

ARIZONA READING FIRST ANNUAL EVALUATION 2008

APRC, NWREL
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AZ Reading First Evaluation 2008

AZ Reading First (RF) has been implemented in

- 85 Cycle 2 schools for two years
 - 61 “new” schools
 - 24 “expanding” schools
- 51 Cycle 1, “continuing” schools
 - 46 Cohort 1 schools for five years
 - 5 Cohort 2 schools for four years.

Student Outcomes

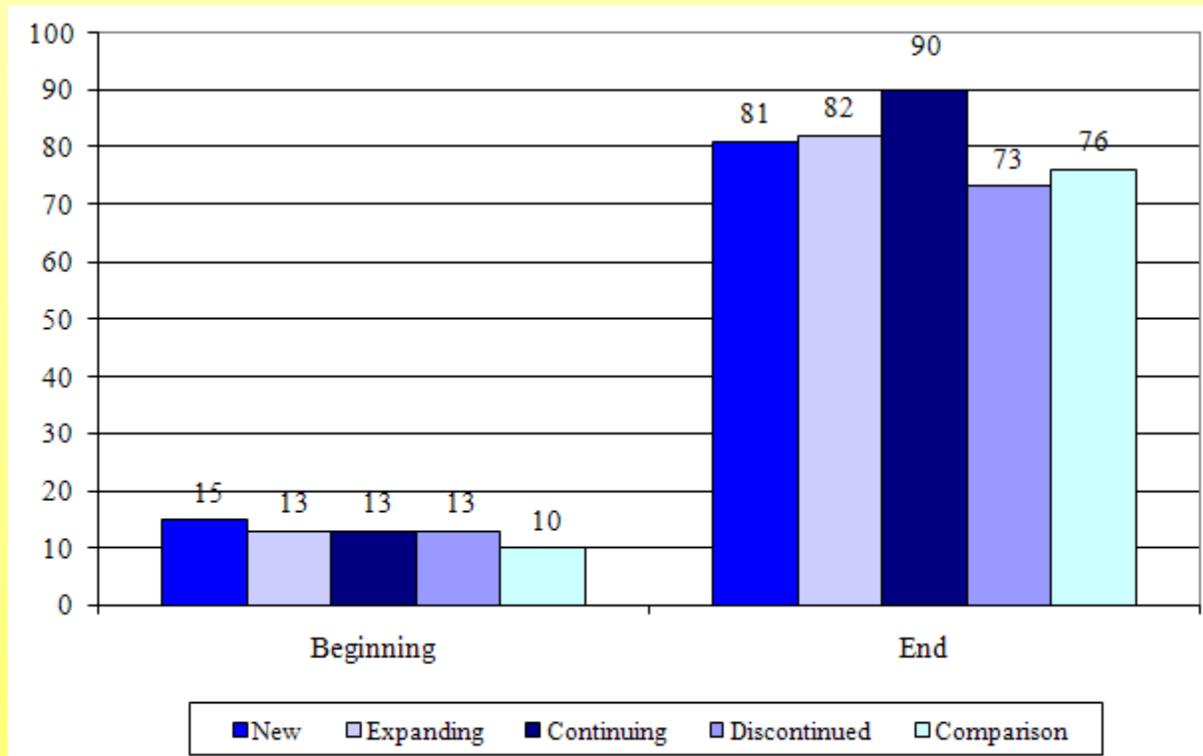
Student outcomes were measured using

- The Dynamic Indicator of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS)
- Arizona Instrument to Measure Standards (AIMS) reading test

