

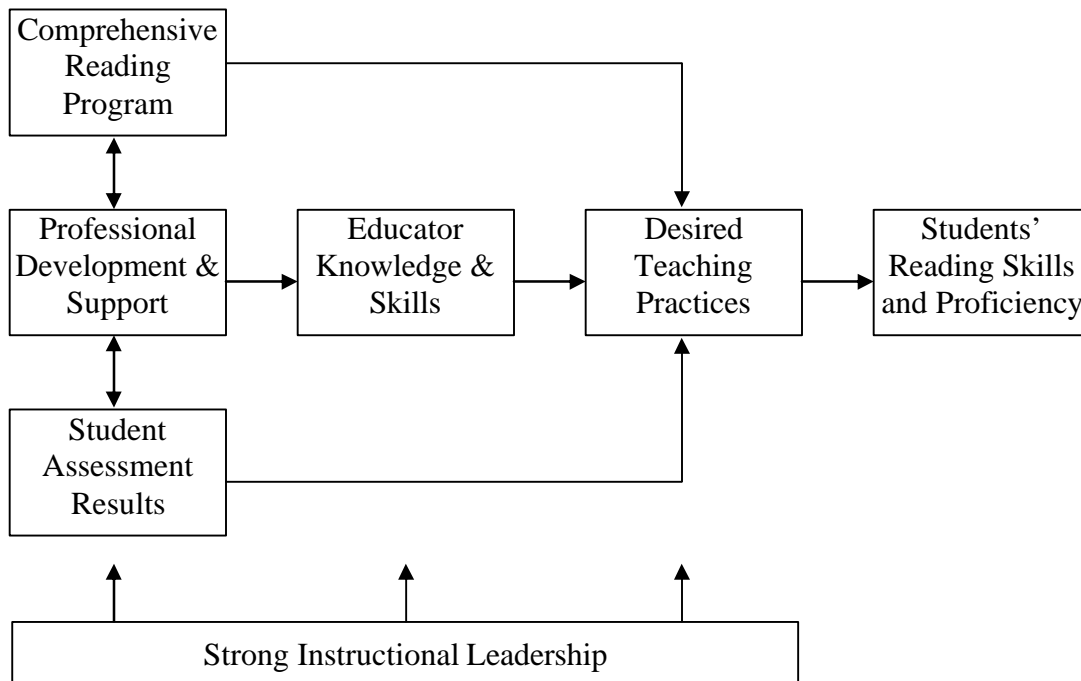
# Massachusetts Reading First Summary of Evaluation Plan

## Introduction

The Massachusetts Department of Education has contracted with the UMass Donahue Institute to conduct a statewide evaluation of the Massachusetts Reading First Plan (MRFP). The evaluation will provide timely, ongoing feedback to support the Massachusetts Department of Education's management of the initiative. It will also measure progress toward, and overall attainment of, the program's fundamental objectives with regard to teacher and student outcomes. A more detailed evaluation plan can be found on pages 68-79 of Massachusetts' Reading First application.

The evaluation plan is organized according to a basic logic model, which describes the program and its anticipated outcomes. Presented in simplistic terms, the model associates several key inputs (implementation of comprehensive reading programs, participation in professional development and support activities, and utilization of student assessment data) with intermediate outcomes (changes in teachers' knowledge and skills and changes in teaching practice). The model also relates those intermediate outcomes to changes in students' acquisition of reading skills and overall reading proficiency.

The Massachusetts Reading First logic model can be represented as follows:



## Research Questions and Data Sources

Below are the specific research questions associated with each component of the logic model and the data sources that will be used to answer each question.

### Comprehensive Reading Program

1. What reading programs are being used in each school? How are each being used – core, supplemental, or intervention? Have any schools changed their programs since their original proposal? If yes, how and why?

Data Source(s):

- District proposals.
- District implementation reports.

2. In what manner and to what extent are the programs being used? Have they been fully implemented as prescribed by the publisher?

Data Source(s):

- District implementation reports.
- RPDP school implementation rubrics

3. What, if any, problems do schools encounter as they attempt to implement these programs? What solutions have they identified? What, if any, additional assistance is needed to address them?

