

ALASKA READING FIRST

Annual Evaluation Report: 2007–2008



June 2008



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Alaska Reading First strived to provide a statewide program focused on supporting schools and staff members to improve K-3 reading instruction, with the ultimate goal that all K-3 students would read at grade level by the end of third grade. In the fourth year of school-level implementation, it witnessed both successes and challenges. Reading First was implemented in 14 schools across three school districts, impacting over 2,000 students. To reach its goal, the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills or DIBELS test was administered to each student three times a year—fall, winter, and spring—to monitor student progress. Based on collective results, an overall instruction support recommendation (ISR) was calculated for each student—“intensive,” “strategic,” or “benchmark.” Reading First immersed students in a core reading program taught during a daily 90-minute uninterrupted reading block. Depending on their ISR status, students might walk-to-read to receive instruction at their instructional level or they might stay in their classes and receive instruction at their grade level and/or instructional level. The state also expected strategic and intensive students to receive intervention outside of the reading block. Part of Reading First was for each school to have a Reading Leadership Team (RLT) and grade-level-meetings. Teachers, coaches, and principals were supported by professional development.

Professional Development

The state continued to provide a comprehensive approach to professional development, which included four conferences, technical assistance, and coaching for teachers. The focus of conferences varied—the Consortium on Reading Excellence (CORE) Reading Leader Institute was for principals, the CORE Coaches Institute was for coaches, the Reading First Summit was for all school staff

members from Reading First and non-Reading First schools, and the Reading First Data Retreat was for school teams. On-going technical assistance was provided by CORE consultants on the school level, but not at schools in the rural Lake and Peninsula School District. Coaches continued to work with teachers.

Overall, principals, coaches, and teachers were pleased with the quality of the conferences that they attended, but thought that much of the Reading First Summit was review for them and was not sufficiently differentiated. Compared to last year, principals reported higher approval rates for the CORE Reading Leadership Institute than last year and were less pleased with the Summit. They also indicated that the amount of training they received had declined since the previous year. Coaches' attitudes towards the conferences were mostly unchanged from last year—they were pleased with the Data Retreat (90%), but less than one-half (43%) were pleased with the Coach Institute. Few coaches (21%) indicated that they had received enough training. Teachers received most of their training through their coaches. Interestingly, while the number of modeled lessons has steadily decreased since 2006, teachers continued to see their coaches as valuable resources and allies. Also, teachers found their overall 2008 training as less on-going, intensive, and focused on the classroom than in the previous year.

Alaska Reading First continued to offer technical assistance to the schools either by the state coordinator or CORE consultants. Coaches and principals viewed the state coordinator's technical assistance as responsive and extremely valuable, although the transition to a new state coordinator meant that the

relationship between the schools and state was not as close as in the past. CORE visits were viewed as extremely helpful. On the other hand the schools in Lake and Peninsula School District received no technical assistance from the CORE consultants and minimal assistance from the state coordinator.

Leadership

District coordinators, principals, and coaches were responsible for developing structures and systems that encouraged collaboration and assisted individuals to implement change. To promote leadership, district coordinators, principals, and coaches participated in different strategies, such as attending professional development, facilitating RLT and grade level meetings, and using data. District coordinators attended most of the Reading First professional development and meetings and reported that they were useful. They found the state's expectations of their districts to be clear; however, only one of the district coordinators (33%) found them reasonable. District coordinators felt that their district's support for Reading First was very high. Principals corroborated this high level of district support for Reading First.

Principals universally supported Reading First and identified their three primary obligations as ensuring fidelity to Reading First, providing leadership, and using data. Principals ensured fidelity through classroom observations and walk-throughs. However, only a minority of teachers reported that their principals visited their classroom (37%) or provided feedback (25%) at least monthly. Both principals' observations and feedback to teachers has declined across the years. Principals continued to report that they provided leadership to the school primarily through their participation in the Reading Leadership Team (RLT) and grade-level meetings. However, in interviews, principals commented that they did not attend regularly unless invited or a specific item needed to be addressed. While principals

continued to use data to study trends and make decisions, its use declined from the previous year.

Compared to last year, coaches spent more time on gathering, analyzing, and using data to make decisions, and less time on coaching and professional development. This year witnessed a large increase in the clarity of the coach's role, as perceived by both coach and teachers.

The majority of coaches, principals, and teachers felt that their schools had a moderately high collaborative culture. However, only half of teachers felt that they had a voice in decision-making about Reading First.

The RLT and the grade-level meetings were thought to be the well-spring of this collaborative culture. All but one school had a RLT, most of which met every other month instead of the expected monthly meetings. The majority of school members felt that attending these meetings was a valuable use of their time. Grade-level meetings usually occurred at least once a month and were regularly attended by teachers and coaches, who felt that their attendance was a valuable use of their time. Principals were very enthusiastic about these meetings, but did not attend regularly.

Schools administered the DIBELS three times per year. The majority of staff members felt that the DIBELS was valid and accurate. Progress monitoring was also administered on a regular basis. In most schools, intensive students were monitored weekly, while the strategic students were progress-monitored biweekly.

Data use was pervasive. Teachers felt very confident in their personal ability to use data, and almost all teachers looked at their data at least monthly. Coaches reported that they frequently used assessment data when communicating with teachers about their students, identifying which students needed

interventions, matching appropriate intervention, and monitoring progress during interventions. On the other hand, schools infrequently reviewed disaggregated data.

Teacher buy-in to Reading First was the highest it has ever been, with more than three-quarters of teachers expressing strong support for Reading First. All coaches and nearly all principals also reported strong support for Reading First. However, coaches reported that overcoming teacher resistance to Reading First was increasingly a challenge.

Sustainability continued to be a frequently discussed topic on the school level, but was not addressed at the 2008 Reading First Summit. Teachers were more optimistic about sustaining Reading First than were coaches and principals, with the vast majority feeling that they would continue to practice what they had learned under Reading First. Most principals felt that the 90-minute reading block, the core program, and the use of DIBELS assessments would continue after grant funding ended. The reading coach's position was seen as the least likely to be continued. The district coordinators agreed that the grade-level meetings and the core program would be mandated by the district, but had mixed opinions about sustaining DIBELS testing, professional development in reading, and interventions. Most principals and district coordinators were unhappy with the amount of support their school or district received from the state to address sustainability.

Instruction and Interventions

All schools delivered at least 90 minutes of uninterrupted reading instruction to their half-day kindergarten, first-, second-, and third-grade students. The majority of schools used walk-to-read in all or nearly all classes or in some grades, but not all grades (64%). Over one-third of the schools (36%) did not use walk-to-read. During the reading block, over 50 percent of schools spent the entire time at

students' instructional level in first through third grades. The majority of half-day kindergarten classes, but only a third of full-day kindergarten classes, spent the time at each student's instructional level.

A vast majority of both the teachers and principals were satisfied with their school's core program. However, only 21 percent of the coaches were satisfied. Teachers frequently used templates. To differentiate instruction, the vast majority of teachers (88%) at least tailored their instruction to individual student needs several times a week. Also, a large majority of teachers (81%) reported that they used small groups on a daily basis as another way to differentiate instruction.

Belief that Reading First was meeting the needs of ELL students was not overwhelmingly high. In fact, teachers, coaches, and principals had less confidence in meeting the needs of ELL this year than last year. A minority of coaches and teachers thought that their schools used reading materials that were well-matched to ELL needs. In addition, only a third of the coaches and about one-half of the teachers felt they were equipped to meet the needs of ELL students.

Classroom observations helped to provide a picture of reading instruction. Sixteen classroom observations were conducted in six schools. Compared to last year, substantial positive changes were found in most areas of effective classrooms—lesson clarity, explicit modeling, student engagement, opportunities to practice, and feedback. Effective questioning declined moderately, while monitoring of student understanding remained the same as last year.

Although instruction covered all five essential components of reading, some components received more attention than other components. Phonics instruction was taught in almost all lessons across all grade levels. Vocabulary instruction was taught in

62 percent of the lessons. It was most often observed in kindergarten, first-, and second-grade classes. Also, comprehension instruction was witnessed in 62 percent of lessons and at all grade levels. Of the comprehension lessons, the most popular strategies used to teach comprehension included recall questions, questions to generate higher-order thinking skills, and making connections between self-to-text or text-to-self. A majority of teachers relied on multiple comprehension strategies during the lesson.

All schools have intervention programs at virtually every grade level. However, the perceptions of teachers, coaches, and principals about their school's intervention system were moderately positive. Compared to last year, the opinion of both principals and coaches improved about their intervention programs, but teachers were less enthusiastic this year. Satisfaction with intervention materials was high among the coaches but moderate with teachers. Only four schools (29%) and five schools (36%) were able to provide supplemental and intensive interventions, respectively, to all strategic and intensive students in their schools. Compared to 2007, there was a significant increase in the percentage of schools using paraprofessionals as intervention providers, and a moderate increase in the percentage of schools using paid tutors. Opinions about the adequacy of the training of intervention providers were less favorable than last year, but opinions were still moderately positive.

Student Outcomes

Benchmark students. The benchmark groups in kindergarten and second-grade significantly improved from fall 2007 to spring 2008 (i.e., 31% to 75% and 51% to 60%, respectively). The other grade levels did not improve. Since baseline in spring 2004, all grades dramatically improved by spring 2008. The third-grade benchmark group steadily improved from 39 percent to 52 percent in spring 2008. The

other grade levels reached a plateau after the first or second year of implementation and did not improve, except by a few percentage points, for the last three or four years. In addition, during this school year, across grade levels, the vast majority of benchmark students remained in the benchmark group. The second grade had the highest retention rate at 93 percent.

Examining key demographics, the kindergarten benchmark group improved on all key demographics. Also, kindergarten classes in all schools improved by spring 2008. On the other hand, across all grade levels, the percentages for Alaska Native/American Indian and Asian student, students eligible for free and reduced-price lunch, and special education students were all lower than the state benchmark percentage for spring 2008.

Compared to kindergarten, two years ago, the percentage of benchmark students declined significantly (75% to 67%) by spring 2008 for current second-grade students. Compared to kindergarten, three years ago, the percentage of third-grade benchmark students significantly dropped over time (72% to 61%). Since kindergarten, almost 80 percent of benchmark students currently in second and third grades remained in benchmark.

Strategic Students. Compared to kindergarten, three years ago, the percentage of strategic students significantly increased from 16 percent to 30 percent by spring 2008. Since kindergarten, about 40 percent of strategic students in both second and third grades moved to benchmark by spring 2008.

Intensive students. The percentage of kindergarten and third-grade intensive groups significantly dropped from fall 2007 to spring 2008 (i.e., 25% to 11% and 24% to 17%, respectively). There were no changes at all in either the first grade or the second grade. Additionally, intensive, kindergarten students in the fall 2007 were more likely to move to

strategic (22%) or benchmark (54%) than intensive students in any other grade level. Intensive students in second grade were the least likely to change their ISR category. Again, kindergarten, strategic students were the most likely to move up to benchmark (76%), while third-grade students were the least likely (26%).

On key demographics, the percentages for Alaska Native/American Indian, Asian, and black/African American students; students on free and reduced-price lunch; and students eligible for special education were higher than the state intensive percentage for spring 2008 in first through third grades.

Since baseline in spring 2004, the intensive groups displayed a general downward trend for all grade levels to spring 2008. Compared to kindergarten, the percentage of intensive students remained the same by 2008 for current second grade students, at about 13 percent, and increased significantly for current third-grade students (16% to 30%) by spring 2008. Since kindergarten, the percentage of intensive students to remain in the intensive group was 61 percent for the second grade, but only 42 percent for the third grade.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Executive Summary	i
Table of Contents.....	vii
List of Figures	viii
List of Tables	x
Acknowledgements	xii
Chapter One: Introduction.....	1
Chapter Two: Evaluation Methods.....	3
Chapter Three: Professional Development and Technical Assistance	10
Chapter Four: Leadership and School-Level Structures:	24
Chapter Five: Instruction and Interventions:	49
Chapter Six: Assessment Results.....	66
Chapter Seven: Suggestions for Consideration.....	87
Appendices.....	91
Appendix A: Frequencies on State Surveys–Spring 2008	
Appendix B: Alaska Reading First–Site Visit Instruments for 2008	
Appendix C: Agenda for the Alaska Reading First Summit–February 2008	
Appendix D: CORE Site Visit Schedule: 2007–2008	

LIST OF FIGURES

Page

CHAPTER THREE: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Figure 3-1.	Attitudes Regarding the 2008 Reading First Summit.....	11
Figure 3-2.	Changing Attitudes between the 2007 and 2008 Reading First Summits	12
Figure 3-3.	Percentage Agreeing that the Reading First Summits Did a Good Job of Addressing English Language Learner (ELL) Issues	13
Figure 3-4.	Future Professional Development Needs for Coaches	16
Figure 3-5.	Teachers Reporting that Model Lessons Did Not Take Place, 2005–2006 to 2007–2008	18
Figure 3-6.	Percentage of Teachers Reporting Regular Observation, 2007–2008	19
Figure 3-7.	Attitudes Towards State Reading First Staff Members.....	22
Figure 3-8.	Percentage of Schools Reporting CORE Visits	23

CHAPTER FOUR: LEADERSHIP AND SCHOOL-LEVEL STRUCTURES

Figure 4-1.	Principals Reporting that Overcoming Teacher Resistance Has Been a Challenge	28
Figure 4-2.	Teachers Report on Frequency of Principal Observation and Feedback	29
Figure 4-3.	Teachers Report on Frequency of Principal Attending Grade Level Meetings.....	30
Figure 4-4.	Percentage Point Change in Principals' Use of Reading Assessment Data, 2006–2007 and 2007–2008.....	31
Figure 4-5.	Changes in the Percentage of Time Spent on Coaching Tasks, 2005–2006 to 2007–2008	33
Figure 4-6.	Coaches' Perceptions of the Clarity of their Roles, 2004–2005 to 2007–2008	34
Figure 4-7.	Percentage Point Change in Coaches' Use of Reading Assessment Data, 2006–2007 to 2007–2008	35
Figure 4-8.	Attitudes Regarding the RLT Meetings	36
Figure 4-9.	Frequency of Grade-Level Team Meetings.....	37
Figure 4-10.	Attitudes Regarding the Grade-Level Meetings.....	38
Figure 4-11.	Perception of the DIBELS.....	39
Figure 4-12.	Frequency of Assessment Data Use by Teachers Over Time	41
Figure 4-13.	Teachers Looking at Reading Data at Least Monthly, 2004–2005 to 2007–2008	41
Figure 4-14.	Perception of Instructional Changes Under Reading First.....	43

LIST OF FIGURES (continued)

Page

CHAPTER FIVE: INSTRUCTION AND INTERVENTIONS

Figure 5-1.	"Our RF Program is Doing an Excellent Job of Meeting the Needs of Our ELL Students"-- Percentage of Agreement, 2006–2007 and 2007–2008	53
Figure 5-2.	Comparison of Lesson Clarity, 2006–2007 and 2007–2008	55
Figure 5-3.	Modeling and Effective Questioning in 2006–2007 and 2007–2008.....	55
Figure 5-4.	Comparison of Student Engagement and Practice Opportunities Across Years, 2006–2007 and 2007-2008.....	56
Figure 5-5.	Monitoring Understanding and Providing Clear and Frequent Feedback Across Years, 2006–2007 and 2007–20008	57
Figure 5-6.	The Five Components in Observed Lessons	57
Figure 5-7.	Perception of Interventions, 2006–2007 and 2007–2008	60
Figure 5-8.	Position of Intervention Providers.....	62

CHAPTER SIX: ASSESSMENT RESULTS

Figure 6-1.	State Percentage of Matched Students at Benchmark in Fall 2007 and Spring 2008, by Grade Level	67
Figure 6-2.	Percentage of Students at Benchmark, Spring 2004 to Spring 2008, by Grade Level.....	68
Figure 6-3.	State Percentage of Matched Students at Intensive in Fall 2007 and Spring 2008, by Grade Level	69
Figure 6-4.	Percentage of Students at Intensive, Spring 2004 to Spring 2008, by Grade Level.....	70
Figure 6-5.	Current Grade 2—Percentage of Matched Students at Each ISR Status in Spring 2006 (Kindergarten) and Spring 2008 (Grade 2) (N=246)	81
Figure 6-6.	Current Grade 3—Percentage of Matched Students at Each ISR Level in Spring 2005 (Kindergarten) and Spring 2008 (Grade 3)(N=100)	82

LIST OF TABLES

	Page
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	
Table 1-1. Participating Alaska Reading First Schools.....	2
CHAPTER TWO: EVALUATION METHODS	
Table 2-1. Scheduled Administration of DIBELS Assessment Measures	7
CHAPTER THREE: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE	
Table 3-1. Coaches' Attendance at Professional Development Conferences	14
Table 3-2. Principals' Attendance at Professional Development Conferences	14
Table 3-3. Principal Perception of Professional Development.....	15
Table 3-4. Coach Perception of Professional Development.....	16
Table 3-5. Teacher Perception of Professional Development.....	17
Table 3-6. Teacher Perceptions of Assistance	18
Table 3-7. Proportion of Teachers Regularly Observed	19
Table 3-8. Teacher Perceptions of Their Coaches, by Frequency of Observation	20
Table 3-9. Teacher Confidence in Using Data	21
CHAPTER FOUR: LEADERSHIP AND SCHOOL-LEVEL STRUCTURES	
Table 4-1. Reading First School Districts and Schools in Alaska	26
Table 4.2. Principals' Use of Reading Assessment Data.....	31
Table 4-3. Percentage of Time Spent on Coaching Tasks.....	32
Table 4-4. Coaches' Use of Reading Assessment Data, 2008.....	34
Table 4-5. Frequency of Progress Monitoring	40
Table 4-6. Organized Data Systems in Reading First Schools.....	40
Table 4-7. Teachers' Use of Reading Assessment Data.....	42
Table 4-8. Teachers' Views of the Sustainability of Program Components	45
CHAPTER FIVE: INSTRUCTION AND INTERVENTIONS	
Table 5-1. Percentage of Schools Using What Percentage of Reading Block to Teach Students at Their Instructional Level, by Grade Level	50
Table 5-2. Percentage of Schools with Eligible Students Receiving Interventions.....	61

LIST OF TABLES (CONTINUED)

Page

CHAPTER SIX: ASSESSMENT RESULTS

Table 6-1.	Percentage of Kindergarten Students at Benchmark in 2007–2008	71
Table 6-2.	Percentage of First-Grade Students at Benchmark in 2007–2008.....	73
Table 6-3.	Percentage of Second-Grade Students at Benchmark in 2007–2008.....	74
Table 6-4.	Percentage of Third-Grade Students at Benchmark in 2007–2008.....	75
Table 6-5.	Kindergarten Spring 2008 Instructional Support Recommendations.....	77
Table 6-6.	First-Grade Spring 2008 Instructional Support Recommendations	78
Table 6-7.	Second-Grade Spring 2008 Instructional Support Recommendations.....	79
Table 6-8.	Third-Grade Spring 2008 Instructional Support Recommendations	80
Table 6-9.	Statewide Changes in Matched ISR Scores from Kindergarten to Spring 2008, by Grade Level.....	83
Table 6-10.	Fall 2008 <u>Intensive</u> Students Changes in Matched ISR Scores from Fall 2007 to Spring 2008, by Grade Level	84
Table 6-11.	Fall 2007 <u>Strategic</u> Students Changes in Matched ISR Scores from Fall 2007 to Spring 2008, by Grade Level	85
Table 6-12.	<u>Benchmark</u> Students Changes in Matched ISR Scores from Fall 2007 to Spring 2008, by Grade Level	86

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Reading First is a federal initiative providing an unprecedented level of funding and focused support for the improvement of K-3 reading instruction, with the ultimate goal of ensuring that all children read at grade level by the end of third grade. This goal, in turn, supports the larger goals of the *No Child Left Behind Act*, passed in 2001, that all students be able to meet state academic targets. In support of this goal, Reading First provides funds to states to support comprehensive programs to improve reading instruction at selected Reading First schools. Most funds that states receive under Reading First are distributed to selected Reading First districts and schools, which are eligible for the grant based on state-determined criteria (a combination of poverty level and history of low reading performance).

In fall 2003, the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development (EED) was awarded a six-year federal Reading First State Grant. While 2003–2004 was the first year of the state program, 2004–2005 marked the first year of school-level implementation. The 2007–2008 year was the fourth year of Reading First in the state. Grant funds have been used at the local level for:

- Selection and implementation of core reading program materials from a list of approved research-based materials. Selection and implementation of research-based reading interventions from a list of approved research-based materials
- Hiring of a full-time reading coach to provide mentoring, coaching, training, and demonstration lessons
- Creation of a Reading Leadership Team to guide the design and implementation of a K-3 reading delivery system

- Attendance of school leadership teams and all K-3 staff members at regular state-provided professional development events
- Use of approved assessments that are valid and reliable, analyses of results, and use of results to make reading improvement decisions
- Identification of students in need of intensive reading interventions and provision of appropriate, targeted interventions in a small-group setting
- Agreement to visits from independent evaluators, as well as state and federal Reading First administrators, and use of their feedback

The EED established criteria and participation requirements for schools and districts in order to select schools to participate in the grant. Sub-grants were awarded to the following 14 schools in three districts in winter 2004 (See Table 1).

The 14 schools agreed to specific requirements for project staffing, the adoption of a core reading program, and the use of the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills, or DIBELS, to assess student reading. Professional development requirements for grantees included attendance at summit meetings by the school leadership teams and all K-3 staff members. In addition, onsite professional development, coordinated by the school and/or district, would be ongoing. School principals were required to agree to take a leadership role in the implementation of the grant to provide the support necessary to increase the capacity of the school to institutionalize early reading improvement strategies. They also agreed to attend Reading First professional

Table 1-1
Participating Alaska Reading First Schools

District	School
Anchorage	Airport Heights
	Creekside Park
	Mountain View
	Spring Hill
	Ursa Minor
	Tyson William
Fairbanks North Star Borough	Anderson
	Nordale
	Ticasuk
Lake and Peninsula*	Chignik Lake**
	Kokhanok
	Mishik**
	Newhalen
	Nondalton
	Perryville

*Note: The Lake and Peninsula school district was funded as a “district-based” rather than a “school-based” program. Two itinerant reading coaches serve several schools each year.

**This year Chignik Lake School was not a Reading First School. Because the K-3 students at Chignik Lake School were transferred to another school, the state replaced it with Meshik School.

development workshops as a condition of accepting funding.

Surveys asked principals if their schools had made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in 2006–2007. Of all schools, 50 percent made AYP. Only 7 percent did not because of their reading scores, while 14 percent did not because of both reading and mathematics. In other words, about 20 percent, or one in five schools, missed AYP due to reading. Less than a third of the schools (29%) did not make AYP for other reasons, such as attendance and behavior.

The Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NWREL) was contracted to conduct an annual evaluation of the Alaska Reading First program. The evaluation is both formative and summative and focuses on the following areas:

- Effectiveness of the professional development and technical

assistance provided to grant recipients

- Quality and level of implementation of statewide Reading First activities
- Impact of Reading First activities on desired student and teacher outcomes

Quantitative and qualitative evaluation methods provide EED with a record of progress in both implementation and outcomes. Also, the evaluation provides feedback to EED and individual schools to inform program development throughout the life of the grant.

The evaluation results reported in this document are for Year 5, the 2007–2008 school year, which was the fourth year of full implementation of the Alaska Reading First program at the school level.

CHAPTER TWO: EVALUATION METHODS

The evaluation of Alaska Reading First examined both the implementation of the project and the student assessment outcomes. To do this, the evaluation relied on information from a variety of instruments and respondents and tried to capture the experience of a wide range of project participants.

The instruments used in the 2007–2008 evaluation included the following:

- **Spring surveys**—paper surveys of all teachers, coaches, principals from all Alaska Reading First schools, as well as online surveys of the district coordinators in each district
- **In-person interviews**—during site visits to six randomly selected schools, extended, open-ended interviews with principals, coaches, and two teachers from each visited school
- **Classroom observations**—during site visits, targeted observations of three reading lessons at every school selected for a site visit
- **Student assessments**—K-3 assessment scores on the DIBELS
- **Informal interview with state project coordinator**—Several informal interviews conducted with the state project coordinators about their perceptions of implementation

Every year, the survey and interview instruments undergo a comprehensive review and revision process. The instruments used this year were similar to those used in the previous year's evaluation; that is, many survey and interview items were kept from past surveys in order to permit an analysis of change over time. Similar to past years, however, the

instruments were further refined to reflect changes in program implementation and/or evaluation demands.

This chapter describes each of the instruments and how they were administered as part of the evaluation. Limitations of the evaluation methods are also discussed.

Spring Surveys

In spring 2008, surveys were administered to school staff members involved in Reading First. The surveys were designed to gather information on school and classroom practices, perceptions of Reading First, and its impact during the 2007–2008 school year. These surveys included:

- Principal survey (68 items)
- Reading coach survey (104 items)
- Teacher survey for staff members who taught K-3 reading during the past year (not including aides or student teachers) (109 items)
- District survey for district Reading First liaisons/coordinators (30 items)

In the fall of 2007, the surveys once again underwent a comprehensive review and evaluators made minor changes to the previous year's surveys based on this review process. The final surveys contained close-ended questions related to grant implementation including assessments, use of the core program, student grouping, collaboration, professional development, beliefs and attitudes about Reading First, and sustainability. Copies of the survey instruments with the frequencies of responses are located in Appendix A. For details of any survey data reported in this document, please refer to these documents.

Coach, principal, and teacher surveys were mailed in a packet to the reading coach at each school on March 14, 2008 with explicit instructions for administration. Coaches were asked to set aside time for survey completion at a staff meeting or other already reserved time. Survey instructions encouraged respondents to be candid in their answers and assured respondents' anonymity; cover sheets for each survey further explained the purpose of the survey and intended use of the data. To further encourage honest responses, respondents received confidentiality envelopes in which to seal their surveys before turning them in. Completed surveys were collected by the reading coach, who was asked to mail them back to NWREL by April 11, 2008. Postcard, e-mail, and telephone reminders were made to encourage schools to respond, and late surveys were accepted up through April 25.

NWREL received surveys from all 14 schools—a 100 percent response rate overall. In some instances, schools returned surveys, but the packages they sent did not include surveys from all staff members. NWREL received 105 teacher surveys out of 115 surveys, or a 93 percent return rate from teachers. All principals and coaches returned their surveys. The two coaches at Lake and Peninsula School District sent in a separate coach survey for each of their six schools, making it possible to know about these individual schools.

The majority of teacher respondents were regular classroom teachers (86%); additional teacher respondents included language arts/reading specialists (5%), special education (7%), and ESL/bilingual teachers (2%). Regardless of position, all of these respondents are referred to as "teachers" unless otherwise noted.

Again this year, district surveys were conducted online. District coordinators were sent a request and link by e-mail; the

link took them to a secure NWREL Web site where they were able to complete their surveys. NWREL received surveys from all district coordinators.

Site Visits

This year, site visits were conducted at six schools which were randomly selected. Day-long site visits included interviews with the principal, coach, and two teachers. The visit also included observations of three randomly selected classrooms.

A team of three evaluators conducted the site visits; each school was visited by a single team member. In order to ensure understandings of the instruments and to maximize reliability, a mandatory two-day training was provided to site visitors in February 2008.

Prior to each site visit, reading coaches and/or principals were contacted to make arrangements for the visit. For each site visit, coaches were asked to schedule the interviews and observations. The format and content of each of these data collection activities is described in greater detail below. Copies of instruments can be found in Appendix B.

Interviews

Interviews with both the principal and reading coach covered a similar range of topics: the roles of each, the type and perceived effectiveness of professional development they had received, their experience with technical assistance from the state, perceptions of instructional change at the school, use of assessments, grade-level and Reading Leadership Team meetings, as well as challenges and successes of the past year. The coach interview was somewhat longer than the principal interview. Two teachers were also interviewed at each school. Schools were asked to select a K-3

teacher with the fewest years of teaching experience, and randomly selected a second teacher, regardless of their years of experience, from the remaining K-3 staff. Schools were given specific directions about alphabetical criteria to use in these selections. These criteria were provided in order to capture the voices of teachers who were new to Reading First as well as to teaching versus those who had been involved in the grant and the profession for a longer period of time.

Interviews were not taped; instead, the interviewer took extensive notes during each interview. Consequently, the quotes provided in this report are not verbatim, but they do represent, to the degree possible, the actual wording of the respondents.

Interview questions were deliberately open-ended. This provided a good balance to the surveys, which pre-defined the issues for respondents and asked them to express what might be complex opinions by checking one of four or five choices. The interviews, in contrast, allowed respondents to answer by talking about the issues or concerns most relevant to them. Qualitative analyses focused on patterns found among respondents, rather than exact counts, because the open-ended nature of the questions permitted respondents to take the conversation in many different directions.

Respondents were encouraged to talk candidly about their experience with Reading First and were promised confidentiality. For this reason, the responses provided are never identified by individual, school, or district.

Classroom Observations

Classroom observations were designed to view as much instruction as possible in a limited period of time. Since most Reading First schools delivered core program instruction during a 90-minute reading block, this limited the available observation time to the length of that block. Therefore, site visits included three classroom observations at different grade levels, 20 to 30 minutes each. These observations provided a “snapshot” of the instruction that occurred at the school.

Evaluators randomly selected three of the four grades to observe at each school so that approximately the same number of classes at each grade level would be observed across all the schools. Site visitors then randomly selected classrooms at those grades by telling coaches they would like to visit the classes of teachers whose name fell in a certain place in the alphabet. Coaches were informed that teachers had the right to request *not* to be observed, and that in such circumstances a different class could be substituted (such substitutions were very rare).

In total, site visitors conducted 16 classroom observations, spread fairly evenly across grades: kindergarten (19%), first grade (25%), second grade (12%), and third grade (12%). There was one classroom observation of a combined second- and third-grade class. Also, another 25 percent of the observations were conducted in multigrade classrooms in Lake and Peninsula School District. The average observation was 22 minutes in length.

The initial observation protocol was developed in 2003 and has been revised slightly each year. A review of literature related to reading instruction identified several key areas shown to be clearly linked to differences in student achievement such as subject of the lesson, clarity of the lesson,

ongoing monitoring and feedback, providing clear feedback to students, providing opportunities to practice, and student. Evaluators used their detailed notes taken during their 20-minute observation to rate these characteristics, using a five-point rubric developed alongside the protocol.

Reliability of the protocol was assessed in 2003 when a team of reading evaluators visited a former Reading Excellence Act school in Portland, Oregon and completed ratings in several classrooms. Their ratings on the five-point scales were compared and discussed; preliminary inter-rater reliability was 81.3 percent (within one point of agreement). Problematic items were revised and rubrics were developed to better clarify the basis for making decisions about the ratings on each items. An additional reliability check was conducted at an Arizona Reading First school in 2003, with a 91.2 percent inter-rater reliability within one point of agreement. Reliability checks have also taken place at annual site visitor trainings. In all instances, inter-rater reliability with a zero-point difference was much lower. As a result, analyses of ratings were collapsed into two broad categories. Ratings between "0" and "2" were collapsed into the category "occasionally or not at all," while ratings of "3" or "4" were put into the category "yes, definitely." These broader categories then provided more reliable, if less nuanced, estimates of the areas rated by site visitors.

During the observations, the evaluators focused on the work of the teacher and the response of the students and took detailed notes of what they observed. For example, if the teacher was working with a group of five students, and other students were working with a paraprofessional or on their own, in groups or individually, the observation focused on the small group work of the teacher. Paraprofessionals and

other adults were not explicitly observed, although their presence in the classroom was noted.

When excerpts from observation notes are included in the text as examples, student names have been changed in order to protect confidentiality. Similar to interviews, quotes are not verbatim, but they do represent, to the degree possible, the actual wording of from observed instruction.

Student Assessments—DIBELS

Student progress in reading across the 14 Alaska Reading First schools was monitored with the *Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills*, or DIBELS. DIBELS measures the progress of student reading development from kindergarten through third grade in the areas of phonemic awareness, phonics, and fluency.

The 'benchmark' assessment is administered three times a year: fall, winter, and spring. It includes five measures—Initial Sound Fluency, Letter Naming Fluency, Nonsense Word Fluency, Phoneme Segmentation Fluency, and Oral Reading Fluency—for which benchmark levels have been established. Two additional measures—Retell Fluency and Word Use Fluency—are available, although there are no benchmarks for these measures. In accordance with DIBELS administration guidelines, not all measures are administered to all students at each testing period; instead, only those measures are administered that apply to skills students should be mastering at a particular period. Table 2-1 indicates which measure is administered to each grade level at each assessment period.

Table 2-1
Scheduled Administration of DIBELS Assessment Measures

Measure	Fall	Winter	Spring
Initial Sound Fluency (ISF)	K	K	--
Letter Naming Fluency (LNF)	K, 1	K	K
Phoneme Segmentation Fluency (PSF)	1	K, 1	K, 1
Nonsense Word Fluency (NWF)	1	K, 1	K, 1
Oral Reading Fluency (ORF)	2, 3	1, 2, 3	1, 2, 3
Retell Fluency (RTF)	2, 3	1, 2, 3	1, 2, 3
Word Use Fluency (WUF)	K, 1, 2, 3	K, 1, 2, 3	K, 1, 2, 3

Collection and Analysis of DIBELS Data.

Administration of the DIBELS assessment took place at the individual Reading First schools three times during assessment windows set by the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development.

After results were collected, DIBELS scores were entered into the online DIBELS database maintained by the University of Oregon. Schools were required to complete entry of student assessment results for spring 2008 into the online database by May 9, 2008. Data included in this report were downloaded by the NWREL evaluation staff on May 19, 2008; any information that was added or changed after that point is not included in this report. The analyses in this report include only matched students, or those who had *both* fall and spring results reported *and* who were continuously enrolled. Districts reported which students were not continuously enrolled, and these records were not included in the analyses.

Calculation of DIBELS Instructional Recommendation

A student's raw score from each DIBELS measure places them in one of three categories: "at risk/deficit," "some risk/emerging," or "low risk/established." When multiple measures are administered, these categories are further rolled-up by grade-level and testing window to produce an *overall* instructional support

recommendation (ISR) for each student: "intensive," "strategic," or "benchmark." These categories are defined by the assessment developers, based on the analyses of tens of thousands of student assessments. NWREL followed the guidelines of the DIBELS developers in order to combine scores and determine overall instructional recommendations.

Calculation of The Statistical Significance of Changes in Student Assessment Scores

The Pearson chi-square test was used to determine whether the change in percentage of students at benchmark changed significantly from last year to this year. McNemar's test (which is based on the chi-square distribution but accounts for data that are matched from one point in time to the next) was used to determine the statistical significance of changes among matched students from fall to spring of the current school year.

Coding of English Language Learner (ELL) Status

Due to the complex way in which ELL data are reported in the DIBELS database, there have been changes in the way that this report presents data disaggregated by this variable. Schools have the option of indicating on the DIBELS Web site whether students are "current LEP" (Limited English Proficient), "former LEP" and/or "Home Language Not English." The definitions of

these categories do not appear to be consistent across schools and districts. Our solution has been to create two ELL categories, a “narrow” and a “broad” one. The narrow category included only those students identified in the DIBELS database as “current LEP” students; this is consistent with federal reporting practices. The broad category included those same students as well as students who are identified as “former LEP” and/or “home-language not English.” It is important to consider the “broad” ELL category, because this includes students who entered school with little or no English but have since developed English-language skills. Excluding them from the ELL analyses would mean that the ELL group would always include only newcomers and never reflect the success schools had achieved in teaching them English.

Matching Students

To conduct the data analyses presented in this report, students who were “matched” in the online database were used. What this means is that for the two intervals for which analyses were conducted, students were only included if they had DIBELS ISR scores for both periods. For example, the beginning to end of the school year analysis only included students who had DIBELS scores for fall 2007 and spring 2008. Students with only one or no score were excluded from the analysis. Similarly, only students with DIBELS ISR scores for spring of the 2006–2007 school year, and spring of the 2007–2008 school year were included in the year-to-year analysis.

The University of Oregon uses student identification numbers to match student data. A total of 1,058 students in the year-to-year analysis had both scores for both data points. It should be noted that only three grade levels were included in these analyses, as this year’s kindergarten class

would not have had any assessment results from spring 2007. A total of 1,818 students in the fall 2007 to spring 2008 analysis had both data points.

The data presented in this annual report represent what was entered at the school level. Because matched scores came directly from the online database, there is no information on the number of students who had either no fall or no spring data.

Data Analysis

Data analysis consisted of calculating percentages of students at each of the three ISRs. For each ISR, two data points are reported which represent the beginning and end of the comparison period. Since these data are matched, each set of percentages represent absolute increases or declines for the cohort of students included in the analysis. Bar charts are used to present the data.

The Pearson chi-square test was used to determine whether the change in percentage of students at benchmark changed significantly from last year to this year. McNemar’s test (which is based on the chi-square distribution but accounts for data that are matched from one point in time to the next) was used to determine the statistical significance of changes among matched students from fall to spring of the current school year.

CHAPTER THREE: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Highlights

- The Alaska Reading First program provided a comprehensive approach to professional development, including four conferences, technical assistance, and coaching for teachers.
 - Four conferences were offered: The Consortium on Reading Excellence (CORE) Coaches Institute, the CORE Reading Leader Institute, the Reading First Data Retreat, and the Alaska Reading First Summit.
 - On-going technical assistance was offered by CORE consultants on the school level.
 - Coaches continued to provide teachers with high quality training and professional development.
- While nearly all coaches and principals, and about half of teachers, found the Reading First Summit to be of high quality, they also felt that much of it was review and that it was not sufficiently differentiated to meet their needs.
- Principals reported higher rates of approval for the 2008 CORE Reading Leader Institute than were reported the previous year.
 - They were less pleased (-19 percentage points) with the Reading First Summit than in the previous year.
 - They indicated that the general quality of presentations and amount of training they received had declined from the previous year.
 - Coaches' attitudes towards the conferences were largely unchanged from last year.
- The majority (90%) of coaches were very pleased with the Data Summit.
- Only a minority (43%) was happy with the CORE Reading Coach's Institute.
- A minority of coaches (21%) felt that they had received enough training.
- Teachers continued to receive the majority of their professional development through their coaches
 - The number of modeled lessons has steadily decreased since 2006. However teachers continued to see their coaches as a valuable resource and ally.
 - Teachers felt that the professional development they received in 2008 was less on-going, intensive, and focused on the classroom than in the previous year.
- The technical assistance offered by the state Reading First office continued from previous years to be seen by coaches and principals as responsive and extremely valuable, although the transition to a new state coordinator meant that the relationship between the schools and the state was not as close as in the past.
- CORE visits were seen as extremely helpful, but did not occur in the Lake and Peninsula schools.