Student Outcomes: DIBELS

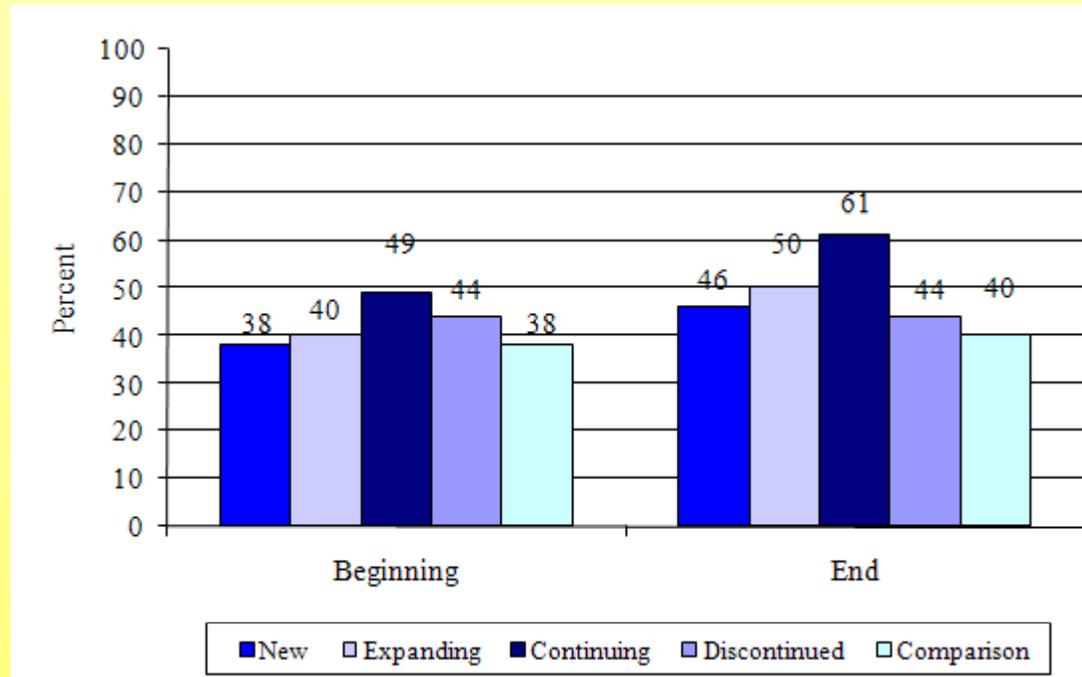
- Kindergarten, 2nd and 3rd grades (all cohorts) showed increases in the percentage of students in the benchmark category at the end of the year compared to the beginning, while 1st grade showed declines.
- Students in kindergarten continued to have the greatest increases.

Student Outcomes: DIBELS



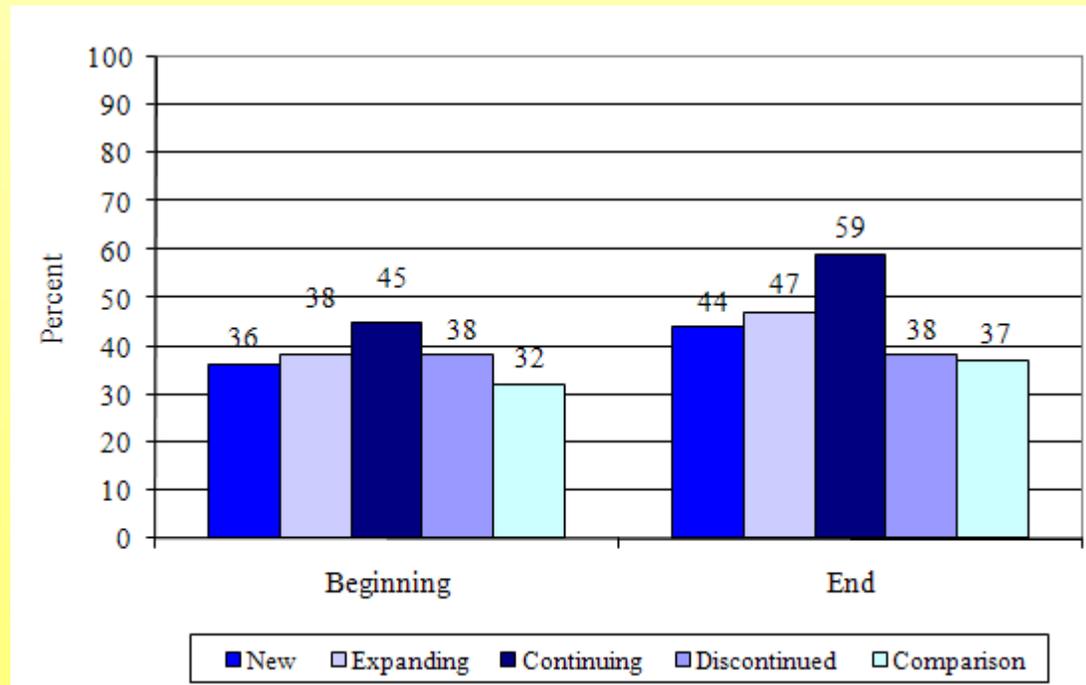
Kindergarten Instructional Support Recommendation – Benchmark

