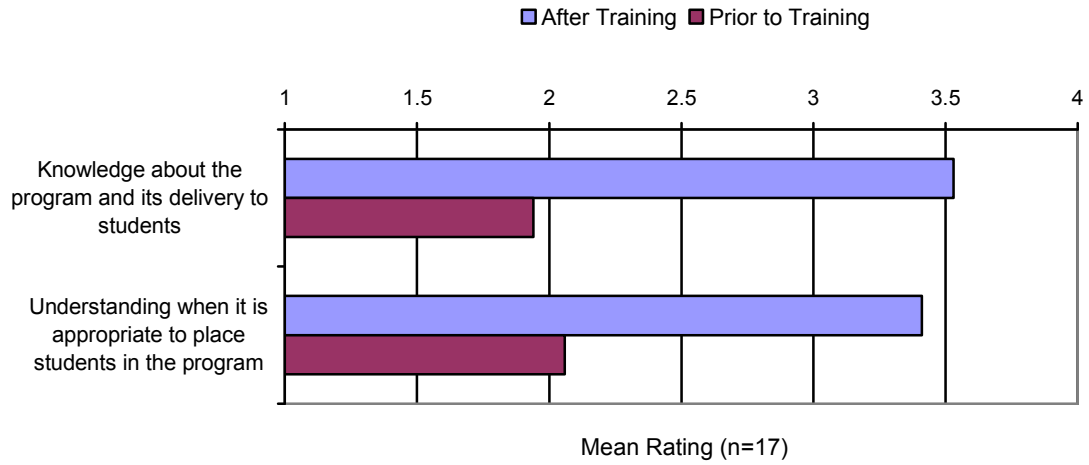


Figure 11: Mean ratings of participants' knowledge before and after training for Reading Master III

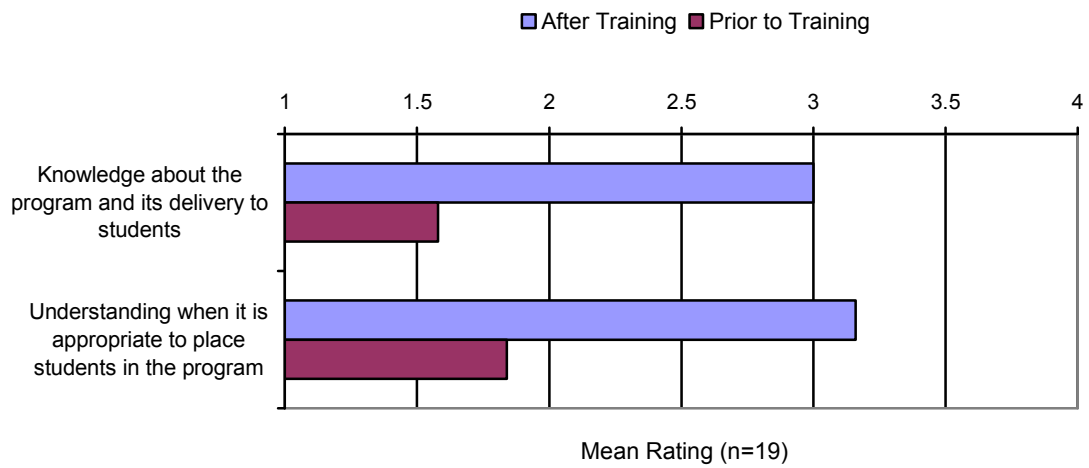


Figure 12: Mean ratings of participants' knowledge before and after training for Language for Learning

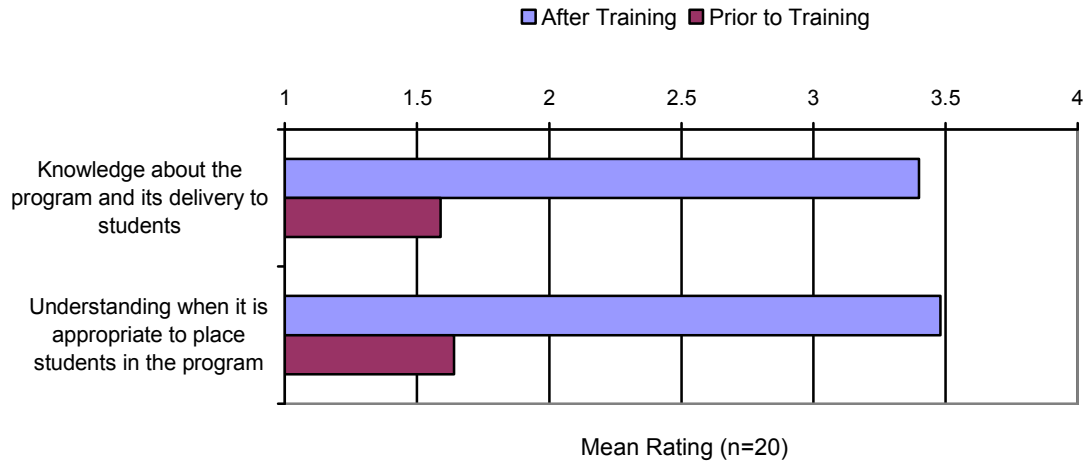


Figure 13: Mean ratings of participants' knowledge before and after training for DIBELS data

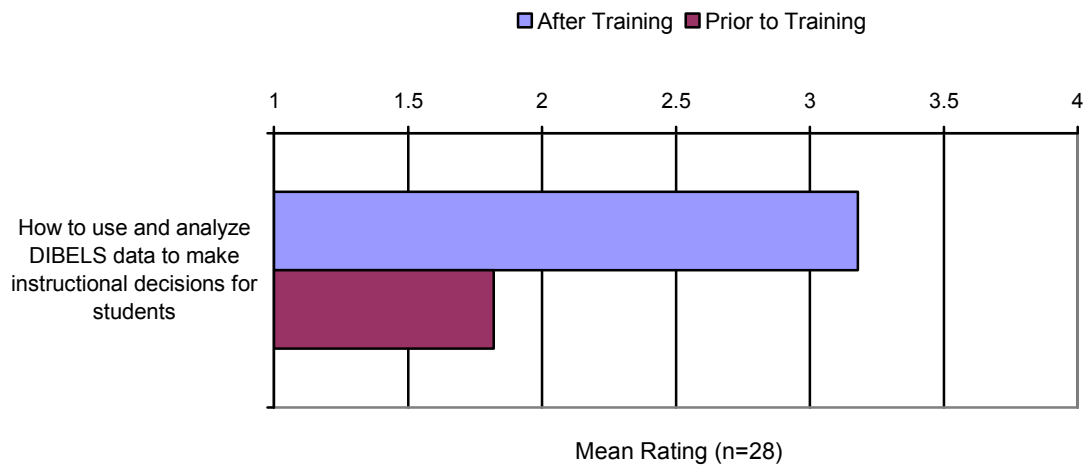


Figure 14: Mean ratings of participants' knowledge before and after training for Para Professional

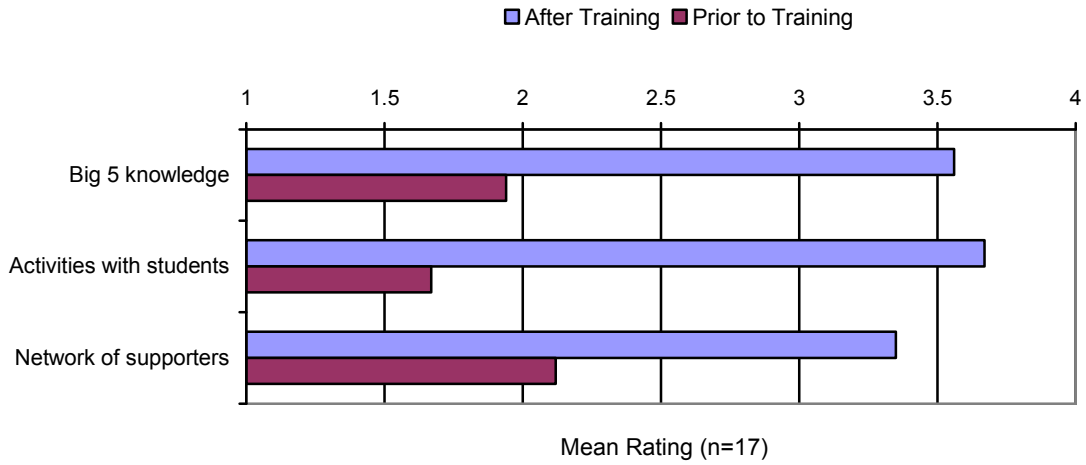


Figure 15: Mean ratings of participants' knowledge before and after training for Reading Mastery

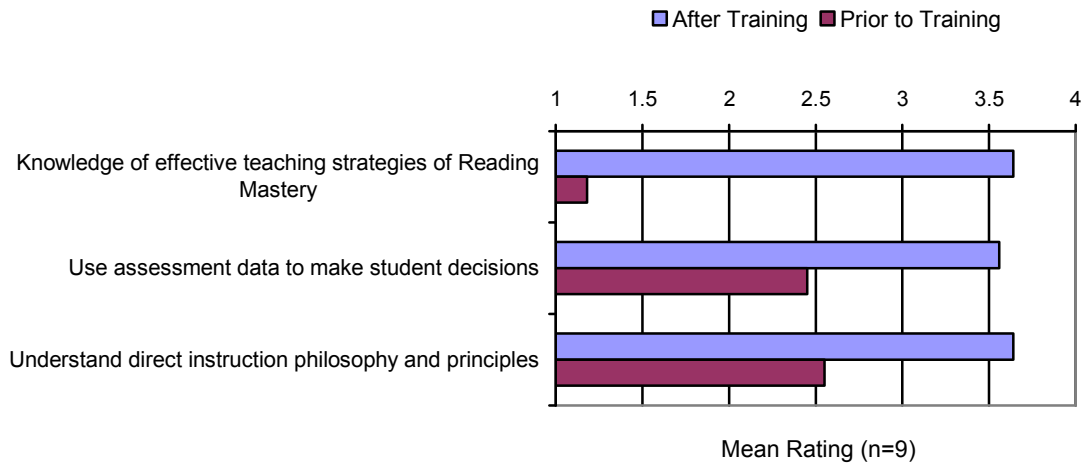
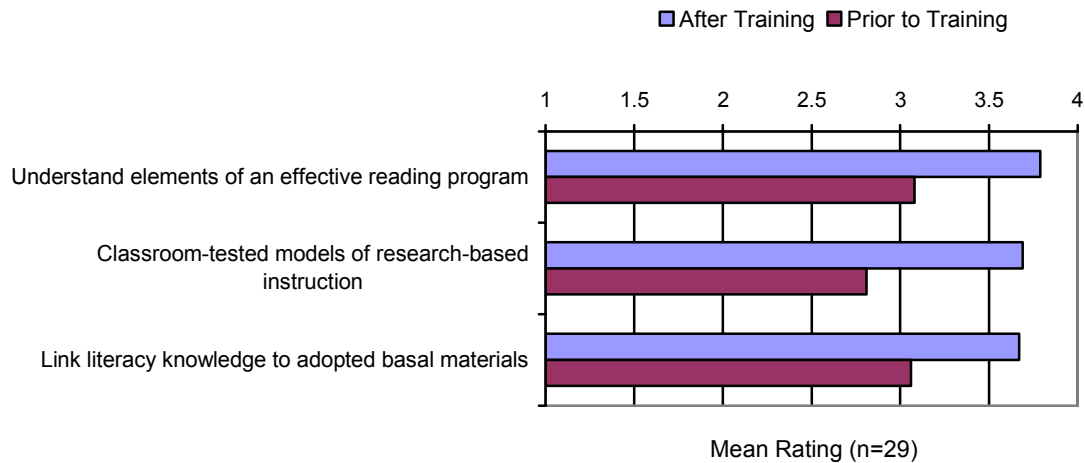


Figure 16: Mean ratings of participants’ knowledge before and after training for Language for Learning



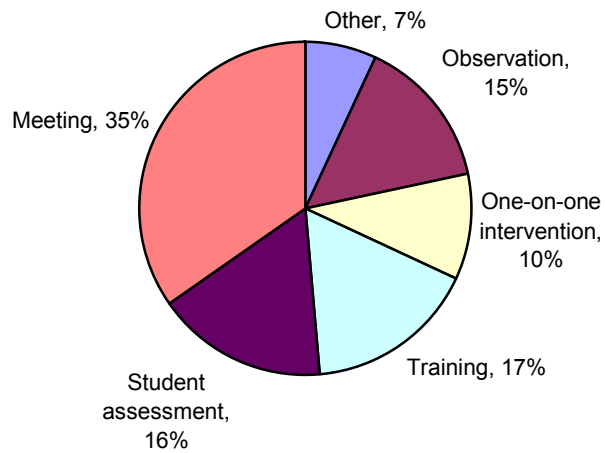
SERVICE ACTIVITIES AND PARTICIPATION

Technical assistance is provided to participating schools through the SDDOE, the Western Regional Office of the National Center for Reading First Technical Assistance, by commercial publishers and vendors, and through a variety of online sites. The state used the Reading First listserv, on-site visits, and the Digital Dakota Network to share project-related information and resources, respond to issues and concerns, and promote discussion among Reading First coaches.

Coaches played the central role in making training and technical assistance available to participating teachers and administrators. During Year 4, Reading coaches were asked to log “significant” technical assistance services using the SDRFI Technical Assistance Log. As previously described, the log provided a checklist for coaches to record the nature of each service, its duration, the number of people served, its goals, its focus, whether or not the goals of the activity were met, and additional comments or action items.

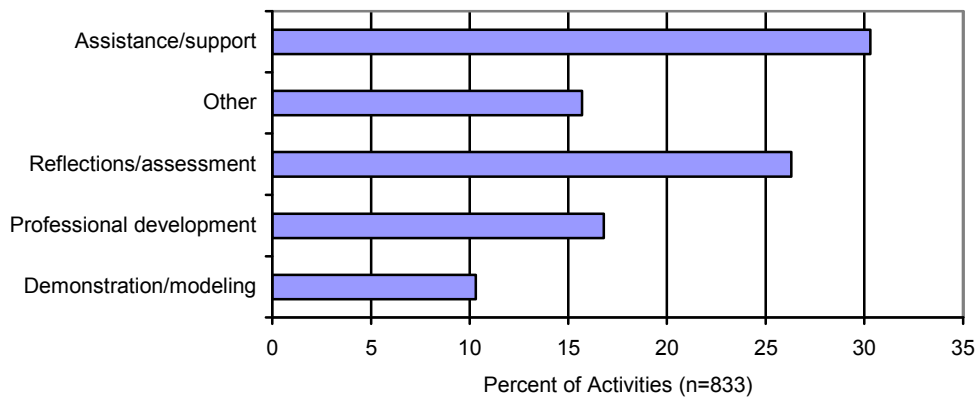
A total of 572 activities were reported by coaches during Year 4 of the project. Figure 17 shows the percent of each of the different services reported. The “meeting” category was used most often (35%), followed by “training” and “student assessment” (17% and 16%, respectively). The average duration of these activities was 9.37 hours, while most activities lasted four or fewer hours. The scope ranged from a single individual to 750 individuals. Larger numbers of participants typically meant that classes of students or entire school staffs were served.

Figure 17: Relative frequency of service activities (n=572).



The goals of these activities are summarized in Figure 18. Note that coaches were allowed to select as many goals as applied to each activity. As shown in the figure, more than 30% of the activities were designed to “assist/support” teachers and 26% addressed “reflection/assessment” goals. The other goals were further explained as coordinating with other educators, informing parents, or conducting student assessment.

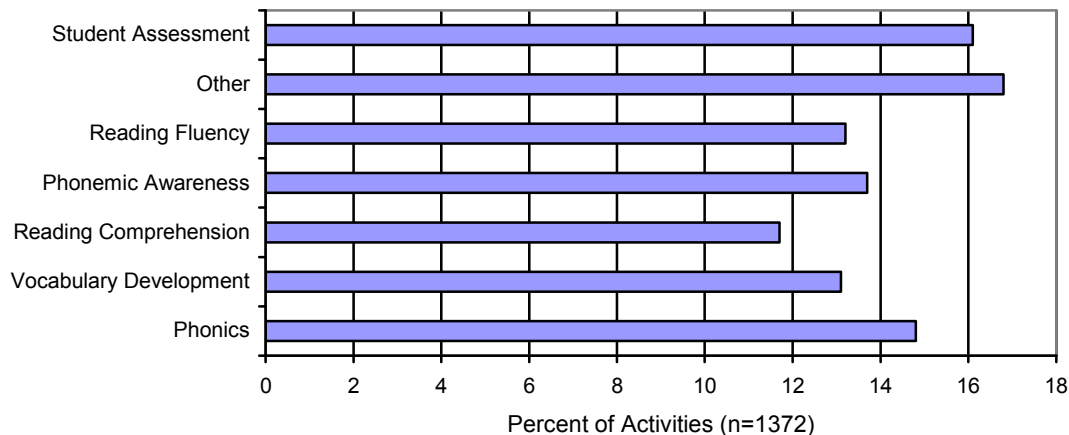
Figure 18: Relative frequency of service goals



Coaches were also asked to indicate the topic area(s) of focus for each activity; again coaches could select as many as applied. The relative frequencies in percentages are shown in Figure 19. As shown in the figure, activities focused most often on “other” topics (17%) and “student assessment” (16%). The other topics typically included more

general programmatic topics such as differentiated instruction. The reported topic areas of focus perhaps reflect the fact that these instructional topics are emphasized at specific grade levels.

Figure 19: Relative frequency of service focus.



Reading coaches’ goals were “mostly” or “completely” met for 88% of the activities reported. In general, coaches did not collect written participant feedback from their activities.

SURVEYS OF ADMINISTRATORS, COACHES AND TEACHERS

Online surveys were completed and submitted by 11 administrators, 12 reading coaches, and 84 teachers.³ The administrators included 11 principals. The administrators averaged 27 years of experience in education and two hold a doctorate degree while eight hold masters degrees. The reading coaches averaged 17 years experience and six of the twelve held masters degrees. The teachers averaged 19 years in the profession and 21 percent of them held masters degrees. Twenty-five percent of respondents to the teacher survey taught first grade, 22% taught second grade, 21% taught kindergarten, and 20% taught third grade. Eighteen percent of the teachers taught multiple grade levels or had other assignments such as special education or Title I.

