

“Reading Recovery offers U.S. education its first real demonstration of the power of a process combining research, development (including ongoing teacher education), marketing, and technical support in an orchestrated system of change.”¹

— K.G. Wilson and B. Daviss

READING RECOVERY ELIGIBILITY FOR FEDERAL FUNDS

The Reading Recovery Council of North America is frequently asked whether Reading Recovery is eligible under the Reading First program and, by implication, other federal education funds authorized by the No Child Left Behind Act. While the U.S. Department of Education (USDE) Web site clarifies that the department has not developed or endorsed any list of instructional programs as appropriate for the Reading First program, the documents excerpted below comprise a cumulative body of evidence that supports Reading Recovery’s eligibility. Sources include

- I. No Child Left Behind Act
- II. Conference Committee Report for HR1 No Child Left Behind Act
- III. USDE Reading Leadership Academy materials
- IV. Congressional testimony by USDE Undersecretary Gene Hickok
- V. Senate “Dear Colleague” letter
- VI. USDE newsletter *The Achiever*
- VII. Correspondence from Education Secretary Rod Paige

I. No Child Left Behind Act

The Reading First program requires both state and local educational agencies to integrate early intervention into instruction and professional development activities. Excerpts from the act include

Sec. 1203 (b): “A [state] application under this section shall contain...(4) a State educational agency plan containing a description of...(B) How the State educational agency will assist local educational agencies in identifying instructional materials, programs, strategies, and approaches, based on scientifically based reading research, *including early intervention* [italics added] and reading remediation materials, programs, and approaches.”

Sec. 1202(d)(3): “A State educational agency that receives a grant under this section may expend not more than 20 percent of the grant funds...(3)(A) to develop and implement a program of professional development for teachers that (ii)...shall include (I) information on instructional materials, programs, strategies, and approaches, based on scientifically based reading research, *including early intervention* [italics added] and reading remediation materials, programs, and approaches.”

¹ Wilson, K.G., & Daviss, B. (1994). *Redesigning education*. New York: Teacher’s College Press.



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Sec. 1202(c)(7): "...An eligible local educational agency that receives a subgrant under this section shall use the funds provided under the subgrant to carry out the following activities...(iv) Providing professional development for teachers...that (II) shall include (aa) information on instructional materials, programs, strategies, and approaches, based on scientifically based reading research, *including early intervention* [italics added] and reading remediation materials, programs, and approaches."

Source: Public Law 107-110, Title I, Part B, Subpart 1, Government Printing Office. Also available electronically at http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=107_cong_public_laws&docid=f:publ110.107.pdf.

II. Congressional Intent and Reading First

The Conference Committee Report for HR1 No Child Left Behind Act states unequivocally that

"The Conferees intend State educational agencies and local educational agencies to be able to select from a wide variety of quality programs and interventions to fund under Reading First and Early Reading First, including small group and one to one instruction, so long as those programs are based in research meeting the criteria in the definition of scientifically based reading research."

Source: Conference Report to Accompany HR 1, Government Printing Office, printed December 13, 2001, p. 768. Available electronically at http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=107_cong_reports&docid=f:hr334.107.pdf.

III. USDE Reading Leadership Academies

The Reading Programs section of the academy presentation categorizes three types of reading instruction to be evaluated under Reading First: (a) comprehensive, (b) supplemental, and (c) intervention. The purpose of intervention reading programs is to "provide additional instruction to students performing below grade level," and can be either "stand-alone intervention programs" or "in-program intervention program (components of comprehensive reading programs)." The presentation also stated

"Reading programs work best when implementation of the reading program is linked to: effective instruction, assessment, professional development, and instructional leadership."

Source: Reading Leadership Academy PowerPoint presentation, U.S. Department of Education, 2002.

IV. Congressional Testimony

In June 2002, Undersecretary Gene Hickok testified before the U. S. Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee. In response to Senator Susan M. Collins' question "Is there anything in the guidance that the department has given so far that would preclude funding for Reading Recovery programs?" he responded,

"No, there is not....Our only goal is to make sure that whatever is being done at the State and local levels results in students being able to read by grade 3....The goal would be preventative programs so the need for intervention and remediation is limited, but that does not mean that Reading Recovery or any other successful program that has got the science and can demonstrate it in an application cannot be part of this."

