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# 2013-2014 Executive Summary, Reading Recovery Program of Iowa

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# READING RECOVERY PROGRAM OF IOWA

2013-2014 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (PUBLISHED MARCH 2015)



College of Education

Reading Recovery is a research-based early literacy intervention implemented in schools to provide intensive individual literacy instruction to the lowest achieving first grade students in the core classroom. The goal of the intervention is to accelerate students' progress to grade-level proficiency in 12 to 20 weeks. Reading Recovery fits response to intervention (RTI) plans by significantly reducing the number of students who need special education services and contributing to the identification of a small number of children who may need specialized long-term assistance.

The University of Northern Iowa is an official University Training Center of the Reading Recovery North American Trainers Group. Dr. Salli Forbes is the Director/Trainer for the Reading Recovery Program of Iowa and supports the following sites, which collected data during the 2013-2014 academic year:

- + Area Education Agency 267
- + Council Bluffs Community School District
- + Des Moines Public School District
- + Heartland Area Education Agency
- + Iowa City Community School District/Grant Wood Area Education Agency
- + Keystone Area Education Agency
- + Mississippi Bend Area Education Agency
- + Northwest Iowa Area Education Agency
- + Prairie Lakes Area Education Agency
- + Southeast Iowa Reading Recovery Site
- + Waterloo Community School District

The Burlington Community School District will be established as a new site in 2014-2015.

Annual results for the state of Iowa are provided by the National Data Evaluation Center, The Ohio State University (2014).

## Key Elements of Reading Recovery

1. Intensive yearlong preparation for teacher leaders and teachers in research-based theory and procedures.
2. On-going professional development for teachers and teacher leaders for as long as they teach Reading Recovery.
3. Intensive daily instruction for lowest achieving readers and writers in first grade, individually designed and delivered, which maximizes the learning potential of each student.
4. Research and evaluation to monitor results and to provide data for educational decision-making.

## Reading Recovery in Iowa

Reading Recovery began in Iowa in 1991-1992 in the Des Moines Public School District with one teacher leader and one class of teachers. Since 1991 Reading Recovery has served 77,732 children in the state of Iowa.

In January 2009, the Reading Recovery Center of Iowa was established in the College of Education at the University of Northern Iowa. In 2013-2014, the center supported:

- 15 teacher leaders
- 11 teacher training sites
- 373 teachers in 272 schools in 136 districts
- 2,844 students

The demographics of Reading Recovery children in Iowa in 2013-2014 were: 60% boys; 40% girls; 69% free or reduced priced school lunches; 67% white, 18% Hispanic/Latino, 10% African American, 1% Native American, 1% Asian, and 3% multiethnic.

Reading Recovery teachers usually work half day in the Reading Recovery role and teach small groups, in classrooms, or in some other role the other half-day. In Iowa, the most common roles in addition to Reading Recovery and average number of students taught in 2013-2014 by role included:

**Table 1.** Teacher Role by Average Total Number of Students Taught

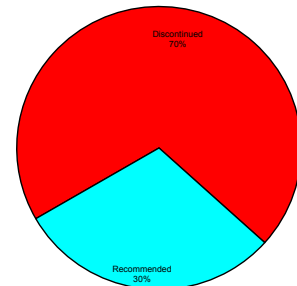
Teacher Role	Avg. Number of Students
Reading Recovery/Title I	38.3
Reading Recovery/ Classroom Teacher	47.3
Reading Recovery/ESL	78
Reading Recovery/Staff Developer	72.3

## Reading Recovery and Response to Intervention (RTI)

The revised Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) (2004) allows educators to use response to intervention (RtI) as a method to identify children for special education services as an alternative to the traditional IQ discrepancy (Johnston, 2010). RtI as an identification process is intended to reduce the number of students who are identified as well as providing a more reliable method of identification.

Many districts/schools find that Reading Recovery is an excellent early intervening service (EIS) as part of their RtI plan (Forbes, Swenson, Person, & Reed, 2008; Lose, 2005; Lose, et al., 2007). Reading Recovery teachers select the lowest achieving students in reading and writing in the first grade classroom. All students make progress, but some do not accelerate their learning to grade level performance. In 2013-2014, a large percentage (70%) of these students accelerated their learning and achieved on-grade level performance with only 12-20 weeks of instruction. A smaller percentage of the students (30%), while making progress, did not achieve on-grade level performance and were recommended for further assessment at the end of 20 weeks of instruction.