CHAPTER THREE: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

The Alaska Reading First program provided a comprehensive approach to professional development and technical assistance by providing an array of strategies, including four major state-wide events:

- Consortium on Reading Excellence (CORE) Coaches Institute. This three-day institute was conducted in late September 2007 and was open to Reading First and non-Reading First coaches.
- CORE Reading Leader Institute. This three-day institute was held in October 2007 and was attended primarily by principals new to Reading First.
- 2007 Reading First Data Retreat. Schools' Reading Leadership Teams, consisting of principals, coaches, teachers, and district coordinators attended this retreat in late November.
- 2008 Alaska Reading First Summit. Open to Reading First and non-Reading First school staff members, this two-day summit was conducted in late February 2008.

In addition to these conferences, the Alaska Reading First program provided ongoing technical assistance to schools through school visits by CORE consultants and the state Reading First coordinator.

On the school level, teachers received ongoing training from their coaches. Other technical assistance came from district staff members, publishers' representatives, and external consultants. In Fairbanks, teachers and school staff members received DIBELS training in late August 2007. Lake and Peninsula had two itinerant coaches, one of whom also acted as district coordinator.

Each coach worked with a separate set of schools in the district, visiting each school about once a month. They would go out for a week, and then return to their home site. This was a very different coaching scenario than what occurred in the other two districts.

This chapter reports on the delivery, relevance, and reception of Reading First professional development and technical assistance provided in Year 5 of the project. Information was collected from surveys and interviews with principals, coaches, and teachers. The chapter concludes with a review of technical assistance provided by state project staff members.

2008 Alaska Reading First Summit

The 2008 Reading First Summit was held in Anchorage on February 21st and 22nd. The Summit was attended by coaches, principals, and teachers from Reading First and non-Reading First schools. The summit included keynote addresses on "Reading First and Response to Intervention" presented by Carolyn Denton, the "Alaska Reading First Overview" by Ruth Baumgartner, "Sustaining an Effective Comprehensive Reading Plan" by Frances Bessellieu and Carrie Cole, and "Data—Then, Now, and Moving Forward." In addition to the keynote speeches, each day participants chose one of four breakout sessions. These sessions were on diverse subject matter and were presented by consultants, including those from CORE and the Western Regional Reading First Technical Assistance Center (WRRFTAC). A copy of the agenda can be found in Appendix C.

Feedback regarding the 2008 Alaska Reading First Summit was captured

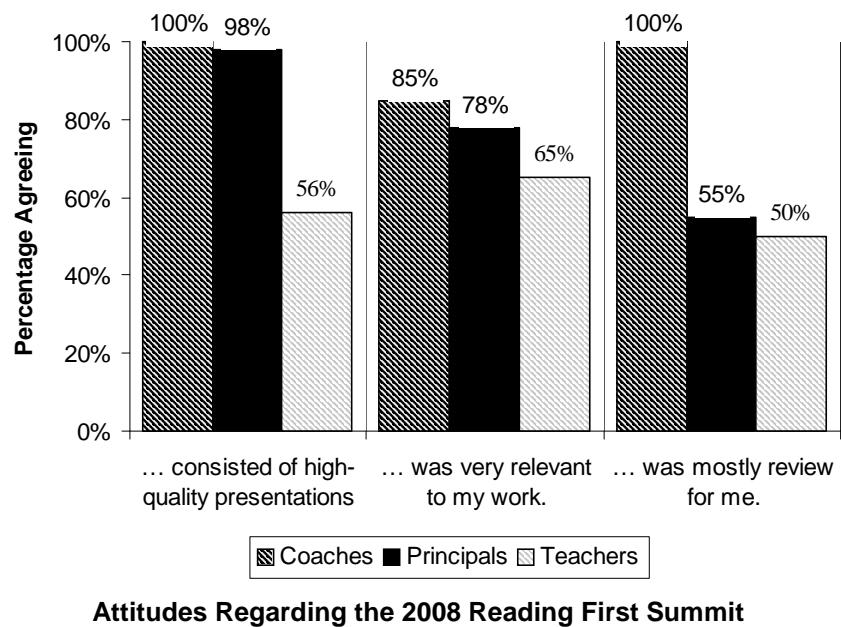
primarily on surveys from principals, teachers, and reading coaches.¹ In addition, interviews with principals and coaches included questions about professional development and provided an opportunity for participants to discuss their experiences at the conferences.

The majority of Reading First coaches (100%), principals (64%), and teachers (59%) attended some or all the 2008 Reading First Summit. Overall, coaches and principals reported a more positive response to the 2008 Reading First Summit than teachers.

The vast majority of coaches and principals believed that the presentations were of very high quality and were directly relevant to their work. Teachers reported lower rates of approval. These results are portrayed in Figure 3-1.

These responses were slightly less enthusiastic than those from last year.

Figure 3-1



¹ There was an error on the teacher questionnaire; the 2008 Reading First Summit was incorrectly labeled as the "2007 Reading First Summit." Once the error was discovered the coaches were immediately contacted and asked to notify the teachers. All questionnaires were returned with "2007" crossed off and replaced with "2008." In addition, the general directions stated that all questions refer to the current school year. Consequently, it is the belief of this evaluation that this error did not significantly change the results.

In comparison to the 2007 surveys, there was a significant increase in the percentage of respondents who found the 2008 summit to be "mostly review." This was true among coaches, who universally reported that the summit was review. This sentiment is exemplified by this coach's comment:

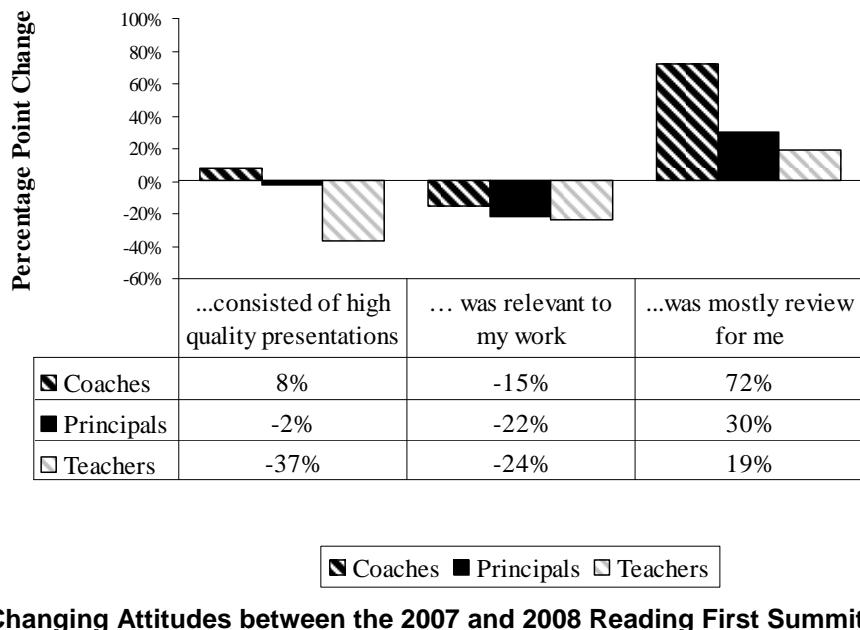
The Reading Summit was focused on schools that were not Reading First and much of the information was review for Reading First school staff. Our teachers saw second and third rounds of the same material and they have different needs. (Coach)

There was a significant reduction (-37% from 2007) in the percentage of teachers who reported that the presentations were of high quality. Compared to the 2007

Reading First Summit coaches, principals and teachers described the content of the 2008 Reading First Summit to be less relevant to their work. These results are shown in Figure 3-2.

Participants felt that the Summit had not been significantly changed from the previous year, and had not been well tailored to their needs and level of experience. It is worth mentioning that the 2007 and 2008 summits were attended by Reading First and non-Reading First schools. Consequently the audience came with very different background knowledge and needs, and differentiation may have been very difficult. These data reflect only the responses of Reading First coaches, principals, and teachers.

FIGURE 3-2

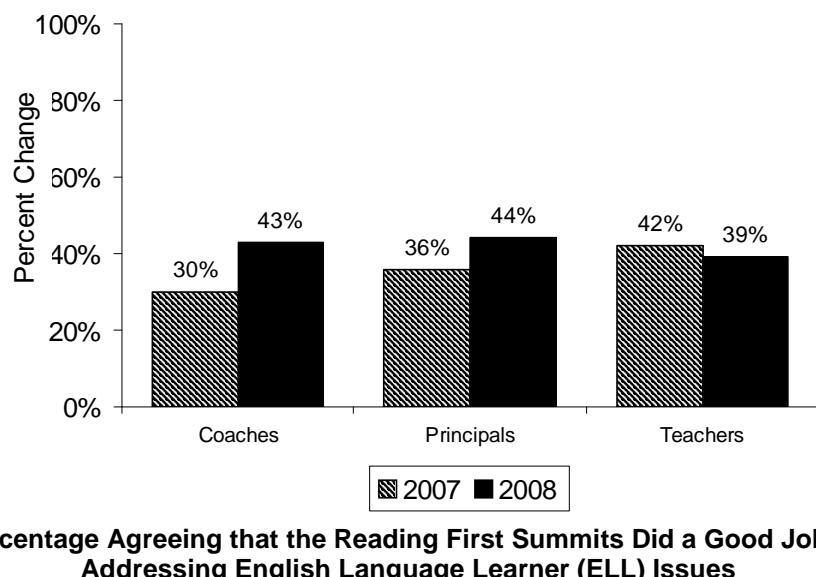


A minority of coaches, principals, and teachers (43%, 44%, and 39%, respectively) felt that the 2008 Reading First Summit did a good job of addressing English Language Learner (ELL) issues. However these percentages are a slight increase from 2007 for coaches and principals. Results are represented in Figure 3-3

Surveys revealed that very few coaches (14%) and a minority of principals (44%) found that the 2008 Summit met their specific needs. Other data reported that

- There were very few opportunities to reflect and share with colleagues at the 2008 Summit. Fewer than half of coaches (28%) and principals (44%) found adequate time meet with colleagues.
- The Summit was not sufficiently differentiated. Very few principals and coaches (11% and 14%, respectively) found the 2008 Summit to be differentiated enough to meet the needs of different groups. This may reflect the presence of both Reading First and non-Reading First schools at the summit.

Figure 3-3



Professional Development for Principals and Coaches

In addition to the 2008 Reading First Summit, coaches and principals were invited to attend the CORE Reading Leadership Institute, offered in October 2007, and the Reading First Data Retreat, in November 2007. Coaches were also offered the CORE Reading Coach's Institute in September. Most coaches attended both the Reading First Summit and Data Retreat, while most principals attended the Reading First Summit, CORE Reading Leadership Institute, and the Reading First Data Retreat. Table 3-1 and Table 3-2 describe the attendance to these meetings.

meaningful feedback to teachers and are able to make informed decisions about the allocation of resources and the provision of targeted professional development to staff. Consequently, the successful implementation of Reading First depends upon the professional development of the principals.

Overall, principals were not as pleased or as enthusiastic about their training and professional development this year, as compared to last year's responses. The only exception was the CORE Reading Leadership Institute, which was greatly improved from last year in the eyes of the principals. These results are revealed in Table 3-3.

Table 3-1
Coaches' Attendance of Professional Development Conferences

Conference Name	Percentage Attending
Reading First Summit	100%
CORE Reading Coach Institute	14%
Reading First Data Retreat	64%

Table 3-2
Principal's Attendance of Professional Development Conferences

Conference Name	Percentage Attending
Reading First Summit	64%
CORE Reading Leadership Institute	86%
Reading First Data Retreat	85%

Leadership Professional Development for Principals

Under Reading First, principals were expected to play not only their traditional role of building manager, but also the role of instructional leader. This is only possible when the principal has a solid understanding of the practical and theoretical underpinnings of Reading First. They must know what effective reading instruction looks like, what struggling students need, and how to ensure that teachers provide appropriate instruction. With this knowledge principals can provide

Other observations from the surveys suggest that:

- The amount of training offered to Reading First principals was viewed as ample by most principals, however a minority (29%, including one principal who reported as neutral) wished for more.

Table 3-3
Principal Perception Professional Development

	Percentage Agreeing or Strongly Agreeing	
	2007	2008
I am very pleased with...		
CORE Reading Leadership Institute	53%	84%
Reading First Data Retreat	85%	66%
The <u>quality</u> of training in instructional leadership that I received through the state and Reading First this year.	85%	66%
The <u>amount</u> of training in instructional leadership that I received through the state and Reading First this year.	78%	59%

- A minority of the principals (22%) felt that the professional development they received had provided them with useful training in observing teachers and providing feedback.
- Few principals (22%) felt that the professional development they received provided them with useful tools for working with resistant staff members.

Future professional development needs for principals. The overwhelming majority of principals reported that they felt very confident in their use of data to identify teacher strengths and weaknesses (93%), make staff assignments (93%), and understand student achievement trends (100%). A small group (21%) reported they would like more training to identify the professional development needs of teachers.

A few principals (20%) reported during open-ended interviews that they were concerned with sustainability, and would like training to prepare for the end of the grant.

*At my stage, I need more support and help figuring out our status and what to do in the future. Perhaps more training in how to maintain a high level of fidelity...
(Principal)*

Professional Development for Coaches

Federal guidelines for Reading First required the use of coaches “who provide feedback as instructional strategies are put into practice” in state Reading First plans.

While coaches take on many tasks in their schools (see chapter 4), an important part of their job is the provision of on-going, targeted professional development to teachers. To do so effectively requires that coaches know not only what good reading instruction looks like, but how to work effectively with a wide range of teachers. Coaches’ reactions to their professional development were largely unchanged from the previous year. The vast majority (90%) felt very positive about the 2008 Data Retreat, but were less pleased with the CORE training. In both years, only half the coaches were pleased with the quality of their training through the state. Also, few coaches (21%) in both years were pleased with the amount of professional development offered by the state. See Table 3-4 for the results.

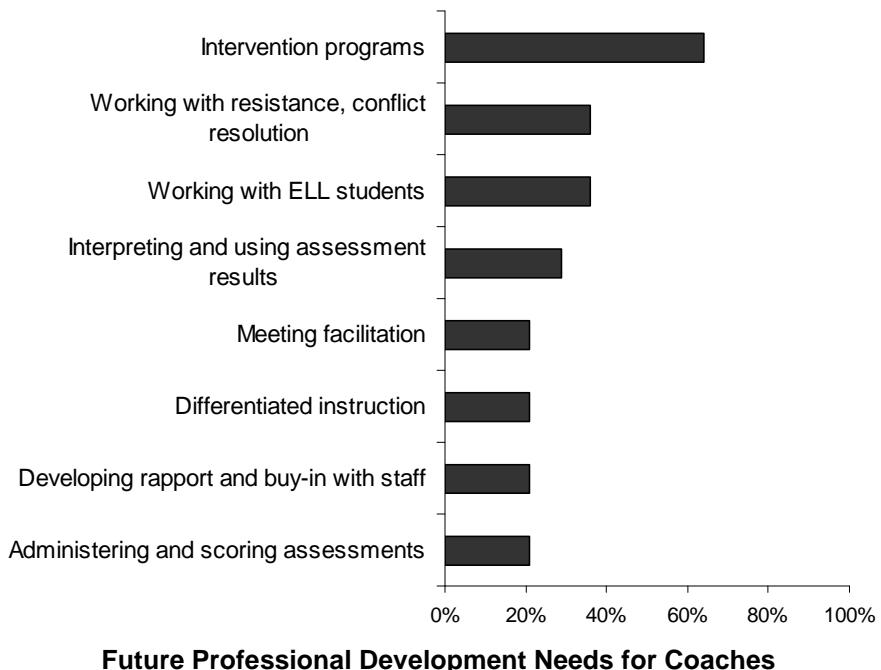
Table 3-4
Coach Perception of Professional Development

	Percentage Agreeing or Strongly Agreeing	
	2007	2008
I am very pleased with...		
CORE Reading Coach's Institute, September 2007	50%	43%
Reading First Data Retreat, November 2007	100%	90%
The <u>quality</u> of training in instructional leadership that I received through the state and Reading First this year.	50%	50%
The <u>amount</u> of training in instructional leadership that I received through the state and Reading First this year.	21%	21%

It is significant that the majority of coaches (71%) felt that they did not receive enough training and wanted more. This is unchanged from the previous year. Overall, only a few coaches felt that their training had provided them with useful tools for working with resistant staff (14%), useful training in coaching methods (16%), or met their needs as a Reading First coach (14%).

Future professional development needs for coaches. The majority of coaches reported that they did not receive enough training; however there was no clear consensus on what training they wanted to receive. The only need which a majority of coaches (64%) agreed upon was more guidance on intervention programs. Additional trainings which a sizable minority (>20%) reported a need are detailed in Figure 3-4.

Figure 3-4



During the open-ended interviews, a number of coaches specified that advanced training was needed. This is typified by this coach's quote:

We have had a lot of the basic trainings, and need to go another step to advanced training. We kind of know how to meet the needs of the intensives, so we need to know how do we meet the kids who are benchmark and keep them there and not let them drop?... So I guess more training on maintaining and upping the benchmark kids. (Coach)

In previous years the majority of teachers have reported that the professional development they received was "ongoing and intensive," however in 2007–2008, slightly fewer than half (47%) of teachers found this to be true. This change is summarized in Table 3-5.

In general, teachers found the number of visitors and trainers to their programs to be "just about right." Specifically, teachers were very pleased with the number of visits by district reading staff members (77% approval) and the CORE consultants (83%

Table 3-5
Teacher Perception of Professional Development

	Percentage of Teachers Agreeing or Strongly Agreeing, 2007	Percentage of Teachers Agreeing or Strongly Agreeing, 2008
Overall, the professional development I received through Reading First was ongoing and intensive.	66%	47%
Overall, the professional development I received through Reading First focused on what happens in the classroom.	80%	65%

Professional Development for Teachers

The February 2008 Reading First Summit was the major state-sponsored training for Reading First teachers. However, other Reading First professional development specifically for teachers occurred at the building or district level provided by publishers, external consultants, peers, or the school's reading coach.

A majority of teachers (59%) attended some or all of the February 2008 Reading First Summit. Of those who attended, 65 percent found the presentations relevant to their work, providing instructional strategies which they have used in the classroom.

approval). Only the visits of "other contracted experts" were seen by the majority of teachers (75%) as too infrequent.

Teachers were very pleased with the number of visits they received by coaches, with 94 percent finding them to be "just right," and only 6 percent finding them to be not frequent enough. Teachers received coaching assistance in a variety of areas which has changed little over the past two years. As seen in Table 3-6, the vast majority of teachers (>81%) found their coach's feedback and assistance to be usually or always helpful.

These numbers are not significantly different from those of last year ($\pm 7\%$), with the exception of a larger increase in the

Table 3-6
Teacher Perceptions of Assistance

Over the 2007–2008 school year, how helpful was/were...	Usually or Always Helpful*	Did Not Take Place
demonstration lessons provided by your reading coach?	83%	40%
feedback on your instruction provided by the coach after observation of your classroom?	81%	22%
assistance from the coach in administering and scoring student assessments?	88%	10%
assistance from the coach in interpreting assessment results?	85%	2%
assistance from the coach in providing quality interventions?	81%	5%
assistance from the coach in monitoring the effectiveness of interventions?	83%	8%

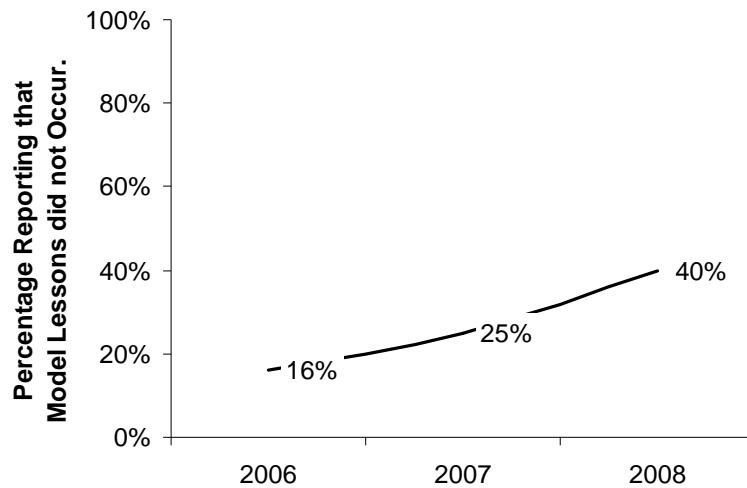
*percentage reported is the percentage of all teachers who reported this did take place

number of teachers reporting that “demonstration lessons” did not take place. This change is echoed in Figure 3-5, which illustrates the increasing number of reports that demonstration lessons take place less frequently than in previous years.

Most Reading First teachers were observed by (88%) and received feedback from (89%) their reading coach at least once a year.

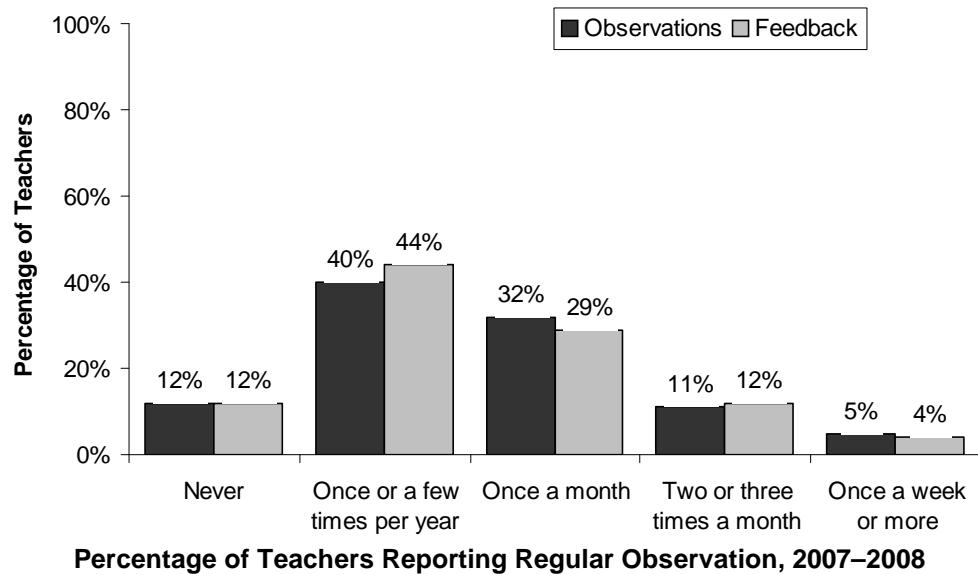
Almost half (48%) of these teachers reported that they were observed at least monthly. This reflects a small increase (four percentage points) from 2006–2007 and 2007–2008. The feedback received from coaches’ classroom observations was similar, with 45% of all teachers receiving feedback on a monthly basis, if not more often. This is illustrated in Figure 3-6.

Figure 3-5



Teachers Reporting that Model Lessons Did Not Take Place, 2005–2006 to 2007–2008

Figure 3-6



As the figure above demonstrates, there was quite a bit of variation in how often teachers were observed throughout the state. There was also quite a bit of variation between schools, as seen in Table 3-7.

It seems that the coaches were not observing all the teachers as often as they did in the past. In the majority of schools (61%), teachers reported that they were not regularly observed. What might explain this? Survey and interview data from coaches revealed two different explanations: teacher resistance to observation or on coaches being focused on other job responsibilities. A connected explanation suggested by a few teachers and coaches

during interview was that the teachers were more experienced and did not need as much supervision. This might also explain the decrease in model lessons as discussed above. One coach explained:

Teachers this year are returning and didn't need modeling as much, so I do less modeling and more with data and helping support independent activity time during the reading block. Now we're really looking more at the data and targeting instruction and interventions. [The change is] really just a progression. (Coach)

Most coaches (85%) reported that they were "very comfortable observing teachers and

Table 3-7
Proportion of Teachers Regularly Observed

Proportion of Teachers Who Reported That They Were Regularly* Observed by Coach	Percentage of Schools in 2007	Percentage of Schools in 2008
All or almost all of teachers (at least 80%)	36%	31%
Many teachers (60-79%)	14%	8%
Some teachers (40-69%)	7%	23%
Few or no teachers	43%	38%

*Regularly defined as at least monthly

providing constructive feedback," and only a third of coaches (33%) reported that teacher resistance kept them from observing classrooms. One coach commented:

The biggest issue is team members who are not comfortable with me there. (Coach)

Another coach remarked that resistance was

Not an issue at all. It took a while at the beginning of the year to build trust, but now teachers are very open to me coming in and out of their classrooms. (Coach)

Most coaches reported that assessment, administrative tasks and, to a lesser degree, data input prevented them from spending as much time as they wanted in the classroom. At the same time, most coaches explained that they felt that there was no longer a great need for them to observe, since most teachers were comfortable teaching Reading First and their core curriculum.

I can anytime I want to, but I don't really have that much time. At the beginning I do, but since January I haven't much. If they have a problem they will come to me. And if they make a change they send me their lessons plan. It is all automatic now. (Coach)

This position is corroborated by the fact that the vast majority of teachers (94%) reported the frequency of classroom observation to be just about right. Some teachers commented that it felt like the visits were purposefully less frequent.

I felt that there was some backing off, maybe weaning off. In the past [the coach] certainly has, but we have been a bit more autonomous this year in terms of you know the program... In the past there was more direct instruction and service than this year... (Teacher)

The overwhelming majority of teachers felt that their coaches were a valuable resource and an important ally. This is illustrated in Table 3-8.

One interesting finding, and a reversal from the previous year, is that teachers who were regularly observed were less positive about their reading coaches' knowledge and the usefulness of their feedback than those who were not regularly observed. After investigation, no significant correlation to philosophical opposition to Reading First, experience as a teacher, years at school, as well as other teacher characteristics, could be established to explain this finding.

Table 3-8
Teacher Perceptions of their Coaches, by Frequency of Observation

Coach Characteristic	Percentage of Teachers Agreeing/Strongly Agreeing	
	who were <u>not</u> observed regularly* in 2008 and (2007)	who were observed regularly* in 2008 and (2007)
Our reading coach is a knowledgeable resource about reading research and practices.	93% (83%)	87% (94%)
Even when providing critical feedback, I feel our reading coach is an ally in helping me to improve my instruction.	89% (80%)	86% (94%)
Our reading coach has helped me become more reflective about my teaching practice.	67% (60%)	75% (77%)
Our reading coach has increased my understanding of how children learn to read.	55% (59%)	61% (69%)

*Regularly is defined as at least monthly.

In addition to being observed by coaches, 95 percent of teachers recounted that they had been observed by their principal during the reading block at least once, and

37 percent of teachers reported that they were observed by the principal at least once a month.

Another aspect of teachers' training, usually prompted and overseen by the coach, was peer observations—having another teacher observe their classroom. During the year 53 percent of teachers had another teacher observe their classroom during the reading block, and 38 percent observed another teacher's classroom.

Future Professional Development Needs

To help gauge past and future professional development offerings, teachers were asked about areas in which they would like additional training. Like coaches, there was no consensus on what training the teachers wanted to receive. Trainings for which a sizable minority (>20%) reported a need were:

- Comprehension (22%)
- Student engagement (23%)
- Differentiated instruction (31%)
- Using intervention programs (33%)

As seen in Table 3-9, teachers felt very confident in their use of data, and very few asked for additional training in any of these areas.

Technical Assistance

The Alaska Department of Education and Early Development (EED) oversaw the state's Reading First program. The EDD's responsibilities included funding districts, programmatic oversight, technical assistance, and the provision of training. The department was also responsible for ensuring program evaluation. One state Reading First coordinator oversaw the entire program, and much of the professional development and technical assistance was provided by contractors and CORE consultants. Three district coordinators assisted the state Reading First coordinator.

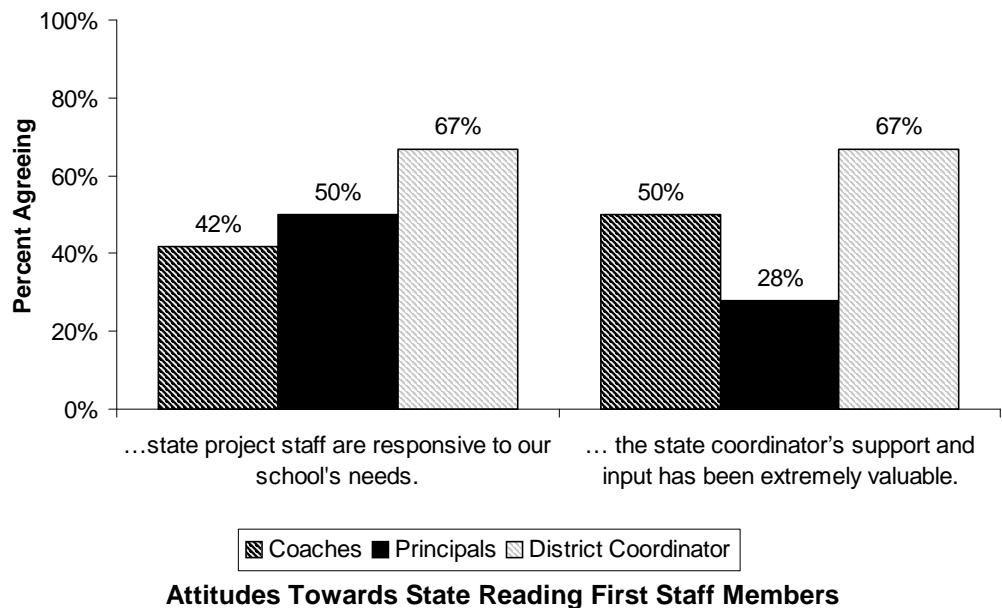
State-level Technical Assistance

Two of three district coordinators found that the state was responsive and provided valuable input. On the other hand, coaches and principals felt less favorable. These responses are detailed in Figure 3-7.

Table 3-9
Teachers' Confidence in Using Data

I am very confident in my <i>personal</i> ability to...	Agree or Strongly Agree	Would like more training in this area
administer progress-monitoring assessments.	87%	6%
diagnose a student's specific reading needs using reading-assessment data.	79%	10%
use data to group students.	91%	2%
use data to plan small-group instruction.	89%	5%
understand student-achievement trends across our school.	75%	5%

Figure 3-7



Principals and coaches felt ambivalent about the relationship between their school and the state coordinator. Only 21 percent of principals and 18 percent of coaches felt that the state coordinator understood their school and took that into account when making recommendations. During interviews, principals and coaches clarified that the main reason for this distance was that the state coordinator was new to the job and was not responsible for just Reading First, but also for the State's Title 1 program as well as school and district improvement programs. It takes time to build relationships with schools and to know all of the schools in-depth. One principal stated:

This year I have had very little to do with [the state coordinator] simply because she is brand new. [The previous coordinator] had been on board since the very beginning; she knew all of us... [The new coordinator] seems very nice and she is dealing with everything the way she should be, but there is not that personal relationship. (Principal)

Two of the surveyed schools (n=14) reported that the EED had visited their school during the year. Both schools found the visit helpful and the frequency of the visit to be "just right."

District-level Technical Assistance

At the district level, district coordinators provided technical assistance, helped to coordinate the CORE site visits, and organized monthly meetings of coaches or coaches and principals. District coordinators also provided other kinds of technical assistance, such as analyzing assessment data and supporting core reading and intervention programs. Reading First provided the district coordinators with professional development at the Reading First Data Retreat and the CORE Reading Leadership Institute.

The district coordinator's role in providing guidance and professional development had great variation from district to district and school to school. A coach in one school did not know there was a district coordinator and had received no guidance from the

district. Most coaches however had a working relationship with their district coordinator, but often felt the relationship was not as close or useful as it could be. For one coach, the relationship was counter-productive.

It's actually kind of negative. She just needs to take the edge off some of the communications. People were dealt with kind of harshly about everything. (Coach)

Another coach noted that the district coordinator was

Not real helpful. The concerns seem to be trivial when the real issues appear to be ones they want to delegate... There seems to be a lot of fretting over low priority issues. Well intentioned and kind, but missing the mark. (Coach)

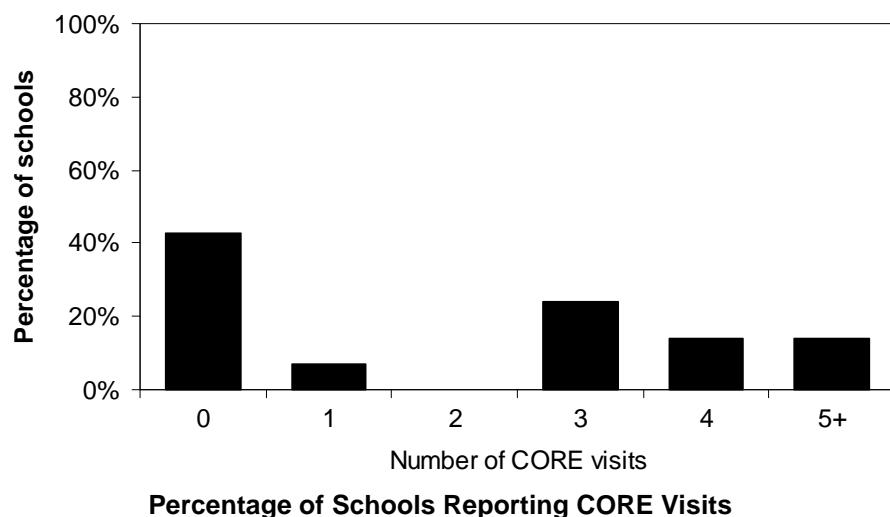
On the other hand, others coaches were full of accolades, noting that the district coordinator was always available and very helpful.

Very supportive. [The district coordinator] attends all the professional developments and is right there with us. [The district coordinator] is willing to do just about anything... (Coach)

CORE Technical Assistance

CORE provided technical assistance to five out of the six Reading First schools in Anchorage and all Reading First schools in Fairbanks. The number of visits at each school varied from one to five or more visits. However, in Lake and Peninsula, CORE made no visits after last year; CORE consultants found it too difficult to relate to the rural context and, as a result, discontinued this district from its contract. The state Reading First coordinator visited Lake and Peninsula in April 2008 and provided technical assistance at that time. The schedule of CORE site visits can be found in Appendix D. The percentage of schools reporting and number of CORE visits is illustrated in Figure 3-8. Most schools (83%) were very pleased with the number of CORE visits, and found them to be very helpful (88%).

Figure 3-8



CHAPTER FOUR:LEADERSHIP AND SCHOOL-LEVEL STRUCTURES

HIGHLIGHTS

- District coordinators attended most of the Reading First professional development and meetings and reported that they were useful. They found the state's expectations of their districts to be clear; however, only one (33%) of the district coordinators found them reasonable. District coordinators felt that their district's support for Reading First was very high. Principals corroborated this high level of district support for Reading First.
- Principals universally supported Reading First and identified their three primary obligations as ensuring fidelity to Reading First, providing leadership, and using data.
 - Principals ensured fidelity through classroom observations and walk-throughs. However, only a minority of teachers reported that their principals visited their classroom (37%) or provided feedback (25%) at least monthly. Both principals' observations and feedback to teachers has declined across the years.
 - Principals continued to report that they provided leadership to the school primarily through their participation in the Reading Leadership Team (RLT) and grade-level meetings.

While principals continued to use data to study trends and make decisions, its use declined from the previous year.

- Compared to last year, coaches spent more time on gathering, analyzing, and using data to make decisions, and less time on coaching and professional development. This year witnessed a large increase in the clarity of the coach's role, as perceived by both coach and teacher.
- The majority of coaches, principals, and teachers felt that their school had a moderately high collaborative culture. However, only half of teachers felt that they had a voice in decision-making about Reading First.
 - The RLT and the grade-level meetings were thought to be the well-spring of this collaborative culture. All but one school had a RLT, most of which met every other month instead of the stipulated monthly meetings. The majority of school members felt that attending these meetings was a valuable use of their time.
 - Grade-level meetings usually occurred at least once a month, and were regularly attended by teachers and coaches, who felt that their attendance was a valuable use of their time. Principals were very enthusiastic about these meetings, but did not attend regularly.

- Schools administered the DIBELS three times per year. The majority of staff members felt that the DIBELS was valid and accurate. Progress monitoring was also administered on a regular basis. In most schools, intensive students were monitored weekly, while the strategic students were progress-monitored biweekly.
- Data use was pervasive. Teachers felt very confident in their personal ability to use data, and almost all teachers looked at their data at least monthly. Coaches reported that they frequently used assessment data when communicating with teachers about their students, identifying which students needed interventions, matching appropriate interventions, and monitoring progress during interventions.
- Teacher buy-in to Reading First was the highest it has ever been, with more than three-quarters of teachers expressing strong support for Reading First. All coaches and nearly all principals also reported strong support for Reading First. On the other hand, coaches reported that overcoming teacher resistance to Reading First was increasingly a challenge.
- Sustainability continued to be a frequently discussed topic on the school level, but was not addressed at the 2008 Reading First Summit.
 - Teachers were more optimistic about sustaining Reading First than coaches and principals, with the vast majority feeling that they would continue to practice what they had learned under Reading First.
 - Most principals felt that the 90-minute reading block, the core program, and the use of DIBELS assessments would continue after grant funding ended. The reading coach's position was seen as the least likely to be continued.
 - The district coordinators agreed that the grade-level meetings and the core program would be mandated by the district, but they had mixed opinions about sustaining DIBELS testing, professional development in reading, and interventions.
 - Most principals and district coordinators were unhappy with the amount of support their school or district received from the state to address sustainability.