Since many of the survey items were identical across the different respondent groups, the findings are combined in the charts that follow; differences among the groups are highlighted where appropriate. Unless otherwise noted, respondents were asked to use a 5-point scale for each statement: 1=strongly agree, 2=agree, 3=neutral, 4=disagree, and 5=strongly disagree. Analyses focused on the extent to which respondents agreed with

³ Among teachers, this is a 48% response rate, compared with 58% in 2006; thus in 2008, SD and McREL staff need to encourage all teachers to respond.

each statement (i.e., rated the statement 1 or 2). The full text of each survey is shown in Appendix A.

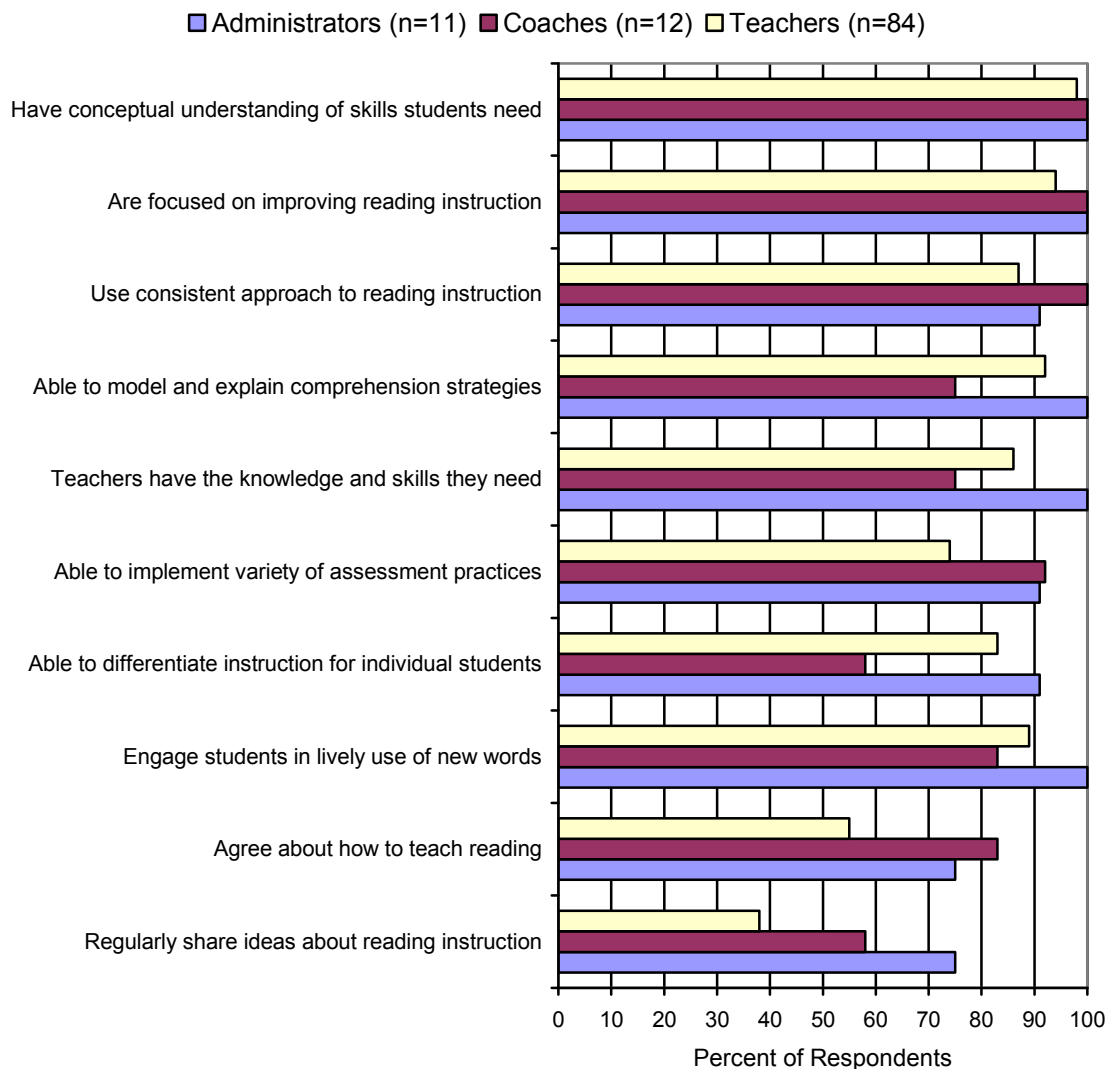
Knowledge and Skills

All three groups were asked about the knowledge and skills of participating school faculty. As shown in Figure 20, participants overwhelmingly agreed that *K-3 teachers have a conceptual understanding of what skills students need to become good readers*, that *K-3 teachers and administrators are focused on improving reading instruction*, and that *K-3 teachers use a consistent approach to reading instruction* (overall levels of agreement were 99%, 98%, and 93%, respectively).

The groups agreed least often with the statements that *there is agreement among K-3 teachers about how to teach reading*, and *K-3 teachers regularly share ideas about reading instruction* (71% and 57%, respectively).

Coaches agreed somewhat less often than teachers and administrators that K-3 teachers are able to: model and explain comprehension strategies to their students, have the knowledge and skills they need to help students read well, differentiate reading instruction of individual students within their classes, and implement daily instruction that engages students in the lively use of new words.

Figure 20: Percent of each respondent group in agreement with statements about K-3 teachers’ knowledge and skills



Instructional Practices

Teachers were asked to provide additional information about how often they engage in various reading-related student activities in their classrooms. The percentages of teachers who reported using each activity either “a couple of times a week” or “daily” are shown in Figures 21 through 25 for the five key Reading First components.

Together, the figures show that teachers routinely used a variety of reading strategies that involved the active participation of students and their peers. At least 90 percent of all teachers reported using “vocabulary practice through guided instruction,” “repeated reading to develop fluency,” “independent reading,” “answering why and how questions,” and “connecting books to life” either a couple of times per week or daily with

their students. The use of phonemic awareness, phonics, and worksheet and writing activities were reported less frequently than other learning strategies.

Figure 21: Reported use of activities to develop students' phonemic awareness.

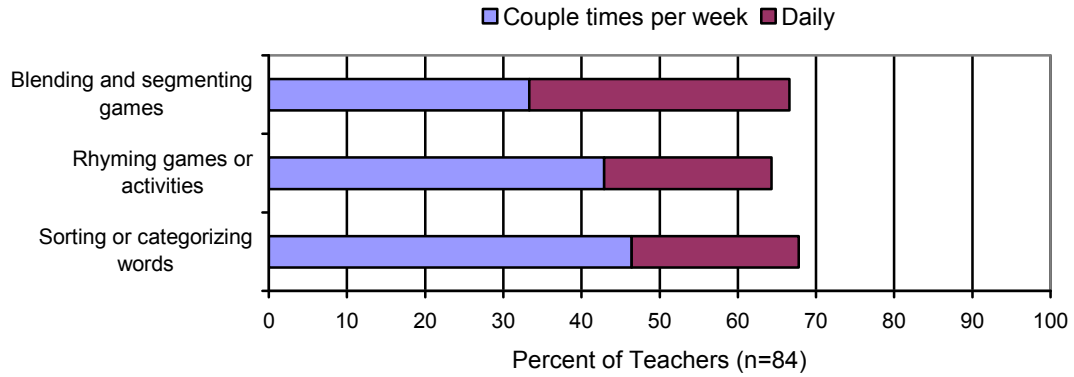


Figure 22: Reported use of activities to develop students' phonics skills.

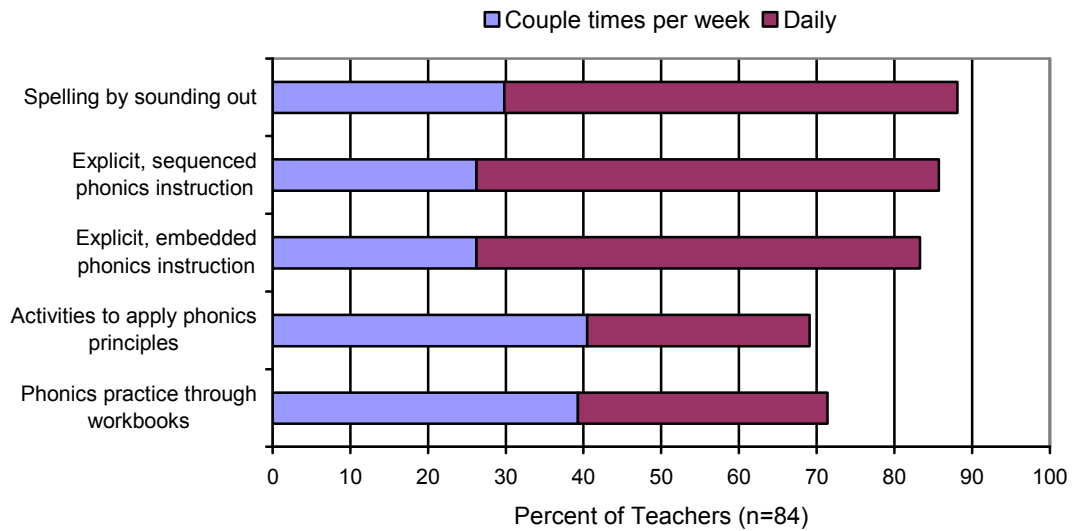


Figure 23: Reported use of activities to develop students' vocabulary.

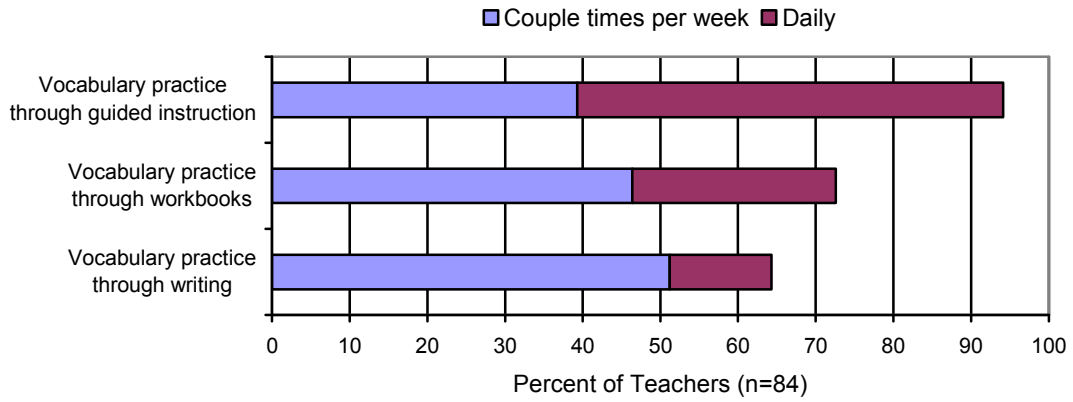


Figure 24: Reported use of activities to develop students' reading fluency.

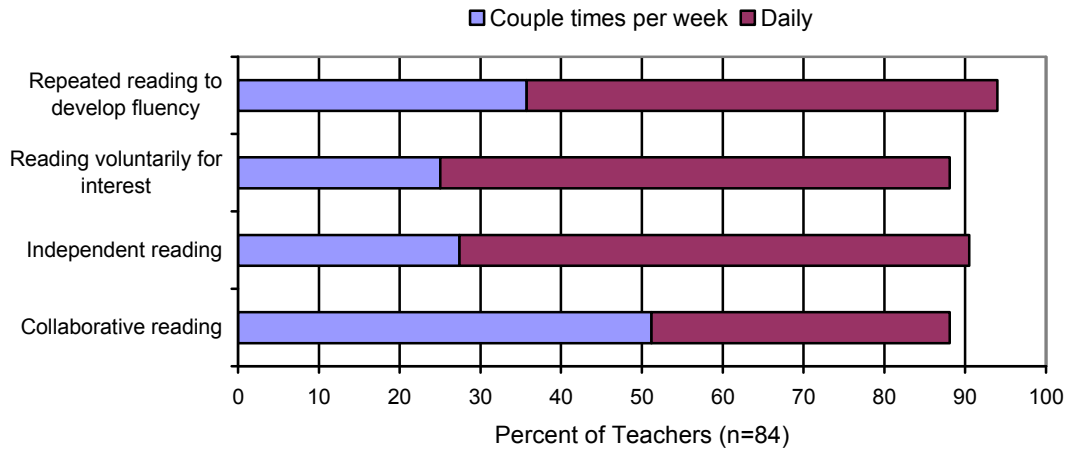
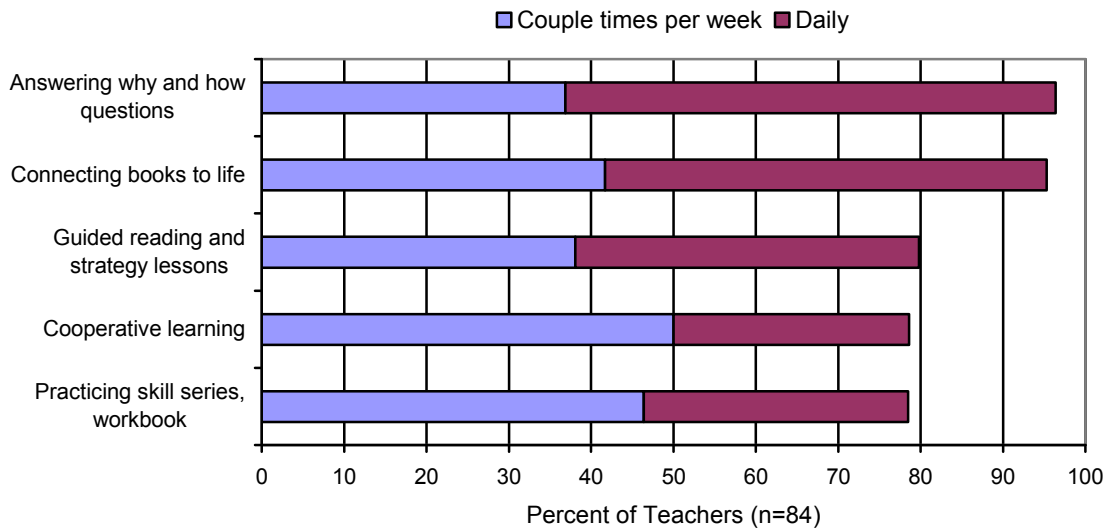


Figure 25: Reported use of activities to develop students’ reading comprehension.



Teachers reported a variety of “other” instructional practices related to each of the five component areas. Some of these referred to specific resources associated with their Reading First programs, for example, *Earobics*, *Reading Mastery*, *Read Naturally*, and *Elements of Reading*. Teachers also described hands-on activities such as computer games, use of graphic organizers or displays, and writing in journals; others focused on using conventional techniques with various language formats such as songs, poetry, word games, or stories.

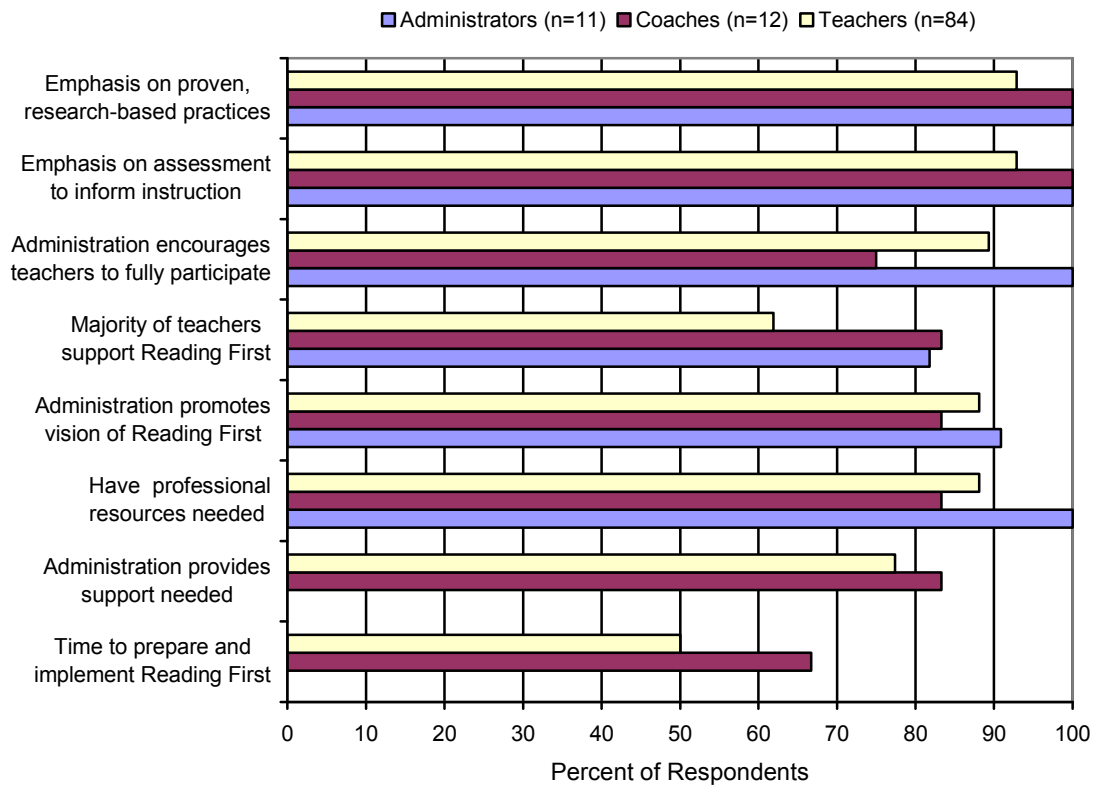
School Implementation

One section of the survey focused on the school climate and support for Reading First. The percent of respondents in each group who agreed with these statements are shown in Figure 26. As shown in the figure, nearly all respondents agreed with the importance of the basic tenets of Reading First: an emphasis on scientifically-based reading research and the use of assessment to inform instruction. However, there were differences among groups regarding the perceived levels of support for Reading First among the school staff. For example, while at least 80% of administrators and coaches reported that the majority of teachers support Reading First, a little over 60% of the teachers themselves agreed. Also, while teachers and administrators generally agreed that administrators encourage teachers to participate in Reading First, promote the vision of Reading First, and provide the professional resources needed to implement the program, reading coaches agreed less often.