Student Outcomes: DIBELS



2nd grade Instructional Support Recommendation – Benchmark

Student Outcomes: DIBELS

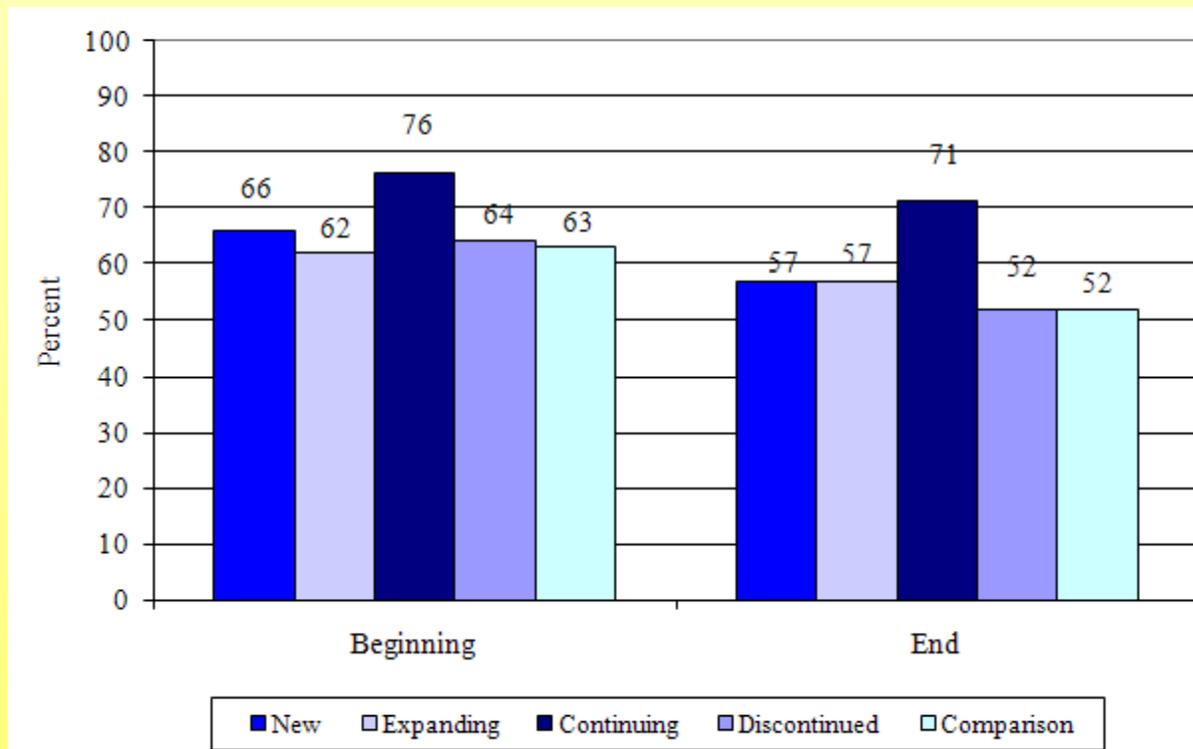


3rd grade Instructional Support Recommendation – Benchmark

Student Outcomes: 1st grade DIBELS

- 1st grade students showed academic losses over the year on DIBELS for all cohorts.
- Students entering 1st grade this year began the year 14 percentage points ahead of 1st graders in the same schools the year before.

