



Reading Recovery®  
Council of North America

[www.readingrecovery.org](http://www.readingrecovery.org)

## Reading Recovery Salutes Outstanding Principals



**James Lujan**  
Eugene Field Elementary School  
Albuquerque, NM

“We are meeting the goals set by the No Child Left Behind Act,” says Principal James Lujan. “We met our annual yearly progress goal last year, and we have data tracing first graders in Reading Recovery that as third graders passed the Standards Based Assessment.”

### *Setting Priorities*

At Eugene Field Elementary, a tight budget means priorities must be carefully set. Programs must provide results, and Reading Recovery is one program that has become an indispensable part of the literacy program there.

“I want to maintain Reading Recovery at my school,” Lujan says. “I would rather have Reading Recovery than an assistant, which is why I gave up my assistant rather than give up Reading Recovery.”

Eugene Field Elementary is a city center school with a bilingual maintenance model. One hundred percent of the students are on free or reduced-price lunch. As many as 40% of the parents do not have telephones in the home. For many students, school may offer them an opportunity to reach for their dreams.

### *A Cost-Effective Program*

“Is it cost-effective? I think so,” Lujan said. “Reading Recovery works. It works. If you saw it on paper, you might say no. You’re giving up a full FTE for 16 kids, and someone who was uninformed about Reading Recovery might not see why we’d want to do that. But we’re keeping those 16 kids from falling through the cracks. I’ve seen it with my own two eyes; a student from Reading Recovery who surpasses his classmates after going through the lessons. It’s a fabulous experience to see kids catch up like that.”

About 7 years ago, Lujan, then an assistant principal, was given the job of assessing the school’s literacy intervention options. After learning that Reading Recovery was research-based and scientific, they brought Reading Recovery on board. Now, Eugene Field Elementary has two teachers sharing one Reading Recovery position, and the rest of the time they work as instructional coaches. The two highly trained teachers have flexible schedules for the rest of the day and are able to brainstorm with the classroom teachers. Their schedules are always full, Lujan says.

### *Diagnosing the Reading Needs of a Child*

“I compare it to doctors,” says Lujan. “When my father was undergoing medical treatment, I watched the doctors get together and consult with each other. They got together and discussed his medical situation, they diagnosed his condition. And Reading Recovery is the same thing; a group of educators are diagnosing the reading needs of a child. If doctors do it, scientists do it, why not educators?”