Several survey items specifically addressed the types of support given to Reading First participants. Administrators were asked to indicate what types of support mechanisms they provide for Reading First teachers. One-hundred percent of administrators noted that they have the professional resources needed to support teachers to improve their reading instruction. Fewer administrators reported that they provided additional time for

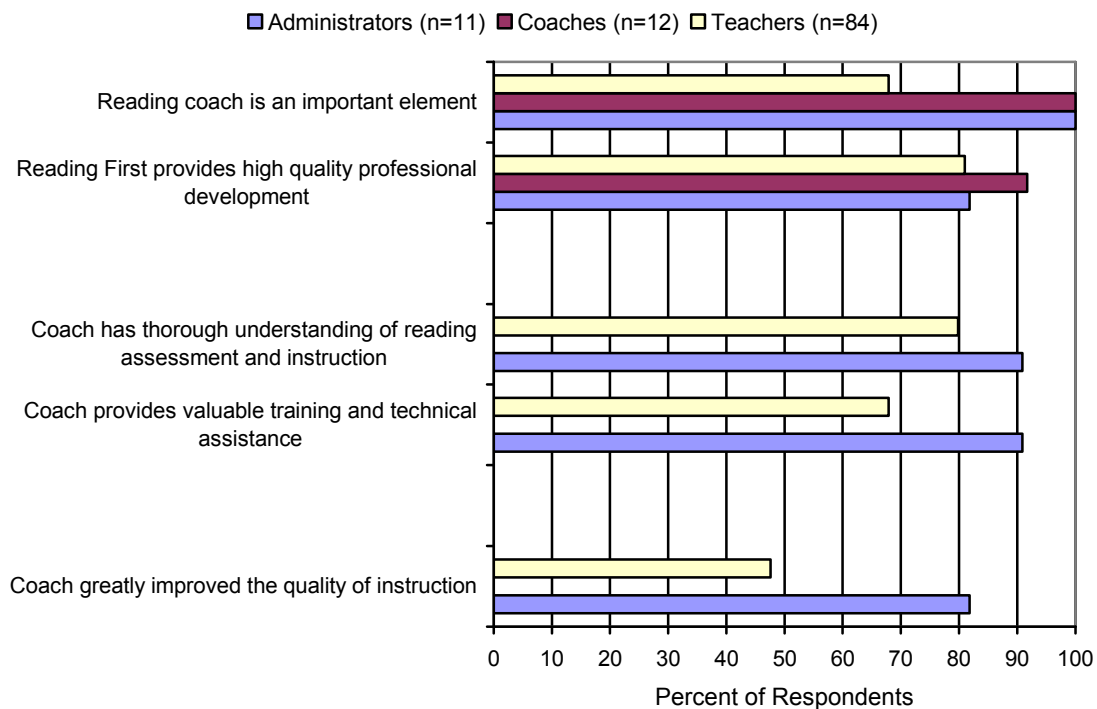
teachers to meet and discuss their experiences (64%) or time to plan (55%). As shown in Figure 20, this lack of time was also reported by the teachers and coaches surveyed; only 50% and 67%, respectively, agreed that they had sufficient time to implement Reading First.

Figure 26: Percent of each respondent group in agreement with statements about school climate and support



Survey items that focused on the role of the reading coach are shown in Figure 27. All coaches and administrators agreed that the reading coach is a valuable and important element of Reading First. Most administrators also agreed that coaches are knowledgeable, provide high quality training and technical assistance, and have improved the quality of instruction. While most teachers agreed that coaches are knowledgeable and provide high quality training and technical assistance, they agreed less often on the importance of the coach’s role, the value of their assistance, and their impact on the quality of instruction.

Figure 27: Percent of each respondent group in agreement with statements about reading coaches.



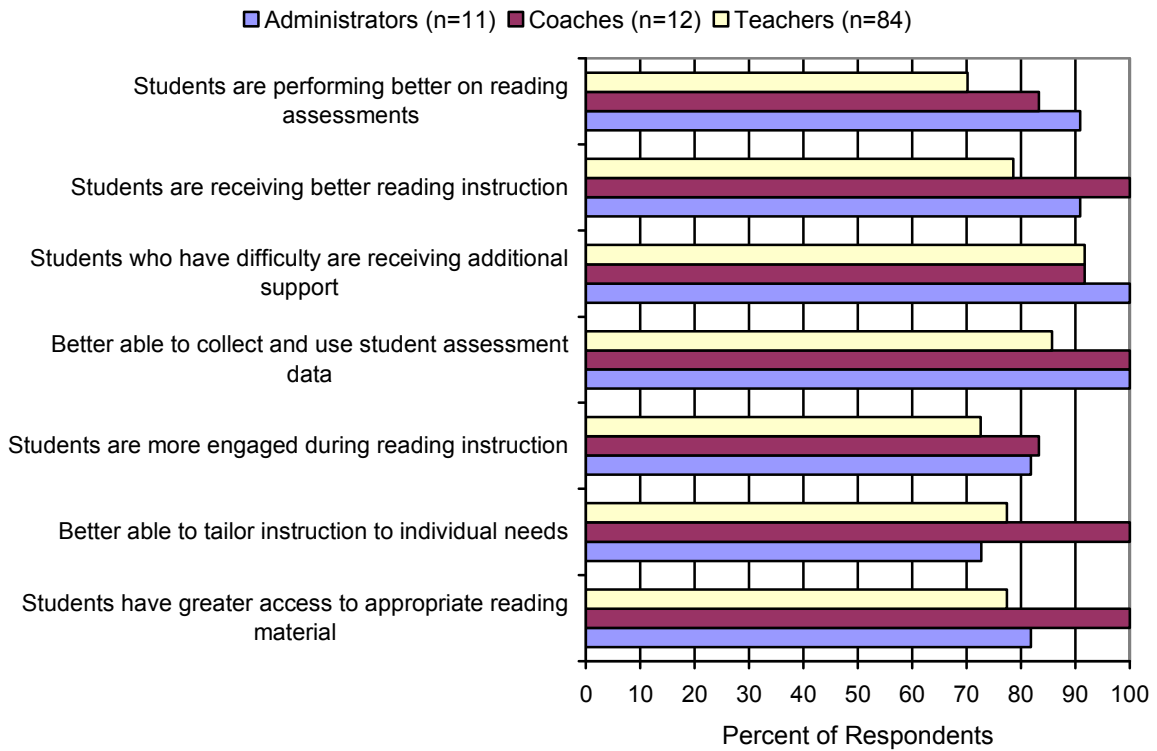
Perceived Outcomes

All three groups were asked about the outcomes that have resulted from their participation in the Reading First program. The percent of respondents who agreed with each statement are shown in Figure 28. While all three groups reported positive outcomes for Reading First, agreement with the outcome statements was generally highest among coaches, somewhat lower for administrators, and lowest for teachers.

Overall, the highest percentages of agreement were for the statements “Teachers are better able to collect and make use of student reading assessment data” and “Students who have difficulty learning to read are receiving additional support” (95.2% and 94.5%, respectively, for the groups combined). At least 75% of the respondents in each group also agreed that “Students are receiving better reading instruction” and “Students have greater access to appropriate reading material.”

Respondents agreed least often that “Students are more engaged during reading instruction” (79.2% combined). This item may reflect the perception among teachers that their core instructional programs are typically more repetitive and offer fewer opportunities for creative responses than previous instructional approaches.

Figure 28: Percent of each respondent group in agreement with outcome statements.



Barriers to Implementation

Each group of survey respondents was asked to comment on the primary barriers they face in implementing Reading First. Most respondents reported that the overriding burden they faced in implementation was a lack of time to prepare, collaborate on, and teach and assess the program. Typical comments from teachers included:

“Teachers need more time to plan, confer, and share ideas and information on assessment and teaching”

“Time. It takes longer than 90 minutes to implement all the elements in the lesson maps. The templates are essential, but again it takes time to get through them.”

“Trying to get everything done in the time that is allocated for reading. There is so much to do and teach.”

“Time; getting past perceptions of student learning”

“Time to master the techniques and organize implementation”

Several coaches and administrators noted that there is still resistance to change among the faculty or a lack of staff commitment to Reading First. The inflexible, repetitive nature of the core programs may produce some of this resistance. Below are some of their comments.

“Change, especially from those who have taught for many years.”

“Some teachers just want to hang on to the old way of doing things – change is hard. “

“The other barrier for veteran teachers is their ability to NOT think out of the box and be creative with their time and efforts.”

Comments and Suggestions

Administrators, coaches, and teachers were also asked if they had additional thoughts, comments, or suggestions regarding Reading First. Most comments from administrators and coaches were positive and mentioned proven successes they have observed in the program. However, teachers have some concerns with coaches. Some teachers feel that coaches should have full-time position, not part-time, and coaches should spend more time in the schools. Below are some of their comments.

“I suggest that the Reading Coaches spend more time in the schools, and less time running all over the state to meetings.”

“I think that the Reading Coach needs to get a little bit more involved during grade level meetings and to look for answers and give us solutions to our questions about students who are not meeting their goals.”

“When a Reading Coach is hired, it should be a full time position and not half time.”

“The Reading Coaches spend entirely too much time ‘on the road’ traveling to this meeting and that meeting.”

ON-SITE VISITS

Schools for the 2007 on-site visits were selected with two criteria in mind. First, we chose to examine the implementation of Reading First in the unique context of a Hutterite community established in the late 1800's in order to practice religious beliefs. German is the first language of the Hutterite Colonies and thus children learn English as a second language in school. The second criterion was to be able to travel along I-80 and visit multiple sites within a week's time.

McREL staff visited SDRFI schools in four districts: Bon Homme School District 4-2 (Bon Homme Colony School and Tyndall Elementary) , Tripp- Delmont School District 33-5 (Tripp elementary), White River School District 47-1 (White River Elementary), and Bennett County 3-1 (Martin Elementary). Interviews were conducted with the principal, reading coaches and classroom teachers and reading instruction was observed. The full report for each district is presented in Appendix C; findings across sites are summarized below.

Assessment

With the Reading First initiative, teachers and Reading First Coaches began using DIBELS for screening, to diagnose gaps in student knowledge and skills, and monitor progress related to phonemic awareness, alphabet knowledge and skills, and oral reading fluency. Some teachers and coaches also reported using classroom-based assessments included in their core reading program (i.e., Open Court and Houghton Mifflin). In several sites, use of DIBELS replaced the use of the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA). Teachers and coaches appreciated professional development in use of DIBELS.

Instruction

With Reading First, reading instruction became more explicit, teacher-directed, fast-paced, coherent across grades, and focused on the five components of reading instruction. To some teachers, students seemed more interested, successful, and aware of what to expect. Seeing students succeed and enjoy reading, gave teachers confidence. Some suggestions for changes included hiring intervention teachers trained in Reading First methods and more opportunities to teach writing and language arts.

Classroom observations confirmed that reading instruction addressed, to some extent, each of the five components of reading; however, reading comprehension generally was not taught explicitly. Teachers engaged students in question and answer interactions and some discussion of meaning, but did not teach students about or how to use strategic reading. Observations of reading instruction at Martin Elementary School in Bennett County School District were one exception. Comprehension strategies (i.e., Browse, Preview, and Prepare) were observed being taught explicitly.

Professional Development and Technical Assistance

Teachers and Reading Coaches attended professional development and received technical assistance nationally, state-wide and locally. Principals and teachers themselves consistently reported that teacher gains in knowledge and skills about reading, reading development, and reading instruction were enormous. Observations and interviews made it clear that teachers applied this knowledge to day-to-day reading instruction and delighted in the growth they saw in their students. One principal attributed the success of Reading First to teachers seeing their students' growth.

STUDENT READING ACHIEVEMENT

The ultimate intended outcome of SDRFI is for every child in South Dakota to be able to read by the end of 3rd grade. In particular, SDRFI focuses on improved literacy rates in low-income and low-achieving schools. In keeping with the assessment plan (outlined in Table 1), three tests were used: the Stanford Reading First, the Dakota STEP, and the DIBELS. All three serve multiple purposes in SDRFI and were selected as outcome measures, in part, to minimize the data collection burden for program participants.

Data collected in Year 1 primarily provided information about baseline reading levels for students in the first cohort of schools. Data collected in Year 2 was compared to the baseline to evaluate trends associated with SDRFI implementation. Data collected in Year 3 was compared to Year 2 in a continuing evaluation of trends associated with SDRFI implementation.

Stanford Reading First

The Stanford Reading First (RF) is a standardized, criterion-referenced measure that assesses the five essential components of reading. The test, which is based on the reading and listening subtests of the Stanford 10 was administered to students in grades K-3 in the Reading First schools. Students were assessed in *Reading*, *Oral Fluency* and for an overall *Total*.

Figures 29-32 show the percents of SDRFI students at each grade and performance level on the Stanford RF *Reading*, *Oral Fluency*, and *Total* measures (a, b, and c, respectively). Analyses of these data revealed:

- The percent of students in grades K-2 reading “at grade level” based on the Total measure were at least 10 percentage points higher in 2007 than in 2005. The percent of students in grade 3 scoring at grade level based on the Total measure increased six percentage points from 2005 to 2007.

- The percent of students in grades K-3 scoring “at grade level” on the Reading measure had slight increases from 2005 to 2007, with smaller gains made between 2006 and 2007.
- The percent of students in grades 1-3 scoring “at grade level” on the Oral measure had slight increases from 2005 to 2007. The percent of students in kindergarten scoring “at grade level” on the Oral measure increased 20 percentage points from 2005 to 2007.

Figure 29a: Percent of kindergarten students with Stanford RF *Reading* scores by performance level in spring 2005 through 2007

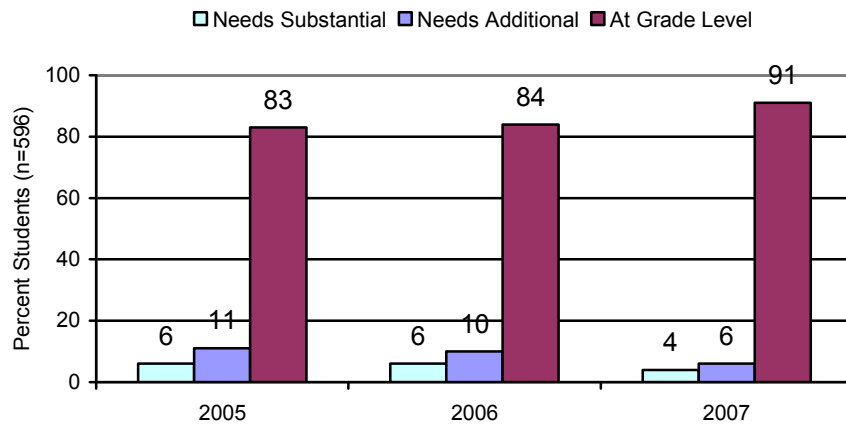


Figure 29b: Percent of kindergarten students with Stanford RF *Oral Fluency* scores by performance level in spring 2005 through 2007

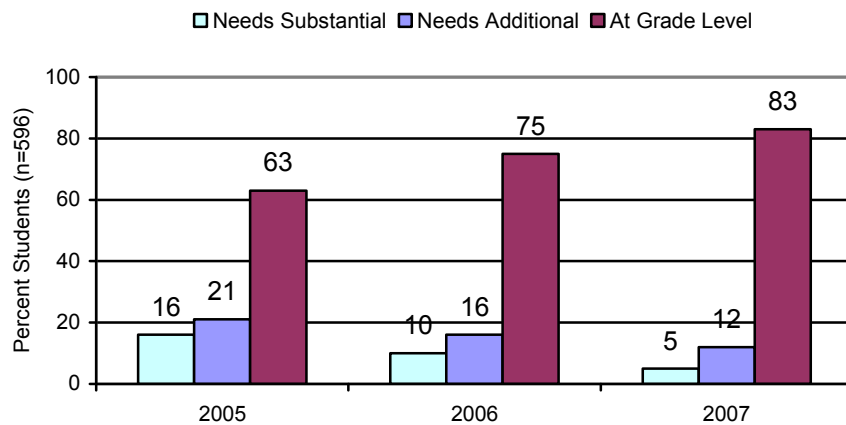


Figure 29c: Percent of kindergarten students with Stanford RF *Total* scores by performance level in spring 2005 through 2007

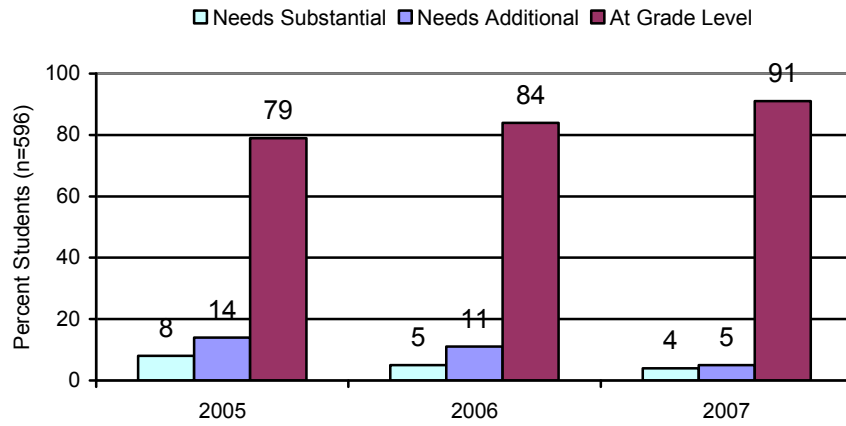


Figure 30a: Percent of grade 1 students with Stanford RF *Reading* scores by performance level in spring 2005 through 2007

