



Colorado Department of Education

Read to Achieve
Grant Program
Pursuant to Senate Bill 07-192
(22-7-901 through 22-7-909 C.R.S.)

Report to the Governor and the Education Committees
of the Senate and the House of Representatives
November 30, 2007

Issued by:



Colorado Department of Education
Office of Special Services/Competitive Grants and Awards Unit
1560 Broadway, Suite 1450
Denver, Colorado 80202
<http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdecomp/r2a.htm>

Read to Achieve Report to the Governor and Legislative Bodies

The Read to Achieve Grant Program was established in the year 2000 as a result of 22-7-506 of the Colorado Revised Statutes (C.R.S.). However, numerous changes were made to the program through Senate Bill 07-192 during the 2007 Legislative Session. The new Read to Achieve legislation enacted by the General Assembly is now found in 22-7-901 through 22-7-909 of the Colorado Revised Statutes (C.R.S.).

The purpose of the Read to Achieve Grant program is to solicit proposals from any elementary school, including charter schools or a consortium of schools, to fund research-based intensive reading programs. In the original Read to Achieve legislation, the funding opportunity was designed specifically for second and third grade students and students between third and fourth grades whose literacy and reading comprehension skills are below the level established by the State Board of Education in the Colorado Basic Literacy Act (CBLA)-CRS 22-2-106(1)(a) and (c) and 22-53-601, 22-53-602, 22-53-604, 22-553-605, and 22-53-208. Funded activities could include reading academies for intensive reading instruction, after-school literacy programs, summer school clinics, tutoring and extended-day reading programs.

As a result of Senate Bill 07-192, key amendments were made to the Read to Achieve grant program. These changes include: The continuation of the Read to Achieve Board in statute until 2014; That the Commissioner of Education shall be able to appoint a designee to attend Read to Achieve Board meetings; The addition of a parent position on the Read to Achieve Board; An extension of students served to kindergarten through third grade students whose reading readiness or literacy and reading comprehension skills are below the levels established by the State Board of Education; The designation of a single, valid and reliable assessment designated by the State Board of Education; Subsequent year grant funding for each funded school will be based on the demonstration that at least 65% of the pupils who completed the one year instructional cycle of the intensive reading program reached their achievement goals or demonstrated that they are on pace to achieve grade level proficiency on the State Assessment in reading; That the Department and the Read to Achieve Board shall determine schools eligible to apply for Read to Achieve funds; and An increase in program administration from one percent to no more than three percent (including 1.0 FTE). The goal of the Read to Achieve grant program continues to be that all Colorado students will be proficient readers by the end of third grade.

The program is administered under the direction of the Read to Achieve Board, which consists of eleven members representing education at the state and local levels, both houses of the General Assembly, and parents of children who may participate in the program. See *Attachment C* of the following report for a listing of Board members.

Pursuant to 22-7-907 (C.R.S.), the Read to Achieve Board shall report to the Governor and to the Education committees of the Senate and House of Representatives on the effectiveness of Read to Achieve on or before November 30 of each year. The report shall include but is not limited to:

- (I) The number of grant recipients that received grants under the programs and the average amount of the grants **(located on pages 8, 9, 52-60, and 138-139 of the attached report)**;

- (II) The number of pupils enrolled in intensive literacy programs funded by the program, the number of pupils enrolled who improved their reading skills to proficient on the Read to Achieve Assessment in reading for their grade level in the year after starting the intensive literacy program, and the percentage of pupils who achieved proficiency on the Read to Achieve Assessment for reading for their grade level in both the year after starting the intensive literacy program and the following year (**located on pages 8, 9, 13-23 of the attached report**); and
- (III) Whether any statutory changes are recommended, including but not limited to the appropriateness of the requirements in section 22-7-905 (5), C.R.S. (**no statutory changes recommended at this time**).

The following report, which was submitted to the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment on November 1, 2007, fulfills these requirements as well as provides additional information and accomplishments regarding the Read to Achieve Program during the 2006-2007 school year.



READ TO ACHIEVE

Grant Program

Pursuant to Senate Bill 00-124

(22-7-506, C.R.S.)

Annual Report to the Colorado Department
of Public Health and Environment

November 1, 2007

Issued by:



Colorado Department of Education
Office of Special Services/Competitive Grants and Awards Unit
1560 Broadway, Suite 1450
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<http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdecomp/r2a.htm>

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Colorado Department of Education
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The Colorado Department of Education dedicates itself to increasing achievement levels for all students through comprehensive programs of education reform involving three interlocking elements: A) High Standards for what students must know and be able to do; B) Tough Assessments that honestly measure whether or not students meet standards and tell citizens the truth about how well our schools serve children; C) Rigorous Accountability Measures that tie the accreditation of school districts to high student achievement

The Colorado Department of Education does not discriminate on the basis of disability, race, color, religion, sex, national origin, or age, in access to, employment in, or provision of any of CDE’s programs, benefits, or activities.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Fiscal year 2006-2007 was the third and final year of the second funding cycle of the Read to Achieve grant program. During this year, 331 elementary schools successfully participated in serving second and third grade students reading below grade level. Funded schools provided research-based intensive reading programs for over 14,000 second and third grade students on Individual Literacy Plans (ILPs). Pursuant to the legislation that created Read to Achieve (22-7-506 C.R.S.), all funded schools are held accountable for reaching the specific reading achievement goals outlined in the statute in order to be recommended for subsequent year funding.

The Read to Achieve Grant Program was able to distribute \$4,021,114 to funded schools during the 2006-07 school year. With 331 funded schools, this provided funding at \$282 per pupil. However, at the end of June 2006 (FY 2005-2006), Read to Achieve received a large supplemental appropriation. Because this supplemental was awarded so late in the fiscal year and most schools' programs were closing for the year, schools were authorized by CDE to use the supplemental funding for Year 3 program activities outlined in their grant proposals. With the significant increase, schools were able to spend \$1078 per student, enabling them to provide quality, intensive reading services to their low achieving second and third grade readers.

During the third year of Read to Achieve (Funding Cycle II), 19 of the 49 participating *Colorado Reading First* (a federally funded reading initiative) schools received both Read to Achieve and *Colorado Reading First* funds. Leveraging funds through these two programs allows schools to continue providing systematic research-based approach to reading instruction and assessment. In addition to leveraging funds through *Colorado Reading First*, the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) has also made a concerted effort to facilitate collaboration among Read to Achieve and other grant programs as well as other literacy focused supports (including Title I – Part A). Of the 331 funded schools during Year 3, 56% (187 schools) were identified as schools that received Title I funding. In addition, 11% (35 schools) also received 21st Century Community Learning Centers (CCLC) grants. CDE was pleased to see these schools continue to leverage funds in order to provide our most struggling students with the intensive support needed for academic achievement.

After both the Read to Achieve *Performance Audit* and the Department of Regulatory Agencies (DORA) *Sunset Review* in 2006, the Read to Achieve Board was eager for the opportunity to strengthen the program. With recommendations prompted from the audit and DORA Sunset Review, the Board was able to convey further recommendations to “tighten-up” the program legislation during the 2007 Legislative session. As a result of Senate Bill 07-192, key amendments were made to the Read to Achieve grant program. These changes include: the continuation of the Read to Achieve Board in statute until 2014; an extension of students served to kindergarten through third grade students whose reading readiness or literacy and reading comprehension skills are below the levels established by the State Board of Education; the designation of a single, valid and reliable assessment designated by the State Board of Education; subsequent year grant funding for each funded school based on the demonstration that at least 65% of the pupils who completed the one year instructional cycle of the intensive reading program reached their achievement goals or demonstrated that they are on pace to achieve grade level proficiency on the State Assessment in reading; that the Department and the Read to Achieve Board shall determine schools eligible to apply for Read to Achieve funds; and an increase in program administration from one percent to no more than three percent (including 1.0 FTE).

This report is submitted to the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment to detail progress made in implementing the Read to Achieve grant program from July 1, 2006 through June 30, 2007. This report is divided into four sections: background, description of program, Year 3 outcomes and results, and evaluation of program operation.

I. BACKGROUND

Senate Bill 00-71 and S.B. 00-124 established the Read to Achieve grant program. The resulting legislation enacted by the General Assembly is 22-7-506 Colorado Revised Statutes (C.R.S.).

The Tobacco Litigation Settlement Cash Fund provides an ongoing source of funds for the program. Ninety-nine percent of the funds have been distributed directly to schools implementing intensive reading programs through Read to Achieve grants. One percent of the funds, as stipulated by statute, were retained for administrative costs, including training and support for grant applicants, external evaluation, and ongoing support and networking of grant recipients.

Rules for Administering Grant program

The State Board of Education is responsible for promulgating rules for the grant, including application procedures, criteria for selecting schools and determining grant amounts, and processes to evaluate the success of the programs operated by grant recipients. See Attachment A for a copy of the Rules for Administration. The Colorado Department of Education administers the grant. Please note: The State Board Rules default to the criteria within the Read to Achieve statute.

Each elementary school that received Read to Achieve funds addressed specific expectations within the scoring rubric. In order to receive subsequent year funding, schools were required to meet the statutory requirement that 25% of the students involved in the intensive reading program for the full instructional cycle would be at grade level or proficient on CSAP at the end of the program. All of the requirements for receiving these dollars relate directly to the expectations of the Colorado Basic Literacy Act (CBLA) – 22-7-501 through 22-7-505 Colorado Revised Statutes (C.R.S.). In May 2004, the rules for the Colorado Basic Literacy Act (CBLA) were amended to reflect a tightening of assessment guidelines and proficiencies related to the five components of reading. See Attachment B for the Amended Rules for the Administration of the Colorado Basic Literacy Act (CBLA).

Purpose of the Program

The purpose of the Read to Achieve grant program is to solicit proposals from any elementary school, including charter schools or a consortium of schools, to fund research-based intensive reading programs. The funding opportunity was designed specifically for second and third grade students and students between third and fourth grades whose literacy and reading comprehension skills are below the level established by the state Board of Education in the Colorado Basic Literacy Act (CBLA). Funded activities can include reading academies for intensive reading instruction, after-school literacy programs, summer school clinics, tutoring, and extended-day reading programs.

Role of the Read to Achieve Board

The program is administered under the direction of the Read to Achieve Board, which consists of 11 members representing education at both the state and local levels, both houses of the General Assembly, and parents of children who may participate in the program. See Attachment C for a listing of Board members. To meet the legislative intent of the Read to Achieve grant program (22-7-506 C.R.S.), the Board in partnership with the Colorado Department of Education is responsible for the following goals:

Goal 1: Provide additional intensive reading services to all second and third graders on Individual Literacy Plans (ILPs) so that they will be proficient readers by the end of third grade.

- Goal 2:* Collect and review applications for Read to Achieve Grants.
- Goal 3:* Recommend to the State Board of Education the schools that should receive grants as well as the duration and amount of each grant.
- Goal 4:* Determine continued funding of grants based on adequate progress during granting period, e.g., grantee meets the goals established in the grant application including demonstration that at least 25% of the students enrolled for the prior year met the reading standard.
- Goal 5:* Report to the Governor and to the General Assembly on the effectiveness of the program by February 1, 2004.

II. DESCRIPTION OF PROGRAM (July 1, 2006 – June 30, 2007)

Population Served by the Read to Achieve Grant

Read to Achieve funds were granted to a total of 331 schools, resulting in services for over 14,000 students during the 2006-2007 school year. Please see attachment D for a complete listing of funded schools. This number represents funding for approximately 51% of Colorado students in grades two and three who are on Individual Literacy Plans (ILPs).

