



RTAC Communications ♦ April 2007

California Reading First
Regional Technical Assistance Center (RTAC)
Alameda County Office of Education (ACOE)

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Message from the Director

We have conducted Reading First (RF) Program Reviews at 41 schools in 12 school districts in Regions IV and V to monitor the implementation of their reading programs. More than 90% of our school districts made significant progress in 2006 as measured by the Reading First Achievement Index (RFAI). Our goal is to continue making progress this year as well.

Reading First School Visits are facilitated by the Regional Technical Assistance Center (RTAC). An average of five RF curriculum program reviews are conducted in each district. The purpose of the visits is to support and monitor compliance with the RF Assurances, as the grant stipulates.

A preliminary activity for this visit is data gathering. We look at how children are doing as it relates to their theme assessment scores. We also see progress over the years and over the themes within the same year.

RTAC Director, District Administrators, RF Coordinator, and the RF Coach make up the visiting team. After the observations, we debrief the strong areas of curriculum implementation and those which need attention or further training. This forms the basis for developing an action plan with a specific recommendations to be followed.

The action plan is shared with the teachers and implemented in the following four to eight weeks. Each team member has a responsibility to support this effort. Together we can ensure that all our students learn to read at grade level by the end of third grade. For further information about this process, or to schedule a Reading First Curriculum Audit, call the RTAC Office at (510) 670-7773.

National News: Reading First Considered Effective

- **The Reading First Initiative has a strong program design, good management practices, and appears to bring about improvements in students' reading abilities.** A small Department of Education staff leverages its efforts through technical assistance contracts and the efforts of states.
- **The program has shown improvements in the reading ability** of various subgroups of students and has met performance targets. However, some groups are not improving as quickly as others.
- **A major evaluation of the implementation of the Reading First program has been completed and yielded positive results.** A large-scale scientifically-based examination is scheduled to generate an interim report in 2007 and a final report in 2008.

More information & full report go to: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/expectmore>

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Reading First Achievement Index

The California Reading First Plan, approved by the United States Department of Education on August 23, 2002, requires the development of criteria to assess progress for Reading First local educational agencies (LEAs). To comply with this requirement, the Reading First Achievement Index (RFAI) was established. The RFAI is an annually calculated numerical index of a school's reading achievement in kindergarten through grade three, and comprises weighted results from the following assessments:

- The Standardized Testing and Reporting Program (STAR), California Standards Test (CST) in English/Language Arts...60%
- The STAR norm-referenced subtests in reading, language arts, and spelling for grade three.....10%
- The Reading First 1-3 End-of-Year Fluency Assessments (English or Spanish)
 - 1st grade.....10%
 - 2nd grade.....10%
 - 3rd grade.....5% and
- The Kindergarten End of the Year Skills Assessment5%

In order to continue to receive Reading First funding, a local educational agency (LEA) must achieve "significant progress," which is defined as having at least half of those LEA Reading First schools which have an RFAI achieve an RFAI that is higher than one standard deviation below the mean on the RFAI for the LEA's cohort.

For more information see:

<http://www.cde.ca.gov/pd/ca/rl/rdfst06achievedef.asp>

Curriculum: About Fluency

Why is Fluency important?

Fluency means accurate, sustained, and expressive reading, including automatic rapid reading of a bank of words children have acquired in learning to read as well as drawing from a set of reading skills and strategies that children continue to learn.

When children are taught to read fluently, they develop a habit which stays with them and serves them as the curriculum in later grades demands ever more complex reading. The earlier we establish habits, the more automatic and sustainable they become.

Students' futures will require substantial reading (high school, college, assessments, jobs, and enjoyment). When fluency is not established in early years, the task of sustained reading of long passages, books, reports, etc. is daunting. We must make sure children are taught and given the time and practice they need to develop fluency in school.

For students learning English, fluency develops as they acquire the language and vocabulary they need. Students may need additional instruction and practice.

Fluent reading is not fast reading. Asking children to read as fast as they can is not what makes fluent readers. "Fluency instruction leads to impressive gains when it provides regular opportunities for expressive reading through assisted and repeated readings coupled with coaching and feedback." T. Rasinsky (2004) *Creating Fluent Readers*.

For more information or professional development on this topic, please call the RTAC Office.