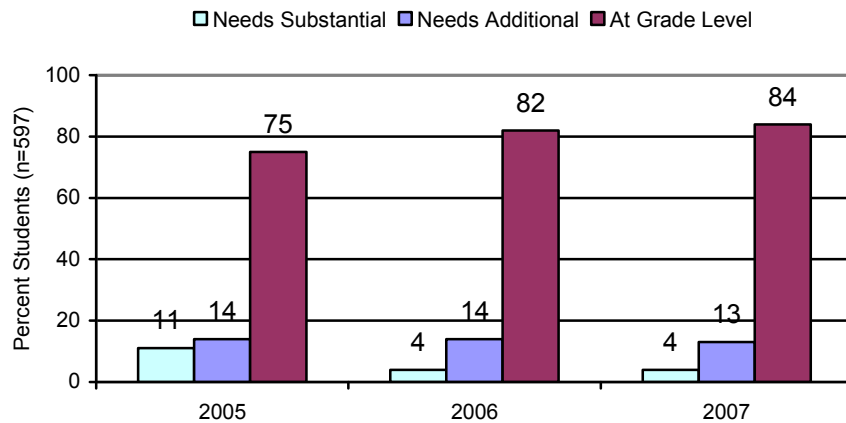


Figure 30b: Percent of grade 1 students with Stanford RF *Oral Fluency* scores by performance level in spring 2005 through 2007

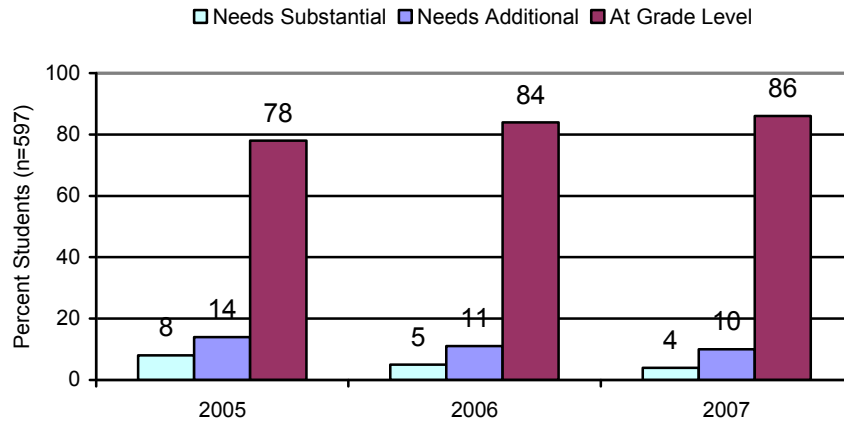


Figure 30c: Percent of grade 1 students with Stanford RF *Total* scores by performance level in spring 2005 through 2007

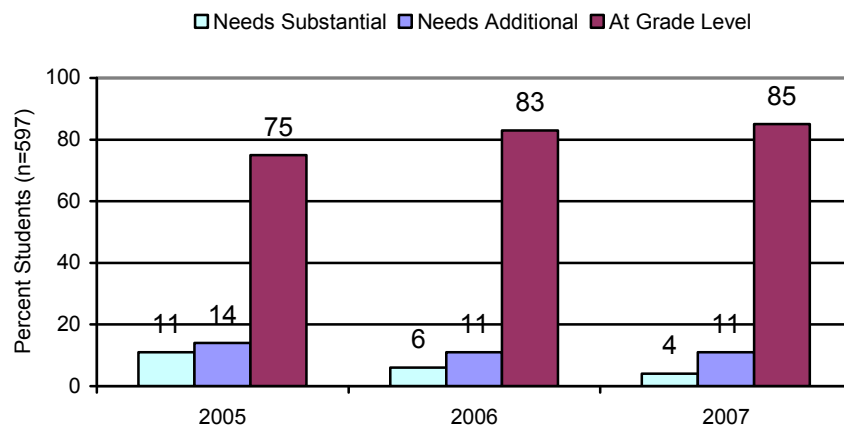


Figure 31a: Percent of grade 2 students with Stanford RF *Reading* scores by performance level in spring 2005 through 2007

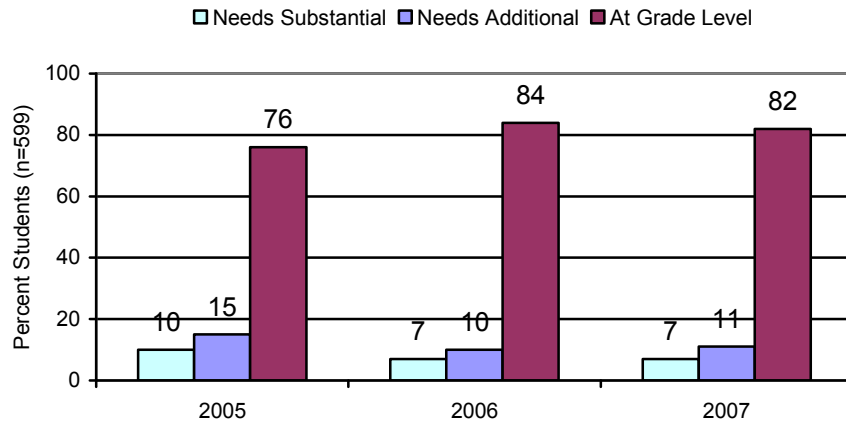


Figure 31b: Percent of grade 2 students with Stanford RF *Oral Fluency* scores by performance level in spring 2005 through 2007

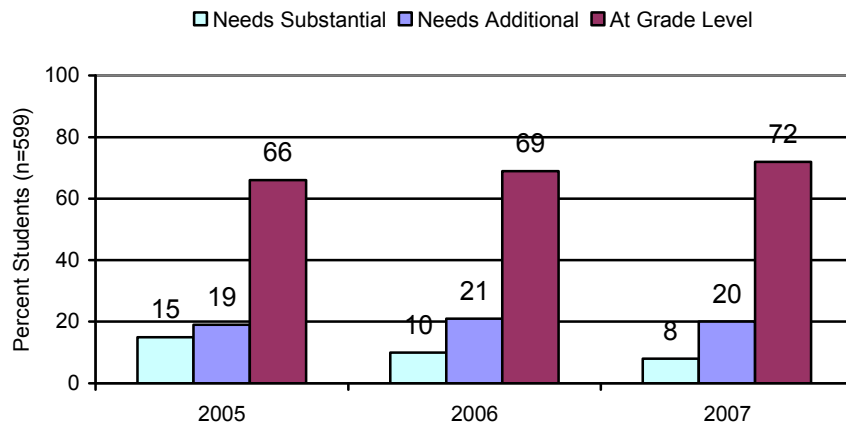


Figure 31c: Percent of grade 2 students with Stanford RF *Total* scores by performance level in spring 2005 through 2007

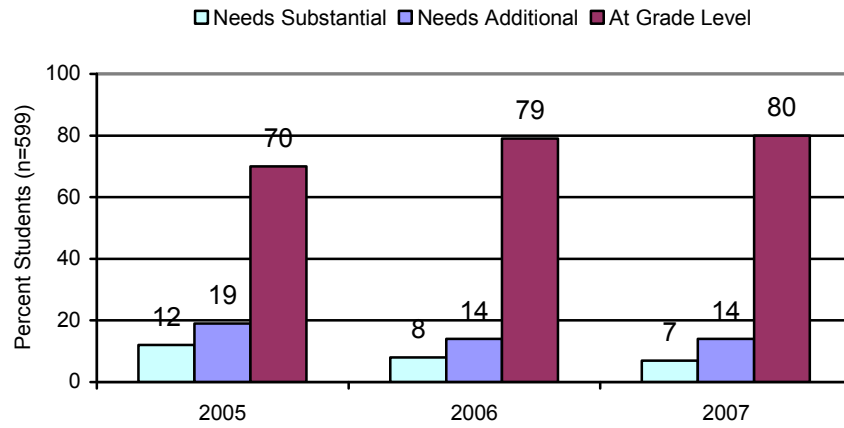


Figure 32a: Percent of grade 3 students with Stanford RF *Reading* scores by performance level in spring 2005 through 2007

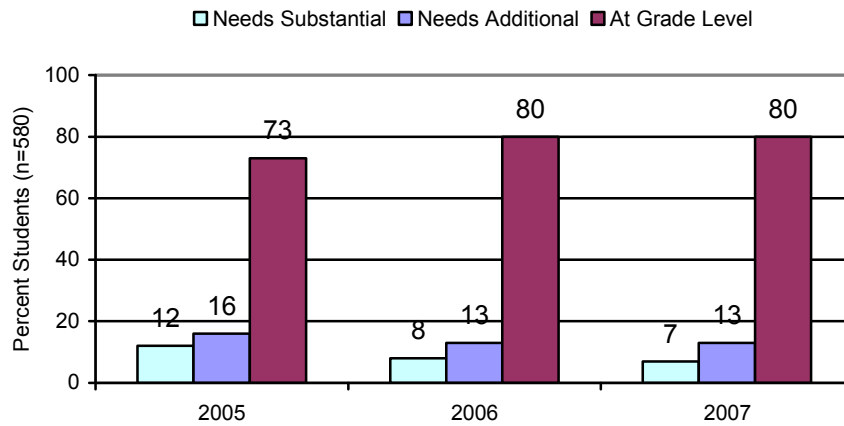


Figure 32b: Percent of grade 3 students with Stanford RF *Oral Fluency* scores by performance level in spring 2005 through 2007

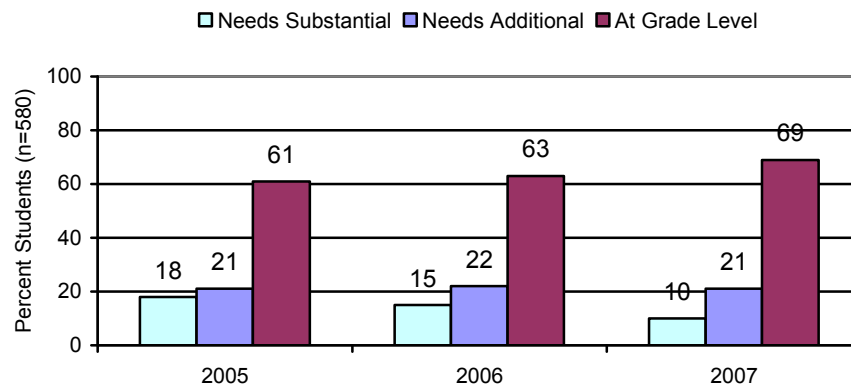
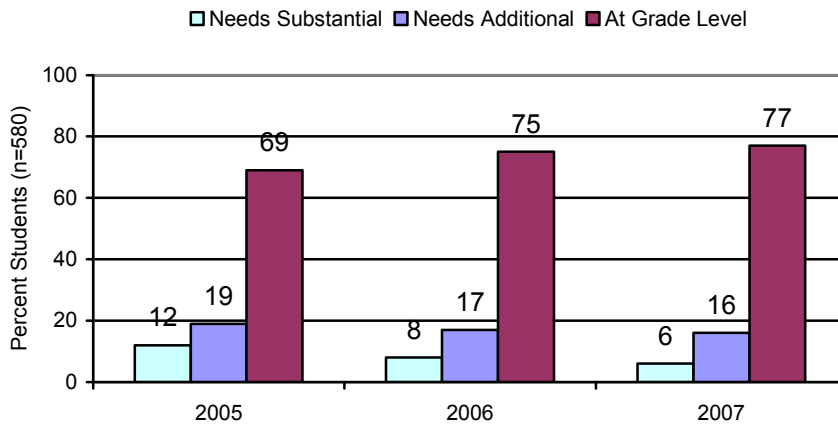


Figure 32c: Percent of grade 3 students with Stanford RF *Total* scores by performance level in spring 2005 through 2007



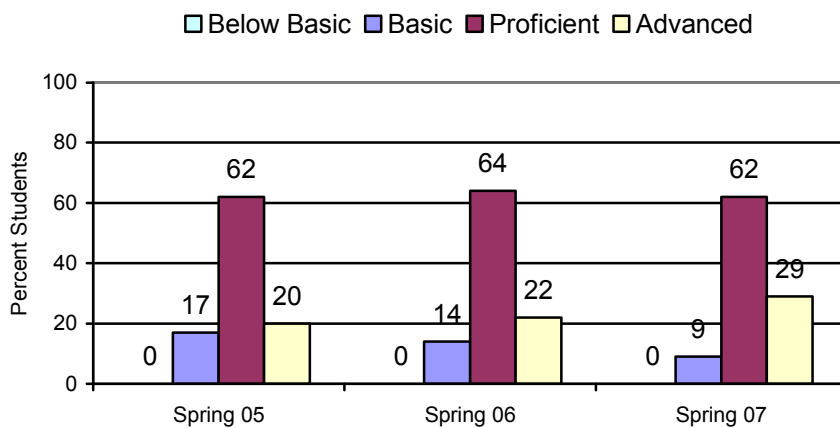
Dakota STEP

Dakota STEP (State Test of Educational Progress) is the assessment system for accountability in South Dakota schools. STEP has as its basic platform the Stanford 10 Abbreviated test which has been augmented to fully assess state content standards. The assessment, which is administered annually each spring in grades 3-8 and 11 statewide, yields both norm-referenced and standards-based scores in reading.

Figure 33 and Figure 34 show the estimated percents of grade 3 students in the Reading First schools who scored “advanced,” “proficient,” “basic,” and “below basic” on the Dakota STEP reading assessment for the past three years for first round schools and for

the past two years for second round schools.⁴ For the first round schools scores from 2005, 2006, and 2007 indicate reading proficiency after the first, second and third year of Reading First implementation, respectively. As shown in Figure 34, the data suggest an increase in the students who were either proficient or advanced over the three year time period, from 82 percent to 91 percent. For the second round schools scores from 2006 and 2007 indicate reading proficiency before implementation and after the first year of Reading First implementation, respectively. As shown in Figure 35, the data suggest a slight increase in the students who were either proficient or advanced, from 79 percent to 84 percent.

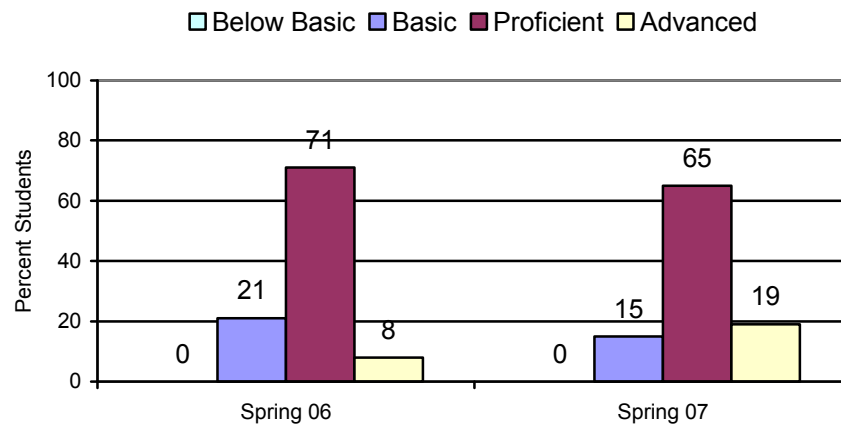
Figure 33: Estimated* percent of grade 3 students with *Reading* scores on the Dakota STEP in spring 2005 through 2007 – All First Round Reading First Schools



* Student enrollment data for 2007 were not available as of the writing of this report. The N reflects 2006 student enrollment (n=514).

⁴ Individual student level data were not available for this analysis. Estimates were computed from school level data available from the South Dakota Department of Education website for 13 round one participating schools and 3 round two participating schools.

Figure 34: Estimated* percent of grade 3 students with *Reading* scores on the Dakota STEP in spring 2007 – All Second Round Reading First Schools



* Student enrollment data for 2007 were not available as of the writing of this report. The N reflects 2006 student enrollment in second round Reading First Schools (n=24).

DIBELS

The DIBELS is a standardized, criterion-referenced test of reading. As a measure of student outcomes, DIBELS provides an indication of whether or not individual students are making adequate progress toward important reading goals.⁵ DIBELS measures foundational reading skills critical to understanding the alphabetic principle and gaining familiarity with and ease in the use of the alphabetic code to decode, read fluently and with understanding.

DIBELS is typically administered at least three times during the school year – beginning, middle, and end – and the subtests differ by grade level. This administration pattern is shown in Table 7.⁶ In Kindergarten, DIBELS provides an indication of whether or not children are progressing in phonological awareness and letter recognition. These foundational skills are measured with *Initial Sound Fluency*, *Letter Naming Fluency* and *Phoneme Segmentation Fluency*. In grade 1, DIBELS monitors progress in these areas as well as provides an indication of whether or not children are progressing adequately in

⁵ Good, R. H., Simmons, D. C. & Kame'enui, E. J. (2001). The importance and decision-making utility of a continuum of fluency-based indicators of foundational reading skills for third-grade high-stakes outcomes. *Scientific Studies of Reading* 5(3), 257-288.

Good, R. H., Kaminski, R. A., Smith, S., Simmons, D., Kame'enui, E., & Wallin, J. (In press). Reviewing outcomes: Using DIBELS to evaluate a school's core curriculum and system of additional intervention in kindergarten. In S. R. Vaughn & K. L. Briggs (Eds.), *Reading in the classroom: Systems for observing teaching and learning*. Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes.

⁶ Good, R. H. & Kaminski, R. A. (Eds.). (2002). *Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills* (6th ed.). Eugene, OR: Institute for the Development of Educational Achievement.

use of the alphabetic code. Use of the alphabetic code is measured by *Nonsense Word Fluency* and *Oral Reading Fluency*. *Oral Reading Fluency* is measured regularly in grades 1, 2 and 3.

Using data from tens of thousands of children, the DIBELS system has defined benchmark goals that have been validated through predictive correlation studies following children from grade to grade. Results from the studies were used to categorize performance levels into “at risk/deficit “some risk/emerging” or “low risk/established” where “at risk/deficit” indicates a certain degree of certainty that without intervention, the child will not attain later grade level benchmarks. “Some risk/emerging” means the child is at some risk of not attaining later grade level benchmarks without intervention. “Low risk/established” means the child is currently performing at benchmark and with effective instruction is likely to attain later grade level benchmarks. Performance is referred to as *at risk*, *some risk*, and *low risk* if the measure was administered prior to the benchmark goal, and *deficit*, *emerging*, *established* if the measure was administered at the benchmark goal or later.