**Figure 1.** Intervention Status of Reading Recovery Students with Complete Interventions in 2013-2014



There are many RtI models, which include Reading Recovery (Dorn & Schubert, 2008; Forbes, Swenson, Person & Reed, 2008; International Reading Association, 2007). In 2013-2014, only 7% of the children taught in Reading Recovery in Iowa were placed in special education for literacy (representing approximately 1% of the entire first grade population in those schools). This demonstrates the effectiveness of Reading Recovery in RtI.

## Scientific Research Supports Reading Recovery

What Works Clearinghouse (WWC), determiner of the “gold standard” in educational research for the U.S. Department of Education, in a review of current beginning reading programs found that Reading Recovery® was the only program with positive or potentially positive effects in all four areas studied—general reading achievement, alphabets, fluency, and comprehension. **Reading Recovery demonstrated the highest results of all programs studied in general reading achievement and fluency.** Reading Recovery had the second highest rating in alphabetic skills and the third highest rating in comprehension (What Works Clearinghouse, 2008, 2012).

Reading Recovery and *An Observation Survey of Early Literacy Achievement* (Clay, 2012), the assessment used in Reading Recovery, both received the highest ratings from the National Center for Response to Intervention, established by the American Institutes for Research, Vanderbilt University, and the University of Kansas through the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Special Education. Subsequently, Reading Recovery and the Observation Survey received high ratings from the National Center on Intensive Intervention at the American Institutes for Research, funded by the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Special Education Programs, part of the OSEP’s Technical Assistance and Dissemination Network (TA&D).

D’Agostino & Murphy (2004) published a meta-analysis of 36 studies of Reading Recovery in the research journal *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*. The research demonstrated consistently positive results. The authors concluded that, “In sum, the results seem to indicate a lasting program effect at least by the end of second grade, on broad reading skills” (p. 35).

## Cost Effectiveness of Reading Recovery

A report from the KPMG Foundation (2006) in the United Kingdom demonstrates the high costs of literacy difficulties. Factors attributed to low literacy rates include:

- extra instructional support in school throughout the grades
- high levels of expulsion and drop-out rates
- unemployment and under-employment
- violent crime
- increased health risks

The KPMG Foundation report adjusted the costs to reflect if Reading Recovery were available for every person who needs it. The projected savings would be at least 1.37 billion pounds (\$2.7 billion dollars) annually. The report estimated that for every pound invested in Reading Recovery the savings would be 14-17 pounds—an extraordinary return on the investment.

Projections for long-term savings are based on many studies, which demonstrate that Reading Recovery has a high rate of sustained effects for the students served (Forbes & Szymczuk, 2008; Schmitt & Gregory, 2005; Thornton-Reid & Duncan, 2008). Several cost-effectiveness studies in the United States have shown that Reading Recovery provides cost savings for school districts by reducing the number of students who need ongoing special education, Title I services, grade-level retention and related services. (Gomez-Bellengé, 2007; Schmitt, Askew, Fountas, Lyons & Pinnell, 2005; Assad & Condon, 1996). Table 2 provides a cost comparison example between Reading Recovery and other educational interventions.

**Table 2.** Cost Comparison Example Between Reading Recovery and Other Educational Interventions (Rodgers & Ortega, 2008)

	Annual Per-Pupil Cost	Average Time in Program	Per-Pupil Cost Across Time
Retention	\$9,200	1 Year	\$9,200
Title I	\$2,400	5 Years	\$12,000
Special Education	\$3,750	5 Years	\$18,750
Other (e.g., small group pullout)	\$2,400	3 Years	\$7,200
Reading Recovery	\$3,750	12-20 Weeks	\$3,750

Note. Calculations for estimated annual per-pupil cost are based on a teacher salary and benefits of \$60,000 annually.

## Sustained Effects

Reading Recovery students who successfully complete the intervention continue to make excellent progress for several years beyond the intervention (Forbes & Szymczuk, 2008; Schmitt & Gregory, 2005; Schmitt, Askew, Fountas, Lyons, & Pinnell, 2005; Thornton-Reid & Duncan, 2008). Forbes and Szymczuk (2008) found that between 68-75% of former Reading Recovery students in Iowa performed within or above the average band of their peers on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills on Reading Comprehension, Reading Vocabulary, and Total Reading scores in third, fourth, and fifth grade. Studies of sustained effects at several of the Iowa Reading Recovery sites have found a very high percentage of former Reading Recovery students who are proficient on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills in fourth grade. Information on these studies can be obtained by contacting one of the teacher leaders at specific sites (see the directory at <http://uni.edu/jccl/rppi/directory-affiliated-sites>).

## Reading Recovery Program of Iowa

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