Student Outcomes: DIBELS



1st Grade Instructional Support Recommendation – Benchmark

1st-Grade Beginning- and End-of-Year Percentages at Benchmark, 2007 & 2008

Group	2007 Beginning of Year Benchmark %	2007 End of Year Benchmark %	2007 Difference in % Benchmark Beginning to End of Year	2008 Beginning of Year Benchmark %	2008 End of Year Benchmark %	2008 Difference in % Benchmark Beginning to End of Year	% Difference Benchmark End 08 compared to End 07
Combined Cycle 2 New-Exp	50	47	-3	64	57	-7	+10
New, C4	47	44	-3	66	57	-9	+13
Expanding, C3	54	51	-3	62	57	-5	+6
Continuing Cycle 1, C 1&2	73	66	-7	76	71	-5	+5
Discontinued	82	59	-23	64	52	-6	-7
Comparison	55	48	-7	63	52	-9	+4

Student Outcomes: DIBELS – Cycle 2 Compared to Cohort 1

- Despite the losses during the 1st grade, the performance of Cycle 2 schools was similar to, or slightly better than, schools in Cohort 1 when they had implemented RF the same amount of time.
- RF students in the program for four years had a higher percentage of students in the DIBELS benchmark category at the beginning and end of the year compared to all Continuing Cohort 1 students.

End of Year Percentages at Benchmark, Cycle 2 and Cohort 1 – First Two Years of Implementation

Group	Cohort 1 2003-04 End of Year Benchmark %	Cohort 1 2004-05 End of Year Benchmark %	Cohort 1 Difference in % Benchmark End Yr 1 to End Yr 2	Cycle 2 2006-07 End of Year Benchmark %	Cycle 2 2007-08 End of Year Benchmark %	Cycle 2 Difference in % Benchmark End Yr 1 to End Yr 2	% Difference Benchmark End Yr 2 Cycle 2 compared to End Yr 2 C1
Kindergarten	53	76	23	68	81	13	5
1st grade	41	54	13	47	57	10	3
2nd grade	32	46	14	41	48	7	2
3rd grade	31	44	13	35	45	10	1