Data Source(s):

- District implementation reports.
- RPDP school implementation rubrics.

4. How do school personnel perceive the quality and effectiveness of curricula and materials related to each of their programs?

Data Source(s):

- District and school personnel surveys.

5. To what extent do the reading programs align with the content and practices recommended through the reading academies?

Data Source(s):

- RPDP school implementation rubrics.
- District and school personnel surveys.

### **Strong Instructional Leadership**

6. Who provides instructional leadership related to Reading First implementation at the school? What are their educational and professional backgrounds?

Data Source(s):

- District proposals.
- Annual district implementation reports.

7. How knowledgeable are those instructional leaders about the findings of SBRR and underlying principles of the Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for ELA?

Data Source(s):

- RPDP school implementation rubrics.

8. How is the school organized to implement Reading First? To what extent does it change over time to better support implementation? Do school personnel feel that organization is effective?

Data Source(s):

- School personnel rosters and updates.
- District implementation reports.
- District and school personnel surveys.

9. How are resources allocated to support the implementation of Reading First? To what extent does it change over time to better support implementation? Do school personnel feel those resources are adequate?

Data Source(s):

- District implementation reports.
- District and school personnel surveys.

## Professional Development and Support Activities

10. What is the nature and scope of PAR's role? To what extent does it change over time to meet the ongoing PD needs of Massachusetts Reading First?

Data Source(s):

- Interviews with PAR and DOE leadership.

11. How effectively has PAR prepared and supported its summer academy trainers and Regional Professional Development providers?

Data Source(s):

- Interviews with lead trainers.
- RPDP focus groups.
- Training participant feedback surveys.
- District and school personnel surveys.

12. How effective is the training and support provided to the local assessment teams?

Data Source(s):

- Assessment training participant feedback survey.
- District and school personnel surveys.

13. How, and to what extent, has each school utilized the following? How do school personnel perceive the quality and effectiveness of the following? To what extent do the various sources of professional development align with the content and practices recommended through the academies?

a. Participation in the summer reading academies?

Data Source(s):

- District implementation reports.
- Summer academy feedback surveys.

b. Training and support provided by the RPDP?

Data Source(s):

- District implementation reports and RPDP logs.
- District and school personnel surveys.

c. PD provided by their publisher(s)

Data Source(s):

- District implementation reports.
- RPDP logs.
- District and school personnel.

d. Other related PD provided by the district or school?

Data Source(s):

- District implementation reports.
- RPDP logs.
- District and school personnel surveys.

### **Student Assessments**

14. How are the Reading First assessments being administered in each school? What, if any, other assessments are being used and why?

Data Source(s):

- District implementation reports.
- RPDP school implementation rubrics.

15. How do school personnel perceive the Reading First assessments? Are they easy to administer? Do they provide useful information?

Data Source(s):

- District and school personnel surveys.

16. What tools (GRADE software, TestWiz, DRP reports, DIBELS website, Edformations, other) are schools using to analyze their student assessment data? Who uses them and how? How do they perceive their quality and effectiveness?

Data Source(s):

- District implementation reports.
- RPDP school implementation rubrics.
- District and school personnel surveys.

17. How and to what extent are the results being used to:

- a. Screen students
- b. Diagnose specific learning needs
- c. Guide individual and group instruction
- d. Monitor student progress

Data Source(s):

- District implementation reports.
- RPDP school implementation rubrics.
- District and school personnel surveys.

18. Do DIBELS screening and diagnostic subtests required by MRFP have predictive validity for the program's outcome assessments (GRADE and MCAS)?

Data Source(s):

- DIBELS screening and diagnostic sub-test results.
- GRADE and MCAS results.

### **State Implementation**

19. What is the nature and scope of MADOE's role? To what extent does it change over time to meet the ongoing needs of Massachusetts Reading First?

Data Source(s):

- Interviews with DOE leadership.

20. What are the major challenges to program implementation encountered by MADOE? How have they been overcome? What additional steps are necessary to address them?