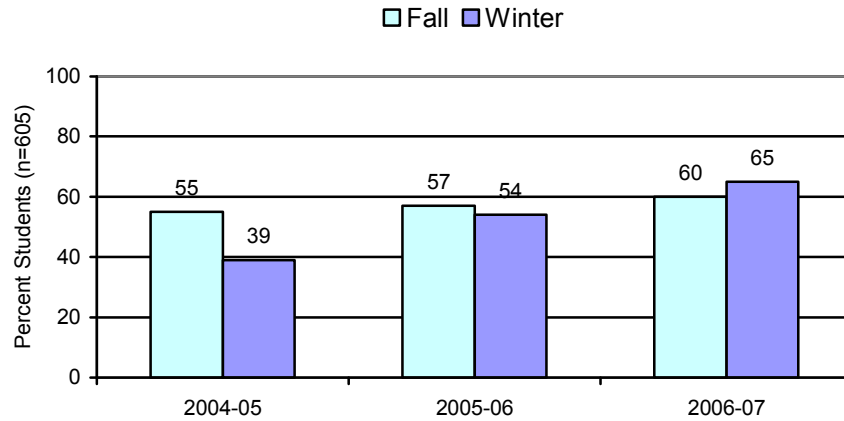
Student DIBELS data and summary reports were collected directly from the University of Oregon website, <http://diebel.uoregon.edu/>, for the 2006-07 school year. The results are summarized by grade level cohort in the sections that follow, and each grade level’s results are compared to the results from that grade level in 2004-05 and 2006-07. Although these are not the same students (comparing, e.g., 2005-06 1st graders to 2006-07 1st graders), they provide a reference for measuring “systemic change” – that is, the degree to which the Reading First program has had an overall effect on schools’ delivery of services and students’ learning of materials.

Table 7: DIBELS Administration Schedule

KINDERGARTEN			GRADE 1			GRADE 2			GRADE 3		
Fall	Winter	Spring	Fall	Winter	Spring	Fall	Winter	Spring	Fall	Winter	Spring
Initial Sound											
Letter Naming Fluency											
Phoneme Segmentation Fluency											
Nonsense Word Fluency											
Oral Reading Fluency											

Kindergarten

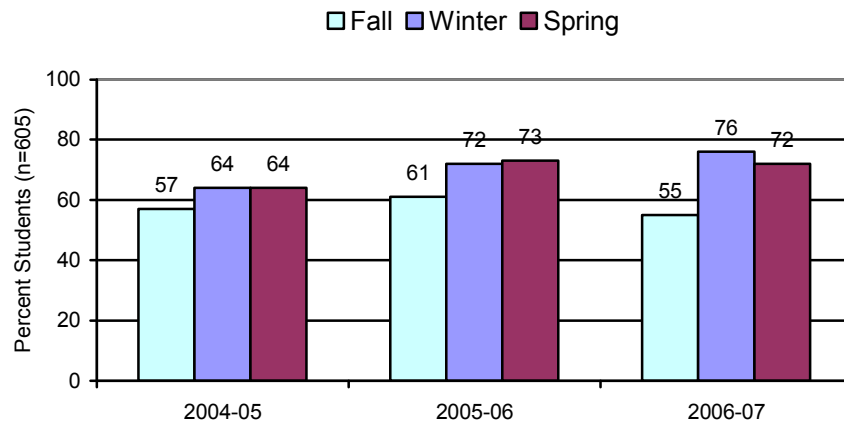
Figure 35: Percent of Kindergarten students⁷ with *Initial Sound Fluency* scores in the “low risk” performance category.



The benchmark for *Initial Sound Fluency* is to have all students demonstrate phonological awareness skills by selecting 25-35 words with the specified initial sound by the middle of Kindergarten. The results are shown in Figure 35. While 60 percent of students were considered likely to achieve the benchmark when assessed at the beginning of the school year (low risk), some 65 percent demonstrated established skills with the initial sounds in words by the middle of the school year.

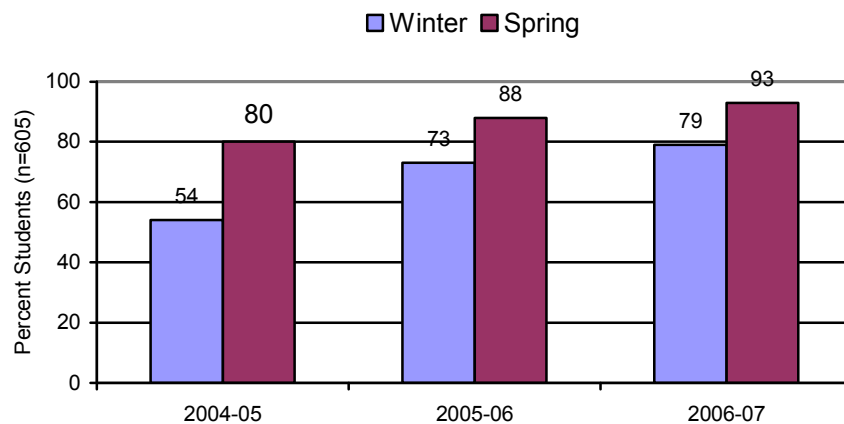
⁷ The number of students who completed each DIBELS subtest varied somewhat by administration. The minimum number during 2006-07 is indicated in each figure; actual numbers are reported in the appendix.

Figure 36: Percent of Kindergarten students with Letter Naming Fluency scores in the “low risk” performance category.



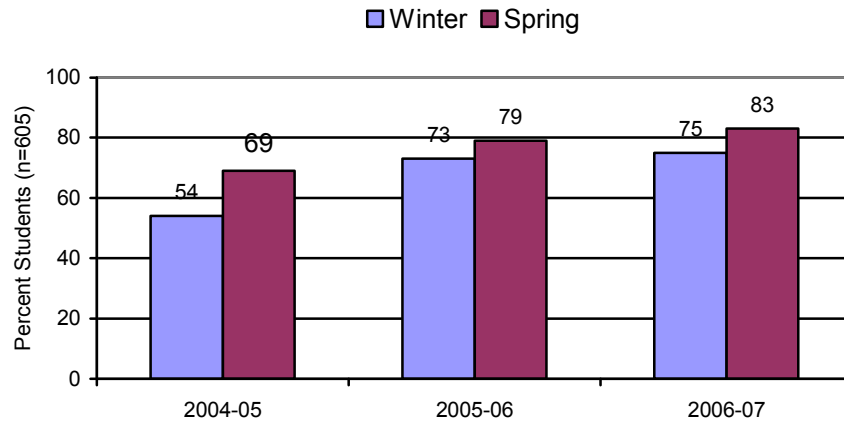
The *Letter Naming Fluency* measures the number of letters that a student can name in one minute. There is no benchmark for *Letter Naming Fluency*, however, this score serves as an indicator of risk in conjunction with scores from other DIBELS measures. Cutoff scores for “low risk” change with beginning, middle and end of year administrations (8, 27, and 40 letters, respectively). The results, shown in Figure 36, indicate that 72 percent of the Kindergarten students tested were at low risk by the end of the school year.

Figure 37: Percent of Kindergarten students with *Phoneme Segmentation Fluency* scores in the “established” performance category.



The *Phoneme Segmentation Fluency* score is a measure of phonemic awareness. The benchmark goal for all children is to have established phonemic awareness skills of 35-45 sounds per minute by the end of Kindergarten or the beginning of Grade 1. As shown in Figure 37, 93 percent of the students tested had established phonemic awareness skills by the end of Kindergarten.

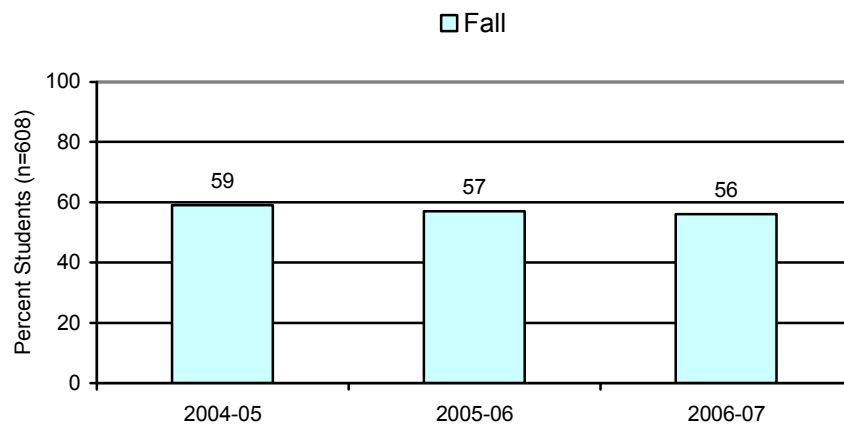
Figure 38: Percent of Kindergarten students with *Nonsense Word Fluency* scores in the “low risk” category.



The *Nonsense Word Fluency* score measures alphabetic principle skills. The benchmark goal is a score of 50 by the middle of Grade 1; students who score 25 or more are making adequate progress at the end of Kindergarten (low risk). As shown in Figure 38, 83 percent of students were at low risk by the end of Kindergarten.

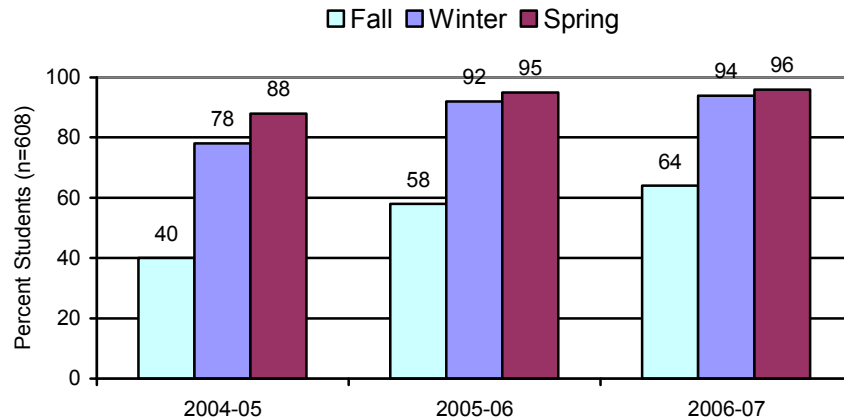
Grade 1

Figure 39: Percent of grade 1 students with *Letter Naming Fluency* scores in the “low risk” performance category.



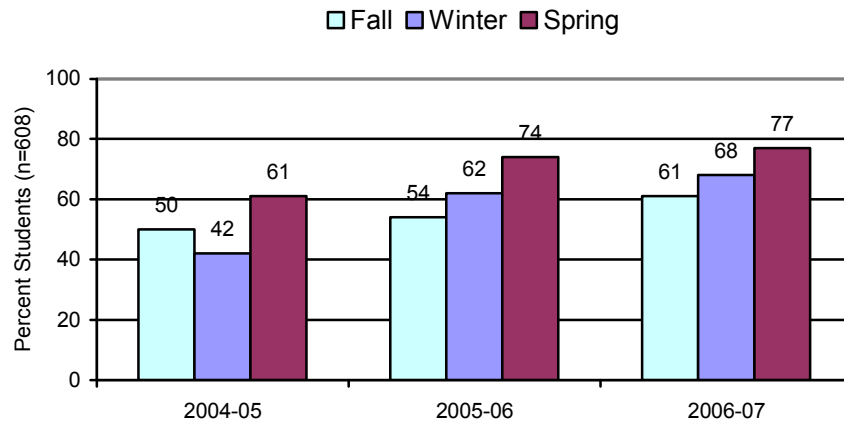
The results for the *Letter Naming Fluency* measure are shown in Figure 39. In the beginning of Grade 1, students who are able to name at least 37 letters of the alphabet in one minute are considered low risk. Fifty-six percent of the grade 1 students tested were at low risk at the beginning of the school year; 44 percent showed a greater risk of difficulty in achieving early literacy goals.

Figure 40: Percent of grade 1 students with *Phoneme Segmentation Fluency* scores in the “established” performance category.



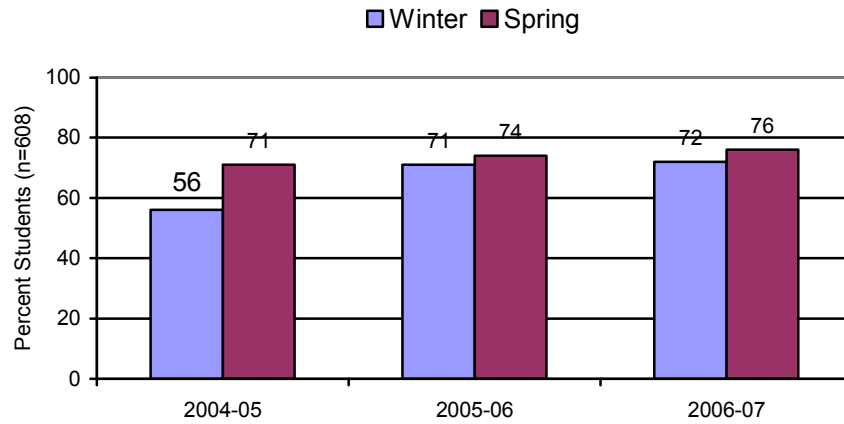
The *Phoneme Segmentation Fluency* score is a measure of phonemic awareness. As shown in Figure 40, 95 percent of the students tested had established phonemic awareness skills by the spring of grade 1 in 2006, while 96 percent had achieved the benchmark by the spring of 2007.

Figure 41: Percent of grade 1 students with *Nonsense Word Fluency* scores in the “established” performance category.



The *Nonsense Word Fluency* score measures alphabetic principle skills. The benchmark goal is a score of 50 by the middle of grade 1. As shown in Figure 41, 74 percent of students reached the benchmark in the spring of 2006; 77 percent reached the benchmark score at the end of 2007.

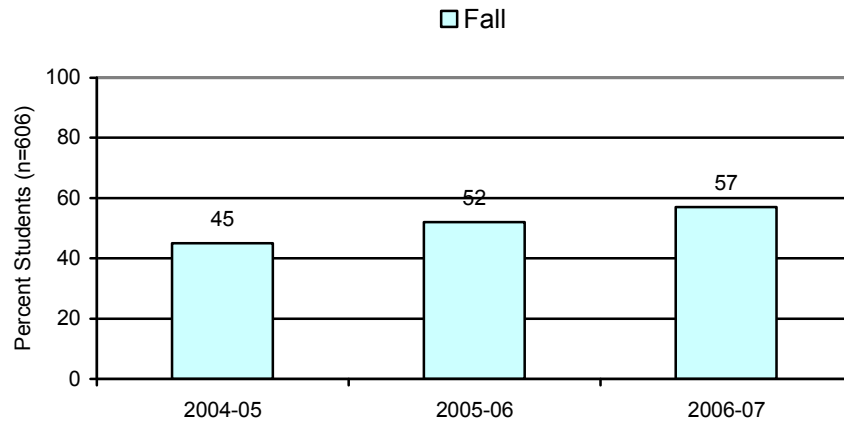
Figure 42: Percent of grade 1 students with *Oral Reading Fluency* scores in the “low risk” performance category.



The *Oral Reading Fluency* score measures reading skills. The benchmark goal is for all students to read 40 or more words per minute by the end of grade 1; those who read 20 or more in the middle of grade 1 are considered some risk. As shown in Figure 42, 74 percent of students reached the low-risk benchmark in spring 2006; 76 percent reached the benchmark in spring 2007.

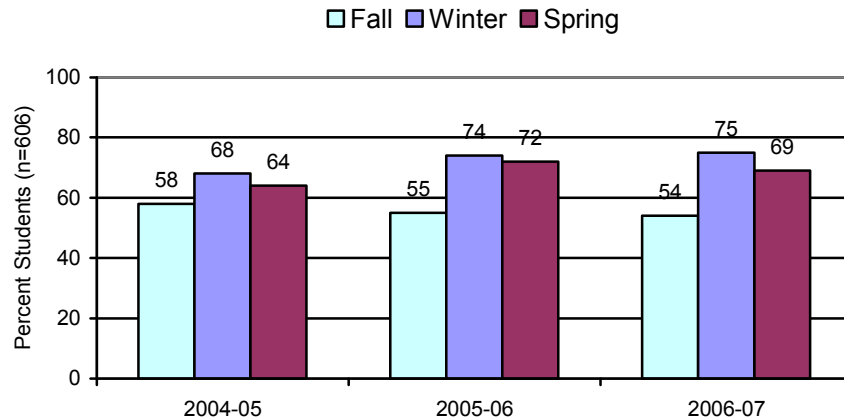
Grade 2

Figure 43: Percent of grade 2 students with *Nonsense Word Fluency* scores in the “established” performance category.



The benchmark goal for the *Nonsense Word Fluency* measure is a score of 50 by the middle of grade 1. As shown in Figure 43, 52 percent of students in grade 2 reached the benchmark in the fall of 2005; 57 percent of students in grade 2 reached the benchmark in the fall of 2006.

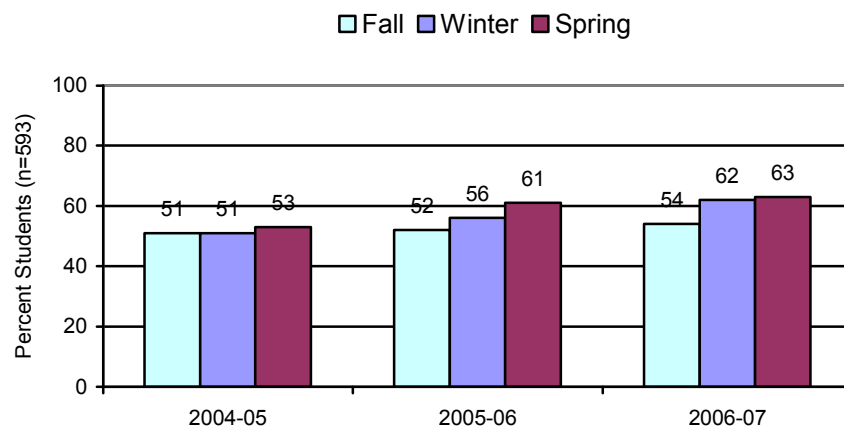
Figure 44: Percent of grade 2 students with *Oral Reading Fluency* scores in the “low risk” performance category.



