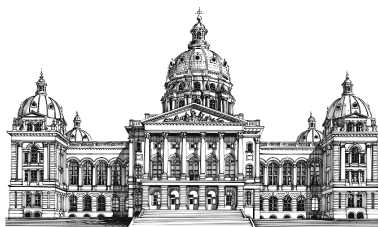

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Reading Recovery Program Update

ISSUE

This *Issue Review* provides an update on the Reading Recovery Program in Iowa.

AFFECTED AGENCIES

Department of Education

CODE AUTHORITY

Chapter 256, Code of Iowa

HISTORY

The Reading Recovery Program is an early intervention program for first grade students that is designed to reduce reading failure. The Program was developed and implemented in the late 1970s by Marie Clay, a New Zealand educator and psychologist. The Program was first introduced in the United States in Ohio in 1984 through a consortium created by Ohio State University, the Ohio Department of Education, and the Columbus Public Schools. In 1985, Ohio State University began training teacher leaders. Reading Recovery was first implemented in Iowa during the 1991-92 school year in the Des Moines Public School District.

There are currently 25 Reading Recovery University Regional Training Centers in North America. The Reading Recovery Center of Iowa, located in Des Moines, is one of these.

HOW THE PROGRAM WORKS

Teachers

The training program for teacher leaders involves a total time commitment of one academic year on-site at the training institution. The majority of Iowa's teacher leaders received their training in Ohio or Texas. In addition to university course work, teachers teach four students daily, and participate in fieldwork experience with "mentor" teacher trainers in established Reading Recovery school district programs. Once trained, teacher leaders typically return to their school districts to train teachers to become Reading Recovery teachers and implement and support Programs in their own and nearby school districts.

Students

First grade students are selected for the Reading Recovery Program by classroom teacher judgment and results of a diagnostic survey. Typically, these students are in the lowest achieving 20.0% of the class in reading performance. The six measures of the survey are also used to evaluate the success of the Program. The six measures include:

- Letter Identification: Requires identification of 54 characters, including lower- and upper-case letters.
- Word Test: Requires reading a list of 20 high-frequency words.
- Concepts About Print: Requires response to a variety of tasks as the tester reads a book. The tasks represent book handling concepts as well as concepts about printed language.
- Writing Vocabulary: Requires students to write all the words they know within a 10-minute period.
- Dictation Test: Requires writing a dictated sentence, indicating the ability to analyze words for sounds.
- Text Reading Level: Requires reading texts representing a gradient of difficulty. Levels represent basal reading systems that are not part of the school's instructional program or Reading Recovery instruction. This oral reading task has been determined to yield the highest text reading level with an accuracy rate of 90.0% or better.

Lessons

Reading Recovery lessons are individualized and based on the teacher's observation of the child's progress. Lessons are given daily for 12 to 20 weeks. Each 30-minute lesson usually includes the following:

- Reading familiar books
- Rereading the previous day's new book
- Working with letters and/or words
- Writing a message or story which is then divided and reassembled
- Introduction and first reading of a new book

SUCCESS RATES

The Reading Recovery Program measures success in terms of the percentage of children that complete the program and continue to read at or above grade level average in subsequent years. Children who successfully complete the Program are "discontinued." The Program typically has a success rate in excess of 80.0%.

During the first six years of the Ohio State project, successful discontinuation rates were 73%, 82%, 86%, 83%, 87%, and 88%. This illustrates that on average, 83% of the children identified as being in the lowest 20% of their peer group left the Reading Recovery Program performing within the average range of their classmates. A follow-up study of Ohio Reading Recovery Program students completed in 1989, showed the students maintained progress in second, third, and fourth grades. In fact, former first grade Reading Recovery students, now in fourth grade, could accurately read text at above-average grade levels.

IMPLEMENTATION IN IOWA

The Reading Recovery Program was implemented in Iowa by districts that viewed the Program as a priority and used existing budget funds to send teachers out-of-state to become trained as teacher leaders. There are currently 142 public school districts in Iowa that have implemented the Reading Recovery Program.

Iowa had the following Reading Recovery participation statistics for the 1998-99 school year:

- 432 Reading Recovery teachers
- 12 teacher leaders
- 269 schools (265 public and 4 nonpublic)
- 3,393 children served (All children who entered even if only for one lesson)
- 2,001 children served who discontinued (Children released from the Program due to reading within the average of the class)
- 2,567 children who received the full Program (Reading Recovery children who received a full Program of 12-20 weeks.)
- 78.0% proportion of children who received the full Program and who discontinued

BUDGET IMPACT

During the 1997 Legislative Session, several interested groups, spearheaded by the Iowa Reading Recovery Task Force, lobbied for a State investment to help implement Reading Recovery in more Iowa districts.

For FY 1998, a total of \$200,000 was authorized for the Reading Recovery Program. The source of funds was as follows:

- \$50,000 General Fund appropriation.
- \$50,000 allocation from the Educational Excellence standing appropriation.
- \$100,000 one-time carryover balance remaining in the Interest for Iowa Schools Fund (interest earned on the Permanent School Fund).

The funds authorized for FY 1998 were expended as follows:

- \$100,000 to area education agencies (AEAs). The funds were distributed to each AEA based on the percent of students in grades one through six who qualify for the federal free and reduced lunch program. The AEAs used these funds to make more school districts aware of the Program and to provide support to school districts with existing programs.
- \$100,000 to the Board of Regents for establishment of a Reading Recovery Center. These funds were used to hire a Director for the Center (Mary Lose) and send her to Ohio to be trained as a Trainer of Teacher Leaders. The Reading Recovery Center was established via a consortium of the Colleges of Education at the University of Iowa, Iowa State University, the University of Northern Iowa, and Drake University. The Center's office is located at Drake University. The Reading Recovery Council of North America recognizes Iowa's Center as a regional training center.

For FY 1999, the General Assembly authorized funding for the Reading Recovery Program from the Interest for Iowa Schools Fund. This Fund collects interest earned on the Permanent School Fund. During FY 1999, approximately \$433,000 of interest was earned and deposited in the Fund with 55.0% (\$238,000) dedicated to the Reading Recovery Program. A minimum of \$100,000 was allocated to support the Reading Recovery Center and the balance was distributed to AEAs in the same manner as FY 1998. Funding for the Reading Recovery Program from the Interest for Iowa

Schools Fund was codified in FY 1999, so the Program will continue to receive approximately \$238,000 annually.

For FY 2000, the General Assembly authorized an additional \$100,000 in one-time funding for the Reading Recovery Program reallocated from the funds appropriated to the Department of Education for extended school year grants.

For FY 2001, the Department of Education has requested a General Fund appropriation of \$100,000 for the Reading Recovery Program.

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