Data Source(s):

- Interviews with DOE leadership.

## Teacher Knowledge

21. To what extent do the summer reading academies improve educators' knowledge and skills with regard to specific concepts and practices consistent with the findings of SBRR?

Data Source(s):

- Professional development assessment instrument.

22. To what extent do educators maintain or improve their knowledge and skill levels during the course of the academic year?

Data Source(s):

- Professional development assessment instrument.
- District and school personnel surveys.

## Desired Teaching Practices

23. To what extent do participating teachers demonstrate teaching practices consistent with the findings of SBRR? How does that change over time?

Data Sources:

- RPDP school implementation rubrics.
- District and school personnel surveys.
- Semi-annual classroom observations.

24. Is there empirical evidence linking improved teacher knowledge to desirable teaching practices?

Data Source(s):

- Follow-up professional development assessment instrument.
- RPDP school implementation rubrics.

## Students' Reading Skills and Proficiency

25. To what extent are students in MRFP schools realizing improved reading outcomes? What is the relative impact of various program components (reading programs, instructional leadership, pd and support activities, use of student assessment data, improvements in teacher knowledge and classroom practice) on these outcomes? What is the relative impact of other educational factors (e.g., staff turnover, class size) on these outcomes?

- a. Does the amount of annual growth at each grade-level increase over time?

Data Source(s):

- MRFP outcomes assessment (GRADE).

- b. Does the proportion of students performing below grade-level decrease over time? Does the performance of certain demographic groups (i.e., low-income, racial/ethnic minority, and LEP students) improve over time? Is there evidence that the reading proficiency gap between more and less advantaged students is closing in these schools?

Data Source(s):

- Grade-level benchmarks (GRADE and MCAS).

- c. Are MRFP schools meeting their Adequate Yearly Progress goals as defined by performance on the Grade 3 MCAS exam?

Data Source(s):

- Grade 3 Reading MCAS.
- AYP goals.

- d. Are special education referral rates declining in MRFP schools?

Data Source(s):

- Special education referral rates.

## Evaluation Requirements for Participating Districts and Schools

Applicants for MRFP funding must indicate their commitment to cooperation in all aspects of the statewide evaluation. Such cooperation entails participation in all of the following activities:

- *Annual District Implementation Reports* – Each spring, the district’s MRFP central office reading coordinator, in consultation with principals and specialists from each MRFP school, will be asked to complete a report documenting their progress in program implementation. This report will be developed using a common template and protocol to be developed by the Donahue Institute.
- *District and School Feedback* – In addition to the above report, the district’s central office reading coordinator, as well as principals, specialists and K-3 teachers from each MRFP school, will be asked to complete a written survey each spring. The focus of the survey will be to provide the Massachusetts Department of Education with feedback on the perceived effectiveness of the program.
- *Educator Knowledge and Skill Gains* – Measurement of the extent and nature of changes in MRFP educators’ knowledge and skills will be addressed through the use of a professional development assessment administered to all MRFP educators on the first and last days of each teacher reading academy. As a follow-up, participants will be asked to complete the instrument a third time after participating in nearly one full year of professional development. For the purpose of pre/post comparisons of results (as well as linkage to student outcome data), participants will be asked to identify themselves on the assessments through the use of a personalized coding system.
- *Changes in Teaching Practice* – One or more MRFP schools in your district may be selected as a site for classroom observation. Selection of schools will take place through stratified random sampling. The observations will be used to document the degree to which “desired” teaching practices and behaviors (reflective of scientifically-based reading research) are evident in MRFP classrooms. These observations will begin with a baseline in the spring of 2003, with semi-annual visits thereafter.
- *Evaluation of Student Outcomes* – MRFP student assessment results over time will provide the basis for measuring student improvement, for providing comparisons among groups of students, and for linking student outcomes to teacher outcomes, thereby testing the validity of the program’s logic model. Each fall and spring, all MRFP schools will be required to enter their students’ assessment data into TestWiz software and then export the data onto a disk to be mailed to the Donahue Institute.