According to statute, the Read to Achieve Board is required to ensure, to the extent possible, that grants are awarded to schools in a variety of geographic areas across the state. During the review process, both the Board and reviewers worked to assure that the funding pattern was equitable throughout the state. Reviewers funded applications by region, in proportion to how many students were enrolled in that region to the total amount of students in the state. For example, if one region contained 55% of the state's second and third grade students, the reviewers tried to ensure that the amount of applications funded in that region was equitable. The following table shows that the regional distribution of funds was consistent with the need for funds.

Table 1

<u>Distribution of Read to Achieve Funds Among Geographic Regions</u>						
Third Funding Period of the Second Cycle (July 2006 – June 2007)						
	<u>Grant Awards</u>				<u>Number of Read to Achieve Students</u>	
<u>Region</u>	<u>FY06 Supplemental Amount*</u>	<u>FY07 Funding Amount</u>	<u>Total Amount Each Region received for the 06-07 school year</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Metro	\$6,263,862.04	\$ 2,180,700.75	\$8,444,562.79	54%	7,767	54%
North Central	\$1,563,137.00	\$570,794.95	\$2,133,931.95	14%	2,033	14%
Northeast	\$118,811.00	\$49,414.61	\$168,225.61	1%	176	1%
Northwest	\$425,943.00	\$147,963.10	\$573,906.10	4%	527	4%
Pikes Peak	\$1,961,599.15	\$698,823.77	\$2,660,422.92	17%	2,489	17%
Southeast	\$166,497.49	\$57,837.57	\$224,335.06	1%	206	1%
Southwest	\$261,869.83	\$90,967.83	\$352,837.66	2%	324	2%
West Central	\$646,592.20	\$224,611.91	\$871,204.11	6%	800	6%
Total	\$11,408,311.71	\$4,021,114.49	\$15,429,426.20	100%	14,322	100%

* FY06 Supplemental was received in June 2006. Because of the late award of this supplemental, funded schools were to use the supplemental funding during the 2006-07 school year.

The table above highlights the amount distributed to funded Read to Achieve schools in Year 3 of Funding Cycle II based on \$282 per pupil. However, at the end of June 2006 (FY 2005-2006), Read to Achieve received a large supplemental appropriation. Because this supplemental was awarded so late in the fiscal year and most schools' programs were closing for the year, schools were authorized by CDE to use the supplemental funding for Year 3 program activities outlined in their grant proposals. With the significant increase, schools were able to spend \$1078 per Read to Achieve second and third grader during the third year.

Both the Read to Achieve Board and schools have stated they were very pleased to be able to provide meaningful, intensive literacy services to the state's most struggling second and third grade readers in the final year of the grant cycle. The following table demonstrates allocations from the second funding cycle (FYs 2004-2007).

Table 2: Summary of Read to Achieve Funded Grants

SUMMARY - READ TO ACHIEVE FUNDED GRANTS					
July 1, 2004 - June 30, 2007					
	YEAR 1 July 1, 2004 - June 30, 2005	YEAR 2 July 1, 2005 - June 30, 2006	YEAR 3 July 1, 2006 - June 30, 2007	TOTAL	
Number of Schools	374	347	331		
Number of Schools Meeting the 25% Statutory Goal	329*	331	265***		
Approved Funding					
	Approved	\$15,992,035			\$15,992,035
	Approved		\$15,723,092**		\$15,723,092
	Approved			\$4,021,114**	\$4,021,114
Total Approved					\$35,736,241
Summary					
	Total Students Served	16,289	14,985	14,322	
	Minimum	\$354.84	\$1078.00	\$282	
	Maximum	\$1,057.51	\$1078.00	\$282	
	Average	\$994.32	\$1078.00	\$282	

*329 schools met the 25% Statutory Goal. However, 21 schools that were funded in January 2005 did not meet the goal but continued according to Read to Achieve Board determination.

**Although the total appropriation resulted in \$15,992,035 for FY 2005-06, \$11.5 million of the total appropriation was received in June 2006. For the 2005-06 school year funded schools only received \$327 per student. Because of the late date in receipt of the supplemental, schools were allowed to spend the remainder of FY 2005-2006 funds during the 2006-07 school year.

*** At the end of Year 3, a vast majority of schools continued to meet and exceed the stated legislative goals for Read to Achieve. However, because fiscal year 2006-07 was the third year of the funding cycle, no subsequent funding was awarded after the evaluation process and many participating schools were no longer eligible to apply for funding. The number of schools that did not submit end of year data was higher than in the previous two years.

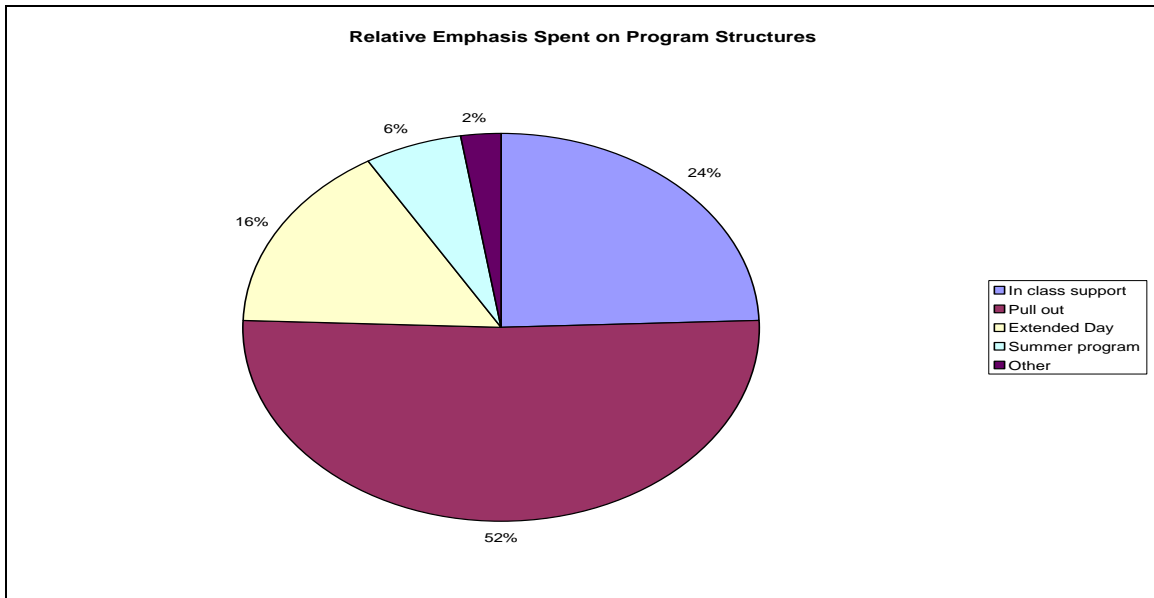
Types of Services Provided by Schools

As in the first funding cycle of Read to Achieve, Year 3 funds continued to provide research-based, intensive reading instruction, based on specific needs assessment, to second and third grade students who were on ILPs. The type of program was not prescribed in the statute, thus different types of reading programs have been approved for funding. Under the amended CBLA guidelines, each of the schools was required to provide evidence of meeting scientifically based research for each of the National Reading Panel's Five Essential Components of Reading (Comprehension, Phonemic Awareness, Phonics, Vocabulary, and Fluency) for the program they chose to implement. These types of programs could include, but were not limited to, intensive after school tutoring programs, one-on-one school day pull-out programs, and summer programs.

Funded schools were required to complete a Program Profile form to describe the type of services they provided. They were asked to assign relative percentages to the amount of time that they spent on each of the Five Components of Reading. Additionally, schools assigned percentages to describe the relative emphasis in their programs of the structure for delivery of instruction (in-class support

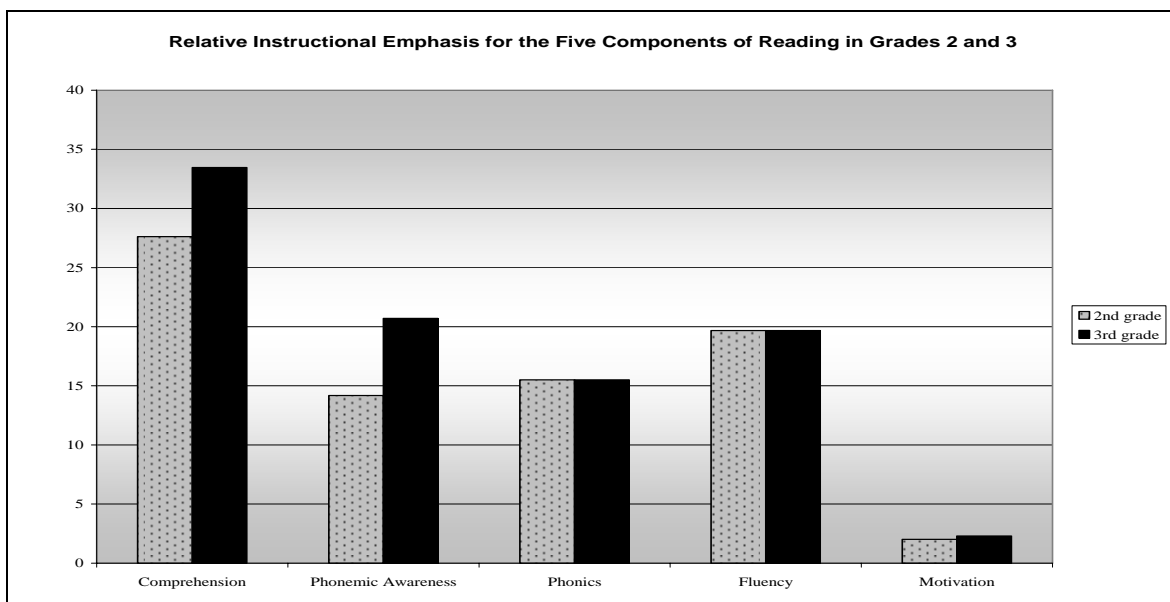
and assistance; pull-out; extended day; summer programs, or other.) The majority of schools reported the emphasis of their Read to Achieve programs consisted of intensive pull-out sessions for ILP students, followed by in class support for ILP students. Figure 1 depicts the relative amount of time spent in each type of program provision.

Figure 1: Relative emphasis spent on program structures for delivery of Read to Achieve Instruction



The majority of schools reported the emphasis of their Read to Achieve programs focused on reading comprehension, both in the second and third grades. Fluency was the second most emphasized instructional category in the second grade, while the emphasis shifted to phonics in the third grade. Table 3 demonstrates the relative importance of the various instructional emphases by grade.

Table 3: Relative instructional emphasis for the Five Components of Reading in grades 2 and 3



Schools delivered the Five Components of Reading in a variety of ways. More than half (51.6%) of schools reported the relative instructional emphasis of their Read to Achieve programs consisted of intensive pull out sessions for ILP students. Next most common was in class support (23.8%) followed by extended day study (15.8%) and summer programs (5.8%) Most schools integrated their programs through regular coordination with the classroom teacher (94.8%).

Schools provided services in various time periods. Table 5 provides summary data for the hours per week, sessions per week, and weeks per program period by type of service. The largest number of weeks was spent in intensive pull-out sessions, followed by in-class services. Pull-out also accounted for the greatest number of sessions and hours per week. More than half of schools (55.1%) reported their services for students were provided in a structured, but not highly prescribed way. Less than 2% reported an open, unstructured approach to service delivery.