Source: Implementation of Reading Programs and Strategies, Hearing Before the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions, United States Senate, Government Printing Office, S. Hrg. 107-517, p.10. Also available electronically at <http://www.readingrecovery.org/pdfs/HickockTestimony.pdf>.

V. U.S. Senate “Dear Colleague” Letter

In July 2002, U.S. Senators Susan M. Collins (R-ME) and Edward M. Kennedy (D-MA) sent a “Dear Colleague” letter to all members of the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives about Reading Recovery and Reading First. In part it stated

“Because it’s so effective, we want to share some background on it, because we think it’s exactly the kind of program that the new law is intended to support....Reading Recovery works to prevent reading difficulties among students and helps children at risk of reading failure catch up to their grade level.”

Source: July 3, 2002 “Dear Colleague” letter. Available electronically at <http://www.readingrecovery.org/pdfs/dearcolleague3.pdf>.

VI. USDE Newsletter *The Achiever*

The December 2002 issue of the department’s newsletter for No Child Left Behind features the Arkansas Department of Education’s comprehensive literacy efforts. “Anchors Aweigh for a Smart Start” states

“Activities focused on the needs of classroom teachers, specialized training and support for schools implementing comprehensive literacy services, including Reading Recovery and early literacy groups for struggling readers in kindergarten through third grade.”

Source: *The Achiever*, December 1, 2002, Volume 1, No. 6, p. 2. Also available electronically at <http://www.nclb.gov/Newsletter/20021201.pdf>.

VII. Secretary Paige’s letter re: Analysis of Reading Assessments

In 2002, The Institute for the Development of Educational Achievement, College of Education, University of Oregon, published *Analysis of Reading Assessment Instruments K–3*, which concluded that the Observation Survey of Early Literacy Achievement did not have sufficient evidence to assess one or more of the essential components. However, Education Secretary Rod Paige quickly responded in a letter to the Association of American Publishers (AAP),

“I assure you that the findings of this study do not in any way represent an “approved list” of assessments for use under the Reading First program. Rather, this analysis examines the technical qualities of a group of K–3 assessments, *not their suitability for use in connection with Reading First* [italics added].”

Source: September 10, 2002 letter from Education Secretary Rod Paige to the AAP. Available electronically on the AAP Web site at <http://www.publishers.org/press/pdf/paigeltr.pdf>.

Other Federal Policy Related to Literacy Instruction and Reading Recovery

The No Child Left Behind Act contains many provisions to assure that at-risk and low-income children receive instructional assistance particularly in Title I, Part A (Improving Basic Programs Operated by Local Educational Agencies). For example

- Schools providing *targeted* assistance with Title I funds must provide “services to eligible children...identified as having the greatest need for special assistance.”
- *Schoolwide* assistance provided with Title I funds must include “effective, timely additional assistance which shall include measures to ensure that students’ difficulties are identified on a timely basis and to provide sufficient information on which to base effective assis-

tance.” This is often referred to as the safety net requirement (Title I, Part A, Sec. 1114 (b)(1)(I)).

- Both targeted and schoolwide Title I programs must provide instruction by highly qualified teachers, and funds may be used for professional development to accomplish this (Title I, Part A, Sec. 1114, (b)(1)(C) and Title I, part A, Sec. 1115 (c)(1)(E)).

Source: The No Child Left Behind Act may be viewed on the Government Printing Office Web site at http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=107_cong_public_laws&docid=f:publ110.107.pdf.

Resources Available from the Reading Recovery Council of North America:

ESEA fact sheets describing Reading Recovery in relation to the federal definition of scientifically based reading research and the five essential components of reading instruction:

http://www.readingrecovery.org/sections/home/adv_esea_factsheets.asp.

What Evidence Says About Reading Recovery responds to recurring questions and misconceptions about Reading Recovery: <http://www.readingrecovery.org/sections/home/Evidence.asp>.

More Than One Million Children Served: Annual Results

<http://www.readingrecovery.org/sections/reading/results.asp>.

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