CHAPTER FOUR: LEADERSHIP AND SCHOOL-LEVEL STRUCTURES

In Reading First, district coordinators, principals, and coaches were responsible for developing structures and systems that encouraged collaboration and assisted individuals to implement change. This chapter examines the roles of these leaders within Reading First schools, and investigates how well they are able to meet the state's expectations. Second, this chapter discusses the state requirements for school-level teams, notably the Reading Leadership Team (RLT) and grade-level teams, and how these teams met expectations. Third, the chapter examines of the use of assessment data in the schools, and fourth, concludes with a discussion of sustainability.

Districts and District Coordinators

Alaska's 14 Reading First schools are located in three districts: Anchorage, Fairbanks, and Lake and Peninsula school districts. The first two districts are urban, while the third is rural and remote. These districts range in size from 14 to 60 elementary schools, detailed in the Table 4-1.

While the schools in Fairbanks and Anchorage are quite large, those in the Lake and Peninsula School district are very small, often serving five to ten students in multi-grade classrooms. Because of its small size, the two reading coaches and some principals were itinerant in the Lake and Peninsula school district.

Table 4-1
Reading First School Districts and Schools in Alaska

District Name	Elementary Schools in District	Number of Reading First Schools
Anchorage	60	6
Fairbanks	19	3
Lake and Peninsula	14	5

The District Coordinator

Every school district was required by the Reading First grant to designate a district coordinator, whose duties were to participate in Reading First meetings and trainings, and to support the implementation of the grant in their district. In Alaska there were three district coordinators, one in each district, working for Reading First. The Lake and Peninsula district coordinator also worked as a coach.

In addition to Reading First, these district coordinators had other responsibilities. While two were officially allocated to spend all or most of their time (100% and 95%) on Reading First, one only spent 5 percent of his or her time on Reading First. The two part-time district coordinators identified their other responsibilities as an instruction director/specialist (33%) or "other" (67%), which included DIBELS contact coordinator or reading coach.

The district coordinators all attended the Reading First Summit in February 2008. Two of the district coordinators attended the Data Retreat in November 2007. They reported that these conferences were usually, if not always, useful. District coordinators often attended other state meetings, and often participated in school visits made by the state Reading First coordinator.

State Support of Districts

Two of the three district coordinators (66%) found state Reading First staff members to be responsive and their help to be extremely valuable. Two of three district coordinators (66%) also found the state's expectations of their districts to be clear; however only one of the district coordinators (33%) agreed that these expectations were reasonable.

In addition to what was offered to the districts by the state, the district coordinators suggested that the state Reading First office:

- Provide or support professional development on the district level
- Provide beginning institutes every year
- Ensure all institutes, summits, and retreats were appropriate for issues at different sized schools

District Support of Schools

All district coordinators felt that their district's support for Reading First was very high, and they reported numerous examples of assistance provided to their schools. All districts reported that they were provided the following:

- Financial management of the grant
- Assignment of a district-level coordinator
- Districtwide Reading First meetings for principals
- Analyses of student reading assessment data
- Professional development aligned with Reading First
- Technical assistance for Reading First

In addition, two districts (66%) provided a DIBELS Assessment Team and modified district requirements to be aligned with

Reading First. One district (33%) also reported that it facilitated districtwide Reading First meetings for coaches, and one also provided additional funds from its own budget to support Reading First.

Principals corroborated this high level of district support for Reading First. They agreed that new district-level initiatives were aligned with Reading First (85%), and that their district provided sufficient support for Reading First (79%). One principal remarked:

The district is always helpful, but they have a huge vision and Reading First only is a small little component. (Principal)

Principals in Reading First

Principals in Reading First schools are expected to serve as instructional leaders. Therefore, they need to be knowledgeable about reading and are expected to model a high level of support for Reading First. Principals must also observe classrooms and provide teachers with useful feedback. They should use data to inform decisions and ensure that teachers did the same.

Principals in Alaska Reading First schools were experienced educators and leaders. They had an average of 11 years experience, with a range from one to 42 years. Most principals had been in their current school for six years, and only three principals (21%) were new to their school in the 2007–2008 school year.

Teachers saw their principal as a strong leader. Most teachers (74%) found their principals had very clear expectations, goals, and visions of their schools. The principal was perceived by most teachers as caring about the progress of both students and staff members, demonstrated by their tracking of student academic progress (71%) and teachers' professional development (78%).

During interviews, principals were asked to describe what the state expected from them as Reading First principals. Principals identified three primary obligations. As could be expected, these were unchanged from last year:

- **Ensure Fidelity** to Reading First Guidelines
- **Provide Leadership** to guarantee Reading improvement
- **Use Data** to make decisions

Only a small minority (14%) felt that Reading First put excessive emphasis on their involvement. These duties and responsibilities are discussed in detail below.

Ensure Fidelity

Principals felt that one of their primary duties under Reading First was to ensure that their school followed the guidelines and rules established under the grant. They made sure that the 90 minute reading block was uninterrupted and that the reading materials were used correctly. Principals

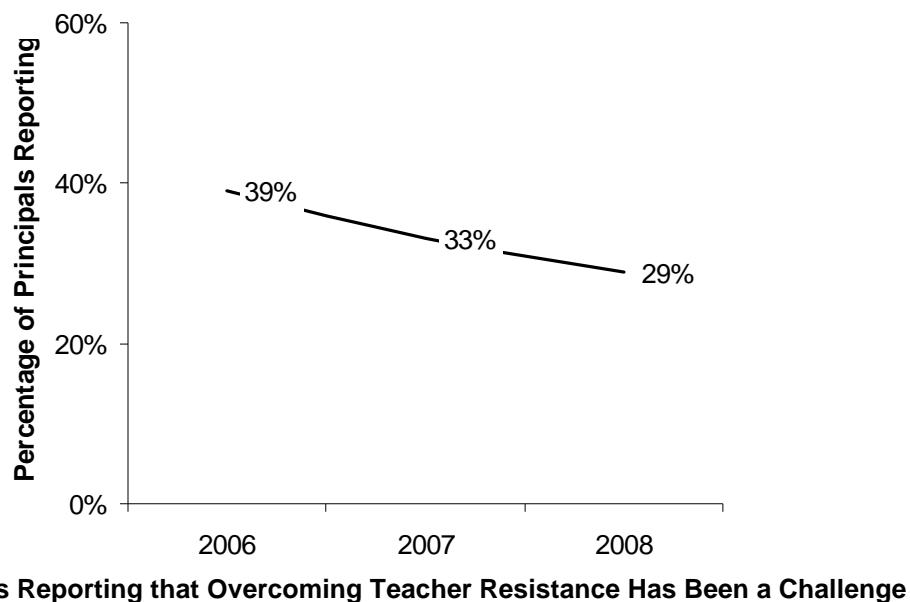
did this by overcoming teacher resistance and by conducting classroom observations.

Overcoming teacher resistance. One of the first steps that principals needed to take to ensure their school's compliance with the Reading First guidelines was to overcome teacher resistance. In previous years this had been a challenge for principals; however since 2006, resistance has steadily decreased, as illustrated in Figure 4-1.

Only a few principals reported teacher resistance to Reading First to be an issue this year. For these principals, teacher resistance was a great concern and took up a lot of time. For the most part principals tried to talk through resistance, showing their support for their teachers.

We talk a lot, and encourage people if they are really resistant to give it a try. I think that a lot of resistance is because the teachers don't feel support, so we find ways of providing that support and help them. We always try to validate their concerns.
(Principal)

Figure 4-1



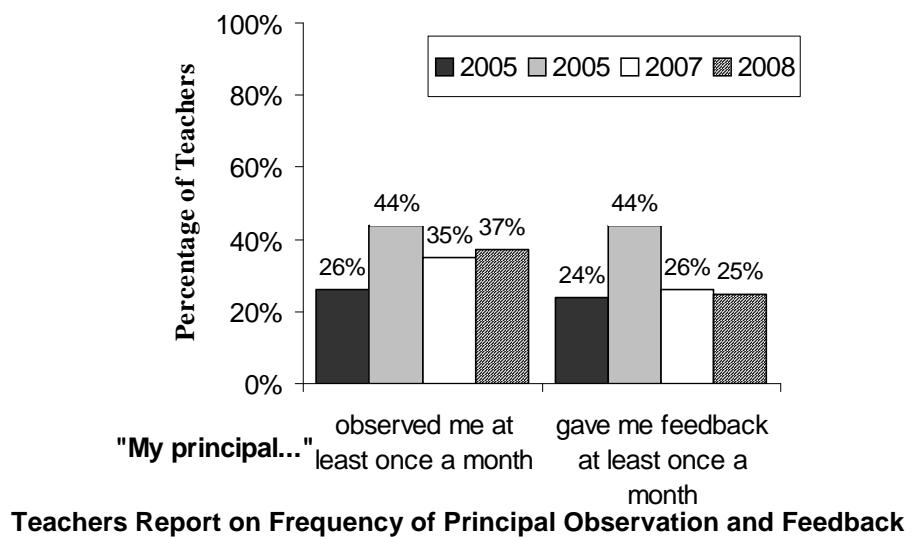
Walk-throughs and classroom observations. The principal's walk-through and classroom observation was one of the chief methods of ensuring fidelity to Reading First guidelines. The overwhelming majority of principals (93%) felt comfortable observing teachers and providing feedback. In interviews, principals unequivocally expressed that classroom observations should be one of their main priorities. These two quotes typify how principals articulated their responsibility to observe and provide feedback:

If I wasn't in the classrooms, I wouldn't have any idea what teachers were doing. (Principal)

I think walk-throughs should be my priority as a school leader. We are here about student learning and must get into the classroom to get to know the students and see what is going on. (Principal)

However, only 37 percent of teachers reported that they were visited by their principal *at least monthly*,² and one in four teachers reported that they had received feedback from these monthly observations, indicating that principals were not conducting many observation or providing feedback. Principals' observations and feedback have declined since 2005–2006. Changes since the 2004–2005 school year in this area are shown in Figure 4-2..

Figure 4-2



² The wording on this question was changed from "observed your classroom" to "visited your classroom" which may compromise comparability over time. However, the percentage of teachers who reported observation (37%) and feedback (25%) does not appear to be significantly different from previous years.

Provide Leadership

Principals almost universally supported Reading First and supported the instructional changes which occurred under Reading First. Principals reported that they provided Reading First leadership to the school primarily through their participation in the Reading Leadership Team (RLT) and grade-level meetings. Principals were all members of the RLT, with the exception of one school which did not have a RLT. All principals reported that attending the RLT was a good use of their time, and most (85%) reported that they often or always attended the RLT meetings.

Similarly, all principals agreed that attending grade-level meetings was a good use of their time. However, as reported by teachers, principal attendance at the grade-level meetings was low. Almost one-half of principals (46%) usually or always attended grade-level meetings. Figure 4-3 shows the frequency of principals' attendance.

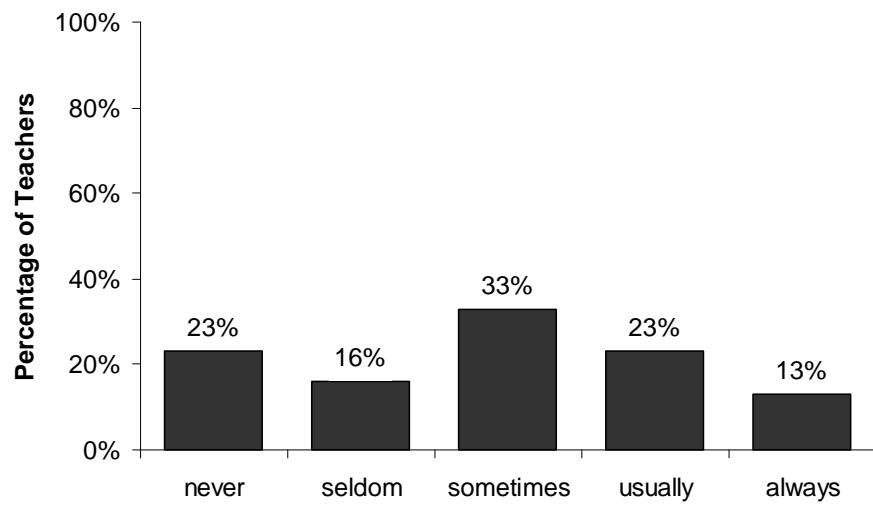
In interviews, principals spoke candidly about their attendance at grade-level meetings, and often reported that they attended only when necessary or when invited. One typical principal confirmed:

I don't attend all the meetings, but only when I am specifically invited, where there is an issue that needs to be dealt with...
(Principal)

Use Data

Reading First emphasizes the use of data to drive decisions about student placement, interventions, teacher pedagogy, schoolwide trends, and many other important school issues. Principals saw the use of data to be one of their primary obligations under Reading First.

Figure 4-3



Teachers Report on Frequency of Principal Attending Grade Level Meetings

Most principals regularly (“usually” or “always”) used data to study schoolwide trends (86%) and to make decisions about interventions (85%). Table 4-2 summarizes other uses of data by principals.

Compared to last year, the use of data by principals declined. The greatest declines occurred in the areas of making decisions

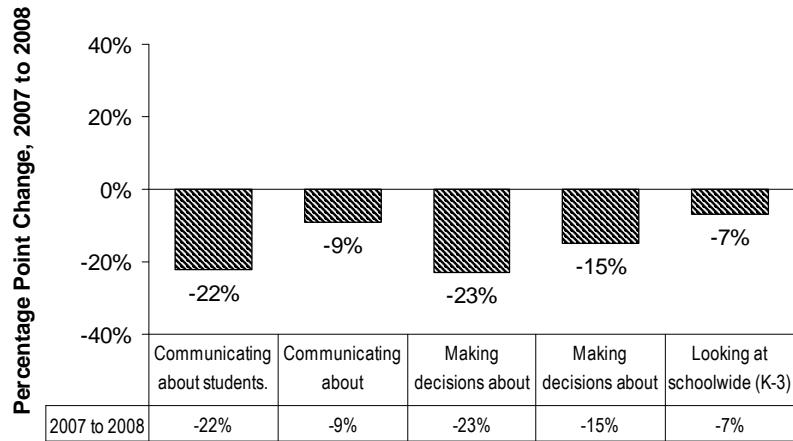
about grouping (decline of 23 percentage points) and communicating about students (decline of 22 percentage points).

Figure 4-4 illustrates the percentage point change in the frequency of data used between the 2006–2007 and the 2007–2008 school years changed negatively.

Table 4-2
Principals’ Use of Reading Assessment Data

I use the results of reading assessments (such as the DIBELS) when...	Never/Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Always
Communicating with teachers about their students.	0%	29%	21%	50%
Communicating with teachers about their instruction.	8%	15%	54%	23%
Making decisions about student grouping.	8%	15%	54%	23%
Making decisions about matching students to the appropriate interventions.	0%	14%	21%	64%
Looking at school-wide (K-3) trends.	7%	7%	36%	50%

Figure 4-4



**Percentage Point Change in Principals’ Use of Reading Assessment Data,
2006–2007 and 2007–2008**

Coaches in Reading First

Coaches are important instructional leaders in Reading First schools. They support teachers and promote instruction by modeling lessons, observing teachers, and providing constructive feedback. They also assist with professional development, and serve as a resource manager for school staff members. This section describes and analyzes the job expectations of coaches. The role of the coach as a provider of professional development to teachers is detailed in Chapter 3 (Professional Development and Technical Assistance), and will not be reiterated here.

Most coaches were employed full time (71%), and were the only reading coach in the school (86%). They had, on average, seven years coaching experience, ranging from one to 30 years. Prior to becoming a coach, they had an average of 16 years teaching experience, with a range from seven to 36 years. Although there were two

new reading coaches this year, both had previously worked in their schools. For the most part, coaches had Bachelor's degrees (79%), and roughly a third (36%) had reading certification. A smaller number of coaches had Master's degrees in reading (14%) or other areas of education (36%).

Expectations and Work Load of Coaches

The work load of Reading First coaches changed as the coaches, teachers, and schools adjusted to Reading First's requirements and expectations. On average, full time coaches worked 50 hours a week, a slight increase from the 44 average hours which coaches worked in 2005–2006 and 2006–2007.

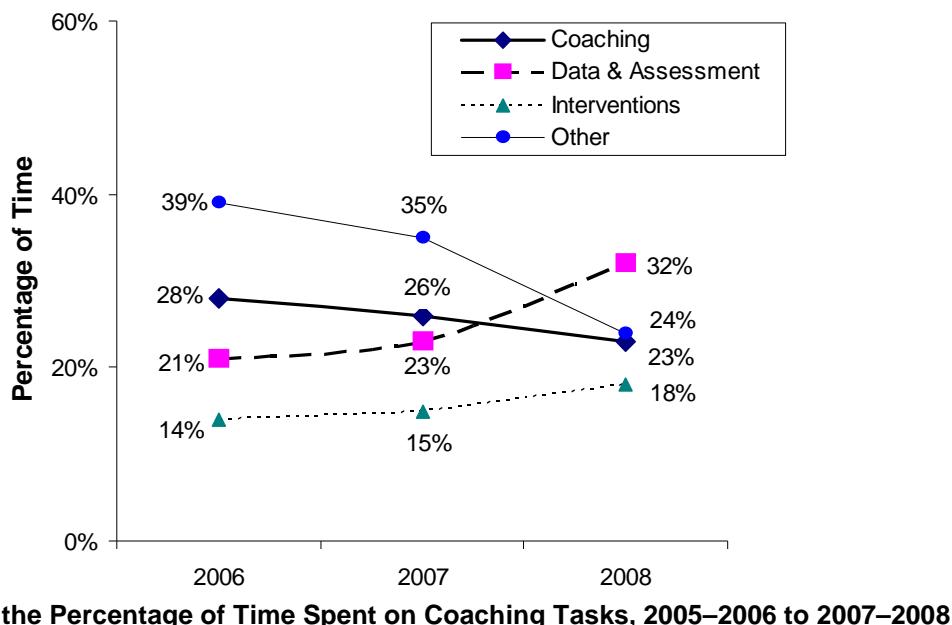
The data since 2005–2006 showed a clear increase in the time spent on data and assessment, but a decrease in coaching time and other tasks. Table 4-3 details changes in other coaching tasks, while Figure 4-5 succinctly shows these trends.

Table 4-3
Percentage of Time Spent on Coaching Tasks

Coach Responsibilities	2006	2007	2008
One-on-one coaching (K-3)	22%	18%	14%
Group coaching (K-3)	5%	5%	5%
Coaching out-of-grade	1%	3%	4%
Subtotal: Coaching	28%	26%	23%
Administering/coordinating assessments	6%	7%	12%
Managing data (entering, charting)	7%	7%	9%
Using/interpreting data	8%	9%	11%
Subtotal: Data & Assessment	21%	23%	32%
Planning interventions	7%	8%	8%
Providing interventions directly	7%	7%	10%
Subtotal: Interventions	14%	15%	18%
Planning for/attending meetings	17%	8%	7%
Attending professional development	4%	4%	3%
Paperwork	16%	15%	10%
Unrelated (subbing, bus duty, etc.)	2%	8%	4%
Subtotal: Other	39%	35%	24%

Note: Numbers may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Figure 4-5



Changes in the Percentage of Time Spent on Coaching Tasks, 2005–2006 to 2007–2008

In interviews, coaches stated that they had spent previous years developing leadership and coaching teachers. As the teachers became more experienced and confident with Reading First, coaches were able to spend more of their available time on data-oriented tasks. One coach said:

I spent a lot of time developing leadership last year, so leadership has been distributed among the staff so there is a core team.
(Coach)

Another coach was more explicit and clarified that last year she spent more time modeling.

Most of my teachers are returning, but last year I did an awful lot of modeling. I have done some modeling this year, but not to the extent that I did last year. We've moved on to how to target the independent time.
(Coach)

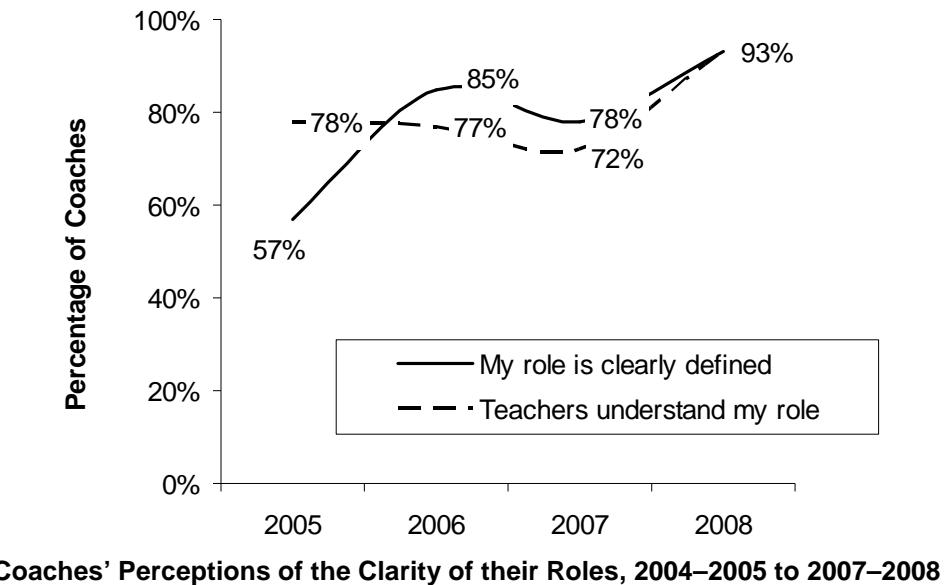
These changes are reflected in the discussion of teacher's professional development in Chapter 3 (Professional Development and

Technical Assistance), notably around the decrease in the number of modeled lessons since last year.

Another important change this year was a large increase in the clarity of the coach's role. The vast majority of both coaches and teachers (93%) felt that the coaches' role was "clearly defined." These percentages reflect a 15 percentage point improvement in the clarity of the coach's role and a 21 percentage point increase in teachers' understanding of that role. Figure 4-6 illustrates these changing perceptions.

It is unclear what led to these changes in the perception of the coach's role, but it may be linked to the growing experience and confidence of Reading First coaches.

Figure 4-6



Coaches' Perceptions of the Clarity of their Roles, 2004–2005 to 2007–2008

Data Use

As described above, coaches reported that much of their time was used gathering, analyzing and using data to drive decision-making. In 2007–2008, all coaches regularly (“usually” or “always”) used data to

communicate with teachers about their students (100%), identifying and matching students for interventions (100%), and monitoring student progress (100%). Table 4-4 details the use of data by coaches.

Table 4-4
Coaches' Use of Reading Assessment Data, 2008

I use the results of reading assessments (such as the DIBELS) when...	Never/Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Always
Communicating with teachers about their students.	-	-	29%	71%
Communicating with teachers about their instruction.	-	7%	71%	21%
Making decisions about student grouping.	-	7%	36%	51%
Modifying lessons from the core program.	8%	33%	42%	17%
Identifying which students need interventions.	-	-	21%	79%
Matching struggling students to the correct intervention for their needs.	-	-	36%	64%
Monitoring student progress in interventions.	-	-	29%	71%
Helping teachers tailor instruction to individual student needs (i.e. differentiated instruction).	-	7%	71%	21%
Looking at school wide (K-3) trends.	-	21%	7%	71%

Note: Numbers may not add up to 100 percent due to rounding.

For the most part, coaches used data more than in the previous year. Coaches used data more this year to communicate about instruction and to help tailor instruction. On the other hand, coaches used data less often this year than last year to make grouping decisions. Figure 4-7 illustrates the changing use of data between 2006–2007 and 2007–2008.

Collaborative Leadership

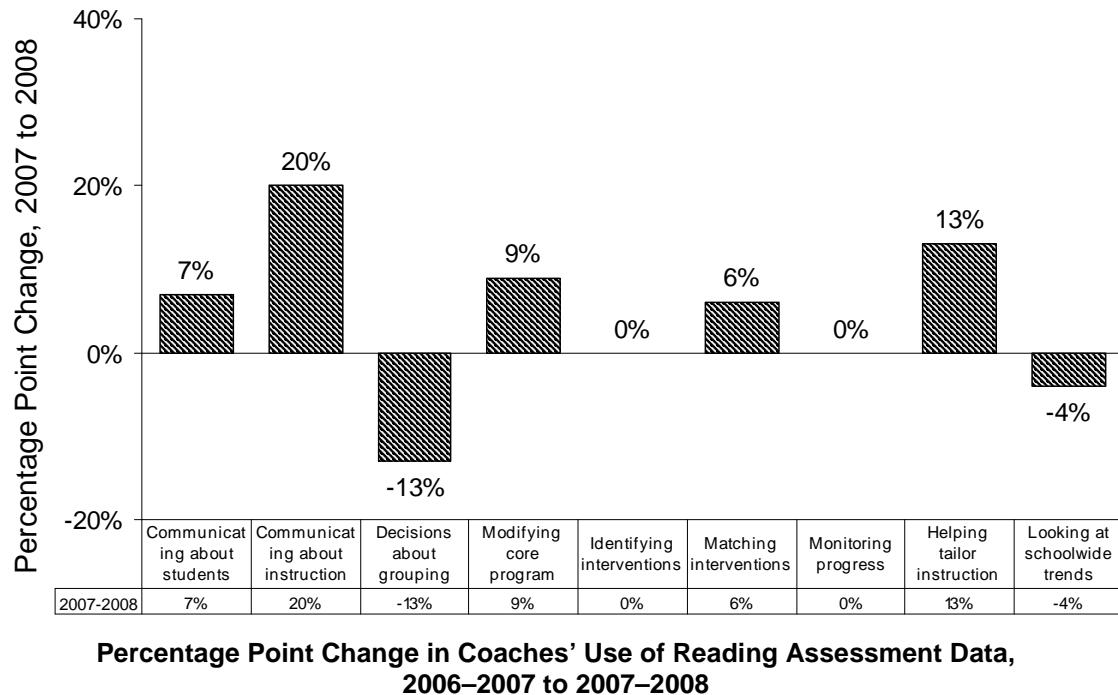
Under Reading First, the coach and principal are charged with the creation of a collaborative school culture, in which all participants—coaches, principals, and teachers—share the decision-making process. The Reading Leadership Team (RLT) and grade-level meetings are intended to create and foster this partnership. This section explores the collaborative culture of Reading First schools and how the RLT and grade-level meetings support this group effort.

A large majority of coaches (93%) and principals (86%) felt that that their schools had a collaborative culture, sharing decisions and authority. While three out of four (74%) teachers agreed with this statement, it was notable that only 51 percent felt that they had a voice in the school's decision-making about Reading First. Surveys revealed that teacher-to-teacher trust, an important framework for developing a collaborative school culture, was moderately high—72 percent of teachers felt that the teachers in their school trusted and cared about one another, and 69 percent felt that it was acceptable at their school to discuss feelings, worries, and frustrations with other teachers.

Reading Leadership Team

Every Reading First school is required to have a RLT, which should include coach, principal, and a teacher serving as representative from each grade, K-3. Teams were expected to meet at least monthly.

Figure 4-7



With one exception, all schools had a RLT. Coaches and principals were all members, as were 36 percent of teachers. The teachers were primarily K-3 classroom teachers; specialized teachers, such as ELL (14%), Title 1 (29%), or Special Education (36%) were less frequently on the RLT. Only in one-third of the schools (36%) did the RLT meet at least monthly, as stipulated. In most schools (86%) the RLT met every other month and in a small number of schools (14%) the RLT met only once or a few times per year.

As reported by over one-half of the coaches, RLT meetings were used to discuss the following topics:

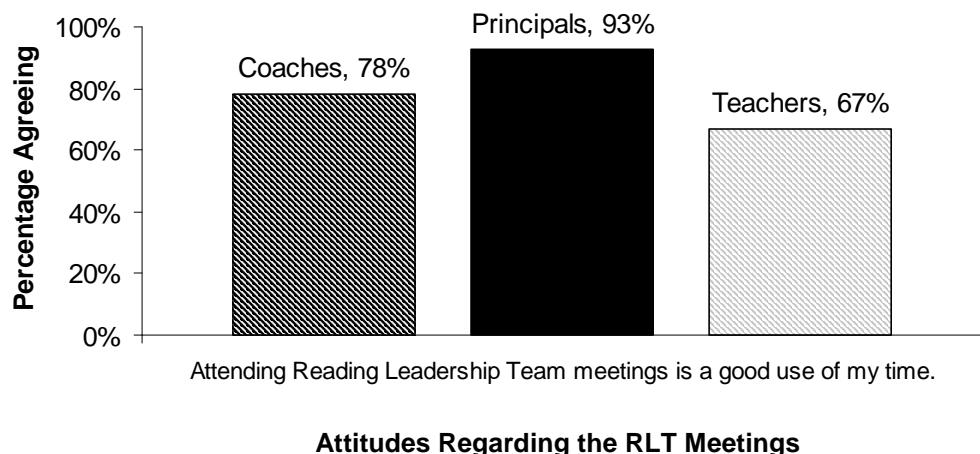
- Interventions (86%)
- Reading assessment data (71%)
- Scheduling (64%)
- Individual students (57%)
- Sustainability (57%)

Teachers thought that the RLT was visible and effective (67%), and the majority of members, particularly principals and coaches, felt that attending the RLT meetings was a valuable use of their time. Figure 4-8 displays this data.

In interviews, coaches and principals thought that the RLT meetings were essential to establish a collaborative culture. A principal noted:

You need to function as a team, and in order to function as a team you need to meet and communicate... You need to work in coordination and decide who is going to do what and how you are going to do it... It is not all 'this is what we are going to do and this is my vision', but what is our vision? (Principal)

Figure 4-8



A coach explained it in terms of buy-in:

Communication to let people know what is expected of them. Buy-in works well when teachers have a voice and are part of the planning. The K-3 teachers collaborating and planning together is what makes the program work. (Coach)

Grade-level Meetings

Reading First schools are expected to conduct grade-level meetings to provide same-grade teachers the opportunity to collaborate and discuss teaching and learning. During these meetings, teachers and coaches discuss topics such as curriculum implementation, instructional strategies, and student data. Coaches are expected to facilitate these meetings, and occasionally used them to provide professional development. Almost all teachers (94%) regularly ("usually" or "always") attended their grade-level meetings.

Most teachers (90%) reported that these meetings occurred *at least* once a month, and many teachers (63%) indicated that these meetings took place more frequently, often two or more times a month. Figure 4-9

illustrates the regularity of the grade-level meetings as reported by teachers.

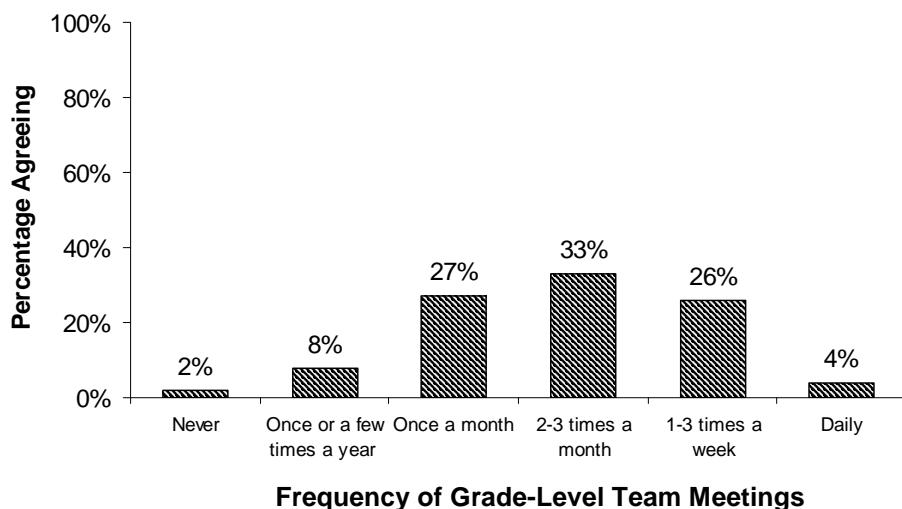
Over two-thirds of the teachers (69%) reported that coaches "usually" or "always" attended the grade-level team meetings. Grade-level team meetings were used to discuss the following topics, as reported by over one-half of the teachers:

- Student-level reading assessment data (90%)
- Interventions (82%)
- Grouping (77%)
- Individual students (76%)
- Instructional strategies (67%)
- Student behavior/discipline (67%)
- Scheduling (58%)

In the survey, over three-quarters of the teachers (78%) thought that the grade-level meetings were a good use of their time. However, in interviews, teachers were much more enthusiastic. One teacher said:

Absolutely, because we were able to share ideas, we were able do our scheduling, talk about the students, regroup, add some placement; we were able do some discussion

Figure 4-9



as to where we are at with our own lessons, share some of our ideas from our lessons, share our frustration, give input to each other. They were very valuable. (Teacher)

On the other hand, principals—who were universally enthusiastic in the survey about the grade-level meetings—revealed in their interviews that they didn't attend the meetings regularly. Many attended only when “specifically invited” or when “the agenda involves something that I need to address.” (Principal).

While principals were the most enthusiastic about grade-level meetings, both principals and coaches were more favorable than teachers. They reported that the meetings were particularly useful to “organize around the data and focus on the kids.” (Coach). Figure 4-10 shows these attitudes towards the grade-level meetings.

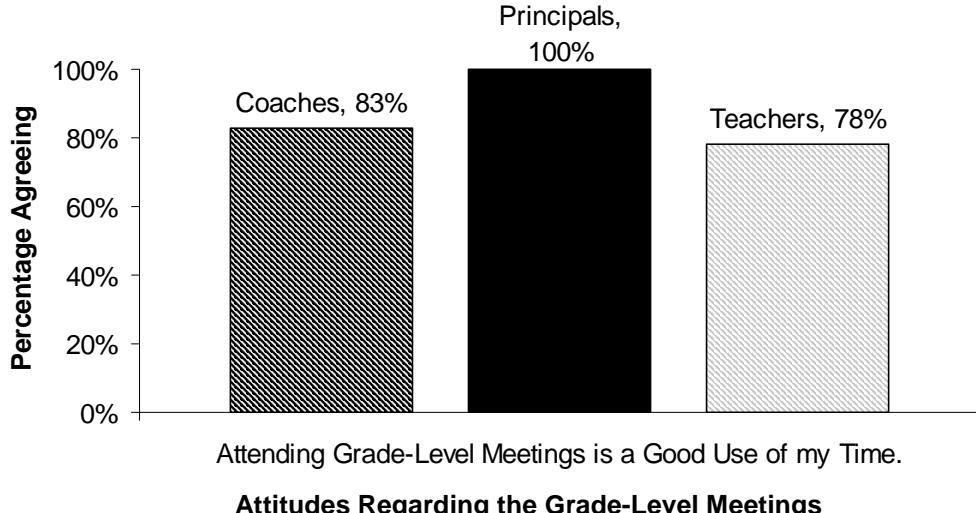
School Use of Assessment Data

Reading First focuses on the use assessment data to make key decisions about instruction and the long-term impact of the program. During the 2007–2008 academic year, Alaska Reading First schools conducted the required benchmark assessments three times a year. In addition, all schools also conducted regular progress monitoring, using the *Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills* (DIBELS) and other assessment tools. The majority of schools reported an organized system for collecting, analyzing, and interpreting their data. This section of the report describes the use of assessment data in Alaska Reading First schools.

Benchmark Assessments

In Alaska, schools administered the DIBELS three times per year: fall, winter, and spring. The administration of the DIBELS assessment was conducted by school assessment teams. Students were given one of three ratings, “intensive,” “strategic,” or “benchmark,” which indicated the predicted amount of additional intervention (if any) needed to for the student to become a proficient reader by the end of the third

Figure 4-10



grade. These ratings are called instructional support recommendations (ISRs) for students. Several measures in combination determine whether a student requires “intensive,” “strategic,” or “benchmark” level instruction. The ISR scores are available from a University of Oregon database.

The DIBELS Benchmark assessment teams were primarily composed of K-3 mainstream teachers (86%) and the reading coach (79%). To a lesser extent, paraprofessionals (43%), other school and district staff members, such as specialists (36%), and fourth- through sixth-grade teachers (29%) also participated in administering the assessments. Coaches felt very confident that their assessment teams understood the administration and scoring of the DIBELS and produced reliable results.

A few coaches reported that they or other members of their staff, primarily paraprofessionals, could use more training on data input and manipulation of the database:

It is sufficient. Maybe a bit more training on the database would be good. There are features I could definitely use and can't find.

The teachers really like it and we need training at the beginning of the year for everyone. (Coach)

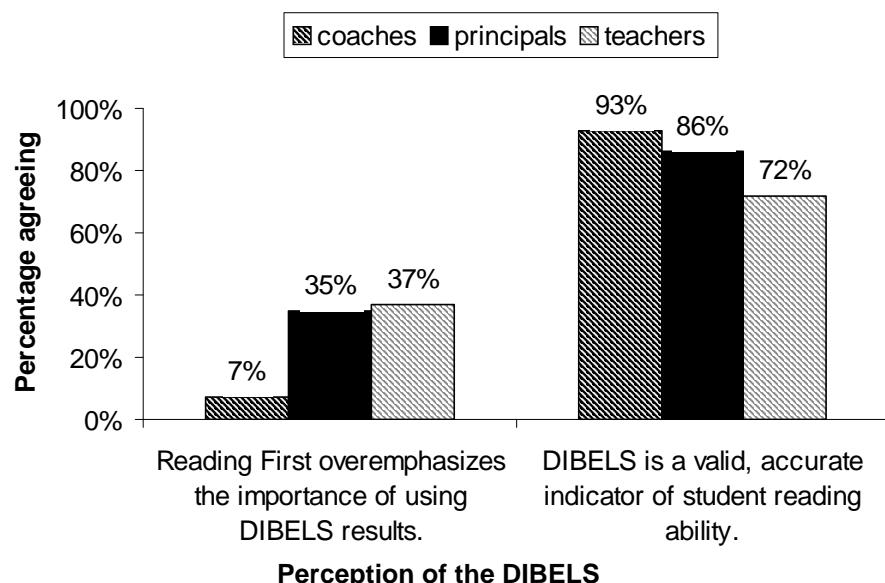
The majority of coaches, principals, and teachers felt that the DIBELS was a “valid and accurate as an indicator of student reading ability.” Likewise, only a minority indicated that Reading First “overemphasizes the importance of DIBELS results.” Figure 4-11 depicts these perceptions.

Progress Monitoring

Reading First requires that students’ progress be monitored frequently throughout the year. Progress monitoring ensures that students make adequate academic growth in reading.

