

# Reading Recovery<sup>®</sup> in Georgia

## 2007-2008 Executive Summary

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### Reading Recovery makes a Difference

Reading Recovery is the **only** program determined by the What Works Clearinghouse, a branch of the Institute of Education Sciences of the United States Department of Education, to have positive or potentially positive effects in all aspects considered. Using a number of studies, reviewers found Reading Recovery to have positive effects on students' alphabetic skills and general reading achievement outcomes, and potentially positive effects in fluency and comprehension (What Works Clearinghouse, 2008). Both the positive (the highest rating possible) and potentially positive ratings mean there is "no overriding contrary evidence." According to reporters for Education Week, Reading Recovery's "thumbs-up rating" from the USDE is rare.

### Florida Center for Reading Research Reports No Weaknesses

As part of its mission, the Florida Center for Reading Research reviews specific literacy programs and disseminates information about research-based practices related to the program. Reviewers concluded that the research support for Reading Recovery demonstrated no notable weaknesses (Florida Center for Reading Research, 2008).

### Critical Early intervention and Prevention of Reading Failure

Reading Recovery<sup>®</sup> is a cost-effective and proven short term, one-to-one early literacy intervention designed to prevent students at risk of failing to learn to read and write in first grade. By intervening early, Reading Recovery can halt the debilitating cycle of failure for low-achieving students. Reading Recovery enables the lowest-achieving learners to make accelerated progress, catch up with grade-level peers, and profit from regular classroom reading instruction. Reading Recovery researchers have 20 years of data to provide evidence of the program's effectiveness.

### Federal Policy Alignment

In 2000, the National Reading Panel identified the following five essential components of reading instruction: *phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension*. Reading Recovery lessons include the five elements. In addition, Reading Recovery meets the definition of scientific research as published by the Institute of Education Sciences of the United States Department of Education.

### Response to Intervention

There are two positive outcomes of Reading Recovery. Most students successfully complete the program, and a small number of students are appropriately identified as needing further assessment and longer term support. By helping those students who, with intensive intervention will not require long term support and by assisting school systems to quickly identify students who will need longer term supplemental help like Special Education, Reading Recovery is an effective **response-to-intervention**. When included as an integral part of a comprehensive response-to-intervention plan, Reading Recovery aids in reducing the number of Special Education placements for literacy related learning disabilities.



## Outstanding Professional Development

Highly qualified teachers are a critical factor in student achievement. To ensure the skillful teaching necessary to prevent literacy failure, the Reading Recovery professional development model provides a powerful framework for teacher learning. The intensive level of initial training and continuous professional development empowers teachers to make changes in their own instructional practices and to systemically impact the teaching of reading and writing in their schools. The apprenticeship model enables teachers to begin working with students at their schools at the beginning of the initial training year.



During the weekly training sessions, teachers engage in extensive learning that progressively builds expertise about how to teach the hardest to teach students. Initial training and continuous professional development sessions involve the use of a one-way glass. One Reading Recovery professional teaches 'behind the glass' while peers observe and discuss observations. The conversations include analyses of the observations and support teachers in questioning, assessing, and challenging their thinking and practice with respect to literacy achievement for struggling young learners.

## Reading Recovery in Georgia, 2007-2008

Fourteen teacher leaders provided training and ongoing support in the 23 school systems implementing Reading Recovery in Georgia. During the 2007-2008 school year, 3113 Reading Recovery students and over 14,000 students in other instructional settings were served by 328 teachers. The students served in Reading Recovery were the lowest performing students in their first grade classes in reading and writing. Generally students resemble the diversity of students in urban, suburban and rural public schools except 77% of Reading Recovery students participated in free or reduced price lunch compared to 52% participation rate reported for all Georgia students (Suits, 2008).

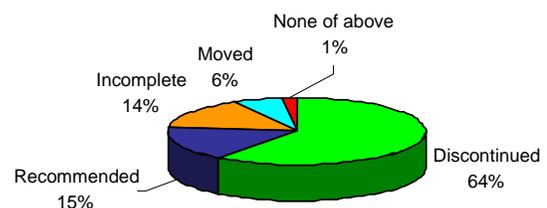
## Results

### Program Outcomes

Reading Recovery reports data on all students served, distinguishing between several outcomes. A minimum reading level and evidence that the child can continue learning to read without individual support are some of the criteria used for exiting or discontinuing the series of lessons.