The *Oral Reading Fluency* score measures reading skills. The benchmark goal is for all students to read 90 or more words per minute by the end of grade 2; those who read 44 or more at the beginning of grade 2 and/or 68 by the middle of grade 2 are considered low risk. As shown in Figure 44, 64 percent of grade 2 students reached the benchmark in the spring of 2005 as compared with 72 percent of students in the spring of 2006 and 69 percent of students in the spring of 2007.

Grade 3

Figure 45: Percent of grade 3 students with *Oral Reading Fluency* scores in “low risk” performance category.



The results of the *Oral Reading Fluency* measure at grade 3 are shown in Figure 45. The benchmark goal is for all students to read 110 or more words per minute by the end of

grade 3; those who read 77 or more at the beginning of grade 2 and/or 92 by the middle of grade 3 are considered low risk. As shown in Figure 39, 61 percent of students reached the benchmark in spring 2006; 63 percent reached the benchmark in the spring 2007.

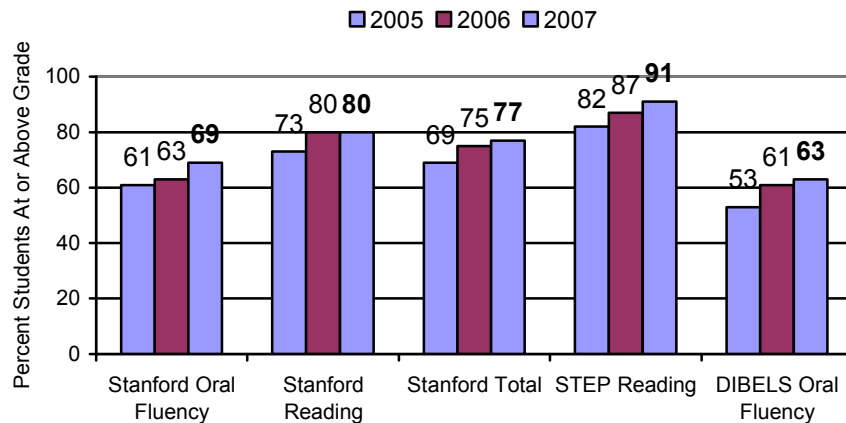
Student Assessment Summary

The findings from the Stanford Reading First, Dakota STEP, and DIBELS assessments can be used to describe the extent to which K-3 students in participating Reading First schools are proficient in reading and reading-related skills. The results from each of these different measures can be briefly summarized as follows.

- The Stanford RF test was designed to measure the skills and overall reading proficiency targeted by the Reading First initiative. As previously shown, 66-91 percent of students performed at or above grade level on the Stanford RF in spring 2007, depending on the subtest and the grade level. The Total Stanford RF scores for children in Reading First schools showed steady, annual improvement when compared with data from spring 2005.
- The Dakota STEP Reading scores offer an indication of the extent to which students are successful in meeting state standards. At this point, only estimates based on school level data were available. These estimates showed a slight increase in the percent of students in Reading First schools who were proficient or advanced from spring 2005 to spring 2007.
- DIBELS provides valuable progress monitoring in different reading-related activities. The DIBELS classification of “low risk” indicates that students are likely to meet subsequent benchmarks in reading skill development. Overall, the SDRFI DIBELS results showed that the percent of students classified as “low risk” students generally increased in grades K through 3 from the beginning to the end of the 2006-07. The percent of students classified as “low risk” increased by 10 or more percentage points or more for the following grades and subtests: kindergarten phoneme segmentation, kindergarten and first grade nonsense word fluency, and third grade oral reading fluency.

The ultimate goal of Reading First is that all students read at or above grade level by the end of grade 3. Data from all three measures can be used to examine the extent to which this goal has been achieved. Students who scored “low risk” on the DIBELS, “at grade level” on the Stanford RF, and “advanced” or “proficient” on the Dakota STEP were assumed to be “at or above grade level” for the purposes of this comparison. Figure 46 summarizes the percents for the various measures. As shown in the figure, there were slight to modest increases on all measures from 2005 to 2007, with the exception of the Reading subtest score on the Stanford Reading First Assessment, which remained constant.

Figure 46: Percent of grade 3 students at or above grade level in spring 2005 through 2007 according to various measures.



CONCLUSION

During Year 4, the South Dakota Reading First Initiative made significant progress toward accomplishing its goals. Twenty-one schools in nine school districts completed the past year of Reading First implementation. The schools are mostly small, serving an average of about 150 students in grades K-3, and all are located in rural areas or small towns. In six of the schools, a majority of the students are Native American. Five different core reading models are being used and each addresses the five essential components of reading instruction.

State and district level professional development was provided to coaches and to participating teachers; the coaches, in turn, provided valuable training and technical assistance to school staff. Feedback from participants showed that these professional development opportunities were valuable and of high quality and that participants expected to apply what they learned to their classroom practices.

Technical assistance is provided to participating schools through the SDDOE, the Western Regional Office of the National Center for Reading First Technical Assistance, by commercial publishers and vendors, and through a variety of online sites. The state used the Reading First listserv, on-site visits, and the Digital Dakota Network to share project-related information and resources, respond to issues and concerns, and promote discussion among Reading First coaches. Coaches reported providing a variety of services designed to support teachers such as meetings, student assessment, training, and one-on-one interventions. These services often focused on student assessment and other program elements.

Online surveys of participating coaches, teachers, and administrators showed that they are focused on improving reading instruction, that teachers understand what skills

students need to become good readers, and that important changes in instructional practices are taking place. In particular, there is an emphasis on proven, research-based practices and on the use of assessment to inform instruction. All three groups reported positive initial outcomes for the Reading First initiative but many were concerned about having sufficient time to plan, collaborate, implement the program, assess students, and meet the needs of individual students.

Student assessment results from Year 4 were promising, showing many gains over the three year period. The results from DIBELS, Stanford Reading First, and Dakota-STEP indicate increases in the percent of students reading at or above grade level in association with the implementation of the SDRFI program over the course of the last three school years (2004-2005, 2005-2006, and 2006-2007). The vast majority of 3rd graders in SDRFI schools are reading with comprehension at or above grade level as measured on the Reading subtest of the Stanford Reading First assessment and the state reading assessment (Dakota STEP).

Across the state, participants in SDRFI reported increasing their knowledge and skills when attending SDRFI professional development events. Across the 21 SDRFI schools, teachers generally recognize the importance and positive impact of SDRFI on collection and use of reading assessment data and the additional support and instruction for students who are having difficulty learning to read. SDRFI participants agreed least often with the statements that *there is agreement among K-3 teachers about how to teach reading*, and *K-3 teachers regularly share ideas about reading instruction* indicated that it has been difficult to reach consensus about the changes occurring with this initiative. Remaining challenges relate to not enough time to prepare for, collaborate on, teach to, and assess each student's reading development. Student achievement results, however, indicate excellent progress toward attaining the Reading First goal of all students reading at or above grade level by the end of grade 3.

APPENDIX A: DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS

SDRF Event Registration Form

SDRF Reading Coach Technical Assistance Log

Participant Feedback Form

SDRF Teacher Survey

SDRF School Administrator Survey

SDRF Reading Coach Survey

SDRF Classroom Observation Guide

SDRF Interview Guide

SDRFI Event Registration Form

Please use this form to record contact information for participants in key training and technical assistance events (or attach registration spreadsheet). Note that each participant in group training should complete a Participant Evaluation Form at the conclusion of the event.

Event Title _____ Date _____
 Location _____

Facilitator(s) _____

Participant name	School or district	Job	Grade level	E-mail address	Telephone

SDRFI Reading Coach Technical Assistance Log

Please log each significant technical assistance activity using the checklists provided. Use the “other” response and add comments to clarify as necessary; attach an agenda if appropriate. Note that each participant in group training should complete an Event Assessment at the conclusion of the event.

Coach			Site					
Date	Service <i>(check one)</i>	Duration <i>(minutes)</i>	No. Served	Goal <i>(check all that apply)</i>	Focus <i>(check all that apply)</i>	Goals of activity met? <i>(check one)</i>	Eval. Forms	Comment/ Action Items
	<input type="checkbox"/> Intervention <input type="checkbox"/> Observation <input type="checkbox"/> Training <input type="checkbox"/> Meeting <input type="checkbox"/> Student assessment <input type="checkbox"/> Other <i>(describe)</i>			<input type="checkbox"/> Prof. development <input type="checkbox"/> Reflection/assessment <input type="checkbox"/> Demonstration/modeling <input type="checkbox"/> Assistance/support <input type="checkbox"/> Other <i>(describe)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Phonemic awareness <input type="checkbox"/> Phonics <input type="checkbox"/> Vocabulary development <input type="checkbox"/> Reading fluency <input type="checkbox"/> Reading comprehension <input type="checkbox"/> Student assessment <input type="checkbox"/> Other <i>(describe)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Not at all <input type="checkbox"/> Slightly <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat <input type="checkbox"/> Mostly <input type="checkbox"/> Completely Other outcomes?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Intervention <input type="checkbox"/> Observation <input type="checkbox"/> Training <input type="checkbox"/> Meeting <input type="checkbox"/> Student assessment <input type="checkbox"/> Other <i>(describe)</i>			<input type="checkbox"/> Prof. development <input type="checkbox"/> Reflection/assessment <input type="checkbox"/> Demonstration/modeling <input type="checkbox"/> Assistance/support <input type="checkbox"/> Other <i>(describe)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Phonemic awareness <input type="checkbox"/> Phonics <input type="checkbox"/> Vocabulary development <input type="checkbox"/> Reading fluency <input type="checkbox"/> Reading comprehension <input type="checkbox"/> Student assessment <input type="checkbox"/> Other <i>(describe)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Not at all <input type="checkbox"/> Slightly <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat <input type="checkbox"/> Mostly <input type="checkbox"/> Completely Other outcomes?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Intervention <input type="checkbox"/> Observation <input type="checkbox"/> Training <input type="checkbox"/> Meeting <input type="checkbox"/> Student assessment <input type="checkbox"/> Other <i>(describe)</i>			<input type="checkbox"/> Prof. development <input type="checkbox"/> Reflection/assessment <input type="checkbox"/> Demonstration/modeling <input type="checkbox"/> Assistance/support <input type="checkbox"/> Other <i>(describe)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Phonemic awareness <input type="checkbox"/> Phonics <input type="checkbox"/> Vocabulary development <input type="checkbox"/> Reading fluency <input type="checkbox"/> Reading comprehension <input type="checkbox"/> Student assessment <input type="checkbox"/> Other <i>(describe)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Not at all <input type="checkbox"/> Slightly <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat <input type="checkbox"/> Mostly <input type="checkbox"/> Completely Other outcomes?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	

	<input type="checkbox"/> Intervention <input type="checkbox"/> Observation <input type="checkbox"/> Training <input type="checkbox"/> Meeting <input type="checkbox"/> Student assessment <input type="checkbox"/> Other <i>(describe)</i>			<input type="checkbox"/> Prof. development <input type="checkbox"/> Reflection/assessment <input type="checkbox"/> Demonstration/modeling <input type="checkbox"/> Assistance/support <input type="checkbox"/> Other <i>(describe)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Phonemic awareness <input type="checkbox"/> Phonics <input type="checkbox"/> Vocabulary development <input type="checkbox"/> Reading fluency <input type="checkbox"/> Reading comprehension <input type="checkbox"/> Student assessment <input type="checkbox"/> Other <i>(describe)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Not at all <input type="checkbox"/> Slightly <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat <input type="checkbox"/> Mostly <input type="checkbox"/> Completely Other outcomes?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
--	--	--	--	--	---	--	---	--

Service Definitions

This log is designed to document *significant* service activities or events that directly involve administrators, teachers, students, or parents. The **Duration** of an activity is typically one hour or longer. The log is *not* designed to account for all time spent doing Reading First work. Reading coaches engage in a number of important, ongoing activities that do not need to be recorded. Examples of activities that do not need to be recorded include product review, research, coordination, and responding to questions. Services that *should* be recorded are described below.

Intervention: Small-group or one-on-one direct instruction or counseling provided to students.

Observation: Observing teaching or assessment for purposes of providing professional feedback or consultation on effective practices for developing student reading. For **Duration**, Include feedback/consultation time with teacher as well as observation time.

Training: Providing information and/or facilitating knowledge and skill development through a workshop format. **Workshops** may be used for the same goals as a **Meeting** (e.g., professional development), but are distinguished from **Meetings** in that **Training** is a service that emphasizes teacher learning.

Meeting: Bringing staff together as a workgroup or colleagues (and may include parents) to communicate progress, tasks and responsibilities with regard to work and planning.

Student Assessment: Preparing to administer, administering, scoring, organizing, analyzing and interpreting student assessments and data.

Other (describe): Refers to other South Dakota Reading First technical assistance not defined above that may include a Reading coach attending a conference or meeting off-campus to present or participate.

Participant Feedback Form

Professional Development Feedback Form

The purpose of this assessment is to gather information regarding the quality of the professional development in which you have engaged. This information will be used to guide future professional development and future assessment. Your individual responses will be treated as confidential information.

MARKING INSTRUCTIONS

- Use number 2 pencil only.
- Make dark marks that fill the circle completely.
- Erase cleanly any mark you wish to change.
- Make no stray marks.

Please identify your position by marking the appropriate response:

- Teacher
 Administrator
 Other (please describe) _____

Title of professional development event _____

Presenter _____

Date of Professional Development Event:

MO.		DAY		YEAR	
0	0	0	0	0	0
1	1	1	1	1	1
2	2	2	2	2	2
3	3	3	3	3	3
4	4	4	4	4	4
5	5	5	5	5	5
6	6	6	6	6	6
7	7	7	7	7	7
8	8	8	8	8	8
9	9	9	9	9	9

- A. In column A below, please write the Stated Outcomes for this professional development.**
- B. In column B below, please rate your knowledge and skills relative to each outcome prior to participating in this professional development. Mark your responses using the 1-4 rating scale with 4 being high and 1 being low.**
- C. In column C below, please rate your knowledge and skills relative to each outcome at the completion of this professional development. Please mark the appropriate response using the 1-4 rating scale with 4 representing a high rating and 1 representing a low rating.**

	4=high	1=low
A. STATED OUTCOMES	B. PRIOR	C. AFTER
	4 3 2 1	4 3 2 1
	4 3 2 1	4 3 2 1
	4 3 2 1	4 3 2 1
	4 3 2 1	4 3 2 1

ii. Directions: Select the one response that you believe to be the most appropriate for each item by marking the appropriate response.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable
1. My attendance at this professional development was determined by local needs.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(M)
2. The presenter was knowledgeable and effective.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(M)
3. The strategies used by the presenter were appropriate in helping me attain the goal(s) and/or outcomes of this professional development experience.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(M)
4. This professional development offered sufficient and appropriate opportunity for networking.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(M)
5. I will continue to learn about this topic as part of my own professional development.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(M)

Participant Feedback Form (cont.)

II. Directions: Select the one response that you believe to be the most appropriate for each item by marking the appropriate response.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable
6. My local administration will support me in the implementation/use of this information and training.	4	3	2	1	NA
7. The handouts and materials were adequate and useful.	4	3	2	1	NA
8. I gained knowledge and skills to implement this professional development into my job.	4	3	2	1	NA
9. The level of difficulty of the content was appropriate.	4	3	2	1	NA
10. Teachers: This professional development provided me with research-based instructional strategies to assist students in meeting rigorous academic standards.	4	3	2	1	NA

III. Directions: Please write your responses to the following questions in the space provided.

A. As a result of this professional development experience, I will use my new knowledge and skills in the following ways:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

B. To continue learning about this topic I need the following:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Additional Comments are welcome. Thank you!

Adapted from Dimensions of Excellence Scales published by Research for Better Schools, 1990 and National Staff Development Council Standards for Professional Development, 2001.

SDRFI Teacher Survey (Administered online)

The purpose of this survey is to gather information about reading instruction in South Dakota. In particular, the information you provide via this survey will be used to look at the effectiveness and progress of the Reading First program to date.

Your participation in this survey is greatly appreciated. It should take you about 15-20 minutes to complete. We will not use your name, or the name of your school or district in any report or presentation. Individual responses will be kept strictly confidential.

*If you have any questions about this survey, please contact Dr. Bruce Randel, Principal Evaluator at Mid-continent Research for Education & Learning (McREL), at (303) 632-5576 or brandel@mcrel.org. **Thank you for your assistance.***

Directions:

Please schedule an uninterrupted block of time so you can complete the survey in one sitting. It is not possible to save a partially completed survey. If you close the browser window that the survey is in before clicking on the "Submit survey" button on the last page, your answers will be lost and you will have to start over.

Use your mouse or the "tab" key to move from question to question. Clicking on the "Next" button at the bottom of the page or pressing the "enter" key will take you to the next page. If necessary, you can use the "back" button on your browser to go back to previous pages in the survey. However, once you click on the "Submit survey" button on the last page, your survey is submitted and can not be retrieved. Please click on the "Submit survey" button only once.

1. What grade level(s) do you currently teach? (mark all that apply)

- Kindergarten
- Grade 1
- Grade 2
- Grade 3
- Other (specify) _____

2. Counting this year, how many years have you been teaching?

Years: _____

3. Counting this year, how many years have you taught at your current school?

Years _____

4. What is the highest academic degree you hold?

- Bachelors
- Masters
- Doctorate

5. Please indicate the Reading First core reading program your school is using: (mark one)

- Success for All
- Legacy of Literacy

- Open Court Reading
- Macmillan/McGraw Hill Reading 2003
- Scott Foresman Reading
- Houghton Mifflin Reading
- Other (specify) _____

6. Indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>a. An emphasis on proven, research-based instructional practices is an important step towards improving student reading.</p> <p>b. An emphasis on the use of assessment to inform instruction is an important step towards improving student reading.</p> <p>c. I discuss what I learn from the Reading First professional development or coaching with other teachers.</p> <p>d. I discuss what I learn from student reading assessments with other teachers in my building.</p> <p>e. I have sufficient time to integrate aspects of the reading professional development or coaching into my classroom.</p> <p>f. The position of reading coach is an important element in improving classroom reading instruction.</p> <p>g. The reading coach works with me in my classroom to improve assessment and instruction.</p> <p>h. My reading coach has helped me to become a better teacher.</p> <p>i. I have the knowledge and skills I need to help all of my students read well.</p> <p>j. I am able to differentiate reading instruction for individual students within my class.</p> <p>k. I have a conceptual understanding of what skills students need to become good readers.</p> <p>l. I am able to implement a variety of assessment practices.</p> <p>m. I am able to model and explain comprehension strategies to my students.</p> <p>n. My daily instruction engages students in lively use of new words.</p> <p>o. I have the instructional resources I need to support reading instruction.</p> <p>p. My administration provides me with the support I need to implement Reading First.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Strongly Agree <input type="radio"/> Agree <input type="radio"/> Neither Agree nor Disagree <input type="radio"/> Disagree <input type="radio"/> Strongly Disagree |
|---|--|

7. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

In my school...