Progress monitoring, like the benchmark assessments, was primarily conducted by the K-3 mainstream teachers (79%) and the reading coach (64%). Paraprofessionals (43%), specialists (21%), and fourth- through sixth-grade teachers (14%) also assessed students. Coaches felt that the progress-monitoring teams were sufficiently trained and had no significant concerns over the integrity of the data.

Figure 4-11



The progress-monitoring assessments were administered on a regular basis in Alaska Reading First schools. In most schools (71%), intensive students—those needing the most assistance to move to benchmark—were progress monitored weekly, while the strategic students—those who needed less assistance—were progress monitored biweekly.

The frequency of progress monitoring of all students is shown in Table 4-5.

In addition to their well-organized progress monitoring routine, schools had established systems for administering, analyzing, and sharing data. For the most part, these systems were stable from year to year. Coaches and teachers had similar views of their schools data systems. However, this year, schools infrequently reviewed their disaggregated data. Table 4-6 highlights these findings.

Table 4-5
Frequency of Progress Monitoring

On average, how often are students in each of the following groups progress-monitored at your school?	Weekly	Every 2 weeks	Every 3-4 weeks	Every 5 weeks or more
Benchmark	-	-	50%	50%
Strategic	7%	71%	21%	-
Intensive	71%	21%	7%	-

Table 4-6
Organized Data Systems in Reading First Schools

School Data Systems	Percentage	
	Coaches	Teachers
Our school has an organized system for administering the DIBELS and other Reading First assessments.	93%	95%
Our school has an organized system for analyzing and sharing the results of the DIBELS and other Reading First assessments with teachers.	85%	94%
Our school has an organized system for reviewing reading assessment data that have been disaggregated by key demographic variables.*	36%	46%

* Teachers item read, "I have seen our school's reading assessment data disaggregated (split up) by key demographic variables."

Teacher Use of Data

The majority of teachers (53%) reported that they used the reading assessment data at least once per week, and almost all (94%) looked at their data at least monthly. Since 2005–2006, teachers' use of data has been generally increasing, while data usage several times a month has declined. This can be seen in Figure 4-12.

The number of teachers who used data at least once a month has not significantly changed since the 2005–2006 school year, but the percentage of teachers reporting weekly usage has increased. Figure 4-13 reveals these trends.

Teachers felt very confident in their personal ability to use assessment data in the classroom. They reported that they were

Figure 4-12

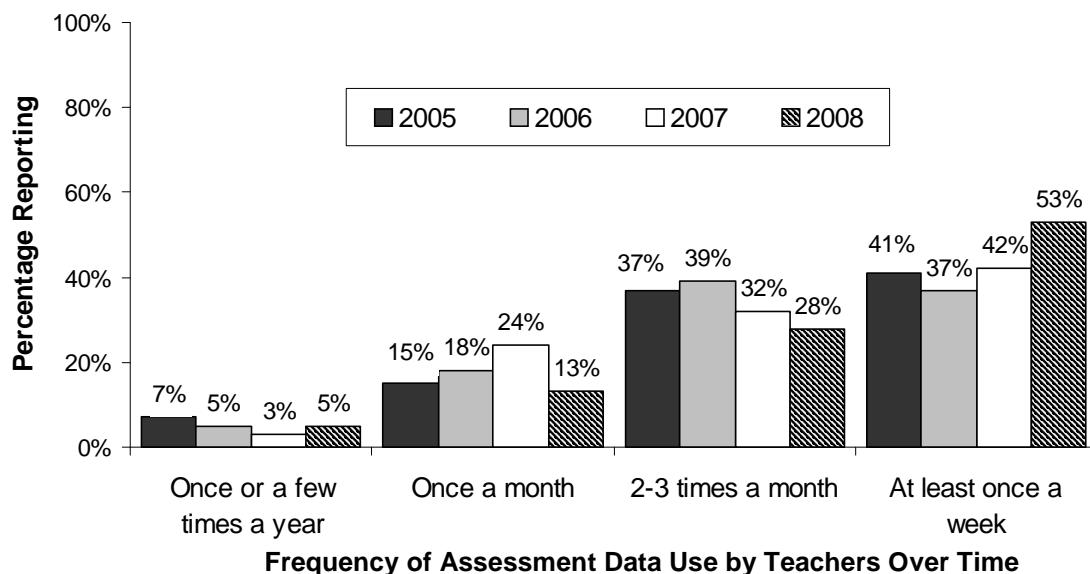
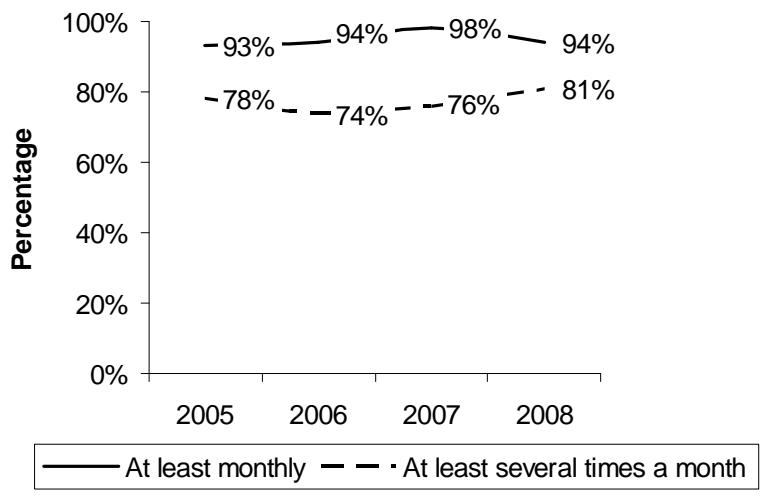


Figure 4-13



very comfortable using data to group students (91%), plan small-group instruction (89%), and diagnose a student's specific reading needs using reading assessment data (79%). A slightly lower number felt comfortable using assessment data to understand student achievement trends across the school (75%).

To complement their comfort with data, teacher reported that they most frequently ("usually or "always") used their reading assessment data to guide their decisions about which students needed interventions (96%), monitor progress during interventions (94%), and match appropriate interventions (91%). Table 4-7 highlights these findings.

Despite teachers comfort with data, coaches felt that teachers weren't always looking at it closely enough to find patterns.

I don't think they take the time that's required. They get lost in all the other demands of the day. I'm not sure they totally understand how to look deeper at data. (Coach)

Table 4-7
Teachers' Use of Reading Assessment Data

I use the results of reading assessments (such as the DIBELS) when...	Percentage of Teachers			
	Rarely/ Never	Sometimes	Usually	Always
Grouping students into small instructional groups within my classroom	4%	11%	26%	60%
Communicating with colleagues about reading instruction and student needs	1%	8%	33%	58%
Looking at school-wide (K-3) trends	6%	18%	29%	47%
Modifying lessons from the core program	8%	22%	33%	37%
Identifying which students need interventions	1%	3%	25%	71%
Matching students to the appropriate interventions	3%	7%	28%	63%
Monitoring student progress in interventions	1%	5%	26%	68%

Note: Between 0 and 6 percent of teachers reported "I don't do that." Those respondents were not included in the analyses for either year.

Sustaining Reading First Structures and Practices

When funding is no longer available or greatly reduced, and Reading First schools and districts are no longer held accountable under the auspices of the grant, what will happen? What will be sustained and what will not?

While we have no perfect means to foresee the future, data from schools can help point out some issues related to sustainability. This section explores three questions related to sustainability.

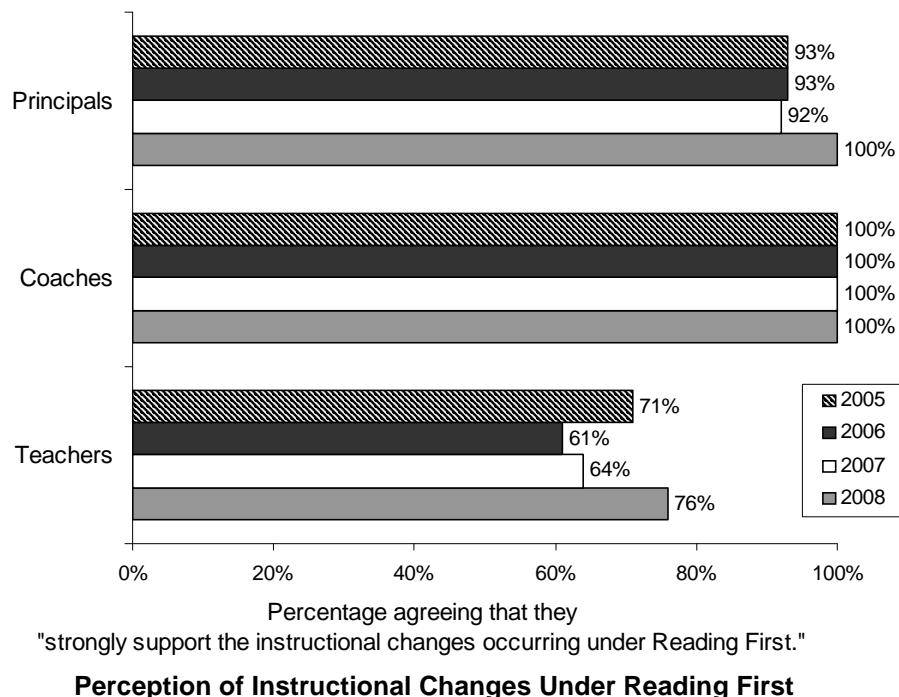
- Is there support for the reform among participating schools?
- What are the prospects for sustainability from the point of view of participating schools and districts?
- What are some other issues related to sustainability?

Support for Reading First and Buy-In

One of the most important factors for sustaining reform work is staff commitment and support for reform activities. Data from evaluation suggested that all coaches and nearly all principals (93%) reported strongly supporting the "instructional changes occurring under Reading First." In the past, teacher support of Reading First appeared to be lower than that of coaches or principals. However, this year witnessed a growth in teacher support, bringing it to a record high, with more than three-quarters of teachers (76%) expressing strong support for Reading First. See Figure 4-14 for details since 2005–2006..

Despite this growing support for Reading First, there were a very small percentage of teachers and principals (1% and 2%, respectively) who were pleased that their schools had a Reading First grant. As with previous years, a small minority of teachers (10%) reported philosophical or pedagogical objections to Reading First. No coaches or principals indicated any such objections with Reading First.

Figure 4-14



One in three coaches reported that that overcoming teacher resistance to Reading First was a challenge. This was an increase of 12 percentage points from 2006–2007, and 10 points from 2005–2006. However, fewer principals reported difficulties with resistance this year (29%) than last year (43%).

In interviews, half of coaches described teachers' buy-in in their school as "high," while the other half described it as "mixed" or "medium." On the other hand, all but one principal (five out of six) described buy-in as "high." Principals and coaches who described buy-in as high typically attributed it to "the data and the success" (coach), as well as the fact that the staff members who did not agree with Reading First had already left the school to find employment elsewhere. As one coach noted:

There is no resistance. The teachers who didn't want to do it left early on, before I was here. The principal really enforced this. (Coach).

Principals and coaches attributed limited buy-in to two things—personality and unwillingness to try something new. A principal noted:

There are two classroom teachers who do everything they are supposed to do and see the results and are happy, but they... like to be a little less structured. It is the kind of people they are. They have done everything, but if they had their druthers, they would be doing something else. (Principal)

Regarding those teachers who were unwilling to try something new, one coach succinctly stated:

Observable growth for those who buy-in, and philosophical stubbornness for those who don't. A belief of instruction based on experiences, not data. [This is an] emotional not empirical response. (Coach)

In their interviews, coaches, and principals noted a variety of ways to effectively deal with resistance. The most commonly mentioned strategy was simply to talk about difficulties.

Prospects for Sustainability

As with previous years, teachers were more optimistic about sustaining Reading First than coaches and principals. Only one in three of principals (36%) believed that their schools would sustain the instructional changes made under Reading First. Coaches were slightly optimistic, with a small majority (58%) foreseeing that the changes made under Reading First would be continued. On the other hand, the vast majority of teachers felt that they would continue to practice what they had learned under Reading First. Only 11 percent of teachers believed that they would go back to the way they were teaching before Reading First.

Teachers were asked which components of Reading First they believed should continue. Most teachers (75%) strongly believed that interventions should continue while the reading coach and the RLT were seen as the least likely to continue beyond the grant (51% and 38%, respectively). Table 4-8 presents these highlights.

Table 4-8
Teachers' Views of the Sustainability of Program Components

In your opinion, once your school no longer has the Reading First grant, should the following program components continue?	Percentage			
	Definitely not	Probably not	Probably yes	Definitely yes
Interventions	-	4%	22%	75%
90-minute reading block	1%	7%	23%	69%
Ongoing professional development in reading	1%	6%	27%	66%
Grouping	1%	3%	30%	66%
Grade-level meetings	1%	12%	24%	63%
Core program	2%	6%	34%	58%
DIBELS	-	7%	38%	56%
Reading coach	6%	10%	32%	51%
RLT	7%	19%	37%	38%

These views have changed very little (ranging from one to six percentage points) from the previous year.

According to most principals (64%), the 90-minute reading block, the core program, and the use of DIBELS assessments would definitely continue after grant funding ends. The reading coach's position was seen as the least likely to be continued (14%).

Finally, the district coordinators were asked which of the Reading First components would be mandated by the district. All district coordinators agreed that the grade-level meetings and the core program would definitely be mandated by the district. Two of the three district coordinators thought that their districts would mandate the DIBELS, professional development in reading, and interventions. The district coordinators were divided about the reading coach (67% not likely) and the RLT (33% not likely).

Other Issues Related to Sustainability

Research also suggests that other variables impact sustainability of a program (Taylor, 2005). Some of these variables are:

- **Supportive political context & protection from competing reforms.** At the district level, the district coordinator and principal reported that there are no programs that were seen to clash with the goals or structure of Reading First. Will this context remain? And what about state level?
- **Leadership stability.** When leadership changes, years of work in one direction can evaporate if a new direction is selected. The principal's position appears to be relatively stable, with the average of six years experience at the current school.
- **Staff retention.** Schools in which teacher turnover is low do not need to spend a lot of resources and time on providing professional development to new teachers who need to learn the reform approach. K-3 teacher turnover in the surveyed schools appeared to be relatively high, with most buildings (57%) having, on average, three new K-3 teachers this year.

State Support for Sustainability

The Alaska Department of Education and Early Development required that Reading First schools take steps to guarantee the benefits beyond the life of the grant. However, very few principals (7%) and only one of three district coordinators were pleased with the amount of support their school or district received from the state to address sustainability. One principal, when asked what the state had done to promote or assist sustainability, retorted “very little,” noting that there was a break-out session at the 2007 Reading First Summit, but not this year. Another remarked:

I sat in on several meetings about sustainability and there was very little the state could tell us about what to expect. They say it is important to fold sustainability into program by drawing on other funding sources. Once the funding goes away so does everything else. It pays for so much! We ask the district how it will help us. I will utilize some of Title I funds to help sustain. (Principal)

Sustainability was often discussed at RLT meetings—57 percent of teachers on RLTs cited discussing planning for sustainability after their Reading First funds disappeared. This represents an 11 percentage point decrease from 2007, but a significant increase of 43 percentage points from 2006.

Influence of Reading First in Non-Reading First Schools

All three Reading First school districts in Alaska had elementary schools with and without Reading First grants. District coordinators from these districts unanimously agreed that Reading First greatly influenced the reading programs in their district’s non-Reading First schools.

CHAPTER FIVE: INSTRUCTION AND INTERVENTIONS

HIGHLIGHTS

- All schools delivered *at least* 90 minutes of uninterrupted reading instruction to their half-day kindergarten, first-, second-, and third-grade students. In 88 percent of schools with full-day kindergarten classes this was also true.
- The majority of schools used walk-to-read in all or nearly all classes (43%) or in some grades, but not all grades (21%). Over one-third of the schools (36%) did not use walk-to-read.
- When the percentage of block time spent at students instructional level was computed, over 50 percent of schools spent the entire time at students' instructional level in first-(54%), second-(54%), and third-grades (57%). In schools with half-day kindergarten classes, three out of the four schools spent the entire time at each student's instructional level, but only 38 percent of the schools with full-day kindergarten classes did so.
- Both the teachers (81%) and principals (92%) were satisfied with their school's core program. However, 21 percent of coaches were mostly satisfied.
- Templates were used frequently by teachers. At least 72 percent of the teachers used them a few times each week. Few teachers (14%) never used templates in their classes.
- The vast majority of teachers (88%) tailored their instruction to individual student needs at least *several times a week*.
- A large majority of teachers (81%) reported that they used small groups on a daily basis as another way to differentiate instruction. Very few teachers (7%) never used small groups.
- Belief that Reading First was meeting the needs of ELL students was not overwhelmingly high. In fact, teachers, coaches, and principals had less confidence in meeting the needs of ELL this year than last year. A minority of coaches and teachers thought that their schools used reading materials that were well-matched to ELL needs—33 percent and 41 percent, respectively. Only a third of the coaches and about one-half of the teachers (52%) felt they were equipped to meet the needs of ELL students.
- Compared to last year, substantial positive changes were found in most areas of effective classrooms—lesson clarity (62% to 88%), explicit modeling (25% to 67%), student engagement (50% to 75%), opportunities to practice (56% to 75%), and feedback (37% to 62%). Only one area declined moderately—effective questioning (56% to 40%). One area remained the same as last year—monitoring of student understanding (50%).
- Although instruction covered all five essential components of reading, some components received more attention than other components. Phonics instruction was taught in almost 100 percent of the lessons across all grade levels. Vocabulary instruction was taught in 62 percent of the lessons. It was most often observed in kindergarten, first-, and second-grade classes. Also, comprehension instruction was witnessed in 62 percent of lessons and at all grade levels. Of the comprehension lessons, the most

popular strategies used to teach comprehension included recall questions (90% of the lessons), questions to generate higher-order thinking skills (60%), and making connections between self-to-text or text-to-self (60%). A majority of teachers relied on multiple comprehension strategies during the lesson.

- All schools had intervention programs at virtually every grade level. Only one school did not offer it in kindergarten. However, the perceptions of teachers (65%), coaches (71%), and principals (64%) about their school's intervention system were moderately positive. Compared to last year, the opinion of both principals and coaches about their intervention programs improved, but teachers were less enthusiastic this year.
- Satisfaction with intervention materials was high among the coaches but moderate with teachers. Eighty-six percent of coaches and 67 percent of teachers agreed that

the intervention materials were well-matched to the needs of their struggling readers.

- Only four schools (29%) and five schools (36%) were able to provide supplemental and intensive interventions, respectively, to all strategic and intensive students in their schools.
- Compared to 2006–2007, there was a significant increase in the percentage of schools using paraprofessionals as intervention providers and a moderate increase in the percentage of schools using paid tutors.
- Opinions about the adequacy of the training of intervention providers were less favorable than last year. Only 58 percent of the coaches and 65 percent of the teachers thought providers were well trained.

CHAPTER FIVE: INSTRUCTION AND INTERVENTIONS

The overarching goal of Reading First is to have all students reading at grade level by the end of third grade. Instruction in Reading First classrooms should ideally:

- Be delivered during an uninterrupted 90-minute reading block
- Use a core reading program
- Be differentiated and delivered at student's instructional level
- Cover the five essential components of reading
- Meet the needs of English language learners
- Consist of high quality lessons and instruction

Furthermore, the school should offer interventions delivered in small groups and targeted to students' specific needs for students who need additional support in reading.

Collectively, the professional development, leadership structures, and assessment systems already discussed are all aimed at affecting classroom instruction. This chapter examines the evidence to determine the degree to which schools are fulfilling the Reading First expectations for instruction. To get a closer look at what happened at the classroom level, teacher and coach surveys and site visits provided this information. In February and March, three evaluators conducted six site visits during which they interviewed the coaches and principals, visited 16 classrooms, and conducted six teacher interviews, one at each school.

Classroom Description

The vast majority of the those responding to the Teacher Questionnaire were regular classroom teachers (86%), with 84 percent holding a bachelor's degree, 37 percent with

a traditional teacher certification, and 31 percent having a master's degree in education other than reading. Only 3 percent of the teachers held a master's degree in reading, and no one had certification in reading. The primary role of the remaining 14 percent of respondents was specialist in special education, language/reading, and ESL/bilingual. Alaskan Reading First teachers were experienced, with an average of 11 years of teaching experience, and had worked at their schools for an average of seven years.

During the reading block, almost two-thirds of the teachers had homogeneous classrooms where students were mostly at the same level and had similar instructional needs. On an average day, teachers had an average of 16 students, but the range was from one student to 30 students. The grade level that teachers taught during the reading block was generally the same grade level of the materials that they used. Only slightly more than a third of the teachers (38%) agreed that the instructional strategies promoted under Reading First were very similar to their pre-service program training. While 44 percent of the teachers had paraprofessionals present during the reading block on a daily basis, over a third of the teachers (35%) did not have any paraprofessionals to help them teach reading.

Coaches, teachers, and principals varied in their opinions about Reading First and instruction. Almost all principals (93%), and over three-quarters of the teachers (76%), agreed that instruction had noticeably improved at their schools. However, only 50 percent of the coaches agreed about the improvement. In their interviews, most coaches noted that teachers had been working on a specific aspect of instruction this year. Two coaches remarked that the

focus had been on comprehension at their schools. The other coaches indicated an array of topics ranging from good pacing for lessons, systematic phonics (kindergarten and first grade) and building routines with phonological processes, to nothing. Finally about one-half or less of the teachers and principals, (51% and 43%, respectively) thought that instruction in other subjects had suffered because of the focus on Reading First. Coaches, on the other hand, did not. Only 21 percent of the coaches agreed other subjects had suffered.

The 90-Minute Reading Block

In all Alaska Reading First schools, all students in half-day kindergarten, first grade, second grade, and third grade received *at least* 90 minutes of uninterrupted reading instruction. This was only true for 88 percent of schools with full-day kindergarten classes. Two-thirds of the teachers reported that they *never* used the reading block to work on non-reading instruction or tasks. One-quarter of the teachers used this time for non-reading tasks about once or a few times a year. Very few teachers (8%) used the reading block in this manner more frequently. In classroom observations, evaluators only observed non-reading instruction in one class out of 16 classes (6%).

Table 5-1
Percentage of Schools Using What Percentage of Reading Block to Teach Students at Their Instructional Level, by Grade Level

Grade Level/ (N of schools)	Percentage of Reading Block Used to Teach at Instructional Level						
	0%	17%	25%	33%	50%	67%	100%
K-Half day(N=4)	25%	--	--	--	--	--	75%
K-Full day (N=8)	38%	--	25%	--	---	--	38%
Grade 1 (N=13)	15%	--	15%	--	--	15%	54%
Grade 2 (N=13)	8%	8%	8%	8%	15%	--	54%
Grade 3 (N=14)	7%	14%	7%	7%	7%	--	57%

Across grade levels, almost all schools had at least a 90-minute reading block. A few schools had reading blocks of 120 minutes or 150 minutes. The few schools with half-day kindergarten classes generally had 60-minute reading blocks (3 out of 4 schools).

While about two in five schools (43%) used walk-to-read in all, or nearly all, of their classes, and 21 percent used it in some grades but not all, over one-third of the schools (36%) did not use this approach. However, in classroom observations, evaluators found that 62 percent of the classes they observed did walk-to-read.

When the percentage of reading block time spent at students' individual instructional level was computed, there were some interesting findings. Over 50 percent of schools spent the entire time at students' instructional level in first (54%), second (54%), and third grades (57%). In schools with half-day kindergarten classes, three out of the four schools spend the entire time at each student's instructional level, but only 38 percent of the schools with full-day kindergarten classes did so. See Table 5-1 for these results.

The Core Reading Program

Reading First schools are required to adopt a core reading program for their school. Several core reading programs were used in Alaska Reading First schools, namely Houghton-Mifflin, Harcourt, Success for All, and Reading Mastery. Success for All was also used as an early intervention program; and in a few schools, Reading Mastery was implemented in different classes together with another core program.

In teacher interviews during the site visits, teachers unanimously expressed that they followed the core program "pretty exactly." One teacher commented that she "tweaked" the curriculum for her bilingual students by using more visual examples. All of the teachers thought that the expectation to follow the core program was quite reasonable. This opinion is typified by one teacher's comment:

Yes, because the students do better with consistency. I think it keeps consistency through the districts. Before, the school had different expectations for student achievement. Before Reading First, some students fell through the cracks. Reading First has made our kids better readers.

(Teacher)

On the survey, both the majority of teachers (81%) and principals (92%) indicated they were satisfied with their school's core program. On the other hand, coaches were mostly dissatisfied. Only 21 percent of them agreed they were satisfied with it.

Use of Core Reading Program

Teachers generally followed the core program closely; but because of the large amount of material in it, teachers had to make choices. Teachers used templates to standardize instructional procedures and to smooth out pacing and correctional routines. Templates are modifications to the

core program that still constitute good use of the core program. Almost one-half of the teachers (48%) indicated they used templates on a daily basis, while another 24 percent did so a few times a week. Few teachers (14%) never used templates in their classes.

In the coach interviews, responses were mixed about the extent that teachers were modifying the core. At three of the six schools, teachers did not deviate from the core program; but at the other schools, teachers would occasionally deviate quite a bit. For example, teachers might not use the anthology story to its full extent, and instead bring in other literature. Sometimes new teachers did writing during the 90 minute reading block. Experienced teachers modified the core program more than less experienced teachers, who followed it strictly. In another school, some teachers did not make the connection between the workbook and the lesson. "Kids did workbook pages independently and the instruction took 5-10 minutes." Overall it seemed that, for the most part, teachers who used the core program used it well.

In classroom observations, evaluators found all of the teachers using the core reading program. Almost one-half of the teachers (44%) read directly or briefly consulted their teacher manuals. Another 19 percent did not use the manual but did have it out and opened. Over a third of the teachers (38%) were not using the manual.

On the teacher survey, 73 percent of the teachers indicated that they followed the precise language in the teachers' manuals on a daily basis. Another 17 percent did the same, one to three times a week. Very few (8%) never followed the precise language of the manual.

Differentiated Instruction (Delivery at Instructional Level)

Differentiated instruction ensures that students receive instruction at their appropriate level. Reading instruction at a student's *instructional level* is not necessarily the same as instruction at a student's grade level. In addition to one-on-one instruction, flexible grouping is another strategy used to respond to individual instructional needs of students. Flexible grouping allows for instruction at the student's instructional level, since students can be changed from one group to another based on their changing needs. Flexible grouping can be accomplished by grouping within the regular classroom. In Reading First, flexible grouping was aided by the practice of "walk-to-read," in which students leave their regular classroom to attend a reading group that is at their instructional level.

On the teacher survey, the majority of teachers (69%) reported that they daily tailored their instruction to individual student needs, and 19 percent differentiated instruction several times a week. In coach interviews, if the grade level did not do walk-to-read, teachers were able to sufficiently differentiate instruction, or not, based on the number of students, student needs, and their classroom management skills. Their ability depended on these factors. On the other hand, coaches said that their teachers "absolutely" were able to sufficiently differentiate when they did walk-to-read. As reported earlier, survey results indicated that 64 percent of the schools used walk-to-read in *at least* some classes/grade levels, while over one-third of the schools (36%) did not use walk-to-read.

While walk-to-read is one strategy for differentiation, instruction in small groups is another way to tailor instruction to student needs. A large majority of teachers (81%) reported that they used small groups on a daily basis. Only another 8 percent

conducted small groups a few times a week. Very few teachers (7%) never used small groups.

In addition, further professional development in differentiated instruction was one of the top four requests by teachers (31% requested this topic) and one of the top six requests by coaches.

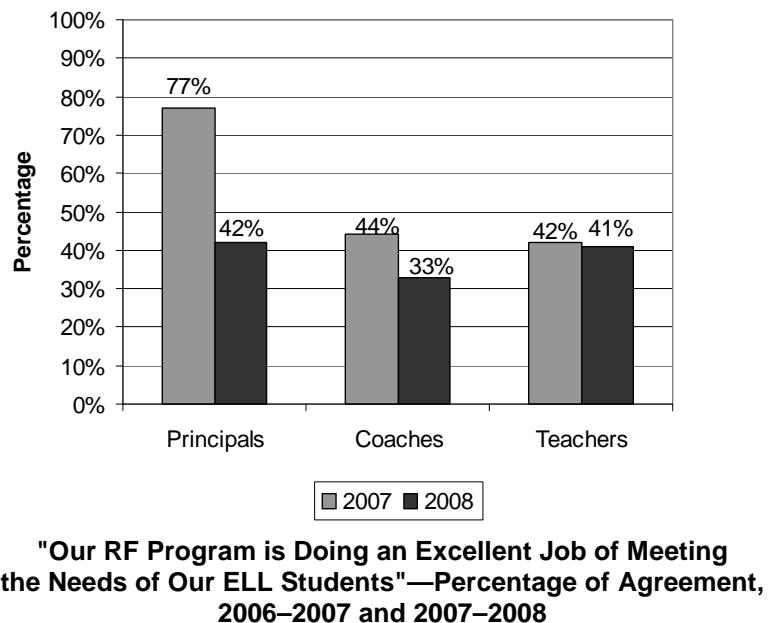
English Language Learners

Overall, about 11 percent of the Alaskan Reading First students are English language learners. The need for differentiated instruction may be most pressing in schools that serve large numbers of English language learners (ELLs).

The belief that Reading First was meeting the needs of ELL students was not overwhelmingly high. In fact, teachers, coaches, and principals had less confidence in meeting the needs of ELL this year than last year. Compared to last year, a much smaller percentage of principals thought Reading First was doing an excellent job in meeting the needs of ELL students. A smaller percentage of coaches held the same view, but about the same percentage of teachers as in the previous year agreed with the statement. See Figure 5-1 for these results.

In interviews with coaches, coaches revealed that the state has not really given much assistance to support their work with ELL students. One coach pointed out that at trainings and at the summit there were attempts to address these issues, but it was not enough. The coaches indicated that the state needed to support them with reinforcement and with people to talk about instructional techniques for ELL students. Another coach reported that what she was hearing was that "the routines for the neediest students are also to be applied to ELL students." There appeared to be

Figure 5-1



"Our RF Program is Doing an Excellent Job of Meeting the Needs of Our ELL Students"—Percentage of Agreement, 2006–2007 and 2007–2008

insufficient support from the state to support ELL students. Survey results also indicated that a minority of coaches and teachers thought that their schools used reading materials that were well-matched to ELL needs—33 percent and 41 percent, respectively. Also only one-third of the coaches and about one-half of the teachers (52%) felt they were equipped to meet the needs of ELL students. However, few coaches and teachers agreed that the philosophy or pedagogy of their ELL program or services clashed with Reading First.

In other words, state support to teachers and coaches seemed insufficient to help them address instructional issues with ELL students. While teachers were under-prepared to meet ELL student needs, the reading materials they had to use were also not particularly well-matched to ELL needs. However, the ELL programs and Reading First did not seem to be a mismatch in philosophy or pedagogy.

Inside the Reading First Classroom

Classroom observations help to provide a picture of the delivery of reading instruction in Alaskan Reading First classrooms. In the February and March of 2008, evaluators observed 16 classrooms across six randomly selected schools, fairly evenly divided across the four grades (K-3), with first grade and multi-grade classrooms being slightly overrepresented. One classroom was a combined second and third grade classroom. In addition, the instructional level was below grade level in one-quarter of the observed classrooms, while it was mixed in 50 percent of them. Part of the mixed instructional level can be accounted for by the multi-grade classrooms in the Lake and Peninsula School District. Class size averaged about 14 students, with 50 percent of the classes having 11 or fewer students. Seven of the classrooms (43%) had a total of 13 other adults besides the teachers. These adults were generally teaching students in small groups, working one-on-one with students, or providing ELL

assistance. All observations took place during the reading block and 62 percent of the classes were walk-to-read classes

During their site visits, evaluators had limited time in classrooms—between 20 and 25 minutes in each of three randomly selected classrooms at each school. However, a word of caution is in order. The classrooms observed represented a small percentage of all K-3 classrooms in Reading First schools and observations were quick, one-time snapshots of what was occurring in them. These classrooms were generally not the same classrooms observed in the 2006–2007 school year. Given this caveat, there were still some notable trends observed. Evaluators spent their time taking detailed notes on instruction and student activities, and later rated each lesson using a rubric that focused on the following major areas:

- **The lesson is clearly presented.** Lesson clarity includes the characteristics of clear and easy to follow, accurate, apparent student understanding, and smooth flow.
- **The teacher models the work or thinking process.** Explicit modeling includes frequency, accuracy/clarity, and missed opportunities for modeling.
- **The teacher guides students' thinking with effective questioning.** Attributes of effective questioning include frequency, clarity, and missed opportunities.
- **All students are engaged in the lesson.** Student engagement consists of who participates, how much of the time, and off-task behavior.

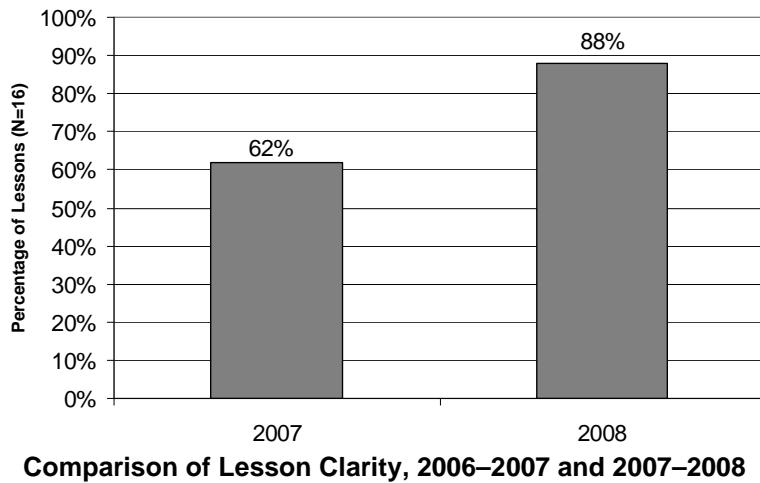
- **Students have opportunities to practice the content of the lesson.** Effective use of time includes amount, quality, type of practice (i.e., partner, individual, or group), and missed opportunities.
- **The teacher monitors student understanding and adjusts the lesson.** Student monitoring consists of frequency of monitoring, adjustment of the lesson, who is monitored, and attention to errors.
- **The teacher provides clear, direct, and frequent feedback.** Feedback encompasses frequency, tone, clarity, to whom, and missed opportunities.

A copy of the Classroom Observation Protocol and Classroom Observation Rubric can be found in Appendix B. Ratings in these areas were compared to ratings of observations conducted last year, and substantial positive changes were found in several areas—lesson clarity, modeling, student engagement, opportunities to practice, and feedback. Compared to 2007, there was only one area—effective questioning—that declined moderately, and one area—monitoring of student understanding—that remained the same. Each of these findings is discussed in greater detail, below:

Lesson Clarity

Compared to last year, lesson clarity has improved. The percentage of observed lessons that were definitely clear throughout the lesson improved from 62 percent in 2006–2007 to 88 percent in 2007–2008 (Figure 5-2).

Figure 5-2

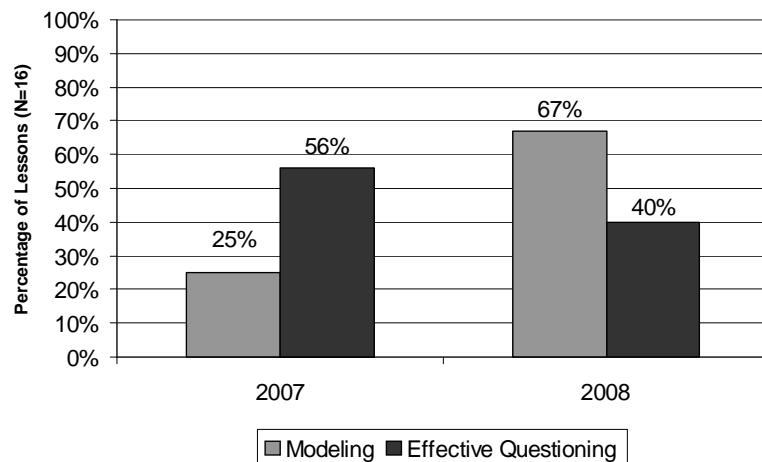


Modeling and Effective Questioning

Teachers can scaffold student learning by first modeling a task for them, then doing it with them, and then gradually withdrawing so that students learn how to do it themselves. Evaluators did not expect to witness explicit modeling in every classroom, since students often practice

already familiar routines and do not require modeling of every activity every day. In 2007, evaluators noted explicit modeling in only a quarter of the observed lessons while it was observed in two-thirds of the classrooms in 2008—a substantial positive change.

Figure 5-3



Teachers could also turn to the use of guiding questions instead of, or in addition to, modeling, in order to scaffold students' learning. This practice was observed in 56 percent of the classrooms visited in 2007, compared to only 40 percent in 2008. This might be an area to focus professional development. (Figure 5-3)

Student Engagement and Effective Use of Time

Overall, in 2007–2008, observers saw a substantial improvement in student engagement and in providing students with opportunities to practice. (Figure 5-4). During the observations, evaluators also noticed very few outstanding problems with classroom management which can interfere with student engagement and other aspects of an effective classroom. It should be noted that there are a number of ways to enhance student engagement, and many of these were covered in teacher professional development at the 2007 Reading First Summit, but not at this year's summit.

Monitoring of Student Understanding and Provision of Direct Feedback

In order to use classroom instruction time wisely, teachers need to monitor how well students understand the material they are working with and make almost instantaneous judgments about whether students need more practice or are ready to move to something else. They also need to address misunderstandings right away and replace them with correct information. In 2007–2008, evaluators were just as likely to observe teachers monitoring student

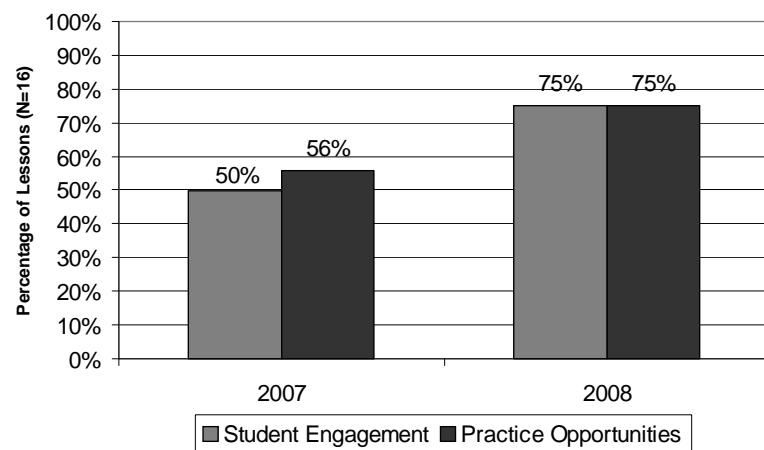
understanding during a lesson and adjusting instruction as in 2006–2007.

