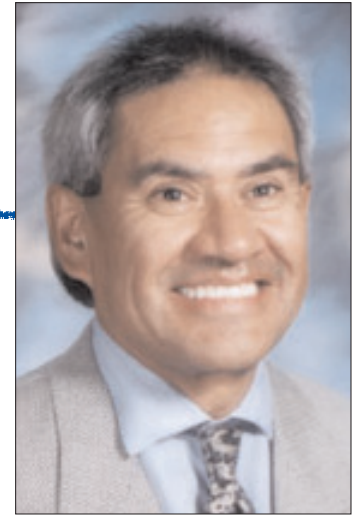




Reading Recovery®
Council of North America

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Reading Recovery Salutes Outstanding Principals



Dr. Robert D. Villarreal
Eastridge Community Elementary School
Aurora, CO

“We have had Reading Recovery at Eastridge for 11 years. The Cherry Creek School District researched a variety of effective reading intervention programs, and Reading Recovery was selected for its comprehensive research and effectiveness in teaching children to read at the proficient level. Eastridge made a commitment to the program,” says Principal Robert D. Villarreal, “and we now have six certified Reading Recovery specialists.”

Working with Extreme Diversity

In terms of student outcomes, Villarreal feels that the commitment to Reading Recovery has paid off. Eastridge Community School’s population represents an unusually broad range of diversity: Of the 723 students, 47% are on free and reduced-price lunch; 60% are children of color who represent five of the world’s seven continents and speak 42 different languages. Student performance at Eastridge is consistently high. All lowest-ranked first graders, regardless of their diversity, achieve!

All Students Can Benefit

When students enter first grade, the teachers administer pre-assessments and rank order students from high to low. The lowest-ranked students receive Reading Recovery. “Before a child begins his Reading Recovery intervention, Reading Recovery teachers often introduce me to each child,” says Villarreal. The teachers send personal letters from Villarreal to the parents of each new student—congratulating them on the opportunity for receiving one-to-one instruction and emphasizing the importance of parent support.

“At the end of the program when the child graduates, they will come to my office again and read the leveled book they are reading at the time of their exit (after 12–20 weeks). They receive a certificate that I sign along with a letter of congratulations that is to be given to their parents,” Villarreal said. “I’ll often tell them, ‘When you came here 20 weeks ago, you couldn’t name three letters, now you’re reading at level 16!’ The child’s wide, toothy smile of achievement often brings a tear to my eye.”

Having Reading Recovery-trained teachers in the classroom is an additional benefit that all students receive, he added. “Reading Recovery trained teachers are effective teachers for all children. We then have the added benefit of a reading specialist teaching all 23 students effective strategies in the classroom.”

Teachers Are Staff Developers

One aspect of Reading Recovery Villarreal values is having highly trained teachers as a resource for his staff. “An added asset is that Reading Recovery teachers become staff developers. There are a variety of models we can access. One is to have new and veteran teachers observe Reading Recovery lessons. We can have the Reading Recovery teachers observe specific teachers teach a reading lesson and give feedback about their instruction. Another model is to have Reading Recovery teachers teach mini classes to a targeted group of teachers. Teachers learn from each other. It’s a domino effect; even the fourth- and fifth-grade teachers learn the effective reading techniques that Reading Recovery teachers use at the first-grade level.”