

Appendix A

State Interview Protocol

Reading First Coordinator, Title I State Director, Reading/Literacy Coordinator Telephone Interview

Each Reading First coordinator, Title I state director, and reading/literacy director will have received a cover letter describing the topics for the interview. Each interviewer will have thoroughly reviewed available data (e.g., state websites, summaries of prior interviews from first Implementation Study, information from SEDL and/or Program Office on number of RF districts and schools) prior to each interview.

The questions are numbered below. The bulleted items represent sub-topics or prompts to use if necessary.

- o **Name:**
- o **State:**
- o **Position/Title:**

Abt Associates and its partner Hezel Associates are conducting a national study of the implementation and sustainability of the Reading First (RF) program. As part of this study, we are collecting data from Reading First, Title I, and Elementary Reading/Curriculum Directors to learn about the ongoing implementation and sustainability of the Reading First Program in your state. State personnel will be interviewed once in the fall of 2008.

This conversation will include questions about management and monitoring of RF, funding decisions, especially given recent federal budget cuts to the Reading First program, technical assistance, how Reading First interacts with other reading initiatives in your state, use of student reading achievement data, and outreach to non-RF schools and districts.

We will be taking notes during our conversation, and may use a tape-recorder to ensure accuracy. If you do not wish this conversation to be taped, let us know and we will not use one. These notes will be used to create interview summaries, which will not include your personal information. If you have any further questions that we may not be able to answer about this evaluation or this conversation, please contact Marianne Beauregard, the director of Abt Associates' Institutional Review Board, at (617) 349-2852, or Beth Gamse, the Abt project director of this study at 617-349-2808. Please note these are toll calls.

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless such collection displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is **1875-New**. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average one hour per response,

including the time to review instructions, search existing data resources, gather the data needed, and complete and review the information collection. **If you have any comments concerning the accuracy of the time estimate(s) or suggestions for improving this form, please write to:** U.S. Department of Education, Washington, D.C. 20202-4537. **If you have comments or concerns regarding the status of your individual submission of this form, write directly to:** Beth Franklin, Policy and Program Studies Services, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, S.W., office 6W219, Washington, D.C. 20202.

Note: Questions with an asterisk will only be asked of Reading First Directors

Do you have any questions before we begin?

Management and Leadership

- 1) How long have you served as your state's director of RF/Title I/Reading-Literacy director?**
- 2) What are your RF-related job responsibilities (past and/or current) *¹**
 - *Competitions for RF funding (selection process, making grant awards)*
 - *Budget allocations at state level, at local level*
 - *Professional development*
 - *Outreach to non-RF schools*
 - *Monitoring RF evaluation data*
 - *Other*
 - *Job responsibilities and approximate percentage of time for RF/Title I vs other responsibilities beyond RF/Title I/Reading-Literacy*
- 3) Your organizational/management and reporting structure**
 - *Describe the organization chart for Reading First/Title I/Reading/Literacy in the state (to whom do you report and who reports to you); describe coordination of state-level reading initiatives.*

Reading First Funding at the State Level

The following questions ask about Reading First funding in your state, both in terms of what has already been funded and in terms of planning for future cohorts under a reduced federal budget.

- 4) Number and nature of RF awards to date in your state***
 - *Average school-level award amount, number of schools funded to date, average duration of grant awards, how award amounts are determined e.g., is funding based on student enrollment, an equivalent amount for each funded school, other) state minimum/maximum level award*
- 5) In your state, did most districts and schools implement the RF program in all four grades at once or did they roll out the program one grade at a time?***
(Could you estimate the approximate percentages?)
- 6) Describe any unanticipated exits from participation in Reading First for districts/schools within your state (e.g., have any districts and/or schools had funding revoked or voluntarily withdrawn from participation in Reading First, has your state added any new cohorts mid-cycle?), and whether they have had an impact on subsequent funding decisions.***

¹ Questions marked by an asterisk apply to Reading First Directors only.