Closely linked to monitoring is the provision of clear, direct, and frequent feedback, so students know when they made an error and get that error corrected. Observers watched the interaction between teachers and students to see if teachers provided direct and frequent feedback to students. When students made errors in their reading, did teachers catch those errors and give students feedback telling them they were incorrect? This is an area which saw a meaningful positive change between 2006–2007 and 2007–2008 (See Figure 5-5).

Identification of Problem Areas

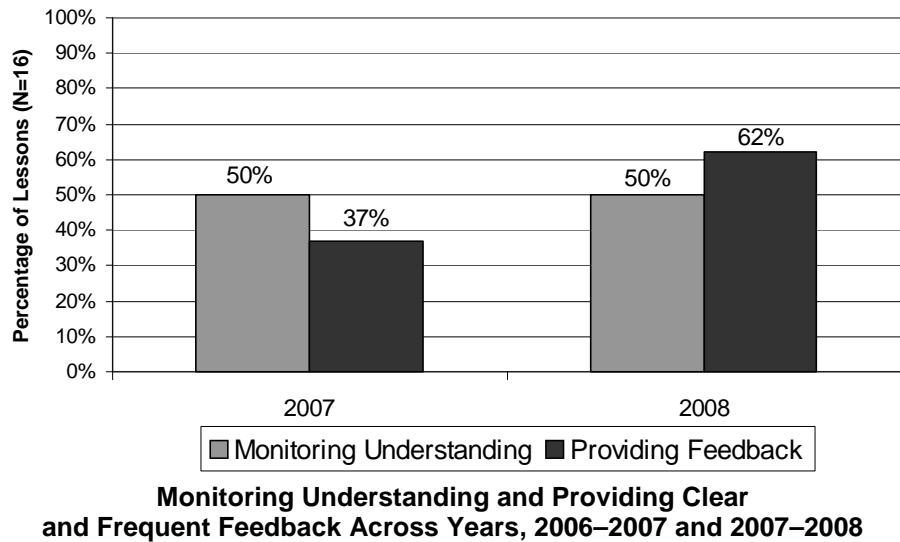
Only in very few instances were problem areas identified. Out of 16 observed lessons, teachers spent too much time talking in three classrooms (19 percent of the lessons.) In two classrooms, or 12 percent of the lessons, time was lost to lengthy transitions or directions; more than four minutes was spent in transitions. Other problem areas, which occurred only during one lesson each, included students being confused, the teacher not adjusting the lesson, and round-robin reading.

Figure 5-4



Comparison of Student Engagement and Practice Opportunities Across Years, 2006–2007 and 2007–2008

Figure 5-5

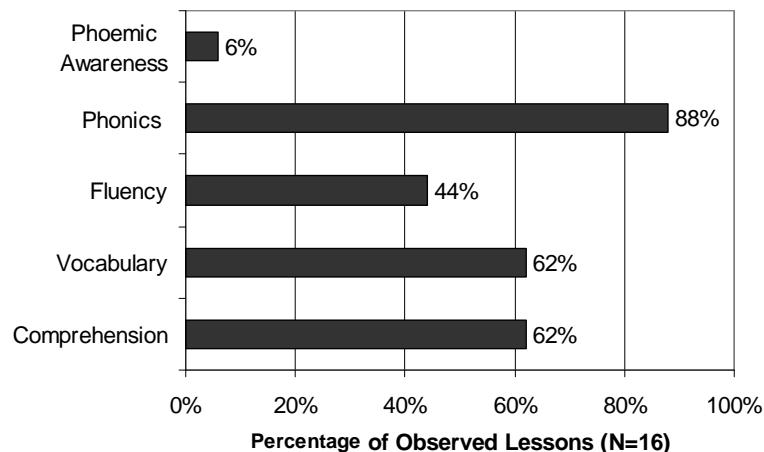


Instruction in the Five Components

In its report, the National Reading Panel (2000) identified five essential components of reading instruction: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. These five components have become the centerpiece of Reading First, providing focus to teacher professional development and a way for schools to think about the different types of knowledge and skills that students need in order to read successfully. The following section briefly reviews findings from observations of instruction in the five components in the 16 randomly selected Reading First classrooms.

Although evaluators saw instruction in all five components, some components received more attention than other ones. (See Figure 5-6). Please note that the percentage of lessons including the five components totals over 100 percent because evaluators could record more than one component during each time period. It is important to recognize that evaluators were in classrooms for slightly more than 20 minutes and did not observe the entire reading block; therefore, these percentages do not necessarily represent the total amount of time devoted to each of the five components over the entire reading block.

Figure 5-6



The Five Components in Observed Lessons

Phonemic Awareness. Phonemic awareness is the ability to hear and manipulate individual sounds, or phonemes, within words, as well as the recognition that altering phonemes changes the word. Students build their phonemic awareness through activities such as blending phonemes into words, segmenting words into their component phonemes, identifying beginning or ending phonemes, or adding initial sounds (onsets) to existing words (such as /f/ to 'air' to get 'fair'). Most students need comparatively little direct instruction in phonemic awareness before there begins to be some overlap into phonics instruction—that is, the connection between the sound and the written letters that represent those sounds.

According to the National Reading Panel, most students require no more than 20 hours of phonemic awareness instruction, usually in kindergarten or the beginning of first grade. Only 6 percent of the observed lessons (one lesson) included phonemic awareness, and that was in a multi-grade classroom for younger children. This was an improvement over last year when phonemic awareness was a regular part of instruction in the upper grade levels as well as kindergarten.

Phonics. Phonics instruction aims to teach students about the relationship between the phonemes (sounds) they hear in words and the graphemes (letters) they see written on the page. Students then use their knowledge of those relationships in order to decode text and to write their own text. Early phonics lessons beginning in kindergarten typically involve students learning about letter-sound correspondences. They quickly progress to reading simple, decodable text.

As they advance, students learn that there are multiple ways to represent some sounds (for example, the /s/ sound can be written with an 's' or with a 'c') and that sometimes

single sounds are represented by multiple letters in combination (such as 'ch' or 'sh'). Students learn about words that do not follow phonetic rules (such as 'said'), often learning them as 'funny words' or 'tricky words.' Often spelling, dictation, and phonics lessons are interwoven.

Evaluators who visited schools this year observed a great deal of phonics instruction; in fact, 88 percent of observed classrooms had at least some phonics instruction occurring during the observation. Phonics was being taught in almost 100 percent of the lessons across all grade levels.

Perhaps this was the impact of templates. The Western Regional Reading First Technical Assistance Center (WRRFTAC) designed and introduced templates. These provided a highly, explicit structured format for modeling and then leading students through the practice of phonics skills. These templates were developed out of concern that some of the core programs used did not provide an efficient structure for phonics instruction. As mentioned earlier, almost one-half of the surveyed teachers indicated they used templates on a daily basis, while another 24 percent did so a few times a week. Few teachers (14%) never used templates in their classes

Fluency. Reading fluency refers to the ability to process text smoothly, without having to painstakingly decode each word encountered. Thus fluency includes considerations of speed, accuracy, and phrasing (prosody). Fluency in reading is important because only as students come to read more fluently can they focus their attention on making meaning out of larger blocks of text.

Teachers can support the development of fluency in their students by modeling fluent reading and by being explicit about what it entails, including calling attention to punctuation and the clues it provides to

meaning. They can also provide students with ample opportunities to practice reading aloud in order to build fluency.

Across grade levels, 44 percent of the lessons included fluency instruction. Most of the instruction occurred in the first and second grades as well as in the multi-grade classroom.

Vocabulary. The National Reading Panel (2000) noted that a knowledge of vocabulary and sufficient background information to comprehend are essential to successful reading. While the direct instruction of particular vocabulary words is one way to help students increase their vocabularies, by itself this approach is not sufficient to support the learning of the many words students need to acquire. In addition, they need to learn to identify and interpret word parts to develop an ability to ascertain meaning from context and to create a heightened awareness of the words used in speech and writing all around them.

Evaluators observed vocabulary instruction in 62 percent of the lessons. It was most often observed in kindergarten, first grade, and second grade, but was included in one-half of the lessons in third grade and multi-grade classrooms.

Comprehension. The ultimate goal of all reading instruction is to enable students to better comprehend the meanings, explicit and implicit, embedded in a wide variety of texts. This means that students need to learn, among other things, to pay attention to and think about what they read, extract the main idea, identify important supporting details, and relate the text to their own personal experience, in life and from other books.

Comprehension instruction was observed in 62 percent of all lessons and in all grade levels. It was primarily observed in the second grade, third grade, and multi-grade lessons. Interestingly, it was also observed

in two out three of the kindergarten lessons. A total of 10 out of 16 lessons (62%) included comprehension. Of the comprehension lessons, the most popular strategies used to teach comprehension included recall questions (90% of the lessons), questions to generate higher-order thinking skills (60%), and making connections between self-to-text or text-to-self (60%). Other strategies included identifying the main ideas or details (30%), accessing background knowledge (30%), look-back citation (20%), and response journals (20%). In the vast majority of lessons, teachers relied on multiple comprehension strategies in their instruction during the observation period. Almost all teachers used multiple strategies. In fact, one-half of the teachers incorporated four or five comprehension strategies in their comprehension lessons. Only two teachers, 20 percent of the teachers who taught comprehension, used only one comprehension strategy.

Provision of Interventions

Interventions are a critical part of Reading First, providing additional, targeted, small-group instruction for those students who need more than the core reading program in order to read at grade level. Alaska Reading First uses the terms “supplemental programs” and “intensive interventions” to define additional services needed for “strategic” and “intensive” students. Supplemental programs and intensive interventions are the add-ons that ensure that teachers have a full range of instructional options available as they implement the core program. The base of the core program is the 90-minute reading block. Supplemental programs and intensive interventions are provided to students based on their needs and assessment results. In supplemental programs, teachers might pre-teach or re-teach the core curriculum and/or use supplemental materials that extend the

critical elements of the core program. Intensive interventions are at least two hours a week for six weeks. Individual goals are usually set, and student progress is continuously monitored.

All schools had intervention programs at virtually every grade level. Only one school did not offer it in kindergarten. About three-quarters of the schools began their interventions at each grade level in September. By January almost all intervention programs had been implemented.

In teacher interviews during site visits, all agreed that their intervention programs were working well, but that a few obstacles remained. One teacher commented that at first their intervention program was:

Too broad, not addressing specific needs; but when we started using data to target intervention, it is much better. Now we're identifying exactly what a student isn't getting. Well, I just started making notes with the DIBELS. Before we used DIBELS in a limited way. Now I analyze the words students missed. [She and another teacher came to the same conclusion.] It was better

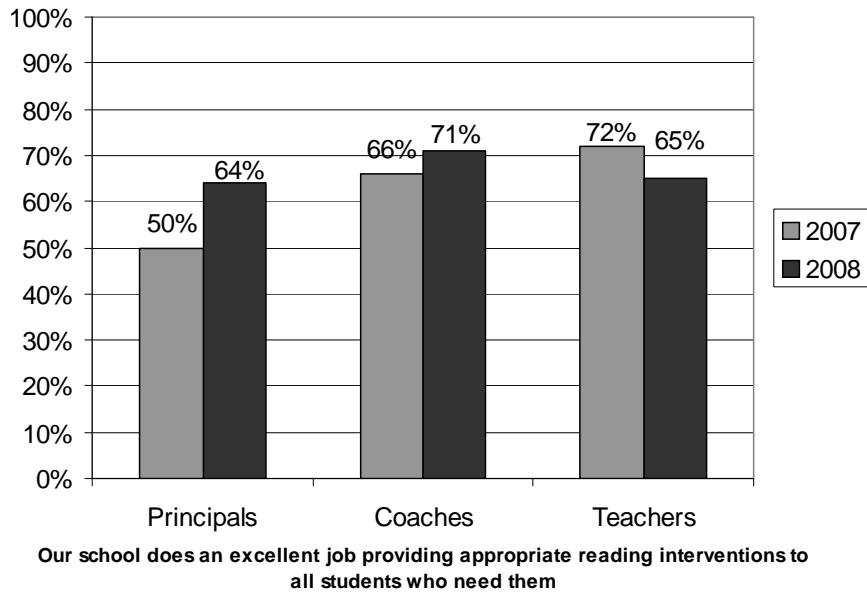
to tailor the interventions more to students' needs. (Teacher)

Other obstacles to schools' intervention programs included: 1) the teacher needing to spend too much time working with the paraprofessional because they lacked training, 2) the impact on other subjects, especially mathematics, and 3) the difficulty in finding a good time to pull students out because they were at so many grade levels. Overall, interventions were working, but, according to interviewed teachers, there remained a few challenges.

Survey results indicated that at the school level, in spring 2008, the perceptions of teachers, coaches, and principals about their school's intervention system were moderately positive. More than two-thirds of them agreed that their schools were doing an excellent job providing appropriate interventions. Compared to last year, the opinion of both principals and coaches improved about their intervention programs, but teachers were less enthusiastic this year. (See Figure 5-7)

Over one-half of the principals (57%) agreed that their staffing resources were sufficient

Figure 5-7



Perception of Interventions, 2006–2007 and 2007–2008

enough to provide interventions to all students who needed them—this was an increase of seven percentage points from last year. However, almost one-third of the principals (28%) disagreed that they had sufficient staffing resources, indicating a dissatisfaction with available resources.

According to interviewed coaches, the biggest achievement in their intervention programs this year included:

- Doing a better job at identifying students who needed interventions
- Having a really defined program and clear path to follow
- Increasing the time for the neediest students
- Providing professional development to tutors by the teachers
- Implementing an early reading interventions program—a Success for All component for tutoring one-on-one

Who Receives Interventions?

In 2007–2008, a total of 551 students from the 14 Reading First schools received intensive interventions outside of the reading block, for at least two hours per week, for at least six weeks. Another 329 students from 13 schools received less intensive interventions. Only four schools (29%) and five schools (36%) were able to provide supplemental and intensive interventions, respectively, to all strategic and intensive students in their schools. (See

Table 5-2.) This represents a substantial decrease from last year when 69 percent and 79 percent of the schools provided supplemental and intensive interventions to all their strategic and intensive students.

When fewer than 100 percent of eligible students received interventions, coaches most often cited the following obstacles: insufficient funding (71%), lack of trained staff (36%) and available space in building (14%).

Knowing that there were often limited resources to provide interventions, evaluators asked how schools made decisions about who to serve first. Coaches expressed a variety of foci, ranging from students with the highest needs, intensive kindergarten and first grade students, to both intensive and strategic students and all students, including benchmark students. As one coach pointed out:

[We] focus on intensive students and low strategic. We really focus on our intensive, because they have the highest need. We also try to look at high vs. low strategic and give more assistance to low strategic. But [we] still monitor benchmark. We're trying to get them to benchmark and beyond. I've been using that phrase with my teachers. I'm really trying to drive home that benchmark is the minimum. (Coach)

Table 5-2
Percentage of Schools with Eligible Students Receiving Interventions

	Percentage of Schools (n)	
	Not All Students Receive Interventions	All Students Receive Interventions
Students in “strategic” group	71% (10)	29% (4)
Students in “intensive” group	64% (9)	36% (5)

Schools are still faced with challenges in providing interventions to all students who need them. Some schools are working on getting the students the correct intervention, providing the time for them outside of the reading block, training staff, assessing the true needs of any one child, and making sure they meet the needs of all students. One coach remarked:

Making sure that we meet the needs of all the students. We have kids who have been in intensive all year and the next step is special ed, but we try not to go there. That is the hardest part; why can't we get these seven kids up? (Coach)

Interventions Materials

Satisfaction with intervention materials was high among the coaches, but moderate with teachers—86 percent of coaches and 67 percent of teachers agreed that the intervention materials were well-matched to the needs of their struggling readers. Compared to last year, coaches' opinion remained consistent. However, for teachers, this was a substantial increase of 21 percentage points over last year when only 46 percent of the teachers agreed about the materials. In addition, schools might

have used a replacement core with some students during the reading block. Almost 80 percent of the schools did use a replacement core program.

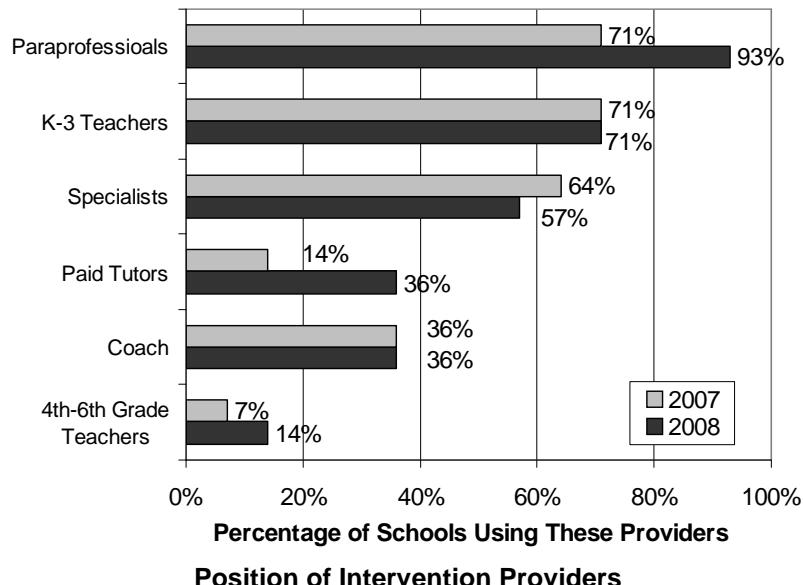
Group Size

Research suggests that interventions are most effective when delivered to small groups, and that interventions for the most intensive students should be even smaller. The evaluation found that a majority of Alaska Reading First schools (58%) delivered interventions to groups of six or fewer students. Six schools (43%) delivered their interventions to groups of more than six students. Some intensive intervention groups were reportedly as large as 11 students. Some intensive students worked in replacement core programs. The largest number of students in these groups ranged from two to 12 students, with an average of five students.

Intervention Providers and Their Training

At Alaska Reading First schools, interventions were provided by a wide range of individuals at the schools. As Figure 5-8 illustrates, interventions were provided most often by paraprofessionals

Figure 5-8



(93% of schools), K-3 teachers (71%) and specialists (57%).

Compared to 2007, there was a significant increase in the percentage of schools using paraprofessionals as intervention providers, and a moderate increase in the percentage of schools using paid tutors.

In 2007, almost three-quarters of the coaches (71%) and teachers (72%) felt that their school's intervention providers were well-trained to meet the needs of struggling readers. This year opinions were less favorable. Only 58 percent of the coaches and 65 percent of the teachers thought providers were trained adequately enough.

As mentioned previously, almost 80 percent of the schools used a replacement core for some students during the reading block. Coaches reported that from 10 percent to 100 percent of the teachers and paraprofessionals who used the replacement core had training in the replacement core program. In fact, 100 percent of the staff members in 64 percent of the schools had this training. Please note, this refers to replacement core training. Replacement core programs are used during the reading block and often were continued during the intervention time. However, not all intervention programs were replacement core programs.

CHAPTER SIX: ASSESSMENT RESULTS

HIGHLIGHTS

- The benchmark groups in kindergarten and second-grade significantly improved from fall 2007 to spring 2008 (i.e., 31% to 75% and 51% to 60% respectively). The other grade levels did not improve.
- Since baseline in spring 2004, all grades dramatically improved by spring 2008. The third-grade benchmark group steadily improved from 39 percent to 52 percent in spring 2008, but the percentage of third-grade benchmark students in spring 2008 was smaller than the percentages of benchmark students in other grade levels. The other grade levels reached a plateau after the first or second year of implementation and did not improve, except by a few percentage points, for the last three or four years.
- The kindergarten and third-grade intensive groups significantly dropped from fall 2007 to spring 2008 (i.e., 25% to 11% and 24% to 17%, respectively). There were no changes at all in either the first grade or the second grade.
- Since baseline in spring 2004, the intensive groups at all grades substantially declined by spring 2008. In fact, the general trend for all grade levels was a steady decline.
- Across the state, the percentage of benchmark students in kindergarten improved by 44 percent from fall 2007 to spring 2008—more than any other grade level. The other grade levels minimally improved, except for second grade which had a 9 percent gain in benchmark students. Also, the kindergarten benchmark group improved for all key demographics and all schools by spring 2008.
- Across all grade levels, the percentages for Alaska Native/American Indian students, Asian students, students eligible for free and reduced-price lunch, and special education students at benchmark were all lower than the state benchmark percentage for spring 2008. In the other grade levels, different ethnic/racial groups also missed the state percentage.
- Similarly, in first through third grades, the percentages for Alaska Native/American Indian, Asian, and black/African American students; and students on free and reduced-price lunch; students eligible for special education were higher than the state intensive percentage for spring 2008. For other ethnic/racial subpopulations there were variations across grade levels. Kindergarten presented a slightly different picture, though there were still subpopulations with percentages higher than the state percentage.
- The schools with the highest percentage of benchmark students included Airport Heights and Spring Hill (93%) in kindergarten and Anderson in first, second, and third grades (91%, 86% and 90%, respectively). Schools with the lowest percentages included William Tyson (50%) in

kindergarten, Mountain View (43%) in first grade, Lake and Peninsula (44%) in second grade, and William Tyson (28%) in third grade.

- Compared to kindergarten, two years ago, the percentage of benchmark students declined significantly (75% to 67%) by spring 2008 for current second-grade students. Compared to kindergarten, three years ago, the percentage of third-grade benchmark students significantly dropped over time (72% to 61%) and the percentage of strategic students significantly increased from 16 percent to 30 percent.
 - During this school year, intensive, kindergarten students in the fall 2007 were more likely to move to strategic (22%) or benchmark (54%) than intensive students in any other grade level.

Intensive students in second grade were the least likely to change their ISR category. Again, kindergarten strategic students were the most likely to move up to benchmark (76%), while third-grade students were the least likely (26%). Across grade levels, the vast majority of benchmark students remained in the benchmark group. The second grade had the highest retention rate at a percentage of 93 percent.

- Compared to kindergarten, almost 80 percent of benchmark students currently in second and third grades remained in benchmark, while 61 percent of intensive second-grade students were retained. About 40 percent of strategic students in both second and third grades moved to benchmark by spring 2008.

CHAPTER SIX: ASSESSMENT RESULTS

Alaska Reading First assessed its students in the fall 2007, winter 2008, and spring 2008 using the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) in each of the Alaska Reading First schools. Coaches and teachers used DIBELS scores to track student progress toward the ultimate goal of having all students reading at grade level by the end of third grade. At each grade level, DIBELS results also guided decisions about grouping, instructing, and intervening with individual students.

This chapter summarizes assessment data from the 2007–2008 school year. This was the fourth year of school-level implementation in Alaska. In the spring 2004, students in Reading First schools took the DIBELS for the first time. These results were used as baseline information. This chapter also includes comparisons of spring 2008 data to spring 2007, spring 2006, and spring 2005 data.

The chapter's focus is on the ISR for students at each grade level. ISR scores used in this analysis were those calculated by the University of Oregon DIBELS database. Analyses were conducted only with students who had data from the fall, winter, and spring testing periods. It should be noted that this matching produced a slightly smaller number than those reported in the spring interim report. Across grade levels there were only 15 fewer students in this report than in the interim report.

The results of the spring 2008 DIBELS assessment are presented as follows:

- **Overall Project-Level Results.** Overall project-level results provides a graphic overview of grade-level benchmark and

intensive results changes from fall 2007 to spring 2008, and across time since spring 2004.

- **Overall Progress in Attaining Benchmark.** This section includes the percentage of benchmark students in the fall, winter, and spring by grade level and key demographic characteristics and school.
- **Spring 2008 Instructional Support Recommendations.** This section reports the spring 2008 percentage of students in each of the three ISR categories by grade level and key demographic characteristics and school. In addition, trends are reported on the ISR status of matched students in second grade and third grade since they were in kindergarten—two years ago for second-grade students and three years ago for third-grade students. Also, the movement of students within each ISR group from kindergarten to spring 2008 is summarized.
- **Movement of Students Between Instructional Support Recommendations.** This section provides statewide information on the movement of students who were in the “intensive,” “strategic,” and “benchmark” groups in fall 2007, over the course of the school year.

Key demographic characteristics included ethnicity, eligibility for free and reduced-price lunch (FRL), eligibility for special education, and English Language Learners (ELL). Because there was a minimum difference in results between the “narrow” and “broad” definition of ELL students, the “broad” definition was used for ELL students in the analyses. Please refer to Chapter 2 for these definitions.

Overall Project-Level Results

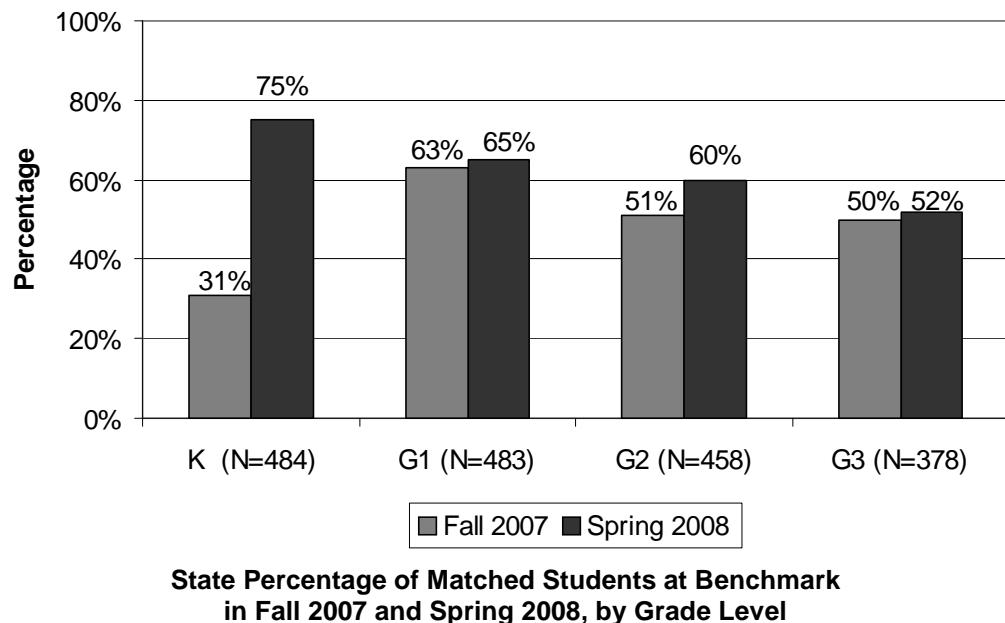
This section presents a graphic overview of grade-level benchmark results from the spring 2008, changes from fall 2007 to spring 2008 and longitudinal changes. Grade-level intensive results are summarized in a similar manner.

Changes in Percentage of Students at Benchmark in 2007–2008

Every grade level demonstrated an increase in the percentage of matched students from fall 2007 to spring 2008. The greatest percentage point change was in kindergarten, which increased 44 percent, from 31 percent to 75 percent.

This result was quite similar to last year and was not surprising for kindergarten. The large amount is typical for kindergarten and is attributed to the test properties. Similar to last year, Grade 2 had the second highest gains, with an increase of nine percent (i.e., 51% to 60%). In addition, the results for kindergarten and second grade were statistically significant (McNemar's test, $p<0.01$). Although not statistically significant, the percentage of first- and third-grade students at the benchmark level increased slightly from fall to spring. Results are shown in Figure 6-1.

Figure 6-1



Longitudinal Trends in Benchmark since Spring 2004

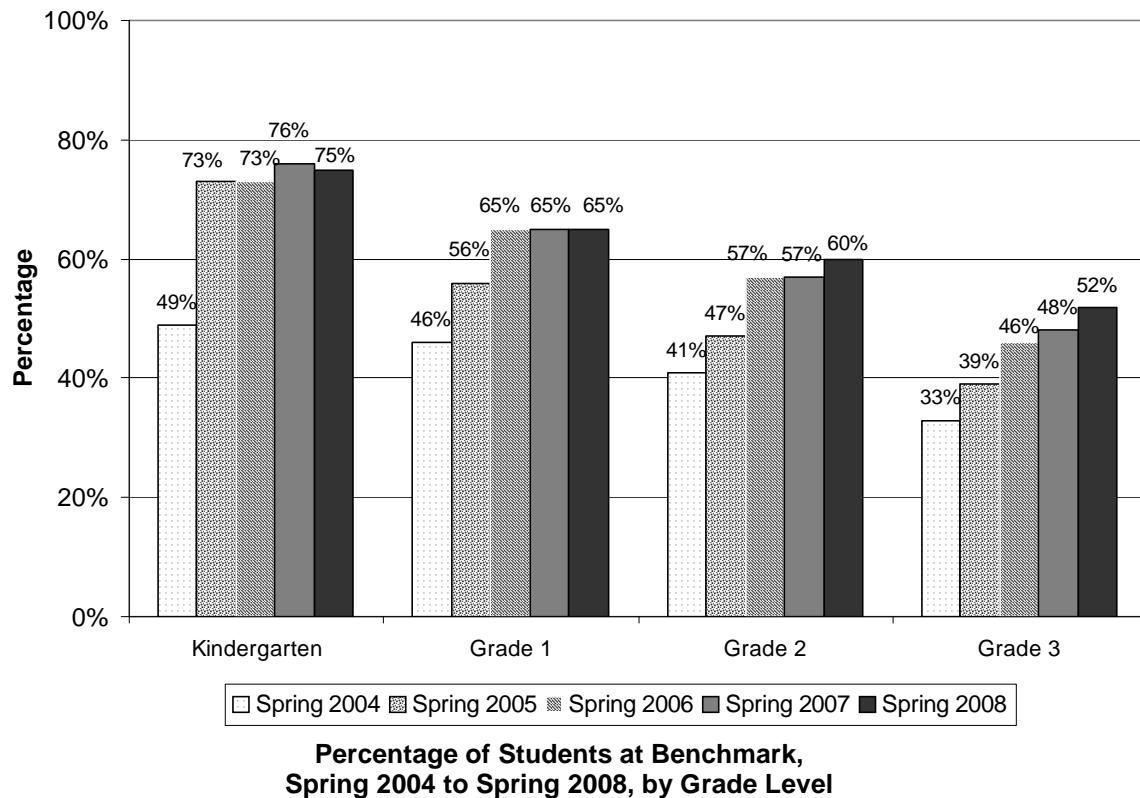
Only students with both fall and spring scores in each school year were included when looking at statewide longitudinal trends in the percentage of benchmark students each spring. The percentage of students at benchmark increased steadily from spring 2004 to spring 2006 in all grade levels. In the spring 2004, none of the Reading First schools had yet implemented Reading First. The gains from spring 2005 to spring 2006 for first through third grades were significant (Pearson Chi-square, $p < 0.01$).

From spring 2006 to spring 2008, the percentage of benchmark students in third grade has been steadily increasing (from 46% to 48% to 52%). At first grade, the percentage of benchmark students remained relatively flat; at kindergarten, there was a

slight increase, then a decrease, in the percentage of benchmark students. The percentage of second-grade students remained stable for two years, then slightly increased in spring 2008. None of the changes from spring 2006 to spring 2008 were statistically significant.

From baseline in 2004 there has been substantial change in all grade levels. Except for kindergarten, which had the largest percentage point change of 26 percentage points, all of the other grade levels improved by the same number of percentage points (i.e., 19), regardless of where they started. From the spring 2005 to spring 2008, significant changes occurred in first, second, and third grades (Pearson Chi-square, $p < 0.01$). Figure 6-2 displays these results.

Figure 6-2



Changes in Percentage of Intensive Students in 2006–2007

A decrease in the percentage of intensive students is another measure of progress in Reading First. The percentage of students in the intensive group from fall 2007 to spring 2008 decreased for kindergarten by 14 percent and for third grade by seven percent. These reflect the same findings from last year. The changes in kindergarten and third grade were statistically significant (McNemar's test, $p<0.01$). In both first grade and second grade, there were no changes at all in the percentage of intensive students. Figure 6-3 shows these findings.

Longitudinal Trends in Intensive Since Spring 2004

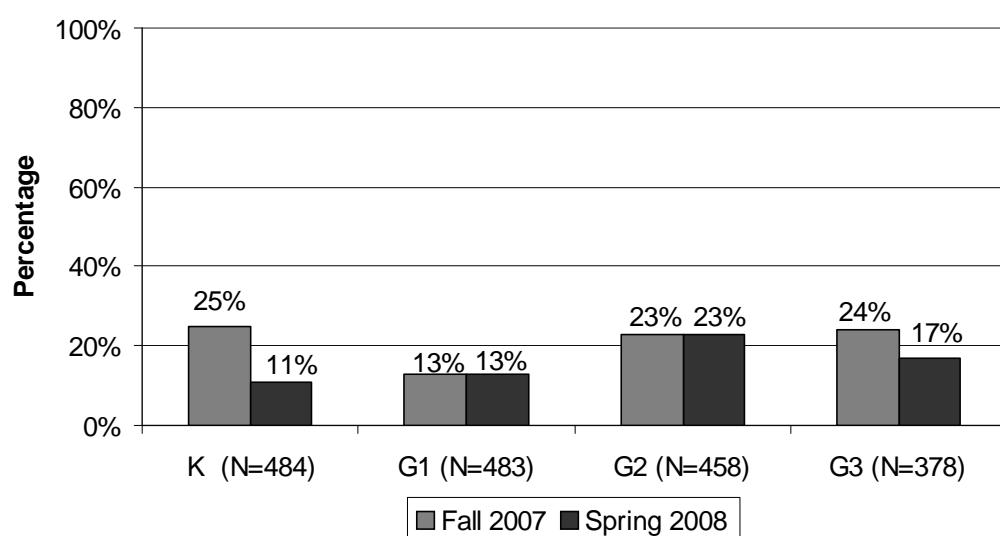
When looking at statewide longitudinal trends in the percentage of intensive students each spring, only students with both fall and spring scores in each school year were included. Overall the general trend among students in all grade levels was a gradual decrease in the percentage of intensive students from spring 2004 to spring 2008. From baseline in spring 2004,

there were substantial percentage point declines across all grade levels. The largest drop was in the second grade, with a 16 percentage point decline.

From spring 2005 to spring 2006, the most significant decreases were made by third-grade students with a 10 percentage point drop (28% to 18%), second grade with an eight percentage point drop (32% to 24%), and first grade with a four percentage point drop (19% to 15%). These declines were statistically significant (Pearson chi-square, $p<0.01$). There was no statistically significant change for kindergarten.

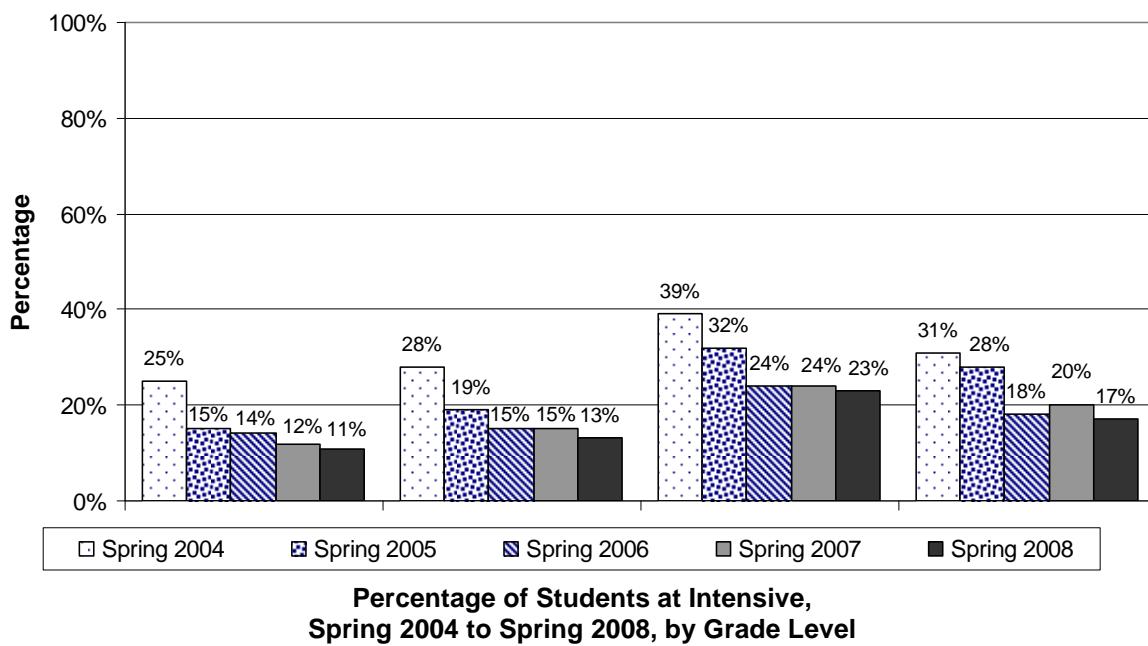
From spring 2006 to spring 2008, the percentage of children at intensive remained relatively constant, within a few percentage points. The percentage of intensive kindergarten students dropped by three percentage points, while the percentage of intensive students in third grade increased, then dropped three percentage points, during this time period. None of these changes were statistically significant. These findings are displayed in Figure 6-4.

Figure 6-3



State Percentage of Matched Students at Intensive in Fall 2007 and Spring 2008, by Grade Level

Figure 6-4



Overall Progress in Attaining Benchmark in 2006–2007

The following tables (Table 6-1 through Table 6-8) show the progress of students during this school year—from fall 2006, to winter 2007 to spring 2007—in meeting benchmark. The tables summarize the percentage of students at benchmark in each grade, broken down by key demographic characteristics and by school. Percentages for the Hawaiian/Pacific Islanders group should be interpreted with caution, given the small number of these students. Sometimes there were so few students in this category that interpretation is unadvisable.