Table 4: Instructional time provided to students in Read to Achieve program

	In class	Pull out	Extended Day	Summer Program	Other
Mean number of hrs per week	3.19	3.80	1.28	3.20	.21
Mean number of sessions per week	2.77	4.74	1.29	1.1	.17
Mean number of weeks in program	15.83	23.16	9.85	1.43	1.25

Programming Support Provided by CDE

Due to budget constraints in this second funding cycle, the Board decided to forgo both the large and costly networking day and the small regional sessions. Instead, more cost efficient web-based trainings were used to disseminate Year 3 program information for Read to Achieve schools. This information focused on the required evaluation pieces and budget requirements. Schools have favored this format because it is flexible and eliminates the time commitment of traveling to Denver for a required function. While the web-based trainings have received positive feedback, the Read to Achieve Board supports the reinstatement of the Annual Networking Day if funding allows in the future. During the first funding cycle, this day provided a positive professional development experience for educators to come together, hear the latest research, and share what is working in their programs.

While not specifically related to Read to Achieve, grantees were invited again to attend the Colorado Reading Summit in May 2007. After proving to be an enormous success in the previous two years, the Colorado Department of Education and the Secretary’s Regional Office of the U.S. Department of Education again hosted the Colorado Reading Summit on May 7, 2007. This event invited representatives from both Read to Achieve and *Colorado Reading First* schools, other school and district representatives, and key policymakers from around the state giving them the opportunity to hear presentations on what is working across our state in the area of literacy. The overall theme of this year’s summit was a focus of leveraging hard work and resources into student achievement. Key features of this year’s program included: state and national gain-makers; beating the odds with students from poverty; gains with ELL students; Reading First; Distinguished Title I Schools; and Blue Ribbon Schools.

As in the previous two years of the funding cycle a key piece of support provided by CDE for Year 2 funded schools was technical assistance. The Read to Achieve Coordinator was available by phone, email and in-person to provide technical assistance regarding program specific questions, budget issues, and evaluation reporting. Feedback from schools has indicated that this technical assistance continued to be especially critical during the end of year evaluation process.

Relationship to Other Government Programs

The Read to Achieve Program was structured to fund only those schools meeting the rigorous criteria of the Request for Proposal. In Year 3 of Funding Cycle II, approximately 51% of students on ILPs in grades two and three in Colorado were impacted by these funds. This percentage is down approximately 24 points from Funding Cycle I of Read to Achieve. This can be attributed to the fact that the funding for Funding Cycle II of Read to Achieve was reduced and fewer schools were served. However, CDE has made a concerted effort to facilitate collaboration among Read to Achieve and other grant programs as well as other literacy focused supports (including Title I – Part A).

Table 5: Relationship to Other Government Programs

Relationship to Other Government Programs		
Programs	# of R2A Schools	% of R2A Schools
<i>Colorado Reading First</i>	19	6%
<i>21st Century Community Learning Centers</i>	35	11%
<i>Title I</i>	187	56%

Of the 331 funded schools during Year 3, 56% (187 schools) were identified as having received Title I funds. In addition, 11% (35 schools) received 21st CCLC grants and 6% (19 schools) participated in *Colorado Reading First (CRF)*.

III. THIRD YEAR OUTCOMES AND RESULTS

Description of Evaluation Process

By statute, the Read to Achieve grant program is a competitive grant program in which subsequent funding is contingent on each year's performance. The requirements for being eligible for funding are clearly defined in Section 506 of Article 7 of Title 22, C.R.S. By statute, to be eligible in subsequent years, schools must show that 25% of the students enrolled in the intensive literacy program improved their reading skills to grade level or achieved proficiency on the state assessment in reading for their grade level. Therefore, at least 25% of students who were enrolled for the full instructional cycle of the program needed to improve to grade level as measured by the school's own reported CBLA levels or score proficient on the third grade CSAP.

Schools that received third year funding were responsible for submitting all evaluation data by June 2007. Data were submitted in two forms: student level data and school level data.

Data at the student level included limited demographic data (gender, ethnicity) classification data (English-language learners, special education) and achievement on the CBLA end of cycle assessment and/or CSAP proficiency. Raw scores and classifications were reported for both CBLA and CSAP. Students were identified as full cycle or partial cycle; partial cycle students were eliminated from funding analysis after their relative frequency was calculated. Student-level data also included – for those children who did not meet CBLA proficiency – categorization as to whether they made improvement or deteriorated over the cycle.

School level data included information submitted on the Program Profile. These data described the number of students the school expected to serve and detail about the content, structure, and prescriptive nature of the Read to Achieve services.

Summary data from the student-level file was merged with the school level file to determine associations between content, structure, and process and specific proficiency outcomes. All data were analyzed using Excel or SPSS v14.4.

Detail of Results

Overall, 331 schools received funding for Read to Achieve during the 2006-2007 school year. Of the 331 schools participating in the third year, 87.7% (n=265) met the 25% statutory goal. More than half (62.9%) of participating schools met the statutory goal at a level of between 30% and 70%. This number is slightly higher than 2005-06. Of note is the 29.1% of schools that met or exceeded a goal of 65%, because this level has been set as the statutory goal for the school year 2007-08. It is clear that substantial improvements will be needed in the coming year to achieve this goal at the school level. However, it is also important to note that schools will be using a single assessment for the third funding cycle (FYs 2008-11).

The tables that follow depict:

- The number of students served overall and by grade;
- The percent of these that were full cycle; and
- The number meeting the proficiency goals that were established by statute for year 3 of the funding cycle.

Number of Students Served

Information submitted by participating schools indicated that 13,906 students were served by Read to Achieve programs in this cycle, which is 1,155 fewer than the number of students from cycle 2. An average of 39 students per school participated in the program in year 3. The average number of students participating in second grade was 22 and an average of 23 students participated in the third grade. Figure 2 depicts the distribution of schools by number of students served, followed by Figure 3 that depicts the breakdown of this information by grade.

Figure 2: Distribution of schools by number of students served, both grades

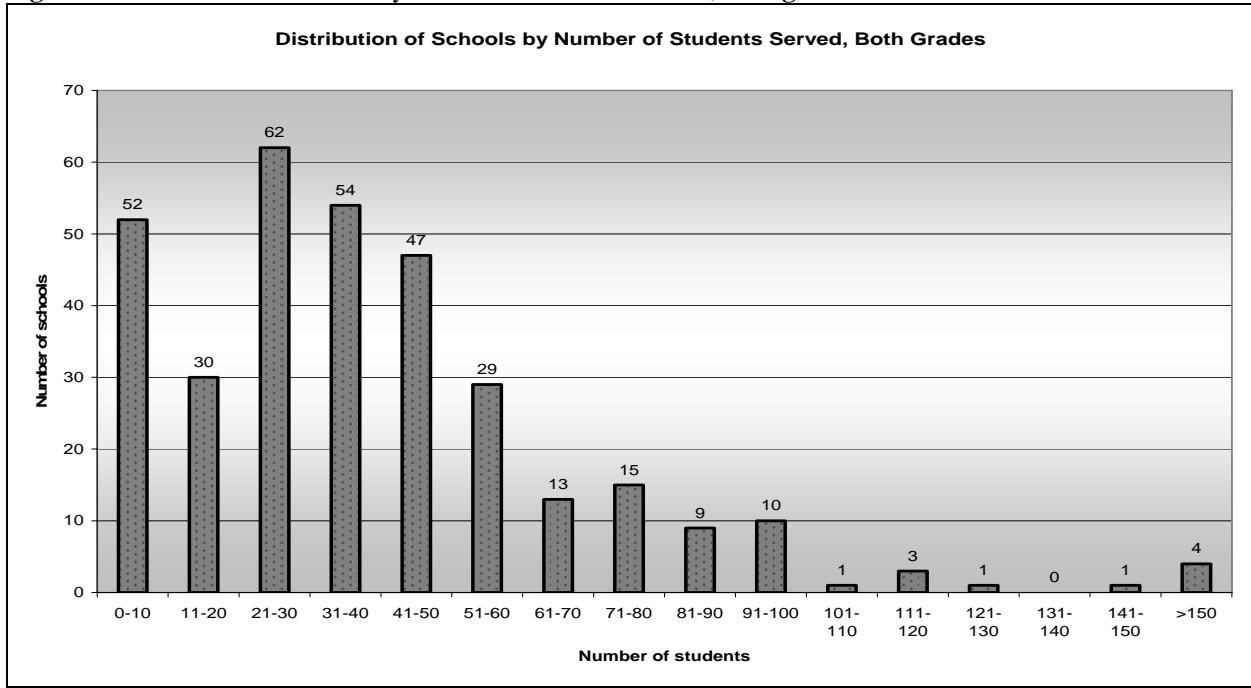
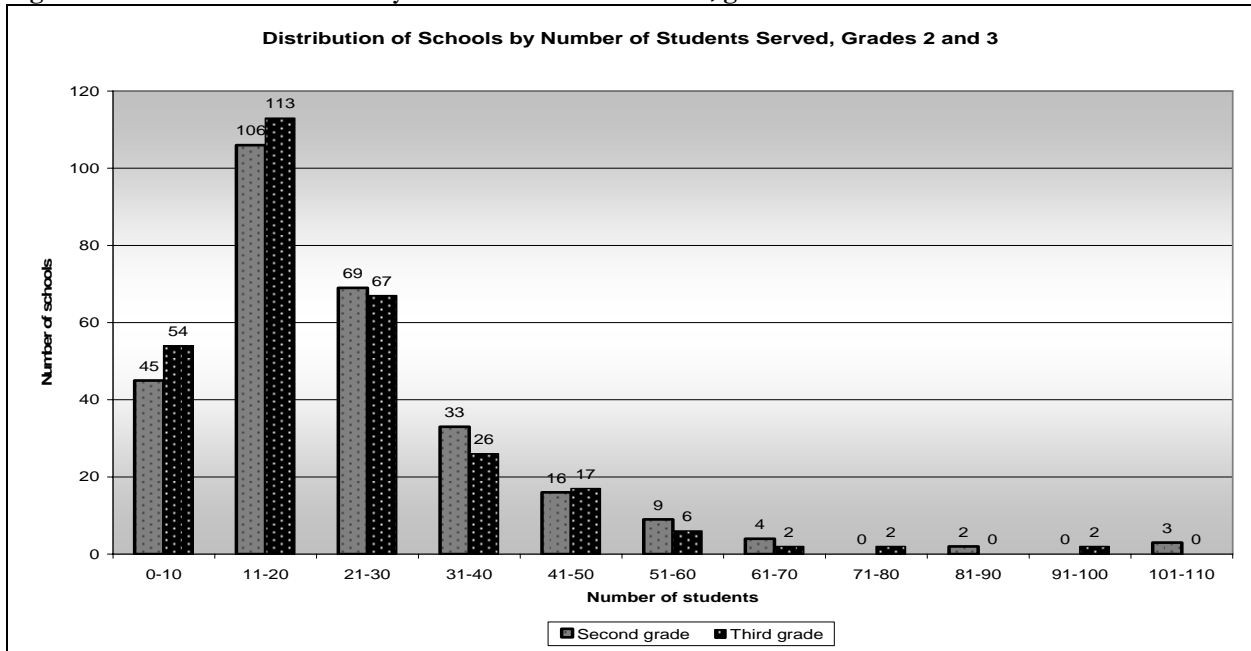
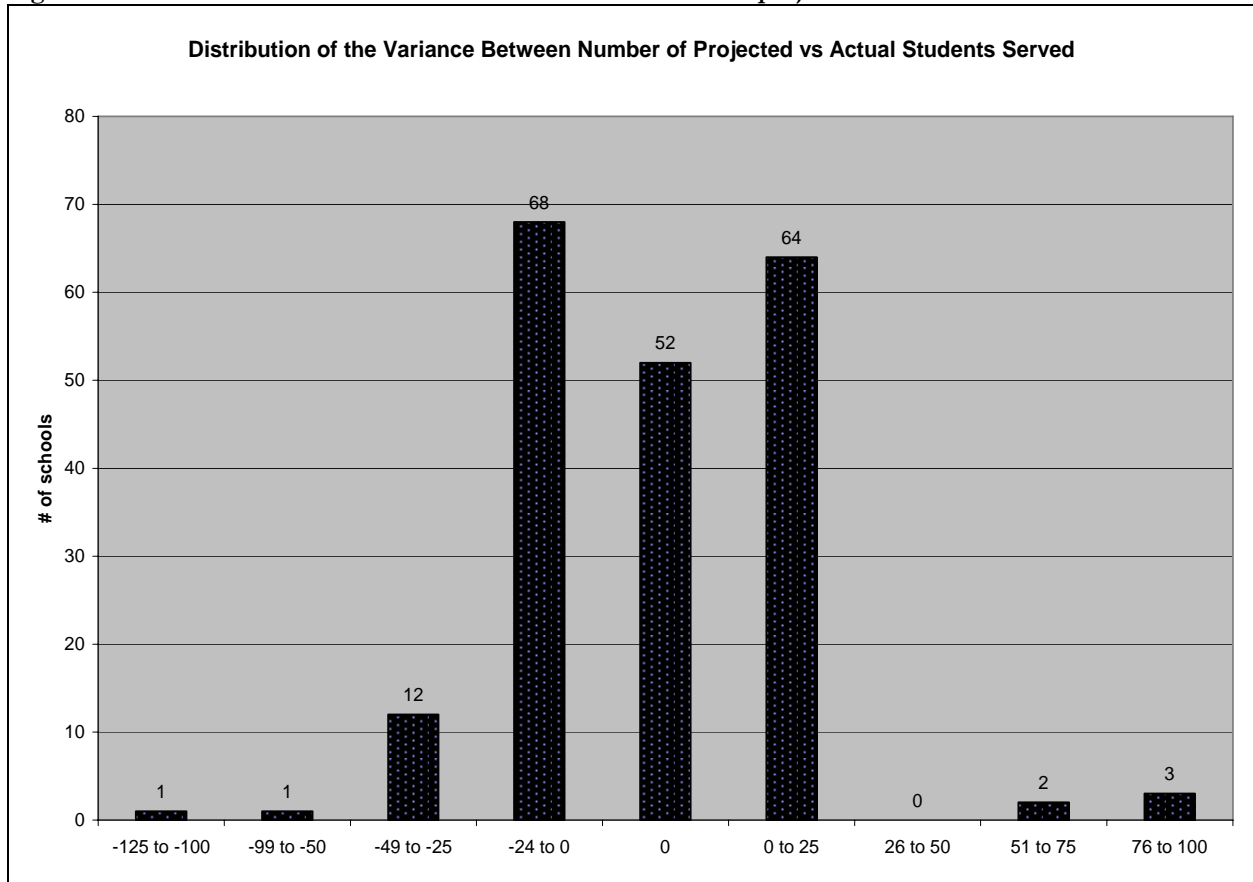