**In 2007-2008, 1984 students or 64% of all students served (receiving just one lesson or more) had the intervention successfully discontinued after meeting rigorous criteria for exiting (Figure 1).**

**Figure 1: Intervention Status of All Reading Recovery Students, Georgia State University, 2007-2008**



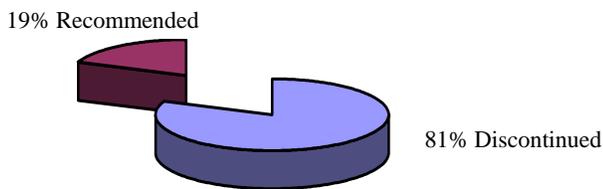
Of the remaining students, 14% were still in Reading Recovery at the end of the school year with insufficient time (less than 20 weeks) to complete the intervention; 6% moved while being served and 1% were classified as "None of the Above" (Figure 1). A small number of students 477 (15% of the total) benefited from this short term intervention but were not able to reach criteria to be discontinued. After receiving a complete series of intervention lessons (20 weeks of instruction), these students were recommended for assessment and consideration for long-term instructional support.

The appropriate early identification of students requiring further support is a cost-effective, positive outcome of Reading Recovery.



Of the students served, who had the opportunity to receive a complete series of interventions lessons, **81%** achieved average reading levels relative to their peers after approximately 15 weeks of Reading Recovery instruction (Figure 2). **These students avoided the pitfall of prolonged careers in remedial reading programs, because of the effectiveness of this intensive, short-term intervention.**

**Figure 2: Intervention Status of Reading Recovery Students with Complete Interventions, Georgia State University, 2007-2008**

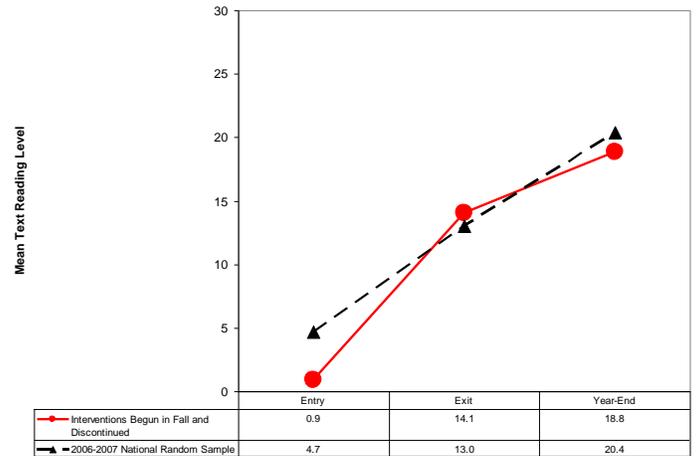


### Reading Levels

An important question to ask about interventions is whether or not upward progress continues after the intervention has ended. After being discontinued from Reading Recovery services, students receive no further supplementary help but are expected to continue to make progress with good classroom instruction. In order to determine student progress after the intervention ends, scores of all students served in the fall of the school year (first-round) and who successfully completed the intervention (discontinued) were analyzed.

As indicated in Figure 3, first-round Reading Recovery students continued to progress in text reading level after the intervention series of lessons had been discontinued. The Reading Recovery students began reading at a considerably lower level (0.9) than the national random sample of first-grade students in schools implementing Reading Recovery (4.7). At year end, Reading Recovery students were reading slightly above the grade-level benchmark and at a similar level of complexity as the random sample students.

**Figure 3: Progress on Text Reading Level of Students who Began the Intervention in the Fall and had their Lessons Discontinue**



### Summary

The results reported here for the school districts providing Reading Recovery in Georgia corroborate earlier research that shows that Reading Recovery, as a supplement to good classroom teaching, can have a substantial, positive impact on the literacy development of low achieving students. For students who might have continued to experience failure in reading and writing, Reading Recovery provided an opportunity for success. The results suggest that when the program is fully implemented, both within systems and across the state, greater numbers of students in need can become average or better readers thereby reducing the numbers of students experiencing literacy failure.

### References:

National Data Evaluation Center, "Reading Recovery Complete Tables and Figures for Georgia, 2007-2008. September 23, 2008.

Suits, Steve, "Crisis of the New Majority: Low-income students in the south's public schools. *Southern Spaces*, April 16, 2008. <http://www.southernspaces.org/contents/2008/suits/1a.htm>

What Works Clearinghouse "Beginning Intervention Report" March 19, 2007. [http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/Reports/beginning\\_reading/](http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/Reports/beginning_reading/)

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*“If there is on thing every educator and policymaker can agree on, it is the right of every child to become a successful reader.”*

*Thornton-Reid & Duncan, 2008*