- 7) Describe your state's response to the 61% reduction of federal funds for Reading First.
- a) *What changes do you anticipate in terms of funding levels and grant duration?**
 - b) *What are your plans to find other federal and state funding sources for awarded districts and schools?*
 - c) *Describe efforts to work with other State-level employees about increasing spending on reading (for example, Special Education or Title I coordinators)?*
 - d) *What are your plans for any additional RF cohorts?**

Reading First Student Achievement Data

In this section I will ask you about student achievement data analysis, use, and dissemination.

- 8) **Who is responsible for preparing data on student performance in RF schools and to whom are these data released or distributed? ***
- 9) **Who at the state level uses RF student achievement data and for which purposes? (e.g., planning professional development, technical assistance, assessing core and supplemental materials, assessing districts and school performance, determining future funding, comparing RF and non-RF schools and districts)**
- 10) **What are expected district- or school-level actions as a result of published/released data (e.g., changes in professional development, assessment, instruction)?**
- 11) **Describe changes you have observed (since your state began to implement RF) in state, district, and school capacity to use RF data.**

Technical Assistance from State Reading First Program

Next, I will ask you questions about various elements of the RF program both BEFORE the budget cuts were implemented and how you anticipate these RF elements will be affected AFTER the budget cuts are implemented.

- 12) **Describe technical assistance provided by your office to RF district and school staff (e.g., nature, frequency, support for, coordination of, participants, changes to). TA includes both PD activities and specific help to choose and implement core, supplemental, and intervention programs,**

administering assessments, using data to determine effectiveness of programs, etc.*

- a) BEFORE the RF budget cuts
- b) How do you anticipate the TA your office provides will be affected AFTER the RF budget cuts are implemented

Outreach and Communication with Schools and Districts

- 13) Describe your state's outreach to non-RF districts and schools. (e.g., what information and support were non-RF districts and schools asking for and what was provided?)*
- a) BEFORE the budget cuts*
 - b) How do you anticipate your state's outreach to non-RF districts and schools will be affected AFTER the budget cuts are implemented*
 - c) What challenges have you experienced as a result of your state's outreach to non-RF districts and schools and do you anticipate these will change after the budget cuts are implemented?*

- *Prioritization of non-grantee districts and schools for outreach*
- *Methods used to inform and engage non-RF schools and districts (with whom do you communicate)*
- *Level of participation of non-RF districts and schools in RF-sponsored conferences, professional development, TA, other activities*

- 14) Describe coordination between RF and other state-level initiatives and programs (e.g., higher education, special education, ELL, etc.)
- a) BEFORE the budget cuts
 - b) How do you anticipate your relationship with other state-level initiatives and programs will be affected AFTER the budget cuts are implemented
 - c) What challenges have you experienced in coordination with other state-level initiatives and programs and do you anticipate these will change after the budget cuts are implemented?

Diversity of Reading Programs within the State

- 15) The Department of Education's RF Program Office is interested in learning how many RF-funded districts in each state have reading instruction that is distinctly different across RF- and non-RF schools. Can you please tell me if you have the following: *
- *Districts where the reading program is not the same for RF and non-RF schools*
 - *Districts where the required assessments differ between RF and non-RF schools*
 - *Districts where the requirement for a 90-minute reading block differs for RF and non-RF schools*

- *Districts where reading coaches are differentially available to RF and non-RF schools*
- *Districts where reading-related professional development opportunities differ for RF and non-RF schools*
- *Districts where the methods for identifying struggling readers and interventions differ for RF and non RF schools*

Long Term Sustainability of Reading First

16) What evidence have you seen that RF practices are being adopted in non-RF districts and schools (e.g., commonalities in use of materials, professional development topics, uses of assessments)?

a) BEFORE the budget cuts were implemented

b) How do you anticipate these adopted RF practices will be affected AFTER budget cuts are implemented?

17) Which elements of Reading First you believe will be sustained and why, given the 61% cut to the budget for the Reading First program in fiscal year 2008.

- *Which aspects of reading instruction currently practiced in RF schools will remain?*

Thank you for participating in this interview.