Kindergarten

Across all Alaska Reading First schools, the percentage of kindergarten students at benchmark substantially increased from fall 2006 to spring 2007. The data showed large gains for all ethnic groups, students eligible and not eligible for free/reduced-price lunches, special education and non-special education students, ELL students, and in all schools. (Table 6-1)

Table 6-1
Percentage of Kindergarten Students at Benchmark in 2007–2008

Kindergarten	N*	Percentage			Percent Change Fall 2007 to Spring 2008
		Fall 2007	Winter 2008	Spring 2008	
All AK Reading First Kindergarten	484	31%	66%	75%	+44
Race/Ethnicity					
Alaska Native/American Indian	56	30%	62%	66%	+36
Asian	36	11%	53%	61%	+50
Black/African American	37	22%	68%	76%	+54
Hispanic/Latino	55	24%	62%	78%	+54
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	18	0%	28%	56%	+56
White	142	44%	72%	75%	+31
Other	40	32%	68%	75%	+43
Free and Reduced-price Lunch					
Eligible for Free/Reduced-Price Lunch	234	25%	57%	68%	+43
Not Eligible for Free/Reduced-Price Lunch	144	41%	76%	78%	+37
Special Education					
Eligible for Special Education	39	28%	54%	54%	+26
Not Eligible for Special Education	289	34%	70%	76%	+42
English Language Learners					
ELL Broad	49	6%	57%	71%	+65
Not ELL Broad	435	34%	67%	75%	+41
School, by District					
Anchorage	Airport Heights	41	32%	90%	93%
	Creekside Park	52	29%	83%	86%
	Mountain View	53	15%	40%	58%
	Spring Hill	41	37%	90%	93%
	Ursa Minor	41	32%	58%	76%
	William Tyson	58	19%	34%	50%
Fairbanks	Anderson	82	35%	70%	83%
	Nordale	40	50%	78%	75%
	Ticasuk Brown	65	38%	63%	65%
Lake and Peninsula	Lake and Peninsula	11	18%	73%	82%

* Students matched fall, winter and spring

First Grade

The percentage of first-grade Alaska Reading First students who reached benchmark increased by 2 percent statewide from fall 2007 to spring 2008. This was the same amount of growth found for last year. Two ethnic/racial groups and two special category groups showed negative growth, most notably Alaska Native/American Indian (-4%) and "Other" (-13%), and students on free and reduced-price lunch (-2%) and the ELL group (-2%). Except for four schools, all schools showed a decline in the percentage of students at benchmark from fall to spring. The most growth was shown by Anderson, with an increase of 23 percent. (Table 6-2)

Second Grade

The overall percentage of second-grade Alaska Reading First students who reached benchmark increased by 9 percent from fall 2007 to spring 2008, much greater than the 2 percent improvement found in first grade. Improvement varied across race/ethnicities. No improvement was found for Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander students, and there was a negative growth for Asian students (-2%). All other ethnic/racial groups improved, especially the black/African American (+20%) and Hispanic/Latino (+16%) groups. Improvement was also seen in all of the special categories except for ELL students, who made no improvement. All but two schools saw increases from the beginning to the end of the 2007–2008 school year. Increases ranged from 2 percent to 21 percent. Ursa Minor showed the most improvement, a 21 percent increase. (Table 6-3)

Third Grade

Like the first-grade group, the percentage of third-grade students increased by 2 percent. However, only about one-half of the students (52%) were at benchmark by the spring 2008. In the other grade levels, the majority of students had reached benchmark by spring 2008—kindergarten (75%), first grade (65%) second grade (60%). All ethnic/racial groups showed growth except for two groups which did not improve at all—Asian and "Other." All of the special categories improved by a few percentage points or not at all except for the ELL group which improved by 18 percent. Except for three schools, schools showed improvement; one school showed no change. At this grade level, Creekside Park showed the most growth—a 13 percent increase. (Table 6-4)

Table 6-2
Percentage of First-Grade Students at Benchmark in 2007–2008

First Grade	N*	Percentage			Percent Change Fall 2007 to Spring 2008
		Fall 2007	Winter 2008	Spring 2008	
All AK Reading First Grade 1	483	63%	60%	65%	+2
Race/Ethnicity					
Alaska Native/American Indian	66	52%	41%	48%	-4
Asian	47	62%	53%	51%	+11
Black/African American	33	67%	76%	70%	+30
Hispanic/Latino	42	60%	60%	62%	+2
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	28	61%	64%	68%	+7
White	197	66%	61%	70%	+4
Other	44	70%	68%	57%	-13
Free and Reduced-price Lunch					
Eligible for Free/Reduced-Price Lunch	286	59%	57%	57%	-2
Not Eligible for Free/Reduced-Price Lunch	171	69%	64%	72%	+3
Special Education					
Eligible for Special Education	63	41%	40%	46%	+5
Not Eligible for Special Education	377	67%	65%	70%	+3
English Language Learners					
ELL Broad	47	57%	51%	55%	-2
Not ELL Broad	436	63%	61%	66%	+3
School, by District					
Anchorage	Airport Heights	53	62%	58%	68%
	Creekside Park	58	78%	74%	64%
	Mountain View	44	54%	48%	43%
	Spring Hill	30	80%	77%	77%
	Tyson William	59	51%	46%	49%
	Ursa Minor	45	64%	71%	73%
Fairbanks	Anderson	79	68%	71%	91%
	Nordale	47	53%	53%	64%
	Ticasuk Brown	59	58%	46%	49%
Lake and Peninsula	Lake and Peninsula	9	56%	56%	44%

* Students matched fall, winter and spring

Table 6-3
Percentage of Second-Grade Students at Benchmark in 2007–2008

Second Grade	N*	Percentage			Percent Change Fall 2007 to Spring 2008
		Fall 2007	Winter 2008	Spring 2008	
All AK Reading First Grade 2	458	51%	65%	60%	+9
Race/Ethnicity					
Alaska Native/American Indian	77	38%	54%	46%	+8
Asian	51	53%	55%	49%	-2
Black/African American	37	49%	57%	57%	+20
Hispanic/Latino	35	34%	57%	51%	+16
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	18	50%	61%	50%	0
White	195	57%	73%	70%	+13
Other	28	61%	68%	68%	+7
Free or reduced-Price Lunch					
Eligible for Free/Reduced-Price Lunch	243	47%	59%	52%	+5
Not Eligible for Free/Reduced-Price Lunch	164	56%	74%	75%	+16
Special Education					
Eligible for Special Education	50	16%	22%	24%	+8
Not Eligible for Special Education	329	56%	73%	68%	+12
English Language Learners					
ELL Broad	62	39%	55%	39%	0
Not ELL Broad	396	53%	66%	64%	+11
School, by District					
Anchorage	Airport Heights	32	47%	53%	53%
	Creekside Park	51	65%	76%	67%
	Mountain View	50	50%	58%	52%
	Spring Hill	34	50%	50%	50%
	Tyson William	43	40%	49%	30%
	Ursa Minor	33	52%	73%	73%
	Anderson	76	74%	84%	86%
	Nordale	48	40%	56%	58%
	Ticasuk Brown	82	40%	65%	58%
Lake and Peninsula	Lake and Peninsula	9	33%	56%	44%

* Students matched fall, winter and spring

Table 6-4
Percentage of Third-Grade Students at Benchmark in 2007–2008

Third Grade	N*	Percentage			Percent Change Fall 2007 to Spring 2008
		Fall 2007	Winter 2008	Spring 2008	
All AK Reading First Grade 3	378	50%	52%	52%	+2
Race/Ethnicity					
Alaska Native/American Indian	51	33%	29%	31%	+2
Asian	41	37%	39%	37%	0
Black/African American	37	35%	35%	40%	+5
Hispanic/Latino	34	53%	53%	56%	+3
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	16	19%	38%	31%	+12
White	157	65%	69%	68%	+3
Other	39	41%	44%	41%	0
Free or Reduced-Price Lunch					
Eligible for Free/Reduced-Price Lunch	246	41%	43%	43%	+2
Not Eligible for Free/Reduced-Price Lunch	130	65%	69%	67%	+2
Special Education					
Eligible for Special Education	65	25%	28%	29%	+4
Not Eligible for Special Education	272	59%	61%	59%	0
English Language Learners					
ELL Broad	39	26%	33%	44%	+18
Not ELL Broad	339	52%	54%	52%	0
School, by District					
Anchorage	Airport Heights	29	45%	41%	48%
	Creekside Park	38	37%	50%	50%
	Mountain View	44	23%	27%	34%
	Spring Hill	35	63%	69%	51%
	Tyson William	54	39%	37%	28%
	Ursa Minor	37	76%	73%	68%
Fairbanks	Anderson	10	80%	90%	90%
	Nordale	55	58%	66%	62%
	Ticasuk Brown	67	54%	63%	64%
Lake and Peninsula	Lake and Peninsula	9	33%	33%	33%

* Students matched fall, winter and spring

Spring 2008 Instructional Support Recommendations

In this section, Tables 6-5 through 6-8 present the results from the spring 2008 DIBELS. For each grade, the table presents the percentage of students in each of the Instructional Support Recommendation categories: "intensive," "strategic," and "benchmark." Data are presented for all Alaska Reading First schools, as well as disaggregated by race/ethnicity, free and reduced-price lunch, special education, and ELL, and by district and school.

The percentage of benchmark students by spring 2008 declined across all grade levels starting at 75 percent in kindergarten and falling to 52 percent in third grade. Wide variations existed in the ethnic/racial group and the special categories. The schools with the highest percentage of benchmark students included Airport Heights and Spring Hill (93%) in kindergarten and Anderson in first, second, and third grades (91%, 86% and 90% respectively). Schools with the lowest percentages include William Tyson (50%) in kindergarten, Mountain View (43%) in first grade, Lake and Peninsula (44%) in second grade, and William Tyson (28%) in third grade.

Kindergarten

In spring 2008, three-quarters of the kindergarten students (75%) in Alaska Reading First schools scored at benchmark, while 15 percent were in the strategic group, and 11 percent were in the intensive group. Except for the black/African American group, the percentages of students at benchmark in all other racial/ethnic groups were the same or lower than the state benchmark percentage. Students eligible for free and reduced-price lunch, special education, and ELL students were also less likely to score at benchmark than their peers. All of the individual schools had over one-half of their students at benchmark by the end of the year. The percentage of benchmark students at individual schools ranged from 50 percent at Tyson William to 93 percent at Airport Heights and Spring Hill. Overall, the percentage of benchmark students was lower than the state percentage at three of the 10 schools. (Table 6-5)

Table 6-5
Kindergarten Spring 2008 Instructional Support Recommendations

Kindergarten	N*	Percentage		
		Intensive	Strategic	Benchmark
All AK Reading First Kindergarten	484	11%	15%	75%
Race/Ethnicity				
Alaska Native/American Indian	56	21%	12%	66%
Asian	36	8%	31%	61%
Black/African American	37	14%	11%	76%
Hispanic/Latino	55	7%	14%	78%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	18	11%	33%	56%
White	142	11%	13%	75%
Other	40	12%	12%	75%
Free or Reduced-Price Lunch				
Eligible for Free/Reduced-Price Lunch	234	12%	20%	68%
Not Eligible for Free/Reduced-Price Lunch	144	12%	10%	78%
Special Education				
Eligible for Special Education	39	26%	20%	54%
Not Eligible for Special Education	289	10%	14%	76%
English Language Learners				
ELL Broad	49	10%	18%	71%
Not ELL Broad	435	11%	14%	75%
School, by District				
Anchorage	Airport Heights	41	7%	0%
	Creekside Park	52	6%	8%
	Mountain View	53	13%	28%
	Spring Hill	41	5%	2%
	Ursa Minor	41	17%	7%
	William Tyson	58	17%	33%
Fairbanks	Anderson	82	5%	12%
	Nordale	40	10%	15%
	Ticasuk Brown	65	17%	18%
Lake and Peninsula	Lake and Peninsula	11	9%	9%
				82%

* Spring ISRs are from students with matched fall, winter and spring scores.

First Grade

In first grade, almost two-thirds of students (65%) reached benchmark statewide. Twenty-two percent were identified as strategic students, and 13 percent were intensive. These percentages were similar to those found in the previous year. American Indian/Alaskan Native, Asian, and

Hispanic/Latino students, "Other" students, those eligible for FRL, those eligible for special education, and ELL students had benchmark percentages lower than the state percentage. The benchmark percentages among individual schools ranged from 43 percent at Mountain View to 91 percent at Anderson. (Table 6-6)

Table 6-6
First-Grade Spring 2008 Instructional Support Recommendations

First Grade	N*	Percentage		
		Intensive	Strategic	Benchmark
All AK Reading First Grade 1	483	13%	22%	65%
Race/Ethnicity				
Alaska Native/American Indian	66	15%	36%	48%
Asian	47	19%	30%	51%
Black/African American	33	15%	15%	70%
Hispanic/Latino	42	21%	17%	62%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	28	11%	21%	68%
White	197	10%	20%	70%
Other	44	14%	23%	63%
Free or Reduced-Price Lunch				
Eligible for Free/Reduced Lunch	286	16%	27%	57%
Not Eligible for Free/Reduced Lunch	171	10%	17%	72%
Special Education				
Eligible for Special Education	63	30%	24%	46%
Not Eligible for Special Education	377	9%	21%	70%
English Language Learners				
ELL Broad	47	21%	23%	55%
Not ELL Broad	436	12%	22%	66%
School, by District				
Anchorage	Airport Heights	53	11%	21%
	Creekside Park	58	10%	26%
	Mountain View	44	30%	27%
	Spring Hill	30	13%	10%
	Tyson William	59	15%	36%
	Ursa Minor	45	16%	11%
Fairbanks	Anderson	79	4%	5%
	Nordale	47	15%	21%
	Ticasuk Brown	59	14%	37%
Lake and Peninsula	Lake and Peninsula	9	11%	44%

* Spring ISRs are from students with matched fall, winter and spring scores.

Second Grade

More than half (60%) of the second-grade students from Alaska Reading First schools reached benchmark by spring 2008, 16 percent reached the strategic level, and 23 percent were categorized as intensive (Table 6-9). Except for the white and “Other” groups, all of the ethnic/racial groups fell below the state Reading First benchmark percentage.

In addition, those eligible for FRL, those eligible for special education, and ELL students had lower benchmark percentages, especially the special education (24%) and ELL (39%) groups. These percentages were substantially lower than those for students who did not fall into these special categories. The percentage of benchmark students at individual schools ranged from 30 percent at Tyson William to 86 percent at Anderson. Except for three schools, none of the schools had benchmark percentages higher than the state percentage of 60 percent.

Table 6-7
Second-Grade Spring 2008 Instructional Support Recommendations

Second Grade	N*	Percentage		
		Intensive	Strategic	Benchmark
All AK Reading First Grade 2	458	23%	16%	60%
Race/Ethnicity				
Alaska Native/American Indian	77	35%	20%	46%
Asian	51	37%	14%	49%
Black/African American	37	27%	16%	57%
Hispanic/Latino	35	40%	9%	51%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	18	22%	28%	50%
White	195	13%	16%	70%
Other	28	18%	14%	68%
Free or Reduced-Price Lunch				
Eligible for Free/Reduced Lunch	243	28%	19%	53%
Not Eligible for Free/Reduced Lunch	164	15%	13%	72%
Special Education				
Eligible for Special Education	50	58%	18%	24%
Not Eligible for Special Education	329	16%	16%	68%
English Language Learners				
ELL Broad	62	37%	24%	39%
Not ELL Broad	396	21%	15%	64%
School, by District				
Anchorage	Airport Heights	32	31%	16%
	Creekside Park	51	10%	24%
	Mountain View	50	34%	14%
	Spring Hill	34	32%	18%
	Tyson William	43	51%	19%
	Ursa Minor	33	12%	15%
Fairbanks	Anderson	76	4%	10%
	Nordale	48	29%	12%
	Ticasuk Brown	82	22%	20%
Lake and Peninsula	Lake and Peninsula	9	33%	22%
				44%

* Spring ISRs are from students with matched fall, winter and spring scores.

Third Grade

Over one-half of third-grade students (52%) reached the benchmark level. Thirty-two percent scored at the strategic level and 17 percent at the intensive level. Except for the Hispanic/Latino and white groups, the benchmark percentage of all of the other ethnic/racial groups fell below the state

Reading First percentage. The percentages of students eligible for free and reduced-price lunch and for special education were also substantially lower than the state percentage. The benchmark percentages among individual schools ranged from 28 percent at Tyson William to 90 percent at Anderson. (Table 6-8).

Table 6-8
Third-Grade Spring 2008 Instructional Support Recommendations

Third Grade	N*	Percentage		
		Intensive	Strategic	Benchmark
All AK Reading First Grade 3	378	17%	32%	52%
Race/Ethnicity				
Alaska Native/American Indian	51	33%	35%	31%
Asian	41	39%	24%	37%
Black/African American	37	19%	40%	40%
Hispanic/Latino	34	9%	35%	56%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	16	25%	44%	31%
White	157	6%	26%	68%
Other	39	15%	44%	41%
Free or Reduced-Price Lunch				
Eligible for Free/Reduced Lunch	246	22%	35%	43%
Not Eligible for Free/Reduced Lunch	130	6%	27%	67%
Special Education				
Eligible for Special Education	65	32%	38%	29%
Not Eligible for Special Education	272	12%	29%	59%
English Language Learners				
ELL Broad	39	17%	31%	52%
Not ELL Broad	339	15%	41%	44%
School, by District				
Anchorage	Airport Heights	29	21%	31%
	Creekside Park	38	13%	37%
	Mountain View	44	27%	39%
	Spring Hill	35	17%	31%
	Tyson William	54	37%	35%
	Ursa Minor	37	3%	30%
Fairbanks	Anderson	10	0%	10%
	Nordale	55	13%	26%
	Ticasuk Brown	67	6%	30%
Lake and Peninsula	Lake and Peninsula	9	22%	44%
				33%

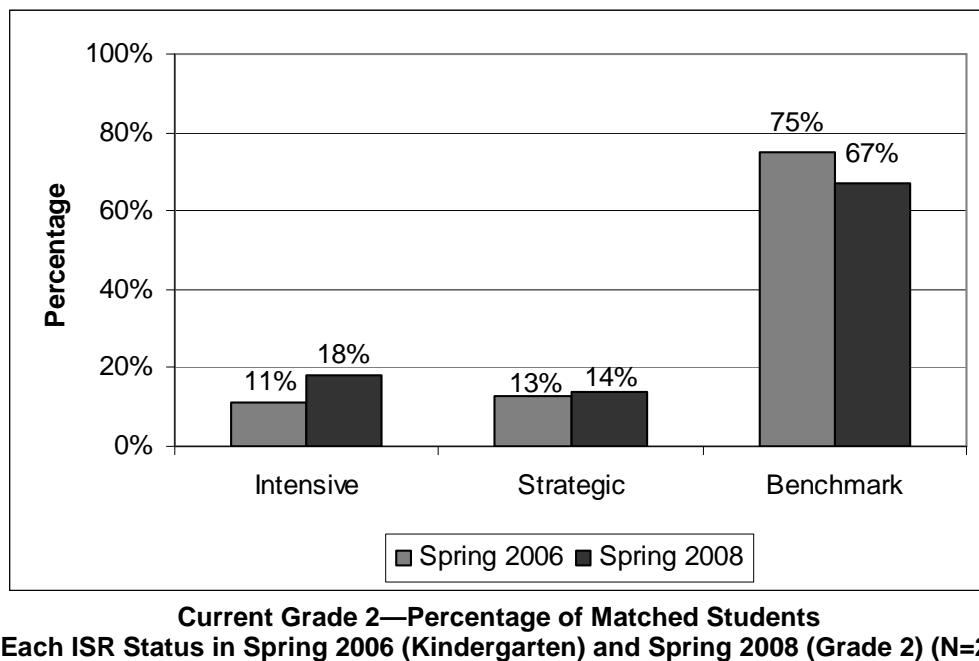
* Spring ISRs are from students with matched fall, winter and spring scores.

Trends and Movement in ISR Status of Students since Kindergarten

The spring 2008 ISR scores of students currently in the second grade and third grade were matched to their ISR scores when they were in kindergarten (i.e., spring 2006 for second-grade students and spring 2005 for third-grade students). In the current second grade, the percentage of benchmark students declined by 8 percent, from 75 percent to 67 percent since kindergarten. This decline was statistically significant (McNemar's test, $p<0.05$) and indicates that instruction might not have been intensive enough to keep second-grade students at benchmark over time.

The percentage of both intensive students and strategic students increased from 11 percent to 18 percent and from 13 percent to 14 percent, respectively. The increase for the intensive group was significant (McNemar's test, $p<0.01$), indicating a need for more intense focus on these students. The change in the strategic group was not significant. Figure 6-5 shows these findings.

Figure 6-5



The trend in the third grade was somewhat different (Figure 6-6). Both the percentages of the benchmark and intensive groups declined—by 11 percent and 3 percent, respectively. While the decline in the intensive group was not significant, it was significant in the benchmark group (McNemar's test, $p<0.05$), indicating a change in ISR status from spring 2005 to spring 2008 and the need to monitor these students even more closely each year to ensure they stay at grade level. On the other hand, the strategic group significantly improved (McNemar's test, $p<0.05$).

Movement of matched students since kindergarten. This section looks at the overall trends across Alaska Reading First schools in the movement of students who were in each of the ISR levels—intensive, strategic, and benchmark—in kindergarten and in spring 2008. Please note that for second-grade students this would be two years ago and for third-grade students three years ago. Within Table 6-9, the different

cells report the percentage of students in that group who dropped to a lower group, remained the same, or moved up to a higher group on the spring 2008 DIBELS assessment. Major findings include:

- Almost 80 percent of the students (78%) in second and third grades, who were at benchmark in kindergarten, remained at benchmark in spring 2008.
- Approximately 40 percent of the strategic students in kindergarten, and in both second and third grades, moved to benchmark by spring 2008. However a moderate percentage of second-grade students (31%) and third-grade students (24%) fell from strategic to intensive by spring 2008.

A greater percentage of second-grade intensive students (61%) than third-grade students (42%) remained in intensive since kindergarten.

Figure 6-6

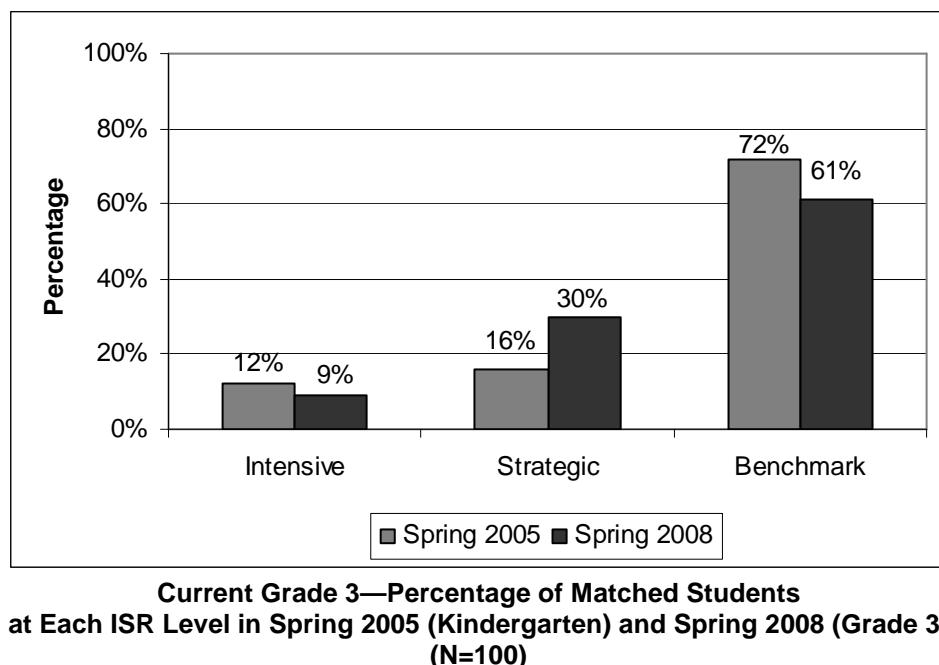


Table 6-9
Statewide Changes in Matched ISR Scores from
Kindergarten to Spring 2008, by Grade Level

Movement within each ISR Group from Spring 06 to Spring 08	n	Percentage
GRADE 2		
Intensive (N=28)		
to Intensive	17	61%
to Strategic	7	25%
to Benchmark	4	14%
Strategic (N=35)		
to Intensive	11	31%
to Strategic	10	29%
to Benchmark	14	40%
Benchmark (N=190)		
to Intensive	18	10%
to Strategic	23	12%
to Benchmark	149	78%
Movement within each ISR Group from Spring 05 to Spring 08		
GRADE 3		
Intensive (N=12)		
to Intensive	5	42%
to Strategic	7	58%
to Benchmark	0	0%
Strategic (N=17)		
to Intensive	4	24%
to Strategic	6	35%
to Benchmark	7	41%
Benchmark (N=79)		
to Intensive	0	0%
to Strategic	17	22%
to Benchmark	62	78%

Movement Between Instructional Support Recommendations

In addition to summarizing change over time, it is also helpful to look at the movement of students across the intensive, strategic, and benchmark groups during the 2007–2008 academic year. This section examines the percentage of students that changed their ISR status from fall 2007 to spring 2008.

Each table below presents a separate ISR group of students—those who were in the overall intensive group (Table 6-10), strategic group (Table 6-11), or benchmark group (Table 6-12), based on their fall 2007 DIBELS results. Within each table, the different cells report the percentage of students in that group who dropped to a lower group, remained the same, or moved up to a higher group on the spring 2008 DIBELS assessment. What is in the parentheses in each cell represents last year’s results. The analyses on these pages include only students who had both fall, winter, and spring results reported.

Movement of Students Who Were Intensive in Fall 2007

The movement of intensive students is, in many ways, a measure of the effectiveness of the most intensive interventions in helping to move the lowest performing students towards reading at level.

Table 6-10 presents the movement of students, by grade level, in the intensive group from fall 2007 to spring 2008. The data showed that:

- Schools were successful in moving over half of the kindergarten intensive students (54%) to benchmark.
- Similar to last year, many first-, second-, and third-grade students who began the fall in intensive, remained there in the spring (59%, 78%, and 62%, respectively).
- Among grade levels, second-grade intensive students were the least likely to move out of the intensive group over the school year.
- The results for the current reporting period (2007–2008) closely mirrored those found for the previous school year (2006–2007).

Table 6-10
Fall 2008 Intensive Students
Changes in Matched ISR Scores from Fall 2007 to Spring 2008, by Grade Level

Grade Level	N	Percentage (2006–2007 Percentage)		
		Remained in Intensive	Moved to Strategic	Moved to Benchmark
Kindergarten	121	23% (26%)	22% (21%)	54% (53%)
Grade 1	64	59% (62%)	25% (21%)	16% (17%)
Grade 2	106	78% (81%)	16% (16%)	6% (3%)
Grade 3	92	62% (65%)	36% (32%)	2% (3%)

Movement of Students Who Were Strategic in Fall 2007

The movement of strategic students is a measure of the success of schools' supplemental programs in helping move students who were somewhat below level up to benchmark this year. Table 6-11 presents the movement, across all four grades, of students who began the 2007-2008 school year in the strategic group. The data showed that:

- Over three-quarters of kindergarten students (76%) who were in the strategic group in the fall moved to benchmark in the spring.
- First- and second-grade strategic students were equally likely to remain in the strategic group or move to benchmark. Third-grade students were the most likely to

remain in the strategic group among the grade levels. Almost two-thirds of these students (69%) stayed in this ISR level from fall to spring. Students dropped from strategic to intensive at all grade levels; however the smallest drop was in third-grade (5%) while the largest drop was in second-grade (19%).

- Results generally reflected those for the 2006-2007 school year except for first-grade strategic students. This year there was a smaller drop from strategic to intensive than last year, but a greater percentage of students remained in the strategic group than last year.

Table 6-11
Fall 2007 Strategic Students
Changes in Matched ISR Scores from Fall 2007 to Spring 2008, by Grade Level

Grade Level	N	Percentage (2006-2007 Percentage)		
		Moved to Intensive	Remained in Strategic	Moved to Benchmark
Kindergarten	99	10% (7%)	14% (16%)	76% (77%)
Grade 1	116	13% (24%)	44% (33%)	43% (42%)
Grade 2	117	19% (16%)	37% (41%)	44% (43%)
Grade 3	99	5% (5%)	69% (65%)	26% (21%)

Movement of Students Who Were at Benchmark in Fall 2007

The movement of students that began the 2006–2007 school year at benchmark and remained there by the end of the year is a measure of the ability of instruction, using the core program, to keep students at level over the year. Ideally, this figure should be 100 percent. Table 6-12 presents the movement of benchmark students this year.

The data showed that:

- All grades retained at least 83 percent of students at benchmark. Second grade retained the highest percentage of benchmark students (93%), followed by both kindergarten and third grade (89%). Lowest retention was in the first grade at 83%.
- Most students who dropped from benchmark dropped to strategic, not intensive. However, the first grade had the largest drop from benchmark to strategic (13%) and to intensive (4%) than any of the other grade levels. These results are almost identical to those from the 2006–2007 school year.
- Overall the 2007–2008 results mirrored those found in 2006–2007.

Table 6-12
Fall 2007 Benchmark Students
Changes in Matched ISR Scores from Fall 2007 to Spring 2008, by Grade Level

Grade Level	N	Percentage (2006–2007 Percentage)		
		Moved to Intensive	Moved to Strategic	Remained in Benchmark
Kindergarten	151	1% (1%)	9% (5%)	89% (93%)
Grade 1	303	4% (3%)	13% (15%)	83% (82%)
Grade 2	235	1% (<1%)	6% (10%)	93% (89%)
Grade 3	187	<1% (0%)	10% (12%)	89% (88%)

CHAPTER SEVEN: SUGGESTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

In 2007–2008, Alaska Reading First completed its fourth year of school-level implementation. It continued many of its successes from the previous year and had additional successes this year, namely:

- The Alaska Reading First program provided a comprehensive approach to professional development by providing four major statewide conferences, ongoing technical to schools, ongoing coaching to teachers, and district support for implementation. The Reading Data Retreat and the Alaska Reading First Summit were especially well received.
- Data use was pervasive. Teachers felt very confident in their personal ability to use data, and almost all teachers looked at their student assessment data at least monthly. Coaches reported that they frequently used assessment data when communicating with teachers about their students, identifying which students needed interventions, matching appropriate intervention, and monitoring progress during interventions.
- Teacher buy-in to Reading First was the highest it has ever been since the program's inception. More than three-quarters of teachers expressed strong support for Reading First. All coaches and nearly all principals also reported strong support for Reading First.
- The results from the 16 classroom observations conducted in six schools were quite positive.
- Compared to last year, substantial positive changes were found in most areas of effective classrooms—lesson clarity, explicit modeling, student engagement, opportunities to practice, and feedback.
- Although instruction covered all five essential components of reading, some components—phonics, vocabulary, and comprehension—received more attention than other components. Unlike last year, phonemic awareness was observed only in kindergarten instead of across grade levels.
- All schools had intervention programs at virtually every grade level.
- The percentage of students at benchmark this year increased from fall 2007 to spring 2008 in every grade—significant changes were made again in kindergarten and second grade. Similar to last year, all grade levels retained a vast majority of their benchmark students (at least 83%) from the beginning to the end of the school year. Unlike last year, when kindergarten retained the largest percentage of benchmark students (93%), this year's second grade retained 93 percent of its benchmark students.
- Key findings from this report can be found in the Executive Summary.

While making some progress over the past year, Alaska Reading continued to face significant challenges:

- This year, turnover in the state Reading First leadership occurred. The state hired a new Reading First coordinator, who was not only responsible for Reading First but also for school/district improvement and Title 1. The turnover in the state Reading First coordinator combined with the wide-ranging job responsibilities of the new coordinator complicated the close relationship between schools and the state coordinator. Building relationships and learning all of the schools' contexts take an enormous amount of time. The state coordinator is commended on her work during her first year.
- Lack of student progress over the years is a concern. While all grades dramatically improved from baseline in spring 2004 to spring 2008, it has not been a continuous upward trend in all grade levels, except for third grade. The third-grade benchmark group steadily improved from 39 percent to 52 percent in spring 2008, but the percentage of third-grade benchmark students in spring 2008 was smaller than the percentages of benchmark students in other grade levels. More importantly, the other grade levels reached a plateau after their first or second year of implementation and have not improved, except by a few percentage points, for the last three or four years.
- The achievement gap between demographic subgroups has not been reduced. The benchmark percentages of many ethnic/racial groups, free and reduced-price lunch students, special education students, FRL students, and English language learners were lower than the state benchmark percentage. Likewise, the percentages for these same students often were higher than the state's percentage for the intensive group. Coupled with the fact that few intensive students moved out of that group over time—especially in the second grade, where 61 percent of them remained in the intensive group in 2004 and in 2008—the state should closely investigate the lack of continued student success at all grade levels except, perhaps, for kindergarten.
- Little change in the overall percentage of students at benchmark over the past three years raises questions about how to move schools to a higher level of implementation.

What important factors might account for this lack of student progress?

- Given that the school year ended in mid-May, the lateness of the Reading First Summit in February gave teachers only about two months to practice what they had learned. Also, Summit participants commented that most of the information covered at the Summit was a review for them and thus did not take them to the next stage of implementation. It also appeared that the Summit did not differentiate adequately enough for Reading First versus non-Reading First teachers.

During the 90-minute reading block, about 50 percent of the teachers taught at students' instructional levels for the *entire* time, while other teachers worked with students at their grade level for *some or all* of the time.

- Few schools were able to provide supplemental and intensive interventions to all strategic and intensive students in their schools. These interventions are crucial to moving students out of the intensive and strategic groups into benchmark.
- Compared to previous years, coaches spent more time collecting, analyzing, and using data for decision-making and less time on coaching and technical assistance. For both coaches and principals, the frequency of classroom observations and feedback declined this year. Teachers may need continuous observation and feedback to continue improving their practices.
- Schools spent little time reviewing disaggregated data; and teachers generally seemed to lack the training, understanding, and experience to teach poor, ELL, and different minority groups of students.

Suggestions for Consideration to Improve Student Outcomes

Based on these factors, the evaluation offers the following suggestions to consider and reflect upon for next year's Reading First, even in light of reduced funding:

1. ***Modify the timing, format, and content of professional development events.*** As suggested last year, the Reading First Summit needs to be offered much sooner in the school year so that teachers will have

enough time and opportunities during the school year to practice the new skills they learn. The training should focus on effective reading instructional strategies for struggling readers, effective intervention programs, and teaching students at their instructional level. The Summit training needs to be differentiated for Reading First schools and non-Reading First schools.

2. ***Offer stronger support to lower performing schools.*** Considerable variations in student performance existed among the schools. Low performing schools need additional state technical assistance, training, mentoring, and coaching. The state needs to be equitable in the assistance it provides among the lower performing schools. Schools in Lake and Peninsula received far less technical assistance than other schools. The state should implement more aggressive technical support to low-performing schools.
3. ***Require that all schools teach students at their instructional level during the 90-minute reading block.*** The approach that would ensure this the most is walk-to-read. It is difficult for struggling readers to master grade-level skills when they lack the basic skills.
4. ***Regularly disaggregate DIBELS data.*** Schools need to disaggregate and review their data to ensure that all students in key demographic groups are improving and reaching benchmark. While schools use data a lot, they do not provide the differentiated instruction and/or interventions that would change student outcomes. Multiple sources

of data all pointed to the urgent need to provide additional support to schools to help them better meet the needs of their ELL students, minority populations, poor students, and special education students.

5. *Strengthen intervention programs for struggling readers.* Student movement out of intensive and strategic is indicative of the effectiveness of intervention programs to move students toward students reading at grade level. Overall it does not seem that intensive and strategic students are improving quickly enough or that schools are able to serve all of their strategic and intensive students.

Is Alaska Reading First Sustainable?

The answer to this question is dependent on both the state and the school. Sustainability needs to be openly discussed and clearly supported by the state Reading First program.

State and school staff members need a clear understanding of the factors that make programs sustainable and, from this understanding, articulate plans to address the various factors in their own context. Most principals and district coordinators were dissatisfied with the amount of support that their schools or districts received from the state to address sustainability.

District coordinators, principals, and teachers all expressed the opinion (and hope) that at least some components of Reading First would outlast the period of grant funding. The coach position seemed to be the least likely component to continue. This year saw strong support from teachers, in addition to principal and coach support. While Reading First influenced reading instruction in districts' non-Reading First schools, it is likely that various bits and pieces of Reading First, in different configurations at different schools, will be sustained; but the program in its entirety will not without strong state support and additional funding.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Frequencies on the State Surveys--Spring 2008

Online District Survey

Principal Survey

Coach Survey

Teacher Survey

**ALASKA READING FIRST
ONLINE DISTRICT SURVEY 2008**

3 out of 3 district coordinators (100%) returned their surveys. Unless otherwise noted, all or almost all respondents answered each question.