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RTAC Services to LEAs:

Summary of Services 2006–2007 (to date)

- 12 Reporting meetings with Superintendents of each district (last one in April)
- 41 Support and Compliance visits to District & Schools followed up with written report
- 41 Follow up meetings (phone conferences or direct meetings) with RF School Teams
- 10 District Leadership Team Planning Meetings
- 3 Board and/or Community Reading First Presentations
- 8 Annual Regional Network Meetings for Regions 4 and 5
- 5 Administrator Modules to Principals
- 1 Fall Principal Meeting
- 2 Coaching Follow Up Sessions
- 2 Orientations to New District
- Dialogue with Teachers (after visit)
- Professional Dialogue in the following areas:
 - Sound Spelling System in Spanish
 - Lesson Study
 - Coaching
 - Reading Difficulties
 - Sound Spelling Cards
 - Universal Access
 - ELD Discussions
 - Parallel Instruction in English
 - Internal Evaluation Guidance
 - Support for new RF Coordinators/Coaches
 - Development of support materials in English and Spanish

And ongoing technical assistance and support on topics of planning, HM Curriculum implementation, internal evaluation, assessments, and RF Assurances.

RF Assurances:

Adopted Text

All teachers and children have complete sets of the state-adopted materials for teaching and learning.

Protected 2.5 hrs Reading and Language Arts

All grade 1–3 children receive 2.5 hrs of daily uninterrupted and protected Reading instruction, and Kindergarteners receive 60 minutes.

Teacher Professional Development

All teachers receive the AB 466 professional development each year they are in the program

Administrator Professional Development

All site administrators receive AB 75/ SB 430 professional development. They also participate in professional development session offered by CTAC

Knowledgeable Delivery

All teachers offer full and skillful implementation of the district-adopted program. They participate in professional development during their RF participation

Collaboration

All K–3 teachers meet regularly (3 or 4 times monthly) for collaboration

Assessments

Children take assessments every 6–8 weeks. Principal, Coach(es), and Teachers study and analyze the assessment data for results

Coaching

Coaches provide services to teachers (demonstrations, observations, consultation, and professional development) and make sure that 70% of their time is spent in classrooms working with teachers.

RF Coordinators and Coaches continue to receive training.

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RF Counties and Districts We Serve:

Alameda County

- Hayward Unified School District
(7 schools)

Contra Costa County

- Mount Diablo Unified School District
(5 schools)

San Francisco City and County

- San Francisco Unified School District
(19 schools)

Monterey County

- Chualar Union School District
(1 school)
- Salinas City Elementary School District
(7 schools)
- Alisal Union Elementary School District
(8 schools)
- Greenfield Elementary School District
(3 schools)
- King City Elementary School District
(2 schools)

Santa Clara County

- San Jose Unified School District
(5 schools)
- Luther Burbank
(1 school)

Santa Cruz County

- Pajaro Valley Unified School District
(9 schools)

Solano County

- Vallejo City Unified School District
(7 schools)

Upcoming Dates to Remember

(phone conferences not included)

- **Alisal Union SD Reading First Presentation to School Board**
4/11/07 District Board Room
- **Meeting with MDUSD Reading First Team**
4/12/07
Location: MDUSD District Office
- **School Visit to Salinas City ESD**
4/13/07
Location: Sherwood Elementary
- **Region V Principals' Training**
4/18/07 (2:00–4:00 p.m.)
Location: Salinas City ESD Board Room
- **Meeting with VCUSD State Administrator and RF Team**
4/19/07 (3:00–4:00)
Location: District Office
- **LEA Session (Important to attend!)**
4/25/07 Registration required
Location: Sacramento Doubletree
- **Administrator Training of Trainers**
4/26/07 Registration required
Location: Sacramento Doubletree
- **Regional Lectura Network Meeting:**
5/1/07 (9:30–12:30) – Registration required
Location: Santa Clara COE
Oak Grove Conference Room
- **Regional Districts Network Meeting:**
5/14/07 (9:30–12:30)–Registration required
Location: Santa Clara COE
San Jose Conference Room
- **National Reading First Conference:**
7/18/07–7/20/07 in America's Center St. Louis, Missouri. For registration and updates go to:
<http://www.mikogroup.com/index.htm>

For more information call Araceli Varela at 510-670-7772 or visit www.alamedartac.org to view the calendar of events, information and other resources.

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