Figure 3: Distribution of schools by number of students served, grades 2 and 3



Most schools (66.5%) served up to 25 students with their Read to Achieve program. Only 4.4% of the schools served more than 100 students. The distribution of students is consistent with the previous cycle's data. The schools' projections of the number of students that would be served was fairly consistent with the number that were actually served. Twenty-five percent served exactly the number of children they projected would be served. The distribution of the variance of projected to actual number of students appears in Figure 4.

Figure 4: Distribution of the variance between number of students projected and actual students served



Full Cycle Participation (Mobility Issues)

A total of 11864 (85.3%) students were reported as participating for the full instructional cycle, down 548 from the previous year. The drop in full-cycle students can be partially attributed to 274 students who were not properly identified as either full-cycle, or who were not full-cycle in the data collected from the schools. This may not represent a real drop in numbers; 1155 fewer students participated in Read to Achieve in 2006/7 when compared to the previous year. Most schools (80.1%) reported that at least 80% of the students remained for the full instructional cycle. More than half (57.1%) of the schools reported that more than 90% of students remained full cycle. These numbers represents 4.1% and 7.1% increases, respectively, over the previous year. These data indicate the majority of students participating in the program remain the full-cycle, which is approximately consistent with the previous year's data. Figures 5 and 6 represent the distribution of full cycle participation by schools and broken down by grades.

Figure 5: Distribution of schools by percent of students for full cycle

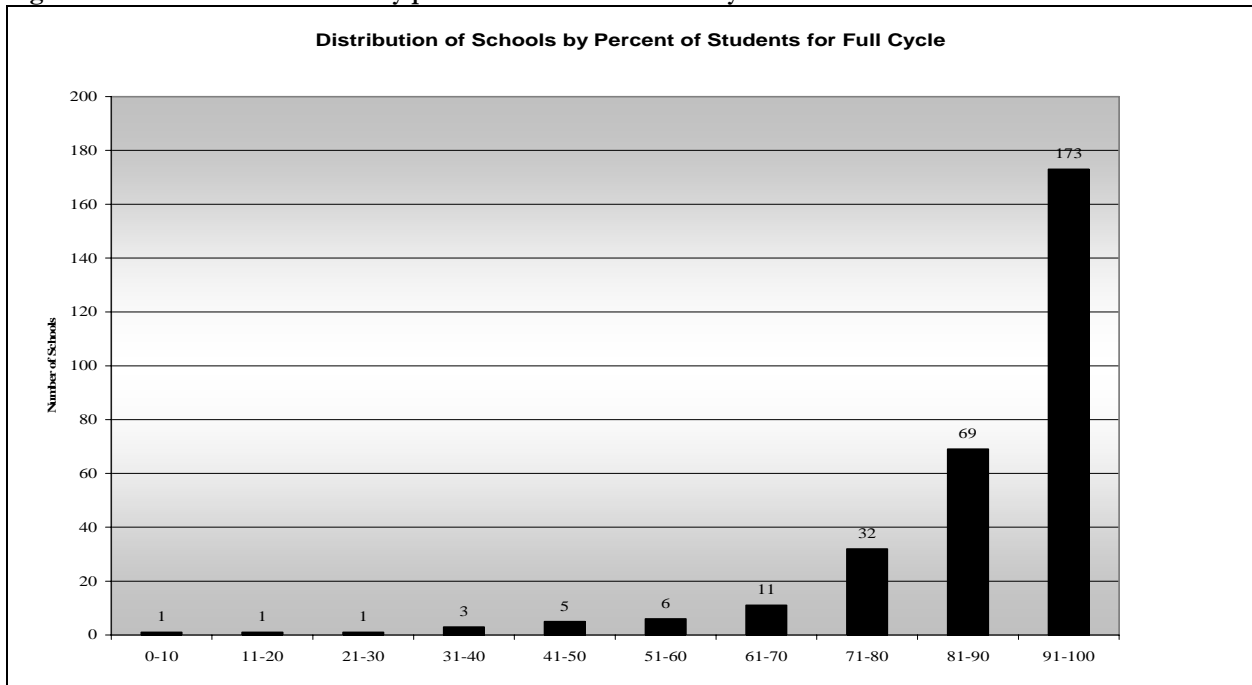
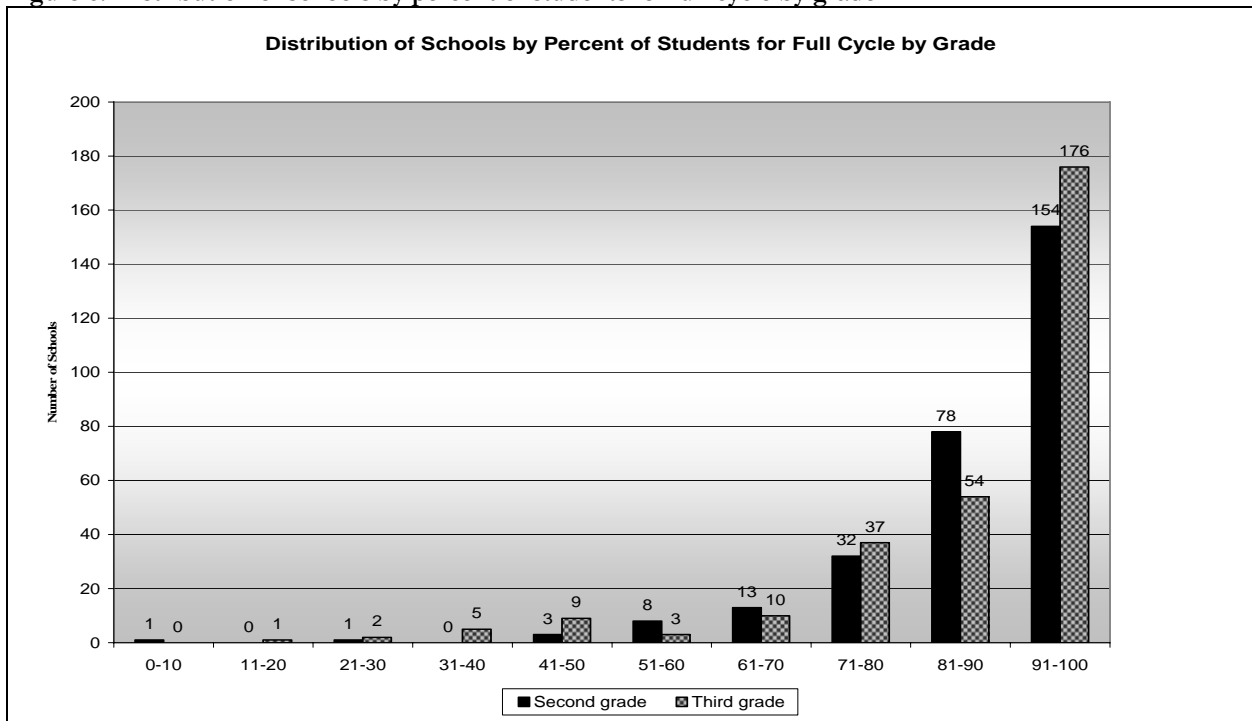


Figure 6: Distribution of schools by percent of students for full cycle by grade



Students Meeting Achievement Goals

Of the 331 schools with full-cycle students, 87.7% met or exceeded the goal of 25% of students reading at grade level as determined by exist assessments and/or proficiency on the grade 3 reading CSAP. The figure below depicts the percent of students meeting this goal by grade and overall.