- a. teachers and administrators are focused on improving reading instruction.
- b. adequate time is scheduled for teachers to meet and share ideas about instruction with one another.
- c. additional time and support are allocated to reading instruction for those students who need it.
- d. K to 3rd grade teachers are using a consistent approach to reading instruction.
- e. K to 3rd grade teachers regularly share ideas about reading instruction.
- f. there is agreement among K to 3rd grade teachers about how to teach reading.
- g. the majority of teachers are supportive of the Reading First program.
- h. the administration promotes the vision of Reading First.
- i. the administration encourages teachers to fully participate in the Reading First training and related activities.
- j. Reading First provides high quality professional development that is guided by reading research.
- k. the reading coach has a thorough understanding of reading assessment and instruction.
- l. the reading coach provides valuable training and technical assistance.
- m. the reading coach has greatly improved the quality of classroom instruction.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

For the following aspects of reading instruction, please indicate how frequently students in your classroom engage in each activity.

8a. For developing phonemic awareness, my students engage in:

- a. blending and segmenting games to develop phonemic awareness
 - b. sorting or categorizing words to develop phonemic awareness
 - c. rhyming games or activities to develop phonemic awareness
 - d. other activity used to develop phonemic awareness (*specify below*):
- Never or almost never
 - A couple of times a semester
 - A couple of times a month
 - A couple of times a week
 - Daily

8dw.
Other activity _____

8b. For developing phonics skills, my students engage in:

- e. games or activities to figure out and apply phonics principles Never or almost never
- f. spelling by sounding out A couple of times a semester
- g. explicit, sequenced phonics instruction A couple of times a month
- h. explicit, embedded phonics instruction A couple of times a week
- i. phonics practice through worksheets/workbook Daily
- j. other activity used to develop phonics skills (*specify below*):

8jw.
Other activity _____

8c. For developing vocabulary, my students engage in:

- k. vocabulary practice through worksheets/workbooks Never or almost never
- l. vocabulary practice through writing A couple of times a semester
- m. vocabulary practice through guided discussion A couple of times a month
- n. other activity used to develop vocabulary (*specify below*): A couple of times a week
- Daily

8nw.
Other activity _____

8d. For developing reading fluency, my students engage in:

- o. reading voluntarily for interest and own purposes Never or almost never
- p. independent reading A couple of times a semester
- q. repeated reading to develop fluency A couple of times a month
- r. collaborative reading (e.g., engage in partner reading, shared reading, book clubs) A couple of times a week
- s. other activity used to develop fluency (*specify below*): Daily

8sw.
Other activity _____

8e. For developing reading comprehension, my students engage in:

- t. making connections between events, characters, and actions/themes in books to specific life experiences. Never or almost never
- u. answering *why* and *how* questions A couple of times a semester
- v. reading comprehension practice through skill series or workbook/textbook A couple of times a month
- w. cooperative learning to develop reading comprehension A couple of times a week
- x. guided reading, strategy lessons, and mini lessons Daily
- y. other activity used to develop reading comprehension (*specify below*):

8yw. _____
Other activity _____

9. What outcomes have resulted from your participation in the Reading First program? *Please base this rating on how it has currently influenced your school and NOT on how you perceive it might influence it in the future.*

As a result of my school's participation in the Reading First program...

- a. students have greater access to reading material which is at an appropriate instructional level for them.
- b. I am better able to tailor reading instruction to the needs of individual students
- c. students are more engaged during reading instruction.
- d. I am better able to collect and make use of student reading assessment data.
- e. students who have difficulty learning to read are receiving additional support.
- f. students are receiving better instruction in reading.
- g. all students, including those who have difficulty learning to read, are performing better on reading assessments.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

10. In your opinion, what are the primary barriers you face as you try to implement the techniques disseminated via the Reading First project?

11. Finally, do you have any additional thoughts, comments or suggestions in regards to the Reading First program?

Thank you for completing this survey!

SDRFI School Administrator Survey (Administered online)

The purpose of this survey is to gather information about reading instruction in South Dakota. In particular, the information you provide via this survey will be used to look at the effectiveness and progress of the Reading First program to date.

Your participation in this survey is greatly appreciated. It should take you about 10-15 minutes to complete. We will not use your name, or the name of your school or district in any report or presentation. Individual responses will be kept strictly confidential.

*If you have any questions about this survey, please contact Dr. Bruce Randel, Principal Evaluator at Mid-continent Research for Education & Learning (McREL), at (303) 632-5576 or brandel@mcrel.org. **Thank you for your assistance.***

Directions:

Please schedule an uninterrupted block of time so you can complete the survey in one sitting. It is not possible to save a partially completed survey. If you close the browser window that the survey is in before clicking on the "Submit survey" button on the last page, your answers will be lost and you will have to start over.

Use your mouse or the "tab" key to move from question to question. Clicking on the "Next" button at the bottom of the page or pressing the "enter" key will take you to the next page. If necessary, you can use the "back" button on your browser to go back to previous pages in the survey. However, once you click on the "Submit survey" button on the last page, your survey is submitted and can not be retrieved. Please click on the "Submit survey" button only once.

1. What is your current position?

- Principal
- Assistant Principal
- Curriculum Director
- Other (specify) _____

2. Counting this year, how many years have you been working in education?

Years: _____

3. Counting this year, how many years have you been in your current position?

Years _____

4. What is the highest academic degree you hold?

- Bachelors
- Masters
- Doctorate
- Other (specify) _____

5. Please indicate what core reading program your school is currently using: (mark one)

- Success for All
- Legacy of Literacy
- Open Court Reading
- Macmillan/McGraw Hill Reading 2003
- Scott Foresman Reading
- Houghton Mifflin Reading
- Other (specify) _____

6. How do you keep informed about what teachers are doing in regards to implementation of the teaching strategies focused upon by Reading First? (mark all that apply)

- Classroom observations
- Discussions with teachers
- Monitoring and discussion of student assessment results
- Periodic performance reviews
- Meetings with the Reading First coach
- Other (specify) _____
- I do not know what teachers are doing in regards to Reading First implementation – I leave this up to them and/or the coach.

7. What support mechanisms does your school provide to help teachers as they try to implement what they learn via Reading First? (mark all that apply)

- Provide additional time for them to plan
- Provide additional time for them to meet and discuss their experiences with one another
 - Provide them with books and instructional resources that they need to implement the Reading First instructional strategies
 - Administrators observe teachers and provide them with feedback
 - Reading coaches observe teachers and provide them with feedback
 - Other teachers in the school conduct observe teachers and provide them with feedback.
- Other (specify) _____
- No formal support mechanisms are in place.

8. Indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

- | | |
|--|--|
| a. An emphasis on proven, research-based instructional practices is an important step towards improving student reading. | <input type="radio"/> Strongly Agree |
| b. An emphasis on the use of assessment to inform instruction is an important step towards improving student reading. | <input type="radio"/> Agree |
| c. The position of reading coach is an important element in improving classroom reading instruction. | <input type="radio"/> Neither Agree nor Disagree |
| d. I promote the vision of the Reading First training in my school. | <input type="radio"/> Disagree |
| e. I encourage teachers to fully participate in the Reading First training. | <input type="radio"/> Strongly Disagree |
| f. I have the resources I need to support K to 3rd grade teachers improve their reading instruction. | |
| g. I have the knowledge and skills I need to help my teachers improve their reading instruction. | |

9. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

In my school...

- a. K to 3rd grade teachers have the knowledge and skills they need to help all students read well.
- b. K to 3rd grade teachers are able to differentiate reading instruction for individual students within their classrooms.
- c. K to 3rd grade teachers have a conceptual understanding of what skills students need to become good readers.
- d. K to 3rd grade teachers are able to implement a variety of assessment practices.
- e. K to 3rd grade teachers are able to model and explain comprehension strategies to their students.
- f. K to 3rd grade teachers implement daily instruction that engages students in lively use of new words.
- g. teachers and administrators are focused on improving reading instruction.
- h. adequate time is scheduled for teachers to meet and share ideas about instruction with one another.
- i. additional time and support are allocated to reading instruction for those students who need it.
- j. K to 3rd grade teachers are using a consistent approach to reading instruction.
- k. K to 3rd grade teachers regularly share ideas about reading instruction.
- l. there is agreement among K to 3rd grade teachers about how to teach reading.
- m. the majority of teachers are supportive of the Reading First program.
- n. Reading First provides high quality professional development that is guided by reading research.
- o. the reading coach has a thorough understanding of reading assessment and instruction.
- p. the reading coach provides valuable training and technical assistance.
- q. the reading coach has greatly improved the quality of classroom instruction.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

10. What changes have occurred in your school as a result of participation in the Reading First program? *Please base this rating on how it has currently influenced your school and NOT on how you perceive it might influence it in the future.*

As a result of my school's participation in the Reading First program...

- a. students have greater access to reading material which is at an appropriate instructional level for them.
- b. teachers are better able to tailor reading instruction to the needs of individual students.
- c. students are more engaged during reading instruction.
- d. teachers are better able to collect and make use of student reading assessment data.
- e. students who have difficulty learning to read are receiving additional support.
- f. students are receiving better instruction in reading.
- g. all students, including those who have difficulty learning to read, are performing better on reading assessments.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

11. In your opinion, what are the primary barriers for your teachers as they try to implement the techniques disseminated via the Reading First project?

12. What are your plans to continue Reading First after your three year grant ends?

13. Are you planning to continue explicit and systematic instruction in the following components of Reading First?

- a. Phonics
- b. Phonemic awareness
- c. Vocabulary development
- d. Reading fluency
- e. Reading comprehension strategies

- Yes
- No

14. Which of the following do you plan to continue at your school after your Reading First grant ends? (please check all that apply)

- Core reading program
- Supplemental instructional materials aligned with core reading program
- Salary reading coach position
- 90 minutes of uninterrupted reading instruction
- Additional reading instruction for 'at risk' students
- Professional development in reading instruction
- Professional development in reading assessment
- Screening assessment
- Diagnostic assessment
- Progress monitoring assessment
- Outcomes assessment
- Regular use of assessment data
- Other _____

15. Are you planning to seek funds for continuing activities begun as part of your Reading First program?

- Yes
- No

16. Which of the following funds will you pursue for continued support of activities begun as part of your Reading First program? (please check all that apply)

- Reapply for Reading First
- Title I
- Title II A
- Title IV Part B
- Title V
- General funds
- Other _____

17. How important are continuing the Reading First activities for helping students become readers but Grade 3?

- Very important
- Somewhat important
- Not important

18. Finally, do you have any additional thoughts, comments or suggestions in regards to the Reading First program?

Thank you for completing this survey!

SDRFI Reading Coach Survey (Administered online)

The purpose of this survey is to gather information about reading instruction in South Dakota. In particular, the information you provide via this survey will be used to look at the effectiveness and progress of the Reading First program to date.

Your participation in this survey is greatly appreciated. It should take you about 10-15 minutes to complete. We will not use your name, or the name of your school or district in any report or presentation. Individual responses will be kept strictly confidential.

*If you have any questions about this survey, please contact Dr. Bruce Randel, Principal Evaluator at Mid-continent Research for Education & Learning (McREL), at (303) 632-5576 or brandel@mcrel.org. **Thank you for your assistance.***

Directions:

Please schedule an uninterrupted block of time so you can complete the survey in one sitting. It is not possible to save a partially completed survey. If you close the browser window that the survey is in before clicking on the "Submit survey" button on the last page, your answers will be lost and you will have to start over.

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1. Counting this year, how many years have you been working in education?

Years: _____

2. Counting this year, how many years have you been a reading coach?

Years _____

3. What is the highest academic degree you hold?

- Bachelors
- Masters
- Doctorate
- Other (specify) _____

4. What special professional certifications do you hold in education? (check all that apply)

- Reading Specialist
- Title I Teacher
- Bilingual Teacher
- English as a Second Language
- Principal
- Special Education
- Speech and Language Pathologist/Therapist
- Other (specify) _____

5. Please indicate what core reading program your school is currently using: (mark one)

- Success for All
- Legacy of Literacy
- Open Court Reading
- Macmillan/McGraw Hill Reading 2003
- Scott Foresman Reading
- Houghton Mifflin Reading
- Other (specify) _____

6. Indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

- | | |
|--|--|
| a. An emphasis on proven, research-based instructional practices is an important step towards improving student reading. | <input type="radio"/> Strongly Agree |
| b. An emphasis on the use of assessment to inform instruction is an important step towards improving student reading. | <input type="radio"/> Agree |
| c. The position of reading coach is an important element in improving classroom reading instruction. | <input type="radio"/> Neither Agree nor Disagree |
| d. I have sufficient time to prepare for and conduct coaching sessions with teachers in my school. | <input type="radio"/> Disagree |
| e. I have the professional resources I need to prepare for and conduct coaching sessions with teachers in my school. | <input type="radio"/> Strongly Disagree |
| f. I have the knowledge and skills I need to help my teachers improve reading instruction. | |
| g. My administration provides me with the support I need to implement Reading First. | |

7. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

In my school...

- a. K to 3rd grade teachers have the knowledge and skills they need to help all students read well.
- b. K to 3rd grade teachers are able to differentiate reading instruction for individual students within their classrooms.
- c. K to 3rd grade teachers have a conceptual understanding of what skills students need to become good readers.
- d. K to 3rd grade teachers are able to implement a variety of assessment practices.
- e. K to 3rd grade teachers are able to model and explain comprehension strategies to their students.
- f. K to 3rd grade teachers implement daily instruction that engages students in lively use of new words.
- g. teachers and administrators are focused on improving reading instruction.
- h. adequate time is scheduled for teachers to meet and share ideas about instruction with one another.
- i. additional time and support are allocated to reading instruction for those students who need it.
- j. K to 3rd grade teachers are using a consistent approach to reading instruction.
- k. K to 3rd grade teachers regularly share ideas about reading instruction.
- l. there is agreement among K to 3rd grade teachers about how to teach reading.
- m. the majority of teachers are supportive of the Reading First program.
- n. the administration promotes the vision of Reading First in my school.
- o. the administration encourages teachers to fully participate in the Reading First training and related activities.
- p. Reading First provides high quality professional development that is guided by reading research.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

8. What changes have occurred in your school as a result of participation in the Reading First program? *Please base this rating on how it has currently influenced your school and NOT on how you perceive it might influence it in the future.*

As a result of my school's participation in the Reading First program...

- a. students have greater access to reading material which is at an appropriate instructional level for them.
- b. teachers are better able to tailor reading instruction to the needs of individual students.
- c. students are more engaged during reading instruction.
- d. teachers are better able to collect and make use of student reading assessment data.
- e. students who have difficulty learning to read are receiving additional support.
- f. students are receiving better instruction in reading.
- g. all students, including those who have difficulty learning to read, are performing better on reading assessments.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

9. In your opinion, what are the primary barriers for your teachers as they try to implement the techniques disseminated via the Reading First project?

10. Finally, do you have any additional thoughts, comments or suggestions in regards to the Reading First program?

Thank you for completing this survey!

SDRFI Classroom Observation Guide

Observations should be approximately 20-30 minutes during a typical reading period. They should be preceded by a quick interview with the teacher regarding what to expect. Remind teachers that the observation is designed to better understanding the core reading program, not to evaluate individual teachers or schools. Describe instruction using the guide below; add pages as necessary. At the conclusion, ask whether the class was typical of reading instruction; if not, in what way(s) was it unusual? Thank the teacher.

Teacher _____ Grade _____ No. Students _____ Date _____
 Setting _____
 Lesson overview (*expectation?*) _____

Focus? phonemic awareness phonics vocabulary fluency comprehension	
Strategies? reading listening question/answer summarizing organizing writing assessing	
Format? whole class groups pairs independent	
Teacher/Student Roles? leading interacting guiding modeling sharing	
Resources? books displays worksheets technology	
Student Engagement? on task responsive	
Other? pacing organization supplemental activities	

Observation time (*in minutes*) _____
 Lesson follow-up (*typical?*) _____

SDRFI Interview Guide

Interviews should be brief, approximately 20 minutes each, and focus on understanding the core reading program and how it was implemented. Interviews should be tailored to the role of the informant. Administrators should focus on the school context and program implementation; coaches on professional development and classroom instruction; and teachers on classroom instruction. All informants should be asked about perceived outcomes and lessons learned.

Participants' comments will be kept confidential. The information will be used to understand and illustrate the state program and not to evaluate or compare individuals or schools. An online survey will be conducted to collect additional information, interviews should complement those data.

1. Context and Need?

- Important school characteristics and influences (political, cultural, economic, etc.)
- Prior reading program(s) experience

2. Status of Program Implementation?

- Core resources, materials
- Staffing, coach, collaboration, administrative support
- Professional development (extent, focus)

3. Key Classroom Changes?

- Content (components of reading instruction)
- General approach to instruction (prescriptive, interactive, etc.)
- Resources (quality, etc.)
- Formats (class management, time allocation, student and teacher roles)
- Assessment (screening, diagnostic, progress, outcomes)
- Supplemental services (tutoring, etc.)

