

# Educators' Perceptions of the First Year of Read to Achieve

Presentation to the Joint Legislative Education  
Oversight Committee

December 2, 2014

## Purpose

In Spring of 2014, SERVE Center collected data on educators' perceptions of the first year of Read to Achieve implementation using:

- Online surveys
- Statewide focus groups
- District interviews

## Respondents

- **Statewide online surveys** (N=4,016)
  - ✓ 66 superintendents (57%)
  - ✓ 77 district elementary supervisors (67%)
  - ✓ 729 elementary principals (51%)
  - ✓ 2,136 K-2 teachers
  - ✓ 1,008 3<sup>rd</sup> grade teachers
- **Statewide focus groups** (N=356)
  - ✓ 40 focus groups (5 per region)
- **District interviews**
  - ✓ 30 interviews (6 districts)

## **Components of RtA Addressed**

1. Comprehensive Plan for Reading Achievement
2. Developmental Screening and Kindergarten Entry Assessment (KEA)
- **3. Facilitating Early Grade Reading Proficiency**
- **4. Elimination of Social Promotion**
- **5. Successful Reading Development for Retained Students**
6. Notifications to Parents and Guardians
7. Accountability Measures

## **Educators were asked about...**

- Prior experiences with early literacy improvement
- Experiences with the implementation of RtA components (primarily 3, 4, and 5)
- RtA impact on practice
- Recommendations for improvement of RtA



## Context: Progress Prior to RtA

*Progress in your district made in implementing reading interventions, programs, policies, practices or teacher professional development to improve K-3 reading outcomes **prior to RtA....***

Superintendent Responses:	%
Little progress	2%
Some progress	38%
Steady progress	48%
Very significant and sustained progress	12%

## **District Site Visits: Context Matters**

Four types of district reactions:

1. RtA aligned with and enhanced prior efforts
2. RtA helped to jump start and leverage literacy improvement
3. RtA was in conflict with a major initiative
4. RtA presented a significant time and resource challenge for K-3 teachers given the high numbers of non-proficient readers



## First Year of Statewide RtA Rollout

Educators described frustrations with the:

- Lack of educator input on the front end
- Rushed implementation of RtA requirements, resulting in frequent changes in guidance
- Absence of piloting for some components
- Tight timelines for implementing particular components



Contributed to heavy accountability burden on 3<sup>rd</sup> grade teachers and students



## **Component 3: Facilitating Early Grade Reading Proficiency (mCLASS Reading 3D)**

- Well-received training and support from NCDPI regional consultants; built on foundation of 3D pilots in previous years
- Administrators described increased use of data through 3D to identify and intervene with struggling readers
- Majority of teachers reported being sufficiently trained on 3D; also reported needing help with time management and use of data

## **Component 4: Elimination of Social Promotion**

- Reading assessment burden was overwhelming for many 3<sup>rd</sup> grade teachers and students
- More principal discretion desired in making retention decisions
- Belief that overuse of retention may lead to an increase in dropout rates



## **Component 5: Successful Reading Development for Retained Students**

- Agreed with need for summer reading camps but preferred at lower grades (1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup>)
- Initial concern with lack of flexibility of state funding and the length/timing for camps
- Some worries about adequacy of resources for 4<sup>th</sup> grade non-proficient readers

# Elementary Principal Perceptions—Overall

Statement	% Agree	% Disagree
The RtA Program helped my school <b>better enhance our focus</b> on improving K-3 reading outcomes.	<b>53%</b>	<b>46%</b>
The ideas behind RtA have great <b>potential to make a positive</b> difference in reading achievement.	<b>63%</b>	<b>37%</b>

## Elementary Principal Perceptions—Challenges

Statement	% Agree	% Disagree
The amount of <b>focus paid to K-2</b> struggling readers in the RtA Program is sufficient.	35%	<b>65%</b>
At my school, RtA has resulted in a significant <b>loss of instructional time</b> due to additional assessment processes.	<b>84%</b>	16%
It may be difficult for our school to find experienced teachers to <b>teach 3<sup>rd</sup> grade in the future</b> as a result of the stresses associated with RtA.	<b>88%</b>	13%

## **Stay the Course**

*I think we need to give it a shot—an opportunity to work. Everybody is experiencing growing pains at this point, but don't throw it away just because everybody's having growing pains. At least give it an opportunity to work before we fully evaluate the effectiveness of RtA. (LEA)*

## Give it Time

*Just one piece of advice I would say to the state is stop changing things every two years. Two years is not a long enough time for teachers to learn a new system, for kids to learn a new system, for accurate data to be collected and measured...It's like whiplash just trying to change. (K-2 teacher)*