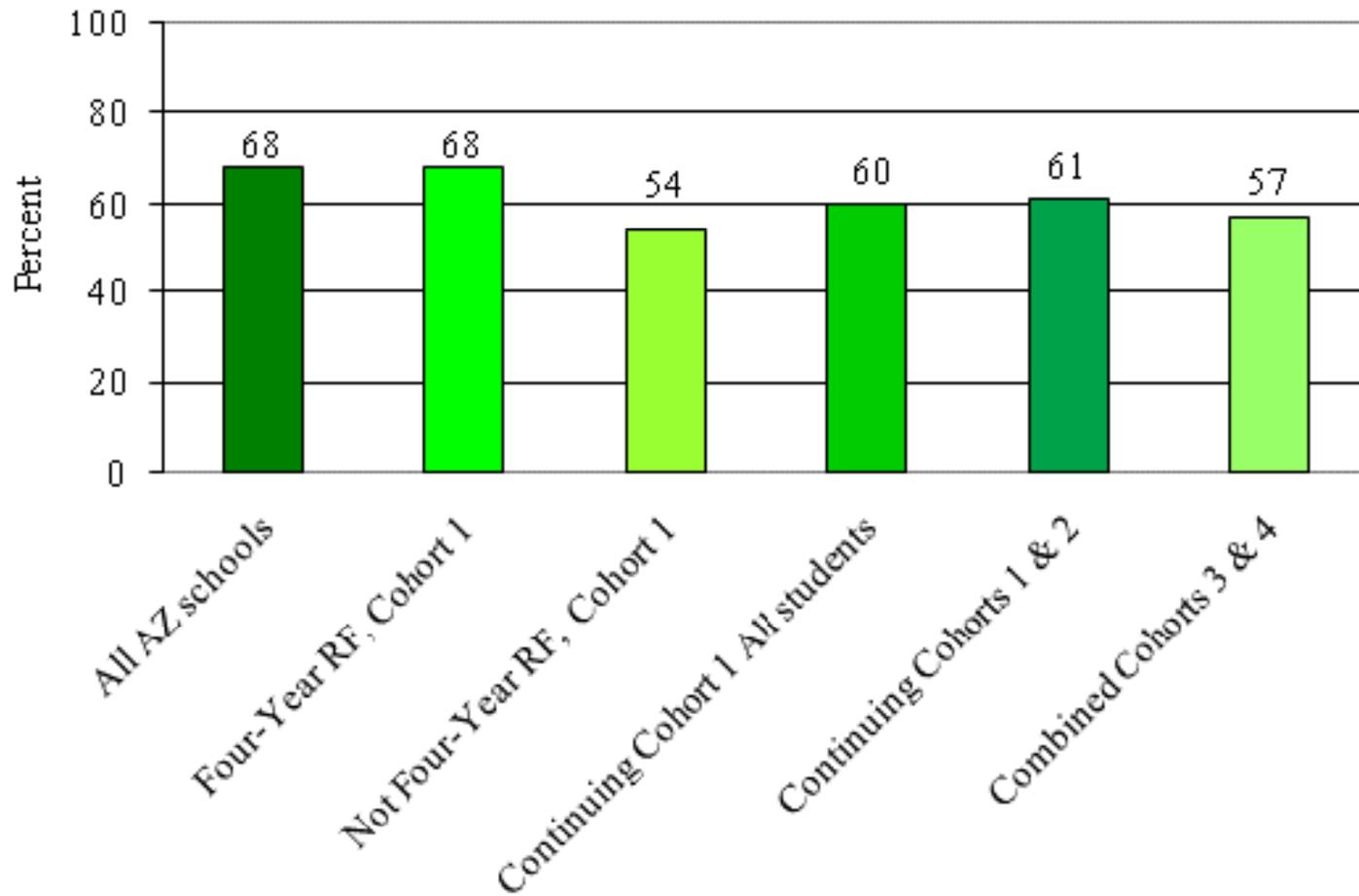
Student Outcomes: AIMS

- In 2008, at least half of the students passed the 3rd grade reading assessment.
- The Continuing Cycle 1 group had the highest percentage of students passing AIMS compared to other cohorts.

Student Outcomes: AIMS – Four Year RF Students

- The same percentage of continuously enrolled, “Four-Year,” RF students passed the 3rd grade AIMS reading test as did all Arizona students (68%).
- 68% of four-year RF students passed compared to 54% of non-continuously enrolled students ($p < .01$).

AIMS 2008 3rd grade Reading Percent Passing (Meets or Exceeds)



Implementation

Implementation was measured in Cycle 2 by

- Surveys, Implementation Checklist, interviews, classroom observations, intervention observations.

Areas of implementation include

- Instruction and Interventions
- Leadership
- Professional Development
- Use of Assessment Data

Instruction & Interventions



- For Cycle 2 schools, the perceived impact of RF on instruction continued to be very positive this year.
- Most coaches, principals, and teachers agreed that reading instruction had improved in their school over the last year.
- Schools were using a research-based core curriculum with high levels of fidelity to the core program during an uninterrupted 90-minute reading block.

Instruction & Interventions



- Most teachers, though not all, differentiated instruction to meet students' needs. This use of differentiation increased from last year.
- Many accomplished this goal through grouping and using other adults such as paraprofessionals to respond to the needs of individual students.



Instruction & Interventions

- Instruction in the five essential components varied by grade, and most of these variations were appropriate to the grade level.
- Observers noted that the clarity of instruction increased compared to the previous year and that student engagement remained acceptable.
- However, teachers were seen doing slightly less modeling, scaffolding, and monitoring of student understanding.



Instruction & Interventions

- The percentage of schools that were able to provide interventions to all eligible students increased dramatically. Still, only slightly more than half of the schools were able to provide all eligible students with interventions in 2007 – 2008.
- Many coaches reported unacceptably high group-sizes; 45% reported that intensive students with intervention providers in groups of more than 6 students, 29% in groups of five or fewer and 26% reported groups of 6.

Instruction & Interventions

- The percentages of coaches who perceived obstacles to providing interventions decreased compared to last year; the most frequently reported obstacle was insufficient staffing.
- Cycle 1 coaches and teachers reported that the percentage of intervention providers who were well-trained declined. They also noted a decline in schools doing an excellent job providing interventions. Some coaches noted that the school provided interventions to fewer students this year.

Instruction & Interventions

- Percentages of coaches, principals, and teachers who agreed their reading program did an excellent job of meeting the needs of ELL students increased.
- Still, about 6 in 10 coaches and principals agreed and one-third of teachers reported that their reading program was doing an excellent job of meeting the needs of ELL students.



