

Reaching Literacy Expectations (Grades P/K-5)

2. Struggling Readers Success : Highest Need Schools

\$405,000

Research-proven results, across Washington State (Reading First) and in the Renton School District:

One school celebrated:

2008-09: Beginning of the Year: 24% meeting/exceeding reading standard
End of the Year: 86% meeting/exceeding reading standard

District-wide results:

2008-09: Beginning of the Year: 34% meeting/exceeding reading standard
End of the Year: 62% meeting/exceeding reading standard

Early reading achievement is a strong predictor of whether or not a child will be successful throughout his or her academic career. Research indicates that children who are reading below grade level at the end of third grade will require more costly and intensive interventions in multiple academic areas as they progress through the years. They feel less connected to school and have a greater likelihood of dropping out. Early interventions with “at risk” readers before they complete third grade, while intensive, is a fraction of the cost that delaying intervention poses.

The *Reading First* program, was implemented at the two highest need elementary schools in the district, Lakeridge and Campbell Hill Elementary, through a federally funded state grant which ends in June, 2010. The impact of this program in only one year is a startling testament to how early interventions can be successful. At the beginning of the 2008/2009 school year, only 34% of children K-3 were reading at grade level. By the end of just one school year, that number skyrocketed to 62%! The program costs include alternative instructional materials and more intensive instructional support by teachers who have been specifically trained to meet the diverse learning needs of these students. While somewhat costly, the long-term financial costs of later interventions are much higher, and the return on later investment, much lower.

There are more than 280 “intensive needs” students at just these two elementary schools and our goal over time will be to help the school district get the funds they need to get this program into the remaining 11 elementary schools where although the need is not as intense, there are students who need this additional support to become competent.

Funding for this program was provided by a federally funded state grant which ends in June, 2010.