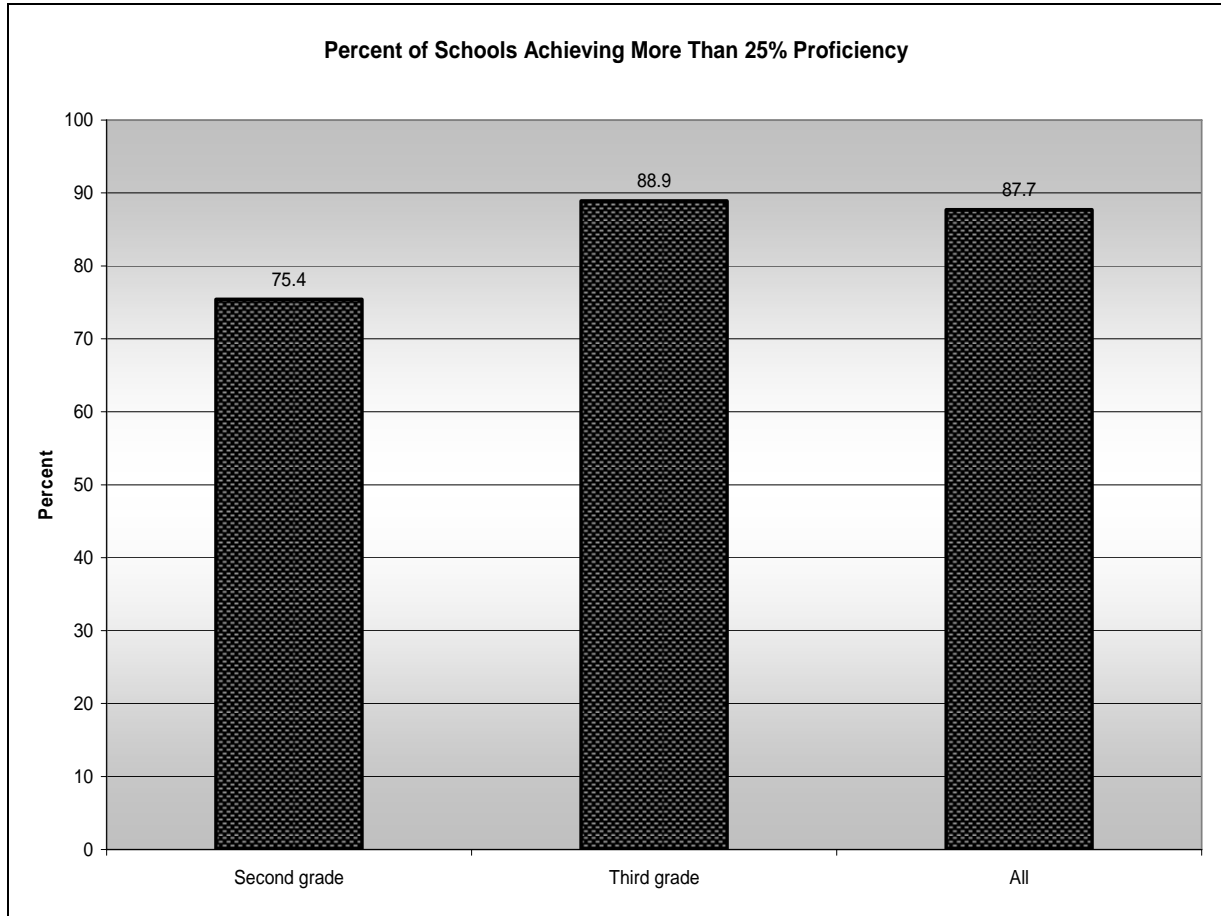


Figure 7: Distribution of schools by percent students that are CBLA and/or CSAP proficient

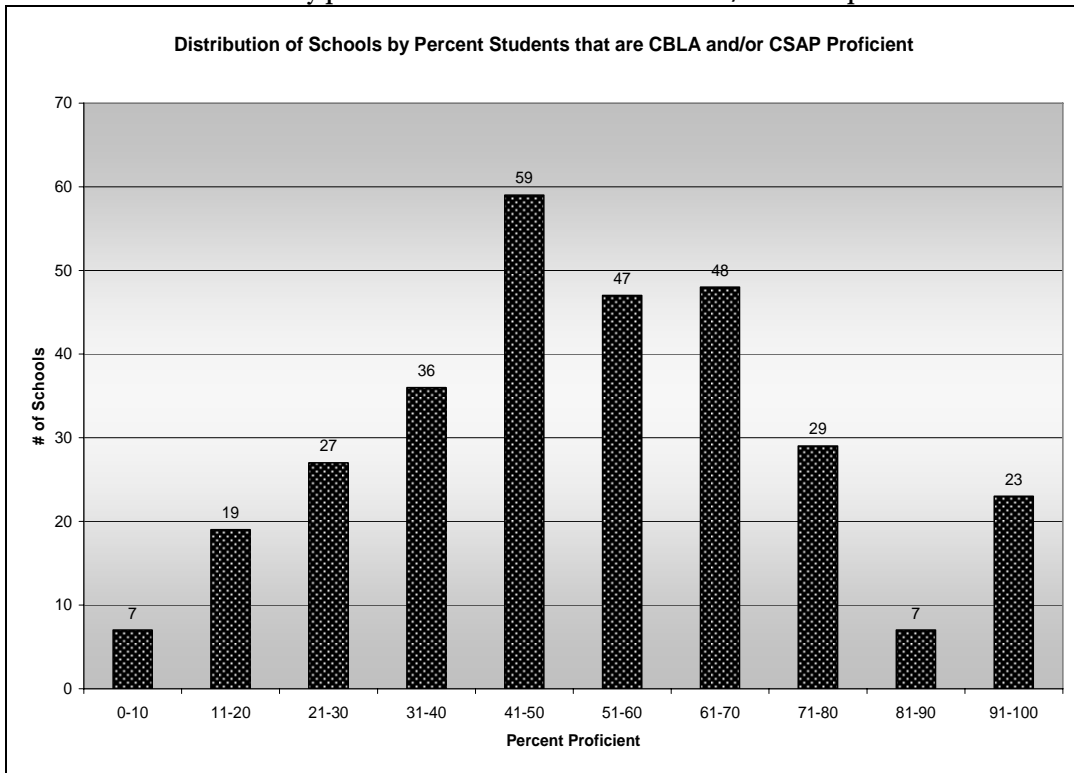
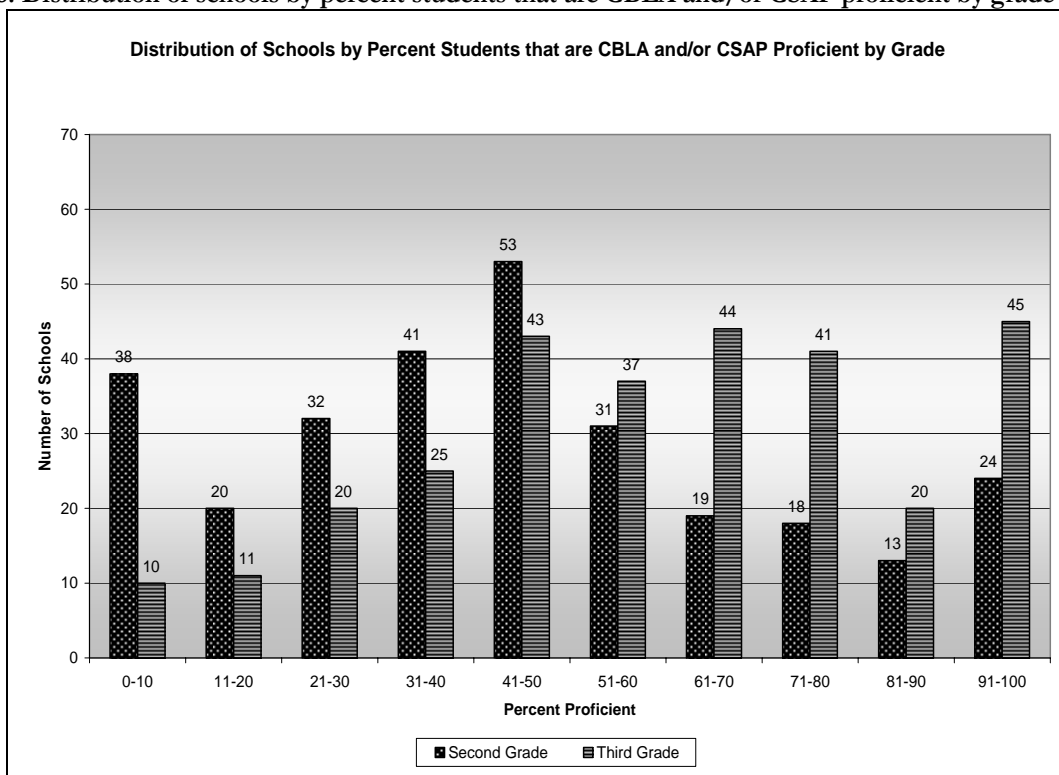


Figure 8: Distribution of schools by percent students that are CBLA and/or CSAP proficient by grade



Proficiency by Special Classifications

ELL Students meeting achievement goals

A total of 3674 full cycle students were identified as English Language Learners. This represents 31% of all full-cycle students. As a group, 40.9% of ELL students met the grant-specified achievement goal, a decrease of 2.1% from year 2. When compared to the 52.18% for all full cycle students who met the achievement goal, an 11.9% percentage point achievement gap exists for ELL students. The achievement gap for ELL students has increased 3.9% percentage points from year 2. Detail of the percent achieving goal broken down by grade appears in Table 6.

Special Education Students meeting achievement goals

A total of 1588 full cycle students with disabilities were included in the achievement data submitted by schools. This represents 14.3% of all full cycle students. As a group, 35.2% of special education students met the grant-specified achievement goal. This compares to 52.8% of all students, representing a 17.6% percentage point difference. The achievement gap for special education students decreased by 2.4% from cycle 2. Detail of the percent achieving goal broken down by grade also appears in Table 6.

Table 6: Breakdown of percent achieving goal for ELL and Special Education Students by grade

Group	ELL Students	Special Education	All Students
All	40.9%	35.2%	52.8%
Second grade	37.0%	30.0%	46.1%
Third grade	45.0%	40.0%	59.9%

Achievement goals by demographic classifications

Distribution of ethnicity in the Read to Achieve students is shifting over the cycles of the program. In the year 2006/07, Hispanics were the majority of students for the first time. The relative numbers of other ethnic groups stayed essentially the same from previous years, while the percentage of white children declined. Approximately ten percent more girls than boys receive Read to Achieve services.

Achievement goals were classified by demographic groupings of ethnicity and gender. Scores for all students in the classification as well as for second and third grade appear in Table 7. The achievement gap for ethnic groups was within 5.3 percentage points. Hispanics had the greatest achievement gap when compared to the overall group, and an even greater achievement gap when compared to White students. However, all ethnic groups except Asians showed an improvement in achievement levels when compared to year 2.

Table 7 represents the percent achieving goal broken down by gender and ethnic group.

	Percent of Group	Both Grades	Second Grade	Third Grade
Ethnicity:				
Native American	1.1%	55.1%	43.4%	72.5%
Asian	2.4%	55.9%	51.7%	60.4%
Black	2.2% 5.5%	53.3%	47.1%	59.5%
Hispanic	46.3%	47.0%	42.2%	52.1%
White	44.6%	58.6%	49.8%	67.7%
Gender:				
Male	44.9%	53.6%	47.3%	60.3%
Female	54.9%	52.1%	45.1%	59.6%

Students Unable to Achieve Proficiency

A total of 6,207 (47.8%) students were unable to reach the proficiency goals set for Read to Achieve students. Of these, however, the majority – nearly 80% did make improvements from the beginning of the cycle to the end. Table 8 depicts the number and percent of children that were unable to achieve proficiency but did make progress, compared to those who had deteriorating proficiency.

Table 8: Number and percent of children who did not achieve proficiency but improved/deteriorated

	All	2nd Grade	3rd Grade
Improved	4884	2630	2254
	78.7%	80.1%	77.1%
Deteriorated	1323	654	669
	21.3%	19.9%	22.9%
Total	6207	3284	2923

Characteristics of successful programs

There were differences between program structures and processes at schools that were successful at the 25% level and those that were not. However, few of these were statistically significant when compared using inferential techniques. Further study was undertaken to see if differences could be identified between program structures and processes at schools that were successful at the 65% level – the level of proficiency required by statute in 2007/08 – and those that were not. In each case, some characteristics were identified that differentiated these groups. However, a conclusion cannot be drawn as to whether these program structures and processes actually caused an improved outcome. Nevertheless, a contrast can be helpful in drawing a comprehensive picture of success in Read to Achieve.

Table 9 depicts the mean scores on program variables for those schools achieving at less than the 25% level, at the 25% level or above, and at the 65% level or above. Those differences that were statistically significant are identified.