Leadership - District



- SRSs indicate that LEAs again this school year provided consistent support to schools

Implementation Checklist-Local Education Agency	"Yes" Percentage		
	Fall '06	Spr. '07	Spr. '08
Does your LEA leadership facilitate a monthly meeting with RF schools/principals to analyze assessment data?	48	47	61
Does your LEA support school-level RF activities with adequate resources?	88	94	91
Does your LEA provide technical assistance, as needed based on information gathered at monthly RF coordination meetings?	72	82	84
Does your LEA monitor monthly RF activities and intervenes when necessary?	74	85	88



Leadership - Observations

- Principals remained committed to consistent walkthroughs and almost all mentioned the instructional benefit to performing them. SRS reported high levels of principal classroom observation and feedback to teachers.

Implementation Checklist – Leadership Observations		91-100%	Total >50%
The principal observes reading instruction in each K-3 classroom to ensure research-based instruction is sustained.	Spr. '08	48	87
	Spr. '07	38	77
	Fall '06	40	54
The principal provides constructive feedback to all teachers at least once a month based on LEA observation requirements, and/or walkthroughs and assessment data.	Spr. '08	45	82
	Spr. '07	22	62
	Fall '06	26	47

Leadership Buy-In



- Buy-in from principals and coaches remained high, teachers remained at less than 50 percent.

I strongly support the instructional changes that are occurring under Reading First	Percentage Agreeing/Strongly Agreeing		
	Principals	Coaches	Teachers
2006	99	95	70
2007	96	95	45
2008	96	96	43

Leadership - Meetings



- Teachers reacted favorably to grade-level meetings as opportunities for staff collaboration. A large majority of the responding teachers agreed that attending grade-level meetings was a good use of their time as they continued to attend grade-level meetings frequently.

Leadership - Meetings

- The most common themes for grade-level meetings were reviewing data (DIBELS and progress monitoring) and interventions for struggling students.
- SRSs reported that 72 percent of most K-3 teachers discussed assessment data twice a month at their grade-level meetings to monitor progress toward benchmark goals.

Leadership - Meetings

- Three-fourths of Cycle 1 teachers agreed that grade-level meetings were a good use of their time. The percentage who reported that they attended a grade-level meeting at least 2-3 times a month, decreased from the previous year.





Professional Development

- The majority of principals and coaches appreciated the professional development they received.

The professional development that I received at coach and principal meetings this year...	Percent Agreeing/Strongly Agreeing	
	2007-2008	
	Principal	Coach
was very relevant to my work.	92	94
met my specific needs as a RF principal/coach	76	82



Professional Development

- Only six in ten principals and coaches felt the professional development they received had provided them with useful tools for working with resistant staff.
- Only six in ten principals and four in ten coaches said that training was differentiated to meet the needs of the different groups.

The professional development that I received at coach and principal meetings this year...	Percent Agreeing/Strongly Agreeing			
	2006-2007		2007-2008	
	Principal	Coach	Principal	Coach
provided me with useful tools for working with resistant staff.	64	82	63	64
was differentiated (tailored) to meet the needs of different groups, based on their level of pre-existing expertise.	61	---	61	44

Professional Development



- Percentages of teachers reporting positively on professional development with instructional strategies used in their classrooms declined somewhat from last year.

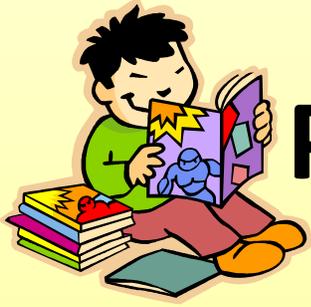
The professional development that I received at coach and principal meetings this year...	Percent Agreeing/Strongly Agreeing	
	2006-2007	2007-2008
provided me with instructional strategies I have used in my classroom.	69	63

Professional Development



- The percentages of teachers rating help from the coach as positive increased slightly; these increases ranged from 2 to 7 percentage points.

The professional development that I received at coach and principal meetings this year...	Percent Agreeing/Strongly Agreeing	
	2006-2007	2007-2008
Our reading coach is a knowledgeable resource about reading research and practices.	76	78
Even when providing critical feedback, I feel our reading coach is an ally in helping me to improve my instruction.	75	76
Our reading coach has helped me become more reflective about my teaching practice.	60	66
Our reading coach has increased my understanding of how children learn to read.	46	53



Professional Development

- Among all categories of RF participants—coaches, principals, and teachers—fewer than half of participants reported professional development did a good job of addressing the needs of ELL students.
- Teachers wanted more professional development in differentiated instruction, using intervention programs, and working with ELL students.