12. How many elementary schools are in your district?
14 (Lake and Peninsula), 19 (Fairbanks), and 60 (Anchorage) schools

13. How many elementary schools have a Reading First grant?
12 of 14, 3 of 19; 6 of 60

14. Beyond Reading First, what is your role in the district?
-- Superintendent
-- Assistant Superintendent
-- Curriculum director/specialist
33% Instruction director/specialist
-- Literacy director/specialist
-- Budget/finance officer
67% Other, including DIBELS contact coordinator; reading coach, and SLM

15. What percentage of time are you *officially allocated* to spend on Reading First?
5%; 95%; 100%

16. In past years, some district coordinators have reported spending more time than anticipated on Reading First activities. In order to report any continuing discrepancies, please report the *actual* percentage of your time spent on Reading First.
(All missing)

17. How has your district supported Reading First this year? (*select all that apply*)
-- Assisted with proposal writing
100% Provided financial management of the grant
100% Assigned a district staff member to be the Reading First “go-to” person (district-level coordinator)
33% Facilitated districtwide Reading First meetings for coaches
100% Facilitated districtwide Reading First meetings for principals
100% Analyzed student reading assessment data
100% Provided professional development aligned with Reading First
100% Provided technical assistance for Reading First
33% Provided additional funds to support Reading First
66% Provided a DIBELS Assessment Team
66% Modified district requirements to be aligned with Reading First
-- Other: _____

18. In 2007–2008, did you attend...

1. a. Did you attend the February 2008 Reading First Summit?		
<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes – some of it	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes – all of it

1.b. Did you attend the November 2007 Reading First Data Retreat?		
<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes – some of it	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes – all of it

1.c. Did you attend the October 2007 CORE Reading Leader Institute?		
<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes – some of it	Yes – all of it
a the February 2008 Reading First Summit?		
33% No	33% Yes – some of it	33% Yes – all of it

b the November 2007 Reading First Data Retreat?		
--- No	33% Yes – some of it	67% Yes – all of it

19. How useful, to you as Reading First district coordinator, was your attendance at the following:

	Never Useful	Rarely Useful	Sometimes Useful	Usually Useful	Always Useful	Did not Attend
February 2008 Reading First Summit	--	--	--	67%	--	33%
November 2007 Reading First Data Retreat	--	--	--	---	100%	

20. When the state coordinator visits schools in your district, how often do you participate?

- Never
- Seldom
- Sometimes
- 67% Often
- 33% Always

21. (a) Does your district have a mentoring or induction program for new teachers?

- 100% Yes
- No

(b) If yes, does it include an introduction to Reading First?

- 67% Yes
- 33% No

22. How easy/difficult was it to find qualified applicants for the coaching position(s)?

- Very easy
- 33% Somewhat easy
- 67% Somewhat difficult
- Very difficult

Please indicate your level of agreement with each statement below.

This year...	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
23. The state's expectations for district involvement in Reading First are clear.	--	33%	--	--	67%
24. State Reading First project staff are responsive to our district's needs.	--	33%	--	67%	--
25. The state coordinator's support and input has been extremely valuable.	--	--	33%	67%	--
26. The state has done a good job of communicating necessary information regarding Reading First to district staff.	--	33%	--	67%	--
27. Our district strongly supports the instructional changes occurring under Reading First.	---	---	---	33%	67%
28. Major initiatives (programs or grants) in our district contradict or are not aligned with Reading First.	33%	67%	---	---	---
29. I am pleased with the amount of support we have received from the state to address sustainability.	--	33%	33%	33%	---
30. Reading First has greatly influenced the reading program in our district's non-Reading First schools.	---	---	---	33%	67%
31. The state's expectations of district involvement in Reading First are reasonable.	---	---	67%	---	33%

<p>32. In what ways could the state further support districts in the implementation of Reading First? Please be as specific as possible. *</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• This project has informed our practice. It has improved the learning environment at these schools for thousands of students, which has translated into increased achievement. These schools are the pioneers, and in order for the state to continue to learn from the practices at Reading First schools, the project needs to continue to be funded. <p>It would be my hope/wish/desire that the state ascertain funding to continue this project.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• To access the bulk of the professional development offered, Fairbanks staff is required to travel to Anchorage. We have spent thousands of dollars in travel to go to Anchorage to receive the same professional development as districts who are brand new to Reading First. <p>The state provided some support by giving our district extra money so we can offer professional development here in our district. This would be our preferred way of accessing professional development that would better meet our local needs and provide outreach professional development to our neighboring non-RF districts. I would like to see more of this type of support rather than the big summits held only in Anchorage.</p> <p>An example: We were able to bring Roland Good to Fairbanks to do a Mentoring Workshop for 40 people because the state paid for his presentation fee. So we decide what we need and organize the trainings and the state provides support financially.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide more coaching training not just from CORE. <p>Provide beginning institutes every year. We have high teacher turn over and have no way of doing all the training ourselves that our RDG First teachers got in the beginning of the grant.</p> <p>Find ways to get the administration in districts more involved so they really understand what is happening and why.</p> <p>Make sure all institutes, summits and data retreats have things for both large and small (very small) schools. Our principals are K-12 principals and our teachers teach 3-10 grades at once in their classroom. Grade level teams do not happen as there is only one teacher teaching grades in our schools.</p> <p>Coach and principal are itinerants so may only visit schools 1-5 days a month. Make sure those situations are addressed.</p>

	After grant funding ends, will the following Reading First components be <u>mandated</u> by the district?				If yes, how will they be funded?			
	Definitely	Likely	Not Likely	Don't Know	General Funds	Categorical Funds	Other Funds	Don't know
22. 90-minute reading block	33%	67%	---	---				
23. Reading Leadership Team	---	33%	33%	33%	---	---	---	100%
24. Grade-level meetings	100%	---	---	---	50%	---	---	50%
25. Core program	100%	---	---	---	100%	---	---	---
26. DIBELS	67%	33%	---	---	335	33%	---	33%
27. Reading coach	---	33%	67%	---	33%	---	---	67%
28. Professional development in reading	67%	---	---	33%	50%	---	---	50%
29. Interventions	67%	33%	---	---	33%	---	---	67%

30. In which district do you work? *Your district name is used *only* to make sure we hear from each district. Your responses are confidential and no district names will be used in reporting.*

**Anchorage
Fairbanks
Lake & Peninsula**

Additional Comments:

- Many of your survey questions do not reflect what happens in small schools/districts. It is sometimes frustrating to take them because we have to interpret them or make them fit to what we do in very small schools.
- We are extraordinarily grateful to have been a part of this project. The Reading First staff development has been outstanding, and the project and results from Reading First schools have been of significant benefit to every school in the elementary division.
- I think Reading First has made a significant impact on our district. Each RF school has a plan in place to sustain critical components of their RF school programs, but with reduced or no funding, it will indeed be a challenge to continue providing the level of services, especially to the Tier 3 at risk students.

Thank you for your support of the evaluation!

**ALASKA READING FIRST
PRINCIPAL SURVEY 2008**

14 out of 14 principals (100%) returned this survey. Unless otherwise noted, all or almost all respondents answered each question.

SECTION A: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

1. a. Did you attend the February 2008 Reading First Summit?

36% No	7% Yes – some of it	57% Yes – all of it
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1.b. Did you attend the November 2007 Reading First Data Retreat?

14% No	21% Yes – some of it	64% Yes – all of it
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1.c. Did you attend the October 2007 CORE Reading Leader Institute?

14% No	7% Yes – some of it	79% Yes – all of it
--------	---------------------	---------------------

The professional development that I received at the February 2008 Reading First Summit this year...

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
2. was very relevant to my work.	-	11%	11%	67%	11%
3. was mostly review for me.	-	-	44%	33%	22%
4. consisted of high-quality presentations.	-	-	11%	78%	11%
5. provided me with useful training in observing teachers and providing feedback.	-	11%	67%	22%	-
6. provided me with useful tools for working with resistant staff.	11%	22%	44%	22%	-
7. met my specific needs as a Reading First principal.	11%	11%	33%	44%	-
8. included adequate opportunities to reflect and share with my colleagues.	11%	11%	33%	44%	-
9. was differentiated (tailored) to meet the needs of different groups, based on their level of pre-existing expertise.	22%	11%	56%	11%	-
10. did a good job of addressing English Language Learner (ELL) issues.	-	11%	44%	44%	-
11. did a good job of addressing sustainability.	-	33%	44%	22%	-

I am very pleased with...		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
12. October 2007 CORE Reading Leader Institute		-	17%	-	67%	17%
13. November 2007 Reading First Data Retreat		-	17%	17%	58%	8%
14. the <u>quality</u> of training in instructional leadership that I received through the state and Reading First this year.		8%	8%	17%	58%	8%
15. the <u>amount</u> of training in instructional leadership that I received through the state and Reading First this year.		-	25%	17%	42%	17%
16. If you were not pleased with the amount, was there too much or too little?		Too much ---		Too little 29% (n=4)		

SECTION B: USE OF DATA

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements and indicate whether or not you would like more training.

I am very confident in my <i>personal</i> ability to use data to...	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	I would like more training in this area (check if yes)
17. identify professional development needs in reading.	-	15%	15%	62%	8%	21%
18. lead teachers in discussions.	-	-	-	92%	8%	14%
19. make staff assignments (teachers and pares).	-	-	7%	64%	29%	7%
20. identify teacher strengths and weaknesses.	-	8%	-	62%	31%	21%
21. understand student achievement trends across our school.	-	-	-	77%	23%	21%

The section below asks how frequently you use reading assessment data when performing specific aspects of your job. If a question asks about an activity that you do not perform, please select the last option, "I don't do that."

Note: Rows may not add up to 100% because frequencies only include those who reported doing the activity.

I use the results of reading assessments (such as the DIBELS) when...	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Always	I don't do that
22. communicating with teachers about their students.	-	-	29%	21%	50%	-
23. communicating with teachers about their instruction.	-	8%	15%	54%	23%	7%
24. making decisions about student grouping.	-	-	17%	42%	42%	14%
25. making decisions about matching students to the appropriate interventions.	-	-	14%	21%	64%	-
26. looking at schoolwide (K-3) trends.	-	7%	7%	36%	50%	-

SECTION C: READING LEADERSHIP TEAM

27. Are you a member of the Reading Leadership Team (RLT) at your school?

93% Yes	-- No (Skip to Section D)	7% There is no RLT at our school (Skip to Section D)
---------	---------------------------	--

28. This year, how often did you attend Reading Leadership Team meetings?

- Never
- Seldom
- 15% Sometimes
- 46% Often
- 39% Always
- There is no such team at our school

SECTION D: YOUR VIEWS ON READING FIRST

Please indicate your level of agreement with each statement below. If a question is not applicable, please leave it blank.

This year...	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
29. I am very comfortable observing teachers and providing constructive feedback.	-	-	7%	43%	50%
30. I feel that Reading First puts excessive emphasis on the involvement of the principal in instructional matters.	29%	36%	21%	7%	7%
31. Reading First would not run smoothly without the Reading Leadership Team.	-	-	29%	50%	21%
32. Major initiatives in our district contradict or are not aligned with Reading First.	21%	64%	14%	-	-
33. I strongly support the instructional changes that are occurring under Reading First.	-	-	7%	36%	57%
34. Our district provides sufficient support for Reading First.	-	-	21%	79%	-
35. Overcoming teacher resistance to Reading First has been a challenge for me.	14%	36%	21%	29%	-
36. I have significant philosophical or pedagogical objections to the approach of Reading First.	50%	43%	7%	-	-
37. I am pleased that our school has a Reading First grant.	-	-	-	43%	51%
38. In my view, Reading First overemphasizes the importance of using DIBELS results.	29%	36%	14%	21%	-
39. I think that the DIBELS is a valid, accurate indicator of student reading ability.	-	-	14%	57%	29%
40. Our school has a collaborative culture.	-	-	14%	36%	50%
41. Attending grade-level reading meetings is a good use of my time.	-	-	-	64%	36%
42. Attending Reading Leadership Team meetings is a good use of my time.	-	-	7%	43%	50%
43. I am very satisfied with the core reading program we are using at our school.	-	-	7%	71%	21%
44. Our Reading First program is doing an excellent job meeting the needs of our ELL students.	-	-	57%	21%	21%
45. I believe that reading instruction at our school has improved noticeably.	-	-	7%	57%	36%
46. Our staffing resources are sufficient to provide interventions to all students who need them.	7%	21%	14%	43%	14%
47. Our school does an excellent job of providing appropriate reading interventions to all students who need them.	-	7%	21%	36%	36%

This year...	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
48. Instruction in other subjects has suffered because of all of the focus on Reading First.	-	36%	21%	43%	-
49. State project staff are responsive to our school's needs.	-	14%	36%	43%	7%
50. The state coordinator's support and input has been extremely valuable.	-	14%	57%	21%	7%
51. I trust our state coordinator with any information – good or bad – about our reading program.	-	14%	43%	36%	7%
52. Our state coordinator understands our school, our programs and culture, and takes that into account when making recommendations.	7%	14%	57%	21%	-
53. We receive conflicting messages about reading from our district and state Reading First staff.	7%	57%	29%	7%	-
54. I believe that all of the instructional changes we made under Reading First will be sustained after the grant is over.	-	21%	43%	36%	-
55. I am pleased with the amount of support we have received from the state to address sustainability.	-	50%	43%	7%	-

SECTION E: SUSTAINABILITY

	After grant funding ends, will the following Reading First components be <u>continued at your school</u> ?			
	Definitely	Likely	Not Likely	Don't Know
56. 90-minute reading block	64%	36%	-	-
57. Reading Leadership Team	21%	64%	-	14%
58. Grade-level meetings	43%	50%	-	7%
59. Core program	64%	29%	-	7%
60. DIBELS	64%	36%	-	-
61. Reading coach	14%	21%	36%	29%
62. Professional development in reading	29%	29%	7%	36%

SECTION F: PRINCIPAL & SCHOOL DEMOGRAPHICS

63. How many K-3 classroom teachers do you have in your building?
Range 1-14. Average 7.

64. This year, how many of those teachers were new to your building?
Range 0-3. Average 3.
(43% of schools had no new K-3 teachers.)

65. How many total years of principal experience do you have (including this year)?
Range 1-42. Average 11.

66. How many years have you been the principal at this school (including this year)?
Range 1-21. Average 6. (Three principals (21%) were new to the school this year.)

67. Did your school make AYP in 2006-2007?

68.

50%	Yes
14%	No, because of <u>both</u> math and reading scores
7%	No, because of reading score
--	No, because of math score
	29% No, because of other reasons (attendance, behavior, etc.)

**ALASKA READING FIRST
COACH SURVEY 2008**

11 coaches (100%) returned surveys on 14 schools. Note: There are 2 coaches for the Lake & Peninsula SD. These coaches completed a survey for each of their schools. Unless otherwise noted, all or almost all respondents answered each question.

SECTION A: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

1(a). Did you attend the February 2008 Reading First Summit?		
- No	7% Yes – some of it	93% Yes – all of it
1(b). Did you attend the September 2007 CORE Reading Coach's Institute this year?		
86% No	- Yes – some of it	14% Yes – all of it
1 (c). Did you attend the November 2007 Reading First Data Retreat this year ?		
36% No	- Yes – some of it	64% Yes – all of it

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.

The professional development that I received at the February Reading First Summit this year...	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
2. was very relevant to my work.	--	--	14%	71%	14%
3. was mostly review for me.	--	--	--	50%	50%
4. consisted of high-quality presentations.	--	--	--	86%	14%
5. provided me with useful training in coaching methods.	8%	46%	31%	8%	8%
6. provided me with useful tools for working with resistant staff.	7%	36%	43%	7%	7%
7. included adequate opportunities to reflect and share with my colleagues.	7%	7%	57%	21%	7%
8. met my specific needs as a Reading First coach.	7%	36%	43%	7%	7%
9. was differentiated (tailored) to meet the needs of different groups, based on their level of pre-existing expertise.	29%	29%	29%	7%	7%
10. did a good job of addressing English Language Learner (ELL) issues.	7%	14%	36%	36%	7%
11. did a good job of addressing sustainability.	--	43%	21%	29%	7%

I am very pleased with...	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
12. The September 2007 CORE Reading Coach's Institute	-	-	57%	29%	14%
13. The November 2007 Reading First Data Retreat	-	-	10%	50%	40%
14. the <u>quality</u> of coaching training that I received through the state and Reading First this year.	8%	17%	25%	42%	8%
15. the <u>amount</u> of coaching training that I received through the state and Reading First this year.	7%	57%	14%	14%	7%
16. If you were not pleased, was there too much or too little?	-- Too much			71% Too little (n=10)	

17. Looking ahead to next year (2008-2009), in which area(s) do **you as coach** need additional training: *(select all that apply)*

14% Coaching methods	14% Using templates
21% Developing rapport and buy-in with staff	64% Intervention programs
36% Working with resistance, conflict resolution	36% Working with ELL students
7% Lesson modeling	-- Student engagement
7% Classroom observations	7% Strategies to teach the five components
14% Providing constructive feedback	21% Differentiated instruction (i.e. instruction tailored to individual students' needs)
21% Meeting facilitation	21% Administering and scoring assessments
14% Budgeting	29% Interpreting and using assessment results
-- Using the core program	36% Other:

This year, how many visits did your school receive from:	This number of visits was:								
	0	1	2	3	4	5 +	Too much	Too little	Just right
18. EED	86%	14%	-	-	-	-	-	42%	58%
19. District reading staff	29%	14%	7%	14%	-	36%	-	23%	77%
20. Consortium for Reading Excellence (CORE) consultant	43%	7%	-	24%	14%	14%	8%	8%	83%
21. Core program publisher	93%	-	-	-	-	7%	-	50%	50%
22. Other contracted experts/trainers	57%	29%	7%	7%	-	-	-	75%	25%

Note: Rows may not add up to 100% because ratings are only included for those who said the activity took place.

This year, how helpful were visits from:	Not at all helpful	Somewhat helpful	Helpful	Very helpful	Did Not Take Place
23. EED	--	--	100%	--	79%
24. District reading staff	--	10%	80%	10%	29%
25. Consortium for Reading Excellence (CORE) consultant	--	13%	-	88%	43%
26. Core program publisher	--	--	100%	--	93%
27. Other contracted experts/trainers	--	--	63%	38%	43%

SECTION B: DATA AND ASSESSMENTS

28. Who regularly administers the K-3 DIBELS progress-monitoring assessments to students at your school? (*check all that apply*)

64% I do (coach)	79% K-3 teachers
-- Principal	14% 4 th -6 th grade teachers
43% Paraprofessionals	7% District staff
21% Specialists -- (Title I, ELL, Special Ed, etc.)	-- Other: _____

29. Who regularly administers the K-3 DIBELS benchmark assessments to students at your school? (*check all that apply*)

79% I do (coach)	86% K-3 teachers
-- Principal	29% 4 th -6 th grade teachers
43% Paraprofessionals	14% District staff
36% Specialists (Title I, ELL, Special Ed, etc.)	7% Other: _____

On average, how often are students in each of the following groups progress monitored at your school?	Weekly	Every 2 weeks	Every 3 weeks	Every 4 weeks	Every 5 to 6 weeks	Every 7 weeks or less often	Never
30. Benchmark	-	-	7%	43%	14%	36%	-
31. Strategic	7%	71%	21%	-	-	-	-
32. Intensive	71%	21%	7%	-	-	-	-

The section below asks about how frequently you use reading assessment data when performing specific aspects of your job. If a question asks about an activity that you do not perform, please select the last option, "I don't do that."

I use the results of reading assessments (such as the DIBELS) when...	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Always	I don't do that
33. communicating with teachers about their students.	-	-	-	29%	71%	-
34. communicating with teachers about their instruction.	-	-	7%	71%	21%	-
35. making decisions about student grouping.	-	-	7%	36%	51%	-
36. modifying lessons from the core program.	-	8%	33%	42%	17%	14%
37. identifying which students need interventions.	-	-	-	21%	79%	-
38. matching struggling students to the correct intervention for their needs.	-	-	-	36%	64%	-
39. monitoring student progress in interventions.	-	-	-	29%	71%	-
40. helping teachers tailor instruction to individual student needs (i.e. differentiated instruction).	-	-	7%	71%	21%	-
41. looking at schoolwide (K-3) trends.	-	-	21%	7%	71%	-

SECTION C: READING LEADERSHIP TEAM

42. Who is on the Reading Leadership Team (RLT)? (*select all that apply*)

100% I am (coach)	64% K teacher(s)
100% Principal	79% Grade 1 teacher(s)
14% ELL teacher(s)	50% Grade 2 teacher(s)
36% Special education teacher(s)	71% Grade 3 teacher(s)
29% Title I teacher(s)	36% Grade 4-6 teacher(s)
7% Parent(s)	14% District representative(s)
21% Paraprofessional(s)	36% Other: _____
	- We don't have a RLT (skip to section D)

43. This year, how often does your school have Reading Leadership Team meetings, on average? (*select one*)

- Never
- 14% Once or a few times a year
- 50% Every other month
- 29% Once a month
- Every other week
- 7% Once a week or more

44. Which of the following are **typical** topics at your Reading Leadership Team meetings? (*select as many as apply*)

71% Schoolwide reading assessment data
 71% Student-level reading assessment data
 21% Reading research
 29% Reading materials to use or purchase
 14% Modifications to the core program
 43% Templates and/or lesson maps
 21% Student behavior/discipline
 21% Special events (e.g., family literacy day)
 43% Instructional strategies
 86% Interventions
 50% Information from the Reading First Data Retreat and/or Reading First Summit
 64% Scheduling
 50% Grouping
 57% Problem solving for individual students
 -- Topics not related to reading
 57% Sustainability of Reading First (what will happen when funds are gone)
 36% Other _____

SECTION D: ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

In previous years, the evaluation has found that many coaches work very long hours and carry a wide range of responsibilities. This year, we are asking in more detail about the amount of time you spend on different activities, in order to track overall patterns and make recommendations about task allocations. As always, no individual responses are reported; only overall summaries and trends are provided in the report.

For the following two questions, please round to the nearest hour: up for 30 minutes or more, down for 29 minutes or less.

45. As a reading coach, how many hours a week do you work at this job, on average?
 Range 40-60. Average 50. n = 10 (full-time coaches only).

Below, hours were converted to percentage of time. All coaches (including part-time) were included.

46. On average, how many hours per week do you spend on the following tasks?

Average	Range	
12%	4%-28%	Coordinating or administering reading assessments
9%	0-15%	Managing data (entering data, creating charts, etc.)
11%	4%-15%	Reviewing and using reading assessment data
3%	0-9%	Attending professional development or state-level meetings
7%	2%-13%	Planning for and attending Reading Leadership Team and grade-level meetings
5%	0-14%	Training groups of teachers in grades K-3
14%	5%-38%	Observing, demonstrating or providing feedback to individual teachers in grades K-3
3%	0%-10%	Observing, demonstrating or providing feedback to individual teachers in grades 4-6
1%	0-5%	Training groups of teachers in grades 4-6
8%	0-21%	Planning interventions
10%	0-27%	Providing interventions directly to students
2%	0-13%	Covering or subbing for teachers
10%	0-24%	Paperwork (not including assessment/data management)
2%	0-8%	Bus/recess duty
6%	0-15%	Other: _____

SECTION E: INSTRUCTION AND INTERVENTIONS

Please indicate the number of minutes (do not round).

Grade	How many minutes long is the reading block?	How many minutes of the block, on average, are taught at students' grade level?	How many minutes of the block, on average, are taught at students' individual instructional level?	Are at least 90 minutes uninterrupted?
47. Half-day Kindergarten (N= 4)	Average=75 mins (SD=30 mins) 75%=60 mins. 25%=120 mins	Average=80 mins (SD=34.6mins) 67%=60 mins 33%=120mins	Average=60 mins (SD=0 mins) 100% = 60 mins	100% Yes --- No
48. Full-day Kindergarten (N=9)	Average=96.7 mins (SD=20 mins) 11%=60mins 56%=90 mins 33%=120 mins	Average= 68 mins (SD=44.6 mins) 25%=0 mins 12%=60 mins 50%=90 mins 12%=120 mins	Average=41.2 mins (SD=42.2 mins) 38%=0mins 25%=30mins 38%=90 mins	88% Yes 12% No
49. First (N=13)	Average=103.8 mins (SD=19.8 mins) 62%=90 mins 31%=120 mins 8%=150 mins	Average=52.5 mins (SD=42.2 mins) 33%=0 mins 8%=40 mins 8%=50 mins 50%=90 mins	Average=69.2 mins (SD=39.7 mins) 15%=0 mins 15%=30 mins 8%=80 mins 46%=90 mins 8%=100 mins 8%=120 mins	100% Yes --- No
50. Second (N=13)	Average=99.2 mins (SD=14.4 mins) 69%= 90 mins 31%=120 mins	Average=50 mins (SD=39.6 mins) 33%=0 mins 8%=45 mins 17%=60 mins 8%=75 mins 33%=90 mins	Average=66.9 mins (SD=39.5 mins) 8%=0 mins 8%=15 mins 15%=30 mins 8%=45 mins 8%=60 mins 38%=90 mins 15%=120 mins	100% Yes --- No
51. Third (N=14)	Average=98.6 mins (SD=14.1 mins) 71%=90 mins 29%=120 mins	Average=49.6 mins (SD=42.2 mins) 38%=0 mins 15%=60 mins 8%=75 mins 38%=90 mins	Average=64.6 mins (SD=37.8 mins) 7%=0 mins 7%=15 mins 7%=20 mins 14%=30 mins 7%=60 mins 50%=90 mins 7%=120 mins	100% Yes --- No

52. Does your school use walk-to-read (students walk to another teacher for reading instruction) during the 90-minute block?

43% Yes, in all or nearly all classes
 21% Yes, in some grades or classes but not all
 36% No, not at all

The following series of questions refer to the interventions your school provides to students outside of the reading block.

53. How many students will have received **intensive interventions** this year (from August or September 2007 to June 2008)? “Range 0-139. 551 students total from 14 schools.”
“Intensive interventions” occur outside the reading block, at least two hours per week for at least six weeks. Count any individual student only once, even if he/she has received interventions for more than one session or term. If you do not have exact numbers, please provide the best estimate that you can. (bubble in number, up to 999)

54. How many other students (not counted in the previous question) will have received **less intensive interventions** (outside the reading block, less than two hours per week and/or less than six weeks)? “Range 0-89. 329 students total from 13 schools.”

To what percentage of students in each DIBELS grouping is your school able to provide interventions?

	<20%	20-39%	40-59%	60-79%	80-99%	100%
55. Intensive	29%	-	-	7%	29%	36%
56. Strategic	29%	-	14%	7%	21%	29%

57. If fewer than 100 percent of eligible students receive interventions, what are the primary obstacles your school faces? (check all that apply):

71% Insufficient staffing
 36% Lack of trained staff
 7% Student transportation/bussing (limits before/after school options)
 14% Available space in the building
 -- Teacher resistance
 7% Lack of parental support
 29% Other _____

58. Who regularly provides interventions at your school? (*check all that apply*)

36%	I do (coach)	14%	4 th -6 th grade teachers
93%	Paraprofessionals	--	Volunteers
57%	Specialists (Interventionist, ELL, Literacy Facilitator, etc.)	36%	Paid tutors
71%	K-3 teachers	21%	Other: _____

59. When did your intervention system begin this year?

<u>Grade K</u>	<u>Grade 1</u>	<u>Grade 2</u>	<u>Grade 3</u>
79% Sep-Oct 07	64% Sep-Oct 07	77% Sep-Oct 07	79% Sep-Oct 07
14% Nov-Dec 07	21% Nov-Dec 07	15% Nov-Dec 07	14% Nov-Dec 07
- Jan-Feb 08	- Jan-Feb 08	- Jan-Feb 08	7% Jan-Feb 08
- Mar-Apr 08	14% Mar-Apr 08	8% Mar-Apr 08	- Mar-Apr 08
- Not yet	- Not yet	- Not yet	- Not yet
7% Not offered at this grade	- Not offered at this grade	- Not offered at this grade	- Not offered at this grade

60. What is the largest number of **intensive** students that work at one time with an intervention provider?

Range 2-11. Average 6. Six schools reported groups larger than 6 students.

61. (a) Does your school use a replacement core for some students during the reading block?
79% Yes 21% No

(b) If yes, what is the largest number of students that work at one time with a replacement core teacher?

Range 2-12. Average 5.

(c) If yes, what percentage of teachers and paras who use the replacement core have had formal training in the replacement core program?

Range = 10-100%. Average= 76%

SECTION F: YOUR VIEWS ON READING FIRST

Please indicate your level of agreement with each statement below. If a question is not applicable, please leave it blank.

This year...	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
62. My role as the reading coach is clearly defined.	-	7%	-	43%	50%
63. Most teachers at our school understand the role of the reading coach.	-	7%	-	57%	36%
64. I am very comfortable observing teachers and providing constructive feedback.	-	7%	7%	71%	14%
65. Reading First would not run smoothly without the Reading Leadership Team.	-	14%	21%	36%	29%
66. Major initiatives (programs or grants) in our district contradict or are not aligned with Reading First.	14%	43%	29%	14%	-
67. I strongly support the instructional changes that are occurring under Reading First.	-	-	-	14%	86%
68. Overcoming teacher resistance to Reading First has been a challenge for me.	21%	-	36%	29%	14%
69. I have significant philosophical or pedagogical objections to the approach of Reading First.	79%	14%	7%	-	-
70. In my view, Reading First overemphasizes the importance of using DIBELS results.	50%	43%	-	7%	-
71. I think that the DIBELS is a valid, accurate indicator of student reading ability.	7%	-	-	29%	64%
72. I am fully confident that before each benchmark testing period, all members of our assessment team thoroughly understand the administration and scoring of the DIBELS.	-	7%	7%	50%	36%

This year...	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
73. Our school has an organized system for <u>administering</u> Reading First assessments (such as DIBELS).	-	7%	-	36%	57%
74. Our school has an organized system for <u>analyzing and sharing</u> Reading First assessments (such as DIBELS) with teachers.	-	8%	8%	46%	39%
75. Our school has an organized system for reviewing reading assessment data that have been <u>disaggregated</u> (split up) by key demographic variables (i.e. race/ethnicity or free/reduced-price lunch status).	-	27%	36%	27%	9%
76. I am pleased that our school has a Reading First grant.	-	-	-	-	100%
77. Our school has a collaborative culture.	-	-	7%	50%	43%
78. Attending grade-level reading meetings is a good use of my time.	-	-	17%	33%	50%
79. Attending Reading Leadership Team meetings is a good use of my time.	-	-	21%	21%	57%
80. I am very satisfied with the core reading program we are using at our school.	79%	-	-	-	21%
81. I believe that reading instruction at our school has improved noticeably.	21%	29%	-	-	50%
82. Our school uses reading materials that are well-matched to the needs of our ELL students in reading.	-	11%	56%	11%	22%
83. Teachers at our school are equipped to meet the needs of our ELL students in reading.	-	33%	33%	11%	22%
84. The philosophy or pedagogy of our ELL program or services sometimes clashes with Reading First.	22%	44%	22%	11%	-
85. Our Reading First program is doing an excellent job meeting the needs of our ELL students.	-	11%	56%	11%	22%
86. The intervention materials we use are well-matched to the needs of our struggling readers.	-	7%	7%	57%	29%
87. Our school's intervention providers are well-trained to meet the needs of struggling readers.	-	7%	36%	29%	29%
88. Our school does an excellent job of providing appropriate reading interventions to all students who need them.	7%	29%	14%	43%	7%
89. Instruction in other subjects has suffered because of all of the focus on Reading First.	14%	50%	14%	21%	-
90. State project Reading First staff are responsive to my school's needs.	-	33%	25%	25%	17%
91. The state coordinator's support and input has been extremely valuable.	-	50%	-	40%	10%
92. I trust our state coordinator with any information – good or bad – about our reading program.	-	20%	50%	10%	20%
93. Our state coordinator understands our school, our programs and culture, and takes that into account when making recommendations.	-	27%	55%	9%	9%

This year...	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
94. I believe that all of the instructional changes we made under Reading First will be sustained after the grant is over.	-	7%	36%	29%	29%
95. I am pleased with the amount of support we have received from the state to address sustainability.	7%	14%	29%	36%	14%

SECTION G: DEMOGRAPHICS

96. What is your current position?
 29% Part-time reading coach
 71% Full-time reading coach

97. Is there another reading coach at your school?
 14% Yes 86% No

98. If yes, does this reading coach also work with K-3 reading teachers?
 33% Yes 67% No

99. How many total years of coaching experience do you have (including this year)?
 Range 1-30. Average 7. Two coaches were new to coaching.

100. How many years have you been the reading coach at this school (including this year)?
 Range 1-7. Average 4. Two coaches were new to the school as coach.

101. How many years have you worked at this school (in any capacity, including this year)?
 Range 4-25. Average 10. No coaches were new to the school.

102. How many years of teaching experience do you have (prior to becoming a coach)?
 Range 7-36. Average 16.

103. What are your educational credentials? (select as many as apply)
 79% Bachelor's degree
 36% Reading certification
 Master's degree
 14% In reading
 36% In area of education other than reading
 -- In discipline other than education
 -- Doctorate (Ph.D. or Ed.D.)

104. At which school do you work? *Your school name is used *only* to make sure we hear from each school. Your responses are confidential and no school names will be used in reporting.*

Thank you for your support of the evaluation!

**ALASKA READING FIRST
TEACHER SURVEY 2008**

107 out of 115 teachers (93%) from 14 schools returned surveys. Unless otherwise noted, all or almost all respondents answered each question.

SECTION A: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

1. a. Did you attend the February 2008 Reading First Summit?		
41% No	3% Yes – some of it	56% Yes – all of it

If you attended some or all of the 2008 Reading First Summit, please indicate below your agreement or disagreement with each of the following statements. Otherwise, please skip to question 8.

The February Reading First <u>Summit</u> ...	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
2. was very relevant to my work.	8%	8%	16%	51%	18%
3. was mostly review for me.	2%	18%	15%	29%	36%
4. consisted of high-quality presentations.	3%	9%	31%	43%	13%
5. provided me with instructional strategies I have used in my classroom.	6%	12%	18%	54%	10%
6. included adequate opportunities to reflect and share with my colleagues.	15%	16%	18%	37%	13%
7. did a good job of addressing English Language Learner (ELL) issues.	8%	18%	36%	33%	6%

Thinking back over this school year, please indicate how helpful you feel that the various forms of Reading First professional development were for you, personally.

Over the 2007–2008 school year, how helpful was/were:	Never Helpful	Rarely Helpful	Sometimes Helpful	Usually Helpful	Always Helpful	Did Not Take Place
8. training in the core program from the publisher?	2%	12%	22%	46%	18%	54%
9. demonstration lessons provided by your reading coach?	2%	3%	12%	23%	60%	40%
10. feedback on your instruction provided by the <u>coach</u> after observation of your classroom?	1%	2%	16%	31%	50%	22%
11. feedback on your instruction provided by the <u>principal</u> after observation of your classroom?	6%	5%	14%	35%	41%	22%
12. assistance from the coach in administering and scoring student assessments?	1%	2%	9%	24%	64%	10%
13. assistance from the coach in interpreting assessment results?	-	1%	14%	27%	58%	2%
14. assistance from the coach in providing quality interventions?	-	2%	18%	30%	51%	5%
15. assistance from the coach in monitoring the effectiveness of interventions?	1%	1%	16%	33%	50%	8%

16. This year, the frequency of classroom visits from the coach was...

-- too frequent	94% just right	6% not frequent enough
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17. Looking ahead to next year (2008-2009), in which area(s) do you need additional training: (*select all that apply*)

14%	Phonemic awareness	13%	Using templates
8%	Phonics	4%	Using the core program
9%	Fluency	17%	Using supplemental programs
12%	Vocabulary	33%	Using intervention programs
22%	Comprehension	12%	Administering and scoring assessments
23%	Student engagement	7%	Interpreting assessment results
17%	Working with ELL students	12%	Using assessment results to drive instruction
31%	Differentiated instruction (tailoring instruction to individual students' needs)	9%	Other: _____

SECTION B: STUDENT ASSESSMENTS

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements and indicate whether or not you would like more training.

I am very confident in my personal ability to...	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	I would like more training in this area (check if yes)
18. administer progress-monitoring assessments.	5%	4%	5%	33%	54%	6%
19. diagnose a student's specific reading needs using reading-assessment data.	3%	5%	13%	44%	35%	10%
20. use data to group students.	2%	-	7%	44%	47%	2%
21. use data to plan small-group instruction.	2%	1%	8%	49%	40%	5%
22. understand student-achievement trends across our school.	2%	3%	21%	47%	28%	5%

The section below asks how frequently you use reading assessment data when performing specific aspects of your job. If a question asks about an activity that you do not perform, please select the last option, "I don't do that."

I use the results of reading assessments (such as the DIBELS) when...	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Always	I don't do that
23. grouping students into small instructional groups within my classroom.	2%	2%	11%	26%	60%	6%
24. communicating with colleagues about reading instruction and student needs.	-	1%	8%	33%	58%	-
25. looking at school-wide (K-3) trends.	3%	3%	18%	29%	47%	4%
26. modifying lessons from the core program.	3%	5%	22%	33%	37%	6%
27. identifying which students need interventions.	1%	-	3%	25%	71%	1%
28. matching struggling students to the correct intervention for their needs.	2%	1%	7%	28%	63%	3%
29. monitoring student progress in interventions.	-	1%	5%	26%	68%	2%

30. This year, how much of the progress-monitoring of your reading students did you conduct yourself?

- 22% All
- 36% Most
- 31% Some
- 11% None

a. SECTION C: THE READING FIRST CLASSROOM

31. Which best describes the group of students you usually have in your classroom during the reading block:

65% Homogeneous – students are mostly at about the same level and have similar instructional needs.	35% Heterogeneous – students are at a wide variety of levels and have differing instructional needs.
---	--

32. On a typical day, how many students are in your classroom during the reading block?
Range 1-30. Average = 16.

Please indicate the frequency with which the following activities took place during this school year (2007–2008).