Characteristic	Schools <25% proficiency: mean	Schools >/= 25% proficiency: mean	Schools >/= 65% proficiency
# Students served	43	43	44
Dollars per student	1002	1090	1080
Percent of time spent on :			
Comprehension	31.2	33.3	32.9
Phonics	15.3	15.6	16.5*
Vocabulary	17.1	17.2	16.6
Fluency	23.5	21.1	21.8
Motivation	0.80	2.7*	2.2*
Relative time spent on delivery:			
In class	18.5	23.7	22.8
Pull out	45.4	51.9	51.1
Extended day	27.1*	15.2	18.5
Summer program	9.7	5.8	5.4
Presentation of program:			
Highly structured	41.2	26.2*	29.6*
Regular coordination with teacher	17.6	15.3	20.1
Open based on teacher experience	0.00	0.20	0.00
Hours spent:			
In class services	3.0	3.1	5.1*
Pullout programs	3.1	4.0	5.6*
Extended day	1.5	1.3	1.2
Summer programs	5.1	3.1	4.1
Sessions spent:			
In class services	3.8	2.7	3.4
Pullout programs	3.2	5.0	5.4
Extended day	1.5	1.3	1.4
Summer program	1.7	1.3	1.5

* statistically significant at <.05

The group that was proficient was categorized into 4 levels based on quartile scores, and these levels of the proficiency factor were used to attempt to identify program structures and processes that were different from those performing at the lowest level of proficiency and those performing at the highest level. A limited number of differences were statistically significant, but these differences do hold promise for moving schools to the highest level of proficiency.

Of the relative instructional emphases, only 3rd grade phonics was different based on proficiency levels. It would appear that phonics can improve proficiency in those in the lowest levels of proficiency ($p=.015$) but the impact is only detected in those at the lowest proficiency levels and only in the third grade. The extended day delivery is more effective for this group, as well, but for both second and third graders ($F=3.561_{3,194}$, $p=.015$, CI: 1.56 – 29.38.) Overall, the schools with the highest levels of proficiency on CBLA and CSAP had more summer program hours ($F=2.644_{3,192}$, $p=.05$, CI: .4 to 6.26) and a larger number of summer sessions ($F=2.571_{3,193}$, $p=.04$, CI:

.74 to 1.47.) In terms of structure, the highest levels of proficiency were found in schools that had regular coordination with the classroom teacher ($F=2.61_{3,193}$, $p=.045$, CI: .06 to .5.)

The sample was then divided into two groups: those that had fewer than the goal 25% at proficiency and those that had 25% or more at proficiency. Additional differences were detected when these groups were compared. In grade 3, up to a 3% difference in proficiency was detected in schools that included motivation as part of the curriculum ($p=.024$.) The lowest proficiency schools used more structure in program delivery. The higher performing schools used regular coordination with the classroom teacher in lieu of highly structured delivery ($p=.045$.)

Smaller group size appears to support effectiveness of program delivery. Schools with a greater percentage at proficiency had smaller groups of 2 to 4 students in class ($p=.005$) and in summer programs ($p=.013$.) Schools that had up to 8 students in class also performed better ($p=.025$) than those that performed less proficiently.

Finally, the schools were grouped into those that were and were not performing at the 65% proficiency level, as this is the goal for the 07/08 funding cycle. Schools in the over 65% performance level were more likely to use one-on-one, in class delivery ($p=.020$, CI: .92 to 10.6) and to have more hours in class ($p=.031$) and in pull out ($p=.018$.) The former accounted for up to a 5% improvement in proficiency percentage, the latter for up to 4%.

Because the CBLA measures are not standardized at this time, these findings must be considered in light of the amount of measurement error that may be inherent in non-standard measures. In the 2007/08 school year, measures will be standardized using the DIBELS measures, which have demonstrated reliability and predictive validity in the Colorado population of students (through Reading First.) These differences, then, should be considered suggestive of, rather than conclusive for, strategies that are proven to improve proficiency. With these caveats, though, it could reasonably be considered that providing services to smaller groups, capitalizing on the teachers' experience for the structure of the program, and investing in more hours and sessions of service delivery could be associated with improved attainment of proficiency in this population.

In summary, some change in proficiency levels appears to be associated with:

- Use of phonics for those in the lowest performing groups
- Extended day delivery for those in the lowest performing groups
- More summer program hours and sessions
- Regular coordination with the classroom teacher rather than a highly structured program
- Inclusion of motivation as part of the curriculum
- Small group sizes for instruction (less than 8; optimal appears to be 2-4)
- One-on-one in class delivery
- More hours spent in class and in pull out

Future Outlook

This report contains information about current performance of Read to Achieve schools and some limited information that relates proficiency to program structures and processes. This latter process will be supported for future grant cycles by the implementation of a standard measurement system for monitoring progress. The Dynamic Indicators for Basic Evaluation of Literacy (DIBELS) assessment will be a standard CBLA for future grant cycles. These tests enable the classroom teacher to monitor progress of students toward literacy goals. The DIBELS tests are quick to administer and have been used for progress monitoring in the Reading First program since that program's inception. Using a single standard test to monitor literacy will leverage the shared goals of these two programs and enable program administrators to make comparisons across programs, students, and classrooms.

The DIBELS assessments have been evaluated for psychometric properties in the population of Reading First students in Colorado and have been found to have acceptable reliability. Furthermore, these tests have been determined to possess the ability to predict performance on the third grade CSAP with 85% or better accuracy. The best predictive capacity is at the end of first grade – when intensive intervention is still possible – and at the beginning of the third grade. Both of these are relevant for the Read to Achieve schools. In addition, the DIBELS suite of tests has been found to be technically equal – and in many subtests, superior – for ELL students. This is of particular importance for the students of Read to Achieve, given the distribution of Hispanic children in this population.

The consistent use of a standard test should enable future evaluations to better identify the differences in program structures, processes, and outcomes between schools that are performing proficiently and those that are not. This would provide program administrators, school administrators, and teachers with the guidance to provide the Read to Achieve services in a way that is most likely to help children achieve reading proficiency. It will also be helpful to determine the return on investment for these grant monies. Some of these planned efforts include the following:

- A web-based, automated database is in development to capture data more consistently and efficiently, so that datasets will be complete and accurate. This should also reduce the burden on schools to produce data about program profiles and achievement.
- A cross sectional study is planned to study Reading First, Read to Achieve, and other Title I students to analyze which services are best across programs and across schools.
- Longitudinal study of school progress, students progress within Read to Achieve, and ongoing progress after the third grade are also in planning stages.

Read to Achieve has met many of the goals it was designed to achieve, but challenges lie ahead. A benchmark has been set for future grant recipients that will be difficult to reach, at best. Providing the evidence needed for both evaluating program effectiveness and guiding teachers and program administrators is a key goal for the future of Read to Achieve.

IV. EVALUATION OF PROGRAM OPERATION

Accountability

To date, the Read to Achieve grant program has consistently emphasized accountability for the planned and actual use of the funds. Funds were initially distributed to schools that applied with a plan for well-designed programs that were focused on accomplishing specific objectives.

Accountability for the grant program has continued to be addressed through a rigorous application and evaluation process, involving the reporting of outcomes.

To ensure that programs achieved intended results, future funding was conditional on schools meeting a specific achievement goal. By statute, funded schools could only be eligible for funding in subsequent years if they achieved the goals set forth in their applications and demonstrated that a minimum of 25% of the pupils enrolled in the program in the prior year improved their reading skills to grade level based on the CBLA or scored proficient on the Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP).

During Funding Cycle I (FYs 2001-2004), schools were also asked to submit longitudinal CSAP information for previously served students. This information was used for tracking purposes to demonstrate achievement after a student's participation in the Read to Achieve program. Schools were asked to submit CSAP scores for any student who had participated in Read to Achieve. However, during the first funding cycle, the collection of longitudinal CSAP information proved to be a challenge due to the high mobility rate and the intensive amount of time in gathering the data. For the second funding cycle, Read to Achieve has collaborated with the Information Management Services within the Colorado Department of Education in gathering this information electronically based on individual student identifiers to ensure reliable collection of data. An online data collection was created so that by using individual student identifiers, CSAP scores can be tracked from year to year by CDE rather than schools keeping track of students from each previous cohort that are no longer being served. These identified students will remain confidential. The Read to Achieve Board is pleased that previous students can now be tracked in a more efficient way, which is less time intensive for schools.

Research Base for Read to Achieve:

The accountability process for the Read to Achieve program was tied directly to CSAP data, the Colorado Basic Literacy Act (CBLA), and the research based on the Six Dimensions of Reading documented in the *Report of the National Reading Panel – Teaching Children to Read* (2000).

The rigorous and explicit evaluation expectations of Read to Achieve and technical supports using consistent data analyses have strengthened CBLA, implementing more rigorous performance measures for second and third grade students and more frequent progress monitoring for students to provide the best instruction possible. This result is frequently noted by local school leaders.

The Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP) is a state assessment program designed to measure student achievement in relationship to the Colorado Model Content Standards. These standards are expectations specifying what students should know at particular points in their education. Assessment of reading occurs from grade three through grade ten. The Read to Achieve program uses these results in assessing adequate progress related to 25% of students meeting the reading standard.

In Spring of 1996, the Colorado General Assembly passed House Bill 96-1139, Colorado's Basic Literacy Act (22-7-501 through 506 C.R.S.). The preamble to this Act states:

It is the intent of the General Assembly that, after third grade, no pupil may be placed at a grade level or other level of schooling that requires literacy skills not yet acquired by the pupil.

The Act mandates that all students will be reading at the third grade level by the end of third grade. This Act requires that the reading growth of all students be monitored carefully from kindergarten through third grade. Those students not reading at that grade level will be placed on Individual Literacy Plans (ILPs), which are developed with the school and the family.

District Responsibilities include:

1. Assessing the reading performance of all students.
2. Placing students on ILPs if students are not reading on grade level.
3. Reporting to the state:
 - The number and percentage of pupils in the third grade who read at or above their grade level.
 - The number and percentage of pupils enrolled in the district who are on ILPs.
 - The number and percentage of pupils who have increased their literacy and reading comprehension levels by two or more grades during one year of instruction.

Best practices in literacy must serve as a foundation for all literacy work. All Read to Achieve grantees developed proposals based upon principles in the *Report of the National Reading Panel – Teaching Children to Read*, which includes the six dimensions of reading: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, building background and vocabulary, comprehension, and motivation. After a comprehensive needs assessment, each grant had to show how the school planned to implement each of the six dimensions.

In the spring of 2004, Colorado State Board of Education and Colorado Attorney General's office approved amendments to the rules of administration for the Colorado Basic Literacy Act. These changes to the CBLA were prompted by the knowledge gained in the last seven years by experts in literacy on how to teach and assess reading. This is a positive step in ensuring Colorado's students become proficient readers by the end of the third grade. These changes include:

- New definitions of the five components of reading (comprehension, phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, and fluency) and of adequately validated accepted scientific standards,
- Changes regarding expected proficiencies at each grade level (K-3) across the five components of reading,
- Clarifications regarding assessment instruments to be used in terms of
 1. the scientific standards criterion and
 2. the purposes of assessment (screening, progress monitoring, end-of-year proficiency).

Please refer to Attachment E for an overview of the amended guidelines for the amended CBLA.

External Evaluation

According to statute, the Read to Achieve program was required to report to the Governor and the General Assembly by February 1, 2004, on the following information:

1. The number of schools that received grants under the program and the average amount of the grants;
2. The number of students enrolled in intensive literacy programs funded by the program, the number of pupils enrolled who improved their reading skills to grade level or achieved proficiency on the state assessment in reading for their grade level in the year after starting the intensive literacy program, and the percentage of students who achieved proficiency on the state assessment for reading for their grade level in both the year after starting the intensive literacy program and the following year; and
3. Whether any statutory changes are recommended, including but not limited to the appropriateness of the requirements for adequate progress.

