The primary goal of the Reading First grant was to ensure each student was reading on or above grade-level by the end of third grade. Across the five years of the grant this was to be accomplished by the implementation of: (a) a comprehensive Scientifically Based Reading Research (SBRR) program with direct, explicit instruction, (b) a professional development program for all K-3 teachers and administrators, (c) a screening, diagnostic, progress monitoring and outcome measurement assessment battery designed to identify students who need additional reading intervention and (d) a three-tier classification system for identifying students in need of increasingly intense reading intervention. The Reading First program was evaluated to provide context, implementation, and outcome data for decision-making purposes. This evaluation was designed to act both as a record of program implementation and as a resource for future program planning.

**Demographics**

The Reading First program was implemented in 40 schools in kindergarten through grade 3. Special Education students in grades 4 through 6 were also supported. In 2006-07, a total of 15,644 students were enrolled in these grades on the census date; 89% (13,897) were continuously enrolled throughout the year. The student population was 70% Hispanic, and 27% African American. Almost all of the students, 92%, were economically disadvantaged and 48% were English Language Learners.

The program provided training to 781 teachers who served in kindergarten through grade 3. A majority of teachers (52%) had five years or less teaching experience. The teaching corps was ethnically diverse; 47% were Hispanic, 29% African American, and 22% white.

**Implementation**

The district implemented approved SBRR core programs prior to the commencement of the Reading First grant, utilizing Open Court and McGraw-Hill reading materials. In Reading First schools, additional intervention materials were provided to teachers for those students who needed additional support. Classroom observations and focus groups indicated that teachers consistently used the core curricula and intervention materials in their lessons.

Reading First teachers received an average of 32 hours of training beyond the regular district training. Campus coaches, hired for each school to help implement the program and train staff, conducted 93% of the training. Training on instructional topics such as fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, graphophonemic knowledge or phonemic awareness accounted for 75% of training hours. Training on mechanical elements of implementing the program and data analysis to drive instruction comprised another 20% of training hours. Coaches used a variety of training methods including large group, small group, side-by-side and one-on-one in their sessions with teachers.

Screening and diagnostic assessment was conducted three times during the year to identify and place students in the appropriate intervention tier. Texas Primary Reading Inventory (TPRI) and the El Inventario de Lectura en Español de Tejas (Tejas LEE) were the instruments used for screening and diagnostic assessment.

Progress Monitoring was measured using the Vital Indicators of Progress (VIP) and the Tejas Lee Fluency Probes (TLFP). Teachers used hand-held personal digital assistant (PDA) to administer these measures. Outcomes for kindergarten through grade 2 were measured with the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS). Grade 3 outcomes were measured with the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS).

![Figure 1. Percentages of students in Tier 2 by grade and assessment period.](image-url)
screening and diagnostic assessments, some students were moved into Tier 2 or Tier 3 levels of instruction. The fall assessment resulted in placing 36% of second grade students in Tier 2, with smaller percentages in each of the other grades. The results of the winter assessment placed substantially higher percentages of students in Tier 2 with kindergarten at 46% of students, and 43% of students in grades 1 and 2 on this intervention level. Figure 1 shows the percentages of students served in Tier 2.

Less than one percent of kindergarten students were served in Tier 3 at any time during the year. Grade 3 had the highest proportion of students in Tier 3 at the beginning of the year (15%) and at the winter assessment (19%). Nearly one fourth of all second grade students were identified as needing Tier 3 intervention at the winter benchmark. Figure 2 shows the percentages of students served in Tier 3 during the year.

Outcomes

Outcomes for kindergarten through grade 2 were measured using Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) and the Spanish equivalent Logramos. Kindergarten scores were not used in this report because the language component used for that grade changed during the course of the program. Scores on reading comprehension were used for grades 1 and 2. A student who scored at or above the 40th percentile on reading comprehension was considered to be reading on grade level. The slight differences between Reading First students and the rest of the district in grades 1 and 2 were not statistically significant. Among first graders, 71% of Reading First students were at grade level, compared to 68% in other district schools. Sixty percent of Reading First second graders were on level compared to 59% of their counterparts. The comparisons for the past three years are shown in Figure 3.

Scores on the reading component of grade 3 TAKS indicated that Reading First schools continued to have a lower percentage of students meeting standard than the rest of the district. The gap narrowed after the first year of implementation from 3.9 percentage points to 2.5 percentage points in 2005-2006 and remained at that level in 2006-2007. The results indicated in Figure 4 were combined English and Spanish test results through the May administration of TAKS each year. The score calculations were based on students who were continuously enrolled in Reading First campuses during each school year, compared to continuously enrolled students in the remainder of district schools.

Figure 3. Percent of students on grade level using ITBS/Logramos percentile rank, by grade and year.

Scores on the reading component of grade 3 TAKS indicated that Reading First schools continued to have a lower percentage of students meeting standard than the rest of the district. The gap narrowed after the first year of implementation from 3.9 percentage points to 2.5 percentage points in 2005-2006 and remained at that level in 2006-2007. The results indicated in Figure 4 were combined English and Spanish test results through the May administration of TAKS each year. The score calculations were based on students who were continuously enrolled in Reading First campuses during each school year, compared to continuously enrolled students in the remainder of district schools.

Figure 4. Percentages of students meeting TAKS standard.
For more information, see EA07-176-2, available at
www.dallasisd.org/inside_disd/depts/evalacct/, or
contact Paul Dabbs at 972-925-6459.