4. Perceived Outcomes?

- Faculty knowledge, skills, peer support
- Students reading

5. Factors Influencing Success?

- Most valuable/successful elements of the program to date (like best)
- Factors contributing to success
- Less than successful elements of the program (like least)
- Problems or barriers that exist

6. Future Plans for Reading First?

Thank participant and provide opportunity for questions. School-specific reports will not be prepared but we will encourage the state to share our findings with all grantees.

APPENDIX B: SUPPORTING DATA TABLES

**Table B-1: Stanford Reading First results - Students performing “At Grade Level”
Spring 2005 through Spring 2007**

MEASURE	PERFORMANCE LEVEL		
	Spring 2005	Spring 2006	Spring 2007
	Number* Percent	Number* Percent	Number* Percent
Kindergarten			
Reading	599 83%	582 84%	596 86%
Oral Fluency	599 63%	582 75%	595 86%
Reading First Total	599 79%	582 84%	596 91%
Grade 1			
Reading	576 75%	585 82%	596 81%
Oral Fluency	576 78%	585 84%	594 89%
Reading First Total	576 75%	585 83%	597 85%
Grade 2			
Reading	542 76%	631 84%	598 75%
Oral Fluency	542 66%	631 69%	598 71%
Reading First Total	542 70%	631 79%	599 80%
Grade 3			
Reading	570 73%	528 80%	578 73%
Oral Fluency	570 61%	528 63%	579 66%
Reading First Total	570 69%	528 75%	580 77%

*Number represents the total number of students taking the assessment.

Table B-2: DIBELS results - Percent of students in “Low Risk” performance category, Fall 2004 through Spring 2007

MEASURE	ADMINISTRATION								
	Fall 04	Winter 05	Spring 05	Fall 05	Winter 06	Spring 06	Fall 06	Winter 07	Spring 07
	Number* Percent	Number* Percent	Number* Percent	Number* Percent	Number* Percent	Number* Percent	Number* Percent	Number* Percent	Number* Percent
Kindergarten									
Initial Sound Fluency	625 52%	638** 39%		623 58%	600** 55%		623 60%	626** 65%	
Letter Naming Fluency	625 57%	639 64%	615 64%	623 61%	600 73%	580 73%	623 55%	626 76%	605 72%
Phoneme Segmentation		639 54%	615** 80%		599 73%	580** 90%		626 79%	605* 93%
Nonsense Word Fluency		638 54%	615 69%		597 73%	580 81%		626 75%	605 83%
Grade 1									
Letter Naming Fluency	586 59%			599 57%			631 53%		
Phoneme Segmentation**	586** 40%	593** 78%	571** 88%	600** 58%	590** 92%	570** 95%	631** 64%	636** 94%	608** 96%
Nonsense Word Fluency	586 50%	593** 42%	571** 61%	600 54%	590** 62%	570** 76%	631 61%	636** 68%	608** 77%
Oral Reading Fluency		593 56%	571 71%		590 72%	569 76%		636 72%	608 76%
Grade 2									
Nonsense Word Fluency*	524** 45%			577** 53%			631** 57%		
Oral Reading Fluency	521 58%	526 68%	520 64%	576 55%	577 75%	550 73%	630 54%	636 75%	606 69%
Grade 3									
Oral Reading Fluency	578 51%	587 51%	565 53%	558 52%	551 56%	543 61%	614 54%	611 62%	593 63%

* Number represents the total number of students taking the assessment.

** Categories are “deficit,” “emerging,” and “established” rather than risk levels for this measure.

**APPENDIX C: SOUTH DAKOTA READING FIRST SITE VISIT REPORT
MARCH 2007**

Bon Homme School District 4-2

Tripp- Delmont School District 33-5

White River School District

Bennett County Schools 3-1

District: Bon Homme School District 4-2
Elementary School(s): Bon Homme and Tyndall
Date of Site Visit: 3/13/07
Program Year: Year Three of Reading First
Observer: Pam Blair, McREL Research Associate
Report Writer: Helen Apthorp, McREL Principal Researcher

Context

Two of the four district elementary schools participate in Reading First: Tyndall Elementary School and Bon Homme Hutterische Colony School. Students at Bon Homme speak a German dialect at home and are learning English as a second language. Their core reading program is Houghton Mifflin. McREL staff interviewed the principal, classroom teachers and the Reading First (RF) Coach at Bon Homme and conducted classroom observations at Tyndall. At the time of the site visit, both schools were in their third year of the Reading First grant. Before Reading First, Bon Homme staff explained that teachers used their own and different reading programs. Reading First “brought unity to the district,” resulting in a curriculum that is more organized; now, “all the pieces build together.” Concurrently, the principal reported that Bon Homme went from a “school improvement” to “distinguished” school. The RF Coach predicted that in reading by the end of 2006-2007, the 3rd grade class at Tyndall will be 100% advanced and Bon Homme will be 100% proficient.

Reading Assessment and Instruction

The RF Coach coordinates assessments, using Houghton Mifflin for phonics screening and DIBELS for progress monitoring. Weak areas are identified, issues diagnosed, and treatments prescribed; weak areas are taught and assessed again. The principal reported that if she could change something, it would be the testing requirements for English language learners, allowing them more time to become proficient in English before requiring assessment in English.

Regarding changes in reading instruction with Reading First, the RF coach reported that the teachers’ approach is more explicit and systematic, directed; “they’re teaching to kids instead of teaching the book; individualized teaching as well as group, more whole-group response (rather than calling on one child)...leads to student engagement.” As shown in the following table, all five components of reading instruction were addressed by teachers during classroom observations at Tyndall. Teachers provided important learning opportunities through use of manipulative letters, explicit phonics instruction, modeling reading, reading aloud to the teacher, lessons about multiple meaning words and use of dictionaries, and engaging in question and answering for comprehension. Teacher modeling of reading comprehension strategies or explicit instruction in reading comprehension strategies was not observed but this may have been a matter of timing of the observation, not a matter of omission.

Table C-1: Tyndall Colony Elementary – Classroom Visits March 2007

Observed Instructional Activities Focusing on Each Component across Grade				
	Kindergarten	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3 & 4
Phonemic Awareness	Practicing writing b and d Reading words beginning with certain letter	Making/spelling different words (hat to heat) Spelling “oa” words with letter blocks		Identified long and short sounds, emphasized syllables
Phonics	Manipulative letters used with students to make words (c_t)			Sounding out words; teacher sounded out “hard” words
Fluency	Teacher modeling	Practicing reading Teacher read to students Students read aloud to group	Students took turns reading to teacher Compound words on flashcards	Read a story Teacher modeling reading
Vocabulary		Multiple meaning words (park, train) Proper nouns	Action words Use of dictionaries to help answer worksheet questions	Use words to fill-in blanks in sentences
Comprehension	Question & answer	Question & answer about story	Started writing a story Began talking about doing a character sketch	Circle the sentence that matches the picture

Professional Development and Technical Assistance

Multiple professional development opportunities occurred in conjunction with Reading First, including attendance for teachers, the principal and reading coach to national, state and local conventions or symposium. The reading coach attended a lot of training (at least two times per month; core training, core reading academy training, reading leadership training) and provides ongoing professional development for teachers, aides and title teachers in use of Reading First methods during the school year.

Successes and Success Attributions

- More interaction and collaboration among teachers
- Having an outside person come in as RF Coach; principal-RF Coach collaboration (“they meet often”) and support for Coach’s suggestions, good administrative support
- Parent involvement and teacher willingness
- Resources: special book of extra help for English Language Learners, additional ESL program for kindergartners, Houghton Mifflin program, lots of books, workbook, transparencies, CDs w/songs, sound-spelling cards for the wall

Barriers to Program Implementation or Goal Attainment

- Time and money; can’t pay teachers for extra time outside of school.

District: Tripp- Delmont School District 33-5
Elementary School(s): Tripp
Date of Site Visit: 3/12/07
Program Year: Year One of Reading First
Observer: Pam Blair, McREL Research Associate
Report Writer: Helen Apthorp, McREL Principal Researcher

Context

Two school districts consolidated in 1991 to form the Tripp-Delmont School District. The district is located in rural, South Central South Dakota, serving communities with a strong Germanic cultural heritage, including two Hutterite colonies. At Tripp Elementary, all students in the Hutterite colonies are English Language Learners (ELL) and comprise about one-sixth of the school's 300 students. McREL staff interviewed the principal, classroom teachers and the Reading First (RF) Coach and conducted classroom observations.

Reading Assessment and Instruction

Before Reading First, the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) was used at Tripp. Now, DIBELS is in use, K-6, for ongoing reading assessment (three times per year for everyone; every 2 weeks for "intensive" kids). The principal spoke positively about the use of DIBELS to see where kids are at and where they are going. The Reading Coach would like to use more of the Houghton Mifflin assessments to provide much more formative assessment.

Regarding curriculum and instruction in reading, school staff reported that it is more structured with Reading First. One teacher reported that the reading lessons are more in-depth and that the lesson maps have been valuable. The Reading First Coach reported that reading instruction is more explicit with each of the five components (or "big ideas") addressed daily. Likewise, another teacher reported that reading instruction is now more teacher-centered, whole-group, and directed.

Classroom observations, as shown in the following table, confirm these reports. Teachers introduced phonic elements with increasing sophistication, with increasing grade level and modeled reading for students. They also delivered lessons focusing on vocabulary knowledge and incorporated reading for comprehension across all grade levels. Explicit comprehension strategy instruction (e.g., making and confirming/disconfirming predictions), however, was not observed. Such instruction may occur during lessons that were not observed by McREL staff.

Table C-2: Tripp Elementary – Classroom visits March 2007

Observed Instructional Activities Focusing on Each Component across Grades				
	Kindergarten	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3
Phonemic Awareness	Phoneme blending and substitution; Syllable counting	Long “o” sound	Practicing sounds	
Phonics	Letter recognition Teacher directs students to write words on board.		Sounds into words	Sounded out words & then determined if the word made sense “augh/ough” Possessive nouns
Fluency	Reading high frequency words; Flashcards Students read aloud with teacher	Reading new words using phonic elements just practiced; Teacher modeling (“read after me”)		Students take turns reading aloud to class
Vocabulary		Practicing word meaning (“Who has a word that means....?”)	Learning words before reading a story; Students read from overhead while teacher lead vocabulary lesson; Teacher led review of Theme 5 (family members)	Analogies lesson
Comprehension	Teacher read while students listened and answered questions	Reading and understanding a story using lots of long “o” words	Summarizing stories previously read	Q&A about the story Whole class discussion about what they read

Professional Development and Technical Assistance

Some teachers attended the Reading First conferences. The RF Coach provided some professional development to teachers, mainly on working with templates to make reading instruction more explicit. One teacher reported that Reading First has changed her skills; she is “better at building on kids’ skills. She thinks kids can see relationships between lessons, and they know they are building on their own knowledge. She’s better at breaking apart words too. Feels like she knows more now. RF filled in some gaps for her.”

Successes and Success Attributions

The Reading First coach and two classroom teachers reported that the children are enjoying reading; “they are excited about reading.” One teacher and the principal attributed the success to the Reading Coach; the coach herself thought it helpful to have a coach to facilitate reflection.

Barriers to Program Implementation or Goal Attainment

At the time of the site visit, school staff were trying to figure out how and what to fit into the timeframe from so much material.

District: White River School District
Elementary School(s): White River Elementary and Norris Elementary
Date of Site Visit: 3/14/07
Program Year: Year Three of Reading First
Observer: Pam Blair, McREL Research Associate
Report Writer: Helen Apthorp, McREL Principal Researcher

Context

At the time of the site visit, Norris was in its third year of Reading First. The school has a high free and reduced lunch rate (over 90%). Students enter school with varying levels of experience and oral language skills. The majority of students are American Indian. McREL staff interviewed the principal, the White River Elementary School reading coach and the Norris Elementary School reading coach, and two classroom teachers and observed kindergarten and Grade 1 and 2 classrooms at White River Elementary. They are implementing Open Court and a more intensive, very directed program, Language for Learning.

Reading Assessment and Instruction

Regarding reading assessment, DIBELS is used which allows teachers to identify gaps in student knowledge and monitor progress. The Open Court periodic assessments are also used.

Since Reading First, the curriculum and instruction has become consistent from kindergarten through Grade 3 which as noted by one of the teachers, “helps the kids understand what to expect; more structure; helpful for new teachers too...they have guidance right away; more focused on five major areas. The approach to instruction is more directive, explicit, interactive; do more testing; just have to follow the book now rather than come up with own ideas; there are a lot of hands-on materials: tapes, stories that go with letters, flash cards, letter blocks; don’t really need to supplement own materials.” Teachers report that they are more accountable now; they incorporate the five components of reading instruction into each lesson. However, one teacher reported spending a lot of time on phonics and not enough time on Science and Social Studies. She also observed that although children have stronger word skills than before Reading First, “comprehension hasn’t changed much.”

The principal has observed changes in teachers knowledge; they are “more aware of the power of their instruction; better than the old system; this is very intensive and purposeful; puts the five important things and puts it in a package; provides structure so everybody gets some success; but there seems to be a plateau at 3rd grade.”

The classroom observations (see subsequent table) revealed attention to phonemic awareness in kindergarten and phonics instruction and practice in kindergarten and Grades 1 and 2. A vocabulary lesson was observed in Grade 1. One reading comprehension strategy was observed: predicting.

Table C-3: White River Elementary – Classroom Visits March 2007

Observed Instructional Activities Focusing on Each Component across Grades*			
	Kindergarten	Grade 1	Grade 2
Phonemic Awareness	Phoneme substitution		
Phonics	Sounding out words Use of letter cubes to make/spell words	Consonant clusters “whisper read” story to self	Word study (different but similar sounds) Use of decodable books
Fluency	Flashcards with words	Students reading aloud together	Partner reading
Vocabulary		Vocabulary lesson using overhead projector and vocabulary books that they have made themselves	Reading in anthology Notebooks for writing
Comprehension	Question & answer	Predict what will happen next	Independent reading at desks & writing

*Grade 3 instruction was not observed during the March 2007 site visit.

Professional Development and Technical Assistance

One of the classroom teachers reported that professional development was one of the Reading First strengths. Teachers attended helpful conferences in different locations in the state that focused on Reading First, attended an Institute for Beginning Reading, and learned how to use DIBELS scores. Coaches provide professional development, model in classrooms, and “help when a child is not responding or when [the teacher] needs help in certain areas.” Although the principal reported that teachers have grasped the Reading First concepts and skills have changed a lot, not all teachers can attend all workshops. When asked if he could change anything, the principal identified more intensive coaching with teachers who struggle with the new system, more opportunities to observe other teachers, and more modeling by coaches.

Successes and Success Attributions

- Interaction among teachers and learning from each other.
- Very strong Reading Coach.
- Teacher accountability.

Barriers to Program Implementation or Goal Attainment

- It is too much for coaches to try to conduct all the interventions; hiring intervention teachers was recommended as long as they were trained in Reading First methods.

District: Bennett County Schools 3-1
Elementary School(s): Martin Elementary
Date of Site Visit: 3/15/07
Program Year: Year Three of Reading First
Observer: Pam Blair, McREL Research Associate
Report Writer: Helen Apthorp, McREL Principal Researcher

Context

Before Reading First, Martin Elementary School (98% American Indian; 78% free and reduced lunch) used guided reading, not very structured, varied curriculum between teachers and schools within district. Martin is using Open Court and Reading Mastery. McREL staff interviewed the principal, Reading First Coach, and two classroom teachers and observed kindergarten and Grade 1, 2 and 3 classrooms.

Reading Assessment and Instruction

Assessment is conducted using Open Court end-of-unit assessments and DIBELS. With Reading First, instruction has become more explicit, teachers are doing more whole group responding and paired interactions. Teachers follow lesson plans closely. The instructional pace is quicker. One teacher thought “it was more interesting for kids now.” Teachers are more confident now in their teaching skills and knowledge, they know what is best for struggling students. As shown in the subsequent table, classroom teachers at Martin were observed teaching all five components of reading instruction. Notably, reading comprehension was addressed at all grade levels, strategies were taught (i.e., Browse, Preview & Prepare) and discussion occurred.

Professional Development and Technical Assistance

Teachers and RF Coach attended a lot of professional development and training, “workshops and weekend trips;” “the principal searches out professional development opportunities.” One teacher reported that her knowledge has changed enormously; she has added a lot to her classroom repertoire.

Successes and Success Attributions

The reading coach reported that students are seeing success, more willing to read, and are overcoming challenges. She attributed the success to professional development for both coach and teachers. The principal attributed success to teacher buy-in and teachers seeing growth in kids. Two respondents said they would not change anything in the program (“it is a good program overall”).

Barriers to Program Implementation or Goal Attainment

One respondent said she wishes writing and language arts were part of the reading block, explaining, “the kids are tested on writing as part of the state assessment.”

Table C-4: Martin Elementary – Classroom Visits March 2007

Observed Instructional Activities Focusing on Each Component across Grades				
	Kindergarten*	Grade 1*	Grade 2	Grade 3
Phonemic Awareness	Phoneme counting, blending and replacement /z/ sound identification (“I’m thinking of a word that starts with /z/ where animals live”)	Practicing sounds, Blending /j/ and /g/ sounds; r & wr, f & ph spellings Sounding out words Students listen for word recognition accuracy as classmates read sentence aloud		
Phonics	Use of letter cards to read and spell (see how adding letter e changes vowel sound, rat to rate) Select letter that makes sound of /z/ (worksheet)	Teacher modeling how to say words Identify rhyming words Phoneme substitutions	Lesson on er, ur, oo, -ew, ow, ou, oi, oy	
Fluency	Teacher assesses passage reading (“check out”) Pairs reading story to each other	Students practice reading without mistakes Guided reading, having students repeat	Students read to teacher individually for assessment	Reading aloud
Vocabulary	Select word that describes picture (worksheet)	Transparencies with vocabulary lessons	Use of glossary Read definitions & discuss new words	Be – words, compound words
Comprehension	Picture comprehension Reading comprehension	Talk about what they read Discussing what is going on Strategies: Browse, Preview & Prepare	Literacy elements (plot line, climax, resolution) Strategies: Preview & Prepare	Main ideas & supporting details; Predicting Teacher modeling strategies Discuss what story tells about story telling

* Both general education and intensive instruction observations are reported.