During Funding Cycle I, the Department contracted with an external evaluator to implement a comprehensive evaluation that addressed each of the statutory requirements. The use of an external evaluator avoids conflict of interest and assures necessary accountability. The evaluator worked closely with the Read to Achieve Board to design an effective and comprehensive evaluation. This collaboration has continued to allow the Board to define clear rules to make decisions about subsequent funding for schools, as well as to continue the process of evaluating the overall effectiveness of programs used across the state. In Funding Cycle II, the Read to Achieve Board continued to contract with an external evaluator to assure accountability. The Report to the Governor and General Assembly as well as all previous external evaluation reports can be found on the Read to Achieve website at: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdecomp/r2a.htm>.

By using the clearly defined rules, the Board made decisions regarding continued funding for year three in May and June 2006. All schools that were not recommended for continued funding were given details on the appeals process and were allowed to submit a timely appeal for reconsideration by the Board.

The Read to Achieve evaluation focused primarily on the following questions:

1. How well did schools achieve the grant specified achievement goals (25% improvement standard)?
2. What program characteristics or extenuating circumstances describe those schools that did attain the achievement goals and those that did not?

For schools participating in the second funding cycle, the Read to Achieve Board significantly scaled back the required evaluation reporting. The decision was made at the end of the first funding cycle that, due to budget restraints, schools would only be responsible for submitting the following reports:

- Program Profile
- CBLA Levels Definition Worksheet
- Online Achievement Data Collection

These forms were updated in 2006-2007 for final reporting in Year 3 of the Funding Cycle II. During Year 1 of funding cycle II of Read to Achieve, the Read to Achieve Board worked closely with the Information Management Services unit within the Colorado Department of Education to transform the formerly used Achievement Data Tables (Excel spreadsheets) into an automated data

collection. This online data collection was created to make the evaluation reporting more efficient and less time intensive for funded schools. The conversion to the online format has also made it easier for CDE to track CSAP progress of previously served Read to Achieve students. Grantees continued to express positive feedback on the efficiency, user-friendliness, and time-saving aspects of the online data collection in the final year. Please see Attachment F for an overview of the online data collection.

Detailed instructions on completing the required evaluation pieces were distributed via mail to the principal at each funded site.

Internal Evaluation of State Level Activities

During the Year 3 of the second funding cycle, budget and time constraints did not allow for any large scale networking for grantees. Feedback was always encouraged through e-mail communication and shared with the Read to Achieve Board. In the final year of the program, feedback received included:

- Appreciation from principals/school staff for being able to participate in the program and the difference these funds made to schools;
- Compelling stories of student success; and
- Supportiveness from the Department throughout all aspects of the program.

When the significant legislative changes were made to the program during Spring 2007, it should be noted that a great deal of feedback was generated from the schools and districts. Many schools also expressed very positive feedback around the strengthening of the program, in particular, the expansion of grades that can be served through the program (now kindergarten through third grade). However, with these significant changes, some concerns were also noted over:

- Significantly lower level of funding than in all of the previous year; and
- The fact funds could no longer be disseminated to all schools but now a select group of 'eligible' schools.

Though many schools were no longer eligible to receive funding during the third funding cycle (FYs 2007-2010), the Read to Achieve Board supported the many program changes made during the 2007 Legislative Session, feeling it was the best way to ensure these funds reached the students truly at risk of not reading. It is the Board's hope that in future years of the program additional funding will be appropriated to allow for the funding of more schools.

Read to Achieve Administrative Costs

During Year 3 of Funding Cycle II of Read to Achieve (July 1, 2006 – June 30, 2007), 331 schools received funds for a total of \$4,021,114. Tobacco revenue from 2006-2007 were used to fund this 12-month period. By statute, one percent of the amount appropriated was used for administration of the program. Because the \$11.5 supplemental was received so late in the fiscal year, the 1% funding for program administration was only taken from the original FY 2006-2007 appropriation. Table 3 details the amount and justification of administrative costs incurred by Read to Achieve for fiscal year 2006-07. It should be noted that monies spent on administration of the program were significantly lower in FY 2006-07 than in previous years. After consideration of the 2006 performance audit recommendations, the Department revised evaluation procedures for Read to Achieve, including contracting with a new external evaluator. The new external evaluation contract

began in August 2007. The delay in contracting with the new evaluator accounts for the low admin costs in FY 2006-07.

Table 10

Read-to-Achieve Administrative Costs	
Fiscal Year 2006-07	
Tobacco Oversight Costs	\$2,767
Other Administrative Costs*	\$6671
Total Costs	\$9,438
*Other Administrative Costs include outside consultants to conduct site visits and technical assistance, costs related to the networking days, travel, temporary services, postage, printing/reproduction, supplies and materials.	
**No FTE were funded due to statutory limitation	

State Auditor’s Review

During fiscal year 2005-2006, a performance audit of Read to Achieve was conducted by the State Auditor’s Office. In last year’s Annual Report to the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, CDE’s responses to the State Auditor’s Office recommendations were included. For the complete Read to Achieve Performance Audit Report, please visit the State Auditor’s Website at: [http://www.leg.state.co.us/OSA/coauditor1.nsf/All/49299D33C9C8CF72872571D1006046FD/\\$FILE/1743%20Read%20to%20Achieve%20Perf%20Contr%20Aug%202006.pdf](http://www.leg.state.co.us/OSA/coauditor1.nsf/All/49299D33C9C8CF72872571D1006046FD/$FILE/1743%20Read%20to%20Achieve%20Perf%20Contr%20Aug%202006.pdf). Over the course of this past year, CDE has furthered its efforts to respond to the recommendations from the audit. The following information lists the recommendations from the audit and details what actions CDE has taken during the 2006-2007 school year to further address the findings.

Recommendation No. 1

The Department of Education should ensure that Read to Achieve grant funds are directed toward schools and students with the greatest needs for intensive literacy services by:

- a. Requiring schools to include in their applications information on the current reading levels of students to be served as well as any other factors that might indicate need for Read to Achieve funding.*
- b. Improving the grant evaluation process by compiling key comparative data on student needs (such as the number and location of eligible students and the current reading levels of students to be served) along with the grant applications. This comparative information should be provided to the review teams for consideration in their evaluation of proposals and to the Read to Achieve Board for making final funding decisions.*
- c. Considering the geographic distribution of grant awards in the application review and funding process. The Department should also report both the actual number of eligible students in each region as reflected by the number of second and third graders on Individual Literacy Plans and the number served.*

During the 2007 Legislative Session, the R2A Board (and CDE) sought a change in the R2A legislation. One change includes criteria for selecting eligible applicants. This eligibility criteria was based on percentage of students over time who reading readiness or reading and literacy comprehension skills are below the levels established by the State Board. Three years of consistently low CSAP performance, percentage of K-3 students on ILPs, and geographic distribution was used in determining schools eligible

to apply. During the 2007 application process, eligible applicants included the number of students reading below grade level from the 2006-07 school year. In both July and August, when applications were scored by grant reviewers, comparative information from eligible schools' applications was provided to assist readers while making their funding decisions. This information included:

- The amount of funds requested for each year of the grant;
- The number of eligible students to be served at each school;
- The reading program the applicant selected to use (and duration of the program);
- The type of program proposed (e.g., before/after school, tutoring, summer school);
- Other supplementary reading grants the applicant has received;
- Whether the applicant received Title I funding; and
- Whether the applicant is currently using the DIBELS assessment.

Recommendation No. 2

The Department of Education should improve data for assessing Program performance and strengthen methods for evaluating and disseminating the results of the Read to Achieve Program by:

- a. Using student-specific data on students with Individual Literacy Plans to assess the changes in reading skills of those students in the Program compared to students who were not in the Program.*
- b. Compiling additional information including details on all applicants and specific budget and actual data for each school receiving a grant.*
- c. Modifying the external evaluations to include assessment of cost issues and analyses that will isolate the effects of the Read to Achieve Program and identify the benefits of different types of programs.*
- d. Posting all external evaluation reports on its website and informing schools and districts of the location of the reports.*

Since the performance audit, the Department has begun contracting with a new external evaluator to revise and implement evaluation activities to strengthen methods for evaluating Read to Achieve. Pursuant to the revised Read to Achieve legislation (22-7-906, C.R.S.), the State Board of Education has designated one assessment to assess Read to Achieve students' reading proficiency. In May 2007, the State Board of Education designated the Diagnostic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS®) as the Read to Achieve Assessment. Both the Read to Achieve Board and the Department support the designation of a single assessment for the program, believing this solution will aide in the assessment and demonstration of Program performance.

It should be noted that at the time of the release of the State Auditor's report, Read to Achieve had already implemented the recommendation that past program results (internal and external evaluations) be accessible to the public and grantees. All past evaluations have been posted to the program website.

Recommendation No. 3

The Department of Education should improve accountability for the Read to Achieve Grant Program and comply with statute by ensuring that only schools that achieve the statutory standard (i.e., 25 percent of participants improve their reading skills to grade level) receive continuation funding under the existing grant cycle or a new grant award under the subsequent grant cycle.

Beginning with Grantees funded in July 2007, funded sites will now be required to demonstrate that at least 65% of the pupils who completed the one year instructional cycle of the program reached their achievement goals or otherwise demonstrated that they are on pace to achieve grade level proficiency on the state assessment in reading for their grade level to obtain subsequent year funding. Applicants were

given detailed information on this new requirement in the new Request for Proposal (RFP). The Board will continue to fund only schools that meet the statutory goal in all future years.

Recommendation No. 4

The Department of Education should improve oversight of schools with Read to Achieve participants who do not complete the full instructional cycle by collecting, verifying, and analyzing complete data on dates of service and assessment scores. This should include:

- a. Determining why a high percentage of students at some schools are not completing the instructional cycle and providing technical assistance as appropriate.*
- b. Defining and applying criteria for those circumstances under which a school will be allowed to retain all its Read to Achieve funding or will be required to refund a portion.*
- c. Reevaluating the decision to exclude students who complete less than a full instructional cycle from the 25 percent calculation and considering whether students who complete most of the instructional cycle should be included.*
- d. Evaluating achievement data for partial year students to determine whether students who complete various amounts of the instructional cycle make improvement in their reading skills, and thus, have benefited from the Program.*

Beginning with fiscal year 2007-08, CDE will collect specific data regarding students who do not complete the full instructional cycle through the R2A online data collection. Schools will be asked to designate a reason for the student leaving the program in order to facilitate better reporting of students who do not complete the full instructional cycle. Students that do not participate in the full instructional cycle of the program (one school year) will not be counted in the 65% calculation of students on track to reach proficiency; however, data will be collected on these students to compare against students that participate in the full year.

Recommendation No. 5

The Department of Education should improve accountability for Read to Achieve costs by:

- a. Discontinuing per pupil funding standards and considering alternatives, such as maximums or cost ranges for standard budget items, to evaluate the reasonableness of costs.*
- b. Requiring schools to report total program costs and sources of funds in budget worksheets.*
- c. Establishing grant agreements or contract provisions that require schools to set targets for students served, state the criteria for refunding monies when targets are not met, and certify that grant funds are not supplanting existing programs.*
- d. Establishing a process to verify data reported by grantees.*

During the 2007 Legislative Session, the Read to Achieve Board recommended that per-pupil funding be removed from the Read to Achieve legislation. As part of the new legislative changes to Read to Achieve, funded schools were funded on a total cost basis, rather than per-pupil. The elimination of per-pupil spending in Read to Achieve will allow the Department to better track grantees' use of funds.

In addition, the 2007 Request for Proposal, the Assurances & Disclaimers page will hold schools to spending funding appropriately. Through the revision of the evaluation process for Read to Achieve, the Department will conduct randomly selected site visits to a stratified sampling of funded sites. These visits will focus on both program activities and fiscal monitoring. The Department believes this will strengthen accountability of Read to Achieve funds.