Professional Development

- RF principals, coaches and teachers all wanted more and better professional development on working with ELLs.
- Almost all Continuing Cycle 1 schools received technical support from state staff and from their district. Visits from state staff were appreciated by most coaches.

Professional Development



- While Cycle 1 staff viewed the offered professional development as high quality, an increasingly small percentage of coaches and principals reported attending this professional development.
- Given that Cycle 1 schools faced staff turnover, lack of participation in professional development means that new staff may be less prepared to implement RF. Almost half of principals reported inadequate funding for professional development and interventions.



Use of Assessment Data

- Coaches and teachers continued to report that their schools had established systems for administering, analyzing, and sharing student-level assessment data. SRS substantiated this high level of implementation of assessment systems.

	Percentage Agreeing/Strongly Agreeing			
	Coaches		Teachers	
	2006-2007	2007-2008	2006-2007	2007-2008
Our school has an organized system for administering RF assessments.	90	98	80	88
Our school has an organized system for reviewing and sharing RF assessments.	72	78	75	81

Use of Assessment Data



There were two areas in which data were not used to a high degree:

- First, only about 30 percent of both coaches and teachers reported that their school had an organized system for reviewing reading assessment data that had been disaggregated by key demographic characteristics.

	Percentage Agreeing/Strongly Agreeing			
	Coaches		Teachers	
	2006-2007	2007-2008	2006-2007	2007-2008
Our school has an organized system for reviewing reading assessment data that have been disaggregated by key demographic variables. *	26	30	28	29

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

Use of Assessment Data



- Second, two thirds of teachers were modifying lessons from the core based on data.

I use the results of reading assessments (such as the DIBELS) when...	Percent Responding Usually or Always			
	Coaches		Teachers	
	2006-2007	2007-2008	2006-2007	2007-2008
modifying lessons from the core program	36	61	51	68

Use of Assessment



Perception of DIBELS	Percent Responding Usually or Always			
	Coaches		Teachers	
	2006-2007	2007-2008	2006-2007	2007-2008
I think that the DIBELS is a valid, accurate indicator of student reading ability.	80	91	46	46
In my view, Reading First overemphasizes the importance of using DIBELS results.	15	15	57	57

Recommendation 1

1. Focus attention on the performance of students during 1st grade
 - Results showed that the percentages of RF students at benchmark at the end of 1st grade compared to the beginning, declined for all cohorts. ADE must focus again on the 1st grade by identifying the causes and finding solutions for the decline in performance over the 1st grade year.

Recommendation 1

- 1st grade teachers may have trouble identifying students for interventions in fluency because there is no fluency test for 1st grade at the start of the year.
- Specifically, ADE could conduct progress-monitoring assessments in the 1st grade once or twice for all benchmark students before the main testing periods so that interventions can begin sooner.
- ADE may want to examine the pacing of instruction in 1st grade.

Recommendation 2

2. Attend to the fidelity of intervention programs, especially for ELL students
 - Both Cycle 1 and 2 could benefit from closer attention to the appropriate implementation of intervention programs. Short staff and insufficient funding may have contributed to groups that were too large.

Recommendation 2

- Specifically, SRS should monitor group size and help schools adjust schedules if needed so that intervention groups can remain small.
- RF principals, coaches and teachers in Cycle 2 schools all wanted more and better professional development on interventions and working with ELL students.

Recommendation 2

- Evaluation results also identified the need to increase the skills of teachers and coaches to disaggregate data in order to make good decisions about instruction for various intervention and ELL groupings.
- ADE should offer more professional development in differentiating instruction, especially for ELL students, for Cycle 1 and Cycle 2 schools.

Recommendation 3

3. Work to ensure that schools sustain RF by continuing to emphasize implementation of key systems through high levels of communication, technical assistance and professional development
 - Due to high staff turnover, access to technical assistance and professional development must be supported. ADE should work with districts to ensure that new staff receives adequate training.

Recommendation 3

- ADE must define the state's approach to reading after RF grants have ended.
- Being clear about the successes and challenges of RF will help the state construct new reading initiatives that built effectively on past experience.