This year, how often did...	Never	Once or a few times a year	Once a month	2-3 times a month	1-3 times a week	Daily
33. the principal visit your classroom during the reading block (for a quick walk-through or a longer observation)?	5%	59%	19%	6%	11%	1%
34. the principal provide you with feedback on your instruction?	15%	60%	18%	7%	-	-
35. the reading coach observe your classroom during the reading block?	12%	40%	32%	11%	5%	-
36. the reading coach provide you with feedback on your instruction?	12%	44%	29%	12%	4%	-
37. another teacher observe your classroom during the reading block?	47%	47%	4%	2%	-	1%
38. you observe another teacher's reading lesson?	62%	33%	2%	1%	2%	1%
39. paraprofessionals work with you during the reading block?	35%	9%	2%	2%	8%	44%
40. you look at reading assessment data?	1%	5%	13%	28%	43%	10%
41. your grade-level team meet?	2%	8%	27%	33%	26%	4%
42. you need to use the reading block to work on non-reading instruction or tasks? (i.e. writing, science, math, field trips, administrative tasks)?	66%	26%	3%	3%	1%	1%
43. you follow the precise language in the teachers' manual?	8%	3%	2%	1%	17%	73%
44. you use the templates?	14%	7%	3%	5%	24%	48%
45. you differentiate instruction (tailor instruction to individual students' needs) during the 90-minute reading block?	3%	2%	3%	6%	19%	69%
46. you use small-group instruction during the reading block?	7%	2%	-	3%	8%	81%

SECTION D: MEETINGS AND COLLABORATION

47. How do you prepare your reading lessons?

18% Always in collaboration with other classroom teachers
7% Often in collaboration with other classroom teachers
11% About half the time in collaboration with other classroom teachers and half the time on my own
35% Often on my own
29% Always on my own

48. This year, how often did the principal attend your grade-level meetings?

21% Never
15% Seldom
31% Sometimes
21% Usually
12% Always

49. This year, how often did the coach attend your grade-level meetings?

7% Never
7% Seldom
17% Sometimes
20% Usually
49% Always

50. This year, how often did you attend your grade-level meetings?

1% Never
1% Seldom
5% Sometimes
14% Usually
80% Always

51. Which of the following are **typical** topics at your grade-level meetings? (*select as many as apply*)

42% School-wide reading assessment data
90% Student-level reading assessment data
27% Reading research
37% Reading materials to use or purchase
36% Modifications to the core program
27% Templates and/or lesson maps
67% Student behavior/discipline
34% Special events (e.g., family literacy day)
67% Instructional strategies
82% Interventions
26% Information from the Reading First Data Retreat and/or Reading First Summit
58% Scheduling
77% Grouping
76% Problem solving for individual students
16% Topics not related to reading
43% Sustainability of Reading First (what will happen when funds are gone)
5% Other _____

52. Are you a member of the Reading Leadership Team (RLT) at your school?

36% Yes	58% No	6% There is no RLT at my school
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SECTION E: YOUR VIEWS ON READING FIRST

The following statements present a range of opinions about different components of Reading First. Please indicate your level of agreement with each statement. If a question is not applicable, please leave it blank.

This year...	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
53. Our school has a visible and effective Reading Leadership Team.	8%	7%	19%	42%	25%
54. Attending grade-level reading meetings is a good use of my time.	4%	5%	13%	47%	31%
55. Attending Reading Leadership Team meetings is a good use of my time. n = 39 (only members of RLT)	3%	3%	28%	46%	21%
56. Overall, the professional development I received through Reading First was ongoing and intensive.	10%	11%	31%	37%	10%
57. Overall, the professional development I received through Reading First focused on what happens in the classroom.	5%	4%	26%	53%	12%
58. I am very satisfied with the core reading program we are using at our school.	5%	3%	12%	46%	35%
59. The instructional strategies promoted under Reading First are very similar to my pre-service program training.	12%	23%	27%	34%	4%
60. I believe that reading instruction at our school has improved noticeably.	2%	1%	21%	34%	42%
61. I think the DIBELS is a valid, accurate indicator of student reading ability.	3%	6%	19%	45%	27%
62. Our school has an organized system for <u>administering</u> Reading First assessments (such as DIBELS).	-	3%	3%	38%	57%
63. Our school has an organized system for <u>analyzing and sharing</u> the results of Reading First assessments (such as DIBELS) with teachers.	-	1%	6%	38%	56%
64. I have seen our school's reading assessment data <u>disaggregated</u> (split up) by key demographic variables (i.e. race/ethnicity or free/reduced-price lunch).	13%	24%	17%	30%	16%
65. Reading First has significantly changed the way I teach reading.	5%	5%	23%	36%	32%
66. The intervention materials we use are well-matched to the needs of our struggling readers.	1%	5%	27%	51%	16%
67. Our school's intervention providers are well-trained to meet the needs of struggling readers.	4%	7%	24%	44%	21%
68. Our school does an excellent job of providing appropriate reading interventions to all students who need them.	2%	10%	23%	41%	25%
69. I have significant philosophical or pedagogical objections to the approach of Reading First.	36%	36%	18%	6%	4%
70. Our school has a collaborative culture.	2%	8%	17%	48%	26%
71. Teachers in this school trust each other.	2%	12%	15%	51%	21%
72. It's okay in this school to discuss feelings, worries, and frustrations with other teachers.	4%	8%	19%	51%	18%
73. Teachers respect other teachers who take the lead in school improvement efforts.	2%	6%	21%	54%	17%
74. Teachers at this school respect those colleagues who are experts at their craft.	1%	7%	12%	56%	24%
75. Teachers at this school really care about each other.	1%	6%	21%	51%	21%

This year...	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
76. The principal takes an interest in the professional development of teachers.	1%	7%	15%	39%	39%
77. The principal communicates a clear vision for our school.	4%	11%	12%	39%	35%
78. The principal makes clear to the staff his or her expectations for meeting instructional goals.	1%	9%	16%	42%	32%
79. The principal carefully tracks student academic progress.	-	7%	23%	40%	31%
80. In my view, Reading First overemphasizes the importance of using DIBELS results.	11%	24%	28%	25%	12%
81. Our reading coach is a knowledgeable resource about reading research and practices.	-	-	10%	36%	54%
82. Even when providing critical feedback, I feel our reading coach is an ally in helping me to improve my instruction.	1%	3%	9%	38%	49%
83. Our reading coach has helped me become more reflective about my teaching practice.	3%	3%	23%	41%	30%
84. Our reading coach has increased my understanding of how children learn to read.	4%	7%	33%	31%	26%
85. I am pleased that our school has a Reading First grant.	2%	3%	9%	30%	56%
86. I feel that I have a voice in our school's decision-making about Reading First.	6%	15%	29%	30%	21%
87. Instruction in other subjects has suffered because of all of the focus on Reading First.	6%	17%	27%	36%	15%
88. I strongly support the instructional changes that are occurring under Reading First.	2%	3%	24%	45%	26%
89. Our Reading First program is doing an excellent job meeting the needs of our ELL students.	3%	10%	47%	39%	2%
90. Our school uses reading materials that are well-matched to the needs of our ELL students.	2%	5%	52%	36%	5%
91. I feel equipped to meet the needs of my ELL students during reading instruction.	3%	11%	35%	49%	3%
92. The philosophy or pedagogy of our ELL program/services sometimes clash with Reading First.	2%	22%	60%	14%	2%
93. When our school no longer has Reading First funding, I think that I will go back to more or less the way I was teaching reading before.	23%	44%	23%	7%	4%

SECTION F: SUSTAINABILITY

		In your opinion, once your school no longer has the Reading First grant, which of the following program components would you like to see continue?			
		Definitely not	Probably not	Probably yes	Definitely yes
94.	Core program	2%	6%	34%	58%
95.	90-minute reading block	1%	7%	23%	69%
96.	DIBELS	-	7%	38%	56%
97.	Reading coach	6%	10%	32%	51%
98.	Ongoing professional development in reading	1%	6%	27%	66%
99.	Grouping	1%	3%	30%	66%
100.	Interventions	-	4%	22%	75%
101.	Grade-level meetings	1%	12%	24%	63%
102.	Reading Leadership Team	7%	19%	37%	38%

SECTION G: DEMOGRAPHICS

103. What is your primary teaching role this year? (select one)

- 86% Regular classroom teacher
- Specialist (select one)
 - Speech/language
 - 5% Language arts/reading (e.g., Title I, reading specialist)
 - Library
 - 7% Special education
 - 2% ESL/bilingual
- Paraprofessional
- I do not work directly with students

104. This year, which grade(s) do you teach during the reading block? For example, you might teach first- and second-grade students. (select all that apply).

27% Grade K	44% Grade 1	41% Grade 2	30% Grade 3	5% Other
1% I do not provide direct classroom instruction during the reading block.				

105. This year, what is the grade level of the material you teach from during the reading block? (select all that apply.) For example, you might teach using the second-grade Open Court materials.

26% K	41% Grade 1	41% Grade 2	22% Grade 3	6% Other
1% I do not provide direct classroom instruction during the reading block.				

106. How many years teaching experience do you have?

Range 0-34. Average 11.

107. How many years have you worked at this school?

Range 0-25. Average 7.

108. What are your educational credentials? (*select as many as apply*)

- 84% Bachelor's degree
- 37% Traditional teacher certification
- Emergency teacher certification
- Reading certification
- Master's degree
 - 3% In reading
 - 31% In area of education other than reading
 - 3% In discipline other than education
- Doctorate (Ph.D. or Ed.D.)

109. At which school do you work? *Your school name is used *only* to make sure we hear from each school. Your responses are confidential and no school names will be used in reporting.*

District	School	
Anchorage	Airport Heights	9
Anchorage	Creekside Park	14
Anchorage	Mt. View	13
Anchorage	Spring Hill	9
Anchorage	Ursa Minor	8
Anchorage	Tyson William	10
Fairbanks	Anderson	17
Fairbanks	Nordale	9
Fairbanks	Ticasuk Brown	15
Lake & Peninsula	Kokhanok	1
Lake & Peninsula	Newhalen	2
Lake & Peninsula	Nondalton	1
Lake & Peninsula	Perryville	1
Lake & Peninsula	Meshik	1

Thank you for your support of the evaluation!

APPENDIX B

Alaska Reading First—Site Visit Instruments for 2008

Coach Interview
Principal Interview
Teacher Interview
Classroom Observation Protocol
Classroom Observation Rubric

Alaska Reading First **Coach Interview 2008**

Professional Development & Technical Assistance

Here is a list of the primary trainings to date (*show list*) that you have received from the state this year.

- (a) What stands out as especially useful? Why?
- (b) What stands out as especially not useful? Why?
- (c) Overall, as a professional development package, how well did these offerings meet your needs as coach? (Please explain.)

District coordinator:

- (a) How helpful has your district coordinator been this year? Why?
- (b) What is the relationship (tone, feeling) between the district coordinator and your school? (Please explain.)

What other services or training could the state or district coordinator provide to **you as a Reading First coach?**

Coaching Role

- (a) Thinking about your job as coach, what are the two or three things you spend most of your time on? (*if they say: it depends, ask on what and see if that can get them to still identify the top things they do*)
- (b) How is this different from how you spent your time last year? (*acceptable responses: it isn't different; new coach so not applicable*)
- (c) If it is different, what would you say has made it change?

- (a) Some coaches say that they are not able to get into classrooms as much as they would like to or feel they should. To what degree has this been an issue for you?

(b) If it is an issue, what prevents you from spending more time in classrooms?

6. Tell me about working with inexperienced teachers this year, particularly those with 1 to 4 years of experience.

(a) Was this part of your role?

(b) Do new teachers have different needs than veteran teachers? Please describe.

Buy-In

7. How would you currently describe teachers' buy-in to Reading First? (*select one*)

- High
- Medium/Mixed
- Low

8. To what do you attribute this level of buy-in?

9. How do you work with resistance?

Communication and Collaboration

10. How do you pass on what you learn at district meetings and/or state meetings to teachers?

11. Thinking about your Reading Leadership Team and about what works well and what doesn't work well in terms of getting things done:

(a) What works well?

(b) What does not work well?

12. Thinking about grade-level meetings and about what works well and what doesn't work well in terms of getting things done:

(a) What works well?

(b) What doesn't work well?

Data and Assessment

13. Think about the work you do to collect and manage data for DIBELS benchmark assessments throughout the year. Is support for data collection and management for DIBELS benchmark assessments sufficient? If not, what other supports do you need?
14. This year, have there been any concerns about DIBELS benchmark administration and scoring? If so, what were they?
15. Think about the work you do to collect and manage data for **progress monitoring** throughout the year. Is support for data collection and management for progress monitoring sufficient? If not, what other supports do you need?
16. This year, have there been any concerns about **progress monitoring** administration and scoring? If so, what were they?
17. How, if at all, are teachers involved in data collection and management? (*Note: This refers to benchmark and progress monitoring.*)
18. (a) Do you think that your school is using data to its full potential?
(b) Why or why not?
(c) If not, what does your school need to make better use of data?

Instruction and Interventions

19. (a) How much do teachers modify the core program? (Please provide a specific example.)
(b) What kinds of modification are considered inappropriate? (Please provide at least one specific example.)
20. (a) Have your teachers been working on a specific aspect of instruction this year (for example, a focus on one component or a skill such as student engagement)?
(b) Why was this chosen as a focus?
(c) What changes have you seen in this area?

21. The next few questions are about your intervention program. They refer only to interventions provided outside of the reading block.

- (a) What have been the biggest achievements in your school's K-3 reading intervention program this year?
- (b) What have been the biggest challenges?
- (c) Understanding that there are often limited resources to provide interventions, which students do you focus your energy on? Why?

(For example, strategic or intensive, those closest to benchmark or furthest behind, specific grades?)

22. Are teachers able to sufficiently differentiate instruction (i.e. tailor instruction to individual students' needs) during the reading block? Why or why not?

English Language Learners

(Only at schools that serve ELL students. If you are unsure, ask.)

- 23. (a) How is Reading First working for your ELL students?
- (b) What have state Reading First staff done to support your work with ELL students?
- (c) What additional support do you need from the state Reading First office?

Overall

- 24. In your opinion, what are this school's prospects for sustaining Reading First without the grant money (or with reduced grant money)?
- 25. Is there anything else about Reading First in your school you think I should know?

**Alaska Reading First
State-Provided Professional Development 2007–2008**

When	What
*Aug 30-31, 2007	DIBELS trainings—for Fairbanks only
September 25-27, 2007	CORE Reading Coach's Institute
November 15-16, 2007	2007 Reading First Data Retreat
February 21-22	2007 Reading First Summit

* Coach might not have attended.

**Alaska Reading First
Principal Interview 2008**

Professional Development & Technical Assistance

1. Here is a list of the primary trainings to date (*show list*) that you have received from the state this year.
 - (d) What stands out as especially useful? Why?
 - (e) What stands out as especially not useful? Why?
 - (f) Overall, as a professional development package, how well did these offerings meet your needs as principal? (Please explain.)
2. (a) How helpful has the state coordinator been this year? Why?
(b) What about the district coordinators?
3. What other services or training could the state provide to **you as a Reading First principal?**

Leadership

4. What does the state expect from you as a Reading First principal?
5. Are some of those expectations more challenging than others? Which ones? Why?
6. Tell me about principal walk-throughs at your school.
 - (a) On average, how often do you observe a given teacher? (____ per ____)
 - (b) What checklists or tools, if any, do you use during walk-throughs?
 - (c) How much priority do you think should be placed on principal walk-throughs? Why?
7. How helpful has the district been with Reading First this year? Please explain.

Buy-In

8. How would you currently describe teachers' buy-in to Reading First? (*select one*)
 - High
 - Medium/Mixed
 - Low
9. To what do you attribute this level of buy-in?
10. How do you work with resistance?

Communication & Collaboration

11. Do you think that attending Reading Leadership Team meetings is a good use of your time? Why or why not?
12. What about grade-level meetings; is it a good use of your time to attend them? Why or why not?

Sustainability

13. (a) What is the typical level of turnover of K-3 classroom teachers in your building? (percentage)
(b) How do you bring new teachers up to speed on Reading First?
14. (a) In your opinion, what are this school's prospects for sustaining Reading First without the grant money (or with reduced grant money)?
(b) What has the state done to help you prepare for the end of the grant?
(c) What else can the state do to support your school in sustaining Reading First?

Overall

15. Is there anything else about Reading First in your school you think I should know?

**Alaska Reading First
State-Provided Professional Development 2007–2008**

When	What
Aug 30-31, 2007	DIBELS trainings—for Fairbanks only
October 16-18, 2007	CORE Reading Leader Institute
November 15-16, 2007	2007 Reading First Data Retreat
February 21-22	2007 Reading First Summit

Alaska Reading First

Teacher Interview 2008

Designed for individual teacher interviews (2 per school, 15-20 minutes each)

Opening

Thank you so much for taking time out of your busy day to meet with me. I have a few questions for you about Reading First, what it has been like at your school, and what it has meant to you, personally, to have this grant. While we talk, I will be taking (hand or computer) notes to capture your responses to these questions. My notes from today are completely confidential: I will not share anything you say with your colleagues, coach, or principal. The data from our interview here go into a big pool of data from teachers at all the schools we are visiting so we can understand, across the state, what some of the overall trends are. Nothing you say will be attached to your name or your school's name. Before I begin, do you have any questions for me?

What grade do you currently teach? _____

How many years of teaching experience do you have (including this year)? _____

(Note this does not include years being a para/aide but would include years as a specialist.)

1. (a) In Reading First, there is often an expectation to closely follow the core program. At your school, to what degree are you expected to follow the core program?
(b) In your opinion, are these expectations reasonable?
2. (a) Does your school have an intervention program outside the reading block for struggling readers?
(b) If no, why not? (If yes, go to (c).)
(c) In your school's intervention program, what is working well and what is not working?
3. Has your coach helped you change your instruction this year? If so, how (please provide an example)?
4. Do you think that attending grade-level team meetings is a good use of your time? Why or why not?
5. To what degree is Reading First good for you as a teacher? Why?

Classroom Observation Protocol

Reading First 2008 Classroom Observation Protocol					
State:	<u>AK</u>	<u>AZ</u>	<u>ID</u>	<u>MT</u>	<u>WA</u>
Date:	School & District:				
Teacher:	Evaluator:				

Grades of students (circle main grade level or more than one if there are many Ss from different grades):					
K	1	2	3	Other _____	
Instructional Level:					
ABOVE	AT	BELOW	MIXED		

Observation start time:					
Observation end time:					
TOTAL Observation Minutes (minimum 20):					
Number of students <u>at start of observation</u> :					
Number of adults besides the teacher (present for part <i>or</i> all of the observation):					
What are other adults doing? (check all that apply)					
<input type="checkbox"/> Teaching small group(s) <input type="checkbox"/> Working 1:1 with students <input type="checkbox"/> Circulating around the room <input type="checkbox"/> Assessment			<input type="checkbox"/> Providing ELL assistance to students <input type="checkbox"/> Not working with students (e.g., grading) <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____		
Is this a walk-to-read class or a self-contained classroom?					
<input type="checkbox"/> WTR <input type="checkbox"/> Self-contained					
Is the teacher using the teacher's manual from the core reading program during your observation?					
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes – reading directly from it		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes – consults briefly		<input type="checkbox"/> No – but it's open and/or out	
<input type="checkbox"/> Check if instruction is clearly <i>not</i> using the core reading program. Explain:					

Use the following space to record what happens during each 5-minute observation block, a separate sheet for each block. Include both what the teacher is doing and what students are doing. Also describe transitions. At the end of the five minutes, look around and count up the number of students off-task and total number of students.

OBSERVATION BLOCK # 1		
Size of group (number of students) working with teacher _____		
Time	Notes of what happens	Labels/Notes
	<i>Please include a sentence or two to provide the context or big picture of what is going on.</i> Context:	

BREAK. Number of students off-task: _____ Total Students in the room: _____

OBSERVATION BLOCK # 2		
Size of group working with teacher _____		
Time	Activities	Labels/Notes

Number of Students off-task: _____ Total Students in the room: _____

OBSERVATION BLOCK # 3		
Size of group working with teacher _____		
Time	Activities	Labels/Notes

Number of Students off-task: _____ Total Students in the room: _____

OBSERVATION BLOCK # 4		
Size of group working with teacher _____		
Time	Activities	Labels/Notes

Number of Students off-task: _____ Total Students in the room: _____

Observation Ratings

Try to complete the ratings on the same day as the observation but after the observation is complete.

A. TIME IN SMALL GROUP

Total Minutes of Small Group Instruction (6 or fewer): _____

B. FOCUS OF INSTRUCTION

What was the <u>main focus</u> of the teachers' instruction for each 5-minute block you observed? (Choose up to 2 per block.)									
		Phonemic Awareness	Phonics & Decoding (+ sight words)		Fluency	Vocabulary	Comprehension	Directions/ Transitions	Other Subject
Block1									
Block2									
Block3									
Block4									
<input type="checkbox"/> Check if you saw the use of WRFTAC templates.									

C. COMPREHENSION

In a comprehension lesson, did you see any of the following?									
<input type="checkbox"/> Check here if there was no comprehension lesson.									
Block1	Use of Graphic Organizers	Look-back citation	ID of Main Idea/Details	Questions to generate HOT	Recall questions	Retell (beginning, mid_end)	Summarizing	Response Journals	Background knowledge
Block2									Connections (self-to-text or text-to-self)
Block3									
Block4									

Other comprehension:

D. INSTRUCTION FROM TEACHER & ON-GOING ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING

Always rate the instruction overall (across the blocks). Provide block numbers where there is evidence of 0, 1, or 4 scores.

Remember to refer to the rubric!

1. Lesson is clearly presented. See block(s) #_____	0	1	2	3	4
2. The teacher models the work or thinking processes. See block(s) #_____	0	1	2	3	4
3. The teacher guides students through thinking with effective questioning. See block(s) #_____	0	1	2	3	4
4. All students are engaged in the lesson. See block(s) #_____	0	1	2	3	4
5. Students have opportunities to practice the content of the lesson. See block(s) #_____	0	1	2	3	4
6. The teacher monitors student understanding. See block(s) #_____	0	1	2	3	4
7. The teacher provides clear, direct, and frequent feedback. See block(s) #_____	0	1	2	3	4

E. IDENTIFICATION OF PROBLEM AREAS

Did you see any of the following “problematic” issues?

<input type="checkbox"/> Time is lost due to lengthy transitions or directions	<i>In general >4 minutes transition is a problem – use your judgment for exceptions – explain if necessary.</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Teacher did not have materials ready for lesson or activity prior to starting.	<i>This includes the start of the lesson or any time after a transition.</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Students were confused and teacher did not adjust the lesson	<i>Should be evident in your notes (at least some students answer incorrectly or inconsistently).</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Too much teacher talking time	<i>Should be evident in your notes; generally a time when students do not get enough opportunity to talk (teacher talks excessively, tells personal stories, goes on tangents)</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Material seemed too easy and/or was presented too slowly (students were bored)	<i>Should be evident in your notes (students fidget, yawn, fall asleep).</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Interruptions to the 90-minute block	<i>Students arriving late are not an interruption unless their arrival actually disrupts the lesson. Announcements over the loudspeaker, fire drill, nurse coming to check for lice - these are examples of interruptions.</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Round-robin reading	<i>Any time the teacher moves in a predictable pattern to call on the next student to read, small or large group.</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____	

F. GUIDE TO QUALITATIVE NOTES

In your qualitative notes, are there (choose all that apply):

Especially positive examples of

- Phonemic awareness
- Phonics/decoding
- Fluency
- Vocabulary
- Comprehension
- Classroom management or student engagement
- Other _____

Do not check “positive example of fluency” if you rated the lesson below a 3 in clarity or engagement.

Especially problematic examples of

- Phonemic awareness
- Phonics/decoding
- Fluency
- Vocabulary
- Comprehension
- Classroom management or student engagement
- Other _____

Why?

G. SHORT SUMMARY. Please write a 2-3 line summary of the lesson.

Classroom Observation Rubric

Cross-State Reading First 2008 Classroom Observation Rubric

SCORING DIRECTIONS

Please use the following set of scoring guides to rate general areas of your classroom. Each area should be rated using a scale of “0” to “4.” There are narrative descriptions for each of the ratings from 1 (the lowest quality) to 4 (the highest quality).

- 1) You will notice that “0” is given if the area was non-existent. It does not always indicate something negative. For example, a teacher might not have used explicit modeling because the students already knew how to do the activity. In this situation, modeling was not appropriate and also there were no “missed opportunities.” The teacher would receive a “0”
- 2) Assign the column rating if the classroom meets all or the majority of descriptors.
- 3) If the classroom meets different descriptors across ratings, then average your ratings for each descriptor or give the rating that BEST describes that classroom.

If you give an extreme rating – “1” or “4” —please label the example in your classroom visit notes in the LABEL column, if possible. This will help us to pull out illustrations for these ratings.

Area 1: Lesson is clearly presented.

CLARITY	0	1	2	3	4
Clear, easy to follow		Not clear	Somewhat clear	Clear	Exceptionally clear
Accurate		Many inaccuracies	Largely accurate, but with some errors	Usually accurate	Always accurate
Apparent student understanding	No reading instruction to rate.	Often/always don't understand	Some Ss don't understand or all Ss don't understand some parts	Most all Ss understand most everything in the lesson	Ss always understand
Flow		Mostly choppy, disorganized	Many parts are disorganized; some parts are smooth	Usually smooth	Always smooth

You would choose “0” or “No instruction to rate” if you observed for the entire time an assessment being given or no instruction, such as the teacher sitting at her desk grading papers.

Inaccuracies might include mispronunciations or incorrect definitions of words, giving inaccurate background information about a text, etc. If the teacher makes an error but then corrects it, don’t count that as an inaccuracy.

Area 2: The teacher models the work or thinking process.

MODELING	0	1	2	3	4
Frequency		When a concept was new or difficult for Ss, T never modeled	When a concept was new or difficult for Ss, T sometimes modeled	When a concept was new or difficult for Ss, T often modeled	When a concept was new or difficult for Ss, T always modeled
Accuracy & Clarity	No examples of modeling	Always or almost always models incorrectly or unclearly	Sometimes models incorrectly or unclearly	Usually correct and clear	Always very clear and very accurate
Missed opportunities for modeling		Many missed opportunities	Some missed opportunities	Few missed opportunities	No missed opportunities

A “0” rating doesn’t have to be negative – it might not always be appropriate to use explicit modeling. However, if modeling was needed but the teacher did not do any modeling, then these are “missed opportunities” and the rating would be a “1.”

Use of templates is a type of modeling. Incorrect/inaccurate modeling might include mispronunciations of words, not reading fluently, giving incorrect information about the sound a letter makes, etc.

Area 3: The teacher guides students' thinking with effective questioning.

GUIDING QUESTIONS	0	1	2	3	4
Frequency	Once	Sometimes	Often	Regularly built into the lesson	
Clarity	Always or almost always unclear	Sometimes unclear	Almost always clear	Always clear and especially thoughtful	
Missed opportunities	Many missed opportunities (T tells rather than supports with Qs)	Some missed opportunities	Few missed opportunities	No missed opportunities	

A “0” doesn’t have to be negative – it might not always be appropriate to use questions to guide students because students already know how to do.

***Note:** effective questioning does not really occur with the use of templates, which keeps “teacher talk” to a minimum and has the teacher stick to a script.*

Area 4: All students are engaged in the lesson.

STUDENT ENGAGE-MENT	0	1	2	3	4
Who participates	Many students are not actively participating	At least 70% of Ss	At least 85% of Ss	All students	
How much of the time	No one is participating at all; (you probably will not use).	Very little of the time	At least 70% of the time	At least 85% of the time	
Off-task behavior	A great deal	Sometimes	Very little	None	

The focus here is on the STUDENTS and their level of participation and engagement.

Area 5: Students have opportunities to practice the content of the lesson.

OPPOR-TUNITIES TO PRACTICE	0	1	2	3	4
Amount	No opportunities provided (Ss listen and T talks)	Inadequate for all students	Inadequate for some Ss; only a few Ss get to practice	Adequate for almost all students	Adequate for all students
Quality		Opportunities do not make sense	Opportunities are not very meaningful	Ss practice a meaningful skill	Opportunities to practice are very meaningful
Partner, Individual, Group		Only one kind	Mostly one kind of practice	2 or more kinds of practice	All three kinds of practice
Missed opportunities		Yes - many	Yes – some	Perhaps one or a few but practice is regular	No opportunities missed

This refers only to the group you are watching the teacher work with. So if the teacher is working with six students and other students are working individually, you rate this area based on the teacher's group of six students. [Note: when the teacher provides opportunities, student engagement is then promoted.]

Area 6: The teacher monitors student understanding and adjusts lesson.

MONITORS UNDER-STANING	0	1	2	3	4
Frequency of Monitoring	DO NOT USE – Ts should always be monitoring. If Ts are not, it is a '1'.	Little or no monitoring	There is some monitoring, but not enough	Regular monitoring through most of the lesson	Frequent monitoring throughout
Adjustment of Lesson		T keeps going with the lesson even though Ss are not responding correctly	Some of the time, the T keeps going even though Ss don't understand	The T may make some adjustments to the lesson (repeating a section)	The T makes adjustments to lesson based on how well Ss are understanding
Who is Monitored		Only a few students	Some students	Most students as a group or many students as individuals	Most individuals and the group as a whole
Attends to Errors		Often ignores student errors.	Sometimes ignores student errors.	Corrects all or all but one error.	Corrects errors, goes back to check again that Ss understand

Note: even if you observe an informal classroom assessment, you can rate the teacher's monitoring. A teacher who sits in the front of the room calling out spelling words without circulating or responding to students would receive a 1.

Monitoring students as a group includes really listening to choral responses, noticing if not all students answer the same way, and looking around to see if all the students are responding.

Area 7: The teacher provides clear, direct, and frequent feedback.

FEEDBACK	0	1	2	3	4
Frequency	No feedback given.	Very little feedback	Infrequent	Regular feedback through most of the lesson	Frequent feedback throughout
Tone		Negative/ inappropriate	Mixed, with some negative tone	Neutral and/or positive	Neutral and/or Positive +
Clarity		Always or almost always unclear	Often unclear	Usually clear	Always clear and especially thoughtful
To Whom		To only a few students.	To some students	To most students as a group or many students as individuals	To most individuals and the group as a whole
Missed opportunities		Yes - many	Yes – some	Perhaps one or a few but feedback is regular	No opportunities missed

Note: When there is an absence of any acknowledgments, the student is NOT receiving any feedback.

APPENDIX C

Agenda for the Alaska Reading First Summit–February 2008

Alaska Department of Education & Early Development



Alaska Reading First Summit February 21 and 22, 2008 Captain Cook Hotel, Anchorage

DAY ONE AGENDA

Thursday, February 21

Time	Type	Description	Room
8:30 a.m. – 8:45 a.m.	Keynotes	Welcome ----- Ruth Baumgartner, Department of Education & Early Development	Fore Deck
8:45 a.m. – 10:15 a.m.		Keynote Address: <i>Reading First and Response to Intervention: Implementing the Model in the “Real World”</i> ----- Carolyn Denton, Consultant Reading intervention research has clearly demonstrated the need to intervene early for students who are at-risk for reading difficulties, and many suggest that intervention be provided through a school-wide tiered intervention approach. Implementing such an approach has great potential, but also great challenges. Dr. Denton will discuss both the promise and challenges of school-wide reading intervention, with an emphasis on initiating and sustaining initiatives even when resources are limited.	Fore Deck
10:15 – 10:30 a.m.		BREAK	
10:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.		Keynote Address: “Alaska Reading First Overview – Where are we and where are we going?” ----- Ruth Baumgartner, Department of Education and Early Development	Fore Deck
12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.		LUNCH	On your own
1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.	Breakout Sessions	Teach the Core and “Kick it up a Notch” – Adapting Instruction to Meet the Needs of Struggling Readers in Tier I ----- Carolyn Denton, Consultant	Quadrant
1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.		Annual Growth vs. Catch Up Growth: Responding to Instruction & Intervention (RTI) ----- Danielle Thompson, Consultant	Resolution
1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.		Effective Instruction: Strategies for English Language Learners ----- Frances Bessellieu and Carrie Cole, Consultants	Endeavor
1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.		Response to Instruction: Reading First and RTI Working Together ----- Erin Chapparro, WRFFTAC	Adventure
1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.		The Multisyllabic/Vocabulary Connection – Moving Students to Morphemic Knowledge ----- Jennifer Ashlock, Consultant	Voyager

*See Back for Breakout Descriptions

Day 1 – Breakout Session Descriptions

Time	Description	Room
1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.	<p>Teach the Core and “Kick it up a Notch” – Adapting Instruction to Meet the Needs of Struggling Readers in Tier I ----- Carolyn Denton, Consultant</p> <p>A large percentage of struggling readers can successfully learn to read with quality classroom reading instruction (Tier 1) alone. In this session, Dr. Denton highlights key components of effective instruction for these students and demonstrates simple instructional techniques that can be integrated into classroom reading instruction to support students with reading difficulties. These instructional strategies are effective for English language learners as well as other students with reading challenges. The session emphasizes grades K-3, but general principles can be applied to older students.</p>	<i>Quadrant</i>
1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.	<p>Annual Growth vs. Catch Up Growth: Responding to Instruction & Intervention (RTI) ----- Danielle Thompson, Consultant</p>	<i>Resolution</i>
1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.	<p><i>Effective Instruction: Strategies for English Language Learners</i></p> <p>----- Frances Bessellieu and Carrie Cole, Consultants</p> <p>Like any other population of learners with academic difficulties, struggling ELLs require effective instructional approaches to prevent further difficulties and support their academic achievement. This session focuses on practical and engaging strategies to effectively scaffold the learning of English learners and at-risk students. Participants will explore vocabulary research and research-based interactive vocabulary teaching strategies to use before, during, and after reading. Effective reading comprehension strategies will also be explained and demonstrated, including practical strategies for helping students to comprehend nonfiction texts. Participants will actively experience all strategies in action and leave with the confidence to implement these strategies into the classroom.</p>	<i>Endeavor</i>
1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.	<p>Response to Instruction: Reading First and RTI Working Together</p> <p>----- Erin Chapparro, WRFFTAC</p> <p>By the end of the presentation participants will be able to describe the foundations of RtI. They will know the many factors that go into implementing the RtI. Participants will be introduced to SPBS, School-wide Positive Behavior Supports and will see how Reading First, SPBS, and RtI work together and are extremely complimentary. Brief videos will be shown of schools implementing the named school-wide models.</p>	<i>Adventure</i>
1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.	<p>The Multisyllabic/Vocabulary Connection – Moving Students to Morphemic Knowledge ----- Jennifer Ashlock, Consultant</p> <p>Teachers have expressed concern across the nation for students, especially in grade 2 and up, who are not moving to the Orthographic stage of reading. This session will outline explicit steps with helping students to read multisyllabic words while making the needed connection to word structure and morphemic knowledge.</p>	<i>Voyager</i>

Alaska Department of Education & Early Development



Alaska Reading First Summit February 21 and 22, 2007 Captain Cook Hotel, Anchorage

DAY TWO AGENDA

Friday, February 22

Time	Type	Description	Room
8:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.	<i>Breakout Sessions</i>	<i>Student Focused Coaching- Coaching with a Problem-Solving Focus ----- Carolyn Denton, Consultant</i>	<i>Quadrant</i>
8:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.		<i>Getting to Know the Details of the "Ph" words (Phonological Processing, Phonetics, Phoneme Awareness and Phonics) ----- Danielle Thompson, Consultant</i>	<i>Resolution</i>
8:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.		<i>Turbocharged Interventions for Struggling Readers in K – 5 ----- Frances Bessellieu and Carrie Cole, Consultants</i>	<i>Endeavor</i>
8:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.		<i>Vocabulary Instruction Made Explicit ----- Erin Chapparro, WRFFTAC</i>	<i>Adventure</i>
8:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.		<i>The Multisyllabic/Vocabulary Connection – Moving Students to Morphemic Knowledge ----- Jennifer Ashlock, Consultant</i>	<i>Voyager</i>
11:30 a.m. – 12:45 p.m.		LUNCH	on your own

12:45 p.m. - 2:15 p.m.	Keynotes	<p>Keynote Address: Sustaining an Effective Comprehensive Reading Plan ----- <i>Frances Bessellieu and Carrie Cole, Consultants</i></p> <p>This session focuses on examining implementation priorities that establish and maintain program/plan fidelity and are aligned with Reading First and NCLB. Process of procedures and guidelines used to ensure alignment with the Comprehensive Reading Plan and sustaining components such as instructional support, professional development, action planning, data analysis, leadership, monitoring and coaching will be discussed.</p>	Fore Deck
2:15 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.		BREAK	
2:30 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.		<p>Data- Then, Now, and Moving Forward ----- <i>Jennifer Ashlock, Consultant</i></p> <p>This session will highlight the differences between reading assessment years ago and what we are being asked to do now. How is the data collection really different? Why does it really matter which assessments we chose? What are the real reasons we can't move students to Benchmark? What's next?</p>	Fore Deck

***See Back for Breakout Descriptions**

Day 2 – Breakout Session Descriptions

Time	Description	Room
8:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.	<p><i>Student Focused Coaching- Coaching with a Problem-Solving Focus</i></p> <p>----- Carolyn Denton, Consultant</p> <p>The reading coach faces many challenges, including working with reluctant teachers. Student-Focused Coaching, developed by Dr. Denton and Dr. Jan Hasbrouck, is a model of instructional coaching that emphasizes collaborative problem-solving. Unique features of this model may reduce feelings of evaluation and increase the likelihood that teachers will cooperate with coaches.</p>	<i>Quadrant</i>
8:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.	<p>Beyond CBMs – What do I do next?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Danielle Thompson, Consultant 	<i>Resolution</i>
8:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.	<p>Turbocharged Interventions for Struggling Readers in K – 5</p> <p>----- <i>Frances Bessellieu and Carrie Cole, Consultants</i></p> <p>Shatter the myth that it is too late! Students who have slipped through the cracks need intensive, explicit, accelerated, systematic instruction to close the achievement gap. This session discusses four areas of intervention that meet the criteria for NCLB, Reading First, Title I and Special Education: 1) Characteristics of struggling and at-risk students, 2) Research on Interventions, 3) Models and Examples of Interventions, 4) Specific Intervention Recommendations.</p>	<i>Endeavor</i>
8:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.	<p>Vocabulary Instruction Made Explicit ----- Erin Chapparro, WRFFTAC</p> <p>In this presentation participants will learn how to select vocabulary and how to teach vocabulary with the explicitness that at-risk students require. Participants will receive a model of this instruction through the presenter as well as videos of Dr. Anita Archer teaching students in the elementary grades. Participants will be given routine cards to guide them in the process of improving their vocabulary instruction for at-risk learners.</p>	<i>Adventure</i>

APPENDIX D

CORE Site Visit Schedule: 2007–2008

CORE Site Visit Schedule, 2007–2008 (as of May 1, 2008)

Anchorage School District

Airport Heights: September 5-7; November 27-8; February 5-6; April 15-16
Creekside Park: September 5-6; November 13-14; January 30-31; March 3; May 12-13
Mountain View: November 30; February 4; April 14; + one more (to be scheduled)
Spring Hill: August 17; + two more days to be scheduled
Ursa Minor: August 30; January 16-17; April 22-23

Fairbanks:

Anderson: January 29
Nordale: September 25; April 8
Ticasuk Brown: September 26; January 30; April 9