Recommendation No. 6

The Department of Education should establish a monitoring process for the Read to Achieve Program to ensure the Program is effectively administered, overseen, and evaluated as discussed throughout the report. The Department should consider the need to reallocate existing resources or request statutory changes for additional resources as appropriate.

The Read to Achieve Board sought and was granted change in the Read to Achieve legislation to accommodate FTE for the administration of this program. A total of 1.0 FTE was granted in May 2007. In addition to a newly designated FTE for the program, the Department may use up to 3% of the moneys appropriated from the Read to Achieve Cash Fund for administration of the program.

The Department has begun working with a newly contracted external evaluator in order to develop and establish a more efficient and effective monitoring process for the program. The new evaluation and monitoring process will include: randomly selected monitoring site visits; the requirement that schools progress monitor students served three times each year; and that the Department will provide detailed feedback regarding schools' progress after each monitoring window.

Department of Regulatory Agencies (DORA) Sunset Review

In January of 2006, CDE was notified that Read to Achieve was scheduled to be reviewed by the Department of Regulatory Agencies (DORA). The regulatory functions of the Read-to-Achieve (R2A) Board in accordance with Section 506 of Article 7 of Title 22, Colorado Revised Statutes (C.R.S.), shall terminate on July 1, 2007, unless continued by the General Assembly. During the year prior to this date, it is the duty of DORA to conduct an analysis and evaluation of the Board pursuant to section 24-34-104, C.R.S. The purpose of this review was to determine whether the Board should be continued and to evaluate the performance of the Board and staff of the Colorado Department of Education (CDE). The Sunset Review was performed between January 2006 and September 2006. As part of this review, DORA staff attended Board meetings; interviewed school administrators of R2A grant recipients, CDE staff and Board members and reviewed Board records, Colorado and federal statutes and the laws of other states.

Key recommendations from the Sunset Review include: continue the Read to Achieve Board until 2014; hold grantees accountable for satisfying all statutory requirements; direct the various appointing authorities to remove appointees for neglect of duty and define "neglect of duty" as including missing three consecutive Board meetings; and repeal the requirement that no more than six Board members belonging to the same political party. For the complete 2006 Read to Achieve Sunset Review report, please visit the Department of Regulatory Agencies website at:

<http://www.dora.state.co.us/opr/archive/2006ReadtoAchieveBoardReport.pdf>.

2007 Statutory Changes

The Read to Achieve Board appreciated the opportunity for reexamination of the program during both the State Auditor's performance audit as well as the DORA Sunset Review. The Board felt it was a great opportunity to make informed and meaningful amendments to the existing legislation. With recommendations prompted from the audit and DORA Sunset Review, the Board was able to convey further recommendations in strengthening the program legislation.

As a result of Senate Bill 07-192, key amendments were made to the Read to Achieve grant program. These changes include:

- The continuation of the Read to Achieve Board in statute until 2014;

- That the Commissioner of Education shall be able to appoint a designee to attend Read to Achieve Board meetings;
- The addition of a parent position on the Read to Achieve Board;
- An extension of students served to kindergarten through third grade students whose reading readiness or literacy and reading comprehension skills are below the levels established by the State Board of Education;
- The designation of a single, valid and reliable assessment designated by the State Board of Education;
- Subsequent year grant funding for each funded school will be based on the demonstration that at least 65% of the pupils who completed the one year instructional cycle of the intensive reading program reached their achievement goals or demonstrated that they are on pace to achieve grade level proficiency on the State Assessment in reading;
- That the Department and the Read to Achieve Board shall determine schools eligible to apply for Read to Achieve funds; and
- An increase in program administration from one percent to no more than three percent (including 1.0 FTE).

The resulting legislation enacted through Senate Bill 07-192 is 22-7-901 through 22-7-908 of the Colorado Revised Statutes (C.R.S.). Please refer to Attachment G for the enacted version of Senate Bill 07-192.

The State Board of Education is again responsible for promulgating Rules for the Administration of the Read to Achieve Grant Program. These Rules include: criteria the Department shall apply in determining whether a public school (or consortium of public schools) is eligible to apply for funds; application procedures; procedures for reviewing the effectiveness of the intensive literacy programs; the designation of a valid and reliable assessment for schools to use in assessing students' reading proficiency; and a method for tracking the progress of students who move from one school to another school within the state while participating in Read to Achieve programs. Please see Attachment H for the new Rules for the Administration of the Read to Achieve Grant Program adopted by the State Board of Education on Emergency Basis in May 2007, then formally adopted in August 2007.

Read to Achieve Assessment

As charged in the new Read to Achieve legislation, the State Board of Education (SBE) designated a single, valid and reliable Read to Achieve assessment for participating schools to use in assessing students' reading proficiency. In May 2007, the SBE designated that each grantee will now use the Diagnostic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS®) to assess Read to Achieve students' reading proficiency. Because the Read to Achieve grant program is so closely connected to the Colorado Basic Literacy Act, the State Board made their decision based on feedback generated from the Spring 2007 CBLA Focus Groups. This assessment was chosen in part because it was one of the three assessments chosen (DIBELS, PALS, and the DRA-II) for the Colorado Basic Literacy Act reporting. It also was viewed as an assessment that would provide the most adequate data.

Grantees will be responsible for testing participating Read to Achieve students at three points during the year (Fall, Winter, and Spring). Because not every newly funded Read to Achieve school has used the DIBELS assessment, the Read to Achieve Board provided training on the assessment in August 2007. The Department contracted with a national trainer for the Dynamic Measurement

Group, the authors of the DIBELS assessment, to provide this training, free of charge, to funded schools. In addition to training, CDE also plans to provide detailed progress monitoring funded schools to notify them if they are on track to meeting the 65% student proficiency goal. Attachment I details the DIBELS Testing Schedule for 2007-08.

Eligible Schools

As specified in the Read to Achieve legislation, the Department and the Read to Achieve Board prepared a list of schools eligible to apply for Read to Achieve funds. Criteria used to determine eligible schools included: the percentage of students over time whose reading readiness and reading comprehension level are less than proficient; and the distribution of funded sites based on geographic location and school size. Please refer to Attachment J for the list of schools eligible to apply for Read to Achieve funds in 2007.

Eligible public elementary schools, including charter schools or Institute Charter Schools, and/or a consortium of eligible schools were encouraged to apply on behalf of their eligible students. However, because of the significantly decreased appropriation for fiscal year 2007-08 (approximately \$5 million), the Department anticipated only being able to fund between 50 and 75 schools. This is significantly less than in the previous two funding cycles when over 550 schools were served. Because the estimated number of schools to be served was

Revised Request for Proposal

In May 2007, the Department and the Read to Achieve Board revised the Read to Achieve Request for Proposal (RFP) to incorporate both the new legislative changes as well as additional feedback from the State Auditor's performance audit. Major changes to the RFP include: a list of eligible applicants; a reorganization of how applicant data is collected; and clarified fiscal requirements. The RFP was released to eligible schools mid-May 2007 with a due date of June 27, 2007. The 2007 Read to Achieve RFP can be found in Attachment K.

During May and June 2007, the Department conducted training sessions on the Read to Achieve grant writing process. Three a total of 4 trainings were held in Colorado Springs, Greeley and the Denver metro area. A web-based session was also held. Please see Attachment L for the Training Session PowerPoint and Grant Writing Guide.

On June 27, 2007, CDE received a total of 47 applications for funding. Grant reviewers indicated 42 of the 47 applications were to be funded. Because not all funding was distributed in July 2007 after the initial competition, a second funding competition was held with applications due on August 17, 2007. After the combined funding competitions, a total of 54 schools (51 applications) were funded to serve students in kindergarten through 3rd grade students (and students between the 3rd and 4th grades) whose reading readiness or literacy and reading comprehension skills are below the level established by the State Board of Education pursuant to the Colorado Basic Literacy Act. Please refer to Attachment M for a listing of funded sites.

Review of Goal Accomplishments: Year Three Results

The Read to Achieve grant program has five stated goals. They are listed below with a brief review of accomplishments during the current year regarding each. Further details on how these goals have been addressed during the 2006-07 school year can be found throughout this report.

Goal 1: *Provide additional intensive reading services to all second and third graders on Individual Literacy Plans (ILPs) so that they will be proficient readers by the end of third grade.*

- **Accomplished.** During the 2006-07 school year, the Read to Achieve grant program served over 14,000 students in 331 schools, representing approximately 51% of all students on ILPs.

Goal 2: *Collect and review applications for Read to Achieve Grants.*

- **Accomplished.** The comprehensive application process was revised Spring 2007 to include clear expectations, an evaluation rubric, training, support, a review process, and individualized feedback was completed in July and August 2007. A total of 54 schools have been funded for the 2007-08 school year.

Goal 3: *Recommend to the State Board of Education the schools that should receive grants as well as the duration and amount of each grant.*

- **Accomplished.** In the third year (July 1, 2006 – June 30, 2007), 331 schools received funds for a total of \$4,021,114. For the third year, one percent of the amount of the original appropriation was spent on administration of the program.

Goal 4: *Determine continued funding of grants based on adequate progress during granting period, e.g., grantee meets the goals established in the grant application including demonstration that at least 25% of the students enrolled for the prior year met the reading standard.*

- **Accomplished.** The Read to Achieve Board used clearly defined decision criteria, based on legislation, to recommend schools for continued funding. The Board recommended continued funding for 331 schools in Year 3. Because 2006-07 was the third and final year of the third funding cycle, no subsequent funding decisions could be made.

Goal 5: *Report to the Governor and to the General Assembly on the effectiveness of the program by February 1, 2004.*

- **Accomplished.** Data required to report to the Governor and General Assembly were collected and analyzed by the external evaluator and CDE staff. This report can be found on the CDE website at <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdecomp/r2a.htm>.

Read to Achieve funds have provided a solid foundation for a successful second funding cycle of Read to Achieve as well as increased literacy levels for students throughout the state. This report to the Colorado Department of Public Health contains information on implementation and evaluation activities completed during the third year of the second funding cycle.

Summary of Primary Accomplishments 2006-2007

- **Service to Students at Risk of Not Reading.** Over 600 Read to Achieve schools have received funding throughout the existence of the program. This funding has provided sustained impact for over 50% of Colorado students on ILPs – those students determined at risk for not reading successfully by the end of third grade.
- **Impact on Students Served.** Over 14,000 students at 331 schools participated in Read to Achieve programs during Year 3 of Funding Cycle II. To date, over 100,000 students have been served through reading intervention programs funded by Read to Achieve, with over 80% of these students participating in the program for the full instructional cycle.
- **Commendable Performance of Schools.** Student performance data has shown that of the 331 schools participating in the third year, 87.7% met the 25% statutory goal.
- **Legislative Changes.** The Read to Achieve Board collaborated with policymakers on the revisions to the Read to Achieve legislation to increase accountability and impact of Read to Achieve funds.
- **Sustained Expertise on the Read to Achieve Board.** Over the six year duration of the grant, the Read to Achieve Board has retained high quality reading professionals and community representatives. This sustained leadership is critical to the success of the Read to Achieve program.
- **Continually Enhanced Supports for Schools.** Each year Read to Achieve has developed more powerful and efficient supports for grantees. This is evidenced in the automated evaluation tools, online supports (including web-based conferencing), and participation in unique professional development opportunities such as the *Colorado Reading Summit*, grant writing trainings, and assessment training.
- **Reexamination of Program.** After thorough examination of program activities and procedures, the Read to Achieve Board, in collaboration with CDE staff, worked to develop procedures to strengthen program accountability and effectiveness.